

# Community News

DAILY ROUNDUP OF NEWS AND EVENTS FROM ACROSS METRO ATLANTA

## Vine City residents help produce a park amid struggling area

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Atlanta's next city park is taking shape blocks from the Georgia Dome.

Vine City Park's terraced plaza and tidy plantings stand in the heart of a struggling neighborhood prone to flooding and diagonally across

the street from a boarded-up apartment complex.

"People would not expect this in the inner city," said Byron Amos, a community organizer who started talking with residents about developing the park eight years ago.

Sometime this spring, when Vine City residents gather at the finished park

and playground, they can thank themselves for the 2-acre patch of greenery. Public and private donations, totaling \$1.6 million, and the backing of Atlanta's parks department, were necessary, but the park would not have been built without the community's insistence.

"These people wanted a

park," said Amos, who ran the neighborhood's civic association before starting a nonprofit organization that develops housing in the area. "We had the idea long before we had the money."

City officials were skeptical, Amos said. Amos and others raised money elsewhere to get things going.

In 2002, the Arthur M. Blank Foundation gave \$125,000 to start acquiring the first acre of land, which consisted of overgrown lots and a house in a flood zone. In 2005, a park advocacy organization called Park Pride helped the neighborhood create a master plan for Vine City Park that included

a picnic pavilion, formal gardens and a meadow.

It could take several more years to complete the park, but Amos said the community will stick with its plan to eventually add more space and an exercise trail.

"We've been able to do what some people deemed impossible," he said.