

Waller Creek Tunnel: Marking a Milestone

The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department recently celebrated the completion of the Waller Creek Tunnel. Key figures including department leaders, City staff, engineers, contractors, and contributors gathered to commemorate this milestone.

During the event, attendees had the opportunity to tour the Waller Creek Tunnel Inlet Facility. The occasion featured light refreshments, an informative presentation, and musical performances by the Eastside Kings band.

Tunnel construction began in 2011 and flooded for the first time in May 2015. It took until 2019 for all components, such as the 4th and 8th Street inlets, to be finalized. Situated 70 feet below ground and spanning 5,600 feet from Waterloo Park to Lady Bird Lake, the tunnel reduces the floodplain along Waller Creek. With a diameter of 22 to 26 feet, it captures floodwaters, directing them into Lady Bird Lake. This helps mitigate flood risks to buildings and roads, improves water quality, and enhances wild-life habitats along Waller Creek.

Beyond its technical significance, the tunnel's creation has led to revitalization efforts in the Waller Creek District. Thanks to the tunnel, businesses, governments, and nonprofits are able to invest in both private and public projects, including 37 acres of parks and open space. Construction for The Confluence, Phase 2 of the Waterloo Greenway, began in spring 2023, creating a continuous hike and bike trail and improving the appearance, stability, ecology, and water quality along Waller Creek.

Commemorating the Waller Creek Tunnel's completion goes beyond recognizing an incredible engineering feat. It's a testament to its crucial role in fortifying Austin against flooding, a collective achievement made possible by the efforts of everyone involved. For more information about the tunnel, visit AustinTexas.gov/department/waller-creek-district-and-tunnel.



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