




## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THRU:** Christopher Shorter, Assistant City Manager

**FROM:** Kimberly McNeeley, CPRP, Director, Parks and Recreation Department 

**DATE:** May 22, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Summer Operations and Programming Update

---

This memo serves as an update regarding Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) summer operations and programming for the 2020 summer season. As you likely know, PAR is taking small incremental steps in managing park system operations to ensure recreational activities are offered in a healthy and safe manner and the re-establishment of programming opportunities does not contribute to increased risks associated with COVID-19.

With summer upon us and as the state moves forward to reopen, community members are eager for updates regarding pool operations and summer camps. PAR anticipates opening pools in June and will provide more details regarding the modified pool operations next week.

In evaluating summer youth programming, PAR considered the following:

- **Available Trained Staff** - PAR currently has enough Regular and Temporary employees on payroll to operate Summer programs at approximately 50% capacity of a typical summer.
- **CDC, and Local Health Recommendations** - The Center for Disease control is the leading source of information for COVID 19 response and prevention. The CDC has produced specific [guidelines](#) for school and childcare operations. Austin Public Health used these guidelines as a base and produced local [guidelines](#), including for local childcare entities. Both guidelines suggest ratios of two staff members for every eight youth. In addition, the guidelines currently recommend keeping groups separate (isolated) at all times, meaning each group would avoid interaction with each other
- **State of Texas Orders** - The Governor of Texas released guidelines related to summer camp/day camp operations on May 18, 2020.
- **American Camping Association** - The American Camping Association is the industry leader in guiding camp operations. The American Camping Association recently released camp operational guidelines in response to COVID-19.
- **Facility Cleaning** - The State of Texas Orders, Local Standards of Care, American Camping Association and the CDC recommendations outline specific additional cleaning procedures to frequently sanitize the facility's commonly touched areas.
- **Support to City-wide Initiatives** - PAR will continue to support child care for City of Austin essential employees.
- **Equity** - PAR has worked with the City of Austin Equity Office to ensure programming decisions to not disproportionately impact minority communities.

- **State and Local Stay at Home Orders** - These orders have impacted the readiness of facilities and staff.

Based upon the current health authority recommendations, industry research, available staffing resources and safety, PARD developed a multi-level approach to youth summer programs:

- Summer program operations will be delayed until July 6<sup>th</sup>. This four-week postponement serves to ready facilities, train staff regarding modified SOPs to combat COVID 19 spread and is consistent with the current community risk rating
- PARD will cancel and refund all paid summer camps. Adhering to CDC and APH guidelines substantially changes the camp offering and the program no longer resembles the program that was originally advertised
  - Registration for these camps occurred in February prior to fully understanding the impacts of COVID-19.
  - Adhering to current CDC and APH guidelines limits camp capacity, discourages interaction between camp groups, requires additional physical space and eliminates transportation for field trips
- PARD intends to offer a free, modified summer camp program at approximately 20 locations for City of Austin community members only
  - Most locations will be within the eastern crescent
  - Session options will be available to maximize availability and flexibility to serve a variety of family needs
  - In adherence to the current CDC and industry guidelines, capacity is limited to 16 to 24 campers per camp day (depending upon facility size)
  - Registration processes will be announced in June
- PARD is working to secure summer meal options for the camp sites
- PARD will continue to provide all day camp to City of Austin essential employees as it has done since the beginning of the COVID-19 response
- PARD will not offer specialty camps like those at the Austin Nature and Science Center or Cultural Center camps.
  - PARD specialty camp staff will supplement programming at one of the estimated 20 locations
  - PARD specialty camp staff will create, offer and manage continued online programming

PARD's modified summer schedule provides equitable access opportunities, supports COA initiatives and meets all health related COVID 19 guidelines.

Should you have any questions related to youth summer programs, please contact Lucas Massie, Assistant Director at (512) 974-6772 or [lucas.massie@austintexas.gov](mailto:lucas.massie@austintexas.gov).

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Deputy City Manager