





MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kimberly McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department 

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager 

DATE: January 19, 2023

SUBJECT: Staff Response on Park System Shade Structure Analysis (Ordinance No. 20220817-004)

This memo serves as an update on the Parks and Recreation Department's (Department) progress in response to [Ordinance No. 20220817-004](#), [CM Vela - Budget Rider 1 \(Park Shading\)](#) which directed the City Manager to prioritize infrastructure to provide necessary shade, including planting trees, for community activity spaces including playscapes, splash pads, basketball courts, and skating spaces. The City Manager was also directed to

- provide a report listing park locations where shade structures and natural shade already exist;
- identify where shade structures are missing and needed;
- identify a prioritization strategy, and;
- provide a timeline to implement the shading needs at those parks along with required funding and funding sources.

This update provides information on recommended shade installations and is a follow up to the information provided in a [memo](#) sent to Mayor and Council Members on December 19, 2022.

High Need Parks and Recommended Shade Treatments

Since the last update, Department staff visited parks with a demonstrated high need that lacked shaded amenities to identify appropriate treatments. The list below identifies the highest-need parks, the recommended treatment, and funding that would be required outside of the Department's existing Capital Budget appropriations.

Park	District	Recommendation	Funding Needed
St. John Pocket Park	4	Include additional shade during the park's expansion and continued development occurring with the Home Depot site redevelopment	None currently
Jamestown Neighborhood Park	4	Include planting and structured shade when park is developed	None currently
Onion Creek Metro Park (Nuckols Crossing)	2	Install picnic shelters	Design in progress with installation funded by parkland mitigation funds
T.A. Brown Neighborhood Park	4	Plant shade trees on site alongside Neighborhood Partnering Program fitness equipment project	Development in progress with parkland dedication fees
Ponciana Neighborhood Park	2	Install structured shade over play area to supplement existing trees	\$60,000
Buttermilk Neighborhood Park	4	Install picnic shelter with lighting	\$150,000
Earl J. Pomerleau Pocket Park	4	Install structured shade over play area; plant additional shade trees	Construction in progress funded by APF and parkland dedication fees
Oertli Neighborhood Park	1	Install picnic shelters; plant shade trees	Permitting in progress with construction funded by 2018 Bond and parkland dedication fees
Brownie Neighborhood Park	4	Install picnic shelter and play equipment with structured shade; plant shade trees	Construction in progress funded by 2018 Bond, APF, parkland dedication fees, urban forestry funding portal, and parkland mitigation funds
Agave Neighborhood Park	1	Plant shade trees throughout site	Project in progress funded by Watershed Protection and DSD Urban Forestry

Implementation Challenges

The following permitting-related items impact shade options and/or the timeline associated with project permitting:

- During site plan review, picnic shelters and pavilions are treated as commercial buildings by the City's Land Development Code and trigger Subchapter E requirements. This treatment adds cost and impacts aesthetics and functional for park projects.
- Restrictions related to critical root zones limit the ability to install play areas and other amenities under the shade of mature trees.

The Department has completed the tasks assigned to it through this Budget Rider and will continue to evaluate opportunities to improve park shading on an on-going basis.

Should you have any questions, please contact Steven Linett, Capital Improvement Program Manager, at Steven.Linett@austintexas.gov, or Assistant Director Liana Kallivoka at Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager