



MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Board Members

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

DATE: May 14, 2021

SUBJECT: Recycling Implementation in Parks and Recent Progress: Second Update

The Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is currently in Phase I of the Recycling Implementation Plan to ensure that our parks and facilities are compliant with [Universal Recycling Ordinance](#) guidelines and our own [City of Austin Zero Waste Goals](#) and standards. A prior update on initial recycling implementation was provided in September 2020.

Background: In 2018, the Zero Waste Advisory Commission and the Parks and Recreation Board urged City Council to create a Parks and Recreation Recycling Task Force ([Resolution 20180614-072](#)), and based on those recommendations, the subsequent FY19 City budget included more than \$1 million for expanding recycling to parks citywide. The Recycling Program Manager was hired in June 2019 to implement comprehensive recycling and composting standards at all PAR indoor and outdoor facilities to meet Zero Waste goals. In September 2019, City Council awarded bids for the purchase and installation of updated receptacles at parks.

Recycling Implementation Plan – Phase I Progress

Phase I of the Recycling Implementation Plan prioritizes all metro parks, Athletics sites, Aquatics sites, Golf facilities, and recently completed capital improvement park projects. This phase began in early 2020 when receptacles were received from the manufacturer and is anticipated to be complete in late summer 2021. Installation contractor Piatra continues to install new Max-R landfill and recycling receptacles as paired units on concrete pads with two-way dome lids and clear labels in English and Spanish to comply with Universal Recycling Ordinance guidelines. After installation, outdated receptacles such as the older trash “coffins” are removed by PAR maintenance staff as soon as possible to avoid having duplicate receptacles. COVID-19-related staffing issues initially led to some delays in removing outdated receptacles though as of May 2021 all maintenance staff are back at work. The outdated coffin-style receptacles are being recycled and repurposed wherever possible, as planters and blockades to prevent illegal dumping. Any removed concrete is recycled through Texas Disposal Systems concrete recycling.

Since the last update to PARB, metro parks with new paired landfill and recycling receptacles recently added include: Zilker Metropolitan Park, Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metropolitan Park, Circle C Metropolitan Park, Edward Rendon Sr. Metropolitan Park, and Commons Ford Metropolitan Park. Next on the list are Mary Moore Searight Metropolitan Park and Walter E. Long Metropolitan Park with scheduled completion in May/June 2021 and Onion Creek Metropolitan Park and Emma Long Metropolitan Park with scheduled completion in July 2021. While Walnut Creek Metropolitan Park already has some recycling receptacles on site, this park will be revisited at the end of summer 2021 to ensure it has upgraded recycling receptacles as well. Additionally, recently completed CIP park projects that received new receptacles include playscapes at Givens District Park, Springdale Neighborhood Park, and Balcones District Park. Where possible, PARD's stock of existing Pilot Rock receptacles are repurposed at neighborhood level park projects and will also be used at Onion Creek Metropolitan Park.



New Max-R receptacles in use at Roy Guerrero Metropolitan Park and Butler Hike and Bike Trail



New Max-R receptacles at Zilker Metropolitan Park and Circle C Metropolitan Park



CIP projects adding recycling: relocated Pilot Rock receptacles at Little Stacy Neighborhood Park and Georgian Acres Neighborhood Park

Aquatics, Athletics, and Golf Sites

100% of Aquatics sites have recycling through either the Austin Resource Recovery blue cart service or through on-site recycling receptacles.

90% of PARD outdoor Athletics sites now have recycling and the remainder should be complete by summer 2021. Havins Fields and Krieg Fields had recycling previously. Athletics sites that have recently had recycling added include Butler Shores Metropolitan Park ball fields, Camacho Activity Center ball fields, and the Onion Creek Soccer Complex. West Austin Youth Association will install PARD-provided recycling receptacles at the Cesar Chavez fields in summer 2021. Downs Field and Garrison District Park ballfields recycling is anticipated to be complete in summer 2021.

Five out of the six (83%) Golf facilities currently have recycling (Grey Rock, Hancock, Jimmy Clay, Morris Williams, Roy Kizer). Lions Municipal Golf Course does not have recycling due to its uncertain leasing status.



Athletics sites adding recycling: Onion Creek Soccer Complex

Recycling Implementation Plan – Next Steps, Phase II and III

PARD anticipates beginning Phase II of the Recycling Implementation Plan focusing on district parks in fall 2021. The final Phase III will add recycling to neighborhood parks, additional special use parks including joint use school parks, and other event sites. The majority of pocket parks will be transitioned to “Pack It In, Pack It Out” only with no receptacles on site.



Photos of illegal dumping at Onion Creek Metropolitan Park



Photos of trash and recyclable material piling near receptacles at Walsh Boat Landing

Additional Recycling Program Initiatives and Goals

The Recycling Program Manager continues to work initiatives drawn directly from recommendations from Austin Resource Recovery, the Zero Waste Advisory Commission, and Parks and Recreation Board, as well

as PARD's Long Range Plan for Land Facilities and Programs (2020-2030), [Our Parks, Our Future](#). These accomplishments and priorities are listed below:

- Coordinate with volunteer groups for litter cleanup workdays, partnering with Watershed staff and PARD PARKnerships program: upcoming TrashBlitz event May 22-June 12 will have individuals collect and categorize litter in public spaces and will provide valuable data on litter in parks
- Manage dumpster contracts with Texas Disposal Systems and Balcones Recycling and continue work to right-size dumpsters and ensure adequate frequency of pickups
- Continue work of Materials Reuse Group at PARD to re-use office furniture, landscaping material, large appliances, etc., amongst PARD Divisions and other City Departments
- Provide guidance for recycling difficult items from recreation centers and other PARD Divisions (ex. fluorescent light bulbs, expired car seats, large appliances)
- Develop composting training for PARD staff at recreation centers, offices, and event sites in partnership with Austin Resource Recovery
- Holiday Tree Recycling in partnership with Austin Resource Recovery – managed a COVID-safe contactless operation in January 2021 with an estimated 1000 trees recycled



Should you have any questions, please contact Meredith Gauthier, Recycling Program Manager, at (512) 974-9494, or at Meredith.Gauthier@austintexas.gov, or Assistant Director Liana Kallivoka at (512) 974-9455, or at Liana.Kallivoka@austintexas.gov.

cc: Liana Kallivoka, PhD, PE, LEED Fellow, Assistant Director, PARD
Meredith Gauthier, LEED AP, SITES AP, TRUE Advisor, Recycling Program Manager, PARD
Charles Vaclavik, Operations and Maintenance Division Manager, PARD
Lucas Massie, M.Ed., CPRP, Assistant Director, PARD
Anthony Segura, Assistant Director, PARD
Suzanne Piper, DBA, Chief Administrative Officer, PARD