



City of San Marcos

City Council Work Session

May 20, 2025



Presentation Item

Receive a staff presentation regarding preparations for the Riverfront Parks Summer Season 2025 and update on Managed Access Program and provide direction to the City Manager.



Purpose

Provide City Council with an update regarding staff preparation for the 2025 Summer Season in the Riverfront Parks System.

Key topics to be covered in this presentation:

- Single-Use Beverage Container Ordinance.
- Recap of the 2024 Summer Season and City Council Consensus and Direction for Changes
- 2025 Summer Season Preparations
- Recommendations for a Managed Access Test Plan & Ordinance revisions and planned outreach strategies.
- City Park Paid Parking Pilot Update.

Single-Use Beverage Container Ordinance – Adoption and Implementation



- Adopted by Council in February 2024 and went into effect May 1, 2024.
- The first year of the Ordinance was focused on education only. The first year ended April 30, 2025.
- Subsequent years will include enforcement.
- Methods of enforcement:
 - Verbal warnings.
 - Citations.
 - To be discussed later in this presentation – Park access points to provide signage and verbal notification.

Single-Use Beverage Container Ordinance – Educational Outreach Strategies



- Permanent Park Signage
- Printed Materials Dispersed
- Distributed City branded Reuse at The River containers and stickers
- Billboard Messaging, Regionally and Locally
- Social Media Campaigns
- Print, Digital and Radio Advertisements
- Regional Tourism Videos

Single-Use Beverage Container Ordinance – Educational Outreach Strategies



- Press Releases
- Media Interviews (Print, Radio & TV)
- Cable Channel
- Activity Center Sign Messaging
- City Website Landing Page and FAQ
- Direct Messaging via City Newsletters and Subscriber Email Lists
- Leveraged Community Partnerships to provide education to local business patrons

Single-Use Beverage Container Ordinance – Signage



No-Zone Signage



Go-Zone Signage

Summer Season Required Resources –



There are four dedicated City teams and one contractor who are on-site at our riverfront parks during the Summer Season.

- Parks Department
 - Park Ambassadors
- Marshals Office
 - Deputy Marshals
 - Park Rangers
 - Parking Technicians
- Easter Seals



Summer Season Required Resources – Park Ambassadors

- 2025 is the third year of this program.
- Comprised of seasonal staff members who work mid-May through Labor Day.
- Primary duties include:
 - Assists in ensuring the local community and visitors experience safe use of park and recreation areas.
 - Educates park users of local regulations and ordinances.
 - Provide maintenance services such as trash/litter pickup and removal, check restroom and park structures for maintenance issues.
 - Reports unsafe acts, conditions, accidents and injuries to Public Safety Personnel on-duty.



Summer Season Required Resources – Marshals Office

- Deputy Marshals – Eight (8) approved full-time staff.
- Park Rangers – Two (2) approved part-time staff.
- Parking Technicians – Four (4) approved part-time staff.
- Primary duties include:
 - Deputy Marshals – Preserve life safety; enforce rules/laws/ordinances/statutes; work each weekend throughout the Summer Season; provide authority for towing vehicles.
 - Parking Technicians – Issue citations for parking violations.



Summer Season Required Resources – Easter Seals

- On site from May through September.
- Primary duties include:
 - Empty on-site trash cans.
 - Remove litter that is not properly placed in trash cans.

Recap of 2024 Summer Season



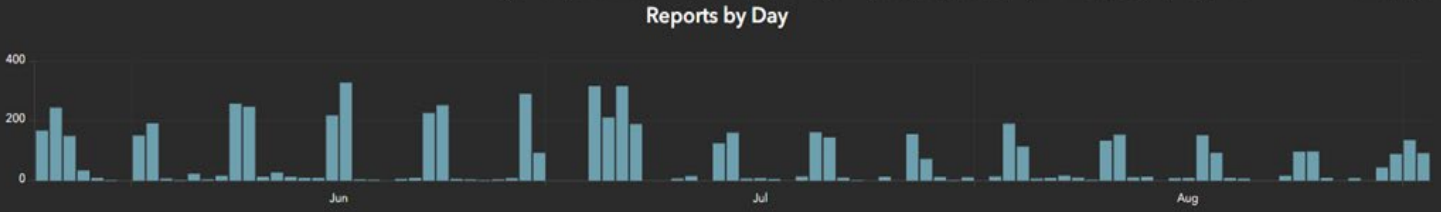
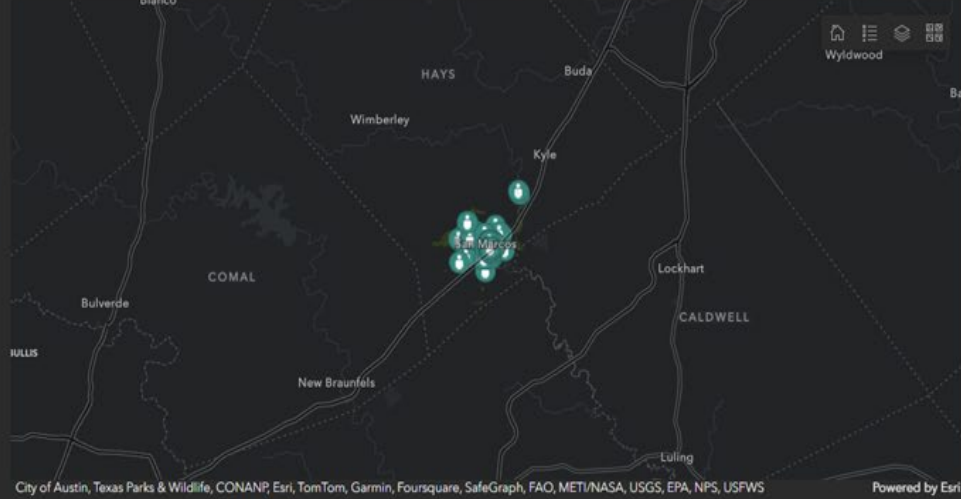
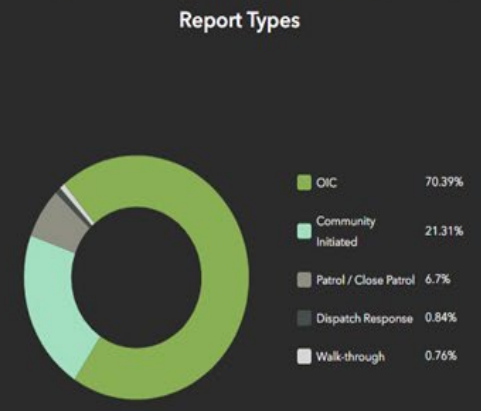
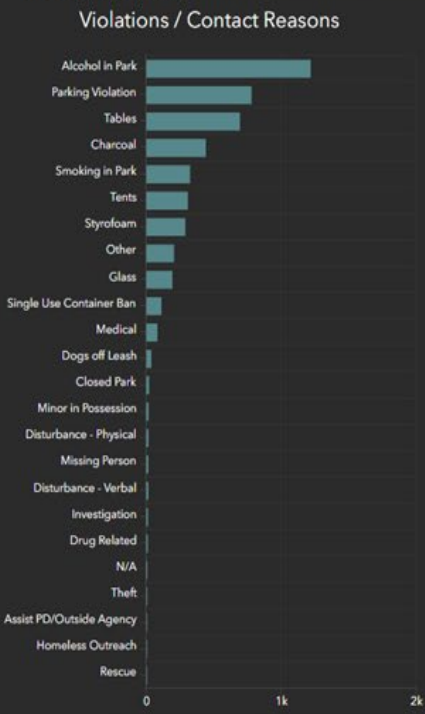
Staff Insight:

- Crowds continue to increase year-over-year.
- 2024 had the largest crowds ever.
- It is difficult to enforce non-life safety ordinances (single-use beverage container, styrofoam, charcoal, etc.) because of the need to attend to multiple and consistent (1) incidents that threaten life safety; and (2) life-threatening injuries sustained due to intoxication, falls, and hot environment.
- The number of vehicles exceeds the number of parking spaces available.

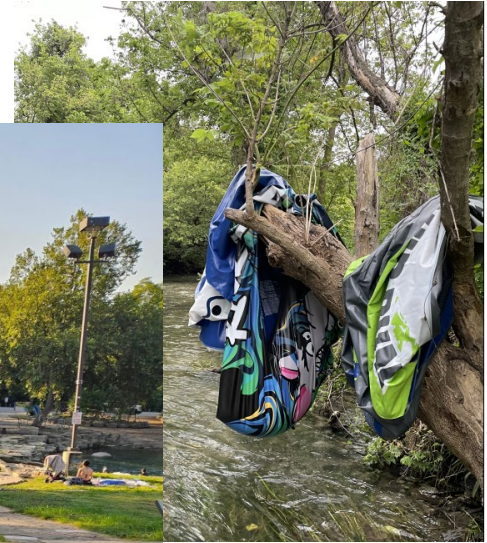
Resident/Business/Visitor Insight:

- The riverfront parks are not a safe place to visit because of intoxicated visitors and fights that occur.
- The weekend crowds are too large to enjoy the swimming pool and tennis courts.
- There is too much traffic on residential streets and illegal parking.
- When returning to their parked vehicles, riverfront parks visitors discard trash.
- The open use of marijuana and loud music are unpleasant; too many intoxicated visitors.

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Environmental Impacts - Litter



*Photos taken by David Karl Zambrano & Jon Lopez

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Habitat Impacts – Aquatic Vegetation Trampling & Bank Erosion



Ramon Lucio/
William &
Eleanor Crook
Park Area



Plaza Park Area

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2024 Mid-Season Efforts to Provide a Safer Atmosphere for Parks Patrons

Solutions Implemented for July 4th and Labor Day Weekends

- Utilized contract peace officers to supplement on-site Deputy Marshals.
- Closed Cheatham Street between Riverside Street and CM Allen Parkway.
- Supplemented Parking Technician staff with Code Enforcement staff.
- Re-routed the Lion's Club Shuttle and provide dedicated ingress/egress to Cheatham Street for loading/unloading.
- Canceled tournaments at the softball complex (Labor Day Weekend).
- Closed Children's Park parking lot once full.

Summer Season – Revenue from Riverfront Parks Visitors



- The data we collected and have been provided indicate that 70% of weekend riverfront parks patrons are from out of town – primarily Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin.
- Data indicates that out-of-town visitors are making single-day trips and largely not buying goods locally, not eating locally, and not staying overnight locally.
- There are no significant sales taxes nor hotel taxes collected from single-day trip out-of-town visitors.
- There is no significant economic activity from single-day trip out-of-town visitors that supports local jobs and businesses.



Questions Regarding Single-Use Container Ordinance or 2024 Summer Season Experience?

2025 Summer Season Operations Plans



All Weekends

- Utilize contract peace officers to supplement on-site Deputy Marshals.
- Lions Club Shuttle will use a new route that avoids Riverside Drive. The new route uses Hopkins and IH35 access road to get to Rio Vista.

Holiday Weekends

- Close Cheatham Street between Riverside Street and CM Allen Parkway.
- Ramon Lucio Baseball Fields and Rio Vista pavilions usage and rental dates were blocked out not to use.
- Children's Park parking lot will be used for staging and emergency vehicle ingress/egress.

New Gates Installed on Cheatham Street and Sidewalk Improvements

- Total cost: \$46,281.



New Gates Installed on Cheatham Street and Sidewalk Improvements





2025 Lions Club Shuttle Route



Green line represents shuttle leaving Lions Club and heading toward Rio Vista.



Red line represents shuttle leaving Rio Vista and heading toward Lions Club.

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Council Consensus Provided on September 17, 2024

Measures to Generate New Revenue to Support Costs to Provide a Safe Environment and Clean Up Our Riverfront Parks

- Support of staff researching the installation of aesthetically-pleasing perimeter fencing along our riverfront parks and creating specific managed access points.
- Support charging non-residents to enter through the managed access points.
- Support of permits for picnic spots.



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

- Install temporary chain link fencing with gates that serve as key access points. Can be installed prior to Memorial Day Weekend.
- Operate and staff key access points on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the Summer Season. Parks Ambassadors will staff the key access points.
- Do not operate and staff key access points Monday through Thursday, except on long holiday weekends where a Monday or Thursday will also be operated and staffed.
- Example - July 4th long holiday weekend for 2025:
 - Thursday, July 3rd
 - Friday, July 4th
 - Saturday, July 5th
 - Sunday, July 6th



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

- Create an Access Fee for out-of-town visitors when the access point gates are operated and staffed to generate revenue that will offset the annual cost for securing, cleaning, and maintaining our riverfront parks.
- Residents will not be charged an Access Fee and would be issued a Resident River Pass.
- Proposed Access Fee for out-of-town visitors:
 - \$25 per group (up to 10 people of any age)
 - \$5 per individual (age 6 and older)
- Parks and Recreation staff are prepared to host multiple in-person resident events throughout June to help residents register for Resident River Passes.



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

- Opportunity to provide front line education at key access points to proactively reduce punitive enforcement contacts for park rule violations, litter and increase public safety
 - Single-Use Beverage Containers in No-Zone & River.
 - Prohibited items: Glass and charcoal grills.
 - No Public Consumption or Display of Alcohol.
 - Proper placement of shade structures & propane grills



Closed to traffic Holiday Weekends & Holidays

Children's Park

Entry Point

Rio Vista Park

Staff and Public Safety Lot - Holiday Weekends & Holidays

ADA Parking Only - Holiday Weekends & Holidays

Street Access Gate

Exit Only Area

Entry Point

Entry Point

Entry Point

Street Access Gate



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

Outreach Strategies to Educate About Changes

- Include in monthly summer newsletters and in a dedicated river park edition.
- Social ads educating potential visitors and directing them.
- Continue to promote accidental litter videos.
- Build out microsite that focuses on new procedures for visiting San Marcos riverfront parks.
- Prominently display at the top of our home page and on secondary pages that focus on outdoor/water recreation.
- Search Engine Marketing: add keywords about new procedures, add new URL to search links.



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

- Key Messaging – Reuse at the River.
 - Focus: Policy Rules and Notice of Enforcement Implementation.
 - Visuals: Campaign photos/video/graphics will only depict examples of approved beverage containers. Visuals of the San Marcos River will not be included in this campaign.
 - Goal 1: To increase web traffic to www.reuseattheriversmtx.com.
 - Goal 2: To continue increasing awareness of the City’s “Can Ban” policy.



Recommendation – Managed Access Test Plan

- Key Messaging – Rio Vista Access.
 - Focus: Increase awareness of new access rules, fees, and resident registration.
- Key Messaging – Installation of park signage attached to fencing.
 - Goal 1: To increase web traffic to project website (To be created).
 - Goal 2: Facilitate resident registration online and via in-person registration events.



Recommendation – Parking Enforcement Ordinance Revision

- **Current Ordinance** – Parking Enforcement Technicians are not authorized to initiate the towing of a vehicle.
- **Operational Impact** – Parking Enforcement Technicians must call for a Deputy Marshal or Police Officer to initiate the towing of a vehicle.
- **Recommendation** – Amend the Parking Enforcement Ordinance to authorize Parking Enforcement Technicians to initiate the towing of a vehicle.

Questions and Decision Points

General Questions

- Are there any questions regarding Summer Season 2025 Operations Plans; recommendations for a Managed Access Test Plan; recommended Access Fees; education strategies; and Parking Enforcement Ordinance revision?

Decision Points

- Does Council support the recommendation for a Managed Access Test Plan?
- Does Council support creating an Access Fee for out-of-town visitors?
- Does Council support modifying the Ordinance related to parking enforcement?



City Park Paid Parking Update – Recap of Previous Direction

- June 2022 – City Council provided direction to proceed with developing a Paid Parking Pilot program for City Park Parking lot.
- January 2023 – City Council provided direction to proceed with the implementation plan and to work with the Parks and Recreation Board and Parking Advisory Board to further refine implementation.
- Implementation – The City hired a Multimodal Parking Initiatives Manager who has been working with the Parking Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Parks and Recreation Director and Procurement with the goal of going live in 2025.



City Park Paid Parking Update – Next Steps

- June 1, 2025 – Resident registration and education campaign will begin.
- July 1, 2025 – Paid Parking will begin in the City Park parking lot.
- Activity Center staff will be available to assist customers in-person or over the phone:
 - Monday through Friday: 8am to 5pm.
 - Saturday: 10am to 5pm.

City Park Paid Parking Update – Next Steps



- Additional in-person resident registration events for one-on-one assistance:
 - Monday, June 2: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the former Quail Creek Country Club & Golf Course during the Parks Open House event.
 - Tuesday, June 17: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Activity Center.
 - Monday, June 23: 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Activity Center.
 - Saturday, June 28: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. - Activity Center.



City Park Paid Parking Update – Enforcement and Options to Pay Fines

- Enforcement will be monitored by fixed License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras like those currently used on Parking Enforcement vehicles.
- These cameras do not report to any other databases and are solely used to monitor the time someone enters and exists the parking lot.
- Two options to pay fines:
 - Pay by Phone via text or call.
 - Kiosks: 3 cashless and 1 cash accepting.



Questions Regarding City Park Paid Parking?



Next Steps if There is Council Consensus to Move Forward on Staff Recommendations

- June 3 – First reading of Ordinances to establish Access Fees and modifications related to parking enforcement.
- June 26 – Second reading of Ordinances.
- July 1 – Paid Parking and Rio Vista Access Fees for Out-of-Town visitors goes into effect.



Questions