

Threshold Review and Prioritization of Park Projects

Threshold Criteria

Question 1: Is the candidate project located in unincorporated Travis County?

Question 2: Is the candidate project consistent with Travis County park plans and policies:

- It improves a Lake Travis park, or
- Develops a new metropolitan park or improves an existing one, or
- Develops or improves a river corridor or greenway, or
- Replaces or upgrades an existing park facility

Question 3: Does the candidate project have a design life of 20 years or better?

Parkland Acquisition Criteria

Criteria 1: Planning Status – 15 points max

An area that is targeted for land acquisition in an adopted plan is prioritized over an area that is not because it's been assessed as a need, vetted by the public, and formally adopted by Travis County Commissioners Court. Scoring is as follows:

- Included in *Travis County Parks and Natural Areas Master Plan* = 10
- Included in *Concept Plan for the Onion Creek Greenway* = 5
- Included in *Lake Travis Parks Master Plan* = 5

Criteria 2: Purpose – 25 points max

Land that serves multiple recreational and environmental protection purposes is prioritized over land that does not. Scoring is as follows:

- Protects water resources = 5
- Protects wildlife habitat = 4
- Protects cultural resources = 4
- Protects scenic quality = 4
- Provides access to Lake Travis = 4
- Provides access to the Pedernales River or Colorado River = 3
- Provides access to a stream (continuous flow) = 2
- Improves park boundary = 2

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Criteria 3: Geographic Distribution – 10 points max

Projects that are a new type of park in an area¹ are prioritized over ones that are not.

- Provides a new type of park = 5
- Provides a new type of park in a CAMPO-identified Environmental Justice (EJ) area² = 5

Criteria 4: Connectivity – 10 points max

Land that connects to parks, schools, neighborhoods, or civic facilities is prioritized over land that does not provide this type of linkage. Scoring is as follows:

- Park to park = 4
- Park to school = 3
- Park to neighborhood = 2
- Park to civic building = 1

Criteria 5: Other Parkland – 15 points max

A greenway or corridor project that includes non-Travis County parks and/or donated parkland is prioritized over greenways and corridor projects that do not. Scoring is as follows:

- One non-Travis County park or donated parkland = 5
- Two non-Travis County parks or donated parkland = 10
- More than two non-Travis County parks or donated parkland = 15

Point Distribution for Land Acquisition Criteria

Criteria	Maximum Points	Percent Total
Criteria 1: Planning Status	15	20%
Criteria 2: Purpose	25	33%
Criteria 3: Geographic Distribution	10	13%
Criteria 4: Connectivity	10	13%
Criteria 5: Other Parkland	15	20%
Total	75	99%

¹ For this purpose, “area” refers to a quadrant as defined by Precinct 3’s boundary with Precincts 1, 2, and 4, and the centerline of Lake Travis and the Colorado River.

² CAMPO uses demographic data to identify Environmental Justice (EJ) areas that have “low income” or “minority” populations. More information about EJ can be found in the *CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan* (adopted May 24, 2010) p.64.

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Park Project Criteria

Criteria 1: Planning Status – 15 points max

A project that is identified in an adopted plan is preferred over one that is not because it's been formally assessed as a need, vetted by the public, and approved by Travis County Commissioners Court. Scoring is as follows:

- Included in *Travis County Parks and Natural Areas Master Plan* = 10
- Included in *Concept Plan for the Onion Creek Greenway* = 5
- Included in *Lake Travis Parks Master Plan* = 5
- Included in site master plan for *Northeast Metro Park, Southeast Metro Park, East Metro Park, or Milton Reimers Ranch Park* = 5

Criteria 2: Recreational Opportunities – 30 points max

In 2004, the United States Corps of Engineers (USCOE) completed “A Recreation Study for the City of Austin and Travis County, Texas”.³ For the purpose of this assessment, points are awarded to projects that provide opportunities to enjoy one or more of the ten most popular outdoor recreational activities in the metropolitan area.⁴ Scoring is as follows:

Activity	Rate of Participation	
▪ Walking (General)	81%	= 6
▪ Swimming in Outdoor Pool	67%	= 6
▪ Swimming in Natural Waters	54%	= 3
▪ Picnicking	52%	= 3
▪ Running, Jogging (General)	49%	= 3
▪ Using Playgrounds	48%	= 3
▪ Bicycling (General)	44%	= 3
▪ Boating (General)	33%	= 1
▪ Camping in Tent	30%	= 1
▪ Fishing	27%	= 1

Criteria 3: Geographic Distribution – 10 points max

Projects that support the equitable distribution of recreational opportunities throughout the county are prioritized over ones that do not.

³ This survey of a randomly selected, sample population of people living in the Austin metropolitan area was completed by telephone. Both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking interviewers conducted the surveys, and a five-call back design was used to minimize bias towards easy to reach people. Interviews were completed for a total of 1,228 households.

⁴ Recreational activities that Travis County does not accommodate – such as cultural/arts activities – are not included in the list. Subsets of a general activity – such as “walking on roads/sidewalks” is a subset of “Walking” – are also not included on the list.

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- Provides a new type of recreational opportunity in an area = 5
- Provides a new type of recreational opportunity in a CAMPO-identified Environmental Justice area⁵ = 5

Criteria 4: Investment Leveraging – 15 points max

Projects that have financial or in-kind support for capital improvements from sources other than voter-approved bond funds are prioritized over those that do not. Scoring is as follows:

- < \$250,000 = 5
- ≥ \$250,000 - \$750,000 = 10
- ≥ \$750,000 = 15

Criteria 5: Impact on O&M Budget – 5 points max

Projects with a lesser annual impact on the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) budget are prioritized over ones that have a greater impact. Scoring⁶ is as follows:

- < \$300,000/annually = 5
- ≥ \$300,000 - \$500,000/annually = 3
- > \$500,000/annually = 0

Point Distribution for Park Project Criteria

Criteria	Maximum Points	Percent Total
Criteria 1: Planning Status	15	20%
Criteria 2: Recreational Opportunities	30	40%
Criteria 3: Geographic Distribution	10	13%
Criteria 4: Investment Leveraging	15	20%
Criteria 5: Impact on O&M budget	5	7%
Total	75	100%

⁵ CAMPO uses demographic data to identify Environmental Justice (EJ) areas that have “low income” or “minority” populations. More information about EJ can be found in the *CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan* (adopted May 24, 2010) p.2 footnote #1.

⁶ O&M costs for Arkansas Bend Park are offset in part by day-use entrance fees and camping permit revenues.

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