
Community Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation

FROM: Jen Basham, Parks and Recreation Director

MEETING: July 15, 2026

SUBJECT:

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide recommendations to the city council regarding potential shade and play area enhancement options for Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza and provide feedback. (*Staff Contact: Jen Basham, Director of Parks and Recreation*)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AND GOAL(S):

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
 Great Place to Live Through Expanded Quality of Life Amenities	4.1 Provide high-quality parks

SUMMARY:

As part of ongoing discussions regarding Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza, the Community Services Committee requested that staff evaluate potential enhancement opportunities focused on expanding family-oriented amenities and increasing visitor comfort through additional shade.

The Plaza currently offers portable recreational features, including moveable chess pieces, and corn hole boards; however, it does not contain a permanent children's play area. Staff developed a conceptual nature-inspired playscape that complements the Plaza's existing public art and landscape while encouraging active, imaginative, and sensory play. The concept includes a concrete embankment slide, interactive musical play elements, climbing and balance features, accessible play components, artificial turf safety surfacing, and landscape integration.

Staff also evaluated two shade enhancement concepts. Option 1 consists of a triangle sail shade system providing continuous shade along the Ellison Street promenade, while Option 2 proposes umbrella shade structures over high-use seating areas. Both concepts were evaluated based on visitor experience, constructability, aesthetics, and cost.

The purpose of this item is to present the conceptual enhancement options, associated planning-level cost estimates, and receive Committee feedback regarding future implementation.

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

January 5, 2026 – City Council received a presentation regarding Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza operations, maintenance, and long-term asset management. As part of that discussion, staff presented several enhancement considerations, including a family-oriented play area, expanded shade opportunities, replacement of black rock landscape areas with pavers, establishment of a furniture replacement program, and long-term replacement planning for Plaza assets.

July 9, 2026 – Community Services Committee to receive the conceptual enhancement report and provide feedback.

REFERENCE:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

STAFF CONTACT:

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