

**GOLF COURSE**

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Steve Parker, City Manager

From: Bruce Allen, General Manager, Starcke Park Golf Course

Through: Timothy J. Howe, Deputy City Manager

Subject: Resolution authorizing the purchase of winter greens covers for the putting greens at Starcke Park Golf Course; and declaring an effective date.

Date: August 4th, 2026

As part of the recent renovation of Starcke Park Golf Course, the City invested in planting of approximately 130,000 square feet of Platinum TE paspalum putting greens. These greens represent one of the golf course's most valuable assets and are essential to maintaining high-quality playing conditions and protecting the City's investment in the renovation project.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Climate Prediction Center are forecasting the development of a strong El Niño pattern during late 2026 that is expected to continue into early 2027. Historically, strong El Niño events increase the likelihood of wetter winters across Texas, more frequent Pacific storm systems, and an increased potential for prolonged Arctic cold outbreaks affecting Central Texas. While El Niño does not guarantee severe winter weather, it does increase the probability of weather patterns capable of producing extended freezing conditions and cold, wet weather. These conditions present an increased risk of winter injury to warm-season putting greens.

Although Platinum TE paspalum demonstrated excellent recovery following previous extreme freeze events in Texas, including the February 2021 winter storm, the greatest threat to turf health is generally associated with prolonged freezing temperatures, frozen soils, cold rainfall followed by hard freezes, and extended periods of desiccating winds. Winter greens covers provide protection against these conditions by moderating soil temperatures, reducing wind desiccation, minimizing freeze-thaw cycles, and protecting turf crowns during extended cold events.

This purchase represents a proactive risk management investment intended to protect one of the City's most significant recreational assets. The cost of the covers is relatively small compared to the potential expense associated with repairing or replacing damaged putting greens, delaying spring recovery, or reducing course playability following a severe winter weather event. Purchasing the covers before the onset of the 2026–2027 winter season ensures they are immediately available should prolonged freezing conditions threaten Central Texas.