

Shade structures are reshaping park & rec spaces

As communities continue to invest in outdoor spaces, one category that is seeing rapid innovation and demand is open air shade structures. What was once a simple amenity has become a critical design element for comfort, safety, and overall park usage.

Shade structures are a defining element of landscape design that create central gathering spaces to extend park usability, improve visitor experience, and create park identity. With an increased focus on wellness and community expectations, shade is quickly becoming a 'must-have.'

Key Trends

- **Space Maximization**

Shade helps identify and define spaces allowing cities to maximize urban areas to create pocket parks and social gathering areas.

- **Increased Customization**

Structures can be customized to coordinate with theming to increase visual impact of destination parks.

- **Multi-Functional Hub**

Shelters are designed to support gatherings, events, and social interaction - driving higher park engagement.

- **Integration with Play and Fitness**

Growth in integrated shade over playgrounds, fitness zones, seating, and aquatic spaces to improve usability and safety.

- **Climate Driven Demand**

Increased heat and UV exposure are accelerating the use of shade solutions to reduce harmful rays and reduce surface temperatures on equipment.

- **Extended Seasonal Use**

Open air structures enable communities to host programming, events, and markets in more seasons by protecting from inclement weather.

- **Inclusive Design**

Communities are evolving into more inclusive environments where comfort (temperature, accessibility, and rest areas) are prioritized for everyone.



Poligon structures are a strategic investment that directly impacts usage, safety, and community satisfaction. Parks that prioritize shade are seeing longer visits, higher engagement, and a stronger return on investment. Contact us to discuss how these trends can be applied to your next project.