

2017 CITY OF WACO – PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

WACO, TEXAS



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THE FOLLOWING LINK:**

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wacoparks_comments



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I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ADOPTION

a. Preparers & Participants

Deepest thanks to the citizens of Waco who participated in the planning process. Thanks also to the direction and support of the following:

Waco City Council

Mayor Kyle Deaver
Councilman Wilbert Austin, District 1
Councilwoman Alice Rodriguez, District 2
Councilman John Kinnaird, District 3
Councilman Dillon Meek, District 4 (Mayor Pro Tem)
Councilman Jim Holmes, District 5

Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission

Chairman Ruben Andrade Jr.
Diane Deaver
Haydn Ross Harris
Mary Ann Jordan
Jennifer Lindsey
Woodrow Logan
Austin Meek
Amber Nava
Dollyn Tusa
Jessica Wash
Kathy Wise

City Manager's Office

Dale Fisseler, P.E., City Manager
Wiley Stem III, Deputy City Manager
Deidra Emerson, Assistant City Manager
Cynthia Garcia, Assistant City Manager
Jack Harper II, Assistant City Manager

Parks & Recreation Department Staff Contributors

John Williams, Director
Tom Balk
Jonathan Cook
Megan Davis
Kenny Duron
Dustin Felix
Jeff Goodman
Raegan King
Peggy McCart
John Rose
Cynthia Simms
Larry Simms
Earl Stinnett

Coordinating Department Contributors

Planning Dept. Police Dept. Health District. Housing Dept.

b. Documentation of Council Adoption

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Pending Council Action*

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II. INTRODUCTION

a. Master Plan Purpose & Duration

The purpose of this Master Plan is to develop and document a defined approach toward the maximization of recreation opportunities and resources, present and future, for the greatest benefit to Waco's general public over the next ten years (2017-2027) and beyond. It endeavors to speak clearly to residents and local leadership, as well as prospective granting agencies. This approach includes specific recommendations for existing park development, provides a basis for future park development, and offers guidance as follows:

1. Provide the framework for orderly and consistent planning, budgeting, and development
2. Provide detailed research facts concerning the community and the role of parks and recreation
3. Establish priorities and statements of direction based on research, documented facts, and a community-based needs analysis
4. Provide direction in the area of acquisition and development of parkland to meet current and future needs

This Master Plan document will include recommendations for improving the department's ability to develop great parks for the enjoyment of all who live, work, and play in the City of Waco. Section III sets forth the goals and objectives of the master planning process and how the plan will support the Vision and Mission established for the Parks & Recreation Department. Section IV outlines the methodology used to develop and prepare a well-rounded plan. Section V contains a review of nation-wide parks and recreation industry averages and comparisons to current City of Waco and Peer City facilities and programs. Section VI is a complete inventory of existing parks, including City of Waco property and Corp of Engineers property, and a list of current recreation programs. Section VII documents the results of the needs assessment as identified by public meetings and citizen surveys. Section VIII identifies the recommended priorities and budget estimates for proposed park development. Section IX identifies implementation guidelines including policies and ordinances, potential funding sources, and a five year action plan to organize and prioritize the implementation of this Master Plan.

b. City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department Role

The many physical features in the City provide scenic, beauty, and recreational opportunities to the residents of and visitors to Waco. In order to continue and improve upon Waco's success, it is important that these assets be preserved and maintained. It is also important that these assets be made available to those that desire them.

Residents of a thriving community expect public park spaces that promote the general health and wellbeing of the community, as well as offer variety, and sometimes, unique recreational opportunities. Waco Parks and Recreation will endeavor to create the type of

park system that will be sustainable in the long term, and offer visitors an unrivaled experience.

The City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department was organized as a single department by amendment of the Waco City charter in 1948. Department leadership consists of a Director, and the partnership of a public Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission, comprised of 12 citizen-members appointed by the Waco City Council. Reporting to the Director are six Divisions of Parks & Recreation operations: Budget/Admin, Park Planning & Development, Park Maintenance, Golf Course, Recreation, and Park Rangers. The Department is tasked with the management and planning for the recreational needs of the entire Waco community. This Master Plan document is being prepared to help guide the next decade of department leadership.

This master plan builds upon the success of similar planning processes of the past:

2000 – 2005 Master Plan Accomplishments

Advanced all 9 of the High Priority goals

Advanced 7 of the 12 Medium & Low Priority goals

Notable Projects:

Riverbend Ballfields



Partnership on Lake Waco Dam Trail



Neighborhood Park Trails & Amenities



Water Park Development



2005 – 2010 Master Plan Accomplishments

Advanced all 8 of the High Priority goals

Advanced 11 of the 15 Medium & Low Priority Goals

Notable Projects:

Cameron Park Redevelopment



Sul Ross Skate Park



Cottonbelt Trail



South Waco Community Center Redevelopment



c. Community Profile

Located in the heart of Central Texas between Dallas/Ft. Worth and Austin, the city of Waco is a flourishing arts and recreation community with 46 parks and 15 museums. The Brazos River and the Bosque River converge in the north central region of the City. The Brazos River Corridor supports numerous parks in the city including the 416-acre Cameron Park which is located in the heart of Waco. The park features scenic towering limestone bluffs, overlooks, wildlife and playgrounds, plus approximately 20 miles of nationally recognized soft surface trails that weave through the natural landscape. The Brazos River Corridor is also a major tourist corridor for the city, highlighted by its trademark Suspension Bridge. Lake Waco, a Corps of Engineers owned property adjacent to the city to the west, is one of the largest urban lakes in Texas and acts as the focus for numerous parks and associated water-based recreation.

Waco is also home to three campuses of higher education; Baylor University, McLennan Community College and Texas State Technical College. One of the major north-south transportation corridors in Texas, IH-35 runs through Waco, offering visitors to the city ease

of access to present and future regional recreation opportunities. Waco offers 25 major attractions, 6 historic homes, 16 recreational venues, and 20 arts organizations staging theatrical and musical productions, as well as art exhibitions.

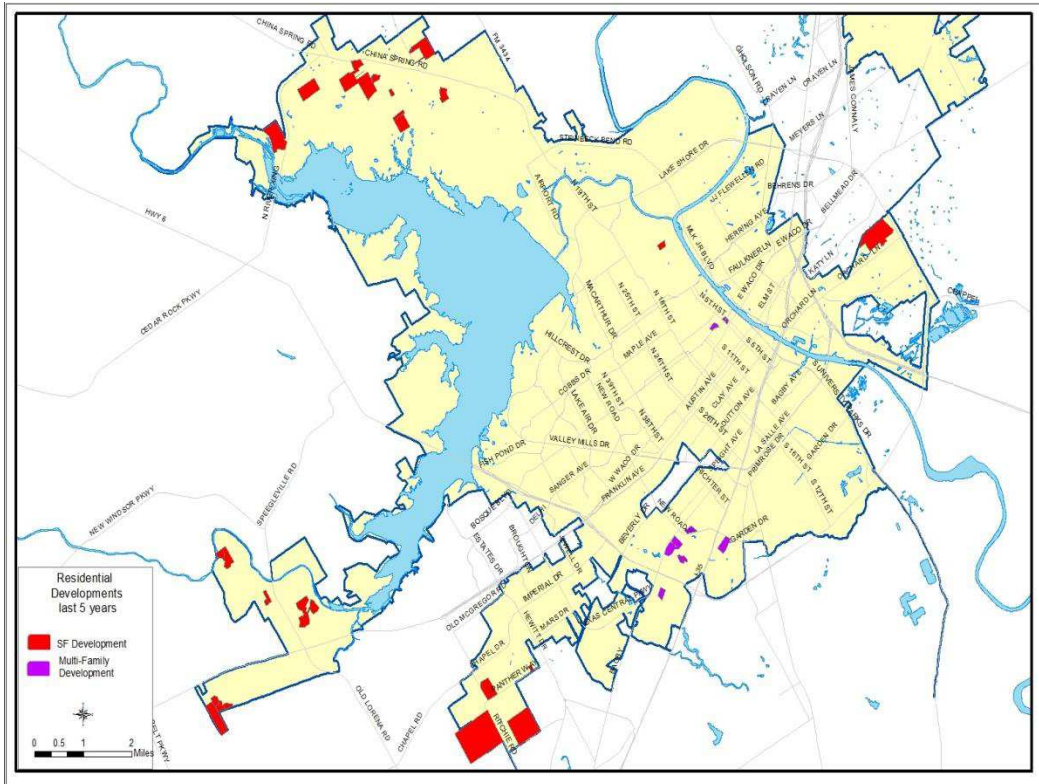
These and other physical and economic assets produce a quality of life that is unique and important to the future success of the city as a whole and the nearly 130,000 citizens who live here.

Community Growth

Like many communities in Central Texas, the City of Waco has experienced a steady growth in population. Between the 2010 census and the estimate for 2015, there was a projected population growth of six percent. Coinciding with this population growth over the past five years, the City of Waco has seen an increase in new housing in four distinct areas, resulting in the development of 3,848 single-family residential lots and 1,700 multi-family dwelling units. As depicted by the map below, these four areas of growth also happen to be areas that are underserved by parks.

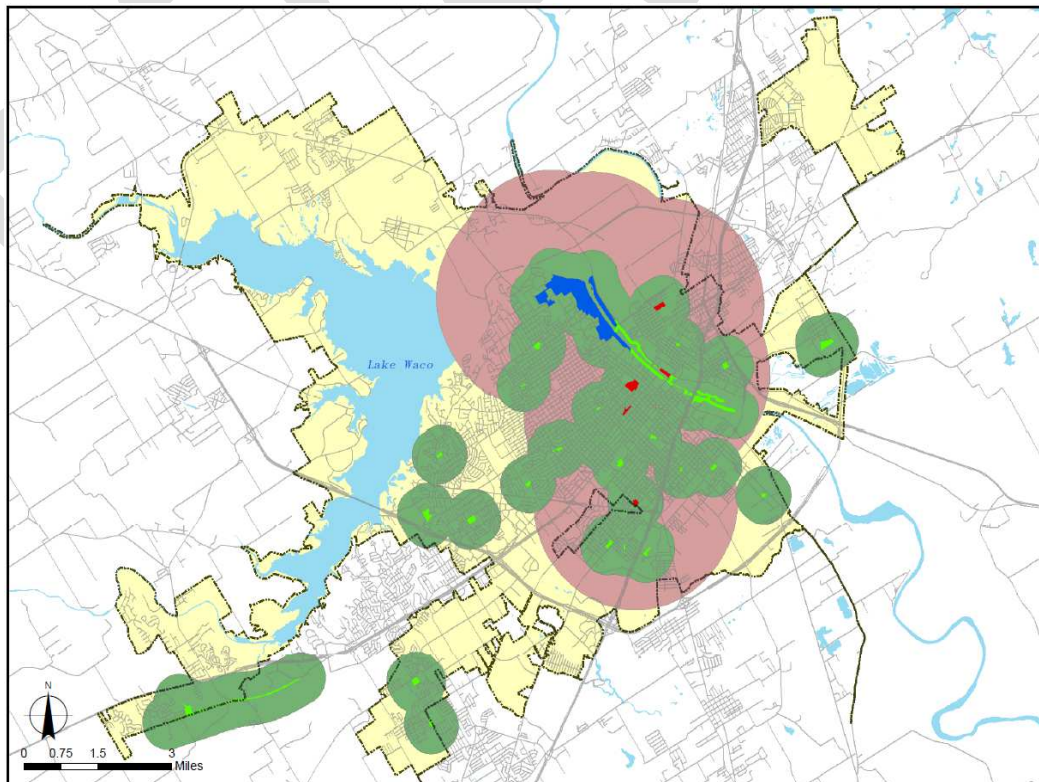
Although much of the growth of late has taken place away from the city center, there has been some movement of population back to Downtown. Since 2010, 428 new residential units have been constructed in Downtown Waco, with another 431 Downtown residential units currently under way, either in the planning or construction phase. Development of residential property in the Downtown District offers a unique challenge of providing appropriate park spaces for families. Based on the trends in the growth pattern for both the Downtown and suburban areas, park development will become an increasing need.

Areas of Highest Development



Source: City of Waco Planning Dept.

Neighborhood & Community Park Service Areas (yellow = underserved areas)



Source: City of Waco Parks Dept.

Subject	Waco, Texas 2010 Census	Waco, Texas 2015 Estimate	Numerical Change	Percent Change	Percent Change
TOTAL POPULATION	124,805	132,356	7,551	6.05%	↑
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE					
Total households	44,349	46,719	2,370	5.34%	↑
Family households (families)	26,331	27,597	1,266	4.81%	↑
With own children under 18 years	12,965	13,377	412	3.18%	↑
Married-couple family	16,259	17,491	1,232	7.58%	↑
With own children under 18 years	6,866	7,614	748	10.89%	↑
Male householder, no wife present, family	1,978	2,481	503	25.43%	↑
With own children under 18 years	1,039	1,016	-23	-2.21%	↓
Female householder, no husband present,	8,094	7,625	-469	-5.79%	↓
With own children under 18 years	5,060	4,747	-313	-6.19%	↓
Nonfamily households	18,018	19,122	1,104	6.13%	↑
Householder living alone	14,084	15,128	1,044	7.41%	↑
65 years and over	4,373	4,516	143	3.27%	↑
Households with one or more people under	15,012	15,257	245	1.63%	↑
Households with one or more people 65	9,616	10,351	735	7.64%	↑
Average household size	2.61	2.59	-0.02	-0.77%	↓
Average family size	3.35	3.31	-0.04	-1.19%	↓
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT					
Population 3 years and over enrolled in	42,670	43,831	1,161	2.72%	↑
Nursery school, preschool	2,077	2,426	349	16.80%	↑
Kindergarten	2,012	2,267	255	12.67%	↑
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	13,036	13,144	108	0.83%	↑
High school (grades 9-12)	5,940	5,954	14	0.24%	↑
College or graduate school	19,605	20,040	435	2.22%	↑
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT					
Population 25 years and over	67,000	71,725	4,725	7.05%	↑
Less than 9th grade	7,330	6,485	-845	-11.53%	↓
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9,098	8,424	-674	-7.41%	↓
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	17,311	19,816	2,505	14.47%	↑
Some college, no degree	14,760	15,660	900	6.10%	↑
Associate's degree	4,890	5,900	1,010	20.65%	↑
Bachelor's degree	9,014	9,937	923	10.24%	↑
Graduate or professional degree	4,597	5,503	906	19.71%	↑
VETERAN STATUS					
Civilian population 18 years and over	91,140	97,321	6,181	6.78%	↑
Civilian veterans	7,610	7,874	264	3.47%	↑
DISABILITY STATUS OF THE CIVILIAN					
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized	n/a	125,852	n/a	n/a	n/a
With a disability	n/a	15,133	n/a	n/a	n/a
Under 18 years	n/a	31,750	n/a	n/a	n/a
With a disability	n/a	1,075	n/a	n/a	n/a
18 to 64 years	n/a	80,553	n/a	n/a	n/a
With a disability	n/a	8,202	n/a	n/a	n/a
65 years and over	n/a	13,549	n/a	n/a	n/a
With a disability	n/a	5,856	n/a	n/a	n/a

source: census.gov quick_facts

WACO GENDER & AGE STATISTICS 2010 - 2015

Subject	Waco, Texas 2010 Census	Waco, Texas 2015 Estimate	Numerical Change	Percent Change	Trend
SEX AND AGE					
Total population	122,212	132,356	10,144	8.30%	↑
Male	57,794	62,806	5,012	8.67%	↑
Female	64,418	66,387	1,969	3.06%	↑
Under 5 years	9,750	10,461	711	7.29%	↑
5 to 9 years	8,367	8,719	352	4.21%	↑
10 to 14 years	8,043	8,020	-23	-0.29%	↓
15 to 19 years	12,454	12,332	-122	-0.98%	↓
20 to 24 years	16,598	17,936	1,338	8.06%	↑
25 to 34 years	16,472	17,305	833	5.06%	↑
35 to 44 years	13,003	14,292	1,289	9.91%	↑
45 to 54 years	13,540	13,241	-299	-2.21%	↓
55 to 59 years	5,581	6,604	1,023	18.33%	↑
60 to 64 years	4,715	5,699	984	20.87%	↑
65 to 74 years	6,291	7,009	718	11.41%	↑
75 to 84 years	4,922	4,690	-232	-4.71%	↓
85 years and over	2,476	2,885	409	16.52%	↑
Median age (years)	27.9	28.7	1	2.87%	↑
18 years and over	91,205	97,365	6,160	6.75%	↑
21 years and over	79,212	84,901	5,689	7.18%	↑
62 years and over	16,472	17,736	1,264	7.67%	↑
65 years and over	13,689	14,584	895	6.54%	↑
18 years and over	91,205	97,365	6,160	6.75%	↑
Male	41,958	46,425	4,467	10.65%	↑
Female	49,247	50,940	1,693	3.44%	↑
65 years and over	13,689	14,584	895	6.54%	↑
Male	5,243	5,945	702	13.39%	↑
Female	8,446	8,639	193	2.29%	↑

source: census.gov quick_facts

WACO EMPLOYMENT & INCOME CHANGE 2010 - 2015

Subject	Waco, Texas 2010 Census	Waco, Texas 2015 Estimate	Numerical Change	Percent Change	Trend
EMPLOYMENT STATUS					
Population 16 years and over	94,326	100,637	6311	6.69%	↑
In labor force	57,342	59,085	1743	3.04%	↑
Civilian labor force	57,277	59,041	1764	3.08%	↑
Employed	51,956	54,556	2600	5.00%	↑
Unemployed	5,321	4,485	-836	-15.71%	↓
Armed Forces	65	44	-21	-32.31%	↓
Not in labor force	36,984	41,552	4568	12.35%	↑
Civilian labor force	57,277	59,041	1764	3.08%	↑
Percent Unemployed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Females 16 years and over					
Population 16 years and over	50,717	52,466	1749	3.45%	↑
In labor force	28,532	29,274	742	2.60%	↑
Civilian labor force	28,532	29,258	726	2.54%	↑
Employed	25,838	26,843	1005	3.89%	↑
Unemployed	2,694	2,415	-279	-10.35%	↓
Armed Forces	10	10	0	0.00%	↔
Not in labor force	22,185	23,192	1007	4.54%	↑
Own children under 6 years	10,951	11,990	1039	9.49%	↑
All parents in family in labor force	6,851	7,733	882	12.87%	↑
Own children 6 to 17 years	17,962	18,370	408	2.27%	↑
All parents in family in labor force	12,613	12,600	-13	-0.10%	↓
COMMUTING TO WORK					
Workers 16 years and over	50,613	53,660	3047	6.02%	↑
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	39,368	43,227	3859	9.80%	↑
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	7,065	6,466	-599	-8.48%	↓
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	382	404	22	5.76%	↑
Walked	2,185	1,320	-865	-39.59%	↓
Other means	593	559	-34	-5.73%	↓
Worked at home	1,020	1,684	664	65.10%	↑
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	16.4	17.1	0.7	4.27%	↑
INCOME AND BENEFITS					
Total households	44,349	46,719	2370	5.34%	↑
Less than \$10,000	7,119	7,124	5	0.07%	↑
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4,164	3,592	-572	-13.74%	↓
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7,035	7,543	508	7.22%	↑
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,607	6,185	578	10.31%	↑
\$35,000 to \$49,999	6,810	6,394	-416	-6.11%	↓
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6,397	7,078	681	10.65%	↑
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3,340	3,729	389	11.65%	↑
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,450	2,872	422	17.22%	↑
\$150,000 to \$199,999	770	1,155	385	50.00%	↑
\$200,000 or more	657	1,047	390	59.36%	↑
Median household income (dollars)	31,288	33,147	1859	5.94%	↑
Mean household income (dollars)	45,082	50,719	5637	12.50%	↑
With earnings	34,618	36,110	1492	4.31%	↑
Mean earnings (dollars)	45,045	51,404	6359	14.12%	↑
With Social Security	11,350	12,182	832	7.33%	↑
Mean Social Security income (dollars)	13,658	15,232	1574	11.52%	↑
With retirement income	5,816	5,758	-58	-1.00%	↓
Mean retirement income (dollars)	18,352	20,464	2112	11.51%	↑
With Supplemental Security Income	2,337	3,303	966	41.34%	↑
Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)	7,666	8,647	981	12.80%	↑
With cash public assistance income	995	716	-279	-28.04%	↓
Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)	2,497	3,188	691	27.67%	↑
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	6,974	8,384	1410	20.22%	↑

Families	26,331	27,597	1266	4.81%	↑
Less than \$10,000	2,431	2,483	52	2.14%	↑
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,804	1,096	-708	-39.25%	↓
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3,984	3,824	-160	-4.02%	↓
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3,316	3,555	239	7.21%	↑
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4,462	4,278	-184	-4.12%	↓
\$50,000 to \$74,999	4,510	5,096	586	12.99%	↑
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2,572	2,765	193	7.50%	↑
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,009	2,571	562	27.97%	↑
\$150,000 to \$199,999	693	1,008	315	45.45%	↑
\$200,000 or more	550	921	371	67.45%	↑
Median family income (dollars)	39,811	44,230	4419	11.10%	↑
Mean family income (dollars)	55,172	63,266	8094	14.67%	↑
Per capita income (dollars)	17,323	19,289	1966	11.35%	↑
Nonfamily households	18,018	19,122	1104	6.13%	↑
Median nonfamily income (dollars)	20,423	19,957	-466	-2.28%	↓
Mean nonfamily income (dollars)	29,088	30,539	1451	4.99%	↑

source: census.gov quick_facts

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III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

a. City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department Vision:

To provide an integrated system of outdoor and indoor spaces promoting physical fitness, social interaction, and community cohesion, managed and maintained by a staff of talented problem-solvers, supporting the long term vision outlined within the City of Waco's Comprehensive Plan 2040 and other supporting documents

b. City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department Mission:

To provide excellent community services by maintaining an accessible, attractive, safe system of parks, open spaces and facilities to promote recreational and educational opportunities to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors to Waco.

c. Master Plan Goals

Building from the success of previous master planning efforts, this process began with evaluation of previous goals for possible continued inclusion. Additionally, City of Waco staff and the Review Team have identified new goals and objectives that are incorporated below.

1. Produce a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan document to guide the City of Waco over the next five to ten years, and to meet the Texas Parks and Wildlife grant guidelines.
2. Subsequently utilize the Master Plan to meet the diverse needs of the citizens of Waco. To accomplish this, the plan contains:
 - A. Recommendation for immediate development of an all-inclusive park to meet the needs of all ability groups in the Waco community.
 - B. Planning guidelines for improvements in programming within parks.
 - C. Directives for long-term planning of the citywide parks and recreation system.
3. Evaluate practical means of maintaining and upgrading existing park and recreation facilities to an established standard and purpose.
4. Identify needed acquisition of parkland and development of outdoor recreation facilities, including orderly development of existing park areas.
5. Encourage community interest by involving individuals, citizens groups, and elected officials in the planning process.
6. Provide a forum for public input and needs assessment through public meetings and a citizen survey.
7. Provide recommendations for new and traditional parks and recreation experiences for current and future Waco residents and visitors to the community.
8. Develop recommendation for revenue enhancement.
9. Provide an inventory of the parks and recreational system.

IV. PLAN PREPARATION & INPUT PROCESS

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan document was completed in two phases. Phase I consisted of the inventory/supply analysis, standards analysis, and the needs assessment. Phase II included the recommended priorities/action plan, budget analysis, and funding methods. The results of the citizen input became one of the primary considerations for the open space plan recommendations within Phase II.

a. Overview of Process

The process in preparing the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan consisted of two phases comprised of the following steps:

PHASE 1a – Inventory: The first step included a complete inventory of all the existing Department of Parks and Recreation facilities and programs in Waco. This examination included all City owned property, property owned by the Corps of Engineers but managed by the City, property leased by the City for parks and recreation purposes, and recreation programs run or sponsored by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

PHASE 1b – Standards and Guidelines: This step involved a thorough review of Waco's existing park facilities as compared to published national averages published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in their 2016 NRPA Field Report. Items, such as acreage and facility standards based on population, were analyzed and also compared to peer cities including Bryan, College Station, Denton, and Killeen.

PHASE 1c – Needs Assessment: To identify the needs of the City of Waco, the first step was a series of three community meetings to receive comment from general citizens regarding the current state of the local parks and recreation system. Next, a citizen survey was released with more than 3,088 respondents filling out the online survey. Finally, a follow up citizen-review leading to three focus group meetings was conducted. These sessions provide a good baseline for needs and priorities for the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding long term park maintenance and development.

PHASE 2a – Recommendations/Priorities for Opens Space Plan: This step involved the ranking of priorities for future park facilities and programs from highest to lowest needs. Factors considered in determining the ranking included citizen input obtained during the needs assessment phase, City Council input, City Staff (Parks and Rec, Health, Planning, WPD) input, Waco Comprehensive Plan 2040 input, youth input, and national averages published by the NRPA as related to cities like Waco.

PHASE 2b – Implementation: This final step establishes the framework and methods for public officials to use in the implementation of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Master Plan. Policies, ordinances, and sources of funding are recommended so that the plan can become a reality. Also a five-year action plan provides specific priorities and budget estimates for the first five years of the plan.

b. Review of Public Meetings

Public meetings to kick-off the master planning process were held as follows:

November 10, 2016 – South Waco Community Center (8 attendees)

November 14, 2016 – Waco Multi-Purpose Center (19 attendees)

November 17, 2016 – Dewey Community Center (12 attendees)

December 6, 2016 – City Council Work Session

Community conversations at Neighborhood Association Meetings were held as follows:

January 12, 2017 – N. East Riverside Neighborhood Association Meeting (23 attendees)

January 23, 2017 – Youth Advisory Council Meeting (19 attendees)

January 23, 2017 – Brook Oaks Neighborhood Association Meeting (15 attendees)

January 24, 2017 – Carver Neighborhood Association Meeting

Public meetings to facilitate the draft review process **are to be** held as follows:

February 2, 2017 – Harris Creek Baptist Church, Sunwest Campus

February 6, 2017 – South Waco Community Center

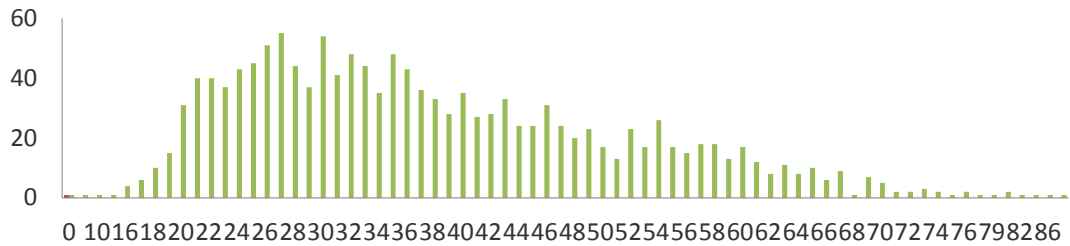
February 9, 2017 – China Spring Intermediate School

February 13, 2017 – Dewey Community Center

c. Review of Surveys

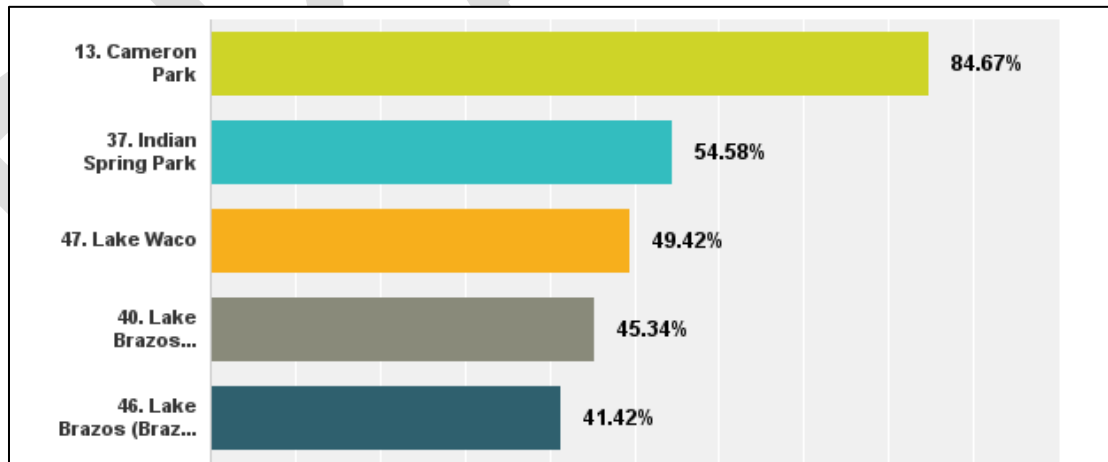
A 28 question survey was made available for public participation from November 10, 2016 through December 9, 2016. This format was utilized to collect feedback from local park users to reveal use-trends, satisfaction ratings, priorities, desires, and concerns affecting Waco's park system and programs. The survey was made available online, in print, and at each of the November public meetings. The advertising campaign included city web pages, social media paid advertising, the City of Waco cable channel, the Waco Tribune Herald and on-site facilitation at all of the Waco-McLennan County Libraries, City of Waco Community Centers, City of Waco Senior Centers, and City Secretary's Office.

In total, 3,088 survey responses were collected, representing a statistically significant participation rate. This data showed 85% of responses came from within the Waco city limits and over 95% from within the Waco Metropolitan Statistical Area. On average, respondents were female, 35-38 years old, from a household of 3.5 persons (over a third reported children under 19).



Respondent Age

Respondents indicated 93% had used parks repeatedly within the past 12 months, typically over 20 times a year, visiting, 9 or more parks on average. Cameron Park was overwhelmingly reported to be Waco’s most frequently visited park by 84% of users. The next highest usage parks reported include Indian Spring Park and Lake Waco. Use of traditional parks such as Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Regional Parks accounted for over 25% of the reported usage, followed by Event Spaces (19%), Public Waters (13%), and Metropolitan Trails (11%). Average use-patterns City-wide include a willingness to travel 15 minutes to get to park facilities and a typical visit length of 30 to 60 minutes.



Overall park conditions were reported as “good”, representing a “B” letter grade. Top feedback for park improvement desires included the following:

1. Improve/expand riverfront parks and trails
2. Improve/add shade at playgrounds
3. Improve/expand natural areas and nature parks
4. Improve/add neighborhood parks
5. Improve park handicap accessibility & add inclusive playgrounds
6. Add additional dog park
7. Improve/add splash pads
8. Add pool
9. Improve/add event spaces
10. Improve/expand Farmers Market

Additional emphasis was added via supporting question responses and comments for the expansion of accessibility and inclusivity, as well as natural areas and nature parks. Top Amenity requests included paved trails lighting, shade, playgrounds, and drinking fountains.

Overall program conditions were also reported as “good”. Top feedback for program improvement desires included the following:

1. Improve/add adult fitness programming
2. Improve/add public concerts
3. Improve/add nature programs
4. Improve/add swim programming
5. Improve/add pet-based programming
6. Improve/add inclusive programming
7. Improve/add special events
8. Improve/add summer camp programming

Additional emphasis was added via supporting question responses and comments for the expansion of accessibility and inclusivity, nature, pet, fitness, and swim programs, as well as expanded summer cam programming.

Questions were also asked about deterrents to park and programming usage. This provided helpful feedback about outreach effectiveness, perceptions regarding safety and comfort, and advertising/wayfinding effectively.

General comments were also collected and reviewed, tallying 5,183 individual responses. These can be particularly helpful for ensuring major themes have not been omitted from the survey and subsequent Master Plan. Of the responses, 67% concerned the park system, 16% related to operations and management, 8% related to recreation programs, 6% concerned maintenance, and 3% involved broader City concerns.

One of the primary objectives of the survey was to obtain direct feedback regarding development planning. This information fell into two categories. Top feedback for the first of these categories, overall level of service improvements, is as follows:

1. Renovate Existing Parks
2. Parkland Acquisition
3. Expand Trail System
4. Provide New Programs
5. Renovate Existing Athletic Fields Including Lighting
6. Provide Additional Special Events

Additional emphasis was added via supporting question responses and comments for parkland acquisition, expansion of the metropolitan trail system, and the renovation of existing parks. Top feedback for the second category, specific development desires, is as follows:

1. Community Center Renovation (*BM, SR, HC*)
2. Expand Mammoth Site (*Center, Parking, CDA*)
3. Parkland Acquisition and Ordinance (*Underserved Areas*)
4. General Park Redevelopment (*ISP, BV, TB*)
5. Inclusive Playgrounds (*Destination + RP + CP*)
6. Expansion & Improvement of Trail System (*SRtP, Connectivity*)
7. Finish Cameron Park Redevelopment (*PS, LP, EC, Archery*)
8. Landmark Preservation (*SB, PS, Cemeteries*)
9. Indoor Playground
10. Indoor Aquatics Center

The survey also included a brief discussion of development funding strategies beyond traditional Capital Improvement budget funds or grants, with feedback as follows:

Strongly Supported: Formation of Park Foundation & Implementation of Hotel/Motel Tax

Somewhat Supported: Implementation of Dedicated Property Tax

Uncertain: Implementation of Dedicated 4b Sales Tax

Additional Suggestions:

- Park Fundraisers/Benefits
- Review Use-Fees & Vendor Fees
- Explore Corporate Sponsorship Opportunities

As a whole, the survey was very successful and became the foundation for subsequent decisions and recommendations identified in this document. The preliminary results of the survey were presented and discussed with the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission on January 12, 2017.

V. *PARK UNIT CONCEPTS & STANDARDS*

a. **Standards Development & Basis**

The adequacy of existing parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces is determined by comparing the needs of the present population of Waco against peer cities and national averages. This master plan includes standards based on local expression of need, peer city comparison, and analysis of national averages established by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) as included in the 2016 NRPA Field Report. This Section includes comparison of Waco to national standards based upon park acreage per population and facilities per population, and a comparison to selected peer cities.

CRITERIA FOR STANDARDS

The most common reference for park planning guidelines, as recognized by park and recreation professionals, are the published annual field reports of the NRPA. This organization emphasizes the importance of municipalities establishing and using park and recreation standards as:

1. A guideline of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of urban and rural communities.
2. A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation areas and facilities.
3. A basis of relating recreation needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide system of parks and open spaces.
4. One of the major structuring elements that can be used to guide and assist regional development.
5. A means to justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land use pattern of the region or community.

The purpose of this document is to present park and recreation space standards that are applicable city-wide for planning, acquisition, and development of parks, recreation, and open space lands, primarily at the community level. These standards should be viewed as a guide, as they address minimum, not maximum, goals to be achieved.

b. **Overall Availability of Parks**

When evaluating existing or future parks in Waco, it is necessary to consider distribution and quantity of parkland overall, as well as by park type.

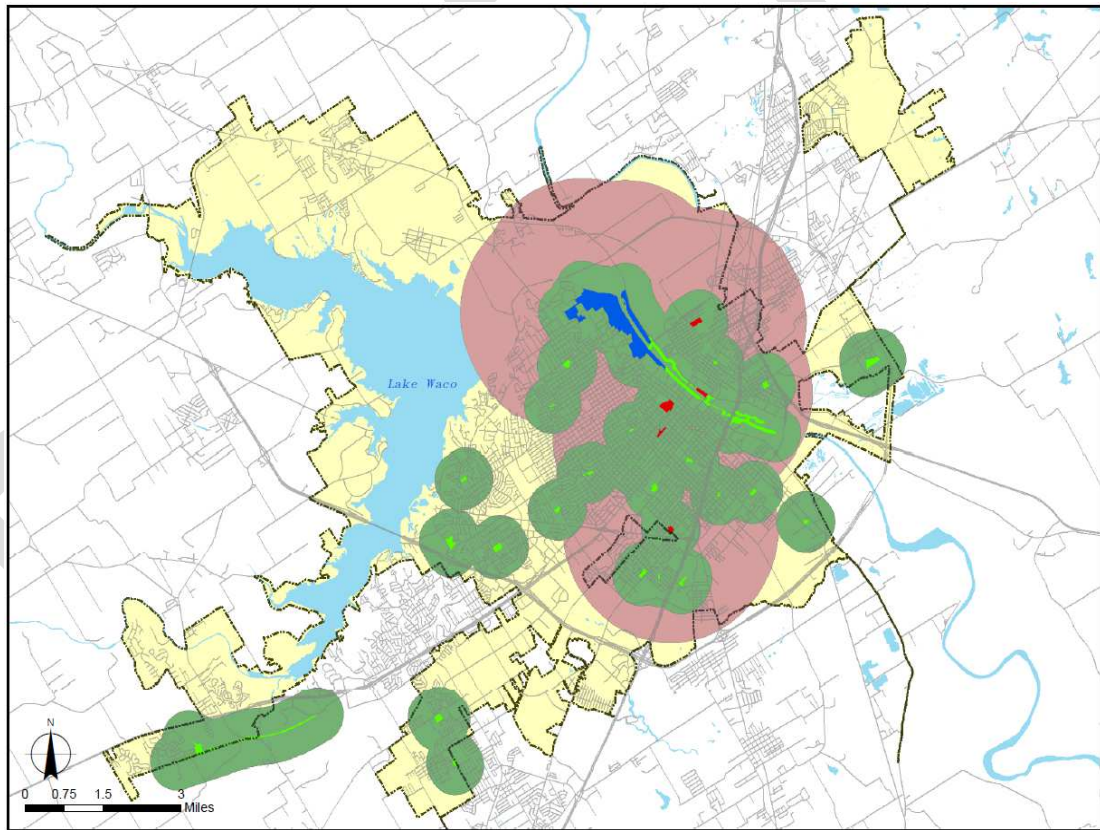
The City of Waco contains 1,666 acres of parkland managed by the City and 1,020 acres managed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (*as well as 16.5 square miles of public waters*). In aggregate, this provides over 21 acres of land per 1000 residents, which compares favorably to the national average of 9.5 acres per 1000 residents. It may, however, be more appropriate to evaluate the City of Waco facilities separately since much

of the USACE land is comprised of fee-use areas. This leaves over 13 acres of City of Waco park land per 1000 residents, nearing the national average.

The City of Waco’s parkland is comprised of 56 distinct sites with an additional 7 managed by the USACE. In aggregate, this provides 1 park for every 1,987 residents, which exceeds the national average of 1 park for every 2,277 residents. Again, looking only at City of Waco inventory, this leaves 1 park for every 2,232 residents, nearing the national average.

These broad models are utilized to provide a general gap analysis, but with respect to distribution it is much more effective to consult a mapped model of park service areas. Service areas are established for Neighborhood Parks based on an easily walkable distance (1/2 mile), Community Parks based on an easily bike-able distance (2miles), and Regional Parks filling in for some similar functions (when within 2 miles). The resulting map represents the gap analysis of areas currently underserved by these parks:

Neighborhood & Community Park Service Areas (yellow = underserved areas)



Source: City of Waco Parks Dept.

Further analysis and recommendations for neighborhood, community, and regional parks can be made based on the framework of previous standards and acreage guidelines established in previous plans, and included below.

c. Basic Park Units

Note: Each park unit is classified by type, based on a number of factors beyond size, such as developable terrain, utility easements, and site specific features. Classifications are subject to change.

Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood Parks represent the basic park unit of every neighborhood. They are pedestrian oriented, providing basic recreation opportunities for all ages, close to home. They generally range in size from 2 acres to 15 acres and are intended to serve local residents within a walkable distance of a ½ mile.

Waco currently provides 21 Neighborhood Parks, with an average size of 7 acres.

Total Acreage: 146 = 1.17 acres / 1000 residents (below previous guidelines of 1.25-2.5)

Typically included are basic traditional park amenities to accommodate small-scale active and passive recreation. Example amenities include walking loops, playgrounds, sport courts, picnic areas, and multi-use turf space.

Community Parks: Community Parks are intended to be larger and more highly developed than Neighborhood Parks, for the purpose of providing additional recreational opportunities to the neighborhoods within a 2 mile radius. This distance can typically be travelled by car or bicycle within 10 minutes, and these parks are traditionally located near major and minor arterial roads to facilitate access by public transit. Waco's Community Parks range in size from 5 acres to 25 acres; however, to function properly as a multi-neighborhood attraction, national standards recommend spaces no smaller than 15 acres.

Waco currently provides 5 Community Parks, with an average size of 11 acres.

Total Acreage: 51 = 0.41 acres / 1000 residents (vastly below previous guidelines of 5 - 8)

Typically included are traditional park amenities for active and passive recreation, as well as parking and major indoor or outdoor facilities. Example amenities include not only walking loops, playgrounds, and picnic areas, but also lighted sporting areas that host leagues and practices. Often, Community Centers are co-located with Community Parks to help serve these larger community needs.

Regional Parks: Regional Parks comprise the largest standard park type provided by the City of Waco, offering the greatest diversity of recreational experiences. On average, these parks are over 200 acres in size, contain major developments as well as undeveloped areas, are located near waterways, and are easily accessible from major roadways. They serve the city-wide population and provide attractions, sites, or events that also draw visitors from other parts of the state or country.

Waco currently provides 2 Regional Parks, with an average size of 200 acres.

Total Acreage: 416 = 3.28 acres / 1000 residents (below previous guidelines of 5 - 10)

Typically included are active and passive recreation amenities such as paved and unpaved trails, open turf areas, picnic areas, natural areas, water access, and specialized-use areas such as archery ranges.

Community Centers: Community Centers are indoor facilities that serve as community recreation and resource centers, offering a variety of programs and activity spaces. Like Community Parks, they typically serve a 2 mile radius. These facilities can meet broad community needs for classes, meeting spaces, fitness amenities, and gymnasium space, or can be dedicated for more specific uses such as senior programming.

Waco currently provides 7 Community Centers, of which 2 are dedicated Senior Centers, and 2 are non-staffed rental facilities.

Athletic Complexes: Athletic Complexes function as specialized or single-purpose recreation areas oriented around specific athletic activities. Typically, these parks accommodate league or tournament play. These parks primarily serve local residents, but larger complexes can also facilitate athletic tourism, drawing in users from out of town.

Waco currently offers 19 Athletic Complexes.

Attraction Parks: Attraction Parks are fee-use facilities run by public-private partnership, offering specialized or single-purpose recreation, oriented around culture or amusements. These facilities provide important recreation services to the local community, while also stimulating tourism.

The Waco Parks & Recreation Department currently partners to provide 3 Attraction Parks.

Public Commons & Event Spaces: Public Commons & Event Spaces serve as the outdoor areas most commonly utilized for public assembly, festivals, markets, and special events. These areas range in size from 3 acres to 8 acres and are set up to accommodate large crowds, vendors, parking, and demonstrations.

Waco currently provides 5 Public Commons & Event Spaces, with an average size of 7 acres.

Metropolitan Trails: Metropolitan Trails function both as recreation corridors and alternative transportation routes for cyclists and pedestrians. They connect districts, neighborhoods, and parks. Trail surfaces are typically 10 feet wide, paved or otherwise improved, and designed to be ADA compliant. Lighting is typically provided along these corridors in areas of high use.

Waco currently provides 3 Metropolitan Trail Units for a total length of 13 miles.

Rustic Trails & Conservation Areas: Rustic Trails & Conservation Areas are characterized by nature-oriented recreation and/or preservation. They generally cover a large area of more than 20 acres and are sometimes included as a sub-unit of larger parks or public waterways.

Park development is minimized, with an emphasis on sight-seeing, nature-study, wildlife habitat, conservation, and low-impact use of unimproved trails.

Waco currently provides 3 designated Rustic Trail & Conservation Areas covering ~600 acres.

Public Waters: Public waters are often overlooked as part of the park system inventory, but represent a large component of Waco’s recreational infrastructure. The Brazos River and Bosque River offer considerable boating and fishing access downtown. Similarly, Lake Waco is a popular recreation destination managed by the Army Corps of Engineers, serving both local residents and users from out of town.

Waco currently offers over 16.5 square miles (10,500 acres) of public water access.

Non-Park Landscape Maintenance Areas: The City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department provides care for a significant number of additional public properties that do not directly support traditional recreation. In some cases, there may be future opportunities to strengthen the connection to recreation or cultural activities; regardless, these areas of maintenance represent a considerable portion of department staffing, budget, and operations.

Small Green Spaces - Small Green Spaces are parcels, typically smaller than 3 acres that are not well-suited for development as Neighborhood Parks due to size, access, topography, or drainages. These areas often do have natural or aesthetic beauty, and in some cases may support future Metropolitan Trail connectivity. Small Green Spaces are available for public use, but not scheduled for further development.

Waco currently maintains 8 Small Green Spaces, totaling 11 acres

City Maintained Cemeteries – City Maintained Cemeteries are culturally and historically significant sites of broad community interest. Sensitive and appropriate care is provided to maintain these grounds, preserving public access to this facet of Waco’s history.

Waco currently provides for the care of 3 cemeteries, totaling 234 acres.

Municipal Properties – Municipal Properties consist of the various sites owned and operated for official City of Waco business and operations. These non-park properties each include public-facing lawns and landscape that represent our city as a whole. The Parks & Recreation Department provides for their maintenance.

The City of Waco conducts City business and services out of more than 168 facilities across 1,020 acres.

Right of Way & Medians – Right of Way & Median spaces consist of areas along highways and waterways. These non-park areas are often in highly visible and trafficked areas, forming a subtle but significant impression of our city as whole. The Parks & Recreation Department provides for their maintenance.

Waco currently maintains 636 acres of Right of Way & Median areas.

Waco currently maintains a total of: 1,904 acres of Non-Park Landscape Maintenance Areas.

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VI. PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO & INVENTORY

a. Jurisdictional Park System Summary Tables

City of Waco Park System				
Park Type / Park Name	Ownership	Building (s) Area (sf.)	Park Area (ac.)	Trail Length (mi.)
Neighborhood			146.3	5.1
Alta Vista Park	Waco		6.1	0.27
Bell's Hill Park	Waco		8.5	0.17
Brooklyn Park	Waco		7.3	0.33
Buena Vista Park	Waco		18.1	0.20
Chapel Park	Waco		4.1	0.25
Cotton Palace Park	Waco; Two buildings leased to		7.0	0.06
Council Acres Park	Waco		2.5	0.24
Crestview Park	Waco		5.0	0.18
East Waco Park	Waco		2.7	0.27
Gurley Park	Waco		4.7	0.28
Jaycee Park	Waco		10.6	0.33
Kendrick Park	Waco		7.8	0.21
Mitchell Park	Waco		1.8	TBD
Mountainview Park	Waco		4.5	0.43
North Waco Park	Waco		8.0	0.33
Oakwood Park	Waco		5.3	0.33
Pioneer Park	Waco		4.1	0.19
S.J. Guthrie Park	Waco		8.0	0.33
Seley Park	Waco		2.2	0.17
Trail Blazer Park	Waco		13.4	0.25
Viking Hills Park	Waco		14.9	0.25
Community			50.5	1.4
Bledsoe-Miller Park	Waco		8.1	0.17
Dewey Park	Waco		22.3	0.30
Oscar DuConge Park	Waco		11.7	0.33
South Waco Park	Waco		6.3	0.26
Sul Ross Park	Waco		2.1	0.33
Regional			415.7	
Brazos Park East	Waco		52.5	
Cameron Park	Waco		363.2	
Community Centers			92,062.2	3.5
Bledsoe-Miller Community Center	Waco	19,840.0		
Dewey Community Center	Waco	19,977.0		
Harrison Sr. Center	Waco; Leased to Meals on Wheels	3,819.0	2.6	
Multipurpose Center	Waco	9,409.0		
South Waco Community Center	Waco	23,178.4		
Sul Ross Sr. Center	Waco	15,838.8	0.9	
Athletic Complexes			588.3	0.0
Brazos Park East: Disc Golf Course	Waco		51.7	
Brazos Park East: Jimmy Bryant Horseshoe Complex	Waco		0.7	
Cameron Park: Huaco Bowmen Archery Range	Waco; Leased to Huaco Bowmen		39.1	
Cameron Park: Disc Golf Course	Waco		62.2	
Challenger Baseball Field	Waco; Leased to Lake Air Little League's Challenger League		2.0	
Cotton Palace Ball Fields	Waco		18.7	
Cottonwood Creek Golf Course	Waco	22,709.6	171.8	
Eastern Little League Complex	Waco; Leased to Eastern Little League	2,575.9	8.9	
Hart-Patteson Track & Field Complex	Waco	952.1	28.7	
Heart'O'Texas Youth Soccer Complex	U.S. Corps of Engineer Land		64.1	
Lake Air Football Fields	Waco		5.8	
Lake Air Little League Complex	Waco; Leased to Lake Air Little League	1,084.0	26.1	
Riverbend Ballfields Complex	Waco	28,369.1	73.8	
Waco Regional Tennis Center	Waco	39,632.9	16.0	
Waco Soccer Association Complex	U.S. Corps of Engineer		18.7	

City of Waco Park System				
Park Type / Park Name	Ownership	Building Area (sf.)	Park Area (ac.)	Trail Length (mi.)
Attraction		17032.1	131.1	0.0
Hawaiian Falls Water Park	Waco; Leased to Hawaiian Falls	6,478.1	14.0	
Lion's Park	Waco; Leased to the Lion's Club		8.9	
Waco Mammoth National Monument	U.S. National Parks Serve owns 4.8 acres; Waco owns surrounding 103.5	10,554.0	108.3	TBD
Public Commons / Events Space		54797.5	34.1	
Brazos Commons	Waco		6.8	
Fort Fisher	Waco		16.1	
Heritage Square & City Hall	Waco	54,797.5	2.2	
Indian Spring Park	Waco		4.5	
Martin Luther King, Jr., Park	Waco		4.5	
Metropolitan Trails			49.6	5.2
Cotton Belt Trail	Waco		47.1	2.4
Lake Brazos River Walk	Waco		2.5	
Lake Waco Dam Trail	U.S. Corps of Engineer			2.8
Rustic Trails & Conservation Areas		6685.9	235.9	20.0
Bend of the Bosque Conservation Area	Waco		55.9	
Brazos & Bosque Rivers Paddling Trails	U.S. Corps of Engineer			3.5
Cameron Park: Unpaved Trails	Waco			16.5
Lake Waco Wetlands	U.S. Corps of Engineer; Leased to City of Waco	6,685.9	180.0	
Public Waters			16.5 (mi²)	16.1
Bosque River	U.S. Corps of Engineer		0.1 (mi ²)	4.6
Lake Brazos (Brazos River)	U.S. Corps of Engineer		3.2 (mi ²)	11.5
Lake Waco	U.S. Corps of Engineer		13.2 (mi ²)	
Maintenance Area - Green Space			11.2	
Barron's Branch at Colcord	Waco		2.2	
Canyon Triangle Green Space	Waco		0.4	
Edmond Green Space	Waco		1.3	
Karem Green Space	Waco		3.2	
Shakespeare Memorial	Waco		0.7	
Terrace Green Space	Waco		2.0	
Wenz Green Space	Waco		0.6	
Willowood Green Space	Waco		0.7	
Maintenance Area - Cemetery			234.0	
First Street Cemetery	Waco		6.9	
Greenwood Cemetery	Waco; partial owner		18.5	
Rosemound Cemetery	Waco		208.6	
Maintenance Area - Municipal Properties				
Maintenance Area - Right of Ways & Medians				

USACE Waco Park System		
Park Type / Park Name	Ownership	Park Area (ac.)
Parks at Lake Waco		448.0
Flat Rock Access Area	USACE	
Airport Beach Park	USACE	
Bosque Park	USACE	
Koehne Park	USACE	
Midway Park	USACE	
Twin Bridges Park	USACE	
Speegleville Park	USACE	
Lacy Point Access Area	USACE	
Reynolds Creek Park	USACE	

- c. Portfolio of Existing Parks, Facilities, & Open Space
→ please see Appendix

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VII. PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT OF NEED

a. Identification of Needs and Methodology

To identify the needs of the City of Waco, the first step was a series of three community meetings to receive comment from general citizens regarding the current state of the local parks and recreation system. Next, a citizen survey was released with more than 3,088 respondents filling out the online survey. Finally, a follow up citizen review leading to three focus group meetings was conducted. These sessions provide a good baseline for needs and priorities for the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding long term park maintenance and development.

The information gather through the public meetings and the survey showed that citizens are interested in improving facilities, adding special amenities to make the park system all inclusive, and improving the overall safety of the system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To identify key issues within the park system, general public meetings were conducted on three separate occasions and staff attended three neighborhood association meetings. Additionally, four community meetings were conducted to review the draft plan prior to City Council approval. The discussion points for the public meetings included the following:

The discussion points for the public meetings included the following:

1. Review what we have in our system
2. Discussion on how we're doing overall.
3. Discussion on how the park system can best grow with the community for the next 10 years.
4. Discussion on how well visitors are served by the parks & facilities.
5. Discussion on how well visitors are served by park programs.
6. Discussion on how well the parks and programs address the needs for all ages.

Prior to Master Plan Draft – Community Meetings:

Neighborhood residents were invited to comment on the discussion points listed above as well as offer any other insight they had on the development and use of parks.

Prior to Master Plan Draft – Neighborhood Association Meetings:

Staff attended neighborhood association meetings to gain perspective on the needs of the neighborhoods represented by the various associations. These meetings provided an avenue for staff to discuss the process for plan development as well as solicit information that should be referenced in the plan.

Following Master Plan Draft – Community Meetings:

Upon completion of writing the draft plan, neighborhood residents were again invited to comment on the proposed plan and provide suggestions for inclusion in the plan that they believe may have been omitted.

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VIII. PRIORITIES & JUSTIFICATION

The recommendations and priorities in this section are a result of analyzing the various information to help gauge the overall need for the Department of Parks and Recreation. This analysis included, looking at the inventory of current park property and programs, standards analysis, survey analysis, and City Council and community input. The goal is to incorporate this information into an action plan that will direct the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, and open spaces in the City of Waco for the next five to ten years. These recommendations are based on the existing Waco population of 124,810 in 2010, and estimated population of 132,356 in 2015.

At the completion of the collection and analysis of all pertinent information, the priorities were identified and ranked according to their position on the list of needs, which included the following inputs:

1. City Council – Specific priorities identified by the Waco City Council.
2. Citizen Input/Survey Results – The specific needs and requests by the Waco Community, as represented by the survey, identifies a variety of concerns and challenges within the Parks and Recreation Department.
3. The City Plan, Waco Comprehensive Plan 2040 – A 2016 Planning Department Comprehensive Plan for the City of Waco for the next 25 years. The City Plan highlights the growth of Waco which further demonstrates the need for park development in the areas of growth (see appendix).
4. City Staff Input – The specific needs as identified by City staff based upon recreation programs and demands on resources.
5. National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) Published National Averages – the appropriate national averages as compared to current Waco facilities.
6. Baylor Cameron Park Survey – A 2016 survey of Cameron Park users (see appendix).

The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority, Moderate Priority, and Low Priority. The table on the following page provides a summary of the priorities for the City of Waco.

a. Priorities / Rankings

At the completion of the collection and analysis of all pertinent information, the priorities were identified and ranked according to their position on the list of needs, which included the following inputs:

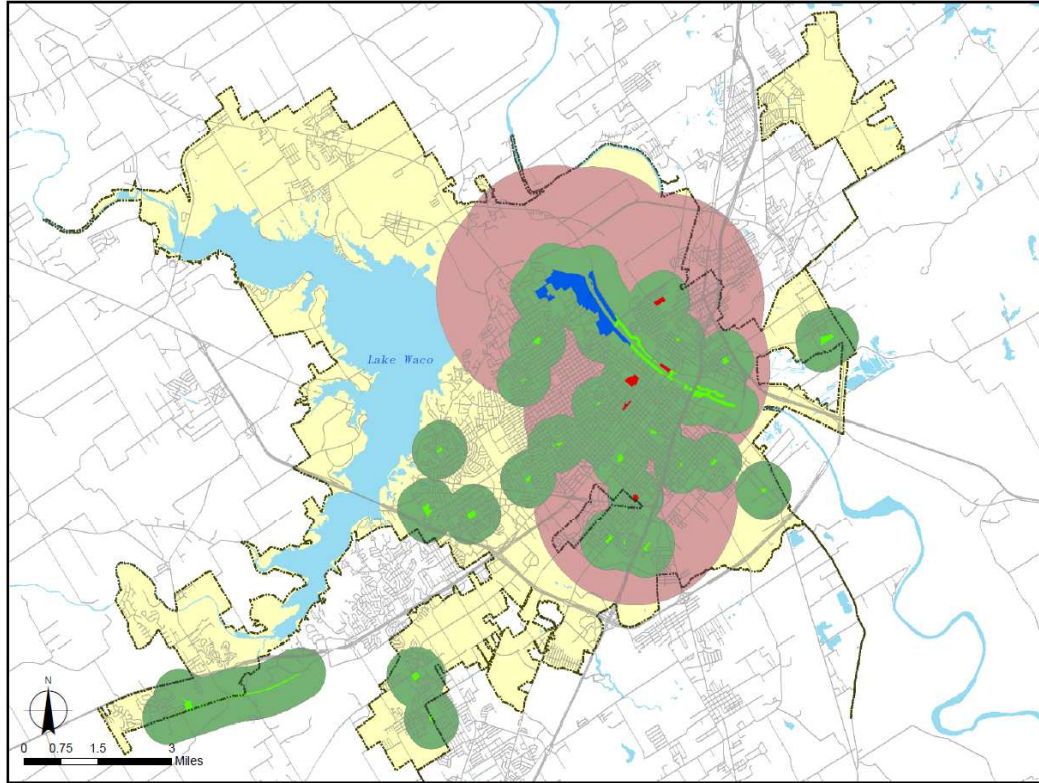
<u>High Priority</u>	<u>Moderate Priority</u>	<u>Low Priority</u>
1. Riverfront Parks & Metropolitan Trails	1. Farmers Market	1. Mountain Bike/BMX Course
2. Shaded Playgrounds	2. Indoor Swim/Water Parks	2. Disc Golf Course
3. Natural/Nature Parks	3. Fishing Access	3. Rental Facility for Banquets/Receptions
4. Neighborhood Parks	4. Large Community Parks	4. Community Centers
5. Handicapped Accessible Parks/Facilities	5. Interconnected Metropolitan Trail Corridors	5. Tennis Courts
6. Inclusive playgrounds	6. Kayak and Rowing Access	6. Outdoor Basketball
7. Off-leash Dog Parks	7. Community Gardens	7. Indoor Gymnasium Space/Game Courts
8. Spraygrounds/Splash Pads	8. Picnic Shelters/Picnic Areas	8. Outdoor Soccer Fields
9. Festival/Event Parks	9. Outdoor Stage or Amphitheater	9. Skateboarding Area
10. Outdoor Pools/Aquatics	10. Other	10. Senior Center
	11. Arts Parks	11. Baseball and Softball Diamonds
		12. Youth Football Fields

While the majority of the priorities for development are traditional outdoor development needs, for any funding opportunities pertaining only to indoor development, the following indoor priorities excerpted from above will be addressed in the following order:

1. Indoor Swim / Water Parks
2. Rental Facility for Banquets/Receptions
3. Community Centers
4. Indoor Gymnasium Space/Game Courts
5. Senior Center

c. Mapped Areas of Need – acquisition & Development

Neighborhood & Community Park Service Areas (yellow = underserved areas)



Source: City of Waco Parks Dept.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION/ACTION PLAN

This section of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan identifies important components integral to the successful implementation of the proposed action plan. There are three areas that will play a crucial role in guiding the long-term efforts of developing and maintaining a growing park system: Policies and Ordinances, Funding Sources, and a Five-year Action Plan. It's important to note that this is a planning document that will, from time to time, undergo revision and update. However, any future changes will take into account overall needs of the City of Waco, and remain consistent with the overall needs assessment for the park system.

a. Implementation Guidelines

Policies

1. Elected Boards and Commissions
2. City Staff
3. Adjacent Municipalities
4. School Districts
5. Citizens Involvement

Ordinances

1. Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Funding Sources

1. General Fund
2. Capital Improvement Funds
3. Bonds
4. User Fees
5. Grants-In-Aid
6. Parkland Dedication/Payment-In-Lieu of Land
7. Public Improvement Districts (P.I.D.)
8. Tax Incremental Financing District (T.I.F)
9. Private Park Foundation
10. Private Donations
11. Joint-Use Agreements/Cost Sharing

b. Five Year Action Plan

The Five-Year Action Plan incorporates the priorities established in the Needs Assessment of the City of Waco, and identifies the time table for seeking potential funding for park development and maintenance. The plan combines action items to effectively address the following system wide challenges and ensure improvements in the overall park system.

Park Facility Development and/or Improvement

The survey revealed that riverfront parks and paved trails, natural area preservation, increasing neighborhood parks, and developing inclusive playgrounds should be high on the list of priority for the City of Waco.

In order to address these concerns, we will focus on utilizing not only the budgetary process to receive allocated funds, promote and support policies that will facilitate development, explore grant opportunities, develop appropriate partnerships, and seek other local government funding sources to develop to a vibrant and dynamic park system.

In consideration of the survey results and the representative needs of the community, our efforts will incorporate a commitment to filling voids within the park system while maintaining/improving the assets we have currently. We will also seek to develop and improve parks with an emphasis on inclusiveness.

Parks Programming

The survey results related to park programming included feedback for program improvements in a number of areas. However, looking at the system holistically, the responses center around two overarching categories: Health and Fitness; and Life Enrichment.

Health and Fitness

We know that there is a growing concern with issues like obesity and diabetes that affect the young and elderly alike. We also know that addressing many health concerns like this takes more than just letting the health care community respond to the effects of these types of chronic conditions. Many studies have shown that improved health reduces disease and sickness, which has a positive impact on the local economy. We believe that when our citizens are physically fit, they are more likely to be more emotionally, socially, and spiritually healthy too. Thus, having a community filled with residents that have a balanced, healthy life is good for the overall vitality of the community. This approach to health is in line with the goals Prosper Waco has set for the community.

There are citizens in our community that don't have access to health and fitness activities that promote their overall health. To align our program offerings with the

desires of the community, Waco Parks and Recreation will endeavor to expand the types of health and fitness offerings to ensure we're doing our part in creating a health and vibrant community.

Life Enrichment

The survey also revealed that citizens would like to see improvement in programs offered that enrich their lives. The addition of special events, inclusive programming, and nature programs were high on the list of things in which the community could participate.

Safety and Security

According to the survey, the perception of safety within parks is of great importance. In fact, over 341 responders listed safety concerns as a reason why they don't visit parks very often. This plan will focus on the appropriate guidelines listed above to ensure the safety of park patrons. Our goal will be to propose and support ordinance development and/or revisions necessary, continue to work with the Waco Police Department to seek training that would be appropriate for the Park Rangers, as well as, look at a variety of Crime Prevention Thru Environmental Design (CPTED) tactics like, improved lighting, clearing of brush and vegetation that provide cover, and controlled access to certain park amenities like parking lots, to accomplish this task. We will also continue to focus on the role of the Park Rangers to develop good public relation skills that help improve the visitor experience, while ensuring adherence to park rules. Additionally, the condition of sidewalk amenities and accessibility to public transit stops serving the parks is a notable concern. The Parks & recreation Department will explore emerging local collaborations as well as national initiatives that may lead to grant funding for Safe Routes to Parks projects.

Funding Strategies

Survey participants were asked to rate four funding options: Formation of a Park Foundation; Implementation of a Hotel/Motel Tax; Implementation of a Dedicated Property Tax; and Implementation of a Dedicated 4b Sales Tax. The results showed strong support for both the Park Foundation and Hotel/Motel Tax options, some support of the Dedicated Property Tax, and uncertainty for the Dedicated 4b Sales Tax. The comments also suggested support of fundraisers/benefits as a means to funding parks, as well as a review of user and vendor fees, and exploring corporate sponsorship opportunities.

The Parks and Recreation Department will explore the founding options listed in the above implementation guidelines, as well as explore alternative taxing options for park development and improvement.

c. Conclusion with Implementation Timeline & Possible Funding Sources:

It's worth noting that the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is an active planning document, and project priorities could be shifted as funding sources become available. The following table outlines the prioritized facility improvements, identifies potential funding sources, and identifies a target time frame to plan for and seek project funding. Depending on availability of project funding, other amenities could be added to the project as appropriate.

Item	Facility Improvement / Recommendation	Implementation Period	Possible Funding	Comments
1	Riverfront Parks & Paved Trails	Year 1 - 5	Grants In-Aid, Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Complete Riverwalk to McLane Stadium b) Expand Riverwalk to Mammoth National Monument
2	Shaded Playgrounds	Year 1 - 5	CDBG Grants Bond Program, General Fund Fee in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Implement shade as an included standard for all new playground structures b) Retrofit existing unshaded play structures
3	Natural/Nature Parks	Year 1 - 5	Grants In-Aid, Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Preserve existing natural areas for low-impact uses b) Acquire additional parkland for rustic and nature-oriented recreation c) Continue developing trail management standards with volunteers and users
4	Neighborhood Park Improvements	Year 1 - 5	Grants In-Aid, CDBG Grants Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Continue redevelopment of Neighborhood Parks
5	Handicapped Accessible Parks/Facilities	Year 1 - 5	Grants In-Aid, CDBG Grants Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Continue implementation of accessibility standards in compliance with Texas accessibility Laws b) Develop & implement higher accessibility standards to better promote true inclusivity
6	Inclusive Playgrounds	Year 2 - 4	Grants In-Aid, CDBG Grants Private Funding Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Coordinate with community focus group to plan, fund, and construct a destination inclusive playground b) Develop a set of general inclusivity standards to implement in all new playgrounds
7	Off-Leash Dog Parks	Year 3 - 5	Grants In-Aid, Private Funding Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Explore and develop options for off-leash dog areas within the park system or via partnership
8	Spraygrounds/Splash Pads	Year 1 - 5	Grants In-Aid, CDBG Grants Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Improve existing splash pads b) Develop implementation plan to expand the number of parks served
9	Festival/Event Parks	Year 2 - 4	Grants In-Aid, Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Improve existing event areas and expand or develop additional spaces
10	Outdoor Pools /Aquatics	Year 3 - 5	Grants In-Aid, Private Funding Bond Program, General Fund Fee-in-Lieu Ordinance	a) Explore public/private partnership opportunities for development

X. GLOSSARY

Accessibility

Refers to the goals set forth by the ADA and TAS concerning persons with disabilities and the elimination or prevention of architectural barriers to products, devices, services, or built environments.

ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act – sets forth legal standards for the prevention of architectural barriers.

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant

A grant administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, sometimes available for park improvements in designated economically disadvantaged areas

Fee-In-Lieu

A typical component of ordinances concerning Parkland Dedication and the responsibility of land developers to provide funding for parks if the planned development does not include park space to serve the development's projected needs.

Inclusive / Inclusivity

Refers to a broader design ethic and goal to develop parks, facilities, and programs that seamlessly integrate recreation opportunities for persons of all abilities to increase play and strengthen community, typically, exceeding legal standards.

Interpretive

Refers to programs or signage that communicate the meanings and relationships of a number of topics affecting a site's significance. Examples include: culture, history, nature, and other topics.

Landmark Preservation

Sensitive care that at a minimum does not hasten the decline of locally or broadly significant cultural sites and structures, and in many cases includes study, stabilization, or rehabilitation measures coordinated with governing agencies.

Low-Impact Uses

Refers to park or recreation uses that can be conservation or research based, passive recreation, or active in such a way that does not lead to development significantly disrupting the character & natural systems of the site.

MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area

A census defined geographical region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. MSA boundaries are generally contiguous with county boundaries. In 2010, the Waco MSA covered McLennan & Falls Counties.

Peer Cities

A list of 10 cities that are considered to have similar characteristics to the City of Waco. These cities include: Abilene, Amarillo, Bryan, College Station, Lubbock, Odessa, Temple, Tyler, San Angelo, and Wichita Falls.

TAS

Texas Accessibility Standards – sets forth legal standards applicable in Texas, that mirror or exceed those set forth by ADA, for the prevention of architectural barriers.

TxDOT – Texas Department of Transportation

USACE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

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