

An aerial photograph of a city landscape. In the foreground, there's a river flowing through a green park area with many trees. A modern, multi-story building with a glass facade is prominent on the right. In the background, more city buildings and a bridge are visible under a clear blue sky.

CHAPTER

01

Introduction

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Photo Credit: City of Fort Worth

Why Plan and Why Now?

Parks, green spaces, and the public realm are more than just amenities—they are essential pieces of infrastructure that shape the health, identity, and resilience of a city. As Fort Worth continues to experience rapid growth and demographic shifts, the need for an **equitable, accessible, and forward-thinking park system** has never been greater. GREENprint Fort Worth is a bold and transformative vision that reimagines parks, recreation, and public green space as interconnected systems. Supporting Fort Worth's vibrant communities, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are at the heart of this plan.

Historically, Fort Worth's park system has reflected the city's evolving development patterns, from the early park planning efforts of **George Kessler** in 1909 to the expansive suburban growth of the late 20th century. Today, new challenges and opportunities require a **fresh approach**—one that moves beyond traditional park boundaries and integrates green spaces into every aspect of life. This chapter sets the stage for Fort Worth's future as **A City in a Park**: where nature, recreation, and public life are seamlessly woven into the fabric of daily life.

Why Now?

Fort Worth is at a pivotal moment in its growth trajectory. With a projected **population of 1.3 million by 2050**, ensuring equitable access to quality parks and public spaces is critical for fostering community well-being. The **impacts of climate change**, including rising temperatures, flooding risks, and air quality concerns, highlight the importance of parks as natural cooling systems and stormwater management solutions. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the vital role that parks play in **mental and physical health**, as residents sought refuge in outdoor spaces.

It is equally important to note that parks are **economic drivers** that enhance property values,

attract businesses, and strengthen local economies. Research consistently shows that well designed parks increase nearby home values by 8-20%, generate tourism revenue, and stimulate investments in surrounding commercial areas.¹ Quite simply: the role of parks is expanding, and they are no longer just places of recreation but hubs for **community gathering, economic growth, and cultural expression**.

A New Vision for Parks and the Public Realm

The GREENprint Fort Worth Master Plan does more than just identify where new parks are needed. It lays the groundwork for an **integrated, connected, and sustainable park system** that aligns with broader city goals, including the Good Natured Initiative, the Fort Worth Green space Conservation Program and the Active Transportation Plan. This plan envisions parks not as isolated spaces but as part of a broader **ecosystem of green infrastructure, walkable streets, and dynamic public spaces**.

This chapter also provides a comprehensive look at the importance and benefits of parks, examines the current challenges and opportunities facing Fort Worth's park system, and outlines a data-driven planning framework that ensures the city's parks and public spaces are equitable, accessible, and sustainable for generations to come. **By investing in parks today, Fort Worth is shaping a future where every resident, regardless of zip code, income, or background, has access to high-quality green spaces that enhance their quality of life.**

Through strong leadership, innovative planning, and community-driven collaboration, Fort Worth is not just expanding as a city—it is transforming into **A City in a Park; a place where people, nature, and public life thrive together**

¹ John L. Crompton (2001) The Impact of Parks on Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence, Journal of Leisure Research

With rapid urban growth, evolving demographics, and an increasing demand for vibrant public spaces, Fort Worth is at an exciting crossroads. Now is the time to embrace a visionary plan for parks, recreation, and green spaces that will enhance quality of life and support a thriving, resilient community. The GREENprint Fort Worth: Parks, Recreation, Green space, and Public Realm Master Plan is a forward-thinking initiative designed to ensure that all residents benefit from quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.

- **Expanding Park Access:** Investing in parks now will create a more inclusive and connected community, ensuring that all residents, regardless of location, have access to quality outdoor spaces.
- **Strengthening Climate Resilience:** By enhancing green infrastructure, and expanding tree canopies and improving stormwater management, Fort Worth can proactively address rising temperatures and flood risks, making the city more sustainable and livable.
- **Maximizing Funding Opportunities:** GREENprint Fort Worth strengthens Fort Worth's ability to pursue diverse funding sources—ranging from state and federal grants, to innovative

public-private partnerships and philanthropic investments—ensuring sustained support for parks and recreation enhancements.

- **Enhancing Quality of Life:** Parks contribute to physical and mental well-being, foster social connections, and stimulate economic development. By investing in green spaces, Fort Worth strengthens its appeal for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.
- **Unlocking Economic Potential:** Well-planned parks and trails attract tourism, boost local businesses, and increase property values, generating long-term economic benefits for the community.

Now is the Time to Act

Fort Worth has a tremendous opportunity to build on its strengths and create a world-class parks system that benefits everyone. GREENprint Fort Worth provides the strategy and vision needed to ensure that the city's parks, green spaces, and public realm continue to enhance quality of life for generations to come. Through strategic investments and community-driven collaboration, Fort Worth is poised to flourish as **A City in a Park**.



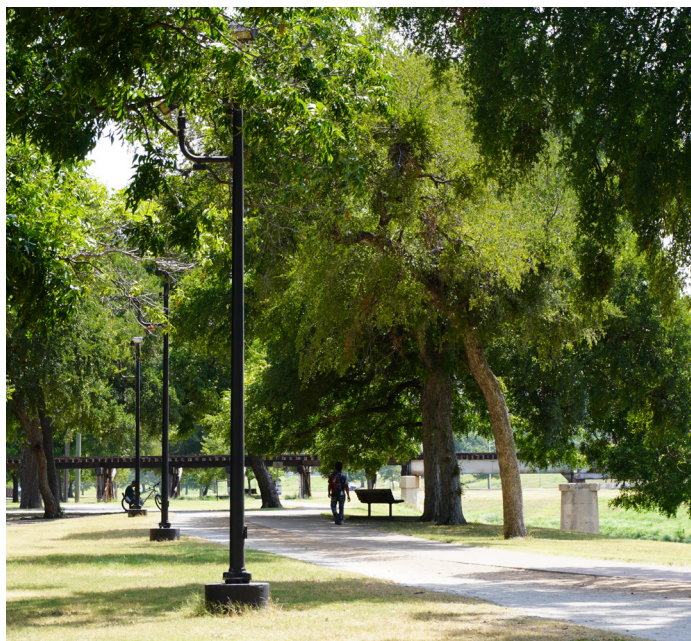
Fort Worth Trinity Trails

Why Parks Matter: The GREENprint for a Healthier, Wealthier, and More Resilient Fort Worth

The GREENprint Plan is crucial now as parks are no longer just recreational spaces—they are essential infrastructure that promote public health, environmental resilience, and economic development. Over recent years, parks and recreation systems have gained new significance as essential parts of daily life. Once viewed primarily as spaces for occasional gatherings and seasonal activities, parks have become vibrant hubs for health, social connection, and community resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of **access to outdoor spaces, as people sought refuge in parks and trails to combat isolation and mental distress**. This renewed connection has driven growing demand for **quality parks that offer physical, mental, and social benefits**. Expanding and enhancing parks and recreational facilities not only improves public health and strengthens social cohesion but also contributes to local economic development and environmental sustainability, making them **vital assets for thriving, resilient communities**.

Health Benefits

Parks and recreation systems play a crucial role in enhancing physical, mental, and social well-being. With over half of U.S. adults affected by chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, parks offer essential opportunities for physical activity and healthier lifestyles. People with access to safe parks and trails exercise more and experience lower rates of these conditions. Parks are also vital for mental health, as 40% of Americans suffer from anxiety or depression. Proximity to green spaces significantly reduces these risks—people who live near parks are 44% less likely to have a diagnosed anxiety disorder¹. Research shows that spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with better overall health and well-being², while physical activity in parks is directly linked to improved mood and self-reported well-being³.



Fort Worth Trinity Park



People with access to safe

Parks & Trails **exercise more** and have lower rates of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

For every \$1 spent on building trails and greenways, there is a **\$3 return in medical cost savings**

due to increased physical activity.



40% of Americans suffer from anxiety or depression. People who live near parks and green spaces are



44% less likely to have a diagnosed anxiety disorder.¹

1. City Parks Alliance. (2019). City Parks: A Smart Investment for America's Health, Economy & Environment.

2. White, M. P. et al. (2019). Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and well-being.

3. Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022). The Health Benefits of Parks and Their Economic Impacts.

However, achieving health equity remains a critical goal. To ensure that these benefits are equitably distributed, **it is essential to focus on developing close-to-home parks, particularly in underserved areas.**

Economic Benefits

Parks offer significant economic benefits, driving the growth and prosperity of cities while enhancing the quality of life for residents. According to The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), local park and recreation agencies generated nearly \$218 billion in economic activity and supported 1.3 million jobs across the U.S. in 2019⁴. **Parks not only increase property values but also attract businesses, promote workforce development, and support local economies.**

Trails and greenways deliver some of the highest returns on investment. In Dallas, properties near the Katy Trail saw a 25% premium on sale prices, while a study of the city's park system found that trails generated a return of over 50:1 from 1998 to 2016⁵. Similarly, a greenway in Austin resulted in an estimated \$13.64 million in new property tax revenue⁶. Research also shows that home prices increase by 20% near passive parks and up to 37% near heavily wooded open land.⁷

Environmental Benefits

Parks and green spaces play a critical role in promoting environmental sustainability and mitigating the impacts of urban development. As cities experience rapid residential and commercial growth, the loss of natural spaces and increased stormwater runoff can create significant environmental challenges. **Parks help combat these issues by improving air and water quality, enhancing biodiversity, and providing natural cooling.** According to NRPA, parks are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and conserving natural resources. Large shady parks reduce urban heat by 10–20 degrees, and trees lower temperatures by 6–10 degrees, providing much-needed relief from

extreme heat—currently the #1 weather-related killer in the U.S.⁸. Tree cover also reduces asthma rates and improves air quality. In fact, children living in leafy neighborhoods are three times less likely to have asthma compared to those in areas with limited tree coverage.⁹

8 City Parks Alliance. (2019). City Parks: A Smart Investment for America's Health, Economy & Environment.

9 Sungmin Lee, Juha Baek, Se Woong Kim, Galen Newman, Tree canopy, pediatric asthma, and social vulnerability: An ecological study



Parks Attract Residents & Businesses

Nashville's downtown park investments have helped increase the influx of college-educated 25-to 34-year-old by 50% over the past decade.



Local parks and recreation agencies generate \$218 billion in annual economic activity and support 1.3 million jobs in the U.S.

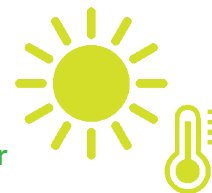


Well-designed public spaces can increase retail sales by up to 30% in adjacent businesses.



Trees reduce heat **6-10 Degrees** and large, shady parks reduce heat **10-20 Degrees**

Extreme heat is the **#1 Weather-Related Killer** in the U.S. and deadlier than all other weather-related causes combined.



Tree cover reduces asthma rates. Children in leafy neighborhoods are **3 Times Less Likely** to have asthma than children who live in neighborhoods with few trees.

4. Roth, K. (2022). Economic Impact of Local Parks Report. National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

5 HR&A Advisors. (2016). Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways in the Dallas Park System: Return on Investment Study (1998-2016)

6 National Recreation and Park Association (2005). The impact of greenways on property values: An empirical estimation of the economic value of a greenway in Austin, Texas. Journal of Leisure Research

7 Wolf, K.L. 2010. Community Economics - A Literature Review. In: Green Cities: Good Health (www.greenhealth.washington.edu). College of the Environment, University of Washington.

Building on the Past, Looking to the Future

GREENprint Fort Worth is more than a parks master plan — it's a visionary blueprint to integrate green infrastructure, natural resource conservation, and public realm investment into the city's long-term growth. Building on Fort Worth's strategic initiatives, GREENprint draws momentum from the **Good Naturesd Green Space Initiative (2023)** and the **Aspirational Strategies Plan (2025)**, together driving a generational transformation.

GREENprint Fort Worth unifies, updates, and advances a broad collection of past and present planning efforts—ensuring that parks and green space are no longer planned in isolation but are integral to transportation, housing, sustainability, economic development, and public health agendas. It is in direct conversation with strategic frameworks such as the City's 2023 Comprehensive Plan, Re-Imagine Fort Worth (2050), Moving a Million, the Active Transportation Plan (2019), the Urban Forest Master Plan (2024), and the Fort Worth Green space Strategy (2022). These interlocking plans form the scaffolding on which GREENprint Fort Worth has been built—allowing it to transform visionary goals into tangible priorities.

At the heart of GREENprint is the Good Naturesd Initiative, a mayoral commitment to making Fort Worth the “greenest big city in the nation” by 2050, with a goal to conserve 10,000 acres by 2028.

GREENprint operationalizes this vision by identifying high-value conservation lands, prioritizing greenway expansion, and embedding ecological resilience into park design and planning. Where Good Naturesd rallies public support and partnerships, GREENprint provides the tools for implementation.

While GREENprint Fort Worth articulates the “**what**” and “**why**” of Fort Worth's green future, the Aspirational Strategies for Implementing a Bold New Vision defines the “**how**.” Developed by HR&A Advisors in close collaboration with PARD, Good Naturesd partners, and the Stantec team, this complementary document provides the internal strategy and organizational roadmap necessary to activate the Master Plan's goals.

One Vision. Three Tools. Unified Impact.

Together, Good Naturesd, GREENprint Fort Worth, and the Aspirational Strategies Plan form a powerful trio:

- Good Naturesd sets the **policy** and **partnership** agenda.
- GREENprint shapes the **planning** and **design** framework.
- Aspirational Strategies provide the **operational** **roadmap**.

By integrating these efforts, Fort Worth is not just keeping pace with growth — it is leading with purpose, investing in equity, and securing its green legacy for future generations.



The Planning Process

The GREENprint Fort Worth: Parks, Recreation, Green space, and Public Realm Master Plan was developed using a comprehensive 10-step Planning Process to ensure a thorough and strategic approach. This process involved an in-depth analysis of the city's demographics, existing parks and recreation facilities, community needs, and projected growth. Each step was designed to build on the information gathered in the previous one.

Steps 1 and 2

Conducted a demographic analysis and site inventory to assess existing conditions and community profiles.

Step 3

Developed the vision and goals through community input gathered from surveys, interviews, pop-ups, and workshops.

Steps 4 and 5

Established park classifications and standards, completed a system assessment and gap analysis to identify service gaps and population needs, and validated findings with City staff and advisory committees.

Steps 6 through 8

Created recommendations, identified priorities, and defined action items.

Steps 9 and 10

Outlined funding strategies, implementation responsibilities, and a detailed action matrix. The plan was presented to the community, advisory committees and City Plan Commission and was adopted as a guiding framework for the future system for years to come.



Strategy of the GREENprint Master Plan

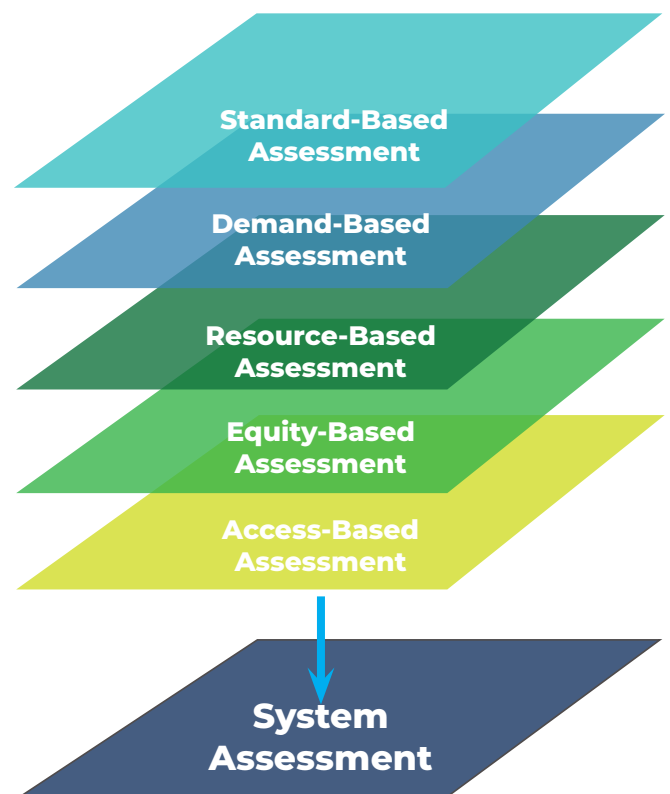
The GREENprint Master Plan is built on core components that ensure the plan is comprehensive, data-driven, community-centered, and actionable. These elements work together to establish a strong foundation for both the development and future implementation of Fort Worth's park and recreation system.

- **Data-Driven Foundation:** At the heart of the framework is a strong emphasis on data collection and analysis. This approach supports evidence-based decisions for strategic investments.
- **Community-Centered Planning:** The framework prioritizes community engagement through surveys, workshops, and interviews, ensuring residents' feedback shapes the vision, goals, and recommendations for a shared sense of ownership.
- **Strategic Alignment with Citywide Initiatives:** The plan aligns with key city initiatives like Re-Imagine Fort Worth, Moving a Million, the Good Natured Green Space Initiative, and the Aspirational Strategies Initiative to ensure seamless integration with broader city strategies and future development.
- **Equity-Focused Approach:** The framework prioritizes equity by identifying underserved areas and gaps in park access, ensuring investments target communities with the greatest need and provide all residents with high-quality green spaces.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** The plan's success relies on strong partnerships with City departments, the Park & Recreation Advisory Board, nonprofits, regional agencies, and private stakeholders (e.g. developers, philanthropist) ensure broad collaboration and shared resources.
- **Action-Oriented Implementation:** The framework emphasizes execution with a clear roadmap, including funding strategies, partnerships, and an implementation matrix. Performance metrics ensure progress tracking and accountability.

System Assessment Methodology

The GREENprint Fort Worth Plan assessment includes five key components for a comprehensive evaluation of the city's park system. The Standard-Based Assessment benchmarks the system against national standards from NRPA, Trust for Public Land (TPL), and peer cities, while the Demand-Based Assessment gathers extensive community input through surveys, stakeholder sessions, and committee meetings to reflect resident needs.

The Resource-Based Assessment identifies public and private resources that enhance park offerings. The Equity-Based Assessment ensures fair distribution of parks by evaluating socioeconomic disparities, environmental conditions, and community health. Lastly, the Access-Based Assessment prioritizes physical access, emphasizing Close-to-Home Parks and the 10-minute walk standard to guarantee convenient access to green spaces for all residents.



GREENprint Master Plan at a Glance

GREENprint Master Plan Structure: The GREENprint Fort Worth: Parks, Recreation, Green space, and Public Realm Master Plan is structured to provide both a strategic roadmap and detailed technical information, ensuring accessibility for decision-makers while preserving depth for planners and researchers.

- **Executive Summary:** presents a high-level overview of the plan's vision, key findings, and transformative initiatives.
- **Chapter 1 Introduction:** outlines the purpose, the planning process, and overarching goals of GREENprint Fort Worth.
- **Chapter 2 History and Past Planning:** reviews past planning efforts, significant milestones, and how historical trends have influenced present and future strategies.
- **Chapter 3 Snapshot of Today:** provides a comprehensive assessment of Fort Worth's current park system, including existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Chapter 4 Public Engagement:** summarizes key findings from surveys, workshops, focus groups, and other outreach activities.
- **Chapter 5 Parks and Public Realm of Tomorrow:** Presents a forward-looking vision for the future of Fort Worth's parks and public spaces.
- **Chapter 6 Transformative Ideas:** Highlights bold, transformative concepts that have the potential to redefine Fort Worth's parks and public realm.
- **Chapter 7 Objectives and Strategies:** Provides a structured approach to implementation by aligning goals with actionable steps.
- **Chapter 8 Park Planning District Recommendations:** Provides recommendations for every Park Planning District.
- **Appendix A Strategic Plan:** Provides the strategic framework that will guide the implementation of the master plan.
- **Appendix B Park and Public Realm Classification System:** Provides the recommended update for the park and public realm typology.
- **Appendix C In-Depth System Assessment:** Presents a comprehensive evaluation of the park system's current conditions

- **Appendix D Park Inventory:** Provides a list of existing parks and facilities, acreage and classification.
- **Appendix E Survey Report:** Provides a breakdown of the statistically valid survey responses.

The GREENprint Master Plan structure ties these elements together, creating a seamless structure that ensures all plan components work in harmony to achieve the city's vision. The analysis of Fort Worth began with an extensive System Assessment, Citywide Visionary Analysis, and input from Community Engagement and the Citywide Initiative, which then established the foundation for the Vision and Mission.

The Goals translate this vision into six focus areas: Thriving Community, Connected System, Vibrant Nature, Common Ground, Premier Destination, and Manageable Resources. These goals serve as the guiding structure for System-Wide Recommendations, which provide actionable objectives, strategies, and specific steps to meet citywide needs.

To address localized priorities, the plan includes Park Planning District Recommendations, ensuring that neighborhood-specific actions reflect unique community needs. The plan culminates with Transformative Ideas, offering bold and innovative concepts to inspire change and position Fort Worth's park system as a national leader in green space planning.

By integrating strategic guidance with technical depth, the GREENprint Fort Worth Master Plan offers a holistic, adaptable approach. This ensures that Fort Worth's park and recreation system continues to thrive, evolving into A City in a Park—where parks and public spaces enhance quality of life, strengthen community connections, and preserve the city's natural heritage for generations to come.

GREENprint Master Plan - Framework

Park & Recreation Department	Vision and Mission Why we exist and what we aspire to do
	Goals How the vision is translated into six focus areas
	Transformative Ideas Bold, innovative moves to reshape Fort Worth's parks and public spaces
	System-wide Recommendations The approach to accomplish the goals city wide
	Park Planning District Recommendations The approach to accomplish the goals for each Park Planning District
GREENprint Vision	
Implementation Plan	Action Steps The steps to accomplish the recommendations

