

CHAPTER

07

Objectives and Strategies

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Photo Credit: City of Fort Worth

Introduction

This chapter outlines the roadmap for achieving Fort Worth's long-term vision for its parks, recreation, and public space system. It is organized into six overarching goals, each representing a foundational theme such as equity, access, environmental resilience, community identity, economic vitality, and operational excellence. These goals reflect the community's values and aspirations, and serve as the guiding pillars for future decision-making.

Each goal is supported by several objectives, which identify more specific focus areas that need to be addressed to realize the broader vision. These objectives cover a wide range of priorities—from enhancing physical access to parks and expanding recreation programming, to promoting environmental stewardship and celebrating local culture.

To achieve each objective, the chapter presents a set of strategies. These strategies describe actionable approaches and methods that the City and its partners can implement. They are designed to be flexible and responsive, drawing on best practices, innovative solutions, and local insights. Each strategy is accompanied by a series of action

steps that provide clear, practical tasks to guide implementation. These steps help translate vision into on-the-ground results by identifying what needs to be done, by whom, and in what time frame.

The graphic below is an example of how each goal is structured, showing the hierarchy from goal to objective, strategy, and action steps. This clear structure helps organize recommendations and ensures accountability throughout the implementation process.

To further support implementation and inspire innovation, the chapter also highlights best practices from other cities and organizations. These real-world examples illustrate successful models and creative solutions that Fort Worth can adapt to local needs and conditions.

The alignment graphic highlights how each of the six goals connects to the common themes identified through community engagement in Chapter 4. These themes reflect input gathered through workshops, focus groups, and surveys, ensuring the plan responds to community priorities.



Thriving Community

Support the community's physical, mental, and emotional well-being through innovative design and programming.

Objective 1: Design an award-winning park and recreation system that enhances the community's quality of life.

Objective 2: Continuously assess community needs and pro-actively plan facilities, recreation, and programs that adapt to evolving needs and trends.

Objective 3: Enhance public health and promote active lifestyles by expanding access to parks, offering diverse recreational programs, and improving facilities for physical activity in parks and public spaces.

Objective 4: Strengthen partnerships with other agencies, non-profit groups, community partners, and the private sector to expand opportunities for programming and joint use of space and facilities.

Objective 5: Position parks to help address complex challenges in the community.



Goal 1 Thriving Community

Objective 1.1: Elevating Fort Worth's Park System to Award-Winning Excellence - Enhancing the Community's Quality of Life.

Great cities are defined by great parks. Fort Worth's parks and recreation system is poised to set a new standard for excellence, delivering not just functional green spaces but truly exceptional public realms that inspire, connect, and enrich the lives of all residents. Through high-quality design, innovative planning, and outstanding project delivery, Fort Worth will transform its park system into one that is not only cherished by the community but also recognized as one of the finest in the nation. By building a legacy of excellence and establishing these high standards, Fort Worth will not only elevate its reputation as a leader in parks and recreation but will also attract greater investment, forge stronger partnerships, and enhance the overall quality of life for its residents.

Through innovative design, strategic investment, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, Fort Worth will build a park system that is as bold and dynamic as the city itself—one that serves as a national model for how parks can shape the future of a thriving, connected, and resilient community.

Strategy 1.1.1: Create a signature park in each Park Planning District, celebrating local history and diversity with exceptional design and programming.

- Use the provided map to evaluate and prioritize potential locations for signature parks based on accessibility, land availability, and alignment with community needs, while considering each site's historical, cultural, and environmental significance.
- Collaborate with renowned planners, architects, and designers to create a visionary design plan for signature parks, featuring immersive play experiences, iconic gathering spaces, and dynamic water elements that inspire connection and exploration.
- Gather input from residents, historians, artists, and cultural organizations through workshops and surveys to ensure the park's design incorporates culturally reflective features, such as public art, amenities, and storytelling elements that showcase the unique identity, history, and values of each district.
- Partner with private developers, non-profit, business campus owners, and philanthropic organizations to secure funding to support signature park development, programming, and long-term maintenance.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE POWER OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Design is more than aesthetics—it is about creating immersive, accessible, and sustainable spaces that foster community pride, improve public health, enhance safety, and stimulate economic growth. **Proximity to parks can increase property values by over 5%**, making them a key driver of neighborhood vitality and economic resilience. **Well-designed parks also play a crucial role in public safety, as neighborhoods adjacent to green spaces have been shown to experience lower rates of violent and property crimes.**

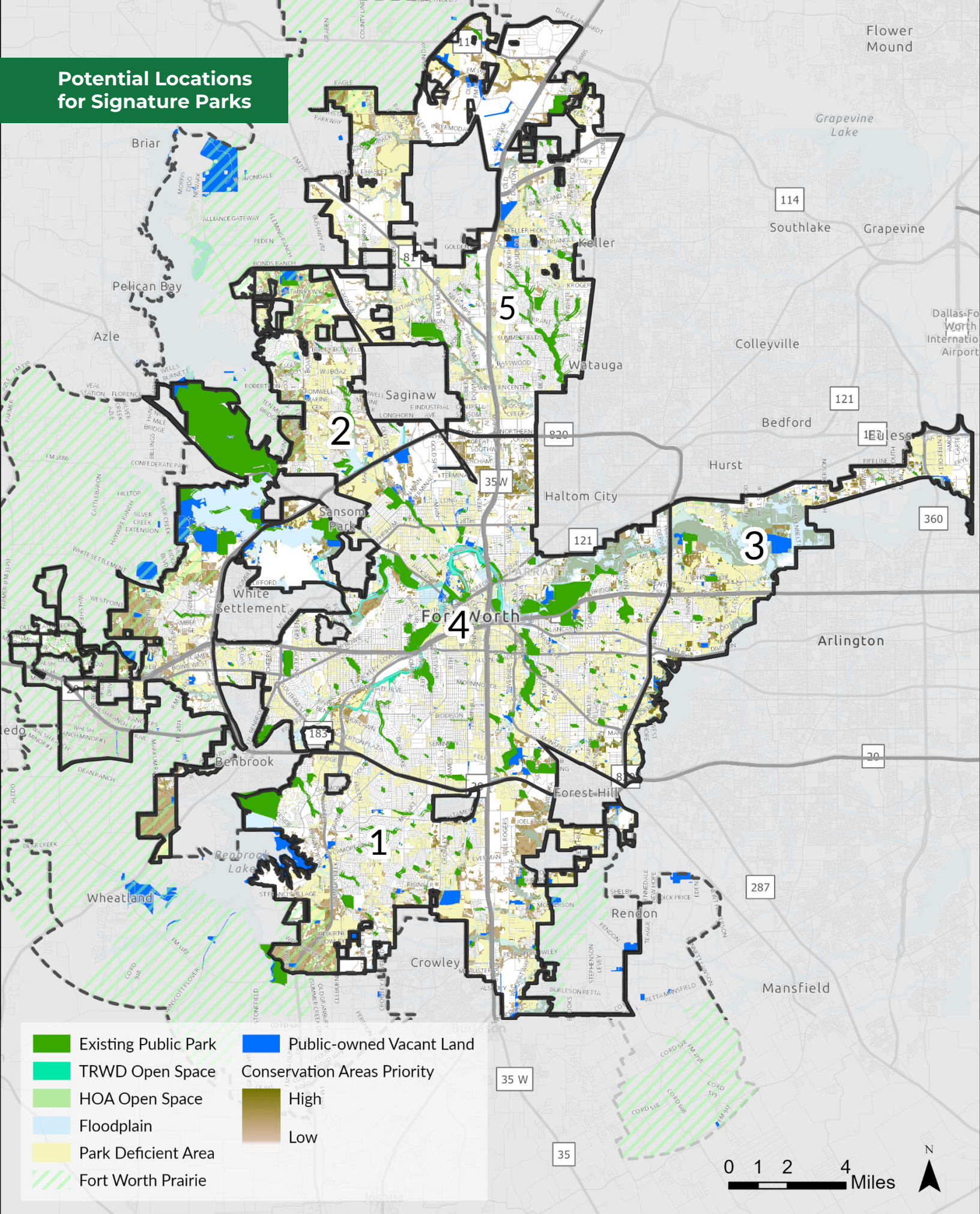
Beyond economic and safety benefits, **parks with walking trails see 80% more users and a 90% increase in physical activity, directly contributing to a healthier, more active community.** Parks should not only meet basic recreational needs but inspire and engage, offering unique experiences that reflect Fort Worth's culture, history, and natural beauty. By incorporating forward-thinking design principles, Fort Worth will craft parks that seamlessly integrate nature, recreation, and urban life, ensuring that every park becomes a destination that enhances the city's identity and quality of life for all residents.

Sources:

Little Tikes Commercial: How Parks Lead to Healthier Cities

BREC: Parks Create Safer Neighborhoods

Potential Locations for Signature Parks



Strategy 1.1.2: Strive for design excellence in the development and renovation or replacement of parks and amenities.

Exceptional parks are more than just green spaces—they are vibrant, engaging destinations that enrich daily life, foster community connection, and celebrate the unique character of Fort Worth. Parks should not only meet basic recreational needs but should inspire and engage, offering unique experiences that reflect the city’s culture, history, and natural beauty.

Achieving design excellence requires a holistic approach to planning and development, ensuring that every park and amenity is thoughtfully crafted to enhance its surroundings, complement existing landscapes, and create seamless connections between built structures and green spaces. Whether renovating existing parks or designing new ones, the following should be considered:

- Sustainable design elements where appropriate. Sustainable design elements may include those made with recycled, salvaged or locally produced materials, those that consume few resources, those that produce or are powered by renewable resources (e.g., solar panels) or those that reduce maintenance and life cycle costs.
- Incorporate unique features such as public art, sculpture gardens, adventure play areas, observation towers, thematic gardens, or water play elements to attract regional and national attention. Where possible introduce digital public art that can be regularly reprogrammed by local artists and tell the stories of local residents and interactive public art that introduces people to each other and transforms strangers into neighbors.
- Design fully inclusive parks with dedicated spaces for all generations and abilities, such as sensory play areas, active teen zones, and quiet spaces for seniors.
- Integrate smart technology into park systems, such as interactive kiosks, app-based navigation tools, and free public Wi-Fi, to enhance the user experience and improve accessibility.
- Partner with local organizations, schools, and businesses to offer a wide variety of community events, festivals, and activities in parks year-round. Seek the use of specialized and specific skills, talents and abilities that partners may have which the City's Park and Recreation Department may not have. Using their specialized skills can help introduce new and exciting events and programs to the community. Additionally, partners may have access to resources, equipment and funding not accessible or currently owned by the City.



BEST PRACTICE

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Evelyn's Park, Bellaire, TX

Evelyn's Park in Bellaire, Texas, showcases **sustainable park design by integrating natural systems, resource efficiency, and community-focused elements**. Native plantings and low-maintenance landscaping reduce water use while supporting biodiversity, creating a resilient ecosystem suited for the Texas climate. To manage stormwater, the park features permeable surfaces, bioswales, and rain gardens, minimizing runoff and flooding.

Beyond its ecological impact, Evelyn's Park is a model for community-driven green spaces, offering flexible recreation areas, educational programs, and cultural events that strengthen social connections and appreciation for nature. By prioritizing sustainability and livability, it sets a benchmark for balancing environmental stewardship with vibrant, people-centric spaces.

Application to Fort Worth

By embracing sustainable design principles, Fort Worth can create parks that enhance climate resilience, conserve resources, and provide dynamic public spaces that support both ecological and community well-being.



Evelyn's Park, Bellaire, TX

Strategy 1.1.3: Develop a Parks, Recreation, Greenspace and Public Realm System That Achieves and Maintains Award-Winning Recognition

An exceptional park, greenspace and public realm system does not go unnoticed. Earning national and state-level awards affirms Fort Worth's leadership in parks and recreation and signals to residents, businesses, and visitors that the city prioritizes quality, sustainability, and community well-being. The City should strive to maintain and achieve the following distinctions at a minimum:

- Maintain CAPRA Accreditation (NRPA) – The gold standard for park and recreation agencies, ensuring Fort Worth's parks meet the highest national benchmarks in quality, service, and operations.
- The National Gold Medal Award (American Academy for Parks and Recreation Administration) – Recognizing excellence in long-term planning, park development, and operational efficiency.
- NRPA Innovation Awards – Celebrating cutting-edge design, sustainability initiatives, and community impact.
- Texas Recreation & Park Society (TRAPS) State Awards – Honoring leadership in park development, conservation, and inclusive programming.

Objective 1.2: Continuously Assess Community Needs & Adapt to a Changing City

A thriving parks and recreation system must be dynamic, responsive, and forward-thinking—continuously evolving to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population. Fort Worth's residents, neighborhoods, and recreational preferences will continue to shift over time, and the City must stay ahead of these changes by regularly assessing community needs and adjusting its offerings accordingly.

As Fort Worth expands and diversifies, the Park and Recreation Department (PARD) must actively engage with residents to understand their evolving priorities. This includes monitoring population growth, generational preferences, cultural influences, and new recreation trends—ensuring that parks, facilities, and programming reflect what residents want and need most.

Strategy 1.2.1: .Develop a public engagement strategy to ensure community input is integrated into any park planning efforts.

Currently, there are no institutionalized structures across the park system to consistently gather resident feedback, which limits the ability to create programming and amenities that are exciting, responsive to gaps, and reflective of surrounding communities. This resulted in "one size fits all" park designs with minimal place-based customization, missing opportunities to create innovative, community-driven spaces. To address these issues, PARD should develop a comprehensive public engagement strategy to ensure meaningful and consistent integration of community input into all park planning efforts.

- Develop stakeholder/steering/advisory committees composed of cross-sections of the City's population in each Park Planning District to provide ongoing place-based input on park and recreation planning. Opportunities to participate in these and other committees should be publicly announced well before the initial planning phases of a project. The announcements should be made through neighborhood organizations, newspapers, schools, libraries, social groups, postings at parks and recreation facilities, businesses and offices, and online social media.
- Partner with the City's Communication & Public Engagement Department to schedule community outreach events and programs at the various parks and recreation facilities. These events will help in obtaining information from residents on recreation programming, park operations/maintenance, amenities, and needs.
- Improve departmental capabilities in community outreach and engagement through the creation and hiring of a public engagement division within the PARD. Work with the City's Human Resources to create new staff positions, such as a Public Engagement Specialist who will be responsible for coordinating and meeting with residents and stakeholders to obtain input on the department's operations and programming.
- Conduct customer service training that will empower all staff members to speak with residents and visitors at the parks and recreation facilities regardless of their position. Explain to all parks and recreation staff that they are the department's ambassadors and should regularly speak with residents and users of the parks system to understand what the public wants from their park system.
- Implement annual surveys to "take the pulse of the system" and find out what is working, what needs to be fixed, what needs to be replaced and where new parks/green spaces/trails are needed. Residents who are not regularly using the parks and recreation system should be encouraged to participate in the surveys to identify why they are not using the parks, trails and facilities and what can be done to get them to use the program and services.



DID YOU KNOW?

FORT WORTH RESIDENTS LOVE THEIR PARKS!

The community and stakeholder engagement process for GREENprint Fort Worth was a dynamic, multi-phase initiative designed to capture diverse voices, priorities, and aspirations for the future of Fort Worth's parks and public spaces. Through public workshops, surveys, pop-up events, and targeted stakeholder discussions, thousands of residents and community leaders actively contributed valuable insights, ensuring that the master plan reflects the needs and desires of the people it serves. Below are some key highlights:

85%

Percentage of residents using Fort Worth parks and recreation facilities, making them the most popular recreational spaces in the city.

TRAILS!

Among all park amenities, trails are the most frequently used facility, with 69% of survey respondents saying they visit them at least weekly or monthly.

90%

Percentage of Residents saying that quality parks and recreational opportunities are "very important" to their overall quality of life.

Source:
Appendix E- Survey Results

- Implement technologies (such as QR codes on signage at parks and recreation facilities) that will allow residents and stakeholders to instantly provide the PARD feedback on programs, events, and facilities. The same technology can be used by the Department to distribute announcements about events, projects, and opportunities for public involvement.

Strategy 1.2.2: Prioritize Community-Driven Recreation Enhancements

A truly impactful parks and recreation system reflects the needs and desires of its residents. Fort Worth must prioritize the development of recreation elements that directly respond to the preferences identified through the Demand-Based Assessment, ensuring that investments align with community expectations and emerging trends. By expanding diverse recreational offerings and strategically enhancing accessibility, the City can cultivate an inclusive, engaging, and future-ready parks system.

Key Community-Identified Priorities:

- **Expand Aquatic Facilities:** Construct additional swimming pools to meet increasing demand, particularly in underserved areas, and explore options for year-round indoor aquatics.
- **Embrace Emerging & Trendy Sports:** Develop new pickleball and disc golf facilities to accommodate the growing demand.
- **Strengthen Trail Networks:** Expand and enhance hiking and biking trails, improving connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and key destinations.
- **Increase Indoor Recreation Spaces:** Develop new community centers, particularly in northern Fort Worth, to provide all-weather recreational and gathering spaces.
- **Offer Multi-Generational Programming:** Create diverse programs tailored to all age groups, ensuring recreational opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.
- **Launch Mobile & Pop-Up Recreation:** Introduce traveling recreation programs featuring temporary pop-up amenities such as pickleball courts, disc golf courses, and modular fitness stations. These mobile programs will bring recreation directly to neighborhoods with limited park access.

By prioritizing these key enhancements, Fort Worth will create a more dynamic, inclusive, and responsive parks and recreation system that evolves with the needs of its residents. Through intentional investment in facilities, programming, and accessibility, the City will strengthen its role as a leader in delivering high-quality, community-driven recreation.

Objective 1.3: Enhancing Public Health & Active Lifestyles Through Parks & Recreation

Parks and recreation are more than just amenities—they are essential components of a healthy, thriving city. Access to well-designed parks, diverse recreational programming, and high-quality fitness infrastructure plays a critical role in physical, mental, and social well-being. By expanding access to parks, improving facilities, and offering inclusive programs, Fort Worth can inspire healthier lifestyles, reduce health disparities, and foster a stronger, more active community.

Strategy 1.3.1: Promote Healthy Daily Habits By Creating Equitable Access to Active Spaces

Recreational benefits shouldn't be confined to individual parks or natural spaces. The City should explore adding recreation-focused amenities throughout the public realm. Examples include benches along sidewalks, parklets replacing on-street parking, gaming tables in neighborhoods, and exercise stations along paths or trails. These enhancements extend the impact of parks and natural spaces into the broader community.

Strategy 1.3.2: Develop and expand outdoor fitness and recreation programs

PARD's programming is heavily tied to outdated indoor facilities, limiting flexibility and hindering the ability to deliver creative and accessible programs. PARD should create a diverse range of fitness and outdoor recreation programs to promote active lifestyles for residents of all ages, abilities, and skill levels. These programs should include targeted activities for specific groups while also fostering multi-generational interactions and opportunities for social connection. Initiatives such as community fitness challenges, sport tournaments, and pop-up fitness sessions held outdoors can increase visibility, inspire participation, and encourage active lifestyle.

- Create flexible, inclusive programs that encourage community participation regardless of skills or abilities.
- Pilot pop-up fitness programs and launch mobile fitness sessions like yoga, aerobics, or boot camps in parks and green spaces, rotating locations to maximize reach and accessibility.
- Increase the number of multipurpose sports courts, walking loops, playgrounds, fitness stations, and outdoor gyms to provide accessible spaces for physical activity. Install exercise equipment near playgrounds so adults can exercise and socialize while their children play.
- Install shaded rest areas, water fountains, and restrooms in parks to support extended outdoor use.
- Develop new community centers in identified areas of need, such



BEST PRACTICE

COLLABORATING WITH SCHOOLS

New York City & TPL

Collaborating with schools to provide park space is an efficient and effective strategy to address park needs. For example, New York City (NYC) Parks has worked collaboratively with the Department of Education and the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit organization that works with communities to create parks and protect land for people, to renovate and open hundreds of school yards to the public during non-school hours through the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program.

TPL completed an analysis in 2019 showing that only 10% of the approximately 100,000 public schools in the United States provide the general public with formal access to schoolyard sites. The study also suggests that America's public-school grounds have the potential to solve the problem of park access for at least 19.6 million people, including 5.2 million children.



Collaborating with Schools, Source: TPL

as northern and eastern Fort Worth and new growth areas to ensure these indoor centers are located within 1 mile of every resident. These facilities promote active lifestyles by offering recreational programs, fitness opportunities, meeting spaces, and venues for community interaction.

Strategy 1.3.3: Partner with health organizations to provide residents with added health benefits when they visit parks and/or participate in recreation programs.

- Partner with health organizations to host events throughout the park system, including mobile health screenings, vaccination clinics, and health workshops.
- Organize public health awareness campaigns in parks about the benefits of physical activity, balanced diets, and healthy lifestyles, using signage, public talks, and workshops. Campaigns should include participation from health professionals as well as representatives of local gyms. The activities and information should be geared to be multi-generational.
- Collaborate with local healthcare providers to expand the park prescription program. For patients struggling with chronic disease or other issues that could be ameliorated by physical activity and time spent in a natural environment, doctors can “prescribe” or recommend they spend time being active in a park or other public space. Time spent in natural or green areas has been shown in many studies to improve health outcomes.
- Track parks and public space usage indicators over time to determine the positive health impacts of public space system improvements. Indicators such as the percentage of adults who bike or engage in active commuting are available as part of routine national research programs (e.g., the American Community Survey) and are recommended by the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Evaluating Progress on Obesity Prevention Efforts. Such indicators can also be triangulated with directly observed and validated data on park or trail use. The System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) results in counts by key demographic characteristics and levels of physical activity and has been used to measure changes in park usage and physical activity levels accompanying renovations.

Strategy 1.3.4: Activate the use of the Trinity River and its tributaries for active recreation by introducing more areas to launch boats, canoes, and kayaks.

- Identify areas along the river that can be used for swimming, water yoga and other water-based activities/programs.

Objective 1.4: Strengthen partnerships with other agencies, non-profit groups, community partners, and the private sector to expand opportunities for programming and joint use of space and facilities.

Fort Worth has many underutilized buildings and vacant areas, though some are privately owned, limiting their use. Partnering with property owners, operators, and managers can open opportunities for joint-use agreements. These agreements enable the park system to extend its services to underserved areas, helping to close gaps identified in the level of service analysis.

Strategy 1.4.1: Partner with subject matter experts such as private sector and non profits to develop new recreation programs

- Partnering with local disc golf and pickleball clubs to hold instructional events and tournaments.
- Explore partnerships with the YMCA, ISDs, and other organizations to expand aquatics programming and lifeguard training opportunities, including both capital investments and shared-use agreements.

Strategy 1.4.2: Seek volunteers from the surrounding communities and non-profit organizations to operate and manage recreation programs.

- Continue to strengthen and expand existing volunteer programs by offering a diverse range of opportunities that cater to various interests, skills, and abilities. Building on current efforts across PARD divisions, volunteer experiences can include tree planting, administrative support, event assistance, and program development.
- Create a community ambassador program where volunteers from the surrounding areas act as liaisons between the park and the local population. Familiar, friendly faces leading programs may draw more participation.

Strategy 1.4.3: Partner with private property owners to increase public access to private parks

- Consider starting with a pilot program for public access, which allows all parties to evaluate the benefits and address any issues before entering into long-term agreements.
- Explore opportunities for HOAs and private property owners to receive tax incentives, grants, or other financial benefits from local or state governments for allowing public access.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

PATHWAY TO RECOVER FROM HOMELESSNESS

Downtown Streets Team, San Jose, CA

This initiative employs unhoused individuals to maintain parks and public spaces in exchange for access to services like case management, housing assistance, and job training.



Downtown Streets Team

Seattle Parks Restroom Access Program, Seattle, WA

Seattle parks introduced 24-hour access to restrooms and hygiene facilities in designated parks for unhoused individuals. The program includes cleaning schedules and security measures to ensure safety for all users.



BEST PRACTICE

FARMERS MARKETS AND PARKS

Clark Park Farmers' Market, Philadelphia

Clark Park Farmers' Market in Philadelphia stands out as a best practice for integrating farmers markets into parks, offering a model for how public spaces can serve as vibrant community hubs. Located in the heart of West Philadelphia, the market has become a centerpiece for local food access, sustainability, and social connection. Open year-round, the market draws residents from diverse backgrounds, providing access to fresh, locally grown produce while supporting regional farmers. Its placement within Clark Park, a beloved green space, creates a seamless blend of recreation and commerce, encouraging visitors to enjoy the park's amenities while shopping for fresh food. The market also enhances park activation, making it a safer, more inviting space while fostering a strong sense of community.



Clark Park Farmers' Market ,
Source: University City District

Strategy 1.4.4: Strengthen partnerships with local school districts, colleges, and universities to permit equilateral use of parks, green spaces, sports fields, playgrounds, and recreation facilities by both the public and the school districts.

- Establish formal agreements that outline the shared use of parks, fields, and facilities. These agreements should define terms for equitable access, scheduling, maintenance responsibilities, liability, and cost-sharing.
- Encourage the development of parks and green spaces as part of expansion projects for schools, colleges and universities.
- Develop shared programming that benefit both students and the public, such as after-school sports leagues, fitness classes, outdoor learning programs, or summer camps.

Strategy 1.4.5: Continue to work with the Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD), the Army Corp of Engineers, and FEMA on the use of the Trinity River, its creeks, tributaries, and floodplains as green spaces to be enjoyed by the public.

Strategy 1.4.6: Partner with developers of new residential and commercial developments to construct multi-modal trails and extend existing trails to service nearby neighborhoods.

Strategy 1.4.7: Work with the community partners to explore areas of opportunities to host programs in unconventional, underutilized spaces and where service gaps exist as identified by the Level of Service and Opportunity Areas maps.

Objective 1.5: Position parks to help address complex challenges in the community

Strategy 1.5.1: Leverage parks as community support hubs for at-risk population.

Parks and public spaces, valued for their accessibility and openness, often attract individuals experiencing homelessness, a challenge acknowledged by the PARD and raised by the community. While this highlights the inclusivity of parks, it can sometimes affect the broader community's use and enjoyment of park amenities. PARD should take thoughtful and strategic actions to address this concern effectively.

- Work with multidisciplinary teams, including social workers, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and community advocates, to create coordinated support systems that connect at-risk populations with essential resources and support.

- In-house trained social workers at community centers and create a specialized team to assist those in need with referrals and support.
- Use parks to develop programs and activities for at-risk populations to help deliver services, employment, and educational opportunities.
- Develop and enforce fair park rules that recognize unhoused individuals as valid users, pairing enforcement with educational initiatives to reduce bias.

Strategy 1.5.2: Collaborate with the City of Fort Worth's Neighborhood Services Department and other housing partners to enhance parks and recreation opportunities near existing affordable housing locations.

- Work with Neighborhood Services and housing partners to develop a shared GIS map identifying existing affordable housing developments and overlay park access, amenities, and trail connectivity.
- Use assessment findings to prioritize capital improvements, park expansion, or programming near housing sites lacking adequate recreational access.
- Offer targeted recreation programs, events, and wellness activities in parks near affordable housing, ensuring they meet the needs of diverse, multigenerational residents.
- Partner with housing managers and neighborhood leaders to co-host pop-ups or listening sessions in or near affordable housing sites to gather resident input on park needs.

Strategy 1.5.3: Organize farmers markets, community gardens, and community-supported agriculture programs that bring healthy foods closer to residents dealing with food insecurity.

- Assess existing parks and underutilized green spaces for their potential to host farmers markets, community gardens, or community-supported agriculture pickup sites—especially in areas with limited access to fresh food.
- Develop new gardens or expand existing ones in collaboration with local residents, offering plots, tools, and resources to support neighborhood-based food production.
- Coordinate with local vendors and community groups to host regular farmers markets at parks or community centers, making them accessible through transit and walkable connections.
- Collaborate with schools, food banks, public health agencies, and nonprofits to co-host programs and events, maximizing impact and community trust.

Strategy 1.5.4: Design parks that integrate into the city's emergency preparedness plan

- Work with Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to designate key parks as to be used in the overall emergency preparedness plan including using them as temporary shelters, stormwater detention, or storm damage storage areas
- Explore the role of parks in addressing urban heat island and providing cool areas for residents by increasing shade and cooling opportunities at parks.



Envisioning a Thriving Community: A vibrant public space where recreation, connection, and wellness come together





Connected System

Create a dynamic, connected network of high-quality parks, public spaces, and trails that unite the community and support the mobility and recreational needs of all Fort Worth residents.

Objective 1: Provide an accessible, well-distributed and balanced parks system throughout the entire community.

Objective 2: Connect the parks system, seamlessly into the urban public realm and the community within and beyond the parkland.

Objective 3: Enhance public awareness of parks, recreation facilities, and programs through social media, multicultural public outreach, and developing a comprehensive branding & communications plan.



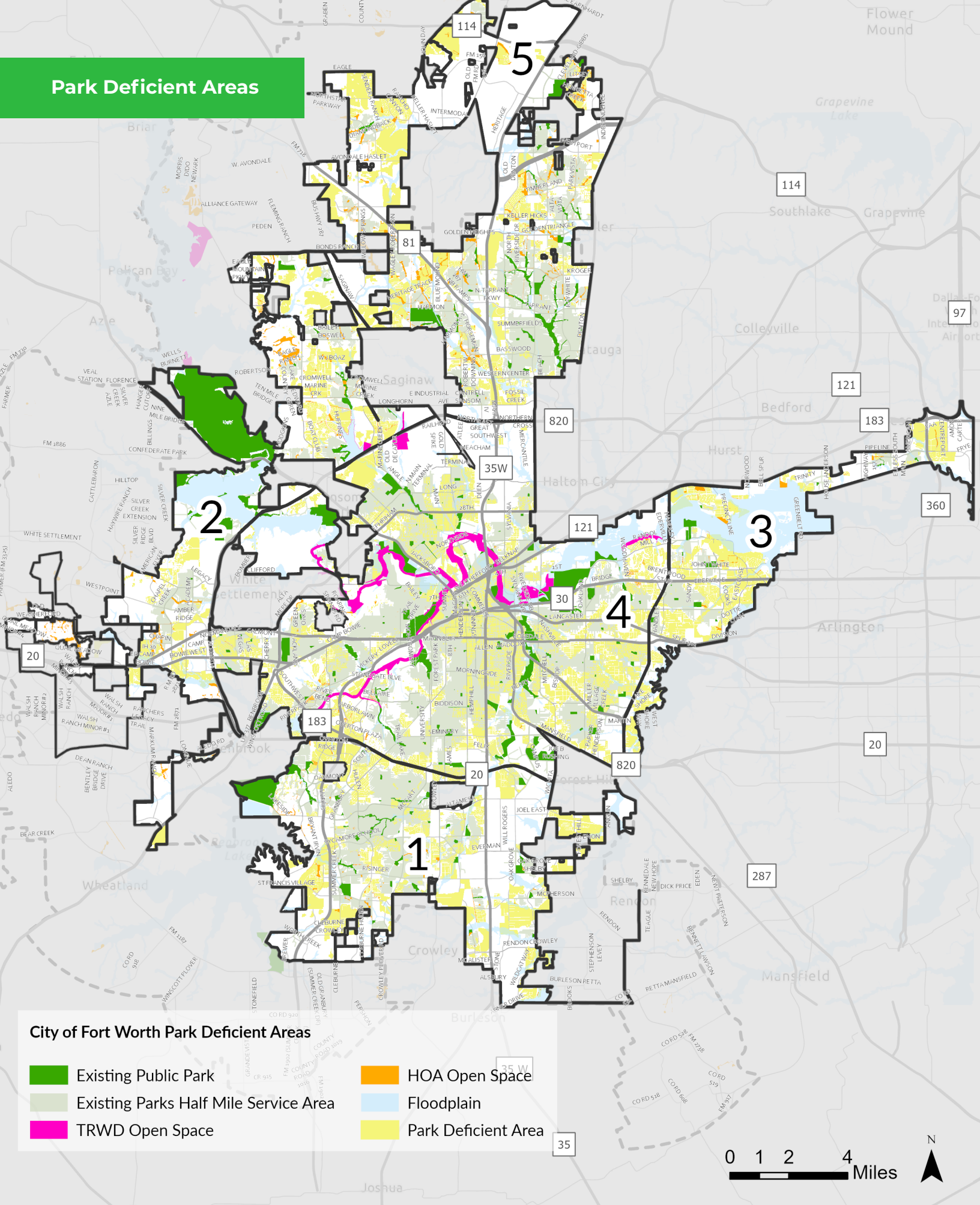
Goal 2 Connected System

Objective 2.1: Provide an accessible, well-distributed and balanced parks system throughout the entire community.

Strategy 2.1.1: Champion sustainable and equitable parkland expansion to enhance the quality and accessibility of the park system for all.

- Increase the amount of parkland equitably throughout the City, with a focus on underserved areas.
- Fort Worth residents identified access to parkland as a high priority. Currently, the Acreage Level of Service (LOS) for close-to-home parks in Fort Worth is 1.88 acres per 1,000 population. If parkland is not expanded in the next 10 years, this Acreage LOS will drop. Fort Worth would have to expand parkland by an additional 2500 acres by the year 2030.
- Prioritizing investments should consider the disproportionate needs of the Park Planning District, with Districts 1, 3, and 4 having the greatest need for parkland. Use the "Park Deficient Area" map to prioritize interventions.
- Expand parkland and green spaces by advocating and supporting ongoing initiatives, including Mayor Parker's pledge of the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) 10-minute walk campaign, Good-Natured Greenspace Initiative, Open Space Program and Riparian Area initiative.
- Expand parkland and green spaces through partnerships with ISDs, HOAs, TRWD, TXDOT, Trinity River Authority, Tarrant County.
- The design standards and guidelines should be integrated into the City's ordinances and codes for private development (both residential and non-residential) and made accessible through the Development Services website, which provides links to all related development requirements. The manual should establish standards such as:
 - * Ensuring public parks are located within a maximum 10-minute walking distance of residential subdivisions.
 - * Defining criteria for the maximum grade of usable areas.
 - * Requiring that existing trees on a site be preserved to the greatest extent.
 - * Specifying required park amenities.
 - * Limiting the acceptance of parkland within federally designated floodplains to a maximum of 25% of the total required parkland dedication.

Park Deficient Areas



City of Fort Worth Park Deficient Areas

- Existing Public Park
- Existing Parks Half Mile Service Area
- TRWD Open Space
- HOA Open Space
- Floodplain
- Park Deficient Area



BEST PRACTICE

SUPPORT FOR NEW PARKS IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program

As cities are trying to close the park equity gap this Federal Program can help.

The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program is a best practice for supporting new parks in disadvantaged areas by providing federal grants to urban communities. Administered by the National Park Service, the ORLP focuses on creating or improving parks in economically distressed neighborhoods, enhancing access to green spaces for underserved populations. The program prioritizes projects that address community needs, improve recreational opportunities, and foster connections to nature. For example, Seattle used the funding to purchase long-vacant parcels in an underserved community and transform them into a vibrant park.



Urban Village Park in Seattle

* Excluding land intended primarily for non-public uses—such as stormwater drainage, detention, utility easements, rights-of-way, parking, or vehicular access areas—unless it is accessible and functional for public use.

- Explore using public rights-of-way as pedestrian-focused plazas, parklets, and recreational spaces, particularly in high-density neighborhoods where larger parcels of land may not be available.
- Pocket parks, plazas, urban parks, and parklets address the needs of residents in densely urbanized areas like Urban Villages by providing accessible, engaging, and comfortable social spaces. These small-scale parks increase access to green spaces, repurpose underutilized land, and contribute to neighborhood revitalization. By reintroducing pocket green areas, they reduce heat islands, manage stormwater, improve air quality, and offer shaded areas for gatherings and safe play spaces for children, enhancing both physical and social health in urban neighborhoods.
- Leverage stormwater infrastructure to expand parks and green spaces.
- Integrate stormwater infrastructure and drainage ways into the park system to create multi-functional green spaces that provide recreational opportunities while supporting sustainable water management. Transform these areas into parks, trails, and natural habitats to enhance flood resilience, improve water quality, and expand access to recreational facilities. Use the following map to identify potential areas where stormwater infrastructure can be reimagined as part of the green space network, prioritizing locations based on community needs and environmental impact.
- Use the following map to identify and activate vacant or underutilized publicly-owned land for recreational use and green space development where parkland dedication and/or acquisition is not feasible.



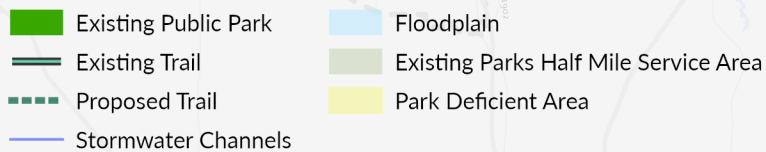
Stormwater Channels, Source: Trinity River Confluence Master Plan

Stormwater Infrastructure

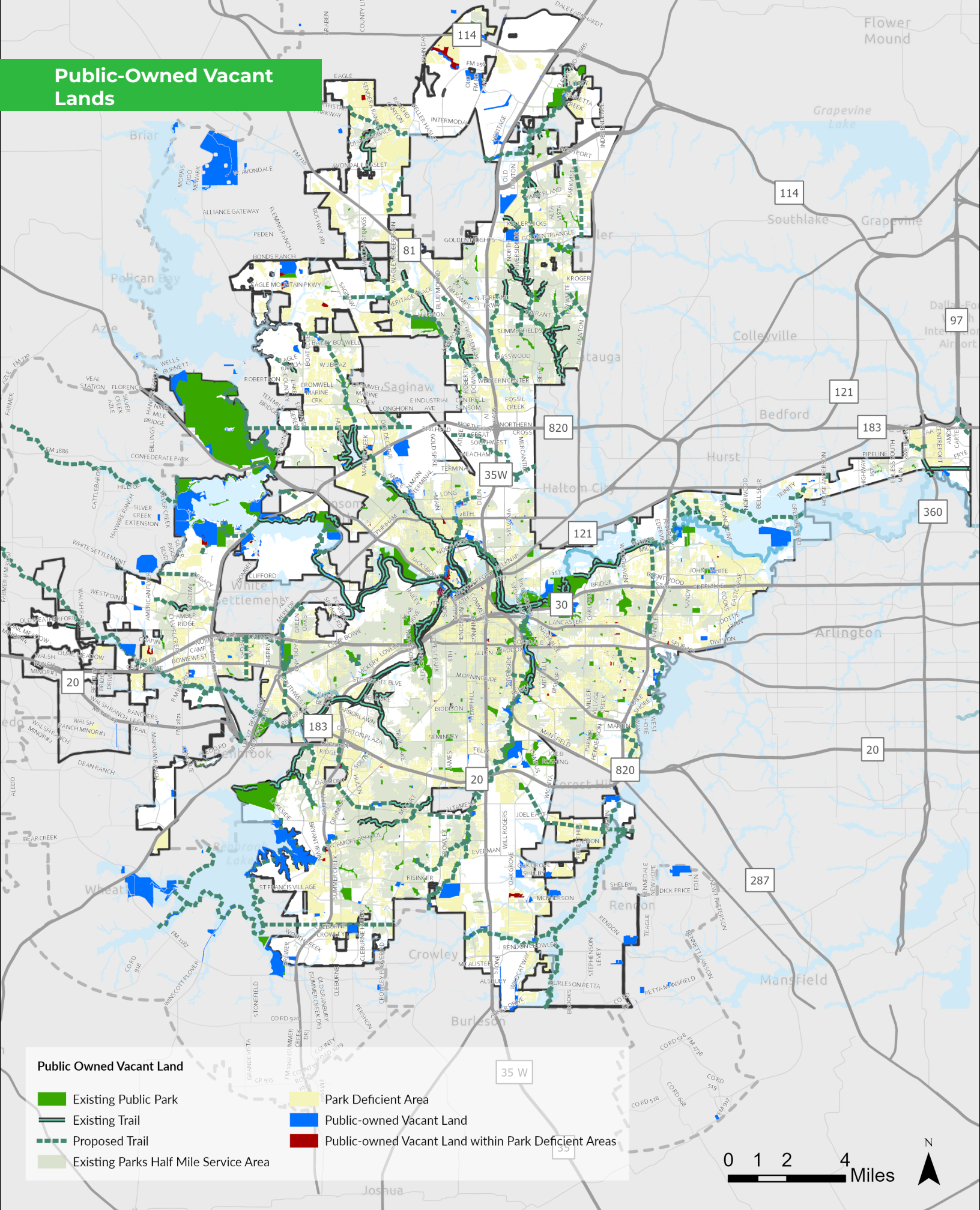
Existing Public Park
Existing Trail
Proposed Trail
Stormwater Channels
Floodplain
Existing Parks Half Mile Service Area
Park Deficient Area

0 1 2 4 Miles

N



Public-Owned Vacant Lands



Objective 2.2: Connect the parks system, seamlessly into the urban public realm and the community within and beyond the parkland.

Parks are just one component of the broader public realm. Expanding trails and pathways beyond the park system is a powerful way to extend the benefits of parks and recreation to all residents and stakeholders. This approach creates an accessible, seamless park and public realm network where stepping outside immediately connects people to the city's amenities and experiences.

Strategy 2.2.1: Develop high-quality pedestrian and bicycle connections to parks, recreation facilities, and natural areas.

Fort Worth residents have repeatedly identified parks and trails connectivity as one of the highest-priority needs over the last decade. The City of Fort Worth has responded to this need in various ways. The City completed the Active Transportation Plan in 2019. This plan identifies a multitude of projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to parks and natural areas. Move A Million Plan (M1M) and Vision Zero Safety Action Plan are other ongoing initiatives to enhance and support safe access to parks and other facilities. PARD should continue to advocate and support implementing these projects that maximize pedestrian and bicycle connection to parks, recreation facilities, and water bodies.

Top THREE facilities for PARD to prioritize over the next five years (Survey Results):



- Expand the existing trail system and fill critical gaps in the trail network to provide continuous and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists to neighborhoods, parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities. ATP encourages that nearby trails or extensions are considered as new developments are approved. To aid in this effort, the plan calls for:
 - * Subdivisions provide connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists to adjacent ATP facilities and between neighborhoods.
 - * Subdivisions provide an internal circulation plan that considers bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.
 - * Streets should be designated with appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to convey residents to parks, schools, shopping areas, and other neighborhoods.



BEST
PRACTICE

SUPPORTING TRAILS

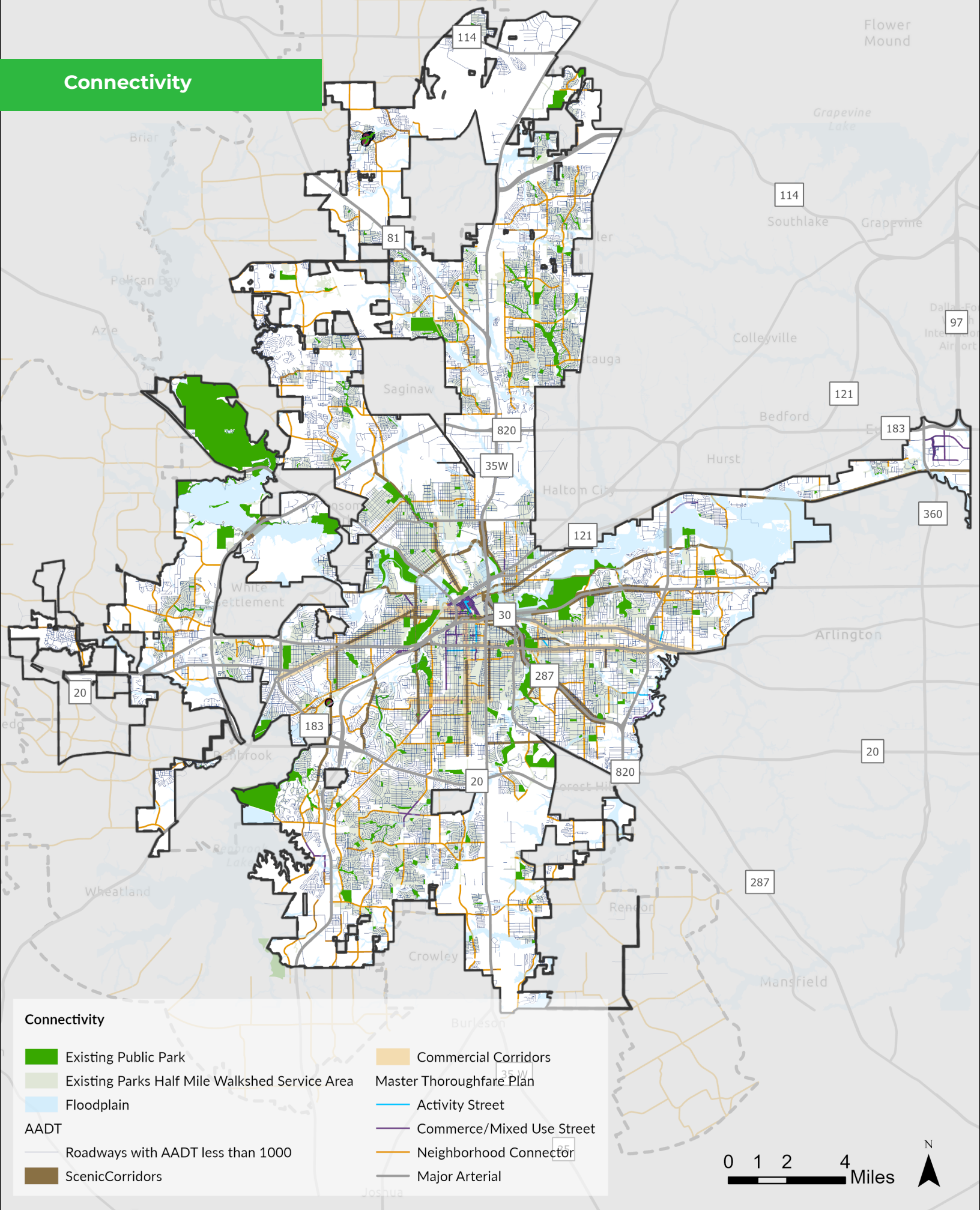
San Antonio, TX

San Antonio's Howard W. Peak Trail System exemplifies a best practice for supporting trails due to its innovative funding mechanism, community engagement, and sustainable growth. The use of a 1/8th cent sales tax ensures a dedicated, reliable funding source for the development and maintenance of the trail network. Additionally, the Trail Watch volunteer program strengthens community involvement, fostering a sense of ownership among residents while promoting safety and stewardship. This combination of funding, maintenance, and public participation has enabled the trail system to expand to 65 miles, demonstrating a replicable model for sustainable trail development and community connectivity.



Leon Greenway North, San Antonio

Connectivity



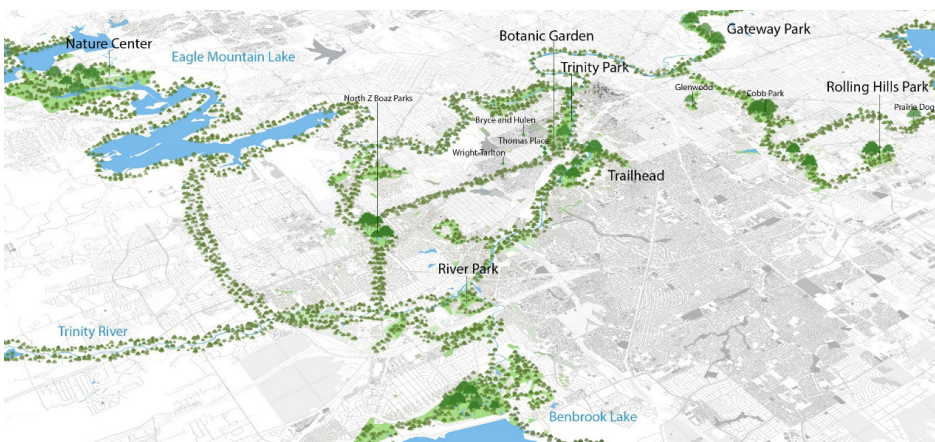
- Establish a network of interconnected complete streets, corridors, and public realms that foster greater pedestrian and active transportation mobility throughout the city.

This can be achieved through collaboration with the Transportation & Public Works Department to transform roadways and underutilized spaces into multi-use corridors that support pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized modes of transportation. Use the following map, which highlights roadways with potential to serve as pedestrian and cycling connections to parks (from the master thoroughfare plan), revitalized commercial corridors and scenic corridors (from the comprehensive plan), and roadways with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of fewer than 1,000 vehicles per day, to identify underutilized streets suitable for transformation.

- Additionally, enhance sidewalks and parkways with park-like features and amenities, such as benches, gaming tables, picnic areas, games painted on sidewalks, and public art installations. These tactics elevate the mobility network beyond transportation, while extending parks beyond their physical boundaries, creating a vibrant and interconnected public realm for all.
- Transform underused public infrastructure, such as utility corridors, into green spaces or trail connections to cost-effectively expand the network.
- Leverage the Trinity River as a Central Connector.

The Trinity River and its tributaries—including West Fork, Clear Fork, Marine Creek, and Sycamore Creek—along with drainageways, provide a natural framework to integrate Fort Worth's park system with the urban public realm and surrounding communities. These corridors connect neighborhoods, retail areas, and key destinations while supporting pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly networks that minimize interaction with motorized traffic.

Enhancing these routes with pocket parks, seating, water fountains, and cultural elements such as signage, public art, and playscapes fosters neighborhood identity and creates vibrant, interactive pathways. By aligning with the "spine and ribs" system



Inspiring rendering for a network of interconnected complete streets, green corridors, and public realms



BEST PRACTICE

BEST PRACTICE: RIVER AS A CENTRAL CONNECTOR

Chattanooga TN

The Chattanooga Riverwalk is an exemplary model of leveraging a river as a central connector, integrating over 16 miles of trails along the Tennessee River to connect parks, cultural landmarks, neighborhoods, and commercial hubs. It integrates neighborhoods, commercial hubs, and green spaces, making the river a unifying feature of the city.

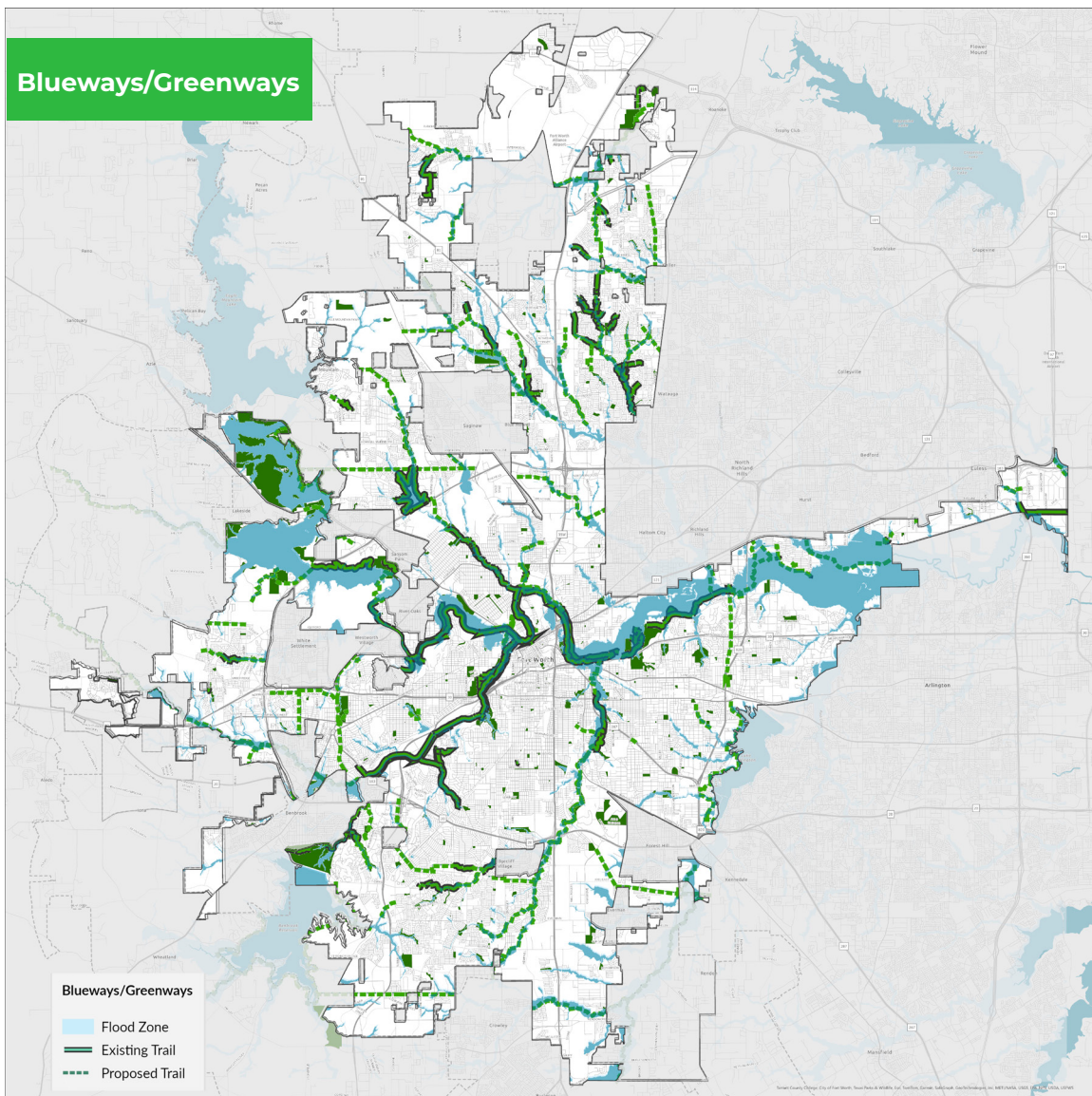


Chattanooga Riverwalk

outlined in the Active Transportation Plan, these natural corridors can seamlessly connect parks and public spaces, enriching the city's public realm.

To achieve this vision, PARD should continue collaborating with the Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD) to advocate for and support the implementation of the Trinity River Strategic Master Plan (Confluence). Priority projects, including the proposed trail system and developments along the Upper West Fork, Clear Fork, Lower West Fork, Marine Creek, Sycamore Creek, and West Fork East, should be advanced, as highlighted in the following map.

- Map out major parks, green spaces, and community hubs to prioritize connections between them.
- Advocate for regional trails (DFW Discovery Trail and others) to be connected to Fort Worth trails.
- Explore a role for the participation of the PARD in the Transportation & Public Works Department project selection process for capital projects to submit to the North Central Texas Council of Governments for federal funding opportunities.



Strategy 2.2.2: Ensure universal and safe access to parks and recreation facilities.

- Improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure leading to parks/green spaces/recreation facilities by including and improving safe street crossings, sidewalks, and dedicated bike lanes.
- Establish multiple pedestrian access points along park edges, integrating them with sidewalk and trail networks to ensure seamless connections to park amenities.
- Develop and implement a Cool Corridor Program to create shaded, pedestrian-friendly walkways or trails along arterial streets that provide safe and comfortable passage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. These corridors, spanning one-quarter to half-mile segments, will feature natural and engineered shade combined with temperature-lowering design elements, such as vegetation, reflective materials, and water features to support safe access to parks and recreation facilities.
- Work with the Transportation & Public Works Department, Army Corp of Engineers, non-profit organizations (e.g.. Streams & Valleys) and others to eliminate or mitigate physical barriers to green space access.
- Physical barriers such as creeks, major roadways, railways, and hazardous utility easements can deter access, leading individuals to avoid these sites. These barriers also contribute to inequities, cutting off neighborhoods from the benefits of parks and green spaces. Collaborating with other agencies and property owners to address these challenges is key to ensuring equitable access for all.
- Ensure all parks and recreational facilities have ADA-compliant pathways, entrances, and parking. Install smooth, wide paths that accommodate wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers, with ramps at park entrances and key areas.
- Adopt accessibility standards for park and recreation facilities and assets. These may follow ADA/PROWAG (Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines) guidelines or may exceed them, based on Park and Recreation Department policy desires and available resources.
- Develop an ADA transition plan and updating inventory of non-accessible facilities—such as community centers, restrooms, and pavilions—and equipment, including playsets, picnic tables, and exercise stations, within City Parks. Identify sites and facilities requiring upgrades and incorporate them into the Capital Improvement Plan to align with the accessibility guidelines established by the Park and Recreation Department.
- Coordinate with the Transportation & Public Works Department on its ADA Transition Plans and PROWAG implementation efforts and identify locations where both departments' funds and resources may be combined for more efficient project delivery.



BEST PRACTICE

INCLUSIVE PARKS

Lawrenceburg, IN

The Arch Street Park in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, exemplifies best practices in inclusive park design by going beyond ADA compliance to create a space that is welcoming and engaging for individuals of all abilities. Its design includes sensory play zones, adaptive swings, and universally accessible playground equipment, enabling children with diverse physical, cognitive, and sensory needs to participate equally in play and fostering social interaction among all users. The park features enhanced accessibility elements such as smooth pathways, wheelchair-accessible surfaces, and barrier-free entrances, accommodating not only children but also caregivers with disabilities. Community input shaped the park's development, ensuring it meets the needs of its users while promoting a sense of ownership and inclusivity.



Ash Street Park, more than access

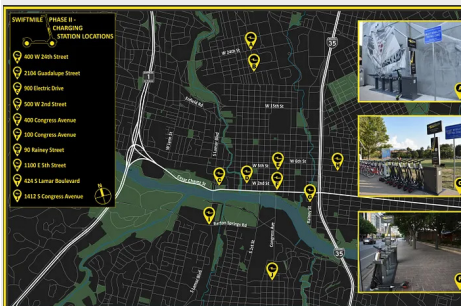


BEST PRACTICE

MICRO-MOBILITY HUBS AND PARKS

Austin, TX

Austin's Shared Micromobility Program is a best practice in integrating micro-mobility services to enhance access to parks and natural areas. The city strategically places e-bike and e-scooter docking stations near parks, trails, and green spaces, ensuring seamless connectivity for residents and visitors. These stations are integrated with public transit, creating a cohesive transportation network that supports active and sustainable travel.



Mobility hub locations in Austin, TX



Strategy 2.2.3: Provide access to micro-mobility services at/or near parks and natural areas.

Micro-mobility, including e-bikes and scooters, has rapidly gained popularity, encouraging more people to bike and scooter to parks and recreation areas. PARD should prioritize the Active Transportation Plan, focusing on facilities that enhance park access, as shown in the following map.

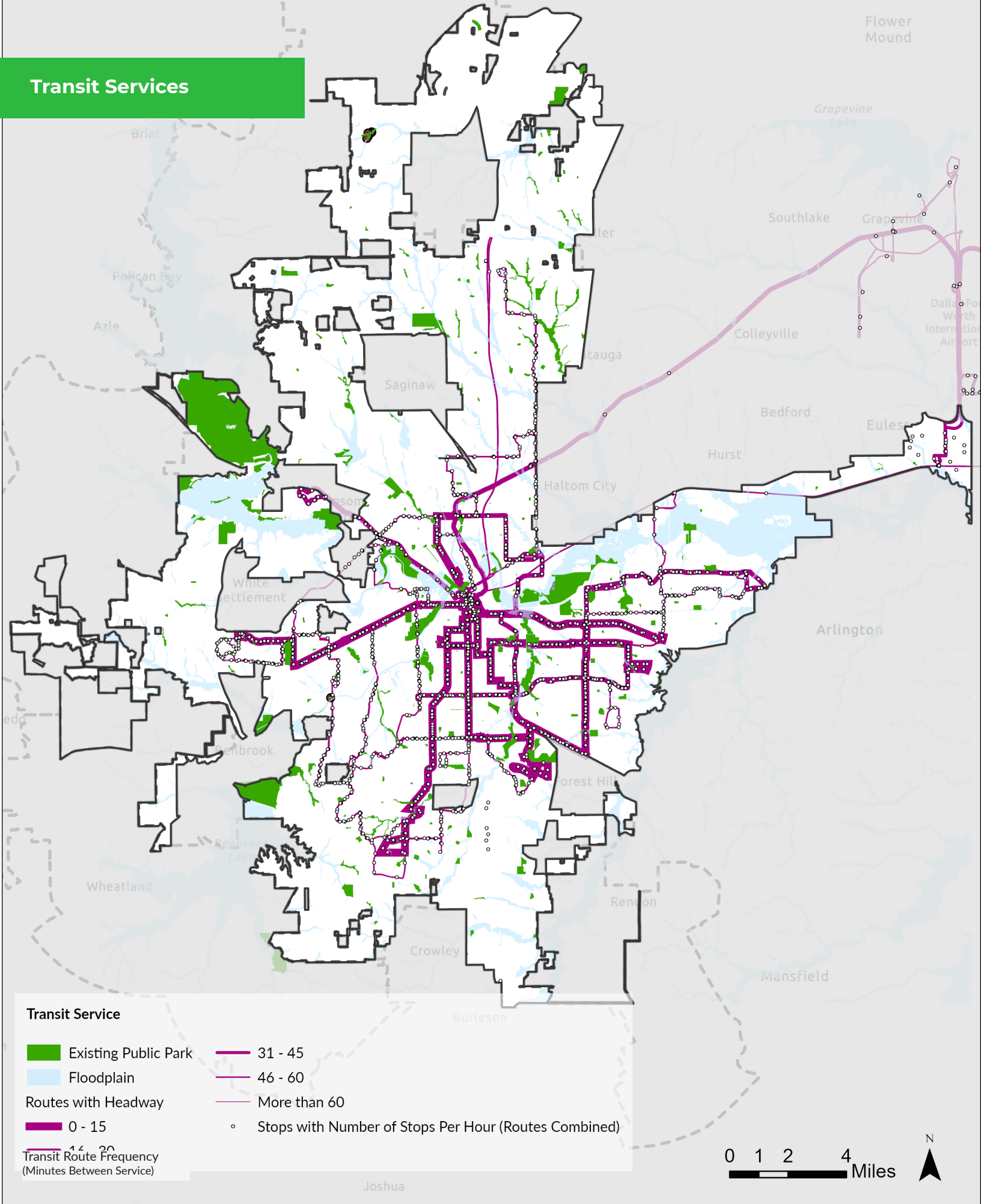
- Identify ready candidate locations for installing full-service hubs (to include electrical supply for station equipment, accessible or accessible-ready site locations for construction of structures and hard surfaces, and connections to public streets, trails, or internal park paths).
- Develop a usage reporting plan with the Transportation & Public Works Departments and other operator partners to understand system performance for mobility hubs within or adjacent to PARD properties and assets, and identify policy steps for relocation of hubs that are not performing on a level expected with overall visitor numbers and attendance of their related facilities.

Strategy 2.2.4: Provide Transit, Paratransit, and Shared Mobility Access to Key Parks and Events

As the following map highlights, central Fort Worth parks are generally well-served by transit, but outlying parks—such as the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, Alliance, and Buck Sansom Park—along with areas with infrequent service (longer headways), continue to face significant accessibility challenges. Enhancing equitable access citywide will require improving transit frequency and connectivity, and integrating multimodal options such as bike share and scooters.

- Identify transit stops within $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of community and regional parks.
- Coordinate with the Transportation & Public Works Department and Trinity Metro on service development, planning, and capital projects that support transit service. Identify strategies for park assets having a greater role in ridership forecasts, stop and station location, and service alignments.
- Coordinate with Trinity Metro on its paratransit service delivery and rider needs. Identify opportunities where the Park and Recreation Department facilities could serve as locations for commonly accessed services using paratransit. This may include healthcare services, shopping for essential needs and items, and access to faith-based or social support services.
- Jointly study operational funding models with Trinity Metro to understand where PARD resources may help to supplement Trinity Metro operations and offset the need for any similar park and recreation services or other services related to park access.
- Reference and support Fort Worth Bike Sharing and explore opportunities for integrating bike and scooter infrastructure near parks and public spaces, especially those not easily reached by fixed-route transit.

Transit Services





BEST PRACTICE

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDINGS

Seattle, WA

The Seamless Seattle Pedestrian Wayfinding Program exemplifies best practices in urban navigation by integrating cohesive design, accessibility, and technology to enhance the pedestrian experience. With uniform signage featuring clear symbols, high-contrast text, and tactile elements, the system prioritizes inclusivity and ease of use. Strategically placed at transit stops, intersections, and pedestrian corridors, the signs connect key destinations such as parks, neighborhoods, and cultural landmarks. Interactive kiosks and digital displays offer real-time updates, while app integrations provide personalized routes, encouraging active transportation and reducing car dependency.



Strategy 2.2.5: Ensure adequate parking for high-volume parks.

- Provide well-planned parking options near parks that attract large numbers of visitors from across the city, while prioritizing sustainable transportation alternatives. Focus on integrating parking with multi-modal access points, such as bike racks, transit stops, and pedestrian pathways, to support diverse transportation choices and minimize reliance on cars.
- Create a communications and outreach plan to property owners of any parking not owned by the PARD (which may include public right-of-way parking managed by Transportation & Public Works) to begin discussions about their parking use and potential shared parking arrangements.

Objective 2.3: Enhance public awareness of parks, recreation facilities, and programs through social media, multicultural public outreach, and developing a comprehensive branding & communications plan.

Strategy 2.3.1: Develop and implement a consistent signage and wayfinding system.

Create a unified wayfinding and branding strategy for the park and recreation system to enhance navigation, accessibility, and visibility. This strategy should include consistent signage across all parks, trails, and facilities, incorporating branded design elements that reflect the City's character and values. Wayfinding tools, such as directional signs, maps, and digital platforms, should guide users to and within parks while highlighting nearby amenities and connections.

Develop appropriate design concepts that improve visibility and strengthen the park system's identity. Integrate branding into park entrances, communication materials, and outreach efforts to foster a sense of community pride and encourage greater use of recreational resources.

- Identify strategic locations for signage installation.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment to identify strategic locations for signage installation that maximize visibility, accessibility, and impact. Prioritize areas with high foot or vehicle traffic, such as park entrances, trailheads, intersections of major trails, and community gathering spaces.
- Enhance the signage system by integrating interactive digital displays at recreation facilities, parks, and throughout the public realm. These dynamic elements should provide real-time information on events, programs, and community news, complementing traditional signage with engaging, up-to-date content.

Strategy 2.3.2: Implement a multi-pronged approach to increasing awareness of programs and services using traditional printed media, radio, and digital strategies.

Lack of awareness is a key barrier to participation, with many residents citing “I don’t know what is being offered” as a top reason for limited use. While no single communication method can address all awareness challenges, a strategically focused marketing, outreach, and branding plan that leverages multiple platforms is essential to improving public awareness and engagement.

- Enhance web-based and digital platforms to improve access to park information.

Provide real-time, user-friendly and accessible information on parks, recreation programs, and facilities through an improved city website, mobile apps, and social media. Include details such as available amenities, trail connections, and pavilions, alongside a search function to help users quickly find parks that meet their needs. Use social media for real-time updates on events and activities, and integrate mobile apps with geolocation and interactive features to enhance the user experience. These tools ensure convenient access to park information and improve community engagement.

Strategy 2.3.3: Develop strategies for tailored and effective community engagement, communication and partnerships.

Enhance web-based and digital platforms to improve access to park information.

- Establish a Park Planning District (PPD) Manager role for each district to serve as the primary liaison between residents and the Park and Recreation Department. The PPD Manager will be responsible for identifying and communicating community needs and priorities to department leadership and city officials, ensuring that each district's unique demands are effectively addressed.
- Develop periodic public meetings in each of the Park Planning Districts to gather feedback from the residents on the existing services being provided, new services that they would like to see, and recommendations for new parks and recreation facilities.
- Develop teen council to involve teens in shaping recreation programs, fostering leadership, mentoring, and ownership of activities they help design.
- Advertise program development opportunities to recruit contract instructors to inspire neighborhood residents to develop and lead recreation programs at local parks and recreation facilities.
- Develop professional advocacy programming to provide children with information and hands-on experiences in Provide children and young adults with hands-on experiences in park-related careers like Urban Forestry, Preservation, Planning, Maintenance, and Recreation.



BEST
PRACTICE

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Westminster, CO

The City of Westminster, CO, exemplifies best practices for using social media to enhance public awareness of parks and recreation facilities through its innovative monster egg hunt campaign. By crafting a creative narrative about mysterious eggs found at Standley Lake Regional Park, the city captured public attention and fostered engagement through the hashtag #StandleyMonster, generating significant social media buzz, including over 30,000 views on one video. This campaign effectively bridged virtual engagement with real-world participation by encouraging residents to visit the park, search for eggs, and redeem certificates at the nature center, boosting both visitation and trail usage. The fictional Westminster Enquirer Facebook page extended the storytelling, creating a dynamic and interactive experience. This creative approach showcases how cities can leverage social media, storytelling, and community interaction to promote parks and recreation, engage diverse audiences, and increase public involvement.



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Visualizing a Connected System: Linking Fort Worth's green spaces through a continuous network of parks, trails, and natural corridor.





Vibrant Nature

Cultivate natural spaces that enhance ecosystems, foster community connections, and build resilience by integrating the natural environment into Fort Worth's park and recreation system.

Objective 1: Promote and foster stewardship that protects, preserves, and enhances the natural environment through coordinated management of green infrastructure and fosters community interaction, biodiversity, and resilience.

Objective 2: Connect people to nature through immersive and educational experiences and increased awareness of resiliency, water resources, and benefits of ecological biodiversity.

Objective 3: Adopt a holistic and synergistic approach to develop nature-based solutions within the park system and city's public realm.

Objective 4: Enhance the Trinity River, its watersheds, tributaries, and lakes as interconnected natural and recreational assets that showcase Fort Worth's ecosystems and foster community enjoyment.



Goal 3 Vibrant Nature

Objective 3.1: Promote and foster stewardship that protects, preserves, and enhances the natural environment through coordinated management of green infrastructure and fosters community interaction, biodiversity, and resilience.

The City of Fort Worth is projected to surpass a population of 1.3 m by 2050. As residential and non-residential development accelerates, the natural environment faces increasing pressures. To balance growth with sustainability, it is vital for the City to take proactive measures to protect and preserve its remaining natural spaces.

These spaces are essential for safeguarding native plants and animals while also reducing greenhouse gas effects and minimizing negative impacts on residents' quality of life. Preserving natural areas helps combat urban heat islands, improve air quality, and lower emissions, ensuring a healthier and more resilient community for future generations.

Strategy 3.1.1: Collaborate daily with the City's dedicated Green Space Leadership Team to ensure coordinated planning, implementation, and stewardship of natural assets.

Through this ongoing partnership, PARD aligns park initiatives with citywide sustainability goals, drives cross-departmental collaboration, and advances the long-term protection and management of green infrastructure.

- Establish an organizational structure with clear roles, staffing, and resource commitments.
- Identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities across departmental green infrastructure efforts.
- Secure interdepartmental consensus to sustain daily collaboration and advance shared goals for sustainability and natural resource stewardship.

Strategy 3.1.2: Leverage the expansion of parks, recreation, and the public realm to safeguard green spaces and natural features.

This strategy aligns seamlessly with City initiatives like "Good Natured" and the Open Space Plan. As Fort Worth continues to grow, prioritizing the preservation and protection of green spaces is essential to maintaining a high quality of life, a core value identified by the public during the 2023 workshops. This strategy safeguards shade trees, maintains clean and flowing waterways, and protects natural habitats for wildlife, while also providing residents with opportunities to exercise, socialize, and connect with nature.



Source: FW OS Report

Big Fossil Creek and suburban development



Source: FW OS Report

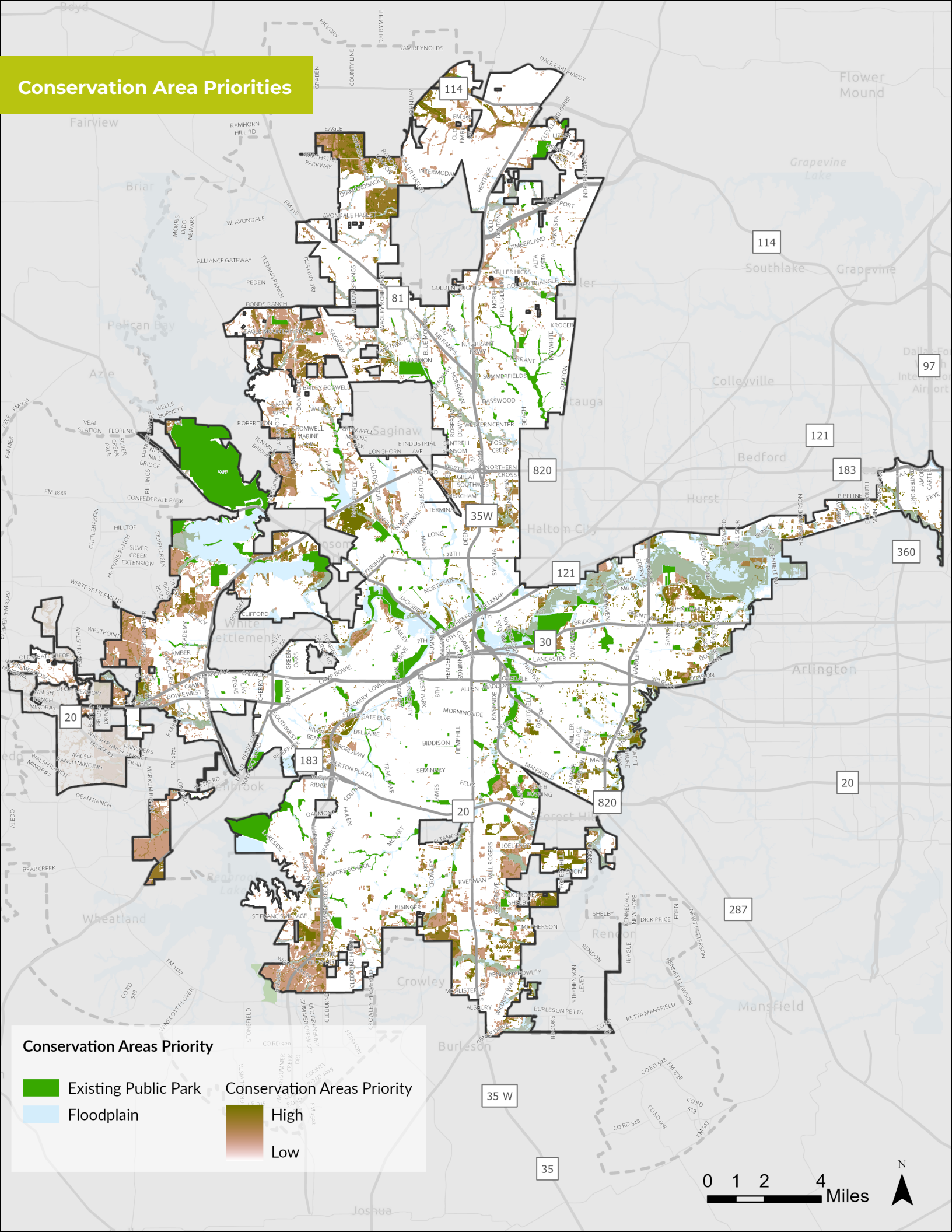
West Fork Trinity River



Source: FW OS Report

Sycamore Creek.

Conservation Area Priorities



Conservation Areas Priority

- Existing Public Park
- Floodplain

- ## Conservation Areas Priority
- High
 - Low

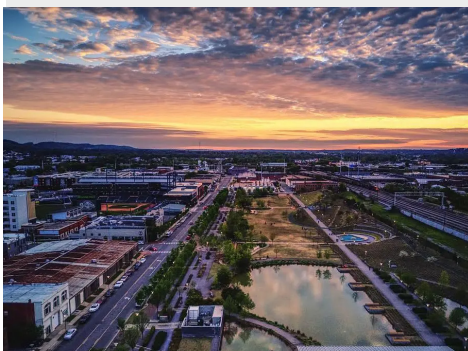
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ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

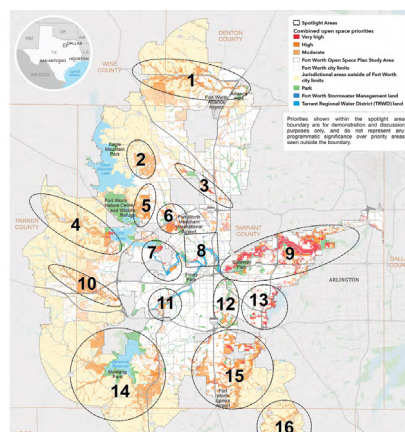
Railroad Park, Birmingham, AL

Railroad Park in Birmingham, AL provides an excellent example of how reimaged landscaping can change once active industrial railroad area into a prized park through innovative design and landscaping. With over 30% of the site being water, the park included sustainable features such as bio-filtration wetlands, ponds and streams. Additionally, many of the features to include the abundance of plant life that are on the site are irrigated by onsite wells. Railroad Park has become a great example of how sustainable infrastructure can take an industrial area and make it into "Birmingham's Living Room."



Railroad Park

- Collaborate with FW Lab to update zoning and land use regulations that protect natural features, riparian zones, and critical habitats in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Support the Riparian Ordinance effort under the TPW–Stormwater Master Plan and advocate for additional tools like conservation overlays and stronger floodplain protections.
- Pursue conservation easements to protect natural areas like prairie ecosystems.
- Use the following map (TPL priority map + Park deficient areas) to identify and acquire high-priority parcels—especially in park-deficient areas—for conservation of floodplains, habitats, and waterways.
- Develop Natural Resource Management Plans for existing and new parks.
- Implement an annual invasive species management program to control and restore ecologically significant areas across the parks.



Spotlight areas with combined open space priorities, Fort Worth Open Space Strategy Report, 2022

Strategy 3.1.3: Integrate natural areas into existing parks and demarcate key ecological zones that serve as hubs for biodiversity, education, and conservation.

- Identify areas within existing parks suitable for natural integration, such as underutilized spaces, floodplains, or degraded zones with specific natural features like streams, wetlands, or tree groves. For example, areas along the Trinity River or sections of the Fort Worth Nature Center, Tandy Hills, and Chisholm Trail could be designated as ecological zones to safeguard riparian habitats, support native wildlife, and educate the public about the importance of water quality and biodiversity.
- Prioritize planting native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers that attract local pollinators and provide food and shelter for birds and other native wildlife.
- Consider designing uninterrupted green corridors that provide habitat connectivity and opportunities for active transportation.
- Develop nature-based, unstructured play areas using natural materials to foster imaginative play and connection with nature.

Strategy 3.1.4: Engage and educate city staff and community to protect and preserve the natural environment

- Develop and implement a training program for maintenance staff focused on natural area management and ecological best practices.
- Add park ranger positions to ensure safety, enforce park rules, and educate visitors in natural spaces.
- Hire programming staff (interpreters) to deliver environmental education and increase nature-based programming.
- Create internship opportunities to support stewardship, education, and natural resource management efforts.
- Establish and maintain a Speakers Bureau to engage the public on topics related to conservation and ecology.
- Host regular programs in parks led by PARD Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to connect the community with Fort Worth's natural assets.
- Continue convening Natural & Cultural Work Group meetings to align efforts across departments and partners.
- Support volunteer stewardship events, including invasive species removal, native plantings, and park clean-up initiatives.

Objective 3.2: Connect people to nature through immersive and educational experiences and increased awareness of resiliency, water resources, and benefits of ecological biodiversity.

Strategy 3.2.1: Expand Access to Nature

Ensure equitable access to high-quality natural areas throughout the City by protecting, acquiring, and enhancing opportunities for nature experiences, facilitating access to existing sites, expanding natural areas where possible, and targeting undeveloped areas for acquisition to provide additional high-quality nature experiences for all residents.

- Use the Conservation Priority Areas map, Comprehensive Plan Recommended Opportunities Area map, and the Open Space Conservation Plan Spotlight Areas map to create new pockets of naturalized green space in combination with new public sector infrastructure projects and private development.
- Maximize the potential of existing natural area parks—such as Tandy Hills, Stratford Nature Area, the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, and Log Cabin Village—through enhanced maintenance and expanded programming.



BEST PRACTICE

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

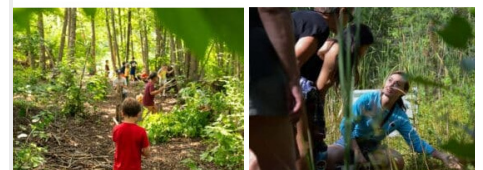
Minneapolis, MN

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Department hosts a variety of nature education programs designed specifically for children, held at recreation centers throughout the city. Programs are tailored to different age groups, including preschoolers, children aged 6–12, and all-ages activities for children and their parents or guardians. The department also offers nature-based programs for adults and families, encouraging everyone to enjoy and explore nature together. While many programs are fee-based, scholarships are available, and some, like the monthly "Come Out and Play" family program, are free and require no registration.



➔ Early Childhood

➔ Families



➔ School-Aged Youth

➔ Adults

Nature activities



BEST PRACTICE

PARKS AS AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Kellogg and Greenfield Community Parks, CA

Kellogg and Greenfield Community Parks in Southern California are excellent examples of parks that have been designed to addressing learning and play within a natural setting. Both parks draw from their local natural setting to offer learning through "... observing, touching, playing with and learning about plants, animals, water and landforms.



Learn and Play

- Develop small Natural Area Parks in high-density urban communities where access to large parks is not feasible.
- Collaborate with the Stormwater Management Division to inventory conserved green spaces and identify those with the potential for transformation into recreational areas that balance public use with ecological protection.
- Improve access to hiking trails, and provide accessible opportunities for all hiking trail users.

Strategy 3.2.2: Promote parks and green spaces as outdoor interactive classrooms to be used by schools, universities, steward organizations, and the public.

- Develop curriculum-aligned programs in partnership with Fort Worth ISD, charter schools, and homeschool groups.
- Offer field trips for schools with tailored lesson plans on local history, ecology, and conservation.
- Launch after-school and summer camps focusing on historical trades (blacksmithing, candle-making) or wildlife studies.
- Create a "Junior Naturalist Program" where students assist with wildlife monitoring.
- Partner with universities for biodiversity studies and conservation initiatives.
- Install real-time data collection stations for water quality testing and climate monitoring.
- Interactive exhibits where visitors can use AR (augmented reality) apps to see how settlers lived or how Fort Worth's landscape evolved over time

Objective 3.3: Adopt a holistic and synergistic approach to develop nature-based solutions within the park system and the City's public realm.

Strategy 3.3.1: Establish design standards requiring green infrastructure in all new and renovated parks, green spaces, and recreation facilities to enhance sustainability.

Incorporating green infrastructure into the park system enhances both environmental sustainability and community resilience. By using natural solutions such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable surfaces, and restored wetlands, parks can effectively manage stormwater, reduce flooding, and protect the environment. Green infrastructure reduces reliance on traditional, costly stormwater systems by treating water at its source and can be seamlessly integrated into parks of all sizes, from expansive regional spaces to neighborhood parks and plazas.

Strategy 3.3.2: Protect and enhance natural features to improve flood control, filter stormwater, reduce runoff and erosion, and enhance water quality in streams, lakes, and the Trinity River.

As the city expands with new residential and non-residential developments, natural greenery and permeable ground are increasingly replaced by impermeable surfaces such as roads, buildings, and parking lots. This shift exacerbates stormwater impacts, as the natural environment can no longer effectively absorb and manage runoff. The City's Stormwater Management Plan addresses this challenge by promoting the integration of natural spaces—such as trails, parks, greenways, and other recreational features—into stormwater management strategies outlined in the Stormwater Management Design Manual. PARD should continue working with the Transportation & Public Works Department, the City's Stormwater Management Department, and the City Engineer's Office to protect and dedicate these sites as parks and green spaces in new developments while leveraging them for flood control, enabling the city to grow responsibly, safely, and sustainably.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established some recommended strategies and guidelines in the development and implementation of green infrastructure designs through:

- EPA Green Infrastructure Design Strategy Tools

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) along with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provide valuable guidance on the designing and implementation of green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff. It is estimated that 10 trillion gallons of dirty, untreated runoff enters US waters each year. The NRDC explains that best practices in the use of green infrastructure is to capture the rain where it falls, thus allowing it to filter into the earth. Secondly, green infrastructure improves water quality by decreasing the amount of stormwater that reach the waterway and removing contaminants. The use of soils and plants help in the absorption and filtration of the pollutants. - Green Infrastructure: How to Manage Water in a Sustainable Way, Melissa Denchak - NRDC



BEST
PRACTICE

A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN GREEN SPACE

Tanner Springs Park, Portland, OR

This park transforms a former industrial site into a vibrant urban oasis, blending ecological restoration with recreational use. The park features native wetlands, sustainable stormwater management, and the iconic "Art Wall," celebrating the area's history. Despite its small size, it offers walking paths, seating, and gathering spaces while connecting to Portland's broader park system. Recognized as a model for sustainable urban design, it showcases how to connect people to nature in dense urban areas.



Tanner Spring Park

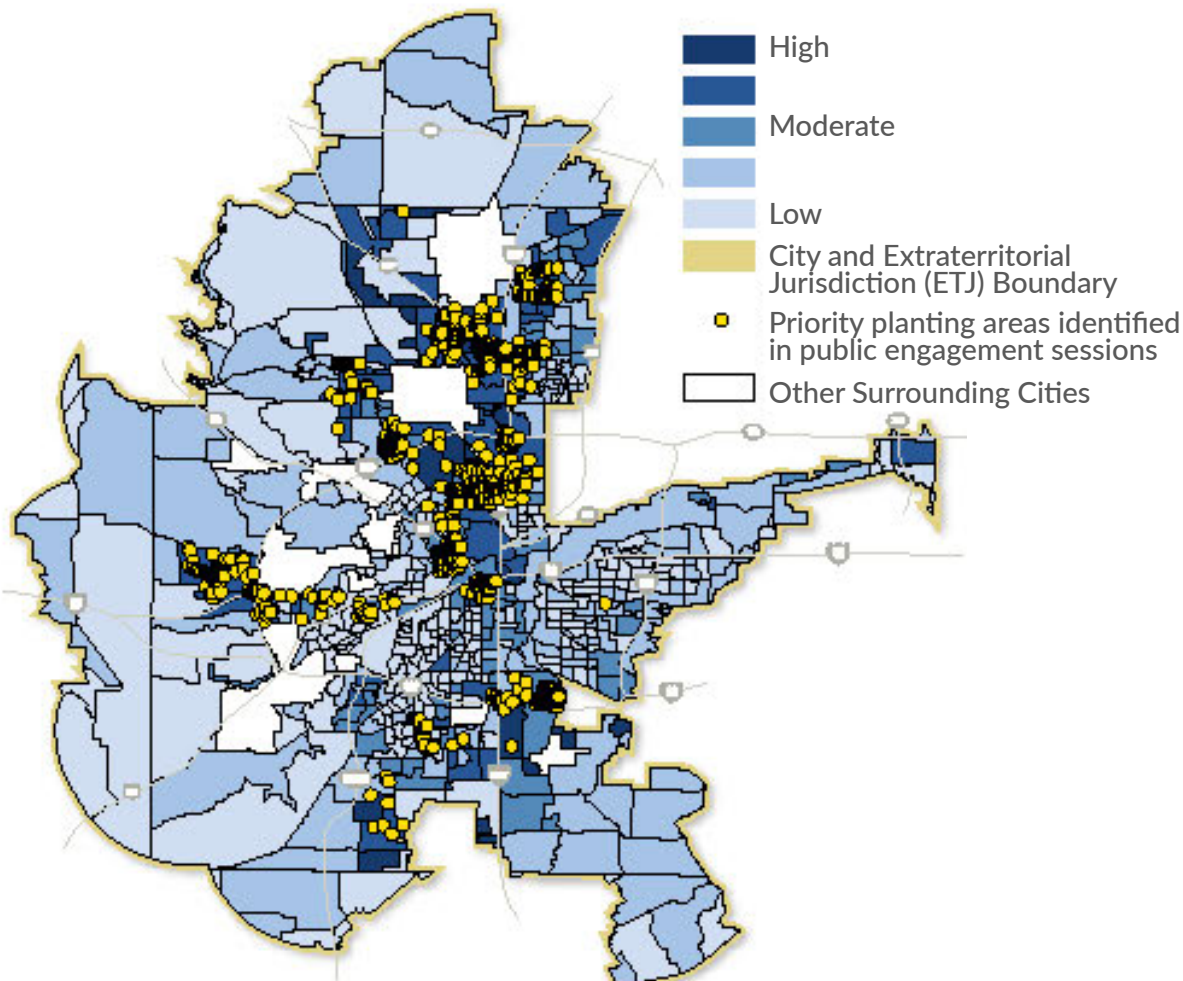
Strategy 3.3.3: implement and advocate for the urban forest master plan to expand tree canopy and create cool corridors.

Fort Worth residents identified the lack of shade as a top priority. In response, the Fort Worth City Council adopted the Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) on June 25, 2024, officially designating it as the city's guiding framework for urban forest management. The plan aims to increase tree canopy from 19% to 30% by 2050.

- Collaborate with the City's Urban Forestry team to support implementation of UFMP priorities by using the Combined Priority Map to guide tree planting, canopy expansion, and maintenance efforts in the most impactful locations.
- Integrate UFMP goals into park planning, design, and renovation projects by identifying opportunities to plant shade trees, especially in underserved and park-deficient areas.
- Prioritize the development of cool corridors along trails, sidewalks, and streets near parks, schools, and transit stops to reduce urban heat and improve walkability.
- Track and report PARD's contributions to annual canopy gains as part of the City's overall progress toward the 30% canopy goal by 2050.

"Parks and trails need shade, Fort Worth is too hot and people don't want to withstand the heat "

Community Member Feedback, 2024



Combined Priority Planting, Map Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP)

Objective 3.4: Enhance the Trinity River, its watersheds, tributaries, and lakes as interconnected natural and recreational assets that showcase Fort Worth's ecosystems and foster community enjoyment.

Strategy 3.4.1: Restore riparian buffers, wetlands, and natural habitats along the Trinity River, its tributaries, and lakes to improve biodiversity and ecosystem health.

- Develop programs to remove invasive plants and reintroduce native species to strengthen ecosystems.
- Work with Green Space Leadership Team to conserve high-priority natural areas within watersheds that have been identified in the Open Space Strategy report.
- Incorporate watershed enhancement goals into the city's Comprehensive Plan, Good Natured Initiative, and other ongoing efforts.
- Work with Fort Worth Environmental Department on water quality testing and monitoring programs to assess the health of waterways and wetlands.

The City of Fort Worth's Water Utility sources 100% of its drinking water from surface water in area lakes, ensuring the highest quality for the community. Key sources include Lake Worth, Lake Bridgeport, Eagle Mountain Lake, Benbrook Lake, Richland Chambers Reservoir, Cedar Creek Reservoir, and the Clear Fork of the Trinity River. The Park and Recreation Department can support water quality monitoring for Lake Worth and the Trinity River by installing monitoring stations in parks and trails with water features that feed into these bodies. Publicly



Proposed renderings for potential river projects, Source: Confluence: The Trinity River Strategic Master Plan

accessible stations can also be placed in areas where stormwater accumulates, serving as educational tools to raise awareness about water quality impacts.

- Encourage community involvement in taking an active role in restoration efforts, maintaining and monitoring the health of waterways and wetlands.

Community involvement in maintaining waterways and wetlands fosters pride and ownership among residents. This can include forming "Friends of" groups, adopting sites for upkeep, or partnering with schools to use these areas as outdoor classrooms for learning about water quality and biodiversity protection.

Strategy 3.4.2: Acquire land, secure easements, and develop partnerships to maximize public access to the water throughout the City.

Enhancing access to the Trinity River and waterways can create vibrant public spaces that connect the community to nature while showcasing Fort Worth's unique assets. While some access points exist, much of the waterfront remains underutilized. PARD should work with TRWD, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other partners to expand access through land acquisition, easements, and strategic partnerships.

- Activate key nodes along the Trinity River while preserving flood storage, levees, and the natural setting.
- Enhance the river as a hub for recreation, community gatherings, and environmental education, making it one of America's great riverfront parks.



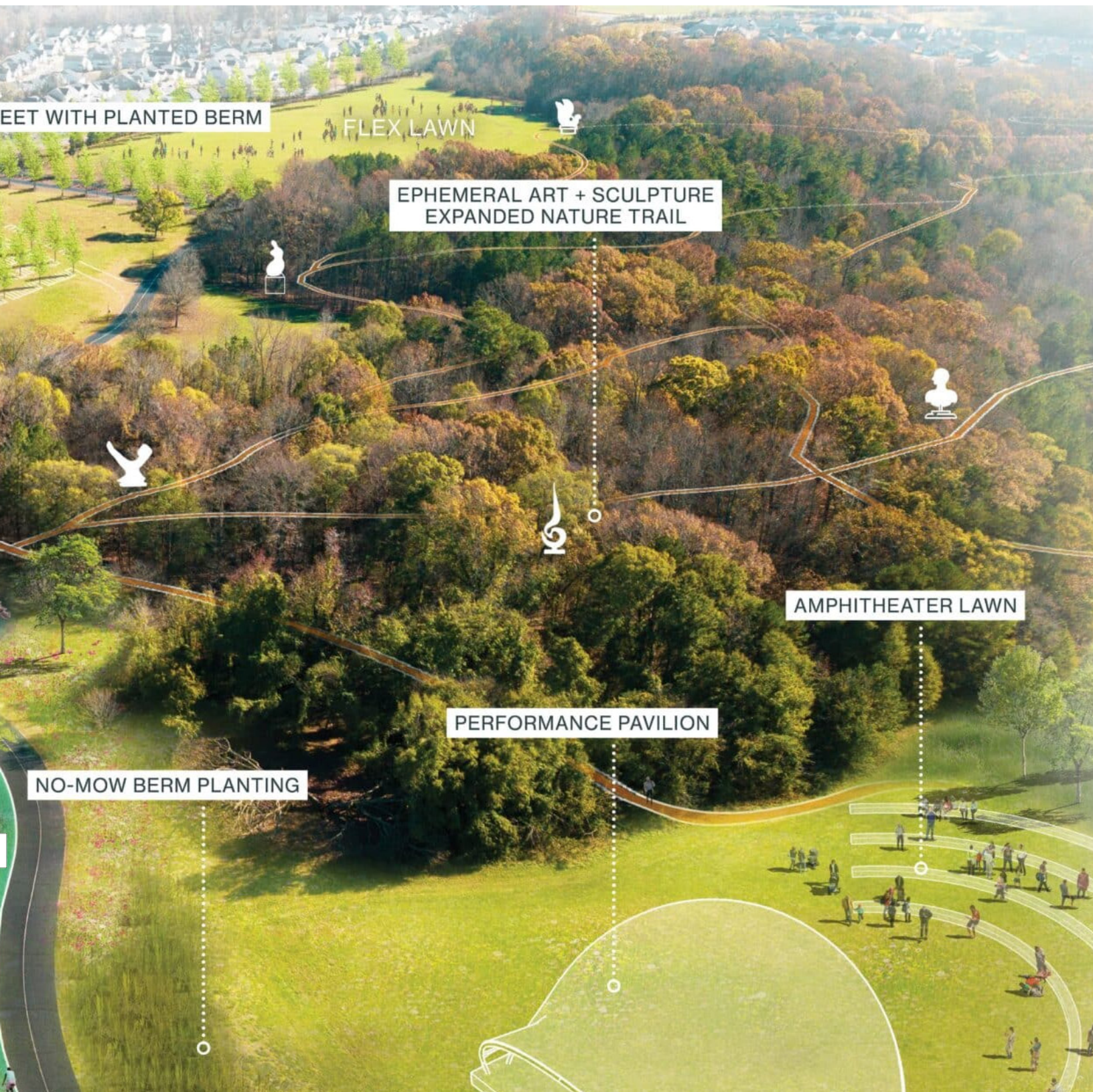
Proposed renderings for potential river projects, Source: Confluence: The Trinity River Strategic Master Plan

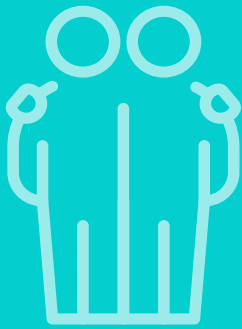


Proposed renderings for potential river projects, Source: Confluence: The Trinity River Strategic Master Plan



Celebrating Vibrant Nature: A vision for integrating natural habitats, scenic trails, and immersive outdoor experiences, creating a harmonious balance between recreation and ecological preservation.





Common Ground

Develop public spaces that are accessible and welcoming for everyone, foster social interaction, and celebrate the community's multiculturalism, enhancing a sense of belonging and unity.

Objective 1: Embrace and adopt new park system typologies to strengthen the public realm.

Objective 2: Create safe, convenient and inviting public spaces that support positive experiences for everyone.

Objective 3: Offer a wide range of facilities and recreation programs that cater to the diverse interests, ages, abilities, and income levels of Fort Worth's evolving community.

Objective 4: Preserve and celebrate neighborhood identities by integrating local culture, art, history, and community values into park design and programming.



Goal 4 Common Ground



BEST
PRACTICE

Objective 4.1: Embrace and adopt new park system typologies to strengthen the public realm.

Fort Worth's 2023 Comprehensive Plan places a new emphasis on growth centers, urban villages, and revitalized commercial corridors as a primary focus for the city's growth going forward. This new chapter calls for additional park and public realm typologies that enhance quality of life, access to nature, and a sense of community for these compact, mixed-use, walkable environments.

Strategy 4.1.1: Conduct a study to identify high-potential ROWs for conversion into pedestrian plazas or green streets in areas with limited park access.

Strategy 4.1.2: Undertake an inventory of existing (Privately-owned and Publicly-owned) public spaces to better understand their distribution and gaps.

Strategy 4.1.3: Foster Integration of Public Spaces within Mixed-Use Developments.

Encourage public spaces in mixed-use developments by partnering with developers to create parks and plazas that enhance the public realm. Implement incentives, such as density bonuses, for high-quality, accessible spaces that prioritize community needs, including seating, landscaping, and programming.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

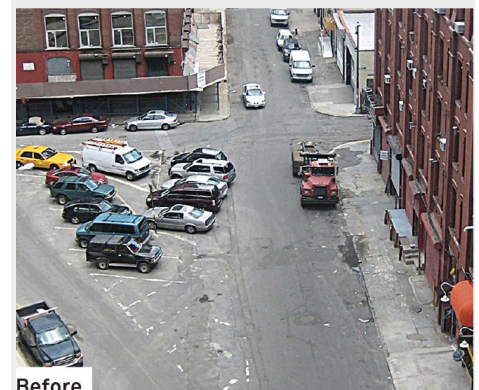
Reclaiming the Right of Way by UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs is a good toolkit on where and how to create parklets. Provides design guidance to items such as site selection, site design, surrounding land use considerations, and more.

Tactical Public Realm Guidelines is another guideline serves to introduce new tools for tactical public realm improvements for public space development and management.

TRANSFORM PUBLIC ROW INTO PUBLIC SPACE

New York City Plaza Program and Open Street Initiative

The Plaza Program is a citywide effort led by the Department of Transportation (DOT) of New York City to create cost-effective, high-quality public spaces in underutilized roadways throughout the city. The program aims to prioritize areas that currently lack green space, especially in high-pedestrian or low-income neighborhoods. NYC DOT partners with nonprofit applicants to develop plazas that meet the needs of local communities. It works with local groups to manage ongoing maintenance. There are 71 plazas citywide in some phase of planning, design, construction, or completion.



Before



After

Pearl Street, activated underutilized parking

Strategy 4.1.4: Integrate the outdoor public realm (sidewalks, medians, parkways, ROW) into the parks and green spaces to expand recreational experience.

Add features such as benches, storywalk displays, misting stations, kiosks, and public art along these routes for users to enjoy as they move between parks. Also, encourage the recreational use of the public realm as an urban park for things such as community block events, street festivals, traveling parklets, public art, and performance displays, as well as sidewalk games like hopscotch.

Objective 4.2: Create safe, convenient and inviting public spaces that support positive experiences for everyone.

Strategy 4.2.1: Integrate and highlight Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies in the design and redesign of parks and recreation facilities.

- **Lighting and Visibility:** Install well-placed lighting along pathways, entry points, and high-traffic areas like playgrounds and sports courts to enhance visibility and safety, especially during evening hours. Incorporate strategic landscaping to maintain clear sightlines and avoid creating hidden or obstructed spaces.
- **Natural Surveillance and Activity Zones:** encourage consistent activity by including green spaces, seating areas, and diverse activity zones such as playgrounds, fitness trails, and sports fields. Increased use naturally promotes casual monitoring by park users.
- **Territorial Reinforcement and Access Control:** Use landscaping, signage, and pathways to clearly define boundaries, guide movement, and discourage unauthorized access. Ensure entry and exit points are well-marked and strategically placed.

Strategy 4.2.2: Implement the use of security features such as emergency call stations and security cameras in areas identified as safety concerns by the public.

Strategy 4.2.3: Identify locations where fencing or walls are needed to ensure safety for active recreation areas like sports fields, courts, or similar uses.

Strategy 4.2.4: Integrate smart technology into park systems, such as interactive kiosks, app-based navigation tools, and free public Wi-Fi, to enhance the user experience and improve accessibility.

- Install interactive kiosks and app-based wayfinding tools at key park entrances and along major trail corridors to provide real-time information on amenities, events, and accessibility features.



BEST PRACTICE

CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM

Los Angeles Summer Night Lights (SNL) Program

Parks that are peak gang activity areas can be transformed into vibrant community spaces after dark with organized activities for at-risk youth and families. The Summer Night Lights program extended nighttime hours in eight parks in troubled neighborhoods, keeping lights on until midnight, and sponsoring nighttime movies and family-oriented activities four nights a week. Beginning with 8 Los Angeles parks in 2008, Summer Night Lights has expanded to 24 sites in 2010 and to 32 sites in 2013. This strategy has become a nationally recognized success story for both reducing violence and building communities for safer cities.

THE MAYOR'S GRYP OFFICE PRESENTS:

SNL 2022

FREE FUN

FOOD, SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

JULY 13 TO AUGUST 13 7PM-11PM AUGUST 19 TO SEPTEMBER 2

WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY FRIDAY & SATURDAY

100TH REC. 1404 E 100th St, LA, CA 90002	ALVIN SUTTON REC. 8800 S Hoover St, LA, CA 90008	COSTELLO REC. 3141 E Olympic Blvd, LA, CA 90023	CYPRESS REC. 2630 Pepper Ave, LA, CA 90005
DAVID M. GONZALES 38043 Harwick Ave, Pasadena, CA 91131	DELANO REC. 15100 Erwin Pl, Van Nuys, CA 91411	DENKER REC. 15500 W 50th St, Los Angeles, CA 90018	EL SERENO REC. 4721 Klamath St, LA, CA 90032
EVERGREEN REC. 3041 E 2nd St, Los Angeles, CA 90033	GILBERT LINDSAY 422 E 42nd Pl, Los Angeles, CA 90011	GLASSSELL REC. 3000 Verdugo Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90065	GREEN MEADOWS REC. 421 E 3rd St, Los Angeles, CA 90003
HARBOR CITY REC. 20001 Franklin Ave, Harbor City, CA 90731	HAZARD REC. 2200 Norfolk St, Los Angeles, CA 90033	HIGHLAND PARK REC. 5350 Piedmont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90042	HUBERT HUMPHREY REC. 12500 Fairview St, Pasadena, CA 91131
IMPERIAL COURTS 2250 E 114th St, Los Angeles, CA 90059	JIM OLLIAM REC. 4000 S La Brea Ave, LA, CA 90008	JT HARVARD REC. 1535 W 62nd St, Los Angeles, CA 90047	LAFAYETTE REC. 625 S La Fayette Park Pl, Los Angeles, CA 90057
LANARK REC. 21818 Lanark St, Camarillo Park, CA 91304	LEMON GROVE REC. 4050 Lemon Grove Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90008	MLK JR. REC. 3010 S Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90002	MONTECITO REC. 4645 Homer St, Los Angeles, CA 90011
MT. CARMEL REC. 504 W 30th St, Los Angeles, CA 90044	NICKERSON GARDENS 11201 Compton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90059	NORMANDIE REC. 22400 Holliston Ave, Torrance, CA 90501	NORMANDIE REC. 1550 Normandie Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90006
RAMON GARCIA REC. 1015 S Fresno St, Los Angeles, CA 90023	RANCHO CIENEGA REC. 5001 Chama Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90018	ROSECRANS REC. 840 W 149th St, Culver City, CA 90230	ROSS SNYDER REC. 1501 E 42nd St, Los Angeles, CA 90011
ST. ANDREWS REC. 8701 S St Andrews Pl, Los Angeles, CA 90047	SEPULVEDA REC. 8825 Kester Ave, Panorama City, CA 91402	SCLAUSON REC. 5306 South Compton Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90011	SOUTH PARK 345 E 51st St, L, Los Angeles, CA 90013
SUN VALLEY REC. 4133 Inwood Ave, Sun Valley, CA 91352	TOMERMAN REC. 1220 Tomerman St, Los Angeles, CA 90013	TOWNEY REC. 2535 Towner St, Los Angeles, CA 90011	VALLEY PLAZA REC. 12940 Ardwood St, North Hollywood, CA 91606
VAN NESS REC. 15025 Van Ness Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90043	WABASH REC. 1500 Wabash Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90003	WILMINGTON REC. 225 N Kington Ave, Wilmington, CA 90743	

@la_gryd

Creating Safe Park Environments



BEST PRACTICE

FINDING RELIEF IN PARKS

Portland Loo

In Portland, OR, City Commissioner Randy Leonard instigated the design of a better public toilet. With input from police, fire and maintenance personnel, the result is the wheelchair accessible and easy-to-clean metal “Portland Loo.” With open bars at the top and bottom, the restroom is ventilated, and police can see how many people are within. The system uses water for flushing but there is no sink—only hand sanitizer—and blue lighting discourages heroin use. As of 2018, 17 Portland Loos were installed in Portland, and over 50 others are in use across the U.S. and Canada.

The base price is \$90,000; utility work, foundation work, shipping and installation add another \$36,000–\$44,000.



- Partner with technology providers and internet service companies to expand free public Wi-Fi coverage in high-traffic parks and prioritize connectivity in underserved neighborhoods.

Strategy 4.2.5: Enhance comfort and convenience

Focusing on introducing comfort features such as restrooms, water fountains, shade, and sitting areas will enhance the experiences for those using the park and recreation system and encourage visitors to extend their time at parks.

- Ensure all facilities meet or exceed ADA and TAS (Texas Accessibility Standards) standards for accessibility, including installing ramps, accessible restrooms, and clear pathways for those with mobility challenges.
- Increase the number of permanent restrooms at parks and other public spaces. Modernize existing restrooms by making them cleaner, more accessible, and energy-efficient.
- Increase shaded areas and install more seating throughout the parks and public realm, especially near high-traffic zones like playgrounds, sports fields, trails and along sidewalks where there is high pedestrian activities such as in and round commercial and retail areas.
- Adding shade to parks and along the public realm is important in providing a comfortable experience for visitors to parks especially here in Texas. Shade in parks and in the public realm can be increased through the planting of shade trees and the installation of shade canopies. It is encouraged that trees native to the Fort Worth area are used as they will be the most effective in withstanding the high temperatures and long drought seasons. Adding seating also helps to active parks and the public realm as the seating provides locations where people can gather, relax and socialize.
- Upgrade shelters, pavilions, and other structures to make them more usable during different seasons by adding heating, cooling, or weather-resistant materials.
- Add or upgrade drinking fountains and include bottle-filling stations to provide easy access to hydration, especially in warmer months.
- Install vehicle charging stations in parking lots of parks and at events to attract visitors while their electric vehicles charge.

"Even if a park features great amenities, a beautiful setting, varied programming and easy accessibility, if it doesn't have public comfort stations, many park users may stay away."

Active Parks, Healthy Cities Report, City Park Alliance

Objective 4.3: Offer a wide range of facilities and recreation programs that cater to the diverse interests, ages, abilities, and income levels of Fort Worth's evolving community.

As one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., Fort Worth is a vibrant melting pot of ages, cultures, abilities, and beliefs. To sustain and celebrate this diversity, the City must offer services that cater to all groups while fostering connections among them.

Strategy 4.3.1: Expand inclusive, adaptive, and innovative recreation programs to equitably meet the diverse needs of the community.

Based on what we heard from the community, there is strong interest in expanding programs that reflect evolving needs and preferences. High-priority programs include:

- Expand indoor recreation centers that offer low-cost or free fitness classes, creative workshops, drop-in sports, and multi-generational programs.
- Create a variety of trail-based programs such as guided nature walks, family hikes, and walking groups for seniors.
- Offer water and nature-based programs
- Activate underutilized spaces by introducing new amenities such as pickleball courts, mini-pitches, and multi-use courts that accommodate drop-in play, low-cost leagues, and intergenerational tournaments
- Expand youth development programs such as after school care, seasonal camps, literacy initiatives, and summer enrichment to support academic and social growth.
- Enhance senior programs through recreational offerings, group outings, wellness classes, and social events that foster connection and active aging.
- Offer specialized and adaptive recreation to ensure inclusive participation for individuals of all abilities, with potential support from a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and partners like the YMCA.

Strategy 4.3.2: Increase the number of recreation facilities

The City of Fort Worth has hundreds of facilities, ranging from various types of fields and courts to playgrounds and community centers. Considering the City's historical growth in the last 10 years, and the expected increase in population over the next 10 years, the Department will need more recreation facilities to meet the demand. This plan anticipates this need by developing Facilities Level of Service (LOS) targets for key recreation and park facilities and combining them with projected population figures to identify the number of facilities that may be needed in the next 10 years. The following pages map the areas that are in need of these facilities.



Playground Service Area

Legend:

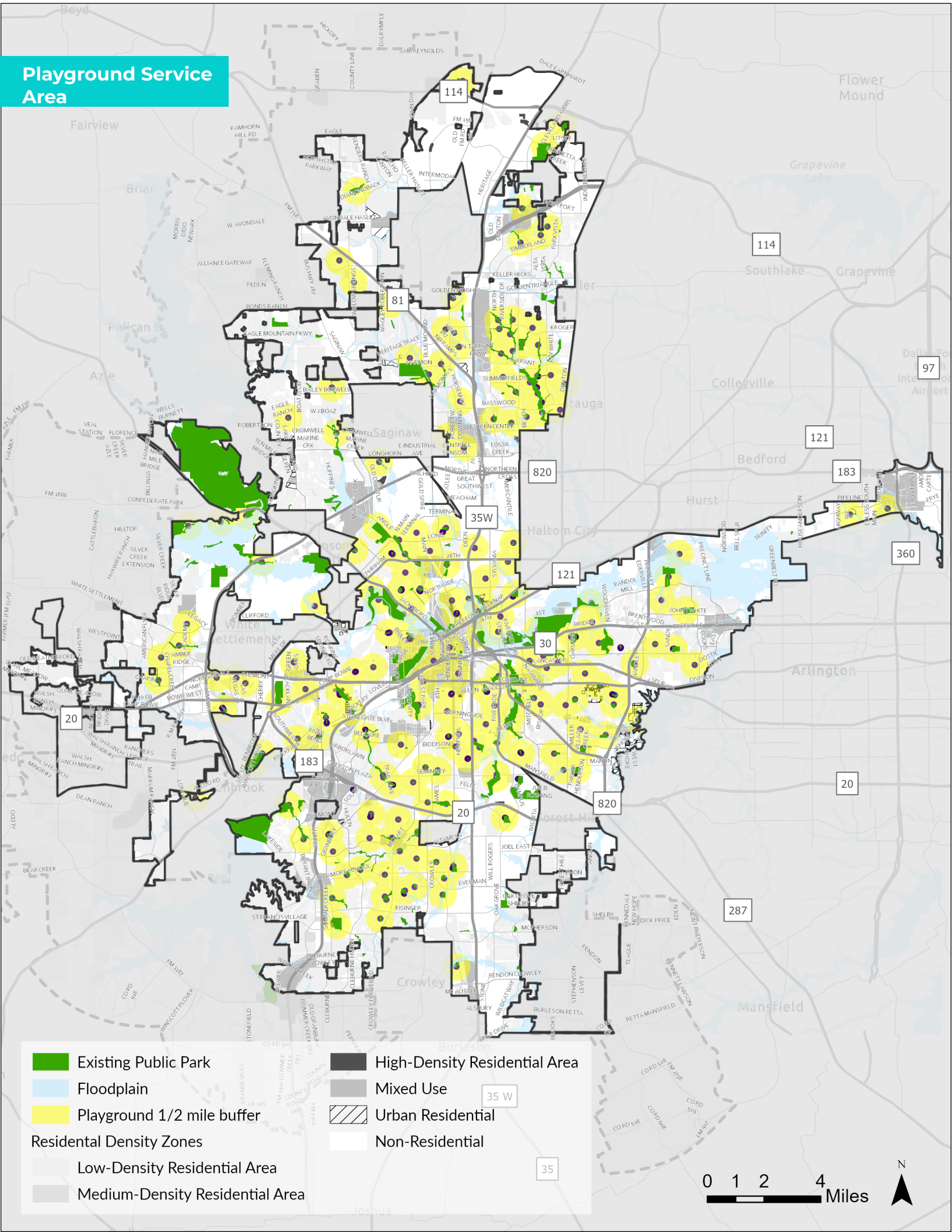
- Existing Public Park (Green)
- Floodplain (Light Blue)
- Playground 1/2 mile buffer (Yellow)
- Residential Density Zones:
 - Low-Density Residential Area (Light Gray)
 - Medium-Density Residential Area (Medium Gray)
- High-Density Residential Area (Dark Gray)
- Mixed Use (Dark Gray with diagonal lines)
- Urban Residential (Dark Gray with diagonal lines)
- Non-Residential (White)

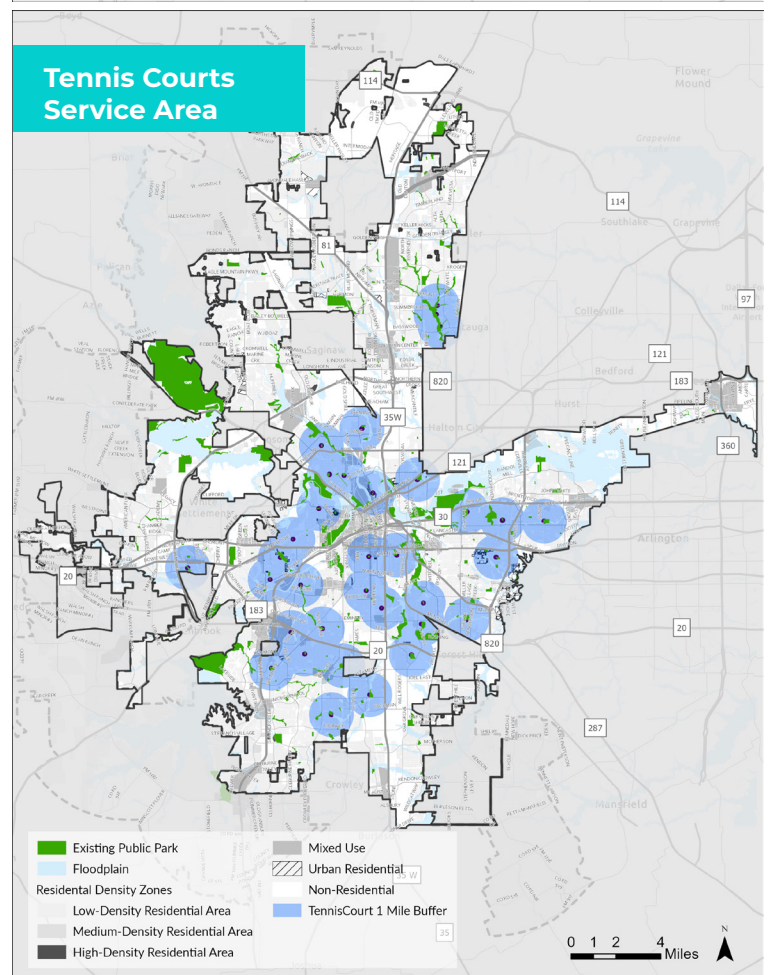
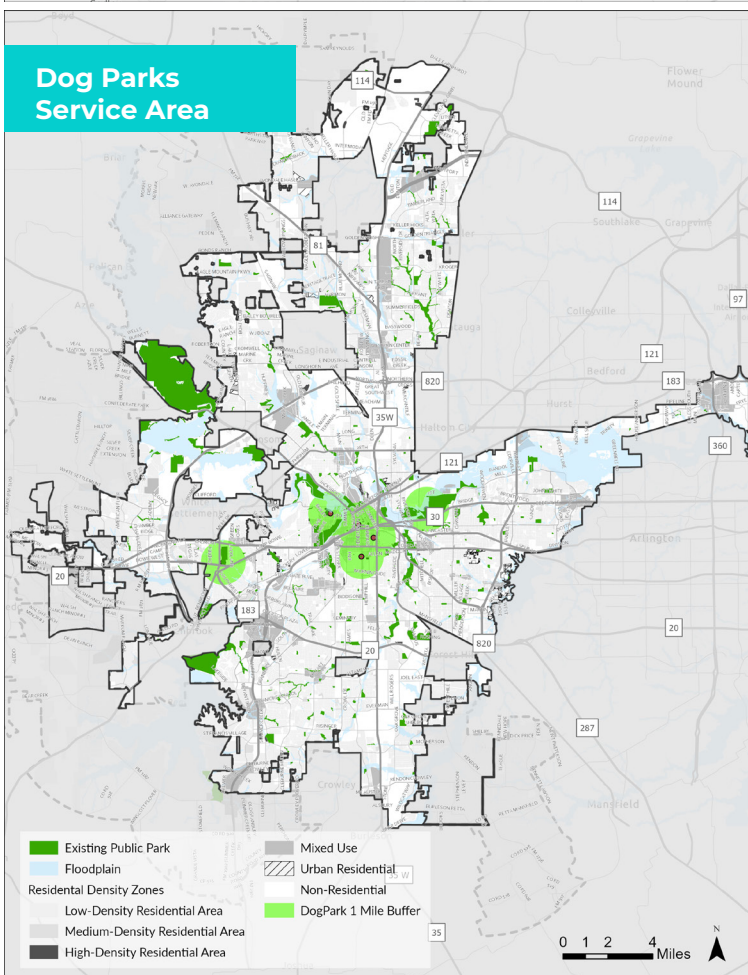
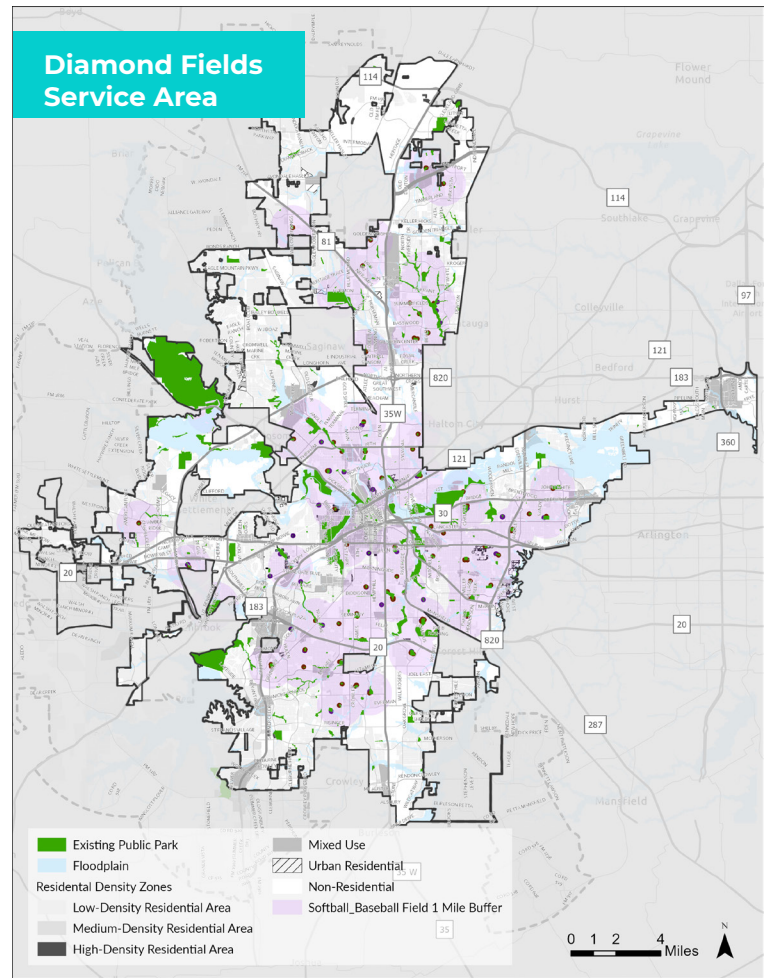
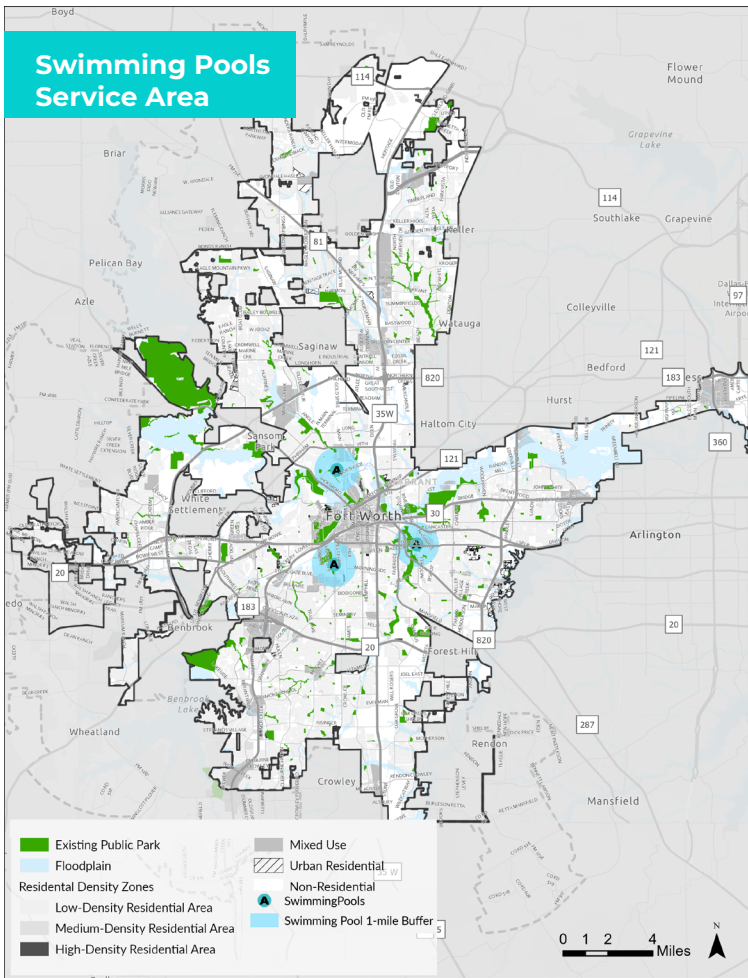
Scale: 0 1 2 4 Miles

North Arrow: N

The map shows the following areas and features:

- Existing Public Parks:** Several parks are marked with green, including Fairview, Briar, and others.
- Floodplains:** Light blue areas represent floodplains, primarily along the edges of the service area.
- Playground 1/2 mile buffers:** Yellow circles indicate the 1/2 mile buffer around existing playgrounds.
- Residential Density Zones:** The map is divided into Low-Density Residential (light gray) and Medium-Density Residential (medium gray) areas.
- High-Density Residential Area:** A small area in the center is designated as High-Density Residential (dark gray).
- Mixed Use and Urban Residential:** These areas are shown with dark gray and diagonal line patterns.
- Non-Residential:** White areas represent non-residential zones.





Strategy 4.3.3: Make better use of existing facilities through system-wide planning and investments.

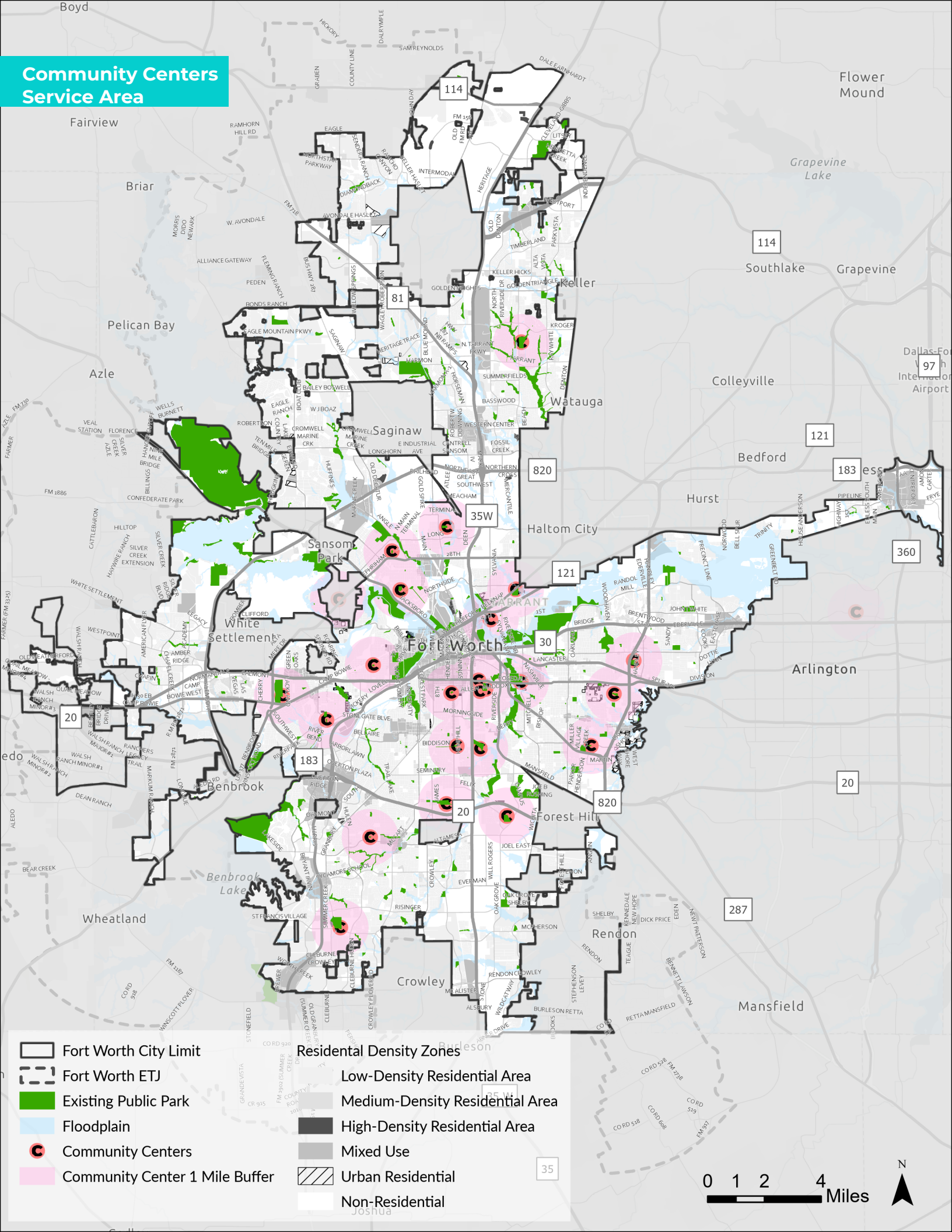
In addition to looking for opportunities to grow Fort Worth's system of recreation facilities, the City must also make the best use of the space that it currently has through system-wide planning and investments in facilities.

- Analyze existing recreation facilities utilization to identify underutilized spaces, outdated infrastructure, and areas of overlapping services. Use technology, such as attendance tracking or reservation systems, to gather insights on how facilities are being used.
- Conduct a recreation facilities needs assessment, including a statistically valid survey and Level of Service analysis, on a 5-year cycle to gather input on facility improvements and programming needs.
- Explore opportunities to provide all-season access to certain high-use facilities and athletic fields commensurate with demand through the use of temporary or permanent structures.
- Historically, athletic programs were more seasonal, with different sports seasons having less overlap. The seasons have been extended in recent years, and some are played year-round. However, Fort Worth's climate is not always conducive to outdoor athletics. Temporary, climate controlled structures around outdoor athletic fields or permanent, indoor recreation centers with full-size athletic fields could be possible solutions to providing all-season access.
- Clustering amenities in ways that encourage interaction and activity to promote vibrant, multi-use parks that attract a diverse range of visitors. This approach, often referred to as "triangulation," involves positioning complementary features near one another to create lively, engaging spaces.
- Convert existing natural grass fields to synthetic turf and/or add lighting to existing fields to increase available hours of play.



Inspiring rendering for clustering amenities and monitoring the usage.

Community Centers Service Area



- Fort Worth City Limit
- Fort Worth ETJ
- Existing Public Park
- Floodplain
- Community Centers
- Community Center 1 Mile Buffer

- ### Residential Density Zones
- Low-Density Residential Area
 - Medium-Density Residential Area
 - High-Density Residential Area
 - Mixed Use
 - Urban Residential
 - Non-Residential

0 1 2 4 Miles



Strategy 4.3.4: Ensure that existing and new facilities are inclusive and welcoming all segments of the population.

- Coordinate with public transit providers and bike-share companies to install stops at/near parks, recreation facilities, trailheads, and green spaces to provide alternative modes of transportation for those who may not have access to personal vehicles.
- Use clear, multi-lingual, and pictorial signage with large fonts, color contrast, and easy-to-understand icons to help everyone navigate park facilities.
- Ensure a set percentage of programs, classes, and facility access are offered free or at low cost and schedule community days with free entry to recreation centers, pools, or fitness programs.
- Introduce multi-generational playscapes, comfort features (seating, shade structures, restroom facilities) and recreational programming that will allow for persons of all ages to play, work, and socialize together.
- Provide specific amenities for seniors: Aquatic centers, low-impact exercise equipment, senior recreation centers, adult summer camps.

Objective 4.4: Preserve and celebrate neighborhood identities by integrating local culture, art, history, and community values into park design and programming.

Each neighborhood is shaped by the unique culture, heritage, and values of its residents, reflected in the architecture, landscaping, and personal touches of their homes. Neighborhood parks should embody these characteristics, serving as integral extensions of the community. By incorporating elements like art, park furniture, pavilions, playscapes, and signage that reflect local identity, parks can foster pride and a sense of ownership among residents.

Moreover, such thoughtful design and programming can attract visitors from other areas, offering opportunities to experience and learn about the distinct character of each neighborhood.



BEST PRACTICE

FEE STRUCTURE

Access Pass Program, Portland, OR

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) believes recreation is for everyone and the price of programs and activities could prevent some community members from being able to participate. So they established a nationally recognized Access Pass Program, which offers a sliding scale fee structure to ensure equitable access to recreation programs and facilities for all residents, regardless of their financial situation.

ACTIVE AGING PROGRAMS

Howard County, MD

In Howard County, Maryland, older adults can embark on exciting new adventures called Encore Adventures that allows seniors to participate in various outdoor activities. Participants in the program can explore activities such as kayaking, archery, fishing, biking, history hikes and even an indoor rock wall. After completing five different adventure programs, their enthusiasm for staying active is acknowledged with a patch and certificate.



Strategy 4.4.1: Develop a set of flexible design standards that celebrate Fort Worth's unique neighborhood history and culture while maintaining system-wide quality.

- These standards will allow for neighbourhood-specific customization, incorporating diverse and adaptable features that reflect community identity and meet the needs of specific demographics.
- Use data-driven decision-making and leverage demographic data, recreation trends, and usage patterns to align park amenities with the unique needs of each district. Use this analysis to identify gaps in service and avoid duplication of similar park features across neighborhoods.
- Collaborate with neighborhoods to create culturally reflective features in signage, fostering community pride and ownership of local parks and facilities while welcoming visitors to different areas of Fort Worth.
- Leverage PARD's Log Cabin Village Interpretive Museum as a model for celebrating Fort Worth's local heritage and pioneer history, and explore opportunities to integrate similar interpretive elements and storytelling features into neighborhood parks across the city.
- Continue working with local historians, Fort Worth Public Art, museums, galleries, schools, universities and local artists to introduce features and public art pieces into park and recreation facilities that mirror the culture and personalities of the neighborhoods the parks and facilities serve.

Integrating historic features and public art into public spaces strengthens the connection between neighborhoods and parks, fostering a unique sense of place. This can involve artists hosting neighborhood brainstorming sessions to gather creative ideas and incorporating residents' stories and photos into features like digital murals, unique play structures, shade structures, art installations, community gardens, and multipurpose fields for cultural sports and activities.

As outlined in the City's Public Art Master Plan, public art enhances and celebrates Fort Worth's rich cultural and ethnic diversity. Existing plans, such as the Fort Worth Public Art Master Plan for Lake Como Park, the East Lancaster Public Art Plan, and the Heritage & Paddock Parks Public Art Master Plan, serve as valuable guides for developing similar plans tailored to other parks or creating an overarching Public Art and Parks Master Plan.



BEST PRACTICE

CELEBRATING NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Methow Park, Wenatchee, WA

This park exemplifies how parks can preserve and celebrate neighborhood identities by integrating local culture, art, history, and values into their design and programming. Through extensive community engagement, the park was transformed to reflect the predominantly Latino heritage of its surrounding neighborhood, fostering pride and ownership among residents.

Key features include murals, cultural motifs, and spaces designed for festivals and gatherings, honoring the community's heritage. Bilingual programs, cultural dance classes, and inclusive events further enhance its role as a vibrant cultural hub. Flexible spaces cater to all ages, ensuring accessibility and fostering connections.





BEST PRACTICE

USING PUBLIC ART TO DEFINE PARKS



Cloud Gate at Millennium Park, a symbol of Chicago, attracts millions annually for its reflective and interactive design.



Pipe Dream at Symphony Park, Las Vegas visually interprets music, creating a dynamic cultural landmark.



Echo at Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle invites reflection



Please Touch the Art in Brooklyn Bridge Park turns visitors into participants in a dynamic art experience.

Strategy 4.4.2: Explore opportunities in Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism to protect, restore, and promote the cultural and historic resources of the parks system.

- Partner with the City's Historic Preservation Department, Texas Christian University, and non-profit historical and cultural organizations in identifying, cataloging, and preserving historic and culturally significant areas throughout the City. Include these as part of the City's parks and recreation inventory to be enjoyed by the public. Create a "historic trail" that connects local, state and nationally registered historic sites to parks and public facilities through the use of the city's multi-modal trail system.
- Host community events, such as scavenger hunts, that will take participants on a city-wide adventure and teach them about the history and culture of neighborhoods, communities, Park Planning Districts, and the City. Art Master Plan for Lake Como Park, the East Lancaster Public Art Plan, and the Heritage & Paddock Parks Public Art Master Plan, serve as valuable guides for developing similar plans tailored to other parks or creating an overarching Public Art and Parks Master Plan.

Strategy 4.4.3: Support culturally-based events and programs, such as dance, art, and language activities, developed by residents to hold at parks and public spaces.



Creating Common Ground: A vibrant public space where community members of all backgrounds can gather, connect, and celebrate Fort Worth's rich culture.





Premier Destination

Transform Fort Worth's parks and public spaces into a leading destination that contributes to the City's economic development and growth.

Objective 1: Promote the City's parks and public spaces to attract tourists and new user groups to Fort Worth.

Objective 2: Position parks and public spaces as key economic development assets to attract major employers and a talented workforce.

Objective 3: Enhance the economic impact of parks by integrating amenities like food concessions, recreational rentals, and vendor opportunities to create revenue streams and boost tourism.



Goal 5 Premier Destination



BEST
PRACTICE

Objective 5.1: Promote the City's parks and public spaces to attract tourists and new user groups to Fort Worth.

TRANSFORMING PARKS INTO VIBRANT DESTINATIONS

Memphis River Parks, Memphis, TN

Memphis River Parks serves as a successful example of promoting regional parks and public spaces to attract new user groups and tourists. The park system (including 8 parks), anchored by the redesigned Tom Lee Park, offers spaces for recreation, arts, and cultural programming while hosting major events like the Memphis in May International Festival, which draws attendees from across the country. Other spaces, such as Beale Street Landing, provide iconic riverfront views and family-friendly activities, while Fourth Bluff Park connects downtown Memphis with unique public art installations and seasonal events. The diverse amenities and programming, paired with accessible design, make the parks a destination for residents and visitors alike.



Memphis River Parks

Strategy 5.1.1: Organize a diverse schedule of special events, festivals and programs to attract tourists and new user groups to the park.

To increase engagement, Fort Worth should host a variety of recurring and one-time events—from monthly meetups to annual festivals—that activate park spaces and draw both residents and visitors. Regularly scheduled events can establish tradition and routine, encouraging community participation and boosting the local economy through tourism, dining, and retail.

- Host events and programming such as: Music festivals, Food truck gatherings, Charity runs, Location specific programming at Log Cabin Village and Fort Worth Nature Center.
- Organize monthly, semi-annual, and annual events such as cultural celebrations, food festivals, and holiday-themed gatherings across parks.
- Develop private rental opportunities by converting underutilized park facilities into venues for weddings, retreats, and team-building events, with partnerships to offer event packages through local caterers, musicians, and vendors.
- Facilitate community celebrations through culturally specific gatherings that reflect Fort Worth's diverse population.
- Partner with local sports organizations, schools, and leagues to host local, regional, state, and national tournaments in sports like soccer, baseball, softball, and rugby, contributing to sports tourism and showcasing Fort Worth's public recreation facilities.

Strategy 5.1.2: Leverage Fort Worth's cultural and natural heritage.

Fort Worth's park system offers a powerful platform to celebrate the city's history, culture, and environmental assets. By connecting parks to heritage sites and storytelling, the City can create immersive experiences that build community pride and attract cultural and eco-tourism.

- Promote historic venues like Log Cabin Village as interpretive park assets, and integrate storytelling and heritage programming across the system to highlight neighborhood history and local identity.

- Collaborate with local historians, artists, and cultural institutions to develop public art, cultural displays, and educational signage that reflect Fort Worth's Western heritage and rich community diversity.
- Promote natural areas as eco-tourism destinations with programming tied to hiking, photography, biodiversity, wildlife conservation, outdoor education and other non-intrusive activities. .
- Incorporate revitalization and conservation efforts into marketing and interpretive materials to tell the story of Fort Worth's commitment to sustainable and resilient park development.

Strategy 5.1.3: Utilize diverse and unique designs, amenities, and programming in signature parks that reflect the character and makeup of the community.

- Develop self-guided tours with specific themes, such as wildlife watching, historical landmarks, or cultural digital art specific to the surrounding community.
- Ensure regional parks have adequate visitor amenities, such as easily accessible parking, restrooms, wayfinding signage, and visitor information centers.

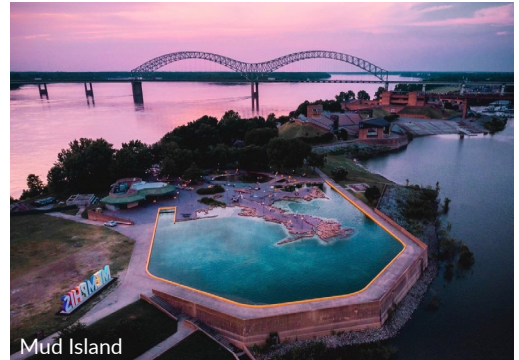
Strategy 5.1.4: Create a vibrant Downtown Riverfront Park

Enhance the Trinity River Corridor by developing a series of interconnected spaces that link major destinations in the downtown area and nearby neighborhoods (The Botanic Gardens, the Cultural District, Trinity Park, the Zoo and Log Cabin Village, the Stockyards, Rockwood Park and La Grave Field) . This approach unlocks the River's potential and enhance the City of Fort Worth's reputation as a desirable place to live and visit while preserving its unique ecosystem and resilience to periodic flooding.

- Design and implement key public spaces and iconic landmarks such as pedestrian bridges, scenic overlooks, and art installations, to create a unique visual identity and destination along Trinity River Corridor and Riverfront Park.
- Expand waterfront recreation opportunities like kayaking, paddleboarding, or river cruises, which draw visitors seeking outdoor and water-based activities.
- Host major riverfront events and festivals like Fort Worth River Front Music Fest, Annual Charity Runs, Beer and Wine Festivals, Fourth of July and Holiday Celebrations.



Martyrs Park



Mud Island



Tom Lee Park Playground



River Garden

Memphis River Parks diverse and unique designs and amenities

Strategy 5.1.5: Strengthen branding and marketing efforts to effectively promote Fort Worth's parks, public spaces, and recreational assets, highlighting their unique qualities to attract residents, visitors, and talent.

Create a unified brand that reflects the diversity and character of Fort Worth's parks and recreation system. Incorporate this branding into signage, promotional materials, and digital platforms to elevate visibility and identity.

- Develop interactive digital tools to enhance visitor experiences at unique destinations like Log Cabin Village and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, including:
 - * Augmented reality (AR) self-guided tour apps that let users scan QR codes to view historical reenactments, wildlife information, or interactive storytelling.
 - * Gamified scavenger hunts that engage visitors through fun, educational content linked to QR code stations throughout park grounds.
- Offer virtual content and live streaming experiences, such as:
- Monthly “Behind-the-Scenes” livestreams featuring animal care, traditional crafts, or living history presentations.
- Podcasts or video series spotlighting historians, naturalists, and local cultural voices to tell the stories of Fort Worth’s natural and cultural heritage.
- Highlight unique park features through virtual tours, interactive maps, and digital storytelling.
- Partner with Visit Fort Worth and other local tourism organizations to promote parks as key cultural and recreational destinations in citywide marketing efforts.
- Partner with local travel influencers, nature photographers, and bloggers who can highlight Fort Worth parks in their content.
- Work with hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies to develop themed travel packages that include park experiences—such as guided hikes, picnic events, historic tours, or river adventures.



BEST PRACTICE

BEST PRACTICE:

AUGMENTED REALITY AND PUBLIC ART

Philadelphia, PA

The Mural Arts Philadelphia Augmented Reality (AR) Public Art Project is a great example Fort Worth can learn from. It blends public art with technology by using an app that brings murals to life through animation, sound, and storytelling. This approach makes the art more interactive and accessible while deepening the viewer’s connection to local culture and history. Fort Worth can apply this model in parks and heritage sites like Log Cabin Village or along trails and cultural corridors—using AR to animate historical narratives, nature scenes, or community art, creating immersive experiences that engage residents and visitors alike.



[Augmented Reality and Public Art](#)

Objective 5.2: Position parks and public spaces as key economic development assets to attract major employers and a talented workforce.

Strategy 5.2.1: Explore opportunities to integrate high-quality parks and public spaces into new developments, creating vibrant environments.

As Fort Worth continues to grow and transform, the City should proactively engage with developers and corporations during the preliminary planning stages of new projects to explore opportunities for partnerships. These partnerships will focus on creating or improving park spaces within or near mixed-use developments. Collaborative efforts may include shared funding responsibilities for capital projects, as well as the operations and maintenance of parks.

- Partner with Economic Development to engage corporate leaders relocating to Fort Worth, integrating parks and public spaces into new developments to enhance employee well-being and foster community engagement.

Strategy 5.2.2: Fund, operate, and manage the park system to enhance residents' quality of life and attract or retain corporations in the city.

- Invest in creating more greenways, trails, and bike-friendly paths that connect neighborhoods, business districts, and recreational areas, promoting an active, sustainable lifestyle.
- Invest in designing high-quality, multi-use public spaces such as, main streets, plazas, parklets that cater to diverse activities like recreation, relaxation and community events.
- Invest in public spaces that support innovation and collaboration like outdoor innovation hubs with access to public Wi-Fi, outdoor meeting rooms and collaboration spaces.

Strategy 5.2.3: Develop relationships with local Universities, colleges, and companies to integrate parks into their research and innovation.



BEST PRACTICE

PARKS AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Plano, TX

Plano has effectively used parks as an economic development tool, attracting and partnering with major employers. Once a small bedroom suburb, the City of Plano is now a diverse, quickly growing city with a strong economy. Plano has effectively utilized its impressive network of parks and trails to attract major employers and new residents to the city. The Parks and Recreation Department and Economic Development Departments collaborate with each other and organizations like Visit Plano to communicate the value of Plano's parks to businesses researching potential new locations for their offices and operations that would be beneficial for their employees and their families. In 2020 alone, 23 corporations relocated to Plano. Leaders of the City of Plano's Economic Development and Parks and Recreation Departments spend time building interpersonal relationships and trust with the leaders of corporations moving to Plano, coordinating to enable the development of publicly accessible green space on new and redeveloped corporate campuses.

Objective 5.3: Enhance the economic impact of parks by integrating amenities like food concessions, recreational rentals, and vendor opportunities to create revenue streams and boost tourism.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

**BEST PRACTICE:
CONCESSIONS**

Parks on Tap, Philadelphia, PA

Parks on Tap is a program that brought a traveling beer garden, featuring craft beer and food, to a different Philadelphia park each week for the summer season. Since its 2016 launch, the program has generated enough revenue to support improvements, maintenance, and programs in the city's parks. The events are often paired with "friends of" fundraisers and outreach events. Due to its success, funding was secured to continue the program until now.



Philadelphia's Traveling Beer Garden

Strategy 5.3.1: Explore economic strategies, including revenue-generating amenities, to maximize existing park opportunities without compromising green space and park functionality.

- Explore expanding the offering or permitting of concessions in public spaces in high density areas, adjacent to sports fields and at locations where special events are regularly held.
- Establish permanent food and beverage kiosks or cafes in high-traffic parks like Trinity Park, offering diverse dining options that cater to park visitors. These can be managed directly by the city or leased to local businesses, generating steady rental income.
- Partner with food trucks and pop-up food vendors, creating designated food truck zones for special events or weekends.
- Create outdoor adventure offerings like zip lines, rock climbing walls, or ropes courses in larger parks, charging admission fees for these attractions.
- Encourage investment in the development of picturesque event spaces, such as pavilions or waterfront venues, that can be rented for weddings, corporate events, or private parties.

Strategy 5.3.2: Improve mobile payment systems for rentals, concessions, and vendor payments, making it easy for visitors to purchase services or make reservations.

Strategy 5.3.3: Continue to host and expand signature annual events.

- Generate revenue at events through entry fees, vendors sales, and sponsorships.



Manageable Resources

Elevate the management, operations, and maintenance to ensure organizational sustainability

Objective 1: Ensure the fiscal sustainability of the Parks and Recreation Department through innovative funding mechanisms, diversified revenue streams, and efficient resource management.

Objective 2: Address staffing challenges to ensure effective maintenance, programming, and management, supporting the department's growing needs and future vision.

Objective 3: Invest in developing and strengthening diverse partnerships to enhance PARD's capacity and impact.

Objective 4: Optimize and upgrade park facilities to improve functionality, ensure efficient maintenance, and enhance the long-term sustainability of the system.

Objective 5: Enhance governance and organizational excellence through accreditation, performance evaluations, and increased accountability and transparency.



Goal 6 Manageable Resources

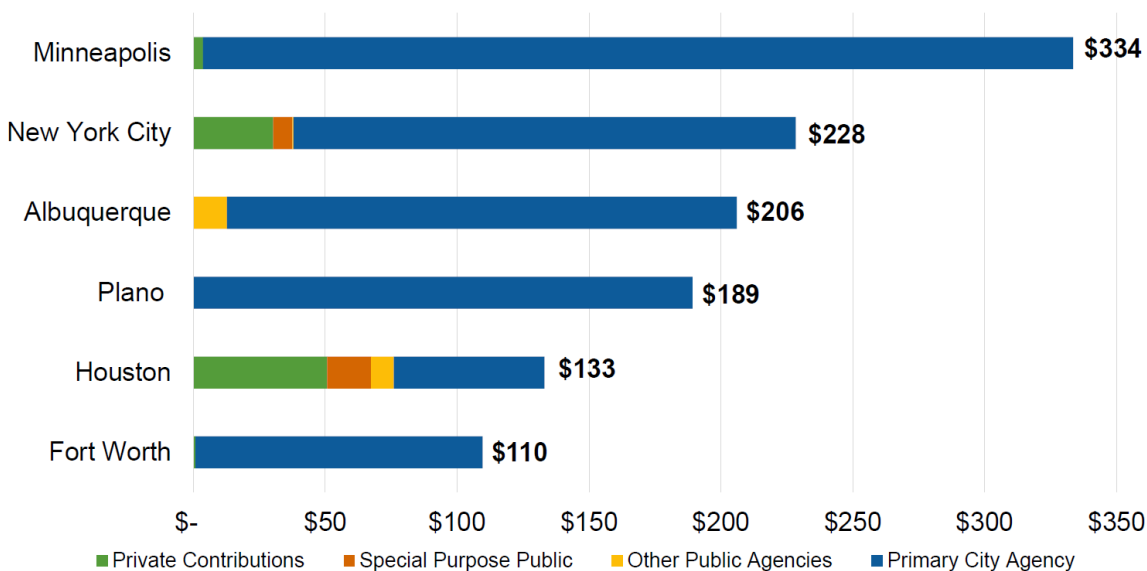
Objective 6.1: Ensure the fiscal sustainability of the PARD through innovative funding mechanisms, diversified revenue streams, and efficient resource management.

The City of Fort Worth Park & Recreation Department has historically prioritized fiscal discipline through standardization of operations and a focus on cost savings. While this approach has ensured financial efficiency, it has also limited the department's ability to pursue innovative capital planning and resource allocation. Years of minimizing resource requests have created a culture of scarcity, restricting the department's capacity to invest in new initiatives, enhance programming, and adapt to evolving fiscal demands. This highlights the need for a more balanced approach to resource management that supports long-term financial sustainability while fostering growth and innovation.

Strategy 6.1.1: Identify and implement sustainable and innovative funding mechanisms.

- Building on the Grant Opportunities outlined in Appendix A, develop a Funding Matrix that incorporates private, special purpose, and other public agency sources alongside City funds to diversify and balance funding streams, ensuring the fiscal sustainability of ongoing park maintenance and capital projects.

2023 Park Spending Per Capita



Source: TPL City Park Facts®, 2024.

Source: Aspirational Strategies Plan Draft Report, HR&A

Strategy 6.1.2: Work with City leadership, Finance, and other City departments to identify supplemental funding for PARD's maintenance of non-park-related facilities.

The City's Park and Recreation Department (PARD) goes beyond maintaining parks and recreation facilities; it also oversees the upkeep of parkways, alleys, boulevards, medians, and all city-owned trees. Managing these non-park responsibilities highlights the need for additional funding to adequately support the park and recreation system.

- Identify supplemental funding for the maintenance of non-park related maintenance activities (E.g. ROW, Medians and city owned trees) by using the Funding Matrix, City Leadership and other Departments.

Strategy 6.1.3: Establish metrics to gauge appropriate capital and operating spending

Strong budget management requires data-driven decision-making to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and effectively. Currently, the PARD lacks defined metrics to guide the allocation of capital and operating budgets, relying instead on traditional practices. Establishing clear, measurable metrics will enable PARD to assess spending priorities, align funding with departmental goals, and address community needs. This approach will provide greater transparency, accountability, and the ability to adapt to evolving demands, ensuring the department can sustainably manage its financial resources while delivering high-quality services.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

**METRICS FOR STRATEGIC
PARK FUNDING**

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) exemplifies effective use of metrics to assess capital and operating spending. By tracking per capita spending, park access within a 10-minute walk, facility usage, maintenance costs per acre, and equity-based factors, MPRB ensures resources are allocated strategically and equitably. These metrics guide funding decisions, prioritize underserved areas, and enhance accountability, ensuring parks remain accessible and sustainable.

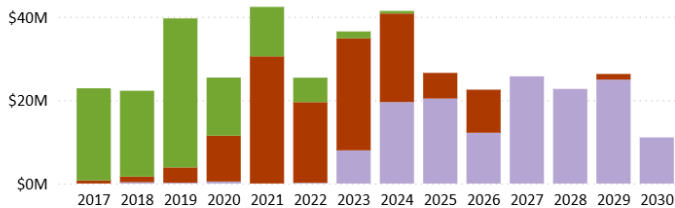
[Capital Improvement Program Dashboard](#)

MPRB Capital Improvement Program - Funding Status



Funding Amount by Status per Year

● Pending Status ● In progress Status ● Complete Status



Filters

Park/Project Name

All

Status

All

Funding Year

All

Commissioner District

All

Project/Program Type

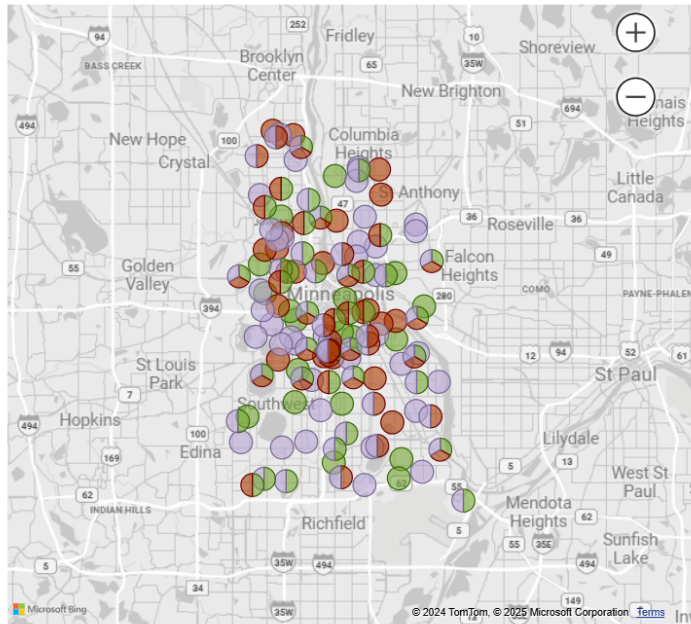
All

Funding Source

All

Locations with Funding By Status

● Complete ● In progress ● Pending



Strategy 6.1.4: Integrate parks planning with citywide planning, policies, land use strategies, and economic development initiatives.

- Collaborate with other city departments and external partners to increase the opportunity to leverage other resources and secure joint grants.

Strategy 6.1.5: Develop and operate revenue-generating facilities within parks, such as event spaces, cafes, sports fields, or fitness centers, where rental fees and concessions can fund park upkeep.

- Continued development of a diversified revenue generating facility portfolio where those revenues can fund park upkeep.

Strategy 6.1.6: Implement the use of outsourcing of tasks, responsibilities, and programming where possible to improve the efficient use of funding and staff.

Outsourcing can significantly enhance efficiency in funding, operations, and maintenance. As Fort Worth continues to grow, increasing demands strain the limited staff available. A strategic approach is to outsource maintenance tasks, such as mowing and painting to private companies located within each Park Planning District. This reduces wait times for park and facility upkeep, ensuring quicker responses. As noted by a parks and recreation leader, leveraging private sector support for maintenance allows the public sector to focus on other priorities—doubling efficiency without increasing the burden on city budgets.

- Determine what services currently being performed in-house could potentially be outsourced to gain efficiency, and plan for implementation.

Objective 6.2: Address staffing challenges to ensure effective maintenance, programming, and management, supporting the department's growing needs and future vision.

Strategy 6.2.1: Increase the number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) at critical areas by 293 FTEs to reach 748.4 FTEs, in line with the NRPA's recommendation.

Findings from the Needs and Priorities Assessment and HR&A's analysis highlight significant staffing challenges within the PARD. Current staffing levels are insufficient to manage existing assets at a high standard or meet the demands of future growth. Many staff members are stretched thin, often taking on responsibilities beyond their roles, including administrative tasks, due to limited capacity. Maintenance and operations divisions are particularly affected, facing difficulty hiring qualified applicants for key positions.

To address these challenges, PARD must increase staffing levels to ensure adequate support for park maintenance, programming, and management, enabling the department to deliver high-quality services and achieve its long-term vision.

- Prioritize and implement a comprehensive strategy to attract and retain qualified maintenance and operations personnel by enhancing the appeal of positions, partnering with educational institutions, improving working conditions, and leveraging temporary workers and contractors as needed.
- Create a position of Park Planning District Manager for each Park Planning District, who will act as a link between the residents and the Park and Recreation Department.
- Consider having a landscape architect and park planner for each Park Planning District.
- Create a position specifically for cultivating and tracking partnerships to increase transparency, community connections and maintenance sustainability.
- Adding a position specifically for grant research and writing may increase external funding and fiscal sustainability

Strategy 6.2.2: Provide and encourage training and professional development opportunities for staff that includes cross-training, introduction to new experiences, and advancement.

Based on HR&A findings, PARD allocates just 0.5% of staff salaries for training, compared to 1-1.5% in other City departments and the industry standard of 2-5%. This could result in employees left due to insufficient development opportunities. This strategy recommends increasing investment in training, including cross-training, new experiences, and career advancement pathways, to improve skills, reduce turnover, and attract and retain top talent.

- Provide and encourage training and professional development opportunities for staff that includes cross-training, introduction to new experiences, and advancement to contribute to more sustainable maintenance operations.
- Encourage Innovation by staff to increase efficiency in the use of resources and fiscal sustainability.

Strategy 6.2.3: Assign non-park duties to other departments to increase staff efficiency in park maintenance.

Objective 6.3: Invest in developing and strengthening diverse partnerships to enhance PARD's capacity and impact.

PARD engages a wide range of partners, from one-time donors and neighborhood groups to major organizations like the Botanic Research

"Our parks are the heart of our community, but without enough staff to care for them, we're missing opportunities to make them thrive. Investing in the people who maintain and program our parks means investing in the health, happiness, and future of Fort Worth."

**Steering Committee Member
Feedback, 2024**

Institute of Texas (BRIT) and the Fort Worth Zoological Association. These partnerships play a critical role in managing key attractions like the Botanic Garden and Fort Worth Zoo and delivering essential services, such as the YMCA's provision of affordable access to the William M. McDonald YMCA pool. Smaller neighborhood-level partners also contribute through volunteer efforts that help maintain parks and green spaces.

However, PARD currently lacks an overarching strategy for partnerships and volunteering, as well as dedicated staff to manage these relationships. Partnerships often depend on the personal connections of PARD leaders rather than a systematic approach. This objective aims to establish a strategic framework and dedicated resources to cultivate, manage, and strengthen diverse partnerships, enabling PARD to expand its capacity and elevate the quality and impact of the public realm.

Strategy 6.3.1: Establish a robust partnership framework to enhance collaboration and achieve shared goals.

- Conduct a thorough review of all current agreements and contracts with public, private, and nonprofit partners to ensure alignment with the city's park development and maintenance goals.
- Explore transition to outcome-based contracts with partners, where funding or support is tied to the achievement of specific results, such as increased park usage, higher levels of visitor satisfaction, or improved environmental conditions.
- Develop clear, formalized partnership agreements that identify the roles in the operation and maintenance of parks/green spaces/facilities/amenities. Successful partnerships can provide excellent benefits for everyone, but to do so each partnership should have specific, well-defined roles and responsibilities.
- Refine sponsorship packages tailored to Fort Worth businesses, emphasizing community impact and visibility. Opportunities could include sponsoring sections of the Trinity Trails, naming rights for playgrounds or sports fields in popular parks like Gateway Park, or supporting events like the Mayfest Festival.
- Develop a Citywide shared platform for departments and partners to view real-time information on opportunities to foster collaboration and community feedback for data driven decisions.
- Establishing a permanent Cross- Department group to ensure priorities and strategies align and support one another to increase partnerships and outside funding opportunities.
- Schedule regular meetings with partners to review progress of partnerships, discuss challenges and identify growth opportunities.
- Create a communication and outreach plan to build trust and long-term relationship with potential partners.



BEST PRACTICE

FRIENDS OF THE PARK

Atlanta, GA

Since 1989, the City of Atlanta has operated its "Park Pride" program which has played an important role in creating citizen-led park based initiatives. One of its top programs has been the "Friends of Parks" program. The City has taken steps to develop the "Friends of the Park Handbook". It is a step by step guide in how to create a "Friends" group, how to publicize it, how to set goals, and how to advocate for your park.

Friends of the Park Handbook



© 2019 Park Pride

Friends of the Park Handbook

Strategy 6.3.2: Enhance strategic collaborations and partnerships

- Explore opportunities and continue to partner with developers, local businesses, and real estate companies to integrate new parks into major urban developments.
- Establish partnerships with neighborhood organizations and local businesses to maintain and operate public spaces such as parklets and squares in dense urban areas.
- Foster interagency cooperation and integrate parks and public spaces goals into broader urban development plans, such as the Fort Worth Comprehensive Plan, the City's Good Natured Initiative and Moving a Million Master Plan. Emphasize how partnerships contribute to shared goals, such as increasing access to green spaces, enhancing equity in underserved neighborhoods, and promoting environmental sustainability.
- Cultivate interagency cooperation (FWISD, Tarrant County, USACE, etc.) to align on shared goals, leverage external funding through regional initiatives like Moving a Million, the Fort Worth Comprehensive Plan, and the Good Natured Initiative, and build community trust by enhancing transparency and fiscal sustainability.

Strategy 6.3.3: Foster a robust network of non-profit organizations and community partnerships.

- Develop and strengthen non-profit organizations, such as a Parks Foundation and groups like Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area or Streams & Valleys, to connect with philanthropy, secure funding, and lead initiatives like park improvement, environmental conservation, habitat restoration, community engagement, and volunteer coordination.
- Promote the "Adopt-a-Park" program where local businesses or organizations or neighborhood associations take responsibility for maintaining specific parks or public spaces.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement and celebrate achievements to maintain motivation and the value of the partnerships.
- Celebrate and recognize partners' contributions by showcasing their impact on Fort Worth's parks through signage, media releases, and social media highlights.



BEST PRACTICE

PARTNERSHIP

Southern Conservation Trust (SCT), GA

The Southern Conservation Trust (SCT) in Georgia provides an excellent example of how partnerships can maximize resources and expand public access to green spaces. By collaborating with private funders and foundations, SCT has secured funding and support to develop and maintain over 1,200 acres of public lands. These partnerships allow SCT to create and sustain parks that may not have been feasible through public funding alone, demonstrating the power of leveraging diverse resources to enhance community amenities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

The "[Partnership Building Resources](#)" document by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) offers guidance for park and recreation agencies to establish and enhance collaborations within their communities. It outlines various partnership types, including those with schools, local businesses, nonprofits, and cultural organizations, emphasizing the benefits of leveraging shared expertise and resources.



BEST PRACTICE

Objective 6.4: Optimize and upgrade park facilities to improve functionality, ensure efficient maintenance, and enhance the long-term sustainability of the system.

Strategy 6.4.1: Develop maintenance plans

- Create short- and long-term maintenance plans during the early planning stages of new projects, ensuring proactive planning for required materials and maintenance schedules.
- Coordinate with other City departments ahead of the project to adequately estimate maintenance needs (E.g., Meeting with Transportation and Public Works about maintenance needs for a project within a floodplain). Include a life cycle cost analysis (LCCA) to estimate the total cost of ownership for park features and amenities. Allocate part of the project budget specifically for maintenance and operations.
- Involve all relevant staff and project partners to ensure comprehensive maintenance planning.
- Ensure that park and recreational facility designs are created with ease of maintenance in mind. This includes selecting low-maintenance plants, durable infrastructure materials, easily accessible facilities, and spaces that can be efficiently cleaned, repaired, or upgraded when needed.
- Include maintenance plans as part of capital improvement projects, specifying monthly, quarterly, and yearly inspections, with milestones to trigger efforts before service interruptions occur.

Strategy 6.4.2: Conduct comprehensive facility assessment

- Perform a thorough bi-annual inventory of all park facilities, documenting current conditions, usage levels, and any existing maintenance issues.
- Use tools like Park Assessment Tool and community feedback to guide assessments and prioritize upgrades.
- Identify gaps in services and prioritize improvements for underserved neighborhoods to promote equity and inclusivity.

PARK MAINTENANCE PLAN

Brownsville, TX

The City of Brownsville, TX uses a detailed park maintenance plan that breakdown priorities into high, medium and low priorities. It also includes a cost analysis and funding options for park maintenance.

Parks Maintenance Operations Plan



PREPARED BY:



OCTOBER 2015



BEST PRACTICE

Strategy 6.4.3: Implement proactive maintenance

- Continue to develop and improve detailed maintenance plans for existing facilities that outline standards, schedules, responsible parties, and routine upkeep processes.
- Continue to establish and improve clear operation and maintenance standards (e.g., safety, cleanliness, durability) and use monitoring tools to evaluate compliance regularly.
- Conduct semi-annual evaluations of maintenance standards and schedules, incorporating community input through surveys or resident drive along or park walk through.

Strategy 6.4.4: Improve performance metrics and tracking

- Continue to use and expand on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor park project and program success, identifying areas for improvement or resource reallocation.
- Continue to employ automated tools like visitor counting systems, mobile apps, or program registration data to track park usage and participation.
- Utilize NRPA COFW benchmark performance metrics against peer cities and industry standards to maintain high-quality service delivery. Each year pick a few metrics to prioritize and focus on to improve.

Strategy 6.4.5: Prioritize facility upgrades

- Develop a phased upgrade plan, prioritizing facilities with immediate safety concerns and high public demand.
- Focus on "quick-win" projects that can be completed quickly to build momentum while working on larger upgrades.
- Align facility upgrades with city capital improvement plans to optimize timelines, resources, and efficiency.

Strategy 6.4.6: Encourage sustainable practices

- Implement viable renewable energy solutions (e.g., solar panels) at PARD facilities, including conservation practices (e.g., motion sensors, programmed thermostats, use of shades, and weatherproofing).
- Adopt durable, weather-resistant materials to improve longevity and reduce environmental impact.
- Promote waste reduction, recycling, and energy efficiency to enhance sustainability.
- Explore ways to automate routine park tasks e.g. mowing, trash pick up etc.
- Use green infrastructure and native landscaping to reduce water consumption and maintenance costs.

ASSESSMENT TOOL

Great Public Spaces Toolkit

New South Wales, Australia created an evaluation "toolkit" that municipalities can use to determine what is working and what needs improvement. Tool captures information such as who is using the park, what space is being used, what are people doing, what is being said about the park, accessibility, are connections being made among users, and can park-goers participate in use of amenities/programs at park.



Great Public Spaces Toolkit

"To measure is to know. If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it."— Lord Kelvin

Strategy 6.4.7: Enhance staff and resource allocation

- Conduct an inventory of equipment and resources needed by staff, scheduling procurement to minimize delays in maintenance efforts.
- Explore the construction of satellite maintenance facilities in park districts to reduce response times for repairs and safety concerns.
- Provide staff training on advanced maintenance techniques and sustainability practices.

Objective 6.5: Enhance governance and organizational excellence through accreditation, performance evaluations, and increased accountability and transparency

Strategy 6.5.1: Use the accreditation as a framework for continuous improvement in governance and organizational excellence.

Accreditation system, such as the NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) establish high standards, thus those park and recreation agencies that receive this accreditation can rightly be seen as some of the top performers. By reaching for and achieving such as ranking, will show the dedication that the City's Park and Recreation Department has for providing services to the community. And by keeping such accreditations, goes to show that the department is continually seeking to be the best.

- Conduct an annual internal audit to assess current policies, practices, and operations against the accreditation requirements. Identify any gaps that need to be addressed to meet the standards.
- Use benchmarking to identify areas for improvement and adopt best practices from other successful organizations.
- Engage all staff in the accreditation process by having a brief standard overview in regularly scheduled staff meetings, to ensure understanding and support of standards. PARD newsletter could feature a standard each month and ask staff for feedback on how to improve.

Strategy 6.5.2: Implement comprehensive performance evaluations.

- Define clear roles and responsibilities with SMART metrics, then use that performance data for decisions on resources and improvements. Ensure staff understand their impact on organizational goals.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities and incentives to enhance staff performance and organizational success.

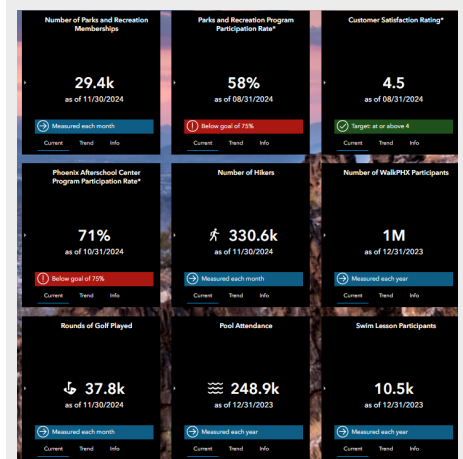


BEST PRACTICE

BEST PRACTICE: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Phoenix, AZ

The City Manager's Office for the City of Phoenix has developed a forward facing "Performance Dashboard" that is used to track various measurable metrics for each of the departments. These metrics help to display the City's progress toward meeting goals and needs, but also help in identifying where more focus is needed.



PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

Strategy 6.5.3: Promote public transparency of the department's operations, administration, finances, projects and maintenance.

- Community updates via public accessible semi-annual/annual reports via, Gov Delivery, COFW website and/or City News story.
- Hold open meetings where the public and stakeholders can attend and participate in discussions related to operations, maintenance, planning, and development of the parks, recreation and public realm system.
- Connect financial data to KPIs to demonstrate budget impacts on programs, services, park development and public space improvements.