

Section III:

Plan Development Process

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Overview

The Fort Worth Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (Master Plan) is developed following the processes recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This Master Plan serves as an evolving document that is reviewed and updated over time and provides a dynamic planning framework from which the future needs of the citizens of Fort Worth can be anticipated and met.

The Parks and Community Services Department (the Department) employs a systems approach to create the framework for park master planning. This approach includes the effective use of citizen input and needs assessment tools, adherence to the City's overall vision for community enhancement, and identification of corresponding goals, objectives, and strategies. The comprehensive nature of this Master Plan addresses the planning and development priorities of the Fort Worth park system for the next five to ten years as identified by the citizens of Fort Worth, the Parks and Community Services Advisory Board, the Fort Worth City Council and City staff.

Goals and objectives based on public input are ratified by the Parks and Community Services Advisory Board and integrated as part of an update to the Departmental Business Plan. The identified priorities serve as a guide for decisions made in producing and updating the park master plan. For details concerning the current plan's goals, objectives and strategies, see Section II - Goals and Objectives.

The various inputs that contribute to the Master Plan's recommendations and priorities are represented in Figure III-1.



Figure III-1 Factors Affecting Plan Recommendations, Priorities and Scheduling

Park Planning Districts

Fort Worth is a large City, both in terms of population and geographic area. Further, Fort Worth has a wide range of neighborhood age and density patterns. Some areas of the City are developing, and other areas of the City are redeveloping. While facility standards and levels of service provide a framework for park development, it is important to recognize that priorities in one area of the City may not mirror another area.

In order to address unique conditions in each area, the City is divided into five Park Planning Districts (PPDs). The PPDs were derived from the physical characteristics of the City based on: major roadways, rivers, creeks, and topographic features that serve as the boundaries for the park planning districts, as well as being based on population density considerations. The map on page 3 of this section shows the PPD boundaries.

Inventory of Existing Facilities, Programs and Opportunities

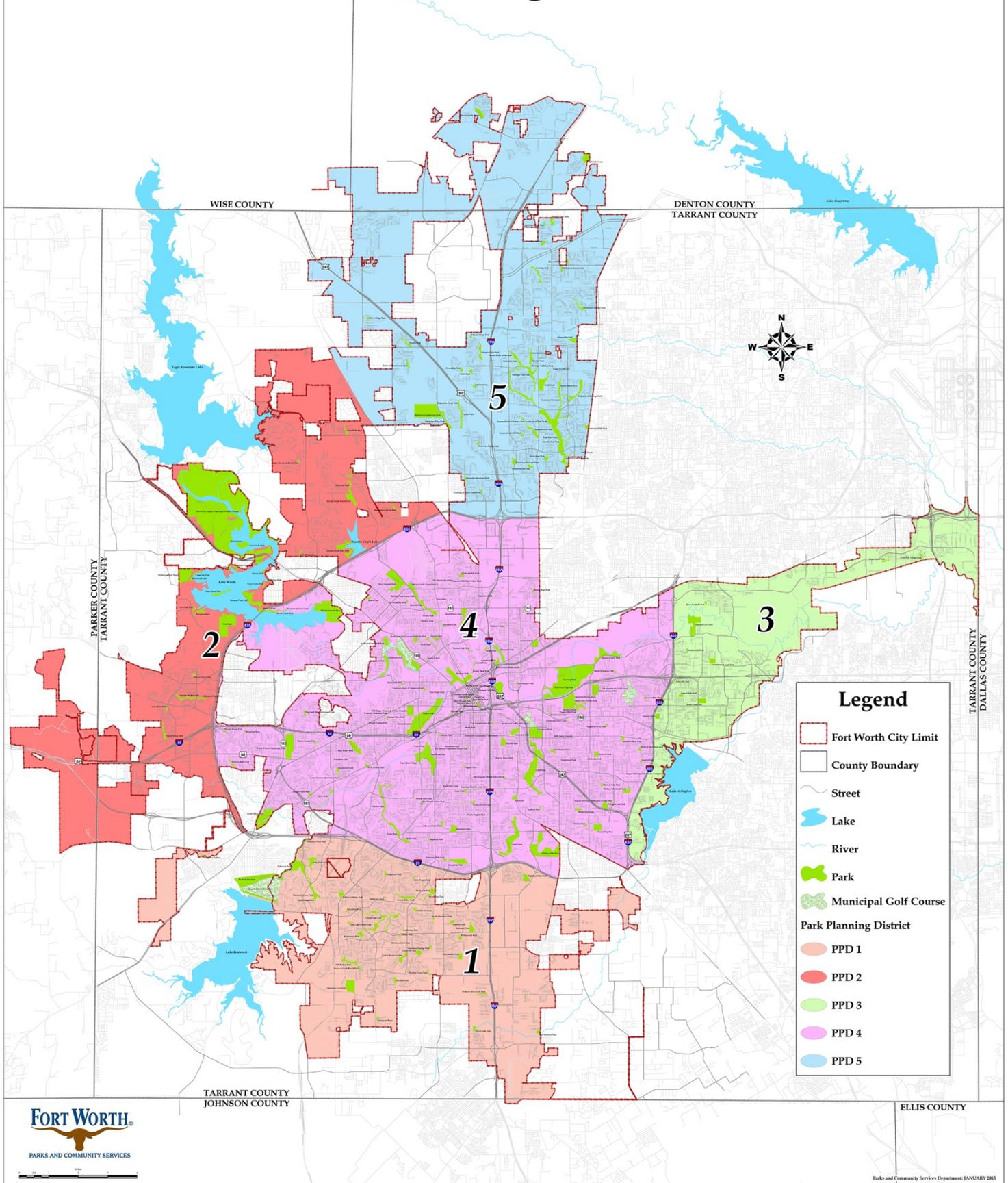
The Parks and Community Services Department's resources are evaluated through a process of inventory, analysis and assessment. Each park in the system is inventoried to determine acreage, location and age of existing facilities. In addition, each park is analyzed to determine if classification modifications are required according to park classification standards adopted by the City. This information is used in conjunction with needs assessment instruments to evaluate areas for future park facility needs.

The inventory contained in this master plan is a descriptive and mapped account of existing park, recreation and open space facilities. This inventory is continually being updated as park land is added to the system. When new park facilities are constructed the information is used in the prioritization process for capital improvement expenditures for each Park Planning District. Park inventory information can be used to assess:

- the current level of service of existing park, recreation and open space infrastructure
- connections to regional open spaces and facilities
- relationships to school sites and facilities
- relationships to other public land and facilities
- relationships to private, non-profit and commercial recreational facilities

For detailed information on the park facility inventory, see Section VI - Inventory of Areas and Facilities.

2015 City of Fort Worth Park Planning Districts



In developing this Master Plan, the Department relied on public input from three sources: the 2013 Needs Assessment, the 2014 Bond Program, and the 2014 Public Survey. These sources are discussed below.

2013 Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment is one of the most significant instruments in the development of the Master Plan for the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department (PACSD). The findings of the Needs Assessment provide a foundation for the direction of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and provide guidance for developing priorities for park facilities and future park and open space development. The 2013 Needs Assessment process was undertaken to meet the following objectives:

1. To identify priorities of Fort Worth citizens for facility needs.
2. To measure the extent of use for programs and facilities offered by the department.
3. To measure perceived maintenance and safety of parks and facilities.
4. To inform residents about parks, recreation facilities and programs.
5. To identify preferences and priorities for future spending on department provided services and facilities.

The City employed National Service Research (NSR) of Fort Worth, a full service research firm, to carry out the 2013 Needs Assessment process. The research process included a mailed survey instrument to 20,000 households randomly chosen within each of the eight Council Districts in direct proportion to the population within each district. The residential mail list was provided to NSR by the PACSD.

The mailed survey introduction was provided in English and Spanish and gave residents the option of completing the survey on paper or online. The online survey link (available in English and Spanish) was posted on the City's website. The City also posted the link on its Facebook page and sent the survey link to Home Owners Association groups and to its database of e-notifications throughout the survey period. Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. also posted the survey link to its Facebook page one week after the initial survey mailing date.

The Spanish portion of the introduction also gave residents the option of completing the survey via mail or online. If residents preferred a mailed survey in Spanish, a phone number was provided so they could call and request a Spanish version of the survey be mailed to them.

The survey document was designed by NSR based upon goals and objectives of the PACSD. PACSD staff provided significant input to the questionnaire. The final survey was tested by NSR and approved by PACSD staff.

The 20,000 surveys were mailed September 23, 2013. The online link (provided in English and Spanish) was active September 23 through October 20, 2013. A total of 340 mailed surveys were returned and 463 citizens completed the survey (in its entirety) online. All questions were optional for residents to answer. The 803 surveys provide a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5% at a 95% confidence level.

2014 Bond Program

In order to gather public input for the 2014 Bond Program, the City launched the Bond Election Public Engagement Plan in July 2013. As part of that plan, staff initiated an extensive public engagement program to educate and solicit and receive input from Fort Worth residents regarding a preliminary list of staff recommended bond projects. The public engagement program offered many traditional and non-traditional citizen communication opportunities, including public meetings, e-mail, social and print media, crowd sourcing software, a hotline and the bond program web page.

The Public Input Phase included both scheduled and specially requested public meetings. A total of 31 bond election-related public meetings were held between July 13 and November 2, 2013. At these public meetings, the public had an opportunity to: (1) comment on projects proposed for funding; (2) comment on projects that were considered, but not proposed for funding; and (3) suggest new projects not included on either list. The comments received through this process were used to verify the findings of the 2013 Needs Assessment Study.

The 2014 Bond Program was ratified by public vote on May 10, 2014. Proposition 2: Parks, Recreation and Community Center Improvements includes \$30,823,600 for athletic field development, walks and trails, community centers, playgrounds, security lighting, park erosion repair and park road and parking lot repair. Specific projects funded through this Bond Program are listed in the 5-year work plan in Section VII – Plan Implementation and Prioritization of Needs.

2014 Public Survey

In conjunction with a November 1, 2014 City-wide public meeting for the Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, a public survey was posted on the City of Fort Worth website. Paper copies of the survey were also available at the public meeting.

Almost 456 surveys were submitted, and all Park Planning Districts were represented. The purpose of the survey was to verify the findings of the 2013 Needs Assessment described above. A summary of the top priorities identified in each Park Planning District is included as an Appendix to this Plan.