

6.0

Parks, Recreation, & Natural Resources



INTRODUCTION

City parks are dynamic institutions that play a vital, but not fully appreciated or understood role in the social, economic, and physical well-being of America's cities and residents. Notable landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted designed America's first urban parks in the 19th Century. These green spaces provided relief from the numerous stresses and strains of urban living and brought people together across social, economic, and racial divides. During the post World War II years people shied away from urban centers, preferring suburban homesteads with spacious yards. During these years the quality of the nation's park systems suffered enormously from disinvestment and disinterest. Many parks have yet to fully recover.

As cities across the country find that populations are being attracted back into more urbanized areas, revitalized park systems and recreation facilities are becoming central themes of this urban renaissance. They are not only safe and beautiful, but parks also aid in addressing critical urban issues from health to housing, to education and tourism - all of which are discussed in greater detail throughout the chapter.



PURPOSE

In order for the City of Plainview to maintain its current population level and attract future populations, it must place a priority on improving economic well-being and enhancing quality of life-related issues, including development and revitalization of the City's parks, recreational opportunities, trails and open spaces. Parks and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and vibrant community environment. They provide the necessary components for events outside the home, after work, and after school activities. Whether for passive or active use, parks and recreation facilities are an important part of everyday active living. Much like streets and sidewalks, water and wastewater; and drainage facilities, police and fire equipment, and other municipal facilities and services, parks are an integral component of the municipal infrastructure. Thus, they warrant a significant level of attention and commitment of time, financing, and personnel resources.

This chapter, in coordination with the 2006 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces (PRTOS) Comprehensive Master Plan and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, provide direction over a 20-year planning period to meet current and future parks and recreation needs. It includes the policy direction the City should champion regarding the preservation and conservation of natural areas and open space, timing of park and trail development, their placement and connectivity within and throughout the City and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and the types of facilities needed and wanted by Plainview citizens.

Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces (PRTOS) Comprehensive Master Plan (2006)

In 2006, Plainview's Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) along with the Park Superintendent developed a 25-year master plan designed to address future growth, recognizing the crucial role that the City's parks, recreation, trails and open spaces play in the vitality and well-being of Plainview and its citizens. It is the mission of the City of Plainview Parks Department to:

- Protect the natural beauty of Plainview through the development of a system of parks, recreation, trails and open spaces;

- Provide citizens of all ages positive recreational opportunities in clean, safe and accessible facilities; and
- Preserve the City's quality living environment for future generations.¹

Concurrent with the Parks Department's responsibilities, the PAC also plays a critical role in the implementation of PRTOS initiatives. The PAC consists of eight board members and makes recommendations to the City Council in regard to the open space planning, parks, and recreation planning and/or purchase, disposal, or trade of such lands.² Recommendations involve the coordination of the PRTOS master plan, or future plans, within the City of Plainview Parks Department, issues pertaining to open space, parks, recreation, or land planning issues, and on

1 City of Plainview Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces Comprehensive Master Plan (2006).

2 City of Plainview. <http://www.plainviewtx.org>

2006 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces (PRTOS) Goals

1. The City of Plainview should build, operate and maintain a system of parks, recreational facilities, trails and open spaces that are distributed throughout the City and responsive to the needs of Plainview residents.
2. The City of Plainview should, as much as practical, develop and maintain public access to available natural land through direct purchase and public / private partnerships.
3. The City of Plainview should build and maintain a system of public exercise trails that provide recreational and mobility opportunities for Plainview residents.
4. The City of Plainview should provide opportunities for varied recreation activities and programs that are responsive to the needs of a wide range of Plainview residents.
5. The City of Plainview should promote opportunities for public participation in planning parks, recreation facilities, trails and open spaces.
6. The City of Plainview should create and promote opportunities for private contributions and volunteerism in the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of parks, recreation facilities, trails and open spaces.
7. The City of Plainview should participate with other jurisdictions and public sector entities in promoting a region-wide parks, recreation, trails and open spaces system, for recreational as well as educational purposes.

priorities for the allocation / expenditure of funds. Thus, the PAC plays a role in conjunction with the Parks Department in determining the current and future successes of Plainview's PRTOS system.

The 2006 PRTOS Master Plan assessed the unique needs of the community by conducting an assessment of existing parks, facilities and equipment; and surveys (both verbal and written) in each district. The PRTOS Master Plan listed

goals followed by the standards necessary to support the City's need for desirable parks, recreation facilities, trails and open spaces - many of which are still relevant today. The goals focused on several important issues such as accessibility and mobility; conservation and preservation; public / private partnerships and community stakeholder participation; as well as operation and maintenance responsibilities.

The Benefits of Parks in Advancing the Development of Healthy Communities

According to the National Recreation and Park Association, parks and recreation possess three values that make them essential services to communities:

1. Economic Value

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values.
- Cities can use parks to reduce public costs for stormwater management, flood control, transportation, and other forms of built infrastructure.
- Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top reasons for business relocation decisions.
- Parks and recreation programs generate revenue from operating costs.
- Indirect revenues are generated for the local and regional economies through the hosting of sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses yields more sustainable local and regional economies.

2. Public Health and Environmental Benefits

- Parks are the places people go to get healthy and stay physically fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- Designing places within which people can become physically active can improve individual and community health, and result in an increase of residents who exercise regularly.
- Research shows correlations between the reduction of stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health and the length of time spent in parks.
- Parks and other conserved open spaces help to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve air quality, produce wildlife habitat, and provide places for individuals to connect with the natural

environment and recreate outdoors.

- Cities can use parks to help preserve essential ecological functions and to protect biodiversity.
- When planned as part of a system of green infrastructure, parks can help shape urban form and buffer incompatible uses.

3. Social Importance

- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community; providing identity for citizens and enhancing the perception of quality of life in the community.
- Parks provide gathering places for social groups and families, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- By providing gathering places, parks facilitate social interactions among residents that are critical to maintaining community cohesion and pride, as well as developing social ties that become the glue that holds the community together and drives future actions.
- Voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space has exceeded 75 percent in recent years, revealing the public's prioritization of parks in government spending.
- Parks and recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities.
- Community involvement in the planning and design of neighborhood parks, as well as access to parks and recreation opportunities are positively associated with lower crime rates, vandalism, and juvenile delinquency.
- Parks have a value to communities in the formation of a sense of public pride and cohesion.

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association. "Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services." http://www.colchesterct.gov/Pages/ColchesterCT_Dept/PR/forms/Parks-Are-Essential-Public-Services.pdf

The Central Flyway

Migration is one of the most fascinating aspects of the natural world. Two times per year, billions of birds migrate vast distances across the globe. The geographical area covered by a migratory bird over the course of its annual cycle, encompassing breeding and non-breeding grounds and the connecting migration route, is known as a flyway.¹ Sadly, many of the world's migratory bird species are in critical population declines due to multiple factors, including:

- habitat loss and degradation;
- illegal and unsustainable hunting practices;
- infrastructure development (e.g., power lines, fences, windmills, etc.); and
- climate change and disease.²

The conservation of migratory birds is dependent upon the international collaboration and coordinated conservation initiatives along their flyways.

Typically, migration patterns follow a north-south axis with birds relocating to milder climates at lower latitudes for the duration of their non-breeding season.³ Taking on such tremendous journeys can be dangerous as birds are reliant on favorable weather conditions, *en route* resources and the geographical features they encounter - such as mountain ranges, watercourses and coastlines, avoiding large bodies of open water and taking advantage of prevailing wind patterns and updrafts. Subsequently, a number of species share the same flyways (especially those with similar biological and ecological traits); for example, waterbirds require a route that encompasses a variety of highly-productive staging sites. In the United States there are three classified flyways:

1. Atlantic Flyway;
2. Mississippi Flyway; and
3. Central Flyway.

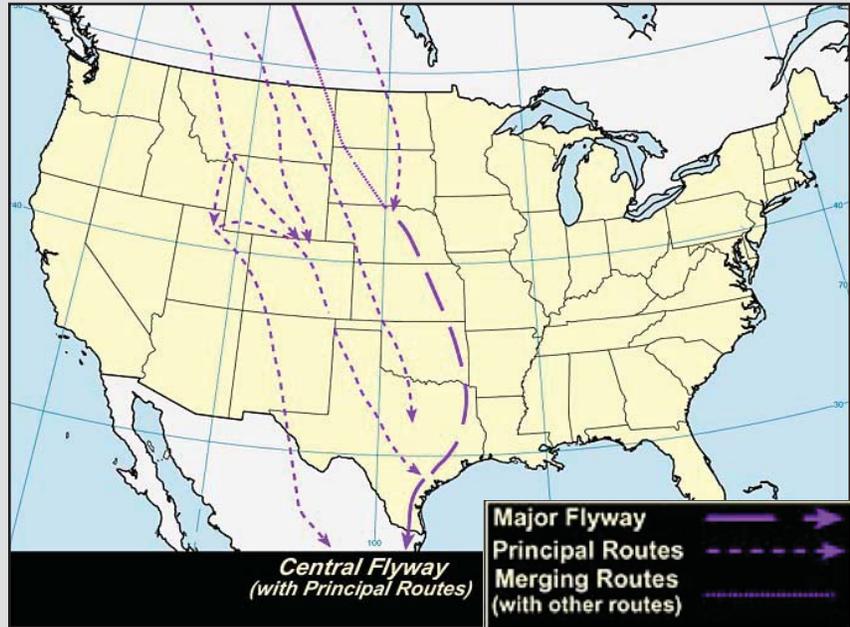
The Central Flyway is a massive bird migration route, covering more than one million square miles across North America's interior. It is composed of the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories, and the states of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.⁴ The territories within the Central Flyway serve over 380 species of birds (not all of which are migratory) - including 16 priority bird species:

1 Kirby, J. S., Stattersfield, A. J., Butchart, S. H. M., Evans, M. I., Grimmett, R. F. A., Jones, V. R., O'Sullivan, J., Tucker, G. M. and Newton, I. (2008) Key conservation issues for migratory land- and waterbird species on the world's major flyways. *Bird Conserv. Int.* 18: S74-S90.

2 Bird Life International. "Spotlight on flyways." <http://www.birdlife.org>

3 Newton, I. (2008) *The ecology of bird migration*. London: Academic Press.

4 Flyways.us. "The Central Flyway." <http://central.flyways.us/>



Source: <http://www.birdnature.com/central.html>

American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, Brown Pelican, Greater Sage-Grouse, Least Tern, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Piping Plover, Reddish Egret, Redhead, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Plover, Whooping Crane, and Wilson's Plover.⁵

Birds have an increasing recreational value as eco-tourism (including birdwatching, camping, hiking, nature study and photography) has become part of a popular, multi-billion dollar industry. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) report *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*, more people participate in birdwatching than baseball, football, basketball and hockey combined. In 2001, birders spent an estimated \$32 billion on wildlife-watching; this includes money spent for binoculars, field guides, bird food, bird houses, camping equipment, and travel-related costs such as food and transportation costs, guide fees, etc.⁶ Forty percent of birders (roughly 18 million Americans) traveled more than a mile from home to bird watch, visiting a variety of habitats on both private and public lands creating economic benefits in many places. This \$32 billion that birders spent on wildlife-related recreation generated \$85 billion in economic benefits for the nation in 2001. This ripple effect on the economy also produced \$13 billion in tax revenues and over 863,406 jobs, as outlined by USFWS. The magnitude of these figures clearly showcases birding as a major economic driver, driving billions in spending around the country.

The Central Flyway provides many places, including Plainview, with a variety of nature-based tourism opportunities, given that the localities within the flyway take action to protect and enhance natural environments and wildlife habitats. For Plainview, the value of planning and promoting wildlife preservation lies in revenue generation, funding opportunities, and regional interest in birdwatching and recreational opportunities.

5 The National Audubon Society. "Priority Birds." <http://conservation.audubon.org>

6 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (2001). *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*.

Through analyzing existing conditions, assessing community needs, and incorporating relevant issues, this chapter outlines a series of updated goals, strategies, initiatives and actions that will aid the City in maintaining and preserving, enhancing and developing the existing PRTOS system to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the future citizens of Plainview. This chapter is divided into six topical areas:

- Discussion of issues and opportunities affecting parks, recreation, trails and open space in Plainview.
- Identification and analysis of local resources in order to determine highest and best uses.
- Recommended focus areas, strategies, initiatives and actions for maintaining and improving Plainview's PRTOS system, in addition to conserving and protecting local resources from degradation and disuse.
- Classification, inventory, and existing conditions analysis of park services areas, facilities, programs, and amenities.
- Needs assessment to gauge the service, facility, recreational, maintenance, and operations requirements of the park system.
- A Priority Improvement Project (PIP) is identified and improvements conceptualized including recommendations and implementation strategies for improvements to the Travis Trussell Park, also known as the "Duck Pond."

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

This Comprehensive Plan element is designed specifically to inform the City of Plainview of potential deficiencies in the provision of parks and recreation facilities presently and in the

future. Plainview has a number of opportunities and constraints with regard to the physical environment, fiscal obligations and commitments, and natural resources, all of which are discussed in further detail in other plan chapters.

The total park and open space acreage in Plainview (i.e., 311 acres) is quite substantial for a city of its size. Virtually all of this open space acreage is within flood hazard / protection areas (i.e. playa lake basins), which is a traditional practice in parts of the country that receive as little as 20 inches of rain per year and where there are no permanent rivers or streams.³ This both presents an opportunity for habitat conservation and passive recreation, as well as a constraint on the intensity of development and provision of adequate recreational amenities / provisions. Park areas are scattered throughout most of the City, allowing for the opportunity to enhance the breadth of the park system service areas, but may also lead to connectivity issues if not planned for and implemented.

Two factors that seriously constrain the actual usable park and open space area in Plainview, as cited in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, are still relevant today. First, most of the acreage is characterized as open space in that the areas are entirely, or almost entirely, undeveloped and in a number of instances, poorly maintained and basically unusable, even as passive recreation areas. Second, the bulk of developed parkland is located at two points along Running Water Draw, with both points being located far away and disconnected from the majority of Plainview's population (especially the lower-income populations). While these serious constraints threaten the success of the City's PRTOS system, they also afford major opportunities to develop these areas into unique,

³ United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). <http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/playa.cfm>

Playas (Spanish for "beaches") provide important water sources for Panhandle farmers and ranchers, as well as natural habitats for migratory and indigenous animals.

Source: <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/kids/facts-new.html>



The shallow, seasonal playa lakes and the plants they support provide ideal habitat for a variety of wildlife. This playa in Plainview is full from recent rains and flush with a water-loving vegetation and birds.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.



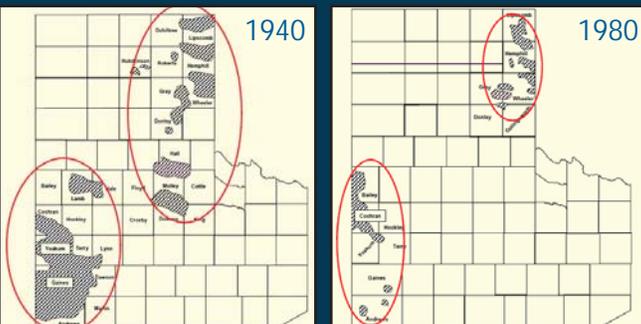


Source: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org>

The Lesser Prairie Chicken

The lesser prairie chicken once extensively roamed the native grasslands of the High and Rolling Plains in the Texas Panhandle. According to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD), by the late 1970s less than 1.2 million acres of lesser prairie chicken habitat remained in the Panhandle. Displayed below is the drastic habitat decrease from 1940 to 1980 in which massive quantities of prairie chicken habitat have been destroyed. Today, the species is a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. It is “warranted, but precluded” from listing due to more critical bird populations, though its population status is reviewed annually in case of drastic declines.

There are many factors contributing to declines in lesser prairie chicken populations and distributions, including: market hunting, overgrazing / poor range management practices, drought, intensive agriculture / cultivation of native rangeland, brush encroachment, energy development projects (i.e. oil / gas and wind farms), and fire suppression. Because lesser prairie chicken populations naturally inhabit large tracts of native rangeland, it is believed that the loss of their habitat is the primary reason for their decline. Remaining habitats are fragmented and of relatively poor quality, effectively isolating populations and limiting their genetic variety. Conserving and managing these shrub and grassland communities can help landowners increase local lesser prairie chicken populations, as well as those of other grassland-dependent species. Thus, prairie restoration is a critical component in the successful revitalization of the lesser prairie chicken population as well as the natural landscape of Texas.



Source: Whitlaw, Heather. “Lesser Prairie Chicken: Ecology and Habitat Management.” Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

parklands infused with natural, educational, and recreational opportunities.

This long-range planning process supplements the findings of the 2006 PRTOS Comprehensive Master Plan in identifying the following issues and opportunities:

- Promote resource conservation and protection;
- Provide accessibility and connectivity;
- Enhance quality park facilities, appearance, and maintenance; and
- Establish joint use and financial agreements with community stakeholders.

FOCUS AREAS

Throughout the planning process, several issues and opportunities were identified relating to the PRTOS system in Plainview, including poor accessibility and connectivity, poorly maintained facilities, and expansive, undeveloped park spaces. Along with analysis of existing conditions, review of current development regulations, and local planning practices, these findings formed the foundation for the following focus areas. Following the identification of the focus area is the series of strategies and their rationale, along with advisable implementation measures. The four focus areas are:

- Focus Area 6.1 - Conservation and Preservation of Natural Resources
- Focus Area 6.2 - Accessibility and Connectivity
- Focus Area 6.3 - Improving Park System Amenities, Recreation Programs, and Facilities
- Focus Area 6.4 - Public / Private Partnerships and Community Participation

FOCUS AREA 6.1: CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Plainview’s landscape is unique in that it contains numerous playa basins that serve as small, ephemeral lakes - meaning that they are only present at certain times of the year. Most of these lakes are dry during the year, due to the

arid weather of the region, and leave expansive open spaces; various species native to the High Plains survive only because of the existence of playa lakes. Playas support the surrounding agriculture by providing irrigation water and seasonally recharging the underlying Ogallala Aquifer.⁴ Though these topographical features are sensitive to urban development, they can provide valuable opportunities to fulfill other community objectives like recreational opportunities, tourism generation, sound resource management, and regional significance.

Nature-based tourism and ecotourism are some of the fastest growing recreational activities in the United States and are sources of significant economic benefits for many localities. Two million waterfowl commonly winter in the playa lakes of the Southern High Plains in addition to numerous other species including: mayflies, dragonflies, salamanders, Bald Eagles, endangered Whooping Cranes, jackrabbits and raccoons.⁵ Many of these playa basins within the floodplain are under public ownership and make up much of the City's open spaces and passive recreational facilities. The baseball and softball practice fields, as well as the soccer fields associated with Edgar & Essie Givens Park are an excellent example of a multi-use recreation facility that also functions as a playa lake during seasons of heavy rain.

Land along the Running Water Draw, floodplains, creeks and playa lakes all offer unique opportunities for land and habitat preservation, recreational trail systems, linear parks systems, and the establishment of Plainview as a regional recreational destination. Public workshop comments directly recognized the Running Water Draw as a catalyst for drawing regional-level interest to the area, in addition to providing valuable amenities to the local population. Preservation and development of these sites will require sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices.

The region in which Plainview is a part is rich with natural amenities, like Lake McKenzie (73 miles away), White River Lake (80 miles), Buffalo Springs Lake (56 miles), and Lake Theo (74 miles); along with Palo Duro Canyon State Park (70 miles) and Caprock Canyon State Park (76 miles). Capitalizing

4 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). <http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/playa.cfm>

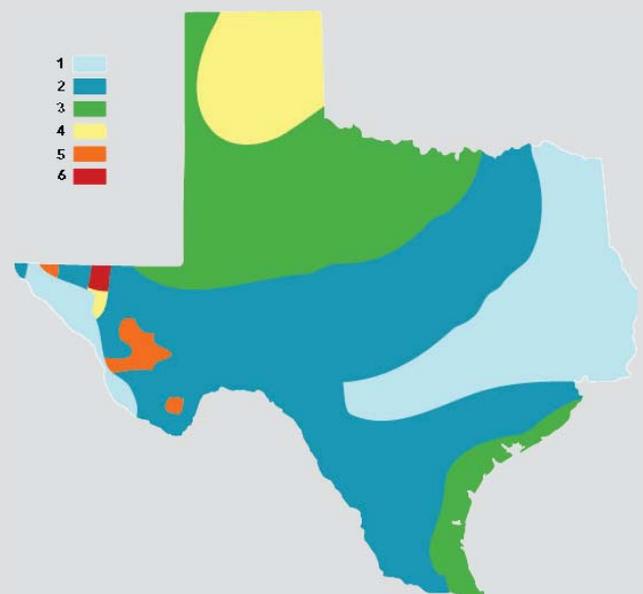
5 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). <http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/playa.cfm>

Wind Energy and Conservation Efforts in the Panhandle

Since the formation of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) in 1989, the electric utility industry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have worked together to decrease avian electrocution and collision mortality. This collaboration has resulted in the development of guidelines for Avian Protection Plans (APP). The guidelines laid out in these plans are meant to serve as a foundation for utilities to tailor their own Avian Protection Plans that will best fit their needs and improve customer service / reliability while furthering the conservation of avian species.¹ A utility company that implements an APP will greatly decrease avian risk as well as its own risk of enforcement under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This is especially important in the Panhandle where wind / wind energy infrastructure are prominent.

The quality of wind in the Panhandle is of good quality (ranging from three to four out of six, illustrated below) and is located in primarily agricultural areas, which is suitable to the extensive land lease and infrastructural requirements of wind energy systems. There are numerous large wind energy and transmission projects planned and in construction, such as the TUCO to Texas / Oklahoma Interconnect Project mentioned in Chapter 2.0, Growth Capacity and Management, that will be installing massive infrastructures throughout the panhandle and existing avian flyways. These projects are required to do extensive analysis of and planning for avian protection in order to comply with federal regulations and receive any federal grants or approvals necessary to move forward with development and implementation.

1 The Edison Electric Institute's Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Avian Protection Plan (APP) Guidelines. 2005.



Source: <http://texaswindenergy.tcaptx.com/>

on the region's amenities and Plainview's unique natural features into an overall regional recreational planning program could potentially initiate a broader image of Plainview as a recreational destination. Tourism activities may include:

- nature watching opportunities;
- recreational trails with educational opportunities;
- seasonal hunting tours;
- boating and fishing; and
- educational conferences / research convoys.

Strategy 6.1.1: Conserve and protect local and regional natural resources through organized planning and development.

It is important to conserve and protect local and regional natural resources so that the history and cultural significance of Plainview is not destroyed. Organized planning efforts can aid the City in preparing for and monitoring development so that no populations are under served, parks under utilized, nor fragile resources destroyed.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Identify natural resources, both locally and regionally, that are unique, scarce, fragile, notable, or necessary to protect.
2. Identify all endangered species and species of concern, both locally and regionally, that require special regulations and / or considerations.
3. Identify any threats to natural resources and wildlife that may have negative impacts on sustainability and conservation efforts.
4. Create resource-specific programs that aim to preserve and protect fragile ecosystems, wildlife, and habitats from negative externalities.

Strategy 6.1.2: Implement regulations to ensure the protection of migratory waterfowl.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Identify migration stopover sites and over-wintering areas in and around Plainview.
2. Identify hazardous conditions that exist at the identified stopover sites and nontraditional wintering areas.
3. Develop an understanding of the behavior

Ecotourism: Economic and Conservation Benefits

Ecotourism has become a popular activity in natural areas around the world providing opportunities for visitors to experience beautiful wonders of nature and culture as well as to learn about the importance of environmental conservation and local cultures. The definition of ecotourism, as adopted in 1996 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is :

Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.

According to the Nature Conservancy, ecotourism is a tool to accrue benefits for both local people and the protected area, making it an ideal part of a sustainable development strategy where natural resources can be used as tourism attractions without causing harm to the natural area. An ecotourism initiative must have the following aspects in order to be successful:

- have a low impact upon a protected area's natural resources
- involve stakeholders (individuals, communities, ecotourists, tour operators and government institutions) in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring phases;
- respect local cultures and traditions;
- generate sustainable and equitable income for local communities and for as many other stakeholders as possible;
- generate income for protected area conservation; and
- educate all stakeholders about their role in conservation.¹

Ecotourism has the opportunity to boost local, regional and national economies. Visitors require numerous goods and services while traveling, including hotels, restaurants, shops, guide services and transportation systems - thus, a multitude of businesses receive direct benefits from ecotourism. Ecotourism has the potential to reduce the threats posed by conventional tourism to natural areas and communities via income generation for: conservation, local enterprise and employment, cultural exchange, environmental education, protected area justification and visitor appreciation. Ecotourism requires rigorous planning and management to realize this potential and to become successful.



¹ Drumm, Andy and Alan Moore (2002). Ecotourism Development: A Manual for Conservation Planners and Managers (Vol. 1). The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA.

of the birds at identified sites and note how the birds utilize the habitat and its resources through observation so that local regulations can be updated and / or added to encourage sustainable and safe interaction between wildlife and visitors to the sites.

4. Provide incentives for the inclusion of local flora and fauna in landscapes during development to encourage prairie restoration in and around the City.

Strategy 6.1.3: Establish a series of passive recreational park spaces that can serve as small-scale nature preserves and wildlife sanctuaries.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Identify playa lakes and open spaces that are within migratory bird travel routes or house unique wildlife / flora / fauna within the jurisdiction of the City of Plainview.
2. Incorporate natural, local species of vegetation in and around the park areas to enhance the habitat for wildlife, contribute to prairie restoration, and improve aesthetics.
3. Install barrier-free, interpretive facilities (i.e., boardwalks, signage, etc.) to provide visitors with scenic vantage points and information, as well as protect the resource from overuse.
4. Seek public and private partnerships with interests in conservation to aid in the conceptualization, financing, implementation, and / or maintenance efforts.
5. Coordinate with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) wildlife biologists and experts to ensure that park designs and concepts are suitable to sustain and protect the local and migratory wildlife in the area.

Strategy 6.1.4: Promote the conservation of wildlife through the establishment of a sustainable, nature-based tourism program.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Promote recreational and interactive educational opportunities that will attract users in the region.
2. Create an economic development program, budget, and schedule to market, develop, and promote nature-based tourism within Plainview and the region.

3. Inventory all of the unique natural resources and patterns (e.g., land forms, topography, unique flora and fauna, etc.) within the region and identify which are specific to Hale County and Plainview.
4. Inventory and analyze comparable successful nature-based tourism programs in Texas and around the country.
5. Ally with state and federal wildlife organizations that could share valuable information on relevant species, conservation methods, and environmental resources to aid in educational initiatives.
6. Identify key organizations that could help jump-start and maintain a nature-based tourism program.
7. Create educational programs for all age groups that will emphasize individual responsibility for conservation in the community, facilitate public participation, and provide healthy, safe, and active recreation.

FOCUS AREA 6.2: ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

An essential part of a parks and recreational system is the linear linkages that tie together the community's neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other public spaces. Such linkages may boost accessibility to parks and other public spaces, thereby expanding the effective service area coverage of these existing parks and allowing more people access to them. Plainview has little to no connectivity of trail networks, pedestrian pathways, or bike paths; but because Plainview's street network is laid out in a traditional grid pattern it would be easier and more efficient to link recreational trails into direct on-street multi-modal transportation networks (e.g., bike lanes and sidewalks). Plainview's street network, as discussed in **Chapter 3.0, Mobility**, provide an ideal opportunity for adding on-street bike lanes that directly connect to the Running Water Draw recreational trails, as well as other parks and recreation facilities within the City (see **Map 3.3, Bicycle Mobility Plan** and **Map 6.1, Parks System Plan**). The proposed Bicycle Mobility Plan will provide off-street recreational trails running east to west connecting the larger Running Water Draw Regional Park and existing Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) trail systems together,

Techniques for Design and Placement of Interpretive Signage along Trails

Trail signage is an important tool in engaging users, educating the public, and providing important safety information. To be effective signage should contain the following:

- Have an inviting trailhead that includes an engaging trail name.
- Use an introductory sign to set the theme of the trail and indicate trail distances / length. This sign usually has a longer message that may include historical facts as well as safety information. For some trails, this may be the only interpretation needed or desired.
- All signs should have a provocative title, graphics, and minimal text.
- Many interpretive sign specialists recommend that most interpretive signs be placed closer to the beginning of the trail while visitors are still fresh and curious. Avoid placing two signs within view of each other.
- Place signs at natural stopping points (e.g., points of interest, great views, animal habitats, etc.) and where people may have questions.
- Limit signs to maintain visitor interest.
- Use panel sizes of 30" x 18" for major trail panels and 7" x 5" for identification panels. Mount signs along trails at 35 - 45 degree angles to the ground so that users can view them easily when passing.
- Signs should be placed to avoid ruining pristine areas and scenic views.

Source: Gross, Zimmerman, and Trapp (1999). Signs, Trails, and Wayside Exhibits: Connecting People and Places. UW - SP Foundation Press, Inc. Stevens Point, WI. (Page 99).

Existing signage on the Running Water Draw Trail could be improved to be more educational and visually appealing.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



as well as directly connecting northward to the proposed on-street bicycle lanes that dissect the City's interior and circle its larger grid network.

The recreational value of parks dramatically increases when they are linked through a series of greenbelts along natural watercourses and drainage ways, trail and walkway / bikeway corridors, and other internal connections. The proposed Bicycle Mobility Plan will link most of the City's developed parklands, including: M.B. Hood Park, Lakeside Park, Lakeside School Park, Edgar & Essie Givens, Running Water Draw, Thomas Boulevard Park, City Park, Chamber of Commerce Park, and lastly Broadway Park. Linking all of the parks with multi-modal accessibility and direct connectivity allows for greater equality in the provision of services and amenities to the City's population. Though this plan will need to be implemented in phases, long-range system planning will help ensure that this form of green infrastructure efficiently grows in coordination with new development patterns and community needs.

Strategy 6.2.1: Improve connectivity within the PRTOS system.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Update and redevelop the Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces Comprehensive Master Plan (2006) to identify opportunities and constraints pertaining to cost, land ownership, and site conditions. The plan should re-establish a 20-year vision that complements **Map 7.1, Future Land Use & Character Map** and guides infrastructure investments, specifically land acquisition and sidewalk / trail construction.
2. Establish a recreational trail hierarchy that specifies width, material, use, and location criteria. Sidewalks should be inventoried to identify broken links, and the local system should be tied to regional networks.
3. Identify where new roadway construction along proposed trail and bicycle routes may require additional land acquisition to accommodate on- or off-street travel lanes. The proposed system avoids I-27 and Columbia given the safety considerations associated with heavy traffic and high speeds. New trails should be constructed in accordance with the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and TxDOT standards and criteria.

Adopted
05.14.13



Map 6.1 Parks System Plan

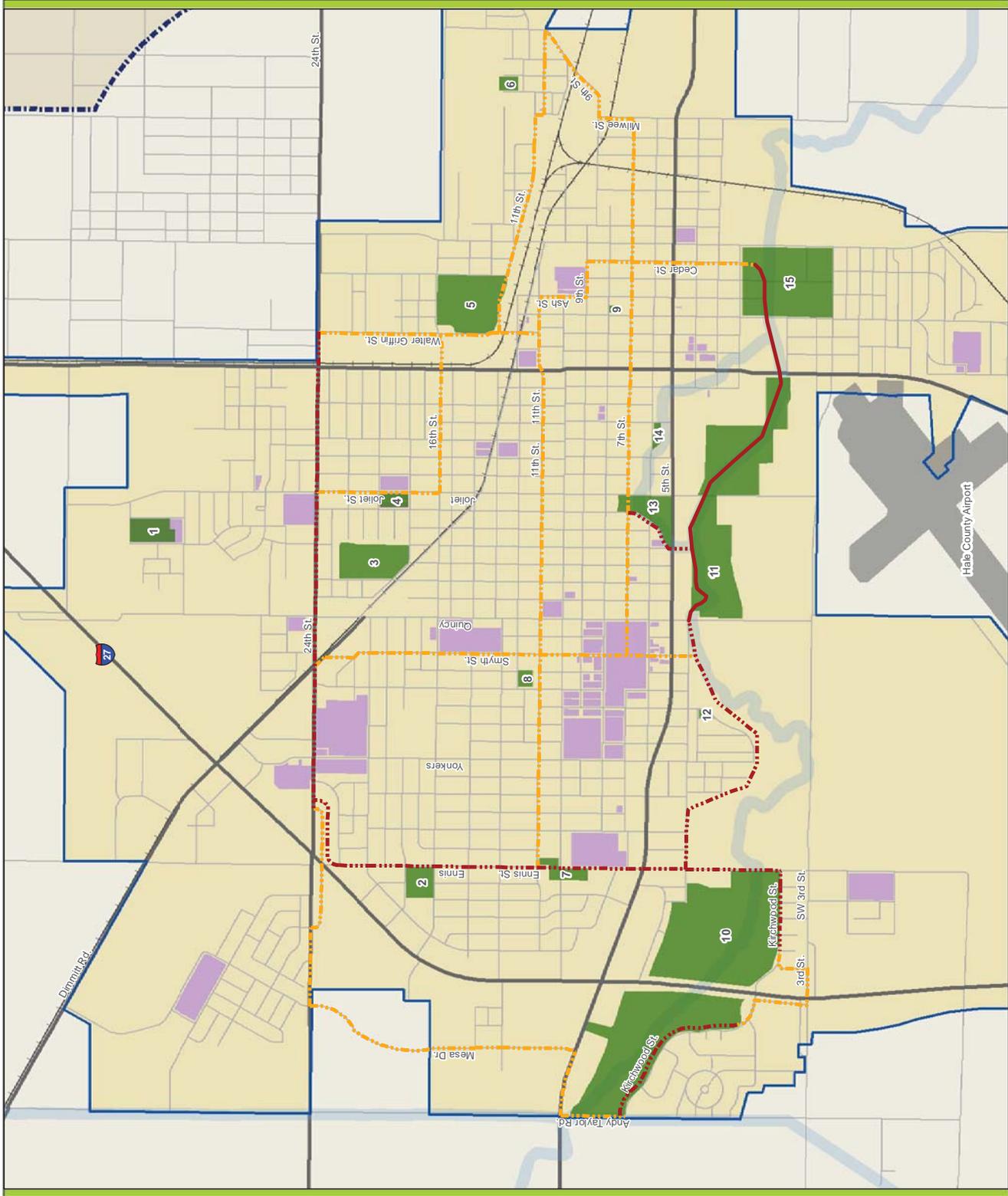
Legend

- Existing Off-Street Recreational Trail
- Proposed Off-Street Recreational Trail
- Proposed On-Street Bicycle Lane
- Parks
- School Properties
- Airport
- City Limits
- ETJ
- Creeks
- Railroad

- 1: John D. Stoneham Park
- 2: M. B. Hood Park
- 3: Lakeside Park
- 4: Lakeside School Park
- 5: Edgar & Essie (E.E.) Givens Park
- 6: Frisco Park
- 7: Travis Trussell Park
- 8: Ulica Street Park
- 9: Millennium Park
- 10: Running Water Draw Park
- 11: Joliet Park / Hike & Bike Trail
- 12: Thomas Boulevard Park
- 13: Lloyd C. Woods Park
- 14: Chamber of Commerce Park
- 15: Broadway Park
- 16: Little Thomas Park



Source: City of Plainview



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

Strategy 6.2.2: Improve accessibility to ensure equal access for all citizens.

Accessibility is critical in facilitating equality among citizens and preventing the alienation of vulnerable populations. Accessibility addresses issues regarding access to information, physical barriers, and the provision of multi-modal transportation. Plainview's parks seldom have Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required curb cut, ramp, and crosswalk provisions; nor do the parks have any specialized amenities (i.e., shorter water fountains, paved play areas, etc.) geared toward disabled or elderly individuals with limited mobility. Connectivity is an issue in many parks where restrooms, playscapes, and other such amenities are located off of paved sidewalks, thus preventing handicapped and disabled individuals from using facilities and hindering his / her interaction among friends and family.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Analyze the PRTOS system's accessibility, specifically to what degree the City's parks are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for disabled and handicapped users. By adding sidewalk curb cuts / ramps and wheelchair-accessible facilities (e.g., play equipment and restrooms), the City can ensure equitable access to amenities and enhance quality of life. For example, the City has already installed ADA-compliant water fountains at all parks.
2. Incorporate on-site handicapped accessible walking trails that create a loop around the edge of each park and connect the important amenities within the park, so that users can utilize these trails for walking, running, biking, roller blading, and pushing strollers, among other things.
3. Continue to provide opportunities for individuals and groups (including low-income, minority, disabled, elderly, and youth at-risk populations) to participate in cultural, recreational, and educational activities that foster better health, both physical and emotional. Arranging special transportation, inclusion, and recognition may allow these groups to more easily participate in events.

Active vs. Passive Recreation

The types of recreation chosen for a specific park can vary depending on the surrounding population's age. Age plays a huge factor in these decisions because physical capacities at different ages vary dramatically such as eyesight, mobility, hearing, and dexterity. As depicted in Figure 6.1, Population Age by Percent (%), the majority of the population is middle-aged and therefore the City needs to provide citizens with enough variety in order to equally serve the population. The most basic differences between passive and active recreation are described below.

Passive Parks

- Passive recreation areas refer to a mix of uses typically found in a neighborhood park, undeveloped land or minimally improved lands which includes the following: landscaped area, natural area, ornamental garden, non-landscaped greenspace, stairway, decorative fountain, picnic area, water body, or trail without recreational staffing.
- These "unprogrammed spaces" allow for a variety of uses because they accommodate change of use over time, as the needs or interests of the community change.

Active Parks

- Active recreation refers to a mix of uses in a park that includes the following facilities or facility types: athletic fields, building or structures for recreational activities, concessions, community gardens, outdoor courses or courts (basketball, volleyball, and tennis), children's play areas, picnic shelters, restrooms, event areas, dog parks, or bike paths.
- Active parks sometimes include more loosely structured areas for softball, soccer, Frisbee / Frisbee golf, and pick up games.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Open spaces can provide both passive recreation areas plus facilities for more active recreation such as sports practice fields.

Source: mendhamtownship.org



FOCUS AREA 6.3: IMPROVING PARK SYSTEM AMENITIES, RECREATION PROGRAMS, AND FACILITIES.

Plainview’s median age is 30.9 years, with the largest age cohorts being 35 to 59 years of age and 5 to 19 years of age (as shown in the pie chart on page 6.11). This data indicates that the community is primarily middle-aged, thereby necessitating diverse spaces, amenities, and programs for the accessibility, usability, enjoyment, and participation by all age groups.

Park assets and amenities vary according to age group and include, but are not limited to the following (with asterisks indicating specific needs or aspirations identified by the City of Plainview Parks Department):

- Playgrounds (new or updated);*
- Swimming pools (new or updated) and splash pads;*
- Picnic areas;
- Baseball fields/softball fields (and eventual complex with official fields, bleachers, etc);*
- Rectangular sports fields (e.g., football or soccer);
- Basketball courts;
- Tennis courts;
- Volleyball courts;
- Dog parks;
- Skate / skateboard parks;*
- Community / cultural center space;
- Recreation / fitness center space; and
- Recreational trails; and

- Restrooms (especially for hike and bike trails and M.B. Hood Park).*

In **Table 6.3, Park Amenity Inventory**, each park’s facilities are recorded and general condition determined through observation.⁶ Eight of the City’s 12 developed parks have more than one combined amenity; combinations including both sports fields and pavilions / gazebos, picnic areas, multi-use courts, and miscellaneous use open spaces (a.k.a., passive recreation areas). Unfortunately, some of these facilities appear outdated and in some cases worn out, and could use some planned reinvestment alongside a reevaluation of the park system’s maintenance needs and schedules with regard to budget, projects, and staffing.

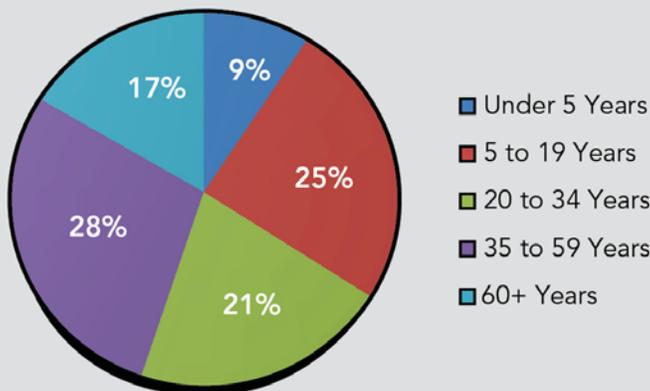
Strategy 6.3.1: Improve park conditions and diversify amenities.

Initiatives and Actions

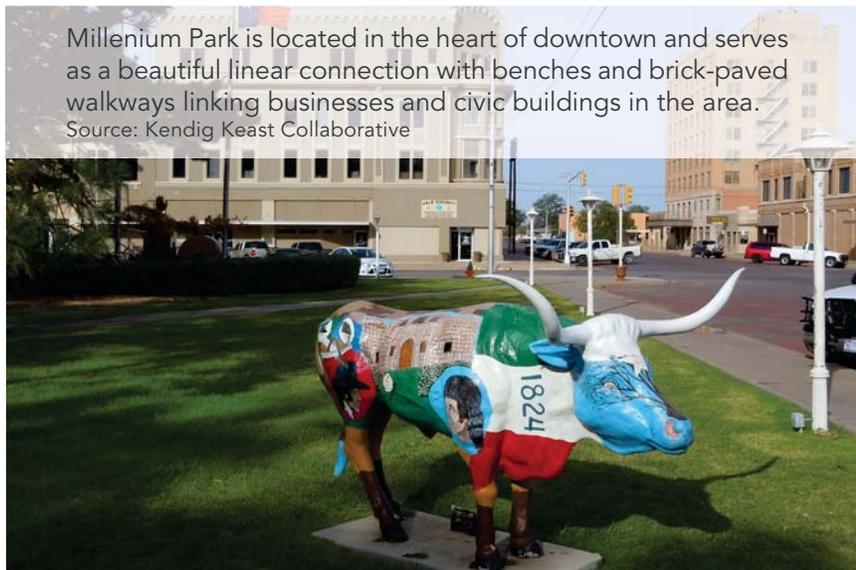
1. Complete a thorough physical conditions review and needs assessment to confirm and prioritize necessary improvements to the PRTOS system and related amenities and programs to maintain sound operations and appealing, competitive facilities.
 - Prepare revitalization plans for each of the existing parks. Plans should include equipment replacement and repair (e.g., add electric panels where needed), building / structure rehabilitation, new features / activities, landscape enhancement. plantings (e.g., lawns, post-drought tree replacement), etc.), and other refurbishment.

⁶ Conditions were determined through aerial observation and analysis. Sources include GoogleEarth, GIS files provided by the City of Plainview, and on-site field visits.

Figure 6.1, Population Age by Percent (%)



Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data



Millenium Park is located in the heart of downtown and serves as a beautiful linear connection with benches and brick-paved walkways linking businesses and civic buildings in the area. Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

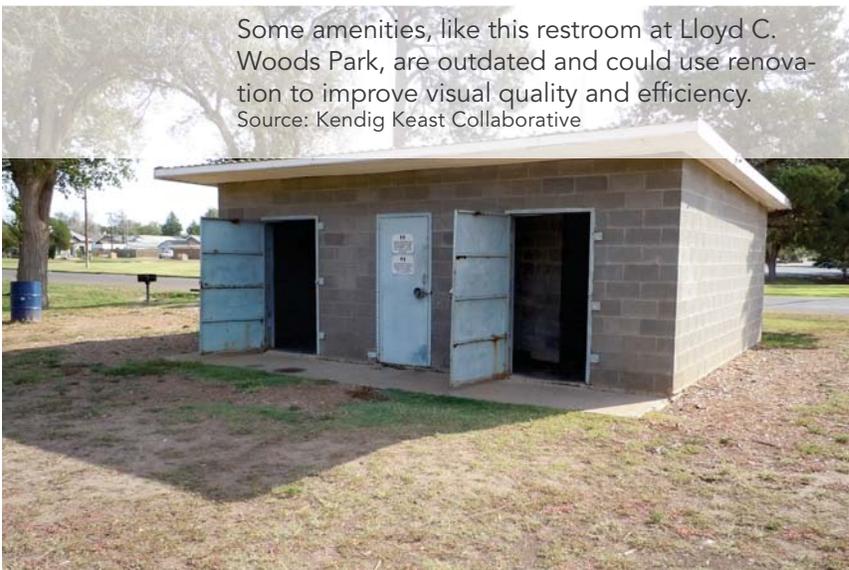
- Evaluate opportunities to incorporate various amenities, as well as active and passive recreation, that appeal and can be utilized by intergenerational and non-traditional users in existing and future parks, including community gardens, dog parks, climbing walls, bike trails, Frisbee golf, spraygrounds, running / walking trails, checkerboard tables, art walks, and sandboxes, among others.
2. Update the Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Comprehensive Master Plan to reflect current conditions, updates to planning priorities, and changing demands; and develop a maintenance program that anticipates park maintenance based not only on trails in need of repair and maintenance, but also anticipates the next time a recently repaired trail will require maintenance, based on the most recent level of maintenance provided.
 3. Use the National Program and Playground Safety guidelines and / or the United States Consumer Products Safety Commission standards in the design and replacement of playground equipment, all surface areas, and other recreational facilities and improvements.
 4. Implement a wayfinding system within parks and along trails to highlight natural features, provide useful information for users (i.e., mile markers), and direct people to nearby destinations.
 5. Enhance landscape plantings and lawn maintenance in parks and along trails.
 - Analyze each park to determine appropriate areas for high quality, irrigated turf grass. Other areas should then be designated, signed, planted, and maintained to reflect natural, environmental conditions.
 6. Add shade trees and shrubs along trails and in parks to improve aesthetics, create necessary shade, and improve the overall character of the park system.
 6. Improve lighting conditions for existing facilities and identify areas where additional lighting is needed in order to promote safer, more responsible use of the PRTOS system's amenities and increase usability at various times of the day / year. Citizen input during community engagement forums revealed a demand for more well-lighted facilities (specifically along trails and other pedestrian areas, and on sports and practice fields).

Strategy 6.3.2: Promote increased local and regional community use of Plainview's PRTOS system.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Work with City and county organizations and civic clubs to program public events and activities in Plainview's parks. Partner with other public and/or private entities to market activities to a broader audience.
2. Establish and/or enhance a "Friends of the Park" program to solicit neighborhood and business involvement in maintaining and policing public parks and open space areas, including esplanades and public gardens.
3. Continue to pursue opportunities to negotiate and enter into joint-use agreements for park development with the Plainview Independent School District.
4. Provide for a high-profile, colorful, and very public update to the community on major park facility additions and new amenities, as well as continuing challenges and areas, sites, and structures that are at particular risk

Some amenities, like this restroom at Lloyd C. Woods Park, are outdated and could use renovation to improve visual quality and efficiency.
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



A well-used, recently upgraded children's play structure in City Park is a great example of a Neighborhood Park and the ideal amenities provided within them.
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



of irreparable decline and / or demolition. This would also provide another opportunity to recognize the exceptional efforts by local organizations and positive results of public / private partnerships.

- 5. In areas of infill development, add mini "pocket" parks with limited amenities providing residents greenspace near their homes as well as linear connections along streets and between neighborhoods.
- 6. Integrate technology systems such as phone applications, information kiosks, e-newsletters, etc., to facilitate awareness of Plainview's special events, amenities, recreational opportunities, and history. Technological upgrades are a current priority in many communities given the evolving technical expectations and sophistication of facility users.

Strategy 6.3.3: Reduce park maintenance requirements in order to decrease the fiscal and operational demand on the City's Parks Department.

Initiatives and Actions

- 1. Analyze the efficiency (including locational, fiscal, and operational) of the park system and identify parks that are under serving populations or present a heavy burden to the City and consider relocating or retiring them from the City's parks system obligations.
- 2. Reevaluate and adjust park maintenance schedules to maximize efficiency (i.e., yearly trimmings, water requirements, etc.). Consider restoring native prairie grasses and vegetation that require minimal watering and maintenance.

- 3. Examine each park to identify appropriate areas (such as little used areas) that could be left in their natural state with minimum maintenance obligations during certain times of the year.
- 4. Consider cross-utilizing existing parks for other purposes such as: community gardens, trail corridors, linear parks, sports fields, dog parks, etc.)
- 5. Add specific parkland dedication and fee-in-lieu provisions to the municipal code of ordinances and subdivision regulations. The City currently has no provision for the dedication or maintenance of parkland nor fee in-lieu of land dedication policies; Section 6.01 of Plainview's subdivision ordinance states:

*Preliminary subdivision plats shall provide sites for schools, parks or other public areas as set out in the Comprehensive City Plan. The responsible Public Authority must take steps to acquire such property within sixty (60) days of the submission of the preliminary plat to the City Planning and Zoning Commission or else the subdivider may proceed with his subdivision as though such areas were non-existent.*⁷

A recommended approach is to incorporate the parkland dedication criteria, standards, and procedures directly into the platting and subdivision provisions, which applies throughout the City limits and ETJ. Land suitability standards should also be included to ensure that the City is not presented with "leftover" pieces for dedication that are inappropriate for practical and cost-effective park development, public use and/or maintenance based on their relative inaccessibility, drainage conditions, etc.

⁷ Subdivision Regulations of the City of Plainview. Ordinance Number 89-2807. Adopted 10.24.89.

Expansive parks like the Regional Park South - Driving Range require irrigation, fertilization, mowing, and overseeing by the Parks Department. Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Community gardens facilitate valuable community interaction and even provide social services as many gardens donate produce to local food banks / assistance organizations. Source: <http://austintexas.gov/austingrows>



- To enact the fee-in-lieu of land dedication program, the City will need to delineate a set of park planning and improvement zones so that fee revenue generated within each area can be documented and devoted to improvements in the same area (versus fee revenue going into a “general fund” for expenditure anywhere in the City).

Strategy 6.3.4: Relocate and revitalize the City’s community garden program.

The community garden initiative was first founded in Plainview in 1998 at 1008 Baltimore Street. The garden’s first year was a success with all City-provided plots being utilized and participation / productivity levels high. In 1999 the garden was relocated to 903 West 28th Street where it was successful for a couple of years until productivity levels began declining, followed by decreased participation (there are currently one to two gardeners with plots). The community organization, RSVP, has an established partnership with the City to coordinate volunteers, plot assignments, and most of the administrative responsibilities. The City’s responsibility is to till the soil and pay for the water used to maintain the site.

Initiatives and Actions

- Re-evaluate the current community garden’s location to determine levels of participation, volunteer retention, and productivity.
- If necessary, identify an alternate site suitable for public access and use as a community garden.
- Re-brand, market, and advertise in local business publications any open garden spaces or volunteer opportunities available to increase public awareness, involvement, and support.

FOCUS AREA 6.4: PUBLIC/ PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

County, City, school, and private recreation amenities (e.g., special events, playgrounds, swimming pools, sports fields, etc.) should be coordinated among public agencies, so that less duplication and geographic overlap occur, which may lead to inefficiencies or service area gaps. Community growth and development will strain the existing park system unless new construction and maintenance is borne by a collaboration of public and private stakeholders. These continued partnerships require strategic planning and funding mechanisms.

Strategy 6.4.1: Encourage and facilitate volunteerism and effective organization.

Initiatives and Actions

- Continue to coordinate with and support the efforts and effectiveness of volunteer-based organizations, such as the YMCA, RSVP and the Plainview Optimist Club, that promote positive community involvement, active recreation, and education for all ages in Plainview.
- Plan and design park improvements to elevate neighborhood viability. Highlight the importance of clean, safe, well-lighted and -maintained, and vibrant neighborhood parks as an anchor for strong, established neighborhoods where residents and kids use public spaces and interact during evenings and weekends.

Information kiosks can be utilized to provide key information (i.e., points of interest, food, special events, education, etc.) to visitors and residents. Source: www.savannahnow.com



“No single park, no matter how large and how well designed, would provide citizens with the beneficial influences of nature; instead parks need to be linked to one another and to surrounding residential neighborhoods.”

- Frederick Law Olmsted

3. Establish a policy of master planning new / revitalized parks to develop a unique design theme for each park to broaden the types of facilities and activities that are available across the community and to better tie their identity to adjacent neighborhoods.
 Conduct neighborhood design workshops to gather resident input to determine unique park features, types of amenities, and overall theme. Ideas may include parks for special uses (i.e., dog parks and skate parks), arts and culture, heritage, nature-based tourism, etc.
4. Continue to provide adequate funding in the annual capital and operating budgets to enhance, improve, and maintain the existing public parks, recreation, trails, and open space.
5. Conduct an annual meeting with the City’s program partners and other community organizations to discuss opportunities for the improved coordination and provision of services.

Strategy 6.4.2: Continue to pursue intergovernmental and public-private partnerships to leverage park and recreation investments.

Initiatives and Actions

1. Continue to seek grants, in-kind donations, and corporate sponsorships to construct recreational facilities that meet community needs. This includes voluntary gifts, bequests, or negotiated sales to be dedicated as parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. These forms of private investment in public amenities will be necessary to acquire substantial community assets, especially single-use ones, that the City cannot otherwise afford.

2. Continue forming interlocal agreements with Hale County, state agencies, local organizations, and private developers to allow joint use of facilities and shared maintenance agreements, when feasible. The City has a number of these agreements in place, like the joint-use park shared between: John D. Stoneham Park and the Thunderbird Elementary School; and Lakeside Park with the Lakeside Learning Center.

PARK CLASSIFICATION

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. Standards provide a measure for determining the amount of parks, recreation and open space needed to meet the current and future demands of the City’s citizens and visitors. The standards are shown in greater detail below in **Table 6.1, Park Guidelines**. Parks and recreation standards are typically expressed in terms of acres of land dedicated for parks, recreation and open space per unit of population, such as one and a half acres per 1,000 persons (for neighborhood parks). While general standards are useful, it is critical to establish standards founded upon unique local factors, such as participation trends and projections, user characteristics, demographics, climate, natural environment, and other considerations. Values related to leisure and recreation are unique to each municipality; therefore, the standards should represent the interests and desires of local parks users.

Parks are typically classified according to their size and the size of the population they are intended to serve. Conventional park classification

Park Type	Size (acres)	Walking Distance (miles)	Area / 1,000 persons
Mini “Pocket” Park	< 1	0.25	0.5 acre / 1,000 persons
Neighborhood Park	5 - 10	0.25 - 0.5	2.0 acre / 1,000 persons
Community Park	30 - 50	0.5 - 3.0	5.0 acre / 1,000 persons
Regional Park	Variable	Variable	100 - 300 acres total

Source: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

usually includes mini parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and open spaces. The City of Plainview has 17 parks constituting over 286 acres of developed land and 325 acres of undeveloped land. Plainview's parks, recreation, open space, and trails system consists of 11 neighborhood parks, two community parks, four mini parks, three recreational trails, and four open spaces - all of which can be reviewed in greater detail and description in **Table 6.2, Inventory of Existing Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces and Trails Systems**. For geographical understanding of Plainview's existing parks system, refer to (*Map 6.1, Park System Plan*).

Mini Parks

Mini Parks are typically less than one acre in size and are intended for active recreational use by nearby residents, such as within apartment complexes and residential subdivision. There are no specific criteria to guide development of mini parks, although they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of children living in the immediate area. The notable features that distinguish a mini park from a neighborhood park are its considerably smaller size and lack of restrooms. In urban areas, these are often referred to as "pocket" parks.

Plainview currently has four half-acre mini parks with a combined total of two acres. Many of these park spaces were obtained through community developers who abandoned undevelopable land upon completion of projects or left over land from roadway expansions and improvements. These properties were not designed or planned to be parks, therefore many of them have been left without infrastructure or amenities (with the exception of sprinkler systems). The City, concerned about the visual quality of these lands, has planted trees /

vegetation and is therefore responsible for the watering and mowing on these properties; though it is not clear how utilized they are by the community. Notably, the City has made recent upgrades to the mini park at 11th and Columbia to conserve water through the planting of low-maintenance grasses and vegetation, as well as trees. Millenium Park is the most successful mini park in Plainview. Situated in the heart of Plainview's downtown, Millenium Park serves as a linear connection among businesses and civil services in the area. Sidewalks through the park are paved with brick, reminiscent of some of the historical streets, and lighting is provided to ensure safety and usability throughout the day.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are five to 10 acres in size and should provide facilities and improvements that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods. Ease of access from adjacent neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and, therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities.

The City of Plainview has 11 neighborhood parks totalling 160 acres of parkland. The neighborhood parks usually have sports fields (including soccer fields and baseball / softball pitches), picnic areas, and playgrounds - ideal amenities for sports leagues, families, and visitors. Also, passive parks and sports field conditions vary depending on seasonal changes and severity; unfortunately Plainview has a very dry climate with as little as two inches a year making the parks look barren, appear under-utilized and unappealing. Refer to **Table 6.3, Park Amenity Inventory** for more detailed amenity inventories.

Lloyd C. Woods Park has many amenities including a sports practice field, picnic areas, a playground, restrooms, and multi-use spaces.
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



John D. Stoneham Park contains active recreation in the form of playscape equipment ideal for children.
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Table 6.2, Inventory of Existing Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces and Trails Systems

Park Name	Park Address	Acres (unless otherwise noted)
Neighborhood		
City "Broadway" Park	100 South Broadway	60
Lloyd C. Woods Park	5th & Joliet	15
Edgar & Essie Givens Park	Campbell & Walter Griffin	50
John D. Stoneham Park	32nd & Lexington	10
Lakeside School Park	1801 Joliet	3
Frisco Park	Winchell & Drake	2
M.B. Hood Park	16th & Ennis	10
Thomas Blvd. Park	312 Irene St.	2
Utica Street Park	12th & Utica	1
Travis Trussell Park	10th & Ennis	3
Chamber of Commerce Park	711 West 6th	4
Subtotal	11 parks	160 acres
Community		
Regional Running Water Draw Park	3400 West 4th	80
Regional Park South-Driving Range	3200 Kirchwood	44
Subtotal	2 parks	124 acres
Mini Parks		
11th & Columbia Park	11th & Columbia	0.5
Thunderbird Park	101 Thunderbird	0.5
Little Thomas Park	101 Aileen	0.5
Millennium Park	800 Block Broadway	0.5
Subtotal	4 parks	2 acres
Trails		
Lakeside Motorcycle Trails	1800 Lexington	2 miles, 2.8 acres in 35 acre land block
TxDOT Hike and Bike Trail	Quincy-Date	1.63 miles, 3.3 acres in total of 244 acres in 4 land block
Running Water Draw East/Equestrian Trail	210 Kirchwood Dr.	4 miles, 5 acres in 80 acres land block
Subtotal	3 trails	7.63 miles
Open Spaces		
Joliet West	Quincy-Joliet	49
Joliet East	Joliet-Columbia	55
Astro	South Columbia	1
Splat	34th & Joliet	5
Subtotal	4 open spaces	110
Total PRTOS	24	403.63
Source: City of Plainview		

Table 6.3, Park Amenity Inventory

Park Name	Community Building	Sports Field	Picnic Area	Play-ground	Rest-room	Multi-use Court	Walking Track	Misc. Use Open Space
City "Broadway" Park	1	Practice (1) Sports Field (6)	6	2	1	0	1	3
John D. Stoneham Park	0	Baseball/ softball practice fields (2)	1	1	1	Lighted (1)	1	1
M.B. Hood Park	Swimming Pool	Baseball/softball practice field (1)	1	1	0	No Lights (1)	1	1
Lloyd C. Woods Park	0	Baseball/softball practice field (1)	5	1	1	0	0	2
Edgar & Essie Givens Park	Pavilion (1)	Soccer field (1) Baseball/softball practice field (2)	2	1	1	Lighted (1)	1	2
Frisco Park	0	0	1	1	0	Half-court basketball (1)	0	1
Lakeside School Park	0	Junior soccer field (1) Baseball practice fields (2)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Utica Street Park	0	Baseball/softball practice field (1)	1	1	0	Lighted half-court basketball (1)	0	1
Travis Trussell Park	Gazebo (1)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Little Thomas Park	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Chamber of Commerce Park	0	0	1	0.5	0	0	0	1
Regional Park South - Driving Range	Community (1) Pavilion (1) Gazebo (1)	Softball fields/ lighted (3) Baseball practice fields (3) Soccer field (1) Golf driving range (1)	3	4	1	No Lights (1)	1	4

Source: City of Plainview

Community Parks

Community Parks are 30 to 50 acres in size; and are intended to function on a large scale, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community. They typically include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events such as picnic areas, walking / jogging trails, athletic fields, and other larger-scale activities. It is important that adequate off-street parking be provided near these types of parks. Where feasible, community parks should be located adjacent or connected to a greenway / trail to provide an off-street linear linkage with other areas.

Plainview’s two community parks total 124 acres, with 80 acres constituting the Running Water Draw Park and 44 acres belonging to the Regional Park South - Driving Range. Running Water Draw Park runs along the Running Water Draw river and provides a regional destination for visitors seeking recreation. The Regional Park South - Driving Range was established in 1990 at the request of citizens seeking recreational activities. The Driving Range is free and open to the public though its use is primarily seasonal. The City is responsible for the mowing, fertilization, oversight, and irrigation of the Driving Range though maintenance requirements are reduced seasonally.

Regional Parks

Regional and large urban parks, which are greater than 50 acres in size and may include active sports complexes.

Open Spaces

Open Spaces are typically large expanses of public land permanently dedicated as open space or parkland. As previously discussed, Plainview has numerous undeveloped open spaces due to the unique natural playa lake features that pock the region’s topography.

Open spaces in Plainview total 110 acres. The City has no formal obligations for maintenance of these open spaces and therefore they remain natural and undeveloped. Several of these open space areas are located within the developed City limits and therefore have been disturbed by land grading, infrastructure development, and utility stations. Without maintenance these flattened open spaces can become unattractive and detract from the community’s aesthetic quality.

PARK SERVICE AREAS

The foundation for establishing an adequate parks and recreation system begins with the availability, location, and condition of existing park and recreation areas.

Evaluating service areas is an effective means of identifying geographic areas that have sufficient park areas available, but more importantly to identify the demographic needs for additional parks and recreation areas and facilities. The effectiveness and use of an entire park system is strongly determined by the location of each park. To be utilized, parks need to be conveniently accessible and evenly distributed throughout the community. This section identifies and analyzes areas of Plainview that are under served, over served, or under utilized.

Depicted in **Map 6.2, Parks System Service Area and Needs Analysis**, are service area buffers around all existing parks. Each park is classified, as well as park assets and amenities analyzed, to determine the degree to which user demands are being fulfilled.

Community parks have a primary service area of one mile, meaning that a majority of persons utilizing these area-wide parks generally reside

Table 6.4, Park and Recreation Needs

Park Classification	2010 (Population: 22,194)				2040 (Projected Population: 25,000)			
	Recommended (acres)	Actual (acres)	Acres Needed	% of Need Met	Recommended	Actual (acres)	Acres Needed	% of Need Met
Mini "Pocket" Park	11.1	2	9	18.2	12.5	2	10.5	16
Neighborhood Park	44.4	160	-115.6	360.4	50	160	-110	320
Community Park	111	124	-13	111.7	125	124	1	99.2

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Adopted
05.14.13

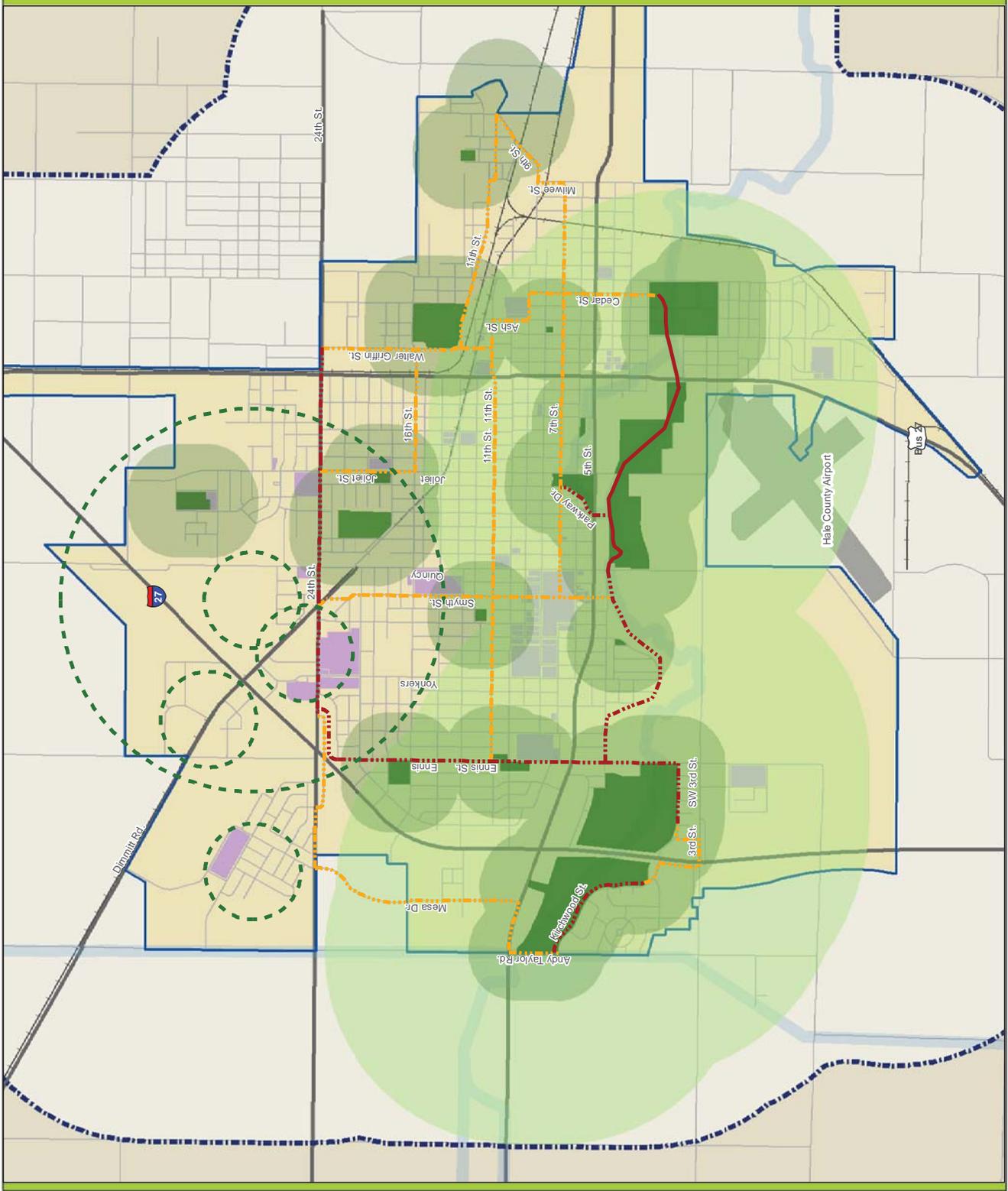


Map 6.2 Parks System Service Area and Needs Analysis

- Legend**
- Proposed Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/4 Mile)
 - Proposed Community Park Service Area (1 Mile)
 - Parks
 - Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/4 Mile)
 - Community Park Service Area (1 Mile)
 - School Properties
 - Existing Off-Street Recreational Trail
 - Proposed Off-Street Recreational Trail
 - Proposed On-Street Bicycle Lane
 - Airport
 - City Limits
 - ETJ
 - Creeks
 - Railroad



Source: City of Plainview



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

within this radius. As illustrated by *Map 6.2, Parks System Service and Needs Analysis*, Plainview currently has two community parks. While their associated service areas cover more than half of the City limits, the northeastern and western areas of the community have limited coverage. Since there is limited development in these areas, the community park needs are being exceeded at present. If all current park acreages remain the same until the year 2040, then according to calculations made in **Table 6.4, Parks and Recreation Needs** the community parks will then adequately serve the populations.

Illustrated in *Map 6.2, Parks System Service Area and Needs Analysis*, are the one-quarter mile service areas of the 11 neighborhood parks. The intent is to have well-distributed and evenly spaced neighborhood parks within or near residential developments. As displayed, the current array of neighborhood parks provides good coverage near the central core and eastern portion of the City. However, under-served areas are evident to the north and northwest. For example, there is limited coverage near Interstate 27 and 24th Street. Another such area is along Dimmitt Road within the City limits. However, these areas are still sparsely developed and may not necessarily need additional neighborhood parks until more development occurs - in which case mini parks may suffice in serving these populations. As new residential development occurs throughout the periphery of the City, there will be a need for additional park space, but not necessarily in the addition of neighborhood parks - perhaps the relocation of neighborhood parks, in combination with mini parks would more efficiently and adequately serve these populations.

From a purely locational standpoint, the analysis indicates that, within the City limits, the northeastern and northwestern districts of Plainview are currently under-served by the existing park system. Plainview is similarly under-served with regard to the variety and quality of parks and the amenities provided. By establishing a couple mini "pocket" parks to the north and east as well as a community park (either through land dedication requirements, grants, public/private partnerships, or any combination of these methods), Plainview will more thoroughly serve the developed sectors of the City. Findings of the service area analysis for each type of park are discussed in further detail in the following needs assessment.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Similar to determining park service areas, in order to assess the adequacy of the existing parks and recreation supply it is necessary to look at existing populations, the supply of parks provided by existing facilities including planned improvements or expansions, and relate them to planning standards for desirable levels of service. In addition, it is necessary to consider forecasts in future population to determine future needs and to identify current deficiencies in order to address the needs of the system. As such, the park and recreation system currently and in the future would meet the needs of the 2040 forecasted population of 25,000 persons.⁸ Based upon these parameters and displayed in *Table 6.4, Parks and Recreation Needs*, the City has a surplus of neighborhood park acres (by roughly 115 acres) and community park (roughly 13 acres), and is nine acres deficient in mini "pocket" park provisions. However, the surplus of community park is primarily due to the inclusion of the Running Water Draw Park and could continue to serve the community adequately in the future.

By 2040, if all 160 acres of neighborhood park space is maintained, the City would still be providing a surplus of 110 acres. The neighborhood parks, as seen in *Map 6.2, Parks System Service and Needs Analysis*, primarily over serve the southern half of the City and in a number of cases are acquired properties not planned additions to the park system. This indicates the City should reevaluate the criteria in which they keep, accumulate, and disregard neighborhood parks in the PRTOS system. According to *Table 6.4, Park and Recreation Needs*, the mini "pocket" park acreage does not currently - nor in the future - adequately meet the needs of people. Mini parks may be added in the northern half of the City in order to adequately provide recreational amenities to citizens throughout the City, while keeping maintenance requirements at a minimum.

⁸ See **Figure 1.2, Population Projections Comparison**, in *Chapter 1.0, Introduction*.

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: TRAVIS TRUSSELL PARK LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Overview

This chapter's Priority Improvement Project explores and demonstrates ways in which an existing municipal park, Travis Trussell Park, may be redesigned and reprogrammed to provide a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities for a broad range of user groups within the City of Plainview. Constructed natural features such as ponds, wetlands and prairies could replace sparsely-planted open areas with natural splendor that could attract migrating waterfowl. Interpretive signage will educate park users about the region's unique and varied natural heritage.

Existing Conditions

Travis Trussell Community Park is located in District 4, within southwestern Plainview, just north of 5th Street and east of Interstate 27. The Park is approximately three acres in area, the remnants of a playa lake. With the construction of Ennis Street and 10th Street the playa was divided into four quadrants. All four quadrants are within the 100-year floodplain. The northeastern quadrant slopes to the intersection of Ennis and 10th Streets and drains under Ennis Street to the northwestern quadrant. The northwestern quadrant also slopes to the intersection and drains under 10th Street into the Travis Trussell Park "duck pond." The southeastern quadrant drains under Ennis Street into the duck pond. The main portion of Travis Trussell Park is located within the southwestern quadrant, though the City owns portions of the northwestern and northeastern quadrants as well (refer to **Figure 6.2, Travis Trussell Park Aerial**).

Travis Trussell Park is composed of a large pond, typically referred to as the "duck pond." The pond is primarily used by migrating waterfowl and is surrounded by a chain-link fence. The fence is prone to catching blowing trash and paper refuse. To the south of the pond is a long, narrow, unimproved open space, which runs south to Itasca Street. Adjacent to this space is the Garland Street Church of Christ, which is accessed from the south via Itasca Street and from Garland Street to the west. The portion of property between the pond and Garland Street is owned by the church.

On the northern edge of the pond, immediately south of 10th Street, is a small viewing platform, consisting of a sheet metal shelter, constructed on a concrete slab, a picnic table, a few benches and a waste receptacle. The remains of an interpretive sign are nearby, which once provided illustrative and descriptive information about the types of waterfowl that could be found on the pond.

To the north of the park, across 10th Street, is land owned by the City of Plainview, that consists of a depressed, open field. To the north of the field is the Trinity United Methodist Church.

To the east of the park, across Ennis Street, is land owned by the Plainview Independent School District that primarily consists of a large, open, depressed field. To the north of the field, fronting onto 10th Street is a beauty salon, a small, partially vacant retail strip center, and a self-serve car wash. To the south of the field is the College Hill Elementary School, which is accessed by Canyon Street. The school is surrounded by playgrounds and a sports field.

The land north of 10th Street is owned by the City of Plainview, and is composed of a depressed open field (formerly the northeastern quadrant of the playa). The field is bordered to the east by storage facilities and to the north by 11th Street.

Provisional Program

Principles

Travis Trussell park landscape enhancements should be planned and designed according to the following principles:

- 1) Park facilities will incorporate both active and passive programmatic features and elements, and will accommodate multiple user groups;
- 2) The park will be designed to be low maintenance, requiring minimal resource inputs to remain viable;
- 3) The park's landscape will be designed to enhance biological diversity; and
- 4) The park's principal orientation will be to educate users through the interpretation of the unique natural and cultural resources that compose the regional landscape.

Goals

The Travis Trussell Park Landscape Enhancement program has been designed to advance several of the goals outlined within the City of Plainview

Parks Department's 2006 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:

PRTOS-G3: the City of Plainview should build and maintain a system of public exercise trails that provide recreational and mobility opportunities for Plainview residents.

PRTOS-G4: The City of Plainview should provide opportunities for varied recreation activities and programs that are responsive to the needs of a wide range of Plainview residents.

PRTOS-G7: The City of Plainview should participate with other jurisdictions and public sector entities in promoting a region-wide parks, recreation, trails and open spaces system, for recreation as well as educational purposes.

Features and Elements

In keeping with the goals outlined within the 2006 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Spaces (PRTOS) Comprehensive Master Plan, the following programmatic features and elements are recommended (refer to **Figure 6.3, Priority Improvement Project: Travis Trussell Park Landscape Enhancement Program**):

1. Enhanced Duck Pond

The banks of the duck pond should be regraded and stabilized using bio-engineering techniques. Concrete debris and rubble should be removed. Cypress trees should be planted along the shoreline and to screen birdwatching enthusiasts from the water fowl. To minimize conflicts between waterfowl and vehicles a chain link fence should be erected between the guard rail along Ennis Street and the pond shoreline.

Figure 6.2, Travis Trussell Park Aerial



2. Native Texas Prairie Restoration

Inspired in part by the large, natural field of black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* sp.) within the park's northeastern quadrant, a key programmatic element of a future landscape enhancement program should include restoring large swaths of the park back to a native Texas prairie landscape. Prairie restoration will reduce the area requiring routine mowing, further stabilize the pond banks, and will minimize the amount of fertilizer runoff into the ponds (which prevent algal blooms). Specific plants should be selected to provide habitat for dragonflies and other predaceous insects that feed on mosquitoes.

3. Wildlife Viewing Areas

Decked boardwalks should extend from the duck pond's shoreline to provide access to elevated screened waterfowl view areas ("duck blinds").

4. Interpretive Signage

Illustrative signage should explain the unique geomorphological and hydrological characteristics of playa lakes, and should feature pictures of native Texas prairie plants as well as the types of migrating waterfowl park enthusiasts may witness within the park.

5. Off-street Recreational Trails

Due to space constraints between Ennis Street and the edge of the duck pond, the off-street recreational trail along Ennis Street (refer to *Chapter 3.0, Bicycle Mobility Plan*) should be routed into and around the west side of Travis Trussell park. As it passes along the west side of the duck pond, the width of the trail should be expanded to function as a promenade and should include benches, ornamental lighting and other streetscape amenities. People will be able to stop and relax, while watching the birds.

6. Active Recreational Parcourse, Playground and Sports Field

It is recommended that the City partner with Plainview Independent School District to develop an active recreational park area, complete with an improved sports field, playground equipment for children and parcourse, with associated exercise stations. Parents using the parcourse exercise stations will be in close proximity to the playground and will be able to watch their children playing.

7. Fishing Ponds

The northeastern and northwestern quadrants of the former playa should be excavated, re-graded and sculpted to form two, relatively deep fish ponds. The City's Parks Department can partner with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to stock the ponds with native and indigenous species of fish. It is recommended that the City's Parks Department develop a family fishing program to teach people how to fish while being sensitive to the migrating wildfowl.

8. Pavilions

Several pavilions have been located throughout the park to provide families places to have picnics.

9. Lawn Areas

The park provides expansive lawn areas where park users can play frisbee, fly kites, or just sun bathe on a warm spring day.

Figure 6.3, Priority Improvement Project: Travis Trussell Park Landscape Enhancement Program



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]