

Chapter 10

Implementation Strategies

“To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success.”

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Introduction

The park and recreation needs of Georgetown are described in the previous sections of this report. This chapter recommends a series of actions to begin to address those needs. These actions are recommendations to guide the staff and city council over the next five to ten years, and should be revisited and updated on a regular basis.

Highest Priority Needs - The prioritization is based on information received from public input as well as from the needs assessment formed from facility and acreage standards shown in Chapter 6. The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in Georgetown are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input from a citywide telephone survey;
- Level of need based on direct citizen input from public comments;
- Level of need based on standards based needs assessments;
- Condition of existing park facilities in the city.

The priorities are shown in Table 10-1.

Table 10 - 1 Summary of Priority Needs in Georgetown (ranked in order of highest priority)	
Additional Facilities Based on Survey Results <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Park Restrooms 2. Picnicking Facilities 3. Playgrounds 4. Hike and Bike Trails 5. Natural Habitat/Nature Areas 6. Large Pavilions 7. Nature Center 8. Basketball courts 	Additional Facilities Based on Public Meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. San Gabriel Park Festival/Farmers Market Venue 2. Trails 3. Downtown Festival Park 4. Acquire Land for a Northwest Park 5. Renovate/Enhance San Gabriel Park 6. Preserve Land, Open Space, Floodplains 7. Water Sprayground Parks 8. Enhance Lake Georgetown
Additional Facilities Based on Level of Service <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hike and Bike Trails 2. Water Spraygrounds 3. Practice Fields 4. Large Pavilions 5. Picnicking Facilities 6. Support Facilities 7. Baseball Fields 8. Soccer Fields 	Renovate Facilities Based on Existing Condition <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trails Around Lake Georgetown 2. Basketball Courts 3. Practice Fields 4. Soccer Fields 5. Neighborhood Parks 6. Picnicking Facilities 7. Sand Volleyball Courts 8. Baseball Fields

Needs meeting all of the criteria were ranked as high priority elements and are to receive the highest level of attention over the next five years. The top twelve priorities that the City of Georgetown should accomplish are (in order of highest priority):

1. **Secure funding for the future Garey Park** - Garey Park is a 525 acre park site that was donated to the City of Georgetown by the Garey family. The Garey family also promised \$5 million to the City of Georgetown to help develop the park; however that money must be matched by the City. This master planned park will become one of the most impressive parks in all of Texas once it is built. The City of Georgetown needs to ensure the funding for developing this park is secured once the time comes.
2. **Develop additional trails** - trails were consistently ranked as the highest priority and the one amenity almost all residents want more of. Georgetown is fortunate to have an extensive creek and river system which provides ample opportunities for trail development.
3. **Acquisition of community parkland on the westside of IH 35** - there currently is no large significant community park on the westside of the City; and the population of Georgetown is heavily growing in the sector.
4. **Develop a festival grounds area in San Gabriel Park** - Georgetown has the unique opportunity to develop a signature festival grounds and performance area in San Gabriel Park on the site of the former high school football stadium.
5. **Additional and renovated picnicking facilities in San Gabriel Park and in other parks around Georgetown** - San Gabriel Park is Georgetown's central park and many of the picnicking facilities are older and have been heavily used. The first phase of renovations to San Gabriel Park should include upgrading and renovating the picnicking facilities and providing additional large rental pavilions. The same renovations should be considered for other smaller parks around Georgetown when necessary.
6. **Develop multiple sprayground areas around Georgetown** - the first sprayground park in Georgetown is being constructed at the recreation center and is projected to open Summer 2009. It is

recommended that two of the existing pools in Georgetown be decommissioned and converted into sprayground parks so that there is adequate distribution of sprayground facilities throughout Georgetown.

7. **Assist with enhancements to Lake Georgetown** - Georgetown is fortunate to have an asset such as Lake Georgetown within its city limits. Enhancements include improved trails, improved signage and access, improved non-motorized boating opportunities, and improved picnicking facilities.
8. **Additional and renovated soccer fields** - the current city-owned soccer fields are in adequate condition. For the City to continue to provide recreational soccer leagues for youth, additional soccer fields and the renovation of existing soccer fields will be needed.
9. **Additional and renovated baseball fields** - similar to soccer fields, as Georgetown grows rapidly in population renovated and additional baseball fields will be needed. The current baseball fields in San Gabriel Park are in an inefficient configuration. When these fields are renovated and if the fields stay in San Gabriel Park, they should be reconfigured in a more modern style similar to the softball fields at McMaster Athletic Complex.
10. **Renovated basketball courts** - a portion of the basketball courts in Georgetown are only in adequate condition. Many backboards and rims are rusted and need replacing.
11. **Additional practice fields** - there is a significant deficit of practice fields in Georgetown and many of the leagues use the game fields for practice. This leads to the game fields deteriorating faster. Backstops and soccer practice facilities should be included in neighborhood parks and several practice facilities should be included in large community parks where feasible.
12. **Develop a Downtown Festival Park** - the City of Georgetown hosts several large annual events in their historic downtown. Currently there is no designated place for these events and often times the events occur on blocked-off streets. Providing a downtown festival park will ensure a proper venue for the downtown events and can increase the safety of the events' patrons.

"We believe the place to start is in our communities. Americans living together and joining in associations across the country - this is where the tremendous strength and vision of our people will be tapped. We recommend a prairie fire of local action to sweep the nation, encouraging investment in outdoor recreation opportunities and rededication to the protection of our great natural heritage."

President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987



Recently Passed Parks Bond

In November 2008, the residents of Georgetown approved \$35.5 million in bond funding for park projects. The projects that are to be developed as a result of this bond include:

- Purchasing land for a west side community park and athletic complex.
- Purchasing land for nature preserves.
- Developing new hike and bike trails.
- The development of an amphitheater/festival area in San Gabriel Park and the first phase of improvements to San Gabriel Park.
- Secure future funding for the development of Garey Park.

The residents also approved a transportation bond of \$46 million. It is important to remember that parks are valuable to the residents of Georgetown. The residents supported the park bond and are excited to see the development of the new facilities that will come out of the bond money. Continually throughout the planning process for this Master Plan, residents unanimously agreed that parks are important to the character and vitality of Georgetown, and more than that the residents are willing to pay to ensure their park system continues to be one of the best park systems in all of Texas. A detail of the approved bond projects are discussed on the following pages.

1 Secure funding to prepare for the development of Garey Park

Develop Garey Park within three years after the Gareys pass away

Allows for immediate movement forward to develop park

Responds to Council's commitment to develop the park

Development Cost: \$20.0 million

Garey Park Cost Summary			
Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Costs - 2008-2009			
PHASE	FEATURES	2008-2009 Projected Cost	5 Year Escalation
Area 1	Main Entrance, Splashpad, Fields, Playscape	\$3,500,000	\$4,258,285
Area 1a	Equestrian Facilities	\$2,000,000	\$2,433,306
Area 1b	Natural Area Trails and Access	\$1,250,000	\$1,520,816
Area 2	Home and Garden Area Improvements	\$3,150,000	\$3,832,457
Area 3	Meadow, Amphitheater and Event Area	\$3,500,000	\$4,258,285
Area 4	Cabin Area	\$1,750,000	\$2,129,143
Area 4a	Observatory Area	\$1,600,000	\$1,946,645
Area 5	Primitive and Group Camping	\$1,500,000	\$1,824,979
Area 6	River Corridor Trails	\$500,000	\$608,326
Total		\$18,750,000	\$22,812,242

Projected costs prior to detailed design. Costs will vary as more detailed design occurs.



Initial recommended city bond funding - \$10,000,000

2A Create an amphitheater / festival area in San Gabriel Park

Development Cost for Amphitheater and Park improvements: \$12.5 Million

Amphitheater/festival Area Projected Cost

Amphitheater and Festival Grounds at San Gabriel Park		
Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Costs		
Item No.	Type	Amount
	Demolition	\$295,000
	Site Earthwork	\$237,500
	Roads and Parking	\$637,500
	Storm Drainage	\$75,000
	Dry Utilities	\$150,000
	Buildings, Pavilions	\$2,478,000
	Hardscape	\$420,000
	Landscape and Irrigation	\$160,000
	Site Furnishings	\$89,000
	Miscellaneous	\$460,000
Subtotal - Estimated Construction Cost		\$5,002,000
Contractor Mobilization (2%)		\$100,040
Contingency at Pre-Design Level (20%)		\$1,000,400
Design, Testing, Surveying, Environmental, Project Administration (14%)		\$840,336
Estimated Cost including Escalation (2Years at 4%)		\$7,509,307

Initial recommended city bond funding - \$7,500,000



2B

Begin to renovate and enhance San Gabriel Park as Georgetown's "Central Park"

Renovation and Enhancement of San Gabriel Park

- Amphitheater/festival area to replace old football stadium for concerts, Farmer's market, festivals, etc.
- Amphitheater/festival area cost \$7.5 Million
- Renovations to San Gabriel Park – New restrooms, pavilions, parking, improve irrigation, entrance area, better lighting along trail
- Renovation Cost - \$5.0 Million

Create an amphitheater/performance venue/festival area to replace older football stadium

3

Develop trails throughout the city

- #1 citizen priority
- Extends trail system, one of the city's premier amenities
- Can include:
 - connection to Southwestern University,
 - trail extension from Blue Hole Park to Wolf Ranch Mall and towards Garey Park,
 - Trail from northwest area to Lake Georgetown
 - Downtown trails
 - Regional link from Georgetown to Williamson County Regional Park and possibly to the Brushy Creek Regional trail
- Development Cost for 6 to 8 miles - \$8 Million

4

Fund acquisition and/or development of a large community park in the Northwest quadrant of the city.

- No large active parks in the area
- Pursue the acquisition of a large tract, preferably 100 acres +/-
- Will serve a significant percentage of the current and future population of Georgetown
- Will not impact Sun City limits, but will provide additional amenities when developed
- Consideration will also be given to development on existing non-city parklands if feasible
- Projected Cost - \$5.0 Million

Initial recommended city bond funding - \$5,000,000

San Gabriel Park Renovations and Improvements

San Gabriel Park Improvements (excluding Stadium area)
Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Costs

Item No.	Type	Quantity	Unit	Unit Price	Amount
	Demolition				\$325,000
	Site Earthwork				\$75,000
	Roads and Parking				\$375,000
	Storm Drainage				\$150,000
	Dry Utilities				\$200,000
	Buildings/Pavilions				\$430,000
	Hardscape				\$12,000
	Site Furnishings				\$52,500
	Miscellaneous - sunken garden area, entrance, river area				\$1,637,500.00
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST					\$3,267,000
CONTINGENCY (20%)					\$651,400
Design, Testing, Surveying, Environmental, Administration (14%)					\$547,176
Projected Overall Cost with 4% Escalation for 3 Years					\$5,011,917

Initial recommended city bond funding - \$2,500,000

Trail Improvements – Potential Segments

Trail Improvements
Preliminary Estimate of Probable Construction Costs

Item No.	Type	Quantity	Unit	Amount
1	Trail extension from Blue Hole Park to Wolf Ranch	1.4	miles	\$1,050,000
2	South San Gabriel Trail from Wolf Ranch to Lyndoch Park	1.1	miles	\$825,000
3	University Drive Trail - Downtown to Smith Branch	1.3	miles	\$975,000
4	Northwest Georgetown Trail connection to Lake Georgetown	2.5	miles	\$1,875,000
6	Allowance for Easement or Right of Way Acquisition as needed	6.3		\$472,500
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST				\$5,197,500
CONTINGENCY (15%)				\$779,625
Design, Testing, Surveying, Environmental, Administration (12%)				\$657,255
Projected Overall Cost with 4% Escalation for 5 Years				\$8,071,738

Initial recommended city bond funding - \$5,000,000

5

Fund the continuing preservation of open space and greenways throughout Georgetown (before those lands are lost)

1,200 to 1,500 acres of potential open space preserves along or near greenbelts shown in this illustration could be preserved as public open space in Georgetown. These areas, primarily along rivers, creeks and natural drainageways, will help Georgetown preserve its Hill Country appearance and sense of uniqueness.

- Acquire through purchase or by acquiring development rights
- Target lands along river corridor, key tributaries or other unique open space areas in the city.
- Allows for acquisition as opportunities arise
- May open opportunity to leverage with non-city funds
- Acquisition amount for this bond cycle - \$4.0 Million

Initial recommended city bond funding - \$4,000,000



Implementation Strategy

The following implementation strategy is recommended to address the city's key recreation highest priorities over the next five years. These actions include many of the high priority facility needs listed above. Recommendations are ranked in one of the three categories listed below.

- **Short Term Implementation** - List of top priority items to be completed or initiated over the next one to five years. Key recommended short term items are shown on the following page.
- **Medium term Implementation** - List of recommendations to be initiated or completed in five to ten years.
- **Longer-range implementation** - List of recommendations to be initiated in ten years or longer. While these actions may take longer to initiate, planning for these items should continue.

Key implementation steps are listed in the action plan tables contained in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, and consist of the action plan for this Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

Funding Strategies for Recommendations

Different parks and pathways will require different funding strategies. While improvements to existing parks and most trails can be built with local funds, other park, open space, and trail projects may be able to contend for federal and state funds. This section provides brief descriptions of these funding implementation assistance opportunities.



Key City Generated Funding Sources

General Fund Expenditures – General fund expenditures are primarily used for improvements to existing parks and facilities. Some funding should be set aside annually to cover upgrades to at least one park. An amount of \$50,000 to \$100,000 should be budgeted for annually.

Bond Funds – It is recommended that the city consider a bond program to support park improvements within the next five years.

Park Facility Funding through a Parkland Dedication Ordinance – Continue the implementation of the parkland dedication ordinance so that it provides some lands and funding for the development of neighborhood parks throughout the city. This ordinance is described in greater detail in the Ordinance Recommendations section.

Partnering with Developers and Private Land Owners – This is frequently possible as land is developed in Georgetown through the Park Land Dedication ordinance. This ordinance provides a vehicle for development of parks, open spaces, and trails as land is developed in Georgetown. This plan’s corridor alignments for trails in currently undeveloped areas should be viewed as flexible. The City should work together with the developer to create non-motorized corridors, which will connect the new neighborhood to adjacent or future neighborhoods, schools, and other key destinations; and be beneficial to both the developer and the citizens of Georgetown.

Key Grant Funding Sources

Grants can provide a significant source of additional funding for parks, but should not be considered as the primary source for park construction.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) is the primary source for park grants in Texas and in addition provides funding for recreational trails. Up to a 50 percent match can be obtained, up to \$500,000, for new park and trail facilities, as well as for indoor facilities. Grant applications that stress joint funding and support from two or more local entities may have a greater chance in contending for the TRPA grants. The city should take a leadership role in pursuing public cooperation.

National Park Service (NPS) Programs – includes the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR), which provide funds for parks and recreation. Funding for UPARR is currently not available. Typically, the funding sources have supported traditional parks rather than linear systems.

The next round of transportation enhancement funding (SAFTEA- LU) was recently re-authorized by Congress. It will provide the funding mechanism for federal transportation programs through 2009. Additional rounds of funding, as well as new transportation initiatives by the Federal Government should be monitored for grant opportunities. The completion of the South San Gabriel River Trail may be an ideal candidate for an enhancement grant application. The city should budget for a local 20% match.

Indoor Recreation Grants are available to local governments for the construction or renovation of indoor recreation facilities. This assistance is in the form of 50% matching grant funds up to \$750,000. Local governments must apply, permanently dedicate the building for public recreational use and assume responsibility for operation and maintenance. Application deadlines are July 31st each year. Awards are distributed in January each year. Recent developments have reduced the amount of available funds from the state, and the city should consider other available funding sources whenever possible.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program provides money support for transportation activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the transportation system. Funding is on a cost reimbursement basis and projects selected are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80% of allowable cost. This

funding program is not available on a yearly basis, but intermittently only, often in 5 year periods apart. The next opportunity for funding under this program is unknown at this time, but should be evaluated periodically.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – These funds can be spent to construct new recreational trails, improve/maintain existing trails, develop/improve trailheads or trailside facilities, and acquire trail corridor/easements. It is a cost reimbursement program. Projects may range in total cost between \$5,000 and \$100,000.

Environmental Protection Agency – The EPA can provide funding for projects with money collected in pollution settlements, or with funding targeted at wetland and habitat preservation or reclamation.

Foundation and Company Grants – These can assist in direct funding for projects, while others exist to help citizen efforts get established with small seed funds or technical and publicity assistance.

Grants for Greenways – This is a national listing that provides descriptions of a broad spectrum of both general and specific groups who provide technical and financial support for greenway interests.

Sidewalk Funding Sources – These sources currently construct sidewalks in existing areas through citywide bond programs and with new developments through the subdivision regulations.

Partnering with Volunteer Groups – Partnering with volunteer groups can be helpful when constructing nature, bike and equestrian trails. Their efforts can be used as part of the required match for the Recreational Trails program. There are a variety of sources for volunteers including user groups, local residents, corporate community service initiatives, and business and civic support groups. Also see Adopt-A-Park Program section at the end of this chapter.



Policies and Ordinances

Ordinance Support for System Development – Georgetown currently has a Park Land Dedication Ordinance to assist in the implementation of neighborhood parks in new areas of the city. This type of ordinance is used by many cities, and is now generally not considered onerous by the development community, but rather is welcomed as a method to help fund smaller parks in a timely fashion. The City’s Parkland Dedication ordinance, Section 13.05 of the Unified Development Code, provides an important mechanism to ensure that adequate parkland is available when new development occurs. The current ordinance is clear and concise in its language, and is easy to follow and understand. Based on current trends in comparable cities throughout Texas, the following refinements are recommended.

Section 13.05.010, Section A, Subsection 2 - Add language that allows the Director of Parks and Recreation to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Board where fees in lieu of land where more than 3 acres are required is preferred. This may occur if the area is already well supplied with park land.

Section 13.05.020, Subsection B - Add language that specifies that a minimum of 50% of the perimeter of a proposed park site be situated along a publicly accessible corridor, preferably a street. This will reduce the possibility of a park site that is “trapped” behind lots.

Section F, Subsection 2 - Require that non residential development also donate lands within the 25-year or 100 year flood plain along the three branches of the San Gabriel River. These are key open space and trail corridors throughout the City, and should allow public access.

Consider adding two additional new provisions.

- The first would specifically designate that the Director of Parks and Recreation is responsible for review of development submissions regarding proposed parkland, and will make recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Board, the Planning Commission and the City Council. The reason for this is to vest review and recommendation-making power in the hands of the person who is most knowledgeable regarding the park land needs of the City.
- The second would add a fee for the development of park land. Typically, lands that are donated today must wait until adequate funding is available to initiate development of the neighborhood park. Consider adding a charge per lot (typically these charges vary from \$100 to \$800 per unit in Texas). These funds

would be used to specifically begin to develop the park land that is dedicated by a new development.

Landscaping Ordinance – Establish a landscaping ordinance that will contribute to new beautification efforts throughout the city.

Joint Planning with Georgetown Independent School District – Establish joint planning review sessions with the School District to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for a partnership in acquiring land for schools and parks.

Plan Updates

The 2008 Georgetown Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan is a guide to be used by the Georgetown Parks and Recreation Department to develop the existing system for future needs over the next 5 to 10 years. However, during that time frame there will be changes that occur during the time frame of this plan. Population may increase more rapidly than projected; the community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations; development of some of the recommendations listed in this master plan will occur.

A review and update of this master plan by city staff should be conducted every two years or when a significant change does occur. These updates can be published in short report format and attached to this master plan for easy use. Four key areas for focus of these periodic reviews are as follows:

Facility Inventory - An inventory of new facilities should be recorded as well as any significant improvements to GISD, County Parks, State Parks and major private facilities that could influence recreation in Georgetown.

Public Involvement - As mentioned previously, this master plan reflects current population and attitudes as expressed by the citizens of Georgetown. However, over time those attitudes and interests may change as the city changes. Periodic surveys are recommended to provide a current account of the attitudes of the citizens and to provide additional direction from the public on issues that may arise. In order to make an accurate comparison of the changes in attitudes and interests, it is recommended that future surveys follow the general format of the citizen survey conducted in this master plan.

Facility Use - Facility use is a key factor in determining the need for renovation of additional facilities. Updates on league participation of sports facilities should be done each season with data from each association. Changes in participation of those outside the city limits as well as the citizens of Georgetown should also be recorded.

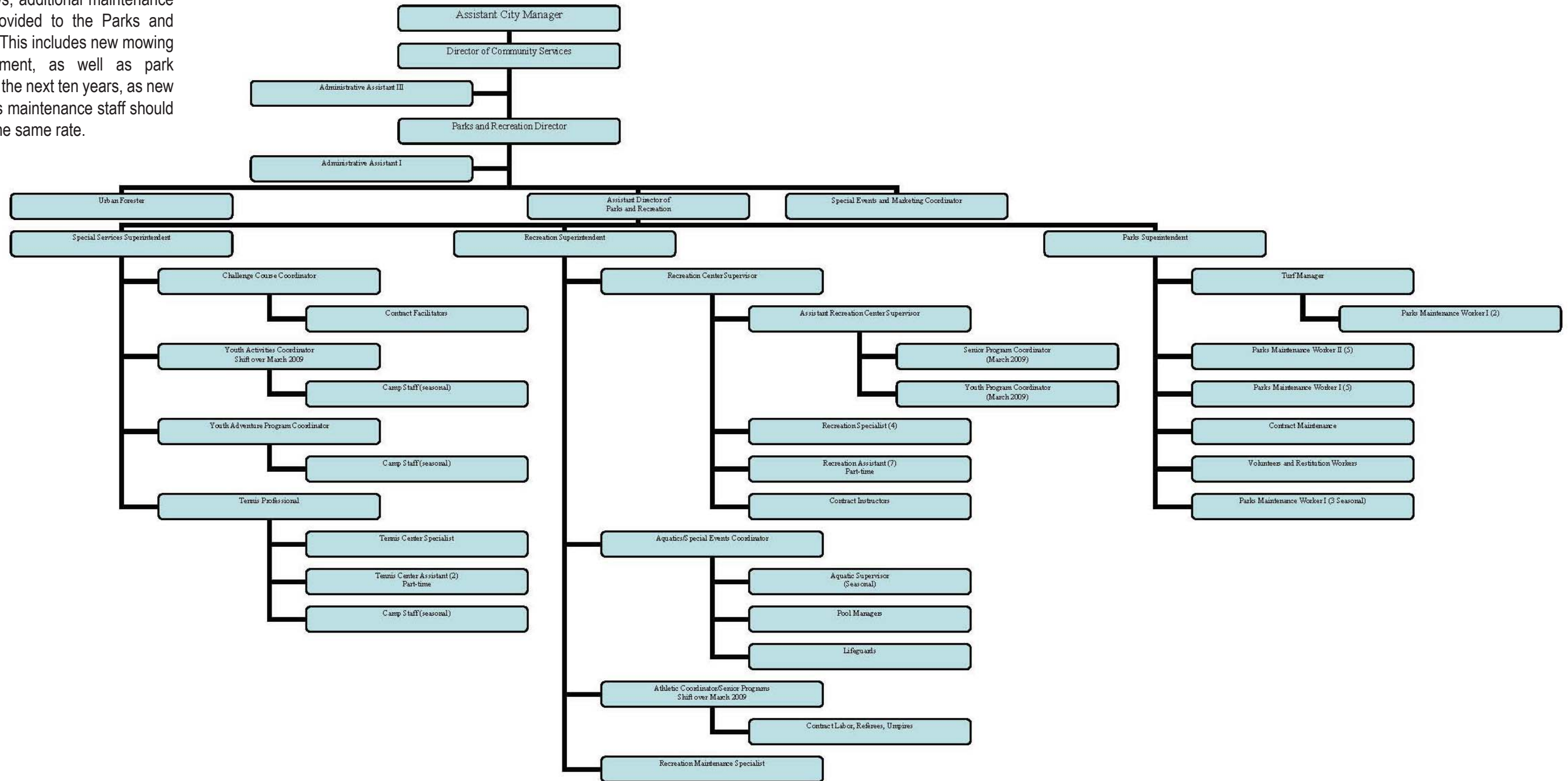
Action Plan - As items from the action plans in this document are implemented updates should be made to this prioritized list to provide a current schedule for city staff.



Park Administration, Operation and Maintenance

As the park system grows, additional maintenance resources should be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department. This includes new mowing and transporting equipment, as well as park maintenance staff. Over the next ten years, as new facilities are added, parks maintenance staff should grow, as a minimum, at the same rate.

Parks & Recreation Dept. Organizational Chart



Go Green Georgetown!

So much emphasis today is placed on being more environmentally friendly. People and businesses are conscientious about lowering their “Carbon Footprint.” Parks have traditionally been thought of as one of the few environmentally friendly developments that a city undertakes. However, with the advancement of technology and materials, parks and recreational amenities themselves can be even greener. From lighting and irrigation to constructing Green buildings, there are parts of every development that can make Georgetown’s parks more environmentally friendly, and set Georgetown apart from other communities as a pioneer in Going Green. General recommendations on how to be green include the following:

Constructing and Operating Green Buildings – any community center, recreation center, museum, nature center or even office building can be more environmentally friendly. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a building certification process originating from the U.S. Green Building Council. They offer a rating system and certification for buildings that are green. They suggest ways to construct a new building so that it is more environmentally friendly, and ways to operate an existing building to achieve greener results. Easy ways to make the current park buildings greener include:

- Turn off any computers, machines, and appliances when they are not being used.
- Position desks, workstations, sign in counters, and work out rooms to make the best use of natural light.
- In a multiple story building, encourage people to use the stairs instead of an elevator.
- Use emails or notice boards to share information with staff instead of printed memos.
- Adding certain shingles on roof tops that reflect the light and create less heat inside the building.
- Buy products with a longer life expectancy, such as low energy light bulbs and recycled products.
- Use electric hand dryers in all restrooms instead of paper towels.

Irrigation – certain amenities that contribute to the maintenance of park land can be improved so that it is more environmentally friendly. The technology for irrigation has improved tremendously in the past several years. One improvement is the Drip Irrigation System. A drip irrigation system slowly emits water to the plants’ roots. When compared to a traditional sprinkler system, the drip system conserves water because

there is less evaporation and less run off. A drip irrigation system has other benefits including:

- Conserving water by watering much less and not as often.
- Maintaining the optimal moisture level for the soil.
- Allowing you to water the exact area of the plant or grass that needs water, such as the roots.
- Reducing erosion on slopes.
- Improving water-holding capacity in sandy soils.

The cost of the drip irrigation system is roughly the same as other systems. One drawback of the drip system is that the tubing can puncture. If used on ball fields, for example, the cleats of players can puncture the tubing and it can be some time before it is noticed that the irrigation is not working properly.

Another type of irrigation system is a state-of-the-art Central Control System. With this system, one can monitor the efficiency of every park irrigation system from the comfort of their office. This system uses a computer software which can change irrigation run times depending on different variables. This system gathers information from weather satellites, and uses the information to adjust the irrigation system. One only has to designate how much moisture to have in the soil, and the Central Control System automatically sets the irrigation run time based on the temperature, amount of rainfall, evaporation rate, and other climate factors for that day. This is the most advanced system for water conservation. Because this system is technologically advanced compared to the other irrigation systems, it is greatly more expensive.

Lighting – people want their environment to be well lit, whether it is the ball fields they are playing on, the park where their children swing, the trail they are running on, or the community and recreation centers they are attending. In Texas there is usually ample sunshine to provide a well lit facility; however, after the sun sets and inside many of our buildings we rely completely on light fixtures. Just as with the technology of the irrigation systems, light bulbs and fixtures have improved so that they are more environmentally friendly.

Conventional incandescent light bulbs turn only 5 to 10% of their energy into light, the remainder is heat. These traditional light bulbs can easily be replaced by more eco-friendly bulbs such as LED (light emitting diodes) or CFL (compact florescent lamp bulbs). LED bulbs produce more light per watt, last longer (up to 50,000 hours compared to incandescent bulbs that last 1,000 to 2,000 hours), turn on and light up quickly, and are ideal for frequent on-off usage. However, LED bulbs are more expensive and can be harder to come by. CFL bulbs are mostly recognized as the white swirl bulbs that can easily fit in existing light fixtures. These bulbs use less

power than the incandescent bulbs and still are able to produce the same amount of light. As with the LED bulbs, CFL also have a longer life span (about 10,000 hours) and reduce energy consumption. The CFL bulbs are somewhat more expensive than incandescent bulbs; however with the longer life span and the energy savings, the cost difference equals out in the long term.

Other simple practices for conserving light energy include: turning off lights when they are not in use, installing timers or motion sensors so the lights are on only when people are present, and directing all lights downward.

Light fixtures themselves can also be a little more environmentally friendly if they are made from natural, recycled or reused materials. Natural materials can include felt, cloth, or wood; and recycled materials can include metal, glass, or plastic.

As for sport field lighting, there are ways to manage the usage of these lights to help lower energy costs. For example, many cities will charge the league teams a fee if the lights are left on over night after a game. Similarly many lights are placed on a timer to ensure that they are turned off during the late night hours. One idea that is just starting to take off is street lamps and school zone signs with solar panels installed on or near them so that the lights use solar energy instead of traditional electricity. Theoretically the same idea can be applied to athletic field lights, lights in the parks, and lights along trails.

In addition to placing sport field lighting on timers, there are reflectors that can be placed on them which will benefit the fields and the surrounding areas. These reflectors reduce the amount of light that is spilled over into the surrounding streets, neighborhoods, and other fields. They also direct the light onto the field so that it is well lit and the players can see better. Reflectors also limit the amount of light that escapes into the sky ergo protecting the dark skies.

Recycled Materials – Recycling is one of the easiest ways to help the environment. Many products can be recycled and turned into something else, providing great benefits to the environment as well as the economy. Much the furniture in parks can be made from recycled materials such as benches, pavilions, picnic tables, trash bins, signage and even fencing. Often the material is recycled plastic lumber from products such as milk jugs. Recycled plastic lumber has many environmental benefits including:

- It is non-toxic and non-leaching
- There is no cracking, splitting, peeling or splintering when compared to traditional wooden furniture.
- There is no need to paint it or stain it so maintenance is reduced.
- There is relatively no sagging or warping.



- The color is permanent and does not fade.
- The material is weather, pest and mold resistant.
- The products are usually cheaper than lumber products and last longer, benefiting a city economically.
- Most recycled plastic lumber is resistant to paint, ink, mildew and other contaminants which may be removed using mild cleaners (graffiti vandalism is not more of an issue when compared to traditional lumber products).

Playground equipment fall surfacing can also be made from recycled materials such as recycled plastic or rubber. For example, recycled tires can make up to 100% of the surfacing for a “poured-in-place” type of surfacing.

Trails are one other aspect of a park that can be constructed with recycled materials. The asphalt or pavers can be made from recycled rubber tires; crushed concrete from demolished buildings have been used to make trails; and retaining walls can use recycled plastic. Shingles from homes and businesses have also been used as building materials for trails in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

Rainwater Capture and Reuse – capturing rainfall then reusing it is one of the most eco-friendly ways to use water. Captured rainwater can be used to irrigate parks and landscape, as well as be used for flushing toilets in park restrooms. The first item needed is a catchment, something that catches the rainwater such as off the roof of a building. The water is then stored in a tank or barrel. Finally, a distribution system is needed to get the water from the tank to the irrigation system or restrooms. It is important that the water stays as clean as possible so installing a filter and insect netting on the tank is necessary.

Adopt - A - Park Program

The City of Georgetown is interested in starting an Adopt-a-Park Program. This program is a great way to reduce the time and maintenance that the city has to spend on a park. The program is based on volunteer workers contributing their time to beautifying and maintaining a park within the city, usually a neighborhood park close to where they live. Some general guidelines for an Adopt-a-Park Program are listed below. The most important consideration is making sure the group that adopts a park knows all work must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Department before starting. In the Appendix of the master plan, there are examples of registration forms and a program agreement between the Parks Department and an Adopt-A-Park Group.

Adopt-A-Park Guidelines

What is the program?

A volunteer program that keeps a city park safe, clean and beautiful.

Who can participate?

Any individual, organization, or business can participate. Usually participants must be 12 years of age or older, or have parental consent (such as a Boy or Girl Scout Troop).

Process of applying?

People or groups must apply. People must coordinate all their own volunteers and sometimes provide supplies.

How much time is involved?

Participants can commit to as much work as they want such as a minimum of 4 work sessions / days per year. All work sessions must first be coordinated and approved by Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation Department can offer staff help during the work session if they choose however at least one staff member should be on site for supervision and safety.

What projects can be done?

Most projects include:

- Gardening
- Painting
- Erecting structures (such as playscapes)
- Removing graffiti and litter

- Clearing trails
- Pruning
- Preparing and planting flower beds
- Tree planting
- Weeding
- Monitoring wildlife

What does the City provide?

During a work session / day, the city may provide:

- Any to all supplies
- Staff help
- Water / Gatorade
- Mid-day snacks
- At least one on-site staff personnel

What are the guidelines?

Parks are adopted on a first-come, first-served basis. If work sessions are allowed year round, then there usually is not an application deadline. Major work should only be done when approved and during park hours. Workers must follow all park rules.

Safety issues?

Some general safety guidelines for the staff and volunteer workers include:

- Wear appropriate clothing, shoes, and gloves for the work that is being done and the time of year
- Work during park hours only
- Wear light or bright clothing
- Use insect repellent when necessary
- Lift all objects with your legs, not your back
- Do not bring along pets or small children that need supervision
- Use caution when picking up sharp objects such as broken glass
- Tie bags tightly before placing in trash bins
- Take plenty of breaks and drink lots of liquids

Recognition of the group?

Usually a sign is placed in the adopted park or area, recognizing the groups' work and their commitment to the project.

