

Chapter 4

Goals of the Master Plan

“It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours.”

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Goals - Introduction

Goals are included in the park planning process to serve as a guide for the continual improvement of the parks system. Addressing the quality of life in a city, goals are an expression of a city's vision and desired intent.

Goals are established so as to serve as a policy and philosophical framework for the master plan. They serve to guide park planning in the City even as councils and staff change over the years. Goals can be as specific or as general as the planners of the park system feel comfortable with; but once established should be followed diligently and consistently.

The goals for the 2008-2018 Parks Master Plan focus on:

- Providing a variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the ultimate recreational needs and desires of the City of Georgetown's growing population.
- Creating a park system that will continue to improve the physical form and appearance of the City of Georgetown.
- Preserving and enhancing Georgetown's open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources, especially areas with topography change and/or indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding.
- Providing an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, open spaces and cultural landscapes.
- Providing a tool to coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.
- Continuing to maintain all of the Georgetown parks and recreational facilities in a superior and sustainable condition.
- Developing other funding mechanisms to help supplement the city's limited funding resources.
- Including a citizen participation process in all ongoing park planning and design, as well as updating of the Parks Master Plan.

Goals Terminology

The terms "policies", "goals", and "objectives", as used in this report, follow the definitions shown below.

Policies: planning policies consist of the Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan itself and specific actions and ordinances created by the Georgetown City Council to implement the goals established in this document.

Goals: goals are general statements concerning an aspect of the city's desired ultimate physical, social and economic environment. Goals address the desired quality of life.

Objectives: objectives express the actions or approach that is necessary to achieve the stated goals, or portions of those goals, without assigning responsibility to any specific actions. Objectives are often expressed as actions that can be measured.

Parks Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The Excellent Park System, written by Peter Harnik and published by the Trust for Public Lands in 2003, lists seven major measures of an excellent park system. Those measures are used to develop the fundamental guiding principles of the future parks system of Georgetown; those principles will be the foundation for future decisions as this plan is implemented.

1. The Parks System will be Accessible

- The parks system will provide adequate parks - the city will work towards providing parks, trails, and open spaces in an adequate amount in all parts of the city.
- Facilities will be well distributed to provide equitable access - parks will be located so that every citizen of Georgetown has close access to a park. In the near future, no one in Georgetown will live further than one-half mile from a park, and ideally most residents will be within one-quarter mile from a park, green space or trail access point.
- In newly developing parts of the city, adequate parkland will be allocated from the beginning of development, so that the target levels of service of this plan are met.
- A balanced park system will be provided - a variety of park sizes and facility types are readily available. The parks system will work towards providing a mix of small and large parks, trails, open spaces, and indoor recreation facilities. The system will work towards meeting parks, trails and open space goals - in other parts of the city, appropriate steps will be initiated to come closer to the facility and service goals of this plan.

2. The System will be Well Funded and will Actively Pursue Partnership Opportunities

- The parks system will be adequately funded - the parks system will be funded to a level that corresponds to its importance to the citizens of Georgetown. It will be encouraged to flourish.
- The parks system will use all available land resources - Every land resource in the city will be considered for its potential as a park or open space resource since there are too few available open space and suitable park sites. Schools and drainage land should be considered in the overall parks equation of the city.
- School Parks must be a vital part of the parks system - Parks adjacent to elementary or secondary school sites must be a vital resource for the citizens of



Georgetown in the future.

3. The System will Identify and Focus First on “Core” Services

- The Department will focus on providing basic services that serve a significant portion of the population. These will be measured against five desired outcomes.
- Livability of the Community – provides diverse recreational opportunities and experiences for all citizens of Georgetown.
- Health - provides opportunities to improve the health of all residents of Georgetown.
- Youth – provides learning and recreational experiences for the youth of Georgetown.
- Revenue – provides opportunities for revenue, but only if not at the expense of the other desired outcomes. The system’s top priority should not be for-profit or to make revenue so much so that park and recreational facilities and programs are only available to an elite portion of the population. The priority should be to provide parks and recreation to all residents first, and then revenue return second.
- Outdoors – provides opportunities to experience the outdoors in many different ways.

4. Parks in Georgetown will be Extraordinary and Timeless

- The parks of Georgetown will express the natural beauty and cultural diversity of Georgetown. The parks should look like they belong in Georgetown.
- Create extraordinary parks - Resolve to create parks that are unusual and that stand out.
- Express the Character of Georgetown - The entire park system, with its lands and buildings, should be one of the most visible character creating features of the city.
- Use materials that fit in - Develop parks that represent the natural beauty of the area, and that fit in with the scenery of the area.
- Native materials - Use materials that are native to the area, and that are already commonly used, such as boulders, native rock, shrubs, and trees.
- Strong, distinctive appearance for park buildings - Use architectural features as the focal points of parks. Use strong architectural statements that draw attention to the parks.

5. Parks will be Community Focal Points

- Parks as focal points of the Community - Place parks so that they become readily visible focal points of the community around them. Encourage the development community to think of parks in this manner, and where necessary,

develop ordinances that force that consideration.

- Think of parks as mini-oasis - Treat parks as lush areas, but note that only a portion of each park has to have that feeling.

6. The City will Focus on Connectivity and Linkage

- Trails and linear parks will equally focus on connectivity and leisure uses - the trail system will actually link a variety of uses, especially neighborhoods to area schools and parks, to local retail and centers of government, and to indoor recreation.
- Trails and linear parks will be a vital part of the parks system - A spine system of linear parks and trails should be extended, so that the goal of one day linking all parts of the city via scenic parkways and linear parks can be achieved.

7. The City will Value and Preserve Open Space

- Open Spaces - Make the preservation of open space within the city a high priority in the future. Set a goal of having five times more undeveloped in-city open space within the next 10 to 20 years.
- Use drainage as opportunities to “create” open space - Use drainage channels as the “greenbelts” of an area. Run roads alongside them and add trees to create linear parkways.

Seven Measures of an Excellent Parks System (from “The Excellent City Parks System” by Peter Harnik)

A Clear Expression of Purpose – a clear purpose for the system must be in place, expressed through a mission statement and goals that define precisely what the system is expected to provide. Georgetown’s Park system must clearly identify who its target market is, and must continue to push for a return to providing “core services.”

Ongoing Planning and Community Involvement – the excellent parks system has a plan that it follows and updates periodically. It also involves its residents in the development of the plan and major decisions undertaken by the system. Georgetown, through this plan, is clearly committed to both short term and long term planning.

Sufficient Assets in Land, Staffing, and Equipment to Meet the System’s Goals – the Parks System must have adequate land, know how much parkland it has and where, and have adequate operating funds and “a regular infusion of capital funds for major construction and repairs and land acquisition.”

Equitable Access – parks should be readily accessible, no matter where residents live. Ten minutes on foot in dense areas and 10 minutes apart by bicycle in suburban areas is recommended by the author. Access for persons with different disabilities or for residents that cannot afford the full cost should also be provided. Access in many parts of the city is very good.

User satisfaction – citizens should fully use the park facilities and be satisfied with what they are provided with. Cities should record usership, and should periodically query their residents to determine the level of resident satisfaction. The citizens of Georgetown, though ongoing input, appreciate the system they have, but would like to see it continue to expand as the population of the City grows.

Safety from physical hazards and crime – park users should feel safe when they use the facilities anywhere in the city. Georgetown is considered a very safe city, and in general citizens feel that their parks are safe.

Benefits for the City Beyond the Boundaries of the Parks System – the excellent parks system clearly provides environmental, economic, health and learning benefits for its residents. Georgetown residents have long recognized the great benefits of an excellent park system, and are calling for the resources to allow the system to flourish.

