

Chapter 7

A Plan for Georgetown

“Somehow I can’t believe that there are any heights that can’t be scaled by a man who knows the secrets of making dreams come true. This special secret, it seems to me, can be summarized in four Cs. They are curiosity, confidence, courage, and constancy, and the greatest of all is confidence. When you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionably.”

WALT DISNEY

Recommendations Introduction

Recommendations in this chapter address the need for indoor recreation facilities, aquatic facilities and spraygrounds, trails, additional practice fields, improved lakeside and riverside park features, and more parks in the recently developed areas of the city. These sections recommend a series of actions to improve and expand the Georgetown's parks, recreation, trails and open space system.

The recommended improvements fall into four general categories:

- Land Acquisition - both short term and long term. Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation facilities, and open space including habitat protection where possible.
- High Profile Recreation facilities - provide needed recreational facilities including an amphitheater, a sports complex, a second indoor recreation center, and updated aquatic facilities.
- Development - develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority. Plan for the development of Garey Park and downtown plaza parks.
- Existing Park Improvements - implement key improvements to existing parks throughout the city. Consider potential actions regarding Lake Georgetown parks and adding art in the parks as a way of improvement.

Philosophical Background for Recommendations

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the city have been discussed throughout this master plan document. These points are as follows:

- Every park should be considered as a green oasis in Georgetown - Parks should be carefully sited so that they are prominent features in their respective neighborhoods, and should include extensive mature trees and landscaping.
- Parks should follow a consistent citywide design theme. Fundamental items such as park signs, high quality pavilions with rock faced columns, and the preservation of existing vegetation and trees should be used in every new and existing park to create a consistent and recognizable park nomenclature.
- Where possible, each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of Georgetown. Parks can incorporate historical plaques and features that allude to the area or neighborhood around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users. Park facilities should be multi-faceted, and should follow the guidelines for each park type presented in Chapter 3.
- Parks should be designed so as to reduce maintenance. Automatic irrigation systems should be a key component of every park, as should simple features that make every park easier to take care of.
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park. Playgrounds and basketball courts should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park is.
- Bodies of water should be highly valued. Existing areas of water, whether in the form of ponds, small lakes or creeks should be preserved and located in key parks where feasible, assuming a ready source of re-supply water is available.
- Community input should be welcomed. Input from neighborhoods surrounding each new or renovated park should be included in the design of every park in the city.

The following items comprise the major priority recommendations of the 2008 Georgetown Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but are not specific concepts or actual plans. Costs that are shown are at an order of magnitude level of detail, and will vary as more detailed programming and design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. All costs include a cost escalation factor, assumed to be in the 3 to

4% per year range. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections should be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented.

Prioritization - Actions are divided into categories of acquisition, recreation facilities, park development, and park improvements. Then the recommendations are further ranked by importance: High Priority, Medium Priority and Long Term Priority.

High Priority Recommendations

Medium Priority Recommendations

Long Term Priority Recommendations

The timeframe of each recommendation priority is based on either High Priority (within the next five years), Medium Priority (within the next five to fifteen years), or Long term Priority (beyond fifteen years). Note that the prioritization shown in this plan is intended to guide staff and council actions, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Following is a summary of the priority items recommended in this master plan.

“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value.”

Theodore Roosevelt



Land Acquisition

Acquisition of land in newly growing parts of the city should focus on the provision of neighborhood parks, additional community parks, linear parks, and the protection of habitat and open space. Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, the establishment of recreation and/or parkland easements, and the involvement of Conservation Trusts. One very important consideration regarding the future acquisition of parkland is to not just look to acquiring that will meet the needs of the 2020 population. Georgetown is going to continue to expand its city limits over the next several decades and the population is expected to exceed 400,000 at ultimate build-out. The acquisition of land for parks will need to be continually sought throughout the entire lifetime of the City of Georgetown, well beyond the timeframe of this master plan.

Land for neighborhood parks - there is a deficit of neighborhood parkland in Georgetown. By the year 2020, close to 55 neighborhood parks of 5 acres each will need to be added to meet the recommended target level of service for the future population of Georgetown.

- Consider donations by developers and continue enforcing the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Target 5 acre sites or larger that are easily accessible and have sufficient land to be useful.
- The master plan illustration indicates general geographic locations where future parks may be required.
- For land acquisition for neighborhood parks in northwest Georgetown, consider acquisition in conjunction with Georgetown Independent School District, adjacent to future school sites.
- Park sites around the newly developing neighborhoods should be included.

Land for community parks - it is recommended that community parks be at least 30 to 50 acres in size. More than 700 acres of community parkland is needed to meet the 2020 target level of service. Much of this parkland is needed in the northwest sector which is quickly growing in population.

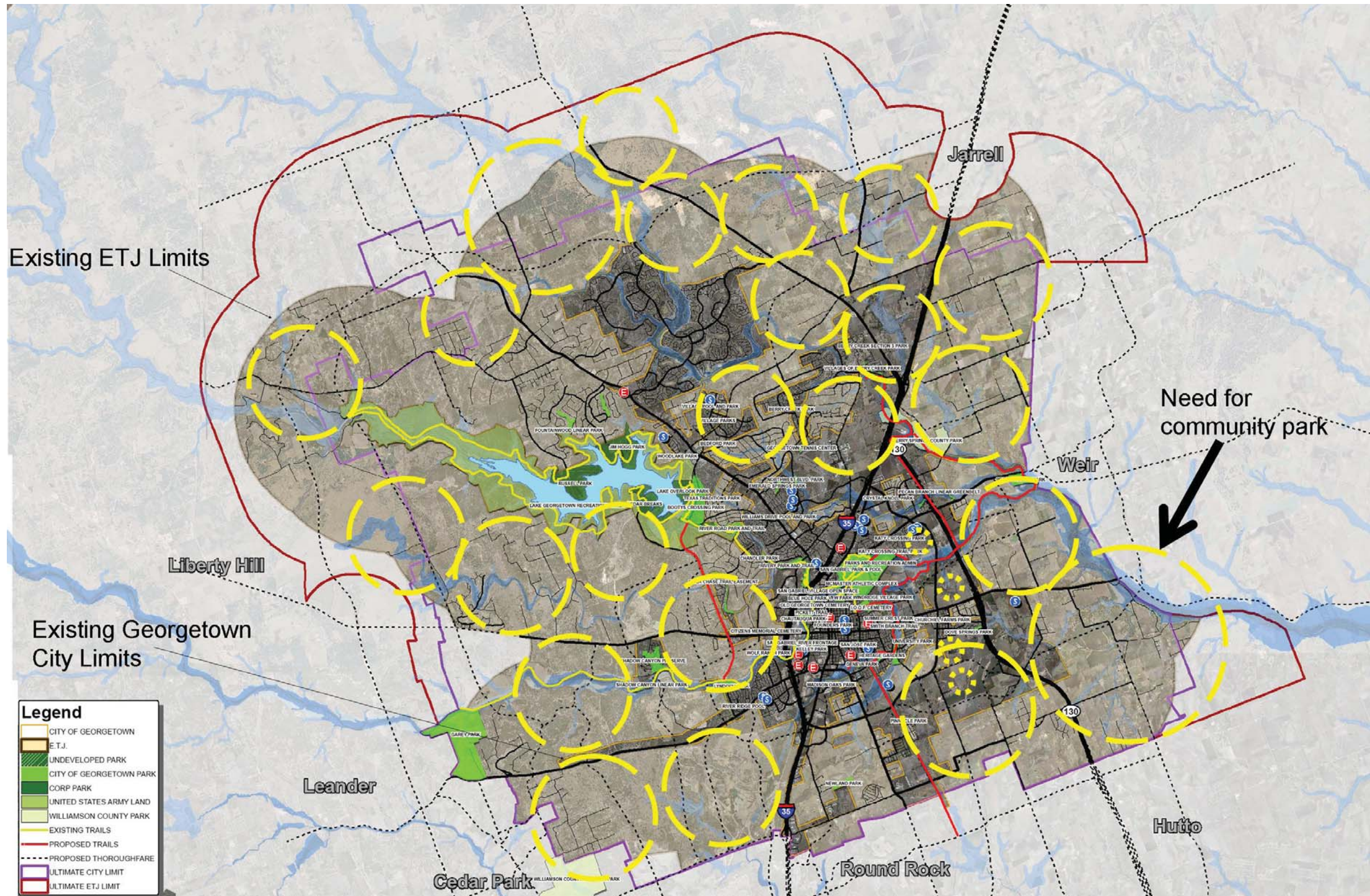
Linear Parks - Georgetown has several linear parks and trails along the forks of the San Gabriel River. It is recommended that Georgetown continue the development of the linear corridors and trails system so that it adds to what has already been built.

Open Space - natural habitat and nature areas are of high importance for the residents of Georgetown. Areas that have habitat value and warrant habitat protection typically include creeks, rivers, floodplains, and wooded areas. Lands dedicated as open space will receive only minimal development.

General opportunities for open space land dedication include:

- Land and/or development rights of the entire 100 year floodplain and/or lands that are regularly subjected to flooding.
- Secondary creeks that can create linkage to adjacent neighborhoods by means of trail connections.
- Land along creeks that are not necessarily part of a specific park.
- Land as identified of natural and cultural importance including wetlands and their buffers; moderate and steep slopes; groundwater resources and their recharge areas; woodlands; farmland to ensure the rural character of the city; significant wildlife habitat; historic and archaeological features; and scenic view sheds.
- Land associated with the cultural landscape of Georgetown such as downtown open spaces, buffer areas around Southwestern University, and river overlooks.





future parkland acquisition needs

Need for community park



Georgetown Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Draft Action Plan 2008-2018

Parkland Acquisition Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	City Sector	Acres Low	Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Dev.	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Potential Priorities										
High	1	Acquisition of land for a Northwest Sports Complex and Community Park	Northwest	50	100	\$1,500,000	\$5,000,000	Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2008-2010
High	2	Ensure acquisition and development of smaller close to home parks in new neighborhoods through Georgetown	Citywide	2	5	\$500,000	\$500,000	Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, foundation assistance, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, Garey \$5 Million matching fund.	2008-2010
High	3	Acquire undeveloped river corridor or gaps on the South San Gabriel River floodplain where feasible between Lyndoch Park and Garey Park (through Parkland Dedication Ordinance when necessary)	Southwest					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2009-2012
Medium	4	Acquisition of land for a southeast community park	Southeast	50	100	\$2,500,000	\$5,000,000	Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2009-2013
Medium	5	Acquire undeveloped river corridor or gaps of land along the middle fork of the San Gabriel River where feasible (through Parkland Dedication Ordinance when necessary)	Southwest					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2010-2013
Medium	6	Acquire undeveloped river corridor or gaps of land along the San Gabriel River on the east side of Georgetown where feasible (through Parkland Dedication Ordinance when necessary)	East					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2011-2014
Low	7	Acquisition of land for a community park in the far northwest sector, north of Lake Georgetown	West	25	100			Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2012-2015
Low	8	Acquire and preserve Berry Creek corridor in the northeast sector of Georgetown	Northeast					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2012-2015
Low	9	Acquisition of land in the Northeast for a community park	Northeast	25	100			Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2013-2015
Low	10	Acquire and preserve floodplain corridor of the North San Gabriel River, north of Lake Georgetown.	Northwest					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2013-2016
Low	11	Georgetown should continue to monitor the quarry sites, and when/if they become available, quarries can be developed into a very unique park	West					Acquisition	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	Beyond 2018
Estimated Total				152	405	\$4,500,000	\$10,500,000			
Total Potential Expenditure Range For 2008 to 2018 Planning Timeframe and Beyond - (note that grants and donations may fund portions of the amount shown)				152	405	\$4,500,000	\$10,500,000			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
 2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per acre.
 3. Cost include an annual 5% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest \$50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.



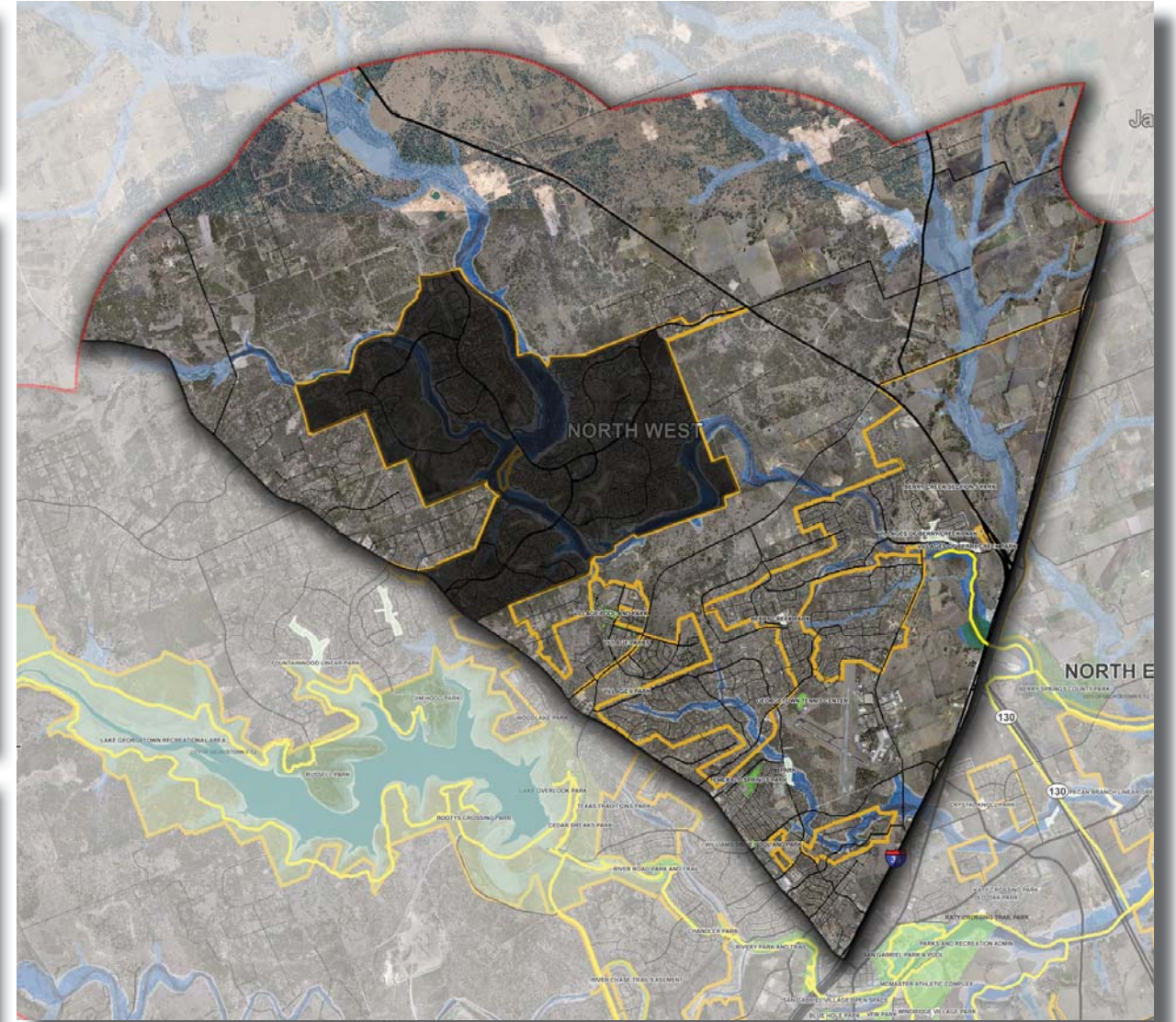
Acquire Land for Northwest Community Park

Acquisition of land is needed for a large community park and sports complex in the northwest sector. The park site should be 100 to 200 acres in size with unique topography and trees if possible. Strong considerations should be given to:

- Acquiring floodplain lands along upper Berry Creek for preservation, and use as a large park and open space preserve for the northwest area.
- Acquire a 100 acre to 200 acre site for future active recreation in this sector. A site along major arterial roads and that is centered in this sector is preferred.

The cost of the acquisition could range from **\$1,500,000 to \$5,000,000**. (Low range assumes some or all donations)

This is considered a **very high priority** and should occur in the next five years. Rising land values and increasing development pressures make this acquisition imperative in the very near future.



Acquire Land for Neighborhood Parks

As the city grows and new neighborhoods are developed, neighborhood parks should be an integral part of the development. Continue the enforcement of the parkland dedication ordinance and encourage the development of conservation subdivisions. Each development in Georgetown should have a neighborhood park that serves a focal point for those neighborhoods that surround it. Consider a greater reliance on homeowner association owned park facilities, provided that superior development and maintenance are provided.

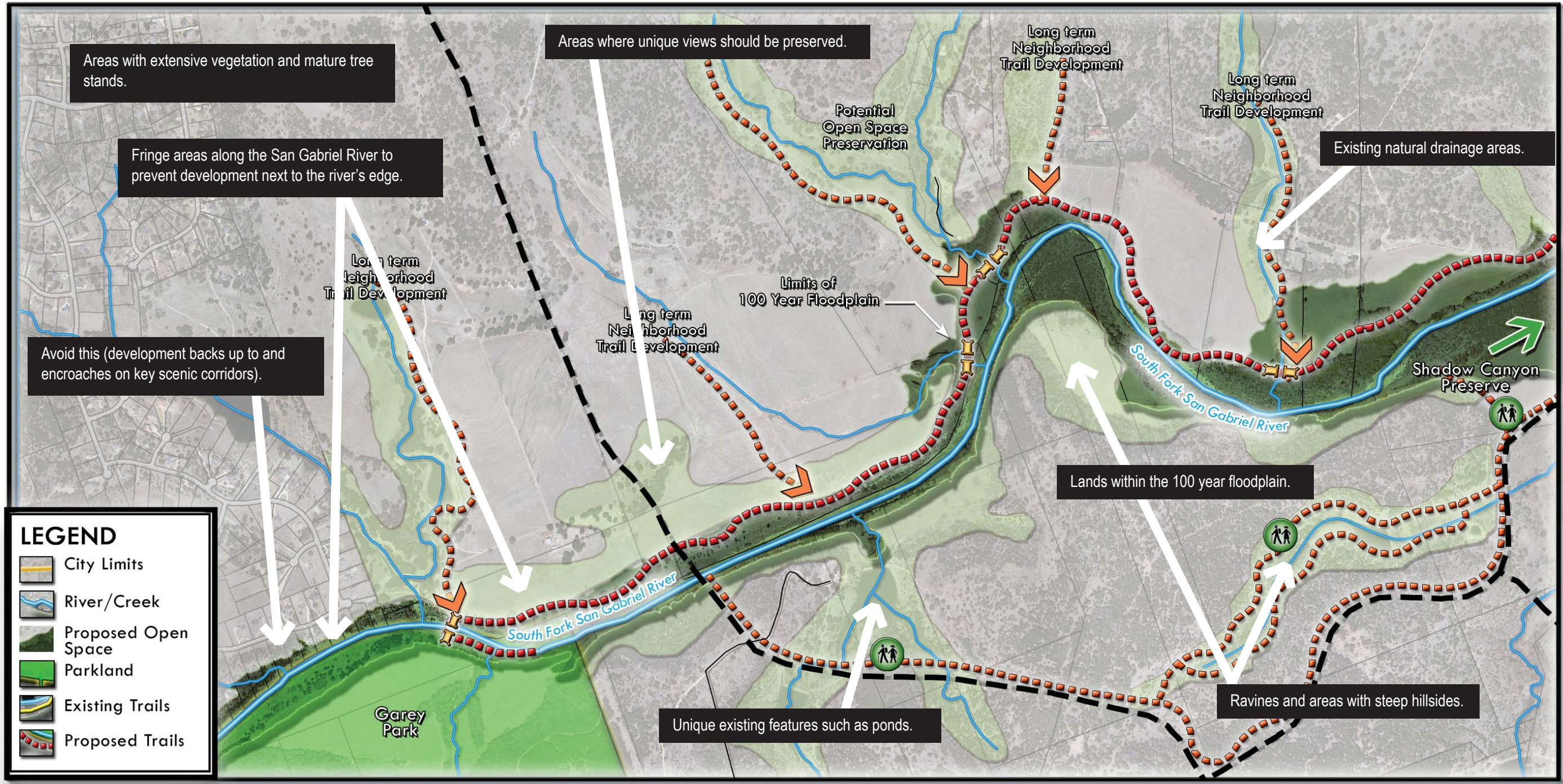


Continue to provide a variety of recreational opportunities in neighborhood parks such as play areas, shade shelters, walking trails, and multi-purpose courts.



Acquire and Preserve Floodplain Corridors

The preservation of key open space areas throughout the City and its ETJ is of immediate concern. There are key corridors that should be identified as in imminent danger of being permanently lost. Preservation should be accomplished through existing or new development standards, and a pro-active and positive working relationship with development entities. Continue to refine conservation development techniques. Preservation of open space is considered a **very high priority** and should be ongoing throughout the timeframe of this plan.

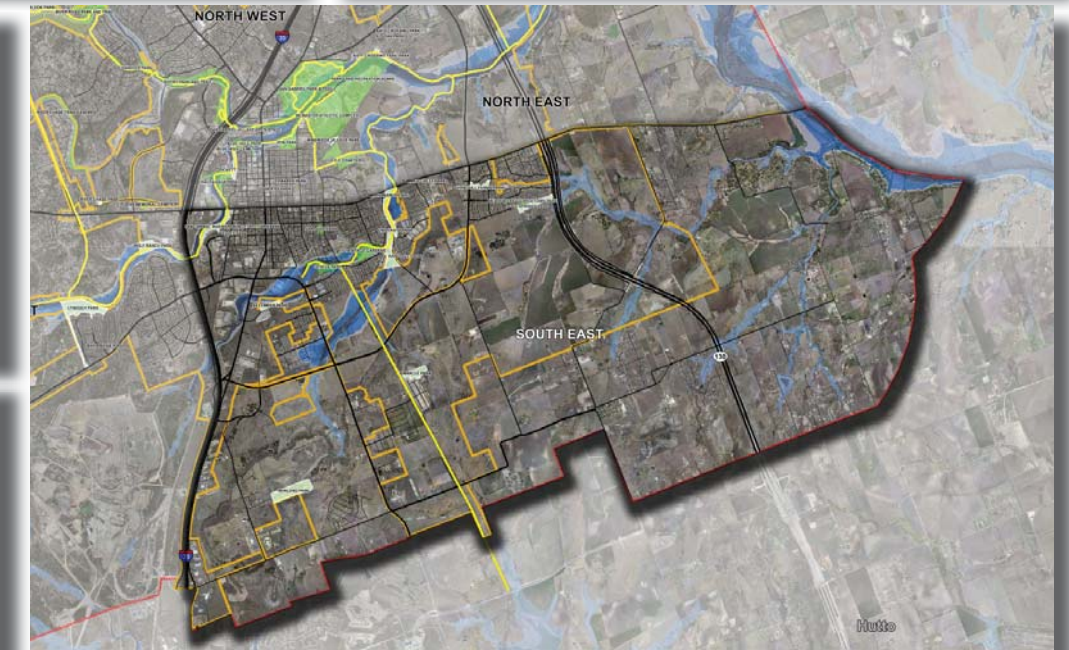


Acquire land for Southeast Community Park

The southeast sector of Georgetown is deprived of any community park facilities. As long term growth occurs in this sector, a community park will need to be provided. The park site should be 50 to 150 acres in size with access to greenway corridors, unique topography and trees if possible.

The cost of the acquisition could range from **\$2,500,000 to \$5,000,000**.

This is considered a **short term priority** for acquisition, but a long term priority for development which should occur in 15 to 20 years.



Types of amenities that could be found in a community park of this size. Actual recreation facilities may vary from what is shown.



Development of Recreational Facilities

The citizen telephone survey and other citizen input techniques identified needs for very specific recreation facilities. The following are the key facility needs in Georgetown, with rankings prioritized based on facility standards, and city staff and citizen input combined.

Key Outdoor Priority Facility Needs include:

1. Jogging / biking trails
2. Natural habitat / nature areas
3. Picnic tables and park restrooms
4. Amphitheater
5. Playgrounds
6. Water spraygrounds
7. Rental / reunion pavilions
8. Basketball courts
9. Soccer fields
10. Tennis courts

Recommendations Per Key Facilities

Jogging and Biking Trails - the city needs to begin to develop a true citywide trails network. Trails were the highest desired element in the citizen surveys. Georgetown has already begun the process of developing cross-town trails that follow along the South San Gabriel River and the North San Gabriel River to Lake Georgetown. More trails need to be added that link parks, schools, neighborhoods, retail, civic building, and other facilities.

Reasons for developing a citywide trails system include:

- Can provide a means of transportation from one location to another during much of the year when the weather is favorable.
- Creates a very visible recreational element that contributes to the perceived quality of life in the city.
- Trails may be heavily used by all age groups.
- Trails are relatively easy to maintain, as opposed to many other types of recreation facilities.

The citywide network of trails is discussed in more detail in chapter 8 of this Master Plan.

Natural Habitat and Nature Areas - through objective public participation efforts, many cities learn about the strong need that most citizens have to experience natural habitat and natural areas within the city. However, most cities have never considered acquiring land for conservation purposes, partly because it is not programmed space. However, land with no particular program may fulfill the function of wildlife habitat and flood control. If managed correctly, such land typically requires the least amount of maintenance.

Natural areas and natural habitat also provide a sense of visual, emotional and psychological relief to citizens. The provision of such land does not include the acquisition of undeveloped land only but may include areas within existing parks where the establishment of native trees, wildflowers and native grasses is encouraged. This

in turn allows for activities including bird watching and wildflower enjoyment.

The conservation of open space and natural areas also makes economical sense. It has been proven that the value of property adjacent or close to open space often has a substantial premium over the value of property in the same vicinity but not identified with the open space. Every effort should be made to secure the protection of existing natural areas and to restore disturbed sites.

Park Restrooms - although expressed as a need by respondents to the telephone survey, it is recommended that restrooms are provided at community parks and large neighborhood parks only. The provision of restrooms at smaller neighborhood parks is discouraged. Compared to community parks, neighborhood parks have irregular use with fewer visitors, resulting in higher amounts of vandalism and illegal activity. Neighborhood parks are also typically in walking distance of the visitors' homes and restrooms are thus less of an urgent need.

Amphitheater - the City of Georgetown currently does not have an amphitheater that is adequate for organized performances. The City should consider investing in a facility that offers:

- Lawn and tiered row space for 300 to 2,000 spectators
- An elevated performance stage at least 15 feet by 20 feet in size
- Adequate electrical service of a minimum of 200 amps or larger
- Shaded spectator seating
- In close proximity to adequate restrooms and parking
- Water and electrical service for temporary utilities for entertainers' vehicle connection
- Pre-rigged stage for lighting and sound
- Should be designed with concession vendor accommodation

Amphitheaters are popular amenities as indicated by the various forms of public input that was received.

Playgrounds - playgrounds are important gather sites for families and parents to stimulate and promote social interaction in the community. Georgetown has a good supply of playground facilities, and should maintain this trend with play areas in all

“We must make every piece of space do double and triple duty, and we have all the tools and precedents we need. With ingenuity, we can make the smaller spaces seem larger; we can find ways to link them and to emphasize their continuities; we can make them far more accessible to people, and if not to the foot at least to the eye. It is the effect of open space we are seeking, not just the space, and with this approach a given acreage of open spaces can be knit into a pattern more pleasing, more useful, and seemingly more expansive than a far greater acreage laid out in conventional fashion.”

William H. Whyte, *The Last Landscape*



future parks. Since the Texas heat can be overwhelming, the playgrounds should be covered as much as possible under shade structures or tree canopies. Develop the playgrounds in such a manner as to benefit from the shade provided by existing trees. If not possible, plant a dense stand of trees adjacent to the playground and consider steel supported shade structures. Also, if a fence is built surrounding the playground, provide either an opening or a gate for easy access to the playground. Consider the inclusion of low walls around all play areas for containment and parent seating.

Water Spraygrounds - water spraygrounds follow a trend in many cities, whereby the excitement of water is provided in a safe and clean environment. The principle is spray nozzles, drop buckets and other features that either regularly or intermittently (for a sense of surprise) spray and/or drop water on children excited with expectation. The water is collected directly in surface drains from where it is circulated. Important factors to consider for the selection and preparation of an appropriate site are: accessibility and visibility, wind, and leaves or other material that can possibly clog the drain system.

Rental Picnic or Reunion Pavilions - pavilions and other shade shelters with picnic tables are frequently used and requested by the citizens. Reasons for additional picnic facilities:

- Serve many diverse age groups
- Are key to recreational use during the warm seasons of the year
- Larger facilities may generate rentals revenue for the city

Distribution should remain balanced throughout the city so that all city areas have a good supply of park pavilions and tables. Design and construct pavilions to allow for airflow through the roof by means of a two-tiered roof structure.

Basketball Courts - Provide at least one lighted half court at all existing and new neighborhood parks. The value of such an amenity allows neighborhood kids to practice their skills on their own time. At community parks, provide a number of full basketball courts in close proximity to enable tournament and league playing.

Soccer Fields - develop competitive level league fields in the city's new community parks as they are developed. Also, provide multi-purpose practice fields in all existing and future neighborhood parks for soccer and baseball.

Tennis Courts - ensure tennis courts are evenly distributed throughout all of Georgetown.

Convert Two Pools into Water Spraygrounds



Existing Williams Dr. Pool



It is recommended that the Williams Dr. Pool and the Village Pool be converted into water spraygrounds. The Williams Dr. Pool is aging and has few amenities. The "L" shaped 50 yard configuration is adequate for lap swimming and competitive swim practice, but lacks recreational amenities. The pool's location along Williams Dr. is impacted by traffic noise and does not allow for expansion. Consider converting the pool into a zero entry configuration or closing the pool and converting the facility into a sprayground similar to those shown on this page. The Village neighborhood has plans to develop an HOA swimming pool at which time the current city-owned swimming pool will be unnecessary and can be converted into another sprayground feature. Benefits of this to the city will include significant staffing and operational cost savings.

The potential cost of decommissioning the pools and converting them into spraygrounds ranges from **\$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000**.

This is a **high priority** item that should occur within the next five years.



Westside Sports Complex and Community Park

The development of a sports complex is necessary for the growing population of Georgetown. The sports complex will be on the west side of IH 35 and will supplement the facilities at San Gabriel Park and McMaster Athletic Complex. It will serve residents in the high growth areas of the city.

The potential development cost of the initial phases of the sports complex and community park ranges from **\$7,500,000 to \$12,500,000**.

Development of this park is a **medium priority** item that should occur in the next five years to ten years.



Typical features offered at a sports complex are shown for illustrative purposes only. The site will need to be configured based on the topography and facility needs identified at the time of development.



Second Aquatic Center west of IH 35

As Georgetown continues to grow, a second aquatic center may be needed on the west side of IH 35. This center will supplement facilities that are planned for Garey Park as well as the facilities that will be provided in San Gabriel Park at the Recreation Center.

The potential cost ranges from **\$4,500,000 to \$6,500,000.**

This is a **long term priority** item and implementation should begin in the next fifteen to twenty years.



Planning for West Side Recreation Center

The population of Georgetown is projected to nearly triple over the next fifteen years and much of that growth is occurring to the west. Similarly to an aquatic center, as Georgetown continues to grow a second indoor recreation center will be needed on the west side of IH 35.

The potential cost range is to be determined.

This is a **long term priority** item and implementation should begin in the next fifteen to twenty years.



Similar facilities found at the existing recreation center will need to be offered on the west side of Georgetown as the city grows.

