

CITY OF HEATH PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

DRAFT:
MARCH 27, 2018



City of
Heath
Texas



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City of
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INTRODUCTION 01



Introduction

Heath is a community situated east of Dallas, on the east side of Lake Ray Hubbard. Heath has a lot to offer, and the community members seem to value most its rural character and open spaces, the lakefront location, and the family friendly culture. Heath is a small city: in 2017, the Heath population was estimated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments to be 7,820, and the city area was approximately 6.9 square miles. It currently has three City/public parks: Towne Center Park, Terry Park, and Antigua Bay Park; and it has seven publicly maintained trails. Heath has many large estates and planned subdivisions, which also contain open spaces and private park and/or amenity areas.

In addition to Lake Ray Hubbard as a natural asset, Heath also has private destinations such as the Buffalo Creek Golf Club, Rush Creek Yacht Club, and the Heath Golf and Yacht Club, which have both community and regional draw. Although these are privately-owned assets, they are still recognized in the plan as having a place within Heath's overall quality of life offerings for parks and recreation.

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan takes a new look at Heath's Parks and Recreation System and sets forth a bold vision that includes a prioritized action plan and strategies to take the Parks and Recreation System to higher levels of service and quality to be more in line with Heath's assets, opportunities, location, and family friendly culture.

Purpose of the plan

The purpose of the plan is to adopt a system-wide master plan that will provide an information base to help guide decisions related to parks, recreation, and open space. This will be the first time the City of Heath has an official Park System Master Plan and it will serve as a starting point for developing an exceptional parks system in Heath. It is a key time in Heath's history to document a vision for a parks system as the area continues to develop, and future build-out is on the horizon.

Texas Parks and Wildlife

In addition to these purposes, the plan serves as a submittal to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to gain project priority for potential grant consideration for park, recreation, and open space improvements. TPWD has established Master plan Guidelines, which the plan applies. Plans must be updated every five years to remain eligible for the project priority program for grant funding, and they must include, at minimum, a summary of:

- Accomplishments
- New public input
- Most recent inventory data
- Updated needs assessment
- Priorities
- New implementation plan
- Demographics
- Population projections
- Goals and objectives
- Standards
- Maps

Related Planning Efforts

The City of Heath's Parks Master Plan has been created to expand on the foundation established by the City Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan takes a look at the city as whole, the plan dives deeper into the relationships that parks and recreation assets have on the vision of the city. The following vision statement from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was also included in the 2017 planning effort.

City of Heath's Vision Statement

A lakeside community of premiere neighborhoods with open green spaces, parks and trails, cultural amenities, an exemplary educational system, and distinctive economic development in order to provide the highest level of public services – a place to call home for a lifetime.

This vision statement shows the importance the community holds for open green spaces, parks, and trails. Throughout the planning effort the above statement was reinforced in relationship to the participants' ideas for parks and open spaces in Heath.

The recommendations of the plan should also support other City planning efforts relating to topics such as sustainability, mobility, and capital improvements. The Capital Improvements Programs (CIP) should contain the updated parks and recreations priorities contained here.

Engagement and Feedback

The results and recommendations of the plan are based on an extensive process of community engagement including:

- A comprehensive online survey
- Social media posts and advertisements promoting the plan and engagement opportunities
- A Community Workshop
- Park Board involvement throughout the planning process
- Extensive staff involvement and interviews

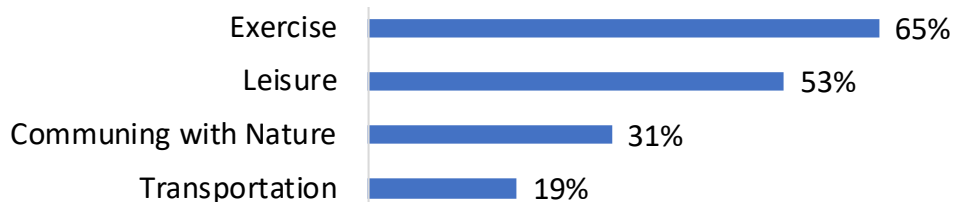
The following are summaries of each engagement event:

Online Survey

A survey was conducted to receive feedback and ideas to create the recommendations found in the plan. Questions identifying parks and recreation facilities and activities were asked, in addition to questions on levels of satisfaction and funding priorities. Although additional feedback was received and considered in the survey responses, a summary of the analysis from the survey is provided below:

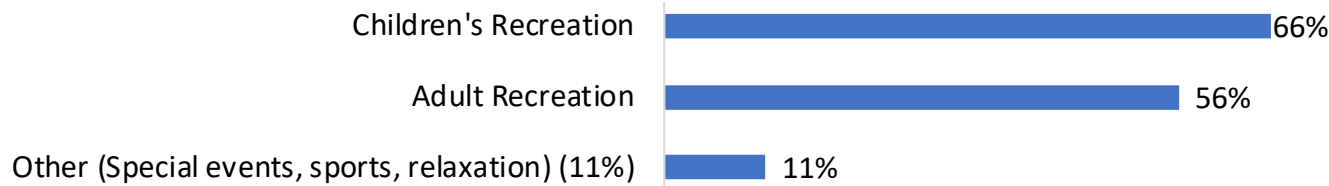
- The survey gathered 286 responses over the course of 8 weeks.
- Over 60 percent of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 55. The survey had a good distribution of respondent ages overall.
- 66 percent of respondents were female. The difference in gender response rate could be due to word of mouth for this particular effort reaching more women than men. Typically online surveys are free of gender bias due to their availability to everyone, but in this case, there may be a skew toward female responses due to the significant difference in respondent gender percentages.

- Approximately 68 percent of respondents had children under the age of 19 in their home. This is a significantly high number, and it represents a young community with more kids than other local communities.
- Over 42 percent of respondents had been a resident of Heath for more than 10 years. This is representative of a city where people do not typically leave once they own property. Typically residents who have lived in a city for a considerable amount of time have lower expectations than newer residents. It is possible that due to an influx of newer residents in the region and in Heath, expectations could steadily rise for newer and improved parks and recreation amenities.
- Only 27 percent of respondents used a City park or recreation facility at least once a week, and approximately 36 percent of respondents reported either never using a City park and recreation facility or using one at least once a year. This distribution is representative of a low rate of utilization. Responses to other survey questions suggest that the low rate of utilization is due to a lack of park and recreation facilities in the city and/or lack of facilities that meet the respondents' expectations.
- Over half of respondents (53 percent), reported using a City hike and bike trail either never or at least once per year. This distribution is representative of a low rate of utilization. Similar to the lack of utilization for park and recreation facilities, responses to other survey questions and analysis of existing trails suggest that the low rate of utilization is due to a lack of trails in the city and/or lack of trails that meet the respondents' expectations.
- Approximately 76 percent of respondents utilize the City's trail system which is a moderate rate of utilization. The rates of utilization appear to vary between questions and reflect inconsistent reporting by the respondents. The top reasons for utilization of the City's trail system as follows:



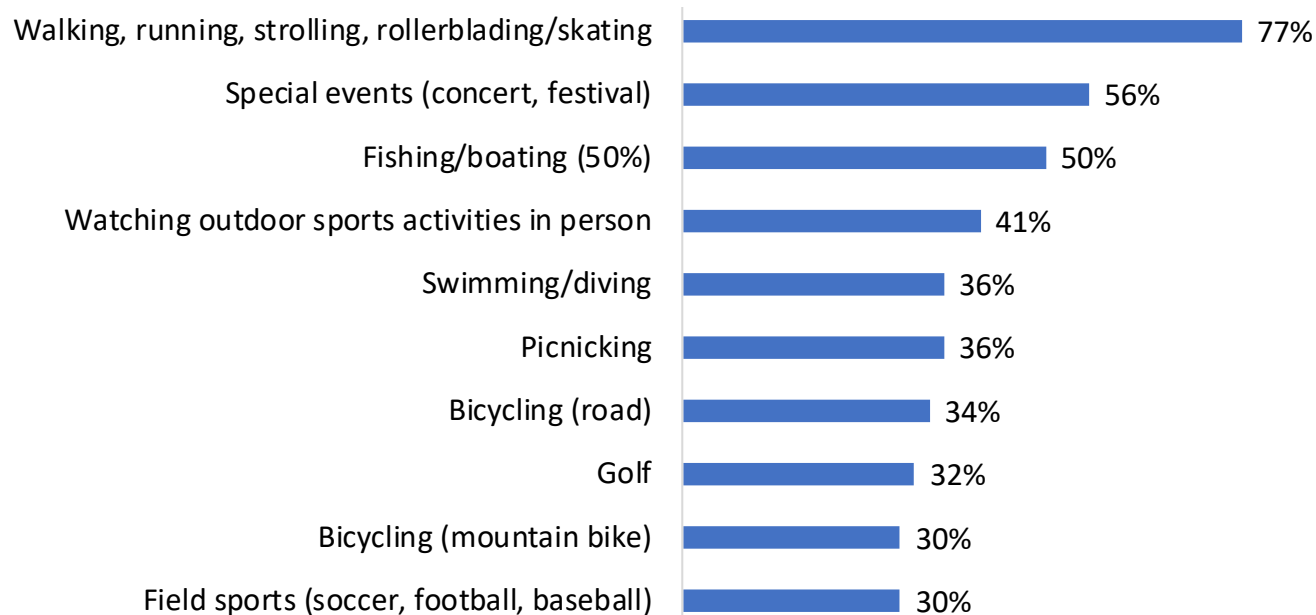
Of particular note is that 19 percent of respondents utilize the trail system for transportation. This is a fairly high percentage in the DFW area, suggesting that there is additional demand for more multi-use trails to connect more destinations in Heath and beyond.

- The following three reasons were the top responses for why the respondent or their family utilize the City’s park and recreation facilities:



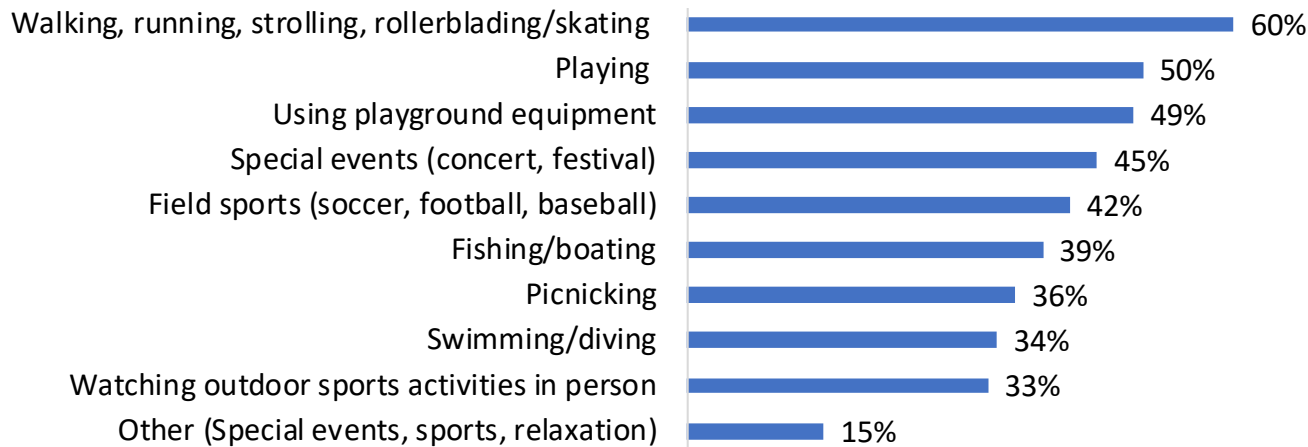
The percentage of utilization for children’s recreation is higher than in some other communities, reflecting a higher number of children in Heath. The adult recreation number is also higher than in some other communities. When these are taken together, it suggests needs for a family friendly park and recreation system with ample opportunities for all ages.

- The following adult outdoor recreation activities received the most responses for participation by the respondents or their family within the past year:



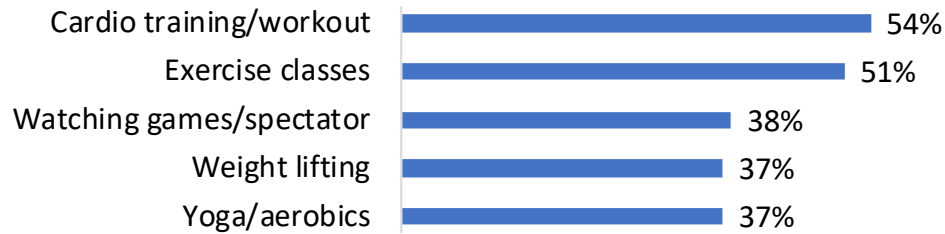
The distribution of adult outdoor recreation activities is similar to other DFW lakeside communities except the rate of utilization is higher, suggesting an active community. Also of note is golfing participation of almost a third of the respondents, thirty-two percent, which is higher than some other local communities and could suggest existing golf facilities, such as the Buffalo Creek Golf Club (a private facility), are of strong interest and could represent demand for public golf facilities.

- The following children’s outdoor recreation activities received the most responses for participation by the respondents’ children or their family within the past year:



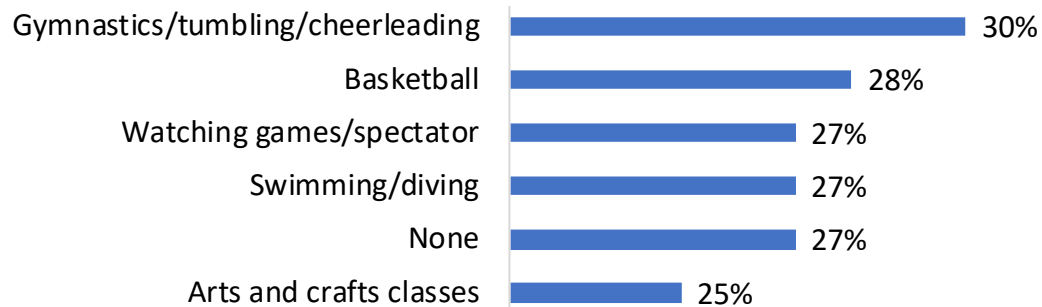
Similar to adult outdoor recreation, the distribution of children’s outdoor recreation activities is similar to other DFW lakeside communities except the rate of utilization is higher, suggesting an active community. Also of note is a higher than average percentage of participation in playing and using playground equipment than nearby communities which, complemented by other survey information, is representative of a community with a significant number of child residents and/or visitors (ex. grandchildren) who enjoy outdoor recreation.

- The following adult indoor recreation activities received the most responses for participation by respondents or their family within the past year:



Based on the responses, the most popular adult indoor recreation activities center around fitness. The rates of adult indoor recreation utilization were generally strong compared to other cities suggesting an active community.

- The following children’s indoor recreation activities received the most responses for participation by the respondents’ children or their family within the past year:



The rates of children’s indoor recreation utilization were generally strong compared to other cities, suggesting an active community. Of particular note is a quarter of respondents twenty-five percent, indicating participation in arts and crafts classes (above average), which could indicate demand for additional indoor children’s creative programming.

Funding Support for Additional Facilities and Programming

- Respondents indicated that 82 percent of the indoor or outdoor recreation activities in the preceding questions were located in Rockwall and only 59 percent of them were located in Heath.
- 61 percent of those who indicated the activities were outside the City of Heath prefer that the City of Heath construct similar facilities, and 25 percent of respondents replied “maybe” when asked if they preferred Heath construct similar facilities (for a total of 86 percent support <yes> or somewhat support <maybe> for additional facilities in the City of Heath).

Of those who replied “maybe,” that particular answer to this type of question reflects an “it depends” feeling determined by cost and potential benefits to the respondent and their community members—a typically fiscally conservative answer. Approximately 79 percent of respondents indicated that they would be supportive or somewhat supportive of some increase in fees or taxes to support the recreation facilities and programs important to them.

Responses to these three questions indicate a very strong interest in constructing more facilities and adding more programming, depending on the particular facility or program up for consideration. 164 respondents provided their preferences regarding which facilities the City of Heath should construct, and the themes to the feedback included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Shaded trails
- Shaded playgrounds
- Indoor recreation center/multi-purpose building with adult and children areas, gym, and indoor aquatics
- Outdoor sports/event complex with soccer, baseball, and softball fields, trails, splash pad, playground, multi-use concert/festival area, and/or a skate park (all with ample shade)
- Lakefront parks, trails, fishing spots, and paddling amenities

- When asked to rank funding priorities, the following list is ranked in general order, weighing options from first priorities to last priorities:
 1. Building new senior center
 2. Expanding recreation and tournament level sports opportunities
 3. Renovating existing parks and facilities and/or enhancing park maintenance
 4. Building new recreation centers
 5. Other (connecting existing trails, lake access, shade)
 6. Land acquisition for new parks
 7. Building new hike, bike, walk, and jog trails
 8. Preserving natural habitat

There are several things of note to the analysis of this question. First, the option of a new senior center ranked highest amongst number one priorities, receiving the number one priority vote of almost 61 percent of respondents. In other survey questions, the responses did not reflect this need/desire because respondents likely did not realize or remember that a senior center was part of the options associated with a park and recreation system until they saw the choice. The prevalence of the top priority for a new senior center reflects a national planning issue relating to the aging Baby Boomer Generation now looking for senior-focused amenities and programming.

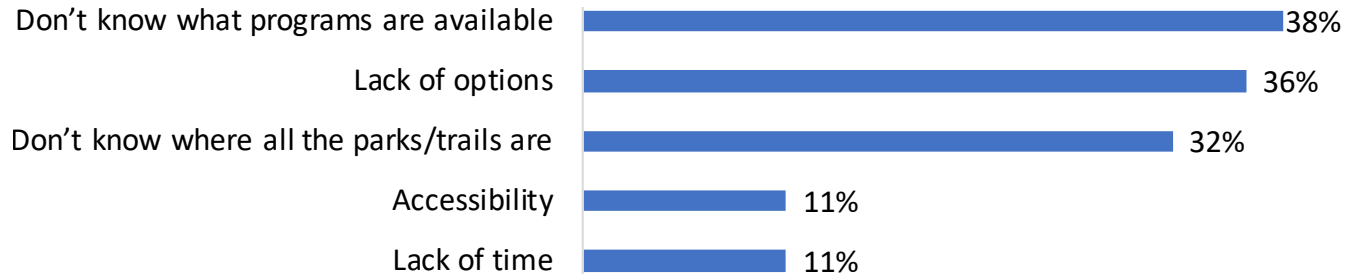
Next, although an indoor recreation center was a high priority when looking at write-in comments regarding desired new facilities, when put up against expanding recreation and tournament level sports opportunities or renovating or maintaining existing facilities, it went significantly downward in terms of priority. Although expanding recreation and tournament level sports opportunities is the second overall ranked priority, only 43 percent of respondents chose it as the top priority versus the 61 percent of respondents ranking a new senior center as the top priority.

Finally, although new trails and connections were also a high priority when looking at write-in comments for desired new facilities, they did not rank highly when asked to spend limited funds. This may seem like the community does not want or need new trails just by looking at these funding priorities, but it should be noted that people often see trails as accessory to a primary use and they were significant desires in other survey questions. So, for example, since the community has ranked a new senior center and a new sports/event complex highly for funding, they would likely expect for trails to be located around and throughout those properties.

There was not an identifiable theme among the write-in feedback for the “other” selection.

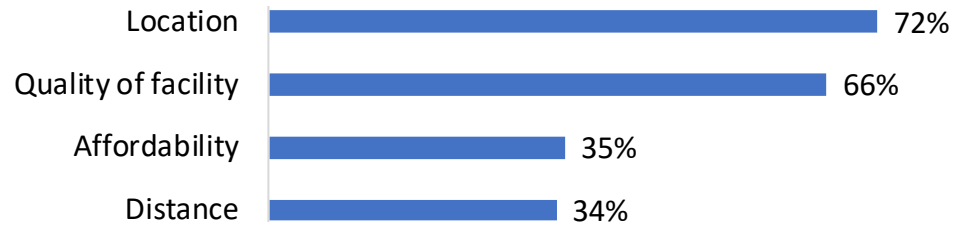
Satisfaction Ratings

- Respondents reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied more than being satisfied or very satisfied with recreational activities provided by the City, across all age groups. This is an abnormally high level of dissatisfaction for provided recreational activities, especially when expressed across all age groups. This is indicative of the need to plan for and execute strategic park and recreation system improvements.
- Less than half of respondents reported the two most positive levels of satisfaction regarding the quality of maintenance of Heath park and recreation facilities. Forty percent of respondents selected the mid-rating of “3.” These responses in levels of satisfaction are low and reflect some areas of opportunity in terms of maintenance of park and recreation facilities.
- More respondents reported being dissatisfied with the recreational programming provided by the City of Heath than reported being satisfied. Approximately 42 percent of respondents selected the mid-rating of “3.” These responses in levels of satisfaction are low and reflect additional needs in recreational programming.
- Respondents provided the following top reasons for what prevents them from participating or using the parks or programs offered by the City:



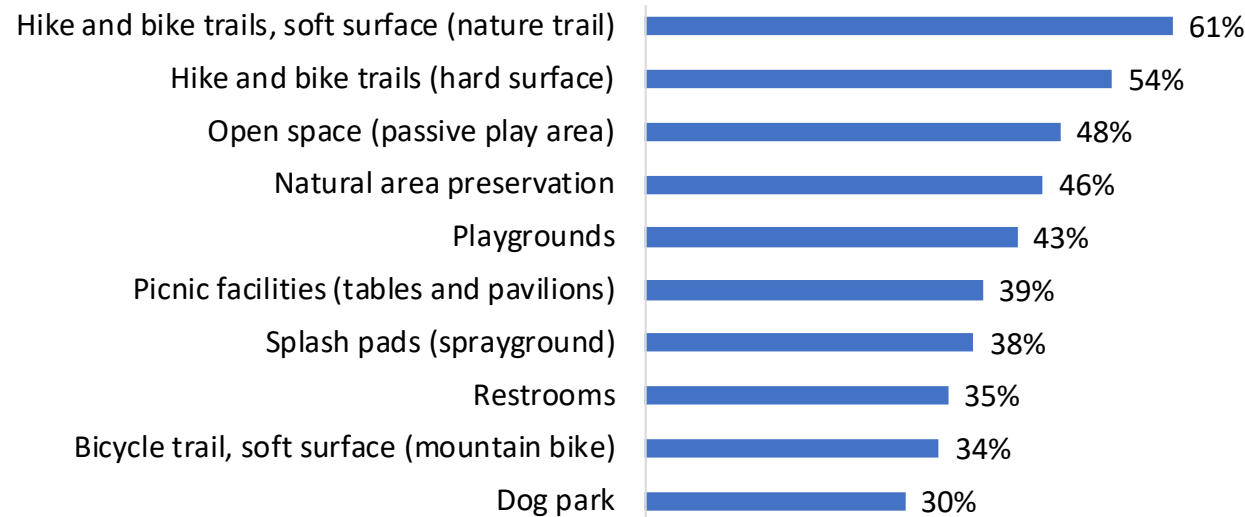
The responses to this question, paired with existing inventory of park and recreation system offerings, suggest that community members would utilize the facilities and programs more if they were made available within the City. The City's website has high quality presentation of information for the Parks Department, but there is not an extensive set of facilities or programming to communicate. Making a strategic investment, such as an indoor recreation center with designated age group areas (e.g. children, adults, seniors) could provide relief to the satisfaction levels.

- When choosing to participate in a recreation activity, the following criteria are most important to the respondents' household:



The lack of selection on affordability is reflective of Heath’s demographics. The community members would like high quality facilities in a great location.

- 91 percent of respondents answered “yes” or “maybe” to the need for additional parkland in Heath. This is a very high level of agreement. This level of agreement is seen on the question regarding the construction of new facilities that respondents are utilizing in nearby cities (86 percent “yes” or “maybe”) as discussed above. The write-in responses for the purpose of additional parkland are generally summarized as the following:



- 48 percent of respondents use social media the most as a source for information on recreational activities. Following social media is “word of mouth” at 25 percent and the City’s website at 15 percent.

Preference for receiving information related to parks and recreation activities and programs in Heath were related but show a key finding with 72% social media, 48% emails or email newsletters, and 43% City website and/or water bill insert were preferred. These two question responses, when taken together, point to a potential desire of respondents to receive more information through online sources than they currently get. For example, 48 percent of respondents use email to get their parks and recreation information, but 72 percent of respondents prefer to get their information through social media—this represents an unmet need to provide more information on social media that is strategic and communicates to respondents regarding parks and recreation offerings and activities.

Park Board Workshops

The planning team conducted several updates to the Park Board throughout the planning process. These meetings were open to the public and typically held in conjunction with a planned Park Board meeting. Topics were presented and open discussion assisted the development of the priorities and recommendations of the plan.

Park Board updates were held on:

June 16, 2017

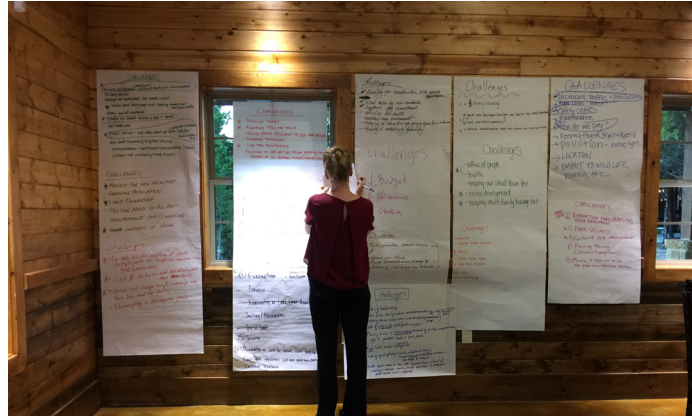
October 16, 2017

November 20, 2017

Community Workshop

The meeting on August 31, 2017, gathered over 200 people who weighed in on the future of Heath's Parks and Recreation System. An interactive and collaborative exercise was facilitated which had small groups come up with their top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for the Parks and Recreation System. This feedback was utilized to create the recommendations in the plan and will also be utilized as the City proceeds with additional planning and implementation efforts.

The chart on page 23 represents a summary of the top items listed for each category, but it should be noted that other ideas and feedback that were not "top vote getters" were also considered in the development of the plan.



SWOC Analysis:

The following SWOC analysis was generated from the community

STRENGTHS

Characteristics of the park system that give it an advantage over others



- 10 | Natural open areas
- 8 | Lake/beach
- 4 | Safety/security
- 4 | Trails
- 3 | Location
- 2 | Community activities
- 2 | Maintenance
- 2 | Small town feel
- 1 | Connectivity
- 1 | Family-friendly amenities
- 1 | Non-specific
- 1 | Pavilions/picnic areas
- 1 | Playgrounds
- 1 | Restrooms in parks
- 1 | Room to grow
- 1 | Schools
- 1 | Variety

WEAKNESSES

Characteristics of the park system that place it at a disadvantage relative to others



- 17 | Trail connectivity
- 8 | Sports/event complex
- 4 | Safety/security
- 3 | Aquatics
- 3 | Maintenance
- 3 | Parkland
- 2 | Small/neighborhood parks
- 1 | Non-specific
- 1 | Accessibility
- 1 | Infrastructure
- 1 | Lack of town center
- 1 | Lack of vision
- 1 | Recreation programming

OPPORTUNITIES

Elements in the environment that the park system could exploit to its advantage



- 6 | Community gathering spaces
- 6 | Court sports
- 5 | Farmers market
- 5 | Healthy/active living
- 3 | Implement plan
- 2 | Lakeside amenities
- 2 | Maintain rural feel
- 2 | Pavilions/picnic areas
- 1 | Playgrounds
- 1 | Private open space requirements
- 1 | Recreation center
- 1 | Senior center
- 1 | Accessibility
- 1 | Outdoor pool/splashpad
- 1 | Sense of community
- 1 | Natural/open areas preservation
- 1 | Fundraising/volunteering/partnerships
- 1 | Sports/event complex
- 1 | Non-specific
- 1 | Trails and pathways

CHALLENGES

Elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the park system



- 12 | Funding
- 6 | Growth issues/management
- 4 | Safety/security
- 3 | Land for future parks
- 3 | Diverse perspectives
- 2 | Trail connectivity
- 2 | Open space preservation
- 2 | Maintenance
- 2 | Density prevention
- 1 | Visitors
- 1 | Staffing
- 1 | Sports/event complex
- 1 | Retail development
- 1 | Long term City commitment
- 1 | Less need for parks
- 1 | Lack of maintenance
- 1 | Development compliance
- 1 | Communication/transparency

Plan Framework

After the introduction to the planning process and a brief background on Heath, the plan is organized by topic-oriented chapters and contains Goals, Policies, and Actions throughout.

Goals broadly express what to achieve, policies tell what will need to be done to achieve the goals, and actions tell us how exactly to implement the policies.

The vision for parks and recreation in Heath developed by the plan is based on this statement and these three goals supported in each topic-oriented chapter.

A parks and recreation system that preserves a rural feel and provides active lifestyle opportunities with family-friendly amenities.

Parks and Open Space

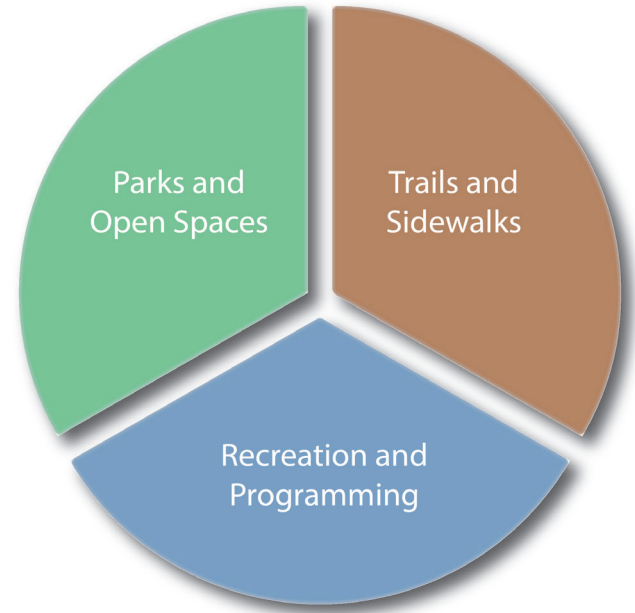
To keep a rural feel in Heath by maintaining existing parks and making new parks that provide open space and family-friendly amenities.

Trails and Sidewalks

To add strategic trails and pathways in the community for recreation, leisure, and transportation connections.

Recreation and Programming

To incrementally build a formal recreation program by introducing new facilities and programming.



The recommendations of the plan also help implement other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific goals of the Comprehensive Plan that directly relate and should be coordinated are:

- Livable Community
- Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity
- Identity
- Resource Protection
- Lakefront



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HEATH AT A GLANCE 02



Community Profile

Heath is a community of more than 7,820 residents. The City of Heath is committed to preserving a special way of life where rolling hills and the sparkling lake provide a serene backdrop for beautiful neighborhoods and distinctive homes.

While this pastoral setting offers a sense of being removed from the bustle of city life, residents enjoy spectacular views of the Dallas skyline and easy access to the business, cultural, and entertainment amenities of the Metroplex.

Heath's growing trail system and three municipal parks, including one along the lake, contribute to an enjoyable lifestyle. First-class recreational opportunities are also offered by Rush Creek Yacht Club, home to Olympic Gold Medalist sailors, and the award-winning Buffalo Creek Golf and Country Club. Exemplary schools include the state-of-the-art Rockwall-Heath High School.

Community Population:
7,820

Median Age:
44.9 years

Location:
Rockwall and Kaufman Counties

Median Home Value:
\$407,000

Housing Units:
Approximately 2,660

Median Household Income:
\$150,319

City Type:
Home Rule City

Source: Census 2016

Incorporated:
October 12, 1959



Population Projections

A full analysis of the Parks and Recreation system is not based solely on the inner workings of the parks system but includes the community being served as well. In providing a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, we must analyze both current and projected demographics to determine the composition of the population and its needs. Understanding these trends is a critical component in planning the current and future delivery of recreation programs and facilities in Heath.

There are various ways to estimate population for a given area. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) uses a method that accommodates the varying levels of data available for local communities while focusing on consistency. Their estimates have been developed to use in regional planning activities. NCTCOG preforms demographic research on such topics as population, housing, employment, income, etc.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan draft presents the following population projection data based on NCTCOG population estimates. Table shows population projections through 2050.

2018 Comprehensive Plan Population Estimates

Year	Scenario A 3.0%	Scenario B 4.5%	Scenario C 7.0%
2017	7,820	7,820	7,820
2020	8,801	9,325	10,250
2025	10,203	11,621	14,377
2030	11,828	14,482	20,164
2035	13,712	18,047	28,281
2040	15,896	22,490	39,666
2045	18,428	28,207	55,633
2050	21,363	34,927	78,029
Projected Year to Reach Population Capacity			
	2050	2039	2031

Table 02-1

Parks and Open Space in Heath

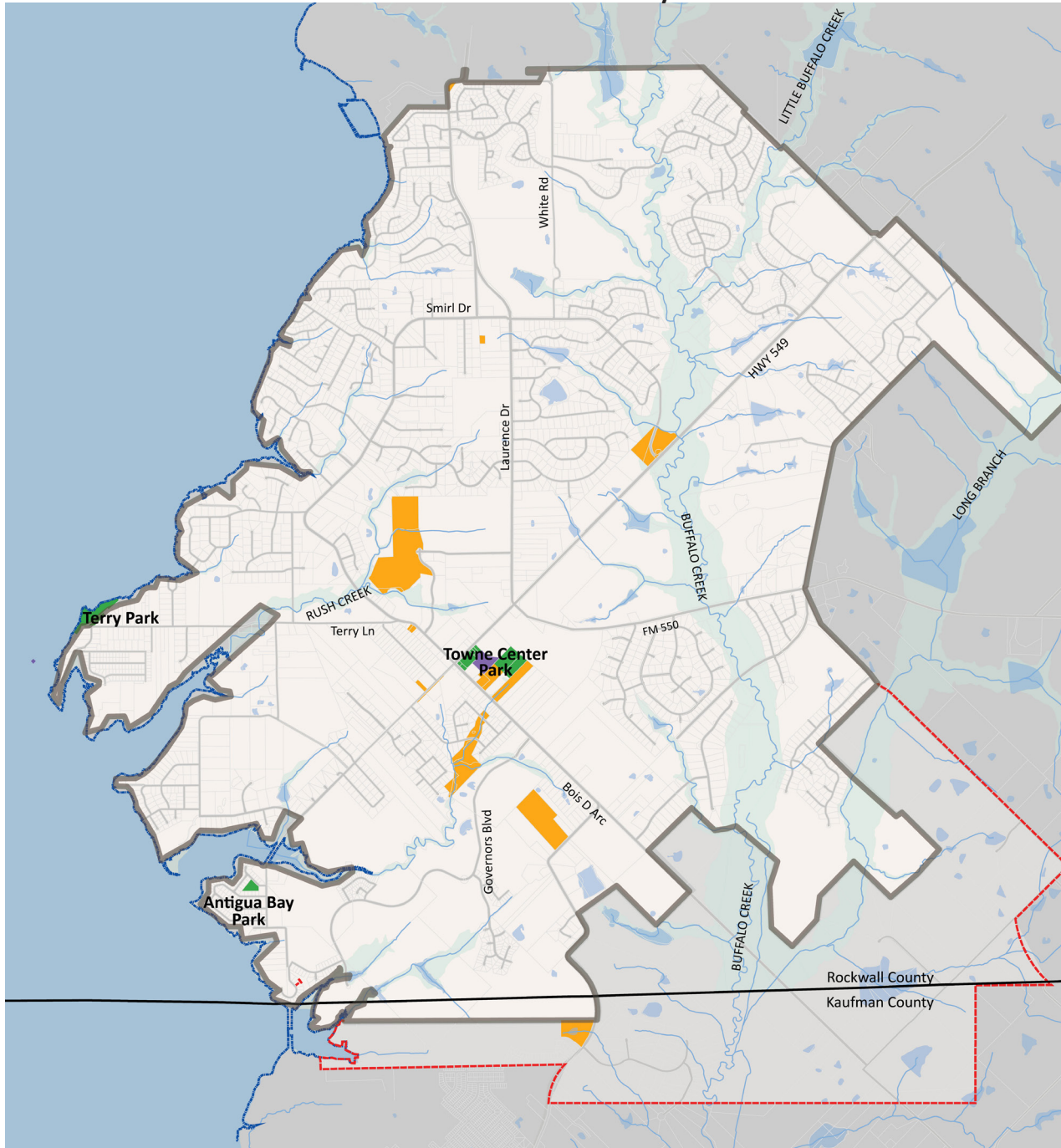
The City of Heath has parkland assets that are truly unique to the region. Heath is a community that is proud of its rural aesthetic. Parks, trails, and natural open spaces provide the community with public access to these character spaces.

Early in the process the planning team visited city parks as well as other recreation assets within the City of Heath. The following pages contain an inventory of the current parks and facilities in the City of Heath. It is important to understand what park and recreation facilities are currently accessible to the public and what type of amenities each provide. The City of Heath currently owns and maintains three public parks:

- Terry Park- 6.6 acres
- Towne Center Park- 18 acres
- Antigua Bay Park- 1.7 acres

In addition, the city owns multiple tracts of land throughout the city. These areas should be the first properties evaluated when looking to expand the park system.

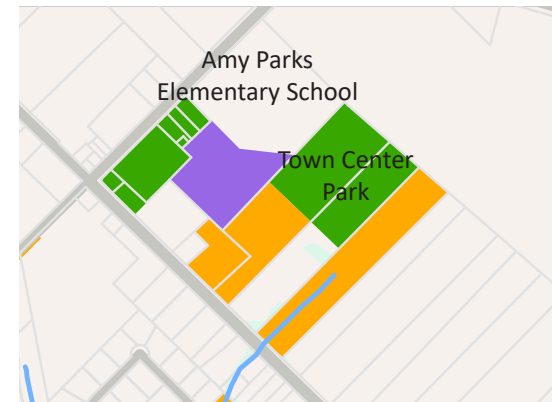
City Parks & Potential Recreation Assets



LEGEND

- City Parks
- City-Owned Land
- Land Use Agreement with RISD

Town Center Park





Terry Park

Location: 517 Terry Ln.

Size: 6.6 Acres

Current Amenities:

- Concrete Trails
- Playground
- Pavilion
- Picnic Tables
- Restrooms
- Boat Launch



Towne Center Park

Location: 200 Laurence Dr.

Size: 18 Acres

Current Amenities:

- Playground
- Gazebo
- Soccer Fields
- Baseball Field
- Concrete Trail
- Horseshoe Pit



Antigua Bay Park

Location: 610 Scenic Drive

Size: 1.7 Acres

Current Amenities:

- Pavilion
- Swings
- Sidewalk
- Open Space

Additional Open Spaces and Recreational Opportunities

Within the city limits of Heath there are several additional recreational opportunities that are not under the direct management of the City. Some of these areas include:

- HOA parks
- Private lakes and ponds
- School campus
- Rush Creek Yacht Club
- Buffalo Creek Golf Club
- Buffalo Creek Swim - Tennis Club
- Heath Yacht and Golf

These areas provide Heath residents with recreation opportunities, in addition to the parks and open-space controlled by the City. While some of these areas may not be accessible to the general public, they still provide the community with open space assets. When planning for new parks, the service area of these offerings should be taken into consideration. More detail on this issue will be explained in the Parks and Open Space Chapter.

HOA Parks

A few home owners associations and planned developments within Heath provide parks and open space for the residents in their community. Some of these spaces have developed improvements such as playgrounds, shade structures, and trails, while others remain undeveloped and in a preserved natural state. Some of these spaces include ponds and lakes that provide a serene setting.

School Campuses

One of the largest providers of open space in Heath is the Independent School District. Almost every school property has open play fields and a playground. In order to provide opportunities for neighbors, shared use and public access agreements should be explored.



HOA Parks



School Campuses

Rush Creek Yacht Club

Rush Creek Yacht Club was founded on the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard in 1969. Since then, RCYC has become a landmark for yacht racing in the Dallas area as well as the Southwestern region of the US. The club offers organized competition for all ages and skill levels and a Junior Sailing Program.

Buffalo Creek Golf Club

Buffalo Creek Golf Club features an array of rolling hills and majestic trees off the eastern shore of Lake Ray Hubbard. Measuring 7,018 yards, this par 71 course was designed by Jay Morrish and former PGA Tour player Tom Weiskopf, opening in the summer of 1992 and was ranked among the “Top 25 High Priced Golf Courses in Texas” by the Dallas Morning News in 2011.

Buffalo Swim-Tennis Club

Buffalo Swim-Tennis Club has been an established resource for tennis enthusiasts in the Rockwall-Heath area. Buffalo Creek country club is located in the Buffalo Creek neighborhood. The club welcomes all families to come and spend quality time together playing and learning the game of tennis. All levels are welcome.

Heath Golf and Yacht Club

Heath Golf & Yacht Club is a 787-acre, master-planned resort community featuring 1,200 luxury homes to be built by some of DFW’s top home builders. Plans for Heath Golf & Yacht Club include a championship golf course, club house, pool, tennis courts, and fitness center. Miles of jogging and walking trails will meander throughout the community from the entrance all the way to the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard.



Rush Creek Yacht Club

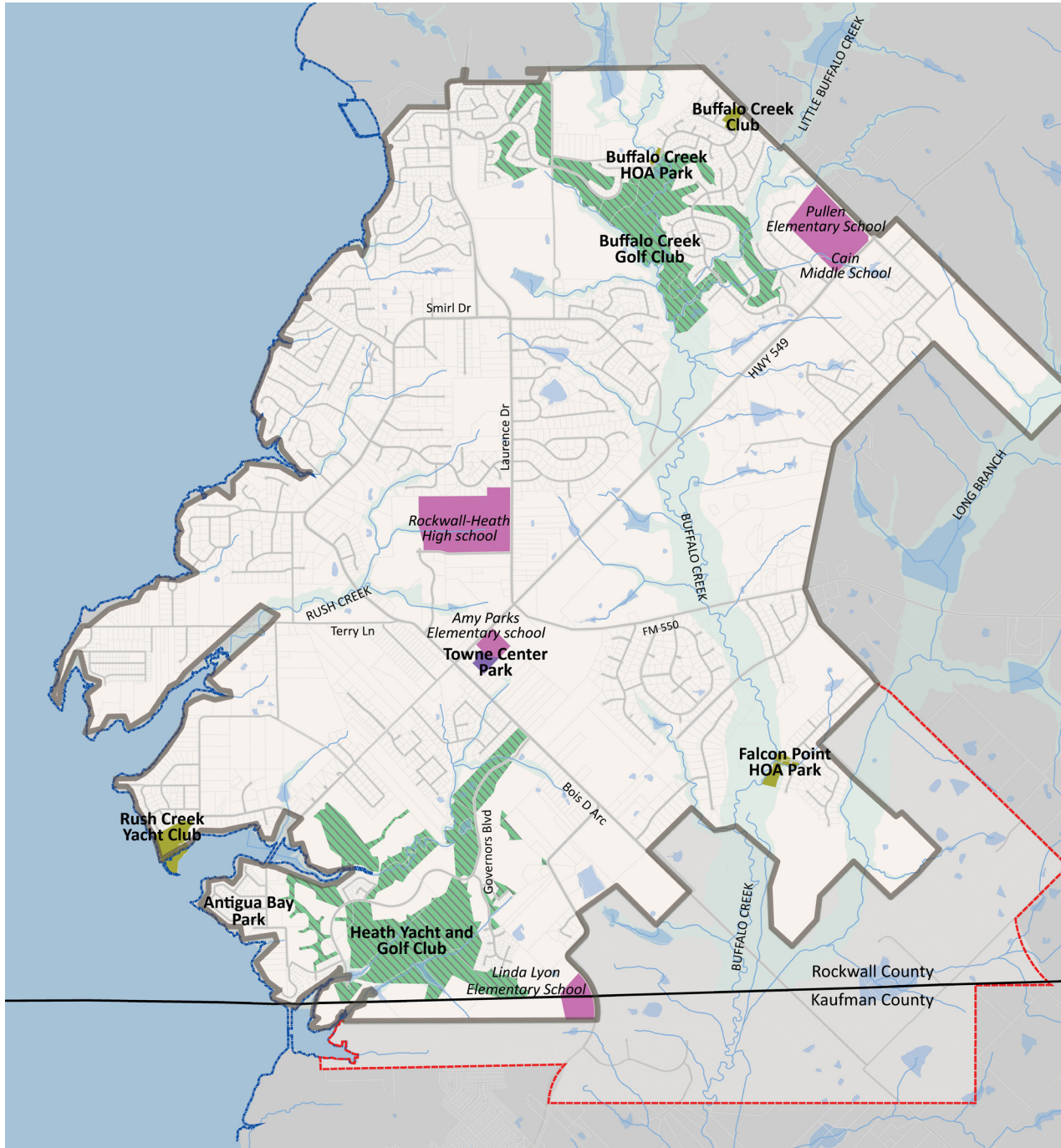


Buffalo Creek Golf Club



Heath Golf and Yacht Club

Additional Recreation Assets



LEGEND

- Private/HOA Parks
- RISD-Owned Land
- Golf Clubs
- Land Use Agreement with RISD



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PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 03



Parks and Open Space

There are three public parks in Heath at various stages of development: Towne Center Park, Terry Park, and Antigua Bay Park. All three of the developed parks have recommendations within this Chapter for additional improvements and development. There are other public lands in Heath that could be developed into new parks, and there are also opportunities for new parks to be created as private development occurs. This chapter sets forth an action plan revolving around a four-step framework for new parks in Heath to become a reality and for existing parks to meet or exceed expectations of community members. Provided below is the four-step Park Development Cycle, which is explained further in the Chapter:

Goal: To keep a rural feel in Heath by maintaining existing parks and making new parks that provide open space and family-friendly amenities.

Park Development Cycle



Needs Assessment

In order to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for Park improvements, current park standards and level of service were evaluated. The adequacy of existing parks, facilities, and open spaces is determined by comparing needs of the present and forecasted populations of Heath to specific goals and guidelines.

Criteria for Guidelines

Historically, the most common standards for park planning guidelines, as recognized by park and recreation professionals, have been the published guidelines by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). As written in the introduction, the NRPA recognizes the importance of establishing and using park and recreation guidelines as:

- A national expression of minimum acceptable facilities for citizens of urban and rural communities
- A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation facilities
- A basis for relating recreation needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide system of parks and open space
- A means to justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land use pattern of a community

These guidelines address minimum, not maximum, goals to be achieved. The guidelines are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgement relating to a particular situation to which they are applied and specific local needs.

The plan utilizes a combination approach complemented and informed by community feedback to determine the needs of each topic-oriented chapter of the plan. The following two assessments were used to establish a Level of Service (LOS) for parks and open spaces specifically:

- Population-based assessment - Provides a ratio of acreage to population
- Pedestrian shed-based assessment- Provides a geographic range of where certain parks and open space may be needed, measured against a one-half mile radius for a typical maximum pedestrian walk.

Standards and Park Classifications

In order to provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities needed by the City's residents, a set of standards and criteria should be followed. For the purposes of this planning effort, the parks in Heath were categorized and classified based on park design concepts and standards identified by the NRPA.

Park classification types for the City of Heath include:

Neighborhood Parks

Generally designed with a focus on informal active and passive recreation that serves neighborhood recreation needs. Area is provided for recreational activities such as field games, court games, picnicking and playground areas. A neighborhood park is a medium sized park, generally ranging from 1.5-15 acres.

Community Parks

A community park is a large and much more versatile type of park developed to serve the community. These parks can be oriented to provide both active and passive recreational facilities for all ages. A community park can serve several neighborhood areas and can typically be conveniently accessed by automobile. A community park is a large park ranging in size from generally 25-300 acres.

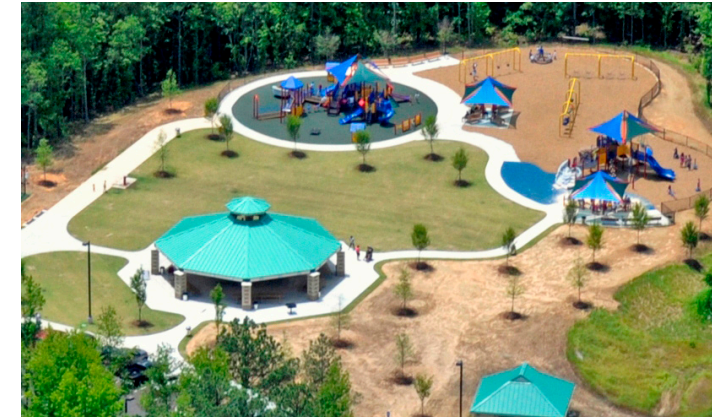
Natural/Open Space

These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, but are not necessarily characterized as land preservations. No organized, active recreational uses are typically accommodated in these areas; they are primarily intended for passive recreational use.

The following is a population-based assessment providing a ratio of acreage to population, measured against NRPA standards and like sized communities.



Neighborhood Park



Community Park



Natural/ Open space

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve a variety of age groups within a limited area or neighborhood. They range in size from 1 to 15 acres and generally serve residents within a quarter- to half-mile radius. The neighborhood park includes areas for active recreation activities such as field games, court games, playgrounds, etc. Passive recreation activities may include walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking. A unique situation exists in Heath today where the majority of neighborhood parks are actually provided and maintained privately by Homeowners Associations. As mentioned before, these private parks serve only the adjacent homes that have access to the space and are not open to the general public. For this planning effort, privately-provided neighborhood parks will not be included in the population based assessment as there is truly an identified need to determine the appropriate LOS.

Currently Antigua Bay Park is the only public neighborhood park in Heath at 1.7 ac.

Neighborhood Parks LOS

NRPA Recommended LOS	.5 Acres for every 1,000 residents
2017 Population Estimate	7,820 (NCTCOG)
2017 Target LOS	11.73 Acres
2017 Provided LOS (City Parks Only)	1.7 Acres
Population Capacity Projection	21,000 (Estimate per Comp Plan)
Capacity Projected Target LOS	31 Acres

As shown above, the current offering of neighborhood parks has a gap of approximately 10 acres when applied to a .5 acre per 1000 residents (a minimum standard). To meet the 2017 Target LOS, 6-8 public neighborhood parks would need to be added.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and serve several neighborhoods. They range in size from 16 to 100 acres and generally serve a user area of one to two miles in radius. The community park may include areas for intense recreation activities such as competitive sports, swimming, tennis, playgrounds, volleyball, etc. There may also be passive recreation opportunities such as walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking.

Currently, Terry Park and Towne Center Park are the only public community parks in Heath at 24.6 ac.

Community Parks LOS

NRPA Recommended LOS	5 Acres for every 1,000 residents
2017 Population Estimate	7,820 (NCTCOG)
2017 Target LOS	39 Acres
2017 Provided LOS (City Parks Only)	24.6 Acres
Population Capacity Projection	21,000 (Estimate per Comp Plan)
Capacity Projected Target LOS	105 Acres

As shown above, the current offering of neighborhood parks has a gap of approximately 14 acres when applied to a 5 acre per 1000 residents (a minimum standard). To meet the 2017 Target LOS, one public community park would need to be added.

Natural/Open Spaces

While there are many wide open spaces and preserved natural corridors, there are currently no publicly-managed nature preserves or green belts within the city of Heath. The majority of the areas that have the potential to be preserved as a recreational asset occur on private land. It will be important to study these areas as Heath continues to develop and make sure standards are put in place to ensure natural areas will be preserved in perpetuity.

Natural\Open Spaces LOS

NRPA Recommended LOS	3 Acres for every 1,000 residents
2017 Population Estimate	7,820 (NCTCOG)
2017 Target LOS	23.4 Acres
2017 Provided LOS (City Parks Only)	0 Acres
Population Capacity Projection	
Population Capacity Projection	21,000 (Estimate per Comp Plan)
Capacity Projected Target LOS	63 Acres

As shown above, the current offering of no public natural spaces has a gap of approximately 23.4 acres when applied to a 3 acre per 1000 residents (a minimum standard). To meet the 2017 Target LOS, one (1) 3public natural space parks would need to be added.

Strategies

Policy: Acquire and/or receive new parkland to increase levels of service within the Parks and Recreation System.

The first part of the Park Development Cycle is to get land for parks. Land can be added to the Parks and Recreation System by several different methods:

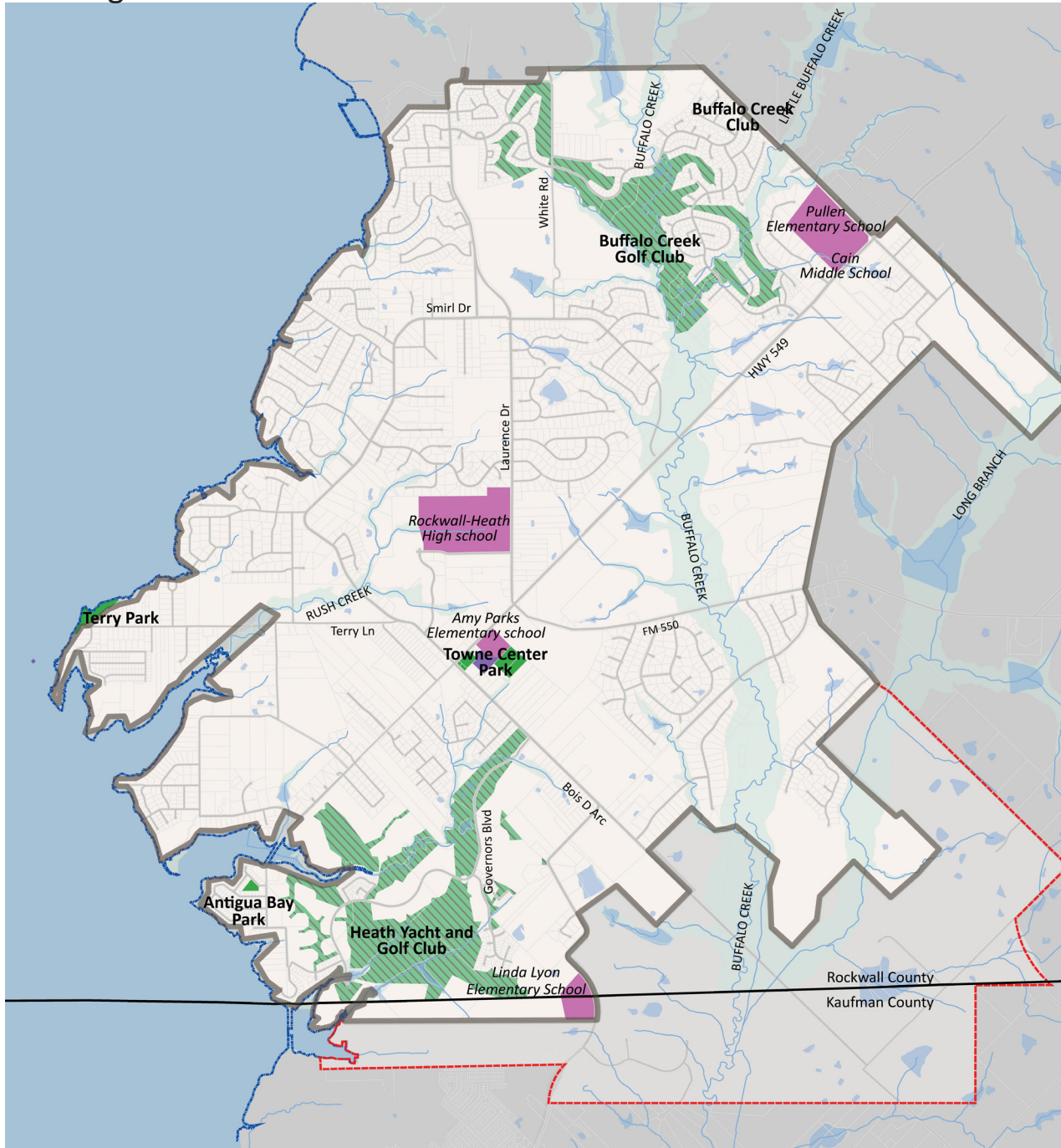
1. Donation from the private sector or from individuals;
2. Dedication from the private sector of land to meet City requirements of new development;
3. Payment of parkland fees by the private sector to meet City requirements of new development which then get used by the City to purchase/acquire new parkland;
4. Purchase/acquisition of desirable parkland by the City; and/or
5. Conversion of property already owned by the City for new parkland.

Actions are provided below to ensure the City is primed with a solid foundation to achieve this policy and move on to other stages in the Park Development Cycle. When considering future parklands for acquisition and development, certain criteria should be utilized for evaluation. Among these criteria should be the following:

- Is the land in an area without a park within a 10-minute walk from another park?
- Is the land available for purchase?
- Is there an added public purpose besides quality of life enhancement that could be addressed upon acquisition (e.g. erosion control, flood control, drainage improvement)?
- Does the land give additional lake front access or amenities?
- Is there upcoming or pending development that could assist with development of a park in a certain area?
- Are there any other efforts in the area or otherwise that could be complementary to the acquisition/development of a park in the area?

Not all of the criteria above need to be met or have positive answers, but they should be consulted when evaluating potential parkland opportunities.

Existing Recreation Assets



LEGEND

- City Parks
- Golf Club
- RISD-Owned Land
- Land Use Agreement with RISD

- *Action: Focus on attaining parkland in areas that do not have a park within walking distance.*

A pedestrian shed-based assessment was conducted by applying a “service area” to the three city-owned parks. The standard chosen for these parks is a 1/2 mile radius, or a typical ten minute walk for the average human. This analysis also includes a smaller 5 min or 1/4 mile radius on privately-managed recreational assets. This will assist in identifying areas of the city that are not within walking distance of a park.

As the city looks to expand the park system and acquire or transition a piece of land into parkland, the map on page 49 should be referenced and areas within the shaded “underserved” area should be considered.

Implementation strategies, including the revision of the City’s parkland dedication ordinance, are provided in the Implementation chapter of the plan.

- *Action: Review the balance of all parkland fees collected on an annual basis to strategize whether acquisition of certain properties is consistent with level of service deficits is possible.*

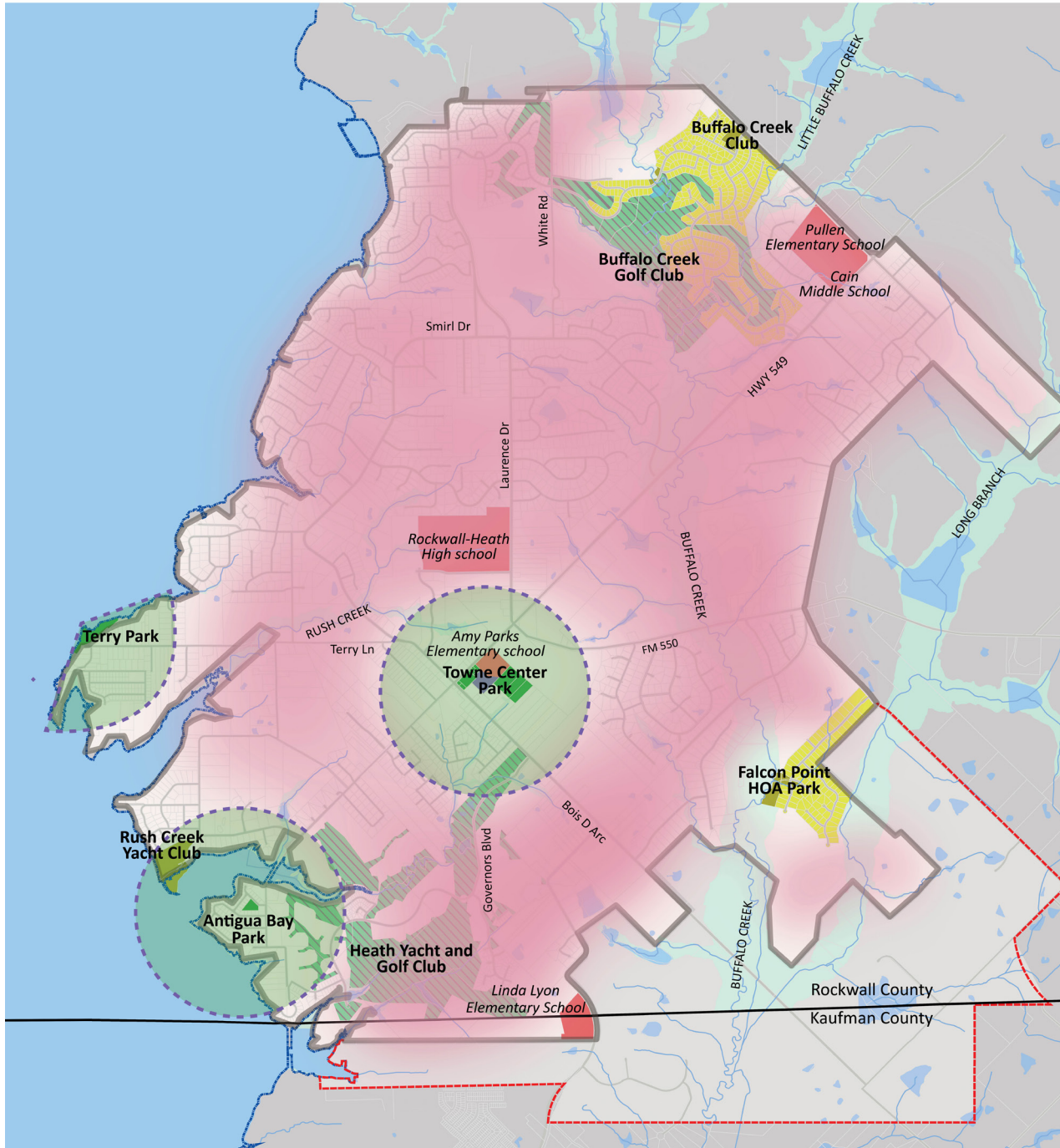
Parkland fees are required to be expended within a reasonable timeframe. The City should review the balance of all parkland fees on a regular basis to coordinate any potential purchases or acquisition.

- *Action: Encourage private development to dedicate and develop new neighborhood parks as new development occurs instead of paying parkland fees.*

To ease the cost and effort burden on the City, new development can be encouraged to provide and develop parks as development occurs instead of developers paying fees and the City adding acquisition and development of another park on its long list of projects. Strategies to encourage this and example topics to revise are provided in greater detail in the Implementation Chapter of the plan.

Although parkland fees are the best option in smaller projects, which may not be able to fit a public park, parkland fees should not be the default method of meeting parkland dedication or development requirements. Developing and dedicating parks for and to the City should be the new default method of meeting parkland requirements for new development.

Existing Level of Service



LEGEND

- City-Owned Parks
- Private/HOA Parks
- RISD-Owned Land
- Golf Clubs

- Publicly Served Areas
10 Minute Walk

- Underserved Areas

- Privately Served HOA

It is important to note here how platting is relevant to the new default method. Parkland dedication or development requirements are usually triggered at the time of platting, before the plat is filed with the County. When a new plat comes in for review, under straight zoning districts or in existing planned developments where the approved layout allows, design considerations need to be made, and commented on if possible, to provide area for a usable park within the subdivision. New plats on small scale projects will not be able to fit a public park feasibly in most instances, but larger projects have the space, and it can work from a cost perspective. Commercial or mixed-use development can also provide parks in certain instances if incentives or zoning are up for consideration.

Policy: Plan or design specific park improvements to be installed and/or completed.

- Action: Design additional improvements for installation at Terry Park.
- Action: Design additional improvements for installation at Towne Center Park.
- Action: Design additional improvements for installation at Antigua Bay Park.



Antigua Bay Park:

- Playground upgrade/replacement
- Shade structure for playground
- Accessibility study



Terry Park:

- Playground upgrade/replacement (potential location for new all-abilities playground)
- Shade structure for playground
- Waterfront seating areas w/ shade
- Trail connection to future Terry Road Trail
- Parking and access control study



Towne Center Park:

- Playground upgrade/replacement (potential location for new all-abilities playground)
- Shade structure for playground
- Expand park south to FM 740
- Master plan the entire area for new active-use park and civic complex
- Implement temporary uses for land already acquired during planning phases
- Explore land assemblage/reconfiguration
- Trail connections
- Add irrigation to back field
- Add lighting to back field

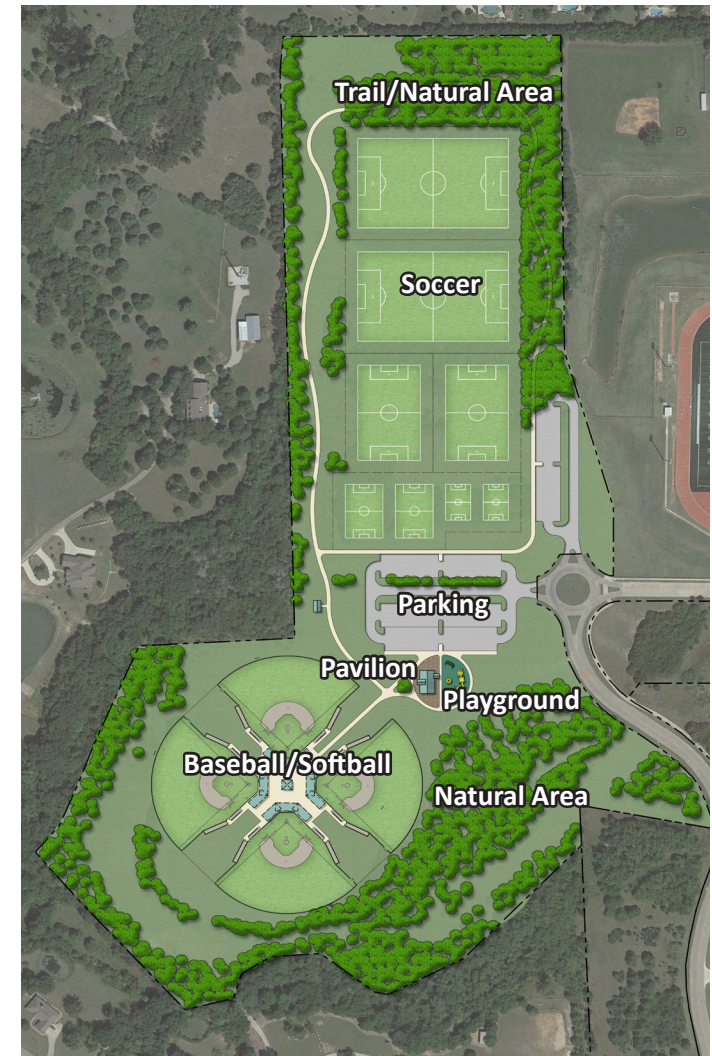
- *Action: Master plan and design a phased Sports and Events Complex including, but not limited to, the following:*
 - Soccer, baseball, and softball fields
 - Trails
 - Splash pad
 - Outdoor swimming pool
 - Playground(s)/play equipment
 - Multi-use concert/festival area
 - Skate park/concrete skating-type areas
 - Restrooms
- *Action: Construct a phased Sports and Events Complex.*

A strong emphasis should be placed on providing ample shade and accessibility/accommodations for people with disabilities and/or special needs.

This action is detailed in the Recreation and Programming Chapter, but is cross-referenced here due to applicability in planning and designing new park improvements. A potential area to study in detail is the City-owned 50 acre tract directly west of the high school. This area is large enough to support a sports complex that could serve the community. Detailed study should include: drainage, topography, existing vegetation, and parking needs.

- *Action: Master plan the Buffalo Creek corridor (including Little Buffalo Creek) as a natural asset to the Parks and Recreation System and develop adjacent or through-areas accordingly.*

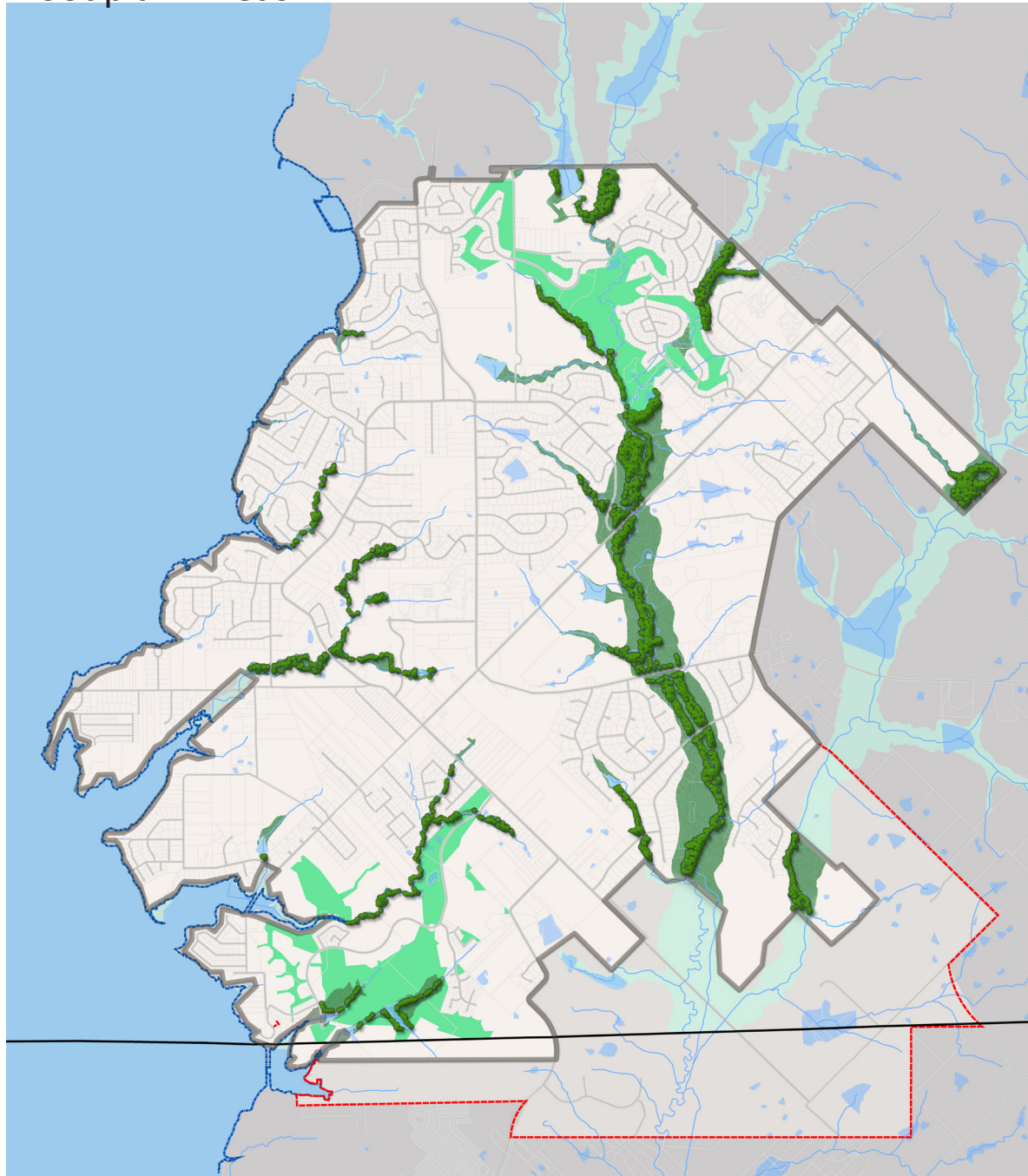
Buffalo Creek runs north-south through the City of Heath and adjacent communities. Heath has the opportunity to provide a new focus on the Corridor as well as other floodplain areas as a natural asset that both public and private efforts can improve and capitalize on. Developing a plan now to keep these areas natural and functional as a form of flood control will be beneficial to the lasting value of these areas as a natural recreation asset.



Sports Complex Study Area

This sketch was prepared as a diagrammatic representation of a potential sports complex configuration on the 50 acre city owned property west of the high school. It is intended for planning and spacial relation purposes only. This area is detailed in the implementation plan of this report as potential to be studied in more detail. Elements and layout shown on the plan are subject to change.



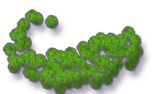
Floodplain Areas



Flood Plain Areas as an Amenity:

- Develop Buffalo Creek and other floodplain areas as natural passive park with trails, boardwalks
- Encourage parkland dedication within developments adjacent to and in conjunction with the nature preserve plan
- Explore ways to link corridors together
- Trail connection to future Terry Road Trail

Legend

- Flood Zone 
- Golf Club 
- Tree Canopy 

- *Action: Explore design options on accessible waterfront areas to increase the public enjoyment of the Heath shoreline.*

An area identified during the planning process exists along the shoreline of Windward Trail. This area is currently suffering from shoreline erosion. If not addressed, it will eventually compromise the street itself. The area between the normal pool level of Lake Ray Hubbard and the western curb of Windward Trail could become a linear passive green space with amenities for the public to enjoy the shoreline. Amenities may include:

- *Sea Wall development (land area may be able to extend beyond existing eroded shoreline. Coordination with Dallas Water Utilities required.)*
 - *Shoreline seating areas, shade structure, overlooks, paddle ramp*
 - *Public parking*
 - *ADA or All Accessible*
- *Action: Design new parks with a minimum set of amenities.*

The design of new public parks, to be developed by the public or private sectors, should be designed with a minimum set of amenities for the use of community members. Based on community feedback, this minimum set of amenities should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- restroom (where possible)
- shade
- play equipment
- picnic tables
- parking

Policy: Install park improvements consistent with the plan or design prepared for each park.

The third stage in the four-step Park Development Cycle is to install improvements, which converts raw parkland into a developed park. Developing more parks in Heath will improve the quality of life within the community by adding family friendly amenities and protecting the rural character of Heath.



Shoreline Study Area

It is important that parks in Heath advance in the Park Development Cycle. Should parkland be available after completing steps one and two in the cycle, improvements should be scheduled and installed as soon as possible to convert the parkland to a useable amenity. As detailed further in the Implementation Chapter, cities that only require dedication and not development are at a disadvantage in pushing parks through the Park Development Cycle. A parkland development fee can further incentivize private development to develop and dedicate public parks instead of paying fees because it can be more economical to develop it than to pay the fees depending on the size of the development.

- *Action: Develop three parks with a minimum set of amenities within the next five years (before 2024).*

Parks can range in size from the small to the large, yet in Heath, the focus should not be on size, but rather on having a minimum set of amenities as outlined above. Developing three parks within the next five years with restrooms, shade, play equipment, and picnic table(s) is an achievable target. Larger parks, such as the Sports and Event Complex, can be phased and do not have to wait on funding for all phases for improvements to begin.

Policy: Enhance existing parks with amenities and high quality maintenance.

Although maintenance of existing parks is a top priority to community members in Heath, it is technically the last stage in the Park Development Cycle. Maintenance of parks and recreation assets is of paramount importance to keep levels of satisfaction with the Parks and Recreation System high within the community.

- *Action: Maintain current parks to a high level of quality.*

Levels of satisfaction were low regarding the quality of maintenance of Heath parks and recreation facilities on the community survey for this planning effort. The low levels of satisfaction reflect that there are some areas of opportunity in terms of maintenance of park and recreation facilities, and the community also ranked maintenance of existing system facilities as a high funding priority. Typical maintenance relating to parks and recreation relates to the following, broadly:

- Pickup of trash and debris and regular emptying of trash cans
- Grounds-keeping and mowing
- Cleanliness of restrooms and play equipment
- Harmful pest removal and vigilance near play areas (e.g. ants, wasps, mosquitos.)
- Adequate drainage and stagnant water mitigation
- Functional lighting of main areas

Park and recreation facilities are currently maintained by City staff who do not have parks and recreation as their sole purview, and there is currently no formal Parks and Recreation Department with dedicated staff. Building a dedicated parks and recreation staff should assist in maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities (see Implementation Chapter).

It should be noted that there was a lack of write-in comments to detail respondents' specific concerns regarding maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. Occasionally, respondents will attribute maintenance of existing facilities to more amenity-related perspectives. For example, a resident may feel that a particular park needs a picnic table and restrooms and will attribute those needs to a category of "maintenance" because it is an existing facility. For this reason, not only should the list above be tended to, the other actions within this chapter could also be complementary to improving levels of satisfaction with maintenance (e.g. providing a minimum set of amenities/features at each City park).

- *Action: Add shade structures and/or shade trees and picnic tables to existing Parks and Recreation System assets.*

Shade was a consistent need and want expressed by the community throughout the planning process. Heath's climate is very hot during the warmer months of the year, and parks, trails, and other facilities in the Parks and Recreation System without shade become practically unusable for many members of the community and for visitors. The playgrounds at Terry Park and Towne Center Park do not have any shade, and shade trees along the trails at both are sparse. Also, the spectator and other improved areas at Towne Center Park do not have shade (except for the gazebo).

The feedback during the planning process also mentioned the need or want for additional picnicking areas in the city. Picnic tables have the ability to activate open space to an extent, and smaller "pocket parks" can be created within larger parks. Terry Park and Towne Center Park both have large open areas that picnic tables could be added to.

Making a focused effort to shade play and picnic tables and other activated park areas with canopies and/or shade/canopy trees can greatly improve levels of satisfaction within the community and can also provide many other benefits. As detailed further above, shade should also be provided for new parks.



City of
Heath
Texas

TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS 04



Trails and Sidewalks

Typically in parks and recreation-related plans for cities, there is a strong need for better communication of where trails are present in the city, especially provided on the City's website. The City of Heath has excellent resources for its trails on the City website, however, and the presentation of those resources is commendable. There was not typical feedback stating that community members did not have the information or could not access it on the City's website, which is a great thing.

The community survey for this planning effort (detailed in the Introduction Chapter) reflected a low rate of utilization for trails within the city and that there is additional demand for more multi-use trails to connect destinations in Heath and beyond. The City currently has seven mapped trails. Provided in this Chapter are strategic recommendations for additional trails, based on community feedback and analysis of potential trail placement, and also recommendations for the trail and pathway system in general for Heath.

Policy: Provide new trails and pathways within the community and connecting to adjacent communities.

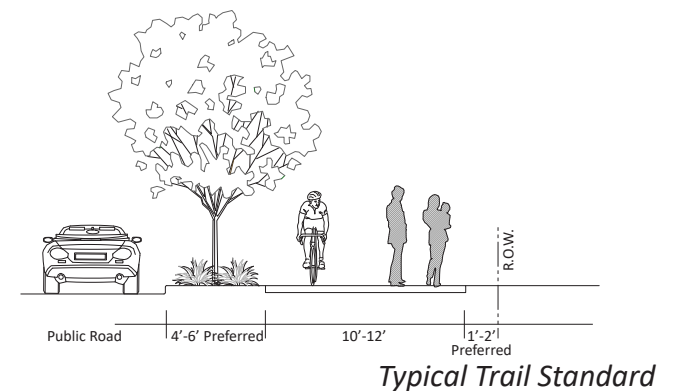
- *Action: Plan, design, and construct new multi-use trail connections.*

According to the community survey for this planning effort, the following park and recreation facilities were the top selections of respondents to be added to the City of Heath:

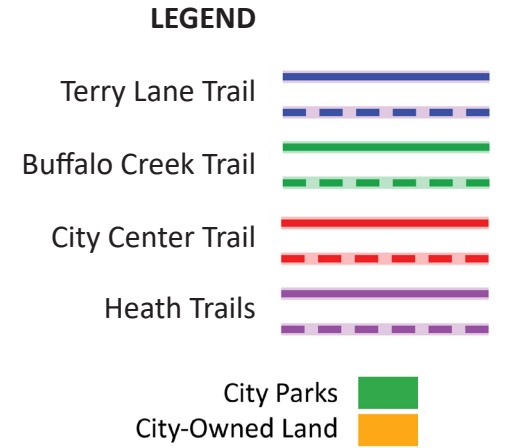
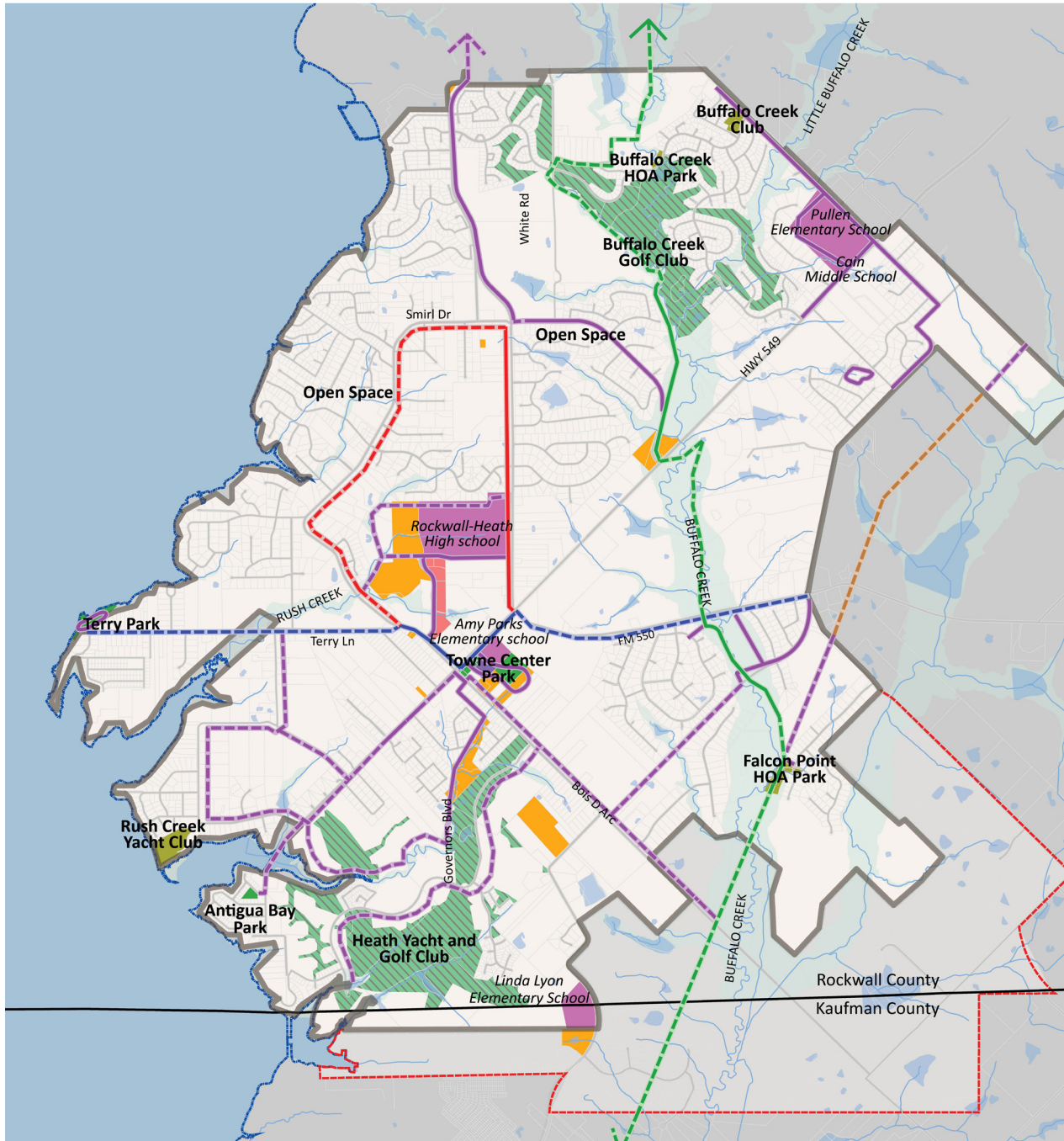
1. Hike and bike trails, soft surface (nature trail) (61%)
2. Hike and bike trails (hard surface) (54%)
3. Bicycle trail, soft surface (mountain bike) (34%)

The Trail Plan on page 61 is conceptually provided to show existing trails and potential future trails in Heath. Five major potential future trails are highlighted as priorities for implementation:

Goal: To add strategic trails and pathways in the community for recreation, leisure, and transportation connections.



Trail Plan



- *Action: Design and plan for three priority trails*
 - *Terry Lane Trail*
 - *Buffalo Creek Trail*
 - *City Center Trail*
- *Action: Provide a diverse array of trail types as the trail system develops.*

The community values diverse trail types, such as soft surface/nature trails, traditional hard surface trails, and soft surface mountain bike trails.

- *Action: Plan, design, and construct additional pathways within the community.*

Evaluate or create a Sidewalk Policy.

Policy: Enhance existing trails with amenities and high quality maintenance.

The City of Heath’s trail and sidewalk system is being used, and the community wants to enjoy it more. Minor improvements, such as bike racks, benches, and lighting and security can make a significant difference to trail users.

- *Action: Provide trail off-spots with water, seating, trash bins, and restrooms (if possible).*

A pleasant and family-friendly trail experience is desired within the community. To accomplish this, trail off-spots can be used to provide small “amenity pockets” to stop for a few moments or use the restroom in some cases. Off-spots are recommended to be installed at key locations on longer trails or in destination trail areas.



- Action: Maintain current trails with a high level of quality.

One of the keys to success for trail maintenance is for City staff responsible for trail maintenance to walk each trail at a minimum of every week, preferably more often. In some cases, the City employee(s) can take a small vehicle (ATV or golf cart) on the trails to expedite observation and maintenance. Where trail off-spots are present, they should be visited daily. Trails should be kept free of trash and debris, should be trimmed to prevent overgrowth, and any safety hazards should be removed.





City of
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Texas

RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING

05



Recreation and Programming

Although the City does have recreational offerings currently, there is not a formal recreation program. A formal recreation program would include, but not be limited to, diverse types and sizes of recreation facilities, recreational programming and activities, staff, and special events. Heath has the assets in all of these areas, but the plan contains recommendations to build on the existing assets and create a solid and recognizable recreation program.

Policy: Expand the City's inventory of recreation facilities.

As Heath continues to grow, it is important that facilities be added and/or expanded to meet the needs of the community. Phasing additions to the Parks and Recreation system will be key to continued success for Heath. Recommendations to provide two new facility groupings are provided below. It is possible to combine some or all of the two facility groupings on the same property. Each grouping should be explored and planned for the best possible placement and design.

- *Action:* Plan and design a multi-purpose indoor recreation center including, but not limited to, the following:
 1. Areas for children
 2. Areas for adults
 3. Areas for seniors
 4. Gym
 5. Aquatics/indoor pool

Through the planning process, there were many ideas of how to improve the current parks and recreation system in Heath and there were also barriers identified regarding low satisfaction or participation levels. The strongest theme that emerged from feedback was the need for an indoor facility where community members could participate in recreation activities year round. Due to the flexibility needs of the potential facility, it should be planned and designed to have several multi-purpose spaces but should also have age-group specific areas. Community members emphasized the desire to explore working with groups such as the YMCA to maximize potential partnerships.

Goal: To incrementally build a formal recreation program by introducing new facilities and programming.

- *Action:* Construct a multi-purpose indoor recreation center including, but not limited to, the following:

Strong emphasis should be placed on providing ample shade and accessibility/accommodations for people with disabilities and/or special needs.

Another theme that emerged from the feedback during the planning process is the need for a Sports and Events Complex. Although feedback did not call out the Complex facility in many cases, there were repeated comments regarding the elements listed to the right as needs and wants by the community. Due to the land holdings of the City and the size of the City, it appears to be an economical and efficient option to group the outdoor recreation elements in one area.

Should the recreation elements listed not be included in a phased Sports and Event Complex, they should be considered elsewhere in the city. For example, a public outdoor swimming pool was a need expressed by the community. A public outdoor swimming pool is an amenity that can be found in many park and recreation systems across the country, especially in warmer climates such as in the DFW Metroplex. The community identified the need for more aquatic amenities, both indoor and outdoor. It would be a complementary component to the Sports and Events Complex, but it could be provided in another area of the city if that is determined to be the best option upon planning and design.

- Soccer, baseball, and softball fields,
- Trails,
- Splash pad
- Outdoor swimming pool,
- Playground(s)/play equipment,
- Multi-use concert/festival area, and/or
- Skate park/concrete skating-type areas

Community Needs From Community Input

Policy: Build a recreation program within the parks and recreation system.

Recreation programming generally comes in four main forms: individual sports/exercise, team sports, special events, and artistic activities. Recreation programming should not be confused with recreation facilities; recreation programming involves activities on or within recreation facilities that are organized, coordinated, operated, and/or sponsored by the City.

- *Action: Add activity programming to existing facilities and prepare or phase new programming to existing and future facilities.*

Heath has the opportunity to provide a set of recreation programming to meet the needs of the community. The following areas should be pursued for a core set of programming and phased expansions:

1. Exercise and fitness (indoor)
2. Special events (detailed further below)
3. Gymnastics/tumbling/cheerleading
4. Basketball and court sports
5. Aquatics
6. Arts and crafts

An essential component to building a strong recreation program is to provide dedicated parks and recreation staff to operate and build it (see Implementation Chapter). Until additional indoor or outdoor facilities are constructed, programming can be added to existing facilities. Partnerships to provide additional competitive or tournament-level sports should be pursued to bring more activity into the system.



Indoor Exercise and Fitness



Arts and Crafts



Court Sports

- *Action: Continue special events that are well received by the community and continue to add special event programming as parks and recreation staff are added to operate and build them.*

At the time of this planning effort, the City hosts several special events throughout the year in Towne Center Park. High quality special events are not only essential to a strong parks and recreation system, they are also important for overall quality of life and for economic development. Heath's special events showcase the community's warm and friendly hometown spirit. The following special events are currently programmed by the City of Heath Special Events Board and City staff:

1. Holiday in the Park
2. Independence Day in the Park
3. Fit and Fun in the Park (featuring Heart of Heath 5k/Family Run)

As a potential Sports and Event Complex is planned and designed, as more lakefront amenities are provided, and as dedicated parks and recreation staff are added, the following special events could be added to the set of existing special events:

1. Movie or music series (e.g. Farmers Branch's Date Night in the Park or Denton's Twilight Tunes)
2. Art festival (e.g. Richardson's Cottonwood Art Festival)
3. Fishing event (e.g. Coppell Family Fish)
4. Arbor Day event (e.g. Euless' Arbor Daze or Wylie's Texas Arbor Day)

As with the current special events, sponsorships can and should be pursued to help offset event costs and labor for setup, event day(s), and breakdown.



Holiday in The Park



Independence Day in The Park



Fun & Fit Run



City of
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IMPLEMENTATION

06



Implementation

It has been said that “A plan is only as good as its implementation,” and for that reason, the plan takes the recommendations and sets them up for future completion by providing implementation strategies.

Policy: Begin to build a Parks and Recreation Department within the City organization.

The success of the Parks and Recreation System in Heath hinges upon the City’s ability to adapt to the growth of population and development of the community. Currently, the facilities are maintained by staff within the Public Works Department, and those staff members also have other responsibilities to public infrastructure, which often take precedence over parks and recreation needs. The community expressed low levels of satisfaction regarding park maintenance, and actions are provided in the plan to address maintenance.

In addition to maintenance, there are actions within the plan that address building new facilities and creating new recreation programming consistent with community feedback gathered through the planning process. The actions provided below are provided to further implement the vision of the Parks and Recreation System the City of Heath community members have identified.

- *Action: Hire a minimum of two initial staff to operate and build the City’s new Parks and Recreation Department.*

A director of parks and recreation would oversee the development of a new department. The director could have an assistant to help in day-to-day tasks.

- *Action: Develop a strategic plan for the future of the City’s new Parks and Recreation Department and its development.*

A strategic plan for the new Parks and Recreation Department should include, at minimum, roles and responsibilities of the new staff, goals and benchmarks, and anticipated funding and support.

Policy: Maintain up-to-date and relevant parkland dedication and development fees.

The three main elements of Parkland Dedication Ordinances in Texas are:

1. Land Dedication
2. Fee-in-Lieu of Dedication
3. Park Development Fee

It is important to note that Park Development Fees cannot be “impact fees” in the Texas (Chp. 395 Texas Local Government Code).

- *Action: Review methodology and fees annually to ensure best practices and most relevant fee structure.*

Heath’s Parkland Dedication Ordinance was updated concurrently with this planning effort. A methodology was established to base the updated fees on data and levels of service relevant to Heath. The methodology and fees should be reviewed annually and updated on a regular basis when warranted.

With the update to the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, a Park Development Fee was created. A Park Development Fee allows the City of Heath to improve land that has been acquired for parks to a high-quality amenity that can be used by the community and visitors. Without the Park Development Fee, existing taxpayers would be forced to bear a tax burden for new growth instead of new growth paying its own way. Developers have the option to pay the Fee or construct the improvements themselves to Heath’s identified level of service (LOS).

The Park Development Fee is based on empirical details of how much the average park and recreation improvements cost in Heath based on the community feedback gathered in this plan and associated analysis. Any updates to the methodology and/or fees in the Parkland Dedication Ordinance should undergo similar analysis and incorporate best practices from model cities.

Policy: Support the addition of new high quality parks in Heath by incentivizing and/or encouraging park development by the private sector.

- *Action: Require dedication and development of new parks with large-scale rezoning applications.*

The most cost-and time-effective method of developing future parks in Heath, which supports the City as it grows, instead of after it grows, is to require dedication and development of new parks when applications for rezoning are up for consideration. Layouts included in potential planned development districts should identify conceptual park locations, specify a list of required minimum amenities as stipulated within the plan, and detail a trigger for timing of development of the park to ensure that it is not left as the “last thing,” which may never get completed. Any park dedication and/or development associated with a proposed planned development should be considered through a development agreement which offsets proportional required parkland dedication and development requirements. Any considerations in development agreements regarding parkland be based on the recommendations of this plan and Heath’s identified level of service. this method has the ability to speed up the Park Development Cycle and make it more effective.

Agreements can also be used to specify timing related concerns regarding development of a park by the private sector to complement a planned development district or to complement economic development incentives. It is essential that the timing of development of parks associated with new private development be addressed in a planned development district list of special ordinance provisions or in an agreement that reserves funds for the City to develop the park should the development not happen according to the private developer's stated intentions. Depending on the design scale of the park (minimal improvements versus major improvements), financial participation by the City through the use of park development or economic development funds may be appropriate. Park development projects should be considered during annual CIP project planning and budgeting sessions.

Action Plan and Cost Estimates

Each topic chapter in the plan contains a goal, policies to achieve the goal, and actions to implement the policies. Each of the recommended actions below is detailed in the corresponding topic chapter.

Recognizing that all actions are important to the overall implementation strategy to achieve the plans vision, rather than "high, medium, low" for a priority, a time frame is indicated to reflect the recommended priority.

Cost for each implementation item is represented with a symbol as a general guide to compare the potential financial impact to the operating budget.

\$ = Lowest Cost

\$\$\$\$ = Highest Cost

- **Immediate** (within 2 years)
- **Short-Term** (within 5 years)
- **Mid-Term** (within 7 years)
- **Long-Term** (within 10 years)
- **Ongoing** (no specific time frame)

ACTION PLAN FOR GOAL 1 - PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Policy No.	Action No.	Recommended Action	Potential Time Frame	Cost
GOAL 1: To keep a rural feel in Heath by maintaining existing parks and making new parks that provide open space and family-friendly amenities.				
A) Policy		Acquire and/or receive new parkland to increase levels of service within the Parks and Recreation System.		
	i) Action	Focus on attaining parkland in areas that do not have a park within walking distance.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$\$\$
	ii) Action	Review the balance of all parkland fees collected during annual city fee schedule review to strategize whether acquisition of certain properties consistent with level of service deficits is possible.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$
	iii) Action	Encourage private development to dedicate and develop new neighborhood parks as new development occurs instead of paying parkland fees.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
B) Policy		Plan or design specific park improvements to be installed and/or completed.		
	i) Action	Master plan and design a phased Sports and Events Complex including, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer, baseball, and softball fields • Trails • Splash pad • Outdoor swimming pool • Playground(s)/play equipment • Multi-use concert/festival area • Skate park/concrete skating-type areas 	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$

	ii) Action	Construct a phased Sports and Events Complex	<i>Long-Term</i>	\$\$\$\$
	iii) Action	Master plan the Buffalo Creek corridor (including Little Buffalo Creek) as a natural asset to the Parks and Recreation System and develop adjacent or through-areas accordingly.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$
	iv) Action	Design new parks with a minimum set of amenities.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$
C) Policy		Install park improvements consistent with the plan or design prepared for each park.		
	i) Action	Develop three parks with a minimum set of amenities within the next five years (before 2024).	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$\$\$
D) Policy		Enhance existing parks with amenities and high quality maintenance.		
	i) Action	Maintain current parks to a high level of quality.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
	ii) Action	Add shade structures and/or shade trees and picnic tables to existing Parks and Recreation System assets.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$\$

ACTION PLAN FOR GOAL 2 - TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS

Policy No.	Action No.	Recommended Action	Potential Time Frame	Cost
GOAL 2: To add strategic trails and pathways in the community for recreation, leisure, and transportation connections.				
A) Policy		Provide new trails and pathways within the community and connecting to adjacent communities.		
	i) Action	Plan, design, and construct new multi-use trail connections.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$\$
	ii) Action	Provide a diverse array of trail types as the trail system develops.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$
	iii) Action	Plan, design, and construct additional pathways within the community.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
B) Policy		Enhance existing trails with amenities and high quality maintenance.		
	i) Action	Provide trail off-spots with water, seating, trash bins, and restrooms (if possible).	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
	ii) Action	Maintain current trails with a high level of quality.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$

ACTION PLAN FOR GOAL 3 - RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING				
Policy No.	Action No.	Recommended Action	Potential Time Frame	Cost
GOAL 3: To incrementally build a formal recreation program by introducing new facilities and programming.				
A) Policy		Expand the City’s inventory of recreation facilities.		
	i) Action	Plan and design a multi-purpose indoor recreation center including, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas for children • Areas for adults • Areas for seniors • Gym • Aquatics/indoor pool 	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$
	ii) Action	Construct a multi-purpose indoor recreation center.	<i>Long-Term</i>	\$\$\$\$
B) Policy		Build a recreation program within the parks and recreation system.		
	i) Action	Add activity programming to existing facilities and prepare or phase new programming to existing and future facilities.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
	ii) Action	Continue special events that are well received by the community and continue to add special event programming as parks and recreation staff are added to operate and build them.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Policy No.	Action No.	Recommended Action	Potential Time Frame	Cost
A) Policy		Begin to build a Parks and Recreation Department within the City organization.		
	i) Action	Hire a minimum of two initial staff to operate and build the City's new Parks and Recreation Department.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$\$\$
	ii) Action	Develop a strategic plan to plan for the future of the City's new Parks and Recreation Department and its development.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$
B) Policy		Maintain up-to-date and relevant parkland dedication and development fees.		
	i) Action	Review methodology and fees annually to ensure best practices and most relevant fee structure.	<i>Short-Term</i>	\$
C) Policy		Support the addition of new high quality parks in Heath by incentivizing and/or encouraging park development by the private sector.	<i>Ongoing</i>	\$\$

