



CHAPTER 5 PARKS & RECREATION



Full-service park and recreation systems encourage outdoor exercise, participation in athletic programs, and community gatherings. Beyond leisure activities, these open spaces improve the quality of life for residents, enhance community character, attract economic development, and serve environmental functions such as flood control and habitat protection. As the City of Killeen sustains one of the nation's fastest growth rates and experiences new waves of housing and commercial construction, the enhancement of its parks system and conservation of green spaces will be beneficial to existing residents, as well as those who will make Killeen their home in the decades ahead.

Parks, open space, and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and sustainable community, offering relaxation and exercise outside of the home, after work, and beyond school activities. Much like streets, utilities, and police and fire protection, parks and open spaces are integral parts of any municipality. This includes maintaining and enhancing existing facilities, increasing the quantity of developed recreation areas, and capitalizing on natural features and assets of the Central Texas landscape.

Recently, in 2009, the City of Killeen adopted a Parks Master Plan, a planning guide that provides clear and concise direction for the City's parks and recreation facilities, staffing, programming, and interdepartmental coordination. The plan examines the community's current and future needs for managing, enhancing, and expanding the parks and recreation system. In addition to 18 traditional parks, the Parks & Recreation Department oversees a network of public trails, athletic and recreation programs, two aquatic facilities, two senior centers, a family recreation center, and a public golf course—all on a \$5.2 million annual budget¹.

This chapter, in coordination with the Parks Master Plan and other elements of this Comprehensive Plan, establishes a 20-year planning framework

¹ City of Killeen Parks Master Plan 2009-2019



through 2030. Based on industry standards, consideration is given to the location and appropriate size of recreation sites, as well as the means to acquire land for additional parks, open spaces, building facilities, and trails. These decisions warrant a significant level of attention and commitment of resources so that improvements may be appropriately planned, constructed, operated, and maintained. A list of implementation priorities, located at the end of this chapter, will help to set the policy direction for the City with regard to the timing and scope of park development; facility placement in accordance with new development in the City and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ); and adherence to the principles of open space conservation and stewardship of public lands and natural resources.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Key factors for Killeen's ongoing parks and recreation planning include:

- ★ **Broad Basis and Vision for Parks, Recreation and Open Space.** The City's adopted Parks Master Plan of 2009 states that "premier" parks and recreation venues and programming are "paramount to the quality of life in a community" and help to create a positive image of the City and its citizens. Furthermore, Killeen's City Council "has made a commitment to quality of life via the stated goal of providing outstanding and affordable programs and facilities for young and old alike ..." including "... better park facilities at more diverse sites."
- ★ **Citizen Input.** A survey of 1,500 Killeen residents conducted in support of the 2009 Parks Master Plan (along with citizen input at town hall meetings) found that:
 - Skate facilities, hike and bike trails, and water venues rank highest as public priorities.
 - Adequate fitness facilities do not exist in the community.
 - Killeen's two existing community pools are no longer adequate.
 - Water and miscellaneous exercise amenities consistently show up as community desires.
 - The public's satisfaction level regarding facilities and programming needs to be increased significantly.

Roughly two-thirds of residents said they were either "very satisfied" (28%) or "satisfied" (37%) with the variety of recreation programming in Killeen. But 24% said they were "less than satisfied" and 11% were "very dissatisfied." A notable 69% of respondents reported that at least one member of their household was currently participating in Killeen Parks & Recreation sponsored events/activities. Also, 83%



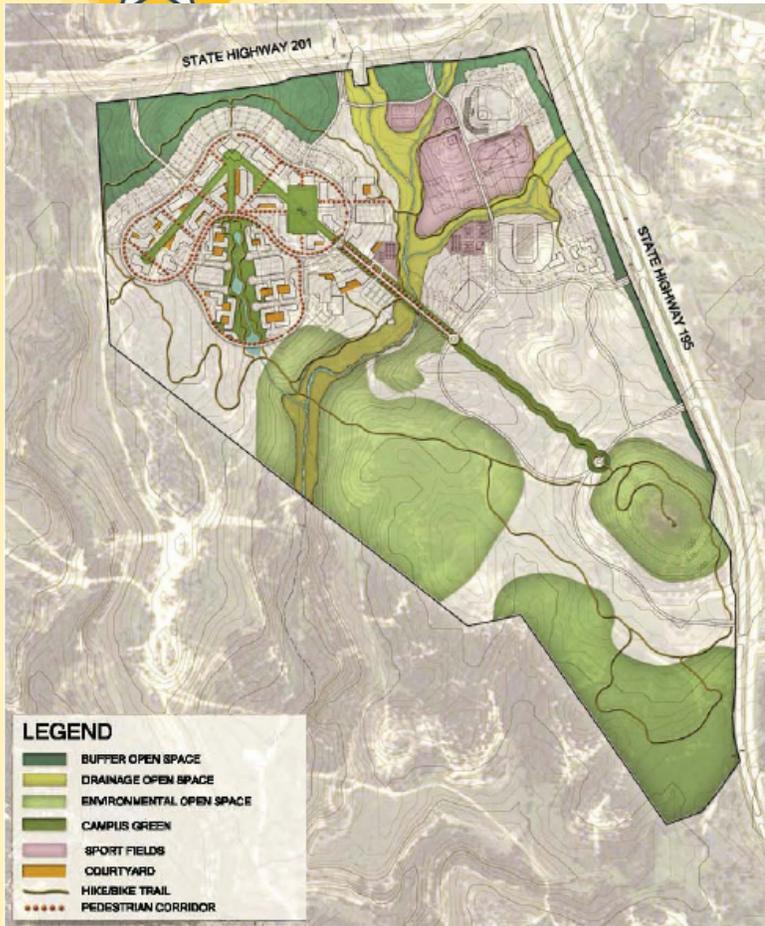
thought up to 5 miles was a reasonable distance to drive to an athletic or recreational facility, with 33% preferring 0-2 miles.

★ **City Vision and Strategy.** The City's 2009 Annual Report includes 12 goals resulting from a Vision 2030 strategic planning process. The following initiatives are relevant to this Comprehensive Plan chapter:

- Enhance cultural, quality of life, and medical services (Goal 2, Preserving, Enhancing, and Leveraging Partnership with Fort Hood).
- Maintain quality public facilities (Goal 6, Preserve and Promote a Positive City Image).
- Expand parks and recreation programs to meet the needs of a growing population (Goal 7, Foster a Sense of Community and Provide an Exceptional Quality of Life).

★ **Economic Imperative.** "To compete in an innovation-based, knowledge-driven economy, leaders and citizens in Central Texas must engage in a strategic discussion to ensure that their community has the quality of place amenities that attract and retain the next generation workforce." This is a bottom-line quotation from the final report of *Talent 2030: How Central Texas Can Retain and Attract its Future Workforce*, which was completed in June 2009 and sponsored, in part, by the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce along with other regional partners. The report highlights seven ways in which people rate communities, one of which is Vitality ("I value a vibrant community where people are 'out and about' using public parks, trails and recreation areas, attending farmer's markets and living in a healthy community"). The study's author determined that Central Texas residents place a relatively high priority on Vitality, right behind cost of living, convenient transportation, and job options and earning potential. However, while 88% of survey respondents mentioned Vitality, only 59% thought their region was doing well at offering these amenities. Killeen was found to be below the U.S. average in the Vitality category, in part due to a particularly low score for nature parks. In recommending expansion and connection of parks and green spaces across the region, *Talent 2030* notes their importance in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, increasing property values for nearby home owners, creating public gathering places for all ages—but especially children, and reinforcing Central Texas' "family friendly" image.

★ **Institutionalized Open Space—and New Amenities on A&M Campus.** The combination of Fort Hood, the new Texas A&M University-Central Texas campus, and the Texas Veterans Cemetery has ensured preservation of an amazing amount of green and open



space to the west and southwest of Killeen. This vast acreage also provides many spectacular vistas for residents and visitors to the City. Even with the pending phased development of the new university campus, the Campus Vision aims to “Preserve Site Character and Environmental Quality,” citing a quintessential Central Texas landscape, urging appreciation for the rugged beauty of the site, and approaching the campus master plan with sensitivity to riparian corridors, vegetation, and endangered species. Of the 663 acres available, just over one-third (247.7 acres) will be preserved in habitat, flood plain, and steep slope areas. Another 42 acres is planned for recreation and athletic facilities and areas, including: a 30,000-seat football stadium; a 10,000-seat baseball stadium; an 8,000-seat indoor arena; and 22 acres for outdoor recreation (soccer, track, tennis, softball, etc.); as well as a campus Recreation and Wellness Center.

INVENTORY

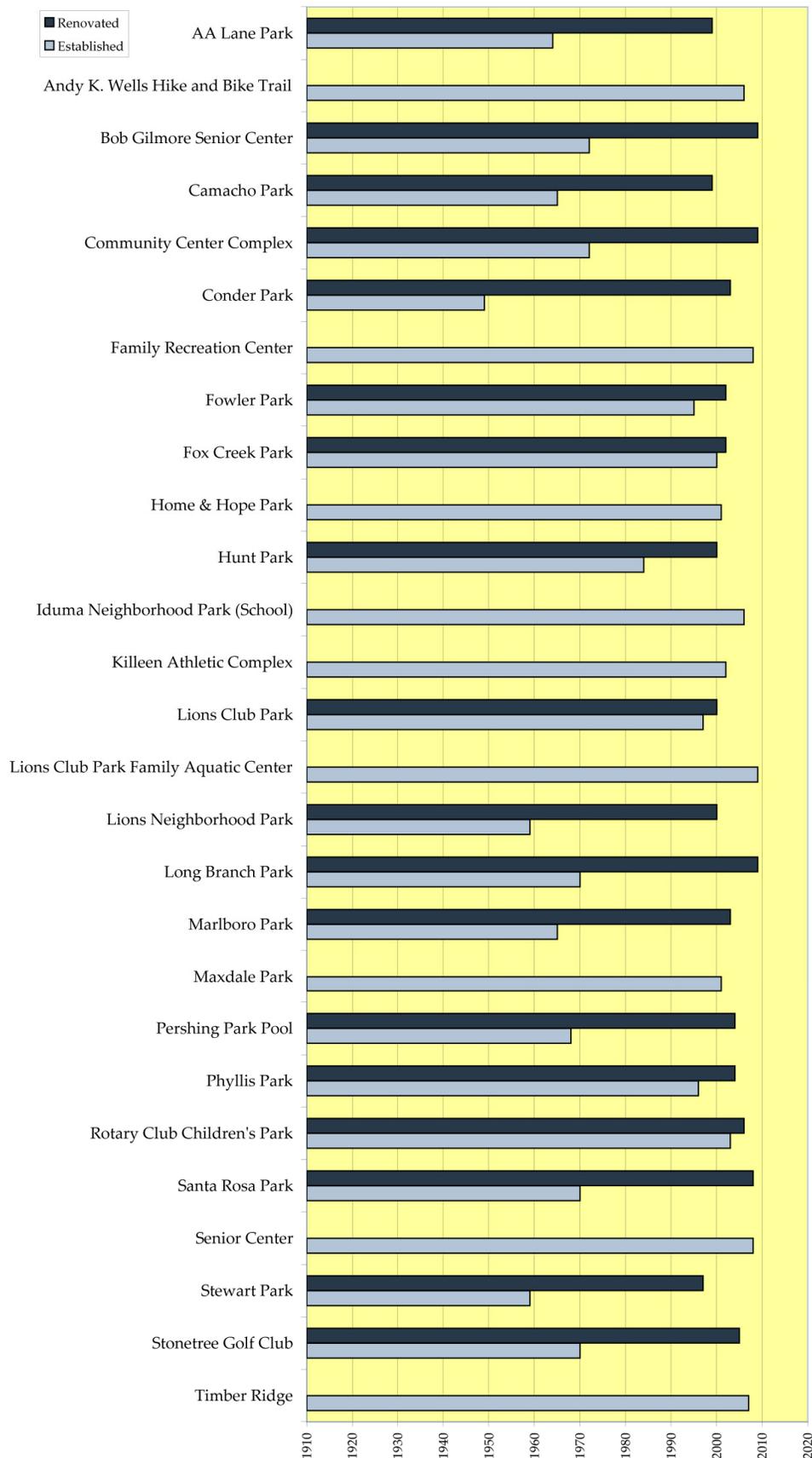
The City’s Parks & Recreation Department maintains 29 parks and special use facilities. The locations of these parks and facilities are displayed on **Map 5.1, Parks and Recreation System with Service Areas**. The system accommodates a range of traditional recreation sports, such as baseball and basketball, as well as trendier activities, such as skateboarding and disc golf.



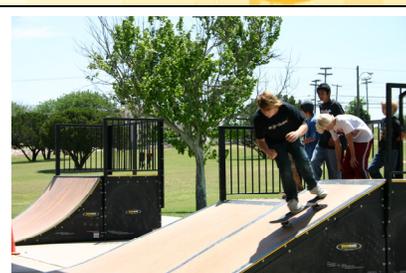
The City has been actively developing new facilities, like the \$5.7 million Family Aquatic Center², while upgrading older ones, such as the \$500,000 renovation to Long Branch Park. Within the last 10 years, more than 80% of the facilities were either built initially or renovated. The chart in **Figure 5.1, Age of Parks**, illustrates the system’s construction history.

² *Killeen Daily Herald*, “Aquatic center at Lion’s Club Park opening this year,” March 5, 2009.

FIGURE 5.1
Age of Parks



SOURCE: City of Killeen Parks Master Plan 2009-2019



Addressing the needs of a relatively young community is paramount.



Community pride as reflected in community facilities.





Park Classifications

1. Community Parks
2. Neighborhood Parks
3. Pocket Parks
4. Linear Parks
5. Special Use Facilities

PARK CLASSIFICATION

In order to evaluate existing conditions and future needs, the parks and recreation facilities are classified into one of the five listed categories. A well-balanced system offers all types and sizes, ensuring adequate and equal opportunity for all persons, and, ultimately, encouraging use by all population groups. The breakdown of the park system provided in **Table 5.1, Park Classifications and Amenities**, relates park classifications with size and amenities for each facility within the system.

**TABLE 5.1
Park Classifications and Amenities**

	Acreage	Shelters	Restrooms	Pavilions	Picnic Units	Play Units	Open Play Area	Pond	Grill	Jog Walk	Basketball	Soccer	Softball	Baseball	Tennis	Swimming	Disc Golf
REGIONAL PARKS																	
Use: Serves entire populations of a community or region. Exhibits unique natural amenities or cultural characteristics, as well as a variety of recreational facilities.																	
Service Area: City-wide and surrounding region.																	
Desirable Size: Minimum 150 acres.																	
Density: 10 acres per 1,000 residents.																	
Site Characteristics: Protect and preserve natural amenities, sufficiently buffered from nearby urban development.																	
Northwest Regional Park	407.0	PROPOSED															
Southeast Regional Park	370.0	PROPOSED															
Totals	777.0																
COMMUNITY PARKS																	
Use: Serves the broad community. Includes facilities for active and passive recreation and leisure, including athletic fields, swimming pools, picnic areas, walking/jogging paths, open play areas, exercise stations, and restrooms, among other improvement.																	
Service Area: Primarily for neighborhood residents within a 2-mile radius, but available throughout the City.																	
Desirable Size: Typically 25 to 150 acres.																	
Density: 5 acres per 1,000 residents.																	
Site Characteristics: Located to provide full access to the city.																	
Long Branch Park	77.4		*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*			*	*	
Lions Club Park	67.0	*	*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*	*			
Conder Park	24.6		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*		*		*
Totals	169.0																

TABLE 5.1 (continued)

	Acreage	Shelters	Restrooms	Pavilions	Picnic Units	Play Units	Open Play Area	Pond	Grill	Jog Walk	Basketball	Soccer	Softball	Baseball	Tennis	Swimming	Disc Golf
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS																	
Use: Serves neighborhood residents within walking distance. Facilities are for active use (e.g., sports activities, playgrounds) and passive use (e.g., walking, picnicking).																	
Service Area: Primarily serves neighborhood residents within a ½-mile radius.																	
Desirable Size: Typically 5 to 25 acres.																	
Density: 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents.																	
Site Characteristics: Evenly distributed across the City with convenient and safe access for nearby residents. Joint school/park facilities are highly desirable.																	
AA Lane Park	6.6	*		*	*	*	*				*		*	*	*		
Stewart Park	5.7				*	*	*				*				*		
Iduma Neighbrhd Park (School)	5.0 ^x			*	*	*	*				*						
Marlboro Park	5.2			*	*	*	*				*						
Timber Ridge	4.6			*	*	*											
Maxdale Park	4.6			*	*	*	*				*	*					
Lions Neighbrhd Park	3.6				*	*	*				*				*		
Ira Cross Park (School)	5.4	n/a															
Totals	40.7																
POCKET PARKS																	
Use: Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.																	
Service Area: Immediate development.																	
Desirable Size: Typically 5 to 10 acres.																	
Density: 0.25 acre per 1,000 residents.																	
Site Characteristics: Close proximity to high-density developments or unique attractions/developments.																	
Phyllis Park	2.4					*	*				*						
Fowler Park	0.9				*	*	*										
Hunt Park	0.7				*	*					*						
Fox Creek Park	0.6				*	*	*				*						
Santa Rosa Park	0.4	*				*	*										
Home & Hope Park	0.3				*	*											
Camacho Park	0.1				*	*											
Totals	5.4																



TABLE 5.1 (continued)

	Acreage	Shelters	Restrooms	Pavilions	Picnic Units	Play Units	Open Play Area	Pond	Grill	Jog Walk	Basketball	Soccer	Softball	Baseball	Tennis	Swimming	Disc Golf
LINEAR PARKS																	
Use: Developed for bicycling, hiking, walking and jogging and commonly used as a linkage between parks.																	
Service area: City-wide.																	
Desirable Size: Sufficient size to accommodate expected use and provide adequate travel distance, typically a minimum of ½ mile.																	
Density: No minimum standard.																	
Characteristics: Typically follows a linear natural feature, such as a stream, or street rights-of-way or easements.																	
Rosewood Linear Park	66.1	PROPOSED															
Andy K. Wells Hike and Bike Trail ^Y	9.1 ^X			*	*												

^X City of Killeen 2009 Parks Master Plan

^Y Includes Rotary Club Children's Park

Joint Use Facilities

In addition to City-owned parks, there are a number of other parks and recreational amenities that help to meet community demand for facilities. Other public agencies plus private developers provide both public and private parks and open space opportunities for residents and visitors to Killeen. Several City parks share facilities with adjoining schools, including

Iduma Neighborhood Park with Iduma Elementary School and Ira Cross Park with Ira Cross Elementary School.

A collaborative approach to parks and recreation planning requires communication and ongoing coordination among interested parties. Joint agreements created between public agencies, as well as public-private partnerships, help to maximize facility use while reducing cost. Furthermore,

joint acquisition, construction, and ongoing operation and maintenance ensure more efficient allocation and use of public dollars while requiring that recreational facilities be coordinated and connected.



The Andy K. Wells Hike & Bike Trail set a new standard for Killeen that is envied in other parts of the City.


TABLE 5.1 (continued)

	Acreage	Shelters	Restrooms	Pavilions	Picnic Units	Play Units	Open Play Area	Pond	Grill	Jog Walk	Basketball	Soccer	Softball	Baseball	Tennis	Swimming	Disc Golf
SPECIAL USE FACILITIES																	
Use: Serves the broader community or region for specialized, multi-purpose recreation activities (e.g., performance venue).																	
Service Area: Available to all persons.																	
Desirable Size: No minimum standard.																	
Density: No minimum standard.																	
Site Characteristics: Intended for city-wide or regional use.																	
Stonetree Golf Club	185.7																
Community Center Complex	82.4	*	*	*	*		*			*	*						
Lions Club Park Family Aquatic Center	66.7 ^x	*	*	*	*	*											
Bacon Ranch Park (Special Events and Rodeo)	24.0		*														
Killeen Athletic Complex	10.0	*	*	*	*					*			*				
Pershing Park Pool	1.4						*									*	
Family Rec. Ctr.	41,000 SF	*	*			*					*						
Senior Center	14,000 SF		*														
Bob Gilmore Sr. Center	n/a		*														
Rotary Club Children's Park	n/a					*				*							

SOURCE: City of Killeen GIS Data and Kendig Keast Collaborative

^x City of Killeen 2009 Parks Master Plan

^y Includes Rotary Club Children's Park



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify current and future needs for additional park acreage, new facilities, and other improvements. This need is measured by determining the degree to which the existing parks and recreation facilities are in sufficient supply, from a system-wide and quantity perspective, and whether they provide sufficient geographic coverage, from a locational perspective relative to the City's residential areas.

Killeen's rapid growth rate, combined with an uneven growth pattern, has created some under-served pockets. Currently, two-thirds of the City's facilities are located in the northern part of the community north of U.S. Highway 190. The City needs to evaluate the condition of these existing facilities while adding new facilities to the south of Central Texas Expressway. As highlighted in the Parks Master Plan, revitalization efforts must also take into account the need to diversify facilities and improve their accessibility to the public. The City's two proposed regional parks will be important additions for Killeen's growing southern area, but will also provide new open space amenities for the entire community.

Industry Standards

The standards-based assessment offers a benchmark comparison for evaluating Killeen's present and future park needs, typically expressed in terms of acres of land dedicated per unit of population. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines* to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities. To ensure the City's interests are met, national standards were customized based on local characteristics and community input. These considerations included:

- ★ A projected 2030 population of 168,000 persons, based on assumed annual growth of 1.74%, which implies steadily increasing demand for parks and recreation facilities in coming years.
- ★ As Figure 1.5, Age and Gender Population, and Figure 1.6, Median Age, in Chapter 1 indicate, Killeen has a young demographic with a median age of 27.6 years, the lowest among comparison communities. The predominance of younger residents requires more outdoor play structures, such as playgrounds and water features, than in communities where older age groups are more prominent.
- ★ Killeen will continue to be a popular destination for both leisure activities and Baby Boomer retirement living.



Displayed in **Table 5.2, Future Park Needs**, is the acreage of each park type that will be needed to meet future demands. The amount of parkland was calculated by applying acreage standards to the current and projected populations.

According to the NRPA standards, Killeen should already have a total park supply of 2,041.3 acres. The City currently maintains 215.1 acres of parks and recreation areas in the four categories: regional, community, neighborhood, and pocket parks. If proposed parks are included in this total, the City is still only meeting half of the recommended standard. By 2030, the total park acreage target increases to 2,982.0 acres. The major challenge for the City will be to meet the current acreage needs within the park system while obtaining and developing sufficient recreational land to keep pace with anticipated population growth in the community. The City's rigorous construction and renovation schedule, as illustrated in Figure 5.1, Age of Parks, indicates that the City is actively expanding and maintaining the system with consideration for present and future needs.

TABLE 5.2
Future Park Needs

Park Type	Standard	Existing Supply	Proposed Supply	Acres Needed		Deficit	
				Current	2030	Current	2030
Regional	10 acres/ 1,000 residents	0.0	777.0	1,150.0	1,680.0	-1,150.0	-903.0
Community	5 acres/ 1,000 residents	169.0	-	575.0	840.0	-406.0	-671.0
Neighborhood	2.5 acres/ 1,000 residents	40.7	-	287.5	420.0	-246.8	-379.3
Pocket	0.25 acres/ 1,000 residents	5.4	-	28.8	42.0	-23.4	-36.6
Totals		215.1	777.0	2,041.3	2,982.0	-1,826.2*	-1,989.9

* The "current" acreage deficit does not account for the proposed parks since they are not yet part of the system.

NOTE: This table assumes a 2008 population of 115,000 and a 2030 population of 168,000 (1.74% annual growth rate).

Service Areas

The service area assessment evaluates the geographic distribution rather than the total acres of parks across the City. The location of these recreation opportunities plays into the effectiveness of the entire system. A service area buffer is drawn around each park within the following classifications: community, neighborhood, and pocket park. The larger the park, the larger the associated service area. This analysis identifies under-served areas, or



gaps, as depicted on **Map 5.1, Parks and Recreation System with Service Areas**. The following conclusions can be drawn based on this map:

- ★ From a locational standpoint, the analysis indicates that the community is well served by the existing parks system in the older sections of the City but deficient near new development, such as the western and southeastern portions of Killeen.
- ★ Three new parks are proposed, including two regional parks that will help fill the gaps to the west and southeast. In addition, a 66-acre linear park is planned to link the regional park in the southeast to Stonetree Golf Club, connecting at U.S. 190. These parks will boost the total system acreage and address recreation needs in active development areas within the community.
- ★ Community parks have a primary service area of 2 miles, meaning that most people who utilize these area-wide parks generally reside within this radius. The combined service areas of Conder, Long Branch, and Lions Club parks cover the majority of the City. However, areas of newer development along the periphery are significantly lacking in public parkland. Therefore, the City needs to act to eliminate these gaps and/or address parkland needs more directly and promptly in conjunction with land development activity (e.g., parkland dedication requirements or continual negotiation of voluntary dedications).
- ★ Neighborhood parks have a primary service area of one-half mile, with the intention to create evenly spaced neighborhood parks proximate to most residentially developed areas. As displayed, the current array of neighborhood parks provides good coverage in concentrated nodes, but much of the City lacks adequate park sites in this category. While larger-scale parks help to alleviate these deficiencies, such as Long Branch Park in the northeast quadrant, neighborhood parks are intended to be closer to home and more convenient to reach by bike or on foot. They are also some of the easiest to plan given their smaller size and frequent association with master-planned subdivisions.
- ★ Pocket parks have a limited service area of one-quarter mile, and, given their smaller size and modest design, are meant to serve the needs of people living in their immediate vicinity. Killeen maintains seven of these parks, primarily concentrated in older sections of the City. While the national trend in many communities is to focus on larger parks, pocket parks are great supplements to neighborhoods and urban districts. However, pocket parks are usually not of a size that the City should acquire on its own. Instead, they may emerge as part of private



development or as donated sites and may include provision for ongoing maintenance by others besides City employees.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Parks Master Plan established a 10-year strategy for upgrading the parks and recreation system as outlined in **Table 5.3, Implementation Schedule**. Each specific improvement falls within a particular priority level, and the status of each item has been updated to reflect activity since the Parks Master Plan was adopted in early 2009. (During final City Council consideration of this Comprehensive Plan, the need to explore a potential dog park in Killeen was also noted.)

TABLE 5.3
Implementation Schedule

HIGH PRIORITIES (2009-2010)	Status
Construct a skateboard park in Long Branch Park	Planning Stages
Construct hike and bike trail at Lions Club Park	Planning Stages
Construct restroom facility at Conder Park	Funds Allocated
Construct second restroom facility at Andy K. Wells Hike and Bike Trail	Funds Allocated
Construct a special needs athletic facility at the Andy K. Wells Hike and Bike Trail	Funds Allocated
Construct a playground within the Killeen Athletic Complex	No Activity
Develop Westside community park & trail	Land donated
MODERATE PRIORITIES (2011-2015)	Status
Revise Parks Master Plan in 2011	No Activity
Renovate the Killeen Community Center to include a new roof, HVAC system, restroom facilities and flooring	Bond Funds Allocated
Design/Construct a Northside Recreation Center at Long Branch Park in conjunction with Armed Services YMCA	Bond Funds Allocated
Renovate existing pool at Long Branch Park to include construction of new bath house, resurfacing of pool and addition of zero depth area	Bond Funds Allocated
Acquire park land for the construction of a community park on Killeen's eastern perimeter	Property Identified and Negotiated, No Recent Activity
Revise Parks Master Plan in 2013	No Activity
Renovate Conder Community Park to include lighted multi purpose field, playground, basketball court, paved walking trail and water playground	Constructed Disc Golf Course



TABLE 5.3 (continued)
Implementation Schedule

MODERATE PRIORITIES (2011-2015)	Status
Lighting and restroom survey research for existing park facilities void of lighting and restrooms	No Activity
Construct restrooms at A.A. Lane Park	Potential Funding Source via Community Block Grant
Install perimeter walking trail at Maxdale Park	No Activity
Revise Parks Master Plan in 2015	No Activity
Construct a pavilion at Fowler Park	No Activity
Construct a basketball court at Lions Neighborhood Park	No Activity
Construct a skate park facility on the city's southern section	No Activity
Review and assess the needs for a Capital Improvements Plan for Parks and Recreation	No Activity
Construct a Regional Park on Killeen's western perimeter	Property Identified and Concept Being Developed, Planning Stages
LONG TERM PLANS (2016-2019)	Status
Fund lighting and restroom projects at existing park facilities	No Activity
Resurface outdoor basketball and tennis courts	No Activity
Revise Parks Master Plan in 2017	No Activity
Acquire park land on Killeen's southernmost boundary for a community park	No Activity
Install a perimeter walking trail at Long Branch Park	No Activity
Relocate Camacho Park	No Activity
Revise Parks Master Plan in 2019	No Activity
Review and assess the connection potential of the Andy K. Wells Hike and Bike Trail to the communities	Grant Application Submitted

SOURCE: City of Killeen Parks Master Plan 2009-2019; Parks & Recreation Department staff

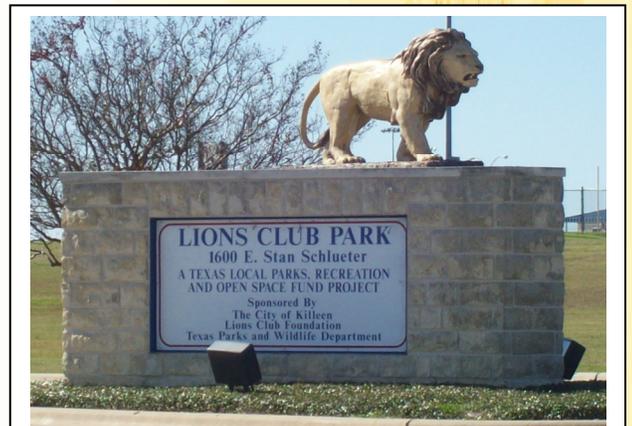




KEY PLANNING THEMES

Given the rapid population growth of Killeen in recent years, plus the larger geographic scale of the City’s developed area, more park sites and recreation facilities are needed in general. However, the recent Parks Master Plan of 2009 also highlighted the need to respond to the varied indoor and outdoor recreation interests of a community that is increasingly diverse and whose population covers the entire spectrum of age groups. There is also a clear need for more non-traditional opportunities, including nature parks and minimally developed sites intended more for passive recreation and relief from City living versus more active recreational pursuits. Based on the 2009 Master Plan, plus the concerns and hopes expressed by residents, public and private leaders, and key community stakeholders and investors—from Fort Hood representatives to small business owners—Killeen must act, through this new Comprehensive Plan, on the following basic principles:

- ★ **Upgrading Past Investments.** Much of Killeen’s current park and facility inventory is north of U.S. 190, in the older areas of the community. Additionally, many of these public sites are important focal points of established neighborhoods or otherwise offer clear quality-of-life benefits to many Killeen residents. With a clear need to address park and recreation demand in newer growth areas, the City’s challenge is to devote adequate resources to revitalization of older park sites, structures, and other physical plant items. By continuing to follow through on the priority initiatives outlined in its 2009 Parks Master Plan, Killeen will be well on its way toward balancing these needs. The Master Plan also documents the extent of community and individual donor support for system improvement efforts. The City should continue to tap into this community-spiritedness and also work toward more formal partnerships with Killeen Independent School District. Also essential will be the interim Master Plan updates scheduled for 2011 and every two years thereafter, especially to maintain all the plan elements required by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department to ensure Killeen’s continued eligibility for various grant programs administered by the department.



The fruits of community partnerships and external funding support.





- ★ **Addressing Gaps.** The Parks Master Plan underscored the need to fill a void in parks and public recreation facilities in Killeen’s more recent growth areas to the south and southwest. These gaps are highlighted visually on Map 5.1 in this chapter. As pointed out in Chapter 6- Housing & Neighborhoods of this Comprehensive Plan, providing new parks and recreation amenities in these areas—and working toward a complementary network of public trails and bikeways—will help to “finish out” these residential areas, together with the eventual emergence of nearby retail development. It is not surprising for Killeen to be in this position given the housing boom of the last decade. However, so long as Killeen continues to develop without the parkland dedication procedures employed by many other cities its size, then City staff will be under ongoing pressure to track land development activity, anticipate new and emerging park needs, and attempt to arrange for voluntary dedication or other public acquisition of worthwhile and well-situated properties in such areas—and hope to

be able to do so before land prices are bid up even for “leftover” pieces. Establishment of a Parks Board in



Killeen would provide another vehicle for public/private coordination and land acquisition efforts, pursuit of more external funding, and community input and support for overall park system enhancement.



- ★ **Building Nature into the City.** Themes of open space preservation and “green” development are weaved throughout this Comprehensive Plan. Ongoing acquisition of land for public parks and special use facilities affords a particular opportunity to set aside significant acreages and high-value sites for perpetuity, even as the community continues to grow and urbanize near and around them for years to come. Creek corridors and their flood plains, steep slopes and high elevation points, stands of mature trees, and intact habitat



areas should be treated as Killeen’s natural endowment and assets that can add value to nearby residential areas, business parks, and institutional uses. This is certainly a fundamental principle of the Cen-Tex Sustainable Communities Partnership, a recurring bit of wisdom found in various economic development strategy documents for Killeen and the region, and core values espoused by Killeen’s key economic anchors in Fort Hood and now Texas A&M University-Central Texas. Especially as Killeen continues to grow southward, the opportunities to work much more in concert with the landscape are there, and the community benefits can be many (economic, ecological, aesthetic, financial, etc.).

