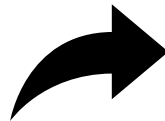# GROW ZONE PROGRAM
(No Mow Zone)

CITY OF KILLEEN, TEXAS

RECREATION SERVICES

What is a Grow Zone?

▶ A "Grow Zone" or "No Mow Zone" is a designated area where the vegetation is allowed to return to its natural state. Mowing is halted to allow the native plants and grasses to grow. Commonly mowed at 3" annually during the late Fall/Winter months.

▶ Photos from austintexas.gov – Austin's Grow Zones

Why Create Grow Zones?

▶ There are several benefits to creating Grow Zones:

  ▶ **Benefits for wildlife**

    ▶ Provides a sheltered area for animals to protect themselves from predators

    ▶ Provides a habitat for insects, birds, and small mammals, as well as a breeding ground needed for species whose populations are declining

      ▶ I.e., Eastern Meadowlarks, Monarch butterflies, native bumble bees, other bee species

  ▶ **Benefits for plant habitat**

    ▶ Restores natural plants

    ▶ Allows us to grow beautiful wildflowers

    ▶ Allows park users to discover & enjoy nature

Why Create Grow Zones?

- There are several benefits to creating Grow Zones:
  - **Benefits to water**
    - Fertilizers & pesticides would no longer be needed in these areas, which prevents them from entering the water
    - Over many years, eventually we will see more and more flower grow from year to year, which provides cooler air & water temperatures
    - Controls/reduces erosion
    - Slows storm water runoff
      - These areas retain storm water and create hazardous situations for staff and equipment
  - **Improve air quality**
    - Reduced mowing = reduction in our carbon footprint
    - By reducing our constant use of these lawn equipment machines in these areas, we are reducing the carbon dioxide that is put into the atmosphere
    - "Doing less" benefits the environment!

Why Create Grow Zones?

- There are several benefits to creating Grow Zones:
  - **Fiscal Savings**
    - Less labor hours focused on these areas, which results in more labor hours where needed
    - Less fuel
    - Less fertilizer & pesticide use
    - Less wear on lawn equipment = less need for maintenance
    - Less purchase of trees and irrigation due to allowing trees to naturally re-seed and grow

Why Create Grow Zones?

- There are several benefits to creating Grow Zones:
  - Aesthetics
    - When you go to a park, it's much more pleasing & relaxing to look at what nature has created
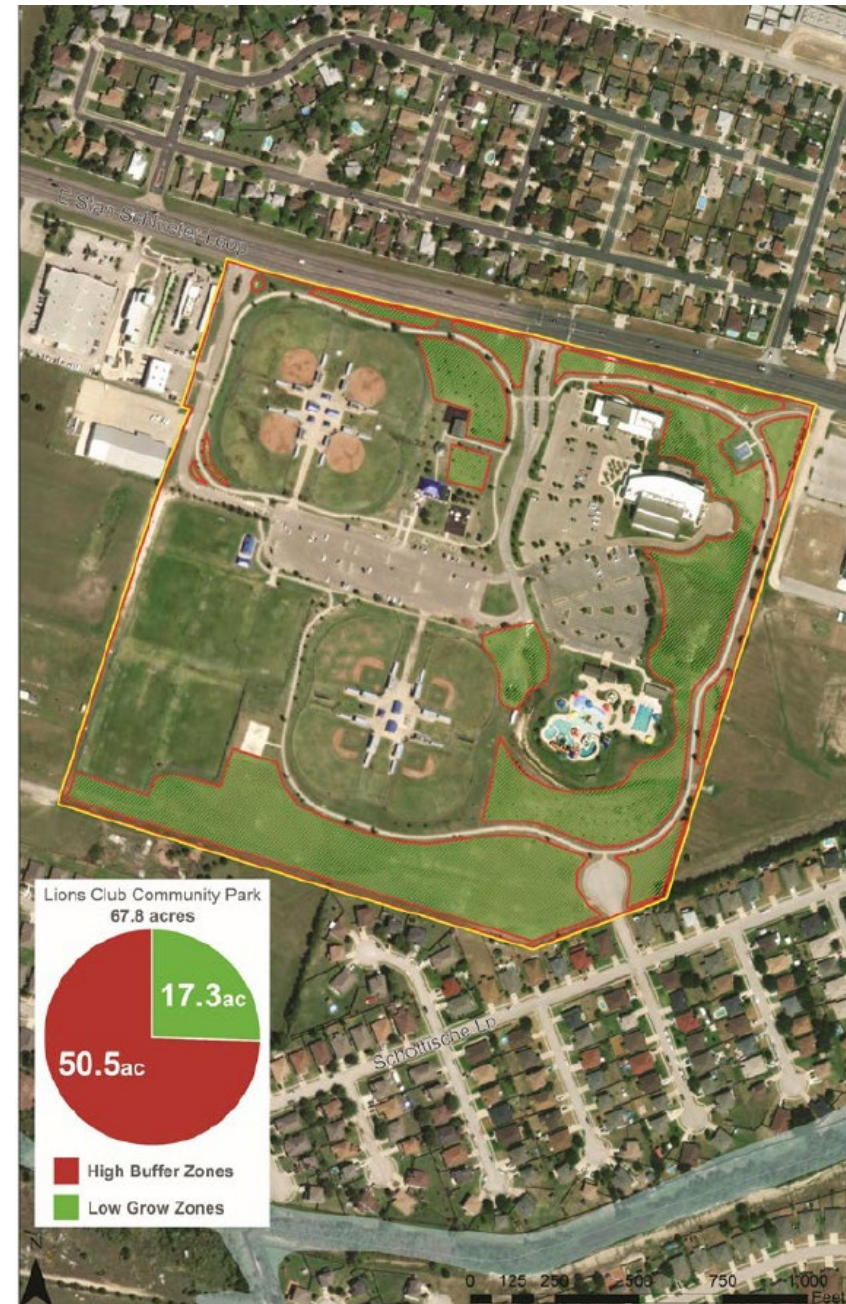
Quick Summary

- To sum up all the benefits:

Grow Zones are an essential part of our Parks system and our lives, in order to provide better quality water, and a better ecosystem for future generations of wildlife and humans.

- Through the Parks Master Plan, we are planning to
  - Reduce mowing cost by 5% by 2023
  - Continue to identify "Grow Zones" in all of our parks

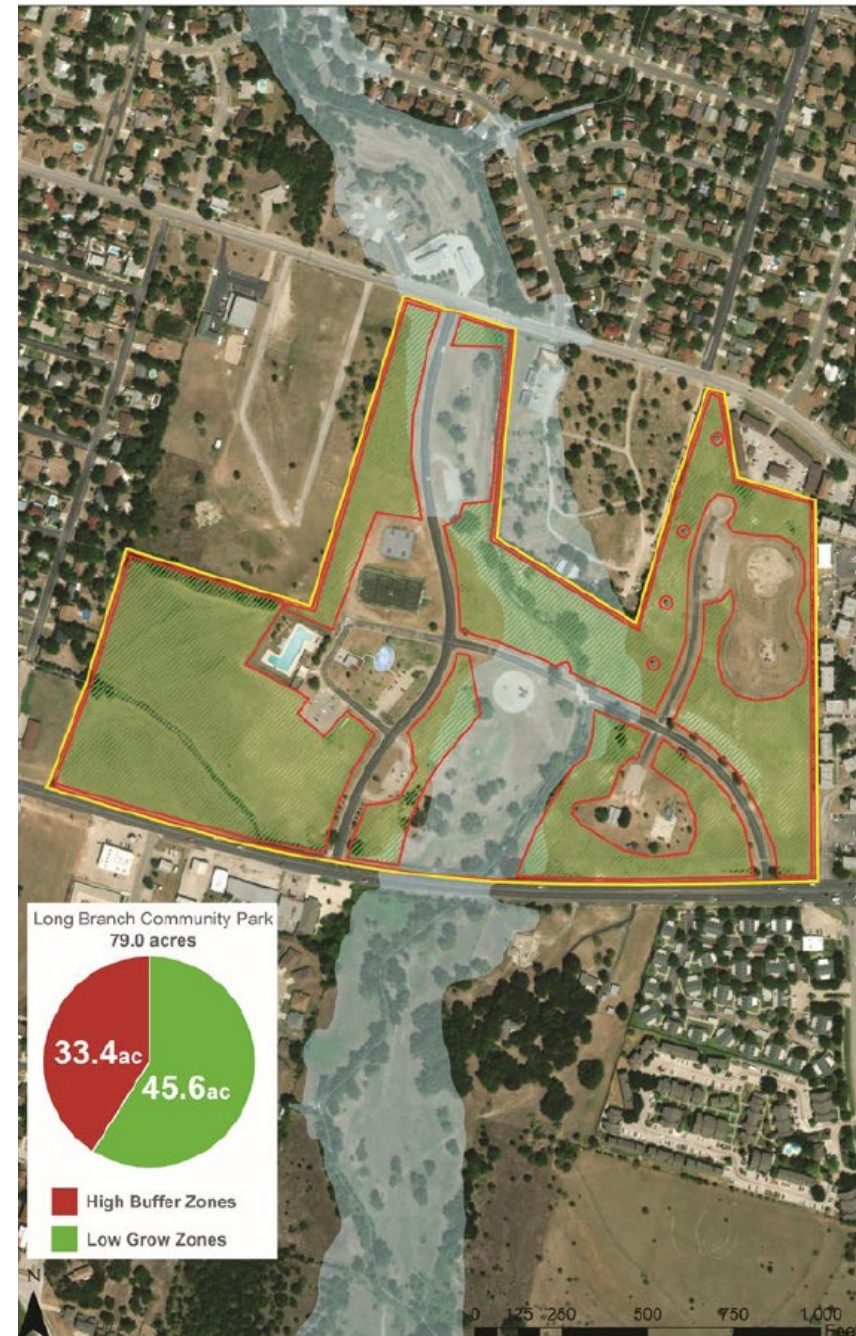# Community Parks Grow Zones

▶ Lions Club Park Grow Zone established March 2022
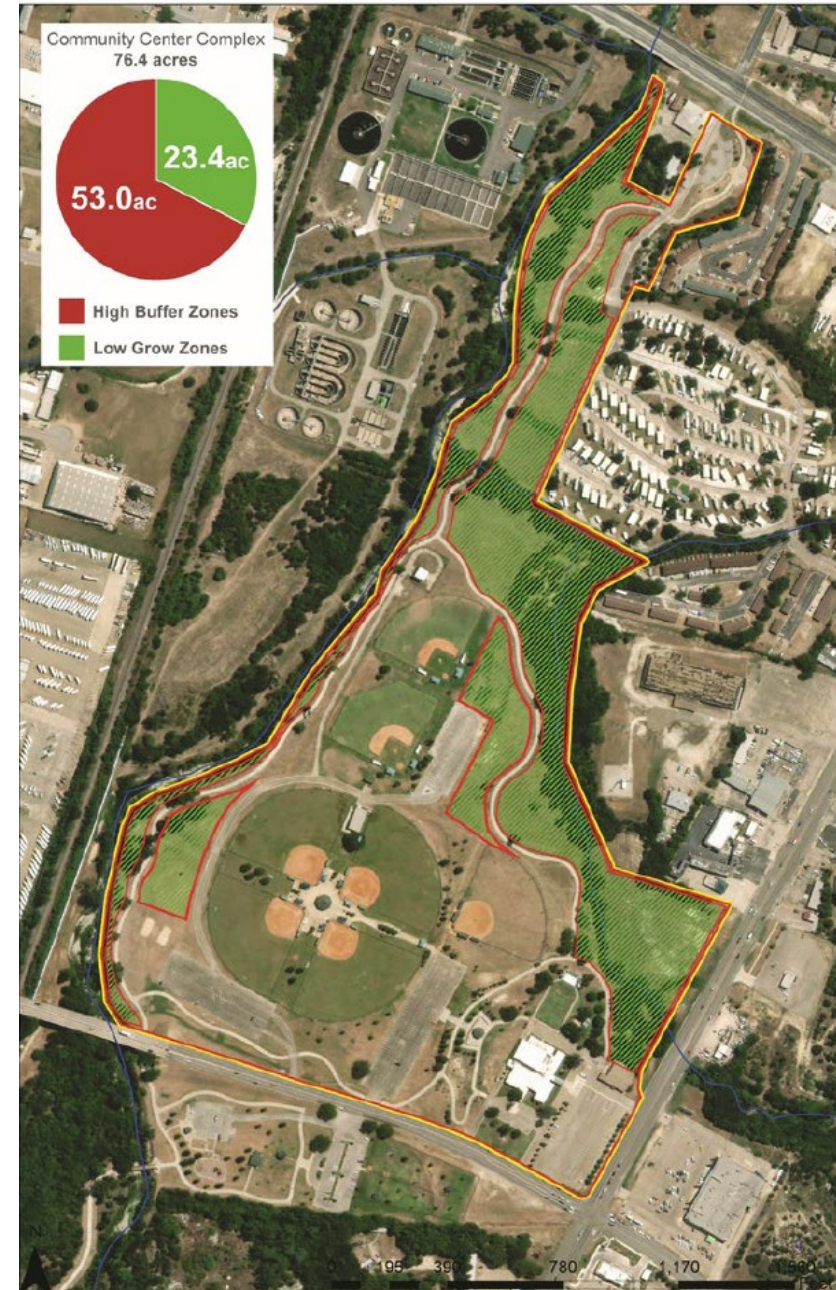
　　▶ 17 acres designated as Grow Zones of 67.8 acres

Community Parks Grow Zones

▶ Long Branch Park Grow Zone established March 2022

  ▶ 45.6 acres designated as Grow Zones of 79 acres

Long Branch Community Park
79.0 acres

33.4ac 45.6ac

■ High Buffer Zones
■ Low Grow Zones

Community Parks Grow Zones

▶ Killeen Athletic Complex Grow Zone established March 2022

    ▶ 23.4 acres designated as Grow Zones of 76.4 acres

How can you get involved?

- ▶ Grow Zones are a part of how we are continuing to keep our parks beautiful & a huge part of that is you.

  - ▶ Do your part to stay out of Grow Zone areas

  - ▶ Volunteer!

    - ▶ Recreation Services puts on several park & waterway clean up events throughout the year

    - ▶ Keep your eye open for the next one and join us in making our parks even better!