June 2014

2014 Odessa Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

HALFF

Odessa

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

FINAL DRAFT JUNE 2014

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June 26, 2014

City of Odessa
Mr. Steve Patton
Director of Parks and Recreation
1100 West 42nd Street
Odessa, Texas 79764

Reference: Draft of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Dear Mr. Patton:

Halff Associates, Inc. is pleased to submit the draft document of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. This document is the culmination of an extensive planning process involving elected officials, staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and most importantly the citizens of Odessa. The plan's recommendations encompass the many varied components of Odessa's parks and recreation system - from parks, athletic fields, and aquatics to trails and the preservation of open space. Our purpose has been to create a functional road map that outlines the vision for the parks system over the next ten years. This document is intended to guide the parks system, but also incorporates flexibility in responding to unique opportunities as they arise.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to have worked with you, your citizens, and your staff. We believe that this document will help guide Odessa as it creates one of the best parks system in the west Texas region.

Sincerely,

Halff Associates, Inc.

Jim Carrillo, FAICP, ASLA
Vice President/Director of Planning

Acknowledgements

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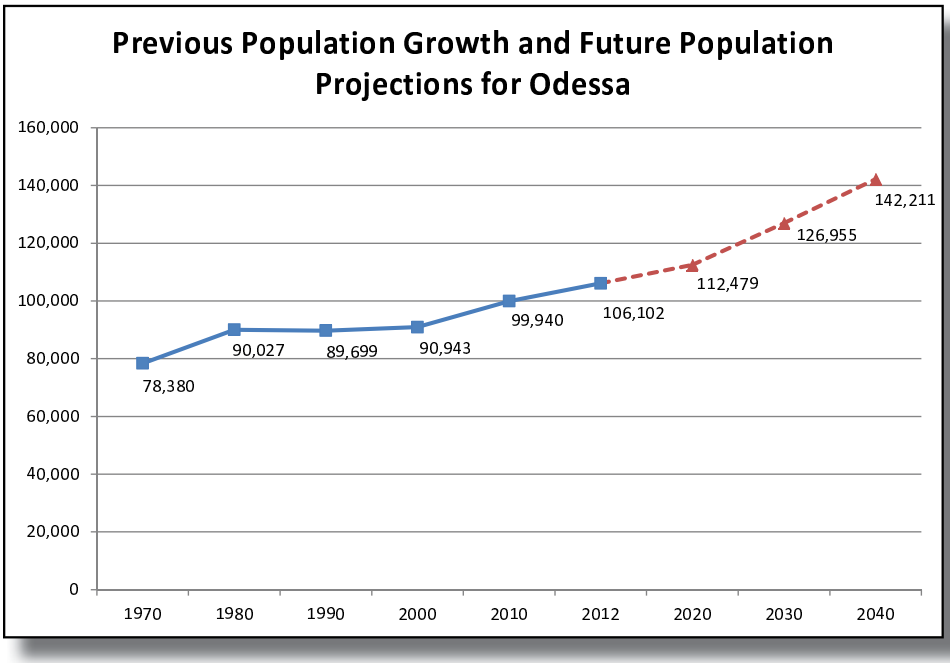
Executive Summary

Because of the oil boom experienced over the past decade, Odessa's population has grown significantly. It is important for cities such as Odessa to properly manage that growth so that the quality of life in the City will be sustained. Planning for parks and open spaces among the development of homes and commercial areas is vital to the overall success of Odessa. The quality of our lives in enhanced by the qualities of the places we live. In turn, that quality of life is reflected in greater economic returns and a great sense of optimism about that place.

Well developed parks and natural areas are often the first places that visitors notice in a community. In fact, parks are one of the most visible elements of a city government at work, and can instill a strong sense of pride in its residents. A great parks system lets both citizens and visitors know that the leadership of the city is interested in providing the best for its citizens. Odessa city staff and elected officials recognize that recreation plays an important role in the quality of life in the City, and that a strong parks system provides for a healthier environment, improves the well being of children and adults, and reminds us every day about what is attractive and fun in our city.

The primary functions of this master plan are to assess the current state of Odessa's parks, recreation, trails and open space system; define needs and deficiencies in the system; and establish goals and priorities for improving the system. In addition to performing these primary functions, the master plan also identifies changing trends locally, regionally and nationally; identifies citizen needs and opinions; and finally recommends changes on various scales - from citywide to site-specific, and of various types - from physical, to regulatory, to operational.

This master plan assesses what is great about parks and recreation opportunities in Odessa, and what should be done to fill key needs to make the City an even better place to live. It is an ambitious plan, but one that can be tackled by all who live in Odessa in readily achievable steps. It is a plan that will help contribute to Odessa being a great place to live, work, play and visit.



Source: 1970 - 2012 US Census Bureau; 2020 - 2040 TWDB 2016 Regional and 2017 State Water Plan Projections Data

Population Growth

Odessa's population growth has always been closely tied to the rise and fall of the oil and gas industry in the United States. The growth over the past 10 years can be characterized as steady because of the recent oil boom. After suffering a lose in population during the 1980s and 1990s because of oil and gas industry troubles, the City of Odessa has gained approximately 15,000+ residents since 2000 (or approximately a 17% increase). In the 2004 Plan, the population was estimated to reach 106,00 by the year 2040. At that time, it was thought that it would take four decades to add 15,000 residents. However, Odessa is currently at that population now, and the gradual growth is expected to continue into the future with a new estimated population of 142,000 by 2040.

Park Categories

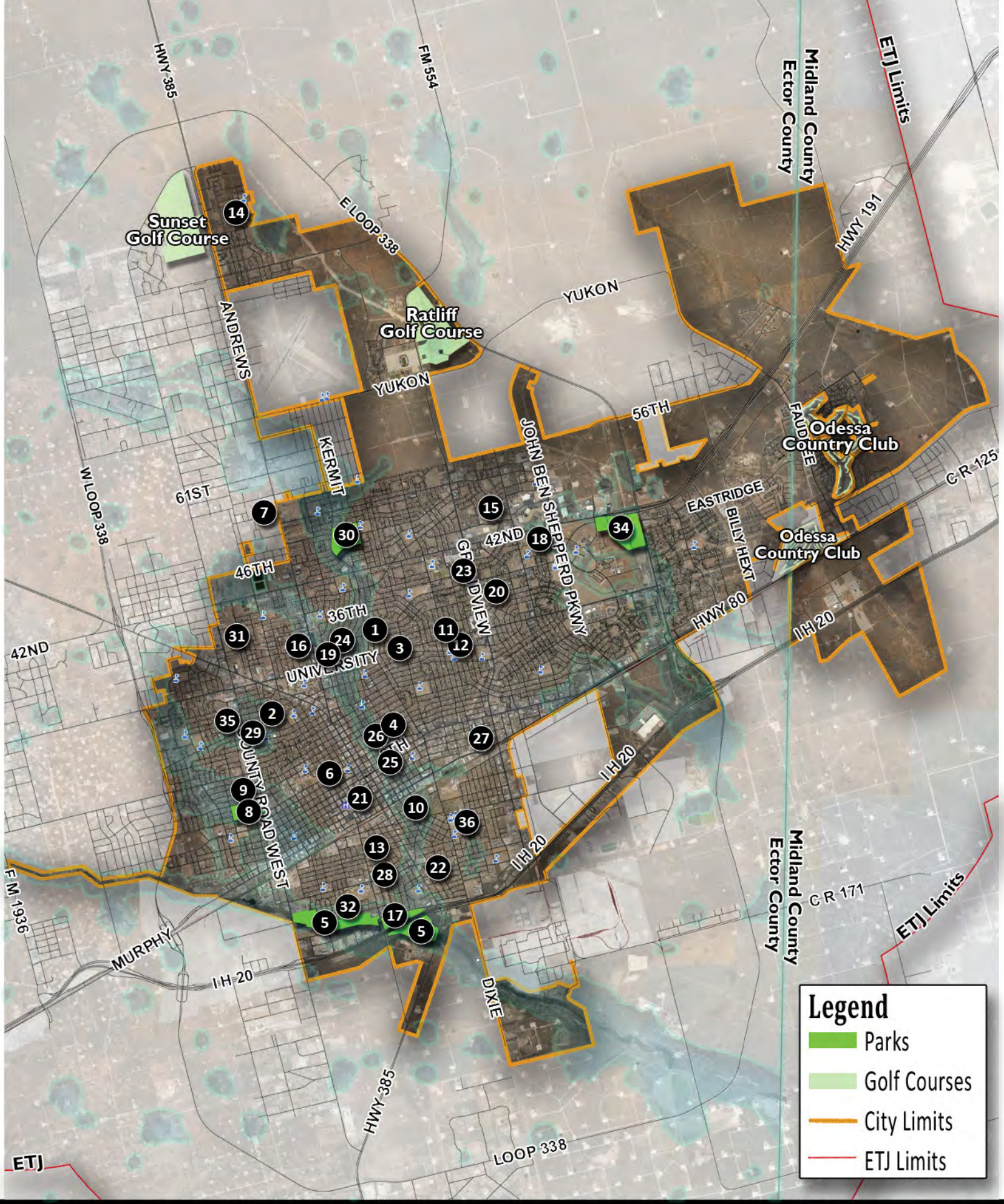
The Odessa Parks and Recreation Department is currently responsible for the operation and maintenance of 36 park sites, totaling 554.76 acres. Understanding the types of parks and their distribution helps to determine whether or not the public is being well served with recreation opportunities. This plan uses national and state guidelines which identify three broad categories of parks. These are:

- **Local, Close to Home Parks** - These are usually located within the community served by the facility. It includes pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Trail corridors, greenbelts, and in some cases, linear parks may also be considered Close to Home Parks.
- **Regional Parks** - These parks can be located up to an half hour to one hour driving distance for most of its visitors. Parks in this category serve a number of communities, and include city regional parks, park reserves, state parks, and national parks.
- **Unique Parks** - These parks can be either local or regional. They are defined as areas that are unique in some way, whether because of the physical features of the park, or because of the types of facilities provided within them. Parks in this category may include linear parks, special use parks, land conservancies, nature preserves, sports complexes, or botanical gardens.

Close to home parks are the most important category and are of the greatest immediate concern to the City of Odessa. Close to home parks address day to day facilities for all ages and activities, and are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live. The five close to home park types currently existing in Odessa are:

- Neighborhood parks, including pocket parks
- Community parks
- Athletic parks
- Special use parks
- Linear parks

Table E.1 summarizes the existing recreation facilities contained in the parks in Odessa. There is also one municipal golf course in Odessa, Ratliff Ranch Golf Course, which is a highly valued recreational amenity within the City. The golf course is approximately 125 acres in size.



Existing Parks

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

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Table E.1 Odessa 2014 Park Inventory

#	Park Name	Acres	District	Classification	Community Building	Swimming Pool	Walking Trail (miles)	Baseball Fields (Lighted)	Softball Fields (Lighted)	Soccer Fields (Lighted)	Soccer Fields (Not Lighted)	Backstop	Practice Soccer Goals	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Play Area	Pavilion	Pavilion Picnic Tables	Pavilion Trash Cans	Wood Picnic Tables	Metal Picnic Tables	BBQ Pits	Trash Cans	Drinking Fountain	Gym	Restroom	Park Signs	Park Rules	Dumpster	Irrigation System	Park Spaces (Reg/Handicap)	Attendance/ Crowd Capacity
1	Bellaire	4.2	3	Neighborhood								1					1					2		4			1	2		1	A	2/H	150
2	Buchannan	0.5	3	Neighborhood									2				1							6				1	1		A		NR
3	Casa Bella	1.8	3	Neighborhood									1				1											1	1		A		50
4	Central	9.5	1	Neighborhood													1							5			1	3	4	2	A	134 N/H	370
5	Comanche Trail	160	1	Special Use			1.6			2							1	2	2	6			5	7			3	3	4	3	A	160/9H	
6	Crump	1	5	Neighborhood													1							3				2	2		A	7/1 H	50
7	Dorthy Murphy	4.2	3	Neighborhood								2		1/CNL			1				2			4				1	1		A		50
8	Floyd Gwin	40	5	Community		1		4						2/CL	1/CL	3/AL	1	1	6	4	4		9	15		1	2	4	6		A	457/17H	1400
9	Floyd Gwin Soccer	12	5	Sports Complex							5																1						
10	Frederick Douglass	0.3	1	Neighborhood											2/CNL		1											1		1	A		50
11	Freedom	6.7	4	Special Use															6	4	1			2				3	2		A		50
12	Jim Parker	14	1	Neighborhood				2				3	1	2/CL		2/AL	1	1	6	2			2	2			1	3	4	4	A	229/6H	300
13	Juan Ramirez	4	1	Neighborhood								1			1/CNL		1	1	2	2			1	2				2	1		A		100
14	Lawndale	8	4	Neighborhood			0.3					1					1	1							1								
15	Lions Club	3.5	4	Neighborhood									2				1					1						2	1		A		50
16	Mark Henderson	2.1	3	Neighborhood													1		6	4		2						1	1		A		50
17	McKinney	22	1	Community		1	0.3	3						1/AL		2/SL	1	1					3	9	1		1	3	4	2	A	52/8H	215
18	Memorial Gardens	12	2	Special Use			1.0																				1						
19	Modern Gardeners	0.75	3	Special Use																	3			1				1			A		
20	Murry Fly	5	2	Neighborhood										1/CNL			1					1	1	2				3			A		50
21	Noel Heritage Plaza	1	1	Special Use																	2										A	30 N/H CB-1CEN BUS	400
22	O'Conner	1.5	1	Neighborhood													1		6	4				1				1	1		A		50
23	Optimist	10	4	Neighborhood									2	2/AL			1	1					1	1			1	4	3		A	51/3H	200
24	Polyantha	0.91	3	Special Use																								1	3		A		NR
25	Progressive	2	1	Neighborhood													1				3			5				1	3		A	43/9H	100
26	Purple Sage	7	1	Neighborhood			0.3										1		2	2			3	3				3	1	2	A	43 U/P	120
27	Royalty	4.2	1	Neighborhood										1/CNL			1		2	2	3		1	4			1	4	2	1	A		50
28	Salinas	7	1	Neighborhood	1			1									1	1	3	4	1		1	6				1	2	1	A	78/5H	100
29	San Jacinto	9.3	3	Neighborhood			0.4					4		1/CNL			1	1	0	6	9	13	2	5				3	5	1	A	31/2H	105
30	Sherwood	65	4	Community	1	1	1.2	3				4	19	2/CL		2/SL	1	1	0		1		11	38	1		1	4	12		H/M	363/14H	1650
31	Slator	8.9	5	Neighborhood	1				2					2/CL		2/AL	1						1	5			1	2	3	1	A	39/1H	150
32	Southside Ball Park	11.5	1	Sports Complex				1																2			1	1	2	1	A	136 N/H	375
33	Stone Gate	6	2	Neighborhood															20	10		16									A(trees)		
34	UTPB	90	2	Sports Complex			5.0		14	3	16			1/ANL	1/ANL	1/SNL	1	6			1		8	7			2	1	12		A	254/1H	2000
35	Western Manor	1.9	5	Neighborhood								2	1				1		6	6	5		1	2				1	2		A		50
36	Woodson	17	1	Community	1	1					1						1	2					4	8				3	8		A	198/12H	300
	Total	**554.76**			**4**	**4**	**10.1**	**14**	**16**	**5**	**22**	**18**	**28**	**16**	**5**	**12**	**28**	**19**	**67**	**56**	**35**	**35**	**54**	**149**	**3**	**1**	**18**	**66**	**91**	**20**		**0**	**8585**

Goals and Objectives for Odessa

Goals and objectives for a plan such as this create the foundation for guiding future decisions and development. They are intended to build upon the goals established in the 2004 Parks Plan. Goals are an important part of the planning process in that they provide the underlying philosophical framework for decisions and also guide decision makers on issues. The goals expressed in this plan reflect the desires of the citizens, elected and appointed officials and the staff of Odessa.

Goal #1 Work towards transforming Odessa's parks, recreation, and open spaces into one of the best systems in the State of Texas.

Goal #2 Provide an even and adequate distribution of park facilities citywide.

Goal #3 Continue to provide a good range and diversity of facilities and recreation activities for all segments of the population of Odessa.

Goal #4 Use park sites to create an "urban oasis" to promote the beautification of Odessa.

Goal #5 Preserve and protect unique natural open spaces, floodplain corridors, and drainage corridors within the City and its ETJ.

Goal #6 Promote partnerships with other public, semi-public and private entities to most efficiently use public funding to provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities in Odessa.

Goal #7 Be proactive in conserving water in parks.

Goal #8 Continue to maintain all City of Odessa parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition.

Public Involvement in the Planning Process

The recommendations of the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan are designed to truly reflect the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of Odessa. This plan adopts the philosophy that a citywide planning process should listen to the citizens of the City, and reflect the desires and concerns of all of the citizens of Odessa.

This plan incorporates an extensive amount of public input, utilizing several alternative methods. By using multiple methods of public input, feedback from many varying parts of the community was received, leading to a broader consensus on the direction that the plan should take.

An online survey was conducted as part of the park planning process. The survey was designed to examine residents' current participation and interests in recreational activities, and it also assessed recreational needs in Odessa. The survey was linked through the City's website, and was available to all residents in Odessa and its ETJ. The survey generally contained the same questions that were asked in the 2004 survey for the previous master plan so that satisfaction and preference trends could be established. The survey was available to the public for approximately three months, and 1,395 responses were received - that is equivalent to approximately one out of every 91 residents in the City.

Five public meetings (one in each council district) were held in the month of July. The public meetings were designed as an open forum type of setting. A brief presentation was given to discuss the purpose of having a master

plan and where the City is today in terms of facilities and condition. Then residents were invited to participate in an open discussion and verbalize what they feel are the needs of the City for parks and recreation. Approximately 100 residents attended the public meetings.

Over the course of a two day charrette in June 2013, the planning team met with several different stakeholder groups including various athletic leagues and associations, the YMCA, public art activists, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the particular needs and desires of their interest groups.

Needs Assessment Methods

A variety of different inputs and techniques are used in evaluating Odessa's current and future park needs. Generally, three methodologies were included in the needs assessment analysis. These techniques follow general methodologies accepted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for local park master plans. These three techniques are:

- **Standard-based Assessment** - This technique uses locally developed level of service ratios of facilities to population so as to project where the City is today and where it might be in the future as the population grows.
- **Demand-based Assessment** - This technique uses actual and/or anticipated usage growth data, as well as citizen input on the types of activities they would like to engage in, to determine which facilities and programs are most in demand.
- **Resource-based Assessment** - This technique recognizes that Odessa has many unique physical features, and explores how to convert these into recreation or open space assets that help to meet the demand for recreation in the City.

All three methods are important in their own regard, but individually do not represent the entire picture. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities and park requirements are needed in Odessa. Ultimately, these needs are vetted by the citizens of Odessa, and are determined to best represent the key park and recreational needs of the City.

Summary of Park Acreage Needs

Neighborhood Parks

- Current Ratio = 1.03 acres per 1,000 population
- Recommended Standard = 1.5 acres per 1,000 population
- Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 169 acres +/- (deficit of 59 acres +/-)
- The largest issue facing neighborhood parks is keeping up with development. As Odessa continues to grow quickly, the City needs to adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance to ensure that those development and the residents living within are adequately served with neighborhood parks. All new neighborhood parks should ideally be located within the center of the neighborhood to allow for adequate access and will help to reach the goal that all residents are within 1/2 mile walking distance of a park.

Community Parks

- Current Ratio = 2.6 acres per 1,000 population
- Recommended Standard = 4.0 acres per 1,000 population
- Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 450 acres +/- (deficit of 192 acres +/-)

- The largest acquisition needs facing the City is in terms of community parkland. There is a near term opportunity for a community park in the northern portion of the City near Ratliff Golf Course. This park will help alleviate the deficit of community parkland. Long term the City should seek to acquire additional land towards the eastern and the western portions of the City limits where growth is occurring.

Open Space

- Recommended Standard = 5.0 to 10.0 acres per 1,000 population
- Key areas of open space preservation will be along the draws in and near the City, which can further increase the opportunities for linear parks in Odessa.

Table E.2 Summary of Facility Needs

Facility	Current Amount	Current LOS (per residents)	Current Need Based on Pop	2020 Need Based on Pop	Level of Need
Baseball Fields	14	1 per 7,579	14, no deficit	15, deficit of 1	Medium
Basketball Courts	5	1 per 21,220	13, deficit of 8	14, deficit of 9	High
Community Centers	4	1 per 26,526	5, deficit of 1	5, deficit of 1	High
Dog Park	0	None	1 to 2, deficit of 1	1 to 2, deficit of 2	High
Football/Multi-purpose Fields	0	None	10, deficit of 10	11, deficit of 11	High
Pavilions	19	1 per 5,584	26, deficit of 7	28, deficit of 9	High
Picnicking Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Medium
Playgrounds	28	1 per 3,790	35, deficit of 7	37, deficit of 9	High
Practice Fields/ Backstops	46	1 per 2,307	53, deficit of 7	56, deficit of 10	High
Skate Park	1	1 per City	1 to 2, no deficit	1 to 2, deficit of 1	Medium-long term
Soccer Fields	27	1 per 3,930	30, deficit of 3	32, deficit of 5	High
Softball Fields	16	1 per 6,631	14, no deficit	15, no deficit	Low
Spraygrounds	1	1 per City	2, deficit of 1	2, deficit of 1	High-long term
Support Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Medium
Swimming Pools	3	1 per 35,367	3, no deficit	3, no deficit	High-long term
Tennis Courts	16	1 per 6,631	13, no deficit	14, no deficit	Low
Trails	10.1 miles	1 per 10,505	14.1, deficit of 4.0 miles	15, deficit of 4.9 miles	High
Volleyball Courts	12	1 per 8,842	13, deficit of 1	14, deficit of 2	Low

Table E.3 Summary of Demand-Based Assessment
Summary of top needs based on the online survey
1. Playgrounds
2. Jogging/biking trails
3. Picnic tables
4. Outdoor family aquatic center/water park
5. Indoor aquatic facility
6. Rental picnic/reunion pavilions
7. Dog park
8. Arboretum or nature center
9. Amphitheater
10. Natural habitat/nature areas
Summary of top needs based on public meetings
1. Dog park
2. Citywide indoor recreation center
3. Improvements/renovations to existing parks
4. Additional sports fields for football, soccer, etc.
5. Trails, especially lighted trails for evening use
Summary of top needs based on stakeholder interviews
1. Upgrades to existing parks
2. Overall beautification efforts including public art
3. More turf fields for practice as well as soccer/football
4. More trails for both walkers/joggers and bicyclists
5. Fourth pool either in the east or north
6. Hire an athletic coordinator to help leagues schedule places and times to practice
7. Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance so that developments add park facilities as new neighborhoods are built to serve those residents

Summary of Resource-based Assessment

The resource-based assessment addresses key physical features of the City that may be incorporated as potential recreational opportunities. Both man-made and natural features can be considered. The City of Odessa has many landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreation use and open space preservation where feasible. These include the draw corridors, utility right of ways, and easements. The use or development of each resource should be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the unique characteristics of each location and the opportunities that can be afforded without damaging environmentally sensitive features. It is important to approach the use and development of these various resources in a unified, coordinated manner in order to realize the best results from each.

Recommendations by Category

The items contained in the recommendations section summarize the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommend a series of actions to improve and expand Odessa's park system. These recommendations address the development of land already acquired and dedicated for parks, additional land for new parks, opportunities for trails, indoor facility needs, and general improvements to existing parks. The recommendations should be implemented or initiated over the general life of this master plan, which covers the next five to ten years. However, this section also includes other longer range recommendations to be initiated beyond the ten year timeframe. All recommended items in this report are prioritized in Chapter 7 in the implementation plan.

Illustrations included with each of the recommendations are intended to convey the essence of each idea, but unless noted otherwise are not actual plans. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections should be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented. Recommendations and associated actions are divided into the following categories:

A. Current and future parkland acquisition

B. Park renovations

C. Outdoor recreation facilities

D. Beautification and public art

E. Indoor recreation facilities and programs/special events

F. Trails

Action Plan

The Action Plan is the basic actions and tasks required in order for the City of Odessa to reach the target goals and objectives for the parks and recreation system. It maps out the immediate tasks at hand. Consider the following notes when reviewing the Action Plan:

- **Sequence** - The sequence is based directly on the recommended importance and need for each action. However, some actions may take longer to occur. In that case, other actions may be easier to accomplish sooner, but should not diminish the need for higher priority actions.
- **Funding possibilities** - The sale of certificates of obligation may generate funding, such as a Quality of Life Bond. The Action Plan is a guide, but may vary as specific needs or opportunities occur within the City. Other potential funding sources are noted in the table, but are not secured. Rather, they should be considered as possibilities to also pursue.
- **Projected costs** - The projected costs per item are intended to establish an order of magnitude cost range. These estimates are made prior to any designs or detailed concepts being developed, and will vary as more detailed design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar types of facilities and efforts. All costs include an escalation factor, assumed to be in the range of 3% per year.
- **Suggested timeframe** - The suggested timeframes are approximate and are intended to establish a sequence for all actions. The timeframe of each recommended priority is based on High Priority (within the next five years), Medium Priority (within five to ten years) or Long Term (ten years and beyond). Note that the prioritization in this plan is intended to guide staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and City Council, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

A Parkland Dedication Ordinance is used by many cities, and is now generally not considered onerous by the development community, but rather is welcomed as a method to help fund smaller parks in a timely manner. A city's parkland dedication ordinance provides an important mechanism to ensure that adequate parkland is available when new development occurs. The City of Odessa currently does not have a parkland dedication ordinance. Therefore, it is a high priority recommendation that the City pursues adopting such an ordinance.

Landscaping Ordinance

Establishing a landscaping ordinance in Odessa can contribute to the beautification efforts throughout the City. This master plan strongly recommends the City adopt a landscaping ordinance. Beautification was consistently ranked as a high priority need among residents during the public input process.

Table E.4 Action Plan 2014-2024

City of Odessa

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Key Recommendations - 2014 to 2024

Priority	Action	District	Land in Acres		Estimated Cost Range (1)		Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Additional Staffing Needs (1)	Potential Time Frame
			Low	High	Low Range	High Range				
1	**Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance**	Citywide			NA	NA	Policy	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
2	**Adopt a Landscaping Ordinance**	Citywide			NA	NA	Policy	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
3	**Repurpose/redevelop exisitng parks (Southside Ball Park, Salinas Park and Community Building, Lawndale building into Community Center)**	Citywide			$2,000,000	$2,500,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
4	**Renovate/develop neighborhood park sites (Slator Park including dog park if additional land can be acquired, Lions Club Park, Bellaire Park, Central Park, Preston Oaks Park*, 52nd Street and Tanglewood Ave Park*, Murry Fly Park, Western Manor Park, Eastside neighborhood park*)**	Citywide	3	6	$4,000,000	$7,000,000	Renovation/New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	2 +/-	Within 5 Years
5	**Renovate/develop community parks (Floyd Gwin Park, Woodson Park, Sherwood Park, UTPB Park, North Park near school site including sprayground*)**	Citywide		40	$6,000,000	$8,000,000	Renovation/New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	2 +/-	Within 5 Years
6	**Develop new aquatic facility in north or east**	Citywide	10	20	$8,000,000	$12,000,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	4 to 10 +/-	Within 5 Years
7	**Develop/redevelop neighborhood parks (O'Conner Park, expand Frederick Douglass Park, Dorothy Lee Murphy Park, Stonegate Park*, Dunbar Avenue Park*)**	Citywide			$2,000,000	$5,000,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 Years
8	**Develop 90 acre Metropolitan Park at Eastridge Road and Bill Hext Road***	2		90	$950,000	$1,000,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	3 +/-	Within 5 Years
	Estimated Total Cost - High Priority Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)		**13**	**156**	**$ 22,950,000**	**$ 35,500,000**			**up to 17 +/-**	

**New Park Development*

Table E.4 Action Plan 2014-2024

City of Odessa

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Key Recommendations - 2014 to 2024

Priority	Action	District	Land in Acres		Estimated Cost Range (1)		Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Additional Staffing Needs (1)	Potential Time Frame
			Low	High	Low Range	High Range				
9	**Additional jogging and biking trails in all parks**	Citywide			$4,000,000	$5,000,000	Trail Construction	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
10	**More shade, playgrounds, lighitng and public art in existing parks**	Citywide			$500,000	$1,000,000	Renovation / Enhancements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
11	**Additional rental pavilions at existing parks (add at least five)**	Citywide			$150,000	$300,000	Renovation / Enhancements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
12	**Citywide recreation center with aquatic component (could be multiple phases)**	Citywide	10	20	$12,000,000	$15,000,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	5 to 10 +/-	Within 5 to 10 Years
13	**Add more backstops in existing parks**	Citywide			$40,000	$120,000	Renovation / Enhancments	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
14	**Improve practice fields at existing parks (grading, improved playing surface)**	Citywide			$200,000	$500,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
Estimated Total Cost - Medium and Long Term Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)			**10**	**20**	**$ 16,890,000**	**$ 21,920,000**			**up to 10 +/-**	

1. Note: Costs and maintenance personnel estimates shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Chapter 1 :: Why Plan for Parks

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Chapter 1 :: Why Plan For Parks

Why Do We Plan for Parks?

Because of the oil boom experienced over the past decade, Odessa's population has grown significantly. It is important for cities such as Odessa to properly manage that growth so that the quality of life in the City will be sustained. Planning for parks and open spaces among the development of homes and commercial areas is vital to the overall success of Odessa. The quality of our lives is enhanced by the qualities of the places we live. In turn, that quality of life is reflected in greater economic returns and a great sense of optimism about that place.

Well developed parks and natural areas are often the first places that visitors notice in a community. In fact, parks are one of the most visible elements of a city government at work, and can instill a strong sense of pride in its residents. A great parks system lets both citizens and visitors know that the leadership of the city is interested in providing the best for its citizens. Odessa city staff and elected officials recognize that recreation plays an important role in the quality of life in the City, and that a strong parks system provides for a healthier environment, improves the well being of children and adults, and reminds us every day about what is attractive and fun in our city.

The purpose of this 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to provide an assessment of Odessa's parks and recreation system. The park planning process allows the citizens of Odessa to determine what their preferred park and recreation priorities should be for the next five to ten years.

A Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is exactly what its name indicates. **Parks** typically refer to land dedicated to outdoor areas programmed for **Recreation**, which refers to both active and passive recreation activities including sports play, jogging, picnicking, etc. **Open space** lands can be dedicated for conservation and preservation due to their ecological value, wildlife habitat quality, cultural significance, or functional role to assist with flood management. The importance of open space is often overlooked since the concept of open space does not always fit the idea of land programmed for a particular recreational activity that would require regular landscape maintenance. However, the very reason for it not requiring regular attention can be a

The very reason that open space does not require regular maintenance can be a great asset, offering outdoor enjoyment, visual pleasure and ecological function at a minimum cost.

great asset, offering outdoor enjoyment, visual pleasure and ecological function at a minimum cost.

The 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan aims to:

- Look at the potential growth of the City over the next ten years, assess where additional facilities will be needed as the City grows, and assess what types of facilities are most needed.
- Point out opportunities and recommend alternatives for improving the parks system.
- Guide city staff in acquiring land to meet future park and open space needs, specifically in terms of regional parkland.
- Prioritize key recommendations so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible.
- Guide city staff and city leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years.

Purpose of the Master Plan Update

The primary functions of this master plan are to assess the current state of Odessa's parks, recreation, trails and open space system; define needs and deficiencies in the system; and establish goals and priorities for improving the system. In addition to performing these primary functions, the master plan also identifies changing trends locally, regionally and nationally; identifies citizen needs and opinions; and finally recommends changes on various scales - from citywide to site-specific, and of various types - from physical, to regulatory, to operational.

This master plan assesses what is great about parks and recreation opportunities in Odessa, and what should be done to fill key needs to make the City an even better place to live. It is an ambitious plan, but one that can be tackled by all who live in Odessa in readily achievable steps. It is a plan that will help contribute to Odessa being a great place to live, work, play and visit.

This document is the culmination of the park planning effort, and is intended to guide the staff and elected officials of the City as they decide how best to meet and prioritize the recreation needs of Odessa over the next ten years.

Steps in the Planning Process

The planning process is illustrated by the figure shown below. The single most important element of the master planning process is the extensive interaction with stakeholders, residents, staff, and appointed and elected city representatives. This plan should fully embrace the needs, concerns and dreams of the residents of Odessa.

The plan is divided into sections that address existing facilities and key needs, then lays out recommendations for each type of park facility and major programs for the City. The plan divides each recommendation into two categories:

Figure 1-1 Steps in the Park Planning Process

- The first part address those actions that are immediate and that should be undertaken to renovate or better utilize existing facilities. It also addresses actions that meet the needs of today's population.
- The second part of the recommendations addresses longer range, visionary actions that can maintain Odessa's parks position as one of the best systems in region.

Master Plan Timeframe

The master plan is formulated to address a ten year timeframe from 2014 to 2024. Many of the recommendations of the plan are valid for a period of more than ten years, and should be reassessed periodically. Per planning requirements issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the master plan should be updated after a five year period, or before if any major developments occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the City. The following steps are recommended for periodic review of this master plan:

- An annual review by the Odessa Parks and Recreation Department staff should be conducted to review progress and successes.
- Any updates will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Odessa City Council.
- More frequent updates may be required if special needs or occurrences require modifications to the plan.
- In all cases, public involvement through citizen meetings, interviews and workshops will be included in any updating process.

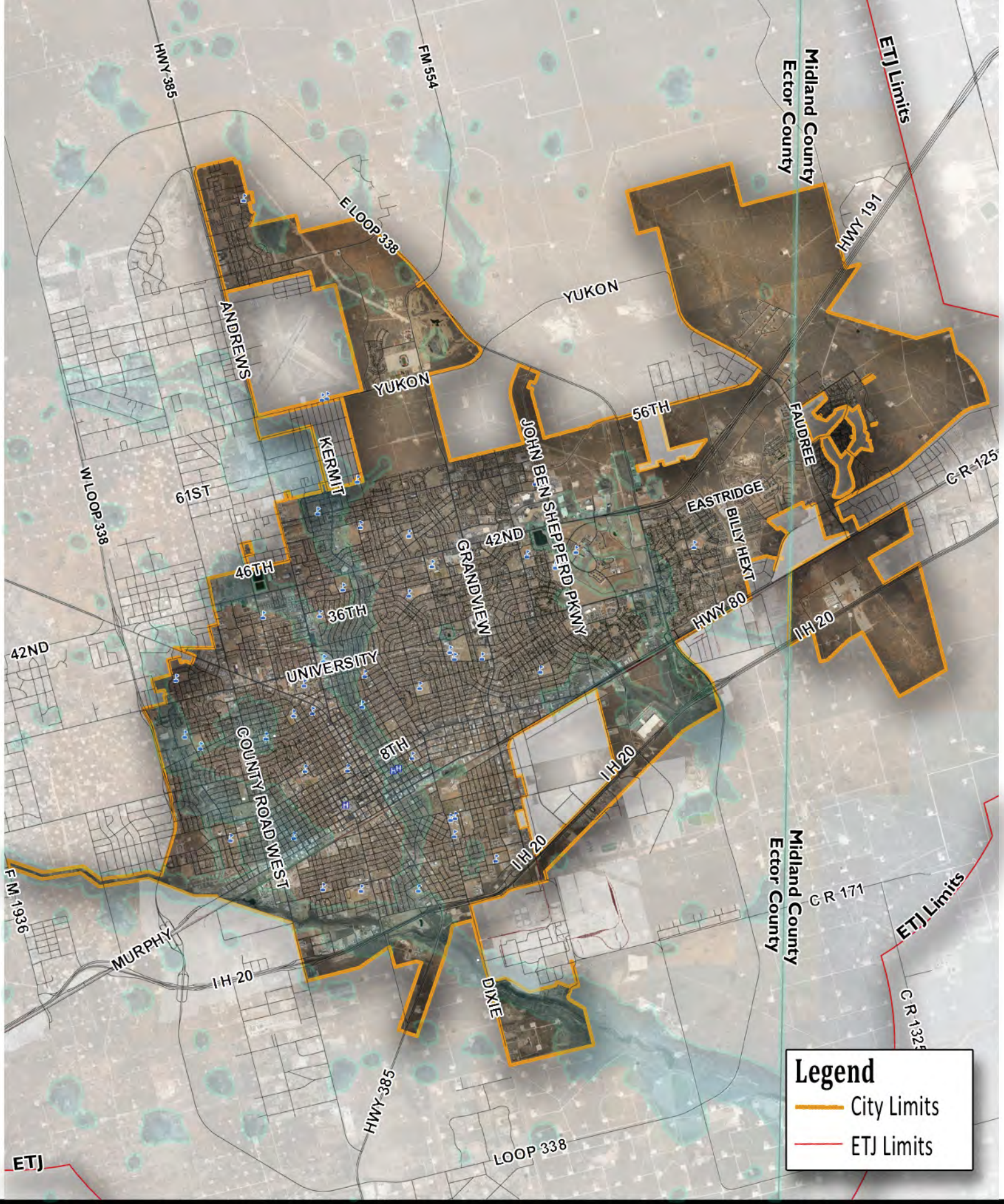
Jurisdiction and Recreation Provider

This plan analyzes the park needs of the City of Odessa and its surrounding extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The recommendations of this plan should be implemented by the City of Odessa. The city limits of Odessa are approximately 45.5 square miles in size. Most of Odessa is within Ector County; however, a small portion of the eastern side of the City falls within Midland County. The map on the following page shows the existing city limits of Odessa.

The City of Odessa is the primary governmental entity charged with providing recreational facilities for the citizens of Odessa. Ancillary recreational facilities are provided by Ector County Independent School District on the school campuses, Odessa College, the University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB), Ector County, and the local YMCA. The implementation of this plan will be lead by the City of Odessa and the Parks and Recreation Department. However, everyone in Odessa has a vested interest in ensuring the parks system in the City continues to be one of the best in the west Texas region. This includes:

- Primary responsibility - Odessa Parks and Recreation Department
- All governmental entities, including the City of Odessa, Ector County, ECISD, and other advisory group entities such as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
- The business community in Odessa, including property owners, developers, commercial entities, and others.
- All citizens of Odessa, no matter which part of the City they live in.
- Nearby residents of Ector County, since the Odessa parks system can offer services to non-residents.

The parks master plan follows the general guidelines for local park master plans established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). This document will be filed with TPWD and allows the City to better qualify for grant opportunities as they become available.



Odessa's City Limits

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

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History of Odessa's Parks System

From the neighborhood parks in most parts of the City to the athletic fields the UTPB Park, evidence of a diverse and innovative park system is readily apparent in Odessa. A prime example of this is Memorial Gardens. The park is very simple, but it's beauty, inclusion of water and the fact that walking is attractive to every segment of the population, makes it a place that everyone in Odessa can point to with pride.

Most of Odessa's parks were established by Ector County, which operated the Parks system until the mid 1980s. Odessa's first park was McKinney Park which was developed in 1927. Soon after in September 1927, Crump Park was developed. It was purchased from Albert Smith for the sum of $1,500 and was 1.04 acres in size. In 1936, it was selected as the site for the first city hall. The original building is still in use today.

The first community park was Floyd Gwin Park, developed in 1940. This park contained the "Ector County Auditorium," built in 1940, and it served as the first Ector County coliseum. The auditorium is still utilized by the Police Athletic League. The first aquatic facility was developed in 1945 at Floyd Gwin Park. The swimming pool remained operational until the 1980s, when it was renovated. It remains in operation today. Three other swimming pools were developed in the early 1950s, including McKinney Park Pool, Woodson Park Pool, and Sherwood Park Pool.

In 1954, Sherwood Park, a second community park was developed. Sherwood Park contained Prairie Pete Playland Park, a playground developed by the Rotary Club. Sherwood Park remains the most popular and used park in Odessa.

In 1986, Comanche Trails Park opened and it contained the area's first major hike and bike trail system. Noel Plaza was developed in 1991, in honor of Mr. W.D. Noel. In 1996, the Odessa Downtown Lioness Club developed a park for the physically challenged at Progressive Park.

An athletic park was developed on the campus of the University of Texas Permian Basin. The features of UTPB Park include athletic facilities for soccer, baseball, softball, disc golf, horseshoes, basketball, tennis, sand volleyball, playgrounds and picnic facilities. The Memorial Gardens Park site is a passive recreation park site that includes a hike and bike trail, a xeriscape demonstration garden and Pioneer Plaza. Memorial Gardens is also a great example of the use of public art in an outdoor setting. In 2004, the Heritage of Odessa Foundation dedicated a bronze steer at Pioneer Plaza in the park that was donated by the original ranching families that settled the West Texas Area.

Two family aquatic centers (one located at Sherwood Park and the other at Woodson Park) opened in 2002. These two aquatic centers feature amenities for all ages, including a bathhouse with a concessions stand, shade structures, sand volleyball, sand playground, and a beach entry pool that contains lap lanes. Also featured are water slides, vortex, swim channel, lily pad walk, floor geysers, water volleyball, water playground equipment, frog slide and mushroom fountain.

Sherwood Pool - photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

The park system now contains over 550 acres of dedicated park land at 36 park site locations. The maintenance and operations of the parks and recreation system consists of an employee force of 42 full-time employees and an annual budget of over $4.8 million.

Odessa has also been named a "Tree City USA" for the past 19

years. This Arbor Day Foundation program is intended to guide cities in forestry management. To qualify as a Tree City USA, a city must meet four standards: 1) have a tree board or department; 2) adopting at Tree Care Ordinance; 3) have a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita; and 4) have an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. There are a total of 77 cities in Texas with the "Tree Cities USA" designation.

Previous Parks Master Plan

The previous Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was adopted in 2004. That master plan is the starting point to this update. This plan incorporates the goals and park standards that were developed during 2004. The 2004 plan was an ambitious plan, and yet many of the recommendations have been achieved in the past decade.

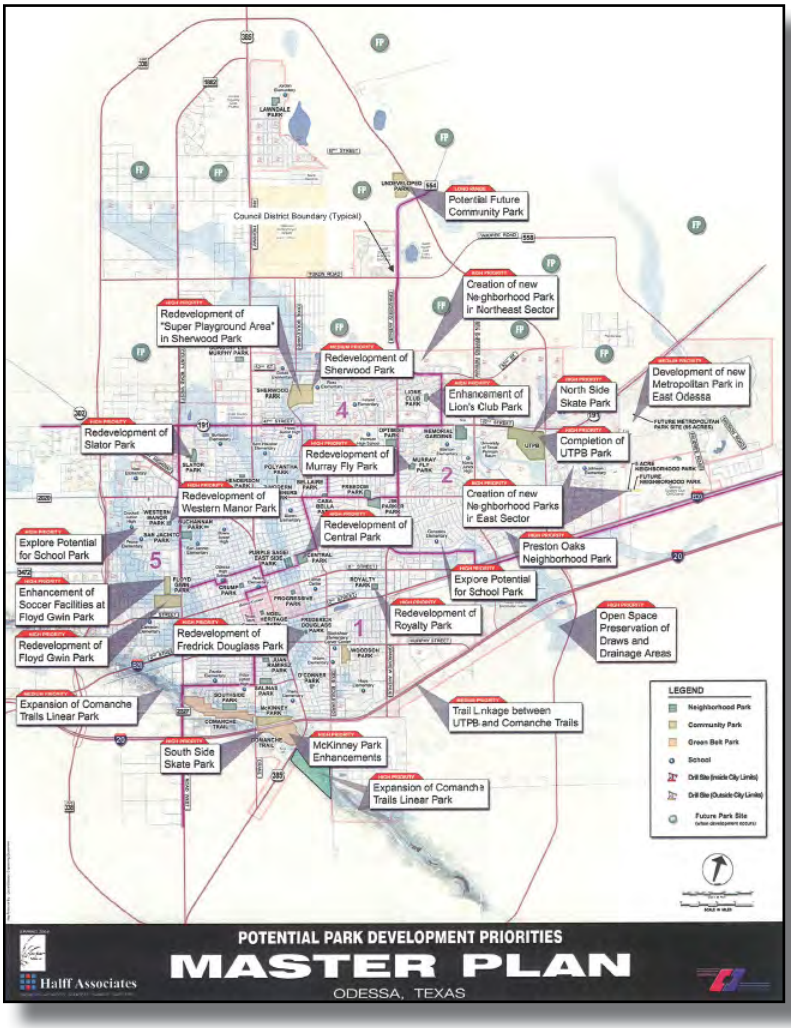


Figure 1-2 Priority recommendations from the 2004 Parks Master Plan

The key needs for the parks system in 2004 were determined to be picnic tables, an arboretum or nature center, jogging/biking trails, playgrounds, and more rental pavilions. There was also interest in more fishing facilities and a skateboard park. In 2004, 65% of respondents supported the City adopting a landscape ordinance and 57% supported adopting a parkland dedication ordinance.

The priority recommendations of the 2004 plan included renovations to existing community parks, enhancing neighborhood parks, developing a skate park, developing new neighborhood parks, acquiring land for future community parks, and extending the Comanche Trail.

Before the 2004 Plan, the 1995 Master Plan encompassed input from many segments of the population of Odessa, and created a strong vision for Parks, Recreation, Open Space and the Urban Landscape fabric of Odessa that has been followed diligently for the past several decades. That plan has served as an excellent guide in helping the parks system continue the process of transformation from the County-operated system of the 1980s to an excellent municipal system. Funding for park system improvements has been recognized as being very important, and has been maintained by council after council and through changes in city management. Every indication by the residents of Odessa is that they support the continued enhancement of the parks system and expect it to continue.

Market Assessment and Trends in Recreation

The parks, open spaces, and recreational offerings of a city play a large role in defining quality of life, as well as a city's identity and image. It is therefore important for a marketing plan for parks to understand regional and national trends related to parks and recreation facilities. Below, several of the most prevalent trends in the recreation profession are discussed. These are expected to carry forward into the near future and be relevant for the lifespan of this plan.

Many relevant articles and research findings are published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) that discuss the current and foreseeable trends in the recreation profession. For instance, technology advances, changes in our population, and the perception of public health are changing the parks and recreation industry standards and how people recreate. In one such article written last summer, Brad Chambers, Past Chair of the Supervisors Management School sponsored by NRPA, discusses how the technological advances that are being made can drastically change the operations of a parks and recreation department. For example, most of society is now cashless. Very few people carry cash, and even fewer will carry their wallet when they are out exercising on a trail or in a park. Park and recreation departments taking credit cards and having online registration was cutting edge nearly a decade ago. However, if the point of technology is to be convenient and secure, then staying up to date is crucial. In the very near future, there will be ways to register for programs or leagues on your mobile phone or by scanning a QR code. Satellite community centers and swimming pools could very likely have tablets and smart phones to accept payment and user fees through *Square* (a device that allows businesses to swipe and charge credit cards using a smart phone or tablet).

Within the past decade, the use of online registration and accepting credit cards for user fees was considered state of the art. As technology changes, the park and recreation program user experience will become even more convenient.

Population Trends

The population of the United States is starting to shift somewhat dramatically from what it was decades ago. This in turn will have a direct effect on recreation programming in terms of the types of people our cities are now serving and the types of activities they are interested in doing. Emilyn Sheffield of California State University at Chico notes five key demographic changes occurring the in United States that directly impact recreation. These include (1) the population is growing, but more slowly. The population from the 2000 to 2010 Census only increased 9.7%. That's down from a 13.2% growth rate from the decade before.

As our demographics change, the way people recreate will also change.

(2) Baby boomers are shifting the median age of our population. From the 2010 Census it was determined that 13% of the population is over 65, and that is expected to increase to 20% by the year 2050 as baby boomers continued to age. In fact, the baby

boomer generation as a whole and the elder seniors over 65 create a combined total of about 39% of the current population. This shift demonstrates the need to program our facilities for activities that accommodate retirees, and offer events that are multi-generational for the whole family - grandparents, parents and children.

(3) As the older portion of our population increases, the younger population is decreasing. In 2010, the population under the age of 18 reached an all-time low at 24%. Children, youth and teens will continue to be primary users of recreation facilities, so the change in programming for this cohort might not be as dramatic as for other groups.

(4) The population is becoming more racially and ethnically diversified. This is especially true of Texas which is a majority-minority state, meaning the majority of the population is of a minority background. This shift can have a change of parks and recreation department by offering events that cater to their population's unique cultural backgrounds and traditions.

(5) The distribution of our US population is changing. It is no surprise to those of us living in Texas that the US Census in 2010 reported that more than half the population lives in only ten states (Texas being one of them along with California, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, and Michigan). In fact, they further reported that 25% live in Texas, California and New York alone. One can argue that the rapid growth of our population in Texas will continue, and it is important to continue developing programs and facilities that appeal to everyone.

Health Trends

For the past several years and even decades, the health in America has been declining rapidly. It is estimated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that one in three children are obese and more than two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese. The CDC continues to report that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for one in four deaths. We all know that exercise and being outdoors is important to our overall health and wellbeing. After years of being bombarded with statistical evidence about how unhealthy our nation has become, we may now be at a turning point. For the first time in decades, the CDC reports a decrease in obesity for low-income preschoolers in 2013. This is a hopeful sign that people are becoming more active and living a healthier lifestyle.

Maureen Hannan, former editor of the NRPA magazine *Parks and Recreation,* discusses key trends that communities and even parks and recreation departments across the country are taking part in to help improve overall public health. (1) It is becoming more mainstream for doctors to actually prescribe spending time in parks and in nature. The purpose of such prescriptions is to increase activity outdoors in order to improve mental health, decrease obesity, and even reduce the risk of developing asthma. (2) More and more cities across the nation are banning tobacco use in parks. Many communities have found it easy to gain support among their residents that tobacco use in parks should be banned because of the problems it creates, from litter and second hand smoke, to setting a bad example for children. (3) People are walking more. The CDC reports that the percent of people who walk at least one time for ten minutes or more per week rose from 56% in 2005 to 62% in 2010. Because walking can be done by people of all ages, trails continue to be one of the top recreational needs in most communities throughout Texas. (4) Communities are starting to take notice of areas that are underserved by parks and recreation, and are seeking ways to provide improved infrastructure and safer access to those amenities.

Ongoing Trends

The guiding trends listed as influences in the 2004 Plan are largely still valid, and are also considered as part of this update.

- We have many more leisure activity choices. Greatly increased at-home leisure opportunities are available today, such as hundreds of channels on television, sophisticated game consoles, smart phones, tablets, e-readers, and the internet.
- Safety is a great concern to parents. Many parents no longer allow their children to go to area parks unattended. In many places the use of neighborhood parks has gone down.
- We live in an era of instant gratification. We expect to have high quality recreation, and to be given activities that we will like. Cities must be willing to provide a much broader menu of recreation activities, but must draw the line if those activities become too costly.
- Through the media and internet, we are exposed to the best from around the world. Because of this, we expect our facilities and activities to be of the highest quality possible.
- Concern over the health of our population is rapidly growing. Obesity is now recognized as a nationwide problem. Funding to reduce obesity rates by increasing outdoor activities may be more readily available in the future. It may also be a source of grants for parks and recreation programs and facilities.
- New revenue sources for public funding are difficult to come by. The federal surpluses briefly experienced at the turn of the century are now a thing of the past, and deficit spending is probable for the next decade. As a result, little help can be expected from the federal and state government, and even popular grant programs such as enhancement funds for trails and beautification are not always available.

Outdoor Recreation Trends

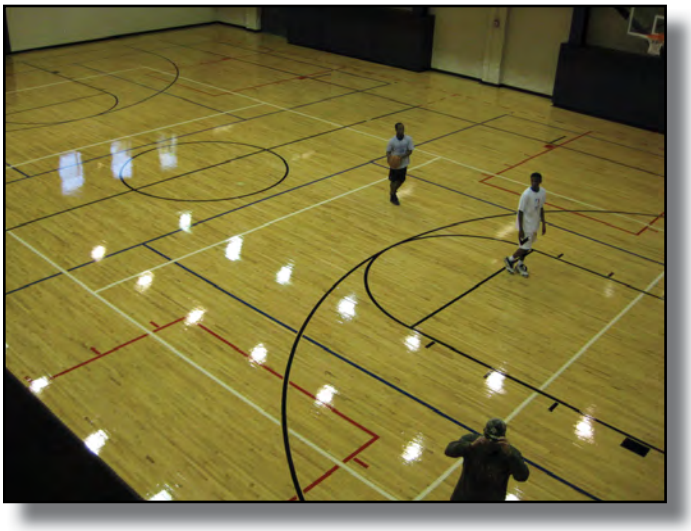
One of the most important trends in parks and recreation today is the increased demand for passive recreation activities and facilities. Passive recreation, as compared to active recreation, includes activities such as walking and jogging on trails, picnicking, enjoying nature, geo-caching, visiting dog parks, and bird watching. It focuses on individual recreation rather than organized high-intensity pastimes like team athletics (which has long been the focus of parks and recreation departments nationwide). People desire opportunities to use parks and open space on their own time and in their own way.

Across Texas, the provision of trails is the top priority for citizens. Numerous surveys, public meetings, questionnaires, and in-person interviews have shown that people, on average, place the importance of trails above the provision of any other single type of recreation amenity or facility. Many factors contribute to this, including the demand for passive recreation (as discussed above), greater focus on health, rising transportation costs, and increasing funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Related to the previous two trends, the protection of and access to open space and natural areas is growing in popularity across the nation. As people are increasingly using trails, they generally prefer to use trails that are located in scenic areas in order to enjoy being outdoors. Memorial Gardens Park and Comanche Trail Park are excellent examples of scenic areas with walking trails in Odessa.

While passive recreation is in greater demand, active recreation activities still play a large role in city

parks and recreation systems. One major trend over the last few years has been changing participation rates in various city-sponsored league sports. Examples of these changing participation rates include decreased participation in youth softball, dramatically increased participation in youth soccer, and the emergence of new league sports such as adult soccer, kickball, and youth lacrosse. That said, it continues to be the case that league sport participation rates vary greatly from city to city depending, in part, on activities offered by the school district and other organizations such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and in some cases churches.



Indoor Recreation Trends

There is a movement away from providing multiple smaller recreation centers to providing a single large center that is within a 15 to 20 minute travel time of its users. This trend responds to increased diversity of programming that can be provided at these larger centers, while also being more convenient for families to recreate together. These types of centers also provide increased staff efficiency.

There is also a trend of combining separate senior activity areas within the large recreation center. Such an area with a distinct entrance separate from the main center entrance gives the desired autonomy of seniors while providing convenient access to the various opportunities in a recreation center including an indoor walking track, warm water exercising, and adequately-sized fitness areas.

Many cities today are seeking a higher fee structure to help offset operational costs. Observation reveals a range from a 50 to 60% operational cost recapture rate all the way to a 100% recapture rate across the State of Texas.

University students today have elaborate recreation and aquatic facilities at their disposal. New graduates are leaving their universities with expectations for cities to provide comparable facilities. Quality of life is an important component of a new graduate's job search and residence decision, and has influenced what new city recreation centers will provide.

Environment and Recreation Trends

As cities and towns continue to grow and expand, citizens are becoming increasingly aware of the diminishing amounts of open space and natural areas in and around their communities. Similarly, this increased awareness parallels an increased interest in preserving open spaces, rural landscapes and natural areas along creeks, lakes, wooded areas, prairies, and other environmentally and culturally significant locations.

Related to this increased interest in the preservation of open spaces and natural areas is an increased interest among citizens to consider alternative development strategies within their communities. This is in order to preserve and provide access to natural areas, decrease traffic congestion, encourage walking and bicycling, enhance property values, and increase and enhance recreation opportunities within their community. Alternative development strategies often considered include mixed-use development, new urbanism, and conservation developments.

The attributes of a community play a large role in attracting (or detracting) people to a city or region. Research shows that the quality of a city's environment (its climate, park space, trails, and natural resources) is a significant factor in attracting new residents. As such, high-quality, high-quantity parks

and open space systems will attract people while low-quality, low-quantity parks and open space systems will detract people.

Participation Trends

The National Federation of State High School Associations records the number of high school students participating in sport activities every year. These trends can have an influence on the types of programs that are offered by a city's parks and recreation department. A city can focus on offering youth leagues in the same sports for those that are interested from an early age; as well as offer different teen sports so that services are not duplicated by the athletic opportunities offered by the school districts.

The top ten sports in Texas for **GIRLS** in 2012/2013 (most recent data available) ranked in order by number of students participating are:

1. Basketball - Approximately 22% of all high school girls participating in sports play basketball. However, participation in this sport has declined every year since 2008.

2. Track and Field - This is the number one participated sport across the nation for girls. However, similar to basketball, track and field has decreased in participation across Texas since 2007.

3. Volleyball - This sport has seen a significant increase in participation since 2009, and then leveling out over the past year. However, participation is still not as high as it was in the early 2000s.

4. Softball (fast pitch) - This sport has experienced a slight increase in participation every year since 2003.

5. Soccer - Minimal growth has occurred every year since 2003, and there was a significant increase in participation last year. The current year's participation is slightly lower than it was in 2011/2012.

6. Cross Country - Participation is less than it was in the previous year.

7. Tennis (individual) - Participation has also dropped slightly from the previous year. However, this sport has experienced an increase in participation every year since 2005 prior.

8. Tennis (team) - A significant increase in participation was experienced for a number of years in the mid-2000s, but it has declined since 2009.

9. Swimming and Diving - Participation has also experienced a decline this past year. However, this sport had steady growth in participation for the past decade, and it has experienced the highest percentage of growth among all the other sports.

10. Golf - This sport has a tendency to slightly fluctuate in the number of participants every year. Participation has remained fairly consistent since 2003.

The top ten sports in Texas for **BOYS** ranked in order by the number of students participating are:

1. Football - Approximately 34% of all high school boys who participate in sports play football in the State of Texas. Even though this sport has the highest number of participants, it has experienced a minimal fluctuation in either growth or decline every year since 2003.

2. Track and Field - Similar to track and field for girls, this sport for boys has experienced a decrease in participation every year since 2007.

3. Basketball - This sport has experienced a decrease in participation every year since 2008.

4. Baseball - This sport experienced an increase in participation every year since 2003, except for the previous year which showed a slight decline.

5. Soccer - There was a drastic increase in participation in the 2006-2008 seasons; then, participation declined every year since 2008.

6. Cross Country - This sport has declined in participation every year since 2007, and has experienced the largest percentage of decrease in participation among all the other sports since 2007.

7. Tennis (individual) - This sport experienced steady growth every year prior to 2008, but participation has remained fairly consistent every year since.

8. Tennis (team) - Participation in this sport fluctuates. It slightly declined the past three years.

9. Golf - Similar to team tennis, participation in golf also fluctuates from year to year while remaining fairly consistent.

10. Wrestling - The most dramatic increase in participation in this sports has occurred last year (2011/2012), increasing from 7,825 participants to 10,580 participants. It experienced a slight increase again this year in participation.

Drought Conditions and Water Use in West Texas

Record drought conditions throughout Texas in recent years, including Odessa, have driven home the point that city parks can no longer be kept green through a limitless supply of water. Conditions in Odessa during 2012 and most of 2013 remained so severe that even irrigation systems supplied by municipal water had to be turned off or their use severely restricted. This resulted in damage to turf in some parks and the loss of weaker trees in multiple parks in the City. Ultimately, water wells drilled in many park sites have helped alleviate the need for water, but going forward should only serve as a backup to a permanent municipal supply and proactive water saving efforts. Key points regarding water and conservation related issues considered in this master plan are as follows:

- **Odessa's parks represent a huge capital investment.** They also represent some of the more attractive environments throughout the City. Even more importantly, the trees that exist in Odessa are not as plentiful as in cities in wetter climates, and therefore are significantly more valuable. Mature trees that have lived for decades are extraordinarily hard to replace, and even then will take additional decades to reach a similar level of maturity.
- While the City has set in motion actions to address long term water supply issues, water will still always be scarce in the area, and **Odessa's park system should be actively supported in its efforts to become more efficient.**
- **Parks and attractive streetscapes are critical to Odessa's future.** It cannot be overstated as to how much they positively contribute to the appearance of the City today. Without the relatively few existing green areas and parks that are spread throughout the City, Odessa would become less appealing as a place to live. In the years to come, when oil and gas exploration levels taper off, those green areas will be vital to attracting new residents to the City and keeping existing ones feeling good about staying in Odessa.
- **The lack of water should <u>not</u> be used as an excuse not to provide parks and additional streetscape throughout the City.** Rather, technology, alternative sources and drought tolerant materials should be used to increase the amount of green in Odessa.

- **Beautiful parks exist in some of the most arid and water-poor areas of the Southwest.** Odessa's parks, as they are improved or renovated over time, should include best practices that are used in other southwest cities. These include:
  - § Increasing the use of artificial turf playing surfaces for premier game fields throughout the City.
  - § Actively choose extremely drought tolerant trees such as thornless mesquites, honey locust, and cedar elms. Large trees are not common on the prairie around Odessa, and yet they are desperately needed to help beautify the City.
  - § Incorporate desert-scapes that use dry climate plants and gravel or mulch beds in larger portions of existing and new parks.
  - § Incorporate larger hardscape areas where appropriate in heavy use areas of parks.
  - § Plan for significant use of shade structures to increase the versatility and year round usefulness of the City's parkland.
  - § Modernize irrigation systems in all parks to include drip systems and other high efficiency distribution techniques.

Examples of desert-scape parks in cities with similar climates and drought conditions as Odessa

The Many Benefits of Parks and Recreation

Developing an excellent parks and recreation system demonstrates a local government's commitment to offer a high quality of life for its residents. A superior parks and recreation system increases the quality of life in a community because of the many benefits it offers. Parks are the single most visible positive expression of a city government at work.

Opportunities to Relax

So many people face increased challenges every day, whether it is from their job, their family life, financial obligations, or any other combination of things. People come to parks to relieve some of their daily stress. Whether it involves kicking a soccer ball, watching their children play on the swings, or fishing in lakes and ponds, the idea of "restoration" is that people feel better after they leave a park than when they first arrived. There are some elements of the natural environment that can increase the likelihood of restoration.

- Parks and recreation allow for people to reflect and discover what is on their mind. This can come from fishing, listening to birds, watching a water fountain, enjoying the scenery, or countless other natural occurrences. Placing benches or bridges where people can stop to notice nature increases the opportunities for restoration.
- Parks need to have inviting things to allow the mind to wander. Japanese gardens offer outstanding examples of how small spaces can achieve this. They position viewpoints so the entire garden cannot be seen at once, they have circuitous pathways to make the area seem larger, or they have vegetation that divides larger spaces.
- By providing a slight sense of enclosure, the users of a park feel as if they are somewhere else, away from life's distractions. Enclosures can be achieved by having a tree canopy or planting vegetation along building sides to hide them.

Opportunities to Get Involved

Parks and recreation offer opportunities for citizens to become involved in the community such as:

- Having an Adopt-A-Park program lets residents volunteer to help maintain one specific park in their neighborhood.
- Allowing residents to be instructors for a recreation program gives them the opportunity to share and teach their skills to other members of the community.
- Organizing work day projects to install a playground or plant new trees lets residents feel a sense of ownership in the park they helped build.

By providing opportunities for residents to become involved in the community, parks and recreation is also providing opportunities for residents to socialize and meet their neighbors.

Benefits to At-Risk Youth and Teens

One major benefit of parks and recreation is the impact it can have on at-risk youth. Teenagers are the hardest market of the population to reach. By providing activities and recreation programming for this segment of the population, a city is providing a safe place for the youth to go and usually a supervised environment for them to be in.

Tourism Impacts of Parks and Recreation

People visit a city for the attractions that are offered. Several attractions in a community include parks and recreational facilities, as well as festivals, concerts and events that take place in those facilities. In essence, people often visit a city because of the Parks and Recreation Department. For example:

- While visiting New York City, people want to go to Central Park in addition to other historical sites and monuments. Millennium Park in Chicago is a primary tourist attraction in that city.
- People often drive to Houston from surrounding communities just to jog or bike along the trails in Memorial Park.
- In 2008, the sports tournaments in Round Rock, Texas held at local city parks had a total economic impact of over $43 million for the City.

Parks and recreation are also good for a community's economy because of the impact it can have on other businesses. For example hotels often charge more for a room if it overlooks a park, lake, ocean, garden or open space as opposed to a roof top or parking lot. By charging more, the hotel/motel tax that the city receives is higher. Other business impacts include the operations that people start in conjunction with a park or trail. As examples, people can rent canoes and kayaks at Zilker Park in Austin, and people can rent bicycles along the Cape Cod Rail Trail in Massachusetts. Each creates an attraction, a business opportunity, and a possible revenue generation that would not otherwise be there without the park or trail facility.

Environmental Benefits of Parks

Parks and recreation offer several environmental benefits to a community. Parkland, open space, greenbelts and trails all contribute to ensuring that a community is green and not overrun with concrete and construction. Furthermore, parks and open space can control storm water runoff and reduce the likelihood of flooding. Rain water that falls onto impervious surfaces can be slowed down by planting trees which impede the fall rate.

Parks, open space and trees also contribute to cleaner air in a community. Trees can absorb air pollutants that would otherwise increase sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere. For example, in 1994 in New York City, it was reported that trees removed 1,821 metric tons of air pollution.

Parks and open space protect wildlife habitat as well. Habitats of endangered species and areas specific to migratory patterns are often protected and designated as parkland or open space. By preserving these lands, a community is helping the survival of these species.

Parks and open space contribute to the preservation of land in general. The parks and recreation department within a community ensures that all the land is not developed. It is important to have green space and places of nature within a city. Parks and greenbelts are the most significantly preserved open spaces in a community.

Personal Health Benefits of Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation at its most basic function offer places for exercise. With heart disease, diabetes, and child obesity rising to staggering numbers, we all need to be more physically active. Parks and recreation gives us the opportunities to be physical. Whether it is jogging along a trail, playing in a softball league, taking a fitness class, or swimming at a pool, the most common places for exercise are in our parks and through our recreation programs.

Furthermore, play is critical for child development. Organized sports, playing on a playground, and even unstructured activities such as tag or hide-and-seek will help children develop muscle strength, coordination, cognitive thinking and reasoning, and develop language skills. Also, play teaches children how to interact with one another. The places where children play are again often at a community's parks and recreational facilities.

Parks and recreation have been shown to have psychological benefits as well. Physical exercise helps develop new nerve cells which increase a person's capacity for learning. Being in nature and exercising have both been shown to reduce feelings of stress, depression and anxiety. Parks and nature conjure a sense of relaxation. A person does not have to be among nature for extended periods of time to experience those feelings. Just driving through a park or looking at green space through a window of a building has been shown to be enough to relax the mind.

Economic Benefits of Parks and Recreation

In the parks and recreation profession, there has been a movement in the past few decades to prove that parkland has a direct impact on the property values of homes in a community. The Proximity Principle, developed by Dr. John Crompton of Texas A&M University, is a theory that people are willing to pay more for their home when it is close to a park or green space.

- The Proximity Principle divides houses into different zones and the zones closest to a park have the highest value. People living in Zone A (within 200 feet of a park

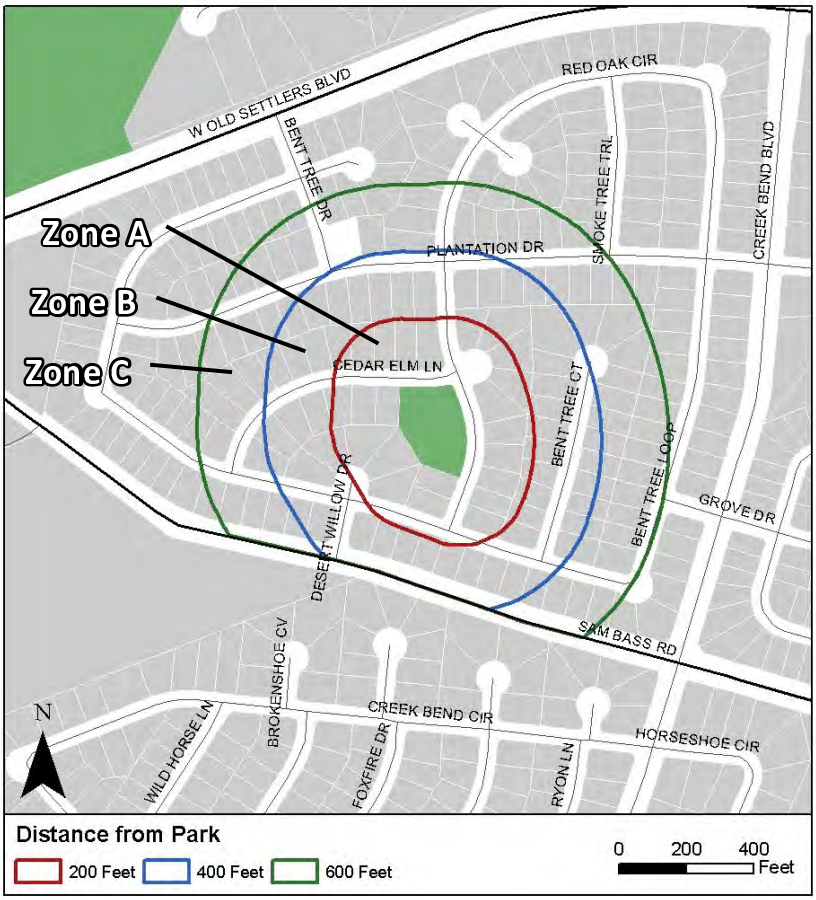


Figure 1-3 The Proximity Principle

or green space) pay the most for their home, people living in Zone B (between 200 and 400 feet of a park or green space) pay less than Zone A but more than Zone C, and people living in Zone C (between 400 and 600 feet from a park or green space) pay the least. See Figure 1-4.

- If people pay more for their property, then this results in higher property taxes being paid to the city.
- Finally, park maintenance typically costs much less for a city than providing services to the additional homes that would have otherwise been built on the site. For example, if ten additional houses were built on a piece of land instead of a park, it would cost the city more money each year to provide water, sewer, trash service, police and fire protection, and school services for the ten houses than it would to maintain a park.

In a study done by the Trust for Public Lands for the Philadelphia Parks Alliance in June 2008, it was calculated that parks in Philadelphia generate $18 million in added property tax revenue, $689 million in increased equity for homeowners near parks, $16 million in municipal cost savings, $23 million in city revenue, and $1.1 billion in cost savings for citizens.

Goals and Objectives for Odessa

Goals and objectives for a plan such as this create the foundation for guiding future decisions and development. They are intended to build upon the goals established in the 2004 Parks Plan. Goals are an important part of the planning process in that they provide the underlying philosophical framework for decisions and also guide decision makers on issues. The goals expressed in this plan reflect the desires of the citizens, elected and appointed officials and the staff of Odessa.

These goals are based on the input received from the public input meetings, the citizen survey, and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Department, city management staff, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the City Council of Odessa.

Goals provide the underlying philosophical framework for decisions and also guide decision makers on issues.

Goals describe the desired outcome for a plan. It is different from a vision in that it speaks directly about a component of the overall system.

Objectives are identified statements or policies that work toward the goal. It is more specific than a goal, and addresses particular issues related to the elements to achieve the desired goal.

Actions include specific strategies or steps to take in order to reach a specified objective. Action items are specific enough to include a recommended timeframe for implementation, other agencies or entities to partner with, and often a potential cost.

Benchmarks are target measures which the objectives and actions are working toward. It measures progress toward achieving the goal over time, and are ways to measure progress of plan implementation. For example, one benchmark for parks and recreation would be for every residence of Odessa to be within a quarter mile of park, trail or open space.

Goal #1 Work towards transforming Odessa's parks, recreation, and open spaces into one of the best systems in the State of Texas.

1.1 Implement a long-range program for expansion and development of Odessa's parks system based upon the updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

1.2 Through the park planning process, identify benchmarks that will indicate progress towards meeting this goal.

1.3 Identify park-planning areas with the greatest need for park facilities, and pursue the acquisition of land or resources as needed, and the development of facilities in those areas.

1.4 Identify a funding source for parkland acquisition, such as an adopted Parkland Dedication Ordinance, and develop an acquisition plan.

Goal #2 Provide an even and adequate distribution of park facilities citywide.

2.1 Use diverse and reasonable criteria to identify park needs, including reasonable calculations of potential level of use, but also the ability of each facility to respond to citywide needs in a cost effective manner.

2.2 Preserve the ability to respond to unique acquisition or development opportunities as they arise, even if out of the proposed sequence of improvements, provided that they respond to key citywide needs and goals.

2.3 Provide adequate funding and resources to ensure that the park and recreation needs of all citizens are met.

2.4 Encourage and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in planning, development, maintenance, and operation of the City's parks and open space system.

2.5 Periodically update the long-range plan and standards to reflect changing conditions in the City and to provide a forum for citizen input.

Goal #3 Continue to provide a good range and diversity of facilities and recreation activities for all segments of the population of Odessa.

3.1 Interpret and prioritize citizen needs and desires for recreation facilities.

3.2 Provide facilities for a wide range of both active and passive recreational activities throughout the City of Odessa.

3.3 Provide a reasonable balance of recreational facilities that address the needs of all age groups, young and old, active and passive, athletic and non-athletic, and in all socioeconomic categories.

Goal #4 Use park sites to create an "urban oasis" to promote the beautification of Odessa.

4.1 Renovate existing park sites in Odessa so that each park becomes a vegetated and green focal point of the neighborhood around it.

4.2 Where appropriate, incorporate public art into major parks or green spaces in the City.

4.3 Provide funding and resources for adequate landscaping and irrigation when renovating existing parks or designing and constructing new park facilities.

Goal #5 Preserve and protect unique natural open spaces, floodplain corridors, and drainage corridors within the City and its ETJ.

5.1 As part of the citywide park planning and development process, establish criteria to identify key open space areas and natural areas worthy of preservation throughout the City and its ETJ.

5.2 Identify key natural space corridors and lands with unique natural qualities throughout the City, and prioritize key areas for preservation.

5.3 Establish policies and methods to preserve key natural areas in and around the City. Use mechanisms that preserve needed floodway and drainage ways throughout the City to also preserve greenbelt corridors.

5.4 Establish funding mechanisms to acquire lands for protection through acquisition, purchase of easements, or outright dedication of floodplain lands where these are deemed to have open space value. Focus on high quality natural or open space areas that are likely to be developed with incompatible uses in the near future.

5.5 Preserve the environmental quality of the Comanche Trail corridor as a key greenbelt and open space corridor for the entire city.

5.6 Establish policies that encourage private owners to preserve and protect key natural areas within the City.

5.7 Encourage educational institutions, semi-private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage, and maintain natural and open space conservation areas within the City.

Goal #6 Promote partnerships with other public, semi-public and private entities to most efficiently use public funding to provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities in Odessa.

6.1 Work to strengthen local organizations that can assist with providing park and recreation facilities and programs for the residents of Odessa.

6.2 Enhance and expand the mission and goals of the Odessa Parks Foundation so that it remains a strong partner with the City of Odessa in providing park and recreation facilities throughout the City.

6.3 Enhance and strengthen Heritage Holidays, so that it promotes the holiday spirit in Odessa.

6.4 Actively pursue partnerships to develop greenbelts and trails throughout the City.

6.5 Actively pursue mechanisms to allow the private sector to build or fund some park and recreation facilities in Odessa such as adopting a parkland dedication ordinance.

6.6 Coordinate extensively with other recreation providers in the area, such as Ector County Independent School District, Ector County, Midland County, the City of Midland, Odessa College, the University of Texas Permian Basin, Main Street Odessa, Keep Odessa Beautiful, the Council for the Arts and Humanities, and state agencies such as Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Department of Transportation and other federal, state and local governmental entities. Enhance communications and joint planning to consider and create joint development of park and recreation facilities and programs where those opportunities can be shown to adequately fulfill needs of the citizens of Odessa.

6.7 Actively and aggressively promote the continued beautification of key corridors in the City.

Goal #7 Be proactive in conserving water in parks.

7.1 Use native plant materials to reduce the amount of water needed.

7.2 Evaluate and increase the use of artificial turf.

7.3 Use less turf areas and more desert-scape in perimeter areas of parks.

7.4 Use well water and re-use water where feasible.

Goal #8 Continue to maintain all City of Odessa parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition.

8.1 Provide city parks staff with the manpower and funding resources to maintain all parkland and facilities in a superior manner. Provide additional operations and maintenance resources as new recreational facilities are developed and added to the Odessa parks system.

8.2 Continue to implement renovation/improvement master plans for each park, and identify a tentative schedule for phasing in improvements.

8.3 Address key safety and accessibility needs as quickly as possible.

8.4 Continue the City's excellent ongoing programs to promote the use of native plant materials and xeriscape to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs in parks and on city properties.

8.5 Continue to explore and implement innovative techniques to partner with other governmental, non-profit or private organizations to reduce the city's park maintenance burden.

Chapter 2 :: Existing Character of Odessa

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Chapter 2 :: Existing Character of Odessa

The History of Odessa

As part of the Citywide Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the overall context of Odessa was evaluated and considered throughout the planning process. This includes the rich history of Odessa, the local economy, the demographic and population aspects of the citizens of the community, and the physical characteristics of the community. Recreation is an integral part of every facet of Odessa, and as such is key to the success and health of the entire City.

Odessa is located where the Comanche Indians once roamed across the plains of Texas. Odessa's history as a settlement can be traced to the 1881 extension of the Texas and Pacific Railway across the south plains towards El Paso and the need to provide water for the steam engines. The availability of cheap land encouraged settlers to the area in the period from 1879 to 1885. The first ranchers arrived in 1885, but it was the railroad that made Odessa vital to the cattle industry. By the mid-1890s Odessa was an established cattle-shipping center. From 1880 to 1920, Odessa grew slowly, with a population of only 921 in 1925.

The discovery of oil in the area in 1926 charted a new course for Odessa. This discovery brought people of varied interests and occupations to the area, and the local economy began to change from a ranching base into an industrial one. After the oil boom of 1927, it became obvious that the new oil fields would need equipment and support services. Since Odessa was the closest point to the fields by railroad, it soon became the service, work force, transportation, supply and manufacturing center of the Permian Basin. It remains so today and is considered one of the major oil field technology centers throughout the world.

Odessa's climate is mild and semi-arid. Summer night average temperatures decline to the 60s, and day temperatures reach the upper 90s. Winter temperatures range from the low- and mid-30s to the upper 50s. Low humidity allows for conditions that are conducive to personal comfort, especially during the summer months. Average rainfall is 14.96 inches and average snowfall is 1.5 inches annually. Most of the rainfall occurs between April and October, with less than one inch per month in the winter.

Odessa and Ector County's fortunes have followed those of the oil and gas industry. For example, between 1973 and 1981, the price of oil rose well over 1,000 percent. Correspondingly, in 1976 alone, the total real output from all sectors in Ector County rose an unprecedented 17.5 percent. Employment rose 88.8 percent in the Odessa/Midland MSA between 1972 and 1982. Meanwhile, the U.S. economy was at low ebb, experiencing three relatively severe recessions. The downside of

Odessa's good fortune was that virtually no diversification occurred. When excess oil production produced a glut on the world market in 1982, Ector County saw losses in real gross product of more than 11 percent in a single year. The tide had turned. The oil price collapse in 1986 only made the situation more untenable.

Diversification efforts are now well underway, although ties to the energy sector remain very strong. Odessa offers Freeport Exemption which means some or all of a company's products can be exempt from property taxes. This business incentive is very enticing for industries that export goods or merchandise. While the oil and gas industry still has a strong presence in Odessa, other industries are starting to rise such as medical facilities and education. The top major employers in the City are listed in the table below.

Table 2.1 Major Employers in Odessa

Employer	Industry	# of Employees
Ector County ISD	Public Education	3,413
Medical Center Hospital	Hospital/Medical	1,899
Saulsbury Companies	Electric & Construction	1,628
Halliburton Services	Oil & Gas	1,200
Weatherford	Oil & Gas	1,100
Walmart	Retail	889
City of Odessa	Government	868
Odessa Regional Medical Center	Hospital/Medical	816
Ector County	Government	639
Holloman Construction	Oil Field Construction	550
Dixie Electric	Electric	550
Nurses Unlimited, Inc.	Hospital/Medical	527
Investment Corp. of America	Financial	508
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center	Education/Medical	502
Bobby Cox Companies, Inc.	Retail/ Restaurants	488
Odessa College	Education	440
The University of Texas Permian Basin	Education	400

Source: Odessa Development Corporation

Regional Context of Odessa

Odessa is located in Ector County, approximately midway between Ft. Worth and El Paso, and covers an area of 45.5 square miles situated in the heart of the Permian Basin, a vast oval of land (100,000 square miles). The Permian Basin was once covered by a shallow sea known as the Permian Sea, which was densely populated with life. Three of the state's major land resources meet here - the High Plains, Trans Pecos and Edwards Plateau. These regions tend to have short grasses, sparse and usually scrubby tree growth, and limited rainfall. The altitude of Odessa is approximately 2,851 feet above sea level.

Odessa is located along IH-20 in west Texas. It is approximately 320 miles west of Fort Worth, 282 miles east of El Paso, and 257 miles south of Amarillo. The local highway system Hwy 385 provides easy connections to Andrews and Seminole. Midland is approximately 20 miles to the east, and the Midland/Odessa International Airport is located directly between the two cities.

A 30 to 45 minute drive time (or 35 to 50 mile travel distance) service area is not uncommon for facilities in the wide open west Texas country, where significant driving times are expected. For example, parents may choose to enroll their children in local little league baseball, or in some cases may choose to travel from Monahans to Odessa to allow their children to compete at a higher level. Participation rates will always be highest for facilities and programs that are most convenient and accessible. Therefore, it is not uncommon for Odessa's parks and recreation programs to serve people living in West Odessa, Gardendale, Goldsmith, South Odessa or surrounding Ector County areas.

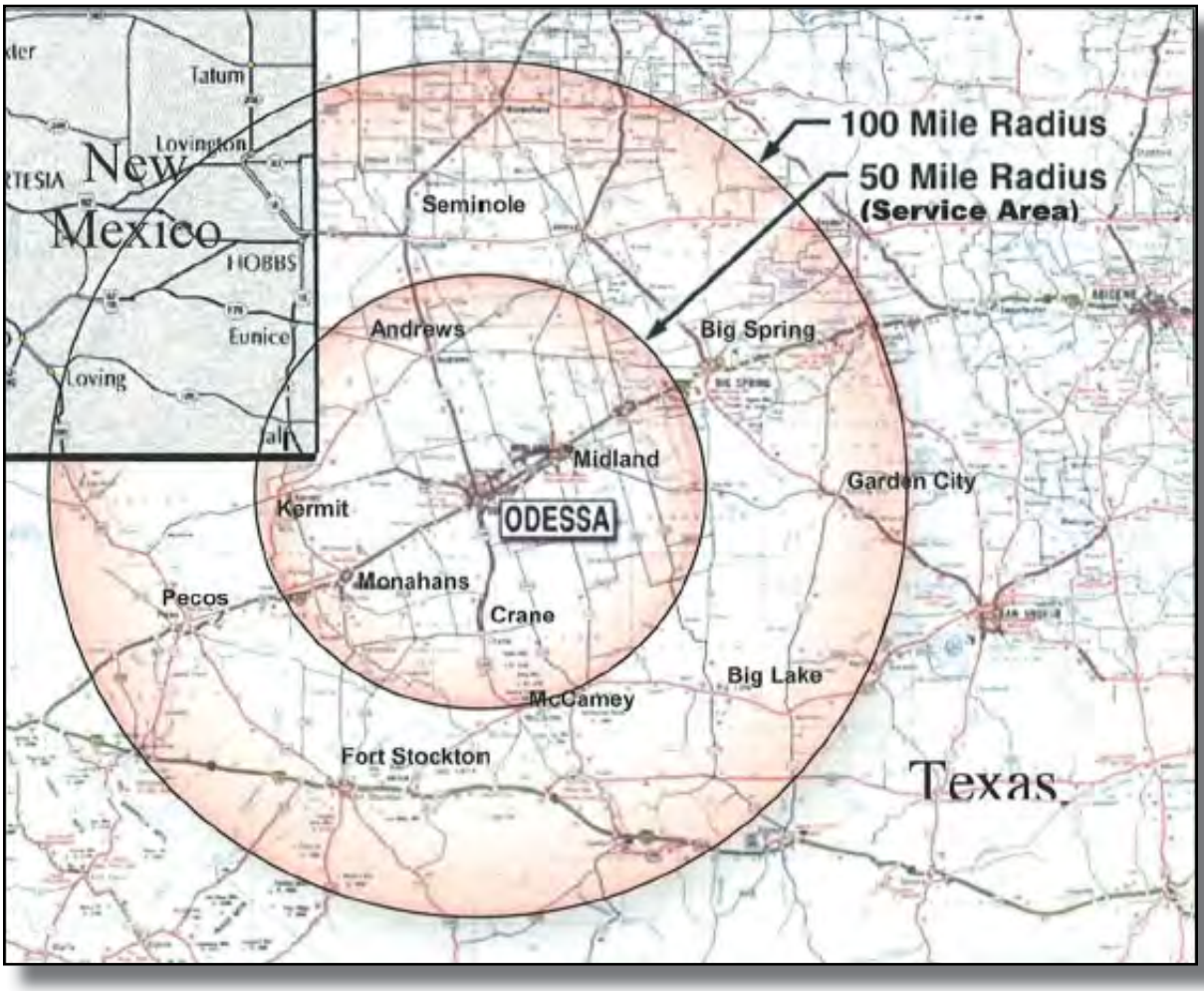


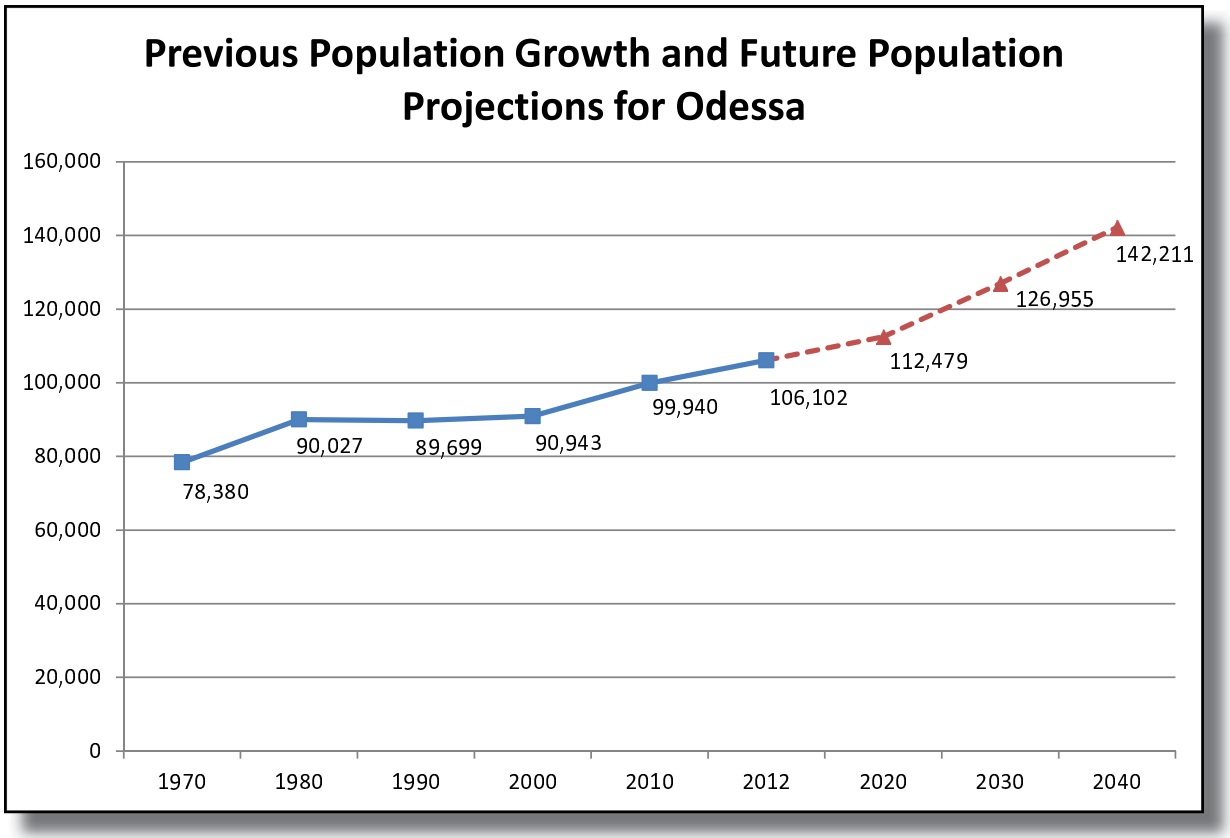
Figure 2-1 Odessa's location within the west Texas region

Demographic Profile of Odessa

Understanding the current and future size and characteristics of the population to be served is a key part of the parking planning process. Establishing a base population for today is the foundation from which the projection of population growth extends and influences the demand and needs for future parks and recreational facilities. This chapter examines historical growth in Odessa, and establishes a potential population projection range for the master plan update. The U.S. Census Bureau is the primary source for population estimates used by government entities across the nation. Not only does the U.S. Census Bureau estimate the population, but they also collect detailed characteristics of a population that often have planning implications. However, the U.S. Census does not provide future population projections. Resources that were used to project the future population in the Texas Water Development Board 2016 Regional and 2017 State Water Plan Projections. As the City finalizes its Comprehensive Plan, any population projections given in that document should be considered more relevant and accurate than the Texas Water Development Board.

Population Growth

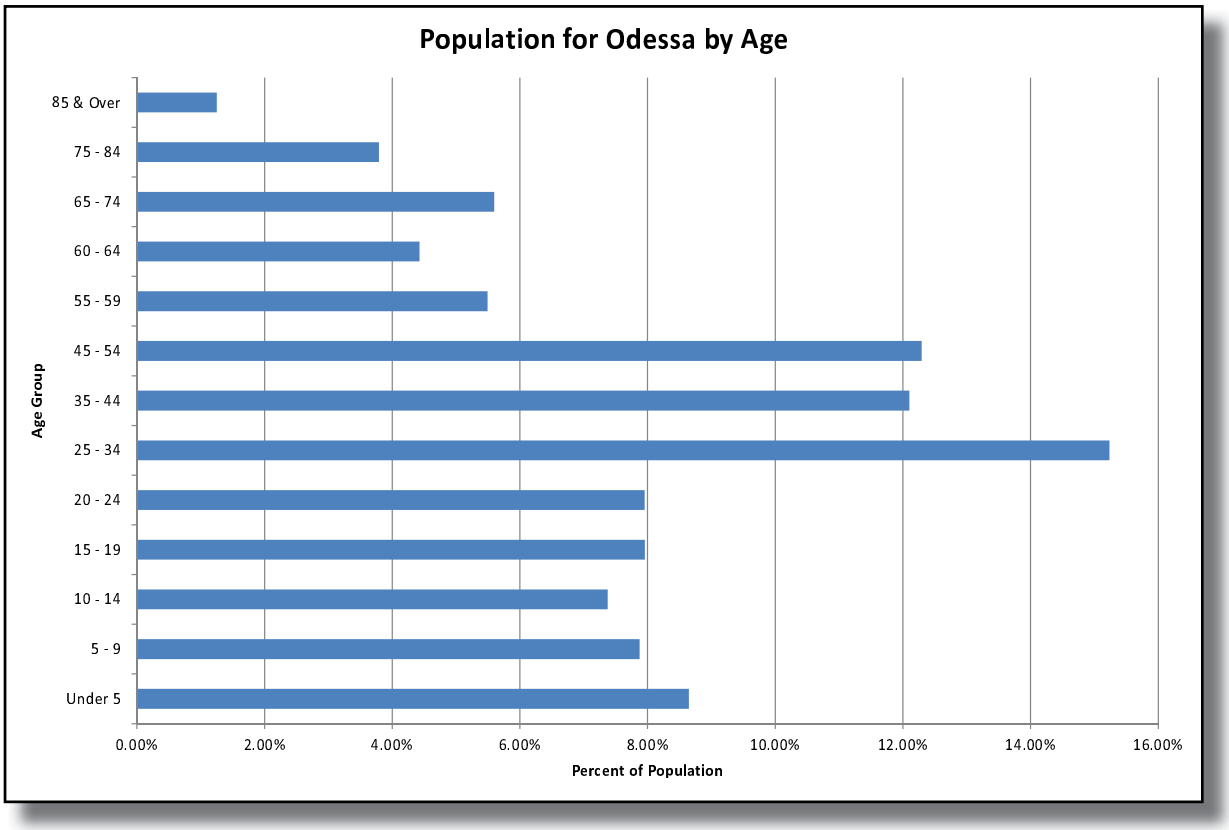
Odessa's population growth has always been closely tied to the rise and fall of the oil and gas industry in the United States. The growth over the past 10 years can be characterized as steady because of the recent oil boom. After suffering a lose in population during the 1980s and 1990s because of oil and gas industry troubles, the City of Odessa has gained approximately 15,000+ residents since 2000 (or approximately a 17% increase). In the 2004 Plan, the population was estimated to reach 106,00 by the year 2040. At that time, it was thought that it would take four decades to add 15,000 residents. However, Odessa is currently at that population now, and the gradual growth is expected to continue into the future with a new estimated population of 142,000 by 2040. The chart below shows the historic and projected population growth for the City.



Source: 1970 - 2012 US Census Bureau; 2020 - 2040 TWDB 2016 Regional and 2017 State Water Plan Projections Data

Age Characteristics

Further demographic information is illustrated below representing the characteristics of the population, households, and workforce for the entire City. Evaluating the population by age helps the City understand what the needs and lifestyles are of its residents. Generally, the Odessa population is dominated by Generation X and the younger Baby Boomer generations. This population, which is roughly between the ages of 25 and 59, accounts for 45% of the population in Odessa. The largest population segment is between the ages 25 and 34, accounting for 15% of the population. Odessa's population is almost split in half in terms of gender with 49.8% of the population as being male and 50.2% female.



Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

The table below portrays the racial and ethnic distribution for the State of Texas, Ector County, and Odessa. The population estimates for 2012 illustrate that Odessa has a significantly higher percent of persons with Hispanic or Latino Heritage when compared to the State of Texas overall. There is also a much lower African American population (less than half) when compared to the State of Texas.

According to the U.S. Census demographic categories, a person of Hispanic or Latino heritage can be of any race. Therefore, in the table below, the percentages add up to more than 100%.

Table 2.2 Odessa's Population by Race and Ethnicity

		City of Odessa		Ector County		State of Texas	
		Population	% of total	Population	% of total	Population	% of total
Race	White	98,155	96.7%	113,334	83.6%	18,093,212	73.0%
	Black or African American	5,499	5.4%	5,686	4.2%	2,917,108	11.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	849	0.8%	771	0.6%	125,101	0.5%
	Asian	1,083	1.1%	1,024	0.8%	939,558	3.8%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	12	0.0%	70	0.1%	19,966	0.1%
	Some other race	6,077	6.0%	10,066	7.4%	2,155,160	8.7%
	Two or more races	3,390	3.3%	4,594	3.4%	524,082	2.1%
Hispanic or Latino of any race		51,650	50.9%	70,358	51.9%	9,216,240	37.2%

Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Educational Attainment

When the educational attainment for Odessa is compared to Ector County, the percentages are relatively similar. However, when compared to the State of Texas overall, Odessa has a lower percent of the population that has either a Bachelor's degree or Graduate/Professional degree. The percent of the population less than high school diploma is higher when compared to the State of Texas. The percent of people in Odessa that have some college education but no degree, as well as the percent that have an Associate's degree, is relatively similar when compared to the State.

Table 2.3 Educational Attainment Comparison

Education Level	City of Odessa	Ector County	State of Texas
Less than 9th grade	11.6%	13.5%	9.8%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	12.7%	13.5%	9.8%
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	27.6%	29.8%	25.7%
Some college, no degree	25.7%	24.2%	22.3%
Associate's degree	6.3%	5.8%	6.4%
Bachelor's degree	11.1%	9.4%	17.4%
Graduate or professional degree	5.0%	3.9%	8.6%

Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Employment by Industry

The employment by industry percentages are calculated based on the population over the age of 16 that is employed. Because of the large presence of the oil and gas industry in Odessa, many of jobs are considered traditional blue-collar jobs. When comparing Odessa to the State of Texas, Odessa has a significantly higher percent of agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining employment. Odessa has a much lower percent of the population working in the professional, scientific, and management industries.

Table 2.4 Employment by Industry

Industry	City of Odessa	Ector County	State of Texas
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11.6%	11.4%	2.9%
Construction	7.4%	8.7%	8.3%
Manufacturing	8.4%	9.1%	9.6%
Wholesale trade	4.5%	4.5%	3.2%
Retail trade	10.9%	10.2%	11.5%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.2%	5.6%	5.6%
Information	1.8%	1.8%	2.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.5%	5.5%	6.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.5%	6.5%	10.6%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.5%	18.2%	21.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10.3%	9.0%	8.3%
Other services, except public administration	5.3%	6.5%	5.3%
Public administration	3.2%	3.0%	4.4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Household Income

The household income in Odessa very closely mirrors what the average income in State of Texas is overall. Approximately 31% of households in Odessa earn an income higher than $75,000. The median household income for Odessa is currently $51,251. In 2000, the median household income was estimated to be $31,209.

Table 2.5 Household Income Distribution

Income	City of Odessa	Ector County	State of Texas
Under $25,000	23.7%	25.6%	24.1%
$25,000 to $34,999	10.4%	10.7%	11.0%
$35,000 to $49,999	14.8%	13.6%	14.1%
$50,000 to $74,999	20.3%	21.0%	18.0%
$75,000 to $99,999	12.6%	11.9%	11.8%
$100,000 and over	18.3%	17.2%	21.0%
MEDIAN INCOME	$51,251	$50,056	$50,920

Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Chapter 3 :: Existing Park Standards & Inventory

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Purpose of the Existing Inventory

It is important to understand what park, recreation and open space facilities are currently available and to assess the current condition of those facilities. This will in turn help to determine whether or not those facilities are addressing the current park and open space needs of the City. Odessa has an established network of neighborhood parks and larger community parks. Often, the parks are well placed within the neighborhoods they serve and are well maintained. This section begins to identify where park service is lacking, as well as park standards, and the general condition of each park. The park categories build upon the standards established in the 2004 Parks Plan.

The Odessa Parks and Recreation Department is currently responsible for the operation and maintenance of 36 park sites, totaling 554.76 acres. Understanding the types of parks and their distribution helps to determine whether or not the public is being well served with recreation opportunities. The number, type, distribution and condition of parks also define the effort and cost required for maintenance and operations. Having an up-to-date inventory is a key part of the park planning process. It helps to understand which parks and recreation facilities are currently available, to assess the condition of those facilities, and to understand what facilities are lacking within different areas of the City. The need for new or improved recreational facilities can be determined by comparing the available park facilities with the characteristics of the residents the park system serves.

Park Categories

This plan uses national and state guidelines which identify three broad categories of parks. These are:

- **Local, Close to Home Parks** - These are usually located within the community served by the facility. It includes pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Trail corridors, greenbelts, and in some cases, linear parks may also be considered Close to Home Parks.
- **Regional Parks** - These parks can be located up to an half hour to one hour driving distance for most of its visitors. Parks in this category serve a number of communities, and include city regional

parks, park reserves, state parks, and national parks.

- **Unique Parks** - These parks can be either local or regional. They are defined as areas that are unique in some way, whether because of the physical features of the park, or because of the types of facilities provided within them. Parks in this category may include linear parks, special use parks, land conservancies, nature preserves, sports complexes, or botanical gardens.

Close to home parks are the most important category and are of the greatest immediate concern to the City of Odessa. Close to home parks address day to day facilities for all ages and activities, and are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live. The five close to home park types currently existing in Odessa are:

- Neighborhood parks, including mini-parks
- Community parks
- Athletic Parks
- Special use parks
- Linear parks

Neighborhood and Pocket Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the foundation for recreation in the Local Close to Home park system. Ideally, they provide facilities and recreation space for the entire family, but are within easy walking or bicycling distance of the people they serve. The neighborhood park typically serves one large or several smaller neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood park in Odessa, generally 5 to 10 acres in size, and should serve no more than 3,000 to 4,000 residents per park. In Odessa, Murray Fly, Juan Ramirez, San Jacinto and Lawndale Parks are good examples of neighborhood parks.

- Neighborhood parks should be accessible to residents who live within a one-half mile radius of the park. Ideally, and as expressed as a goal of this plan, neighborhood park facilities should be located within a quarter mile radius of the residents that will use those facilities.
- Neighborhood parks are frequently located adjacent to elementary schools, so as to share acquisition and development costs with the school district. This has not always been the case in the past in Odessa, but is more likely to be followed today.
- Neighborhood parks are preferably located away from major arterial streets and provide easy access for the users that surround it. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets.

Size - The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to physical limitations around the park. The 2004 parks plan recommended an ideal size of six acres, and that standard is maintained in the updated plan. However, existing neighborhood parks in Odessa today range in size from a minimum of less than 1/2 of an acre to over 14 acres in size (Jim Parker Park). In general, the size of the existing neighborhood parks in Odessa is well within the desired range of sizes. In fact, the average size of neighborhood parks in Odessa is 5.3 acres.

Neighborhood parks provide the foundation of recreation by ideally offering facilities for the entire family

Location - If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in neighborhoods they serve. An ideal location, for example, is adjacent to an elementary school. The park should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served, and should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets which do not allow high-speed traffic.

Murry Fly Park; photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Facilities - Facilities generally located in neighborhood parks include the following:

- Playground equipment for ages 2-5 and ages 6-12, with adequate safety surfacing around the playground and shade structures over the playground
- Multi-purpose practice fields for baseball, soccer, football (unlighted)
- Unlighted multi-purpose courts for tennis, basketball or volleyball
- Open space and landscaping
- Active areas for unorganized play
- Picnic shelter with benches, picnic tables, cooking grills
- ADA accessible sidewalks to provide access to facilities
- Shaded pavilions and gazebos
- Additional picnic area under trees or with shade provided
- Jogging and exercise trails
- Enhanced park signage
- Some night-time illumination to allow views into the park at night

Parking - Should vary based on the size of the park, facilities provided and the availability of safe on-street parking. A minimum of six to ten spaces with an additional one to two handicapped parking spaces was recommended in the 2004 Plan. This is because more and more park users are expected to drive to area parks. The exact amount of parking needed will vary based on the size of the park, the facilities it contains and the number of users. Opportunities for shared parking with surrounding compatible facilities such as libraries, schools and city buildings may be possible.

Restrooms - The 2004 Master Plan did not recommend restrooms as a standard element in neighborhood parks, and this update follows that recommendation. On a case by case basis, and depending on the size and facilities to be provided in each neighborhood park, restrooms may be occasionally included. However, restrooms typically are not placed in neighborhood parks because they increase maintenance, and these parks are ideally within walking distance of a person's home.

Athletic facilities - Fields for competitive play are not recommended in neighborhood parks due to the level of traffic and activity that they generate. Where they occur today in existing neighborhood parks, efforts should be made to relocate them over time.

Design - The overall design and layout of a neighborhood park is important to its final quality and timelessness. These parks should generally be designed with the programmed space - playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, etc. - clustered into an "active zone" within the park. These areas need ample seating and shade to be hospitable year round. Constructing these areas near existing stands of trees is strongly recommended as this eliminates the years of waiting for shade trees to mature. The open/unprogrammed space should be visible from this activity area, but should be clearly delineated through plantings and hardscape features such as paved trails and seat walls. Finally, a looped trail is considered a preferred component of a neighborhood park.

How the park integrates with the surrounding land uses - residences, a school, a wooded area, etc. - is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. When a road borders the park, it should be ensured that the houses across the street face the park. When houses must back up to a park, ensure that fencing between the house and the park is transparent wrought iron fencing (or similar) rather than wooden, tall, privacy fencing. Transparent fencing allows a softer transition between park and residence, and provides for informal surveillance of the park. In the future, preferably no more than 25% of any park's boundary should be bordered by the backs of houses, otherwise it would create a sense of uncomfortable enclosure within the park. When a park is constructed adjacent to a school, ensure that the two sites interact: work with ECISD to have paved connections between the school and the park. Lastly, it is important to design neighborhood parks that are unique in character, respond to the surrounding environment, and provide unique experiences for the park's users.

Figure 3-1 Example of a typical neighborhood park layout

The figure on this page illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed as a unique part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. Community parks are usually reached by automobiles on collector streets, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or bicycle to it. Community parks are more than 15 acres in size and have a two-mile service radius. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike/bike trails and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users.

Floyd Gwin Park is an example of an ideal community park. At close to 40 acres it is large enough to provide a variety of facilities for active and passive recreation, and has an almost ideal location for serving most of the residents of the western part of the City.

Floyd Gwin Pool at Floyd Gwin Park; photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Type - There are essentially two types of community parks: active and passive. Each type has a different set of facilities provided and an overall different character. Active community parks typically focus on high-intensity recreation such as lighted competitive game fields, recreation centers, and manicured vegetation. Passive community parks, on the other hand, typically have low-intensity uses such as hiking, picnicking, and free play. Passive community parks generally have a large amount of natural and unprogrammed space in the park. When a community park is large enough, it can sometimes be both types by having areas that are active and areas that are passive within the same park.

Size - The typical community park should be large enough so it can provide a variety of facilities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion as new facilities are required. A typical community park varies in size from 20 acres to over 50 acres. A community park should not be completely consumed by athletic field facilities, but instead should focus on variety with something for a broad range of users.

Location - Community parks should be located near a major thoroughfare to provide easy access from different parts of the City. Because of the potential for noise and bright lights at night, community parks should ideally be buffered from adjacent residential areas. This is not feasible with the existing community parks in the City, but should be considered for new community parks.

Parking - Parking varies based on the facilities provided and the size of the park. Additional parking is needed to accommodate facilities such as athletic fields or recreation centers that can be located in community parks. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of five spaces per acre with additional parking for added facilities. The specific amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park.

Facilities - Facilities generally located in community parks include the following:

- Multiple shaded pavilions and gazebos (three per community park)
- Additional picnic areas with grills and tables under trees or with shade provided
- Jogging and exercise trails around major portions of the park

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike/bike trails and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users.

- Enhanced park signage
- Water features where feasible such as a pond or detention area
- Night-time illumination to allow use of some facilities at night (to take advantage of cooler temperatures)
- Active free play areas
- Restrooms
- Recreation center/community building (if appropriate)
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park
- Playground equipment for ages 2-5 and ages 6-12, with adequate safety surfacing around the playground and shade structures over the playground
- Fields for baseball, soccer, football, as long as the fields do not dominate the park (may be lighted)
- Multi-purpose courts for tennis, basketball or volleyball
- Open space and landscaping (50% of the overall park acreage)
- ADA accessible sidewalks to provide access to facilities
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as nature trails, fishing ponds, swimming pools, amphitheaters etc.

Design - As with neighborhood parks, the overall design and layout of a community park is important to the park's final quality and timelessness. Similarly, activity zones of programmed space are also important within community parks. Playgrounds, pavilions and basketball courts make up one type of active zone, while ball fields, concession stands and storage buildings make up another type. Again,

Figure 3-2 Example of a typical community park layout

providing shade by means of constructing the former of these two activity zone types near existing stands of trees is strongly recommended, as is the provision of benches and picnic tables. In community parks and other large parks, it is often desirable to delineate between activity zones and unprogrammed areas by the use of natural features such as stands of trees or landscaping where available. This helps to break up the park visually and delineate space. Paved trails should connect these various areas with each other, as well as provide a walking/jogging loop for recreational use.

Amenities at Sherwood Community Park; photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

The interaction between a community park and surrounding areas is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. Because community parks are often located outside of neighborhoods, there are different considerations than there are with a neighborhood park. As with neighborhood parks, it is important that the park be bordered by neighborhood roads and, if feasible, creeks or other natural areas. When development does border the park, how the edge is addressed depends on the type of development. If the development is residential, ensure that the fencing between the houses and the park is transparent. However, if the development is industrial in nature or otherwise aesthetically unpleasing or potentially a nuisance, the border should be fenced and heavily planted with trees and shrubs to soften the edge.

As a final consideration, it is important to understand that active community parks themselves can sometimes be a nuisance if near residential neighborhoods. Bright lighting at night, excessive noise from cheering spectators, or the overflow of parking onto neighborhood streets can all become major issues. If an active community park is to be developed in close proximity to a neighborhood, it should be designed with an adequate landscape buffer to provide visual screening and sound reduction, and design parking areas away from housing. The figure on the previous page illustrates a typical community park and some of the elements that the park might contain.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are intended to serve an entire city and very often become the premier park in that area. It is land that is dedicated as parkland due to its regional importance or relevance. This may be due to its natural characteristics including habitat, geological formations, or aesthetic beauty. Other reasons may be the role that the particular site plays in issues of regional importance: e.g. historical memorial, habitat protection, or ecological service including water conservation and flood protection. The size of a regional park can vary from less ten acres to several thousand acres, depending on the purpose and character of the site. Regional parks are often under the ownership and control of county or state government, but in some cases can be owned and operated by a city. Regional parks should be located near highways or major arterials to provide easy access from different parts of the city. Because of the potential for traffic, noise and bright lights, regional parks should be buffered from adjacent residential areas.

Facilities - Regional parks can include:

- Indoor or outdoor swimming pools
- Recreation centers

- Large natural habitat for wildlife and bird watching
- Multi-use trails
- Nature or interpretive center
- Large picnic shelters with grills and tables
- Large shaded playgrounds for ages 2-5 and ages 6-12 with adequate safety surfacing
- Restrooms
- Athletic fields for game and tournament play
- Amphitheater or community gathering area for performances and events
- Parking areas for each of the facilities listed above

Special Use Parks

These types of parks are designed to accommodate specialized recreational activities. Because the facility needs for each activity are different, each special use park usually provides one or only a few activities. Examples of special use parks include:

- Athletic complexes
- Swimming pool/aquatic centers
- Tennis complexes
- Skate parks
- Dog parks
- Golf courses
- Open space preserves or natural area parks
- Linear parks
- Downtown plazas

Athletic complexes and golf courses are the most common type of special use parks for most cities. Athletic complexes seek to provide fields for organized play in a location that can accommodate the traffic and noise that a large number of users can generate. Athletic complexes should include sufficient fields so that leagues can congregate at one facility and not have to spread out in different locations across the City. Evening activities at athletic complexes necessitate high-intensive lighting that can become a nuisance when the complex is located too close to residential areas. To address this, wide buffers should be placed around such complexes and/or they should be located adjacent to commercial or industrial areas.

Nature parks and preserves are a critical part of the land use system in any metropolitan area. They provide wildlife habitat, flood control, and places for passive recreation. These parks can greatly vary in size depending on the resources available, but are meant to have a citywide service radius. The benefit and inclusion of places that are natural areas or unprogrammed open space has been largely overlooked in the context of typical park master plans. Conservation and preservation are especially valuable as, over time, natural resources disappear in our cities and natural habitat is wiped out. The value of walking through historic and natural places that have been left untouched is immeasurable. Such opportunities are rapidly becoming rare, and the identification and protection of such areas is urgently needed in most cities today. Cities that marshal the will and act quickly to conserve natural

resources demonstrate the foresight and resolve necessary to ensure that future generations may enjoy something of beauty and timelessness.

Natural areas and open space are part of a city's resources and are its natural gems. The value of such land may have visual, historic, and cultural appeal that imprints upon the visitor, creating a sense of place and lasting memories. Wilderness, creeks, ponds, prairies and particular geologic formations or topographic change may all be considered elements worthy of protection, public access, and celebration. As unprogrammed space, there is the added benefit of these areas as self-maintaining. There may be the occasional need to check for hazards, but maintenance is generally not a significant factor. Other than recreational and aesthetic opportunities afforded by natural areas, they also have economic value to societies in terms of ecological services provided such as water and air purification, carbon sequestration, flood control, pollination reduction, air cooling, and positively effecting human health and well being.

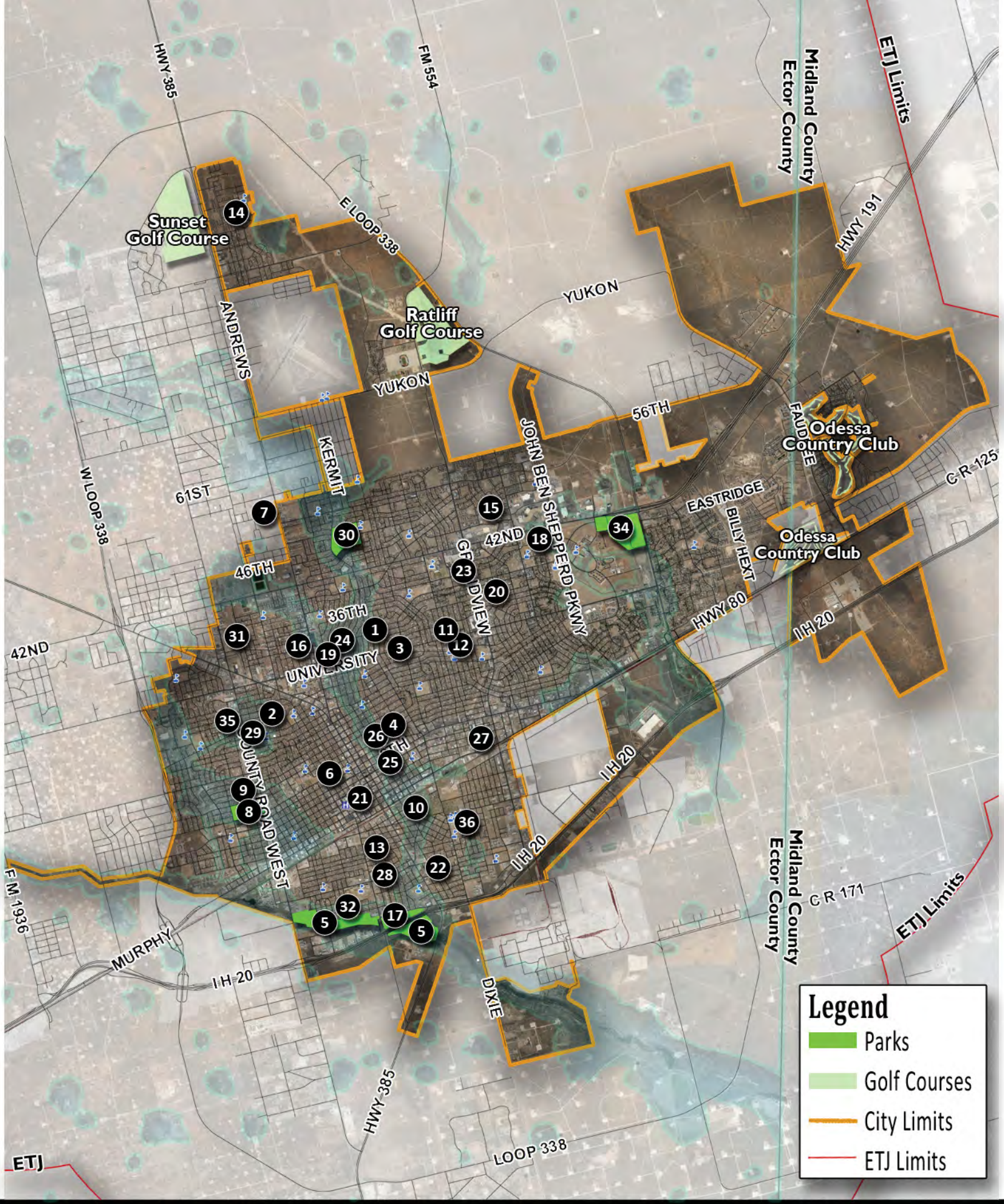
Linear parks are open park areas that generally follow some natural or man-made feature that is linear in nature such as creeks, abandoned railroad right-of-ways, power line corridors, drainage corridors, or utility easements. Properly developed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel, linear parks can serve to link or connect other parks in the local system, as well as schools, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and other major destinations. They should also serve to help preserve open space. No specific standards apply to linear parks other than the park should be large enough to adequately accommodate the resources they contain.

Hike and bike trails, often found in linear parks, serve to provide active and passive recreation as well as connections between parks and other destinations within the City. A trails system should be established to serve both recreation needs and as a means of alternative transportation throughout the City. Such a system should provide each resident with quick and easy access to parks, retail, and employment areas.

An additional type of special use park is a **"special interest" park** which typically is developed as a skate park, dog park, or some other park designed to accommodate a special recreational need. Many cities only accommodate one park of each special interest type (e.g. only one skate park per city). Although in the future, demand from residents might be able to sustain two or more of each type of special interest park. Another popular alternative is incorporating special interest park areas into larger community or regional parks.

Existing Parks System

The local parks system in Odessa includes 36 city-owned parks with approximately 554.76 acres of parkland. Table 3.1 on the following page summarizes the existing recreation facilities contained in the parks in Odessa. There is also one municipal golf course in Odessa, Ratliff Ranch Golf Course, which is a highly valued recreational amenity within the City. The golf course is approximately 125 acres in size.



Existing Parks

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

Table 3.1 Odessa 2014 Park Inventory

#	Park Name	Acres	District	Classification	Community Building	Swimming Pool	Walking Trail (miles)	Baseball Fields (Lighted)	Softball Fields (Lighted)	Soccer Fields (Lighted)	Soccer Fields (Not Lighted)	Backstop	Practice Soccer Goals	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Volleyball Courts	Play Area	Pavilion	Pavilion Picnic Tables	Pavilion Trash Cans	Wood Picnic Tables	Metal Picnic Tables	BBQ Pits	Trash Cans	Drinking Fountain	Gym	Restroom	Park Signs	Park Rules	Dumpster	Irrigation System	Park Spaces (Reg/Handicap)	Attendance/ Crowd Capacity
1	Bellaire	4.2	3	Neighborhood								1					1					2		4			1	2		1	A	2/H	150
2	Buchannan	0.5	3	Neighborhood									2				1							6				1	1		A		NR
3	Casa Bella	1.8	3	Neighborhood									1				1											1	1		A		50
4	Central	9.5	1	Neighborhood													1							5			1	3	4	2	A	134 N/H	370
5	Comanche Trail	160	1	Special Use			1.6			2							1	2	2	6			5	7			3	3	4	3	A	160/9H	
6	Crump	1	5	Neighborhood													1							3				2	2		A	7/1 H	50
7	Dorthy Murphy	4.2	3	Neighborhood								2		1/CNL			1				2			4				1	1		A		50
8	Floyd Gwin	40	5	Community		1		4						2/CL	1/CL	3/AL	1	1	6	4	4		9	15		1	2	4	6		A	457/17H	1400
9	Floyd Gwin Soccer	12	5	Sports Complex							5																1						
10	Frederick Douglass	0.3	1	Neighborhood											2/CNL		1											1		1	A		50
11	Freedom	6.7	4	Special Use															6	4	1			2				3	2		A		50
12	Jim Parker	14	1	Neighborhood				2				3	1	2/CL		2/AL	1	1	6	2			2	2			1	3	4	4	A	229/6H	300
13	Juan Ramirez	4	1	Neighborhood								1			1/CNL		1	1	2	2			1	2				2	1		A		100
14	Lawndale	8	4	Neighborhood			0.3					1					1	1							1								
15	Lions Club	3.5	4	Neighborhood									2				1					1						2	1		A		50
16	Mark Henderson	2.1	3	Neighborhood													1		6	4		2						1	1		A		50
17	McKinney	22	1	Community		1	0.3	3						1/AL		2/SL	1	1					3	9	1		1	3	4	2	A	52/8H	215
18	Memorial Gardens	12	2	Special Use			1.0																				1						
19	Modern Gardeners	0.75	3	Special Use																	3			1				1			A		
20	Murry Fly	5	2	Neighborhood										1/CNL			1					1	1	2				3			A		50
21	Noel Heritage Plaza	1	1	Special Use																	2										A	30 N/H CB-1CEN BUS	400
22	O'Conner	1.5	1	Neighborhood													1		6	4				1				1	1		A		50
23	Optimist	10	4	Neighborhood									2	2/AL			1	1					1	1			1	4	3		A	51/3H	200
24	Polyantha	0.91	3	Special Use																								1	3		A		NR
25	Progressive	2	1	Neighborhood													1				3			5				1	3		A	43/9H	100
26	Purple Sage	7	1	Neighborhood			0.3										1		2	2			3	3				3	1	2	A	43 U/P	120
27	Royalty	4.2	1	Neighborhood										1/CNL			1		2	2	3		1	4			1	4	2	1	A		50
28	Salinas	7	1	Neighborhood	1			1									1	1	3	4	1		1	6				1	2	1	A	78/5H	100
29	San Jacinto	9.3	3	Neighborhood			0.4					4		1/CNL			1	1	0	6	9	13	2	5				3	5	1	A	31/2H	105
30	Sherwood	65	4	Community	1	1	1.2	3				4	19	2/CL		2/SL	1	1	0		1		11	38	1		1	4	12		H/M	363/14H	1650
31	Slator	8.9	5	Neighborhood	1				2					2/CL		2/AL	1						1	5			1	2	3	1	A	39/1H	150
32	Southside Ball Park	11.5	1	Sports Complex				1																2			1	1	2	1	A	136 N/H	375
33	Stone Gate	6	2	Neighborhood															20	10		16									A(trees)		
34	UTPB	90	2	Sports Complex			5.0		14	3	16			1/ANL	1/ANL	1/SNL	1	6			1		8	7			2	1	12		A	254/1H	2000
35	Western Manor	1.9	5	Neighborhood								2	1				1		6	6	5		1	2				1	2		A		50
36	Woodson	17	1	Community	1	1					1						1	2					4	8				3	8		A	198/12H	300
	Total	**554.76**			**4**	**4**	**10.1**	**14**	**16**	**5**	**22**	**18**	**28**	**16**	**5**	**12**	**28**	**19**	**67**	**56**	**35**	**35**	**54**	**149**	**3**	**1**	**18**	**66**	**91**	**20**		**0**	**8585**

Chapter 4 :: Public Involvement in the Planning Process

Why Do We Seek Public Input?

Public input is a critical part of any planning process. Public entities work for their citizens by providing and managing the types of park facilities and recreation programs the residents and taxpayers of the community want to have. In essence, our citizens are our "customers" and it is the City's responsibility to provide what our customers seek. In the park planning process, public input helps identify what types of existing facilities are being used, where key deficiencies may occur, and where the citizens of Odessa would like to see their funding targeted. In other words, the residents of a community determine what they want to have in their city through their current use of those facilities and their input.

The recommendations of the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan are designed to truly reflect the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of Odessa. This plan adopts the philosophy that a citywide planning process should listen to the citizens of the City, and reflect the desires and concerns of all of the citizens of Odessa.

This plan incorporates an extensive amount of public input, utilizing several alternative methods. By using multiple methods of public input, feedback from many varying parts of the community was received, leading to a broader consensus on the direction that the plan should take. Public input methods included:

- A citywide online survey available to all residents, to determine a broad based public opinions and perceptions from across the City (1,395 responses)
- Public presentations to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Citywide public meetings held in each of the council districts (five total)
- Stakeholder interviews

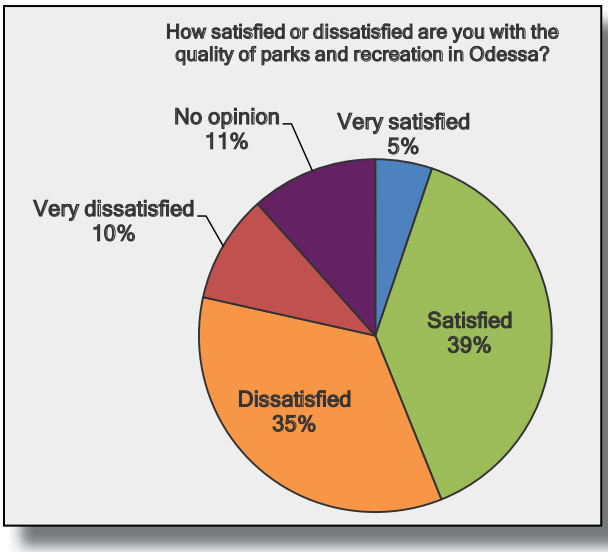
A summary of the results and comments received from each of these methodologies is described below.

Online Survey Results

An online survey was conducted as part of the park planning process. The survey was designed to examine residents' current participation and interests in recreational activities, and it also assessed recreational needs in Odessa. The survey was linked through the City's website, and was available to all residents in Odessa and its ETJ. The survey generally contained the same questions that were asked in the 2004 survey for the previous master plan so that satisfaction and preference trends could be established. It should be noted that the 2004 survey was considered a statistically valid telephone survey, while the current survey was available to all residents who chose to take it. The current survey responses provide a good general assessment of citizen desires and allows comparison to attitudes in 2004.

The survey was available to the public for approximately three months, and 1,395 responses were received - that is equivalent to approximately one out of every 91 residents in the City. Of the respondents who participated in the online survey, 46% were male and 54% were female. 26% were under the age of 18; 48% were between the ages of 18 and 45; 22% were between the ages of 46 and 65; and 2% were over the age of 65 (2% of respondents preferred not to give their age). Approximately 12% of respondents have lived in Odessa for less than three years; 15% have lived in Odessa from four to ten years; and 70% have lived in Odessa more than 11 years (3% of respondents preferred not to answer how long they have lived in the City).

Over the next several pages, the key results of the online survey are shown.



How satisfied are you with parks and recreation in Odessa?

This question will help establish a baseline for how the City is doing and can be tracked overtime. The current satisfaction rate is approximately 44% either satisfied or very satisfied (see graph to the left).

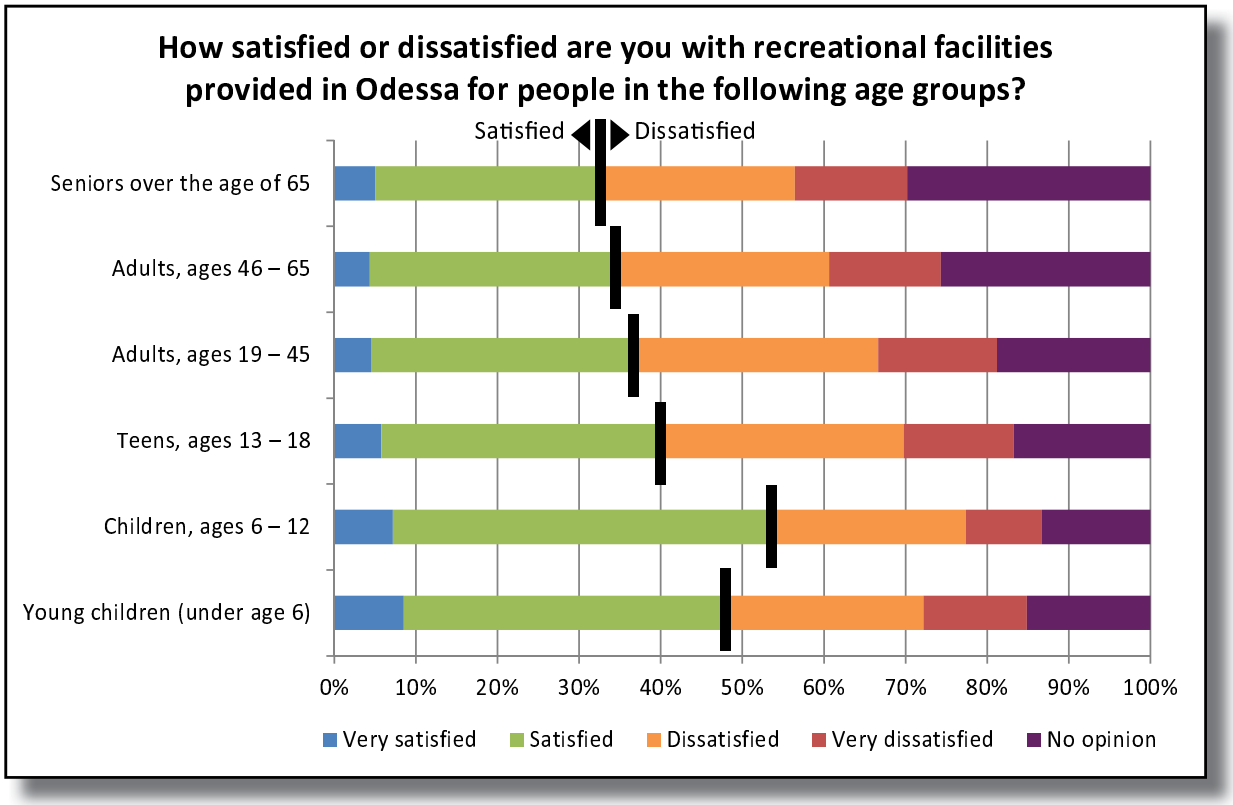
However, satisfaction varies based on how long the respondent has lived in Odessa. Respondents who have lived in Odessa the longest (more than 20 years) are the most satisfied with the quality of parks and recreation with 51% being either satisfied or very satisfied. Respondents who have lived in Odessa from four to seven years are the least satisfied with only 34% satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the quality of parks and recreation also increased with the respondents age. Those that were over the age of 56 were the most satisfied (58%) compared to those under the age of 18 being the least satisfied (34%).

Satisfaction was also compared to the previous survey done for the 2004 Plan. Since 2004, the level of satisfaction has dropped significantly, from 78% being either satisfied or very satisfied in 2004 to only 44% in 2013.

How satisfied are you with recreation facilities provided for people in different age groups?

The survey respondents were given a list of the different age groups and asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the recreational opportunities that provided for each age group. Respondents were most satisfied with the recreation opportunities that are provided for children ages 6 to 12 (54% satisfied or very satisfied). They were least satisfied with the recreational opportunities provided for seniors over the age of 65 (32% satisfied or very satisfied). See the graph below.



What type of recreational amenity is missing in Odessa today?

The survey respondents were asked what type of recreational amenity or facility do they think is missing from the parks system in Odessa today? The most popular responses were trails, playgrounds, and water park. Respondents were then asked a follow up question of what one recreation facility would they say is lacking in their part of the City? The answers are shown below.

Hike and bike trails.....28%
Playgrounds.....17%
Courts for volleyball or basketball....11%
Places for picnics.....11%
Recreation/community center.....10%
Parks/open space.....9%

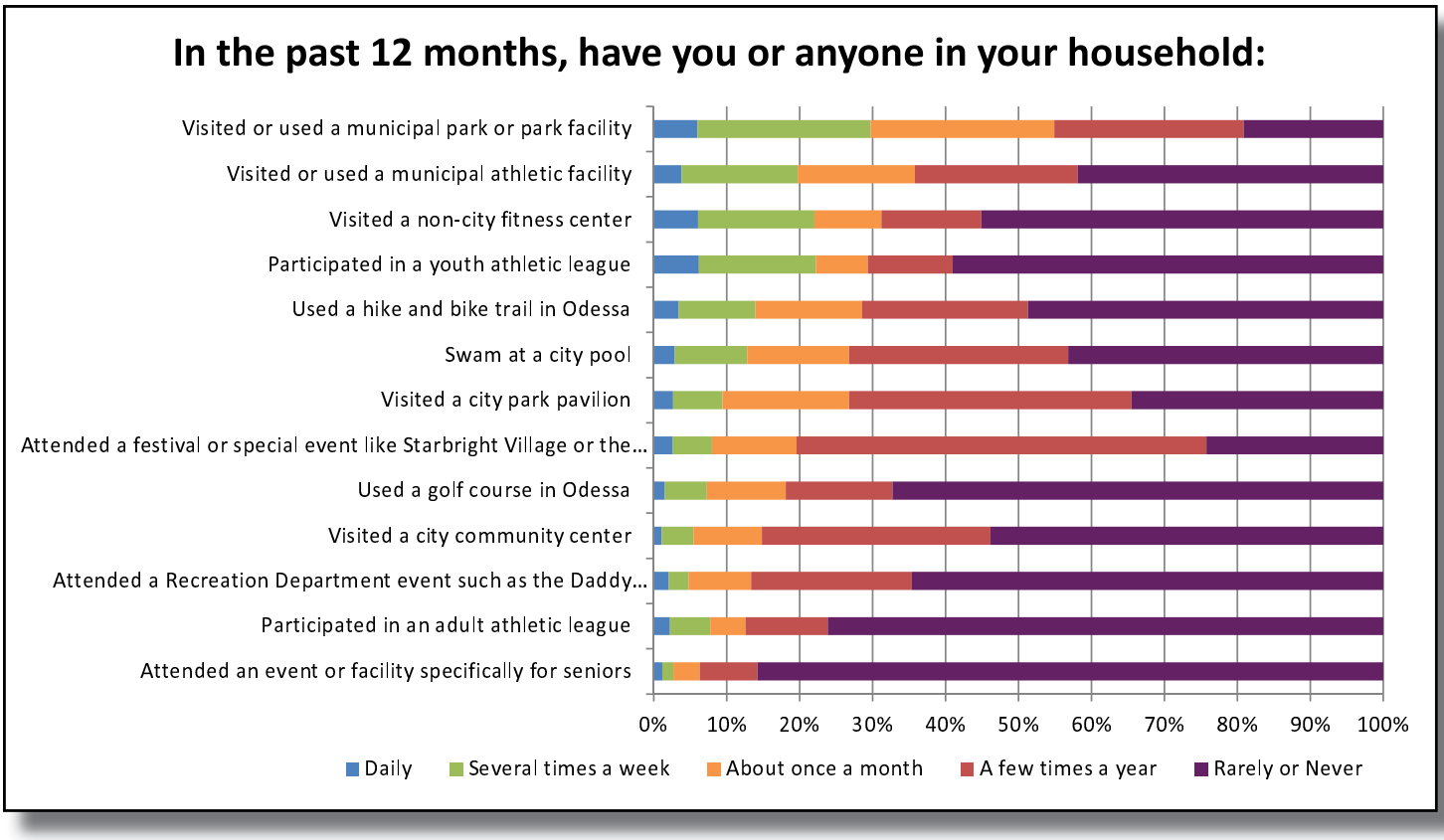
Have you participated in a recreational activity outside of Odessa?

Respondents were asked if they have participated in any recreational or athletic activity within the past year outside of the City of Odessa. 47% indicated that yes they have gone outside of Odessa for recreation. The most common sports or activities they were going outside of Odessa for were swimming (39%). fishing/hunting (38%), golfing (28%), softball/baseball (23%), and football (22%).

The most common cities they visited when participating in these recreational or athletic activities were Midland (19%), Lubbock (14%), San Angelo (12%) and Dallas (12%).

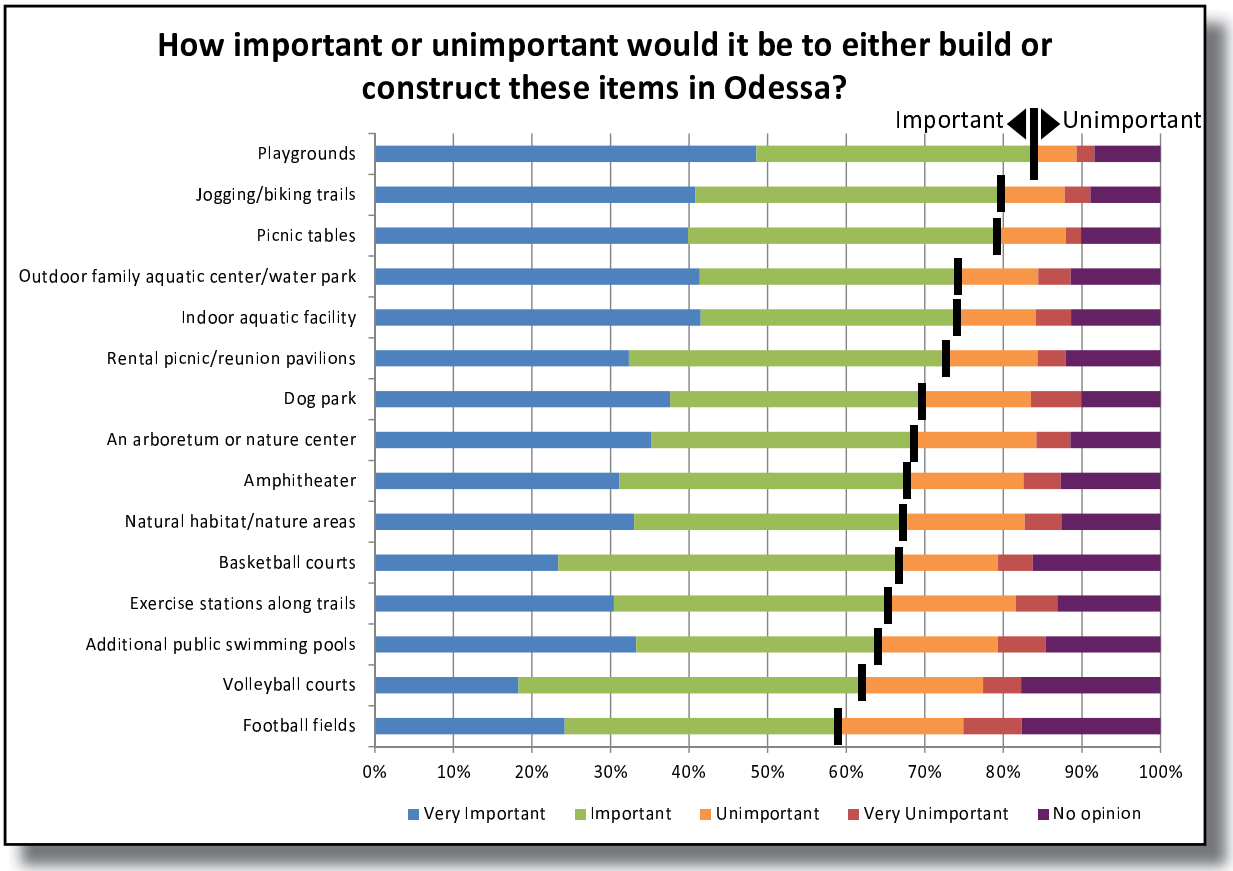
In the past year, have you used or done any of the following?

The survey respondents were given a list of different park and recreation facilities and activities. They were then asked whether or not they or anyone in their household have used those facilities within the past year. The majority of respondents have visited a municipal park or park facility, with 55% indicating they have visited about once a month or more (when combining the percent of responses who answered daily, several times a week, and about once a month). Just over one-third, or 36%, have used a municipal athletic facility at least once a month or more. Nearly 30% of respondents indicated that they have used a hike and bike trail in Odessa about once a month or more in the past 12 months. The results are shown in graph below.



How important is it to build each of following in Odessa?

The survey respondents were given a list of different park amenities and were asked to rate how important or unimportant they felt it was to build or construct those amenities. The most popular amenities were new playgrounds (84% indicated either important or very important), followed by jogging/biking trails and picnic tables (both 79% important or very important). The top 15 amenities are shown in the graph below.



Which is the most important facility to construct?

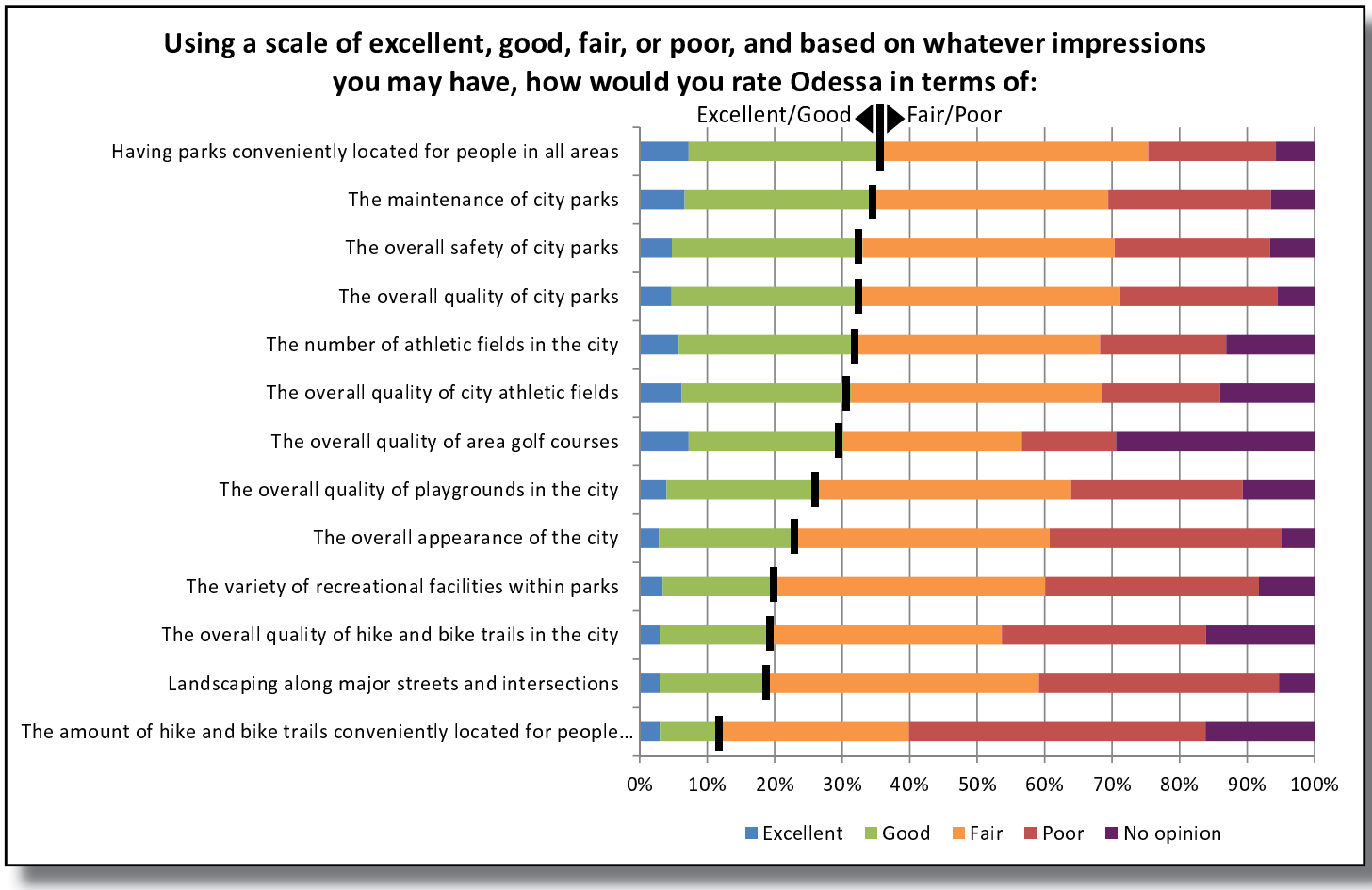
The survey respondents were then asked the follow up question: which of the facilities from the list above do they feel is the most important to construct? The top ten facilities are listed below:

1. Dog park
2. Jogging/biking trails
3. Playgrounds
4. Indoor aquatic facility
5. Outdoor aquatic center
6. Football fields
7. Amphitheater
8. Basketball courts
9. Arboretum/nature center
10. Exercise stations along trails

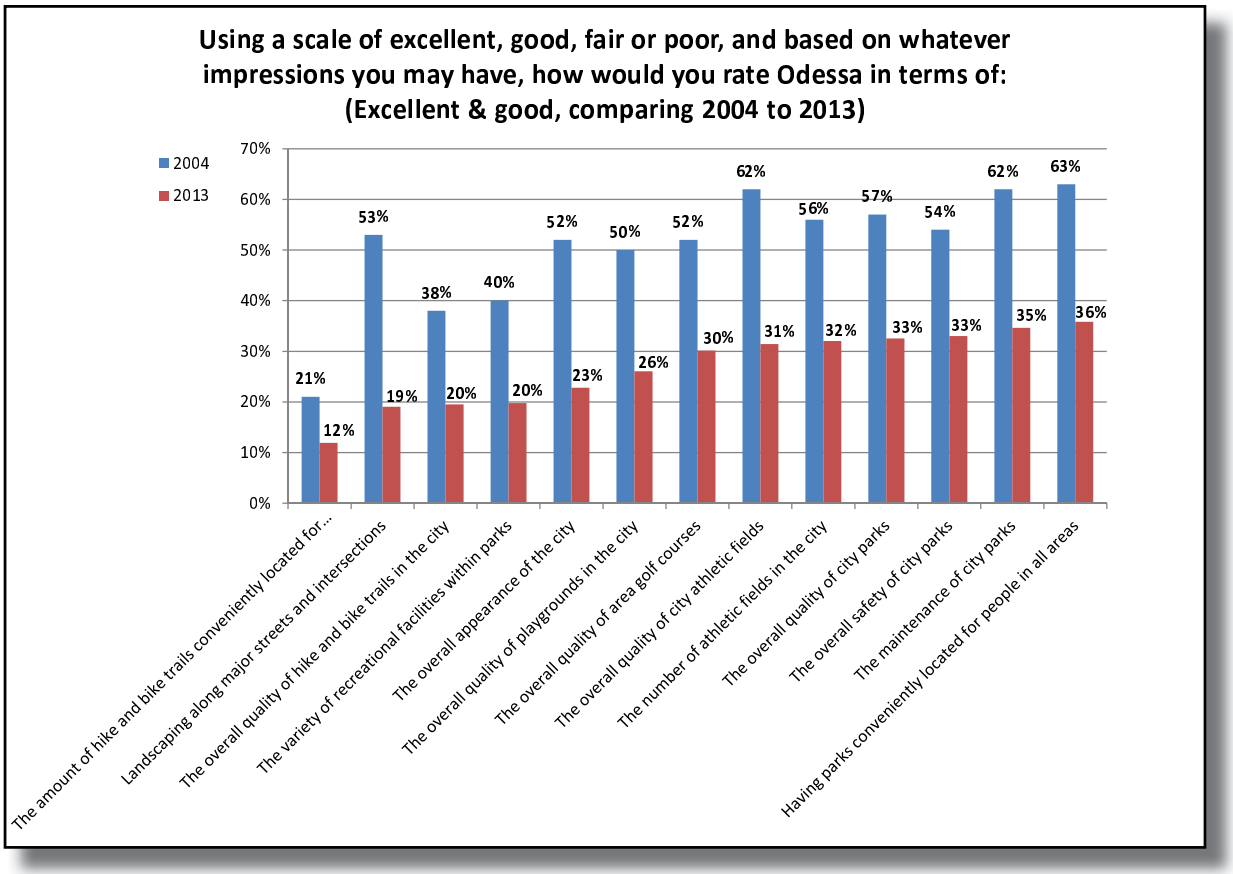
The top facility to construct varied by the different age groups of the respondents. Those that were 18 or younger felt the number one facility was basketball courts. 18 to 25 year olds wanted a dog park as their number one facility. 26 to 35 year olds voted that playgrounds were the most important. 36 to 45 year olds asked for jogging/biking trails. Finally, those over 46 also felt a dog park was the most important.

How would you rate Odessa Parks?

Respondents were given a list of different characteristics in the City of Odessa that deal directly with parks and recreation. They were then asked to rate those characteristics using a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, and base them on whatever impressions they may have. Just over one-third, or 36%, of the respondents feel that having parks conveniently located for people in all areas is either excellent or good. 35% indicated that the maintenance of city parks is either excellent or good. One-third, 33%, indicated that both the overall safety and the overall quality of city parks is either excellent or good. The results are show in the graph below.

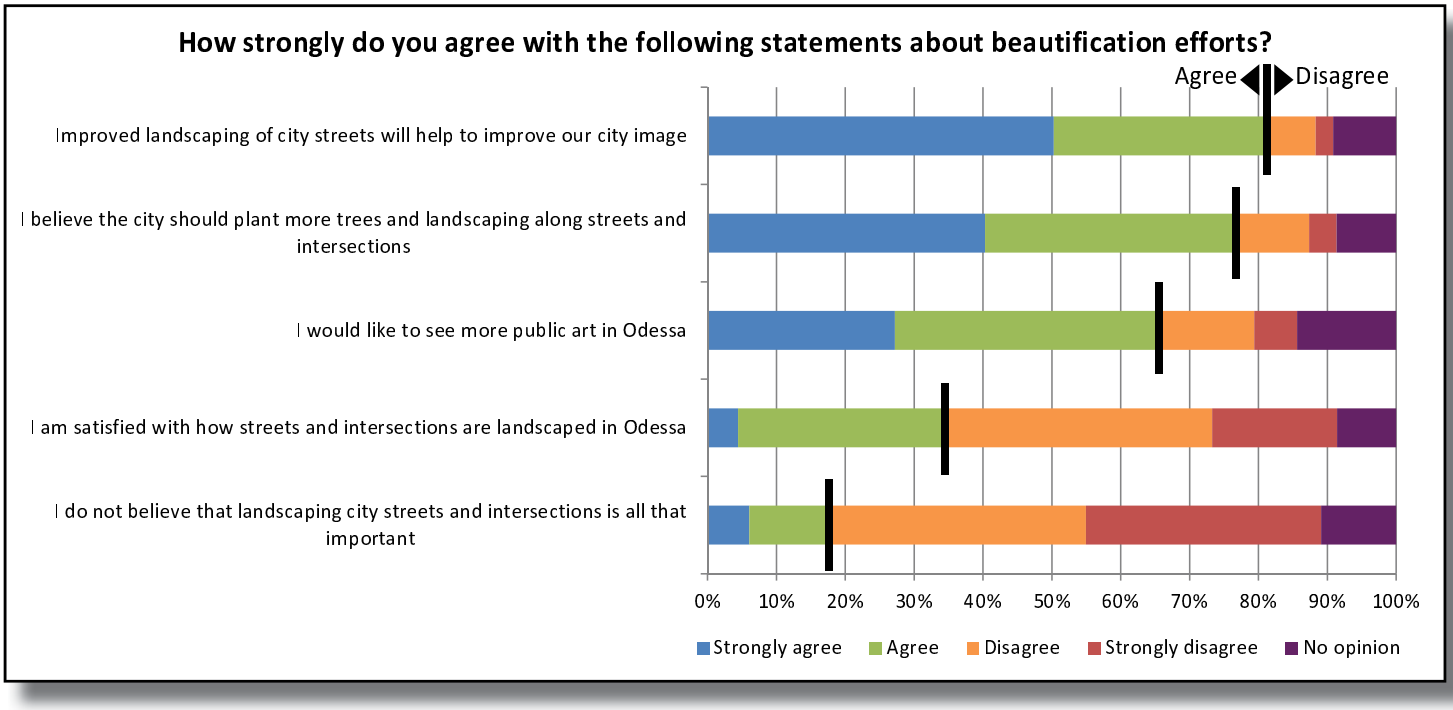


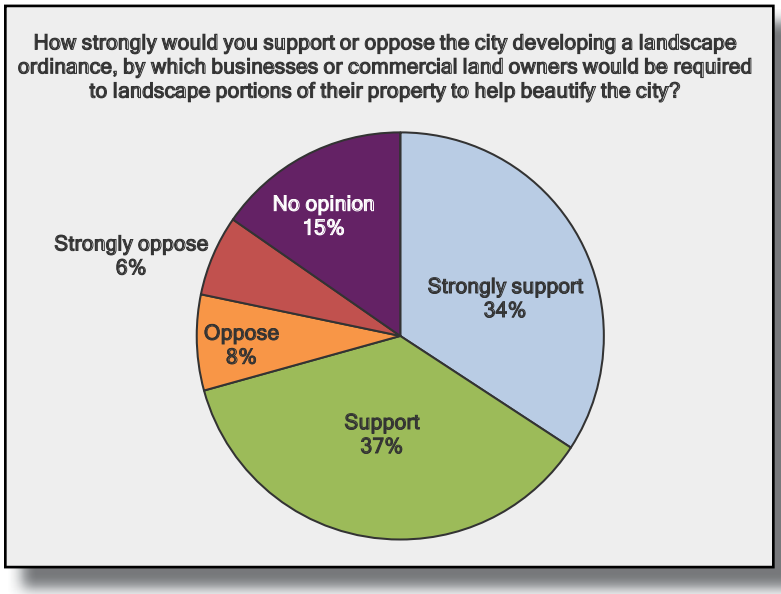
When comparing this question to the results from the 2004 survey, the percent of those who felt the City was doing either excellent or good has dropped in every category. The categories that had the most significant decrease were overall quality of city athletic fields (dropping 31 percentage points) and the overall appearance of the city (dropping 29 percentage points). The results are shown in the graph below.



Beautification efforts in the City

The City of Odessa has undergone some extensive beautification efforts throughout the past several years. In fact, beautification of the City is one area that residents consistently support. When asked about beautification, the survey respondents were very favorable. 81% either agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that improved landscaping of city streets will help to improve the city image. 77% also agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that the city should plant more trees and landscaping along streets and intersection. 65% indicated that they would agree or strongly agree to having more public art in Odessa. The results are shown in graph below.

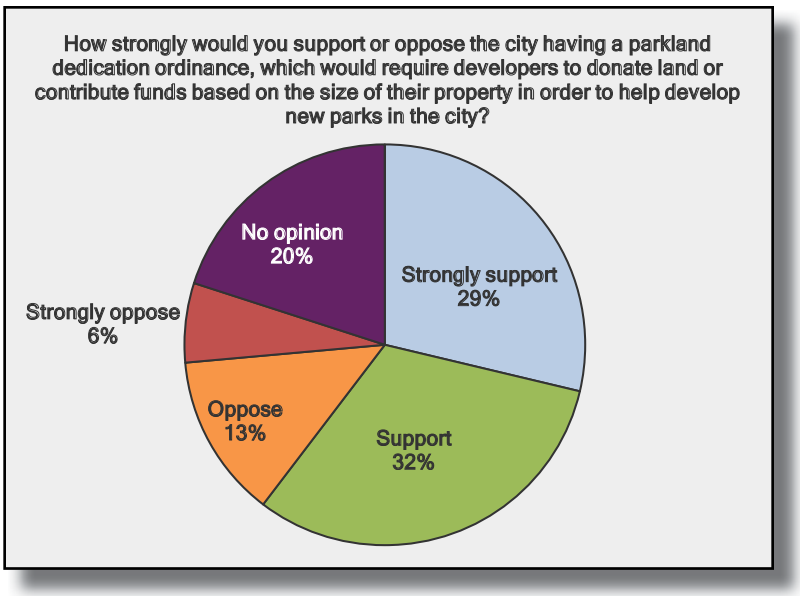


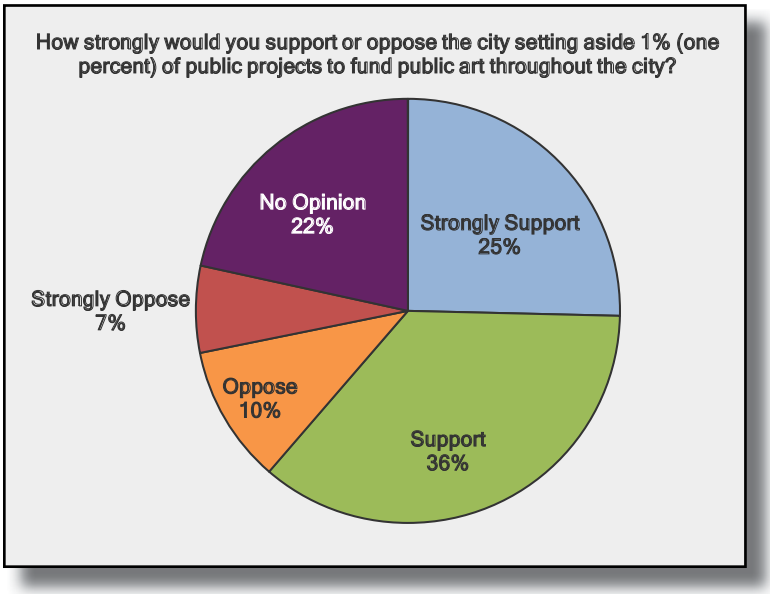


Of those who responded to the survey, over 71% indicated they would support or strongly support the City adopting a landscape ordinance. Such an ordinance would require businesses and commercial land owners to landscape portions of their property to help beautify the City. This percentage is actually up from the 2004 survey when only 65% supported a landscape ordinance at that time.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Of those who participated in the online survey, 61% indicated they would support or strongly support the City adopting a parkland dedication ordinance. This type of ordinance would require developers to donate land or contribute funds to help develop new parks in the City. This type of ordinance is already used by many cities in Texas and is viewed as a way to develop smaller parks at the same rate that growth occurs. The percent of respondents supporting this type of ordinance has also increased since the 2004 survey, from 57% in 2004 to 61% now.





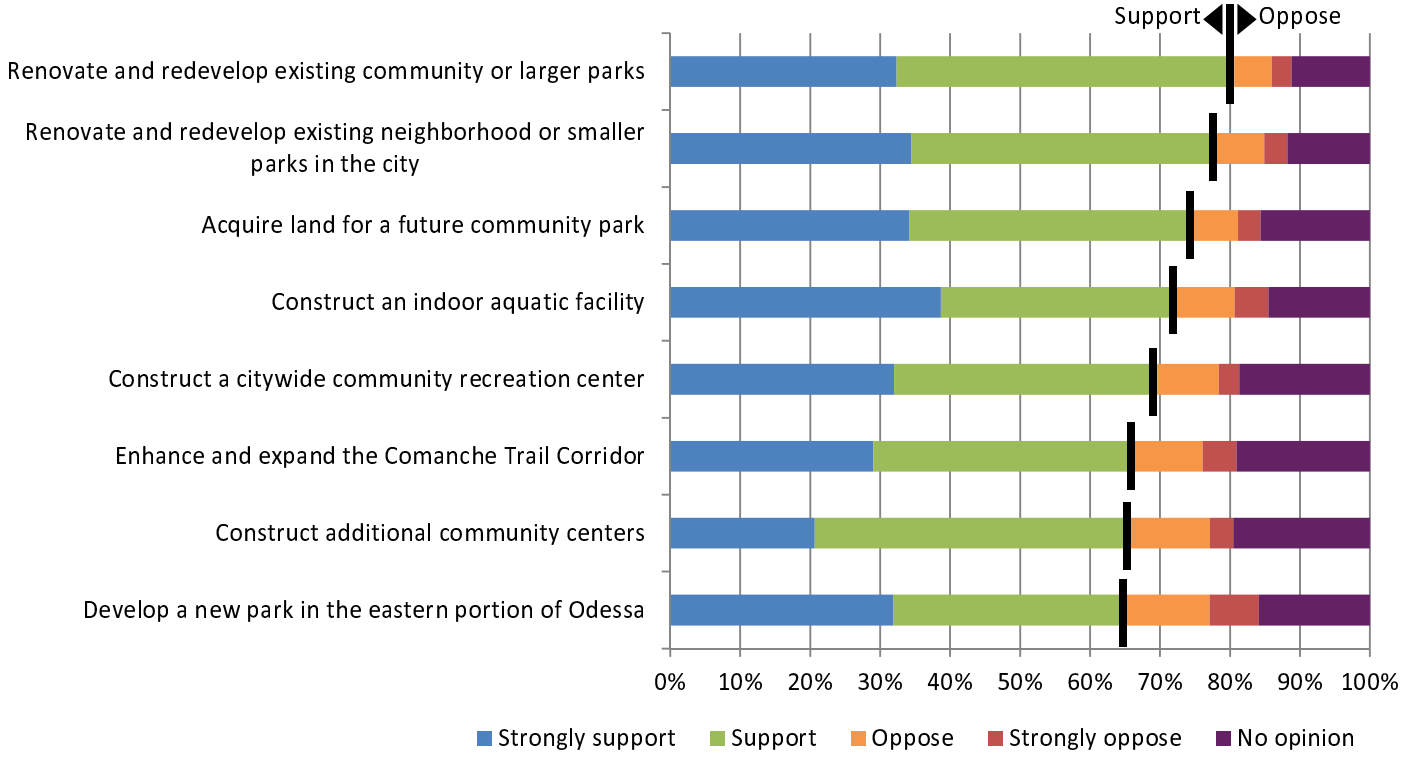
Funding Public Art

The survey respondents were also asked whether or not they would support the city setting aside 1% of public projects to fund public art throughout the city? 61% indicated they would either support or strongly support the City doing this to help fund public art.

How strongly would you support the following projects being funded?

Survey respondents were given a list of potential improvements the City could make over the next five to ten years. They were then asked to rate how strongly they would support or oppose each of the improvements. The large majority, at least two-thirds, responded supportive of all the improvements. 81% indicated they would support or strongly support renovating or redeveloping existing community or larger parks. 78% indicated they would support or strongly support renovating or redeveloping existing neighborhood or smaller parks. 74% also supported or strongly supported acquiring land for a future community park. The results are shown in the graph below.

How strongly would you support or oppose the following projects being funded by the city in the next five to ten years? Building these may require the issuance of bonds and a small tax increase.



When asked to select the one improvement from the list above that was the most important to them and their family, the most common answers were: renovate and redevelop existing neighborhood or smaller parks in the City (24%), construct an indoor aquatic facility (23%), and develop a new park in eastern portion of Odessa (20%).

Public Meetings/Open Houses

Five public meetings (one in each council district) were held in the month of July. The public meetings were designed as an open forum type of setting. A brief presentation was given to discuss the purpose of having a master plan and where the City is today in terms of facilities and condition. Then residents were invited to participate in an open discussion and verbalize what they feel are the needs of the City for parks and recreation. Approximately 100 residents attended the public meetings. Some of the more common themes that residents expressed were the desire for:

- A citywide indoor recreation center
- Dog park
- Multi-purpose fields for football, rugby, flag football, etc.
- Park lighting and extended park hours
- Continued and improved upkeep to existing parks

Specific comments from each of the five meetings is listed below.

District 1

- We need to utilize the whole Woodson Park.
- We need a dog park in Odessa.
- Need a mega rec center for teens and the disabled.
- Need a sensory park for pre-school ages.
- I would like a dog park. It gives dogs much needed exercise and socialization and their owners a place to meet. Let's keep people in Odessa rather than have them go to Midland.
- I do agree that we need a rec center so that we have a place for people of all ages to go.

District 2

- Sports complex used for football, soccer, adults and youth leagues.
- More trees, less football, more boxing.
- I think a dog park would improve the quality of life here.
- We need to promote the parks as an avenue to enjoy living in Odessa. We are a large enough community to have several jewels.
- Tee boxes for the disc golf course. Concrete is not the only option. Rubber mats that are bolted in place are already in use in Lubbock and San Angelo course.
- Expand park hours to accommodate night golf. Playing any sport in 95 degree plus heat is a hazard in itself.
- Weed control and lighting.
- Youth football complex. This is the only major sport that is not addressed. With the abundance of youth soccer and baseball fields, it only seems natural that this is the next logical step.
- Certification of mileage or distance at existing park pathways for one mile, 5k, 10K, ½ marathon, marathon distances to have for a variety of events for children and adult ages.
- Park upkeep with things like grass so that kids are not playing on stickers, rocks, etc.

- Dog parks are great however I do not see the need over youth. Anything that gives our youth an alternative to staying in playing video games or getting into trouble…I'll be a satisfied citizen if the youth is considered first in any parks additions.

District 3

- More solar powered lights for the night at all parks, need a dog park, need a mega rec center for teens and the disabled, need a sensory park pre-school ages.
- Dog park, walking trails, lighting of trails and active areas of parks, shaded areas, rec facility, updated playground equipment, sand volleyball, better swing sets.
- Odessa needs a dog park. I would also like to see lighted walkways around our parks.
- A recreation center would benefit our city. I am a taekwondo student and we could host tournaments if we had a recreation center.
- We need more benches.
- Add volleyball courts to the west of Frederick Douglass Park. Upkeep this park.

District 4

- Adult playground, planetarium, boxing gym for youth and adults, dog park.
- Specialized location for the fair, boxing locations/gyms, dog park.
- Dog park, fitness equipment, more public art, more events held at parks, sidewalks.
- With more development to the north, it's a great place for another pool. Fitness course for Iron Man competitors, large field for rugby or flag football.
- Trash at skate park needs to be addressed. Benches placed on every side of the parks. Some angled parking on Everglade would help with parking during soccer season.
- More parking on the east and southeast streets at Sherwood, more picnic tables and BBQ areas.

District 5

- Dog park
- Citywide recreation center

Stakeholder Interviews

Over the course of a two day charrette in June 2013, the planning team met with several different stakeholder groups including various athletic leagues and associations, the YMCA, public art activists, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Common needs regarding parks and recreation in Odessa were brought to light during these interviews which include:

- Need more turf fields for practice and for soccer/football
- Need to upgrade the existing neighborhood parks
- Funding for parks is limited. A bond proposition might be necessary for future improvements
- The growth of the City is expected to continue because of the production in oil and natural gas. These new residents are going to need park and recreation facilities
- Need to hire an athletic coordinator to help leagues assign practice fields and times of use
- Need fourth baseball field at Sherwood to be constructed
- Pools are extremely popular. Need a fourth pool in the east or north
- There is a push and an interest in the City for more beautification efforts
- Need a Parkland Dedication Ordinance so that developers are building parks in new neighborhoods where there are no parks available.
- Need more trails that are safe for both walkers/joggers and bicyclists

Chapter 5 :: Assessment of Park Needs

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Chapter 5 :: Assessment of Park Needs

An Assessment of Park Needs in Odessa

Residents of Odessa have clearly established that parks and recreation is important to them, and that they appreciate the recreational opportunities that exist in the City today. They also recognize that the City is growing, and that new residents arriving in Odessa will only increase the need for park and recreation facilities and programming. More importantly, the way we recreate is changing, as shown by the recreation trends discussed in Chapter 1. New technology, as well as an increasing amount of activities, are constantly competing for our time and are challenging the way we play and relax. This needs assessment will help recognize both basic and new needs, and will help Odessa embrace those changes.

The Needs Assessment is the most critical component of the parks master planning effort. An assessment of what deficiencies exist in the parks system is vital so that actions can be developed that address those deficiencies. At a basic level, the needs assessment compares the state of Odessa today with the parks and recreation facilities that will be needed in the future. An understanding of the deficiencies that exist in the parks and recreation system is vital so that actions can be developed to address these needs. This assessment also projects potential future needs relative to recreational trends and the changing needs of the City so that an action plan can be developed to address these needs effectively. In essence, a needs assessment is an analytical way of assessing what facilities are most needed and desired by the citizens of Odessa, and determining which needs are the most critical.

A needs assessment is an analytical way of assessing what facilities, actions, and programs are most needed and desired by the residents of Odessa. From the results of the needs assessment, recommendations and actions to address these needs will be created and prioritized. The assessment of these needs is both quantitative and qualitative, as discussed in more detail below.

Assessment Methods

A variety of different inputs and techniques are used in evaluating Odessa's current and future park needs. Generally, three methodologies were included in the needs assessment analysis. These techniques follow general methodologies accepted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for local park master plans. These three techniques are:

- **Standard-based Assessment** - This technique uses locally developed level of service ratios of facilities to population so as to project where the City is today and where it might be in the future as the population grows.
- **Demand-based Assessment** - This technique uses actual and/or anticipated usage growth data, as well as citizen input on the types of activities they would like to engage in, to determine which facilities and programs are most in demand.
- **Resource-based Assessment** - This technique recognizes that Odessa has many unique physical features, and explores how to convert these into recreation or open space assets that help to meet the demand for recreation in the City.

All three methods are important in their own regard, but individually do not represent the entire picture. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities and park requirements are needed in Odessa. Ultimately, these needs are vetted by the citizens of Odessa, and are determined to best represent the key park and recreational needs of the City.

Standard-Based Assessment

The national guidelines and standards that were created decades ago were based on demographic trends rather than specific local desires, and are now intended to serve as a starting point for park planning. Each city has its own unique geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic composition, and as such, the arbitrary application of national standards would not necessarily meet the needs of a particular community. Therefore, national standards are no longer used to project facility needs since they are based on a "one size fits all" type of evaluation. Instead, the standards are fine-tuned to meet local conditions.

Park standards are simply guidelines that allow Odessa to assess where its citizens want it to be, and to allow the City to compare itself to other similar cities. The standards establish targets that allow the City to chart its progress over the next 5 years.

This plan utilizes the existing level of service in the City as a starting point and determines whether that level of service is adequate, or whether it needs to be increased or decreased. Extensive public input is used to determine how to adjust the current level of service, as well as the anticipated growth of the City, and what parts of Odessa are well served and what parts are not. ***Local needs and desires are used to mold these guidelines to meet the expectations of the citizens of Odessa in a realistic manner.*** Three types of level of service determinations are made as shown below.

- **Level of Service: Spatial** - Defines the quality context of parkland needs, and is expressed as a ratio of acreage to population. More importantly, it also defines the distribution of parks throughout Odessa.
- **Level of Service: Access to Parkland** - Geographically determines how easy it is for Odessa residents to access parkland, and determines where parkland is needed to meet the City's target level of service.
- **Level of Service: Facility** - Defines the number of facilities recommended serving each particular recreation need. Facility standards are usually expressed as a ratio of units of one particular facility per population size. For example, a facility standard for baseball fields might be one field for every 10,000 residents of the city.

The Level of Service (LOS) based assessment uses target levels of service established by the local jurisdiction, in this case the City of Odessa, to determine the quantity of park facilities required to meet the City's needs. These target levels of service usually are expressed as the quantity of park facilities needed to adequately serve a given ratio of residents. These targets are established to provide the level of service that the particular jurisdiction believes is the most responsive to the amount of use and the interest of its citizens. This plan establishes individual city specific levels of service for Odessa, and does not rely on national standards that may not be applicable to Odessa.

The Need for Park Acreage (Level of Service: Spatial and Access)

The purpose of spatial levels of service for parks and recreational areas is to ensure that sufficient area is allocated for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. This type of level of service allows a city to plan ahead so that parkland can be targeted and acquired before it is developed and can no longer be used as parkland. To help determine an appropriate level of service, a "target" level is incorporated into this plan. These spatial standards are expressed as a ratio of parkland to the number of residents in Odessa, and in essence refer to the minimum preferred level that can adequately provide for the needs of the residents of Odessa.

Developing and applying a target level of service for park acreage results in acreage standards for different types of parks. Neighborhood parks and community parks are the primary park types to focus on as they provide close-to-home park space. Additional acreage is required both in order to serve the existing and future population, but also to allow for the development of additional neighborhood and community parks evenly spaced throughout the City. The goal is to provide close-to-home parks within a 5 to 10 minute walking distance of each resident in Odessa.

The recommended preferred levels of service for park acreage for the City of Odessa are shown in the table below. These spatial standards are based on the levels established in the 2004 Plan, and have been adjusted where needed based on the current level of importance. They are expressed as the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Table 5.1 Recommended Level of Service

Close to Home Parks
Neighborhood Parks (Recommended Standard) = 1.5 acres +/- per 1,000 population
Community/Metropolitan Parks (Recommended Standard) = 4.0 acres +/- per 1,000 population
Total Recommended Close to Home Parks Standard = 5.5 acres +/- per 1,000 population
Other Citywide Parks
Athletic Parks (Variable Standard) = no standard established
Special Purpose Parks (Variable Standard) = no standard established
Linear Parks (Variable Standard) = recommended goal of 1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 population
Open Space (Variable Standard) = recommended goal of 5.0 acres per 1,000 population
Total Recommended Standards for other parks = 8.0 to 9.0 acres +/- per 1,000 population

The recommended spatial standards or levels of service for Odessa were compared to the actual number of park acres in Odessa. This comparison is useful to determine how close to the target level of service the City actually is. At the same time, the comparison also is used to predict future need for land for parks in sectors of the City that will grow over the next five to ten years.

Neighborhood Parks in Odessa

The standard of 1.5 acres of neighborhood parks for every 1,000 residents is an average standard for the state of Texas. It does reflect the importance of having nearby parks for the younger families of Odessa, but also recognizes the changing role of smaller parks in our cities.

Table 5.2 Existing Neighborhood Parks

Park Name	Acres	Council District
Central	9.5	1
Frederick Douglass	0.3	1
Jim Parker	14.0	1
Juan Ramirez	4.0	1
O'Conner	1.5	1
Progressive	2.0	1
Purple Sage	7.0	1
Royalty	4.2	1
Salinas	7.0	1
Murry Fly	5.0	2
Bellaire	4.2	3
Buchannan	0.5	3
Casa Bella	1,8	3
Dorothy Murphy	4.2	3
Mark Henderson	2.1	3
San Jacinto	9.3	3
Lawndale	8.0	4
Lions Club	3.5	4
Optimist	10.0	4
Crump	1.0	5
Slator	8.9	5
Western Manor	1.9	5

Existing low density residential neighborhoods developed over the past 50 years are too spread out to encourage easy access to smaller parks via walking. In addition, parents are increasingly reluctant to allow children to visit parks without supervision, and as a result tend to focus more on organized activities such as sports, swimming or recreation destinations rather than informal play in the area park. Odessa currently has 109.9 acres of developed neighborhood parks for a current population of 106,102. On a citywide basis, Odessa currently has a ratio of 1.03 acres per every 1,000 residents of the City. Table 5.2 summarizes the current neighborhood park supply and acreage on a citywide basis.

Neighborhood parks are typically centrally located in a neighborhood or central to the several smaller neighborhoods that it serves. A neighborhood park in Odessa is one acre to 15 acres in size, and ideally should serve no more than 1,000 to 4,000 residents. Neighborhood parks should be integrated into the community in a prominent manner during the design phase, and not layered in as an afterthought during construction.

A pocket park is a type of neighborhood park that serves a smaller number of residents and is therefore smaller in size. They are typically less than one acre in size and provide public gathering places for residents. Odessa has one park that is smaller than one acre, Buchannan Park. Therefore, the purposes of this analysis, that pocket park is included with neighborhood parks.

The prominence of neighborhood parks reflects the importance of having them as centerpieces of a neighborhood. The recommended target level of service goal is 1.5 acres of neighborhood parks for every 1,000 residents. This target reflects the goal of providing parks within walking distance of all residents in Odessa.

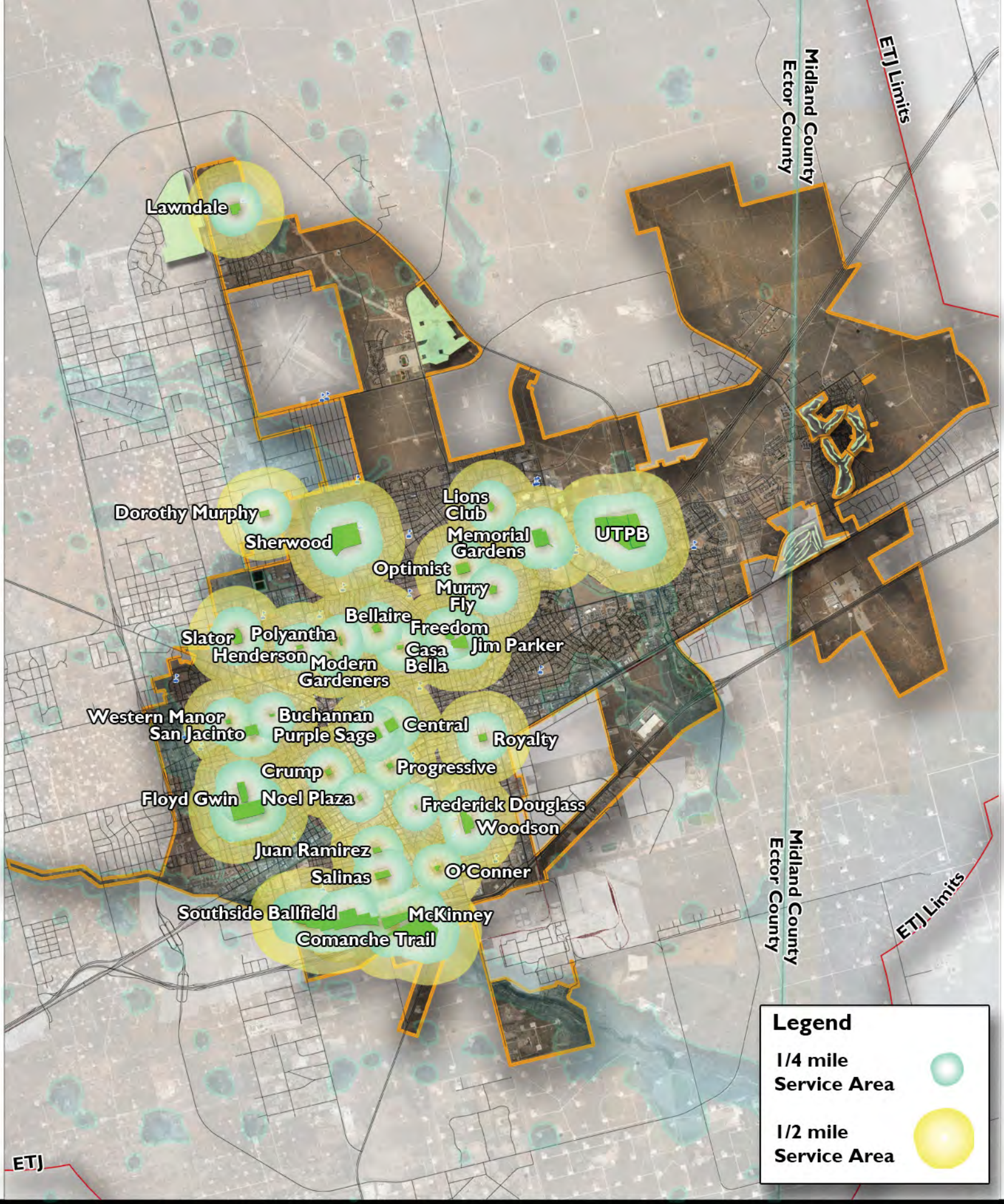
Since neighborhood parks serve as a central gathering place for residents, accessibility is a critical component of these parks more so than any other park type. The preferred ideal service area for access to a park from any neighborhood in Odessa is one-quarter (1/4) mile. The maximum service area for a neighborhood park is one-half (1/2) mile. In no case should access to close-to-home parks

require that a child or young person cross a major collector or arterial road.

A benchmark that all residents of Odessa be within 1/4 mile walking distance of a park within 20 years will result in parks that are designed to be more centralized in their neighborhoods so as to improve access. Note that for the purposes of access, every neighborhood park, school play area, and parts of community parks in Odessa can be considered the "neighborhood park" for the areas close to it. The map on the following page illustrates the distribution and service areas for neighborhood parks in Odessa.

Future needs for neighborhood parks to meet the target level of service are summarized below. The City of Odessa is expected to continue growing towards the east and to the north. These areas have the largest deficit of neighborhood parkland. The maps on the following pages shown the level of access to neighborhood parks in Odessa.

Table 5.3 Neighborhood Parks Summary
Current Acres = 109.9 acres +/-
Current Ratio = 1.03 acres per 1,000 population
Recommended Standard = 1.5 acres per 1,000 population
Current needs with 106,102 population = 159 acres +/- (deficit of 49 acres +/-)
• Existing acres are 69% of the total that is currently recommended
Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 169 acres +/- (deficit of 59 acres +/-)
Year 2030 needs with 126,955 population = 190 acres +/- (deficit of 80 acres +/-)



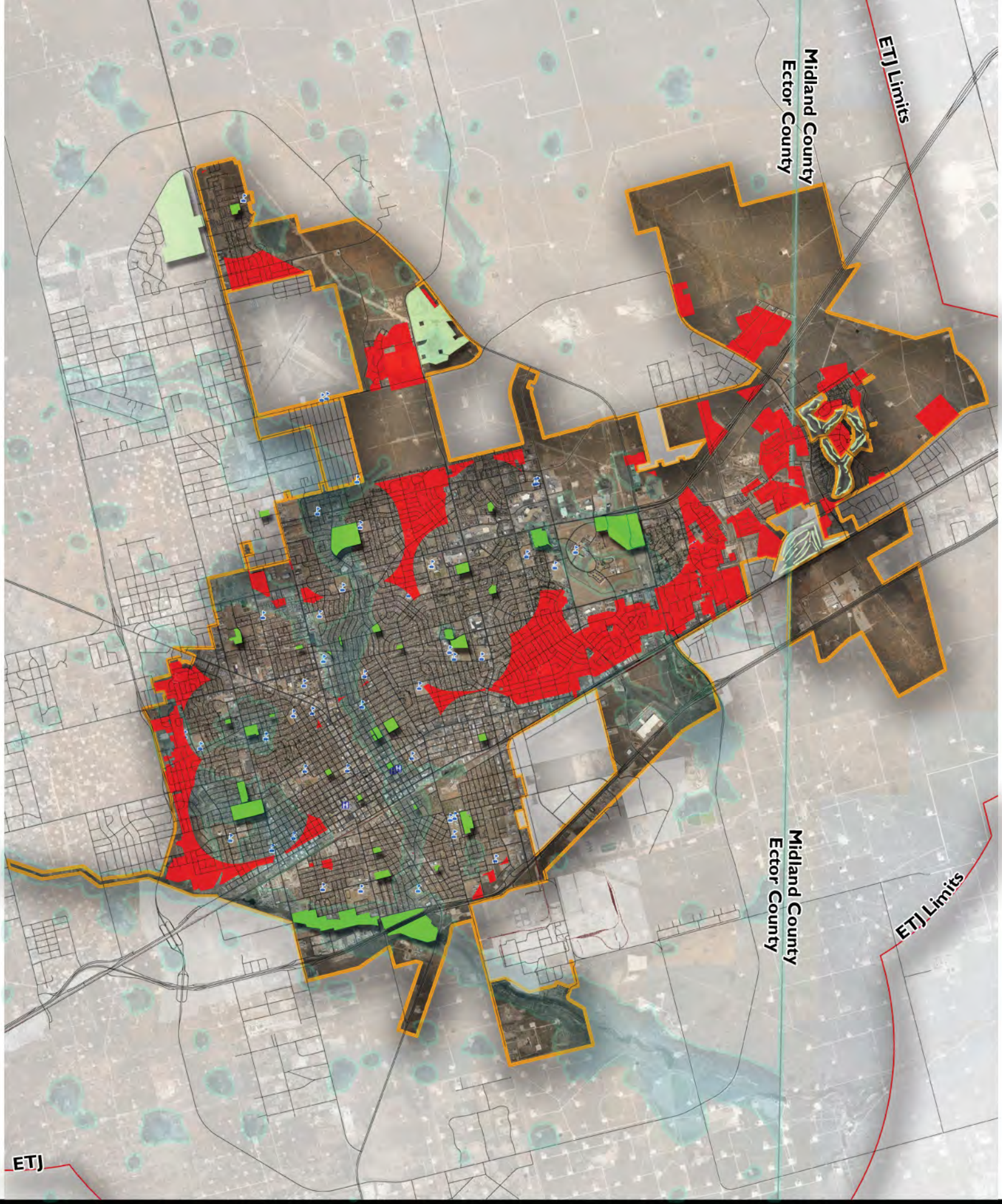
Neighborhood Parks Service Area

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF



Areas Without Neighborhood Park Access

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

Community Parks

Community parks are large parks that serve several neighborhoods or a portion of a city. They serve as locations for larger community events, sports and activities. Therefore, they contain many popular recreation and support facilities. Because of the larger service area and additional programs, community parks are more heavily used, increasing the potential for facility deterioration.

The additional facilities associated with a community park increase the spatial requirements necessary for this type of park. Also, community parks often require parking for users who drive from surrounding areas, which increases the amount of space needed. The recommended standard for community parks is 2.0 acres for every 1,000 residents. Since community parks are typically accessed by car, the preferred service area is approximately two miles.

Community parks in Odessa today are very well distributed throughout the City, and are larger in size (the average size of community parks is approximately 32 acres). There are also three sports complex sites with community park elements and serve as the community park destination in those communities.

Table 5.4 Existing Community Parks

Park Name	Acres	Council District	Classification
McKinney	22.0	1	Community
Southside Ballfields	11.5	1	Sports Complex
Woodson	17.0	1	Community
UTPB	90.0	2	Sports Complex
Sherwood	65.0	4	Community
Floyd Gwin	40.0	5	Community
Floyd Gwin Soccer	12.0	5	Sports Complex

The community park deficit is as much about the need for more facilities in some of the parks as it is about having enough parkland. The existing community parks in the City are well distributed, and as a result all of the major community parks are over used. Since these parks also serve as de facto neighborhood parks for the areas around them, they are heavily used and will continue to deteriorate from overuse if additional parklands are not added. Table 5.5 below summarizes the citywide community park needs in Odessa.

Table 5.5 Community Parks Summary

Current Acres = 257.5 acres +/-

Current Ratio = 2.6 acres per 1,000 population

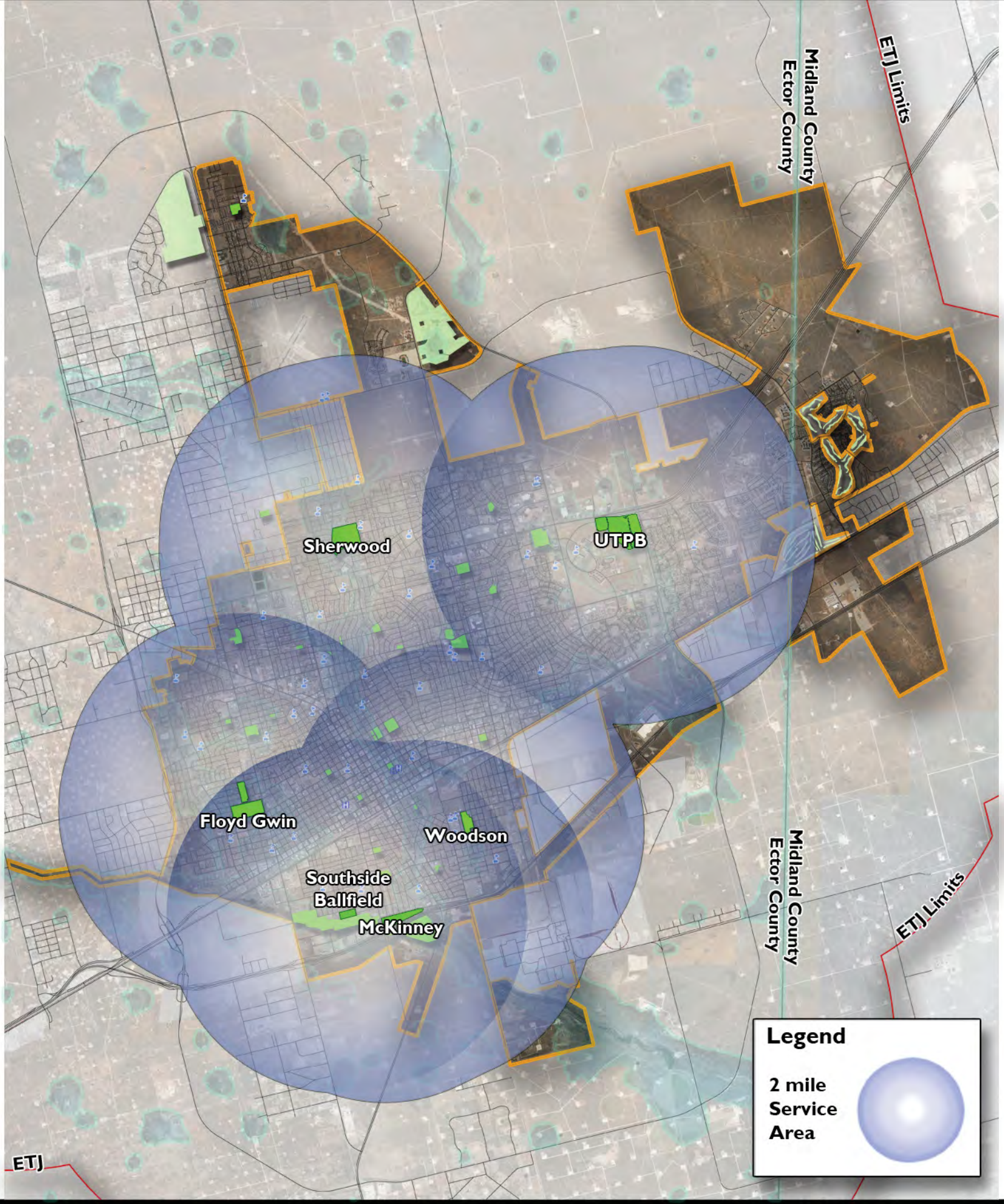
Recommended Standard = 4.0 acres per 1,000 population

Current needs with 106,102 population = 424 acres +/- (deficit of 167 acres +/-)

- Existing acres are 61% of the total that is currently recommended

Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 450 acres +/- (deficit of 192 acres +/-)

Year 2030 needs with 126,955 population = 508 acres +/- (deficit of 250 acres +/-)



Community Parks Service Area

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

Special Purpose Parks in Odessa

Other types of parks that respond to specific physical conditions in the City or to specific needs are also part of the park system. These include special purpose parks, such as golf courses, linear or linkage parks, regional parks, and open space or natural preserves. Table 5.6 shows the existing special purpose parks in the City.

Table 5.6 Existing Special Purpose Parks

Park Name	Acres	Council District
Comanche Trail	160.0	1
Noel Heritage Plaza	1.0	1
Memorial Gardens	12.0	2
Modern Gardeners	0.75	3
Polyantha	0.91	3
Freedom	6.7	4

The total special purpose park acreage in Odessa is approximately 181.36 acres, and is equivalent to approximately 1.7 acres of special purpose parkland for every 1,000 residents. No specific goal has been established for special purpose parks since this will address specific facility needs.

Open Space Preservation

Undeveloped open space will become an increasingly important need in Odessa as the City continues to mature. The vastness of the prairie and open lands surrounding the City may make the need for preserved open space seem non-important, but in reality the preservation of high quality open space in Odessa will be one of the most significant challenges facing the City over the next five to ten years.

High quality open space is defined as areas with significant vegetation, low areas that frequently flood such as wetlands, wallows and playas, and areas with interesting physical features whether man-made or natural.

This master plan recommends that the City acquire over time a minimum of five acres of open space to a preferable goal of ten acres of open space for every 1,000 residents of Odessa. This standard would set a target of between 562 and 1,125 acres of undeveloped open space in the City by 2020.

Currently the City has approximately 190 acres of open space, consisting of 100 acres along Monahans Draw (out of a larger 160 acre linear park) and 90 acre of undeveloped and highly scenic land east of Odessa along Highway 191. This results in approximately 1.8 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents of Odessa. This level of service is relatively low, but is reflective of the lack of defined and undevelopable drainageways found in other cities in wetter climates.

Key existing examples of open space areas that could be acquired in or near the City include:

The Monahans Draw Corridor - Running along the southwestern edge of the City, the draw area includes the most heavily vegetated portions of the City. In fact, many of the wooded areas of the draw are similar to woods in areas with much greater stands of forest. Unfortunately, much of the draw is in private ownership and has been used for industrial uses or storage. Acquisition of the remainder of the floodplain and forested portions of the draw, both within the City and in ETJ areas adjacent to the City, should be the highest land acquisition priority of the City. Existing environmental issues and the scenic value of the lands should also be considered when evaluating the acquisition of tracts along Monahans Draw.

The Muskingam Draw Corridor - Running through the heart of central Odessa, this area is already developed in an area subject to periodic flooding. A long range plan has been developed to consider gradually acquiring the land and to convert it to open space in the center of the City.

Low Drainage Areas - Low areas in the area should be preserved as permanent open space when they become available. Low areas such as lands in the industrial zone between Business 20, IH-20 and Loop 338 and lands east of Loop 338 and FM 554 in the northeast segment of the City are examples of low drainage areas to be preserved.

Drill sites - In certain areas, drill sites may be acquired to supplement needed open space. However, drill site acquisition should not replace the acquisition of more valuable natural lands.

Summary of Park Acreage Needs

Neighborhood Parks

- Current Ratio = 1.03 acres per 1,000 population
- Recommended Standard = 1.5 acres per 1,000 population
- Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 169 acres +/- (deficit of 59 acres +/-)
- The largest issue facing neighborhood parks is keeping up with development. As Odessa continues to grow quickly, the City needs to adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance to ensure that those development and the residents living within are adequately served with neighborhood parks. All new neighborhood parks should ideally be located within the center of the neighborhood to allow for adequate access and will help to reach the goal that all residents are within 1/2 mile walking distance of a park.

Community Parks

- Current Ratio = 2.4 acres per 1,000 population
- Recommended Standard = 4.0 acres per 1,000 population
- Year 2020 needs with 112,479 population = 450 acres +/- (deficit of 192 acres +/-)
- The largest acquisition needs facing the City is in terms of community parkland. There is a near term opportunity for a community park in the northern portion of the City near Ratliff Golf Course. This park will help alleviate the deficit of community parkland. Long term the City should seek to acquire additional land towards the eastern and the western portions of the City limits where growth is occurring.

Open Space

- Recommended Standard = 5.0 to 10.0 acres per 1,000 population
- Key areas of open space preservation will be along the draws in and near the City, which can further increase the opportunities for linear parks in Odessa.

Level of Service for Recreation Facilities

Facility standards and target levels of service define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular type of recreation. They are expressed as the usage capacity served by each recreational unit, as well as the level of access to each type of facility from all parts of the City. The target levels of service shown on the following pages are based on comparisons with recognized standards, the standards established in the previous master plan, comparisons to other similar cities in Texas, the actual number of facilities in Odessa, and the amount of use each facility receives.

The following pages have a description of the 2014 target level of service for each recreational facility. A specific review of each major type of outdoor facility, key needs and key issues follows. Facility needs are based both on ratios related to existing population, as well as the amount of demand for each type which is based on public input and user information where available. As with the acreage standards discussed earlier, the facility target levels of service are adjusted based on Odessa's unique recreational goals. The target level of service for each type of facility is determined as a guide to provide the most basic recreation facilities to the community.

Developing Target Levels of Service - The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), in their publication *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, edited by R.A. Lancaster, defines recreation and park standards in this manner:

"Community recreation and park standards are the means by which an agency can express recreation and park goals and objectives in quantitative terms, which in turn, can be translated into spatial requirements for land and water resources. Through the budget, municipal ordinances, cooperative or joint public-private efforts, these standards are translated into a system for acquisition, development and management of recreation and park resources."

The publication further describes the role standards have in establishing a base for the amount of land required for various types of park and recreation facilities, in developing the community's acceptable minimum correlating needs to spatial requirements, and for providing justification for recreational expectations and needs.

The national and state standards are a useful guide in determining minimum requirements; however, the City of Odessa must establish its own standards in consideration of expressed needs of the residents and the City's economic, operational, and maintenance capabilities.

As part of the assessment, levels of service for each type of recreation facility have been developed. Levels of service define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular type of recreation. They are expressed as the number of facilities per population size. The standards shown in this section are specifically based on demonstrated needs, the actual number of facilities in Odessa and the amount of use each facility receives.

Baseball Fields

Current number of fields: 14 (lighted)

Current level of service: 1 field for every 7,579 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for every 7,500 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 14 fields, no deficit
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 15 fields, deficit of 1 field
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 17 fields, deficit of 3 fields

Level of need: Medium

Short term, the City should complete the development of the fourth baseball field that is planned at Sherwood Park. Completing that fourth field will meet the current baseball needs for 2020. Long term, the City should still seek to develop an eight-field complex in the northern part of Odessa as was recommended in the 2004 plan. The recommendation of the 2004 plan, which still carries over into this master plan, is to convert the two little league fields at Jim Parker Park into practice fields to give that park more of a neighborhood park feeling, and to convert the Southside Park field into practice fields and soccer facilities. With these conversions, and the potential new eight field complex in the north, Odessa would have 19 fields long term: 4 fields at Floyd Gwin Park; 3 fields at McKinney Park; 4 fields at Sherwood Park; and a new 8 field complex in the north.

Softball Fields

Current number of fields: 16 (lighted)
7 youth/girls fields and 9 adult fields

Current level of service: 1 field for every 6,631 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for every 7,500 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 14 fields, no deficit
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 15 fields, no deficit
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 17 fields, deficit of 1 field

Level of need: Low

14 of the existing softball fields are located at UTPB Sports Complex and are considered tournament quality facilities. One improvement that needs to be made to this park short term is adding a paved parking lot near the girls softball fields. The long term recommendation for softball facilities in the 2004 plan, which still holds true in this plan, is to plan for an additional softball complex with four adult sized fields in conjunction with the baseball complex to be planned in the northern portion of the City.

Soccer Fields

Current number of fields: 27 total (5 lighted and 22 not lighted)
16 youth size fields and 11 adult size fields

Current level of service: 1 field for every 3,930 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for every 3,500 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 30 fields, deficit of 3 fields
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 32 fields, deficit of 5 fields
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 36 fields, deficit of 9 fields

Level of need: High

Soccer continues to be one of the fastest growing sports in the area. There is an opportunity to develop soccer fields at Southside Ball Park by converting the existing unused baseball fields into soccer fields and soccer practice areas. This would provide soccer fields on the south side of the City and help meet the long term needs.

Football Fields/Multipurpose Flat Fields

Current number of fields: 0

Current level of service: None

Target level of service: 1 field for every 10,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 10 fields, deficit of 10 fields
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 11 fields, deficit of 11 fields
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 13 fields, deficit of 13 fields

Level of need: High

These types of fields can also be used for multiple sports. Football, field hockey, and lacrosse all use a similar type of flat field for their games. Participation in those sports, especially football and lacrosse, is expected to grow over the next decade, and having multiple recreation fields that can accommodate different sporting events will benefit everyone in Odessa. They can also be used for soccer if demand warrants it.

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association and the Physical Activity Council, youth lacrosse was the highest growing sport in terms of participation in 2012, which grew 158 percent.

Practice Fields and Backstops

Current number of fields: 46 total - 18 backstops and 28 practice soccer goals

Current level of service: 1 field for every 2,307 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for every 2,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 53 fields, deficit of 7 fields
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 56 fields, deficit of 10 fields
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 63 fields, deficit of 17 fields

Level of need: Medium

Practice fields continue to be one of the highest recreation facilities in demand. Existing practice fields for baseball/softball and soccer/football are not located in convenient locations. Therefore, some practice areas are not utilized. There are continued conflicts for use of practice fields in the north and east areas of the City. Competitive fields should not be used for practice if at all possible. Practice fields should be irrigated to promote even turf growth and reduce bare spots. While many elementary schools do have practice field facilities, the school district does not irrigate those fields and they are not conducive to safe play. Practice fields should be included in all future neighborhood and community parks, and they should be added to existing parks where feasible. During the public input process, many of the athletic association stakeholder groups also voiced a need for the City to hire an athletic coordinator to help leagues schedule designated places and times to practice based on the facilities that are already available.

Basketball Courts

Current number of courts: 5

Current level of service: 1 court for every 21,220 residents

Target level of service: 1 court for every 8,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 13 courts, deficit of 8 courts
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 14 courts, deficit of 9 courts
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 16 courts, deficit of 11 courts

Level of need: High

Basketball courts are often one of the more popular amenities in a park because they allow for spontaneous games among people of all ages, especially teens. Short term, the City should add up to eight lighted courts at Central, Floyd Gwin, Slator and Woodson parks. Many of the existing courts also need to be renovated and upgraded such as at Frederick Douglass and Juan Ramirez parks. The City should also construct large covered basketball courts at both McKinney Park and Sherwood Park, as recommended in the previous master plan. These types of covered courts will allow for use during the hot summer months, and could potentially double as a special event facility when necessary.

Volleyball Courts

Current number of courts: 12

Current level of service: 1 court for every 8,842 residents

Target level of service: 1 court for every 8,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 13 courts, deficit of 1 court
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 14 courts, deficit of 2 courts
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 16 courts, deficit of 4 courts

Level of need: Low

Similar to basketball courts, outdoor sand volleyball courts can be popular amenities and are relatively easy to add to an existing park. While the need for additional volleyball courts is low, one or two future courts should be added to community parks when funding becomes available.

Tennis Courts

Current number of courts: 16

Current level of service: 1 court for every 6,631 residents

Target level of service: 1 court for every 8,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 13 courts, no deficit
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 14 courts, no deficit
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 16 courts, no deficit

Level of need: Low

Odessa currently does have an adequate supply of tennis courts throughout the City. However, the key issue with tennis courts is distribution. Most of the parks that have tennis courts only have a single court or two at the most. The City should pursue a partnership with Ector County ISD to have some of the tennis courts located a junior high school properties be available and open to the public during after school hours and on the weekends.

Furthermore, the majority of the existing tennis courts need to be renovation. At least ten of the existing 16 courts need resurfacing, lighting and other repairs.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

Current number of pools: 3 pools, 1 sprayground

Current level of service: 1 pool for every 35,367 residents

Target level of service: 1 pool for every 35,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 3 pools, no deficit
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 3 pools, no deficit
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 4 pools, deficit of 1 pool

Level of need: Long term - high for one additional pool

The three existing swimming pools at Sherwood, Woodson and Floyd Gwin are extremely popular and receive a high level of use during the summer season. In fact, the swimming pools in Odessa are regional destinations, drawing visitors from Midland and surrounding Ector County. Floyd Gwin pool is the oldest of the three and will need renovations sooner than the others. Long term, the City should seek to construct a fourth pool either in the northern or eastern portions of Odessa. Significant growth is expected in these areas over the next few decades, and a fourth aquatic center, similar to the one at Sherwood Park, will be needed.

The City has one existing sprayground. Spraygrounds provide a lower cost aquatic facility for cities, and are most popular in parks when located adjacent to family gathering areas. One additional sprayground could be needed in the City long term either in the north or the east.

Skate Parks

Current number of skate parks: 1

Current level of service: 1 skate park for all of Odessa

Target level of service: 1 to 2 skate parks per city

- Current need for 106,102 population: 1 to 2 skate parks
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 1 to 2 skate parks
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 1 to 2 skate parks

Level of need: Long term - medium

Odessa currently has one skate park at Sherwood Park. The skate park was constructed just within the past two years, and is an extremely popular amenity to the residents of the City. Odessa should continue to monitor the usage of the skate park to determine if a second skate park is needed long term.

Dog Parks

Current number of dog parks: 0

Current level of service: none

Target level of service: 1 to 2 dog parks per city

- Current need for 106,102 population: 1 to 2 dog parks
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 1 to 2 dog parks
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 1 to 2 dog parks

Level of need: High

Dog parks are quickly becoming one of the most common amenities that cities across the nation offer their residents. It was also one of the top requested needs among the residents of Odessa during the public input process. Dog parks need to be of a certain size, usually one acre minimum up to five acres, to allow the turf to recover from wear and tear, and to have separated areas for large and small dogs. Water stations and waste dispenser/disposal stations, plus shade features for dogs and their owners are important to the overall success of the dog park. Short term, Odessa should construct one dog park, with a potential location at Slator Park. A second location should be identify long term for an additional dog park.

According to the Trust for Public Land, dog parks are the fastest growing segment among city parks, with a 34% increase from 2005 to 2010. Odessa has none.

Trails

Current miles of trails: 10.1 miles

Current level of service: 1 mile for every 10,505 residents

Target level of service: 1 mile for every 7,500 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 14.1 miles, deficit of 4.0 miles
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 15.0 miles, deficit of 4.9 miles
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 16.9 miles, deficit of 6.8 miles

Level of need: High

Trails were one of the most frequently mentioned recreational features throughout the master planning process. Trails benefit everyone in the City, whether they are young or old, active runners or cyclists or just someone who wants a quiet stroll in the evening. One goal of this plan is to identify a connected system of potential corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists in order to provide recreation opportunities as well as transportation choices, enhancing the quality of life available to all Odessa residents.

Playgrounds

Current number of playgrounds: 28

Current level of service: 1 playground for every 3,790 residents

Target level of service: 1 playground for every 3,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 35 playgrounds, deficit of 7 playgrounds
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 37 playgrounds, deficit of 9 playgrounds
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 42 playgrounds, deficit of 14 playgrounds

Level of need: High

Additional playgrounds was ranked as the highest need among residents during the public input process. The Parks Foundation dollar donation program has helped the City replace older playground equipment. It is strongly recommended that this program continue and expanded if possible so that more of the dated playground structures in the City can be replaced with more modern and safer equipment. Playgrounds should be included in all future parks as one of key amenities that is offered. Playgrounds should also be covered with a shade structure where feasible so that the amenity can be used throughout the entire year.

Community Centers

Current number of centers: 4

Current level of service: 1 center for every 26,526 residents

Target level of service: 1 center for every 20,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 5 centers, deficit of 1 center
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 5 centers, deficit of 1 center
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 6 centers, deficit of 2 centers

Level of need: High

The four existing community centers at Salinas, Sherwood, Slator and Woodson parks are heavily used by residents. Woodson community center was recently renovated, and there are plans to renovate Sherwood community center this spring.

Short term, the City has the opportunity to convert an abandoned fire station at Lawndale Park into a community center for the northern area. Long term, a sixth community center will be needed towards the eastern portion of Odessa which currently does not have a community center.

Group Pavilions

Current number of pavilions: 19

Current level of service: 1 pavilion for every 5,584 residents

Target level of service: 1 pavilion for every 4,000 residents

- Current need for 106,102 population: 26 pavilions, deficit of 7 pavilions
- 2020 need for 112,479 population: 28 pavilions, deficit of 9 pavilions
- 2030 need for 126,955 population: 32 pavilions, deficit of 13 pavilions

Level of need: High

Pavilions provide shaded, central gathering areas for events such as daily picnicking, birthday parties and reunions. Pavilions are one of the primary basic elements to be included in all parks, and are typically among the most popular amenities in the City. All community and metropolitan parks should have at least two larger pavilions that can be rented. Smaller pavilions should be placed in existing parks so that each park has a shaded area for picnics.

Picnicking Facilities

Current number of picnicking facilities:

- Pavilion picnic tables: 67
- Pavilion trash bins: 56
- Wood picnic tables: 35
- Metal picnic tables: 35
- BBQ grills: 54
- Trash cans: 149
- Drinking fountains: 3

Assumptions: Picnic facilities should be at all parks.

Target level of service: Plan for picnic facilities at all parks and include tables, shade, outdoor grills, water fountains, benches and trash bins.

Level of need: Medium

This is a key facility need in all parks. The City should replace dated and damaged picnic facilities on a regular basis. The design of parks should include a cluster of tables, outdoor grills and designated zones for picnicking activities.

Support Facilities

Current number of support facilities:
Park support facilities include parking, restrooms, bicycle racks, and concrete sidewalks. These support facilities should be included in all community parks and larger neighborhood parks. Restroom facilities are generally not intended to be placed in small neighborhood parks.

Current level of service: No specific target level of service for support facilities.

Target level of service: Varies per park; each park site should have adequate support infrastructure.

Level of need: Medium
All new parks constructed in Odessa should have the appropriate support facilities.

Table 5.7 Summary of Facility Needs

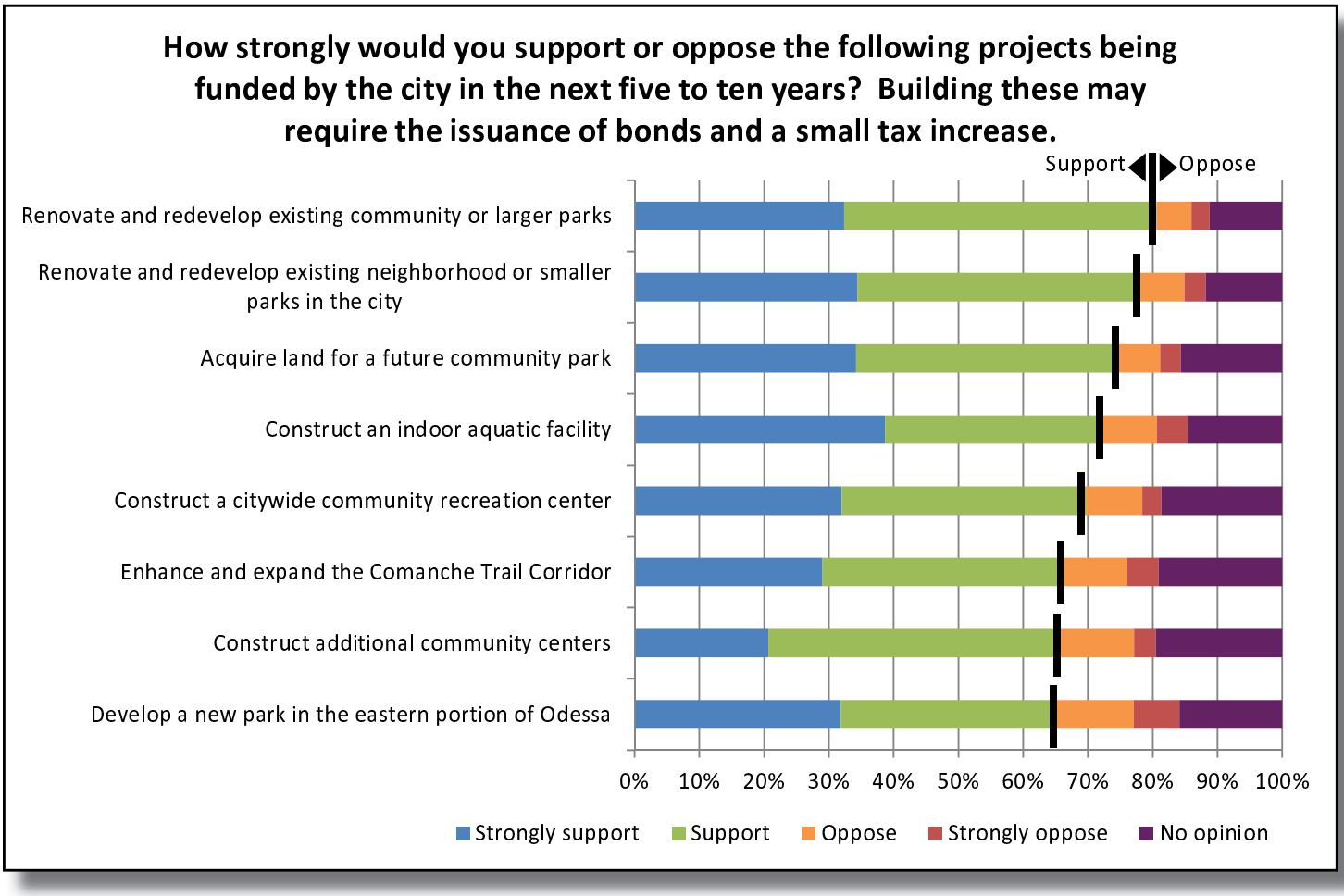
Facility	Current Amount	Current LOS (per residents)	Current Need Based on Pop	2020 Need Based on Pop	Level of Need
Baseball Fields	14	1 per 7,579	14, no deficit	15, deficit of 1	Medium
Basketball Courts	5	1 per 21,220	13, deficit of 8	14, deficit of 9	High
Community Centers	4	1 per 26,526	5, deficit of 1	5, deficit of 1	High
Dog Park	0	None	1 to 2, deficit of 1	1 to 2, deficit of 2	High
Football/Multi-purpose Fields	0	None	10, deficit of 10	11, deficit of 11	High
Pavilions	19	1 per 5,584	26, deficit of 7	28, deficit of 9	High
Picnicking Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Medium
Playgrounds	28	1 per 3,790	35, deficit of 7	37, deficit of 9	High
Practice Fields/Backstops	46	1 per 2,307	53, deficit of 7	56, deficit of 10	High
Skate Park	1	1 per City	1 to 2, no deficit	1 to 2, deficit of 1	Medium-long term
Soccer Fields	27	1 per 3,930	30, deficit of 3	32, deficit of 5	High
Softball Fields	16	1 per 6,631	14, no deficit	15, no deficit	Low
Spraygrounds	1	1 per City	2, deficit of 1	2, deficit of 1	High-long term
Support Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Medium
Swimming Pools	3	1 per 35,367	3, no deficit	3, no deficit	High-long term
Tennis Courts	16	1 per 6,631	13, no deficit	14, no deficit	Low
Trails	10.1 miles	1 per 10,505	14.1, deficit of 4.0 miles	15, deficit of 4.9 miles	High
Volleyball Courts	12	1 per 8,842	13, deficit of 1	14, deficit of 2	Low

Demand-Based Assessment

Demand was also used to determine what additional facilities are needed in Odessa. Demand is based on actual level of use of the parks and the preferences expressed by citizens through the online survey, public input meetings and stakeholder interviews. Public input is a critical part of any planning process. Public entities work for their citizens by providing and managing the type of facilities the residents and taxpayers want to have. In essence, our citizens are our "customers" and it is the City's responsibility to provide what our customers seek with approved funding. In the parks planning process, public input helps identify what types of existing facilities are being used, where key deficiencies may occur, and where the citizens of Odessa would like to see their funding targeted.

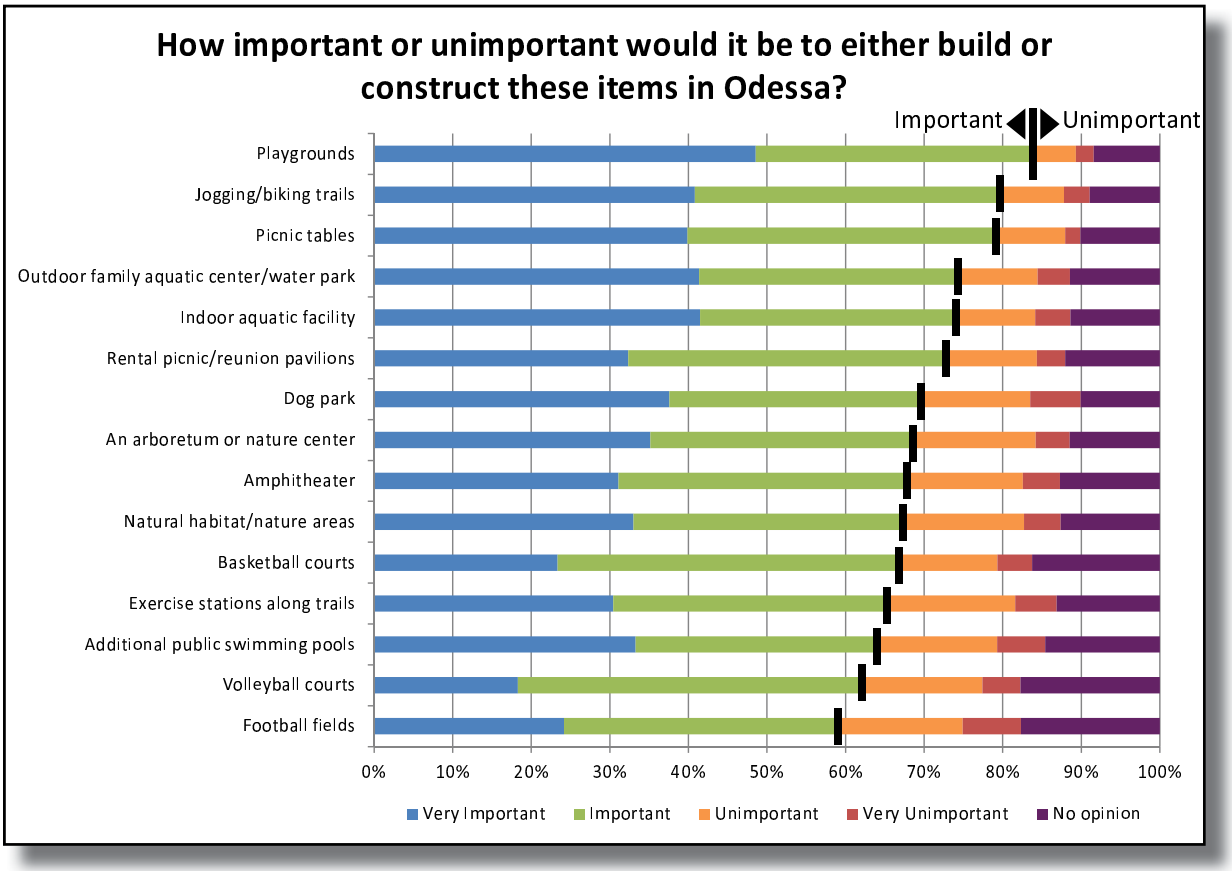
How strongly would you support the following projects being funded?

Survey respondents were given a list of potential improvements the City could make over the next five to ten years. They were then asked to rate how strongly they would support or oppose each of the improvements. The large majority, at least two-thirds, responded supportive of all the improvements. 81% indicated they would support or strongly support renovating or redeveloping existing community or larger parks. 78% indicated they would support or strongly support renovating or redeveloping existing neighborhood or smaller parks. 74% also supported or strongly supported acquiring land for a future community park. The results are shown in the graph below.



How important is it to build each of following in Odessa?

The survey respondents were given a list of different park amenities and were asked to rate how important or unimportant they felt it was to build or construct those amenities. The most popular amenities were new playgrounds (84% indicated either important or very important), followed by jogging/biking trails and picnic tables (both 79% important or very important). The top 15 amenities are shown in the graph below.



Which is the most important facility to construct?

The survey respondents were then asked the follow up question: which of the facilities from the list above do they feel is the most important to construct? The top ten facilities are listed below:

1. Dog park
2. Jogging/biking trails
3. Playgrounds
4. Indoor aquatic facility
5. Outdoor aquatic center
6. Football fields
7. Amphitheater
8. Basketball courts
9. Arboretum/nature center
10. Exercise stations along trails

The top facility to construct varied by the different age groups of the respondents. Those that were 18 or younger felt the number one facility was basketball courts. 18 to 25 year olds wanted a dog park as their number one facility. 26 to 35 year olds voted that playgrounds were the most important. 36 to 45 year olds asked for jogging/biking trails. Finally, those over 46 also felt a dog park was the most important.

Table 5.8 Summary of Demand-Based Assessment
Summary of top needs based on the online survey
1. Playgrounds 2. Jogging/biking trails 3. Picnic tables 4. Outdoor family aquatic center/water park 5. Indoor aquatic facility 6. Rental picnic/reunion pavilions 7. Dog park 8. Arboretum or nature center 9. Amphitheater 10. Natural habitat/nature areas
Summary of top needs based on public meetings
1. Dog park 2. Citywide indoor recreation center 3. Improvements/renovations to existing parks 4. Additional sports fields for football, soccer, etc. 5. Trails, especially lighted trails for evening use
Summary of top needs based on stakeholder interviews
1. Upgrades to existing parks 2. Overall beautification efforts including public art 3. More turf fields for practice as well as soccer/football 4. More trails for both walkers/joggers and bicyclists 5. Fourth pool either in the east or north 6. Hire an athletic coordinator to help leagues schedule places and times to practice 7. Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance so that developments add park facilities as new neighborhoods are built to serve those residents

Resource-Based Assessment

The resource-based assessment addresses key physical features of the City that may be incorporated as potential recreational opportunities. Both man-made and natural features can be considered. The City of Odessa has many landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreation use and open space preservation where feasible. These include the draw corridors, utility right of ways, and easements. The use or development of each resource should be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the unique characteristics of each location and the opportunities that can be afforded without damaging environmentally sensitive features. It is important to approach the use and development of these various resources in a unified, coordinated manner in order to realize the best results from each.

Draws

As mentioned previously in this Chapter, the key areas for long-term open space preservation in Odessa are along the draw corridors. There are two major draws in the area that can serve as potential linear parks and trails. These are Monahans Draw, located near the southwestern portion of the City, and Muskingam Draw, which runs through the center of the City.

Right of Ways

Utility right of ways are linear in nature which makes them ideal for hike and bike trails. Developing trails along utility right of ways, power line corridors and other easements is an opportunity for extending the trails system over the next ten years.

Water Availability

There are a few remaining playa areas, specifically the 40 acre undeveloped park site north of Ratliff Ranch Golf Course, that could be developed with trails and other park amenities. These areas provide aesthetic beauty to the City and are a valuable resource. Additionally, well water capacity is very limited in Odessa. The City has already started utilizing treated effluent reuse water for some irrigation projects such as at Ratliff Ranch Golf Course. The practice of using reuse water should be expanded to all park sites where feasible.

Chapter 6 :: Master Plan Recommendations

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Introduction to Recommendations

Quality of life is not only about having functional and safe park infrastructure, but is also defined by the intangibles of mental well-being including: happiness, beauty, and a sense of belonging. The vision established for the 2014 Odessa Parks Master Plan is for parks and recreation facilities in Odessa to be one of the primary contributors to quality of life for residents of Odessa. Odessa's residents, elected officials and staff are challenged to make an ongoing commitment to sustainability, quality and beauty.

Sustainability - We develop and change Odessa with deliberate actions, knowing what effects those changes have. The awareness of the importance of stewardship for our city is not a fad anymore; but rather must start to be regarded as a basic standard by all Odessans today. We must begin to take responsibility for creating an Odessa that our children will be proud of and want to live in.

Quality - Today's young families are drawn to cities with state-of-the-art parks and facilities. These people expect to find amenities and facilities in cities similar to what they experienced in their prior communities. Attracting and retaining residents, as well as businesses to employ and serve such residents, will depend on providing high-quality parks and recreation facilities in Odessa.

Beauty - However it is defined, all people seek to have access to beautiful surroundings and environments. The days of an "anything goes" attitude should be a thing of the past. Odessans want to commit to creating a city that reflects the rugged beauty and strength of West Texas. Therefore, this plan seeks to provide attractive places for all residents of Odessa to linger, to play, or just to enjoy as they pass by.

Odessa's park, recreation and open space system is a vital part of what will establish Odessa as a great place to live, work and play. That's because parks are often times the most visible and tangible element of that elusive quality of life that all cities seek. This plan seeks to build upon what is already in place, and to build a framework that makes Odessa a great city.

Philosophical Background of Recommendations

All of the recommendations in this plan follow certain key points that should guide park related choices in Odessa. These key philosophical points reinforce and expand upon the goals established in Chapter 1 of this document.

- Every park should be considered as a "signature" element in that part of the City. No park is less important than any other. Parks should be carefully chosen sites so that they are prominent features in their respective neighborhoods. Where possible, they should continued to be seen as an attractive oasis in that part of the City.
- Parks should follow a consistent citywide design theme. Fundamental items such as park signs, high quality pavilions with a similar color and design, and an emphasis on preserving existing vegetation and trees where feasible should be used in every new and existing park to create a consistent and recognizable park look for Odessa.
- Every park should in some way, truly celebrate the history and culture of Odessa. Parks can incorporate historical plaques and features that allude to the area or neighborhood around the park, the circumstances that caused the park to be created, or some other unique event that happened in Odessa.
- Consider beginning to implement public art in some parks and along trails (photo 1). Public art, often created by local artists that can be supported by the City, is an easy way to make many parks in Odessa much more memorable.
- Where they exist, parks that include bodies of water should be highly valued such as Memorial Gardens Park (photo 2). Existing areas of water, whether in the form of ponds or along creeks, should be included in parks where feasible.
- Shade should be a standard component of every park (photo 3). In all parks, playgrounds and picnic areas should be covered, either by trees, shade structures or pavilions.
- Create a defined and easily recognizable "entrance" for every park in Odessa (photo 4). Every park should have a front door. Even parks that have street frontage on three sides can still include features that announce this is a valuable space in Odessa.
- Parks should be designed so as to reduce maintenance. Automatic, treated effluent irrigation should be a key component of every park, as well as native grasses and landscaping that make every park easier to maintain. With the scarcity of water throughout West Texas, a transition to attractive desert-scapes in some portions of area parks should begin.

Recommendations by Category

The items contained in this section summarize the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommend a series of actions to improve and expand Odessa's park system. These recommendations address the development of land already acquired and dedicated for parks, additional land for new parks, opportunities for trails, and general improvements to existing parks. The recommendations should be implemented or initiated over the general life

of this master plan, which covers the next five to ten years. However, this section also includes other longer range recommendations to be initiated beyond the ten year timeframe. All recommended items in this report are prioritized in Chapter 7 in the implementation plan.

The following items comprise the majority of priority recommendations in Odessa. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but unless noted otherwise are not actual plans. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections should be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented. Recommendations and associated actions are divided into the following categories:

A. Current and future parkland acquisition

B. Park renovations

C. Outdoor recreation facilities

D. Beautification and public art

E. Indoor recreation facilities and programs/special events

F. Trails

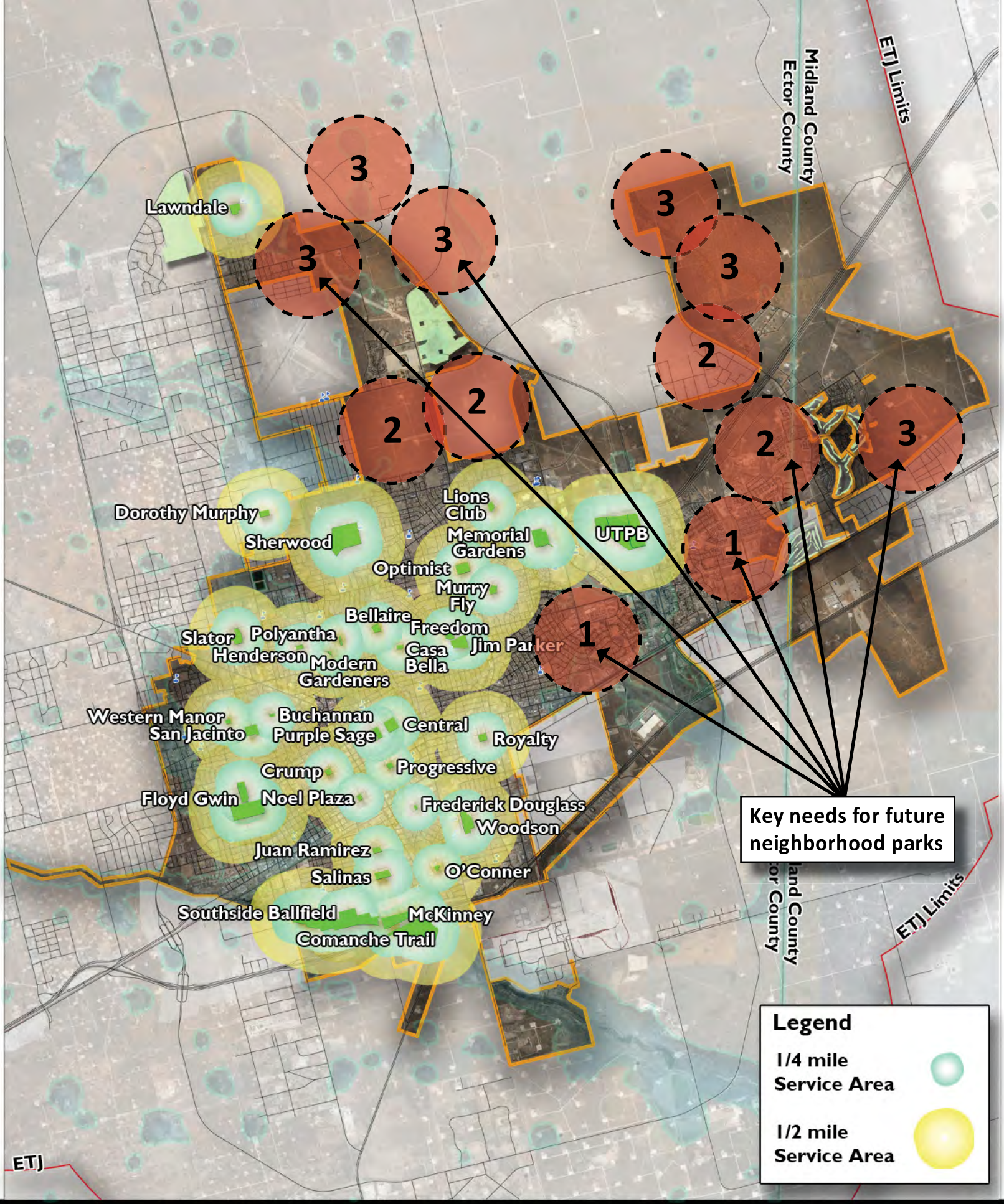
The following pages summarize the key components of each major recommendation category.

A. Current and Future Parkland Acquisition

Without land to preserve or on which to build recreation facilities, Odessa cannot have any future parks. This master plan recommends that the City try to improve the ratio of parkland to residents from the current ratio of 5.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents to the target ratio of 5.5 acres of neighborhood and community parkland and an additional 5.0 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents (as was discussed in the needs assessment in Chapter 5). This will require proactive land acquisition on the part of staff and the City Council. **Acquiring land for future parks in areas with park land needs should be a priority, even if those parks will not be built for years to come.**

Keeping in mind that parks are a critical component of how the City is perceived, land acquisition should not always target the least expensive piece of land. Rather, the specific needs of the area, the citizens that it will serve, and the natural characteristics of the site should all be considered when land is acquired for park use. Land is also a finite resource, and efforts to acquire that land today at a lower cost will pay off in the future. If the location of the park site is known, then the entire neighborhood can be planned around it (see images below).

Image 1 is an example of a neighborhood with no access to parkland. Image 2 is an example of a well developed neighborhood with trails, greenbelts, and park amenities.



Neighborhood Parks Service Area

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

Land for Neighborhood Parks

Smaller parks should be planned for every new neighborhood or grouping of neighborhoods in Odessa. Sites should be selected that allow easy walking access within a few blocks and without crossing any major streets. Odessa currently has a deficit in fully developed neighborhood parkland, and there are a handful of developed areas where current access to neighborhood parks is not available. **Most importantly, the growth of the City is expected to continue and a Parkland Dedication Ordinance is critically needed to acquire land for neighborhood parks to meet future needs.**

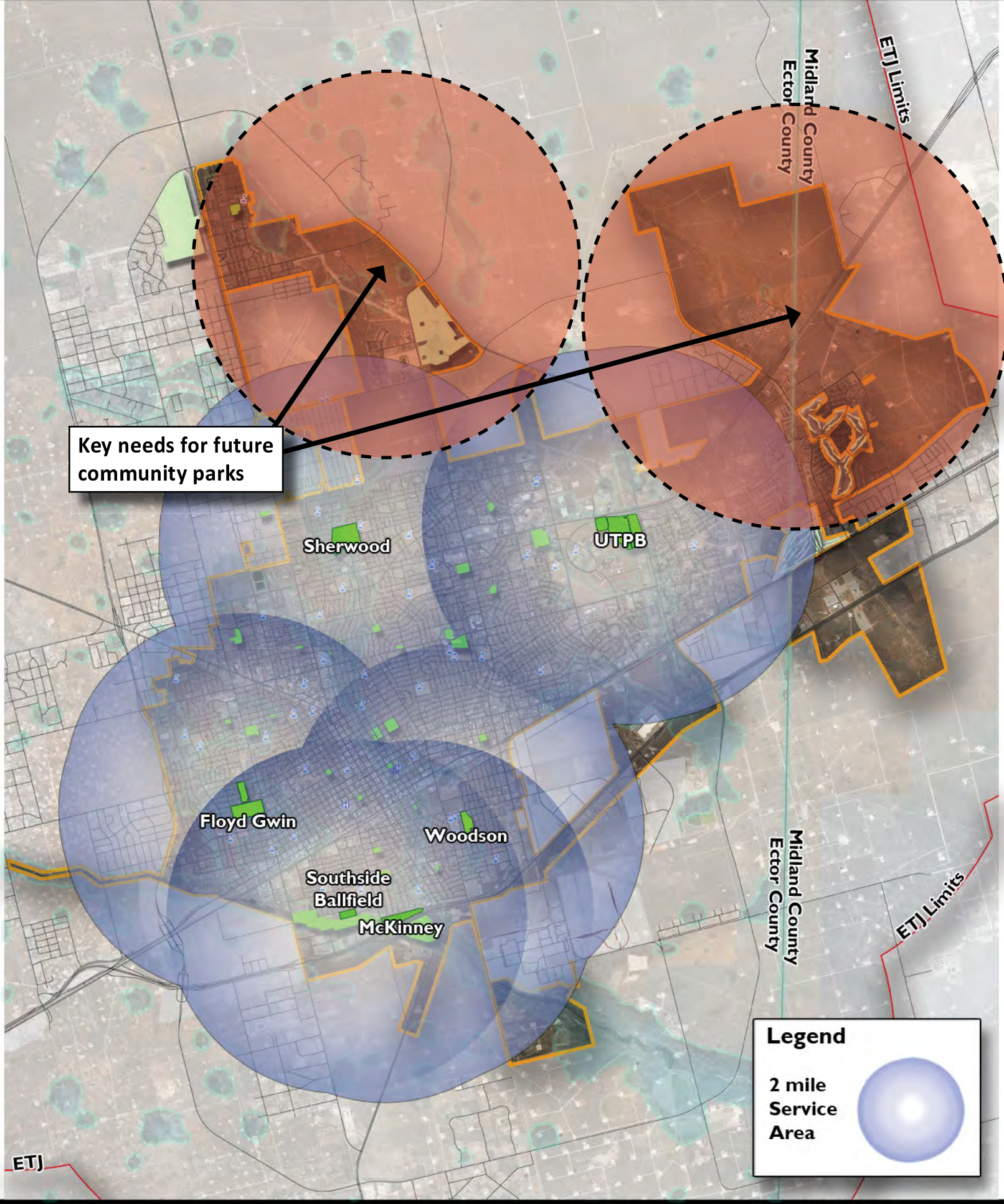
The City of Odessa also has two existing neighborhood park sites that are not developed. Development of both Preston Oaks Neighborhood Park and Stonegate Neighborhood Park should be completed within the next five years. There is also potential to develop a neighborhood park on a drill site just north of 52nd Street to serve that neighborhood. Development of all three of these park sites was also a recommendation of the 2004 Plan. Furthermore, redevelopment and improvements are needed to at least nine existing neighborhood parks including Slator, Murry Fly, Lion's Club, Western Manor, Central, O'Conner, Frederick Douglass, Bellaire, and Dorothy Murphy Parks. The redevelopment of six of these parks were recommendations in the 2004 Plan also, and the improvements have not been completed.

The map to the left shows key areas for neighborhood parkland acquisition.

1. **Existing neighborhoods without parkland in East Odessa** - The neighborhood east of Loop 338 and south of East Ridge Road is currently underserved without access to a neighborhood park. There is one vacant drill site in the neighborhood that is unused and not fenced located along Dunbar Drive. The site is approximately five acres in size and if possible would make for an ideal location of a neighborhood park. If the drill site is not an option, an alternative would be to partner with ECISD to have a school/park partnership at Johnson Elementary. This school also offers basketball courts, practice fields, backstops and playground units which could serve as the neighborhood park for the area if the amenities were to remain open to the public during non-school hours (similar to the neighborhood around Gonzales Elementary which utilizes the school as their de facto neighborhood park). A third option for this neighborhood would be to develop a series of linear parks. There is a drainage draw that runs through the northwestern portion of neighborhood and a power line corridor that crosses east/west through the middle. Both of these corridors have the potential to be converted into linear parks with amenities such as trails, benches and possible playground units. Although not ideal to address the deficit of neighborhood parkland, this is a viable option if no other parkland is available.

2. **Existing neighborhoods in North Odessa** - Similar to the neighborhoods along Business 20, the fast growing neighborhoods in the north and northeast critically lack parkland. The areas south of Odessa-Schlemeyer Airport are currently drill site locations with no residential homes. However, these areas are likely to be developed in the near future, and neighborhood parkland will be needed to serve the residents in those areas. Furthermore, the two neighborhoods along Hwy 191 are quickly developing without land being designated for neighborhood parks. As a result, these areas will be underserved in the near future.

3. **Areas with near or longer term future residential growth** - The remaining areas shown on the map are generally undeveloped or currently developed at a very low density. However, additional residential development will probably occur in the very near term in these areas. Parkland dedication requirements should be established immediately to create locations for parks in these areas.



Community Parks Service Area

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

Land for Community Parks

The highest priority need for parkland is for community parks. The City currently has a 40 acre community park site near Ratliff Golf Course in the northern area that was dedicated in 1987. The City currently uses reuse water across the street at Ratliff Ranch Golf Course, and could easily extend the supply line to the existing playa lake area of this site. The reuse water would not only be used for irrigation, but can add to the aesthetics of the park. Furthermore, there is an elementary school being developed on the property adjacent to the site. This will allow for an opportunity to partner with ECISD to develop the park site so that it can be utilized by both entities.

There is also an opportunity to develop a large community park on the 95 acre site east of Billy Hext Road. This park will serve not only entire east side but the entire city, and will have primarily nature park facilities associated with it. While these two parks will address key needs for a community park in the north and to the east, it will still leave a 65 acre +/- deficit of community parks by the year 2020. Areas where community park needs are most critical are shown on the map to the left.

The development of all new parks and the redevelopment of all existing parks should be cognisant of the limited use of water for irrigation, and explore the possibility of using treated effluent water whenever possible. Furthermore, all development must comply with ADA requirements and regulations.

B. Existing Park Renovations

The input received from Odessa's residents have made it clear that improvements to existing parks are a key priority. The 2004 Parks Master Plan noted that park renovations were the City's highest priority, and some significant improvements have been made over the past decade. However, many improvements to many existing parks remain outstanding. As noted in the 2004 Master Plan, facilities in some existing parks continue to age and are in a poor state of repair, and major funding has not been allocated to facility replacements or upgrades. Therefore, based on this input, renovations and additions to existing parks remain a very high priority of this master plan.

In addition to improvements to existing parks, there are also general renovations that can be made to all parks to provide a uniform "Odessa" level of service and appearance. General renovations that can be made include:

- Add play areas to parks that do not have modern play structures.
- Add shade structures over existing playgrounds when feasible.
- Increase shade in all parks by planting more trees where practical.
- Improve landscaping and overall beautification in parks by adding native trees and grasses. Native materials also conserve water.
- Install well or treated effluent irrigation in all parks around the active use zones (athletic fields, picnic areas, playground areas, open play/practice areas).
- Ensure all improvements meet ADA requirements.
- Add trails in key high usage parks.
- Wi-Fi access to the internet in parks is popular in many cities. Odessa should consider providing Wi-Fi hot spots in larger community parks and in community centers.

Key Existing Park Improvements - Recommendations are made for each park in the system. These are preliminary master plan level recommendations, and are intended only to define the magnitude of the improvements for each park, and to establish the relative cost range for each park site. Each park should be further programmed and master planned as it enters the design phase, and extensive area resident and user group input should be included in the design process. Preliminary cost estimates at a master plan level for the improvements to each park are also included. Table 6.1 which begins below outlines needed renovations at each of the existing parks in Odessa.

Table 6.1 Recommended Renovations to Existing Parks

Park	District	Renovations	Potential Cost	Priority
Bellaire	3	Add playground, walking trail, lighting	$475,000	High
Buchannan	3	Add new playground, sidewalk, install curb and gutter	$150,000	Medium
Casa Bella	3	Replace playground, add walking trail, parking lot (10 cars), public art (by others)	$400,000	Medium for playground, Low for others
Central	1	Add 2 basketball courts with lights, walking trail, security lighting, parking lot	$1,200,000	High
Comanche Trails	5	Extend parking area south of IH-20, add playground and lighting in area south of IH-20	$550,000	Low

Table 6.1 Recommended Renovations to Existing Parks				
Park	**District**	**Renovations**	**Potential Cost**	**Priority**
Crump	5	Add playground, renovate existing building into community center, renovate parking lot, install additional lighting	$800,000	Low
Dorothy Murphy	NA	Add playground, renovate tennis courts	$200,000	High for playground, Medium for tennis
Eastside	1	Add new playground, sidewalk and parking lot	$200,000	Low
Floyd Gwin	5	Add 2 new basketball courts, 3 new volleyball courts, resurface existing tennis courts, add walking trail, renovate parking lots, add fencing between traffic/parking areas and fields	$3,350,000	High
Frederick Douglass	1	Resurface basketball courts, expand park, add playground	$500,000	High
Freedom	4	Add lighting, water feature, public art (by others)	$400,000	Low
Jim Parker	1	Replace pavilion, renovate existing volleyball courts with lights, add walking trail, improve parking lots with additions and resurfacing, add lighting	$1,250,000	Medium
Juan Ramirez	1	Replace basketball courts and add lighting, remove pavilion and replace with small covered picnic tables, add security lights	$250,000	Medium
Lawndale	4	Expand parking lot, add new playground, add lighting	$700,000	High
Lions Club	4	Add walking trail, renovate playground, renovate basketball courts with lights, add lighting	$575,000	High
McKinney	1	Add barrier fence between sprayground and IH-20 freeway	$100,000	Medium
Murray Fly	2	Renovate tennis courts, add walking trail, parking lot and lighting	$675,000	High
Noel Plaza	1	Redesign with more hardscape to accommodate large crowds, reduce maintenance and security matter	$750,000 to $1,500,000	Low (but key downtown space)

Table 6.1 Recommended Renovations to Existing Parks				
Park	**District**	**Renovations**	**Potential Cost**	**Priority**
O'Conner	1	Add security lighting and picnic pavilion	$75,000	High
Optimist	4	Add walking trail, replace pavilion, tennis court lighting and add security lighting	$650,000	Medium
Progressive	1	Replace playground, add public art (by others)	$1,000,000	Low
Purple Sage	1	Add lighting, add public art (by others)	$25,000	Low
Royalty	1	Replace playground, add security lighting	$300,000	Low
Salinas	1	Add playground, renovate exterior of community building, add parking lots and security lighting	$900,000	High
Sherwood	4	Add 1 remaining baseball field to complex, renovate tennis courts with lights, add 2 basketball courts with lights, add 2 pavilions, security lighting, renovate and add parking lots	$2,500,000	High (key for athletics)
Slator	5	Add new playground, 2 basketball courts with lights, demo existing tennis and volleyball courts, install new irrigation system, add pavilion and security lighting	$800,000	High (serves west side of the City)
Possible expansion of Slator	5	Expand onto the drill site to the east of the existing park to accommodate a dog park	$550,000	Medium
Southside Ball Fields	1	Demo and develop as a soccer complex, install irrigation, fencing, parking lot and security lighting	$1,100,000	High
Stonegate	NA	Add irrigation, turf, lighting, water well, playground, walking trail, and parking lot	$1,200,000	High
UTPB	2	Add paved parking lot for girls softball	$350,000	High
Woodson	1	Add walking trail, 2 basketball courts with lights, renovate playground, expand park site	$2,500,000	High

C. Key Outdoor Recreation Facilities

The needs assessment section of this plan noted that Odessa has some deficiencies in recreation facilities. During the public input process, residents of Odessa also spoke up in support of the need for these facilities. The following are the key outdoor facility needs in Odessa, with rankings prioritized based on facility standards and citizen input.

1. Playgrounds
2. Picnic pavilions
3. Jogging/biking trails
4. Soccer/football fields
5. Basketball courts
6. Dog park
7. Public art
8. Backstops/practice fields for all sports
9. Basketball courts
10. Aquatics facilities - splash pads/spraygrounds/swimming pools

Playgrounds - Play areas that accommodate a range of ages are needed throughout the City. Continue to replace older playgrounds citywide to continue to meet safety standards. Provide updated fall zones and safety material around play areas as needed. If the long term durability of artificial turf safety surfacing is confirmed, continue to use turf surfacing with required padding.

Newer playground units are still needed at Bellaire, Buchannan, Casa Bella, Comanche Trails, Crump, Dorothy Murphy, Eastside, Frederick Douglass, Lawndale, Progressive, Salinas, Slator, Stonegate, and Woodson Parks. As much as possible, allocate funding for overhead fabric shading as an integral part of playground enhancements.

Picnic Pavilions - Pavilions and other shade shelters with picnic tables are frequently used and requested by citizens. Pavilions serve many diverse age groups, are key to recreational use during the warm seasons of the year, and larger facilities may generate rental revenue for the City. Distribution should remain balanced throughout the City so that all areas have a good supply of park pavilions and

picnic tables. Design and construct pavilions to have a uniformed and unique look to Odessa. New pavilions are needed at Jim Parker, Juan Ramirez, O'Conner, Optimist, Slator, and Sherwood Parks.

Walking and Jogging Trails Within Parks - Odessa lacks looped trails for jogging and walking within parks. The City should develop new trails in existing parks that do not have any, and add trails that link together parks, schools, neighborhoods, retail areas, civic facilities and other destinations in the City. Key recommendations for trails are discussed in greater detail in Section F of this chapter.

Soccer and Football Fields - Most of the current soccer/football fields are in adequate condition; however general improvements are needed to the fields. For the City to continue to provide fields for recreational leagues, renovations will be needed to the existing fields. General design considerations for soccer/football fields and complexes in Odessa include: appropriate fencing to separate traffic and parking areas from the fields of play, rotating fields in schedule of play to allow for turf re-establishment, and if lighting is necessary then it should have light shields to prevent light overspill.

Furthermore, the City should convert one or more fields at Floyd Gwin to an artificial surface to test their viability and cost. The remainder of the fields at this site should be regraded, and additional bleachers and spectator areas should be installed.

Existing Floyd Gwin soccer fields

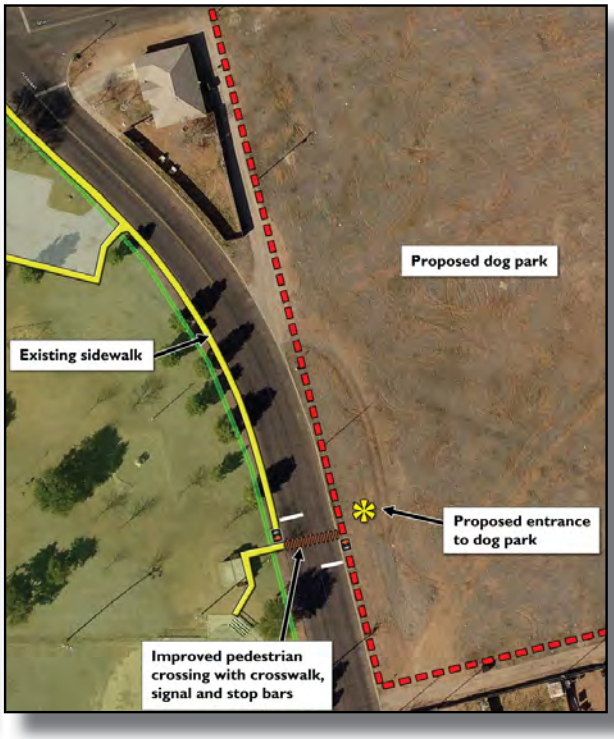
Baseball fields - Similar to soccer fields, as Odessa grows rapidly in population, renovated and additional baseball fields will be needed. The key priority for baseball fields is to develop the remaining field at Sherwood Park, and to pave the parking lot at McKinney Park.

Examples of dog parks in Round Rock and Cedar Park, Texas

Dog Parks - Dog parks were one of the most commonly requested amenities from residents during the public input process. Dog parks are relatively inexpensive, and are typically well used. Dog parks usually contain double entry/exit gates, separated by an intervening area. This helps prevent dogs from accidently escaping when someone enters or leaves. Separate fenced areas are commonly zoned for big dogs and small dogs. The location of dog parks must take into consideration the potential noise, odor, traffic and the need for parking.

Ideally a dog park in Odessa will be placed in a central location in the City. One potential location for the first dog park is near Slator Park, which could be expanded to the east on a vacant drill site across from the park (see map below). Independent parking for the dog park should be developed along either 38th Street or Pleasant Avenue (or both). An alternative site may be undeveloped lands directly west of Slator Park.

One additional improvement that will be needed at this park will be an enhanced pedestrian crosswalk on Pleasant Ave. The graphic below illustrates a potential layout for the enhanced pedestrian



crossing. The enhanced crossing would be considered a mid-block crossing, which would need a highly visible painted crosswalk or a raised crosswalk, and a pedestrian actuated crossing signal, also called a HAWK signal. This type of signal light allows a pedestrian to push a button to activate the signal, stopping traffic and allowing the pedestrian to cross safely.

In the future, a second dog park should be developed to serve the east side of Odessa, but needs to be a central/east location to garner a high level of use.

Public Art - Art has a tremendous potential to add layers of meaning to the landscape and to encourage contemplation as a manner of passive recreation. It is recommended that the City of Odessa explore and develop a policy to include environmental and outdoor art in multiple parks and public spaces across the City. Specific actions include:

- Pursuing a "Percentage for Art Program" where a portion of the funding for all public projects is dedicated to outdoor art, ideally 1% of the overall project costs.
- Pursuing other alternatives as funding mechanisms such as grants, donations and hotel/motel tax.
- At a minimum, fund at least one major art installation every one to two years.
- Place art at prominent locations, and pursue joint placements with other entities such as local schools and universities.
- Involve the Council for Arts & Humanities and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board in developing an *art in the parks plan* for the entire City, with specific ideas for key parks.

Public art is further discussed in section D of this chapter.

Backstops/Practice Fields - It is important that practice fields in Odessa continue to be irrigated so that leagues do not use game fields for practice which would lead to the game fields deteriorating faster. Furthermore, there is not adequate distribution of practice fields within the City. Currently there are no practice fields within District 2 and very limited facilities in District 5. The majority of practice fields are concentrated in the District 3 and 4 areas. Therefore, backstops and soccer practice facilities should be included in neighborhood parks, and several practice facilities should be added in large community parks where feasible. An additional priority in the City is to convert a portion of the baseball facilities at Southside Park that are no longer utilized into practice fields for other sports.

Basketball Courts - Basketball courts provide activities for teens and young adults. Many of the existing basketball courts in Odessa are only in adequate condition, with court surfaces that need to be repaired. Because of the current deficit of basketball courts, the City should seek to add up to eight lighted courts at existing parks. Basketball courts are needed at Central, Floyd Gwin, Slator, Sherwood, and Woodson Parks. Renovation of existing basketball courts are needed at Frederick Douglass and Juan Ramirez Parks.

Aquatics Facilities: Splash Pads/Spraygrounds/Pools - Water spraygrounds follow a trend in many cities, whereby the excitement of water is provided in a safe and clean environment. The principle is spray nozzles, drop buckets and other features that either regularly or intermittently (for a sense of surprise) spray and/or drop water on children excited with expectation. The water is collected directly in surface drains from where it is circulated. Important factors to consider for the selection and preparation of an appropriate site are: accessibility and visibility; and leaves or other material that can possibly clog the drain system. It is recommended that the City install one additional splash pad in either the northern or eastern portion of Odessa.

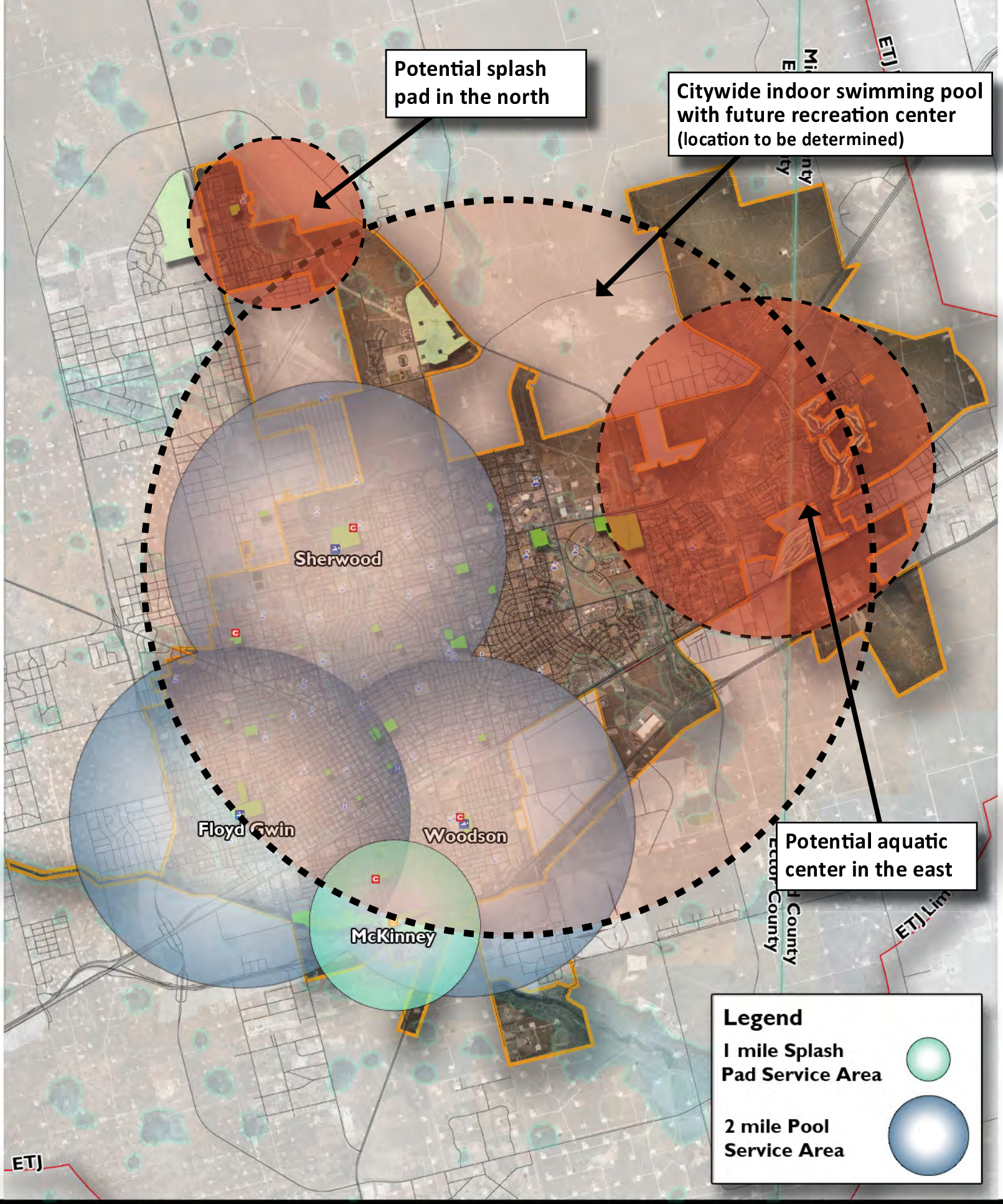
Photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Furthermore, as population growth is expected to continue in the north and to the east, there will be a need for one additional swimming pool to accommodate new residents. The City should start the process now of identifying a potential site and acquiring land for a future pool. An aquatic center similar to the one at Sherwood Park should be replicated within the next ten years either in the north or to the east.

The current swimming pools in Odessa have become regional destinations for visitors from surrounding communities. Therefore, it would behoove the City of Odessa to investigate the opportunity to partner with a private entity for the development of water park utilizing tax funded incentives. This type of facility would be a destination for all of the Permian Basin and southeastern New Mexico. Similar joint ventures have been done in Garland, Mansfield, The Colony, Roanoke, Waco and most recently in Pflugerville.

Finally, as the City begins to implement the recommendation of an indoor citywide recreation center with a possible aquatic component, Odessa should explore the opportunity to partner with Ector County ISD for the development of a natatorium. ECISD is in need of a natatorium for swim teams and aquatic related classes. Such a partnership could give the school district priority use and time to meet the needs of the swim teams during the school year.

The map on the following page illustrates future aquatic needs.



Aquatic Facilities Service Areas

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

N

0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

HALFF

D. Beautification and Public Art

Defining and seeking beautiful things is an age-old human quest. It is often found in the smallest and simplest of ideas and concepts, and is especially found in nature whether it is a sunset, a view over quiet water, or the appearance of spring flowers. However it is defined, all people want to be able to live, work and play in beautiful surroundings, or to at least have access to that beauty.

For much of its history, Odessa has been inexorably linked to oil and gas production. As a result, that production has been the most important aspect of the economic context of the City, and has overridden any need to consider the appearance of Odessa. In fact, the City has embraced the rugged appearance of the oil fields and has proudly proclaimed that to be its heritage.

Furthermore, the economic ups and downs of the oil industry have left their mark on the City. These started with the wonderful additions to Odessa in the 1950s and 1960s, when production was at its peak and funds to build significant public facilities were available; and transitioning to the late 1970s and 1980s, when economic hard times hit the residents of the City and left little private or public funding for extras such as beautification. Much of what is visible in Odessa today is a result of that second period, and it continues to leave an unfavorable impression of the City.

In today's world, Odessa must compete with neighboring cities, other communities throughout Texas and New Mexico, and nationally and internationally for significant business enterprises. Quality of life and the appearance of the City become important impressions that can mean the difference between landing a major employer or loosing it to a more attractive competing community.

Relatively small actions can have a major impact in dramatically improving the appearance of Odessa. The purpose of this section is to layout a series of steps to be taken to help beautify Odessa. This section does not include treatment for specific areas - those will need to be addressed as individual efforts as funding is approved.

The arid climate of Odessa does not allow for a lush look, and irrigation promotes the growth of trees in much of the City. However, the natural landscape of the Permian Basin is beautiful in its own right, and if promoted throughout the area would allow the City to both blend in with the surrounding environment, as well as take on a more attractive appearance. Focusing on beautification in Odessa can have multiple benefits.

- **Citizen pride** - Beautification increases the pride that residents feel for their City.
- **Relocation benefits** - Beautification makes Odessa a more attractive relocation alternative for new families and businesses.
- **Increasing the competitiveness of Odessa** - Beautification makes the City more competitive when pursuing major employers and/or individuals in desired fields such as the medical profession.
- **Keeping citizens in Odessa** - Beautification helps residents remain in Odessa because it is an attractive place to live.
- **Health benefits** - Beatification, when linked to open space and to active recreation facilities such as trails, can promote the health of the residents of Odessa.
- **Beautification increases the value of properties**, thereby leading to increased revenue for the City. It is important to note that everyone who lives in Odessa is the City, so increased tax revenue can result in lower tax rates and better services.
- **Addressing beautification now rather than later** - Addressing beautification today is easier than delaying it into the future, where it will be more expensive and more difficult to remedy.

- **Preservation of open space** through urban landscapes creates more attractive greenbelts that can revitalize areas, and provide tourism opportunities.
- **Trails help preserve key greenbelt areas** through the acquisition of open space for green ways. Imagine Odessa twenty years from now, and imagine how green corridors might help enhance the image of the City.

Therefore, Odessa's leadership and staff should commit to continuing and indeed accelerating efforts at beautifying the City. **The first step in achieving this is adopting a Landscape Ordinance.** A landscape ordinance is typically put in place for the purpose of requiring landscape screenings and appropriate setbacks so that the city will have a positive aesthetic quality and quality development which increases property values. Other methods of beautification include:

- Beautify public spaces throughout the City. Start with streetscapes, the most visible of public spaces, and then move to parks and public buildings. Landscape these areas with a variation of plant materials, install attractive furnishings, and generally improve the appearance. Do this in a coordinated manner across the City so that there is uniformity, but allow for uniqueness when necessary.
- Utilize architecture as a regional expression of culture and nature. Develop new facilities and renovate existing facilities by utilizing good architecture. Architecture is often beautiful because it reflects the region and is sensitive to its subtleties. Construct buildings and structures that belong in Odessa. Good architecture does not impose itself, but rather is part of the overall pallet of form, color and texture.
- Art is an intentional expression of beauty to be experienced visually, audibly, and emotionally. Support the arts in Odessa by funding art programs and by providing quality spaces for public art displays.
- Develop beautiful, unique parks in Odessa. When developing new parks or renovating existing ones, commit to creating a place that is truly beautiful and unique. Do this by emphasizing landscaping, installing attractive furnishings, and implementing art in the park.

Beautification of Drill Sites

The more than 80 drill sites that spread throughout Odessa are one of the unique opportunities for open space in the City. The sites are generally one to five acre tracts of land that have been reserved as future sites for oil or gas wells. In many cases, drilling has already occurred on the site, and active wells occupy the center of the site. Drill sites occur in all parts of the City, irrespective of the surrounding land uses. In almost all cases, the drill sites are open and unfenced, and are largely barren sites with no existing appeal other than the fact that they are undeveloped. However, the drill sites are respected as an integral part of the history and economic culture of Odessa and the Permian Basin.

Surface ownership of many of the drill sites is distinct from the mineral rights attached to the sites, therefore creating difficulties for transforming the sites into a more attractive look. Some sites are owned by the City of Odessa. Options to address drill sites that have been discussed during the master planning process include:

- **Require perimeter landscape and screening** - Require that property owners "tidy up" the edges of drill sites that they control. Planting of mesquite trees or other drought tolerant species could provide a much more attractive edge look at relatively little cost.
- **Do nothing and leave drill sites as they are today** - The cost of transforming the drill sites could be significant, and many have argued that the cost of providing turf and plantings to the vacant sites is an unfair burden on the property owners. If left as they are today, a significant opportunity to improve the appearance of the City will be lost.

Examples of current landscaping in Odessa

Streetscaping

A heavily treed landscape boulevard would become the starting point for the beautification of the entire City. The ring would include Business 20 and 2nd Street to the south, Andrews Highway to the west going through the downtown area, 42nd Street to the north, and John Ben Shepherd Parkway or Loop 338 to the east. The major focus would be on tree planting along most of the corridor on both sides. Drip irrigation would be installed on a lot by lot basis, with the cost of water being covered by individual property owners. This boulevard links two major medical hospitals and many smaller ancillary facilities in the area, and creates a strong environment from which to continue to attract major medical talent and facilities to Odessa.

Further streetscaping recommendations include the street frontage sections of all public entity facilities in the City. Public facilities can set an example for commercial facilities in the City, and demonstrate the preferred beautification techniques. Candidate facilities include the Ector County Coliseum, the City of Odessa Water Treatment Facilities along 42nd Street including the reservoir, Permian High School frontage onto 42nd Street, UTPB, Odessa College, Ector County Courthouse and Annex, and Odessa City Hall.

Other ideal locations for streetscaping are at key intersections and at gateways into the City. Providing landscaped nodes at key intersections can be highly visible and have a significant visual impact as drivers and pedestrians are stopped or slowly moving by. Providing attractive gateways into the City announces the arrival of Odessa and identifies it as a unique and special place to be.

Screen Parking Areas

The City should establish mechanisms and requirements to screen non-single family parking areas in the City by requiring varying degrees of parking lot screening along major roadways (with standards for both major and secondary roadways within the city). Screening can consist of low walls, low shrubs, or decorative fencing. Irrigation of vegetative material and use of xeriscape planting materials and techniques should be required. Requirements would be established by a landscaping ordinance recommended in Chapter 7. Front yard parking areas are the single most unattractive feature in the City.

Public Art

The display of art in the public realm will help to beautify Odessa. The City should acquire and display public art, specifically sculpture, in public spaces such as parks, along roads, and inside and outside of public buildings. In this plan, it is proposed that 1% of the funding for all publicly funded projects should be dedicated to the construction and installation of public art in the project. Such a policy would provide and display art that is public and free on a citywide basis. The artist and type of art to be installed should be reviewed by the Council for Arts & Humanities and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board when necessary.

Public spaces, such as parks and along streets, speak volumes about the quality of life in a city and its

Examples of public art

values and aspirations. Therefore, beautifying these spaces with art will not only improve the attractiveness and uniqueness of an individual park, but will improve the City's overall image.

There are many more reasons for the acquisition and display of public art: art has a tremendous potential to add layers of meaning to the landscape, it can encourage contemplation as a manner of passive recreation, and it will set Odessa apart as a city that appreciates quality of life for its citizens.

Key initial locations for public art include Casa Bella Park, Freedom Park, Progressive Park, Modern Gardeners Park, Polyantha Park, and Purple Sage Park. Examples of public art are shown on the previous page.

E. Indoor Recreation Facilities and Programs/Special Events

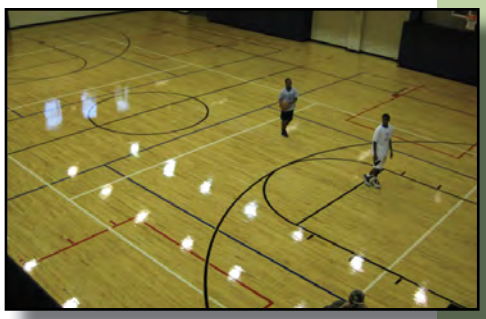
Indoor recreation programming is a key component of most modern city's recreation system. These programs increase fitness and allow a city to diversify what it offers. Odessa's current sources of indoor recreation are by the YMCA, Odessa College Sports Center, and private gyms. The City of Odessa currently does not have a facility capable of offering indoor recreation. Annual YMCA memberships can be expensive and beyond the capability of many families in the area. The need for a large, citywide indoor recreation facility will be needed within the next ten years.

Odessa does have a good system of smaller community centers at four key locations throughout the City that offer rental space for parties, events and meetings. Renovations are needed to one of the centers in the long term. Also, there is an opportunity to construct a community center in the northern portion of the City which is currently underserved. Long term, a sixth community center will be needed on the east side of Odessa which is where the population growth is most likely to occur.

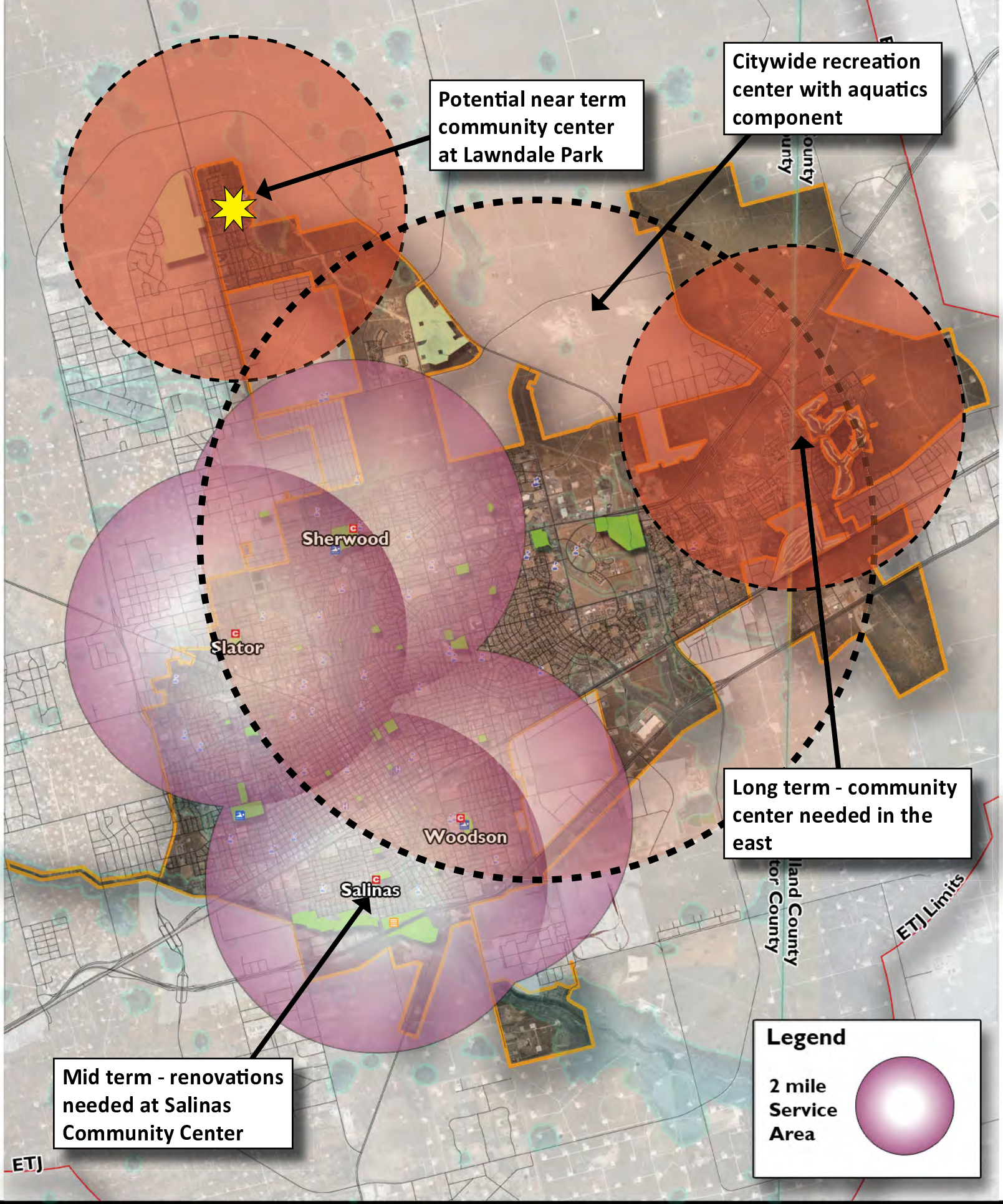
The top five priority needs for indoor recreation are as follows:

1. Lawndale Park Community Center - There is a unique opportunity for the City of Odessa to develop a community center on the northern side of the City which currently is not being served. The abandoned fire station located at Lawndale Park has the potential to be converted into a community center for that area.

2. Develop a citywide indoor recreation center - A citywide, state-of-the-art, recreation center will provide a healthful and attractive environment in which every person in Odessa will have the opportunity to enjoy activities of a social, creative and/or physical nature. The public input process showed interest for a recreation



Examples of typical amenities offered at a modern recreation center



Community Center Service Areas

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

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center with a swimming pool and meeting rooms. This would be the first facility of this type for Odessa, where people and families of all ages can recreate together.

3. Develop an indoor natatorium addition to the recreation center - As a possible second phase to the above mentioned recreation center, the City of Odessa should plan to include an indoor aquatic component. An indoor aquatic component was one of the top needs from the online survey. Typically when the two are paired together, the facility is able to share staff and other resources making it more successful.

4. Renovate Salinas Community Center - The existing community center at Salinas Park is one of the oldest community centers in the City. Renovations and preventative maintenance needs to be done to this center so that it continues to be a viable asset to the community. The center needs a new roof, new facade, exterior painting and additional parking. Furthermore, the center can be expanded along the east wall to allow for an outdoor patio area.

5. Future Eastside Community Center - Long term the City will need a community center on the east side, making it the sixth community center in Odessa. This new community center can be similar to the existing centers, with the intention of being a rental facility for parties, meetings, and other events.

Programs

The table below provides a summary of the current recreation programs that are offered by the City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department. However, based on recent trends (as discussed earlier in Chapter 1), there are opportunities for Odessa to expand the variety of programs that are available to residents.

- Because the Baby Boomers are a very active generation, Odessa Parks and Recreation Department should provide physical fitness exercise classes for older adults and seniors.
- High school sports teams are growing in participation but not all high school students will be good

Table 6.2 Existing City of Odessa Recreation Program Inventory

Adult Athletics	Youth Athletics	Swimming Programs	Special Events
Softball	Soccer	Pet Splash	Movies in the park
Disc golf	Girls softball	Community Pool Parties & Drive-in Movies	Daddy/Daughter Dance
Flag football	Baseball		Take Me Fishing
			Easter Egg Hunt
			MLB Hit, Pitch, Run
			5K Mud Run
			Fall Festival
			Jingle Bell Jog 5K
			Christmas Tree Lighting
			Starbright Village
			Comanche Cross - Cyclocross Event
			An American Tribute
			Buffalo Battle Odessa

enough to make a team. Odessa should consider offering sports leagues to teenagers, not just offering the leagues for youth or adults.

- Fitness trends that are gaining in popularity include Pilates, spinning, cardio kick boxing, yoga, martial arts, and low impact aerobics. These programs should be offered at the proposed citywide indoor recreation center. Because these classes are most likely to include adults, they should be offered in the very early morning or early evening hours when most people are not at work.
- A morning fitness walk/run club could be popular because of the amount of people interested in walking for fitness.

Any future recreation facilities need to provide flexible space that can accommodate classes, lectures, and activities of varying types. In a state-of-the-art recreation center, these types rooms have moveable tables and chairs, moveable walls or partitions, and hard flooring such as wood or commercial-grade carpet.

Special Events

Special events in a city such as Odessa help preserve the sense of community that both long-time and new residents are seeking. Often times, it is at these events that most residents participate in any type of programming offered by the City. Expansion of special event programming in Odessa should be considered in a number of areas including:

Examples of downtown parks

- Events that bring together individual participants such as cycling clubs, 5K runs/walks, etc.
- Events that bring together people who share a special interest or introduce people to a new area of interest, e.g. geocaching, model airplane flying, etc.
- Family events focused on ease and enjoyment of interaction between adults and children.
- Neighborhood events such as National Night Out and organized block parties. It should never be assumed that people living in common neighborhoods actually know one another, and these types of events build a sense of community and reinforce safety.
- Look for opportunities to offer environmental education and nature programming to residents of all ages.

One recommendation of the 2004 Master Plan, and is still a priority today, is a Downtown "Celebration" Park or Square. Ideally the downtown park should be within the area of the medical district, with the intention of serving as a citywide outdoor space for all types of civic functions and events. A tract ranging in size from 1.5 to 3 acres should be assembled and developed as the square. One potential location could be the already city-owned land behind the Ector Theater, especially if there is potential to combine the site with the right of way of adjacent streets. Benefits of such a unique park space include drawing people into the downtown area, serving as a central and neutral location for citywide events, and enhancing the recent redevelopments of the medical district.

F. Trail Recommendations

Trails were one of the most frequently mentioned recreational features throughout the master planning process. Trails benefit everyone in the City, whether they are young or old, active runners or bicyclists or just someone who wants a quiet stroll in the evening. The goal for trails in Odessa is to identify a connected system of potential corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists in order to provide recreation opportunities as well as transportation choices, enhancing the quality of life available to all Odessa residents.

The Benefits of a Network of Trails Throughout Odessa

Throughout the United States, trails continue to be one of the most popular recreation features provided by communities. In Texas, with favorable outdoor weather much of the year, trails are becoming exceedingly popular, and this remains true in Odessa with its dry, non-humid climate.

Example of a trail with multiple users

Trails are popular because they offer something for everyone, from the very young, to the very active, to the elderly simply seeking a tranquil place to walk and enjoy being outside. Trails provide an opportunity to see the beautiful natural parts of the City, and especially those areas that are not readily visible as one travels around Odessa, such as the Comanche Trail corridor.

Through the acquisition of corridors for greenways, trails help to preserve key greenbelt areas. Imagine Odessa twenty years from now, and imagine how green corridors might help to enhance the image of the City.

Trails provide a healthy lifestyle, by providing opportunities to engage in exercise in a fun setting, whether by simply walking or through more strenuous activities such as bicycling or roller-blading.

Trails preserve the history and culture of the City by preserving key historical features and areas, as well as the landscape context around those areas.

Trails support economic development by creating more attractive greenbelts that can revitalize areas, provide tourism opportunities and make Odessa an attractive place to relocate.

Trails can provide transportation benefits by providing alternative ways to get to work, to retail areas or to key destinations such as libraries, parks, community centers, pools or City Hall.

Finally, and most importantly, a citywide trail system clearly speaks to Odessa's commitment to establishing a higher quality of life standard for its citizens. In turn, that commitment to quality of life promotes the business and economic growth of the City, since it says that Odessa will always seek to be a great place to live and to do business.

This trails component of the overall Parks Master Plan Update has been developed with input from city staff as well as from interested citizens during the public input process.

Trail Users

Trails should be designed to accommodate a variety of users. Activity on a trail lends a sense of safety and comfort to a trail, and encourages others who are not as active to use the trail. Users of trails will include:

- **Walking for Exercise and Recreation** - Typically relaxed walking along a pleasant corridor. May include senior citizens, mothers with children or families. May occupy a significant portion of the trail due to walking side by side.
- **Joggers and Runners** - Use trail corridors for exercise and activity. Higher speed may conflict with slower users of the trails.
- **Recreational and Inexperienced Cyclists** - Use trails for exercise and activity, are interested in scenic appeal and connectivity of the trail system, and prefer more interesting trail alignments, rather than trails that favor higher speeds.

Multi-purpose trail

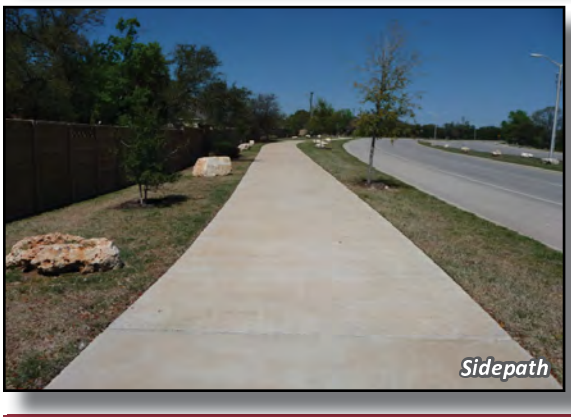
- **Higher Speed Bicyclists and Commuters** - More experienced riders are typically more interested in higher speeds. These riders often favor roadways over off-street trails. For off-street trails, alignments with shallower curves are favored by these users. Because of the higher speeds, increased trail widths are recommended to reduce conflicts with other trail users.
- **Mountain Biking** - Users can travel on crushed rock or more natural trail surfaces, and preferred trails with challenging terrain.

Trail Types

A variety of different trail types should be considered in Odessa. These include:

Natural surface nature trail

- **Multi-purpose Recreation Trails** - Typically hard surface of asphalt or concrete, and designed to accommodate a variety of users. All trails should be accessible to the elderly and the physically challenged, and should meet applicable State of Texas and Federal accessibility requirements. Minimum of eight feet (8') width is recommended, and a ten feet (10') width is preferred.
- **Natural Surface Nature Trails** - Soft surface trails provide a more natural feeling in locations with scenic appeal. Width can be reduced since high speed use is not involved, but should be at least a minimum of six feet (6').


Sidepath

- **Sidepaths** - Where off-street corridors are not readily available, trails can be placed along roadways, and in effect become large sidewalks with a minimum width of ten to twelve feet (10' - 12'). Key issues are maintaining an adequate amount of separation from nearby lanes of traffic, and fitting the wider sidepath corridor within the available right of way. Portions of the right of way of John Ben Shepherd Parkway may allow for this.

Existing Trails

Major existing trails in Odessa are found within parks as looped trails. The largest trail segments are the Comanche Trail which is approximately 1.9 miles, and nearly 5.0 miles of trails throughout UTPB Park and

campus. Memorial Gardens Park and Sherwood Park both have a one mile looped trail around them. The Memorial Gardens trail circles the lake feature in the center of that park, making it one of the most popular trails in the City. In total, there are approximately 10.1 miles +/- of existing trails in Odessa.

Future Trail Recommendations

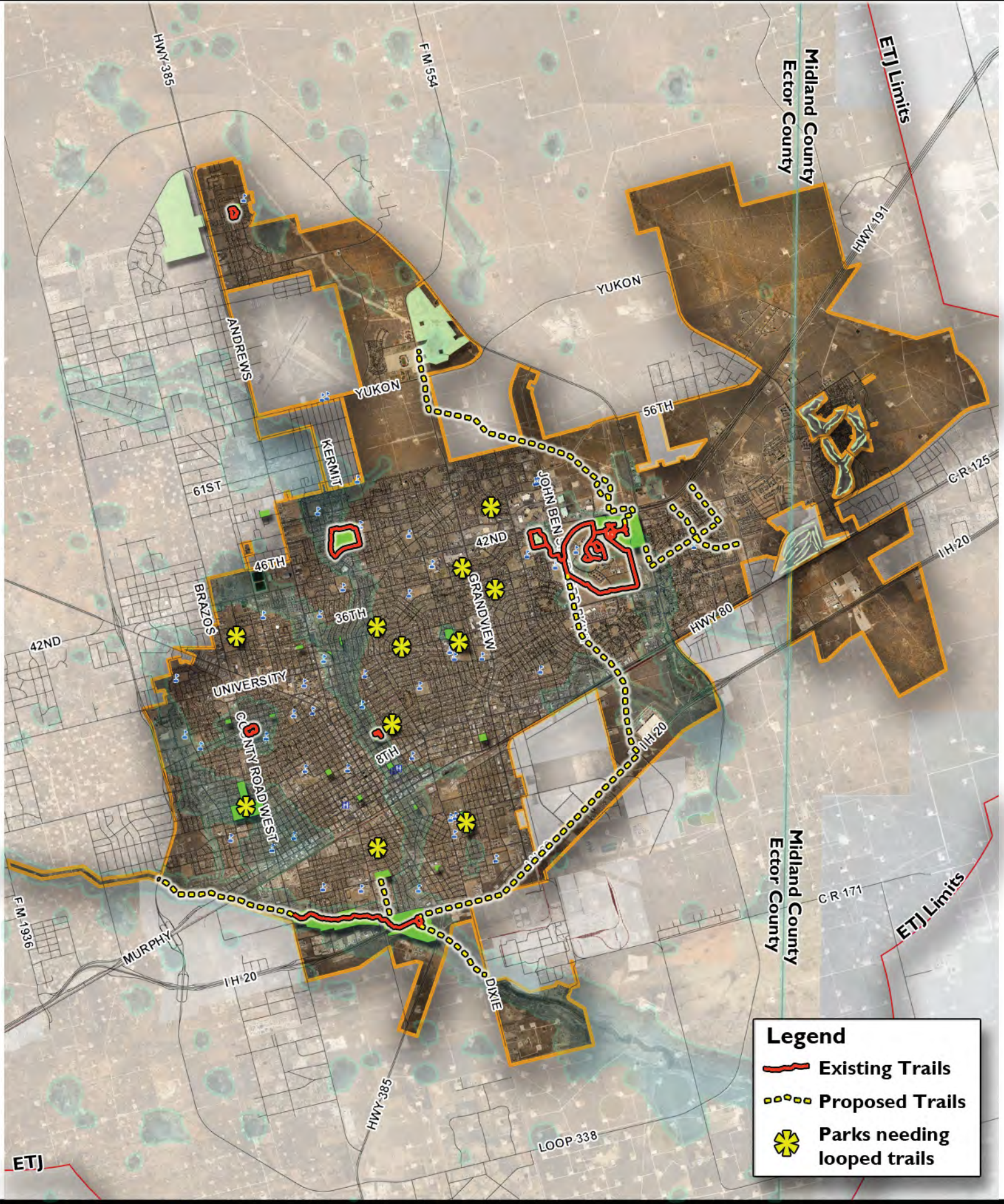
Many potential trail corridors exist in the city limits of Odessa and in the city's ETJ. These potential trail corridors are shown on the following page. The proposed and planned segments were selected because of the potential public use of the corridors, linkage from residential neighborhoods to parks, schools, and other key destinations, potential trail interconnections, present and potential development patterns and the degree of public interest in a particular segment. The following trail recommendations are made to begin to implement a citywide trail system in Odessa.

Trail Construction Prioritization - Focus on the "spine" segments of the citywide trail system . Each may be divided into smaller, affordable segments. These include:

- Comanche Trail/Monahans Draw Corridor, ultimately leading west to Loop 338, and farther east; Estimated length and cost - 1.7 miles to the west, 1.0 miles to the southeast ($2,500,000 to $4,500,000)
- The IH-20 Corridor - traveling along the edge of the freeway right of way to John Ben Shepherd Parkway; Estimated length and cost - 3.3 miles ($3,00,000 to $5,000,000)
- The John Ben Shepherd corridor - portions of the existing roadway are wide enough to permit a trail linking the IH-20 corridor with the UTPB/Memorial Gardens Park trail system. Estimated length and cost - 2.4 miles on street ($2,000,000 to $3,500,000)
- The East Odessa corridor - a trail using pipeline and overhead transmission line rights of way, as well as the drainage corridor on the east side of the City. Estimated length and cost - 2.9 miles ($3,000,000 to $4,350,000)
- The North Odessa corridor - this trail also follows along pipeline and utility easements, and will connect Ratliff Ranch Golf Course and Ratliff Stadium to UTPB Park. Estimated length and cost - 4.3 miles ($4,450,000 to $6,450,000)
- McKinney Park to Salinas Park Trail - this trail would connect McKinney and Salinas parks along a utility easement between Anderson and Broughton Avenues. The trail would have to cross three minor collector streets which would required adequate at-grade crossing elements such as painted crosswalks and caution signs. Estimated length and cost - less than 0.5 miles ($500,000 to $750,000)
- Looped trails within existing parks - Many of the residents in Odessa mentioned during the public input process that they enjoy using trails within parks, and would like to see more looped trails added to existing parks. Ideally, these trails should be one mile in length when feasible. The recommended parks to add looped walking trails are Bellaire, Casa Bella, Central, Floyd Gwin, Jim Parker, Lions Club, Murray Fly, Optimist, Stonegate, and Woodson Parks.

Set a target construction goal - Construct a minimum of three to six miles of trails over the next five years. At $1,000,000 to $1,500,000 per mile for a major concrete trail, the estimated cost of three to six miles of new trails ranges from $3.0 million to $9.0 million. Trails should continue to be one of the highest facility priorities throughout the City.

Allocate adequate funding - Consider allocating annual "in-place" funding that permits the opportunistic acquisition of land or easements for trail development.



Trail Recommendations

Odessa Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

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Establish trail partnerships - Continue to pursue joint development trail projects with the school and university systems. Joint projects will create stronger grant opportunities and permit pursuing larger dollar amounts. Work with developers and other governmental entities to pursue trail construction.

Consider the aesthetics and visual appeal of trails - Use trail corridors as visual parts of the City. Memorial Garden Park trail is an excellent example that demonstrates the significant potential economic and beautification effects of a good trail project.

Trails seldom lead from door to door. However, residents should be able to anticipate accessing trails from their homes as pedestrians along sidewalks, and along roadways that accommodate bicycle traffic, or multi-use trails that accommodate both. Given safe facilities in attractive surroundings, studies show that people will generally walk up to one mile to a trail access destination, or bicycle three to five miles to get to a destination - a journey of usually less than 20 minutes. The key objective of this trail plan is to make access possible from neighborhoods to the City's parks, schools and other everyday destinations for Odessa residents of all ages and abilities, to the extent feasible in the context of an off-road trail plan.

Trails should all be well maintained to ensure the safety and functionality of pedestrian and bicycle flow. Periodic refurbishing and debris removal will be necessary to assure ongoing serviceability. The degree of maintenance provided has a direct impact on facility service life, level of use, liability and community image. Inadequate facility maintenance conveys a feeling of lack of security or usability and leads to decreased facility usage. A strong maintenance regimen is essential to the security and safety of users. In addition to mowing, a trail maintenance program should include:

- Inspection of and repair or replacement of signs and bollards
- Removal of debris
- Repair of damage from seasonal washouts
- Cleaning of drainage structures
- Cleaning and upkeep of lighting where used
- Maintenance of support facilities such as benches, drinking fountains, etc.
- Maintenance of bridges
- Inspecting the condition of trail-related structures
- Emptying of trash cans

Chapter 7 :: Implementation Strategy

Photo courtesy of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Chapter 7 :: Implementation Strategy

An Implementation Plan for Odessa

In previous chapters, the importance of a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is described in detail. This chapter, one of the most crucial in this master plan, prioritizes the recommendations outlined in previous chapters and discusses potential sources of funding for the implementation of these recommendations.

The prioritization is based on information received from public input as well as from the needs assessment formed from facility and acreage standards shown in Chapter 5. The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in Odessa are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input from a citywide basis
- Level of need based on direct citizen input from public comments
- Level of need based on standards based needs assessments (level of service)
- Conditional assessment of existing park facilities in the City
- Opportunities for recreation facilities based on existing physical conditions in or near Odessa

The table below summarizes the key priority needs. Needs meeting all of the criteria were ranked as very high priority elements and are to receive the highest level of attention over the next five to ten years. The top actions over the next ten years that the City of Odessa should accomplish are shown by the action plan on the following pages.

Table 7.1 Summary of Priority Needs in Odessa	
Additional facilities needed based on online survey 1. Playgrounds 2. Jogging/biking trails 3. Picnic tables 4. Outdoor family aquatic center/water park 5. Indoor aquatic facility 6. Rental picnic/reunion pavilions 7. Dog park	Additional facilities needed based on public meetings/stakeholder interviews 1. Dog park 2. Citywide indoor recreation center 3. Beautification/renovations to existing parks 4. Additional turf fields for practice and for football, soccer, etc. 5. Trails that are lighted for evening use, and safe for walkers/joggers and bicyclists 6. Additional pool in north or east
Additional facilities needed based on level of service 1. Pavilions 2. Trails 3. Basketball courts 4. Playgrounds 5. Dog park 6. Community center 7. Soccer fields/multipurpose flat fields	Additional facilities needed based on condition 1. Playgrounds 2. Basketball courts 3. Additional park lighting 4. Walking trails 5. Pavilions 6. Resurface tennis courts and volleyball courts 7. Expand/renovate parking lots
Top 10 Cumulative Outdoor Facility Needs Based on Above Summaries 1. Playgrounds, with shade structures whenever possible 2. Pavilions with picnicking facilities 3. Jogging/biking trails 4. Soccer/multipurpose fields (convert Southside Ball Park into soccer facilities and practice fields) 5. Baseball fields (construct fourth baseball field at Sherwood Park) 6. Dog park 7. Public art and general beautification efforts 8. Basketball courts 9. Improved practice fields for baseball/softball and soccer/football, specifically at Southside Ball Park, Jim Parker Park, Optimist Park, and Western Manor Park 10. Additional swimming pool or sprayground in either north or east	
Top 5 Cumulative Indoor Facility Needs Based on Above Summaries 1. Community center at Lawndale Park, converted from abandoned fire station 2. Citywide indoor recreation center 3. An indoor aquatic component as a second phase to the citywide indoor recreation center 4. Renovate Salinas Community Center 5. Acquire land on the east side of the City for a future community center in that area	

Table 7.2 Action Plan 2014-2024

City of Odessa

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Key Recommendations - 2014 to 2024

Priority	Action	District	Land in Acres		Estimated Cost Range (1)		Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Additional Staffing Needs (1)	Potential Time Frame
			Low	High	Low Range	High Range				
1	**Adopt a Parkland Dedication Ordinance**	Citywide			NA	NA	Policy	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
2	**Adopt a Landscaping Ordinance**	Citywide			NA	NA	Policy	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
3	**Repurpose/redevelop exisitng parks (Southside Ball Park, Salinas Park and Community Building, Lawndale building into Community Center)**	Citywide			$2,000,000	$2,500,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Immediate
4	**Renovate/develop neighborhood park sites (Slator Park including dog park if additional land can be acquired, Lions Club Park, Bellaire Park, Central Park, Preston Oaks Park*, 52nd Street and Tanglewood Ave Park*, Murry Fly Park, Western Manor Park, Eastside neighborhood park*)**	Citywide	3	6	$4,000,000	$7,000,000	Renovation/New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	2 +/-	Within 5 Years
5	**Renovate/develop community parks (Floyd Gwin Park, Woodson Park, Sherwood Park, UTPB Park, North Park near school site including sprayground*)**	Citywide		40	$6,000,000	$8,000,000	Renovation/New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	2 +/-	Within 5 Years
6	**Develop new aquatic facility in north or east**	Citywide	10	20	$8,000,000	$12,000,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	4 to 10 +/-	Within 5 Years
7	**Develop/redevelop neighborhood parks (O'Conner Park, expand Frederick Douglass Park, Dorothy Lee Murphy Park, Stonegate Park*, Dunbar Avenue Park*)**	Citywide			$2,000,000	$5,000,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 Years
8	**Develop 90 acre Metropolitan Park at Eastridge Road and Bill Hext Road***	2		90	$950,000	$1,000,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	3 +/-	Within 5 Years
	Estimated Total Cost - High Priority Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)		**13**	**156**	**$ 22,950,000**	**$ 35,500,000**			**up to 17 +/-**	

**New Park Development*

Table 7.2 Action Plan 2014-2024

City of Odessa

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Key Recommendations - 2014 to 2024

Priority	Action	District	Land in Acres		Estimated Cost Range (1)		Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Additional Staffing Needs (1)	Potential Time Frame
			Low	High	Low Range	High Range				
9	**Additional jogging and biking trails in all parks**	Citywide			$4,000,000	$5,000,000	Trail Construction	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
10	**More shade, playgrounds, lighitng and public art in existing parks**	Citywide			$500,000	$1,000,000	Renovation / Enhancements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
11	**Additional rental pavilions at existing parks (add at least five)**	Citywide			$150,000	$300,000	Renovation / Enhancements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
12	**Citywide recreation center with aquatic component (could be multiple phases)**	Citywide	10	20	$12,000,000	$15,000,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	5 to 10 +/-	Within 5 to 10 Years
13	**Add more backstops in existing parks**	Citywide			$40,000	$120,000	Renovation / Enhancments	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
14	**Improve practice fields at existing parks (grading, improved playing surface)**	Citywide			$200,000	$500,000	Renovation	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights, park development fees	0	Within 5 to 10 Years
Estimated Total Cost - Medium and Long Term Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)			**10**	**20**	**$ 16,890,000**	**$ 21,920,000**			**up to 10 +/-**	

1. Note: Costs and maintenance personnel estimates shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Action Plan

The Action Plan is the basic actions and tasks required in order for the City of Odessa to reach the target goals and objectives for the parks and recreation system. It maps out the immediate tasks at hand. Consider the following notes when reviewing the Action Plan:

- **Sequence** - The sequence is based directly on the recommended importance and need for each action. However, some actions may take longer to occur. In that case, other actions may be easier to accomplish sooner, but should not diminish the need for higher priority actions.
- **Funding possibilities** - The sale of certificates of obligation may generate funding, such as a Quality of Life Bond. The Action Plan is a guide, but may vary as specific needs or opportunities occur within the City. Other potential funding sources are noted in the table, but are not secured. Rather, they should be considered as possibilities to also pursue.
- **Projected costs** - The projected costs per item are intended to establish an order of magnitude cost range. These estimates are made prior to any designs or detailed concepts being developed, and will vary as more detailed design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar types of facilities and efforts. All costs include an escalation factor, assumed to be in the range of 3% per year.
- **Suggested timeframe** - The suggested time frames are approximate and are intended to establish a sequence for all actions. The timeframe of each recommended priority is based on High Priority (within the next five years), Medium Priority (within five to ten years) or Long Term (ten years and beyond). Note that the prioritization in this plan is intended to guide staff, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and City Council, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Funding Strategies

Different parks and recreation facilities will require different funding strategies. While small improvements to existing parks and most trails can be built with local funds, other parks, open spaces and large facility projects may be able to contend for federal or state funds. This section provides brief descriptions of these funding implementation assistance opportunities.

Key City Generated Funding Sources

General Fund Expenditures - General fund expenditures are primarily used for operations and minor improvements. Some funding should be set aside annually to cover upgrades to at least one park. An amount of at least $250,000 should be budgeted annually for general improvements and replacement costs.

Sales Tax Revenue - Odessa should explore establishing a 4B fund which can be used for community facilities such as parks, trails and recreation buildings, subject to approval by voting by the citizens of Odessa. While each project or group of projects would have to be approved by citizen vote, this option could be considered for projects with significant community-wide benefit. Recreational features with significant impact on quality of life will make Odessa a much more attractive and economically viable location to live, work and play.

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) Districts - A TIF District is a zone where certain property tax revenue generated in the district is reinvested back into the district through development of infrastructure. TIFs operate on the idea that public investment helps stimulate and grow property values, justifying the reinvestment of property taxes back into the district generating the revenue. If feasible, explore the use of TIF/TIRZ funds to address needs identified in this plan.

Public Improvement District (PID) - Somewhat similar to a TIF district, a PID allows a city or county to levy and collect special assessments on property that is within the city or its ETJ to fund improvements that are within that district. Essentially, property owners within the district agree to pay an additional tax so that improvements can be made within the district (similar to HOA fees for homeowners). Examples of improvements can include street and sidewalk improvements, park or cultural improvements, landscaping and other aesthetic improvements, and art installations.

Voter Approved Bond Funds - When feasible, a voter approved bond program to support park and facility development within the next five to ten years should be considered, such as Quality of Life Bond.

Park Facility Funding Through a Parkland Dedication Ordinance - This type of ordinance would provide some lands and/or funding for the development of neighborhood parks throughout the City in new residential developments. This type of ordinance is discussed further in the Ordinance Section of this Chapter.

Hotel Occupancy Tax - A portion of the City's hotel occupancy tax revenue is a source to help fund sporting events and special events.

Key Grant Funding Sources

Grants can provide a significant source of additional funding for parks, but should not be considered as the primary source for park construction.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) is the primary source for parks grants in Texas, and in addition provides funding for recreational trails. Up to a 50 percent match can be obtained, up to $500,000 for new parks and trail facilities. Grant applications that stress joint funding and support from two or more local entities may have a greater chance of contending for the TRPA grants. These grants are highly competitive, and in recent years there have been far fewer grants available or awarded due to State budget restrictions. When the grants are available, the typical deadline to submit an application is March 1st and August 1st every year.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - This fund is divided into two funding categories: state grants and federal acquisition. The state grants are distributed to all 50 states, DC, and other territories based on factors such as population. State grant funds can be used for park development and for acquisition of parkland or easements.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program - This program provides monetary support for transportation activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the transportation system. Typically, funds can be used for trails and streetscape related projects. Funding is on a cost reimbursement basis, and projects selected are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80% of allowable costs. This funding program is not available on a yearly basis, but intermittently only, often in two to five year periods. A deadline for a submission was late 2012, so the next opportunity for funding under this program is unknown at this time. These funds, while difficult to work with, are becoming more responsible to real world costs, and should be seriously considered since they remain one of the few sources of outside funds.

Indoor Recreation Grants – These grants are available to local governments for the construction or renovation of indoor recreation facilities. This assistance is in the form of 50% matching grant funds up to $750,000. Local governments must apply, permanently dedicate the building for public recreational use and assume responsibility for operation and maintenance. This TPWD sponsored grant program is currently suspended, and funding amounts may be limited over the next few years.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – These funds can be spent to construct new recreational trails, improve/maintain existing trails, develop/improve trailheads or trail side facilities, and acquire trail corridors/easements. It is a cost reimbursement program. Projects may range in total cost between $5,000 and $100,000.

Environmental Protection Agency – The EPA can provide funding for projects with money collected in pollution settlements, or with funding targeted at wetland and habitat preservation or reclamation.

Foundation and Company Grants – These can assist in direct funding for projects, while others exist to help citizen efforts get established with small seed funds or technical and publicity assistance.

Grants for Greenways – This is a national listing that provides descriptions of a broad spectrum of both general and specific groups who provide technical and financial support for greenway interests.

Partnering with Volunteer Groups – Partnering with volunteer groups can be helpful when constructing trails or playground equipment. Their effort can be used as part of the required match for many grants such as the Recreational Trails Program. There are a variety of sources for volunteers including: user groups, local residents, corporate community service initiatives, and business and civic support groups.

Photo source: City of Odessa Parks and Recreation Department

Parks Foundation - Parks foundations are non-profit organizations and another source for volunteers. People can make tax deductible donations to a foundation, which in turn provides financial support and volunteer time to a city's parks system. Parks foundations often assist with physical improvements to a park or support recreational programming. They essentially help fill the gap between what needs to be done and what a parks department can afford to do.

Odessa's Parks Foundation Dollar Donation Program - The citizens of Odessa have a voluntary dollar donation program that is attached to their monthly utility bill. The Dollar Donation Program was created in 2007, and the money raised has been used to replace major playground structures at four city parks. It is strongly encouraged that this program continue, but is not viewed as a way to fund capital improvements in the parks department. Rather, this donation program allows the City to address a key need that might not otherwise be met.

Policies and Ordinances

Parkland Dedication Ordinance - This type of ordinance is used by many cities, and is now generally not considered onerous by the development community, but rather is welcomed as a method to help fund smaller parks in a timely manner. A city's parkland dedication ordinance provides an important mechanism to ensure that adequate parkland is available when new development occurs. The City of Odessa currently does not have a parkland dedication ordinance. Therefore, it is a high priority recommendation that the City pursues adopting such an ordinance.

Landscaping Ordinance - Establishing a landscaping ordinance in Odessa can contribute to the beautification efforts throughout the City. This master plan strongly recommends the City adopt a landscaping ordinance. Beautification was consistently ranked as a high priority need among residents during the public input process.

Trail Development Ordinance - A trail development ordinance is usually a component of a Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Similar ordinances have been enacted in other cities in Texas, and have proven successful in helping to get trails constructed. Often the city will fund regional trails and trailhead development, then require complete developer construction of key trail segments that fall within their property limits. Credits for landscaping, pavement, or other infrastructure elements could be given in return for trail construction outside of a city's trail master plan. A central point to consider is that many developments these days will add trails automatically; therefore, such a mandatory trail development ordinance only serves to create a level playing field between the developments that include trails and those that will build them only if required to do so.

Joint Planning with Ector County ISD - Establish joint planning review sessions with ECISD schools to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for partnership in acquiring land for schools and parks. Identify existing school sites that may be developed jointly with the school district as publicly accessible park lands.

Joint Planning with Ector County, Midland County and the City of Midland - Establish joint planning review sessions with Ector County, Midland County and the City of Midland to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for a partnership to jointly develop park and trail facilities when feasible.

Other Policy Recommendations

Establish a City Ordinance that requires single loaded streets along future neighborhood parks. Single loaded roads allows for accessible parks that are safe and inviting. Safety is generally achieved by the informal surveillance provided by the residents overlooking the park.

Establish a City Ordinance that mandates the donation of floodplain lands along draws. Such land is not developable yet provides habitat and corridors of movement for fauna and the opportunity for use as open space, greenways and trails.

Establish a formal process and agreements for working directly and continuously with the Ector County Independent School District, so as to acquire lands for neighborhood and family parks in conjunction with school district property acquisitions.

Establish a formal process and agreements for working directly and continuously with the various utility districts and other city departments that can assist in acquiring park lands or in jointly developing facilities. These include the Water Works Department, private entertainment providers, as well as other City of Odessa departments.

Pro-actively search for park lands to target for acquisition over the next five years. Include Odessa's ETJ in this search.

Endorse the park to population ratios established by this plan to guide the acquisition and development of parks in all sectors of the City. These are 2 to 2.5 acres per 1,000 population for neighborhood parks and 5 acres per 1,000 population for community parks.

Endorse the creation of linear park corridors that bisect and link parts of the City. Use the corridors identified in this plan as the major corridors throughout the City. Establish standards for developing land adjacent to linear park corridors. These include helping to fund linear parks, providing pedestrian connections to the parks, minimum amounts of landscaping along those corridors, and signage regulations adjacent to or within the linear park corridors.

Ensure that adequate maintenance personnel are provided to take care of park lands in the City.

Expect and provide an exceptional level of care for high visibility park corridors.

Endorse the need for the acquisition and preservation of open space preserves throughout the City limits. Consider acquiring these lands in conjunction with needed park areas.

Direct City staff to pursue alternative methods of funding park system and programming improvement such as partnerships with nongovernmental entities, grant funding sources, establishing "Friends of..." organizations, and contracting out programs or operations. Consider these and other methods only where feasible and financially sound.

Operations and Maintenance

With the recommendations of additional parks, recreation facilities and trails, it should be recognized that additional manpower is needed for the required maintenance of these various projects. The number of additional staff needed to attended to these proposed facilities will vary depending on the use of these facilities. The provision of adequate staffing must be included as each facility is developed or the facility should not be built.

As the park system grows, additional maintenance resources should be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department. This includes new mowing and transporting equipment, as well as park maintenance staff. Over the next ten years, as new facilities are added, park maintenance staff should grow at the same rate.

Sustainability Approach to Maintenance

Often parks and recreation agencies are the single largest landowner in a city or community. As such, stewardship of the community's natural resources and recreation amenities is a key parks department responsibility, all the while managing the conscientious expenditure of tax dollars. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "Good stewardship requires management practices that protect and enhance the recreational, environmental, social and cultural values of public lands and natural and cultural resources in a manner that is cost-effective and sustainable for future generations."

The role of the Odessa Parks and Recreation Department in the conservation of natural and recreation resources, while implementing "sustainability" in its approach to resource management, not only contributes to the health and welfare of its residents, it also reduces operations and maintenance costs, particularly for mowing and irrigation. Sustainability is defined as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Basically, sustainability embraces a stewardship approach that conserves our natural resources for use by future generations. These natural resources include:

- Clean water
- Clean air
- Nutrient rich topsoil
- Wildlife habitat
- Trees and vegetation
- Harnessing of wind and solar energy to reduce the use of fossil fuels

The sustainability approach to natural resource management is not only an environmentally sensitive management strategy - it is "good business" for the City and its residents. The Odessa Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the care and maintenance of approximately 555 acres,

throughout the City in 36 park locations. To provide the highest level of park and recreation facilities and amenities, while maintaining these facilities in the most cost-effective manner, the Parks and Recreation Department will implement a sustainability based approach to park development and maintenance. This approach includes:

- Planting native tree and grass species that are water conserving and hardy to the regional climate. This approach will encourage the "greening" of parks, while limiting the amount of long-term maintenance required to achieve attractive facilities.
- Developing active areas in parks and greenways that will be maintained to levels dictated by the intended use. For example, high intensity use areas such as athletic facilities or playgrounds, will have a higher degree of maintenance and cultivation. On the other hand, areas that are less used or do not require a high level of care, such as disc golf courses or open play areas will receive a less frequent or less intensive maintenance.
- Planting more trees in parks in mass plantings rather than lines or rows to create more shade and summer cooling effect in key areas in existing and new parks.
- Planting native grasses and wild flowers in peripheral areas of parks and in park sites that are planned as natural or habitat areas. These areas will only need to be mowed once or twice per year, and rarely fertilized, reducing maintenance costs.
- Provide beds of native and drought tolerant ornamental shrubs and perennial plants for color in "high-impact" areas such as park entrances. These beds can be mulched with recycled "green waste" such as Christmas trees, chipped branches and dead trees, and lawn clippings to help the soil retain moisture and reduce irrigation demand.
- Changing irrigation practices to water only those areas that are designated as "high intensity use" areas, such as playground and adjacent picnic areas, designated sports practice fields, and athletic facilities that host league play. This approach will conserve water and reduce costs by discouraging turf growth except in priority locations.
- Implementing the use of treated effluent at areas where direct human contact can be managed. Evaluate and implement extension of re-use water to as many parks as feasible, both short term and long term.

Image of artificial turf

- Transition to Artificial Turf – Since the previous master plan was published in 2004, the quality of artificial turf has improved dramatically. Recent advances have produced turf that is very real in appearance and yet much more forgiving to athletes. Costs have also come down, and droughts or water shortages in the region have become a major concern. Artificial turf fields allow for much greater frequency of use, and use significantly less water (i.e. cleaning and cooling) to remain playable. Continued research and testing is needed regarding artificial turf fields, but can be one viable option in the future. Add test synthetic turf field for 4th baseball field at Sherwood and for two of the existing soccer fields at Floyd Gwin. The purpose will be to test implementation and operations costs for possible future expanded use of synthetic fields.

Staffing Levels

Current Staffing - The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 555 acres of parkland throughout the City. The present maintenance staff includes 11 full-time grounds maintenance workers, 10 parks equipment operators, two parks maintenance supervisors, one athletic field supervisor, two parks repairers, one irrigation supervisor, and four irrigation technicians. On the average, each maintenance staff member is responsible for the maintaining 17.9 acres.

Staffing Goal - Over the five to ten year life span of this master plan update, the department is anticipated to develop and maintain at least 30 acres of additional parks and sustain renovations to several other existing parks. In order to maintain the current average of acres per maintenance staff, at least one to two new grounds maintenance staff members and the corresponding level of equipment will be needed. Staffing requirements should be projected and approved by City Management and the City Council prior to the development of any new parks, to ensure that operations and maintenance staff members are available to properly maintain new parks. If staff levels cannot be increased, new parks should not be developed.

The City should also seek to hire an athletic coordinator within one year. Such a position would be responsible for assisting leagues in scheduling designated places and times for practice, and would coordinate game and tournament play among the different athletic complexes that are available.

Furthermore, two of the mid term recommendations will require substantial new staff as part of the overall operations of those facilities. A citywide indoor recreation center and a new aquatic center on the east side of the City will both require approximately ten new staffing positions each (+/-) to fully operate.

Master Plan Updates

The Odessa Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Update is a guide to be used by the Odessa Parks and Recreation Department to address system needs over the next ten years. However, during that timeframe, there will be changes that occur. The area population may increase more rapidly than projected, the community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations, or development of some of the recommendations listed in this plan will occur.

A review and update of this plan by city staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should be conducted on an annual basis, or when significant changes occur. These updates can be published in short report format and attached to this plan for easy use. Four key areas for focus of these periodic reviews are as follows:

- **Facility Inventory** - An inventory of new or updated city-owned facilities should be recorded. This inventory should also mention any significant changes or improvements to ECISD schools, the City of Midland, or major private facilities that could influence recreation in Odessa.
- **Public Involvement** - As mentioned previously, this plan reflects current population and attitudes expressed by the citizens of Odessa today. However over time, those attitudes and interests may vary as the City changes. Periodic surveys are recommended to provide a current account of the attitudes of the citizens, and to provide additional direction from the public on issues that may arise. In order to make an accurate comparison of the changes in attitudes, it is recommended that future surveys include similar questions to those included in this plan.
- **Facility Use** – Facility use is a key factor in determining the need and renovation of additional

facilities. Updates on league participation should be incorporated each season with data from each association. Changes in participation of those outside the city limits, as well as the residents of Odessa, should also be recorded.

- **Action Plan** – As items from the action plan in this document are implemented, updates should be made to the prioritized list to provide a current schedule for city staff and elected officials.

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