

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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Local access to active and passive recreation, nature, and opportunities for community interaction offers mental, physical, environmental, and economic benefits to a city. The City of Sugar Land strives to offer and preserve a high quality, well-distributed, and well-connected parks and recreation system for the enjoyment of its residents and visitors. This Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan first recognizes the benefits of parks and recreation; identifies local, regional, and national trends; and reviews the City's previous planning efforts for key successes, current status, and guidance towards the development of further recommendations for the City.

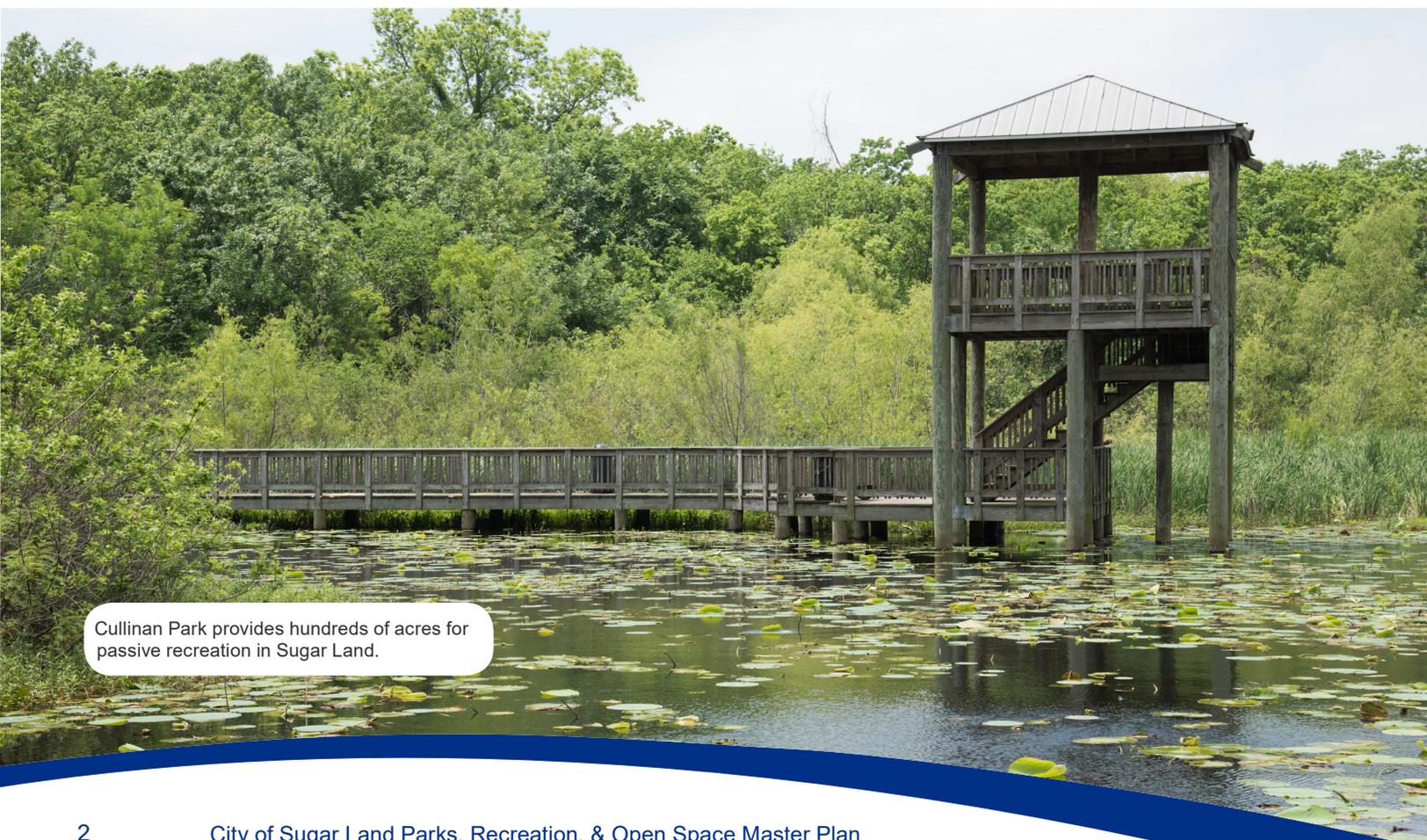


The City of Sugar Land is a mid-sized city located in the most highly populated region of Texas. The provision of quality parks and recreation in Sugar Land is an essential element of what sets the City apart from all the other jurisdictions around it. With over 1,500 acres of City-owned parkland and 230 acres of homeowner association (HOA) parkland, residents are provided with a variety of park and recreation resources including small and large parks; passive (e.g., trails and unprogrammed open space) and active (e.g., sports complexes) recreation opportunities; and access to water, trails, and a high quality recreation center and senior center.

Why Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space?

Since the adoption of the City's 2005 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, 90 percent of its recommended projects have now been included in the City's capital improvement budget, designed, completed, or otherwise since been implemented. Therefore it is important that the City consider its current unique opportunities, identify future needs, and plan for the next 10 years of parks and recreation in Sugar Land.

In recent years, the City has acquired hundreds of acres of parkland through donation and dedication. Most recently, over 750 acres of land was acquired through annexation and an inter-local agreement with the City of Houston and Cullinan Park Conservancy. The land,



Cullinan Park provides hundreds of acres for passive recreation in Sugar Land.

known as Cullinan Park, offers great opportunities for the City to provide enhanced passive nature-based recreation. Similarly, parkland dedicated as part of the Riverstone development, added an additional 293 acres of property along the Brazos River. This area includes woodlands, floodplain, and a conservation easement providing passive, water-based recreation opportunities. The City also stands to gain over 100 acres of land through dedication by the Imperial Development which would allow for the expansion of Gannoway Park. This would increase its size to approximately 170 acres and provide potential linkage opportunities to Cullinan Park. Gannoway Park provides opportunities for passive recreation and environmental education.

The City also owns a number of acres along the Brazos River Corridor and along the edge of the Telfair development that provide additional active and passive recreation opportunities which are not currently being realized. Programming of the undeveloped parkland along the Brazos River will coincide with a larger initiative by Fort Bend Green to develop an extensive river recreation corridor geared towards passive, water-based recreation. The undeveloped community park property in the Telfair development was acquired in 2012 and includes a historic cemetery and large, flat lawn areas which provide opportunities for athletic and other active recreation.

With the multitude of opportunities for community and regional parkland in Sugar Land, it is important that the City proactively plan for the development, operation, and maintenance of these parks to maximize their potential.

In an effort to continue setting the parks and recreational standards high in Sugar Land, and meet the growing and shifting recreational needs and desires of the residents, it is important to reconnect with the public; analyze the current conditions of the parks, recreation, and open space system; and develop prioritized recommendations for implementation over the next five to 10 years. Based on input and prioritization by the community and elected and appointed officials, the City will budget for improvements and likely propose a bond election to fund larger construction projects resulting from this Plan.

Purpose of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

This Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) serves a variety of purposes. Its primary functions are to analyze the current state of Sugar Land's parks, recreation, and open spaces; identify needs and deficiencies in the system; and determine a series of goals, recommendations, and priorities for improving the system.

Above and beyond these primary functions, this Plan will also:

Identify the desires and needs of the community and provide multiple opportunities for public input and feedback.

Recognize shifting parks and recreation trends and levels of participation.

Further define the goals and objectives (i.e., Goals B, D, E, F and H) set out in Chapter 5 of the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Analyze the potential growth of the City over the next 10 years and identify associated program and facility needs in terms of types, locations, and priorities.

Evaluate current opportunities in the City and provide recommendations for development and enhancement of these areas.

Provide clearly prioritized recommendations so that the community’s greatest deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible.

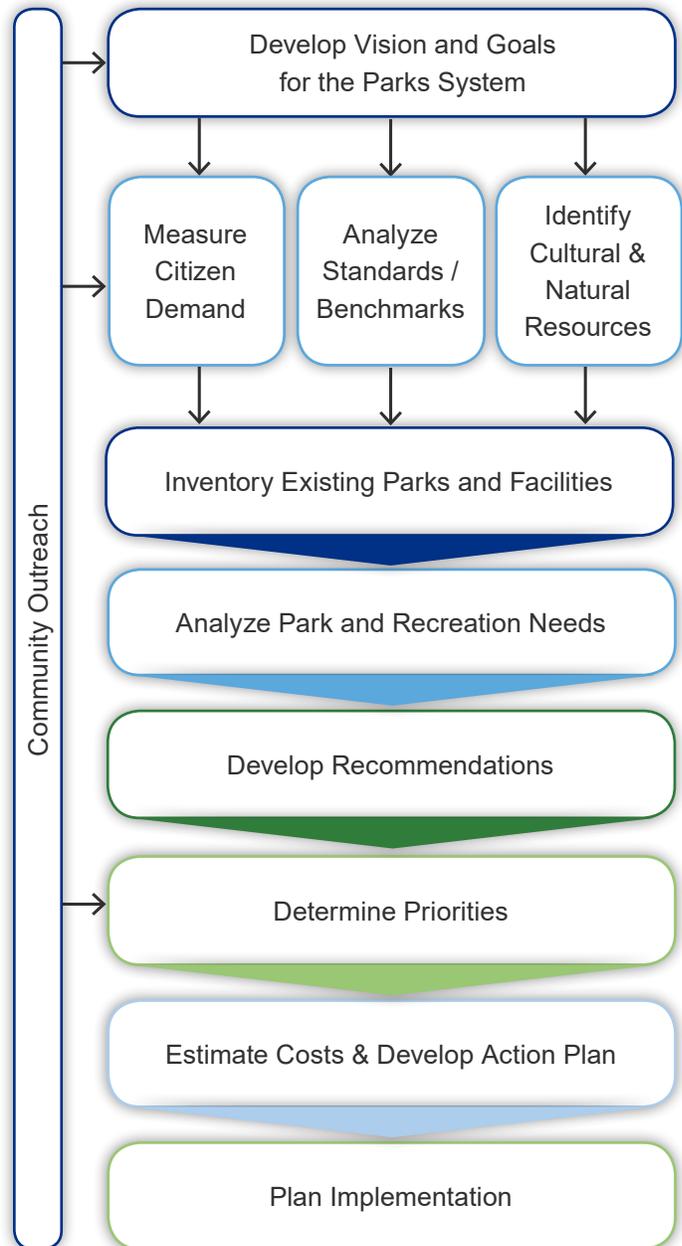
Develop a detailed 10-year implementation action plan.

Guide City staff and leaders in determining how and where park funding should be allocated over the next five to 10 years.

Identify funding strategies to provide predictable funding resources for the proposed improvements.

By identifying and recognizing the community’s wants and needs, evaluating unique opportunities in the City today, and providing realistic, prioritized implementation actions, this Plan will help guide Sugar Land towards a sustainable future with a safe, beautiful, inclusive, and environmentally responsible parks, recreation, and open space system.

Figure 1.1, Master Planning Process



Master Planning Process and Timeline

In March 2016, Sugar Land appointed Halff Associates, Inc. to prepare an update to the City’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. The master planning process includes a series of steps which allow for development of a successful Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (see Figure 1.1, *Master Planning Process*). These steps include understanding the existing conditions in the community and developing appropriate goals for the parks system, seeking public input, identifying local resources, analyzing park and recreation needs, developing recommendations and priorities, and offering implementation strategies.

The most important component of any planning process is seeking public input from residents, visitors, staff, and elected and appointed officials. This component is often called “community outreach” or “public engagement.” This allows the community to voice their preferred park and recreation priorities for the next five to 10 years. Community outreach is included at key points throughout the process to allow citizens to provide input regarding the vision and goals of the parks system, their wants and needs, recommended improvements, and prioritization of Plan implementation.

During the preparation of the Sugar Land PROSMP, public input was gathered through stakeholder meetings; Parks, Art, Recreation, Culture, and Streetscapes (PARCS) Board meetings; a statistically valid public survey; open house public meetings; HOA meetings in a box; and an online Sugar Land Town Hall. Detailed documentation of the public input process, including meeting notices, stakeholder meeting highlights, sign-in sheets, and Sugar Land Town Hall results can be found in *Appendix A, Supplemental Information*. A copy of the original survey and detailed survey results can be found in Appendix D, *Sugar Land Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Needs Assessment Survey Findings Report*.

Implementation of the Plan’s recommendations will be divided into two categories. The first category includes short-range recommendations that can be implemented immediately, address the near-term needs of the existing residents and City staff, or are actions that should be undertaken to renovate existing facilities. The second category includes long-range improvements that are visionary in order to address population growth, enhance the parks system, and meet the projected future needs of City staff.

Planning Time Frame

The City of Sugar Land’s PROSMP is intended to be a 10-year document addressing the time frame from the year 2018 to 2028. The most specific recommendations will be provided for the first six years. Guiding recommendations will be provided for the years seven through 10 and should be reevaluated periodically. Furthermore, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) suggests that the PROSMP should be updated after a five-year period, or sooner if special opportunities or developments occur that significantly alter the parks and recreation needs of the community.

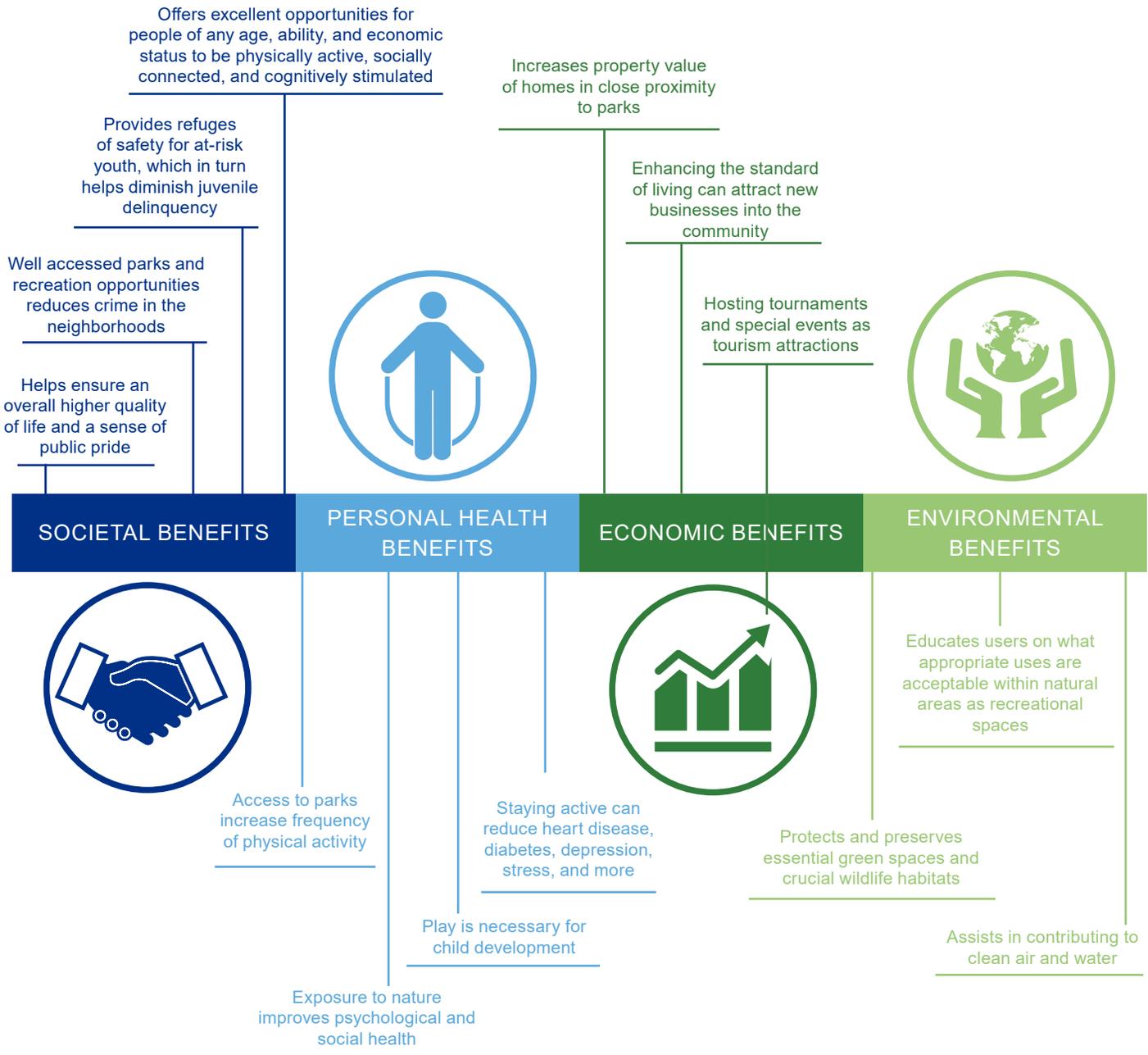
The following steps are recommended when reviewing and periodically updating this Plan:

- Above and beyond the City’s current practice of presenting a Master Plan Annual Report to City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Sugar Land Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) staff should review Plan progress and successes with the Parks, Art, Recreation, Culture, and Streetscapes (PARCS) Board.
- Provide opportunities for public involvement through citizen meetings, interviews, and workshops.

Benefits of Park, Trail, and Open Space Planning

There are numerous benefits provided by a superior parks and recreation system. A high quality and well-structured system can provide residents a healthier environment in which to live; improve the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of children and adults; provide access to natural resources; and foster a sense of pride in the community. Additional benefits of community access to parks and recreation are detailed below in Figure 1.2, *Benefits of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*.

Figure 1.2, Benefits of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space



City, State, and National Park and Recreation Trends

Trends fluctuate and cycle over the years. As park and recreation trends change, so does the quality-of-life activities and amenities most sought out by residents. Quality of life is dependent upon several key components, such as employment opportunities, the housing market, access to desirable schools, the amount of green space in a community, and the variety of amenities and recreational activities that are available. People tend to pursue activities that provide recreation; ease of use; convenience; and improve mental, physical, and emotional health. With that in mind, it is vital to understand today's regional, statewide, and national trends related to parks and recreation. The trends examined in Figure 1.3, *Park and Recreation Trends*, are projected to last into the immediate future and be relevant for the duration of this PROSMP.

Figure 1.3, Park and Recreation Trends



¹ Singh, S. (2014, May 12). The 10 Social And Tech Trends That Could Shape The Next Decade. Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/sarwantsingh/2014/05/12/the-top-10-mega-trends-of-the-decade/#472cbb8e570a>

Figure 1.3, Park and Recreation Trends (cont.)



¹ Amselle, N. (2016, August 01). Pokémon Go and What It Means for Parks. Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2016/August/Pokémon-Go-and-What-It-Means-for-Parks/>

Figure 1.3, Park and Recreation Trends (cont.)



1 Texas Parks and Wildlife, "2012 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan."

2 Lyamba, N. (2012, June 04). Splash Pads Fun, Cheap Alternative to Public Pools. Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148>

3 Madren, C. (2014, February 01). A Sporting Shift | Parks & Recreation Magazine. Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2014/February/A-Sporting-Shift/>

4 Study shows major drop in American youth sports participation. (2015, August 11). Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.si.com/more-sports/2015/08/11/american-youth-sports-participation-drop-decline-statistics-study>

Figure 1.3, Park and Recreation Trends (cont.)



1 Outdoor Foundation, "Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016," <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2016Topline.pdf>

2 Ibid.

3 Fuehrer, Dan and Scott Douglas, "2 Charts Show Growth of Non-Traditional Races," *Runner's World*, 29 April 2014, Accessed 28 Sept 2016, <<http://www.runnersworld.com/newswire/2-charts-show-growth-of-non-traditional-races>>

4 Madren, C. (2014, February 01). A Sporting Shift | *Parks & Recreation Magazine*. Retrieved August 29, 2016, from <http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2014/February/A-Sporting-Shift/>

Sugar Land Parks and Recreation Department Role

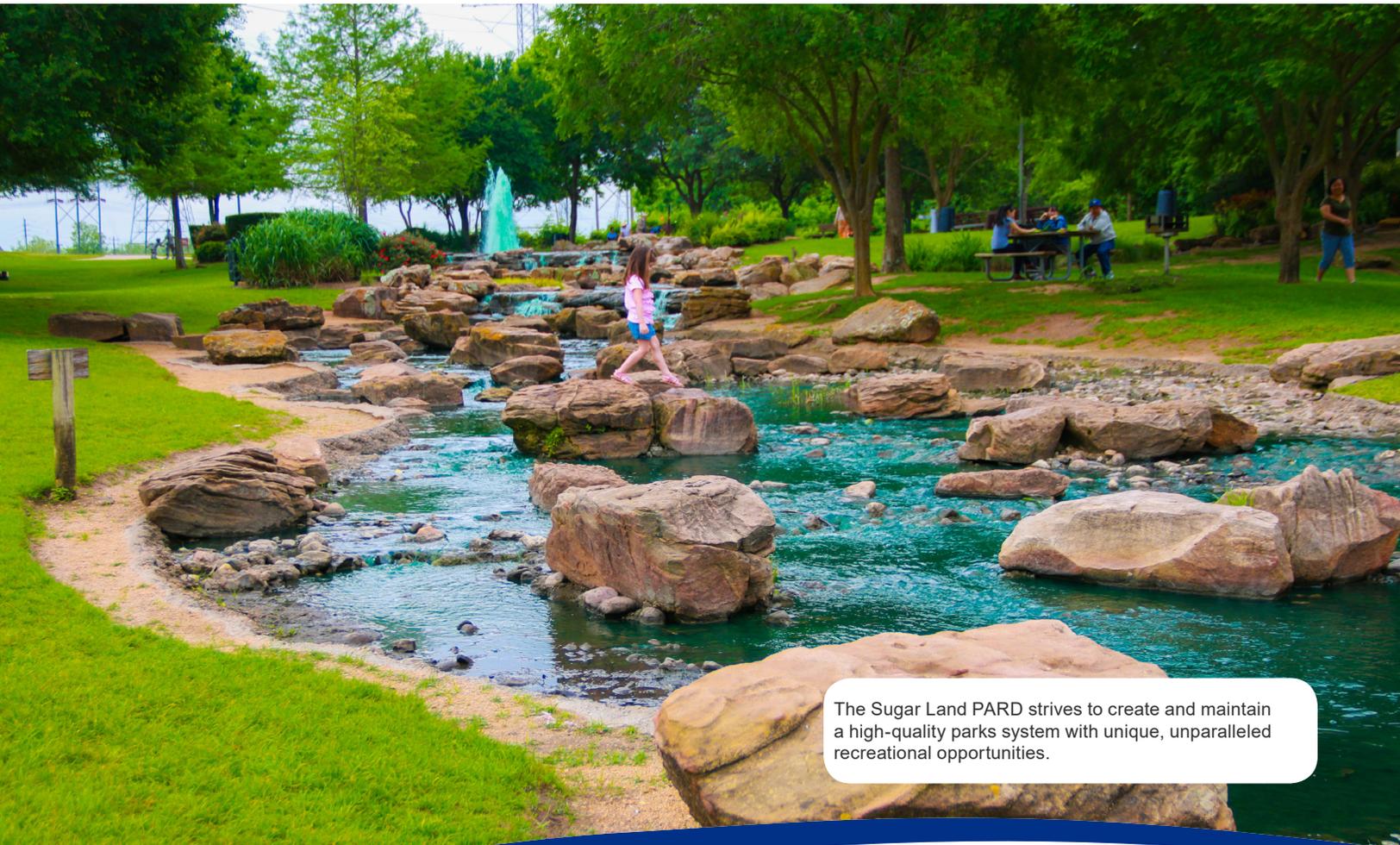
The City of Sugar Land Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is the primary governmental entity that provides parks and recreational facilities for the citizens of Sugar Land. Additional recreational facilities are provided to residents through a large number of homeowner associations, multiple private country clubs, the Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD), and Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (LCISD).

The implementation of this PROSMP will be led primarily by the City of Sugar Land. However, everyone in the City has a vested interest in ensuring that Sugar Land residents are provided with unparalleled parks and recreational opportunities. This includes:

- All governmental entities, including the City of Sugar Land, Fort Bend County, FBISD, LCISD, and other advisory group entities.

- The business community in Sugar Land, including property owners, developers, commercial entities, and others.

- Homeowner associations



The Sugar Land PARD strives to create and maintain a high-quality parks system with unique, unparalleled recreational opportunities.

Planning Area

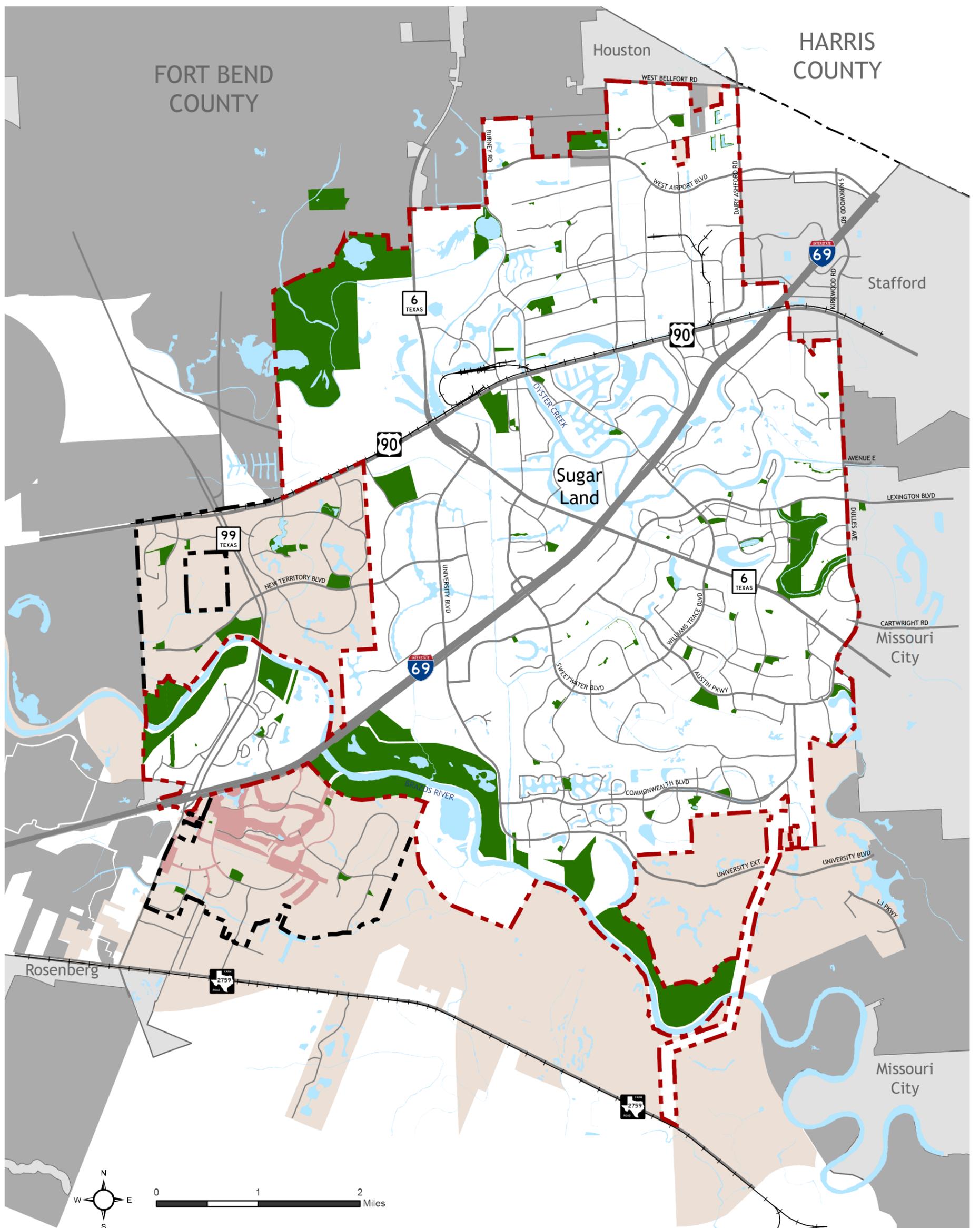
As of 2016, the City of Sugar Land has 36.43 square miles within its City limits, 0.51 square miles within its limited-purpose annexation area, and an additional 19.05 square miles within its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Considering the annexation of Greatwood and New Territory, and eventual build out of the City to include the remainder of the ETJ, the PROSMP will analyze the park, recreation, and open space needs of the City of Sugar Land, its limited-purpose annexation area, and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The recommendations of the Plan may include the land area within all of these areas (see Map 1.1, *Planning Area*).

"The measure of any great civilization is its cities; a city's greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces, its parks and squares."

- John Ruskin

An aerial photograph showing a wide, muddy-brown river winding through a lush green landscape. The river is flanked by dense trees and grassy banks. In the background, a residential area with houses and a large open field are visible under a hazy sky. A small white water tower stands in the distance.

The PROSMP will cover the City limits and land within the City's ETJ.



Map 1.1, Planning Area

Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
|  City Parks (City and HOA) |  Nearby City ETJs |
|  Sugar Land City Limits |  Counties |
|  City Limits 2018 |  Lakes, Streams, Creeks |
|  Sugar Land Limited Purpose Annexation (2017) |  Major Roads |
|  Nearby City Limits |  Minor Roads |
|  Sugar Land ETJ |  Railroads |

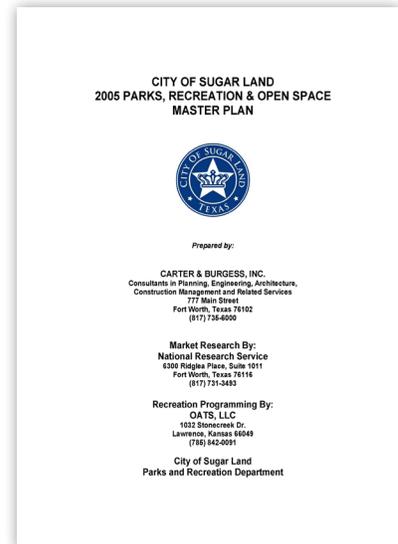
Previous Planning Efforts in the City of Sugar Land

A variety of planning efforts previously completed by the City have contributed to the current development of the park and recreation system. Through analysis of these plans, a background understanding of what led to City decisions is gained as well as further guidance for planning for the future. The plans below will be reviewed to determine their key goals and objectives, status of key recommendations, and what studies have been completed by other recreation providers which may impact this Plan. Additional plans which are not summarized below, but still contributed to parks and recreation in Sugar Land and the surrounding region include the 2015 Fort Bend County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan and the Imperial Park Master Plan.

2005 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

The City of Sugar Land developed its first Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan in 1996. Later in 2005, the plan was completely updated. The 2005 plan highlighted the desire to enhance the Sugar Land community's trust through increased clarity, develop Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) policies and protocols, and maximize available community resources. A key action in the 2005 Master Plan was the development of facility standards which were used as a guide for future planning of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Sugar Land. These standards brought facility deficiencies to the forefront after looking at future population estimates. The Master Plan, with the help of surveys, inventory, program and standard analysis, and demographics compiled information and used the data to develop a needs and recommendations assessment for indoor and outdoor facilities and the community. Recommendations addressing the identified needs were categorized into three levels of priority (i.e., low, medium, or high). A 10-year Action Plan was developed providing guidance as to when each action should be completed. Some of the higher priority actions included:

- Recreation Center;
- Trails and a Trails Master Plan Update;
- Land acquisition along the Brazos River, Gannoway Lake, and other properties;
- Additional picnic areas and pavilions;
- Upgraded and new playgrounds;
- Youth teen center;
- Special events/festival site;
- Water playgrounds;
- Aquatic complex, and
- Senior Center.



City of Sugar Land 2005 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan



The Imperial Park Recreation Center is an example of an implemented project stemming from the 2005 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan.

Sugar Land Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan – 5-Year Periodic Update (2011)

In 2011, the City of Sugar Land completed the first update to the 2005 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. It was a staff-led update which compiled an up-to-date inventory of existing facilities, incorporated new vision and goal direction from the City’s Comprehensive Plan, and reevaluated the City’s parks and recreation needs. The plan also acknowledged the accomplishments since the original plan was adopted – one of the greatest being system expansion. Indeed, over the previous 5 years, the City had achieved a majority of its high priority accomplishments, including over 400 acres of new land acquisition, including:

- Greatwood Development (135 acres);
- River Park Development (183 acres);
- Gannoway Lake Park (23.5 acres);
- University of Houston Lease Tract (52 acres);
- Settlers Way Park (5 acres);
- Mesquite Park (2.44 acres);
- Brazos River Parkland (16.9 acres);
- Telfair Development (65 acres); and
- Riverstone Development (293 acres).

The City also accomplished constructing its first indoor recreation / teen center (i.e., the Imperial Park Recreation Center), which was Sugar Land’s first and sixth highest priorities for indoor facilities. The Senior Center, the next highest indoor priority, was completed in 2007, and nearly tripled the City’s recreation programming space (see Figure 1.4, *Representative 2005-2016 Accomplishments*).

The City’s outdoor facilities also saw several improvements in conformance with their identified highest outdoor priorities. In 2005, trails were identified as the highest priority need. By 2011, the City had constructed one mile of hard trails and four miles of natural surface trail. They had also developed a Hike and Bike Master Plan in 2007, which was then updated as the Sugar Land Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan in 2013. This resulted in numerous miles of various hike and bike trail projects being included in the City’s Capital Improvements Program.

There have been a number of additional accomplishments since 2011. Key successes during this time include:

- T. E. Harman Center renovation and expansion for seniors;
- Eldridge Park Trail extension;
- Imperial Park Trail;

Figure 1.4, Representative 2005-2016 Accomplishments

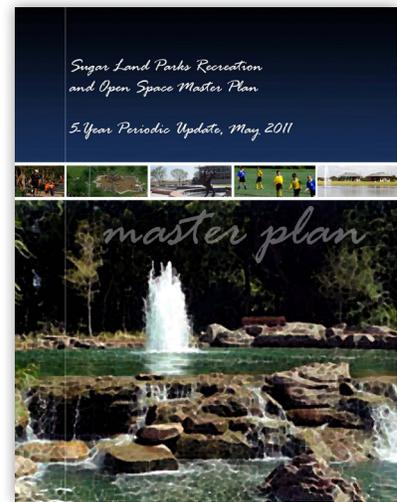


- Universally Accessible Playground at First Colony Park;
- Settlers Way Park Improvements (trail, restroom, parking, fitness equipment);
- Playground Renovations at Covington West, City Park, Lost Creek, Ron Slockett, & Highlands;
- Brazos River Park development;
- Festival Site development;
- Public Art donations at Oyster Creek Park and Memorial Park;
- Veterans Memorial at Memorial Park;
- Canoe/Kayak Launch on Brazos River;
- Land acquisition of parkland in Telfair; and
- Dog Park (“Pawm Springs”)

In general, the City’s 2011 priorities remained the same, including:

- Expanding the new Recreation Center from 17,000 square feet to 80,000 square feet;
- Adding 18 miles of new trails (9 hard surface; 9 natural surface);
- Increasing the amount of open space/natural areas;
- Continuing improvement to the City’s playgrounds;
- Adding a new small amphitheater;
- Developing a special events/festival facility;
- Adding a second water playground;
- Developing an aquatic complex; and
- Expanding the senior center.

As clearly illustrated by the successes since 2005, the City has made great progress in its effort to provide a high-quality, diversified parks and recreation system for its residents and visitors. Over the years the City has received recognition from a variety of organizations for its parks, recreation, and City events and was presented with over 40 awards (see Figure 1.5, *Representative 2005-2016 Awards*). A sampling of the numerous awards received include the 2015 Texas Festival and Events Association (TFEA) 1st Place Best Children’s Program for KidsFish, 2014 Texas Recreation and Parks Society (TRAPS) Gold Medal Award Winner for Best New Event, 2012 TRAPS Arts and Humanities Award for “Bernar Venet Sculpture Garden at Oyster Creek Park,” 2010 Trees for Houston Arbor Day Award, and 2008 Texas Trails Network Tales of Texas Design Award for Oyster Creek Trail.



Sugar Land Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan – 5-Year Periodic Update

Figure 1.5, Representative 2005-2016 Awards

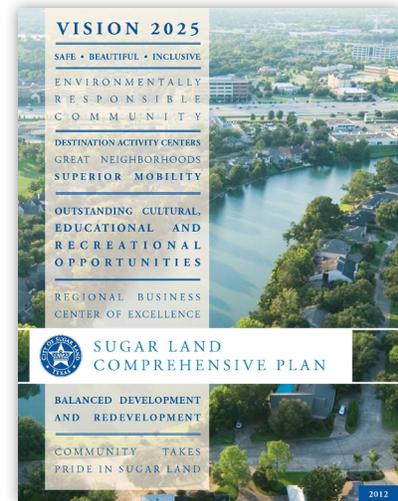


2012 Comprehensive Plan

In 2012, the City adopted updates to chapters one through five of its Comprehensive Plan. In general, the Comprehensive Plan prepares the City for future development or redevelopment. It is a broad based comprehensive overview and assessment of all aspects (from parks and recreation to transportation) of the entire City. In Sugar Land, the plan provides an overarching framework for addressing community-wide needs. It is comprised of base information, vision statements, and a set of more refined master plans which provide more specific information regarding implementation (e.g., this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan). In this regard, the Comprehensive Plan guides the direction of the specific master plan. In turn, the specific master plan feeds back into the overall community vision.

The City is still working through its update of Chapter 6, *Land Use Plan*, of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Comprehensive Plan did provide guidance to this Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) planning effort as to which overall citywide goals should be further defined. In particular, this PROSMP planning effort is tasked with defining how parks and recreation further the following goals (see Figure 1.6, *2012 Parks and Recreation Related Comprehensive Plan Goals and Summarized Objectives*):

- Goal B: Beautiful Community;
- Goal D: Environmentally Responsible Community;
- Goal E. Destination Activity Center;
- Goal F: Great Neighborhoods;
- Goal H: Outstanding Cultural Arts, Education, and Recreational Opportunities.



Sugar Land Comprehensive Plan - 2012



Oyster Creek Park is a representative example of how the City's parks and recreation resources contribute to improving Sugar Land as a beautiful community.

Figure 1.6, 2012 Parks and Recreation Related Comprehensive Plan Goals and Summarized Objectives



Goal B: Beautiful Community

Sugar Land will remain a community with attractive, well-designed, and well-maintained public buildings and spaces, commercial and residential areas, and lakes and waterways.



Goal D: Environmentally Responsible Community

The City will be an exemplary environmentally responsible community including open green spaces, effective stormwater management, water conservation, reduced energy conservation, a state-of-the-art recycling system, environmentally sustainable development, and improved air quality.



Goal E: Destination Activity Center

The City will include a variety of unique destination activity centers such as Town Center, Brazos River Park, Entertainment District, and the “Imperial” Area. These areas will create positive community focal points and regional destinations which will include quality, pedestrian-friendly features, community gathering spaces, and cultural and entertainment events.



Goal F: Great Neighborhoods

The City’s neighborhoods will have strong identities, include a high percentage of owner-occupied, well-maintained homes, include effective home owner and neighborhood associations, include high quality active and passive parks, and encourage residents to stay involved and take responsibility for making their neighborhood a great place to live.



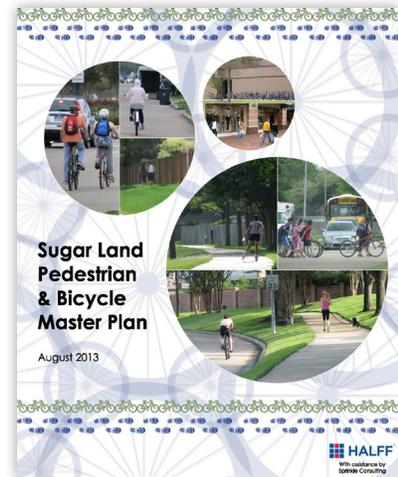
Goal H: Outstanding Cultural Arts, Educational and Recreational Opportunities

The City will include a variety of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities such as Brazos River Park and the Performing Arts Center as regional destinations; varying cultural programs; public art; major museums; sport venues; a major university; recreational programming for the whole community; and a strong relationship between the City and schools, colleges, and universities.

2013 Sugar Land Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan

In 2013, the City adopted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which identified a citywide network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and accompanying support programs. The 2013 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan replaces the 2007 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan and expands the planned recreational network to focus on both recreational and non-recreational trips. Similar to other more refined master plans, the 2013 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan incorporated guidance from the 2012 Comprehensive Plan, the original 2007 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan, and other City policy documents. Additionally, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan incorporates extensive public input received throughout the planning process, including direction from a citizen-member Pedestrian and Bicycle Task Force.

While implementation of the on- and off-street trail network is a high priority for the City and an essential component of both transportation and recreation use, its implementation action plan is contained in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. As such, this Plan will highlight important elements of trail connectivity to and from parks, but will predominantly focus on trail recommendations within parks.



2013 Sugar Land Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan

2014 Brazos River Recreation Master Plan – Fort Bend Green

In 2013, Fort Bend Green, a 501 (c)3 non-profit coordinated representatives from local government, interested organizations, and the general public to work collaboratively on a recreation plan for the Brazos River Corridor. The result was the 2014 Brazos River Recreation Master Plan, which identified first steps necessary to achieve the long-term development of an extensive river recreation corridor throughout Fort Bend County.

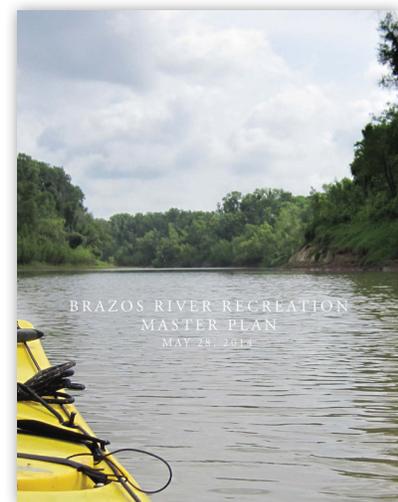
The plan identified the following vision and plan goals.

“The natural ecosystems of the Brazos River are conserved and appreciated by the community at large. The relationship of the Fort Bend community to the Brazos River is enhanced by safe public access. Land trails, paddle trails and parks are connected in a distinguished Brazos River greenway system.” The vision will be accomplished through the following three goals:

Assuring that improvements for public use respect wildlife habitat and private lands.

Facilitating public-private partnerships for maximizing shared economic, social and environmental benefits.

Promoting river-oriented facilities and activities that encourage community and regional involvement.

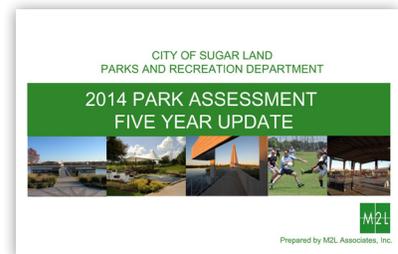


2014 Brazos River Recreation Master Plan

Indeed, the Brazos River is a very important asset and resource for Sugar Land and its residents. As such, the City has continually prioritized its protection and development, including preparation of the Brazos River Park Land Acquisition and Master Plan; development of the Sugar Land Memorial Park, Justin P. Brindley Bike Trail, Pawm Springs Dog Park, and most recently the special events and festival site in Brazos River Park. Responding to continued community support, this Plan identifies further recommendations for this great community asset.

2014 Park Assessment Five Year Update

In 2007, M2L Associates Inc. completed an assessment of Sugar Land’s parks to identify and prioritize upgrades, enhancements, and repairs needed in the parks system. In 2014, M2L Associates Inc. performed a five-year update to the assessment. The report reviewed maintenance and capital deficiencies within City-owned community and neighborhood parks, with a focus on capital projects. Cost estimates were included for all the recommended improvements. Implementation of recommended improvements was prioritized into three categories; immediate need, a need within the next several years, or a need in five years or more. The three community parks needing the greatest amount of financial investment were First Colony Park, City Park, and Eldridge Park, respectively. The three neighborhood parks needing the greatest financial investment were River Park Splashpad and Trail, Mesquite Park, and Covington Woods Park, respectively.



2014 Park Assessment Five Year Update



The 2014 Park Assessment Five Year Update identified that the greatest amount of financial investment was needed in First Colony Park.

Individual Park Master Plans

Beyond citywide master plans, the City has also prepared more refined individual park master plans. These provide comprehensive site assessments and focused recommendations about specific projects and programs. The following pages include summaries of three of these individual park master plans.

Gannoway Lake Park

In 2009, the City adopted the Gannoway Lake Park Master Plan. In 2015, a preliminary engineering report (PER) was completed assessing the opportunity and feasibility for developing a nature park capitalizing on the property's unique natural assets. As set out in the original master plan and the updated PER, the site is proposed to include core activities of hiking, bicycling, paddling, outdoor education, wildlife observation, fishing, nature-play, and picnicking. When considering potential off-site connections to Cullinan Park and another undeveloped park to the south, this property could become one element of an unparalleled urban habitat corridor and recreational amenity.



Gannoway Lake is one of the key assets found in Gannoway Lake Park.



As part of the 2015 preliminary engineering report (PER) done on Gannoway Lake Park, an updated site plan was developed.

Design: Asakura Robinson

Cullinan Park

The Joseph S. & Lucie H. Cullinan Park was formed in 1989 when the City of Houston and Houston Parks Board acquired 754 acres from the Nina Cullinan Estate. The vision was to create a regionally serving “place of beauty and peacefulness in the city.” In 1991, an initial master plan was created followed by some preliminary development in 1995. In 2016, the City of Sugar Land annexed the park by signing a historic agreement with Cullinan Park Conservancy, the City of Houston, and the Houston Parks Board. As part of the agreement, the City of Sugar Land took over operation and maintenance of the park. Future planned improvements include trails and boardwalks which provide greater access to the area’s existing lakes and wetlands. The improvements also include canoe and kayak launches into Oyster Creek, picnic pavilions, benches, and interpretative signage. The implementation time frame for the proposed improvements was started by a \$500,000 contribution by the Cullinan Park Conservancy, which was a portion of the proposed commitments of \$1 million from The George Foundation and \$250,000 from the Wortham Foundation. Overall, the Cullinan Park Conservancy has committed to raising \$5 million within the first five years and \$10 million within 10 years.



Additional boardwalks throughout Cullinan Park can expand the pedestrian access throughout the site while minimizing disturbance to natural plants and wildlife.



Design: Original:
Vernon G. Henry
Assoc. (1991); update:
Siglo Group (2011)

In 2011, an updated master plan was developed to identify proposed improvements to Cullinan Park.

Brazos River Park Master Plan

The Brazos River is an important natural asset and local and regional amenity for Sugar Land. The City has nine miles of Brazos River frontage and approximately 3,600 acres of floodway property within its boundaries. In 1997, a preliminary roadmap was identified for land acquisition and future park development.

Currently, the City has acquired over 1,000 acres of land and have developed a series of parks, trails, and open spaces, including Memorial Park, Canoe Launch, Brazos River Park Phase II, and a new special events / festival site. The City is also in the process of developing the Middle Lake with potential water-based recreation, disc golf course and natural trails.

Moving forward, there is an opportunity to create a contiguous trail system along the City's entire nine-mile stretch of river and connect regionally to adjacent cities. As this corridor continues to develop over time, more substantial entry and access points could be created in New Territory, Greatwood, and Riverstone subdivisions truly creating an accessible and connected system.



Memorial Park currently includes recreation opportunities for the whole family.

