



CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORKSHOP/SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, July 27, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Bauer Community Center | 2300 Highway 35 North, Port Lavaca, Texas 77979

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

The following item will be addressed at this or any other meeting of the city council upon the request of the mayor, any member(s) of council and/or the city attorney:

Announcement by the mayor that council will retire into closed session for consultation with city attorney on matters in which the duty of the attorney to the city council under the Texas disciplinary rules of professional conduct of the state bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the open meetings act (title 5, chapter 551, section 551.071(2) of the Texas government code).

(All matters listed under the consent agenda item are routine by the city council and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately.)

AGENDA

Council will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary.

MEETING PROCEDURE

Public notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, will conduct a **Joint Workshop Session with the Recreation and Parks Board**, followed by a **City Council Special Meeting**, on Monday, July 27, 2026 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Bauer Community Center (Side Meeting Rooms), 2300 Highway 35 North, Port Lavaca, Texas to consider the items listed.

[After publication, any information in a council packet is subject to change during the meeting]

The meeting will also be available via the video conferencing application "Zoom",

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85723318546?pwd=BaWIfAAjadZM8nEGucJmJs2W7X01uw.1>

Meeting ID: 857 2331 8546

Passcode: 588854

One Tap Mobile

+13462487799,,85723318546#,,,588854# US (Houston)

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

JOINT CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP**I. ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER****II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION****III. MEETING SAFETY BRIEFING (911 __, AED __, EVAC __, CPR __, SAFETY __)****IV. REVIEW OF MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT**

- **Our Vision**

The Mayor and the City Council envision a friendly town on Lavaca Bay where economic and recreational opportunities abound, providing for a wonderful quality of life for both citizens and tourists, rich in history and looking toward a vibrant future

- **Our Mission**

Our mission is to make Port Lavaca a desirable place to live through high-quality services, responsible use of public resources, and a progressive approach to community development. With enthusiasm, integrity, and vision, we will maintain a safe environment and continually improve the quality of life for all citizens.

V. PRESENTATION(S)**VI. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

(Limited to 3 minutes per individual unless permission to speak longer is received in advance. You may make public comments as you would at a meeting by logging on with your computer and using "Join Zoom Meeting" information on first page of this agenda).

VII. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION - Council will discuss the following items

1. Discuss presentation by LJA Architects regarding the Port Lavaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Presenter is Jody Weaver

VIII. ADJOURN WORKSHOP

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**IX. CALL TO ORDER****X. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

(Limited to 3 minutes per individual unless permission to speak longer is received in advance. You may make public comments as you would at a meeting by logging on with your computer and using "Join Zoom Meeting" information on first page of this agenda).

XI. ACTION ITEMS - Council will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary

1. Announcement by Mayor that City Council will retire into closed session:
 - For consultation with City Attorney concerning contemplated or pending litigation in accordance with Title 5, CH 551, Section 551.071(1) of the Texas Government Code.
2. Return to Open Session and take any action deemed necessary with regard to matters in closed session. Presenter is Luis De La Garza

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CITY MANAGER**XIII. ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING**

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING NOTICE

This is to certify that the foregoing notice of a Joint Workshop Session of the City Council of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, and the Recreation and Parks Board, followed by a City Council Special Meeting to be held on **Monday, July 27, 2026, beginning at 5:30 p.m.**, was posted at City Hall in a location readily accessible to the public at **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 2026.**

Lorena Perez-Diaz, Assistant *City Secretary*

ADA NOTICE

The Port Lavaca City Hall and Council Chambers are wheelchair accessible. Access to the building is available at the primary north entrance facing Mahan Street. Special parking spaces are located in the Mahan Street parking area. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Port Lavaca will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending meetings. To better serve you, requests should be received 24 hours prior to the meetings. Please contact City Secretary Mandy Grant at (361) 552-9793 Ext. 230 for assistance.

COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Discuss presentation by LJA Architects regarding the Port Lavaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Presenter is Jody Weaver

INFORMATION:



Item 1.



JULY 2026

LJA PLANNING & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



FROM BAY TO BACKYARD

OUR PARKS, RECREATION, & TRAILS MASTER PLAN



CITY OF
PORT LAVACA
TEXAS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION

Luis De La Garza	Mayor
Jack Whitlow	Former Mayor
Daniel Aguirre	City Council District 1
Tim Dent	City Council District 2
Sissy Rigby	City Council District 3
Rosie Padron	City Council District 4
Rose Bland-Stewart	City Council District 5
Justin Burke	City Council District 6
Mac Sistrunk	Recreation and Parks Board Chair
Olga Szela	Recreation and Parks Board Vice Chair
Gregory Falcon	Recreation and Parks Board Member
Mary Lou Tharling	Recreation and Parks Board Member
Socorro Cantu	Recreation and Parks Board Member
Bill Reagan	Recreation and Parks Board Member
Jody Weaver, PE	City Manager
Wayne Shaffer	Public Works Director
Tania French	Events and Marketing Coordinator

CONSULTANT TEAM

Ernesto Alfaro, AICP	Project Manager
Katy Harris, AICP	Project Manager
Corry McClellan, AICP	Associate Project Manager
Alexandra Diaz	Associate Project Manager
Laura Cuervo	Associate Planner
Brissa Estrada	Associate Planner
Kailey DeLuca	Associate Planner
Francisco Garcia	Landscape Designer

Thank you to the countless residents who participated in a community event, emailed, took a survey, colored a picture, or otherwise contributed to this Plan!

Item 1.



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Item 1.

LETTER FROM OUR CITY MANAGER



Jody Weaver, PE- Port Lavaca City Manager

Item 1.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situated along the scenic shores of Lavaca Bay, Port Lavaca's parks, recreation, and trail system plays a vital role in shaping the community's coastal identity, quality of life, and economic vitality. Rooted in a resilient history and supported by a growing, business-friendly community, Port Lavaca's public spaces provide essential access to nature, outdoor recreation, and gathering places that serve residents, attract visitors, and support tourism, workforce retention, and long-term sustainable growth along the Texas Gulf Coast.

Initiated in May 2024, the Port Lavaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan serves as a comprehensive, long-range guide for efficiently growing and maintaining the City's parks, recreation areas, and trail network. The Plan establishes a framework to guide future improvements, prioritize capital investments, and inform operational and budgetary decisions. This will help ensure that the community's vision for a connected, accessible, and high-quality parks and recreation system can be realized.

The mission of the Parks & Recreation Department is to serve both residents and visitors by providing the highest standard of parks and leisure services in a safe, efficient, and professional manner. The department is responsible for operations and maintenance tasks including mowing, landscaping, park upkeep, playground equipment inspections, custodial duties, maintenance of the community swimming pool, and the construction of new facilities and amenities. Proactive planning is essential in park system management.

This Master Plan evaluates existing conditions, identifies gaps in service, and anticipates future recreational needs to ensure that park and trail investments keep pace with population changes, economic development, and environmental challenges. Particular emphasis is placed on coastal resilience, access to nature, and efficient, demand-based distribution of recreational amenities throughout the community.

Placemaking is also a central theme throughout the Plan. By enhancing parks and waterfront spaces, expanding recreational programs, and supporting community events, Port Lavaca can strengthen its civic identity and reinforce parks as vibrant community hubs. At the same time, strategic investment in natural resource protection and coastal preservation will safeguard the environmental assets that define the region and sustain the community for future generations.

The Master Plan is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the community's vision and guiding principles for parks, recreation, and trails. Chapter 2 evaluates the City's parks and facilities, including level of service and park inventory analysis. Chapter 3 focuses on trails and connectivity, emphasizing pedestrian access and system-wide integration. Chapter 4 explores events, programs, and placemaking as tools to activate public spaces and strengthen community life. Chapter 5 presents an actionable implementation plan that outlines recommended projects, priorities, phasing, and partnerships to guide decision-making over time.

Collectively, the Port Lavaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan provides a roadmap for enhancing quality of life, preserving natural landscapes, strengthening community identity, expanding connectivity, and supporting economic vitality through recreation and tourism. Through thoughtful planning and strategic investment, Port Lavaca's parks and recreation system will continue to serve as a cornerstone of a vibrant, resilient coastal community.

Welcome To

Item 1.

INTRODUCTION & PLAN CONTEXT

01



PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

Item 1.

Parks and trails play vital roles in the community. Play facilities promote healthy childhood development, creativity, and social skills through safe, unstructured play. Gathering spaces foster social connection, civic life, and a shared sense of community through events and informal interaction. Passive recreation to supports mental health, stress reduction, and overall well-being. Active recreation promotes physical health, reduce chronic disease, and provide accessible opportunities for movement and sport. Natural spaces preserve ecosystems, improve environmental quality, and connect people to the natural world.

Port Lavaca's current parks and recreation system is comprised of eight City parks that feature a wide variety of public amenities: playscapes, picnic areas, trails, beach access, a public pool, and a myriad of other public facilities. By leveraging these assets and prioritizing strategic investment and collaboration, Port Lavaca is strengthening a growing parks system that reflects the community's values, supports a high quality of life, celebrates the city's natural beauty, and fosters inclusive spaces for all.

The Port Lavaca Parks & Recreation Master Plan serves as a comprehensive guide for enhancing, expanding, and shaping the future of the City's parks, recreation areas, and trail networks. Initiated in May 2024, the Plan provides a clear framework to guide future improvements, prioritize investments, and inform budgetary decisions, ensuring that the community's vision for a well-connected, accessible, and resilient parks and recreation system become a reality.

As Port Lavaca continues to evolve, proactive planning is essential. This Plan ensures that the City's parks and recreation system offerings not only meet current needs but also anticipate and respond to future demands, positioning Port Lavaca for a vibrant, resilient future. Placemaking lies at the heart of this Plan. By enhancing public spaces, expanding recreational programs, and fostering community events, Port Lavaca can strengthen its unique identity and quality of life. At the same time, strategic investment in coastal preservation will protect the natural assets that define the region, ensuring that Port Lavaca's beauty and character endure for generations to come.

The primary objectives of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan are to:

- » Enhance the quality of life for all residents by providing exceptional recreational opportunities and green spaces.
- » Preserve and protect the natural landscape, while guiding growth for community resilience.
- » Strengthen community identity and civic pride through investment in parks, trails, and recreational amenities.
- » Expand connectivity and access through trails and pedestrian infrastructure.
- » Strengthen economic vitality and growth through recreational tourism, strategic partnerships, and innovation.



Port Lavaca Lighthouse Beach Park



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Item 1.

Physical features, including natural and man-made barriers, play a key role in determining the suitability of sites for parks and trails. This suitability influences everything from the placement of parks to the layout and design of park spaces.

FLOODPLAIN

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) defines a floodplain as any land area susceptible to inundation by floodwaters. Port Lavaca's flood hazard areas are primarily located along Chocolate Bayou, and Lynn Bayou.

WETLANDS, MARSHES, & BAYOUS

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, or is present at or near the surface of the soil, either year-round or for varying periods of time throughout the year, including during the growing season. Coastal and tidal wetlands are a specific type of wetland closely associated with estuaries where seawater and freshwater mix to create environments with varying salinity levels. Salt marshes are one form of 'blue carbon', the organic carbon captured and stored by the world's coastal and marine ecosystems. Port Lavaca's wetlands and marshes are primarily located along Lighthouse Beach and Harbor of Refuge.

Bayous are slow-moving tributaries that feed into larger bodies of water. The characteristic marshy waters of bayous are commonly found in low-lying coastal areas throughout the Gulf Coast region. Like coastal wetlands, bayous often consist of freshwater, saltwater, or a mix of both, known as brackish water. Port Lavaca's bayous support rich and diverse estuarine ecosystems, provide vital wildlife habitat, and offer valuable recreational opportunities.

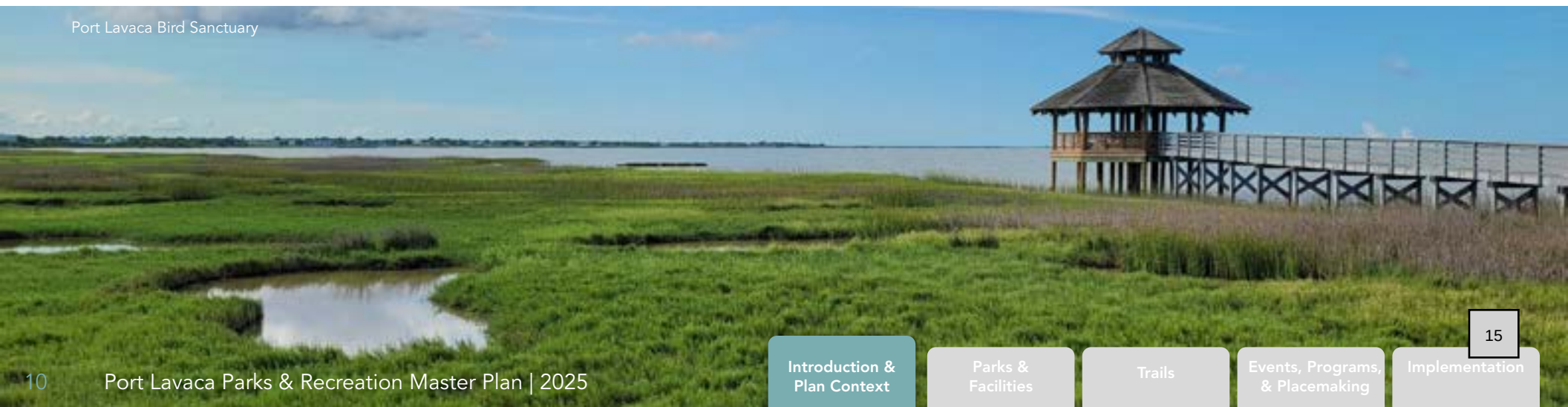
RAILROAD

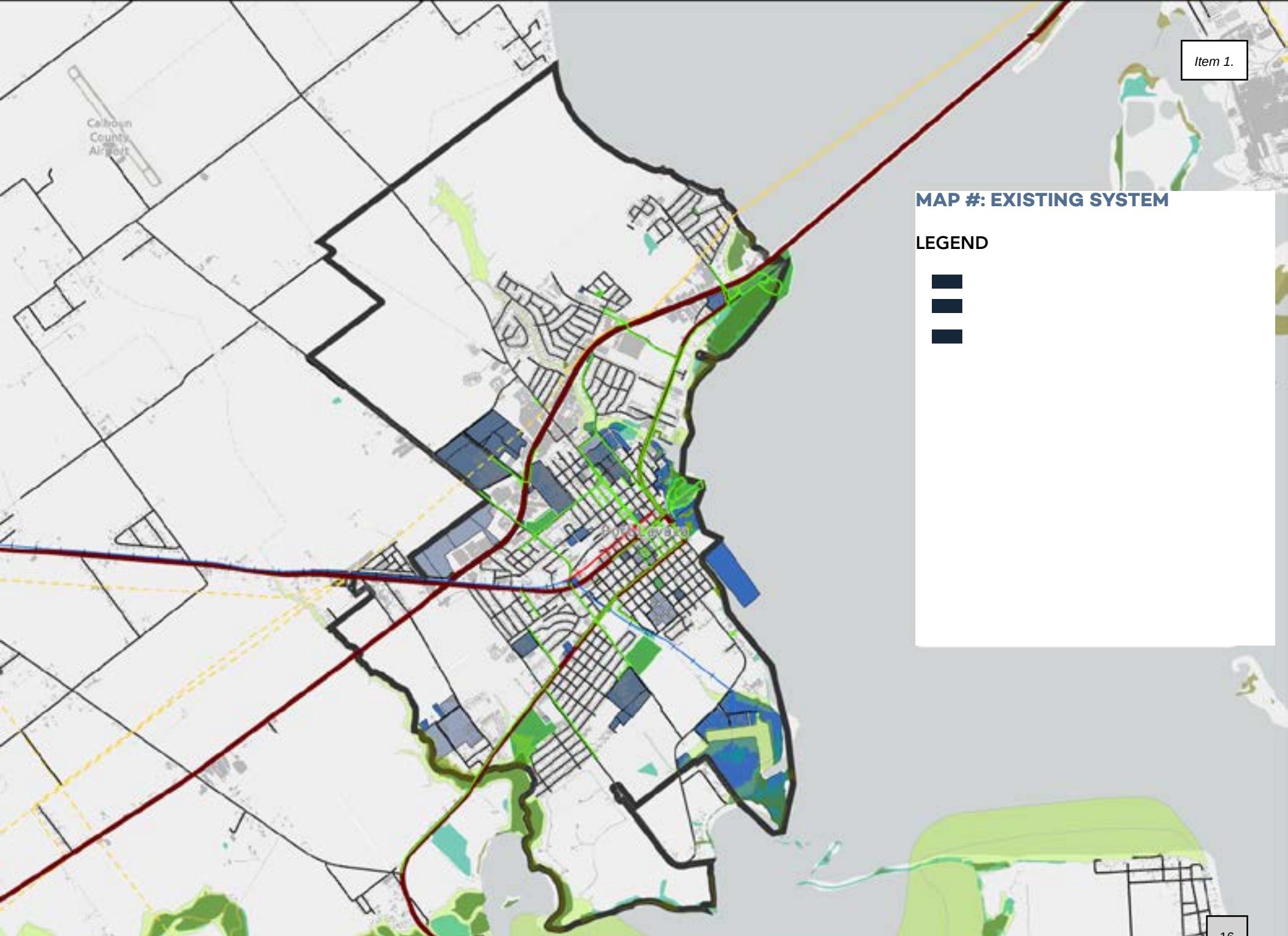
An active Union Pacific Railroad line bisects the city north to south along US 87, splitting at Half League Road. While the southern portion remains technically active, it is currently unused due to a washed-out bridge at Virginia Street/ 1090. The northern fork, however, is permanently inactive and terminates at the historic depot within the Waterfront District.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Impervious surfaces (roads, roofs, parking lots) act as an indirect indicator for human development because they directly correlate with population density, economic activity, and urban sprawl.

Port Lavaca Bird Sanctuary





MAP #: EXISTING SYSTEM

LEGEND



PARKS FOR THE PEOPLE OF PORT LAVACA

DEMOGRAPHICS

By recognizing the City’s diverse population, this Plan ensures that parks are inclusive, accessible, and relevant to all users. Anticipating how population dynamics and growth trends may evolve also helps the City prioritize investments that support long-term community health, engagement, and quality of life.

Port Lavaca’s population has remained relatively stable between 11,000 and 12,500 residents for over 30 years.

Port Lavaca is a diverse and multigenerational community. Hispanic residents make up 64 percent of the population, and the City boasts a high Diversity Index of 83.7 (as of 2025), well above the national average.

Nearly one-quarter of residents are children, and the City’s median age of 38 reflects a balanced mix of young families, working professionals, and retirees.



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

- » 11,335: Current population
- » -0.5: Population growth
- » 2.7: Average household size
- » 38: Median age
- » 64,000: Median household income
- » 135,500: Median home value
- » 197,000: Median net worth
- » 24%: Residents under age 18
- » 17%: Residents over age 65

TAPESTRY SEGMENTS

Esri’s Tapestry Segmentation system groups residential areas into segments based on shared demographic, socioeconomic, and lifestyle characteristics - offering a clearer view of how people live, work, and recreate within a community.

RURAL ROOTS

Country-living and self-reliance are core values for this community. Residents place a strong emphasis on outdoor pursuits including hunting, fishing, motorcycling, hiking, camping, and golf, which play a significant role in their lifestyle.

HERITAGE HOMESTEADERS

This community is broadly characterized by traditional rural lifestyles. Residents value family time, embrace outdoor living, and spend much of their free time planning fishing, boating, or camping excursions.

FOUNDATIONAL FAMILIES

Family and the preservation of rich traditions are central to this community’s identity. Residents deeply value time and activities spent with family and friends while carefully managing their budgets and expenses.

RURAL ROOTS

Education & Employment

- » Majority are college educated
- » Employed in professional sectors, self-employed, or retired

Housing

- » Older residents, primarily married couples with no children, living in single-family, owner-occupied homes
- » Older homes with ample acreage
- » Median home value: \$235,000

Lifestyle

- » Physically active
- » Engaged in their community
- » Own a variety of vehicles
- » Access to high-speed internet
- » Technology is viewed as more of a tool than trend
- » Cautious consumers focused on quality and durability
- » Pessimistic economic outlook but comfortable with debt

HERITAGE HOMESTEADERS

Education & Employment

- » Majority have a high school diploma and some college education
- » Employed in manufacturing, construction, or related industries

Housing

- » High homeownership rates
- » 2 in 3 households are married couples
- » Household income just over the national median and net worth is nearly double the national median

Lifestyle

- » Enjoy outdoor activities
- » Typically 2-car households
- » Access to high-speed internet
- » Seek face-to-face contact for routine activities and businesses
- » Cost-conscious consumers loyal to brands they like with a focus on buying American

FOUNDATIONAL FAMILIES

Education & Employment

- » Majority have a high school diploma
- » Employed in skilled positions across the manufacturing, construction, or retail trade sectors

Housing

- » Multi-generational households averaging 3.62 persons per home, living in older, owner-occupied homes
- » More than 1 in 4 households fall below the poverty line

Lifestyle

- » 1- or 2-car households
- » Access to cable television
- » Labor force participation is at 61%
- » Cost-conscious consumers loyal to brands they like with a focus on buying American

KEY TRENDS

- » Even among high-earning households in Port Lavaca, the City's primary demographic groups tend to have less discretionary income compared to similar groups nationally.
- » This low overall discretionary spending suggests that relying solely on sales and property taxes may be insufficient to fund a major revamping of the parks and recreation system.
- » Significant fluctuations in discretionary spending across groups and neighborhoods indicate that some areas may be more adversely affected by gaps in Level of Service (LOS).

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WORKSHOP #1

As part of the 12-month planning process, a Public Workshop was held to gather meaningful input and guide the development of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The event was held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at the Bauer Community Center from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in a come-and-go format. Approximately 50 community members attended and contributed to collaborative and engaging discussions. Participants shared their ideas and priorities at various interactive feedback stations, helping to shape the vision and direction of the Master Plan.

Workshop Goals:

- » Introduce the community to the fundamentals of park master planning
- » Share information about the existing Parks and Recreation System
- » Understand public perspectives on current parks, programs, and facilities
- » Gather input to begin forming a collective community vision for the future

Stations were set up throughout the Community Center offering a mix of informational and hands-on opportunities designed to engage residents of all ages. Bilingual members of the LJA Planning Team were on-site to facilitate discussions, answer questions, and encourage dialogue throughout the evening.



Community Outreach Flyer

Public Workshop (May 20, 2025)





There is a strong local preference for larger parks with diverse offerings, even if the parks are further away.



Jars of the Future

Recreation (36 percent):

Provide fun and engaging opportunities for enjoyment, sightseeing, and/or fitness.

Design (20 percent):

Enhance public spaces to encourage social interaction and beauty through high-quality design to the places that make the City unique.

Nature (18 percent): Design spaces that protect sensitive or important natural areas and features, and integrate low impact / "green" practices.

Community Trends:

- » Additional shade trees or structures within existing parks
- » Residents appreciate larger parks with a range of amenities
- » Community recreational center with amenities for all age groups, such as sports courts and/or a public pool
- » More community events and programming
- » Rentals for kayaks, canoes, and paddle boats, near the water
- » Walking, running, and cycling trails within parks and neighborhoods
- » Splash pads for younger children
- » Free access to Lighthouse Beach for Port Lavaca residents

COMMUNITY “SWOT” ANALYSIS

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify and evaluate existing conditions to develop effective strategies of improvement. This SWOT Analysis is based on community feedback and research identified through the public engagement process.



STRENGTHS

- » Coastline access, particularly the close proximity of downtown Port Lavaca to the shore
- » High-quality playgrounds, walking trails, and park splash pads
- » Quantity of existing parks
- » Strong prior planning efforts up to County level



WEAKNESSES

- » Lack of shade trees and structures which limit summertime enjoyment of parks and playgrounds
- » Lack of continuous, connected, and level trails, sidewalks, and safe pedestrian paths
- » No indoor recreational center
- » Limited maintenance for park facilities, particularly restrooms



OPPORTUNITIES

- » Expand trails and sidewalks to ultimately link parks to schools, the library, and other destinations
- » Develop an indoor recreation center, dog park, and more green spaces
- » Host more community events and explore partnerships for funding
- » Offer more sports facilities like tennis, pickleball, volleyball, and more
- » Promote Port Lavaca’s parks as ecotourism destinations



CHALLENGES/THREATS

- » Limited funding and infrastructure constraints
- » Population decline leading to economic vulnerability and limited resources
- » Natural hazards, including sea-level rise, storm surges, and hurricanes



'My Dream Park' Activity from Public Workshop (May 20, 2025)

ADMINISTRATION

In the early 2000's, the City of Port Lavaca operated a standalone Parks and Recreation Department. However, following the departure of the department's director, the position was not refilled and the department was subsequently consolidated under the Department of Public Works.

Currently, there are no dedicated City staff assigned to manage recreation programming. While the community pool is owned by the City and open to the public, daily operations and staffing are managed by the local YMCA. Public access is limited to the pool itself and does not include other YMCA amenities or programs.

Currently, as the Parks & Recreation Department is rolled into the Public Works team, there are 5 full-time city employees dedicated to parks: 1 park superintendent, 1 foreman, and 3 maintenance workers. During the summer, 1 temporary worker assists the team part-time.

2023 - 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Replaced all Lighthouse Beach metal frame picnic tables with wood.
- » Constructed a bird blind at Lighthouse Beach.
- » Repainted the old bathroom at Bayfront Park.
- » Installed new LED lights at Bayfront Park.
- » Replaced bollards cables at Blackrock.
- » Expanded the nuisance vegetation program with a bi-weekly spraying schedule.
- » Installed a shade structure at Bayfront Park splash pad.
- » Daily park inspections of maintenance and grounds keeping.
- » Constructed a new restroom at Wilson Park.
- » Worked with private partners to expand the Born Learning Trail.
- » Built 1 cabana at the Lighthouse Beach splash pad.
- » Rehabilitated pool plumbing and chlorination system.
- » Installed a new water slide at the community pool.
- » Reconstructed the volleyball court at City Park.

2025-2026 BUDGET OBJECTIVES

- » Install new surveillance cameras where needed.
- » Build 2 to 3 cabanas at the Lighthouse Beach splash pad.
- » Reconstruct the Lighthouse Beach volleyball court.
- » Butterfly Park improvements including lighting, cabanas, and fencing.
- » Add a covered basketball court at Wilson Park.
- » Hire a consultant to apply with the Army Corp of Engineers to connect the Veterans Memorial to Scully's via a boardwalk.

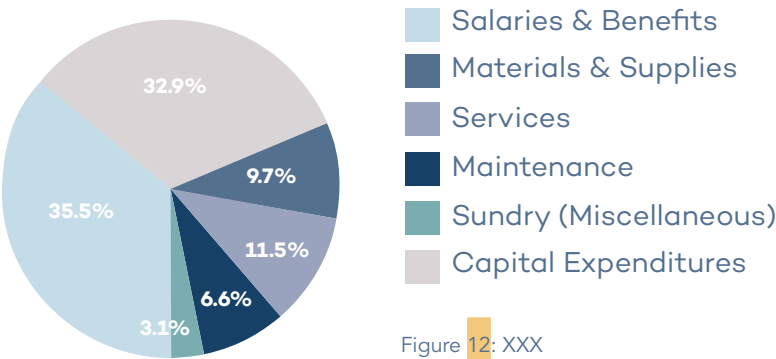


Figure 12: XXX

ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL PLANS + STUDIES

CALHOUN COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

- » Protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, coastal, and barrier areas to reduce erosion
- » Improve public facilities
- » Construct shade structures at public parks
- » Plant drought-resistant plants at public parks and facilities
- » Establish cooling centers at public parks and/or critical public facilities
- » Repair and/or install bulkhead along the coastline
- » Build a pavilion or covers in public areas and public parks
- » Implement erosion mitigation elements at Lighthouse Beach and boat ramp
- » Construct a living shoreline along the wetlands of Lighthouse Beach Park
- » Construct a stormwater relief channel upstream of Lynn Bayou
- » Construct shoreline protection of eastern shorelines of the Harbor of Refuge

TEXAS COASTAL RESILIENCY MASTER PLAN

- » Maintain coastal economic growth
- » Improve community resiliency
- » Grow key knowledge & experience
- » Adapt to changing conditions
- » Address under-represented needs
- » Manage coastal habitats, gulf shorelines, bay shorelines, and watersheds

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

TPWD is one of the largest grant providers for local parks, trails, and recreational facilities in Texas, awarding more than \$30.1 million in local parks grants in 2025. TPWD grant program guidelines outline funding opportunities for parks and trails, recommending sustainability measures, connectivity enhancements, and conservation easements to maximize eligibility. The applicable TPWD priorities are integrated into this Master Plan:

Conservation and Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources

- » Protect, restore, and manage Texas' land, water, and wildlife to ensure long-term environmental and recreational sustainability.

Increasing Public Access and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

- » Ensure that all Texans have equitable access to outdoor spaces and recreation.

Economic Development and Park-Based Tourism

- » Leverage parks and trails to drive local economies, boost tourism, and support small businesses.

Education, Community Engagement, and Recruitment

- » Expand public outreach, increase environmental education, and attract new park users.

DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

Several city parks are located within the waterfront area, including Lighthouse Beach, Bayfront Peninsula Park, and Fay Bauer Sterling Park.

KEY ALIGNMENT TOPICS:

- » Add value to the waterfront through new public facilities & improvements, better access & opportunities for recreation
- » Preserve the natural environs & conserve valuable resources
- » Through placemaking, achieve broad recognition as a destination on the Texas Gulf Coast
- » Cohesive wayfinding and branding that promotes community identity
- » Restore the role of gathering and recreation by the waterfront

'PLAN PORT LAVACA' COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

KEY ALIGNMENT TOPICS:

- » Establish a parks dedication ordinance anticipating new development.
- » Explore opportunities for community gardens throughout the City, utilizing abandoned lots in neighborhoods
- » Explore and create beautification programs for the community
- » Recreation activity center and programming
- » Developing a citywide hike & bike trail system
- » Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors
- » Destinations to attract visitors
- » Resilient waterfront
- » Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income
- » Grant funding for sidewalks and complete streets

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This page establishes the Community Vision and Guiding Principles that serve as the foundation for the overall structure and direction of this Plan. The visioning and implementation processes will inform capital improvements and long-range policy, ensuring alignment between community goals and future investments.

As with every chapter in this Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the goals identified are aligned with capital improvement plan (CIP) initiatives. Each set of goals remains thematically-focused providing a clear, topic-specific framework to guide decision making and resource allocation in support of the community's evolving recreational needs.

These five Guiding Principles form the basis of the Plan's analysis and recommendations:



QUALITY OF LIFE

Enhance the quality of life for all current and future residents by providing exceptional recreational opportunities and green spaces.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Preserve and protect the natural landscape and build community resilience.



EQUITABLE ACCESS

Expand access, connectivity, and accessibility through trails and pedestrian infrastructure.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Encourage economic growth through recreational tourism, public-private partnerships, and innovative funding strategies.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Strengthen community identity and vitality through high-quality park programming and special events.



CHAPTER RECAP

This page will appear at the end of every chapter to summarize the key points. For chapters two through four, a summary of the chapter recommendations will also be provided.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

REGULATORY ALIGNMENT

- » Coastal and ecological protection and restoration
- » Heat mitigation through shade trees and structures
- » Recreational tourism
- » Placemaking
- » Expand access to parks and natural areas
- » Expanded recreational tourism and economic development
- » Fiscal resilience in system planning

COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT:

- » Additional shade trees or structures
- » Larger parks with a range of amenities
- » Community recreational center with amenities for all age groups
- » Community events and programming
- » Rentals for kayaks, canoes, and paddle boats
- » Walking, running, and cycling trails within parks and neighborhoods
- » Splash pads
- » Free beach access for residents





PARKS & FACILITIES 02



Formosa Wetlands Walkway (City of Port Lavaca))

INTRODUCTION

Item 1.

Port Lavaca's parks and facilities serve as vital public assets that offer spaces for gathering, play, cultural expression, and community identity. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive overview of Port Lavaca's parks and recreational facilities. As one of three recommendation-focused chapters within the broader Parks Master Plan, it builds upon prior analyses of existing conditions, community preferences, and visioning outcomes. Trails designed for recreational use within parks are addressed here, while trails serving broader connectivity purposes are discussed in the following chapter.

This chapter provides a detailed assessment of current and near-term Levels of Service (LOS), offering insight into how well the system meets community needs today and how it may perform in the near future. It also defines the classifications of parks and facilities that make up the local recreation network, establishing a clear organizational framework to guide future planning, investment, and development efforts. Additionally, this chapter presents a comprehensive inventory of existing park assets and recreational facilities, serving as a baseline for future improvements and expansion.

KEY FEEDBACK

Common community desires identified across all activities and boards include:

- » Additional shade trees or structures within existing parks
- » Free access to Lighthouse Beach for Port Lavaca residents
- » Covered or indoor basketball court
- » Pickleball Courts
- » Obstacle course with zip lines or a climbing wall
- » Dog park(s)
- » Improved safety, sidewalks, and restrooms

Community members want local parks to provide fun and engaging opportunities for enjoyment, sightseeing, and/or fitness. Residents recommend focusing on larger parks with a wide range of amenities. They want to enhance public spaces to encourage social interaction and beauty through high quality design to the places that make the City unique.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



QUALITY OF LIFE: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Attain and surpass national standards for park level of service
- » Promote walkability and multimodal transportation through park connectivity
- » Utilize park design to encourage social interaction and movement



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Promote sustainable park management practices that preserve critical habitat for native species
- » Establish conservation easements to protect ecologically sensitive areas
- » Educate the public on native flora and fauna within local parks



EQUITABLE ACCESS: EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Ensure every resident is within a 10-minute walk of a park
- » Encourage universal design practices that ensure park accessibility across ability and age
- » Evenly distribute recreational amenities throughout the City



ECONOMIC VITALITY: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

- » Ensure development and maintenance of park amenities are financially sustainable
- » Partner with local businesses and organizations to activate park spaces through placemaking initiatives
- » Activate neighborhoods and districts through high-quality parks



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Establish minimum standards for park development to meet the needs a diverse population
- » Create spaces within the parks for community members to share photos, feedback, and suggestions
- » Develop new park amenities based on community input gathered regularly



PARK TYPOLOGIES

Parks come in a variety of types, shapes, and sizes, each designated to meet different community needs. From small, localized green spaces to expansive natural preserves, these park typologies help cities provide accessible recreation, support social interaction, and conserve natural resources for residents and visitors alike.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides guidance on park classifications to help communities plan and maintain effective recreation systems. The NRPA has established target level of service ratios for each park typology.

Bigger parks offer superior environmental benefits (better cooling, air quality, biodiversity) and enhanced programming opportunities (more space for activities, deeper restoration) compared to smaller parks. A network of fewer but bigger parks is also easier and more cost-effective to maintain.

Conversely, smaller parks are crucial for accessibility; they allow cities to provide baseline amenities with minimal setup costs and are vital for daily nature access and micro-benefits.

< 1 ACRE



POCKET PARK

Size: 2,500 sq. ft. - 1 acre

Service Area: 0.25-mile radius

Purpose:

- » Serves small, localized recreational needs
- » May offer active recreation areas (playground)
- » May offer passive recreation areas (picnicking)
- » Small-scale parks designed to meet limited, localized recreation needs within a short walking distance.

Examples:

- » Brookhollow Estates (Butterfly) Park
- » Claret Crossing Pocket Park
- » Faye Bauer Sterling Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Size: 1 - 15 acres

Service Area: 0.25- to 0.5-mile radius

Purpose:

- » Serves local residents
- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

Examples:

- » City (Tilley) Park
- » George Adams Park
- » Substation Site (future)

15+ ACRES



500+ ACRES



COMMUNITY PARK

Size: 16 - 99 acres

Service Area: 1- to 2-mile radius

Purpose:

- » Serves multiple neighborhoods
- » Offers more intense active recreation opportunities (sports fields, swimming pools, sports courts)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (hiking, picnicking)
- » Provides a broader range of recreation facilities that draw users from neighborhoods across the city.

Examples:

- » Bayfront Peninsula Park
- » Wilson Park

METROPOLITAN PARK

Size: 100 - 499 acres

Service Area: Entire city & surrounding areas

Purpose:

- » Serves all city residents
- » Large, mixed-use park with natural landscapes & developed amenities including sports fields, trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, and water-based recreation
- » Large, citywide destinations that offer significant natural and recreational amenities.

Example:

- » Lighthouse Beach Park

REGIONAL PARK

Size: 500+ acres

Service Area: Multiple communities within a 1-hour drive

Purpose:

- » Multi-use facilities supporting all ages and abilities
- » Often includes nature preservation, wildlife habitat, and conservation areas
- » Expansive multi-community destinations that conserve natural resources while supporting a wide variety of year-round recreational activities.

Example:

- » Little Chocolate Bayou Park

NOT SIZE-SPECIFIC

Non size-specific parks may be larger standalone sites or distinct areas within larger parks (IE. the preserve within Lighthouse Beach versus Powderhorn Preserve).



PRESERVE

Size: Varies

Service Area: Varies

Purpose:

- » Protects and manages natural or cultural resources
- » Active and passive recreation serve as a secondary focus

Examples:

- » Powderhorn State Park (future)



LINEAR PARK

Size: Varies

Service Area: Varies

Purpose:

- » Green corridors connecting neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces
- » Supports multimodal forms of transportation such as walking, jogging, biking, hiking, etc.
- » May include active recreation areas and/or gathering spaces

Examples:

- » Depot Linear Park (future)



SPECIAL USE AREA

Size: Varies

Service Area: Varies

Purpose:

- » Single-purpose or specialized activities such as marinas, golf courses, amphitheaters, plazas, arboretums, and historical sites

Examples:

- » Calhoun County Fairgrounds
- » Smith Harbor (future)
- » Boat docks
- » City Pool

PARK INVENTORY MATRIX

Item 1.

	ACREAGE	BARBECUE PIT	BASEBALL FIELD	BASKETBALL COURT	BEACH ACCESS	BENCH	BIKE RACK	BOAT RAMP	CABANAS	FITNESS CENTER	FISHING PIER	PICNIC TABLE	PET DRINKING STATION	PET WASTE STATION	PLAYGROUND	PAVILION	RESTROOM	SAND BOX	SAND VOLLEYBALL	SKATE PARK	SOCCER FIELD	SOFTBALL FIELD	SPLASH PAD	SWING SET	T-BALL FIELD	TEETER-TOTTER	TRASH/ RECYCLING BIN	WALKING PATH	WATER FOUNTAIN
EXISTING																													
BAYFRONT PENINSULA	25.8	1			9	1	1	1		1	24	1	2	1	1	1	1					1					18	1	1
BROOKHOLLOW ESTATES	0.8				4				1		2	1	1	1									1				1	1	1
CITY (TILLEY)	10.3	4		1	4						7			2	1	2		1		1			1				8	1	
CLARET CROSSING	0.7				4									1									2		1	2	1		
FAYE BAUER STERLING	0.2																									1			
GEORGE ADAMS	2.1	4	1	1	2			1			15			1	1	2							4		1	4		1	
LIGHTHOUSE BEACH	78.4	1			1	3		1	1		1	11		3		2		1				1					25	1	1
WILSON	21.4		1											1					1	1	1		1	1			5	1	
EXISTING TOTAL	139.7	10	2	2	1	26	1	2	3	1	2	59	2	3	10	3	7	1	2	1	2	1	2	9	1	2	64	6	4
PLANNED																													
KITCHEN SITE	2.4				1																								
SMITH HARBOR	15.0																												
SUBSTATION SITE	0.4																												
WATER PLANT	2.8									1	1																		
COMBINED TOTAL	179.2	10	2	2	2	26	1	2	3	1	2	59	2	3	10	3	7	1	2	1	2	1	2	9	1	2	64	6	4

PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

The Park Development Process, divided into three progressive phases, serves as a guideline for its phased development upon acquisition of land. The park improvements and amenities which describe phases 1-3 serve as targets for typical development, but are not guaranteed items in each park. The timing, techniques and procedures for accomplishing each phase may vary significantly in response to funding availability, constituent preferences and natural characteristics of the parkland. These phases, as well as their corresponding maintenance levels discussed next, form the basis of the parks and recreation-specific recommendations.

PARK DEVELOPMENT PHASES			
Existing Parks	Current	2030	2035
Bayfront Peninsula Park	2	2	3
Brookhollow Estates Park	2	3	3
City (Tilley) Park	2	2	3
Claret Crossing Park	2	3	3
Faye Bauer Sterling Park	1	3	R
George Adams Park	2	2	3
Lighthouse Beach Park	3	3	3
Wilson Park	2	3	3
Future Parks	Current	2030	2035
Marina	-	1	1
Substation A	-	2	3
Substation B	-	1	3
Kitchen	-	1	1
Depot	-	2	3
Water Plant	-	1	3

PHASE 1: BASIC OPPORTUNITIES & ACCESS

Item 1.

Phase 1 Provides basic recreational opportunities and access:

- » Initial signage and wayfinding
- » Open play areas and flexible turf fields
- » Basic picnic areas and benches
- » Trash and recycling infrastructure
- » Parking, trailheads, ADA pathways
- » Master planning, design future expansion capacity, and community input process
- » Baseline natural resource and cultural assessments
- » Stabilize soils and address erosion risks with native, low-maintenance vegetation

PHASE 2: KEY FACILITIES & RECREATION

Phase 2 provides many of the remaining facilities typical of the park type:

- » Expanded parking and utilities; traffic management
- » Safety and comfort design features and landscaping
- » Athletic fields, multipurpose courts
- » Playgrounds, pavilions, splash pads
- » Wayfinding network and signage
- » Irrigation systems where justified
- » Multi-phase funding for large investments
- » Trails and park connectivity

PHASE 3: FULLY DEVELOPED

Phase 3 development builds out the full recreational spectrum and park identity:

- » Full-site circulation and accessibility
- » Durable, long-lifespan materials to reduce operational burden
- » Reserve space for future programming or rotating installations
- » Prioritize maintenance planning as amenities reach maturity
- » Add monitoring technology (visitor counters, smart irrigation)

PHASE 0: REHABILITATION

Phase 0, Rehabilitation, applies to any park type and revisits Phases 1-3 depending on condition and need.

- » Renewal of aging infrastructure (restrooms, courts, equipment, turf, irrigation, drainage, etc.)
- » Redesign of outdated spaces; modernization of playgrounds, structures, and furnishings
- » Restoration of trails and natural areas
- » Master planning and community input process

SERVICE & UPKEEP LEVELS

Not all parks require the same level of upkeep or attention, even for parks in the same phase of development. Park maintenance levels are standardized service frameworks used by cities and recreation departments to classify how intensely different parks are managed. They define the frequency of tasks, such as mowing, trash removal, and facility repairs, based on a park's usage, visibility, and budget. Standardized systems typically divide maintenance into four distinct levels.

PARK MAINTENANCE LEVELS			
Existing Parks	Current	2030	2035
Bayfront Peninsula Park	2	2	2
Brookhollow Estates Park	3	3	3
City (Tilley) Park	3	2	2
Claret Crossing Park	3	3	3
Faye Bauer Sterling Park	3	3	2
George Adams Park	3	1	2
Lighthouse Beach Park	3	2	2
Wilson Park	3	2	2
Future Parks	Current	2030	2035
Marina	4	4	2
Substation A	4	3	3
Substation B	4	5	3
Kitchen	4	4	3
Depot	4	4	2
Water Plant	4	3	2

Level 4: Minimum / Natural

Undeveloped natural areas, nature trails, or buffer zones.

Appearance: Wild and natural with minimal human intervention.

Turf & Landscaping: Only minimal mowing is performed on trails or perimeters to allow for safe passage. Native vegetation is left to grow naturally.

Cleaning: Trash receptacles are generally removed or only serviced on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Repairs to structures are limited to removing safety hazards.

Level 2: High / Standard

Well-developed community parks, heavily used neighborhood parks, and sports complexes.

Appearance: Clean, green, and highly functional. This is generally the recommended target level for most municipal organizations.

Turf & Landscaping: Mowed once a week, regular aeration and fertilization, with minimal weed presence.

Cleaning: Daily litter pickup, trash emptying, and daily to near-daily restroom cleaning. Infrastructure and playground equipment are checked and repaired promptly.

Level 3: Moderate

Locations with moderate-to-low levels of development or visitation, or parks operating under restricted municipal budgets.

Appearance: Presentable and safe, but less manicured.

Turf & Landscaping: Mowed every 5-7 days; weeds and clover are more broadly tolerated; less frequent fertilization and aeration.

Cleaning: Trash and litter are addressed less frequently (e.g., 2-3 times a week), and restroom cleanings may occur on a reduced schedule. Repairs are usually handled as routine rather than immediate.

Level 1: State-of-the-Art / Impeccable

High-traffic urban areas, premium botanical gardens, or flagship downtown public squares.

Appearance: Flawless and highly manicured.

Turf & Landscaping: Mowed 1-3 times a week, complete edging of all borders, intense fertilization, and strict weed control.

Cleaning: Daily, multiple times a day. Zero accumulated debris or litter. Restrooms and playgrounds sanitized frequently.

Item 1.

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

The quality of a community’s parks and recreation system can be challenging to quantify. Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure used to describe the operational conditions of a parks system. The three leading measures for park system level of service are identified below.

Half a mile is generally considered the maximum distance most people are willing to walk to reach a park. At a brisk pace, a half-mile walk typically takes 7 to 10 minutes, while a leisurely walk might take upwards of 12 to 15 minutes. Based on current City- and County-owned parks within Port Lavaca city limits, roughly 58.5 percent of residents live within a ten-minute walk of a park.



RESIDENTS PER PARK

NATIONAL AVERAGE

1 park per **2,411 residents**

AVERAGE FOR COMMUNITIES WITH LESS THAN 20,000 RESIDENTS

1 park per **1,001 residents**

PORT LAVACA’S CURRENT LOS

1 park per **1,413 residents**

1 park per **1,256 residents**

(If County-owned Little Chocolate Bayou Park is included)

With 9 total parks (including Little Chocolate Bayou Park), Port Lavaca needs to bring three more parks online to adequately serve all 11,300 residents. However, continued population decline could unintentionally fill the gap as well.

PARKLAND PER CAPITA

NATIONAL AVERAGE

10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

AVERAGE FOR COMMUNITIES WITH LESS THAN 20,000 RESIDENTS

12.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

PORT LAVACA’S CURRENT LOS

19.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

There are currently 220.2 acres of dedicated parkland in Port Lavaca - sufficient to service a population of over 20,000. This includes Little Chocolate Bayou Park and three undeveloped sites. Without counting these parks, Port Lavaca has 161.4 acres of parkland - sufficient for a population of approximately 15,000.

PARKS WITHIN 1/2 MILE

NATIONAL AVERAGE

70% of residents within a 10-minutes walk of a park

PORT LAVACA’S CURRENT LOS

58.5% of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park
1,265 need walkable park to meet national average

Built on the country’s most comprehensive database of local parks, the ParkServe mapping platform provides insights into who has access to these parks – and who does not. Their online mapping tool enables anybody to 1) explore the relationships between park access and climate, health, or other community characteristics, 2) identify priority locations for new parks, 3) evaluate the impact of a proposed park on a community’s park access, and 4) review and update the underlying park database.

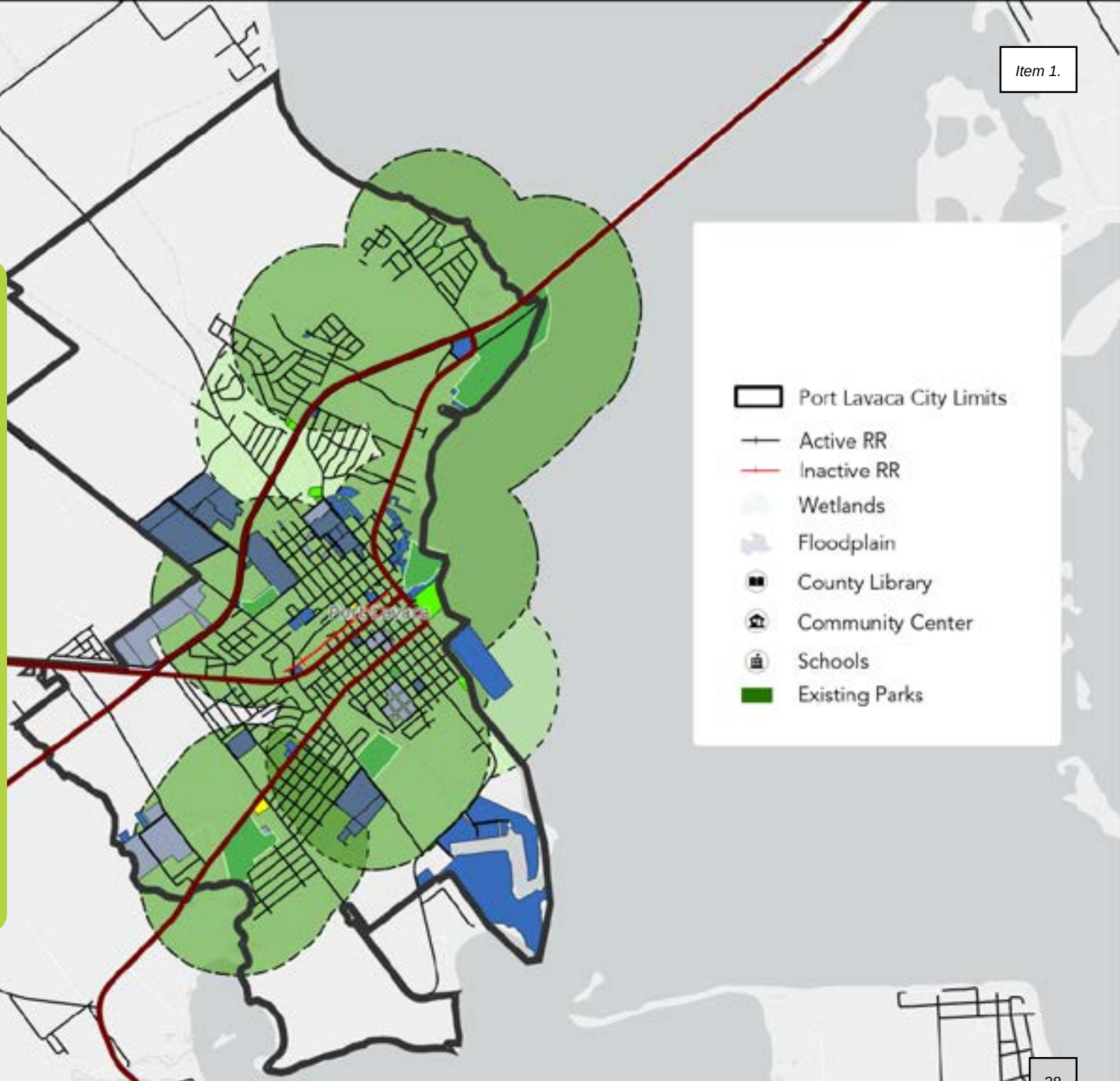
Calhoun
County
Airport

OBSERVATIONS:

It's important to note that the map to the left does not capture the actual walking experience residents face. Availability and quality of sidewalks, shade coverage, and safe walking conditions along busy streets affect how easily and comfortably people can reach nearby parks.

Pockets of need include:

- » Between N Virginia/FM 1090 and Lynn Bayou, though parkland has already been identified for acquisition
- » Between US 87 and W Austin
- » RR track to bay south of San Dollar Dr, though parkland in this area has already been acquired
- » South of Leon



SECTION STRATEGIES

TYOLOGY & AMENITIES

- » Explore Issue and open call to churches and other houses of worship in North Port Lavaca that have active recreation facilities on their grounds; establish partnerships to spread awareness of the facilities and provide access for residents of recreationally underserved neighborhoods.
- » In recreationally underserved areas, prioritize active recreation amenities in any new parks over five acres constructed north of SH 35; at that time, allow for public input to guide which amenities are introduced.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

- » Establish a City policy of developing pocket parks sparingly, such as for Downtown plazas
- » Identify floodplains, wetlands, easements, and distressed properties adjacent to existing pocket parks that could be used to expand park footprints

LEVEL OF SERVICE

- » Establish a City policy of developing pocket parks sparingly, such as for downtown plazas
- » Identify floodplains, wetlands, easements, and distressed properties adjacent to existing pocket parks that could be used to expand park footprints
- » Prioritize development of a

neighborhood park or larger, ideally a community park, north of SH 35 in the vicinity of Lynn Bayou

- » Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger along the southeast waterfront
- » Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger between US 87 and W Austin

PARK DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

- » Bring Faye Bauer Sterling Park into Phase 2
- » Begin phased rehabilitation of George Adams Park, with the goal of reaching Phase 2 by 2035
- » Initiate Phase 1 improvements for undeveloped park sites, especially Substation Site A and the Kitchen Tract

PARK MAINTENANCE LONG-RANGE TARGETS

- » Maintain Level 3 maintenance minimum for all parks/areas with recreational amenities, including playgrounds
- » Maintain Level 2 maintenance for high-traffic parks at the community park level or higher, including any park hosting league play
- » Maintain Level 1 maintenance for downtown and regional parks
- » Maintain Level 3 maintenance minimum for trailheads
- » Reduce costs by using native, drought-tolerant landscapes

- » Conduct a feasibility and staffing study to determine the resources needed to bring four existing parks into Level 2 by 2035
- » Codify minimum standards for new parks, including private parks within future master-planned communities
- » Establish conservation easements or designated preserves to protect 500 acres of ecologically sensitive land from development and degradation.
- » Restore at minimum 50 acres of degraded prairie or wetland habitat through native planting and ecological enhancement features.
- » Adopt a riparian buffer policy to safeguard waterways, prevent erosion, and improve water quality along streams, creeks, and shorelines.
- » Integrate universal design standards into all park infrastructure, including piers, boat launches, and playgrounds. At minimum, ensure ADA compliance is met with all current and future park projects.

PARK PROFILES

BAYFRONT PENINSULA PARK

LOCATION: East of Commerce Street, along the Lavaca Bay.

COMMUNITY PARK: 25.8 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves multiple neighborhoods
- » Offers more intense active recreation opportunities (sports fields, swimming pools, sports courts)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (hiking, picnicking)
- » Provides a broader range of recreation facilities that draw users from neighborhoods across the city.

AMENITIES:

- » Splash pad
- » Playground
- » Bike rack
- » Pet drinking station
- » Water fountain
- » Restrooms
- » Walking path
- » Pavilions
- » Cabanas
- » Fishing pier
- » Boat launch
- » Veterans memorial

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Shared-use path connecting to Fulton Street (2027)
- » Entrance rehab (2027-2028)
- » Bench Shade Structures (2027)
- » Amphitheater



Item 1.

CLARET CROSSING POCKET PARK

LOCATION: Harbor Drive East and West across from La Salle Boulevard.

POCKET PARK: 0.3 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves small, localized recreational needs
- » May offer active recreation areas (playground)
- » May offer passive recreation areas (picnicking)
- » Small-scale parks designed to meet limited, localized recreation needs within a short walking distance.

CURRENT AMENITIES

- » Playground
- » Swing set
- » Water fountain
- » Dog drinking station
- » Benches
- » Walking path

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- » Backfall fencing, entry improvements (2026)
- » Brick-lined walkways (2026)
- » Cabana structure (2026)
- » Lighting (2026)



CITY (TILLEY) PARK

LOCATION: Half League Rd. and Tilley St., next to Travis Middle School

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: 10.3 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

CURRENT AMENITIES:

- » Half court basketball
- » Soccer goals
- » Sand volleyball court
- » Covered pavilion
- » Barbecue pits
- » Junior Playground
- » Music Park and child size stage
- » Walking/Born Learning® Trail
- » Benches
- » Water fountains
- » Restrooms
- » Parking

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- » Parking improvements (2028-2030)
- » Born Learning® Trail Shade Structure (2026)
- » Scoreboard, sign, and lights at football field (TBD)



CLARET CROSSING POCKET PARK

LOCATION: Between Aimable Street, Crimson Avenue, and Claret Drive.

POCKET PARK: 0.7 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves small, localized recreational needs
- » May offer active recreation areas (playground)
- » May offer passive recreation areas (picnicking)
- » Small-scale parks designed to meet limited, localized recreation needs within a short walking distance.

CURRENT AMENITIES:

- » Playground
- » Swing set
- » Teeter-totter
- » Benches
- » Dog drinking station

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » NA - New Playground



FAYE BAUER STERLING PARK

LOCATION: E. U.S. 87, between Colorado and Guadalupe Streets

POCKET PARK: 0.2 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves small, localized recreational needs
- » May offer active recreation areas (playground)
- » May offer passive recreation areas (picnicking)
- » Small-scale parks designed to meet limited, localized recreation needs within a short walking distance.

CURRENT AMENITIES:

- » Gazebo
- » Event space
- » Planter boxes

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Implement recommendations from the Waterfront Master Plan: plaza stage, string lights, public art (TBD)
- » Expand into adjacent Regan building (TBD)



GEORGE ADAMS PARK

LOCATION: Center St., San Antonio St., S. Benavides St., and Martin Luther Kind Dr. Catty corner to the Port Lavaca Cemetery

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: 2.1 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

CURRENT AMENITIES:

- » Basketball court
- » Baseball field
- » Playgrounds
- » Jungle gym
- » Merry-go-round
- » Teeter-totter
- » Swing set
- » Pavilion
- » Barbecue pits
- » Cabanas

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

- » Sidewalk (2028)
- » Shade structure (2028)



LIGHTHOUSE BEACH

LOCATION: South of Lavaca Bay Causeway, along Lavaca Bay coastline

METROPOLITAN PARK: 78.4 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves all city residents
- » Large, mixed-use park with natural landscapes & developed amenities including sports fields, trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, and water-based recreation
- » Large, citywide destinations that offer significant natural and recreational amenities.

CURRENT AMENITIES:

- » Playground (3)
- » Splash pad
- » Sand Volleyball
- » Fishing pier
- » Cabanas
- » Barbecue pits
- » Restrooms
- » Water fountains
- » Parking
- » Gated entrance
- » RV Park
- » Preserved wetlands
- » Observation points
- » Beach access
- » Benches

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Three new shaded cabanas at splash pad with covered seating area and picnic tables
- » Develop camping area (2026)
- » Reconstruct volleyball court (2026)
- » Raised crosswalk and accessible sidewalk from splash pad to restrooms (2026)
- » Improve rock jetties
- » Provide living shoreline protection to wetlands area



WILSON SPORTS COMPLEX

LOCATION: East of Seadrift St. across from Jackson Roosevelt Elementary

COMMUNITY PARK: 21.4 acres

PURPOSE:

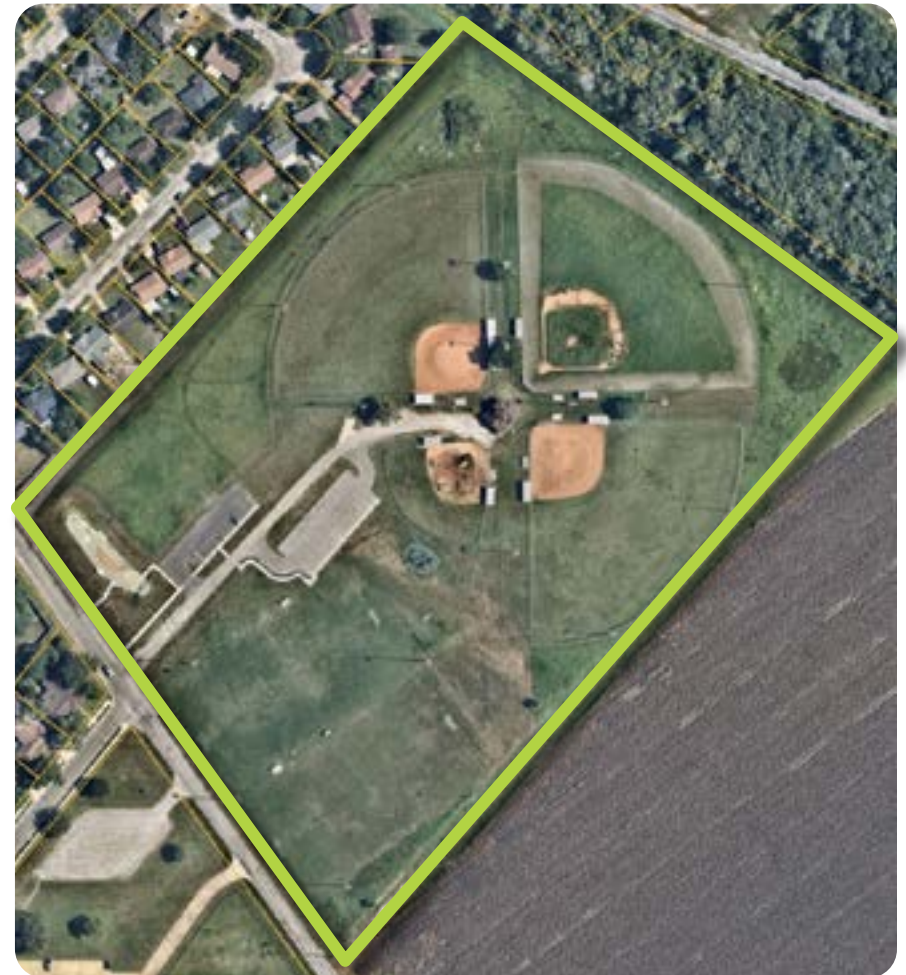
- » Serves multiple neighborhoods
- » Offers more intense active recreation opportunities (sports fields, swimming pools, sports courts)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (hiking, picnicking)
- » Provides a broader range of recreation facilities that draw users from neighborhoods across the city.

AMENITIES:

- » Baseball field
- » T-Ball field
- » Softball
- » Soccer field
- » Skate Park
- » Playground
- » Swing set
- » Restrooms
- » Benches

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Covered Basketball Court (2026)
- » Sidewalk (2028)
- » Pickleball Court (2028)
- » Perimeter trail (TBD)
- » Additional parking along southeast edge (TBD)



LITTLE CHOCOLATE BAYOU PARK (COUNTY)

LOCATION: South of Austin St., between Alcoa Dr. and Little Chocolate Bayou

COMMUNITY PARK: 35 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Serves multiple neighborhoods
- » Offers more intense active recreation opportunities (sports fields, swimming pools, sports courts)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (hiking, picnicking)
- » Provides a broader range of recreation facilities that draw users from neighborhoods across the city.

AMENITIES:

- » Athletic fields
- » New Playground
- » Swing set
- » Fishing Pond
- » Trails
- » Restrooms
- » Picnic Area
- » Grills
- » Pavilion
- » Benches

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Inclusive Playground (2025)

Little Chocolate Bayou Park is maintained by Calhoun County.



FUTURE PARKS

Port Lavaca is actively working to expand open space recreation opportunities by improving waterfront access, enhancing multi-use trail and greenway connections, and strengthening shoreline resilience measures. These efforts are framed around increasing public access, supporting community events, protecting natural resources, and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

SMITH HARBOR

LOCATION: S. Commerce St & Live Oak St

SPECIAL USE AREA: 15 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Single-purpose or specialized activities such as marinas, golf courses, amphitheaters, plazas, arboretums, and historical sites

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Public access boardwalk (2026)
- » Marina services area
- » Motorized boating and sailing center
- » Dredging, widening of Harbor
- » Seawall armoring
- » Peninsula shaping and edge treatment
- » Elevated (stilted) marina building
- » Lowland trails
- » Planned/Budgeted: 10' boardwalk along existing concrete seawall



SUBSTATION SITE A & B

LOCATION: Holiday Ln at Brookhollow Dr.; East of TX-35.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: 2.1 acres

PURPOSE:

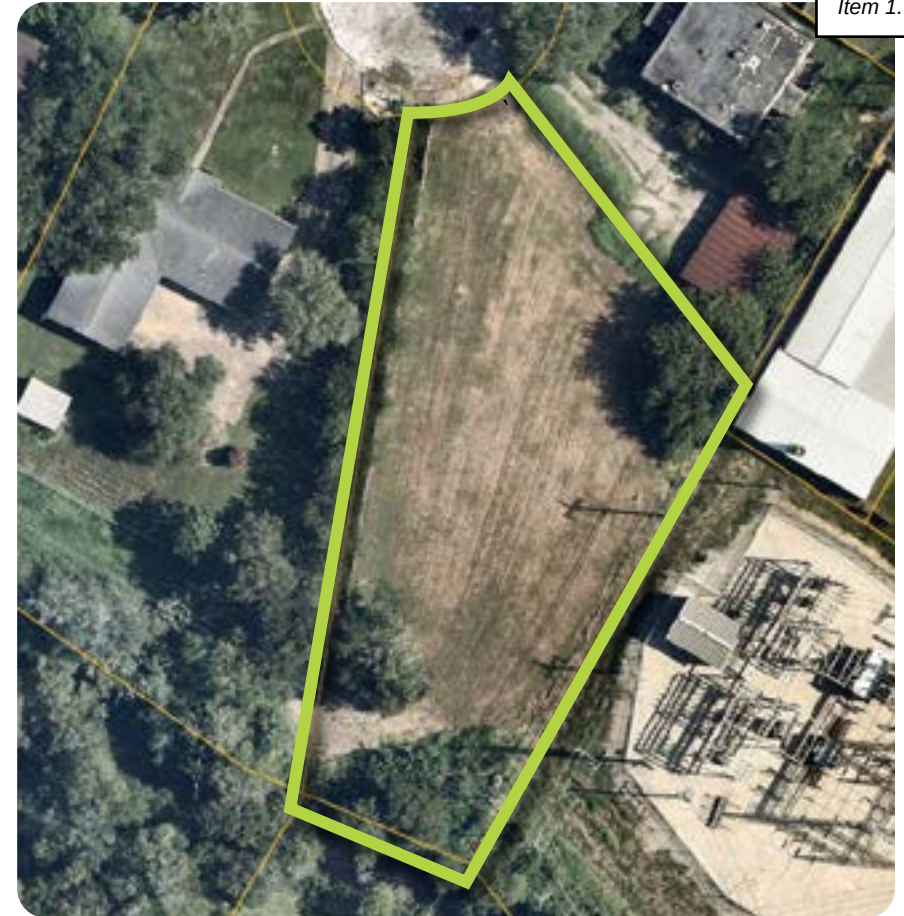
- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » TBD



AEP may eliminate this substation following the completion of other improvements in the County, providing an opportunity to acquire this tract of land as parkland. This land would complement adjacent property already owned by the City.



Item 1.

KITCHEN SITE

LOCATION: E South St & S Guadalupe St

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: 2.4 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Public access to Lavaca Bay (2030)
- » Preserve
- » Fishing



WATER PLANT SITE

LOCATION: Newlin St & Houston St, near Lynn Bayou

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: 2.8 acres

PURPOSE:

- » Offers active recreation areas (playgrounds, sports courts and sports fields)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (walking, picnicking)
- » Serves nearby residents by offering daily-use amenities tailored to the surrounding community.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Fishing Decks
- » Picnic Tables



MEETING FUTURE DEMAND

PARKLAND DEDICATION

Parkland Dedication is a local government requirement on subdivision and site plan applications mandating the dedication of land for a park and/or the payment of a fee to be used by the governmental entity to acquire land and/or develop park facilities.

The principle relates to the establishment of an “essential connection” between the demand generated by a development and the park or park improvement being constructed with the resources provided by the developer. For example, if a large apartment building is built where previously there was not a multifamily structure, nearby parks will face increased usage from new residents. In order to keep up with the increased demand on existing parks, a dedication is required. Land or fees acquired through dedication ordinances must be used to benefit those who will live in the development.

DEDICATION FORMULA

750+ HOMES:

- » 1 acre per 75 dwelling units established by the plat

<750 HOMES:

- » Donation to the city of at least 10 acres of parkland; OR
- » Cash payment into the park development fund in an amount per dwelling unit as set by the City Council

PARKLAND CRITERIA

- | | |
|--|---|
| » Location is consistent with the city's future park needs | » Free of easements, pipelines, overhead utilities, and other conditions that would inhibit its effective use |
| » Frontage on an existing public roadway | » Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment within the preceding 12 months |
| » Dimensions, topography, elevation, and other natural features to allow for organized or passive recreation | » Cleared of all trash, refuse, waste materials, dilapidated structures, abandoned vehicles, and unwanted trees and brush |
| » Potable water, sanitary sewer, and electric power is readily available from an adjacent right-of-way or easement | |
| » Adequate drainage | |

Item 1.



CHAPTER RECAP

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of Port Lavaca's current and future parks and recreational facilities, with a focus on analyzing and understanding existing conditions, park classifications, public feedback, and community visioning. This chapter presents clear, actionable strategies that build upon the Plan's overarching Guiding Principles as well as a methodology to evaluate parks. An assessment of current and near-term Levels of Service (LOS) offers valuable insight into how well the parks system meets community needs both today and in the future.

It also provided definitions for the park, trail, and facility classifications and a comprehensive inventory of existing park assets that comprise Port Lavaca's recreation network, creating an organizational framework under the City's Comprehensive Plan that will guide future parks planning efforts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

NEW PARKS

- » 20+ acres of new parkland already identified, much of it already City-owned
- » Suggested parkland dedication ratio will net one acre of parkland per 75 new homes built

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING PARKS

Bayfront Peninsula Park

- » Shared-use path connecting to Fulton Street
- » Entrance rehab
- » Bench shade structures

Brookhollow Estates (Butterfly) Park

- » Backfall fencing/entry improvements
- » Brick-lined walkways, cabana structure, and lighting

City (Tilley) Park

- » Parking Improvements (2028-30)
- » Born Learning Trail shade structure
- » Scoreboard, sign, and lights at

football field (TBD)

Faye Bauer Sterling Park

- » Implement recommendations from Waterfront Master Plan
 - » Expand into adjacent Regan building
- #### George Adams Park

- » Sidewalk and shade structure
- #### Lighthouse Beach

- » Shaded cabanas with seating
- » Develop camping area
- » Reconstruct volleyball court
- » Connect splashpad to restrooms
- » Improve rock jetties and provide living shoreline protection

Wilson Sports Complex

- » Covered basketball court
- » Sidewalk and pickleball court
- » Perimeter trail and parking



Beachfront View

SUMMARY OF PARK STRATEGIES

Item 1.



ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Bring Faye Bauer Sterling Park into Phase 2
- » Initiate Phase 1 improvements for undeveloped park sites, especially Substation Site A and the Kitchen Tract
- » Maintain Level 3 maintenance minimum for all parks/areas with recreational amenities, including playgrounds
- » Maintain Level 2 maintenance for high-traffic parks at the community park level or higher, including any park hosting league play or community events
- » Conduct a feasibility study to determine the resources needed to bring four existing parks into Level 2 by 2035
- » Codify minimum standards for new parks, including private parks within future master-planned communities



PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Establish conservation easements or designated preserves to protect 500 acres of ecologically sensitive land from development and degradation.
- » Restore at minimum 50 acres of degraded prairie or wetland habitat through native planting and ecological enhancement features.
- » Adopt a riparian buffer policy to safeguard waterways, prevent erosion, and improve water quality.
- » Identify floodplains, wetlands, easements, and distressed properties adjacent to existing pocket parks that could be used to expand park footprints



EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Establish partnerships with churches and other entities in North Port Lavaca with private recreation facilities; provide access for residents of recreationally underserved neighborhoods.
- » In recreationally underserved areas, prioritize active recreation amenities in any new parks over five acres constructed north of SH 35; at that time, allow for public input to guide which amenities are introduced.



ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

- » Establish a City policy of developing pocket parks sparingly, such as for Downtown plazas
- » Adopt a park, trail, and improvements dedication ordinance to support efforts to expand the existing parks system
- » Require developers to construct any trails that are shown on the Master Plan.
- » Offer a fee-in-lieu option, which is a method to fund park enhancements where City Council has the ability to decide whether a financial contribution would be preferred to land dedication. In certain cases, the dedication of open space may not be desirable, or the City does not want the extra maintenance of another park. The fee collected for the development can be used in another area to make a more significant impact. These new regulations could be adopted as a standalone ordinance or incorporated within the subdivision ordinance.



STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger, ideally a community park, north of SH 35 in the vicinity of Lynn Bayou
- » Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger along the southeast waterfront
- » Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger between US 87 and W Austin
- » Integrate universal design standards into all park infrastructure, including piers, boat launches, and playgrounds. At minimum, ensure ADA compliance is met with all current and future park projects.

TRAILS 03

Item 1.



INTRODUCTION

Movement and connectivity are key elements of a community's overall quality of life. Linking together parks, schools, neighborhoods, and other key destinations through strategic connectivity investments allows residents to more easily and safely access the world outside of their front doors. Chapter 3 explores how an expanded trail network and improved pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure can transform Port Lavaca into a multimodal, accessible, and active community.

Multi-use trails and greenways are essential components of outdoor recreation infrastructure, providing exercise opportunities, alternative transportation options, and access to natural spaces. This chapter considers trails located within City parks as well as those functioning more like sidewalks outside of parks. It also considers a range of trail types, including those for walking, running, biking, and paddling.

FEEDBACK THEMES

- » There is a growing community of runners in Port Lavaca, which has led to heightened interest in off-street / wooded trails
- » Trails connecting parks, neighborhoods, and other community amenities are highly desired
- » Long standing community interest in paddle trails
- » Residents and guests are delighted by existing piers, nature trails, and boardwalks
- » Residents appreciate the growing sidewalk connectivity, which has potentially added to community interest in additional trail development
- » Trail maintenance and storm/flood resilience is a top priority for City Staff

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



QUALITY OF LIFE: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Trails that enable both active and passive recreation
- » Trails that compliment and showcase the natural beauty of Port Lavaca
- » Trails that are comfortable to use year-round



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Trails that protect natural areas by directing foot traffic away from sensitive habitats and reducing erosion
- » Trails and linear parks that preserve floodplains and wetlands while allowing for active living opportunities
- » Trails that encourage responsible stewardship of sensitive coastal and ecological areas



EQUITABLE ACCESS: EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Every resident within a 10-minute walk of an off-street trail
- » Accessibility and amenities for all ages and abilities
- » A trail system that feels and is safe
- » Continue to explore options to build trails in utility and railroad easements



ECONOMIC VITALITY: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

- » Consider park vendors and private rental shops as part of a larger trail ecosystem
- » Tap into the booming Heritage Trails market planning at the County level



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Trail and amenity development process guided by community input
- » Understand which groups use certain trail types and why

OBSERVATIONS:

- » Aside from walking trails confined to parks, much of Port Lavaca's trail network is indistinguishable from sidewalks to the average user.
- » With the exception of sidewalks along 283/ W Austin Street, Port Lavaca is disconnected from other destinations within Calhoun County
- » Many, though not all, of the City's parks have at least partial connectivity to nearby neighborhoods and schools via sidewalks or on-street rails
- » Lynn Bayou, SH 35, and railroad tracks are some of the greatest barriers to connectivity
- » Note: Other similar infrastructure are critical elements of holistic mobility and circulation system, but are not considered as part of this Plan: safe routes to school (SRTS), standard sidewalks, and on-street bike lanes. For various reasons, these elements are better evaluated as part of the Comprehensive Plan or other standalone documents.



- Port Lavaca City Limits
- Active RR
- Inactive RR
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- County Library
- Community Center
- Schools
- Existing Parks

TRAIL TYPOLOGIES

ACTIVITY TYPE

Trails come in a variety of types, shapes, and sizes, each designated to meet different community needs. Understanding their typologies help cities provide accessible recreation, support social interaction, and conserve natural resources for residents and visitors alike.



NATURE TRAILS

- » Width: 4' - 6' unmowed path or aggregate surface.
- » Uses: walking, hiking, mountain biking, etc.
- » Experience: natural trail
- » Cost/Environmental Impact: minimal. Uses existing vegetation and open space
- » Some trails may be limited by use type (hiking OR biking)



COMMUNITY PATHS

- » Width: 6' - 10' paved surface
- » Uses: Multi-use designation
- » Experience: Unique environments and landscape treatments along its length
- » Cost/Environmental Impact: high due to amount of hardscape and adjacency to roadway
- » Highly efficient at moving residents to/from key amenity areas and special nodes.



NEIGHBORHOOD PATHS

- » Width: 6' - 8' usually paved surface, gravel in some cases.
- » Uses: walking, hiking, biking, etc.
- » Experience: links neighborhoods to community pathways and greenways
- » Cost/Environmental Impact: medium. Utilizes land set aside for open space.
- » Location, surface, and landscape design should tie with the development zone of which it is a part.



SIGNATURE GREENWAY

- » Width: 12' - 15' paved surface
- » Uses: ultimate multi-modal use designation
- » Experience: regional connector between major community elements with signature wayfinding and landscape features.
- » Cost/Environmental Impact: high due to level of investment required to construct and maintain.

EXISTING INVENTORY

Item 1.

LIGHTHOUSE BEACH

NATURE TRAIL: Distance

PURPOSE:

- » Provide a designated path for recreation and environmental education while protecting ecosystems from trampling

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

»



BAYFRONT PENINSULA

COMMUNITY PATH: Distance

PURPOSE:

- » Provide safe spaces for outdoor recreation
- » Serve as alternative, non-motorized transportation networks connecting neighborhoods to schools, jobs, and parks

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Shared-use path connecting to Fulton Street (2027)



Commons- Overall Map



Commons- Perspective View with Proposed Improvements

WILSON PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD PATH: Distance

PURPOSE:

»

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Sidewalk (2028)
- » Perimeter trail (TBD)

LITTLE CHOCOLATE BAYOU PARK

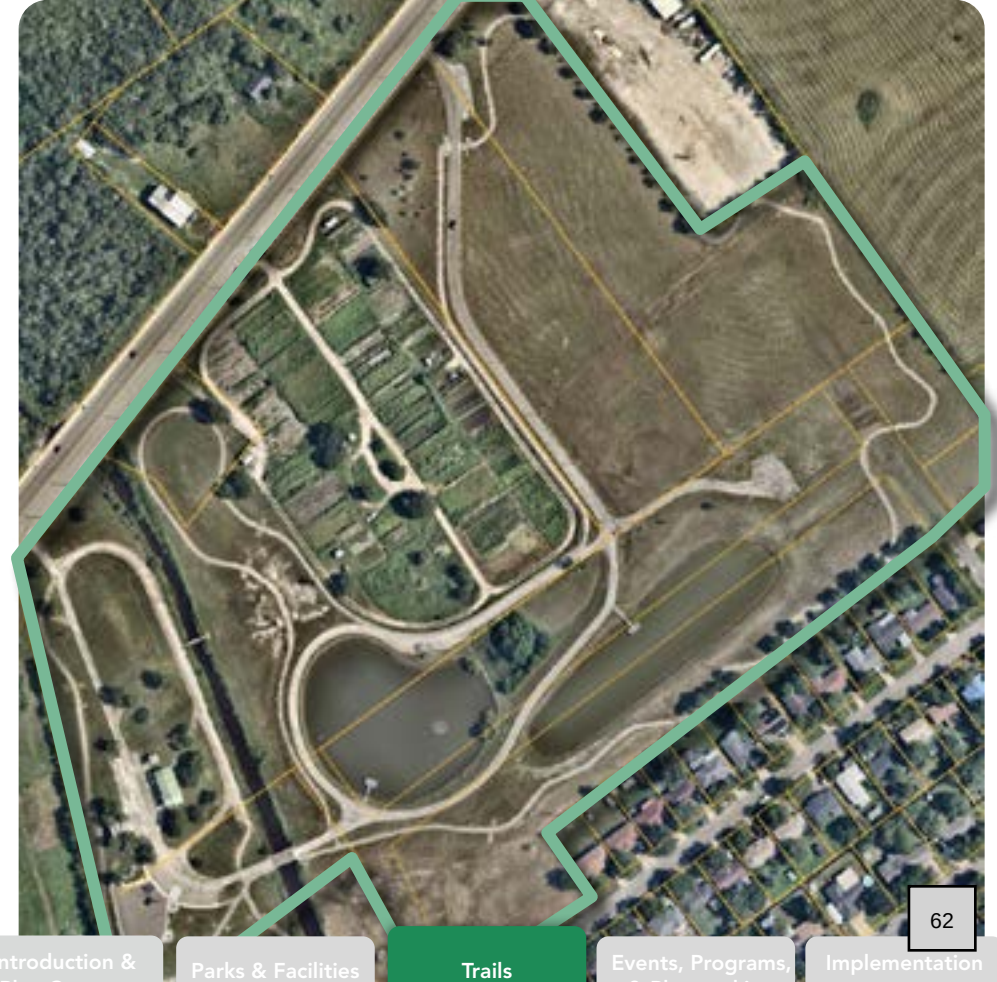
NEIGHBORHOOD PATH: Distance

PURPOSE:

»

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » N/A (County)



PLANNED TRAILS

SMITH HARBOR

NATURE TRAIL/COMMUNITY PATH: TBD

PURPOSE:

- » Provide a designated path for recreation and environmental education while protecting ecosystems from trampling
- » Serve as alternative, non-motorized transportation networks connecting neighborhoods to schools, jobs, and parks

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS:

- » Public access boardwalk (2026)
- » Lowland trails
- » 10' boardwalk along seawall



Smith Harbor Overall Map



Smith Harbor- Perspective View- Existing Conditions



Smith Harbor- Perspective View with Proposed Improvements

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS & LINKAGES

There are a number of locations in Port Lavaca where relatively minor trail projects can have an oversized impact for the local community. Six park sites were selected as case studies to illustrate the role of local trail-park linkages.

The impacts of these projects include:

- » Connect neighborhoods directly to adjacent parks
- » Introduce trails in currently underserved areas
- » Reroute bike and pedestrian traffic away from high-volume roadways



Legend:

- Conceptual Alignment
- Planned Trail
- Barrier (highway, floodplain, or railroad)

SECTION STRATEGIES

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS & LINKAGES

- » Consult with Union Pacific about constructing pedestrian bridges over their active tracks at key locations
- » Continue to coordinate with Union Pacific about acquiring the unused portion of tracks leading into Downtown and express interest in acquiring the southern spur should the opportunity arise
- » Consult with TXDOT about constructing pedestrian bridges over SH 35 at key locations
- » Consult with TXDOT about developing off-street trails within the ROW of SH 35
- » Identify and map the locations of all undeveloped City-owned properties, floodplains, and utility easements - relative to parks, schools, and neighborhoods - to determine possible additional trail linkages
- » Budget for ± 3.6 miles of local linkages annually



TRAIL CROSS SECTIONS

Typical trail cross sections have been developed to offer local agencies guidance for project development and trail design. These cross sections can serve as the basis for discussions with property owners, project engineers, landscape architects, and other stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of typical trail design elements. Additional trail design resources should be referenced in preliminary and final design phases.



COMMUNITY PATH

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL TRAILS

Building trails entails key considerations like user needs, environmental impact, sustainability, site specifics, and community/social factors.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

- » User-Centered: Define users to set width (8-14 ft), sight lines (400 ft), and features.
- » Access: Plan parking, access points, trail heads or location markers, and facilities.
- » Drainage: Use grade reversals, dips, and ensure the outside edge is lower for water flow.
- » Terrain: Use cross-slopes, avoid ridge tops, dry washes can be good, and use natural features to guide layout.
- » Loops: Create loops and avoid dead-ends for better user flow.
- » Safety: Design intersections carefully, ensure clear vertical clearance

ENVIRONMENT & SITE

- » Soil: Locate on stable, well-draining soil; avoid deep loam, clay.
- » Habitat: Minimize disruption, avoid fragmentation, and use quiet tools.
- » Water Crossings: Carefully select and design to prevent erosion.
- » Control Points: Use natural features like viewpoints, rock outcrops, or existing paths to guide the trail.
- » Dedication of adjacent development areas to conservation easements when bordering floodplains.

SUSTAINABILITY & MAINTENANCE

- » Build to Last: Use full bench construction on slopes, avoid water bars (use grade reversals instead).
- » Materials: Choose surfaces (rock, natural materials) for user satisfaction, accessibility, cost, and maintenance.
- » Management: Plan for maintenance capacity, user management (directional, dogs), and restoration of closed trails.



IN-PARK TRAIL



OFF-STREET TRAIL/GREENWAY



TRAIL MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS						
	Asphalt	Boardwalk	Re-Adapted Roads	Crushed Gravel	Natural Surface	Concrete
Cost Range	\$200 / linear foot	\$100 / square foot	\$0	\$50 / square foot	\$5 / square foot	\$35 / square foot
Ideal Conditions	Highly durable - High traffic, high use trails. Trails part of a multi-modal transportation network	Environmentally sensitive areas	Parks or natural areas where existing roads are converted to trails	Rail-to-trails, urban to rural trails, long-distance trails with lower grades (Can be built to meet ADA accessibility) guidelines	Natural areas, or open space patchwork in urban areas	Internal circulation, heavy use, areas prone to flooding, and greenway connectors

PADDLE TRAILS

Paddle Trails in and around Port Lavaca have been discussed and researched dating back to the 2012 Calhoun County Texas Shoreline Access Plan. In the time since, concerns about water choppiness has slowed significant advancement. With the anticipated completion of the offshore breakwater projects, Port Lavaca is again in a position to move forward with the development of paddle trails.

The City can prepare for the development of paddle trails by reviewing Texas Parks and Wildlife's desirable characteristics:

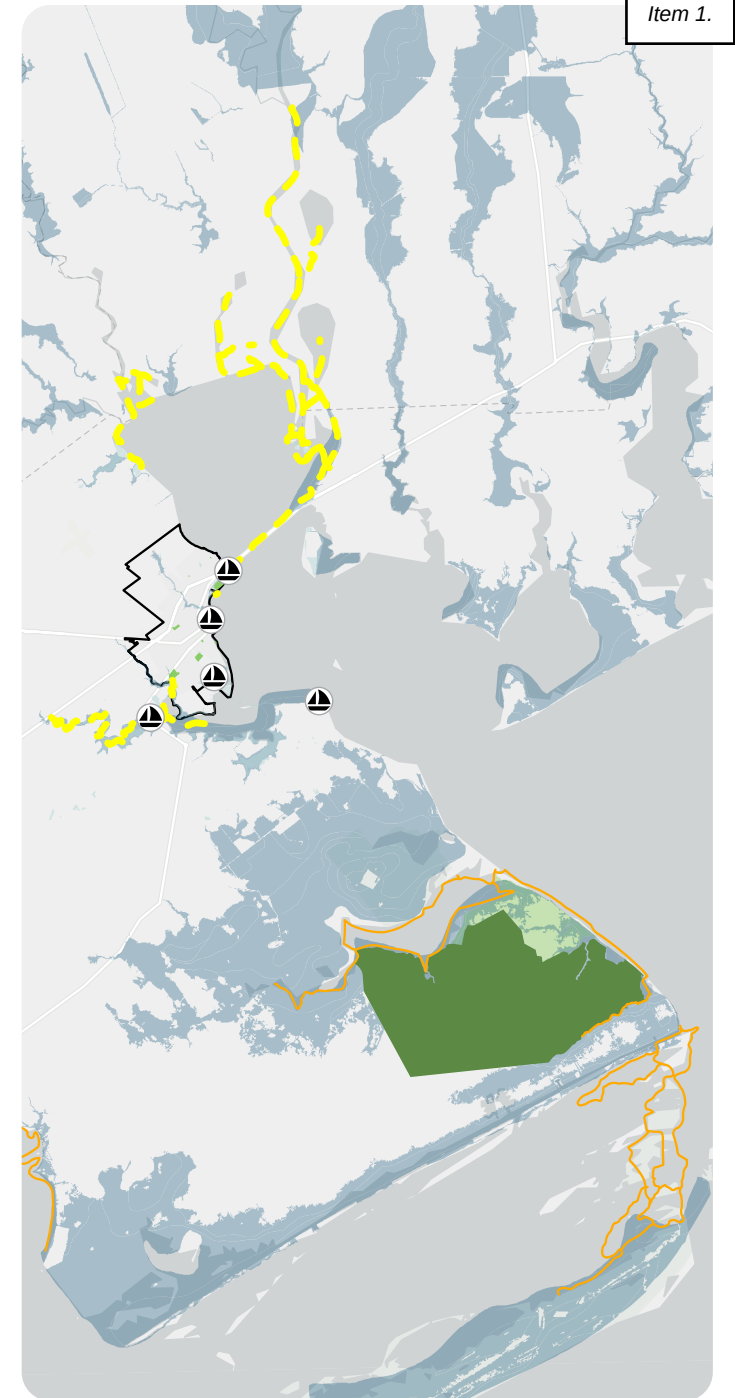
- » Public access must be a minimum of four paddling miles to a maximum of twelve paddling miles for each segment on linear trails; ponds, lakes and bays may be shorter
- » Presence of natural or historical attractions such as rapids, mature trees, wildlife diversity, historic sites, etc.
- » Adequate water quality, river flows or water depth (seasonal flows acceptable)
- » Local partner(s) to maintain put-in/take-outs and keep them clean
- » Canoe and kayak rentals from local sources (not required but helpful)
- » Designated parking
- » TPT marker signage and kiosk

KAYAK LAUNCHES

A kayak launch is a designated structure, like a ramp or floating platform, designed for safely and easily getting kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards into and out of the water, featuring stable surfaces, guide rails, or rollers to help paddlers board without getting wet or risking falls, making it ideal for beginners or varied water levels.



Kayak launch



Paddle Trails- Calhoun County



REGIONAL TRAILS

Regional trails are public, shared-use paths that connect communities, counties, and other jurisdictions, providing recreational and transportation corridors between cities, parks, and open spaces. Regional trails serve both recreational and transportation needs, providing opportunities for exercise, leisure, and non-motorized commuting

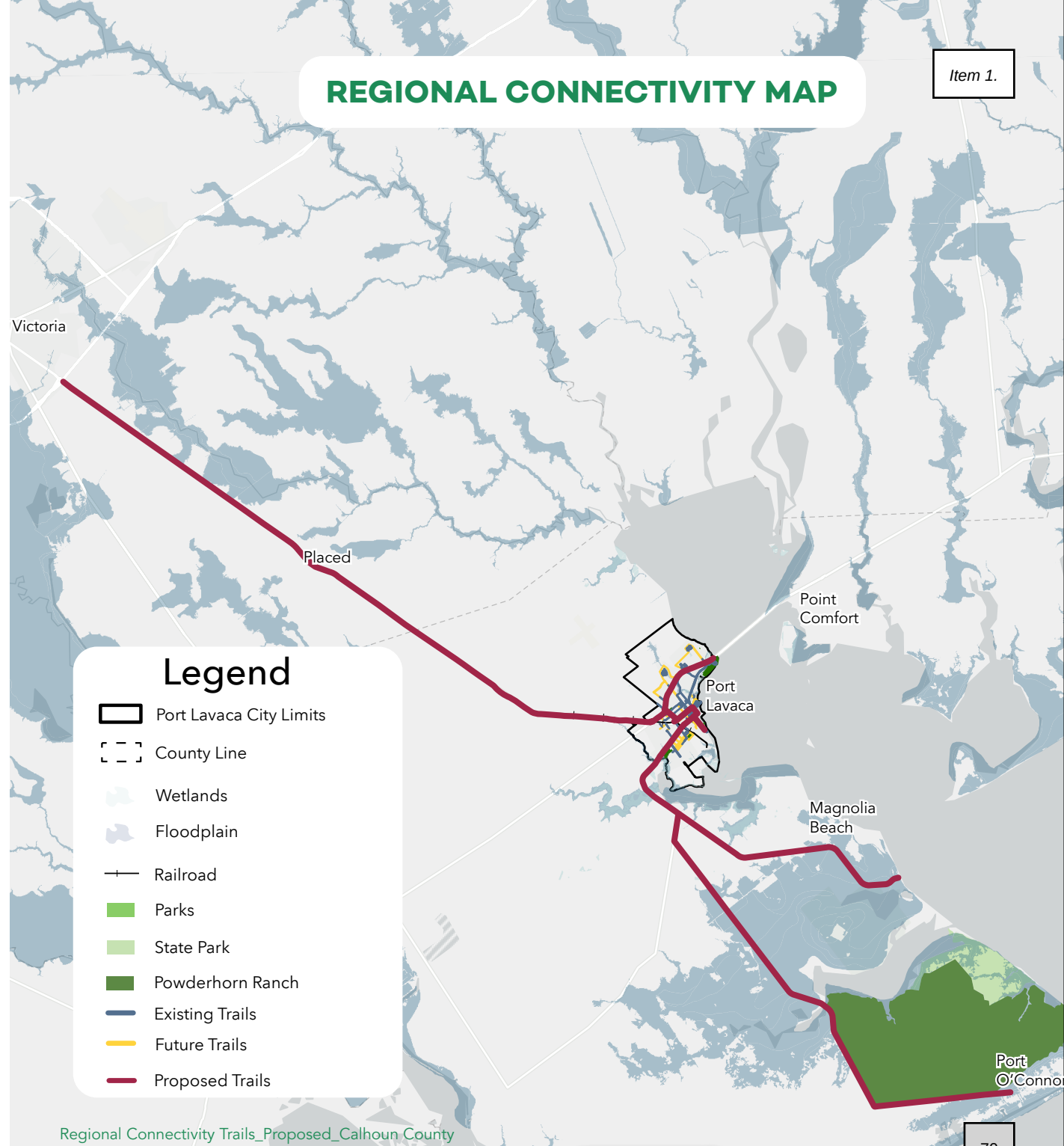
Regional trails are designed to be physically separate from vehicle traffic and are accessible to a variety of users. Trails can range from paved, multi-use paths to natural surface trails and help complete a larger, interconnected network of greenways.

Characteristics of regional trails include:

- » Geographic scope: They extend beyond local neighborhoods to link entire cities or regions
- » Shared use: They are multi-use paths designed for pedestrians, cyclists, and sometimes equestrians
- » Separation from traffic: They are typically physically separated from vehicle traffic, offering a safer and more pleasant experience. In some cases, they connect segments of off-road paths with on-road bikeways or sidewalks.
- » Connectivity: They serve as major arteries in a larger network, connecting local trails, parks, preserves, and other destinations.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY MAP

Item 1.



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TEXAS HERITAGE TRAIL PROGRAM

The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) award-winning heritage tourism initiative. This economic development initiative spans across 28 counties and promotes Texas' historic and cultural resources.

These successful local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites, and bring more dollars to Texas communities.

This, in turn, supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations. Each heritage region works to forge local tourism partnerships and support the region's attractions by developing its own unique blend of programs and promotions.



According to program data from the Texas Historical Commission:

- » 10.5% of all travel in Texas is heritage-related
- » \$33.5 billion of travel-related spending was generated just within the Texas Independence Trail Region in 2024
- » \$3.1 billion state and local taxes were generated from travel spending in the region
- » Over 220,000 jobs are supported by tourism spending within the region, with \$11.5 billion in travel-related earnings

SECTION STRATEGIES

Item 1.

PADDLE TRAILS

- » Formally express interest in the Texas Paddling Trails program via Texas Parks and Wildlife's Nature Tourism Program
- » Apply for the Texas Paddling Trails Program Community Application for Assistance
- » Upon completion of the breakwater project, commission a study to determine the experience level for a shoreline paddle trail along previous identified alignments
- » Identify City- and partner-owned waterfront sites that could host paddle-focused amenities
- » Budget for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of one kayak launch annually, beginning with existing public boat ramps and shoreline access sites

REGIONAL TRAILS

- » Establish a working group through the local Council of Governments or form a standalone group to explore the feasibility of a regional trail system from Victoria to Port Lavaca to Powderhorn State Park and Port O'Connor
- » In addition to partner communities, coordinate with TXDOT, Union Pacific, and utility providers to study easement opportunities for off-street trails
- » Submit historic sites and community events to Texas Time Travel, part of the Texas Historical Commission, to be featured online and on the organization's trip planning app
- » Coordinate with Calhoun County and TXDOT's Support Services Division to install signage along key roadways leading to Port Lavaca
- » Coordinate with the City of Port O'Connor and Texas Parks and Wildlife to bring the City and Powderhorn State Park into the existing trail network
- » Identify floodplains, wetlands, easements, and distressed properties adjacent to existing pocket parks that could be used to expand park footprints

CHAPTER RECAP

Chapter 3 explores how an expanded trail network and improved pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure can transform Port Lavaca into a multimodal, accessible, and active community. This chapter considers trails located within City parks as well as those functioning more like sidewalks outside of parks. It also considers a range of trail types, including those for walking, running, biking, and paddling.

This chapter also establishes the nexus between trails, recreational tourism, and economic development. It also identifies the potential of a trail system to directly link Port Lavaca to Powderhorn State Park.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

COMMUNITY TRAILS

- » 3.6 miles of last-mile trail connections recommended
- » Considerations identified to codify trail specification into the Master Thoroughfare Plan

PADDLE TRAILS

- » Seven locations identified for pilot paddle trail program

REGIONAL TRAILS

- » Heritage Trail Program identified and recommended
- » 45-mile regional greenway recommended

Item 1.



Beachfront View

SUMMARY OF TRAIL STRATEGIES



QUALITY OF LIFE: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Upon completion of the breakwater project, commission a study to determine the experience level for a shoreline paddle trail along previous identified alignments
- » Identify City and partner-owned waterfront sites that could host paddle-focused amenities
- » Budget for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of one kayak launch annually, beginning with existing public boat ramps and shoreline access sites
- » Formally express interest in the Texas Paddling Trails program via Texas Parks and Wildlife's Nature Tourism Program



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Identify and map the locations of all undeveloped City-owned properties, floodplains, and utility easements - relative to parks, schools, and neighborhoods - to determine possible additional trail linkages



EQUITABLE ACCESS: EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Coordinate with Calhoun County and TXDOT's Support Services Division to install signage along key roadways leading to Port Lavaca Accessibility and amenities for all ages and abilities
- » Coordinate with the of Port O'Connor and Texas



ECONOMIC VITALITY: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

- » In addition to partner communities, coordinate with TXDOT, Union Pacific, and utility providers to study easement opportunities for off-street trails
- » Submit historic sites and community events to Texas Time Travel, part of the Texas Historical Commission, to be featured online and on the organization's trip planning app
- » Apply for the Texas Paddling Trails Program Community Application for Assistance



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Establish a working group through the local Council of Governments or form a standalone group to explore the feasibility of a regional trail system from Victoria to Port Lavaca to Powderhorn State Park and Port O'Connor



Item 1.



PROGRAMS & PLACEMAKING 04



Port Lavaca Pier with Proposed Improvements (Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on elements of the parks, recreation, and trails system that occur within the parks and trails themselves, specifically events, recreation programming, and placemaking. It addresses how these spaces can be activated beyond their physical infrastructure to create social, cultural, and economic value for the community.

Events, programs, and placemaking initiatives transform parks from passive open spaces into active community assets. Well-designed programs support public health, youth development, social connection, and environmental stewardship, while also strengthening community identity and local pride. Even modest programs, such as seasonal events, volunteer days, or partnerships with local organizations can increase park usage, improve safety through regular activity, and demonstrate measurable return on investment for residents.

Some of the topics discussed herein are not currently provided as a service by the City due to limited staffing, funding, and operational capacity. Sustained investment is required to plan, deliver, and maintain high-quality programming and events. These topics are included to outline best practices, partnership opportunities, and phased implementation strategies so that, should there be sufficient community support and available resources in the future, the City has a clear and practical roadmap for expansion.

KEY FEEDBACK

- » Strong interest in rentals for kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, etc. near the water
- » Community/recreation center with indoor facilities and multi-generational amenities/programs, such as sports courts and pool
- » Community events, such as live music or movies in the park;
- » Development of league sports through a future Parks Department
- » Recreation-focused private businesses provided activities like paintball/airsoft, ropes courses, and BMX
- » Boat ramps are popular, but more for fishing than sailing or general boating

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



QUALITY OF LIFE: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Introduction of a community recreation center
- » Introduction of league play, youth sports, and in-park community programs
- » Recreational facilities that go beyond sports



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Community events that celebrate and give back to Port Lavaca's coastal resources
- » Public spaces that can withstand Texas summers and hurricane season



EQUITABLE ACCESS: EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Public spaces that are accessible and enjoyable for all residents, year-round



ECONOMIC VITALITY: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

- » Public spaces with amenities and flexibility to support crowds and a range of events
- » Vibrant calendar of events year-round for residents and visitors alike



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Deliberate use of placemaking principles to design public spaces



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:

Item 1.

Within the context of a parks and recreation department, program management is the strategic oversight of diverse activities (sports, events, classes) to meet community needs, ensuring efficient use of resources (staff, budget, facilities) to achieve organizational goals like public engagement and well-being. Program management requires planning, execution, budgeting, evaluation, and alignment with departmental mission.

This section reviews common service offerings of parks and recreation departments, recognizing that such offerings are currently not feasible. Through the 2000s, Port Lavaca City had a standalone Parks and Recreation department, but the Director position was never backfilled when the then-director left. The department was rolled into Public Works, where it remains. Public Works maintains the parks, while the YMCA provides pool access to residents through an agreement with the City.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Port Lavaca does not currently offer indoor recreation or recreational programming within the parks. While the existing, relatively robust park system has been manageable for the Public Works department and allocated park staff, it is likely that the system could better serve residents in a standalone capacity. With the caveat that the City of Port Lavaca can realistically only provide so many services without indoor recreation and the resources of a standalone parks-first department, this section will review the City's core program areas, service format, program inventory, program distribution, and age segmentation.



RECREATION LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)

Nationally, parks agencies offer a median of 250 programs annually, while communities smaller than 20,000 offer 45. Of these, 83% are fee-based. The vast majority of these programs (91%) are themed special events, such as movies or concerts in the park, cultural events, or holiday festivities.

Other common programs include social recreation events (88%), team sports (86%), health and wellness education (82%), and fitness classes (82%). There are several types of programs focused specifically on children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Of agencies serving communities of less than 20,000 residents, 93% offer a youth summer camp, 85% provide older adult programs, 85% offer programs for people with disabilities, and 82% provide teen programs.

Most park agencies offer indoor recreation centers (63%) and community centers (60%). Just over half provide permanent or semi-permanent restrooms (52%), and two in five agencies offer performance amphitheaters (43%) and senior centers (41%). Approximately one-third of agencies offer a nature center (35%) or aquatic center





INDOOR RECREATION

Indoor recreation refers to physical, social, and wellness activities held in indoor public facilities such as recreation centers, gymnasiums, fitness studios, or multi-purpose halls. These spaces allow parks departments to offer year-round programming regardless of weather conditions - critical in Texas communities where heat, storms, or flooding can limit outdoor use. Indoor recreational programming can include sports leagues, dance and fitness classes, senior activities, arts and crafts, youth camps, and community events. Recreation centers also play a vital role in climate resilience by offering a safe, conditioned space for cooling/warming stations, storm shelters, or disaster recovery zones as a resilience hub.

Although there is broad, stated community interest in expanded indoor recreation opportunities, Port Lavaca voters have historically been reluctant to approve bond-funded initiatives, creating uncertainty around the feasibility of a new, City-led recreation facility.

It is worth noting that city-sponsored indoor recreation centers remain common in communities of Port Lavaca's size and peer context; however, until residents indicate a willingness to fund a formal recreation center, strengthening and expanding the City's partnership with the YMCA represents a practical interim solution to meet indoor recreation needs.

Item 1.

There is no universal standard for the size of a community center, as the appropriate square footage depends heavily on the specific needs and desired programming of the local population. For a city of 12,000 people, the size could range from as little as 12,000 square feet for a basic facility to a much larger center if it includes extensive recreational amenities like gymnasiums and pools. The size and scale of a community center should be determined through a comprehensive needs assessment.

According to NRPA, Americans are increasingly seeking expanded services, amenities, and programs on top of traditional community/recreation center offerings like gyms, out-of-school kids programming, and aquatics.

These expanding expectations include:

- » Healthy living classes (51%)
- » Programming for older adults (46%)
- » Nature-based activities (45%)
- » Access to computers and the internet (43%)
- » Inclusive facilities for all needs and abilities (41%)
- » Health clinics and services (38%)

PROGRAMS INVENTORY

The following is a list of major program categories that park and recreation agencies throughout the country commonly provide. This list helps identify common program areas not offered by the City. Items in **blue** are provided by the City, while *italicized* items are provided by a different public entity - most often Calhoun County via the Calhoun County Library(*), Fairgrounds, or the YMCA.

- » Active Adult Programs*
- » Aquatics
- » Arts
- » Before/After School
- » **Biking**
- » **Birdwatching**
- » Child Care
- » Child Programs*
- » Cooking
- » Dance
- » Day/School Break Camps
- » Disc Golf
- » Esports
- » Early Childhood /Preschool
- » **Environmental/Nature**
- » Extreme Sports
- » Fitness
- » Golf
- » Gymnastics/Tumbling
- » *Historical Programs*
- » Horseback Riding
- » Ice Skating/Hockey
- » *Language Arts/Foreign Language**
- » *Lifelong Learning**
- » Martial Arts
- » Music
- » Open Gym
- » Outdoor Adventure
- » **Pickleball***
- » *Seniors*
- » **Special/Community Events**
- » Specialty Camps
- » Sports
- » STEM/STEAM Summer Camps (Daylong)
- » Sustainability/Green
- » *Teen Programs**
- » Tennis
- » Theatre/Acting
- » Therapeutic Recreation

CALHOUN COUNTY LIBRARY

The Calhoun County Library System serves over 20,000 citizens, and its main branch is the Calhoun County Public Library in Port Lavaca. Though not directly adjacent to any City-owned parks, this library is just .5 miles from Bayfront Peninsula Park and 1 mile from City (Tilley) Park. This physical proximity encourages collaboration between library and park professionals.

THE HERITAGE CENTER

The Heritage Center is operated by The Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association. Sixty-nine percent of the senior citizens in Calhoun county are low income and forty-eight percent are minorities. Without the services provided by this organization would be unable to exist independently on their fixed income.



EMERGING TRENDS LEVERAGING ASSETS

Underutilized land or properties, with the right private partner, can make excellent candidates for amenities like indoor climbing walls, paintball parks, and BMX tracks. These amenities are likely more risk than the City cares to be liable for - but these attractions could generate jobs and tax revenue while also providing more activities for teens and possibly attracting regional tourists.



Paintball Outdoor Amenity



Bike Park



Indoor Rock Climbing Amenity



Kids Indoor Play Area

MAKERSPACES

A makerspace is a public space that is home to all types of tools from carpentry equipment and ceramics materials, to media studios and robotics labs. Each makerspace offers unique tools and materials to suit the needs of its particular community. Makerspaces are hubs of education: they will offer classes and have staff on hand to help patrons learn to use the equipment offered. An important feature of makerspaces is that they are accessible to any community member that is interested in participating. For communities like Port Lavaca, incorporating maker spaces into parks expands the role of recreation from purely leisure to include economic development, workforce readiness, and intergenerational learning. These spaces can host DIY workshops, robotics clubs, gardening classes, or craft markets, blending creative placemaking with educational programming. This approach fosters community resilience by offering low-barrier access to skills training and innovation.



ESPORTS

Esports is a term used to describe organized, competitive video gaming. Esports are typically player vs player games, played in a league or tournament structure. Similar to regular, professional sports teams, esports is also a spectator event.

Esports reaches more viewers than all other major sports leagues, with the exception of the NFL. Twitch, which is owned by Amazon and is the leading streaming service for esports, also averages around 15 million daily viewers. Esports are increasingly part of parks and recreation programs, with many cities nationwide integrating gaming into their services to foster community, collaboration, and skill development. Departments, from small towns to major cities like Philadelphia, Dallas, and Aurora, are offering dedicated gaming spaces, consoles, and tournaments.

According to the National Alliance for Youth Sports Poll, 70 percent of kids stop participating in traditional sports, such as little leagues and recreational teams, by the age of 13. Likewise, 90 percent of 12-17-year-olds participate in playing video games. Gaming is a hobby that sticks with youth throughout the majority of their life.

More than 1,200 high schools and 300 colleges now have programs, many of which also often provide academic support. Through these programs, teens can begin to learn career paths they could take within esports — going pro is not the only avenue. Team management, event production, broadcasting and even sports health all fall within the realm of esports. Via connecting with local colleges and high schools, park and recreation agencies can begin to foster 'esports ecosystems' in their community. Scholarships could be awarded for winning leagues, and departments can find ways to engage their community via the varsity programs these schools may offer.



ESPORTS VS. VIDEO GAMES

Esports are a competitive, team activity meant to be played in leagues. Therefore, it is imperative that any future program be differentiated by:

- » Video games that match what is being played at the competitive level
- » Coaching and mentorship by individuals who are gamers
- » In-person facilities that allow youth to congregate and socialize
- » Dedicated spaces and facilities

SECTION STRATEGIES

Item 1.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- » Work with City Council to initiate the process of establishing a recreation element to the Parks Department with a dedicated Parks Director
- » Budget for a director level hire.
- » Update the City website better to connect users to County- and TPW-managed facilities
- » Update the City website to better showcase the City's parks including new photography, consistent naming and addressing, sort functionality, and all reservation/cost information and links
- » Incorporate QR codes for reporting issues, providing maps, and sharing safety tips.
- » Implement asset management software to track condition, repairs, and lifecycle replacement schedules.

INDOOR RECREATION & RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

- » Identify expanded partnership opportunities with the YMCA, such as swim lessons and aquatic safety
- » Explore partnership opportunities to use vacant public property for semi-permanent uses like bouldering/climbing, paintball, or airsoft.
- » Coordinate with Calhoun County ISD and Calhoun County Library to explore esports,
- » Fill in programmatic gaps for adult fitness and wellness, nature, aquatic, and inclusive and adaptive program areas.
- » Issue an open call to churches, private rec centers, and other entities that have indoor recreation facilities, youth sports, after-school/daycare, and seniors events on their grounds; establish partnerships via 380 agreement to spread awareness of the facilities and provide access for residents at a fraction of the cost of a flagship recreation center.
- » Commission a Community Center Master Plan that provides an initial feasibility study and design program.
- » Any feasibility study should evaluate potential partnerships with Calhoun County
- » Incorporate features that can allow this facility to act as an emergency shelter during severe weather events.
- » Include commercial kitchen equipment in recreational centers; this opens potential to utilize space as a resilience hub during disaster events or to earn revenue by renting out space for events.
- » Co-locate indoor recreation space with libraries, public health clinics, or parks/trail networks to increase benefits.
- » In coordination with the EDC, conduct a STEM feasibility study focused on Esports and Makerspaces

SECTION STRATEGIES (CONT.)

LEVERAGING ASSETS

- » Issue an open call to local landowners to explore interest in establishing a private paintball, airsoft, high ropes, or dirtbike park
- » In coordination with the Parks Board, TIRZ Board and/or Port Lavaca Economic Development Corporation, establish a small business grant and support program that could:
 - » Partially fund site assessments or designs for prospective sites
 - » Contribute to basic renovations or site improvements
 - » Provide advertising and promotion
 - » Negotiate for voluntary public park areas, trail easements, or coastline dedication

MAKER SPACES

- » Identify existing makers, hobbyists, clubs, schools, libraries, and small manufacturers
- » Bring together potential partners: libraries, schools, community colleges, economic development staff, nonprofits, and local makers.
- » Start small and flexible: community centers, park buildings, recreation facilities, or shared library space.
- » Confirm basic requirements: power, ventilation, storage, safety, ADA access, and insurance.
- » Design for adaptability rather than permanence in the initial phase
- » Launch Core, Low-Barrier Programming by beginning with introductory and inclusive offerings:
 - » Open lab hours
 - » Basic workshops (e.g., crafts, woodworking, digital fabrication)
 - » Youth and teen programs
 - » Keep costs low or free to build participation and trust.
 - » Prioritize learning and community-building over advanced equipment at first.
 - » Host maker meetups, demonstrations, and showcases.
 - » Tour an existing makerspace, such as The MakerBarn in Magnolia or the jaX lab at TAMU Victoria



Item 1.

PLACEMAKING

This section addresses elements of placemaking that apply to Port Lavaca's parks and trails. Placemaking is a collaborative process of transforming public spaces into vibrant, community-focused destinations by leveraging local assets, culture, and potential, making them healthier, happier, and more engaging places for people to live, work, and play, often involving grassroots efforts and community input.

Placemaking focuses on the human experience in shared areas, enhancing social connection, community identity, and well-being through thoughtful design and programming. At its core, placemaking is:

- » **COMMUNITY-DRIVEN:** It emphasizes public participation, using residents' knowledge to create spaces that truly serve their needs and reflect their vision.
- » **PEOPLE-CENTERED:** The goal is to create spaces designed for people, not just cars or buildings, fostering human interaction and comfort.
- » **MULTI-FACETED:** It combines urban design, public art, programming, and cultural elements, from large-scale projects to small, tactical interventions like pop-up parks or painted crosswalks.
- » **ASSET-FOCUSED:** It builds on a community's unique strengths, history, and natural features to create a strong sense of place and identity.



SOCIABILITY, USES, & ACTIVITIES

ALL AGES & ABILITIES

Nearly 30 percent of Americans have a disability of some kind, be it physical or mental. As a key means to exercise, play, and nature, it is critical that the Parks and Recreation System be designed for every single resident and visitor to Port Lavaca. Accessible parks and trails for all ages and abilities are designed to be inclusive, ensuring that people with disabilities, seniors, young children, and individuals with limited mobility or sensory challenges can fully use and enjoy park amenities. Accessibility includes physical features (like ADA-compliant paths, ramps, and playgrounds), as well as sensory, cognitive, and social components, such as wayfinding signage, shaded seating, and quiet zones. For communities like Port Lavaca, which serve a diverse population including aging adults and families with young children, prioritizing accessibility is key to equity and public health.

For more information, visit [NRPA Parks for Inclusion Program](#).



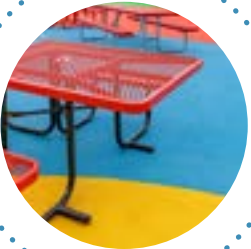
MENTAL CHALLENGES



ACCESSIBLE SURFACES AND STRUCTURES



MULTI-SENSORY



ACCESSIBLE AMENITIES



PHYSICAL CHALLENGES



FLEXIBLE AND FORGIVING IN USE



SPECIAL EVENTS

Parks and recreational spaces yield significant economic benefits for communities like Port Lavaca. In 2021, NRPA reported that local public park and recreation agencies across the United States generated more than \$200 billion in economic activity and supported over 1 million jobs. Beyond direct economic contributions, the presence of parks increases nearby property values by upwards of 20%, benefiting both homeowners and tax revenues.

The most successful tourism destinations are places that first become great places for residents. By investing in connected parks, trails, waterfront spaces, and authentic recreational experiences, Port Lavaca can strengthen its position as a premier Gulf Coast recreation and nature tourism destination while enhancing daily life for the people who call it home.

Port Lavaca's greatest tourism asset is not a single attraction, it's the combination of coastal landscapes, waterfront access, birding opportunities, trails, fishing, parks, and community character. Recreational tourism should therefore focus on creating a seamless network of experiences that encourage visitors to explore the waterfront, attend events, access nature, and support local businesses. The result is a strategy where investments in parks, trails, waterfronts, and placemaking accomplish multiple goals simultaneously.

RECREATIONAL TOURISM

BUILD FOR RESIDENTS, TOURISTS WILL FOLLOW

Successful destinations are places where people genuinely want to live, walk, gather, and spend time. Walkable districts, active public spaces, local businesses, shade, trails, and community gathering areas serve residents while simultaneously making the city more attractive to visitors.

CREATE EXPERIENCES, NOT JUST FACILITIES

Visitors are drawn to memorable experiences and authentic connections rather than isolated attractions. Places become successful when they offer opportunities for gathering, exploration, and discovery.

- » Birdwatching
- » Fishing tournaments
- » Paddling adventures
- » Environmental education
- » Nature-based recreation
- » Waterfront festivals



Fishing Event- Adobe Stock

RECREATIONAL TOURISM (Cont.)

RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Sidewalks, bike paths, gathering spaces, and public amenities are economic development investments because they encourage people to stay longer and spend more money locally. These amenities enhance recreation opportunities for residents while strengthening Port Lavaca's identity as a Gulf Coast outdoor recreation destination:

- » Bayfront trails and waterfront promenades
- » Paddling routes and kayak launches
- » Wildlife observation areas
- » Fishing access points
- » Regional trail connections

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DESTINATIONS

Successful tourism destinations are interconnected rather than isolated. Visitors enjoy exploring multiple destinations through comfortable walking, cycling, and trail networks.

- » Waterfront trail systems
- » Connections between parks and neighborhoods
- » Regional trail opportunities
- » Downtown-to-waterfront linkages
- » Connections to future regional recreation destinations

SMALL IMPROVEMENTS CAN GENERATE BIG RETURNS

Implementing focused, incremental improvements that can be tested, refined, and expanded over time rather than relying solely on large capital projects.

These relatively modest investments can improve visitor experiences quickly while building momentum toward larger long-term projects:

- » Enhanced directional signage
- » Interpretive birding and ecology panels
- » Trail markers and mileage signage
- » Kayak rental partnerships
- » Temporary event activations
- » Pop-up waterfront programming
- » Public art installations
- » Seasonal recreational events



ONGOING & PLANNED SPECIAL EVENTS

Public spaces are the heartbeat of a vibrant and thriving community, and in Port Lavaca, parks play a central role in bringing people together for connection, celebration, and everyday enjoyment. Port Lavaca hosts a variety of annual events that energize the City and generate revenue.

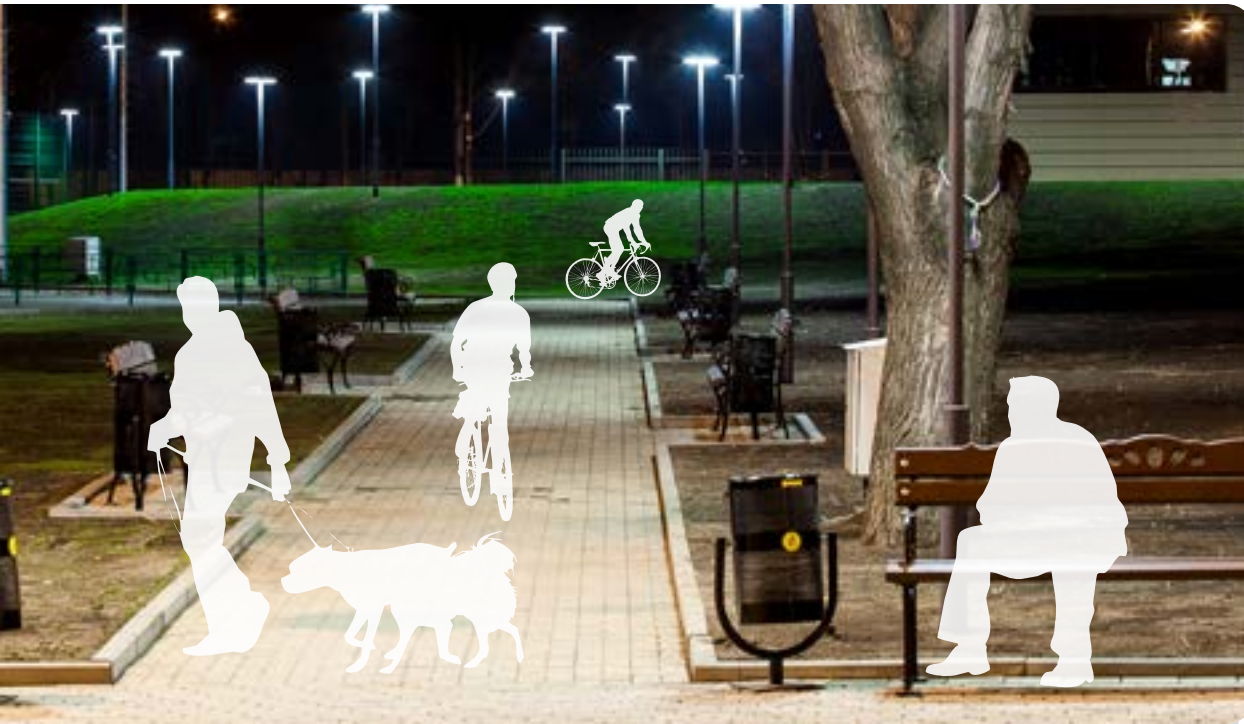


COMFORT & IMAGE

SAFETY

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the use of smart design to make spaces safer and more welcoming, focusing on natural surveillance (clear sightlines), natural access control (defined entrances), territorial reinforcement (sense of ownership), activity support (encouraging use), and excellent maintenance.

- » Define formal entry points and boundaries with signage or design features.
- » Consolidate informal trails by converting into formal paths or decommissioning with vegetation or barriers.
- » Install low-cost guidance elements (bollards, fencing, landscaping) and utilize controlled vehicle access protocols, such as lockable gates or collapsible bollards for after-hours security and event management.
- » Place benches and gathering areas so they are visible from main circulation routes
- » Install dark sky-friendly lighting along high-use corridors, parking lots, and pavilions
- » Identify high incident location and create a rapid-response protocol (24–72 hours) for graffiti, vandalism, and damaged infrastructure.
- » Evaluate public Wi-Fi hotspots in major destinations to support real-time communication.
- » Work with neighborhood associations to conduct periodic “walk audits”



FURNITURE, SHADE, & COOLING

Street and trail furniture are crucial in parks and recreation planning for placemaking by enhancing safety, fostering social interaction, promoting sustainability, guiding movement, and creating a strong sense of place and beauty, transforming functional spaces into vibrant community assets that encourage physical activity and belonging through elements like comfortable seating, bike racks, waste bins, and art.

High temperatures and intense sunlight are common challenges that can significantly impact the enjoyment and safety of public parks and recreation spaces. Thoughtful planning for heat is essential to protect residents' health. Prolonged exposure to heat can increase the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, especially among vulnerable groups such as children and seniors. To mitigate these risks, the City should

- » Plant shade trees throughout playgrounds and walkways
- » Continue installing shaded picnic pavilions and seating areas
- » Use heat-reflective and permeable materials for paths and playground surfaces
- » Incorporate water features such as splash pads or misting stations
- » Ensuring that drinking fountains are readily available
- » Utilize heat safety signage or adjust operating hours during extreme heat events

By prioritizing these elements in parks and recreation planning, Port Lavaca can create more comfortable, welcoming spaces while supporting public health and encouraging year-round outdoor activity, even in the face of rising temperatures.

TREES

As Port Lavaca continues to evolve, the need to protect and expand its tree canopy, green spaces, and natural systems becomes increasingly important. With population and household growth expected over the next several years, expanding development brings new challenges, particularly around preserving the city's coastal prairie landscape and managing environmental impacts. Trees and open space play a critical role in reducing heat, improving air quality, and supporting stormwater management. Restoring riparian corridors along creeks and drainage areas helps prevent flooding, improves water quality, and preserves the region's natural character.

Current national trends show an increasing preference for nature-based recreation and shaded outdoor areas, especially among older adults. With nearly one in five residents over the age of 65, the City should prioritize accessible green infrastructure—such as shaded walking trails, seating areas, and native gardens—that support passive recreation and aging in place. Expanding tree canopy and park access doesn't just support health and livability—it also boosts economic value, with homes near green spaces often experiencing higher property values and greater curb appeal.

To meet future needs, Port Lavaca should continue investing in tree planting, riparian restoration, and the integration of natural features into its parks and trails. As demand for outdoor recreation grows, these efforts will help strengthen the city's resilience, foster a stronger local economy, and ensure that Port Lavaca remains a healthy, beautiful, and connected community for generations to come.



SUGGESTED PLANTS & SHADE TREES



LIVE OAK



AUTOGRAPH TREE



WAX MYRTLE



MEXICAN OLIVE TREE



TEXAS SAGE



MEXICAN FAN PALM

SECTION STRATEGIES

SOCIABILITY, USES, & ACTIVITIES

- » Integrate universal design standards into all park infrastructure, including piers, boat launches, and playgrounds
- » Create flexible indoor and outdoor recreation areas for fitness, wellness, and community programs.
- » Design multi-generational recreation areas, including:
 - » Playgrounds, splash pads, and skate plazas/features.
 - » Fitness stations, jogging trails, and sports courts.
 - » Shaded seating, accessible pathways, and low-impact exercise zones.
- » Conduct an ADA assessment to determine what types of retrofits can improve ADA accessibility.
- » Support local businesses through vendor opportunities, pop-up markets, and collaborations with restaurants, breweries, and artisans.
- » Foster public-private partnerships to expand event funding, sponsorships, and programming.
- » Activate underutilized spaces with such as food truck courts, live performance spaces, and seasonal/temporary pop-ups/installations
- » Install multi-use features (e.g., lawn areas, flexible shade shelters, portable seating) to support varied community events.
- » Create small activity nodes every ½–1 mile along long trails to encourage continuous circulation.
- » Encourage third-parties (youth groups, nonprofits, businesses) to host activities through simplified permitting and low-cost use agreements.
- » Coordinate with schools and youth organizations to host stewardship and environmental learning days.
- » Develop an “Adopt-a-Park” program inviting neighborhoods, businesses, and volunteers to provide support and monitoring.
- » Enhance/evaluate the rotating seasonal event schedule, ensuring at least one major community event per quarter
- » Develop partnerships with local schools and organizations to host a youth-focused gathering or event.
- » Develop partnerships with local organizations to host a senior-focused gathering or event.
- » Provide affordable vendor spaces at community events, allowing local entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services.
- » Increase marketing and promotion of programs and special events
- » Create and launch a Block Party Trailer that can be rented for neighborhood events
- » Launch a collaboration with the School District to link student volunteers, who need community volunteer hours, with the City’s events team to provide outreach assistance, setup, cleanup, and event staffing.
- » Implement a “Patio Night Series” featuring live music, art walks, and open-air dining experiences and invite indoor dining facilities to activate parking spaces outside their business
- » Develop a promotional campaign with digital marketing, social media highlights, and printed event guides.
- » Commission a tourism strategic plan to:
 - » Identify resources and assets needed to support special events, including public and private spaces
 - » Review and prioritize the next round of long-term improvements from the Waterfront Master Plan
 - » Identify the public and private spaces needed to support special events
 - » Determine use needs for future parks while they are still in the Level 1
- » Formulate and launch a recreation focused campaign to attract snowbirds, partners, vendors, sponsors, and new development

COMFORT & IMAGE

- » Define formal entry points and boundaries with signage, gateway elements, or design features.
- » Consolidate informal trails by converting into formal paths or decommissioning with vegetation or barriers.
- » Install low-cost guidance elements (bollards, fencing, landscaping) and utilize controlled vehicle access protocols, such as lockable gates or collapsible bollards for after-hours security and event management.
- » Place benches and gathering areas so they are visible from main circulation routes
- » Install dark sky-friend lighting along high-use corridors, parking lots, and pavilions
- » Identify high incident location and create a rapid-response protocol (24–72 hours) for graffiti, vandalism, and damaged infrastructure.
- » Evaluate public Wi-Fi hotspots in major destinations to support real-time communication.
- » Work with neighborhood associations to conduct periodic “walk audits”
- » Plant shade trees throughout playgrounds and walkways
- » Continue installing shaded picnic pavilions and seating areas
- » Use heat-reflective and permeable materials for paths and playground surfaces
- » Incorporate water features such as splash pads or misting stations
- » Ensuring that drinking fountains are readily available
- » Utilize heat safety signage or adjust operating hours during extreme heat events



CHAPTER RECAP

This chapter focuses on elements of the parks, recreation, and trails system that occur within the parks and trails themselves, specifically events, recreation programming, and placemaking. It addresses how these spaces can be activated beyond their physical infrastructure to create social, cultural, and economic value for the community.

Events, programs, and placemaking initiatives transform parks from passive open spaces into active community assets. Well-designed programs support public health, youth development, social connection, and environmental stewardship, while also strengthening community identity and local pride. Even modest programs, such as seasonal events, volunteer days, or partnerships with local organizations can increase park usage, improve safety through regular activity, and demonstrate measurable return on investment for residents.

Some of the topics discussed herein are not currently provided as a service by the City due to limited staffing, funding, and operational capacity. Sustained investment is required to plan, deliver, and maintain high-quality programming and events. These topics are included to outline best practices, partnership opportunities, and phased implementation strategies so that, should there be sufficient community support and available resources in the future, the City has a clear and practical roadmap for expansion.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



SUMMARY OF PROGRAMMING & PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES

Item 1.



QUALITY OF LIFE: ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS BY PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GREEN SPACES.

- » Work with City Council to initiate the process of establishing a recreation element to the Parks Department with a dedicated Parks Director
- » Budget for a director level hire.
- » Update the City website better to connect users to County- and TPW-managed facilities
- » Update the City website to better showcase the City's parks including new photography, consistent naming and addressing, sort functionality, and all reservation/cost information and links
- » Incorporate QR codes for reporting issues, providing maps, and sharing safety tips.
- » Implement asset management software to track condition, repairs, and lifecycle replacement schedules.
- » Integrate universal design standards into all park infrastructure, including piers, boat launches, and playgrounds
- » Create flexible indoor and outdoor recreation areas for fitness, wellness, and community programs.
- » Design multi-generational recreation areas, including:
 - » Playgrounds, splash pads, and skate plazas/features.
 - » Fitness stations, jogging trails, and sports courts.
 - » Shaded seating, accessible pathways, and low-impact exercise zones.
- » Conduct an ADA assessment to determine what types of retrofits can improve ADA accessibility.
- » Install multi-use features (e.g., lawn areas, flexible shade shelters, portable seating) to support varied community events.
- » Create small activity nodes every ½–1 mile along long trails to encourage continuous circulation.
- » Encourage third-parties (youth groups, nonprofits, businesses) to host activities through simplified permitting and low-cost use agreements.
- » Coordinate with schools and youth organizations to host stewardship and environmental learning days.
- » Develop an "Adopt-a-Park" program inviting neighborhoods, businesses, and volunteers to provide support and monitoring.
- » Enhance/evaluate the rotating seasonal event schedule, ensuring at least one major community event per quarter
- » Develop partnerships with local schools and organizations to host a youth-focused gathering or event.
- » Develop partnerships with local organizations to host a senior-focused gathering or event.
- » Increase marketing and promotion of programs and special events
- » Create and launch a Block Party Trailer that can be rented for neighborhood events
- » Launch a collaboration with the School District to link student volunteers, who need community volunteer hours, with the City's events team to provide outreach assistance, setup, cleanup, and event staffing.
- » Implement a "Patio Night Series" featuring live music, art walks, and open-air dining experiences and invite indoor dining facilities to activate parking spaces
- » Define formal entry points and boundaries with signage, gateway elements, or design features.
- » Consolidate informal trails by converting into formal paths or decommissioning with vegetation or barriers.

- » Install low-cost guidance elements (bollards, fencing, landscaping) and utilize controlled vehicle access protocols, such as lockable gates or collapsible bollards for after-hours security and event management.
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- » Incorporate water features such as splash pads or misting stations
- » Ensuring that drinking fountains are readily available
- » Utilize heat safety signage or adjust operating hours during extreme heat events

Item 1.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

- » Plant shade trees throughout playgrounds and walkways
- » Use heat-reflective and permeable materials for paths and playground surfaces



EQUITABLE ACCESS: EXPAND ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH MULTI-MODAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

- » Identify expanded partnership opportunities with the YMCA, such as swim lessons and aquatic safety
- » Explore partnership opportunities to use vacant public property for semi-permanent uses like bouldering/climbing, paintball, or airsoft.
- » Coordinate with Calhoun County ISD and Calhoun County Library to explore esports,
- » Fill in programmatic gaps for adult fitness and wellness, nature, aquatic, and inclusive and adaptive program areas.
- » Issue an open call to churches, private rec centers, and other entities that have indoor recreation facilities, youth sports, after-school/daycare, and seniors events on their grounds; establish partnerships via 380 agreement to spread awareness of the facilities and provide access for residents at a fraction of the cost of a flagship recreation center.
- » Commission a Community Center Master Plan that provides an initial feasibility study and design program.
- » Any feasibility study should evaluate potential partnerships with Calhoun County
- » Incorporate features that can allow this facility to act as an emergency shelter during severe weather events.
- » Include commercial kitchen equipment in recreational centers; this opens potential to utilize space as a resilience hub during disaster events or to earn revenue by renting out space for events.
- » Co-locate indoor recreation space with libraries, public health clinics, or parks/trail networks to increase benefits.
- » In coordination with the EDC, conduct a STEM feasibility study focused on Esports and Makerspaces



ECONOMIC VITALITY: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH RECREATIONAL TOURISM, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES.

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- » Issue an open call to local landowners to explore interest in establishing a private paintball, airsoft, high ropes, or dirtbike park
- » In coordination with the Parks Board, TIRZ Board and/or Port Lavaca Economic Development Corporation, establish a small business grant and support program that could:
 - » Partially fund site assessments or designs for prospective sites
 - » Contribute to basic renovations or site improvements
 - » Provide advertising and promotion
 - » Negotiate for voluntary public park areas, trail easements, or coastline dedication
 - » Support local businesses through vendor opportunities, pop-up markets, and collaborations with restaurants, breweries, and artisans.
 - » Foster public-private partnerships to expand event funding, sponsorships, and programming.
 - » Activate underutilized spaces with such as food truck courts, live performance spaces, and seasonal/temporary pop-ups/installations
 - » Provide affordable vendor spaces at community events, allowing local entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services.
 - » Develop a promotional campaign with digital marketing, social media highlights, and printed event guides.
- » Commission a tourism strategic plan to:
 - » Identify resources and assets needed to support special events, including public and private spaces
 - » Review and prioritize the next round of long-term improvements from the Waterfront Master Plan
 - » Identify the public and private spaces needed to support special events
 - » Determine use needs for future parks while they are still in the Level 1
- » Formulate and launch a recreation focused campaign to attract snowbirds, partners, vendors, sponsors, and new development



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND VITALITY THROUGH HIGH-QUALITY PARK PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

- » Identify existing makers, hobbyists, clubs, schools, libraries, and small manufacturers
- » Bring together potential partners: libraries, schools, community colleges, economic development staff, nonprofits, and local makers.
- » Start small and flexible: community centers, park buildings, recreation facilities, or shared library space.
- » Confirm basic requirements: power, ventilation, storage, safety, ADA access, and insurance.
- » Design for adaptability rather than permanence in the initial phase
- » Launch Core, Low-Barrier Programming by beginning with introductory and inclusive offerings
- » Keep costs low or free to build participation and trust.
- » Prioritize learning and community-building over advanced equipment at first.
- » Host maker meetups, demonstrations, and showcases.
- » Tour an existing makerspace, such as The MakerBarn in Magnolia or the jaX lab at TAMU Victoria

IMPLEMENTATION 05



This chapter is structured to translate the goals and strategies outlined in each previous chapter of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan into clear, actionable steps. While vision and planning set the foundation, successful implementation of this plan requires prioritization, accountability, and adaptability over time.

GRANTS

TPWD LOCAL PARKS GRANT

The Texas Parks and Wildlife's Local Parks Grant Program provides matching funds for the acquisition and development of local parks across Texas. Since the 1960's, this program has funded nearly 3,000 projects across the State.

The Program provides 50% matching grants on a reimbursement basis for eligible applicants. All grant assisted sites must be dedicated as parkland in perpetuity, properly maintained and open to the public.

The Local Park Grant Program assists local units of government with the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities throughout the State of Texas. Entities with populations 20,000 or under may apply to either the Small Community or Non-Urban Programs. The amount of grant funds requested determines the program.

- » Small Community Outdoor (20,000 or less): \$150,000 Grant Ceiling
- » Non-Urban Outdoor (500,000 or less): \$750,000 Grant Ceiling
- » Non-Urban Indoor (500,000 or less): \$1,500,000 Grant Ceiling

Applications to the Local Park Grant program require significant time and planning on behalf of applicants. Successful applications include realistic and detailed budgets, excellent site plans, and evidence of long-term planning. Applications are typically due mid-Q3.

TPWD Boating Access Grant Program

Provides 75% matching fund grant assistance to plan and construct new, or renovate existing, public boat ramps that provide public access to public waters for recreational boating.

TPWD Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP)

Provides funding to tax-exempt organizations for programming that engages underserved populations in TPWD mission-oriented outdoor recreation, conservation and environmental education activities.

TPWD National Recreational Trails Fund

Provides grants up to 80% of project cost with a maximum of \$300,000 for non-motorized trail grants.

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Grant Name	Organization	Topic	Funding Amount	Application Window
Texas Preservation Trust Fund	Texas Historical Commission	Historic Preservation	\$50,000	Closed (but will return)
Community Challenge Grant	AARP	Placemaking	Varies	2-Mar-26
Community Placemaking Grants	Project for Public Spaces	Placemaking	Varies	Closed (but will return)
Community Forestry Grants	Texas A&M Forest Service	Environmental	Varies	1-Mar-26
RESTORE Act Direct Component Funding	U.S. Department of the Treasury	Environmental	Varies	31-Oct-26
Global Signature Program	ConocoPhillips	Environmental	Varies	April 1 - July 31, 2026
Local Grants	Union Pacific	Recreation, Environmental	\$30,000	April 1-30, 2026
Our Texas, Our Future Grant	Keep Texas Beautiful & HEB	Beautification	\$5,000	Closed (but will return)
Tree Grant Program	Apache Corporation	Environmental	Varies	Closed (but will return)
Caring for Our Coast Gulf Region Grant	Citgo & Restore America's Estuaries	Environmental	\$44,000	Closed (but will return)
Governor's Community Achievement Awards	Keep Texas Beautiful & TxDOT	Beautification	\$2,000,000	Feb. 2 - Mar. 12, 2026
Skate park Grants	The Skate park Project	Sports	\$25,000	January - March
Trails Grants	Polaris	Trail Management	\$10,000	March 1, September 1
Safe Places to Play Grant	US Soccer Foundation	Sports	Varies	Rolling
Various Grant Opportunities	United Way of Calhoun County	Varies	Varies	Rolling

Grant Name	Organization	Topic	Funding Amount	Application Window
Trees for Texans	Texan by Nature & HEB	Environmental	\$5,000	Rolling
Micro & Open Grants	Entergy	Community Health	\$1,000+	Rolling
National Fitness Campaign	Blue Cross BlueShield of Texas	Community Health	Varies	Rolling
Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	USDA Rural Development	Recreation	Varies	Rolling
Energize the Environment Grant Program	Quadrattec	Environmental	\$3,500	Spring, Fall
North American Wetlands Conservation Small Grants	US Fish & Wildlife Service	Environmental	\$250,000	26-Feb-26
Texas Coastal Management Program Grant	Texas General Land Office	Environmental	Varies	Spring
Spark Good Local Grants	Walmart	Environmental, Community Health	\$5,000	Rolling
Community Grant	Foundation for Rural Service	Community Health	\$5,000	Spring
Grants	Meadows Foundation	Environmental, Community Health	Varies	Rolling
2026 Community Grants	Keep America Beautiful	Beautification	\$5,000	23-Feb-26
Trail Grants	Rails to Trails Conservancy	Trail Management	Varies	Spring 2026
Tread Lightly!	BFGoodrich Tires	Trail Management	Varies	Rolling

ORGANIZATION

Implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is structured around four key components that guide Port Lavaca's path from vision to action:

1. GOALS

These are the broad, long-term priorities that reflect what Port Lavaca seeks to achieve in each focus area. Rooted in the community's vision and guiding principles, goals serve as aspirational targets that inform policy decisions, capital investments, and program development.

2. STRATEGIES

Strategies outline the general approaches for achieving each goal. They provide a framework for action, ensuring that efforts are purposeful, efficient, and aligned with best practices. Strategies connect the community's vision to practical implementation.

3. ACTIONS

Actions are the specific, measurable steps required to carry out each strategy. These may include policy revisions, infrastructure upgrades, funding initiatives, partnerships, regulatory updates, and public engagement efforts. Each action is accompanied by a recommended timeline, estimated cost range, and potential funding sources to support realistic and effective execution.

4. PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK

This framework helps determine when and how each action should be implemented. Actions are evaluated based on:

- **Timeframe:** Short-Term (1–3 years), Mid-Term (4–7 years), Long-Term (8+ years)
- **Conceptual Cost:** Ranging from low-cost administrative tasks (\$) to major capital projects (\$\$\$\$)
- **Readiness Factors:** Including dependencies on policy changes, funding availability, and coordination with external entities



Paddle boarding with man's best friend

This structured approach ensures that implementation remains transparent, adaptable, and responsive to evolving community needs. The City of Port Lavaca will regularly review and update priorities based on progress, funding opportunities, and external influences such as regional growth, economic shifts, and infrastructure demands. By aligning actions with available resources and strategic partnerships, the Plan provides a clear and achievable roadmap for delivering the parks system envisioned by Port Lavaca residents.

PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK

Not all actions can or should be implemented simultaneously. Prioritization helps ensure that limited resources are directed toward initiatives with the greatest impact and feasibility.

TIMEFRAME

- » **Short-Term (1–3 Years):** Low-cost, high-impact actions that require minimal policy changes.
- » **Mid-Term (4–7 Years):** Projects needing moderate investment, regulatory updates, or additional planning.
- » **Long-Term (8+ Years):** Major infrastructure efforts, high-cost initiatives, and actions requiring significant funding, partnerships, or phased implementation.

CONCEPTUAL COST

- » **\$ (Low Cost):** Planning studies, minor beautification, and administrative policy updates.
- » **\$\$ (Moderate Cost):** Targeted incentives, small-scale infrastructure improvements, and support programs.
- » **\$\$\$ (High Cost):** Roadway upgrades, utility improvements, and economic development projects.
- » **\$\$\$\$ (Major Cost):** Large-scale infrastructure, multimodal transportation systems, and capital-intensive investments.

IMPLEMENTATION READINESS FACTORS

Each action is assessed for its readiness based on:

- » **Funding Availability:** Can grants, city funds, or private investment support the initiative?
- » **Policy Requirements:** Are code updates or new regulations needed?
- » **Partnerships:** Does the action require collaboration with entities like TxDOT, TPWD, CCISD, GCRPC
- » **Community & Political Support:** Is there alignment with public priorities and leadership direction?

This framework ensures that implementation is strategic, adaptable, and responsive to both current conditions and future opportunities.



Indoor Basketball Adobe Stock Image

PARKS DEDICATION ORDINANCE

To support the expansion of Port Lavaca's park system and ensure that new development contributes to recreational infrastructure, the City should adopt a Park, Trail, and Improvements Dedication Ordinance. This ordinance would require developers to dedicate a proportional amount of parkland and associated improvements—such as playgrounds, benches, lighting, or parking—based on the size and type of development. Developers would also be responsible for constructing any planned trail segments that fall within their property boundaries, as identified in the City's Master Plan.

The ordinance also should provide a fee-in-lieu option, allowing the City to accept a monetary contribution in place of land when appropriate. This option offers flexibility in situations where:

- » The proposed land is not suitable for park use
- » The location does not align with community access priorities
- » The City wishes to avoid the long-term maintenance burden of a small or disconnected park

Fees collected through this mechanism can be pooled and used to enhance parks or trail facilities in areas with greater need or impact potential. The City Council should retain the authority to determine whether land dedication or fee-in-lieu is in the best interest of the community on a case-by-case basis. These regulations may be adopted as a standalone ordinance or integrated into the existing Subdivision Ordinance to streamline development review and enforcement.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In the 2025-26 fiscal year, the City set aside over \$1.1 million to support parks and recreation. To ensure completion of all current and future park enhancement projects, the City should continue to set aside funds in the annual budget or capital improvement plan. To efficiently administer the funds, plans should detail when each park will receive improvements based on a schedule.

In addition to City funds, park dedication and improvement fees from developers can assist in funding improvements or providing additional parks.

The existing parks system and recreational assets could be better communicated to residents through increased visibility and marketing efforts. Residents who are knowledgeable about the parks system are more likely to enjoy the resources available to them. Whether led by the City or in partnership with local entities, such as the Chamber of Commerce, marketing efforts should encourage recreational activities and promote organized events held within City parks.

The City's website should be updated regularly with information about where parks and trails are located, what amenities are available in each park, and a schedule of upcoming and ongoing events. Additionally, each park should have informational signage that increases knowledge of available amenities, and navigational signage that helps park goers orient themselves.

When possible, passive educational installation such as historical markers, nature facts, and interactive activities should be available to engage park visitors. Programming at each park should engage the whole community with specific offerings for children, teens, and older adults.

Organized events, such as holiday festivities or special competitions, utilize park facilities and engage the community. Event organizers should consider providing additional amenities, including food trucks or market

REVENUE & FUNDING MECHANISMS

Parks frequently offer amenities like community centers, sports fields, picnic areas, and pavilions that can be rented for various occasions, including events, parties, weddings, sports tournaments, and other gatherings.

To begin, consider renting the following:

- » **Renting Facilities:** Renting buildings, rooms, sports fields, and picnic areas can raise capital.
- » **Renting Parking Lots and Streets:** Many events need space like parking lots, such as churches, schools, and non-profits looking for outdoor gathering space.
- » **Equipment Rentals:** Rent out tennis rackets, basketballs, pickleball paddles, and more!
- » Program Fees Revenue

Parks and recreation departments can generate extra income through recreation programs and classes. Parks departments often already offer programs and activities, including sports leagues, fitness classes, art workshops, and summer camps. By implementing registration or participation fees for these programs, parks and recreation departments can contribute to their revenue generation efforts.

- » Special Events Revenue

Hosting special events such as concerts, festivals, farmers' markets, or holiday celebrations within park areas can draw in visitors and generate income through various means, including ticket sales, fees, sponsorships, and concession stands.

- » Concession and Vending Revenue

Concessions, leasing, and other partnerships are other ways to generate revenue for parks and recreation departments. Parks can lease out spaces to vendors offering food and beverage services, equipment rentals, or other recreational services. Collecting a percentage of their sales or charging rent for the use of park facilities can provide a steady stream of revenue.

- » Sponsorships and Advertising Revenue

Parks and recreation departments can generate revenue by leveraging advertising and sponsorship agreements. Partnering with local businesses, corporations, or nonprofit organizations to sponsor park initiatives, events, or facilities can generate additional revenue. In exchange, sponsors may receive acknowledgment and branding opportunities.

Additionally, selling advertising space or showcasing sponsored signage within parks is another way to generate income. Departments can display advertisements in parks, sports fields, department websites, digital screens within facilities, catalogs, brochures, newsletters, and program registration software.

- » Tax-Related Revenue

Parks and recreation departments can generate revenue through taxes because the public is generally more inclined to vote in favor of such initiatives.

Here are some methods that parks and recreation departments employ to increase their revenue through taxes:

- » **Property Tax Revenue:** By collaborating with local officials and raising awareness among the public about the value of parks and recreational opportunities, departments can gain public support for property taxes.
- » **Park Impact Fees:** Developers get charged park impact fees to offset the costs of new parks and recreational facilities in newly developed areas. As new residents move into these areas, maintenance expenses of parks will increase. Departments can establish specific fees to address these expenses.
- » **Landscape Lighting District:** By establishing a landscape lighting district, parks and recreation departments can generate revenue specifically dedicated to covering the costs of installing and maintaining lighting in parks and other public spaces.
- » **Community Facility District:** Parks and recreation departments can impose fees to help finance any construction, operation, and maintenance.

PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

OVERVIEW

The Prioritization Matrix serves as a practical roadmap for translating the vision, goals, and strategies of this plan into measurable, actionable steps. It bridges high-level policy with on-the-ground implementation, guiding decision-making, investment planning, and community enhancements over time.

Each action within the matrix is clearly defined to outline:

- » **What** needs to be done
- » **Who** is responsible
- » **How** it will be funded
- » **When** it should occur

By building on the prioritization framework, the matrix ensures that actions are phased strategically, financially viable, and responsive to Port Lavaca's evolving needs.

STRUCTURE

Each action includes the following components:

- » **Action:** A specific initiative or project to be implemented.
- » **Chapter:** The section of the plan the action originates from (e.g., Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Economic & Fiscal Vitality).
- » **Timeframe:** Categorized as Short-Term (1–3 years), Mid-Term (4–7 years), or Long-Term (8+ years), based on urgency and feasibility.
- » **Conceptual Cost:** A general cost estimate (\$ to \$\$\$\$) to support budgeting and funding decisions.

USING THE MATRIX

The Prioritization Matrix is a dynamic tool designed to support decision-making and guide implementation. City staff, elected officials, developers, and community partners can use it to:

- » Inform annual budgeting and Capital Improvement Plans (CIP)
- » Monitor progress on key initiatives and track performance metrics
- » Align development proposals with City goals and infrastructure priorities
- » Identify and pursue funding opportunities and public-private partnerships
- » Adapt strategies in response to emerging needs and changing conditions

As Port Lavaca implements this Plan, the matrix will remain a flexible and responsive implementation tool. It should be reviewed regularly and updated through a monitoring & evaluation process to reflect completed actions, evolving priorities, and new opportunities. This ensures the City stays focused on long-term sustainability while remaining agile in the face of change.



Port Lavaca Boardwalk

RECOMMENDATION MATRIX

- » FINAL VERSION WILL ALIGN TO GUIDING PRINCIPLES
- » RESPONSIBLE PARTY, TIMELINE, AND FUNDING SOURCES TO BE UPDATED

Item 1.

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
PARKS					
Typology & Amenities					
Issue an open call to churches and other houses of worship in North Port Lavaca that have active recreation facilities on their grounds; establish partnerships to spread awareness of the facilities and provide access for residents of recreationally underserved neighborhoods.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★★	\$	CIP
In recreationally underserved areas, prioritize active recreation amenities in any new parks over five acres constructed north of SH 35; at that time, allow for public input to guide which amenities are introduced.	Civil Engineer, Landscape Architect, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Functional Classification					
Establish a City policy of developing pocket parks sparingly, such as for Downtown plazas	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$	CIP
Identify floodplains, wetlands, easements, and distressed properties adjacent to existing pocket parks that could be used to expand park footprints	Civil Engineer, Environmental Engineer, Landscape Architect, Planner, City	Environmental Reports, Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	CIP
Level of Service					
Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger, ideally a community park, north of SH 35 in the vicinity of Lynn Bayou	Landscape Architect, Planner, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger along the southeast waterfront	Landscape Architect, Planner, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Prioritize development of a neighborhood park or larger Between US 87 and W Austin	Landscape Architect, Planner, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Park Development Long-Range Targets					
Bring Faye Bauer Sterling Park into Phase 2	Civil Engineer, Landscape Architect, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Begin phased rehabilitation of George Adams Park, with the goal of reaching Phase 2 by 2035	Landscape Architect, Planner, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Initiate Phase 1 improvements for undeveloped park sites, especially Substation Site A and the Kitchen tract	Civil Engineer, Environmental Engineer, Landscape Architect, City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Park Maintenance Long-Range Targets					
Maintain Level 3 maintainance minimum for all parks/areas with recreational amenities, including playgrounds	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Donations, Other Grants
Maintain Level 2 mainainance for high-traffic parks at the community park level or higher, including any park hosting league play	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Donations
Maintain Level 1 maintainance for Downtown and regional parks	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private
Maintain Level 3 maintainance minimum for trailheads - see trails chapter	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private
Reduce costs by using native, drought-tolerant landscapes	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Conduct a feasibility and staffing study to determinbe the resources needed to bring four existing parks into Level 2 by 2035	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Codify minimum standards for new parks, including private parks within future masterplanned communities	City, Landscape Architect, Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
TRAILS					
Paddle Trails					
Formally express interest in the Texas Paddling Trails program via Texas Parks and Wildlife's Nature Tourism Program	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP
Apply for the Texas Paddling Trails Program Community Application for Assistance	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP
Upon completion of the breakwater project, commission a Water Trail Assessment to determine the experience level for a shoreline paddle trail along previously identified alignments	City, Landscape Architect, Environmental Engineer	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Identify City- and partner-owned waterfront sites that could host paddle-focused amenities	City, Landscape Architect, Environmental Engineer	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant
Budget for the purchase, instalation, and maintainage of one kayak launch annually, beginning with existing public boat ramps and shoreline access sites	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP
Regional & Heritage Trails					
Establish a working group through the local Council of Governments or form a standalone group to explore the feasibility of a regional trail system from Victoria to Port Lavaca to Powderhorn State Park and Port O'Connor	City, Landscape Architect, Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
In addition to partner communities, coordinate with TXDOT, Union Pacific, and utility providers to study easement opportunities for off-street trails	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP
Submit historic sites and community events to Texas Time Travel, part of the Texas Historical Commission, to be featured online and on the organization's trip planning app	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Coordinate with Calhoun County and TXDOT's Support Services Division to install signage along key roadways leading to Port Lavaca	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Coordinate with the City of Port O'Connor and Texas Parks and Wildlife to bring the City and Powderhorn State Park into the existing trail network	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Neighborhood Trails & Linkages					
Consult with Union Pacific about constructing pedestrian bridges over their active tracks at key locations	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Continue to coordinate with Union Pacific about acquiring the unused portion of tracks leading into Downtown and express interest in acquiring the southern spur should the opportunity arise	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Consult with TXDOT about constructing pedestrian bridges over SH 35 at key locations	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Consult with TXDOT about developing off-street trails within the ROW of SH 35	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Identify and map the locations of all undeveloped City-owned properties, floodplains, and utility easements - relative to parks, schools, and neighborhoods - to determine possible additional trail linkages	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP
Budget for ±3.6 miles of local linkages annually	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
EVENTS, PROGRAMS, & PLACEMAKING					
Leveraging Assets					
Issue an open call to local landowners to explore interest in establishing a private paintball, airsoft, or dirtbike park.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
In coordination with the Parks Board, TIRZ Board and/or Port Lavaca Economic Development Corporation, establish a small business grant and support program that could: - Partially fund site assessments or designs for prospective sites - Contribute to basic renovations or site improvements - Provide advertising and promotion - Negotiate for voluntary public park areas, trail easements, or coastline dedication	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, Other Grants
Recreational Programming					
Budget for a director level hire. Work with City Council to initiate the process of establishing a Parks and Recreation Department	City, Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★ ★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Work with City Council to initiate the process of establishing a Parks and Recreation Department	City, Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★ ★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grant, Other Grants
Identify expanded partnership opportunities with the YMCA, such as swim lessons and aquatic safety	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private
Explore partnership opportunities to use vacant public property for semi-permanent uses like bouldering/climbing, paintball, or airsoft.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private
Coordinate with Calhoun County ISD and Calhoun County Library to explore esports	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Update the City website to better showcase the City's parks including new photography, consistent naming and addressing, "sort by features" functionality, and all reservation/cost information and links	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Update the City website better to connect users to County- and TPW-managed facilities	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Issue an open call to churches, private rec centers, and other entities that have indoor recreation facilities, youth sports, afterschool/daycare, and seniors events on their grounds	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Establish partnerships via 380 agreement to spread awareness of the facilities and provide access for residents at a fraction of the cost of a flagship recreation center	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP
Commission a Community Center Master Plan that provides an initial feasibility study and design program	City, Planner, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP
Incorporate features that can allow this facility to act as an emergency shelter during severe weather events.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP
Include commercial kitchen equipment in recreational centers; this opens potential to utilize space as a resilience hub during disaster events or to earn revenue by renting out space for events.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP
Co-locate indoor recreation space with libraries, public health clinics, or parks/trail networks to increase benefits.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP
In coordination with the EDC and ISD, conduct a STEM feasibility study focused on Esports and Makerspaces.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Special Events					
Enhance/evaluate the rotating seasonal event schedule, ensuring at least one major community event per quarter, such as a winter holiday market, spring art fair, summer concert series, and fall harvest festival.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget
Develop partnerships with local schools and organizations to host a youth-focused gathering or event.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Develop partnerships with local organizations to host a senior-focused gathering or event.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Provide affordable vendor spaces at community events, allowing local entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services to a wider audience.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	Operating Budget
Poll community interest in a seasonal, monthly farmer's market. If interest is strong, identify a location with sufficient infrastructure that is appealing to residents and visitors alike.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Increase marketing and promotion of programs and special events	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Create and launch a Block Party Trailer that can be rented for neighborhood events. The Trailer can be delivered upon request and will include movable seating, tables, yard games, and other useful celebration materials for neighborhood (not private) events.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Launch a collaboration with the School District to create a Community Event Committee to link student volunteers, who need community volunteer hours, with the City's events team to provide outreach assistance, setup, cleanup, and event staffing.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	Operating Budget

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Implement a “Patio Night Series” featuring live music, art walks, and open-air dining experiences at least once per month. Restaurants or establishments without outdoor dining facilities would be invited to activate a few parking spaces outside their area, or other nearby spot, in a City-approved configuration.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Develop a promotional campaign with digital marketing, social media highlights, and printed event guides to increase event awareness and attendance.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Offer vendor and sponsorship incentives for local businesses to participate in festivals, ensuring at least 10 new sponsor or vendor participants in City-hosted events per year.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	Operating Budget
Commission a Tourism Strategic Plan	City Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants
Comfort & Image					
Define clear, formal entry points and boundaries with signage, gateway elements, pavement changes, or landscape features.	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Consolidate informal trails by converting the feasible and most-used into formal paths and decommissioning the rest with vegetation or barriers.	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Install low-cost guidance elements (bollards, fencing, landscaping) to direct visitors toward desired areas and limit access to sensitive zones	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Continue to utilize controlled vehicle access protocols, such as lockable gates or collapsible bollards for after-hours security and event management.	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Place benches, bridges, and gathering areas so they are visible from main circulation routes	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Install dark sky-friendly lighting along high-use corridors, including parking lots, pavilions, and park entries; consider solar-powered or motion-activated fixtures in naturalized areas to reduce operational costs.	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Establish park identity with consistent branding and wayfinding, starting with the parks and drinking themes identified in the Waterfront Master Plan.	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Program parks intentionally with recurring events to reinforce legitimate occupancy and passive surveillance.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, Other Grants
Review the systemwide maintenance standard specifying routine cycles for mowing, litter removal, restroom cleaning, graffiti abatement, and vegetation trimming.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Identify high incident location and create a rapid-response protocol (24–72 hours) for graffiti, vandalism, and damaged infrastructure.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants
Implement asset management software to track condition, repairs, and lifecycle replacement schedules.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants
Where vandalism is recurring, replace vulnerable materials with high-durability options (steel, anti-graffiti coatings, tamper-resistant hardware).	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants
Deploy cameras only in high-traffic or high-incident areas, ensuring signage indicates monitored spaces.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants
Evaluate public Wi-Fi hotspots in major destinations to support real-time communication.	City	Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants
Incorporate QR codes for reporting issues, providing maps, and sharing safety tips.	City	Parks Master Plan	★	\$	Operating Budget, CIP, Other Grants

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Work with neighborhood associations to conduct periodic “walk audits” identifying visibility and safety issues.	City	Parks Master Plan	★	\$	Operating Budget
Establish seasonal cooling centers in high-traffic and low-shade parks	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Other Grants
Plant fast-growing native, drought-tolerant shade trees around seating areas, playgrounds, and along trails	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Install trellises or pergolas and cover them with climbing vines to create natural shade curtains	City, Landscape Architect	Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Replace concrete or asphalt with turf, native grasses, or groundcover to reduce surface temperatures and heat radiation.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Implement stormwater management practices that double as cooling, such as installing shade trees in bioswales or around roadside planters	City, Landscape Architect, Environmental Engineer	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Use high-density polyethylene (HDPE) shade sails over playgrounds, picnic areas, and along trails. These are cheaper, versatile alternatives to solid structures that block up to 98% of UV rays.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Integrated Playground Shade: When replacing play equipment, prioritize structures with pre-installed shades, which are often more affordable than retrofitting separate structures.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Replace asphalt with lighter-colored concrete or permeable paving materials to reflect solar energy rather than absorb it.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Sociability, Uses, & Activities					
Integrate universal design standards into all park infrastructure, including piers, boat launches, and playgrounds. At minimum, ensure ADA compliance is met with all current and future park projects.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Develop multi-sport athletic complexes that accommodate youth and adult leagues and informal play.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Create flexible indoor and outdoor recreation areas for fitness, wellness, and community programs.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Design multi-generational recreation areas, including: Youth (playgrounds, splash pads, and skate plazas/features); Adults (fitness stations, jogging trails, and sports courts); Seniors (shaded seating, accessible pathways, and low-impact exercise zones)	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★★	\$\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Conduct an ADA assessment on specified parks to determine what types of retrofits can improve ADA accessibility.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Encourage community participation by involving local organizations, schools, and businesses in event planning and sponsorships.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	Operating Budget
Support local businesses through vendor opportunities, pop-up markets, and collaborations with restaurants, breweries, and artisans.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	Operating Budget
Foster public-private partnerships to expand event funding, sponsorships, and programming.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$	Operating Budget
Activate underutilized spaces with creative placemaking initiatives, such as food truck courts, live performance spaces, and seasonal/temporary pop-ups/installations.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Install multiuse features (e.g., lawn areas with power stanchions, flexible shade shelters, portable seating) to support varied community events.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Create small activity nodes every ½–1 mile along long trails (water fountains, fitness stations, picnic pads) to encourage continuous circulation.	City, Landscape Architect	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★★	\$\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	ALIGNING DOCUMENT	IMPACT	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
Develop pop-up activation zones for temporary art, vendor kiosks, or mobile recreation units.	City, Planner	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★	\$	CIP, Public/Private, TPWD Grants, Other Grants
Encourage third-party partners (youth groups, nonprofits, businesses) to host activities through simplified permitting and low-cost use agreements.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	Operating Budget, Public/Private, Other Grants
Coordinate with schools and youth organizations to host stewardship days and environmental learning programs.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★	\$	Operating Budget, Public/Private, Other Grants
Develop an “Adopt-a-Park” program inviting neighborhoods, businesses, and volunteers to provide support and monitoring.	City	Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan	★ ★ ★	\$	Operating Budget, Public/Private, Other Grants



COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Announcement by Mayor that City Council will retire into closed session:

INFORMATION:

- For consultation with City Attorney concerning contemplated or pending litigation in accordance with Title 5, CH 551, Section 551.071(1) of the Texas Government Code.

COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Return to Open Session and take any action deemed necessary with regard to matters in closed session. Presenter is Luis De La Garza

INFORMATION:

