

EXPERIENCE BASTROP

10 Year Master Plan



City of Bastrop Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANKS TO THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED

A special thank you goes to everyone who participated in the planning process for the Bastrop Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. This plan was made possible by the contributions and insights of the residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and representatives from various groups and organizations throughout the community.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- St. David's Foundation 
- Bastrop County Cares 
- Edge of Your Seat Consulting 

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE:

01 MASTER PLAN INTRODUCTION

- Purpose Of The Plan 14
- Importance Of Parks 15
- Planning Framework And Process 18
- Bastrop At A Glance 20
- The Park System Today 22
- Vision Of The Plan 23
- Goals And Objectives 24

02 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- General Recommendations 31
- Funding 34
- Improvements To Existing Parks And Recreational Facilities 64
- Trail Connections 87
- Recreational Programming 96
- Land Acquisition For New Parks And Facilities 98
- New Recreation Center 105

03 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Economic Benefit 109
- Economic Opportunities 110
- Sport Complex Study 112

PART TWO:

04 HISTORY AND CONTEXT

- Brief History Of Bastrop 118
- Past Planning Efforts 119
- Context 121

05 CLASSIFICATIONS, STANDARDS AND INVENTORY

- Park Classification 125
- Park Inventory 135

06 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Demand-Based Assessment 152
- Standards-Based Assessment 161
- Resource-Based Assessment 169

07 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Introduction 173
- Implementation Matrices 174

08 GOVERNING BODY DOCUMENTS 231

09 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Appendix A- Survey And Results 233
- Appendix B- Bastrop Sport Facilities Study 248
- Appendix C- Bastrop Accessibility Study 293
- Appendix D-Public Meetings 344



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Our parks will play a pivotal role in attracting individuals to Bastrop, making our city an even more desirable place to live, work, prosper, play, and visit.

”

A LETTER FROM THE BASTROP MAYOR

Great cities are distinguished by their ability to create enchanting parks and public spaces that offer recreation, education, and a profound reflection of their local history. In Bastrop, we are fortunate to possess all the necessary assets to establish exceptional public spaces. Now, with the unveiling of this Master Plan, we have a unique opportunity to enhance and expand our vast acres of parkland.

Bastrop's heritage is deeply rooted in its association with the majestic Colorado River, the captivating Lost Pines, and a timeless downtown adorned with historic structures. We take immense pride in our community-wide commitment to promoting health, safety, and recreation for all. These treasured cultural and educational amenities are intricately woven into the fabric of our parks system.

Looking ahead, we find ourselves on the brink of significant growth and expansion, with several new residential subdivisions and proposed homes on the horizon. Our parks will play a pivotal role in attracting individuals to Bastrop, making our city an even more desirable place to live, work, prosper, play, and visit. This Master Plan serves as our guiding compass, enabling us to meet the needs of our evolving community.

The possibilities presented by this Master Plan are boundless, and the framework it provides is invaluable as we chart the course for future generations. I extend my heartfelt commendation to our dedicated City staff, whose countless hours of hard work have culminated in the development of this visionary plan. Furthermore, I extend my sincere gratitude to each and every one of you who participated in our public engagement forums and shared your invaluable input through surveys pertaining to the future of our parks system. Together, we received an overwhelming response, with over 800 survey submissions. This Master Plan is truly inspired by the people of Bastrop.

Let us unite in our ongoing commitment to make the City of Bastrop one of the most breathtaking and enjoyable cities in Texas. With the implementation of this Master Plan and our collective efforts, we will continue to transform our vision into a reality.

Lyle Nelson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyle Nelson".

Mayor of Bastrop, Texas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the Lost Pines Forest and the Colorado River as part of its fabric, the City of Bastrop sits in a very picturesque part of Texas. These natural resources, along with the community essences, makes the City very welcoming. When the parks and recreational system are added into the mix, it shows that the City prizes its responsibility to provide a high quality of life to its citizens. The City of Bastrop has established a solid foundation for its parks and recreation system, and it should continue to build from this momentum.

Strong and vibrant parks and recreation systems are an essential part of any community. This is very evident in Bastrop. Throughout the analysis and development of the City of Bastrop's new Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan, the community, City officials, and staff immediately demonstrated their enthusiasm for the City taking this step by consistently being active in the Plan's development. Each group energetically participated in the various meetings and events which provided valuable insight into the community's needs, wants, and desires for their parks and recreation system.

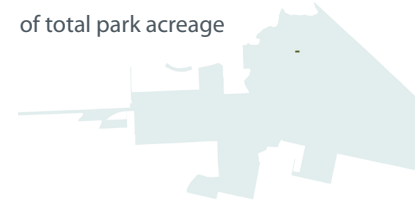
What follows is a summary of the analysis, findings, goals, objectives, and recommendations that grew out of all the input provided by the community of Bastrop.

The City of Bastrop currently has 12 city-owned parks of various sizes and 3 trails/linear parks that creates its parks and recreation system which combine totals approximately 161.10 acres. Site visits were conducted by the project team with the City staff to obtain site specific details such as size, amenities, and facilities provided. The following park classifications and total acreages were identified for the City of Bastrop:

POCKET PARKS

0.62%

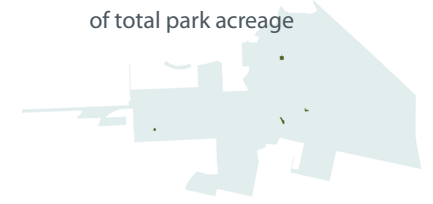
of total park acreage



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

11.5%

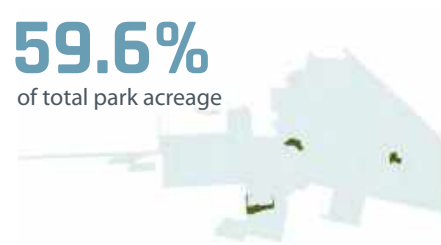
of total park acreage



COMMUNITY PARKS

59.6%

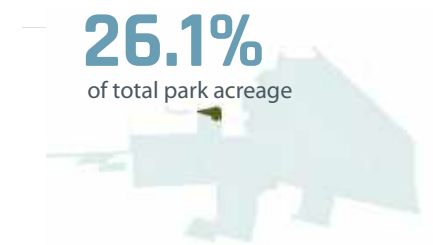
of total park acreage



REGIONAL PARKS

26.1%

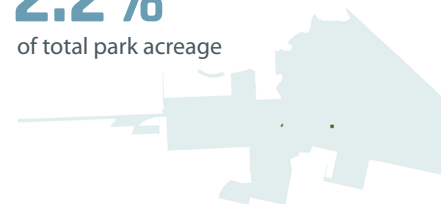
of total park acreage



SPECIAL USE PARKS

2.2%

of total park acreage



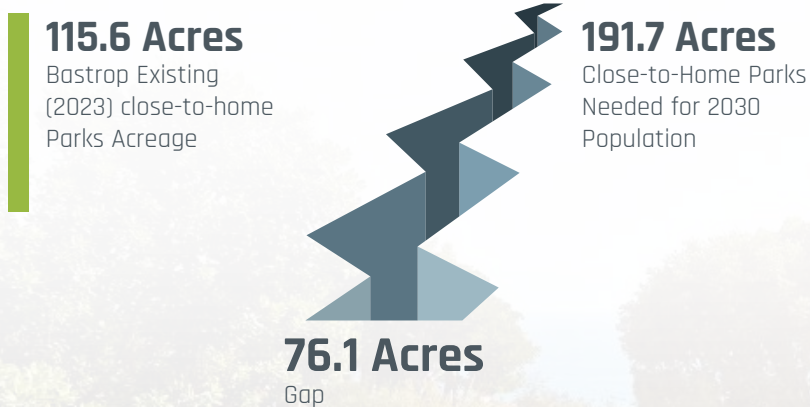
LINEAR PARKS

3,956

linear feet

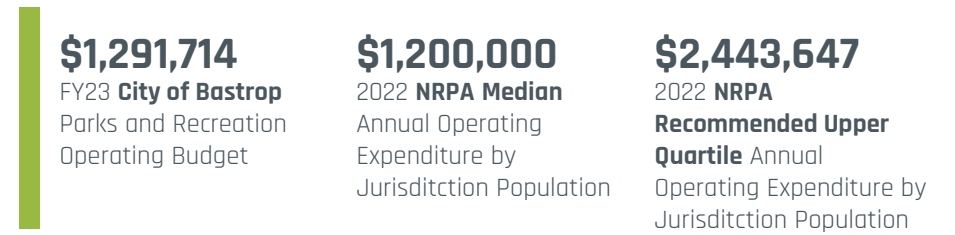


When the City of Bastrop's existing acreage for Close-to-Home Parks (Pocket, Neighborhood, and Community Parks) of 115.6 acres is compared to the NRPA's standard of 191.7 acres for the year 2030, this indicates that today the City needs begin taking steps towards acquiring new land to accommodate the needs of the increasing population through land purchases, easements for public use, parkland dedications, and/or the collection of fees-in-lieu-of-dedication from developers.



As part of the classification process, the existing inventories of the recreational amenities and facilities for each park were recorded by the project team. These inventories were then compared to the NRPA standards to identify what additional facilities should be provided. The findings included items such as the addition of a tot lot, community gardens, a swimming pool, addition of more sports fields (baseball, softball, soccer, football), and the addition of more multi-use sport courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball).

The Plan includes reviews of the existing budget and FTE staffing levels for the parks and recreation system. Applying the NRPA standards for comparable cities, it was identified that the City of Bastrop's budget of \$1,291,714 is inline with the NRPA standard of \$1.2 million; however, the City is rapidly growing, and citizens have indicated needs that require improvements and expansion to the existing parks and recreational system.



It is recommended that the City seek to increase its budget for the parks and recreation system to be more inline with the upper quartile of the NRPA standards of \$2,443,647. This can be accomplished through various methods such as:

- Apply for grants made available by federal and state government agencies.
- Apply for grants made available by private sector groups and philanthropies.
- Pursue unconventional methods of funding such as sponsorships and cost-sharing partnerships.
- Develop a fee-in-lieu-of parkland dedication process, whereby developers may choose to pay a fee in the amount equivalent to the cost of land required to be dedicated.

The Plan also identified the need to increase the existing level of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) for the parks and recreation system. As similar to the budget, the City of Bastrop is inline with the median number of FTEs per the NRPA standards, however to keep up with the needs of the community, it is recommended that the number of FTEs



be increased, especially within the recreational division. This can be accomplished by supplementing the budget through the methods mentioned on the previous page, thus making funds available to hire more full-time personnel.

By creating the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, the City will have a guide to assist in the planning, budgeting, operating and maintaining of its parks and recreation system for the next 10 years. This Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was prepared through the implementation of the following steps:

- Gathered public input through surveys, events, and meetings to understand the community's wants and needs.
- Conduct an inventory and existing conditions analysis to assist in creating a realistic 10-year implementation strategy.
- Combined the project population trends, potential impacts of various factors on future growth, and the standard and demand assessment analysis to help the City of Bastrop implement these strategies in the next 10 years and beyond.

The vision developed by the citizens of Bastrop signifies their dedication to wanting a parks and recreation system which can be used by all to improve their health, regardless of abilities, age, and skills. The community's shared vision calls for :

Envisioning the creation of a dynamic all-inclusive parks, recreation, and trails system, that will foster and support a deeper sense of community, promote overall health, as well as embrace the unique and historic natural environment of the Colorado River and the Lost Pines Forest.

Community input revealed common priorities for residents with an emphasis on investing in:



Improvements and maintenance of existing parks and facilities specially Fisherman's Park and Bob Bryant Park



Aquatic facilities and water recreation



Hiking and biking trails



Indoor recreational facilities



Efforts to make parks more active and add more programs for the youth of Bastrop.

The following goals reflect the desires of the residents, elected/appointed officials, and City staff:



Provide an **accessible and well-distributed** parks and recreation system throughout the community that promotes health, safety and quality-of-life.

GOAL 01: Level of Service



Provide new, vibrant **facilities/amenities** to meet the needs of the growing community and all user groups.

GOAL 02: Facilities



Expand **recreational activities** and programming to meet the needs of all user types and abilities.

GOAL 03: Recreation



Use parks, trails and recreation to support Bastrop's **economic development** strategies.

GOAL 04: Economic Impact



Provide active stewardship of Bastrop's **natural resources** and open spaces to enhance the environment, provide educational opportunities, and promotes the local ecology.

GOAL 05: Natural Resources



Develop unified standards, **branding**, and awareness for the parks and recreation system.

GOAL 06: Visibility and Branding



Conduct **repairs, renovations and enhancements** to existing parks and recreation facilities.

GOAL 07: Safety and Maintenance



Expand the existing trail system, with improved standards, **connecting** neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks, and City facilities.

GOAL 08: Connectivity



Identify suitable park **funding** for annual park budgets and explore creative funding partnerships.

GOAL 09: Funding and Resources



Cooperate and partner with other public and **regional agencies** to achieve mutual goals related to the region's parks, open space, trails and recreational amenities.

GOAL 10: Regional

The community identified six areas of great importance when it comes to enhancing the existing parks and recreation system. The Big Six recommendations are as follows:

1. FUNDING

Develop sustainable and robust funding strategies to support the newly envisioned park system, including the development and improvement of parks and their maintenance and operational requirements through the use of conventional and non-conventional funding methods such as grants, partnerships, sponsorships, and proactive CIP project planning.

2. PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Improve existing parks, trails, and recreational facilities to support the newly envisioned park system through coordinated funding efforts with the Finance Dept.; working with other city departments to coordinate projects; tracking inventory and identifying items needing maintenance or replacement; establishing standards for equipment/facilities/amenities; keeping constant supply of materials to quickly repair or replace amenities; and include all-inclusive park infrastructure and amenities.

3. TRAILS

Develop additional trail connections through the implementation of new design standards; addressing safety concerns and accessibility through the development of trails with lighting, proper lane markings, and signage; and improve citywide connectivity by developing a Trails Master Plan to identify items such as specific locations of trails, access points, amenities, and linking the plan to the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan.

4. RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Expand and create additional recreational programming, special events, and educational opportunities by designing new parks and facilities to be flexible in their programming; by coordinating recreational programming with existing city events; developing communication strategies to promote recreational programming to the community; conduct follow-up assessments at least every three years to determine need for new programming; develop partnerships with specialized organizations such as Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to provide educational opportunities at the parks; partner with the Chamber of Commerce and other private sector groups to utilize the parks and recreation facilities for their public events; and promote events on the City's websites and social media.

5. LAND ACQUISITION

Identify and acquire land for parks, recreational facilities, and trail/open space/preservation areas through the implementation of a parkland dedication ordinance that includes dedication requirements, standards, and a fee-in-lieu-of process for development projects; coordination with private property owners on the application of easements for public use; and coordination between the Parks Division, Recreations Division, and the Planning Department to identify and track existing and future developments.

6. RECREATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Develop an all-inclusive, multi-use Recreational Community Center to support the recreational needs of the community through the development of a feasibility study to be used to identify items such preferred locations, amenities, facilities, number of FTEs to operate/manage/maintain the facility, and potential methods of funding for the construction/operations/maintenance of the facility.

SPORT COMPLEX

As part of the overall development of the PROS Plan, the City requested that the project team investigate the needs and economic opportunities for the construction of a sports complex. The project team undertook this request and what was determined is that the placement of a sports complex within the City of Bastrop would be highly beneficial not only in providing a new facility for sports recreation, but also economically benefit the community. The sports examined were baseball, softball, soccer, pickle ball, and par-3 golf. The study determined that sports complexes geared toward baseball, softball and soccer were the most sought after. These sports complexes were identified as those that brought in the most levels of tournaments and teams to an area. As part of this draw to the sports complex, economic benefits could also be captured through the tourism brought by the tournaments. Those who would be attending the tournaments were found to spend money at local retail businesses, restaurants, and overnight accommodations.