
Parks & Recreation Board

DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation
FROM: Allison Smith, Deputy Director of Recreation
MEETING: August 13, 2026

SUBJECT:

Receive a report on current inclusive and accessible recreation programming efforts, review recommendations developed through the Special Needs Cohort, gather stakeholder feedback, and discuss priorities and next steps for advancing recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities and special needs in Burleson.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AND GOAL(S):

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
 Great Place to Live Through Expanded Quality of Life Amenities	4.2 Provide high-quality recreation opportunities, events and facilities for residents 4.3 Provide outstanding cultural, educational and entertainment opportunities

SUMMARY:

The Parks and Recreation Department will provide an update on current inclusive and accessible recreation programming efforts and facilitate a joint work session with the Park Board, People with Disabilities Committee, and Special Needs Cohort to discuss future opportunities for individuals with disabilities and special needs.

The department currently offers a variety of inclusive programs, accommodations, and sensory-conscious opportunities designed to reduce participation barriers and create welcoming recreation experiences for all residents. Existing efforts include a designated Special Needs Egg Hunt at Bunny Daze, sensory-friendly accommodations at Boo Bash, sensory hours at the Splash Pad and Honey Tour Carnival, Sensory-Friendly Family Nights at the BRiCK, Programs for Individuals with Different Abilities, partnerships with the Center for ASD, and a weekly partnership with Burleson ISD Adult Transition students at Russell Farm. Recent enhancements implemented in direct response to community feedback include the addition of Sensory Time at

the Aqua Egg Hunt, expanded sensory-friendly event accommodations, and increased communication regarding accessibility resources and event accommodations.

To further advance inclusive recreation opportunities, the department established a Special Needs Cohort consisting of representatives from Parks and Recreation, Burleson ISD, the Center for ASD, the People with Disabilities Committee, Human Resources, and community partners. The cohort was created to identify service gaps, strengthen collaboration, improve communication, and develop recommendations that support accessible and unified recreation opportunities throughout the community. Through a series of meetings, the cohort identified several focus areas for future consideration, including fitness and wellness opportunities, unified programming and athletics, sensory-friendly events, communication and outreach, accessibility improvements, transportation considerations, and expanded opportunities at Russell Farm Art Center.

The August 13 work session is intended to gather stakeholder feedback, identify implementation priorities, and develop a shared roadmap for advancing inclusive recreation opportunities in Burleson. Discussion topics will include current programs and accommodations, recommendations developed through the Special Needs Cohort, opportunities to increase unified participation, accessibility enhancements, communication strategies, and future program development. Feedback received during the work session will be used to refine recommendations and establish short-, mid-, and long-term priorities for future consideration by City Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

Park Board – April 16, 2026 (Inclusive and Accessible Programming Update)
Special Needs Cohort Work Session – April 23, 2026
People with Disabilities Committee Meeting – May 27, 2026

REFERENCE:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

Proposed Expenditure/Revenue:
Account Number(s):
Fund:
Account Description:
Procurement Method:

STAFF CONTACT:

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