

The background of the image is a photograph of a park. It shows a wide, open grassy area with several trees in the foreground and middle ground. The trees have bare branches, suggesting a cooler season. In the distance, there are some buildings and a fence line. The overall scene is bright and clear.

Leon Valley Master Park Plan Update

City Council Meeting

February 4, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Leon Valley Master Park Plan Update

Agenda



Team
Introduction



Project



Schedule



Community
Collaboration



Report



Next Steps
and Q & A

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Team Introduction



Park Commission

Melinda Moritz

Director
Public Works Department



Byron Sanderfer

Director

Central Region Public Works Practice

Lata Krishnarao

Community Planning Practice Leader
Project Manager

Jessica Relucio

Planner III
Community Planning

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Project- Background and Scope



Background

The first public park built in 1975
The current Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved in 2019



Scope

Be compliant with current planning standards
Update the current plan and reflect on changes over the years
Update recommendations to meet the Leon Valley's needs

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Project - Phases



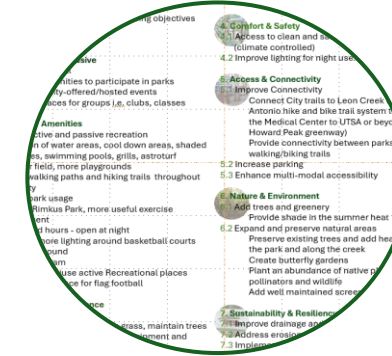
Phase I

- Mobilization
- Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting (Mtg.) #1 on July 11, 2024
- Site Visit
- Community Engagement Strategy Plan



Phase II

- Findings & Visioning
- Data collection, research, and findings
- AC Mtg. #2 on September 12, 2024
- Stakeholder Interviews on August 8, 2024



Phase III

- Recommendations
- Preliminary recommendations and implementation strategy plan
- Staff review and input
- AC review of the draft (Oct.)



Phase IV

- Draft Report
- AC Mtg. #3 on November 4, 2024 (staff facilitated)
- Received Advisory Committee feedback by November 30, 2024



Phase V

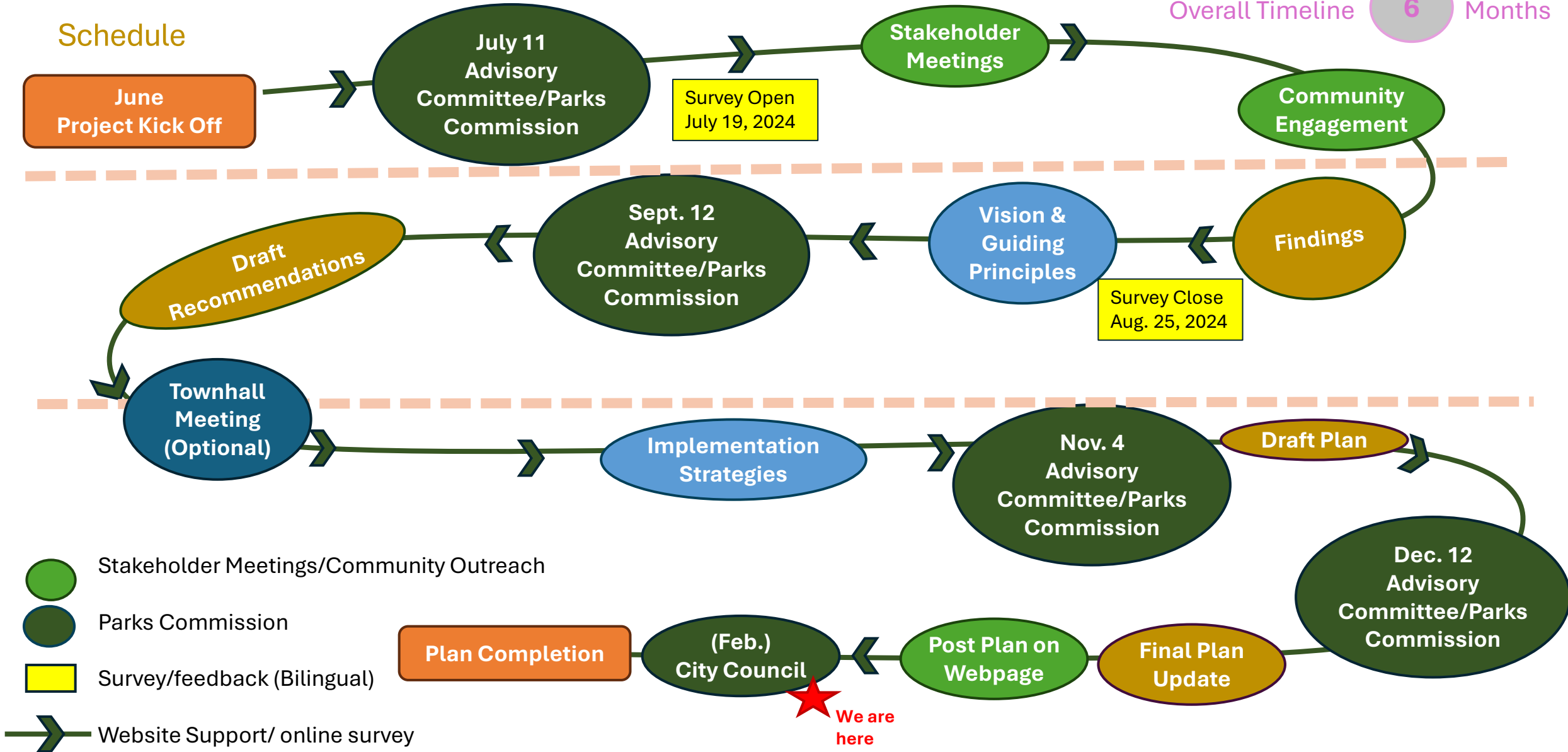
- Finalization
- AC Mtg. #4 on December 12, 2024
- Community input - website
- Presentation at City Council Meeting in February 2025
- City Council action in March 2025



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Overall Timeline **6** Months

Schedule



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Community Collaboration

Project Webpage

Objective: Schedule, events, meeting summaries, updates

Advisory Committee/Parks Commission Mtg. #1

Objective: Project Introduction

Questionnaire (SurveyMonkey)

Objective: Community Feedback (findings/aspirations)

City-Wide Survey

Objective: Community Feedback (findings/aspirations)

Stakeholder Meetings

Objective: Community Member Interviews (findings/aspirations)

Advisory Committee/Parks Commission Mtg. #2

Objective: Share findings, create a vision, guiding principles, recommendations

Advisory Committee/Parks Commission Mtg. #3

Objective: Receive and review the draft report plan update (staff).

Provide responses/comments by Nov. 30th

Advisory Committee/Parks Commission Mtg. #4

Objective: Gather input on the draft plan revisions

City Council Meeting

Objective: Gather input on the draft plan/future steps

Community Collaboration

Key Takeaways
Summarized below are the key takeaways from the city-wide survey, questionnaire, stakeholders, and the Advisory Committee meetings. Detailed information is included in the appendices.

Advisory Committee Mtg. #1
Responses: 6
Duration: July 11th Meeting

- 50% have a dog and/or a kid
- 66% walk less than one (1) mile to the park/s at least once a week
- Trails, climbing wall, dog park, pickleball, and playground are the most desired amenities

City-Wide Questionnaire
Responses: 71
Duration: July 19, 2024 - August 25, 2024


- Each household had at least one dog
- 50% had a kid and/or a someone to care for
- The parks don't have what they want or need
- 50% live within three (3) miles of a park or trail and travel by car or walk
- Trails, splash pad, green open space, pickleball, and dog park are the most desired amenities

City-Wide Survey
Responses: 37
Duration: May 2024 – June 30th, 2024 (Conducted by the city)

- ADA accessibility is satisfactory
- Safety, hospitable, and inclusivity are satisfactory
- Raymond Rimkus Park, Hike and Bike Trail, Huebner Orion, Forest Oaks Pool, and the Community Garden are the most used
- Trails, playgrounds, and natural areas are most liked; fitness equipment are least liked
- Splash pad, dog park, and pickle ball courts are the most desirable

Stakeholder Meetings
Meetings: 2

- Continue good maintenance of an existing great park system
- Raymond Rimkus can be a regional park
- Continue the park land dedication in ordinances
- Add a dog park, splash pad, pickleball, skate park, art, events, and improve water infrastructure
- Improve lighting, drainage; add accessible water facilities
- Family-friendly and pocket parks create a higher quality of living
- Connect parks with each other and provide access by buses
- Preserve nature
- Safe and comfortable parks
- Community policing and regulate shared usage of park amenities



Questionnaire drop box placed in the City Library

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Community Collaboration

Key Takeaways - Continued

Advisory Committee Mtg. #2
Responses: 5
Duration: September 12th Meeting


- Formulated overall city vision to *"Provide exceptional safe, accessible, and well-connected parks and recreation facilities, and preserve and enhance the natural environment for improved quality of life for all."*
- Classified individual parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities and created a vision for each
- Identified recommendations for individual parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities

Advisory Committee Mtg. #3
Responses: 5
Duration: November 14th Meeting


- Recommended:
 - Additional landscape requirement along walking paths (Old Mill Park)
 - Minor text revisions
 - Keeping dark night sky provisions in all parks and open space
- Overall, a great report

City Council Mtg.
Duration: January 21st Meeting


- To be added



Advisory Committee meeting #2



Advisory Committee meeting #2 mobility exercise



Advisory Committee meeting #2 vision exercise

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Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report - City Wide Vision

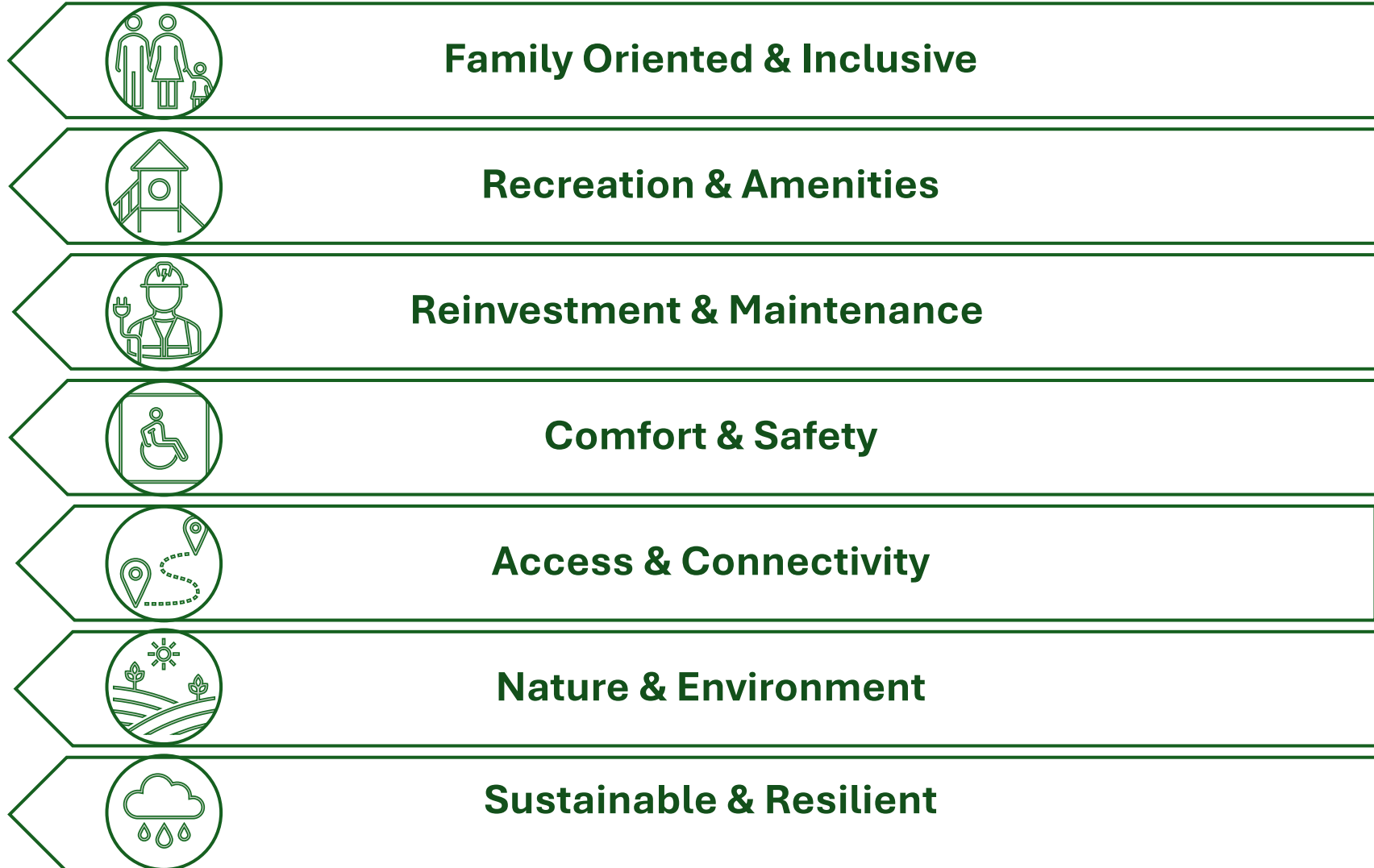
Vision Statement

Based on the community, a Vision statement was formulated. The Vision statement provided an overview of what Leon Valley would look like or provide in years to come.

The City of Leon Valley's Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces will provide safe, accessible, and well-connected parks and recreation facilities, as well as preserve the natural environment of open spaces for improved quality of life for all.

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Key Themes



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Community Input

Key Themes & Objectives

For the key themes identifies, the following objectives were identified by the community.

1. Family Oriented & Inclusive

1.1 Add activities for all

- More opportunities to participate in parks
- Additional city-offered/hosted events
- Provide spaces for groups i.e. clubs, classes

2. Recreation & Amenities

2.1 Increase active and passive recreation

- Addition of water areas, cool down areas, shaded benches, swimming pools, grills, astroturf soccer field, more playgrounds
- More walking paths and hiking trails throughout the City

2.2 Increase park usage

- Larger Rimkus Park, more useful exercise equipment
- Extended hours - open at night
- Safety - more lighting around basketball courts and playground

2.2 Public art program

2.3 Incorporate multiuse active Recreational places

- Specialized space for flag football

3. Reinvestment & Maintenance

3.1 Upkeep trails

3.2 Maintain landscaping - cut high grass, maintain trees

3.3 Reinvest in playground, exercise equipment and additional shade structures

4. Comfort & Safety

4.1 Access to clean and safe restrooms and water fountains (climate controlled)

4.2 Improve lighting for night use.

5. Access & Connectivity

5.1 Improve Connectivity

- Connect City trails to Leon Creek trails and to the San Antonio hike and bike trail system to walk or bike from the Medical Center to UTSA or beyond (The Howard Peak greenway)

- Provide connectivity between parks with walking/biking trails

5.2 Increase parking

5.3 Enhance multi-modal accessibility

6. Nature & Environment

6.1 Add trees and greenery

- Provide shade in the summer heat

6.2 Expand and preserve natural areas

- Preserve existing trees and add healthy shade trees in the park and along the creek

- Create butterfly gardens

- Plant an abundance of native plants to bring more pollinators and wildlife

- Add well-maintained screening trees for privacy

7. Sustainability & Resiliency

7.1 Improve drainage and consider mitigation strategies

7.2 Address erosion problems

7.3 Implement “Dark Parks Policy” at Raymond Rimkus

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report - Structure

Existing Conditions Analysis

Understand the community, changes, and characteristics that impact parks and recreational facilities.

- Demographic Profile
- Community Resources
- Land Use and Development
- Current Parks and Open Space System
- Mobility and Transportation
- Infrastructure (Water/Sewer)
- Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation
- Economic, Housing, Income and Market Conditions

City- Wide Recommendations

Incorporate the community's feedback for city-wide system recommendations.

- Expand park programs
- Adopt National Recreation and Park Association guidelines
- Add a dog park
- Retain one pool and repurpose the other facility
- Expand the parks, trails, and open space network
- Ensure American Disabilities Act (ADA)

Park Recommendations

Incorporate the community's feedback for each park, trail, or open space.

- Heatherington Trail
- Hike & Bike Trail
- Linkwood/Pavona Trail
- Stirrup Lane Trail
- Leon Valley Ranches Park
- The Ridge at Leon Valley Park
- Steurenthaler-Silo Park
- Raymond Rimkus Park
- Huebner Onion Natural Area Park
- Triangle Park
- Old Mill Park
- Shadow Mist Park
- Forest Oaks Pool
- Leon Valley Pool

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

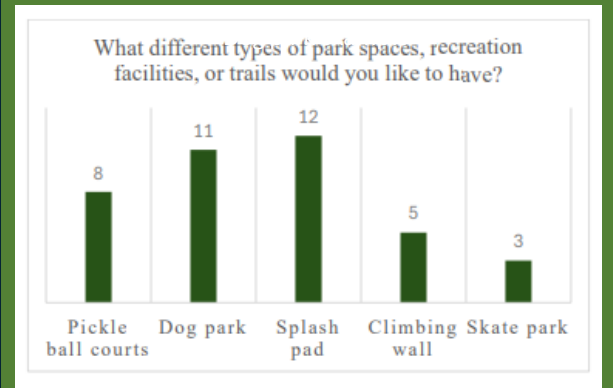
Report – City Wide Recommendations

1. Family Oriented & Inclusive

- **Age-friendly** recreational facilities and opportunities for all
- Activities and **events** hosted by the city
- **Park celebration** event throughout the city parks and facilities
- Plaza or a **park square** to hold community events
- Additional **facilities** - disc golf, skate park, pickle ball, splash pads

2. Recreation & Amenities

- National Recreation and Park Association (**NRPA**) guidelines
- **Parkland dedication** requirements and fees
- Programming to meet the **diverse** ethnic needs of the community.
- Aquatics study and **aquatic related** events
- **Master Trails Plan** – connect parks and regional trail
- **Expand** the parks, trails, and open space network
- **Dog park** and amenities for dogs
- One **pool** for the community and repurpose the other pool site
- **All-weather** surface surfaces for fields and trails
- Exercise equipment with **children's** climbing equipment
- **Public art** program



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – City Wide Recommendations

3. Reinvestment & Maintenance

- **Maintenance Plan** with high maintenance standards
- Augment existing **staffing** levels
- Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (**CAPRA**) **accreditation** to optimize departmental resources and embrace best practices

4. Comfort & Safety

- **Design criteria** manual
- Measures for mitigation of **heat islands**
- **Crime Prevention** Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**) standards
- Crime and **homelessness** in collaboration with other agencies
- Parks and Recreation **Department** with a safety Ranger
- Enforce the “**Dark Sky**” ordinance; areas where additional lighting may be beneficial

Why are Dark Sky Ordinances important?

Benefits:

- Impact on Wildlife
- Reduces disruption and disorientation, thereby contributing to the health and survival of our wildlife.
- Human Health and Well-being
- Reduces significant health impacts for humans due to disruption of circadian rhythms, thereby safeguarding our health and well-being.



Visibility of stars with dark night sky ordinance

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – City Wide Recommendations

5. Access & Connectivity

- Comprehensive **signage** plan with unique branding
- **Bike and pedestrian** connections from park to surrounding neighborhood.
- **Walk Audit** to evaluate walkability
- Needs of children and adults with **disabilities**, beyond ADA
- **Marketing** plan and promotional activities

6. Nature & Environment

- Preserve, enhance and expand **natural areas**
- Indigenous **ecosystems** in parks to promote biodiversity
- **Habitats** for local and migratory birds and animals
- **Native plant** materials in parks, trails and within public medians
- **Eco-tourism**

On the Path to Safe Routes to Parks

This infographic highlights features and steps to creating Safe Routes to Parks. Click the image to see a full version.



Source: "Safe Routes to Parks." National Recreation and Parks Association
<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/partnerships/initiatives/safe-routes-to-parks/>

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – City Wide Recommendations

7. Sustainability & Resiliency

- Adopt “**Envision**” best practices
- **Green infrastructure**- rain gardens and green roofs
- Integrate the **stormwater drainage** systems into the open space network. Consider **habitat enhancements** for birds
- Resource management - water-saving landscaping and using renewable energy sources
- **Parkland acquisition** plan.
- Long-term and short-term **funding** sources
- **Partnerships** and corporate sponsorships
- Partnership with the Northside Independent School District (**NISD**)
- **Monitor and quantify** park and recreational facility use



Example of directional signage



Natural preservation along a walkway

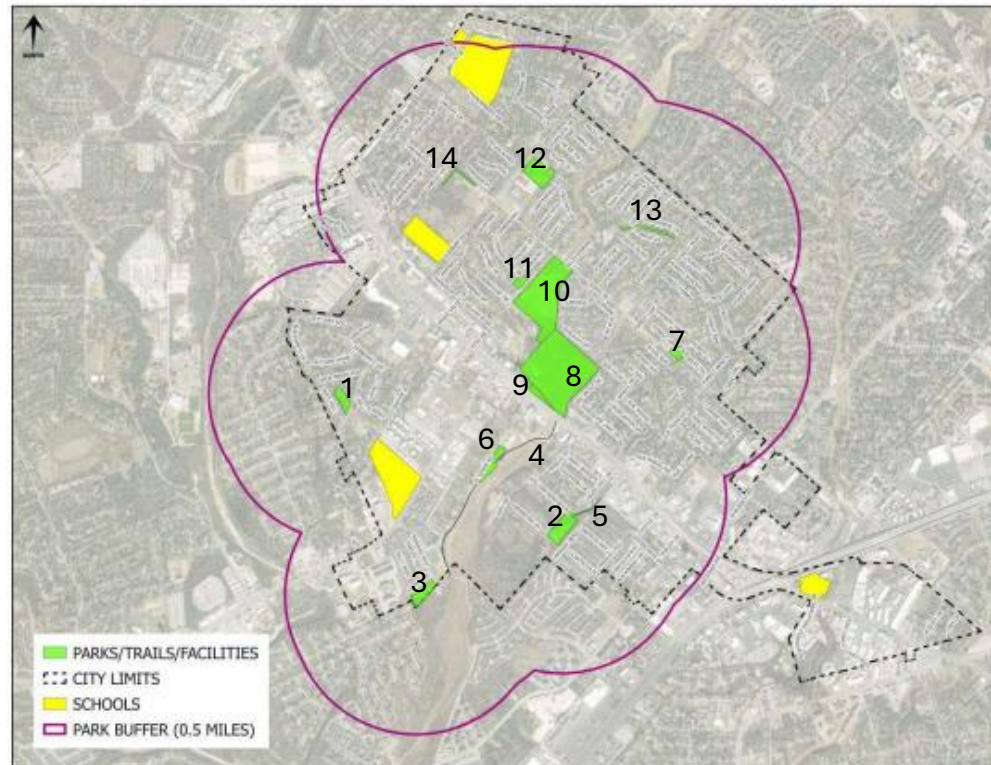


All ages able to use amenities

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – Park Locations

A majority of Leon Valley residents have access to an open green space, trail, park, or recreational facility that is located within half a mile of where they live. The fourteen (14) facilities that were included in this update are listed here and the map below shows the location of these facilities.

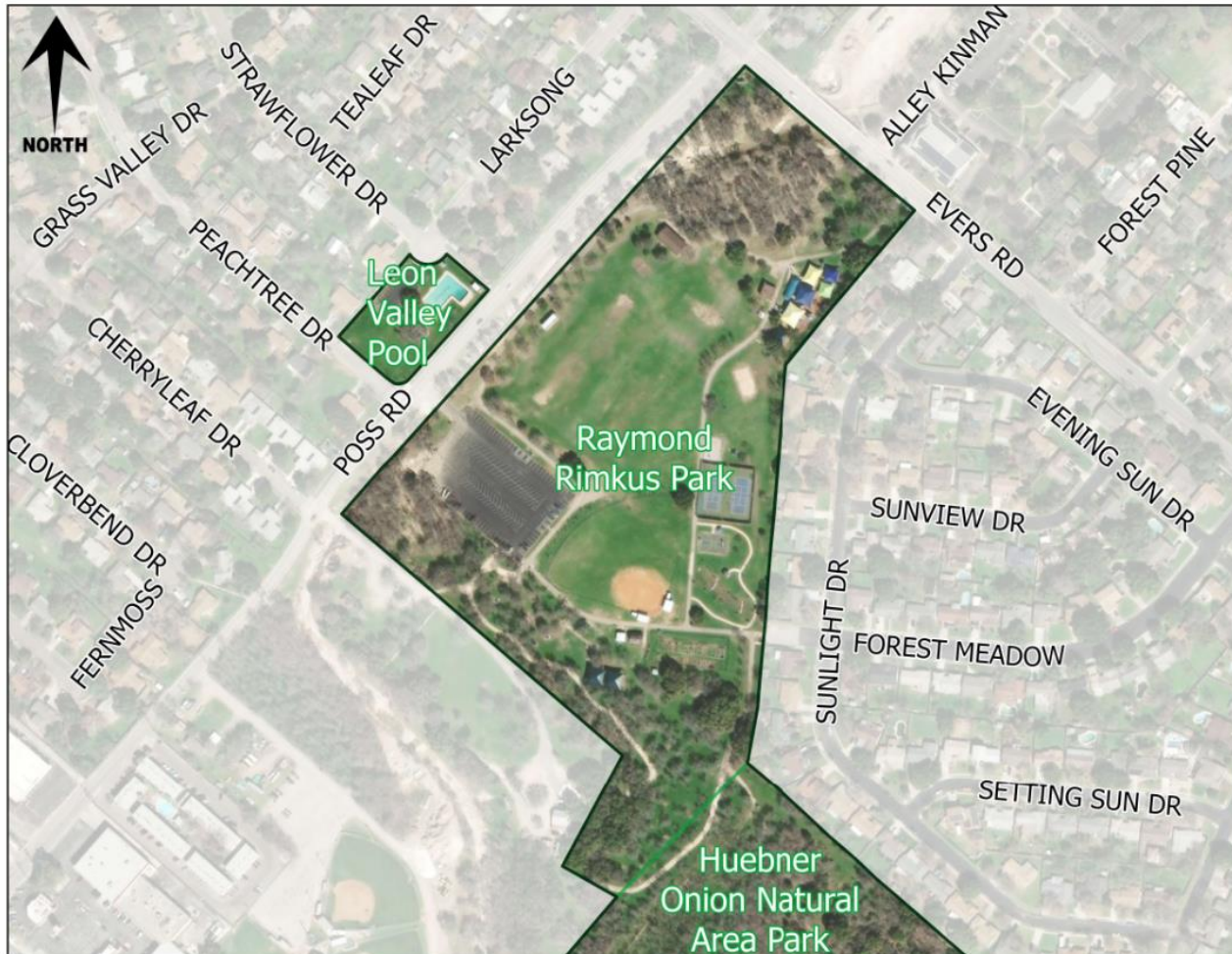


1. Old Mill Park
2. The Ridge at Leon Valley
3. Shadow Mist Park
4. Leon Valley/El Verde Park
5. Heatherington Trail
6. Huebner Creek Greenway (Hike & Bike)Trail
7. Forest Oaks Community Pool
8. Huebner Onion Natural Area
9. Triangle Park
10. Raymond Rimkus Park
11. Leon Valley Community Pool
12. Steurenthaler-Silo Park
13. Stirrup Walking Trail
14. Pavona-Linkwood Walking Trail

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – Example of Recommendations for Each Park/Facility -1

Raymond Rimkus Park - Existing Conditions



Park Zone - 3

Size

24 acres

Location

Located southeast of Poss Road and Evers Road. Raymond Rimkus Park is adjacent to Huebner Onion Natural Area Park and is one of the largest parks in the City.

Classification

Neighborhood Park

Linear Park/Linkages

Functionally, the park serves as a Community Park.

Amenities

- 2 Playgrounds/play structures
- 1 Diamond field
- 2 Basketball courts, standalone
- 1 Rectangular field
- 2 Tennis courts
- 1 Musical (Harmony) park
- 1 Community garden
- 1 Walking loop/trail
- 2 Pavilions
- 15 Benches
- 2 Restrooms
- 4 Water Fountains.

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – Example of Recommendations for Each Park/Facility -2

Raymond Rimkus Park – Existing Conditions

Community Input

- BOUNDARY OF PARKS/TRAILS
- CITY LIMITS
- ADDITIONAL PARKING NEEDED (NO INPUT)
- TREES NEEDED
- DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED (NO INPUT)
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS NEEDED (WITH ADA)
- SAFETY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED
- BIKE ACCESS NEEDED
- AMENITIES NEEDED (BENCHES, WATER FOUNTAINS, ETC.) (NO INPUT)



Community garden, Raymond Rimkus



Open space, Raymond Rimkus



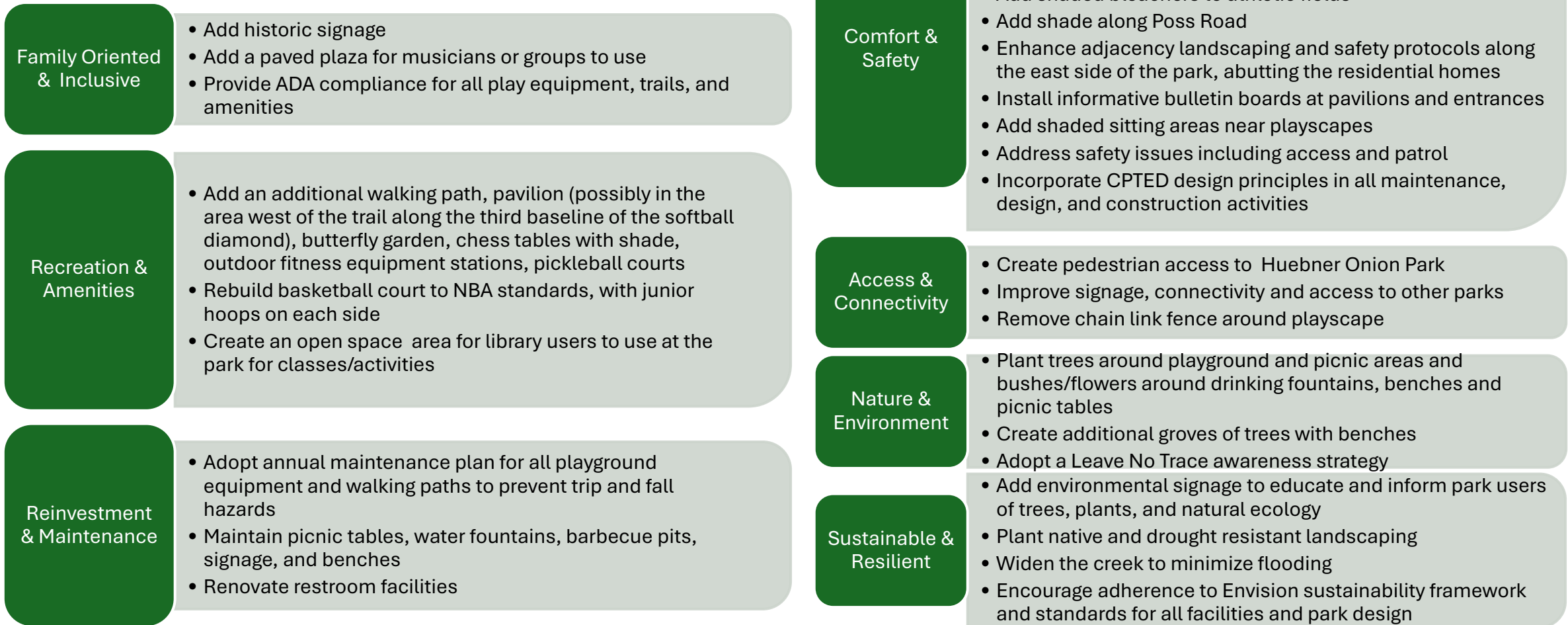
Diamond field, Raymond Rimkus

Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Report – Example of Recommendations for Each Park/Facility - 3

Raymond Park – Community Feedback

Park recommendations based on the community’s feedback from the survey, questionnaire, and Advisory Committee.



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Public Comments Received

None

City-Wide Recommendations

The City-wide recommendations for City of Leon Valley were guided by the input received by the community, the Advisory Committee, and best practices. In addition to these City-wide recommendations, specific recommendations for each Trails, Open Spaces, and Parks are listed in the following sections.

- Family Oriented & Inclusive**
 - Ensure that the City's parks provide age-friendly recreational facilities and opportunities for all cohorts.
 - Expand the parks programming to increase activities and events hosted by the city.
 - Consider a park celebration event throughout the city parks and recreational facilities (for example walkathon, bike races, scavenger hunt, art walks, etc.) that involves all residents and garners media attention.
 - Add a venue such as a plaza or a park square to hold outdoor events and celebrations.
 - Add sports fields and recreational facilities such as disc golf, skate park, pickle ball, and splash pads.
- Recreation & Amenities**
 - Adopt National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines.
 - Reevaluate the parkland dedication requirements and fees.
 - Ensure that the programming of parks and open spaces meets the diverse ethnic needs of the community.
 - Complete an equitability study and incorporate aquatic related events for all.
 - Create a Master Trails Plan, including bulk heads, mile markers, and other facilities, that provides connectivity between parks and to the regional trail network.
 - Expand the parks, trails, and open space network.
 - Add a dog park and include amenities for dogs in all facilities.
 - Retain one pool for the community and repurpose the other pool facility site.
 - Upgrade surfaces for fields and trails with all-weather surface.
 - Replace or augment exercise equipment with children's climbing equipment.
 - Implement a public art program that provides in a unique identity, incorporates local culture, and unifies the park, open space, and trail system.






City-Wide Recommendations

- Reinvestment & Maintenance**
 - Prepare a Maintenance Plan with incorporation of high maintenance standards for all facilities and trails.
 - Augment existing staffing levels by addition of two dedicated personnel to oversee maintenance.
 - Consider Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation to optimize departmental resources and embrace best practices to meet the open space and recreational needs of the community.
- Comfort & Safety**
 - Prepare a design criteria manual that provides guidelines on amenities, landscaping, shade, and other elements to increase usage.
 - Adopt measures for mitigation of heat islands.
 - Encourage compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
 - Ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
 - Address crime and homelessness in parks in collaboration with other agencies.
 - Consider a Park Ranger position to address security and safety issues especially on-site security.
 - Continue to enforce the "Dark Sky" ordinance and examine areas where additional lighting may be beneficial for safety and maintain the current park hours (sunrise to sunset).

Why are Dark Sky Ordinances important?

Benefits:


- Impact on Wildlife:** Reduces disruption and disorientation, thereby contributing to the health and survival of our wildlife.
- Human Health and Well-being:** Reduces significant health impacts for humans due to disruption of circadian rhythms, thereby safeguarding our health and well-being.



Trails, Open Spaces, and Parks

Hetherington Trail – Existing Conditions

Community Input

Legend:

- KLADON/FRONTTRAIL
- CRUISES
- ADDITIONAL/NEEDED/ND
- REMOVED
- ADDITIONAL/NEEDED/ND
- REMOVED
- ADDITIONAL/NEEDED/ND
- REMOVED
- ADDITIONAL/NEEDED/ND
- REMOVED

Trails, Open Spaces, and Parks

Pavona-Linkwood Trail – Existing Conditions

Park Zone 4

Size .86 acres


Location Located south of Linkline Drive and Linkhaven Drive. Linkwood is a natural trail for the neighborhood.

Classification Linear Park/Linkage

Amenity

- 1 Walking trail/loop
- 3 Benches
- 1 Exercise Station

- Current plans to connect a new trail on the southwest corner of Linkwood Trail to the Geneva Subdivision



Implementation: City wide

Key implementation actions in phases of short-, mid-, and long-term time goals are listed below and in the following pages. After receiving community input on the needs and wishes of Leon Valley Parks, Open Space, and Trails, these recommendations were created to meet the needs and recommendations listed within this plan. The actual cost will depend on the design, materials, resources, and timing of the action.

Recommended Action	Action Type & Cost	Term
Family Oriented & Inclusive		
Ensure that the City's parks provide age-friendly recreational facilities and opportunities for all cohorts.	CIP - \$\$\$	Ongoing
Expand the parks programming to increase activities and events hosted by the city.	P - \$\$	Short-Term
Consider a park celebration event throughout the city parks and recreational facilities (for example walkathon, bike races, scavenger hunt, art walks, etc.) that involves all residents and garners media attention.	P - \$\$ C - \$	Short-Term
Add a venue such as a plaza or a park square to hold outdoor events and celebrations.	CIP - \$\$\$ C - \$	Mid-Term
Add sports fields and recreational facilities such as disc golf, skate park, pickle ball, and splash pads.	CIP - \$\$\$	Long-Term

Action Type:


- (R) Regulation: Updating existing regulations or developing new ordinances.
- (C) Coordination: Working with other agencies or groups to implement goals.
- (P) Program: Utilizing existing or new programs, processes or work plans.
- (D) Development: Goals implemented through the development process.
- (PS) Plan / study: Creating new plans or updating existing plans.

Anticipated Cost:

- \$ Low
- \$\$ Medium
- \$\$\$ High

Terms:

- Short-Term: 0-2 years
- Mid-Term: 3-5 years
- Long-Term: 6-10 years
- Ongoing: Tasks completed through existing programs or as the need arises.



Implementation: City wide

Recommended Action	Action Type & Cost	Term
Reinvestment & Maintenance		
Prepare a Maintenance Plan with incorporation of high maintenance standards for all facilities and trails.	PS - \$	Short-Term
Augment existing staffing levels by addition of two dedicated personnel to oversee maintenance.	R - \$\$	Short-Term
Consider Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation to optimize departmental resources and embrace best practices to meet the open space and recreational needs of the community.	P - \$	Mid-Term

Action Type:


- (R) Regulation: Updating existing regulations or developing new ordinances.
- (C) Coordination: Working with other agencies or groups to implement goals.
- (P) Program: Utilizing existing or new programs, processes or work plans.
- (D) Development: Goals implemented through the development process.
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Anticipated Cost:

- \$ Low
- \$\$ Medium
- \$\$\$ High

Terms:

- Short-Term: 0-2 years
- Mid-Term: 3-5 years
- Long-Term: 6-10 years
- Ongoing: Tasks completed through existing programs or as the need arises.



Leon Valley Parks, Opens Spaces, and Facilities Master Plan Update

Next Steps and Q&A

Next Steps

1. Add the foreword to the report
2. City Council Meeting in March 2025 to act on the Final Master Park Plan

Q & A

