

PORT LAVACA PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC WORKSHOP EVENT RECAP

Prepared by **LJA**



MEETING INTRODUCTION

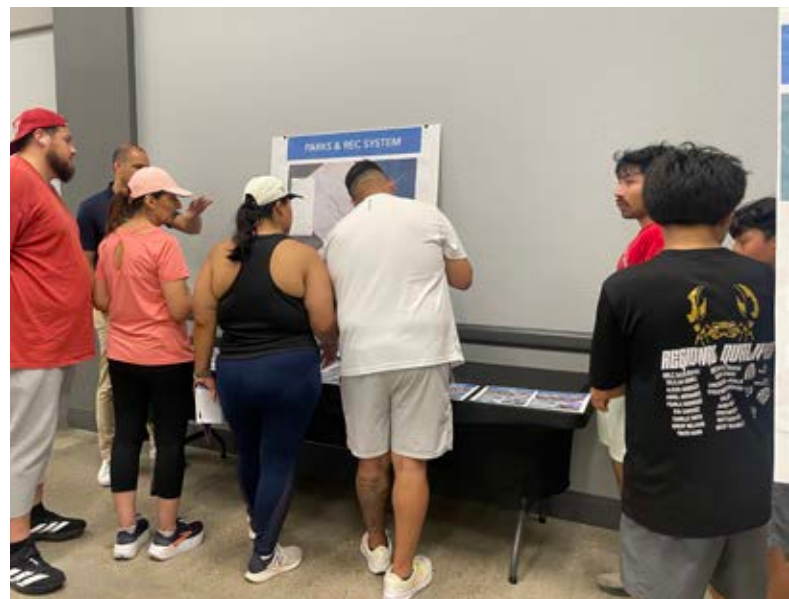
The City of Port Lavaca is developing a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. During this process a Public Workshop was held to obtain vital community feedback and direction for the development of its content.

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 meaningful, collaborative discussion at the interactive stations. This feedback will shape the future Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The goals of the Workshop were to:

- Familiarize the community with park master planning basics
- Inform the community about the current Parks and Recreation System
- Understand the public's perspectives on the current System
- Collect feedback to begin determining the community's vision for the Parks and Recreation System

Stations were set up throughout the Community Center and ranged from informational to interactive for residents of all ages. Members of the LJA Planning team also were available throughout the event to answer questions and spark discussion among community members. Highlights of each station are provided in this recap.



ABOUT THE PARKS & RECREATION PLAN

Port Lavaca needs your help to update the City's Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The Plan will cover many different topics as illustrated below, serving as a Vision that will guide Port Lavaca's Parks and Recreation System in the coming years.

Port Lavaca necesita tu ayuda para actualizar el Plano Maestro de los Parques y Recreación. Tu opinión ayudara a definir la Vision que guiara a la ciudad de Port Lavaca en los proximos años. Los temas que se incluirán son los siguientes:



ABOUT THE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

Parks & Recreation Master Plans are technical documents that serve three key purposes:

- Identify community needs and desires from the System
- Provide strategies to meet those needs and desires both short and long-term
- Meet the criteria to receive grants

Modern Parks & Recreation Master Plans should be updated every three to five years. Our Master Plan was last updated in 1997, and a lot has changed since then!

Considerations

Take a look at the maps! This is where we are discussing today. They show Port Lavaca's parks, trails, floodplains and natural areas, beaches, schools, neighborhoods and more! All of these elements play a role in the overall system.

Timeline

1. Understand community needs and desires (tonight!)
2. Assess system conditions
3. Develop strategies
4. Draft the Master Plan

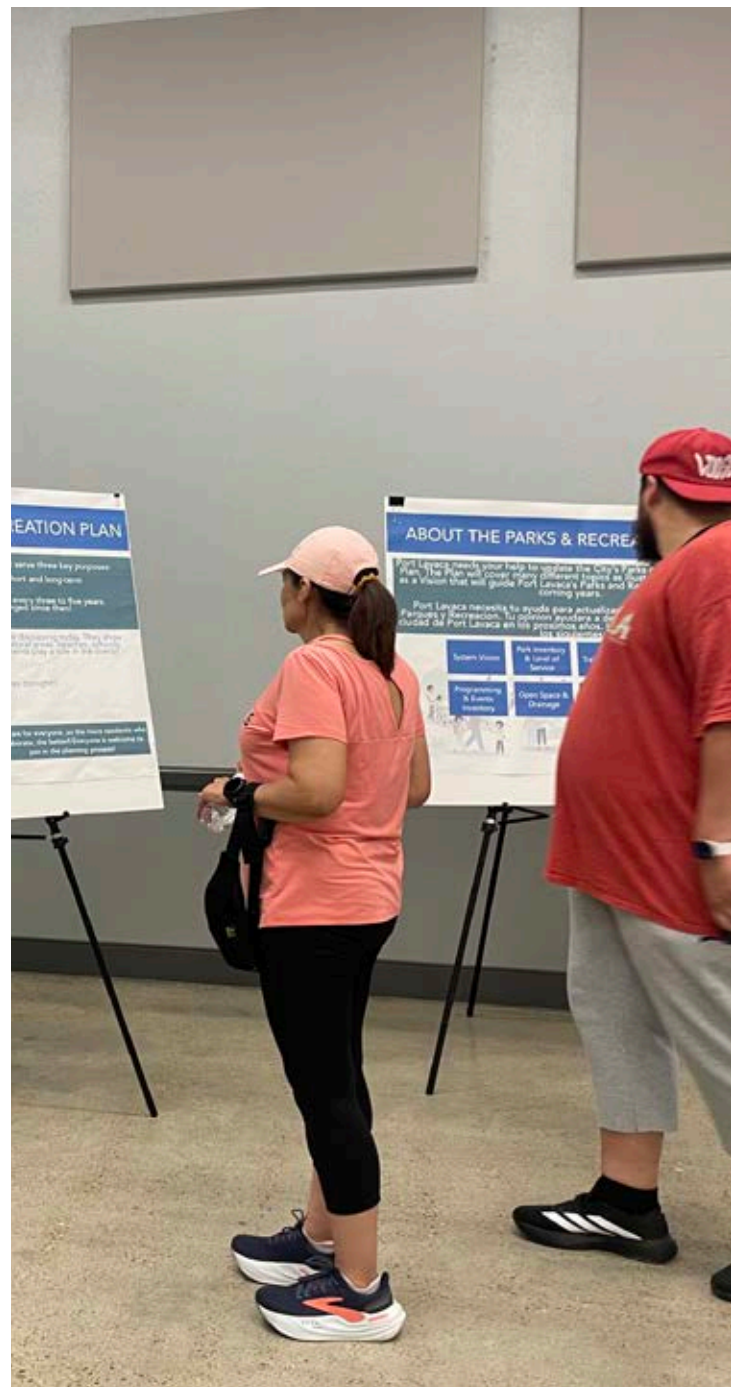
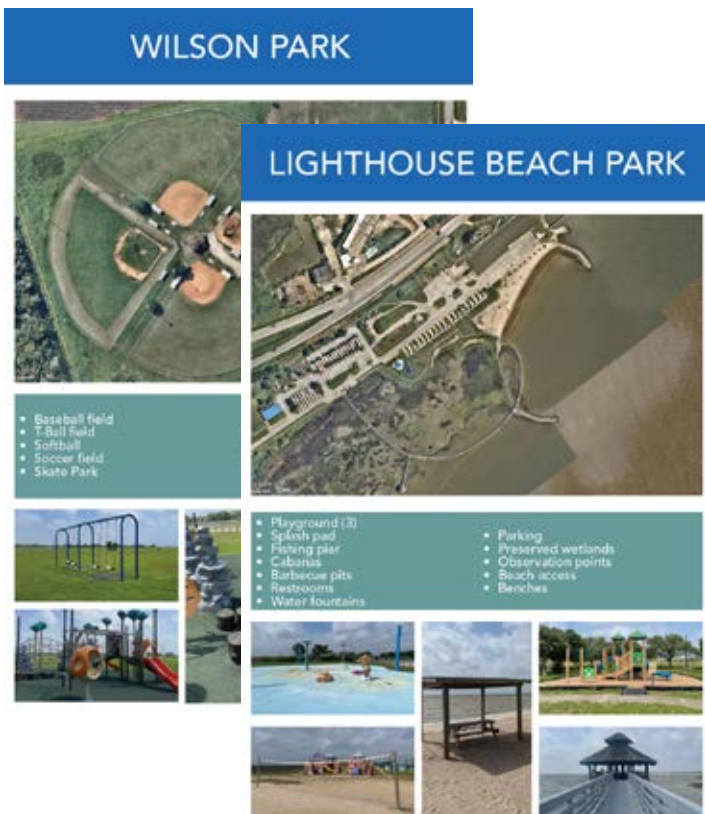
Who

- YOU!
- Port Lavaca Community & Stakeholders
- Elected & Appointed Officials
- City Staff & Consultant Team

Parks are for everyone, so the more residents who collaborate, the better! Everyone is welcome to join in the planning process!

ABOUT THE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

This station contained two informational boards that defined the Five W's of the project: WHAT the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is and its purpose; WHO is involved; WHEN it should be updated; WHY it is being updated; and illustrated areas WHERE the Plan would be implemented through maps of Port Lavaca's current and future parks.

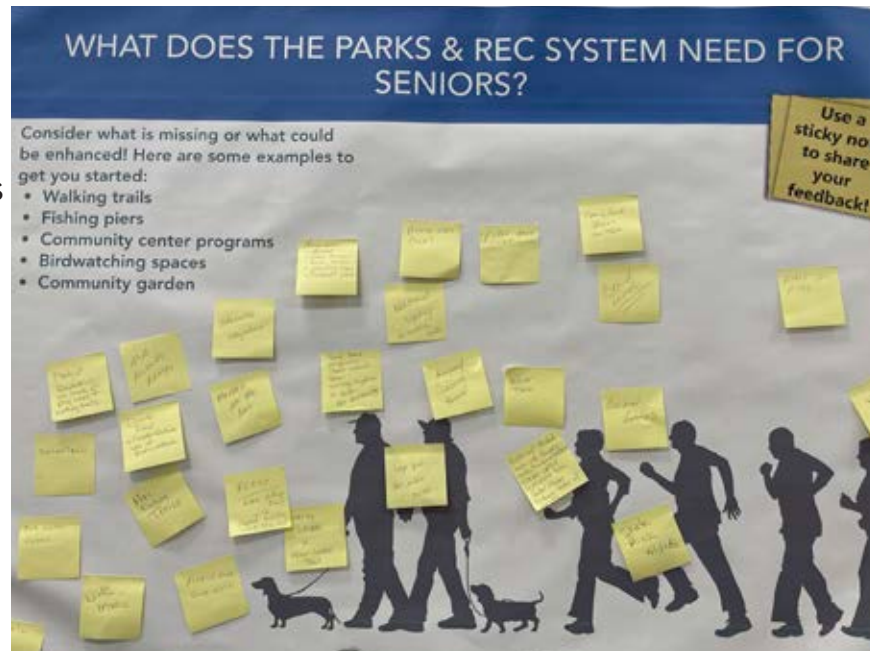


GENERATIONAL NEEDS

SENIORS

This station asked what the Parks and Recreation System is missing for seniors in Port Lavaca. Top responses included:

- Community programs
- Board games
- Pickleball courts
- Additional walking trails
- More shade and seating on existing walking trails



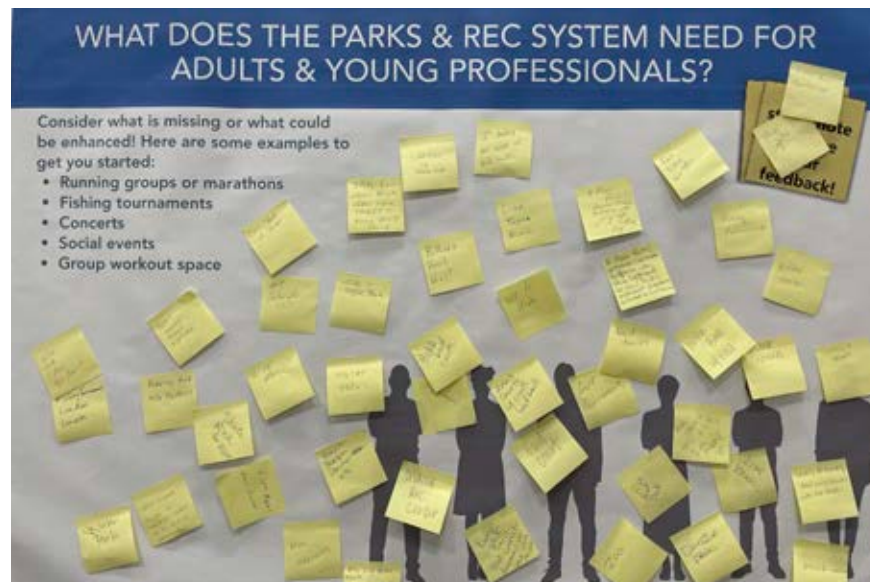
YOUNG ADULTS

This station asked what the Parks and Recreation System is lacking for the adults and young professionals of Port Lavaca.

Many of the top responses reveal a desire for community events or for third spaces to gather:

- Live music or an outdoor festival
- First Friday Art Walk
- Food trucks
- Wine and/or coffee bar

Other responses included a disc golf course, pickleball courts, and a recreational center.



GENERATIONAL NEEDS

TEENAGERS

This station asked what could be added or enhanced for the Parks and Recreation System to better serve Port Lavaca's teenagers. Top responses included:

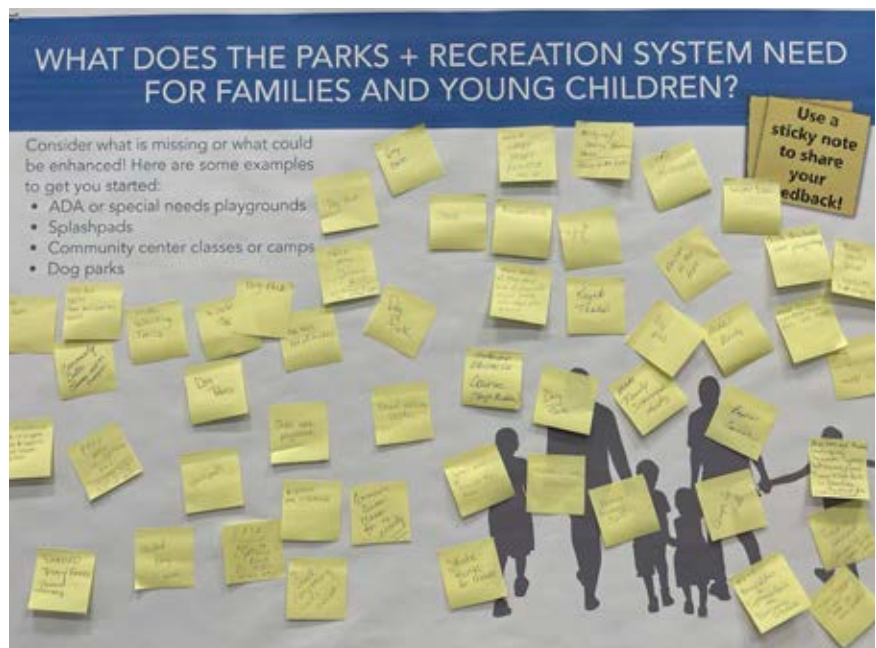
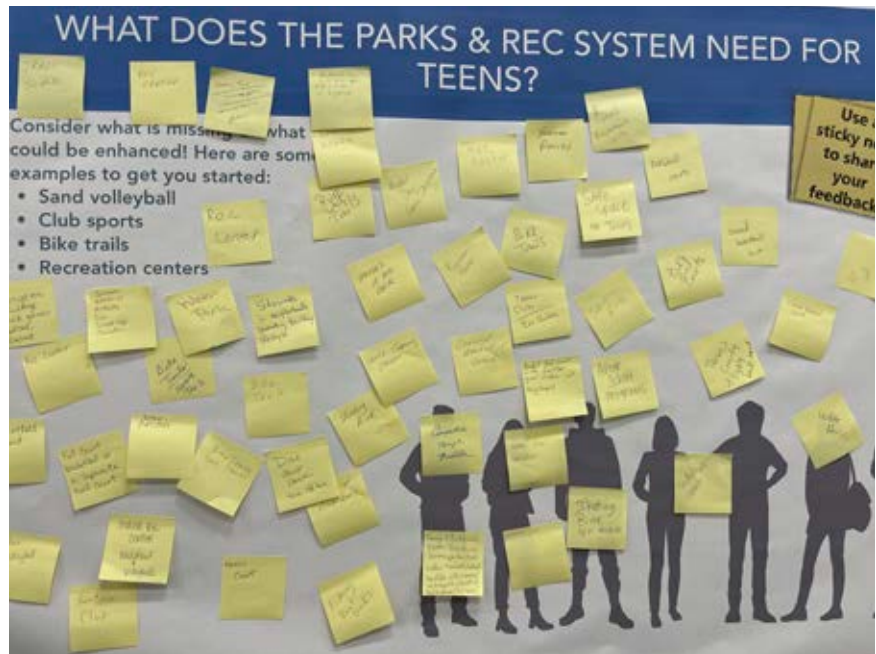
- Indoor or covered basketball court
- Recreational center with sports courts
- After-school, weekend, or summer programs
- Pickleball or tennis court

FAMILIES

This station asked what the Parks and Recreation System could introduce or enhance to better serve the needs of families, including those with young children. The most frequent responses for family-oriented park implementations included:

- More shade trees or structures
- Dog park
- Water park or splash pad
- Free entry to Lighthouse Beach
- Walking, running, or bicycle trails
- Obstacle course

Additional responses included implementing a City-lead sports league for children, kayak launches and trail, and summer, weekend, or after-school programs for children.



WHAT ASPECTS OF PORT LAVACA'S PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM DO YOU LIKE?

This station asked participants to consider what they enjoy about Port Lavaca's current Parks and Recreation System. Common responses included:

- Bayfront Park and its wide, well-lit sidewalks
- Lighthouse Beach
- Shaded splash pads
- Walking and nature trails
- Easy access to the coastline

Some residents shared that they love the parks, and one responded that "the growth and improvements that have been made are wonderful."

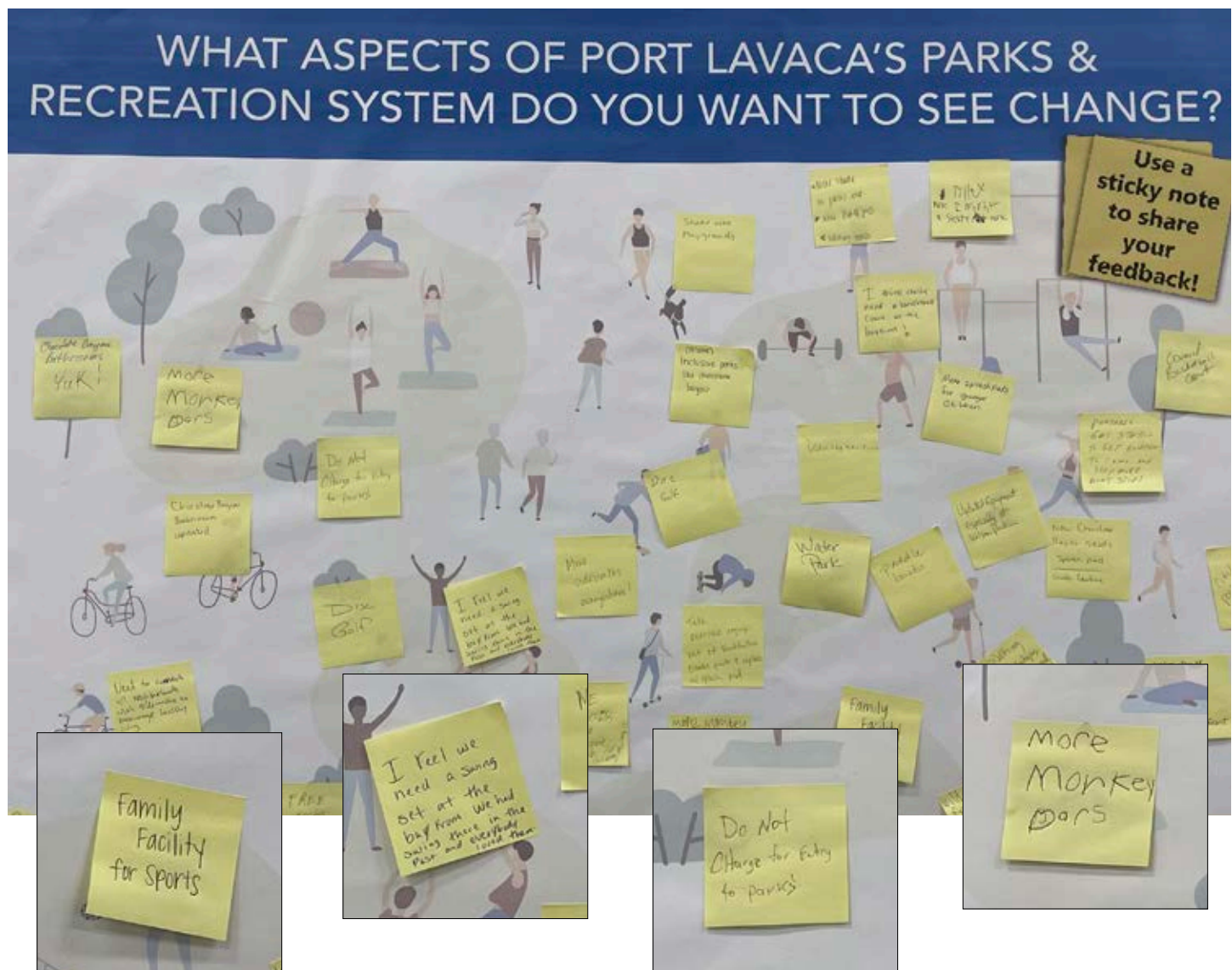


WHAT ASPECTS OF THE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM DO YOU WANT TO SEE CHANGE?

This station gave residents an opportunity to share their desires for change in the current parks system. Frequent responses included:

- Shade trees or structures
- Covered or indoor basketball court
- Free entry to all parks and beaches (i.e., Lighthouse Beach)
- Playground equipment such as monkey bars or swings
- Water park or splash pad

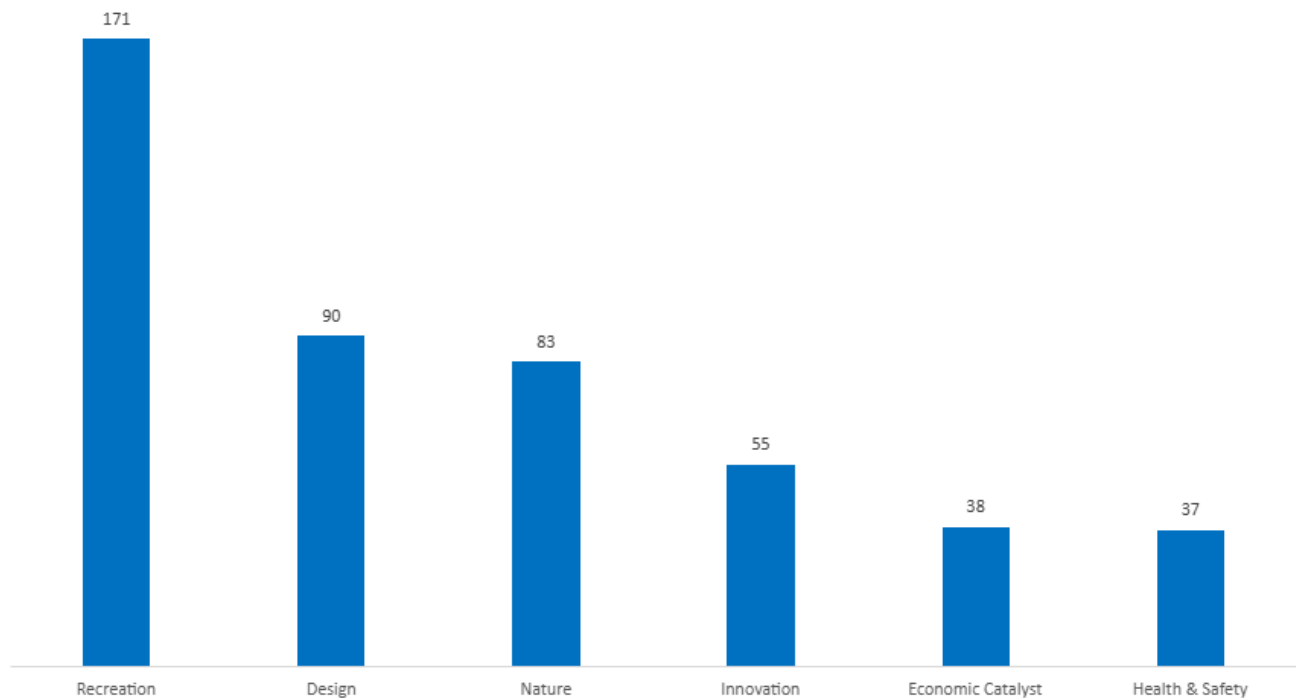
Providing additional shade was the one of the most common responses across all boards prompts.



PARKS AND REC JARS OF THE FUTURE

This activity contained six potential parks initiatives/objectives and asked participants to fund their parks priorities by allocating each of the ten tickets they were provided as they felt appropriate: whether in just a few jars, evenly between the jars, or even all in one jar!

The results of the Parks and Recreation Jars of the Future activity are detailed in the graph below. Recreation objectives lead the way, with design and nature close behind.



RECREATION

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

INNOVATION

Change the way we think about what's possible, and set an example for the rest of the country.

ECONOMIC CATALYST

Activate the local economy by investing in amenities that connect the community to job centers and special places of value.

DESIGN

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

NATURE

Design spaces that protect sensitive or important natural areas and features, and integrate low impact / "green" practices.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Protect the community by lowering the risk of injury and promoting public health.



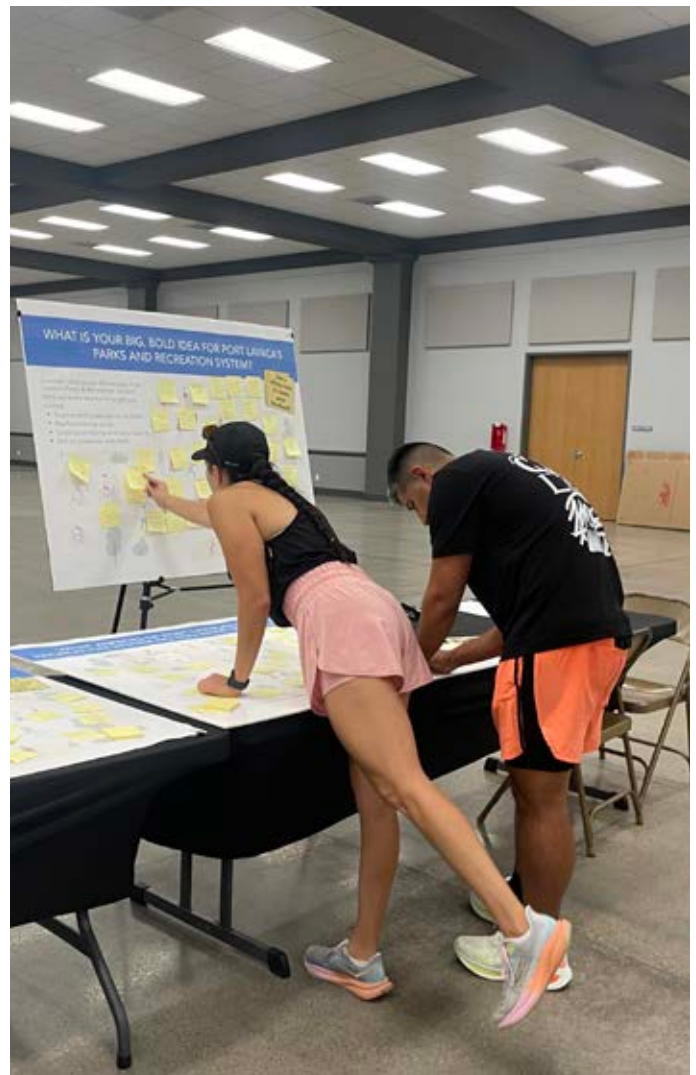
BIG, BOLD IDEAS

This station asked participants “What is your big, bold idea for Port Lavaca’s Parks and Recreation System,” allowing residents to think about the community’s long-term amenities, programs, and attractions.

Answers varied widely, with top responses including (but not limited to):

- Recreational center with sports courts and public pool
- Covered or indoor basketball court
- Community events, such as live music or movies in the park
- Obstacle course with zip lines or a climbing wall
- Additional bicycle infrastructure
- More trees to provide shade

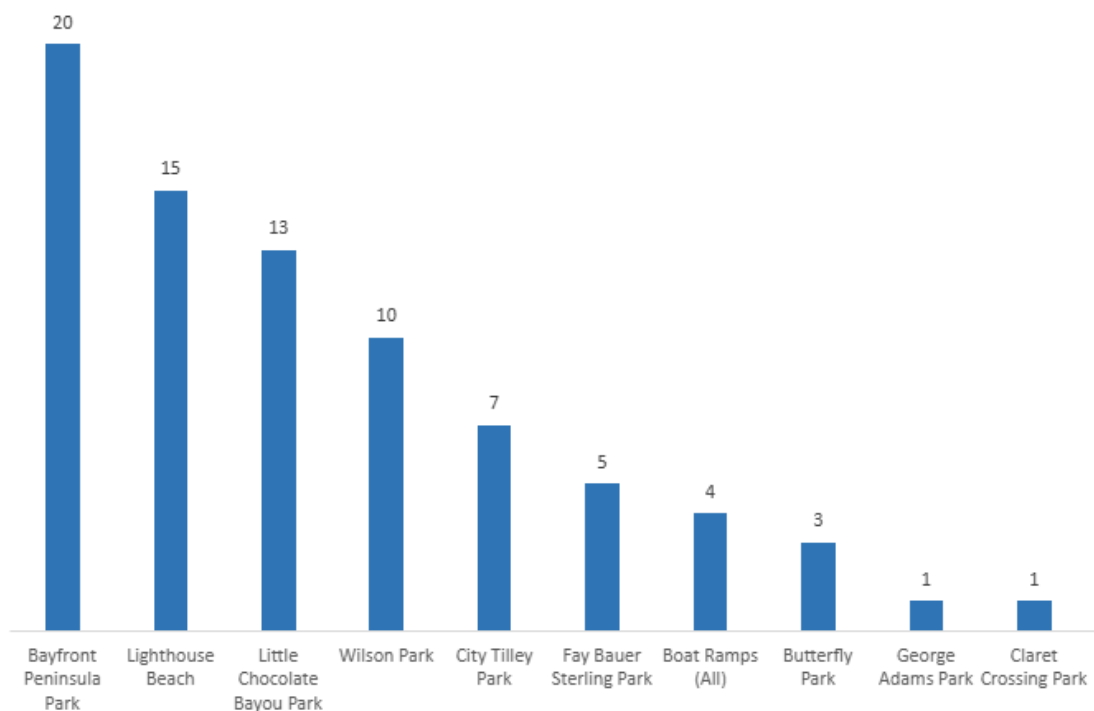
Additional suggestions included a zoo, arboretum, water park, and paddle boat rentals.



WHICH PARKS, TRAILS, OR RECREATION FACILITIES HAVE YOU OR YOUR FAMILY VISITED IN THE LAST YEAR?

This station included a regional-scaled map to show parks, trails, and facilities located within and nearby Port Lavaca. Participants were asked to locate and name which parks, trails, and recreational facilities they and their families utilized in the past year.

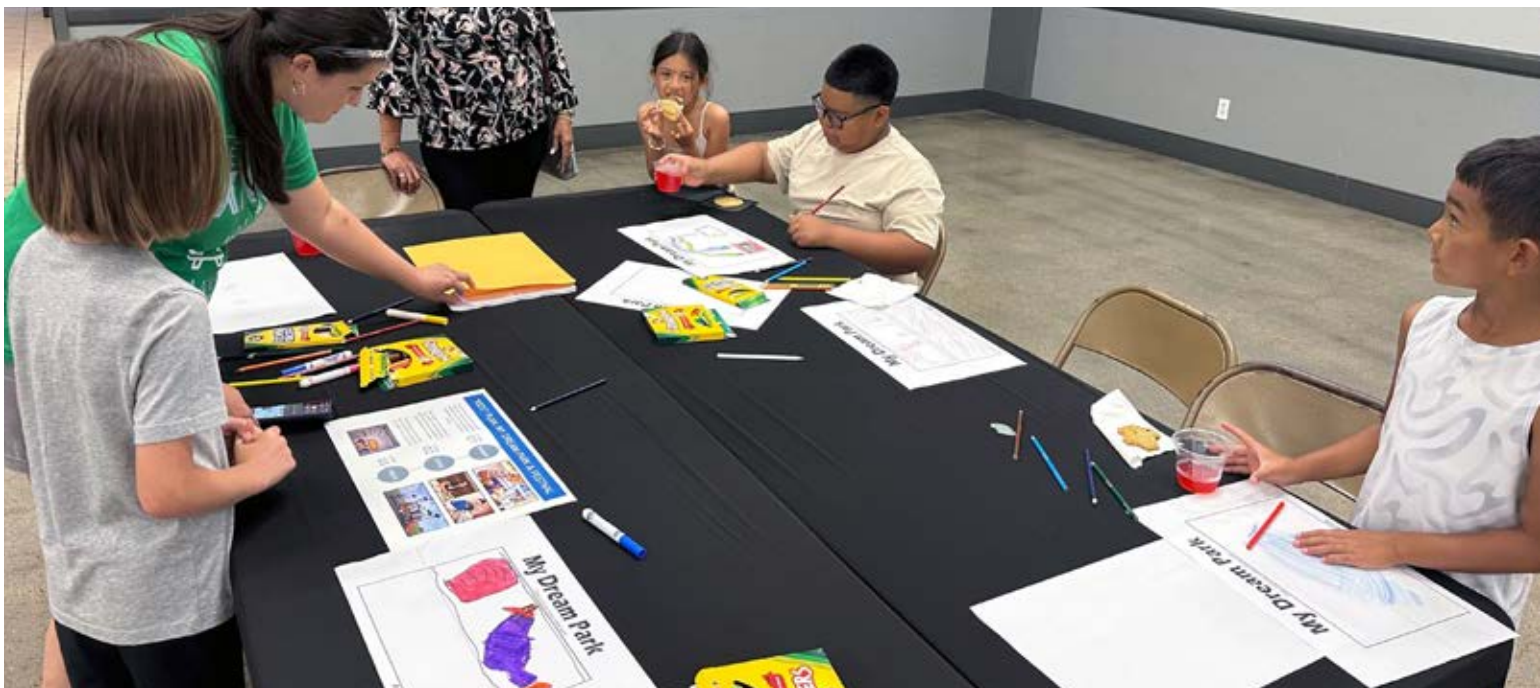
Results are displayed in the chart below. The top three most visited parks are Bayfront Peninsula Park (20), Lighthouse Beach (15), and Little Chocolate Bayou Park (13).



KIDS PLAN: MY DREAM PARK & FESTIVAL

This station gave kids the opportunity to design their dream park and festival that they would like to see in Port Lavaca in the future.

The kids came up with many wonderful ideas for buildings and amenities, such as a petting zoo, water slides, dog park, and a rock climbing wall.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overall, the May 20 Public Workshop engaged approximately 50 residents who offered thoughtful feedback, hopes, and ideas for the future of Port Lavaca's Parks and Recreation system. Common community desires identified across all activities and boards include:



- Additional shade trees or structures within existing parks
- Community recreational center with amenities for all age groups, such as sports courts or a public pool
- More community events and programs, such as movies in the park, live music, Christmas lights, First Friday art walks, etc.
- Rentals for kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, etc. near the water
- Walking, running, and bicycle trails within parks and neighborhoods
- Splash pads for younger children
- Free access to Lighthouse Beach for Port Lavaca residents

Additionally, community members appreciate larger parks with a range of amenities, such as Lighthouse Beach and Chocolate Bayou Park. Residents enjoy the wide, well-lit sidewalks of Bayfront Peninsula Park.

As seen in the jar activity highlighted on page 8, residents prioritize recreational activities offered by parks systems. They hope that future parks and updates to the current parks continue to emphasize recreation with nature trails, ample coastline access, and shade, so they can enjoy the outdoors year-round.



NEXT STEPS

As the City of Port Lavaca continues to advance its Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the next steps will focus on translating public input into actionable strategies. This includes refining priorities based on community feedback, identifying funding opportunities, and coordinating with city departments and partners to develop a phased implementation plan.

The City of Port Lavaca has additional opportunities to engage community members through issuing a public survey, hosting additional public meetings, and sharing project updates. As key components of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan take shape, there will be a Community Open House later in 2025 for the community to get a peek and provide additional direction.

Continued collaboration will be essential in ensuring that the final Parks and Recreation Master Plan reflects the Port Lavaca community's vision and supports a vibrant, accessible, and inclusive parks system for all residents to enjoy.



Learn more about Port Lavaca Parks and Recreation at:
portlavaca.org/city-departments/parks/



CITY OF PORT LAVACA
TEXAS



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