



PARKS & FACILITIES

02



Formosa Wetlands Walkway (City of Port Lavaca))

INTRODUCTION

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

	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

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.

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.

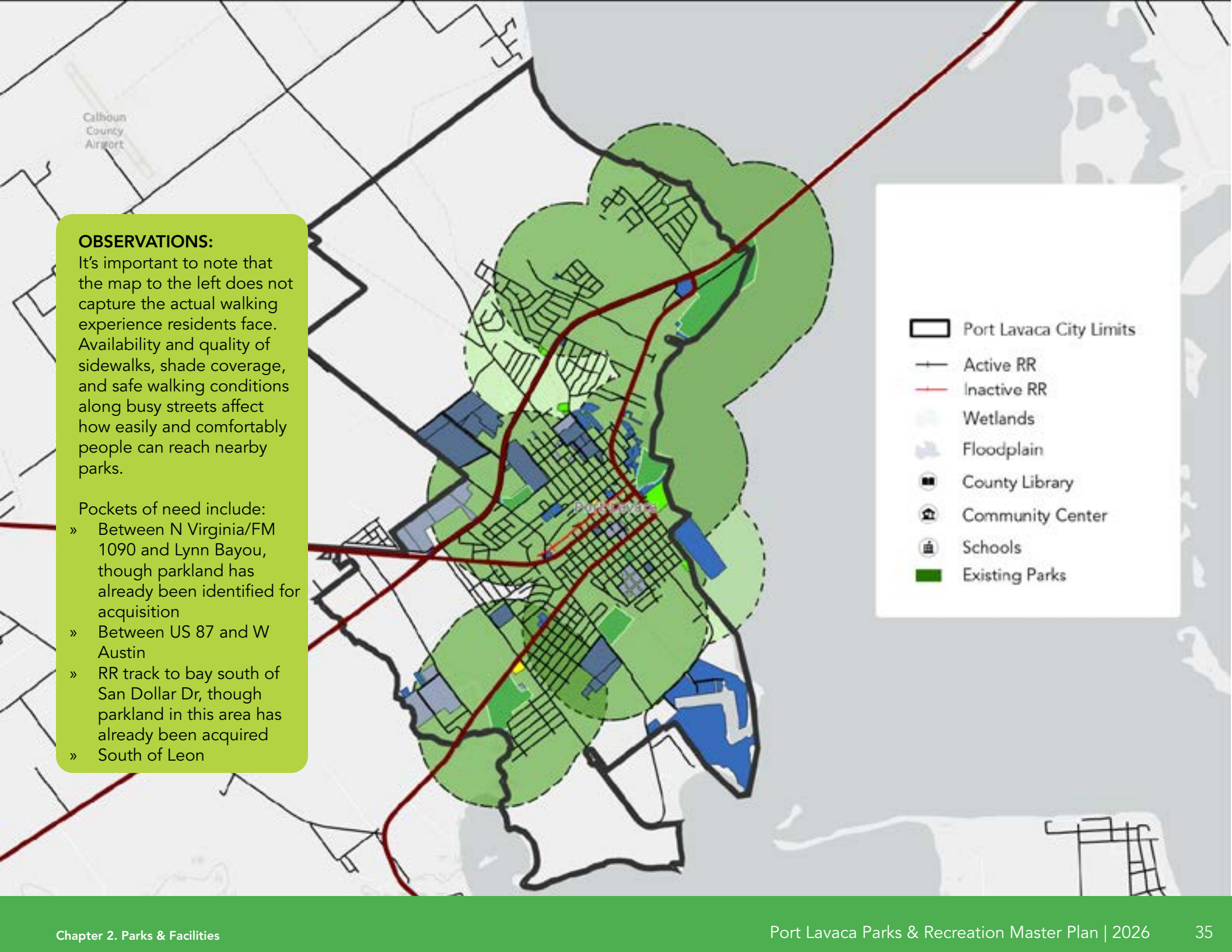
Calhoun
County
Airport

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

- 
- The map displays the Port Lavaca area with various geographical and infrastructure features. A thick black line outlines the city limits. A network of red lines represents rail tracks, with some solid and some dashed. Light green areas indicate wetlands, and light blue areas show floodplains. Dark green patches represent existing parks. Icons for a county library, community center, and schools are placed within the city grid. The Calhoun County Airport is labeled in the upper left. The map also shows the coastline and surrounding water bodies.
-  Port Lavaca City Limits
 -  Active RR
 -  Inactive RR
 -  Wetlands
 -  Floodplain
 -  County Library
 -  Community Center
 -  Schools
 -  Existing Parks

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



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:

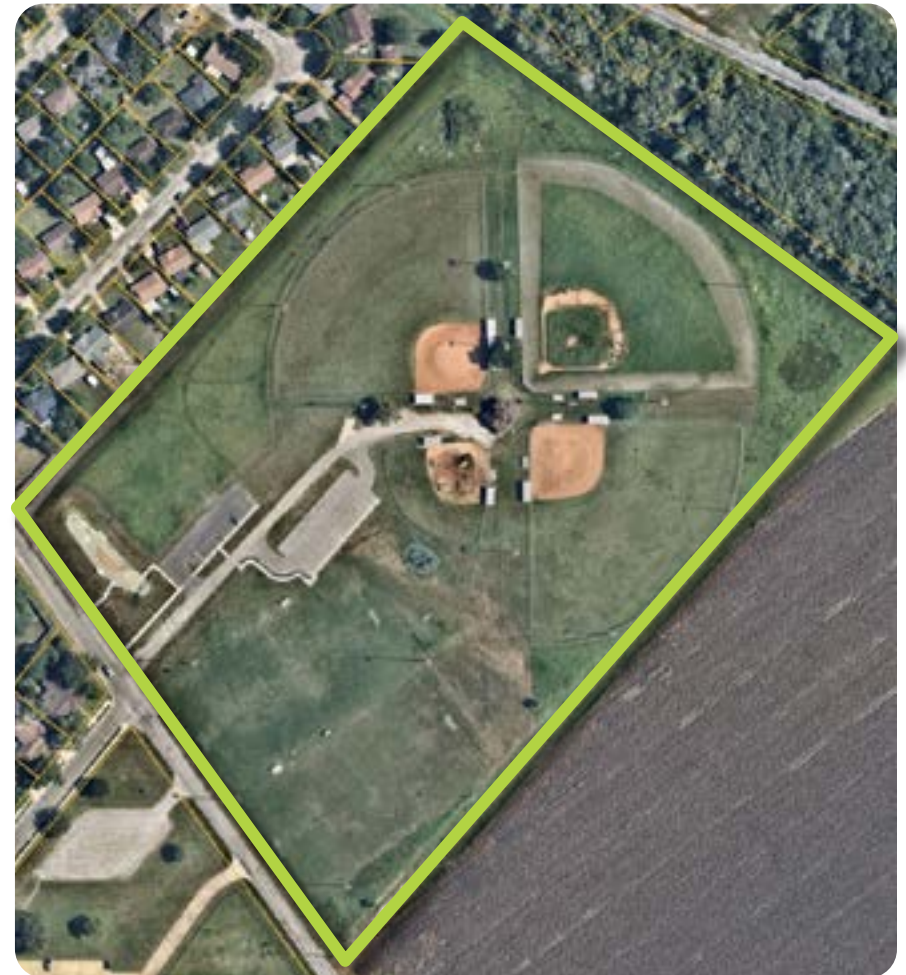
- » Serves multiple neighborhoods
- » Offers more intense active recreation opportunities (sports fields, swimming pools, sports courts)
- » Also offers passive recreation areas (hiking, picnicking)
- » Provides a broader range of recreation facilities that draw users from neighborhoods across the city.

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.



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 | |



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



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.