



Stephenville

EST. 1854

Ye-Oh, Sic' Em!

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

Re-Engaging the Community with Parks and Recreation

2023

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Stephenville

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# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Re-Engaging the Community with Parks and Recreation

# 1

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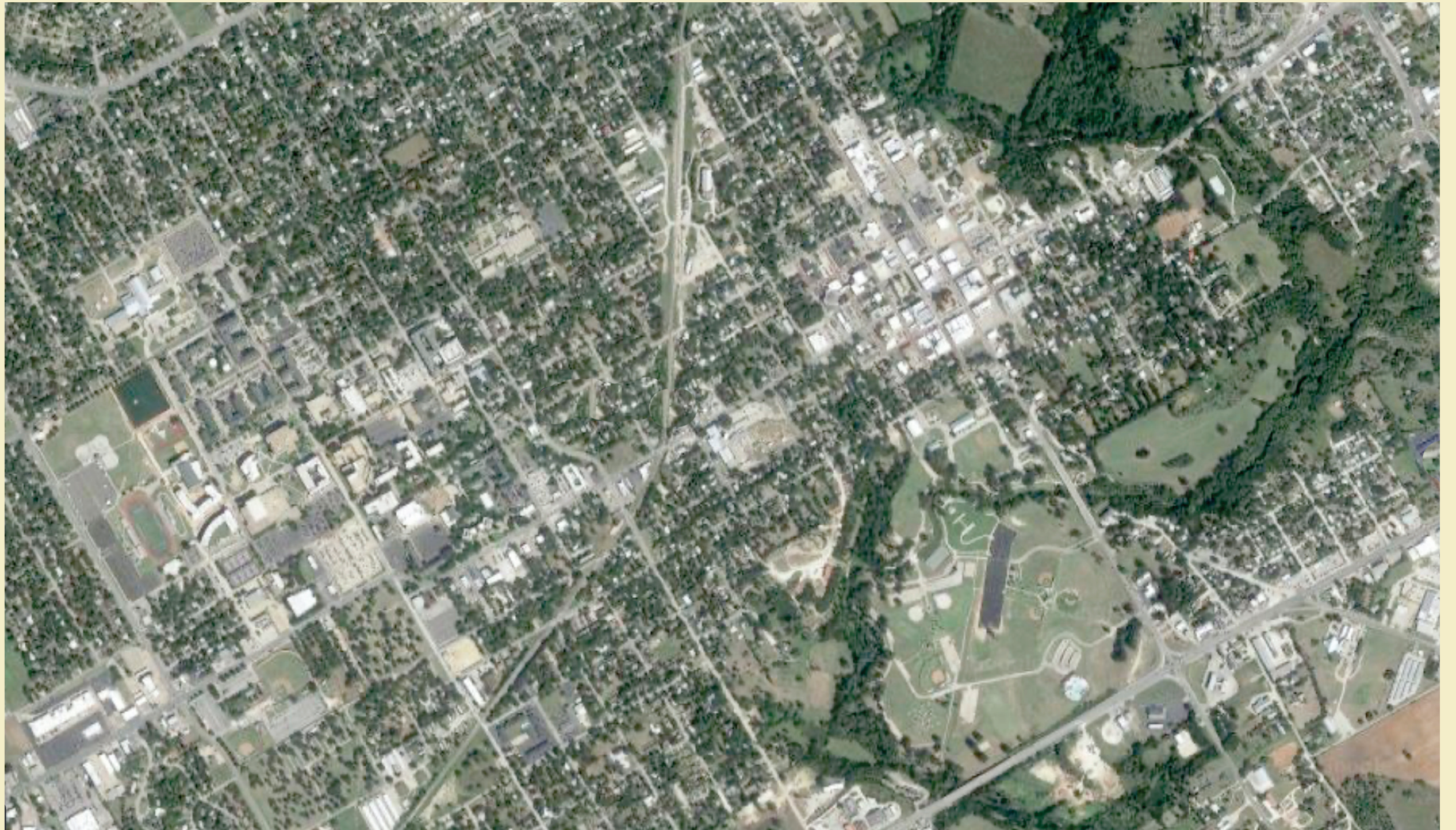




2

Council Resolution

Council Resolution

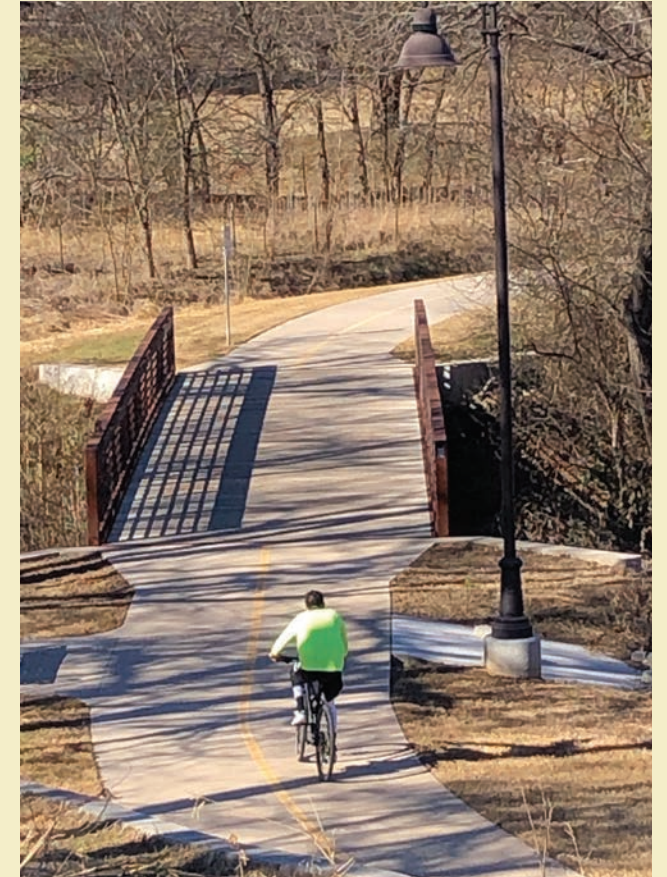


# 3

## Table of Contents & Executive Summary

### Table of Contents

1. Acknowledgements	2
2. Council Resolution	4
3. Table of Contents & Executive Summary	6
4. Introduction	8
5. Existing Conditions	10
a. Overall Parks ID + Inventory	
b. Park by Park Existing Conditions and Recommendations	
c. Standards & Applications; Gap Analysis	
6. Bosque River Trail & Beyond!	32
7. Public Engagement	36
a. Vision and Goals	
b. Online Survey & Interpretation	
c. Downtown on the Park	
8. The Future of City Park, Optimist Jaycee Park, and the Needs for Organized Sports	68
a. City Park	
b. Optimist Jaycee Park	
9. Economic Development	76
10. Implementation Plan	86
11. Appendices	102
a. Stephenville Demographics	
b. Children's Play	
c. Online Survey Full Written Responses	
d. 2008 Comprehensive Plan: Chapter on Parks and Recreation	
e. Bosque River Trail Strategic Plan	
f. Capitalizing on the Natural (Excerpt from the Downtown Master Plan)	





## Executive Summary

The City of Stephenville, like many smaller communities in Texas is aspiring to have a more robust and varied parks and recreation system. In general, there are eight parks listed on the City GIS, one is in question as to whether it is owned by the City. Four of these parks are on the books but not developed to function as a park but left as vacant land. The largest of the parks is City Park with 119 acres of land directly south of the downtown; two blocks to the courthouse square. The City also has a significant Bosque River Trail Corridor Master Plan with about a third of this trail already constructed on the eastern edge of downtown and serves as a point of pride with the City.

Vista Planning and Design's approach is to maximize all of the parks on the books even though some parks are undeveloped and are questionable in their potential. The main points of this parks and recreation master plan are to:

- Supply recommendations to maximize all existing parks' functions
- Perform an analysis that looks at service area gaps and equity issues:
  - Equity of distribution
  - Equity of functionality
  - Equity of access and ability
- Develop strategies that could be significant for economic development
- Coordinate with and boost the importance of "City on the Park" concept as promoted by the recent downtown master plan
- Provide information and strategies for implementation including a projects priorities spread sheet assigning priority level, responsibility, and a potential timeline for each project

The master plan sequence was to analyze the parks and trail, conduct a public engagement series starting by promoting a public survey online and then interpret the survey results as well as the cross section of respondents. Public engagement

also included stakeholder meetings and two public meetings. There were two meetings back to back with the Steering Committee and the Parks Board, both meetings of which were centered on crafting a vision statement, a set of goals and to initiate a discussion regarding City Park and its future.

All projects brought up through the public engagement process are included on the project priority spread sheet which is integral to the implementation of the overall plan.

Several projects came to light that fall into a category of high capital expence projects. These are large projects that will take time to implement and mostly contribute to significant economic development. Those projects are important facilities and programs in the City but also important in that they could be a considerable funding mechanism for the parks and recreation department overall. These are:

- Develop a new ground-up sports complex
- Develop a new recreation center that is of scale to host basketball and volleyball tournaments
- Complete the Bosque River Trail Corridor and expand to an overall trail looping system including cross connecting corridors through the middle of the City
- Establish three new festivals: Music, Bird Watching, and Arts; All of which contribute to the support of the Downtown on the Park concept

Vista created some maps and diagrams that supported some of the topics listed. A map that illustrates the overall looping trail system was met with enthusiasm especially with the notion that cycling or marathon competitions could bring a significant number of people to Stephenville thus boosting the economic activity for several days.

Another map-led discussion regarding City Park and what a decision model might be like deciding on whether or not to construct a new sports complex. This discussion centered on the 2011 City Park master plan, a plan that represented the planning director's notes on improvements, and a sketch plan by Vista demonstrating a new vision for the park acknowledging a new sports park elsewhere.

One of the main features of the Downtown on the Park concept was linking the park with downtown by re-imagining the function of both S. Columbia St. and S. Belknap St. in the two blocks that connect courthouse square with the north edge of City Park. This concept was to reduce each street in two blocks to one, one-way lane giving the edges to pedestrian connections and looking at an overlay or rezoning to promote these blocks to transform into cafes and coffee shops, art galleries, outdoor dining, music, a boutique hotel and other more cultural leaning ventures. This would make these two streets a central place between the courthouse square and the park and an activity space during major festivals.



# 4

## Introduction

### Introduction:

In 2018, Stephenville embarked on a mission to develop a master plan for the downtown area. The planning evolved a concept of “Downtown on the Park” and in some references referred to the “City on the Crescent”. Both references observed that downtown is next door to a park that is larger than the downtown and stitching this all together is the Bosque River that weaves around downtown and through the park.

Much excitement was generated and great plans in the downtown area were created. One of these was the downtown square surrounding the courthouse. The plans focused on creating important urban pedestrian spaces and generating great economic development for downtown and Stephenville as a whole. These plans and strategies highlighted the fact that Stephenville is a great place! A place that, with a short amount of time, will have a thriving downtown linked with a grand park hosting festivals and sporting events.

Toward the end of the planning process, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was launched to further add depth to the recreation side of the overall concept. The City of Stephenville is blessed to have such a large array of amenities both natural and created. The Bosque River certainly lends much to the beauty and charm of the city including the historic downtown square and its close connection to the river as well as City Park that sits on the southern edge of downtown.



Being a city of approximately 20,000 residents, its important to realize that Stephenville cannot rely solely on one large park to fill the parks and recreation needs of all residents. Many parks distributed around the City are important. Aside from City Park, Stephenville has Three other developed parks and four parks that have been dedicated but remain undeveloped. Additionally, the City has developed a section of trail following the Bosque River with aspirations of continuing that work for a much larger stretch.

The plan that follows in this document addresses all the

relevant needs of the City, and put down in writing a plan that can be a guide for the next 15 years or more. The plan was developed with a significant amount of discussions in small groups and individuals, surveys both in group sessions and online for all residents to participate in. Hours of discussions were recorded so that detailed notes could be captured and stated in the plan. Topics were wide ranging and a sampling is listed here:

- Equity in park distribution, functions, and accessibility
- Striving for a park within a 10-15 minute walk
- Developing the four parks not yet developed
- Anticipating future growth and park needs in those areas
- Updating the subdivision ordinance to increase fees for parkland dedication and adding a fee for parkland development

Looking at the larger picture and economic development:

- Expanding the master plan for the Bosque River Trail to include new segments that create an overall loop around the city as well as smaller trail loops
- Rethinking organized sports and the requirement for facilities needs as it relates to City Park and the potential for identifying a new large sports park
- Considering programming such as sports tourism and bird watching (nature viewing) tourism as well as festivals

The plan starts off by introducing the reader to the parks with the parks profile pages. These pages discuss what the existing conditions are as well as listing a few recommendations. Coupled with the responses in the discussion groups and online survey, many more recommendations will be compiled.

A Gap Analysis revealed that there are several places in the city that do not have a park, green space, or a recreation facility within a short walk. This is an area of planning that focuses on adding park space within the built fabric of the City. This may be one of the harder tasks to accomplish since that may require the purchase of a home lot for sale to create a park or some qualifying facility. The Gap Analysis also needed to anticipate future growth of the City to be ahead of the growth in terms of land acquisition (at a lower cost).

This planning also identifies some more challenging projects such as an important discussion regarding the renovation of City Park to be a more formal sports park for tournaments or to go out and find new land to create

a sports park. Another challenge will be the newly envisioned City trail that has added segments to create a loop around the City. Both of these endeavors are not just about the facility but about economic development for the City. With the sports park, if the City chooses to go with a ground up new sports park then the City could host regional, super-regional and state-wide tournaments given the central location and easy access Stephenville represents.

Cycling competitions are very popular as well and big events such as races for various charity events draw large crowds of competitors and associated families and friends. The looping trail extension of the Bosque River Trail conceived, is considered a smaller length of circuit, but with the wide open country roads, several courses of extended length can be mapped out. The loop trail benefits the City with all ages enjoying the outdoors while peddling, walking, or running various lengths of the segments, connecting all major points across town.

Rounding out the economic development agenda is increasing Stephenville's presence as a tourism destination. Tourism represents lots of outside dollars coming into Stephenville for an extended weekend of events. Sports tourism, bird watching festivals, cycling and music festivals all can contribute at different times of the year drawing hundreds of thousand people to Stephenville. These larger projects represent longer timelines and more complicated strategies to reach the goal. Phasing of the projects

helps by identifying smaller segments or actions that incrementally grow the facility until after 10 or 15 years or so the full project get completed.

There are other parks and recreation facilities in the City that are not dedicated as parks but can serve park services. Areas like the Arts and Culture District off of East Washington Street, as it is called in the Downtown Plan, holds a collection of museum and cultural features wedged up against the Bosque River Trail. This is an expansion area off of the trail and is a great asset for the City.

The Rodeo Plaza is another space northwest of the courthouse square is call such since it commemorates the achievements of the rodeo champions that have honored Stephenville. Mostly a parking lot with a drivethrough ATM but is called out in the downtown plan to be more energized as park space converting the drivethrough into a cafe.

In later chapters of the report, the online survey covers multiple topics. Some more important than others. Each question and reponse needs to take into account, the context of the question, the breakdown of the respondent age groups, and the likely nervousness of additional taxes driving some responses. The final section of the report will be an implementation plan that will line out multiple pathways for funding that do not stress the raising of taxes on the individual residents but seeks out economic development, grants, partnerships, etc that protect the residents from additional taxes. One such tool is updating the subdivision ordinances to include an elevated parkland dedication fee and the addition of a parkland development fee. Some cities are considering this for commercial development and not just residential development.

Overall lots to consider and the discussions will continue long after this report is published.



# 5

## Existing Conditions

### In This Chapter

- Overall Map of Existing Parks
- Individual Park Profiles + Recommendations
- Gap Analysis
- Residential Area in the Gap

#### Park Analysis:

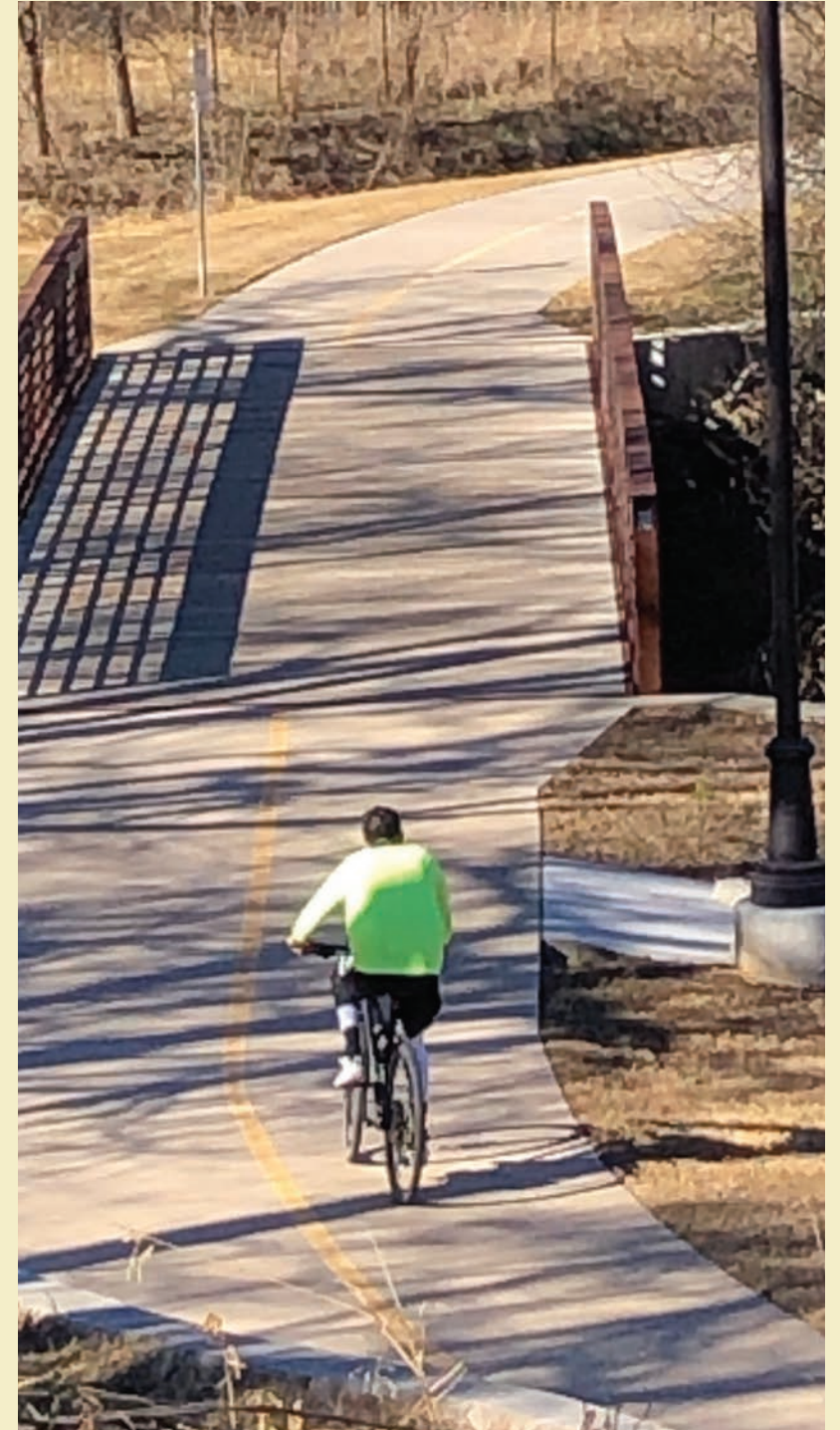
Each of the existing parks has been visited, photographed and drone videoed for continued analysis of the existing conditions of the park. The following pages are the observations and the inventory of the state of condition, what features are present in the park, how the park is accessed and its value in terms of contribution to the overall system and the communities it should serve.

In some cases, a park is undeveloped land that stirred the conversation regarding updating the subdivision code for future developments to contribute more for parkland and/or fees for development. That discussion is later in this report. The list below includes names for parks that have not been named to this date. These are mostly the tracts of land that have been dedicated as parks but have not been developed.

The parks recognized as official city parks are the following:

- City Park
- Bill Johnson Park
- Optimist Jaycee Park
- East Collins Street Park/ Bosque River Trailhead
- Clifton Heights Park
- Prairie Wind Park
- Elk Ridge Park
- Creekside Park

Also included on this list but as a separate chapter in this report is the Bosque River Trail Corridor; an incredibly important feature in the city.

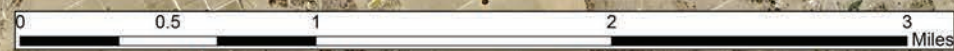


# Parks & Open Space Master Plan

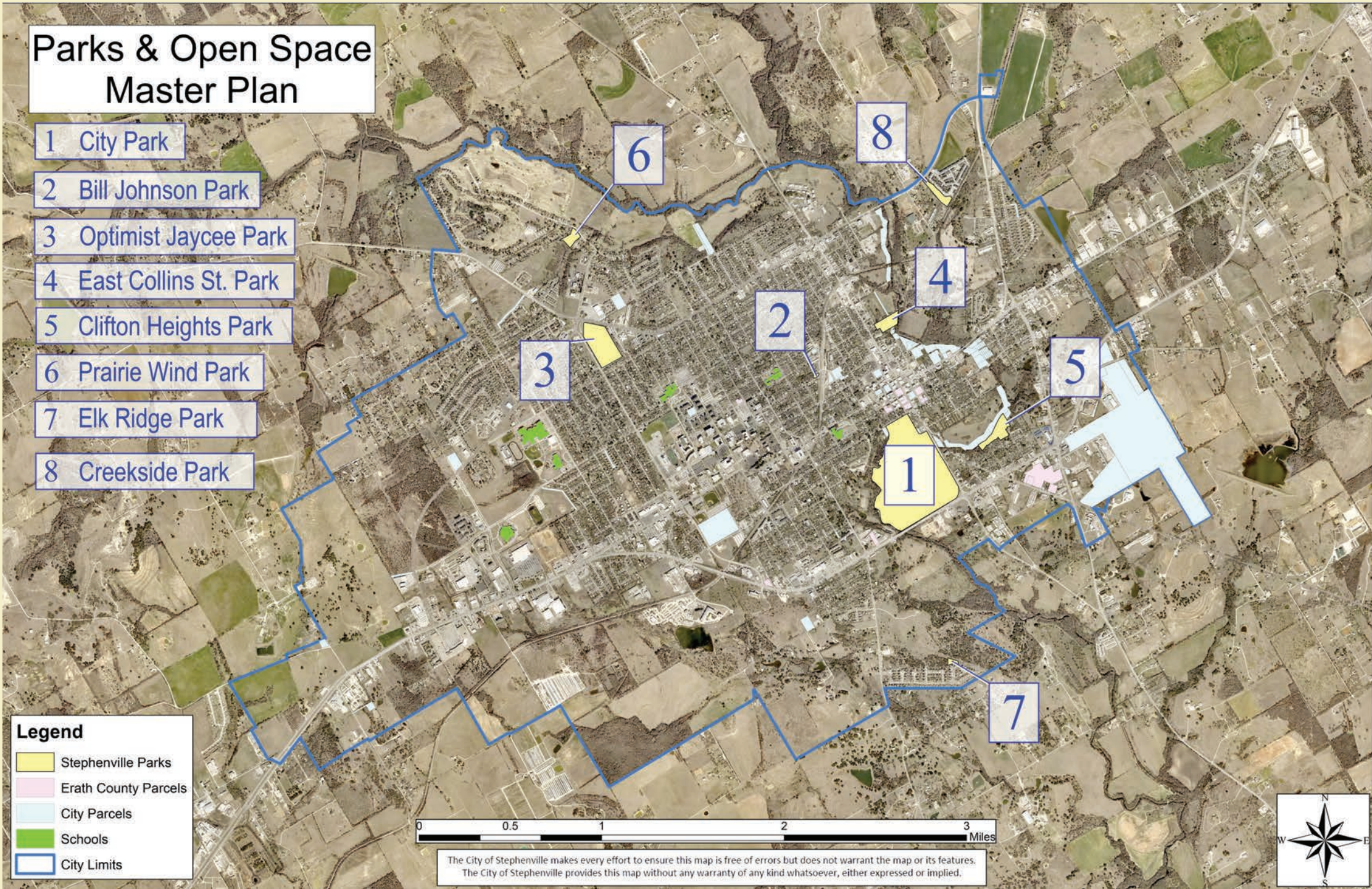
- 1 City Park
- 2 Bill Johnson Park
- 3 Optimist Jaycee Park
- 4 East Collins St. Park
- 5 Clifton Heights Park
- 6 Prairie Wind Park
- 7 Elk Ridge Park
- 8 Creekside Park

**Legend**

-  Stephenville Parks
-  Erath County Parcels
-  City Parcels
-  Schools
-  City Limits



The City of Stephenville makes every effort to ensure this map is free of errors but does not warrant the map or its features. The City of Stephenville provides this map without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.





6 Prairie Wind Park



3 Optimist Jaycee Park



4 Collins Street Park



8 Creekside Park



1 City Park



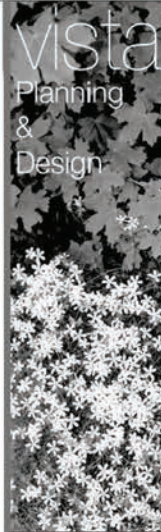
5 Clifton Heights Park



2 Bill Johnson Park



7 Elk Ridge Park



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Parks & Recreation Master Plan  
**Parkland Aerials**  
Stephenville, Texas



sheet number  
**Exh**

# Inventory

Park Facility Inventory		If left blank, it is unknown															
Parks		Dedicated Parkland	City Land	City, County, Private, Other	Undeveloped	Acreeage	baseball	soccer	Basketball	T-ball	swingsets	Playscape	running/walking track	natural spaces	picnic tables	Benches/ Seating	Dog Poop Sta.
		City Park		Y	Y	C		119.8	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
Optimist Jaycee Park		Y	Y	C		19.11	N	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Bill Johnson Park		Y	Y	C		0.35	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
East Collins Street Park (Trailhead)		Y	Y	C		5.09	N	N		N		Y					
Prarie Wind Park		Y	Y	C		3.24	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Elk Ridge Park		Y	Y	C	Y	0.87	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Creekside Park		Y	Y	C	Y	4.08	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Clifton Height Park		Y	Y	C	Y	7.35	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Parks		grills	other sports	exercise equipment	performance areas	History	Nature Play	Education	Disc Golf	Equestrian	Trails	Restrooms	Water Fountains	Wayfinding	Trash Cans	Dog Park	Open Play Field
		City Park		Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Optimist Jaycee Park		Y	N	N	N	N	☒	N	N	N	N	Y		N	Y	N	Y
Bill Johnson Park		N	N	N	N	N	☒	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
East Collins Street Park (Trailhead)					N	N	N	☒	N	N	Y	N		N	Y	N	N
Prarie Wind Park		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Elk Ridge Park		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Creekside Park		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Clifton Heights Park		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

# City Park: The Crown Jewel



## City Park:

Most significant park in the city that is 119.75 acres.

1. Current southern end of the Bosque River Trail, trailhead
2. Splashville pool center
3. Bosque River passes through with the trail following it with occasional benches and picnic tables
4. Birdsong Amphitheater
5. Passive spaces, Ball sports with seating stands, tennis and basketball, playscapes including inclusive playscape, disc golf, rec center, Parks office
6. Well developed playscapes, most with some shade
7. Pavilions, Fishing, shade structures
8. Parking
9. Confusing circulation when navigating to a ball game, the roads are confusing and some efficiencies can be found by replanning the road and parking network
10. The only vehicular connection crossing the north side of the park to the south side of the park over the Bosque is the low water crossing. There is a pedestrian crossing behind the Birdsong amphitheater
11. Utility building placed in a space on the south end that complicates the use of this whole area for improvements
12. Entry road on Graham closest to loop road is a concern for traffic movement hazards, consider making right in and right out only
13. Disc golf takes advantage of the park perimeter for the 18 hole course



### General Overall Recommendations:

1. The overall park is being considered for an overhaul to improve the park experience for all residents and take better advantage of space for additional features
2. General need for overall planning, there is a considerable amount of open spaces too small for many uses but open space not being utilized for other purposes
3. Underway already is upgrades to the parking areas with replacing the barriers and adding lighting
4. Century Park would be a nice place to establish a pollinator garden interpreted for education
5. The space on the NW portion of the park that is open field against the Bosque River has soccer goals and may have been used for practice, otherwise in conversations is not used so this is a great spot for a youth pump tract or BMX tract and then relocate the skate park here so that a youth zone can be created
6. A comprehensive review of ADA compliance for general movement and access as well as playgrounds. Include playground safety at the same time.
7. Need overall wayfinding in City Park
8. pier is in need of replacing or removing



# Bill Johnson Park



## Bill Johnson Park:

Small corner neighborhood park; .35 acres

1. Very nice small park that serves the immediate neighborhoods on either side. It appears that one side is a lower socioeconomic neighborhood and the other is a more affluent neighborhood providing a rich cultural diversity that could be important for young children growing up with diversity.
2. The park has a sport court, playscape, sidewalk, trashcan, doggie station, park bench with small shelter, water fountain, landscape with trees and shade

### General Overall Recommendations:

1. There are sections of sidewalks on West Vanderbilt and no sidewalks on the residential side of North McCart St. Add into public works street repair agenda to add sidewalks to lead to the park. This would happen when a street was in need of repair, repaving, or even large utility work. It may be possible to shrink down the travel lane widths to accommodate the additional sidewalks.

# Optimist Jaycee Park



## Optimist Jaycee Park:

Largest park in north Stephenville; 19.11 acres

1. The Optimist Jaycee Park is well located with optimum reach, serving a large areas of residents
2. This park features two different age appropriate playscapes under a large shade pavilion. In the same location are a large group of swing sets
3. There are several soccer goals for informal or practice soccer play, numerous picnic tables and benches with shade shelters and trashcans
4. There is a trail that circles around the perimeter of the park that, according to conversations, is very popular with area residents
5. Doggie stations are positioned along the loop trail that surrounds the park, mostly against the multifamily project
6. Basketball under a shade shelter, multiple pods of parking associated with the picnic tables and other features.

### General Overall Recommendations:

1. There is a significant amount of space in this park and a concept that has been developed proposes to redo the park layout to be more efficient with baseball / softball fields since the soccer use appears to be lacking.
2. A competing vision for Optimist Jaycee Park is to reforest portions of the park with a grid pattern of trees that would, over time create a full canopy overhead which would serve as a peaceful green space for joggers, pedestrians, picnics, gatherings, and launching point for cycling, once the trails connectors were in place.
3. Form an Ad Hoc committee to determine the highest and best use for the surrounding community and greater Stephenville.
4. The park also has restrooms but it has been stated that they are in need of updating and maintenance.
5. While updating the park plan, also consider updating the sidewalks that connect to the main intersection of Lingleville and Northwest Loop to accommodate a future trail connection. This may include advanced signalization, curb line changes, ramping, and striping.

# East Collins Street Park



## E. Collins Street Park:

Partially developed park and trailhead; 5.09 acres

1. This park on the east edge of downtown and is one of the trailheads of the Bosque River Corridor and features a large shaded area with picnic tables, exercise stations, and water fountain
2. A significant portion of the park remains undeveloped and could offer recreation elements not found in other parks.
3. Access and parking is adequate

General Overall Recommendations:

1. Continue to develop this park with children's play
2. Develop a soft trail in the remaining parts of the tract that weaves through the woods. This may be a natural trail bladed smooth
3. establish a dog park with doggie stations and trash



# Clifton Heights Park



## Clifton Heights Park:

Undeveloped park; 7.35 acres

1. This is an isolated tract of land east of City Park on the backside of a series of houses. It is adjacent to the Bosque River and across the river is the Bosque River Trail.
2. There is information in the City data that suggests that the park is a collection of parcels and so clarification would be important to understand exactly what is park or not.
3. Looking at the aerial there are approximately 70-100 houses in the adjacent neighborhood that would benefit to have a nice neighborhood park particularly if small kids live there.
4. Access to the tract is not clear and roads leading to the park are not cul de sacs
5. There appears to be two roads that end on the park boundary and another road that turns close to a corner. Again, delineating the property boundary with survey and fencing is important to define the space.

### General Overall Recommendations:

1. Survey and split cedar railing fence the boundary of the park
2. It would be nice if a pedestrian bridge was constructed but given the priorities in the overall city, that may be years off.
3. Given the land use observed, the City should fence off the park-land area to make it clear to the adjacent property owners what is city property and to prevent storage of wasting cars etc.
4. Develop an entry point with signage to formalize the park to build pride among the neighborhood residents.
5. Create a looping road so that a car can pull in from two points on either end and drive through. This would be useful with the local law enforcement since this is a hidden tract of land and subject to mischief.
6. As a first phase development, develop limited parking areas, begin seeding with buffalo or other native grass and resume limited mowing on a schedule, and adding picnic tables that are sturdy and anchored. Being on the Bosque, having some access like a fishing pier would be an added low cost benefit

# Prairie Wind Park



## Prairie Wind Park:

Undeveloped; 3.24 acres

4. This park is undeveloped and Prairie Wind Blvd that comprises the access to the park is a low water crossing for a tributary to the Bosque River.
5. There is great opportunity to connect spaces through this park. It is currently planned as the Bosque River Corridor spur that connects Optimist Jaycee Park to the Bosque River Trail.
6. North of the park are agricultural uses and the planned Bosque trail uses these lands to connect the river trail to the park and then the Optimist Jaycee park

### General overall recommendations

1. There is a high powered electrical transmission line that Leads straight to an electrical substation on FM 386 which could be used as a trail but the utility would likely require the City take on the maintenance of that corridor (mowing and trail maintenance). Creating that trail would afford hundreds of homes easy access to the trail network.
2. Through conversations it has been stated that the park has been used for soccer practice. It may be a great space to develop practice fields more formally
3. If Prairie Wind Road was ever lifted out of the floodplain then a trail connection could be under as well as dedication of additional lands since much of the land north is floodplain.

# Elk Ridge Park



## Elk Ridge Park:

Undeveloped park; .87 acres

1. Undeveloped land disconnected to any other parks or trails
2. Adjacent to and including a high powered electrical line that follows the backside of the subdivision
3. A simple door hanger survey of the few houses there would bring lots of interest and ideas for what to include in the park.
4. At least two cul-de-sac access points for going to the park although not clear if the one further away is accessing the park, or just the powerline easement

### General overall recommendations

1. The powerline easement leads to the city wastewater treatment plant where there is a wetland established that could be interpreted for education, and improved for bird watching.
2. Ultimate Bosque River Trail will connect to the wastewater treatment plant which would connect the Elk Ridge Park to the city trail system
5. From an interview of one resident, kids play basketball and ride bikes in the street and would benefit with trails for riding and a small basketball court. The interviewee would prefer an environmentally friendly landscape with native species.
6. The adjacent land to the north, if developed with housing needs to add to the park for a better park space for the area.

# Creekside Park



## Creekside Park:

Undeveloped park except dog park at street; 4.08 acres

1. This park is adjacent to a multifamily complex with access from the multifamily driveway. The only improvement is a small dog park under the shade of trees on the north end adjacent to Lingleville Road
2. Dog Park has chain-link fencing, 2 doggie pot stations with trashcans, 1 park bench, nice oaks. Rules are posted and dog bowls present with a water spicket
3. Southeast edge bordered by the railroad track which requires extensive permitting to cross

### General overall recommendations

1. Along the road, the park is approximately 1,500 feet from the Bosque River trail head. The potential exist to have a trail spur connecting the park space
2. Another potential is a trail segment that is developed going south along the creek that ultimately connects to the Bosque River Trail north of East Washington Street in the historic/ healthy district area.
3. The whole park is in the floodplain and so establishing a natural park is the best option using nature play, pollinator gardens, bird watching, trails, picnic tables, etc. No structures of value
4. Potential exists to establish this park as a key bird watching location but would require a trail and stations, habitat establishment.
5. If a cut and fill manipulation can happen in a small enough foot print, then maybe a playscape can be developed without TCEQ permitting
6. If downstream flooding is an issue then maybe a created wetland / bird-ing habitat that would both mitigate downstream flooding and provide nature viewing experiences.
7. One advantage to this park is that it is in a fringe area that likely will continue to develop with residential and so a much needed area for recreation. Parks department and Planning / Public Works, needs to be aware of tis and if residential develops adjacent to this area then new parkland should be dedicated to add land, especially Upland areas for playscapes and other recreation. The only drawback to that is the railroad that would have to be crossed to connect other parcels to the east.





Creekside Park is a floodplain strip of land that is accessed by a private multifamily driveway. There is a small dog park on the property but no structures can be added such as playscapes. Development should include natural features and a trail

## Park System Overall Key Recommendations:

1. Create Ad Hoc Committee to explore the feasibility of a new major sports park and acquire land with approximately 60+ acres of useable land. Plan should be phased
2. Consider an overhaul to City Park in conjunction with the above decisions
3. Redevelop Optimist Jaycee Park to be another attractive multi-functional park for north Stephenville. Recommend an additional ad hoc committee take on the planning process and get feedback
4. Develop the four undeveloped parks starting with entry and parking points, mowed grass, picnic areas and playscapes or nature play in floodplain, with ADA sidewalk access
5. ADA and playground safety review of all parks and perform necessary upgrades over the course of three or so years
6. Complete the original Bosque River Corridor plan and create a plan for the overall trail loop and begin advancing the Bosque River Trail. Through a formal council process, amend the Bosque River Corridor Master Plan with the new additional alignment and recommendations
7. Design and construct a new recreation facility with indoor court space that may include or have separate a senior center
8. Update the subdivision platting ordinance to enhance parkland dedication requirements and add parkland development fees as a new requirement. Include the type of land that is acceptable for land dedication including connectivity to other parks, easy access from streets, a percentage of uplands, etc.
9. Identify and acquire new park land to serve gaps, underserved and marginalized areas of Stephenville
10. Increased staffing, add more programming, conduct a more robust maintenance program.

# Standards & Applications

## Standards and their Application

Parks master planning has a set of standards that can be used as a framework to develop a parkland system that serves the community well. The standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) that have been used over many decades have been reviewed for application to Stephenville's particular size and demographics. All cities are different with their characteristics which require a more thoughtful adaptation for how best to serve the community. Coupled with the NRPA standards is a review process based on a set of equity principles:

**Equity of Distribution:** This is working toward an even distribution of parks and facilities throughout the City

**Equity of Access:** Access refers to all abilities, including all

forms of disability and ages. Most prominent is ADA access with walking paths and parking as well as playscape elements  
**Equity of Functions:** (Activities and Place Types): A system must seek to balance out the provisions of organized sports, passive, and unstructured active recreation needs

In recent years, NRPA has been adjusting the process of standards application to take into account other dynamics of a given community or population. These include:

Concerns with the environment and environmental trends with pollution and natural resources awareness and appreciation.  
 Social trends such as health and wellness, and diverse cultural heritage and interactivity  
 Demographic trends such as families, seniors, teens and high rates of single or divorced parents.

Much of this overlaps the Equity priorities but some do not and need to be taken into account with each action of new

park acquisition and prioritization of facilities. Looking at the priorities that are described in this report, keep in mind these topics that frame the overall needs of the community. The chart on project priorities in the implementation section, has a column that indicates 1-4 in priority. Gaging priorities in conjunction with the estimated cost and timeline, helps a city spread out the budget implications. This spread also needs to keep equity in mind.

Application of the parks' acreage standards to Stephenville is on the next page.

Noticeable is that there are no Regional Parks within the jurisdiction of Stephenville. The closest State Park is Dinosaur Valley State Park near Glen Rose to the East about 35 miles. Being a small community of approximately 22,000, this is forgivable and the Community Park category becomes the dominant presence. Reviewing the charts to the left, the quantity of Community Parks acreage is above the recommended rates for the low end, and falling short on the high end of the recommended range. Neighborhood Parks are falling short as demonstrated by the Gap Map, there are plenty of areas that need to be served by neighborhood parks.

Even though only 1.02 acres achieves the minimum acreage for 22,000 people, viewing the Gap Map shows that one park doesn't solve both acreage and distribution requirements. Keep in mind these are guidelines and striving for them is a goal for optimum service, not a requirement. Through the lens of Equity however, reviewing the Gap Map such as above, as well as the distribution of functions or activities is in need of adjustments and the addition of new parkland in strategic areas in the City. See the Gap Map discussion on the following page.

Stephenville is fortunate to have City Park in the southeast and Optimist Jaycee Park more northwest giving a nice balance for neighborhoods. Optimist Jaycee Park is almost completely surrounded by residential homes and is planned to have upgrades to serve a broader range of activities. City Park, the main park of the City has the highest level of activity

**Table PR.1: NRPA Parkland Classification and Standards**

Type	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1000 Residents	Desirable Site Characteristics and Facilities
Neighborhood Parks	¼ to ½ Mile	5-15 Acres	1 to 2 Acres	Serve the surrounding neighborhoods with open space and facilities such as basketball courts, children's play equipment and picnic tables
Community Parks	1-2 Miles	25+ Acres	5 to 8 Acres	May include areas suited for intense recreation facilities such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. Easily accessible to nearby neighborhoods and other neighborhoods
Regional Parks	Several Communities	200+ Acres	5 to 10 Acres	Contiguous with or encompassing natural resources
Special Use Areas	No Applicable Standards	Variable Depending on use	Variable	Area for specialized or single purpose recreation activities such as campgrounds, golf courses etc.

Parks With Standards Rating							
Park	Acreage	Park size class	NRPA Target acreage / 1000	Total Acreage by Park Class	Acreage needed for population size of 22,000	Over/Under Minimum	Over/under Maximum
City Park	119.75	Community Park	5 to 8	138.86	110 - 176	28.86	-37.14
Optimist Jaycee Park	19.11	Community Park	5 to 8				
Bill Johnson Park	0.35	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2	20.98	22 - 44	-1.02	-77.02
East Collins Street Park	5.09	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2				
Clifton Heights Park	7.35	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2				
Prairie Wind Park	3.24	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2				
Elk Ridge Park	0.87	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2				
Creekside Park	4.08	Neighborhood Park	1 to 2				
Bosque River Corridor *	7.3	Existing Trail		7.3			
* 3.1 miles X 20' of width = 316,800 = 7.3 acres							
Numbers in red represent the deficiency in acres of parkland by classification as per the standards by NRPA Keep in mind that those parks shaded green are undeveloped.							

including the Bosque River Corridor slicing through enticing a larger program of engagement.

Of the 8 parks listed above, four have not been developed and are virtually unknown to the public. A minor amount of grooming and furnishing will make a big difference in the parks presence and use. As discussed in the Implementation portion of this document, starting the implementation should focus on high visibility, low cost elements such as grooming these parks, installing nice trashcans, tables, benches, gain a lot of visibility and approval laying the ground-work for a potential bond package later for larger ticket items.

#### Selection Criteria for New Parkland Purchases

Once a spatial analysis has been accomplished, the task becomes identifying potential sites for purchase. Here are a few notes on developing selection criteria to assist in the selection process.

Looking at the gap analysis, there is much coverage of parks in this area of the City but the function needs diversification. Land where parks exist but do not serve the full needs of the

area can be updated with features for a broader range of appeal.

Select lands that match up with survey responses:

Selecting land that meets the requested needs of the community as expressed in the surveys should be a prime selection criterion. High marks for hiking and cycling trails need natural lands with some terrain. Playscape and playgrounds need smaller tracts or could be part of a larger recreation facility where flat land is favored.

Select lands with appropriate utility and transportation servicing:

There is some excitement in Stephenville to establish a significant sports complex to relieve pressure on City Park and to allow for regional tournament level of play. Obviously close proximity to utilities is a must as well as relatively flat site. Both of these can contribute significantly to the overall cost. There will need to be enough land to accommodate the immediate needs as well as future expansions, parking, etc. Lights for a sports complex can be a hinderance for neighborhoods so

having sites that might be in areas prone to non-residential uses except perhaps multifamily zones. See the section on this discussion in the chapter on economic development and the remaking of City Park.

Select lands in the floodplain:

Lands that are in the floodplain may be great options for natural parks with minimal structured improvements. A vast amount of research indicates that being present in natural landscapes or forested landscapes is great for a person's health for a variety of physical and mental reasons. Children exploring natural lands builds confidence and imagination as well as motor skills and more. Floodplain lands can be purchased for lower costs as well. One of the highest scoring typologies for adding to the park system or enjoying the greatest amount of support are natural lands and trails of all types. River access was also called out as important by many responses.

Anticipate Growth:

Areas in the City that are known city growth areas need to be prepared for parks. If the City emphasizes parkland dedication, and strengthens the code requirements at platting, it can position land acquisitions to serve the future neighborhoods. Many times, it may be part of the development agreement for the developer to provide lands that can fulfill this purpose.

Security:

One feture of parks that needs to be addressed is security features of a park. This may be appropriate lighting, safe sidewalks, non hazardous elements where kids might be running and playing, Also there needs to be grooming of trees and shrubs that eleiminate hiding places. limbing up trees so that police can see through a space. These safety measures are mostly about the urban parks and especially smaller neighborhood parks where young children may be allowed to walk to without adult supervision.

# Gap Analysis

The Gap analysis is a helpful tool to review the coverage of the service area provided by the existing parks to guide the City in decisions about where new parkland should be acquired. There are standards for park planning which are recommendations by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA). There are many factors involved in understanding whether a city has good service area coverage including efficient pathways to access parks. Vista considers the standards that NRPA strives for to not be adequate to appropriately service families and individuals needing green space. There is significant research on green space and its health benefits beyond the obvious physical exercise and fresh air. Vista therefore has a more robust standard that is described below:

- **Neighborhood Park:** This is a park that is within a 15 minute walk from the residence and can be as small as a 1/4 acre lot up to about 5 acres. Primarily this services young neighborhood kids that can walk to or ride a bike safely to and from the park. The park features playgrounds, picnic areas, seating, dog walking, neighbor gatherings, etc. This park is represented on the map with a 1/4 mile radius circle in red
- **District or Multi-neighborhood park:** This scale of park is within a 30-45 minute walk and is closer to a full service park. The service area representation is a 1/2 mile circle in blue and is typically >5 acres up to approximately 20 that serves a larger area than just one neighborhood. This park features informal sports fields, trails, nature and passive areas, picnic areas, sport courts, playgrounds, etc. It is hoped that this scale of park is near or on a trail or sidewalk system.
- **Community Park:** this scale of park may be >20 acres with a service area of 1 mile and may feature a wide variety of activities such as organized sports, informal sports including sport center such as a tennis or pickle ball center, recreation center, natatorium, or performance venue.
- **Regional Park:** This scale of parkland includes sports parks necessary for regional or larger tournament play. Regional parks may need to be 50 acres or larger depending on the scope of services and features. Typically,

a regional park is a destination park so there are a wide variety of functions. These parks are most often located on the periphery of a city unless they are much older and the city grew around them. A service area is the associating region potentially including multiple cities.

- **Special Use Areas, Linear Parks and Trails:** This is a broad category and Vista uses a broad definition of parks and recreation which include historical & cultural features, natural features, recreation, and educational features.

The map shows three scales of circles around each existing park. These are generalized representations of service radii described above. Understand that review of this should also take into consideration the directness of the travel necessary to actually walk to the park.

It has been stated in Stephenville that a goal of the city is to have a park within a 10 minute walk of all residential areas. The Gap Map shows a 15 minute walk so there is a little more coverage needed within the gap areas.

The second map shows the same information in a different manner by highlighting in green, all of the residential areas that are outside of the park service areas. This map shows only the neighborhood service area of 1/4 mile radius or 15 minute walk. Note that the heaviest concentration of residential areas is around the Optimist Jaycee Park and Tarleton University.

Where these neighborhoods are the most continuous is where finding new parks are the most challenging. The City may need to do block-by-block windshield surveys to identify properties that are viable candidates for acquisition. In other areas, there are a smattering of large lot and infill residential where an acquisition might be easier.

Farmland tracts may be candidates if the owners are seniors and not interested in continuing farm production. Having lots of conversations with people in these areas could yield promising results. Using the tool of a *Life Estate* where the property is sold to the city but the seller has full rights to use the property until they move away or pass away. Purchasing of development rights where the land owner sells off the rights to develop the property is another tool. This may be where the owner wishes long term uses to stay pastoral with environmental conservation but they retain ownership of the whole

property. Other tools are a Development Agreement, Farm Land Tax Exemption or Wildlife Tax Exemption may be another viable technique to put a long term hold on agricultural land for future use. Much of these tools are considered land banking and can work well for the future of parkland development.

Reviewing this map demonstrates the challenges that the City has for infill parkland development but many tools exist to make it work.

The public and private school systems provide another opportunity to gain parks and recreation access. Reviewing the 2<sup>nd</sup> map again, one will notice the array of stars, red and blue. The red stars are public or private school locations with recreation facilities whether they are indoor or outside spaces. There are instances where these facilities are shared. It is not known at the time of this writing to what extent school facilities are shared but this is an avenue, especially with sports fields and with playscapes for younger children and especially in the neighborhood areas most lacking in neighborhood playgrounds and parks.

The blue stars are vacant spaces that may be an opportunity for small parks to be developed. Note that this analysis needs ground truthing to support this due to the surrounding uses, ownership and their intent, or recent development.

The maps on pages 29-31 show areas of flooding (pg 29), floodplain and floodway areas (30-31). These are areas that may have properties that are owned by willing sellers at floodplain prices. It will take many conversations to identify the appropriate properties to acquire to work toward closing gaps in services areas.

# Parks & Open Space Master Plan

- 1 City Park
- 2 Bill Johnson Park
- 3 Optimist Jaycee Park
- 4 Collins Street Park & Trailhead
- 5 Clifton Heights Park
- 6 Prairie Wind Park
- 7 Elk Ridge Park
- 8 Creekside Park

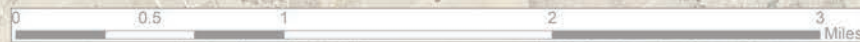
One Mile Radius

Half Mile Radius

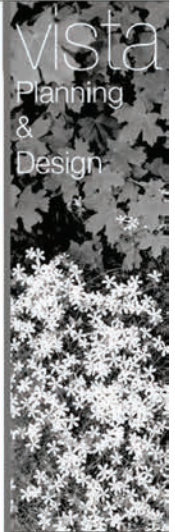
Quarter Mile Radius

**Legend**

- Stephenville Parks
- Erath County Parcels
- City Parcels
- Schools
- City Limits



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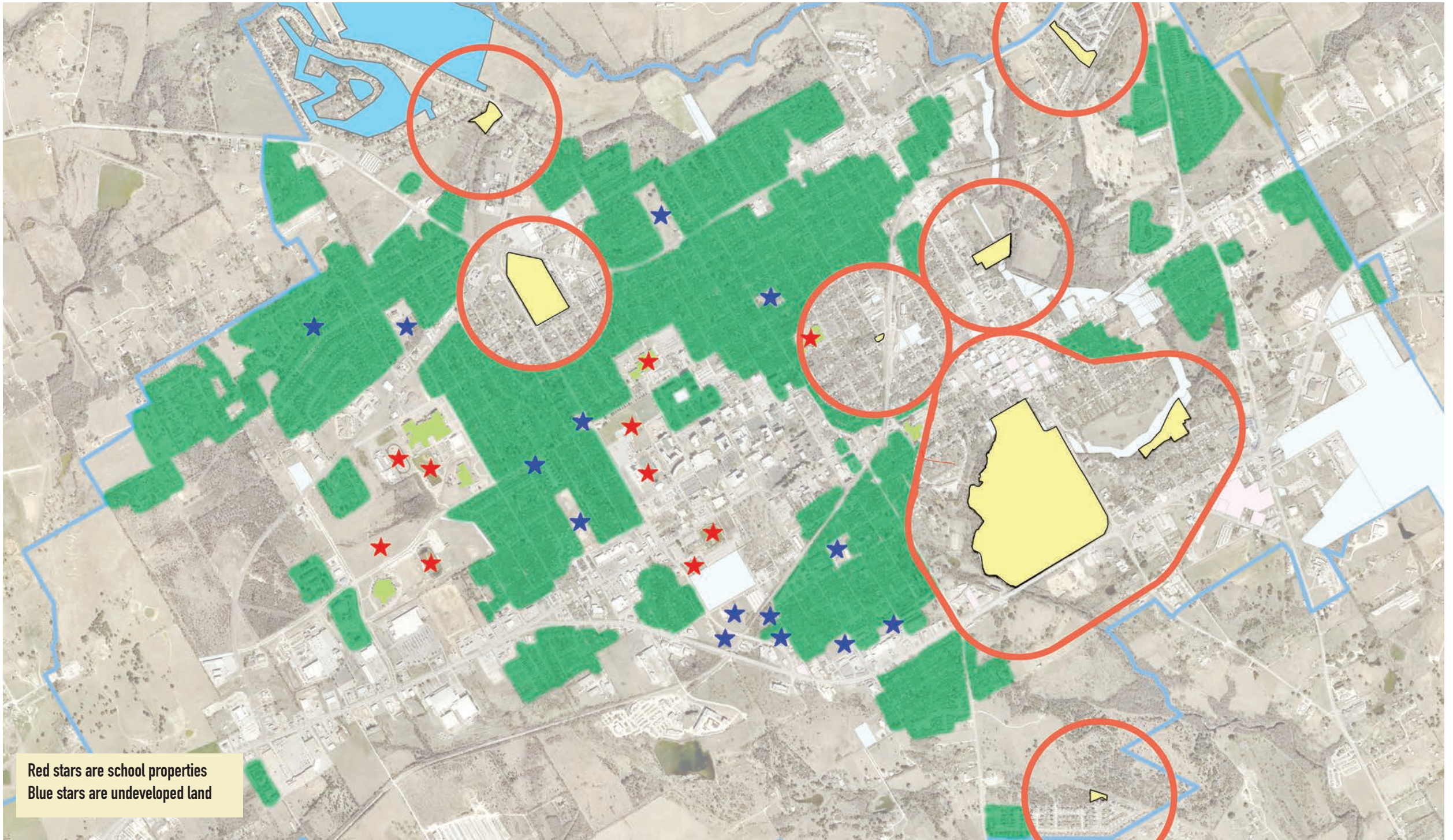


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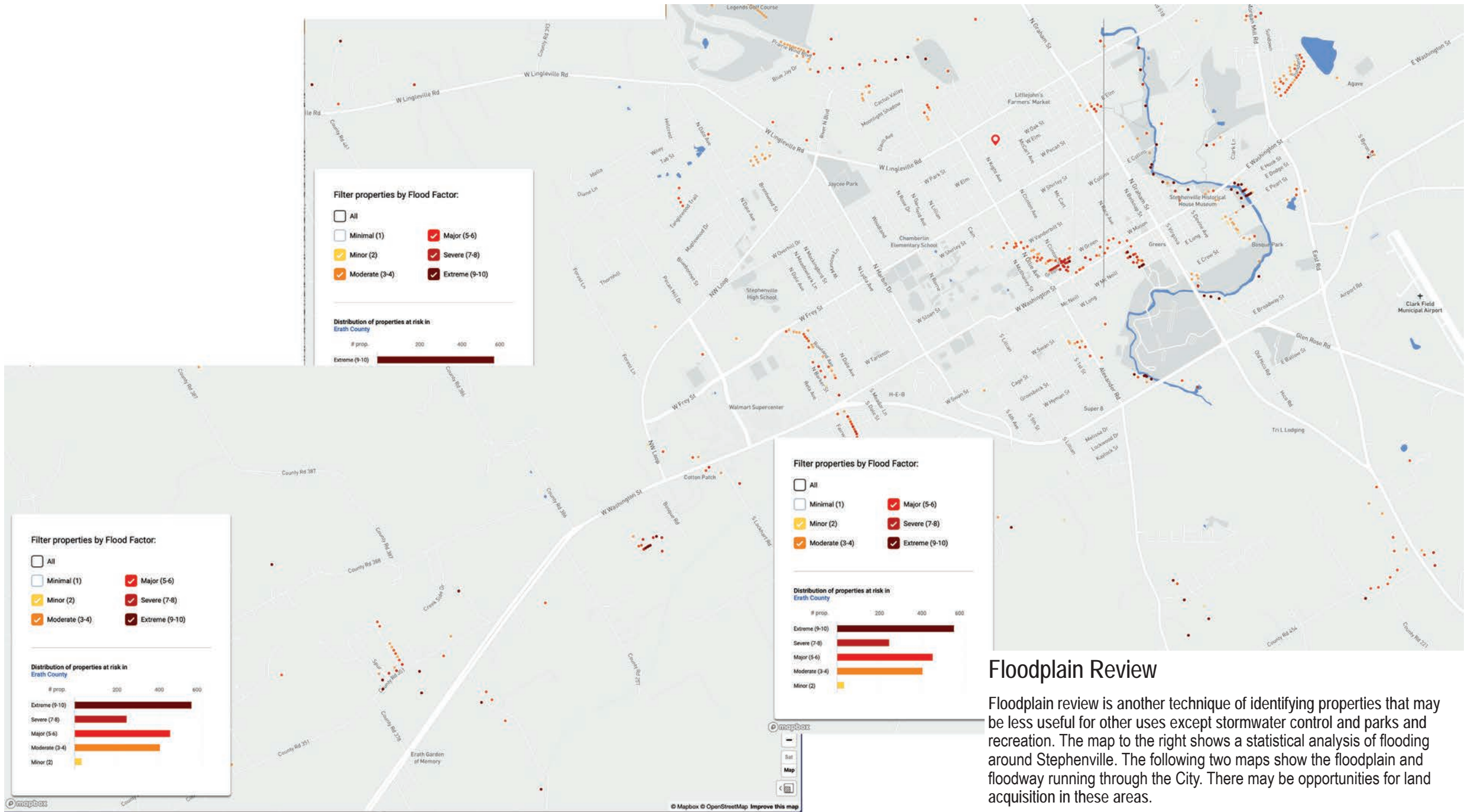
**Parks & Recreation Master Plan**  
**Parkland Aerials**  
 Stephenville, Texas



sheet number  
**Exh**



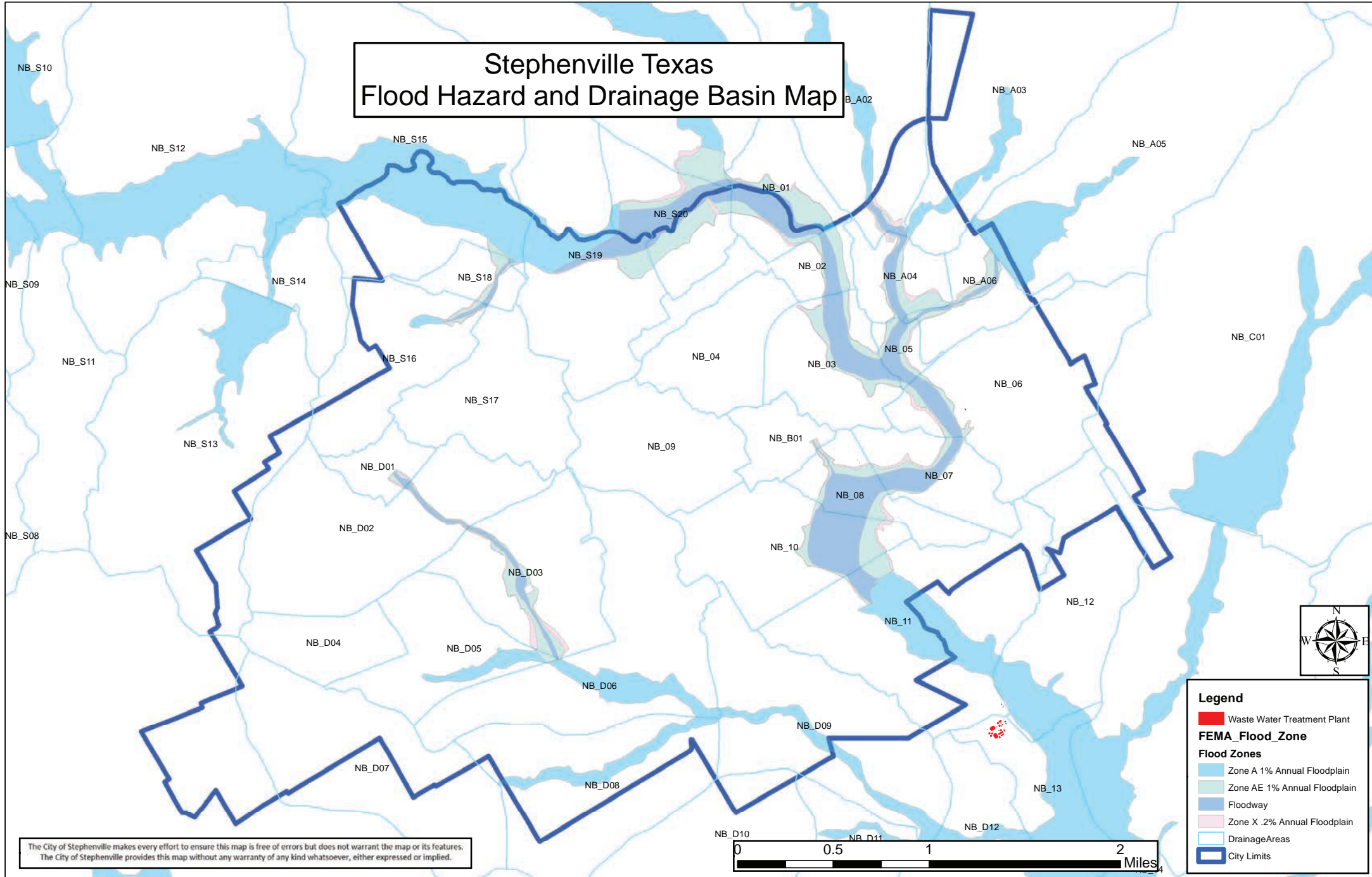
Red stars are school properties  
Blue stars are undeveloped land



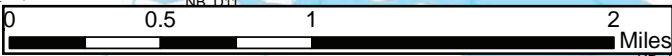
## Floodplain Review

Floodplain review is another technique of identifying properties that may be less useful for other uses except stormwater control and parks and recreation. The map to the right shows a statistical analysis of flooding around Stephenville. The following two maps show the floodplain and floodway running through the City. There may be opportunities for land acquisition in these areas.

# Stephenville Texas Flood Hazard and Drainage Basin Map



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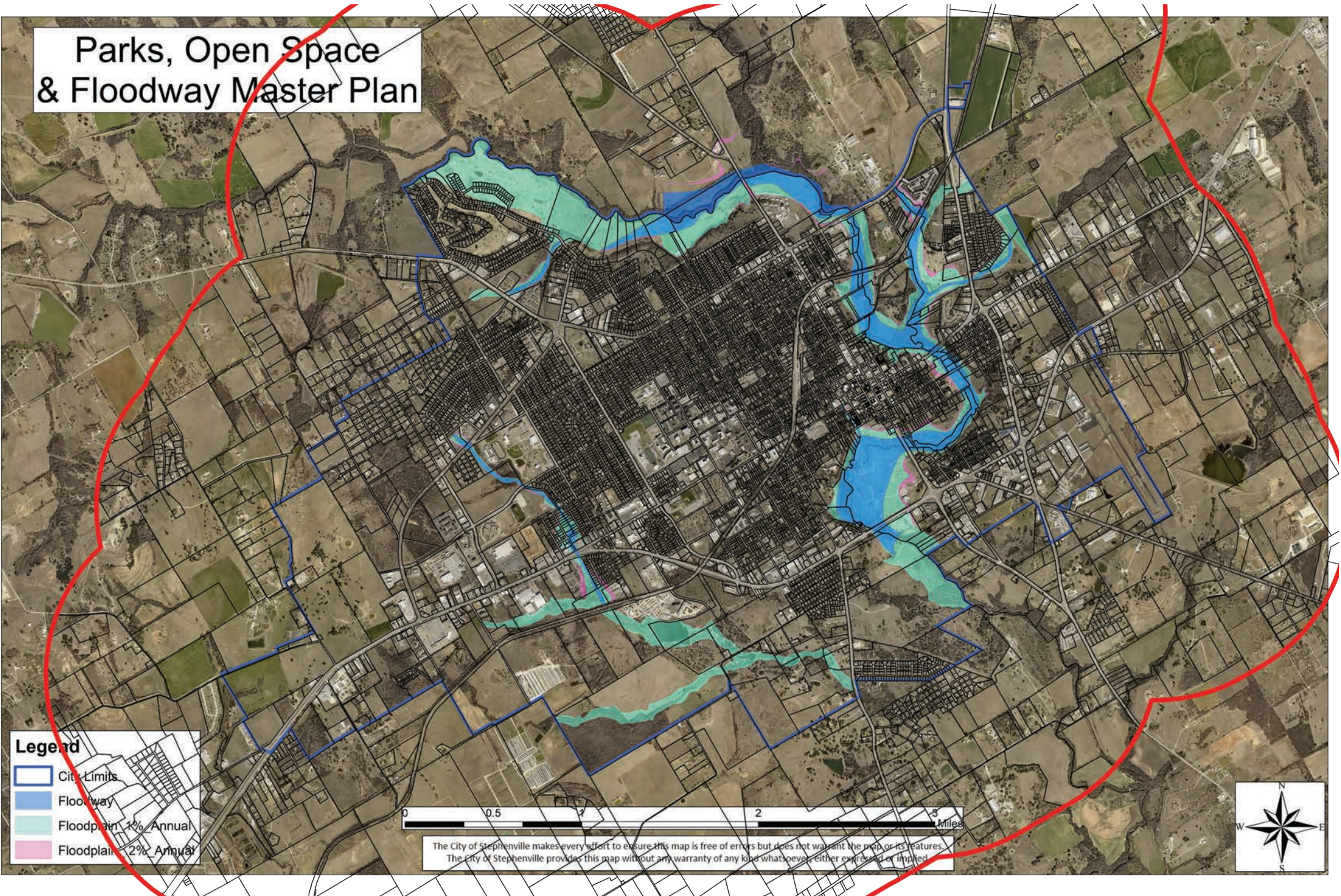
**Legend**

- Waste Water Treatment Plant
- FEMA\_Flood\_Zone**
- Flood Zones**
- Zone A 1% Annual Floodplain
- Zone AE 1% Annual Floodplain
- Floodway
- Zone X .2% Annual Floodplain
- DrainageAreas
- City Limits





# Parks, Open Space & Floodway Master Plan



**Legend**

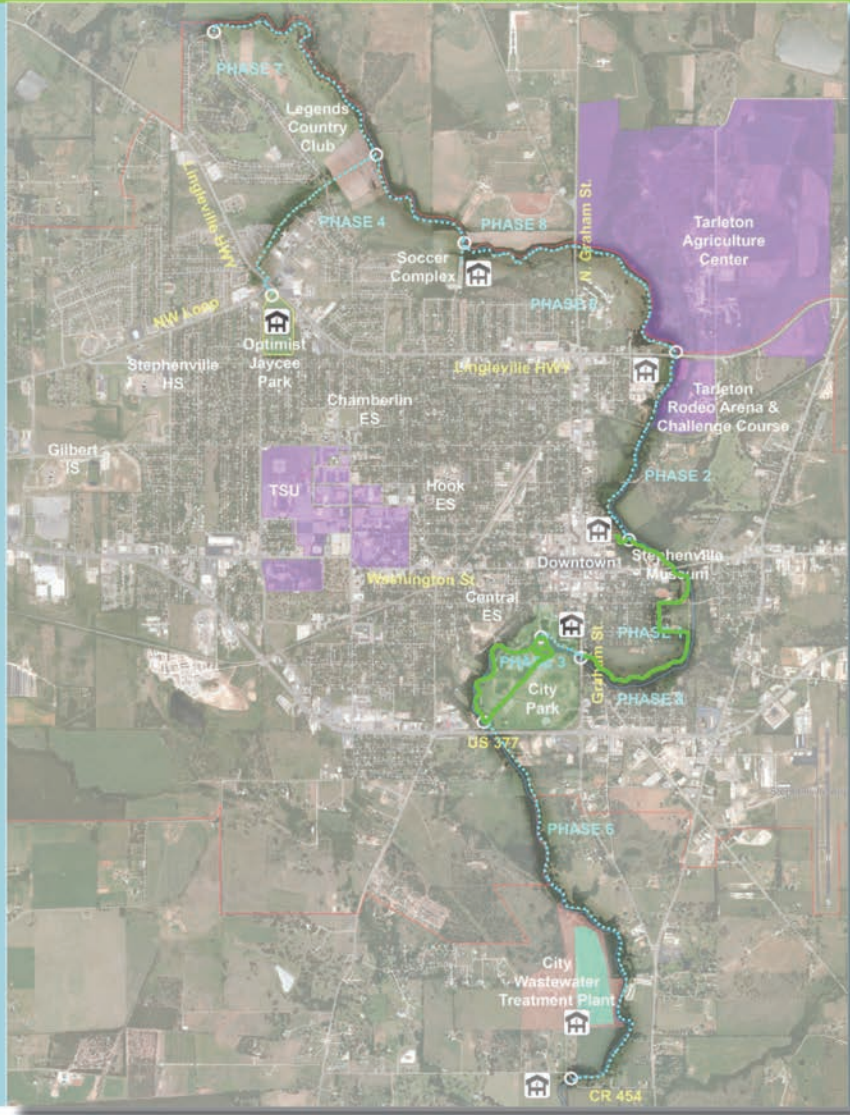
- City Limits
- Floodway
- Floodplain 1% Annual
- Floodplain 2% Annual



The City of Stephenville makes every effort to ensure this map is free of errors but does not warrant the map or its features. The City of Stephenville provides this map without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.







- Legend**
- Stephenville Schools
  - Existing Trail
  - Proposed Trail
  - Trail Head
  - Phase End Point
  - Railroad
  - North Bosque River
  - Proposed Wetland
  - City Limits
  - TSU Property
  - Wastewater Treatment Facility
  - City Parks

**BRTC Project Area Map**



## Bosque River Trail Development

Much has been accomplished to establish the Bosque River Trail to this point. Beautiful swaths of land have been acquired and a concrete trail with trailheads developed.

The master plan for the trail has one endpoint at the south side of the wastewater treatment plant south of town on the Bosque River and the northern endpoint on the west end of the golf course, north edge of the city. What has been constructed is roughly a third of the master plan vision so much work is yet to be done.

To empower the trail further, Vista has developed a concept for consideration that expands on the trail master plan by adding new segments that would create a city-wide loop trail system. There are many benefits to offering this facility to the city:

- Many more residents will find it easier to access the trail.
- The various parks in the city can be connected to the trail loop with spurs so that kids and adults can get to park on bike or walking
- Having a trail nearby will encourage more people to begin a routine of walking and jogging or cycling for health.
- Having a trail system nearby will give a space for kids to ride their bikes
- Overall, Stephenville will be more attractive as a city for business and potential residents considering Stephenville for relocation.

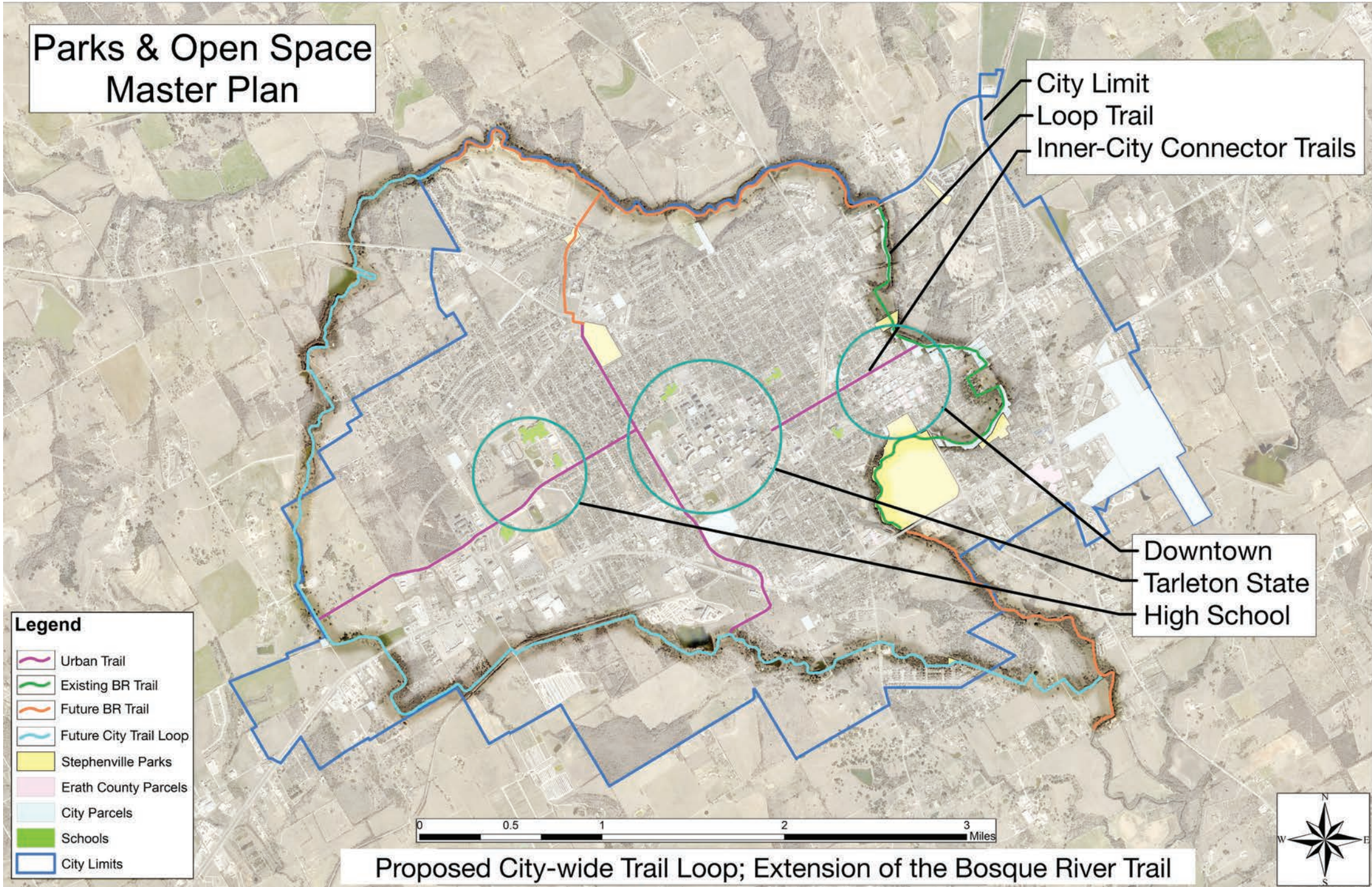
Funding for the trail development may happen with several different mechanisms:

- Trail land donations
- Trail land and construction through the parkland dedication fees or land
- Requirements of developers to build the trail in a subdivision where the master plan shows the trail alignment
- Applying for grants both private and public granting institutions

***Vision:***  
*A model river and trail corridor focused on health and recreation, education, transportation, and restoration, all celebrating the natural heritage of our region.*

***Mission:***  
*The Bosque River Trail Corridor provides stewardship of our community waterway to preserve our natural and cultural heritage, promote healthy lifestyles, and provide educational opportunities for current and future generations.*

# Parks & Open Space Master Plan



Proposed City-wide Trail Loop; Extension of the Bosque River Trail

# City-Wide Trail System

## Trail Development Timeline:

No trails of any length are developed all at once or even within a very short amount of time. The construction is expensive and the land acquisition or rights are difficult and time consuming to acquire. The proposal here may be twenty years in the making but when asked “why plan so far when we don’t see what could happen?” The answer is very simple; If not planned for, then it will never exist.

The description below lays out a long-range plan and a technique for land rights acquisition that has proven successful in many cities. Holding to this vision will result in a trail system that will contribute greatly to achieving goals toward a high quality of life and economic development by retention of youth, attracting families, attracting employers with companies that hire lots of people, and of course contributing greatly to encouraging healthy activities for the community.

## Concept:

A city-wide trail system should strive to develop a looping system so that a trail rider, runner, or walker can start on the trail and not stop at an end, to repeat the same trail on a return trip.

The concept mapped out in this report features a continuation of the BRTC around the south and west sides of the city to create an overall loop that will serve the city far into the future. Additionally, a simple grid of streets are designated to be restriped, widened, or with trail-width sidewalks added to provide access directly to the trail that connect downtown, Tarleton State University, and the high school. These urban segments, aside from providing easier access, also allow multiple trip styles and lengths of time by creating smaller loops within the larger overall city loop.

One major barrier for trail development is negotiating railroad crossings. Research on the proposed crossings can begin at any time since the timeline for approvals and crossing development is extensive. The three crossings proposed follow existing roads.

Rural trail alignments are a matter of gaining fee simple purchase of land or easements to develop the trail alignments. A third strategy is to build into the city development ordinances, code requirements to comply with the adopted Trail Master Plan alignments during a private subdivision planning process. Then any land developer will be compelled to plan and build that particular portion of the trail that crosses the development tract. The internal alignment doesn’t matter as long as the connection points on either end of the property are matched. The trail alignment is not a park and is not donated to the city for maintenance. It remains part of the subdivision and under the

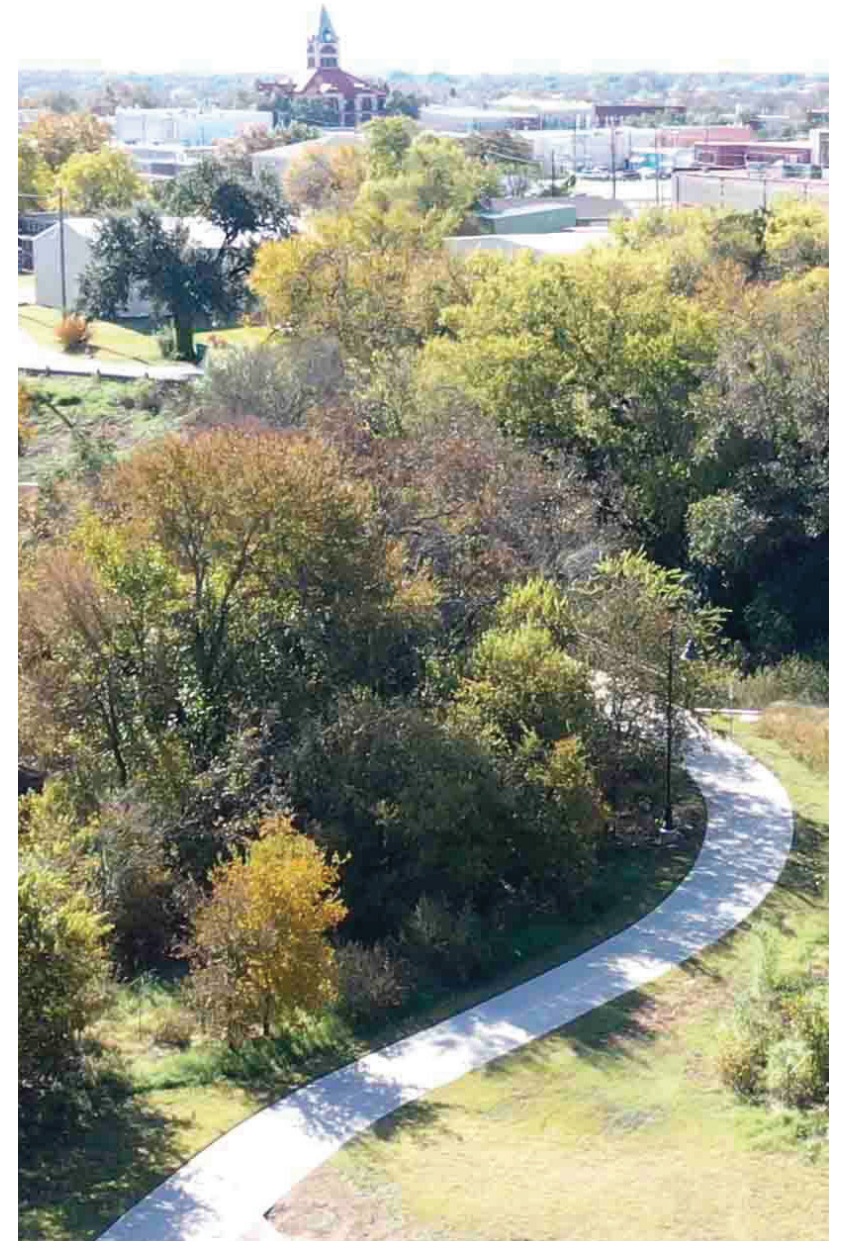
care of the Homeowners Association (HOA). The city may consider whether or not the trail contributes to the Parkland Dedication Fee or the Parkland Development Fee (if the city adopts one).

An added potential is to enhance the loop trail system with park features. This maybe expanding the trail beyond the width of the trail space to incorporate a series of parkland spaces which begins to transform the trail system into more of a linear park system. The setting is particularly important to allow places to insert children’s nature play being in a context of a riverine system and floodplains in much of the future alignment and certainly with the Bosque segment currently. The promotion of nature in this strategy has multiple layers. First it is the emersion into the natural environment giving people exposure to the natural systems. Natural elements can be included as furniture (for instance stumps for seating) or as environmental restoration projects as stated in the Bosque River Corridor master plan. More refined nature play elements can be brought in and conditioned with safety features intended for play elements. Looking back on the Gaps Map, expansion of the trail system in width and adding parkland features can help to close gaps in areas that need more parks.

Looking at the map to the left exhibits the original Bosque River Corridor alignment color coded to represent the existing components and the future expansion components of that plan. The remaining sections of the trail would be newly planned sections with the outer loop in blue connecting the north terminus of the planned Bosque Trail to the south end of the same trail creating a complete loop around the City. The internal trail segments in magenta are connecting segments linking downtown, the university, and the high school to the trail thereby creating a looping system. The lengths of the trail are estimated below:

▪ Existing Trail	3.1 miles
▪ Planned Bosque River Corridor River Portion Only	8.1 miles
▪ Additional Outer Loop	8.9 mile
▪ TOTAL OUTER LOOP	17.0 miles
▪ Planned Optimist Linkage	.86 miles
▪ Additional Urban Linkages	6.1 miles
▪ TOTAL URBAN LINKAGES	7.0 miles
▪ TOTAL OVERALL TRAIL SYSTEM	24.0 miles

The numbers above represent a rough estimate



# 7

## Public Engagement

### Public Engagement

The process of creating a parks and recreation master plan includes reaching out to the residents in the city. Vista employs three primary methods to obtain as much information as possible. The methods are:

- Online and paper surveys posted on the city website or social media. Paper versions can be picked up at City Hall or other locations where residents may frequent.
- Public meetings that are conducted at different locations and are a forum for presenting the majority of the online survey results as well as step through existing conditions, conversations, larger projects, etc.
- Stakeholder meetings tend to yield the most amount of information. A stakeholder meeting is a selection of different people that represent the various city department, recreation activities, sports, or hold prominent positions in the city such as the university, city council, SEDA, Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, etc. As of this writing, 5 such meeting has taken place and many online survey results have been reported.

At two of the stakeholder meetings with representatives of the parks board and the steering committee, an exercise was conducted to develop a parks and recreation vision and a series of primary goals. These will be the guides for moving forward in selecting projects that fit easily under any of the goals. In some cases a project may serve the purpose of several goals which would give it more gravity in the priorities list.

The results of the visioning session yielded a pretty strong consensus and the resulting vision phrase is shown below.

The process of distinguishing a set of goals was a little more challenging.

### Vision and Goals

Crafting a vision statement is the first step toward guiding the City toward a common vision of the future of the city. Parks and recreation, being an important ingredient for vibrant healthy cities, is a crucial department for a vision that drives the attractiveness for families and corporations but also serves in large respect the betterment of health in the city.

Stephenville is in a period of awakening in terms of smaller city taking on larger projects in recognition of their importance regionally in Texas. They are a center. As a center they already provide a medical center, a division 1 university; part of the Texas A&M system, and with a heart of historic Stephenville as the county seat for Erath County complete with a historic county courthouse.

### The Vision

Stephenville is pulled in many directions much like all cities. Budgets, growing populations, public works, dynamics with the university, and living up to the mantra of City of Champions.

During the creation of this plan; the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a gathering of the Steering Committee and the Parks Board came together to discuss some of the top tier topics on the minds of leadership. Part of this session was dedicated to discussing and developing thoughts toward a vision statement. A poster was created that had sample ideas of what a vision statement could look like. Also described was a brief "what not to say" description of a city that envisioned the best and greatest of all things to all people. The Utopia vision. Also, to not be too general but focusing on what does Stephenville look like in 20 years or so. What does this group want to try to accomplish or build inertia behind that will continue beyond their leadership time?

*Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and recreation system to be a well-rounded system for all ages and abilities with a wide variety of activities including organized sports, natural spaces and other physical activities while also offering many opportunities in arts and culture.*

There were lots of thoughts green dotted on the posters and some write in statements. The task herein was to digest the discussion as well as the resulting posters and present this draft vision statement:

*Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and recreation system to be a well-rounded system for all ages and abilities with a wide variety of activities including organized sports, natural spaces and other physical activities while also offering many opportunities in arts and culture.*

The discussion then turned to what are the goals that this group would like to identify as the main goals for the City to take on with this plan. It must keep in mind all the important projects that have already come to light with many discussions.

Again, a poster was presented that had approximately 20 phrases on it. The task of the group was to get up once again and "green dot" anything they liked and write in any additional phrases and comments to be taken into account. Many of the written statements were actually specific projects but we let the conversation flow to get all thoughts down.

Crafting a set of goals is a little more challenging and the process likely takes on many forms with each city. After this exercise the posters were photographed and the data brought into a spread sheet to evaluate the results. Some massaging was in order to accommodate strategic goals for Texas Parks and Wildlife and to bring certain comments together to form a fuller goal statement. The following charts are a reflection of that exercise.

### Vision Statement for Stephenville Parks and Recreation

---

**Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and recreation system...**


Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and rec system to have an enhanced program of sports and arts including festivals for adults and families

Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and rec system to have a robust program for kids in sports including be a regional or state hub for organized sports for tournament play

● Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and recreation system to serve all residents and provide a wide variety of activities for residents of all ages and abilities while being economically sustainable

● All residents  
● Wide variety of activities  
● Residents of all ages and abilities


● Our vision for Stephenville is for our parks and recreation system is to be a well rounded system for all ages and abilities including organized sports, natural spaces and other physical activities while also offering many opportunities in arts and culture



Parks & Recreation Master Plan  
Goals Establishment  
Stephenville, Texas

Vista Planning & Design

1000 North Loop West, Suite 1000  
Dallas, Texas 75208  
714.424.1111  
www.vista-planning.com



### Goals for Stephenville Parks and Recreation System

---

- Great children's play ●
  - Diverse and age appropriate children's plan ●●●● *Special needs*
  - Children's nature play
  - Great activities for seniors
  - Great outdoor space for seniors ●
  - Accessibility for handicapped ●●●●
- Enhanced programming for sports ●●
  - Enhanced programming for arts and culture ●
  - Enhanced programming for general outdoor activities and exercise
  - Enhanced exercise facilities
- Recreation Center ●●●●● *Wingsball*
  - Seniors Center ● *Playgroup then together*
  - New tournament grade sports complex ●●
  - Expanded multi-use trails ●●
  - Economic development related facilities and programming ●●●● *Sub-Tennis*
  - Expanded music festival grounds ●●
  - Educational facilities, interpretive signs, programs *wayfinding*
  - Robust operations and maintenance support ●●●●
  - New parks in gap areas ●●

> Pickleball

> Dog Park

Permanent flag football

Volleyball

Tennis

Pickleball

Soft volleyball


Sports hangout areas

Shade low sports

Pathways

(Paving lot looking city park)


5 lights - general



Parks & Recreation Master Plan  
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## Crafting a Set of Goals

Through the workshop with Steering Committee and Parks Board, continuing through the vision statement, we needed to work on a set of overall goals for the Parks and Recreation System. Again a poster of suggestions was placed for both write-in comments and placing dots on anything written that met Stephenville's needs. The list below is the poster with the arbitrary goals from past projects. At the end of the session the comments and dots are tallied up and a bar chart created.

Goal crafting for the consultant is a bit of an art form writing goals that encompass the thoughts of city leaders. Behind each dot or written comment were

conversations rich with ideas and considerations. The higher scoring themes were accessibility, appropriate play for a diverse population, a recreation center, and economic development promotion.

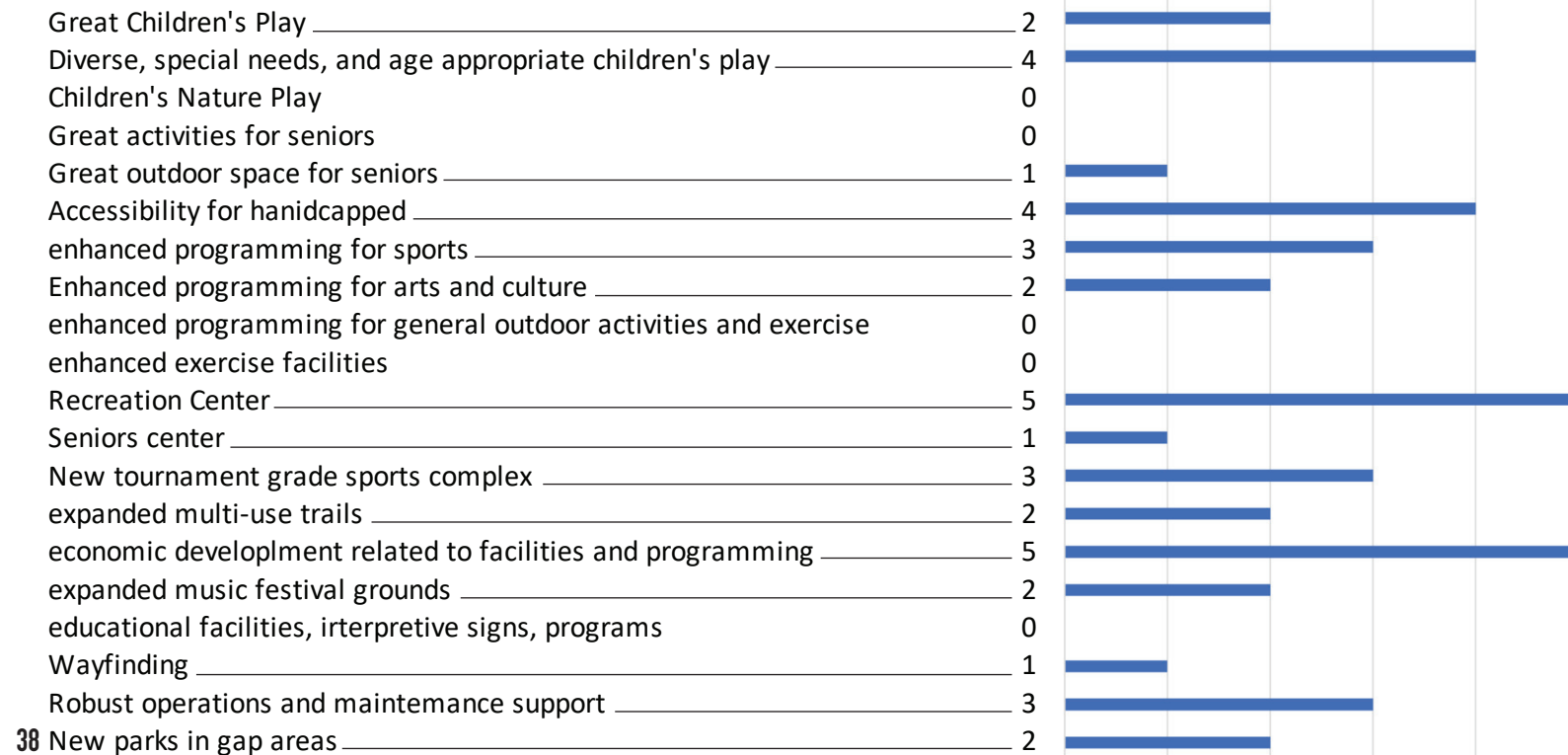
The conversations with the broader City have also revealed other high priorities and goals. These as well have to be considered. The list of goals in the next column represent the main takeaways from this session. The final list of draft goals that take into account the broader conversations over the course of time are on the following page.

Part of those conversations are the types of requirements that are needed for grants, mainly through Texas Parks and Wildlife and recognized goals from the

National Parks and Recreation Association. Mostly these include the broader topics of equity, diversity, distribution and proximity to parks and open space. The list on the next page assimilates all these considerations and the list was developed based on all these considerations. This list brings in all the concerns of the conversations as well as valued goals from the broader lens of parks and recreation needs.

With this list in place, prioritization can be better achieved by having these guideposts for project consideration.

### Goals



1	Recreation Center economic development related to facilities and programming
2	Diverse, special needs, and age appropriate children's play Accessibility for handicapped
3	enhanced programming for sports New tournament grade sports complex Robust operations and maintenance support
4	Great Children's Play Enhanced programming for arts and culture expanded multi-use trails expanded music festival grounds New parks in gap areas
5	Great outdoor space for seniors Seniors center Wayfinding
No Votes	Children's Nature Play Great activities for seniors enhanced programming for general outdoor activities and exercise enhanced exercise facilities educational facilities, interpretive signs, programs



### Primary Goals For Stephenville’s Parks and Recreation System

1	The parks and recreation system in Stephenville will strive to enhance EQUITY, system wide to include access including to leading to parks, for all abilities and age groups, distribution to achieve parks within a short distance of every home, and broad diversity of activities, facilities and programming.
2	Stephenville will strategically enhance all current and future facilities and programming through the lens of economic development with emphasis on significant project strategies.
3	Stephenville will begin the process of developing a multi-purpose, indoor recreation facility that can satisfy the needs of multiple court sports, meeting rooms and other diverse and appropriate uses with synergies. The project will include the repurposing of the retiring recreation center built in the thirties into an event space or other such facility.
4	Given the importance of a strong parks and recreation system, Stephenville Parks and Recreation Department will establish firm accounting of O&M and reporting to support the need for a higher level of City budget support. This comes hand in hand with City support of larger agenda that can generate sound economic development.
5	With the growth of Stephenville, new park areas will be sought out and developed starting with quality children's play and with an ultimate goal of a park, green space, or recreation facility within a 10 minute walk from every home
6	Stephenville has a strong arts and culture fabric within the parks, and the parks and recreation system will continue to strengthen these programs with connections to concepts within Downtown on the Park, music, and the Bosque River Corridor and museum district.
7	Parks and recreation department will strive to enhance the management of the department both with operations of budgets and programming, and with the maintenance of recreation areas
8	Complete a trail network that expands on the existing segments of the Bosque River Trail Corridor. Enhance trail components at key locations

## Online Survey Results and Interpretation

An important part of the public survey is to try to get as broad an opinion as possible across the entire city about what is most use, needed, not liked, desired, etc. as well as who are we talking to. The demographic information is useful to a point but certain questions do open up insights as to who are we talking to, and are there groups of people that have not expressed an opinion.

Most insightful are Q2, Q4 which spell out that we are talking to the middle of the age groups which are young to mid-career families raising children. Q4 is useful in that the survey has reach most everywhere in the city and beyond including the heaviest concentrations match up with the location of the majority of residential neighborhoods. The spike in those that reside outside of the city limits, likely speaks to the larger land owners given the agricultural basis of the region. However given the low overall responses to the survey, it would have been more insightful for central city to be more heavily represented with topics like riding a bike, walking to school, etc.

Income, ethnicity, gender, for parks and recreation planning, are more obscure in what the data is telling although there is usefulness to this data. Students that responded to the survey may offer a skew to the results depending on how many responded and if they are local permanent residents or transient.

There are several questions that are requesting written responses. These are difficult to give an accurate and comprehensive interpretation with the amount of information that is submitted. The work requires the use

of importing the responses into an excel spreadsheet and then grouping the similar responses to get a feel for what is requested. However, the data is very important and mining the actual responses has yielded great ideas from the public. The details may be as specific as sticker removal or as general as needing gathering spaces outdoors. The appendix has all written comments for the purpose of city staff being able to go back time after time to read through the statements for information.

It is also possible to continue to use the spread sheet technique to further evaluate the responses or sort them in different ways.

Two areas of concern for the general public seem to be a need for increased maintenance throughout the park system. This translates to staffing increases. The other item that appears over and over is the desire for much more programming. This may be events and festivals, or it may be the need for additional activities, camps, or classes for the youth in the city. Staffing again may be the main messaging to accomplish this.

As a side note, all of the data is anonymous so no names or addresses are associated with the information.

The full list of questions are listed in the appendices.

### Notes regarding general observations from the survey results:

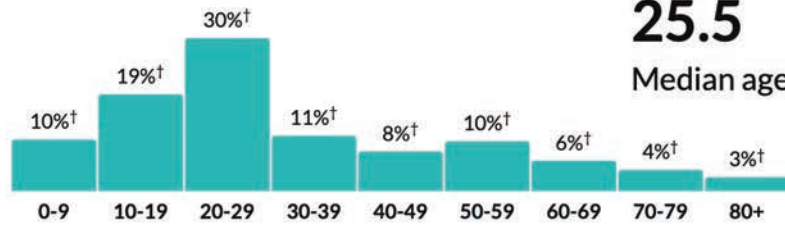
While reviewing the following charts, its important to keep in mind that the respondent are only a small slice of the population. For surveys of this type, a goal is to attract at least 4% of the population. This survey only captured 1.6% of the population.

Given the age group of those responding to the survey, its not surprising that youth sports is high ranking as were comments on increasing Splashville's size and offering. P&R categories such as passive nature, community gardens, arts and crafts received much lower votes overall.

From this we can deduce that activities that may be more attractive to senior citizens are not necessarily equally represented due simply to their percentage in the overall population or as respondents to the survey and their likely access to online technology or access to the survey.

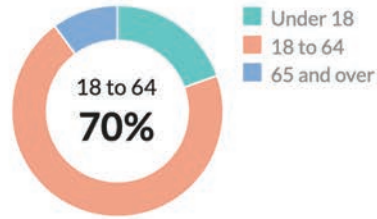
# Population Age Verses Survey Respondent Age

Population by age range



**25.5**  
Median age

Population by age category

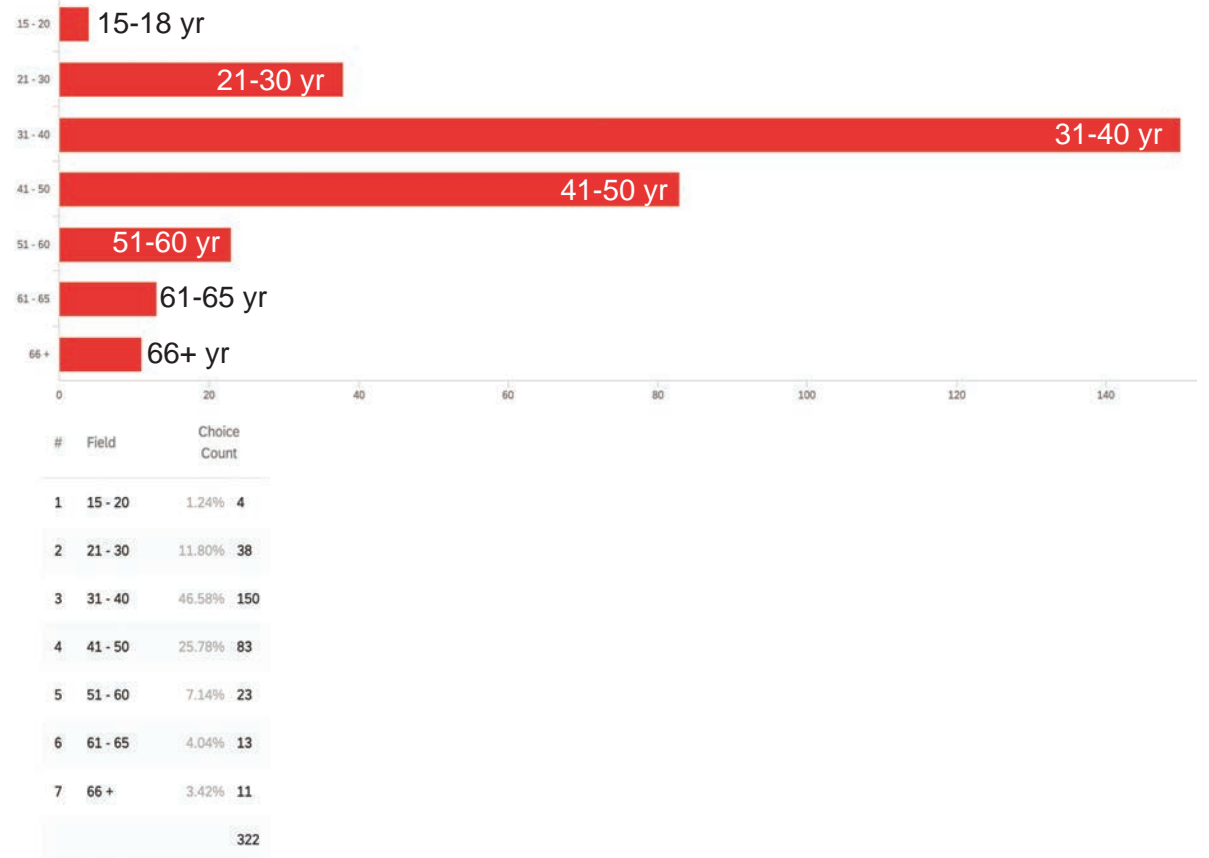


Population by age range

Column	Stephenville		
0-9	10.1% <sup>†</sup>	±1.9%	2,078 ±384.1
10-19	19% <sup>†</sup>	±2.5%	3,900 ±515.5
20-29	30% <sup>†</sup>	±3.5%	6,158 ±717.9
30-39	10.8% <sup>†</sup>	±1.8%	2,220 ±367.2
40-49	7.7% <sup>†</sup>	±1.5%	1,576 ±309.6
50-59	9.7% <sup>†</sup>	±1.7%	1,995 ±339.1
60-69	5.9% <sup>†</sup>	±1.4%	1,203 ±293.3
70-79	4.1% <sup>†</sup>	±1%	845 ±205.8
80+	2.6% <sup>†</sup>	±0.8%	529 ±159.9

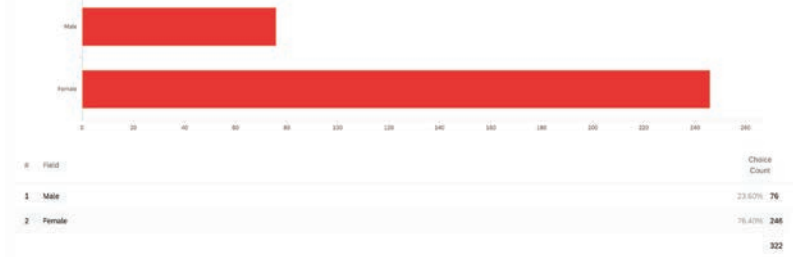
Stephenville, TX Micro Area			
0-9	12.1%	±1%	5,102 ±435.8
10-19	16%	±1%	6,768 ±403.7
20-29	20.2%	±1.8%	8,556 ±755.5
30-39	12%	±0.9%	5,090 ±396.5
40-49	9.4% <sup>†</sup>	±1%	3,987 ±407.7
50-59	10.9%	±0.9%	4,605 ±366.5
60-69	10% <sup>†</sup>	±1.1%	4,227 ±450.8
70-79	6.1% <sup>†</sup>	±0.7%	2,588 ±286.1
80+	3.2% <sup>†</sup>	±0.6%	1,365 ±235.6

Q5 - Please select your age group:



Age 60 & Over	7.10%	% of total respondents that are age 60 or over
Age 60 & Over	0.90%	% of Stephenville's 60+ that responded to the survey
Age 60 & Over	13%	% of Stephenville's overall population
Age 30 - 50	72.40%	% of total respondents that are age 30 - 50
Age 30 - 50	6.10%	% of Stephenville's 30 - 50 that responded to the survey
Age 30 - 50	18%	% of Stephenville's overall population

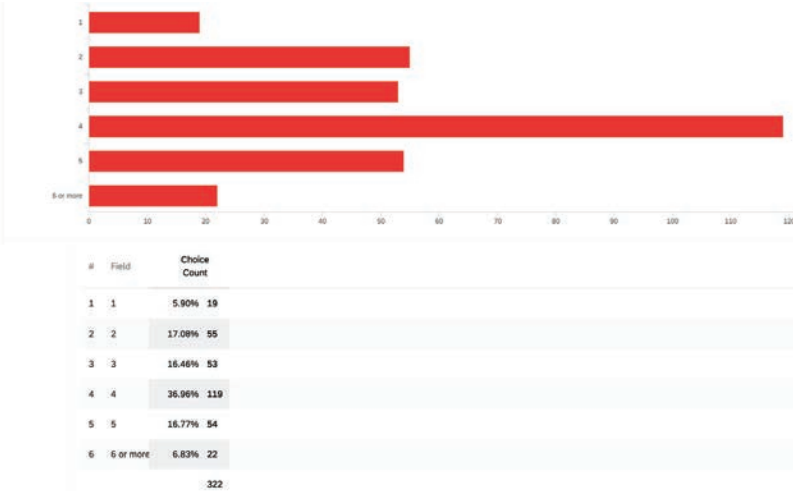
**Q1: What is your gender?**



**Q2: What is your household status?**



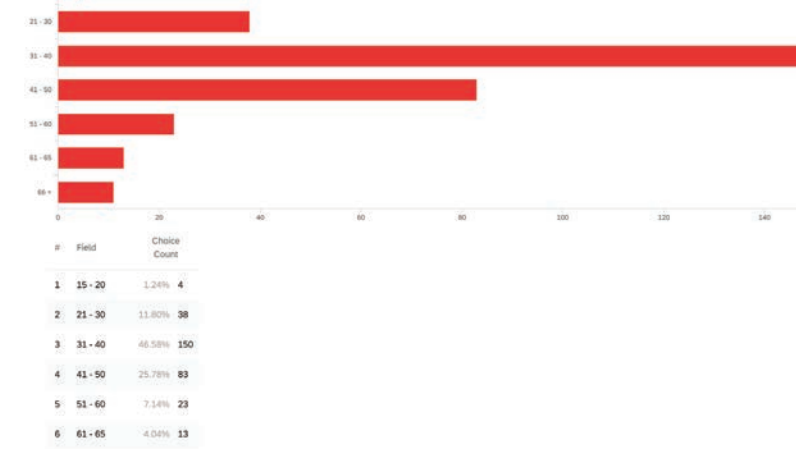
**Q3: Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household**



**Q4: In which area of Stephenville do you reside?**



**Q5: Please select your age group**



**Q6: What is your ethnicity?**



**Q7: Please indicate your status as a resident (please select all that apply)**



**Q8: Please state your approximate income**



*The artform of fill in the blank answers:*

Several of the questions on the survey were asking respondents to write in answers. Question #9 asked the question:

*“In your opinion, what two features you enjoy most in our city parks?”*

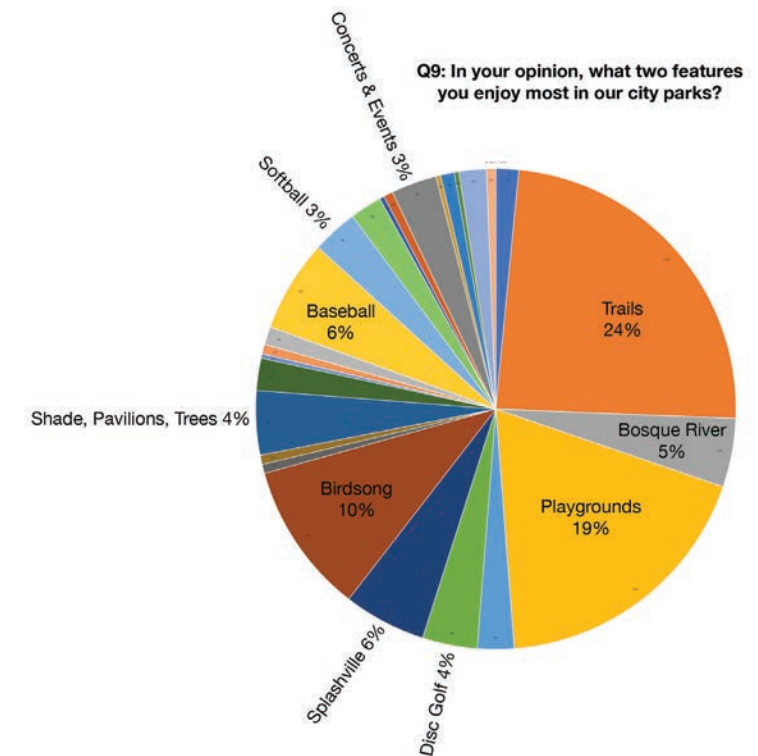
This triggered 178 written comments with each comment listing one, two or three features that they enjoy. The task is how to mold this data into a useable format. To the right is a tabulation that list 26 elements in the parks that people like (or don't like in the case of “none”) and of those topics, how many time a particular topic was listed on the responses. Other responses were listed but grouped according to likeness. See the list of notes below the chart that describes some of those groupings or interpretations. Presenting the audience with the list of

**Q9: In your opinion, what two features you enjoy most in our city parks?**

Top Scoring Favorite Existing Features		
Feature	Vote Ct	% Total
Trails	78	24%
Playgrounds	60	19%
Birdsong	33	10%
Baseball	20	6%
Splashville	18	6%
Bosque River	15	5%
Shade, Pavilions, Trees	14	4%
Disc Golf	12	4%
Concerts & Events	10	3%
Softball	10	3%
Remaining selections		
Covered Playgrounds	8	
Open Space	7	
League Play	7	
Maintenance	6	
None	5	
Basketball	4	
Fishing	3	
Arts & Craft Fairs	2	
Park Furniture	2	
Tennis	2	
Rec Hall	2	
Security	2	
Wildlife	1	
Picnic	1	
Heritage	1	
Restrooms	1	
Notes, caveats, and Clarifications:		
Trail column includes Bosque, City Park, and Optimist Jaycee park		
Shade includes pavilions and trees, covered playgrounds are separate		
If an answer was concerts, Birdsong was also checked		
Answer as ducks, wildlife; checked Bosque River		
Answers like location, available, nice, etc, not recorded		
Sports activities listed as League Play		
Answer ballpark listed as both baseball and softball		

responses for anyone to interpret for useful data would be a useless exercise. All of the write-in responses are interpreted through excel spreadsheet work. Once a full tabulation, as summarized to the left is complete, then the pie chart below can be generated. The result being a detailed summary in both chart form and in graphic form. Where appropriate, notes have been added to clarify or explain certain issues with that specific data set.

With Q9, as in most city surveys, trails remain king of the choices with playgrounds close behind. Again, check the list of comments below the left chart for clarifications on some of the judgement calls made in the data analysis.



Q11: In your opinion, what are the two features you enjoy least in our city parks?

Top 10	Feature	Count	% Total
1	Lacking clean and more bathrooms	39	14%
2	Playgrounds upgrades and maintenance	23	8%
3	Grass stickers	21	7%
4	None	21	7%
5	Sports fields upgrades & maintenance	20	7%
6	Recreation gym	19	7%
7	Splashville	17	6%
8	Parking and circulation	14	5%
9	Maintenance, trash	11	4%
10	Trail maintenance	11	4%

Remaining Selections

Tennis and Pickleball courts conditions, additions	9
Skate Park	8
Bosque River Maintenance & Access	7
More shade, update pavilions	6
More older kid playscapes, equip.	5
SPARD-run activities needs improvement	5
Wasted space; need more functions	5
Not pet friendly, need dog parks	5
Need more trees	4
Security, Vandalism	4
Basketball	4
All parks least enjoyed	3
Improving or lacking more group activities, rec sports	3
Sports fields schedule availability	3
Parades, 4th July events	3
Ants	2
Need soccer fields	2
Disc Golf	2
Need more parks	2
Lack water fountains	1
Lack accessible playground equipment	1
RV Park	1
Football field	1
Lack of fencing for playgrounds	1
Optimist Jaycee Park	1
Picnic tables, furniture	1
Stage Naming	1
Concessions	1

Q11 Observations

Overall there were 180 individual write-in comments on this question resulting in 287 points of need. The full list of comments are in the appendix for a more detailed review. Much like trails are a common #1 most liked, restrooms are mostly high ranking elements that are needed to be added or to be restored. The recommendation here would be to spread out the cost of developing bathrooms in parks over the course of time. Permanent facilities are mostly in parks with high visibility and utilization such as near trailheads and sports fields. In the case of Splashville, discussions are being raised about creating a mechanism allowing bathrooms to be open to the outside even when Splashville is closed. Lots of comments were made about Splashville being open at all. This may have been due in part to staffing and available lifeguards.

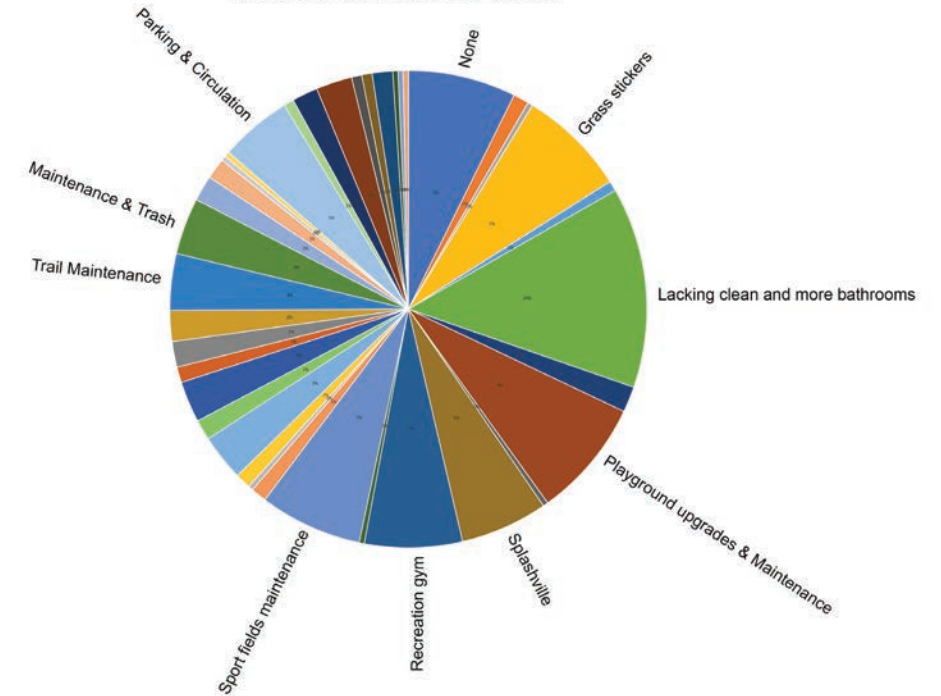
Stickers appear to be a plague in the parks and a concerted effort over time will be needed to get control of this. Mostly this is a man power activity and staffing up with new grounds keepers will be important to this as well as the other elements called out.

The Rec Hall has been a continuous point of conversation throughout the master plan process. It has already made its presence as a top priority element since it covers so many aspects of the recreation system from after school care to basketball and volleyball tournaments. Restoration and upgrades to the existing rec hall just seem to be the wrong strategy given the size of buildings and scope of needs.

Notes, Caveats, Clarifications:

- Call out for River interpreted to mean river maintenance
- Several different sports league comments grouped under “improving or lacking group activities”
- Comment 59 listed as “None” since they called out pool and playscapes not used since kids were grown
- Soccer comments include one regarding the need for more coordination between SPARD and soccer assoc.
- Parking and circulation includes wayfinding
- Trail maintenance includes comments about trail repair where it has been torn up

Q11: In your opinion, what are two features you enjoy least in our city parks?



Q12: If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?

Chart #1 Top Scoring Favorite Existing Features

Top Ten	Feature	Vote Ct	% Total
1	Bathrooms; Add More and Increase Maintenance	45	15%
2	Better Lawn and Field Maintenance	19	6%
3	Playground Upgrades & Maintenance, Add equipment	18	6%
4	New Recreation Hall	17	6%
5	Remove Ants & Stickers	15	5%
6	Trail Maintenance & Repair	14	5%
7	Free Splashville, Open More Often	12	4%
8	Expand Splashville Pool, Add Programming	11	4%
9	Upgrade, Update bleachers, shade, dugouts, add turf	10	3%
10	Parking & Drives Repair	8	3%

Additional Votes

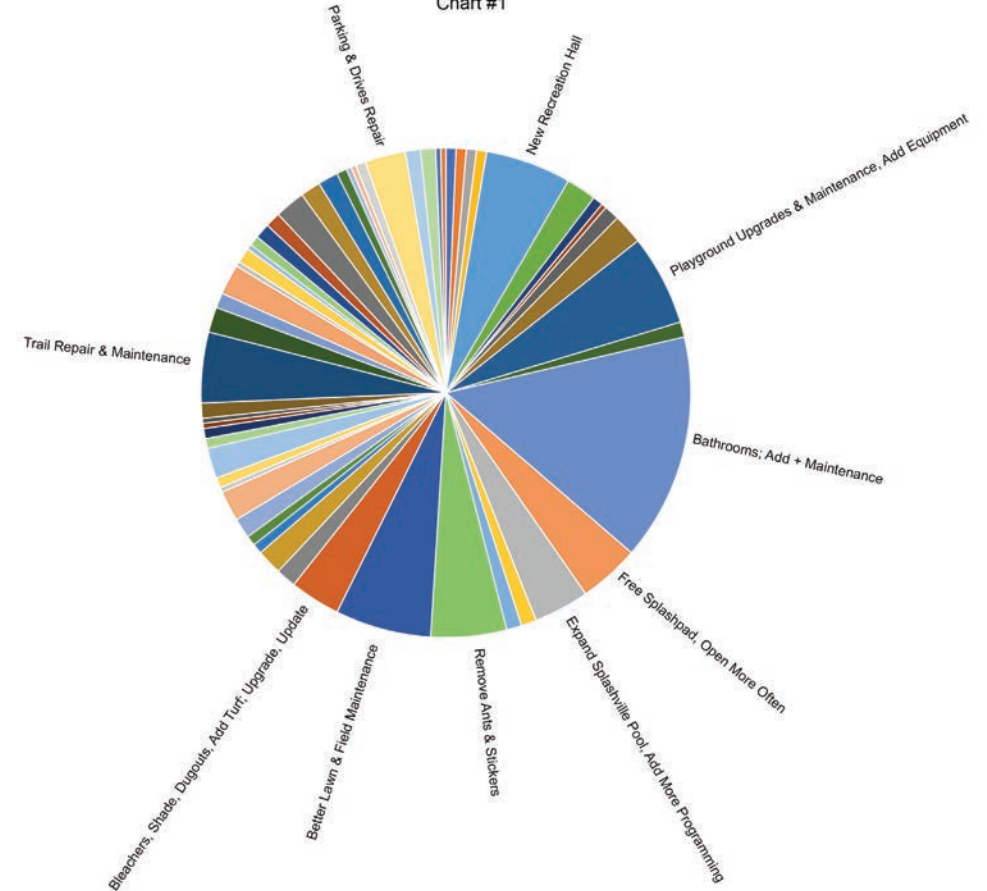
Item	Vote Count
Trash Cleanup	6
Bosque River Access & Water Play	6
Plant More Trees	6
More Events & Craft Shows, Etc.	6
Accessible Playgrounds	6
Renovate Rec Hall + AC	6
More Baseball Fields, Tournaments, Sports Complex	5
Trail and Park Lighting	5
More Shade	4
Seating & Furniture	4
Events for Youth and Small Kids	4
Unlock Baseball Fields	4
ADA Access	3
Playground Fencing	3
Indoor Swimming Pool	3
Disc Golf Upgrades	3
Expand Bosque River Trail	3
More Walking and Biking Areas	3
Dog Parks Including Agility Course	3
Outdoor Exercise Programs and equipment	3
More Parks	3
More Landscaping and Beautification	3
Security	3
No Changes	2
SPARD and Staff Improvements	2
Rec League Management	2
Rec Hall Activities	2
Children's Theater Indoors or Rec Hall	2
Flag Football	2
Soccer	2
Need Water Fountains	2
Basketball Upgrades	2
Outdoor Volleyball Courts	2
Wasp Control	2
More RV Spaces	2
New Skate Park	1
Way Finding, Signage	1
More Sports Organizations / Clubs	1
Caring Referees and Umpires	1
More and Improved Tennis Courts	1
More Doggie Poop Stations	1

Notes on results

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- 56 individual fine grain categories were created out of 157 individual comments in the survey to chart all of the comments
- A comment, when vague, may be assigned to more than one category
- All categories from the first round were regrouped to combine similar topics. Splashville's original categories had three different topics. The second round regroups these three as one category "Splashville". Likewise with any topics that involved maintenance, ball sports fields, rec hall, programming and so forth.
- In the first chart, the top comments were related to bathroom additions, improvements, and maintenance. 2nd highest scoring was field and grass area maintenance. 3rd highest ranging was playground improvements, additions and maintenance
- In the second chart where the groupings were broader, Maintenance scored the highest by far. 2nd highest was bathroom additions, improvements and maintenance. 3rd highest was field and lawn maintenance.
- Notable in the rankings was the high number of comments on the category stickers and ants
- It is apparent that most votes are about City Park, Very few comments otherwise
- The largest takeaway seems to be for the City to add multiple staff positions at the ground keep level to increase the level of maintenance overall

Q12: If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?  
Chart #1

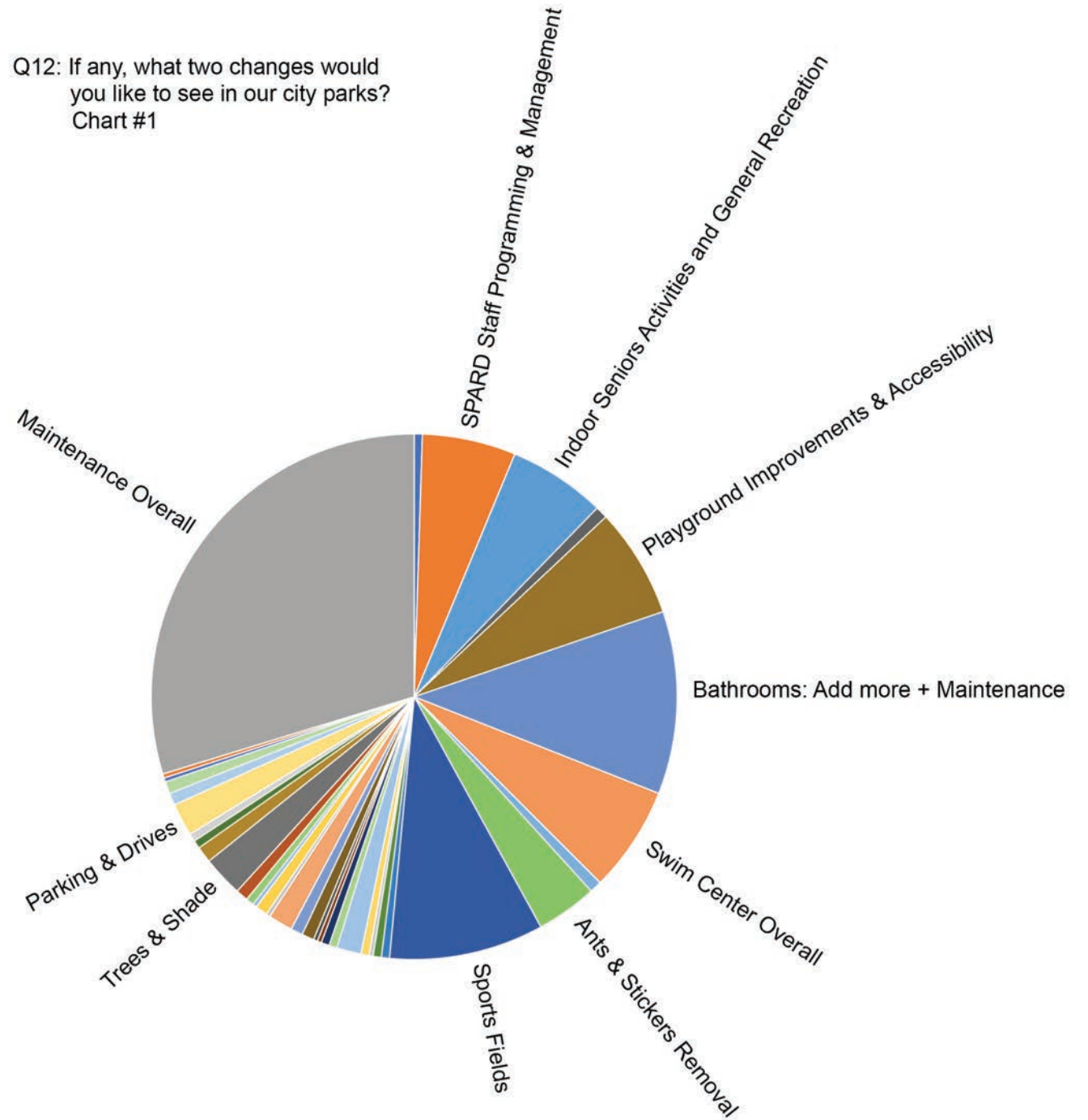


Q12: If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?

Chart #2, Broad Grouping Chart

Chart #2 Top Scoring Favorite Existing Features			
Top Ten	Feature	Vote Ct	% Total
1	Overall Maintenance	119	30%
2	Bathrooms; Add More and Increase Maintenance	45	11%
3	Sports Fields	38	10%
4	Playground Improvements and accessibility	27	7%
5	Swim Center Overall	26	7%
6	Indoor Senior activities and recreation	24	6%
7	SPARD, Staff Programming & Management	23	6%
8	Ants and Stickers Removal	15	4%
9	Trees and shade	10	3%
10	Parking and Drives Repair	8	2%

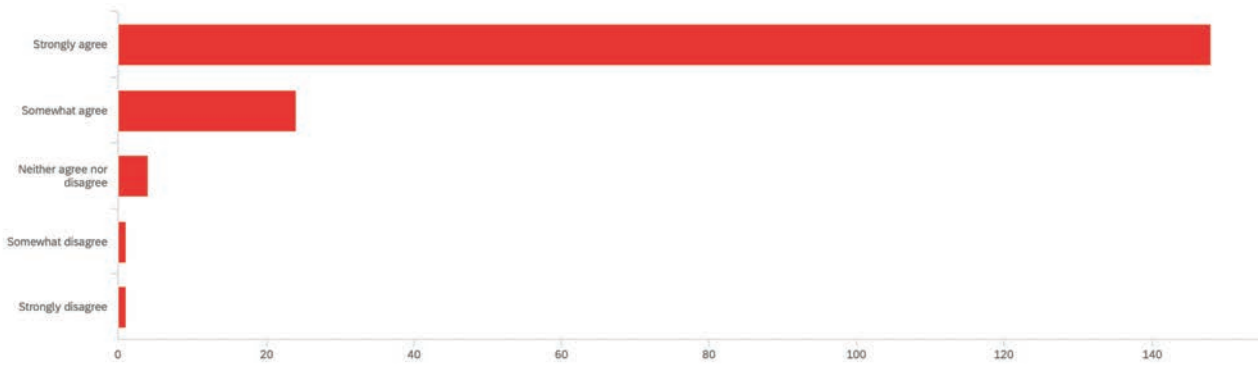
Q12: If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?  
Chart #1





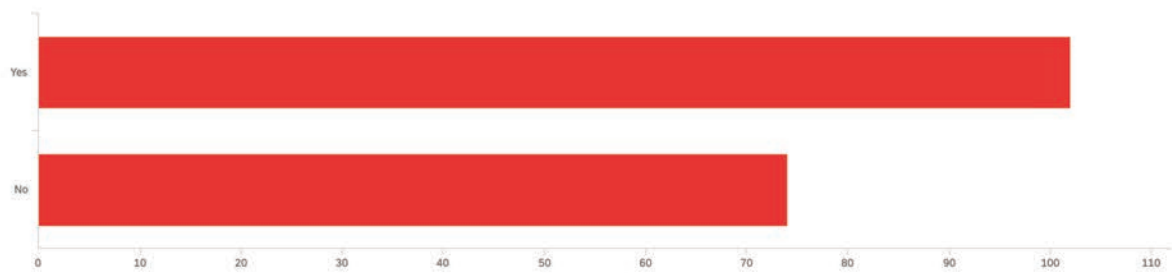
Q14 - Please indicate how strongly you feel about the following statement:

Parks and Recreation facilities and programs are important to the quality of life in Stephenville, Texas.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Strongly agree	83.15% 148
2	Somewhat agree	13.48% 24
3	Neither agree nor disagree	2.25% 4
4	Somewhat disagree	0.56% 1
5	Strongly disagree	0.56% 1
		178

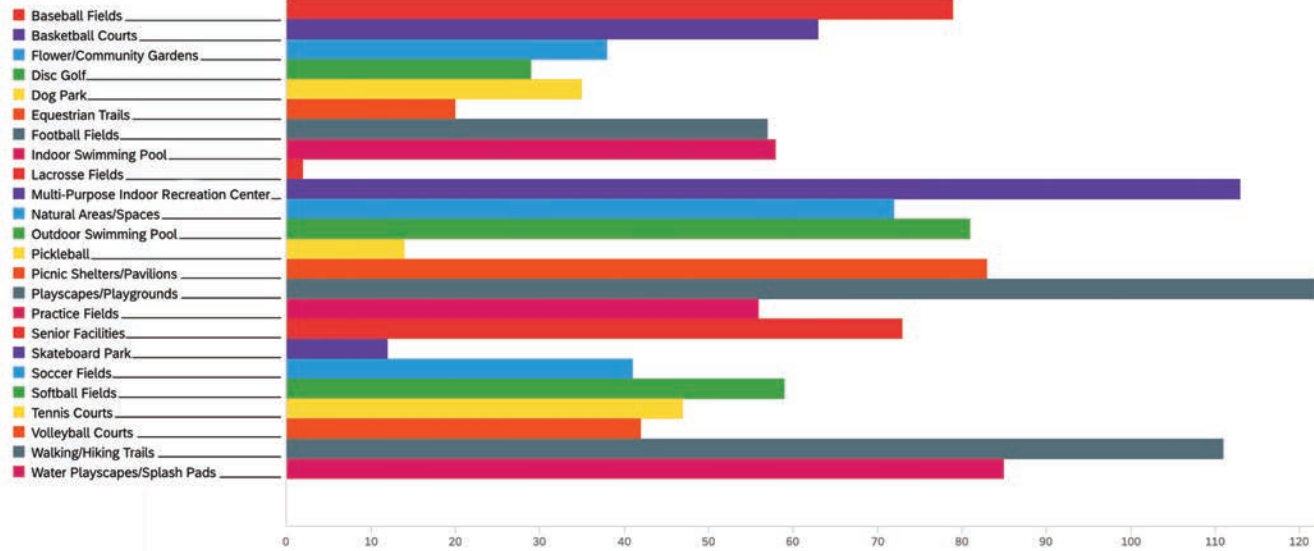
Q15 - Currently, do our facilities meet your needs?



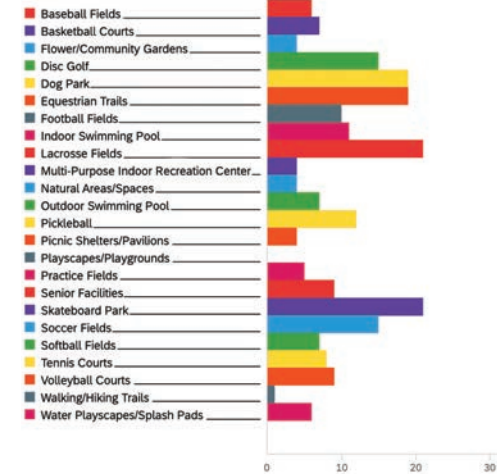
#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	57.95% 102
2	No	42.05% 74
		176

Q17 - Please indicate the importance of the following facilities in both existing and future parks/facilities:

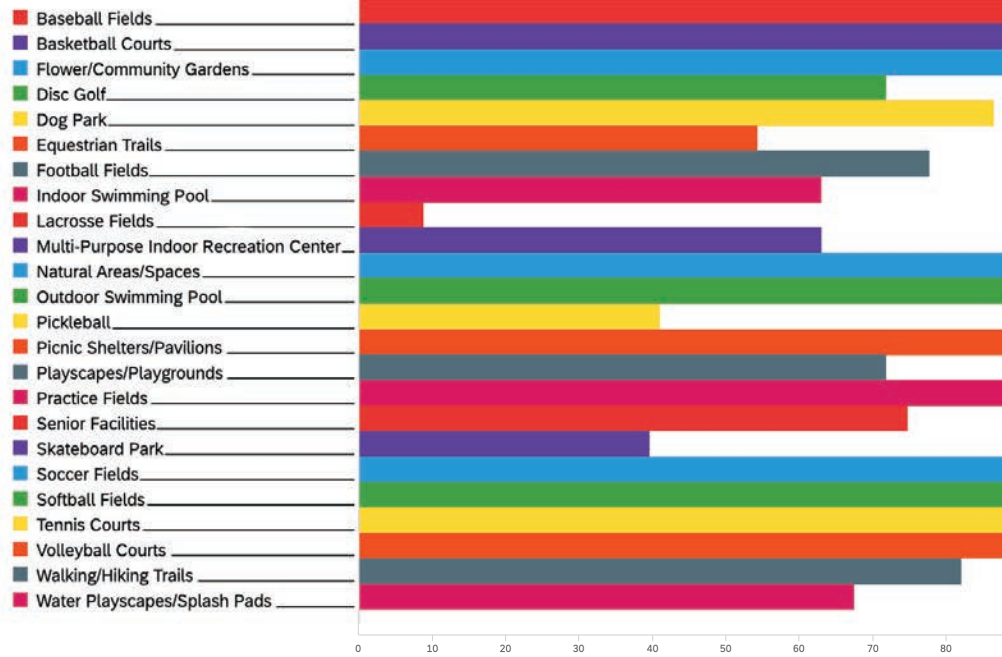
**Extremely Important**



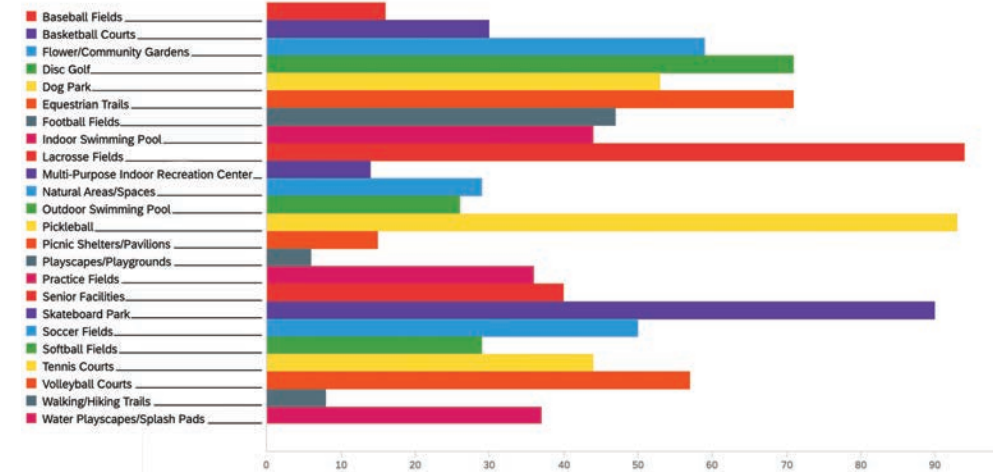
**Slightly Important**

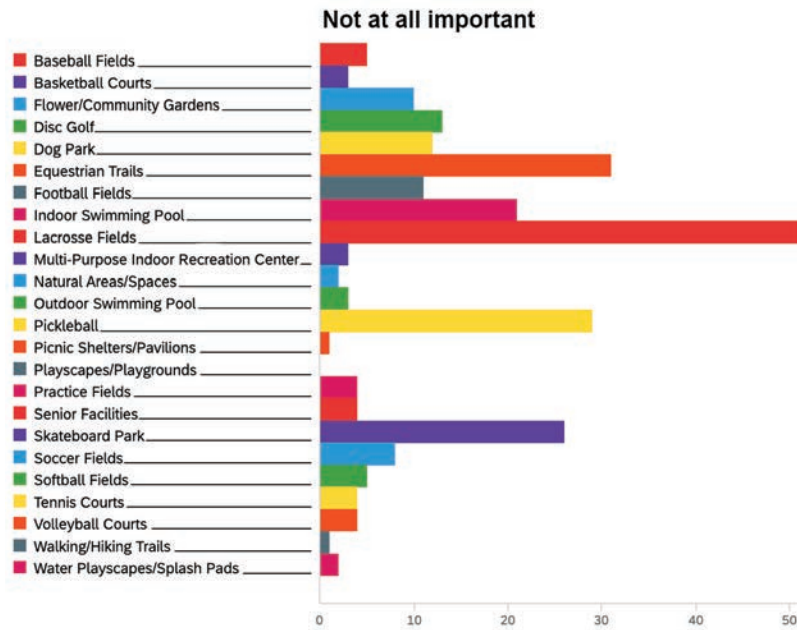


**Very Important**



**Neutral**





#	Field	Extremely important	Very important	Neutral	Slightly important	Not at all important	Total
1	Baseball Fields	44.38% 79	40.45% 72	8.99% 16	3.37% 6	2.81% 5	178
2	Basketball Courts	35.80% 63	41.48% 73	17.05% 30	3.98% 7	1.70% 3	176
3	Flower/Community Gardens	21.35% 38	37.64% 67	33.15% 59	2.25% 4	5.62% 10	178
4	Disc Golf	16.38% 29	27.68% 49	40.11% 71	8.47% 15	7.34% 13	177
5	Dog Park	19.66% 35	33.15% 59	29.78% 53	10.67% 19	6.74% 12	178
6	Equestrian Trails	11.24% 20	20.79% 37	39.89% 71	10.67% 19	17.42% 31	178
7	Football Fields	32.02% 57	29.78% 53	26.40% 47	5.62% 10	6.18% 11	178
8	Indoor Swimming Pool	32.77% 58	24.29% 43	24.86% 44	6.21% 11	11.86% 21	177
9	Lacrosse Fields	1.13% 2	3.39% 6	53.11% 94	11.86% 21	30.51% 54	177
10	Multi-Purpose Indoor Recreation Center	63.84% 113	24.29% 43	7.91% 14	2.26% 4	1.69% 3	177
11	Natural Areas/Spaces	40.68% 72	39.55% 70	16.38% 29	2.26% 4	1.13% 2	177
12	Outdoor Swimming Pool	45.76% 81	33.90% 60	14.69% 26	3.95% 7	1.69% 3	177
13	Pickleball	7.95% 14	15.91% 28	52.84% 93	6.82% 12	16.48% 29	176
14	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions	46.89% 83	41.81% 74	8.47% 15	2.26% 4	0.56% 1	177
15	Playscapes/Playgrounds	68.93% 122	27.68% 49	3.39% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	177
16	Practice Fields	32.00% 56	42.29% 74	20.57% 36	2.86% 5	2.29% 4	175
17	Senior Facilities	41.24% 73	28.81% 51	22.60% 40	5.08% 9	2.26% 4	177
18	Skateboard Park	6.82% 12	15.34% 27	51.14% 90	11.93% 21	14.77% 26	176
19	Soccer Fields	23.03% 41	35.96% 64	28.09% 50	8.43% 15	4.49% 8	178
20	Softball Fields	33.15% 59	43.82% 78	16.29% 29	3.93% 7	2.81% 5	178
21	Tennis Courts	26.40% 47	42.13% 75	24.72% 44	4.49% 8	2.25% 4	178
22	Volleyball Courts	23.73% 42	36.72% 65	32.20% 57	5.08% 9	2.26% 4	177
23	Walking/Hiking Trails	62.71% 111	31.64% 56	4.52% 8	0.56% 1	0.56% 1	177
24	Water Playscapes/Splash Pads	48.30% 85	26.14% 46	21.02% 37	3.41% 6	1.14% 2	176

Q17 Top Rankings

Q17: Please indicate the importance of the following facilities in both existing and future parks / facilities							
Responses as extremely important				Responses as combined Extremely important + very important			
1	Playgrounds / Playscapes			1	Playgrounds / Playscapes		
2	Multi-Purpose Indoor Recreation Center			2	Walking / Hiking Trails		
3	Walking / Hiking Trails			3	Picnic Shelters / Pavilions		
4	Water Playscapes / Splash Pads			4	Multi-Purpose Indoor Recreation Center		
5	Picnic Shelters / Pavilions			5	Baseball Fields		
6	Outdoor Swimming Pool			6	Natural Areas / Spaces		
7	Baseball Fields			7	Outdoor Swimming Pool		
8	Senior Facilities			8	Basketball Courts		
9	Natural Areas / Spaces			9	Water Playscapes / Splash Pads		
10	Basketball Courts			10	Senior Facilities		
11	Softball Fields			11	Softball Fields		
12	Indoor Swimming Pool			12	Practice Fields		
13	Football Fields			13	Tennis Courts		
14	Practice Fields			14	Football Fields		
15	Tennis Courts			15	Volleyball Courts		
16	Volleyball Courts			16	Soccer Fields		
17	Soccer Fields			17	Flower / Community Gardens		
18	Flower / Community Gardens			18	Indoor Swimming Pool		
19	Dog Park			19	Dog Park		
20	Disc Golf			20	Disc Golf		
21	Equestrian Trails			21	Equestrian Trails		
22	Pickleball			22	Pickleball		
23	Skateboard Park			23	Skateboard Park		
24	Lacrosse Fields			24	Lacrosse Fields		

<b>Q18: Please list and describe any facilities NOT previously listed in the survey:</b>
Well maintained restrooms for kids and adults alike. Community garden where people can help tend plants and gather food, maybe classes on how to grow your own at home.
None
Finish park on the trail
None
Accessible facilities & play spaces
Better signage on the trail
More trees
Indoor volleyball
Bathrooms!!
Something not mentioned is the beautification of the park. The landscaping is ugly and full of stickers. You can't take your pets or your kids in the grassy areas without coming back full of stickers.
restrooms
Indoor roller skating, like 80's style none of the online blades -4 wheels
Horseshoes, table tennis
Improvements to fishing area
Rachet hall court
Parking
River activities and clean up
Family activities
Concert/festival type areas
N/A

We need soccer fields!!!
Picnic pavilion closer to the baseball field would be a great addition for people who want to use that area of the park, especially during games. One near NYC fields and one nearer to the T-ball fields. And make them covered!
Upgraded Summer Camp Rec Hall
Maybe look at how Comanche city park is...my kids prefer that park over s'ville park about 90%
Please please please fix the trail system where it's gravel. Wheelchairs can no longer access this!

The list below is a response to Q19 listed on the next pages:

<b>Q20: Please list and describe any programs / activities not previously listed in the survey</b>
Please list and describe any programs/activities NOT previously listed in the survey:
Needlework classes
None
Birdwatching, arts&crafts
None
Indoor volleyball
Equestrian trails
Tackle football for youth
Indoor activities for the summer heat
We can make a ymca type deal like the have in rocksprings wyoming. Look it up, it's fantastic!
Rodeo
?
Festival type
Homeschool classes would be amazing and benefit the homeschool community so much! There is not much offered to us and there is a growing amount of homeschool families here!
A memorial tree program like granbury has would be nice
Not applicable
Cheer
Soccer for rec is much needed!

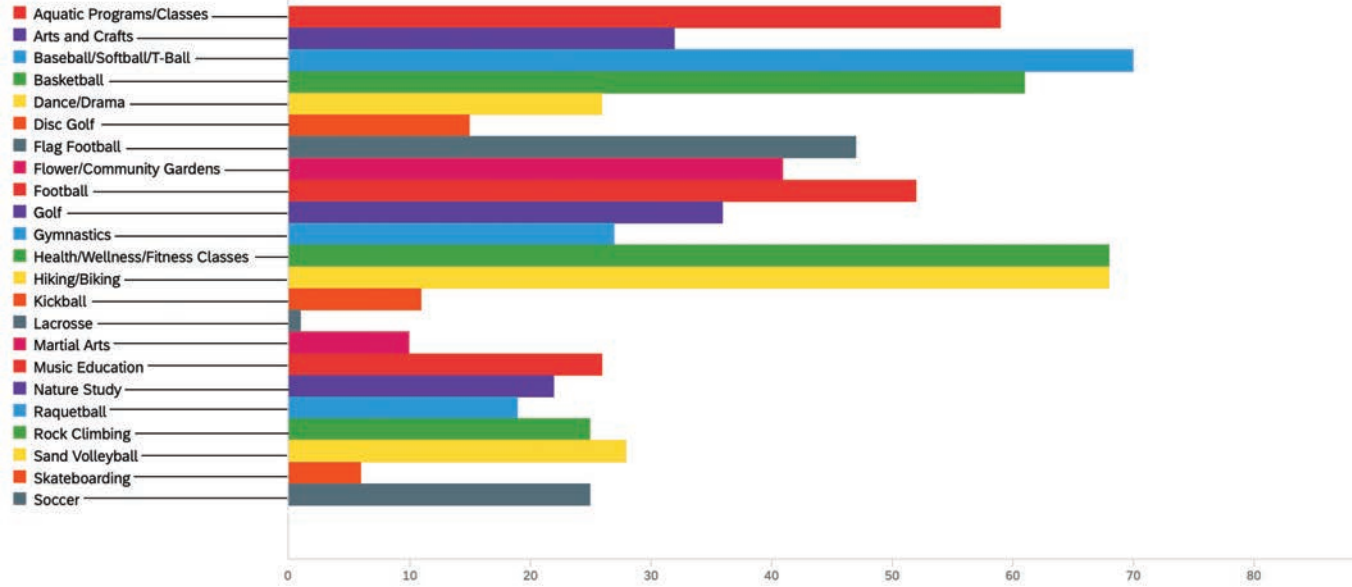
Q19: In your current household, please indicate the level of interest in the following programs / activities

Q19: In your current household, please indicate the level of interest in the following programs / activities							
Responses as extremely important				Responses as combined extremely important + very important			
Rank			votes	Rank			votes
1	Baseball softball Tball		70	1	Health/wellness fitness		135
2	Health wellness fitness cl		68	2	Hiking Biking		123
3	Hiking biking		68	3	Aquatics program classes		116
4	Basketball		61	4	Baseball Softball Tball		105
5	Aquatics program classes		59	5	Basketball		95
6	Football		52	6	Arts and Crafts		94
7	Flag Football		47	7	Flower Community Garde		86
8	Flower/community Garde		41	8	Football		84
9	Golf		36	9	Flag Football		77
10	Arts and crafts		32	10	Sand Volleyball + Gymnas		73
							73
11	Sand Volleyball		28	11	Rock Climbing		72
12	Gymnastics		27	12	Nature Study		71
13	Dance Drama		26	13	Music Education		69
14	Music Education		26	14	Golf		67
15	Rock Climbing		25	15	Dance Drama		66
16	Soccer		25	16	Soccer		56
17	Nature Study		22	17	Raquetball		47
18	Raquetball		19	18	Martial Arts		43
19	Disc Golf		15	19	Kickball		42
20	Kickball		11	20	Disc Golf		40
21	Martial Arts		10	21	Skate Boarding		19
22	Skateboarding		6	22	Lacrosse		8
23	Lacrosse		1				

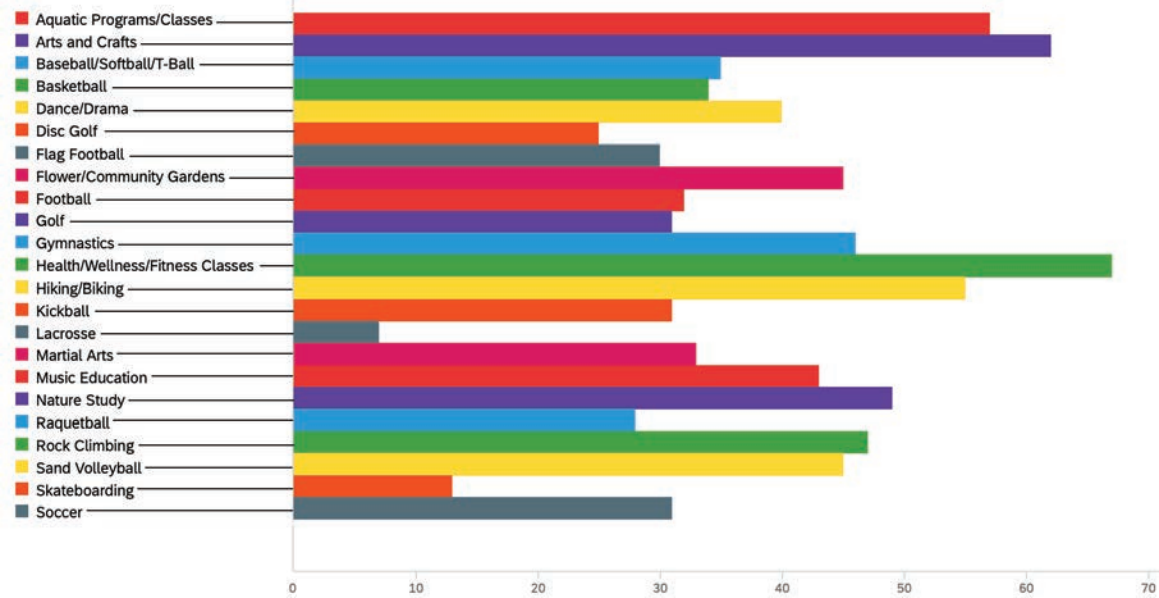
#	Field	Extremely interested	Very interested	Netural	Slightly interested	Not interested at all	Total
1	Aquatic Programs/Classes	33.52% 59	32.39% 57	20.45% 36	6.25% 11	7.39% 13	176
2	Arts and Crafts	18.18% 32	35.23% 62	30.68% 54	8.52% 15	7.39% 13	176
3	Baseball/Softball/T-Ball	39.77% 70	19.89% 35	18.75% 33	5.11% 9	16.48% 29	176
4	Basketball	35.06% 61	19.54% 34	22.41% 39	7.47% 13	15.52% 27	174
5	Dance/Drama	14.94% 26	22.99% 40	38.51% 67	10.92% 19	12.64% 22	174
6	Disc Golf	8.57% 15	14.29% 25	32.00% 56	8.57% 15	36.57% 64	175
7	Flag Football	26.86% 47	17.14% 30	27.43% 48	6.86% 12	21.71% 38	175
8	Flower/Community Gardens	23.43% 41	25.71% 45	32.00% 56	7.43% 13	11.43% 20	175
9	Football	29.71% 52	18.29% 32	26.86% 47	6.86% 12	18.29% 32	175
10	Golf	20.69% 36	17.82% 31	32.18% 56	3.45% 6	25.86% 45	174
11	Gymnastics	15.43% 27	26.29% 46	32.00% 56	8.00% 14	18.29% 32	175
12	Health/Wellness/Fitness Classes	38.64% 68	38.07% 67	13.64% 24	4.55% 8	5.11% 9	176
13	Hiking/Biking	38.64% 68	31.25% 55	20.45% 36	5.11% 9	4.55% 8	176
14	Kickball	6.25% 11	17.61% 31	40.91% 72	13.07% 23	22.16% 39	176
15	Lacrosse	0.57% 1	4.00% 7	36.00% 63	6.29% 11	53.14% 93	175
16	Martial Arts	5.71% 10	18.86% 33	37.14% 65	9.14% 16	29.14% 51	175
17	Music Education	14.86% 26	24.57% 43	33.14% 58	8.00% 14	19.43% 34	175
18	Nature Study	12.57% 22	28.00% 49	31.43% 55	8.57% 15	19.43% 34	175
19	Raquetball	10.86% 19	16.00% 28	34.86% 61	6.29% 11	32.00% 56	175
20	Rock Climbing	14.20% 25	26.70% 47	29.55% 52	11.36% 20	18.18% 32	176
21	Sand Volleyball	15.91% 28	25.57% 45	27.27% 48	11.93% 21	19.32% 34	176
22	Skateboarding	3.41% 6	7.39% 13	29.55% 52	14.20% 25	45.45% 80	176
23	Soccer	14.37% 25	17.82% 31	31.61% 55	11.49% 20	24.71% 43	174

Q19 - In your current household, please indicate the level of interest in the following programs/activities:

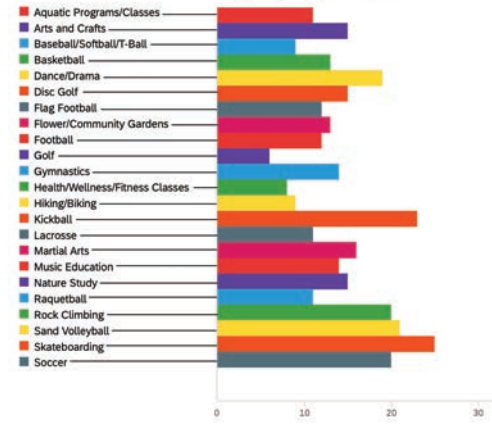
### Extremely Important



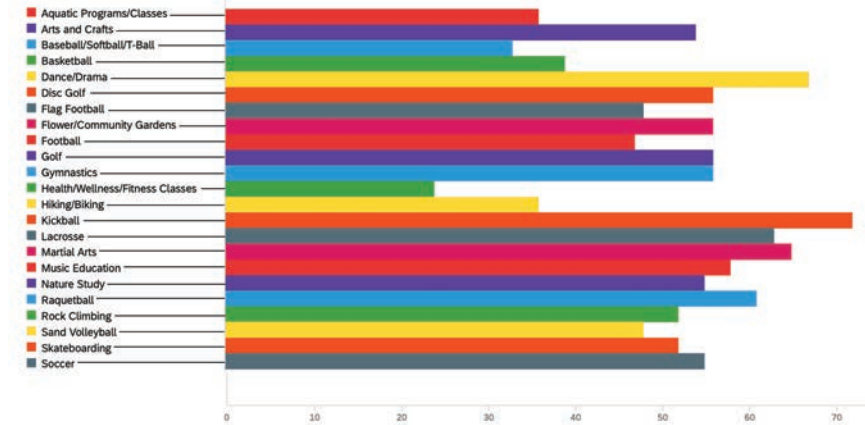
### Very Important



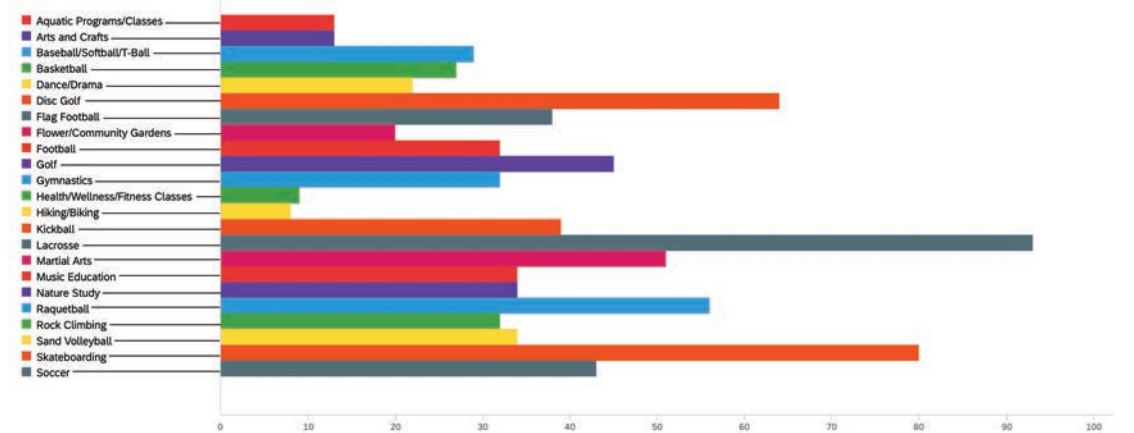
### Slightly Important



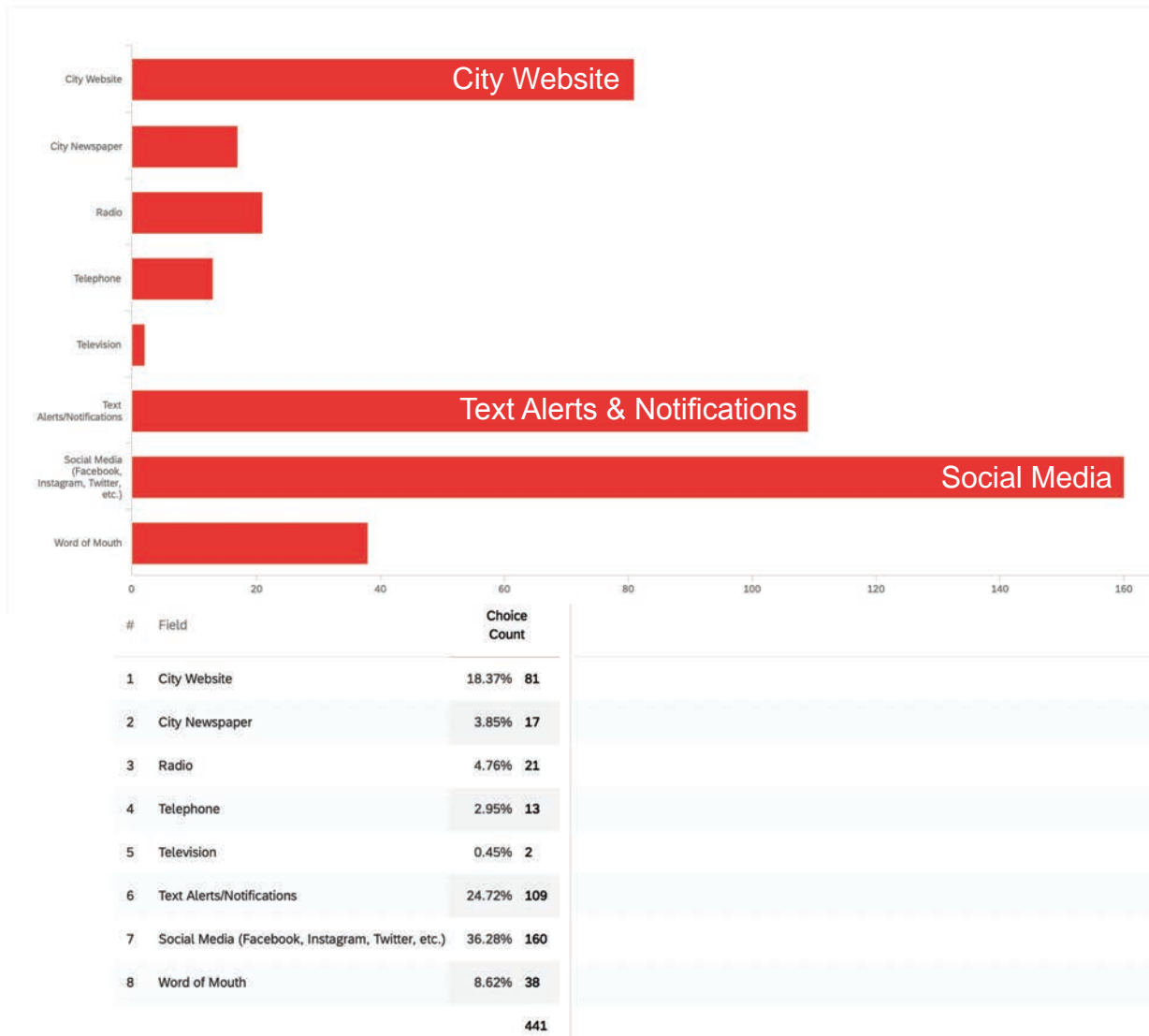
### Neutral



### Not Important

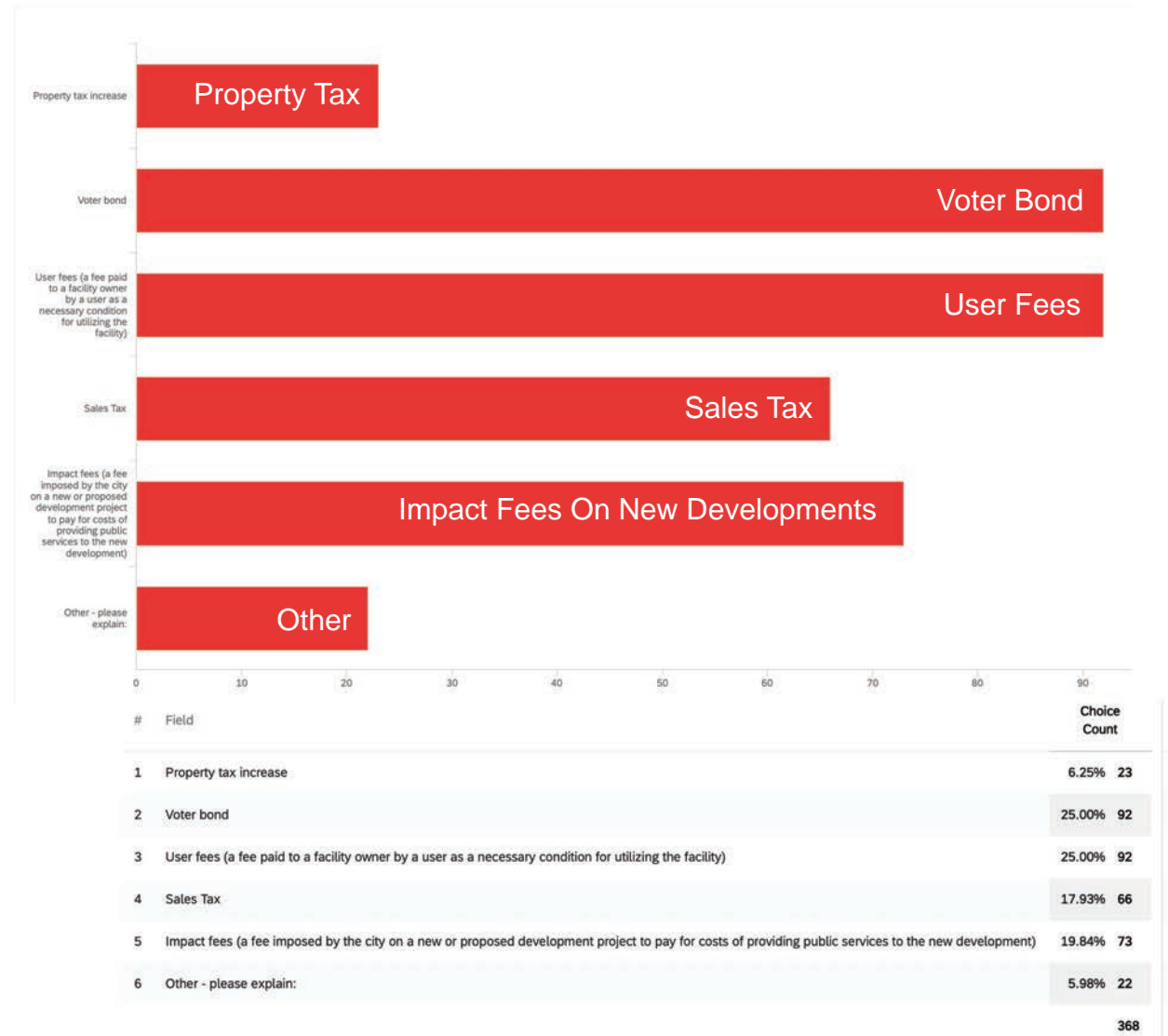


Q21 - Which of the following communication outlets do you most prefer? Please select all that apply.



Many residents may not be literate about technological methods to access information. Among the top three, it should also be a standard to include information in the local new papers even if most people are not calling for that method. Again as discussed in the beginning of the survey results, Seniors may be challenged in this manner being outnumbered in population and as respondents to this survey

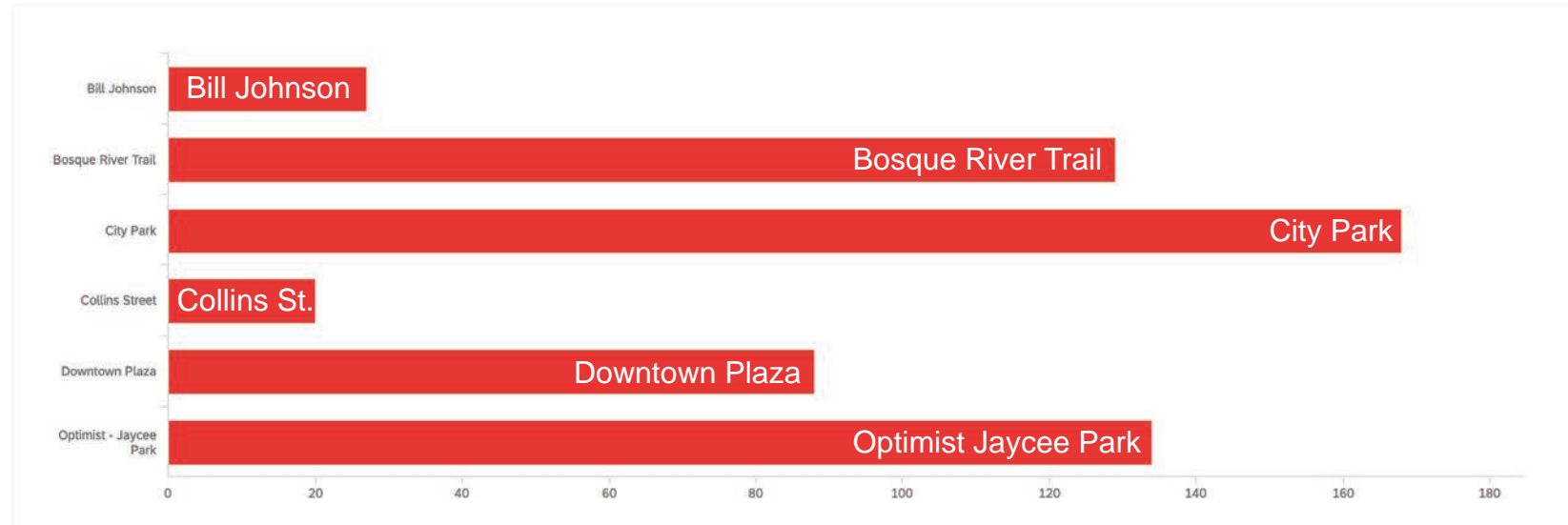
Q22 - Please select two or more funding methods to develop new and improve current public parks and recreation facilities:



Discussed in other sections of the report is the updating and revision to the subdivision ordinance by adjusting the parkland dedication fees to a higher rate, and adding parkland development fees to assist in funding parkland development. The additional adjustment will be to update the requirements for the land that would be dedicated to the City so that awkward or difficult land and only floodplain is not what the City is left with. Grants also have not been addressed in this question.



Q23 - Which of the following parks have you visited in the past year? Select all that apply.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Bill Johnson	4.77% 27
2	Bosque River Trail	22.79% 129
3	City Park	29.68% 168
4	Collins Street	3.53% 20
5	Downtown Plaza	15.55% 88
6	Optimist - Jaycee Park	23.67% 134
		566

No real surprise here that City Park takes the lead in this survey followed closely by the Bosque River Trail and Collins Street Park. Missing due to not being developed are Creekside on Lingleville, Elk Ridge, Prairie Wind, and Clifton Heights. These are tracts of land on the books as being parks but have never been developed.

The prominence of the three highest ranking are all included in this plan with significant upgrades in the future. City Park and an adhoc committee will be investigating whether this park can be the sports complex to encourage tournaments or if a new sports complex is to be developed. Optimist has a plan for great improvements, and the Bosque Trail slated for expansion.

**Q24: Do you visit Splashville in the Summer?**



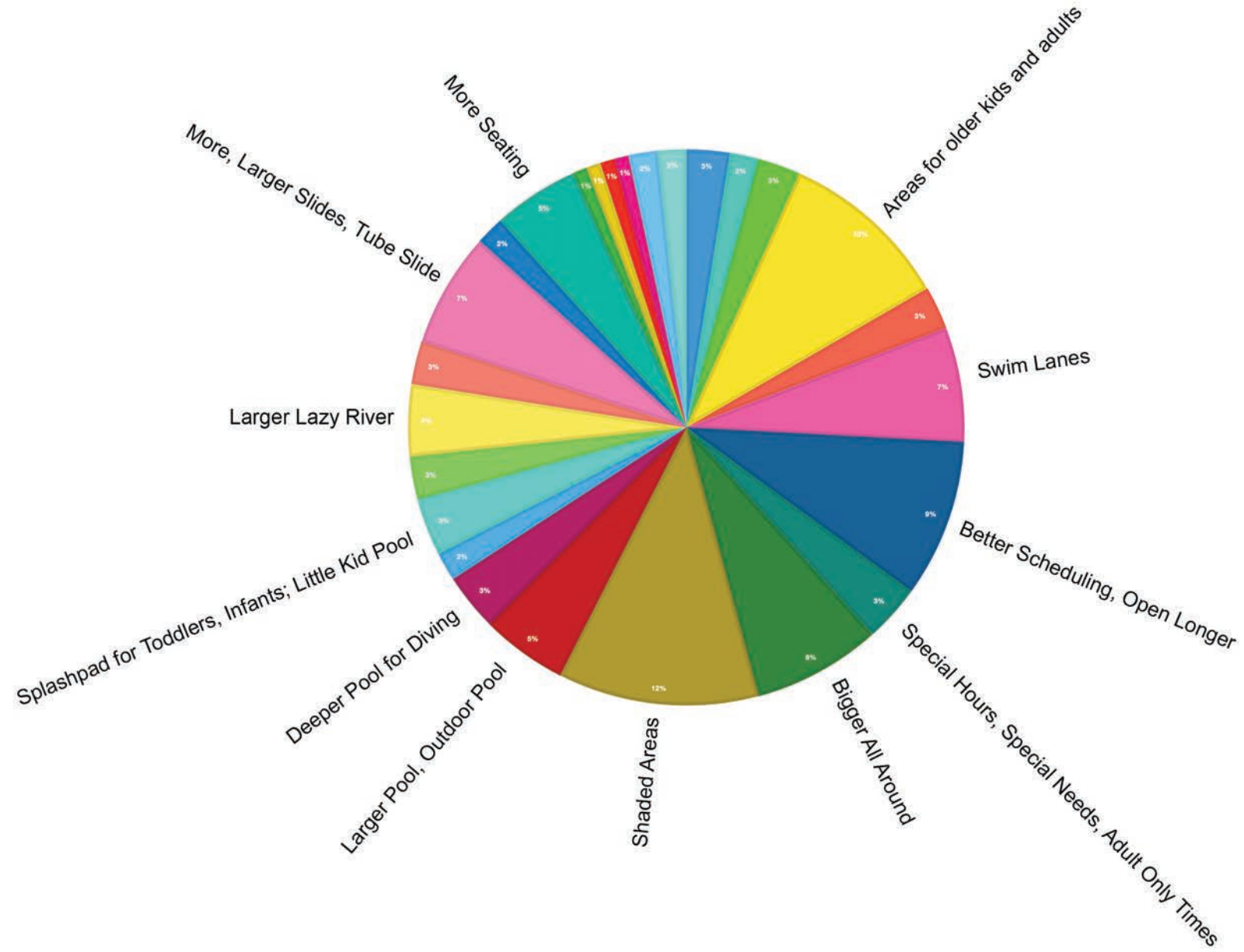
With the question of visiting Splashville in the Summer, I have seen multiple times throughout the survey and discussions that operating times were shortened due to not having enough lifeguards. The survey identifies several issues in these two questions.

**Q25: If any, what amenities would you like to see added to Splashville?**

Generally speaking, most everybody that responded to the survey enjoys Splashville. Certainly a great investment for the community. It appears by the comments that the respondents just want more of everything. The question Q25 does ask that question and the responses complied with a long list of needs, mostly more and better. Notable was the request for special needs children, activities for teens, more for adults including a larger pool, adult time and swim lanes. Shade and seating also scored well. Two replies; request for an unpaved hiking trail and a senior center were marked as none.

Rank	Vote #	Element
1	14	Shaded Areas
2	12	Areas for older Kids, adults, adult areas
3	11	Better Scheduling, Open More , Longer Season
4	9	Bigger all around
5	8	Swim Lanes
6	8	More, Larger Slides, Tube Slides
7	6	More Seating
8	6	Larger Pool, Outdoor Pool
9	5	Larger Lazy River
10	4	Special Hours Special Needs; Adult Only Times
11	4	Deeper Pool, Diving
12	4	Splashpad for Toddlers, Infants; Little Kid Pool
13	3	None
14	3	Better food; Concessions
15	3	Wave Pool; Surf Simulator
16	3	Larger, More Splashpads
17	3	Better Maintenance
18	2	More Special Needs Children Activities and spaces
19	2	Bathrooms
20	2	Improved Lifeguards *see notes
21	2	Heated Pool, Splashpad
22	2	More Floats; Younger Age Floats
23	1	Indoor Pool
24	1	Beach Volleyball
25	1	Adult Classes
26	1	Allow Goggles and Snorkels

**Q25: If any, what amenities would you like to see added to Splashville?**

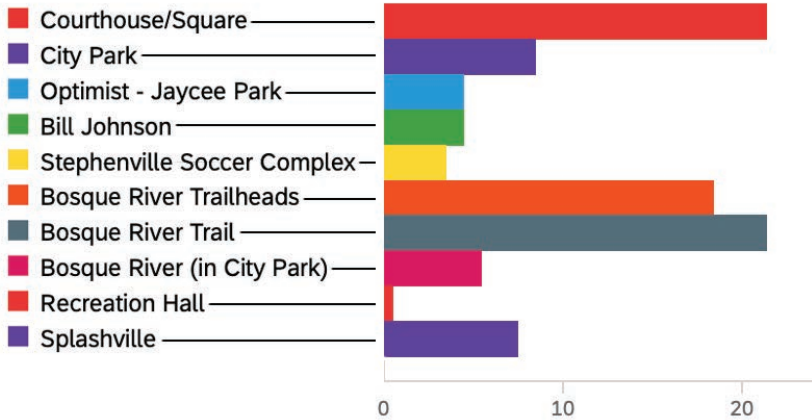


To the left is the pie chart that demonstrates the top 12 elements requested to be added or changed to SPLashville. There was a three way tie for the number 10 spot with special needs activities and spaces, deeper pool for diving, and splashpad for toddlers, infants, and a small child pool.

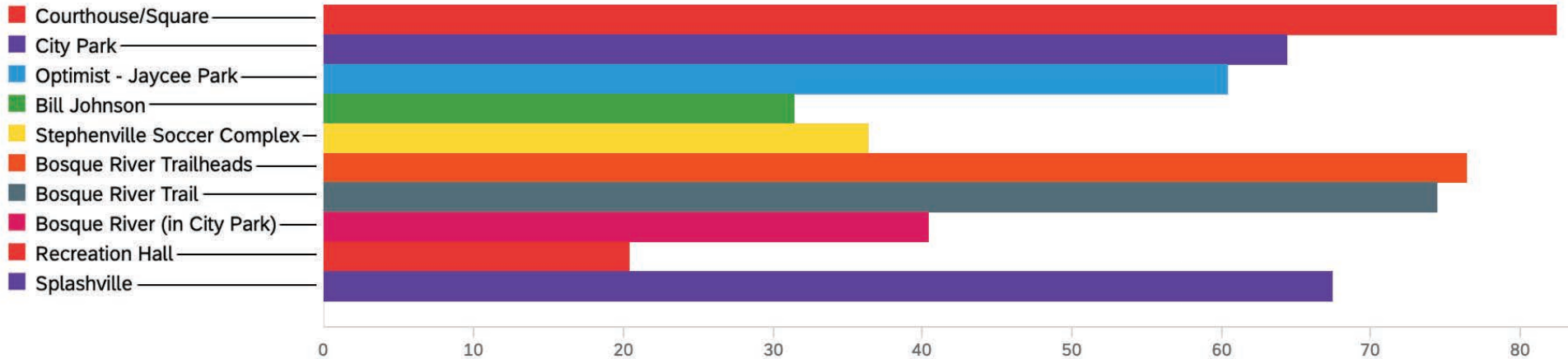
**Q26: Please rate the condition of the following facilities in Stephenville**

The condition of the various parks are a good indicator of staffing and priorities but also awareness of the different parks to begin with. Excellence should be the goal of all parks but staffing along may not be the total solution. Many cities conduct annual or bi-annual cleanup or work days in parks. Many parks have friends groups that pick up the slack on park work with landscaping and trash removal. These volunteer activities need nurturing to

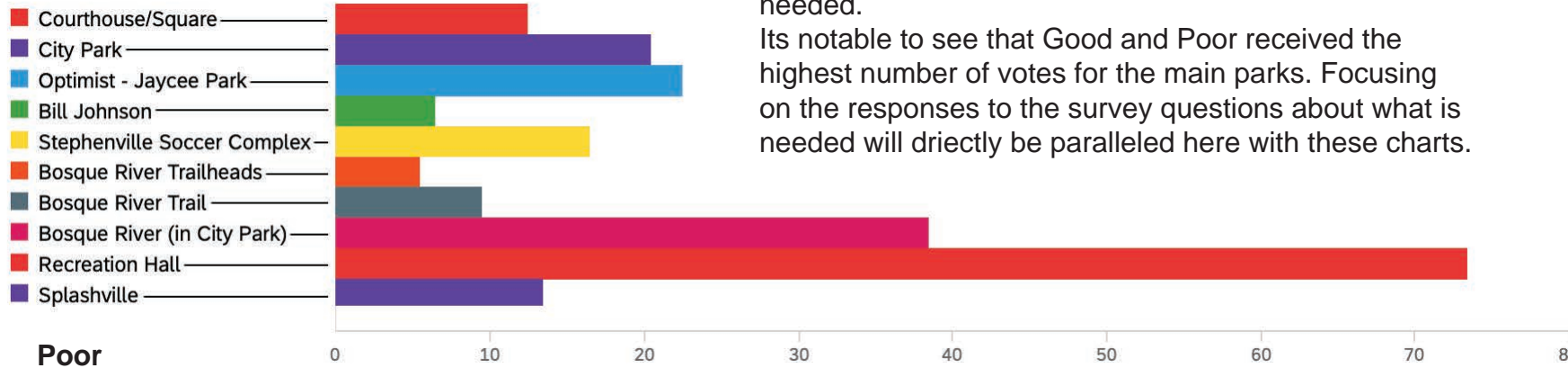
**Excellent**



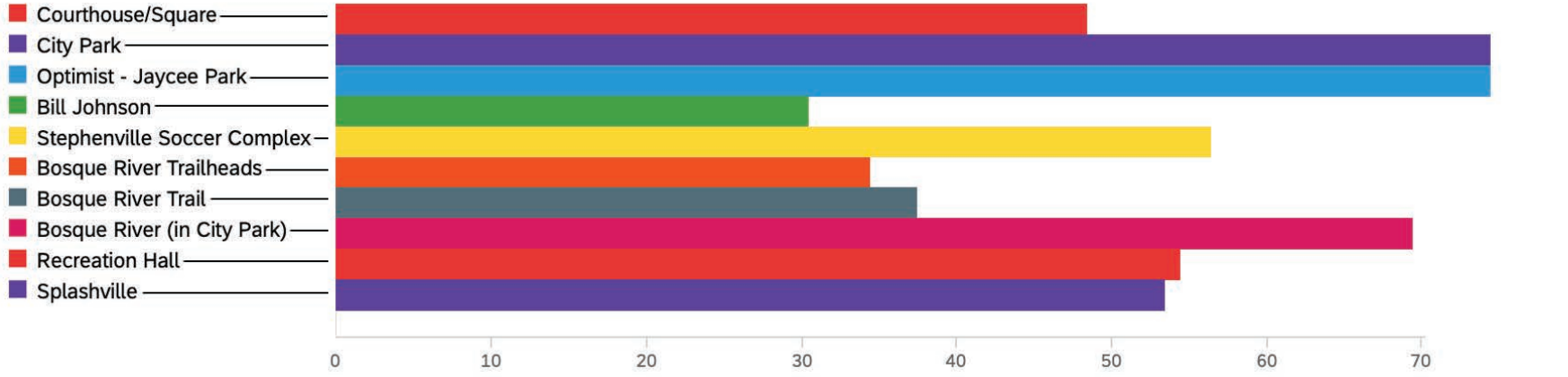
**Good**



**Fair**



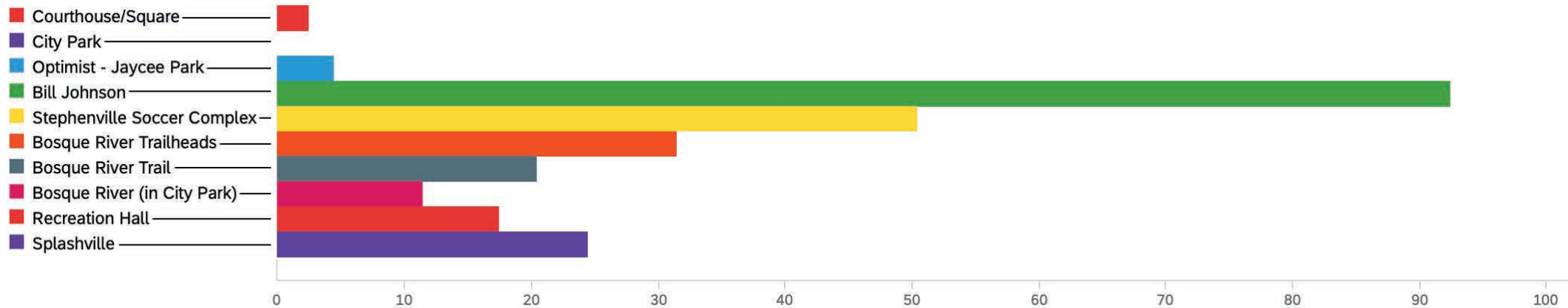
**Poor**



enable the parks staff to do those work elements most needed. Its notable to see that Good and Poor received the highest number of votes for the main parks. Focusing on the responses to the survey questions about what is needed will directly be paralleled here with these charts.

#	Field	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unfamiliar	Total
1	Courthouse/Square	12.94% 22	48.82% 83	28.82% 49	7.65% 13	1.76% 3	170
2	City Park	5.29% 9	38.24% 65	44.12% 75	12.35% 21	0.00% 0	170
3	Optimist - Jaycee Park	2.96% 5	36.09% 61	44.38% 75	13.61% 23	2.96% 5	169
4	Bill Johnson	2.98% 5	19.05% 32	18.45% 31	4.17% 7	55.36% 93	168
5	Stephenville Soccer Complex	2.41% 4	22.29% 37	34.34% 57	10.24% 17	30.72% 51	166
6	Bosque River Trailheads	11.24% 19	45.56% 77	20.71% 35	3.55% 6	18.93% 32	169
7	Bosque River Trail	13.25% 22	45.18% 75	22.89% 38	6.02% 10	12.65% 21	166
8	Bosque River (in City Park)	3.57% 6	24.40% 41	41.67% 70	23.21% 39	7.14% 12	168
9	Recreation Hall	0.59% 1	12.43% 21	32.54% 55	43.79% 74	10.65% 18	169
10	Splashville	4.73% 8	40.24% 68	31.95% 54	8.28% 14	14.79% 25	169

### Unfamiliar

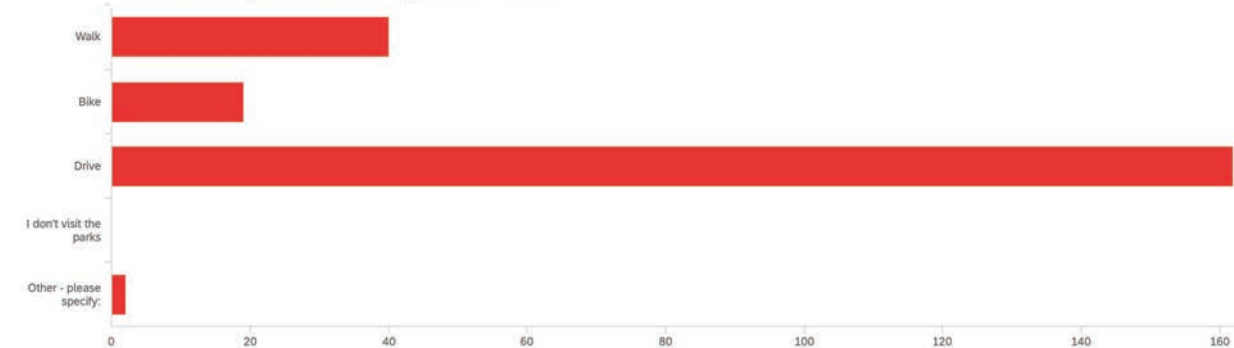


Q27 - What kind of Cultural Heritage amenities or events would you most likely attend?



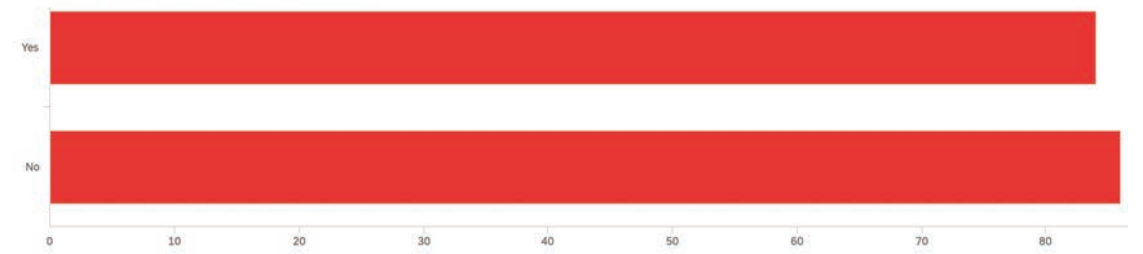
#	Field	Choice Count
1	History and heritage museums	30.13% 72
2	Fine arts galleries/museums	23.43% 56
3	Performing arts (theater, dance, music)	44.77% 107
4	Other - please specify:	1.67% 4
5	Rodeo Museum	239

Q28 - How do you travel to our parks or facilities?



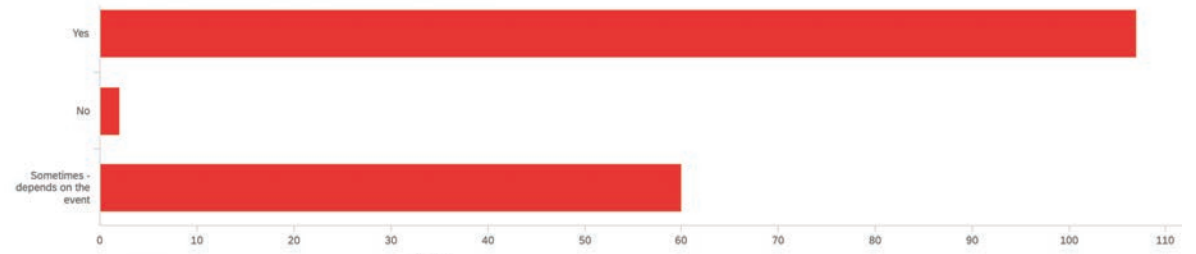
#	Field	Choice Count
1	Walk	17.94% 40
2	Bike	8.52% 19
3	Drive	72.65% 162
4	I don't visit the parks	0.00% 0
5	Other - please specify:	0.90% 2
		223

Q29 - Do you ride a bike for pleasure?



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	49.41% 84
2	No	50.59% 86
		170

Q30 - Do you attend local events and festivals?



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	63.31% 107
2	No	1.18% 2
3	Sometimes - depends on the event	35.50% 60
		169

<b>Q31: Please indicate any special events you would like to see offered in our community:</b>
Teen Nights. Events geared towards low income families so we can participate in fun things without worrying about what's in the bank.
Bigger wine walk, better shops downtown
More concerts, community dances, square dance
More events on the trail
Events for families
None
Disc golf tournaments
More concerts that aren't at bars, better line up for concert in the park summer series
Music on the square. Not just country music either. An actual farmers market with produce
Winter concert series
Gardening
Equestrian riding lessons/classes, agriculture and animal classes
After school program
Concerts on the lawn with different genres other than country
Hosting more sports tournaments here
Regular farmers markets.
Trade days charge vendor fees once monthly like weathorford first monday. Profitable
Plant sale/arts & crafts fair
4th of July event like it was 10+ years ago. More areas for kids and venders and food for adults
More after school programs that dont just involve rodeo
Haunted houses or festival for Halloween, hot air balloon festival, bigger farmers markets with more produce
N/A
Bring in more events like the ballon fest.
Better Christmas decorations- the park did a great job last year
None
Children's theater

**Q31: Events for Stephenville**

Everybody loves a festival! This is indicated a lot in this question's set of reponses. It appears that Stephenville has produced some events in the past that have been dropped over the years and the epople have spoken that they want to see these back and better than ever!

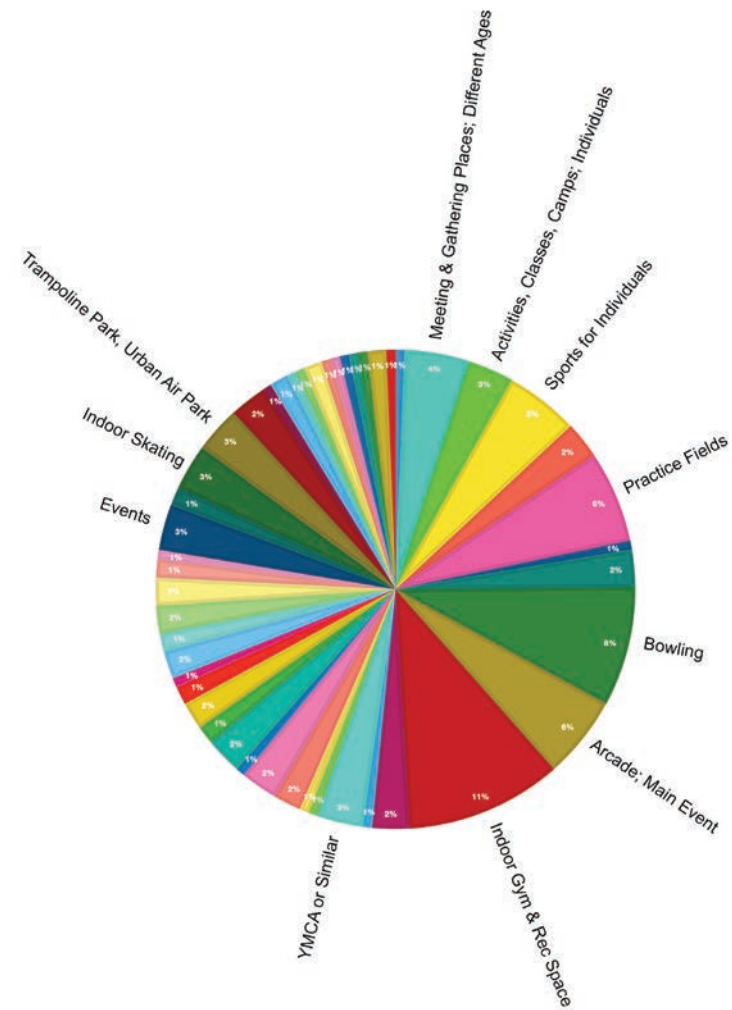
Looking closely at the list, 12 individual events can be teased out fo the overall list that could easily fit in one or more new large or even expanded event. Its a nice list to use when planning the next annual event!

Rodeo has not popped up much but its here on this list and on a previous list. Rodeo has a big history and heritage here and this should be supported and the existing events potentially embellished with a new festival to celebtrate this heritage.

Music diversification is spoken to on this list and has be discussed as well inthe Downtown Master Plan as well as in a section of this plan. There is a rich history that can be expanded on that will serve the community well.

**Q33: In your opinion, what type of facility / activities are most needed for kids, teens, and young adults?**

Ranking	Facility	Vote #
1	Indoor Gym & Rec Space	17
2	Bowling	13
3	Practice Fields	10
4	Arcade / Main Event	9
5	Sports for Individuals	8
6	Meeting & Gathering Spaces; Different Ages	7
7	Classes, Camps, Activities; Individuals	5
7	YMCA or Similar	5
7	Events	5
7	Trampoline Park / Urban Air Park	5
7	Indoor Skating Rink	5
8	Playgrounds Fenced	4
8	Miniture Golf	4
8	Free, Unrestricted Splashpad	4
8	Indoor Pool	4
8	Sand Volleyball	4
8	Sports Complex	4
9	Tennis / Pickleball	3
9	Rock Climbing	3
9	Social Dances	3
9	Outdoor Activities	3
9	Indoor Family Friendly	3



**Q33: In your opinion, what type of facility / activities are most needed for kids, teens, and young adults**

This question triggered a wide variety of responses and therefore the chart far left top section, and the pie chart shows the top rated features and the bottom chart section shows the remaining features that had at least 3 votes. There are plenty more ideas in the overall list with 2 or 1 votes and this list is in the appendices. This overall list is useful to review since grouping down for a better interpretation could be interpreted differently.

Topping the list without question was an indoor multifunctional facility that can be court sports, have gathering spaces, gym features, and could be inclusive of other activities less sports oriented such as billiards, pinball, etc. Separate meeting rooms can host classes and camp activities especially if there is quality outdoor space to accompany the building. The project could additionally serve for senior's activity spaces as well and scheduling to accommodate times for different groups to use.

A multipurpose building, or recreation gym has come up many times in conversations and within this survey and has floated to the top as a priority project for the City. The ultimate recommendation is to form an ad hoc committee to develop a strategic plan for design, land acquisition, funding, and construction.

To serve all the functions that are much needed, it could be a campus of two buildings with spaces outside joining them. Locating these next to the city trail would empower the function even further.

It should be noted that several of the items that have been identified are actually commercial activities that the Chamber of Commerce or SEDA could look into and market to. It was interesting to see Trampoline parks and Urban Air Parks as newer commercial activities and appears to offer great opportunities for kids to enjoy a tremendous range of physical activities coupled with the traditional arcade uses. Being the case. The survey interpretation kept these two separate as votes and so if reinterpreted by combining those votes would raise that ranking to 14 votes thereby coming in second place on the survey.



**Q35: In your opinion, what type of facility / activities are most needed for senior adults?**

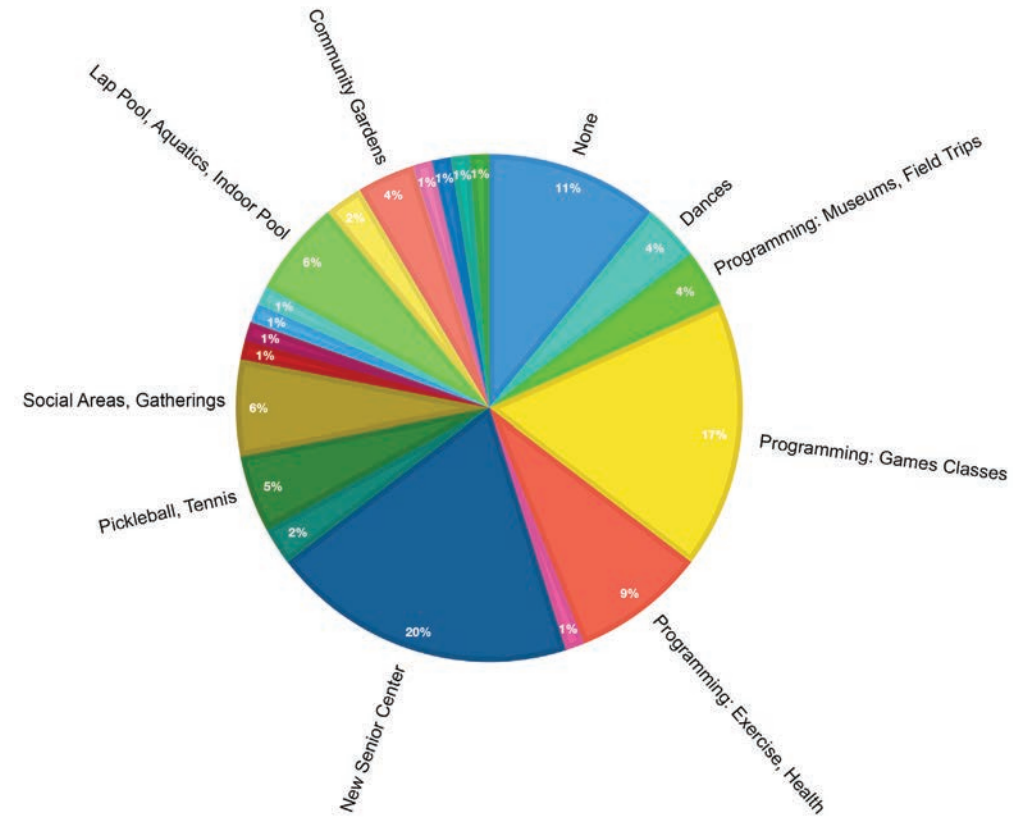
For question 35, it is pretty easy to guess how these responses might represent the sentiments of the population. Developing a new senior center topped the rankings with 16 votes out of the 50 responses to this question. If senior center was grouped with similar responses then the number goes higher.

In thinking about the question and the volume of responses, remember that the majority of responders to the survey are in the age group of 30-50, 31-40 being by far the greatest number of groupings on this survey.

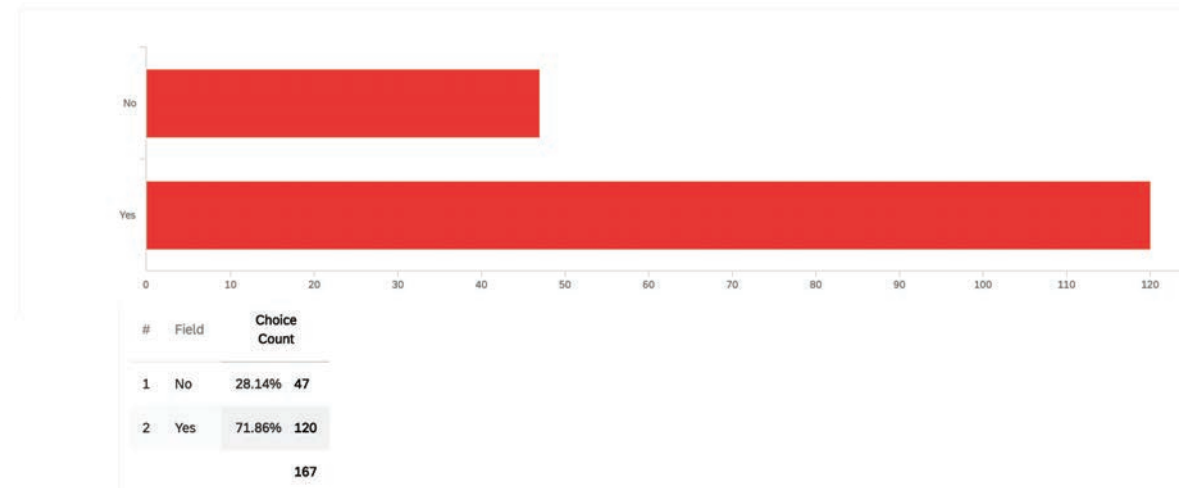
Ranking	Facility	Vote #
1	New Senior Center	16
2	Programming: Games, Classes	14
3	None	9
4	Programming; Exercise, Health	7
5	Social Areas, Gatherings	5
5	Lap Pool, Aquatics, Indoor pool	5
6	Pickleball, Tennis	4
4	Dances	3
4	Programming; Museums Field Trips	3
4	Community Gardens	3
	Sidewalks along roads	2
	Nature, Trails	2
	Staffing for Programs	1
	Bowling	1
	YMCA or Similar	1
	Outdoor activities	1
	Trail Lighting	1
	Volunteers, Companions	1
	Wellness Center	1
	Partnering, Volunteering Programs	1
	Shaded Tables	1

That being said, it's not a surprise that the response quantity was low. What was not anticipated was third place with an answer along the lines of "none". This could be interpreted a couple of different ways, first that the responder really didn't have a good idea of the needs for seniors. A more cynical potential was detractors not wanting tax dollars to go up or to be diverted from other large cost items on the survey.

The survey could be viewed from the aspect of active seniors versus seniors less active or impaired in one way or another. This should be taken into consideration. A senior center developed along the BOSque River Trail would be a bonus having great trees for shade, trail for walking and nature viewing and a center with games and activities. Pleasant summer nights could feature dances outside under the trees with nice lighting. The former site nearby the hospital, in my opinion, was an ideal location with emergency facilities nearby and the arts and museum district being a short walk away in the context of the beautiful Bosque River Trail. There were concerns with impacts to a particular oak tree but those threats could be mitigated with the right protections and treatments.



Q36 - Do you feel there is a need for additional parks and recreation facilities in Stephenville?



**Q37: Please explain your answer in Q36**

Rank	Element	Vote #
1	New Recreation Hall	19
2	General updating of all facilities	14
3	More enhanced playscapes, accessible playscapes	10
4	Improved Rec management / sports management	9
5	Improved Bass fields / sports facilities	9
6	Maintenance, Stickers	9
7	Population growing; more parks & opportunities for sports and activities	7
8	YMCA Styled Facility	7
9	All sports practice fields	6
10	Events for teens and youth	6
11	Expanded BRT, more trails	5
12	Splashpad unrestricted	4
13	Update / add bathrooms	4
14	Fenced Playground	4
15	Events & programs for adults	4
16	Tournament grade facilities	4
17	Mini parks, neighborhood parks	2
18	Disc golf; new wooded site	2
19	After school programs for kids	2
20	Senior Center	2
Note: All other received votes; see appendix for full comments		

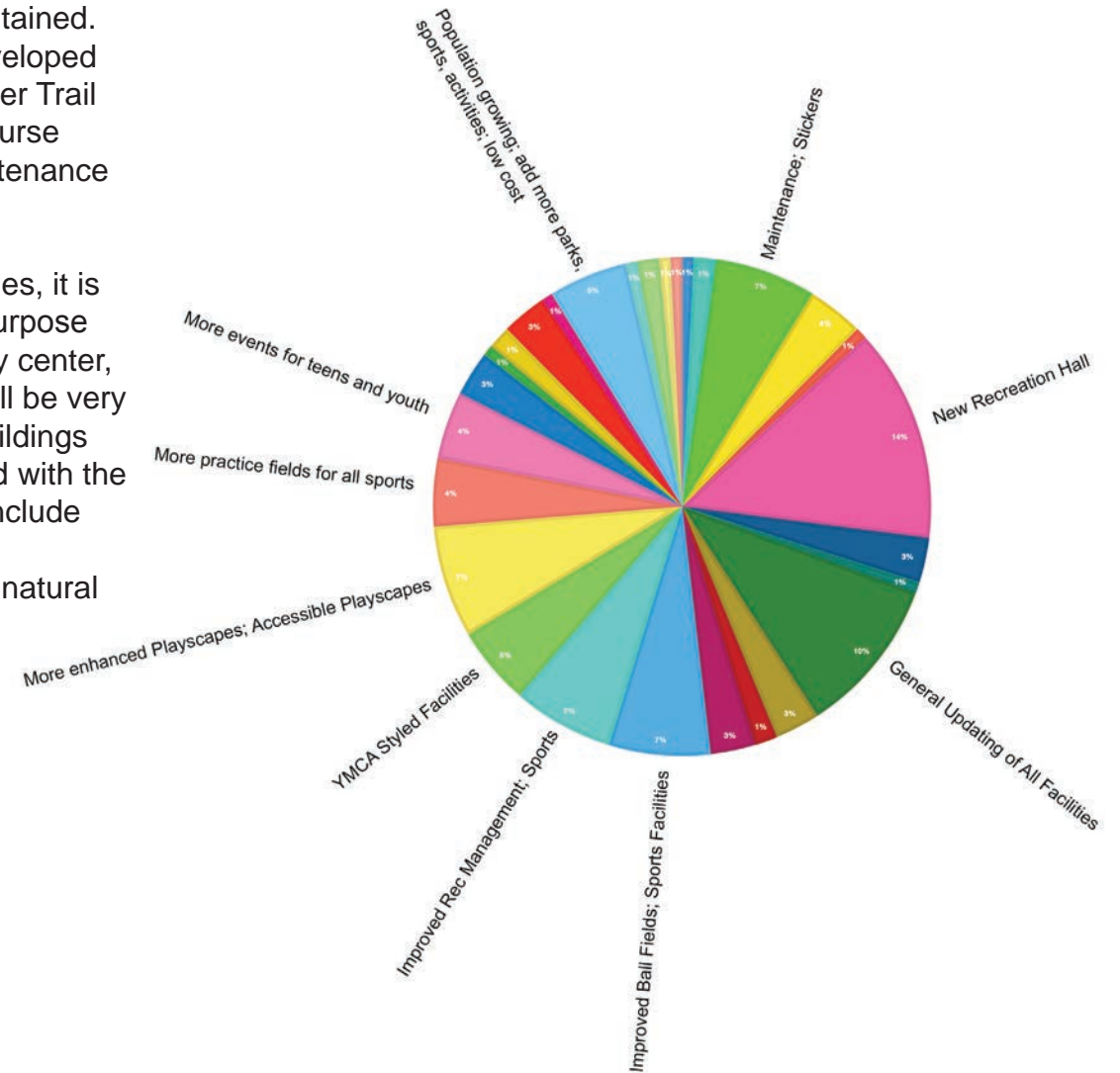
There are some similarities and differences in this series of responses to the last survey question. Recreation center takes the top ranking as a new need. Many of the responses were about updating and managing what is there already. Several responses pointed out that the city was growing and the parks and recreation, both facilities and programming had to expand to keep up.

Important to highlight once again, senior center didn't score high but the percentage of responders in that age group or caring in other age groups, is reflective of that level of response.

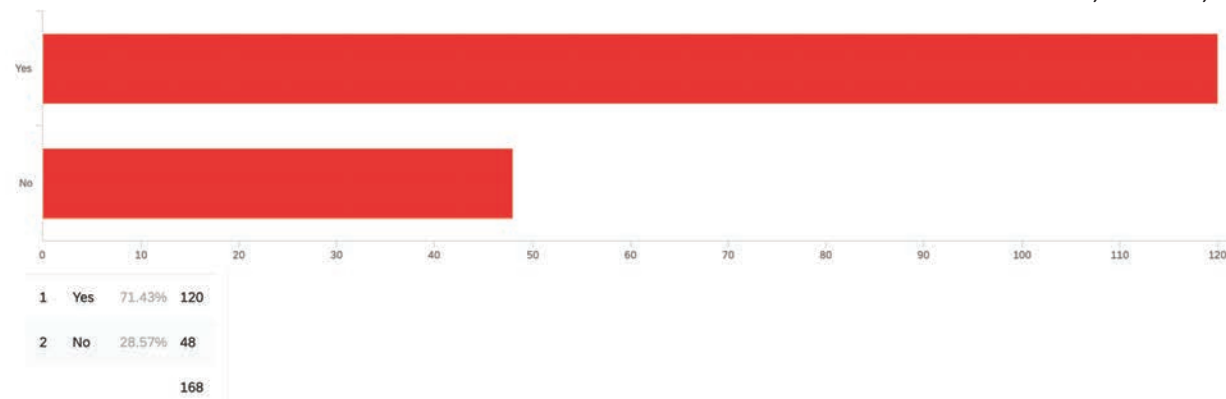
Playscapes scored well also representative of the amount of responders but also consistent across the entire survey.

**Notes:**

1. Disc Golf is popular although not very many comments in support and not scoring high on most lists. However disc golf is a low capitalization for great recreation particularly on site not highly maintained. It could be that some of the undeveloped parks; Prairie Wind or Bosque River Trail expansion could include a new course without much environmental maintenance or damage.
2. Through all the survey comments, especially the written response ones, it is apparent that a significant multi-purpose gym, rec hall, senior center, activity center, wellness, arts and crafts facility will be very popular. Consider a campus of buildings that are phased in over time linked with the trail system and natural spaces. Include lots of outdoor shaded spaces.
3. Mountain biking trails are another natural lands activities not requiring much maintenance



**Q38: Do you attend local craft shows, garden shows, and fairs when they occur?**



**Summary of the Online Survey Questions**

As described in the front of the online survey section, all of the response results to the survey cannot be acknowledged in a vacuum but need to be reconciled within the context of the percentage of people in age groups that responded to the survey. The chart below breaks down the respondents as compared to the overall population of the City.

Age 60 & Over	7.10%	% of total respondents that are age 60 or over
Age 60 & Over	0.90%	% of Stephenville's 60+ that responded to the survey
Age 60 & Over	13%	% of Stephenville's overall population
Age 30 - 50	72.40%	% of total respondents that are age 30 - 50
Age 30 - 50	6.10%	% of Stephenville's 30 - 50 that responded to the survey
Age 30 - 50	18%	% of Stephenville's overall population

By far the most respondents to the survey were in the prime family raising age groups, or young to mid-aged couples while the least represented groups are under 30 years of age (especially children) and 60 years and older.

The rest of the survey spoken to here is about the result and not about the demographics.

The most enjoyed features are the obvious ones, those elements that are mostly the main ones in the parks. Trails and playground have ranked the highest which is not surprise being a big demand in most cities. Least favorite is also not a surprise being overall maintenance issues and the need for more bathrooms. These two areas will be stressed in the priority ranking as with the

expansion and maintenance of playgrounds and trails. Needed will be diversification of age differentiated playgrounds and other facilities to entertain, educate, and provide healthy activities for young people. Playscapes come in all different sizes, shapes and styles. Children's nature play is research where children have opportunities of creativity and exploration in the natural world. Be sure to see the write-up in the appendices. Nature play is also a great playground concept in its basic forms for areas that might be prone to flooding such as Clifton Heights Park and Creekside Park. Large logs from tree clearing sites strategically placed and trimmed are seating, furniture, or low wall or climbing objects. Low cost, local materials, great benefit.

Youth also need lots of programming and this should be a priority as well especially after school programs in sports, arts, and other. The other big item called out in survey and multiple discussions has been building a new gym that can house basketball and volleyball as well as exercise classes, meeting rooms, craft spaces, and weight training. This is listed as a high priority due to the strength of voices calling this out.

As of this writing, a senior's center is being developed. It is the hope of this plan that the center is widely multi-functional with all types of classes indoors as well as couple with great outdoor space next to the city trail. Consider the placement carefully so to allow seniors to watch sports, see kids playing, enjoy walking in the shade. In the survey results aside from the center respondents called out for more programming and classes, health and exercise classes, social areas for gatherings, aquatics and lap pool, dances, and cultural tours among other things. Community gardens which is a favorite among seniors, was within the top ten but only gathered three votes.

Top changes requested are related to the top "least favorite" with bathroom maintenance toping the chart; lawn and field maintenance, playground maintenance and repair close behind. Many written complaints regarding stickers and fire ants making lawn areas unusable.

Q17 asks for ranking the importance of facilities and the top ranking are playgrounds, rec center, trails, picnic shelters, water play and more.

Q19 asks the same question for programs and activities and these top ranking were ball sports, health and wellness classes, Hiking and biking, basketball aquatics, and more.

Note that these are two very important question digging into what the respondents want most out of the parks and recreation system.

It is an interesting exercise to combine the Extremely Important with the Very Important for the second chart highlighting that some items dropped off the top ten and others floated up to the top ten.

Later in the survey with Q27, there appears to be a lot of interest in cultural arts and heritage programming and facilities. This would relate well to continued development of the museum district between the hospital and along East Washington street following the Bosque River Corrido trail. This has been discussed in the Downtown Plan as well. Called out on the project priorities matrix is the need for the Vine Street and Tarleton tract to be developing with a civic institution and not let go to private development.



Bill Johnson Park Playscape

## Additional Comments:

During the later stages of the project, various public meetings were held to preview the report and findings. During these meetings, cards were handed out to those who took the time to learn about the project status and with these cards, could write some last comments that are after the online survey and included here:

### 1. What are the three most important priorities for parks and recreation:

- A new gym, renovate the existing rec hall, add pickleball
- Safety, accessibility, all around good upkeep
- Facilities (restrooms), 6-8 gyms for public use, flag football fields
- Renovate, restore, modernize rec hall (This architecturally significant buildings must be preserved), build pickleball courts, build multi-court gym
- More gyms, finish trail, complete rehabilitation & remodel of the existing rec hall including installing air conditioning; bring it back to its original grandeur
- Bathrooms that are open to the public, safety, amenities such as shade, & aesthetically appealing

### 2. How can parks and recreation improvements / additions contribute to economic development in Stephenville?

- Create a SPARD that the community supports
- The facilities, amenities, & fields could generate the opportunity to host events that increases sales tax
- Increase baseball tournaments with new fields, increase basketball / volleyball tournaments with new gyms
- In general, invest in sports tourism
- Events connecting downtown & park both with the existing events - Buckles & Bugs, Moo-la Fest, July 4th, Christmas festivities
- A modernized & restored Rec Hall can host banquets, family reunions, etc
- A multi-court gym can host basketball and volleyball tournaments; sports tourism is a huge boon for the City
- Vary the entertainers in the Summer Music Series to attract more people
- Host tournaments / this can be the regional hub for youth sports with

the right fields

- New gyms, multiple football fields, better restrooms
  - More tournaments and activities will bring more people to town which will contribute to economic development
- ### 3. What perspective / analysis / or strategy should be included in the final report?
- A way to connect downtown with the park
  - Revenue that can be generated by new facilities
  - How long we have invested in our facilities
  - How can parks work with downtown to host events to incorporate both locations
  - What grants are available; Historic preservation grants for the Rec Hall
  - What revenue could be anticipated for a multi-court gym
  - Analyze the possible dollars that could be brought in by sports tourism by increasing the number of ball fields & gyms
  - Investigate possibility of donors contributing to realization of more facilities
  - TxDOT grants available for trails
  - A report is only as good as the binder it is in. Give us a strategy to implement! Help the Parks Team conquer the launch of the report
  - Enhance the parks, then real estate values and quality of life improve; encourage development to grow

### And finally some notes handed over for inclusion:

#### Priorities:

- Additional Neighborhood Parks
- Concerts & Festivals
- Love the birding festival idea

#### Comments:

- New facilities for Elks, Lions etc., would help with budget support
- LaCrosse field; Minimum 110' x 60'
- Mansfield, Tx complex has indoor volleyball + sand volleyball
- Consider a quiet park such as Jaycee, City Park for pickleball and senior center
- Keep Stephenville City Park a very active sports and entertainment complex
- Review Pine Nursery Park in Bend OK. Wonderful access for all but separated areas to foster kids and seniors

- Indoor facility needs enough courts to hold tournaments (4 volleyball courts minimum). Consider sand volleyball courts outside of the same facility

All good suggestions and comments:

To address these in general, some of the data that would be needed is not available to this report however when it comes to the economics of developing the appropriate facilities to host tournaments, then the burden lies with the parks and recreation staff that has that data to begin a deeper analysis.

Within this report there is discussion regarding performing what is called cost-benefit analysis. Coupled with the basics of costs to host a tournament and the anticipated income that the leaders of each sport type knows, there needs to also be the work performed to see what the market capture is in the region. With that in mind, what are the potential dates that are not in direct conflict with other regional or state-wide tournament as well as events absorbing local facilities and hotel rooms.

Later as fields are constructed or improved, and hotel rooms added to the City, then more capacity of the City to host tournaments can be recognized.

There is another large issue that is related to the cost benefit analysis needed for hosting multiple and significant tournaments for the purpose of economic development. The issue is what is the future of City Park? How does it fit in this scheme of tournaments, and how does this jive with the aspirations of the City to leverage the proximity of City Park to the downtown and courthouse square for major economic development? Lets discuss the concept of Downtown on the Park concept and in the next several pages discuss the future options for City Park.

### Downtown on the Park:

Connecting Downtown with the Park has been a hot topic for a few years now. The recently completed Downtown Master Plan envisioned a wide swath of changes to build the connections and strengthen the dynamics between downtown and City Park. The illustration to the right shows the core concepts from that plan.

S. Belknap Street and S. Columbia Street together with the buildings that line them are the connecting linkages that have a special

responsibility to the plan turning to reality. These two blocks that separate the square and the park have special qualities such as authentic architecture and scale are ripe for this transformation. The changes discussed include converting these streets into one way traffic direction with Belknap St. vehicles traveling toward City Park, making right hand turn on Long Street, also a one way directing vehicles westward, and then right turning on Columbia St. so that vehicles would be traveling north toward College St. This configuration allows the street travel lanes to become one lane gaining space in front of the properties and allowing right of way improvements for pedestrians. Some of these improvements in the ROW may be street trees, benches, pedestrian scale lighting, wayfinding, etc. The private property facing the streets could be up-zoned to include commercial catering toward cafes and coffee shops, art galleries, antique dealers, B&B or boutique hotel accommodations, and street cafes outdoors adding vibrancy to the street edge.

In festival event days, locals and visitors alike may use these two blocks to move back and forth between events in the Courthouse Square and the park. During music festival times, smaller unplugged venues around the Square may appeal to some while larger artists perform on one of the main stages at Birdsong in City Park. Looking closely at the City Park sketch concept by Vista, you will see that Birdsong has been expanded with a large berm positioned further back from the stage and planted with trees for shade. To the southwest is a smaller stage so that multiple acts can be staging; one playing while the other is setting up.

The street concept was met with some pushback but the concept still holds that the two streets should convert to attractive connecting corridors between square and park.

The Downtown on the Park plan, at the heart of the changes are the renovations of the Square itself. This includes recapturing portions of the courthouse lawn for staging of festival events but to make this happen is to reverse the onsite parking form being internal to the lawn to external and street-side parking with the exception of the southeast side and corner that would be an expanded pod of parking spaces

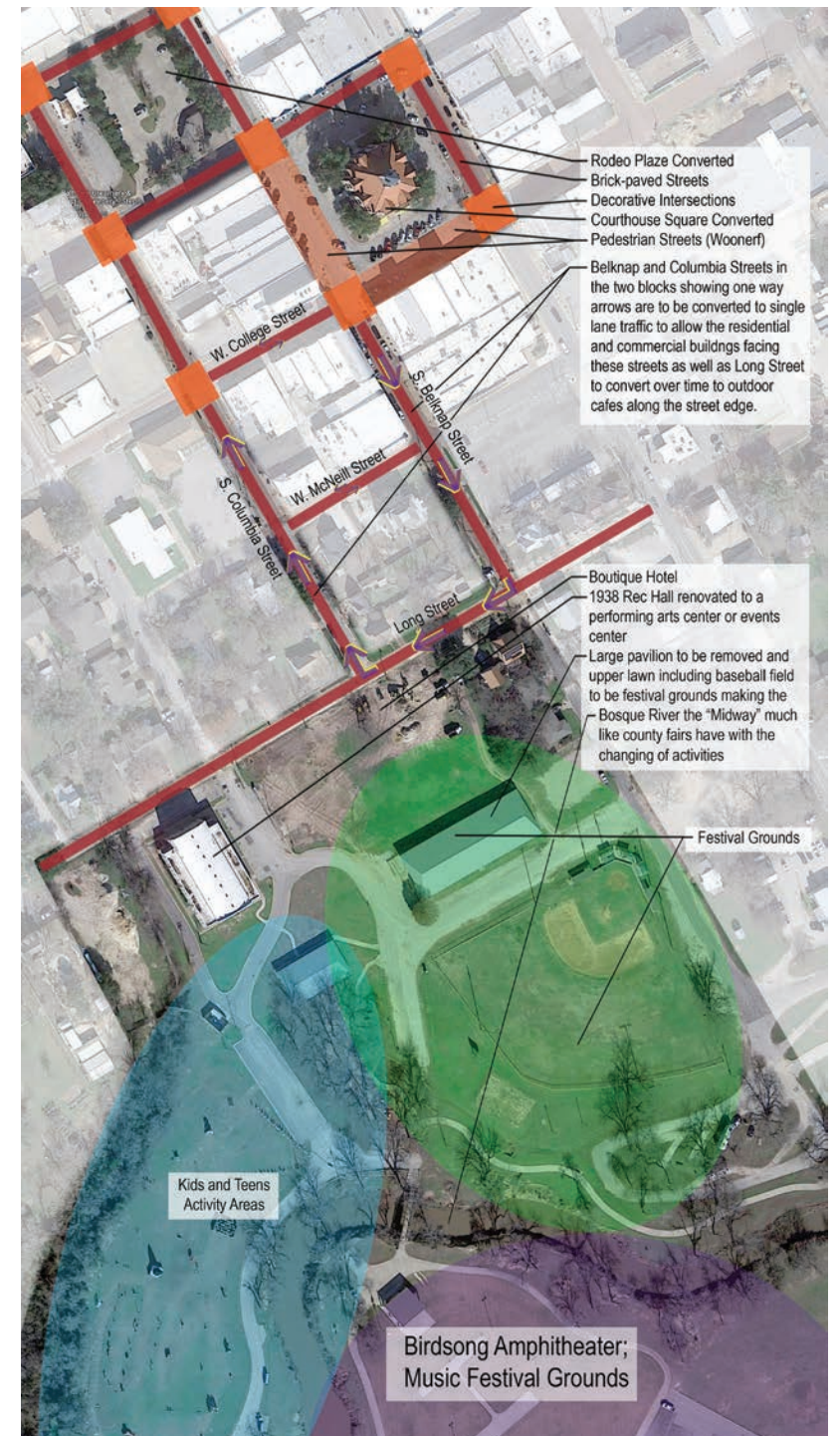
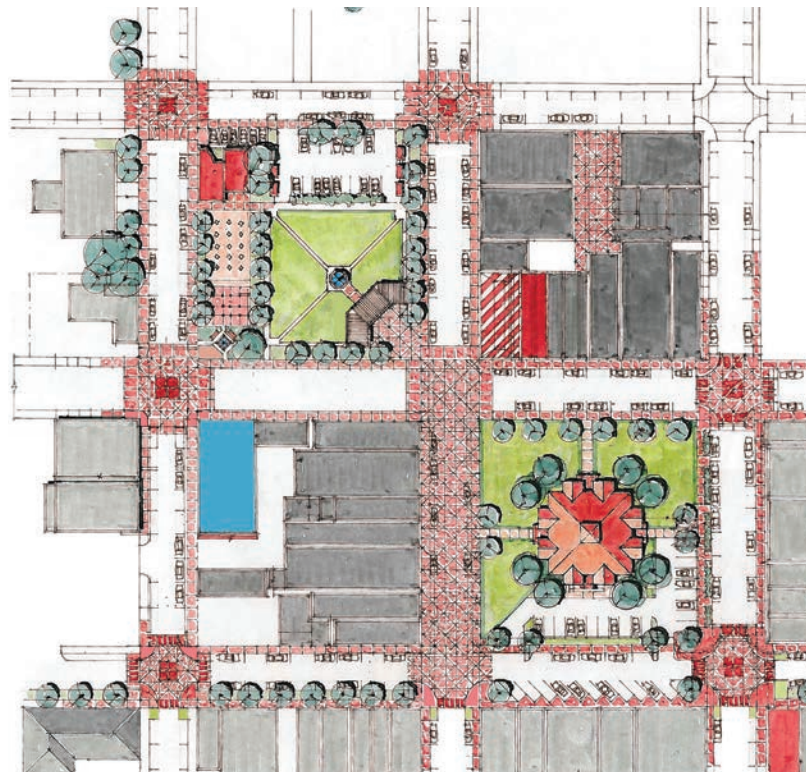
College Street and Belknap streets are redesigned at the Square to be pedestrian streets at the time of major events and to be closed off for street fairs. The Rodeo Plaza as well would see a change with much of its land being recaptured as green space but still

accommodating parking on the north half. The drivethrough ATM would be sold or leased to be converted to a indoor/outdoor cafe with the south end containing a small splashpad, much desired in the public surveys.

The plan to the right is a generalized plan of the overall linkages of the downtown and the park while the plan below from the Downtown Master Plan project is a more detailed proposal for the Courthouse Square and the Rodeo Plaza

Families come to enjoy a full weekend of festivities while entertaining children, eating quality fresh food at farm to table establishments and enjoying a wide variety of music.

The next section specific to the future of City Park discusses options for what that park needs to be for the overall benefit to Stephenville. Linking Downtown to City Park is an important strategy tied to the decisions necessary for City Park's future.



# 8

## The Future of City Park, Optimist Jaycees Park, and the Needs of Organized Sports

### City Park:

Several great points were raised in the workshop such as a vision for the future of City Park and a new sports complex and is summarized below:

The sports fields are valuable to the community for baseball, softball and beginning players learning the game. There has been much investment in City Park toward supporting these sports. It was also acknowledged that there will never be more ballfields beyond the number of fields present today. Spending millions of dollars toward attempting to achieve a sports complex with a larger field count and higher return on investment by the city is not possible on this land unless funding levels were up to near what it would cost to create a new tailored and dedicated sports complex from the ground up on new land.

With these points in mind, the option that seemed most plausible is to continue the work and improvements to the fields in City Park but initiate the beginning stages of a larger sports complex. The work on City Park includes the replacement of lighting for certain fields and the expansion of certain field sizes to better balance the needs of today's tournament demands. Continued grooming and improvements to the current facilities as well as new additions of fields where possible and other facilities supportive of continuing the sporting activities.

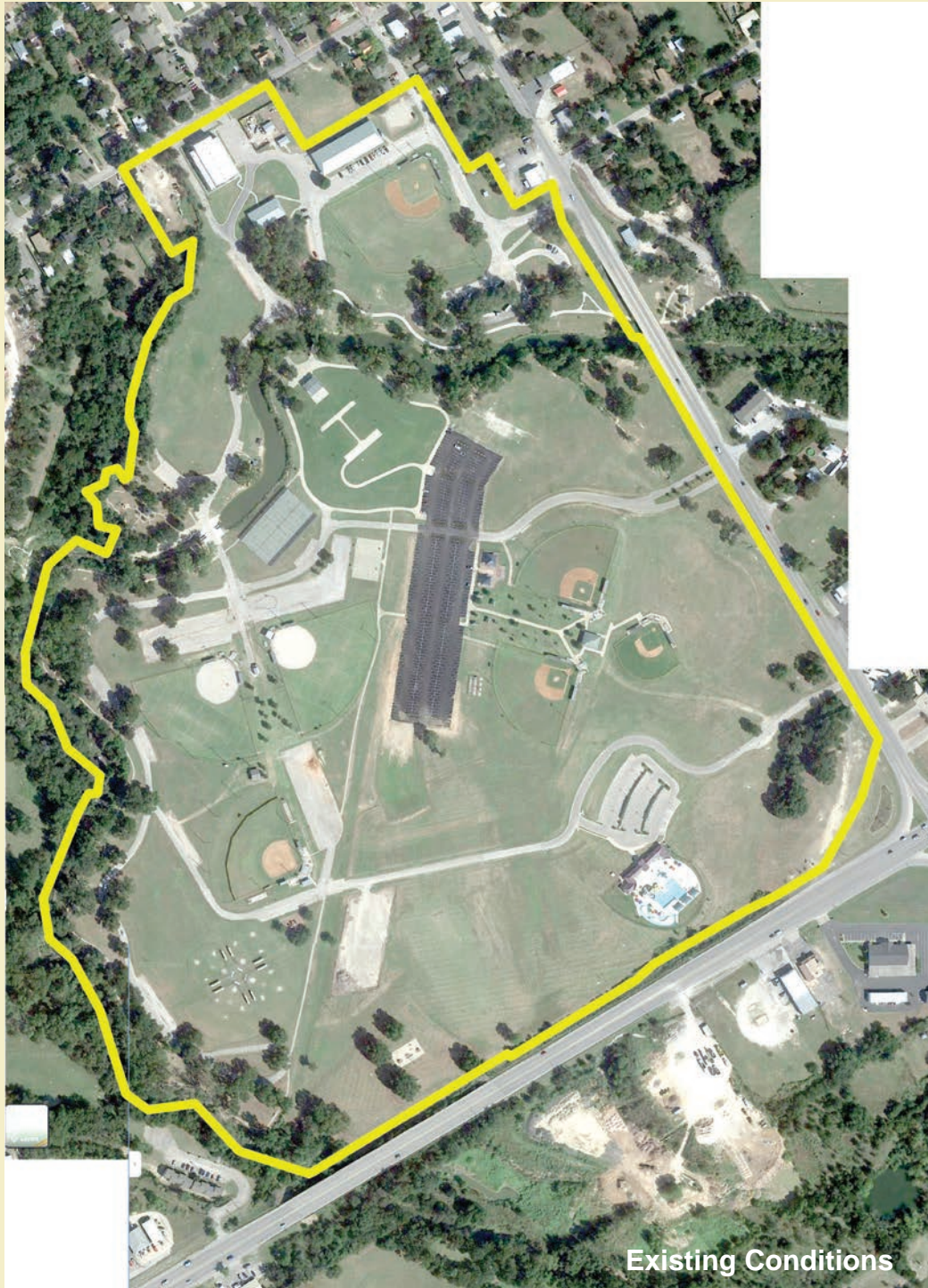
The timelines of enhancements to City Park verses developing a new sports park might be better understood with the graphic below:

The top bar are the years, the left column are the increments of new development as well as the City Park upgrades. Enhancing City Park is not funding lost. Those investments will remain in City Park but fields not improved may be replaced with additional facilities not available elsewhere in the City such as new tennis or gym facilities.

Discussion in support of developing a sports park dedicated to the baseball, softball, and related sports is about the expansion of ball sports in Stephenville. Primarily a sports park generates sports tourism which has the potential of being a significant economic development mechanism. There are the elements of regional or super-regional (or even state level) tournament play coming to Stephenville since the city is centrally located and close to Interstate 20. Hotel beds are full and HOT taxes are increased. Restaurants have bumper crop of patrons for a two day stretch, possibly three. Another externality is the stimulation of hotel and restaurant development that would be triggered by the knowledge of a sports park development.

The new investments in City Park are still valued by continued use. Only those facilities that are expensive to update and not of a size useful, may be eliminated if necessary to make room for additional sports venues or facilities.

Project Scenario Timeline									
Year:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Sports Complex; Funding Strategy and Agreements	█	█							
Sports Complex; Land Acquisition			█	█					
Sports Complex; Design & Engineering			█	█	█				
Sports Complex; Construction					█	█	█		
City Park; Upgrades	█	█	█						
<p>What is anticipated is that the development strategy for a new sports complex is a longer time frame to accomplish and the funding commitment doesn't get higher until year 4-6. In the meantime City Park facilities are improved for the continuation of sports leagues and tournaments to the extent possible as is the current trend but on improved sports fields. Change would be gradual over the course of time and budgeted accordingly.</p>									
<p>Understand that the timeline of a sports park development described here is an estimate of how a potential development deal could unfold. Many variables are in play such as grant opportunities, general budget demands, opportunities for partners or sponsors, etc. An adhoc committee can be formed to begin the analysis with low cost to the City and can jump-start the process with land identification that potentially could be in play for acquisition.</p>									



Existing Conditions



CITY PARK MASTER PLAN  
CITY OF STEPHENVILLE



## City Park Futures:

Presented here are four maps. The first one on the previous page is the park as it exists today. The second map next to it is the 2011 master plan by the firm SRA. It is apparent that the SRA plan has been followed to some extent but not with everything constructed.

On the next two pages are two more concepts. The first one is a sketch plan over the aerial from Vista Planning & Design. It is presented over the aerial so that the existing features such as ball fields can be seen relative to what the sketch shows.

The next plan by Stephenville staff takes the position of leaving all high dollar assets in place and work around these with a modified plan of improvements. This plan is more detailed in the notes and the renovations specific to fields. Phasing comments map out a timeline to completion. The benefit of the staff plan is that a completed park is demonstrated with the least amount of disturbance and costs.

The Vista plan takes the direction of minimal acknowledgement of existing features with the exception of Birdsong Amphitheater and Splashville and develops a new plan that seeks to better organize the site for a variety of activities.

With the new upgrades to the inclusionary playground, and the concept of adding a pump tract and skate park in the underutilized park space to the northwest, this area now can transform into a kids and teenage gathering space with multiple offerings and opportunities for social gatherings. Pickleball may become a teen activity since six courts are envisioned for the smaller pavilion in this space.

River access and engagement is also discussed in this report and the logical place for this is the nearby low water crossing where the river is shallow on the downflow side of the weir. On the south end of the site the ball fields are organized to have a gathering space between the quads including children's playscapes with direct connectivity to Splashville.



There are many similarities between the staff plan and Vista's plan. As written in the recommendations of this report the advice is to convene an ad hoc committee to look at the data, the plans presented here, the options of whether or not to pursue a sports complex and to engage the community regarding the preferences. Then a decision can be made on a path forward.

With these three plans, the City is left with a significant

decision to pick a pathway forward. As stated in the first page of this section, City Park is only large enough to handle smaller tournaments which it already does. The choice of whether to build a sports complex is a choice to invest in a major economic development facility or not.

Birdsong Amphitheater has the capacity for smaller concerts which are much enjoyed by the people of Stephenville. Many responses in the public surveys point to their love of the facility and the enjoyment of events there, requesting that more programming be scheduled.

The Vista concept pushes the berm a significant amount of distance back to allow for a much larger concert space with better sloping for concert viewing. The berm serves as a buffer to other activities to the south, but also as a planting space for forestation and pollinator gardens shown with terraced seating to increase the aesthetics in the park. With the forestation of the berm, the opportunity for shaded seating for concerts or a choice location for gathering on fine weather days becomes popular.

An additional benefit presented by the berm is that kids LOVE hills for runing up and down, rolling down, playing "King of the Hill"; non-stop entertainment value while a concert could be happening.

Concert parking in this concept is conceived to be on the east side of Graham Street in an agricultural field that, at the time of this writing, was available for sale and is mostly flood plain. This field was also discussed during



## 'Pickleball Mania': Chicago Park District announces plan to create 50 more pickleball courts



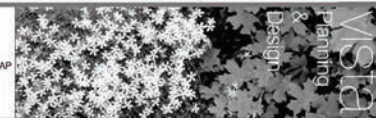
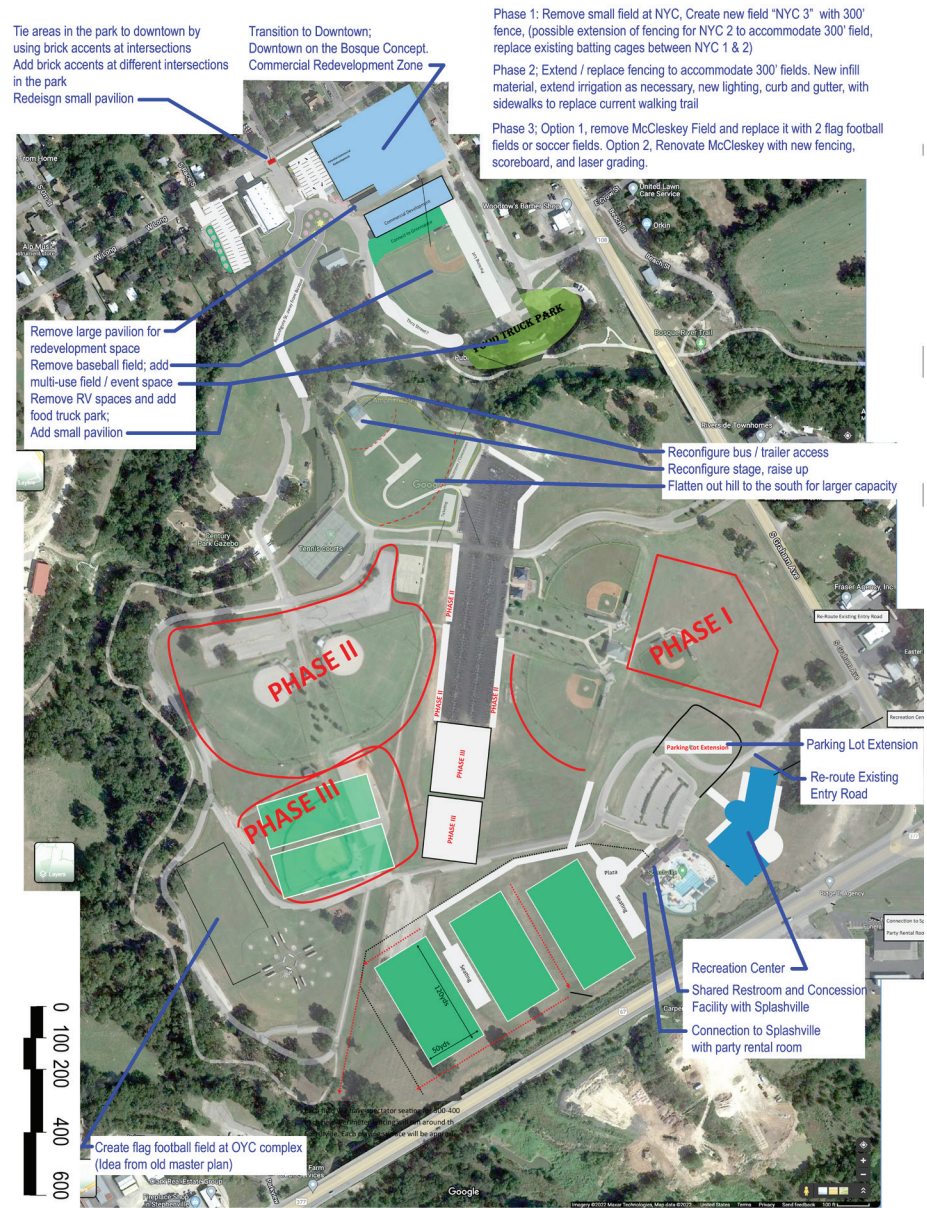
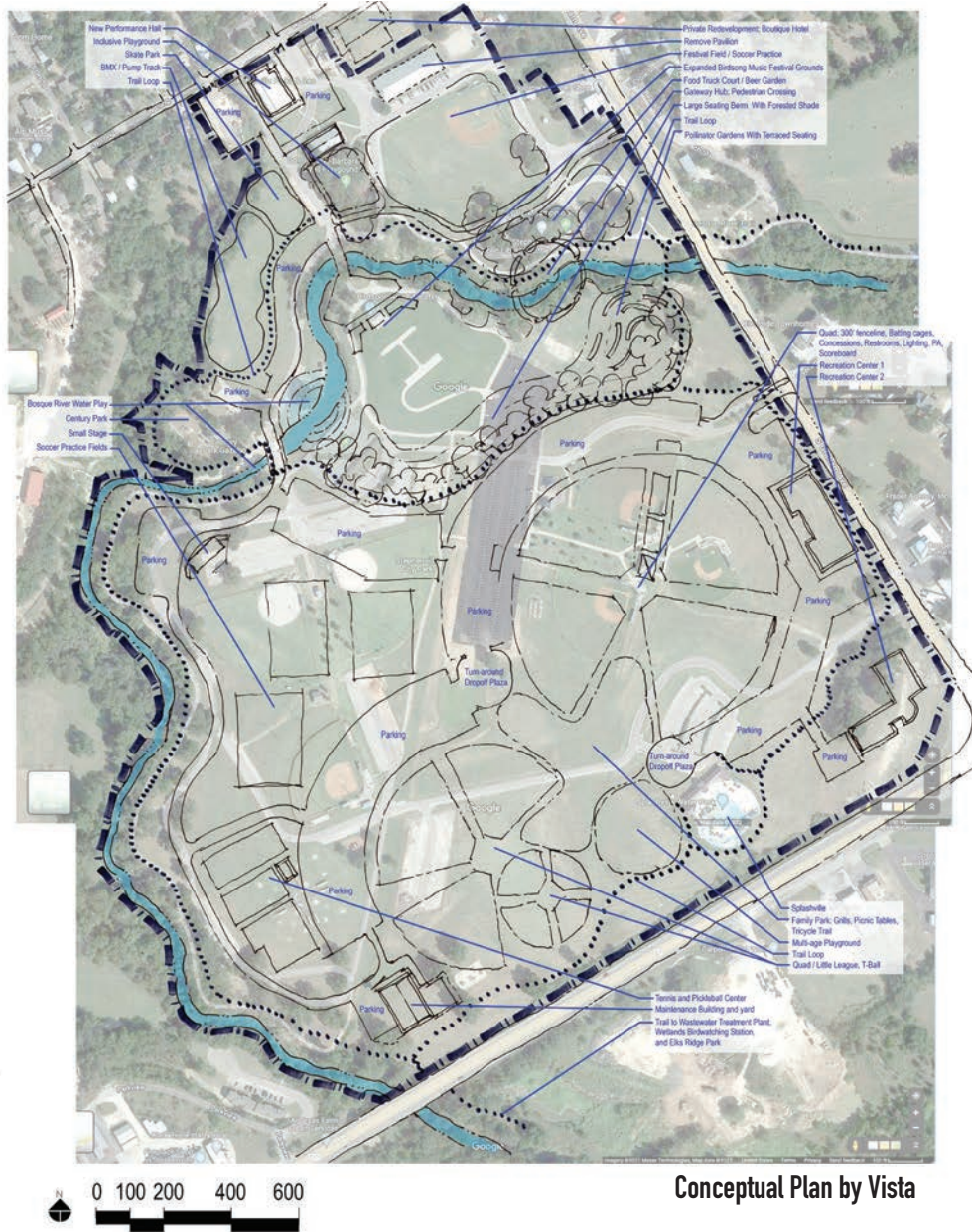
the downtown plan as a prime location for a new RV park since there is a small portion of the north side of the tract that is out of the flood plain. Again, these would be leased spaces and available for concert time rentals as another income stream for the City.

Patrons coming to the park or to a concert would have the Bosque River Trail as access to cross under the Graham Street bridge to enter the park.

The recommendation of this report is to engage an ad hoc committee to analyse deeper into the study starting with a cost benefit analysis or a "Go/No Go" decision process for building a sports complex thereby allowing City Park to expand the variety of parks and recreation facilities and activities.

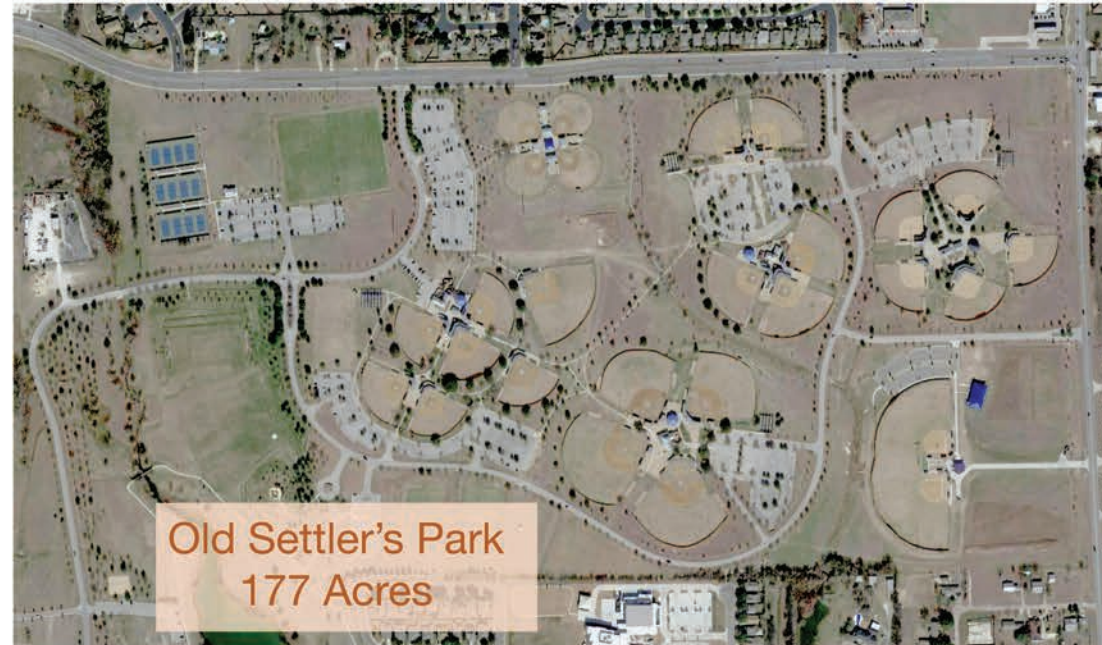


Eagle Pass (left) just completed a new sports park using the strategy of a highly versatile facility that includes baseball, softball, football, tennis soccer, sand volleyball, large shaded seating area, childrens splashpad and playscapes. Big investment reaping long term rewards.





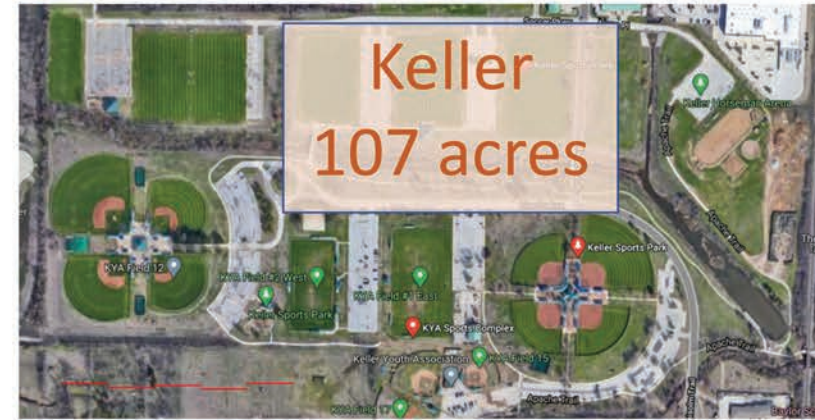
Colony  
60 acres



Old Settler's Park  
177 Acres



Brownwood Sports Park 109  
total Acres; 50 acre baseball  
tournament complex



Keller  
107 acres

## Optimist Jaycee Park

The Optimist Jaycee Park is an important large park that is embedded in the neighborhoods northwest of downtown, north of the Tarleton State University Campus.

It is perfectly situated to serve a large portion of homes in this section of the City and therefore needs careful consideration for the selection of uses. Currently there is a large shaded playscape and basketball area that features elements for different ages in the middle of the park.

Restrooms are nearby and in need of upgrades and maintenance, this was a comment that appeared a few times on the online survey. Surrounding the play area are large fields with backstops for practice or informal play. Stickers may be an issue here but it wasn't called out like City Park's problem. Mostly the criticism of this park was the large underutilized spaces. These are inclusive of the practice fields that are seldom if ever used. Two proposals have surfaced during the course of this planning process; one by City staff shown to the right which takes advantage of the space to redo ball fields and add a flag football field or a multi-purpose field that could also serve soccer practice.

A second proposal espoused a re-wilding of the park with hundreds of trees to be planted. There has not been an exhibit to show this concept, but the discussion was to plant trees in a grid so that a complete canopy was formed overhead to give shaded green space for picnics, strolling, gatherings, and a launching place for cycling on the trails once the connecting trail segments are in place.

There is merit in both concepts and it is possible that the two could be combined however that would dampen down the forest concept considerably. Whichever concept is advanced to development, they both should keep the large investment of the children's play area and shade structure. Add a kiddie tricycle trail that weaves around the immediate area of the children's play and decorate to entice a 'transportation' play scheme with stop signs and striping, etc.

There has been a large call in the surveys to have more natural spaces. In part, providing new phases of a city trail would serve this purpose as well and is well supported in the survey. Even with the



build-out, including adding tennis, there are several pockets that can host dozens of trees. It is notable that the north corner of the park is city-owned land and this should be dedicated to the park to expand their offering, including the re-wilding concept.

Flag football has not had the opportunity to develop as a rec league to the fullest capacity due to the shortage of field space. Ball fields, although several in City Park, are in need for practice and the City Park fields are often locked up.

Other sports have been called out in the surveys such as basketball, tennis, and pickleball that if not in City Park, need a location for developing multiple courts. Optimist Jaycee Park can fit 4 tennis courts in the southern corner with N/S orientation.

Its important to note that the Optimist Jaycee Park is on the proposed Urban Trail and Bosque River Trail network which makes this park accessible from anywhere in the City for cyclist.



Concept from Parks and Recreation Staff

# 9

## Economic Development

### In This Chapter

- Stephenville Sports Complex
- Stephenville Birding Festival
- Stephenville Music Festival
- City Loop Trail (Chapter 6)

### The Future of City Park and the Potential for a New Sports Complex

### The Economic Strategy of Parks and Recreation

An integral part of the parks and recreation strategy is for parks and recreation to be engaged in programs that stimulate economic development. That way funding that supports the parks can be drawn from these activities in direct support for capital improvements, O&M, staffing, and programming.

The economic impact on local communities can be divided into three categories: direct, indirect and induced. Direct impact includes local spending at hotels, restaurants, attractions, retailers, transportation costs and entry fees. Indirect impact is defined as purchasing goods and services and the impact on the supply chain. Induced impact encompasses employee spending—either directly or indirectly associated with sports tourism.



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Public Recreation Master Plan  
Sports Park Comparison  
Stephenville, Texas

Exh

*Youth and Amateur Sports Tourism Brings Economic Benefits to Local Economies*  
Articles 07-26-2022

Fans enjoying baseball during a tournament held at Majestic Park in Hut Springs, Arkansas. (Image by Huff Associates, Inc.)

On any given weekend, thousands of young athletes across the nation utilize their talents in baseball, football, soccer, tennis, volleyball and pickleball, which is booming in popularity. Most of these events occur in complexes developed explicitly for amateur sports.

Since the 600-acre National Sports Center in Blaine, Minnesota, launched in 1990, sports tourism has become an integral part of local economies. More families are traveling to out-of-town venues across the country for sports tournaments, races and events.

If you have been in an airport or hotel recently, you know that groups of young athletes with travel gear, parents, and regional retailers and visiting local attractions are a common sight.

**Funding Opportunities**

Funding for the development of amateur and youth sports facilities comes from various sources. Many communities are using Hotel Occupancy Tax funding for the development of sports facilities.

In Texas, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides funding through its **Local Park Grant Program**. Another source of revenue for developing sports facilities is municipal or county bonds and capital improvement program (CIP) funding. In Midland, a private 501(c)(3) charitable organization is helping fund the development of the Hogan Sports Complex. Soccer teams such as FC Dallas and the Sting Soccer Club are investing in the development of sports facilities on municipal park sites.

Additionally, for-profit organizations such as Perfect Game and Big League Dreams are financially supporting the development of youth and amateur sports facilities.

*Making the Right Investment*  
opportunity and potential it has to improve lives and

# Stephenville Sports Complex

Much has been said about Stephenville developing a sports complex. The section above on City Park describes the challenges of pushing City Park into being upgrading to being a sports complex, however the challenge is that there is not enough room to add more fields given the features that are already in place there.

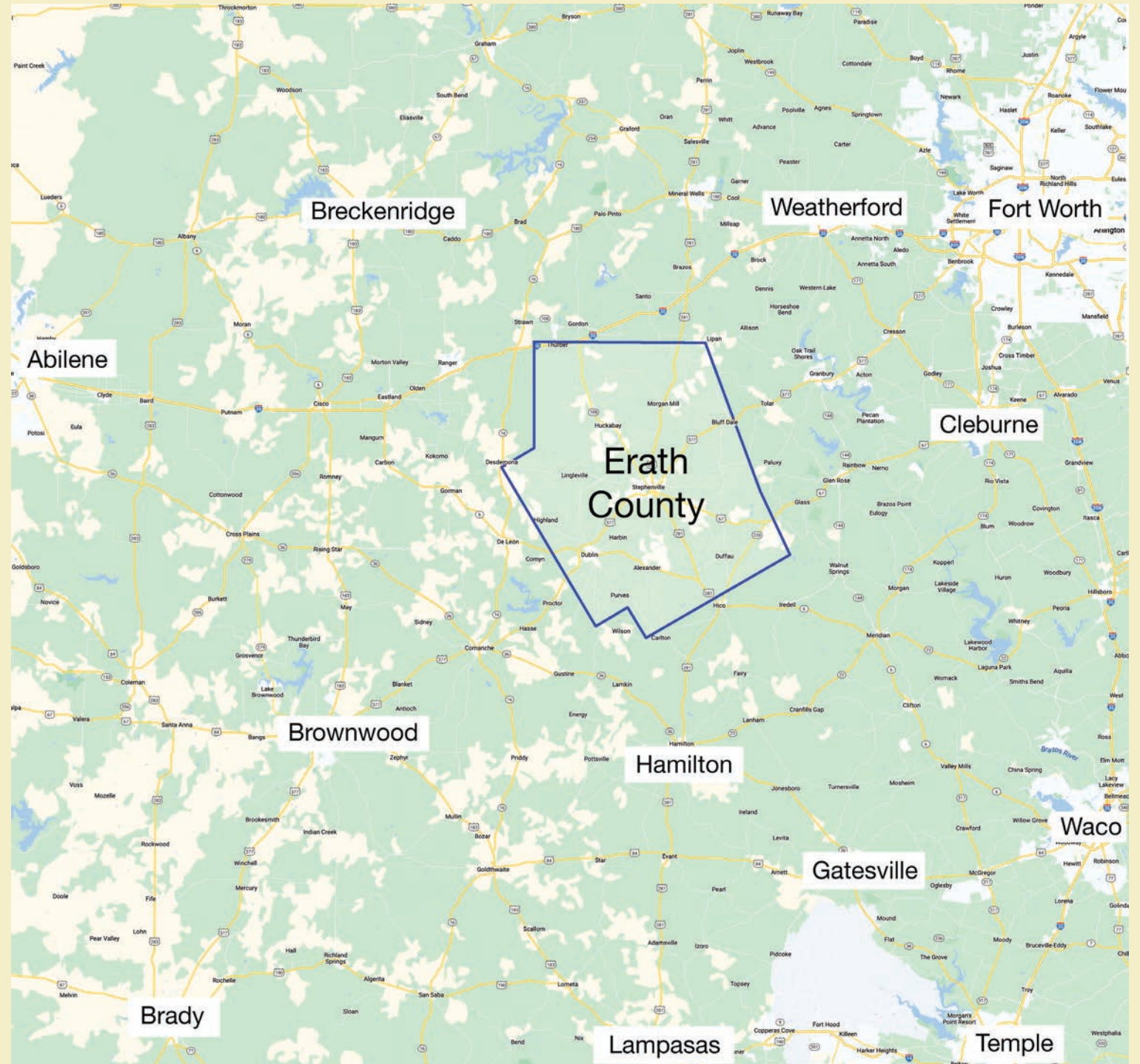
In a small group session with the Parks Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee, there was extensive discussion regarding the pros and cons. There were three main strategies discussed:

1. Push hard to get City Park to do as much as possible to bring tournaments to the City
2. Identify more land and slowly over time migrate tournaments to a newly developed complex
3. Give up on attempting to be a significant center for baseball and softball sports in Texas.

The general consensus is that the second option was in the best interest for Stephenville for several reasons. First and foremost is the amount of energy, costs, and time, participating in sports takes with families involved. Driving teams to the various sports centers around the state, the cost of staying overnight or the weekend, and other family members that would like to watch but can't due to travel and time.

Economic development is a large driver of this decision. Hosting the tournament in Stephenville brings lots of families to the city stimulating hotel and restaurant development. Retail, dining, and night stays expand bringing more dollars to the City and the parks system especially.

From the map to the right, it is easy to see that a tournament grade facility would be very central to north central Texas drawing from a wide variety of cities under two hours away.



## Birdwatching Tourism

# What's the Impact

Estimated annual expenditures by intentionals for 2011 were **\$307 Million**  
(Rio Grande Valley)

Economic contribution from RGV nature tourism led to a total economic output of **\$463 million** and **6,613 full- and part-time jobs** annually.

This total contribution includes a \$266 million contribution to gross regional product and a \$163 million contribution to labor income across the region.

Local taxes generated from direct nature tourist expenditures for 2011 was **\$2.5 Million for sales tax** and **\$7.5 Million for hotel tax**.

**JOBS**



### Texas Bird Festivals - Please notify TOS of any additions or corrections to the list.

**Balcones Songbird Festival** - Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge west of Austin. Late April. Targets include the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo

**Birdiest Festival in America** - Corpus Christi. Late April

**Birding the Border** - Val Verde County. Late April/Early May

**Celebration of Flight** - Corpus Christi, Last Weekend in September

**Davis Mountains Hummingbird Festival** - Fort Davis. Late August

**FeatherFest** - Galveston. Mid-April

**Hummerbird Festival** - Rockport. Mid-September. Focus is Ruby-throated Hummingbirds migration and local birds.

**Laredo Birding Festival** - Laredo. Early February.

**Matagorda Bay Birdfest** - Palacios. Mid-February

**Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival** - Harlingen. Early November

**South Llano River State Park Birding Festival** - Junction. Late April.

**Sparrowfest** - Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge west of Austin. February.

**Whooping Crane Festival** - Port Aransas. February.

Month	Festival	City	State
January	<a href="#">Rains County Eagle Fest</a>	Emory	Texas
February	<a href="#">Laredo Birding Festival</a>	Laredo	Texas
February	<a href="#">Whooping Crane Festival</a>	Port Aransas	Texas
March	<a href="#">Matagorda Bay Birdfest</a>	Palacios	Texas
March	<a href="#">Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival</a>	Eagle Lake	Texas
April	<a href="#">South Llano River Birding Festival</a>	Junction	Texas
April	<a href="#">Dinosaur Valleys Spring Wingding</a>	Glen Rose	Texas
April	<a href="#">Balcones Songbird Festival</a>	Marble Falls	Texas
April	<a href="#">Spring Chirp</a>	Weslaco	Texas
April	<a href="#">Birdiest Festival in America</a>	Corpus Christi	Texas
April	<a href="#">Migration Celebration</a>	Brazoria	Texas
April	<a href="#">Galveston Featherfest Birding and Nature Photography Festival</a>	Galveston	Texas
August	<a href="#">Davis Mountain Hummingbird Celebration</a>	Fort Davis	Texas
September	<a href="#">Rockport-Fulton Hummerbird Celebration</a>	Rockport	Texas
November	<a href="#">Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival</a>	Harlington	Texas



# Stephenville Birding Festival

## Wetland Interpretation and Bird Watching Habitat

Nature tourism and especially bird watching tourism has gained tremendous momentum over the last 20 years to become an important source of revenue for cities that have the right kinds of habitat specially formulated for the attraction of large varieties of bird species.

The City of Stephenville Wastewater Treatment Plant is perfectly positioned to host such a feature as part of the mission of the Bosque River Trail Corridor. With the wetland feature already in place, this location at the southern section of the Bosque River Trail is perfect to develop the site as a destination for birdwatching. With ties to the Bosque River Trail, the city has both the linear riverine and associated edge ecology as well as the wetland ecology that will host likely upwards of 200 species of birds that would be very attractive to the traveling birding cohort.

It is easy to see how a significant event could be packaged out of these assets. A large gathering space in City Park with venues for a speaker series, the Bosque River Corridor for organized or informal walks (or cycling) for bird watching, and the wetlands; 1 mile away from City Park at the closest points, for a more intensive site workshop.

A few statistics from the birdwatching community:

- Birdwatching is a multibillion dollar industry
- Harlingen brings in 2 million dollars in 5 days with a birding festival
- Bird City Texas is a program by Texas Parks and Wildlife partnering with the Texas Audubon Society and birdwatching in Texas brings in approximately 1.8 billion dollars a year in economic impacts from 2.2 million birdwatchers.
- Stephenville can be certified as a Bird City Texas community



Legend  
Trail  
Interpretive Center  
Bird Blind With Identification Boards  
Wetland Interpretation + Bird Watching Habitat



# Stephenville Music Culture

Live music is alive in Stephenville!

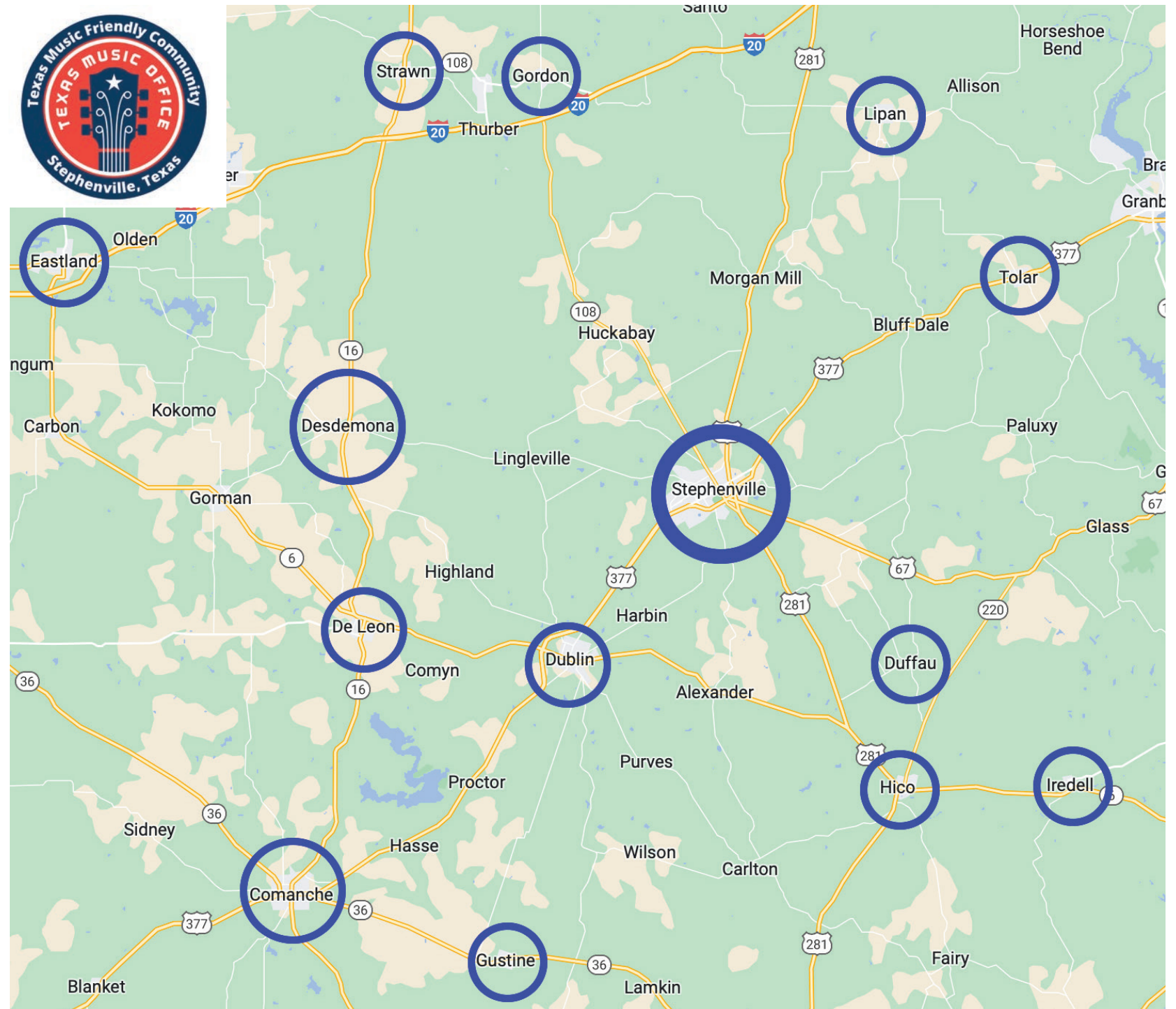
The Texas Music Office within the Office of the Governor certified Stephenville to be the 6<sup>th</sup> city in Texas to receive the official designation of Texas Music Friendly! With 69 musicians listed on the BandMix.com website including 18 bands, not to mention the Texas Music Festival produced by Larry Joe Taylor & Company, bringing big name music stars to a ranch right outside Stephenville, it's not hard to imagine why this recognition was awarded. The Texas Music Festival is a 6 day event that had its beginnings back 32 years ago.

The BandMix.com website goes on to describe 127 musicians and bands that are resident in the surrounding area, all from smaller communities surrounding Stephenville, many of which are represented on the map to the right.

So the city is ripe for developing its music industry which in turn is a significant economic development activity contributing to the city as a whole but more importantly to the downtown vibrancy. There are already a few venues but downtown has the capacity for more with upper level floors of buildings that otherwise might be empty. Festivals are supported by musicians with outdoor or indoor events. Stephenville already has multiple festivals for various times of the year.

Discussions began on the potential of a significant music festival in the City Park. According to Larry Joe Taylor, their experience reveals that it requires a minimum of 10 thousand attendees to have a music festival to cash flow positive.

Several ideas were discussed at meeting with music and entertainment planning and how the Stephenville community might leverage this interest into a more strategic industry. A formative idea was developing that was a three or so day event that featured various





musicians locally available to play at the venues around downtown and the Friday or Saturday night terminating event would be a larger concert in the park at the Bird Song Amphitheater. Among the group there appeared to be traction with the idea. Multiple questions arose such as sound shielding adjacent neighborhoods, powering up and constructing the necessary facilities, flow of traffic, etc.

An additional consideration was with the RV park that resides in the park. An idea pitched out on the table was the potential of moving the RV park across Graham to an agricultural field and create a new place with better accommodations. The location could also take advantage of river front property. This would result in improved income from the RV usage and gain space in the City Park.

It is anticipated that the income stream would have to be more substantial being in the City Park due to the reparations needed to



restore the park lawn areas and other maintenance work.

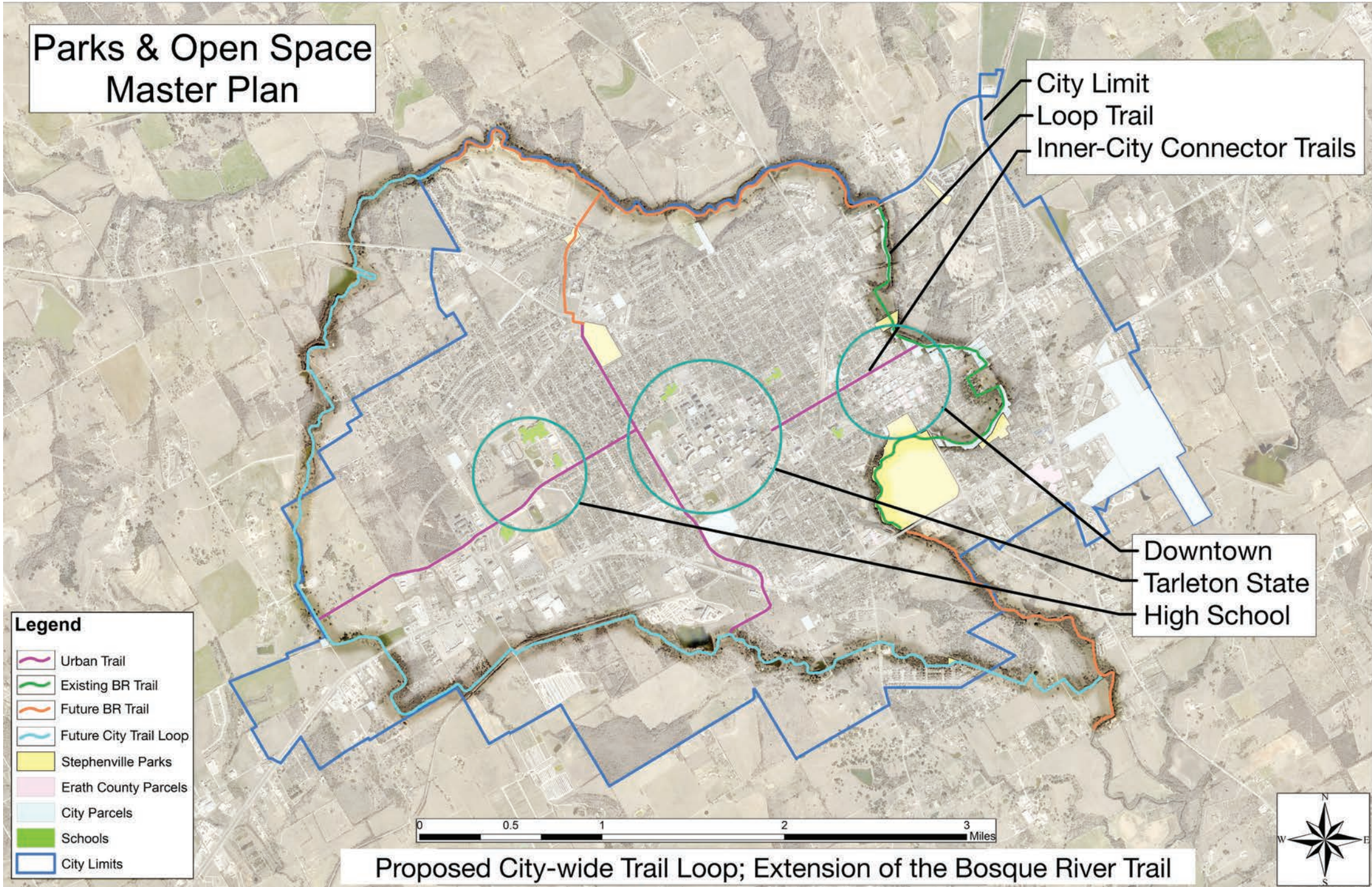
In terms of stimulating the local music scene, certain efforts in getting the local musicians to meet and discuss their thoughts could be the point of beginning. Dr. Chase Peeler, a specialist in ethnomusicology, studied the music of Terlingua, Texas for over two years and found that locally grown musicians very likely bond as a community and in Terlingua (since there wasn't much else to do) often times assembled at The Porch for informal jam sessions. This became the culture and the spirit of Terlingua. Word got out about The Porch and began to attract other musicians to come experience the scene. This included bigger names in music seeking a place to relax and informally jam as well as novice musicians curious about the music generation. It became a community, a tourism stop, a place to rest your heels and pluck the strings. But mostly what became was a gathering of "open mic" informal jamming where all manner of skills could join in and feel welcomed.

Stephenville may already have this culture. The take away from this research was that any small (or even large) community can generate this musical community, this *je ne sais quoi*, to drive a larger agenda of *genius loci* for high quality locally produced music.

Stephenville has already invested in a speaker system that broadcasts music in the courtyard square at certain times. Music is recognized as an element that adds value to place. Live musicians can contribute to the atmosphere much more, since as far as known, visitors don't gather around speakers to listen to music in the City but they may gather if a local artist decided to play a few tunes on a Saturday afternoon!



# Parks & Open Space Master Plan



- Legend**
- Urban Trail
  - Existing BR Trail
  - Future BR Trail
  - Future City Trail Loop
  - Stephenville Parks
  - Erath County Parcels
  - City Parcels
  - Schools
  - City Limits

City Limit  
Loop Trail  
Inner-City Connector Trails

Downtown  
Tarleton State  
High School

Proposed City-wide Trail Loop; Extension of the Bosque River Trail

## Bosque River Trail Corridor

### Expanding to a city-wide looping trail network

Section 6 has already described in detail this major concept for the City but it deserves repeating that a city-wide circuit contributes to parkland access, cycling, jogging, walking, natural space immersion contributing to mental and physical health. Also the trail contributes to economic development, (this section) by attracting cycling competitions and marathons as well as being a city feature to business establishment or relocation. The Bosque Park below is an example of adding more parkland access throughout the City.

### Bosque Park

On the eastern edge of downtown is Vine Street. Formerly the anticipated location of a new senior center, now the site has an unknown destiny. As illustrated in the map to the right, this tract is informally known as Bosque Park.

Knowledge of this tract became known during the downtown master plan process when the senior center was anticipated there. At a public engagement meeting, a gentleman introduced himself as we discussed this site. The site has been partially graded with a pad and now left unfinished and no plan.

The vision of this plan and the downtown plan has always been to utilize this corridor of the Bosque River as a connecting downtown to the museum district on East Washington Street. The vision of this landscape that wraps around the Bosque River connects important cultural features to downtown and a trailhead at East Tarleton Street as described by the Downtown plan. The entirety of this swath of land can be an important park for the city being the most contributing landscape for the history of the region. Bosque Park is the north anchor of this stretch of land.

Highlighted here is the large amount of property that could be included in a natural park. Acquired by the City was the pole yard (bottom right) that was envisioned to be parking for downtown. Some of this land may still be privately owned but most of it is in the floodplain as evidenced by the need to pad up the building site left un-used. Joined with the museum district and with donations of intervening lands creates a magnificent stretch of Bosque River Trail that may be home to cafes

or boutique hotels.

This is an important site that should be kept for civic uses, possible a small stage for performances staying far away from the dripline of the heritage oak tree.

The museum district shown in the photograph in the top right corner looks west toward Vine Street and at the top of that photo you can see the pole yard and the newer housing units recently constructed.



## Economic Development

Part of the overall underlying strategy with this plan is to leverage parks and recreation projects into economic development strategies. It is well represented in research and literature, that a robust parks and recreation system in a city is one of the most powerful economic development tools for attracting business, tourism, retention of youth, and general quality of life that translate to an overall satisfaction of ones personal life experience. Lets review some of the projects in this master plan:

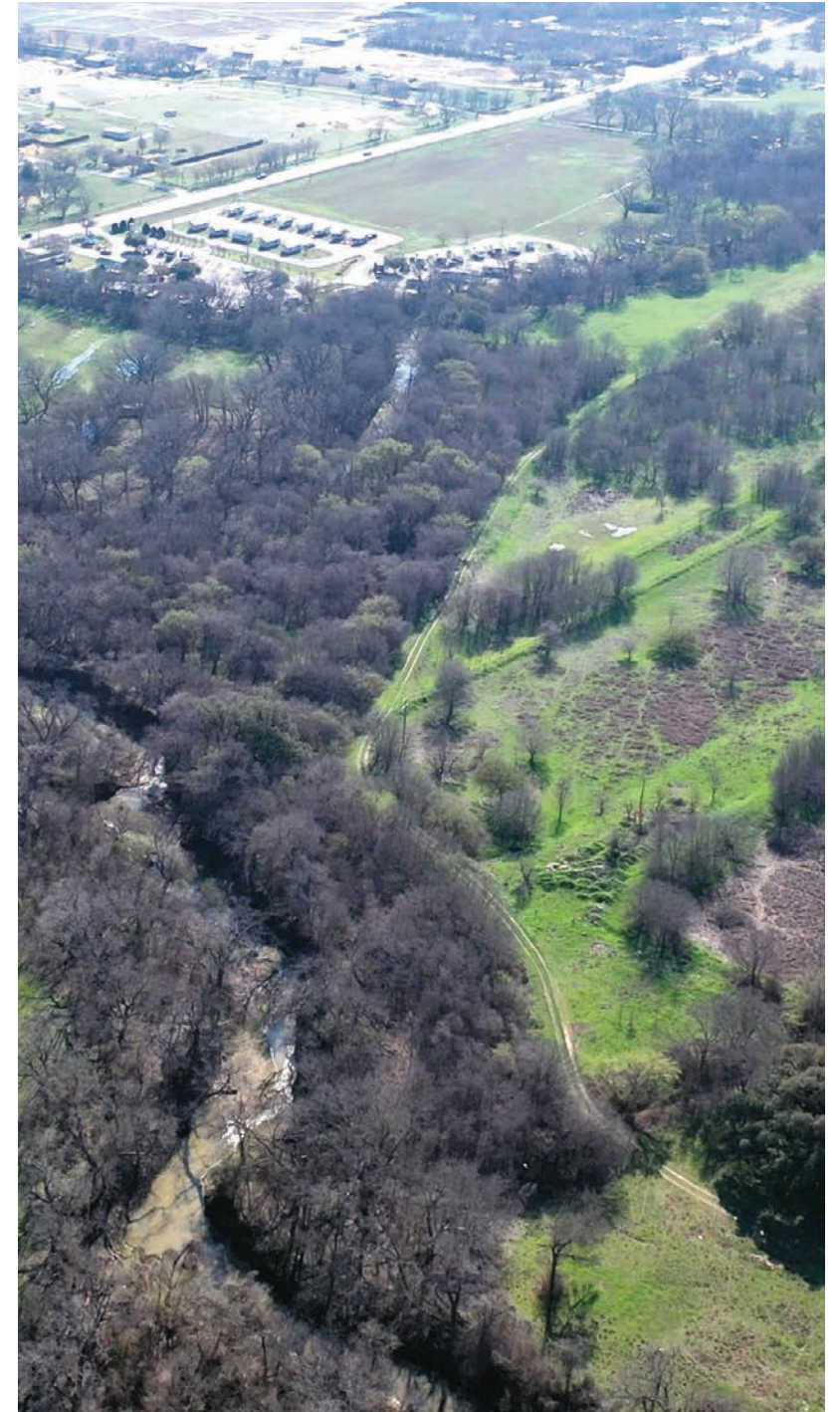
- **New Sports Complex:** Although not set in stone and lots of work to make that determination, developing this complex would benefit all of the recreation ball leagues and other sports with the addition of new tract of land and fields and an economic tool by hosting regional and state-wide tournaments. Tournaments bring in lots of families that stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, shop in stores, etc. Performing a market analysis and a cost benefit analysis is key to making this determination.
- **City of the Park:** Although only a little bit of this concept is included in this report. A much larger report has been performed that expands on the various programs that are in support of this concept. What *is* included is a brief description of the courthouse square to City Park connections points. Basically this is converting S. Columbia St. and S. Belknap St. into single one-way streets between Long Street and College Street, thereby giving up land for pedestrian uses. The land uses assigned to be updated to be a special district emphasizing coffee shops and cafes including outdoor dining, boutique hotels, and reduced setbacks, and an overall enhancement to the pedestrian experience in the corridor. During festival times, this two block connecting district is the resting place between the courthouse square and City Park.
- **City Park:** By including this park in this section, it is intended to link this with the sports complex above since the future of City Park is heavily dependent on the decision of whether or not to develop a sports complex. Two other alternatives are to not pursue regional or state tournaments, or try to fit in as much

as possible to be a host for these tournaments. The latter would be a dramatic change to fit in the requisite number of facilities and displace several other features.

- **Music Festival:** Also tied to the above is the ability to expand Birdsong Amphitheater grounds to host larger music events as a profitable venture. This would be a competing venture against developing more fields in the park for tournaments.
- **Birding Festival:** Very popular around the state are birding festivals. This is a surprisingly low cost event as compared to other big projects. As outlined in this report, completing the Bosque River Corridor trail to the wetlands south of the park, the festival could be a City Park-Trail-Wetland event that would potentially draw hundreds of people in the beginning to potentially thousands once known for a Friday kick-off event with music and lectures and bird watching with experts Saturday through Sunday.
- **City Loop Trail:** As outlined in this report, its important for the Bosque River Corridor trail to expand the vision to create a looping city-wide trail system. This is a longer term project but once completed, becomes a tremendous draw for families relocating to Stephenville, corporations moving headquarters here, and then the potential of cycling or marathon races that are so popular around the country.

The most complex of these economic agenda are both the decisions, and moving forward (if decided with a cost benefit analysis) with a new ground-up sports complex. This is an important decision to be made and many related actions are tied to this decision *being* made.

All of the bullet points in this section are tied up with the decision above with the exception of the City Loop Trail.





# 10

## Implementation Plan

*'The plan should have at least some parts on the regular agenda for the parks board meeting.'*

### Implementation

Writing a plan, even with great participation and excitement, is one thing. Getting the plan implemented where a system and staff (or volunteers) are in place, can be one of the most challenging elements of a successful parks and recreation master plan. People get excited, discussions are active and engaging, the City begins to celebrate the accomplishments of all involved, and then it finds its new home on a shelf.

In part, Implementation is beyond the ability of the consultant. The real work of implementation resides in the City staff, the Parks and Recreation Board, and ultimately the City Council to adhere to the recommendations and to set the agenda both in policy and funding. Generally, taking the lead on implementation is the Parks and Recreation Director

which in turn, educates the Parks and Recreation volunteer board. These two “implementors” are usually the most in tune with what is in the plan. In Stephenville’s case, the Downtown Master Plan may serve to be a catalyst to keep the interests alive and active. As this plan gets adopted, then the responsibility of guiding the tasks then turns back to the City, meaning the Director and Parks Board.

Implementation:

So what should the next step be? There are several aspects to implementation. Most importantly are aspects of funding the improvements, in some cases volunteer labor from a wide variety of sources, and champions that have the zeal to push hard to see projects move forward. **The main ingredient to keeping the plan alive is to discuss elements on a regular basis.** This constant reoccurrence of discussion works hand in hand with the champions and the continuing engagement of volunteers, keeping the pressure on for funding strategies.

The plan should have at least some parts on the regular agenda for the parks board meeting. Meeting agendas can get very crowded so even if its a small element of the plan, addressing it keeps the discussion alive. A simple framework in Stephenville’s case might be to include a discussion item on a single park and in each meeting throughout the year would be a different park. **First off needs to be the formation of an ad hoc committee to further the mission of City Park** and the concept of a new sports park. That one decision is a watershed moment for much of the rest of the overall plan.

**Decide on who are the likely champions** for various elements of the plan. Who can be an active volunteer coordinator that can reach out to the community, the university and drum up great support for a spring park day cleanup or a tree planting? The champions and volunteers may be part of a specific interest group, In my experience, organizations like scouting, or a corporate organization look for projects to get involved in. It will be up to the Board to keep the overall goals of the parks and recreation system in full view to maintain equitable attention to all the various components.

Funding is an important process which relies on budgets, private donations and grants. Many granting institutions relay on a matching grant program so having this in mind is important when seeking out grants to have funding commitments in hand for when grants are applied for. There

may be a fund built and set aside for this purpose through the mechanism of an initial council budgeting process and seeded over time with parkland dedication fee and parkland development fees. A regional corporation may also commit to dedicating funding to be matched by grants.





This overall master plan has a set of goals. These goals are:

- *The parks and recreation system in Stephenville will strive to enhance EQUITY for system-wide access for all abilities and age groups, distribution to achieve parks within a short distance of every home, and broad diversity of activities, facilities and programming.*
- *Stephenville will strategically enhance all current and future facilities and programming through the lens of economic development with emphasis on significant project strategies.*
- *Stephenville will begin the process of developing a multi-purpose, indoor recreation facility that can satisfy the needs of multiple court sports, meeting rooms and other diverse and appropriate uses with synergies. The project will include the repurposing of the retiring recreation center built in the thirties into an event space or other such facility.*
- *Given the importance of a strong parks and recreation system, Stephenville Parks and Recreation Department will establish firm accounting of O&M and reporting to support the need for a higher level of City budget support. This comes hand in hand with City support of larger agenda that can generate sound economic development.*
- *With the growth of Stephenville, new park areas will be sought out and developed starting with quality children's play and with an ultimate goal of a park, green space, or recreation facility within a 10 minute walk from every home.*
- *Stephenville has a strong arts and culture fabric within the parks, and the parks and recreation system will continue to strengthen these programs with connections to concepts within Downtown on the Park, music, the Bosque River Corridor and museum district.*
- *Parks and Recreation department will strive to enhance the management of the department both with operations of budgets and programming, and with the maintenance of recreation areas*
- *Complete a trail network that expand on the existing segments of the Bosque River Trail Corridor. Enhance trail components at key locations*

The parks board may benefit from establishing a set of "Implementation Goals". For example:

- Establish a process for selecting priority funding projects such as rotating between goals.
- Develop a process to decide on a funding mechanism for each proposed project
- If a project is funded through a bond election, then establish a protocol and strategy for outreach and messaging to ensure active promotion and the right information is put forward
- Develop a database of granting institutions, corporations, government programs
- Incentivize volunteerism through programming and identify new "Champions" so that the repeat volunteers don't burn out.
- Develop partnerships with various other departments and institutions such as SISD and soccer league

Below is a list of funding mechanisms and other ways to keep projects moving forward:

- Financing improvements through City budgeting and CIP process from year to year
- Bond election where the public elects to potentially impact their taxes through an election that is specifically targeting improvements
- Grant sources that are available locally, state-wide, and through federal sources. These may be public or private institutions or non-profits
- Grant sources from corporate sponsors, especially those who set up business in Stephenville
- Leveraging funding strength with partnering institutions and organizations
- In-kind services mostly through the involvement of the local citizens that are eager to see improvements happen. This may be rental of heavy equipment or



Elk Ridge Subdivision with park; looking down the powerline toward the wastewater treatment plant and the wetland

volunteering. Prominent potential partners may be Erath County and Tarleton State University

- Community service projects much like what has already happened in Stephenville
- And lastly, city staff position(s) that could be involved with grant writing and coordinating/organizing events

#### Institutional and Government Granting Organizations:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- The Conservation Fund
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Texas Water Development Board
- National Park Service
- USDA
- EPA
- Ducks Unlimited
- Audubon Society
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- American Trails
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Arbor Day Foundation
- Texas A&M Forest Service
- City Parks Alliance
- Local Civic Organizations
- Keep America Beautiful
- Local and regional foundations
- US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
- TCEQ

- DRIVE: Developing a Reliable Innovative Vision for the Economy Act: Federal Funding Program
- Major Retailers
- Outdoor Industry Association <https://outdoorindustry.org/who-we-are-2021/>

#### Partnering Jurisdictions, Institutions and Organizations

- City of Stephenville
- Erath County
- Tarleton State University

- Stephenville Independent School District
- Recreation leagues
- SEDA
- Texas Parks and Wildlife

#### Priority Project Timeline Spreadsheet

Assigning ad hoc committees is an important tool as well to keep the topics of the plan current. Each committee could be a few people from the parks board or residents not on the board with one member to be the liaison to the board.



This plan includes a live spread sheet titled “Priority Projects Timeline” that should be a working document for planning and discussion.

The parks board or parks director may assign an ad hoc committee to manage that spread sheet, modify it to suit the user’s needs, report on the changes made monthly or quarterly. Actively write in responsible party’s name in the column provided. **Keep this document alive** as part of keeping the master plan alive. As projects get completed, take them off the list. Add new projects as new ideas for projects comes forward. It is also recommended that progress over time be tracked. This could prove to be **useful when submitting grant requests** to demonstrate the City’s ability to manage projects and track progress.

When the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is approved and adopted, the Priority Project Timeline Spreadsheet will be turned over the the Parks Director and Parks Board for them to manage as they see fit following the recommendations of the master plan. The spread sheet at the time of approval is a first draft that is expected to be modified within the first 6 weeks to better fit he climate of funding and priority interests that they are more in tune with.

**It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Director report to City Council twice a year to update Council on progress made and/or barriers to completion.**

The spread sheet is expandable; adding an additional sheet or sheets could facilitate cost estimating and budgeting by tying in active cells to the front sheet. The cost column of \$\$\$ on the front sheet might become a live cell with numbers as budgets of projects are developed on additional sheets giving a snap-shot of costs on the front sheet. **In developing this priority projects timeline file, it is considered a draft attempt to balance priority with cost, duration, its economic impact, and how many people the element served; EQUITY being the guiding principle there.** For instance, completing all of the needed ADA requirements may involve multiple years of focused work effort. Whereas another high priority project is adding playscapes. Another is a new gym. All different costs and timelines, and some like restriping roads for urban trail involve public works department. All the while keeping in mind the equity of spatial distribution, equity of the variety of functions, and the equity of the abilities of



*Optimist Jaycee Park looking northwest. Note the land at the intersection that is part of the City ROW that should be ceded to the park to gain some land. This can simply be reforested to soften the city appeal from the streetscape.*

individuals and their needs.

The timeline portion of the spread sheet will likely be adjusted quite a bit as budgets are better understood with projects but also since the timeline doesn’t acknowledge the overall City CIP process and funding committments already made.

It is important to realize that there may be several smaller projects in key areas that are in great need that did not get expressed and then listed on the spread sheet. These projects will continue to surface as time goes on and need to be added to the spread sheet.

# Master Project List

	By Location	Projects	Tasks and comments	Priority Level 1-4	Goal Addressed	Department Responsibility	Staff Responsibility	Estimated Time Duration	Estimated Year Complete	Anticipated Funding Source	Estimated Cost Range (Excluding staff)	Fiscal Year Budget	Stakeholder / User contact	Anticipated Economic Impact	Notes	
1	Overall Parks and Recreation	Initiate a city-wide analysis of ADA compliance in all parks and public recreation facilities	This involves hiring a Registered accessibility Specialist (RAS) to evaluate all facilities	1	1	P&R + Public Works		1 year	2023-24	OB, GR	\$					
		Develop a phased approach to bring all P&R facilities into ADA compliance	Spread out and prioritize the cost and timing with a detailed analysis of critical needs across the system. Figure on a 5 year plan to bring all facilities into compliance including associated parking	2	1	Parks & Recreation		5 years	2023-28	OB, GR						
		Identify and acquire potential lands that works toward the goal of a park or greenspace within a ten minute walk of every home	Land under consideration are publicly owned land, private land left fallow, abandoned and potentially condemned land, and flood plain land.	1	1	P&R, P Board, Planning		2023-2030	2030	OB, DP, GR, BE						
		Begin partnerships with existing schools for new recreation lands in gap areas		2	5	P&R, P Board		2024-2030	2030	DP, OB, BE, GR						
		Develop a first phase of undeveloped parks by adding trails, doggie bags, lighting, trashcans, parking, signage, childrens nature play basics	Start with the basics that begin to invite people out to the space	1	5	P&R + Public Works		2023-2030	2030	OB, GR						
		Enhance education, diversity of activities, and economic development with strategic parks and recreation events and facilities.	This will take time but planning should start immediately	2	2	P&R + SEDA, P Board		2023-2027	Perpetual	OB, GR, BE, BE						
		Develop a comprehensive Implementation program that assigns leadership roles with goals and benchmarks	This task will be launched with this spread sheet to go forward as a dynamic management guide to be updated	1	4	P&R, P Board		2023	2023							
		Assign volunteer coordinator and organize volunteer events for programs listed in master plan	This should also be a paid staff person once budgeting and income stream gains momentum.	1	7	Parks & Recreation		2023	2023-24	OB						\$\$\$
		Have an annual city budget funding amount	Set a yearly amount with escalations	1	4	P&R + Council	P&R Director, Council	2023	perpetual	OB	\$\$\$					
		Update the Subdivision regulations to require higher parkland dedication fees, parkland development fees, and stronger criteria of credit for upland verses floodplain land.	Future developers of all forms of residential AND commercial properties (to a lesser extent) should be contributing to this fund. Commercial properties especially contributing to people coming to town.	1	4	Planning & Development Dept with consultation from P&R Dept.	Planning Director, P&R Director	2023	2023	DP	\$\$					
		Increase maintenance of all parks, including the removal of stickers, trash and fire ants in those areas that kids are mostly playing in. Bosque River was called out as having a lot of trash	Number 1 on the least favorite feature was dirty bathrooms. Close behind was lack of bathrooms near activity centers like popular playgrounds	1	7	Parks & Recreation	P&R	Yearly	Perpetual	OB	\$\$	2024+				
			This goes for sports fields grooming as well as all other areas. The parks dedicated but not developed should begin a small amount of mowing to begin to make these areas more	1		Parks & Recreation	P&R	Yearly	Perpetual	OB	\$\$					
			What would be helpful is forming a 'Friends of City Park' that can assist with trash cleanup	1		Parks & Recreation	P&R	Yearly	Perpetual	OB	\$\$					
			Create a strategic plan / critical path for deferred maintenance	1		Parks & Recreation	P&R	2 mo	2023-2025	OB	\$\$					
			Associated with this highly voted on survey question, is the need for staff to handle increased maintenance requirements	1		P&R, Council	P&R	Yearly	Perpetual	OB	\$\$					
		Publicly available splashpad (no entry fee)	Could be a great use at Optimist Jaycee Park	2	1	Parks & Recreation	P&R, Public Works	18 mo	2024-25	OB	\$\$\$					
			One was proposed in the drive through ATM NW of Courthouse in the Downtown Plan	3		Council + SEDA	P&R, Public Works	2024-26	2026	OB	\$\$\$					
		Maintain, update, repair, playground equipment.	High factor in surveys	2	7	Parks & Recreation		2 years	2023-25	OB	\$\$					
		Evaluate all playgrounds with a Certified Playground Safety Specialist as a third party consultant	Use a third party consultant to relieve the city of liability	2	7	Parks & Recreation	P&R, Outsource	18 mo	2024	OB, GR, DO, UF	\$\$					
		Increase Sports Programming	This shows up in the survey, Q19, for ball sports, basketball, health wellness fitness, aquatics, basketball, and hiking/biking	2	1	Parks & Recreation		2023-24	2024	OB, UF, GR	\$					
		Increase funding for current and new staff positions		1	7	P&R + Council		2023-24	2024-25	OB, UF	\$\$\$					
		Increase funding for maintenance and equipment		1	7	P&R + Council		2023-25								
		Begin a campaign of support and strong re-engagement strategy with all major civic groups including churches, and potential corporate donors		1	7	Parks & Recreation		2023-24	perpetual	OB	\$					
		Provide more Basketball & Volleyball with indoor rec and outdoor spaces	The most comments have been about getting indoor facilities for these sports (leagues) See larger Projects below	2	3	Parks & Recreation		2024-25	2025	BE, GR	\$\$\$\$					
		Provide for Flag Football, Soccer fields	Both of these sports have been underserved and it appears that there is a much larger need for fields to accommodate league play for both. Look to Optimist Jaycee and Prairie Wind parks	3	1	Parks & Recreation		2024-25	2025	OB, BE	\$\$\$					
		Tennis & Pickleball	Tennis and Pickleball are in demand and there are two courts in City Park and Tarleton State has courts. A dedicated Tennis and Pickleball center should be established with 6 courts of tennis and 6 courts for pickle ball with room to grow.	3	1	Parks & Recreation		2024, 2026	2026	OB + UF = GR	\$\$\$\$					
		Develop partnerships with all the surrounding school campuses to allow public use of recreational lands and sports fields		1	2	Parks & Recreation		2024-25	2025	UF	\$					
		Create an outdoor learning space for children on the green lawn of the public library to enhance children's programming	This is from the discussions in the Downtown Master Plan programming	2	1	P&R + Library		2024-25	2025	GR, OB	\$					
		Find opportunities in existing parks or new parks for children's nature play as an important component for childhood early cognitive and sensory development	Much valuable research proves that children's nature play reaps many rewards in early childhood development	3	1, 5	Parks & Recreation		2023-25	perpetual	OB, GR	\$					



Master Project List																
	By Location	Projects	Tasks and comments	Priority Level 1-4	Goal Addressed	Department Responsibility	Staff Responsibility	Estimated Time Duration	Estimated Year Complete	Anticipated Funding Source	Estimated Cost Range (Excluding staff)	Fiscal Year Budget	Stakeholder / User contact	Anticipated Economic Impact	Notes	
		User fees at Splashville: consider rethinking of user fees to reduce impacts to locals	Several comments were related to folks being upset by having to pay user fees. Limit userfees to people who don't live in the City and issue a city pass to locals	2	1, 4	Parks & Recreation		2023	perpetual	UF	\$					
2	Downtown on the Park	Develop linkages with Downtown through corridors that connect downtown with City Park and trails; Specifically Belknap and Columbia		2	5, 8	Council + SEDA + Public Works		2023-26	2026	OB, BE	\$\$\$\$			\$\$\$		
		Strengthen the relationship between Tarleton and Vine Sts (Bosque Park) with a new CIVIC facility at the Tarleton gateway and the museum and promote this strip of land as an outdoor art garden. development. Integrate with a pollinator garden.	East Tarleton Street terminates with the Bosque River Corridor near the hospital. This linkage also connects the museum with the same area. This particular stretch of land is too important to be private	2	6, 8	Council + SEDA + Public Works		2024-27	2027	OB, BE	\$\$\$\$			\$\$\$		
		Re-stripe Tarleton Street with separate or shared bike lanes and complete the sidewalk system that connects the Bosque River Trail with the university	East Tarleton Street has been designated on the City Loop Trail System map as the eastward connector and key element to strengthen the overall trail system plan and linkage between Tarleton State University and Downtown.	3	5, 8	Council + SEDA + Public Works		2026-27	2027	OB, BE	\$\$					
		Regarding Belknap and Columbia streets between College and Long Streets, change the zoning with allowable uses and setbacks. Reconsider the street section and sidewalk connectivity to make walking, shopping, lounging, possible and attractive along these streets	Belknap and Columbus streets are natural connection corridors and a core strategy in the Downtown on the Park plan, and should be supported with city initiated zoning changes to encourage cafes, coffee shops & bars, art galleries, antique stores, etc.	3	2, 6	Council + SEDA + Public Works		2025-27	2027	OB, BE	\$\$\$\$			\$\$\$\$		
		Work with downtown venues to showcase local and regional music talents in conjunction with a music festival in City Park		3	2, 6	SEDA + P&R		2023-2025	2025+	OB, UF, GR, DP	\$			\$\$\$\$		
		Develop an arts festival that can take place on the top City Park lawn areas and work up the connecting Belknap and Columbia Streets	this is reflective of the downtown on the park strategies and needs to identify a time slot in the calendar for an annual event. The programming portion of the timeline would be narrowed down once a schedule is set	2	2, 6	SEDA + P&R		2023-2025	2025+	OB, UF, GR, DP	\$\$\$			\$\$\$\$		
3	City Park	Form an Ad Hoc Committee to continue the discussions regarding the future of City Park	The task of the committee will be two-fold: perform a cost benefit analysis on developing a sports park and making the decision of Go /No Go, and, working up a new master plan for City Park		1, 2, 4	Parks & Recreation		2023-24	2024	OB	\$			\$\$\$\$		
		Reorganize fields in City Park	This task is in conjunction with the concept of whether or not the City wants to pursue a new ground-up sports park for the sake of hosting tournaments bring in an income stream to support parks and recreation as well as area restaurants and hotels.	1	1, 2, 4	Parks & Recreation		2024-27	2027	OB	\$\$\$			\$\$\$		
		Music Festival in City Park	There has been much discussion regarding having a significant music festival in City Park. much of this was with Larry Joe Taylor and Company regarding the specifications needed to accomplish a festival that was profitable. In short, it could work but the accommodations for the performers and the audience would need to undergo expansion. This is possible and would take time and money to get done. The main question is whether the City decides on developing a new sports park instead of making City Park work for tournaments. The latter doesn't seem possible according to the discussions.	3	1, 2, 4	P&R + SEDA		2025-26	2026+	OB, GR, UF, DP	Initial-\$\$\$\$ Future \$\$			\$\$\$\$		
		Pull up and replace the parking stops in City Park		1	7	Parks & Recreation		2023-24	2024	OB	\$					
		Restrooms and concession buildings upgrades and additions		1	7	Parks & Recreation		2024-26	2026	OB, GR	\$\$\$					
		Organize a Birding festival utilizing the City Park, Bosque Trail, and Wetlands		2	2	P&R + SEDA		2023-2024	2024+	OB	\$			\$\$\$\$		
		Dock replacement according to a new City Park Master Plan		3	7	Parks & Recreation		2025-2026	2026	OB, GR, DP, UF	\$					
		Bank Stabilization as needed. Create access to the water utilizing the low water crossing including transportation calming. Enhancements to allow for children to interact with the river with a habitat restoration project	People want to access the water. Complete some water quality testing for safety. Utilize the low water crossing as a basis for developing a significant amenity on both sides of the weir	3	1	P&R + Public Works		2026-27	2027	OB, GR	\$\$					
		Incorporate canoes / paddle boards on the river		4	1	Parks & Recreation		2025	2025	GR, OB	\$					
		Ensure that ADA access allows for water contact		2	1	Parks & Recreation		2026-27	2027	OB DP	4					
		Complete a strategic plan that incorporates the phasing of a new Sports Complex and the phased conversion of City Park sports fields impacted by the new facility	See New Sports Park under Large Projects	1	7	Parks & Recreation		2024	2024		\$					
		Develop new senior Center	Underway	1	1	P&R		2023-2024	2024	OB	\$\$\$\$					
		Develop new Recreation Center that can accommodate court space for tournaments						2023-25	2025	OB, BE, GR	\$\$\$\$					
		Pavement and circulation is in need of repaving and wayfinding so that on game days, fields can be located	Work this task in conjunction with City Park master planning	3	7	P&R + Public Works		2024-2025	2025	OB, UF	\$\$					

2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030							
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
			Blue	Blue	Light Blue																														
			Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange	Orange																					
							Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange	Orange																		
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	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange																	
		Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Purple	Purple	Purple	Purple																								
	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue																														
				Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange																										
							Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Purple	Purple	Purple																					
	Orange	Orange	Orange																																
	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Purple		Green	Green	Purple		Green	Green	Purple																					
											Blue	Orange																							
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	Blue	Orange	Orange																																
			Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Orange	Orange	Orange																										

# Master Project List

	By Location	Projects	Tasks and comments	Priority Level 1-4	Goal Addressed	Department Responsibility	Staff Responsibility	Estimated Time Duration	Estimated Year Complete	Anticipated Funding Source	Estimated Cost Range (Excluding staff)	Fiscal Year Budget	Stakeholder / User contact	Anticipated Economic Impact	Notes	
	City Park	Add Shade with trees and canopies, especially on fields with seating		2	7	Parks & Recreation		2024-2025	2025	OB, GR	\$					
		Splashville Improvements: Expand, Free for locals, additional programming	There were lots of votes concerning Splashville including adding a pool, indoor pool, heated pool, etc. Families with toddlers need more splash play both in Splashville and in other places	4	1, 7	Parks & Recreation		2028-2030	2030	OB, GR, BE	\$\$\$					
		Senior Citizen programming / activities	Senior Center is listed below in large project category. This is a high ranking survey response	1	1, 7	Parks & Recreation		2023-2024	2024+	OB	\$					
		New consistant trash cans with lids, create furnishings style guide	Many cities develop a style guide for furnishings so that the same product is purchased year after year for consistancy and spreading out the investment	1	7	Parks & Recreation		2024-25	2025+	OB, UF, DP	\$					
		Provide maintenance buildings in City Park that is in a strategic location	This action needs to follow a more detailed conversation and study of City Park as it relates to the larger questions	4	7	Parks & Recreation		2026	2026	OB, UF	\$					
		BMX or Pump Track in the field northwest portion of park south of Rec Hall	Add to this space a new skateboard park and develop this corner as a youth gathering place	3	1	Parks & Recreation		2024	2024	OB, UF	\$\$					
		Reforest the park in spaces between fields and activities. Incorporate pollinator gardens.	This could be civic organizations and related to where irrigation is and conversations regarding the future of the park. Ongoing volunteer activities could continue this throughout Stephenville parks	3	7	Parks & Recreation		2024-2027	2027+	DP	\$					
		Convert the 1930's recreation hall into a events and performing arts center	Using the 1930 building could be a great compion for an arts festival providing indoor space for exhibitions or performances	3	1, 6	P&R + SEDA		2025-2028	2028	BE, GR, DP	\$\$\$\$					
		Develop an arts festival that can take place on the top City Park lawn area	This is reflective of the downtown on the park strategies; <del>redundant line from Downtown On The Park above</del>	2	1, 6	P&R + SEDA		2023-2025	2025	GR, DP	\$					
		Pollinator Gardens at Century Park	This would require a special volunteer group to develop and maintain. Start small scale and grow as interests grow	3	7	Parks & Recreation		2024	2024	GR, DP	\$					
		Additional seating at Children's playground		2	7	Parks & Recreation		2024	2024	GR, DP	\$					
		Parking lot lighting for wintertime and evening events		2	1	P&R + Public Works		2025-2026	2026	OB, BE	\$\$					
		Ball park management: many locals are upset that the ball fields are locked up when its not league play time. Consider a schedule of play for non-league times or residents	Its not clear what the source of the comments are that are calling for this change but its sorth having the conversation through social media or other means to sort deeper into the issue. Maybe upgrades to the practice fields are the solution		7	Parks & Recreation		2023-2024	2024+	OB	\$					
4	Optimist Jaycee Park	Form an Ad Hoc committee to explore the highest and best use Of the park considering the options in the plan with economic projections. Incorporate the city trail system with connections north and south ends	Highest and best use may include the proposal to re-forest the land or a hybrid of sports and re-forestation. Staff plan is a viable option but should be weighed against larger decisions such as sports complex and the needs of other sports or leisure activities	1	1	Parks & Recreation		2023-2024	2024	OB	\$					
		Conduct a public meeting with specific notification to all the adjacent neighborhoods.	The most comments regarding this park tended to be the amount of wasted space and loving the walking trail.	1		Parks & Recreation		2024	2024	OB	\$					
		Address stickers and fire ants	Evaluate and address as needed; this will be an ongoing eradicate and control. Being near the river in City Park, recommend the use of weed torch in the early season when the weeds can be identified. Gain the support of scouting troops or other youth organizations and entice with ice cream parties and awards.	2		Parks & Recreation		2023-2024	2024+	OB	\$					
		Update the restrooms		1		Parks & Recreation		2024	2024	OB	\$					
		Gain the north corner of the land area at the Lingleville-Harbin-Northwest streets to join in as park space and re-wild this corner	It appears on the zoning map that this land area is part of the city street ROW. It should be transferred to the parks department to be joined to Optimist Jaycee Park. Even if it's a depression for stormwater, the functionality and aesthetic can be improved with design considerations with developing a stand of woods and pollinator gardens as well as rain gardens	2		Public Works, TxDOT, P&R		2023-24	2024	OB	\$\$					
		Tennis and Pickleball Center as an option to parts of the staff plan	Racket sports have received lots of votes with the public survey and only four tennis courts in the City outside of Tarleton State U. Planning for a racket center with both pickleball and tennis would be very popular and increase lifetime sports activities	2		Parks & Recreation		2027-28	2028	OB, DP, GR, BE	\$\$\$					
		Once a highest and best use analysis have been performed with public input, develop a detailed plan for bidding and construction	This is about considering what is the best use and sentiment of the neighborhoods in that part of Stephenville	1		Parks & Recreation		2025-26	2026	BE, OB, UF						
		Splashpad with picnic tables and shade	Given the priority that the online surveys give splashpads, this Park is ideal being the most prominent park in this part of the city Also surround the splashpad with picnic tables and shelters	2		P&R, Public Works		2026-27	2027	GR, DP, BE	\$\$\$					
5	Collin Street Park	Formalize remaining park with maintenance , childrens play both natural and playscape, small trail though woods and pollinator gardens with nature interpretation		3		P&R		2026-27	2027	GR, DP, OB	\$\$					
		Create a small dog park with doggie bags and trash		2		P&R		2026-27	2027	GR, DP, OB	\$					





Master Project List																
	By Location	Projects	Tasks and comments	Priority Level 1-4	Goal Addressed	Department Responsibility	Staff Responsibility	Estimated Time Duration	Estimated Year Complete	Anticipated Funding Source	Estimated Cost Range (Excluding staff)	Fiscal Year Budget	Stakeholder / User contact	Anticipated Economic Impact	Notes	
5	Comstock Park	Perform a safety inspection and place natural barriers as needed		1, 7		P&R		2026-27	2027	OB	\$					
		Create pollinator garden		1		P&R		2026-27	2017	OB	\$					
6	Bill Johnson Park	Place low fencing around the park	Fencing of playgrounds received several votes. It is not known if there is enough traffic or if sight distance is not adequate to warrant a fence but balls and toys could easily fly out of this small space.	2		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$					
		May need doggie bags and trash		3		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$					
		Add or repair sidewalks leading to the park		1, 5		Public Works		2024	2024	OB	\$					
7	Prairie Wind Park	This park has been used for soccer practice in the past and should be formalized for soccer with grading and goals.		3		P&R		2025	2025	OB	\$\$					
		Develop childrens playscape with shade after assessing the age group needs in the surrounding neighborhoods	Get basics done in 2025 and other elements can be added later.	1		P&R		2025, 2027	2025, 2027	OB	\$\$					
		Establish the trail location that is on the Bosque River Corridor master plan. Blade this trail as a soft trail to establish its use and schedule a full trail linkage from the Bosque Trail to the Optimist Jaycee Park	This is more of the trail master plan and tasks but the alignment can be made through Prairie Wind Park at this stage once the soccer and playscape is established	4		P&R		2027	2027	OB	\$\$					
		Perform a safety inspection and place natural barriers as needed		1, 7		P&R		2025	2025	OB	\$					
8	Clifton Heights Park	It appears that the park may be multiple lots and the boundaries of the park are not obvious or known. Survey the city owned park and create obvious boundaries such as decorative fencing to prevent encroachment by adjacent homes.	Parkland dedication may need to be verified. Selling the tract has been mentioned but that takes a city-wide referendum	1		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$					
		Connect the Clifton Heights tract to the main loop trail with a pedestrian bridge		3		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$\$					
		Develop park with mowing, picnic tables, signage and parking to access the park		1		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$\$					
		It may be possible to expand the park size running along the river or out to the main street. Look for opportunities so that the park isn't so isolated		4		P&R		2025+	2025+	OB	\$					
		Once boundaries are established, develop children's play area in a mowed portion of the site with seating		1		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$\$					
		Perform a safety inspection and place natural barriers as needed		1, 7		P&R		2024	2024	OB	\$					
9	Elk Ridge Park	Connect Elks Ridge Park with the remaining homes in the subdivision and to the wastewater treatment plan using the powerline easement		1		Legal, P&R, Public Works		6 months	2025	OB	\$\$	2024-2025		0		
		Develop the park with children's nature play and seating, add appropriate wayfinding signage and parking with park entrance		1		P&R		1 month	2025	OB	\$	2024-2025		0		
		Perform a safety inspection and place natural barriers as needed		1		P&R		Quarterly	2025	OB	\$	2024-2025		0		
		Expand park with trailhead and seating		3		P&R		2 months	2026	OB	\$	2026		0		
10	Creekside Park	Negotiate legal access point either as an access easement or construct a new driveway cut with new parking if possible		1	1	Legal, P&R, Public Works		3 months	2024	OB	\$	2023-2024		0		
		Work with Engineer regarding some modification to the land to lift up enough for a children's playscape		1		P&R, Public Works		6 months	2024	OB	\$	2023-2024		0		
		Take advantage of the landscape to create a simple trail of natural ground for exploring area. Harvest large trees around the city to place there for seating and prepare with anchoring and champhoring cut ends and removing sharps		3		P&R		3 months	2024	OB	\$	2023-2024		0		
		The above refers to children's nature play, consult with a practitioner for additional advice or look online for Blenenstock playgrounds		1		P&R		2 months	2025	OB	\$\$	2025		0		
		Perform a safety inspection and place natural barriers as needed		1, 7		P&R		Quarterly	Quarterly	OB	\$	2023-2024		0		



Master Project List																		
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11	Trail System	Re-convene the steering committee for the Bosque River Trail		1	8	P&R, Trail Conservancy		Immediately	2023 Q2		0			0				
		Perform an analysis of each segment for acquisition and cost		1		P&R, Trail Conservancy		6 months	2024		0			0				
		Trail Fundraising events	Once trail construction is complete the funding can go toward trail improvements	1		Trail Conservancy		annual	Annual	DP, GR	\$				\$\$\$			
		Evaluate the next phase to be connecting the south wetlands at the treatment plant to facilitate a bird watching festival	The Bird Festival can generate funding to finance the remaining trail segments. There are also discussions regarding the next phase being the northern progression. Much of this was due to land donations. Push forward on both ends of the trail and certainly acquire the donations even if they do not currently connect.	2		P&R, Trail Conservancy		6 months	2024	DP, GR, OB	\$\$					0		
		Develop an annual fundraising event for the trail funding. Monetize the bird watching festival to support funding the remaining trail segments and future trail network		3		P&R, Trail Conservancy		6 months		DF	\$						0	
		Repair the damaged trail segment near Vine Street		1		P&R, Public Works		3 months		OB	\$	2023					0	
		Create an ad hoc committee to explore what a bird watching festival might look like	Connect with Madge Lindsay, Professional Bird Watching Consultant	1		Trail Conservancy		3 months			0						0	
		Complete all trail segments according to the existing master plan		2		P&R, Trail Conservancy		2024-2026		Grants, donation	\$\$\$	2024-2027					\$\$\$\$	
		Adopt a new trail looping system amendment for the city-wide trail system to codify for future subdivisions	See below under large projects	1		P&R, Trail Conservancy		2023			0						0	
		Develop an annual fundraising event for the trail funding	Could be the birding festival; Begin with an event at the nature center on the trail and advertise a bird watching tour	1		Trail Conservancy		2023-2024		GF	\$						\$\$\$	
		All along the trail alignment that is set, identify land adjacent to the trail for parkland expansion to add park	Using this strategy transforms trail segments into linear parkland better serving the community	3														
12	Large Projects	New Sports Complex	Complete a strategic plan that incorporates the phasing of a new sports park facility and the phased conversion of sports fields in City Park impacted by the new facility	1	2	P&R, Public Works, SEDA, Council		2023-24	2026, 2029									
			Convene a land search committee	1		SEDA, Council		2023										
			Approach Schreiber Foods or other major corporate or institutional employer about partnership on a major sports	2		Council, Parks Board		2023										
		Music Festival	Planning & Design	1	P&R		2024-25											
			Construction: Two Phases	3	P&R, Public Works		2025-29											
			Coordination with City Park Master Planning	1	SEDA		2023											
			Perform market analysis / Cost-Benefit Analysis	1	SEDA													
			Promotion & Marketing	1	SEDA													
			Planning & Design	1	SEDA, P&R													
		Birding Festival	Acquisition of east tract	2	SEDA, Council, P&R													
			Construction	3	P&R, SEDA													
			Coordinate with the Trail Expansion	1	BRTCC Conservancy, P&R		2023											
			Prepare a plan and trail alignment with observation stations	2	BRTCC Conservancy, P&R		2023-24											
			Promotion & Marketing	1	SEDA, P&R		2024											
			Place-hold on the City Park calendar the festival weekend	1	BRTCC													
		City-Wide Loop Trail	Plan events, sponsors, music etc.	2	BRTCC													
			Create a birding destination at the wetlands facility at the Wastewater treatment Plant that can be connected by trail to the city. Promote this for birdwatching tourism and ultimately a birdwatching festival	2	BRTCC													
			First year festival to stage in Nature Center near Bosque Park	1	BRTCC, P&R													
		City-Wide Loop Trail	Subsequent years to be staged in City Park depending on construction activities	3	BRTCC, P&R													
			Adopt a new amendment to the Bosque River Corridor Master Plan for the city-wide trail system	1	BRTCC, P&R		2023	2023										
			Begin planning and process for completing the current Bosque River Trail Corridor by securing land donations and investigating the wetland connection	1	BRTCC, P&R		2023-24											
Form a committee to ground truth the conceptual plan in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to refine this alignment for the adoption	2		BRTCC, P&R		2023-24	2024												
Begin discussions with land owners regarding trail alignment, donations, Life estate dedications, etc. Purchase if cost are below market and developable land unless parkland dedication can pick it up.	1		BRTCC, P&R		2023+	2030												
Have a solid discussion about the overall loop trail becoming a dual purpose trail with an equestrian trail parallel to the main trail	3		BRTCC, P&R															
City-Wide Loop Trail	On streets with the Urban Trail linkages, make improvements to streets and/or restripe lanes to accommodate bike lanes. Pave with sidewalks	2	BRTCC, P&R, Public Works															
	All along the trail alignment that is set, identify land adjacent to the trail for parkland expansion to add park features.																	



# Master Project List

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Large Projects		New Senior Center	It is understood that the time of this writing that a new center is being considered in City Park. Its important to consider that the new design and concept be comprehensive to serve seniors to the fullest capacity including functions of health and well-being. It is also important to not create a building or facility that tries to do too much of multiple patron groups, ie a seniors and recreation center may not serve both groups to a level that is satisfactory for either patron group.	1	1	P&R, Council		2023-24	2025						
			Future senior center needs to include therapeutic gardens and memory care (not in a clinical sense) so that seniors have multiple options for stimuli when visiting.			P&R			2025						
			Seniors need indoor crafts and dance or yoga as well as outdoor fresh air activities and walking. Incorporate plenty of outdoor space for exercise and social gatherings			P&R			2025						
		New Recreation Center	This was called out both in interviews and in survey results. The City needs a new facility that can house four or more basketball and volleyball courts	1	3	P&R		2024-25	2025						
			Volleyball has the capacity to expand teams to utilize the space and be a regional center for the sport			P&R		2025	2025						
			Develop to accommodate tournament play that can be an income stream for P&R.			P&R		2025	2025						
		Repurpose Old Recreation Center	Once the recreation activities have been removed from the 1930's building, repurpose the old gym into an events center / multipurpose or performing arts center	4	1	P&R		2025-28	2028						
		Organize a cycling competition or fund raiser once the loop around the city is completed.	Engage in research for cycling course lengths and what others are doing	3	2	P&R		2024	2024						
			Convene an ad hoc committee to discuss cycling activities and to vet the course mapped out			P&R		2024	2024						



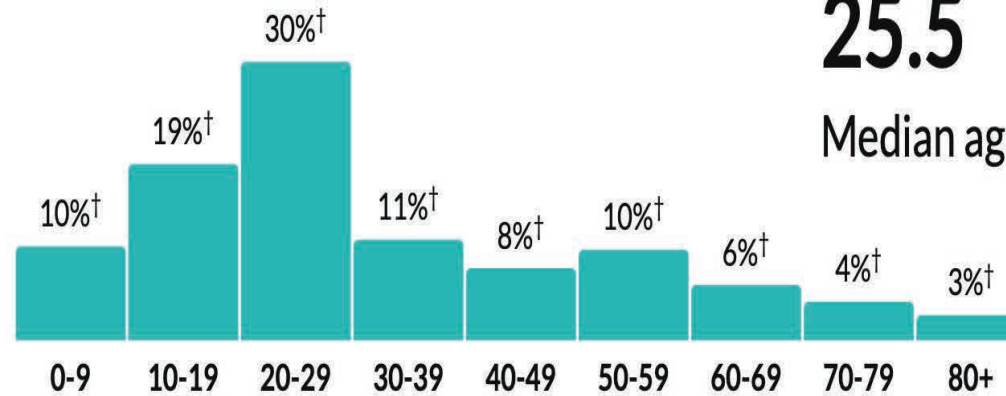
# 11 Appendices

## In This Chapter

- Stephenville Demographics
- Children's Play
- Online Survey Full Written Responses
- 2008 Comprehensive Plan; Chapter Parks and Recreation
- Bosque River Trail Strategic Plan
- Capitalizing on the Natural (Excerpt from the Downtown Master Plan)

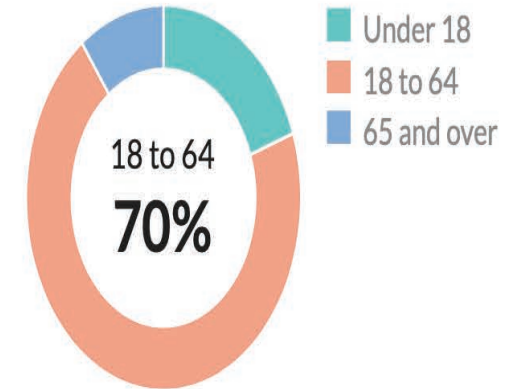
## Demographics

Population by age range



**25.5**  
Median age

Population by age category



Population by age range

Column	Stephenville				Stephenville, TX Micro Area			
0-9	10.1%†	±1.9%	2,078	±384.1	12.1%	±1%	5,102	±435.8
10-19	19%†	±2.5%	3,900	±515.5	16%	±1%	6,768	±403.7
20-29	30%†	±3.5%	6,158	±717.9	20.2%	±1.8%	8,556	±755.5
30-39	10.8%†	±1.8%	2,220	±367.2	12%	±0.9%	5,090	±396.5
40-49	7.7%†	±1.5%	1,576	±309.6	9.4%†	±1%	3,987	±407.7
50-59	9.7%†	±1.7%	1,995	±339.1	10.9%	±0.9%	4,605	±366.5
60-69	5.9%†	±1.4%	1,203	±293.3	10%†	±1.1%	4,227	±450.8
70-79	4.1%†	±1%	845	±205.8	6.1%†	±0.7%	2,588	±286.1
80+	2.6%†	±0.8%	529	±159.9	3.2%†	±0.6%	1,365	±235.6



Population in 2019: 21,247 (98% urban, 2% rural).  
Population change since 2000: +42.4%



Males: 9,788 (46.1%)  
Females: 11,459 (53.9%)

Median resident age: 25.0 years  
Texas median age: 35.1 years

Zip codes: 76401, 76402.

[Stephenville Zip Code Map](#)

Estimated median household income in 2019: \$48,807 (it was \$27,489 in 2000)  
Stephenville: \$48,807  
TX: \$64,034

Estimated per capita income in 2019: \$25,595 (it was \$15,108 in 2000)

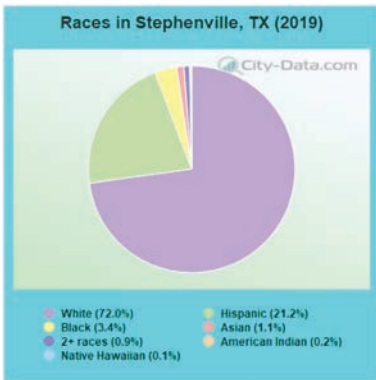
[Stephenville city income, earnings, and wages data](#)

Estimated median house or condo value in 2019: \$164,386 (it was \$66,100 in 2000)  
Stephenville: \$164,386  
TX: \$200,400

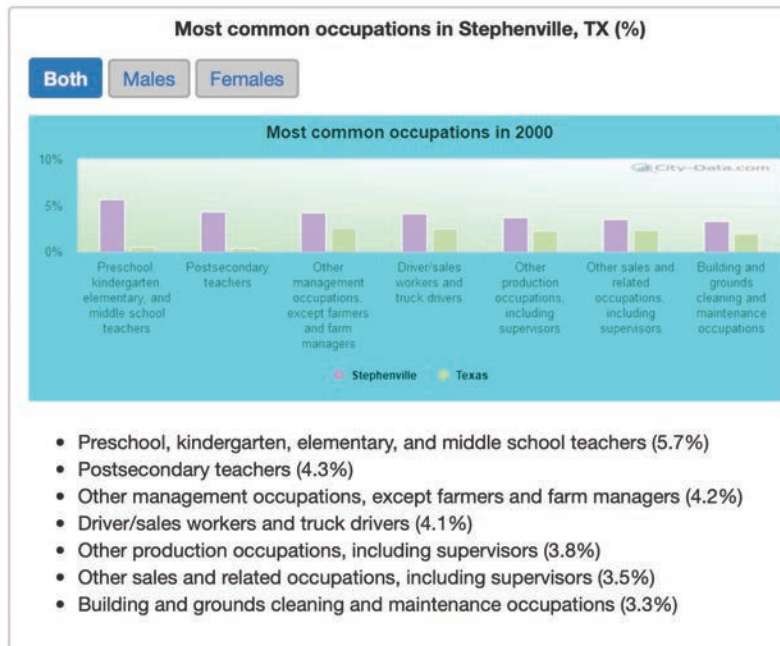
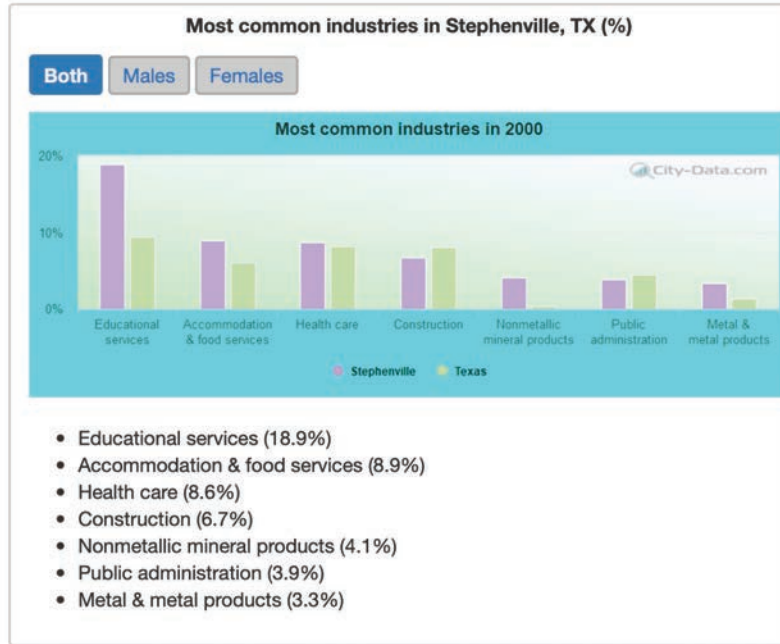
Median gross rent in 2019: \$966.

March 2019 cost of living index in Stephenville: 81.6 (low, U.S. average is 100)

[Stephenville, TX residents, houses, and apartments details](#)



White alone	72.0%	15,224
Hispanic	21.2%	4,479
Black alone	3.4%	727
Asian alone	1.1%	240
Two or more races	0.9%	181
American Indian alone	0.2%	32
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	26



## Food Environment Statistics:

Number of grocery stores: 5

This county: 1.41 / 10,000 pop.  
State: 1.47 / 10,000 pop.

Number of supercenters and club stores: 1

Erath County: 0.28 / 10,000 pop.  
State: 0.14 / 10,000 pop.

Number of convenience stores (no gas): 1

Erath County: 0.28 / 10,000 pop.  
Texas: 1.11 / 10,000 pop.

Number of convenience stores (with gas): 15

This county: 4.22 / 10,000 pop.  
Texas: 3.95 / 10,000 pop.

Number of full-service restaurants: 29

Here: 8.15 / 10,000 pop.  
State: 6.13 / 10,000 pop.

Adult diabetes rate:

Here: 8.8%  
State: 8.9%

Adult obesity rate:

Here: 27.4%  
Texas: 26.6%

Low-income preschool obesity rate:

Erath County: 16.2%  
State: 15.7%

# Children's Play

Childhood development is incredibly important in the years 1 through 7 years old. The research is immense and points to later success as an adult in social and cognitive skills. Successful recreation for children requires that all their senses be engaged and coupled with this stimulus need to include recreation that touches upon what is called *multiple intelligences*. Complete sensory engagement improves the experience and memory, learning becomes richer. Bienenstock Playgrounds references research that demonstrates the high value of playgrounds that offer four distinctive spaces in a playground:

- Play areas that work on gross motor skills
- Play areas that work on fine motor skills
- Play areas that offer space for dramatic play and imagination
- Play areas that offer quiet contemplative space

Most playgrounds only offer products with gross motor skills play and so lacking in a higher sensory engagement.

Risk taking is another important factor in children's play and development. When left to their own devices, children assess risks well starting at a young age. Play that involves bumps, bruises, scrapes and cuts that are minor are considered *learning injuries* and are important in a child's experience and contributes to a child's risk assessment. Children that have learning injury experiences compared to children that have had a highly protected environments with padding and extreme safety measures prove to have fewer



severe injuries later in life during normal life experiences.

Beyond the standard senses, playgrounds need to strive to stimulate each individual's multiple intelligences. What this refers to are a set of innate aptitudes that each child has:

- Bodily-Kinesthetic
- Interpersonal
- Musical
- Verbal-Linguistic
- Logical-Mathematical
- Naturalistic
- Intrapersonal
- Visual-Spatial
- Existential

This research originally came from Dr. Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist at Harvard University. His theory proposes that a person doesn't have just one intelligence but multiple intelligences and each can be cultivated and developed. Within a playscape, these intelligences go hand in hand with the primary senses in the design and selection of elements in a playground. Like sensory engagement, the intelligences also should be engaged as much as possible so when the child grows, they are better prepared for later years in life.

## Children's Nature Play

Kids that are allowed to play freely in natural settings have a much higher level of sensory engagement. In particular they benefit by exercising their own imagination and creativity. They get to explore all natural elements and dive into the wonders of life. In considering nature play playscapes, extensive peer reviewed research has proven that more injuries occur on "off the shelf" products than in nature play settings. Generally this is attributed to the senses being more completely engaged.

## Children, Seniors & Gardening

There is a wonderful synergy with this coupling of children and seniors. The inclusion of gardening strengthens the bonds even further with the child's wonder of the discovery of food and seniors having the opportunity to be their guides.

Seniors benefit since with diminished motor skills tend to be less mobile

and get sensory stimulus by watching or interacting with children at play. Seniors also benefit because otherwise there is the problem of loneliness as friends and family visits are fewer, and their own mobility or ability to drive is diminished.

Gardening exercises can work fine motor skills important for both age groups and soil contact has powerful immunological strengthening qualities by improving the child's gut flora for better health throughout their lifetime. Children also need to learn about food and where it comes from. Too many urban kids don't have these experiences and have little concept of food agriculture and vegetable gardens. These experiences at an early age contribute to a child being more willing to consume a wide variety of healthy foods



# Online Survey Questions

## The Online Survey Questions

- Q1 What is your gender?
- Q2 What is your household status?
- Q3 Including yourself, how many people currently live in your household
- Q4 In which area of Stephenville do you reside?
- Q5 Please select your age group
- Q6 What is your ethnicity?
- Q7 Please indicate your status as a resident
- Q8 Please indicate your approximate annual income
- Q9 In your opinion, what are two features you enjoy most in our city parks?
- Q10
- Q11 In your opinion, what are two features you enjoy least in our city parks?
- Q12 If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?
- Q13
- Q14 Please indicate how strongly you feel about the following statement:
- Q15 Currently, do our facilities meet your needs?
- Q16
- Q17 Please indicate the importance of the following facilities in both existing and future parks/facilities:
- Q18 Please list and describe any facilities NOT previously listed in the survey
- Q19 In your current household, please indicate the level of interest in the following programs/activities
- Q20 Please list and describe any programs/activities NOT previously listed in the survey
- Q21 Which of the following communication outlets do you most prefer? Please select all that apply
- Q22 Please select two or more funding methods to develop new and improve current public parks and recreation facilities
- Q23 Which of the following parks have you visited in the past year?
- Q24 Do you visit Splashville in the Summer?
- Q25 If any, what amenities would you like to see added to Splashville?
- Q26 Please rate the following facilities in Stephenville
- Q27 What kind of cultural heritage amenities or events would you most likely attend?
- Q28 How do you travel to our parks or facilities?
- Q29 Do you ride a bike for pleasure?
- Q30 Do you attend local events and festivals?
- Q31 Please indicate any special events you would like to see offered in the community
- Q32
- Q33 In your opinion, what type of facility/ activities are most needed for kids, teens, and young adults?
- Q34
- Q35 In your opinion, what type of facilities/ activities are most needed for senior adults?
- Q36 Do you feel there is a need for additional parks and recreation facilities in Stephenville?
- Q37 Please explain your response to the above.
- Q38 Do you attend local craft shows, garden shows, and fairs when they occur?

# Detailed Survey Responses

Q9: In your opinion, what are two features you enjoy most in our city parks?
Walking trail
Playgrounds, walking paths
The disc golf course
Disc golf course and splashville
Discgolf, playgrounds for my kids
Bosque River Trail, covered playground at Jaycee
Baseball fields, playgrounds
Parks for the kiddo to run around and have fun on
Disc gold course, amphitheater
Cleanliness
Ducks and playground
Love the amphitheater and river
Bosque River Trail and Birdsong Amphitheater
Bosque River Trail and Rec Hall
Covered area at Jacee.
Walking trails, tennis courts
Arts and crafts fair, concerts
We love the walking trail and the playgrounds
The trail and the rec hall
Walking on the trail
Trails and Birdsong Outdoors
None
The options for play grounds.
Walking trail,
Baseball and softball fields are large and well taken care of.
children play area and birdsong stage area
Playgrounds and walking trails
Disc golf and river
Disc golf and the water park
Playgrounds
safety and shade!
not sure
Sports leagues
Playgrounds
Walking trails, park benches
Bosque River trail. Swimming pool
Disc golf, basketball
Bosque Trail & playgrounds
Walking path and bandshell
Walking trail. Kids play structures
Bosque River Trail, pavilions
Playgrounds, Walking paths
Shaded areas to play
Park equipment & slides
Playground and the trail
Public events

Pool, playgrounds
The play grounds and baseball fields
Trail and playground
Splashville and Walking trails
Concerts and Bosque River Trail
Splashville, playground by NYC fields
Walking trail and amphitheater
Space
Trails and open space
Disc golf course and trail
The trail, the big pavilion for events
The trail and the amphitheater.
Baseball fields, softball fields
Splashville and Kidsâ€™ playground
Trail and playground
River walk, disc golf
Nothing
There thereâ€™s trails to walk and run, wish they were lit up a little better at night
Ball parks, swim facilities
The two facilities we use the most are the baseball fields and disc golf
Playground and duck pond
Swings
Ball fields, pavillions
Walking trails and trees for shade
All the shade and the trail
Baseball fields, hitting cages
Play grounds and ball fields
Walking trails and multiple playgrounds
Lots of playgrounds
Walking trail,
I did like the water park when it was actually open. And the waking trails
Playgrounds, walk/run trail
BRT
The trail and play ground
Trail, amphitheater
Walking Trail,
Walking trail
Trails, the water
River location, but it has a trashy look and family friendly
Trails and fishing
Playgrounds
Open restrooms and shade.
Feeding the ducks & walking trail
Spar sports, the swimming pool
Splashville and sports leagues
Playgrounds and birdsong ampitheater
Location & walking trails
Fields and pool
Basketball courts and playground for all ages
Running/walking trail & amphitheater
Playground & baseball fields
Fishing and the amphitheater
I like the cleanliness and and how they are not neglected.

Despite age, outdoor sports facilities are maintained pretty well.
Walking trail. Disc golf
Heritage
Amphitheater and walking trails
Great walking trails, summer concert series
Amphitheater greens
The children's play area and the ducks
Openness and cleanliness
Pool, playground
Playground and amphitheater
Fields and walking trail
Nothing. So sorry! They arenâ€™t nice at all.
Splashville is really the only thing right now we use.
River, amphitheater
walking paths and nice play grounds for kids
splashville & playgrounds for my grandkids
Safe, clean
Ball fields and play ground areas
The play area and walking trail
Playgrounds and trails
Walking trail and the amphitheater
Concert/activities decent playgrounds
The playgrounds, all the trees
The amphitheater, the trees around the walking trail
Trails
Basketball courts & amphitheater
Open spaces, concert space
Softball fields, amphitheater
The music at the amphitheater, the playgrounds
Baseball Fields, amphitheater.
Kids sports
Baseball fields
Trails and ducks
Trails & trees
None
Amphitheater and Trail Runs
How large the park is. The routine upkeep.
Playgrounds and walking trail
Shaded play ground , theatre
Playgrounds and the stage
Amphitheater area and pavilions
NYC fields and playground
Fishing and disc golf
The river and the main pavilion
Bike path. Water park
Tennis courts, playgrounds
Walking trails, picnic areas
Baseball fields and river
Walking trails
Walking trail, availability
Playgrounds and sitting areas
Bosque River Trail & playgrounds
Walking path and walking trail

Bridge area and the playground closest to the rec hall
The walking trail.
Sports and Concerts
River trail, covered playgrounds
SPARD Athletics and Splashville
Splashville and playgrounds
Walking trail and general park area
Ducks and a nice playground
The river trail and basketball courts
Location and playgrounds
The play grounds, the walking trails
Playgrounds and walking trails
Covered play areas
Splashville and playground
Concerts, fireworks
Bosque trail
splashville and baseball fields
Sports activities, concerts
Ballparks, playground
The parks are covered and variety for different ages
We enjoy the baseball fields and the park
Play grounds
Wildlife, shade
Trail
Walking trails. Play ground
Trail system and playgrounds

<b>Q11: In your opinion, what are two features you enjoy least in our city parks?</b>
No organized activity groups other than leagues where you have to know people to participate.
N/a
All the stickers!!!
Stickers and ants
Skatepark, perades
Lack of accessible playground equipment
Not enough shade, not enough equipment for kids over toddler age
How poorly maintained the playgrounds and parks are
Stickers, lack of water fountain
Bathrooms
Finding sticker burrs in the grass and grass is always dead
Nothing
N/A
Playgrounds, sports fields
Not enough substance underneath equipment for safety.
?
July 4 events, unclean playground equipment
My boys play t ball, and the fields are some of the worst Iâ€™ve seen. The ground is hard as rock and the dirt blows into everyoneâ€™s faces and eyes constantly.
The skateboard park the restrooms
Walking on the extreme dangerous rocky part of the trail close by the post office!!!
Na
All of it
Need bigger playgrounds
There are stickers and not pet friendly

The playground equipment is very limited.
I like the park
I donâ€™t use the tennis courts
Softball and baseball fields
Lack of trees
The playground at jaycee park- too spread out & no fence, the playground by the rec hall & big pavillion- again no fence, extra mudfy & always wasps
playground equipment is old and pavilions are old
playground equipment is old
Sports leagues
Bathroom facilities
Splashville, tennis courts
Park up by the north loop
Baseball fields
Rec fields & grass burrs everywhereeeee
Parking
Stickers in grass.
Destruction and failure to repair/replace Bosque River Trail at former proposed locatio new senior citizensâ€™ center, Lack of adequate restrooms,
Too few trees, No soccer fields
Lack of varied equipment, too much empty unused space
Spard ran actives & crazy ladies at 4th of July parade line up
Na
No bathrooms!
Skate park,
The basketball courts and (lack of) bathrooms
Bathrooms and broken playground equipment
Skatepark
No dog park,
playground by rec hall and walking trail
Play ground and poor baseball fields
Condition of the facilities
Smaller playgrounds and stickers in the grass
The river and rec sports
The tennis courts (I WANT to enjoy them theyâ€™re just not great condition)
Pool and Playground - kids are grown
Locked baseball fields, locked softball fields
Bathroom facilities and frisbee golf
Basketball gym and tennis courts
Dirty river, trash
lack of parks & vandalism
The lack of the sticker control and trails (city park mile loop not bosque trail) being kept
Rec hall, rv park
Our park needs a lot of help most of the facilities are run down. Why is there a field g
Trash
All the tank bark
poor grass/stickers
Dead or scalped grass and stickers and the Nasty water around city park trail. That cre needs to be cleaned up and so does the duck poop on the trail.
NO BATHROOMS! The rec hall
No OPEN restrooms , lack of maintenance on hitting cages
Pavilion
Roads and parking

NICE restroom facilities
Bathrooms, swimming pool
The water park cause it wasnâ€™t open, and nothing else, I really like the park and itâ€™s
N/A
A
Baseball fields and restrooms
Baseball fields, Rec hall
Rec hall, splashville
Tennis/pickle ball courts
The baseball fields and the skate park
Restrooms closer to walking trail/quiet areas. Lack of attractive native landscaping that attracts butterflies/birds
None
Deteriorating paths, dog feces
Stickers. Broken swings.
Baseball fields being locked up & the amount of stickers
There are not that many parks
Playgrounds, gym
Fields full of stickers and run down oyc fields
Parking lot maintenance
Skate park
Nothing
Stickers in grass & fire ants at baseball fields & no air conditioning in SPARD gym
Parking lots
Playground and disc golf
Some of the items need to be updated.
Trail repairs, Playgrounds and picnic tables often appear neglected
Rec hall. Tennis courts.
Naming the stage after Doug Montgomery, and no concessions
Lack of parking by baseball/softball fields
Canâ€™t think of anything
Outdated rec hall, poor A/C at SPARD, limited days of splashville
All the pots holes and the road
Parking, lack of nice bathroom facilities
Restrooms, no free splash pad for littles
Swimming pool and rec gym
River- normally really nasty and wish we had a bigger Rec center.
Not updates at all and not a place I take my family.
The way the programs have been ran the last several years.
Sports, field quality stickers
Baseball fields being closed to public use, more activities to like the disc golf or skate park
none
Tennis and basketball courts
Bathrooms and
No restroom availability
Bathrooms
Trash and pets not on leashes
Bathroom situation is disgusting and its plain and dated
Porta pottyâ€™s and bathroom in rec hall
No restrooms at amphitheater, stickers
None
Bathrooms & tennis courts
Lack of basketball gym, lack of basketball gym

The pool (not for all ages)
Bathrooms, lack of upkeep
The disorganization
Bathrooms and maintenance of park
Splashville, restrooms
Basic & not enough playgrounds
None
Gym and Baseball/Football fields
Parking,
Baseball fields
The rec hall, non shaded playgrounds
Tball fields and parking
Bathroom facilities
Bathrooms and OYC field upkeep
Poor access to river in multiple places. Not enough (clean) restrooms.
The small playground and the drive layout.
Lack of bathrooms, basketball hoops in bad shape
Splashville, outdoor basketball goals
Splashville, tennis courts
Pool
Lack of maintenance on playground areas & difficulty navigating main city park
Security, lack of events/facilities
Restrooms and skate park too small
The lack of organization with kids sports and the lack of communication with Stephenville soccer association
All the stickers and the rocked section on the trail
Parking lots and driving between them.. very little signage if any
The upkeep of the walking trail has improved, but is still not great. It is hard to roller blade with my kids with all of the debris. There is NO free splash pad too. This is something our growing city NEEDS. Especially, since Splashville was not open much at all this year. A splash pad would be wonderful and a good improvement to the city. A FREE one. Simply with the touch start timer.
Splashville
Wasted space at parks covered in stickers that could be used for soccer fields, lack of lighting on running trails
only one gym - no A/C in the rec hall
None
Overgrown river bank that is inaccessible and grass burrs
Trash around river and not clean bathrooms
Not enough shade on paths in some areas
Lack of bathrooms and port-a-potties
The rec hall - i wish it was air conditioned
The size of Splashville and lack of parking at Jaycee park
None and None
Portapotties and thats pretty much it
Parking, lack of bathrooms
Port a potty
the playgrounds and skate park
Lack of restrooms, lack of maintenance
Lack of free splash pad, maintenance
None

So many stickers!
Too much dead spaces, not enough shade
People with unleashed dogs, distance between park amenities
Lazy river pool
Trash
The part of the trail that is torn up and rec enter (too hot)
the trail that goes through sketchy parts of town
lack of nice restrooms
<b>Q12: If any, what two changes would you like to see in our city parks?</b>
Open activities in rec hall. Crafts. lectures. sculpture. newcomers group
Better wheelchair/stroller accessibility, free splash pad
Tee pads for the other two layouts on the disc golf course
The ants and stickers
Stickers gone and more locations for golf baskets
Accessible playground equipment
More swings, more shaded areas
Regular maintenance of playgrounds INCLUDING replacing & repairing things. More events that are good for 3-6 year old kids.
Add water fountains, treat for stickers
Greener grass to play in, less trash in the water
Goal posts with nets
Expansion to BRT, new rec hall and/or renovation of current rec hall WITH AIR CONDITIONING!!!
No grassburrs, more poop containers for dogs on trails
Clean the playground and add handicap swings, more craft shows
A little more general upkeep on the fields, and more events in the park.
New gym senior center in park
Please FIX the very dangerous rocky part of the trail by the post office!!!
hall.
The Staff and the Rec Hall.
Recreation center, not just an old historical outdated gymnasium
won't change anything
Maintenance/upkeep improvements, adding more parks
Bathrooms and
More trees planted throughout
FENCED playgrounds with 1 entrance. Playgrounds next to roads is not safe especially when you are watching more than 1 kid, not to mention abduction risks. More awareness for spraying wasp nests & the fenceline weeds not getting knee high full of stickers.
""
playground equipment update
More organization and ref/umpires who care about their job
Better bathrooms
More rv parking, bigger swimming area
Bosque River trail erosion clean up, indoor pool
Fix parking areas. Better bathrooms open yr round
Good grass! No stickers that make the kids cry. More shade.
Better green space care. Improved accessibility for playgrounds for all abilities.
Repair and restoration of Bosque River Trail at N Vine Street, more public restrooms
Plant a ton of trees, Improve bathrooms
More and varied play equipment, more indoor sports areas that are open to the public that are taken care of
Give it to YMCA

Water activities
More bathrooms!
Changes at the pool open it more!
Better bathrooms, AC in the gym
Cleaner bathrooms and reduced Splashville rates
More youth activities and festivals
Dog park with full agility course, more weekend concerts
updated playgrounds and improve the walking trails
Better bleachers and dugouts and more shade
Better facilities
More shaded areas and a Rec Center
Better management and cleaner restrooms that are open for use
It would be great if the bosque river could be used for recreation when itâ€™s actually running
Less stickers and more bathrooms
Unlock the baseball fields. Our taxes already paid for them.
Accessible playground and improved bathroom facilities left open for more than sports.
Better gym with AC
Bathroom, water fountains
more parks, add turf
Keep the grass maintained better and better sticker control. Keep the trails at the city park maintained better so the grass isnâ€™t creeping in on the trail and narrowing it.
Update facilities and landscaping.
More bike/ walking areas
Improvement to our baseball fields
better grass, more restrooms
Cleaned up and maintained and new tennis courts
Build good clean legit bathrooms, build a new rec center
Open restrooms, maintenance
Clean up the grounds where the kids play and add fresh bedding
Clean, easily accessible restrooms
New bathrooms, better ran Rec leagues
Maybe an indoor water park area, charge a monthly rate like a ymca deal. There is a town in Rock Springs Wyoming (for example) we could do that here. There are way more of that live here than up there, and we make more money- why canâ€™t we do that? Indoor swimming and 2 big slides, racket ball or heater that game is called that hit against the wall, rock climbing area, play area for babies, skating rink one part of year and basket ball the next. Waking / running in upper levels around the court.
Better care and maintenance of fields and more fields for tournaments
Better set up of baseball fields, more restrooms that are clean
Better groundskeeping, new rec hall
Pickleball courts & more accessible playground areas
An improvement in the falf course, more play grounds
Havenâ€™t walked since hip surgery in 2019. Has the walking trail mileage indicators been repainted? More natural beauty.
Wide paths for walking and bikes, grass that isn't full of stickers
Clean, open restrooms. Removal/ spray for stickers.
Add outdoor volleyball courts & open baseball fields to the public
Expansion of splashville or increased amount of walking trails
upkeep of playgrounds and clean bathrooms
Better roads and a bigger variety of athletic fields and games ex: horse shoes, bocthy ball etc.

A dog park & indoor pool
Offer teen options, dances at amphitheater or concerts
Add bathrooms!!!! Super important
More public bathrooms, better lawn maintenance
More shade and seating
Bigger/Better Ballfields (Sports Complex would be nice), Better gymnasium for indoor sports
Permanent trail repairs and more public access to facilities
Large rec center.
More events, more parking
Better lighting on trails and more parking over by softball field area
A/C at Spard, update bathrooms, splashville open more
Better, more available restrooms. Drivable roads
more bathrooms and better lighting on trails
Splash pad and nicer restrooms not portapotties for toddlers
New Rec center and updated park by the Rec center also cleaner river
Updated equipment, special needs accommodations.
Grounds need to be kept up and spruced up. The roads need to be redone.
updates to baseball fields, taking care of grounds in the off season (Stickers are bad)
add splash parks, outdoor fitness equipment
Security and picnic areas
Kill stickers. Can't use most grassy areas.
Clean public restrooms a splash pad
New clean bathrooms that don't smell and remain open during park hours
Nice restroom facilities by amphitheater, pavilions
More stages
Indoor sports facility
New Gym, new flag football fields
Improved bathrooms
A different pool for older kids and adults.
Clean facilities and when events are going on be better staff to take care of facilities
Consistency across the board all the way down to mowing and cleanliness
Better care of baseball fields and bathrooms
A Soccer field, community gardens
More landscaping art like ponds, labyrinths, flowers, etc.
Clean up the river. And the pool should be free since our tax dollars pay for it
New gym with multiple courts. Turf fields
Better field management
More shade on playgrounds, lighted walking trail
Sticker control and better parking areas by fields
Make it affordable for local teams to host tournaments and have some consistency in refs enforcing game rules, making our fields and park something people who come from out of town are impressed with.
Better restrooms and more features to disc golf course
Maybe clean up on the other side of the dam.
Better volleyball pits and basketball hoops
Better swimming pools
More rv spots, more playgrounds
Fields open to residents to use for practice and not pay to use a field we already pay taxes for. Clean up the walk way around the river.
Better signage to help with navigation and overall maintenance
Have more family events/ better facilities

More inclusive for special needs and free public splash pad
Additions to Bosque River Trail
Clear all the stickers and kill the ants at collins st parking
Splashville to have a longer season and for a park "security" person to patrol
The splash pad. Trail upkeep.
pond for fishing derbys and get rid of balloons at Moola
Added lights for safety, soccer fields!
a better rec hall facility with more to do - A/C in the rec hall
Increased availability of splashville,
Clean up the river so it looks appealing and isn't overgrown. Remodel and unlock the public restrooms during the daytime hours.
Cleaner bathrooms and more equipment for kids
More trees
Have bathrooms open/more bathrooms, no smelly port-a-potties
Get a/c in rec hall
Better lighting along the walking trails
More picnicking areas and maybe water pads.
More benches around the playgrounds
Parking, bathrooms
The trail maintained better
new skate park, more attractive park
Public restroom facilities, improved sports facilities
Free splash pad, better maintenance
Splash pad!
Maybe some football fields, better located bathrooms more bathrooms closer to the stands hard for older people to get to in time.
More play equipment, more trees for shade
Enclosed play areas, dog areas
Regular pool where exercise classes can take place. Miniature golf.
Handicap accessible and trail fixed

<b>Q18: Please list and describe any facilities NOT previously listed in the survey:</b>
help tend plants and gather food, maybe classes on how to grow your own at home.
None
Finish park on the trail
None
Accessible facilities & play spaces
Better signage on the trail
More trees
Indoor volleyball
Bathrooms!!
Something not mentioned is the beautification of the park. The landscaping is ugly and full of stickers. You can't take your pets or your kids in the grassy areas without coming back full of stickers.
restrooms
Indoor roller skating, like 80's style none of the online blades -4 wheels
Horseshoes, table tennis
Improvements to fishing area
Racet hall court
Parking
River activities and clean up

Family activities
Concert/festival type areas
N/A
We need soccer fields!!!
Picnic pavilion closer to the baseball field would be a great addition for people who want to use that area of the park, especially during games. One near NYC fields and one nearer to the T-ball fields. And make them covered!
Upgraded Summer Camp RecHall
Maybe look at how comanche city park is...my kids prefer that park over sville park about 90%
Please please please fix the trail system where it's gravel. Wheelchairs can no longer access this!

<b>Q25: If any, what amenities would you like to see added to Splashville?</b>
More available activities for small children, or slower/quieter times for children with
Better food
Unpaved hiking trail
Area for older kids and adults, wave pool, surf simulator
A swimming lane.
Bigger- honestly I would like to see it OPEN
Shaded areas and a deeper part of the pool for diving or jumping into the water.
none
Additional hours open
Bathrooms
A splashpad outside the facility to allow those of use with littles a chance to go in the mornings before its too hot. This summer was not a benefit due to operating hours. We went to other cities & that shouldnt have to happen
deeper!
Just better times
Senior swim
More shade - larger splash pads
Roof
larger lazy river, more slides for older kids...its very boring for teens
Better ground maintenance for the facility
More space for older kids
More water slides, cabanas for daily fee use
Bigger
Much better life guards. Ones that actually care! Liz, Corinne and Jetta need to be fired for lack of care and not paying attention while life guarding. They need to made aware of how serious their job is! While there this summer those 3 did not care to be there and did not watch the pool as supposed too. It was disappointing as a parent and we will not be going back next year.
an outdoor pool would be awesome
lap pool
Bigger and an actual water park for all ages. Large pool
The concession stand needs to be better stocked like it was when they first opened, ice cream, fountain drinks.
Wave pool or tube slides. Extra covered seating

A normal pool or adults only pool so you can actually swim
Be open. Put come covers on top like they did at Bruner's parking lot with the cars, would be safer and more chairs
Expansion
Bring back sensory hour for special needs
Lap pool, beach volley ball
More shaded/sitting areas. Bigger deeper pool with more slides. More splash pads.
More shade. Open longer. This is Texas. No reason to shut down when it's still hot.
Swimming lanes
Better bathrooms
Better slides
Better operating hours/closed to much, wish it had indoor use, diving board, more slides
More adult classes
More shade, allowance of goggles and snorkels
More slides? More splash pads
More shaded areas
More towards big kids
More for older kids. Bigger pool.
Expanded splashpad area, cleaner pool
A lap pool
Totally bigger facility
Something for older kids and adults
More activities for the older kids
Baby/toddler splashpad
Wave pool
More shade
Larger lazy river
Senior center
Larger area
Little kids pool, another lap pool, more tables and better concessions
Additional operating hours
Adult only days
A second lazy river, a new slide, an adult only area
Expand pool. Open year round with your heaters that aren't being used.
more new floats, those news ones are cool!
more seating and shade structures
More tables available and chairs.
Sun shade
Bigger park all together
More covered areas
A better splashpad for the littles and maybe one of the floating things toddlers could play on. My daughter was obsessed with the snake and just wanted to sit on it for a second and couldnt because shes not tall enough. More covered tables
More shaded areas
A time for adults only
more activities
A lazy River that works, longer hours, private party access, swimming pool
Larger slides, longer lazy river...its boring for teens...they need something new
The splash pad having warmer temp.

<b>Q33: In your opinion, what type of facilities/activities are most needed for kids, teens, and young adults?</b>
Young adults need a place to meet people. Not church. Not bars. Classes? Archery? Etc. Something an individual can attend. T
More playground equipment, larger jungle gyms, more practice fields,
Young adults & teens need spaces where they can meet friends or chill on their own without the expectation to buy something or do anything other than just exist. Indoor play areas for kids would be really helpful for bad weather days or summer/winter. Themed events are always fun. You should get some ideas from the library.
Sports facilities and sidewalks
Main event type venues, putters and gutters etc
A new gym
Anything for our youth
Indoor rec spaces
N/A
Unrestricted access splashpad, fenced playground & places for teens/young adults to gather further from the little ones. The older kids & young adults play bball by playground at jaycee & bring speakers then play inappropriate music. They dont always agree to change it or turn it down when asked. My kid shouldn't come home repeating that language
Anything to let them enjoy outdoors and activities
More of a YMCA feel - offering ALL kinds of things in one place. Lots of different things to do
Indoor play areas, bowling, skate rink, arcades
Bowling
free splash pad
Much better library, scouts program or something similar
Rec center, indoor pool, tennis/ pickle ball court, sand volleyball
Unlocked baseball fields.
Rock climbing
More like YMCA
Stuff for teenagers idk what but more to keep them out of trouble.
I think we are on the right track. We just need some updates and beautification.
Social dance area, bowling, pickle ball
Entertainment like main event or an actual putt putt or bowling ally and more sports facilities
Recreational center where they can hang out and enjoy being outside.
Something inside for the Texas heat
Skating, bowling
Outdoor activities allowing them to be active.
Like a YMCA, swimming pools
Mini golf
Functional/interest related that would attract the youth
Rec hall with ping pong and such, racquetball, arcade
Indoor mini golf, bowling, arcade, bounce house. Anything family friendly less than 80 miles away.
Indoor and outdoor sports areas.
Teens
Bowling
Equestrian riding lessons/classes, agriculture and animal classes
Social and fun events
Bowling, arcades, indoor batting cages, mini golf
Indoor- skating rink, trampoline, playground etc
Gymnasiums, Indoor/Outdoor swimming, Sports Complexes, Play areas and playgrounds
Large rec center
More practice fields so that teams aren't having to practice so late and without lights after dark
Places to hang out, skating rink, bowling alley, jump places, dirt parks

Sports facilities
Sporting outdoor activities
Rec center
Just family friendly events.
Bowling, roller rink, trampoline park
Bowling arcade rock climbing laser tag sand volleyball
Bathrooms
Athletics, arts/music, community outreach
Anything for the local kids to do. A YMCA type program would be fantastic
Safe space for kids of all ages
Sport fields
Dances, concerts, and daytime events
More indoor basketball courts
Skateboarding, frisbee, rock climbing, video gaming teams/clubs
a multipurpose space for a variety of camps and basketball and volleyball.
More affordable extracurricular activities for all ages. Not capped at 12. Boxing, martial arts, softball, dance, splash pads
Organized activities like teen game night, family night swim, etc
Kids and young adults! Homeschool community for daytime hours.
Soccer needs to be a bigger part of the city sports. Our rec dept does not coordinate well with the soccer association and it pushes kids to have to choose between soccer and spard sports.
multi rec facility
A multi purpose facility that has 4 or more basketball/ volleyball courts, a fitness area, indoor walking track,
Indoor pool with things for all ages open all yr.
Bowling, arcades, a fun safe place to hangout
After school activities that can happen through the after-schoolers program. Unable to transport mids to activities that happen before 6 on week nights.
Bowling, hang out place, Urban air type place
Something indoors we can take kids to when its too hot/cold/ bad weather. With pool closed the library is the
New rec/event center, pool, improved fields
Somewhere kids can go play hangout, have birthday parties, play sports
Indoor play area, bowling, skate rink,
Main event
All sports

<b>Q35: In your opinion, what type of facilities/activities are most needed for senior adults?</b>
Regular history lectures. Rock and roll dances. Planned trips to museums. More emphasis on younger seniors who are active.
Unsure
A new senior center
Sidewalks along roads
Exercise, health fairs, game days (bridge, dominos etc)
Pickle ball courts/ new facility in downtown area
Clean and updated spaces to gather and classes
N/A
A senior center with accesibility & activities to keep fit/mentally/socially active
Weight/ exercise gym, pool access,
Social area
New large senior center with lots of parking
Bowling
Any/ all, not very familiar



More like YMCA
New facilities, and activities
pickle ball, bowling, social dance area
An actual facility for them that is updated and centrally located.
A new building where they can do crafts, fitness, and luncheons/socialize
Idk
More outdoor activities
Not sure
Upkeep of lighting on trails and pickleball courts
Lap pool
Attractive, safe, gathering place.
Unsure
Senior center, classes that appeal to seniors
Indoor Music/dancing, indoor activities like bingo or other games , aquatics
Dominoes, card games, social gatherings
Updated senior center
Nature, walking trails, aquatics, community garden
A new senior center.
Flower garden painting or art classes book club etc
Volunteers to spend time with them
Wellness center
Bingo, community gardens, partner with helping at animal shelters or after school programs with young kids
New center
Multipurpose space for a variety of gatherings, fellowship, and cooking.
Bingo, book clubs, tennis, shaded tables
N/A
A dedicated building for their events
Indoor pool
The center does a great job
Bingo hall, activity centers
Aquatics
Wellness, dance, social, continuing education
Bunco, bingo
Better building, supplies for activities currently offered, activities director, friendlier staff
Better sr citizens
Walking

**Q36: Do you feel there is a need for additional parks and recreation facilities in Stephenville?**

**Q37: Please explain your answer in Q36**

Seniors need a safe and accessible place to gather.
I imagine another building or some type of dedicated space would help with coordination of things. I would love to see "mini parks" around town with native plants or butterfly gardens, maybe benches.
Our spaces are limited and not maintained adequately
New multi-purpose rec facility to replace our nearly century-old one. Further expansion of BRT.
Splash pad outside of splashville

More trails and open spaces
We have not had a new gym since 1938
Updated facilities
Bathrooms
A more wooded disc golf course would be nice.
Fenced playground, unrestricted access splashpad
It would be nice to have a second disc golf course
City rec sports & kid activities are well known to usually be a hot mess. Paying \$60 for a jersey & then having coaches cancel practice all of the time is disappointing. I would love a YMCA type of amenity & updating the grass/fields. It's not pretty or fun to play on.
Indoor Rec center needed
Accessible playspaces
As Stephenville grows, more playgrounds and field spaces and hiking trails are needed to adequately serve
It would be nice if there were smaller, neighborhood green spaces/parks.
More events to attract kids
New rec hall
As recent new residents with young children it has been difficult figuring out when and where to get them involved in sports and activities
What we have is GOOD but it is past time to go from good to GREAT! This is the city of CHAMPIONS not the city of average
Sports facilities
Indoor pool and wellness facilities
Better gym/rec indoor facilities
Practice and game fields- football,soccer
indoor activity center, more practice fields,
We need a new rec center, a great after school youth center for kids. More extracurricular
There are lots of people
Stephenville is a great central location to host tournaments. Allowing rural communities to come play without having to travel to the metroplex.
The setup of everything is terrible. More baseball fields is imperative and needs to have a playground with covered shading in the middle of 4 fields.
There isn't much to do in this town
Would love more physical activities that teens had access to
Not enough for kids and teens to do.
A lot of the space in city park does not get used more than once or twice a year for moo-la and 4th of July and could be utilized for other buildings or more diverse athletics
Just more modern facilities to be able to host tournaments
We need to be able to accommodate the growth in Stephenville and we should be hosting more events and tournaments and right now we can't really accommodate. We need to make sure our kids and your have plenty of things to do for different interest.
New recreation hall with gyms and multi use area
Growing town. We need to keep up with the population and offer more.
More variety of activities
Maybe an indoor exercise facility like the one Tarleton has
Very limited for the amount of people in the town and what is readily available and easily accessible for a feasible cost per the demographics of the area
City is growing and needs more and updated areas. Dog park etc.
Something like YMCA

Improvement to grounds..stickers. there is a really cool park in Kansas City called meadowbrook prk. New take on a playground and so fun for the kids
Senior citizens need a user friendly building, city needs a user friendly location to host
There has to be modern gym facilities, what we have is an embarrassment
Compared to cities around us of comparable size, our football and baseball/softball fields are lacking
At times the park is not enough for certain events and things get pushed back late or completely done away with
Need to increase recreation to draw in young families
Mountain bike trails
More indoor facilities, SPARD is terrible with youth sports
Toddler inclusive playgrounds, fenced in.
A multi court basketball/volleyball facility, could even have group workout classes and batting cages...similar to Game On
Facilities need updated, bathrooms need to be available outside, be able to make more of the space for kids to use in different sports or even gardening.
Need a new seniors center
Bosque river trail had a multi phase plan. I'd like to see more phases!!
Our community is entirely too large to not have more activities and areas in town for families, teens, kids & senior adults to enjoy
Your current playgrounds need to be fenced in. The ones by the REC hall are too old and dirty. Not well kept up with. The picnic tables need to be replaced too. The SMILES playground is better. It's sort of fenced in. However, the bridge on the smaller playground is kind of hazardous with the huge gap there. We need a FREE splash pad. Go visit the playground by the Abilene Zoo —or even Hico RV Park. They're WONDERFUL!! Fence in your playgrounds.
Soccer!!!
Our parks can be maintained and added to to bring them up to a better quality and more useful space
The kids/young adults have no place to hangout
A new rec hall that allows for expanded options/childcare program growth
Recreation facilities-yes
The parks we have are nice when the weather cooperates. But when it's 110 outside or the pools are closed we have to go to Weatherford for anything to do.
Current facilities are in disrepair or insufficient for population
Splash pad that isn't in splashville
The city park by the pavilions are gross.we need a toddler area, ideally with a gate enclosure. The playgrounds are small and boring...we could use merry go rounds, definitely need more trees for natural shade

## 2030 Comprehensive Plan

City of Stephenville, Texas

Adopted: March 4, 2008

The following is from the 2008 City of Stephenville 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted March 4<sup>th</sup> 2008

### CHAPTER 8 – PARKS AND RECREATION

In November 2002, Schrickel, Rollins and Associates, Inc. completed a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (Parks Master Plan) for the City of Stephenville. The purpose of this section of the Plan is to integrate the adopted parks plan into the future land use plan, transportation plan, community facilities and CIP to ensure that adequate parks, recreational facilities and open spaces are provided for citizens of and visitors to Stephenville.

Parks are quality of life factors that more and more are drawing people and businesses to a community. If Stephenville is to continue to be an attractive community for families, it will need to continue to provide places to play and places to gather. However, with the provision of parks and recreation facilities comes the requirement to operate and maintain these spaces. No new parks are shown on the Future Land Use Plan, as it is advisable only to show very general locations where a future park should be unless there is a tract in City ownership. Parks and open space that were proposed in the adopted *Parks Master Plan* have been reflected in the Future Land Use Plan.

#### Key Issues

The adopted *Park Master Plan* coupled with recent community input identified a set of key issues for parks and recreation in and around Stephenville.

- **Continuation of Bosque Trail and other open space areas:** Stephenville has an existing park system that should be improved upon. Existing trail systems such as the Bosque Trail and other associated creeks should create a networked trail system for the City.
- **Absence of neighborhood parks:** At present, the City is served by two main parks: City Park, Optimist/Jaycee Park. Smaller neighborhood parks are required to serve the community, particularly the areas of the City that are not easily accessible to the main city parks.
- **Park maintenance and upkeep:** For the City's parks to be operational and attractive to both residents and visitors, the City must provide regular maintenance and upkeep of facilities and equipment.
- **Equipment Upgrading:** Much of the City's park equipment is considered old, in poor condition and in disrepair. Health and safety issues are a concern to most residents.

#### Parks Master Plan Summary

The *Parks Master Plan* is intended to guide the development of Stephenville's parks, recreation and open space system from 2002 through 2017. It was developed with input from citizens, members of the park board, park staff and other city officials. The *Parks Master Plan* indicated that Stephenville's 2002 park acreage would be 141.1 acres. Based on its estimated 2020 population of 21,633, park standards suggest that the City should have an estimated 260.0 acres of parkland, thus creating a future deficit of 118.9 acres. If no more new land is acquired, by 2017, there will be a deficit of 162.9 acres of parkland. To compensate for some of this need for new parkland, the potential for linear open spaces and environmental preservation along the city's stream corridors can be used for parkland.

The park acreage guidelines of the 2002 *Parks Master Plan* were set at a goal of 12 acres per 1000 population, an increase of 2.5 acres per 1000 over the 1996 guidelines. The number of recreational facilities doubled as

well in comparison to the 1996 plan. According to the standards established in the *Parks Master Plan*, between 2002 and 2007, the City should acquire 133 acres of parkland. By 2017, 305 total acres will be required. Immediate facility needs, according to the Plan, include an aquatic center, a recreation center, linear parks, picnic facilities, RV parking, athletic fields, multipurpose trails, and basketball courts. By 2017, the accumulative needs will include trails (multi-purpose, nature, equestrian), soccer fields, baseball diamonds, volleyball and basketball courts, aquatic facilities, picnic facilities (tables, pavilions), and various other community recreational facilities. Maps of existing and future conditions are available in the *Parks Master Plan*.

## Existing Park System

### City Park

City Park is made up of 112 acres just off the downtown square on Graham Street along the Bosque River. The park is available for overnight

camping with 10 permanent campsites with water and electricity and up to 50 temporary sites as needed. Other amenities of the park include two group pavilions, picnic areas with grills, two playgrounds, swimming pool, horseshoe courts, four lighted tennis courts, volleyball courts, 1.3 mile walking trail, outdoor stage, two basketball courts, three baseball fields, three softball fields, four youth fields, and one soccer field.

### Recreation Hall

The Recreation Hall is located at the north entrance of the City Park. The building houses the City's Parks and Recreation Department offices. The gym is used for scheduled recreational activities, public exhibits and shows, banquets, dances, auctions, and is open to the public during regular working hours for open play when events are not scheduled.

### Century Park Gazebo

The Century Park Gazebo is located within the City Park. It is located amongst the trees along the Bosque River. The facilities include picnic tables and grills.

### Optimist/Jaycee Park

The Optimist/Jaycee Park is located at the intersection of Harbin Drive and Highway 8. The park is built on 18 acres and features a large pavilion, 0.7 mile lighted walking/jogging trail, covered picnic tables grills, a large playground, and plenty of open space for relaxing and/or recreating. The pavilion is a multipurpose area equipped with two basketball goals and is used for reunions, picnics, skating, roller hockey, and other group activities.

### Johnson Park

Johnson Park is a 0.5 acre park located at the corner of Sloan Street and McCart Street. This is a small neighborhood park that provides an open space for citizens to have a place to relax and enjoy both passive and active recreation.

### Downtown Plaza

The Downtown Plaza is a multi-purpose area located adjacent to the Erath County Courthouse square at the corner of Washington Street and Belknap Street. The parking and rest area downtown is structured to give

shoppers and business patrons a place to relax in a park atmosphere. The sidewalk along the plaza hosts the "Cowboy Walk of Fame", plaques dedicated to the men and women of Stephenville's western heritage including three time world champion bull rider, Tuff Hedeman, and six time PRCA All-Around World Champion, Ty Murray. The City hosts a Cowboy Walk of Fame Induction and Dedication Ceremony each May. Some other events include arts and crafts shows, street dances, and a Christmas light show and entertainment stage.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives detailed below are taken from the adopted *Parks Master Plan*. The Plan did not include specific action statements.

The goals and objective statements were developed by city staff in response to public demand, available natural resources, and staff perceptions of Stephenville's parks and recreation needs. The following are taken directly from the *Parks Master Plan*.

***Goal 1: Provide the citizens of Stephenville with a quality system of parks, recreation, and open spaces that are compatible with the local environment and desirable to the public.***

#### *Objectives*

Provide adequate park and recreational services to the city's citizens based on standards established for Stephenville.

***Goal 2: Develop and preserve the beauty of the natural areas within existing parks and along other natural areas that are desirable for open space preservation and park development.***

#### *Objectives*

Develop the Hampton Property adjacent to City Park to include the Bosque River Trail improvements.

Preserve the Bosque River and greenbelt areas throughout the city to complement Bosque River Trail project underway at the time this plan was published.

• Clear river course from the bridge on South Loop to the bridge on Graham Street near the Foster Home.

- Provide bike trails, picnic facilities, restrooms, some pavilions, and lighting on both sides of the river and under several bridges where security is critical.
- Pave parking areas at various locations.
- Repair erosion problems along the river, particularly in

the park proper and at the museum grounds.

- Provide campsite areas for recreational vehicles.

***Goal 3: Provide recreational facilities in existing and potential parks that will contribute to improving the quality of life for the residents of Stephenville.***

### Objectives

- Develop an aquatics center to replace the existing pool and to provide additional; water recreational opportunities.
- Build a community activity center or renovate the existing recreation center.
- Build additional neighborhood parks and playground areas. **Goal 4: Acquire land for parks to bring the City into compliance with acreage standards.**

**Goal 5: Bring all parks and playgrounds into compliance with current accessibility standards (ADA) and Consumer Products Safety Commission and ASTM guidelines.**

### Goal 6: Renovate and expand City Park

#### Objectives

- Expand City Park west of the river by purchasing out tracts fronting on W. Long St. and presently held in private ownership.
- Transfer the five acres of land west of City Park, now owned by public works, to the park department.

Continue to implement the City Park master plan of development for renovation and development of new facilities in the existing park and on the Hutchinson property.

- Prepare capital improvements program for the phased development of City Park.
- Ensure linkages to other facilities that are sensitive to environmental preservation efforts of the City.

Under the auspices of the Comprehensive Plan, the City may want to consider how to address the need for neighborhood parks either through park dedication fees by which the developer sets aside a park tract proportionate with the number of homes, or money in lieu of land that would actually be enough to purchase park land in the immediate area. This, however, could engender multiple maintenance considerations for the City. Another approach to neighborhood parks is to allow "private parks" funded and maintained by residents or neighborhood associations credited for park dedication.

## Funding Mechanisms

Most capital investments involve the outlay of substantial funds; therefore local governments often must pay for new facilities through appropriations in the annual operating budget. There are numerous techniques available to local governments to pay for capital improvements over a longer period of time. The *Parks Master Plan* identifies some funding sources. The following is a compilation of sources stated in the *Parks Master Plan* as well as some other available techniques.

**Current Revenue** - This technique is known as "pay-as-you-go" financing and is the financing of improvements from current revenues such as general taxation, fees, service charges, special established funds, or special assessments.

**Reserve Funds** - The use of reserve funds is made possible by accumulating funds in advance for capital acquisition or development. The accumulation may result from surplus or earmarked operational revenues, funds in depreciation reserves, or the sale of capital assets.

**Enterprise and Revenue Funds** - Many municipalities establish accounts that are earmarked for park and recreation programs. These accounts are used to fund programs and to acquire, operate, and maintain facilities.

**General Obligation Bonds** - The use of this method involves the taxing power of the jurisdiction as it is pledged to pay the interest and principal

to retire the debt. General obligation bonds can be sold to finance permanent types of improvements such as park and recreational areas and facilities. Voter approval may be required.

**Lease-Purchase** - Local governments utilizing this innovative financing approach prepare standards and specifications for the development of a park by a private company. The facility is then leased to the jurisdiction for a specified period of time. Title to the park and facilities can be conveyed to the local government at the end of the lease period without future payments. The rental over the years will have paid the total original cost plus interest.

**Eminent Domain** - The power of eminent domain allows the local government to acquire private property for public use. Although this is not a common practice for the acquisition and development of park and recreational areas, it is a tool that can be used by the City to purchase property within certain areas of the City, particularly within established neighborhoods. The property would be acquired through condemnation with "just compensation" paid to the property owner.

**Authorities and Special Districts** - Special authorities or districts may be created to provide public facilities such as parks and recreational areas. These authorities are commonly created to avoid the restrictive debt limitations of local governments. They may be financed through revenue bonds retired by user charges or fees, or in some instances, the authority may have the power to tax.

**Sales Tax** - Through a public referendum, the City may establish a sales tax of any size, typically one-half to one cent, to generate general revenue for the acquisition and development of parks and recreation areas throughout Stephenville. The sales tax may have a limited duration or may be permanent.

**User Fees** - User fees may be an effective cost recovery technique to recover a reasonable portion of the costs to administer, operate, and maintain public parks and open space. Examples of user fees include registration or entry fees for recreational programs and equipment and facility rental charges.

**In-Kind Services and Volunteer Participation** - In-kind services may be coordinated with other departments and governmental entities to perform the labor on specific construction projects. Individuals, sports associations, private businesses, and civic groups are just a few examples of entities and organizations that may furnish volunteer participation.

**State and Federal Assistance** - State and federal grants-in-aid are available to finance a large number of programs. The cost of funding parks may be borne completely by grant funds, typically with a local share required. Programs such as federal revenue sharing and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) have given local governments more freedom on how they spend their grant money. Some of the programs currently available include:

**Texas Recreation and Parks Account Program Funds** - The Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) provides 50 percent matching grant assistance to local governments for the acquisition and development of public parks and recreation areas and facilities. All TRPA grant applications are evaluated for program eligibility based on a "Project Priority Scoring System." The applications are scored and presented to the Parks and Wildlife Commission for approval. Minimum master plan standards must be met to qualify for priority points in the competitive scoring system. A project awarded a grant must be complete before another grant is application is submitted.

The TPWD offers five grant programs:

**Outdoor Recreational Grants** are reimbursable matching grants up to \$500,000 for park acquisition, development or redevelopment.

**Indoor Recreational Grants** provide matching funds for qualified recreation centers and other types of indoor facilities.

**Texas Trails Grants** provide funds for off street connections between activity centers, such as connecting parks to other parks or to schools and other qualified center.

**Regional Park Grants** for larger projects that serve regional needs, and require involvement of multiple entities.

**Small Communities Grants** provides matching grant assistance up to \$100,000 total project cost to communities less than 20,000 in population.

The City may apply for and receive a grant in each of the above categories. These grants may run concurrently.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** - CDBG funds may be used on projects which benefit persons with low and moderate incomes. The CDBG program is administered by the state's Office of Rural and Community Affairs (ORCA). Funding is available on an 80/20 cost-share basis.

**Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund/Texas Local Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Fund** - This fund is co-administered by the National Park Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TP&WD). Funds are available to provide planning, land acquisition and development assistance for "outdoor recreation." This is a 50/50 matching grant program administered through the state.

**Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPRRP)** - This grant program is for the rehabilitation of recreation facilities in areas defined by the U.S. Census as a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Stephenville may qualify under this designation. This program is a 70 percent federal and 30 percent local matching grant.

**Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)** - This program is available for planning and technical assistance on projects emphasizing environmental protection, open space accessibility and construction. Funds are available to qualified private organizations and local governments. Public involvement is a requirement of this program.

**Special Recreation Grants** - This program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education under Public Law 101-517, provides \$2.86 million for development of special recreation demonstration projects for persons with disabilities.

**Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21)** - This program provides funding for transportation-related bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There is a Surface Transportation Program (STP) category, which allows cities and counties the option of using bridge and road funds for providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Enhancements can include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail corridor preservation, scenic and environmental transportation opportunities and improvements to historical transportation sites. Funds from this program could be used to establish corridor linkages between neighborhoods and park and recreational areas. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) administers this program in coordination with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) around the state. Congress is currently debating the next six-year omnibus federal transportation bill that would continue similar funding for state and local governments.

**Federal Lands Highway Funds** - This program provides funds for bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities in conjunction with trails, roads, highways and parkways. The primary intent of this program is to assist in the construction of transportation facilities. This is a 100 percent federal share program. The use of these funds would primarily be for the acquisition of right-of-way and development of trail linkages connecting residential neighborhoods with the public parks system.

**The Landscape Cost Sharing Program** - This program is administered by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Through this program, there is 50 percent cost sharing available for both highway and pedestrian landscape projects on routes within the designated permanent state highway system.

**America the Beautiful Tree Planting Program** - This program is administered by the Texas Forest Service. It is an outgrowth of former President Bush's proposal to plant one billion trees in the United States by the end of the century to mitigate the "greenhouse effect." Funding is available for public and private projects on a 50 percent cost-share basis.

**Cooperative Forestry Assistance Funds** - This program is administered by the Texas Forest Service. Matching grants are available on a 50 percent cost-share basis for projects including trails and greenways, beautification efforts, and public education and training. Grants range in size from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and may be matched with in-kind services or private financing.

**American Greenways DuPont Awards Program** - This program is administered by The Conservation Fund, which provides grants of \$500 to \$2,500 to local greenways projects. Grants can be used for almost any activity that serves as a catalyst for local greenways planning, design, or development.

Most of the grant programs are reviewed and selected on a competitive basis, therefore, applications for funding will be evaluated based on assessment of local need; existence of an adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan; and, the availability of local matching funds. Although grants provide an alternative means of financing local park and recreational area improvements, they should not serve as the sole basis for funding a local park and recreation system.

### Private Financing Alternatives

In addition to capital improvement financing and state and federal assistance, there are a variety of innovative approaches to financing public park and recreation areas. The use of incentives to encourage private financing, public-private partnerships, and land dedication or donation can be effective strategies to develop a City-wide park and recreation system without relying on the municipality to fully fund the program. In addition, the use of impact fees may help to offset the impacts of private development on the demand for and use of public facilities and services. The following private funding approaches may be available to the City of Stephenville.

**Park Dedication Fee** - Realizing that residents in new developments use existing park facilities, the City, as part of the subdivision process, may require an equitable and reasonable sum of money per lot to be contributed to the City for park and recreational improvements. However, in order to abide by legal validity tests and to avoid a "taking" of private property, the amount of the fee must be roughly proportional to the demand for park and recreational services placed on the City by a private development. This method has worked effectively in some municipalities.

**Credit for Private Facilities** - In lieu of requiring land dedication or money, the City may consider giving credit for providing recreation facilities in new developments.

**Land Donation** - Property owners may be willing to donate land to the City for use as a public park. The City should encourage donation subject to established guidelines for the development of park and recreational areas. Considerations should include the suitability of the land for park development; conformance with the

objectives of the Stephenville *Parks Master Plan*; and proximity to neighborhoods, natural features, and adjacent land uses.

**Trust Fund** - The City could use a trust fund for citizens to will a portion or all of their estate to public park and recreational use. Legal provisions would need to be established for the conveyance of property. In addition, the City should establish and use guidelines for the acceptance of suitable park land property. The trust fund would be incorporated as a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation or an existing nonprofit corporation could be used. This would allow possible income tax benefits for the donors.

**Private Financing** - Community organizations or local service clubs could assist in acquiring and developing park and recreational areas by providing the local match for state or federal grants-in-aid. Another option is 100 percent financing by a private entity with dedication to the City.

**Fee In Lieu of Dedication or Improvement** - The City may use impact fees to collect revenue for the acquisition and development of park and recreational areas. Similar to the dedication approach, the required fees must also be roughly proportional to the City's burden for the provision of additional park and recreational services resulting from private development. An example of a "fee in lieu of improvement" is a park excise tax that would require a developer to pay a fee (on a per square foot or per dwelling unit cost basis) upon issuance of a building permit.

**Tax Deferral** - The City may use this method to encourage property owners to defer the development of their land while the City uses it for public open space or a semi-developed park. During the deferral period, the property would be assessed as an undeveloped parcel, with the collection of taxes to be deferred until the property is developed. The City would secure an agreement with the property owner with established conditions of use and provisions for liability and ongoing maintenance. In addition, the City would obtain a recreation easement for "temporary" use of the property.

**Tax Reductions** - Donation of private land for public use may reduce an individual's federal income tax burden. Also, the market value of a recreation easement may reduce the tax burden either federally or locally, if approved by the local government.

With its natural resources and outstanding City Park, Stephenville will continue to provide quality recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors.





# STRATEGIC PLAN

*Nature is Our Heritage*



### *Why this plan?*

The Bosque River Trail Corridor Strategic Plan represents the talents and opinions of a number of partnering organizations and citizens of Stephenville and Erath County collected over a nearly two-year period. Participants envisioned that the Bosque River could “be a model river and trail corridor focused on health and recreation, education, transportation, and restoration, all celebrating the heritage of our region.” In the pages that follow, the reader will find information useful for the realization of this vision through collaborative efforts of the City of Stephenville, Erath County, Keep Stephenville Beautiful, and the many advocates for the river and the trail.



### Key Participants

- Brazos River Authority
- City of Stephenville
- Erath County
- Keep Stephenville Beautiful
- National Park Service
- Stephenville Independent School District
- Tarleton State University
- Texas AgriLife Research & Extension Service
- Stephenville Chamber of Commerce
- Stephenville Economic Development Foundation
- Stephenville Historical House Museum
- Stephenville School Board
- Stephenville Soccer Association





## Chapter 1



### The Bosque River Trail Corridor



#### The Project, Vision and Mission

The Bosque River Trail Corridor (“BRTC”) is a proposed river trail system along eight miles of the Bosque River in and around the City of Stephenville, Texas. This BRTC will be a model river and trail corridor focused on health and recreation, education, transportation and restoration, all celebrating the natural heritage of the region. Located in the heart of the Cross Timbers region of Texas, Stephenville is known as the “Cowboy Capital of the World” and is the seat of Erath County. The community is home to Tarleton State University, a scholastic and sports team championship high school, and a local dairy industry that leads the State of Texas in annual milk production. Ultimately, the BRTC will provide and promote stewardship of the community waterway to preserve natural heritage, promote healthy lifestyles, and provide educational opportunities for current and future generations.

As late as the 1970s, the Bosque River played a starring role in the lives of Erath County residents. They swam in its pools, fished its waters, and watered their cattle on its banks. Within a few short years, however, as phosphorous levels rose in the Bosque’s tributaries, the river began to see visible signs of pollution. By 1998, segments of the North Bosque River were deemed “impaired segments” on the Clean Water Act listing. Since then, reclamation and compliance efforts have helped improve and sustain Bosque waters quality within the watershed basin. The Bosque River Trail Corridor Project will tell the story of how a region is working to successfully recover an “impaired” waterway, while providing recreation and educational opportunities to local residents, university students, and visitors to the area.

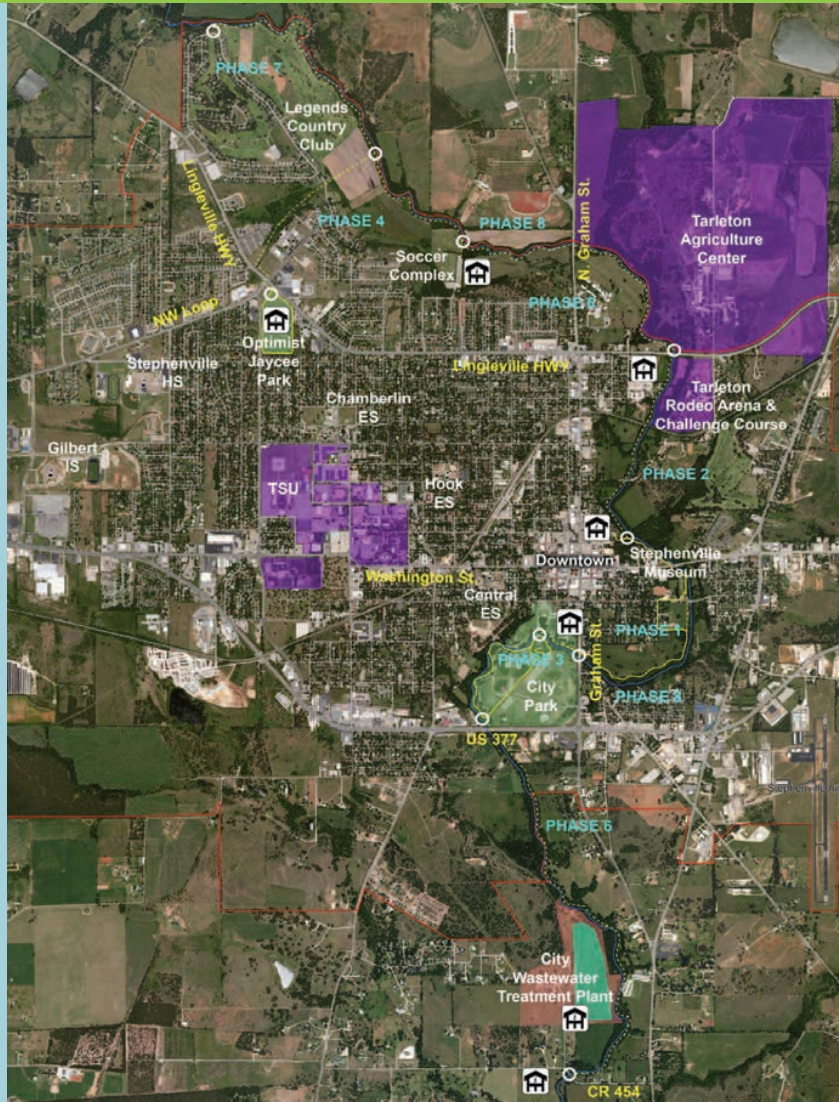


4th of July FunFair on the Bosque River in City Park, circa 1970s  
Photo credit: Stephenville Historical House Museum

The BRTC will complement and enhance Stephenville’s existing one-and-a-half mile trail, known as the Bosque River Trail. When combined with this existing trail, the new (proposed) BRTC trail will link the city’s two major parks. Beginning at the northern border near the Optimist Jaycee Park, the BRTC will wind in a slow “S-curve.” It will offer linkages to Tarleton State University’s Agricultural Center, the Stephenville Historical House Museum complex, and the downtown business district. It continues through the main City Park, and exits the city limits approximately two miles south. The BRTC’s southern border is a proposed wetlands area near the city wastewater treatment facility.

***Vision:***  
***A model river and trail corridor focused on health and recreation, education, transportation, and restoration, all celebrating the natural heritage of our region.***

***Mission:***  
***The Bosque River Trail Corridor provides stewardship of our community waterway to preserve our natural and cultural heritage, promote healthy lifestyles, and provide educational opportunities for current and future generations.***



**Legend**

- Stephenville Schools
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Trail Head
- Phase End Point
- Railroad
- North Bosque River
- Proposed Wetland
- City Limits
- TSU Property
- Wastewater Treatment Facility
- City Parks

**BRTC Project Area Map**



The proposed trail will be interpretive, highlighting the area's indigenous natural resources and historical heritage through the installation of educational signage. It will become a living laboratory providing recreational and educational opportunities to local residents, university students and visitors to the area, and narrating through signage the story of how a region is working to successfully recover an impaired waterway. In 2011, Erath County and the City of Stephenville, working with Keep Stephenville Beautiful, revived one mile of the river, eliminating dump sites, tree debris, and trash. This historic effort not only restored a section of the river, it illustrates the spirit of cooperation and community commitment to complete the proposed BRTC. Taken together, the BRTC will highlight the greater Stephenville community's efforts to restore the North Bosque River Watershed, and serve as a model for river reclamation and restoration in the State of Texas.

**The Existing Bosque River Trail**

The Bosque River Trail is a walking, hiking and biking trail that runs along the north bank of the Bosque River in Stephenville. Two riverside trails exist today: (1) inside the City Park the trail is eight-tenths of a mile along the river, 6 feet wide, and asphalt-surfaced; (2) a ten-foot wide concrete-surfaced trail begins at the edge of the City Park and continues east for a mile-and-a-half along the Bosque River. River views are available along the route through both open and wooded areas. Grassy areas with native plants and Live Oak trees, some more than 100 years old, greet trail users on the trail. A 40-foot bridge over a side tributary invites users to pause, view nature and glimpse wildlife.



Existing trail along the Bosque River

Amenities provided along the trail include two gazebos, bike storage, benches, lighting, litter receptacles, signs and mile markers. A small parking area is located at the end of Beach Street and parking is available inside City Park. The Bosque River trail connects the City Park, Boy Scout area and Stephenville Historical Museum to the downtown area. Vantage points along the trail include a space that runs behind



The current Bosque River Trail attracts appeals to families.

the Historical Museum. It features a lookout structure with river views. Multiple displays of realistic animal tracks have been sandblasted into the trail, reminding the user of the native animals who live along the trail. The wildlife includes turkeys, opossum, raccoons, armadillos, birds and even deer along the trail.

*The Bosque River Trail provides trail users with an experience of a beautiful part of the “country” within city limits. This country feel is rare to find this close to a populated and growing urban area.*

### Location

While the shorter segment of trail is found inside City Park, the linear segment of trail constructed in a city-owned greenway along the river is the genesis of the name Bosque River Trail (BRTC). The BRTC begins on the east side of the Graham Street Bridge, just east of Stephenville City Park on the north side of the Bosque River. From there, trail users travel east along the river until the trail curves north. At one point the trail diverges from its riverside location, following East Crow Street, South Minter Avenue, and East Long Street. The trail returns to the river’s edge on the west bank until the spot where it currently ends, at East Tarleton Street and Vine. Its location gives users close access to hotels, restaurants, and shopping, as well as to important historical sites within the City including the Historical Museum.



BRTC provides a country experience through the woods. Photo credit: Plan-it ink, Treva Wygle

### About the Development

Almost three decades ago the idea of a nature trail was incorporated into the City’s park plans, and the trail inside City Park was constructed in 1977 with federal Land and Water Conservation Funds. The Bosque River Trail, by that name (Phase I), came to fruition October 28, 2010 and was made possible by grants from the Texas Department of Transportation – Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program, the National Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century and the City of Stephenville. The City’s matching contribution was \$443,000 (20% of the cost) for this \$2.2 million dollar project. The project engineering and design firm was Schrickel, Rollins and Associates out of Arlington, Texas. Local contractor, Jay Mills Contracting, was awarded the bid for the work on the project.

## History of the River

If Texas was the dry and dusty place imagined by Hollywood movies, it would have a hard time sustaining today’s nearly 27 million people. In the mid-1850s, when Stephenville was being founded in the land named “el bosque” (the forest) by its Spanish predecessors, Texas’ population numbered fewer than 250,000. As with most Texas towns, a river determined Stephenville’s location. The river not only shaped the topography of the community with its banks cutting a slow S-curve path through the city; it helped define a place that is today uniquely Texan – friendly, hardworking, and educated. The intertwined history of the river and community create a rich natural heritage. The Bosque River Trail Corridor (BRTC) project is designed to continue and enhance the Bosque River’s integral role for current and future generations.



New Eden by Kay Walton depicts the 1850’s arrival of Erath and Stephen on the banks of the Bosque River, and Anadarko Chief Jose. From the collection of Jenny and Scott Allen.

Home to the Caddo and Anadarko Indians, these tribes were friendly to the thirty settlers who arrived in 1855 with John M. Stephen,<sup>1</sup> the man for whom the city is named, and George B. Erath, the county’s namesake. The topsoil was chocolate black loam; fields of native blue stem grasses offered ample grazing for livestock.<sup>2</sup> Abundant Post Oak trees supplied wood for log cabin structures. Ample, clean water was a necessity, and the town’s original settlers chose land adjacent to the Bosque River as their oasis.

One of the settlers’ first acts was to map their community on a rise at the highest point above the Bosque River, the current site of the Erath County Courthouse and Stephenville’s historic town square. Even from high ground it was precarious to live in Erath County until late in the nineteenth

century. For several years after the original settlers arrived, the Caddo and Anadarko were peaceful, but after two incidents<sup>3</sup> that resulted in the deaths of friendly Indians, the Comanche launched raids on the Stephenville settlement, stealing cattle and horses. Sustaining farms and ranches in Erath County was so difficult that by the early 1870s, the population had begun to decline. Within a few years, though, cotton supplanted cattle as the cash crop, and the population of Erath County swelled. For the next forty years cotton was Erath County’s economic mainstay.



Erath County Courthouse

The strength of the late nineteenth century economy is evident in the limestone buildings on the town square. Many of the historic buildings date to the 1890s, the same time that John Tarleton College (now Tarleton State University) was founded. Famed architect, J. Riely Gordon, left his mark on Stephenville and Erath County, as he designed the courthouse and two commercial buildings on the square.



Dairy cows are part of Stephenville’s history. Photo credit: Stephenville Historical House Museum

In the 1930s, declining cotton prices drove farmers to diversify. Some planted peanuts or nurseries; others raised poultry and ran dairies. It was the shift to dairies that foretold the future of the Bosque River. By the 1970s, Erath County was home to more than 15,000 dairy cattle that produced over 150 million pounds of milk and set the roots for the town’s mantle, the “Dairy Capital of Texas.” The dairy industry grew throughout the 1980s and early 1990s and at its peak, about one dairy a month was being added to the county. By 1990, Stephenville’s

population had grown to 13,000. Population growth brought new developments with more roadways and parking lots, which added to urban runoff. Municipal wastewater treatment plants and other discharge sources contributed to downstream pollution, as did dairy waste management practices.

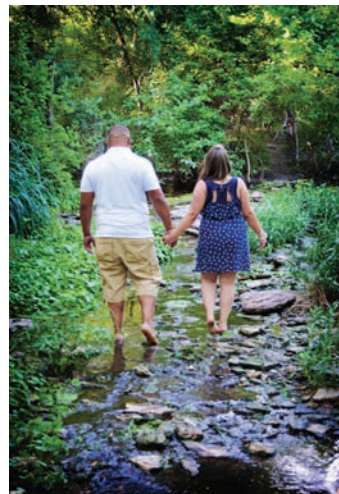
In 1998, parts of the North Bosque River were deemed “impaired waterbodies” on the State of Texas’ impaired waters list under Sec. 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Small freshwater creeks feed the Bosque, which has its headwaters just north of today’s city limits, and these too have been impaired. A muddy-bottom river, the Bosque looks undrinkable, but for livestock and wildlife, it is a life source. In this Cross Timbers part of Texas, seasons arrive with intensity as icy winters give way to unforgiving summers. Thirty inches of rainfall comes throughout the year, but it is soaking rains that refresh the Bosque for which prayers are offered in area churches. From Stephenville, the North Bosque flows south, merging with other branches of the river to become the Brazos, eventually emptying into Lake Waco, the water supply for the City of Waco.

Over the last fifteen years as a consequence of its impaired status, the Bosque River has received more environmental, regulatory, and political scrutiny than most rivers in the United States. As in the old Hollywood westerns, help is on the way. Numerous regulations, rules and practices have been instituted to improve and sustain water quality within the watershed basin. The design of the 20-acre wetland area has been completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ft. Worth District; it could contribute to water quality downstream and lay the foundation for a plan for action. Dairy producers in the Bosque watershed are working to implement environmental waste solutions to benefit the North Bosque River. Today, a collaborative effort including city, county, high school, university, the agricultural and manufacturing industries, and non-profit organizations have focused on the river corridor’s current and future use.



Tarleton students monitor water quality in the Bosque. Photo credit: Kyle McGregor

Stephenville’s roots are in the muddy bottom of the Bosque and the BRTC will tell the story of how a region is working to successfully recover an “impaired” waterway, while providing recreation and educational opportunities for local residents, university students, and visitors to the area. The site along the Bosque where Stephenville is now located served as a catalyst for settlement up the Bosque River and into the Texas Cross Timbers region. The Bosque River Trail Corridor Project will allow the “el bosque” area to once again serve as an inspiration, this time as a model for other communities on how to improve natural resources and enhance outdoor recreation. More than a walking trail in a Texas town, the BRTC is a plan for reclamation and restoration. It will connect its population and visitors to the value of the waterways throughout Texas and the nation.



The Bosque River at the City Park. Photo Credit: Plan-it ink, Treva Wyggle

REFERENCES:

- <sup>1</sup> Stephen acquired the land grant to acreage along the Bosque River in 1853 from the heirs of John Blair, killed at the Alamo. Included in the group of original settlers was William Franklin Stephen, John M. Stephen’s brother, and together they ran the town’s first general store. Early in the history of the city it was referred to as “Stephensville” as well as “Stephenville.”
- <sup>2</sup> As late as 1870, buffalos grazed within three miles of the town.
- <sup>3</sup> The first incident, in 1858, resulted in the slaughter of seven Indians and one settler when a band of self-appointed Erath County Rangers attacked the Caddo and Anadarko. The second incident was about 1860 when Red Jack, an Anadarko, was killed at the hands of a settler. Red Jack is reputed to be buried along the Bosque near the Tarleton Farm; the BRTC will be near this site. See Sherrod, Ricky M., Stephenville. Arcadia Publishing, 2010. pp. 14-15; Young, Dan. Interview with M. Dunkerley, January 8, 2014.

## Chapter 2



## Goals and Strategies



The Bosque River Trail Corridor is a multi-faceted vision. The BRTC Advisory Committee offers the following four major goals with more detailed strategies to implement the goals. Some of the recommended strategies are already underway while others will follow in the future through the efforts of the City of Stephenville and its partners.

## Health and Recreation

**Goal:** To promote healthy lifestyles for our citizens through the use of the BRTC

### STRATEGIES

- Extend the existing BRTC to its ultimate 8 or more miles and include a variety of trail surfaces to support multiple recreational activities
- Promote the BRTC as a premier setting for leisurely activities, special events, and outdoor expeditions
- Provide outdoor facilities along the BRTC to promote healthy lifestyles
- Create seasonal opportunities for citizens to use the BRTC as a functional waterway for activities such as kayaking and fishing



Trails have been found to encourage active lifestyles in the people who have easy access to them. Trails in natural settings also offer the benefits of stress relief and relaxation. The current BRTC trail already attracts walkers, runners, skaters, nature enthusiasts, and more. Participants at the community workshop supported these uses, but also indicated that even more uses for the trail corridor would be desirable, including equestrian, hiking, and mountain biking on natural surfaced trails.

Implementation of the health and recreation goal and its strategies will primarily involve developing additional trail segments of the BRTC and park nodes along the trail that could provide other complementary outdoor facilities like children’s play areas and exercise equipment. A dream of using the river for paddling activities could come to fruition seasonally and more if the water in the river can be augmented.

Recognizing the benefits to Stephenville residents, college students, and visitors, BRTC advocates will actively promote the use of the existing and future segments of the trail by individuals and groups for organized events. The trail has already been the venue for fun runs, like the Stephenville Education Foundation’s Color Run. The City Park can accommodate large events with parking and staging areas for activities offered on the trail. The pavilion below Graham Street also can serve as the race event headquarters. Other events could include festivals, youth group activities, geocaching, nature tours, bike rides, and more.



## Education

**Goal:** To provide educational opportunities, through design and facilities, for educational institutions and the general public

### STRATEGIES

- Utilize the entire 8 mile section of the Bosque River as an “Outdoor Laboratory”, providing numerous learning opportunities along the trail, including a permanent outdoor classroom for organized activities.
- Showcase wildlife, natural and culture heritage features along the trail
- Establish research and service opportunities for public and private schools, Tarleton State University, and local, state and federal agencies
- Provide marketing for the BRTC to promote the trail and its educational opportunities

A component of the Bosque River Trail Corridor Mission is to “provide educational opportunities for current and future generations”. Additionally, the Vision “to be a model river and trail corridor” includes focusing on education. With this mission and vision in mind, an Education Subcommittee was formed to research and identify areas in which the BRTC could be used for educational purposes by students of all ages as well as the general public. Outdoor classrooms can be as simple as using the riverbanks for fishing.

The Education Subcommittee identified five project areas which will enable the BRTC to become an integral part of the Stephenville community for both educational institutions and the general public.



Stephenville High School’s outdoor classroom

**1** Renovation of North Shapard Avenue using Thurber bricks. Located in the vicinity of the Stephenville Historical House Museum, the bricking project will replicate the way some Stephenville streets were originally paved beginning in 1929. A brick-surfaced Shapard Avenue would lead to a bricked parking area providing access to the BRTC and the museum complex.

**2** Interpretive walks with artistic yet informational signage strategically placed throughout the BRTC to educate both students and the general public on its wildlife, vegetation, ecosystems and natural history. Stephenville ISD teachers and administrators are partnering with professors and students in the Wildlife Management Department at Tarleton State University to develop a program in which Tarleton students teach SISD students topics related to the BRTC. A partnership with The Cross Timbers Fine Arts Council will provide students with opportunities to participate in an art contest with the winners having their artwork/interpretive signs displayed along the BRTC.



Example of youth created interpretive sign, Salt Springs Island, BC

- 3 Adopt a trail segment in which persons involved in service organizations at both the local schools and Tarleton will participate in helping to keep the BRTC clean and free of debris.
- 4 A website showcasing the BRTC will be designed and kept up-to-date by Tarleton web-design classes. The site will include activities occurring on the existing trail as well as plans for future development.
- 5 A cooperative effort between Stephenville ISD and Tarleton State University students will create presentations which will include short biographies of people connected to Erath County and Stephenville, information pertaining to native plants and animals, the usage of plants by Native Americans and early residents, stories of the settlement of the areas along the Bosque River, interviews with people telling of their experiences in the area, and information regarding the development of Stephenville and the surrounding area. Students in technology classes will be utilized to develop a QR code system for BRTC visitors to access the historical information.



Tarleton students conduct river cleanups.

## Restoration

**Goal:** To promote the ecological restoration of the BRTC with respect to its health, integrity, and sustainability

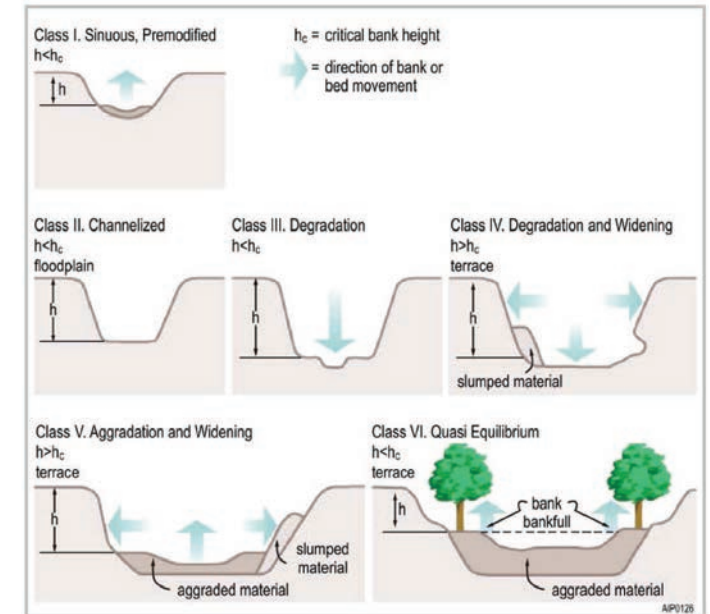
### STRATEGIES

- Restore the BRTC to a more natural environment
  - > Remove invasive species along the BRTC and replant with native vegetation
  - > Identify and improve locations where stream channel morphology, design, and natural function can be enhanced
- Establish community-wide cleanup events to remove trash along the BRTC
- Establish a wetland ecosystem in the Bosque River Trail Corridor
- Facilitate activities which will lead to the Bosque River being removed from the “impaired waterway” list under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act.

The Bosque River Trail Corridor’s restoration goal was created to address water quality and quantity issues that occur in the upper portion of the Bosque River. The proposed re-creation of a bio-diverse ecosystem along the Bosque River recognizes the need to restore the river and its banks to a healthy and sustainable condition.

The morphology of a stream refers to the shape of the channel and its floodplains and banks. A healthy shape is relatively stable and allows a river at flood stage to flow across floodplains. Initial stream bank degradation occurs when heavy rainfall events pass down river with too much velocity. Velocity of the flow in rain events increases when the watershed is covered with impervious surfaces, like paving and buildings, and when upstream tributaries do not have enough vegetative buffers along them to absorb water and slow the water flow. In some portions of the Bosque River, banks have eroded causing silt from the banks to contribute to deteriorated water quality. As banks become increasingly unstable, erosion continues.

To help remedy this, the BRTC is seeking to integrate watershed monitoring into the BRTC trail experience. Through documentation of degraded streambank morphology, project partners can plan for restoration activities. Some of the actions can involve replanting the riparian areas or floodplains next to the river while others would need to involve heavy equipment to re-slope some of the steeply eroded banks. Non-native invasive species could be removed and replanted with native vegetation for wildlife benefits and bank stabilization. Concept designs for necessary restoration needs of affected sections of the BRTC will likely involve a combination of traditional flood control practices, low impact development in the watershed, and natural channel design solutions.



The Upper Bosque River shows Class III and IV level degradation of its morphology, according to Texas AgriLife.

Other efforts will need to focus on restoring water quality with the aim of full recovery of the Bosque River and removal of the North Bosque as an impaired water from the State of Texas Clean Water Act list. Current automated water quality monitoring could be enhanced with volunteer sampling assistance and additional data gathering. A wetland ecosystem design created in 2005 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is still a project that could contribute to improved water quality as well as provide visitors with an education experience.



Waco’s manmade wetlands can serve as a model for Stephenville.

## Transportation

**Goal:** To provide options for all members of the community to access the BRTC

**STRATEGIES:**

- Provide adequate parking, including ADA and bicycle parking, for the BRTC at multiple trail head locations
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect targeted centers of activity to the BRTC and integrate into the City’s thoroughfare plan
- Install signage to advertise the BRTC and to guide users to trail heads and access points
- Identify and encourage access from multiple residential and business areas

The BRTC committee recognizes that the Bosque River Trail Corridor will be more beneficial to the citizens of Stephenville if it is integrated into the transportation system. Participants at the community workshop were asked to identify places in town they would like to see connected to the trail. Workshop attendees marked certain streets as routes to connect the trail to important activity centers. Such activity centers included the downtown business area and courthouse square, Tarleton State University’s main campus, Stephenville’s public schools, hospital and medical areas, and senior residential areas – all places that are destinations for purposeful trips.

After reviewing the many ideas for using streets to connect the trail to parts of town, the BRTC advocates recommend a citywide bike and pedestrian plan that will be integrated into the City’s Thoroughfare Plan. Such a plan would identify the best places to locate additional pathways, on-street bicycle facilities (marked routes, painted bike lanes, and shared lanes for bikes and vehicles), and sidewalks. Ideally the result will be a comprehensive network of bike and pedestrian facilities connecting to the BRTC. Such a network will encourage and facilitate the BRTC’s usage for recreational purposes as well as for destination-oriented travel from the trail user’s chosen Point A to Point B within the greater Stephenville community.

Another need to improve the use of the BRTC now and in its future full development is an attractive and well-placed wayfinding signage system within the greater Stephenville community. The wayfinding signs would indicate to people who are near the trail the direct way to find an access point. Major trailheads would include parking areas for people who live too far to arrive at the trail by bike or on foot. Minor trailheads could be as minimally developed as trailhead kiosks with maps, and they could be included at any place where a street ends adjacent to the trail.



## Chapter 3

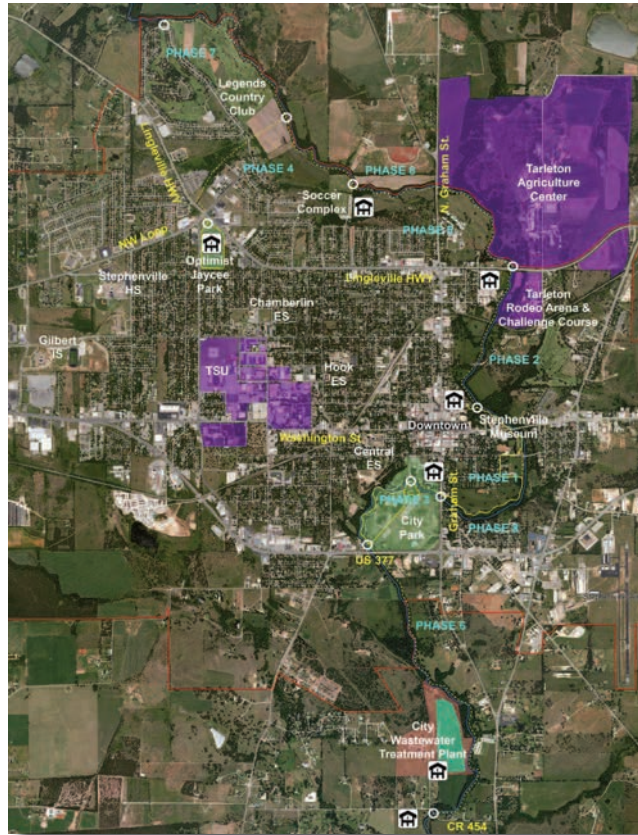


## Recommended Corridor Improvements



One of the primary purposes of the BRTC planning effort is to recommend physical improvements to meet the goals for the river and its surrounding corridor. Proposed corridor improvements emphasize activities that bring people closer to the Bosque River to enjoy it without impacting its natural scenic qualities.

The map below shows an approximately 8-mile river corridor: the proposed trail is along the length of the river from northwest Stephenville through the city, then continuing south of City Park to the wastewater treatment plant outside the city limits. In addition to the trail itself, the concept includes major and minor trailheads where people access the trail, visitor amenities at the trailheads, park nodes along the trail with adjacent facilities to enjoy, educational places showcasing the Bosque River ecology and watershed, and identified restoration opportunities along the river. Corridor advocates also envision connecting the trail to key destinations in the city using bikeways and sidewalks; this would encourage active lifestyles and help Stephenville become a walkable and bikeable community.



### Proposed Trail Segments

The BRTC project developers propose breaking the trail extensions into segments for easier implementation. Phase I is the existing trail which was discussed earlier in this plan. After the gap in the trail is completed, connecting to the existing Bosque River Trail (BRT) through Texas Parks and Wildlife's Recreational Trail Fund, trail users will be able to enjoy 2.8 miles of hard-surfaced trail. The BRTC Advisory Committee recommended seven additional phases.

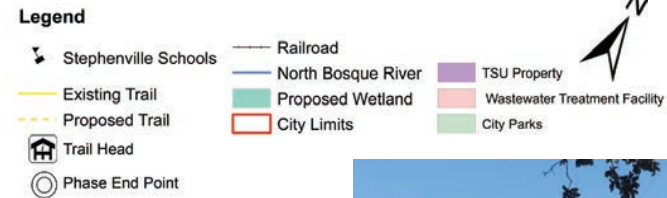


### Phase 2: Tarleton-Vine to Lingleville Highway

This 1.3-mile trail segment extends the existing trail northward to Lingleville Highway (SH 8). With funding awarded from the Texas Department of Transportation's Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program in 2013 and the City's matching funds, the segment is slated to be completed in 2015. The trail will be similar in design to the existing one, concrete-surfaced and suitable for bicycles, skaters, strollers, wheelchairs and pedestrians.



The City owns some lots at the current trail ending at Tarleton and Vine Streets that can be improved as a trailhead with a small number of parking spaces. The closest access between the BRT and Tarleton State University's main campus is a route along Tarleton Street, a distance of 17 blocks. Improvements for bikes and pedestrians on Tarleton Street would provide better access to the trail. The downtown square is a destination only 6 blocks away. Wayfinding signage would help visitors and residents make their way between the trail and destinations in the area.



Potential trailhead site for the Phase 2 segment



This segment takes users under the Fort Worth and Western Railroad trestle, a feature that will appeal to railroad buffs using the trail. Other destinations in the vicinity of this segment include the Harris Methodist Hospital, Tarleton’s challenge course and rodeo grounds, and the Tarleton Farm. All would need side trails or on-street improvements to make better, safer connections.



Traveling under the Fort Worth & Western Railroad trestle will be a unique experience. Photo credit: Drew Wells

The church property at the intersection of the river with Lingleville Highway would make a suitable major trailhead for those wishing to park their cars to use the trail. The church has indicated its willingness to work with the City.

### Phase 3: City Park North Trail Link

The City of Stephenville proposes to build 2,000 linear feet of 10-foot wide concrete trail in the Stephenville City Park, with funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Texas Recreational Trails Fund Program. The linear trail will follow the north bank of the North Branch of the Bosque River and connect to existing trails for a total length of 16,000 linear feet. Also included in the project is a small parking lot and connecting drive. The trail and parking lot will be fully accessible.



**Legend**

- Stephenville Schools
- Railroad
- TSU Property
- North Bosque River
- Proposed Wetland
- Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Existing Trail
- City Limits
- City Parks
- Trail Head
- Phase End Point

The east end of the proposed trail connects to the BRT on the west side of Graham St. (SH 108). The BRT extends 8,000 linear feet east and then north following the Bosque River. The proposed trail will also connect the west end of the BRT with a pedestrian bridge, which crosses the river and provides access to the majority of City Park amenities including its walks and trails. This project would complete a segment of the City Park Master Plan.



A “desire” line path indicates where the new addition will connect to the BRT.

The proposed trail will follow gentle gradients, making it suitable for a variety of users including walkers, bicyclists, wheelchairs, baby strollers, and skaters. The existing bridge over the river, to which the proposed and existing park trails connect, contains steps, and therefore, a replacement bridge is needed for the entire connection to be usable for wheeled users.

### Phase 4: Optimist-Jaycee Park to Stephenville Soccer Association Area

This 1.4-mile segment would connect Optimist-Jaycee Park with the Soccer Fields, likely by following along a tributary of the Bosque part of the way and partly along the Bosque River. The large Optimist-Jaycee Park with existing parking area would need only wayfinding signage to make it a major trailhead directing users to reach the northwest end of the Bosque River Trail. There is a 0.7 mile loop trail inside the park that would be connected to the BRT. Trail users will need a specially designed highway crossing to traverse the very busy intersection of Lingleville Road (Highway 8) and Northwest Loop.



**Legend**

Stephenville Schools	Railroad	TSU Property
Existing Trail	North Bosque River	Wastewater Treatment Facility
Proposed Trail	Proposed Wetland	City Parks
Trail Head	City Limits	
Phase End Point		

A trail segment connected to the Optimist-Jaycee Park would be close to the high school and to medical facilities in the area. Having a trail segment in this area gives residents and visitors safe access to healthy outdoor exercise paths. It will pass through existing developed neighborhoods and commercial areas. These nearby destinations would need trails or on-street connections be safely connected.



The trail from the Bosque River to Optimist-Jaycee Park might follow the floodplain of this wet-weather creek.

As one of the more urban segments of the trail, the desired surface would likely be hard surface suited to pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters, strollers, and wheelchairs. Soccer players would be able to go to their games on bicycles. The portion along the river would be designed to give users a woodland experience while the tributary and cross-field connections would be through open areas.

### Phase 5: Lingleville Highway to Stephenville Soccer Association Area

The segment of proposed trail between the end of the TxDOT-funded phase 2 and the Stephenville Soccer Association property is approximately 1.4 miles in length. At the southeast end of this segment, the trail would share the trailhead being proposed at the Lingleville Highway for Phase 2. At the northeast end, the proposed trailhead is recommended in the area of the soccer fields. This latter would need additional acreage for trailhead parking as the soccer association often fills their parking lot.



**Legend**

Stephenville Schools	Railroad	TSU Property
Existing Trail	North Bosque River	Wastewater Treatment Facility
Proposed Trail	Proposed Wetland	City Parks
Trail Head	City Limits	
Phase End Point		

This segment is currently rural in character and most of the trail could be located within the riverside wooded area, providing shade along the trail. At the workshop, many participants expressed a desire for equestrian use in addition to the bicycle-pedestrian-friendly characteristics of the existing and funded trails. Tarleton Farm is across the river for a portion of this segment, lending it to retain much of the agricultural character into the future. Access between the trail and the Tarleton Farm might generate equestrian use; however, it would require a bridge or a designated ford area to make a connection.

The Foster's Home for Children is adjacent to this section of the river on the south side. The President of Foster's Home for Children provided a letter of support for the trail project citing the benefits for their children and the community at large. The Stephenville Soccer Association also endorsed the trail concept, saying their soccer families might travel to the fields on the trail and also that players could run the trail during practice.



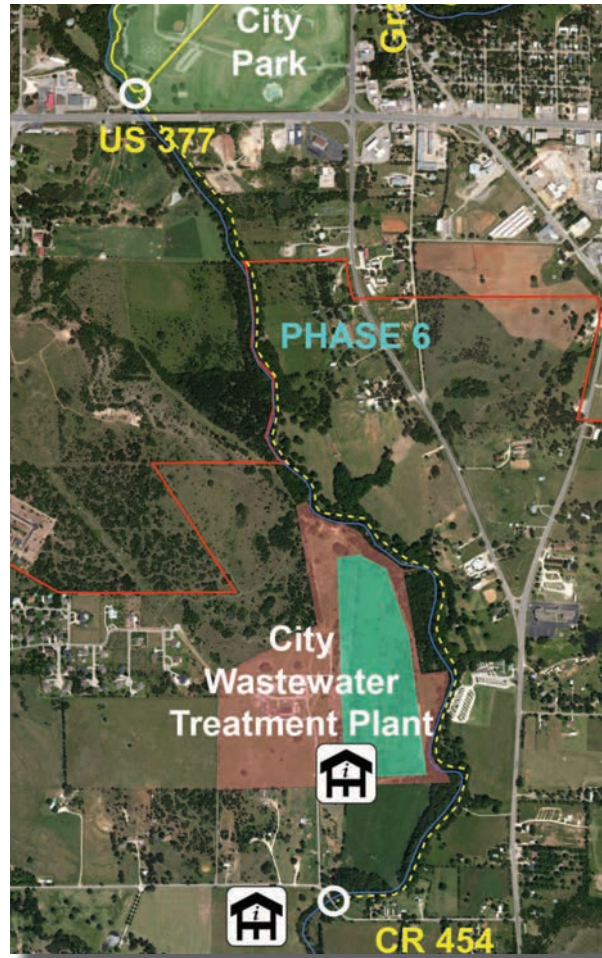
BRTC enthusiasts look toward the tree-lined river corridor east of the Stephenville Soccer Association property.



Big trees line the Bosque River near the North Graham Street Bridge.

### Phase 6: City Park to Wastewater Treatment Plant/CR 454

The trail system along the Bosque within City Park ends at the southwest corner of the park. From there, this phase of the trail is proposed to continue 2 miles south following the Bosque River until reaching CR 454, the road that accesses the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant. Part of the route is within the city limits and the remainder within the jurisdiction of Erath County. It would pass an RV park that could market campsites to visitors with trail interests.



An additional water quality aspect of the BRTC effort would be a constructed wetlands project on some of the floodplain area at the wastewater treatment plant. If completed, this could be the anchor attraction at the south end of the trail corridor. Nature trails through the wetlands would provide educational experiences along with scenic ones.



A view of the Bosque River from CR 454

Participants at the trail planning workshop suggested that this portion of the proposed trail, mostly rural in character, could be suitable for a more rustic trail surface. With a natural design, it could serve hikers, equestrians, and trail bicyclists.

**Legend**

Stephenville Schools	Railroad	TSU Property
Existing Trail	North Bosque River	Wastewater Treatment Facility
Proposed Trail	Proposed Wetland	City Parks
Trail Head	City Limits	
Phase End Point		

### Phase 7: Northwest Stephenville

There are approximately 1.5 miles of Bosque River northwest from where the river trail links with the Optimist-Jaycee Park connector. This segment would be a good candidate for a riverside trail extension as development continues on this northwest side of the city.



The trail would sweep around the edge of the Legends Country Club golf course and be an amenity for the residential neighborhoods in the vicinity, both current and future. The wooded corridor along the river is rural and the trail may begin as a rustic, natural trail and later be improved with hard surfacing, as the population demands it.

**Legend**

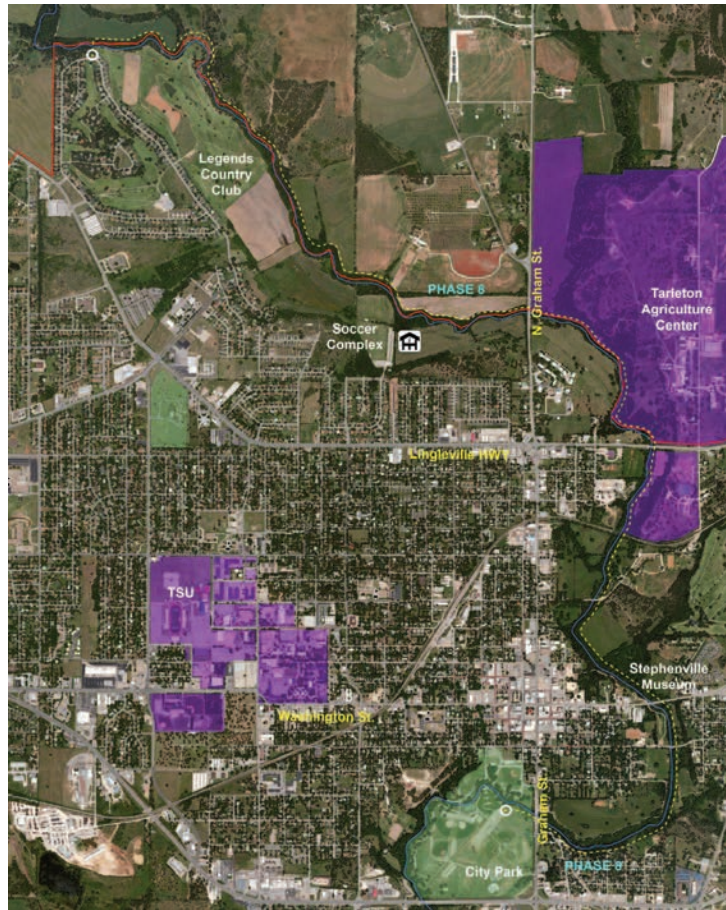
Stephenville Schools	Railroad	TSU Property
Existing Trail	North Bosque River	Wastewater Treatment Facility
Proposed Trail	Proposed Wetland	City Parks
Trail Head	City Limits	
Phase End Point		



Looking toward the Bosque's wooded banks on the horizon.

### Phase 8: North and East Sides of Bosque River

The final phase of the Bosque River Trail Corridor would target the side of the river away from most of Stephenville. A distance of approximately 4 miles would follow the river on the opposite side from the existing trail. It could begin in City Park on the south side near existing parking areas, go under South Graham and continue on the east side and then the north side until it reaches a place where it would need to bridge back across the river to meet with the trail to Optimist-Jaycee.



This segment would connect several Tarleton State University properties – the rodeo facilities, challenge course, and two areas of the farm. Workshop participants targeted this area for equestrian use, citing the image of Stephenville as the Cowboy Capital and the several areas of horse programs along the route. If a proposal to use some of the riverside areas on Tarleton’s farm for outdoor classrooms came to fruition, this could also be a destination to link along this portion of the trail. A special feature found along this segment, just east of City Park, is a shelter cave naturally carved into a bluff.

**Legend**

- Stephenville Schools
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Trail Head
- Phase End Point
- Railroad
- North Bosque River
- Proposed Wetland
- City Limits
- TSU Property
- Wastewater Treatment Facility
- City Parks



Tarleton’s Challenge Course backs up to the riparian woods on the north side of the Bosque River where a long-term trail segment is proposed.

The rural character of this area along with the equestrian focus could lend this trail surface to be natural soil instead of hard-surfaced. A natural surface would provide a more wilderness experience for hikers and trail bicyclists as well. As Stephenville grows, a hard-surfaced trail might be placed alongside the natural trail to provide commuting trips for bicyclists and pedestrians.

### Total Trail Miles

The existing BRT, plus the trails inside City Park and Optimist-Jaycee Park, currently provide approximately 3.3 miles of built trail. The already-funded trail extensions will add an additional 1.3 miles along the river and 0.2 miles within City Park to make the BRT a continuous 4.3 miles. If phases 4-7 are completed, the spine trail called BRT would provide residents and visitors the use of an 11.3-mile trail along the Bosque River. A parallel trail on the other side of the river, phase 8, could add an additional 4-mile trail opportunity for the community.



The Bosque’s wooded banks near North Graham might offer a rustic equestrian trail on the north side.

## Trailheads & Park Nodes

As the Bosque River Trail Corridor develops, improvements such as additional trailheads and park facilities will become of great value to the community. With each additional segment of the trail, new major or minor trailheads will be developed. In addition to trailheads, educational classrooms, river restoration sites, restrooms, playgrounds, and other park facilities will improve the value of the corridor.

**Major Trailheads** – Major trailheads should be placed throughout the 8-10 miles of the Bosque River Trail Corridor with at least one every mile and a half. Major trailheads should consist of a parking area and a map of the trail. In addition to the parking area, water fountains, restrooms, and playgrounds will enhance major trailheads if the natural landscape allows for such development. Workshop participants and survey respondents indicated a strong desire for restrooms to be placed at trailheads.



Examples of major trailheads with parking and restrooms



Kiosks direct users to the trail at minor trail heads.

**Minor Trailheads** – Minor trailheads are much less developed than major trailheads, but they still improve the trail and corridor. Minor trailheads are informational and allow users to access the trail from multiple areas throughout town and determine their location on the trail. Wayfinding signs placed along streets can direct people to access the trail. The more access points provided along the trail, the more users will be encouraged to come to the trail.



Workshop participants would like water fountains.

**Natural Playgrounds** - Natural playgrounds improve the recreational opportunities throughout the corridor, and they blend in with the natural wooded corridor of the Bosque River Trail. They can be placed at major trailheads and/or various places throughout the trail corridor. Using natural rocks and logs is likely to lower the cost compared to purchased playscapes.

Examples of playscapes with natural materials



Outdoor classrooms typically have seating for students.

**Outdoor Classroom** – Outdoor classrooms add excellent educational facilities and can be located in more than one place within the corridor. These “classrooms” come in various forms and are best if they are designed to coincide with the natural environment of the corridor.

**Environmental Restoration Projects** – Environmental restoration projects provide great educational opportunities as well as opportunities for the community to experience wildlife in its natural habitat. Environmental restoration projects will benefit the corridor’s wildlife population, enhance the water quality of the North Bosque River, and increase the aesthetic value of the area.



Some bank work and plantings can be done with volunteers

In 2005 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed a plan for a created wetland in the vicinity of the City’s wastewater treatment plant. The wetland project was not funded at that time; however, current BRTC advocates are resurrecting the idea and exploring funding opportunities. A wetland project could also serve as a hands-on teaching location as well as a scenic destination for trail users to enjoy at the south end of the BRTC.



An example of a creek shoreline in southeast Texas after restoring contours and revegetating

## Connectivity: On-Street Connections

A combination of wayfinding signage and designated connection bicycle and pedestrian facilities from key area locations to the BRTC will provide multiple enhancements to the community at large and to BRTC visitors.



Signage showing the overall layout of the BRTC is recommended to be placed at significant locations such as the major trailheads, the Stephenville downtown square, Tarleton State University's campus, Stephenville Independent School District campuses and other school sites, Stephenville Historical House Museum, and major population, employment and visitor centers. Directional signage created around a specific color scheme and theme along major thoroughfares throughout the area will similarly "drive" visitors to the BRTC.

Wayfinding signage placed at gaps along the BRTC where the trail is disrupted by roads, intersections and other obstacles will also improve the visitors' experiences and create opportunities to attract new visitors.

Designated connection routes may be sidewalks, on-street bikeways or bike-ped trails. Designated and improved connection routes which provide access to the BRTC will similarly benefit the Stephenville community at large and BRTC visitors specifically. Sidewalks, bikeways and trails connecting Tarleton State University and the Stephenville Independent School District campuses to the BRTC are a first priority. Additional connections to major population centers (nursing homes and major apartment complexes), employment and visitor attractions are also desired.



Bike paths may be on-street lanes painted on roadways or simply designated routes with signage. Bike-ped facilities connecting to the BRTC should be part of an over-all transportation scheme that is thoughtfully and cohesively designed. All designated connectors should be included on the wayfinding signage. It is recommended that the City of Stephenville undertake a bicycle and pedestrian planning effort to incorporate into the City's Thoroughfare Plan.

Well-placed and attractive wayfinding signage and a well-planned network of connecting bike-ped facilities will serve to integrate the larger community into the BRTC experience and to enhance the overall experience of visitors to the BRTC by:

- Improving enjoyment and understanding of the BRTC
- Improving safety and accessibility for all visitors
- Attracting new visitors
- Encouraging visitors to experience more areas in the BRTC, and
- Fostering improved stewardship of the land and of the Bosque River.

## Paddling the Bosque River

One excellent way for people to gain a greater appreciation of rivers is to experience them from a human-powered boat. Paddlers enjoy rivers that are clear and clean. Paddlers that see close-up the trash that ends up in the river rarely litter themselves.

Earlier BRTC planners wondered whether the amount of water in the Bosque River in Erath County could support canoeing and kayaking at least in the wetter seasons of the year. In the recent drought years, that answer may be "no", unless actions are taken to increase the amount of water in the river. One action to consider involves revegetating bare river banks to create a "riparian sponge" that holds rainwater and releases it back into the river over a longer timeframe. Other efforts could include pumping water from wells, piping it from ponds in the watershed, and increasing reuse of treated wastewater pumped upstream.



Tarleton students kayak through City Park when conducting river clean-ups.

The best likelihood of having sufficient seasonal paddling water in the BRTC area would be from City Park to the City's wastewater treatment plant on County Road 454. One non-motorized boat launch might be provided inside the park where parking is fairly close to the river bank. A take-out access site could be included in the design of the BRTC trailhead proposed in the vicinity of the wastewater treatment plant. Public road crossings of the Bosque below CR 454 do not appear for many river miles downstream.



In very wet seasons, paddling may be possible downstream of Long Street.

Any additional access site within a half-day paddle would need a willing private landowner to participate.

## Chapter 4



### Conclusion



*“You can comprehend a piece of a river. A whole river that is really a river is much to comprehend unless it is the Mississippi...and you spend a lifetime in its navigation...A piece, then...it has meaning which makes it worth the trouble. But if you are like me, neither the certainty of change, nor the need for it, nor any wry philosophy will keep you from feeling a certain enraged awe when you hear that a river that you’ve known always, and that all men of that place have known always back into the red dawn of men, will shortly not exist. A piece of river, anyhow, my piece....”* John Graves, [Goodbye to a River](#).

The Bosque River Trail Corridor (BRTC) Project is a model community-based initiative designed to promote and sustain a riverside trail system in the north central Texas Cross Timbers region along over eight-plus miles of the Bosque River, located in the City of Stephenville, Texas. The trail is envisioned to be interpretive, highlighting different habitats and ecosystems, as well as historic sites within the corridor. The BRTC is a diverse project, focused on preservation, recreation, and education and is the result of a community’s commitment to celebrate “its river.” The project is led by local citizens in coordination with the City of Stephenville and engages over 20 private and public organizations, including Keep Stephenville Beautiful, the Stephenville Independent School District, Tarleton State University, the Stephenville Historical House Museum, and Texas A&M AgriLife.

The corridor will highlight the importance of the river as a natural resource, including the successful efforts to improve water quality since 1998, and provide for recreation as well as education outreach. The Bosque River flows through the community of Stephenville beginning at the city’s northern border near the Optimist-Jaycee park, then winds in a slow “S-curve” adjacent to Tarleton State University’s Agricultural Center, the Stephenville Historical Museum complex, and the downtown business district. In all, the BRTC Project will enhance over eight miles of the river corridor and link the city’s two major parks totaling 130 acres with a spine trail and a network of additional side linkages to area historical museum sites, youth organization facilities, schools, and a proposed wetlands area. The completed system will promote the area’s natural resources and historical heritage along the Bosque River while helping improve our community’s quality of life and the health of its citizens.

***The City of Stephenville and the Bosque River are woven together, both physically and historically. The BRTC will preserve and celebrate this relationship for both current and future generations.***

In Texas, we have a deep respect for water, both water quality and quantity. We know what it is to be thirsty and to have our thirst quenched. We know the look of a dry lawn or pasture only too well.

When the waters of the Bosque River began showing signs of pollution, the people who used the river as a water source had to ask themselves something that we have not had to ask in nearly a hundred years: how clean is our water? The debates over clean water in the late twentieth century left the community struggling to engage calmly and thoughtfully with each other. In 1996, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) identified high concentrations of nutrients and algae as a problem in the North and Upper North Bosque River forks, and two years later, segments of the North Bosque River were deemed “impaired waters” on the State of Texas Clean Water Act list.



Current trails off Washington St. Photo Credit: Plan-it ink, Treva Wygle

A search for workable solutions began. As a consequence of the high degree of environmental, regulatory, and political scrutiny of the Bosque River, new rules, regulations and management practices were put in place to sustain and improve water quality within the Bosque watershed. Since then, stakeholders in the watershed have voluntarily undertaken additional measures to improve the river’s quality. The Bosque is on a path to recovery



as a source of water for wildlife, livestock, and for human needs and enjoyment.

The BRTC project will elevate those efforts; it is a cornerstone in the community’s reclamation of the river. The hard lessons the Bosque teaches us give us an advantage over those who turn on their tap and expect clean water. We understand that clean water requires wise choices and steadfast community interest. Our Bosque River demands that we re-imagine how we use it and how we protect it. Simply stated, the goal of this project is to celebrate and preserve the Bosque River.

The successful efforts to restore the North Bosque River Watershed provide us a model for river

reclamation and restoration in the State of Texas. Not only will the BRTC project tell the story of a region working to successfully recover its impaired waterway, it will offer new recreation and educational opportunities to local residents, university students, and visitors to the area. A trail throughout a protected green space corridor along the river introduces people to a previously hidden river resource. When a river

is no longer “out of sight, out of mind”, people become better stewards of the river and the watershed. When the river is loved by folks who come there to exercise, explore nature, and find tranquility from their busy lives, the river gains their appreciation as the lifeblood of water for human use, agriculture needs, and the wildlife and plants that live there.

***The BRTC project will elevate those efforts; it is a cornerstone in the community’s reclamation of the river. Simply stated, the goal of this project is to celebrate and preserve the Bosque River.***

***The City of Stephenville and the Bosque River are woven together, both physically and historically. The BRTC will preserve and celebrate this relationship for both current and future generations. With the success of the corridor project, the region and city built along the banks of the Bosque River will once again be able to proudly say, “this is my piece of the river.”***



Stephenville City Park trails.  
Photo Credit: Plan-it ink, Treva Wygle

## Appendix A



### Strategic Plan Planning Process

#### Overview

In 2011, Keep Stephenville Beautiful (KSB) added improving the Bosque River Trail Corridor (BRTC) to its scope of community beautification work. The first tasks involved cleaning up a dump site off Floral Street in the Bosque River floodplain and removing large amounts of flood debris piled up at the Long Street crossing and Washington Street bridge. In 2012, KSB and the City of Stephenville jointly prepared an application to the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program requesting assistance to develop a Bosque River Trail Corridor Strategic Plan. The National Park Service awarded an assistance grant to the BRTC project, and over the next two years, KSB, the City of Stephenville, the National Park Service, and many local partners undertook a series of planning steps and actions to move the project forward.

#### Start-up Phase

##### Steering Committee

The BRTC Steering Committee first convened in Fall 2012 with 21 members (see Acknowledgements section). Individuals serving on the BRTC Steering Committee represent key entities in the community – City of Stephenville, Erath County, Tarleton State University, Stephenville Independent School District, Keep Stephenville Beautiful and other civic organizations, and environmental entities that have focused on river efforts. The BRTC Steering Committee provided policy guidance and approved various planning activities throughout the process, including recommending this Strategic Plan for adoption by the City of Stephenville.

##### Subcommittees

In early 2013, the BRTC Steering Committee formed two subcommittees to actively participate in the BRTC project tasks. The Community Participation and Planning Subcommittee included 13 members. This Subcommittee’s charges included recommending community input processes, designing the survey and community workshop, developing strategies for informing the community about the BRTC project and opportunities to participate in the planning process, and identifying individual and group stakeholders to include in the notification process. Some of this Subcommittee served as facilitators at the workshop and writers of sections of the planning documents.

A second subcommittee also began its work in 2013. Initially called Programs, Events, and Education, the initial 14 members shortened the name to Education Subcommittee. This group’s charges included promoting the trail – its



extension and its active use, enhancing the corridor through stewardship projects, and educating about river health and ecology. The group quickly grew to 25 members and became the focus of many participants from Tarleton State University and the Stephenville Independent School District.

### Mission, Vision, Goals, & Strategies

The initial development of a mission for the BRTC Steering Committee's participants and a vision for the future conditions of the Bosque River Trail Corridor was drafted by a small group of writers and thinkers in 2013. The language that was adopted by the BRTC Steering Committee and included in this Strategic Plan was edited over the next year and half as the participants became more familiar with the project and its potential. The results of this task are included in Chapters 1 and 2 of this plan and include discussions of the four goals: Health and Recreation; Education; Restoration; and Transportation.

## Community Input

### Survey

The Community Participation and Planning Subcommittee recommended conducting an on-line survey targeted at the community at large. The survey was available to respondents for 40 days from March 1 – April 10, 2013. Many project partners promoted the survey through email lists, on website homepages, in the newspaper, at civic group meetings, and more. The result was 774 respondents, a very respectable number that indicates interest in the BRTC project. The results of the questions included in the survey are summarized at the end of this chapter.

### Workshop

A community workshop to gather public input to the BRTC project plan was held on April 18, 2013 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Graham Street Church of Christ Family Center. The workshop was announced in the newspaper, and thousands of individuals received emailed invitations sent by KSB, the City, the County, Tarleton, and civic organizations. Approximately fifty people participated in the workshop, which included presentations on the BRTC project's work to date, the survey results, and ways to get further involved. The majority of time was spent in break-out groups focused on recommending locations for trailheads and amenities to be added along the trail. Participants were also asked to identify destinations in town that should be connected to the trail via sidewalks, bikeways, and other means. They also identified desired trail uses for each of several zones within the 8-mile reach of the Bosque River. Representatives from each of the five break-out groups orally presented their group's findings to all of the workshop participants



## Plan Development

### Trailheads

After the community input workshop in spring of 2013, the National Park Service compiled the recommendations from the workshop's five break-out groups. Approximately twelve areas were suggested to be considered for future BRTC trailhead development. With the help of maps created by the City of Stephenville's Community Development Department, a small team of BRTC project partners visited the areas proposed in the workshops that could be accessed. Using a set of assessment criteria, the team evaluated the potential trailheads and developed recommendations for the Community Participation and Planning Subcommittee and the BRTC Steering Committee. The following criteria were considered in recommending future trailheads:

- Topography – accessible from the roadway and not too steep for siting improvements
- Space for public parking and other improvements
- Near or within a destination – a park, public facility, or thoroughfare
- Likely willing partner or seller.

### Trail Segments

Using the selected trailhead locations, the Community Participation and Planning Subcommittee described eight segments of the BRTC trail and recommended a phased order for the trail's development. Phase 1 is the existing 1.5 mile trail while phases 2 and 3 are the extensions that have already received funding. The phased order, as approved by the BRTC Steering Committee, is based on several factors that included:

- The presence of public land and/or likely willing landowners
- Proximity to populated residential areas
- Geographic distribution
- Connection to important destinations.

### Writing and Graphic Layout

Members of the Community Participation and Planning Subcommittee authored various chapters and sections of the draft plan, and the National Park Service compiled the components. Several editors provided their reviews to help make the writing cohesive and represent the adopted goals, strategies, and priorities. Many participants in the BRTC project offered photographs. Again, the City of Stephenville's Community Development Department provided the maps. KSB, with the help of some NPS funds, was able to hire a local graphic artist, Treva Wygle of Plan-it ink.

## Community Review

Keep Stephenville Beautiful and the National Park Service hosted an Open House event on March 20, 2014 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. to showcase the draft Bosque River Trail Corridor Strategic Plan. Once again, the venue was the large Graham Street Church of Christ Family Center. Over 70 people were in attendance. Stephenville Mayor Kenny Weldon welcomed everyone and acknowledged the many partners that helped develop the plan. Kathryn Nichols, Community Planner with the National Park Service, presented a slide show of the draft plan document. Printed copies of the plan along with large printed maps of each of the recommended eight phases of the trail were on display for attendees to review. Comment forms were provided for attendees to suggest additions or modifications to the draft, and the draft plan was reviewed and revised in light of those suggestions.

## Implementation

### Funding and Leadership

The BRTC Steering Committee expects implementation of the recommendations in the Strategic Plan to be undertaken through a combination of government grants, funding awarded by foundations, donations from areas businesses and individuals through fundraising campaigns, and in-kind contributions of students, civic organizations, and individual volunteers. The City of Stephenville has already budgeted matching funds for government awards and that practice is likely to continue where possible. To date, the City of Stephenville has taken ownership of the trail corridor and managed the funds for trail construction and capital improvements. The BRTC Steering Committee welcomes this continued role. There may however be trail locations in the future phases where another partner might be the lead, such as where trail is proposed on land owned by Tarleton State University. The partners have created a list of potential funding sources by categories.

### Programs, Projects and Plans for Education, Restoration and Transportation

Project partners also envision efforts other than just trail construction as part of the overall BRTC project. The Education Subcommittee has identified some projects that have strong partnership elements in their implementation (see Chapters 2 and 3), and more are likely to follow as the corridor extends and the community participation grows. To date, the partners are developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that can spell out roles for those entities that are expected to jointly sign the MOU. There are likely to be additional targeted plans developed subsequent to the adoption of this strategic plan, including a Bike-Pedestrian Plan as part of the City's Thoroughfare Plan, and Restoration Plans to further develop efforts to improve the watershed and the river's hydrology, morphology, and water quality and quantity.

## Appendix B



## Survey Results

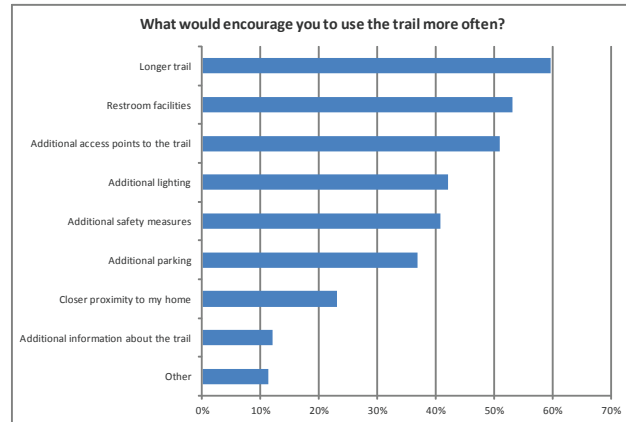
### Introduction

The community survey that was completed in April, 2013 garnered 774 respondents who answered questions on their current trail use patterns, and desires for improvements to the trail and for environmental outcomes for the river corridor. Eighty-four percent of respondents live in Stephenville; all but a few live in Erath County or an adjacent county. Respondents were asked to report a few demographics about themselves. Compared to the 2010 population census of Stephenville, the respondent pool was somewhat overrepresented by women (64% of respondents vs. 53% actual) and by whites (94% of respondents vs. 89% actual).

### Trail Usage

Seventy-six percent of respondents said they already use the existing trail, using it an average of 4.6 days per month. Figure 1 figure shows the activities in which trail users are engaged.

Figure 1: Current Trail Users' Activities



Trail users were asked “What would encourage you to use the trail more often?” The main answer was that it needed to be longer, followed by a desire for restrooms and more access points and lighting. All their answers are shown in Figure 2. For those survey respondents who indicated they had not used the existing trail, they were asked why they were not using the trail. Their primary reason was that they weren’t familiar with it, followed by “too far” and “safety concerns.” See Figure 3 for all their reasons.

Figure 2: Improvements Desired by Trail Users

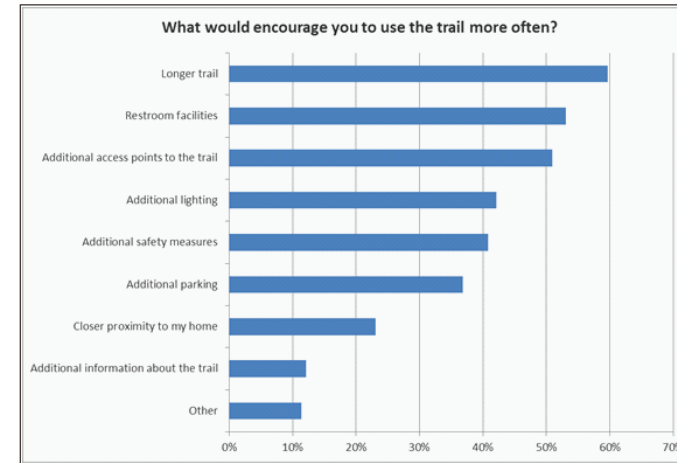
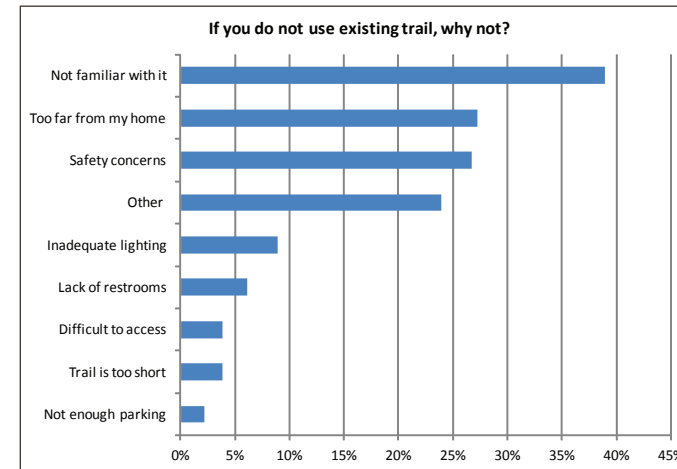


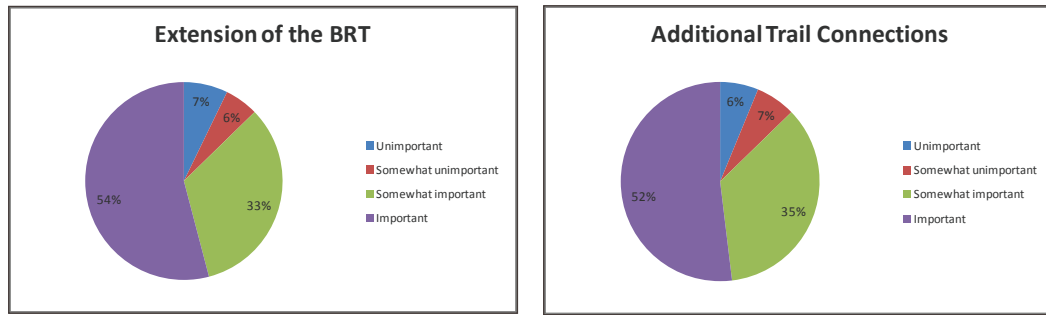
Figure 3: Reasons Non-users Don't Use the Trail



### Trail Preferences

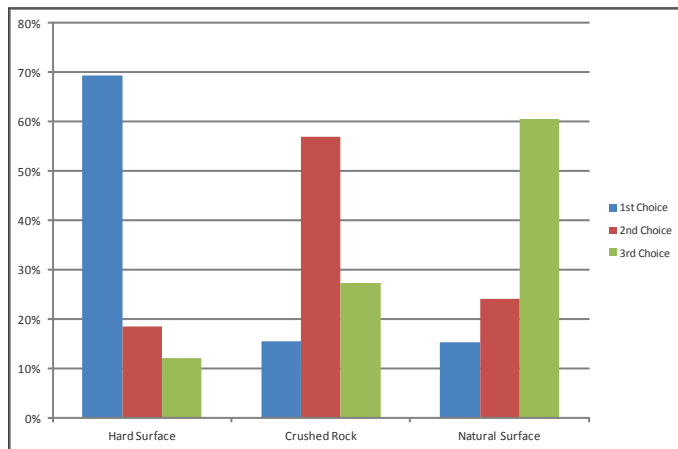
Survey respondents reported the importance for them of some possible outcomes of the BRTC plan. The top two trail outcomes are shown in Figures 4 and 5. Their answers indicate overwhelming support for extending the trail and adding connections from the trail to areas of town.

Figure 4: Importance of Top Trail Outcomes



Respondents were asked to give their first, second and third choices for trail surfaces. Almost 70% of respondents preferred hard surfaced trail, like the current existing trail, followed by crushed rock as a second choice. Though natural surface trail came in third, there were about 12% of respondents who preferred it as their first choice. In a follow-up question to suggest other surfaces, a number expressed a desire for a combination of surfaces in various settings. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Preferred Trail Surfaces



### Corridor Projects and Facilities

Several questions allowed respondents to weigh in on the importance of outcomes and a variety of projects that might be proposed within the Bosque River corridor in addition to trail construction. When asked about the importance of various outcomes, more than 90 percent named care of the river and water quality as either important or somewhat important.

Figure 6: Top Environmental Outcomes.

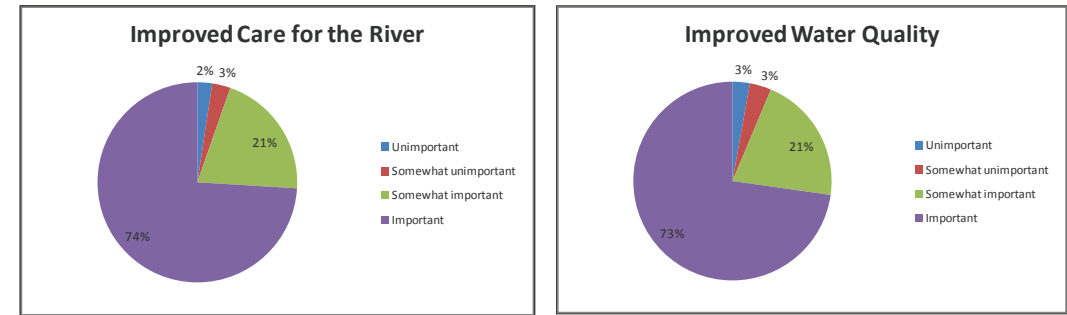
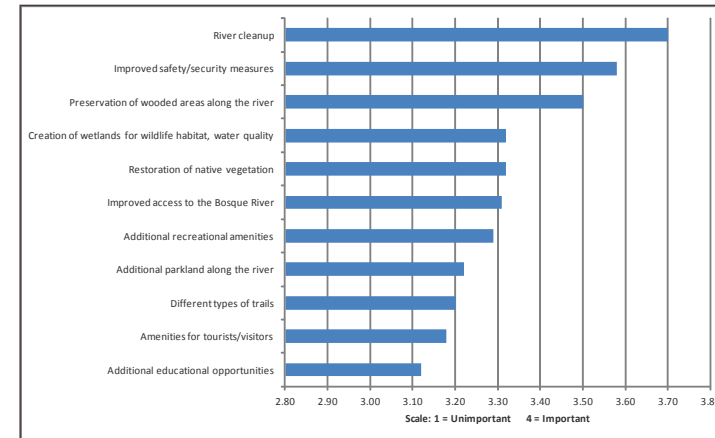


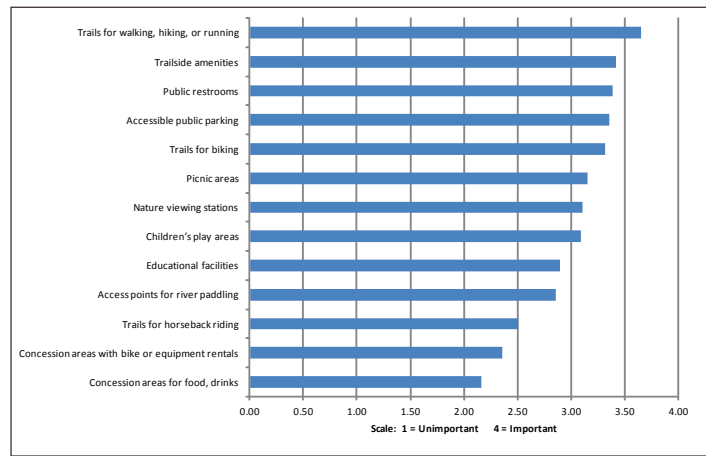
Figure 7 shows the weighted average of importance for a list of projects that might be developed to improve the corridor as a community asset. All scores are above 3, indicating a weighted average of at least somewhat important, with most tending toward a higher level of importance.

Figure 7: Importance of Projects in River Corridor



In addition to asking about the importance of project activities, respondents were also asked to rate the importance of specific facilities. Any facilities with a score of 3 or higher indicate a majority of answers of important or somewhat important.

**Figure 8: Importance of New Facilities**



### Open-Ended Comments

Survey respondents were asked to provide additional information or thoughts they would like to share about the Bosque River Trail or Bosque River corridor. Of the 774 people who participated in any of the survey, 254 took the time to enter comments in their own words. Of those 254, 76 percent (or 194) gave positive comments about the existing trail or the proposed trail extension, including some requests for improvements. Twenty-four percent made negative comments about the project. The negative statements most often focused on concerns for safety or security, perceptions of poor river conditions, or preferences that expenditures be undertaken in other ways.

#### Examples of Survey Respondents' Comments:



- "Best thing S'ville has done for itself in a while!"*
- "I want to be a part of any effort to ensure that this resource is appreciated and maintained for generations."*
- "It is always a pleasant day when I can walk the Bosque River Trail."*
- "One of the best ideas ever!"*
- "I can't wait to see Stephenville finally take advantage of the river running right through our town."*
- "I love taking my children on walks there - very scenic and peaceful for any family activity."*



## Appendix C



## Acknowledgements



## Acknowledgements

### BOSQUE RIVER TRAIL CORRIDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Graham Street Church of Christ Family Center  
Stephenville Historical Museum  
Stephenville ISD Administration Building  
Tarleton State University

**HEALTH & RECREATION  
EDUCATION  
RESTORATION  
TRANSPORTATION**



*Nature is Our Heritage*

# Capitalizing on the Natural

- a. Downtown on the Bosque
- b. The Natural Capital
- c. Organic + Locally Grown

*"I would like to see people more aware of where their food comes from. I would like to see small farmers empowered. I feed my daughter almost exclusively organic food."*

**Anthony Bourdain**

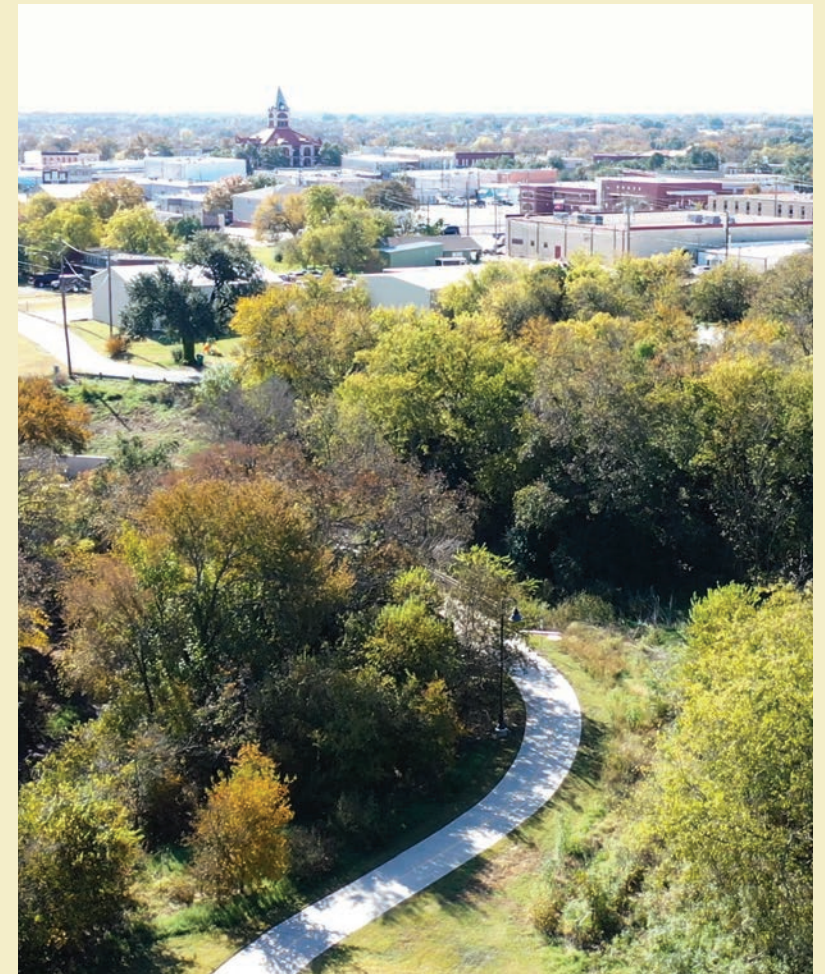
## Downtown on the Bosque

Historic, vibrant, quaint, friendliest; These are all qualities that are used to describe Stephenville downtown. The shops surrounding the courthouse present a typical quality courthouse city that dots the Texas landscape. What Stephenville has that most other cities don't have is the Bosque River wrapping around three sides of the downtown area. This jewel of an emerald necklace warmly wraps the downtown with a mosaic of green spaces and trails allowing residents and visitors alike to walk from the vibrant downtown to the river and associated spaces with in a 5 to 10 minute walk. The connectivity of urban to green is powerful in the way land use potential is suggestive and evident; places of leisure, residential, restaurants, cultural features are all comfortably sharing spaces between the commercial center, courthouse square, and the river.

The envelope of the riverine landscape is pedestrian pervious with multiple places where residents and downtowners can break away from their routine and immerse themselves in a more relaxed greenspace, vital to our well-being. The power is the duality of natural and urban stimulating interstitial spaces of culture, arts, eateries, residences, and lower density working environments. This rich balance of natural and urban, centered on courthouse square, restricts an untenable development sprawl making each place and building special because it is THERE, straddling the worlds of urban and pastoral. This is even more so with the historic buildings and the entrenched histories woven into the tapestries of Stephenville.

The important Washington Street corridor that connects east to west linking Downtown to Tarleton State University, crosses the Bosque River and has

the character of the gateway into the downtown. Monumentation to accentuate this is an important opportunity that would highlight both downtown and the Bosque River. Part of the features discussed are to start the new downtown lighting standards at this



intersection of river and corridor. Bricking this section of East Washington as part of the gateway character would further enhance the special nature of the arrival. This linkage is also the intersection of East Washington and the Bosque River Trail that spans the distance from



City Park to currently ending at East Tarleton Street north east of the Hospital but planned to follow the river another five fold in distance to terminate near the northeast corner of The Legends Country Club. Once completed, access to the river wrapping around the city will be easier for all to enjoy.

For downtown, this envelope encapsulates and stimulates. Within its wrapping arms, commercial interests thrive, residential neighborhoods maintain sustainable value, agricultural operations and their lands are viewed as beautiful but also opportunity. This project sees a tremendous opportunity, but one that may not be noticed by many.



This project sees as an overarching theme that Stephenville becomes a Healthy Care City. What does this mean? What are the components to this proposition? Lets look at four main ingredients to this proposal:

- The Bosque River Trail wraps around downtown and a significant portion of the overall city
- The hospital is poised to become a major player in the region for regional healthcare and coupled with that are:
- Tarleton State University has a strong program on healthcare and is linking their efforts with the

*Below are the degree programs at Tarleton State University that directly align with the Healthy Care City concept. This is an integration of healthcare & public health, agriculture, business, multiple sciences, technology, and engineering.*

Bachelor's	
Areas of study	2019 graduates
Business/commerce	9.2%
Health and physical education/fitness	8.3%
Registered nursing/registered nurse	7.5%
Agricultural/farm supplies retailing and wholesaling	4.6%
Animal sciences	4.1%
Business administration and management	3.7%
Agricultural economics	2%
Natural resources management and policy	2%
Industrial technology/technician	1.9%
Marketing/marketing management	1.7%
Biology/biological sciences	0.9%
Public health	0.9%
Mechanical engineering/mechanical technology/technician	0.6%
Zoology/animal biology	1.2%
Clinical laboratory science/medical technology/technology	0.4%
Chemistry	0.4%
Geology/earth science	0.4%
Environmental science	0.2%
Environmental/environmental health engineering	0.2%

acquisition of the hospital

- The culture of agriculture and dairy is strong in Stephenville

When considering these together combining a strong courthouse square presence, we see a symbiosis of culture and industry working together creating agriculture sourcing locally grown produce and dairy products to local restaurants and eateries as well as a regional (or larger) distribution network of the same produce and dairy products.

Going organic is great for the production in agriculture as well as benefiting the natural ecosystem of the Bosque River. Tarleton State University has significant land holdings north of downtown and the school has invested in hydroponic research and greenhouse technologies for sustainable agricultural output. Joining with farms and business acumen, industry supplying locally sourced produce can create the dynamic of being a mega-regional leader.

