

**CITY OF TYLER, TEXAS**  
**PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN**  
**2010 - 2020**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In July of 2009, the City of Tyler commissioned MHS Planning and Design, LLC to assist in developing a new Parks and Open Space Master Plan. This plan is a more detailed follow-up to the 2007 “City of Tyler Comprehensive Plan - Tyler 21.”

The 2010 Parks and Open Space Master Plan is intended to:

- Provide the City of Tyler with an information base to help guide decisions related to parks, recreation and open space
- Assist in the implementation of those decisions and set guidelines for future park and open space development
- Provide feasible recommendations to the governmental body and be in accordance with the desires of Tyler’s residents
- Include all land within the City of Tyler
- Provide detailed parks and open space project recommendations through 2020
- Provide general parks and open space recommendations through 2040
- Provide emphasis and detailed cost projections for projects recommended for implementation



The following pages of the Master Plan contain:

- Goals and objectives for a comprehensive city wide parks and open space network
- The methodology used in developing the plan
- An inventory of existing facilities which make up the park network
- An analysis of local needs, the adopted parks, recreation and open space priorities
- The implementation programs developed to guide the city in accomplishing the proposed projects within the plan's time frame
- Potential funding sources that may assist with the implementation of the proposed projects

### **Community Profile**

**The City of Tyler is:**

- Located in north east Texas in Smith County
- Approximately 90 miles east of Dallas, 215 miles northeast of Houston and 90 miles west of Shreveport, Louisiana
- Neighbored by Lindale, Jacksonville, Chapel Hill, Flint and Gresham
- A total of 49.4 square miles
- An average elevation of 544 feet about mean sea level
- Accessed by Highways 69, 31, 64 and Loop 323

The City of Tyler's climate and average rainfall do not pose significant barriers to outdoor activities due to the fact that the weather is generally mild and any extreme changes are short in duration.

- Temperatures range from a mean minimum in January of 34 degrees Fahrenheit to a mean maximum in July of 96 degrees Fahrenheit.
- The average first freeze is mid November and the average last freeze is mid March
- The average rainfall is 37.05 inches per year
- The basic soil type is sandy loam



### **Tyler's Current Demographics**

- Population estimate - 108,000
- Ethnic breakdown -
  - 69.6 % White Non-Hispanic
  - 10.3 % Hispanic
  - 6.2 % African American
  - 3.8 % Chinese
  - 3.9 % Other
- Median household income - \$72,000
- Senior citizen population - +/- 23,760

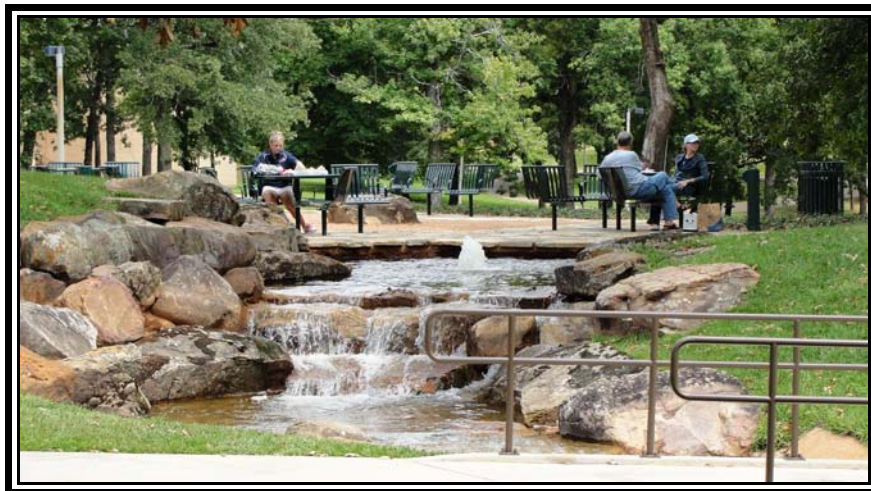
The following are key points regarding the founding, history and important aspects of the unique community of Tyler, Texas.

- Tyler was authorized on April 11, 1846 by the Texas legislature.
- In February of 1847, a town site was laid out in a twenty-eight block central square.
- Tyler was incorporated on January 29, 1850 with an aldermanic form of government.
- Tyler grew rapidly due to the immigration from the Old South into Texas and the rich soils attracted farmers; increasing Smith County's population to 4,300 people by 1850.
- During the Civil War, Tyler was the site of the largest Confederate ordnance plant in Texas and in 1863 a large Confederate prison camp, Camp Ford, was constructed.
- Tyler suffered from economic depression in the early post war period due to their investment in slavery and the because two railroads bypassed the city.
- In 1879, the Tyler Tap Railroad was acquired by the Texas and St. Louis Railway Company, which located its machine shops in Tyler.
- The railroad shops produced many new jobs and the city's population nearly tripled from 1880 to 1890.
- In April of 1915, the city adopted the manager-commission form of government.
- The courthouse was constructed in 1954 and still exists today.



- By the 1920s the rose industry had developed into a major business, and by the 1940s more than half the U.S. supply of rose bushes was grown within ten miles of Tyler.
- The flourishing rose business gave rise to the Texas Rose Festival, which has become one of the city's major attractions.
- The East Texas oilfield was discovered in 1931 and set off a huge economic boom.
- The population mushroomed to more than 25,000 by 1933 and to 28,279 by 1940.
- Between 1931 and 1973 more than 167,000,000 barrels of oil were produced in East Texas, contributing to an annual income of \$17 million by 1973.
- Tyler emerged as the leading medical and educational center for the area and included the East Texas Chest Hospital (now the University of Texas Health Center at Tyler), the Mother Frances Hospital, Tyler Medical Center, and Doctor's Hospital.
- Higher education was provided by Texas College, established in 1894 by ministers of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, and by Tyler Junior College, originally established in 1926 as part of the Tyler public school system.
- The University of Texas at Tyler, established in 1971 as Tyler State College, had an enrollment of 3,725 in 1990.
- Tyler's population grew steadily from 51,230 in 1960 to 57,770 by 1970.
- In 2000 the number of businesses had more than doubled again to 5,557, while the population remained relatively static at 83,650 inhabitants.

- City of Tyler, Texas



## II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are provided to give direction for future community decisions regarding parks, recreation and open space. These goals and objectives were established based on input from the City of Tyler residents and the Tyler 21 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Park and Recreation Goal:**

To ensure the provision of a balanced park and open space system that meets the recreational needs of the citizens of Tyler and helps to create a unique community character.

### **Objectives:**

- To provide new and different recreational opportunities for all age groups.
- To renovate, rehabilitate and upgrade existing parks in Tyler.
- To develop and provide public parks throughout the city that are in close proximity to all neighborhoods.
- To forge partnerships with public and private organizations for the development, operation and maintenance of future recreational facilities.
- To provide a trail system that connects parks, residential and commercial areas and schools.
- To be proactive in acquiring land for developing parks with recreational facilities .
- To continue maintaining the existing park system at a high level and increase maintenance as new facilities are developed.

### **Open Space Goal:**

To identify, protect and preserve quality natural open spaces for unstructured recreational activities, inherent aesthetic value and protection of valuable ecosystems.

### **Objectives:**

- To continually research the viability of developing trail systems along creeks, flood ways, and utility easements that will link recreational facilities, neighborhoods and schools.
- To be proactive in the acquisition and protection of unique natural open spaces throughout the City of Tyler.
- To limit development in natural open spaces in order to minimize adverse effects on valuable ecosystems.
- To address natural open space needs when developing active recreational facilities to provide citizens with well balanced recreational experiences that include active, passive and primitive opportunities.



### III. METHODOLOGY

The planning process officially began in 2009 when the City of Tyler began to address the parks and open space opportunities throughout the city. The Parks Board, representing a cross section of the community, was appointed to guide the development of the master plan for future park and recreation opportunities. The Parks Board was involved in each major step of the planning process and provided the local insight needed to produce a successful master plan.

Several steps were taken in order to create a successful and realistic Master Plan.

- The initial step in evaluating the parks and open space system in Tyler was to inventory the existing parks, open space and recreational resources.
- The developed park acreage was compared to the existing population in order to establish the current level of service.
- The existing parks were evaluated against national standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to allow for an objective review of the park system.
- Surveys were available online in addition to the 3,000 surveys that were mailed to random households from the city water bill listing in Tyler for input on existing and future park development and nearly 16 percent of the surveys were returned and tabulated.
- Focus Group meetings were conducted to obtain more information from different environmental, civic and athletic groups.
- Public Input meetings were held in all four quadrants of Tyler in order to receive input from the general public.

Based on the citizen input, existing inventory, available resources and professional opinion, potential park projects were developed that included additional parks and recreational facilities for the City of Tyler. Once the master project list was developed and refined, the projects for the city were prioritized based on local demand and their perception of needs. Budget estimates were generated for each project and possible funding sources were identified.



#### **IV. PARK CLASSIFICATION & INVENTORY**

The park classification system for all parks in the city is broken down into ten major categories.

##### **Pocket/Ornamental Park**

A pocket or ornamental park is a small (usually less than two acres) park developed for passive recreation.

##### **Mini-Neighborhood Parks**

A mini-neighborhood park is a site of approximately one to four acres located within the city limits and serves the area with a one-quarter mile radius with both active and passive recreational opportunities.

##### **City Neighborhood Parks**

A city neighborhood park is a site of approximately five to ten acres located within the city limits and serves the area within a one-half mile radius with both active and passive recreational opportunities. Neighborhood parks provide access to different outdoor activities for residents living in close proximity.

##### **Community Parks**

A community park is a site of approximately 40 to 150 acres with a service area radius of two miles and provides both active, passive and often primitive recreation. Community parks provide a large variety of outdoor activities, opportunities for environmental education and encourage social community activities.

##### **Lake Parks**

A lake park varies in size from 10 to 100 acres, typically serves a 100 mile radius and provides destination oriented water based recreational opportunities. A lake park has the primary function of providing access to a large natural resource. A balance of both active and passive recreational opportunities should be provided by such a park.





## **Special Use Parks**

The Special Use Park classification covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities that focus on one or two specific recreational uses; typically sports fields. Facility space requirements are the primary determinants of site size and location. For example, a golf course may require 150 acres, whereas a community center with parking may only require 10 or 15 acres. Special Use Parks provide areas for specific activities to allow groups with common interests to participate together.

## **Regional Parks**

Regional parks typically are a minimum of 50 acres and serve a larger area than the community alone. Regional parks typically have the same type of amenities as community parks and focus of community based recreation but are much larger in size. Regional parks typically have land set aside to preserve as unique landscapes or natural open space.

## **Greenbelts**

Greenbelts or greenbelt parkways are linear parks that are typically developed around a natural resource such as a creek, river, utility easement or lake shore. Not only can a greenbelt system preserve valuable open space and natural habitats, it ties the park systems' components together to form a cohesive park environment. Greenbelt corridors of less than fifty (50) "useable" feet should be avoided and narrow corridor sections kept to a minimum. One-hundred foot corridor widths and wider give flexibility in design and are encouraged wherever possible.

## **Indoor Recreation**

Indoor Recreation Centers provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities in a controlled setting which allows citizens to enjoy year round activities. Recreation centers may include both passive and active recreational amenities. The key to a successful recreation center is the flexibility built into the design of the center, which allows for the same facility to be used for multiple activities. This enables the center to accommodate changing interests and trends with little or no physical improvements required to the facility itself. In the past, the NRPA national standard has been one indoor recreation center per 20,000 to 30,000 population.



## Natural Areas

Natural areas are spaces containing ecosystems in a non-disturbed state with minimal man-made intrusions. Natural areas lend a certain aesthetic and functional diversity to a park network and urban landscape. Although the benefits of natural areas are hard to quantify, they are numerous and include preservation of wildlife habitats, opportunities for nature study and encourage environmental health in the community. When flood plains are preserved as natural areas, they offer a resource to aid in the protection from flooding. There are no national standards for natural areas within a city due to the extreme variations found in natural resources from region to region.

Each park category serves a unique purpose:

- Pocket and ornamental parks enhance the visual image of the community.
- Neighborhood parks serve as a family oriented gathering place for neighborhoods.
- Community parks provide a mix of active, passive and primitive recreational opportunities and lighted sports fields.
- Lake parks provide a venue of water-based recreation and special use parks are devoted to one or two uses - typically sports.
- Greenbelts are natural areas usually containing a trail that ties other park types together.
- Natural areas provide a visual escape from the built environment and indoor recreation provides recreational opportunities in a controlled environment.

The park types, when combined, form a park network that covers the entire spectrum of recreation.



The following table contains the types of parks proposed for the Tyler Parks System and associated development information

Classification	Service	Size	Population	Typical	Development
Pocket / Ornamental Park	1/4 Mile	2,500 sq.ft. to 2 acres	500-2,500	Landscaping, drinking fountains, sidewalks and benches	\$50,000 - \$80,000 Per Acre
Mini-Neighborhood Park	1/4 Mile	1 acre to 4 acres	500-2,500	Paved area, playground apparatus, landscaping, sidewalks, drinking fountains, lawn area, benches	\$50,000 - \$250,000 Per Acre
Neighborhood Park	1/2 Mile	5 acres to 10 acres	2,000-10,000	Playground apparatus, picnic area(s), pavilion, play courts, play fields, restroom, natural open space landscaping & parking	\$45,000 - \$80,000 Per Acre
Community Park	2 Miles	40 acres to 150 acres	10,000-50,000	Tennis courts, sports fields, playground apparatus, picnic area(s), pavilions, walking/jogging trails, swimming pools, open space, landscaping, recreation centers, restrooms & parking	\$35,000 - \$70,000 Per Acre
Lake Park	Up to 100 miles	10 acres to 100 acres	Entire urban area	Paved trails, nature trails, swimming areas, R.V. camp sites, tent camp sites, picnic stations, playgrounds, pavilions, restrooms, shower facilities, boat ramps, fish cleaning stations, fishing piers, roads & parking	Varies - Dependent on primary use
Special Use Park	Varies	Determined by primary use	Varies - Dependent on primary use	Concentration of one or two of the following: Baseball/softball complex, soccer fields, tennis centers, sports stadiums, golf courses, performing arts parks, amphitheaters & ornamental gardens	Varies - Dependent on primary use
Regional Park	10 Miles	Varies	Entire urban area	Sports fields, tennis courts, lakes, swimming complexes, campgrounds, hike/bike trails, golf courses, nature areas, play structures, restrooms & ample parking	\$2,000,000 & up



Classification	Service	Size	Population	Typical	Development
Greenbelts	Varies	Varies	5,000 to entire community	Landscaping, multi-purpose trails, benches, information kiosks, telephones, exercise courses & drinking fountains	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
Indoor Recreation Center	Varies	10,000 sq. ft. Minimum	20,000 - 30,000	Walking track, fitness rooms, gymnasium, weight room, racquetball/squash courts, indoor swimming pool, meeting/convention facilities, arts and crafts rooms & day care facilities	\$3,000,000 - \$7,000,000
Natural Areas	Varies	Determined by resource	Entire community	Nature trails, multi-purpose trails, benches, picnic areas, wildlife viewing stations, educational components, information kiosks, interpretive signs, exercise courses & drinking fountains	Varies

### Existing Parks and Open Space

The existing parks in Tyler are classified in the Existing Parks and Open Space Inventory shown in the following table. In order to illustrate the geographic distribution and areas of the city currently served by the park system, the service area of each existing park has been shown on the Existing Parks and Open Space Map. Ideally, all developed areas of the city should fall within the service area of a neighborhood park and a community park.



## Existing Parks and Open Space

	Name	Type of Park	Developed Acres	Total Acres	Facilities
1	Bellwood Lake Park	Lake	92.5	185	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnic areas</li> </ul>
2	Bergfeld Park	Neighborhood	8.3	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphitheater</li> <li>• Two tennis courts</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
3	Children's Park	Pocket	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Botanical flower garden</li> <li>• Story amphitheater</li> <li>• Picnic areas</li> </ul>
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-purpose court</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
5	Crescent Park	Mini-Neighborhood	1.3	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
6	Emmett J. Scott Park (Lincoln Park)	Mini-Neighborhood	2.75	2.75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball/softball field</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Multi-purpose court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
7	Faulker Park	Community	180	180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight baseball fields</li> <li>• Eight tennis courts</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Sprayground</li> <li>• Hike/bike trail(1.5 miles)</li> <li>• Fishing pond</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
8	Fun Forest Park	Community	22	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming pool</li> <li>• Five baseball fields</li> <li>• Two tennis courts</li> <li>• Two basketball courts</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
9	Gassaway Park	Neighborhood	6.7	6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball/softball field</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
10	Golden Road Park	Special Use	30	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six baseball fields</li> <li>• Soccer field</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>



	Name	Type of Park	Developed Acres	Total Acres	Facilities
11	Goodman/LeGrand	Special Use	8.35	8.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goodman Museum</li> <li>• Earthkind Rose Garden</li> <li>• Wedding/special event facilities</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
12	Herndon Park	Mini-Neighborhood	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
13	Hillside Park	Mini-Neighborhood	3.5	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soccer field</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
14	Lindsey Park	Special Use	204	454	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five softball fields</li> <li>• Eleven soccer fields</li> <li>• Disc golf course</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
15	Noble E. Young Park	Neighborhood	25	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skate park</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Hike/bike trail</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
16	Northside Park	Special Use	0	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote control airplane flying area</li> </ul>
17	Oak Grove Park	Mini - Neighborhood	3.83	3.83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-purpose concrete trail</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
18	P.T. Cole Park	Neighborhood	4.68	4.68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tennis court</li> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Practice baseball field</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
19	Pollard Park	Neighborhood	9.17	9.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four tennis courts</li> <li>• Two football/soccer fields</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
20	Rose Rudman Park	Greenway	30	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-purpose concrete trail</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> </ul>
21	South Tyler Trails	Greenway	14	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-purpose concrete trail</li> </ul>



	Name	Type of Park	Developed Acres	Total Acres	Facilities
22	Southside Park	Neighborhood	15	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-purpose concrete trail (South Tyler Trail)</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
23	T.R. Griffith Park	Mini-Neighborhood	2.56	2.56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basketball court</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
24	Tyler Rose Garden	Special Use	14	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest municipal rose garden in the United States</li> <li>• Walking trails</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
25	W.E. Winters Park	Neighborhood	17.5	17.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two basketball courts</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Walking trail</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
26	Windsor Grove Nature Park	Natural Area	1.5	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hike/bike trail</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Picnic facilities</li> </ul>
27	Woldert Park	Community	52.5	52.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glass Indoor Recreation Center</li> <li>• Swimming pool</li> <li>• Three basketball courts</li> <li>• Tennis court</li> <li>• Baseball field</li> <li>• Pond</li> <li>• Multi-purpose concrete trail</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Restroom facility</li> </ul>
	Total Park Acres			1,207.4	
	<b>Total Developed Acres</b>		<b>757.99</b>		



## Existing Parks and Open Space Map





## V. LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of service is the term used to describe the importance or the role of a park system in a community and is expressed in acres of useable park land per 1,000 persons. For the last forty years, the targeted level of service for communities nationwide has been ten acres of park land for every 1,000 residents. Based on the specific needs of a community, levels of service ranging from five acres of developed park land per 1,000 people to 15 acres of developed park land per 1,000 people are typically targeted.



It is important to note that the level of service for parks and open space is based on useable space and, therefore, undeveloped or unuseable park land should not be a factor in the level of service calculation. Although private recreational facilities and golf courses should be considered when establishing the desired level of service for that activity to be provided by the community, the actual acreage is not typically used in the calculation.

The City of Tyler currently owns 1,207.49 total park acres and a total of 757.99 acres of the 1,207.49 acres are developed. The current level of service for the City of Tyler is 7.01 acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents and because the City of Tyler owns more total park land than actual developed park land, there is a total of 11 acres of total park land per 1,000 people.

The following table shows the total park acres, developed park acres and the level of service for each different type of park classification in Tyler.

<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Total Developed Park Acres</b>	<b>Total Park Acres</b>	<b>Level of Service (Total Developed Park Acres Per 1,000 Residents)</b>
Pocket Park	1	1	.01
Mini- Neighborhood Park	17.79	17.79	.16
Neighborhood Park	71.35	91.35	.66
Community Park	258.5	258.5	2.45
Special Use Park	256.35	566.35	2.37
Lake Park	92.5	185	.86
Greenway	59	86	.54
Natural Area	1.5	1.5	.01
<b>Total Park Acres</b>		<b>1,207.49</b>	
<b>Total Developed Acres</b>	<b>757.99</b>		
<b>Level of Service</b>  (Total Developed Park Acres Per 1,000 Residents)			<b>7.01</b>



## VI. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recreational needs are determined using the following planning approaches:

- Demand Based - what the citizens desire
- Standard Based - what the park standards call for
- Resource Based - what the local natural resources can offer
- Capacity Based - what sport facilities can accommodate

This combination allowed the desires for recreational opportunities expressed by citizens with different interests to be compared with NRPA standards and peer cities while at the same time recognizing the unique natural attributes of the area.

The Needs Assessment integrates supply and demand.

- The supply - existing park and recreation facilities and the natural resources of the area
- The demand - identified through the stated goals and objectives, the concept of level of service, national standards and most importantly, input from local citizens.

Local input was obtained through:

- Public meetings
- Focus group meetings
- Citizen survey
- Elected officials
- Parks Board
- Professional city staff

The result is a balanced analysis which reflects the parks and recreation needs and desires of Tyler residents through 2020.



The following table depicts projected populations for the City of Tyler today and throughout the planning period.

	2010	2015	2020
Tyler	108,000	113,975	121,000

### **Citizen Survey Results**

In January of 2010, the City of Tyler mailed out 3,000 surveys to randomly chosen citizens who receive water bills from the City. In addition, the survey was posted online for other citizens to have the opportunity to express their needs for the future of Tyler’s Park System. A total of 465 surveys were returned by mail (nearly 16% of the surveys mailed) and 383 surveys were taken online. The mailed surveys were broken down into different categories depending on age and location of residence. Although the mail survey and online survey were the exact same, the mailed surveys gave more insight into which specific age groups and which areas of the city desired what. The following paragraphs will provide an explanation of the total results (848 surveys), the mailed results (465 surveys) and the online results (383 surveys). The average age of the online survey respondents was 44.8 years old and the average age of the mailed survey respondents was 53.9 years old. The overall average age of the survey respondents was 49.3 years old. (The average age of Tyler residents - excluding those under 18 - is 47.4 years old based on the 2000 Census data.)

The total results from the mailed surveys and online surveys provided information from citizens from all over the City of Tyler. (The complete survey results can be found as Appendix I)

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) were received from residents south of Front Street
- Twenty-one percent (21%) were received from residents north of Front Street
- Twenty-one percent (21%) of the surveys were submitted by senior citizens (65+) from all regions of the city.



Some of the most important information regarding the desires and needs of the citizens regarding Tyler’s park system were found in the citizen survey and are as follows:

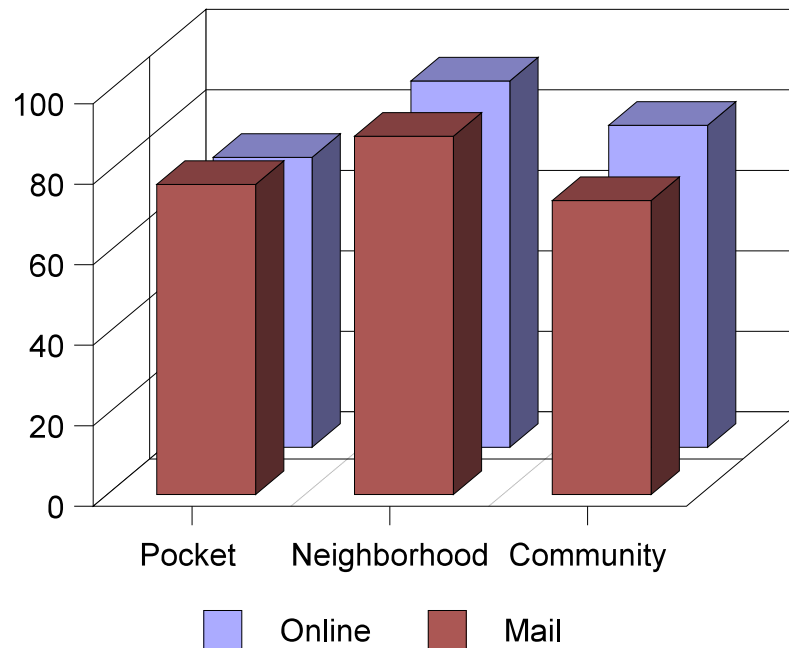
- Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” when asked how they felt about the existing parks and recreational facilities in Tyler.
- Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents feel that the role of parks, recreation and open spaces in Tyler are more important today compared ten years ago and 17% said the same.
- Eighty - eight percent (88%) of the residents feel that additional parks and recreational facilities are needed.
- Eighty - nine percent (89%) feel existing parks should be upgraded and improved to include additional facilities.
- Sixty - four percent (64%) could NOT reasonably walk to a city park from there home.
- Eighty - three percent (83%) of the respondents feel that residential neighborhoods, schools and parks should be connected with linear parks such as trails along creeks and other corridors.
- Ninety - one percent (91%) of the respondents feel that parks and recreation are well worth the cost to taxpayers.

The acquisition of parkland and the development and maintenance of park facilities can be expensive. Each respondent could choose their top three responses with the number one choice being worth three points, number two response worth two points and the number three response worth one point. The following table represents the top answers when asked where funding future parks should come from other than state grants.

<b>RANK</b>		<b>WEIGHTED SCORES</b>
1	Donations	1,260
2	Bond Program	1,105
3	Sales Tax	1,031
4	Park User Fees	546
5	Property Tax	441



The following chart represents the percentage of residents who “strongly agree” or “agree” that more pocket, neighborhood and community parks are needed. On both the online survey and the mail survey it was apparent that majority of the population “strongly agree” or “agree” that more neighborhood parks are needed throughout town.



The survey had a question asking citizens what facilities they wanted added to the Tyler park system. Twenty-seven suggestions were listed and each person was to choose their top five choices and rank them with one being the highest and five being the lowest. Each number was then awarded points to create a weighted score. If a one was chosen, it was worth five points, if a two was chosen, it was worth four points, if a three was chosen, it was worth three points...etc.



The following table represents the rank and weighted scores of the facility priorities wanted by residents.

Rank	Facilities	Weighted Score
1	Multi-Purpose Trails	1,010
2	Swimming Pools	957
3	Nature Trails	828
4	Indoor Recreation Centers	680
5	Water Features(creeks, small lakes etc.)	634
6	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions	627
7	Nature Areas	585
8	Picnicking Areas	566
9	Botanical/Flower Garden	563
10	Playgrounds	536
11	Dog Park	526
12	Sprayground/Small Water Park	441
13	Lawn Areas for General Play	402
14	Sports Practice Fields	326
15	Bandstand/Amphitheater	309
16	Soccer Fields	302
17	Playgrounds Specifically for Handicap	270
18	Tennis Centers	259
19	Sand Volleyball Courts	219
20	Skate Park	217
21	Basketball Courts	208
22	Disc Golf Course	178
23	Adult Softball Fields	152
24	Youth Softball Fields	149
25	Horseshoe/Washer Courts	148
26	Football Fields	140
27	Baseball Fields	125



## Focus Groups and Public Meetings

In order to better understand the needs of citizens, focus group meetings and public meetings were held in Tyler. The public meetings were well attended and the focus groups were informative tools to get specific information regarding different organizations, clubs and groups around town. Throughout the course of all the meetings, participants had the opportunity to walk around the room and answer five different general questions about the City of Tyler's Park System. The following list are the questions and most common answers to the responses. (The complete list can be found as Appendix II)



- What makes Tyler a unique community?
  - ▶ Community involvement
  - ▶ Diversity and growth
  - ▶ Park system, trees and outdoor areas
  
- What is your highest priority for the park system by the year 2020?
  - ▶ Swimming/aquatic facility
  - ▶ Development of Bellwood Lake
  - ▶ Gym facilities
  - ▶ Dog park
  - ▶ Master Plan and development of the Rose Garden
  - ▶ Comprehensive biking system
  - ▶ Connectivity of parks, neighborhoods and businesses
  - ▶ Upgrades of park conditions and playgrounds





- Are there programs that should be provided in the park system that are not currently offered?
  - ▶ Art shows and plays
  - ▶ Outdoor exercise programs
  - ▶ Music and/or food events
  - ▶ Swimming year-round in an aquatic center
  - ▶ Activity programs to bring the community together
  - ▶ Gardening classes on weekends and evenings
  
- Are there facilities that should be added to the park system that would increase the use of parks?
  - ▶ Better playgrounds
  - ▶ Multi-purpose trails
  - ▶ Better access to parks
  - ▶ Practice fields
  - ▶ Nature areas
  
- What do you think needs to be done to make the Tyler Parks System better?
  - ▶ Connectivity
  - ▶ Parks in South Tyler
  - ▶ Multi-purpose trails for biking, walking and running
  - ▶ Sports practice fields
  - ▶ Better public communication
  - ▶ Improve on existing parks - increase maintenance

### **New Parks - Needs**

Based on the citizen survey, input from the focus group and public input meetings it is apparent that the City of Tyler needs to acquire additional parkland in under served portions of the city. Each park within the park network has a service radius to identify how far people are typically willing to travel to a particular park from the surrounding area. It is estimated that people are most often willing to walk ½ mile to neighborhood parks. The survey asked if residents could reasonably walk to a city park and a total of 64% of the respondents said they could NOT walk to a city park. After reviewing the Existing Parks and Open Space Map, it is obvious that there is a need for additional park land in the southern portion of Tyler (see map on page 16).

The City of Tyler lacks sufficient neighborhood park coverage, especially south of Front Street. Neighborhood parks are intended to be within ½ mile of every residential area in town to benefit



all citizens of the community. New neighborhood parks are needed sporadically throughout the southern region of town, particularly south of Loop 323. There is a need to partner with different organizations, both public and private, in order to acquire new parkland for the City of Tyler. Although Tyler's current park system is good, there is a need for a plethora of additional park acres to increase the level of service.

A new downtown park and greenway is needed to upgrade and better the downtown area with green space and recreational opportunities. A park in the downtown, historical area of Tyler would not only benefit the entire community, but especially those residential neighborhoods in close proximity.

Dog parks ranked as number eleven on the citizen survey and were strongly supported at the public input meetings. A dog park is a relatively low cost project except for the cost of land. Since there is a need for a dog park in Tyler, it should be constructed at an existing park to keep the cost low until the city can afford the ideal piece of property.

### **Existing Parks - Needs**

In addition to acquiring new park land and increasing the existing Level of Service it is imperative to continue upgrading and maintaining the existing parks and facilities within the park system. Since the majority of the parks in Tyler are located in the northern region, most park upgrades will be in the northern part of town. Each neighborhood has individual characteristics and needs and therefore, each park should reflect those needs.

A total of eighty-nine percent (89%) of the survey respondents expressed a need for existing parks to be upgraded and/or improved to include additional facilities. The survey and focus group meetings expressed needs for upgraded playgrounds, picnic areas and facilities, trails and enhanced landscaping. In addition, each park playground needs to be reviewed for compliance with the current safety guidelines established by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Also, all existing park facilities need to meet the accessibility standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



## Athletic Facilities - Needs

Since athletic organizations have different recreational needs than the general public, a carrying capacity analysis was used to determine the true needs of the different sports associations. The carrying capacity is the number of games one athletic field can accommodate each week. In addition to the carrying capacity analysis, focus group meetings were specifically held with different sports organizations. These meetings gave insight into how sports organizations are managed in Tyler and what each different organization needed to better provide recreational opportunities for the growing population.

*Youth Baseball* - The Rose Capital West program in the City of Tyler currently plays on a total of seven baseball fields at Faulkner Park. There are a total of 46 teams playing five nights a week; Monday -



Friday. All seven fields are lighted and allow a total of three games to be played per field per night. At this rate a total of 15 games per week can be played on a single field. The ideal number of games per field per week is 12. The following table represents the carrying capacity of the youth baseball fields based on the number of teams.

Age Groups	Number of Existing Game Fields 2010	Number of Teams 2010	Number of Required Game Fields 2010	Number of Teams 2020*	Number of Required Game Fields 2020
5-8	2	23	2	26	2
9-10	1	11	1	13	1
11-14	2	11	1	13	1
15 +	2	1	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	7	46	5	54	5

\*Team growth from 2010-2020 is projected to be 1.3% per year.

*Rose Capital East and Dixie League* - Waiting on data



*Adult Softball* - Adult softball is played on the five existing fields at Lindsey Park. A total of 140 teams are participating in the Fall season. Adult softball games are currently played Monday - Thursday



with Friday left available for a rain-out game day. If four games are played on each of the five fields each night on four nights a week, the fields can accommodate a total of 80 games per week. The following table represents the carrying capacity of the adult softball league fields at Lindsey Park based on the number of teams. It is apparent that there is a current deficit of one field and two additional adult softball fields will be needed by 2020.

<b>Adult Softball</b>	Game Fields 2010	Number of Teams 2010	Number of Required Game Fields 2010	Number of Teams 2020*	Number of Required Game Fields 2020
	5	140	6	160	7
<b>Total</b>	5	140	6	160	7

\*Team growth from 2010-2020 is projected to be 1.3% per year.

*Soccer* - The youth soccer program in Tyler currently plays on the existing fields at Lindsey Park. A total of three soccer fields are lighted and limits the amount of games



and practices that can be played throughout the week. Although exact numbers were not available, it is clear after focus group meetings that additional fields and lighting are needed for youth soccer. One of the most important reasons is not only the growth of soccer but the popularity in adult soccer. Many of the adult leagues are desperate for fields and tend use the large youth fields and the fields get torn up due to overuse. Additional lighted fields are needed for practice and games for the youth soccer leagues in Tyler.



*Adult Soccer* - Adult soccer is a very popular sport in the City of Tyler and the city is lacking in adult fields. Currently the adult leagues are supposed to play at the one field at Golden Road Park and the one field at Hillside Park. Both of these fields are



highly stressed due to overuse. The demand is high for soccer fields so many of the adult teams find themselves in Lindsey Park using the larger youth fields to accommodate there needs. In order to provide for the adult soccer leagues in Tyler, additional soccer fields are needed. Due to the heavy use, artificial turf fields may provide an answer to the current high level of demand. Artificial fields do not require much maintenance and do not wear out too fast due to overuse. The following table represent the carrying capacity of the adult soccer fields for the two different adult soccer leagues.

<b>Adult Soccer</b>	<b>Game Fields 2010</b>	<b>Number of Teams 2010</b>	<b>Number of Required Game Fields 2010</b>	<b>Number of Teams 2020*</b>	<b>Number of Required Game Fields 2020</b>
<b>Liga Latina</b>	1	40	2	45	3
<b>Liga de Futbol Pachura</b>	1	40	2	45	3
<b>Total</b>	2	80	4	90	6

\*Team growth from 2010-2020 is projected to be 1.3% per year.

After meeting individually with each sports organization and listening to what is desired, it is apparent that every organization desires additional lighted sports practice fields.



### **Swimming Pool - Needs**

The City of Tyler currently has two public swimming pools - one at Fun Forest Park and one at Woldert Park. The swimming pool at Fun Forest Park was constructed in 1951 and the pool at Fun Forest was constructed in 1938. Swimming pools have a life span of approximately 30-40



years and both the swimming pools in Tyler are past their expected life. Although both pools are functional and will be opened in the summer of 2010, both pools are old and need to be extensively remodeled or completely rebuilt. Swimming pools ranked as the number two priority on the citizen survey and the topic was discussed in detail at different public input meetings. Swimming pools are not only needed for public use by the residents of Tyler but are needed for competitive swimming and organized sports. It is apparent that the residents of Tyler need a new swimming pool or aquatic facility for competitive and recreational activities.

### **Indoor Recreation Center - Needs**

The City of Tyler currently has an indoor recreation center - The Glass Recreation Center - located in Woldert Park. The Glass Recreation Center is relatively small and located in far north Tyler. The need for a new, larger and more centrally located indoor recreation center is apparent. Indoor recreation center ranked number



four on the citizen survey. In order to construct an indoor facility, the City of Tyler would first need to choose a location, whether it is on existing or acquired park land. The city also has an option to acquire existing facilities to convert into a recreation center. The key to a successful recreation facility is the flexibility built into the design of the center, which allows for the same space to be used for multiple activities. The need for an additional recreation center in Tyler is apparent and supported by the citizen survey and public input meetings. It is important, when planning and constructing a recreation center, to fulfill many different needs of the residents.



### **Trails - Needs**

Currently, the City of Tyler is in need of more trails - both multi-purpose and nature trails. More importantly, Tyler needs a trail system that will connect the entire community. Multi-purpose trails ranked as number one on the citizen survey and nature trails ranked as



number three. In addition, eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that residential neighborhoods, schools and parks should be connected with linear parks such as trails along creeks and other corridors. More trails are needed throughout the community that connect parks, neighborhoods and commercial properties - such as the immensely popular South Tyler Trail and Rose Rudman. In addition, multi-purpose trails and soft surfaced nature trails are needed in and throughout parks for jogging, walking and other forms of exercise. The need for trails is apparent for the City of Tyler’s Park System.

### **Natural Open Space - Needs**

The City of Tyler needs to preserve the beautiful natural open spaces around the area in order to make these areas available for primitive recreation. Water features - such as creeks, small lakes, etc - ranked as number five on the citizen survey and nature areas ranked as



number seven. It is apparent that natural water features and natural areas are important to the citizens of Tyler and need to be preserved - especially along Mud Creek, Blackfork Creek, Stoneleigh Creek and their tributaries. Preserving natural open spaces and water features were expressed as a need at nearly every focus group meeting and public input meeting. Most



participants agreed that the natural areas and water features are one of the reasons Tyler is such a unique community. Future recreational development should preserve the most valuable environmental assets, such as water features and natural open space.

**Senior Citizens - Needs**

Senior citizens play a large role in the City of Tyler and have their own needs as an elderly population. Not only did 30 seniors attend a focus group meeting held for senior citizens at the Tyler Senior Center but many of the focus groups and public input meetings were highly attended by senior citizens. The majority of the senior citizens expressed the need to expand the existing senior center for more space, the opportunity for more programming and multi-use walking trails for exercise. Many expressed other needs for benches, picnic areas, picnic shelters, enhanced landscaping, athletic fields and playgrounds for their grandchildren to have safe places to play. A total of 148 senior citizens (65 or older) responded to the mail survey and the following table are their top facility priorities and their weighted scores.

Rank	Facilities	Weighted Score
1	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions	147
2	Nature Trails	144
3	Botanical/Flower Garden	137
4	Picnicking Areas	135
5	Multi-Purpose Trails	128

Senior citizens have specific needs in different areas throughout the City of Tyler. However, it is important to notice the top priorities of senior citizens all closely match the city’s overall priorities. This is important because by providing specific needs for senior citizens, the City of Tyler is also creating areas that are appealing and available to the entire community. Senior citizens are a growing population and use the park system in Tyler. Their needs should be considered when upgrading and/or constructing parks and outdoor spaces.





## **Maintenance - Needs**

It is important to keep all parks and public facilities well maintained and safe. The citizen's were asked how they would rate the existing maintenance level of parks and recreational facilities in Tyler and a total of sixty-four percent (64%) responded "excellent" or "good." As Tyler's population and park system continues to grow, it is necessary for the maintenance crews and budget to grow proportionally so that all outdoor public spaces are safe and aesthetically pleasing to all residents and park visitors.

## **Conclusions**

It is important to analyze the actual needs of the community so that the recommendations and future development of Tyler's park system is representative of what the residents desire. Multi-purpose trails were the number one priority on the citizen survey and were discussed in detail at several focus group meetings and public input meetings. It is evident that both multi-purpose trails and nature trails are needed in Tyler for recreation and connectivity. Swimming pools ranked number two and indoor recreation centers ranked as number four on the citizen survey and were also discussed in detail during many public meetings. The high initial cost and planning associated with these two facilities make it less practical to recommend in the early stages of the ten year planning period. There is an evident need for both facilities but the current economic climate and projected tight budget for the parks and recreational facilities in the near term necessitates the postponement of these two facilities.

The following list is key points from the needs analysis:

- More park land needs to be acquired for the development of neighborhood parks - especially in South Tyler.
- Existing parks and facilities need to continually be upgraded in order to keep Tyler's park system up to standards and safe for all users.
- A downtown park and greenway is needed to better serve Tyler's downtown neighborhoods
- Two additional adult softball fields and soccer fields are needed at Lindsey Park.
- A swimming pool or aquatics facility is needed in Tyler for competitive and recreational swimming.



- A dog park needs to be constructed
- Lighted sports practice fields are needed for all organized athletic organizations
- Multi-purpose trails are needed in Tyler to create connectivity between homes, parks, schools and retail stores
- Natural open spaces need to be acquired in and around Tyler - especially along Mud Creek, Blackfork Creek, Stoneleigh Creek and their tributaries
- An indoor recreation center is needed in Tyler - built on existing park land or acquired park land
- Benches, picnic areas, picnic shelters, multi-purpose trails, enhanced landscaping and playgrounds are needed to satisfy the growing senior citizen's recreational needs
- A maintenance plan needs to be adopted in order to keep Tyler's park system aesthetically pleasing and safe



## VII. PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table represents the projected recreational facility priorities for the Tyler Park System. These priorities are based on the needs analysis, citizen surveys, public input meetings, focus group input meetings, city staff and the City of Tyler Parks Board members.

Priority	Facility
1	Trails
2	Water Features (creeks, small lakes, etc)
3	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions
4	Nature Areas
5	Swimming Facility
6	Indoor Recreation Center
7	Picnicking Areas
8	Soccer Fields
9	Botanical/Flower Gardens
10	Playgrounds
11	Dog Parks
12	Adult Softball Fields
13	Spraygrounds
14	Lawns for General Play
15	Sports Practice Fields

### Recommendations

Although the City of Tyler has a good park system, more park acreage is needed to increase the level of service and many of the older parks need to be upgraded to better provide for the citizens. The following recommendations are to be implemented within the next ten years to ensure that the parks and open space system continues to meet the recreational needs of Tyler's residents.



## New Parks

- Acquire and develop +/- 40 acres in the vicinity of the intersection of Gentry Parkway and Beckham Avenue for a downtown park and greenway
  - Preserve the most valuable and aesthetically pleasing natural areas
  - Construct open lawn areas for sports practice fields/general play
  - Construct trails
  - Construct playground
  - Construct Pavilions
  - Construct picnic stations



- Acquire and develop +/- 30 acres for a neighborhood park along West Mud Creek, north of Faulkner Park
  - Construct multi-purpose trails
  - Construct playground
  - Construct picnicking areas and pavilions
- Partner with The Park of East Texas to develop a 240 acre regional park
- Acquire and develop +/- 15 acres for a neighborhood park in the vicinity of the intersection of Old Omen Road and Stonebrook Lane
  - Construct multi-purpose trails
  - Construct playground
  - Construct new pavilion
  - Preserve natural areas and natural water features
  - Construct sprayground

## Existing Parks

- Update and renovate Lindsey Park
  - Prepare Master Plan
  - Construct nature trails
  - Construct multi-purpose trails
  - Preserve natural areas
  - Construct new pavilion
  - Construct new playground
  - Construct 2 additional adult softball fields
  - Construct additional soccer fields
  - Construct dog park



- Re-purpose Fun Forest Park
  - Prepare Master Plan
  - Construct playground
  - Construct sprayground
  - Construct multi-purpose trail with connections to the Senior Center
  - Re-purpose swimming pool
  - Construct multi-purpose lawn area
  - Construct pavilion
  - Analyze configuration and demand of sports fields



- Renovate Bergfeld Park
  - Remodel playground
  - Create connectivity with multi-purpose trail
  - Re-purpose/rebuilt tennis courts
  - Enhance landscaping and unify site furniture
  - Consider parking



### **Athletic Facilities**

- Construct two additional adult softball fields and additional soccer fields at Lindsey Park
- Construct lighted sports practice fields

### **Trails**

- Acquire land along Blackfork Creek to construct a multi-purpose trail (+/- 3 mi. x 125') from Northside Park to proposed downtown park at the intersection of Gentry Parkway and Beckham Avenue
- Acquire land along West Mud Creek to construct a multi-purpose trail from the South Tyler Trail at Grande Boulevard to Faulkner Park (+/- 2 miles)
- Construct multi-purpose trails at Bergfeld Park, Lindsey Park and Faulkner Park
- Construct nature trails at Lindsey Park



### **Natural Open Space**

- Preserve the most valuable and aesthetically pleasing natural open spaces - especially along Mud Creek, Blackfork Creek, Stoneleigh Creek and their tributaries.

### **Senior Citizens**

- Provide facilities such as: Benches, picnic shelters, walking trails, landscaping and picnic areas for senior citizens at all new and upgraded parks

### **Maintenance**

- Adopt a maintenance plan that will increase the maintenance staff and budget as the park system continues to grow.



## VIII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Due to the fact that Tyler is located in the vicinity of several beautiful natural resources and considering the amount of available land, a list of thirty-three (33) projects were created regarding the parks and open space system. This following list includes the ten year project priorities and the additional twenty-three projects that should be considered within the next thirty years.

	Project	Estimated Cost
<b>2010 - 2020</b>		
*	Acquire and develop +/- 40 acres in the vicinity of the intersection of Gentry Pkwy. and Beckham Ave. for a downtown park and greenway	\$1,500,000
*	Acquire and develop +/- 30 acres for a neighborhood park along West Mud Creek, north of Faulkner Park between West Heritage Dr. and Hollytree Dr.	\$650,000
*	Acquire land along Blackfork Creek to construct a multi-purpose trail (+/- 3 mi. x 125') from Northside Park to proposed downtown park at intersection of Gentry Pkwy. and Beckham Ave. (+/- 45 acres)	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
*	Acquire land along West Mud Creek to construct multi-purpose trail from the South Tyler Trail at Grande Blvd. to Faulkner Park (+/- 2 miles or +/- 30 acres)	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
*	Partner with The Park of East Texas to develop a 240 acre regional park that can be used all year round west of Loop 323 between Highway 64 and Highway 31	
*	Update and renovate Lindsey Park - Prepare Master Plan - Construct nature trails - Construct multi-purpose trails - Preserve nature areas - Construct new pavilion - Construct new playground - Construct 2 additional adult softball fields - Construct additional soccer fields	\$1,500,000
*	Acquire and develop +/- 15 acres for a neighborhood park northwest of the intersection of Old Omen Rd. and Stonebrook Ln.	\$650,000
*	Re-purpose Fun Forest Park - Prepare Master Plan - Construct sprayground - Construct playground - Construct multi-purpose trail with connections to the Senior Center - Re-purpose swimming pool - Construct multi-purpose lawn - Construct pavilion - Analyze demands for sports fields	\$1,000,000



	<b>Project</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
*	Renovate Bergfeld Park - Remodel playground - Create connectivity with a multi-purpose trail - Re-purpose/rebuild tennis courts - Enhance landscaping and unify site furniture - Consider on-site parking	\$375,000
*	Acquire connection from Northside Park to Blackfork Creek - Preserve nature areas and natural water features - Construct nature trails - Construct picnic areas - Construct restroom	\$750,000
<b>2020 - 2030</b>		
+	Create a more park-like atmosphere at the Rose Garden and surrounding areas	
+	Partner with others to construct aquatic complex	\$4,000,000 - \$8,000,000
+	Acquire additional land at Children's Park to expand facilities	\$330,000
+	Acquire land west of Faulkner Park along Mud Creek and continue to follow Faulkner Park Master Plan for further development - Construct multi-purpose trail from the playground area to and around the lake - Construct large performance venue - Construct pavilion at the existing playground - Construct parking lot for nature trail - Expand tennis facility - Consider for location of future indoor recreation and aquatic center	\$1,500,000 without indoor recreation and aquatic center  \$12,000,000 for total expansion with indoor recreation and aquatic center
+	Re-develop Southside Park by remodeling the existing facilities and developing +/- 25 acres east of West Mud Creek.	\$1,000,000
+	Construct multi-purpose trail from the corner of East Grande Blvd. and Highway 110, north to UT Tyler (+/- 3 miles)	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
+	Construct indoor recreation center	\$2,000,000 - \$6,000,000
+	Acquire and develop +/- 20 acres in between Hollytree Dr. and Spring Creek Dr. north of Grande Blvd for a neighborhood park	\$750,000
+	Acquire and develop land along Stoneleigh Creek to construct a multi-purpose trail (+/- 1.5 mi. x 100') (+/- 18 acres)	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
+	Acquire and develop +/- 5 acres for a dog park in the vicinity of the intersection of Rieck Rd. and Spring Creek Rd.	\$200,000
<b>2030 - 2040</b>		
^	Acquire and develop land between Faulkner Park and Cumberland Gap for a new neighborhood park	\$750,000
^	Acquire and develop land northeast of the intersection of Old Noonday Rd. and Lake Placid Rd. for a neighborhood park	\$750,000
^	Partner with TPWD for a nature based community park at the 80 acre Tyler Nature Center off Bascom Rd.	
^	Acquire and develop land in the vicinity of Shiloh Rd. and Paluxy Dr. for a neighborhood park	\$750,000





	<b>Project</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
^	Acquire and develop land for a greenway connecting Bellwood Lake, The Park of East Texas, John Tyler High School, Fun Forest Park and the Rose Garden ( +/- 9.5 miles)	\$200,000 - \$750,000 per mile
^	Continue the development of LeGrand Gardens in accordance with the Master Plan	\$4,600,000
^	Acquire land north of Gassaway Park and redevelop into a neighborhood park	\$450,000
^	Acquire and develop land for a neighborhood park and trail connection at the intersection of Donnybrook Ave. and Wilma St.	\$250,000
^	Reconstruct Hillside Park soccer fields	\$250,000
^	Develop Bellwood Lake in accordance with the Master Plan	
^	Develop Lake Tyler in accordance with the Master Plan	
^	Develop a neighborhood park in the wooded area just north of the newly purchased water treatment plant between Old Jacksonville Highway and Highway 155	\$750,000
^	Partner with others to preserve Neches River Corridor between Highway 31 and Highway 64	

Note: Costs are preliminary estimates only and prepared without the benefit of detailed engineering. All costs shown are based on 2010 dollars and do not include fees associated with planning, engineering and/or architectural work that may be required. Final construction costs will vary. Land acquisition is not included in cost estimate.



**Future Parks and Open Space Map**  
**2010 - 2020**



**Future Parks and Open Space Map**  
**2010 - 2040**



## **IX. EXISTING AND AVAILABLE MECHANISMS**

In order to implement this park and open space plan update, there are a variety of funding mechanisms and tools available for use by the City of Tyler. These include:

SENATE BILL 376-4B - SALES TAX REVENUES - Funds generated by this special sales tax can be used for developing and maintaining public recreational facilities.

TEXAS RECREATION & PARKS ACCOUNT PROGRAM - This program, administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife, is a matching grant program which may be used to aid communities in acquisition and development of parks and open space. This grant program includes the Outdoor Recreation Acquisition and Development Program and the Texas Recreation & Parks Account Indoor Recreation Program. The Texas Recreation & Parks Account Small Grants Program is a matching grant program which may be used to aid communities with a population less than 20,000 in the development of parks and open space.

TEXAS RECREATIONAL TRAILS FUND - The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department administers the National Recreational Trail Fund through a provision in the Federal Highway Bill. The National Recreational Trail Grants provides 80% matching funds (maximum \$200,000) for both motorized and non-motorized trail projects in local communities for hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, off-road motor vehicles, and nature enthusiasts. Funds can be utilized to construct new recreational trails, improve/maintain existing trails, develop/improve trail heads or trail side facilities, and acquire trail corridors. Eligible sponsors include city and county governments, state agencies, river authorities, water districts, MUDs, school districts, federal land managers, non-profit organizations, and other private organizations.

NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION - The national Fish and Wildlife Foundation promotes healthy populations of fish, wildlife, and plants by generating new commerce for conservation. The foundation leverages public dollars with corporate, private, and other non-profit funds. Funds are available on an as-need basis.



EAST TEXAS WETLANDS PROJECT - The East Texas Wetlands Project provides technical assistance and financial incentives to promote the restoration, enhancement, or creation of natural or man-made wetlands & associated upland habitats. ETWP will match seventy-five percent of the total construction cost under a Wetland Development Agreement (WDA), up to a maximum of \$15,000. This limit may be increased to \$30,000 if the WDA is 15 years or longer.

PAY AS YOU GO - This method of financing park improvements involves budgeting for land acquisition, development, and maintenance of park facilities through the city's annual budget process. Allocations for park improvements are made and spent annually through the standard budget process.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS - These bonds are issued by the city following an election in which the voters authorize their issuance for specific stated purposes, as well as the necessary tax increases to support them. These bonds pledge the property or ad valorem taxing power of the city.

CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION - These certificates have basically the same effect as general obligation bonds except they do not require an election to authorize them. An election can be petitioned by five percent of the registered voters of the city. These certificates are issued on the authorization of the City Council. Repayment is based on the property taxing power of the city, utility system revenues, or a combination of the two.

USER FEES - This method of financing requires the eventual user of each park to pay a fee for the use of each facility. Fees to be charged users can be established to pay for debt service, maintenance, and operation of the park system.

PRIVATE OR CORPORATE DONATIONS - Donations from foundations, corporations, and/or private individuals are often used to acquire and develop parks. The city should constantly identify and pursue opportunities to receive such funding for parks. One avenue for receiving donations is through the use of the Texas Parks & Recreation Foundation. This foundation has been developed to help all communities in the State of Texas to maximize the benefits of donations of land, property, and money.



## **X. SUMMARY**

The City of Tyler owns a total of 1,207.49 total park acres and 757.99 of those acres are developed. When compared to Tyler's existing population of 108,000 residents, the resultant level of service of developed park land is 7.01 acres per 1,000 residents.

This Parks and Open Space Master Plan provides a total of 33 different projects throughout the next 30 years. Realistically, the City of Tyler should consider the first ten projects in the next ten years found in the implementation schedule in order to increase the level of service and have the largest impact on the citizens. If the first ten projects are completed in the ten year time period then the City of Tyler will increase its total park acreage from 1,207.49 to approximately 1,637.49. After developing portions of these properties, it is very likely that the developed park acres will increase from 757.99 to 937.99. The additional 180 developed acres will result in a new level of service of 7.75 acres per 1,000 residents - approximately a ten percent increase. It is important for the City of Tyler to continue to acquire and develop new properties in order to continue increasing their level of service.

This plan is to be utilized as a flexible tool which should be reviewed annually and updated every five years with input from citizens-at-large, city boards and commission members, city staff and City Council to continue to reflect the unique recreational needs of the area. The city should take advantage of any unforeseen opportunities not identified in the plan that may arise, such as donations of land and/or facilities as long as the actions meet the intent of the goals and recommendations of this plan.

With the proposed improvements to the park system that are outlined in this plan will come additional maintenance and operational needs in order to utilize, manage and care for both the new facilities and those that exist today. The proposed improvements contained in this plan will enhance the quality of life in the region and help ensure that the City of Tyler is able to keep pace with the growing recreational needs of its citizens and the residents of Smith County. The resulting benefits of this plan include: increased quality of life, tourism potential, economic value, increasing property values and pride in the residents of the area.



APPENDIX I  
CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS



## City of Tyler Parks and Recreation Survey Tally

### Total - Mail-In and Online - 848

1. What parks and recreation facilities would you like to have in Tyler?

RANK	FACILITIES	WEIGHTED SCORE
1	Multi-Purpose Trails	1,010
2	Swimming Pools	957
3	Nature Trails	828
4	Indoor Recreation Centers	680
5	Water Features(creeks, small lakes etc.)	634
6	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions	627
7	Nature Areas	585
8	Picnicking Areas	566
9	Botanical/Flower Garden	563
10	Playgrounds	536
11	Dog Park	526
12	Sprayground/Small Water Park	441
13	Lawn Areas for General Play	402
14	Sports Practice Fields	326
15	Bandstand/Amphitheater	309
16	Soccer Fields	302
17	Playgrounds Specifically for Handicap	270
18	Tennis Centers	259
19	Sand Volleyball Courts	219
20	Skate Park	217
21	Basketball Courts	208
22	Disc Golf Course	178
23	Adult Softball Fields	152
24	Youth Softball Fields	149
25	Horseshoe/Washer Courts	148
26	Football Fields	140
27	Baseball Fields	125





How satisfied are you with the existing parks and recreational facilities in Tyler?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	Don't Know
8%	52%	27%	9%	4%

How would you rate the maintenance level of parks and recreational facilities in Tyler?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
11%	53%	26%	7%	3%

Can you reasonably walk to a City park in Tyler from your home?

Yes	No
36%	64%

Are additional parks and recreational facilities needed in Tyler?

Yes	No
88%	12%

In what area of Tyler do you reside?

<u>NW</u>	12%	<u>NE</u>	9%
<u>SW</u>	36%	<u>SE</u>	43%

What is your current age?

U-18	18-24	25-34	35-44
	2%	11%	21%
45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
25%	19%	13%	8%



The role of parks, recreation and open space in Tyler today compared to ten years ago is:

More Important	The Same	Less Important	Don't Know
70%	17%	2%	11%

More pocket or ornamental parks are needed. (2,500 sq. ft. to 2 acre in size)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	44%	23%	3%

More neighborhood parks are needed. (5 to 10 acres in size)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36%	52%	10%	2%

More community parks are needed. (40 to 150 acres in size)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	42%	24%	4%

Existing Parks in Tyler should be upgraded and/or improved to include additional facilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39%	50%	10%	1%

Residential neighborhoods, schools and parks should be connected with linear parks such as trails along creeks and other corridors.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39%	44%	15%	2%



Parks & recreation facilities are well worth the cost to taxpayers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
44%	47%	6%	3%

Existing parks in Tyler provide a safe environment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10%	66%	22%	2%

How do you typically hear about parks activities and other upcoming events?

RANK		SCORES
1	Newspaper Articles	409
2	Word of Mouth	336
3	TV	268
4	Banners in the Park	243
5	Radio	134
6	Website	57
7	Email	39



The most important consideration regarding future parks in Tyler is:

<b>RANK</b>		<b>SCORES</b>
1	Quality of Facilities in Design/Construction	333
2	Maintenance after Construction	280
3	Preservation of Natural Areas	141
4	Number of Facilities	62

The acquisition of parkland and the development & maintenance of park facilities can be expensive. In addition to state grants, where should future park funding come from?

<b>RANK</b>		<b>WEIGHTED SCORES</b>
1	Donations	1,260
2	Bond Program	1,105
3	Sales Tax	1,031
4	Park User Fees	546
5	Property Tax	441



APPENDIX II  
PUBLIC MEETING INPUT



# Public Meeting Input - January 2010

## City of Tyler

What is your highest priority for the park system by the year 2020?

- Parking
- Swimming pool at Faulkner Park
- Senior citizen center in south Tyler (Faulkner?)
- Large circular running routes of crushed granite 8'-10' wide
- Small children's athletic fields
- Development of Park at Bellwood Lake (too include Lindsey Park)
- More gym facilities
- Railroad Museum (model trains)
- Dog park
- Aquatic Center
- Off leash dog park
- Master Plan and development of the Rose Garden
- Comprehensive biking system
- Connectivity of parks, neighborhoods and businesses
- Cleaner facilities in parks
- Natatorium
- Connectivity
- Younglife location for high school students
- Upgrades on park conditions and kid equipment

What makes Tyler a unique community?

- Large number of people who donate time and money to those in need
- Trees and parks
- Opportunity to plan carefully for future development; preserving nature and fostering community
- Community involvement in our interests.
- Parks/trees/outdoor areas
- People of faith
- Its growth and willingness to adjust growth/diversity/needs of the community
- Diversity - but we need an aquatic center
- Medians
- Lack of a natatorium
- Caring community
- Giving
- Small nit community



What parks do you use the most? Why?

- Bergfeld - facilities and amphitheater
- Lindsey - location and youth soccer
- Rudman/Southside - walking
- Rose Rudman - location (poor aesthetics though)
- Bergfeld -
- Rose Garden - Landscape/events
- Rose Rudman - Running/walking - It is in a neighborhood and good parking on street; heavily used
- Bergfeld
- Rose Rudman - biking and playgrounds - Convenience and safety
- Rose Rudman and Faulkner - Walking, biking and GeoCaching
- Fun Forest - Pool for summer training (5:45 am with 35 others)
- Fun Forest/Woldert - close to home
- Bergfeld - Very nice park and my kids love it
- Children's Park - weddings, family and community group events in a serene setting

Are there programs that should be provided in the park system that are not currently offered?

- Programs for mothers of young children (exercise, baby care, yoga, etc) running in succession with baby exercise classes
- Art shows, plays
- Outdoor exercise programs
- Gardening at evening and weekend times
- Music, food events e.g. Taste of Tyler (like Taste of Chicago - Huge Event!) Maybe at Rose Garden?!
- I think that there should be programs offered for children under five. Children under five would have earlier time slots available where they could do different things when others are in school
- Swimming year round in an aquatic center
- Swimming center and programs
- Activity programs with community to pull people to these parks. Bergfeld is one of the only parks that does this.

Are there facilities that should be added to the park system that would increase use of the parks? What facilities should be added?

- Youth baseball and soccer practice fields
- Golf course
- Better playgrounds - different equipment, especially for those under six
- Circular running paths constructed of crushed granite - 8' to 10' wide
- Bike trails



- Hiking trails
- Bike parking and easier access by providing better ways of crossing Loop 323, Broadway and other multi-lane roads
- RV campground at Lake Tyler and/or Bellwood
- Access!! More natural trails (not concrete)
- Fishing and GeoCaching
- Self-guided nature tours and/or nature center for programming on weekends and after school
- Natatorium
- Activity facilities (playgrounds, picnic areas, passive uses)
- Multi-purpose recreation center with pool and splash park
- A new 50 m swimming pool
- Maintenance = new jobs in Tyler
- There should be restroom and preparation facilities at the Children's Park to accommodate those attending events
- The Children's park should be expanded to accommodate large groups

What do you think needs to be done to make the Tyler Parks System better?

- Connectivity
- More neighborhood parks in South Tyler
- More running routes
- More biking options
- More youth baseball, softball and soccer practice fields
- Proximity and connectivity
- More places for public events - amphitheaters, art shows, plays, etc
- Better public communication
- Better lighting and parking
- Trails to connect existing parks
- For the existing parks to be kept up with. For the hazardous areas to be done away with
- Something other than basketball, baseball, soccer or football fields - more variety
- Extend Rose Rudman to UT Tyler from Grande north on existing pipeline
- A new swim center
- Improve on what we have
- Indoor swim center with 50 m pool





What do you like LEAST about the existing parks and open space system in Tyler?

- Inadequate off street parking
- Equipment for children - more needed
- More family-type picnic areas
- Difficult to access parks without driving - lack of safe sidewalks
- They are not equally maintained
- Maintenance
- Not enough variety
- No variety in sports
- No where for lap swimming
- No natatorium
- Lack of maintenance and poor facilities(old)
- No place to swim
- Existing aquatic center is no functional
- Poor maintenance of some parks (Woldert & Fun Forest) To much space not used

The Tyler Parks and Open Space network consists of 27 parks containing 1,200 acres of land. What do you like the MOST about the existing parks?

- Organized athletics
- the move towards hiking/nature experiences
- Landscapes at the Rose Garden
- Amphitheater at Bergfeld Park
- Access and walking distance from my home
- Rose Rudman trails
- The marriage of staying natural in its development
- That they provide the community
- That they provide the community with a place to enjoy as a family
- The beauty in Spring
- The community use
- The naturalness
- The new walking trails
- Being able to use them
- Pretty
- Use of the senior center (needs expanding)
- A place for nature
- I would like to be able to use them

