



7. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

CHAPTER 7: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO PARKS, RECREATION AND

SPECIAL EVENTS

CURRENT AS OF JANUARY 2018

The services, facilities and open spaces addressed by this Plan Element include many of the features that define a community's identity and character. They often play a role in residents' daily lives and shape residents' perception of their community. These essential places and activities must be managed so they provide the desired experiences for people in a way that is fiscally responsible and that makes wise use of natural resources.

The network of these places must grow and change over time as a community adds population and expands geographically, and as the needs and desires of community residents' change. Ideally, these opportunities should come in many forms and should serve all age groups and all geographic areas. From specialized parks for active play to visually appealing passive open spaces,

park areas make an important contribution to the quality of life that a city provides. Weatherford is a rapidly growing community with a need for extensive planning to ensure that municipal service systems, including parks and recreation, keep pace with increasing demands. The acquisition and development of parks and open space areas will be significant factors in maintaining a high quality of life for citizens in Weatherford.

For all of these reasons, this element is a vital part of the General Plan. Weatherford's parks, recreational facilities and programs, open spaces and special events play a significant role in achieving the vision for Weatherford described in this plan.



POLICY DIRECTION FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* guides the development and acquisition of new park land and recreational facilities. The Master Plan identifies the need for park improvements, athletic fields, facilities, and restoration of existing parks. As with any municipal project, available funding is the controlling factor in deciding which project or projects should be completed first. A new parks master plan should be prepared every ten (10) years and updated within five (5) years from the date of adoption.

The current update of the *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* was developed for the City by Dunkin Sims Stoffels, Inc. The plan development process included analysis using national standards as well as demand based recreation evaluation, discussions with City staff on technical issues, and extensive input by the citizens of Weatherford. The plan was adopted in 2016. It provides the City with long-range park planning priorities (along with funding possibilities) for the next 5 years, until 2021.

The complete *2016 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* can be viewed on the City of Weatherford website at: <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan> or by contacting pardinfo@weatherfordtx.gov via email or the

Parks and Recreation Department, 119 Palo Pinto Street, Weatherford, TX 76086 for more information.

GOALS

These are the goals for the Weatherford park system established in the 2016 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*:

1. Provide passive and active recreational opportunities for all citizens.
2. Preserve and conserve Weatherford's natural areas, greenbelts and open space for the enjoyment and environmental education of current and future citizens.
3. Pursue regional park and recreation opportunities.
4. Cooperate with other external entities within Parker County, to provide cost-effective services and optimize benefits to citizens.
5. Use public input, senior groups and stakeholders to identify indoor recreation and aquatic needs of the community.



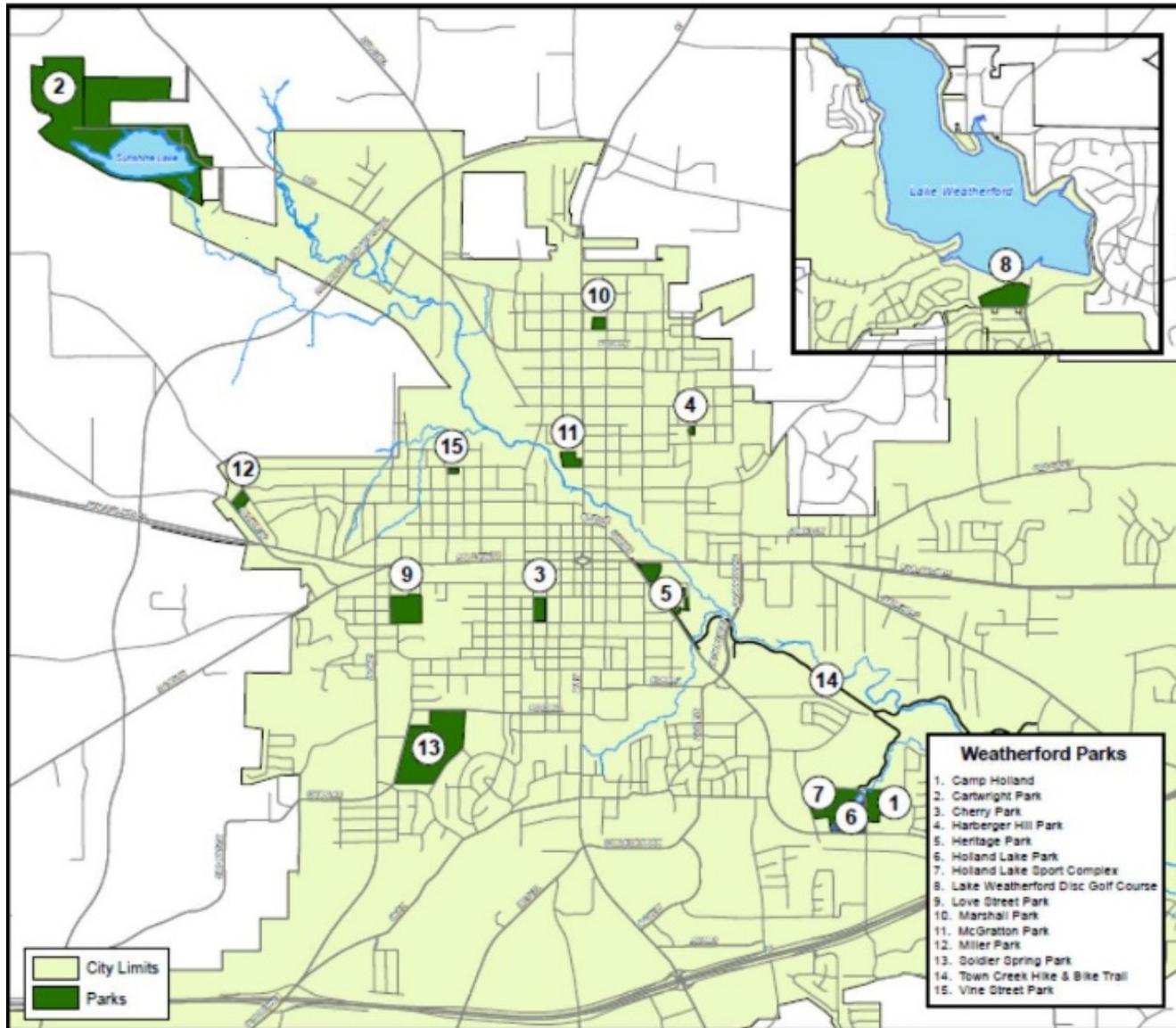


Exhibit 7.1 – Existing Weatherford Parks

EXISTING ASSETS

EXISTING PARKS

Guidelines and standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) have been followed by cities for many years to define the hierarchy for their park systems. NRPA’s guidelines are intended only as a guide to the development of local parks standards, so they provide the first step in the evaluation of park’s needs.

The 2016 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan uses selected park classifications from the NRPA including the description, size and location criteria for each park type. These Weatherford specific park classifications are described in the following sections. They configure an organized park system that is responsive to recreational demands being generated by the present, as well as future, population. <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan>

The distinct types of park classifications provide differing recreational opportunities, some for neighborhoods, some for organized sports, some for passive play, etc. It is important

Existing Park Land Analysis (2016) <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan>

Park Type	Existing Parks (acres)	NRPA Guidelines (acres per 1,000 residents)	Acres Needed to Meet Guidelines	Surplus / Deficit
Neighborhood Park	19.55	3	70	-50.49
Community Park	268.30	5	140	128.23
Lake Front Park District	15.60	No Std.	NS	NS
Special Use Parks	119.80	2	56	63.77
Regional Parks	38.40	2 to 6	NS	NS
Open Space & Greenbelts	39.00	6 to 8	NS	NS
Total System	500.65	23.5	658	-157.70

Table 7.1 – Existing Park Land Analysis

for a city to have a diverse park system, and provide its citizenry with varying recreational choices. The size and scope of that system is also important and needs to adequately serve a city’s population base. Currently, Weatherford falls below the amounts of park acreage suggested by NRPA guidelines for neighborhood parks and for the overall parks system. It exceeds these suggested amounts for Community and Special Use Parks, however.





Drive-In Theater at Cherry Park Pool



Movies in the Park at Heritage Park



KIDFISH Event at Holland Lake Park



Blastball at Cartwright Ball Field



General Swim Time at Cherry Park Pool



Ringer Alley at Love Street Park

EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

The *Parks Guide* is a tool to disseminate information on the numerous recreational opportunities in Weatherford each year. The complete *Parks Guide for 2017* can be viewed on the City of Weatherford website at: <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2968/2017-Parks-Guide> or by contacting pardinfo@weatherfordtx.gov via email or Parks and Recreation Department, 119 Palo Pinto Street, Weatherford, TX 76086 for more information. Recreational programs and events are centered in our parks where most of the community will gather to enjoy fun activities.

The facilities analysis conducted as part of the Master Plan update included a comparison with NRPA facilities standards. As with park acreage, Weatherford ranks above the standards in some areas and below in others. It provides more youth soccer facilities and picnic tables than the national guidelines suggest, but fewer facilities in other areas. These variations reflect local preferences and decisions about the recreational facilities that will best serve this particular community.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Primary uses of greenbelts and open space include location of hike, bike and multi-use trails and preservation of the natural environment. Although trails are developed in neighborhood and community parks, the most optimal location is in the greenbelts and open spaces of creek corridors. The open

space and trail classification applies to types of land which have characteristics either identifying them as undevelopable land or suitable for use as a component linking other park areas. Such spaces are generally natural corridors along creeks/flood prone areas or along easements containing a man-made feature. There is no specific size for open spaces or trails, however, establishing a minimum width of 50 feet is important to the function a greenway, particularly if use as a location for a trail. When located along a natural drainage course, a minimum of 15 feet shall be provided for foot traffic or motorized vehicles performing maintenance.

These trails provide access to retail areas and connections to other parks and public areas. Trails such as the Lake Mineral Wells State Trailway also connect to adjacent cities. When property adjacent to creeks and floodplains is developed, floodplain property should be dedicated to the City for Open Space and Greenbelts. The City should accept floodplain areas as a donation and should not purchase the land, unless there is a need for a critical purchase to preserve land and/or provide a link to another park. Open spaces preserve trees and native areas and enhance the educational and passive use of floodplains and open space for park patrons. Weatherford's existing trails and open spaces are described below.



TOWN CREEK HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL

Park Size: 7 Acres **Park Classification:** Open Space / Greenbelt **Park Facilities:** 3.15 Miles of Trail
Trailhead Locations: 801 Santa Fe Drive; 401 Fort Worth Highway; 1419 Holland Lake Road; 100 Ikard Lane

SOLDIER SPRING PARK TRAIL AND NATURE AREA

Park Size: 32 Acres **Park Classification:** Open Space / Greenbelt **Park Facilities:** 1.1 Miles of Trail
Trailhead Locations: 961 Charles Street; 200 Thrush Street; 907 Russell Street; 101 Thrush Street

QUANAH HILL MOUNTAIN BIKE AND HIKING TRAIL

Size: 75 Acres **Classification:** Open Space / Greenbelt
Facilities: 5.37 Miles of Trail
Trailhead Locations: 810 West Lake Drive

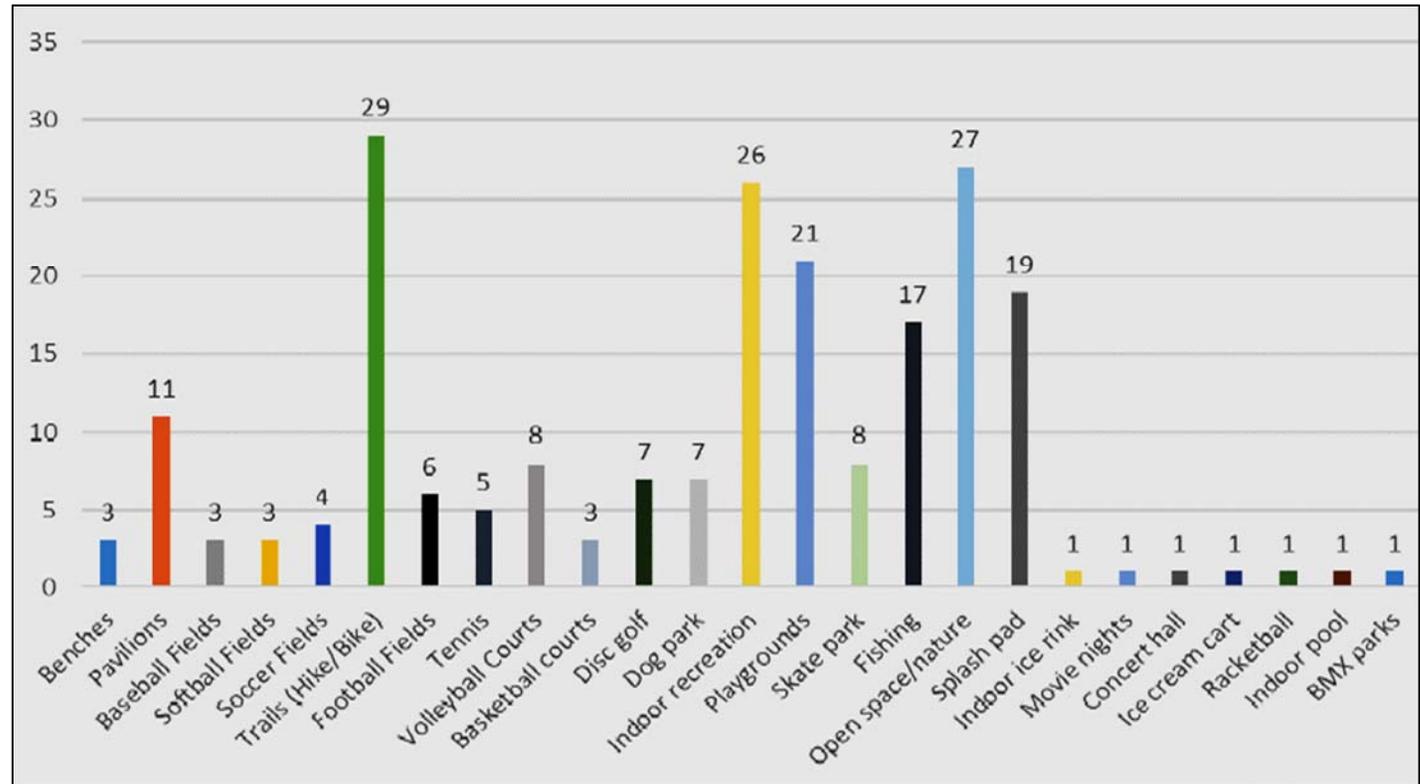
The Weatherford Mountain Bike Club (WMBC) and the City of Weatherford have collectively worked together to build, maintain and manage multi-use nature trails in the City's jurisdiction for the benefit of the off-road bicycling, trail running and hiking communities and the citizens of Weatherford. The WMBC is a non-profit club operated by citizen volunteers to promote biking/hiking and the enjoyment of an outdoor experience on a multi-use nature trail.



CURRENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A key factor in any park planning process is citizen input, and an extensive process of gathering of input was undertaken in late 2015 as part of the Master Plan update. The Master Plan included a preference survey that showed a preference for the following facilities with the following results.

The first wants/needs expressed by Weatherford citizens were Hike and Bike/Walking Trails, which are now listed first on the Ten-Year Action Plan/Priority List. Water Conservation was also mentioned, as citizens are aware of water usage in the park system. The City is working to conserve water within the park system and is now planning to recycle water used at the splash pad in Love Street Park.



FUTURE PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE PLAN

Planning for the future includes addressing the needs identified by current residents; it also requires an evaluation of expected future growth. As discussed in the Land Use and Development Element, growth in Weatherford and its ETJ is expected to continue to increase. The population projection used for this 2016 *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* is consistent with the projections in that Element. The Master Plan update assumed that Weatherford's population in 2035 would be 41,700. The General Plan projects that the City of Weatherford's population in 2035 could range from 39,278 to 47,378. These projections show significant growth in the number of residents who will be served by the City's parks, open spaces and recreational facilities.

The process for updating the Master Plan considered the growth in Weatherford's population. It also examined a range of other factors that affect parks and recreation usage:

- Demographic shifts in the population
- Barriers created by major highways and roads
- Changing preferences for various sports and recreational activities
- Increasing interest in using parks as part of a healthy lifestyle
- Expected geographic expansion as the City grows

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LOCATIONS

The parks planning process identified locations that are not currently served by the City's parks and recreational facilities. Exhibit 7.1 shows existing parks, schools and other opportunities for outdoor recreation. Exhibit 7.1 also shows the one-mile radius for areas needing neighborhood parks. This is the service area of a neighborhood park because most people are able to comfortably walk that distance to enjoy a park. The map does not show precise locations for future parks, but indicates approximate locations for parks that will serve future growth.



WEATHERFORD GENERAL PLAN – CHAPTER 7: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

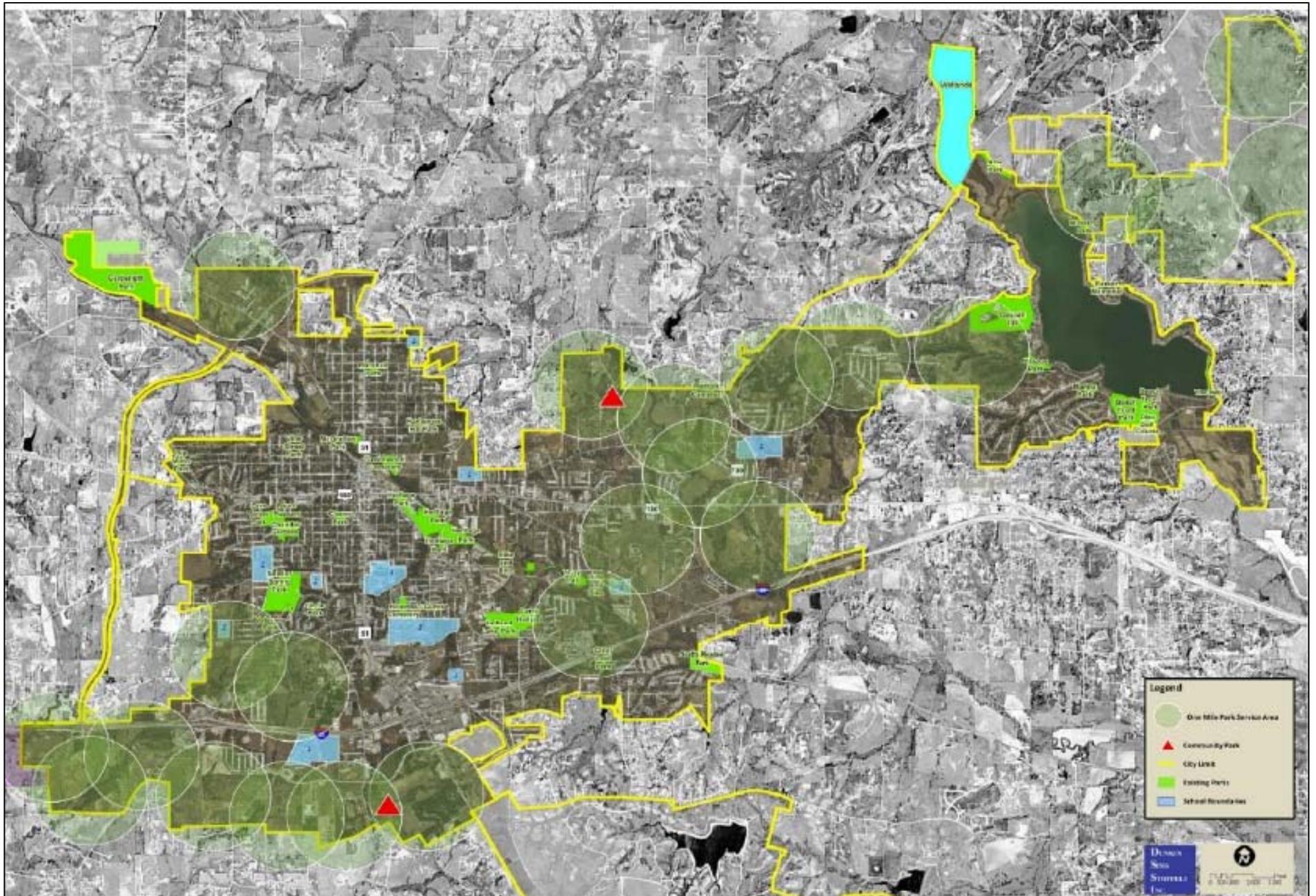


Exhibit 7.2 - Future Park Improvement Plan – <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan>

PARKLAND ACQUISITION

The analysis of Weatherford’s existing parks by category in Table 7.2 from the Master Plan shows that an additional 480 acres of parkland will need to be acquired by the year 2035 in order to meet the needs of a predicted population of over 40,000 in 2035.

Park land acquisition is one of the most important components in park development; without it, a city cannot provide a diverse, geographic- and size-appropriate park system. Park land acquisition is generally most effective when it is done prior to or concurrently with new development, both within the City limits and in the ETJ.

FACILITY NEEDS

The 2016 *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* identified an estimated cost of \$50,000,000 in park development and improvement needs over the next 10 years. An indoor recreation center was one of the desired amenities mentioned by many Weatherford citizens and is ranked 4th in the overall Ten-Year City Priority List. It would include an aquatic facility,

multi-purpose courts, racquetball, art and crafts among other features. The cost of this facility could range between \$15,000,000 to \$35,000,000 which would be determined by the square footage and amenities within the center. Rounding out the other top five items in park improvement needs would be hike and bike trails, playgrounds, park benches, and outdoor multi-use courts.

Future Facilities Analysis (2035)				
Park Type	Existing Parks (acres)	NRPA Guidelines (acres per 1,000 residents)	Acres Needed to Meet Guidelines	Surplus / Deficit
Neighborhood Park	19.55	3	104	-84.70
Community Park	268.30	5	209	59.80
Lake Front Park District	15.60	No Std.	NS	NS
Special Use Parks	119.80	2	83	36.40
Regional Parks	38.40	2 to 6	NS	NS
Open Space & Greenbelts	39.00	6 to 8	NS	NS
Total System	500.65	23.5	980	-479.30

Table 7.2 – Future Facilities Analysis



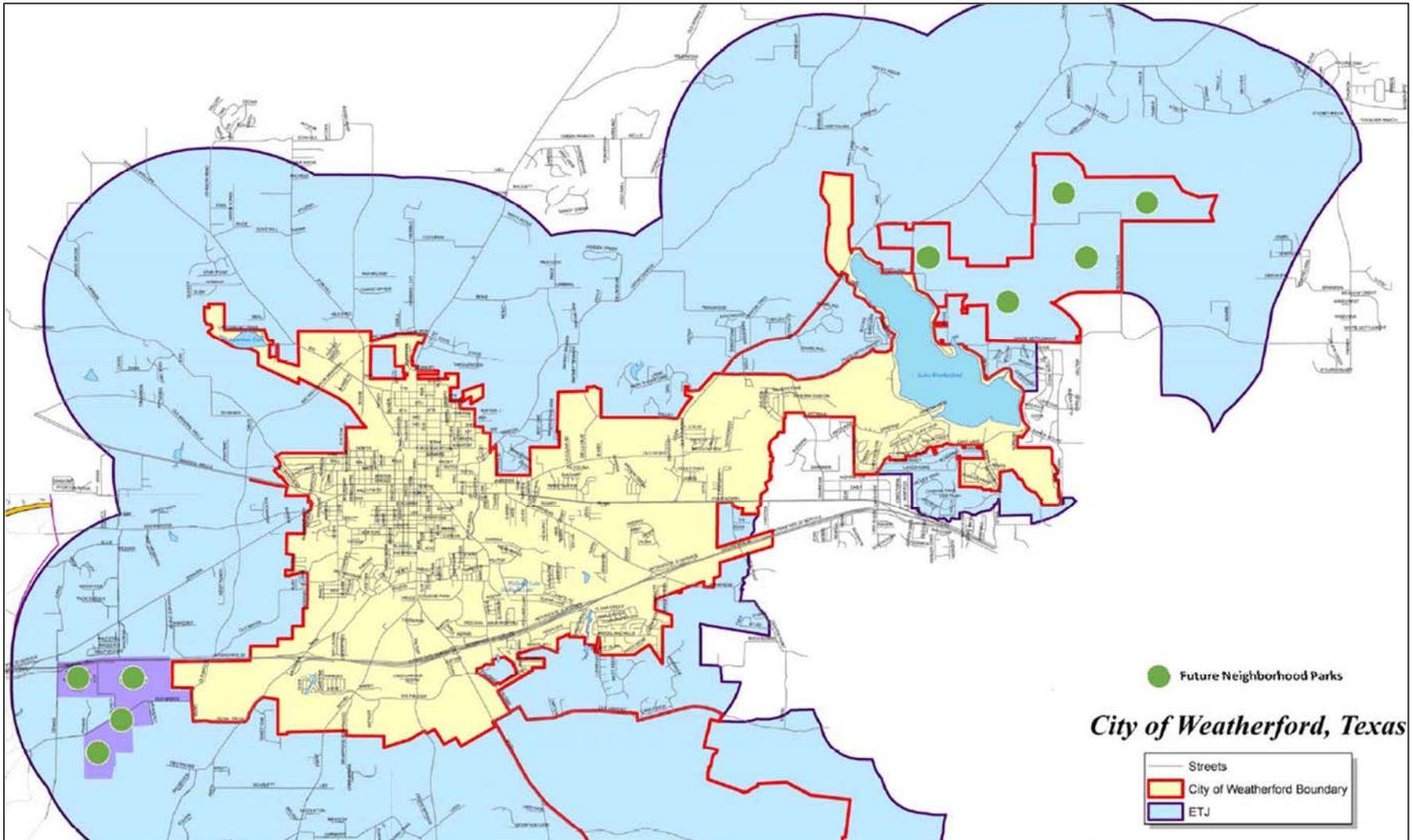


Exhibit 7.2(a) - Future Neighborhood Parks – <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan>

TABLE 13: TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN – RECREATIONAL FACILITY PRIORITY LISTING FOR OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Priority	Facility	Timing	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Sources
1.	Hike and Bike Trails	2016 – 2021	\$300,000/Mile	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
2.	Playgrounds	2016 – 2021	\$80,000/Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
3.	Park Benches	2016 – 2021	\$750/Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
4.	Recreation Centers	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
5.	Multi-Use Courts	2016 – 2021	\$40,000/Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
6.	Picnic Pavilion	2016 – 2021	\$25,000 to \$60,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
7.	Football Fields	2016 – 2021	\$250,000/Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
8.	Practice Open Space	2016 – 2021	\$25,000/Acre	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
9.	Splash Park	2016 – 2021	\$150,000 to \$250,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
10.	Tennis Courts	2016 – 2021	\$80,000 Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
11.	Sand Volleyball	2016 – 2021	\$20,000 Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
12.	Picnic Tables	2016 – 2021	\$1,000/Each	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
13.	Dog Park	2016 – 2021	\$100,000 to \$300,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
14.	Open Space Acquisition	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
15.	Youth Baseball Fields	2016 – 2021	\$300,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
16.	Youth Softball Field	2016 – 2021	\$275,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
17.	Youth Soccer Field	2016 – 2021	\$325,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
18.	Adult Softball	2016 – 2021	\$350,000	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
19.	Wetland Interpretive Area	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
20.	Nature Preserve	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
21.	Nature Trail	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
22.	Regional Arboretum	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations

OUTDOOR RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

Table 13 from the Park’s Master Plan lists the prioritized recreational improvements for outdoor facilities along with their estimated costs and implementation dates. The number one priority reflecting current trends is for hike and bike trails.



INDOOR RECREATION FACILITY PLAN

Table 14 from the *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* lists the prioritized list of indoor recreation facilities along with their implementation dates. The number one priority, the aquatic center is a unique challenge due to the expense, which could be an estimated cost between \$8 - \$10 million dollars. The City will need partners to build and operate this facility. While a natatorium generally serves a larger population than Weatherford has today, this would be only indoor natatorium available to North Texas residents west of Keller and East Fort Worth. The existing outdoor pool in Cherry Park was constructed in 1949, renovated 10 years ago and is heavily used. It is the only publicly owned pool available in Parker County. A large population may be able to support such a facility but will

require a partnership between cities, school districts, college districts, hospitals, private groups such as a YMCA and other potential users to finance its construction. A special district, non-profit foundation or other entity may be needed to fund and operate a natatorium.

TABLE 14: TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN – RECREATIONAL FACILITY PRIORITY LISTING FOR INDOOR FACILITIES

Priority	Facility	Timing	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Sources
1.	Indoor Aquatic	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
2.	Indoor Track	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
3.	Multi-Purpose Court	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
4.	Aerobic Room	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
5.	Arts & Crafts	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
6.	Racquetball	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
7.	Weight Room	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
8.	Computer Game Room	2016 – 2021	Varies	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations



OPEN SPACE AND TRAIL NEEDS

Weatherford's 2013 Transportation Plan includes a Bike/Pedestrian Plan connecting parks, schools, and the retail areas on Interstate 20 and Downtown Weatherford. Based on the Needs Assessment survey and the Ten-Year Priority List in the Master Plan, hike and bike trails or multi-use trails have been identified as the number one requested recreational element in Weatherford; this is also the park type with the greatest projects acreage deficit. The Bike/Pedestrian Plan's recommendations are included in the trails plan of the 2016 *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* shown on Exhibit 7.1. They include: 1) Connection to Solder Spring Park, to Love Street Park, and Chandor Gardens, 2) Connection to Clear Lake Park and from the north side of Interstate 20 and 3) Connection to the Mineral Wells State Park to the northwest, and future connection to the Veloweb Trail to the southeast. The Bike/Pedestrian Plan guides City acquisition of property for trail construction and evaluation of future and existing thoroughfares and for on-street bike lanes. Not only is it a valuable asset for the City when determining future trail connections, but it also is valuable in helping the City apply for grant assistance for trail construction.

For more information and detailed maps on the regional system, the NCTCOG has completed the Regional Paths (Trails) and Bikeways (On-Street) Active Transportation Network at:

<http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/bikeped/veloweb.asp> which highlight the adopted 2040 regional plan consisting of 7,030 miles of regional shared-use paths and on-street bikeway network in various stages of development.



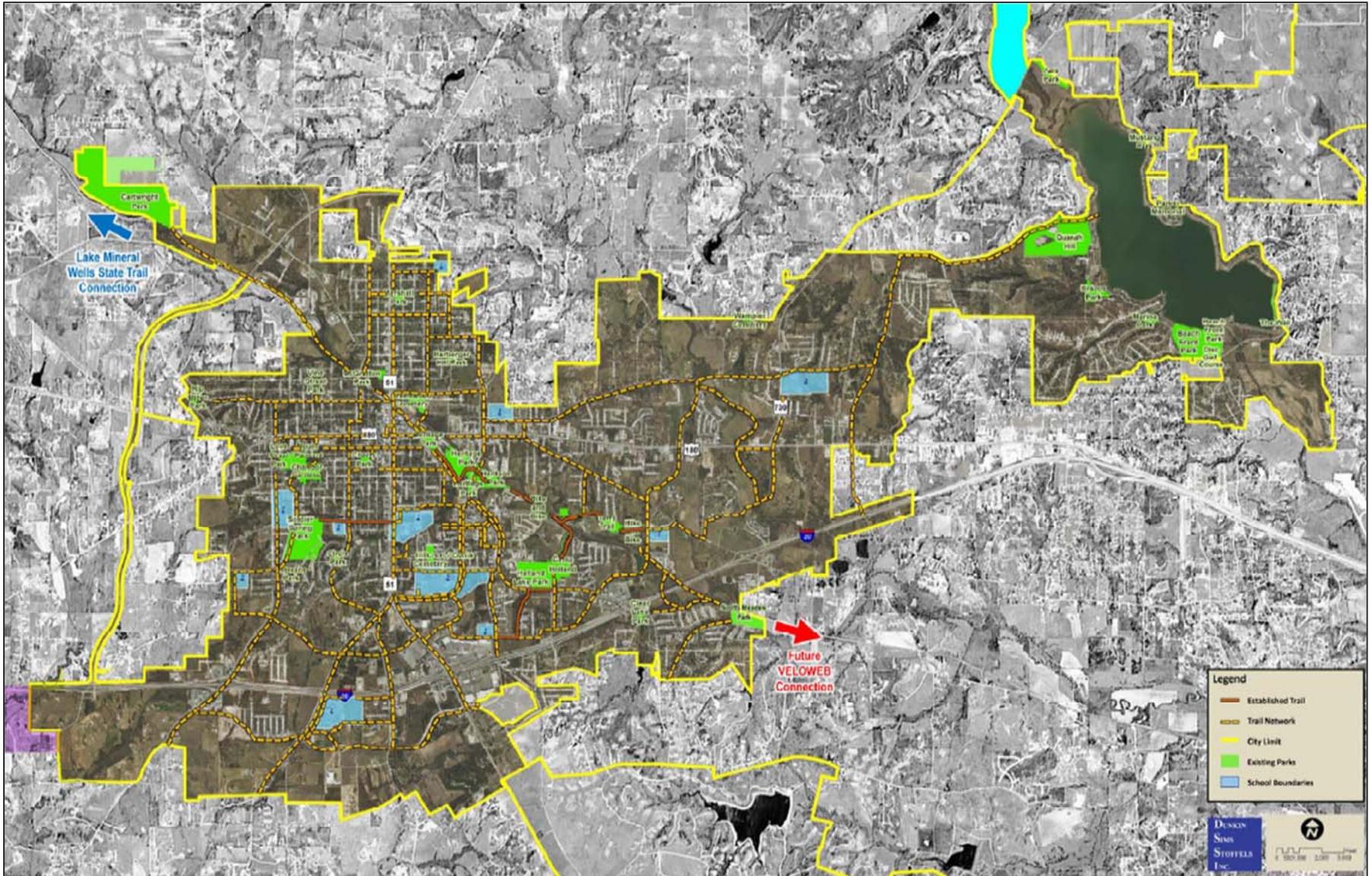


Exhibit 7.3 – Trail Network Plan – <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2937/Parks-Master-Plan>

SPECIAL WEATHERFORD PARKS AND FACILITIES

In addition to the parks, recreational facilities and trails provided by most communities, Weatherford has some assets that are truly unique. These are also part of the managed by the City's Parks, Recreation and Special Events Department. They must be maintained to provide enjoyment of Weatherford's future residents and visitors.

CHANDOR GARDENS

Chandor Gardens in the Historic District of Weatherford on 711 West Lee Avenue captures both the ornate design of ancient Chinese architecture and the elegance of a formal English garden. The 3.5 acre estate with its 5,600-square foot mansion/ studio and formal gardens was the vision of celebrated portrait artist Douglas Chandor and was developed from 1936 until his death in 1953. His widow, Ina Kuteman Chandor, kept the gardens open to the public until her death in 1970. Over the next 20 years, the property became overgrown and deteriorated. In 1994, Charles and Melody Bradford purchased the estate and restored the mansion and gardens. They then sold it to the City in 2002 when it was updated and made ADA-accessible. The intensely developed and landscaped gardens have everything from a 30-foot man-made waterfall to Chinese fountains, lakes and pathways to various grottos. It has won several architectural awards and is listed on the Texas and National Historic registers. The

Chandor Gardens are well known as a Texas destination, with many TripAdvisor sites recommending them to national and foreign tourists and thousands of annual visitors. It is often utilized or rented for special events up to 200 people, private parties, weddings, meetings, group tours with docent guides, and photography sessions. Visitor and rental revenues help pay for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of the site but the City still must subsidize the facility. Increased visitation would generate more revenue but would also take a toll on this historic facility.

<http://www.chandorgardensfoundation.org/future.html>





Exhibit 7.4 - Future Chandor Gardens Improvement Plan <http://www.chandorgardensfoundation.org/future.html>

Chandor Gardens Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit group working with the City of Weatherford to protect and preserve the historical heritage of the gardens. It also works with the City to promote the Gardens and plan/develop additional gardens, buildings and accessible open space on an additional 13.5 acres located on the west side of the current gardens and mansion. These planned buildings are meant to significantly reduce the stress on the Chandor Mansion; they would provide space for cultural and social endeavors, dining and a gift shop/visitors center. Funding for the entire 17-acre complex is a major issue which the Foundation hopes to address. For more information concerning Chandor Gardens, please visit the website at <http://www.weatherfordparks.com/170/Chandor-Gardens> or contact the staff at 817-613-1700. The Foundation information may be found at <http://www.chandorgardensfoundation.org>.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

A special event can be defined as any event where a large number of people are brought together to watch or participate. Some other characteristics of special events may include food and alcohol vendors, music venues, temporary stands or structures, fireworks, volunteers and/or impacts on traffic flows or road closures. Examples of special events include summer festivals and concerts, races, national celebrations, sporting competitions, exhibitions, and the Spark in the Park at Heritage Park tractor pulls and demolition derbies. The Parks, Recreation and Special Event Department hosts many special events and has employees who are solely responsible for special event planning, execution and coordination with other departments, especially public safety and traffic. Notable special events are described below.



FIRST MONDAY

Known as one of the oldest open-air markets in Texas, the First Monday Trade Days event is steeped in tradition as a monthly event with a history of buying, selling, and trading for over 160 years. In the mid-1800s, local farmers, ranchers, and merchants would buy, sell or trade their livestock, handmade items, produce, and other supplies to large crowds during the monthly legal trials at the courthouse square. Initially this event was known to all as a monthly “Stray Day” sale. It is now located adjacent to the historic downtown at 317 Santa Fe Drive with convenient parking on site. The First Monday Trade Days event is still growing with over 8,000 visitors each month. It is consistently recognized as one of the Weatherford’s most popular tourist attractions. The monthly market event offers traditional selling opportunities for vendors to showcase their items including unique gifts, plants, farm and ranch items, antiques, pet supplies, jewelry, second-hand bargains, iron works, crafts, pottery, furniture, collectibles, artwork, tools, along

with great festival food. The grounds are open to the public from 9 am to 4 pm each Friday, Saturday and Sunday before the First Monday of each month. Additional information may be found at by calling 817-598-4359 or viewing: <http://weatherfordtx.gov/883/First-Monday-Trade-Days>.





*Food Park at Heritage Park
First Monday*



*Lot A at Heritage Park
First Monday*



*Lot B at Heritage Park
First Monday*



*Lot C at Heritage Park
First Monday*



*Farm/Ranch Lot at Heritage Park
First Monday*



*Overview of Grounds
First Monday*



HERITAGE PARK AMPHITHEATRE

The amphitheater is nestled in the 62-acre Heritage Park on Santa Fe between the south lot and the Patsy Hooks Dog Park, along the Town Creek Hike and Bike Trail. It seats up to 2,000 people with additional space for handicap accessibility. Opened in 2015, it has state-of-the-art audio technology and opportunities for stage lighting during larger events.

In 2017, it is scheduled to have a number of events including 5 live music concerts, a number of “Movies in the Park” and fireworks displays. A schedule of events can be found at <http://www.experienceweatherford.com/events>.

OTHER ANNUAL SPECIAL EVENTS

April (3rd Sat) – Blooms – With 4,500 attendees, it is the largest home and garden festival in Parker County. It is held in the Courthouse Square with vendors selling goods from seasonal plants to furniture and home decor.

July 4 - Spark in the Park - A rain or shine community celebration in Heritage Park for America's Independence Day with live entertainment and fireworks that can be viewed from miles away. The crowd of over 12,000 requires shuttle services for additional parking at Weatherford College.



July (2nd Sat) – Peach Festival – The Peach Festival is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the City’s Parks Department heavily involved in coordinating and handling the 30,000 plus visitors to historic downtown enjoying over 200 arts, crafts, food and activity booths, live music, children’s activities and the Peach Pedal Bike Ride.

December (2nd Fri) – Holiday in the Park. Always a record number of visitors with over 8,000 visitors enjoying the activities ranging from sleigh rides, ice skating rink, pony rides, snow slides, getting a picture with Santa and lots of great food to eat.

The Parks, Recreation and Special Event Department also handles and coordinates requests for other special events on public property or on private property if special events include large numbers of attendees, food and alcohol vendors, music venues, temporary stands or structures, fireworks, volunteers and/or impacts on traffic flows or road closures. Permit requests are made to the Department at 119 Palo Pinto Street. For more information in regard holding a special event or knowing the schedule for city-sponsored special events, please visit the website at: <http://weatherfordtx.gov/633/Special-Events> or call (817-598-4034)

PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITY FUNDING SOURCES

As described above, the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* recommends development of several new parks, and further development in some existing parks. These recommended improvements represent a substantial public investment in parks and open space as the City grows and develops. It is important to fund these improvements from diverse funding sources. By using several sources of funds, no one source is overburdened and there is a better probability of successful implementation. The sources discussed below relate to the purchase, development, and/or renovation/expansion of park land and facilities.

PARK DEDICATION FEES

Park Dedication Fees are collected on each new permitted dwelling unit. Fees are deposited in a special fund for park acquisition and development. The current fee of \$550 per residential unit is approved by the City Council and periodically reviewed. This review analyzes the cost of land and park development compared to the monetary fee collected to ensure the fee and dedication amount is adequate to provide for park development. As a guide, the City may evaluate other cities’ fees and dedication. The City may accept land in lieu of fees on larger developments if it is suitable for park acquisition and development.



GENERAL FUND

This source of funding is supported by ad valorem tax revenues. It is generally the primary source of funds for maintenance and operation of the existing park system. The general fund is also the source for projects requiring smaller amounts of capital investment. Although projects funded by this source make a small annual contribution to the expansion of the park system, over several years it adds up as a major contributor to improvements to the park system. It is also important to include additional funding for new demands for on-going maintenance and staff requirements for new developments and improvements.

USER FEES

One aspect of the General Fund that may need to be looked at is a more focused review of user fees. These are fees charged to the various users of facilities. Some facilities such as parks in general are available to everyone in Parker County and beyond. The City's Primary Trade Area identified in Chapter 5, Economic Development has over 180,000 people visiting the city weekly. Building park and recreation facilities to serve such a population places a burden on the existing Weatherford taxpayers. Some facilities such as the



MARSHALL PARK RENOVATION
 Opening in Spring 2019
 115 Fifth Street
 Marshall Park is scheduled to get a beautiful new face lift which will include an awesome splash pad, playground and pavilion area. Renovations start this March and will take two-three years to complete.

amphitheater, little league or soccer fields and various special events may charge a fee for the use or event. Those fees may need to be examined and updated to discount existing taxpayers but charge non-taxpayers more of the actual cost of the use. Sales tax and other revenues already paid by non-residents will need to be factored into the equation.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX

The Hotel Occupancy Tax is a tax levied on hotel rooms and lodging. This tax could be used for certain park developments such as athletic facilities and community parks that attract visitors and put "heads in beds."

BONDS

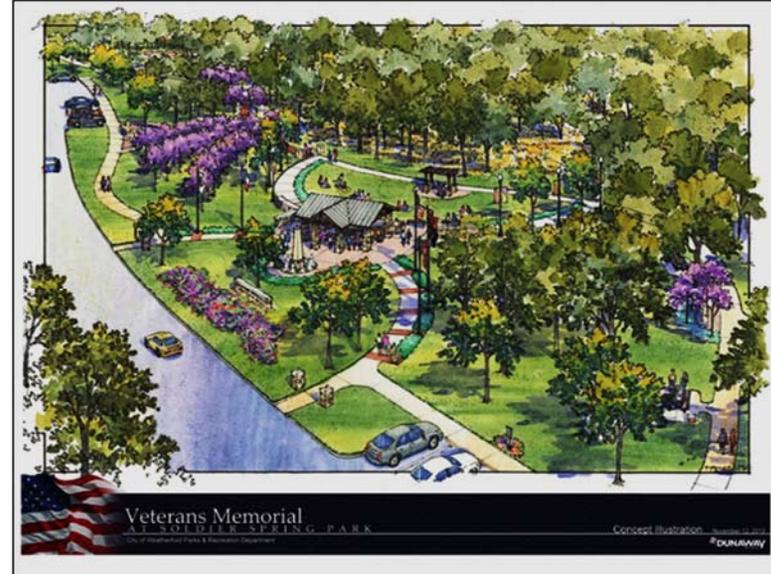
Bonds are generally the most common funding source utilized by cities for the purchase of land and for providing development monies. There are two types of bonds which are used for parks, both of which must be approved by referendum.

General Obligation Bonds are amortized using ad valorem taxes and used for the funding of capital projects which are not supported by a revenue source. Capital items, such as purchase of land and physical improvements with a useable life expectancy of 15 to 20 years, are usually funded with general obligation bonds. Park acquisition and development may be lumped in with major road improvements, public safety buildings and other large capital projects which may affect the availability of bonding for parks.

Revenue bonds fund projects which produce enough revenue to retire their debt, such as golf courses, batting cages, and enterprise-oriented park projects.

LAND DEDICATION AND PRIVATE DONATIONS

This source of financial assistance usually comes from a citizen, an organization, or a business with an interest in assisting with the development of the park system. Land dedication is not an uncommon occurrence when property is being developed. The location of a neighborhood park within a residential development offers additional value to residential units within that neighborhood, especially if the residential development is occupied by younger families with



children. Private donations may also be received in the form of funds, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses, as sponsors for events or facilities, should be pursued. The Veterans Memorial currently being developed by the Gold Star Moms and Veterans Associations is a good example.

SALES TAX OPTION (4B)

The passage of Senate Bill 376 in 1992 gave cities an economic development tool which provided a sales tax that could be levied for park and recreation purposes. However, the City of Weatherford does not have additional capacity in its sales tax rate to fund a 4B project.

TEXAS RECREATION AND PARKS ACCOUNT (TRPA) PROGRAM

The TRPA Program is administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The TRPA program allows a city to request matching funds for both the acquisition and construction of park facilities on a 50/50 basis with a maximum grant request of \$500,000. Applications received are ranked by a point system with funds distributed among the applicants having the greater number of points, until all allocated funds are expended. Applications to the TPWD can be made annually. The number of applications a city may submit at any given time is based on both past performance on grants and TPWD evaluation criteria. This funding source is used by many communities.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

POLICIES

The City Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board set the policies for parks, open space, recreation and special events in Weatherford. The policies below include some of the major policies established by the City as well as some additional proposed policies to be considered. This list is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, nor is this General Plan meant

to establish new policies that have not been approved by the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

- POS1. The City of Weatherford will provide parks, open spaces and recreational facilities of a size, type and location that meet the needs of the future development pattern envisioned in this General Plan.
- POS2. The City’s plans for parks and open space should identify general locations for future neighborhood and community parks so residents in all Weatherford neighborhoods have can enjoy parks within an appropriate distance from their homes.
- POS3. Land for identified parks and open spaces should be acquired before or during the development of major new residential and non-residential projects.
- POS4. Use the City’s *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan* as the guide for future park land acquisition, facility construction and operation.
- POS5. The Parks, Recreation and Special Events Department should establish procedures for parks use and operation that allow residents and visitors to enjoy the City’s parks and facilities while ensuring adequate funding and maintenance for the long-term sustainability of these places and facilities.



POS6. Special event planning and execution should support Weatherford's desired Vision for its future and should communicate this Vision and Weatherford's distinctive assets to visitors from the North Texas region, the nation and the world.

INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIONS AND INVESTMENTS

The following actions include recommendations to be considered by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as well as key projects identified in the 2016 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*. They are a general summary of the Department's plans and their key projects, actions and investments. Some actions are noted as the Department's response to growth plans and place types contained in this general plan and color coded as either **Short Term** or **Long Term**. All others are important to the Department. This list is not all-inclusive, and the reader is encouraged to refer to the Parks Plan for a complete list of recommendations.

Action 7.01 Refine for General Plan Consistency.

Review/consider updates to the *Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan* as necessary to ensure consistency with the General Plan and support future develop that achieves this vision of Weatherford's future.

Action 7.02 Park Land Acquisition. Put parks and open space lands for acquisition in the City's Capital Improvements Program.

Action 7.03 Neighborhood Trails. Acquire and improve properties needed to complete networks of trails and open space within a short distance of all neighborhoods.

Action 7.04 Downtown Open Spaces. In partnership with property owners, enhance open spaces and activities in and near the Downtown Square.

Action 7.05 Trail Way-Finding. Prepare maps, way-finding signage, markers, and other tools to encouraging use of the trail network.

Action 7.06 New Park Locations. Negotiate with property owners in advance of development to provide and acquire parks and open spaces in identified key locations.

Action 7.07 Park Improvements. Carry out projects that implement designs for new parks and construct improvements (such as restrooms) to provide desired facilities at existing parks.



Action 7.08 Aquatic Center. Complete a feasibility study of a potential indoor aquatic center to serve Weatherford, Parker County and the western part of the North Texas region.

Action 7.09 Lake Weatherford Study. Conduct an evaluation of Lake Weatherford’s potential role as a major recreational opportunity for the City of Weatherford.

PARKS, RECREATION AND SPECIAL EVENT INFORMATION

CURRENT AS OF JANUARY 2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

Responsible Department Parks, Recreation and Special Events 817.598.4124 pardinfo@weatherfordtx.gov
 Web Page <http://www.ci.weatherford.tx.us/25/Parks-Recreation-Special-Events>

FULL ELECTRONIC COPY OF PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUMMARIZED IN THIS CHAPTER:

2017 Parks Master Plan <http://www.ci.weatherford.tx.us/DocumentCenter/View/12214>
 2017 Parks Guide <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2968/2017-Parks-Guide>
 2013 Transportation - Bike/Pedestrian Plan <http://weatherfordtx.gov/2944/Thoroughfare-Plan> (page 53)
 Chandor Gardens Future Plans <http://www.chandorgardensfoundation.org/future.html>
 Quanah Hill/Weatherford Mountain Bike Club <http://www.wmbctx.org/trail.html>

SCHEDULES, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, WEB SITES REFERENCED IN THIS CHAPTER:

First Monday Trade Days <https://ci.weatherford.tx.us/883/First-Monday-Trade-Days>
 Experience Weatherford (citywide events) <http://www.experienceweatherford.com/events>
 Parks, Recreation and Special Events Schedule <http://weatherfordtx.gov/633/Special-Events>



(This page intentionally left blank.)

