

Chapter 7

Recommendations



7.1 A Vision for The Colony

As discussed in Chapter 1, having a vision for Community Development is paramount to the creation and implementation of a Master Plan for the future – a road map to guide future decisions and actions in a coordinated manner. In The Colony, this vision is a result of efforts by the Council, the CDC Board, City Staff, and the citizens involved with the Public Input process. Each of these groups has a different perspective but they all share common and aligned values for which they desire their City to grow. Along with these common values, there is a need by all groups to adopt and support a common vision for The Colony.

This vision for The Colony is based on the desire to be a city with a strong sense of community, a prevalent identity, a wealth of opportunities for all, and an embracing of Lewisville Lake, which gives the City its identity. This vision, along with the needs as identified by information gathered from citizens and discussed in Chapter 6, is what guides and informs the recommendations of this Master Plan. Each of the recommendations contained herein (as well as the prioritization of these recommendations) is measured and weighed against the intent and character of the vision,

so that each recommendation not only aligns with the vision, but supports and furthers the vision to the fullest extent.

7.1.1 Commitments for Community Development

Community Development requires **commitment**. It requires commitment from the Council, the CDC Board, and City Staff to make decisions in accordance with and strive toward the vision to improve The Colony for current and future residents.

With the multitude of choices available today, peoples' priorities when relocating to a new city is determined by the type of lifestyle they desire rather than a specific job. The question then becomes: How do we capture and attract this demographic to The Colony? It is through an understanding that quality lifestyles are not only about functional infrastructure, safety and education, but are often defined by the intangibles of mental well-being – including happiness, beauty, and a sense of purpose. Officials often shy away from such concepts, but when approached with an open mind and willingness to extend the boundaries of the conventional, true greatness can be achieved in communities through enlightened and committed leadership.

As a matter of City policy, The Colony is challenged and called upon to make a commitment to Sustainability, Quality, and Beauty for the City. Each of these are described and motivated as follows:

Commitment to Sustainability

Due to worldwide population growth (the world population officially transitioned from majority rural to majority urban in 2007) and the affects of pollution and over-development in a finite environment, the awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship is not a fad anymore, but is rather regarded as a necessity by most people today. Therefore, commit to developing and operating the City in a sustainable manner by doing the following:

- In areas of new development and redevelopment, strive to abide by and encourage the principles of new urbanism/traditional neighborhood development (TND), walkability, and denser developments to reduce emissions from auto travel and to encourage the use of alternative means of transportation
- In environmentally sensitive areas, encourage the practice of conservation development which identifies areas of unique environmental value and allows denser development in one part of a site while reducing development altogether in another, thereby retaining the same net developed units per acre while lessening the environmental impact.

- When developing new indoor facilities, utilize the LEED¹ rating system as a measure to rate the sustainability of structures. Many cities and other governmental agencies in America are committed to achieving LEED certification for public buildings and it is therefore becoming the standard. Developing new facilities in accordance with LEED will serve as a hallmark for the City’s commitment to sustainability.
- Similarly, apply measures of sustainability, such as those found in LEED, to the development of outdoor recreation and park facilities, as well as streetscape medians. Aim to achieve low energy and water consumption and use recycled, recyclable, or low-chemical materials. Plan for and install native vegetation, which requires less fertilizer and water, to give parks a native, natural appearance. Finally, develop maintenance programs that are sustainable and minimize the use of water and fertilizer and utilize low-noise and low-emission maintenance equipment.
- Through supporting sustainability and the “green” movement people assume a sense of purpose through actions described as “taking care of the earth”. Such commitment by a community is very powerful when encouraged by officials and supported by city leaders.

Commitment to Quality

Today’s young professionals and their families are drawn to cities by state-of-the-art facilities, community buildings, parks, and arts (both performing and visual) facilities. These people expect to find amenities and facilities in cities similar to what they experienced during their education at universities and colleges. Attracting and retaining residents, as well as businesses to employ and serve such residents, will depend on providing high-quality, state-of-the-art facilities in The Colony. For too long, it appears that residents of The Colony have settled for the mediocre or the “good enough” – today, The Colony needs to commit to quality facilities and programs by doing the following:

- Improve Quality of Life in The Colony by making targeted improvements to recreational and cultural amenities within the City and by providing unique experiences to residents.
- Provide quality facilities through renovating or constructing new recreation and community facilities designed to serve the entire population.
- Provide up-to-date, quality programming that meets the needs and expectations of changing trends among recreation users.
- Target facilities and programs to those in between young children and retired seniors. Provide services for teenagers, young adults, and adults without children.

¹ Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a national rating system for the design, construction, and operation of buildings and sites. The system evaluates performance in five areas: sustainable site development, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

- There is a change occurring in the services required by senior citizens. Due to the Baby Boomers nearing retirement age, the size of this population group is growing and their needs are changing. They are much more active than the previous generation of seniors and have higher expectations for facilities and programs.

Commitment to Beauty

It is an age old quest to define beauty – it is often found in the smallest and simplest of ideas and concepts, especially found in nature: a sunset, a view over quiet water, the appearance and change of fall color, spring flowers. However it is defined, all people deserve to have access to beauty – to live, work, and play in beautiful surroundings and environments. Therefore, commit to beauty – to providing attractive places for people to linger, to play, or to pass by. The impacts on mental well-being of attractive environments are great; therefore, commit to achieve beauty in The Colony by doing the following:

- Beautify public spaces throughout the City. Start with streetscapes, the most visible of public spaces, and then move to parks and public buildings. Landscape these areas, provide variation, install attractive furnishings, and generally improve their appearances. Do this in a coordinated manner across the City so that there is uniformity, but allow for uniqueness to shine through.
- Utilize architecture as a regional expression of culture and nature – develop new facilities and renovate existing ones utilizing good architecture. Architecture is often beautiful *because* it reflects the region and is sensitive to its subtleties. Do not build a building that could be in California or Delaware – build buildings that could only be in The Colony. Good architecture does not impose itself but is rather organically part of an overall pallet of form, color, and texture.
- Art is an intentional expression of beauty to be experienced visually, audibly, and emotionally. Support the arts in The Colony by funding arts programs and by providing quality space for the practice, production, and appreciation of the visual and performing arts. One art program to fund is the procurement and display of outdoor art in public spaces like parks and streetscapes.
- Develop beautiful, unique parks in The Colony. When developing new parks or renovating existing ones, commit to creating a place that is truly beautiful and unique. Do this by emphasizing landscaping, installing attractive, quality furnishings, and implementing art in the park.
- Develop and implement policy for the arts, beautification, and landscaping that specifically forwards these and other actions to achieve beauty for The Colony.

7.1.2 Achieving Uniqueness

Uniqueness is paramount to having a strong City image and community identity. The recommendations, actions, and policies contained in this CDMP – as well as actions taken externally to this Master Plan – should serve to not only support the vision, but also to set The Colony apart from the banal and apart from other surrounding communities.

Achieving this uniqueness will depend on specific ideas by which to base recommendations and future actions so that the steps taken by The Colony are distinctive to this City, this community, and this land. Forging these ideas, adopting them, and implementing their products will ensure the growth and development of The Colony as a community, a place to play, and a unique City in North Texas. The ideas most crucial to The Colony today are:

- Creating a strong, unified, and coordinated City Identity that includes physical landmarks, quality graphic standards for signage, and a quality higher than average for everything the City does. In addition, the enhancement and beautification of streetscapes and parks is vital to the formation of a strong, positive City Identity.
- The protection, enhancement, and recognition of Lewisville Lake, its Shoreline, and views toward it. Protect these areas against de-vegetation, erosion, and development that prevents access and ensure viewsheds remain open so that the natural beauty of the area can be seen and can reinforce the City Identity.
- Becoming a City connected by parks, trails, and greenbelts by which people can move throughout the community on foot or by bicycle. This network should also provide linkages for wildlife and ribbons of green that enhance physical and mental health for the City's residents.
- Provide state-of-the-art services and facilities to the City's diverse population that includes the amenities and programs required by the community.

The implementation of such ideas requires visionary leadership, whereby tools are used to identify, define, preserve and respect important natural and cultural features within the community and find ways to incorporate those creatively in the City. The direct results of the comprehensive implementation of improvements to the City that adhere to the vision and that stem from these four ideas will be higher property values, a more beautiful City, enhanced City Image, and a greater quality of life for citizens.

7.1.3 Community Development Master Plan Recommendations

This Chapter summarizes the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommends a series of Community Development actions to improve and expand The Colony's park system, sense of community, recreational opportunities, and quality of life. These recommendations stem from the vision outlined earlier and the uniqueness ideas discussed above – they address matters of City Policy, City Image and Beautification, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, and Arts, History, and Culture. The recommendations should be implemented or initiated over the general life of this master

plan, which covers the next five to ten years (recommended items in this chapter are prioritized in Chapter 8, The Implementation Plan).

The recommendations fall into six (6) general categories:

- City Policy
Adopt City policies that will ensure the implementation of the vision for The Colony based on priorities established by citizen input and recommendations in this CD Master Plan. These are generally broad recommendations that relate to all aspects of the Community Development Master Plan.
- City Image & Beautification
 - Landmarks – Develop and establish standards for gateways and entry features.
 - Streetscapes & Public Spaces – Make tactical improvements to the quality and appearance of right-of-way and public space within the City.
 - Programs – Establish specific programs that address specialized aspects of City Image.
- Parks, Open Space & Recreation
 - Land Acquisition – Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation facilities, and open space including habitat protection where possible.
 - Park Land Dedication – examine the City’s park land dedication ordinance and refine it to meet the current needs of The Colony.
 - Natural Area Protection – Identify areas for protection and implement actions to acquire, protect, and provide access to these areas,
 - Trail Development – Develop trails according to the specific need and in order of priority.
 - Park Development – Develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority.
 - Park Improvements – Implement key improvements to existing parks as described per individual park in Chapter 3.
- Recreation Facilities – Provide needed indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.
- Operations & Maintenance – Establish procedures and funding for effective operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.
- Arts, History & Culture
 - Programming & Activities – Identify gaps in programming and suggest future studies.
 - Physical Recommendations – Identify space both indoors and outdoors and suggest improvements to enhance usability.
 - Coordination – Develop Arts, History & Culture amenities in coordination with other public projects.

7.2 City Policy and Vision

Realizing the vision for Community Development in the Colony will require holistic action taken by the Council, the CDC Board, City Staff, and the citizens. Instigating such action will best be realized through a focused and dedicated shift of ideas and practice within the City as an organization. Therefore, certain broad-brushed recommendations for policy actions directed at achieving the vision and meeting the Uniqueness ideas (expressed earlier in Section 7.1.1) are needed.

The vision, established through comprehensive public participation, relates to the physical appearance, city image, parks, open space, recreation, arts, and cultural enrichment of The Colony. This vision of The Colony as a place with a strong, unique identity that embraces the Lake and provides state of the art services to its citizens demands changes in City policy. The following describes essential policies required for The Colony in order to make this Vision a reality.

Policy Issues include:

- Protection of unique cultural and natural landscapes
- Park land access and dedication
- Access to the lake
- Trail Development
- Image Enhancement
- City-wide Studies

7.2.1 Access to the Lake

Paramount to the success of the CDMP and the improvement of The Colony is physical and visual access to Lewisville Lake. Work toward achieving this goal by:

- Providing trails along entire shoreline
- Providing trail heads and other access points to the lake for every one mile of shoreline
- Holding more festivals/events at lakeside parks to draw people to the lake
- Developing more parks to have lake access (such as a trails system/access at Wynnewood Peninsula)
- As described and recommended in the City's 2007 Comprehensive Plan, efforts should be made to preserve the views of the lake from Main Street/FM 423. By providing appropriate guidelines for development along the corridor, the "City by the Lake" image can be strengthened.

7.2.2 Image Enhancement

Having a beautiful and reputable community is one of the more important and needed things for the citizens of The Colony. Provide a beautiful community for your residents by:

- Implementing Streetscape & Beautification improvements in a coordinated manner
- Providing quality, attractive facilities to residents
- Promoting the arts and enhancing cultural activities and programs within the community.

7.2.3 Citywide Studies

The Colony uses a number of policy documents that all future development should coordinate and comply with. These include the Comprehensive Plan, the Thoroughfare Plan, and the Trails Master Plan. It is important that the ideas and recommendations of these reports all be supported by overarching policies without causing conflict between various goals and objectives. Additional Citywide studies should be performed to coordinate various improvements with each other and with other Citywide plans and policy documents. These include:

- Beautification & Streetscape Master Plan
- Arts Master Plan
- Recreational Programming Study

7.2.4 Expand Programming

It was not within the scope of the CDMP to perform a recreation programming study, however the public input process and information gained through the review of previous studies reveals the need for expanded recreation programming within The Colony. It is therefore recommended that the City performs a Recreation Programming Study that specifically assesses the current state of programming offerings within the City (considering also leagues that operate within The Colony but are not specifically operated by the City) and makes recommendations for additional programming or adjustments to existing programming. This study should specifically assess the needs of various age groups in The Colony (including children over 12 years old, adults without children, and non-retired seniors) for programming that includes physical activity (such as aerobics, spin classes, or dance) and non-physical activity (such as art classes and book clubs). Most importantly, through the public input process it was determined that most of the citizens want programming that not only entertains, but also educates.

7.3 City Image & Beautification Recommendations

While City Image applies to both the visible characteristics of the City and the non-visible, abstract characteristics (such as the City’s reputation or what comes to mind when someone mentions The Colony), the root factor in determining the City Image is the appearance of the City. Therefore, beautifying The Colony is key in improving the City Image and eventually resident’s opinion of the quality of the City.

7.3.1 Beautification & Streetscape Master Plan

Develop a Beautification and Streetscape master plan for the entire City that includes the location and design of gateway features at major City entrances (such as FM 423, SH 121, Windhaven, Plano Pkwy), the coordination of signage, developing monument signs for every park in the City, and landscaping medians with trees, shrubs, seasonal color, and grasses. The City has an existing Beautification Plan which should be updated as a component of a combined Beautification and Streetscape Master Plan. Throughout the City, strive to establish a unique Brand for The Colony that establishes a presence in peoples’ minds.

7.3.2 Standards

To ensure that improvements are made in uniform quality throughout the City, develop standards for street and site furnishings in coordination with the Beautification & Streetscape Master Plan. These standards will apply to public spaces across the City, including streetscapes, parks, and public buildings. Utilize the standards to “build the brand” for The Colony, but allow enough flexibility that unique, high-quality exceptions can be made in special places when such an exception is warranted.

7.3.3 Specific Improvements

Visual improvements to public spaces within The Colony will serve to improve the City’s standing within the Metroplex and with its own residents. Two specific programs are recommended for The Colony:

Wildflower Program

Develop and implement a wildflower program along roads and streets which will allow seasonal color of natural quality to emerge during the spring and summer months. This is a low-cost, low-maintenance alternative to more intensive landscaping programs and serves as a good interim between what exists today and potential future landscaping. Reference the Texas Department of Transportation’s “Texas in Bloom” program and the City of Richardson’s wildflower program.

Public Art

The display of art in the public realm will help to beautify The Colony. Acquire and display public art – specifically sculpture – in public spaces such as parks, along roads, and outside and inside public buildings. In this plan we propose that 1.5% of the funding of all publically funded projects should be dedicated to the construction and installation

of art in the project. The artist and type of art to be installed should be reviewed by an Art Selection Committee (discussed in Section 7.7).

7.4 Parks, Open Space & Recreation Recommendations

7.4.1 Park Land Acquisition

With opportunities decreasing and costs increasing, there is a finite time to acquire adequate acreage (or reallocate acreage from existing parkland) that will meet the requirements for parks in the next 10 to 20 years and at build-out conditions. **Land acquisition should follow the needed acreage for build-out as outlined in Table 6.1 in Chapter 6.**

Acquisition/reallocation of land should be focused on the provision of neighborhood parks, community parks, linear parks, and the protection of habitat and open space. Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, park land dedication, the establishment of recreation and/or park land easements, purchasing of development rights (which means the purchasing of the right to develop from a property owner, with the sole intent of never developing the land but to place it in a conservation easement forever), and the involvement of Conservation Trusts (www.texaslandtrusts.org).

Desirable locations for park land area to be acquired/reallocated are shown on the Proposed Parks Maps, as described below:

The following describes the recommended acquisition/reallocation of park land per City Area:

Area I – Wynnewood Peninsula

Proposed parks situated in this area include three Neighborhood Parks, and two Community Parks.

Area II – City Core

Proposed parks situated in this area include two Neighborhood Parks and one Community Park.

Area III – South of SH 121

Proposed parks situated in this area include two Neighborhood Parks and one Community Park.

Citywide Land Acquisition

A summary of park land to be acquired, by City Area, is shown below:

Priority 1 Park Land Acquisition:

Neighborhood Parks* – 1 Citywide:

1. City Core: one park site

Community Parks – 1 Citywide:**

2. South of 121: one park site

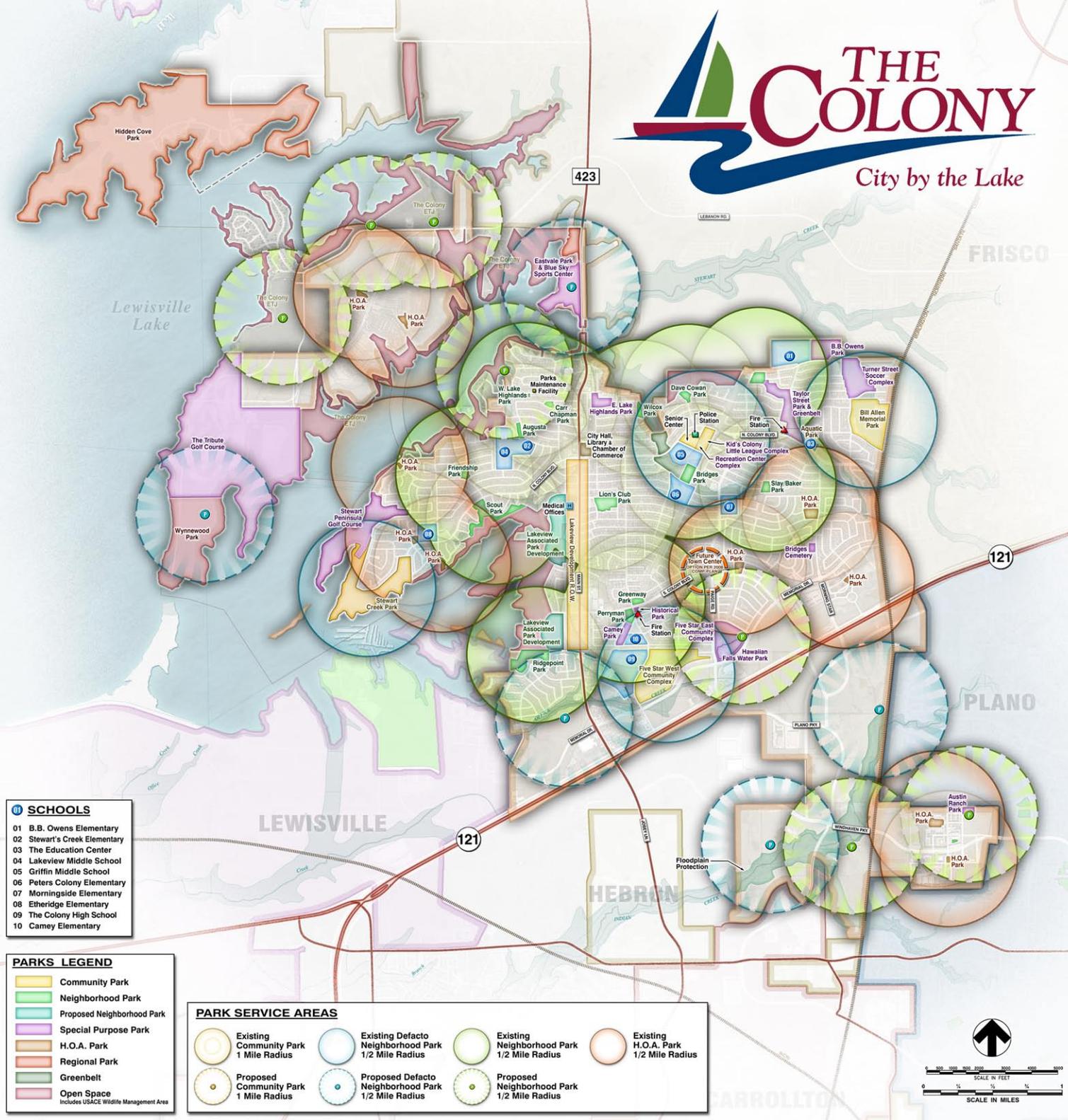
Other Park Park Land:

3. Indian Creek Nature Preserve
4. Fourplex Softball (acquire or reallocate land for this purpose)
5. Dog Park (acquire or reallocate land for this purpose)

*Five to ten acres, typically. See page 5 – 9 for a full description of requirements for neighborhood park development.

**Twenty to over fifty acres, typically. See page 5 – 12 for a full description of requirements for community park development.

*The **Existing & Proposed Neighborhood & DeFacto Neighborhood Parks** and **Existing & Proposed Community Parks Maps** on the next pages illustrates the distribution of existing and proposed Parks.*

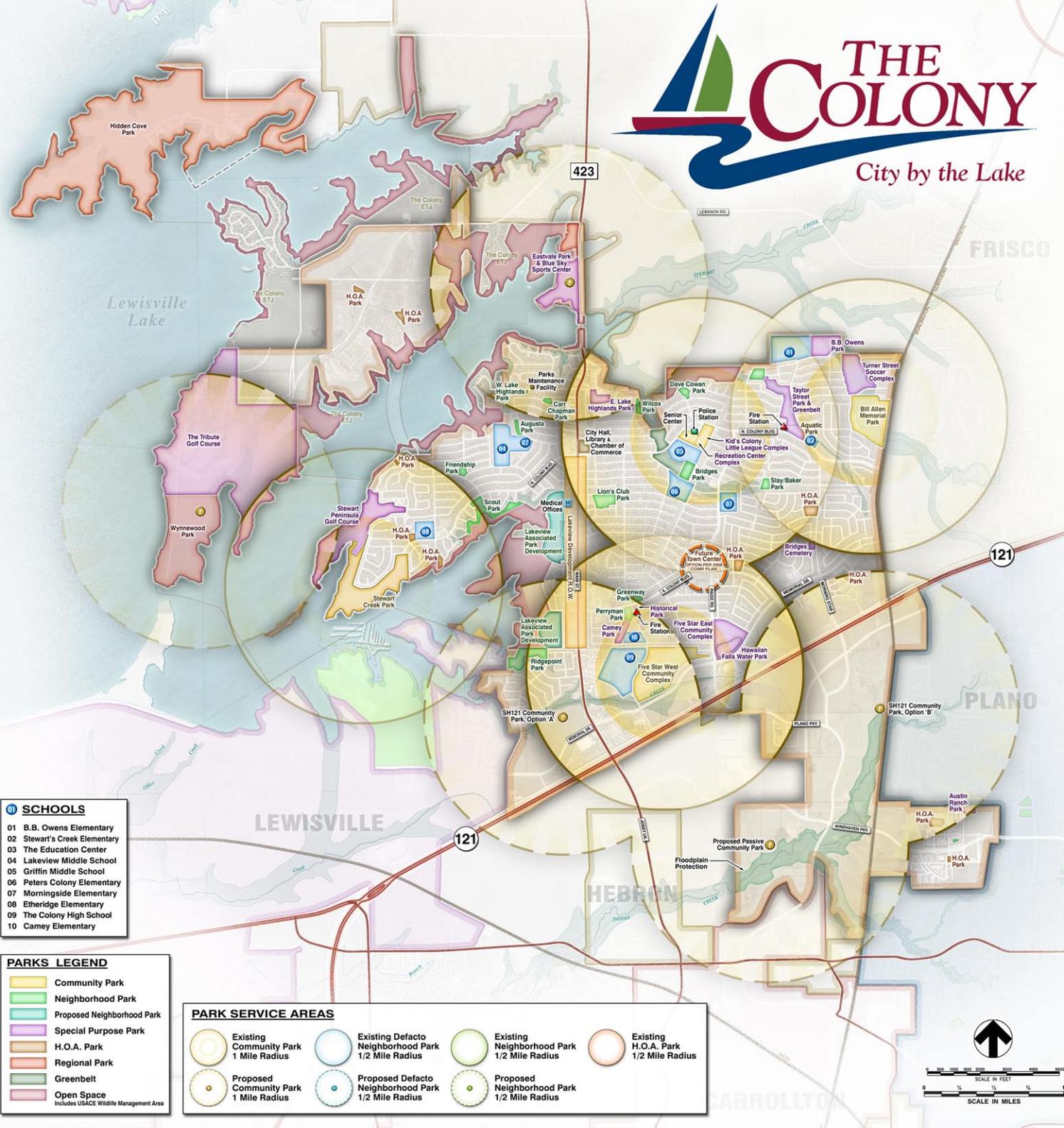


- SCHOOLS**
- 01 B.B. Owens Elementary
 - 02 Stewart's Creek Elementary
 - 03 The Education Center
 - 04 Lakeview Middle School
 - 05 Griffin Middle School
 - 06 Peters Colony Elementary
 - 07 Morningside Elementary
 - 08 Etheridge Elementary
 - 09 The Colony High School
 - 10 Camey Elementary

- PARKS LEGEND**
- Community Park
 - Neighborhood Park
 - Proposed Neighborhood Park
 - Special Purpose Park
 - H.O.A. Park
 - Regional Park
 - Greenbelt
 - Open Space
 - Includes USACE Wildlife Management Area

- PARK SERVICE AREAS**
- Existing Community Park 1 Mile Radius
 - Proposed Community Park 1 Mile Radius
 - Existing Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
 - Proposed Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
 - Existing Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
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 - Proposed Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius



November 13, 2009

EXISTING & PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARKS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

CITY OF THE COLONY, TEXAS

7.4.2 Park Land Dedication

The City has a large amount of open space, especially in areas along the lake front. Even so, the park land is inadequate in certain areas of the City.

It is recommended that the Park Land Dedication Ordinance be revised to include the following considerations:

Basic principles

- Encourage all land and site features as identified in the recommended Resource Map to be set aside and ensure their protection and maintenance by the Home Owners Associations or through the involvement of a variety of Conservation Trusts in Texas that have as their aim the conservation of open space (see www.texaslandtrusts.org).
- Provide unimpeded public access to these identified and protected site features through a combination of trails, single loaded roads, and dedicated easements.
- Open space, parks and recreational areas required by the park dedication ordinance should NOT be restricted to the private use and enjoyment of the citizens of the particular development or subdivision.
- Utility easements should NOT be accepted as land dedicated for parks but should be made available for park and trail use where needed.
- In addition to the requirement that each park must have ready access to a public street, it is required that single loaded roads be established between a subdivision or part thereof and land set aside for park land and/or open space protected areas.
- Review and update Park Dedication and Park Improvement Fee in terms of Dwelling Units and Non-Residential Development to be in line with the standard used in the industry. A few examples follow:

Dwelling Unit Park Improvement Fee Comparison:

- Colleyville:	\$1,802 / DU
- Flower Mound:	\$789 / DU
- City of Lancaster:	\$1,400 / DU
- Grapevine:	\$1,135 average per lot
- Southlake:	\$1,200 per gross acre
- Coppell	\$1,285 / DU

Non-residential Park Improvement Fee Comparison:

- Southlake:	N/A
- Flower Mound:	\$1,000 / acre
- Grapevine:	N/A
- North Richland Hills:	\$1,000 / acre
- Colleyville:	\$800 / acre
- Coppell:	N/A

Park Dedication Comparison:

- Southlake:	1 acre / 40 DU
- Flower Mound:	1 acre / 25 DU
- City of Lancaster:	1 acre / 50 DU
- Grapevine:	1 acre / 50 DU
- Colleyville:	1 acre / 25 DU
- Coppell:	1 acre / 100 DU

The Colony currently determines Park Dedication Fees in Lieu of Land based upon the average per-acre value of the land within a development, rather than utilizing a set fee. The Park Dedication requirement is currently five (5) acres per 1,000 persons projected population (at the City's average persons per household figure of 3.1, this equates to 1 acre / 64.5 DU). While The Colony has an arguably progressive Park Dedication Fees in Lieu of Land rate, the Park Dedication acreage requirement is quite low. In addition The Colony accepts floodplain land at a ratio value of 1:3 compared to out-of-floodplain land, whereas many cities do not accept floodplain land as part of park dedication.

1) Revision:**a) Park Dedication**

1 acre / 50 DU - single family AND multi-family residential units (currently 1 acre / 64.5 DU)

b) Fee in Lieu of Land

\$500 / DU - single family AND multi-family residential units (currently: fee is based on the value of the property that is developed).

c) Floodplain land

Revise the allowance of 1:3 ratio to 1:15, or ideally, no acceptance of any floodplain land as part of park land dedication

2) **New:**

a) **Dwelling Unit Park Improvement Fee**

\$1,500 / DU

b) **Non-residential Park Improvement Fee (new):**

\$1,000 / acre

c) **Floodplain land**

Have all flood plain land protected with no reclamation allowed

7.4.3 Cultural and Natural Landscape Protection

The purpose of the protection of open space is to create a community-wide network of open space and natural preserves to allow for an interconnected network of community green spaces.

It is recommended that the City commits to the following:

- Preserve the community-wide network of protected open space as "linked landscapes";
- Create the City's resource inventory of cultural and natural landscapes (Resource Map).

Update the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to make provision for the implementation of the protection of the updated network of protected open space.

7.4.4 Trail Development

The Colony recently completed a Trails Master Plan that remains relevant to the needs of the City. It is generally recommended that the City continues implementing the existing Trails Master Plan while addressing new recommendations which the following section describes generally and specifically.

Prioritize Funding

Trails are of the highest priority for the Citizens of The Colony. Prioritize trails for funding so that there is always trail development occurring until the Trails Master Plan has been completely implemented. Utilize dedication fees for trail construction and dedicate a certain percentage of CDC funding for trail development each year.

Coordinate with Park Development

Implement trails as a part of all park development projects including park renovation. If the Trails Master Plan includes a trail passing through or adjacent to a park being developed or redeveloped, include the construction of this segment of the trail in the overall development project. Otherwise, strive to implement loop trails / walking trails in each new park project.

Lake Access

Utilize trails and trail access points to improve access to Lewisville Lake. The Shoreline Trail serves this purpose but continued access improvements through trails will ensure the prominence of the Lake in The Colony’s parks system and City Image.

Unique Experiences

Provide unique experiences along trails that include interpretive signage, interesting natural features, and scenic viewpoints. Incorporate art and furnishings (such as benches and trash receptacles) into trail corridors and trail heads. Developed theme trails such as an “art trail” that incorporates multiple pieces of sculpture along the trail or an “adventure trail” or “discovery trail” geared toward young children.

Additional Trails

In addition to the trails included in the existing Trails Master Plan, additional trail connections are recommended as part of the Community Development Master Plan. See the map on the following page for these additional trail connections.

Connections

Provide connections to other cities with the trails system. This is provided for in the existing Trails Master Plan, but being proactive in this venture is important. Coordinate with surrounding cities – particularly those currently undergoing trails master planning exercises (The City of Lewisville in particular).

*The **Existing & Proposed Parks, Trails & Beautification Map** on the next page illustrates the distribution of existing and proposed Parks.*

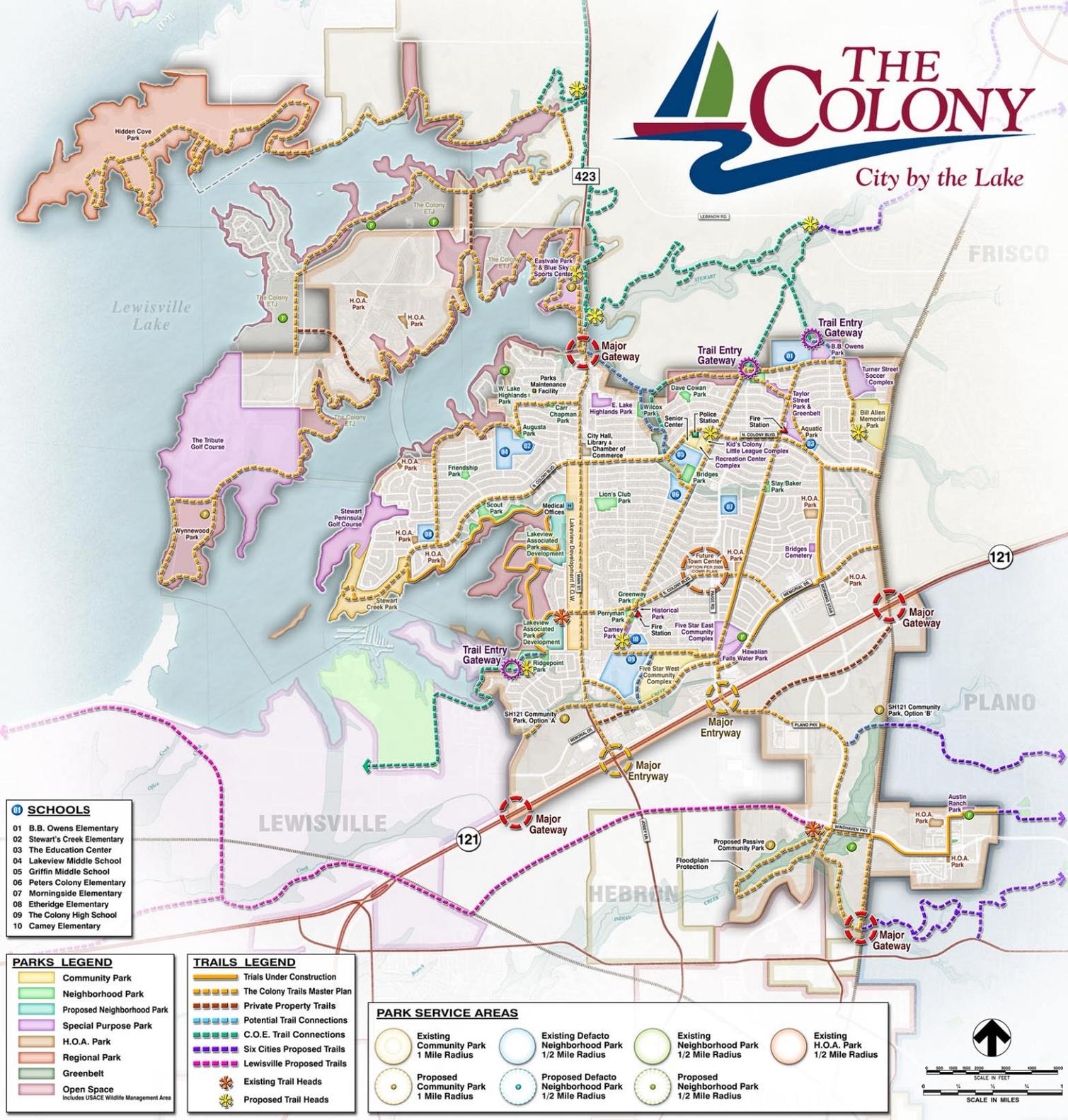
7.4.5 Park Development

The following section describes general, as well as specific, recommendations for park development in The Colony.

General Recommendations for Park Development

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the City are recommended as follows:

- Each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of The Colony by incorporating historical plaques and features that allude to the neighborhoods around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users and levels of activity. Parks should be multi-faceted, without being over-programmed and over-filled with elements. Natural and un-programmed areas play a huge role in providing “breathing space” in a park and should be encouraged.
- Parks should incorporate art and should be an example of the sophistication of The Colony of today and tomorrow.



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- TRAILS LEGEND**
- Trials Under Construction
 - The Colony Trails Master Plan
 - Private Property Trails
 - Potential Trail Connections
 - C.O.E. Trail Connections
 - Six Cities Proposed Trails
 - Lewisville Proposed Trails
 - Existing Trail Heads
 - Proposed Trail Heads

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- A design concept for each neighborhood park, incorporating children’s play areas, offering solar refuge with shade trees/ structures, walkways, hike and bike trails, areas for open play, multi-use play areas, picnic facilities and a park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof.
- Include all the basic facilities that make up a Community Park with specific reference to the programmed recreation facilities as identified in the needs assessment.
- The size of one individual Special Purpose Park may vary depending on the specific need and function.
- Linear Parks are ideal for hike and bike trails – as these parks may be associated with creeks, rail, or utility corridors, they provide connectivity to many destination points.
- Within nature areas and open spaces, provide low key facilities with generally passive uses.
- At Bridges Cemetery, work with owners to provide park facilities such as trails to connect with this valuable cultural resource.
- Encourage the golf course owners/operators to enroll in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP), which aims to establish environmental stewardship at golf courses.
- A single loaded road adjacent to all parks is advised in order to protect open space for purposes of informal surveillance and to prevent crime in areas that may pose danger for park and open space users.
- A transparent, wrought iron metal fence (or similar) between all residential lots and parks and/or open space should be required where a single loaded road is not possible.
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park. Playgrounds should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park.
- All pavilion structures should consist of a multi-tiered roof system to prevent heated air from being trapped under the roof.
- Implement storm water bio-swales to allow for temporary retention of storm water in order to allow for infiltration and bio-filtration of run-off water before the excess water leaves the site.
- Community input should be welcomed and included in the design of every park in the City.
- Where required, provide park lights on photocells as an energy saving measure.

Parks are about green open spaces and trees. It is suggested that the City consider the following in terms of a planting strategy:

- Place preference on the application of drought tolerant landscaping and native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.
- Parks should continue to be developed and upgraded in order to reduce maintenance. Automatic irrigation systems attuned to plants with low water requirements should be a key component of all parks. Such systems are typically drip-irrigation systems, which the City has recently begun implementing in certain instances. As a water saving tool, the ideal is that no irrigation be provided at all; however, even native

plants require temporary irrigation for a period of at least two years to ensure effective establishment. When opted for, hand watering with gator bags should be done consistently and in ample quantities.

Implement Needed Recreation Facilities & Amenities

Using Table 6.8 in Chapter 6, identify needed recreation facilities and amenities and implement these when possible in new park development and in park redevelopment.

Use of Native Plants

One of the best ways for any community to express its regional uniqueness is to use plants native to the area. It is, after all, the natural surroundings, including native plants, that determine the unique and special quality of a place. Recognized by many this has led to the increased use of shade trees that are native to a specific area.

Curiously, few know and apply the use of small native trees – often because of a lack of knowledge and often because it is not readily available in the commercial nurseries.

It is recommended that The Colony makes a commitment to encourage the use of Texas small trees, including - but not limited to - Eve's necklace (*Sophora affinis*), Indigobush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Mexican Buck Eye (*Ungnadia speciosa*), Mexican Plum trees (*Prunus mexicana*), Possumhaw trees (*Ilex decidua*), Texas Red Bud (*Cercis Canadensis var. Texensis*), and Rusty Black Haw Viburnum trees (*Viburnum rufidulum*).

For the same reason it is recommended that The Colony not overuse Crape Myrtles in its public spaces. Many communities plant the Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) ornamental tree for the very fact that it is drought tolerant. However, it is necessary to recognize that the Crape Myrtle is an exotic plant that is native to Southeast Asia.

The very fact of this being a practical, drought tolerant small tree with many blossoms and colorful bark has caused this tree to be overused extensively as the ornamental tree of choice from the western states of Florida and the Carolinas, across the country to California, making the planted landscapes of this immense area uniform and somewhat boring. In fact, it may be argued that this is one of many contributing factors that have affected the uniqueness of communities including our native wildlife that will less likely nest and find food in a Crape Myrtle.

For purposes of retaining and maintaining its unique North Central Texas character, it is recommended that the City continues to make a concerted effort to promote the use of native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses for both public and private use.

LEED for City Facility Development

It is recommended that the City consider the achievement of LEED certification for all future City facilities. Aspects that lend positive, measurable results include: on-site storm water management and permeable paving to prevent increased run-off; native plantings to reduce erosion, water consumption, and irrigation dependency; organic maintenance

programs to reduce chemicals and pesticides that infiltrate ground water and city utility and treatment systems; photocell systems for lighting to reduce energy costs; selection of sustainable materials (recycled and rapidly renewable resources) to use resources to maximum effect. Such results not only produce benefits for the environment, but for the owner and users as well.

7.4.6 Specific Recommendations for Park Development

When developing and redeveloping parks of various types, there are specific planning and design approaches relevant to each park type. These approaches should be followed in order to ensure great parks of uniform quality throughout the City.

Neighborhood Parks

General planning and design approach for neighborhood parks:

- Prepare a design concept for each undeveloped neighborhood park that incorporates children’s play areas offering solar refuge with shade trees/structures, walkways, hike and bike trails, areas for open play, multi-use play areas, picnic facilities, and a park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof.
- Include the participation of neighborhood citizens in the design process.
- Provide good pedestrian access to all parks including signage and a wide, welcoming gateway.
- Develop parks adjacent to existing and future schools with easy access from the school grounds. Not only will this add to the quality of life for the community, but also funding is more likely available through collaborative action.
- Place preference on the application of native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.

The foundation of a healthy parks system consists primarily of neighborhood parks. A framework of small to moderate-sized neighborhood parks creates the backbone of a great parks system that offers unique experiences for users of all ages and abilities. In The Colony, there is a need to develop seven additional neighborhood parks (as discussed in Section 7.4.1 and per Table 6.1) – these parks should be developed using the above guidelines.

The needs assessment, together with an analysis of the existing parks system and public input, supports parks and neighborhood parks as priorities for development in the next five years.

Community Parks

General planning and design approach for community parks:

- Develop and implement a concept plan for each parcel of land acquired for the purpose of a Community Park.
- Include all the basic facilities that make up a Community Park with specific reference to the recreation facilities as identified in the needs assessment (refer to Chapter 5).

- In addition to the recreation facilities which are typical of a Community Park, incorporate children’s play areas covered with shade structures, walkways, hike and bike trails, areas for non-athletic, leisure “free play”, multi-use play areas, picnic facilities, and a park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof.
- Provide support facilities such as restrooms, parking, etc.
- Provide signage and a uniquely designed gateway for each park.
- Place preference on the application of native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.

Community parks, as the name implies, support communities. They are important for providing all the features that one would expect to find in a neighborhood park, plus a number and variety of playing fields that support competition and league play. Due to their large size and the variety of activities they support, these are major investments in the parks and recreation system. As with neighborhood parks, there is a need to acquire land for the development of additional community parks in The Colony (five additional parks are needed – see Section 7.3).

In addition to the need to acquire additional land for new parks, there are two parks within The Colony that need improvements and additional amenities in order to fully function as community parks. These parks – The Five Star West Community Complex and the Municipal Community Complex – are of adequate sizes and locations for functional Community Parks, but lack amenities such as pavilions, areas for free play, picnic facilities, and open space (see the Individual Park Assessments found in Chapter 5).

Special Purpose Parks

The need for the development of special purpose parks arises in one of two instances: 1) there is a need for park space for a specific recreational use which cannot be accommodated as part of another park or 2) a piece of land becomes available for park development but will not support the functions of a typical neighborhood or community park. From this, three types of special purpose parks typically are developed: 1) athletic facilities (for league use or practice), 2) pocket parks (because of limited land availability), and 3) special interest parks (such as skate parks and dog parks). Because of this multitude of factors, the size of one individual special purpose park varies, depending on the specific need and function.

As a general recommendation, avoid developing special purpose parks when the recreational use can be combined with another community or neighborhood park. This will reduce maintenance costs and will allow shared use of space. As an example, rather than constructing a new park for practice fields, attempt to construct practice fields as part of a neighborhood park which can also utilize the open space provided by the fields.

General planning and design approach for special purpose athletic parks:

- Locate parks adjacent to non-residential uses to minimize light and sound pollution in neighborhoods

- Utilize full cut-off lighting to reduce light spillover into adjacent areas.
- Use drought-tolerant turf grasses, especially for practice fields, to reduce watering needs
- Provide adequate on and off street parking to reduce traffic congestion in the surrounding area/neighborhood.
- Include permanent restrooms when appropriate.

General planning and design approach for special purpose pocket parks:

- Develop pocket parks to serve the specific needs of the surrounding community.
- Minimum amenities for a pocket park include benches, a trash receptacle, shade, and a focal point, which can include a small playground, a fountain, a plaza, a gazebo, or a piece of public art.
- Some pocket parks can be developed as “tot lots” which contain small playgrounds and focus on young children.
- Some pocket parks can be developed as plazas with more hardscaping than is typical for a park.

General planning and design approach for special purpose special interest parks:

- Special interest parks should be developed and sited based on detailed public involvement to determine the specific characteristics and needs of the special interest that is to be accommodated in the park.
- Provide amenities that meet the needs of the unique use occurring within the park. Amenities that should always be included are benches, trash receptacles, and shade.

Special interests that rated relatively high in importance by the respondents to the questionnaire include a spray park, botanical garden and dog park.

Linear Parks

Linear parks are characterized by their linear nature, which makes them ideal for the implementation of hike and bike trails, which in essence become the “spine” of each particular park. Linear parks may be associated with creeks, railway or utility corridors, and are ideal to create connections between different destination points. Whereas trail development typically includes amenities like trail heads, rest stops, overlooks, benches and light fixtures, linear parks may include additional amenities and facilities e.g. picnic pavilions, playgrounds, basketball, and volleyball courts.

Linear Parks provide the opportunity for trail linkages and connections to other park and recreation facilities, schools, civic destinations and neighborhood to neighborhood alternative travel routes. Natural resources and open space/ natural habitat highlight the users’ experience of linear parks.

The development of linear parks is opportunity-based – that is, a linear park is developed whenever an appropriate piece of land, linear in form, is made available for development. A prime linear park opportunity for The Colony is the shoreline and wildlife management area along Lake Lewisville. The new Shoreline Trail passes through much of this land and will provide the impetus for the creation of a linear park in this location. Another opportunity for a linear park is found at the intersection of North Colony Boulevard and

John Yates Drive along the creek corridor. Being next to a main street in the center of town, this area is highly visible and ideal to be developed as a passive park with trees and walkways.

Natural Areas / Open Space Preserves

Natural resources and open space / natural habitat highlight the user's experience of parks. Preserving such resources and land is essential to maintaining a unique character in The Colony.

General guidelines for the preserving natural areas/open space include:

- Providing low intensity park development with generally passive uses within these earmarked areas.
- Developing educational signage pertaining to the value of native plants, cultural landscapes, and the different benefits of manicured and natural parkland, creeks, and drainage ways.
- Developing low-intensity trails (often unpaved) and designated access points so that users may experience these areas with minimal impact.

The Core acreage along the lakefront is ideal to be protected as Natural Area and Open Space Preserves.

Cemeteries (Non City Owned)

Cemeteries in any city have huge value in providing communities with a connection to the past. Cemeteries are often beautiful tree covered open space areas that are unique destinations in themselves. Trail connections to the non City owned Bridges Cemetery are recommended. Such connections may include informational signage and benches for quiet contemplation. Informational and education signage may refer to the history of the particular cemetery and its geographic context describing the surrounding cultural and historical qualities. To ensure success in providing access to the cemeteries, it is recommended that the City work closely with the relevant private entities and be sensitive to the historical graves.

Golf Courses

Evaluate the feasibility of the city partnering with the owners and operators to develop an organic program of maintenance at each golf course in response to similarly developed organic programs throughout the parks system in The Colony.

It is recommended to encourage the golf course owner to establish and enroll the particular golf course as part of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP)². This program has the aim to establish environmental stewardship at golf courses.

By their very nature, golf courses provide significant open spaces and opportunities to provide needed wildlife habitat in increasingly urbanized communities across North

² Find more information at <http://www.auduboninternational.org/programs/acss/golf.htm>

America. At the same time, golf courses are called to address environmental concerns related to the potential and actual impacts of water consumption and chemical use on local water sources, wildlife species, and native habitats. The ACSP for Golf Courses seeks to address golf's environmental concerns while maximizing golf course opportunities to provide open space benefits. This highly-regarded education and assistance program promotes participation in comprehensive environmental management, enhancement and protection of existing wildlife habitats, and recognition for those who are engaged in environmentally-responsible projects.

7.4.7 Additional Considerations for Park Development

Trails and Trail Gateways

Trails are part of all parks and add connectivity to the parks system as a whole. The Citywide Trails Master Plan identifies future trails and trail connections, and this Community Development Master Plan includes additional proposed trails that will enhance connectivity to parks, schools, and neighborhoods as well as cultural landscapes and natural resources within the city. The Colony's trail network should afford connections to surrounding cities' trails, as well as including along the edge of Lake Lewisville.

Trail Gateways are features which not only provide identity, but also may serve as places for useful directional and informational signage, drinking fountains and waste receptacles, as well as restrooms at major trailheads, especially in high use community parks.

Park Signage

The Colony should adopt a name branding system of park signs. Such identifiable features will add to a sense of place that is unmistakably The Colony. As new parks are developed and existing ones renovated, it is important to include updated park signage for each park. The City currently has a standard sign design; however, consider monument-style signage that blends signage with art when renovated or developing a park.

Tree Plantings

Tree plantings should be done citywide on an annual basis to ensure the longevity of established, mature shade trees. This strategy goes beyond what is planned for the individual park development; rather, it is an adjunct program which is designed to invest in the value of the parks with young trees that balance the loss of mature trees to natural disaster, disease, and age. By providing an annual tree planting program, the parks' futures are ensured with what will in their own time become mature shade trees for the enjoyment of future generations.

Park Renovation

Similar to an annual tree planting program, park renovation is an investment in the value of parks and is important in providing amenities that are safe and reflect current interests and needs. Before engaging in renovation, consider the elements for the particular park

type described in Sections 7.5.1 through 7.5.8 and develop a master plan for each park to provide a clear and coordinated plan for development. **It is recommended that one park per year be renovated, for the first five years.**

7.4.8 High Priority Existing Park Improvements

Individual Parks

Recommendations are made for each park in the City's park system. These are general master plan level recommendations, and are intended only to define the magnitude of the improvements for each park. **Each park should be programmed and master planned as it enters the design phase, and extensive area citizen and user group input should be included in the design process.** Specific facility improvements per individual park are recommended in Chapter 3.

City wide

The following City-wide key improvements to existing parks are recommended during the next 10-year period.

Renovation of existing parks

- Ensure that all improvements meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.
- Increase shade in all parks by planting additional trees where practical.
- For additional landscape improvements, place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Provide shade structures at the children's play areas where feasible.
- Provide adequate funding.

Park Signage

- Develop a branding concept for the City's signage, to be applied consistently at all of the existing and future parks; a well-conceived and designed signage theme will add to the unique identity and character of The Colony.
- Based on the branding concept, develop and install identification, informational, interpretative, and directional signage at all City parks.
- Install additional directional signage throughout the City.
- Provide funding to adequately support the design and maintenance of signage.

Park Maintenance

It is recommended that the Parks Department continue to play an active role in implementing a holistic and sustainable plant management program throughout the parks and grounds. Continue to implement appropriate practices to promote a healthy soil, micro-fauna and root system of all plants. An example includes organic maintenance through ample compost applications. Emphasize native and naturalized plants that are better adapted to the The Colony and North Central Texas region.

Wi-Fi Access

Access to the Internet in parks is popular in many cities. Consider providing Wi-Fi access in Community Parks.

Wi-Fi (pronounced “why-fy”) is short for *wireless fidelity*, which allows the user to connect to the Internet without the need for hard-wire cabling. Wi-Fi enabled computers use radio technologies to send and receive data within the range of a base station or *hotspot*, which is a connection point for a Wi-Fi network.

7.5 Recreational Facilities Recommendations

7.5.1 Indoor Recreation Facilities Recommendations

Existing Recreational Facilities

Full reviews of each of the City’s existing facilities can be found in the Appendix in Section A1.6.

The Colony Recreation Center

Due to its age and condition assessment, if this facility continues to be the recreation center we would recommend a minimal approach that would include painting and new flooring in selected areas. The reason for this recommendation is twofold. If major renovations are done, one, response to the numerous code violations will be required which will, two, start to equate to 75% to 85% of cost of a new facility. Therefore, the long term thought process of having a goal of a new facility in lieu of continuing to spend large amounts of money on a facility that does not currently, or in the future meet the needs of the community.

Lakeside Arts

Renovation is not an option in our opinion due to the existing condition of the facility. The structure itself is not conducive to the types of activities currently occurring at this center, the building finishes have generally exceeded their lifespan, and the building itself has several accessibility issues.

Community Center

We would recommend relocation of the Parks Department and conversion of that space to Senior Center uses. Budget for this should be in a range of \$300,000 – 400,000 project cost.

The Colony Aquatic Center

The prior study completed by Councilman-Hunsaker & Associates in 1999 is still valid. We would recommend the City look to replace/repair only major maintenance requirements and eventually construct a new facility to provide indoor aquatics for both wellness and leisure aquatic programming. A decision on how the existing Aquatic Center compliments the recommended facility should be a discussion topic at that time.

Recreational Facility Development

In order to serve the community recreation and aquatic needs for population projections, the consideration of the following actions is recommended.

Recreation/Indoor Aquatics

Construct a facility that serves as a regional center for the city. This would allow multiple programming to occur for entire family interests. See the attached program for a typical facility that would address the capacity of needs up to 60-65,000 in population and project budget for facility. When a city decides to proceed with an in-depth analysis of citizen desires and preferences with a citizen survey and public meetings dedicated specifically to the recreation center will help set exact priorities for such a center. The budget estimated for this is **\$19,830,000**.

If the indoor aquatics were a component to be phased in later, the budget for the recreation center only without indoor aquatics would be approximately **\$15,980,000**.

Art Related Facilities

Art related facilities should be considered as partnering opportunities and therefore the scope of such a facility should be based upon size requirements of such partners.

Existing Recreation Center

Could be converted to other uses including community meeting space, expanded senior center or perhaps demolish and replace. Budgets are indeterminable at this time until proper planning direction is determined.

Community Center

Relocate the Park Staff from the center and renovate for expanded senior uses. Budget is between **\$300,000 – \$400,000** for such use.

Project budgets expressed are all inclusive including construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment, professional fees and contingencies. The quality of the recommended facilities are considered to match that of surrounding cities.

7.5.2 Facilities Development

The City's 2006 Survey, questionnaires, public meetings and other relevant data form the basis to determine the most accurate and inclusive assessment of overall parks and recreation needs and to identify the needs for specific recreation facilities. Data from sports leagues, incomplete facilities from previous recreation facility studies, trails master plans, citizen input at public meetings, and recreation trends were included in this assessment. Table 7.1 prioritizes the overall parks and recreation facility needs for The Colony, based on facility standards combined with citizen, staff, and consultant input.

Table 7.1
Prioritized, Overall Parks and Recreation Facility Needs

Outdoor Recreation Facility Needs in Order of Priority

1. Hike and Bike Trails
2. Renovate and Update Existing Parks*
3. Natural Habitat Protection
4. New Outdoor Pool

Indoor Recreation Facility Needs in Order of Priority

1. New Community Center with Recreation/Cultural/Civic Elements
2. Senior Center** Expansion / Move PARD Offices
3. Renovate Aquatic Center
4. Indoor Pool at new Recreation Center

*Particular attention should be given to updating Playgrounds

**Currently referred to as the "Community Center"

7.6 Operations and Maintenance Recommendations

Operations and Maintenance Expenditures

Table 7.2 The Colony Parks and Recreation Operational Budget *			
General Fund	Fiscal Year 2006/2007 (Actual)	Fiscal Year 2007/2008 (Budget)	Fiscal Year 2008/2009 (Budget)
Total General Fund Budget	\$19,447,797	\$20,517,962	\$22,555,178
Parks and Recreation	\$754,305	\$881,864	\$868,566
Admin, Recreation & Athletics	3.88%	4.30%	3.85%
Park Maintenance	\$1,029,193	\$1,061,476	\$1,098,189
Park Maint / General Fund	5.29%	5.14%	4.87%
Personnel	13	14	14
Aquatics	\$344,603	\$348,580	\$356,218
Aquatic / General Fund	1.77%	1.70%	1.58%
Community Center	\$126,109	\$140,041	\$147,199
Community Center/ General Fund	0.65%	0.68%	.65%
Total Parks & Recreation Budget	\$2,254,210	\$2,431,961	\$2,470,272
Parks & Recreation/General Fund	11.59%	11.85%	10.95%
Revenue Funds			
Parks and Recreation	\$388,635	\$405,455	\$348,755
Expenses	\$2,254,210	\$2,431,961	\$2,740,172
Revenue/Expenses	15%	17%	14%
Aquatics	\$157,101	\$169,125	\$169,500
Expenses	\$344,603	\$348,580	\$356,218
Revenue / Expenses	46%	49%	48%
Community Center	\$141,765	\$141,438	\$143,480
Expenses	\$126,109	\$140,041	\$147,199
Revenue / Expenses	112%	101%	97%
Other Funds			
Community Development Corp (4B)	\$1,819,566	\$1,455,000	\$1,533,000
Expenses	\$1,228,776	\$1,734,345	\$1,176,557
Revenue / Expenses	148%	84%	130%
Special Events Funds	\$157,439	\$73,550	\$198,450
Expenses	\$84,175	\$135,882	\$204,005
Revenue/ Expenses	187%	54%	97%
Lake Parks Fund	\$144,734	157,920	157,920
Expenses	\$124,130	232,741	231,760
Revenue/ Expenses	117%	68%	68%
Hidden Cove Park	75,684	53,000	53,000
Expenses	70,000	50,000	50,000
Revenue/ Expenses	108%	106%	106%

* Source: The Colony Parks Department

**Table 7.3
Comparison of Overall Park Expenditures Relative to General Fund³**

City	Overall General Fund	General Fund per Capita	Park Expenditures including recreation	Percent of General Fund	City size in Acres
The Colony (2008) 39,850 population	\$22,555,178	\$566	\$2,470,172	11%	8,345
Coppell (2007) 39,508 population	\$43,674,074	\$1,105	\$6,705,764	15%	9,561
Duncanville (2008) 38,793 population	\$23,438,513	\$604	\$2,937,029	12.5%	7,232
Carrollton (2008) 120,553 population	\$78,674,670	\$653	\$10,711,586 ⁴	13.6%	23,424
Frisco (2009) 102,225 population (budgeted)	\$75,400,711	\$738	\$8,592,834	11.4%	44,800
Hurst (2009) 38,750 population (budgeted)	\$31,541,995	\$814	\$4,494,569 ⁵	14.2%	6,336
Lewisville (2008) 92,850 population	\$61,200,434	\$659	\$5,758,215 ⁶	9.4%	27,072
Mansfield (2009) 62,000 population	\$36,037,082	\$581	\$1,978,277 ⁷	5.5%	23,360
North Richland Hills (2008) 65,750 population	\$38,983,678	\$593	\$2,771,201 ⁸	7.1%	11,648
Plano (2008) 260,900 population	\$223,319,551	\$856	\$23,011,871	10.3%	45,824
Average		\$713		11.2%	

- The above nine cities are regarded as the benchmark cities for The Colony, based on factors that includes size, city government and location.
- The following is noticeable from the above table:
- The Colony’s General Fund per Capita, is 20% below the average of \$713 as compared to the Cities above.
- The Colony’s Parks and Recreation Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund, is about equal that of the average of the other benchmark cities.

³ Data source: individual city adopted budget or comprehensive annual financial report. Some population data from the Census Bureau’s 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

⁴ Culture and Leisure budget; excludes library

⁵ Community Services budget; excludes library and facilities maintenance (citywide)

⁶ Park and Leisure Services Dept. budget; excludes library

⁷ Community Services budget; excludes communications & marketing, family counseling, building maintenance, library, and cultural services.

⁸ General Fund expenditures only

The following table illustrates the per capita expenditure for parks compared with the benchmark cities.

Table 7.5 Comparison of Overall Park and Recreation Expenditures (including special or performance funds)			
City	Population	Budgeted / Actual Park Expenditures ⁹	Per Capita Expenditure
The Colony	39,850	\$4,132,494 ¹⁰	\$104
Carrollton	120,553	\$16,846,586 ¹¹	\$140
Coppell	39,508	\$12,135,035 ¹²	\$307
Duncanville	38,793	\$4,080,284 ¹³	\$105
Frisco	102,225	\$17,243,834 ¹⁴	\$169
Hurst	38,750	\$7,242,334 ¹⁵	\$187
Lewisville	92,850	\$7,806,404 ¹⁶	\$84
Mansfield	62,000	\$7,118,181 ¹⁷	\$115
NRH	65,750	\$16,132,328 ¹⁸	\$245
Plano	260,900	\$26,990,409 ¹⁹	\$103
Average			\$156

- The per capita expenditure of the overall park and recreation expenditures (including special or performance funds) of The Colony is 33% lower than the benchmark cities average of \$156.

⁹ See Table 7.3 for detailed information

¹⁰ Includes General Fund, Community Development Corporation Fund, Special Events Fund, Lake Parks Fund, and Hidden Cove Park Fund

¹¹ Includes General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund

¹² Includes General Fund, Recreation Development Corporation Fund, and Recreational Programs Special Revenue Fund

¹³ Includes General Fund, portion of the 4B Fund, and Park Bonds budgeted for 2008-2009

¹⁴ Includes General Fund and Capital Projects Fund

¹⁵ Includes General Fund, Park Donation Fund, and Community Services ½ Cent Sales Tax Fund

¹⁶ Includes General Fund, Recreation Fund, and portion of the 4B Fund

¹⁷ Included General Fund and Parks Facilities Development Corporation Fund

¹⁸ Includes General Fund, Park and Recreation Facilities Development Fund, Aquatic Park Fund, and Golf Course Fund

¹⁹ Includes General Fund, Golf Course Fund, and Recreation Revolving Fund

Table 7.5
Comparison of Overall Park and Recreation Expenditures
(excluding special or performance funds)

City	Population	Budgeted / Actual Park Expenditures ²⁰	Per Capita Expenditure
The Colony	39,850	\$2,470,172	\$62
Carrollton	120,553	\$10,711,586	\$89
Coppell	39,508	\$6,705,764	\$169
Duncanville	38,793	\$2,937,029	\$76
Frisco	102,225	\$8,592,834	\$84
Hurst	38,750	\$4,494,569	\$116
Lewisville	92,850	\$5,758,215	\$62
Mansfield	62,000	\$1,978,277	\$32
NRH	65,750	\$2,771,201	\$42
Plano	260,900	\$23,011,871	\$88
Average			\$82

- The per capita expenditure of The Colony’s overall park and recreation expenditures (excluding special or performance funds) is 24% lower than the benchmark cities average of \$82.

²⁰ See Table 7.3 for detailed information

Parks and Recreation Personnel

Table 7.6 Parks Department Acreage and Personnel Comparisons					
City	Overall Budget (1)	Total Park Acres	Overall Budget/ Park Acre (closest 100)	Number of Personnel (FTE) (2):(3)	Total Park Acres/ Staff Member
The Colony	\$1,098,189	1,938(4)	\$567	14	138
Carrollton	\$10,711,586	988	\$10,842	40 ²¹	24.7
Coppell	\$6,705,764	533.3	\$12,574	9	59.3
Duncanville	\$2,937,029	234.46	\$12,526	12 ²²	19.5
Frisco	\$8,592,834	1,330	\$6,542	54.75	24.3
Hurst	\$4,057,183	290	\$13,990	25	11.6
Lewisville	\$5,758,215	873	\$6,596	45	19.4
Mansfield	\$1,978,277	737	\$2,684	19.7	37.4
North Richland Hills	\$2,771,201	741	\$3,739	13.9	54.3
Plano	\$23,011,871	3,830	\$6,008	137	28
Average (excluding The Colony)	\$6,762,215	1,264	\$7,586	52.48	40

- (1) Budgets and staff levels for general comparison purposes only. Maintenance of non-park areas such as medians is not included but does impact staff levels.
- (2) Excludes Indoor recreation and /or golf course staff.
- (3) Includes parks facilities.
- (4) Excluding USACE land additional to City parks.

Staff Levels

The Colony Parks and Recreation Department budget and staff levels per park acreage are shown in Table 7.6 above. In comparison with benchmark cities, The Colony’s budget is much less than the average and the park acreage per staff member is much higher. The main reason for this is the amount of lake related USACE land which is managed by PARD.

²¹ Also excludes tennis center personnel.

²² Includes horticulture personnel.

Parks Operations and Maintenance Program

In order to ensure future effectiveness and efficiency of the City's parks operations and maintenance programs, the following is recommended for consideration as and when the need arises:

- Continue funding for an **operations center** to professionally manage all parks, athletic fields, municipal grounds, median, and right of way maintenance.
- Continue funding **new signage in accordance with standardization of all park name signage**.
- Continue the practice to **standardize informational signage** in all parks (i.e., park operation hours, lease ordinance, rental information, no motorized vehicles, etc.).
- **Continue to manage athletic fields** for safety of participants and to maximize utilization of athletic field resources.
- The City should invest in **automated athletic field lighting** for facilities to maximize utilization of athletic field resources; such lighting should be as far as possible be on timers and on photocell.
- The City should adopt a policy of **minimal interference or maintenance of natural areas** and open space. The goal should be to preserve these areas in their natural state for which a public awareness campaign should be developed.

Parks Operations and Maintenance Facility

The Colony's Parks Maintenance facility should contain the following:

- EPA approved storage facilities for Chemicals and Pesticides
- Above ground fuel storage and fueling station
- Small engines service area and parts storage
- Irrigation parts storage
- Wash rack for cleaning mowing equipment
- Office space for supervisory staff
- Break room and restrooms for department staff
- Parking for staff vehicles and City vehicles
- Storage for seasonal items such as Christmas Decorations, Banners, etc.
- Covered storage for all motorized equipment
- Storage bins for bulk storage of soil amendments
- Greenhouse for propagation and holding of bedding materials

Other parks operations and maintenance issues include:

- The City should continue to develop a plan to implement native plant material with low water requirement in all landscape situations where possible.
- The City should implement an annual tree planting program in all parks to provide for additional shade, to phase the cost for these trees, and to ensure healthy grouping of old and young trees together.

- The City should weigh the cost benefits of establish a tree farm versus purchasing trees for the propagation of trees native to North Central Texas. These trees are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and will result in superior tree cover, shade, and drought tolerance.
- The City should implement a practice of producing compost whereby tree and plant clippings are chipped and mulched for re-use as compost on all City property. The purpose is to implement an integrated and organic maintenance approach for the entire City that minimizes reliance on chemicals and pesticides.
- Although the City already has an automated irrigation system, it should study the benefit of investing in a City wide irrigation system that is a computerized central control system radio linked for the efficient management of irrigation.

7.7 Arts, History & Culture Recommendations

Because of the importance of socially-oriented activities and events in reinforcing community development for The Colony, specific recommendations geared toward the non-physical side of community development are needed. As they share intrinsic qualities and have interrelated functionality, arts, history, and culture are not given separate recommendations in this section. Rather, these recommendations span the lines between these three subject areas and serve to advance the offerings of each.

Develop an Arts Master Plan

It is recommended that The Colony develops an Arts Master Plan for the entire City. Involve the Cultural Arts Board and the Community Development Board as well as the Parks and Recreation Department in the master plan process. This master plan should include an analysis and recommendations public art and the display and performance of other types of art. This master plan should include general themes and ideas for public art to be located in public spaces such as parks and streetscapes and should identify funding opportunities.

Create an Art Selection Committee

An Art Selection Committee – dedicated to the selection and procurement of qualified art pieces for public projects – should be created out of citizens and should include liaisons from the CDC Board, Cultural Arts Board, and City Staff. This committee should be given the responsibility of seeking out artists and art pieces to be featured in public projects, should identify funding opportunities, and should determine the location and type of art for specific projects.

Festivals & Events

The Colony's festivals and special events – such as the annual Easter Egg Hunt, the Liberty by the Lake events, and Holiday in the Park – serve as the backbone for cultural happenings in the City. It is at these events that the most people participate in any type of programming offered by the City. It is recommended that the City commit to improving each of these events each year and adding additional festivals and special events whenever appropriate and as funding becomes available.

Physical Recommendations

Space for Programming

It is important to provide adequate space for arts, cultural, and history programming in conjunction with existing and new facilities. When renovating the existing Recreation Center and Community Center and when constructing a new Recreation Center, provide flexible use space that can accommodate classes, lectures, and performances of varying types. Potentially, dedicated studio space could be accommodated with specialized storage and equipment to meet the needs of specific types of programming.

In a new Recreation Center, provide a large, flexible use room that can accommodate larger events and performances. Such a room would have a stage, a room behind the stage, sound and light equipment, a hard flooring material (wood, tile, or commercial-grade carpet with a fixed or movable wooded dance floor), moveable chairs and tables, and moveable walls.

Art in Public Spaces

As part of the Arts Master Plan, develop a Public Arts Policy as an instrument to provide and display art that is public and free on a citywide basis in parks, along streets, and at public buildings. Aside from parks and recreation facilities provision, the public spaces of a city speak volumes about the quality of life in a city and its values and aspirations. Therefore, beautifying said spaces with art will not only improve the attractiveness and uniqueness of an individual park, but will improve the City's overall image.

There are many more reasons for the acquisition and display of public art; art has a tremendous potential to add additional layers of meaning to the landscape, it can encourage contemplation as a manner of passive recreation, and it also will set The Colony apart as a City that appreciates quality of life for its citizens.

The following images depict the creative use of public art in various settings by other cities in the states of Texas, California and Washington.



Port promenade - San Diego, CA



Children's Museum of Art - San Diego, CA



Bellevue Downtown Park - Seattle, WA



Olympic Sculpture Garden – Seattle, WA



The Colony, Texas



Transit Station – Seattle, WA



Transit Station – Seattle, WA



Seattle, WA