



OKC PARKS



OKLAHOMA CITY PARKS
MASTER PLAN
2020 *UPDATE*

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NOTE: Updates to the 2013 *Parks Master Plan* are found in green text throughout the document.

OKLAHOMA CITY PARKS MASTER PLAN

2020 UPDATE

The *Oklahoma City Parks Master Plan 2020 Update* was developed and funded by the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department (OKC Parks) and the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, in partnership with Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC (WRT). The *2020 Update* builds on the *2013 Parks Master Plan*, providing anticipated updates on the progress OKC Parks has made in recent years.

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Source: OKC Parks

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Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Myriad Botanical Gardens



“Children of the Pathways Preschool celebrated May in particular and spring in general this morning with a party at McKinley Park in northwest Oklahoma City.”

Source: Oklahoma Times, May 3, 1977

CH. 1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oklahoma City is on an impressive track towards national urban prominence with a vibrant economy, an admired massive infrastructure program, a growing presence in the world of professional sports and Olympic and amateur rowing, and an increasing arts and cultural scene. The city's success has attracted growth downtown and at the fringes.

The City of Oklahoma City is looking for ways to continue providing parks and recreation services and facilities in established neighborhoods as well as brand new neighborhoods. The *2013 Parks Master Plan* provided a compelling vision for our park system. The *Parks Master Plan 2020 Update* brings this vision in sync with new city-wide plans and incorporates the changes our city and park system have experienced in recent years. The *Parks Master Plan 2020 Update* is the guiding document for park system planning in Oklahoma City.

- **Chapter 2** explains the history and role of the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department, the importance of planning for our park system, ongoing city-wide and parks-wide efforts, and voter-approved funding.
- **Chapter 3** covers how the *2020 Parks Master Plan* was developed, key findings from previous efforts, how city-wide plans affect park planning, and how we compare to peer cities. The chapter explains community engagement efforts, the community's vision, and the strategic directions that came from those efforts.
- **Chapter 4** provides an overview of our park system. This includes descriptions of each park type, guidelines for designing safe parks, and considerations for evaluating if a park meets community needs.
- **Chapter 5** takes a deeper look at how our park system is serving the community. The chapter outlines level of service standards for different park types and how the city is or isn't meeting those standards. It applies these standards to our existing park system and identifies gaps in service for local and regional parks and trails. These analyses are accompanied by strategies to fill service gaps.
- **Chapter 6** is the Action Plan. It contains individual tasks that support each Action Step and strategic direction (identified in Chapter 3). The Action Plan is a working tool to carry out the vision, mission, and strategic directions.
- **Chapter 7** is about specific strategies to achieve the community's vision for our park system. The chapter covers funding, maintenance and partnership suggestions and strategies for achieving the action steps in chapter 6.



"Phon Nguyen, 17, grabs the lead in the wheelchair race of Oklahoma City's handicapped youth track and field meet Saturday at Dolese Youth Park, NW 50 and Meridian."

Source: Daily Oklahoman, July 3, 1988

CH. 2 | INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the *Parks Master Plan 2020 Update (2020 Update)* and provides context for why the update occurred. Chapter 2 provides an understanding of why planning for the Oklahoma City park system (park system) is important to current and future generations. The chapter introduces the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department (OKC Parks), including its history and role. Lastly, the chapter covers the agency's ongoing efforts and the role of voter-approved funding in the development of our parks.

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This *Parks Master Plan 2020 Update*—funded and developed by OKC Parks and the Oklahoma City Community Foundation—is an update to the *2013 Parks Master Plan (2013 Plan)*. The *2013 Plan* provided direction for the stewardship and enhancement of Oklahoma City’s park system. However, since completion of the *2013 Plan*, the City Council has adopted multiple city-wide plans. Identifying the need to incorporate these plans into the parks master plan and to update parks data, the City, along with consultant Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT), developed this *2020 Update*.

The *2020 Update* is a collection of information supporting the development of our park system. It includes the community’s vision; an overview of our park system; an analysis of how well the park system serves the community; an Action Plan to meet our goals; and strategies for funding, maintenance, and partnerships to achieve the community’s vision. The *2020 Update* will guide OKC Parks, City Council, the Park Commission, and other stakeholders in achieving the vision for our park system.

WHAT IS A PARKS MASTER PLAN?

A parks master plan provides a framework for the planning, land acquisition, development, and administration of parks and recreation programs and facilities. It relies on community and stakeholder input to identify needs and create a cohesive vision for the parks and recreation system. Using this vision, consultants and stakeholders work together to develop a strategic plan. With a framework in place, a parks master plan guides decision makers and partners towards improving their park system.

WHY UPDATE?

Planning is an ongoing process. Since the *2013 Parks Master Plan*, several accomplishments have been made in Oklahoma City. New trails and parks have been added to the park system, and several reports and studies relevant to our park system have been completed. The *2020 Update* provides updated data and incorporates policies and plans that have been completed since the *2013 Plan*. Two of these plans are Oklahoma City’s comprehensive plan, *planokc* (adopted in 2015), and Oklahoma City’s bicycle and pedestrian master plan, *bikewalkokc* (adopted in 2018).



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Children’s Soccer League

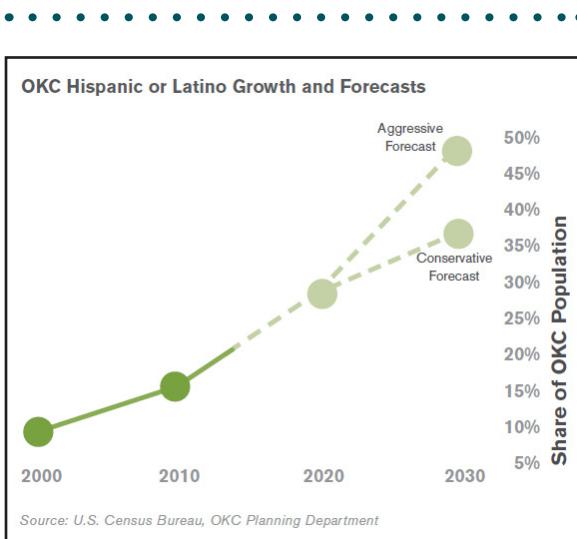


Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Will Rogers Gardens

WHY PLAN?

Great parks build strong communities. Planning our park system to address the needs and challenges of our community will lead to great parks for Oklahoma City. As a part of the planning process for **planOKC**, residents, stakeholders, and city staff identified significant issues that will challenge our community now and in the future. Parks and recreation can play a role in addressing issues related to health and wellness, air and water quality, a changing population, and the transportation system.



ISSUES FACING OUR COMMUNITY

Health & Wellness

According to the American Fitness Index, in 2014, the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) ranked 48th among the nation's 50 largest metro areas for health and fitness (**planOKC**). A sedentary lifestyle is one factor that contributes to Oklahoma's high obesity rates. This can be influenced by the quality of outdoor environments and the recreational opportunities they provide.

Air & Water Quality

According to the *Oklahoma Water Resources Board 2013 Beneficial Use Monitoring Program* reports, about 70% of Oklahoma City's major lakes and streams fail to meet water quality standards (**planOKC**). Since 1871, 60% of the area's forest has been removed (according to the 2009 Oklahoma City Native Tree Inventory), producing a city-wide heat island (**planOKC**). Environmental quality affects many important community issues related to health and wellness, economic diversity, and city quality.

Changing Population

From 2000 to 2010, the City's Hispanic population grew from 10.1% to 17.2%. It is expected to increase at a similar rate over this decade. Forecasts predict that Oklahoma City's population will be approximately 35%-50% Hispanic by 2030.

Also by 2030, the City's largest population growth will be among older and younger adults. The number of residents aged 65 or older will increase from 11% to about 15%. At the same time, the greatest projected population growth is among young adults aged 20 to 30.

Households are changing. Between 1990 and 2010, the traditional two-parent family with children decreased from 27% to 18% of all households (Census Bureau). Over the last five decades, one-person households have increased from 16.7% to 28.4% (Census Bureau).

A changing population means changing needs. Understanding those needs is vital to ensuring the park system is relevant to our entire community. Population forecasts allow us to proactively plan for these changes.

Transportation System

Over 96% of Oklahoma City residents travel to work in an automobile (Census Bureau). However, there is growing preference for active transportation, like walking and biking. This is demonstrated in surveys conducted during the planning process for both **planOKC** and the *2013 Parks Master Plan*. These preferences, combined with more older adults who will want to drive less, will make active transportation options an important component in our transportation system.

PARKS ARE IMPORTANT

Some of the issues Oklahoma City is facing and will face in the future can be addressed by parks and recreation. Parks provide the vital infrastructure to support the community's needs, while recreation programming provides opportunities to engage, learn, and grow with the community.



Source: OKC Parks



Parks provide crucial health and wellness opportunities.

Use of green spaces is associated with decreased health complaints, improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduced stress, improved general health perceptions and a greater ability to face problems.¹



Parks provide measurable economic and environmental benefits.

Parks contribute significantly to the economic well-being of communities through energy and resource conservation and provide many economic benefits to communities derived from outdoor recreation.²



Parks strengthen community ties and bring diverse populations together.

Parks and recreation services provide a space and a reason to partake in enjoying quality time, relaxation, and fun among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide balance and satisfaction in life.³

¹ *Making the Case for Designing Active Cities, Active Living Research (King's Fund, 2013), 2015*

² <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-in-conservation/>

³ <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/social-equity-and-parks-and-recreation/>

ABOUT OKC PARKS

Roles & Responsibilities

- The **Grounds Management Division** maintains our parks and athletic fields, keeps our park tree canopy in good health, oversees large special events in our parks, and provides hazard response services. This division ensures safe, well-maintained parks, amenities, trails, and other City properties.
- The **Natural Resources Division** stocks our ponds for sport fishing, provides unique horticulture displays, and engages with our community through environmental education programming. This division promotes the use and appreciation of Oklahoma's natural environment.
- The **Recreation, Health & Wellness Division** provides programs, events, and sports activities that reflect residents' interests. This division provides opportunities to socialize, develop skills, and participate in health affirming activities.
- The **Administration Division** provides leadership, support and information to the department so it can fulfill its mission and vision.

OKC Parks Mission

The mission of OKC Parks is to provide cultural, social and recreational experiences to our community so they can have the opportunity to cultivate wellness and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

OKC Parks Vision

OKC Parks inspires our community to explore, learn, grow and play.



GROUND MANAGEMENT

- Grounds & Park Maintenance
- Hazard Response Services
- Forestry Services
- Recreational Trails
- Oklahoma River
- Special Events



NATURAL RESOURCES

- Martin Park Nature Center
- Will Rogers Gardens
- Fisheries Management Program
- Educational Programs
- Bricktown Canal
- Park Landscapes



RECREATION, HEALTH, & WELLNESS

- Recreation Programs
- Athletics
- Aquatics
- Camps
- Arts
- City-wide Special Events

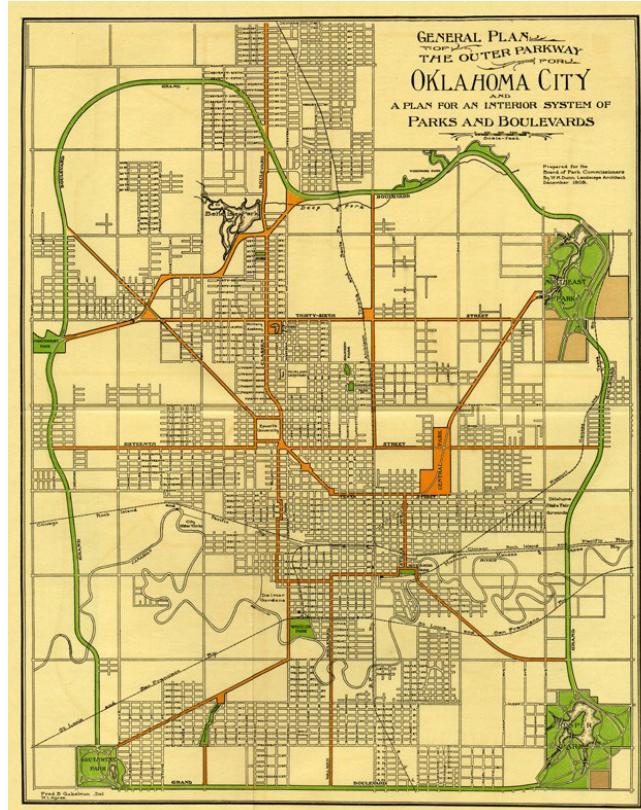


OKC PARKS HISTORY

To create a vision for the future of our park system, we must understand its history. Oklahoma City's earliest leaders knew that planning for parks would be important to quality of life and, ultimately, to the growth of the city. Although our park system has evolved, some of the earliest visions for the park system can still be seen in our city today.

In the early years of the 20th century, the Oklahoma City Park Commission hired W.H. Dunn, a landscape architect from Kansas City, to design a system for the young city which, at the time, had the ambitious goal of reaching a population of 200,000 within a decade. He proposed a bold and striking plan—four major corner parks connected by a beautiful, tree-lined Grand Boulevard. With the strong backing of the park commissioners, the leading newspapers, and other city leaders, a major park bond was passed, the land was purchased or donated, and the great boulevard was laid out and graded. Learning from older cities like Camden, New Jersey, Lowell, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut, the Oklahoma City Park Commission plunged ahead, buying land not only for parks but also for adjoining development that, when sold, was used to cover costs of park acquisition and development. As a result, Northeast Park (now Lincoln Park), Southeast Park (now Trosper Park), Southwest Park (now Woodson Park) and Northwest Park (now Will Rogers Park) were opened in short order. They were all on the outskirts of the small city but helped lead to its expansion and development, and many other infill parks were acquired or donated by generous individuals or real estate developers.

Between 1950 and 1970, two factors changed our Park System dramatically—the construction of the interstate highway system and the city's dramatic expansion through annexation. As a result, several older parks are now bisected by highways, and parts of Grand Boulevard no longer exist.



Source: City of Oklahoma City



Source: Oklahoma Daily, 1981

ABOVE:
Concert at Will Rogers Park amphitheater.

LEFT:
1910 Parks and Boulevard Plan by W.H. Dunn.

BETWEEN:
Cross country meet at Woodson Park.



Source: Oklahoma Daily, 1981

As the city's population has continued to grow farther from the center, the City has been presented with the challenge of providing services and facilities to serve a larger geographic area. OKC Parks has not had the funds to provide new parks while maintaining the older ones. As a result, in The Trust for Public Land's 2019 ParkScore® ranking of the park systems of the 100 largest cities, Oklahoma City came in 97th based on such factors as acreage, park access, amenities, and public spending.

There is, however, a strong, new civic commitment to improve the parks and the urban fabric of Oklahoma City. This includes making better use of existing parkland; redefining conventions of park management and maintenance; devising more linkages between parks; creating more parkland; and building public-private and public-public partnerships. This spirit emanates from OKC Parks, as well as the corporate and philanthropic sectors, the sports and nature constituencies, the Oklahoma City Planning Department, the mayor and city council, and residents. In 2014, City Council elevated the role of OKC Parks by adding a sixth commitment to its Council Priorities: enhancing recreational opportunities and community wellness.

This document, based on input from hundreds of people and institutions as well as the accumulation of management and comparative data, provides the blueprint for an improved park system.

[W.H. DUNN] PROPOSED A BOLD AND STRIKING PLAN—FOUR MAJOR CORNER PARKS CONNECTED BY A BEAUTIFUL, TREE-LINED GRAND BOULEVARD.



Source: *The Daily Oklahoman*



Source: *Oklahoma Daily*, 1979

ABOVE:
Kids playing at McKinley Park, 1979.



Source: Oklahoma Daily, 1978

ONGOING EFFORTS

CITY-WIDE EFFORTS

The following ongoing efforts affect several city departments and have a tremendous impact on our parks system.

1% For the Arts (2009)

Arts and cultural investments make cities great places to live, study, and visit. They also foster economic development. In 2009, the City passed the One Percent for Art Ordinance. It requires that one percent of construction budgets for buildings and parks be allocated to public art. OKC Parks has worked with more than 20 artists, who rely on the community's input to develop and design public art. Public art in parks can create identities for individual parks, evoke community pride, and elicit emotional connections to parks. This, in turn, leads to site stewardship.

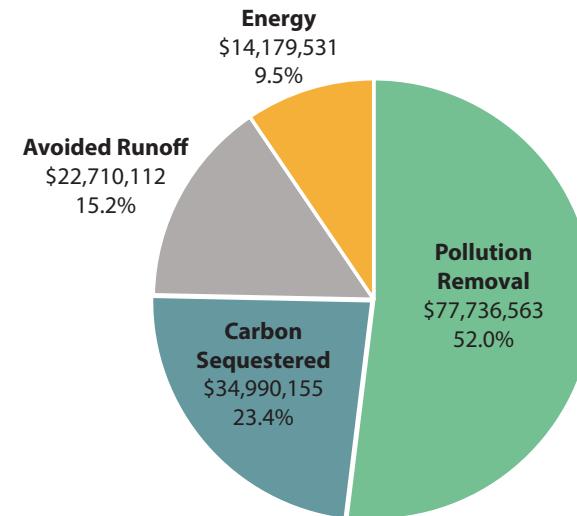
Oklahoma City Metropolitan Tree Canopy Assessment (2019)

In 2019, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation partnered with the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) and Oklahoma Forestry Services to commission the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Tree Canopy Assessment. Conducted by Davey Resource Group, the project provides baseline data for managing the city's urban forest through a comprehensive, 536-square-mile study of tree canopy in the Oklahoma City Metro area. The final report and accompanying geocoded maps illustrate how trees provide community-wide environmental, functional and aesthetic benefits. This data helps shape our community's approach to beautification, quality of life and environmental sustainability including air quality and stormwater runoff planning, as well as the location and type of trees that should be considered for future planting.

Major findings include:

- Annually, the study area's forest provides nearly \$150 million in environmental benefits to the community (**right**).
- The study area contained nearly 65 million total trees (SE 10 million trees), with 74 tree species. The most prevalent tree species include: Eastern redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*, 13.2%), slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*, 9.7%), and western soapberry (*Sapindus saponaria* ssp. *drummondii*, 9.6%)
- Excluding impervious surface and open water, this area contains approximately 197 square miles of land which has the potential to support tree canopy. Landcover totals are summarized **below**.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS (CITY-WIDE TREES)



Source: Oklahoma City Metropolitan Tree Canopy Assessment

THE [CITY-WIDE] STUDY AREA'S FOREST PROVIDES NEARLY **\$150 MILLION** ANNUALLY IN ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY.

LANDCOVER (CITY-WIDE TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT)

The Central Oklahoma Tree Canopy Assessment encompasses 536.4 square miles. Excluding impervious surface and open water, this area contains approximately 197 square miles which has the potential to support tree canopy. The following information characterizes land cover within the study area:

- 40.1% (137,787 acres) of grass and low-lying vegetation
- 30.1% (103,407 acres) of impervious surface, including roads and structures
- 22.4% (76,903 acres) of tree canopy, including trees and shrubs
- 3.7% (12,866 acres) of bare soil
- 3.6% (12,352 acres) of water

PARKS-WIDE EFFORTS

The following ongoing efforts are related specifically to our park system.

OKC Parks Tree Inventory (2016)

In 2016, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation and the Oklahoma Forestry Services funded a tree inventory study to evaluate the health of trees in Oklahoma City's public parks. More than 19,000 trees were surveyed in 134 city parks. The result was an expansive inventory of individual trees that will help OKC Parks' forestry crews prevent disease and ensure the viability of the city's urban tree canopy. This study established a baseline of data to more efficiently plan for tree maintenance, planting and replacement.

Major Findings Include:

The tree population in Oklahoma City parks meets diversity standards and includes 185 species, with 60 percent being native to Oklahoma.

The estimated value of the inventoried trees is \$42.1 million, or an average of \$2,146 per tree.

Trees growing in Oklahoma City parks provide \$163,603 in annual environmental benefits to the city, including:

\$43,053	\$88,774	\$31,776
324 tons of carbon sequestered	8.81 tons of air pollutants removed	3.5 million gallons of stormwater intercepted

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS (PARK TREES)

The 19,000+ trees throughout the City's parks, 94% of which are in good or fair condition, also provide unquantified aesthetic, human health, socioeconomic, property value, and wildlife sustainability benefits.

The data from the study is available in an online interactive map, which can be used for neighborhood park planning, environmental education, and personal landscaping projects. Information about tree species can help residents plant the most suitable and beneficial trees for their geographic location, resulting in an increase of the city's overall tree canopy cover.

Park Impact Fee (2017)

The *2013 Plan* recommended establishing a Park Impact Fee to help fill gaps in parks and trails service. In 2017, the City implemented development impact fees for streets and parks to help infrastructure keep pace with the growth of the city. The Park Impact Fee is collected for new residential developments like single-family homes, apartments and assisted living centers. Developers can choose to develop a park to serve nearby residents or pay the full Park Impact Fee. These fees fund capital improvement projects in the areas they were collected. If the developer chooses to develop a park to reduce their park impact fee, the City enters into an agreement with the developer to ensure that the park meets City standards for quality, safety, and access.

The Park Impact Fee Ordinance has had a great impact on our park system, including:

- 22 new privately developed, publicly accessible parks, serving approximately 60,000 residents (based on 2017 Census Data Population Estimates).
- The acquisition of a 122-acre park in north Oklahoma City. When developed, it will serve surrounding residents in a previously underserved area.

Athletic Field Master Plan (2019)

With a growing population and increased participation in athletic field sports, OKC Parks sought to determine if more athletic fields were needed. The City contracted with PROS Consulting to complete an Athletic Field Master Plan, which will guide OKC Parks on enhancing existing facilities and developing new athletic fields over the next 15 years. With extensive public input and participation from City leaders, the consultants developed recommendations based on community needs and expected trends. The study redefined levels of service, which revealed the need to build and update athletic fields to meet the needs of our population in 2034. To achieve the recommendations presented in the Athletic Field Master Plan, the team developed a reliable and sustainable funding plan.

THE ESTIMATED VALUE
OF INVENTORIED
TREES IN PARKS IS
\$42.1 MILLION.

VOTER-APPROVED FUNDING

OKC Parks' operations are funded primarily from the City's General Fund which is comprised of sales tax dollars and is vulnerable to national and local economic fluctuations. These influences make it difficult to consistently plan and provide quality parks and recreation services that meet evolving community needs. With limited funds and changing demands, voter-approved funding for capital improvement projects is critical to the growth and development of our park system.

Over the last 25 years, Oklahoma City residents have strongly supported General Obligation Bonds and sales tax initiatives—beginning with the original MAPS program in 1993—that fund parks and recreation, wellness, and quality of life projects. The funding sources discussed in the section below are voter-approved propositions that are currently funding capital improvements to our park system.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND 2007

Voters approved the 2007 General Obligation Bond to use property tax revenue to fund basic infrastructure needs. Of the \$835.5 million program, parks and recreation received \$90 million. These funds were used to improve parkland and recreation facilities, acquire new parkland, and construct new public golf course clubhouses. Highlights from this GO Bond package include:

- The Wendel Whisenhunt Sports Complex.
- Improvements to Kitchen Lake.
- Memorial Park redevelopment.
- A new clubhouse at Lincoln Park Golf Course.

MAPS 3 (2010)

In 2010, voters approved MAPS 3, a one-cent, limited-term sales tax to pay for debt-free projects that improve Oklahoma City residents' quality of life. These projects are guided by a subcommittee of civic-minded residents who are stakeholders in the MAPS 3 projects. MAPS 3 expanded Oklahoma City's park and trail system, including:

- A whitewater rafting facility.
- 3 new multi-use trails—West River Trail (7.5 miles), Will Rogers Trail (8 miles), and Lake Draper Trail (13 miles).
- 4 new senior health and wellness centers.
- A 70-acre downtown park, Scissortail Park.

These projects have had a great impact on Oklahoma City's residents and visitors, improving the social and economic climate of the city and providing diverse experiences for all ages.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND 2017

Voters approved the 2017 General Obligation Bond to use property tax revenue to fund basic infrastructure needs. Of the \$967 million program, parks and recreation received \$138 million. This funding will go toward:

- Making critical improvements to public golf facilities and the Softball Hall of Fame Stadium.
- Expanding our trail system.
- Acquiring new parkland in underserved areas.
- Improving local and regional parks.
- Providing trail wayfinding and signage.

This GO Bond package will help ensure our park system keeps pace with the City's growth.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Lincoln Golf Course Club House

BETTER STREETS, SAFER CITIES (2017)

In 2017, the City held a special election to consider a temporary 27-month continuation of the expiring MAPS 3 penny sales tax. This was passed by voters to fund a total of \$240 million of improvements that include:

- \$128 million for street resurfacing.
- \$24 million for streetscapes.
- \$24 million for sidewalks.
- \$12 million for trails.
- \$12 million for bicycle infrastructure.

These improvements will enhance walking and biking infrastructure and better connect residents to parks and trails.

MAPS 4 (2019)

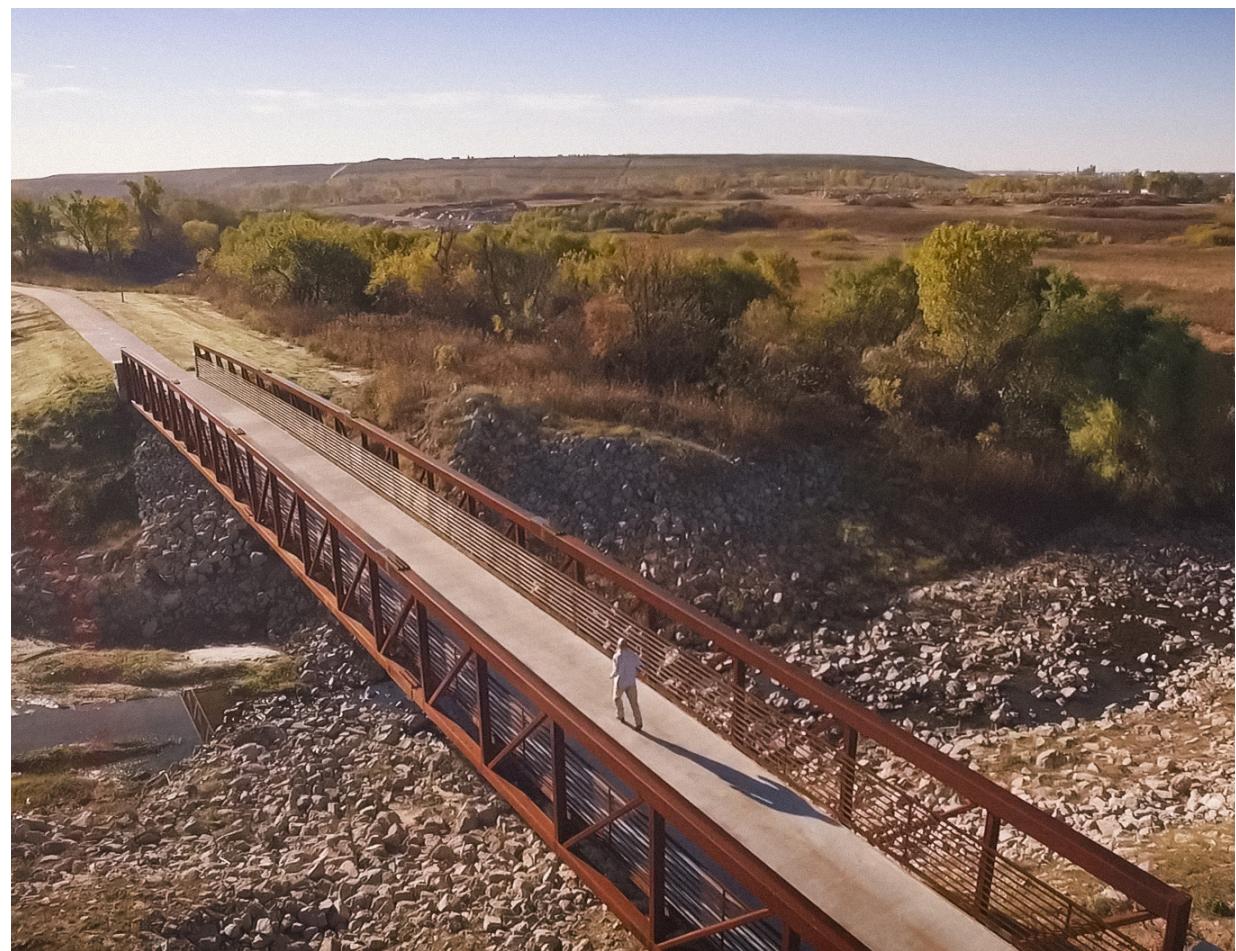
In 2019, voters approved MAPS 4, a debt-free public improvement program funded by a temporary penny sales tax that will raise a projected \$978 million over eight years. More than 70 percent of MAPS 4 funding is dedicated to neighborhood and human needs, while the remaining 30 percent will enhance residents' quality of life and create jobs. Funding includes:

- \$140 million for upgrading community and neighborhood parks, acquiring new land for parks in underserved areas, and enhancing the Oklahoma River.
- \$110 million for four new youth centers that will provide athletics, arts, family, health, and education programming.
- \$30 million for a new senior wellness center to connect seniors to wellness, recreational, and social opportunities.

- \$87 million to transform the environment in neighborhoods across the city through funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, trails and streetlights.

Guided by **bikewalkokc**, several new sidewalks and bike lanes will be added to increase access to Oklahoma City's parks, trails, and recreational amenities. These improvements will expand our park system and improve quality of life for Oklahoma City residents and visitors.

...VOTER-APPROVED FUNDING
FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS IS CRITICAL TO THE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF
OUR PARK SYSTEM.



Source: City of Oklahoma City

ABOVE: Drone footage of West River Trail.



"Sophie, 4, and Claybourn, 4, enjoy a snowy day Saturday at Douglas Park, NW 46 and Lee."

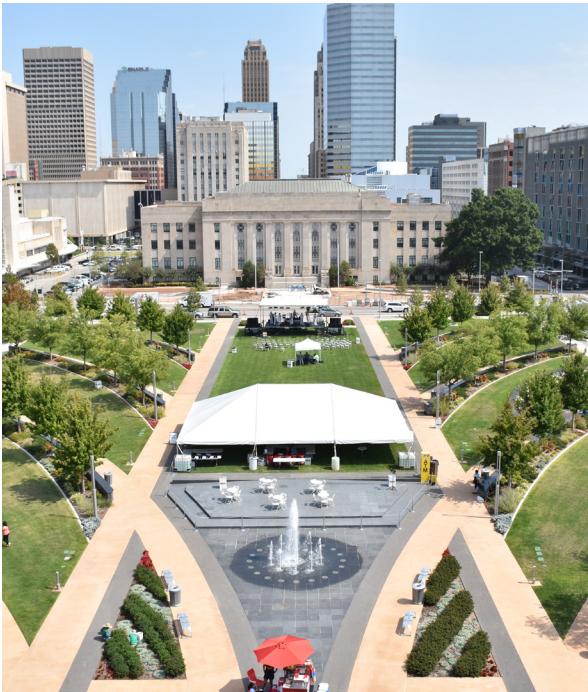
Source: Daily Oklahoman, January 14, 1989

CH. 3 | THE PLANNING PROCESS

This chapter details the planning process for the *2013 Parks Master Plan (2013 Plan)* and the *2020 Update*. This includes an explanation of how the plans were developed, a review of previous parks-related studies, an overview of city-wide plans related to parks, and a benchmark comparison to peer cities. The chapter also covers community outreach efforts from the *2013 Plan* that resulted in valuable feedback from residents. A section about feedback loops summarizes the city's efforts to solicit ongoing input from residents. Lastly, the chapter discusses meeting the community's needs through six strategic directions.

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE PLAN

The primary goals for this *2020 Update* are the same as those from the *2013 Plan*. These include assessing community needs for parks and open space, assessing connectivity and access to parks and open spaces, and defining a strategic action plan to meet identified needs and increase connectivity—including strategies for funding, management, and partnerships. For the *2013 Plan*, a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from OKC Parks, the Oklahoma City Planning Department, and the Oklahoma City Community Foundation stewarded the process and oversaw a consultant team led by WRT. *For the 2020 Update, a Revision Committee comprised of representatives from the previously mentioned agencies and consultant WRT oversaw the revisions and updates to this plan. (#0ac093)*



Source: City of Oklahoma City

ABOVE: Bicentennial Park

PROJECT PHASES

The *2013 Plan* project had four initial phases. Five years later, the plan was due for an update, leading to this *2020 Update*, which began in 2019.

Phase 1: Project Launch

The Steering Committee and consultant team reviewed existing plans, data, budgets, operational practices, and funding sources. In June 2012, the Steering Committee and consultant team met to review, update, and confirm the mission and goals for the *2013 Plan* and present the planning process to key stakeholders. The consultant team also interviewed Steering Committee member organizations and other key stakeholders about strengths of and opportunities for the city's park system.

Phase 2: Analysis

The consultant team administered a community survey over the winter of 2012–2013 to over 600 households to help identify park and recreation priorities; analyze park access and connectivity; analyze park needs in relation to existing and projected population; and review current funding, operations, and maintenance practices of OKC Parks.

Phase 3: Synthesis

Direction was set for the development of the *2013 Plan*. In March 2013, the consultant team presented the results of the analysis phase to the Steering Committee and key stakeholders. The Steering Committee and consultant team synthesized a set of strategic directions to focus the development of plan recommendations. Stakeholders confirmed and prioritized these strategic directions.

Phase 4: Strategic Plan Development

The consultant team worked with the Steering Committee to develop plan recommendations, including actions for the City and partners to take to meet community needs. Stakeholders reviewed plan recommendations in August 2013. The plan was accepted by the City Council in January 2014.

Parks Master Plan Update

The *2020 Update* was developed by the City of Oklahoma City in partnership with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation and WRT. The core content, including goals, community feedback, recommendations, and strategic directions from the *2013 Parks Master Plan* remained as the framework for this plan, with updates reflecting changes in the park system and city-wide policies. (#408d64)



Source: OKC Parks ABOVE: Boardwalk at Martin Park Nature Center.

MISSION FOR THE PLAN

The mission that guided the *2013 Plan*, and guides this *2020 Update*, was adapted from the *2005 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan*:

The mission of the Oklahoma City park system is to promote the highest quality of life and to stimulate the economic viability of Oklahoma City by providing great parks, public areas, and quality cultural and leisure time opportunities for our citizens and visitors.

GOALS FOR THE PLAN

The goals from **playokc**, the parks element of Oklahoma City's comprehensive plan, **planokc**, were incorporated as the goals of the *2013 Plan* and continue to serve as the goals of this *2020 Update*.

OUR GOALS

Funding, Maintenance, and Operations

1. City parks are funded, operated, and maintained in a manner in which people have the amenities and park services they need, and enjoy a safe and clean park environment.

Levels of Service / Programming Needs

2. Parks in Oklahoma City have facilities, programming, amenities, and activities well matched to the recreational needs of residents and visitors.

Accessibility and Use

3. Oklahoma City's park system is accessible to its users by a connected system including roadways, transit, trails, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks.

Safety and Design

4. Public and private parks are designed to achieve optimum safety, accessibility, and attractiveness while reflecting the character of the surrounding community.

Social and Environmental Effects

5. Oklahoma City's park system provides multiple opportunities for people to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

KEY FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS EFFORTS

The 2000 *Community Survey* and the other studies conducted since its completion provided a basis for developing the 2013 *Plan* and the 2020 *Update*.

2000 Community Survey

A city-wide recreation needs survey was commissioned by OKC Parks in 2000 to solicit input for the city-wide master plan. Major findings included:

- Non-motorized “trail-based” activities were very important to Oklahoma City residents. Sixty-one percent of respondents frequently participated in walking for pleasure.
- Many respondents (40%) were not aware of programs and activities sponsored by OKC Parks and did not believe that OKC Parks was an important provider of recreation for their household.
- The highest priorities overall were upgrading parks and playgrounds (91%), building trails (90%), and providing recreation programs/facilities for children (90%) and teenagers (89%).

Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (2005)

The 2005 *Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan* was the last plan done for our park system. The plan lays out a park classification system and population-based standards adapted from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for park acreage and selected facilities. The classification system was used as a basis for the park classification system in Chapter 4.

Oklahoma City Park System Study (2011)

The Oklahoma City Community Foundation commissioned the Meinders School of Business at Oklahoma City University to assess the Oklahoma City park system in terms of funding, demographics, and safety; to assess the park system within the context of the Trust for Public Land’s seven measures of an excellent system; and to review the operational cost impacts of new park improvements. Major findings include:

- The operating budget for OKC Parks is tied to the cyclically sensitive general sales tax—which accounts for half the city’s General Fund—because property tax revenues in Oklahoma may only be used for capital projects.
- There is no comprehensive marketing plan for the Oklahoma City park system. OKC Parks marketing staff consists of one person.
- Information on the demographic makeup of users and non-users of parks, or on the benefits of parks (such as property values) is not routinely analyzed.

NON-MOTORIZED “TRAIL-BASED” ACTIVITIES WERE VERY IMPORTANT TO OKLAHOMA CITY RESIDENTS.

Analysis of Crime in Oklahoma City Parks (2012)

The Oklahoma City Planning Department analyzed crime in and near city parks. Major findings include:

- In 2012, the City’s DirectionFinder® Survey indicated that 31% of residents felt unsafe in city parks.
- The crime rate for parks, and their respective service areas, is two orders of magnitude less than the city average.
- Due to significantly low crime rates, city parks are relatively safe in terms of reported crime incidents.
- Residents’ feelings of being unsafe in parks are based more on perception than reality and may be related to factors such as park maintenance, lighting, and design.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Martin Park Nature Center

RELATION TO CITY-WIDE PLANS

Since the *2013 Plan*, the City has adopted two city-wide plans—**planokc** and **bikewalkokc**. A third plan, Core to Shore, serves as a framework for downtown park development.

Core to Shore Plan (2008)

The I-40 highway constructed in 1965 effectively created a barrier between downtown Oklahoma City and a more underdeveloped, industrial, and blighted area to the south. In 2002, federal funding was approved to renovate I-40, which included relocating the portion crossing downtown five blocks to the south. The City recognized this as an opportunity to rejoin the downtown core to the developing Oklahoma River area. The resultant Core to Shore Plan’s goal was to connect the river to downtown by creating a new urban neighborhood and revitalizing 750 acres of underutilized land. The plan envisioned a grand central park that would provide a greenbelt to the river and serve as a catalyst for area revitalization. In 2009, funding for the 75-acre grand park was included on the MAPS 3 initiative. Construction of the \$132 million Scissortail Park is broken into two sections: upper park and lower park. The construction of the upper park began in 2017 and was completed in late 2019. The south section, connected to the north section by the SkyDance Bridge, is scheduled to be completed in 2021.

planokc (2015)

planokc is a long-range plan with the goal of ensuring a healthy environment, community, and economy for the city’s residents. The plan has nine elements:

sustainokc	future land use
connectokc	transportation
greenokc	environmental & natural resources
liveokc	communities
enrichokc	preservation, appearance & culture
playokc	parks & recreation
strengthenokc	economic development
serveokc	public services
gookc	implementation

The parks and recreation element is **playokc**. **playokc** summarizes the future policies and actions the City and its partners will take to reach the plan’s goals. There are 32 **planokc** policies related to parks. These range from strategies to reduce maintenance costs to developing key partnerships to expand programming. It is worth noting that the nine elements of **planokc** are interrelated and some elements may have policies that apply to parks.

*For more information on **playokc**’s policies, see [Appendix A](#) (p. 105).*

bikewalkokc (2018)

bikewalkokc is an implementation component of **planokc**. It consists of two interrelated plans: the Pedestrian Plan and the Bicycle and Trails Plan. The Bicycle and Trails Plan details a transformative expansion and improvement of the city’s network. It replaces the 1997 Trails Master Plan for on-street bicycle and off-street trails improvements. The Pedestrian Plan was developed to facilitate comfortable, safe walking to destinations within or close to neighborhoods. The plan focuses on ten identified Pedestrian Priority Areas based on proximity to transit stops, schools, and parks. Together, the two plans in **bikewalkokc** are the guide to implementing the City’s vision of safe, comfortable, and connected bicycling and walking infrastructure.

adaptokc (2020)

adaptokc is an implementation component of **planokc**. It is Oklahoma City’s first sustainability plan. The plan identifies Oklahoma City’s greatest risks and opportunities in the face of economic, environmental, and social challenges.

preserveokc (2020)

preserveokc is an implementation component of **planokc**. It is Oklahoma City’s first citywide historic preservation plan. The plan was developed to identify tools and policies for the identification, recognition, protection and revitalization of Oklahoma City’s historic resources.

HOW DO WE COMPARE?

Benchmarking is a way of discovering best practices in cities similar to Oklahoma City. It helps us identify gaps in our park system and develop strategies to address these gaps.

BENCHMARKING

For the *2013 Plan*, Oklahoma City's publicly-owned park system was compared with the publicly-owned park systems of six peer cities. This *2020 Update* compares Oklahoma City to five of these peer cities (Indianapolis data was not available):

- Charlotte, North Carolina (Mecklenburg County Parks)
- Fort Worth, Texas
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Louisville, Kentucky
- Memphis, Tennessee

Of the cities, Oklahoma City is by far the largest in area (even larger than Mecklenburg County). But, interestingly, it is the third-smallest (after Kansas City and Memphis) in population. These facts highlight how sparsely populated the city is in relation to its geographic area.

Numbers for Oklahoma City do not include the Civic Center Music Hall, Oklahoma City Zoo, Myriad Botanical Gardens, or other special facilities (nor do the benchmark numbers include some specialized parks in other cities). Data sources include the 2018 National Recreation and Park Association Park Metrics and the 2019 City Park Facts from the Center for City Park Excellence and the Trust for Public Land.

Highest
Second Highest
Above the Average
Below the Average

Amenities

The city scores high in relation to park acres per population, but is below average in park acres as a percentage of city land area.

On a per-capita basis, Oklahoma City outperforms its peer cities in several categories. This includes the number of basketball courts, skate parks, and multi-use fields used for cricket, football, and soccer. In terms of the number of recreation centers, senior centers, and aquatic centers, Oklahoma City also stands out among its peers.

On the other hand, it scores below the mean, per capita, in ball fields, dog parks, community gardens, outdoor pools, and tennis courts.

Amenities Benchmarking (2018 - 2019)	Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation	Fort Worth (City of) Parks and Community Services	Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation	Louisville Metro Parks	Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation	Memphis (City of) Parks & Neighborhoods Division
Parks per 10,000 residents	2.37	3.31	4.57	1.59	2.09	2.48
Percent of city land area as parkland	3.7%	5.5%	6.0%	5.1%	6.2%	1.6%
FTE's per 10,000 population	4.14	5.59	6.69	4.96	4.82	6.82
Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents	21.7	14.1	25.4	17.0	19.4	4.9
Ball fields ¹ per 10,000 residents	0.96	0.55	2.60	0.84	1.04	0.55
Basketball courts per 10,000 residents	1.17	0.90	0.96	1.06	1.03	0.98
Dog parks per 100,000 residents	0.30	0.59	0.83	0.65	0.65	0.61
Community gardens per 10,000 residents	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.08	0.17	0.08
Playgrounds per 10,000 residents	2.03	2.29	2.33	2.35	2.04	1.13
Outdoor pools per 100,000 residents	0.59	0.23	1.87	0.52	0.19	1.99
Skate parks per 100,000 residents	0.44	0.00	0.42	0.26	0.09	0.15
Rectangular fields ² per 10,000 residents	2.96	1.04	2.41	1.79	1.44	0.37
Tennis courts per 10,000 residents	1.20	1.01	1.93	2.33	1.63	1.23
Recreation/Community centers per 50,000 residents	1.41	0.88	1.04	0.91	0.84	1.92
Senior centers per 50,000 residents	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.14	0.38
Aquatic centers per 100,000 residents	0.74	0.00	0.42	0.13	0.09	0.61

Source: All data is self-reported by each agency through the NRPA Agency Performance Survey. This data is from the 2018 NRPA Park Metrics.

¹Ball fields include baseball (youth & adult), softball (youth & adult), and tee-ball.

²Rectangular fields include multi-purpose, cricket, football, and soccer (adult & youth).

Spending

Oklahoma City spends less than its peers on parks. It is below the mean, per capita, on operating spending, tax expenditures, and spending per full-time employee. Oklahoma City also generates significantly less revenue per capita than its peers. It is below the mean on private funds raised for the agency, but performs well in total volunteer hours.

• • • • •
**VALUE OF VOLUNTEER
HOURS IN OKC PARKS:
\$3.66 MILLION**
• • • • •

Highest
Second Highest
Above the Average
Below the Average

Spending Benchmarking (2018 - 2019)	Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation	Fort Worth (City of) Parks and Community Services	Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation	Louisville Metro Parks	Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation	Memphis (City of) Parks & Neighborhoods Division
Operating expenditures per capita	\$32	\$61	\$103	\$34	\$35	\$55
Revenue per capita	\$2	\$14	\$22	\$7	\$6	\$12
Total revenue to total operating expenditures	6.7%	23.5%	21.1%	20.8%	16.8%	21.7%
Total tax expenditures per capita	\$30	\$47	\$81	\$27	\$29	\$43
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland	\$1,472	\$4,314	\$4,055	\$2,013	\$1,815	\$11,215
Operating expenditures per Full-Time Employee	\$77,194	\$109,072	\$154,203	\$69,068	\$73,247	\$81,178
Total Volunteer Hours	159,442	102,205	64,909	74,518	52,128	386,400
Value of Volunteer Hours	\$3.66M	\$2.57M	\$1.56M	\$1.60M	\$1.26M	\$8.76M
Private Funds Spent	\$0.15M	\$0.83M	\$1.54M	\$1.57M	\$1.15M	\$11.76M

Source: All data is self-reported by each agency through the NRPA Agency Performance Survey and the Trust for Public Land ParkScore Survey. This data is sourced from the 2018 NRPA Park Metrics and the 2019 data from Center for City Park Excellence and Trust for Public Land.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Kids perform Snow White at Northwest Optimist Performing Arts Center.

THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

Input from residents and stakeholders was critical in developing the *2013 Plan*. The team engaged with the community through interviews, a survey, and a work session to learn about their wants and needs for Oklahoma City's park system. Community engagement was not a part of this *2020 Update*. The team relied on previous surveys and feedback to execute the update.

WORK SESSION (2012)

At a Strategic Planning Work Session in June 2012, stakeholders were given the issue statements from **playOKC** and asked, in groups, to confirm and elaborate on them. This input was combined with issues identified through interviews with individual Steering Committee organizations and other stakeholders. Five major themes emerged from the combined stakeholder input.

APPROXIMATELY 85% OF
RESPONDENTS FEEL
QUALITY PARKS, FACILITIES, AND
PROGRAMS ARE IMPORTANT
TO THE OVERALL PURSUIT OF A
HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

WHAT WE HEARD: THEMES

Need to Increase Connectivity and Access

- Better connect parks to each other through sidewalks, trails, greenbelts, open space, etc.
- Enable more residents to travel to parks by improving connectivity and access of the street, sidewalk, and bicycle networks.
- Ensure that residents throughout the city are adequately served by parks.

Parks Are Undervalued

- Improve awareness of publicly-owned parks through customized branding strategies.
- Improve public perception about the value and safety of parks.
- Increase awareness and participation in park programs through better recognition of partnerships.
- Lack of awareness of park classifications and maintenance standards leads to expectations of consistent maintenance across all parks.

Health and Wellness

- Lack of access to parks has been shown in studies to correlate with high obesity rates.
- Maximize opportunities for residents and visitors to use the park system to stay healthy and fit.
- Local organizations, such as the City-County Health Department and Wellness Now, may be potential partners that support using parks to promote health and wellness.

Growth Patterns Affect Service

- Increasing development and growth is occurring outside of the area currently served by city parks.
- New neighborhoods being built beyond the area served by city parks may include private parks, but many do not.

Proactive vs. Reactive Management Posture

- The limited resources of OKC Parks make it difficult to respond to current parks and recreation needs. As the city continues to grow outward and the population increases, residents' needs and expectations will outpace the City's capacity to respond.

COMMUNITY SURVEY (2013)

During the fall of 2012 and winter of 2013, Leisure Vision, a division of ETC Institute, conducted a citywide community interest and opinion survey about parks, recreation, and open space. This survey was a key component of the analysis supporting the *2013 Plan* to understand current park system use, determine priorities for future improvements, and measure support for ways to financially sustain the park system.

The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households across Oklahoma City. Over 600 mail and phone surveys were completed from a random sample of 2,400 households. Some results are compared to national benchmarks developed by ETC Institute from over 400 parks and recreation surveys administered across the country. Key findings are summarized by category.

Park Access and Use

Fairly equal numbers of households use neighborhood parks (55%) and community parks (53%).

Over three quarters of households have visited at least one Oklahoma City park in the past year.

Nearly two thirds of households consider city parks to be in good condition. Excellent ratings (13%) are lower than national benchmarks (31%), while fair ratings (21%) are higher (12%).

Households primarily drive (90%) and walk (38%) to parks.

A majority (52%) of respondents do not feel there are sufficient parks and green space areas within walking distance of home.

Only about 11% of respondents participated in programs offered in the last year, much lower than

national benchmarks. A majority of those who participate rate the quality as good.

Almost half (45%) of respondents find out about parks, programs, and activities from friends and neighbors.

Over a third (37%) of respondents do not use parks and recreation facilities because they do not know what is being offered, and nearly a third say they are too far from home.

Approximately 85% of respondents feel quality parks, facilities, and programs are important to the overall pursuit of a healthy and active lifestyle.

Senior Wellness Centers

The five amenities that would be used most at a Senior Wellness Center are:



A majority of households would use a Senior Wellness Center if it had the program spaces of most importance to them.

Approximately 58% of respondents would use the center at least once a week.

Funding

To fund the parks, trails, and recreation facilities that are most important to them:

- 58% support some increase in taxes
- 62% support some increase in user fees
- Two-thirds of respondents would be willing to

pay a fee for membership to a Senior Wellness Center. Of those, over 80% would pay \$5–30 per person per month.

Identified Priorities

The survey identified priority types of parks and recreation facilities, priority programs, and priority actions for the City to take to improve the park system. The top five priorities **below** represent the areas of greatest need that are not being met.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Parks & Facilities

1. Walking & Biking Trails
2. Indoor Pool/Leisure Pool
3. Small Neighborhood Parks
4. Indoor fitness/exercise facilities
5. Large community parks

Programs

1. Adult fitness & wellness programs
2. Special events/festivals
3. Senior programs
4. Walking/biking groups
5. Family programs

Investment Actions

1. Upgrade Neighborhood Parks
2. Build new walking/biking trails
3. Upgrade community parks
4. Develop new senior wellness centers
5. Purchase land for neighborhood parks

For more information about the results of the 2013 community survey, see *Appendix B* (p. 107).

ONGOING FEEDBACK LOOPS

Soliciting feedback from the community is an ongoing process. OKC Parks collects data from residents in a variety of ways, including surveys, community meetings, and interviews. This provides ongoing feedback for the department to stay accountable, make changes, and meet the needs of our community. Strategies for data collection include:

- **Leading For Results (LFR):** This is the City's program for collecting performance data from each department to be shared publicly. Annual resident surveys provide feedback on service quality, priorities and overall performance. These are then integrated into the LFR business plan, which provides performance goals for each department.
- **Customer Surveys:** These surveys go out to customers who use our parks for special events or rent an event center. OKC Parks uses the survey results to make changes that improve the user experience.
- **User Surveys:** These surveys are given to users after they attend a recreation program. The feedback is used to assess the success of the program and make improvements where needed.
- **Community Meetings:** These meetings are conducted, as needed, when a park receives funding for capital improvements. The intent of these meetings is to inform residents and collect feedback on their wants, needs, and concerns.
- **Interviews:** An interview would be considered any feedback received from residents, whether in a formal or informal setting. This could include phone conversations, social media interactions, or comments made to a Parks employee.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks staff sharing information with the public.

SETTING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic directions that follow provide high-level guidance for the City and its partners in establishing new policies and programs, developing new partnerships, and allocating resources to maintain, improve, and leverage the park system for greater community benefit. Through the 2013 Community Survey, residents expressed clear needs and priorities for the park and recreation system in Oklahoma City. Interviews with stakeholders echoed the same needs and priorities. The following six strategic directions were synthesized to steer the city's park and recreation system toward meeting identified community needs. The order of the strategic directions reflects stakeholders' prioritization during a Strategic Planning Retreat in March 2013.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Martin Park Nature Center

1. Maintain and improve physical assets of existing parks.

OKC Parks is doing the most it can to maintain and improve existing parks. However, the Department's budget is not sufficient to maintain and improve current parks to the level needed to meet community needs.

2. Develop facilities and programs in existing parks to meet community needs.

The community parks and recreation survey asked residents to rate support for improving various components of the parks and recreation system. The actions that received the highest support were upgrading existing neighborhood and community parks.

3. Improve access to existing parks.

The ability of residents to access parks on foot and by bicycle varies from neighborhood to neighborhood, due to sidewalk and trail availability and the location of access points into parks. New sidewalks, trails, and access points can improve access.

4. Promote and increase awareness of the value of parks.

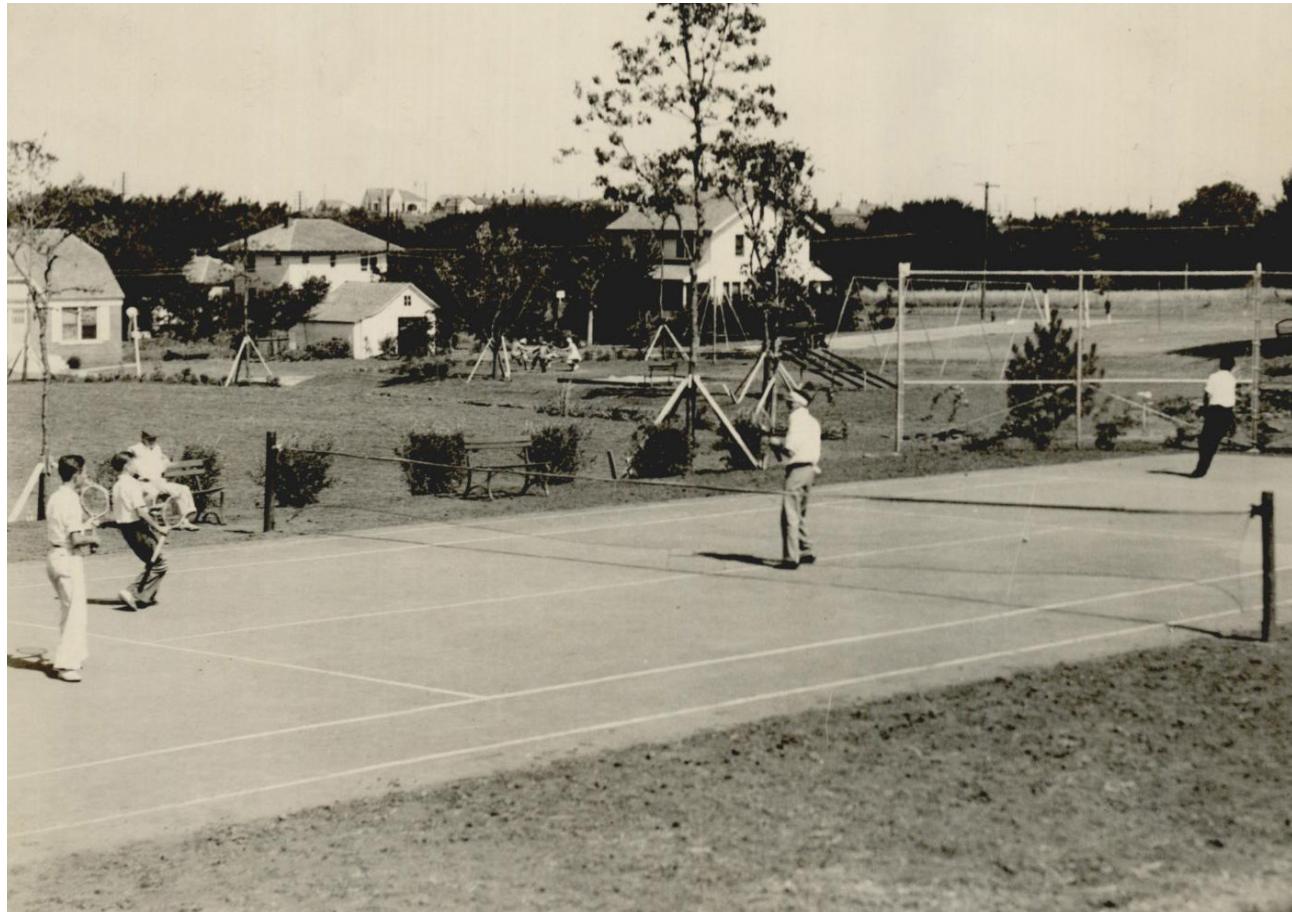
Oklahoma City's parks provide essential and irreplaceable environmental, economic, and quality of life benefits to residents beyond serving as recreation spaces. Among these benefits, parks filter the air, recharge groundwater, increase the value of surrounding properties, attract businesses and new residents, foster a sense of community, and improve public health. Touting these and other benefits can strengthen support for parks and create a case for increased park system funding.

5. Develop new parks and facilities.

Oklahoma City is large in land area and growing in population. In both currently underserved areas and developing areas, new parks and facilities are needed to provide park access to all residents.

6. Establish agreements and standards for private parks and school parks.

To expand park access, the City of Oklahoma City should seek to more formally incorporate existing recreation spaces it does not own, including private parks and school parks, into the park system. By developing standards for these spaces, the City can ensure that a combination of City-owned and non-City-owned parks contribute to meeting community needs.



"Asphalt tennis courts will be recommended for all city parks in the future because of the success of this one built last summer at Glenn Ellyn park, 1200 block Northeast Twenty-second street, according to Donald Gordon, park department superintendent."

Source: Oklahoma Times, June 21, 1933

CH. 4 | ABOUT OUR PARK SYSTEM

Oklahoma City's park system offers residents and visitors diverse amenities and attractions. Each of our parks is organized within a park classification system. Parks are categorized into local, regional, or other parks based on characteristics such as size and expected use. Each park category has an accompanying list of appropriate amenities. Community input is used to determine the program at each park and guide the City in deciding which amenities to include.

This chapter provides an overview and description of our park system, how it is organized, and appropriate design guidelines for each park type. It covers strategies for designing safe parks as well as evaluating if a park serves community needs.

PARK ASSETS

6,200+
ACRES OF
PARKLAND



8,000+
ACRES OF
WATER

SERVING **591,613** → **655,216**
(2017 population estimates) (2030 population estimates)



167
Public Parks



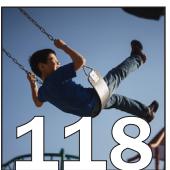
16
Recreation Centers



6
Senior Centers



2
Aquatic Centers



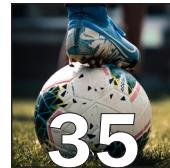
118
Playgrounds



87
Miles of
Multi-use
Trail



32
Baseball/
Softball
Diamonds



35
Soccer
Fields



75
Tennis
Courts



5
Skate Parks



5
Golf Courses



3
Disc Golf
Courses



216
Acres of
“Close to
Home”
Fishing



17
Splash Pads



2
Dog Parks

Legend

- Public Parks
- Private Parks
- Protected Open Space

Community Centers (Operated by OKC Parks)

- 1 Douglass Center
- 2 Foster Center
- 3 Macklanburg Center
- 4 Melrose Center
- 5 Minnis Lakeview Center
- 6 NW Optimist Performing Arts Center
- 7 Pitts Center
- 8 Schilling Center
- 9 Southern Oaks Center
- 10 Taylor Center

Community Centers (Operated by Partners)

- 1 Capitol Hill Center - Draper Park
- 2 Hathaway Park Center
- 3 Lincoln Center
- 4 McKinley Park Center
- 5 Diggs Center
- 6 Northeast Center

Senior Centers (Operated by OKC Parks)

- 1 Will Rogers Senior Center
- 2 Woodson Senior Center

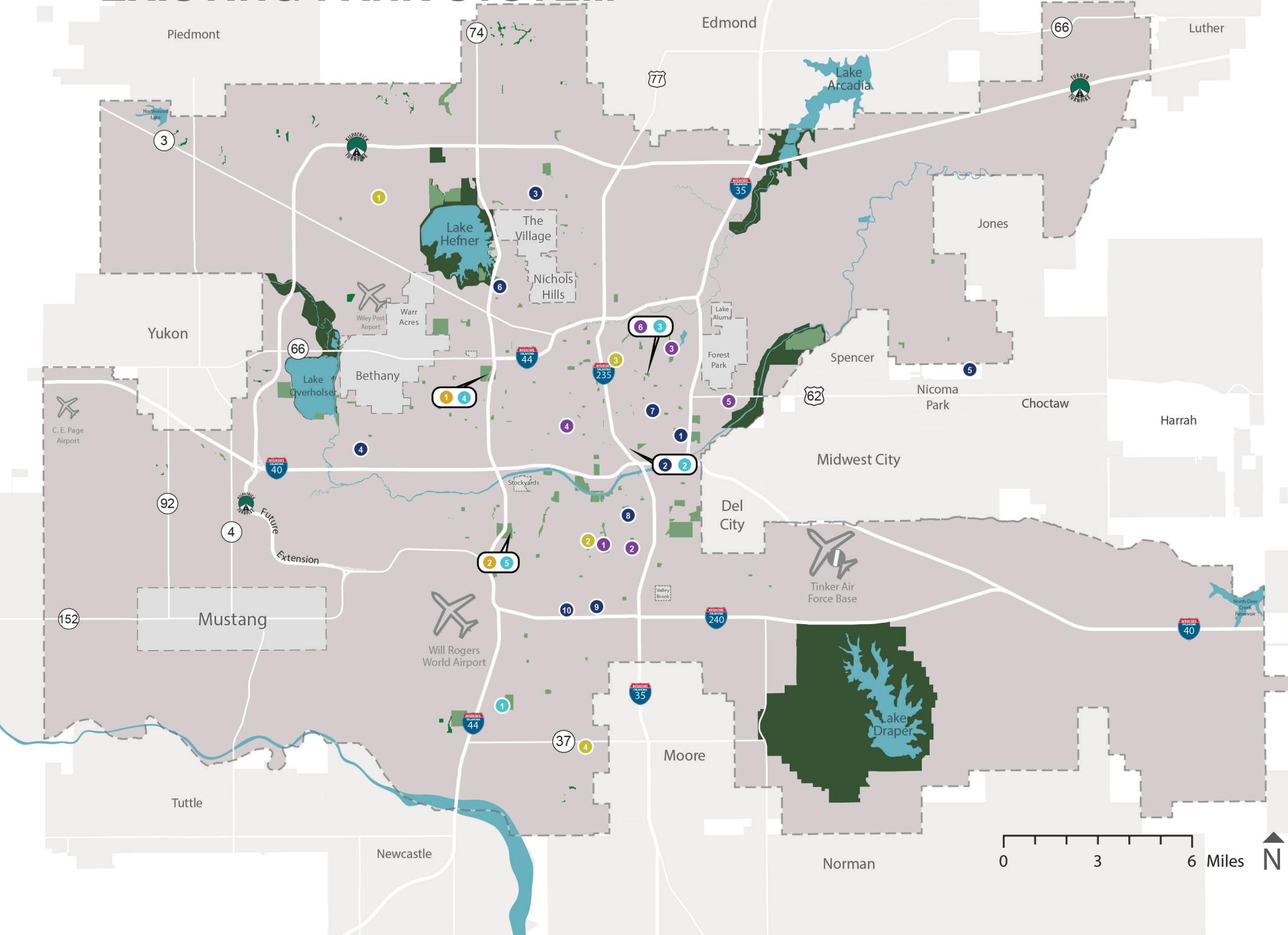
Senior Centers (Operated by Partners)

- 1 Healthy Living and Fitness Center
- 2 Pete White Health and Wellness Center
- 3 Senior Health and Wellness Center No. 3
- 4 Senior Health and Wellness Center No. 4

Aquatics Facilities

- 1 Earlywine Family Aquatic Center
- 2 Foster Indoor Pool
- 3 Northeast Community Pool
- 4 Will Rogers Family Aquatic Center
- 5 Woodson Community Pool

EXISTING PARK SYSTEM





Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Mat Hoffman Skate Park

PARK TYPOLOGIES

The *2005 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan* included a set of park typologies for Oklahoma City. These were largely unchanged in the *2013 Plan* and this *2020 Update*. These park typologies are organized into three classification tiers: local parks, regional parks, and other parks. Each tier provides a different level of service for the community.

Local Parks	Regional Parks	Other Parks
<i>serve the needs of close-by neighborhoods</i>	<i>serve the needs of close-by neighborhoods and regional needs</i>	<i>Integral to the park and recreation system but do not have a defined level of service</i>
Neighborhood Parks	District Parks	Greenspaces
Community Parks	Metropolitan Parks	Greenways & Trails
School Parks		Nature Parks
		Special Use Parks

On the following pages, each park typology includes a general description, a typical size range, a typical length of visit, access provisions, and a list of appropriate amenities for that type of park based on best practices and community input. The list of amenities is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. The appropriate amenities for any individual park should be determined through a regular park master planning process involving the community it is meant to serve. Some amenities or programming may be provided by neighborhood groups or other private partners. All parks should be designed to serve multiple age segments and continue to be designed for safety by following Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (p. 40).

There are various ownership and management scenarios in urban parks, including publicly owned and operated, publicly accessible but privately owned and operated, and other public-private partnerships. Regardless of ownership and management scenarios, park typologies are used for all parks in the park system.

For a list of all publicly-owned parks in Oklahoma City, see [Appendix C](#) (p. 109).

Local Parks

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Size: 5–20 acres

Length of Visit: 0.5–1.5 hours

ABOUT

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve the informal recreation needs of residents within walking distance of their homes. Serving as the recreational focus of the neighborhood, these parks should balance informal active and passive spaces. In general, about half of the park's area should be planned for passive activities and natural features. Neighborhood parks have limited program activities and are not intended to attract users from outside the neighborhood. Neighborhood parks do not have permanent public restrooms, but could have drinking fountains.

ACCESS

Neighborhood parks should be centrally located in residential neighborhoods and should be uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers. They should front adjoining streets, providing visibility and enhanced security from surrounding uses. Parkland without frontage on public streets is not acceptable.

Neighborhood parks should be accessible by way of the city's trail network, sidewalks, or low-volume residential streets. Since they serve nearby residents, neighborhood parks tend to have limited or no associated parking beyond on-street or curbside parking.

Local Parks

COMMUNITY PARKS

Size: 20–100 acres

Length of Visit: 0.5–3 hours

ABOUT

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and serve several adjoining neighborhoods, attracting residents from a relatively large area. They should preserve unique landscapes and open spaces, allow for group activities, and offer recreation opportunities not feasible or desirable at the neighborhood level. As with neighborhood parks, they should be developed for both active and passive recreation. Community parks may have one or two revenue-producing facilities and a community center, gym, or senior center. They typically include a permanent and accessible public restroom and drinking fountains.

ACCESS

Community parks should be located in, near, or within residential neighborhoods. They should front adjoining streets, providing visibility and enhanced security from surrounding uses. Public street frontage is desirable.

Community parks should be accessible by the city's trail network and sidewalks and be serviced by arterial and collector streets. Small parking lots located just off street may be necessary to supplement on-street and curbside parking.

Local Parks

SCHOOL PARKS

Size: 5–30 acres

Length of Visit: 0.5–1.5 hours

ABOUT

Schoolyards and their recreation facilities can be used for public open space that serve surrounding neighborhoods. Smaller elementary schools tend to include amenities geared towards children. Middle and high schools often also include tennis courts, practice and regulation playfields, and running tracks.

ACCESS

School parks that are considered part of the park system are open to the general public outside of school hours, typically following park hours of operation established in the area. They are often operated through joint use agreements between the appropriate school district and OKC Parks. These spaces are meant to accommodate a variety of users.

School parks should front adjoining streets, providing visibility and enhanced security from surrounding uses. They should be accessible by the city's trail network, sidewalks, or low-volume residential streets. Schools may have parking lots for visitors and staff that can be used outside of school hours.

Regional Parks

DISTRICT PARKS

Size: 150-250 acres

Length of Visit: 1-3 hours

ABOUT

District parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood or community parks and should be used to supplement local parks when they are not adequate to serve community needs. District parks are focused on meeting community-based needs and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. They should be designed to generate revenue, with more than two revenue-producing facilities. Permanent and accessible public restrooms and drinking fountains should be provided.



ACCESS

District parks should be located within walking distance of some residential areas. However, high use activity areas should be separated from adjacent residential areas. The site should be serviced by arterial and collector streets and be easily accessible by public transit and the city's trail network. Parkland with frontage on public streets is desirable.

Parking lots should be located on site.

Regional Parks

METROPOLITAN PARKS

Size: 25-350 acres

Length of Visit: 1-4 hours

ABOUT

Metropolitan parks serve the entire city and may also serve other communities within the metropolitan area and the state. These parks are generally established around natural resources, are typically located along waterways or near bodies of water, and have the potential for many uses. However, active areas should be located relatively close to one another with large surrounding areas of preserved natural or open space. They should be designed to generate revenue, with more than two revenue-producing facilities. Permanent and accessible public restrooms and drinking fountains should be provided, with additional portable facilities added for large special events.



ACCESS

The location of metropolitan parks is determined by resource availability and opportunity to utilize and/or protect the resource. They should be serviced by arterial and collector streets, be easily accessible by public transit and the city's trail network; and have reasonable expressway access when possible.

Parking lots should be located on site.

Other Parks

GREENSPACES

Size: varies

Length of Visit: varies

ABOUT

Greenspaces are typically small parcels of preserved open space, including street medians and streetscapes that increase the perception of openness and landscape within highly developed portions of the city. They often provide a buffer and enhance the character of the community. If used at all, they primarily provide areas for walking, dog walking, or jogging.



ACCESS

Greenspaces, if usable, should be accessible from the city's trail network, sidewalks, or low-volume residential streets.

Other Parks

GREENWAYS & TRAILS

Size: varies

Length of Visit: 0.25-1.5 hours

ABOUT

Greenways are narrow open space systems that tie park components together to form a cohesive park, recreation, and open space system. Within a natural environment, they allow for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between parks throughout the community, provide people with a resource based outdoor recreational opportunity and experience, and can enhance property values. Greenways may follow natural resources like stream and river corridors. Others may follow abandoned railroad beds, old industrial sites, power line rights-of-way, pipeline easements, or parkway rights-of-way. Greenway locations are integral to the trail system plan and may be built as part of development projects or interconnected recreational and natural areas. Permanent and accessible public restrooms and drinking fountains should be provided at trail heads and along the trail system when determined necessary and appropriate. **Bikewalkokc** provides information on trail design, amenities, and planning.

ACCESS

Greenways should be have access points where they cross local, arterial, and collector streets. They should be easily accessible by and integrated into the city's trail network.

Other Parks

NATURE PARKS

Size: varies

Length of Visit: 1-3 hours

ABOUT

Nature parks are lands set aside primarily for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, visual aesthetics and buffering, or for wildlife habitat.

ACCESS

Nature parks should have access points where they cross local, arterial, and collector streets. They should be easily accessible by the city's trail network.

Parking lots should be located on site but limited in size to minimize crowds at any one time.

Other Parks

SPECIAL USE PARKS

Size: varies

Length of Visit: varies

ABOUT

Special use parks cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use. They can be individual sites or parts of larger parks and typically serve the entire city.

ACCESS

Special use parks should be strategically located community-wide facilities rather than serve well-defined neighborhoods or areas. The site should be easily accessible from arterial and collector streets.

Parking lots should be located on site.

SUMMARY OF AMENITIES

The following table provides a summary of the amenities that are appropriate in each classification of park. This list is not exhaustive. Instead, it provides high-level guidance for park and infrastructure planning.

	Local Parks		Regional Parks		Other Parks				
	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	School Parks	District Parks	Metropolitan Parks	Greenspaces	Greenways & Trails	Nature Parks	Special Use Parks
Passive Recreation									
Informal Practice Fields/Open Space	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Internal Walking Trails	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
People Watching Areas	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Unique Landscape/Features	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●
Nature Interpretation Areas	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Arboretum/Botanical Garden	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Ornamental Gardens	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●
Community Gardens	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Active Recreation									
Biking Trails	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
Outdoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
Play Structures	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○
Creative Play Attractions	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Large Play Structures	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Court Games	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Tennis Courts	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Volleyball Courts	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Regulation Playfields/Game Fields	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Regulation Sport Courts	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Splash Pad/Spray Grounds	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Outdoor Swimming Pools	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
Disc Golf Areas	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
Facilities									
Individual Picnic/Sitting Areas	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Group Picnic/Sitting Areas	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Park Shelters	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●
Facilities for Plays or Concerts	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●
Aquatic Center	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Multi-Generational Center	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Senior Wellness Center	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○
Nature Center	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	●
Boating Amenities	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○

DESIGNING SAFE PARKS

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a strategy of employing proper design, use, and management of the built environment to reduce the incidence and fear of crime, while improving community vitality and overall quality of life. The following ten principles are guidelines for achieving these results. OKC Parks follows and should continue to follow CPTED principles, as should others responsible for building and maintaining parks in Oklahoma City.

Natural Surveillance

The design and placement of physical features, such as walkways, gathering areas, roadways, and structures, to eliminate hiding places and increase the perception of human presence or supervision.

Natural Access Management

The physical guidance of people and vehicles through the use of barriers such as fencing or plantings, and other wayfinding elements such as lighting, signage, and artwork to orient people and provide a pedestrian-friendly environment to discourage would-be offenders.

Territorial Reinforcement

The use of physical attributes such as art, signs, landscaping, and boundary treatments as well as the orientation and strategic placement of buildings to define borders, express ownership, and communicate a space is cared for and protected.

Physical Maintenance

The repair, replacement, and general upkeep of a space, building, or area to maintain a clean and orderly environment and allow for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose.

Order Maintenance

The attention to minor violations and reducing opportunities for inappropriate behavior through posting rules and expectations, using graffiti- and vandalism-resistant materials, and imposing quick, fair, and consistent consequences for violations.

Activity Support

The planning and placement of safe activities in key community areas to increase the number of people using a space, thereby enhancing visibility, social comfort, and control.

Social Capital

The sense of community and civic engagement that can be fostered through designated gathering areas, social events, community programs, and communication protocols or equipment to encourage communication, trust, and collaboration among stakeholders and with the governmental agencies that serve them and to discourage inappropriate behaviors.

Land Use and Community Design

The location of and relationship among land for various uses, densities, and intensities, that, when planned for and designed well, can improve the overall character of an area, ensure activity at different times of day, and result in built environments that increase public safety.

Target Hardening

The making of potential targets resistant to criminal attack through reinforcement, law enforcement or security presence, and security devices such as locks, alarms, and cameras to increase the efforts that offenders must expend and the risk of their being identified or apprehended.

Natural Imperatives

The ensured access to necessary goods and services including natural light, clean air and water, healthy foods, and physical activity to promote healthy behaviors and reduce mental fatigue and associated risky behaviors by meeting the biological, social, and economic needs of the population.

EVALUATING OUR PARKS

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATING IF A PARK MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Communities are continuously changing, and with changing demographics and land use comes a need to periodically examine the effectiveness of parks in serving the community. The following considerations can be used to evaluate whether a park is meeting community needs and, if not, how it can better do so. Parks that do not meet any community needs may be surplus. (The City may recommend disposal of property only after conducting a public hearing on the question.)

General Considerations

The park provides a type of open space or parkland that is not currently available in its neighborhood.

The park meets park design standards.

The park is on site with or adjacent to another public facility.

The park is sized appropriately for necessary facilities and programs.

The park is best administered by the OKC Parks.

The park has proper access for maintenance or security.

Recreational Facilities and Programs

The park serves multiple age segments.

The park provides a city-wide or local priority facility (Chapter 3, p. 28) not available nearby.

The park provides a city-wide or local priority program (Chapter 3, p. 28) not available nearby.

Connectivity and Access

The park is in or connects to a residential area.

The park is in an area that would not meet level of service standards without it.

The park provides connections to other destinations (e.g., job or retail centers).

The park is within a half mile of a neighborhood anchor (e.g., school, library, transit stop, community center, or multi-generational center).

The park provides connections to other public open space or natural resources.

The park connects developed areas to park and recreation space.

The park includes a segment of planned trail or connects park clusters.

The park is accessible by at least two of the following: car, bicycle, public transportation, walking.

Economic Sustainability

The park increases property values.

The park is or can become a signature park.

The park adds to sales tax revenue.

The park has a part of its capital, maintenance, and/or operating costs offset by contributions from foundations, conservancies, or partnerships.

The park has a feasibility study or business plan that projects operating costs will be recouped through user fees.

The park has a set of performance measures that define its success.

The park has concession areas that provide revenue to offset operating and maintenance costs.

Health, Wellness, and Environmental Sustainability

The park improves air quality.

The park reduces heat island effects.

The park provides opportunities for active recreation.

The park offers facilities for fitness or recreational sports.

The park offers healthy snack or food options.

The park grows healthy foods.

The park provides wildlife and pollinator corridors.

The park reduces stormwater runoff.

The park contributes to watershed health.

The park supports mental health and personal wellness.

Natural or Historic Value

The park helps protect and preserve the diversity of ornamental plant and tree species within the urbanized city.

The park is associated with architecture, events, or persons that have contributed to the history of Oklahoma or Oklahoma City.

The park is unique in Oklahoma or Oklahoma City.

The park creates buffers around resources (e.g., riparian buffers).

The park has scenic value.

The park offers a resource that is unique in the city.

The park includes interpretation of natural or historic features.

The park preserves the integrity of the historic resource's setting.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Volunteers at Will Rogers Garden.



"Huckleberry Finn's spiritual descendant was caught in mid-dangle Wednesday afternoon as he swung across the Deep Fork Creek in Oklahoma City's Will Rogers Park."

Source: Daily Oklahoman, June 5, 1980

CH. 5 | EVALUATING OUR PARK SYSTEM

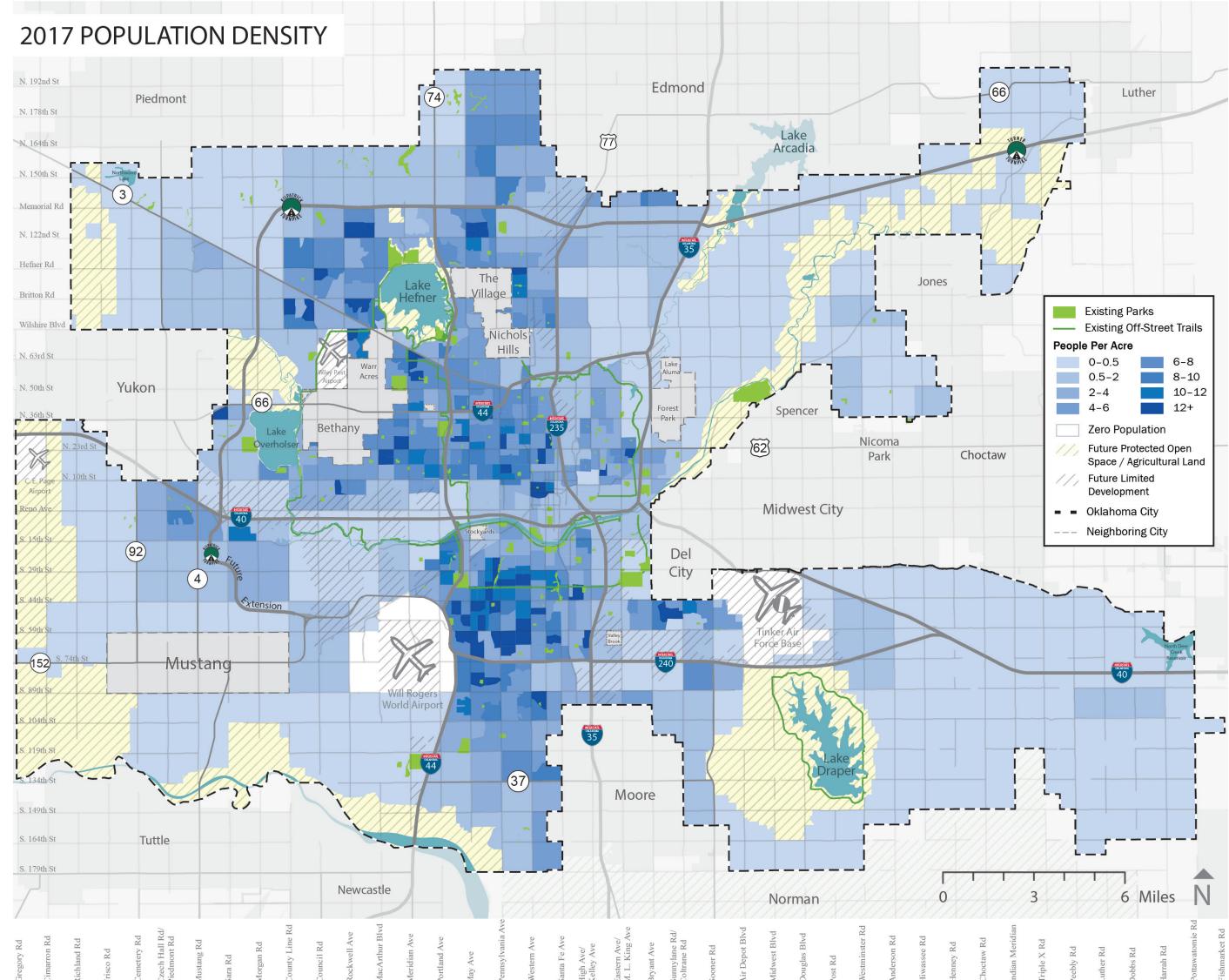
This chapter applies the **planokc** level of service standards to the existing system of local parks, regional parks, and trails within Oklahoma City. It also explores strategies to fill gaps in service through joint-use agreements with schools and developer-provided local parks.

The *2005 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (2005 Plan)* did a thorough, standards-based analysis of park service areas and park needs. The *2013 Parks Master Plan (2013 Plan)* filled analysis gaps through considering the transportation network for accessing parks and the location of park access points. The *2013 Plan* also explored filling service gaps through school partnerships and developer-provided local parks. This *2020 Update* revisits some of these analyses with updated data and new level of service tiers from Oklahoma City's comprehensive plan, **planokc**.

TRENDS AND STANDARDS

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

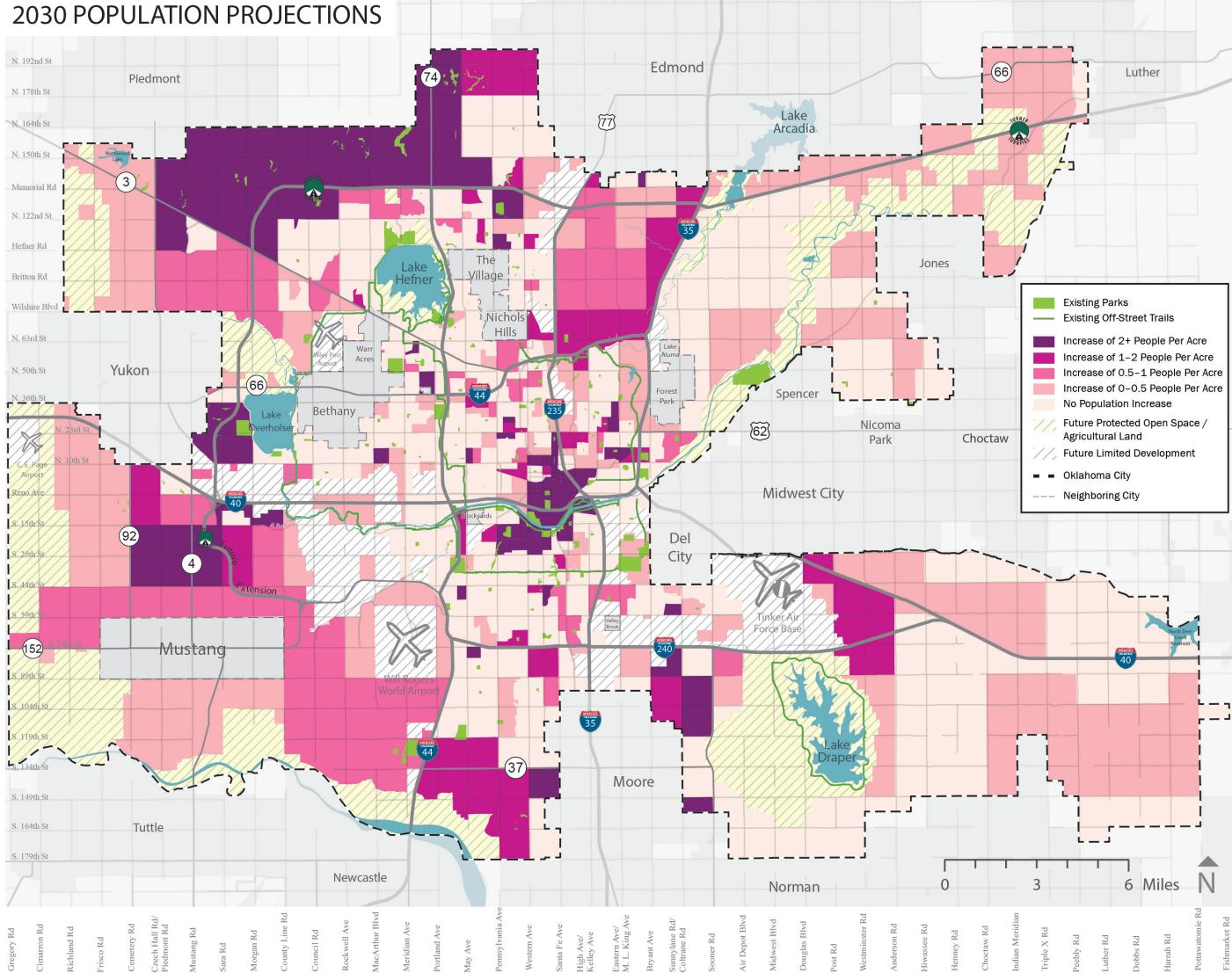
Development trends provide insight on where large concentrations of population currently exist or might exist in the future. This helps decision makers determine where to locate new parks, expand existing parks, or develop partnerships that increase park access. Current population density is more heavily clustered in the center of the City (Map 5.1). Population is expected to increase most rapidly in the northwest, downtown, and southwest areas of Oklahoma City (Map 5.2).



MAP 5.1

Not included on maps: nature parks, green spaces, & specialty parks
Included on maps: local parks, developer-provided local parks, regional parks, undeveloped parks

2030 POPULATION PROJECTIONS



2030 population projections were developed by the Oklahoma City Planning Department, based on current and expected development patterns and the planOKC land use and development plan

MAP 5.2

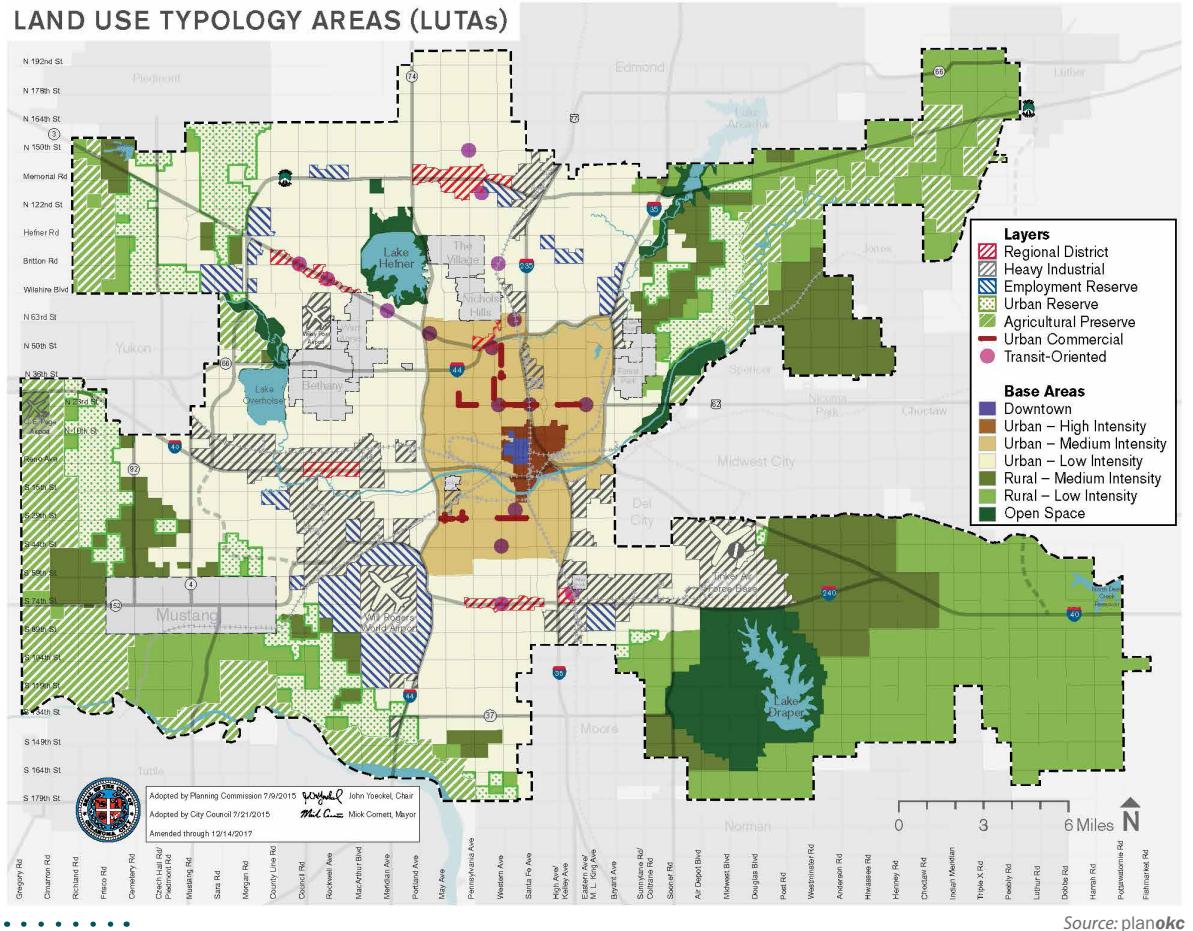
LEVELS OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The levels of service in this plan differ from those in the *2013 Plan*. This *2020 Update* adopts the levels of service that were developed alongside other city services as a part of **planokc**'s Land Use Plan, intended to maximize the City's ability to provide high-quality, cost-effective services. These levels of service balance existing park assets with locations of current and projected population. The standards set for each land use typology area (LUTA) (**Map 5.3**) reflect the location of existing parks and the budgetary constraints of developing new parks to increase service.

*For descriptions of each Land Use Typology Area from **planokc**, see [Appendix D](#) (p. 113).*

In each LUTA, the City is making a commitment to provide the following levels of service, so residents and developers alike know what to expect. Each LUTA has a standard for local parks, regional parks, and trails. The standards take into account existing park locations and survey findings (*2013 Community Survey*) that indicate:

- Driving and walking are the major ways of traveling to parks.
- A slight majority of residents do not feel there are sufficient parks and green space areas within walking distance of home.
- Nearly two thirds of residents would walk or bike a mile or more to get to a park or recreation facility.
- A majority of residents would drive 20 minutes or more to use a park or recreation facility.



MAP 5.3

LEVELS OF SERVICE SUMMARY	
LUTA Categories	Access
Urban - Medium, Urban - High, Downtown	Local or Regional: ½-mile walk Regional Park: 5-mile drive Trail: 2 ½-mile drive
Urban - Low	Local or Regional Park: 1-mile walk Regional Park: 15-mile drive Trail: 5-mile drive
Rural - Low, Rural - Medium, Urban Reserve	Local or Regional Park: 30-minute drive Trail: 15-mile drive

MEETING THE LEVELS OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The following pages contain maps showing the boundaries of each LUTA category accompanied by tables that include a description of the standards for local parks, regional parks, and trails; an explanation of current conditions that may impact the City's ability to meet the standards; and actions that the City could take to meet the standards.

Map 5.4 Land Use Typology Areas:

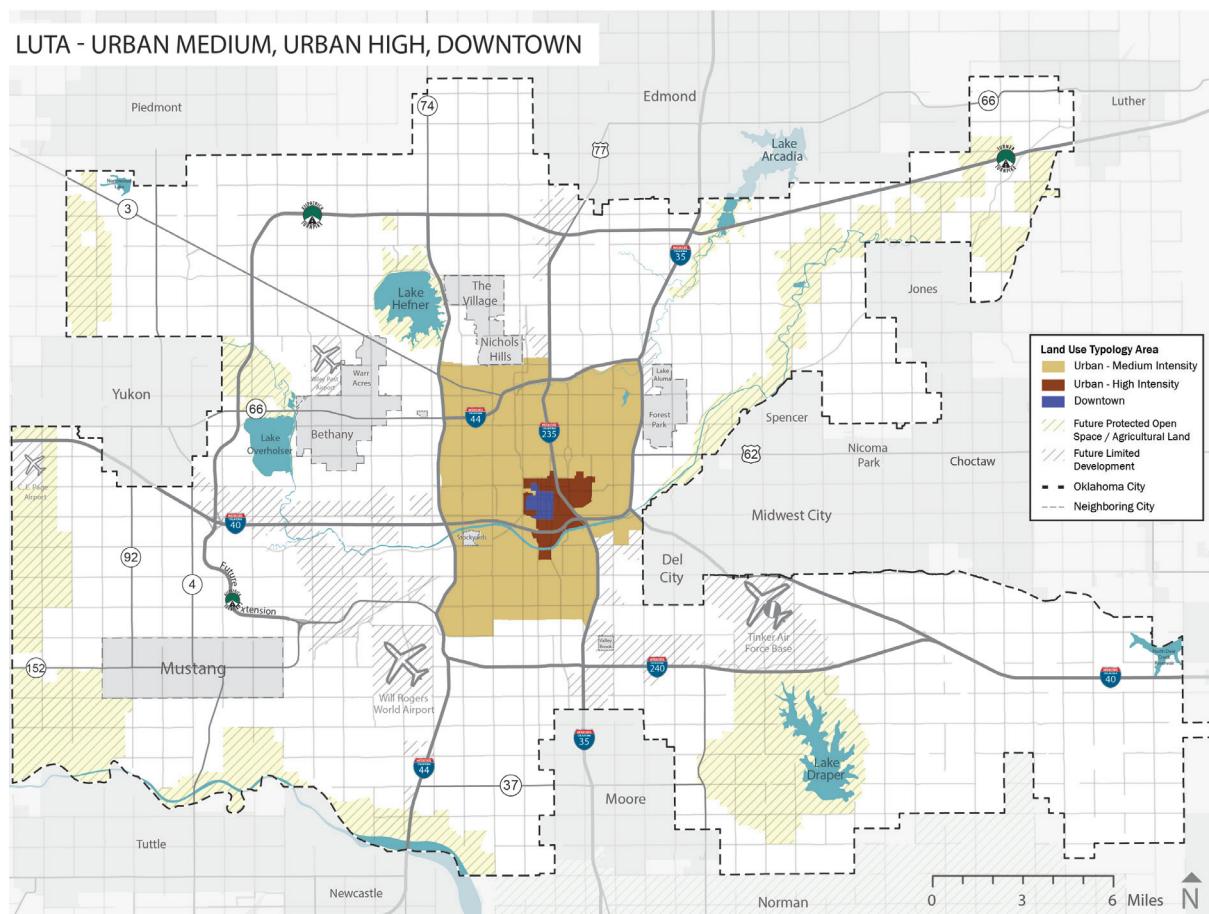
Urban - Medium Intensity

Urban - High Intensity

Downtown

MAP 5.4

POPULATION WITHIN LUTAS (2017):
154,522



LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

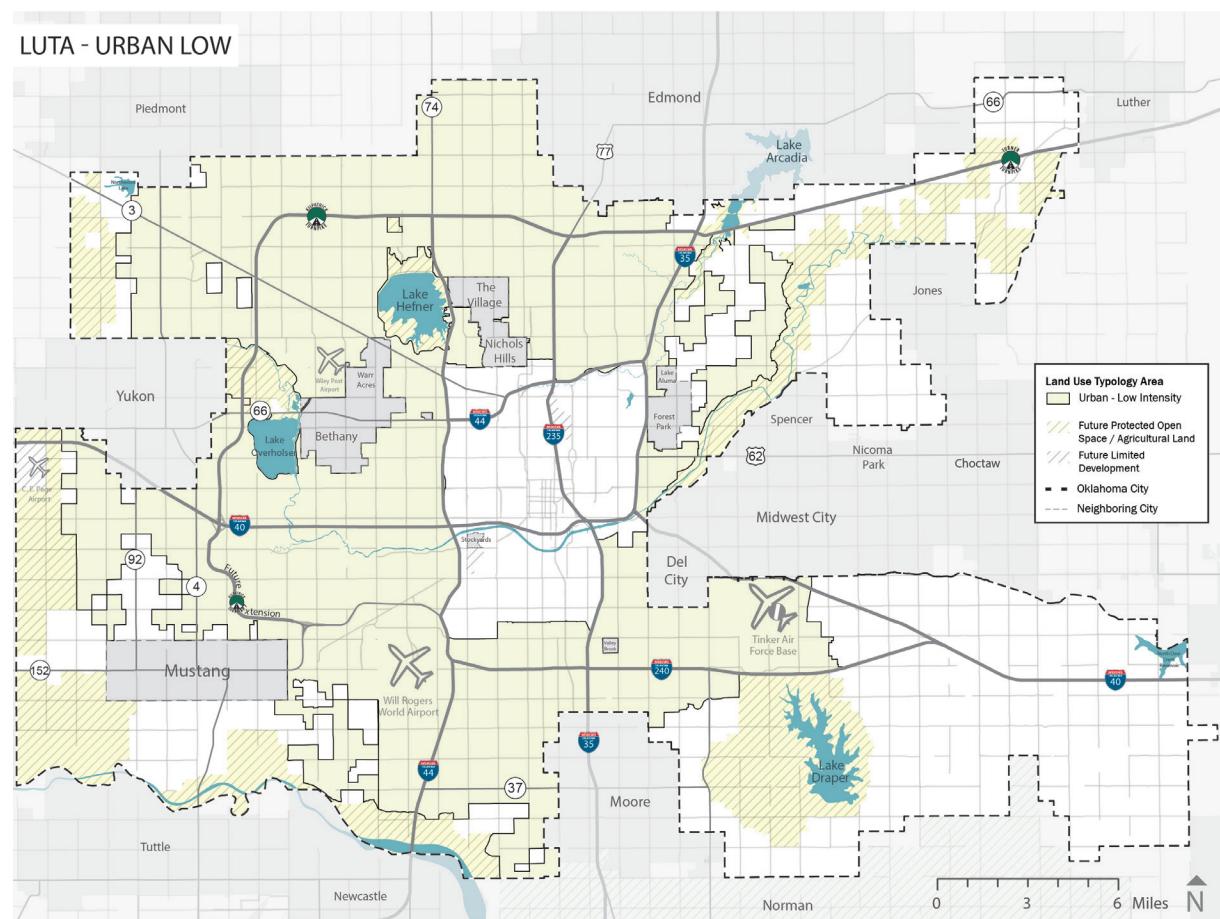
	Standard	Existing Conditions	Meeting the Standard
Local Park	All residents are within a ½-mile walk of a local or regional park.	Some areas are well served by existing publicly-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing parks. Add access points to existing parks. Enable access to existing school parks. Build new public parks on a limited basis where no access exists to existing or new parks.
Regional Parks	All residents are within a 5-mile drive of a regional park.	Most areas are well served by existing publicly-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing parks. Complete the Central Park (Scissortail South).
Trails	All residents are within a 2 ½-mile drive of a multi-use trail.	Most areas are well served by existing multi-use trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing trails. Complete planned trails. Build new trails to create a connected trail system.

MEETING THE LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

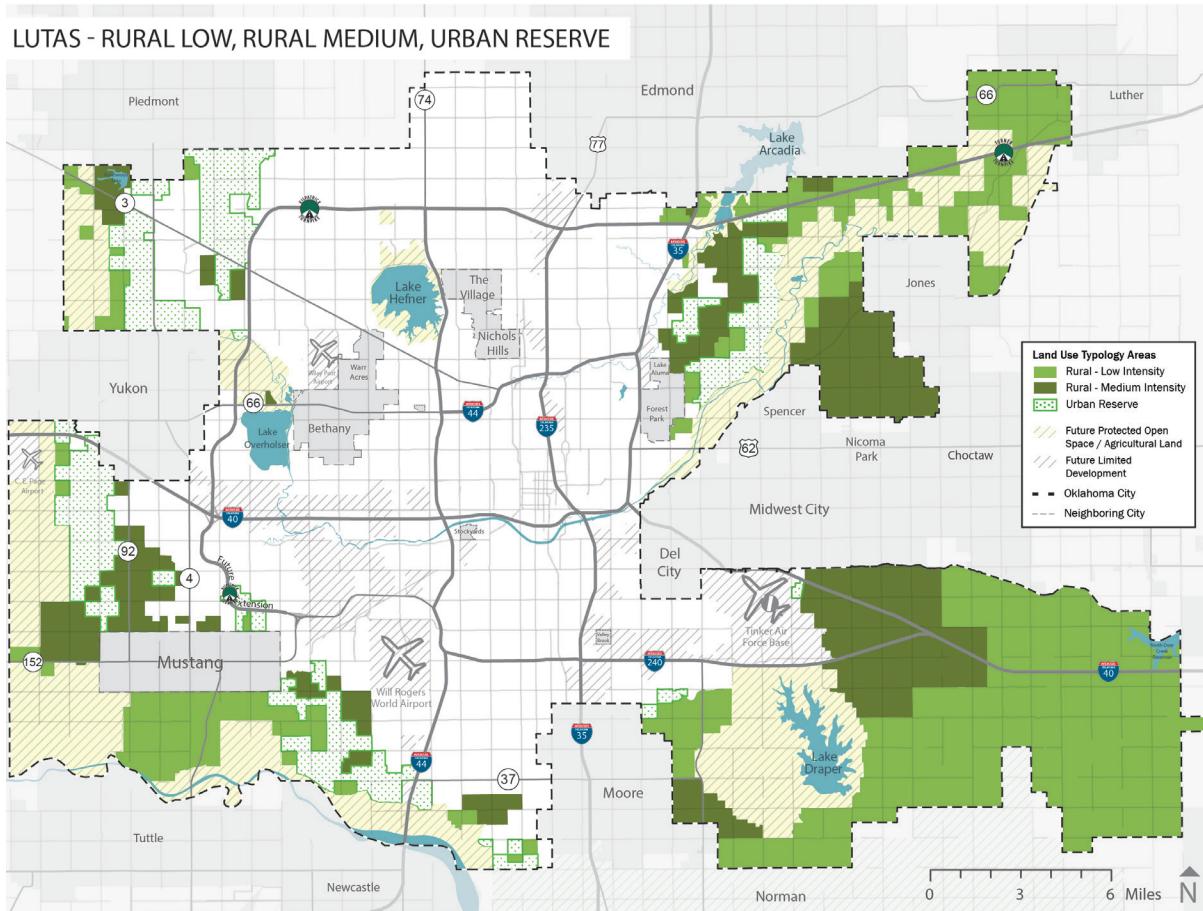
Map 5.5 Land Use Typology Areas: Urban - Low Intensity

MAP 5.5

POPULATION WITHIN LUTAS (2017):
398,777



LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS			
	Standard	Existing Conditions	Meeting the Standard
Local Park	All residents are within a 1-mile walk of a local or regional park.	Some areas are well served by existing publicly- and privately-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing parks. Add access points to existing parks. Enable access to existing school parks. Require new development to meet the standard with privately-owned parks. Ensure new schools have accessible parks. Build new public parks on a limited basis where no access exists to existing or new parks.
Regional Parks	All residents are within a 15-mile drive of a regional park.	Most areas are well served by existing publicly-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing parks. Develop new publicly-owned parks, preferably in tandem with new privately-owned parks, new school parks, or other new public facilities.
Trails	All residents are within a 5-mile drive of a multi-use trail.	Most areas are well served by existing multi-use trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain existing trails. Complete planned trails. Build new trails to create a connected trail system.



MEETING THE LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Map 5.6 Land Use Typology Areas:
Rural - Low Intensity
Rural - Medium Intensity
Urban Reserve

MAP 5.6

POPULATION WITHIN LUTAS (2017):
 38,314

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS			
	Standard	Existing Conditions	Meeting the Standard
Local Park	All residents are within a 30-minute drive of a local or regional park.	Some areas are well served by existing publicly- and privately-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require new development to meet the standard with privately-owned parks. - Ensure new schools have accessible parks.
Regional Parks	All residents are within a 30-minute drive of a regional park.	Most areas are well served by existing publicly-owned parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain existing parks.
Trails	All residents are within a 15-mile drive of a multi-use trail.	Most areas are well served by existing multi-use trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain existing trails. - Complete planned trails. - Build new trails to create a connected trail system.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks staff presenting at a public meeting.

ANALYSIS

APPLYING LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

This section applies the level of service standards to the existing system of local parks, regional parks, and trails within Oklahoma City. Developer-provided local parks were included as part of the existing system. School parks were not included as part of the existing system but were included in the analysis to show how they could supplement the local park system under public access agreements. Parks in surrounding communities were not included but may be relevant to the local park service in parts of Oklahoma City.

For each of the maps in this section, “*Future Protected Open Space / Agricultural Land*” represents areas designated in the Land Use Plan as Open Space and Agricultural Preserve. “*Future Limited Development*” represents areas designated in the Land Use Plan as Heavy Industrial. Because development patterns in these areas are not expected to change anytime soon—seeing little to no residential development—city staff and WRT excluded these areas from the calculations for population served by parks and trails.

Due to a lack of current data at the time of this *2020 Update*, analyses are based on the City’s street network, rather than the sidewalk network. Future mapping should include a robust walking network, using sidewalk data to give a more accurate depiction of a pedestrian’s ability to safely reach a park. This should be done on a smaller scale, looking at individual parks or park clusters to assess opportunities to improve pedestrian access. All sidewalk improvements are guided by [bikewalkokc](#).



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Archery at Martin Park Nature Center

LOCAL PARK ACCESS

Local parks are the backbone of our parks system. They serve neighborhoods' passive and active recreational needs (Ch. 4). The following analyses identify gaps in service in our local park system. With Oklahoma City's large geographic footprint and limited financial resources, the City must use multiple strategies to develop a parks system that matches pace with development. Strategies discussed in this section include 1) acquiring land for new publicly-developed local parks, 2) working with developers to provide privately-developed local parks, and 3) working with schools on joint-use agreements.

Local park service is assessed using levels of service from [planokc](#) (p. 47).

EXISTING LOCAL PARKS ACCESS: PUBLICLY- & PRIVATELY-DEVELOPED

The *2013 Plan* recommended establishing agreements with developers to build private local parks. In 2017, the City implemented Park Impact Fees, which provides developers the option to either pay full park impact fees or build a park—based on OKC Parks' design standards—for reduced fees. Developer-provided local parks have a service area of $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile because they are meant to serve the development in which they are located. Developer-provided local parks are owned and maintained by the development.

The local park system includes both publicly- and privately- developed parks. Publicly-developed local parks include Oklahoma City's local and regional parks, since a regional park may be a neighborhood's closest park. Privately-developed local parks include all Park Impact Fee parks provided by developers.

Local park standards for each LUTA category were applied to the park system. In **Map 5.7**, light green areas are served by publicly-developed parks. Black dashed areas are served by developer-provided local parks. Dark pink areas represent existing concentrations of population that are not being served by the current park system. Light pink areas represent areas projected to grow by 2030 that will be underserved by the current park system. These areas should be studied for ways to provide better access to existing parks or considered for new local or regional parks.

While much of the rural LUTAs are well-served by local parks, less than half of the urban low area is served. Just over half of the residents in the urban core are served by local parks. Approximately half of the City's population is served by local parks.

The **table below** demonstrates the positive effect of the Park Impact Fee Ordinance on our park system, with increased local park access. Between 2017 and 2030, overall park service remains the same. However, it is likely that more developer-provided parks will be built in the Urban Low (developing) area. This would result in more residents served in 2030 without the City building new parks.

The *2013 Plan* recommended to limit the acquisition of land for local parks to areas already developed. Local park needs for developing parts of the city should typically be met through school parks or the Park Impact Fee—either by using funds collected to develop a regional park, or by developers building private local parks.

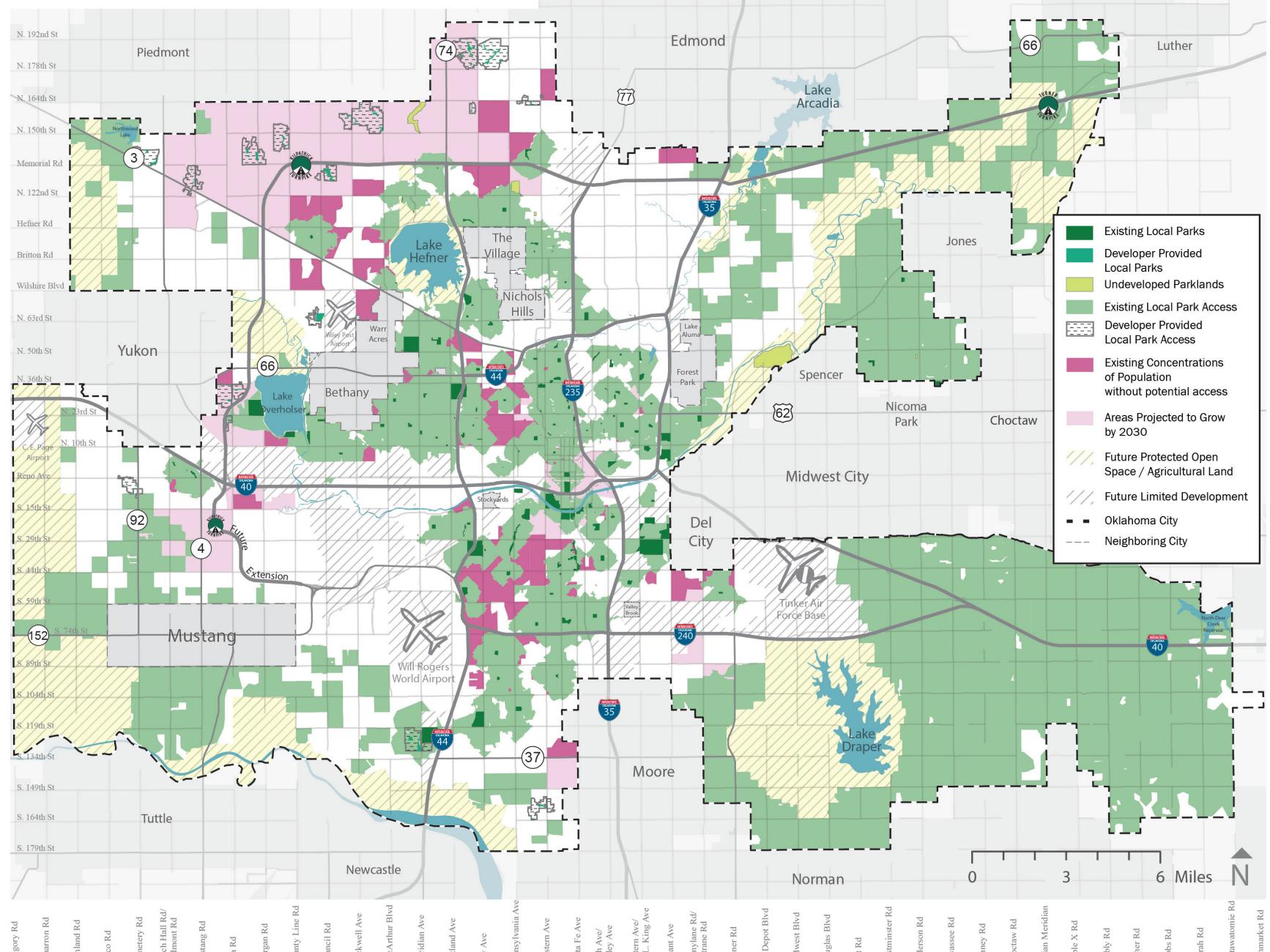
2017	City-Wide Total Population: 591,575*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 154,515)	UL (Total Population: 398,745)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 38,314)
Population Served by Existing Publicly-Developed Local Parks	48%	55%	41%	97%
Population Served by Existing Privately-Developed Local Parks	10%	0%	15%	0%
Total Population Served by Publicly- and Privately-Developed Local Parks	58%	55%	56%	97%

Total population calculations are based on 2017 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.

2030	City-Wide Total Population: 655,138*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 143,226)	UL (Total Population: 447,949)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 63,962)
Population Served by Existing Publicly-Developed Local Parks	43%	56%	31%	98%
Population Served by Existing Privately-Developed Local Parks	15%	0%	22%	0%
Total Population Served by Publicly- and Privately-Developed Local Parks	58%	56%	53%	98%

Total population calculations are based on the 2030 population projections and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.

AREAS CURRENTLY SERVED BY LOCAL PARKS



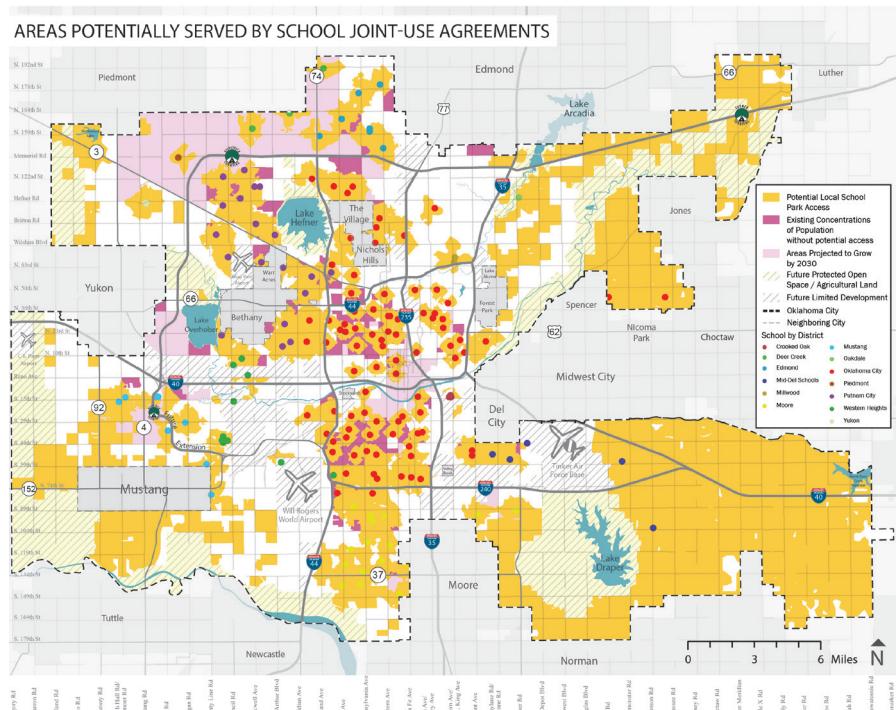
POTENTIAL LOCAL PARK ACCESS: SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

The 2013 Plan recommended establishing agreements for the joint-use of school parks. There are currently several agreements in place that limit joint-use to programmed recreational activities in school gymnasiums. These limited agreements do not allow for school parkland to be open to the public after school hours as a local neighborhood park. OKC Parks has one joint-use agreement that allows for this—Rotary Playground Park.

This analysis shows how school parks may fill service gaps and supplement our local park system. For this analysis, potential joint-use school parks have the same level of service in each LUTA category as public local parks. **Map 5.8** shows individual schools across the city and what their local park service area would be if a joint-use agreement were reached. Each school district is represented by a different color. Orange represents areas of the city with potential park access through local school partnerships.

When the school partnership map is overlaid with existing local park access gaps, the level of service increases across the city (**Map 5.9**). The **table to the right** shows that for the 2017 population, rural LUTAs do not see an increase in service because a majority of the rural population is already served. The rest of the city sees increases of more than 20% in their local parks access.

Map 5.9 demonstrates the potential for increased local park access—through school park joint-use agreements—without building new parks. Joint-use agreements between schools and OKC Parks must be mutually beneficial, assigning responsibility for maintenance, playground inspection, asset replacement, and public access.



MAP 5.8

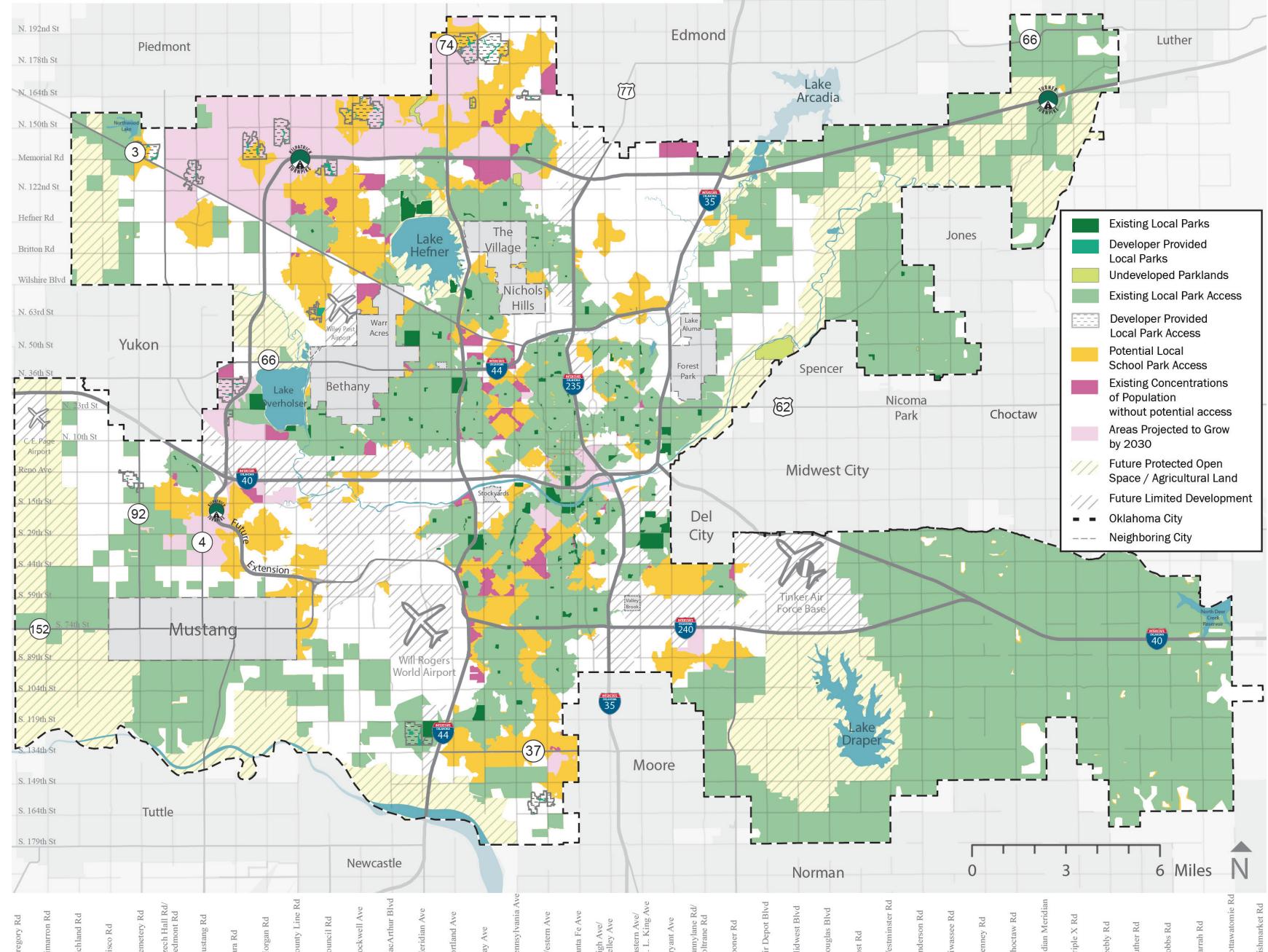
2017	City-Wide Total Population: 591,575*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 154,515)	UL (Total Population: 398,745)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 38,314)
Population Served by Existing Publicly-Developed Local Parks	48%	55%	41%	97%
Population Served by Access to School Parks	23%	21%	26%	0%
Total Population Served by Publicly-Developed Local Parks and Access to School Parks	71%	76%	67%	97%

*Total population calculations are based on 2017 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.

2030	City-Wide Total Population: 655,138*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 143,226)	UL (Total Population: 447,949)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 63,962)
Population Served by Existing Publicly-Developed Local Parks	43%	56%	31%	98%
Population Served by Access to School Parks	21%	18%	24%	0%
Total Population Served by Publicly-Developed Local Parks and Access to School Parks	64%	74%	55%	98%

*Total population calculations are based on the 2030 population projections and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.

AREAS CURRENTLY & POTENTIALLY SERVED BY LOCAL PARKS



MAP 5.9

Public parks that are undeveloped are included on this map for reference but are categorized as green spaces and therefore do not currently have a service area.

REGIONAL PARK ACCESS

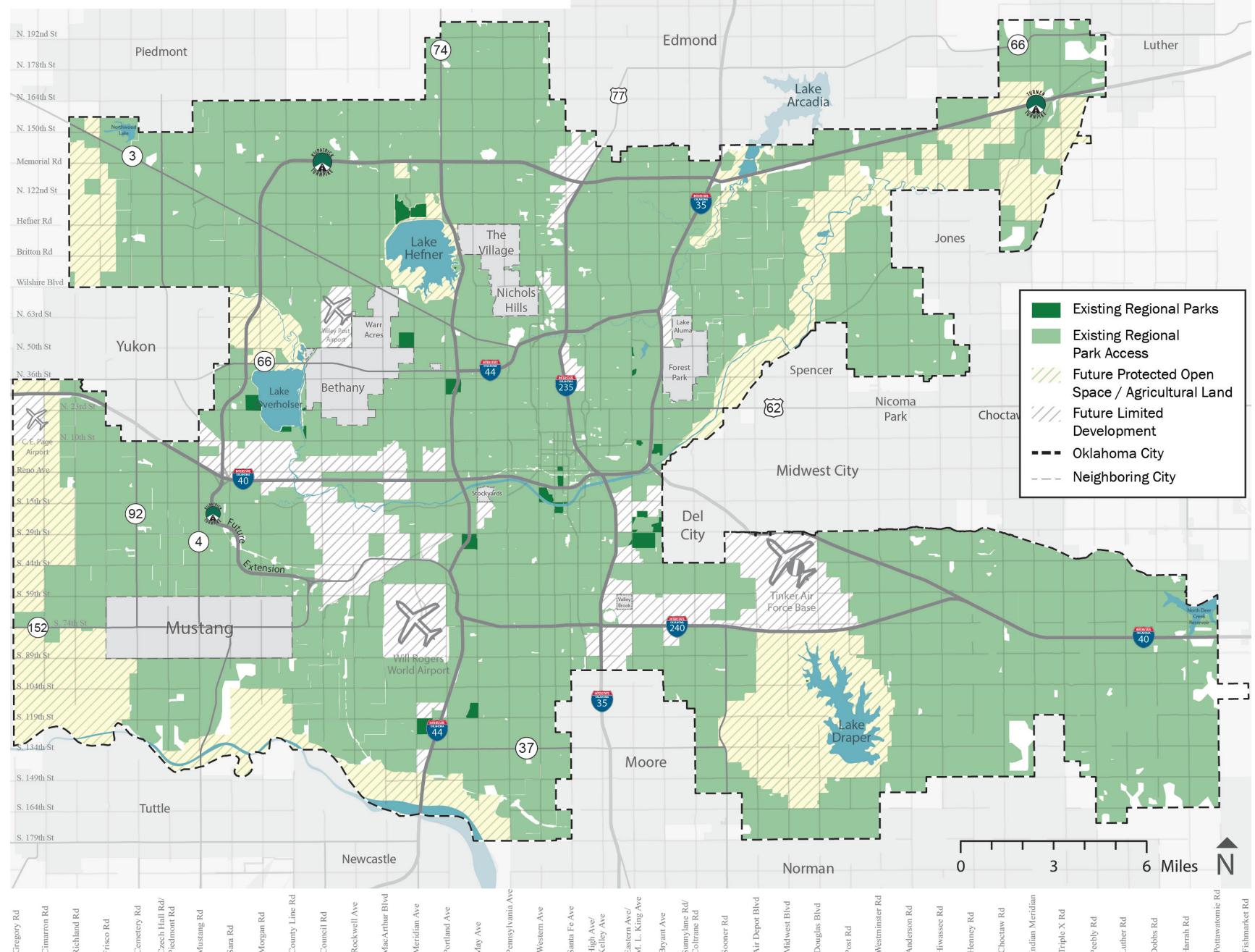
Regional parks are larger than local parks and are focused on meeting the needs of a broader community (Ch. 4). Regional park standards for each level of service tier were applied to the park system. In **Map 5.10**, light green areas are served by the current regional park system.

Most of the City's land area, and a majority of residents, are served by regional parks according to standards set by **planokc** (p. 47). Overlaying the areas meeting the standards with 2017 and projected 2030 population showed no significant change in service, due to most of the land area already being served.

Although most of the city is served by regional parks, based on the level of service standards from **planokc**, strategies must be developed to locate future regional parks. When locating regional parks, decision-makers should consult:

- **Map 5.1 & 5.2: 2017 Population & 2030 Population Projections, p. 45-46.** Regional parks are meant to serve community needs. They should have at least one revenue-generating facility (Ch. 4). Locating future regional parks near current or future concentrations of population will ensure the parks have enough users to support their facilities.
- **Map 5.7: Areas Served by Existing Local Parks, p. 54.** Regional parks can fill gaps in service for local parks, while serving community needs with regional park amenities. Future regional parks should be considered in areas underserved by local parks. Funds from the Park Impact Fee can be used to locate regional parks in developing parts of the city that have gaps in local park service.
- **Maps 5.11-5.14: Regional Parks & Park Facilities Locations, p. 59-60.** These maps show regional parks and large park facilities, including recreation centers, senior centers, aquatic centers, and sports complexes. Due to their size and amenities, regional parks are intended to support these types of facilities. Future regional parks should be considered in areas needing these park facilities.
- **planokc maps including Land Supply, Sewer Service Availability, Water Service Availability, Fire Service Availability, Upland Forests, Vulnerable Aquifers, and Riparian Areas.** These maps highlight service availability and environmentally sensitive areas. Considerations should be made for acquiring land for regional parks in areas further from the urban core, including areas of farmland, environmentally sensitive areas, and other open space, to protect the land under city ownership until funding is available to develop it as a regional park. Utility service maps provide insight on where utilities will likely be available in the future to support these parks.

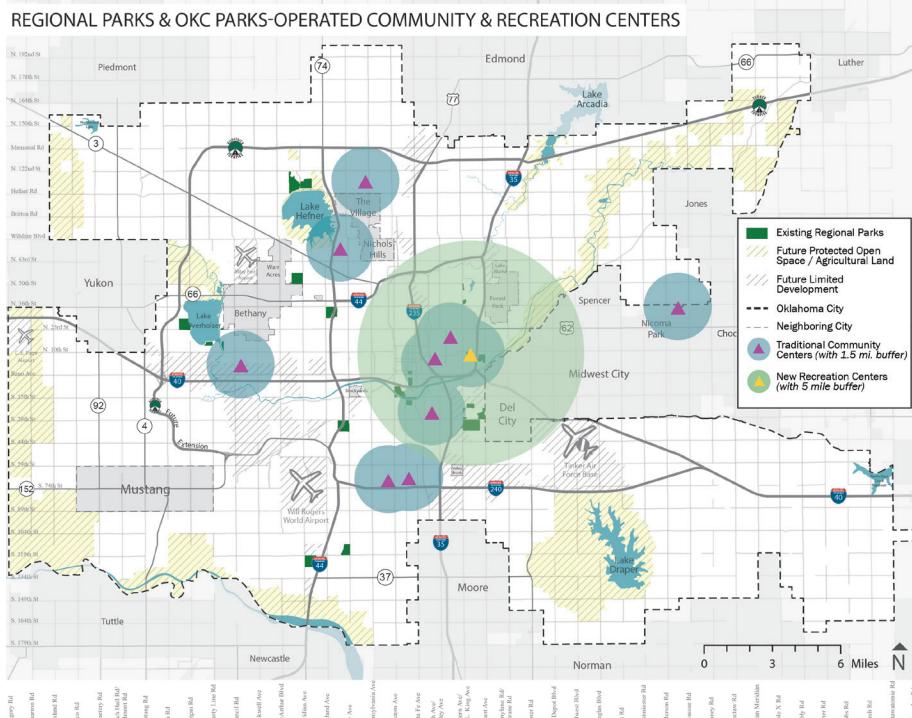
AREAS CURRENTLY SERVED BY REGIONAL PARKS



MAP 5.10

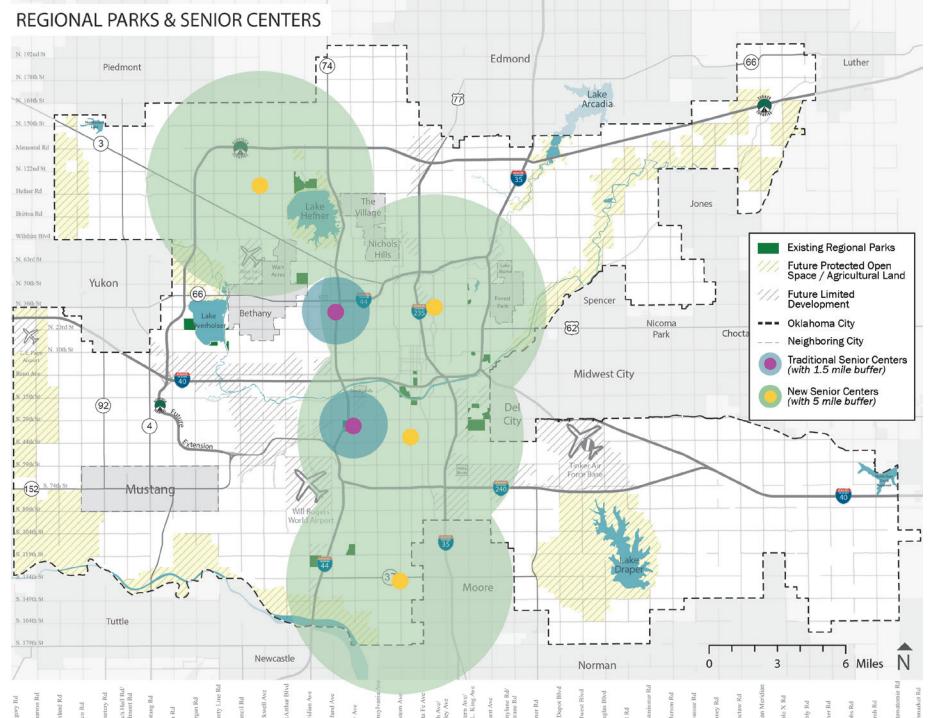
REGIONAL PARKS ACCESS

Community & Recreation Centers



Traditional community centers are those built prior to 2020. These small centers each have a 1.5-mile service area because they were designed to serve mostly the neighborhoods they were in. Best practices now suggest that larger recreation centers offering more amenities, programs, and community spaces than traditional community centers are preferable for long-term financial sustainability. These new full-service recreation centers have a service area of 5-miles, serving a larger portion of the population.

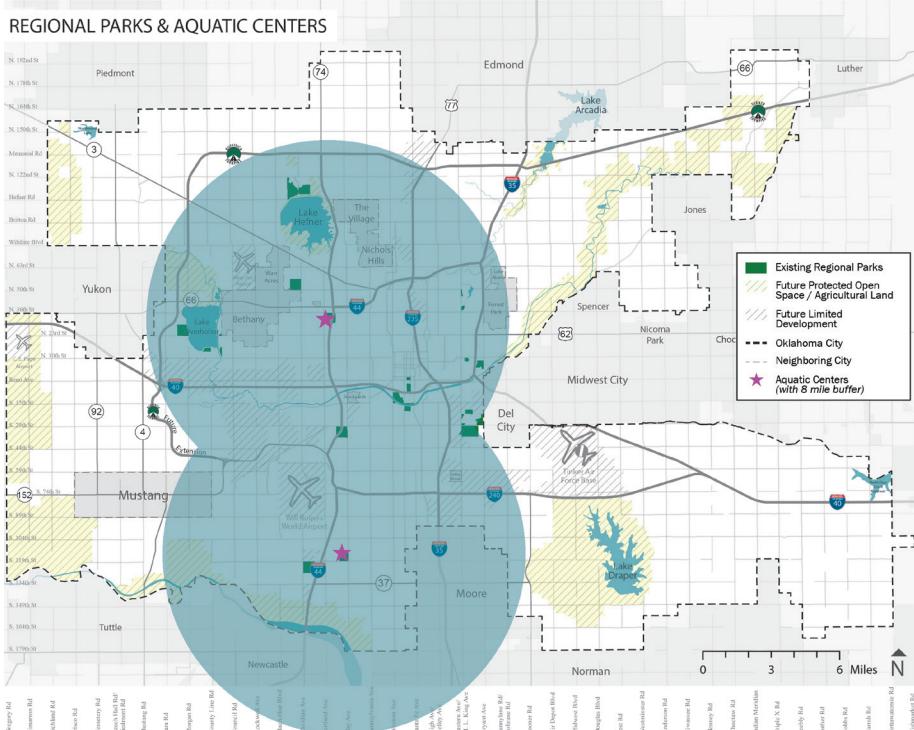
Senior Centers



Traditional senior centers are those built before 2017. These small senior centers have a 1.5-mile service area. New senior centers, funded by MAPS, have a 5-mile service area. New senior centers are larger and equipped with more amenities, programs, and community spaces than traditional senior centers. Two of the four senior centers, funded by MAPS 3, have not been built, but the locations have been determined. A 5th senior center will be built in the next 10 years with MAPS 4 funding; the location is to be determined.

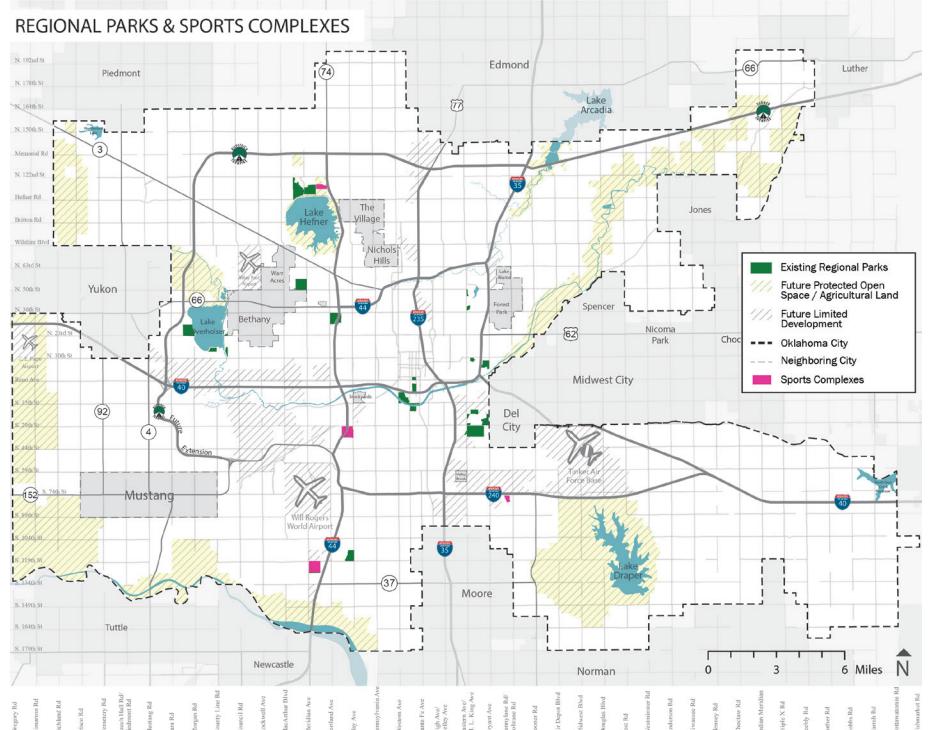
REGIONAL PARKS ACCESS

Aquatic Centers



Aquatic centers are highly specialized park amenities and have an 8-mile service area. Due to their size and unique amenities, they can support a larger population.

Sports Complexes



Sports complexes are parklands that have facilities to support tournament play for soccer, baseball, softball, football, lacrosse, and rugby. Sports complexes are closely associated with regional parks because they need the large land area required for regional parks to support their fields, facilities, and operations.



Source: EMBARK

ABOVE: EMBARK bus stop at a park.

ACCESS TO PARKS: TRANSIT

There has been a growing demand for alternative transportation in Oklahoma City. Previously in this chapter, we looked at the driving network for accessing parks. This section explores how our park system relates to the public transit system.

Transit-accessible parks were defined as those adjacent to or within a quarter-mile (5-minute) walk of existing bus routes. Areas with access to transit-accessible parks were defined as areas adjacent to or within a quarter-mile (5-minute) walk of existing bus routes.

Using these definitions, **Map 5.15** shows that 88 parks are accessible by transit. The **table below** shows 26% of the 2017 population and 21% of the projected 2030 population are within areas that are transit-accessible to parks. The most well-served population is in the downtown area, near the transit hub. As the transit system expands, access to parks via transit is likely to increase.

2017	City-Wide Total Population: 591,575*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 154,515)	UL (Total Population: 398,745)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 38,314)
Population Within 1/4-mile Transit Service Area	26%	54%	18%	0.5%

*Total population calculations are based on 2017 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.

2030	City-Wide Total Population: 655,138*	UM, UH, DT (Total Population: 143,226)	UL (Total Population: 447,949)	RM, RL, UR (Total Population: 63,962)
Population Within 1/4-mile Transit Service Area	21%	56%	13%	0.2%

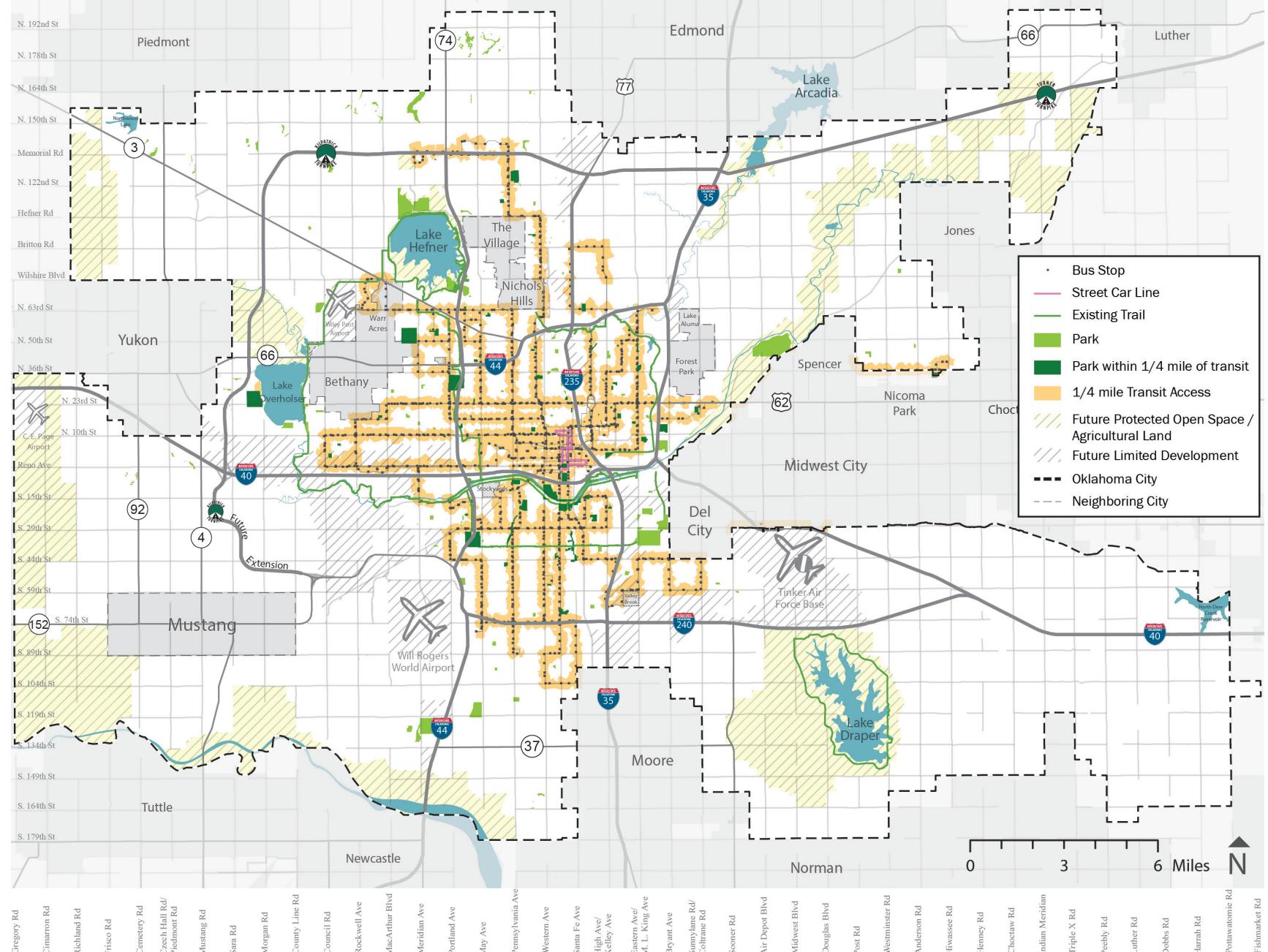
*Total population calculations are based on the 2030 population projections and exclude areas within the Open Space, Heavy Industrial, & Agricultural Preserve LUTAs.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Streetcar loading passengers at the Myriad Botanical Gardens streetcar stop.

TRANSIT ACCESS TO PARKS



MAP 5.15

ACCESS TO TRAILS

Trail standards for each LUTA category were applied to the current trail system. Trail-accessible parks were defined as those adjacent to or within a quarter-mile (5-minute) walk of a multi-use trail. Forty-eight parks are accessible by the existing multi-use trail system.

In **Map 5.16**, light green areas are served by the current trail system (solid green lines). If the planned trails (brown solid lines) were completed, the orange areas would also be served.

Most residents are served by trails, based on the level of service standards from **planOKC** (p. 47). **BikewalkOKC** guides the City on planning and building on- and off-street bicycle infrastructure. This includes appropriate amenities and design guidelines.

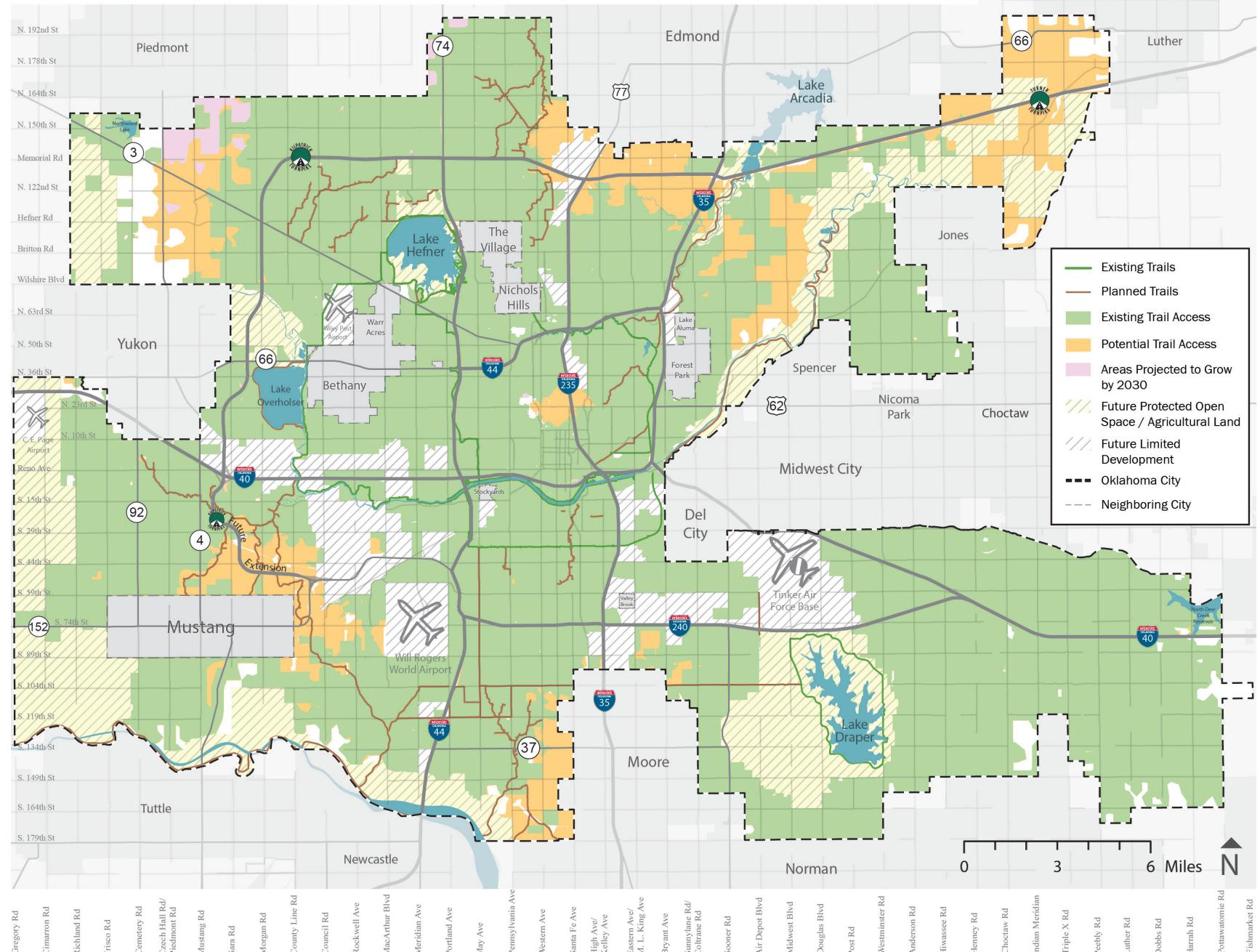


Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Walking trail at Lake Hefner.

48 PARKS ARE
ACCESSIBLE BY THE EXISTING
MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM.

AREAS OF OKC CURRENTLY AND POTENTIALLY WELL-SERVED BY OFF-STREET TRAILS

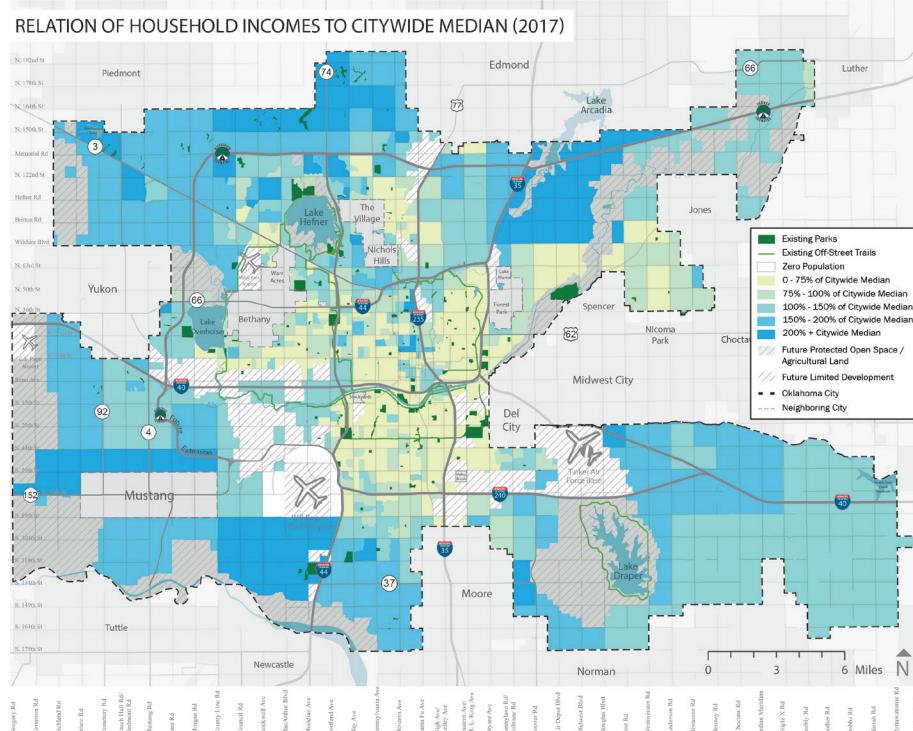


MAP 5.16

DEMOGRAPHICS

To better understand the access of particular segments of the population to existing parks, a demographic analysis was performed to identify areas of the city with higher than average concentrations of particular ages, ethnicities, income groups, and Wellness Scores. For most age and ethnicity cohorts, the population is relatively evenly distributed across the city, with small pockets of concentration. However, four significant patterns were observed.

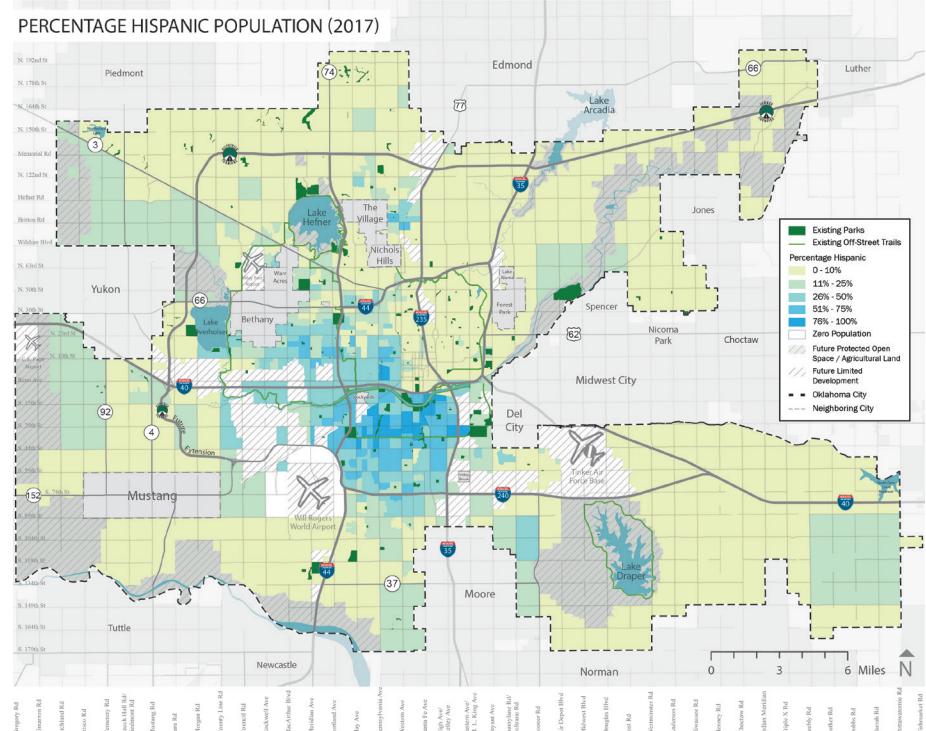
Median Household Income



The median household income in Oklahoma City is about \$60,000 (2017 Census Bureau Population Estimates). Household incomes are significantly higher outside the urban core than within the urban core, except for a few localized neighborhoods.

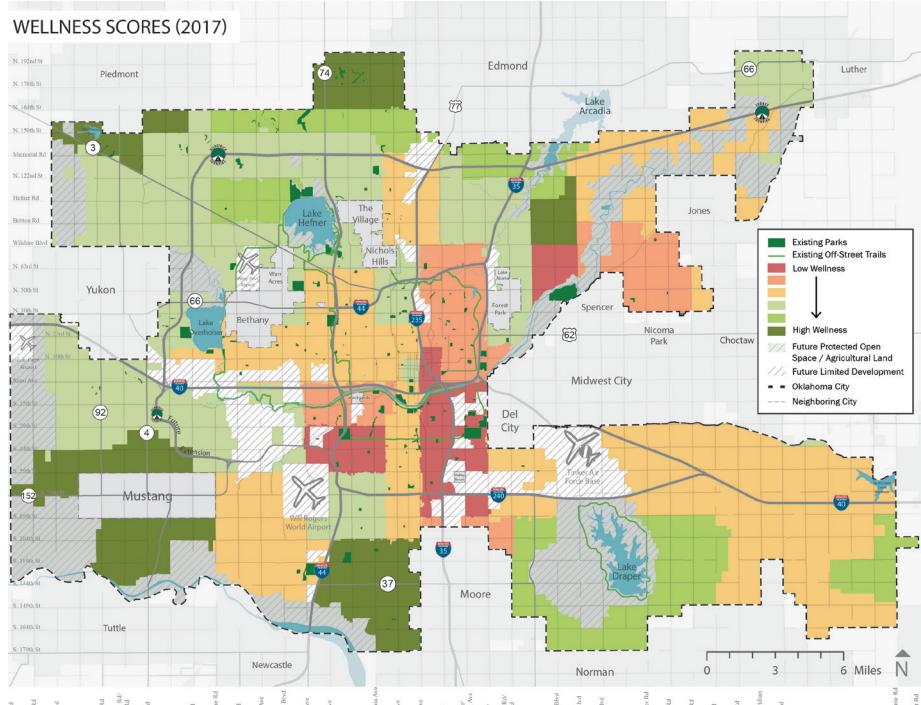
Overlaying this on current park access maps, many lower income households within the urban core are not well-served, while the more rural northeast and southeast areas of the City are well-served. Concentrations of higher income households in the north, northwest, and west are also underserved. These areas are projected to grow by 2030.

Hispanic Population

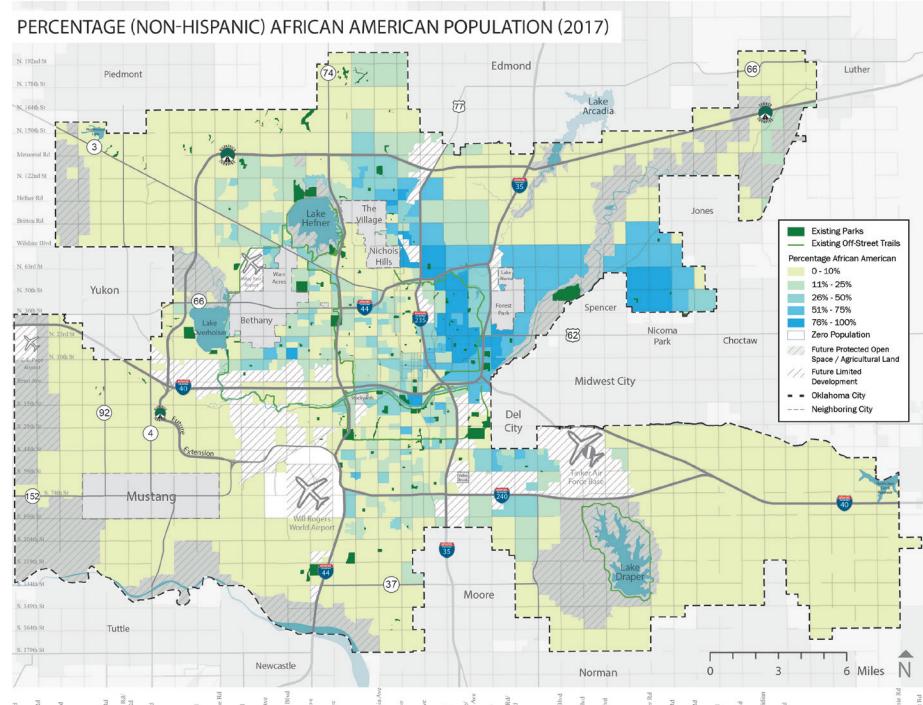


About 19% of the city's population is Hispanic (2017 Census Bureau Population Estimates). This population is highly concentrated in the central southern part of the city, within the loop formed by NW 10th Street, I-35, I-240, and MacArthur Boulevard. Overlaying this on current park access maps, much of the Hispanic population in the loop is underserved. Based on the level of service standards, there are existing concentrations of population and areas projected to grow by 2030 that are not well-served by the park system.

Wellness Scores



African American Population



The Oklahoma City-County Health Department's Wellness Score is an aggregate measure of the determinants of community health, including socioeconomic, educational, environmental, cultural, and infrastructure factors, as well as the overall health of the community. Wellness scores are higher outside the urban core than within the urban core.

Overlaying this on current park access maps, areas with the lowest wellness scores are somewhat served, while areas with high wellness scores are not as well served. This demonstrates that good access to parks does not necessarily mean people are using parks for health benefits. Oklahoma City continues to compare poorly as a city in terms of health and fitness. In 2014, it ranked 48th in the American College of Sports Medicine's American Fitness Index of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the country. This indicates that an awareness campaign about how parks can improve individuals' health may be needed, coupled with improved fitness and wellness facilities and programs (a need identified through the 2013 Community Survey).

About 14% of the city's population is African American (2017 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates). This population is highly concentrated in the northeast quadrant of the city, in a corridor stretching from College Park to Carverdale; around NE 63rd Street and N Sooner Road; and around NE 50th Street and N Anderson Road.

Overlaying this on current park access maps, the area around NE 50th Street and N Anderson Road is well served. This area is a low-density rural community with parks in the vicinity. Although there are gaps in service in the areas from College Park to Carverdale and around NE 63rd and N Sooner Road, there is not a large concentration of population that is underserved based on the established standards.



"Telescopes such as these owned by Russel Wilkerson, will be set up at Will Rogers Park this weekend for the public to gaze through."

Source: Oklahoma Times, June 13, 1963

CH. 6 | ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan provides a framework to guide decision-making and allocate resources to achieve the six strategic directions identified in the *2013 Parks Master Plan*. It should be incorporated into annual work plans and budgeting systems and monitored on a continuous, as-needed basis. This continuous review supports planning as an ongoing process.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Splash pad at Myriad Botanical Gardens.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan was developed for the *2013 Parks Master Plan* and has not changed for this *2020 Update*.

The Action Plan includes recommendations for how the City of Oklahoma City and community partners can implement each of the six Strategic Directions outlined in Chapter 3 (p. 30). For each of the strategic directions, there is a set of actions that can move the park system in that direction, a rationale for each action, and specific action steps that the City and its partners can take to implement the actions.

The Action Table, located in *Appendix E* (p. 115) of this document, provides a summary of the strategic directions, actions, and action steps. For each action, the Action Table also:

- Assigns a responsible party for implementation and monitoring/evaluation.
- Lists potential partners outside of OKC Parks, including public, private, and non-profit entities that could assist in implementation.
- Provides performance measures that can be used to gauge success in implementation.
- Indicates a suggested time frame for implementation.
- Indicates the status of completion (2020 Update).

It should be noted that the Action Table is not intended to be definitive, but rather to provide a working framework for discussion and further development by the City of Oklahoma City and its partners. The City has already moved forward with some of the recommendations. Others will be phased in over time or require further evaluation before being implemented. The intent is for the Action Plan to be a working tool to carry out the vision, mission, and strategic directions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

1. MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE PHYSICAL ASSETS OF EXISTING PARKS.

1.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive asset management and maintenance system with sufficient funding to improve the quality of user experiences in Oklahoma City parks.

About 76% of survey respondents rated the quality of parks in Oklahoma City as excellent or good. The national average is 85%.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) identifies maintenance standards on a six-level scale. Mode II is the level of maintenance expected on a recurring basis, while Mode I is the highest level maintenance reserved for high-visibility areas and Mode III often results from staffing or funding limitations. Current maintenance in Oklahoma City generally corresponds to NRPA Mode II or III, with sports fields achieving Mode II maintenance and neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks achieving Mode III maintenance.

- 1.1.1. Maintain an inventory of all park assets (facilities, infrastructure, and grounds), including condition, deferred maintenance needs, and life cycle replacement schedules.
- 1.1.2. Establish maintenance standards for park assets (facilities, infrastructure, and grounds) tied to quality outcomes. Target a minimum of Mode II maintenance using NRPA's standards.
- 1.1.3. Prioritize and implement physical investments in existing park assets to implement the standards and address deferred maintenance and life cycle replacement.
- 1.1.4. Update existing facility and grounds

maintenance procedures to support the system.

- 1.1.5. Increase current funding to sufficient levels to implement the system.

- 1.2. Determine additional areas in the system where mowing can be substantially reduced or eliminated to reduce cost and create a more balanced system of natural and maintained areas.

While OKC Parks has already identified areas that can remain in a natural state, public expectations and climatic conditions contribute to more mowing than may be necessary.

- 1.2.1. Establish criteria to identify natural areas (e.g., public visibility, ecological restoration value, etc.).

- 1.2.2. Amend the weed ordinance to allow natural areas to be maintained in Oklahoma City parks.

- 1.2.3. Incorporate natural area management zones and practices into the maintenance plans for each park.

- 1.2.4. Undertake public outreach/education on the value of natural areas in city parks.

- 1.3. Develop and implement design standards to improve the attractiveness of and enhance user experiences in community-serving parks.

To clarify expectations, streamline the design process, and promote equity of service delivery, OKC Parks should codify its current guidelines for the design of neighborhood and other parks into a formal set of design standards for each type of park in the system. The guidelines and approval process for projects in parks should be simpler and more accessible to citizens and neighborhoods to spur additional community involvement.

- 1.3.1. Structure the design standards to address the desired facilities and amenities for each park

type (see Chapter 4), with the overall goal of providing a range of quality experiences to draw different age groups to use the park.

- 1.3.2. Address the following in the design standards: facility design (e.g., materials); access, circulation, and parking to support different levels of facilities and amenities; landscaping, including tree planting and maintenance per Action 1.4; and signage, safety and security, lighting, costs, environmental sustainability, etc.

- 1.3.3. Apply the design standards to all physical improvement projects in the parks.

- 1.4. Implement a tree planting and replacement program in the Oklahoma City parks.

Thirty percent of survey respondents indicated that the City should emphasize making improvements to existing parks, including planting trees. The City of Oklahoma City and OKC Parks do not currently have a tree canopy standard. However, parks are natural places to plant trees, increase the city's tree canopy, and maximize the benefits that trees provide.

- 1.4.1. Develop a GIS inventory of existing trees in the parks (species, size, condition, canopy coverage).

- 1.4.2. Establish a tree canopy coverage target, preferred species, and criteria for priority tree planting locations (e.g., in picnic areas and along walking trails).

- 1.4.3. Allocate funding in the annual parks budget for tree planting and replacement. Include adequate funding for maintenance.

- 1.4.4. Support greenOKC's direction to establish an Urban Forestry Program and City Urban Forester position.

- 1.4.5. Coordinate tree planting with city-wide efforts (e.g., the ReleafOKC program).

1.5. Identify and dispose of unproductive parks to allow resources to be invested in more productive parks that better serve community needs.

OKC Parks currently has a system of identifying and disposing of surplus parks. At least 3 parks were identified as surplus since the 2005 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. However, the Department often finds that parks identified as surplus are difficult to dispose of.

1.5.1. Use the criteria defined in Chapter 4 to identify and dispose of surplus parks.

1.5.2. Improve processes for disposal of parkland identified as surplus.

1.6. Evaluate the current park maintenance districts for opportunities to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

To increase the level of maintenance and improve the appearance of parks across the system, OKC Parks can aim to increase efficiency and reduce maintenance costs. One way to achieve this is to optimize maintenance operations, specifically the locations of maintenance districts and the amount of time maintenance staff spends driving.

1.6.1. Undertake a drive time analysis to determine the time maintenance staff spends driving during a typical day.

1.6.2. Redesign the existing (five) park maintenance districts to limit the amount of drive time (ideally to no more than an hour and a half daily) to increase productivity and reduce the cost of maintenance and associated expenses such as fuel. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to compare gains to costs such as increased supervision, new maintenance facility requirements, etc. prior to finalizing a recommendation for revised or new districts.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks' Forestry staff trimming trees.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2. DEVELOP FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS IN EXISTING PARKS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS.

2.1. Implement a program to improve existing park assets to align with community recreational facility needs.

Park facilities should meet the needs of the people who live in the neighborhoods they serve. The community survey indicated that 19% of respondents did not use parks and recreation facilities more often because a desired facility or program was not available. The survey also identified priority facility needs, summarized in Chapter 3. Used in combination with the list of amenities in the park classifications in Chapter 4, this can provide a guide to determine whether community needs are being met and what facilities should be added to existing parks.

2.1.1. Evaluate each park for its contribution to community needs using the park classification and evaluation considerations contained in Chapter 4.

2.1.2. Using the evaluation conducted per 2.1.1, prioritize deficient parks for improvements (upgrades to existing facilities, development of new ones, etc.) to meet community needs.

2.1.3. Develop and regularly update park master plans to define the improvements to be made to priority parks. Engage surrounding residents in the planning process to address the local neighborhood context, demographics, needs, and priorities. Remove or replace unproductive facilities or amenities.

2.1.4. Establish long-range maintenance plans for park improvements consistent with the asset management and maintenance system (Action 1.1). Allocate funding to support

improvements and long-term maintenance.

2.2. Develop a plan for recreational programs and services to be offered in Oklahoma City parks to meet community needs.

In addition to aligning park assets with community needs, park programming should be aligned with community needs. Ninety-four percent of survey respondents indicated they are very or somewhat important to overall quality of life. As with facilities, the survey also identified priority program needs, summarized in Chapter 3. In addition, 85% of respondents indicated that parks, facilities, and programs are very or somewhat important to the pursuit of a healthy and active lifestyle, indicating great potential for health and wellness programming.

2.2.1. Identify core programs and services that should be offered by OKC Parks, focusing on health and wellness as the key element. Identify non-core programs that can be offered by other providers.

2.2.2. Evaluate, strengthen, and expand existing offerings by OKC Parks consistent with the definition of core programs and services. Incorporate facilities to support these programs and services into park improvement plans.

2.2.3. Establish partnership agreements that maximize the extent to which recreational programs and services offered by other providers in Oklahoma City parks meet needs of the overall community (as opposed to specific interest groups).

2.2.4. Explore joint programming opportunities with school districts within Oklahoma City.

2.3. Implement a model of larger, multi-generational centers located in regional (district or metropolitan) parks to replace the current outdated model of smaller community centers in community parks.

The current model of many, small dispersed community centers is difficult to maintain and replicate given current funding. Nationally, community centers are being replaced by fewer, larger multi-generational centers that are more cost effective, can offer a larger variety of programs, and cater to much larger segments of the community.

2.3.1. Identify the programs and uses to be accommodated in multi-generational centers based on the needs analysis. Such centers should incorporate the components of aquatic centers, senior wellness centers, and community/health and fitness centers into one facility.

2.3.2. Identify locations for multi-generational centers based on the level of service standards. Where feasible, expand/upgrade existing facilities (e.g., regional aquatic centers). Develop plans, allocate funding, and incorporate the identified centers into the city's Capital Improvements Program. Dedicate funding to support long-term maintenance.

2.4. Enhance the value of the Oklahoma City parks as places for the community to come together at scales ranging from neighborhood gatherings to large-scale festivals and special events.

In addition to supporting the highest quality of life for Oklahoma City residents, the mission of the park system includes stimulating the economic viability of the city. Neighborhood gatherings and special events result in increased awareness of the park system and increased spending around the venue, and parks are natural event venues. Large-scale festivals and special events provide an opportunity to draw visitors from outside the city, allowing the city to capture additional spending.

2.4.1. Designate areas for informal gatherings in

2.4.2. local (neighborhood and community) parks. Incorporate larger special event areas with sufficient support facilities (access, parking, etc.) into regional (district and metropolitan) parks.

2.4.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing special events offered in Oklahoma City parks. Identify five or more existing or new signature events that can be leveraged for regional economic impact and bring recognition to the park system (see Action 5.2).

2.5. Increase the attractiveness of Oklahoma City parks for young adult professionals as an economic development and community-building strategy.

Companies looking to hire young professionals consider a good park system among the amenities they know will attract such talent. Young professionals are looking for high quality of life, including recreational opportunities, urban life, and amenities such as parks. These are reasons cited, for example, in Boeing's decision to relocate its corporate headquarters to Chicago in 2001.

2.5.1. Conduct surveys and focus groups to determine the recreational opportunities young professionals seek in a park system, with the goal of increasing the city's competitiveness with other regions in attracting and retaining talented young workers and the businesses that depend upon them.

2.5.2. Based on the survey and focus group results, incorporate selected facilities and programs appealing to young adult professionals into regional or community parks.

2.5.3. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to market the economic value of parks as a way to attract talented young workers and businesses to the city (Action 4.2).



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Yoga in the Park at Will Rogers Gardens.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

3. IMPROVE ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS.

3.1. Implement a program to better connect neighborhoods to existing parks via the sidewalk network.

More than half of survey respondents indicated there are insufficient parks and green space areas within walking distance of their residence. The analysis in Chapter 6 of the 2013 Parks Master Plan showed that nearly 40% of the people who could be within walking distance of a park are not because of a lack of sidewalks.

3.1.1. Use the park access maps in Chapter 6 of the 2013 Plan to identify sidewalk gaps, deficient conditions, and other access barriers within a ½- to 1-mile “walkshed” of each existing park. Prioritize existing and potential street/sidewalk connections for improvement.

3.1.2. Evaluate current park access points as they relate to the existing and potential street/sidewalk connections. Prioritize improvements to existing and development of new access points to create welcoming park entrances (signage, landscaping, etc.). Develop design standards for these entrances (Action 1.3).

3.1.3. Prioritize street tree planting along streets leading to parks.

3.1.4. Allocate funding for priority park access (sidewalk and entrance) improvements, targeting retrofits in the central city and urban area to improve community health and promote economic revitalization.

3.2. Connect parks to the citywide trail system.

Another way to improve access to existing parks—particularly regional parks—is to better connect

them to the citywide trail system. Since trails are the highest priority facility identified by survey respondents, there is clearly a desire for a more comprehensive trail network. Trails also attract people from longer distances, so connecting parks to trails increases the number of potential park users.

3.2.1. Prioritize segments of the City’s trails master plan (Action 5.1) connecting to existing parks for implementation, including “street-trails” to create connections to larger parks.

3.3. Enhance City design standards to promote connectivity.

For a period in Oklahoma City, sidewalks were not part of street design standards and were not required to be built as part of new road construction or road improvement projects. This explains why some neighborhoods have no sidewalks and why more residents do not have sufficient parks and green space areas within walking distance. This plan supports planokc’s recommendations to include better pedestrian and bicycle requirements in the City’s street design standards.

3.3.1. Implement the pedestrian and bicycle requirements of planokc’s proposed street design standards to improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment, including sidewalks, multi-use paths, and bicycle lanes. Add requirements for street trees along both sides of all new or reconstructed streets.

3.3.2. Adopt a new “street-trail” classification (separated paths wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles along boulevards and other streets designated in the City’s trails master plan).



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Will Rogers Gardens

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

4. PROMOTE AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF PARKS.

4.1. Increase the marketing and business development capabilities of OKC Parks.

The community survey showed the most common way residents hear about parks, programs, and activities is by word of mouth—from friends and neighbors. It also showed that 37% of households do not use parks and recreation facilities and programs more often because they do not know where to go or what is offered, significantly higher than the national average of 22%. This indicates a lack of effective marketing of the park system. Currently, OKC Parks has only a single person dedicated to marketing, and there is no comprehensive marketing plan for the park system. Additionally, business development capabilities could help the Department become more financially self-sufficient and achieve a higher level of cost recovery.

4.1.1. Develop a distinctive “brand” for Oklahoma City parks within the overall city brand.

4.1.2. Increase the marketing resources of OKC Parks, and implement a plan to strengthen communication and outreach efforts on the value of parks (website, social media, etc.) using the brand.

4.1.3. Ensure that partners who are operating programs and facilities in Oklahoma City parks provide recognition for the park system (partnership agreements, signage, brochures, etc.).

4.1.4. Establish a business development office to develop earned income opportunities and other diversified revenue options available to help offset operational and capital costs and to oversee development of business plans for

major facilities and events.

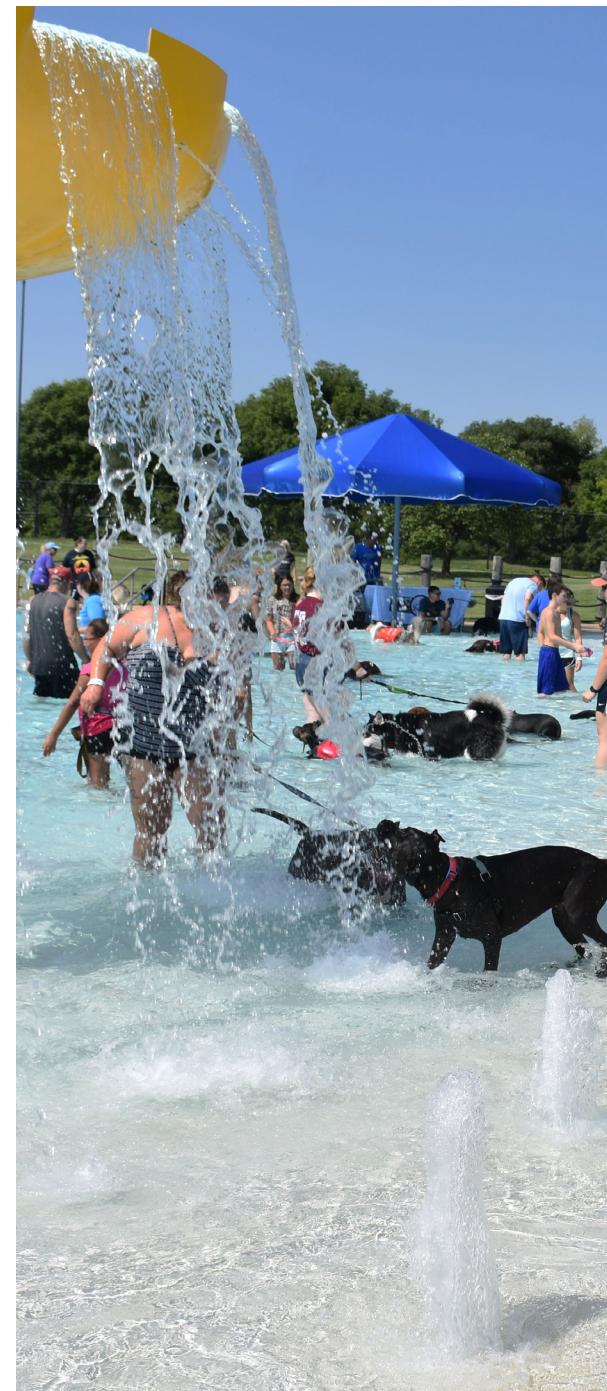
4.2. Initiate a broader, community-wide campaign to increase awareness of the value parks bring to Oklahoma City's quality of life and economy.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they believe quality parks, facilities, and programs are very or somewhat important to the pursuit of a healthy and active lifestyle (85%) and to the overall quality of life in Oklahoma City (94%). Yet, Oklahoma City continues to compare poorly as a city in terms of health and fitness. It ranked last in the American College of Sports Medicine's American Fitness Index of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the country. In addition, parks bring economic value by way of increasing surrounding property values, attracting a skilled workforce, and direct visitor spending. How parks can affect individuals' health and how parks benefit the economy should be part of a larger campaign to increase awareness of the value parks bring to Oklahoma City's quality of life and economy.

4.2.1. Conduct a study of the economic impact of Oklahoma City parks.

4.2.2. Establish a “Parks Alliance” based on the Neighborhood Alliance model, with funding to focus on marketing the value of parks citywide as a key priority (see Chapter 7).

4.2.3. Develop and implement a coordinated marketing campaign to promote the value of Oklahoma City parks. Engage other partners (Chamber of Commerce, City-County Health Department, healthcare institutions, Oklahoma City Schools, Neighborhood Alliance, etc.) and media outlets in this effort.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Doggy Dip N Dash

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

5. DEVELOP NEW PARKS AND FACILITIES.

5.1. Complete the citywide trails system.

Nearly twice as many survey respondents (38%) selected walking and biking trails as a top priority facility as the next highest choice. There is clearly a desire for a more comprehensive trail network. Since the previous trail master plan was developed, some trail segments have become unfeasible. To achieve a citywide, connected system, new connections will be necessary. Trail design and appropriate amenities can be found in bikewalkokc.

5.1.1. Using the trail access and connectivity maps in Chapter 6 (2013 Parks Master Plan) as a guide, update the trails master plan and prioritize key segments for implementation.

5.1.2. Identify “street-trail” connections along key streets and boulevards to increase connectivity and fill gaps in the system.

5.1.3. Require new developments to reserve trail segments designated on the trails master plan.

5.1.4. Incorporate “healthy heart trail” or similar health and wellness features into the trails system (signage, distance markers, etc.).

5.1.5. Develop greenway corridors around trails, where rights-of-way allow, with trees, benches, possible concessions, and other amenities.

5.2. Develop a signature downtown (Core to Shore) park system to leverage economic development and quality of life.

The Core to Shore plan envisions a series of neighborhoods, parks, and economic development opportunities that will reinvigorate the area between downtown Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma River, bring new jobs, and result in a higher quality of life for residents. A 40-acre

Central Park promises to be a centerpiece for the development of new offices, retail, and mixed use housing in the area.

5.2.1. Implement the Core to Shore Plan connecting the downtown core to the Oklahoma River, beginning with Central Park. Identify a sustainable funding stream to support park operations and the highest standards of maintenance (Mode I per NRPA’s maintenance standards).

5.2.2. Incorporate regionally significant, large-scale events into downtown park programming (see Action 2.4).

5.2.3. Incorporate recreational facilities and amenities for downtown residents.

5.3. **Develop new local (neighborhood or community) parks where necessary to serve existing residents and regional (district or metropolitan) parks where necessary to serve residents of developing parts of the city (urban or urban growth area).**

While the City of Oklahoma City should continue to serve residents with the existing system of local and regional parks in developed parts of the city, the City should focus its attention on filling gaps in service for existing residents and providing regional parks in developing parts of the city. Local park needs for developing areas should be met through school parks and development regulations that require privately-built parks to serve new neighborhoods.

5.3.1. Conduct site selection analyses in areas where the level of service standards indicate future local and regional parks will be needed. Incorporate land acquisition and park development into long-term capital improvement plans.

5.3.2. Allocate funding to support development of the new parks when needed to serve residents of developing areas. Consider enactment of

a park impact fee proportional to the demand for regional recreation generated by new developments.

5.4. Develop partnerships to develop and manage new facilities.

OKC Parks has some very successful partnership agreements that enable partners to take care of specific parks or operate programs within parks. This helps the City offer programs and services that may not be feasible to provide given current funding. This type of partnership approach could be expanded to develop new facilities. However, the City should make sure its partners provide recognition for its role in partnerships, reversing a common misperception that the parks partners operate in are not publicly accessible or owned.

5.4.1. Engage potential partners (e.g., health care providers, YMCA, corporate sponsors) in developing concepts for significant new facilities (e.g., multi-generational centers/ senior wellness centers) based on needs assessments.

5.4.2. Develop agreements on programs and processes for operating and managing facilities that give proper recognition to Oklahoma City parks.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

6. ESTABLISH AGREEMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE PARKS AND SCHOOL PARKS.

6.1. Develop a coordinated school/park system strategy providing for appropriate use and sharing of facilities for recreational purposes.

School parks—recreation areas on school property—offer a tremendous opportunity to expand park and recreation access in Oklahoma City. Outside of school hours, these facilities can supplement local park service in developed areas where there are gaps in service and be thought of as integral to providing local park service in developing areas. Standard agreements would help streamline the process of working with the many school districts in Oklahoma City to ensure public access to school properties. Design of these spaces to ensure safety outside of school hours should be considered along with school requirements.

6.1.1. Establish standards and agreements for use of school grounds as school parks, prioritizing areas not meeting the level of service standard for access to public parks. Address safety and liability issues.

6.1.2. Develop standards and agreements for joint development of recreational facilities in the construction of new schools or significant upgrades to existing ones.

6.1.3. Begin discussions on the above with the Oklahoma City School District. Extend to school districts located elsewhere in the urban area and the urban growth area over time.

6.2. Meet the local recreational needs of new residents in developing areas through private parks.

Oklahoma City's subdivision regulations include provisions requiring open space for gated subdivisions. However, this should be expanded to include all new subdivisions. Adequate public facilities requirements should include parks, as new development causes an increase in demand for and usage of parks. It should be the developer's responsibility to ensure there are adequate local parks to serve new development and that those parks meet the City's standards.

6.2.1. Establish design standards for private parks in new developments (size, walking distance for residents, minimum uses to be provided, long-term maintenance, etc.).

6.2.2. Incorporate the design standards into a parkland dedication ordinance or other regulations to ensure that the private parks serve the recreational needs of residents.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Shelter at a privately-developed park.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Playground at a privately-developed park.



"Windy day at Woodson Park – Amy, 10, gears up for a windy kite launching at Southside Woodson Park this weekend when the wind had more fun than the other kids, winding up with several kites when strings snapped."

Source: Daily Oklahoman, March 23, 1982

CH. 7 | ACHIEVING THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

The previous chapter covered action steps the City should take to achieve the six strategic directions identified through the *2013 Parks Master Plan*. Chapter 7 dives deeper into the funding, maintenance, and partnership strategies needed to achieve the community's vision for our park system.

FUNDING OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Based on benchmarking, Oklahoma City is below the mean compared to peer cities on per capita spending for maintenance, operations, full-time employees, and spending per full-time employee (see Chapter 3, p. 26). Like City of Oklahoma City government as a whole, OKC Parks is impacted by the fact that Oklahoma is the only state in the United States in which municipalities do not have access to property taxes for operating expenditures (according to the Oklahoma Municipal League), creating a strong reliance on sales taxes (which are cyclical in nature because of their tie to the economy). This fiscal reality highlights the need for diversified funding sources if the Department is to meet its mission of providing high-quality parks, recreational, and cultural services to Oklahoma City residents and visitors—particularly as the city continues to grow and expand outward from the core.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Will Rogers Gardens volunteers.

OKLAHOMA CITY BY THE NUMBERS

The *2013 Master Plan* consultant team assessed financial information provided by OKC Parks for Fiscal Years (FY) 2007–2008 through 2011–2012 (see [Appendix F, p. 123](#), for the complete financial overview). [For this 2020 Update](#), staff updated figures in this section to FY 2019–2020. Unless otherwise noted, resident satisfaction figures are based on surveys conducted to measure OKC Parks' performance on indicators included in the City of Oklahoma City Strategic Business Plan.

- The operating budget for the Department in 2020 was \$22,924,338. This equates to per capita spending of \$38.75, which is very low for Midwestern cities of similar size to Oklahoma City. Typical levels of per capita spending in the Midwest are \$65–70 dollars.
- The Department had a budget cost recovery level of 7% from earned income revenues in 2019. This figure is lower than most Midwestern cities, which typically recover 35–40% of their budget from earned income.
- The 2020 capital budget for OKC Parks was \$6,408,194. Including bond funding, the capital budget was \$45,503,194. Oklahoma City does not have a permanent, dedicated funding source for capital improvements. Best practice cities typically spend 3–4% annually of their total asset value (less land value) on capital investment in facilities and infrastructure. The total asset value of facilities and infrastructure in the Oklahoma City park system was not available for the financial assessment.
- The 2020 OKC Parks operating budget was \$1,728 per acre on maintenance (4,590 acres maintained), a very low level compared to other Midwest cities. In the 2018 City of Oklahoma City DirectionFinder® Survey, residents had a 66% total satisfaction level (very satisfied and satisfied) with maintenance of city parks. Trails received a 60% level of satisfaction.
- The Department budgets \$4.17 per square foot to maintain 428,793 square feet of flower beds. Typical costs for this task are in the range of \$3.50–4.00 per square foot.
- The City budgets \$8.14 per capita on providing recreational opportunities—such as aquatics, athletics, and fishing—to residents and visitors, which is well below the norm. Other Midwestern cities typically spend around \$20 dollars per capita. Resident satisfaction from the City's 2018 resident survey shows that 46% of the residents are very satisfied or satisfied with recreation facilities. Program participants expressed a good level of satisfaction with recreation programs (89%), while the resident survey showed that residents had a 62% level of satisfaction (very satisfied or satisfied) with recreation programs. Based on the performance indicators, aquatic programs had a 44% level of user satisfaction (very satisfied or satisfied) while sports programs had a 46% level of satisfaction. The Department budgets \$244.48 per person who participates in organized sport programs, a relatively high number.

FUNDING SOURCES

Park and recreation agencies across the United States have developed an understanding of how to manage revenue options to support facilities and services in response to the limited availability of tax dollars. Financially sustainable systems no longer rely on taxes as their sole revenue source but have developed new options to help support capital and operational needs.

A growing number of jurisdictions have developed policies on pricing of services, cost recovery rates, and partnership agreements for programs and facilities provided to the community. They have also developed strong partnerships that are fair and equitable in the delivery of services based on whom receives the service, for what purpose, for what benefit, and at what costs. In addition, agencies have learned to use parks and recreation facilities, amenities, programs, and events to create economic development. This development helps keep property values high around parks and along trails through increased maintenance.

Agencies have recognized that people will visit their community for recreation facilities such as sports complexes, pools, special events, and major attractions if the management and presentation results in a high quality experience. In addition, adding sports facilities and events attracts tournaments that create hotel stays and increased expenditures in restaurants and retail areas in the region.

As of 2019, the Department was 7% self-supporting, which is low for an urban park system. As noted, overall per capita spending is also low compared to other park systems, and new and expanded funding sources are needed to sustain the system for the future. A range of funding options is outlined below for consideration in supporting the capital and operational needs of OKC Parks.

Funding Sources for Land Acquisition and Capital Development

Land Dedication and/or Park Impact Fee

Many cities, including Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, San Jose, Chicago, Atlanta, Portland (Oregon), Long Beach (California), and (most recently) Houston, have ordinances requiring housing developers to donate land for parks to serve the new residents and to make up for the loss of open space. In most of those communities, developers who do not wish to donate land have the option of paying into a parkland acquisition fund.

On April 26, 2016, the City Council adopted a new ordinance to establish development impact fees to share the cost of providing infrastructure for parks and trails. In Fiscal Year 2019, the impact fee generated \$1,689,763 for parks and \$805,521 for trails. These fees are used in the areas they were collected to fund the purchase of land for new parks and trails and the capitol to improve the new properties.

Open Space Bond Issue

Many cities across the United States have used open space bond issues to acquire land for parks, park development and open space. The bonds are paid off by either property or sales taxes and are usually ten years in length. Communities such as Seattle, Phoenix, Chicago Park Districts, Kansas City, and Denver have motivated voters to support open space through bond issues.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Tree Climbing Class

Bond Issue for Park Development and Improvements

This is the source that most park and recreation agencies use to motivate voters to support infrastructure improvements and new construction projects. Over the last 10 years, the City of Dallas has been using property-tax-related bond issues to fund over \$700 million in park-related improvements, which is significantly benefitting the livability of neighborhoods, the downtown, and regional parks.

OKC Parks has benefitted from using property-tax-related bonds, more commonly referred to as General Obligation Bonds, since 1909. From 1974 to 1995, voters did not approve any bonds for parks, and park development and improvements suffered from that twenty-one year period without a financial source for improvements. However, from 1995 to 2020, voters approved GO Bonds for nearly \$300 million in park-related improvements.

Facility Authorities

A facility authority can be set up to fund development of a specific park or attraction such as a stadium, large recreation center, aquatic center, or sports venue for competitive events. Bond funding usually comes from sales taxes. The City of Indianapolis has created several community recreation facilities and national competition venues for local and economic purposes. The Facility Authority is responsible for managing the sites and operating them in a self-supporting manner.

Real-Estate Transfer Fees

This is a relatively new form of funding that many agencies and jurisdictions have used to acquire parkland and develop the lands they acquire. The money comes from the transfer of real estate from seller to buyer, with the jurisdiction retaining ½% of the value of the property at the time of sale to be dedicated to acquiring parkland.

Benefit Districts

This funding source identifies the benefits associated

with an improvement as the basis for establishing a tax on surrounding properties or a sales tax to support the capital cost associated with land acquisition and development. This mechanism can be applied to large community parks, regional parks, event plazas, signature parks, and attractions. The benefit districts are usually in downtowns or areas of the city slated for redevelopment. This has been used in Oklahoma City in the Downtown District. Parks and trail impact fees are used in the same manner. The impact fee is used in the same benefit area where the development occurs.

Lease Backs

This is another source of capital funding whereby banks or private placement fund companies will develop a park or recreation attraction, recreation center, pool, sports complex, etc. with the intent of buying the land, developing the project, and leasing it back to the city to pay off the capital costs over a 20 to 30 year period. Major banks are using this mechanism to invest billions of dollars in public infrastructure across the United States.

Transient Occupancy Tax

This funding source is used by many cities to fund improvements in parks in urban areas to improve the image of an area, enhance parks where hotels and businesses are located, and to support the development of park-related improvements. Cities will apply a 5–10% tax on the value of a hotel room, which is dedicated to improving facilities and to market the community.

[The City of Oklahoma City has a hotel “room tax” of 5.5% that funds a full-time Convention and Visitor Bureau.](#)

Special Recognition License Tag

Some cities have created a special designation car tag that provides income to the city or a parks foundation. In Indianapolis, the city has a designated tag for greenways. The license plate provides \$45 per tag to the Greenways Foundation for greenway development and management.

Conservation Districts

Conservation Districts operate similarly to a land trust (see below under Funding Sources for Park Maintenance) but are set up to protect and preserve property for park systems. Usually these conservation districts are managed by a conservation board for the protection of watersheds or sensitive natural areas. The conservation district’s role is to provide landowners with tax benefits for allowing their property to be put into the district for protection purposes.

Park Foundation

Park foundations have helped many cities acquire land and develop parks across the nation. These foundations are established for the purpose of supporting parks and recreation needs in the city. The Houston Parks Foundation typically raises \$5 million a year for land acquisition and park improvements. The City of Indianapolis has a well-managed park foundation that raises capital dollars for needed projects in the city.

[Oklahoma City’s park foundation, The Greater Oklahoma City Parks & Trails Foundation, had its beginnings in 2010. It was relaunched in 2019 after a dedicated group of board members updated the bylaws and had a kickoff event. The Foundation works with donors, community organizations, and government agencies to enhance our parks, trails, and public spaces through advocacy, education, programming, and grantmaking opportunities.](#)

Grants

Grants have always been a good source of funding for parks throughout the United States. Grants can come from the federal government (see below under Federal Funding Sources), state grant sources such as casino revenues or taxes on alcohol, and local grants from community foundations. Indianapolis has received over \$100 million in foundation grants over the last 15 years from the Lilly Endowment for park related improvements in the city.

Income Tax

In Ohio, many cities have passed a 1% income tax to support parks and recreation needs. This is voted on by the community, and outside residents who work in the city help to pay for park and recreational improvements.

Temporary Sales Tax Initiatives

By funding projects with a limited term sales tax, projects can be built debt free.

Oklahoma City has used temporary sales tax to fund park-related improvements through MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects), a temporary penny sales tax, since 1996. Passed in 2019, MAPS 4 is expected to generate \$140 million for park-related improvements, \$110 million for new youth centers, and \$30 million for a new senior wellness center. An additional \$87 million will go towards expanding and improving walking and biking infrastructure.

Funding Sources for Park Maintenance

Oklahoma City's park system would benefit greatly from dedicated funding for parks maintenance. The following are some funding sources that are particularly suitable for this purpose. They can also provide funding for park and recreational facility development.

Maintenance Endowment Fund

This fund is dedicated exclusively for maintenance of a major park or recreational attraction.

In 2019, OKC Parks' first-ever maintenance endowment fund was created within the MAPS 4 program to support the maintenance and replacement costs for the MAPS 4 Youth Centers and the MAPS 4 park improvements.

Boulevard Tax

This funding source is used by the City of Kansas City to develop and maintain parkways and boulevards throughout the city. Residents who live along these corridors are taxed per linear foot, which is added to their property tax bill. It has proven to be very beneficial to home owners who live along these corridors when selling their homes, which are highly valued properties within the city. This same funding source could be developed for Oklahoma City for the historic boulevard system.

Landscape and Lighting Districts

This funding source is commonly used in California, where neighborhood residents are assessed taxes to support development and ongoing maintenance of parks, landscaped roadways, and boulevards. These improvements raise the value of homes and the quality of the neighborhood.

Stormwater Utility

This funding source is used in many cities as a way to develop and maintain greenways and green corridors through taxes included in residents' utility bills. Improvements can include trails, drainage areas, retention ponds used for recreation purposes, and natural protection of waterways through cities. The City of Houston is using this source to develop and maintain bayous throughout the city, including improved access and use for flood control and recreation purposes. This funding source would work well in Oklahoma City.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks' Grounds crew installing a sign.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks' annual Fiestas Patrias, bringing over 20,000 people to Wiley Post Park.

Land Trusts

This funding source provides ongoing revenue for a specific property for development and maintenance costs. Land trusts operate with a separate non-profit board that oversees the maintenance and funding needs of the park. Santa Barbara Land Trust is a good example of a land trust that is managing a regional park for that city. Likewise the Piedmont Park Conservancy in Atlanta is a good example of a private land trust managing a signature park.

Greenway Foundations

Many cities have turned to a foundation to help develop and maintain greenway corridors and trails throughout the city. The City of Indianapolis Greenway Foundation develops and maintains 181 miles of greenways and negotiates land leases along the trails with food, bicycle, and other concessionaires as a funding source to maintain the trails.

Sale or Lease of Development Rights

Some cities sell or lease the development rights along trail corridors to local utilities for water, sewer, fiber optic, and cable lines on a per-mile basis. This revenue can be used to help develop and manage the corridors. King County in Seattle has done a very good job in accessing this funding source for greenway development.

Dedicated Sales Tax

A dedicated sales tax has been used by many cities as a funding tool for capital improvements. A one-cent sales tax for parks and recreation in Douglas County, Kansas has generated over \$50 million in park improvements over the last seven years. The City of Phoenix also receives sales tax revenue from rental car taxes to support parks and recreation services.

Partnership Development Agreement

Oklahoma City relies heavily on partners to provide recreational programs within city parks. Partnership development agreements call for partners to develop their respective facilities based on set design guidelines, with the City or a private management company managing all the site elements. Partners work collectively to promote the site as a whole versus individual amenities. In Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation has



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks' annual Asian Night Market festival, Military Park, with an estimated 15,000 people in attendance.

an agreement to oversee maintenance and funding for Campbell Park.

Property Damage Payments

The City of Oklahoma City collects property damage when vehicles hit street trees and or impact park property. These monies can be used to replace trees and improve parks.

Funding Sources for Park, Recreation, and Sports Facility Operations

Park agencies have numerous revenue sources to draw from to support operational and management costs associated with recreational facilities, including long-term capital replacement costs. The following are funding options to consider:

User fees

In many instances, user fees are charged to access a recreation facility or sports program. Fees can range from \$3–5 per participant to \$400 per team in a sports league.

Concessions

Concessions can be leased to a private operator for a percentage of gross profits. Typically, 15–18% of gross profits can be recovered from a private concessionaire, or the Department could manage the concessions.

Parking Fees

Parking fees (typically \$5) can be charged during tournaments or special events.

Field Permits

Field permits can be issued for practice or games to cover operational and management costs. If a for-profit private operator desires to rent a site or facility for a sporting tournament, the City can charge a permit fee plus a percentage of gross receipts from the event. The City of Las Vegas uses this arrangement on a 22-field soccer complex.

Admission Fee

An admission fee can be charged to an event in a park or sports or recreation complex. In many instances, both admission and parking fees are charged for major sports tournaments at sports complexes. High school sports tournaments typically include an admission fee.

Tournament Fees

Fees for softball, baseball, soccer, etc. can be assessed for each team that enters a tournament. The fees can range from \$150–400 a team, varying based on the number of games guaranteed.

Official Drink

Official drink and food sponsors can be utilized throughout the system or at specific parks or recreation facilities. Each official drink and food sponsor pays a set percentage of gross receipts (typically 5–10%) in exchange for being the official product and receiving exclusive pouring and food rights at the complex. Likewise official equipment sponsors work well for trucks, mowers, and tractors.

Scoreboard Sponsors

Scoreboard sponsors pay for the cost of the scoreboards for the life of the board, which is usually 15 years.

Official Product Sponsors

Official product sponsors for balls, shoes, hats, gloves, etc. can be used throughout the system. The sponsor prices can vary by how much exposure is received and the amount of sales created.

Advertising Sales

Advertising at sports complexes, playgrounds, and dog parks; on scoreboards, gym floors, trash cans, and flower pots; in locker rooms, along trails, and as part of special events have long been an acceptable practice in parks and recreation systems and should be considered to support operational costs.

Wi-Fi Revenue

The City can set up a Wi-Fi area where a Wi-Fi vendor sells the advertising on the Wi-Fi access banner to local businesses, targeting the users at a specific site or facility.

Cell Tower Leases

Cell tower leases on top of sports lights can be used to generate revenue. This could provide \$35,000–50,000 annually for a site if cell tower coverage is needed in the area.

Capital Improvement Fee

Attractions such as a sports complex would benefit from an ongoing maintenance endowment to keep facilities and amenities updated and positioned for the future. A capital improvement fee of \$2–3 on each person who participates in a class, event, or program can be incorporated into the cost of the program or event.

Volunteerism

This is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist in providing a product or service at a park or recreational facility on an hourly basis. This reduces the City's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy for the park system.

OKC Parks has used this model for many years. In 2019, 15,484 volunteers worked 237,574 hours in parks providing a benefit to their fellow residents, which could not have been provided through OKC Parks' budget. The estimated value of their time and the supplies that they provided to the City was over \$8 million.

Special Fund-Raiser

Many agencies hold special fund-raisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects, with the monies raised dedicated for the park system.

Private Management of Elements in the Park System

The City should consider outsourcing elements of the park system to save operating money where appropriate.

Recycling Center

A sports complex or recreation facility will create a large amount of recycling materials that can be used to generate funding.

Friends of Sports

Recreation facilities and sports complexes lend themselves to friends groups established to support individual sports. These groups can assist with tournaments, fund-raising, training of coaches, and clean-up days at a complex or recreation facility.

Catering

Many recreation facilities and sports complexes are well suited to have an on-site caterer that sports groups can utilize. Caterers usually pay a fixed rate on gross revenues, for example 12–15% of the cost of food and 18% of beverages.

Membership Fees for Recreation Facilities and Aquatic Center

Oklahoma City has created some membership and admission fees to aquatic centers. This revenue source could also be applied to recreation centers and special use facilities.

Corporate Naming Rights

In this arrangement, corporations invest in the right to name an event, facility, or product within a park in exchange for an annual fee, typically over a 10-year period. The cost of the naming right is based on the impression points the facility or event will receive from the newspapers, TV, websites, and visitors to or users of the park. Naming rights for park and recreation facilities are typically attached to sports complexes, amphitheaters, recreation centers, aquatic

facilities, stadiums, and events and are a good source of outside revenue.

Corporate Sponsorships

Corporations can underwrite a portion or all of the cost of an event, program, or activity based on their name being associated with the service. Types of sponsorships include title sponsors, presenting sponsors, associate sponsors, product sponsors, or in-kind sponsors. Many agencies seek corporate support for these types of activities.

Special Event Fees and Sponsorships

An admission fee can be included in the cost of a special event or concert hosted within a city park. Sponsor fees can cover the cost of stages, security, and entertainment. Ticket sales combined with sponsorships can provide a good source of revenue.

Park Revolving Fund

This is a dedicated fund used only for park purposes that is replenished on an ongoing basis from various funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, advertising, program user fees, and rental fees within the park. The Department could establish a revolving fund supported by one or more funding sources identified in this section. This would work well for golf courses, aquatic centers, and sports complexes.

Permit Fees

This fee can be charged for exclusive reservation of picnic shelters, sports fields, special events, and competition tournaments held in the city by other organizations. Permit fees include a base fee for all direct and indirect costs incurred by the city plus a percentage of the gross for major special events and tournaments held on publicly owned properties. The receipts could be applied to the Park Revolving Fund to help support park operation and improvements.

Adopt-an-Area of a Park

In this approach, local neighborhood groups or

businesses make a volunteer commitment to maintaining a specific area of a park.

OKC Parks has partnered with OKC Beautiful for many years to administer our Adopt-A-Park program, which also includes medians throughout the City. The department also partners with the Neighborhood Alliance to work with neighborhood groups to beautify public rights-of-way medians near their neighborhoods. OKC Parks has over 80 adopted areas around the city.

Adopt-a-Trail Programs

These are typically small grant programs that fund new construction, repair/renovation, maps, trail brochures, facilities (bike racks, picnic areas, birding equipment), as well as providing maintenance support. Such programs are similar to adopt-a-mile of highway programs. Adopt-a-trail programs can also be in the form of cash contributions typically in the range of \$12,000–\$16,000 a mile to cover the total operational costs.

Community Service Workers

Community service workers are assigned by the court to pay off some of their sentence through maintenance activities in parks, such as picking up litter, removing graffiti, or assisting in painting or “fix-up” activities. Most workers are assigned 30–60 hours of work.

Park Admission Fees

Admission fees to access programs and facilities are a well-accepted management tool based on the value of the experience and the level of exclusive use a user has compared to a general taxpayer.

Program Fees

Fees to support the operations of a facility, park, or attraction can be applied to lessons, clinics, camps, and life skill, wellness, and fitness programs.

Race Sponsor Fees

Race sponsor fees can be applied for various types of run/walk/bike races. The users pay a fee to participate, and race sponsors support the event itself. The city usually receives \$3–5 dollars per participant for exclusive use of a park for a run or walk event.

Lease of Office and Storage Space

The City can consider leasing excess space to partner agencies and sports groups for offices and storage. Office space leases should be in the \$8–10 per square foot range and storage space leases in the \$3–4 per square foot range.

Rebuild Baseball in the Inner City

The RBI program developed by Major League Baseball has helped rebuild inner city baseball and softball fields in many urban areas across the United States. The Indianapolis RBI program has redeveloped over 15 baseball/softball fields, significantly changing how these fields look and operate and increasing the participation of inner city youth in baseball and softball.

Redevelopment Funds

Redevelopment money from a city or county redevelopment agency can be used for park and recreational facility development that spurs economic development in the area (e.g., sports tourism).

National, Regional, and Local Foundations

Bike Belong

Located in Boulder, Colorado, Bike Belong is a not-for-profit group that makes small grants in the \$10,000 range for bike trails, bridges, and similar facilities to enable leveraging of federal funds.

American Hiking Society

The American Hiking Society has a national fund devoted to promoting and protecting foot trails and the hiking experience.

The Helen R. Buck Foundation

Provides funding for playground equipment and recreational activities.

Deupree Family Foundation

Provides grants for recreation, parks/playgrounds, and children/youth on a national basis. This foundation provides funding and seed money for building/renovation, equipment, general/operating support, and program development.

The John P. Ellbogen Foundation

Provides children/youth services grants as well as support for capital campaigns, general/operating support, and program development.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Parks' Natural Resources staff cleaning out the Bricktown Canal.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Route 66 Park

Oklahoma City Community Foundation - Parks and Public Space Initiative

Supports the beautification, development and activation of neighborhood/community parks, school parks, trails, and other public lands.

OKC Parks has received numerous grants from the Foundation supporting tree planting and other park improvements, for over 25 years.

Federal Funding Sources

A number of federal programs offer financial aid for projects that aim to improve community infrastructure, transportation, tourism, housing, and recreation. These programs include:

National Scenic Byways Program

This program is designed to protect and enhance America's designated scenic roads. Money is available for planning, safety, and facility improvements, cultural and historic resource protection, and tourism information signage. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be developed in conjunction with scenic roadway projects. Some states with scenic byway programs have developed greenways in conjunction with this initiative.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers grants to communities for neighborhood revitalization, economic development, tourism, and improvements to community facilities and services, especially in low and moderate-income areas. Several communities have used HUD funds to develop greenways and tourism areas.

OKC Parks has partnered with the City of Oklahoma City's Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) to combine funding sources from GO Bonds and SNI's CDBG grants to make improvements to John F. Kennedy Park, McKinley Park, and William Fremont Harn Park.

Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), through its Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, provides payments to farm owners and operators to place highly erodible or environmentally sensitive landscapes into a 10–15 year conservation contract. The participant, in return for annual payments during this period, agrees to implement a conservation plan approved by the local conservation district for converting sensitive lands to less intensive uses. Individuals, associations, corporations, estates, trusts, cities, counties, and other entities are eligible for this program. Funds from this program can be used to fund the maintenance of open space and non-public-use greenways along bodies of water and ridge lines.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention (Small Watersheds) Grants

The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations authorized to carry out, maintain, and operate watershed improvements involving less than 250,000 acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, fish- and water-based wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50% local match for public recreation and fish and wildlife projects.

National Recreational Trails Program

These grants are available to government and nonprofit agencies, for amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, for the building of a trail or trail segment. This is a reimbursement grant program (sponsor must fund 100% of the project up front) and requires a 20% local match. It is an annual program, with an application deadline at the end of January. The available funds are split such that 30% goes towards motorized trails, 30% to non-motorized trails, and 40% is discretionary for trail construction.

Design Arts Program

The National Endowment for the Arts provides grants to states and local agencies, individuals and nonprofit organizations for projects that incorporate urban design, historic preservation, planning, architecture, landscape architecture, and other community improvements, including greenway development. Grants to organizations and agencies must be matched by a 50% local contribution. Agencies can receive up to \$50,000.

Community Forest and Open Space Program

This federal grant program has estimated total program funding of \$3,150,000. Individual grant applications may not exceed \$400,000. The program pays up to 50% of the project costs and requires a 50% non-federal match. Eligible lands for grants funded under this program are private forests that are at least five acres in size, suitable to sustain natural vegetation, and at least 75% forested.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

These funds are to be utilized in the preservation, development, and renovation of outdoor recreation facilities, with a focus on America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Land and water conservation funds may be used to create new pavilions or renovate existing structures, playgrounds, or play areas, ball fields, bleachers, golf course meeting rooms, multi-purpose courts, parking facilities, pathways and trails, roads, signs, ski areas, snowmobile facilities, and tennis courts.

OKC Parks has used LWCF grants to purchase parkland and fund park improvements since 1967. Approximately 23 parks have received park improvements and another 11 parks have been acquired or expanded with LWCF funding.

Surface Transportation Program Transportation Alternatives Funds

Enhancement grants have been authorized under successive reauthorizations of the federal transportation program, most recently MAP-21 passed by Congress in 2012. These grants focus on constructing bicycle transportation facilities, pedestrian walkways, maps, brochures, educational activities, bike lanes, signage and bridges. The average grant size is \$300,000.

The City of Oklahoma City has been awarded multiple Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) to support trail projects, including Will Rogers and West River Trail amenities, the Deep Fork Trail, and the Greenway River Trail.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

This program funds transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion. Projects can include bicycle and pedestrian projects, trails, links to communities, bike rack facilities, etc. The average grant size is \$50-100,000.

Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program

This program assists communities with grant and loan funding for the expansion, renovation and/or remodeling of former school facilities and/or existing surplus government facilities that have a current or future community use. Facilities may provide space for community gatherings and functions, as well as recreational athletic facilities for community members, particularly youth. Examples include space for nonprofit offices, child care, community education, theater, senior centers and youth centers, and after school programs. Match requirements for requests up to \$250,000 are 10% of eligible project costs. For requests between \$250,000 and \$1 million, the required match is 15%.

Economic Development Grants for Public Works and Development of Facilities

The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) provide grants to states, counties, and cities designated as redevelopment areas by EDA for public works projects that can include developing trails and greenway facilities. There is a 30% local match required, except in severely distressed areas, where the federal contribution can reach 80%.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Route 66 Park



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Bedlam Bash 5k

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability is a key issue for the Oklahoma City park system. While significant funding is being devoted to park-related capital projects through MAPS sales tax revenues and bond issues; basic capital, operations, and management expenditures, including maintenance, are well below levels of other comparable systems. The following principles from the *2013 Parks Master Plan* provide a framework and guidance for the City of Oklahoma City in planning for the financial sustainability of the system.

- Diversify funding sources to support investment in existing parks, new facilities, and programs to meet community needs.
- Establish cost-benefit criteria to assess proposed capital improvement projects.
- Establish a maintenance endowment for existing parks and all new park development projects.
- Set cost recovery targets for the system as a whole and for key facilities, programs, and services.
- Develop true cost of service information (direct and indirect costs) on a per unit basis to determine levels of operational efficiency.
- Classify services as core essential, important, or value-added based on the level of benefit an individual user receives compared to the general taxpayer.
- Set a pricing policy for facilities, programs, and services based on the cost recovery targets, true cost of service information, and service classification.
- Develop business plans for revenue-producing facilities, programs, and events to optimize the revenue generated and the ability to manage the facility or program in a cost-effective manner.
- Develop financial criteria for partnerships and sponsorships, including tracking of costs vs. level of investment by the partner and the City.
- Where feasible and consistent with the cost recovery policy, design parks and facilities to produce revenue beyond what is needed to offset operational costs.
- Building on the measures defined in the existing Strategic Business Plan, develop financial and management performance metrics to track return on investment from dollars invested in the system.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to help the Department become more financially self-sufficient and achieve a higher level of cost recovery. *Recommendations were developed for the 2013 Parks Master Plan and have not been changed for this 2020 Update.* Key areas to address for the Department to achieve an optimal balance of financial sustainability and customer satisfaction include business development, program services, and park maintenance.

- A major opportunity for the system is to create programs that energize the community to use the parks and facilities at a higher level of productivity. The Department generates a low level of revenue from the participants in program services (\$41,000 in 2012) and does not have a high level of customer satisfaction (44% in 2012) with recreation facilities. This is largely due to many of the recreation facilities and pools being outdated. However, the programs and recreation services held in these facilities have a very high

level of satisfaction (92% in 2012). The highly successful aquatic programming (including admissions) brings in an additional \$1.2 million (2012).

- Programs drive the design of parks and recreation facilities. Therefore, designing parks and recreation facilities to meet program needs and generate revenue should be a higher priority. Based on the evaluation of the system, parks currently have more staffing and development than programs (although dollars spent on park and facility maintenance are relatively low). The low level of program development compared to other park systems is largely due to the numerous recreation partners (107) who provide the majority of recreation services on City-owned property. The City is mainly a facility provider and receives very little if any revenue in return from these partnerships. Partnership agreements should be as financially sustainable as possible and incorporate ways to recover capital as well as operational costs.
- A cost of service analysis should be conducted for recreational programs and services that the Department provides to determine direct and indirect costs incurred. Each program or service should be evaluated against set criteria to determine if it should be classified as “core essential,” “important,” or “value added” and then priced accordingly (**right**). Typical cost recovery levels are 0–20% for core essential services, 20–80% for important services, and 80–120%+ for value added services. This analysis can also help the Department in determining the right level of partnership equity when negotiating contracts with partners.
- Cost recovery goals and pricing of facilities, programs, and services based on the cost of service analysis should be incorporated into the Strategic Business Plan and annual budgeting process.

Core Services

Programs, services, and facilities the Department must provide and/or are essential in order to capably run the Department. The failure to provide a core service at an adequate level would result in a significant negative consequence relative to the city's health and safety or economic and community vitality.

Criteria

- The Department is mandated by law or charter or is contractually obligated by agreement to provide the service
- The service is essential to protecting and supporting the public's health and safety
- The service protects and maintains valuable city assets and Infrastructure
- The city's residents, businesses customers, and partners reasonably expect and support the City in providing the service.
- The service cannot or should not be provided by the private sector and provides a sound investment of public funds.

Important Services

Programs, services, and facilities the City should provide and are important to running the Department and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers, and partners. Providing important services expands or enhances the ability to provide and sustain the City's core services, health and safety, and economic and community vitality.

Criteria

- The service provides, expands, enhances, or supports core services.
- The service is broadly supported and utilized by the community, and it is considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon the manner by which the service is paid for or funded.
- The service generates income or revenue that offsets some or all of its operating cost and/or is deemed to provide an economic, social, or environmental benefit to the community.

Value Added Services

Discretionary programs, services, and facilities that the City may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. Value added services provide value to residents, businesses, customers, and partners above and beyond what is required or expected.

Criteria

- The service expands, enhances, or supports core services, important services, and the quality of life of the community.
- The service is supported, well-utilized by the community, and provides an appropriate and valuable public benefit.
- The service generates income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees, or other sources that offset some or all of its cost and/or provides a meaningful economic, social, or environmental benefit to the community.

- The use of technology in marketing and communications is an opportunity to build a stronger revenue base for the Department. Currently, marketing and communications and associated performance indicators are not included as a line of business in the Strategic Business Plan. With the many attractions that the City operates or is contracted for in the management of these attractions (golf courses, aquatic centers, Myriad Botanical Gardens, Civic Center Music Hall, nature centers, Will Rogers Gardens, and special events), it is appropriate to develop a Marketing and Communications office. This office's responsibilities would include developing a marketing and branding campaign for the park system as a component of Oklahoma City's overall “brand” and appeal to existing and new residents and businesses. Enhancing the use of social media will keep marketing costs down and provide a new generation of users for the system.

- The Department does a good job of tracking and reporting performance measures through the Strategic Business Plan. The current measures could be enhanced through additional indicators focusing on outcomes, for example direct and indirect costs on a per unit basis (currently it appears that only direct costs are measured), costs and benefits of capital improvements, cost recovery and earned income to support operational and capital costs, and levels of productivity and efficiency. Additional factors that can be tracked include facility usage vs. capacity on a daily and weekly basis for golf, sports fields, aquatic centers, recreation facilities, and programs and cost per visitor experience (some of these are currently tracked). Marketing performance could be measured for return on investment (i.e. growth in users and revenues in relation to marketing dollars spent). Retention of users could also be used as a performance measure.
- Business plans should be developed for operating major facilities (e.g., regional parks, aquatic/multi-generational centers) and for staging programs or special events exceeding \$50,000 in costs to produce. The business plan will determine the true cost of providing the facility, program, or event and the level of cost recovery or tax subsidy required, so the Department can make a sound decision as to whether it should be involved based on cost/benefit to taxpayers.
- A business development office should be established to develop earned income opportunities and other diversified revenue options available to help offset operational and capital costs. In addition to exploring opportunities to apply the revenue generating opportunities listed above, this office would oversee development of business plans for major facilities and events. Similar functions in other park agencies typically return ten times the dollars invested in staff and administrative costs for the office.
- The departmental organization, including functions and job descriptions, should be revised to incorporate the above changes and generally to align with the desired outcomes. Staffing standards should be designed to place the right person, with the right skill set, into the right job, at the right pay to achieve the right outcome.
- The above principles and recommendations are designed to reinforce a “business management” mind-set and “outcome-based” culture within the Department to enable it to more effectively carry out its mission.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Multi-use trail at Lake Hefner.

FUNDING SCENARIOS

Several illustrative scenarios for OKC Parks' budget were developed for the *2013 Parks Master Plan* to test the levels of funding that will be required to meet current and future levels of service for Oklahoma City over a 20-year time horizon. *Data has not been updated for this 2020 Update.*

Scenario A

Scenario A assumes that levels of funding and parks and recreation expenditures over the last five years will continue indefinitely. Because the Department's budget was essentially flat during this time period, this scenario results in a \$24 million annual budget and total spending of \$480 million over the 20-year plan time horizon. While requiring no new funding sources, this scenario is clearly unacceptable as it does not allow for additional investment to correct existing levels of service that are deficient, meet levels of service created by future population growth, or otherwise address community needs identified through the resident survey. (It should be noted that this scenario does not account for MAPS spending on park-related projects.)

Scenario B

Scenario B assumes an incremental increase of 5% a year in the Department's budget to allow for investment to address level of service and community needs for parks and recreation. In this scenario the budget increases from \$24 million in year 1 to \$60.6 million in year 20, with total spending of \$794 million over the 20-year time horizon.¹ While developed for illustrative purposes only, it is interesting to note that the scenario increases per capita spending on parks and recreation to \$81.40 for Oklahoma City's projected population of 743,902 in year 20. This would raise Oklahoma City above the norm for Midwestern cities, signifying a commitment to a best-of-class park system that supports both quality of life and a vigorous economy. Scenario B could be implemented by phasing in selected funding sources as listed above over time. The proposed Business Development Office should be put in place as an early implementation action to develop these funding sources, along with the Marketing and Communications Office to promote involvement of residents, businesses, volunteers, etc. in the park system.

Scenario C

Scenario B does not account for the full investment required to address deferred needs created by the historic pattern of underinvestment in the park system or the level of investment required to meet level of service needs of present and future Oklahoma City residents. Therefore, Scenario C was developed to characterize the level of investment required, using order-of-magnitude cost estimates for proposed capital investment, maintenance, and operations and management actions with significant cost implications identified in the Action Plan in Chapter 6.² These costs were added to a base of \$24 million/year (representing the 2012 OKC Parks budget) to develop an overall estimate. The estimate assumes that capital investments and maintenance will be phased over 20 years. Using the phasing assumptions, the budget would average \$56 million per year, including \$40 million in the first year, \$71 million in year 10, and \$47 million in year 20. The total estimate for the 20-year time period is \$1.3 billion.

See Appendix G (p. 125) for a table including order-of-magnitude cost estimates, assumptions, and potential funding sources for the Parks Master Plan actions that are incorporated into Scenario C.

2020 Update

Between 2014 and 2020, OKC Parks' budget was reduced by approximately 15%.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Lighthouse at Lake Hefner.

¹ Scenarios have not been adjusted to account for inflation over 20 years (i.e. assume 2013 dollars).

² These costs are based on general "rules of thumb" and need to be further developed and refined for actual budgeting purposes.

MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

OKC Parks is responsible for maintaining not just the public parks in Oklahoma City, but also recreation facilities, land next to state highways, the Civic Center, and other municipal properties. The Department's performance measures indicate the City spends an extremely low figure on park maintenance. Typically, urban park districts in the Midwest spend 2–3 times as much as Oklahoma City does to maintain their parks.

In 2020, OKC Parks budgeted \$1,728 an acre on park maintenance (4,590 acres maintained), a low figure compared to other Midwest cities. Although the maintenance budget has decreased over the past five years, OKC Parks has maintained the same level of care by finding operational efficiencies. In fact, according to the annual resident survey, resident satisfaction levels with maintenance of city parks rose to 71%—an increase of 8% from 2012–2019.

The Department recently completed new Maintenance Standards, which includes standards and frequency rates for the care of all types of parks, park amenities, sports fields, athletic courts, trails, and trees. These standards indicate that local and regional parks are mowed every two weeks, and trails are inspected and swept every week, as needed. High visibility locations (parks in Downtown and Bricktown) are mowed on a one-week schedule.

Most of the park system, with the exception of the high visibility locations, is maintained at a level comparable to Mode III of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) maintenance standards for frequency of tasks such as mowing, trimming, landscaping, and grounds maintenance care (*Appendix H, p. 127*). This is a much lower level of care than in other similar urban park systems in the Midwest. The consultant team recommends that the maintenance level be raised to NRPA Mode II for most maintained areas of the park system, with very high visibility locations receiving a Mode I standard of care. Achieving these standards will require that

more funding be dedicated for maintenance purposes (potential funding sources are identified in this chapter). It should be noted that the recommendation to increase the percentage of natural areas within the park system will reduce the number of acres requiring more costly maintenance.

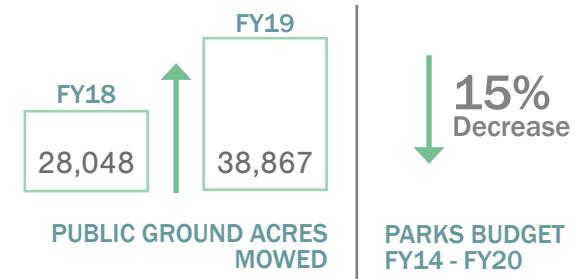
It is also recommended that standards be developed for additional maintenance tasks to augment the current procedures. These include standards and frequency rates for the care of recreation centers, pools, and concession operations, as well as program standards. Putting these standards in place will help support the need for appropriate levels of staffing, help to price services against the benefits received, and increase levels of customer satisfaction. Current satisfaction levels (very satisfied or satisfied), based on the 2018 resident survey, are 60% for trails, 42% for aquatic programs, 39% for sports programs, and 46% for recreation centers—all of which show room for improvement. By contrast, special event satisfaction is 97% and senior program services satisfaction is 99%, which are extremely high levels.

In addition to the standards and procedures for properties it maintains, the Department is developing maintenance requirements for parks or areas of parks managed by private/not-for-profit organizations such as Myriad Botanical Gardens and sports field leases. These arrangements benefit residents because the organizations provide some, if not all, of the resources needed to maintain the properties at a higher level than the City is capable of providing given its current budget. Many cities provide nice incentives to entice partnerships for improving and sponsoring community parks. This chapter provides recommendations for criteria to more explicitly define the partnership responsibilities of the organizations and the City. A key to the future of these partnerships is to ensure sufficient funding for maintenance and improvement of site infrastructure in order to position the sites as valuable

assets that demonstrate a high-quality park system.

Another avenue that the Department could explore to improve the level of maintenance and increase the efficiency of dollars spent is to use volunteers or correctional workers on certain tasks. Based on the \$4.17 cost per square foot to maintain flower beds in the City (as opposed to typical best practice costs of \$3.50–\$4.00 per square costs), this may be an area for an enhanced volunteer program to bring costs down. Volunteerism is not currently listed as a line of business in the City's Strategic Business Plan. Typically, many agencies have full-time staff that recruit, train, and place volunteers in their system, as well as track the number of hours performed and the satisfaction level of volunteers. Volunteers are described by some park and recreation agencies as the next major work force. This may be an opportunity for Oklahoma City to build efficiencies through the use of volunteers in activities such as special event management, park maintenance, trail maintenance, and senior program services.

ALTHOUGH THE MAINTENANCE BUDGET HAS DECREASED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, OKC PARKS HAS MAINTAINED THE SAME LEVEL OF CARE BY FINDING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES.



PARTNERSHIPS

In earlier decades, some cities were fully responsible for the operation of their parks, and they had funding commensurate with the job. Today that is rare, and most cities need the extra assistance of public-private and public-public partnerships to help with the task at hand. These partnerships should never supersede the leadership of OKC Parks, but they can help make the difference between a park system that struggles and one that thrives. This section covers partnerships generally and then makes some specific recommendations for Oklahoma City.



Source: Riversport

ABOVE: Riversport Rapids

OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Friends Organizations

When it comes to support, friends organizations are the basic building block of every park system. Ideally, every park should have one—a group of neighbors who essentially adopt the park, look out for it, report problems, organize volunteer events, and keep the space activated and welcoming. Friends groups can also double as political activists at budget time, either supporting an appropriation or complaining if the funding is not sufficient for the need. In most neighborhoods, the friends group will be relatively loosely structured with volunteers for various tasks. In a larger, denser, or wealthier place, the group might possibly have a paid staff member or two and take on explicit programs for the park.

Service Providers

There are numerous service providing organizations that are potential natural partners with park agencies—groups that offer youth sports, adult sports, exercise, dance, swimming, senior programs, meditation, arts, child care, learning, environmental education, nature appreciation, and much more. Between the open-air parks, trails, pools and fields, and indoor recreation centers, there are scores of facilities and locations that are ideal for these activities. And, in these days of constricted budgets, OKC Parks frequently does not have the funds or staffing to offer all the courses and sports that people desire. A partnership in this context is ideal—preferably one that explicitly shares in the recognition (via signage and advertising) and that also provides appropriate financial remuneration to both parties to cover their costs. Since Oklahoma City has thousands of acres of parkland and hundreds of facilities, many of which are underused at certain times of the day or the week, it makes sense for OKC Parks to have one or more staff persons who aggressively undertake outreach to all kinds of service providers to let them know about land and facility opportunities. The more that Oklahoma City parks are associated with fun and activity, the better it is for everyone.

Corporations, Corporate Foundations and Philanthropies

Some corporations are intimately associated with Oklahoma City since their headquarters are here or they have deep historical roots here. Others may simply have a large presence or wish to be better known in the region. Regardless of the motivation, some corporations are willing or eager to become a park partner, usually by making a financial donation for some kind of capital improvement—buying land, building a structure, providing artwork or a fountain, donating a pond, planting a garden, or carrying out dozens of other enhancements. In Chicago's Millennium Park the gifts totaled over \$200 million, with corporations vying with each other for recognition and for the support and love of the public. Again, OKC Parks must always remain the primary decision-making entity, and no gift should be accepted that is not first and foremost in the best interest of the park, but within these constraints corporate contributions (including the donation of working time by employees and their families) can be of great benefit to the city and its parks. Ideally, a corporation or foundation would not take on the entire burden of building or upgrading the park but would use its largess as a challenge gift to stimulate the expenditure of taxpayer funds as well. It is important that parks retain their image as public facilities that provide beauty and value for and by all residents.

Conservancies

The “Cadillac” of public-private partnerships are park conservancies, where a group of wealthier individuals and institutions form an entity to assist the City in the refurbishment and ongoing maintenance of a park. (Conservancies are usually formed for the single pre-eminent park in a city, although in some places they adopt a number of parks.) Most conservancies begin by taking on a specific capital improvement or repair (such as an intricate non-working fountain, a rundown sports complex, an ecologically damaged lake, or something similar) and then—upon proving their competence and sensitivity to the public—move on to handling more routine day-to-day matters like gardening, cleaning, planting, and sweeping. This gradual phase-in of responsibilities and authority is important in helping the public feel comfortable with the changes—and helping the conservancy learn what is acceptable and what is not (e.g., closing portions of a park for a special event, etc.).

Public-Public Partnerships

The private sector is not the only entity that can work cooperatively with a parks and recreation department. There are also many public agencies that can benefit from a partnership. For instance, water departments may find it useful to build reservoirs on (or under) parkland, or find it useful to route stormwater onto parkland—and pay a fee in return for this service. Transportation departments might benefit from having bicycle commuter trails located on parkland—and they might be willing to pay the costs rather than having to widen a bridge or a road for all the extra automobiles. Health departments and public hospitals might decide to undertake fitness, weight loss, and other similar programs on parkland. Nutrition agencies might want to establish community gardens in parks.

A Parks Foundation

A growing number of cities have a formal parks foundation, an entity with money and connections that can do some or all of the things mentioned above—raise money for capital improvements, accept donations of land and money, promote parks to the general public, inform elected officials about the importance and benefits of parks, serve as a meeting place for different park advocates with different ideas, and much more.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Volunteers at Will Rogers Gardens.

PARTNERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OKC PARKS

Friends Organizations

The first task is to determine the exact number of existing park friends organizations, along with the names and contact information of each of their leaders. (This effort might be done in conjunction with the Neighborhood Alliance.) Next, an entity such as Oklahoma City Beautiful or the Oklahoma City Community Foundation should step up (on either a permanent or an interim basis) to serve as an umbrella friends entity—a convener and information disseminator for all the current and future local park friends groups. Ideally, this entity would evolve into Friends of Oklahoma City Parks with a small staff and a dynamic, community-based board of directors consisting of leaders from the individual friends groups. In addition to direct service in the parks, the primary role of the friends groups is to be a strong advocate for parks in the city—always pressing for park improvements and also working to make sure the park budget is supported by the politicians. These friends groups, along with advocacy organizations as the Conservation Commission, the Ground Water Protection Council, the Environmental Federation of Oklahoma, and the Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District (see below), can also use newsletters, web pages, lecture series, and other outreach strategies to spread the word about park opportunities and events to the entire community.

Service Providers

Since Oklahoma City is on the low side of public park spending, the city is more dependent upon outside service providers to fill the gaps in providing an outstanding park and recreation system. In some cases, the services are offered at market price; in others, philanthropy might allow them to be provided for free or at below-market rates. In Oklahoma City there are already relationships with numerous service providers, many of them in the recreation arena, such as the YMCA/YWCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and others. Programs range from Little League baseball to tennis, bicycling, soccer, Pop Warner football, swimming, and more, for youth and even adults. Recommendations for criteria to apply to partnerships in Oklahoma City parks are provided below and are especially relevant to service providers.

Corporations, Corporate Foundations, and Philanthropies

Oklahoma City boasts a diverse economy, with the energy sector, aviation and aerospace, and engineering making up the largest sector in both employment and economic impact. Public employers with very large workforces include the state of Oklahoma, the City of Oklahoma City, Tinker Air Force Base, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, and the University of Oklahoma (including its Health Sciences Center). All of these institutions, as well as many small ones, can serve as outstanding partners to OKC Parks, either by adopting a particular nearby park or by helping out with specific tasks for the entire system. The partnerships can take many forms: financial gifts; employee work days; donation of services such as printing, mailing, signs, banners, and recreation supplies; public service announcements; and much more. These corporate leaders are often also, of course, the movers and shakers of the social and political worlds of Oklahoma City. So they—Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other business clubs and organizations—should play a significant role in advocating for more parks and park improvements, and also in publicizing the existing parks and programs near and far. Also, the Science Museum of Oklahoma could play a crucial role in spreading the word about the ecological value of parks.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Volunteer at Will Rogers Garden.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Tiki Heads at Will Rogers Gardens.

Partnerships with health-oriented companies are particularly relevant. Some doctors have been “prescribing”—literally!—exercise in parks for certain kinds of physical or mental issues. In other cases, a hospital or clinic might be located very near a park and might even enter into a partnership to help create or upgrade a walking or bicycling trail, or install a “Fitness Zone” of outdoor gym equipment, or sponsor some recreational programming for patients and others.

Conservancies

Oklahoma City has two major park conservancies, the Myriad Gardens Foundation and the Scissortail Park Foundation. (Although they don’t use the word “conservancy,” they perform like one.) The Myriad Gardens Foundation, which had previously existed for many years in a less visible role as an adjunct to OKC Parks, was substantially reformed and upgraded in conjunction with the erection of the Devon Energy Center and the refurbishment of Myriad Botanical Gardens. Its goal is to raise two-thirds of its \$3.6-million budget from private sources and completely handle the maintenance and programming of the park. By continually working to make Myriad Botanical Gardens into an outstanding and well-known public space that defines park excellence, the Foundation could serve to “raise the tide” for all the parks in the city. For instance, certain events like marathons, runs, and bicycle rides could begin and end at Myriad Botanical Gardens while also following a route that passes through other city parks, introducing them to the public.

The Scissortail Park Foundation raises money to support Scissortail Park, a 70-acre urban park in downtown Oklahoma City. Donations to the Foundation support park maintenance and operations, programming, and the Scissortail Park Foundation Endowment.

It is conceivable that a conservancy could be created for Oklahoma City’s four major parks from the W.H. Dunn plan of 1910—Lincoln, Trosper, Woodson, and Will Rogers. Perhaps it could be called the Dunn Parks Conservancy. (This would be similar to the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, which supports four major parks in Pittsburgh.) While the four parks would be fully owned and operated by OKC Parks, the conservancy could undertake major capital projects, such as upgrades and repairs, thus taking some of the financial burden off the shoulders of the City. This is a model that has been used in numerous places, including Atlanta, Houston, New York, St. Louis, Boston, and Philadelphia.

Public-Public Partnerships

Three obvious partnerships between OKC Parks and other public entities would involve school districts, the City-County Health Department, and the Public Works Department in its role as manager of the city’s transportation infrastructure.

Schools are key because they have considerable amounts of land, are well located and embedded in their communities, and have access to the majority of young people. In Oklahoma City, as in other communities, school districts manage their land and facilities independent from city government. An increasing number of cities are implementing joint-use agreements between their parks department and schools regarding schoolyards, whereby the play areas are locked for school-only use during school hours and then unlocked for community use after school, on weekends, and during vacations. Particularly in dense urban areas, these “school parks” often offer the only feasible space to play and socialize in the already built-up development around them. One problem in Oklahoma City is that some of the schools are designed in such a way that the schoolyard/playground is in the “back” of the school, away from the street, and not visible to parents and others from the roadway and school front.

This causes some safety concerns and might entail some environmental redesign of either the space or the roadway.

The Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) could also be an excellent partner, since both it and the recreation agency have a mandate to help people become and remain healthier throughout their lives. The OCCHD can provide exercise programming, but it does not have its own properties to utilize—particularly outdoor space. Doing this would serve the double benefit of making people healthier and activating the park space to make it safer and more inviting. Oklahoma City already has its “One Million Pound” weight-loss challenge, which is a natural for a partnership between parks and the health department. Instead of simply installing “wellness centers” that are similar to traditional clinics, the joint program could result in more holistic centers that offer numerous kinds of fitness activities (along with healthy food choices).

The Public Works Department can play a major role in the provision of non-motorized trails for walking, running, and bicycling, both on parks and between them. There may also be abandoned railroad or canal corridors available for conversion to park trails utilizing funding and the engineering expertise of the Department. Alternatively, the Department may be able to take on some of the responsibilities of planting and maintaining beautiful rows of street trees in some of Oklahoma City’s boulevard and parkways, like Grand Boulevard. (This could be done in conjunction with the Margaret Annis Boys Trust and/or a tree advocacy organization. See below.)

Another good partner could be local community colleges and universities, whose marketing students might prove adept at getting out much more information about parks, recreation events, conservation issues, and more. Alternatively, business students at the schools might be able to help the Department devise new forms of revenue enhancement activities.

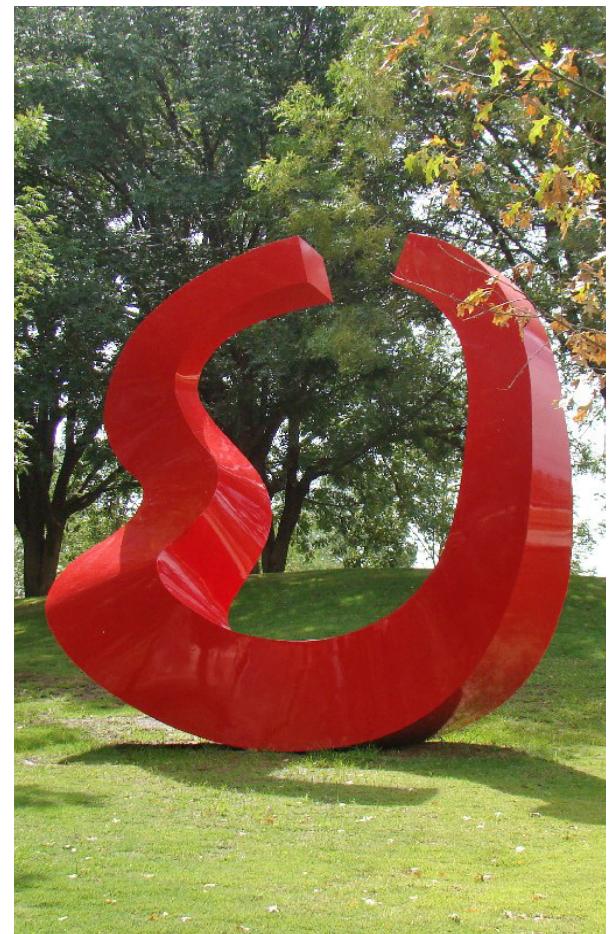
A Parks Foundation

The Oklahoma City Community Foundation has established a parks foundation to assist neighborhood and community parks. The Greater Oklahoma City Parks and Trails Foundation—comparable to existing such entities in Houston, Cincinnati, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, and other cities—could provide a tremendous boost to the city’s park scene. There are likely residents of Oklahoma City who would be willing to make a special donation for parks but are reluctant to contribute directly to the City or the Department since they worry their gift might be used for something else. Having an official foundation that is separate from, but that works closely and cooperatively with, the City on the most badly needed projects is a proven way to make key improvements. The existing Margaret Annis Boys Trust is a start in the right direction, but an active, well-rounded parks foundation could do much more, from acquiring and transferring land to undertaking certain kinds of construction, from making repairs to commissioning artwork, from creating programs to sponsoring holiday celebrations and special events. Positioning the Parks Foundation as the lead organization (“strong and nimble quarterback”) to coordinate the efforts of the other partners could make a tremendous difference in what the City can accomplish for its parks and its people.

Advocacy Organizations

While park and environmental advocacy organizations are not traditional partners with public agencies, they are a large and growing presence in the world of urban parks throughout the nation, and this is the logical place to acknowledge them. Advocacy groups can be considered partners in the sense that they—like the Department—are deeply committed to a strong, beautiful, useful, and environmentally beneficial park system. While the advocates’

roles and capabilities may be very different from the Department’s, they can often provide the kind of public support that raises the tide for everyone—even if there are the occasional rough edges regarding political and funding issues. Among the many organizations that could help OKC Parks are OKC Beautiful, the Arbor Day Foundation, the Treebank Foundation, and the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Council for tree planting and tree care; the Nature Conservancy for natural protection, enhancement, and interpretation; and, ideally, a cadre of park friends organizations watching over and speaking up for each individual park in the system.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: "Gateway" by Hans Van de Bovenkamp, Myriad Botanical Gardens.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: Dodgers Rookie League Baseball Camp

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

While existing partners perform an extremely useful function by providing facilities and programs for the public in Oklahoma City parks, both the City and its partners would benefit from more explicit criteria that define expectations for levels of partnership equity, performance, and measurable outcomes for each partnership. One issue that needs to be addressed is the recognition that the parks and recreation system receives from partners who manage facilities and programs on City-owned property. New, more explicit criteria should include consistency with all relevant OKC Parks' policies plus the following:

What is the partner's mission and goal for the partnership, and how does it support OKC Parks' mission and goals?

To whom does the partner target its services, and what is the value of the targeted users to the Department and Oklahoma City?

What benefits will the Department and partner achieve by partnering together?

What outcomes will be measured to define the benefits for the Department and the partner?

What are the costs for the partner and for the Department, and what level of equity will each partner contribute to the relationship?

The Department should apply these criteria to all new contracts, and it should also update the existing service provider agreements to address these five questions. It should then track the results on a yearly basis.



Source: OKC Parks

ABOVE: OKC Thunder Band, Pitts Park



"Daniel gives his best during the Kid's Pentathlon at Woodson Park."

Source: Daily Oklahoman, August 6, 1984

CH. 8 | APPENDICES

Appendix A: playokc policies

Appendix B: 2013 Community Survey Summary

Appendix C: Park Classifications

Appendix D: Land Use Typology Areas Descriptions

Appendix E: Action Tables

Appendix F: Financial Overview

Appendix G: Funding Scenario C (Example)

Appendix H: NRPA Maintenance Standards

APPENDIX A: PLAYOKC POLICIES (ADOPTED 2015)

Subtopic	Policy
Accessibility and Use	Establish connections between parks, residential areas, and other points of interest by constructing additional bike routes, trails and pedestrian paths to meet the growing demands for recreation and alternative transportation routes.
Accessibility and Use	Acquire easements in existing developments to develop and connect trails between greenways.
Accessibility and Use	Require that new development tie into the park and trail system by providing linkages to existing parks or dedicating new park land.
Accessibility and Use	Provide a continuous system of open spaces along stream corridors that link neighborhoods and park lands.
Accessibility and Use	Establish procedures for creating new joint school/park sites, including the division of maintenance responsibilities.
Accessibility and Use	Increase the number of joint-use agreements that allow community access to school playgrounds outside of school hours to improve neighborhood access to recreational facilities.
Accessibility and Use	Increase the level of involvement and resources from agencies and other community groups to provide physical activity programming, such as after-school programs.
Accessibility and Use	Improve safety of users of the parks and trails system by: A. Providing good lighting, emergency call boxes, and regular police patrols along the trail system. B. Providing shelter structures along the trail networks and determining the appropriate spacing for such structures. Structures could be relatively small to keep costs down but should be sturdy and easy to maintain.
Accessibility and Use	Establish criteria for locating and designing parks to enhance safety and security, including: A. Locating new parks in areas that are highly visible and accessible from surrounding residential streets and utilize trails to increase activity and visibility in parks. B. Utilizing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles (includes controlled access, visibility, lighting, etc.) for new parks and retrofitting/redesign of existing parks . C. Design parks and open areas using lighting, landscaping, and site design techniques proven to deter vandalism/crime.
Accessibility and Use	Ensure all homes are within walking distance of a park based on level of service standards for each urban land use typology.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Explore public/private funding sources and management structures, including non-profit conservancies, to improve, operate, manage and maintain downtown parks and open spaces.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Establish partnerships and programs with neighborhood associations and other organizations to improve maintenance of parks by: A. Increasing participation in the OKC Beautiful's "Adopt a Park" program. Participants can include nearby businesses, neighborhood associations, churches, schools, and nonprofit groups; B. Establishing incentives for participating in the "Adopt a Park" program, such as providing awards. C. Increasing volunteer park maintenance programs.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Reduce the City's long term operations and maintenance costs by: A. Adapting more energy efficient technologies for park facilities; B. Using low water landscape palettes and recycled water for irrigation; C. Identifying and pursuing additional funding sources including: increased appropriations to the City's Parks and Recreation department; federal, state, or county funds; dedicated sales tax; impact fees/in lieu fees; private, corporate, and foundation grants; and business improvement or assessment districts.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Pursue all opportunities, including donations, conservation easements, inheritance trusts, naming rights, and developer incentives to acquire, preserve and maintain land for parks and open space.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Establish a parkland dedication program to ensure adequate provision of parks to serve future populations.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Prioritize capital improvements for parks that serve areas where populations are projected to increase.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Establish standards for landscaping, lighting, and maintenance of private parks.

Subtopic	Policy
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Require new subdivisions in under-served areas to construct and maintain private parks to serve those residents.
Funding, Maintenance and Operations	Approve construction of new private parks only when the following provisions are specified: A. Identification of a party, group, or entity responsible for park maintenance ; B. Adoption of maintenance standards for private park facilities, equipment, and natural areas; C. Establishment of a maintenance and inspections schedule; D. Guarantees of a funding source for long-term maintenance (maintenance bonds, open space escrow, fees etc.).
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Coordinate planning efforts with school districts to attempt concurrent land purchases for schools and parks.
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Prioritize capital improvements to construct linkages and connections from the existing urban parks and open space system to neighborhoods, commercial areas, employment centers, and community facilities.
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Identify projected public parkland needs and prospective park sites in areas where future residential development is projected to occur, and establish mechanisms to purchase land (land bank system, developer fees, park user fees , etc.)
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Coordinate with school districts, local healthcare providers, and other community organizations to provide recreational programming not offered in nearby public parks or recreation centers, such as after-school fitness and education programs.
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Develop a downtown park master plan that identifies the following: A. Opportunities for providing private parks and open space while still maintaining a dense, urban environment (such as vest pocket parks, rooftop gardens, plazas and courtyards); B. Linkages and connections between public and private parks; C. Programming and amenities that complement and support parks in the system; and D. Funding for operations and maintenance.
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to establish separate dedication requirements for parkland that excludes areas otherwise necessary or dedicated for drainage or detention as these areas should not receive credit to serve both purposes.
Levels of Service and Programming/Needs	Identify if existing parks and facilities are serving the specific needs of the community within the park's service area. If the area has transitioned and the park no longer serves the needs of the surrounding community, reprogram the park, or declare park surplus or seek redevelopment to a more fitting use.
Safety and Design	Conduct an assessment of security needs during the planning stage of proposed parks and recreation areas.
Safety and Design	Replace existing high-maintenance, high-water plant material with attractive native plants.
Safety and Design	Explore the use of artificial turf alternative materials and or other types of ground covers that do not require heavy maintenance or frequent mowing.
Safety and Design	Require development adjacent to parks to maintain open sight lines to the park, and discourage fences and walls around the park perimeter.
Safety and Design	Enhance public park design standards to allow for public art and innovative design solutions regarding stormwater management, open space, and play areas.
Safety and Design	Revise subdivision regulations to require development adjacent to parks and public open spaces to maintain open sight lines to parks and public open space and prevent fences and walls around park and public open space perimeters.
Safety and Design	Enhance the City's ability to improve the appearance of existing parks through the following: A. Targeted cleanup and beautification program; B. Seek sponsors to donate funds to improve park signage and lighting; C. Litter and graffiti abatement program.
Social and Environmental Effects	Protect the health of park visitors by utilizing the most environmentally friendly least toxic means available of reducing weeds and other pests to acceptable levels.
Social and Environmental Effects	Study the feasibility of allowing community gardens in some park areas and create a garden pilot program.
Social and Environmental Effects	Utilize existing natural streams as amenities in public parks, and regularly monitor and maintain stream banks for safety of park users.
Trails	Acquire easements in new developments to develop and connect trails.

APPENDIX B: 2013 COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

Geographic Differences

The survey tallied responses across the city as a whole and by 5 geographic regions: central city, northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast. The following are key differences in responses among the geographic areas.

Parks and Recreation Programming

In the northeast, residents are more likely to rate the parks they have visited as being in good condition and less likely to rate them as being in excellent or fair condition.

In the northeast, 2–4 times as many residents have participated in recreation programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department in the last year.

Citywide, 70% of residents rated the quality of programs they participated in as either good or excellent. In the northeast and southwest, this was 100%. In the central city, this was only 50%.

How Residents Learn of Parks and Programming

In the northeast, residents are nearly 5 times as likely to learn about parks, programs, and activities from Parks and Recreation staff than in other parts of the city. Those in the northeast are also more likely than in other areas to learn about parks, programs, and activities from social media, flyers distributed at park and recreation facilities, and flyers distributed at schools. Those in the northwest are less likely to receive flyers distributed at schools, and those in the Southwest are less than half as likely to have conversations with Parks and Recreation staff. (Note: The ability to distribute flyers varies by school district.)

Type of Park

The northeast favors having small neighborhood parks over pocket parks (less than 2 acres) and community parks.

Getting to Parks

In the northeast, 29% of residents would not get to a park by walking or bicycling, higher than the citywide 19%. Residents in the northeast are also less likely to drive to a park (10%) than in the city as a whole (6%).

Funding

In the northeast, fewer people are very supportive of some increase in taxes to fund the types of parks, trails, and recreation facilities that are most important to them, and more are likely to not be sure or not be supportive.

Quality of Life

In the central city, more people are likely to consider quality parks, facilities, and programs as being very important to the overall quality of life in Oklahoma City, and fewer consider them minimally important. In the southeast, more people are likely to consider quality parks, facilities, and programs as being minimally important to the overall quality of life.

Priority Parks and Facilities

Citywide		Northwest		Northeast		Central City		Southwest		Southeast	
1	Walking and Biking Trails (38%)	1	Walking and Biking Trails (40%)	1	Walking and Biking Trails (49%)	1	Walking and Biking Trails (34%)	1	Walking and Biking Trails (38%)	1	Walking and Biking Trails (41%)
2	Indoor Pool/Leisure Pool (21%)	2	Small Neighborhood Parks (25%)	2	Large Community Parks (29%)	2	Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (22%)	2	Indoor Pool/Leisure Pool (29%)	2	Indoor Pool/Leisure Pool (27%)
3	Small Neighborhood Parks (21%)	3	Nature Center and Trails (22%)	3	Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (23%)	3	Small Neighborhood Parks (21%)	3	Outdoor Pools/Aquatic Center (22%)	3	Small Neighborhood Parks (20%)
4	Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (19%)	4	Large Community Parks (19%)	4	Nature Center and Trails (19%)	4	Outdoor Pools/Aquatic Center (19%)	3	Nature Center and Trails (22%)	3	Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (20%)
5	Large Community Parks (18%)	5	Indoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (17%)	4	Park Shelters and Picnic Areas (19%)	5	Large Community Parks (18%)	5	Small Neighborhood Parks (21%)	5	Outdoor Pools/Aquatic Center (18%)
				4	Outdoor Fitness/Exercise Facilities (19%)	5	Indoor Swimming/Leisure Pool (18%)				

Priority Programs

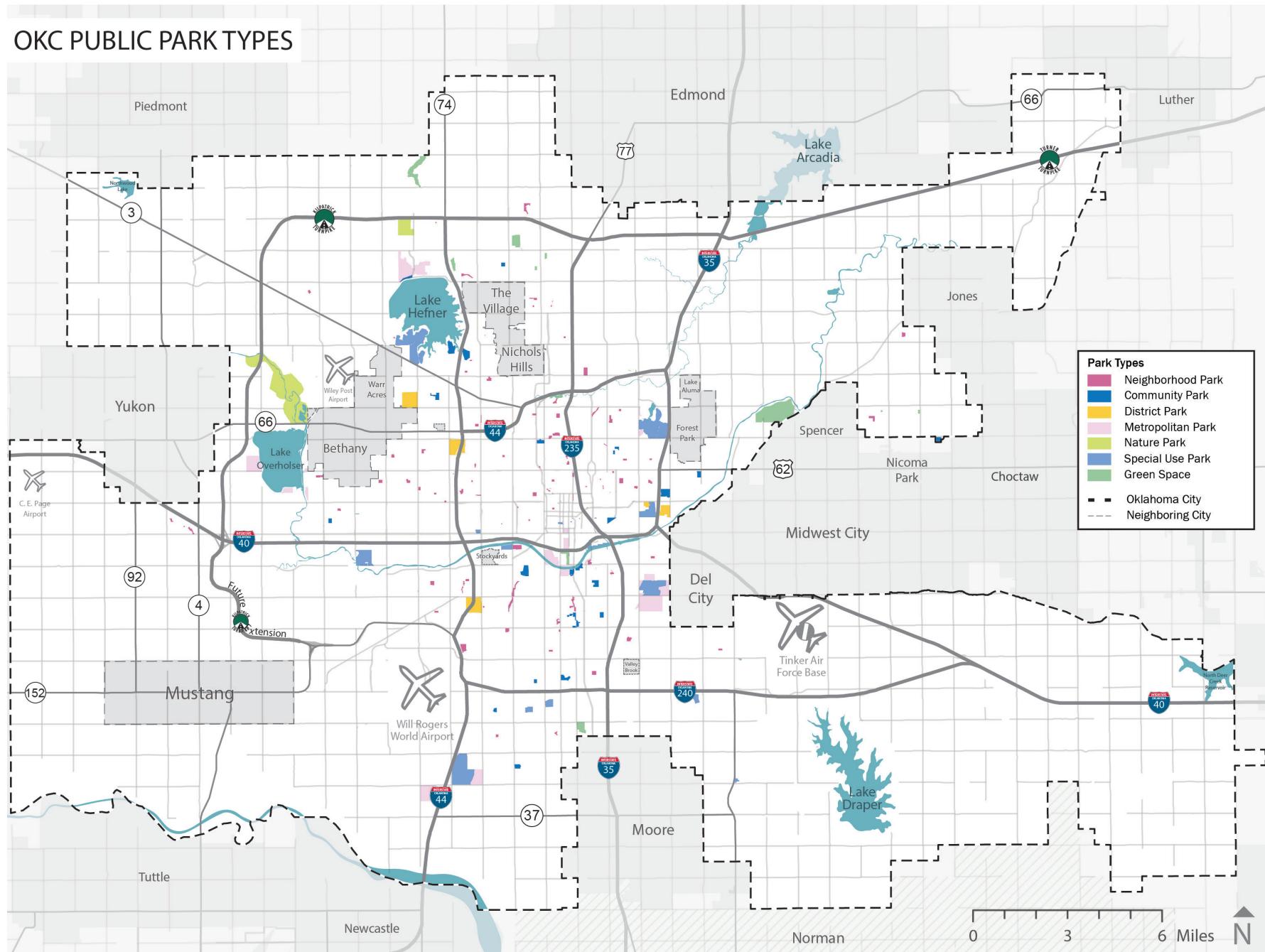
Citywide		Northwest		Northeast		Central City		Southwest		Southeast	
1	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (22%)	1	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (24%)	1	Youth Sports Programs (19%)	1	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (22%)	1	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (21%)	1	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (27%)
2	Special Events/Festivals (17%)	2	Special Events/Festivals (20%)	2	Youth Summer Programs (16%)	2	Family Programs (21%)	2	Water Fitness Programs (18%)	2	Special Events/Festivals (21%)
3	Senior Programs (16%)	3	Nature/Environmental Programs (20%)	2	Adult Fitness/Wellness Programs (16%)	3	Senior Programs (19%)	3	Walking/Biking Groups (17%)	3	Senior Programs (18%)
4	Walking/Biking Groups (15%)	3	Adult Continuing Ed. Programs (20%)	2	Senior Programs (16%)	4	Walking/Biking Groups (18%)	4	Nature/Environmental Programs (16%)	4	Youth Summer Programs (16%)
5	Family Programs (14%)	5	Senior Programs (14%)	2	Special Events/Festivals (16%)	5	Youth Swim Programs (15%)	5	Special Events/Festivals (15%)	5	Adult Swim Programs (12%)
				2	Nature/Environmental Programs (16%)	5	Special Events/Festivals (15%)	5	Adult Continuing Ed. Programs (15%)	5	Adult Continuing Ed. Programs (12%)
				2	Outdoor Adventure Programs (16%)						
				2	Youth Swim Programs (16%)						

Priority Actions

Citywide		Northwest		Northeast		Central City		Southwest		Southeast	
1	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (28%)	1	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (32%)	1	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (23%)	1	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (33%)	1	Purchase Land for Neighborhood Parks (24%)	1	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (27%)
2	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (22%)	2	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (25%)	1	Improve Park Bike/Pedestrian Access (23%)	2	Develop New Senior Wellness Centers (27%)	1	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (24%)	2	Upgrade Community Parks (27%)
3	Upgrade Community Parks (21%)	3	Purchase Land for Neighborhood Parks (23%)	1	Develop New Senior Wellness Centers (23%)	3	Upgrade Community Parks (21%)	3	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks (22%)	3	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (21%)
4	Develop New Senior Wellness Centers (21%)	3	Upgrade Community Parks (23%)	1	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (23%)	4	Build New Walking/Biking Trails (19%)	4	Upgrade Community Parks (20%)	4	Youth Summer Programs (16%)
5	Purchase Land for Neighborhood Parks (19%)	5	Develop New Senior Wellness Centers (22%)	5	Plant Trees along Trails/in Parks (19%)	5	Upgrade Community Centers (16%)	4	Improve Park Bike/Pedestrian Access (20%)	5	Adult Swim Programs (12%)
						5	Build Outdoor Pools (16%)			5	Adult Continuing Ed. Programs (12%)

APPENDIX C: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS (2020)

OKC PUBLIC PARK TYPES



Neighborhood Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Airport Heights Park	3605 S SHAWNEE AVE	3	4
Alice Harn Park	926 NW 15TH ST	6	2
Belle Isle Park	2701 NW 62ND ST	2	9
Berta Faye Rex Quail Creek Park	11130 QUAIL CREEK RD	8	10
Bob Akers Park	2408 SE 11TH ST	7	5
Britton Park	1301 NW 96TH ST	2	1
Brock Park	1601 SW 25TH ST	6	29
Brookwood Park	9600 S SHARTEL AVE	5	4
Burton/Britton Park	9701 N SHARTEL AVE	7	1
Campbell Park	41 W PARK PL	6	1
Creston Hills Park	2240 NE 18TH ST	7	6
Crown Heights Park	600 NW 38TH ST	2	17
Denniston Park	2609 DENNISTON DR	2	3
Dolphin Wharton Park	301 NE 63RD ST	7	19
Douglas Park	500 NW 47TH ST	2	8
E.B. Jeffrey Park	4432 NW 16TH ST	3	5
E.W. Perry Park	1329 NE 48TH ST	7	2
Edgemere Park	3421 N HARVEY PKWY	2	23
Elm Grove Park	710 S PENNSYLVANIA AVE	6	4
Flower Garden Park	4711 N CLASSEN BLVD	2	6
Geraldine Park	3203 N GERALDINE AVE	2	7
Girvin Park	3400 NW 14TH ST	6	7
Glen Ellyn Park	2300 N EVEREST AVE	7	2
Goodholm Park	2701 N ROBINSON AVE	2	4
Grant Corbin Park	4032 NW 13TH ST	3	2
Greens Tot-Lot	13048 BURLINGAME AVE	8	0.7
Guilchester Park	2716 DORCHESTER DR	2	0.3
Harden Park	2801 CRESTON DR	7	2
Harlow Park	4800 NW 19TH ST	3	7
Harvest Hills Park	8235 NW 104TH ST	1	4
Highley Park	1934 NW 8TH ST	6	1
Hiram Park	8200 HAPPY LN	7	9
Hosea Vinyard Park	4201 S WALKER AVE	4	8
J. Brayden Black Park	2121 N COUNCIL RD	1	9

Neighborhood Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Jack W. Cornett Park	3001 N GROVE AVE	3	5
John F. Kennedy Park	1824 NE 16TH ST	7	5
L.D. Lacy Park	1114 NE 43RD ST	7	12
Lakeshore Estates Park	8115 W LAKE HEFNER DR	1	1
Lela Park	1801 LELA AVE	3	7
Lippert Park	5501 S SHARTEL AVE	4	4
Lorraine Thomas Park	2350 S INDEPENDENCE AVE	6	4
Luther Dulaney Park	2931 NW 41ST ST	2	5
Mackleman Park	5501 MACKLEMAN DR	4	5
Mark Twain Park	2402 NW 1ST ST	6	0.3
May Park	2817 SW 34TH ST	6	1
Mayfair Park	4510 N MAYFAIR DR	2	2
Mayview Park	3135 NW 73RD ST	2	1
McCracken Park	410 SE 64TH ST	4	9
McKinley Park	1300 N MCKINLEY AVE	6	9
McMechan Park	1601 MCMECHAN PKWY	7	1
McNabb Park	901 NE 33RD ST	7	1
Meadowbrook Park	3809 NW 10TH ST	3	2
Mike Dover Park	4601 S WALKER AVE	4	2
Military Park	1200 NW 25TH ST	2	1
Nichols Court Park	1901 CULBERTSON DR	7	0.7
North Highland Park	301 NW 81ST ST	7	2
Oliver Park	65 SW GRAND BLVD	4	17
Perle Mesta Park	1900 N SHARTEL AVE	6	3
Phillips Park	2808 N PROSPECT AVE	7	4
Pied Piper Park	1303 NW 100TH ST	2	7
Pilot Center	1435 NW 2ND ST	6	1
Progressive Community Park	4401 LENOX AVE	7	12
Red Andrews Park	720 NW 8TH ST	6	2
Redlands Park	1425 NW 141ST ST	8	17
Reed Park	1217 N MAY AVE	6	2
Riley Leroy Pitts Park	1920 N KATE AVE	7	11
Rotary Playground Park	416 SE 15TH ST	7	8
Saint Clair Park	2212 N ST CLAIR AVE	6	0.6
Shallowbrook Park	4901 S SHALLOW BROOK DR	4	10

Neighborhood Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Siler Park	2508 SW 95TH ST	5	4
Smitty Park	2404 NW 44TH ST	2	6
Sparrow Park	300 NW 30TH ST	2	3
Swatek Park	2301 NW 29TH ST	2	3
Syl Goldman Park	5333 S INDEPENDENCE AVE	3	23
Tinsley Park	3243 NW 65TH ST	2	2
Top O' the Town Park	2102 S EVEREST AVE	7	5
Tulsa Park	2409 S TULSA AVE	3	9
Wayman's Park	1900 N DREXEL BLVD	6	2
William Fremont Harn Park*	331 NE 16TH ST	7	2
William O. Lytle Park	803 GREENVALE RD	1	4
Winans Park	2100 N BROADWAY AVE	6	3
Woodland Park	730 NE 50TH ST	7	7
Woodrun Park	4 N WILLOWOOD DR	1	12
Youngs Park	4610 S YOUNGS BLVD	6	8
Zach D. Taylor Park	633 NW 52ND ST	2	6
Zurline Park	2800 S WOODWARD AVE	6	6

Metropolitan Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Bluff Creek Park	10941 N MERIDIAN AVE	8	271
Earlywine Park	3033 SW 119TH ST	5	97
Lake Hefner (Childrens Playground)	8901 LAKE HEFNER PKWY	8	2
Lake Stanley Draper (Childrens Playground Included)	8255 SE 104TH ST	4	2
Lincoln Park	4712 N MARTIN LUTHER KING AVE	7	22
Myriad Gardens	301 W RENO AVE	6	14
Overholser Park	2402 E OVERHOLSER DR	1	59
Route 66 Park	9901 NW 23RD ST	1	148
Scissortail Park North*	300 SW 7TH ST	6	39
South Lakes Park	4302 SW 119TH ST	3	159
Trosper Park	2300 SE 29TH ST	7	367
Wheeler Park	1120 S WESTERN AVE	6, 4	94
Wiley Post Park	2021 S ROBINSON AVE	4, 6, 7	51

Community Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Booker T. Washington Park	200 N HIGH AVE	7	18
Daniel J. Diggs Park	2201 N COLTRANE RD	7	15
Draper Park (Capitol Hill)	3816 S ROBINSON AVE	4	30
E.M. Sellers Park	8301 S VILLA AVE	5	8
Edwards Park	1515 N BRYANT AVE	7	45
Frank Hathaway Park	3730 S LINDSAY AVE	7	13
H.C. Schilling Park	539 SE 25TH ST	7	22
Hefner Park (NW Optimist)	3301 NW GRAND BLVD	2	43
Louis A. Macklanburg Park	2234 NW 117TH ST	2	9
Manuel Perez Park	21 SE 17TH ST	7	32
Melrose Park	7800 MELROSE LN	1	9
Memorial Park	1152 NW 36TH ST	2	16
Merrel Medley Park	11100 S PENNSYLVANIA AVE	5	16
Minnis Lake View Park	12520 NE 36TH ST	7	20
North Oklahoma City Rotary Park	5708 N TULSA AVE	1, 2	20
Northeast Center	1300 NE 33RD ST	7	11
Pat Murphy Park	4551 W HEFNER RD	8	12
South Rotary Park	1604 SW 15TH ST	6	41
Southern Oaks Park	6818 S WALKER AVE	4	22
Stars and Stripes Park	3701 S LAKE HEFNER DR	8	47
Taylor Park	1115 SW 70TH ST	5	7

District Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Dolese Park	4701 NW 50TH ST	1	153
Douglass Park	900 FREDERICK DOUGLASS AVE	7	81
Will Rogers Park	3400 NW 36TH ST	2	120
Woodson Park	3401 S MAY AVE	3	122

Green Spaces

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Canyon Park	624 W I-44 HWY	2	22
Chisholm Creek Detention Pond	902 NW 122ND ST	7	8
Crossroads Sports Complex	120 SE 89TH ST	4	49
Culbertson Park	1101 NE 13TH ST	7	0.4
Florence Park	820 NW 15TH ST	6	0.4
Joe Louis Park	10810 NE 48TH ST	7	2
O'Neil Park	725 NW 13TH ST	6	0.5
Open Space - A	1910 NE 66TH ST	7	2
Open Space - B	4701 N ANDERSON RD	7	4
Open Space - C	5800 SE 59TH ST	4	3
Open Space - D	1722 S DURLAND AVE	7	0.2
Open Space - E	2719 S MERIDIAN AVE	3	0.6
Open Space - F	1800 NW 112ND ST	2	62
Open Space - G	1102 NW 115TH ST	2	5
Open Space - J	4301 NW 150TH ST	8	109
Open Space - K	4899 N AIR DEPOT BLVD	7	404
Pioneer Park	103 NW 3RD ST	6	0.2
Quail Creek Detention Pond	11501 QUAIL CREEK RD	8	23
Rhode Island Park	6623 N RHODE ISLAND AVE	7	0.4
Rockwell Park	618 N ROCKWELL AVE	3	2
Scissortail Park South	300 SW 7TH ST	6	31
Stiles Circle Park	379 NE 8TH ST	7	0.7

Special Use Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Bicentennial Park	500 COUCH DR	6	2
Carolyn Hill Park	228 PATIENCE LATTING CIR	6	0.2
City Hall Park	200 N. WALKER AVE	6	3
Crystal Lake Recreation Area	6901 SW 15TH ST	3	150
Earlywine Golf Course	11600 S PORTLAND AVE	5	337
Hefner Golf Course	4491 S. LAKE HEFNER DR	2	363
Henrietta B. Foster Center	614 NE 4TH ST	7	1
Hightower (Frank J.) Park	208 PATIENCE LATTING CIR	6	0.2
I-240 Sports Complex*	3960 E. I-240 SERVICE ROAD	4	34
James Stewart Golf Course	900 FREDERICK DOUGLASS AVE	7	106
Kitchen Lake Park*	5501 SE. 119TH ST	4	8
Lightning Creek Park	8100 S. WESTERN AVE	5	35
Lincoln Park Golf Course	4001 NE GRAND BLVD	7	324
Maywood Park	101 NE. 3RD ST	7	0.3
Paw Park	3349 NW. GRAND BLVD	2	2
Regatta Park	701 S. LINCOLN BLVD	7	28
River Park	800 S AGNEW AVE	6	32
Robert S. Kerr Park	102 ROBERT S. KERR AVE	6	0.6
Straka Detention Pond	1203 SW. 84TH ST	5	25
Ted Reynolds Park	3005 W RENO AVE	6	11
Trosper Golf Course	2301 SE 29TH ST	7	204

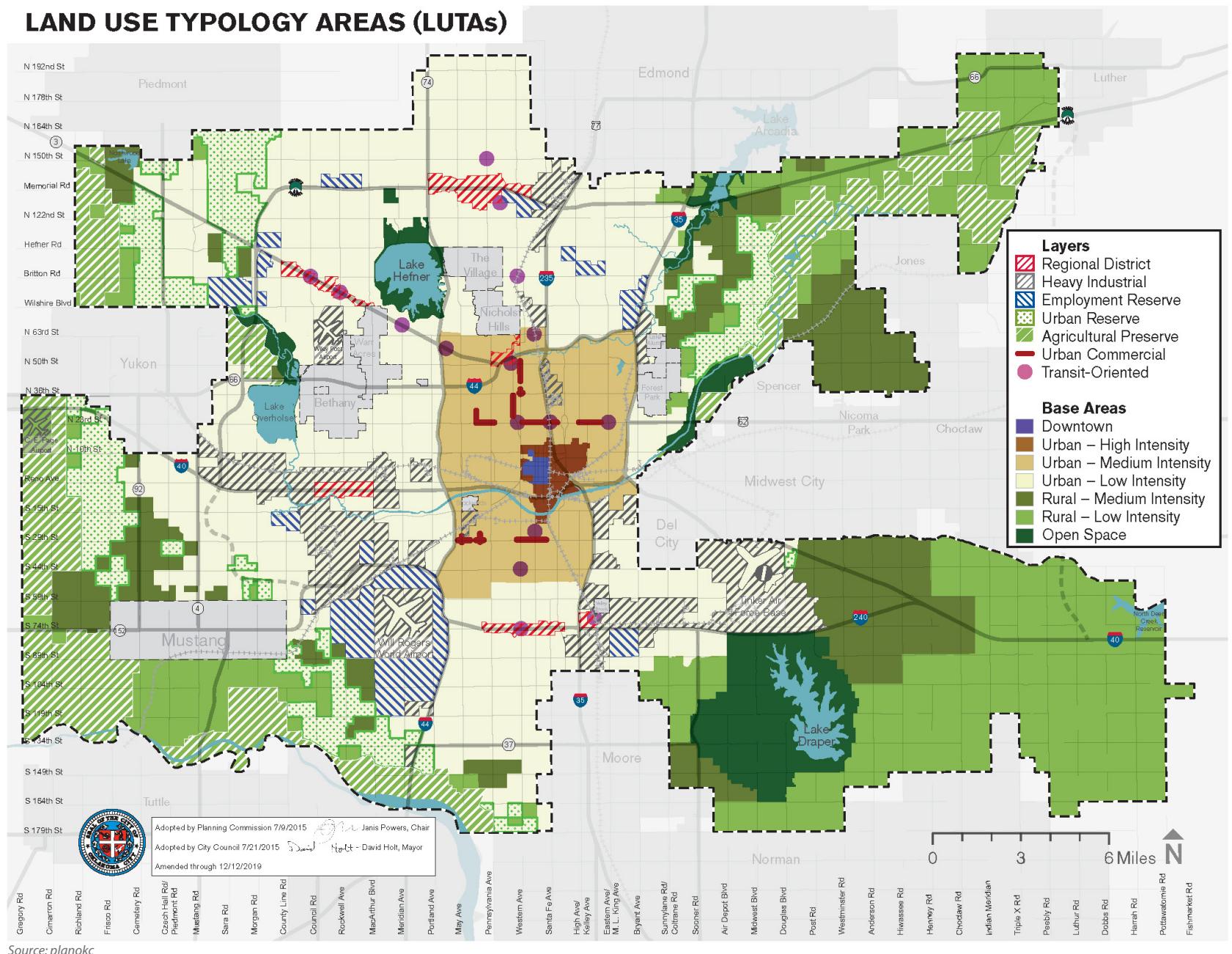
Nature Parks

Name	Address	Ward	Acres
Martin Nature Park	4700 W. MEMORIAL RD	8	137
Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge	5101 N. STINCHCOMB AVE	1	965

* Indicates park has been acquired since the 2013 Parks Master Plan.

APPENDIX D: LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREAS DESCRIPTIONS (PLANOKC)

LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREAS (LUTAs)



Source: planokc

Land Use Typology

BASE LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREAS

The core Land Use Typology Areas are oriented around a spectrum of development intensities – from undeveloped Open Space, to the high intensity of Downtown. Each encompasses development patterns designed to encourage connectivity and compatibility as appropriate to the intended level of intensity. The table at right shows the range of land use intensity from lowest to highest.

LAYER LAND USE TYPOLOGY AREAS

"Layer" Typology Areas are content-specific designations that adjust the purpose and function of the base LUTAs. The variations from the base LUTAs differ. Agricultural Preserve, Urban Reserve, and Heavy Industrial narrow the range of land uses or densities to avoid incompatible land use patterns. Regional Districts and Employment Reserve encourage retail and industrial/employment uses in targeted areas, while Urban Commercial and Transit-Oriented districts encourage higher levels of intensity and connectivity.

LUTA DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The Land Use Typology Areas map is shown at right. Land use policies are explained in detail for each LUTA on the following pages.

(Densities shown in the LUTA descriptions are expressed in gross terms unless otherwise indicated. Gross density is the sum of all residential units divided by the entire site area including all common areas, rights-of-way, etc. and is expressed in dwelling units per acre.)

Source: planokc

BASE LUTAS

Open Space (OS)

Concentrations of publicly owned land that are intended to remain undeveloped and natural in character. Certain public uses may be appropriate.

Rural – Low Intensity (RL)

Large-lot residential (5 acres or more) plus related commercial services. No expectation of urbanization or provision of urban infrastructure such as water or sewer.

Rural – Medium Intensity (RM)

Large-lot residential (2 acres or more) plus related commercial services. No expectation of urbanization or provision of water or sewer.

Urban – Low Intensity (UL)

Applicable to the least intensely developed areas of the city that still receive urban water, sewer, police, park, and fire services.

Urban – Medium Intensity (UM)

Medium intensity urbanized area, reflective of the historic urban core, which balances small-and medium-lot housing and commercial districts.

Urban – High Intensity (UH)

Applies to the area surrounding the central business district. Developments are expected to have notably higher densities, scale, and mixture of uses than those found in UM.

Downtown (DT)

The city center, Oklahoma City's most intense development area, envisioned as a regional center for commerce and tourism.

LAYER LUTAS

Agricultural Preserve (AP)

Preserves large scale acreages used primarily for agricultural purposes as well as large floodplain areas. Existing development patterns are expected to remain unchanged for a long period of time.

Urban Reserve (UR)

Reserves agricultural land and large acreage estates until the area is ready for urbanization. Maintains land to provide the most flexibility for future urban development and the ability to efficiently and sustainably deliver services.

Employment Reserve (ER)

Reserves priority areas for large industrial and business development essential for the City's economic stability and future growth.

Urban Commercial (UC)

Encourages the concentration of small-scale retail, office, and service businesses in locations that serve as hubs for neighborhood and city-wide consumer activity.

Regional District (RD)

Designates areas that strategically prioritize the location and concentration of regionally serving retail and entertainment uses.

Transit-Oriented (TO)

Encourages mixed-use development and higher connectivity, density, and intensity, as well as concentrations of commercial activity around areas designated as important future mass transit stops.

Heavy Industrial (HI)

Intended to accommodate industrial uses that are difficult to integrate with less intense uses due to negative impacts from heavy traffic, noise, or odors.

APPENDIX E: ACTION TABLES (2020 UPDATE)

2020 Update	Not Started	Ongoing	Completed
	○	●	✓

Strategic Direction 1: Maintain and improve physical assets of existing parks.							
	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 1.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive asset management and maintenance system with sufficient funding to improve the quality of user experiences in Oklahoma City parks.							
●	1.1.1. Maintain an inventory of all park assets (facilities, infrastructure, and grounds), including condition, deferred maintenance needs, and life cycle replacement schedules.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department	"Friends of OKC Parks" organization(s)	Maintenance enhancement fund (field and shelter fees, golf fees, etc.), sponsorships, advertising, donations	All park assets and their condition inventoried.	Short term (0–5 years)
✓	1.1.2. Establish maintenance standards for park assets (facilities, infrastructure, and grounds) tied to quality outcomes. Target a minimum of Mode II maintenance using NRPA's standards.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department				
○	1.1.3. Prioritize and implement physical investments in existing park assets to implement the standards and address deferred maintenance and life cycle replacement.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	1.1.4. Update existing facility and grounds maintenance procedures to support the system.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	1.1.5. Increase current funding to sufficient levels to implement the system.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 1.2. Determine additional areas in the system where mowing can be substantially reduced or eliminated to reduce cost and create a more balanced system of natural and maintained areas.							
●	1.2.1. Establish criteria to identify natural areas (e.g., public visibility, ecological restoration value, etc.).	Task	Parks and Recreation Department	Multiple environmental and conservation organizations by way of newsletters, conferences, hikes, lectures, etc. Native plant societies	Maintenance enhancement fund	Keep the balance of maintained vs. natural areas at or below the best practice of 60%/40% over time.	Short term (0–5 years)
○	1.2.2. Amend the weed ordinance to allow natural areas to be maintained in Oklahoma City parks.	Regulation	Planning Department				
●	1.2.3. Incorporate natural area management zones and practices into the maintenance plans for each park.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	1.2.4. Undertake public outreach/education on the value of natural areas in city parks.	Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 1.3. Develop and implement design standards to improve the attractiveness of and enhance user experiences in community-serving parks.							
✓	1.3.1. Structure the design standards to address the desired facilities and amenities for each park type (see Chapter 4), with the overall goal of providing a range of quality experiences to draw different age groups to use the park.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				Short term (0–5 years)
●	1.3.2. Address the following in the design standards: facility design (e.g., materials); access, circulation, and parking to support different levels of facilities and amenities; landscaping, including tree planting and maintenance per Action 1.4; and signage, safety and security, lighting, costs, environmental sustainability, etc.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
●	1.3.3. Apply the design standards to all physical improvement projects in the parks.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				

Strategic Direction 1: Maintain and improve physical assets of existing parks.							
	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 1.4. Implement a tree planting and replacement program in the Oklahoma City parks.							
✓	1.4.1. Develop a GIS inventory of existing trees in the parks (species, size, condition, canopy coverage).	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department	Tree promotion organization (e.g., OKC Arbor Day Foundation)	Insurance monies received from cars damaging city trees, developer fees/tree fund	All trees inventoried. Trees canopy target reached.	Long term (0-20 years)
●	1.4.2. Establish a tree canopy coverage target, preferred species, and criteria for priority tree planting locations (e.g., in picnic areas and along walking trails).	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	1.4.3. Allocate funding in the annual parks budget for tree planting and replacement. Include adequate funding for maintenance.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, City Management				
●	1.4.4. Support greenOKC's direction to establish an Urban Forestry Program and City Urban Forester position.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
○	1.4.5. Coordinate tree planting with city-wide efforts (e.g., the ReleafOKC program).	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
Action 1.5. Identify and dispose of unproductive parks to allow resources to be invested in more productive parks that better serve community needs.							
●	1.5.1. Use the criteria defined in Chapter 6 to identify and dispose of surplus parks.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				Short term (0-5 years)
●	1.5.2. Improve processes for disposal of parkland identified as surplus.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 1.6. Evaluate the current park maintenance districts for opportunities to increase efficiency and reduce costs.							
●	1.6.1. Undertake a drive time analysis to determine the time maintenance staff spends driving during a typical day.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department		Efficiencies gained, outsourcing	Drive time for maintenance staff reduced.	Medium term (0-10 years)
○	1.6.2. Redesign the existing (five) park maintenance districts to limit the amount of drive time (ideally to no more than an hour and a half daily) to increase productivity and reduce the cost of maintenance and associated expenses such as fuel. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to compare gains to costs such as increased supervision, new maintenance facility requirements, etc. prior to finalizing a recommendation for revised or new districts.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				

Strategic Direction 2: Develop facilities and programs in existing parks to meet community needs.

	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 2.1. Implement a program to improve existing park assets to align with community recreational facility needs.							
○	2.1.1. Evaluate each park for its contribution to community needs using the park classification and evaluation considerations contained in Chapter 6.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department	"Friends of OKC Parks" organization(s)	Maintenance enhancement fund (field and shelter fees, golf fees, etc.), sponsorships, advertising, donations	All park assets and their condition inventoried.	Short term (0-5 years)
○	2.1.2. Using the evaluation conducted per 2.1.1, prioritize deficient parks for improvements (upgrades to existing facilities, development of new ones, etc.) to meet community needs.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department				
○	2.1.3. Develop and regularly update park master plans to define the improvements to be made to priority parks. Engage surrounding residents in the planning process to address the local neighborhood context, demographics, needs, and priorities. Remove or replace unproductive facilities or amenities.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department				
○	2.1.4. Establish long-range maintenance plans for park improvements consistent with the asset management and maintenance system (Action 1.1). Allocate funding to support improvements and long-term maintenance.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 2.2. Develop a plan for recreational programs and services to be offered in Oklahoma City parks to meet community needs.							
○	2.2.1. Identify core programs and services that should be offered by the Parks and Recreation Department, focusing on health and wellness as the key element. Identify non-core programs that can be offered by other providers.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department	School Districts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, other recreational providers	Pricing policy, partnerships	Increase to 85% from 71% the percentage of residents rating the quality of programs good or excellent.	Medium term (0-10 years)
○	2.2.2. Evaluate, strengthen, and expand existing offerings by the Parks and Recreation Department consistent with the definition of core programs and services. Incorporate facilities to support these programs and services into park improvement plans.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	2.2.3. Establish partnership agreements that maximize the extent to which recreational programs and services offered by other providers in Oklahoma City parks meet needs of the overall community (as opposed to specific interest groups).	Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation				
○	2.2.4. Explore joint programming opportunities with school districts within Oklahoma City.	Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Oklahoma City Public Schools				

Strategic Direction 2: Develop facilities and programs in existing parks to meet community needs.

	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 2.3. Implement a model of larger, multi-generational centers located in regional (district or metropolitan) parks to replace the current outdated model of smaller recreation centers in community parks.							
○	2.3.1. Identify the programs and uses to be accommodated in multi-generational centers based on the needs analysis. Such centers should incorporate the components of aquatic centers, senior wellness centers, and community/ health and fitness centers into one facility.	Task, Program		City/County Health Department, YMCA, YWCA	Bonds, facility authority, lease backs, user fees or other form of cost recovery to support operations and maintenance	Eight multi-generational centers built in 20 years.	Long term (0-20 years)
○	2.3.2. Identify locations for multi-generational centers based on the level of service standards. Where feasible, expand/ upgrade existing facilities (e.g., regional aquatic centers). Develop plans, allocate funding, and incorporate the identified centers into the city's Capital Improvements Program. Dedicate funding to support long-term maintenance.	Task, Program					
Action 2.4. Enhance the value of the Oklahoma City parks as places for the community to come together at scales ranging from neighborhood gatherings to large-scale festivals and special events.							
✓	2.4.1. Designate areas for informal gatherings in local (neighborhood and community) parks.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation		Sponsorships, cost recovery from events	Host 5 new annual signature events.	Medium term (0-10 years)
●	2.4.2. Incorporate larger special event areas with sufficient support facilities (access, parking, etc.) into regional (district and metropolitan) parks.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation				
✓	2.4.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing special events offered in Oklahoma City parks. Identify five or more existing or new signature events that can be leveraged for regional economic impact and bring recognition to the park system (see Action 5.2).	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation				
Action 2.5. Increase the attractiveness of Oklahoma City parks for young adult professionals as an economic development and community-building strategy.							
○	2.5.1. Conduct surveys and focus groups to determine the recreational opportunities young professionals seek in a park system, with the goal of increasing the city's competitiveness with other regions in attracting and retaining talented young workers and the businesses that depend upon them.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department	Chamber of Commerce	Foundation, economic development agency funding		Short term (0-5 years)
○	2.5.2. Based on the survey and focus group results, incorporate selected facilities and programs appealing to young adult professionals into regional or community parks.	Program	Parks and Recreation Department				
●	2.5.3. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to market the economic value of parks as a way to attract talented young workers and businesses to the city (Action 4.2).	Program	Parks and Recreation Department				

Strategic Direction 3: Improve access to existing parks.

	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 3.1. Implement a program to better connect neighborhoods to existing parks via the sidewalk network.							
●	3.1.1. Use the park access maps in Chapter 6 to Identify sidewalk gaps, deficient conditions, and other access barriers within a ½- to 1-mile “walkshed” of each existing park. Prioritize existing and potential street/sidewalk connections for improvement.	Task, Program	Planning Department		Dedicated sales tax, bonds, boulevard fee	All streets in the central city not meeting local park level of service standards retrofitted with sidewalks.	Medium term (0-10 years)
●	3.1.2. Evaluate current park access points as they relate to the existing and potential street/sidewalk connections. Prioritize improvements to existing and development of new access points to create welcoming park entrances (signage, landscaping, etc.). Develop design standards for these entrances (Action 1.3).	Task, Program	Planning Department				
●	3.1.3. Prioritize street tree planting along streets leading to parks.	Policy	Planning Department, Public Works Department				
●	3.1.4. Allocate funding for priority park access (sidewalk and entrance) improvements, targeting retrofits in the central city and urban area to improve community health and promote economic revitalization.	Policy	Planning Department, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 3.2. Connect parks to the citywide trail system.							
●	3.2.1. Prioritize segments of the City's trails master plan (Action 5.1) connecting to existing parks for implementation, including “street-trails” to create connections to larger parks.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department		Dedicated sales tax, bonds, greenway foundation, land lease/concessions, special recognition license tag		Long term (0-20 years)
Action 3.3. Enhance city design standards to promote connectivity.							
●	3.3.1. Implement the pedestrian and bicycle requirements of planokc's proposed street design standards to improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment, including sidewalks, multi-use paths, and bicycle lanes. Add requirements for street trees along both sides of all new or reconstructed streets.	Policy	Planning Department, Public Works Department				Short term (0-5 years)
✓	3.3.2. Adopt a new “street-trail” classification (separated paths wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles along boulevards and other streets designated in the City's trails master plan).	Policy	Planning Department, Parks and Recreation Department				

Strategic Direction 4: Promote and increase awareness of the value of parks.

	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 4.1. Increase the marketing and business development capabilities of the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department.							
✓	4.1.1. Develop a distinctive “brand” for Oklahoma City parks within the overall city brand.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department	Universities (marketing or business department), Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA	Parks foundation, user fees (permits, rentals, programs, etc.)	Business Development Office generates 10 times its cost in revenue.	Short term (0-5 years)
✓	4.1.2. Increase the marketing resources of the Parks and Recreation Department, and implement a plan to strengthen communication and outreach efforts on the value of parks (website, social media, etc.) using the brand.	Policy	City Management				
○	4.1.3. Ensure that partners who are operating programs and facilities in Oklahoma City parks provide recognition for the park system (partnership agreements, signage, brochures, etc.).	Policy	Oklahoma City Community Foundation				
○	4.1.4. Establish a business development office to develop earned income opportunities and other diversified revenue options available to help offset operational and capital costs and to oversee development of business plans for major facilities and events.	Program	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 4.2. Initiate a broader, community-wide campaign to increase awareness of the value parks bring to Oklahoma City's quality of life and economy.							
○	4.2.1. Conduct a study of the economic impact of Oklahoma City parks.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation	TPL's Center for City Parks Excellence, Chamber of Commerce, City-County Health Department, healthcare institutions, School Districts, Neighborhood Alliance	Foundation, economic development agency funding		Short term (0-5 years)
✓	4.2.2. Establish a “Parks Alliance” based on the Neighborhood Alliance model, with funding to focus on marketing the value of parks citywide as a key priority (see Chapter 10).	Program	Oklahoma City Community Foundation				
●	4.2.3. Develop and implement a coordinated marketing campaign to promote the value of Oklahoma City parks. Engage other partners (Chamber of Commerce, City-County Health Department, healthcare institutions, Oklahoma City Schools, Neighborhood Alliance, etc.) and media outlets in this effort.	Program	Oklahoma City Community Foundation				

Strategic Direction 5: Develop new parks and facilities.							
	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 5.1. Complete the citywide trails system.							
●	5.1.1. Using the trail access and connectivity maps in Chapter 6 as a guide, update the trails master plan and prioritize key segments for implementation.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department	City-County Health Department, healthcare institutions, (hospitals, medical clinic, insurance company, etc.), biking/walking organizations	Dedicated sales tax, developer dedications, bonds, greenway foundation, land lease/concessions, special recognition license tag	One hundred miles of trail complete in 20 years.	Long term (0-20 years)
●	5.1.2. Identify “street-trail” connections along key streets and boulevards to increase connectivity and fill gaps in the system.	Task	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
●	5.1.3. Require new developments to reserve trail segments designated on the trails master plan.	Regulation	Planning Department				
●	5.1.4. Incorporate “healthy heart trail” or similar health and wellness features into the trails system (signage, distance markers, etc.).	Program	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
●	5.1.5. Develop greenway corridors around trails, where rights-of-way allow, with trees, benches, possible concessions, and other amenities.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department, Planning Department				
Action 5.2. Develop a signature downtown (Core to Shore) park system to leverage economic development and quality of life.							
✓	5.2.1. Implement the Core to Shore Plan connecting the downtown core to the Oklahoma River, beginning with Central Park. Identify a sustainable funding stream to support park operations and the highest standards of maintenance (Mode I per NRPA's maintenance standards).	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department	Mayor's office, Governor's office, convention and visitor's bureau, chamber of commerce, leading media outlets	Business Improvement District, special event revenues, sponsors, naming rights		Medium term (0-10 years)
✓	5.2.2. Incorporate regionally significant, large-scale events into downtown park programming (see Action 2.4).	Program	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department				
✓	5.2.3. Incorporate recreational facilities and amenities for downtown residents.	Program	Parks and Recreation Department				
Action 5.3. Develop new local (neighborhood or community) parks where necessary to serve existing residents and regional (district or metropolitan) parks where necessary to serve residents of developing parts of the city (urban or urban growth area).							
●	5.3.1. Conduct site selection analyses in areas where the level of service standards indicate future local and regional parks will be needed. Incorporate land acquisition and park development into long-term capital improvement plans.	Policy	Parks and Recreation Department, Planning Department		Park impact/ land dedication fees, bonds	Five new regional parks and 25 new local parks developed in the central city and urban area.	Long term (0-20 years)
●	5.3.2. Allocate funding to support development of the new parks when needed to serve residents of developing areas. Consider enactment of a park impact fee proportional to the demand for regional recreation generated by new developments.	Policy	City Management				

Strategic Direction 5: Develop new parks and facilities.							
	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 5.4. Develop partnerships to develop and manage new facilities.							
●	5.4.1. Engage potential partners (e.g., health care providers, YMCA, corporate sponsors) in developing concepts for significant new facilities (e.g., multi-generational centers/ senior wellness centers) based on needs assessments.	Partnership	Oklahoma City Community Foundation	Health care institutions, YMCA/YWCA, corporations	Partnerships, sponsorships		Short term (0-5 years)
○	5.4.2. Develop agreements on programs and processes for operating and managing facilities that give proper recognition to Oklahoma City parks.	Partnership, Program	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation				

Strategic Direction 6: Establish agreements and standards for private parks and school parks.							
	Action Steps	Method	Responsible Parties	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Performance Measure	Time Frame
Action 6.1. Develop a coordinated school/park system strategy providing for appropriate use and sharing of facilities for recreational purposes.							
○	6.1.1. Establish standards and agreements for use of school grounds as school parks, prioritizing areas not meeting the level of service standard for access to public parks. Address safety and liability issues.	Policy, Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Oklahoma City Public Schools Planning Department	“Friends of OKC Parks” organization(s)	Bonds, donations, benefit districts, user fees or other form of cost recovery to support operations and maintenance	Agreement in place to use Oklahoma City Schools as school parks.	Short term (0-5 years)
○	6.1.2. Develop standards and agreements for joint development of recreational facilities in the construction of new schools or significant upgrades to existing ones.	Policy, Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Oklahoma City Public Schools Planning Department				
●	6.1.3. Begin discussions on the above with the Oklahoma City School District. Extend to school districts located elsewhere in the urban area and the urban growth area over time.	Policy, Partnership	Parks and Recreation Department, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Oklahoma City Public Schools Planning Department				
Action 6.2. Meet the local recreational needs of new residents in developing areas through private parks.							
✓	6.2.1. Establish design standards for private parks in new developments (size, walking distance for residents, minimum uses to be provided, long-term maintenance, etc.).	Regulation	Planning Department	School Districts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, other recreational providers	Pricing policy, partnerships		Short term (0-5 years)
✓	6.2.2. Incorporate the design standards into a parkland dedication ordinance or other regulations to ensure that the private parks serve the recreational needs of residents.	Regulation	Planning Department				

APPENDIX F: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Introduction

This appendix presents a financial overview of OKC Parks. The revenues and expenditures were analyzed to assess the Department's financial integrity. The cost recovery for facilities, programs and services at major functional levels has been analyzed to access the cost of service readiness.

Data Reviewed

For the *2013 Parks Master Plan*, PROS Consulting reviewed the detailed cost and activity information prepared by OKC Parks staff. PROS reviewed City Budgets 2009-2013 and a Revenue and Expenditure Report for 2012. *This 2020 Update* expands on that, providing *City Budgets 2013-2019* and a *Revenue and Expenditure Report for 2019*.

Operating Expenditures

Historical Expenses from Fiscal Years Ending 2008 through 2012					
Source: Annual Budgets	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	FY 11-12
Operating Expenditures					
Administration	\$4,288,948	\$4,409,819	\$3,874,181	\$3,794,670	\$3,802,934
Horticulture & Gardens	\$1,530,162	\$1,835,371	\$1,736,461	\$1,636,742	\$2,546,556
Civic Center Music Hall	\$2,084,030	\$2,500,880	\$2,559,833	\$2,404,400	\$2,477,567
Grounds Maintenance	\$9,046,565	\$9,001,386	\$8,360,948	\$7,916,515	\$8,846,181
Recreation	\$4,859,750	\$4,785,731	\$4,912,096	\$4,881,277	\$4,988,633
Total Operating Expenditures	\$21,809,455	\$22,533,187	\$21,443,519	\$20,633,604	\$22,661,871
Capital Expenditures	\$1,144,449	\$650,416	\$1,050,057	\$214,684	\$189,407
Non-Operating Expenditures	\$59,565	\$114,920	\$93,371	\$241,592	\$1,036,863
Total Expenditures	\$23,013,469	\$23,298,523	\$22,586,947	\$21,089,880	\$23,888,141

The capital expenditures compared to operation and maintenance expenditures have decreased significantly over the five year period from 2008-2012. This is a reflection of the Department's ability to maintain and replace the current equipment and facilities.

Historical Expenses from Fiscal Years Ending 2013 through 2019							
Source: Annual Budgets	FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Operating Expenditures							
Administration	\$4,036,907	\$3,928,821	\$3,672,549	\$5,058,729	\$4,711,927	\$4,888,438	\$4,807,336
Horticulture & Gardens	\$4,726,094	\$4,923,842	\$4,961,890	\$4,942,536	\$4,354,541	\$5,056,212	\$8,412,052
Civic Center Music Hall	\$2,594,851	\$2,664,793	\$2,984,853	\$3,112,730	\$3,891,550	\$2,944,270	\$889,681
Grounds Maintenance	\$7,303,254	\$7,142,520	\$7,572,873	\$8,018,329	\$6,863,183	\$7,145,830	\$8,024,494
Recreation	\$5,022,838	\$4,808,577	\$5,002,912	\$4,612,576	\$4,130,466	\$4,101,031	\$4,196,119
Total Operating Expenditures	\$23,683,944	\$23,468,553	\$24,195,077	\$25,744,900	\$23,951,667	\$24,135,781	\$26,329,682
Capital Expenditures	\$181,332	\$243,126	\$189,922	\$248,178	\$927,579	\$95,854	\$220,154
Non-Operating Expenditures	\$1,087,091	\$942,080	\$1,940,015	\$4,119,032	\$306,378	\$144,676	\$336,659
Total Expenditures	\$24,952,367	\$24,653,759	\$26,325,014	\$30,112,110	\$25,185,624	\$24,376,311	\$26,886,495

Cost Recovery from Earned Income (2012)

The industry best practices are 35–40% for cost recovery from revenues other than taxes for similar park and recreation agencies. Non-tax revenues, which exclude revenues from property taxes, were 46% of expenditures in 2012. The table below shows the Department's cost recovery from non-tax revenues by major funding sources.

Department Cost Recovery (2012)			
Fund	Revenue	Budget	Recovery %
General Fund	\$1,259,810	\$23,142,479	5%
Special Purpose Fund (donations, park land sales)	\$1,064,619	\$2,941,245	36%
OCMFA (oil and gas Royalties)	\$916,917	\$2,155,893	43%
OCPPA (golf and Civic Center Music Hall)	\$15,726,695	\$13,399,607	117%
Totals	\$18,968,040	\$41,639,224	46%

The industry best practices for private benefit programs and services are 100% or greater cost recovery from revenues other than taxes for similar park and recreation agencies. The table below shows that the Department's cost recovery of the selected programs from non-tax revenues is 83% to 103% of the total operating expenses.

Cost Recovery of Selected Programs (2012)				
Program	Revenues	Expenditures	Revenues Over/Under Expenditures	Cost Recovery
Civic Center/Rose State	\$2,047,376	\$2,477,567	-\$430,191	83%
Golf	\$12,802,685	\$12,464,128	\$338,557	103%
Water Taxi	\$714,496	\$805,946	-\$91,450	89%

Cost Recovery from Earned Income (2019)

Non-tax revenues, which exclude revenues from property taxes, were 22% of expenditures in 2019. The table below shows the Department's cost recovery from non-tax revenues by major funding sources.

Department Cost Recovery (2019)			
Fund	Revenue	Budget	Recovery %
General Fund	\$1,461,197	\$26,703,368	5%
Special Purpose Fund (donations, park land sales)	\$1,285,545	\$3,384,751	38%
OCMFA (oil and gas Royalties)	\$113,618	\$4,718,580	2%
OCPPA (golf and Civic Center Music Hall)	\$13,813,237	\$50,820,163	27%
Parks Impact Fees	\$1,689,763	\$1,730,497	98%
Trail Impact Fees	\$805,521	\$834,397	97%
Totals	\$19,168,882	\$88,191,756	22%

Cost Recovery of Selected Programs (2019)				
Program	Revenues	Expenditures	Revenues Over/Under Expenditures	Cost Recovery
Civic Center/Rose State	\$2,686,679	\$1,360,385	\$1,326,294	197%
Golf	\$11,126,558	\$38,850,417	(\$27,723,859)	29%
Water Taxi (N/A)	-	-	-	-
Special Purpose Fund (donations, park land sales)	\$1,267,756	\$290,311	\$977,444	437%
Parks Impact Fees	\$1,689,763	\$817,000	\$872,763	207%
Trail Impact Fees	\$805,521	-	\$805,521	-

APPENDIX G: FUNDING SCENARIO C (EXAMPLE)

The table on the following pages is from the *2013 Parks Master Plan* and presents the order-of-magnitude cost estimates, assumptions, and potential funding sources for the Parks Master Plan actions that are incorporated into Scenario C. As noted for Scenario B, the Business Development and Marketing and Communications Offices should be put in place as an early implementation action to generate resources to fund the *Parks Master Plan* actions.

Scenario C Funding Assumptions (2012 Data)		
Action	Potential Funding Sources	Cost
Strategic Direction 1: Maintain and improve physical assets of existing parks.		
Maintain Existing Parks		
Maintain 70% of local and regional parks (2460 acres), down from 77%, at NRPA maintenance Mode II at an incremental cost of \$1294 per acre per year over the current \$3206 per acre per year, and maintain 30% of local and regional parks in an unmowed state, up from 23%, at a cost of \$800 per acre per year.	user fees, dedicated sales tax for maintenance, improvement districts and regular operating taxes	\$36,279,096
Tree Planting and Replacement Program		
Plant 1500 trees per year, for a total of 30000 new trees, at a cost of \$180 per tree.	land dedication fees, developer impact fees, property damage monies	\$5,400,000
Maintain 30000 new trees, at a cost of \$30 per tree per year.	business improvement districts, home owners fees, general taxes, boulevard tax	\$9,315,000
Subtotal Strategic Direction 1		\$50,994,096
Strategic Direction 2: Develop facilities and programs in existing parks to meet community needs.		
Improvements to Existing Parks		
Update playgrounds, lighting, restrooms, sports courts, loop trails, spray grounds, picnic areas, etc. in 60% of the local and regional parks (2460 acres) at \$50000 per acre.	dedicated capital improvement fees, users fees, maintenance endowments, permit fees, reservation fees, redevelopment funds	\$84,100,000
Subtotal Strategic Direction 2		\$84,100,000
Strategic Direction 3: Improve access to existing parks.		
Sidewalk Connections to Parks		
Construct 200 miles of new sidewalk in the central city, at a cost of \$260000 per mile.	dedicated sales tax, redevelopment funds, home owners fees, street funds	\$52,000,000
Citywide Trail System		
Construct 5 miles of new trails per year, for a total of 100 miles of new trails, at a cost of \$700000 per mile.	dedicated sales tax, Federal Transportation funds, greenway foundation, sale of greenway license plates, sale of development rights below the ground along the trails, trail sponsorships	\$70,000,000
Maintain 100 miles of new trails, at a cost of \$12000 per mile per year.	sponsorship of a mile of trail, land leases along the trail	\$12,600,000
Subtotal Strategic Direction 3		\$134,600,000

Action	Potential Funding Sources	Cost
Strategic Direction 4: Promote and increase awareness of the value of parks.		
Marketing		
Hire 3 new marketing staff members: one for social media, one for print media, and one for selling advertising, sponsorships, and tracking the costs of marketing and return on investment, at an annual cost of \$200000. Fund additional printing and other materials to promote the park system, at an annual cost of \$400000.	user fees, advertising sales, sponsorships, partnerships, registration fees	\$12,000,000
Business Development		
Hire 3 new business development staff member, at an annual cost of \$250000. (These positions should be able to produce 10 times their cost in revenue, or \$2500000.)	user fees, sponsorships, partnerships, advertising, grants	\$12,000,000
Subtotal Strategic Direction 4		\$24,000,000
Strategic Direction 5: Develop new parks and facilities.		
Multi-Generational Centers		
Construct one 80000 sq.ft. multi-generational center every other year, starting in year 4, for a total of 8 new multi-generational centers across the city, at a cost of \$350 per sq.ft.	bond issue, dedicated capital taxes, user fees, naming rights, foundations	\$224,000,000
Maintain 8 new multi-generational centers, assuming the City pays 30% of the annual \$2000000 per center cost and the rest of the cost is recovered through user fees.	user fees and membership fees	\$48,000,000
Downtown (Core to Shore) Signature Parks		
Construct new Central Park and Promenade Park according to the Core to Shore Plan.	dedicated sales tax, bond issue, business improvement district, conservancy	\$132,168,000
Maintain new Central Park and Promenade Park according to the Core to Shore Plan.	business improvement district, redevelopment funds, user fees, land leases, concessions	\$51,900,000
New Local Parks		
Acquire land for and construct 5 new local parks every 4 years, for a total of 25 new local parks, at about 10 acres per park, \$10000 per acre for acquisition, and \$100000 per acre for construction.	developer impact fees, bond issue, land dedication, private funding, gifts	\$27,500,000
Maintain 60% of 25 new local parks (250 acres) at NRPA maintenance Mode II, at a cost of \$4500 per acre per year, and maintain 40% in an unmowed state, at a cost of \$800 per acre per year.	dedicated sales taxes, user fees, partnerships	\$7,701,000
New Regional Parks		
Acquire land for and construct a new regional park every two years, starting in year 11, for a total of 5 new regional parks, at about 120 acres per park, \$10000 per acre for acquisition, and \$100000 per acre for construction.	developer impact fees, bond issue, land dedication, private funding, gifts	\$66,000,000
Maintain 60% of 5 new regional parks (600 acres) at NRPA maintenance Mode II, at a cost of \$4500 per acre per year, and maintain 40% in an unmowed state, at a cost of \$800 per acre per year.	dedicated sales taxes, user fees, partnerships, entrance fees, concessions	\$10,872,000
Subtotal Strategic Direction 5		\$568,141,000
Subtotal Scenario C Costs Over 20 Years		\$863,835,096
Base (Current) Costs Over 20 Years		\$480,000,000
Total Cost Over 20 Years		\$1,343,835,096

APPENDIX H: NRPA MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

MODE I

State of the art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, governmental grounds or high visitation parks.

Turf Care

Grass height maintained according to species and variety of grass. Mowed at least once every five working days but may be as often as once every three working days. Aeration as required, not less than four times per year. Reseeding or sodding as needed. Weed control should be practiced so that no more than one percent of the surface has weeds present.

Fertilizer

Adequate fertilization applied to plant species according to their optimum requirements. Application rates and times should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium percentages should follow local recommendations from your County Extension Service. Trees, shrubs and flowers should be fertilized according to their individual requirements of nutrients for optimum growth. Unusually long or short growing seasons may modify the chart slightly.

Irrigation

Sprinkler irrigated. Electric automatic commonly used. Some manual systems could be considered adequate under plentiful rainfall circumstances and adequate staffing. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length and demands of plant material.

Utter Control

Minimum of once per day, 7 days per week. Extremely

high visitation may increase the frequency. Receptacles should be plentiful enough to hold all trash generated between servicing without normally overflowing.

Pruning

Frequency dictated primarily by species and variety of trees and shrubs. Length of growing season and design concept also a controlling factor as are clipped hedges versus natural style. Timing usually scheduled to coincide with low demand periods or to take advantage of special growing characteristics such as low demand periods or to take advantage of special growing characteristics such as pruning after flowering.

Disease and Insect Control

Control program may use any of three philosophies: 1) Preventative; a scheduled chemical or cultural program designed to prevent significant damage. 2) Corrective; application of chemical or mechanical controls designed to eliminate observed problems.

3) Integrated pest management; withholding any controls until such time as pests demonstrate damage to plant materials or become a demonstrated irritant in the case of flies, mosquitoes, gnats, etc. At this maintenance level the controlling objective is to not have the public notice any problems. It is anticipated at Mode I that problems will either be prevented or observed at a very early stage and corrected immediately.

Snow Removal

Snow removal starts the same day as accumulations of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch are present. At no time will snow be permitted to cover transportation or parking surfaces longer than noon of the day after the snow stops. Applications of snow melting compound and/or gravel are appropriate to reduce the danger of injury due to falls.

Lighting

Maintenance should preserve the original design. Damaged systems should be repaired as quickly as they are discovered. Bulb replacement should be done during the first working day after the outage is reported.

Surfaces

Sweeping, cleaning and washing of surfaces needs to be done so that at no time does an accumulation of sand, dirt and leaves distract from the looks or safety of the area. Repainting or restaining of structures should occur when weather or wear deteriorate the appearance of the covering. Wood surfaces requiring oiling should be done a minimum of four times per year. Stains to surfaces should be taken off within five working days. Graffiti should be washed off or painted over the next working day after application.

Repairs

Repairs to all elements of the design should be done immediately upon discovery provided replacement parts and technicians are available to accomplish the job. When disruption to the public might be major and the repair not critical, repairs may be postponed to a time period which is least disruptive.

Inspection

Inspections of this area should be done daily by a member of staff.

Floral Plantings

Normally extensive or unusual floral plantings are part of the design. These may include ground level beds, planters or hanging baskets. Often multiple plantings are scheduled, usually at least two blooming cycles per year. Some designs may call for a more frequent

rotation of bloom. Maximum care of watering, fertilizing, disease control, disbudding and weeding is necessary. Weeding flowers and shrubs is done a minimum of once per week. The desired standard is essentially weed free.

Rest Rooms

Not always a part of the design but where required will normally receive no less than once per day servicing. Especially high traffic areas may require multiple servicing or a person assigned as attendant.

Special Features

Features such as fountains, drinking fountains, sculpture, speaker systems, structural art, flag poles or parking and crowd control devices may be part of the integral design. Maintenance requirements can vary drastically but for this mode it should be of the highest possible order.

MODE II

High level maintenance—associated with well developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.

Turf Care

Grass cut once every five working days. Aeration as required but not less than two times per year. Reseeding or sodding when bare spots are present. Weed control practiced when weeds present visible problem or when weeds represent 5 percent of the turf surface. Some pre-emergent products may be utilized at this level.

Fertilizer

Adequate fertilizer level to ensure that all plant materials are healthy and growing vigorously. Amounts depend on species, length of growing season, soils and rainfall. Rates should correspond to the lowest recommended rates shown on the chart on page 14. Distribution should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium percentage should follow local recommendations from the County Extension Service. Trees, shrubs and flowers should receive fertilizer levels to ensure optimum growth.

Irrigation

Some type of irrigation system available. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, seasonal length, and demands of plant material.

Litter Control

Minimum of once per day, five days a week. Off-site movement of trash dependent on size of containers and use by the public. High use may dictate once per day cleaning or more. Containers are serviced.

Pruning

Usually done at least once per season unless species planted dictate more frequent attention. Sculptured hedges or high growth species may dictate a more frequent requirement than most trees and shrubs in natural growth style plantings.

Diseases and Disease Control

Usually done when disease or insects are inflicting noticeable damage, reducing vigor of plant materials or could be considered a bother to the public. Some preventative measures may be utilized such as systemic chemical treatments. Cultural prevention of disease problems can reduce time spent in this category. Some minor problems may be tolerated at this level.

Snow Removal

Snow removed by noon the day following snowfall. Gravel or snow melt may be utilized to reduce ice accumulation.

Lighting

Replacement or repair of fixtures when observed or reported as not working.

Surfaces

Should be cleaned, repaired, repainted or replaced when appearance has noticeably deteriorated.

Repairs

Should be done whenever safety, function, or bad appearance is in question.

Inspection

Inspection by some staff member at least once a day when regular staff is scheduled.

Floral Planting

Some sort of floral plantings present. Normally no more complex than two rotations of bloom per year. Care cycle usually at least once per week except watering may be more frequent. Health and vigor dictate cycle of fertilization and disease control. Beds essentially kept weed free.

Rest Rooms

When present should be maintained at least once per day as long as they are open to public use. High use may dictate two servicings or more per day. Servicing period should ensure an adequate supply of paper and that rest rooms are reasonably clean and free from bad odors.

Special Features

Should be maintained for safety, function and high quality appearance as per established design.

MODE III

Moderate level maintenance—associated with locations with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation or with agencies that because of budget restrictions can't afford a higher intensity of maintenance.

Turf Care

Cut once every 10 working days. Normally not aerated unless turf quality indicates a need or in anticipation of an application of fertilizer. Reseeding or resodding done only when major bare spots appear. Weed control measures normally used when 50 percent of small areas is weed infested or general turf quality low in 15 percent or more of the surface area.

Fertilizer

Applied only when turf vigor seems to be low. Low level application done on a once per year basis. Rate suggested is one-half the level recommended on page 14 for species and variety.

Irrigation

Dependent on climate. Rainfall locations above 25 inches a year usually rely on natural rainfall with the possible addition of portable irrigation during periods of drought. Dry climates below 25 inches normally have some form of supplemental irrigation. When irrigation is automatic a demand schedule is programmed. Where manual servicing is required two to three times per week operation would be the norm.

Litter Control

Minimum service of two to three times per week. High use may dictate higher levels during warm season.

Pruning

When required for health or reasonable appearance. With most tree and shrub species this would not be more frequent than once every two or three years.

Disease and Insect Control

Done only on epidemic or serious complaint basis. Control measures may be put into effect when the health or survival of the plant material is threatened or where public's comfort is concerned.

Snow Removal

Snow removal done based on local law requirements but generally accomplished by the day following snowfall. Some crosswalks or surfaces may not be cleared at all.

Lighting

Replacement or repair of fixtures when report filed or when noticed by employees.

Surfaces

Cleaned on complaint basis. Repaired or replaced as budget allows.

Repairs

Should be done whenever safety or function is in question.

Inspections

Once per week.

Floral Planting

Only perennials or flowering trees or shrubs.

Rest Rooms

When present, serviced a minimum of 5 times per week. Seldom more than once each day.

Special Features

Minimum allowable maintenance for features present with function and safety in mind.

MODE IV

Moderately low level-usually associated with low level of development, low visitation, undeveloped areas or remote parks.

Turf Care

Low frequency mowing schedule based on species. Low growing grasses may not be mowed. High grasses may receive periodic mowing to aid public use or reduce fire danger. Weed control limited to legal requirements of noxious weeds.

Fertilizer

Not fertilized.

Irrigation

No irrigation.

Litter Control

Once per week or less. Complaint may increase level above one servicing.

Pruning

No regular trimming. Safety or damage from weather may dictate actual work schedule.

Disease and Insect Control

None except where epidemic and epidemic condition threatens resource or public.

Snow Removal

None except where major access ways or active parking areas dictate the need for removal.

Lighting

Replacement on complaint or employee discovery.

Surfaces

Replaced or repaired when safety is a concern and when budget is available.

Repairs

Should be done when safety or function is in question.

Inspections

Once per month.

Floral Plantings

None, may have wildflowers, perennials, flowering trees or shrubs in place.

Rest Rooms

When present, five times per week.

Special Features

Minimum maintenance to allow safe use.

MODE V

High visitation natural areas-usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes and parking lots.

Turf Care

Normally not mowed but grassed parking lots, approaches to buildings or road shoulders, may be cut to reduce fire danger. Weed control on noxious weeds.

Fertilizer

None.

Irrigation

None.

Litter Control

Based on visitation, may be more than once per day if crowds dictate that level.

Pruning

Only done for safety.

Insect and Disease Control

Done only to ensure safety or when problem seriously discourages public use.

Snow Removal

One day service on roads and parking areas.

Lighting

Replaced on complaint or when noticed by employees.

Surfaces

Cleaned on complaint. Repaired or replaced when budget will permit.

Repairs

Done when safety or function impaired. Should have same year service on poor appearance.

Inspection

Once per day when staff is available.

Floral Planting

None introduced except at special locations such as interpretive buildings, headquarters, etc. Once per week service on these designs. Flowering trees and shrubs, wildflowers present but demand no regular maintenance.

Rest Rooms

Frequency geared to visitor level. Once a day is the common routine but for some locations and reasons frequency may be more often.

Special Features

Repaired whenever safety or function are a concern. Appearance corrected in the current budget year.

MODE VI

Minimum maintenance level-low visitation natural area or large urban parks that are undeveloped.

Turf Areas

Not mowed. Weed control only if legal requirements demand it.

Fertilizer

Not fertilized.

Irrigation

No irrigation.

Litter Control

On demand or complaint basis.

Pruning

No pruning unless safety is involved.

Disease Insect Control

No control except in epidemic or safety situations.

Snow Removal

Snow removal only on strategic roads and parking lots. Accomplished within two days after snow stops.

Lighting

Replacement on complaint basis.

Surfaces

Serviced when safety is consideration.

Repairs

Should be done when safety or function is in question.

Inspection

Once per month.

Floral Plantings

None.

Rest Rooms

Service based on need.

Special Features

Service based on lowest acceptable frequency for feature. Safety and function interruption a concern when either seem significant.

