

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

THE CITY OF KINGSVILLE HAS TASKED ITSELF WITH DEVELOPING A PLAN TO GUIDE THE FUTURE OF THE CITY'S PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM. THIS CHAPTER SETS UP THE BEGINNING PHASES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS BY PROVIDING THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR THE PLANNING AREA. IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE ACTIVELY USED AND REFERENCED BY CITY STAFF AS WELL AS APPOINTED AND ELECTED OFFICIALS AS A MEANS TO INFORM THE DECISIONS MAKING PROCESS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF THE PARKS SYSTEM.

RELEVANCE OF A PUBLIC PARK SYSTEM

The benefits gained from a quality parks and recreation system may not be as apparent as those received through the delivery of other municipal services such as water, sewer, police, fire, schools, and streets. Provision of a ball field, a trail, a playground, or a swimming pool may not be viewed as 'essential' by all to ensuring daily public safety and welfare. Nonetheless, parks and other communal open spaces play an important role in the creation of a community that is a vibrant and desirable place to live.

Parks and other civic spaces are the public's primary destinations for exercise, play, fellowship, and other leisure activities. The ability to participate in these activities are definitive to how people view the quality of their community park system. The City of Kingsville Parks Master Plan has been prepared in recognition of these attributes, and to provide the following six (6) essential public benefits.

1. PARKS IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING



For many, life has become an overwhelming sedentary routine where exercise needs are met through an intentional action as opposed to the byproduct of everyday activity. This condition requires a built environment that allows for and encourages people to be active.

Parks and open spaces provide the opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Active recreation includes organized sports and activities that require specific spaces for recreation or play. Passive recreation activities may include hiking, biking, kayaking, and wildlife viewing - opportunities which promote interaction with nature and have a smaller imprint on the natural environment.

Recreational opportunities benefits a person's physical and mental health. Exercise is a key component to physical health, while mental health is affected by social opportunities and the restorative effects of interaction with nature.

2. PARKS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED



Parks are places to socialize, engage other members of the community, and meet someone new. Some may talk with another parent as their children use a nearby play structure. Others may find common interests with other pet owners during the interactions afforded at a dog park. These social interactions help build a safe, connected, and friendly community.

Parks also provide an opportunity for community service. A neighborhood group can volunteer to maintain a specific park through an Adopt-A-Park program. Residents can become instructors for programs or coaches for athletic leagues. Special events and festivals hosted in local parks are great ways to get to know neighbors and local businesses.

3. PARKS PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN TO YOUTH



Parks and recreation programs - specifically those targeted towards teens and youth - can have a positive social impact. They provide a supervised and safe environment. Organized sports - as well as unstructured activities such as skateboarding - increase interaction with peers, provide opportunities to be mentored by positive role models, and help develop life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and decision making.

4. PARKS INCREASE TOURISM



People will visit a community because of local attractions. This includes parks with desirable facilities or unique features. Festivals, concerts, sports tournaments, and special events typically take place in community owned public spaces. Even museums, observatories, and sometimes libraries, can be located within or adjacent to a park to increase community offerings in a central location. Kingsville and the surrounding area is already a destination for outdoor activities such as birding, hunting, and fishing. Attracting more visitors to Kingsville and capitalizing on those already existing is a way to increase local revenues.

5. PARKS CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMY



Parks improve local economies by increasing residential property values through what is known as the Proximate Principle. This concept recognizes that people will pay more for a home when it is close to a park or green space. The higher the home values, the more public revenue from property tax rolls.

The Proximate Principle extends beyond residential property. The relationship between private business and parks has a positive impact through an increased in demand for services. Hotels and restaurants that overlook a park, lake, or garden see increased customer satisfaction versus those without similar views. Entrepreneurs look to take advantage of proximity to trails, water bodies, and other park facilities to offer services such as rentals, repairs, and retail. These relationships often lead to positive experiences and reviews and in turn generate more business and tax revenue for the community.

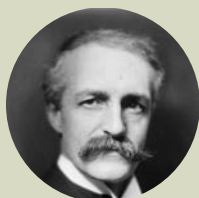
6. PARKS PROMOTE CONSERVATION



Parks, open spaces, and conservation lands remind us of our roles and responsibilities as stewards to the land. Proper practices and approaches to storm water runoff reduce flooding, prioritize clean water, and promote wise use of resources.

The use of native plantings and reclamation approaches have the potential to provide mutually beneficial relationships of lower maintenance costs and opportunities for passive recreation. This approach is geared to providing wildlife viewing opportunities along walking or biking trails.

Finally, the identification or set aside of park land and open space is complimentary to the build out of a city. Understanding where future park land or open space should be located can encourage new development to occur in a manner that promotes other city goals and interests, such as protecting environmentally sensitive areas or buffering undesirable land uses.



“Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men.”

~ Gifford Pinchot

MASTER PLAN PARAMETERS

A master planning process for a community parks and recreation system must include parameters that guide the plan's process and structure. This section defines the purpose of the Parks Master Plan, identifies the geographic scope of the plan, outlines the steps that are taken during the planning process, and provides a time frame for the implementation of the Parks Master Plan.

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

This is the first parks master plan solely led by the City of Kingsville. The City is currently in a transition, not only in terms of park system management, but also in terms of development trends associated with growth. The recent consolidation of City and County-owned park property under municipal oversight will allow for Kingsville to be more responsive to citizen preferences and anticipated recreational needs.

The park planning process is a means of assessment that is vital for parks and recreation departments. Parks systems are developed to meet the recreational and leisure needs of the citizens of the local community. The Parks Master Plan is the organizational element that provides path to accomplish that purpose. Guided by public input, the Parks Master Plan:

- Evaluates trends occurring in the parks and recreation realm both locally and nationally and assesses how those trends could benefit Kingsville.
- Examines the existing and future land uses of Kingsville to integrate additions to the parks system into the community fabric.
- Guides city staff in the development of facilities and the acquisition of property to meet current and future park land and open space needs.
- Prioritizes system recommendations so that projects or initiatives are implemented which address perceived property, facility, and recreational programming deficiencies.

The Parks Master Plan is the culmination of a City-led park planning effort. The document guides Kingsville's elected and appointed officials and City staff in meeting the recreational needs of the City over the next 10 years. The Parks Master Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines for local park master plans, which is established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Adherence to these guidelines and filing with the TPWD assists the City in qualifying for available state-administered grant opportunities.

MASTER PLANNING COMPONENTS

The Parks Master Plan is organized to align with the steps of the planning process (Figure 1.1). In addition to this introductory chapter, the plan includes the following chapters:

- **Kingsville Park System.** This chapter identifies the existing City parks and recreation system conditions and provides the framework for system organization. Additionally this chapter provides insight into the public participation process.
- **Needs Assessment.** This chapter incorporates a series of assessment methods that are used to inform plan recommendations and implementation strategies.
- **Plan Recommendations.** This chapter identifies planning benchmarks for park land acquisition, new park facilities, improvements to existing parks, trail development, general open space/preservation ambitions, and considerations for special park land. The chapter also identifies policy, regulation, and programming pursuits for the parks system.
- **Implementation Program.** This chapter outlines funding strategies, parks administration/organization, capital improvements, plan implementation responsibilities, and plan administration roles.

FIGURE 1.1 : PLANNING PROCESS



Note: The City of Kingsville's park master planning process adhered to a six-step process.

Since the City of Kingsville is the primary entity charged with implementing this plan, the Parks Master Plan focuses meeting parks and open space needs within the City or in its surrounding planning area, the ETJ. The plan area size is approximately 13.9 square miles for the city limits and 42.1 square miles for the ETJ, this value excludes the property of the Kingsville NAS (**Figure 1.2**).

JURISDICTION AND PLANNING AREA

The City of Kingsville entered into a relationship with Kleberg County in October 2014 to maintain and operate all park facilities located within the municipal limits for a period of 20 years. In this relationship the County maintains ownership of its park properties within the municipal limits, but has ceded operations and management to the City with the support of an annual payment. Kingsville has also assumed responsibility for the golf course and other property at L. E. Ramey Park. (L.E. Ramey Park is a land gifted to the County by the U.S. government which at one time was part of the Kingsville Naval Air Station (NAS)). This relationship has left the City of Kingsville with the primary role of providing new recreational facilities, maintaining existing parks, and acquiring new property as it deems appropriate.

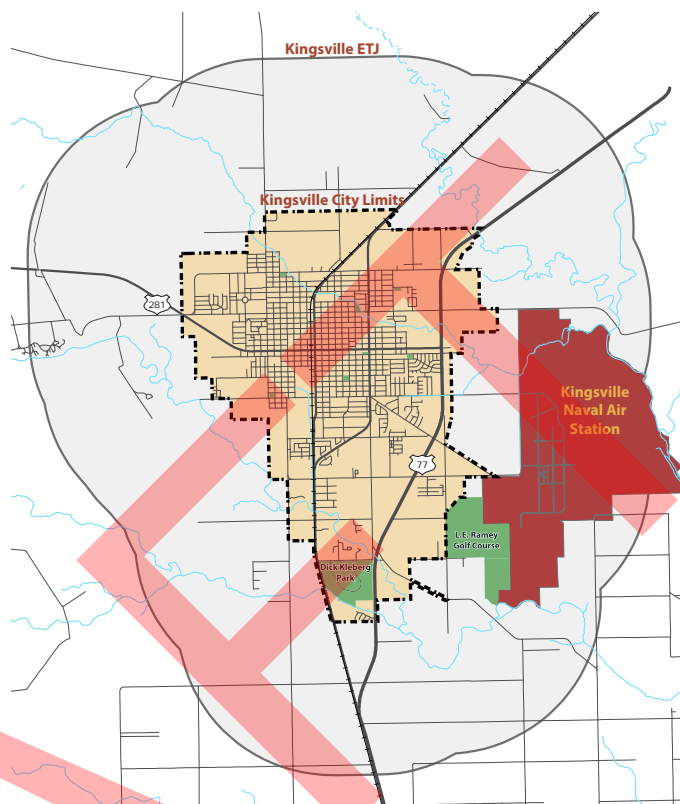
The Parks Master Plan boundary includes the City of Kingsville and its surrounding two (2) mile extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Other recreation providers found in this plan area include the University of Texas A&M - Kingsville (TAMUK), Kingsville ISD, Santa Gertrudis ISD, Bishop CISD, Ricardo ISD, and Rivera ISD.

PLAN TIME-FRAME

The Parks Master Plan is the City of Kingsville's blueprint for developing a consolidated municipal parks and recreation system. This plan provides direction for municipal park system development over the next 10 years (2017-2027) - including a corresponding short-term work program of projects, actions, and initiatives. Since this planning effort is the foundation for subsequent plans the Parks Master Plan considers City park and recreation needs over a greater period of time.

Local planning requirements issued by the TPWD recommend that park plans should be completely updated no less than every 10-years, but also during interim periods if major development or demographic changes occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the community. Recommended methods for interim plan review and modification are contained in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 1.2 : KINGSVILLE PLANNING JURISDICTION



RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Kingsville and Kleberg County conducted a joint planning effort for the entire county park system in 2006 and 2008, this included city owned parks located within Kingsville. The result was the Comprehensive Master Plan for Development, Operation and Maintenance of Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Open Space 2007-2017, which was adopted to May of 2007. This document included guidance and recommendations for both County and City parks.

Major accomplishments during the intervening period include:

- Baseball field renovation (single field) (Kleberg Park)
- New football/soccer field (Kleberg Park)
- New kayak launch
- City/County parks maintenance agreement
- Brookshire Pool bath house improvements
- Parks and recreation bond (\$2.25 million) for park development and improvements
- Designated splash pad and skate park funding

KINGSVILLE PARK SYSTEM GOALS

Kingsville's park system goals and objectives are the basis of this plan's recommendations for the development of City's park land and execution of recreation programming. They also provide key explanation and purpose so that recommendations and implementation strategies have the support in which public officials can confidently allocate community resources for the accomplishment of planning objectives.

The goals of the Parks Master Plan reflect public input collected through survey methods and refined by community stakeholder groups, City staff, and appointed officials. While this is Kingsville's first city-led parks master plan, the following goals are also informed by the City's comprehensive plan (the 2008 Kingsville Master Plan) and 2007 Kleberg County - City of Kingsville parks plan.

The Parks Master Plan's six (6) goals and 27 objectives are found on the following page.



Dick Kleberg Park was operated by Kleberg County until the City of Kingsville assumed operation in 2014.



KINGSVILLE PARK SYSTEM GOALS

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN KINGSVILLE PARK PROPERTIES AND FACILITIES IN AN EXCEPTIONAL CONDITION AND APPEARANCE.

- OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Develop a maintenance plan and best practices to address park system upkeep and appearance.
- OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Identify elements within the Kingsville park system that disproportionately contribute to maintenance demand versus the level of citizen importance. Identify measures to reduce their impact on maintenance time and budget.
- OBJECTIVE 1.3:** Develop a universal standard for park materials, furnishings, and accessory facilities to increase the efficiency of park system maintenance and generate visual consistency.
- OBJECTIVE 1.4:** Emphasize new park design that promotes durability, wise use of water, and low maintenance landscaping.
- OBJECTIVE 1.5:** Establish a schedule for major park facility renovations which dedicates resources across varying park classifications, i.e., neighborhood parks, community parks (Dick Kleberg), special use parks (golf course, nature preserves, etc.), and linear parks/trails.
- OBJECTIVE 1.6:** Develop a park lighting plan that evaluates and then prioritizes areas for lighting improvements.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE FOR A BALANCED DISTRIBUTION OF CITY PARK PROPERTIES AND FACILITIES TO ENSURE CITIZEN ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

- OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Use park service standards identified in this plan as a means to inform capital expenditures for facility additions or enhancements within existing park properties.
- OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Establish funding mechanisms for the incremental addition of park land to match population growth. Base the funding method on level of service and proximity recommendations contained in this plan.
- OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Target park land additions within growth areas identified in the comprehensive plan.
- OBJECTIVE 2.4:** Create a system of linear parks incorporating multi-use trails with a focus on projects that provide the most access to residents per mile of trail.
- OBJECTIVE 2.5:** Distribute park land and recreational facilities in a manner that increases accessibility to existing and future community residents.
- OBJECTIVE 2.6:** Establish partnerships with other organizations that can provide facility space as a means to offer indoor recreation opportunities.
- OBJECTIVE 2.7:** Identify areas that are appropriate for natural resource conservation and passive recreation opportunities.

GOAL 3: INCREASE THE VALUE OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS TO SURROUNDING RESIDENTS.

- OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Provide a balance in neighborhood park facility offerings that span the needs of community residents.
- OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Develop programming guidelines for facility placement within parks, emphasizing quality in park offerings over quantity.
- OBJECTIVE 3.3:** Identify and improve or develop spaces that can be used for neighborhood-scale gatherings and performances.

GOAL 4: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF LINEAR PARKS, AND BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS, TO CONNECT KINGSVILLE'S NEIGHBORHOODS TO PUBLIC PARKS AND OTHER DESTINATIONS.

- OBJECTIVE 4.1:** Utilize drainage channels and natural creek corridors to establish a strong framework for a linear park and multi-use trail system.
- OBJECTIVE 4.2:** Identify roadway and utility corridors that would be best suited for multi-use trails and where maintenance partnerships may be established.
- OBJECTIVE 4.3:** Establish an annual benchmark for multi-use trail additions for build-out of a linear park and multi-use trail system.
- OBJECTIVE 4.4:** Adopt trail standards for the construction of both paved and unpaved multi-use trails.

GOAL 5: PROVIDE A DIVERSE OFFERING OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS TO INCREASE RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE.

- OBJECTIVE 5.1:** Strengthen ties with existing recreational providers and organizations to provide youth and adult athletic programming.
- OBJECTIVE 5.2:** Expand aquatic facility offerings, starting with the implementation of splash/spray pads at neighborhood parks.
- OBJECTIVE 5.3:** Partner with other community entities, non-profit organizations, and private businesses to generate support/sponsorship of events and activities.
- OBJECTIVE 5.4:** Develop a signature downtown park space to host a variety of community events and activities.

GOAL 6: SUPPORT THE KINGSVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM THROUGH A MIX OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING METHODS, SOURCES, AND PARTNERSHIPS.

- OBJECTIVE 6.1:** Actively pursue opportunities where public money can be leveraged with private sector or fee-based financing to maximize resources and generate more engaged community stakeholders.
- OBJECTIVE 6.2:** Apply for grants and other funding sources that can be leveraged to develop capital projects.
- OBJECTIVE 6.3:** Adopt a user fee schedule that reflects the maintenance costs of park facilities.
- OBJECTIVE 6.4:** Coordinate with other public entities such as foundations, area school districts, and Texas A&M Kingsville to leverage mutually beneficial relationships for the provision of parks facilities and recreational offerings.

KINGSVILLE CHARACTERISTICS

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Kingsville is an inland coastal community located along U.S. Highway 77 - roughly 45 miles southwest of Corpus Christi (**Figure 1.3: Regional Context**). Although not located within its (urbanized) metropolitan area, Kingsville is part of the Corpus Christi Consolidated Statistical Area.

This trade area designation means that Kingsville residents are likely to travel to Corpus Christi for services needs not met in the city of Kingsville.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

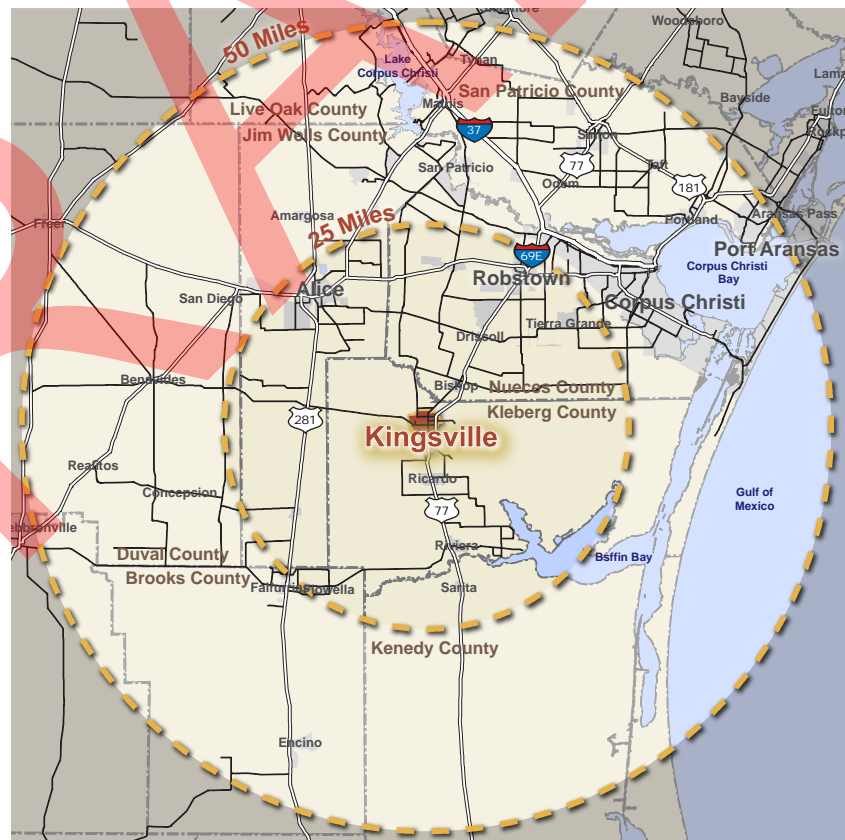
The defining element of Kingsville is its historical and namesake relationship to the famous King Ranch. The development of a railroad to Brownsville spurred the matriarch Henrietta King to designate a large tract of land for the town's inception. The city was formally incorporated in 1911 through the adoption of a charter for a commission form of city government.

The city served the needs of the surrounding farms and ranches in its early years. The exploration and development of oil and gas contributed to city economic and population growth. The additions of a public college, a naval air station, and a chemical production operation contributed to sustained population growth that peaked at 28,711 in 1970. The city remains the predominant population center and destination location of Kleberg County.

This background information is important for defining the role the municipal park system plays for Kingsville - as well as the greater region. The city is still defined by its agrarian relationships and character and will likely continue to provide recreation and social opportunities for the greater area.

FIGURE 1.3 : REGIONAL CONTEXT

Kingsville is located in close proximity to Corpus Christi metropolitan area and the Gulf of Mexico. Bordered by lightly populated ranch land to the south and west, Kingsville serves as a gateway to the Lower Rio Grande Valley (two (2) hours to the south).





Harrel's Kingsville Pharmacy, in Historic Downtown Kingsville is a remnant of the city's early past, serving the community through much of the City's existence.

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

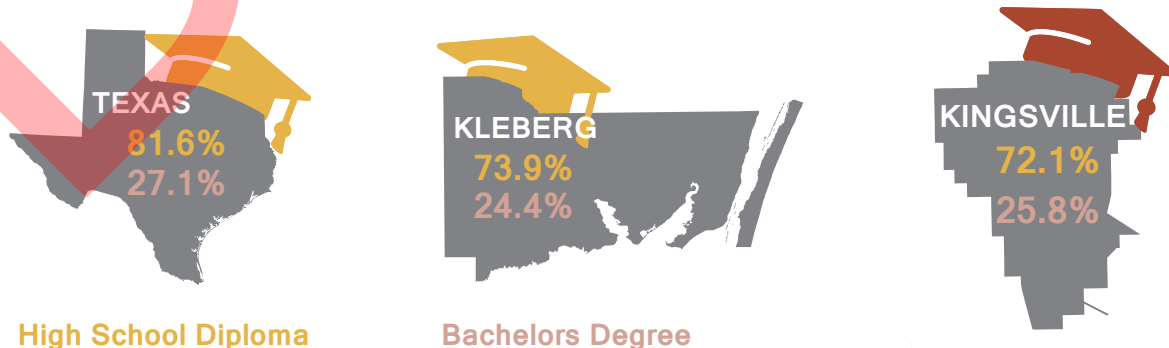
A brief overview of Kingsville demographic statistics is presented on pages 9 through 11. The information is used to provide context to the characteristics of the local community.

The current population of the City of Kingsville represents approximately 80 percent of Kleerg County. Population trends have been relatively flat since 1960, seeing modest cycles of both population growth and decline. The future of Kingsville is anticipated to include a more consistent rate of population growth bolstered by younger age groups, as evident in **Figure 1.6: Population by Age**, (page 10). The primary take away from this demographic snapshot is that the population of Kingsville is younger and of limited financial means. The combination of these two (2) themes suggests that a majority of residents are largely confined to the geographic limits of the City to fill their recreational needs. This conclusion increases the importance of the role the City of Kingsville plays in meeting these needs.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Kingsville and Kleberg County have a lower high school graduation rate than that of the State of Texas, however the percent of adults with a bachelors degrees are very similar.

FIGURE 1.4 : EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: American Community Survey, 2014, 5 Year Estimate.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Kingsville’s median household income is comparable to that of the Kleberg County, but much below that of Texas.

FIGURE 1.5 : MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

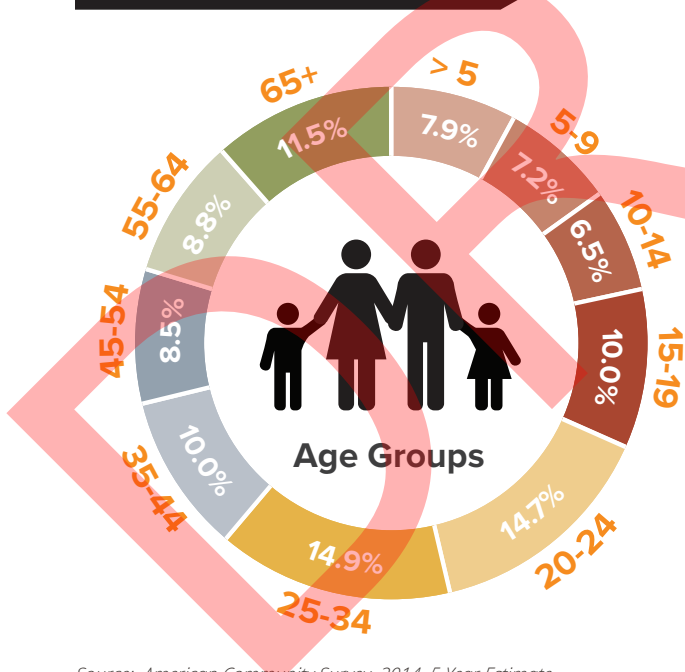


Source: American Community Survey, 2014, 5 Year Estimate.

POPULATION BY AGE

Kingsville’s largest population group is of young adults between the ages of 25-34. As a whole the community of Kingsville is very young with just over 60 percent of the population under the age of 35. The median age of City of Kingsville Residents is 26.7 years, significantly lower than the overall Texas median age of 33.9.

FIGURE 1.6 : POPULATION BY AGE

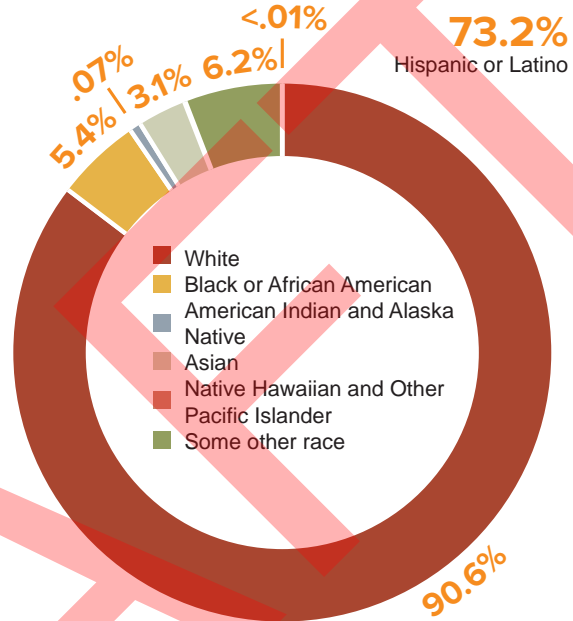


Source: American Community Survey, 2014, 5 Year Estimate.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The Kingsville’s community is predominately white and Hispanic or Latino by ethnicity. Kingsville has a multicultural character with portions of the community being African American and Asian.

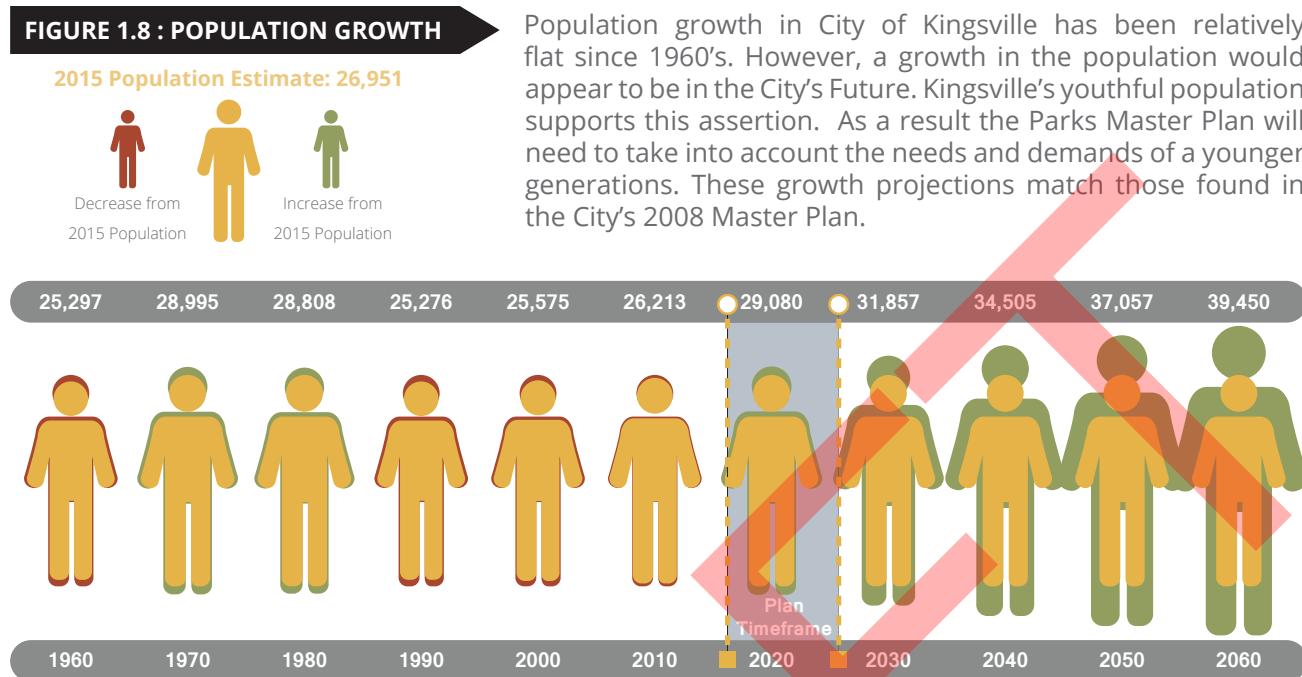
FIGURE 1.7 : RACE AND ETHNICITY



Source: American Community Survey, 2014, 5 Year Estimate.

POPULATION GROWTH

FIGURE 1.8 : POPULATION GROWTH



Population growth in City of Kingsville has been relatively flat since 1960's. However, a growth in the population would appear to be in the City's Future. Kingsville's youthful population supports this assertion. As a result the Parks Master Plan will need to take into account the needs and demands of a younger generations. These growth projections match those found in the City's 2008 Master Plan.

Source: 2016 Regional Water Plan - Population Predictions for 2020-2070, Texas Water Development Board. Population Estimate: 2015 Texas Demographic Center.

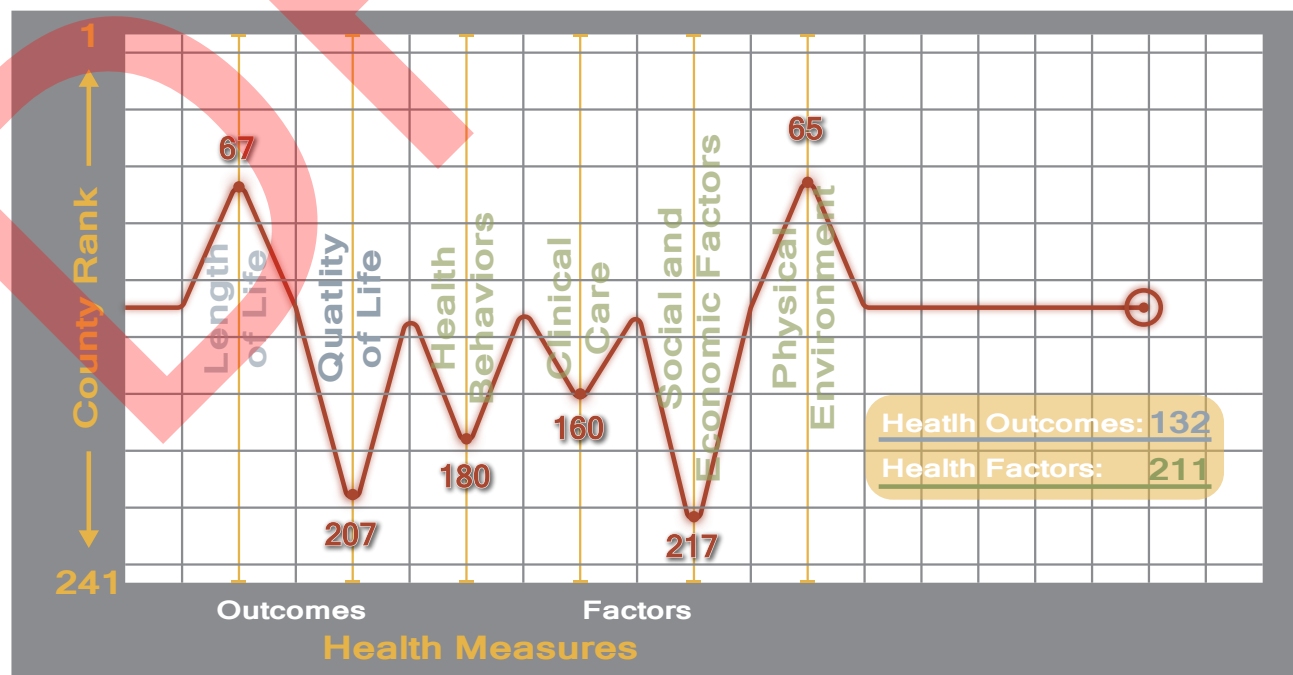
HEALTH MEASURES

A useful tool in understanding the overall health of the community are the County Health Rankings developed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Public Health Institute, which are found in **Figure 1.9: County Health Rankings, Kleberg County**. These annual rankings are an examination of health outcomes which include: length and quality of life; and health factors which include: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

Kleberg County's 2016 health outcomes find performance strong in length of life, while performing poorly in quality of life. The county's health factors rankings identifies the physical environment performing well and social economic factors falling near the bottom of the rankings.

FIGURE 1.9 : COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS, KLEBERG COUNTY

Source: County Health Ranking and Roadmaps, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016..



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