

Parks and Recreation

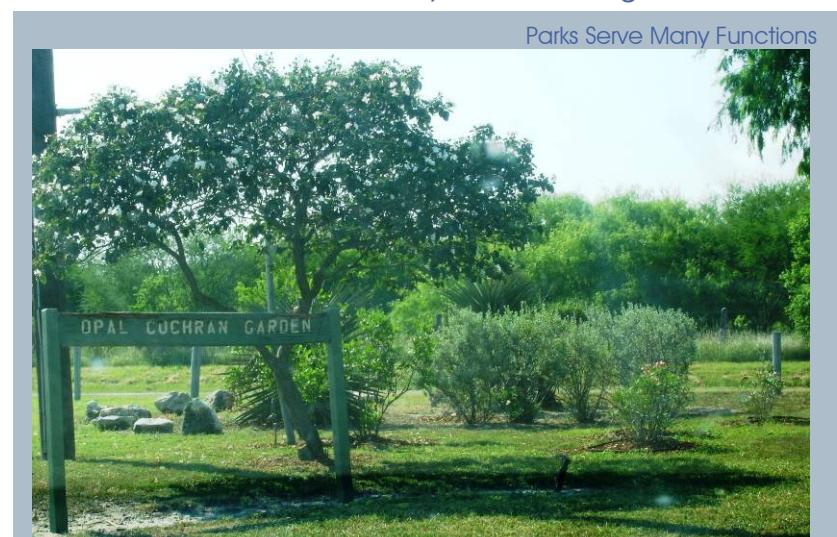
Kingsville Master Plan



Parks and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and quality community environment. They provide the necessary components for events outside of the home, after work, and after school. Whether for passive or active use, parks and recreation facilities are an important part of everyday active living. Much like streets and sidewalks, water and wastewater lines, drainage facilities, police and fire equipment, and other municipal facilities and services, parks are an integral component of the municipal infrastructure. Therefore, they warrant a significant level of attention and commitment of resources.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the community's current and future needs for improving its existing parks and providing adequate areas and facilities to meet its immediate and long-term needs. This plan element will form the policy direction pertaining to the timing of park development, their placement within the City, the type of facilities, and the method by which enhancements and improvements may be funded. It guides the City's planning efforts for developing a suitable public parks and recreation system and incorporating private contributions. This chapter addresses the availability, quality, type, size, and location of recreation opportunities to meet the needs of Kingsville's residents and visitors to the community.



Parks Serve Many Functions

The Opal Cochran Garden not only functions as a park for passive recreation, but also operates as a gateway to the City of Kingsville. As such, quality and regular maintenance is important since visitors use gateways to create a first impression of the community.

A comprehensive system of parks that responds to the needs and values of local residents contributes to a community's quality of life and livability. Parks and recreation opportunities also contribute to the health of residents, provide a variety of recreational and educational activities for all ages, and preserve the integrity of the natural environment. They are also important in attracting visitors to the community and, thus, contribute to local tourism and economic development.



Parks Add Economic Value to Communities

Understanding the economic impacts of parks can help decision makers better evaluate the implementation and maintenance of parks and public open spaces. Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenues, and attract home buyers and retirees. Parks are a solid financial investment for a community.

Issues And Opportunities

This Master Plan element is designed to ensure that Kingsville "catches up" on the many deficiencies in the provision of parks and recreation areas and facilities. As a secondary measure, this Parks element addresses park expansion so that Kingsville is prepared to keep pace with ongoing population growth and new development. As the Parks planning process progressed, two issues emerged as priorities for the community: (1) improving the existing park standards and (2) identifying strategies for reducing the financial burden of ongoing park maintenance in existing or future parks.

The City's current parks require immediate attention to enhance them and bring them to a defined minimum standard of quality and adequacy. Additionally, several key demographics for Kingsville are that the median age is 28.4 years and the largest age cohorts are those below 30 years old. This means the community is quite young, thereby necessitating both spaces and programs for their attention and recreation needs. Improving the quality of life for citizens by offering a variety of programs and physical activities to this particular age group would provide benefit not only to them, but also to the community as a whole. Through enhancing the park system, young professionals and their families will be more inclined to consider Kingsville their home. However, parks and recreation opportunities and programs must be diverse enough to suit the needs of all age groups, including Kingsville's older residents.

Resource Conservation and Enhancement

There are areas interspersed throughout the community and around the larger planning area that possess valuable natural resources warranting protection. Lands adjacent to creeks and flood-prone areas, as well as sites and vistas with stands of mature trees, offer opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation. While these areas are sensitive to urban development, they may be utilized to fulfill other community objectives, such as environmental protection, open space preservation, and sound resource management.

Numerous comments were received through the community meetings for this plan expressing a desire for *quality* housing developments. Part of this emphasis on “quality” meant more “green space” in new development, as well as greenways and hike/bike trail connections within the community. These objectives may be achieved by adopting sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices. Sensitive areas along creeks and elsewhere may be incorporated into developments as natural amenities, helping to sustain their function as an environmental resource. Doing so requires a regulatory system that balances development efficiency and resource protection.

As the community continues to develop, it is advisable for the City to seek preservation of its valuable resource areas, such as creek corridors, areas within or immediately adjacent to floodplains, and critical habitats and known areas for migratory birds. These areas provide great value to the community landscape and act as an attraction for visitors and tourists. In fact, nature tourism is one of the largest growth sectors of the economy. Capitalizing on this opportunity may boost the local economy by attracting more eco-tourists to visit and stay in the area, particularly those drawn by the Escondido River and Santa Gertrudis Bird Sanctuary.

Convenient and Accessible Parks

A key to a well-utilized system of parks is an even distribution of recreation areas and public open spaces throughout the community. In this way, all residents have convenient access to public open spaces and facilities, thereby meeting their active and passive recreation needs. It is important that each park be located and designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods. Depending on demographics and the availability of other facilities, some neighborhoods may be more interested in active play areas, such as basketball and tennis courts and open play fields, while others desire passive activities, such as nature trails and picnic areas. For this reason, it is essential to include users in the planning and design phases of park development.

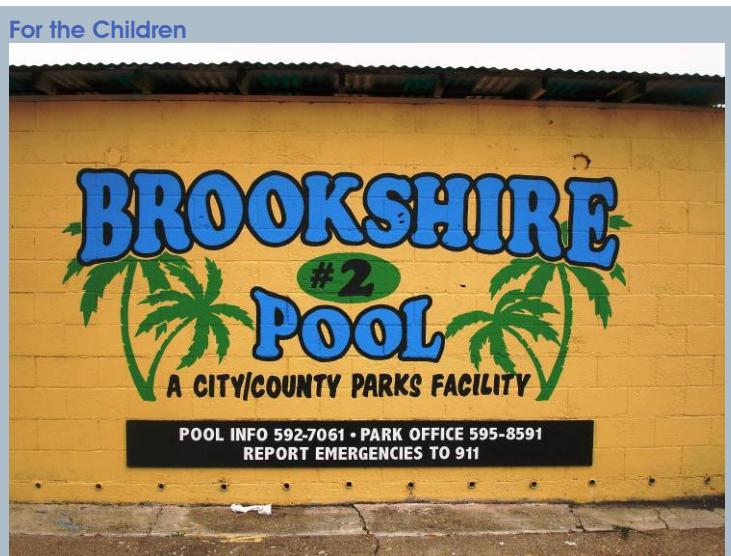


This particular drainage basin was created specifically as a water detention area, but offers potential as a park amenity to residents. Parks and public open spaces can serve multiple purposes by preserving natural resources and functioning as stormwater drainage.



A true "system" of parks offers a wide range of public spaces, including sizable facilities that may be used by the whole community (but especially by those within a one-mile radius), like Dick Kleberg Park or L.E. Ramey Park; parks that are intended for use mainly by residents of nearby neighborhoods, such as Brookshire Park; and those recreational sites used by an individual development, such as a play area within an apartment complex. The value of an adequate park system is in its ability to meet the individual needs of all persons.

Connecting Parks, Schools, and Neighborhoods



Parks provide children:

- *A place to engage in healthy physical activity.*
- *A hands-on learning environment where they can express their creativity and develop problem-solving and social skills.*
- *A sense of place and belonging as an antidote to violence, social alienation, and vandalism.*
- *The motivation to explore and discover.*

The recreational and social value of parks is increased exponentially when they are linked through a series of greenbelts along natural water courses and drainageways, trail and walkway/bikeway corridors, and other ties and connections. Just as it is necessary to plan for road networks and other public infrastructure in advance of growth, it is also important to plan and protect "green infrastructure" in coordination with development. An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities may serve as a resource for recreation and exercise, while providing an added benefit as an alternative mode of transportation.

A system of parks and recreation areas is not complete without linear linkages between park facilities, neighborhoods, schools, and other public use facilities. Such linkages may boost accessibility to parks and other public spaces, thereby expanding the effective service area coverage of these existing parks. This, in turn, reduces the amount of public investment necessary to locate and construct parks densely throughout the community. It is acknowledged, though, that trails are expensive and sometimes difficult to introduce and construct in already developed environments. Therefore, a plan is warranted to identify the best and most efficient means for achieving the intent of a community trail network, which is to enhance pedestrian and other non-motorized mobility within the City.

The fact that cities develop in an incremental fashion adds to the complexity of achieving a continuous system of linkages. This appears to be the historical and ongoing scenario for Kingsville, as well. Cases in point are the pedestrian bridges over the canal, which are limited since the sidewalk connections are generally lacking. Without advance planning, these linkages will not happen naturally. To realize a comprehensive trail network over time, there must be a connectivity review at the stage of subdivision development, backed by the necessary requirements and standards for road continuity, sidewalks and trails within rights-of-way and easements, and other essential planning and design considerations, such as safe intersection crossings, curb cuts, signage, and various other factors.

Quality Park Appearance and Maintenance

The condition and appearance of parks is an indicator of their value to the community, whether intended or not. The perception of a community that has parks in "tired" condition and in need of both improvement and enhancement is that the community does not fully appreciate how much parks contribute to livability and community identity. In fact, recent studies have shown that quality parks increase adjacent property values and are a consideration in home shopping and purchase decisions. Collectively, parks and public open space areas also contribute to the aesthetics and natural beauty of the community.

The idea of a "parks-to-standard" program is to set a standard by which all parks, recreation areas, and public spaces are measured, with improvements conducted to bring each to an equivalent standard – and to adhere to that standard over time through an ongoing maintenance commitment. In this way, the entire park system is elevated in quality and level of importance. This may be accomplished through both public and private efforts. The City may increase its dedicated funding source for equipment replacement, building revitalization, and increased maintenance. The private sector and individual residents and groups may provide in-kind services, volunteer labor ("Adopt-a-Park" approach), and contribution of funding through improvement fees.

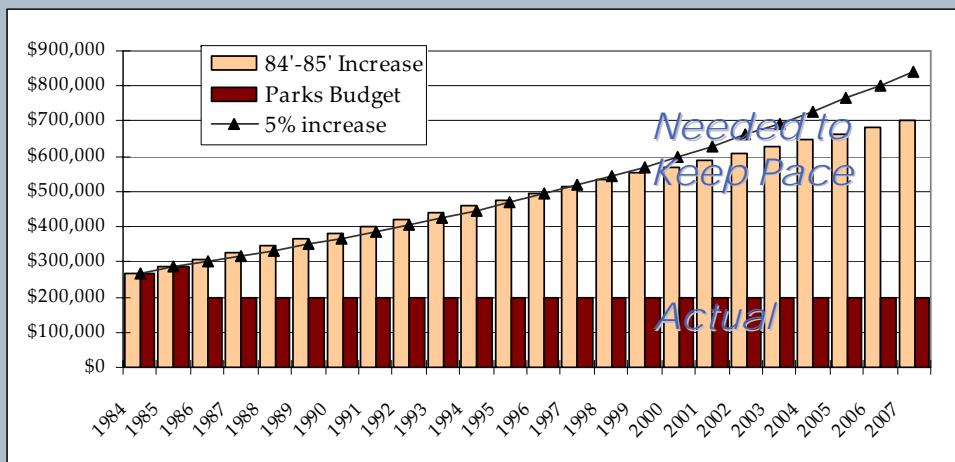


The existing pedestrian bridges that cross the canal and elsewhere could serve as a foundation for developing pedestrian walkways and bike paths connecting the University, Downtown, and residential areas throughout the community. The challenge is finding ways to make connections, possibly by on- or off-street means, to tie these facilities into a community-wide network of trails and walking paths. Lateral connections to the trail system could be developed along utility and/or drainage easements with excess rights-of-way.

Most of Kingsville's parks suffer from a lack of investment – or reinvestment – while others simply need increased maintenance. The improvements needed include replacement of equipment; installation of irrigation systems and a rigorous grounds maintenance program; reconstruction of major facilities, such as a skateboard park; court resurfacing or replacement; new benches, tables, grills, and trash containers; additional landscaping and shade trees; picnic facilities and shaded gathering areas; improved and/or expanded parking areas; and new fencing and lighting. A complete list of proposed improvements is available in the Parks Master Plan (May 2007).

While the community is in need of additional park space to stay on pace with new development, as discussed later in this chapter, **the first priority for the park system should be to improve the existing parks and bring them to the quality and maintenance level expected by residents.** This will require a significant commitment by elected leaders to provide the necessary funds to catch up on current deficiencies, while also preparing for future needs. All improvements certainly do not need to be achieved at once. Instead, community standards and desires may eventually be achieved through establishment of immediate, mid-term, and long-range priorities.

Historical funding levels have not kept up with maintenance needs.



- Current revenue
- General obligation County bonds
- Eminent domain
- Authorities and special districts
- Sales or hotel tax
- User fees
- In-kind services and volunteer participation
- State and federal assistance
- Land donation
- Land dedication
- Fee-in-lieu of development

Additional
Funding
Sources

Coordination, Collaboration, and Adequate Funding

Aging infrastructure, increasing population, and greater demand for recreational programs and facilities have strained the resources of both Kingsville and Kleberg County. Kingsville is home to the Naval Air Station and TAMUK, both of which occupy significant acreage near the community and, thereby, impact the City's tax revenue potential. Intergovernmental agreements and public-private partnerships create opportunities to use limited tax dollars wisely, utilize land efficiently, and conserve precious environmental resources.

A collaborative approach to parks and recreation planning requires communication and coordination among all vested entities and interested parties. In Kingsville's case, it already includes an inter-local agreement (1986) with Kleberg County. However,

this could include the City, Kleberg County, the school district, TAMUK, and other public agencies, as well as potential private sector partners. Joint acquisition, development, and ongoing operation and maintenance of public spaces leverage resources, enhance the quality of parks and recreational facilities, and increase their effectiveness and interconnection.

Park Classification

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The needs and desires of the citizens of Kingsville justify continued development of parks and recreation facilities and preservation of open space to meet the specific needs and requirements of the community.

A variety of types and sizes of parks and recreation facilities and associated activities are recommended to satisfy the diverse interests of the population, to ensure adequate and equal opportunity for all persons, and, ultimately, to encourage use by all population groups. The classifications of parks needed to meet the diverse needs of the community are described below.

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to function on a large scale, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community. They are typically larger in size and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, athletic fields, and other larger-scale activities. It is important that adequate off-street parking be provided. Where feasible, community parks should be located adjacent or connected to a greenway to provide an off-street linear linkage with other areas.

Community Park example



This community park example features multi-generational attractions that may be used year round. The path system features perimeter sidewalks, as well as winding trails internally. Ample parking is provided in several locations, and parking lots are nicely landscaped. Active recreation facilities are present for multiple sports, as well as nearby passive recreation uses.

Community Park Standards

National standards recommend a minimum community park size of 10 acres, assuming appropriate topography and absence of other development constraints. Many community parks, especially those with athletic field complexes for organized sports, are as large as 25 to 40 acres. In overall acreage terms, the standard is five acres of community park land per 1,000 persons. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- Picnic tables with covers and barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- Mountain biking trails with exercise stations (optional)
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Drinking fountains
- Security lighting

Dick Kleberg Park and Expo Center



In cities like Kingsville, a community park often serves as the principal focal point for civic gatherings and organized recreational programs, special events, and sports league play. Further, a community park can often become a major landmark, a symbol that enhances community identity and is beloved by residents. However, the Dick Kleberg Park and Expo Center is in dire need of repair and maintenance. The Expo Center could receive additional funds for maintenance, as well as programming and tourism. Adding events (auto shows, knife/gun shows, etc.) besides the existing rodeo will require additional funding for maintenance, tourism programming, and staff.

- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (for up to 50 children)
- Bicycle racks
- Perimeter fencing or landscaping
- Street signs indicating "children at play"
- Benches
- Trash receptacles and enclosures
- Curb cuts and crosswalks
- Tennis court
- Basketball courts

- Softball and little league fields with bleachers
- Soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts
- Sand volleyball courts
- Swimming pool
- Covered pavilions
- Performance stage (optional)
- Restrooms
- Fencing for ball fields and athletic courts
- Concrete surface for a general play area
- Off-street parking

Community Park Locations

Community parks should be centrally located for convenience to all residents. They should have direct access to collector or arterial streets in order to handle special event traffic, while avoiding neighborhood disruption. Community parks should include adequate off-street parking. The "ideal" service area radius of a community park is one mile. A community park that is located in or near a residential area usually serves a secondary role as a neighborhood park, as described below.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks should provide facilities and improvements that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods. Ease of access from adjacent neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and, therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities.

Aggressive maintenance needed



While the park acreages in Kingsville are adequate by national standards, the equipment and landscaping conditions at most parks are poor. According to the parks inventory in the Parks Master Plan, Dick Kleberg Park is typical of most parks since it has a variety of existing conditions (Good-Fair-Poor-Obsolete). Unfortunately, the majority of conditions are "Poor," "Fair," or "Obsolete."

Role of Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity. The method of determining the need for neighborhood parks is quite different from an assessment of need for community parks. Whereas community parks are designed for large-scale, area-wide events and activities, neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited as a result of the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available.

The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. National standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of five acres, assuming an adequate and even distribution across the community. Although a 10-acre park may accommodate ball fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are each five acres in size may equally, and perhaps better, serve the need, while providing a broader distribution of neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood Park example



This neighborhood park example features active recreation facilities, as well as nearby passive recreation uses. The path system features perimeter trails with access points. Some parking is provided since it is expected that most visitors will come to the site from the surrounding neighborhood.

Neighborhood Park Standards

The ideal neighborhood park should be between five and 10 acres, with an overall provision of one acre of neighborhood park per 1,000 residents. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- Picnic tables with sheltering covers
- Barbecue pits
- Sidewalks and natural walking trail
- Shade trees and landscaping
- Drinking fountain(s)
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play area with multi-purpose play courts
- Playground equipment and/or a playscape (for up to 25 children)
- Perimeter fencing, landscaping, and benches
- Restrooms

- Trash receptacles
- On- or off-street parking
- Curb cuts and crosswalks

It is important that a neighborhood park has handicapped accessible toilet facilities. The lack of a restroom significantly limits the park's service radius and prevents it from accommodating organized recreation program activities or events, especially children's programs.

Location of Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks should be within a short walking distance (typically one-half mile or less) for the residents of one or more neighborhoods, thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and walking safety for neighborhood children. Whenever possible, they should be located away from busy arterial streets and should not require any busy street crossings for access from their constituent neighborhoods. Accomplishing this has been difficult in Kingsville, particularly in the more mature, built-up areas having grid street patterns.

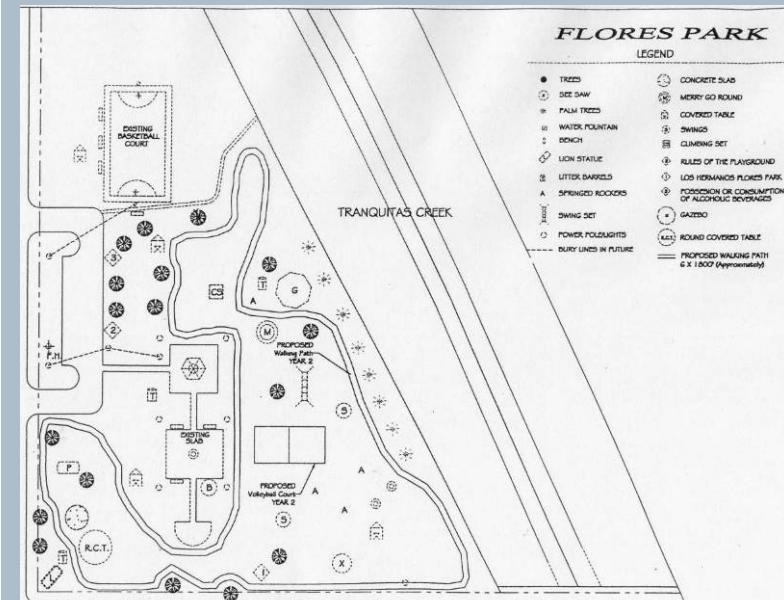
Mini Parks

Mini parks are intended for active recreational use by nearby residents, such as within apartment complexes and residential subdivisions. There are no specific criteria to guide development of mini parks, although they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of children living in the immediate area. The notable features that distinguish a mini park from a neighborhood park are its considerably smaller size and lack of restrooms.

Mini Park Standards

As mentioned before, there are no specific size or facility standards for mini parks, but guidelines suggest that there should be one- to three-

Neighborhood Parks in Better Condition, but Need Maintenance



Los Hermanos Flores Park is one of the most well-maintained City-owned neighborhood parks. Despite this fact, there are improvements that are needed in order to fully utilize this space and offer an improved recreational amenity to the community. Maintenance is not to be underestimated... or under-budgeted.



tenths acre per 1,000 residents on a community-wide basis. Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic tables with covers
- Perimeter sidewalks
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Drinking fountain
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play area
- Playground equipment (for up to 15 children)
- Perimeter fencing or landscaping

Mini Parks come in all shapes and sizes.



- Benches
- On-street parking
- Trash receptacles
- Curb cuts and crosswalks

Location of Mini Parks

The most important criterion for mini park location is that it be situated on a local, low-traffic street with sidewalk or path access to the nearby residents it serves.



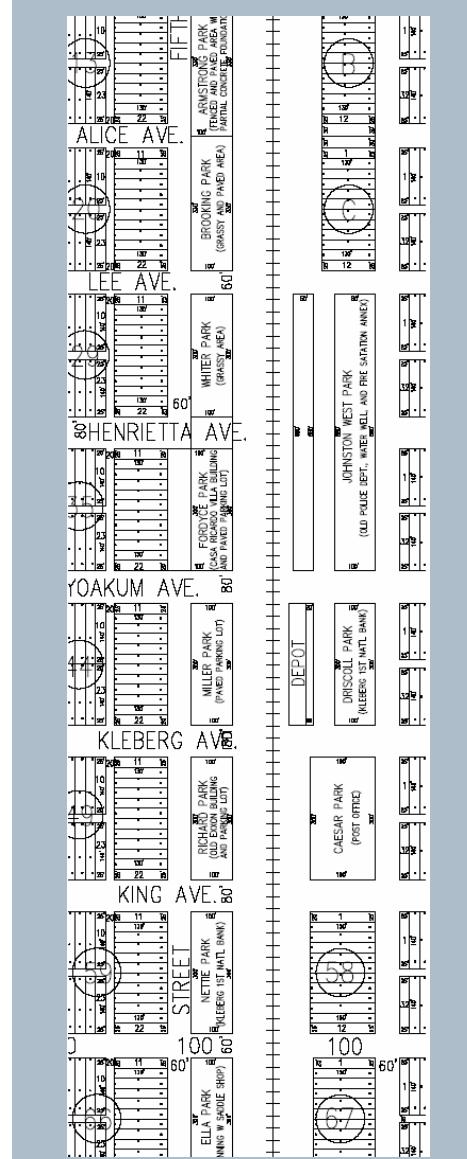
Mini parks serve the need of providing a minimum play area within minutes' walking distance of residents in the very immediate area.

Open Space

Open space areas include reserved public lands dedicated as permanent open space. These lands are owned by the City or County or dedicated through private instrument as a development reserve. They are typically undeveloped and used for informal activities. They may also serve as stormwater collection areas during major storm events. Other examples of open space areas include easements for drainage basins, excess rights-of-way, greenways, and street esplanades.

The City should look at these open space areas near the railroad track as potential opportunities for the future. These are under-utilized resources that could evolve into different positive situations for the community. Potential action plans:

- Community garden (similar to existing community garden efforts)
- Adopt-A-Park opportunity (similar to Opal Cochran)
- Land swap for other park land
- Trail corridor or linear park
- Bike parking
- Passive parks (benches, landscaping, and lighting)



Downtown open space parcels

The City maintains several tracts of open space near the railroad tracks. These parcels are currently maintained by the County Parks Department.



Kingsville Park Inventory

Locations

The location of City of Kingsville parks and other recreation facilities are displayed in **Figure 5.1, Parks**. A summary listing of these facilities is shown in **Table 5.1, Existing Park Facilities within the Kingsville City Limits**. This does not include facilities maintained by either Kingsville Independent School District or parks in unincorporated areas of Kleberg County.

Facility Inventory

Integral to park planning is a thorough evaluation of the existing system. The foundation for establishing an adequate parks and recreation system begins with the availability, location, and condition of the existing City-located parks and recreation areas. In determining the need for additional park land, recreational facilities, and park-related improvements, the first step is to assess the level of sufficiency of the existing parks in meeting the needs of the community. This assessment is done, first, by comparing the acreage of parks to standards for cities of comparable size and, secondly, by soliciting the input of citizens. Each park must also be evaluated in terms of its proximity to its users, its safety and accessibility, the availability and condition of its equipment and facilities, and its utilization.

The City currently offers an assortment of parks that provide opportunities for a typical variety of activities, as displayed in Table 5.1. Kingsville currently has access to an inventory of 11 parks owned and maintained by the City/County, representing a total of 740 acres of

land. The acreage is divided into:

- one community park offering 184.5 acres;
- one special use park totaling 533 acres;
- seven neighborhood parks totaling 20 acres; and
- two mini parks contribute an additional two acres to the City's park inventory.

Table 5.1, Existing Park Facilities within the Kingsville City Limits

Owner	Facility Name	Type	Acreage
County	Dick Kleberg Park & Expo Center	Community	184.5
County	L.E. Ramey Park	Special	533
County	Brookshire #1 Park	Neighborhood	4.76
County	Brookshire #2 Park	Neighborhood	3
County	Corral Street Park	Neighborhood	2.75
County	Williams Park	Neighborhood	2
City	Flato Park	Neighborhood	2.75
City	Flores Park	Neighborhood	3
City	Thompson Park	Neighborhood	2.75
City	Kenedy Park	Mini-park	1.2
County	Opal Cochran Park	Mini-park	< 1

Source: Parks Master Plan (May 2007)

Needs Assessment

Resources versus Needs

A combination of a standard-based and demand-based approach was used to assess the need for additional parks and recreation areas and facilities within Kingsville. The demand-based approach entails input from the City/County's Parks and Recreation Department staff, as well as input gained from residents through citizen participation activities during the course of the park master planning process.

The acreages of parks and recreation areas currently recommended for Kingsville are displayed in **Table 5.2, Recommended Area Standards**. The potential need for additional parks and recreation acreage to satisfy current demands is determined by applying the recommended standards to the current population of the City.

Table 5.2, Recommended Area Standards

Class	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Community	3 to 5 acres/1,000 persons	77	128	103
Neighborhood	1 to 3 acres/1,000 persons	26	77	52
Mini	0.1 to 0.3 acres/1,000 persons	3	8	6
TOTAL		106	213	160

Note: Based upon 2000 Census population of 25,575 persons

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

As shown in Table 5.2, based on a population of 25,575 persons, the total park acreage Kingsville should have today ranges from approximately 106 to 213 acres. The overall suggested standard, which is based on the average of the low and high columns in the table, is for a total of 160 acres of community, neighborhood, and mini parks.

The City currently maintains 207 acres of parks and recreation areas in the three specified categories (community, neighborhood, and mini park). Therefore, based on the park acreage available to the community today, the City has a surplus of roughly 48 acres in its amount of public park land. The challenge for the City is that various parks in its current inventory are in need of significant maintenance or difficult to access (no parking or sidewalks).

Displayed in **Table 5.3, Existing Acreage vs. Future Demands**, is a tabulation of the recommended park supply necessary to support the projected 2030 population of 35,000 persons. Of the recommended acreages according to NRPA standards, Kingsville is currently deficient in two of the three park categories.

Table 5.3, Existing Acreage vs. Future Demands

Class	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Community	3 to 5 acres/1,000 persons	105	175	140
Neighborhood	1 to 3 acres/1,000 persons	35	105	70
Mini	0.1 to 0.3 acres/1,000 persons	4	11	8
TOTAL		144	291	218

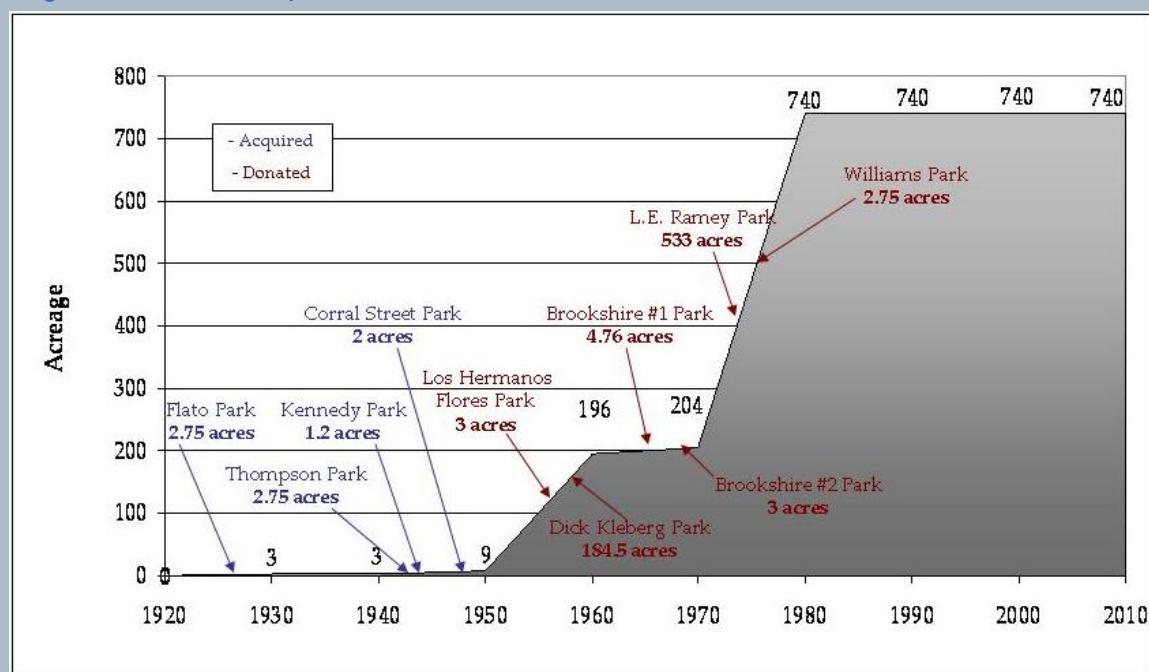
Note: Based upon Texas State Data Center 2030 projection of 35,000 persons

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

The total acreage needed to support the projected population ranges from 144 to 218 acres. Based on the overall suggested standard of 218 acres, the City is projected to need an additional 11 acres of developed park areas by the Year 2030. This might be accomplished through the addition of one or two new neighborhood parks.

Nevertheless, the need for more park land is made apparent by the heavy utilization of existing parks, the frequency of needed trash collections, and the demand for new ball fields and special facilities. Overstressed parks require higher maintenance and more frequent replacement of facilities.

Kingsville's Park Land Acquisitions and Donations Have Slowed



This graphical record of park land acquisitions illustrates the early strategy of park land purchases and subsequent land donations. It is notable that the first parks were purchased and all later parks were donated. Historically, the City and County have been able to subsist on low-cost (or free) park land acquisitions. When combined with the historic pattern of underfunded park maintenance, it is clear that the entire park system is suffering from long-term financial woes.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative and Parks Master Plan (May 2007)

Service Area Coverage

Depicted in **Figure 5.2, Park Service Areas**, are service area buffers around all existing parks and school playgrounds, with a varying buffer radius depending upon the park classification. In the case of Dick Kleberg Park (community park), a neighborhood park service area illustrates how the park also functions as a local park resource for the immediate area. From a purely locational standpoint, preliminary analysis indicates that much of central and east-central Kingsville has convenient access to City parks. However, park coverage is lacking in lesser-developed portions of west and south Kingsville and particularly in outlying, but incorporated, areas around Kingsville.

Goals and Recommendations

The following goals, objectives, and recommended actions were formulated to specifically address the issues and needs outlined above, which were culled from extensive community input, as well as the Parks Master Plan (May 2007). The goals reflect the overall vision of the community, which may be achieved through the objectives and by acting on the recommendations.

Goal:

- A balanced and wide variety of public parks, recreational areas, and open space in near proximity to all residents.

Recommendations:

Invest and reinvest in the community's parks and recreation system to raise its quality standard.

1. Support and carry out an aggressive park and facility maintenance program, which must be acted upon rigorously and continuously. The program must, first, identify and log all necessary maintenance items, including repair of broken equipment, identification of unsafe conditions and remedies for correction, and items needing more significant capital expenditures. Cost estimates should be compiled and integrated into the parks master plan annual work program and the City's multi-year capital improvements programming.
2. Establish and/or enhance a "Friends of the Park" program to solicit neighborhood and business involvement in maintaining and policing public parks and open space areas, including esplanades and public gardens.
3. Improve accessibility for disabled and handicapped users by adding sidewalk curb cuts and ramps and wheelchair-accessible sidewalks and trails and providing accessible facilities such as play equipment, drinking fountains, and restrooms.
4. Assess the viability of certain land and problematic sites already within Dick Kleberg Park and determine whether the City/County should consider removal of high maintenance facilities to pursue other park land and trail opportunities (such areas could also be devoted to drainage functions and minimal

Sidewalks bring local amenities closer together.



Sidewalks inside a development and along the community's street network can link neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas.



maintenance versus continuing to actively mow and maintain as fields). The Expo Center will also require further study to identify its role, proper funding levels, and future programming.

Develop an even distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community.

1. Focus on new park development in the northwestern and southern areas of Kingsville.
2. Continue to monitor opportunities to acquire desirable tracts that are favorably situated in new growth areas for future park development. It is particularly important to target potential purchases before area land prices begin to escalate with oncoming urbanization.
3. Continue to address the needs of youth sports and athletic leagues for adequate fields and facilities to support the community's desired level of recreational activity and offerings.
4. Expand upon the range of facilities and improvements available within the community to include those that may provide an added attraction, such as a spray park; local art park; historical monument walk; interpretive gardens; skateboard park; an indoor recreation center with weight and exercise room, basketball and racquetball courts, climbing wall, and meeting/ training rooms; and other types of activity areas per the preferences of community residents.

Provide official support and adequate funding and resources – on par with similar-sized communities – to perform ongoing maintenance and repairs and to construct needed improvements at existing and future parks and recreation facilities.

Table 5.4. Payment-in-Lieu Requirements in Other Texas Cities

Municipality	Payment-in-Lieu Standard
Edinburg	\$125 per lot and \$125 per dwelling (single-family subdivision)
	\$125 per lot and \$125 per dwelling (two-family and multi-family subdivision)
Mission	\$200 per dwelling unit
League City	\$198 per dwelling unit plus a \$358 development fee (single-family)
	\$160 per dwelling unit plus a \$292 development fee (duplex and multi-family)
Rosenberg	\$350 per dwelling unit
McAllen	\$450 per dwelling unit
Pharr	\$1,250 per acre of development plus a \$250 development fee per residential dwelling unit

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

1. Establish funding sources for priority improvements and a strategic implementation program with annual targets and objectives for the first five years.
2. Establish a dedicated funding source for implementation of the parks-to-standards program. Such funding may be from a single source, such as the hotel/motel tax, or from a combination of sources including County bond funds, fee in lieu of land dedication, and other sources.
3. Establish provisions to allow payment of fees to the City in lieu of dedicating land within new developments for public parks and open space purposes. **Table 5.4, Payment-in-Lieu Requirements in Other Texas Cities**, provides comparison examples. The structure of fees in lieu of land must be based upon an appraised value of the existing parks and their improvements so as to ensure adequate resources to fund new facilities of an equivalent standard.

Collected fees must be invested to acquire and develop new parks or expand and enhance existing parks within the same vicinity (park zone) from which the fee was exacted. However, developers cannot be expected to bear the entire burden of expanding Kingsville's park system. Ultimately, the City must rely on other funding measures to achieve its park system goals (e.g., County bonds, capital budgeting, grants).

4. Regularly prepare nominations and applications to qualify for grant assistance or other funding arrangements to finance annual capital improvements.

Goal:

- Conservation and public enjoyment of natural resources.

Recommendations:

Use the City's development regulations and standards to ensure environmentally sensitive land planning and development.

1. Incorporate into the City's development standards provisions for protection of resources. The resource area may then be dedicated to the community as permanent passive open space or as active recreation space, such as for trails and greenways. The density bonus offsets may act as an incentive to the developer by allowing an increase in the overall development yield. Refer to Chapter 3, Community Character, for further discussion of conservation development techniques. The City should also establish clear criteria for land dedications to avoid problematic, impractical sites with limited value for public use.
2. The City's Zoning Code should include stormwater management provisions that address not only safe and effective conveyance of storm drainage, but also requirements to maintain the quality of area streams and aquifers by reducing or eliminating pollutants in stormwater runoff. Strategies include avoidance, minimization, and mitigation. Preservation techniques may include cluster development; flood plain, drainageway, and wetland resource protection standards; and positive surface drainage in natural channels. Minimization techniques may include water gardens, rain barrels or cisterns, pervious pavement,

Hunter's Cove is a local example of privately developed parks



Privately developed and managed parks in new developments create quality neighborhoods, while preventing the City/County Parks Department from inheriting a maintenance legacy. Many cities in Texas have park land dedication requirements that mandate certain levels of parks per housing unit. Hunter's Cove is one example of a well-designed, multi-family development that incorporates open space and parks throughout the site.



vegetated swales, riparian buffers, swale blocks, and curbs without storm sewers. Mitigation measures are necessary where adverse impacts could not be avoided or minimized.

Adopt "eco-friendly" practices in the City's own parks and open space planning and maintenance programs.

1. Establish standards and procedures for park maintenance to eliminate potential adverse risk to the quality of adjacent streams and water bodies through "no-mow" zones, staged mowing heights in accordance with distances from the channel edge, prudent and well-supervised application of pesticide and herbicide products, and other minimization techniques.
2. Develop a City-wide greenways program along each of the creeks, floodways and drainageways, and other flood-prone areas, as well as forested corridors within the City and ETJ. These areas may then be used to protect the resource through sound management practices, while also hosting recreational trails to tie the community together. This work can be done in partnership with the Irrigation District.
3. Design interpretive sites in parks to leverage their value for preserving the environment and educating the public about the importance of land and resource management. In general, ecological education should be incorporated into the local park system and associated programming.

Today's irrigation canal... tomorrow's pathway



Existing irrigation canals and greenways are unbroken, linear stretches of land that could potentially be transformed into future parks and pathways.

Goal:

- Incremental development of a complete community trail network.

Recommendations:

Use the City's Development Regulations as another means to promote the gradual emergence of a City-wide trail and bikeway network.

1. Amend the subdivision regulations within the City's Development Code to require pedestrian easements in appropriate mid-block locations between lots (or at the end of cul-de-sacs and elsewhere) to allow access to existing or planned parks and trails. This must be integrated as part of the preliminary plat review and approval process, which will require designation of park and school sites and identification of sidewalk locations

and any planned internal trails within the development.

2. Amend the street cross sections in the City's Subdivision Ordinance, as appropriate, to include provisions for trails and bikeways. These facilities should be included in new road projects, as well as reconstruction projects, where feasible and acceptable. At a minimum, sidewalks should be constructed along both sides of collector and arterial streets and one (preferably both) sides of local streets. Provisions must also be made for pedestrian walkways on bridges and across culverts. Refer to Chapter 4, Transportation, for further discussion on these topics.

Goal:

- Coordinated and cooperative approaches to addressing the area's recreational needs and environmental conservation priorities.

Recommendations:

Form mutually beneficial arrangements with both public and private partners to expand and improve the provision of recreational services and facilities.

1. Develop agreements with Kingsville ISD and TAMUK to address potential joint acquisition of land, improvement and maintenance of land and facilities, and use and management of areas and buildings, especially to avoid duplication of efforts and services (such as the 1986 agreement between the City and County).
2. Establish a joint County/City Parks Board with equal representation from both the City and County. The Parks Board would serve as an advisory board to the County Parks Department and would help guide and shape the direction of park policies and decisions. The Board would also be involved in studying park and recreation issues and identifying needs and possible solutions
3. Re-establish and maintain a formal agreement with Kleberg County Sheriff's Department for the use of prison labor in park land maintenance.
4. Explore more formal arrangements/agreements with individual user groups that include user fees. These fees may pay for specific improvements to a park, such as field lighting, play equipment, viewing stands, or benches. Interested groups may

Working Together - SPARK School Park Program



SPARK Program in Houston is a good example of joint partnerships in developing public school playgrounds into community parks. Selected schools and school districts provide some funding and are responsible for construction and maintenance of the park. Additional funding and in-kind contributions are provided by local, county, state and federal governments. Local business and neighborhood residents also provide donations and in-kind services by participating in activities such as landscaping, fundraising, tree planting, and working on public art.



include the Kingsville Boys and Girls Club and adult and youth sports associations. This collaborative effort starts by documenting recreational demand and specific needs and ensuring appropriate contributions to field and facility maintenance based on level of utilization.