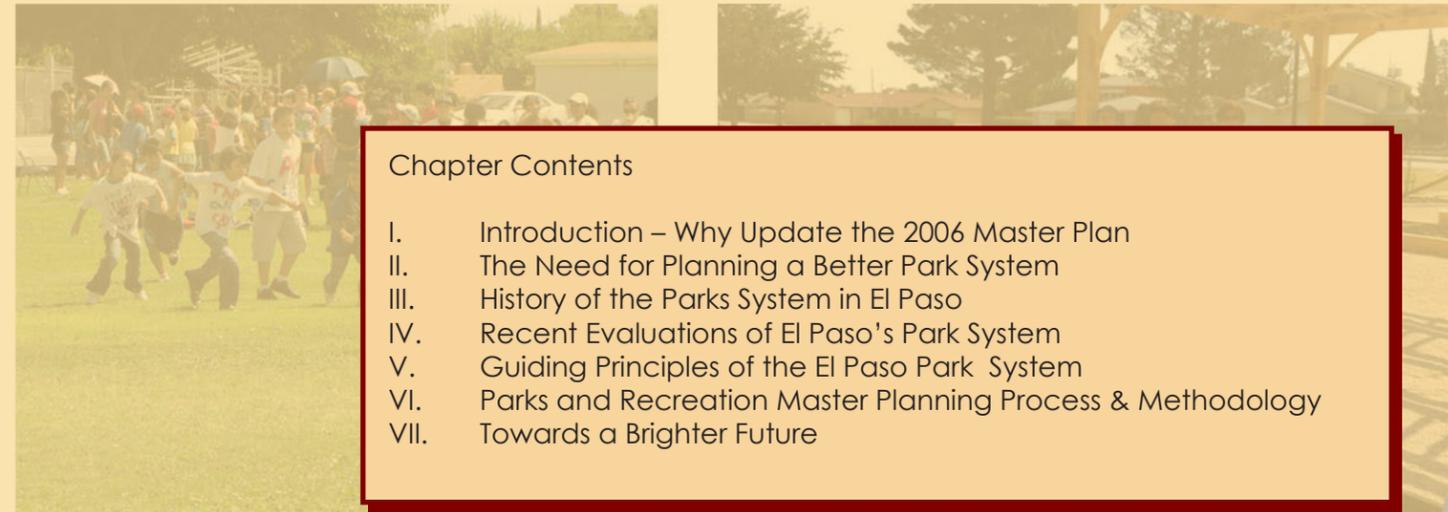


CHAPTER 1:

A PLAN FOR PARKS

Chapter Contents

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- II. The Need for Planning a Better Park System
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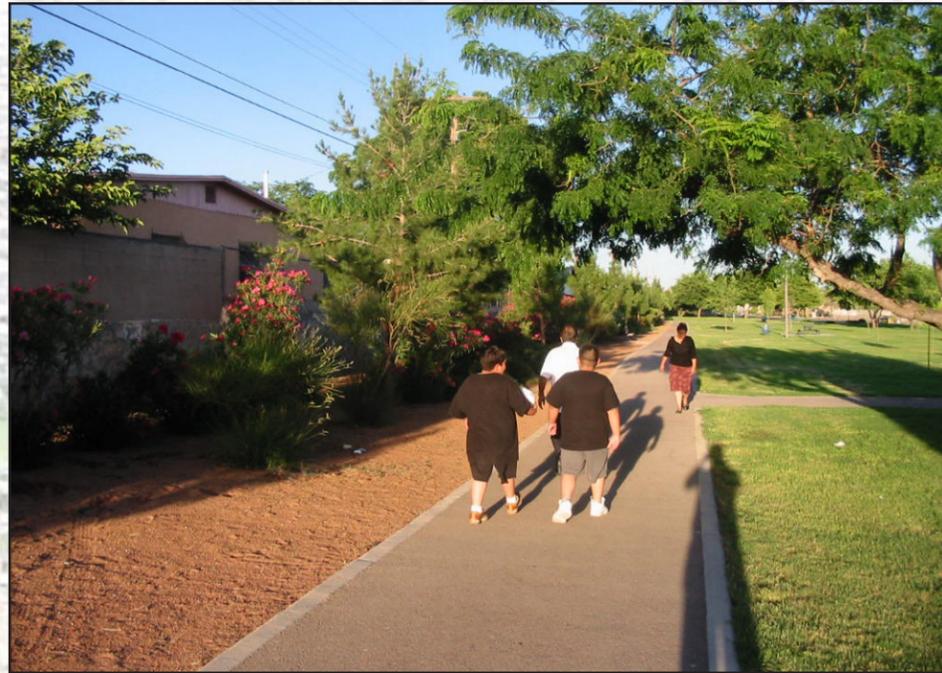




“Nature and a tremendously energetic citizenship combine to afford El Paso opportunities for unique development, with possibilities unsurpassed by any other community in America.

“There is no reason why El Paso should not be, and cannot be, a city of striking distinction among cities, a city so attractive for permanent residence and for transient visits as to make a name for itself nationally famous.”

George Kessler – The Kessler Plan for El Paso - 1925



Walkers in Carolina Park reflect the benefits of a great park system that offers a variety of recreational opportunities and access anywhere in the City. (All photographs in this document are by the City of El Paso, unless otherwise noted)

I. Introduction – Why Update the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan?

The prophetic and inspirational words of George Kessler, in writing El Paso's Visionary Comprehensive Plan in 1925, continue to inspire and motivate us today.

The 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, entitled *Towards A Bright Future* made the following statement regarding the need for a superior park system:

“Quality of life is increasingly becoming an important factor for the nearly 650,000 residents who call El Paso home. Quality of life encompasses many areas, including the ability to get good jobs, the ability to get around the city easily, the feeling that the city is a safe place to live in, and the availability of quality homes and neighborhoods in which to live. In all of these areas El Paso is making great strides.

“One of the most important aspects of quality of life is the availability of high quality parks and recreation opportunities in the city. Parks and recreation influence every aspect of our lives. They allow us to experience new activities and encourage us to lead healthy lifestyles. Attractive parks and natural areas are often the first place that visitors view in our communities. Parks provide a very visible reminder of the beauty of the land that we choose to live in. Parks are also one of the most visible elements of a city government at work, and can instill a strong sense of pride in the residents of a community. A good park system lets both citizens and visitors know that the leadership of the city is interested in the well-being of its citizens.”

Guided by the desires of the residents of El Paso and the 2006 Master Plan, the transformation of El Paso's parks has really taken off. Beginning with the Quality of Life bonds passed in 2000 and then supplemented in 2004, many parks in the City have been significantly upgraded or improved. New recreation centers have been built, and athletic facilities in many parts of the City have been upgraded as well. Almost every park in the entire City has seen some improvements. The Parks and Recreation Department today has strong and stable professional leadership.

As a City, El Paso has begun to focus on its downtown and on adopting new strategies to manage growth. In fact, with its new Comprehensive Plan, *Plan El Paso*, the City is now one of the leaders in a movement to rethink how we organize and develop our cities. These changes will significantly transform the City over the coming decades. So again - the future is bright for El Paso!

But, much remains to be done. Some types of facilities, such as athletics, aquatics and trails, are still straining to accommodate the high levels of use they are receiving.

Other facilities have not yet been modernized, and the City and County population continues to grow, further stressing existing parks and facilities. Hence the importance of making sure that the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan continues to reflect the needs and desires of its citizens.

II. The Need for Planning a Better Park System in El Paso

A good park system does not occur randomly, but rather requires a series of orderly steps. It responds to the interests of all the citizens it serves, and not just the needs of select few. This report is an update to the 2006 Master Plan. This plan addresses both the needs of today and the great opportunities that lie ahead, and proposes a path to create “a bright future” for the parks and recreation system in El Paso.

This update is intended to take stock of the changes and enhancements that have occurred since the initial 2006 Master Plan, and determine what changes to the direction that was charted in 2006 need to be considered. More significantly, this update will incorporate the direction provided by *Plan El Paso*, the City's transforming comprehensive plan that pushes El Paso towards having a great sense of place and an image that is truly unique.



Historic images of San Jacinto Plaza and Washington Park, circa 1909. Photos from the El Paso Historical Society, El Paso Public Library

III. A History of the Parks System in El Paso

The spirit of El Paso’s rich history should be communicated in all of El Paso’s parks - El Paso is one of the most culturally unique areas in the United States, and this is a direct result of the City’s long and rich history. Understanding this history is an important part of this master plan update, so the City’s background and culture can be carried forward and used to shape the facilities and programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

El Paso’s Fascinating History - Since North America was first inhabited, the pass between the mountains of northern Mexico and the far southern mountainous reaches of the southwest United States was known to the Native American inhabitants of the area. Spanish explorers began entering the area more than 400 years ago; and in 1598, Don Juan de Onate is credited with naming the area “El Paso del Norte” translated as the Pass to the North. In that same year, Onate took formal possession of the territory drained by the “Rio del Norte” (the Rio Grande) and established the beginning of more than 200 years of Spanish rule over the Southwest.

Early colonization focused on the south side of the river, and settlements in the area flourished. The historic missions in Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario were founded, and many of those historic structures can still be seen today. By 1682, five settlements had been formed along the river: El Paso del Norte, San Lorenzo, Senecu, Ysleta and Socorro. El Paso was an important stop on the Camino Real serving the Santa Fe Trail and much of present day Mexico.

The early Spanish influence and the strong agricultural economy of the area is a direct contributor to the layout and style of the older areas of El Paso. This rich culture and tradition has been lost in the newer areas of the City. In particular, the idea of the “plaza” as the center of social life should continue as a strong feature of new neighborhoods as they are built. The traditional neighborhood park should be developed, and it should become the “plaza” of the homes around it. This

idea is adopted and reinforced by *Plan El Paso*, which calls for neighborhood “plaza parks.”

Much of the original downtown of El Paso was once part of the Ponce de Leon land grant. El Paso became part of the United States as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which set the Rio Grande River as the boundary between the two countries in the area. El Paso County was established in 1850.

Newer settlements in the area resulted from the California gold rush of 1849. These included Frontera, El Molino, Benjamin Franklin Coon’s mercantile mill, Magoffinsville, built by James W. Magoffin, and Concordia, built by Hugh Stephenson. The border also moved Ysleta, Socorro and San Elizario to the U.S. side, further reinforcing the unique bi-cultural and bi-national character of the area.

One of the most significant events in the City’s history was the arrival of the railroads in the early 1880s. By 1890, the population of the City had grown to more than 10,000. Much of the early history of the City is characterized by its reputation as a rough and tumble place where gambling, prostitution, and drinking were predominant. This continued into the early years of the 20th century, and even today that reputation is part of the folklore of the City.

The relationship between northern Mexico and El Paso was further cemented with the migration of many Mexican residents to the Juarez - El Paso area during the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1920.

The current City of El Paso was once known as Franklin, and later was named El Paso. For over six decades it was often confused with El Paso del Norte on the Mexican side of the border, until that city was renamed as Ciudad Juarez.

The influence of the border on El Paso – In the past, El Paso has been cited as one of the largest “transfrontier” urban regions along the US border. Lawrence A. Herzog, in a paper on “The Transfrontier Metropolis” written in 1991¹ noted that

¹ *Cross-national Urban Structure in the Era of Global Cities: The US-Mexico Transfrontier Metropolis* – Lawrence A. Herzog, San Diego State University 1991



transfrontier metropolitan regions typically consist of two or more settlement centers located around an international boundary. Over time these settlements become fused to form a single ecological and functional city/region. Because the building of cities over the last two centuries has been controlled and managed by nation-states, nations guarded their borders and developed the largest urban concentrations away from the physical edges of a nation. Before 1950, in fact, boundary regions were viewed as buffer zones that helped to protect the nation from invasion by land. Under these conditions, there were few significant cities near national boundaries.

Today, global markets and trade continue to be major economic drivers; lands at the edges of nations have significant possibilities to attract investors, businesses, and governments. Industrial parks, highways, rail systems, and airports that once bypassed international frontiers are relocating there.

However, in recent decades, border security concerns, much of it related to the movement of illegal drugs into the US, have introduced an element of caution among investors. In addition, much manufacturing has continued to seek out the lowest possible labor costs, and those are now found in Asia. Despite these shifts, El Paso continues to thrive, and also remains one of the safest cities anywhere in the United States.

The Beginning of a Parks system in El Paso – The original park in El Paso was San Jacinto Plaza, which is included in the 1859 plat of El Paso by Anson Mills. Other downtown plazas followed. Memorial Park was dedicated in June 1920 on the site of the old Federal Copper smelter as the original large park in the City. Scenic Drive opened later that year.

Early recreation in El Paso included the El Paso Browns, a baseball team formed in 1881 and who played on Sportsman’s Field, which was laid out in the Campbell Addition in 1888. The El Paso Sporting and Athletic Club was organized in 1890, and a cycle track association was established by 1879. Other clubs for fencing, tennis, and golf were created in the late 19th century, and the City’s

first natatorium opened in 1900.

The Kessler Plan of 1925 included Memorial Park and Washington Park as key components of the future growth of the City. The plan noted as one of its goals the following statement “More adequate recreation facilities for adults and children should be provided throughout the city. There is a need for more park spaces, large and small.”

The Kessler Plan noted that El Paso had 22 developed parks totaling 97.5 acres in 1925, including Memorial, Washington, Madeline, and Mundy. The City also had four partially developed parks totaling 313 acres (300 acres for a public golf course) and seven undeveloped parks totaling 175 acres, including the 100-acre site of Charles Davis Park, land that is now owned by the University of Texas at El Paso. **For the population estimate of 100,000 residents in 1925, the ratio of parks to population at the time was around 2.9 acres for every 1,000 residents** (keeping in mind that over 66% of that acreage was undeveloped at that time). But more importantly, that ratio has not changed much since that time, and today El Paso has a similar ratio of parks to population.

Other large parks in El Paso include the Chamizal National Memorial Park, created in 1967 by the Chamizal Agreement that verified the boundary and the exact course of the Rio Grande through the City. The park celebrates the strong bicultural connection between the United States and Mexico.

The Franklin Mountains State Park was created in 1979. It features exceptional geologic history and the highest structural point in Texas. El Paso’s Public Service Board had a significant role in creating the State Park through the conveyance of more than half of the acreage for the park at a very low cost.

1960s and 1970s: A Golden Age for Parks in El Paso - The 1960s and 1970s might be considered the golden age of parks in El Paso. During the 1970s in particular, the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act, the Community Development Block Grant and other federal programs

The City of El Paso surrounds the Franklin Mountains State Park, a state park created in 1979.



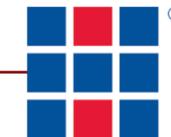
Park Related Excerpts from The Plan for El Paso by George Kessler - 1925

“The progressiveness of a city may be measured largely by its parks and recreational facilities, for these are the expression of the aspirations of the community beyond the purely material and obviously necessary things.”

“But these have more than esthetic value and have been found to pay real, if indirect, dividends which may be translated into cash. The dividends come in attracting new citizens, in keeping the old citizens and reducing the labor turnover, and in the transient and tourist trade.”

The Plan advocates parkways, saying that “They may entirely transform the outward aspect of a city, from comparative bleakness to happy evidences of comfort and civic care.”

“El Paso city is bound to take care of all the large alien population just as if it ‘belonged,’ and school system, governmental agencies, utilities, and all the appurtenances of urban life must be scaled to accommodate all.”



helped fund the development of five recreation centers, two indoor and two outdoor pools, and four of the City's nine senior centers. This explosion of construction more than doubled the major recreation facilities in El Paso, a feat that was not repeated until the flurry of development created by the 2000 and 2004 bonds.

But that golden age was short-lived. The City's rapid expansion, coupled with the retraction of federal funds and the recessions of the early 1980s resulted in under-funding of the system through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. Development during that time period was largely funded through the CDBG program.

More importantly, a change in fiscal policy, from a general fund supported system to one that required the Department to raise funds to pay for the operations of its facilities, greatly hurt the ability to provide quality services. A mindset was established that was geared largely towards revenue generating operations and not towards programming that was most beneficial to the citizens of El Paso. While that has changed through staff efforts and recommendations conveyed in the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it has left the system with many facilities that require significant updating.

The Huge Impact of the 2000 Quality of Life Bonds - A remarkable transition began with the passage of the 2000 Quality of Life Bond program that allocated \$75 million dollars towards park improvements. The vote in favor of the package was overwhelming, and resulted in the approval of additional bonds in 2004. Together, this funding resulted in improvements to over 50% of the parks in the system, along with the construction of the Westside Sports Complex, the renovation of pools and the construction of three new recreation centers (Marty Robbins, Gary Del Palacio and Don Haskins).

- In 1995, the system contained approximately 1,097 acres of parklands.
- In 2006, the acreage of the system had almost doubled to over 2,000 acres.
- In 2012, the City system has over 2,600 acres including dual-use basins and schools, and boasts new or updated parks in every sector of the City.

IV. More Recent Evaluations of El Paso's Park System

The 2010 "Scorecard" – A progress evaluation of the parks system conducted in 2010 illustrated the progress that was made between 2006 and 2010, and also pointed out areas needing more progress.

Key findings are shown on this page, and include:

- Significant progress was being made in the realm of accessibility to parks in neighborhoods, especially in the eastern sector of the City. Upwards of 150 acres in neighborhood parks at the time had either been added or were in the process of being added to the system. However, almost half of those new park sites were under 1.5 acres in size, and amenities above and beyond turf and irrigation (such as playgrounds) were left up to the City to fund after developers installed the minimum improvements.
- New opportunities for combining park facilities with storm water facilities were becoming available due to the new storm water funding source. 10% of this funding, or approximately \$1.5 million per year, was allocated towards open space preservation and facility development, so long as the projects have a nexus to improving storm water protection in the City.
- Community and regional parks remained an issue, with no major funding source identified at the time. In particular, it was noted that the Eastside Regional Park, an unimproved 90+ acre City-owned tract of land, was critically needed.
- Funding allocated for open space was reallocated on an emergency basis towards the buyout of flooded properties due to the 2006 flood. As a result, no direct funds for open space preservation were available.
- Core staff with significant professional parks and recreation experience had been added since 2006. The leadership of the Department provided stability and best practices knowledge.
- A blue ribbon panel appointed by the City Council evaluated the need for a regional park "district" to emulate

Summary - Areas with satisfactory progress

- ↑ Parkland Dedication as a tool provides much needed smaller parks
- ↑ Acquisition of smaller parks (excepting in parts of the City with slower growth)
- ↑ Trail Development in parks
- ↑ Core professional staff
- ↑ Use of Stormwater Fee to fund open space preservation

Summary - Areas with Ongoing Progress

- Parkland development
- Parkland acquisition in areas of City with slower growth
- Acquisition of non-stormwater related open space
- Open Space Oversight Structure
- Longer Trail corridors
- Long Term Governance Structure

Summary - Areas Needing Further Progress

- ↓ Parkland acquisition to address community and regional park needs
- ↓ Regional Park development
- ↓ Annual Capital expenditure funding source for immediate park system needs
- ↓ Opportunity funding for Open Space preservation

Key results from the 2010 El Paso Parks System Scorecard



the successful park systems in much of the midwest and central parts of the United States. (A constitutional amendment was presented to the voters of Texas as part of the November 2011 election, but was not approved statewide by the voters.)

Trust for Public Lands 2012 "ParkScore" – In May of 2012, the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) issued an evaluation of the park systems in the 40 largest cities in the United States. El Paso ranked #27 out of 40, with a score of 41.5. The highest scoring city was San Francisco, California with a score of 74, and the lowest was Fresno, California at 21.5.

However, it should be noted that El Paso's score and acreage included 25,000+ acres of the Franklin Mountains State Park, resulting in the City getting a score of 19 out of a possible 20 points for its percentage of parkland. The 2006 Master Plan and this update argue that the Franklin Mountains parklands are an excellent resource, but that much of that land is scenic in nature, inaccessible to most because of its steep topography, and not available on a daily basis. If the 25,600 acres of the State Park are excluded from the scoring, El Paso's "ParkScore" would drop to less than 25, ranking it second to last.

More importantly, El Paso continues to rank very low in terms of spending on park operations, maintenance and programming at around \$31 per capita. In this category, the City scored only 1 out of a possible 20 points, and had the lowest per capita spending of any of the 40 largest US cities. The next lowest city had expenditures of over \$40 per capita, and the highest amount was over \$303 per capita in Washington D.C.

TPL's "ParkScore" projected areas with the greatest park accessibility needs. Much of El Paso was ranked as having high or very high park accessibility needs.

Plan El Paso (El Paso's New Comprehensive Plan) – *Plan El Paso* was adopted in the early part of 2012, and is the culmination of two years of extensive planning and citizen input. The plan included many recommendations regarding parks and open spaces and how they should be integrated into the City. As the City's overall plan, the Comprehensive Plan provides a global vision and direction for all of the City's other more specialized plans. Plan El Paso will be referred to many times throughout this Parks Master Plan Update.

In general, *Plan El Paso* emphasizes the importance of parks as centerpiece "civic" areas of each neighborhood or area of the City. It calls for:

- Homes and buildings to face parks, and to add trees and other facilities that make these parks lively and well used centers of their part of the City;
- New "typologies" of parks, where greens, squares and plazas are considered as new neighborhood gathering places;
- Continued emphasis on park ponds, so that storm water basins serve a dual purpose and become important parts of neighborhoods, rather than useless left over spaces;
- A new vision for the Franklin Mountains and the City that surrounds it, where the two are more closely melded together, so that access to the mountain trails can occur at multiple locations, and neighborhoods near the mountains are better connected;
- Renewed emphasis on reinvigorating the Rio Grande corridor as a source of pride and as a regional community asset. Trails along the river as well as new parkland areas can increase access to the river corridor; and it
- Reinforces the need for regional parks that combine natural areas with developed facilities. These parks were the highest recommended priority of the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and remain as a very high priority of this update.

V. Guiding Principles and Goals of the Park System

The Excellent Park System, written by Peter Harnik and published by the Trust for Public Lands in 2003, lists seven key measures of an excellent parks system. Those measures are discussed in this report. They were used to develop ten fundamental guiding principles of the future parks system of El Paso. The principles stated below will be the foundation for future decisions as this Plan is implemented.

1. All Parts of the City will have Improved Access to Parkland & Recreation Facilities

- **The Parks system will provide adequate parks** - The City will

Seven Measures of an Excellent Parks System

(from "The Excellent City Parks System" by Peter Harnik, Center for Park Excellence, Trust for Public Lands)

A Clear Expression of Purpose – a clear purpose for the system must be in place, expressed through a mission statement and goals that define precisely what the system is expected to provide. *El Paso's Park system must clearly identify who its target market is, and must continue to push for a return to providing "core services."*

Ongoing Planning and Community Involvement – the excellent parks system has a plan that it follows and updates periodically. It also involves its residents in the development of the plan and major decisions undertaken by the system. *El Paso, through this plan, is clearly committed to both short term and long term planning.*

Sufficient Assets in Land, staffing, and equipment to meet the system's goals – the Parks System must have adequate land, know how much parks it has and where, and have adequate operating funds and "a regular infusion of capital funds for major construction and repairs and land acquisition." *El Paso lacks the physical assets of land and facilities as well as adequate fiscal backing. The system is surviving, but cannot thrive without additional resources.*

Equitable access – parks should be readily accessible, no matter where residents live. Ten minutes on foot in dense areas and 10 minutes apart by bicycle in suburban areas is recommended by the author. Access for persons with different disabilities or for residents that cannot afford the full cost should also be provided. *Access in many parts of the City is very good. However, in the older central part of the City, as well as the high growth fringe areas, new facilities are not keeping pace with the growth of the City.*

User satisfaction – citizens should fully use the park facilities and be satisfied with what they are provided with. Cities should record usership, and should periodically query their residents to determine the level of resident satisfaction. *The citizens of El Paso, through ongoing input, appreciate the system they have, but would like to see it continue to expand.*

Safety from physical hazards and crime - park users should feel safe when they use the facilities anywhere in the city. *El Paso is considered a very safe city, and in general citizens feel that their parks are for the most part safe.*

Benefits for the city beyond the boundaries of the parks system - the excellent parks system clearly provides environmental, economic, health and learning benefits for its residents. *El Pasoans have long recognized the great benefits of an excellent park system, and are now calling for the resources to allow the system to flourish.*



work towards providing parks, trails, and open spaces in an adequate amount in all parts of the City.

- **Facilities will be well distributed to provide equitable access** - Parks will be located so that every citizen of El Paso has close access to a park. In the near future, no one in El Paso will live further than one-half mile from a park, and ideally most residents will be within one-quarter mile from a park, green space or trail access point.
- **In newly developing parts of the City, adequate parklands will be allocated from the beginning of development**, so that the target levels of service of this Plan are achievable.
- **A balanced parks system will be provided** - A variety of park sizes and facility types are readily available. The park system will work towards providing a mix of small and large parks, trails, open spaces, and indoor recreation facilities in all parts of the City. Appropriate steps will be initiated to come closer to the facility and service goals of this Plan.

2. The System will be Well Funded, and will Actively Pursue Partnership Opportunities

- **The parks system will be adequately funded** - The parks system will be funded to a level that corresponds to its importance to the citizens of El Paso. It will be encouraged to flourish.
- **The parks system will use all available land resources** - Every land resource in the City will be considered for its potential as a park or open space resource since there are too few available open space and suitable park sites. Schools and drainage land should be considered in the overall parks equation of the City.
- **School parks must be a vital part of the parks system** - Parks adjacent to elementary or secondary school sites must be a vital resource for the citizens of El Paso in the future.

3. The System will Identify and Focus First on “Core” Services

- The Department will focus on providing basic services that serve a significant portion of the population. Services will be measured against five desired outcomes;

- **Livability of the Community** – Provide diverse recreational opportunities and experiences for all citizens of El Paso.
- **Health** - Provide opportunities to improve the health of El Paso citizens.
- **Youth** – Provide learning and recreational experiences for the youth of El Paso.
- **Revenue** – Provide opportunities for revenue, but only if not at the expense of the other desired outcomes.
- **Outdoors** – Provide opportunities to experience the outdoors in many different ways.

The illustration on this page depicts the continuum of services, from providing broad “basic” services that meet the needs of the entire community (and that have a community-wide benefit) to highly specialized services and programs that primarily serve the needs of individuals (which will be much more limited and generate revenue from the user).

4. Parks in El Paso will be Extraordinary and Timeless

- **The parks of El Paso will express the natural beauty and cultural diversity of El Paso.** The parks should look like they belong in El Paso.
- **Create extraordinary parks** - Resolve to create parks that are unusual and that stand out.
- **Express the Character of El Paso** - The entire park system, with its lands and buildings, should be one of the most visible place-making features of the City.
- **Use materials that fit in** - Develop parks that represent the natural beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert, and that fit in with the scenery of the area.
- **Native materials** - Use materials that are native to the area and that are already commonly used, such as boulders, native rock, shrubs, and trees.
- **Strong, distinctive appearance for park buildings** - Use architectural features as the focal points of parks. Use strong architectural statements that draw attention to the parks.

Continuum of Services





The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to guide City staff and City leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to 10 years.



5. Parks will be Community Focal Points

- **Parks as focal points of the Community** - Place parks so that they become readily visible focal points of the community around them. Encourage the development community to think of parks in this manner, and where necessary, develop ordinances that force that consideration.
- **Think of parks as mini-oasis** - Treat parks as lush areas within the desert environment, but note that only a portion of each park should have that feeling. The strong juxtaposition of lush and verdant alongside desert-like can create an enormously powerful image.

6. The City will Focus on Connectivity and Linkage

- **Trails and linear parks will equally focus on connectivity and leisure uses** - The trail system will link a variety of uses, especially neighborhoods to area schools and parks, to local retail and centers of government, and to indoor recreation.
- **Trails and linear parks will be a vital part of the parks system** - A spine system of linear parks and trails should be extended, so that the goal of one day linking all parts of the City via scenic parkways and linear parks can be achieved.

7. The City will Value and Preserve Open Space

- **Open Spaces** - The preservation of open space within the City will be a high priority.
- **Preserve Arroyos** - Preserve arroyos and natural areas as reminders of the original character of the area, and as beautiful scenic areas that will add significant long term value to El Paso.
- **Use drainage as opportunities to “create” open space** - If arroyos do not exist in an area, then use drainage channels as the “greenbelts” of an area. Run pathways alongside them and add trees to create linear parkways.

8. Detention and Drainage will be used as a Green Opportunity

- **Treat drainage ponds and detention basins as mini parks or green areas** - Plant vegetation around detention basins to convert them into attractive open space.
- **Avoid deep detention unless critical** - In the future, avoid deep detention basins except on a regional scale. Use natural basins as potential large parks.

9. The System will Focus on Sustainability

- **Convert portions of existing parks to more drought-tolerant designs** – Focus on lowering water consumption.
- **Incorporate energy and sustainable features into all buildings and parks in the future** – Include sustainability features that emphasize sustainability if efficiency savings can be demonstrated over time.

10. The System will Focus on Reducing Maintenance

- **Use cost effective maintenance techniques** – Water usage, equipment, and staff allocations will all be designed to promote the most efficient maintenance of park facilities, while maintaining parks in the best manner possible.
- **Design facilities to reduce maintenance** – All park facilities will be designed to reduce the amount of maintenance that they require.

VI. The Parks and Recreation Master Planning Process and Methodology

This 2012 master plan update is the result of a planning process that looks at the facilities and programs that currently exist in the City, identifies future needs and expectations, as expressed by the citizens of El Paso, and lays out a plan to address those needs. This plan:

- Analyzes progress made since the adoption of the previous master plan in 2006, during which new facilities were added;
- Points out deficiencies in the system and recommends projects to address those deficiencies;
- Looks at the potential growth of the City over the next 10 years, and assesses where additional facilities will be needed as the City grows and what types of facilities are most needed;
- Guides City staff in acquiring land to meet future park and open space needs;
- Prioritizes key recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to address the most significant deficiencies as quickly as possible; and
- Is intended to guide City staff and City leaders in determining where and how parks and recreation funding should be allocated over the next ten years.



Five Planning Areas/Sectors

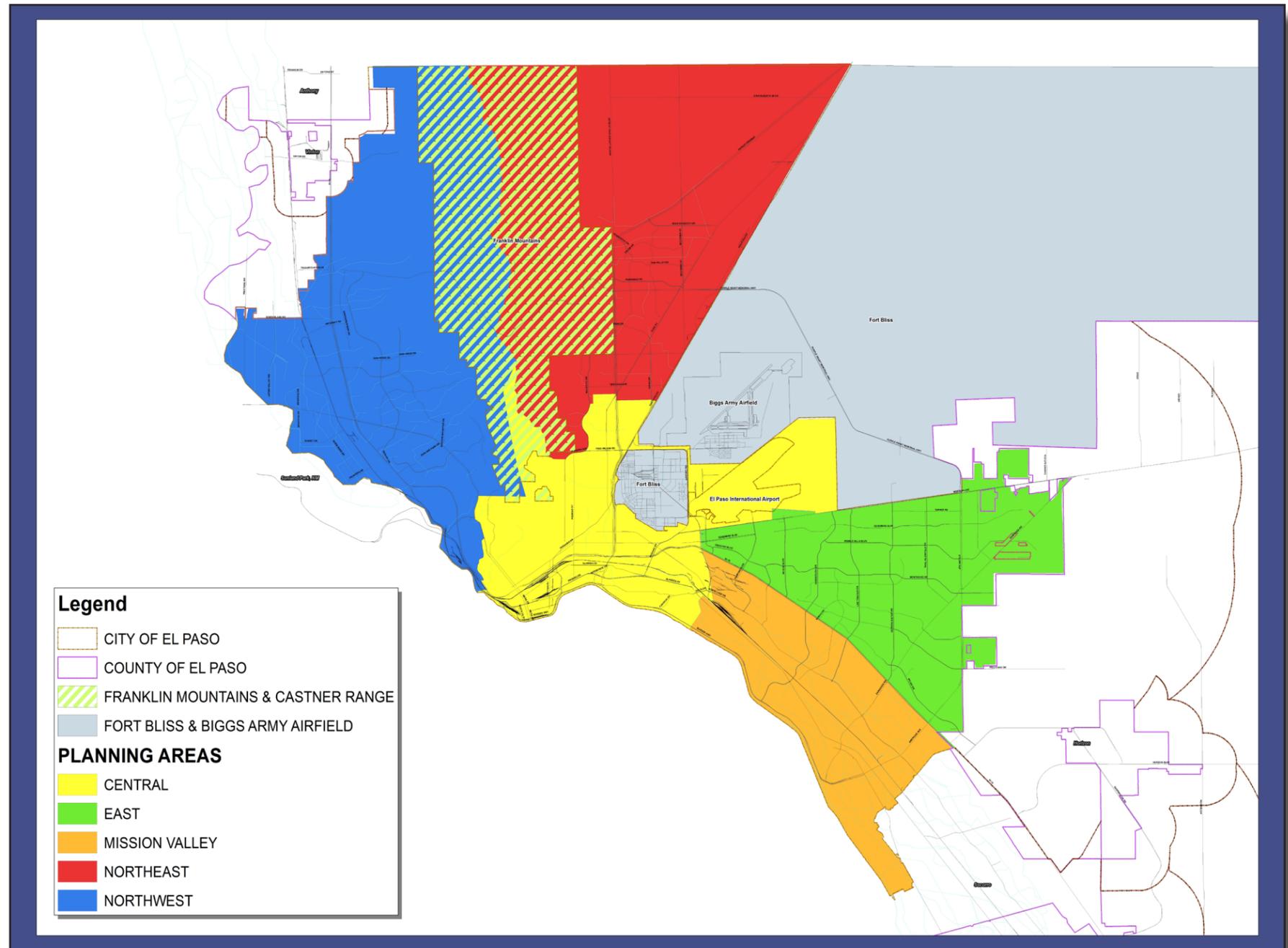
The planning process can be expressed by the flow chart shown on this page. The single most important characteristic of the process is input from the citizens, elected officials, and Parks and Recreation Department managers of the City of El Paso. This Plan represents the needs, concerns, and dreams of El Pasoans.

The plan looks at the park needs of the City on a sector by sector basis, following the five major planning areas designated by the City of El Paso. The sectors are shown on the map to the right.

Process Methodology



The Comprehensive Parks Planning Process



Planning Areas



VII. Towards A Brighter Future

This Plan is divided into chapters that address existing facilities, analyzes needs and service gaps in the current system, and then lays out recommendations for each type of park facility and major program in the City.

Chapter 9 of this document discusses these recommendations using the following categories:

- Immediate (key) Outdoor - Within the next 10 years
- Medium-Long Term Outdoor - Beyond 10 years
- Immediate (key) Indoor - Within the next 10 years
- Medium-Long Term Indoor - Beyond 10 years

Who Will Implement this Plan?

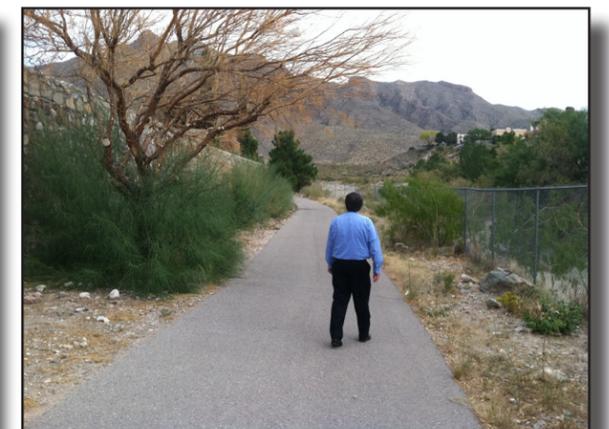
The implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update will be lead by the City of El Paso and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Others who may assist in some areas of the implementation of the plan will include other City departments, other governmental agencies such as El Paso County, independent school districts, and entities such as the Public Service Board. The business and development community of El Paso, who clearly understand the benefits of a strong quality of life in the City, may also participate in some aspects of the implementation of the plan.

This Park and Recreation Master Plan Update follows the general guidelines for local park master plans established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). This document is intended to meet the requirements of the Department of Interior for the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program, and will serve as a Recovery Action Plan document (RAP). This document will be filed with both the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Department of the Interior, and allows the City to better qualify for grant opportunities as they become available.

Timeframe for the Plan

The plan is formulated to address the timeframe from the year 2012 until the year 2024. Per requirements issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be completely updated after a ten year period or before if any major developments occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the City.



The diversity of the Department's programs and facilities are a vital component of El Paso's quality of life.