"As strenuous challenge or contemplative retreat, the parks and other units of the national lands offer welcome respite from the world, a safety valve for body and spirit."

T.H. Watkins, Vice President of the Wilderness Society, 1997

Chapter 9

Outdoor Park Facility Master Plan Recommendations

Introduction

The Master Plan contained in this chapter summarizes the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommends a series of actions to improve and expand Abilene's parks, recreation, trails and open space system. These recommendations co-address the need for indoor recreation facilities, an aquatic center and water spraygrounds, trails, additional practice fields, lakeside park facilities, and more parks in the recently developed areas of the city.

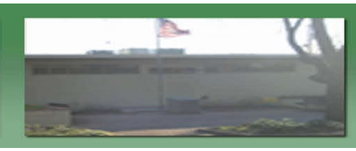
The guiding principles discussed in Chapter 4 have been used as a basis for many of the recommendations in this section. Those principles are specifically adopted as part of this master plan, and form the foundation for future decisions.

Short term recommendations should be implemented over the general life of this master plan, which covers the next 5 to 10 years. Other longer range recommendations, such as the acquisition of land for future parks as well as trails to be developed later are also included as part of the recommendations of this master plan.

Costs that are shown are at an order of magnitude level of detail, and will vary as more detailed programming and design occurs. Escalation should be accounted for whenever those cost projections are refined or updated.

The recommended improvements fall into four general categories:

- **Recreation facilities** - provide needed recreational facilities including aquatic facilities and indoor recreation facilities.
- **Development** - develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority.
- **Acquisition** - both short term and long term. Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation facilities, and open space including habitat protection where possible.
- **Improvements** - implement key improvements to existing parks throughout the city.



Development of Recreational Facilities

The citizen telephone survey and other citizen input techniques identified needs for very specific recreation facilities. The following are the key facility needs in Abilene, based on facility standards and citizen input combined.

Key Outdoor Priority Facility Needs include:

1. Jogging and Biking Trails
2. Lake Access Facilities
3. Pavilions
4. Renovate / Expand or Replace Neighborhood Recreation and Senior Centers
5. Children's Water Sprayground
6. Marina at Lake Fort Phantom (by private development)
7. Citywide Recreation Center
8. Park Restrooms
9. Natural Habitat / Nature Areas
10. Events Amphitheater
11. Basketball Courts
12. Volleyball Courts
13. Soccer Fields
14. Picnic Tables
15. Playgrounds

Recommendations per key facilities

Jogging and Biking Trails - Begin to develop a true citywide trails network. Trails were among the highest desired elements in the citizen survey. Abilene should begin the process of developing a cross-town trail that begins to link parks, schools, and other facilities.

Reasons for developing a citywide trail system:

- Can provide a means of transportation from one location to another during much of the year when the weather is favorable.
- Creates a very visible recreational element that contributes to the perceived quality of life in the city.
- Trails may be heavily used by all age groups.
- Trails are relatively easy to maintain, as opposed to many other types of recreation facilities.

The citywide network of trails is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 of this Master Plan.

Lake Access Facilities - Abilene is fortunate in that it has two lakes within its city limits that can be developed in part for recreational uses. At Lake Fort Phantom the city should focus on upgrading boat ramps and providing a marina, lake side parks, picnicking and camping facilities, water access areas, and trails. Kirby Lake should offer fishing spots, trails, lake side parks, and boat ramps.

Rental Picnic / Reunion Pavilions - pavilions and other shade shelters with picnic tables are frequently used and requested by the citizens. Reasons for additional picnic facilities:

- Serve many diverse age groups
- Are key to recreational use during the warm seasons of the year
- Larger facilities may generate rentals revenue for the city.

Distribution should remain balanced throughout the city so that all city areas have a good supply of park pavilions and tables. Design and construct pavilions to allow for airflow through the roof by means of a two-tiered roof structure.

Renovate / Expand or Replace Neighborhood Recreation and Senior Centers - The recreation and senior centers within Abilene are mostly older buildings that have been built onto over the years. They are in significant need of updating, renovation and expansion. All centers are enjoyed by the residents and this is evident in the overuse the centers receive. More detail of the renovation and analysis of each recreation and senior center can be found in Chapter 8.

Children's Water Sprayground - Water spray parks follow a trend in many cities, whereby the excitement of water is provided in a safe and clean environment. The principle is spray nozzles, drop buckets and other features that either regularly or intermittently (for a sense of surprise) spray and/or drop water on children excited with expectation. The water is collected directly in surface drains from where it is circulated. Important factors to consider for the selection and preparation of an appropriate site are accessibility and visibility, wind, leaves or other material that can possibly clog the drain system.

Marina at Lake Fort Phantom - Abilene is fortunate enough to have a lake within its city limits and there is great interest in building upon this recreational resource. One recommendation is constructing a marina for fishing, boating, dinning, and other activities.

Recreation Center - it is proposed that a major citywide indoor recreation center be built to begin the process of consolidating the city's five smaller centers. This center is proposed to be 40,000 to 60,000 square feet and located near the center of the city. More detail of recommendations for recreation centers can be found in Chapter 8.

Park Restrooms - Although expressed as a need by respondents to the telephone survey, it is recommended that restrooms are provided at community parks and large neighborhood parks only. The provision of restrooms at smaller neighborhood parks is discouraged. Compared to community parks, neighborhood parks have irregular use with fewer visitors, resulting in higher amounts of vandalism and illegal activity. Neighborhood parks are also typically in walking distance to the visitors' home and restrooms are thus less of an urgent need.

For large functions and gatherings in a neighborhood park, it is recommended that the organizers are required to arrange for portable restrooms to be brought to the park.

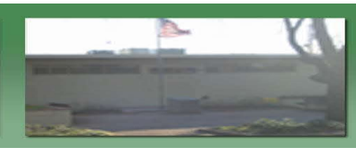
Natural Habitat / Nature Areas - Through objective public participation efforts, many cities learn about the strong need that most citizens have to experience natural habitat and natural areas within the city. However, most cities have never considered acquiring land for conservation purposes, partly because it is not programmed space. However, land with no particular program may fulfill the function of wildlife habitat and flood control. If managed correctly, such land typically requires the least amount of maintenance.

Natural areas and natural habitat also provide a sense of visual, emotional and psychological relief to citizens. The provision of such land does not include the acquisition of undeveloped land only, but may include areas within existing parks where the establishment of native trees, wildflowers and native grasses is encouraged. This in turn allows for activities including bird watching and wildflower enjoyment.

The conservation of open space and natural areas also makes economical sense. It has been proven that the value of property adjacent or close to open space often has a substantial premium over the value of property in the same vicinity but not identified with the open space. Every effort should be made to secure the protection of existing natural areas and to restore disturbed sites.

Amphitheater - the City of Abilene currently does not have an amphitheater that is adequate for organized performances. The City should consider investing in a facility that offers:

- Lawn and tiered row space for 300 to 500 spectators



- An elevated performance stage at least 15' by 20' in size
- Adequate electrical service of a minimum of 200 amps or larger
- Shaded spectator seating
- In close proximity to adequate restrooms and parking
- Water and electrical service for temporary utilities for entertainers' vehicle connection
- Pre-rigged for stage lighting and sound
- Should be designed with concession vendor accommodation

Amphitheaters are popular amenities as indicated in the telephone survey where an events amphitheater rates number 10 in priority from a list of 21 facilities.

Basketball Courts - Provide at least one lighted half court at all existing and new neighborhood parks. The value of such an amenity allows neighborhood kids to practice their skills on their own time. At community parks, provide a number of full basketball courts in close proximity to enable tournament and league playing.

Volleyball Courts - The city should provide both opportunities for sand volleyball and hard surface volleyball courts. Hard surface courts can be used as multi-purpose courts allowing for other activities such as basketball, handball, etc. When possible, these courts should be lighted to allow for play after dark, and covered to provide shade.

Soccer Fields - Provide multi-practice fields in all existing and future neighborhood parks. Should the need for soccer facilities increase, develop competitive level league fields in the city's community parks.

Playgrounds - Playgrounds are important gathering sites for families and parents to stimulate and promote social interaction in the community. Abilene has a good supply of playground facilities, and should maintain this trend with play areas in all future parks. Since the Texas heat can be overwhelming, the playgrounds should be covered as much as possible under shade. Develop the playgrounds in such a manner as to benefit from the shade provided by existing trees. If not possible, plant a dense stand of trees adjacent to the playground and consider steel supported shade structures. Also, if a fence is built surrounding the playground, provide either an opening or a gate for easy access to the playground. Consider the inclusion of low walls around all play areas for containment and parent seating.

Park Development

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing and future park in the city are as follows:

- Every park should be considered as an urban oasis in Abilene. Significant amounts of native plants and drought tolerant landscaping should be incorporated.
- Each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of Abilene by incorporating historical plaques and features that allude to the neighborhoods around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users and levels of activity. Parks should be multi-faceted.
- Parks should incorporate art and should be an example of the sophistication of the Abilene of today and tomorrow.
- Demand a single loaded road adjacent to all parks for purposes of informal surveillance and to prevent areas that may pose danger for park users.
- **Parks should be developed and upgraded so as to reduce maintenance. Automatic irrigation systems should be a key component of every park, as should simple features that make every park easier to take care of.**
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park. Playgrounds and basketball courts should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park is.
- All pavilion structures should consist of a double tiered roof system to prevent heated air from being trapped under the roof.
- Community input should be welcomed and included in the design of every park in the city.

Regional Parks

- Develop regional park facilities at Lake Fort Phantom.
- Create a signature park adjacent to Kirby Lake.

Neighborhood Parks - general planning and design approach for neighborhood parks.

- Prepare a design concept for each undeveloped neighborhood park that incorporates children's play areas with covered shade structure, walkways, jogging trails, areas for unorganized play, multi-purpose practice fields, picnic facilities, and park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof. Seek extensive neighborhood input for each park site.
- Place preference on the application of native plantings including native trees, wildflowers, and native grasses.
- Provide good pedestrian access to all parks including signage and a wide, welcoming gateway.
- Develop parks adjacent to existing and future schools. Not only will this add to the quality of life for the community, but also funding is more likely available through collaborative action.

Linear Parks - are characterized by their linear nature that makes them ideal for the implementation of hike and bike trails, which in essence become the "spine" of each particular park. Linear parks may be associated with creeks, railway or utility corridors, and are ideal to create connections between different destination points. Whereas trail development typically includes amenities like trail heads, rest stops, overlooks, benches and light fixtures, linear parks may include additional amenities and facilities e.g. picnic pavilions, playgrounds, basketball and volleyball courts. Chapter 7 includes specific recommendations for linear parks.

Land Acquisition

Acquisition of land in newly growing parts of the city should focus on the provision of neighborhood parks, additional community parks, linear parks, and the protection of habitat and open space. Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, the establishment of recreation and/or park land easements, and the involvement of Conservation Trusts.

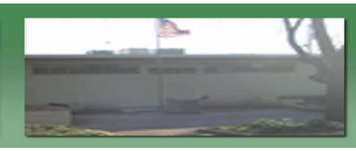
Land for neighborhood parks - there is a deficit of neighborhood park land in Abilene. Over the next 10 years, four to six neighborhood parks of 3 acres each should be added to meet the recommended standard.

- Consider donations by developers and implement parkland dedication as new communities are built. Target 5 acre sites or larger that are easily accessible and that have sufficient land to be useful.
- The master plan illustration indicates general geographic locations where future parks may be required.
- For land acquisition for Neighborhood Parks in the southern park of Abilene, consider acquisition in conjunction with the growing Wylie School District, adjacent to future school sites.
- Park sites around the newly developing neighborhoods at Lake Fort Phantom should be included.

Land for Community Parks - It is recommended that community parks be at least 20 acres in size. 219 acres of community parkland should be acquired over the next 10 to 20 years. Abilene should pursue the accomplishment of this goal of a target standard of 8 acres per 1,000 residents in the year 2020.

Linear Parks - Abilene currently only has one developed linear park in the downtown area. As mentioned in Chapter 6, 2 acres per 1,000 residents should be acquired and developed as linear parks. New linear parks are recommended along Cedar Creek, Cat Claw Creek and along Little Elm Creek.

Open Space - Natural habitat and nature areas are of high importance for the residents in the telephone survey, rating 7 out of 21 facilities to develop. Areas



that have habitat value and warrant habitat protection typically include creeks, floodplains, and wooded areas.

General opportunities for open space land dedication include:

- Land and/or development rights of the entire 100-year floodplain and/or lands that are regularly subjected to flooding.
- Secondary creeks that can create linkage to adjacent neighborhoods by means of trail connections.
- Land along creeks that are not necessarily park of a specific park.
- Land as identified of natural and cultural importance including wetlands and their buffers; moderate and steep slopes; groundwater resources and their recharge areas; woodlands; farmland to ensure the rural character of the city; significant wildlife habitat; historic and archaeological features; and scenic view sheds.
- Land associated with the cultural landscape of Abilene.

Existing Park Improvements

Renovation of existing parks

- Upgrade all facilities to current park design standards.
- Ensure that all improvements meet ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements.
- Increase the shade in all parks by planting more trees where practical.
- For additional landscape improvements, place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Provide shade structures at the children's play areas where feasible.

Park Signage

- The existing signs are becoming dated and should be transformed as significant renovation of the parks occurs.
- A well-conceived and designed signage theme will add to the unique identity and character of the City of Abilene.

Park Maintenance - The parks department plays an important role in the responsible stewardship of the environment of Abilene. Emphasizing native and naturalized plants that are better adapted to the locale will promote a better looking park with healthier plants.

Wi-Fi Access - Access to the internet in parks is popular in many cities. Consider providing Wi-Fi access in community parks. Wi-Fi is short for *wireless fidelity*, which allows the user to connect to the internet without the need for wires. Wi-Fi enabled computers use radio technologies to send and receive data within the range of a base station or *hotspot*, which is a connection point for a Wi-Fi network.

Art in Public Places including Parks - Abilene currently has public art along the 1st Street Corridor. Explore and develop a policy to include environmental and outdoor art in parks and open space. Pursue a percentage for art program, where a portion of the funding for all public projects is dedicated to outdoor art, but also fund at least one major outdoor installation for the next 10 years. Place at prominent locations and pursue joint placements with other entities such as the universities, the medical center, and the area lakes.

Art has a tremendous potential to add additional layers of meaning to the landscape and to encourage contemplation as a manner of passive recreation. It also will set Abilene apart as a city that appreciates quality of life.

Philosophical Background for Recommendations

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the city have been discussed throughout this master plan document. These points are as follows:

- Every park should be considered as a green oasis in Abilene - Parks should be carefully sited so that they are prominent features in their respective neighborhoods, and should include extensive mature trees and landscaping.
- Parks should follow a consistent citywide design theme -as discussed in previous sections, fundamental items such as park signs, high quality pavilions with rock faced columns, and the preservation of existing vegetation and trees should be used in every new and existing park to create a consistent and recognizable park nomenclature. Replace all existing signs with a new sign type that exemplifies a new and improved park system.
- Where possible, each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of Abilene - parks can incorporate historical plaques and features that allude to the area or neighborhood around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users - park facilities should be multi-faceted, and should follow the guidelines for each park type presented in Chapter 3.
- Parks should be designed so as to reduce maintenance - automatic irrigation systems should be a key component of every park, as should simple features that make every park easier to take care of.
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park- playgrounds and basketball courts should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park is.
- Bodies of water should be highly valued - existing areas of water, whether in the form of ponds, small lakes or creeks should be preserved and located in key parks where feasible, assuming a ready source of re-supply water is available.
- Community input should be welcomed - input from neighborhoods surrounding each new or renovated park should be included in the design of every park in the city.

The following items comprise the major priority recommendations of the 2007-2017 Abilene Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but are not specific concepts or actual plans. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. All costs include a cost escalation factor, assumed to be in the 5% per year range. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections will be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented.

Prioritization – Actions are divided into categories, based on the type of facility, and then further ranked in order of importance.

- Recreation and Senior Facilities Priority Items
- Aquatic Priority Items
- Trail Priority Items
- Park Priority Items

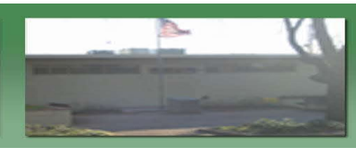
The timeframe of each recommended priority is based on either short term, within the next five year; medium term, within the next five to ten years; or long term, beyond ten years. Note that the prioritization shown in this plan is intended to guide staff and council actions, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Following is a summary of the priority items recommended in this master plan.

Recreation and Senior Facilities Priority Items

Expand / Renovate Sears Center - High Priority - This is one of the most heavily used recreation centers in Abilene. The renovation of this center will be a benefit to the north side of the city and the estimated cost is $3,000,000.

- Include new facilities for Seniors at the Sears Center



Develop a Citywide Recreation Center - High Priority - the city has no modern recreation center. A new facility in a central location such as Rose Park should be considered. The cost of this type of a citywide recreation center is $6,000,000 to $8,500,000.

- Center should be 40,000 to 60,000 square feet in size
- Center should be located in a way so it allows for easy accessibility for all residents.

Convert Facility at G.V. Daniels into a community center/cultural center - Medium Priority - This recreation center is highly used by the north sector neighborhoods that surround it. Renovations are estimated to cost between $750,000 and $1,500,000.

- Renovate inside of recreation center building
- Include gallery and art spaces
- Add more class rooms for board games and dominoes
- Upgrade exercise equipment
- Expand the basketball court, providing a covered court and seating areas

AYSA Indoor Recreation Center - Medium Priority - The estimated cost for constructing this recreation center is between $14,000,000 and $16,000,000. If in a central location and if additional recreation facilities can be included, this facility could be an alternative to the citywide center mentioned above

- Center should include basketball and volleyball courts.
- Could be used for league play and regional tournaments, such as by the AYSA.

Convert South Park Recreation Center into a Rental Facility - Medium Priority (after a citywide center is developed). Estimated cost is $1,000,000.

Convert Cobb Recreation Center into a Rental / Community Facility - Medium Priority (after a citywide center is developed). Estimated cost is from $1,500,000 to $2,000,000.

Develop New Recreation Center in the far Southern part of the City - Long Range Priority - This will be a center that offers amenities, programs, and classes for residents of all ages. The estimated cost of a recreation center at this scale is $8,500,000.

Aquatic Priority Items

Develop Aquatic Park at Rose Park - High Priority - This facility will be intended for citywide use, benefiting all residents. The estimated cost is between $3,000,000 and $5,000,000.

- A major pool with slides
- Water sprayground
- Zero entry feature
- Lap swimming area
- Party rooms

Close Stevenson Park Pool and add Spray Grounds - High Priority - this pool is outdated. Replace with spray ground facility. The potential cost is $600,000.

Spray Grounds at Sears Park - High Priority - The water spraygrounds were continually one of the highest ranked facilities that citizens wanted in the city Abilene. These amenities can be relatively cheap to install and maintain when compared to other aquatic facilities. The estimated cost of development is $600,000.

Spray Grounds at Redbud Park and Scarborough Park - Medium Priority - Again, because of the popularity of having spraygrounds in Abilene, the city should invest in multiple locations for these amenities. The estimated cost is $600,000 per sprayground, totaling $1,200,000.

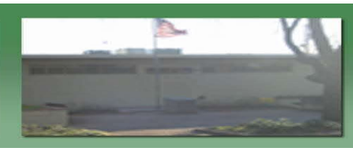
Indoor Therapeutic Pool at Rose Senior Activity Center - High Priority - A therapeutic pool has continually shown increased health benefits for active seniors. Constructing such a pool at the Rose Park Senior Activity Center will allow for water aerobics, lap swimming, and can improve seniors' mobility while reducing the pain of arthritis. The potential cost of a medium size therapeutic pool facility is between $750,000 and $1,000,000, but varies significantly depending on size and whether changing facilities are incorporated into the project.

Trail Priority Items

Cedar Creek Linear Park Phase 1 - High Priority - Cedar Creek is another main creek that runs north to south throughout the center of the city. The development of this corridor will provide benefits to the entire community as well as provide economic benefits. The estimated cost for this initial phase is $1,500,000 and some easements may be required.

- 1.7 miles from Will Hair to Business 20
- Concrete trail
- Include benches, drinking fountains, picnic areas, call boxes, and signs

Catclaw Creek Linear Park - High Priority - This linear park will have a great impact on the residents in the northern part of the city. This linear park corridor can serve as a mode of transportation for children and families to get to and from many of the Abilene schools that are in this portion of the city. The estimated cost is $1,500,000 to $2,500,000 and some easements may be required.



- 8 foot wide trail from Sears Park to Cobb Park
- 1.1 miles
- Include some corridor beautifications, benches, lighting, crosswalks

Kirby Lake Trail - High Priority - This trail will not only benefit the residents in the south sector, it will benefit all citywide residents. The estimated cost is between $1,500,000 and $2,250,000.

- 10 foot wide trail on west and north sides of the lake
- 2.5 miles in length
- Made of decomposed granite trail surface
- Include three overlook features
- Include two trailheads

Little Elm Creek Trail - Medium Priority - This trail will run through the west side of the city. The estimated cost for this trail is $1,000,000 to $1,400,000.

- 1.5 miles from Scarborough Park to Dub Wright Blvd.
- Concrete trail
- One trailhead
- Include benches and drinking fountains along trail

Catclaw Creek Linear Park Phase 2 - Medium Priority - The second phase of this linear park will go through the center of the city. The estimated cost is $800,000 to $1,400,000, and some easements may be required.

- 8 foot wide concrete trail from Cobb Park to Rose Park / C.W. Gill Park
- 1.3 miles
- Include some corridor beautification, benches, lighting, crosswalks

Lake Fort Phantom Trail Phase 1 - Medium Priority - This trail will serve residents citywide as well as serve as an attractor for surrounding communities. The initial phase of this trail is estimated to cost between $750,000 and $1,500,000.

- Decomposed granite trail
- From dam area to west side of lake
- Initially 3 miles of trail

Cedar Creek Linear Park Phase 2 - Medium Priority - The second phase of this linear park will occur in the center of the city. However, because the parks and facilities that it connects receive so much use, the benefits of this linear park will be citywide. The estimated cost of this phase is between $750,000 and $1,500,000. This corridor might also require some easements.

- 1 mile of trail from Will Hair Park to Cal Young Park
- Concrete trail
- Include benches, drinking fountains, picnic areas, call boxes, and signs

Hardin Simmons to ACU Trail Corridor along Ambler - Medium Priority - This trail corridor will benefit the students and residents living in the northern sector of the city, as well as provide some citywide benefit. The estimated cost of development and corridor enhancements is between $750,000 and $1,100,000.

- 1.25 miles
- Concrete trail
- Include benches, some landscape beautification

27th Street Trail from Redbud to Cedar Creek - Medium Priority - This trail will be located in the southern portion of the city. It will provide a connection from the Cat Claw Creek trail corridor to the Cedar Creek trail corridor and possibly the Kirby Lake trail. The estimated cost of this trail is $350,000 to $750,000.

- 1.5 miles
- Concrete trail
- Landscape beautification needed

Cedar Creek Linear Park Phase 3 - Long Term Priority - The last phase of this trail corridor will be located in the southeast portion of the city. It will be the longest portion constructed and the estimated cost of this development is between $3,000,000 and $5,000,000.

- 2 miles from Cal Young Park to Kirby Lake
- Concrete trail
- Include two new access trailheads

ACU to Lake Fort Phantom Sea Bee Park - Long Term Priority - This trail will provide a corridor and mode of transportation for all residents to get from the city to the lake. The existing road will need to be expanded to make this trail feasible and safe. The estimated cost is $1,000,000 to $1,500,000.

- 3 miles
- Shoulder trail along West Lake Road

Railroad Trail in Southern Abilene - Long Term Priority - As mentioned this trail will be located in the southern portion of Abilene. The estimated costs of this new development is between $1,200,000 and $1,500,000.

- 1.5 miles
- Decomposed granite
- Include benches and two trailheads

Park Facilities Priority Items

Enhancements and/or Creation of Neighborhood Parks at Lake Fort Phantom - High Priority - As with the trails surrounding Lake Fort Phantom, the parks around the lake will be a citywide benefit. With the growing number of people taking up residence at the lake, neighborhood parks are needed. These parks could also provide economic benefits by encouraging people from the region to visit Lake Fort Phantom and the City of Abilene.

- Parks should be on both the east and west side of the lake
- Estimated cost is between $1,500,000 and $2,000,000

Redevelopment of Johnson Park - High Priority

Overlook Area on the Northeast Corner of Lake Fort Phantom - High Priority

Develop Center City Neighborhood Park - High Priority - Currently the only neighborhood parks in the center of the city are ones associated with schools and their playground areas. A neighborhood park should be acquired in the center of the city, close to or just west of the downtown area. The estimated cost for this park is $500,000.

School Park in the Northwest Sector - High Priority - Many of the Abilene ISD schools are located in the northwest sector of the city. However there are no school parks associated with these schools. The estimated cost is $500,000 to $750,000. Long and Johnson Schools should be considered as new developments for parks.

New Community Park in far Southwest Abilene - High Priority - The southwest portion of Abilene is rapidly growing. Currently there are no parks serving this portion of residents. A new community park should be developed. The estimated cost is $3,000,000.

- Should be on city owned land
- Include baseball and softball fields
- Include soccer and football fields
- Include a restroom building, shade pavilions, and parking

Create Signature Park adjacent to Kirby Lake Phase 1 - High Priority - As people drive into the City of Abilene from the South, Kirby Lake is one of the very first things they see. Creating a signature park that is known throughout the region as the essence of the type of community Abilene is, can have major economic benefits. This signature park will be beneficial citywide and as an estimated cost of $1,500,000 to $3,000,000. It will include new developments and enhancements to the existing facilities.

- Built on east side of the lake
- Include green lawn sloping to the lake

- Include pavilions, picnic areas, parking, and restrooms
- Include trails
- Include a boardwalk along the edge of the lake

Develop University Park Practice Facility - High Priority - This land is city owned and dedicated as park land. Development of this property could benefit the entire city, and more specifically the northwest and central parts of Abilene. Estimated costs range from $750,000 to $1,500,000.

- Add grading, new turf, and irrigation
- Add backstops and soccer goals for practice
- Add amenities such as a playground and shade pavilions
- Add infrastructure such as a restroom building and parking

Carver Park Covered Basketball Facility - High Priority - This is the basketball court located next to G.V. Daniels Recreation Center. This court is heavily used by the people in the community and has been referred to as the "Rucker Park" of Abilene. During the summer months, this court is host to an evening basketball program for teenagers and youth. The estimated cost is between $300,000 and $750,000.

- Update the basketball court: Cover the court, provide new rims, paint the surface.
- Add tables and benches around the court for spectators and players to sit during games.
- Consider adding a half-court or another full-court for practice and multiple games.

Expansion of Sears Park - Medium Priority - This community park is located on the north side of the city and receives a great of use from the residents. This overuse has caused a need for redevelopment and renovation. The expansion of this park will be a citywide benefit and is estimated to cost between $750,000 and $1,500,000.

- Acquire additional land
- Consider narrowing the street or closing it
- Add a sprayground water feature
- Add an additional baseball field

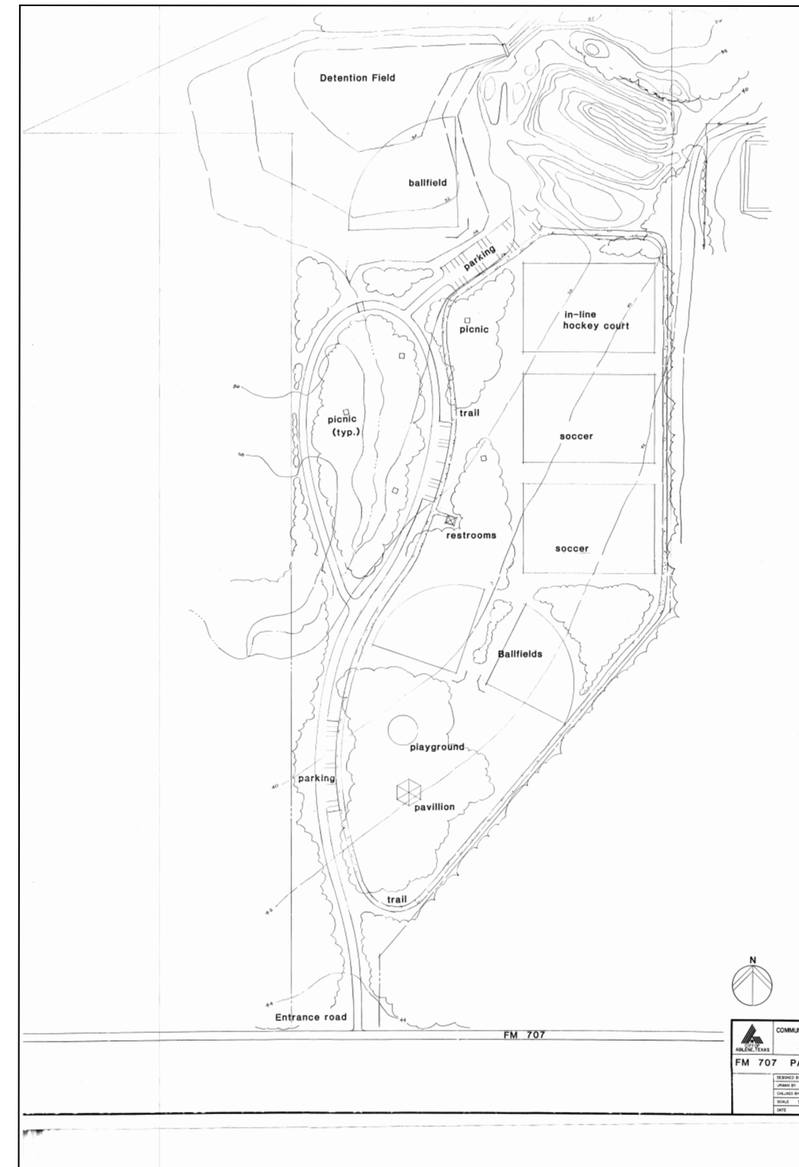
Redevelop Kirby Park - Medium Priority - This park was once a hotspot in the city for teenagers and families is the 1960s. However, in the past few decades, suspect activity has made it one of the most neglected parks in the city. Practice facilities, new pavilions and rental facilities, play facilities, trails and enhanced lighting can increase usage of the park. The projected cost for these improvements ranges from $500,000 to $1,000,000.

Renovate Will Hair Park - Medium Priority - This community park is located in the northeast portion of the city. It is also heavily used and in need of renovation. The estimated cost is between $1,000,000 and $2,500,000.

- Rebuild curb and gutter
- Renovate baseball fields
- Renovate concession building, restrooms, and pavilions

Expand Scarborough Park - Medium Priority - This park is located on the far west side of the city. It currently has practice facilities and baseball fields. Enhancement to this park is estimated to cost between $500,000 and $750,000.

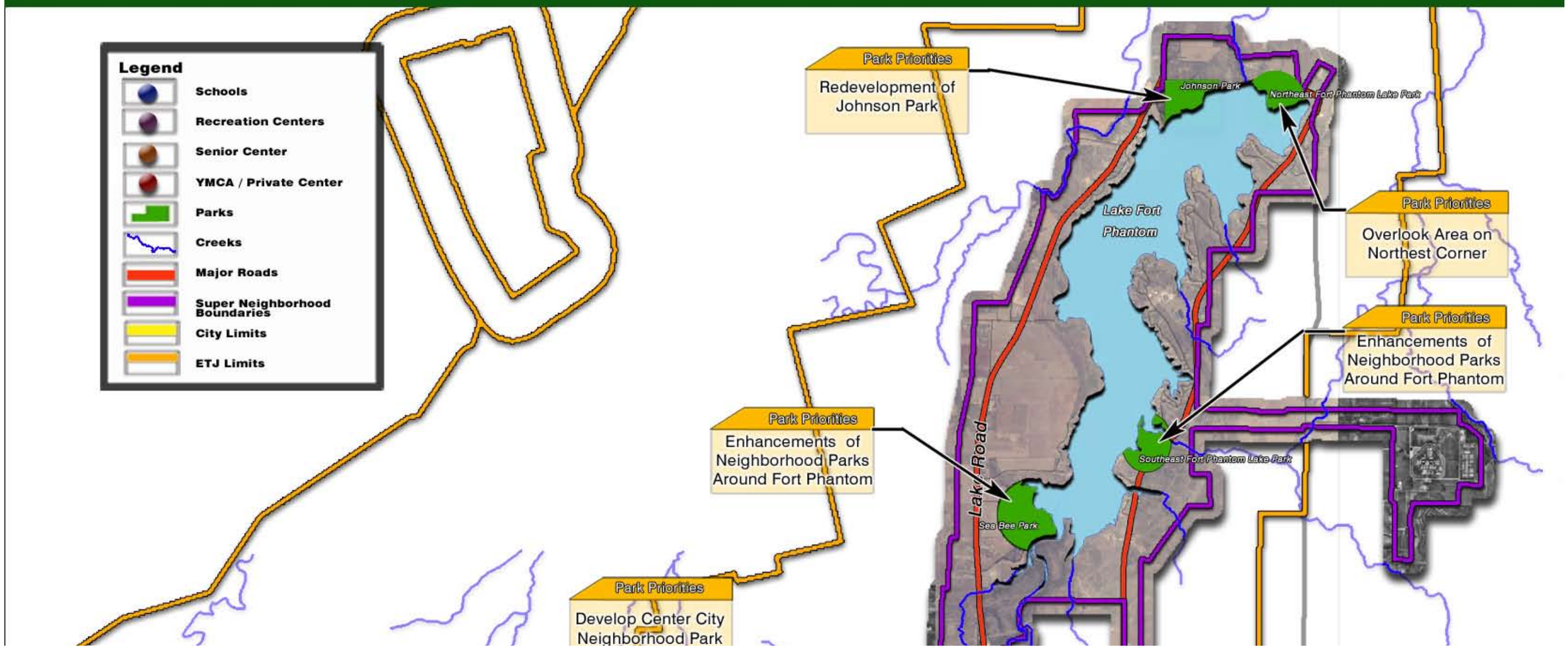
- Add trails
- Add a second pavilion
- Possible site for a dog park
- Improve landscape



Concept plan for far south community park developed by Parks and Recreation Department staff.

The Abilene Parks, Recreation & Senior Facilities Master Plan

Proposed Park Facility Priorities



Park Priorities
Develop Center City Neighborhood Park

Park Priorities
Expansion of Sears Park

Park Priorities
School Park In North-west Sector

Park Priorities
Develop University Park Practice Facility

Park Priorities
Expand Scarborough

Park Priorities
Renovate Will Hair Park

Park Priorities
Carver Park Covered Basketball Facility

Sea Bee Park
North Park
Elm Creek
Cedar Creek
Buck Creek
HWY 351
I-20
Treadaway
Rainey Creek
Sears Park
Will Hair Park
University Park
Lee Park
Stevenson Park
Nelson Wilson Park
1st Street
Vera Hall Minter Park
Everman Park
HWY 80
MLK Park
Grover Nelson Park
Cat Claw Creek
Oscar Rose Park
Chavez South Park
Cal Young Park
Scarborough Park
C.W. Gill Park
14 th Street
Kirby Park
Lytle Lake
Little Elm Creek
Bowie Park
Jackson Park

Park Priorities
Develop University Park Practice Facility

Park Priorities
Expand Scarborough Park

New Communtiy Park in Southwest Abiline

Renovate Will Hall Park

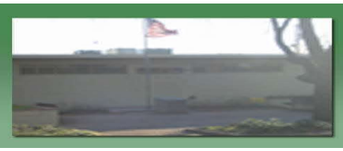
Park Priorities
Carver Park Covered Basketball Facility

Park Priorities
Redevelop Kirby Park

Park Priorities
Create Signature Park Adjacent to Kirby Lake

1st Street
14 th Street
HWY 80
HWY 277
HWY 83 - 84
HWY 36
Loop 322
Cat Claw Creek
Little Elm Creek
Elm Creek
Cedar Creek
Lytle Creek
Buffalo Gap
Lytle Lake
Kirby Lake
Lake Kirby Park
Vera Hall Minter Park
Everman Park
Stevenson Park
Nelson Wilson Park
MLK Park
Grover Nelson Park
Oscar Rose Park
Chavez South Park
Cal Young Park
C.W. Gill Park
Scarborough Park
Kirby Park
Bowie Park
Jackson Park
Red Bud Park
Vaughn Camp Park

HALFF



2008-2012

2008-2015 (as new lake development occurs

2010-2015

2010-2015

2010-2015

2010-2015

2008-2012

2012-2018

2012-2018

2008-2012

2012-2018