



# *Rediscovering Our Parks*

The Abilene Parks, Recreation & Senior Facilities Master Plan  
2008 - 2018





November 26, 2007

City of Abilene  
Mr. Mike Hall  
600 Walnut Street  
Abilene, TX 79601

Reference: Report - *Rediscovering Our Parks*, The Abilene Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan

Dear Mr. Hall:

Halff Associates Inc. is pleased to submit the draft Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan for Abilene. This report seeks to capture the many observations and findings developed as part of the park planning process, and to match those to the dreams and expectations of the citizens of Abilene. The plan's recommendations encompass the many varied aspects of a park system such as Abilene's, from facilities, operations, athletics, and aquatics to management, funding and other key system issues.

As in any comprehensive analysis, this document contains many recommendations. These recommendations include actions that address immediate needs as well as longer term actions that are visionary and will guide the city towards the creation of a premier park system.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to have worked with you, your staff, and the citizens of Abilene, and look forward to the "rediscovery" of Abilene's parks.

Sincerely,

HALFF ASSOCIATES, INC.

Jim Carrillo, A.S.L.A., A.I.C.P.  
Vice President, Director of Planning

JC



## Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS ADOPTING THE YEAR 2007-2017 PARKS, RECREATION AND SENIOR FACILITIES MASTER PLAN; FINDING AND DETERMINING THAT THE MEETING AT WHICH THIS RESOLUTION WAS PASSED WAS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AS REQUIRED BY LAW.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Abilene recognizes the need for a Year 2007-2017 Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan "the Plan" to provide goals, assessments, standards, recommendations and strategies for implementation over a ten year period in an effort to provide for and continually improve park and recreational facilities, provide trail opportunities, preserve open spaces and rehabilitate existing parks in the City of Abilene; and

WHEREAS, the primary objective of "the Plan" is to provide recreational services desired by the citizens of Abilene, acquire needed open spaces and preserve natural resources; and

WHEREAS, in order to address recreational needs in the future, the City of Abilene has sought input from the citizens of Abilene through surveys, public input meetings, the Abilene Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation staff; and that input has been incorporated into "the Plan"; and

WHEREAS, "the Plan" complies with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department master plan guidelines which require parks and recreation needs to be prioritized and addressed in an action plan format; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, having taken into consideration the results of the in-depth study conducted by Half Associates for the City of Abilene, determines that "the Plan" is reasonable; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS:

I. That the Year 2007-2017 Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan for the City of Abilene, Texas, is hereby officially adopted, as attached hereto and incorporated herein for all intents and purposes.

II. A ten-year Action Plan has been developed to prioritize implementation of the Year 2007-2017 Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan, guide the rehabilitation of existing parks, provide guidance in the application of funding, and suggest alternative funding mechanisms.

Adoption of the Year 2007-2017 Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan shall not commit the City of Abilene to specific funding levels implementation strategies, but shall provide a guidance plan for the City's vision for availability and growth of park and recreational services.

PRESENTED AND PASSED on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2007, by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_ yeas and \_\_\_\_\_ nays at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND CONTENT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney



The 2007 Citywide Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan was developed by the City of Abilene Community Services Department with the technical assistance and design help of Halff Associates. A special thanks goes to the many residents, landowners, business owners, and community leaders for their insight and support throughout the duration of this study.

**Acknowledgements**

**City Council Members**

- Norm Archibald , Mayor
- Sam Chase , Place 1
- Joe Spano, Place 2
- Anthony Williams, Place 3
- Celia Davis, Place 4
- Stormy Higgins, Place 5
- Laura Moore, Place 6

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

- Ovelia Campos
- Jack Harkins
- Tim McClarty
- Lydia Long
- Fred Famble
- Bruce Bixby
- Clint Rosenbaum

**City Staff**

- Larry Gilley, City Manager
- Richard Burdine, Assistant City Manager, Director of Economic Development
- David Vela, Assistant City Manager
- David Wright, Director of Finance
- Melvin Martin, Chief of Police
- Paul Knippel, Director of Public Works
- Jon James, Director of Planning and Development Services

**Park and Recreation Advisory Board**

- Susan Arrington
- Amber Cree
- Toney Guterrez
- Moses Hall
- Leroy King
- Gail Russey
- Mike Schweikhard

**Senior Advisory Board**

- Cynthia Coke
- Harriet Conner
- Hazel Forkerway
- John Goode
- Eddie Hodges
- Leroy King
- Paul Rehm
- Linda Smith
- Emory Walton

**Parks, Recreation and Senior Services Staff**

- Mike Hall, Director of Community Services
- Tony Neitzler, Assistant Director of Community Services
- Carl Scott, Recreation Administrator
- Susan Gerred, Recreation Supervisor
- Anita Vigil, Program Coordinator
- Bob Cheatham, Park Superintendent



## Table of Contents

### **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

- Abilene's Need for Parks and Recreation
- Purpose of the Parks Master Plan
- Jurisdiction and Planning Area
- 2004 Comprehensive Master Plan for Abilene
- Role of the City of Abilene in providing Recreation Opportunities
- Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan Timeframe
- Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan Components

### **Chapter 2 - Abilene Today**

- A Brief History of Abilene
- The Economy of Abilene
- Abilene's Population
- Population of Surrounding Counties
- Service Area Population
- Service Area Population Growth
- Schools in Abilene

### **Chapter 3 - Existing Parks Inventory**

- Purpose of the Existing Parks Inventory
- Components of the Existing Parks Inventory
- Park Classification
- Park Types Included in the Current Abilene Park System
- Size of the Park System in Abilene

### **Chapter 4 - Goals of the Abilene Parks System**

- Why Goals are Important
- Guiding Principles of the Parks System
- Goals of the Abilene Parks, Recreation and Senior Facilities Master Plan

### **Chapter 5 - Citizen Input for the Parks Master Plan**

- Citizen Telephone Survey
- Student Survey
- Community Public Input Meetings

### **Chapter 6 - Today and Tomorrow's Park Needs**

- Methods of Assessing Park Needs
- Standard-Based Assessment of Needs

- Demand-Based Assessment of Needs
- Resource-Based Assessment of Needs
- Summary of Key Facility Needs

### **Chapter 7 - Trails Concepts for Abilene**

- Existing Trails in Abilene
- Opportunities for Trails in Abilene
- Public Opinion Regarding Trails
- 2004 Comprehensive Master Plan
- Trails and Linear Parks Action Plan

### **Chapter 8 - Indoor Recreation, Senior Facilities and Aquatic Facilities Components**

- Renovate or Replace?
- Current Indoor Recreation Facilities
- Public Opinion Regarding Indoor Recreation Centers
- Recommendations of Indoor Recreation Centers
- Existing Aquatic Facilities in Abilene
- Public Opinion Regarding Swimming Pools, Aquatic Centers, and Spray Grounds
- Recommendations of Aquatic Facilities

### **Chapter 9 - Master Plan Recommendations**

- Development of Recreation Facilities
- Recommendations per Key Facilities
- Park Development
- Land Acquisition
- Existing Park Improvements
- Philosophical Background for Recommendations
- Recreation and Senior Facilities Priority Items
- Aquatic Priority Items
- Trail Priority Items
- Park Facilities Priority Items

### **Chapter 10 - Implementation Plan for Parks in Abilene**

- Implementation Strategy
- Operation and Maintenance
- Funding Strategies for Recommendations
- Policies and Ordinances
- Plan Updates



***“Parks are a good measure of local pride and integral to our sense of well-being. A run-down park that no one wants to visit reflects badly on the local area. Everyone should have a nearby park they can be proud of with plenty of opportunities for fun, exercise and the enjoyment of beautiful things.”***

Dame Liz Forgan, Chair, Heritage Lottery Fund

***“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 ... tourist trade.”***

George Kessler, City Planner, 1925



Red Bud Park in Abilene, Texas