



“Envisioning City As Park”

Executive Summary

***2007 PARKS, RECREATION
& OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN***



City of North Richland Hills

*Envisioning
"City as Park"*

*2007
PARKS, RECREATION
& OPEN SPACE
MASTER PLAN*

Executive Summary

December 2007

Adopted by NRH City Council on December 2, 2007



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Executive Summary



ES - 1. Introduction

The leadership of North Richland Hills recognizes that parks and recreation play an important role in the quality of life in North Richland Hills, and that a strong parks and recreation system provides for a healthier environment, improves the well being of children and young adults, enhances economic development, builds social capital and develops a sense of community. Residents are attracted by the quality of civic recreation facilities, the wealth of recreation opportunities and the unusual sense of place that uniquely juxtapose ancient natural landscapes alongside contemporary features in North Richland Hills.

The importance of natural open space is often overlooked by a city's parks department since the concept of open space does not always fit the idea of land programmed for a particular recreational activity that would require regular landscape maintenance. However, the very reason for it not requiring regular attention can be a great asset, offering outdoors enjoyment, visual pleasure and ecological function at a minimum cost. For these reasons, natural preserves and open space are an integral part of this Parks Master Plan.

Building upon the importance of natural open space, together with the contribution of well conceived streetscapes, quality parks and good trail connections between parks



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and other destinations, the Parks Master Plan suggests a vision of ***"City as Park"***. Such a vision serves to inspire, encourage and enlighten City staff, Park Board, City Council as well as residents to aim always higher to achieve a superb parks and recreation system, while striving to achieve urban connectedness to nature through all future city developments and street improvements.

The purpose of this 2007 North Richland Hills Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to update the previous plan prepared in 2000. This updated plan reviews the goals and priorities established by the previous plan and provides an assessment of North Richland Hills' parks, recreation and open space system in the year 2007.

The 2007 Parks Master Plan includes all the components required by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and more. Understanding the intrinsic link between a city's character and the manner in which it is experienced and enjoyed, the Halff Associates Planning Team elaborates on North Richland Hills' image, character and physical features. Through the Parks Master Plan, the Planning Team assists in developing a vision for the city, whereby parks, recreation, trails, natural preserves and open space become important components to enhance the quality of life within the city.



ES - 2. City Context

Recreational needs and opportunities are shaped by the city's image, unique physical features, history, demographic profile and economy. Image determines expectation, experience and enjoyment; the physical features provide opportunities and sometimes impose constraints; the man-made and natural history teaches us to treat the land with respect; demographics determine the need; and economy tells us what is possible. It is therefore essential to understand the particular context of North Richland Hills

The current image and character of North Richland Hills may be described as ***evolving timelessness in the fabric of the city***. Like the embodiment of the richness and endurance of the ancient Cross Timbers ecosystem, the parks system of North Richland Hills supports and enriches the lives of its inhabitants. Such character is evident in the parks system through qualities and values such as:

- 1) **Uniquely visioned quality design:** careful, responsive and imaginative themes;
- 2) **High quality maintenance:** striving for the idyllic in all its layers of rich diversity;
- 3) **Ecological sensitivity:** preserving nature, grounded in rural and historic, natural preserves; and
- 4) **Dynamic balance:** reveling in contemporary expression and recreational uses.

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As these qualities are celebrated and integrated, the fabric of North Richland Hills gains vibrancy: it shows a growing expression of appreciation of the richness of communities. It also actualizes the vitality of diverse experiences and achieves an urban connectedness to nature that infuses all parts of the city. The end result is the image of a **“City as Park”**.

2.1

Unique Physical Features

The physical features of North Richland Hills are expressed through its vegetation, topography, creeks and roadway infrastructure.

The city’s **natural vegetation** comprises the Cross Timbers that contains two to four hundred year old post oaks and Tallgrass Prairie with roots of some grass species attaining depths of 10 to 15 feet, which is essential for attaining natural protection against the erosive power of surface runoff.

With the North Central Texas **topography** generally flat, sloping areas along creeks, cliff edges and rolling hills are features worthy of celebration in parks, open spaces and overlooks.

An important network of natural elements that is an essential component of the City of North Richland Hills is its **system of creeks**. These resources have huge potential to be developed into valuable recreation space. Their sinuous and linear character makes them ideally suited as trail linkages and natural area destinations available for all to enjoy. North Richland Hills is blessed with four main creeks: Big Fossil Creek, Walker’s Branch Creek, Calloway Branch and Little Bear Creek.

The image of the city is further articulated by the **major thoroughfares** that transect North Richland Hills. For some visitors, these major roads are the only manner in which they experience or view the City of North Richland Hills. Pleasing views from these roads to the surrounding landscape as well as roadside treatments are all contributors to the image of North Richland Hills and the vision: **“City as Park”**.

2.2

Demographics

In order to do proper planning for parks and recreation in the future, it is essential to understand the demographics and geographic context of North Richland Hills. The 2007 population of 64,000 is expected to grow to 74,000 by 2030. According to the 2000 Census, an adult population dominates North Richland Hills: 61% of the population is between 20 and 64. Children and teens make up 30% of the population. The residents are well educated with 34% of the population holding a college degree or higher.



ES - 3. Existing Parks

The acreage amount and quality of parks and open space in North Richland Hills, together with creek protection, natural area preservation and creative streetscapes, are all important factors in achieving the vision: “*City as Park*”. The purpose of the Existing Parks and Open Space Inventory, is to determine the quality of parks and recreation facilities.

3.1 *Park Classifications*

National and state guidelines identify three broad categories of parks, which are:

- a) ***Local, Close to Home Space***, usually located within the community served by the facility, which includes pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks;
- b) ***Unique Space***, which may be either local or regional in nature. These parks can be defined as areas that are unique in some way, whether because of physical features or because of the types of facilities provided. Parks in this category may include linear parks, special use parks, or land conservancies; and
- c) ***Regional Space***, usually located within an hour or two driving distance. Parks in this category serve a number of communities, and include regional metropolitan parks and regional park reserves.

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The category “Close to Home Parks” is significant and unique as it provides day-to-day facilities for all ages and activities. In addition close to home parks are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live.

i)

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the foundation for recreation in the ***Local Close to Home*** park system. Ideally, they provide amenities and recreation space for the entire family, but are within easy walking or cycling distance of the people they serve.

ii)

Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. Community parks are usually reached by automobile, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or cycle to it, rendering them *de facto* neighborhood parks. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike and bike trails, and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users.

iii)

Linear Parks including Hike and Bike Trails

Linear parks are open park areas that generally follow some natural or man-made feature that is linear in nature, such as creeks, abandoned railroad rights-of-way or power line or utility corridor easements. Properly developed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel, these parks can serve to link or connect other parks in the local system, as well as schools, libraries, and other major destinations. No specific standards apply to linear/linkage parks other than to be large enough to adequately accommodate the resources they follow. They can also serve as linear greenbelts, which preserve open space and natural areas.

iv)

Special Purpose Parks

Special purpose parks are designed to accommodate specialized recreational activities. Because the facility needs for each activity type are different, each special purpose park usually provides for one or a few activities.

v)

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small green gathering spaces ranging from 1/8 acre to 1 acre. Due to the size of this type of park, vehicular parking space is typically not provided.

vi)

Streetscapes

Streetscapes are not generally considered as part of a city’s park system, as many standards were developed with parks being considered as completely distinct entities from the urban fabric. Additionally, park standards were developed as if available park land were infinitely available. Such is not the case in many cities, and even if it weren’t so, many cities consider the real aesthetic and economic values in cultivating the

Envisioning “City as Park”

attractiveness and pedestrian quality of their streets. The beauty of a well landscaped street and the experience of traveling along it is that it may be repeated (uniquely to add to the diversity of neighborhoods) to knit together all parts of the urban fabric, thereby creating a framework of the concept and reality of “**City as Park**”.

‘Cities are for people, not for cars’ is a philosophy that increases the appeal and functionality of a city, by providing multi-modal experiences for enjoying the public spaces that form a vibrant network of a city.

vii)

Natural Preserves and Open Space

As with streetscapes, the benefit and inclusion of places that are natural preserves or unprogrammed open space has been largely overlooked in the context of parks master plans. Conservation is especially valuable as natural resources disappear in our cities, and natural habitat is wiped out. The value of walking through natural and historic places that have been left untouched is immeasurable. Such opportunities are rapidly becoming rare, and the identification and protection of such areas is urgently needed in most cities today.

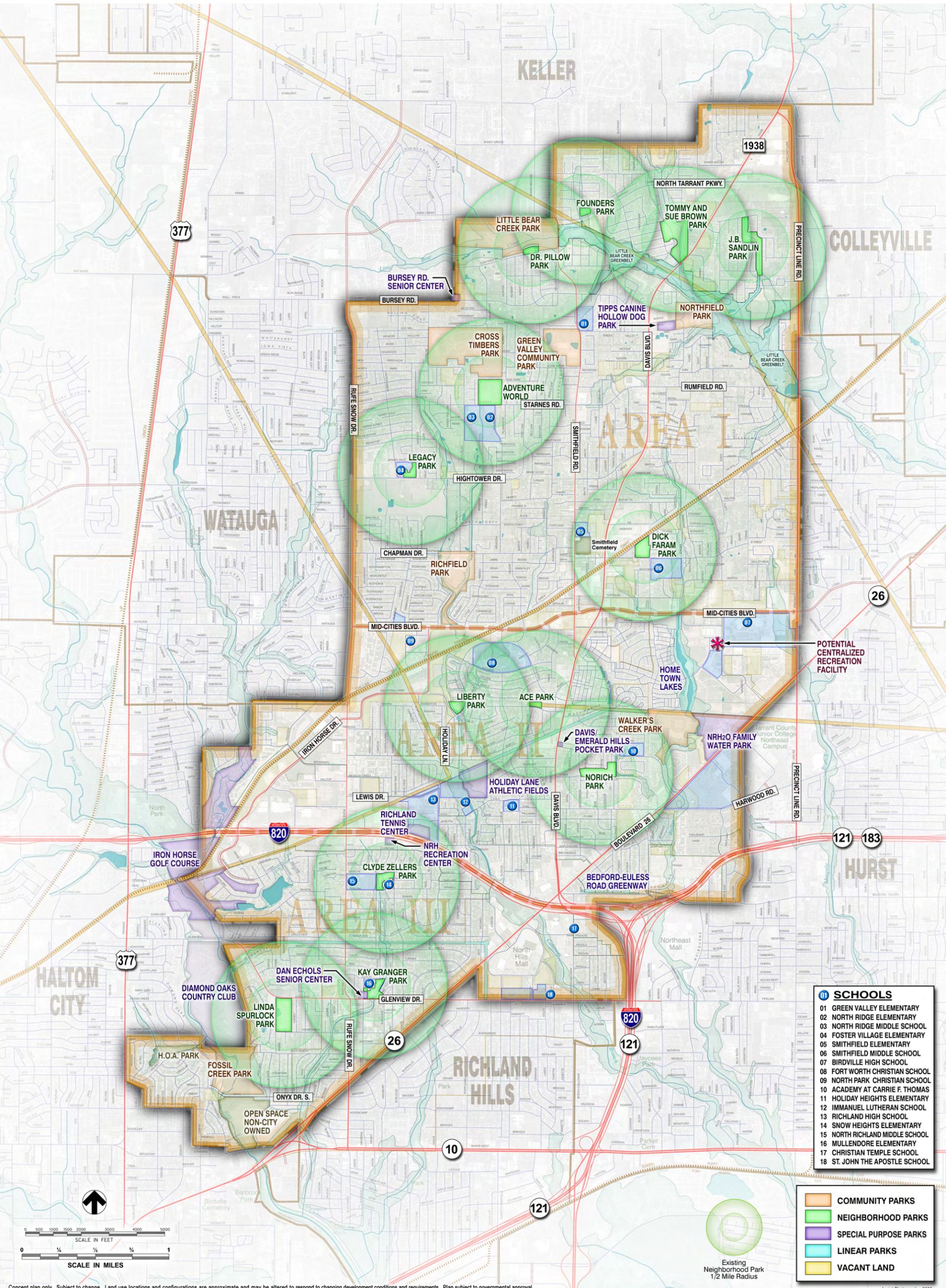
Cities that marshal the will and act quickly to conserve natural resources, demonstrate foresight and resolve necessary, so that future generations may enjoy something of beauty and timelessness.

As unprogrammed space, there is the added benefit of these areas as “self-maintaining”. There may be occasional need to check for hazards, but maintenance is generally not a significant factor. Presently, the acreage associated with nature preserves and open space in North Richland Hills constitutes over 25% of the total parks system.

*The maps of “Close to Home” parks, **Existing Neighborhood Parks**, and **Existing Community Parks** on the next two pages shows the parks types location and distribution, indicating the City-wide coverage of parks.*

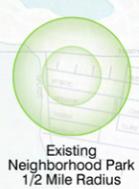
*The map, **Existing Neighborhood Parks** shows the existing neighborhood parks with their ¼ to ½ mile service radii, and the resulting City coverage. The service radius of ½ mile is the standard used to determine geographic coverage.*

*The map **Existing Community Parks** shows the existing Community Parks with their 1 mile service radii, and the resulting City coverage.*



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 GREEN VALLEY ELEMENTARY
 - 02 NORTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY
 - 03 NORTH RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 04 FOSTER VILLAGE ELEMENTARY
 - 05 SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY
 - 06 SMITHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
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 - 17 CHRISTIAN TEMPLE SCHOOL
 - 18 ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS
- LINEAR PARKS
- VACANT LAND

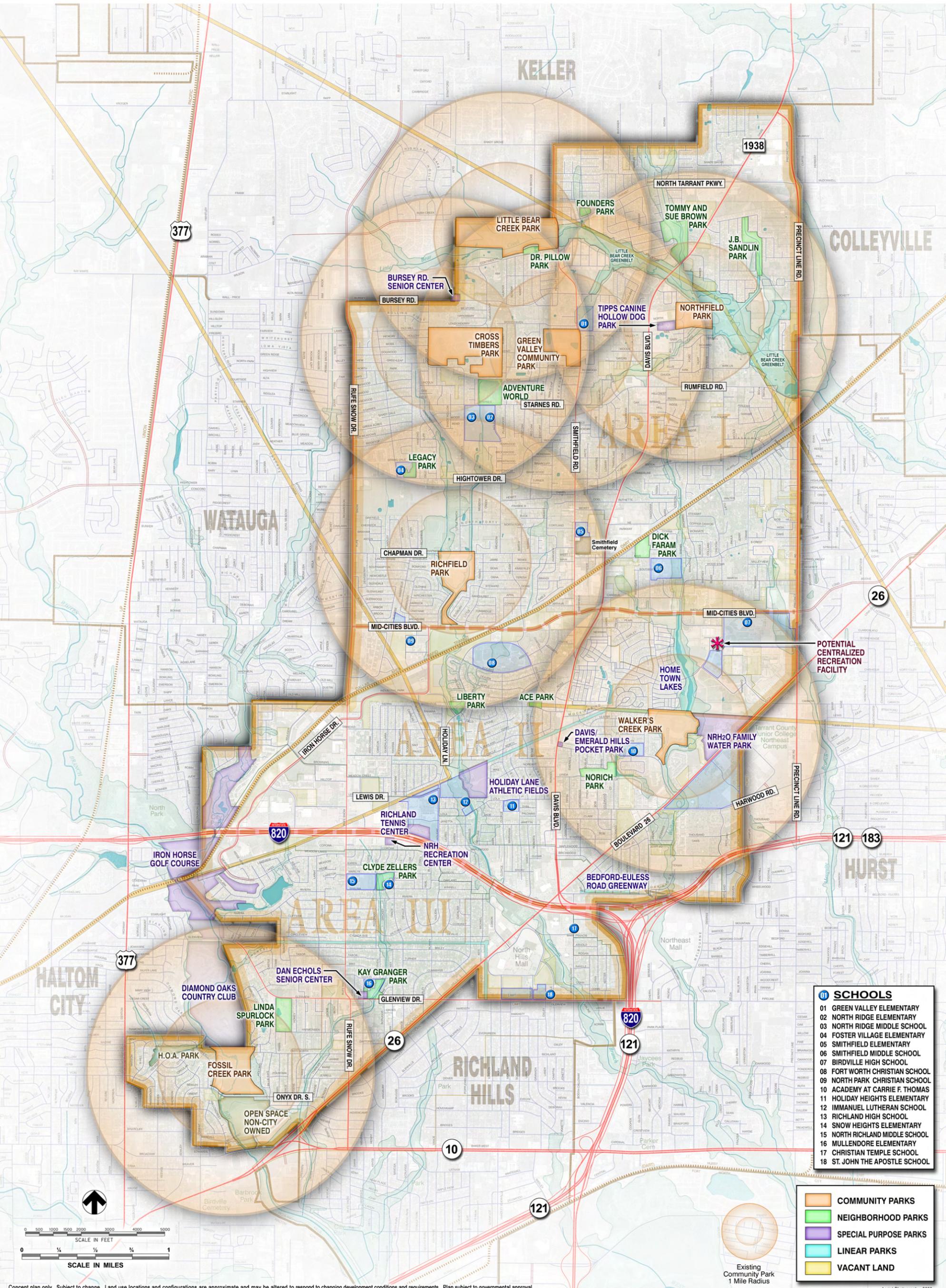


Concept plan only. Subject to change. Land use locations and configurations are approximate and may be altered to respond to changing development conditions and requirements. Plan subject to governmental approval.

September 12, 2007

EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 GREEN VALLEY ELEMENTARY
 - 02 NORTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY
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EXISTING COMMUNITY PARKS

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS



ES - 4. Park System Goals

Goals are established so as to serve as a policy and philosophical framework for the Parks Master Plan. They serve to guide park planning in the city even as councils and staff change over the years.

The goals for the 2007 North Richland Hills Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan focus on:

- Providing a variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the ultimate recreational needs and desires of the City of North Richland Hills' growing population.
- Creating a park system that will improve the physical form and appearance of the City of North Richland Hills.
- Preserving and enhancing North Richland Hills' open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources, especially areas with topography change and/or indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding.
- Providing an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, open spaces and cultural landscapes.
- Providing a tool to coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.
- Continuing to maintain all of the North Richland Hills parks and recreational facilities in a superior and sustainable condition.
- Developing other funding mechanisms to help supplement the city's limited funding resources.
- Including a citizen participation process in all ongoing park planning and design, as well as updating of the Parks Master Plan.
- Conducting periodic citizen surveys to monitor changes in the citizen's attitude and needs.



ES - 5. Public Input

The recommendations of the 2007 North Richland Hills Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan are designed to reflect the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of North Richland Hills. Six methods were used to gain citizen input:

1. An extensive and scientifically accurate city-wide **attitude (telephone) survey**;
2. A focus group presentation, meeting and questionnaire with the North Richland Hills **Youth Advisory Committee**;
3. Three **public meetings** with presentations and questionnaires for the attendees, including the North Richland Hills Park and Recreation Board;
4. A questionnaire distributed separately at the NRH **Recreation Center**;
5. **BISD student questionnaires** distributed to seven local schools, with fourth, seventh and tenth grade respondents, and
6. Letters of invitation to local **sports leagues and organizations**, requesting specific current and future needs data.

Within each survey and questionnaire group, there are strong areas of concentrated facility interest, as distinguished from the facility choice agreement across all groups. As a city moves toward satisfying majority interests, it is also useful to track the interests of groups that are active and whose particular interests are represented in the attitude survey and in each of the questionnaire groups.

i)

Telephone Attitude Survey Group

In the telephone Attitude Survey, 400 respondents rated 29 facility choices as to which they considered the single most important one to construct. At the top of the list was **Hike and Bike/Jogging Trails**. The **Modern Senior Center** ranked second of all the facility choices for this group. Ranking third was **Amphitheater** and fourth overall for this group was **Indoor Soccer and Athletic Training Center**. Ranking sixth overall is



City of Choice

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the **Environmental Education Center**. Seventh overall and sharing equal rank are **Baseball**, **Botanical Garden**, **Large Pavilion** and **Skateboard Park**. These facility choices are ranked out of the total twenty-nine choices given in the survey. Note that the Recreation Center facility was not an option in the Attitude Survey.

ii)

Combined Public Meetings

Unlike the other groups surveyed, respondents to the questionnaire at the public meetings were shown a general overview pertaining to parks and recreation. A relatively small group of seventeen (17) respondents to questionnaires in three public meetings gave their input. Of the thirty-three (33) facility choices given, respondents cited the single facility "most important to construct", with highest support for **Recreation Center** and **Senior Center** at equal support, followed by **Amphitheater**, **Bird Watching Facility**, **Nature Areas** and **Tennis Courts**.

iii)

NRH Recreation Center Questionnaire Respondent Group

Recreation Center ranked first overall as the facility most important to construct, garnering a higher percentage of support than other groups' first picks. Second highest in rank was **Hike and Bike/ Jogging Trails**, followed by the third highest choice of **Water Spray Park**. Fourth highest rank is shared three ways by **Adult Softball Fields**, **Indoor Aquatic Facility** and **Performance Art and Cultural Center**. Rounding out the field of choices and sharing equal rank are **Nature Areas**, **Playgrounds**, **Senior Center**, **Skateboard Park**, **Soccer Fields** and **Wildflower Plantings**.

iv)

BISD Students

Of the thirty-two facilities given as choices in the student questionnaire, their results rank **Outdoor Pool** as their overall first choice of most important facility to construct. Second in rank, **Dog Park** was also strongly supported. Third in rank for this group was **Skateboard Park**, followed by **Football Fields** ranking fourth overall. **Outdoor Basketball Courts**, fifth overall was followed by **BMX Mountain Bike Course** as sixth overall of single most important facility to construct. Seventh highest rank for this group includes three facilities sharing equal support: **Nature Areas**, **Recreation Center** and **Soccer Fields** shows high support of the total 32 facility choices. Eighth in rank overall again shared support among multiple facilities: **Baseball Fields**, **Hike and Bike/Jogging Trails** and **Sand Volleyball Courts**. The above twelve facilities of the total 32 possibilities are selected by this group as most important to construct.

v)

Youth Advisory Committee

Note that while the Youth Advisory Committee filled in questionnaires, they were not asked to choose 'the single most important facility to construct'.

vi)

Sports Leagues Input

Various sports leagues in North Richland Hills provided up-to-date information as to their needs and projected growth.



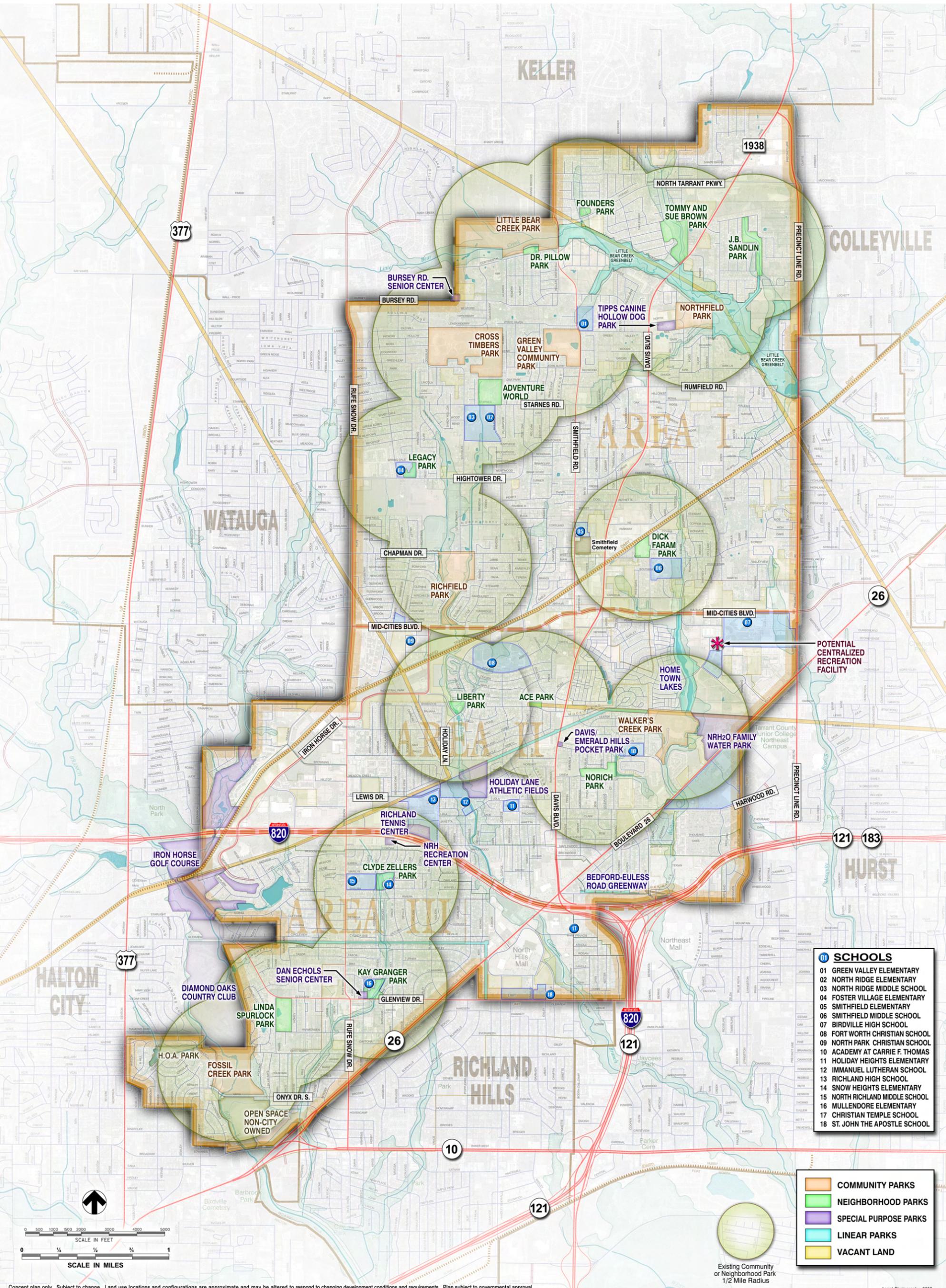
ES - 6. Needs Assessment

6.1 Need for Park Acreage

The map, Existing Park Service to Neighborhoods illustrates the citywide coverage of all "Close to Home" parks. Both Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks are shown with the ¼ mile and ½ mile service radii of a typical Neighborhood Park. The reason that Community Parks are included in this coverage analysis is that they typically contain the elements of a Neighborhood Park and thus function as *de facto* Neighborhood Parks. By inclusion of both park types in this study, the maximal coverage of existing "Close to Home" parks is depicted. Other types of parks such as Special Purpose or Linear Parks typically are not included in such a service coverage analysis. The reason for this is that each is unique and may only be found where a particular function or resource opportunity exists.

The overall goal is to provide walking distance (¼ to ½ mile) service to all residents, throughout the City of North Richland Hills. The areas covered with the service radii are well served, whereas the areas that are exposed, indicate the highest need for neighborhood type recreational facilities and parks.

*The map **Existing Park Service to Neighborhoods** on the next page indicates the City-wide coverage of "Close to Home" parks, and the resultant areas of park service need or "void" in service coverage.*



- 01 SCHOOLS**
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- COMMUNITY PARKS
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Existing Community or Neighborhood Park
1/2 Mile Radius

Concept plan only. Subject to change. Land use locations and configurations are approximate and may be altered to respond to changing development conditions and requirements. Plan subject to governmental approval.

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EXISTING PARK SERVICE TO NEIGHBORHOODS

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS

6.2**Target Standards for North Richland Hills**

The purpose of spatial standards for parks and recreational areas is to ensure that sufficient area is allocated to allow for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. Target Standards in terms of acres per 1,000 population vary by park classification and by city. These standards are useful in as much as they are tailored to meet a particular city's needs and goals, as well as generally serving to provide an overall reference for comparison to what other cities provide for their citizens. At present, the existing acreage for parks and open space in North Richland Hills is 835 acres.

The Parks Master Plan establishes the following standards for park acreage as a ratio of acres to population, in Figure ES 1:

Table ES 1
NRH 2007 Park Acreage Target Standards for North Richland Hills

"Close to Home" Parks

- **Neighborhood Parks:** Target Standard: 2 acres per 1,000 population
- **Community Parks:** Target Standard: 4 - 5 acres per 1,000 population

Total Recommended "Close to Home" Parks Standards 6 – 7 acres per 1,000 population.

Other City-wide Parks

- **Special Purpose Parks:** Target Standard: 3 acres per 1,000 population
- **Linear Parks:** Target Standard: 0.5 - 2 acres per 1,000 population
- **Natural Areas/
Open Space:** Target Standard: 2.5 - 3.5 acres per 1,000 population
- **Regional Parks:** No standard established

Total Recommended Standards for Other Parks: 6 – 8.5 acres per 1,000 population.

The City-wide recommended 2007 NRH target standard for park land acreage is 12–15.5 acres per 1,000 population. The park land standards established in 2000 for the City of North Richland Hills provided the range of 12 – 20 acres per 1,000 population. The standard range recommended in the 2007 Parks Master Plan fits within this range, accepting the lower end of 12 while recommending a more reasonable 15.5 acre standard as the maximum. The resultant standard based target goal comes to between 888 and 1,147 acres at build out condition.

6.3

Park Facility Standards and Needs

The City of North Richland Hills expects modest but consistent growth over the coming years. This is a welcome and positive factor for the City, and this growth is recognized as the impetus for growing the parks and recreation facilities to adequately serve the citizens’ needs in future years. Based on public input and recreational facilities standards, a number of goals are recommended to meet the recreational needs for the next five years.

The standard based recreation facilities (not prioritized) to construct in the next 5 years are presented in Table ES 2.

Table ES 2 Standard Based Recreation Facilities Needs (not prioritized)		
Recreation Facility	Suggested Implementation	Total Number of Facilities
Major Athletic		
▪ Baseball fields	1 field every second year	3 fields
▪ Softball fields (adult & youth)	1 field every second year	3 fields
▪ Backstops	1 backstop per year	4 backstops
▪ Soccer Fields (competitive)	1 field every second year	3 fields
▪ Multi-purpose Practice Fields (S&F)	1 field per year	4 fields
Other Athletic		
▪ Volleyball Court	1 court in the next 5 years	1
Non-athletic		
▪ Playground Units	3 units per year	14 units
▪ Swimming Pools / Aquatic Centers	1 pool in the next 5 years	1
▪ Water Spray Parks	1 park every 2 ½ years in the next 5 years	2
▪ Skate Board Parks	1 park	1
▪ Dog Parks	1 park in the next 5 years	1
Support Facilities		
▪ Pavilions / Picnic Shelters	4 structures per year	19 structures

6.4
Resource Based Needs

The protection, recreational use and enjoyment of a city’s natural resources are an important component of any parks master plan. The City of North Richland Hills has a number of landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreational use and open space preservation. These are the Cross Timbers and Tallgrass Prairie ecological region, creeks and streams, rural landscapes and utility and rail rights-of-way.

One of the most effective ways to ensure the protection and effective management of natural resources and cultural landscapes is through the method of Conservation Planning and Development. It is in essence a tool that ensures the protection of the character of a city, the protection of important ecological habitats, the protection of scenic views and landscapes and the economic sustainability by protecting the assets that add value and quality of life to the community. Conservation Planning and Development is a concept whereby developers are encouraged to implement “open space planning” and “conservation development” whereby large tracts of land are protected by clustering development on smaller parcels of land, with the resultant open space a communal asset to be enjoyed by everyone. Access to the larger open space as an amenity consistently results in higher property values. Such an approach truly speaks for the whole that is more than the sum of the parts.

It should not be overlooked that opportunities for future park land need not reside solely in land deemed desirable due to its inherent natural resources and character. Many great parks have been designed and constructed on land that is unsuited for other functions. An example is Prospect Park in New York City, which is Olmstead and Vaux’s masterpiece, all sited on reclaimed swamp land. In the future, it may prove to be beneficial in identifying other prospective park sites as well, e.g. areas prone to flooding and abandoned/derelict areas.

6.5
City Beautification Needs

The *Needs Assessment* includes holistic consideration of city-wide beautification, particularly along major vehicular arteries, at intersections, and at points that signal the entry to the city. Past city image and beautification studies to this Parks Master Plan, are considered to bring relevant components into focus. Various points from The City Image Study (1999), Citywide Trails System Master Plan (1994), the Loop 820 Corridor Study (July 2005), and the South Grapevine Highway Corridor Strategic Plan (2004) are still relevant and valuable today.

Prime opportunities for the city are identified to realize the concept of ***“City as Park”*** albeit at various levels and in stages. This assessment of beautification identifies opportunities to extend and knit together all parts of the parks system, including the possibility of mass transit - all with the benefit of input from previous plans.

Envisioning “City as Park”

Subsequently, actions related from these opportunities address the interim time frame, and prioritize each item over both the short and long term.

Beautification points fall under three main categories, namely:

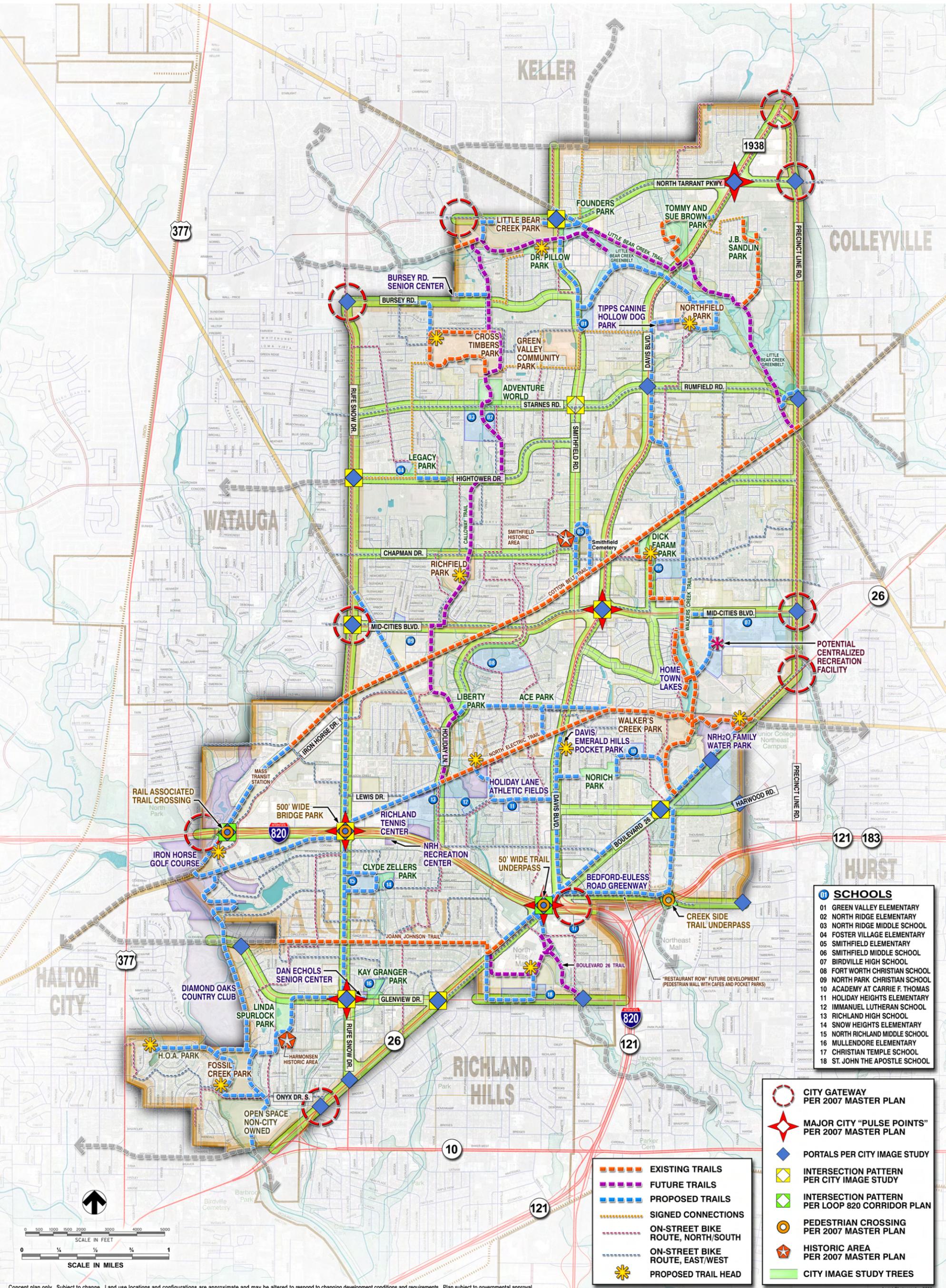
- 1) **Streets as Pedestrian & Multi-modal Parkways**, including traversing Highway 820, pedestrian oriented mixed use development, pocket parks and trees;
- 2) **Gateways as Identity and Orienting Markers**, including celebratory intersections; and
- 3) **Culture and Nature**, including the specifics of public art and city identity, Bedford-Eules Greenway, “Pulse Points” for cultural areas, Harmonson residential area, Smithfield Cemetery and rain water runoff.

Focusing on beautification of the streetscapes of North Richland Hills can have multiple benefits:

- **Citizen pride** – Beautification increases the pride that residents feel for their city.
- **Relocation benefits** – Beautification makes North Richland Hills a more attractive relocation alternative for new families and businesses.
- **Increasing the competitiveness of North Richland Hills** – Beautification makes North Richland Hills more competitive when pursuing major employers and/or individuals in desired fields such as the medical and education professions.
- **Keeping citizens in North Richland Hills** – Beautification helps residents remain in North Richland Hills as an attractive place in which to live and retire.
- **Health benefits** – Beautification when linked to open space and to active recreation facilities such as trails, can promote the health of the residents of North Richland Hills.
- **Beautification increases the value of properties**, thereby leading to increased revenue for the city. It is important to note that everyone who lives in North Richland Hills is the city, so increased tax revenue can result in lower tax rates and better services.
- **Addressing beautification now rather than later** – Addressing urban beautification should be a continual, ongoing effort - as a matter of policy and pride.

*The map, **Beautification Overlay**, on the next page depicts gateways, orienting intersections and designated street shade tree locations as per previous City Studies.*

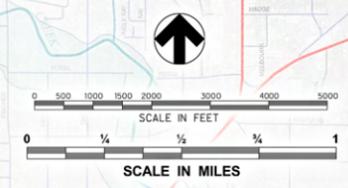
*The map indicates the coincidence of these studies, and the further recommendations pertaining to City gateway locations, pedestrian crossings at Loop 820 and major city “Pulse Point” intersections at particular intersections throughout the City. The combination of all three “layers” in this map highlight the potential for the City of North Richland Hills, through gateways, signage, intersection patterns, street trees and trail crossings to achieve a unique character, culminating in the vision of this Parks Master Plan, **“Envisioning City as Park”**.*



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 GREEN VALLEY ELEMENTARY
 - 02 NORTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY
 - 03 NORTH RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 04 FOSTER VILLAGE ELEMENTARY
 - 05 SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY
 - 06 SMITHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
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 - 08 FORT WORTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
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 - 14 SNOW HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY
 - 15 NORTH RICHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 16 MULLENDORE ELEMENTARY
 - 17 CHRISTIAN TEMPLE SCHOOL
 - 18 ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

- CITY GATEWAY PER 2007 MASTER PLAN
- MAJOR CITY "PULSE POINTS" PER 2007 MASTER PLAN
- PORTALS PER CITY IMAGE STUDY
- INTERSECTION PATTERN PER CITY IMAGE STUDY
- INTERSECTION PATTERN PER LOOP 820 CORRIDOR PLAN
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING PER 2007 MASTER PLAN
- HISTORIC AREA PER 2007 MASTER PLAN
- CITY IMAGE STUDY TREES

- EXISTING TRAILS
- FUTURE TRAILS
- PROPOSED TRAILS
- SIGNED CONNECTIONS
- ON-STREET BIKE ROUTE, NORTH/SOUTH
- ON-STREET BIKE ROUTE, EAST/WEST
- PROPOSED TRAIL HEAD



Concept plan only. Subject to change. Land use locations and configurations are approximate and may be altered to respond to changing development conditions and requirements. Plan subject to governmental approval.

September 12, 2007

BEAUTIFICATION OVERLAY

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS



ES - 7. Recommendations

7.1

A Vision for North Richland Hills

The Parks and Recreation Department of North Richland Hills is whole-heartedly devoted to enhancing the well-being of all of its residents which resonates from its Mission Statement and its dynamic parks and recreation system. The concept of the vision “**City as Park**” fits well with the North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department’s Mission Statement which reads: **“To create an environment where people play; laughter counts; communities grow and learn; and everyone matters”**.

The Mission statement speaks with heart and mindfulness about people. The vision, “**City as Park**”, enthusiastically supports people’s health and well-being first and foremost: a healthy city supports a vibrant relationship between its residents and the environment - the very heart and soul of a city should effuse such harmony in abundance. Nor should it be overlooked that great achievement and learning is supported by a calm, vital and positive environment.

Envisioning “City as Park”

The overarching ideal of “**City as Park**” is a break from the stereotypical notion of parks as occasional, singular elements in the city, serving to alleviate the dreariness of urban existence. “**City as Park**” speaks to the entire city as fabric in which every element is significant in the way that each contributes to the identity, travel experience and sense of destination throughout North Richland Hills. The quality of this environment is measured by how people experience their city on a daily basis. “**City as Park**” suggests that parks, trails, the streets that connect them – all become park-like boulevards or green connecting linkages, which encourage multi-modal travel, while focusing on and enhancing the experience of pedestrians, cyclist, joggers and motorists.

7.2**Achieving Uniqueness**

Ideas fundamental to achieving uniqueness in terms of the vision of “**City as Park**” for the City of North Richland Hills include:

- Protection of the entire 100 year flood plain at fully developed conditions;
- Protection of scenic and rural road corridors; and
- Protection of the rural character of the city.

7.3**City as Park – Choosing Uniqueness and Quality for the City of North Richland Hills**

Through comprehensive public participation, a vision has been established for the City of North Richland Hills’ physical image, parks, open space, and recreation. This Vision expressed as a “**City as Park**” comprises protecting and maintaining the quality of the natural and cultural environment, the acquisition of adequate park land, development of additional trail connections, and the provision of quality recreation facilities. The following describes two essential policies that North Richland Hills requires to make this Vision: “**City as Park**” a reality.

i)**Open Space Protection**

The purpose of the protection of open space is to create a community-wide network of open space and natural preserves to allow for an interconnected network of community green spaces.

It is recommended that the city commits to the following:

- Pre-identify and preserve a community-wide network of protected open space or “linked landscapes”.
- Revise the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to make provision for the implementation of the protection of a network of protected open space.

- Prepare a resource inventory (Resource Map) of the following principal resources:

**Table ES 3
Resource Inventory**

1. Wetlands and their Buffers	7. Representative stands of Tallgrass Prairie
2. Floodplains	8. Significant Wildlife Habitat
3. Moderate and Steep Slopes	9. Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Features
4. Groundwater Resources Recharge Areas	10. Cultural Landscapes
5. Woodlands	11. Scenic Features
6. Representative stands of Cross Timbers	12. Viewsheds from Public Roads

ii)

Park Land Dedication

It is recommended that the Park Land Dedication Ordinance be evaluated and updated in light of the city's current development trend.

Basic principles

- Set aside all land and site features as identified in the Resource Map (see Open Space Protection above) and ensure their protection and maintenance by the Home Owners Associations or through the involvement of a variety of Conservation Trusts in Texas that have as their aim the conservation of open space (see www.texaslandtrusts.org).
- Provide unimpeded public access to these identified and protected site features through a combination of trails, single loaded roads, and dedicated easements.
- Update and/or develop park dedication and park improvement fees to keep trend with the manner in which other cities are securing park acreage and development in the metroplex.
- Ensure dedication for Rough Proportionality.
- Open space, parks and recreational areas required by the park dedication ordinance should NOT be restricted to the private use and enjoyment of the citizens of the particular development or subdivision.
- Drainage areas and easements should NOT be accepted as land dedicated for parks but should be made available for park and trail use where needed.
- Utility easements should NOT be accepted as land dedicated for parks but should be made available for park and trail use where needed.
- In addition to the requirement that each park must have ready access to a public street, it is required that single loaded roads be established between a subdivision or part thereof and land set aside for park land and/or open space protected areas.

7.4

Park System Recommendations

7.4.1

Land Acquisition

i)

Growth Need and Opportunity

Neighborhood Parks form the backbone of the parks system. Community Parks, which generally include features found in Neighborhood Parks, function as *de facto* Neighborhood Parks. The goal of the 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to optimize and maximize parks service throughout the City of North Richland Hills. To that end, the maximal coverage and benefit to neighborhoods will be achieved by the presence of additional Neighborhood and/or Community Parks.

*The map, **Growth Need and Opportunity**, on the next page depicts recommendations regarding land acquisition to meet the need for park service in terms of geographic coverage.*

The first component of the map, "Growth Need and Opportunity", shows the existing service coverage to neighborhoods with the ½ mile service radii of all existing Neighborhood and Community Parks. This coverage area depicts the neighborhoods whose park and recreation needs are met with existing City facilities.

The second component of this map shows the areas of park and recreation need, which are neighborhoods not covered with the existing service coverage radii and lacking parks and recreation facilities. These areas of parks and recreation need which will benefit from a "Close to Home" park or recreational facility are identified and numbered '1' to '8'.

The third component of this map shows areas of limited park and recreation need. There are three such areas shown, one at the northeast corner of the City, where the need is limited by the surrounding commercial/business development and city boundaries, reducing the residential area to be served; the second is located in the southeast area of the City, between Boulevard 26 and interstate 121. This area similarly has limited need due to the commercial/business development which effectively reduces the neighborhood to be served. The third and final such area of limited need lies south of 820 at the eastern edge of the City. This area has limited need, due to the provision of private facilities which however do not serve the general public. It would help to acquire a trail easement to provide access along the HOA lake edge(s) and the golf course, which would allow the citizens of North Richland Hills to experience and celebrate these amenities.



City of Choice

Envisioning "City as Park"

ii)

Recommended Land Acquisition per City Area

The eight areas which present the greatest opportunities for parks and recreation service are as follows:

City Area I

In the City Area I, the Park Area 1 suggests the acquisition of 5 to 10 acres for a Neighborhood Park to serve that particular residential area. Park Area 2 suggests the acquisition of 5 to 10 acres for a Neighborhood Park to serve its specific residential area. Park Area 3 suggests the acquisition of 5 to 10 acres for a Neighborhood Park to serve the residential neighborhood encompassed by its service radius.

City Area II

In the City Area II, Park Area 4 suggests the provision of Neighborhood type recreation facilities at the City's future centralized recreation center. Park Area 5 suggests the acquisition of 15 acres for a Community Park, including neighborhood park recreation facilities. Park Area 6 suggests the acquisition of 20 to 30 acres for a Community Park, including neighborhood park recreation facilities. Park Area 7 suggests the acquisition of 5 acres for a Neighborhood Park.

City Area III

In the City Area III, Park Area 8 suggests the acquisition of 5 to 10 acres for a Neighborhood Park

iii)

Citywide Total Recommended Acquisition

The total acreage for the above named areas of park and recreation need is between 60 to 95 acres.

Even though North Richland Hills is fairly well developed, it is still possible to find land that may become available for park land. Such land is typically to be found in what the Planning Department classifies as "vacant land". Future land acquisition opportunities may present themselves as and when re-development of existing developed areas take place in the future, though no such opportunity is guaranteed.

7.4.2

Park Development

i)

Park Development per City Area

The following section describes general, as well as specific, recommendations for park development in North Richland Hills for Areas I, II and III, based on the recommendation to increase Neighborhood Parks service where they are lacking:

City Area I

Three park areas, numbered 1, 2 and 3 are recommended for City Area I. These areas are located in residential neighborhoods which are underserved by the present park system in terms of neighborhood type recreational facilities.

City Area II

Four park areas are identified and recommended in City Area II:

Neighborhood type, outdoor recreation facilities are recommended in Park Area 4 to be included as part of the future, centralized recreation center.

A Community Park, possibly also serving as a site for a future Senior Center combined with outdoor Neighborhood Park facilities are recommended for Park Area 5.

A Community Park is recommended in Park Area 6. Being mostly industrial, the area is ideal for lighted recreational facilities with no impact on residential areas. An outdoor amphitheater is also considered for this area. Located by a potential future transit line and station, a park in this area furthermore is ideal from an accessibility point of view.

In Park Area 7, a park with Neighborhood type recreation facilities is recommended to be provided in this area.

City Area III

In City Area III, Park Area 8 comprises existing new developments in terms of a medical district and multi-use development surrounding a water feature. Dense multi-use development will require relief through parks and trails facilities as recommended for this area. The medical aspect of this area calls for a healing garden type park facility where patients, care givers as well as others in the community will benefit from relaxing landscapes and features.

ii) Key Design Considerations

A summary of the key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the city are as follows:

- Each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of North Richland Hills 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 type should be multi-faceted and include features to meet the needs of various age groups including a wide range of levels of ability and disability.
- Parks should incorporate art and should be an example of the sophistication of the North Richland Hills of today and tomorrow.
- A single-loaded road adjacent to all parks should be demanded in order to protect open space for purposes of informal surveillance and prevent crime in areas that may pose danger for park and open space users.

Envisioning "City as Park"

- A transparent metal rod or wrought iron fence or other approved consistent site delineation device between all residential lots and parks and/or open space should be incorporated where a single loaded road is not possible.
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park. Playgrounds should be covered where feasible.
- All pavilion structures should consist of a double tiered roof system to prevent heated air from being trapped under the roof.
- Implement storm water bio-swales or other methods to increase infiltration and bio-filtration of run-off water before the excess water leaves the site.
- Community input and partnerships should be encouraged in the design, implementation and care of every park in the city.
- Continue to provide park lights on photocells as required as an energy saving measure.
- Promote sustainable development practices.
- Encourage Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This is the proper design and effective use of the built environment which may lead to a reduction of incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life.

iii)**Use of Native Plants**

One of the best ways for any community to express its regional uniqueness, is to use plants native to the area. It is, after all, the natural surroundings, including native plants that determine the unique and special quality of a place. Recognized by many, this has lead to the increased use of shade trees that are native to a specific area.

It is recommended that the City of North Richland Hills makes a commitment to the exclusive use of Texas small trees.

For the same reason it is recommended that North Richland Hills not overuse Crape Myrtles in its public spaces. Many communities plant the Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) for the very fact that it is drought tolerant. However, it is necessary to recognize that the crape myrtle ornamental tree is an exotic plant that is native to the southeast Asia.

The very fact of this being a practical, drought tolerant small tree with many blossoms and colorful bark, has caused this tree to be overused extensively as the ornamental tree of choice from the western states of Florida and the Carolinas, across the country to California, making the planted landscapes of this immense area uniform and somewhat boring. In fact, it may be argued that this is one of many contributing factors that have affected the uniqueness of communities.

For purposes of retaining and maintaining its unique North Central Texas character, it is recommended that the City of North Richland Hills continues to make a concerted effort to promote the use of native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses for both public and private use.

iv)
Considering LEED for Park and Facility Development

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED, is a national rating system for the design, construction and operation of buildings and sites. The system evaluates performance in five areas: sustainable site development, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Aspects that lend positive, measurable results include: on-site storm water management and permeable paving to not increase run-off which contributes to flooding; native plantings to reduce erosion, water consumption and irrigation dependency; organic maintenance programs to reduce chemicals and pesticides that infiltrate ground water and city utility and treatment systems; photocell systems for lighting to reduce energy costs; selection of sustainable materials (recycled and rapidly renewable resources) to use resources to maximum effect. Such results not only produce benefits for the environment, but for the owner and users as well.

7.4.3
Development of Recreation Facilities

The Citizen Attitude Survey identified needs for very specific recreation facilities. The key facility needs in North Richland Hills, based on facility standards and citizen input combined are:

Table ES 4
2007 Key Facility Needs based on facility standards and citizen input

- 1 Trails
- 2 Recreation Center
- 3 Natural Areas/Open Space
- 4 Amphitheater
- 5 Modern Senior Center Facilities
- 6 Skateboard Park
- 7 Botanic Garden

7.4.4**High Priority Existing Park Improvement****i)****Individual Parks**

Recommendations are made for each park in the City's park system. These are general master plan level recommendations, and are intended only to define the magnitude of the improvements for each park. Each park should be programmed and master planned as it enters the design phase, and extensive area citizen and user group input should be included in the design process. Specific facility improvements per individual park are recommended in Chapter 3.

ii)**City-Wide**

The following city-wide key improvements to existing parks are recommended during the next 10-year period.

Renovation of Existing Parks

- Ensure that all improvements meet ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements.
- Increase shade in all parks by planting additional 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.
- Provide educational opportunities.

Park Signage

- Develop a branding concept for the City's signage, to be applied consistently at all the existing and future parks; a well-conceived and designed signage theme will add to the unique identity and character of the City of North Richland Hills.
- Based on the branding concept, develop and install identification, informational, interpretative, directional, and founder recognition signage at all city parks.
- Install additional directional signage throughout the city.

Park Maintenance

It is recommended that the Parks Department play an active role in implementing a holistic plant management program throughout the parks and grounds. Implement appropriate practices to promote a healthy soil micro-fauna and root system of all plants. Emphasize native and naturalized plants that are better adapted to the North Richland Hills and North Central Texas region.

Wi-Fi Access

Access to the Internet in parks is popular in many cities. Consider providing Wi-Fi access in community parks.

Envisioning “City as Park”

Wi-Fi is short for *wireless fidelity*, which allows the user to connect to the Internet without the need for hard-wire cabling. 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

The purpose of the “Art in Public Spaces” program is to integrate art into the daily lives of the community through a diverse program that beautifies public spaces, improves quality of life and creates a distinctive identity for North Richland Hills. It is recommended that the city continue with their commendable effort to provide art in public places in the city.

Continuing measures currently in place include:

- Pursue a “Percentage for Art Program”, where a portion of the funding for all public projects is dedicated to outdoor art.
- Fund every major park construction project for art. At a minimum, fund at least one installation every 2 to 3 years.
- Place at prominent locations, and pursue joint placements with other entities such as local schools.

7.4.5

City-Wide Trail Connections

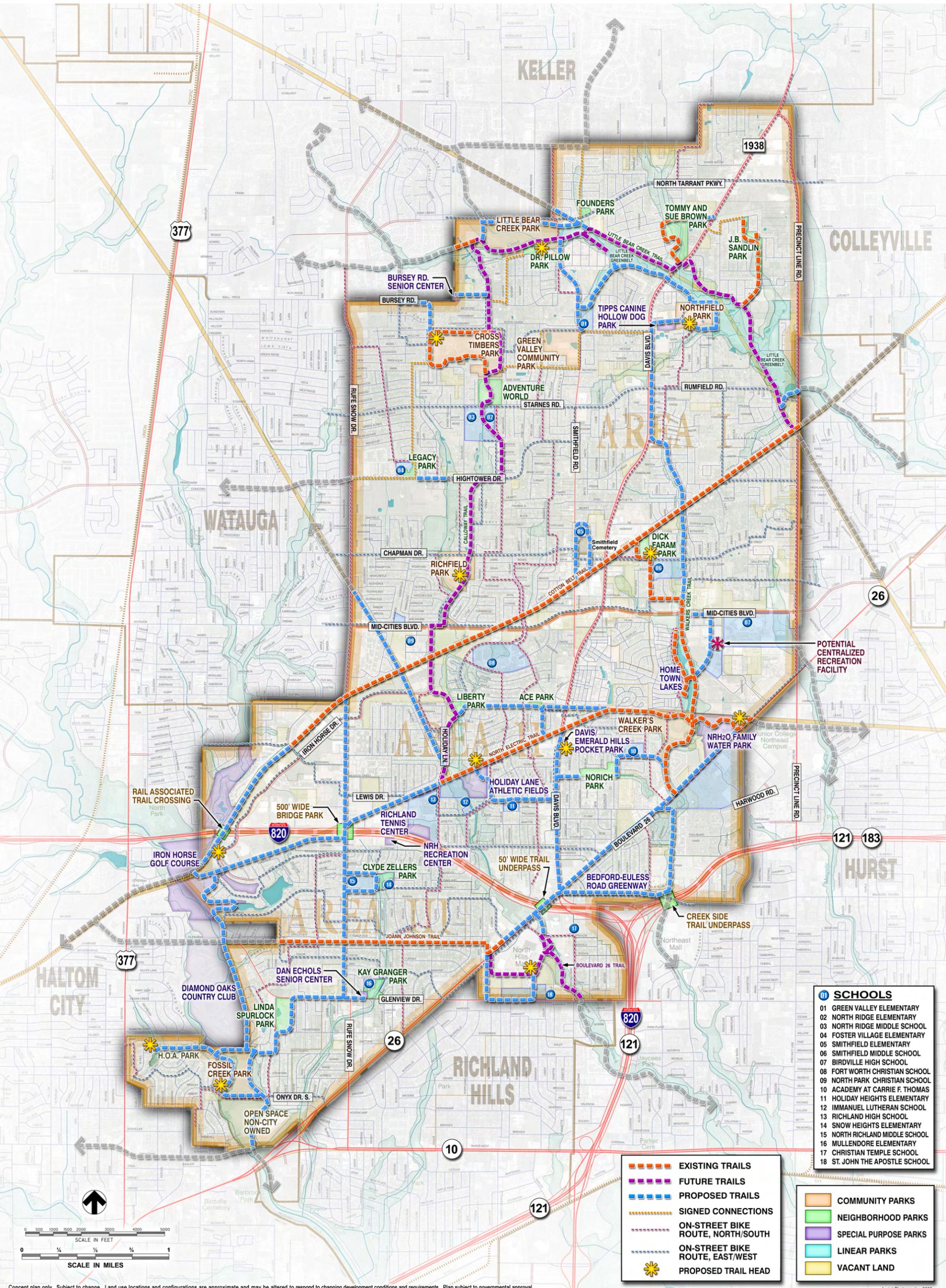
Based on an the assessment of park and recreation needs, the 2007 Parks Master Plan addresses opportunities for future trail connections and trail heads. The purpose of a City-wide trail system is to connect to parks, recreation facilities and cultural destinations throughout the City, to connect to trails in adjacent cities and to provide alternate modes of transportation, connecting neighborhoods, schools, community centers for users of all ages. The 1994 City-wide Trails System Master Plan is very affective in achieving this. However, the popularity of trail usage and the projected population growth for build-out points to a future additional need for connectivity to meet increased demand.

*The map **Trails Master Plan** on page the next page shows the City-wide network of the existing, future and proposed trails and their connectivity to the parks and recreation system of North Richland Hills.*

7.4.6

Parks Department Operations and Maintenance

With the recommendations for additional parks, open space, and trails, additional manpower would be needed for the required maintenance of these various projects. The number of additional staff to attend to these proposed facilities will vary depending on the use of these facilities. However, positive support and the provision of adequate staffing must be included as each facility is developed, or the facility should not be built.



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September 18, 2007

TRAILS MASTER PLAN

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS

- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 GREEN VALLEY ELEMENTARY
 - 02 NORTH RIDGE ELEMENTARY
 - 03 NORTH RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 04 FOSTER VILLAGE ELEMENTARY
 - 05 SMITHFIELD ELEMENTARY
 - 06 SMITHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
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 - 15 NORTH RICHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 16 MULLENDORE ELEMENTARY
 - 17 CHRISTIAN TEMPLE SCHOOL
 - 18 ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

- COMMUNITY PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS
- LINEAR PARKS
- VACANT LAND

- EXISTING TRAILS
- FUTURE TRAILS
- PROPOSED TRAILS
- SIGNED CONNECTIONS
- ON-STREET BIKE ROUTE, NORTH/SOUTH
- ON-STREET BIKE ROUTE, EAST/WEST
- PROPOSED TRAIL HEAD

Envisioning “City as Park”

The city’s needs pertaining to parks and recreation facilities operations and maintenance are addressed in terms of:

- Potential changes to operations and maintenance techniques, equipment and strategies;
- The city’s parks and operations maintenance facility; and
- Sustainable parks operations and maintenance.

i)

Operations and Maintenance Programs and Facility

Continue to ensure future effectiveness and efficiency of the city’s parks operations and maintenance programs. Implement an adequate central maintenance facility.

ii)

Sustainable Parks Operations and Maintenance

1. The city should develop a plan to implement native plant material with low water requirement in all landscape situations where possible.
2. The city should implement an annual tree planting program in all parks to provide for additional shade, to phase the cost for these trees, and to ensure healthy grouping of old and young trees together.
3. The city should establish a tree farm for the propagation of trees native to North Central Texas. These trees are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and will result in superior tree cover, shade, and drought tolerance.
4. The city should implement the practice of producing compost whereby tree and plant clippings are chipped and mulched for re-use as compost on all city property. The purpose is to implement an integrated and organic maintenance approach for the entire city that minimizes reliance on chemicals and pesticides.
5. The city should invest in a city-wide irrigation system that is a computerized central control system radio linked for the efficient management of irrigation, including an automated irrigation added to all athletic practice fields to improve the safety of participants, improve the quality of the turf, and improve the vitality and resilience of the turf.



ES - 8. Implementation

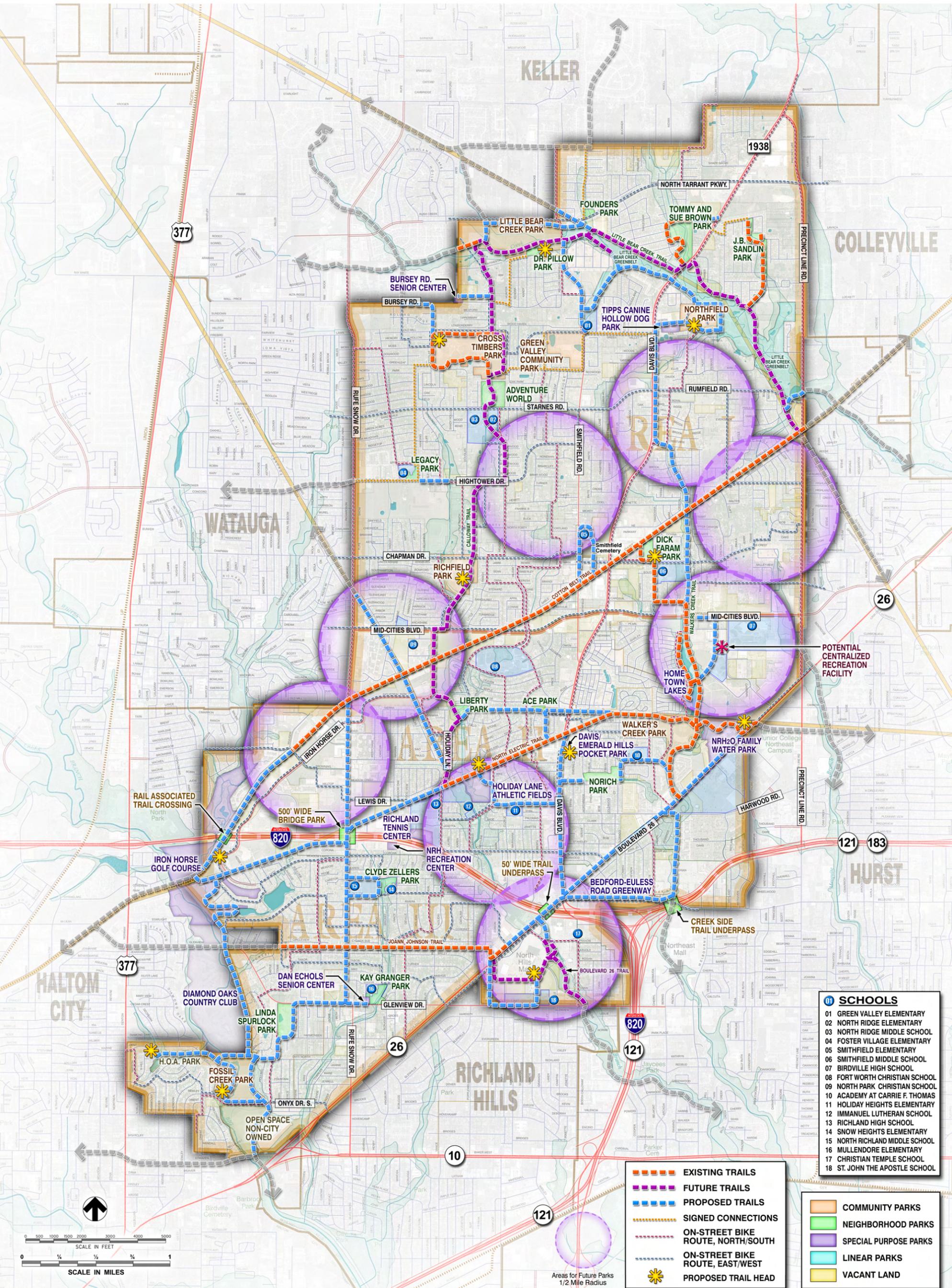
8.1 Introduction

As a whole the Parks Master Plan provides a “roadmap” to fulfill the vision, **“City as Park”**. This chapter, one of the most crucial to make this vision a reality, prioritizes the recommendations outlined in Chapter 7 and discusses potential sources of funding for the implementation of these recommendations.

The map, “Parks and Trails Master Plan” on the next page illustrates the existing and proposed parks and trails for the City of North Richland Hills.

The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in North Richland Hills are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input on a city-wide basis (demand based need);
- Level of need based on standards assessments (standard based need);
- Opportunities for recreation facilities and parks based on existing physical conditions in North Richland Hills (resource based need); and
- Based on experience of consulting in the parks and recreation field.



Concept plan only. Subject to change. Land use locations and configurations are approximate and may be altered to respond to changing development conditions and requirements. Plan subject to governmental approval.

September 18, 2007

PARKS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS

8.2***Priorities Based on Public Input, Continuing Goals and Needs, and Facility Standards***

Tables ES-5 shows the parks and recreation top priorities for facilities funding. Ten recommended projects are identified as priorities for development. Seven other projects are identified as recommended priorities for renovation and improvement projects.

Table ES-6 lists unprioritized, general recommendations for all parks, relative to their Programmed Space/ Support facilities, the Natural Areas/ Open Space, and Sustainable Opportunities.

See **Table ES-5 Parks and Recreation Priorities Based on Public Input, Continuing Goals and Needs, and Facility Standards**, on the next page.

See also **Table ES-6 General Recommendations for All Parks**.

8.3***2007-2017 Action Plan***

A large amount of funding is required to accomplish the recommendations of the 2007 Parks Master Plan, but with vision, commitment, and a concerted effort to secure funding from available sources, many of the recommendations can be accomplished.

The very purpose of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to guide future development and provide the City of North Richland Hills with a tool to motivate the citizens of North Richland Hills to support, participate, and collaborate with park development, recreation programs and achieving the vision of "**City as Park**".

8.4***Funding Strategies***

Different parks and pathways/trails will require different funding strategies. While improvements to existing parks and most sidewalks can be built with local funds, other parks, open space, and trail projects may be able to contend for state or federal funds, although the level of these funding sources has decreased significantly in recent years.

8.4.1***City Generated Funding Sources***

1. General Fund Expenditures
2. Bond Funds
3. Electric Utility Partnerships
4. Electric Utility Bill Contributions
5. Half Cent Sales Tax Funds
6. Park Donations Funds



**Table ES - 5 Parks and Recreation Priorities based on Public Input,
Continuing Goals and Needs, and Facility Standards**

Development of Recreational and Parks Facilities	Park Renovation and Improvement
1. Completion of Trails System Master Plan	1. Northfield Park Redevelopment
2. Modern Recreation Center	2. Norich Park Phase II
3. Development of a Neighborhood Park in the Central West Area	3. Cross Timbers Park Phase II
4. Walker's Creek Park Phase II <i>(Adult Softball Fields)</i>	4. Natural Areas/ Open Space <i>(Programming to include Interpretative Signage and Protection)</i>
5. Southside Multipurpose Community Center	5. Trail Heads and Gateways
6. Modern Senior Center Facilities <i>(TBD by future feasibility study on senior services.)</i>	6. Fossil Creek Park Improvements
7. Amphitheater	7. Richfield Park Infrastructure improvements
8. Skateboard Park	
9. Development of a Neighborhood Park in the Central East Area	
10. Botanic Garden	

Programmed Space/ Support Facilities (Unprioritized)

- Incorporate shade structures to provide sun protection at children's play areas.
- Provide multi-tier roof pavilions for shade and to reduce heat build up.
- Install educational signage relating to culture, history and the natural environment.
- Introduce learning opportunities in partnership with BISD, i.e. environmental education through an outdoor learning center, display gardens, butterfly gardens, etc.
- Provide a unique and defined gateway to each park.
- Develop trail connections per the Trail System Master Plan.
- Develop and implement a focused tree planting program to ensure the timely and conscientious replacement of dying trees in the future.
- Install public art as appropriate to the theme and scale of each park.

Natural Areas/ Open Space (Unprioritized)

- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate.
- Add quality designed informational signage relating to creek ecology, habitat protection, water conservation, wildlife and the value, growth pattern and beauty of native plants.
- Establish native riparian plants along the edge of the drainage easements to create a more natural appearance with trees and grasses to more natural appearance with trees and grasses and to encourage the introduction of water associated biota including amphibians and fish.
- Introduce soft surface trails along creeks for nature exploration.

Sustainable Opportunities (Unprioritized)

- For landscape improvements, place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Decrease areas that need mowing and irrigation, which are typically energy intensive.
- Consider an integrated maintenance approach that minimizes reliance on chemicals and pesticides.
- Consider bio-filtration swales adjacent to parking areas to assist with the removal of pollutants that derive from vehicles before the run-off water reaches the storm water system and/or the City's creek system.
- Consider installing permeable paving surface "green pavers" for parking areas to reduce water run-off that contributes to flooding.
- Consider alternate understorey groundcover such as the shade loving native grass inland sea oats, (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), to abate sheet erosion.
- Develop ecological education programs with BISD, relevant to North Richland Hills' parks system, in which the students actively participate.



City of Choice

Envisioning "City as Park"

8.4.2

Governmental Grant Sources

1. TPWD - Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA)
2. Outdoor Recreation Grants
3. Indoor Recreation (Facility) Grants
4. Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) Grants
5. Recreational Trail Grants
6. Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants
7. Regional Park Grants
8. National Park Service (NPS) Programs i
9. Environmental Protection Agency
10. Sustainable Development Funding Program
11. Regional Transportation Council Partnership Program
12. Transportation Enhancement Program funds available
13. H.U.D. and state administered Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

8.4.3

Other Private and Quasi Private Funding Sources

1. Partnering with Developers and Private Land Owners
2. Other Foundation and Company Grants
3. Grants for Greenways
4. An "Adopt-a-Park Program"
5. Sponsorship through Businesses
6. Partnerships with Community/ Interest or Volunteer Groups
7. National Endowment for the Humanities

8.5

Policies and Ordinances

Ordinance Support for Trail System Development

Utilize Park Land Dedication Ordinance to assist in the implementation of a city-wide trail system. Trail corridors can be integrated into developments as the development goes through the platting process. Land for trail corridors can be donated in a fashion similar to the dedication of land for traditional parks, and each adjacent development can be required to construct its portion of the overall trail system, or other trails that connect to the main trail network. Flower Mound and Allen, Texas have trail dedication components built into their Park dedication ordinances that can be used as models.

Park and Recreation Board

City Staff should provide presentations of significant changes in the Parks Master Plan and provide brief summaries of annual updates to the documentation. This will provide the Board with comprehensive information to assist with development decisions.



City of Choice

Envisioning "City as Park"

Joint Planning with the neighboring Cities of Watauga, Keller, Colleyville, Hurst, Richland Hills and Haltom City

Establish joint planning efforts with these neighboring cities to provide additional options to address recreation needs in North Richland Hills.

Joint Planning with Birdville ISD

Establish joint planning review sessions with Birdville ISD to allow for coordination of facilities usage and development.

Joint Planning with Tarrant County

Continue joint planning efforts with Tarrant County to provide additional options to address recreation needs in North Richland Hills.

Other City Plans

The success of the Parks Master Plan implementation goes hand-in-hand with other City plans and ordinances e.g. Comprehensive Plan; Drainage and Flood Management Plan; and Thoroughfare Plan.

8.6

Plan Updates

The 2007 North Richland Hills Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is a guide to be used by the city to develop the existing system for future needs over the next 5 to 10 up to 25 years. There will be changes that occur during the time frame of this plan:

- Population may increase more rapidly than projected;
- The community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations; and
- Development of recommendations will occur.

