

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



## City of Conroe

June 2009

# Acknowledgements

## City Council

Hon. Webb K. Melder, Mayor  
Marsha Porter, Councilwoman - Place 1  
Toby Powell, Councilman - Place 2  
Jim Gentry, Councilman - Place 3  
Jerry Streater, Mayor Pro Tem - Place 4  
Jay Ross Martin, III; Councilman - Place 5

## Parks and Recreation Board

John Burge, Chairman  
C.K. Ray, Vice Chairman  
Susan Law, Board Member  
Alton Mathis, Board Member  
James Stewart, Board Member  
James Canada, Board Member  
Morris Straughan, Board Member

## Parks Master Plan Task Force

John Burge  
Bobby Burns  
Mickey Deison  
Ruby Johnson  
Wayne Mack  
Toby Powell  
Marlen Tejeda  
Mike Riggins

## City of Conroe Staff

Paul Virgadamo, Assistant City Administrator  
Mike Riggins, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Luis Nuñez, City Planner

## Burditt Consultants, LLC



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# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

In order to ensure the City of Conroe is providing the citizens with adequate facilities and programs to meet recreational needs and that of overall quality of life in Conroe, it becomes necessary to periodically update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Efforts to update the plan are aimed at assessing the current recreation needs of the public and planning for those of tomorrow.

A parks master plan should serve as a broad vision for how the City will provide safe, attractive, and accessible public spaces for citizens to recreate. Development of the plan involves evaluation of all data collected and studies performed in order to glean from all of the information, the highest priorities for the next five years. Recommended actions attempt to find the most economical solutions that achieve the goals of the plan.

### Studies Conducted

To identify ways to expand and enhance the parks and recreation system, a number of studies were conducted to evaluate existing facilities and programs, understand patterns of growth in the community, illicit input from the public regarding how citizens are using current amenities and what they would like to see in the future. To gather this information, the following studies were undertaken:

- Park Inspections
- Development of a Parks Master Plan Task Force
- Staff Interviews
- Evaluation of Demographic Projections
- Community Workshop
- Comparison to Local and National Standards
- Public Opinion Survey
- Case Studies of Key Areas

### Key Findings

Analysis of the above-mentioned studies have resulted in the following key findings:

1. The population in the Conroe area is estimated to increase by approximately 10% by 2013
2. In order to meet NRPA standards for developed park land, Conroe needs an additional 287 acres to meet current needs, or 365 additional acres by 2013
3. Areas in Conroe, on the west side of Interstate Highway 45, are geographically underserved.
4. Pedestrian and Bicycle trails are one of the highest priority demands identified from public input.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Executive Summary

5. Aquatics facilities are not sufficient to meet the current or projected capacity needs. An additional aquatics facility, capable of serving a capacity of 900 users, is needed to meet demands over the next five years.
6. Restroom facilities and drinking fountains are high priorities for park users.
7. An additional recreation center is needed on the west side of I-45.

### Priority Action Items

- Construct a Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail System
- Construct restroom facilities at the following parks: **1.** Lions Park, **2.** Flournoy Park, **3.** Milltown Park and **4.** Carl Barton, Jr. Park
- Install drinking fountains at 20 locations throughout the park system.
- Develop an additional Recreation Center and Aquatics Facility at the City Service Center.
- Develop a Linear Park along Alligator Creek between F.M. 2854 and Sgt. Ed Holcombe Blvd.
- Develop a new 16 acre Community Park at the Hidden Creek Property on Avenue M.

### Probable Level of Investment

Trails: \$5,300,000 - \$6,000,000

Drinking Fountains: \$82,800

Restrooms: \$120,000 - \$176,000

Linear Park: \$250,000 - \$400,000

Hidden Creek Park: \$750,000 - \$1,000,000

New Recreation Center: \$2,500,000 - \$3,300,000

New Aquatics Facility: \$750,000 - \$1,000,000



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Master Plan Goals

The purpose of this project is to develop an updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan covering the city limits and planning area. The plan addresses current and projected parks and recreation needs for the next five years and provides economical solutions for achieving the goals identified by the City.

Goals Include:

1. Ensure existing parks and recreation facilities are maintained and updated to provide high quality recreational experiences.
2. Provide a balanced distribution of parks and recreation facilities.
3. Preserve and enhance Conroe's natural resources.
4. Develop collaborative relationships between the City and other agencies and private organizations to promote a more effective parks and recreation system.
5. Improve accessibility to parks for all citizens.
6. Preserve and enhance the City's historical and cultural resources.
7. Improve park safety and security.
8. Provide a variety of recreation opportunities at each facility.
9. Provide connectivity between recreation areas, neighborhoods, business districts and other activity centers.
10. Enhance educational opportunities within city parks.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Master Plan Process

A parks and recreation master plan is designed to identify the current and future needs for a community's parks and recreation system. The City of Conroe's parks and recreation system is composed of park facilities, program facilities, special use areas, programs, administrative and operational staff and its citizens. Each of these components has specific needs to be fulfilled in order to achieve a fully functional parks system. To understand these needs, the following studies were conducted:

- Geographic Data Collection and Analysis
- Park Inspections
- Public Opinion Survey
- Community Workshop
- Master Plan Task Force Meetings
- Parks Department Staff Interviews
- Demographic Data Review
- Local and National Standards Comparison

The results of each of these studies were used to identify the most critical areas of need in terms of level of service, accessibility/mobility, quality of life and safety. These needs are then used to create a priority list of recommendations for improvements and expansions to the parks system over the next five years.

Findings and recommendations have been organized into five major categories that can be applied to a park planning project:

1. **People**
2. **Path**
3. **Shelter**
4. **Play**
5. **Land.**

A number of Priority Action Items have been identified for implementation. Priority Action Items represent the most important needs identified during public input and analysis phases of the planning process. These items have been developed into proposed projects with probable levels of investment estimated within each case study. It should be noted that the probable level of investment for each project is based on assumed programming and is subject to changes in the desired program, market fluctuations and the economy; and therefore, should not be construed as a firm budget.

Lower priority items for improvements to facilities are listed for future implementation.



# The City of Conroe

## Past and Present





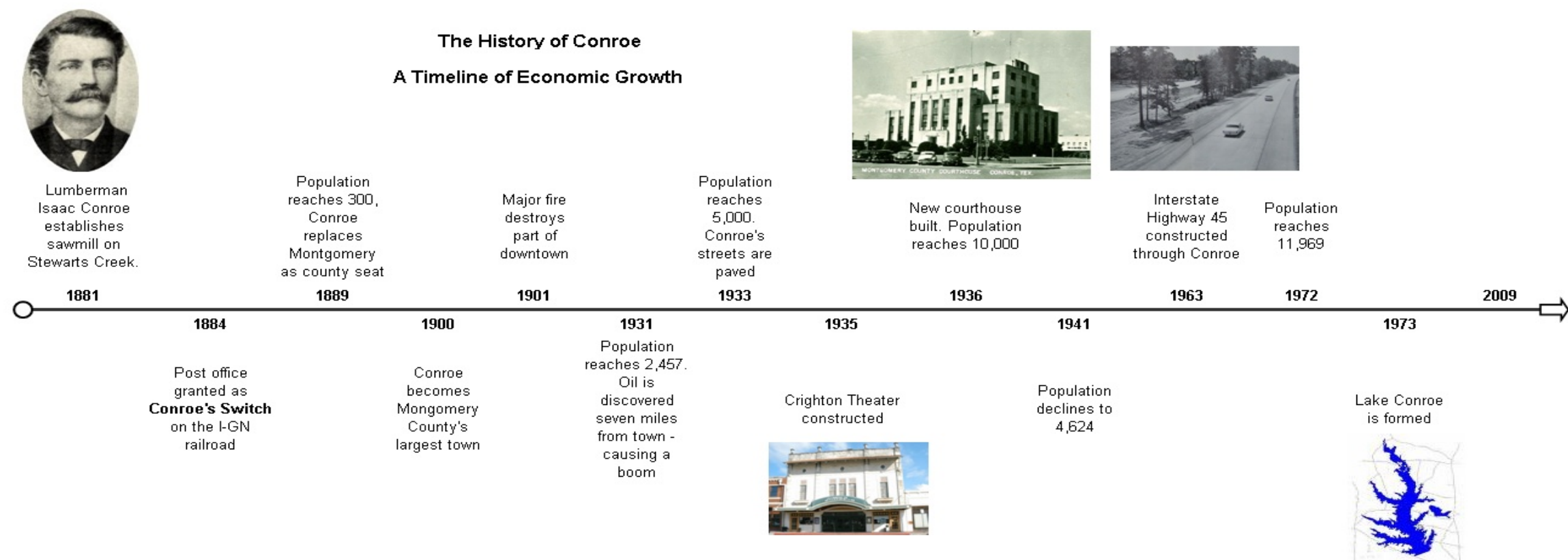
# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Conroe - Past and Present

The City of Conroe has a rich history of economic growth from timber trade to oil exploration to real estate development. In 1881, lumberman Isaac Conroe established the first sawmill along the International-Great Northern railroad, about four miles east of today's downtown Conroe. After moving operations to the intersection of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Lines, a new station was created, along with a mill commissary. By 1884 a post office was established, taking the name for the community of Conroe's Switch, a name later shortened to Conroe. The community's continued growth led to a relocation of the Montgomery County seat, in 1889, to the town with the largest population in accordance with state law.

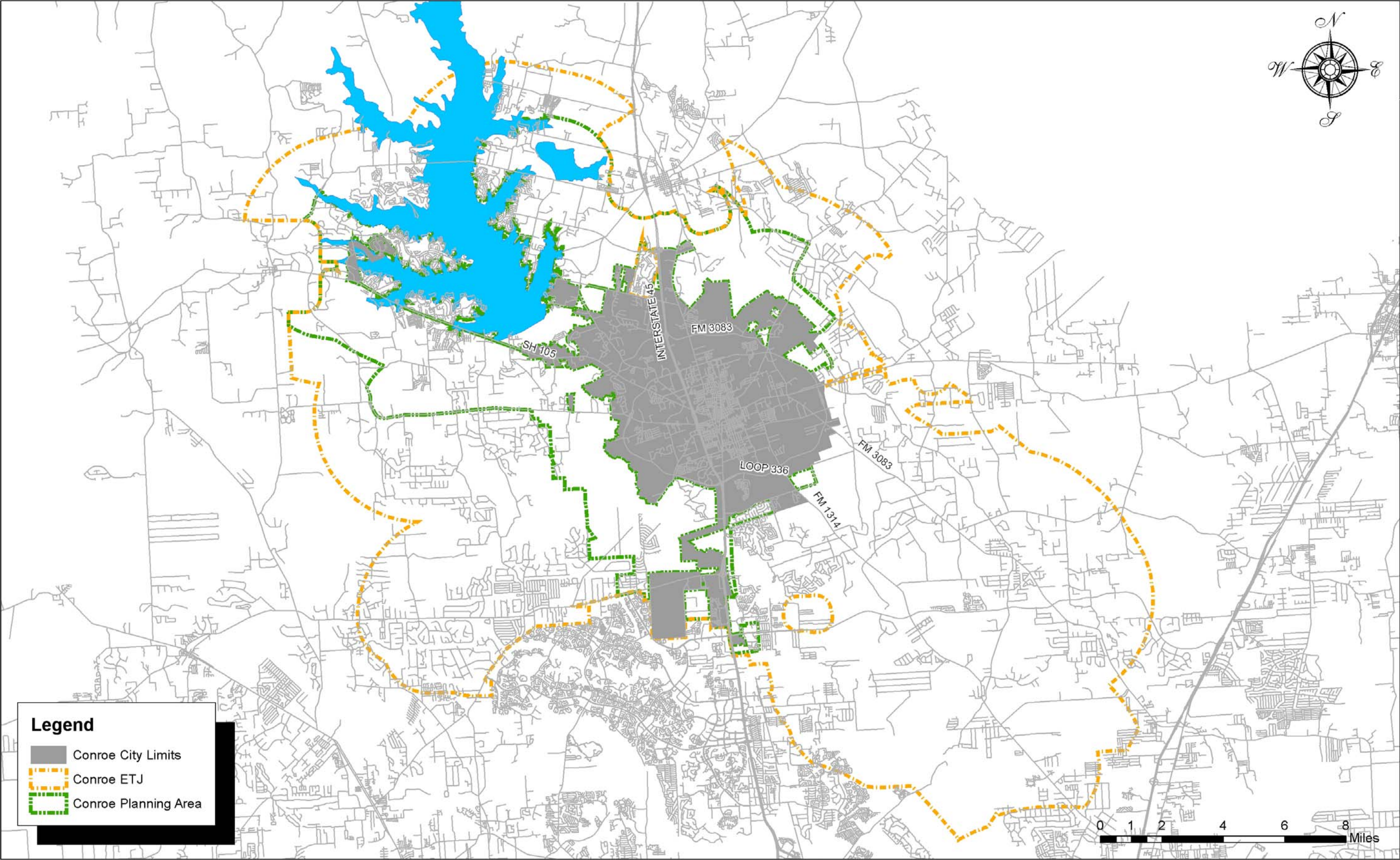
Conroe continued to sustain its prosperity, in spite of a dwindling timber supply, with the discovery of oil by pioneer businessman George Strake. The discovery created a boomtown almost overnight. Conroe's population doubled as businesses and laborers moved in to take advantage of the opportunity. Economic growth continued giving rise to the construction of new schools, a new courthouse and the Crighton Theatre before oil production began to decline. The population by 1941 was estimated at 4,624.

After World War II, the primary industries were timber production and chemical firms. The population sustained a slow, but steady, increase for many years. In 1963, the newly completed Interstate Highway 45 ushered in opportunities for new growth in both commercial and residential development. The impoundment of Lake Conroe was completed in 1973, offering recreational attractions and resort/residential development. Continued development has led to a population of more than 42,000 today with a diverse economy of light manufacturing, engineering, service, construction and other industries and was rated by CNN Money as one of the "Top 100 Small Cities – Best Places to Live" in 2008.





# City Boundaries and Planning Area



The current city limits encompass an area of approximately 53.2 square miles and an ETJ of approximately 64 square miles.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Trends in Conroe

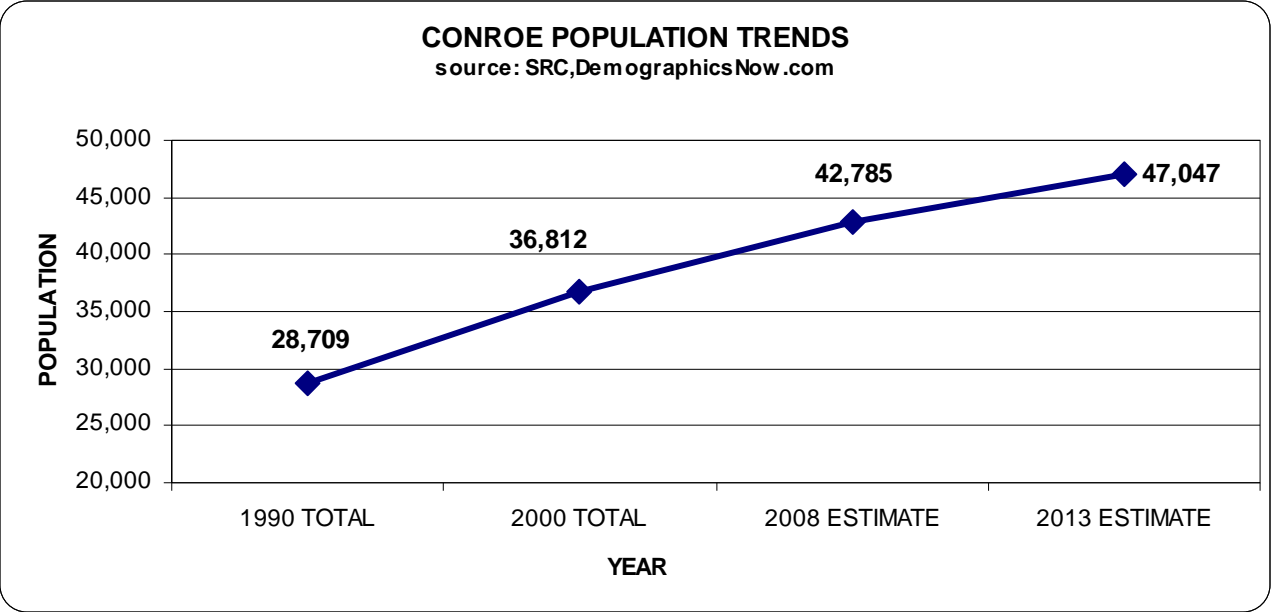
The City of Conroe is a rapidly growing community within Montgomery County, Texas; a county reported as the seventh fastest growing county in Texas from 2000 to 2003. The estimated population of Conroe from 1990 to 2000 grew at a rate of approximately 28%. The rate of growth from 2000 to the present has been approximately 16%. Continued growth is projected at a rate of 10% from 2008 to 2013.

Experience tells us that the patterns of growth and development in Houston and surrounding communities tend to move towards the north and west. This pattern is repeated in Conroe’s history of development as well.

Conroe Independent School District periodically has studies conducted to identify these patterns of growth to be better prepared when planning the number and location of futures schools. Through discussions with developers, polling and census data, and geographic studies, their consultants have located areas of the community where significant increases in population are projected to occur.

Increases in population have been identified by the number of projected new housing occupancies within U.S. Census tracts or groups of tracts. Evaluating the results of these studies is helpful in determining future needs for parks and recreation in these areas.

Projections indicate the highest numbers of new housing occupancies in the western half of Conroe. This is significant in that the western half of Conroe has the least number of parks available.



Conroe Population by Race/Ethnicity

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2008 Estimate		2013 Projection	
White	21,591	75.2%	23,329	71.5%	28,458	66.5%	30,313	64.4%
Black	3,713	12.9%	4,052	11.0%	5,227	12.2%	5,642	12.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	75	0.3%	149	0.4%	150	0.4%	144	0.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	255	0.9%	348	0.9%	708	1.7%	886	1.9%
Some Other Race	3,075	10.7%	4,869	13.2%	6,685	15.6%	8,178	17.4%
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	1,064	2.9%	1,557	3.6%	1,884	4.0%
Hispanic Ethnicity	4,879	17.0%	11,904	32.3%	17,478	40.9%	19,613	41.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	23,831	83.0%	24,908	67.7%	25,307	59.2%	27,434	58.3%

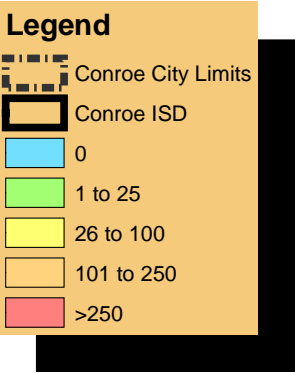
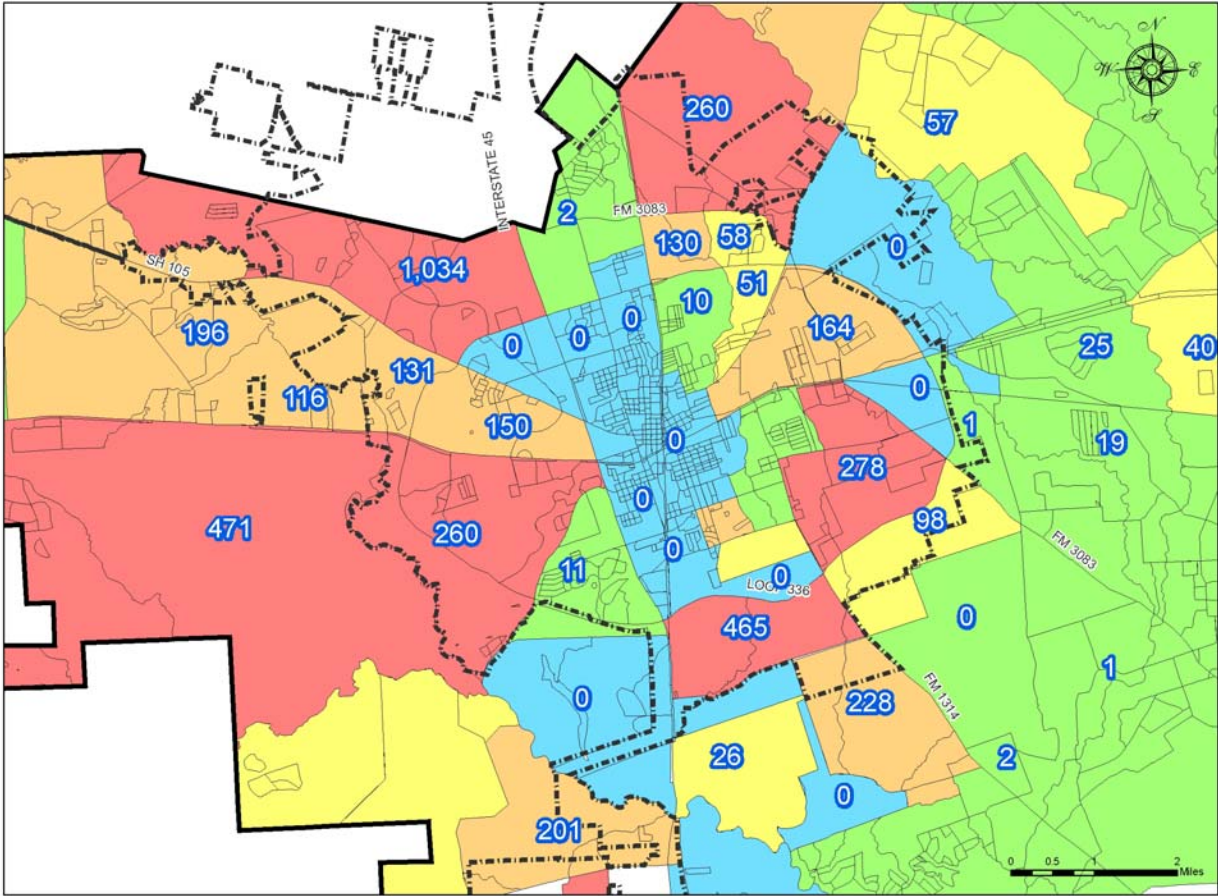
Source: SRC, DemographicsNow.com



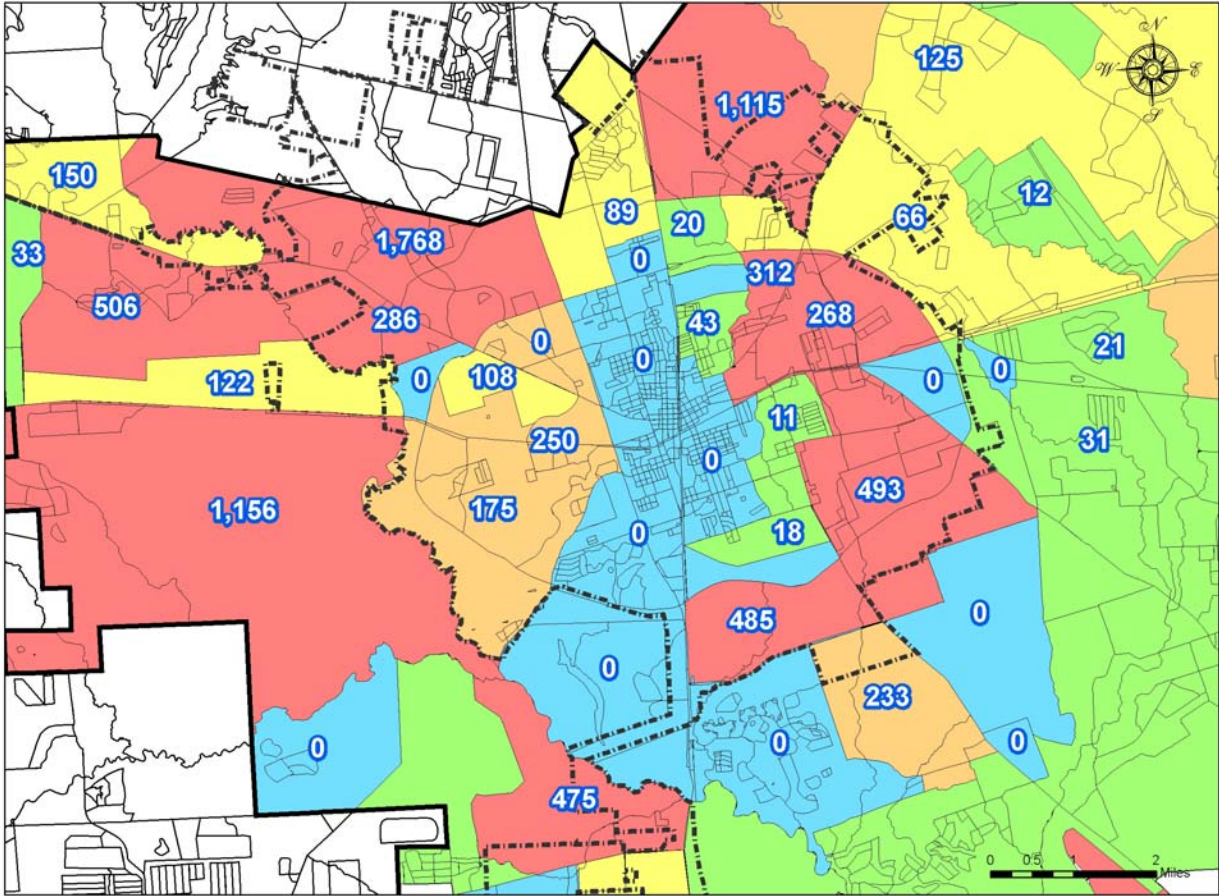
# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Trends in Conroe

Projected Housing Occupancies  
2007 - 2011



Projected Housing Occupancies  
2012 - 2016



Source: PASA - Population and Survey





# The Conroe Parks and Recreation System

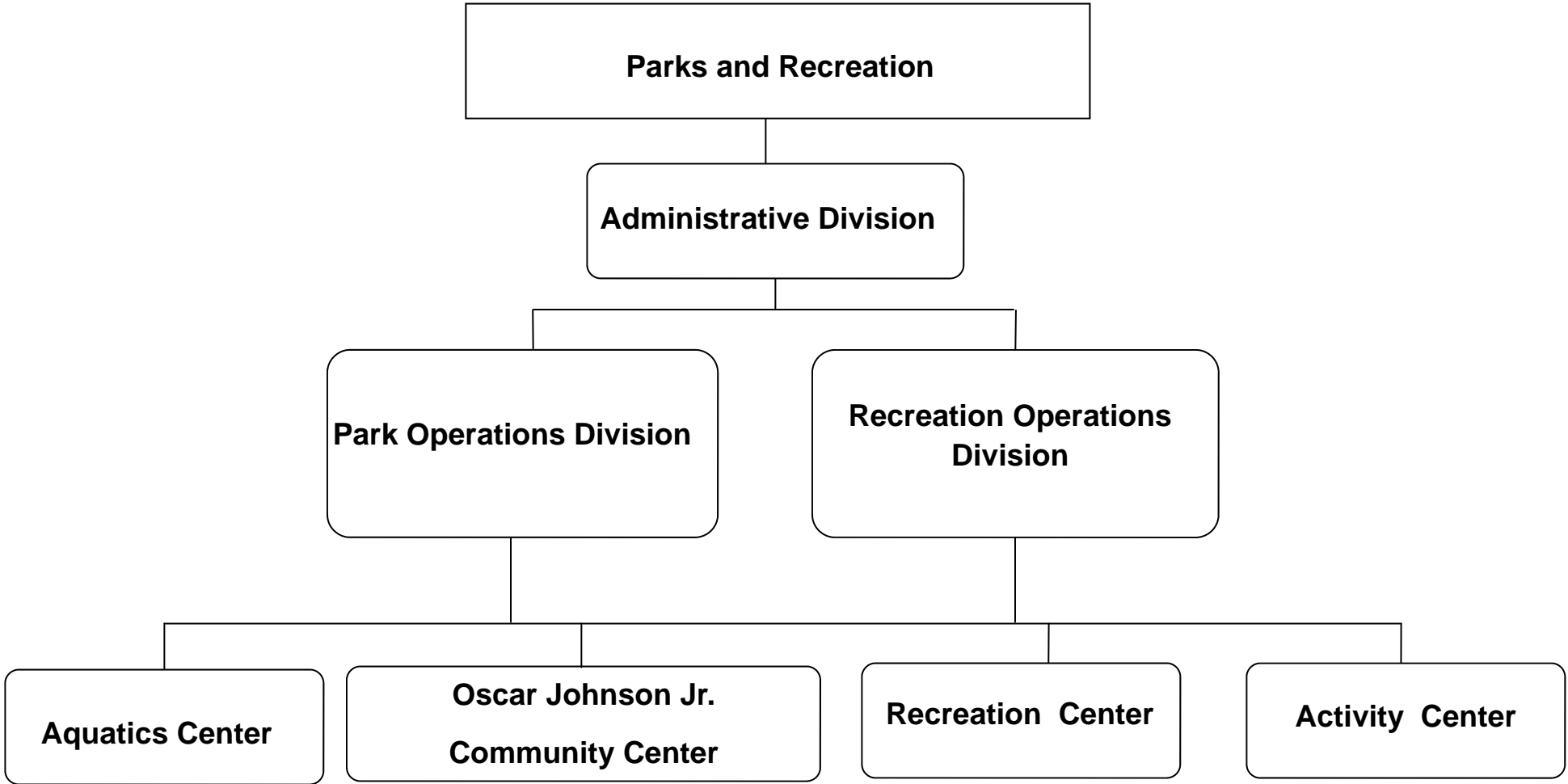




# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## The Conroe Parks and Recreation System

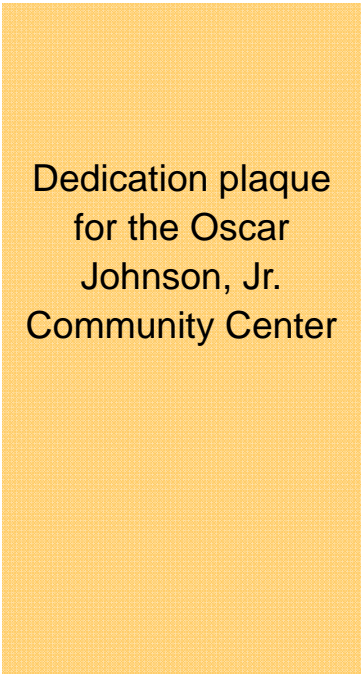
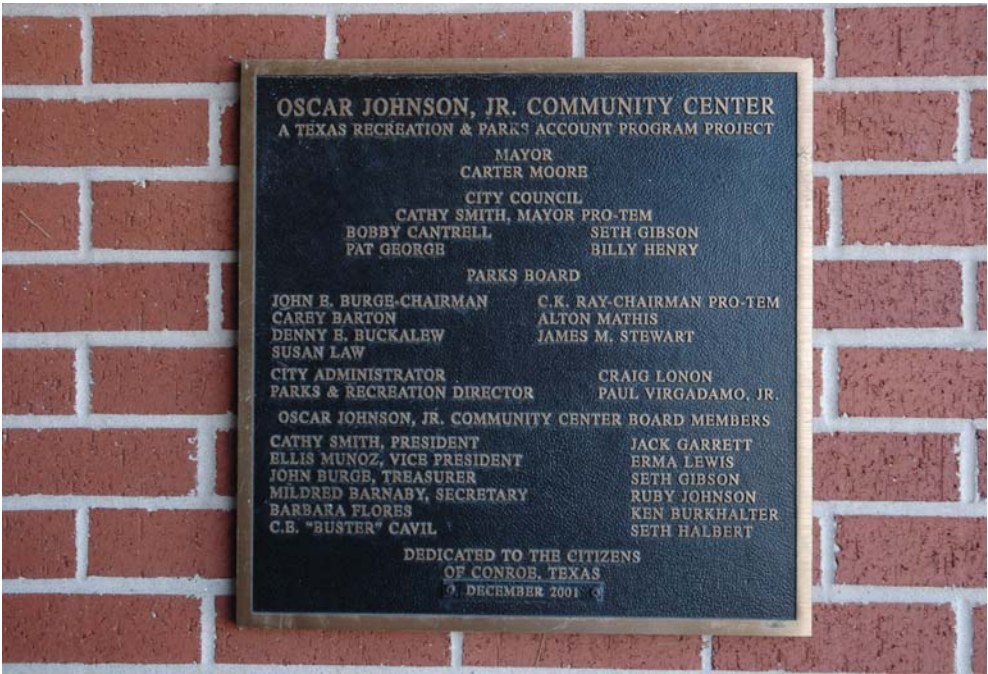
The City of Conroe Parks and Recreation System is composed of a wide variety of parks, programs, events and special-use areas designed to meet the diverse needs of the community for leisure, recreation, health and well-being, culture and overall quality of life. The system currently includes a total of 16 city parks, 6 school parks, 5 special-use areas and a theatre. In addition to facilities, the parks and recreation system also includes many recreation, fitness and community service programs for the citizens. The following chart shows how the City of Conroe Parks and Recreation Department is organized:



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Existing Facilities

The City of Conroe currently maintains a diverse selection of facilities for the citizens to enjoy. These facilities include city parks, school parks, the Recreation Center, the Aquatics Center, the Activity Center, The Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center, Heritage Place and the Owen Theater. The existing facilities have been developed over the course of many years in response to an ever-growing need for more park space and recreational services. The following is an inventory of current facilities:

CITY PARKS	SCHOOL PARKS	SPECIAL USE FACILITIES
GIBSON PARK	ARMSTRONG ELEMENTARY PARK	OSCAR JOHNSON, JR. COMMUNITY CENTER
FLOURNOY PARK	B.B. RICE ELEMENTARY PARK	CONROE RECREATION CENTER
KASMIERSKY PARK	GIESINGER ELEMENTARY PARK	CONROE ACTIVITY CENTER
LEWIS PARK	O.A. REAVES ELEMENTARY PARK	CONROE AQUATICS CENTER
LIONS PARK	RUNYAN ELEMENTARY PARK	HERITAGE PLACE
MILLTOWN PARK	WALTER P. JETT PARK	OWEN THEATER
OSCAR JOHNSON JR. PARK		
ROBERSON PARK		
STEWARTS CREEK PARK		
WHITE OAK POINT PARK		
CANDY CANE PARK		
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PARK		
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SPORTS COMPLEX		
MCDADE PARK		
CARL BARTON, JR. PARK		
WIGGINS VILLAGE PARK		



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Park Classification System

There are a variety of sizes and types of parks and recreation facilities within the City of Conroe parks system. Each facility offers a unique blend of features to satisfy the diverse recreational needs of the community. While each location may differ in its available amenities, a common system of classification is used for comparison to widely-accepted standards. Generally, parks are classified based on overall size and intended uses. The following classification has been adopted from the 2003 Parks Master Plan:

The Conroe Park Classification System and Service Areas			
Park Class	Acres/1,000 Population	Minimum Size	Service Area Radius
Mini Park	0.25 - 0.50	1 acre or less	<0.25mile/5 minute walk
Neighborhood Park	1.0 - 2.0	15 acres	0.5 mile/12 minute walk
Community Park	5.0 – 8.0	25 acres	1-2 miles/5 minute drive
Metropolitan Park	5.0 – 10.0	100 acres or more	30miles/1hour drive
Special Use	Variable	No Standard	No Standard

### Mini-Parks

The mini-park is typically designed to offer recreational opportunities within a limited space. They are often located on small parcels of land that would otherwise be of little use for development. They are typically less than 1 acre in size and serve residents within a 1/4 mile or 5 minute walk. These parks may be passive areas, with art cultural features and landscaping, or they may consist of a small playground with benches.



- Gibson Park - 0.8 Acres
- White Oak Point Park - 1.8 Acres





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Park Classification System

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve a range of age groups within a limited area or neighborhood. They range in size from 1-15 acres and serve an area within 1/2 mile or 12 minute walk. Neighborhood parks typically have a variety of active recreation features such as athletic practice fields, basketball courts, playgrounds and picnic areas.



- Armstrong Elementary Park - 2.0 Acres
- B.B. Rice Elementary Park - 1.0 Acres
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Sports Complex - 3.0 Acres
- Flournoy Park - 4.0 Acres
- Giesinger Elementary Park - 2.0 acres
- Lewis Park - 5.0 Acres
- Lions Park - 3.5 Acres
- Milltown Park - 2.3 Acres
- O.A. Reaves Elementary Park - 1.5 Acres
- Oscar Johnson, Jr. Park - 2.5 Acres
- Roberson Park - 1.6 Acres
- Runyan Elementary Park - 2.0 Park
- Stewarts Creek Park - 9.0 Acres
- Walter P. Jett Park - 2.0 Acres

### Community Parks

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and generally serve several neighborhoods. They are typically 16-99 acres in size and are often used by residents from all over the city. Community parks often have a wide range of activities available for the public such as jogging/walking paths, ball fields, playgrounds, pavilions, basketball and tennis courts and natural and passive areas



- Candy Cane Park - 24 Acres
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Park - 25 Acres
- McDade Park - 38 Acres
- Kasmiersky Park - 9.0 Acres
- Shadow Lakes Park - 39.0 Acres





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Park Classification System

### Metropolitan Parks

Metropolitan parks are large facilities that serve several communities. They are generally 100 acres or more in size. Typically these parks will have game fields for baseball, softball, football and soccer; along with other amenities such as playgrounds, fishing, hike/bike/multi-use trails, natural areas, picnics, swimming and other activity areas.



- Carl Barton, Jr. Park - 201 Acres

### Special Use Areas

Special use areas are unique features of a parks system that are designed for specialized or single purpose activities. They often are the sites of historical and cultural significance, recreation centers, amphitheaters, plazas or community squares. There are no typical sizes or service areas, as they vary by community and region.



- Heritage Place - 1.5 Acres
- Wiggins Village Park - 8.0 Acres
- Downtown Pocket Park - 0.5 Acres
- Owen Theater - N/A





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## New Facilities

The Conroe Parks and Recreation system has been continually growing over the years. Two of the newest additions to the parks system are the Downtown Pocket Park (currently under construction) and Shadow Lakes Park ( currently in final phase of design).

### Downtown Pocket Park

Located in the heart of Downtown Conroe, at the corner of Main Street and Metcalf Street, a new special-use facility is being built. The Downtown Pocket Park will serve as a recreational plaza for leisure and events. The park will include lighted walkways, seating, a small event stage and attractive landscaping. Also included will be a small user-activated splash fountain for children to cool off during the hot summer months.

### Shadow Lakes Park

Located in the northwest corner of the Conroe, along Little Egypt Road, a new 39 acre park site is currently being designed. The park will reside on a beautiful wooded tract of land with rolling topography and several significant creeks and drainages. Proposed features will include several picnic sites with tables and grills, a playground area, a large pavilion, approximately one mile of trails of various surfaces, and parking. This park is designed to take full advantage of the natural features of the property and will retain the majority of its forested areas for nature appreciation, educational opportunities and soil and water conservation. Educational kiosks and signage will explain to visitors how key design features of the park help to filter stormwater runoff, preserve trees and provide for wildlife habitat.



Concept model of Downtown Pocket Park.



Concept Drawing of Shadow Lakes Park.





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Recreational Programs

The City offers a wide array of recreational and educational programs for people of all ages and interests. These programs utilize City facilities and are operated by a combination of permanent and temporary Parks and Recreation Department staff as well as citizens with expertise in each activity.



### Activities

The Parks and Recreation Department offers programs ranging from educational to entertainment. Popular activities include after-school programs, art and swimming lessons, adult softball and disc golf leagues, fitness classes, martial arts and much more. The City’s quarterly publication *Playbook* details each available program’s description, schedule, and any associated fees. Copies of the *Playbook* are available at any of the recreation centers, the Parks and Recreation Department office or on the City website.

### Facilities

The majority of programs take place at one of the recreational centers in the parks system. Among these facilities are the Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center and the Candy Cane Park Recreation Center, Activity Center and the Aquatics Center. Additional programs such as league sports are operated at various parks throughout the City.



- FITNESS
- DANCE
- SPORTS
- DAY CAMP
- ART
- SWIMMING
- OUTDOOR LEARNING
- LIFEGUARD TRAINING
- AFTER SCHOOL
- MARTIAL ARTS
- SCUBA
- YOGA CLASSES



# Resource Assessment



Park Standards

Analysis of a park’s Level of Service (LOS) has traditionally been performed by comparing the size of the facility and quantity and type of amenities to a set of standards or guidelines detailing the minimum size and number of features per unit of population. These guidelines, published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), are widely used, but planners are encouraged to evaluate the acceptable or desired level of service for their specific community. Each community has a unique blend of cultural, lifestyle and demographic patterns that should be considered during the planning of a parks and recreation system.

Comparison to Traditional Standards

The standards and guidelines traditionally used in park planning are based on minimum capacities that a given park or component of a park should be able to support per unit of population. These values are useful in establishing a baseline for comparison to other communities.

There is no formal standard for minimum total park acreage for a population. In order to evaluate the level of service of Conroe parks, it is useful to compare total park acreages to that of other Texas cities. General standards/guidelines published by the NRPA suggest a minimum of 11.5 to 20.5 acres per 1,000 people.

Although the demands for park space and availability of land differ for each community, this provides a benchmark by which the City’s current parks system can be evaluated.

The City of Conroe currently does not meet the NRPA standard for minimum park space. The current need for additional park land to meet a minimum of 16 acres per 1,000 residents (average of NRPA range) is an additional 287 acres. With an estimated population in 2013 of 47,047 residents the total additional park acreage needed is approximately 365 acres. Although total park acreage per number of residents for the City of Conroe is comparable to that of other similar sized cities in Texas, more than half of this acreage is represented by Carl Barton Park. With such an uneven distribution of total park land throughout the City, acquisition of additional land should be considered.

CONROE COMPARED TO OTHER TEXAS CITIES		
CITY	PARK ACREAGE	ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
SAN MARCOS	919	21
GEORGETOWN	831	18
CEDAR PARK	608	17
ROUND ROCK	1450	17
COLLEGE STATION	1197	16
DENTON	1400	15
PFLUGERVILLE	400	13
MCKINNEY	1047	12
TYLER	1000	11
FRISCO	750	10
CONROE	388	9.07
BRYAN	554	8
LONGVIEW	500	7
NEW BRAUNFELS	272	7
SCHERTZ	131	5





PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Park Standards

Park Amenities

In addition to actual park acreage, the NRPA has general recommendations for minimum numbers of common park amenities such as sports fields, swimming facilities, tennis courts, play structures and other features within a parks system. The current inventory of park amenities indicates that the City meets or exceeds the minimum standards for most of the major park features. Areas of need, according to NRPA standards, include additional swimming facilities, disc golf courses, tennis courts and volleyball courts. The following table compares current resources with NRPA standards and projected total needs in 2013.

According to the NRPA standards, the most significant need for the parks system today, and in the near future, is additional swimming facilities. Additional needs identified by standards analysis include another disc golf course, 23 new tennis courts, an additional racquetball court and 10 volleyball courts. It should be noted that these standards represent trends in recreation needs on a national basis and may not reflect the unique needs of Conroe citizens. For instance, public input indicates that there is a need for additional soccer fields to meet current demands; whereas demand for tennis, though a popular sport in Conroe, may not warrant the development of 23 additional courts.

PARK FEATURE	NRPA STANDARD (# UNITS PER POPULATION)	NEEDS BASED ON CURRENT CONROE POPULATION	CURRENT CITY RESOURCES	STANDARD MET OR EXCEEDED	2013 ADDITIONAL NEEDS
PLAY STRUCTURES	1 STRUCTURE PER 1,500	29	49	YES	0
BASKETBALL COURTS	1 PER 5,000	9	25	YES	0
SOFTBALL/ BASEBALL GAME FIELDS	1 PER 5,000	9	13	YES	0
SOCCER GAME FIELDS	1 PER 10,000	5	7	YES	0
SWIMMING FACILITIES	CAPACITY 3-5% OF POPULATION	1,400 USER CAPACITY	500 USER CAPACITY	NO	900 USER CAPACITY
DISC GOLF	1 PER 25,000	2	1	NO	1
TENNIS COURTS	1 PER 2,000	26.25	6	NO	23
RACQUETBALL COURTS	1 PER 20,000	3	2	YES	1
VOLLEYBALL	1 PER 5,000	9	2	NO	10





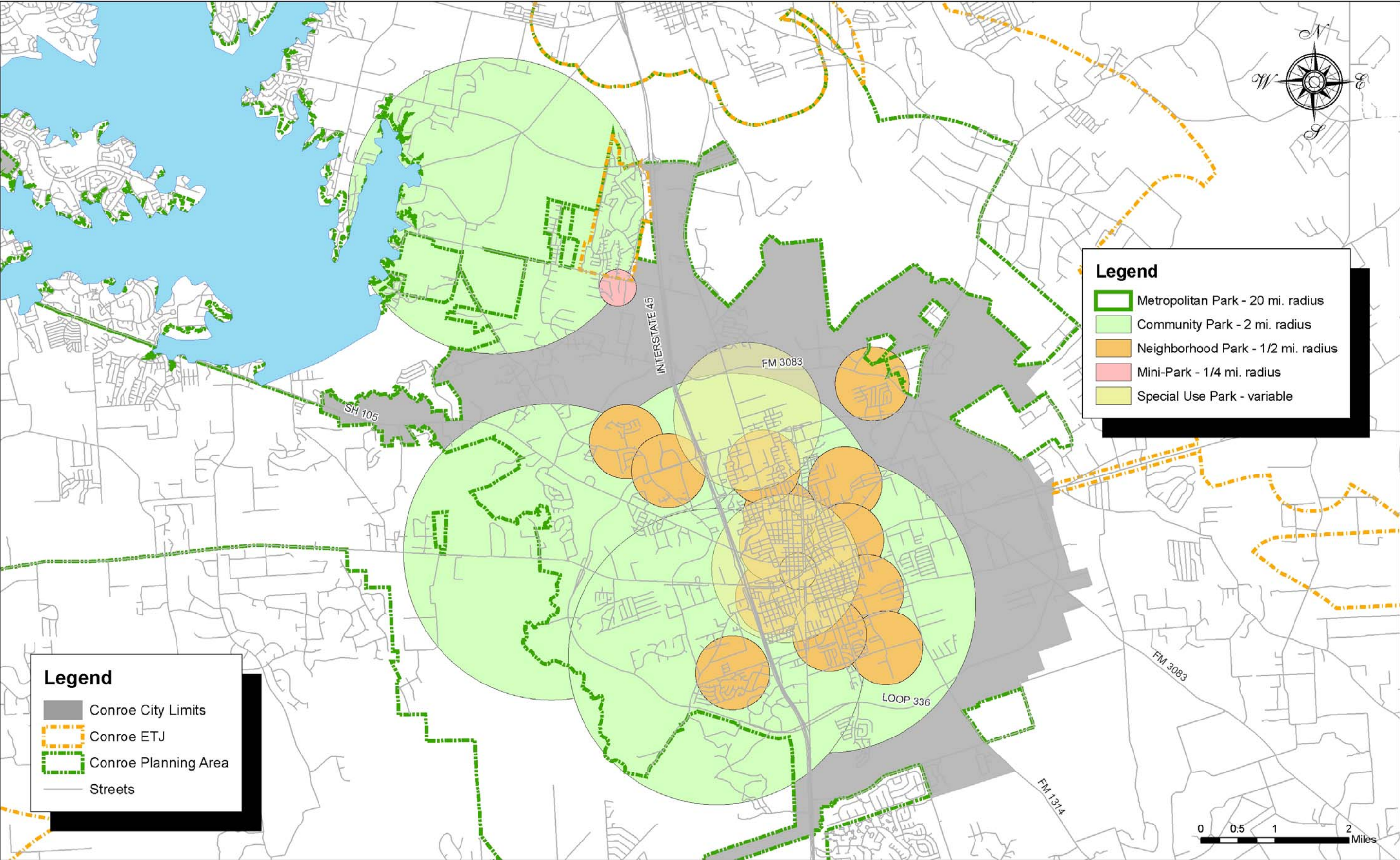
Inventory of Park Amenities

PARK	ACRES	CLASSIFICATION	SERVICE RADIUS	PLAY STRUCTURES	PICNIC AREA	ATHLETIC PRACTICE FIELD	BASKETBALL COURTS	RESTROOMS	PAVILIONS	JOOGING/ WALKING TRAILS	SOFTBALL/ BASEBALL GAME FIELDS	SOCCER GAME FIELDS	GAZEBOS	SWIMMING (CAPACITY)	FISHING	DISC GOLF	MULTI- PURPOSE TRAIL	SKATE PARK	TENNIS COURTS	OFF LEASH DOG PARK	RACQUETBALL COURTS
ARMSTRONG ELEMENTARY PARK	2	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	5	4	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B.B. RICE ELEMENTARY PARK	1	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	4	8	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CANDY CANE PARK	24	COMMUNITY PARK	2 MILE	4	10	0	2	2	2	0.375	0	0	1	400	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
CARL BARTON, JR. PARK	201	METROPOLITAN PARK	1 HOUR	1	8	0	0	2	1	0.6	9	6	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PARK	25	COMMUNITY PARK	2 MILE	4	5	4	8	1	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SPORTS COMPLEX	3	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FLOURNOY PARK	4	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GIBSON PARK	0.8	MINI PARK	.25 MILE	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GIESINGER ELEMENTARY PARK	2	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	3	0	0	2	0	0	0.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HERITAGE PLACE	1.5	SPECIAL USE	.5 MILE	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KASMIERSKY PARK	9	COMMUNITY PARK	.5 MILE	1	5	3	1	1	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
LEWIS PARK	5	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	3	4	0	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LIONS PARK	3.5	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	2	4	2	1	0	1	0.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MCDADE PARK	38	COMMUNITY PARK	2 MILE	3	7	6	1	1	2	0.625	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
MILLTOWN PARK	2.3	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	3	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
O.A. REAVES ELEMENTARY PARK	1.5	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	4	4	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSCAR JOHNSON JR. PARK	2.5	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	1	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ROBERSON PARK	1.6	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	2	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RUNYAN ELEMENTARY PARK	2	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	2	4	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STEWARTS CREEK PARK	9	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	1	4	1	0	1	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WALTER P. JETT PARK	2	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHITE OAK POINT PARK	1.8	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WIGGINS VILLAGE PARK	8	NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	.5 MILE	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
SHADOW LAKES PARK	41.3	COMMUNITY PARK	2 MILE	2	12	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DOWNTOWN POCKET PARK	0.5	SPECIAL USE	0.25 MILE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	392.3			56	105	28	34.5	13	15	4.6	13	7	2	550	2	1	3	1	6	1	2





Park Service Areas





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Feature Quality and Density Analysis

In order to make a more comprehensive evaluation of the parks system, a study of the overall feature quality and variety was conducted for each park facility . Using this method, each park component is assigned a value between 1 and 3 depending on the level at which the component meets user expectations. This approach aims to identify the overall quality of a park, not only by the number and variety of amenities, but the condition of these features as well.

The resulting map gives the user an overview of where the highest density and quality of park amenities are located in the City. The results of the analysis are reported as total scores for each park relative to all other parks evaluated. To visualize these values, a map is created displaying the overall density and quality of park amenities as colored dots within each park’s service area.

The value of the map is it’s ability to display areas of the community that may be underserved in terms of number, variety and quality of features as well as overall number of parks within reasonable proximity.

Each major feature of the park is evaluated against the criteria below:

Value	Definition
1	Below Expectations
2	Meets Expectations
3	Exceeds Expectations

To implement the Feature Quality and Density Analysis for the City of Conroe parks system, each major component inventoried was evaluated using the above-noted criteria. Table below shows the total score for each facility.

PARK	SCORE
Candy Cane Park, .V.F.W. Hall, & Aquatics Center	56
McDade Park	48
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park	42
Kasmiersky Park	41
Carl Barton, Jr. Park	41
Heritage Place	38
Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center	38
Lions Park	35
Lewis Park	34
Stewarts Creek Park	33
Flournoy Park	32
Roberson Park	30
Runyan Elementary Park	29
Armstrong Elementary Park	29
B.B. Rice Elementary Park	29
Martin Luther King, Jr. Sports Complex	28
O.A. Reaves Elementary Park	28
White Oak Point Park	27
Walter P. Jett Park	27
Milltown Park	26
Gibson Park	25
Wiggins Village Park	24
Giesinger Elementary Park	21





# Feature Quality and Density Analysis





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Recreation Opportunities Provided by Others

In addition to the services provided by the City of Conroe, residents also have access to a number of parks and recreation facilities from other government and private agencies such as the Texas Forest Service, the USDA Forest Service, Montgomery County, the YMCA and the River Plantation Community Improvement Association.

**Lake Conroe Park**

**W.G. Jones State Forest**

**Sam Houston National Forest**

**Gwen Hruska Park**

**Gene Campbell Sports Park**

**Montgomery County War Memorial Park**

**Lone Star Convention and Expo Center  
and Montgomery County Park**

**Mussel Pond Preserve**

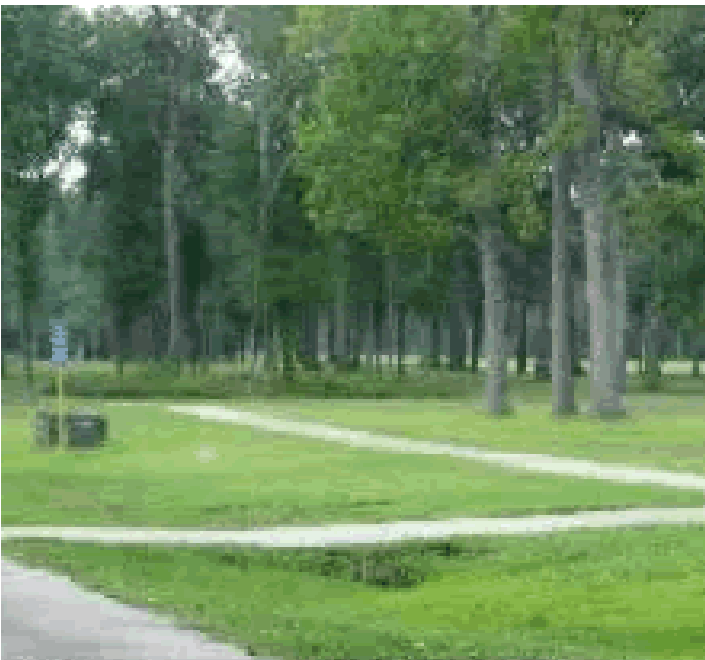
**YMCA - Conroe**



Montgomery County War Memorial Park



Mussel Pond Preserve



Gwen Hruska Park

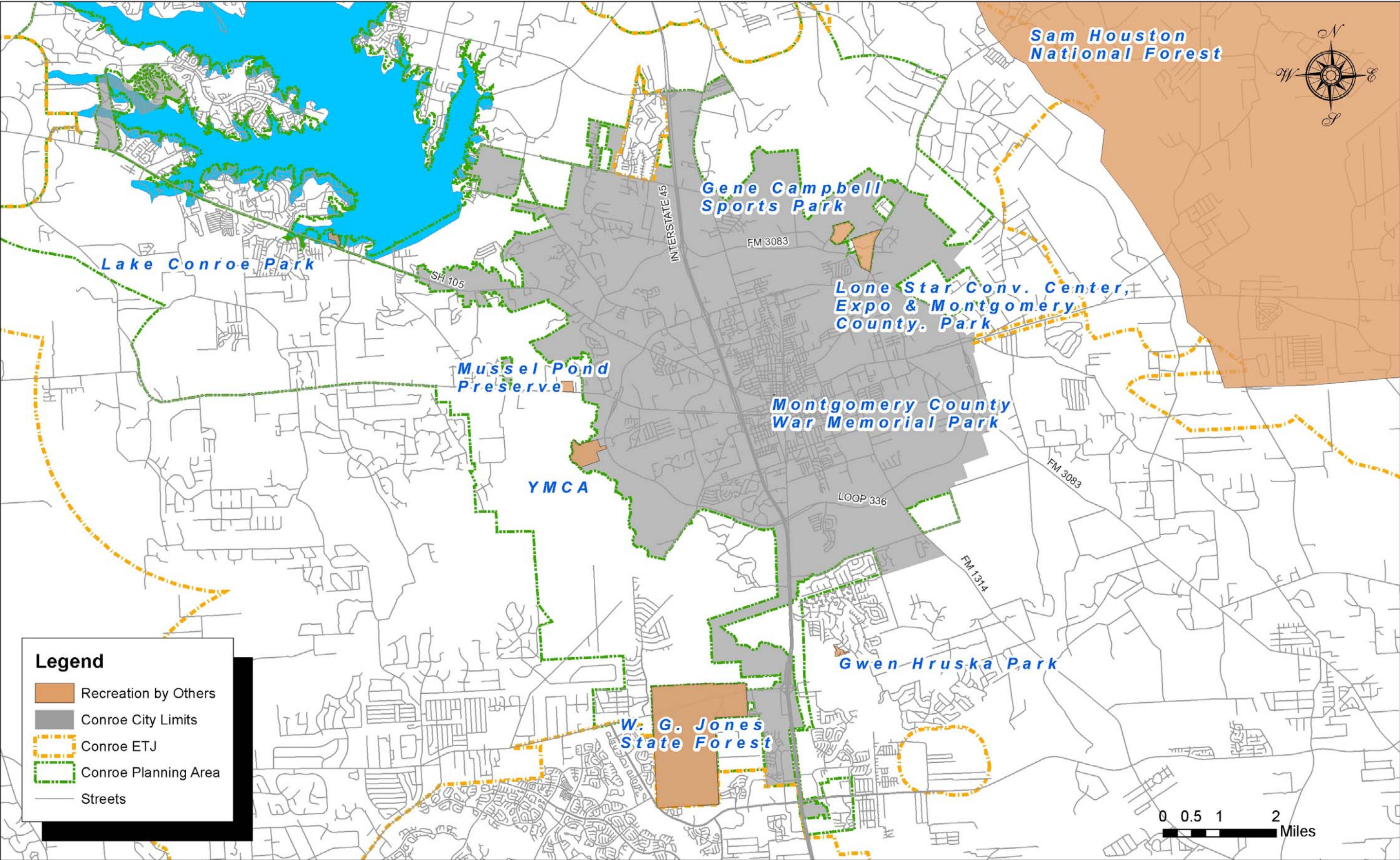


Gene Campbell Sports Park





# Recreation Opportunities Provided by Other Agencies





# People



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Public Opinion Survey

A parks and recreation master plan is designed to achieve the goals and needs of the citizens for recreation, parks and public spaces. In order to identify these needs input was collected through a public opinion survey, a citizen workshop, staff interviews and the formation of a parks master plan task force.

### Public Opinion Survey

To gather public opinions regarding specific recreational preferences and needs, the City conducted a public opinion survey by mailing questionnaires to 5,000 randomly selected households within the general Conroe area. A total of 111 responses were received from residents, yielding some valuable insight into the most needed improvements and additions for the parks system. The responses received were from households within two zip codes located on the east side of I-45. These responses are a representative sample of the population in that area only, and the data should be used with that caveat in mind.

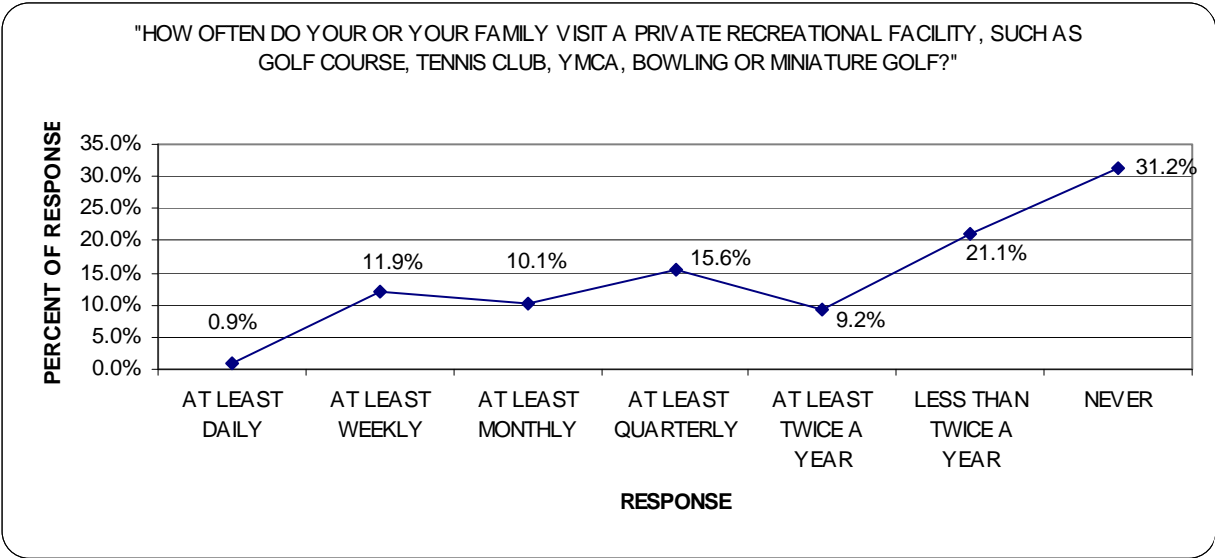
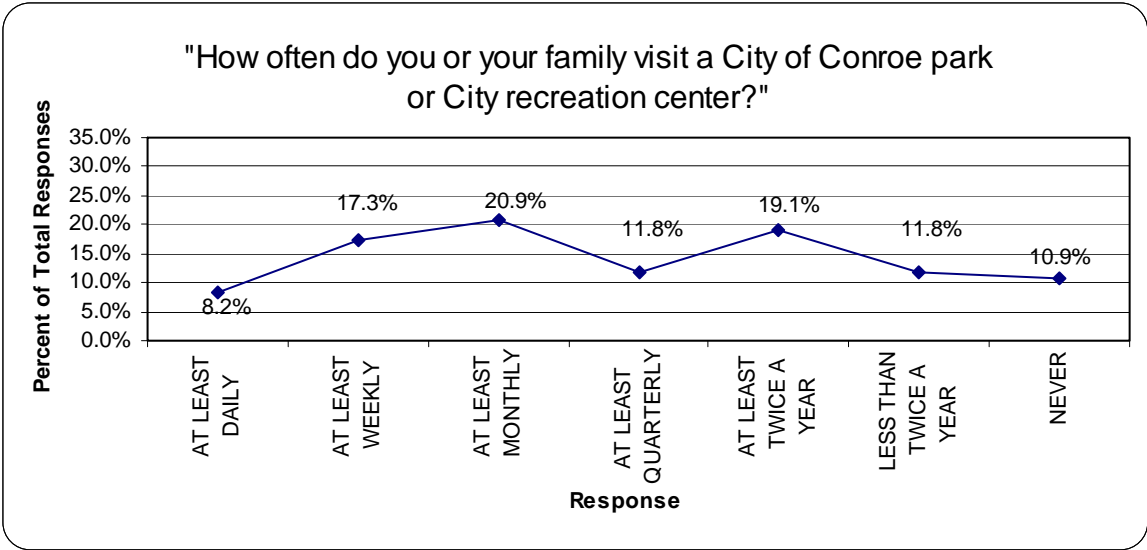
### Who the Respondents Are

Of the total number of responses received, 74% came from households within the Conroe city limits. The remaining 26% were from households in the City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction. This pattern may indicate that the parks system serves a larger area than expected, as growth and development in the community has been steady.

Approximately 36% of the respondent households had children under the age of 19. Almost 66% of the households reported not supporting children at home. This indicates a need to ensure sufficient programs and facilities are available for an older population.

### Public Survey - Facility Use

Survey respondents were asked to identify which park they visit most often. Overwhelmingly, the most frequently visited park identified was Candy Cane Park. With respect to the location of respondent households, Candy Cane Park is clearly a centerpiece of the City’s current parks system. Also of note, is that Candy Cane Park contains a great number of amenities including a water park and swimming facility, recreation center, playgrounds, tennis, jogging path and picnic areas that may add to the attraction for users.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

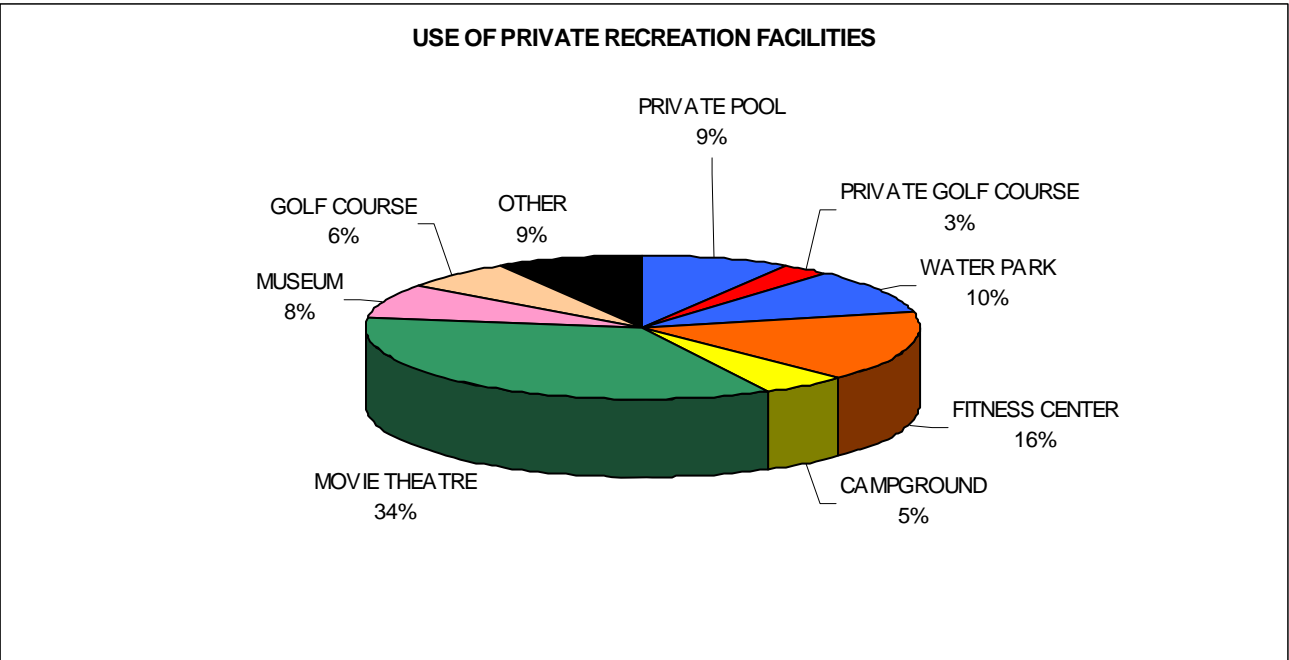
## Public Opinion Survey

In order to identify why some programs and facilities may be under-used, respondents were asked to identify the reasons for not participating in activities at Conroe parks or recreation centers. The three most common responses were that the respondents either **1.** did not have time to participate, **2.** the user fees were cost prohibitive, or **3.** the hours of operation were inconvenient.

Open comments from the surveys indicate that later hours of operation or 24-hour operation of the recreation center would be helpful. It is possible that some of the responses related to “hours inconvenient” may be in reference to many of the park basketball courts, tennis courts, and jogging paths not being sufficiently lighted for evening activity. This pattern is repeated when respondents were asked why their children did not participate in any of Conroe’s recreational programs.

Respondents also reported activities they participated in at private recreational facilities. Among the most popular private facilities to visit were **1.** movie theaters, **2.** fitness centers and **3.** water parks.

TOP FIVE MOST VISITED PARKS	
PARK	# OF RESPONSES
CANDY CANE PARK	77.6%
CARL BARTON, JR. PARK	33.7%
HERITAGE PARK	16.3%
MCDADE PARK	7.1%
OSCAR JOHNSON, JR. PARK	5.1%



While planning for future recreation needs, it is important to understand the frequency with which citizens use City park and recreation facilities as well as the use of competing private facilities such as golf courses, tennis clubs, the YMCA, etc. The patterns of use for both City and private facilities appear to be well-distributed, indicating a wide range of activity levels of respondents. Results of the survey indicate a balance between preference for visiting private and City-owned parks and recreation facilities.

Reasons Why Families Didn't Participate in Recreation Activities at Conroe Parks or Recreation Centers	
REASON	% OF RESPONSES
DO NOT HAVE TIME	34.1%
COST PROHIBITIVE	26.8%
HOURS INCONVENIENT	19.5%
NOT INTERESTED	11.0%
AGE/ILLNESS	9.8%
LOCATION INCONVENIENT	7.3%
TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS	6.1%
LACK OF INFORMATION	4.9%
MOTIVATION	3.7%
OTHER	2.4%
VISITED PRIVATE FACILITIES	1.2%
NO FACILITY AVAILABLE	1.2%
HOMEWORK FIRST	1.2%
CHILDCARE NOT AVAILABLE	1.2%
SAFETY CONCERNS	1.2%



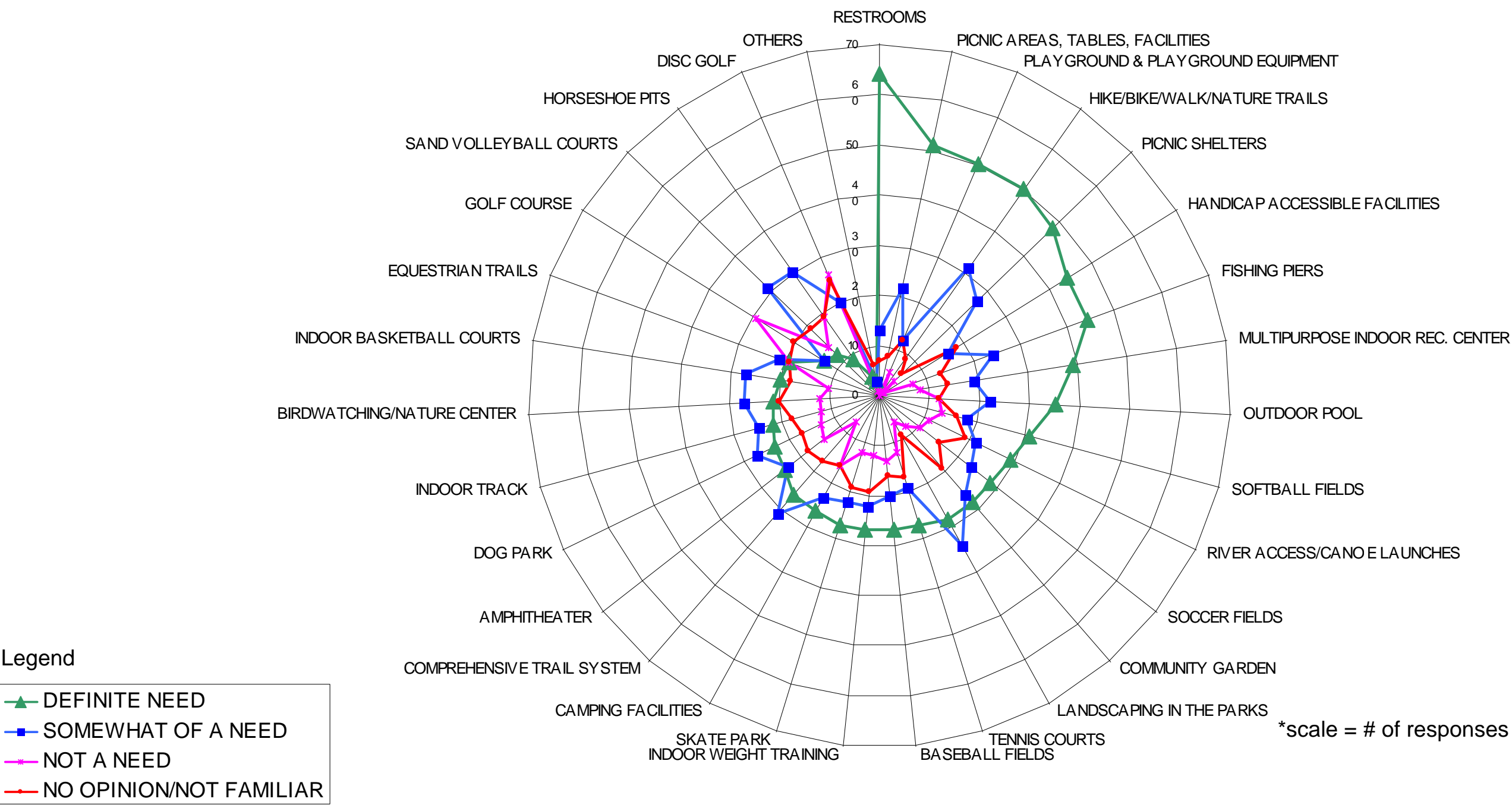


# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Public Opinion Survey

### Facility Needs

One of the most important items to identify in the survey was how the respondents place priority on specific park features. Respondents were asked to rate the level of need for each amenity in the list. Clear patterns of response indicate a definite need for more restroom facilities. Interviews with Park Ambassadors confirm that citizens frequently request restrooms at most of the parks. Other high-priority items include additional picnic areas, playgrounds and hike/bike/walk trails.



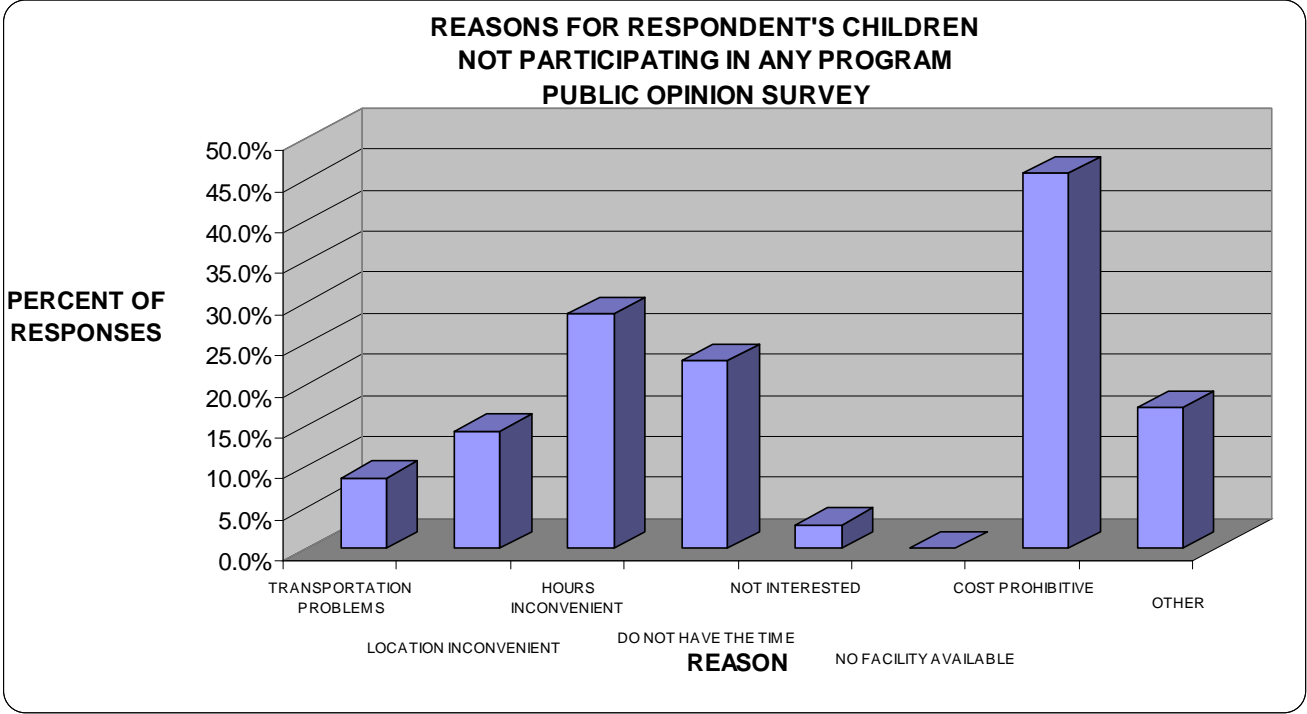
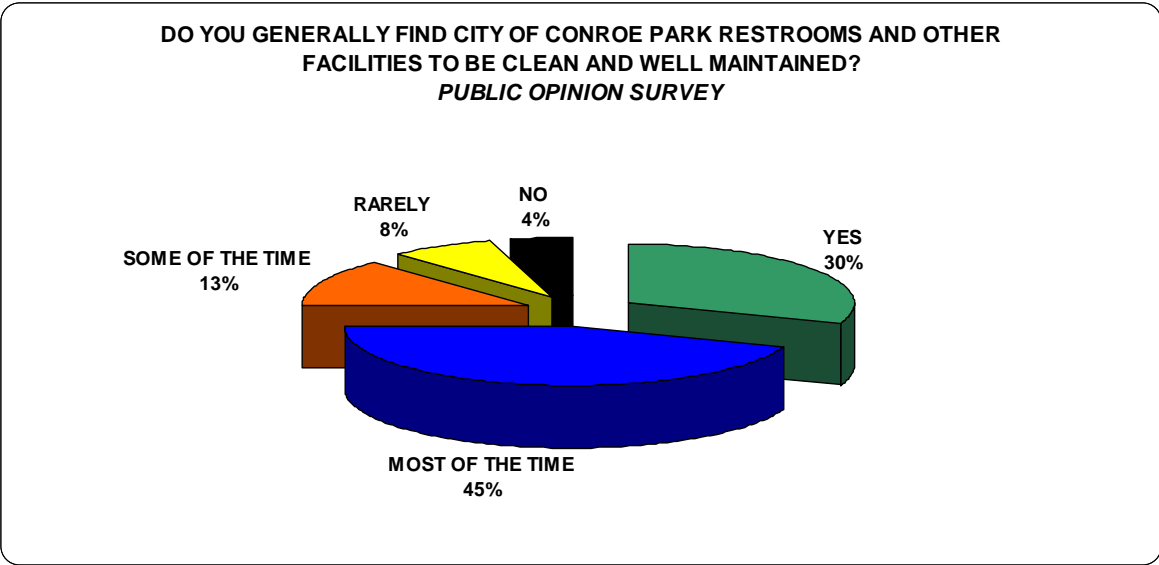
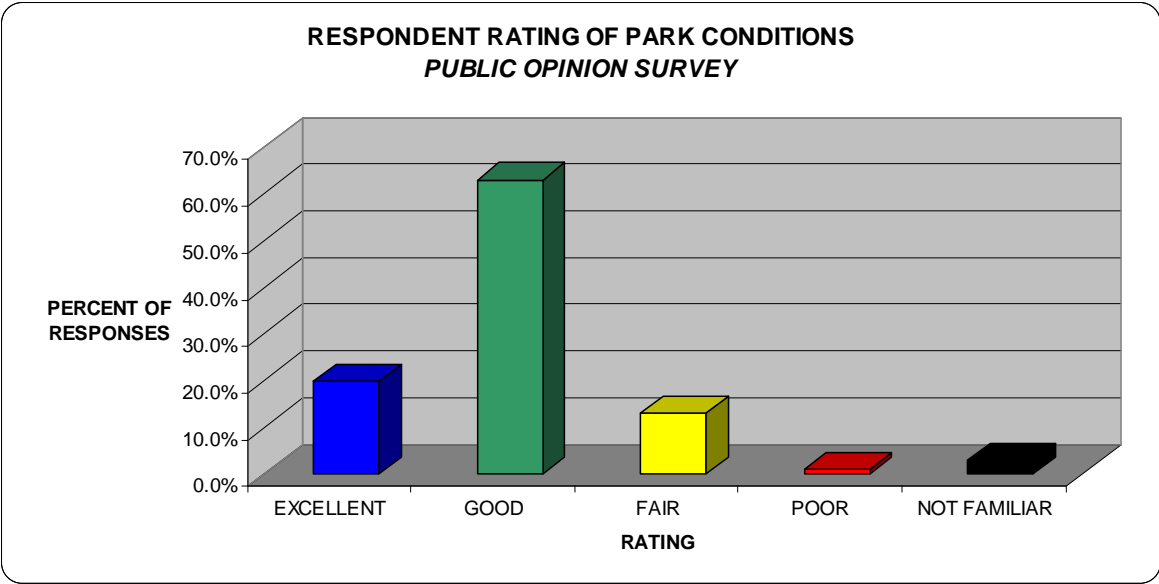
# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Public Opinion Survey

### Activities

The type of recreational activities that citizens are interested in constantly changes in a community as the population grows. Cultural and lifestyle changes in the population also contribute to a need to regularly poll the public for recreation preferences in order to properly plan for future facilities and programs. Respondents indicated that they are generally satisfied with the programs offered by the City and enjoyed the variety of choices for these activities.

Parks and Recreation Department staff report that participation in programmed activities is high, however some respondents indicated that they or their children were not currently taking advantage of these programs for a number of reasons. The most common reasons for not participating were **1.** Programs are cost prohibitive, **2.** Hours of operation are inconvenient, and **3.** Respondents do not have the time.



### Facility Conditions

Survey respondents were asked to rate the overall condition of park facilities and how well they are maintained. The vast majority of responses rated the parks as being in “GOOD” condition. Restrooms and other facilities were rated as being clean and well-maintained at least most of the time. Site inspections confirm this to be the case for most facilities.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Community Workshop

In order to fully understand the wants, needs and concerns of the public regarding parks and recreation programs and facilities, a community workshop was conducted on April 28, 2009. The community was invited to participate in the workshop via invitations using various media including mail-out inserts in the utility bill, radio advertisements, and two newspaper advertisements. Approximately thirty citizens joined City staff and consultants in discussions regarding all aspects of the parks system ranging from desired activities and amenities to ways for improving existing parks and facilities. A “Kids Park Workshop” was conducted on the same evening giving children an opportunity to tell the city what they deemed most important for parks. The painted tiles shown on the front cover of this plan were created during this workshop.



Workshop participants worked in groups of 4 or 5, discussing needs



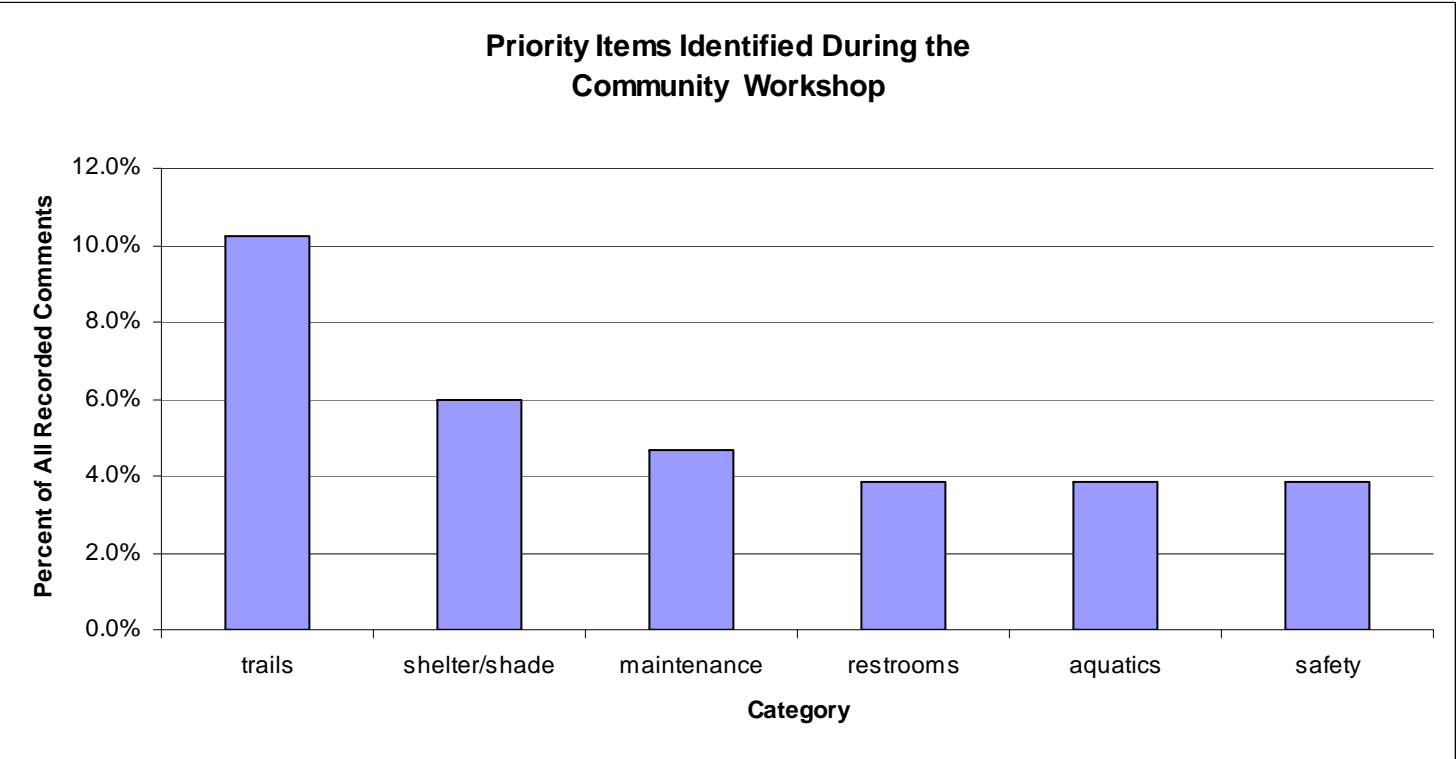
Each group presented their findings to the other groups.



Children participated in a “Kids Park Workshop” providing a child’s

### Priorities

The expressed needs of the workshop participants are widely varied, covering every aspect of the parks and recreation system. However, several subjects were repeatedly discussed as priorities for our parks and programs. Among these, the highest priority identified was the need for a system of trails for pedestrian and bicycle transit and recreation throughout the city. Other high priority items included shade/shelter, improved maintenance, more restrooms, more aquatics facilities and improved safety/security at parks.





Case Study - Results of the Candy Cane Park Charrette


In February of 2009, the City conducted a charrette, or workshop, with staff members of the Parks and Recreation Department to identify key areas of concern with Candy Cane Park. The City has set aside a budget for 2010 expenditures to improve features and facilities at Candy Cane Park, and the City desired staff input to better understand the priority needs for the park, Aquatics Center, Recreation Center and Activity Center. The charrette was facilitated as a working session with members from every division of the Parks and Recreation Department from Aquatics to Operations. Participants were provided maps and photos to guide discussions regarding the overall vision for the park as well as specific needs for facilities and programs including everything from repairing existing facilities to addition of new programs, equipment and buildings. The goal of the session was to prioritize these needs for the next funding cycle.

The needs identified by staff varied greatly depending on each person’s perspective and experience with working in and around the park or when visiting it as a user. With so many different needs and desires identified, it is apparent that not all of them could be implemented within the designated budget. Candy Cane Park is currently the most feature-rich park within the system. Some of the most serious issues identified are those regarding the potential to refit or rebuild the Recreation Center and expand the Aquatics Center. Other items discussed included the following categories:

- Adding new activities and programs.
- Redesigning the way people and vehicles move throughout the property.
- Landscaping and maintenance updates.
- Addressing scheduling conflicts to better utilize existing facilities.





A complete list of comments from the charrette is provided in the *Appendix*.

There is limited land for expansion to accommodate the needs and capacity pressure experienced by the park. It is with this in mind that the City leaders must decide the long-term future for the park . Currently, the park serves as the centerpiece of the parks system, but with a growing population and the desire to make improvements both to meet current capacity needs as well as offer new amenities, it may be necessary to consider development of a new recreation complex on the west side of Conroe to reduce pressure on existing facilities and provide for underserved areas of the community.



City of Conroe

Candy Cane Park Charrette



People

Programs & Scheduling

- Regional vs Neighborhood
- Group vs Individual Membership
- Demographics and Future Demand
- Socio-Economic and Lifestyle Effects



Structures


Facilities

(Renovations, Additions, Replacement, Relocation)

- Basketball
- Aquatics
- Pro Shop, Concessions
- Recreation Center
- Futsal






- Accessibility
- Maintenance





City of Conroe

Candy Cane Park Charrette



Path



Vehicular, Pedestrian, Parking

- Circulation
- Entry Monuments
- Access and Identity
- Signage and Way Finding

Land

Beautification & Maintenance

- Detention and Maintenance
- Erosion and Drainage
- Outdoor Education
- Safety, Accessibility, and Lighting







# Combined Results of Staff Input from the Candy Cane Park Charrette



# Path





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Connecting the Community

Through all phases of public and staff input, one of the highest priority needs identified for Conroe is a system of paths, trails, and bike lanes that connect the neighborhoods, schools, parks and public spaces. Cities across the nation are creating “walkable communities” with interconnected paths and trails linking important areas of the community together.

Development of a city-wide system of trails, paths, and bike lanes can be challenging in Conroe, as growth and development have increased the property values within the city limits. The most economically viable strategies for implementing a trail plan include the following:

- Building connections along city-owned properties, rights-of-way, and drainage easements
- Developing partnerships with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for development of trails along rights-of-way
- Developing partnerships with utility transmission companies for development of trails along utility transmission corridors
- Building connections along creeks and rivers within the city
- Building connections along railroad rights-of-way and properties
- Building bike lanes along city streets

The key to creating a successful trail system is making connections between public spaces. Important elements of the community to connect include schools, parks, business districts and neighborhoods. Available corridors for developing these connections include rights-of-way along roads, utility and drainage easements, creeks and floodways and railroad rights-of-way.

## Proposed Connections

### Street Rights-of-Way

One of the most feasible methods for creating trails within the City is along street rights-of-way. Property along these rights-of-way is already in public ownership thereby eliminating the need to acquire additional land. Connections along city streets can take a number of different forms depending on available space and costs for implementation. Proposed connections should include a variety of off-street paths, paths adjacent to the roadway and bike lanes adjacent to the curb. To decide which implementation is most suitable, it is important to consider what elements are being connected and who will be using the connection. For example, connections between neighborhoods and schools are best suited to off-street paths for safety purposes.

There are both significant opportunities and challenges to development of paths along street and highway rights-of-way such as available space and ownership by other agencies. Some of the most important connections may be made along highways owned by TxDOT, and would span the entire city. Other connections may be along City-owned streets but would cross state or county owned roads; and therefore, require agreements between agencies for implementation.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Connecting the Community

### Creeks, Drainage Easements & Floodways

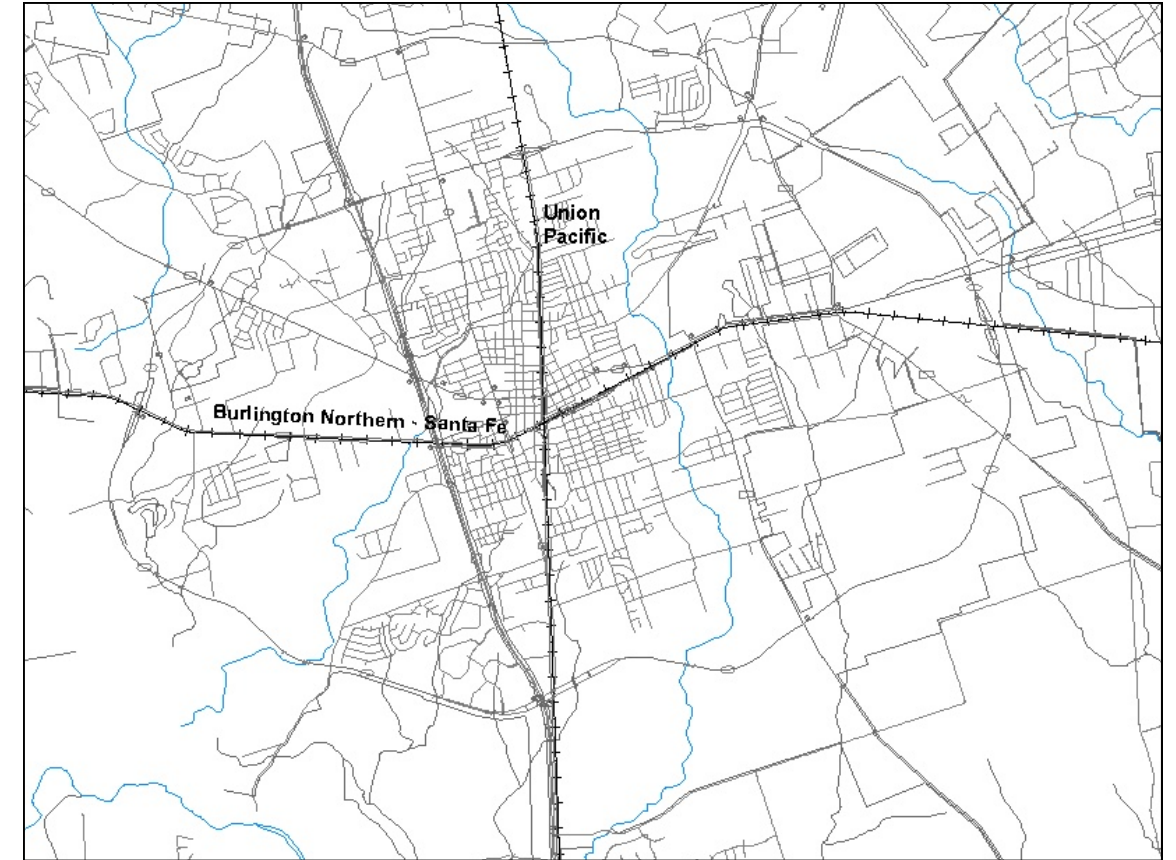
Another effective solution for creating connectivity throughout the community is development of trails along creeks, drainage easements and floodways. Trails along waterways offer travel between public spaces through scenic areas of the community that are not often visited. The primary feasibility concern for trail development along waterways is property ownership. Properties adjacent to natural drainages in Conroe typically have boundaries at the centerline of the creek or river. This may present difficulties with acquiring access; however, many of the man-made or improved natural drainages have City easements on both sides that would allow for trails.

### Rails-with-Trails

A planning solution gaining popularity all over the nation is the use of existing railroad rights-of-way to develop trail systems. With proper design trails can be developed within the rights-of-way of both inactive and active rail lines. Railroads have a long history in the City of Conroe. Establishment of the first railroad station known as *Conroe Switch* is what put the City on the map in the late 1800's. The existing rail lines bisect the community from north to south and from east to west and provide excellent opportunities for creating multi-modal transportation across the City. Railroads through Conroe are owned and operated by Burlington Northern - Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad Company and Union Pacific Railroad Company. Implementation requires extensive collaboration with the railroad companies to create dual-use agreements that cover design, installation, maintenance, management and liability issues related to the trail. Potential stakeholders involved would likely include the following:

- Railroad companies, including representatives of real estate, operations, maintenance, and legal departments;
- Railroad customers;
- Utility companies, such as telephone, cable, water, sewer, electric, and gas;
- Law enforcement officials;
- Other adjacent landowners;
- Trail user groups; and
- Transportation, public transit, parks and recreation, and health departments.

(source: Federal Highway Administration)



The Cottonbelt Trail along DART line - Grapevine, Texas  
(source: Federal Highway Administration)

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Connecting the Community

In addition to creating connections throughout the community, rails-with-trails can provide other benefits to both the community and railroad companies. Some potential benefits to stakeholders include:

- Reduced liability costs;
- Financial compensation;
- Reduced petty crime, trespassing, dumping, and vandalism;
- Reduced illegal track crossings through channelization of users to grade-separated or well-designed at-grade crossings;
- Increased public awareness of railroad company service;
- Increased tourism revenue;
- Increased adjacent property values.

(source: Federal Highway Administration)

A primary concern of most railroad companies is that of liability. Typically, the rails-with-trails manager (city) takes on this liability with standard insurance. A study of 61 rails-with-trails along active lines by the Rails to Trails Conservancy found only 2 successful claims against rail managers, one of which involved a stray farm animal.

### Bike Lanes

A popular solution to creating opportunities for multi-modal transportation in a community is to designate bike lanes along streets and thoroughfares. Bike lanes are effective in creating connections where traditional paths will not fit within the existing right-of-way of a street. The success of implementing bike lanes is by clearly identifying the lanes through the use of pavement markings and signage. Some cities have painted their bike lanes with a bright color to ensure that they are not mistaken for road shoulders.

### Challenges

With implementation of any trail system there are challenges to overcome. During a casual drive around the City of Conroe one can clearly see that the highest frequency pedestrian and bicycle traffic is in the older section of town on the east side of Interstate Highway 45. Typical street rights-of-way in the neighborhoods on this side of town are narrow, have no sidewalks, and have open-ditch storm water drainage systems. In many of these areas it is difficult to find space for a traditional path or even a bike lane. Solutions to this scenario would likely include installation of underground stormwater drainage with curb and gutter pavement to effectively widen the street for installation of either a bike lane, sidewalk, or other type of pathway.



Designated bike lanes provide safe, economical transit solutions.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail System

### Findings:

A trail system has been identified as one of the highest priority items both in past and current master planning processes.

There are very limited pedestrian connections between the east and west sides of Interstate 45.

There are opportunities to create pedestrian and bicycle connections between parks, schools, neighborhoods and business districts throughout the City using street rights-of-way, utility easements, drainage corridors and railroad rights-of-way.

### Recommendations:

Develop proposed connections as identified in the Trail System Concept.

Create partnerships with other agencies as needed to implement the trail plan.

Total Length of Proposed Trail System: 23.0 miles

**Probable Level of Investment:** \$5,300,000 - \$6,000,000



Utility easement opportunity for trail connection.



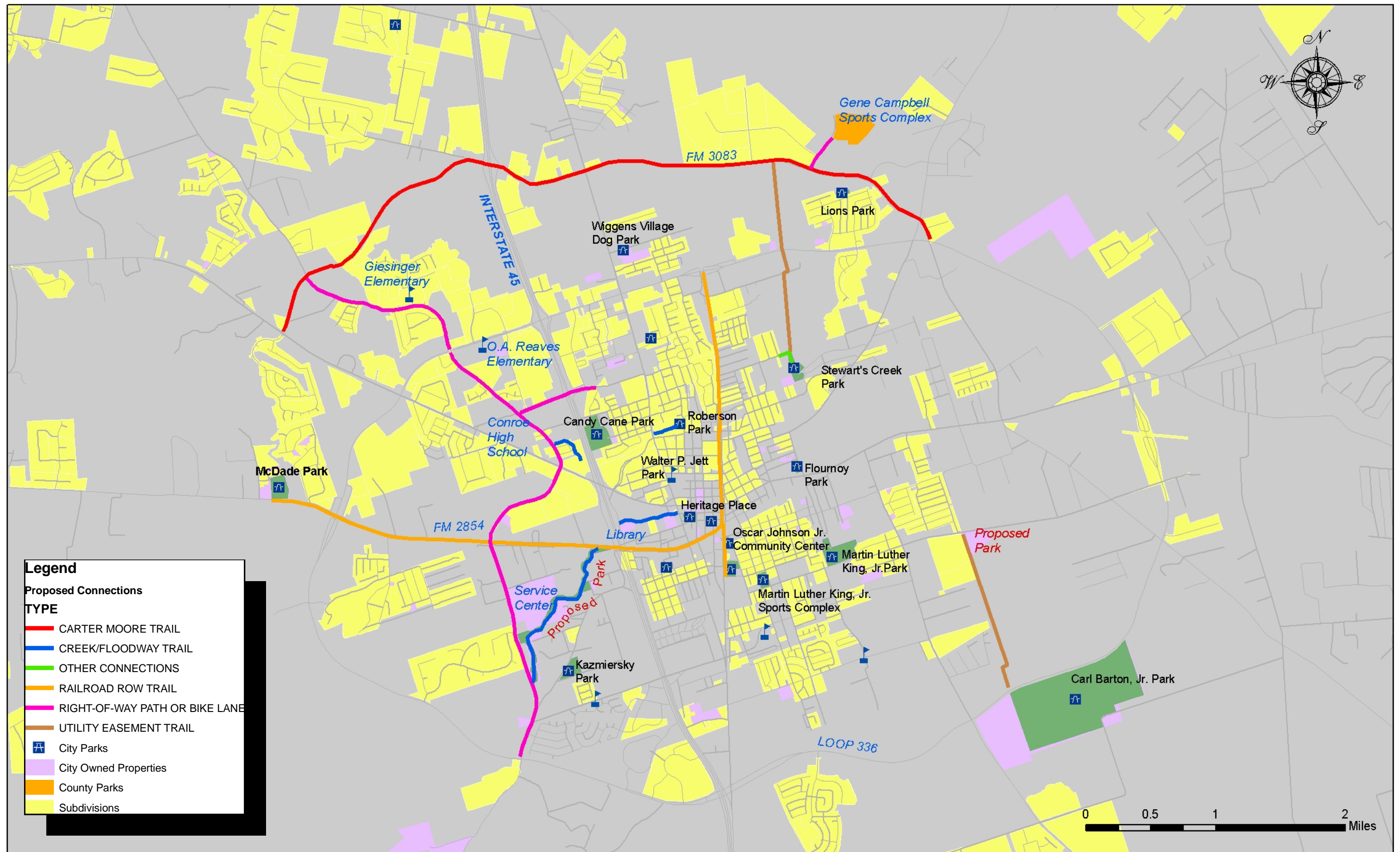
Precedent trail section at Stewart's Creek Park



Wide right-of-way along Sgt. Ed Holcombe creates opportunity for significant connections.



# Trail System Concept



# Probable Level of Investment - Trail System Concept

Trail Segment	Construction Type	Width	Length	Estimated Cost/LF	Estimated Cost	Phase
Longmire (N. Loop to S. Loop)	Concrete	8'	20,300	59	1,198,000.00	I
Alligator Creek (Library to SH 75)	Crushed Granite	8'	2,478	16	40,000.00	I
Union Pacific Railroad (N. Loop to Lewis Park)	Concrete	8'	12,420	59	733,000.00	I
BNSF Railroad (McDade Park to UP Railroad)	Crushed Granite	8'	18,800	16	301,000.00	I
<b>Phase I Total</b>					<b>2,272,000.00</b>	
Carter Moore Drive	Concrete	8'	31,412	59	1,853,000.00	II
Longmire (N. Loop to FM 3083)	Concrete	8'	7,380	59	435,000.00	II
Alligator Creek Linear Park (FM 2854 to Longmire)	Crushed Granite	8'	7,315	16	117,000.00	II
Utility Easement (Stewart's Creek Park to FM 3083)	Crushed Granite	8'	7,870	16	126,000.00	II
<b>Phase II Total</b>					<b>2,531,000.00</b>	
Hidden Creek (Carl Barton Park to Hidden Creek Property)	Crushed Granite	8'	6,710	16	107,000.00	III
Wilson Road (Longmire to Robinhood )	Concrete	8'	3,290	59	194,000.00	III
Utility Easement (Stewart's Creek Park to Gilmore Subdivision)	Crushed Granite	8'	890	16	14,000.00	III
Drainage Easement (Roberson Park to SH 75)	Crushed Granite	8'	1,052	16	17,000.00	III
TxDot Road (Gene Campbell Sports Park to FM 3083)	Concrete	8'	1,570	59	93,000.00	III
<b>Phase III Total</b>					<b>425,000.00</b>	
<b>System Total</b>			121,487		<b>5,300,000.00</b>	
			23.0 Miles			





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Landscaping and Beautification

One of the most important components of any recreational experience at a park is the quality and aesthetics of the landscape. Parks serve not only as places to participate in structured activities, but as places for leisure and relaxation as well. Inspection of the parks has revealed that several of the facilities, though generally well-maintained, could benefit from some landscape improvements.

### School Parks

School parks in Conroe tend to have the highest levels of foot traffic and consequently suffer from poor turfgrass conditions. These parks could additionally benefit from general improvements to the landscaping such as flower beds, shrubs, and additional benches.

One goal of the Parks and Recreation Department and Conroe ISD is to develop educational components within school park areas. Schools across the nation are developing educational gardens on school properties of all levels. One of the challenges in implementation of these gardens is the initial construction of the planting areas. Partnerships between the City and Conroe ISD could allow for the City to build the planting beds and other garden structures such as trellises and arbors, and the school district could provide plant materials and develop a curriculum that aligns gardening with the state curriculum requirements known as the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)*.

### Lighting and Wayfinding

Some of the more subtle features of a parks system are the lighting around activity areas and parking lots, and the signage that helps people to navigate to and within parks. A topic discussed by several groups during the Community Workshop was the need to enhance lighting along walking paths at a number of parks. Citizens have reported that they would like to be able to use walking paths in the evening hours, but often do not feel safe due to a lack of lighting. Additional lighting could help to improve the sense of security at some of the parks.

Also discussed was the need to help citizens find parks throughout the City. One citizen suggested posting maps of the entire parks system at each park. Posting such maps would likely increase the number of visitors to lesser-known parks in the community. An example of how wayfinding may increase the number of users is with improvements to Walter P. Jett Park. Walter P. Jett Park is completely fenced, has no signage and appears to be inaccessible to many people. By using signage and adding a prominent entrance gate along North Frazier St., the park will likely be more inviting.



Giesinger Elementary Park suffers from a lack of turfgrass and subsequent soil erosion.



Educational gardens at schools provide excellent opportunities to study a variety of subjects.



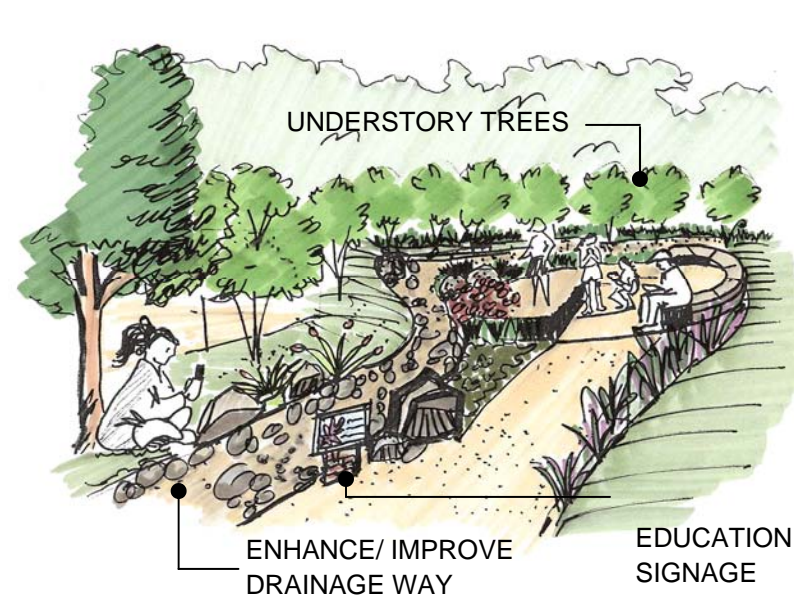
# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Case Study - City of Conroe PARD Restorative School Landscape Considerations

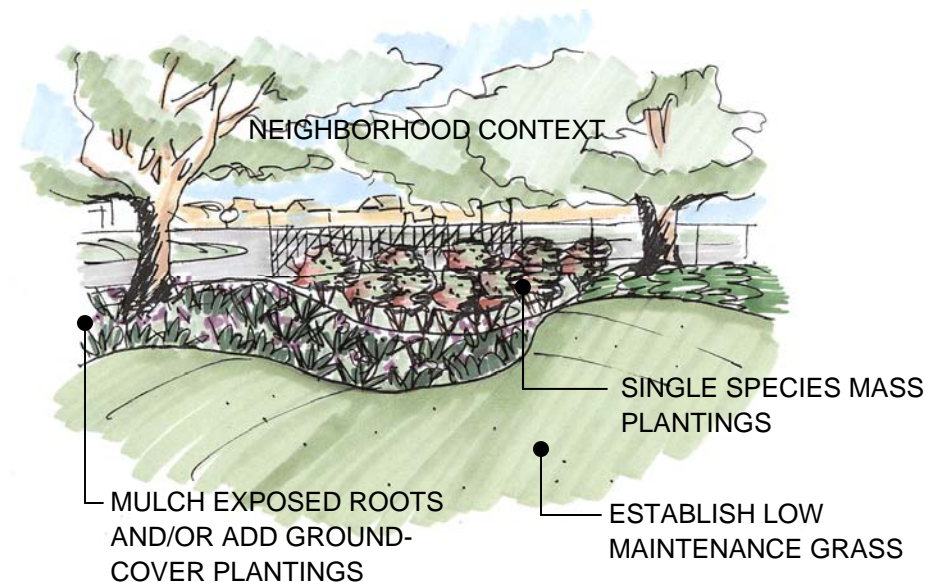
Several of the parks located at elementary schools suffer from poor landscaping and turfgrass conditions. These parks offer excellent opportunities for creating outdoor classrooms and improving the user experience when visiting the park.

### Guidelines for Implementation:

- A site analysis plan should be prepared that depicts current conditions (existing vegetation, buildings, athletic facilities, walks, parking, soils, utilities, drainage, and property boundaries) as well as the physical condition of each item.
- Meet with school professionals and maintenance staff at each campus to determine expectations, budget, and level of maintenance
- Develop opportunities and constraints by evaluating soils, microclimate, views, traffic patterns, hazard conditions, and user input.
- Design concepts may include: “No-Mow” lawns, mass plantings, unified plant beds, class gardens, memorial plantings, flowering trees at entry ways, single species impact, school year color and bloom times, native and ornamental grasses, perennial color, demonstration gardens and outdoor classrooms.
- The final master plan for each school should prioritize health and safety issues first. The remaining goals of each plan will favorably impact the environment, improve school pride, and enhance the community’s image.



**Outdoor Classroom Opportunity**



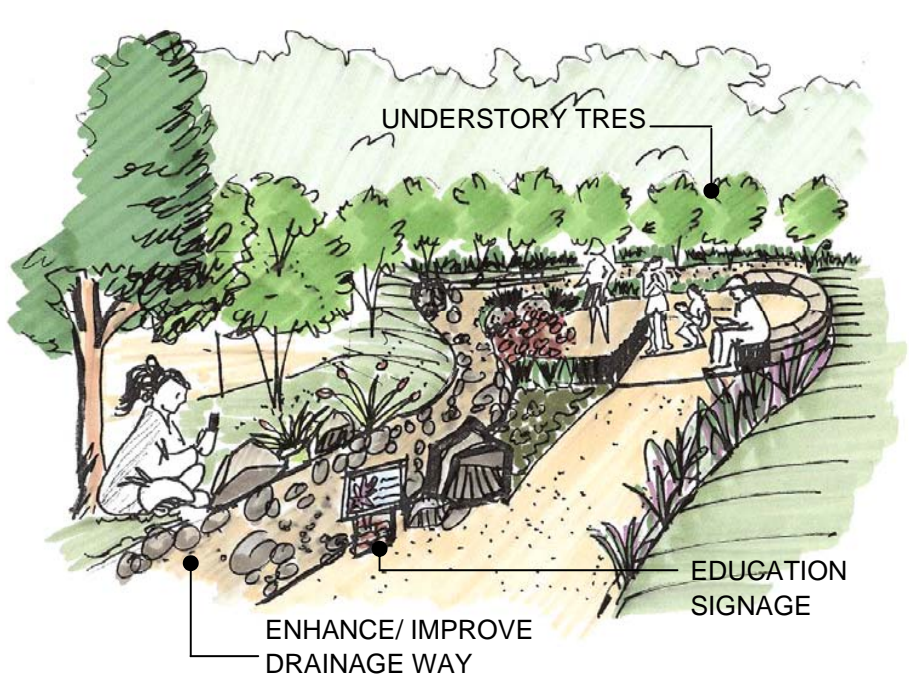
**General Landscape Restoration Concepts**



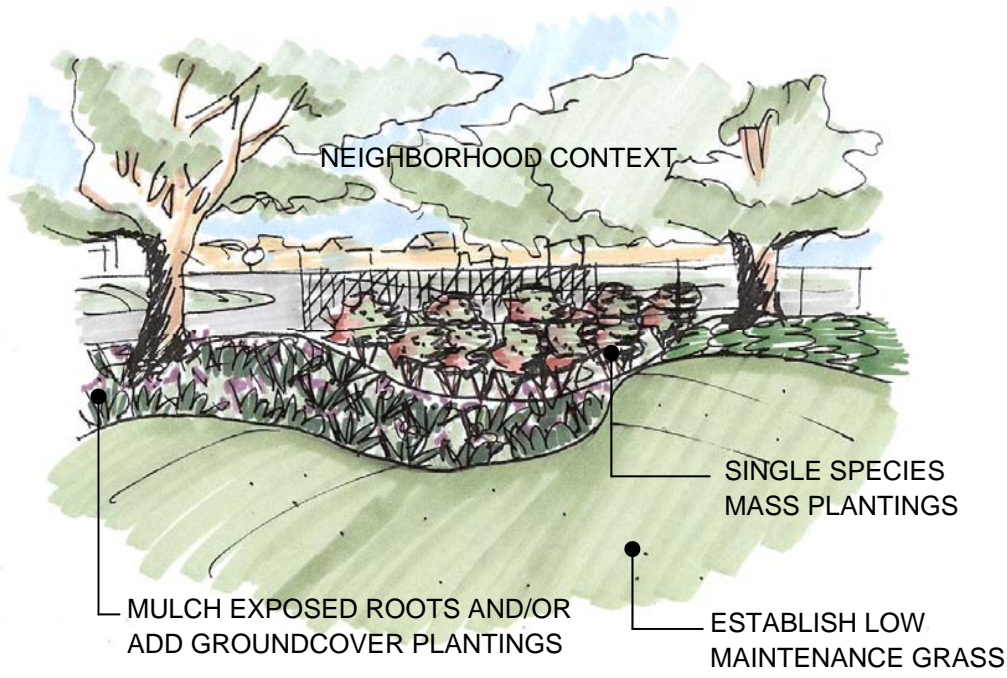
# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Case Study - City of Conroe PARD Restorative School Landscape Considerations

A site analysis plan should be prepared that depicts current conditions (existing vegetation, buildings, athletic facilities, walks, parking, soils, utilities, drainage, and property boundaries) as well as the physical condition of each item.



Outdoor Classroom Opportunity



General Landscape Restoration Concepts





# Shelter





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Shelter

One of the most important issues identified through public input and site inspection process for the Conroe parks system is the need to provide for the citizen's basic level of comfort. Shelter can be defined as the provision of protection from the elements, but may also include other basic features that allow for an enjoyable experience while visiting a park such as shade, adequate and well-maintained restrooms facilities and drinking fountains. Often, these features of a park are some of the most expensive elements to develop and to maintain.

The concept of shade can take on many forms within a park. In the hot Texas summers, this can be one of the most important factors in a user's recreational experience and is a stated priority among citizens. A balanced approach to providing protection from the elements is best-achieved through a variety of approaches including: natural shade, traditional pavilions and smaller shade structures such as canopies and shade sails.

### Pavilions

The City currently maintains a total of 15 pavilions of varied size within the parks system. These pavilions are used regularly for activities such as family picnics, birthday parties, and other events. Pavilions are openly available to the public for use during park operation hours unless they have been reserved by a group ahead of time. Discussions with City staff and citizens indicate that there are often conflicts between groups with reservations and those without for use of the limited number of pavilions. Additional comments indicate that most of the pavilions are too large, and much of the available space is under-utilized. To meet this demand for additional pavilions for the above-mentioned activities, the following actions are recommended:

- Construct additional small pavilions and/or shade structures over picnic tables
- Discontinue reservation of pavilions and allow use on a "first come" basis

### Alternative Shade Structures

When the demand for shade is solely to provide comfort and protection from the elements, rather than for creating a gathering space for events, simple shade structures can be highly effective. Studies of public input and park inspections indicate a need for additional shade around play structures, around the swimming pool at Oscar Johnson, Jr. Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Wiggins Village Off-Leash Dog Park and White Oak Point Park. A popular trend in parks across the nation is the use of modern "shade sails" that can provide creative, economical solutions to shade needs.



Shade structures over play areas can make parks more inviting during hot summer months.



Providing a shade structure at the Oscar Johnson, Jr. Park's swimming facility would greatly improve the user's experience.

# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Shelter

### Restrooms

In addition to the traditional idea of physical shelter, one of the most important components of providing for a park user's basic level of comfort is having adequate and well-maintained restroom facilities. The City currently maintains 12 restroom facilities within 10 park locations.

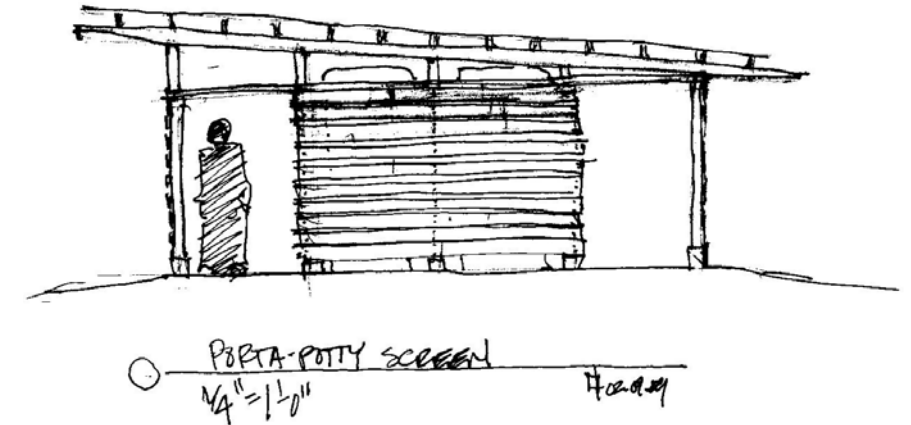
Public input studied indicates that restrooms are among the highest priority items of need in the parks system. The City is well-aware of the demand for these facilities and has made great strides to continue providing these amenities.

Challenges to providing adequate restroom facilities in the parks system include the overall cost of installation and frequent vandalism experienced at many of the facilities. Vandalism is a common problem in many City parks systems, and is best combated through design. The use of more vandalism-proof and more easily maintained construction materials can be an effective tool, as well as locating facilities in open and frequently visited areas of the park.

Construction of traditional restrooms facilities can be costly depending on the size and type of structures. An economical solution to this problem is currently being implemented in the design and construction of temporary restroom facilities at the new Shadow Lakes Park. This temporary facility utilizes a pair of portable toilets that are housed in an attractive shelter to increase the level of comfort and visual appeal. This strategy can be implemented at a fraction of the cost of traditional restrooms. This solution would require an accompanied maintenance contract for cleaning. More traditional facilities can be constructed economically using pre-cast buildings with either flush systems or alternative waterless systems.

### Drinking Water

Providing adequate sources of drinking water for park visitors should be a priority of any park system. Comments from public survey responses, the community workshop and discussions with Park Ambassadors show that citizens would like availability of drinking water at their favorite parks. Of particular note, athletic areas such as tennis courts, basketball courts and athletic practice fields are in great need of drinking fountains. During inspections of the parks, it was noted that none of the outdoor drinking fountains are currently functioning properly, and most of them are completely broken or in bad repair. The City should work toward the goal of ensuring at least one drinking fountain is available at each park. Some parks may require more than one fountain to adequately serve the public need. Future water fountain installations and replacements should be made with vandal-proof, weather-resistant fountains.





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Drinking Fountains

### Findings

Ten (10 ) parks have water fountains (11 fountains total).

Six (6) of these fountains are non-functional.

Every park should have at least one drinking fountain.

Some parks require additional fountains.

- See Appendix for fountain locations.

### Recommendations

Install sixteen (16) 2-station drinking fountains at designated parks.

Install four (4) 2-station drinking fountains with dog stations at designated parks.

### Probable Level of Investment

Total probable level of investment for installation of all fountains are estimated at \$82,800.00.

Plan for implementation of this task over next five years (\$16,560.00 per year)

Existing drinking fountains in City parks are in poor condition



Drinking Fountain Recommendations						
Parks Needing Drinking Fountains	Total New Fountains Needed (Includes Replacements)	Estimated Cost Per 2-Station Fixture	Estimated Cost Per 2-Station+Dog Bowl Fixture	Total Cost 2-Station Fixtures (16)	Total Cost 2-Station +Dog Bowl Fixtures (4)	Total Drinking Fountain Costs
13	20	\$4,000.00	\$4,700.00	\$64,000.00	\$18,800.00	\$82,800.0



2 - Station Steel Pedestal



2 - Station Steel Pedestal with



2 - Station Concrete



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Restrooms

### Findings

Six (6) City parks have no restroom facilities.

Five (5) school parks have no restroom facilities.

Three (3) parks have locked restrooms except for sporting events (MLK, Jr. Sports Complex, Carl Barton, Jr. Park & Lewis Park)

Restrooms are one of the highest priorities identified through public input.

### Recommendations

Construct restroom facilities at 1. Lions Park, 2. Flournoy Park, 3. Milltown Park and 4. near the lake and playground area at Carl Barton, Jr. Park.

Make existing restrooms at MLK, Jr. Sports Complex, Carl Barton, Jr. Park & Lewis Park available at all times.

### Construction Options

Pre-engineered Buildings - Flush Toilet Systems	Pros	Cons
Pre-engineered Buildings - Waterless Systems	Most User-Friendly	Somewhat Costly
	Environmentally Friendly	No Hand Washing Stations
	No water source needed	
	Lower maintenance	
Portable Toilet Systems	Lowest Cost System	Maintenance Contract Needed
		Perceived as Unsanitary

### Probable Level of Investment:

Option A: Flush System, Pre-Cast Building, 2 fixtures - \$44,000 ea.*	Total for all recommended installs - \$176,000
Option B: Waterless System, Pre-Cast Building, 2 fixtures - \$30,000 ea.*	Total for all recommended installs - \$120,000

\* note: Does not include shipping costs.



Flush System Double Facility



Waterless Double Facility



Interior of a Waterless Facility

Source: ROMTEC, Inc.; Restroom





# Play



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Play

The citizens of Conroe participate in a wide variety of activities while visiting city parks and recreation facilities. While some people engage in programmed activities such as team sports, others are there to exercise, have a picnic, play disc golf, or even go fishing. One of the stated goals of the Parks Master Plan is to provide a variety of recreation opportunities at each facility. Recent public input has revealed a number of specific items of concern or interest regarding the parks, programs and facilities available.

### Sports

The Parks and Recreation Department offers numerous opportunities for participation in sporting activities such as soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, tennis and disc golf. One of the fastest growing sports in Conroe is soccer, and there is a growing demand for additional playing fields.

By NRPA standards, athletic practice and competition fields for baseball and softball are adequate for Conroe's population. However, as growth continues it will be important to maintain that level of service. To meet future demands, it should be a policy to develop athletic practice fields within all new parks. These fields can serve as passive areas when not in use for team sports.

### Aquatics

The City currently offers a substantial aquatics program with facilities that rival that of many cities throughout the state. The Aquatics Center has two year-round enclosed swimming pools for educational and fitness programs, lap swimming and recreational swimming. The second pool houses a 13 foot diving well with both diving platforms and boards. The outdoor pool, primarily used for recreational swimming includes a zero-depth entry swim area with a large play structure including water slides and various water blasters and spray devices. In addition to facilities at the Aquatics Center, the Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center offers a swimming facility with a user capacity of approximately 150 people. Aquatics programs offered by the City include lessons in swimming (all ages), SCUBA classes, diving classes, lifeguard training and more.

Aquatics staff report that the facilities at the Aquatics Center are regularly visited at full capacity throughout the summer season, at times with people waiting in line for an opening. The facilities at Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center are used at a much lower rate. Staff have indicated that this is largely due to the attraction of the play structures at the Aquatics Center and the proximity to other amenities offered at Candy Cane Park and the Recreation Center. The total capacity of the aquatics center facilities is approximately 400 people at a given time. The pool at Oscar Johnson, Jr. Community Center can serve up to 150 people.

In order to meet the current demand, additional aquatics facilities are needed in Conroe. By NRPA standards, Conroe's aquatics system should be able to serve approximately 3 to 5 % of the population at any given time. With a total current capacity just over 500, there is a clear need to expand the system to meet current and future demands. City staff have indicated that any future aquatics facilities should include shallow water or zero-depth/zero-entry play structures such as splash pads and spray equipment in addition to recreational swimming areas.





**Skate Park**

The skatepark at Kasmiersky Park is a well-used facility with visitors almost every day of the year. The skatepark offers variety of features including half-pipe and quarter-pipe ramps, grind rails, fun boxes and other ramps and obstacles. Over the last few years the park has begun to show wear due to the elements and heavy use. The masonite ramp surfaces are beginning to decay, metal flashing and coping has become loose and some screws are missing. With the need to either repair or rebuild these structures, it becomes necessary to consider how best to use the site. Prior to being a skatepark, the site hosted tennis courts and a handball court. Currently there appears to be little or no use of the handball court and a demand for additional tennis courts. In order to meet the demands for these activities, it is recommended to consider construction of a new skatepark at a different location within Kasmiersky Park and returning the current site to tennis courts.



The skatepark offers a variety of ramps and other structures.



Ramp surfaces are beginning to decay.



Metal flashing is loose and missing screws on several of the ramps.

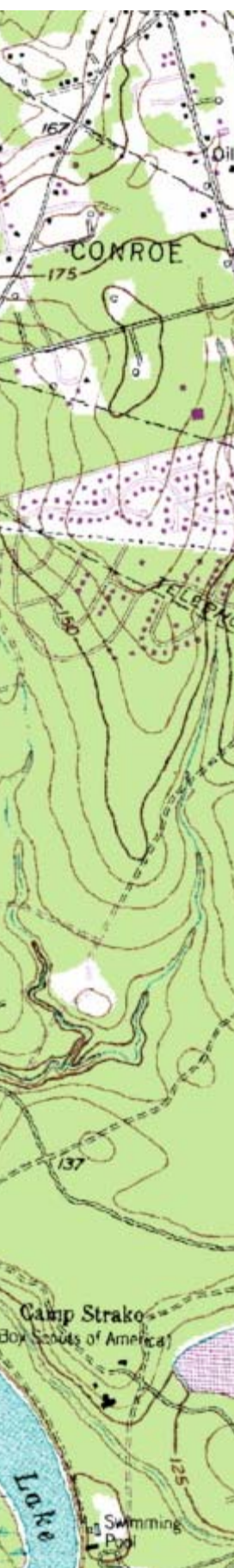


The existing skatepark and handball court sites could be repurposed as tennis courts provided that a new skatepark is built at a different location.





# Land





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Finding Additional Park Space

As the City continues to grow and develop, demand for park and recreation facilities will increase accordingly. Additionally, land prices in the Conroe area have been steadily rising in recent years. With projected growth of approximately 10% over the next five years, acquiring additional park land is a high priority. Several strategies identified for economically addressing the need for additional park space include using existing city-owned properties, developing partnerships with other agencies and private interests, and creating a park land dedication ordinance.

### City-Owned Properties

The City of Conroe currently owns more than 1,000 acres of land within the city limits. These properties include existing parks and recreation facilities, the City Service Center and public works properties and drainage corridors. Many other properties are currently undeveloped land that would serve well for park space and trail corridors.

### Developing Partnerships

Collaboration between other agencies and private entities can create opportunities for use of park land to the mutual benefit of all parties involved. The City has demonstrated this with the development of parks on six elementary school properties.

The agreement between Conroe ISD and the City of Conroe allows for the City to use the park during after-school hours in exchange for developing the park for the school. These agreements should be continued and expanded in the future. Agreements with other agencies such as Montgomery County, Texas Department of Transportation, the Brazos Transit District and even private landowners can offer economical solutions to growing needs for park space.

### County Properties

The City and the County have a long history of working alongside each other when both parties benefit from each other. The County has some properties, such as the overflow parking area at the Lone Star Convention Center and Montgomery County Park, that are not always in use. Such property could easily be used for temporary athletic practice fields for soccer and baseball when not in use by County programs. This type of agreement would alleviate an identified need for additional fields at little or no cost to the County or the City.

### TxDOT Rights-Of-Way

A high priority for Conroe citizens is the development of a city-wide system of trails, paths and bike lanes connecting key features of the community. With limited space available within City street rights-of-way, it can be difficult to accommodate this need. Major arterial roads and highways owned by the Texas Department of Transportation often have significantly larger rights-of-way that may be able to accommodate off-street paths. Although many of these rights-of-way have been acquired for the purpose of future road expansion, a dialogue with TxDOT planners could yield opportunities for significant connectivity throughout Conroe.



Highway rights-of-way can often accommodate bike lanes or off-street paths.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Finding Additional Park Space

### Private Landowners

An often overlooked opportunity for developing additional parks in a community is by forming partnerships with private landowners. The City has made one such agreement with a neighborhood association when White Oak Point Park was recently built. Land that is unusable due to site constraints such as space and floodplain issues, is often left vacant in many private developments.

In commercial developments, the County requires mitigation of increased stormwater runoff, typically through the use of detention facilities. Many of the detention facilities in Conroe are unsightly and seemingly a poor use of space. The City could form joint-use agreements with private developments to use detention facilities for parks as well. Incentives for the developer/landowner might include tax abatements, maintenance agreements, or other measures to encourage the creation of parks and public open space in these facilities.



This Northwest Houston detention facility has been designed for recreation with a walking path, fishing pier and seating. The park is frequently visited by residents of



A typical detention facility such as this one could serve as a small park as well.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Funding Opportunities

As the City continues with improvements and additions to the parks system, funding is often the key player in the decision making process. The Parks and Recreation Department is primarily funded by the Conroe Industrial Development Corporation, but some projects may need additional assistance in order to be realized. There are a variety of State and Federal grant programs available to aid cities in the enhancement of parks and recreation facilities and programs.

### **Community Development Block Grants**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides assistance to communities across the nation for a wide range of activities through the Community Development Block Grants Program. These funds are often distributed to individual communities by the state as match-grants to fund projects supporting economic development and improved quality of life. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department awards grants from this program annually to develop and enhance parks and open space.

### **Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) - Recreation Trails Program**

The *Transportation Safety Act*, also known as the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)*, provides for the distribution of funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Federal Highway Administration is the largest source of funding for shared use paths, trails and related projects. The Recreational Trails Program, an assistance program to FHWA, distributes funds for a range of activities including:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails.
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages.
- Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands).
- Acquisition of easements or property for trails.
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance.
- Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training) (limited to 5 percent of a State's funds).
- State administrative costs related to this program (limited to 7 percent of a State's funds).



Funding Opportunities

TRPA Grants Program

The Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) is funded by a portion of Texas sales tax received on select sporting goods. These funds are administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Recreation Grants Branch for five programs including the following:

- 1. Outdoor Recreation
- 2. Indoor Recreation (facility)
- 3. Small Community
- 4. Regional
- 5. Community Outdoor Outreach Program

These grants are awarded to applicants annually at varied levels depending on project type and available resources for the funding cycle.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a program of the National Park Service that provides matching grants to local governments for acquisition of park land and development of park facilities.

Park Dedication Ordinance

An effective tool for ensuring adequate land will be available for parks and recreation is to codify a park dedication ordinance. Park dedication ordinances typically require new residential subdivisions to develop a designated amount of park land within a development. The amount of land required is usually based upon a formula calculating the total number of acres per number of housing units. An alternative is usually offered for developers to pay in-lieu fees into a park fund for development of parks and recreation land and facilities. These ordinances have several important components defined within the document including:

Key Components of a Successful Park Land Dedication Ordinance

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Defined goals and purpose of the code | 5. Description of fee payments and park fund |
| 2. Applicability                         | 6. Criteria for development of parks         |
| 3. Planning methods                      | 7. Site selection characteristics            |
| 4. Calculation of requirements           | 8. Refunds and Appeals                       |





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Linear Park Along Alligator Creek

With the goals of this parks master plan in mind, a case study was performed as an example to show how a park development scenario can address the following issues:

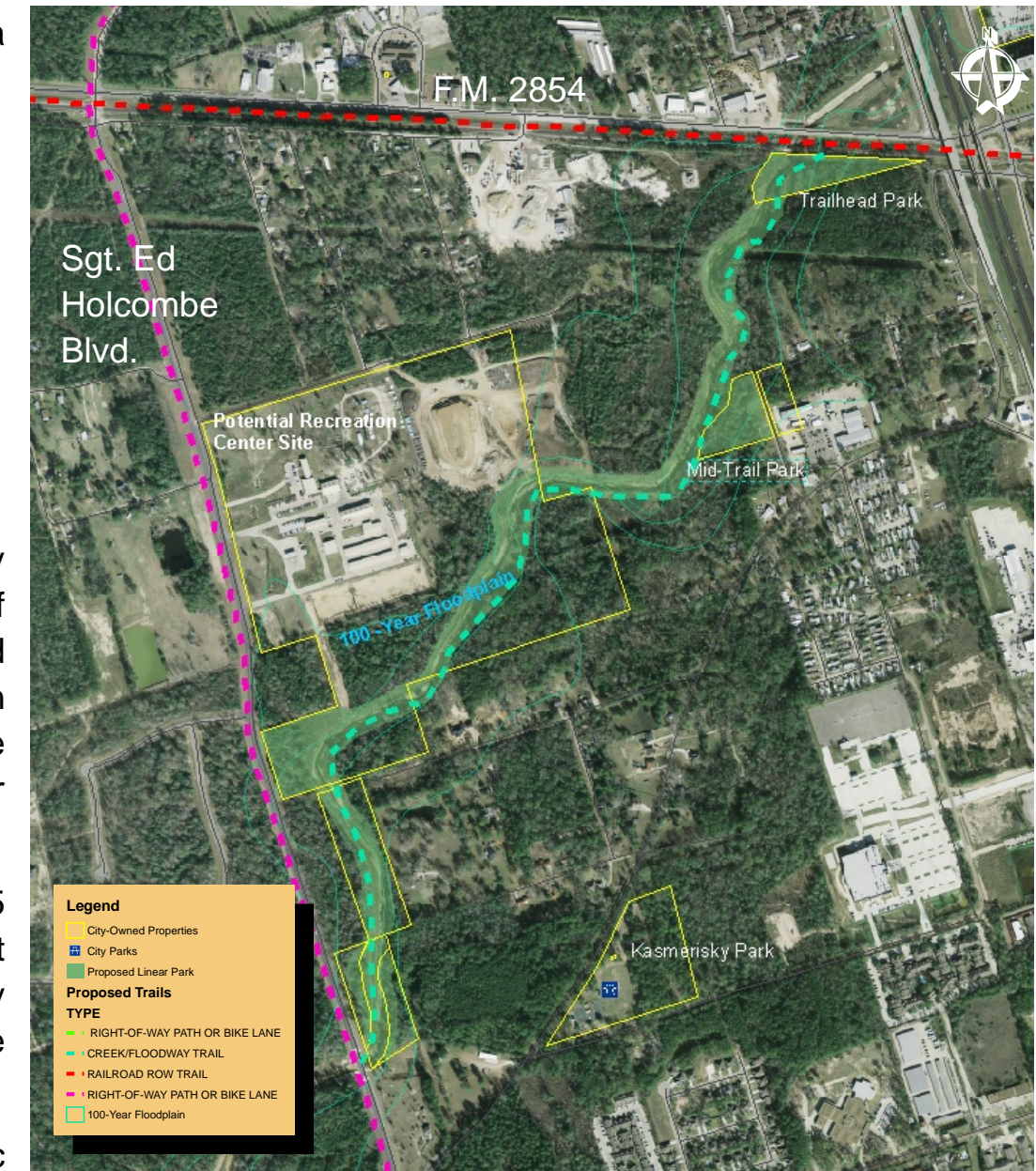
- Provide adequate park space for a growing population.
- Provide more recreation opportunities in underserved areas of the community.
- Establish a system of pedestrian and bicycle connections within the community.
- Identify economically viable ways to increase the acreage of park lands.
- Preserve and enhance natural resources.
- Address the need for additional aquatics facilities.

With the high prices of land in Conroe, opportunities for development of parks within properties already under City ownership become an important consideration. The City currently owns a number of parcels of land adjacent to the City Service Center and along portions of Alligator Creek between F.M. 2854 and Longmire Rd. These parcels cover a total land area of approximately 104 acres. Much of this land is within the 100-year floodplain; and therefore, has limited use for development. County policies prohibit the development of commercial or residential buildings within these areas, but there is potential for development of trails and some park features.

Studies of the current parks system indicate that areas of the City on the west side of Interstate Highway 45 are currently underserved. With demographic projections showing the highest growth potential on the west side, developing additional park lands to serve this area is important. The City Service Center is currently the core of operations for the Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works; however, there are opportunities to maximize the use of this property while continuing to provide space for these operations.

As discussed earlier, the Candy Cane Park Charrette yielded a wealth of information regarding specific needs to address at Candy Cane Park, the Recreation Center, the Aquatics Center and the Activity Center.

Among the many findings of the charrette, was the identified need for an expansion of the Recreation Center to accommodate a growing number of users. Also identified is the need to increase the available aquatics facilities throughout the city. With the west side of Conroe being geographically underserved, it is important to consider the development of an additional Recreation Center on the west side of town. Property at the Service Center, or the purchase of property adjacent to the Service Center but out of the floodplain could be developed into a recreation complex. With the development of a linear park along Alligator Creek, additional opportunities would be provided for pedestrian and bicycle connections, preservation and enhancement of natural resources, potential outdoor education and awareness as well as addressing underserved areas of the community.





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Linear Park Along Alligator Creek

### Opportunities

Develop a 1.4 mile long segment of the proposed Master Plan trail system.

Create pedestrian/bicycle connection to proposed New Recreation Center

Take advantage of greenway and waterway along Alligator Creek

### Recommendations

Acquire remaining land along Alligator Creek between FM 2854 and Sgt. Ed Holcombe Blvd. by purchase or easement.

Develop proposed trail segment as identified in Trail System recommendations.

Develop trailhead park along FM 2854 with parking and wayfinding.

Consider development mid-trail passive park area/open space within City-owned property along trail (see map).

### Probable Level of Investment:

Trails: see Trail System Recommendations

Park Areas: \$250,000 - \$400,000



View of Alligator Creek from FM 2854 facing south.



Conceptual sketch of a crushed granite walking trail along Alligator Creek shown with improved landscaping, lighting and benches.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Hidden Creek Park

### Opportunities

Develop a new 16 acre community park in underserved area of the far-east side of Conroe.

Economy - Utilize property already owned by City of Conroe

Fulfill need for more athletic practice fields as identified in public input.

Fulfill need for more “larger parks” as identified in public input.

Fulfill need for more walking paths at parks as identified in public input.

### Recommendations

Develop 16 acre park at property near Hidden Creek Subdivision.

Construct approximately 1/2 mile of walking paths around park

Construct 5 picnic tables on concrete slabs.

Construct two 12' x 12' picnic shelters .

Install playground with an approximate 65' x 30' play surface.

Construct parking for a total capacity of 40 cars.

Construct a 40' x 60' Pavilion.

Construct a 2 station, flush system, pre-cast restroom facility.

**Probable Level of Investment** - \$750,000 - 1,000,000

(Program Dependent)



Preliminary concept drawing for a new community park at the Hidden Creek property owned by the City of Conroe.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Recreation Center and Aquatics Facility

### Findings

Existing Recreation Center has very limited space for expansion of any kind.

Demand for additional facilities and features will be difficult to meet with existing Recreation Center.

Administrative operations will operate more efficiently if at the same location.

Existing Recreation Center is inconvenient to access by residents west of Interstate 45.

Construction of new facility allows for complete control over design and available features.

Land adjacent to the site could be considered for acquisition should expansion be desired.

Current aquatics facilities do not have the capacity to meet current or future demands.

### Recommendations

Consider development of an additional 12,000 to 15,000 square foot recreation center on the northwest corner of the Service Center Property.

Consider relocation of recreation administrative activities to Service Center and New Recreation Center.

Additional recreation center should aim to serve additional capacity above that served by existing facilities.

Consider development of an approximate 32,000 square foot aquatics facility adjacent to the proposed recreation center.

The aquatics facility should focus on recreation rather than sports and instructional activities.

The aquatics facility should have a splash pad/zero-depth area with a variety of spray features, water slides, etc. for young children and non-swimmers.

### Probable Level of Investment

(Program Dependent)

Recreation Center - \$2,500,000 - \$3,300,000

Aquatics Facility - \$750,000 - \$1,000,000





# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Priority Action Item - Recreation Center and Aquatics Facility



View of the Service Center Property from Sgt. Ed Holcombe Blvd. Approximately 8.0 acres could be utilized for development of a recreation complex.



Conceptual model of a recreation complex including a new recreation center, aquatics facility and parking to the rear.



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Preservation and Enhancement of Natural Resources

An identified goal within the parks master planning process, and a key goal of the Comprehensive Plan, is the need to preserve and enhance diminishing natural resources. Future parks and recreation areas should be planned with the goal of sustainability in mind to limit the impacts of development and lead the community in water conservation, promotion of water quality, preservation of open space and vegetation and reduction of stormwater runoff.

Tools for sustainable development of parks and recreation facilities may include practices such as:

- Rainwater collection and storage systems
- Rain Gardens
- Bioswales
- Conservation easements
- Riparian/Forested buffers and Vegetative filter strips
- Waterless/Composting restroom facilities
- Alternative paving materials



An example study of a recreation building with rainwater collection system. Rainwater would be stored for use in landscape irrigation, thereby limiting the use of groundwater.



Rainwater collection cisterns such as this can provide a regular supply of irrigation water that often ends up in



“Begin a public awareness program to educate residents and large-scale water users about the water rate increase anticipated with the transition to surface water. Use this opportunity to promote conservation strategies and associated savings.”

**Growth Capacity Action 4-6**  
**Conroe Comprehensive Plan**



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## Other Recommendations (By Park)

A number of lower priority recommendations for improvements to the parks system were identified during data collection phases of the planning process. The following items should be considered for future implementation.

### **Walter P. Jett Park**

Install a shade structure and seating/picnic table.

### **Wiggins Village Dog Park**

Install decomposed granite walking path.

Construct dog pond with low-slope banks for swimming.

### **Gibson Park**

Install fence or vegetative buffer along west boundary to screen back of industrial complex.

### **Lewis Park**

Install pedestrian bridge over ditch near basketball courts.

### **Oscar Johnson, Jr. Park & Community Center**

Install shade structures at pool and park

Install pool play structure (ie: water slide or spray/splash features).

### **Carl Barton, Jr. Park**

Install lighting around walking path.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Park**

Install mile markers along walking path.

Install shade structure.

### **Shadow Lakes Park**

Construct permanent restroom facility (2 fixture flush or waterless system)



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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# Appendix



# APPENDIX

## Candy Cane Park Charrette - Comments by Table

### Table 1 – PATH

- Safety Paths from the Pool
- Rec Center
- Activity Center
- From Parking
- Path from Activity Center to the Aquatic
- Clean lines, Canopy
- Kill the circle drives
- Entrance – 45 – new one
- Black Museum
- Frazier – Speed bumps
- Add additional parking near tennis
- Parking – aquatics far end into the drainage
- Rec Center has no real parking area
- Signs near the exit ramp off of 45
- Bigger sign off of 75
- Pavilion Center sign

### Table 1 - LAND

- Lighting by the parks swings, pavilion
- Possible solar type lighting

### Table 1 - PEOPLE

- Groups at the pool, limited space and time
- Where can we add new programs
- Tues/Thurs 1/2 Hr kick boxing water style
- Sat – workouts

- Member only times at all facilities
- Mommy and me times at the pool
- Locker rooms are not private at Rec Center – not people friendly

### Table 1 - STRUCTURES

- Park - Water fountains at park
- Park - Picnic areas
- Park - Benches
- Park - Cool off zones / misting
- Park - Information booth; info, first aide, etc.
- Park - Volleyball
- Park - Horseshoe
- Park - ½ Court of soccer
- Park - Bocce Ball
- Park - Train track
- Park - Full Court basket ball
- Park - One on One court
- Park - Little “tikes” area
- Park - Carousel
- Aquatic Center - Relocate baby pool to picnic area
- Aquatic Center - Restroom’s
- Aquatic Center - Entrance way
- Aquatic Center - PA system
- Aquatic Center - Shaded area’s besides pool.
- Aquatic Center - Covered storage (kill old shed)
- Aquatic Center - No cubicles in office





Candy Cane Park Charrette - Comments by Table

- Aquatic Center - Training facility; 1<sup>st</sup> aide, CPR, Lifeguard, City functions
- Aquatic Center - Healthy concession items
- Aquatic Center - Better sitting viewing area at Ed Pool
- Aquatic Center - Entrance – accessible for all
- Aquatic Center - Update kitchen
- Aquatic Center - Restrooms – want the doors to close
- Aquatic Center - Common areas for parents
- Rec Center - Update machines/equipment and mirror
- Rec Center - More space
- Rec Center - Professional scale
- Rec Center - Station areas
- Rec Center – Towel exchange program
- Rec Center – Maintenance schedule or self cleaning area
- Rec Center – Possible key card entrance
- Rec Center – Physical therapy area
- Rec Center – PA system
- Rec Center – Office area
- Rec Center – Kids zone for non access cards kids to hang out
- Rec Center – Separate entrance for just the gym
- Rec Center – Storage
- Rec Center – More work stations
- Rec Center – Staging area's

**Table 2 – PATH**

- Possible 2<sup>nd</sup> entrance on 45

- Outdoor amphitheatre
- Parking garage
- Splash pad
- New signage; Semands entrance, Callahan, Entrance @ 45, Frazier/Callahan
- Pathways to different locations / crosswalk signs
- Determine water flow (Start / End)
- West side entrance to aquatic center a leisure pool
- Restroom / changing room on west side of pool
- Outdoor sand volleyball courts
- Larger restrooms handicap accessible

**Table 2 - LAND**

- Detention pond (educational)
- Educational tools
- Walking path around pond
- Clean up area around creek
- Lazy river

**Table 2 - PEOPLE**

- Regional growing facilities & seniors
- Future Demands - North & West
- Economics – Lifestyle effects
- Economic and easy access
- Seniors – morning and mid-day
- Facilities – evenings and weekends
- Multi activities at same time for families
- Pet friendly activities



Candy Cane Park Charrette - Comments by Table

- Family activities – Young – Aged 10-15
- Group picnics
- Swimming
- Band concerts
- G-rated Movies

**Table 2 – STRUCTURES**

- New Rec Center
- West side aquatic entrance w/ R.R.
- New gazebo
- Covered walkways
- Covered B.B. Court
- New restroom in park
- Walkways
- Lazy river
- Splash pad
- More park lighting – Eco friendly!
- Investigate costs of repairs at Rec Center
- Remodel Rec Center (more restrooms, workrooms) with office downstairs in front of building
- More storage areas; Rec Center, Aquatic Center (Build in wall storage, bleachers in wall/stored)
- Aquatic Center Tarps!!
- Aquatic Center - Pump room covered
- Aquatic Center – Handicapped accessible
- Remodel and Connect Rec Center with Aquatic Center – wide enough to flow both ways

- Planned activities to cover expense costs – tournaments!
- Expand weight room and facilities
- Expand Kid zone to play area outside

**Table 3 - PATH**

- Opening the walkway from Rec Center to pool and “Covered” walkway
- Safe movement from Rec Center to Activity to Park
- Parking – limited, unsafe, No “loop” design, speed bumps
- Inner connecting paths: pond to play area
- New entry from 45 connecting to Callahan (**Big Signage**)

**Table 3 – LAND**

- Retention pond = fishing pond
- Moving 2 playgrounds together & centralize pavilions and restrooms
- Surfacing materials (playground) – consistent throughout the park
- Open play space (address erosion)
- Exercise equipment (outdoor type) by activity center
- Low ropes / Adventure play
- Expanding B-ball courts
- Parking lot lighting

**Table 3 – PEOPLE**

- Regional but we “feel” like a neighborhood
- Groups – CISD, SATCH, Bridgewood Farms, Conflict of availability, and space issues
- Demographics – melting pot

Socio-Economic – Keep it “affordable”





Candy Cane Park Charrette - Comments by Table

**Table 4- PATH**

- Grand entrance statutes along feeder
- Closing existing entrance
- Reroute traffic to Semands
- Land acquisition to expand park and accommodate traffic
- Extend walking trails
- Use bridges increase safety and tie programs together
- Access ally ways for traffic and biking trails
- Develop the retention pond for soccer use
- Utilize a carousal to circle drive or where gazebo is
- Increase signage within park for information purpose
- Keep neighborhood park with regional access / refer out for other activities

**Table 4 – LAND**

- Recycling underground bins
- Maintenance – things to help; Community service, workers on light duty and high school groups
- We need a main water cutoff

**Table 4 - PEOPLE**

- More programs for younger teens
- Rent park of amenities
- Use symbols to communicate with all demographics in park
- Scholarships for members

**Table 4 - STRUCTURES**

- Pro shop – gingerbread house – candy cane theme throughout
- New Rec Center – Use ½ of existing center for storage – make a larger center

- Covered courts / workout stations for people who can not afford memberships
- Sandpit for volleyball / horseshoes and skate park that’s concrete

**Table 5 – PATH**

- Access from Rec Center to Pool - designated pathway
- Crosswalk from Rec – Aquatic ends at drain – Move/re-route crosswalk
- No designated path from Pool to Aquatic Center – designate a path
- Street / curve damages – Change direction of road
- Freeway entrance to small and obscure – Widen it and move
- Signage inaccurate – New and improved
- Westside entrance

**Table 5 – LAND**

- Pond in front of gym – Improve drainage
- Erosion behind Rec Center – Terracing
- Erosion in Path – Terracing
- Landscape all facilities
- Thin the trees
- Exercise venues throughout park
- Need lot more lighting on trail by pool and parking lot
- Creek is area for outdoor education – deepen inter tube rides

**Table 5 – STRUCTURES**

- Different pockets within park
- Keep pavilion large group
- Family pods
- Inequality within community – facility use
- Multi sized rooms



Candy Cane Park Charrette - Comments by Table

- Skate park
- Facilities from ages 8-14; Kid zone, weight room, Game room – Wii
- Park reservations
- Memberships
- Expand and cover BB court with seating
- Kitchen usable
- Marque
- Centralized concession café coffee
- Rec Center – Racket ball, dance, indoor tract, cardio, weight, locker room
- Clear trees and put up a backstop kick ball – no reservations
- Buy instead of building stuff – we need to buy stuff
- No reservations for park amenities
- Remove the structure (maybe rent or reserve)
- Timeline of history of the park

**Table 6 – PATH**

- Relocate driveway (another entrance)
- Another restroom facility (by the tennis and basketball courts)
- Park areas (angle)
- Crosswalk from Aquatics to Park
- Access ramp from Rec to Aquatics
- Signs for parking at Activity Center
- Kick the seniors to the curve. (utilize friendship space)
- Expand the Rec to the East (buy-out property)
- The curve parking lot, use a drop-off instead of parking space (Rec)
- Add more picnic areas (by activity center)

- Marquees sign on feeder road
- Information sign on Callahan

**Table 6 – LAND**

- Pond on detention area (drive water to area with storm drainage), (stock fish, recreational activities)
- Road connecting existing entrance to north entrance

Making entrances by the leisure pool (access to facility)

**Table 6 – PEOPLE**

Utilize CISD facilities to expand programs into neighborhoods

**Table 6 – STRUCTURES**

- Cover basketball court (put more benches)
- Add another pavilion
- Lap Swim – 1 to 2 lanes open all day
- Relocate and expand Aquatic concession
- Basketball courts (add more), cover courts (inclement weather)
- Have other locations
- Splash pad





# APPENDIX

## Proposed Drinking Fountain Locations

Drinking fountains are recommended at the following parks:

1. Armstrong Elementary Park - 1 fountain (standard)
2. B.B. Rice Elementary Park - 1 fountain (standard)
3. Carl Barton, Jr. Park - 1 fountain (with dog station)
4. Candy Cane Park - 1 fountain (with dog station)
5. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
6. Flournoy Park - 1 fountain (standard)
7. Gibson Park - 1 fountain (standard)
8. Giesinger Elementary - 1 fountain (standard)
9. Heritage Place - 1 fountain (standard)
10. Lewis Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
11. Lions Park - 1 fountain (standard)
12. McDade Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
13. Milltown Park - 1 fountain (standard)
14. O.A. Reaves Elementary Park - 1 fountain (standard)
15. Runyan Elementary Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
16. Stewarts Creek Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
17. Walter P. Jett Park - 1 fountain (standard) (replacement)
18. White Oak Point Park - 1 fountain (standard)
19. Wiggins Village Dog Park - 1 fountain (with dog station)
20. Shadow Lakes Park - 1 fountain (with dog station)

