A LEGACY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Norman Parks & Recreation Master Plan

HALFF

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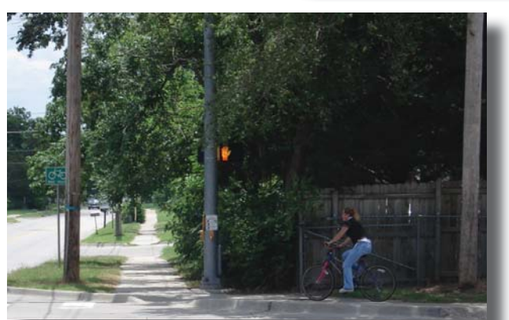
The Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan

December 2009



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CEHP/LLC Inc.
Turco & Assoc.

Letter of Transmittal

December 29, 2009

City of Norman
Mr. Jud Foster
Director of Parks and Recreation
201 West Gray, Building C
Norman, OK 73069

Reference: Final Report - Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Dear Mr. Foster:

Halff Associates is pleased to present the final report of the 2009 Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan entitled *A Legacy For The Next Generation*. This plan is meant to reflect the needs and desires of the residents of Norman. A significant amount of public input went into formulating the plan, and as such the recommendations that were formed out of the planning process mirror needs that the residents of Norman deemed as important. The many recommendations of this Master Plan are part of a comprehensive analysis and include actions that address immediate needs, as well as ones that are meant to be implemented long term.

Halff Associates is honored to have worked with you, the Parks and Recreation Department Staff, the Master Plan Steering Committee, elected officials of Norman and the citizens of Norman.

Sincerely,
Halff Associates, Inc.

Jim Carrillo, ASLA, AICP
Vice President, Director of Planning

Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. R-0910-70

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, ADOPTING THE NORMAN PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN AND DIRECTING AND PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO CITY STAFF AS IT PROCEEDS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE PLAN.

§ 1. WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Norman recognizes the need for a Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan ("the Plan") to provide goals, assessments, standards, recommendations and strategies for implementation over a ten year period in an effort to provide for and continually improve park and recreational facilities, provide trail opportunities, preserve open spaces, and rehabilitate existing parks in the City of Norman; and

§ 2. WHEREAS, the primary objective of the Plan is to serve Norman's residents of all ages by providing recreational services desired by the citizens of Norman and acquire needed open spaces and preserve natural resources; and

§ 3. WHEREAS, in order to address recreational needs in the future, the City of Norman has sought input from the citizens of Norman through surveys, public input meetings, meetings with stakeholder groups, and the Parks and Recreation staff; and that input has been incorporated into the Plan; and

§ 4. WHEREAS, the Master Plan Steering Committee has participated in development of the Plan and reviewed the final Plan and recommends it for adoption; and

§ 5. WHEREAS, the Board of Park Commissioners has reviewed the Plan and recommends it for adoption; and

§ 6. WHEREAS, the City Council, having taken into consideration the results of the in-depth study conducted by Halff Associates for the City of Norman determines that the Plan is reasonable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA,

§ 7. That The Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Norman, Oklahoma, is hereby officially adopted, as attached hereto and incorporated herein for all intents and purposes.

§ 8. That an Action Plan has been developed to prioritize implementation of the Plan to guide the rehabilitation of existing parks, provide guidance in the application of funding, and suggest alternative funding mechanisms.

§ 9. Adoption of the Plan shall not commit the City of Norman to specific funding levels and/or implementation strategies, but shall provide a guidance plan for the City's vision for availability and growth of park and recreational services.

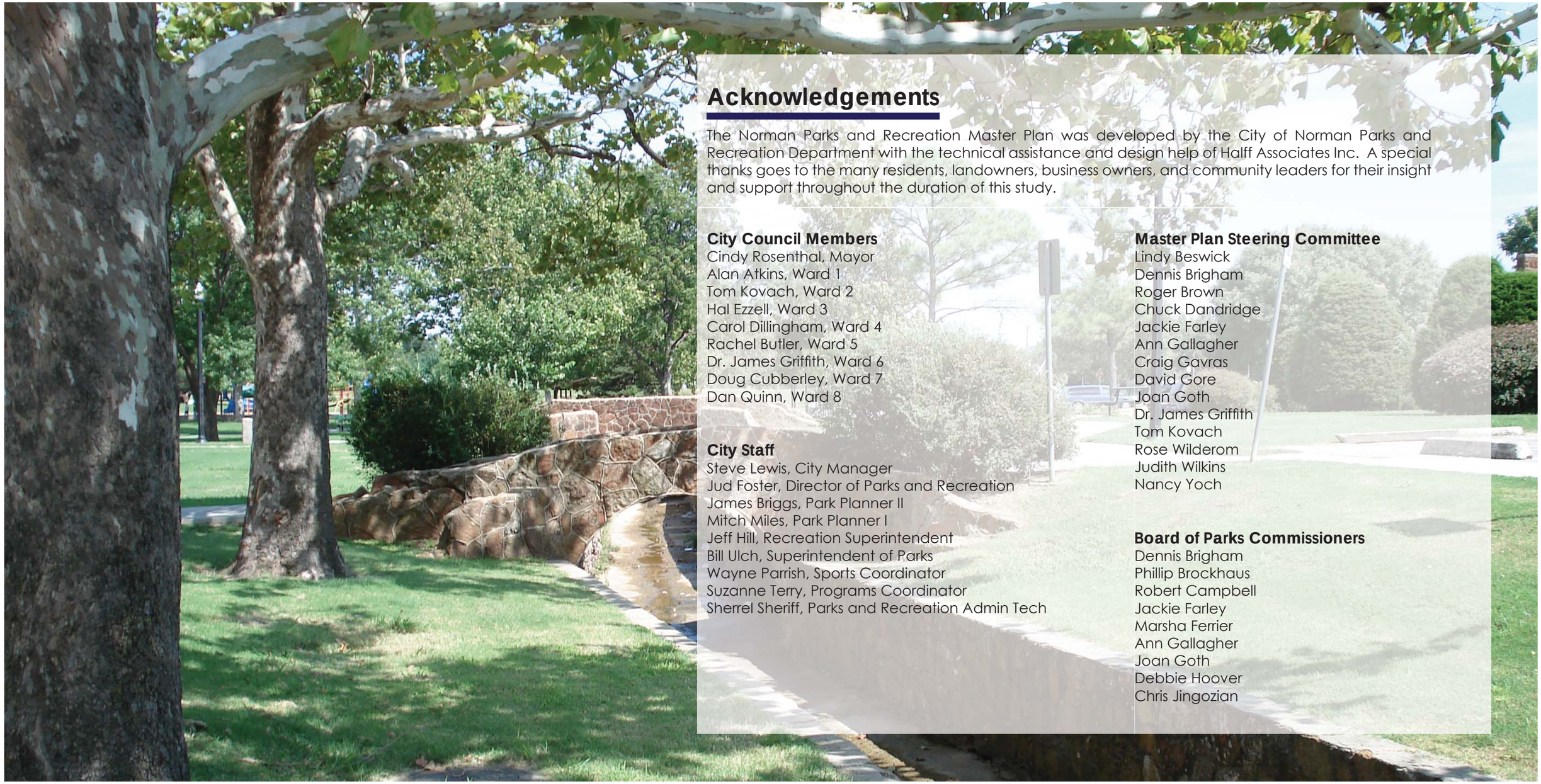
PASSED AND ADOPTED this 24th day of November, 2009.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

CITY OF NORMAN CORPORATE SEAL OKLAHOMA



Acknowledgements

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

City Council Members
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Alan Atkins, Ward 1
Tom Kovach, Ward 2
Hal Ezzell, Ward 3
Carol Dillingham, Ward 4
Rachel Butler, Ward 5
Dr. James Griffith, Ward 6
Doug Cubberley, Ward 7
Dan Quinn, Ward 8

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"Norman is no longer a best kept secret: the word is out! Norman's strong sense of community, its high quality of life and affordability, and its appreciation for diversity, the arts and culture have earned us this ranking. This honor recognizes not only the quality leadership and vision of the University of Oklahoma, our city, our public schools, the health care system, the business and non-profit sectors, but most importantly our citizens. Such recognitions do not happen by chance, but instead by working together to build community. The balance we strike as a growing city and the values we place on being a welcoming and engaged community will continue to serve us well in the future."

Cindy Rosenthall
Mayor of Norman
(Mayor's comments regarding the 2008 selection of Norman as the 6th best place to live in the United States)

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Planning Process

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Parks and Recreation Planning Process

"We should so live and labor in our times that what came to us as seed may go to the next generation as blossom, and what came to us as blossom may go to them as fruit."

Henry Ward Beecher

Introduction

The City of Norman is a very desirable place to live, work and play. In fact, Norman was ranked by *Money Magazine* as the sixth best place to live in the nation in 2008. When residents are asked what it is they like about Norman, they invariably responded that they liked having large city amenities with a small town feel. In fact, one fear expressed by Norman residents is over-development resulting in the deterioration of the City's small town character.

Norman experiences many pressures to develop. Developers see the opportunity to profit in a place that is attractive to new home buyers which are drawn to the University of Oklahoma, the easy and close access to Oklahoma City along I-35, excellent municipal facilities, ample recreational amenities, a downtown, and a place that has a sense of being home.

However, it is when such development happens without consideration for the character and need for open space and pedestrian connections, that the quality of life in Norman will be compromised for everyone. From its rural character to its modern athletic facilities, residents in Norman should feel proud to be part of a community that treasures and seeks to cultivate the health, safety, welfare and image of the City and its people.

Well developed parks and natural areas are often the first place that visitors view in a community. In fact parks are one of the most visible elements of a city government at work, and can instill a strong sense of pride in the residents of a community. A great park system lets both citizens and visitors know that the leadership of the city is interested in providing the best for its citizens. The leadership in Norman has long recognized that recreation plays an important role in the quality of life in Norman, and that a strong recreation system provides for a healthier environment, improves the well-being of children and young adults, and reduces the potential for crime in the City.

The Need for Parks and Recreation Planning in Norman

The purpose of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to provide an assessment of Norman's parks and recreation system in the year 2009. The parks and recreation planning process allows the citizens of Norman to determine what their preferred priorities should be for the next five to ten years.

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan is exactly what its name indicates. "Parks" refer to the land dedicated to outdoor areas programmed for recreation. "Recreation" refers to both active and passive activities including athletic sports, playing on playgrounds, jogging, picnicking, enjoying nature, etc.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan aims to:

- Point out opportunities and recommend alternatives for improving the parks and recreation system.
- Look at the potential growth of the City over the next five to ten years, and types of facilities that are most needed.
- Guide City staff in acquiring land to meet current and future park and open space needs.
- Prioritize key recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible.
- Guide City staff and City leaders in determining where and how parks and recreation funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years.

The Value and Benefits of Parks and Recreation in Norman

A superior parks and recreation system in a city increases the quality of life because of the many benefits that it offers to that community. Parks are the single most visible positive expression of a city government at work. Benefits of parks and recreation may include personal health benefits, community benefits, environmental benefits, and economic benefits.

Personal Health Benefits of parks and recreation include:

- Increasing the frequency of exercise especially among children and youth with better access to parks.
- Improving psychological and social health with exposure to nature.
- Playing which is critical for child development.
- Reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and other health problems by staying active.

Community Benefits of parks and recreation include:

- Providing opportunities for all people to be physically active, socially engaged, and cognitively stimulated.
- Providing opportunities for rest, relaxation, and revitalization.
- Preserving and interpreting historic community assets.
- Providing opportunities for community involvement and volunteer work.
- Providing refuges of safety for at-risk youth which can help reduce juvenile delinquency.

Environmental Benefits of parks and recreation include:

- Protecting and preserving vital green space.
- Protecting and preserving critical wildlife habitat.
- Educating visitors regarding the appropriate use of natural areas for recreation.
- Contributing to clean air and clean water.

Economic Benefits of parks and recreation include:

- Making the City significantly more attractive.
- Increasing resale value and property taxes of homes. Studies have proven that the property value of homes near parks have a higher value than those further from a park, which correlates to higher resale values and property taxes.
- Stimulating economic development by attracting businesses and keeping residents.
- Increasing tourism.
- Attracting new businesses to a community by improving the standard of living and quality of life.

Role of the City of Norman in Providing Recreational Opportunities

The City of Norman is the primary governmental entity charged with providing recreational facilities for the citizens of Norman. Ancillary recreational facilities are provided by the State of Oklahoma (at Lake Thunderbird State Park), Norman Public Schools, Cleveland County, the University of Oklahoma (for students, faculty, and staff), various neighborhood associations, and the Cleveland County YMCA.

Master Plan Timeframe

The Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan is formulated to address the timeframe from the year 2009 until the year 2020.

It is recommended that this comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan be completely updated after a ten year period, or before if any major developments occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the City. It is also recommended that an annual review workshop hosted by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department staff and the Board of Park Commissioners be held to discuss progress over the last year. Citizen input should be frequently sought, not just during the planning process, but throughout the year. In all cases, public involvement through citizen meetings, interviews and workshops should be included in any interim or major update of the plan.

The Parks and Recreation Master Planning Process

The planning process can be expressed by the flow chart shown below. The single most important characteristic of the process is the input received from Norman citizens, elected officials, and staff. This plan is built upon the expressed needs, concerns and dreams of the residents of Norman.

The plan is divided into sections that address the existing state (existing facilities) and the desired state (key needs); then lays out recommendations for key park facilities and major programs for the city. The plan divides each recommendation into two categories:

- The first part addresses those actions that are immediate and that must be undertaken to renovate or better utilize existing facilities. It also addresses actions that meet the needs of today's population.
- The second part of each set of recommendations addresses longer range, visionary actions that can maintain Norman's position as one of the best parks and recreation systems in the State of Oklahoma.

Goals of the Master Plan

Goals are included to serve as a policy and philosophical framework for the Master Plan. They serve to guide parks and recreation planning in Norman even as Councils and staff change over the years. Goals can be as specific or general as the planners of the parks and recreation system feel comfortable, but once established should be followed diligently and consistently.

The goals for the Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan reflect on:

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

Goals Terminology

The terms "policies," "goals," and "objectives" as used in this report, follow the definitions shown below.

- **Policies:** Planning Policies consist of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan itself and specific actions and ordinances created by the Norman City Council to implement the goals established in this document.
- **Goals:** Goals are general statements concerning an aspect of the city's desired ultimate physical, social and economic environment. Goals address the desired quality of life.
- **Objectives:** Objectives express the actions or approaches that are necessary to achieve the stated goals, or portions of those goals, without assigning responsibility to any specific actions. Objectives are often expressed as actions that can be measured.

Goals and Objectives of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Goals are included in the parks and recreation planning process to serve as a guiding force for the continual improvement of the parks and recreation system during the next ten years. The following is a set of goals and objectives of the Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Goal #1 - Provide parkland, a variety of recreation facilities, and programs to meet the changing recreational needs and desires of the City of Norman's population.

- 1.1 Develop short and long-range programs for development, expansion and upgrading of Norman's parks and recreation system.
- 1.2 Provide recreational facilities that address the needs of multiple age groups, young and old, active and passive, and in all socio-economic categories.
- 1.3 Identify parks and recreation planning areas with the greatest need for park facilities and pursue the acquisition and development of facilities in those areas.
- 1.4 Use diverse and reasonable criteria to identify parks and recreation needs, including needs by sector, and reasonable calculations of the potential level of use not only the ability of each facility to respond to citywide needs in a cost effective manner.
- 1.5 Develop land acquired and dedicated to future parks in a consistent and focused manner.
- 1.6 Balance the distribution of park facilities, including neighborhood parks, community parks, athletic facilities, and trail corridors throughout the city.
- 1.7 Periodically update the long-range plan and standard to reflect changing conditions in the City and to provide a forum for citizen input.

Goal #2 - Create a parks and recreation system that will improve the physical form and image of the City of Norman.

- 2.1 Acquire park, greenbelt and open space sites that are prominent and highly visible in the neighborhoods that surround them.
- 2.2 Utilize landscape design at key City entryways and along selected street medians to create a positive and attractive image of the city.
- 2.3 Encourage well-planned systematic tree planting in parks and street frontage.
- 2.4 Develop identification and directional signage for key destinations and park facilities that is consistent and unique to Norman.

Goal #3 - Preserve and protect open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources - especially areas with topography change, indigenous tree cover, prairie land and land prone to flooding within the city limits.

- 3.1 [As part of the citywide parks and recreation planning and development process] Establish criteria to identify key open space areas, cultural landscapes, and natural areas worthy of preservation throughout the City.
- 3.2 Protect areas and landscapes of cultural value including general landscapes, and specific views and vistas.
- 3.3 Protect areas with geological and topographical interest.
- 3.4 Acquire and preserve channels and floodplain areas as public open space and possible future trail corridors.
- 3.5 Acquire and preserve publicly accessible greenbelts along the edges of <u>all</u> creeks.

- 3.6 Establish funding mechanisms to obtain lands for protection through acquisition, purchase of easements, or outright dedication of floodplain lands where these are deemed to have open space and conservation value; and focus on high quality natural or open space areas that are likely to be developed with incompatible uses in the near future.
- 3.7 Establish policies that encourage private landowners to preserve and protect key cultural landscapes. This could include significant vistas, agricultural land and farmsteads, and natural areas within the City which include areas of topography change, indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding.
- 3.8 Encourage and motivate "conservation development" principles whereby development is clustered in order to preserve open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources as communal amenities.
- 3.9 Encourage educational institutions, semi-private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage and maintain cultural and natural open space conservation areas within the city.

Goal #4 - Provide an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, neighborhoods, places of employment, retail shops, restaurants, and open spaces.

- 4.1 Create a trail system throughout the city that will provide opportunities for recreation, as well as alternative modes of transportation e.g. cycling, walking, skating, jogging and hiking.
- 4.2 Research the use of utility easements, sidewalks within the street right-of-way, and drainage ways as potential trail connections.

Goal #5 - Provide a tool to coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts with adjacent cities and the local school district with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.

- 5.1 Emphasize a multi-jurisdictional approach to the provision of recreation facilities in Norman including Cleveland County and surrounding cities.
- 5.2 Work with other city departments and Cleveland County to utilize and encourage "conservation development" strategies in the surrounding areas so as to ensure the protection of cultural landscapes, natural resources and open space.

Goal #6 - Continue to maintain all of the Norman parks and recreational facilities in a superior condition and sustainable manner.

- 6.1 Provide city parks and recreation staff with the manpower and funding resources to maintain all parklands and facilities in a superior manner; and provide additional operations and maintenance resources as new recreational facilities are developed and added to the Norman parks and recreation system.
- 6.2 Plan for and regularly/proactively fund replacement of park facilities.
- 6.3 Improve the quality of operations and maintenance through continued evaluation of the Parks and Recreation Department's current operations.
- 6.4 Implement renovation and/or improvement plans for each park as they age over time and identify a tentative schedule for phasing in improvements.
- 6.5 Address key safety and accessibility needs as quickly as possible.
- 6.5 Continue to promote the use of native plant materials to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs in parks and on city properties.
- 6.7 Use low-maintenance design techniques for future park properties.
- 6.8 Research and consider an organic landscape maintenance program for city property to decrease and / or eliminate the use of potentially harmful chemicals and to invigorate the planted landscapes.
- 6.9 Explore and implement innovative techniques to partner with other governmental, non-profit or private organizations to reduce the city's park maintenance burden.
- 6.10 Actively and aggressively promote beautification of key corridors in the city.

Goal #7 - Develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement the City's limited funding resources.

- 7.1 Apply the Parkland Dedication Ordinance judiciously to help fund land acquisition and park development.
- 7.2 Update the current Park Development fee structure to reflect current costs of parks and recreation developments.
- 7.3 Work to create partnerships with the Norman Public Schools district and Cleveland County to actively and aggressively pursue grant funding from local, state and federal sources.
- 7.4 Encourage private cooperation through donations of park land, labor and financial contributions.
- 7.5 Establish a program where community and business groups and neighborhood associations can help improve and maintain parks and open space areas.
- 7.6 Encourage the assistance of the private sector in providing landscaping along private and public properties including public right-of-way and medians.
- 7.7 Encourage the establishment of local organizations that can assist with providing parks and recreation facilities and programs for the residents of Norman.

Goal #8 - Include a citizen participation process in all ongoing parks and recreation planning and design, as well as updating of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

- 8.1 Update the long-range plan and standards periodically to reflect changing conditions in the city e.g. demographics and to provide a forum for citizen input.
- 8.2 Encourage and provide multiple opportunities for citizens to provide input in the development, maintenance, and operation of the City's parks and recreation system.
- 8.3 Utilize citizen surveys, meetings with key user groups, public meetings, workshops and regular meetings of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

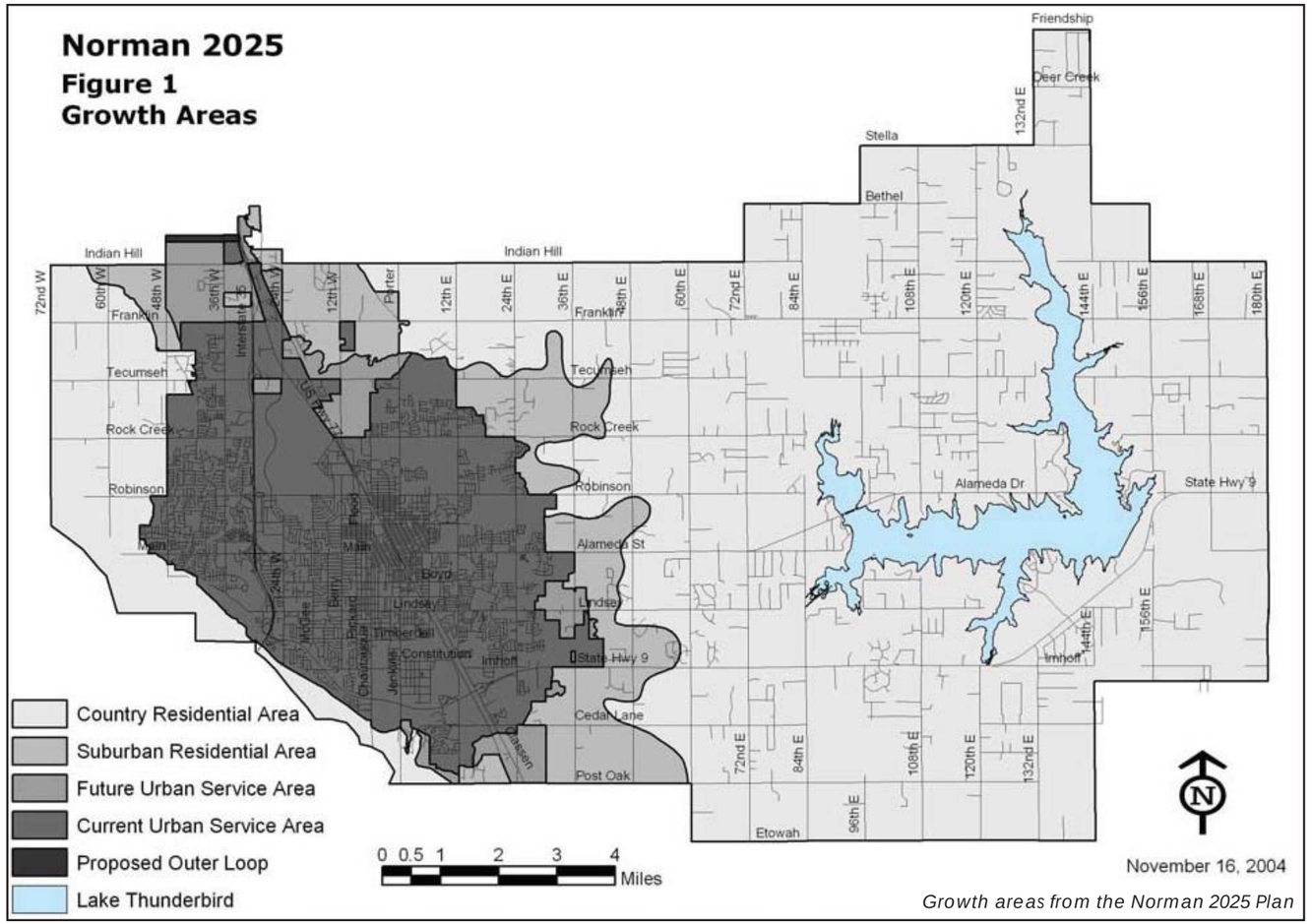
Other Master Plans In Norman

Part of the master planning process for a citywide parks system includes knowing what other recreational providers are planning. Often times the recommendations of other plans can help fulfill a deficiency that is lacking and can prevent the City from duplicating unnecessary parks and recreation facilities. The following pages summarize other related master plans that influenced this comprehensive Park Master Plan. They include the Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Master Plan, Ruby Grant Park Master Plan, and Cleveland County Parks Master Plan.

Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan

In 2004, the City of Norman began the process of developing a citywide comprehensive land use and transportation plan which was intended to guide the development of Norman over the next twenty years. This land use development plan incorporates residential, commercial, industrial, and educational uses, as well as open space and greenbelt preservation uses. The protection of the rural environment and the provision of a greenbelt system are both goals of the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan. These goals can have a direct impact on the acquisition of parkland and lands to be used as preserved open space. Other goals of the 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan which directly relate to parks and recreation in Norman include:

- ► Goal 2, Objective 6: Orient parks and recreational facilities to the needs of all Norman's citizens, including persons with disabilities, senior citizens, young children, and teenagers; and provide for a variety of interests and activities.
- ► Goal 3, Objective 3: Encourage opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in and between neighborhoods and other activity areas.
- ► Goal 5: Retain the distinct character of rural Norman and protect the environmentally sensitive Little River Drainage Basin.
- ► Goal 6: Develop and maintain a greenbelt system for Norman. The preservation of the Little River Drainage Basin provides a significant amount of permanent open space in the City as well as need for flood control. The development of a greenbelt system will provide opportunities for trails in Norman which can be used for recreation and as an alternative means of transportation throughout the City.



Growth areas from the Norman 2025 Plan

The 1969 Parks Master Plan

The City of Norman completed its first Parks Master Plan in August, 1969. The park plan was part of the Norman Urban Area General Plan, and was prepared by the Norman Planning Department, Norman Parks and Recreation Department and Norman School Board. This 1969 Park Plan is similar to the planning effort the City is currently undertaking in regards to parks. The 1969 Plan set goals for the system, inventoried and assessed current parks, and proposed implementation policies to establish future parks.

Principles of the Norman Urban Area General Plan included:

- Sites will be acquired for a centrally located neighborhood park in each neighborhood. This park will be combined with the elementary school wherever possible in order that the two can function as the neighborhood center for cultural, educational and recreational activities.
- Recreation areas will be provided in central locations wherever possible, in all living and working areas, and in areas of outstanding beauty sufficient to meet the varying needs of the people to be served.
- Reaves Park will be developed as a city-wide facility for use by people of all ages.
- At least two new community parks will be developed. One will be located on the west side of the urbanized area and at least one on the east side.
- A City golf course will be developed in the northern portion of the urbanized area.

The goals of the 1969 Park Plan were:

- To provide maximum opportunities for all types of recreational activities for all residents.
- To conserve and develop the unique recreational potentials of the newly developing areas east of the recently urbanized areas.
- To fully develop all areas and facilities now owned by the City.
- To acquire and develop park and open space lands and facilities adequate to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding total urban community.

The 1969 Park Plan calculated deficiencies based on the current number of facilities and a target level of service. Major deficiencies in the system that existed in 1969 were:

- 1 indoor swimming pool
- 1 lighted football field
- 7 tennis courts
- 4 gymnasiums
- 1 auditorium
- 4 arts and crafts workshops
- 19 multiple use rooms

Key implementation steps and recommendations of the 1969 Park Plan were:

1. Adopt this report as the Park Plan for Norman, Oklahoma incorporating the updated park plan and policies as a part of the Community Facilities Plan of the Norman Urban Area General Plan.
2. Establish priorities, based on needs, for the acquisition of new neighborhood and community parks as proposed in the Park Plan.
3. Establish priorities for the acquisition of specific lands for the expansion of existing parks.
4. Prepare development plans for the improvement of all existing and proposed parks.
5. Acquire new neighborhood and community parks and acquire the land necessary for the proposed expansion of existing parks according to the priority schedule established in steps 2 and 3, and utilizing applicable financing methods.
6. Establish a program to improve all parks, giving consideration to both needs and financing methods available.
7. Amend the appropriate ordinances to provide for public acquisition and improvement and/or private improvement of recreational needs as determined under step 5.

The 1969 Park Plan also references implementation strategies for open space in Norman. The Norman Area Open Space Plan was part of the Norman Area Plan Report adopted in 1964. The recommended methods of preserving open space were identified as purchase of title, purchase of easements, regulatory devices, and extension of public services. The uses and benefits of open space were identified as conservation of natural resources, separation of urban areas, recreation and park areas, and miscellaneous uses such as cemeteries, boulevards, quarries, landfills, or large lot residences.

Introduction page to the 1969 Park Plan

Storm Water Master Plan

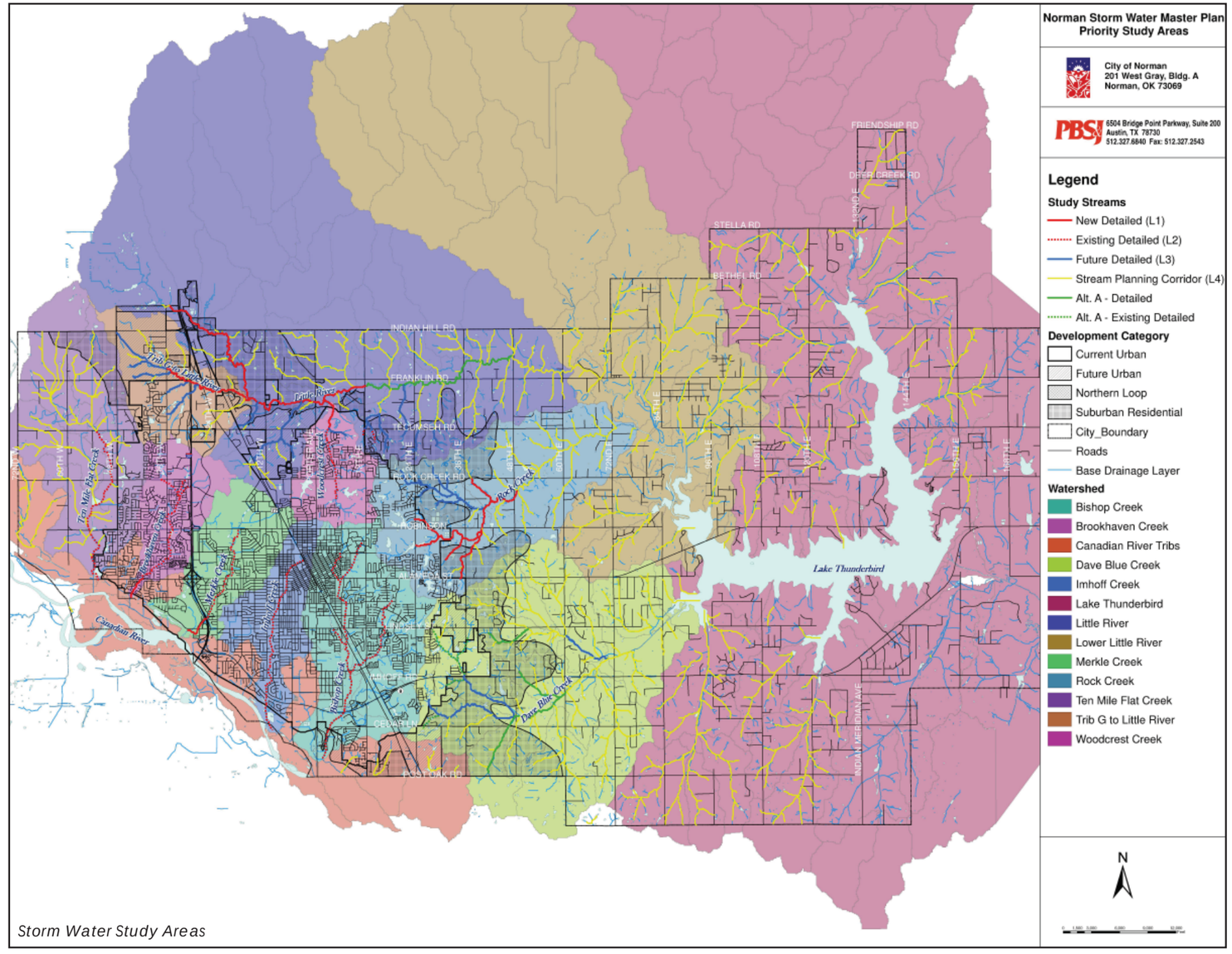
In the summer of 2007, the City of Norman initiated the development of a Storm Water Master Plan with a Greenways Master Plan component. The Storm Water and Greenways Master Plans are in the review and approval process by the City of Norman. The Storm Water Master Plan is intended to give City staff and elected officials a better understanding of how storm water impacts Norman in terms of flooding, water quality and erosion.

The Storm Water Master Plan divided the City into study areas by its 15 different major watersheds. The watersheds carry water into Norman, through Norman, or within the City of Norman. Public input and involvement were a large part of this planning process and a Storm Water Master Plan Task Force was created to review ongoing study efforts.

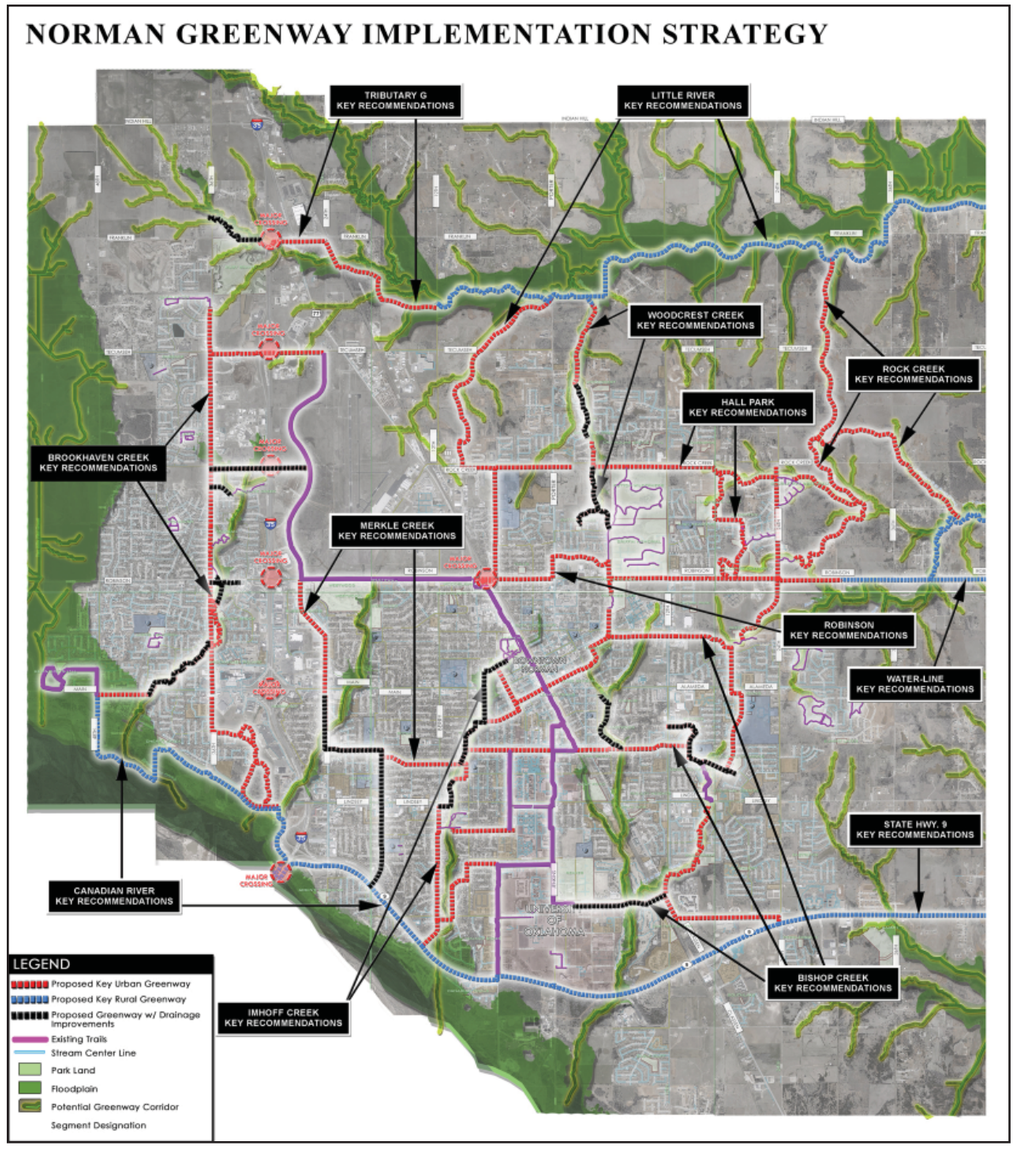
Major problems that the Storm Water Master Plan addresses include:

- Improving and/or protecting stream environmental integrity by using bio-engineering and natural channel design techniques.
- Preserving the historical character of key Works Progress Administration (WPA) constructed channels found in the upper Imhoff and Bishop Creek watersheds.
- Improving water quality.
- Identifying greenway opportunities.

The study that resulted from the Storm Water Master Plan identified fifty-nine problem areas in the City in regards to stream flooding, stream erosion, and local drainage problems. Major problem areas are located along or west of 48th Avenue East. A large majority of the problem areas do not have sufficient drainage easements or right-of-way and as a result a portion of the solution will be to purchase the necessary easement or right-of-way.



Storm Water Study Areas



Greenways Master Plan

A Greenways Master Plan was developed as a component of the Storm Water Master Plan. Creating drainage and watershed corridors for storm water in a city such as Norman also creates opportunities for trails and greenways. Drainage corridors are often ideal for trails because they create greenways, they are linear, and they connect large portions of the City. It was only natural for the City of Norman to develop a Greenways Master Plan with trail priorities in collaboration with the Storm Water Master Plan.

The greenways identified in the master plan were then evaluated based on their suitability for trails. The suitability looked at:

- ► Connectivity
- ► Ownership of the property
- ► Compatibility with adjacent land uses
- ► Environmental and physical characteristics
- ► The level of public support for each corridor

High priority trails that are recommended as a result of this plan include:

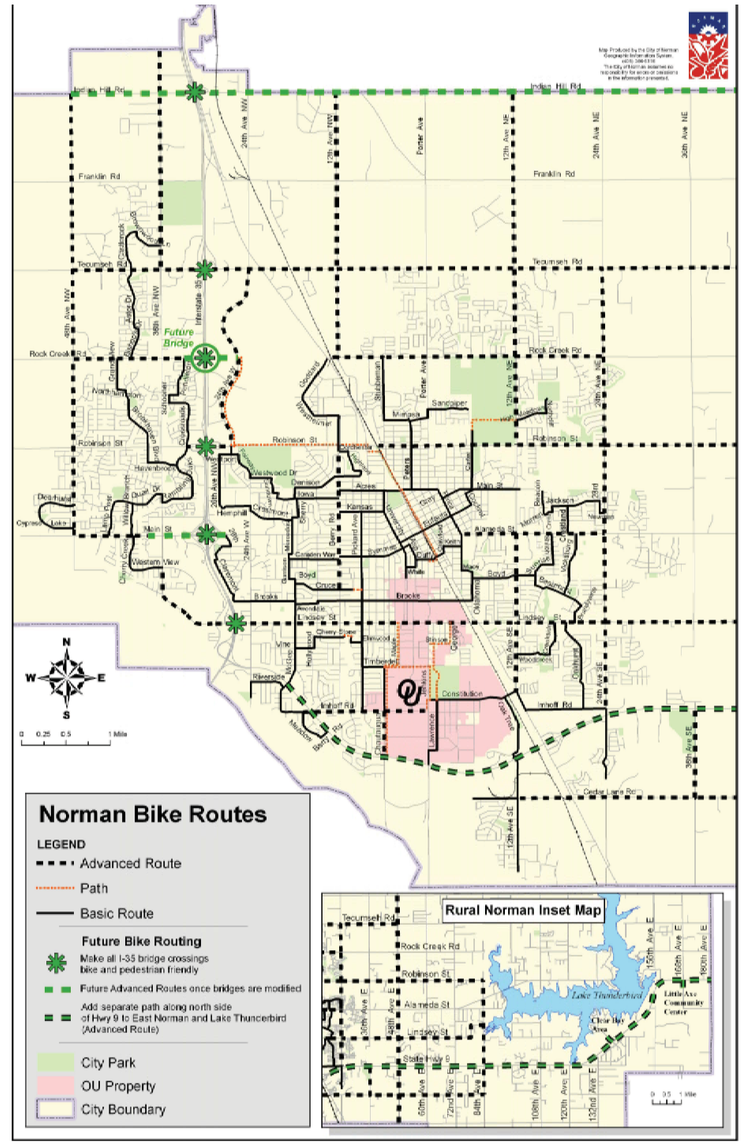
- ► Bishop Creek Greenway
- ► Brookhaven Creek Greenway
- ► Canadian River Greenway
- ► Imhoff Creek Greenway
- ► Little River Creek Greenway
- ► Merkle Creek Greenway
- ► Rock Creek Greenway
- ► Tributary G Greenway
- ► Woodcrest Greenway

Norman Bicycle Master Plan

The Norman Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in 1996 then updated in 2009. The plan designates bicycle routes throughout the city. The routes are prioritized into three categories:

- ► Basic Routes
- ► Advanced Routes
- ► Bike Paths

Norman currently has designated shared-road bicycle routes; however there are no striped bicycle lanes on roadways as shown in the picture below.



2009 Bicycle Master Plan Update

Chapter 2

Norman Past and Present

Chapter 2

Norman Past and Present

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning."

Frederick Douglass

Historic photos from the Pioneer Library system.

Norman's Geography

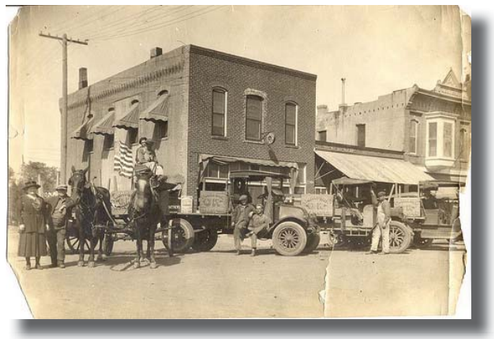
Norman's current size is 189.51 square miles: 177.01 square miles of land and 12.5 square miles of water. Norman is located about 20 miles south of Oklahoma City in Cleveland County. It is the county seat of Cleveland County, and it is the third largest city in the State of Oklahoma. The western portion of the City is mostly prairie lands, while the eastern portion and around Lake Thunderbird is mostly Cross Timbers. Major highways bisecting Norman include: Interstate Highway 35, State Highway 9, U.S. Highway 77, State Highway 77H, and State Highway 74A.

History of Norman

Oklahoma and the area around the City of Norman were long inhabited by Native Americans. The history of how Norman got its name is unlike the naming of most other surrounding towns. In 1870, the United States Land Office decided to survey Oklahoma, which at that time was called the Unassigned Lands, with the intent that the land would one day be settled. The Land Office contracted an engineer to survey the Unassigned Lands. The engineer's name was Abner E. Norman and he became the supervisor of the survey crew for the territory. Abner E. Norman was a young man when he became supervisor and was often the subject of pranks by his crew. One notable prank was that the crew stripped bark off a tree near their camp and burned "Norman's Camp" into the tree trunk. In 1886, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway planned for the current site of Norman to be a rail station. The railroad company found the words burned into the tree and named the station Norman. The railroad line was then platted through what is now the City of Norman.

April 22, 1889 was the first day of the Oklahoma Land Run for the Unassigned Lands. The land run started at 12:00 noon, and over 50,000 people were estimated to have participated. There were approximately 2 million acres of land that were available for settlement. The Oklahoma Land Run was made possible due to the Homestead Act of 1862. This Act stated that legal settlers could claim lots up to 160 acres in size, and if the settler lived on and improved the land then the settler could receive the title to the land. Much of Norman and the surrounding area was quickly settled during the Land Run. Norman was later named the county seat of Cleveland County in May of 1890 when the United States Congress passed the Organic Act which established the boundaries of Oklahoma and formed it into a territory.

George W. Steele was the first governor of the Oklahoma Territory. In December of 1890, Steele signed a bill establishing three educational institutions. Norman was chosen as the site for the University of Oklahoma.



Economy of Norman

When Norman was originally settled after the Land Run in 1889, farming was the largest industry in the area. However, during the Great Depression much of Oklahoma was in drought and farming almost came to a halt. Many of the sharecroppers left Oklahoma hoping for work in California, which became the inspiration for John Steinbeck's classic novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Before Oklahoma was even a state, the University of Oklahoma was a major employer and an economic engine for the City of Norman. The National Weather Center has a prominent research center on OU campus, making Norman a major center in meteorological research. The severe weather research center has several NOAA organizations including the Storm Prediction Center and the National Severe Storms Laboratory.

Table 2 - 1
Major Employers in Norman

Employer	# of Employees
University of Oklahoma	11,913
Norman Regional Hospital	2,300
Norman Public Schools	1,460
Johnson Controls	1,100
City of Norman	735
National Weather Center	650
Client Logic	600
U.S.P.S. Center for Employee Development	550
Office Max	500
Griffin Memorial Hospital	440
Moore Norman Technology Center	410
Sysco Food Services of Oklahoma	400
Oklahoma Veterans Center, Norman	360
Hitachi Computer Product, Inc.	260
AT&T	250
Astellas Pharma Technologies	200
Albon	200
Hiland Dairy Foods Company	100

Source: Norman Chamber of Commerce 2009

University North Park is a high end retail district, located in the northern portion of the City, with an Embassy Suites Hotel and the Norman Conference Center. This area has its own TIF district to fund improvements up to 25 years. This retail district, which opened in October 2006, is expected to be a large contributor to the local economy of Norman. Major retail stores include: Super Target, TJ Maxx, Office Depot, Petco and Kohl's.

The ongoing revitalization of downtown will also play a significant role in contributing to the economy.

Today Norman has several research and technology companies such as Johnson Controls, Hitachi Computer Products, and Client Logic. A list of the major employers in Norman can be found in Table 2 - 1.

Norman's Population

Similar to other communities in the central portion of Oklahoma, Norman and Cleveland County have experienced steady growth over the past few decades as shown in Table 2 - 2. Table 2 - 3 illustrates recent growth of the City of Norman with increases ranging from 1.75% to 3.09% per year.

Table 2 - 2 Previous Population Growth for Norman and Cleveland County

	Norman		Cleveland County	
Year	Population	% of Growth	Population	% of Growth
1970	52,117	-	81,839	-
1980	68,020	30.51%	133,173	62.73%
1990	80,071	17.72%	174,253	30.85%
2000	95,694	19.51%	208,016	19.38%
2007	106,707	11.51%	236,452	13.67%

Source: U.S. Census

Table 2 - 3
Recent Growth of the City of Norman

Year	Population	% of Growth
2000	95,694	-
2001	97,664	2.06%
2002	99,370	1.75%
2003	102,154	2.80%
2004	105,315	3.09%
2005	107,690	2.26%

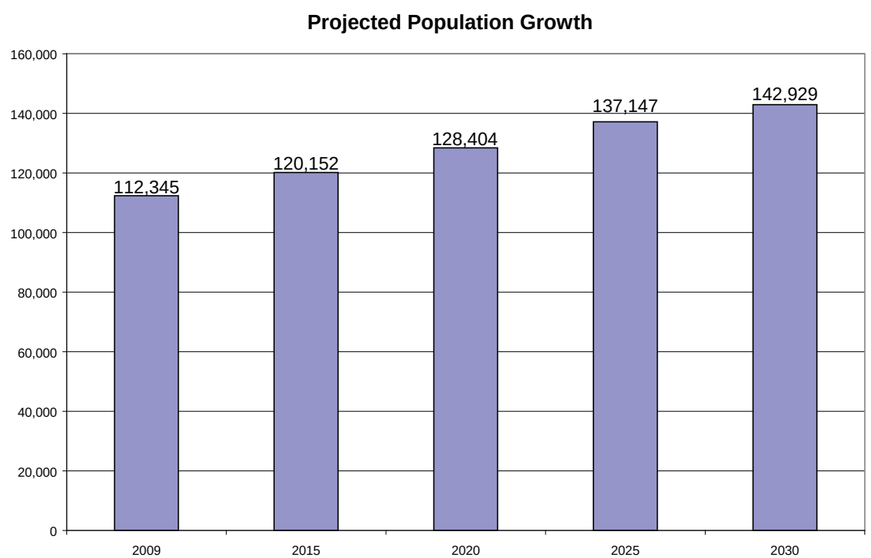
Source: Norman Planning Department

The steady growth that Norman has experienced for the past several decades is expected to continue over the next twenty years. During the lifetime of this master plan, Norman's population will reach over 130,000 residents as shown in Table 2 - 4.

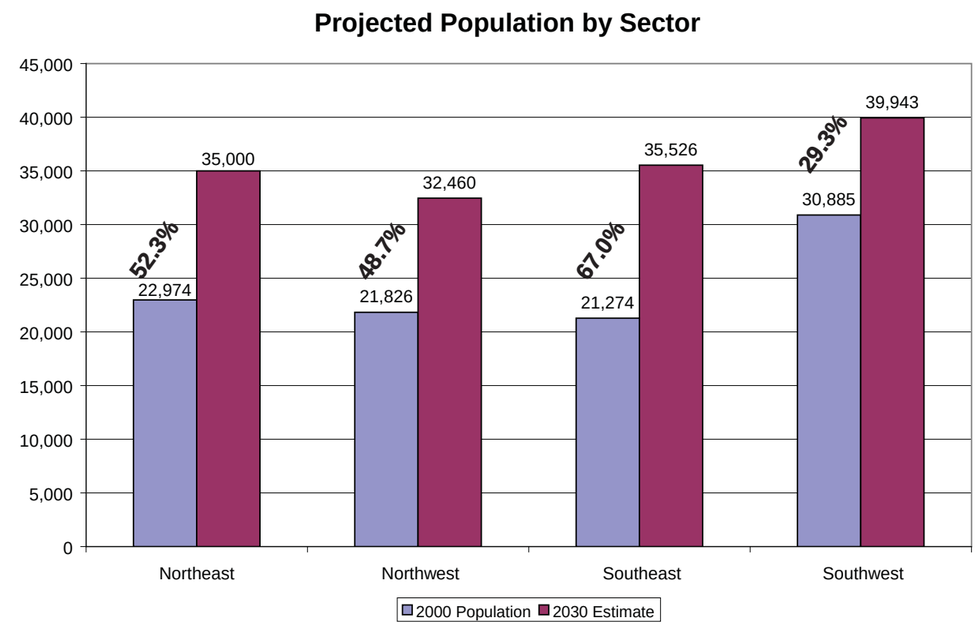
Table 2 - 4
Population Projections for Norman

Year	Population	% of Growth
2007	106,707	-
2010	112,208	5.16%
2015	120,152	7.08%
2020	128,404	6.87%
2025	137,147	6.81%

Source: Norman 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan



Population projections for the year 2030 were provided by the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS). This data allowed for a population projection by sector of the City. The 2000 census population and the 2030 projected population are shown by the graph below. The southeast sector of Norman is projected to have the most growth by the year 2030 with a 67% increase from the 2000 population. The northeast is projected to have the second highest level of growth, followed by the northwest, and the southwest which is projected to have the least amount of growth. The older neighborhoods in Norman are in the southwest sector and much of this area is already built out.



Demographics of Norman

Demographic characteristics include race, age, income level and educational attainment. The majority of the demographic characteristics were assembled from ESRI Market Profile, a reputable national market research company which supplies GIS databases. ERSI data is derived from U.S. Census information. Most demographic characteristics compare the City of Norman to the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Statistical Area. This comparison provides a clear picture of the demographics of Norman as opposed to its surrounding communities as a whole.

Race - The racial distribution of Norman and OKC MSA is shown below in Table 2 - 5. Norman has a slightly higher percentage of American Indian and Asian or Pacific Islander residents when compared to the OKC MSA, and a slightly lower percentage of people identified as Black and as Hispanic origin of any race when compared to the OKC MSA.

Table 2 - 5
2008 Race Distribution

Race	Norman - %	Oklahoma City MSA - %
White	79.1%	73.2%
Black	4.5%	10.6%
American Indian	4.5%	3.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.8%	3.5%
Other	1.8%	4.1%
Two or more races	6.1%	5.6%
Hispanic of any race	6.0%	10.0%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Age - The age of the residents in Norman and OKC MSA is shown in Table 2 - 6. Not surprisingly, Norman has a significantly higher percentage of people between the ages of 20 to 24 when compared to the OKC MSA. This is a result of the University of Oklahoma being located within the City of Norman. Norman also has fewer senior citizens when compared to the OKC MSA. Only 9.5% of Norman's population is over the age of 65 while the OKC MSA has 11.6% of the population over the age of 65. Norman has only 22.4% of its population between the ages of 45 to 64, whereas the OKC MSA has 25.6% of the population between these ages.

Table 2 - 6
2008 Age Distribution

Age	Norman - %	Oklahoma City MSA - %
0-14	16.6%	20.0%
15-19	8.7%	7.0%
20-24	14.7%	7.8%
25-44	28.3%	28.0%
45-64	22.4%	25.6%
65+	9.5%	11.6%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Income Levels - The median household income, median home value, and per capita income for Norman and OKC MSA are shown in Table 2 - 7. Norman has a similar median household income when compared to OKC MSA. The median home value in Norman is significantly higher, and the per capita income of Norman is slightly higher when compared to OKC MSA.

Table 2 - 7
2008 Income Levels

Type	Norman	Oklahoma City MSA
Median Household Income	$48,713	$48,672
Median Home Value	$142,015	$117,045
Per Capita Income	$27,738	$25,392

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Educational Attainment - As a result of the presence of OU, Norman's population is well educated when compared to the OKC MSA. Twice the number of people in Norman have a Graduate or Professional Degree when compared to the OKC MSA. There is also a significantly higher amount of people in Norman who have a Bachelor's Degree, 24.9%, when compared to OKC MSA with 17.6%. Educational attainment is shown in Table 2 - 8.

Table 2 - 8
2008 Population by Educational Attainment

	Norman	Oklahoma City MSA
Less than high school	**8.0%**	13.8%
High school graduate	20.1%	28.9%
Some college, no degree	23.5%	24.9%
Associate Degree	6.4%	6.3%
Bachelor's Degree	**24.9%**	17.6%
Graduate/Professional Degree	**17.2%**	8.6%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Households by Income - 16.2% of Norman's population has a household income over $100,000 where as only 13.8% of the OKC MSA population has a household income over $100,000. By contrast 27.5% of Norman's population has a household income less than $24,999 while only 24.0% of the population of the OKC MSA has a household income of $24,999 or less. Household income is shown in Table 2 - 9.

Table 2 - 9
2008 Households by Income

Income	Norman	Oklahoma City MSA
< $15,000	**16.1%**	12.3%
$15,000 - $24,999	11.4%	11.7%
$25,000 - $34,999	10.3%	11.0%
$35,000 - $49,999	13.3%	16.2%
$50,000 - $74,999	18.8%	20.6%
$75,000 - $99,999	13.9%	14.4%
$100,000 - $149,999	**9.8%**	8.7%
$150,000 - $199,999	**3.2%**	2.5%
$200,000 +	**3.2%**	2.6%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Employed Population by Industry - The most significant difference in Norman's population and the OKC MSA population in terms of employment is in the service industry. 56.2% of Norman's population works in the service industry whereas only 44.4% of the OKC MSA population works in the service industry. Norman does have a lower manufacturing employment base than the greater OKC MSA. Employment by industry can be shown in Table 2 - 10.

Table 2 - 10
2008 Employed Population by Industry

Industry	Norman	Oklahoma City MSA
Agriculture/mining	2.2%	3.3%
Construction	**5.7%**	7.6%
Manufacturing	**4.8%**	7.3%
Wholesale trade	2.0%	3.4%
Retail trade	10.9%	10.9%
Transportation/utilities	3.1%	3.9%
Information	2.9%	2.8%
Finance/insurance/real estate	5.5%	7.9%
Services	**56.2%**	44.4%
Public administration	6.7%	8.4%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

Employed Population by Occupation - Norman has a significant percentage of its population working in a professional occupation, 30.1%. However only 20.7% of the OKC MSA population works in a professional occupation. The employment by occupation is shown in Table 2 - 11.

Table 2 - 11
2008 Employed Population by Occupation

Occupation	Norman	Oklahoma City MSA
Management/business/financial	13.6%	13.8%
Professional	**30.1%**	20.7%
Sales	12.1%	12.0%
Administrative support	12.6%	14.8%
Services	17.0%	16.0%
Farming/forestry/fishing	0.1%	0.3%
Construction/extration	4.4%	6.7%
Installation/maintenance/repair	3.6%	4.7%
Production	3.2%	5.6%
Transportation/material moving	3.3%	5.5%

Source: ESRI Market Profile

ESRI Community Tapestry Segments

The ESRI data system has developed 65 different marketing segments of the population which collectively are called the community tapestry. In a community tapestry, portions of the population are categorized based on different demographic factors such as age, size of family, household income, education attainment, etc. From this, ESRI is able to make generalizations about each tapestry in terms of the type of recreation they enjoy, the type of car they would likely purchase, the type of vacations they would like to take, and what they enjoy doing in their leisure time.

There are five prominent tapestries that occur within the City of Norman. These are "College Towns" which is 16.1% of the population, "Aspiring Young Families" which is 12.5% of the population, "Dorms to Diplomas" which is 6.9% of the population, "Old and Newcomers" which is 6.5% of the population, and "Milk and Cookies" which is 6.0% of the population.

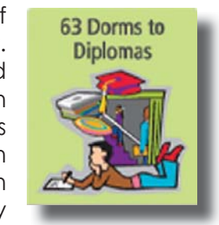
16.1%

College Towns - The average age of this group is 24.4 years old and most residents either live in single-person or shared households. This tapestry segment includes both students at colleges or universities and residents who teach or do research at the college or university. This tapestry is very well educated with over 40% of the residents over the age of 25 having a bachelor's or graduate degree. 52% of those who are employed in this tapestry only work part-time, often at jobs involving educational services, health care, and food preparation. One out of every seven residents in this tapestry lives in an on-campus dorm. Those who live off-campus usually live in low-income rental apartments. These residents are new to living on their own so they purchase only a few appliances such as a microwave oven and a toaster. They eat out at fast-food restaurants or buy ready-made prepared meals. These residents attend music concerts, college basketball and football games, play pool and go to the movies. Their recreational activities are very casual and they participate in nearly every outdoor sport and athletic activity.

Aspiring Young Families - This group of the community tapestry is young, startup families. There is a mix of ethnic groups, as well as married couples with children, married couples without children, and single parents with children. The median age is 30.5 years old. The median household income for this tapestry is $50,000 and approximately 60% of the employed residents have professional, management, sales, or office and administrative support positions. Over 85% of this tapestry has a high school diploma and 22% have a bachelor's or graduate degree. The population of this tapestry lives in a mix of apartments, single-family houses, and startup townhomes. There is a mix of both renters and home owners. Much of their discretionary income is spent on their children and on their home. This population likes to vacation at theme parks. In their leisure time they like to dine out, go dancing, go to the movies and attend professional/college football games. Other recreational activities this tapestry enjoys include fishing, weight lifting, and playing basketball.

12.5%

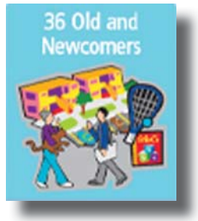
Dorms to Diplomas - This tapestry is made up of college students with a median age of 21.8 years. Approximately 42% of these residents live in shared housing with one or more roommates; in addition 43% live in on-campus dorms. The ethnic diversity is low with 71% being white and 11% of the population is Asian. Almost 75% of the residents work part-time in low-paying service jobs, and many are employed by the educational institutions they attend. Almost all of this tapestry owns a personal computer to research school assignments, find employment, make travel plans, and keep in touch with family. Most students also own cell phones and iPods. They exercise by participating in college sports, walking on campus, and working out at on-campus gyms. Their leisure activities include attending concerts, going dancing, going to movies, visiting theme parks, playing pool, and spending time with friends while watching a sports game or a movie.



6.9%

Old and Newcomers - This segment consists of neighborhoods that are in transition and are populated by renters who are starting their careers or people who are retired. The age of this population is

either 20s or 75 and older. There are more single person and shared households than families. The majority of residents are white. This group of the population usually drives compact cars and has life insurance policies as well as renter's insurance and medical insurance. This population enjoys reading fiction, non-fiction, newspapers and magazines. They also enjoy going to the movies, watching television and listening to the radio. They play sports such as racquetball, golf, and walk or jog. Other activities include going to the zoo and cooking.



6.5%

6.0%

Milk and Cookies - This tapestry is represented by young, affluent married couples who either have young children or are just starting a family. The median age is 34.2 years and the median household income is $63,574. Approximately 58% have a bachelor's degree, graduate degree or at least have attended college. The families in this population are usually duel income families so they have at least two vehicles. They frequently buy fast food from Little Caesars, Whataburger, or Sonic. They enjoy chess, backgammon, football and are very interested in basketball by playing pick up games, attending professional games, and watching games on television. Much of their leisure time is spent working on their lawns, painting the inside of their homes or performing minor maintenance on their vehicles.

ESRI Entertainment and Recreation Expenditures Estimate

The ESRI Entertainment and Recreation Expenditures report analyzes what a given segment of the population spends their money on in terms of different goods and services. Goods and services in this report include a variety of entertainment and recreational activities. The items that the average household in Norman purchased, as well as the total amount spent on these items by all of Norman residents, are shown in more detail in Table 2 - 12 for the year 2008.

Table 2 - 12
2008 Entertainment and Recreation Expenditures for Norman

Entertainment or Recreation Activity	Average Amount Spent per Household	Total Amount Spent by Norman Pop.
Community antenna or cable TV	$659.19	$28,943,632
Pets	$393.96	$17,297,994
Recreational vehicles and fees	$324.64	$14,254,439
Televisions	$272.16	$11,949,931
Reading	$244.34	$10,728,471
Sound equipment	$197.89	$8,688,883
Sports/recreation/exercise equipment	**$183.22**	**$8,044,683**
Membership fees for clubs	**$146.42**	**$6,428,885**
Admission to movie/theatre/opera/ballet	$141.53	$6,214,302
Toys and games	$137.18	$6,023,465
Photo equipment and supplies	$112.01	$4,918,346
Fees for recreational lessons	**$104.64**	**$4,594,657**
Fees for participant sports excluding trips	**$98.65**	**$4,331,665**
Video cassettes and DVDs	$66.13	$2,903,643
Admission to sporting events excluding trips	**$54.43**	**$2,390,092**
Rental of video cassettes and DVDs	$52.08	$2,286,801
Video game hardware and software	$35.09	$1,540,636
VCRs, video cameras, and DVD players	$30.18	$1,325,178
Rental and repair of TV/radior/sound equip.	$5.87	$257,670
Satellite dishes	$0.96	$41,936
Streaming/download video	$0.74	$32,505
Dating services	$0.52	$22,798

Source: ESRI Retail Goods and Services Expenditures

Sports and Leisure Market Potential

The Sports and Leisure Market Potential Report done by ESRI measures the probable demand for a product or service in a defined geographic area, in this case the City of Norman. A list of over 100 recreational activities was generated, and a Market Potential Index was measured. The Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the likelihood that adult households in Norman will exhibit certain consumer behaviors when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average MPI is 100. Therefore, if the City of Norman has an MPI much higher than 100, the adult residents of the City are much more likely to participate in or attend those activities. If the City of Norman has an MPI lower than 100, then the adult residents of Norman are not likely to participate or attend those activities. Popular recreational activities in Norman, as determined by the MPI, include participating in football, basketball, tennis, jogging / running, volleyball, roller blading, and soccer. Because these activities have a high MPI, many more adults in Norman participate in them when compared to the national average. These market sectors may have growth potential in Norman.

Table 2 - 13
High Potential for Participation in Sports

Sport	MPI[1]
Participated in football	156
Participated in basketball	145
Participated in tennis	142
Participated in jogging/running	138
Participated in volleyball	134
Participated in rollar blading	132
Participated in soccer	131
Participated in mountain biking	128
Participated in softball	128
Participated in road bicycling	122

Source: ESRI Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Table 2 - 14
High Potential for Attending Events

Sport or Activity	MPI[1]
Attend football game (college)	148
Attend basketball game (college)	140
Attend rock music performance	134
Attend movies once per month	125
Attend movies once per week	124
Attend adult education course	123
Attend soccer game	121
Attend classical music/opera performance	119
Attend movies 2-3 per month	119
Attend live theater performance	117

Source: ESRI Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Table 2 - 15
High Potential for Participation in Activities

Activity	MPI[1]
Participated in karaoke	163
Played video games	144
Played billiards/pool	130
Participated in Frisbee	129
Participated in Yoga	129
Participated in ice skating	126
Went dancing	126
Participated in weight lifting	125
Participated in back packing/hiking	124
Participated in water skiing	124

Source: ESRI Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Table 2 - 16
High Potential for Money Spent on Misc. Recreation in the last 12 months

Sport or Activity	MPI[1]
<$250 on high end sports equipment	146
Bought 4 to 6 hardcover books	127
Went to the zoo	115
Went to a museum	114
Gambled at a casino 6+ times	112
Went to Six Flags	109
Bought a sound game for a child	107
Dined out 2+ times per week	107
Bought educational toy for child	104

Source: ESRI Sports and Leisure Market Potential

[1] National Market Potential Index (MPI) is 100

Schools in Norman

Norman Public Schools is the primary provider of education to the children of Norman. A list of their campuses and the number of students is shown in Table 2 - 17 to the right. There are a total of 15 elementary schools (14 of the 15 are named after U.S. presidents), four middle schools (all named after U.S. authors), and two high schools.

There are 5 private schools within Norman: All Saints Catholic School for grades Pre-K to 8, Blue Eagle Christian Academy for grades Pre-K to 12, Community Christian School for grades Pre-K to 12, Robinson St. Christian School for grades K to 12, and Trinity Lutheran Kind Preschool for grades Pre-K to 4.

Norman is also the home of the University of Oklahoma, a premier institution of higher learning with over 30,000 students enrolled each year.

Outdoor recreation features associated with each Norman Public School campus are shown in Table 2 - 17. These facilities are considered in the overall planning process since they may supplement recreation features offered by the City of Norman.

Table 2 - 17
Norman Public Schools

School Name	2008-2009 Enrollment	Applicable Recreation Features
Adams Elementary	457	backstop, 2 playgroundss, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts
Cleveland Elementary	467	2 backstops, soccer practice field, 2 playgrounds, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts
Eisenhower Elementary	449	backstop, playground, 4 basketball courts, 4-square courts
Jackson Elementary	423	backstop, soccer practice field, playground, basketball court
Jefferson Elementary	356	playground, 4-square courts
Kennedy Elementary	414	2 playgrounds
Lakeview Elementary	271	playground, basketball court, 4-square court
Lincoln Elementary	323	3 playgrounds, backstop, soccer practice field, basketball court, 4-square courts
Madison Elementary	513	2 playgrounds, backstop, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts, hopscotch
McKinley Elementary	309	backstop, soccer practice field, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts, 1 playground
Monroe Elementary	395	backstop, 3 playgrounds, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts
Roosevelt Elementary	477	backstop, soccer practice field, 3 playgrounds, 4-square courts
Truman Elementary	705	backstop, practice soccer field, playground, basketball court, 4-square courts
Washington Elementary	487	2 playgrounds, 2 basketball courts, 4-square courts backstop, soccer practice field
Wilson Elementary	237	backstop, practice soccer field, 3 playgrounds, 4-square courts
Alcott Middle School	651	football field, baseball field, 3 basketball courts
Irving Middle School	632	City-owned recreation center, 4 tennis courts, baseball field, softball field, football field
Longfellow Middle School	605	baseball field, 2 basketball courts
Whittier Middle School	886	City-owned recreation center, baseball field, 4 tennis courts
Norman High School	1,755	baseball field, track, football field, 4 tennis courts
Norman North High School	2,122	baseball field, track, football field, softball field, 4 tennis courts

Source: Yahoo! Real Estate School Information

Key National Trends in Recreation

The rate of change in the world and United States is accelerating, and many of these trends are having a direct impact on recreation. These trends include:

- **Instead of having more leisure time, the world's increasingly competitive marketplace is forcing many to work harder to keep up.** As a result, we have less leisure time, and fewer opportunities to enjoy recreational activities. We, therefore, tend to seek structured activities with a specific goal, rather than simple unstructured activities such as going for a spontaneous walk.
- **We have many more leisure time choices.** Greatly increased at-home leisure opportunities are available today, such as hundreds of channels of television, sophisticated computer games and the internet.
- **Safety is a great concern to parents.** Many parents do not allow their children to go to area parks unattended. In many places the use of neighborhood parks has gone down.
- **We live in an era of instant gratification.** We expect to have high quality recreation, and to be given activities that we like. We have many leisure time activities and outlets, and can pick and choose what we want to do. Cities must be willing to provide a much broader menu of recreation activities, but must draw the line if those activities become too costly.
- **Through the media and the internet, we are exposed to the best from around the world.** Because of this, we tend to expect our facilities and activities to be of the highest quality possible.
- **Concern over the health of our population is rapidly growing.** Obesity is now recognized as a nationwide problem. Oklahoma tied for 8th as the most obese state nationally in 2008 and also had the 5th worst rate of physical inactivity. Funding to reduce obesity rates by increasing outdoor activities may be more readily available in the near future. It may also be a source of grants for parks and recreation programs and facilities.
- **New revenue sources for public funding are difficult to come by.** The federal surpluses briefly experienced at the turn of the century are now a thing of the past, and deficit spending is probable for the next decade. As a result, less help can be expected from the federal government, and even popular grant programs such as enhancement funds for trails and beautification may not be readily available.

Baby Boomer Trends

It is projected that there are 77 million Americans born between the years of 1946 and 1964. The Baby Boomer generation comprises one-third of the total U.S. population. With such a significant portion of the population entering into the retirement age, they are redefining what it means to grow old. Many Baby Boomers are opting not to retire at a traditional retirement age. Because of their dedication to hard work and youthfulness, this population is expected to stay in the work force longer because they take pleasure in being challenged and engaged. According to Packaged Facts, a demographic marketing research firm, trends that are beginning to take off because of the Baby Boomers include:

- Prevention-centered healthcare to keep aging bodies disease free.
- Anti-aging products and services that will keep mature adults looking as young as they view themselves to be.
- Media and internet technology to facilitate family and social ties, recreation and lifelong learning.
- Innovation in housing that allows homeowners to age in place.
- Increasing entrepreneurial activity among those who have retired, along with flexible work schedules that allow for equal work and leisure time.
- Growing diversity in travel and leisure options, especially with regard to volunteer and eco-friendly opportunities.

High School Sports Trends

The National Federation of State High School Associations reported in September 2008 that participation in high school sports had increased for the nineteenth year in a row. In fact, the 2007-2008 school year had the highest level of sports participation ever recorded with 58% of students enrolled in high school participating in sports. The State of Texas had the highest number of sports participants, followed by California, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Florida as the top 10 states with regards to participation.

The most popular sports for high school girls are (in order of most participants):

- Basketball
- Track and field
- Volleyball
- Fast pitch softball
- Soccer
- Cross country
- Tennis
- Swimming and diving
- Competitive Spirit Squad
- Golf

The most popular sports for high school boys are (in order of most participants):

- Football
- Basketball
- Track and field
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Wrestling
- Cross country
- Golf
- Tennis
- Swimming and diving

Fitness Trends

Americans want to get in shape. Programs such as strength training, conditioning, and aerobics are gaining in popularity. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association performs annual surveys and marketing studies to analyze what activities and sports Americans are participating in, and whether or not interest has increased in those activities. In 2008, the most popular sports and fitness activities ranked by highest number of participants were:

- Exercise walking
- Swimming
- Exercising with equipment
- Bowling
- Camping
- Bicycle riding
- Fishing
- Workout at a club
- Hiking
- Weight lifting
- Aerobic exercising
- Running/jogging

The top 10 sports and fitness activities that had the highest growth rate from the year 2007 to 2008 were:

► Running/jogging	18.2% increase
► Yoga	17.1% increase
► Snowboarding	15.6% increase
► Soccer	12.5% increase
► Bicycle riding	11.4% increase
► Hiking	10.5% increase
► Mountain biking (off road)	9.6% increase
► Exercising with equipment	9.2% increase
► Baseball	8.7% increase
► Exercise walking	7.6% increase

Sports Equipment Sales Trends

With an increased desire to get into shape, people are spending more money than ever on equipment for sports and activities. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association reported in 2007 that the sports industry is nearly a $70 billion business. This includes all the apparel, footwear, and equipment people buy for their desired sports activity. The three activities in 2007 that had the largest statistical gain in spending were martial arts with a 12.1% increase, tennis with a 6.5% increase, and boxing with a 5.0% increase in the necessary equipment. The activities that were expected to have high levels of sales growth in 2008 are:

- Yoga / Pilates
- Fitness walking
- Lacrosse
- Running
- Strength training

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association identified issues that affected industry sales. These issues included:

- Older Americans are buying and using fitness equipment.
- From 1990 to 2007, the number of boys on high school varsity teams rose 27%, while the number of girls on high school varsity teams rose 60%.
- Despite a 1% drop in sales, retail sales of sports licensed products with Alma Maters remained very strong at $13.7 billion in 2007, according to estimates by The Licensing Letter.
- The women's market is biggest in sports apparel with 42% of all spending being for women's items.
- Nearly one-third of all spending on athletic footwear is by those ages 13-24, who also pay the highest average retail price for athletic footwear.
- Free weights are the most common form of fitness equipment in the home, while people spend more on treadmills.
- There are 44.1 million Americans who are members of health clubs, which is 21% more than there were in 2000.

Extreme Sports Trends

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association also analyzed the growth in extreme sports. Most extreme sports have been growing steadily in participation since 2000. The most popular of these sports in terms of participation in 2007 were:

- Inline skating - nearly 45% of all inline skaters participate 13 days or more a year.
- Skateboarding - more than 3.8 million skateboarders participate 25+ days a year.
- Mountain biking - overall participation grew 2% in one month.
- Snowboarding - this is the second most popular winter sport behind Alpine skiing.
- Paintball - overall participation has grown by more than 50% since 2000.
- Cardio kickboxing - more than 60% of participants are casual, participating less than 50 days per year.
- Climbing (indoor, sport, boulder) - popular on cruise ships, at spas, and in many homes.
- Trail running - total participation has been steady since 2000.
- Ultimate Frisbee - in 2007, it had more participants nationwide than lacrosse, wrestling, beach volleyball, fast-pitch softball, rugby, field hockey, ice hockey or roller hockey.
- Wakeboarding - participation is affected by rising fuel costs.
- Mountain / rock climbing - overall participation grew by 30% from 2006 to 2007.
- BMX bicycling - more than 60% of these participants engage in the sport 13+ days per year.
- Roller hockey - one of its biggest challenges is getting access to proper venues.
- Boardsailing / windsurfing - it is dependent upon weather as this sport needs wind and water in order to participate.

Participation State-by-State Index

The National Sporting Goods Association conducted a state-by-state participation index in 2006. The index included 33 different sports where the total participation, frequency of participation and total days spent participating were calculated. The index was determined by dividing a state's percentage of participants by its percentage of the U.S. population. The national average of the index was set at 100. The five highest ranked sports for each state were then calculated.

For Oklahoma, the top five are:

- ► Tennis — index of 338
- ► Hunting with a bow and arrow — index of 234
- ► Baseball — index of 157
- ► Hunting with firearms — index of 156
- ► Aerobic exercising — index of 149

This means that residents of Oklahoma are 3.38 times more likely to play tennis as opposed to the national average and 2.34 times more likely to hunt with a bow and arrow as opposed to the national average.

For comparison purposes, the highest ranked sports for each of the states that surround Oklahoma are:

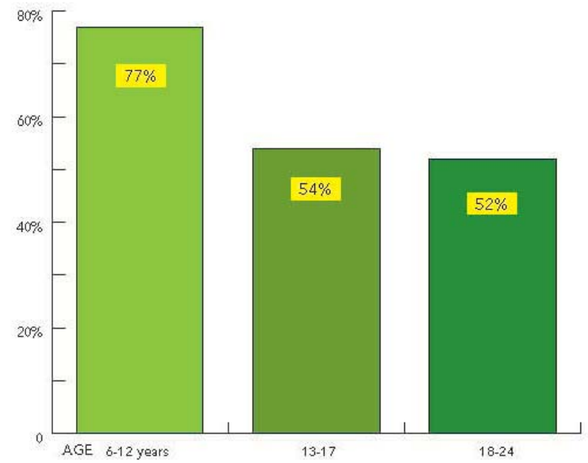
- ► Arkansas, hunting with a bow and arrow — index of 600
- ► Colorado, skiing-alpine — index of 834
- ► Kansas, baseball — index of 236
- ► Missouri, billiards/pool — index of 212
- ► New Mexico, volleyball — index of 353
- ► Texas, in-line roller skating — index of 142

National Outdoor Participation Trends

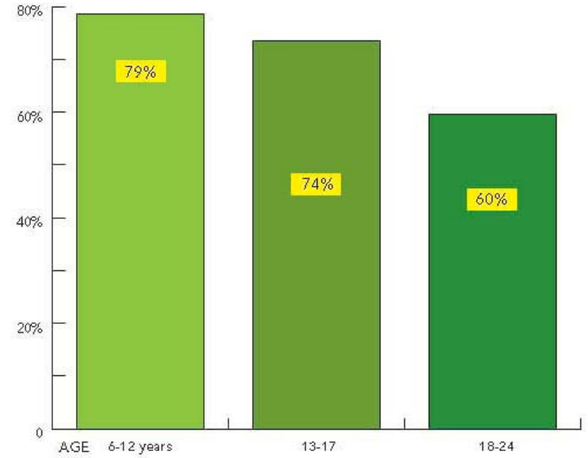
The Outdoor Industry Foundation conducted a nationwide survey in 2007, and a follow up to the survey in 2008, to determine in which outdoor activities that Americans (ages six and older) were participating. The total surveyed panel included more than one million households. The survey identified "gateway" activities as bicycling, camping, fishing, hiking and running/jogging. By introducing people to these outdoor activities, they are more likely to participate in other activities. For example, a day hiker is more likely to later become a backpacker as opposed to someone who does not hike. Significant findings from the survey include:

- The drop-off in outdoor participation between the child age group of 6 to 12 and the teenage group of 13 to 17 is higher among girls than boys (see bar graph to the right).
- Outdoor participation among boys drops significantly between teenage and young adulthood ages (see bar graph to the right).
- Nearly half of those who participate in outdoor activities did so 30 times or less in 2006.
- Only 26% of Americans participate in outdoor activities two times a week or more.
- 50% of outdoor activity participants consider those activities their main source of exercise.
- 76% of youth boys and 69% of youth girls will try outdoor activities.
- As people age, they become more focused on their specific favorite outdoor activities, leading to participation in a fewer variety of activities.
- As people age, they participate in more indoor fitness activities and fewer outdoor activities and team ball sports.
- Participation in indoor fitness and outdoor activities are roughly equal with young adults ages 18 to 24 (see line graph to the far right).
- Youth and young adults ages 6 to 24 are more than twice as likely to bicycle if they also skateboard.
- Adults age 24 and older are three times more likely to backpack if they also jog.
- Encouraging any form of outdoor activity can increase the likelihood of participating in other forms of outdoor activities in the future.

Participation* in Outdoor Activities: Female Youth



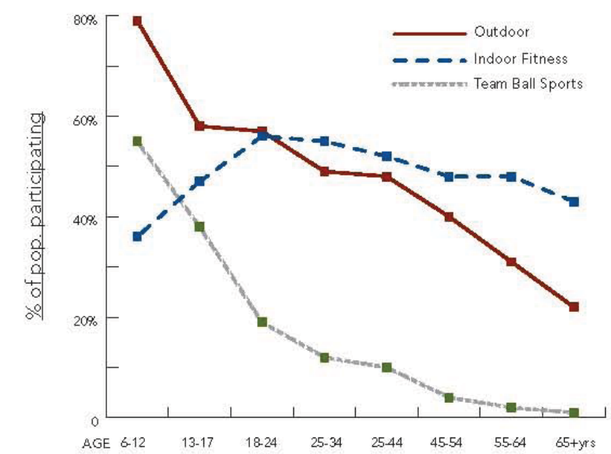
Participation* in Outdoor Activities: Male Youth



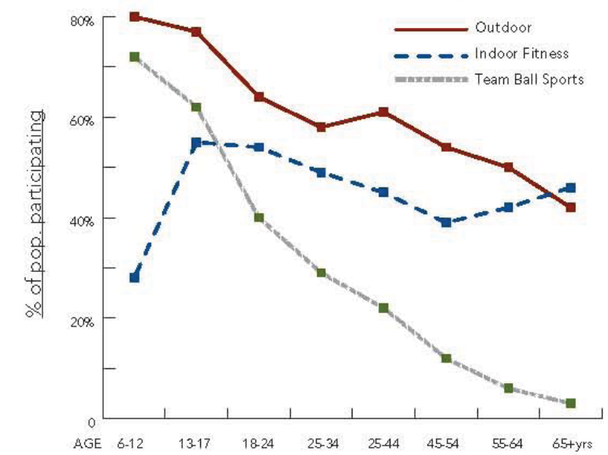
**Participation is defined as taking part in one of 35 outdoor activities at least once in 2006.*

Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2008

Outdoor, Indoor Fitness and Team Ballsports Activities:
Life Cycle of Female Participation*



Outdoor, Indoor Fitness and Team Ballsports:
Life Cycle of Male Participation*



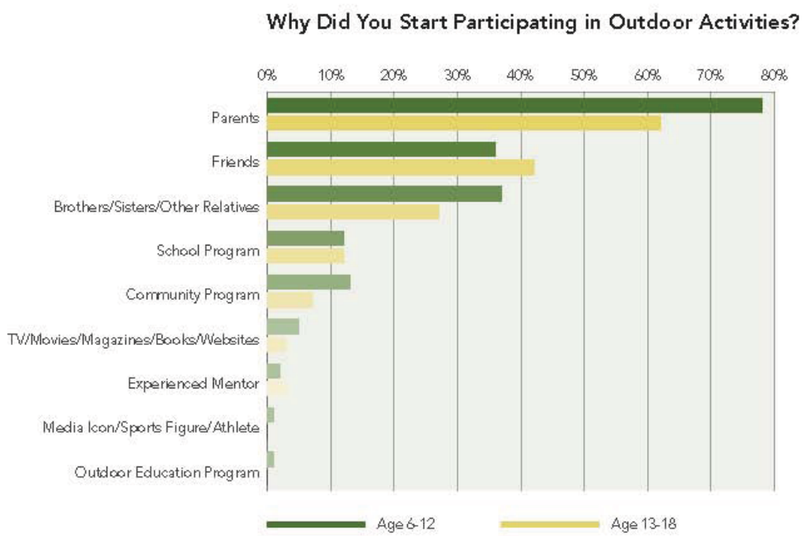
**Participation is defined as taking part in one activity within the activity category at least once in 2005 and/or 2006. Details on activity categories can be found on page 16/17.*

Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2008

National Outdoor Participation Trends in Youth

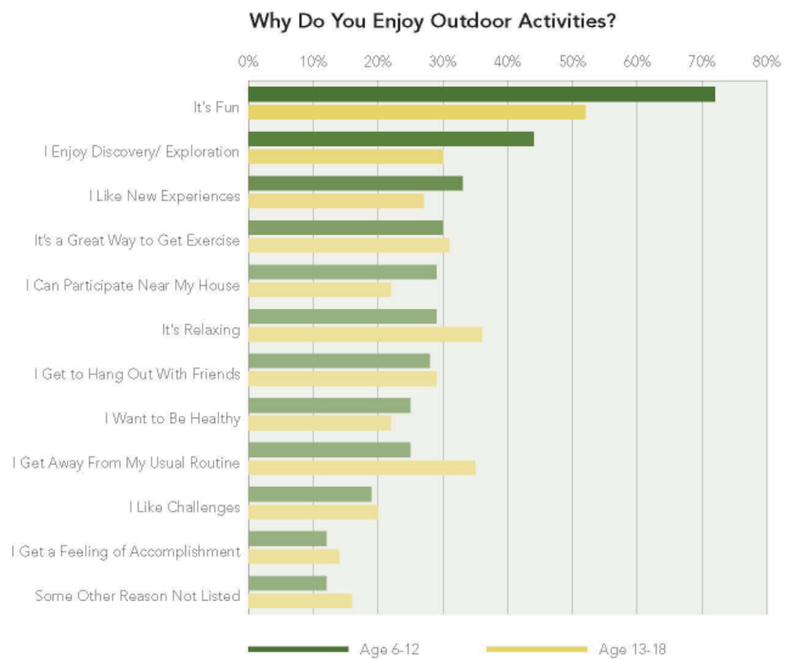
The 2008 follow up survey that was done by the Outdoor Industry Foundation included several direct questions aimed at youth and their participation in outdoor activities. For the purpose of the survey, the youth were divided into two groups: youth ages 6 to 12 and teens ages 13 to 18.

The first question asked who introduces them to their outdoor activities. Parents were the number one response with both age groups. This indicates that parents have a direct impact on whether or not a child is active outdoors. This is shown in the bar graph below.



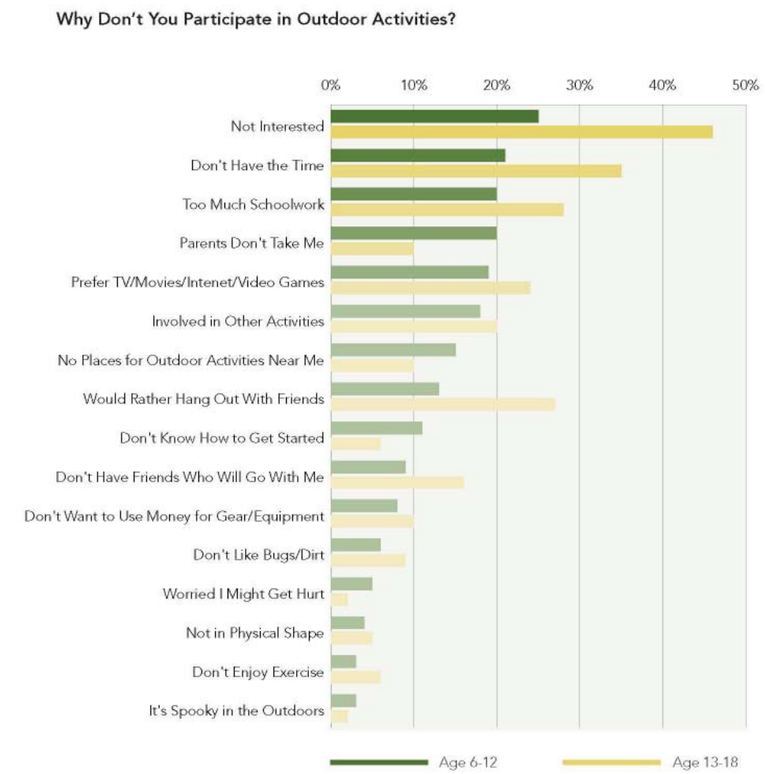
Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2008

Second, the youth were asked why it is that they enjoy those outdoor activities. For both age groups, "it's fun" is the number one response. For the youth ages 6 to 12, the second highest response was "I enjoy discovery/exploration." For teens ages 13 to 18, the second highest response was "it's relaxing" followed by "I get away from my usual routine." These responses are shown in the bar graph below.



Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2008

For the youth who cited that they do not participate in outdoor activities, they were asked what was their reason for non-participation. The most common reason for both age groups was that they were not interested. The second reason was that they "don't have the time." These results are shown in the bar graph below.



Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2008

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducts a survey every five years having begun in 1955 to determine the national and statewide participation in fishing, hunting and wildlife associated recreation activities. Wildlife associated activities include observing, photographing and feeding wildlife. For this master plan, the previous three surveys from 1996, 2001, and 2006, were compared. A summary of the results from the three surveys is shown in Table 2 - 18.

Anglers

- Over the past ten years, the number of people who participate in fishing has dropped, as well as the total number of days spent fishing.
- The average amount of money spent per angler on equipment and trip-related expenditures has significantly increased over the past decade from $525 in 1996 to $819 in 2006.

Hunters

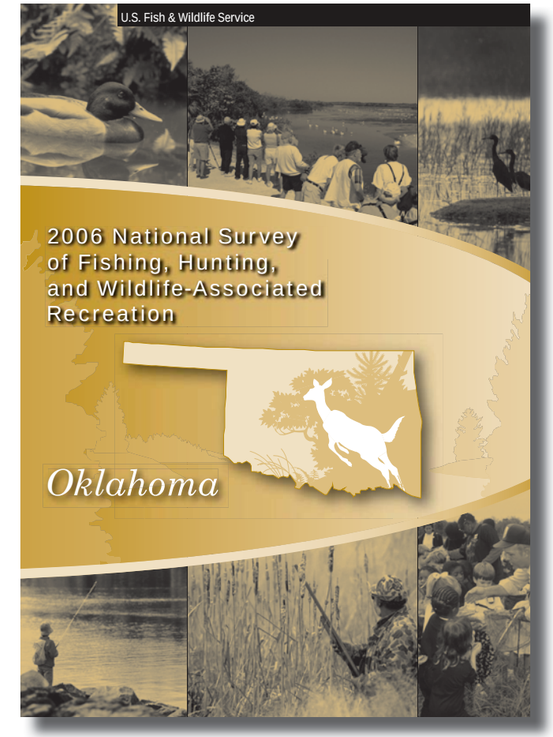
- Similar to fishing, the number of hunters has decreased over the past ten years.
- The total number of days spent hunting has also decreased; however, the average number of days per hunter has slightly increased.
- Again, the average amount of money spent on expenditures per hunter has increased overall from 1996 to 2006.

Wildlife Participants

- The total number of people who participate in wildlife recreation activities has increased overall. The number of both near home wildlife trips and away from home wildlife trips have also increased. This demonstrates a desire for both wildlife areas close to home for day trips and significant wildlife destinations worth traveling.
- Similar to fishing and hunting, the average amount of money spent per participant on expenditures for wildlife recreation has increased from $208 in 1996 to $289 in 2006.

Table 2 - 18
Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Associated Recreation Trends in Oklahoma

	1996	2001	2006
Anglers	924,000	774,000	611,000
Days spent fishing	14,674,000	12,741,000	10,580,000
Avg. days per angler	16	16	17
Total expenditures	$490,767,000	$476,019,000	$501,786,000
Avg. per Angler	$525	$609	$819
Hunters	297,000	261,000	251,000
Days spent hunting	5,605,000	5,642,000	5,534,000
Avg. days per hunter	19	22	22
Total expenditures	$426,803,000	$284,071,000	$476,657,000
Avg. per Hunter	$1,400	$1,086	$1,746
Wildlife Participants	947,000	1,131,000	1,110,000
Away-from-home	347,000	403,000	372,000
Around-the-home	818,000	997,000	976,000
Total expenditures	$201,797,000	$193,248,000	$328,660,000
Avg. per Participant	$208	$171	$289



Chapter 3

The Current State of Parks in Norman

Chapter 3

The Current State of Parks in Norman

Park - an area of land, usually in a large natural state, for the enjoyment of the public, having facilities for rest and recreation, often owned, set apart, and managed by a city, state, or nation.

Introduction

Norman has an established network of both neighborhood and larger community park facilities. These parks are well placed within the neighborhoods that they serve and are well maintained. A key part of the park planning process is to understand what parks, recreation buildings, trails and open space facilities are currently available. The process also evaluates the current condition of those facilities so as to assess whether or not they are addressing the current park and open space needs of the city. This serves as the foundation for the needs assessment for new or improved recreational facilities.

Components of the Review of Existing Parks

This review of existing parks looks at several aspects of each park in the Norman park and open space system. These include:

- **Classification:** What is the purpose of a given park? Is it intended to serve a local neighborhood around it, giving children and young adults a place to play? Is it intended to serve a much larger population, providing fields for organized league play? This determines whether a park should be classified as a neighborhood park, a community park, a special purpose park, or a linkage park. Key issues include:
- **Location**: Where is the park located in relation to the population that it serves? Is it accessible?
- **Service Area**: What are the limits of the area served by each park? Are there any major thoroughfares or physical features that create barriers to accessing the park?
- **Size of the Park**: How big is the park? Is it large enough to adequately accomplish its intended purpose?
- **Facilities in each Park**: What does the park contain? Are the facilities appropriate for the type of park?
- **Layout**: Is the arrangement of facilities in each park appropriate?
- **Condition of the Park**: What is the general condition of the facilities in each park?
- **Special Considerations**: Does the park provide facilities for the physically challenged that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act?

This document notes general condition, but does not provide an in-depth safety or conditional review of equipment, buildings or accessibility. These specific assessments should continue to be conducted by staff on a periodic basis.

Park Classification

There are three broad categories of parks identified by national and state guidelines. These are:

- Close-to-Home Parks (such as neighborhood and community parks)
- Regional Parks (such as parks around Lake Thunderbird)
- Unique Parks (such as special use and linear parks. These can also fall into the category of a close-to-home park or a regional park)

Close-to-home parks are a key category and should be one of the major focal points of neighborhoods in Norman. Close-to-home parks address day to day facilities for all ages and activities, and are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live. The four close-to-home park types that exist in Norman are:

- Neighborhood parks
- Community parks
- Special use parks
- Linear parks

Local Close-to-Home Parks - Located within the community served by the facility, which includes pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks.

Types and Standards For Parks Found in the Norman Park System

The following categories of parks exist in Norman today and should be included as the City grows. Guidelines for each type are included to promote a consistent level of development as new parks in each category are built. These recommendations are guidelines, and each park type should be tailored to the area around it and its intended use.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks, or mini-parks, are small green gathering spaces ranging from 1/8 acre to 1 acre. Due to the size of this type of park, parking is typically not provided. Therefore, pocket parks are accessed by pedestrian and bicycle means. Benches, fountains, landscaping, and other focal features are common items found in these parks. Size is not the key factor of the typical pocket park, but rather the quality of the landscaping and features that go into the park. Small green areas in a downtown area are examples of pocket parks.

Typical Pocket Park. This park is about 1/2 acre in size and offers amenities such as benches, landscaping and possibly a playground.

Many cities have adopted policies that ruled out pocket parks as a choice for future parks. Concerns have long been raised over the effectiveness of such small parks, as well as the higher per acre cost to maintain these smaller sites. However, a second school of thought argues that enormous benefits accrue from having easily accessible parks all over the city. Norman should strongly value access to parks, and should encourage smaller parks where appropriate and green spaces that are accessible even if operational costs are somewhat higher.

Neighborhood Parks

In Norman, as in most cities, neighborhood parks should provide the foundation for recreation. Ideally, they provide facilities and recreation space for the entire family, and are within easy walking or bicycling distance of the people they serve.

The neighborhood park typically serves one large or several smaller neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood park in Norman, generally 3 acres in size, should serve no more than 2,000 to 4,000 residents per park.

- Neighborhood parks should be accessible to residents who live within a one-half mile radius of the park. In some areas of the city, a smaller quarter mile service radius may be more appropriate.
- Neighborhood parks can be located adjacent to elementary or middle schools, so as to share acquisition and development costs with the school district. In the future, where possible, new neighborhood parks should be planned and developed in close coordination with the Norman Public Schools. This can result in significant cost savings and more efficient use of tax dollars to the city and the school district.
- Neighborhood parks are generally located away from major arterial streets and provide easy access for the users that surround it. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets.

Size - The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to physical locations around the park. An ideal size for neighborhood parks in Norman should be around three to ten acres. Parks may range in size from a minimum of two acres to a maximum of ten acres.

Location - If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in the neighborhoods that they serve. The park should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served, and should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets which do not allow high-speed traffic. Many cities require that neighborhood parks have streets on at least two sides of the park.

Facilities - Facilities located in current and future neighborhood parks in Norman should, at a minimum, include the following:

- Age appropriate playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing around the playground
- Unlighted tennis courts
- Lighted or unlighted multi-purpose courts for basketball and volleyball
- Active areas for unorganized play and for practice
- Picnic areas with benches, picnic tables and cooking grills
- Shaded pavilions and gazebos
- Jogging and exercise trails
- Practice backstop

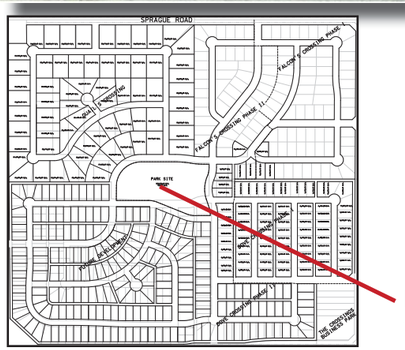
Restrooms – Restrooms are typically not placed in smaller neighborhood parks because they increase maintenance and provide a location for illegal activities. Restrooms in community parks should be handicapped accessible.

Parking – Parking should vary based on the size of the park and facilities provided. A minimum of eight spaces per new neighborhood park are recommended with an additional two handicapped parking spaces per each neighborhood park. The exact amount of parking needed will vary based on the size of the park, the availability of safe on-street parking adjacent to the park, the facilities the park contains and the number of users attracted to the park. Smaller parks, if well placed in their neighborhoods, may not need any parking.

Lighting - Smaller neighborhood parks should include only lighting for security purposes.

The diagram on the following page illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed as a unique part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

Example of a typical neighborhood park layout. This park is approximately 6 acres in size, and has good access from all sides. It is centered in the neighborhood that it serves.



Park location in the center of the area it serves.

Linear Parks

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

Examples of linear parks in Norman include Hall Park Greenbelt, Doubletree Greenbelt, and the Legacy Trail.

Hall Park Greenbelt is an example of a linear park in Norman.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. Community parks are usually reached by automobiles, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or bicycle to it. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike/bike trails and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users. The park facilities at Reaves Park are ideal examples of community park facilities. Other examples of community parks in Norman include Andrews Park, Griffin Park, and Little Axe Park.

Size - The typical community park should be large enough so it can provide a variety of facilities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion, as new facilities are required. A typical community park varies in size from 10 acres to over 50 acres.

Location – Community parks should be located near a major thoroughfare to provide easy access from different parts of the city. Because of the potential for noise and bright lights at night, community parks should be buffered from adjacent residential areas.

Facilities - Facilities generally located in community parks may include:

- Play equipment
- Active free play areas
- Picnic areas and pavilion(s)
- Restrooms
- Jogging, bicycle or nature trails, sometimes lighted for evening use
- Lighted ball fields, suitable for organized competitive events
- Recreation center (if appropriate)
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park
- Security lighting
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as nature trails, fishing ponds, swimming pools, amphitheaters etc.

Parking - This varies based on the facilities provided and the size of park. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of five spaces per acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park such as pools or ball fields. The specific amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park.

A typical community park layout, illustrating the types of facilities that might occur in a 20 to 30 acre community park.

Andrews Park (top) and Griffin Park (bottom) are two examples of community parks in Norman.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are large parks that serve an entire region and cater to people beyond just a city. Regional parks are reached by automobiles, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or bicycle to it. The state park and areas around Lake Thunderbird are examples of regional parks in Norman.

Size - The typical regional park is more than 300 acres in size.

Location – Regional parks are located adjacent to major roadways or freeways to facilitate access.

Facilities - Facilities generally located in regional parks may include:

- Play equipment
- Active free play areas
- Picnic areas and pavilion(s)
- Restrooms
- Jogging, bicycle or nature trails, sometimes lighted for evening use
- Lighted ball fields, suitable for organized competitive events
- Recreation center (if appropriate)
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose recreational fields
- Fishing ponds where feasible
- Amphitheaters
- Equestrian trails
- Observatory
- Botanical gardens
- Veloway
- Dog park
- Canoe rentals / paddle boat rentals
- Putt putt golf
- Disc golf course
- BMX course
- Sculpture garden
- Aquatic complex
- Preserved open space

Parking - It is recommended there be a minimum of five spaces per acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park such as pools or ball fields. The specific amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park.

Special Purpose Parks

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

- Golf courses
- Athletic fields or complexes
- Nature centers or large natural preserves
- Aquatic centers
- Tennis complexes

Athletic complexes and golf courses are the most common types of special purpose parks. Athletic complexes seek to provide fields for organized play in a location that can accommodate the traffic and noise that a large number of users can generate. Athletic complexes should include sufficient fields so that leagues can congregate at one facility and not have to spread out in different locations.

An example of special purpose park in Norman is Westwood Park.

Size of the Park System in Norman

Currently the City of Norman Park System includes 65 parks totaling 1,130.3 acres and 6 indoor recreation sites. Table 3 - 1 summarizes the existing park facilities. Tables 3 - 2 to 3 - 5 on the following pages give a brief summary of the different types of parks in Norman.

Table 3 - 1
The 2009 Parks System in Norman

Total Number of Parks	**65**
Total System Acreage	**1,140.7**
Neighborhood Parks	54 Parks totaling 282.7 acres
Undeveloped Acreage	5.1 acres
Developed Acreage	277.6 acres
Community Parks	6 Parks totaling 512.1 acres
Undeveloped Acreage	242.5 acres
Developed Acreage	269.6 acres
Linear Parks	3 Parks totaling 56.0 acres
Special Purpose Parks	2 Parks totaling 289.9 acres
Recreation Centers	6 Centers totaling 56,884 sq. ft.
Largest Park	Griffin Memorial Park (160 acres)
Smallest Park	Centennial Park (0.2 acres)
Developed vs. Undeveloped	688.3 acres vs. 452.4 acres

Existing Park Reviews

A review of each of the existing parks in Norman begins on page 3 - 11. The reviews include a summary of the facilities in each park, as well as observations regarding the arrangement and condition of facilities. Key potential improvements to each park are discussed in this section.

Table 3-2 Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park Name	Overall Acreage		Address	Sector	Trail / Walking Path (in miles)	Backstop	Soccer Practice Field	Basketball Court	Playground	Soccer Field	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Skate Park	Shuffleboard	Horseshoes	Dog Park	Exercise Station	Disc Golf Course	Swimming Pool	Spraygrounds	Amphitheater	Pavilion	Gazebo	Benches	Picnic Table	BBQ Grills	Bike Rack	Drinking Fountain	Bridge	Historical Structure	Water Feature / Detention Pond	Parking	Restroom Building
Neighborhood Parks	**Undev.**	**Dev.**			←Active Facilities→																Aquatics		←Passive Facilities→								←Infrastructure→				
Chisholm's Trail		6.8	2515 Wyandotte Way	NE					1																		4	1		1	1				
Creighton Park		0.9	2001 Creighton Dr.	NE					1																	2									
Deerfield Park		2.4	2501 Queenston Ave.	NE				0.5	1																								1		
Doubletree Park		0.8	2009 Timbercrest Dr.	NE				0.5	2																		1								
Falls Lakeview		24.1	3280 108th Ave. NE	NE					1		1																								
Frances Cate Park		25.4	333 N. Carter	NE	0.14	2	2	0.5	1															1		3	6	2							X
High Meadows		2.6	1525 High Meadows Dr.	NE	0.24		1																												
NE Lion's Park		34.9	1800 Northcliff Ave.	NE	0.12				1											1				1		10	9	8		1	1		1	X	1
Ruth Updegraff		0.3	505 N. Peters	NE																					1	5			1		1	1			
Sequoyah Trail		1.8	410 Sequoyah Trail	NE	0.06			0.5	1																1		2	1							
Sonoma Park		2.0	1432 Glen Ellen Circle	NE		1		0.5	1																	2	2			1					
Sutton Place Park		2.1	301 Sandpiper Ln.	NE					1																	2	1								
Tull's Park		2.4	100 W. Vida Way	NE		1		0.5	1															1		5	3								
Subtotal of Northeast Sector	**0.0**	**106.5**			**0.56**	**4**	**3**	**3.0**	**12**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**2**	**29**	**28**	**12**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**		**1**
Berkeley Park		3.1	3750 Astor Dr.	NW	0.36	1	1	1	2				1													3	1		1	1					
Brookhaven Park		6.7	1801 N. Brookhaven Blvd.	NW	0.51	2	1	0.5	1																1	2	3							X	
Brookhaven Square	2.1		3333 River Oaks Dr.	NW																													1		
Cascade Park		4.9	3499 Astor Dr.	NW		1			1																	2	2			1					
Castlerock Park		3.4	4136 Castlerock Rd.	NW	0.30	1	1		1										4							3	2	1	1						
Kevin Gottshall Park		2.9	5399 Cypress Lake Dr.	NW	0.10	1	1	0.5	1																	2	1	1		1			1		
Lion's Memorial Park		10.3	514 Parkside Dr.	NW	0.4	3	1	0.5	2																	3	1	3	1						
Morgan Park		3.0	1701 Schooner Dr.	NW	0.38			0.5	1															1		4	1		1	1					
Prairie Creek		3.3	2025 Pendleton Dr.	NW		1	1	0.5	2					1												2	2	1	1	1					
Russell Bates		6.7	800 24th Ave. NW	NW	0.41																												1		
Spring Brook Park		2.9	816 Branchwood Dr.	NW					1																	1	1		1						
Woodslawn Park		2.8	1317 Regent St.	NW		1			1																		2		1						
Subtotal of Northwest Sector	**2.1**	**50.0**			**2.46**	**11**	**6**	**3.5**	**13**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**22**	**16**	**6**	**7**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**3**		**0**
Boyd View Park	2.2		Classen Blvd.	SE																															
Colonial Commons		5.6	1909 Beaumont Dr.	SE		2	1	0.5	1																	2	1			1					
Colonial Estates		16.2	1641 E. Lindsey	SE	0.60				1											1		1		1		6	5				3				
Crestland Park		6.9	501 Crestland Dr.	SE	0.26				1																	1	2	1	1						
Earl Sneed Park		0.5	1381 Classen Blvd.	SE																				1	1										
Eastridge Park		5.3	1700 N. Clearwater Dr.	SE			1	0.5	2																	2	4		1	1					
Eastwood Park		6.6	1001 S. Ponca	SE					4																	3	2								
Faculty Heights		1.1	1017 E. Lindsey	SE					1																										
June Benson Park		0.3	209 E. Alameda	SE					2							2	1								1	7	2		1			1		X	
Kiwanis Park		2.9	635 Sherwood Dr.	SE	0.23			0.5	1																	3	3	1	1						
McGeorge Park		0.5	631 E. Eufaula	SE	0.07			0.5	1																	3	2		1					X	
Oakhurst Park		2.1	1900 Oakhurst Ave.	SE				0.5	1																		1								
Pebblebrook Park		2.4	2500 Overbrook Dr.	SE	0.48				1																								1		
Royal Oaks		4.5	430 Coalbrook Dr.	SE	1.03	1	1	0.5	1															1		4	2	2	1	1			1		
Southlake Park	0.8			SE																													1		
Summit Lakes		2.8	3000 Summit Crossing Pkwy.	SE				0.5	1															1		1	4			1			1		
Sunrise Park		2.4	324 Skyline Dr.	SE				0.5	1																		1	1		1					
Vineyard Park		4.8	3111 Woodcrest Creek Dr.	SE	0.2				1																										
Woodcreek Park		15.4	1509 Concord Dr.	SE	0.76		1																			3	1								
Subtotal of Southeast Sector	**3.0**	**80.3**			**3.6**	**3**	**4**	**4.0**	**20**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**2**	**35**	**30**	**5**	**6**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**4**		**0**
Adkin's Crossing Park		6.7	2136 24th Ave. SW	SW			1		1																	2	5	1	1			1		X	
Canadian Trails		1.3	3600 Canadian Trails Dr.	SW	0.14				1															1		2	1								
Centennial Park		0.2	411 W. Symmes St.	SW					1																	2	2	1	1	1					
Cherry Creek		6.2	530 W. Stonewell Dr.	SW			1	0.5	1																	1	1		1						
Eagle Cliff Park		6.8	3901 Eagle Cliff Dr.	SW	0.25		1	0.5	2																	3	2		1						
Lion's Park		4.8	450 S. Flood	SW		1			2				2											1	1	5	5	3	1	1		1		X	1
Normandy Park		2.4	209 Westside Dr.	SW		1		0.5	1				1	1												2	2		1						
Oak Tree South		4.8	2881 Oak Tree Ave.	SW	0.48				1											0.5						2			1						
Rotary Park		5.6	1501 W. Boyd	SW	0.47	2	1		1		1		1	1										1		4	5	5		2		1			1
Walnut Ridge		2.0	3319 Walnut Rd.	SW																						1			1						
Subtotal of Southwest Sector	**0.0**	**40.8**			**1.3**	**4**	**4**	**1.5**	**11**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**24**	**23**	**10**	**8**	**4**	**0**	**3**	**0**		**2**
Total	**5.1**	**277.6**			**8.0**	**22**	**17**	**12.0**	**56**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**11**	**6**	**110**	**97**	**33**	**22**	**17**	**6**	**5**	**9**		**3**

Table 3-3 Community Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park Name	Overall Acreage		Address	Sector	Trail / Walking Path (in miles)	Backstop	Soccer Practice Field	Basketball Court	Playground	Soccer Field	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Skate Park	Shuffleboard	Horseshoes	Dog Park	Exercise Station	Disc Golf Course	Swimming Pool	Spraygrounds	Amhitheater	Pavilion	Gazebo	Benches	Picnic Table	BBQ Grills	Bike Rack	Drinking Fountain	Bridge	Historical Structure	Water Feature / Detention Pond	Parking	Restroom Building
Community Parks	**Undev.**	**Dev.**		←←←←←←←←←←←←Active Facilities→→→→→→→→→→→→																	Aquatics		←←←←Passive Facilities→→→→								←←Infrastructure→→				
Andrews Park		17.5	201 W. Daws St.	NW	1.24	3		2.5	3						1							1	1	1	1	40	17	3	1	3	7	1		X	1
Griffin Park		158.1	1001 E. Robinson	NE	1.16				1	16	9	5						1		1				2			15	1	1				1	X	4
Little Axe		14.2	1000 168th Ave. NE	SE				2.5	1		3									1						1	4		1					X	1
Reaves Park		79.8	2501 Jenkins Ave.	SE	0.86	1			3		6	6		4										4		3	71	10	1	3		1		X	1
Ruby Grant Park	146.5			NW																															
John H. Saxon Park	96.0			SE																															
Total	**242.5**	**269.6**			**3.26**	**4**	**0**	**5.0**	**8**	**16**	**18**	**11**	**0**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**44**	**107**	**14**	**4**	**6**	**7**	**2**	**1**		**7**
Special Purpose Parks	**Undev.**	**Dev.**		←←←←←←←←←←←←Active Facilities→→→→→→→→→→→→																	Aquatics		←←←←Passive Facilities→→→→								←←Infrastructure→→				
Sutton Wilderness	160.0		1920 12th Ave. NE	NE																															
Westwood Park		129.9	2400 Westport Dr.	NW	0.10								12								1													X	
Tennis Center Acreage		4.0																																	
Swimming Pool Acreage		2.0																																	
Parking and Building Acreage		4.6																																	
Golf Course Acreage		119.3																																	
Total	**160.0**	**129.9**			**0.10**								**12**								**1**														

Table 3-4 Linear Parks Facilities

Park Name	Overall Acreage		Address	Sector	Trail / Walking Path (in miles)	Backstop	Soccer Practice Field	Basketball Court	Playground	Soccer Field	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Skate Park	Shuffleboard	Horseshoes	Dog Park	Exercise Station	Disc Golf Course	Swimming Pool	Spraygrounds	Amphitheater	Pavilion	Gazebo	Benches	Picnic Table	BBQ Grills	Bike Rack	Drinking Fountain	Bridge	Historical Structure	Water Feature / Detention Pond	Parking	Restroom Building
Linear Parks	**Undev.**	**Dev.**			←←←←←←←←←←←←←←Active Facilities→→→→→→→→→→→→																Aquatics		←←←←Passive Facilities→→→→								←←Infrastructure→→				
Doubletree Greenbelt	8.8		24th Ave. at Oak Forest	NE	0.56																														
Hall Park Greenbelt	39.0		24th Ave. at Robinson St.	NE	0.33																												1		
Legacy Trails		8.2	From Acres St. to Duffy St.	Citywide	1.38																														
Total	**47.8**	**8.2**			**2.27**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**		**0**

Table 3-5 Recreation Centers

Center Name	Square Footage	Address	Sector	Gymnasium	Dance Studio	Classrooms	Kitchen/Food Prep Area	Free Weights Room	Cardio Fitness Equipment Room	Indoor Pool	Racquetball/Squash Courts	Teen Room	Gameroom	Childcare Room	Arts and Crafts Room	Meeting Rooms	Indoor Walking Track
Indoor Recreation Centers	**S.F.**																
12th Ave. Rec Center		1701 12th Ave. NE	NE	2	1		1						1	1			
Irving Rec Center		125 Vicksburg	SE	1	1		1						1	1		1	
Little Axe Community Center		1000 168th Ave. NE	SE			1	1										
Reaves Dance Center		121 E. Constitution St.	SW				1										
Senior Citizen Center		Symmes St. at Peters Ave.	SE			1	1								1		
Whittier Rec Center		2000 W. Brooks St.	SW	1	1		1						1	1			
Total	**56,844**			**4**	**3**	**2**	**6**	**0**					**3**	**3**	**1**	**1**	

Other Private Facilities	**S.F.**																
YMCA		1350 Lexington Ave.	NE	2				1	1	1			1	1			
Total				**2**				**1**	**1**	**1**			**1**	**1**			

Adkin's Crossing Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2136 24th Ave. SW
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 6.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Soccer practice field
- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches
- 5 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Historical Structure
- Off-street Parking

Assessment of this park: The picnic tables and benches are in adequate condition. The wood tables and benches will most likely need replacing in the near future. There is no fall surface around the swing area.

Key Needs: Add shade shelter, replace tables, add fall safety material around swings immediately. Replace park sign. This park may ultimately serve as a gateway to a future Canadian River park which will require additional parking and visitor maps/kiosks.

Berkeley Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3750 Astor Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 3.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.36 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Backstop
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Benches
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- No Off-street Parking

Assessment of this park: This park has good access from two major streets within the neighborhood it serves. The amenities are in good condition. There are poles for volleyball but there is no designated court.

Key Needs: Replace/upgrade park sign, add pavilion in the park.

Boyd View Park

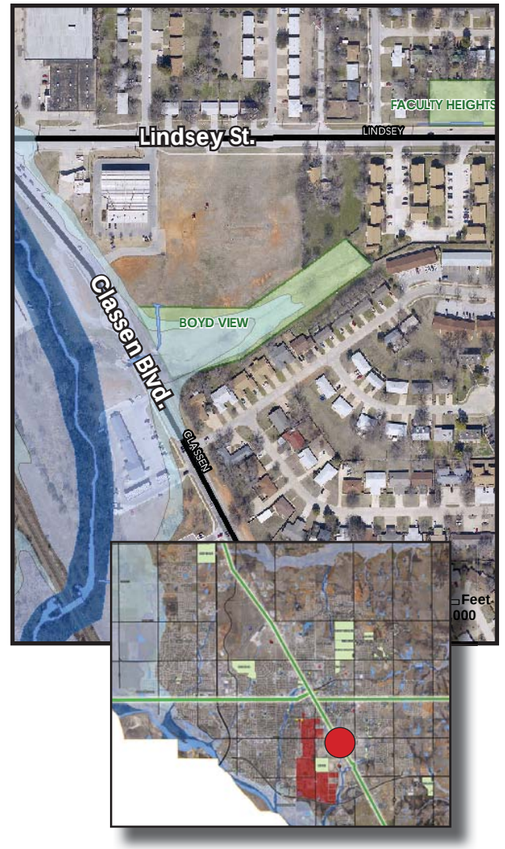
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: Classen Blvd.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.2 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped/serves as open space

Assessment of this park: Because this park is undeveloped, there is not a conditional assessment of the facilities. However, the park is very inaccessible with visibility only from one street, homes backing up to it, and no on-street parking available.

Key Needs: No significant improvements are recommended for this park.



Brookhaven Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1801 N. Brookhaven Blvd.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 6.7 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.51 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 2 Backstops
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Gazebo
- 2 Benches
- 3 Picnic Tables
- Off-street Parking

Assessment of this park: This park is only visible from one street with homes on the other three sides. The benches and picnic tables are in excellent condition. This park has plenty of open space for unstructured recreation. There is a shrub in the middle of the fall surface of the playground near the swings. It should be monitored and trimmed to not interfere with swing set.

Key Needs: No immediate needs. Replace equipment as needed.

Brookhaven Square

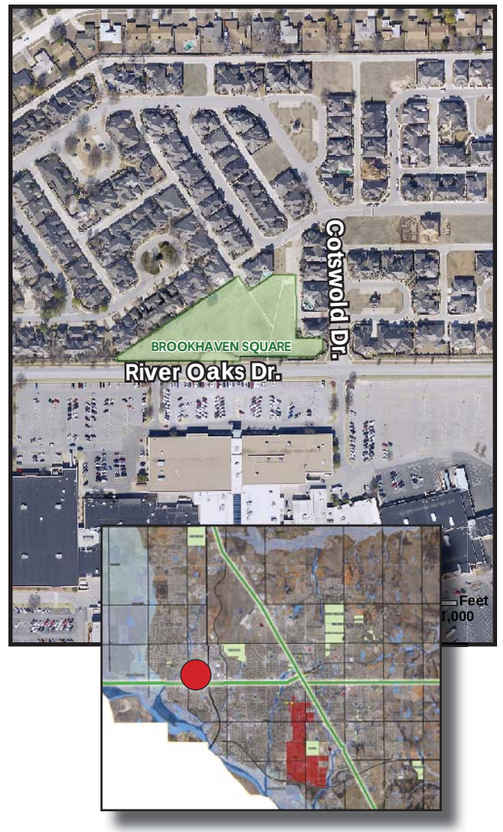
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

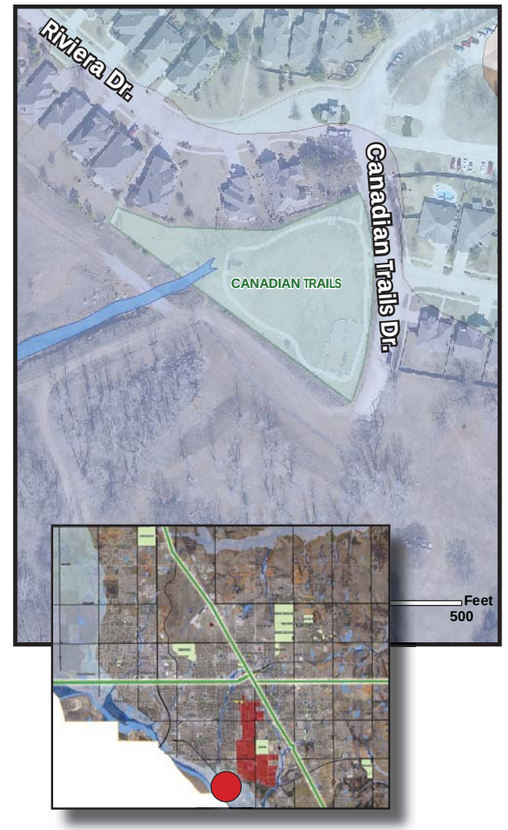
Address: 3333 River Oaks Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 2.1 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped as a park
- Detention Pond

Assessment of this park: This park is solely a triangular detention pond with little access to it. Homes back up to it on two sides and a brick wall makes up the third side. There is no park sign and no amenities.

Key Needs: Add a park sign, a small shade pavilion and benches at key intervals around the detention basin. Add trees along River Oaks Drive as feasible.





Canadian Trails Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3600 Canadian Trails Dr.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 1.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.14 Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables

Assessment of this park: This park is located entirely in the Canadian River floodplain. It also has limited visibility from nearby streets and is at the back of a neighborhood behind homes. Existing park amenities are in good condition. There are attractive shade trees located along the sides of the park and around picnicking areas.

Key Needs: No immediate improvements are recommended. In the future, consider acquiring additional adjacent floodplain lands to allow this park to serve as a neighborhood gateway to a river greenbelt.

Cascade Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3499 Astor Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 4.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Backstop
- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- No Off-street Parking

Assessment of this park: This park is not very accessible. Although there are major streets on two sides of the park, the amenities are located away from the streets. There are homes that back up to the park on the other two sides. There is no on-street parking available. There is a gas pipeline easement and a small manmade drainage channel which designates the northern boundary of the park and further serves as secondary access from Astor Drive.

Key Needs: Add shade structures. Designate one striped handicapped parking space along Astor Drive if possible and build accessible sidewalk to playground. Add trees to the park where feasible. Acquire parkland north of the concrete pilot channel, and develop a trail that bridges the pilot channel. Provide accessible off-street parking along Astor north of the channel.

Castlerock Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 4136 Castlerock Rd.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 3.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.30 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Backstop
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1 Playground
- 4 Exercise Stations
- 3 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1/2 Basketball Court

Assessment of this park: The park is visible from one neighborhood street. It is adjacent to a powerline corridor and a trail that follows the powerlines. The park could serve as a major trailhead for the trail. There is an access point to the park which runs between two homes. The amenities in the park are in good condition.

Key Needs: Add shade trees as feasible. Add shade pavilion. Designate handicapped parking areas along Brownwood Lane. Rebuild drainage structure in park to reduce water retention.

Centennial Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 411 W. Symmes St.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 0.2 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain

Assessment of this park: This is a small park that is tucked away between two homes. Although it is located on a major collector street, the park amenities are located further away from the street and are not very visible. The playground equipment is an older style of monkey bars and see-saws. The picnic tables and benches are in good condition.

Key Needs: Update park sign. The older playground equipment was requested by the residents of this neighborhood to reflect the context of this historic part of town. It was installed in 2003.

Cherry Creek Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

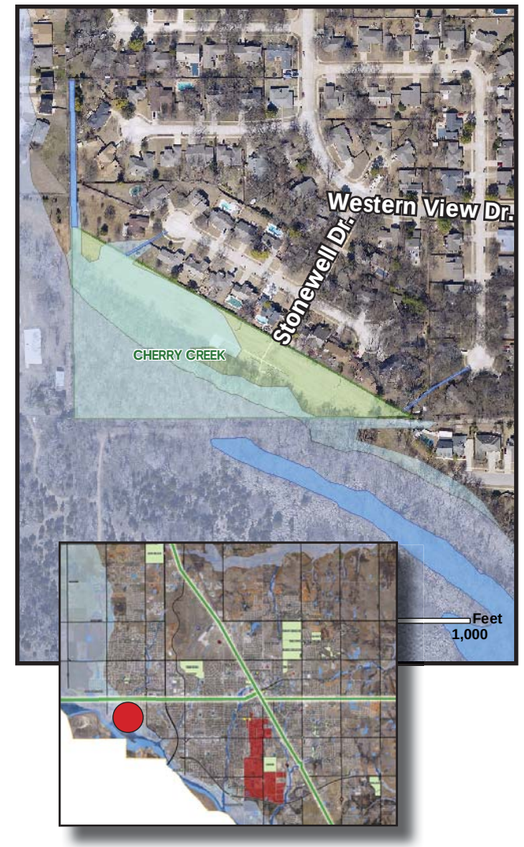
Address: 530 Stonewell Dr.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 6.2 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Bench
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: This park has a significant amount of open space for unstructured recreation. This park is located at the back of the neighborhood and is only accessible down one minor neighborhood street. The amenities are in good condition except for the soccer practice goals which are rusted.

Key Needs: Long term, consider acquisition of floodplain lands along the Canadian River to allow this park to serve as a neighborhood access point to the river greenbelt.



Chisholm's Cattle Trail

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2515 Wyandotte Way
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 6.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Playground
- 4 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 1 Bridge

Assessment of this park: This park has very limited visibility with homes backing up to various sides. However, it preserves an attractive greenbelt. The playground and amenities are in good condition. The bridge crosses over the creek, allowing for access to all areas of the park making the bridge a necessity.

Key Needs: Add handicapped accessible parking area along Wyandotte Way. Add a hard surface trail that connects the bridge to both sides of the park. Update park sign.

Colonial Commons Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

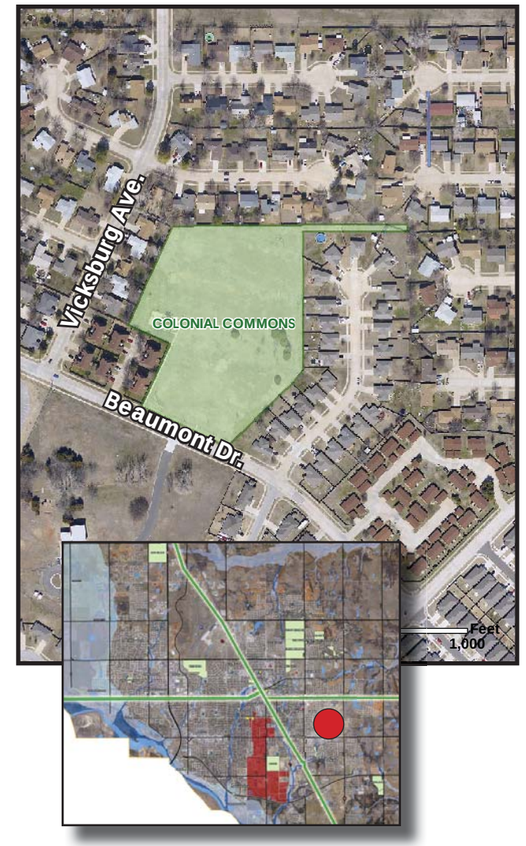
Address: 1909 Beaumont Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 5.6 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 2 Backstops
- Practice Soccer Field
- 2 Benches
- Playground
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- Picnic Table
- Drinking Fountain
- Open Space

Assessment of this park: The picnic table has wooden seating and table top which is in poor condition. The playground is in good condition. The backstops and soccer practice field are in good condition. There is a limited amount of shade trees in the park and more trees are needed.

Key Needs: Designate one striped handicapped accessible parking space along Beaumont Dr. Aggressively add shade trees to this park. Add one to two shade pavilions.



Colonial Estates Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1641 E. Lindsey St.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 16.2 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.60 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Disc Golf Course
- 6 Benches
- 5 Picnic Tables
- 3 Bridges
- Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- Splash Pad (Sept. 2009)
- Parking

Assessment of this park: This park follows a creek corridor and is one of the most beautiful parks in Norman. There is an asphalt trail through the park which is in good condition; however, it is too narrow for multiple users. There is parking at the entrance of the park off Lindsey St. However, a significant portion of the park has apartment complexes backing up to it, and the park provides significant open space to those apartment residents. The playground and the picnic table are in good condition. The benches are wooden and are currently in adequate condition. Because of the creek, there is a significant amount of open space in this park. The splash pad was installed in September, 2009.

Key Needs: Widen the trail to allow for multiple users. Enhance the disc golf course with an information kiosk. Add shade structures over the playground area. Replace benches and picnic tables as needed.

Creighton Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2001 Creighton Dr.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 0.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches

Assessment of this park: This park is tucked away behind homes and is not very visible from the street. There is no park sign designating it as a park. The playgrounds and benches are in good condition. There is a concrete trail leading into the Hall Park Greenbelt.

Key Needs: Long range, enhance park edge with landscaping and other features.

Crestland Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 501 Crestland Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 6.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.26 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Playground
- 1 Bench
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: This park is located at the back of the neighborhood it serves but has excellent frontage along Alameda Park Dr.

Key Needs: Replace park sign, add a half court multi purpose court and shade pavilion, enhance the park edge along Alameda Park Drive with fencing and trees.

Doubletree Park

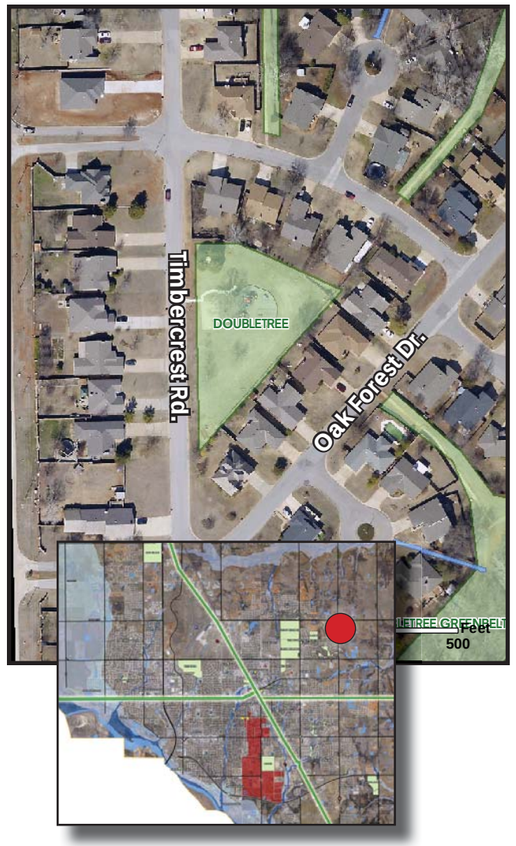
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

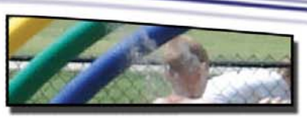
Address: 2009 Timbercrest Dr.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 0.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 1 Picnic Table

Assessment of this park: The basketball court has two new goals. The wooden picnic table is in poor condition and needs replacement. The tot aged playground is in good condition but the structure is slightly leaning. The youth aged playground is in excellent condition.

Key Needs: Add shade pavilion, enhance park sign.





Eagle Cliff Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3901 Eagle Cliff Dr.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 6.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.25 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Backstop

Assessment of this park: The park sign has been removed because of damage and needs replacing. The asphalt trail is narrow. When the trail is renovated, it should be widened to at least 6 feet. There is very limited shade in the park.

Key Needs: The picnic areas should be covered and more trees should be planted. There is no handicap accessibility into the park. Enhance the park sign.

Earl Sneed Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1381 Classen Blvd.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 0.5 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Gazebo
- 2 Benches

Assessment of this park: This is a small park located adjacent to one major arterial and one major collector street. The pavilion and benches are wood and are currently in good condition. The wood structure will need to be monitored and replaced as needed. There is beautiful landscaping in this park and concrete trail along the back side of the park. Its small size precludes adding other park features.

Key Needs: Consider adding very small play feature if feasible.

Eastridge Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

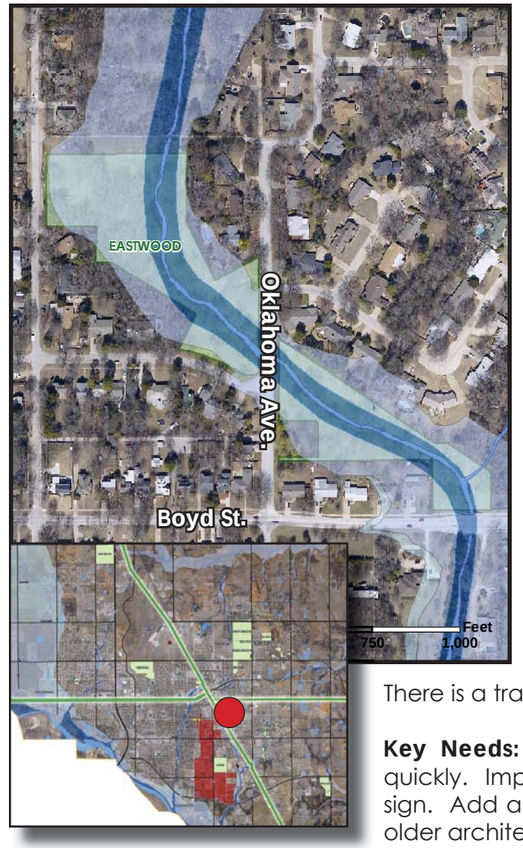
Address: 1700 N. Clearwater Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 5.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Benches
- 4 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 2 Backstops

Assessment of this park: This park is almost entirely surrounded by fences of houses which create very limited visibility into the park. The picnic tables, benches and playgrounds are in good condition.

Key Needs: The sign to the entrance of the park needs to be replaced. Add one to two small pavilions. Add a walking trail around the park.



Eastwood Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1001 S. Ponca Ave.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 6.6 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 4 Playgrounds
- 3 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 3 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bridge

Assessment of this park: Eastwood is one of the most beautiful parks in Norman, with large mature trees and rolling topography. The playgrounds in this park are the older style of monkey bars and slides. The playground equipment is rusted in some areas. There is no fall surface around these playground elements. To access the park off the street, one has to walk down a steep hill with no walking sidewalk or support rails. The wooden benches are in poor condition. There is a trail along one side of the park leading to the creek corridor.

Key Needs: Replace play equipment and add fall surface material quickly. Improve access from Boyd Street. Replace benches and park sign. Add an architecturally compatible pavilion that complements the older architecture of the surrounding neighborhood.

Faculty Heights Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1017 E. Lindsey St.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 1.1 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Playground
- 1 Picnic Table
- 2 Benches
- Open Space

Assessment of this park: This park has access from only one side, off Lindsey Street. The other three sides of the park have homes backing up to it. There is a chain link perimeter fence along Lindsey Street which increases safety but should be removed. There are large trees around the playground area which add shade. There is no access from the neighborhoods along Missouri Street at the north side of the park. There is no off-street parking associated with this park which limits its use.

Key Needs: If feasible, as properties are sold, pursue access easement from Missouri Street. Develop new, attractive landscape edge and fence along Lindsey Street. Replace or enhance park sign. If feasible, create gate access at the western end of the park along Lindsey Street.

Falls Lakeview Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3280 108th Ave. NE
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 24.1 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Backstop
- 1 Baseball Field
- Playground
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 1 Volleyball Court
- Restrooms
- 1 Practice Soccer Field

Assessment of this park: This park is located in the far eastern portion of the city, north of Lake Thunderbird. This park has an extensive amount of tree coverage, especially along the road and around the playground. It serves as both the neighborhood park and larger community park for a large northeastern area of the City.

Key Needs: Add a medium to large size shade pavilion near the center of the park. Add a natural surface walking trail around the park.

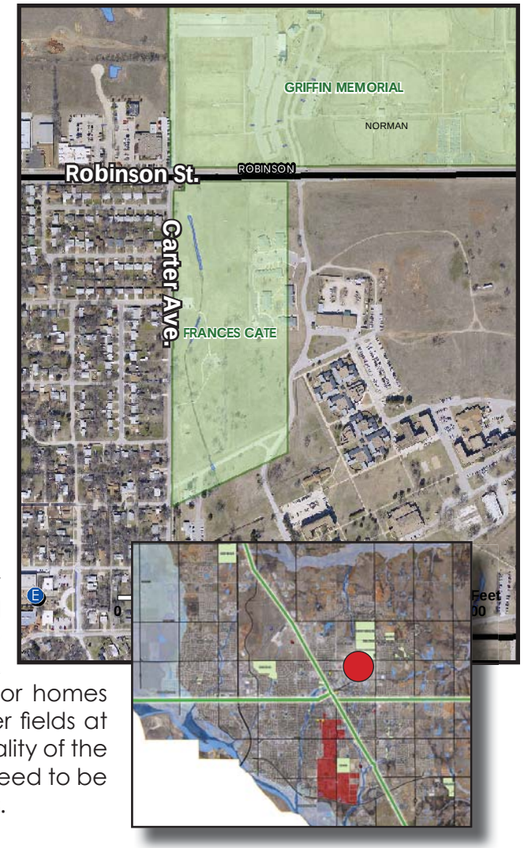
Frances Cate Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 333 N. Carter
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 25.4 developed acres

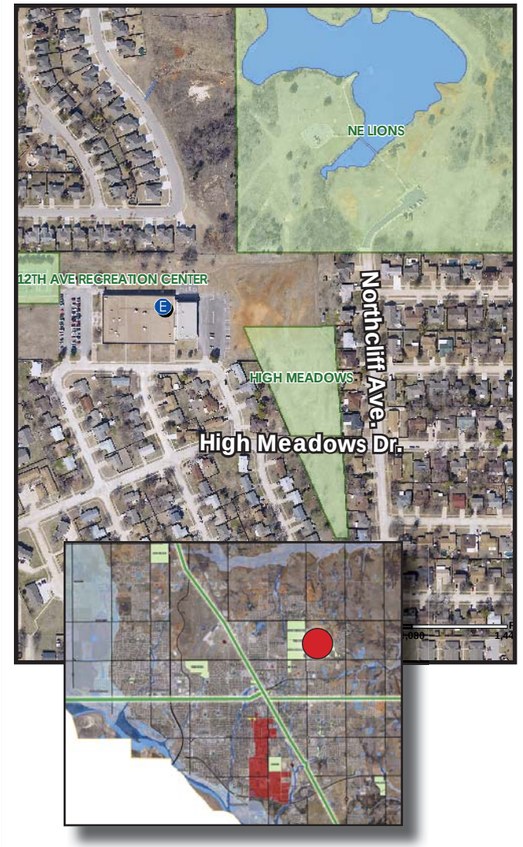
Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.14 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 2 Backstops
- 2 Soccer Practice Fields
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 3 Benches
- 6 Picnic Tables
- 2 BBQ Grills
- Parking



Assessment of this park: This park is visible from a major arterial road. The benches and picnic tables are in good condition. There is plenty of open space in this park to allow for unstructured recreation. While very large in size, the park serves as a quieter, more accessible neighborhood park for homes south of Robinson. Consider upgrading the practice soccer fields at the northern end of the park to enhance the tournament quality of the soccer complex. An existing drainage site in the park may need to be relocated to allow for proper placement of the soccer fields.

Key Needs: Add two to three medium sized pavilions. This park's central location and attractive nature make it an ideal location for family gatherings. Expand the trail around the park. Enhance the park edge along Robinson to create a green edge across from Griffin Park.



High Meadows Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1525 High Meadows Dr.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.6 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Open Space
- 1 Practice Soccer Field
- 0.24 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: This park is located adjacent to an elementary school. The school property has a backstop, another soccer practice field, four half court basketball courts, a playground and 4-square courts. However, the only amenity on the parkland is one practice soccer field. This park has very limited visibility and its most accessible point is off the school property. Homes back up to the park on two sides of the triangle shape.

Key Needs: Add a small shade pavilion on either side of High Meadows Drive. Consider trading a portion of this site to Norman Public Schools and acquiring more land adjacent to the 12th Avenue Recreation Center.

June Benson Park

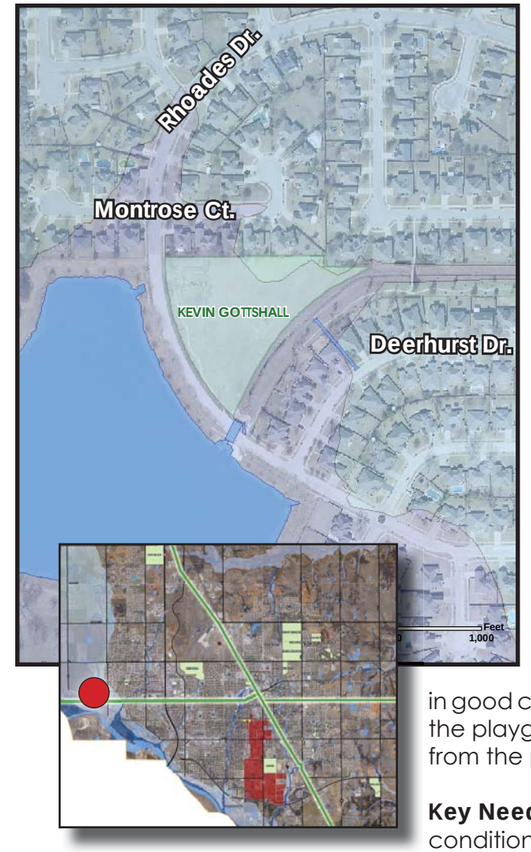
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 209 E. Alameda
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 0.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Shuffleboard Courts
- 1 Horseshoe Pit
- 1 Gazebo
- 7 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Historical Structure (statue)
- Parking

Assessment of this park: The gazebo in this park is wood and currently in adequate condition. The metal benches and picnic tables are in good condition. The playground equipment is an older style of swings, slide, and monkey bars which was chosen by the surrounding neighborhoods and installed in 2004. The playgrounds and fall surface are in good condition. There is visible access to this park from streets on three sides.

Key Needs: Over time, replace the gazebo. Remove the pipe rail barrier around the park. Improve the shuffleboard courts. Consider adding a bocci ball court (lawn bowling). Consider adding two to three additional sculptural elements to this park.



Kevin Gottshall Memorial Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 53399 Cypress Lake Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 2.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.10 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Backstop
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches
- 1 Picnic Table
- 2 BBQ Grill
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 2 Tetherball Poles

Assessment of this park: The amenities found in this park are in good condition. There is abundant shade in this park, especially over the playground and picnic areas. The private lake is across the street from the park. The park is well located within the neighborhood.

Key Needs: No current major needs in this park. Continue to monitor condition of facilities in the park.

Kiwanis Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 635 Sherwood Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Benches
- 3 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack
- 0.23 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

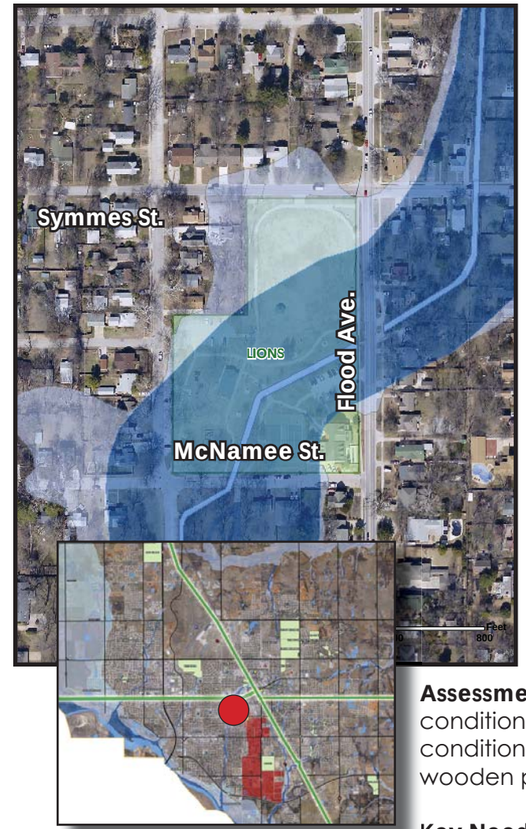
Assessment of this park: The park sign and entry to the park are visible from the street, but homes back up to the park on three sides so accessibility is limited. The benches and picnic tables are wood. Currently they are in adequate condition; however this will need to be continually monitored and the amenities should be replaced as needed. The playground and basketball court are in good condition.

Key Needs: No immediate needs for this park. If feasible, add paved access from north end of the park.

Lions Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 450 S. Flood Ave.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 5.1 developed acres



Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Backstop (lighted)
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Tennis Courts (lighted)
- 1 Pavilion
- 1 Gazebo
- 5 Benches
- 5 Picnic Tables
- 3 BBQ Grills
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Historical Structure
- Parking
- Restrooms
- 0.40 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: The fall surface around the swings is in poor condition and the fall surface around the playgrounds is in adequate condition. The metal benches are in excellent condition while the wooden picnic tables are in adequate condition.

Key Needs: Replace park features as necessary.

Lions Memorial Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 514 Parkside Rd.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 10.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 3 Backstops
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 3 Benches
- 1 Picnic Table
- 3 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bike Rack
- 0.40 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: The wooden benches in this park are in poor condition. The fall surface around the swings is adequate. This park has abundant open space for unstructured recreation.

Key Needs: Add a small pavilion and replace or enhance park sign. Replace or enhance pipe rail edge along Parkside Road.

McGeorge Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

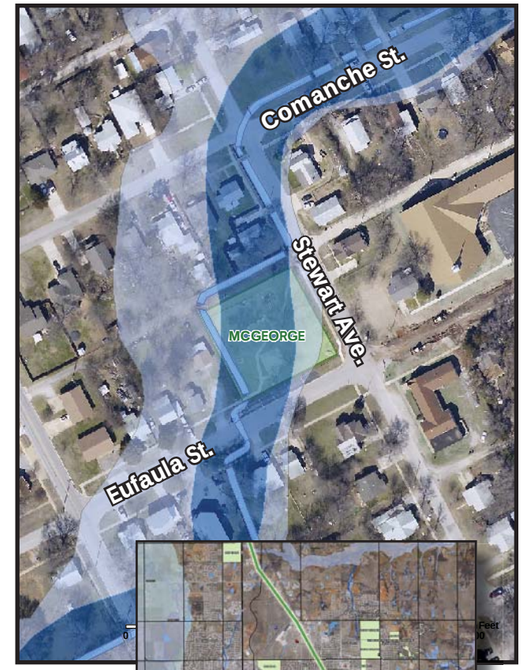
Address: 631 Eufaula St.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 0.5 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.07 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 3 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack
- Parking

Assessment of this park: One picnic table and one bench are wood and both are in poor condition. The playground is in good condition. There is visible access to this park with neighborhood streets on two sides. The guard rail around the park is rusted.

Key Needs: Upgrade or replace the pipe rail edge around the park. Over time, consider reducing the size of the play area to only two play features to provide additional active playgrounds. Upgrade or replace the park sign.



William Morgan Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1701 Schooner Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 3.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.38 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 4 Benches
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- Water Feature/Pond

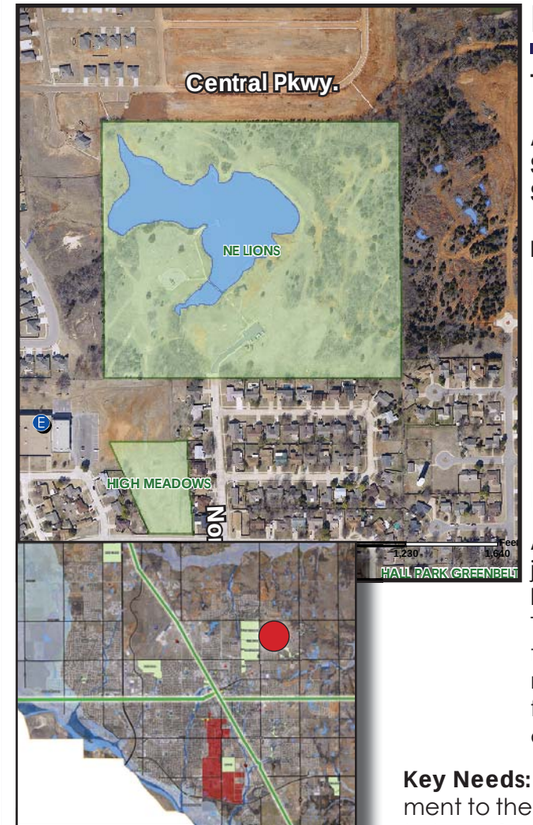
Assessment of this park: This is an excellent example of a neighborhood park. The amenities in this park are in good condition. There is a boardwalk leading over the creek and around a small, attractive wetlands/pond. There is a creek on one side of the park and homes close to the entrance. The park is located at the front of the neighborhood it serves and is off a very minor neighborhood road.

Key Needs: Monitor vegetation along the trail and trim to keep trail clear. Replace/upgrade metal roofed shade structure. Replace boardwalk as needed for safety.

Northeast Lions Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1800 Northcliff Ave.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 34.9 developed acres



Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.12 Mile Walking/ Jogging Trail
- 1 Disc Golf Course
- 1 Playground
- Fishing Pier
- Bridge
- Water Feature/Pond
- Large Pavilion
- 9 Picnic Tables
- 10 Benches
- 8 BBQ Grills
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- Parking
- 1 Restroom Building
- Open Space
- Parking

Assessment of this park: This park is one of Norman's hidden jewels. It is built around a beautiful pond and is a very quiet location. The amenities in the park are in good condition. This large passive park has a great opportunity for nature trails through much of the park and around the lake. Currently, most of this area is used by the disc golf course. The picnicking facilities and playground are away from the main entrance and parking area, but overlook the pond.

Key Needs: If still feasible, acquire access to the park from the development to the north. The new neighborhood should have been compelled to have frontage on the pond, instead of allowing more homes to back up to the park. If at all feasible, acquire park access to the west along Broone Drive. Repair/upgrade buildings in the park, but maintain the existing rustic design and adopt as a vernacular for Norman. Replace restrooms, but keep stone character. Paint all metal rail and fences in the park.

Normandy Park

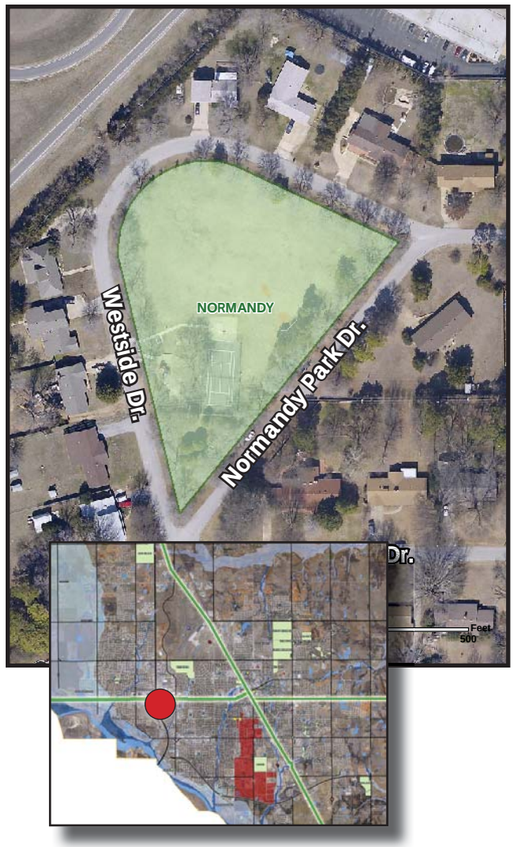
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 209 Westside Dr.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 2.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Backstop
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Tennis Court
- 1 Volleyball Court
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: This park has neighborhood streets on all sides and is very visible within the neighborhood. There is an ample amount of open space for unstructured recreation. The stone picnic table creates a signature feature within the park. The amenities in this park are all in good to excellent condition. This is a good example of a neighborhood park in Norman.

Key Needs: Monitor park condition. Upgrade or replace park sign.



Oak Tree South Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2881 Oak Tree Ave.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 4.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.48 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- Playground
- 2 Benches
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: This park is located along a busy collector street with no parking or crosswalk. The park needs off-street parking added and the trail should be extended to Constitution St. The existing facilities are in good condition.

Key Needs: If feasible, add off-street parking. Explore option of extending park north to East Constiution Street (through purchase or easement) to provide a trail corridor. Extend the trail north as well.

Oakhurst Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1900 Oakhurst Ave.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.1 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Playground
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Picnic Table

Assessment of this park: The basketball pole and back board are in poor condition and are scheduled to be replaced. There is only one picnic area and a second should be added. The trees are in good condition and provide plenty of shade.

Key Needs: No immediate needs for this park. Monitor condition of park.

Pebblebrook Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2500 Overbrook Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.48 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Playground

Assessment of this park: This park is very hidden and has very poor access. The park is located behind homes and is only accessible by the trail. One would have to already know the park is there if wanting to use it. The amenities are in good condition. The adjacent detention pond near the park is owned by the St. James Neighborhood Association, but access to the trail is available to the general public.

Key Needs: No immediate needs for this park. When feasible, improve directional signage to the park.

Prairie Creek Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2025 Pendleton Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 3.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Backstop
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 2 Playgrounds
- 1 Volleyball Court
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 1 Bridge

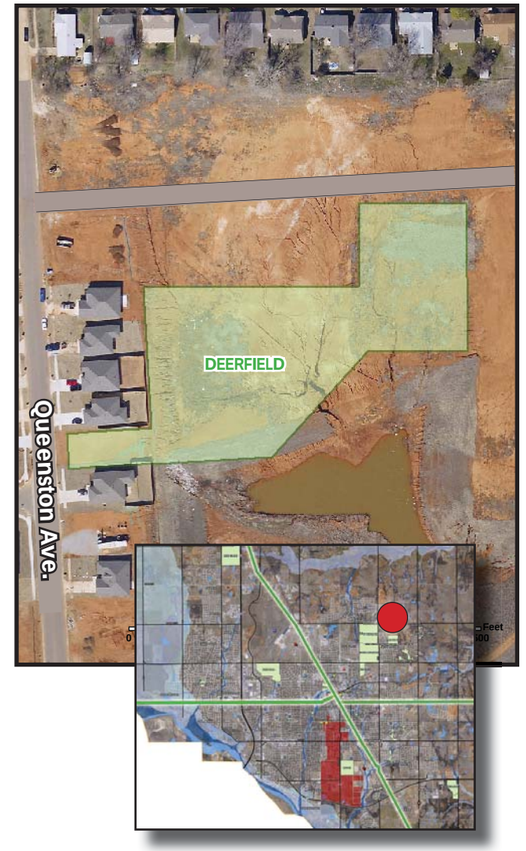
Assessment of this park: There are poles for a volleyball court in this park, but there is no net and designated court area. This park has abundant open space for unstructured recreation. The wooden benches are currently in good condition. The other amenities are all in good condition. This park is very visible from one major road in the neighborhood it serves. There are drainage corridors on two sides of the park.

Key Needs: Upgrade/replace sign. If not yet completed, create a loop walking trail in the park. Add a park sign on the east side of the park. Add a shade pavilion in the park.

Deerfield Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 2501 Queenston Ave.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.4 developed acres



Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 0.28 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: The fall surface of the playground is adequate. The park is adjacent to a water feature which can attract people. The park has large street frontage on the north side next to the park amenities.

Key Needs: This is a new park. Blend adjacent detention area into the park. Over time, add a shade pavilion to the park.

Rotary Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1501 W. Boyd St.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 5.6 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 2 Backstops
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1 Playground
- 1 Baseball Field (lighted)
- 1 Tennis Court (lighted)
- 1 Volleyball Court
- 1 Pavilion
- 6 Benches
- 5 Picnic Tables
- 5 BBQ Grills
- 2 Drinking Fountains
- 1 Historical Structure
- Restrooms
- Parking
- 0.47 Mile Walking/ Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: The baseball field in this park is scheduled to be updated with new lights and fencing. The volleyball court is in poor condition. The other features of the park are in good condition; however they are tightly clustered into a small area at the back of the park. The basketball court has a new slab and two goals.

Key Needs: Enhance or replace park sign. Enhance park edges along Boyd Street and Wylie Road.

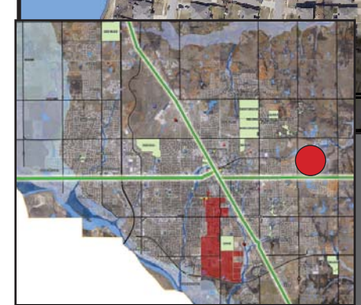
Royal Oaks Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 430 Coalbrook Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 4.5 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1.03 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Backstop
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 4 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 2 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- Water Feature/Pond (not part of City property)



Assessment of this park: There is a lake on one side of the park which separates it from half of the neighborhood. The asphalt trail leading to the lake is in poor condition. When replacing the trail, it should be widened to at least 6 feet. The amenities in this park are in good condition. This park has an abundant amount of open space but very few shade trees. Wood privacy fencing is unattractive and blocks views to pond/detention area.

Key Needs: Replace/upgrade park sign and pipe rail edge along Coalbrook Dr. Add landscaping and trees to eventually screen wooden fence along south edge of the park. Replace trail leading to the pond.

Russell Bates Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 800 24th Ave. NW
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 6.7 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Backstop
- 1 Practice Soccer Field
- 2 Small Pavilions
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 0.41 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: This park is completely hidden and very inaccessible. The park serves as a detention area and is completely surrounded by commercial buildings on all sides. The only access is off 24th Ave. which is a very busy arterial road. There is no parking.

Key Needs: Create a stronger landscaped entry to the park with signage along 24th Avenue. Consider creating a small, highly landscaped area with pavement and a decorative pavilion that serves as an urban respite.

Ruth Updegraff Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 505 N. Peters Ave.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 0.3 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Gazebo
- 5 Benches
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Bridge
- 1 Historical Structure (The City of Norman and The Cleveland County Historical Museum)

Assessment of this park: This is a small pocket park located at the intersection of three streets. The benches and gazebo are all in excellent condition. There is beautiful landscaping throughout this park site. Located across the street is the City of Norman and the Cleveland County Historical Museum. The structure is a historical home built in the 1890s which has been converted into the museum and is considered city park property.

Key Needs: Monitor wooden benches and replace/enhance as needed. Given the size and visual character of this park, consider adding landscape shrubbery and seasonal plantings, as well as stone seating walls.

Sequoyah Trail Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

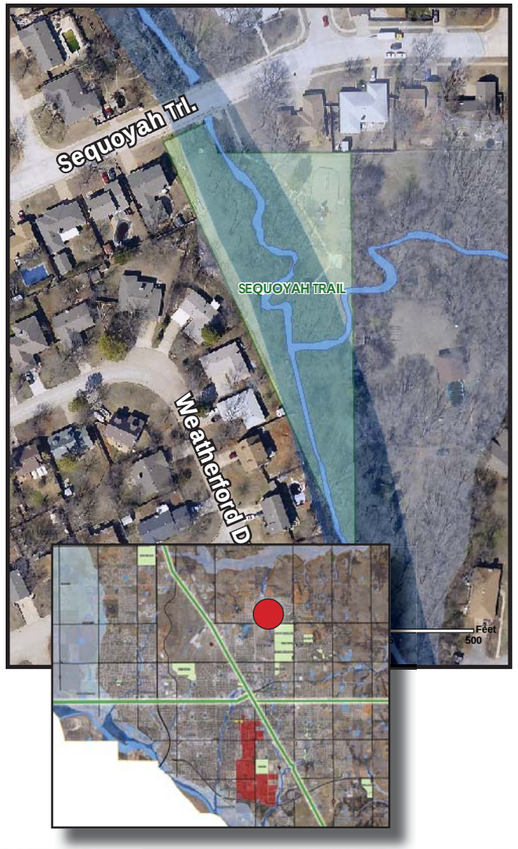
Address: 410 Sequoyah Trail
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 1.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.06 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Gazebo
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grill

Assessment of this park: This park is adjacent to Woodcrest Creek. It is accessible from one major neighborhood street but is secluded behind homes. The amenities in the park are in good condition.

Key Needs: Incorporate decorative fencing to better define the park edges near adjacent homes. Replace or enhance the park sign.



Sonoma Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1432 Glen Ellen Circle
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Backstop
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 2 Benches
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Drinking Fountain

Assessment of this park: This park is located at the back of the neighborhood it serves. It is only visible by one minor neighborhood street. The amenities in the park are in good condition.

Key Needs: Monitor park facilities and replace as needed.

Southlake Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address:
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 0.8 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped
- Water Feature/Detention Pond

Assessment of this park: Because this park is currently undeveloped, there is no assessment needed of the existing facilities.

Key Needs: Consider reconfiguring the park boundaries to create a stronger edge along Southlake Boulevard and along the lake. If feasible, acquire more lake frontage. This park has the potential to be comparable to the lake adjacent to Kevin Gottshall Park. Add a playground, pavilion, walking trails, and accessible parking when feasible.

Springbrook Park

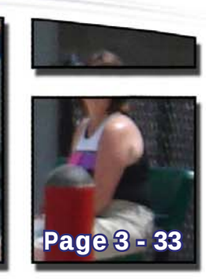
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 816 Branchwood Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 2.9 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1 Playground
- 1 Bench
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: This park only has access from one street, the rest of the park backs up to a creek. The wooden picnic table and bench are in poor condition. The fall surface around the playground is adequate with more mulch chips needing to be added. There currently is no fall surface around the swings. The guard rail designating the park boundary is rusted. The playground is in good condition.

Key Needs: Replace/upgrade park sign and the pipe rail edge fencing along Branchwood Drive. Address fall zone requirements immediately.



Summit Lakes Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3000 Summit Crossing Pkwy.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 1 Bench
- 4 Picnic Tables
- 1 Drinking Fountain

Assessment of this park: This park is located at the back of the neighborhood it serves with little visibility. The amenities are all in good condition. There is currently very little shade in this park; however several trees have been planted and are being irrigated automatically.

Key Needs: Shade. To address the need for shade, many trees have been planted.

Sunrise Park

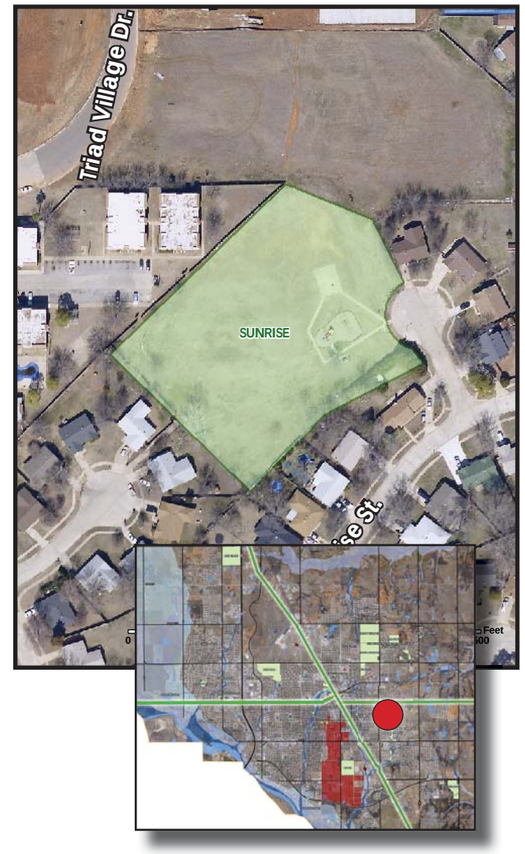
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 324 Skyline Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 2.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 1 Playground
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 BBQ Grill
- 1 Drinking Fountain
- 1 Sand Volleyball Court

Assessment of this park: The trash can and drinking fountain in this park are both in poor condition with severely chipped paint. The entire basketball court was replaced in 2009. The playground is in good condition. Visibility and access to this park is poor. The park is located off a cul-de-sac street with the fences of homes and an apartment complex surrounding it.

Key Needs: Add a shade pavilion when feasible. Replace older park infrastructure such as drinking fountain, trash cans and park sign.



Sutton Place Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

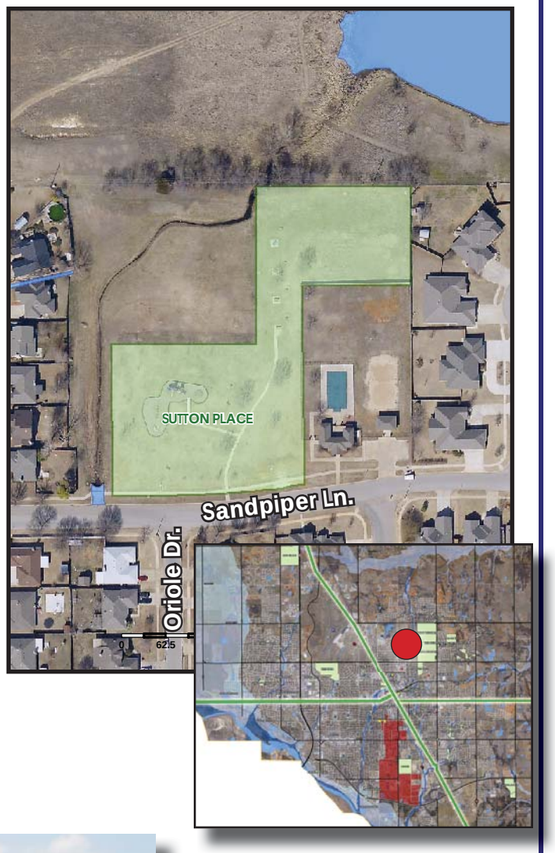
Address: 301 Sandpiper Ln.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.1 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Playground
- 4 Benches
- 3 Picnic Tables
- 1 Drinking Fountain

Assessment of this park: This park is located adjacent to a HOA swimming pool and amenity center. It is located in the center of the neighborhood it serves and is off one of the neighborhood collector streets. The amenities in this park are all in good to excellent condition.

Key Needs: Upgrade park sign and add a shade pavilion when feasible.



Tulls Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 100 W. Vida Way
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Backstop
- 1 Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 5 Benches
- 3 Picnic Tables

Assessment of this park: There are overhead powerlines that cross through the middle of this park and they should be buried. This park has very good visibility and is accessible from two major neighborhood streets. The benches and picnic tables are in adequate to poor condition and need replacing. This park is older and modern amenities should be added such as a walking trail, innovative playgrounds, and new tree plantings. The existing pavilion was designed in 2005 by OU architecture students as a class project to recycle road signs.

Key Needs: Replace aging benches in the park. Consider adding an architecturally prominent gazebo or pavilion as the centerpiece of this park.

Vineyard Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3111 Woodcrest Creek
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 4.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Playground
- 1/2 Basketball Court
- 0.20 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- Picnic Tables
- Benches

Assessment of this park: This park is almost entirely inaccessible and is along a drainage channel.

Key Needs: As tracks to the east develop, pursue street frontage to alleviate a severe lack of visibility at the rear of the park.

Walnut Ridge Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 3319 Walnut Rd.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 2.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1 Bench
- Swings
- 1 Bike Rack

Assessment of this park: There is no fall surface around the swings in this park. The facilities in the park are limited. A picnic pavilion should be added. There is access to the park from several neighborhood points. There is student housing directly around the park.

Key Needs: Address fall zone under swing set. Add a playground to the park.

Woodcreek Park

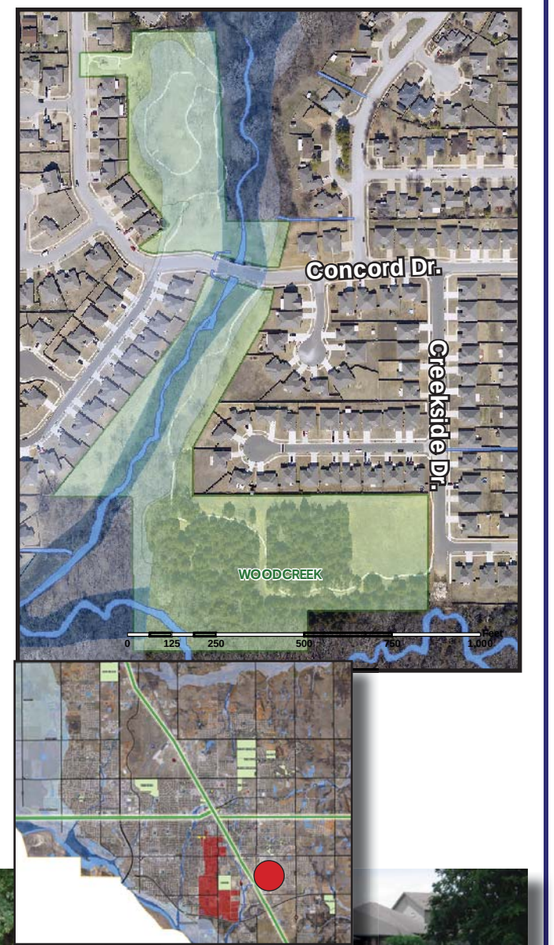
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

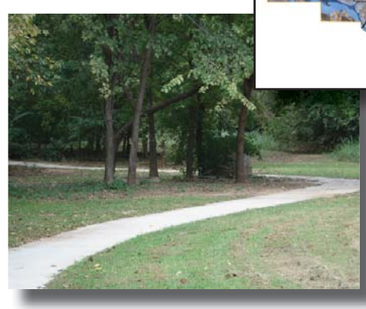
Address: 1509 Concord Dr.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 15.4 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 0.76 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Soccer Practice Field
- 3 Benches
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Playground
- 1 Backstop

Assessment of this park: The trail and benches are in good condition. The park site is wooded with mature trees. There are homes on multiple sides that limit access and visibility into the park. Woodcreek Park has an excellent trail that circles the park.

Key Needs: Update/replace park signs. Continue to monitor condition of facilities in the park.





Woodslawn Park

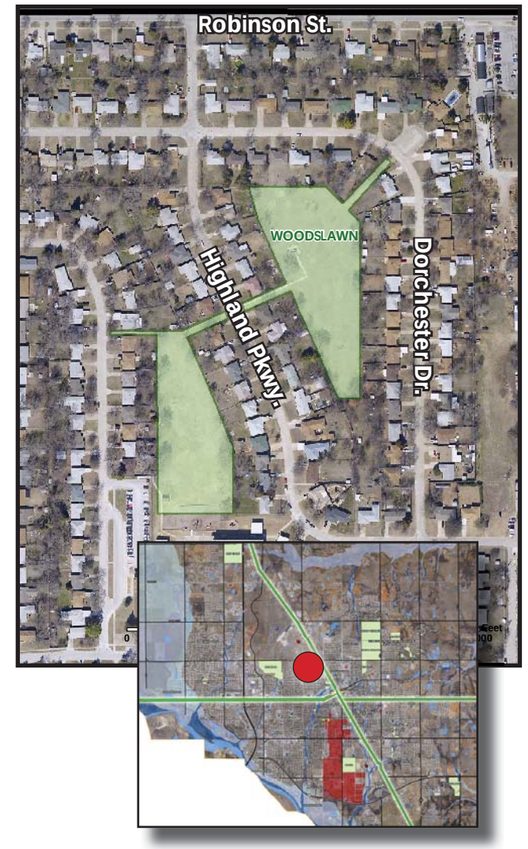
Type of Park: Neighborhood Park

Address: 1317 Regent St.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 2.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 2 Backstops
- 1 Playground
- 2 Picnic Tables
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Pavilion
- 1 Practice Soccer Field

Assessment of this park: This park is completely surrounded by fences of homes that back up to it. It is only accessible by walking down what appears to be a maintenance alley. There is handicap access and parking at the elementary school leading to the western half of the park. It has no sign designating it as a public park. There is no visibility of this park and most people would not know it was there. There is no fall surface around the swings, and the fall surface of the playground has weeds growing out of it. The playground is in good condition. The stone picnic table is missing a seating bench on one side.

Key Needs: Address safety surface under swing sets. Replace stone picnic table.



Doubletree Greenbelt

Type of Park: Linear Park

Address: 24th Ave. at Oak Forest
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 3.3 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped
- 0.56 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail

Assessment of this park: This greenbelt provides an open space buffer around the neighborhood it serves. Many of the homes back up to the greenbelt which creates added privacy for those lots. All the homes in this neighborhood have access to the greenbelt.

Key Needs: Monitor trail condition and repair as necessary.

Hall Park Greenbelt

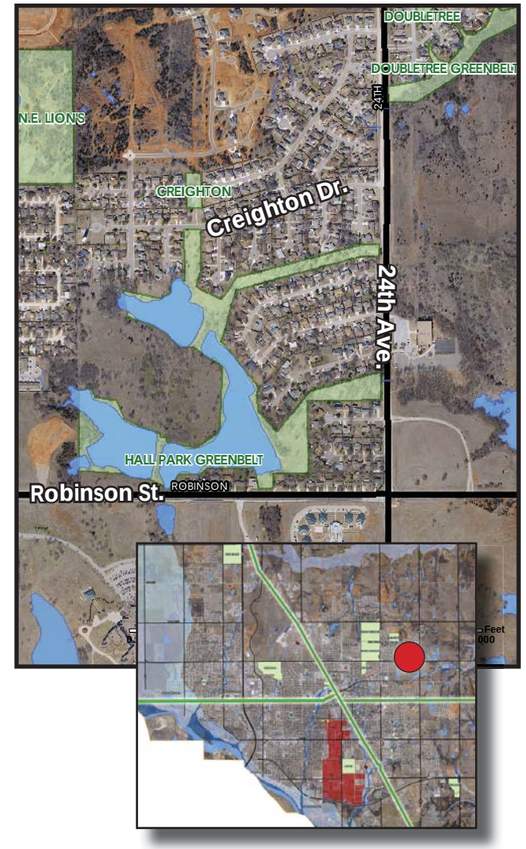
Type of Park: Linear Park

Address: 24th Ave. at Robinson St.
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 39.0 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped
- 0.33 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- Water Feature/Detention Pond

Assessment of this park: This greenbelt has large water pond/detention areas. There is limited visibility with this greenbelt and no access off of Robinson St. There are trail corridors that wind through some lots creating access to the greenbelt however most homes back up to it.

Key Needs: Monitor the trail surface and improve as necessary.



Legacy Trail

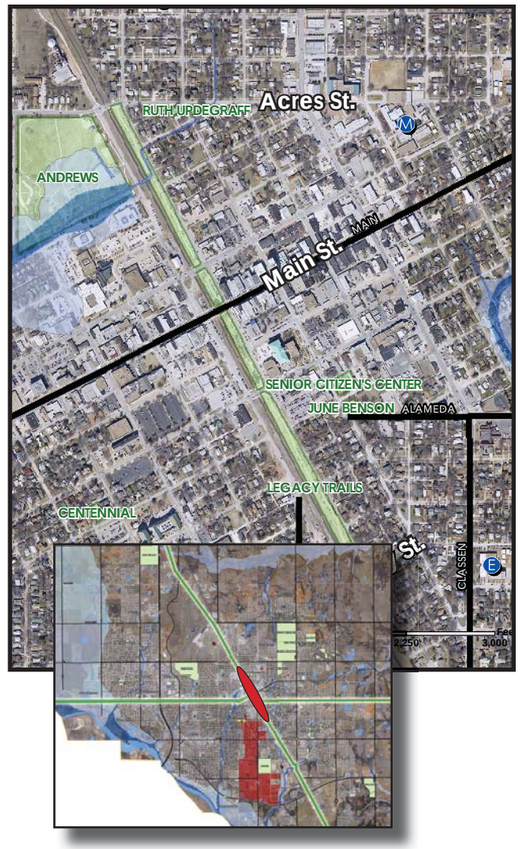
Type of Park: Linear Park

Address: From Hays St. to Duffy St.
Sector: Citywide
Size of Park: 8.2 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- 1.38 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 5 Historical Plazas
- Santa Fe Train Depot
- Public Art and Statues

Assessment this park: This is a trail that follows the railroad line through the middle of Norman. This is a signature project for the City and once complete, it will be a major trail spine for Norman. The concrete trail is in excellent condition. The trail has good street crossing markings and shade trees planted along both sides. It is important to continue to add benches and resting points along the trail.

Key Needs: Continue to aggressively expand the trail as feasible.



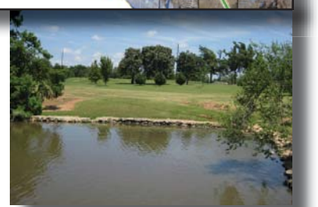
Duck Pond Park

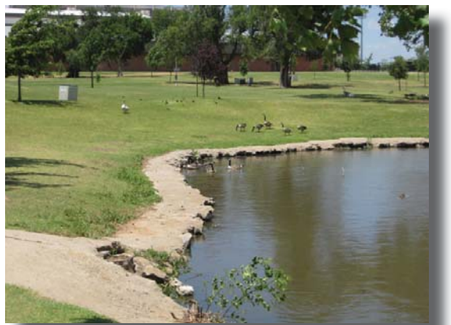
Type of Park: University Park
Ownership: **University of Oklahoma**
Address: Lindsey St.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 23.8 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Benches
- Historical Structure
- Water Feature/Pond
- Bridge
- Open Space

Assessment of this park: This park provides a quiet oasis in the heart of Norman, next to OU campus. Very few amenities are provided in the park and few are needed. Main concerns over the years will be the stabilization of the banks of the pond and the structural integrity of the bridge. The stone bridge vernacular in this park should be considered and duplicated in other major Norman parks.

Key Needs: None at this time.





12th Ave. Rec Center

Type of Park: Recreation Center

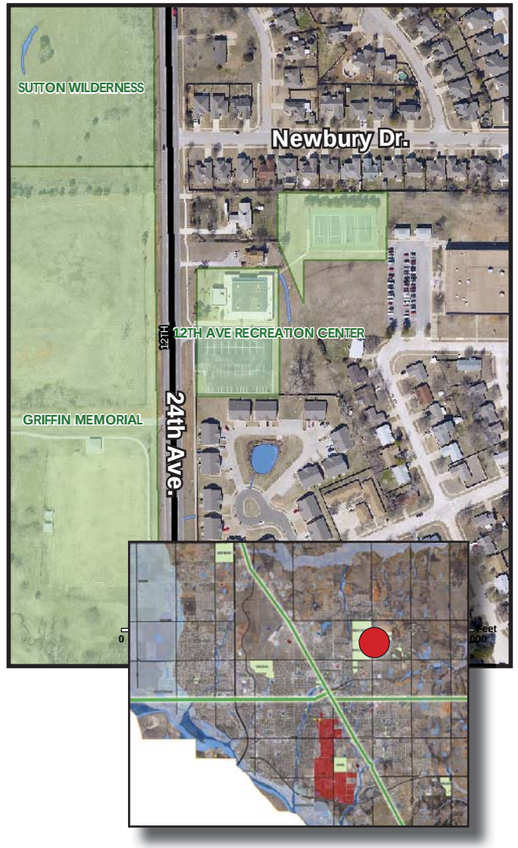
Address: 1701 12th Ave. NE
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 2.0 developed acres

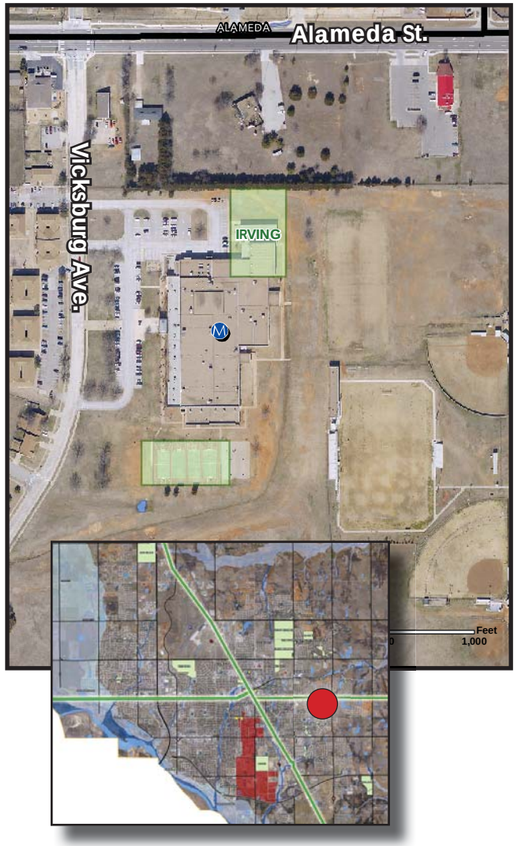
Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Gymnasium
- Gymnastics Room
- Game Room
- Kitchen
- Dance Studio
- 4 Outdoor Tennis Courts

Assessment of this recreation center (park areas only): Outdoor areas around this center are shared with the elementary school. As a result, the center has limited City owned property with which to develop play areas, play fields or other facilities which might complete the center.

Key Needs: Pursue land trade with Norman Public Schools to consolidate land near the 12th Avenue Center. Develop a play field and a playground near the center.

Indoor Components: See Chapter 7.





Irving Rec Center

Type of Park: Recreation Center

Address: 125 Vicksburg Ave.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 1.7 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Gymnasium
- After School Rooms
- 4 Outdoor Basketball Courts

Assessment of this recreation center (park areas only): Courts are separated from the indoor center, and for all practical purposes are parts of the middle school.

Key Needs: Provide signage that identifies courts as being a park and announces hours of usage (that do not interfere with school operations).

Indoor Components: See Chapter 7.

HALFF

Senior Citizen Center

Type of Park: Recreation Center

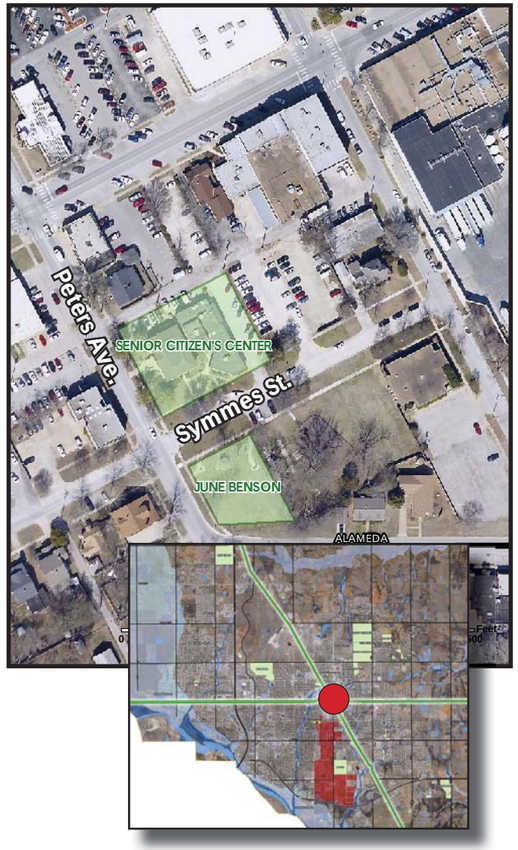
Address: 329 South Peters Ave.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 0.6 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Kitchen/Cafeteria
- Arts and Crafts Room
- Activity Room
- Dance Area
- Tax Preparation Room

Assessment of this center (outdoor areas only): The Senior Center is adjacent to June Benson Park, which is described on Page 3-23.

Key Needs: Maintain outdoor landscaping and walks around Senior Center.

Indoor Components: See Chapter 7.



Whittier Rec Center

Type of Park: Recreation Center

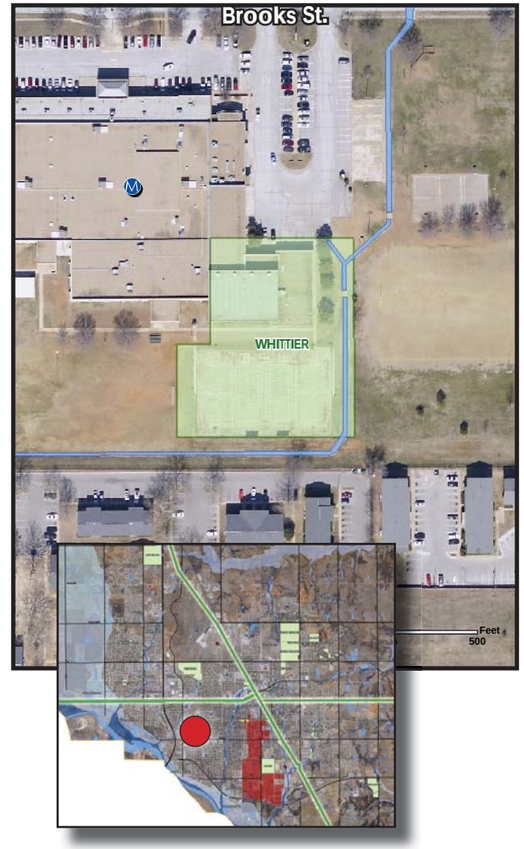
Address: 2000 W. Brooks st.
Sector: Southwest
Size of Park: 1.5 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Gymnasium
- After School Rooms
- 4 Tennis Courts
- 2 Basketball Courts

Assessment of this recreation center (park areas only): The Whittier Center includes four outdoor tennis/multipurpose courts. These courts are behind the recreation center building.

Key Needs: Add sign directing residents to available courts (during non-school hours). Renovate courts with Norman Public Schools when feasible.

Indoor Components: See Chapter 7.



Andrews Park

Type of Park: Community Park

Address: 201 W. Daws St.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 17.5 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1.24 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 3 Backstops
- 2 and 1/2 Basketball Courts (2 are lighted)
- 3 Playgrounds
- 1 Skate Park
- 1 Splash Pad Area
- 1 Amphitheater
- 1 Pavilion
- 1 Gazebo
- 40 Benches
- 17 Picnic Tables
- 3 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bike Rack
- 3 Drinking Fountains
- 7 Bridges
- 1 Historical Structure
- Parking
- Restrooms Building
- WPA Stone Channel

Assessment of this park: Andrews Park is the best known park in Norman. It is heavily used for walking, enjoying the popular splash pad, for baseball and soccer practice, for skateboarding, and for major events. While under 18 acres in size, the park's prominent downtown location makes it easily accessible from all parts of the City. The historic WPA channel and the stone amphitheater are unique features that set the park apart from others in the system. The park also has many mature trees that provide shade. Consideration has been given to lowering a portion of the park to create a storm water detention basin. The area under consideration is the northwest corner of the park, and would be lowered by four to six inches, but could still be used as practice fields. No decision has been made as to the use of the park for this purpose yet.

Key Needs: Add to the park by removing a portion of North Webster Avenue just north of West Daws Street. This would allow a one acre triangle of land that is currently surrounded by roads to be physically incorporated into the park. Continue to add trees to the park to increase the availability of shade. Add additional outdoor sculptural displays in the park to reinforce the park's identity as the cultural center of Norman. Add stone features throughout the park that continue the character established by the WPA components.

HALFF

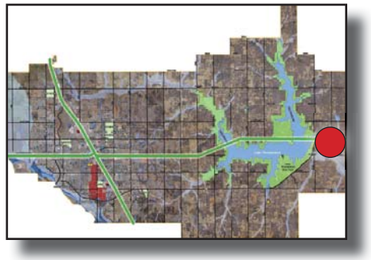
Little Axe Park and Community Center

Type of Park: Community Park/Special Purpose

Address: 1000 168th Ave. NE
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 14.2 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Playground
- Swings
- Community Center Building
- 3 Baseball Fields
- 2.5 Basketball Courts (2 on parking lot)
- Disc Golf Course
- 1 Bike Rack
- 1 Bench
- 4 Picnic Tables
- Parking
- 1 Restroom Building/Concession



Assessment of this park: This park is located in the very far east portion of the City by Lake Thunderbird. This park and community building serves all the residents who live in the rural eastern part of City. The park is located on 168th Avenue East and has good access off Highway 9. Park amenities are in good condition. Additional shade trees and picnic areas around the baseball fields should be considered.

Key Needs: Improve concession building serving the athletic fields, and improve the sidewalk accessibility throughout the park.

Griffin Park

Type of Park: Community Park
Address: 1001 E. Robinson
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 160.0 developed acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 1.16 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Playground
- 16 Soccer Fields
- 9 Baseball Fields
- 5 Softball Fields
- 4 Football Fields
- 1 Dog Park
- 3 Pavilions
- 15 Picnic Tables
- 1 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bike Rack
- Water Feature/Irrigation Lake
- Parking
- 4 Restrooms Buildings
- Disc Golf Course

Assessment of this park: Griffin Park is by far the most actively used park in the Norman parks system. When combined with the adjacent Sutton Wilderness area, Griffin provides more than 300 acres of active and passive parkland in the very center of the City. The park also includes four football fields that are used for Norman's growing youth football leagues. While the park is well used, it needs to be enhanced to truly stand out as one of Norman's premier parks. The baseball fields and surrounding fencing are generally in good condition, and the soccer fields are well maintained. Lighting has been recently added and is in good condition.

Key Needs: The park has no additional room for expansion of its two primary uses, soccer and baseball/softball. Soccer is an extremely popular sport in the City, and the soccer complex in the park hosts many local and regional soccer tournaments that have been very successful. Use of the park for higher level, premier tournaments is precluded by the number of fields, and consideration should be given to identifying where nearby growth might occur.

Other key needs include:

- Replace decades old pipe railing around the park and internal parking areas. Suggested treatments may include using simulated wood concrete fencing or landscaped berms around the park perimeter.
- Replace aging signs at the park entries and at key facility entrances within the park. Signs should adapt the vernacular of the stone pavilions already existing in the park.
- New wayfinding and feature identification signs are needed within the park. This park is large enough to have a unique set of internal signs that guide visitors to the park.
- Shade is needed over bleachers in the park, at both the soccer complex and at the baseball/softball fields. One to two fields per every quad should be covered.
- Resurface or replace the 1+ mile trail around the park. The asphalt trail surface is deteriorating and cracking in some areas.
- The park needs at least two additional playgrounds. One is needed near the soccer area pavilion, while the second is needed at the northeastern corner of the park along 12th Avenue.
- The dog park needs new fence posts and area amenities. These might include fake fire hydrants and dog slides, as well as potential additional shade for pet owners.
- The play area near the softball fields needs to be expanded/enhanced.
- The pavilion near the existing play area is dated, and should be replaced with a pavilion that matches the stone vernacular used in the more attractive pavilions on the site.
- Internal landscaping and additional tree planting needs to be added along main promenades and trail corridors between fields.
- A basketball complex has been proposed in the northeastern quadrant of the City. The park currently has no basketball courts.
- Add shade and additional paved seating areas adjacent to the concession buildings in the park. Shade could be provided by using pergolas or large covered pavilions.

John H. Saxon Park

Type of Park: Community Park

Address: Highway 9 at 36th Ave.
Sector: Southeast
Size of Park: 67.3 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped

Assessment of this park: Saxon Park is currently undeveloped. It is located in the southeast sector of the City along Highway 9 and SE 36th Avenue.

The park site is a mixture of mature woodlands and open fields.

Key Needs: Develop a master plan for the park site. As the key community park for the fast growing southeast sector of the City, careful consideration should be given to balancing both passive and active recreation facilities. Consideration should also be given to allow indoor recreation and aquatic buildings to be located in this park.

The City currently plans to add walking/jogging trails which will accommodate cross country competitions. Some clearing for these trails has been initiated.

Reaves Park

Type of Park: Community Park

Address: 2501 Jenkins Ave.

Sector: Southeast

Size of Park: 79.8 acres developed

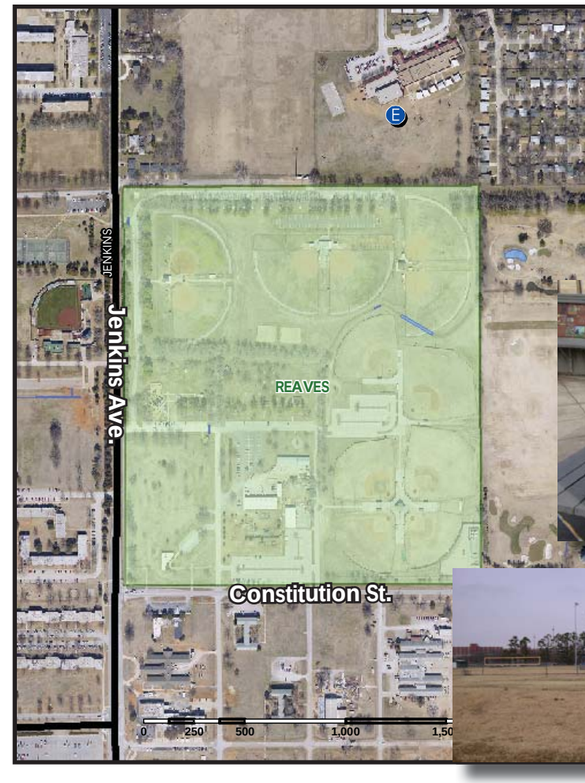
Existing Facilities in the Park:

- 0.86 Mile Walking/Jogging Trail
- 1 Backstop
- 3 Playgrounds
- 6 Baseball Fields
- 6 Softball Fields
- 4 Volleyball Courts
- 4 Pavilions
- 3 Benches
- 71 Picnic Tables
- 10 BBQ Grills
- 1 Bike Rack
- 3 Drinking Fountains
- 1 Historical Structure (Veterans Memorial)
- Parking
- Restrooms Building
- 1 Basketball Court
- 1 Recreation/Dance Center

Assessment of this park: Reaves is home to both softball and baseball facilities operated by the Reaves Park Softball Association and by the Optimist Club. It is 80 acres in size and is the City's third most popular park. However, the park is surrounded by the University of Oklahoma campus, and as such, is easily confused as being part of OU. The park has many mature trees, but recent ice storms have resulted in severe tree losses in this park. The City's Veteran's Memorial Plaza is a recent addition to the park. Kids Place, a Robert Eather's designed wooden complex that was built in 1999, is the City's largest playground and a central feature of the park. A 10' wide asphalt trail that is in good condition circles the park.

A large picnic complex located in the park is somewhat dated, with older pavilions, picnic tables and restroom facilities.

Key Needs: Consider creating a new master plan for the park. Rebuild the picnic complex, with new tables, pavilions and restroom building. Use the pavilion vernacular found in Griffin and Andrews Park to create a character that links Reaves back to those other parks. Add multiple new park signs to identify the park as a City of Norman facility. Install cultural components such as additional outdoor art, commemoration markers or statues, and a place for large gatherings. Create new park entrances that celebrate the park. Continue to upgrade athletic field lighting in the park, and ensure that concession/restroom facilities at the softball and baseball fields are tournament quality.



Ruby Grant Park

Type of Park: Community Park

Address: Franklin Rd. at I-35
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 148.8 undeveloped acres

Existing Facilities in the Park:
- Undeveloped

Assessment of this park: This park is currently undeveloped. There is a master plan for this park which includes practice fields, a cross country track facility, a splash pad, playgrounds, disc golf course, trails, picnic areas, sculpture garden, skate park, dog park, and a pond.

Key needs: Establish a strategy to acquire the funding necessary for construction of the first phase (as per the established master plan for the site).

George M. Sutton Wilderness

Type of Park: Special Purpose Park (Open Space)

Address: 1920 12th Ave. NE
Sector: Northeast
Size of Park: 160.0 undeveloped acres

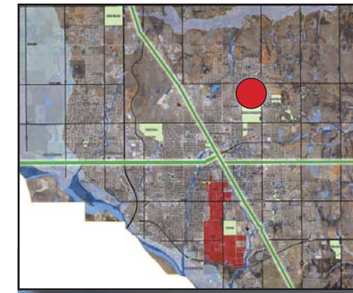
Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Access Parking Area Adjacent to 12th Avenue
- Small Pavilion at Entry Area
- Park Information Kiosk
- 2 Ponds/Water Features
- 3+ Miles of Nature Trails
- Extensive Forested Areas

Assessment of this park: The Sutton Wilderness is the largest natural preserve in Norman, beyond lands around Lakes Thunderbird. It occupies a central and easily accessible location in the City. One parking area focuses entry at a single point, allowing some control over access to the preserve.

The preserve itself is very scenic, with winding forested trails leading to two lakes in the center of the preserve. A recent 50+ acre addition along the western edge of the preserve was acquired, and integrated wetlands and forested areas into the preserve.

Key Needs: Trails within the park are all rustic and natural, and are not wheelchair accessible. Also, emergency access to the center area of the preserve is limited. Develop at least one more accessible route to the larger lake. The lakes have no fishing piers or wildlife observation blinds. Finally the park edge should include some signage or features that identify the site as a natural preserve, especially at Rock Creek Road and 12 Avenue.



Westwood Park

Type of Park: Special Purpose Park

Address: 2400 Westport Dr.
Sector: Northwest
Size of Park: 129.9 developed acres

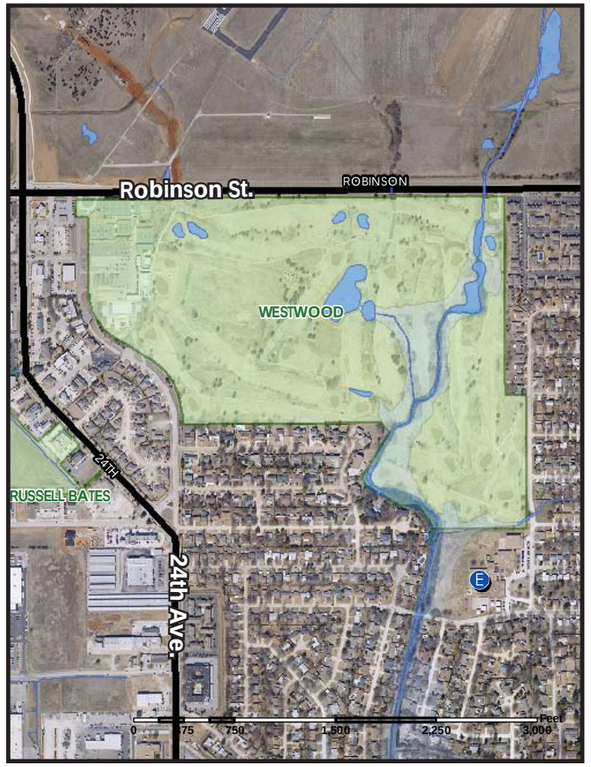
Existing Facilities in the Park:

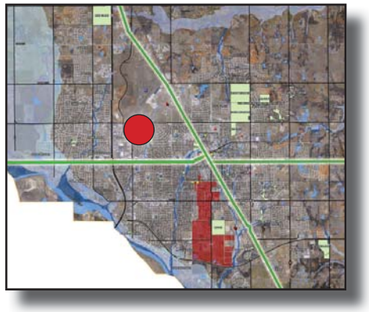
- Walking/Jogging Trail
- 12 Tennis Courts
- Tennis Pro Shop
- 18 Hole Golf Course
- Driving Range
- Golf Pro Shop
- Swimming Pool/Aquatic Complex
- Paved Parking Lot
- Restroom Building
- 1 Playground

Assessment of this park: This park is largely a destination park. The golf course and tennis complex are in good condition. The restrooms, concessions, and golf pro shop need renovation. The swimming pool is very dated and in need of replacement (recommendations regarding the pool are discussed in Chapter 6). There is one playground in the park which is in good condition; however it is not often used and has limited visibility.

Key Needs: Replace or renovate the Westwood Pool. As part of that effort, develop a master plan for the remaining facilities in the park, including the Tennis Center and the Golf Course Clubhouse. Consider consolidating tennis center and golf course building in one building to create space for a two to four covered tennis court building. Consider also re-configuring parking for greater efficiency and to create usable space.

Create a new entrance to the park from Robinson Street. Add features such as pavilions and a connection to the existing Robinson Street trail that also allow this park to serve as a neighborhood park for nearby residents. Add prominent public art pieces in this highly used park.





Lake Thunderbird State Park (State of Oklahoma)

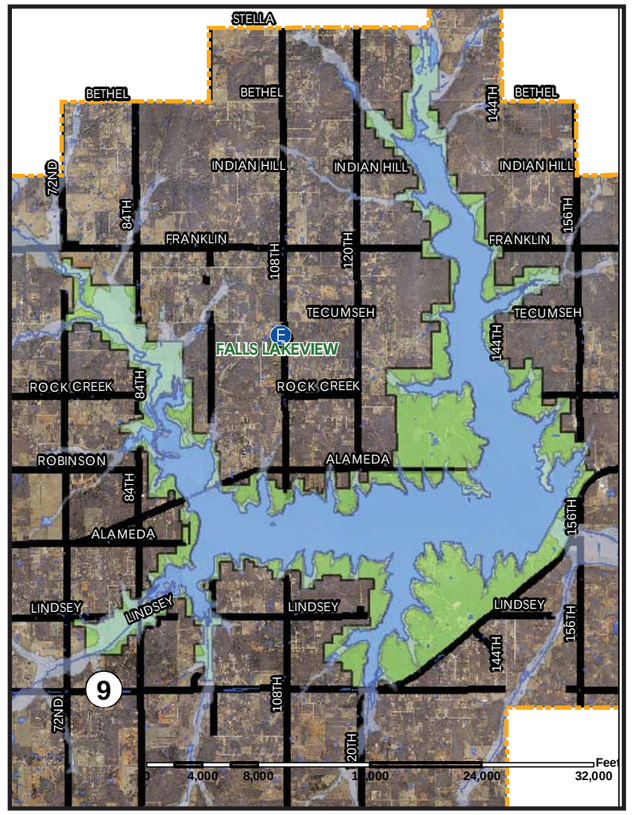
Type of Park: Regional Park
Ownership: **State of Oklahoma**
Address: 13001 Alameda Dr.
Sector: East
Size of Park: 1,874 developed acres of parkland plus 5,497 acres of water (lake surface area) and 5,244 acres of additional open space surrounding the lake.

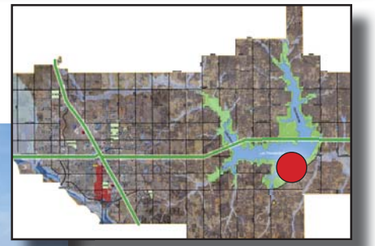
Existing Facilities in the Park:

- Marina with Rentals and Gift Shop
- Swimming Beach
- Paddle Boat and Canoe Rentals
- 447 Campsites
- 8 Lake Huts
- Hike and Bike Nature Trails
- Horse Stables
- Restrooms Building/Showers
- Picnic Areas
- Group Shelters
- Nature Center
- Restaurant
- Hunting Areas
- Archery Range
- Playgrounds
- Miniature Golf

Assessment of this park: This regional park is owned and operated as a State Park and Lake Thunderbird is Norman's primary water source. The park serves not only the City of Norman but the surrounding communities. Long term, the City should develop trails along the Little River corridor and Highway 9 to connect residents to the lake through an alternative form of transportation.

Key Needs: Suggest improvements and potential partnerships where appropriate to enhance park facilities.



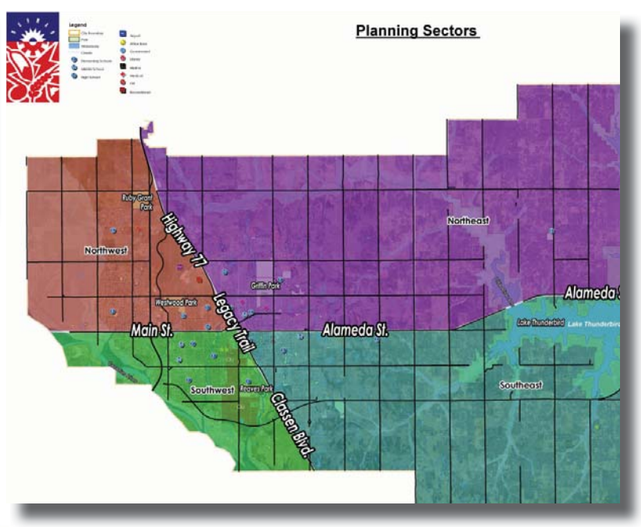


Chapter 4

Public Input

Chapter 4

Public Input



Introduction

Public input is a critical part of any planning process. Public entities work for their citizens by managing and providing the types of facilities that the residents, as taxpayers, want. In essence, our citizens are our "customers" and it is the City's responsibility to provide what our customers seek. In the parks planning process, citizen input helps identify what types of existing facilities are being used, where key deficiencies may occur, and where the citizens of Norman would like to see their funding targeted. This input also can be compared to input received from other cities in nearby regions of the country, so that long term trends can be identified. In essence, the residents of a community determine what they want to have in their city through their current use of those facilities, and through their comments and input.

This master plan incorporates an extensive amount of public input, utilizing several alternative methods. By using these methods of public input, feedback from many varying parts of the community were received, leading to a broader consensus on the direction that the master plan should take. The multiple methods that were used to generate citizen input during the planning process, as well as the number of responses generated with each method, include:

- A citywide mail-out survey (500+ responses)
- An online survey (1,000+ responses)
- Surveys distributed to the young residents of Norman in the Norman Public Schools (2,050+ responses)
- Interviews with key stakeholders, staff and elected officials of the City (15+ interviews)
- Periodic reviews and feedback from the Master Plan Steering Committee
- Citywide open house/public meeting and displays (44 completed questionnaires)

Citizen Mail-out Survey

Why use a mail-out survey - A citywide mail-out survey was conducted as part of the parks and recreation planning process. The survey was designed to examine residents' current participation in recreational activities, and it also helped to assess recreational needs in Norman. The survey allows elected officials and City staff to better understand the recreational needs and desires of its citizenry. The survey was conducted by a professional public input firm with extensive experience in recreation attitude surveys.

Survey methodology - 5,000 mail-out surveys were sent to randomly selected homes in Norman and equally distributed throughout each sector of the City. Approximately 10% or 500+ completed surveys were returned. For the mail-out survey, which is used as a measuring stick for comparison with the other methods, the results yield a 95% level of confidence with a precision of +/- 5%. Respondents were asked to indicate which sector of the city they live in, so that responses could be tied to a particular area of the City.

Online Survey

All citizens in Norman were given the opportunity to log onto the City's website and take a survey pertaining to parks and recreation. The survey was modeled after the mail-out survey with similar questions to allow for comparison. The reason for an online survey was to give all residents a broad based opportunity to voice their opinions.

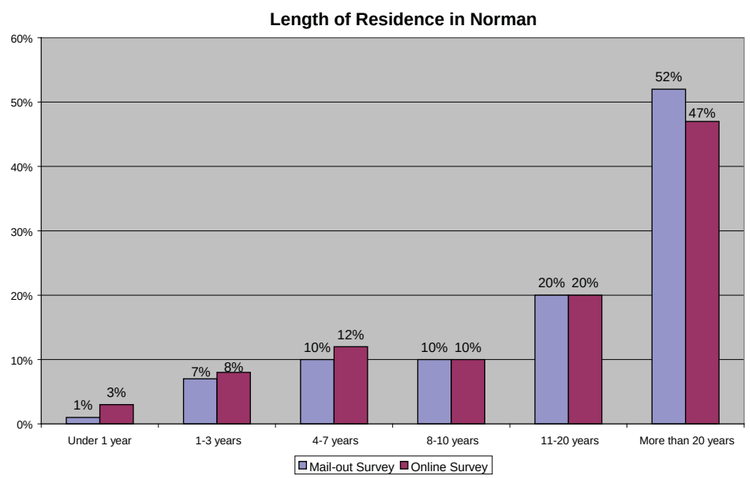
Over the next several pages, the results of the mail-out survey and the online survey are shown and compared. Cumulative results of all surveys can be found in the appendix of this Master Plan. Some questions were also compared to the results of a broader citizen satisfaction survey conducted by the City of Norman in July 2009. Where relevant, those results are referenced.

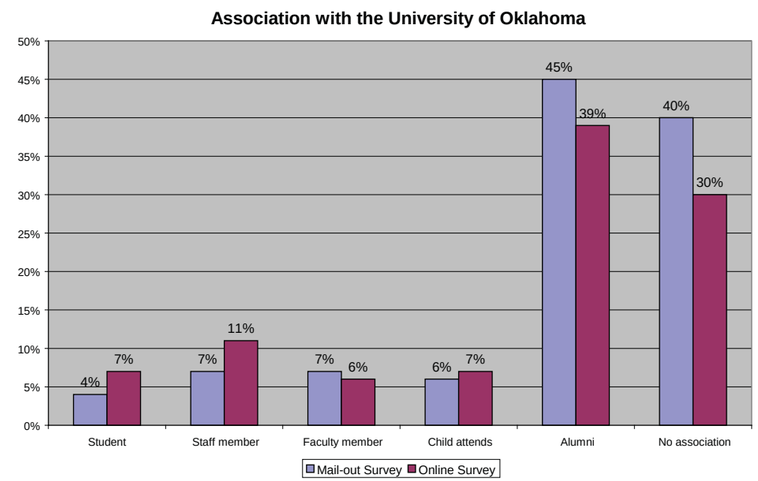
Demographics of Survey Respondents

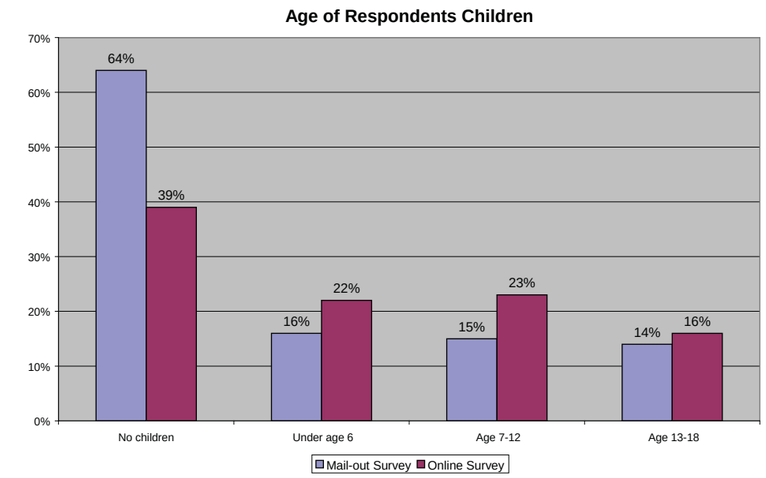
When survey respondents were asked how long they had **lived in Norman**, 52% of the mail-out survey respondents and 47% of the online survey participants indicated that they have lived in Norman for more than 20 years. Additionally, nearly three-fourths of mail-out survey respondents have lived in Norman for more than 10 years (72%), as had 67% of the online respondents. These results are mirrored by responses to the City's broader survey. Norman has a significant and large core population of long time residents.

Not surprisingly, when asked about their **association with the University of Oklahoma**, 60% of the mail-out survey respondents and 70% of the online survey participants had some type of association. On this question the respondents were asked to choose all that apply to them. Most respondents who were associated with the University were alumni. The results are shown in the bar graph below.

Age of Respondents' Children - Given that a large portion of the survey respondents have lived in Norman for over 20 years, it is not surprising that a large portion also indicated that they no longer have dependent children living at home. The responses are shown below of those who have children under the age of 18 living at home. The online survey was open to all residents and clearly attracted more respondents with a greater interest in parks and recreation needs targeting younger children.







Most Frequently Visited Park

Residents were asked what park in Norman they most frequently visit. Only a few of the 65 parks in the City received any mention. The responses are listed below.

Mail-out Survey		Online Survey	
Andrews Park	57%	Andrews Park	26%
Reaves Park	47%	Reaves Park	23%
Lions Park	21%	Lions Park	13%
Griffin Park	8%	Westwood Park	7%
Brookhaven Park	7%	Griffin Park	6%
Westwood Park	3%	Brookhaven Park	3%

Reasons for Visiting Those Parks

Next, the residents were asked the open-ended question of what they feel is their biggest reason for visiting those parks. Their responses are shown below.

Mail-out Survey		Online Survey	
Events/concerts/festivals	23%	Locations/close/proximity	21%
Take kids to play	18%	Events/concerts/festivals	18%
Location/close/proximity	16%	Take kids to play	15%
Walk/jog/run/walk dogs	14%	Golf/disc golf	8%
Atmosphere/beauty/clean	5%	Splash pad/water park	6%

What Do You Generally Do When Visiting a Park

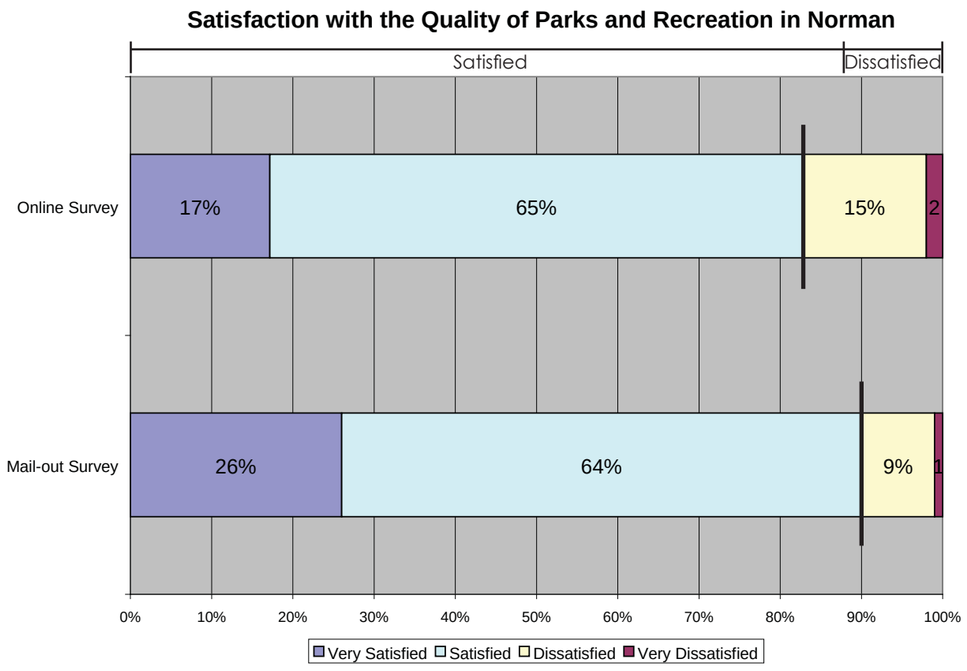
The survey responsents were given a list of various park activities. They were then asked to choose all the activities they generally do when they go to a city park. The responses are shown below.

Mail-out Survey		Online Survey	
Enjoy the outdoors	70%	Enjoy the outdoors	16%
Walk/hike	60%	Take kids to play	15%
Take kids to play	51%	Walk/hike	14%
Picnic	37%	Special events	11%
Walk pets	31%	Picnic	10%
Bike	19%	Walk pets	8%
Take kids to org. sports	18%	Take kids to org. sports	6%
Swim	16%	Swim	6%
Non-organized sports	11%	Bike	5%
Organized sports	6%	Non-organized sports	3%
Don't go to parks	5%	Organized sports	2%

Quality of Parks and Recreation in Norman

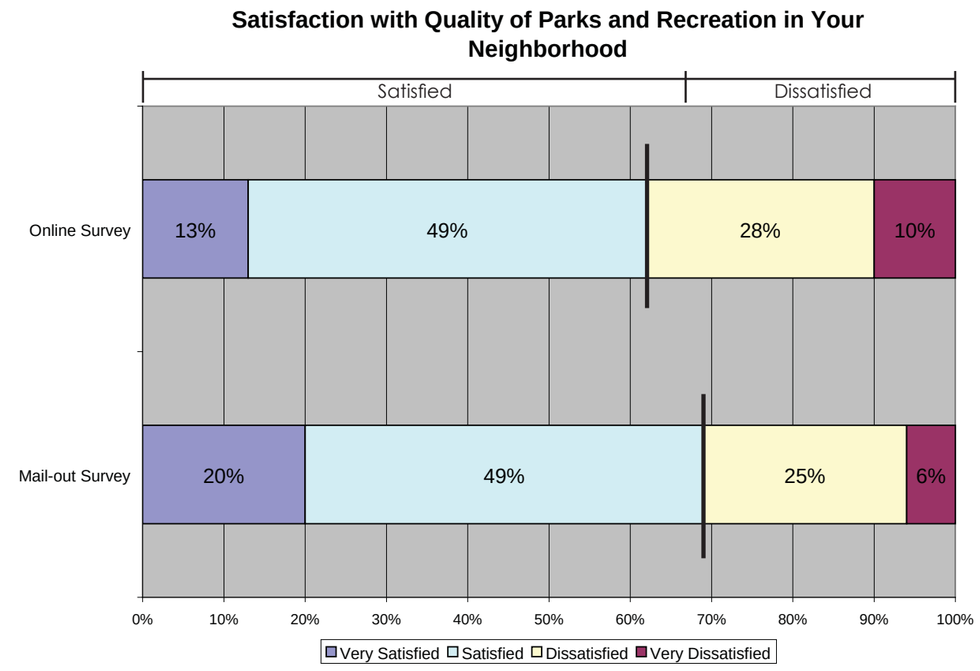
A key question in the survey asks residents how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the overall quality of parks and recreation. This establishes a baseline of citizen perceptions. The same question can be asked on future surveys to determine whether the City's park system has increased or decreased in quality according to the residents.

Norman has a very high level of citizen satisfaction with the overall parks system. 90% of those who responded to the mail-out survey and 82% of those who participated in the online survey indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of parks and recreation in Norman.



Quality of Parks and Recreation in Your Neighborhood

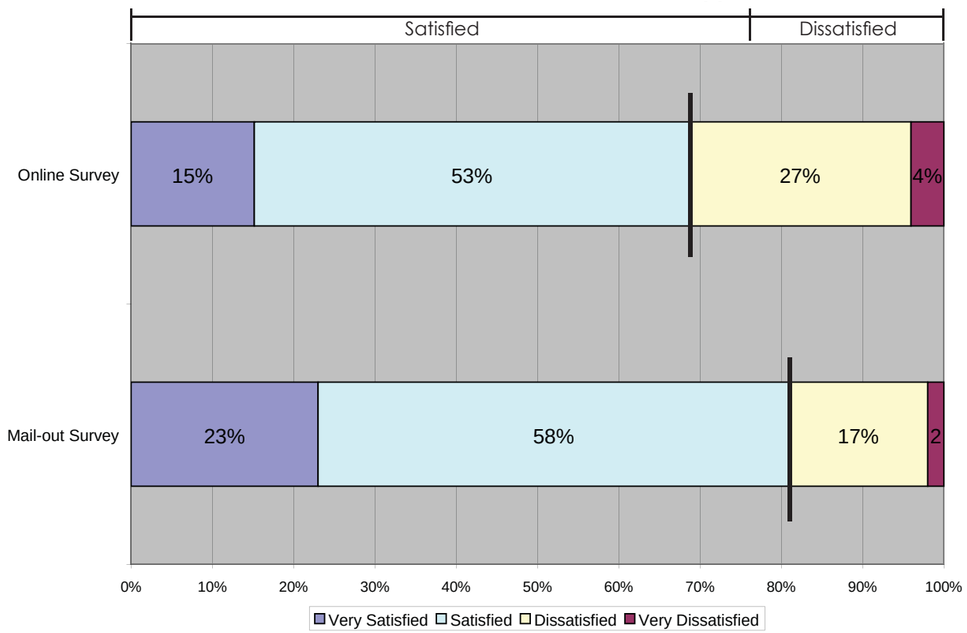
Residents were then asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the overall quality of parks and recreation in their specific neighborhood. The percentage of people satisfied was much lower when compared to the City as a whole. Only 69% of the mail-out survey respondents and 62% of the online survey respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the parks and recreation in their neighborhood. This indicates that while people feel that the overall quality of all parks in Norman is high, residents feel that their smaller, neighborhood parks are not as high a quality.



Amount of Recreational Opportunities

Residents were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the amount of recreational opportunities provided by the City of Norman. 81% of mail-out survey respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied. However only 68% of the online survey participants indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied.

Satisfaction with Amount of Recreational Opportunities



Favorite RECREATIONAL Activity

In an open-ended question, residents were asked what their favorite recreational activity was, as well as the favorite activity of their spouse and their children. In both the mail-out survey and the online survey, the highest rated response was walking/hiking for both themselves and their spouses. This matches the expressed desire later in the surveys for additional trails throughout the entire City for recreation and exercise. Swimming, golf and biking also ranked as favorite activities. The responses in both surveys are shown below.

Mail-out Survey

Yourself		Your Spouse		Your Children	
1) Walking/hiking	36%	1) Walking/hiking	33%	1) Playgrounds	29%
2) Biking	8%	2) Golf	10%	2) Swimming	17%
3) Swimming	8%	3) Biking	8%	3) Sports	9%
4) Golf	7%	4) Fishing/hunting	7%	4) Softball/baseball	8%
5) Jogging/running	7%	5) Jogging/running	7%	5) Soccer	7%
6) Spectator events	7%	6) Aerobics/weight lifting	6%	6) Walking/hiking	5%
7) Aerobics/weight lifting	6%	7) Team sports	6%	7) Basketball	5%
8) Team sports	5%	8) Arts & crafts/gardening	5%		
9) Fishing/hunting	5%				

Online Survey

Yourself		Your Spouse		Your Children	
1) Walking/hiking	29%	1) Walking/hiking	26%	1) Walking/hiking	26%
2) Swimming	15%	2) Golf	10%	2) Golf	10%
3) Golf	11%	3) Swimming	9%	3) Swimming	9%
4) Biking	7%	4) Team sports	9%	4) Team sports	9%
5) Jogging/running	7%	5) Biking	9%	5) Biking	9%
6) Aerobics/weight lifting	7%	6) Jogging/running	8%	6) Jogging/running	8%
7) Team sports	5%	7) Aerobics/weight lifting	8%	7) Aerobics/weight lifting	8%

Organizations Utilized to Participate in Activities

After listing their favorite recreational activities, residents were asked to check which organization they utilize when participating in those activities. The responses are shown below. The number one response for both surveys was City of Norman indicating that residents use City facilities for a large portion of their recreational activities.

Mail-out Survey

1) City of Norman	61%
2) State Park/Lake Thunderbird	41%
3) University of Oklahoma	32%
4) Churches	31%
5) Norman Public Schools	24%
6) YMCA	24%
7) Private Clubs	19%
8) Other	14%
9) Non-profit Youth	9%

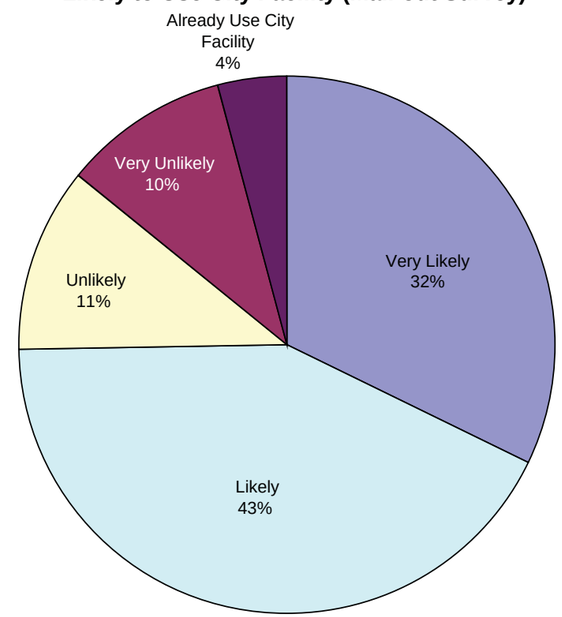
Online Survey

1) City of Norman	24%
2) State Park/Lake Thunderbird	13%
3) University of Oklahoma	13%
4) Norman Public Schools	12%
5) YMCA	11%
6) Churches	10%
7) Private Clubs	8%
8) Other	5%
9) Non-profit Youth	4%

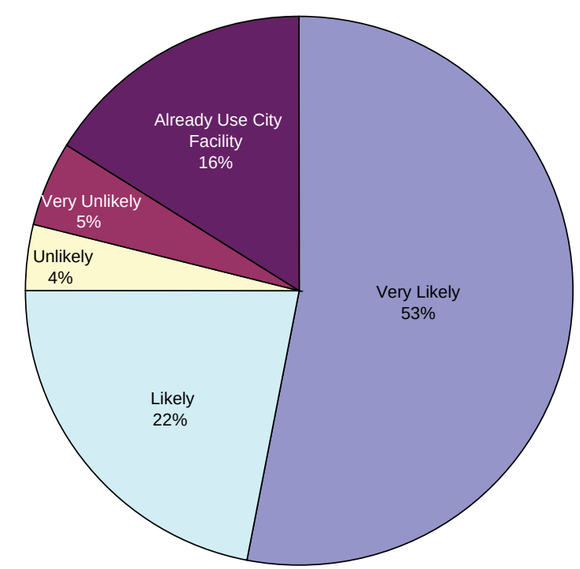
Likelihood of Using a City Facility

The residents of Norman were then asked how likely or unlikely they would be to participate in their favorite recreational activities in a city facility if the City provided such a state of the art facility. 75% of both the mail-out survey and online survey respondents indicated they would be likely or very likely to use the City facility. Such a high level of likelihood is to be expected when compared to the previous question which showed that City facilities are the most likely utilized facilities when participating in a recreational activity. Citizens indicated a tendency to support and utilize City facilities.

Likely to Use City Facility (Mail-out Survey)



Likely to Use City Facility (Online Survey)



Favorite ATHLETIC Activity

Residents were given a list of popular athletic activities. They were then asked to choose their favorite activity. The responses are shown below. The top four favorite athletic activities are the same for both the mail-out and online surveys. The top four athletic activities are walking/hiking on trails, swimming, bicycling, and exercising/working out.

Mail-out Survey

1) Walk/hike on trails	60%
2) Swim	39%
3) Bicycling	37%
4) Exercise/work out	30%
5) Running/jogging	18%
6) Golf	17%
7) Basketball	13%
8) Soccer	13%
9) Baseball/softball	13%
10) Tennis	9%
11) Other	9%
12) Skating/hockey	3%
13) Football	3%
14) Volleyball	3%
15) Skateboarding	2%

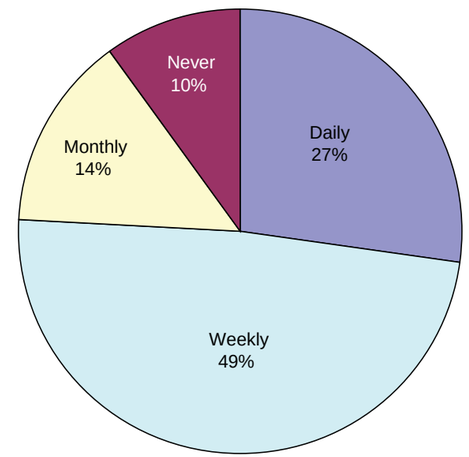
Online Survey

1) Walk/hike on trails	20%
2) Swim	19%
3) Bicycling	11%
4) Exercise/work out	11%
5) Golf	8%
6) Running/jogging	7%
7) Baseball/softball	7%
8) Soccer	4%
9) Basketball	3%
10) Other	3%
11) Tennis	2%
12) Football	2%
13) Skating/hockey	1%
14) Volleyball	1%
15) Skateboarding	0%

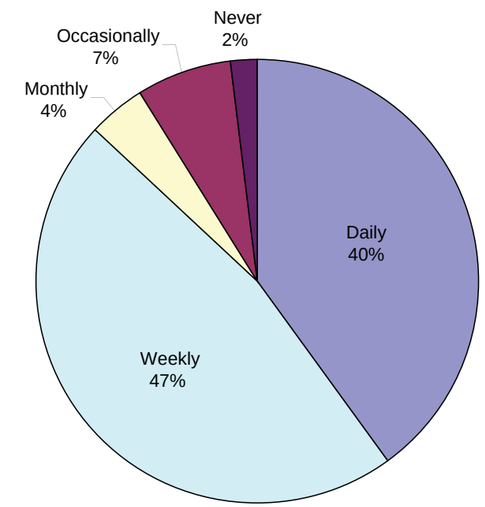
Frequency of Participation

Knowing how frequently residents participate in their favorite activities gives the City staff an idea of how much use and demand there is for the facilities. 76% of mail-out survey respondents and 87% of online survey participants responded that they participated in their athletic activity either daily or weekly. This indicates that the city facilities are receiving a heavy amount of use.

Frequency of Participating in Athletic Activities (mail-out survey)



Frequency of Participating in Athletic Activities (online survey)



Organizations Utilized to Participate in Activities

Again, residents were asked which organization they utilize when participating in their favorite athletic activity. For both surveys, the number one response was that residents utilize City of Norman facilities. All responses are shown below.

Mail-out Survey

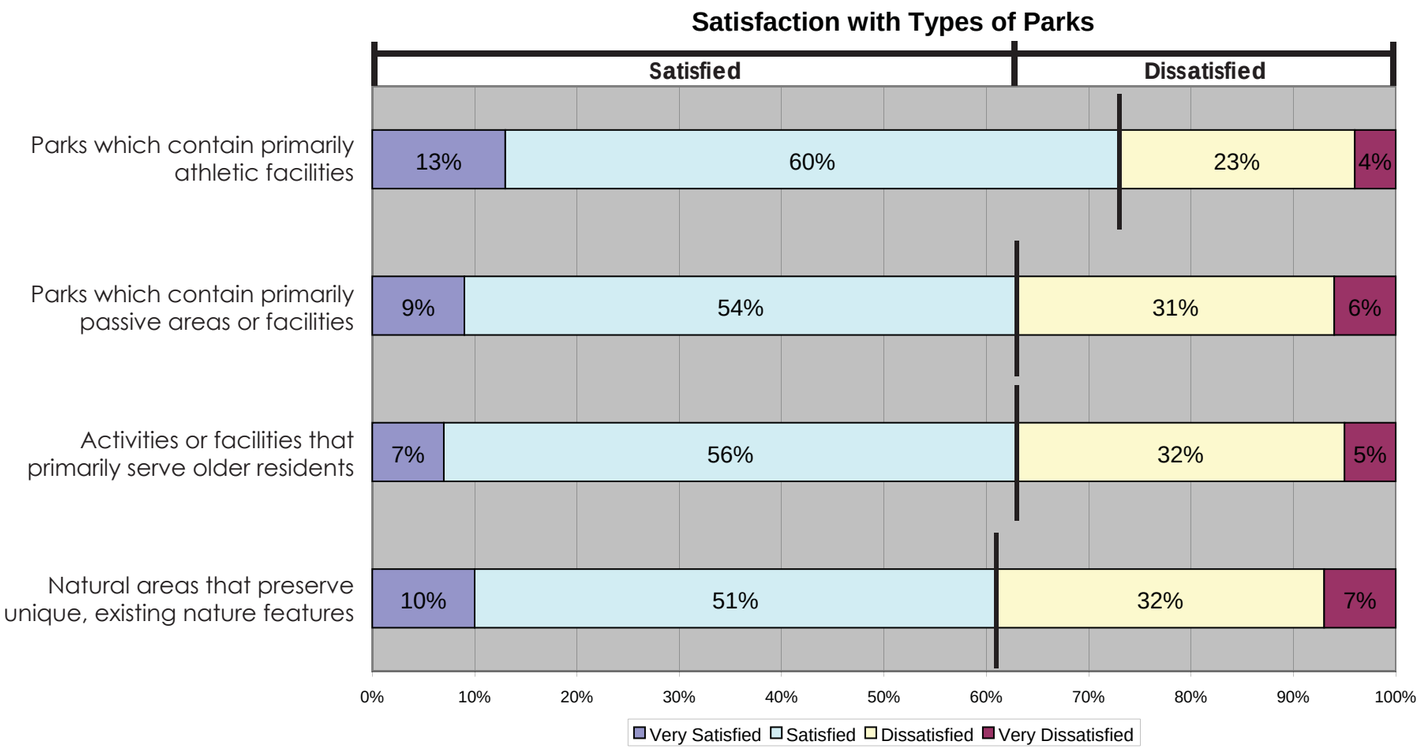
1) City of Norman	60%
2) State Park/Lake Thunderbird	31%
3) University of Oklahoma	26%
4) YMCA	23%
5) Other	22%
6) Churches	21%
7) Private Clubs	19%
8) Norman Public Schools	17%
9) Non-profit Youth	6%

Online Survey

1) City of Norman	27%
2) University of Oklahoma	15%
3) YMCA	11%
4) State Park/Lake Thunderbird	10%
5) Other	10%
6) Norman Public Schools	9%
7) Private Clubs	9%
8) Churches	6%
9) Non-profit Youth	3%

Satisfaction with Different Types of Parks

As an added component, a question on the online survey asked residents how satisfied they were with different categories of parks in Norman. The residents were given four different types of parks and asked to rate their satisfaction for each. 73% of residents said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with parks that contain primarily athletic facilities. Only 63% of residents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with parks that contain primarily passive areas or facilities such as picnic sites, trails and nature viewing areas. The levels of dissatisfaction with the number of passive parks, nature preserves and senior facilities are significant enough to indicate a need to increase these types of parks. The responses are shown in the graph below.

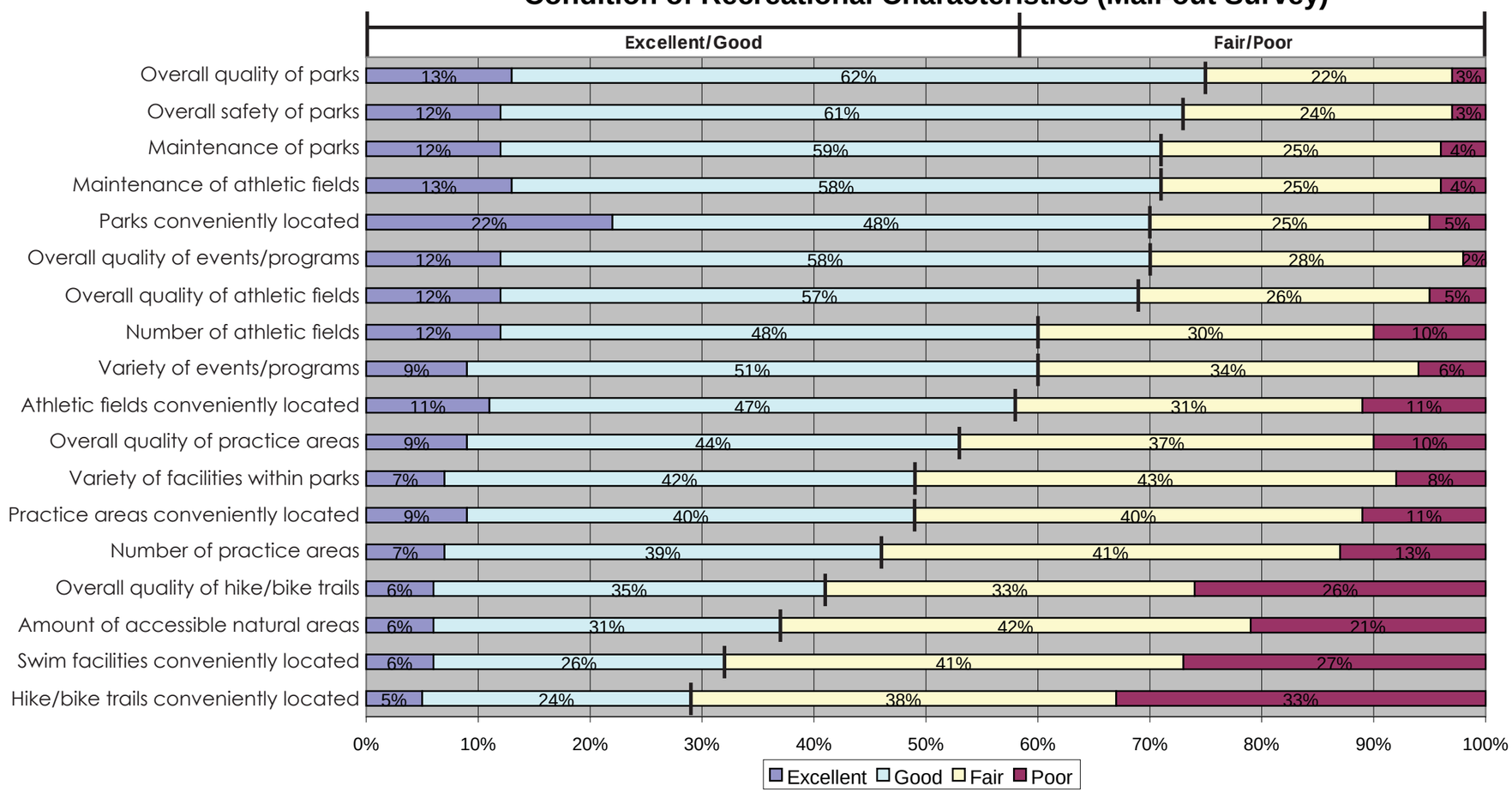


Perceptions of Facility Conditions

Residents were given a list of different conditional characteristics of the parks in Norman. They were then asked to rate each characteristic as excellent, good, fair or poor. The results from the mail-out survey are shown on this page and the online survey results are shown on the opposite page.

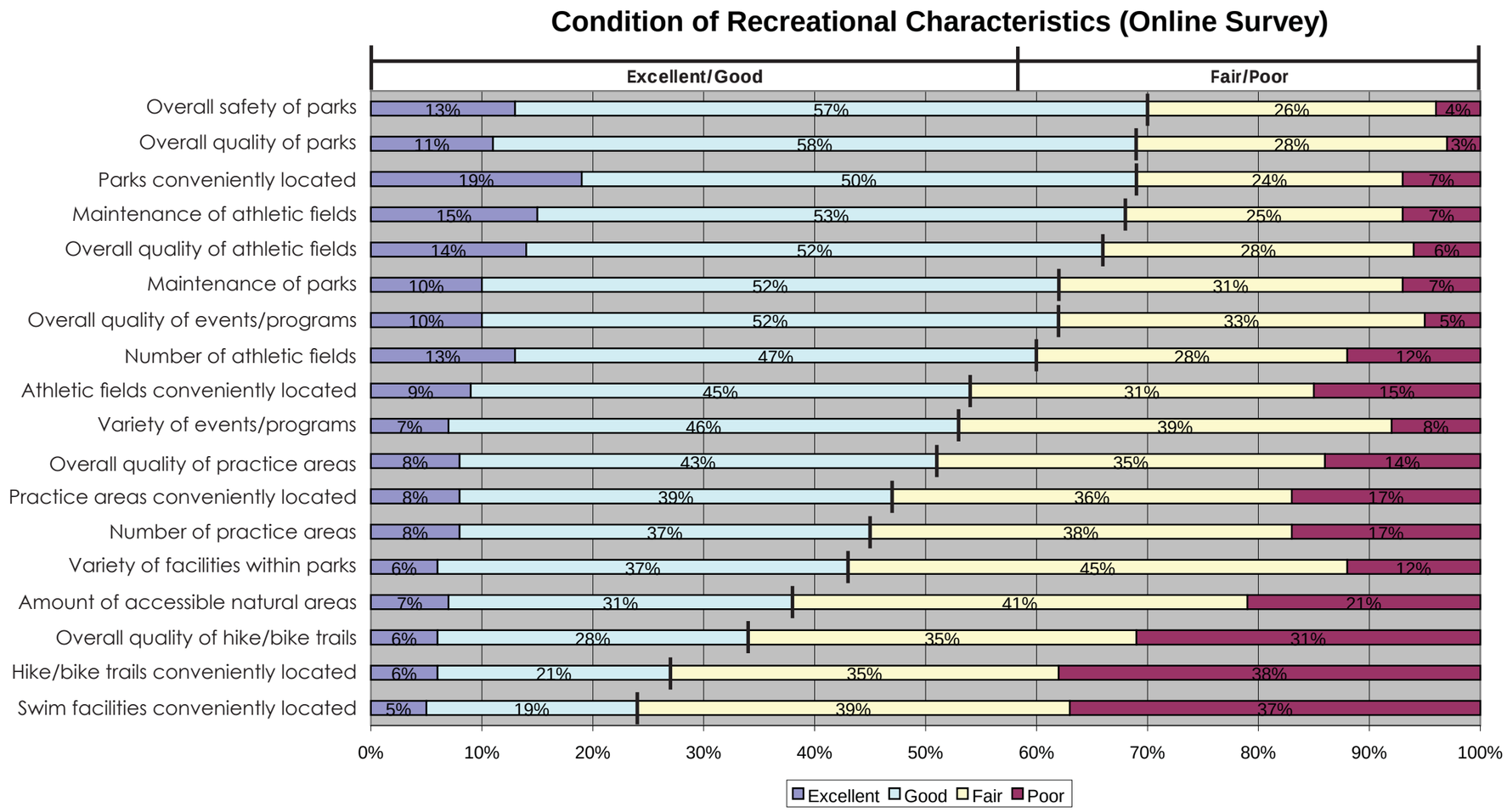
The majority of residents feel that the overall quality, safety and maintenance of parks in Norman is either excellent or good. One surprising finding from this question is that having hike and bike trails conveniently located was the lowest rated item. This again shows the strong desire by residents to have a connected, citywide hike and bike trails system. Other key areas that did not rate as well are the number of practice areas, the amount of natural areas, and having swim facilities conveniently located to all residents.

Condition of Recreational Characteristics (Mail-out Survey)



Condition of Recreational Characteristics

The online survey results closely mirror those of the mail-out survey. Again, the overall quality of hike and bike trails, as well as having hike and bike trails conveniently located, were both rated very low. Only 34% of residents feel that the overall quality of hike and bike trails is either excellent or good, and 27% of residents feel that the location of hike and bike trails is either excellent or good. Again this demonstrates a strong desire for more hike and bike trails throughout the City.



Student Survey Results

Why use a student survey - Students and the youth in a community are often times the primary users of parks. Since this segment of the population frequently utilizes parks and recreation facilities, they often have valuable suggestions on ways to improve them. Children and teens are likely to have a keen insight about what needs to be improved, what amenities are lacking, and what facilities are the most enjoyable to them as compared to their adult counterparts. Since they are the portion of the population that spends much of their leisure time in parks, their opinions and suggestions are extremely relevant and important.

Survey Methodology - A two page survey was distributed to the 4th, 7th and 10th grade students of Norman Public Schools. Individual classroom teachers distributed the survey to the students who were asked to answer each question honestly. A total of 2,056 surveys were returned.

Location of students - Surveys were received from many schools in the Norman Public Schools system. The percentage of respondents from each school is shown below.

Norman High	17%	Adams Elementary	3%
Norman North High	11%	Madison Elementary	3%
Whittier Middle	10%	Roosevelt Elementary	3%
Longfellow Middle	8%	Kennedy Elementary	3%
Irving Middle	8%	Jefferson Elementary	3%
Alcott Middle	5%	McKinley Elementary	3%
Truman Elementary	5%	Monroe Elementary	2%
Washington Elementary	4%	Lincoln Elementary	2%
Eisenhower Elementary	4%	Lakeview Elementary	1%
Cleveland Elementary	4%	Wilson Elementary	1%
		Jackson Elementary	1%

Reasons for Satisfaction with parks in Norman - Students were asked what they most like about parks in Norman. This was an open-ended question where students could write any answer they wanted. Some of the more popular answers include: swings/slides/equipment with an 18% response rate; fun/active/running/exercise (12%); toys/playgrounds (10%); clean/well maintained/safe/quiet (9%); nature/trees/wildlife/beauty (7%); open space/fields/no fencing (6%); and events/activities (5%).

Reasons for Dissatisfaction with parks in Norman - Students were also asked the open-ended question regarding what they do not like about parks in Norman. Some of the most common responses include: trash/dog droppings/no recycling bins with an 18% response rate; broken equipment (12%); crowded/noisy/too small (8%); and bad behavior/gangs/unsafe (7%). With minor upgrades and renovations to the parks, such as upgrading playground equipment and providing more trash bins/recycling bins, two of the primary reasons for dissatisfaction can be addressed.

Favorite Park in Norman - Students were asked what their favorite park in Norman was. The six most popular parks with the percentage of students who chose that park are shown below.

Reaves Park	33%
Andrews Park	28%
Lions Park	8%
Westwood Park	7%
Brookhaven	5%
Griffin Park	3%

What do you do in parks - The students were given a list of various activities that are offered or provided in the parks in Norman. They were then asked to choose all the activities they normally participate in when they visit a park. Playgrounds, active sports, using trails and swimming were the top four activities. Their responses are shown below.

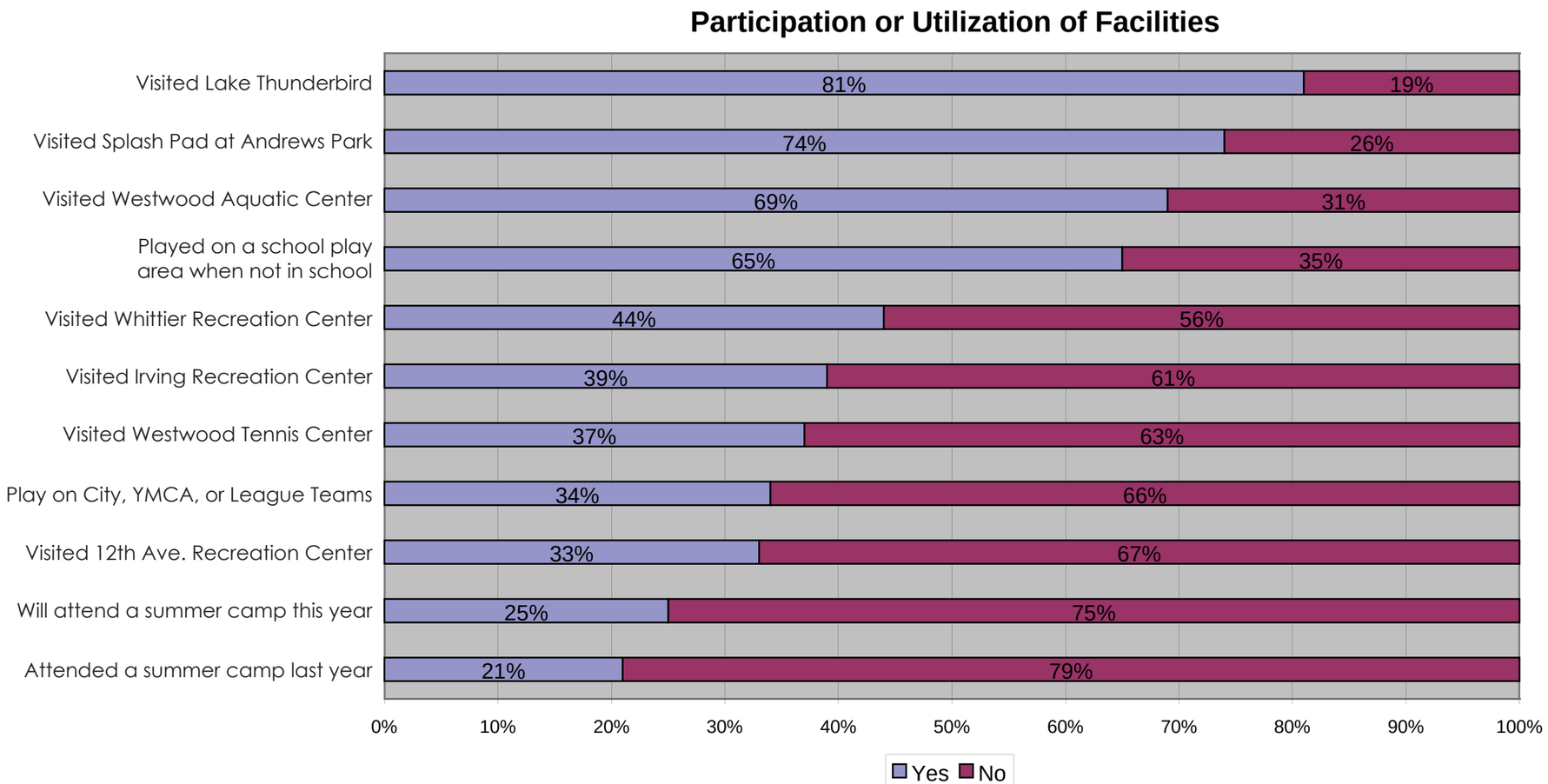
Meet with friends	66%
Play on a playground	65%
Play baseball, soccer or football	48%
Enjoy nature	43%
Walk/run on trails	42%
Go swimming	36%
Family activity such as picnic	33%
Play basketball or volleyball	32%
Other	19%
Skateboard	17%

What do you like to do at Lake Thunderbird - Students were asked if they have ever visited Lake Thunderbird State Park (those results are shown on the opposite page). Of those who said yes, they were then asked what activities they like to do while visiting Lake Thunderbird. The answers and the percentage of students who chose that activity are shown below.

Swimming	57%
Boating	54%
Fishing	50%
Other	40%
Picnicking	35%

Participation or Utilization of Specific Facilities

Students were given a list of various facilities throughout the City and asked if they have visited or utilized those facilities in the past 12 months. The most heavily utilized facility was Lake Thunderbird State Park with 81% of students indicating they have been to the lake in the past year. The second most utilized facility was the splash pad at Andrews Park with 74% indicating they have utilized it. This was followed by the Westwood Aquatic Center as the third most utilized facility with 69% indicating they have visited the center in the past 12 months. A large amount had also visited the Whittier and Irving Recreation Centers.



Sports teams - For the students who answered that they have played on a sports team in the past 12 months, they were then asked which sports they played. Their responses are shown below along with the percentage of students who chose that sport.

Soccer	37%
Basketball	36%
Other	35%
Baseball	22%
Swimming	19%
Softball	18%
Tennis	13%

School Play Areas - If the student chose yes when asked if they had played on a school play area after school or on the weekends, they were then asked which school. Their responses are shown below.

Truman	16%
Cleveland	9%
Eisenhower	8%
Irving	6%
McKinley	6%
Monroe	6%
Jackson	5%
Kennedy	5%

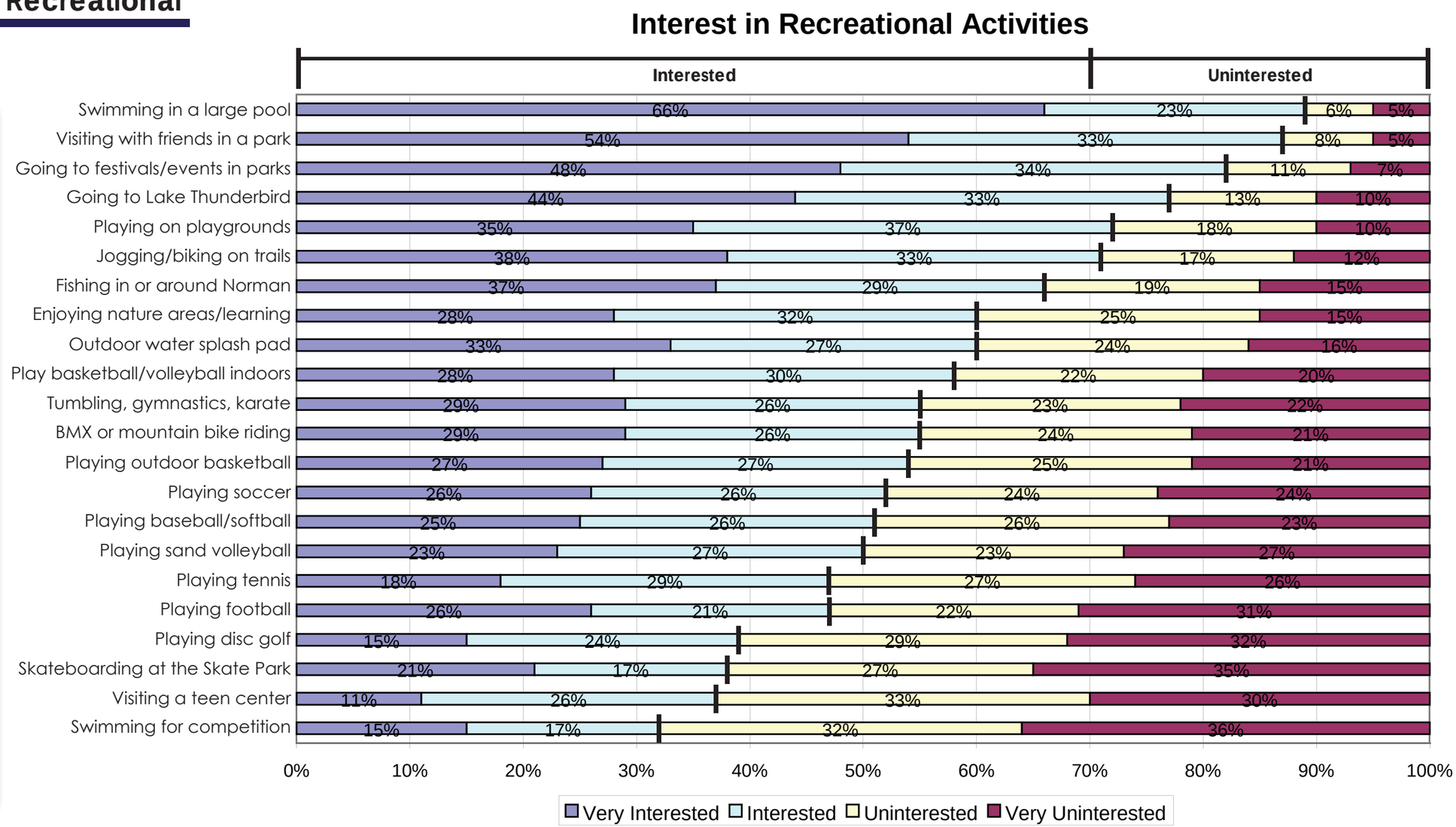
Interest in Various Recreational Activities

The students were given a list of various recreational activities that could be offered by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department. They were then asked to indicate their level of interest in each activity. Their responses are shown in the bar graph to the right.

The number one activity was swimming in a large pool with lots of fun things to do. 89% of all students were either interested or very interested in this activity. This activity also received the highest amount of students indicating they were very interested. A very high 66% said they were very interested.

The second highest rated activity was visiting with friends in a park. This response is common among students who often view parks as social gathering places.

The third highest activity that students are interested in was going to festivals or events in parks. Again, the students view parks as places to gather and be social, so providing activities for them to do while there is important.



Single Most Favorite Recreational Activity - The students were then asked to write the one activity that they would consider being their favorite from the previous list. Their responses vary somewhat from the previous question. Swimming in a large pool with lots of fun things to do was still the highest rated activity with 18% of students listing this as their favorite.

The next three highest rated activities are sports: soccer (9%); baseball or softball (8%); and football (8%). Even though these were rated 14th, 15th, and 18th respectively on the previous question dealing with level of interest, students still listed them as their favorite activity.

The top six responses are shown below.

Swimming in a large pool	18%
Playing soccer	9%
Playing baseball/softball	8%
Playing football	8%
Going to Lake Thunderbird	6%
Visiting with friends at a park	6%

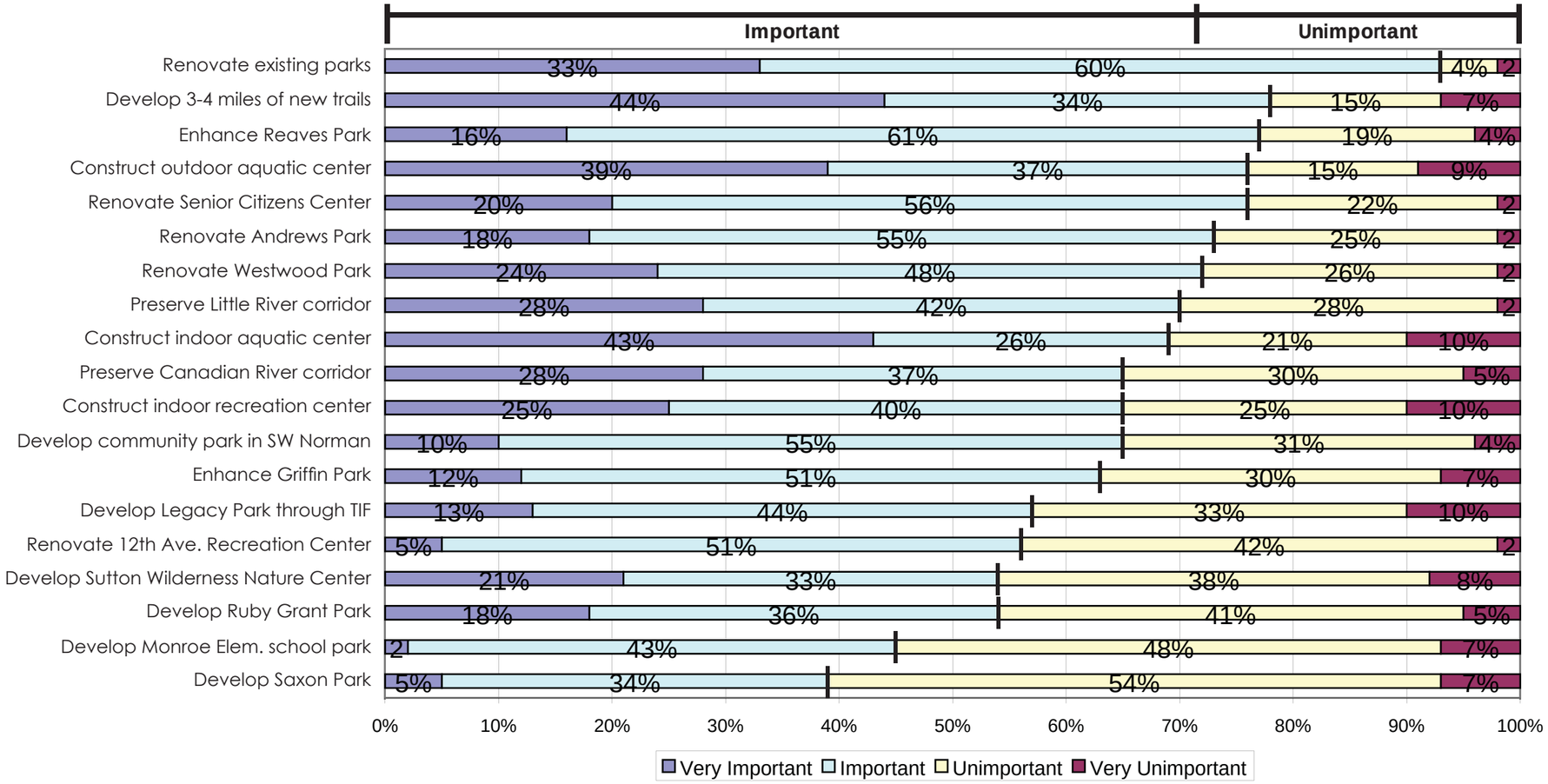
Reasons for Not Participating in Activities - The final question on the student survey asked students what are the main reasons why they do not participate in their favorite recreation activities. They were asked to choose all applicable reasons from a list given and to write in any additional reasons they might have. Their responses are shown below. Lack of access and cost related issues were the most common responses.

No place for that sport or activity near where I live	36%
Hard to get a ride to that activity or sport	30%
That sport or activity is too expensive	26%
I don't have the right equipment for that activity	22%
I prefer to do indoor activities like video games/watch TV	18%
I prefer to play at my house instead of at a park	16%

Open House Questionnaire Results

Potential recommendations of this master plan were presented at an open house in August, 2009. Along with the presentation, the residents were asked to answer a questionnaire which asked how important or unimportant they thought each recommendation was. The results are shown below. Renovation of existing parks received the highest level of importance with 93% of residents indicating it was either important or very important.

Importance of Master Plan Recommendations



Most Important Actions

The residents were then asked to write which three of the previous recommendations were the most important to them. The results of this question were different then the previous one. Approximately 70 people attended the open house/public meeting; and the construction of an indoor aquatic center received the highest level of importance with 43% of the meeting attendees listing this recommendation as the most important to them. However on the previous question, the construction of an indoor aquatic center was ranked nine out of nineteen recommendations in terms of importance.

The top ten recommendations that meeting attendees wrote as important to them are listed below.

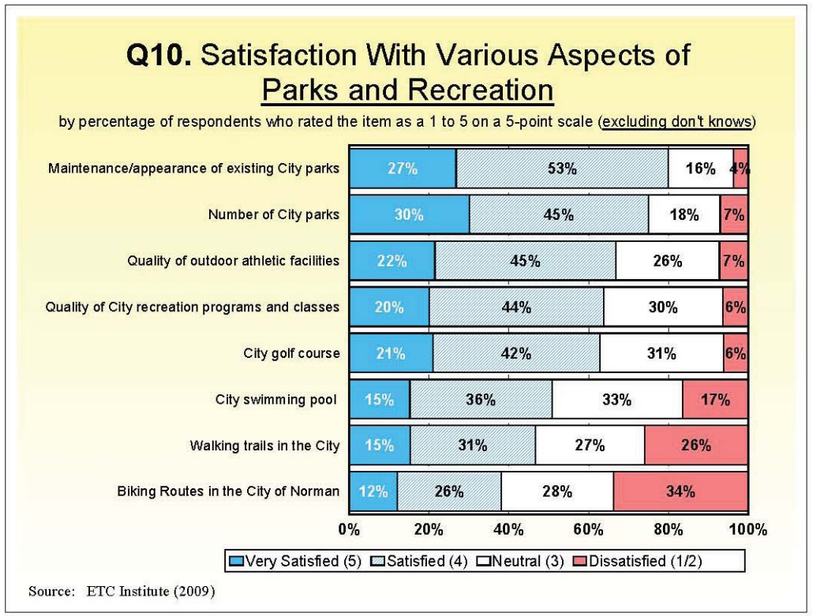
1) Construct indoor aquatic center	43%
2) Construct outdoor aquatic center	32%
3) Construct 3-4 miles of trails	23%
4) Develop Ruby Grant Park	18%
5) Renovate Westwood Park	18%
6) Preserve Little River corridor	18%
7) Preserve Canadian River corridor	18%
8) Construct indoor rec center	11%
9) Renovate existing parks	11%
10) Develop Sutton Wilderness	11%

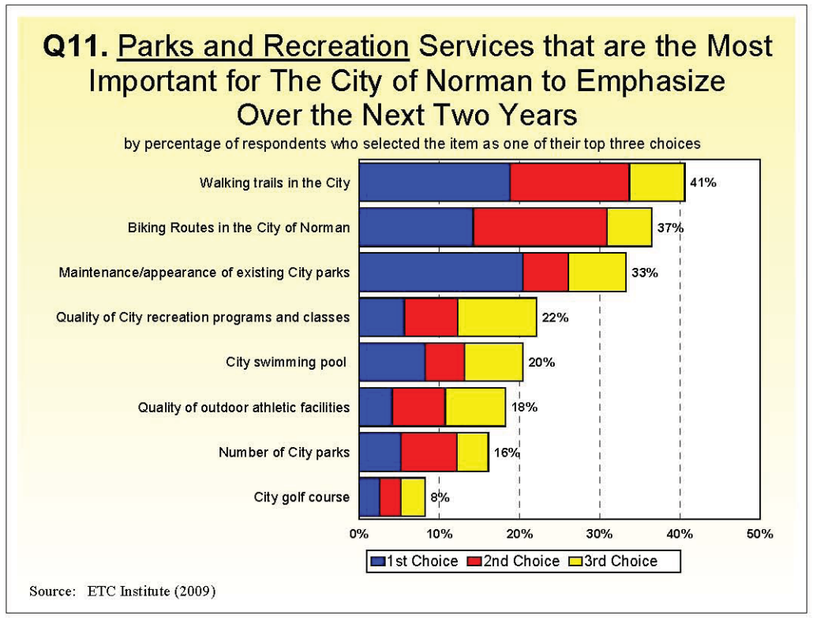
2009 Norman Community Survey

The following graphs and survey results are from the final report of the 2009 Community Survey that was conducted in July 2009. The seven page mail-out survey asked residents a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with services that the City provides. One of those services is parks and recreation programs and facilities. To the right and on the following pages are results from the 2009 Community Survey regarding only parks and recreation questions.

Residents were given a list of different aspects of parks and recreation in Norman, and asked how satisfied they were with each aspect. The maintenance and appearance of existing parks received the highest level of satisfaction, with 80% of residents indicating they were either very satisfied or satisfied. The results are shown below for the level of satisfaction for various recreation considerations in Norman.

Residents of Norman were also asked what parks and recreation services they feel were the most important for the City to emphasize over the next two years. The aspect that received the highest level of importance was walking trails in the City with 41% of residents indicating this as one of their top three choices. The second highest aspect was biking routes with 37% of residents indicating this was also one of their top three choices. Both of these suggest that residents of Norman want to be able to have places to ride or walk for pleasure or for commuting throughout the City.





Importance - Satisfaction Rating

The 2009 Community Survey included a ranking of the most important parks and recreation issues. The survey derived these rankings by evaluating both level of importance (how important that particular item was to the respondent) and the respondents' lack of satisfaction with that item. The survey ratings largely concur and reinforce the public input findings of this Master Plan.

Importance-Satisfaction Rating

Norman, OK

Parks and Recreation

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Very High Priority (IS >.20)						
Biking Routes in the City of Norman	37%	2	38%	8	0.2259	**1**
Walking trails in the City	41%	1	47%	7	0.2164	**2**
High Priority (IS .10-.20)						
City swimming pool	20%	5	51%	6	0.1004	**3**
Medium Priority (IS <.10)						
Quality of City recreation programs and classes	22%	4	64%	4	0.0800	**4**
Maintenance/appearance of existing City parks	33%	3	80%	1	0.0666	**5**
Quality of outdoor athletic facilities	18%	6	67%	3	0.0602	**6**
Number of City parks	16%	7	75%	2	0.0403	**7**
City golf course	8%	8	63%	5	0.0305	**8**

Note: The I-S Rating is calculated by multiplying the "Most Important" % by (1-'Satisfaction' %)

Most Important %: The "Most Important" percentage represents the sum of the first, second and third most important responses for each item. Respondents were asked to identify the items they thought were the most important for the City to emphasize over the next two years.

Satisfaction %: The "Satisfaction" percentage represents the sum of the ratings "4" and "5" excluding 'don't knows.' Respondents ranked their level of satisfaction with the each of the items on a scale of 1 to 5 with "5" being very satisfied and "1" being very dissatisfied.

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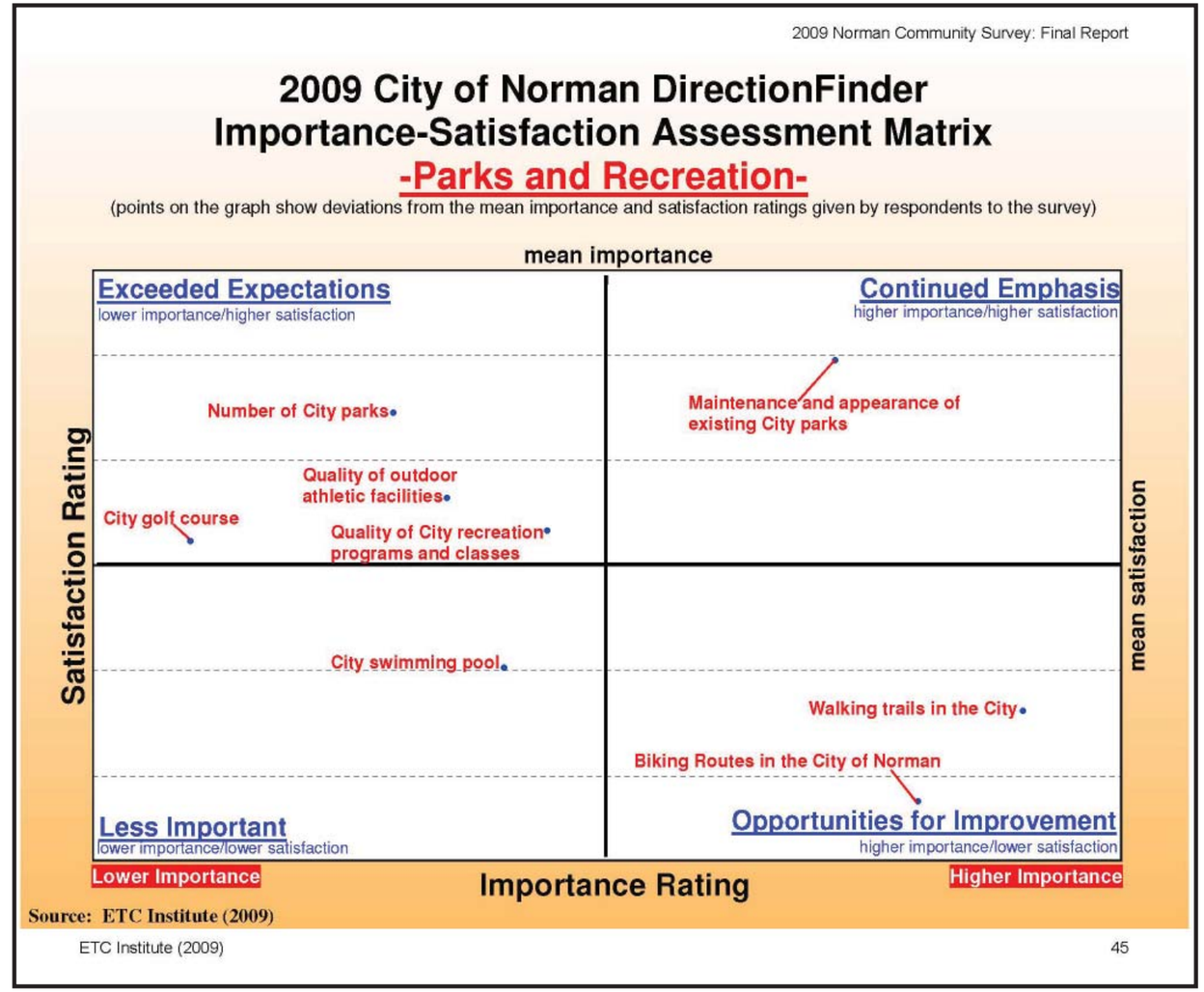
This matrix provides a visual graphing of the Importance - Satisfaction Rating that was just discussed. The importance level is used as the x-axis and the satisfaction level is used as the y-axis. Each park and recreation aspect is then plotted on the graph.



Chapter 5

Assessment of Norman's Park Needs

Chapter 5

Assessment of Norman's Park Needs

"The right of children to play, to sing and to dance; the right of youth to sport for sports sake; the right of men and women to use leisure in the pursuit of happiness in their own way, are basic to our American heritage."

Harry S. Truman

Assessment of Norman's Needs

Norman is evolving and changing daily as is the world around us. Our interests evolve, new technologies and activities are created, and major events shape our futures. All of these changes have long term impacts on parks and recreation needs in Norman. The Needs Assessment compares the state of the city today with the parks and recreation facilities that will be needed in the future. The assessment of what deficiencies exist in the parks and recreation system today is vital so that actions can be developed to address immediate deficiencies. It is also important to project potential future needs and develop a plan of actions to address these needs. The Needs Assessment is effectively the most critical component of the parks and recreation master planning effort.

Three techniques are used in evaluating the City of Norman's current and future park needs. These three methods are:

- Level of Service-based assessment, using locally developed level of service for facilities;
- Demand-based assessment, using actual and/or anticipated growth data;
- Resource-based assessment, using assessments of unique physical features in Norman.

All three techniques are important in their own way, but individually do not represent the entire story. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three techniques in a combined manner to determine what types of parks and recreation facilities are needed in Norman. Ultimately, these needs are vetted by the citizens of Norman and are determined to best represent the key parks and recreational needs of the City.

Level of Service-Based Assessment

Uses target level of service established by the local jurisdiction, in this case the City of Norman, to determine the quantity of park facilities required to meet the City's needs. These target levels of service usually are expressed as the quantity of park facilities needed to adequately serve every 1,000 citizens of Norman, or at a given ratio of each facility to a certain number of residents.

These targets are established to provide the level of service that the particular jurisdiction believes is most responsive to the amount of use and the interest of its citizens. This plan establishes individual City specific levels of service for Norman.

Demand-Based Assessment

Uses participation rates, league usage, and citizen input to determine how much the population uses and desires different types of recreation facilities.

Resource-Based Assessment

The third method is based on the usefulness of available physical resources to provide recreation opportunities. Examples of resources include the Canadian River, Little River and Lake Thunderbird.

Standards Based Assessment (LOS)

Many recreation needs assessments use national guidelines and standards to determine what their facility needs should be. It is important to recognize that national standards are simply guidelines or benchmarks that are intended to serve as a starting point for park planning. Each city has its own unique geographic, demographic, and socio-economic composition, and as such the arbitrary application of national standards would not necessarily meet the need of that particular community. These standards are typically no longer used to project facility needs since they are based on a "one size fits all" type of evaluation.

Rather, this Master Plan methodology utilizes the existing level of service in the City as a starting point and determines whether that level of service is adequate, or whether it needs to be increased or decreased. Extensive public input is used to determine how to adjust the current level of service, as well as the anticipated growth of the City, and what parts of Norman are well served and which parts are not. Local needs and desires are used to mold these guidelines to meet the expectations of the citizens of Norman in a realistic manner.

Three types of level of service determinations are made as shown below.

Spatial Level of Service - Defines the acres of parkland needed, and are usually expressed as a ratio of park acreage to population.

Facility Level of Service - Defines the number of facilities recommended serving each particular recreation need. Facility standards are usually expressed as a ratio of units of a particular facility per population size. For example, a facility standard for a recreation center might be one square foot for every resident of the city.

Development Guideline Standards - Defines the exact spatial and dimensional requirements for a specific recreation area or facility. A neighborhood park, for example, might be required to have a playground, a basketball court, and a picnic pavilion. These are described in both Chapter 3 and this Chapter.

Target Park Acreage Levels of Service

The purpose of spatial levels of service for parks and recreational areas is to ensure that sufficient area is allocated for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. They allow a city to plan ahead so that parkland can be targeted and acquired before it is developed. These spatial standards are expressed as the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 inhabitants. Typical spatial levels of service for the southwest United States region in general are shown below.

Home Based Parks

- **Neighborhood Parks** - Varies from 1/2 acre for every 1,000 residents to over 4 acres per 1,000 residents in cities that focus extensively on their small park network.
- **Community Parks** - Varies from less than 2 acres per 1,000 residents to over 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Typical range is between 3 and 4 acres for every 1,000 residents.
- **Close to Home Parks** - Varies from less than 3 acres for every 1,000 residents to over 12 acres per 1,000 residents in a few cities. The typical range is approximately 4 to 5 acres.

Other Parks/Open Space

- **Metropolitan/Regional Parks** - Varies from 5 to over 30 acres per 1,000 residents. In some cities, large greenbelts or open space areas may distort this number.
- **Special Purpose Parks** - These vary greatly depending on the characteristics of each city, and typically have no general target level of service.
- **Linear Parks/Linkage Parks** - Varies considerably from less than 1 acre to over 20 acres per 1,000 residents.
- **Open Space Preserves** - Varies considerably from less than 1 acre to over 50 acres per 1,000 residents depending on how open space is classified. For example, the surface area of a lake, while not accessible to anyone without a boat, could alter the ratio of open space in a city.

Neighborhood Parks in Norman

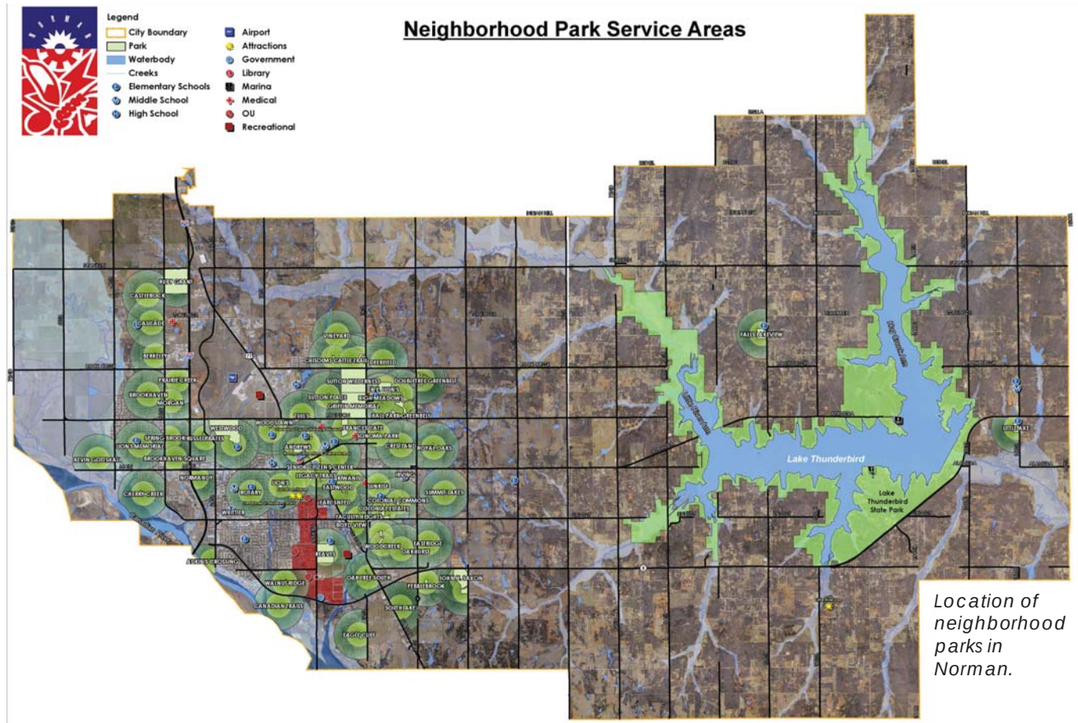
Neighborhood parks are typically centrally located in a neighborhood or central to the several smaller neighborhoods it serves. Ideally a neighborhood park would be 2 to 10 acres in size, and serve no more than 2,000 to 4,000 residents. They should be integrated into the community in a prominent manner and not layered in as an afterthought.

A pocket park is a type of neighborhood park that serves a smaller number of residents and is therefore smaller in size. They are typically less than one acre in size and provide public gathering places for residents. For the purpose of this section, pocket parks are included with neighborhood parks.

Prominence of neighborhood parks reflects the importance of having them as centerpieces of a neighborhood. The recommended target level of service goal is 2.5 acres of neighborhood parks for 1,000 residents.

Norman currently has 282.7 acres of City-owned neighborhood parks, yielding an existing level of service of 2.52 acres of neighborhood parkland for every 1,000 residents, or 1 acre for every 397 residents of the City. Future needs of neighborhood parks to meet the target level of service are summarized below.

Brookhaven Park and Lions Park are two examples of neighborhood parks in Norman.



Location of neighborhood parks in Norman.

Existing Neighborhood Park Level of Service

Recommended Level of Service - 2.5 acres per every 1,000 residents

Neighborhood Parks in Norman
- ► Current acres - 282.7 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 2.52 acres per 1,000 residents
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 100.4%

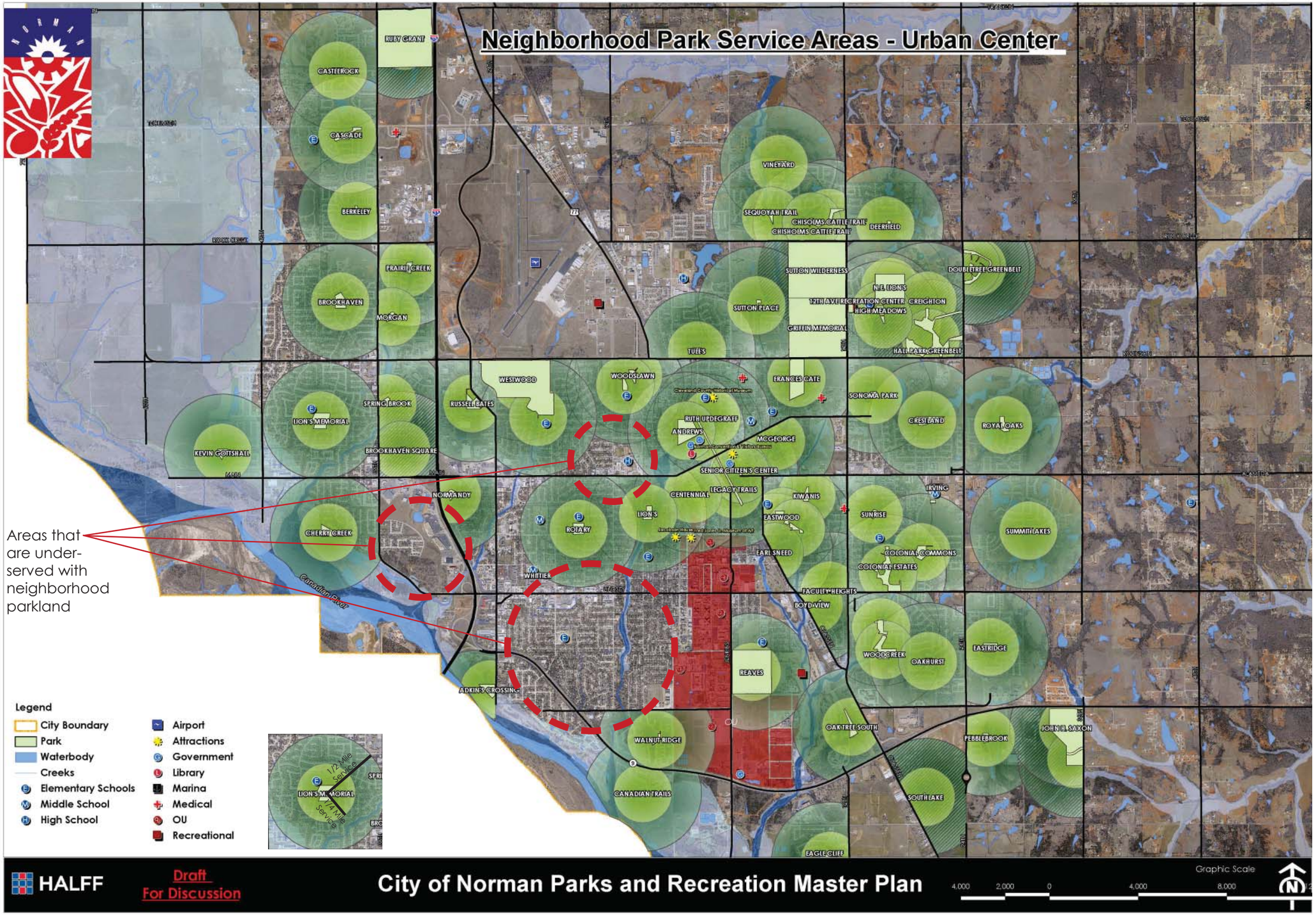
Neighborhood Parks (Surplus or Deficit)

Recommended Level of Service - 2.5 acres per every 1,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 281 acres, a surplus 0.9 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 300 acres, a deficit of 18 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 321 acres, a deficit of 39 acres (because of Norman's Parkland Dedication Ordinance, this deficit will be met with new development).

Neighborhood Park Distribution

Since neighborhood parks serve as a central gathering place for neighborhood residents, accessibility is a critical component of these parks more so than any other type of park. As discussed earlier, the maximum service area for a neighborhood park is 1/2 mile, excluding areas opposite a major collector or arterial road. The ultimate preferred service area is 1/4 mile, this goal will result in smaller neighborhood parks that are more accessible throughout Norman. Note that for the purpose of access, every park in Norman is considered as the "neighborhood" park for the areas close to the park.

The maps on this page and the following page illustrate the distribution and service areas for neighborhood parks in Norman.



Location of neighborhood parks in Norman (note that community parks may also provide benefits to nearby residential areas).

The much lower density of residential areas in the rural sectors of Norman does not require neighborhood parks at this time. Area park facilities should be provided at all schools and at larger community parks.

Priority Needs for additional neighborhood parks:

- In new neighborhoods - very high (continue to add as development occurs).
- In existing developed areas - low except for underserved areas shown on the map.

Community Parks in Norman

Community parks are large parks that serve several neighborhoods or a portion of a city. They serve as locations for larger community events, sports and activities; therefore they contain many popular recreation and support facilities. Because of the larger service area and additional programs, community parks are more heavily used, increasing the potential for facility deterioration.

The additional facilities associated with a community park increase the spatial requirements necessary for a community park. The recommended standard for community parks is 6 acres per 1,000 residents.

Norman currently has 512.1 acres of community parkland, yielding an existing level of service of 4.6 acres per 1,000 residents, or one acre for every 219 residents of the City. Based on the recommended standard, the City is meeting two-thirds of the recommended standard for community parkland.

Andrews Park, Griffin Memorial Park and Little Axe Park are examples of community parks in Norman.

Existing Community Park Level of Service

Recommended Level of Service - 6 acres per every 1,000 residents

Community Parks in Norman
- ► Current acres - 512.1 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 4.6 acres per 1,000 residents (for all community parks including the undeveloped community parks)
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 76.6%

Community Parks (Surplus or Deficit)

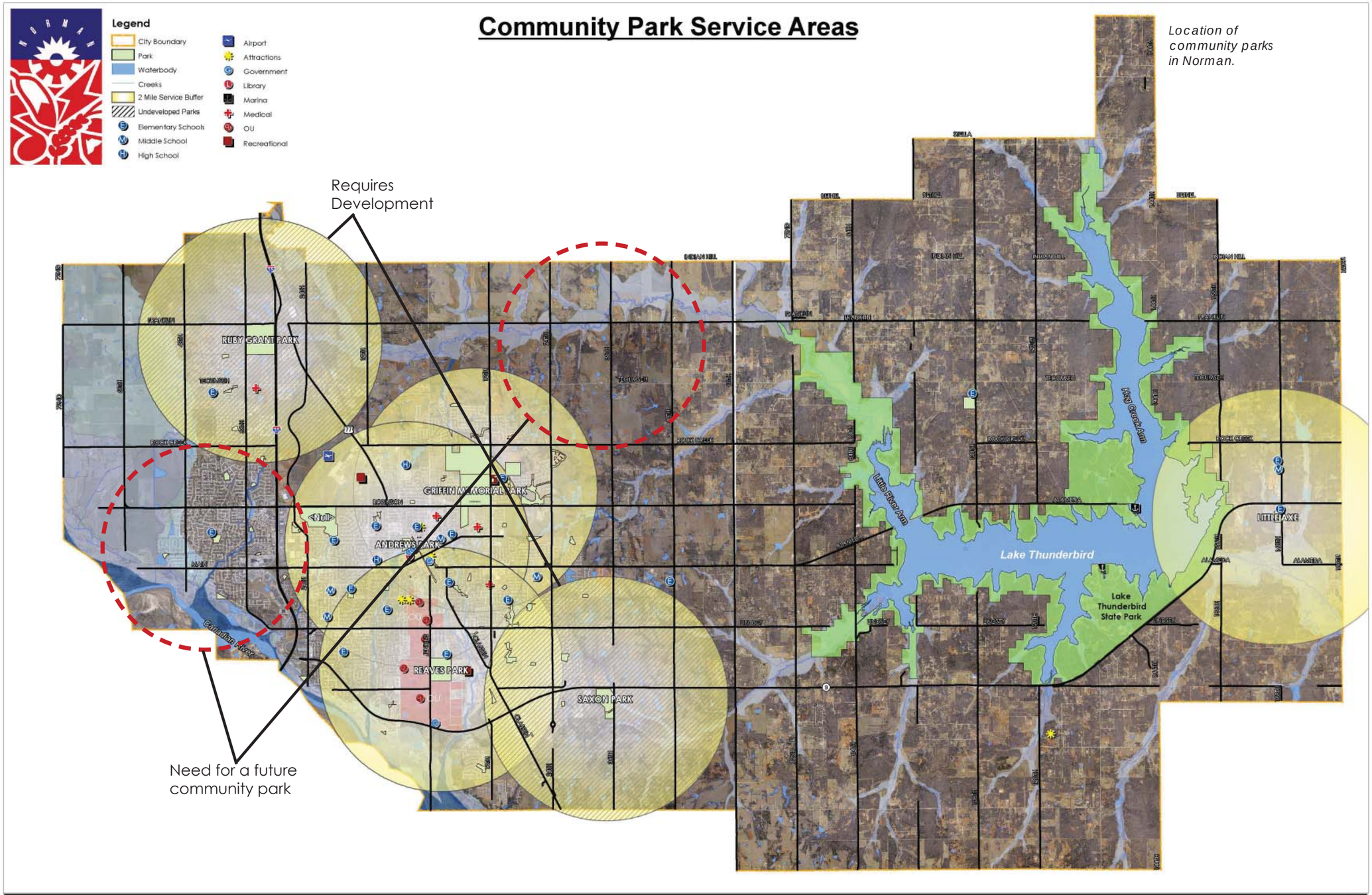
Recommended Level of Service - 6 acres per every 1,000 residents

- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 674 acres, a deficit of 162 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 721 acres, a deficit of 209 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 770 acres, a deficit of 258 acres (deficit assumes that no new community parkland will be acquired).

Community Park Distribution

As mentioned, community parks serve a larger portion of the community. Since they are typically accessed by car, a service area for a community park is 2 miles.

The map on the following page illustrates the distribution and service areas for community parks in Norman.


Community Park Service Areas
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
2 Mile Service Buffer
Undeveloped Parks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
Location of community parks in Norman.
Requires Development
Need for a future community park
RUBY GRANT PARK
GRIFFIN MEMORIAL PARK
ANDREWS PARK
REAVES PARK
SAXON PARK
LITTLE AXE
Lake Thunderbird
Lake Thunderbird State Park
Hog Creek Arm
Little River Arm
Canadian River
HALFF
Draft
For Discussion
City of Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Graphic Scale
4,000 2,000 0 4,000 8,000 12,000
Feet

Other Types of Parks

Other types of parks that respond to specific physical conditions in the city or to specific needs are also part of the Norman park system. These include special purpose parks such as golf courses or aquatic centers; linear or linkage parks; regional parks; and open space or natural preserves.

Special Purpose Parks in Norman

Special purpose parks are areas designated for a special purpose such as golf courses, sports complexes, aquatic centers, plazas, or downtown courtyards. Westwood Park and Sutton Wilderness are designated as special purpose parks in Norman, totaling 289.9 acres in size.

Because special purpose parks vary by size, type and from city to city, there is no specific standard or recommended level of service.

Existing Special Purpose Park LOS

Recommended Level of Service - varies by city/park

Special Purpose Parks in Norman
- ► Current acres - 289.9 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 2.58 acres per 1,000 residents

Westwood Park is an example of a special purpose park in Norman.

Linear Parks in Norman

Norman currently has three areas that are designated as linear parks or greenbelts. **The most recognizable linear park corridor in Norman is the Legacy Trail corridor. The other two include Doubletree Greenbelt and Hall Park Greenbelt.** Norman will benefit from linear parks if they are associated with creeks and can fulfill the purpose of flood protection and open space/habitat preservation, as well as provide opportunities for trails. Opportunities for linear parks exist along creeks, drainage corridors, utility corridors and right-of-ways that traverse the City. Linear parks can connect parks and key areas of the City such as schools, and are relatively inexpensive to develop. The recommended beginning level of service for linear parks is 2 acres for every 1,000 residents.

Existing Linear Park Level of Service

Recommended Level of Service - 2 acres per every 1,000 residents

Linear Parks in Norman
- ► Current acres - 56.0 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 0.50 acres per 1,000 residents
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 25%

Linear Parks (Surplus or Deficit)

Recommended Level of Service - 2 acres per every 1,000 residents

- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 225 acres, a deficit of 169 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 240 acres, a deficit of 184 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 257 acres, a deficit of 201 acres.

Regional Parks in Norman

Regional parks are larger parks within a 30 minute to 1 hour driving distance that serve the entire region and surrounding communities. Like community parks, they serve as locations for larger community events, sports, and activities. There is only one regional park in Norman which is owned by the State of Oklahoma, the Lake Thunderbird State Park. The total land area surrounding the lake that is designated as parkland/open space is 7,117.58 acres. The water surface area of Lake Thunderbird is 5,496.50 acres.

Because regional parks are usually accessed by car, the regional park in Norman serves the entire City and all residents. Greenbelt corridors along the Little River corridor and the Canadian River corridor could serve as future regional parks for Norman.

Existing Regional Park Level of Service

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

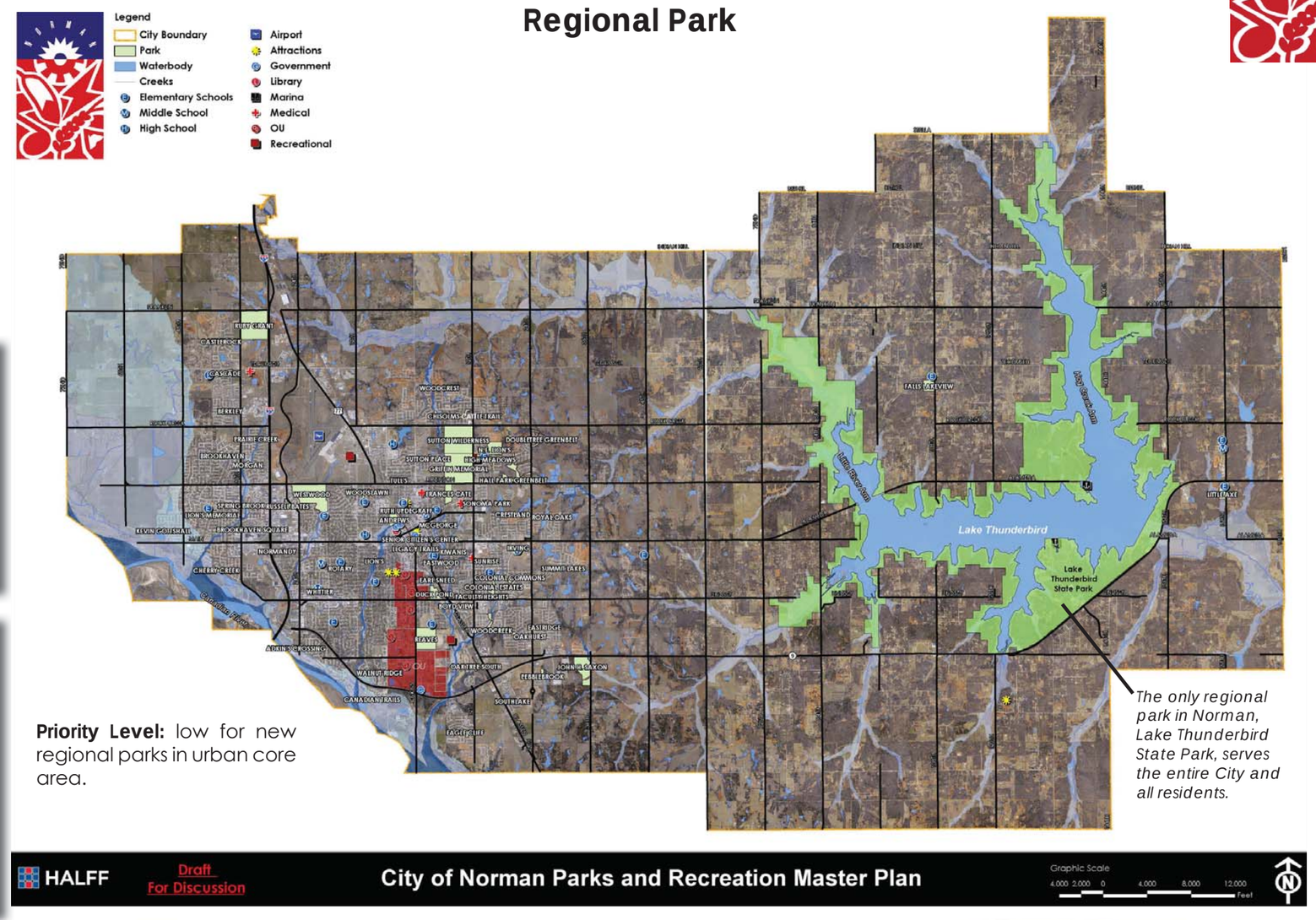
Regional Parks in Norman
- ► Current acres - 7,117.58 acres (land only)
- ► Current Level of Service - 63.35 acres per 1,000 residents
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 317%

Regional Parks (Surplus or Deficit)

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 2,247 acres, a surplus of 4,870 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 2,403 acres, a surplus of 4,715 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 2,568 acres, a surplus of 4,550 acres.

Regional Park



Priority Level: low for new regional parks in urban core area.

The only regional park in Norman, Lake Thunderbird State Park, serves the entire City and all residents.

Open Space in Norman

Existing open space in Norman includes the Sutton Wilderness, all undeveloped parkland such as Ruby Grant Park and John H. Saxon Park, and the land area surrounding Lake Thunderbird. Because the open space acreage surrounding Lake Thunderbird is so large, the level of service for open space may appear to be misleading. Therefore the level of service is shown when including Lake Thunderbird and when excluding Lake Thunderbird. The acreage when Lake Thunderbird is excluded gives a more realistic assessment of the accessible and "urban" open space that is actually located within the populated areas of Norman.

The preservation of some portions of the John H. Saxon Park and Ruby Grant Park sites, even after they are developed, can provide significant additional open space preserves for Norman.

Existing Open Space Level of Service

Including Lake Thunderbird

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

Open Space in Norman
- ► Current acres - 7,570.1 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 67.38 acres per 1,000 residents
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 337%

Existing Open Space Level of Service

Excluding Lake Thunderbird

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

Open Space in Norman
- ► Current acres - 210 acres
- ► Current Level of Service - 1.87 acres per 1,000 residents
- ► % of Recommended Level of Service - 9.35%

Open Space (Surplus or Deficit)

Including Lake Thunderbird

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

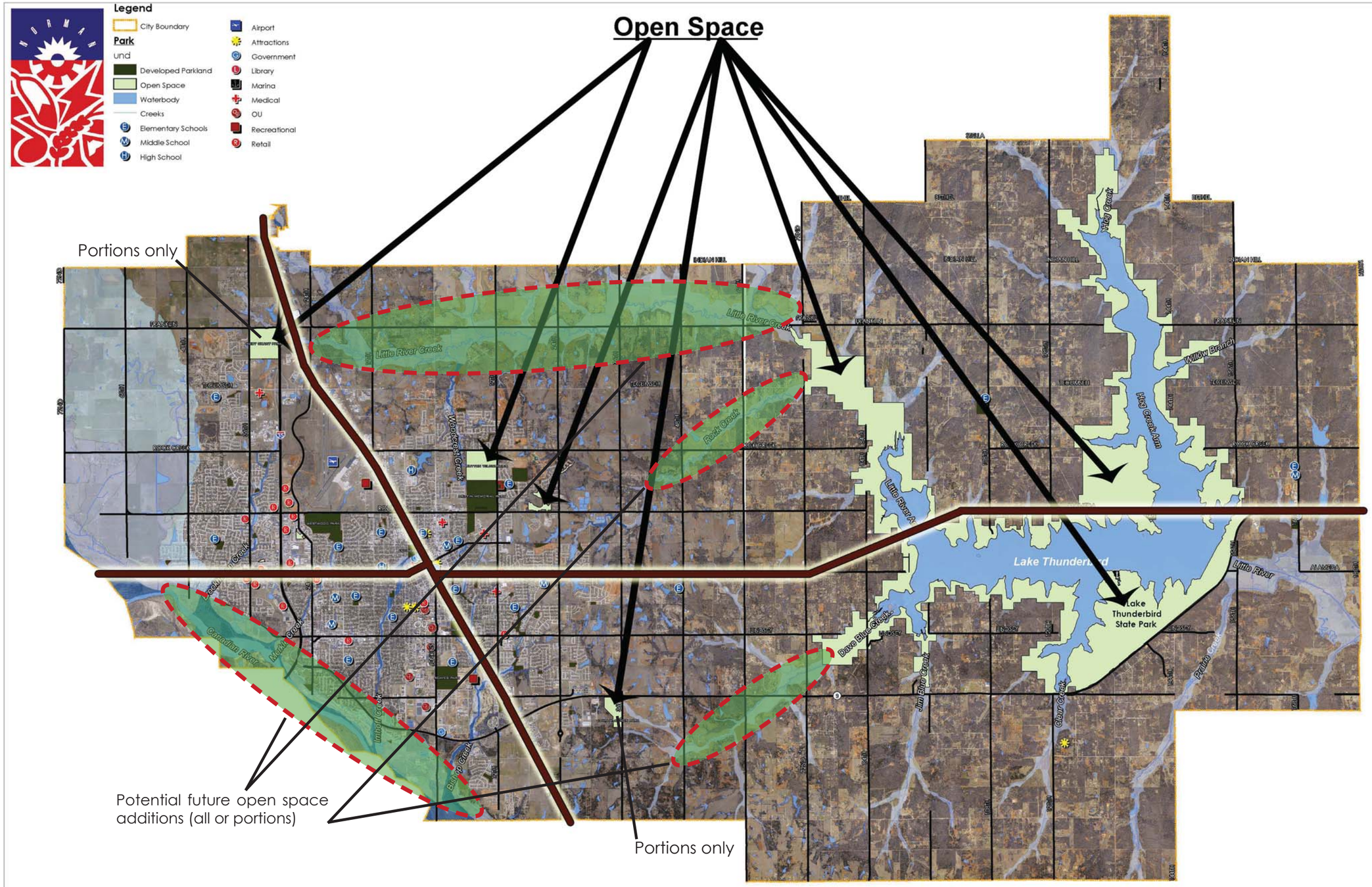
- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 2,247 acres, a surplus of 5,353 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 2,403 acres, a surplus of 5,167 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 2,568 acres, a surplus of 5,002 acres.

Open Space (Surplus or Deficit)

Excluding Lake Thunderbird

Recommended Level of Service - 20 acres per every 1,000 residents

- ► Current 2009 need with 112,345 population - Target of 2,247 acres, a deficit of 2,037 acres.
- ► Year 2015 need with 120,152 population - Target of 2,403 acres, a deficit of 2,193 acres.
- ► Year 2020 need with 128,404 population - Target of 2,568 acres, a deficit of 2,358 acres.



Location of existing and potential open space in Norman.

Priority Level: very high for ongoing permanent preservation as feasible.

Planning for Future Parkland Needs in Norman

Land banking needs to be considered crucial, and ensure that the acquisition of parkland is in a consistent and goal oriented manner. Based upon park acreage standards developed from this master plan, the target level of service for total parkland is 30.5 acres per 1,000 residents. However, this includes the recommended target for regional parkland, and the acreage amount would be skewed if Lake Thunderbird State Park was included. Therefore the target level of service for close in parkland, not including regional parkland, is 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The steps needed to ensure that the adequate amount of parkland is acquired are as follows:

- Currently there is an overall deficit of 20 acres of parkland.
- By the year 2015, an additional 102 acres of combined neighborhood and community parkland will need to be acquired to continue to meet the target level of service.
- By the year 2020, an additional 188 acres of combined neighborhood and community parkland will need to be acquired to meet the target level of service.

Although large areas of Norman are still undeveloped, development is happening and a rigorous effort should be made to continue to acquire sufficient land for future park needs. Various options are availalbe to acquire land including existing vacant land, land subject to flooding along the creeks and drainage channels, and land dedicated to parks as a requirement of developers to fulfill the City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance. The City should also invest in a Floodplain Preservation Ordinance which will preserve all 100 year floodplains as permanent open space, wildlife habitat, or water protection. Not all available land will be suitable for a park; therefore, the proposed criteria for suitable land for parks includes size, location, and potential connectivity to schools, other parks, places of employment, and retail.

Summary of Park Spatial Needs

Table 5 - 1 summarizes the key spatial needs for the next five to ten years in Norman. Key findings of the spatial analysis are shown in the table which forms a key part of the park master plan recommendations in Chapter 8.

Table 5 - 1
Summary of Key Parkland Needs from 2009 to 2020

Neighborhood Parks

- Current acreage is 100.4% of the target standard.
- Neighborhood parks are a key enhancement feature of older neighborhoods, and should be factored into redevelopment plans for each neighborhood.
- New neighborhoods should be encouraged to integrate small homeowner maintained parks as a permanent feature to help maintain neighborhood vitality.
- There is a partnership opportunity with Norman Public Schools so that school play areas can become neighborhood parks and practice facilities for the residents near each school.
- Neighborhood park service deficiencies need to be addressed in two areas of the City, as shown on Page 5 - 5.

Community Parks

- Current acreage is 76.6% of the target standard.
- To meet the target standard for community parks by the year 2020, there is a need to acquire 354 acres.
- The development of Ruby Grant Park and John H. Saxon Park will be key to meeting future needs.
- There is a need in Norman for both active and passive community parks.
- Additional lands for future community parks are needed in the southwest and northeast areas of the City.

Regional Parks

- The current acreage far surpasses the recommended target standard.
- However, regional passive preserves could be established along the Little River and Canadian River corridors.

Linear Parks

- Current acreage is 25% of the target standard.
- The Legacy Trail, Doubletree Greenbelt and Hall Park Greenbelt are the three existing linear parks in Norman.
- In town, creek corridors and floodplain corridors such as the Little River Creek corridor can be preserved as linear parks and greenbelts.

Citywide Acreage Needs

- The sum of all combined target level of service goals recommends 30.5 acres per 1,000 residents. However, including the regional park standard distorts the recommendation because the existing regional park acreage far exceeds the target standand.
- Therefore, the recommended overall target level of service is 10.5 acres per 1,000 residents.
- The total City owned park acreage is 98% of the target standard.
- To meet the 2020 target level of service, an additional 188 acres will be needed of both neighborhood and community parks.

Park Facility Needs Assessment

Facility levels of service define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular type of recreation. They are expressed as the usage capacity served by each recreational unit. The target levels of service shown on the following pages are based on the actual number of facilities in Norman and the amount of use each facility receives.

Facility Target Level of Service

The following pages have a description of the 2009 target level of service for each recreational facility. A specific review of each major type of outdoor facility, key needs and key issues associated with each type of facility follows. Facility needs are based both on ratios related to existing population, as well as the amount of demand for each type of facility based on user information where available.

Soccer Fields

Current number of fields: 16 fields (city-owned)
Current level of service: 1 field per 7,022 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for 7,000 residents

- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 16 fields, no deficit
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 17 fields, deficit of 1 field
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 18 fields, deficit of 2 fields

Key issues: A key issue is the distribution of the fields. All soccer fields are currently located in Griffin Park. As the City grows, fields will be needed in all sectors of Norman. In particular fields should be provided west of I-35, potentially at Ruby Grant Park. The fields in Griffin Park are programmed and maintained by the Norman Youth Soccer Association. Currently this arrangement is working well.

Additional fields may be needed at the Griffin Park Soccer Complex to create a stronger regional tournament level facility. Expansion to state owned lands south of Robinson should be considered if this land or area parkland can be used.

Level of need: Low in terms of additional fields, high need in terms of distribution of fields.

Location of existing fields:

- ► 16 fields at Griffin Park
- ► 4 small fields at YMCA complex (private)

Soccer fields at Griffin Park

Soccer fields at Griffin Park

Baseball Fields

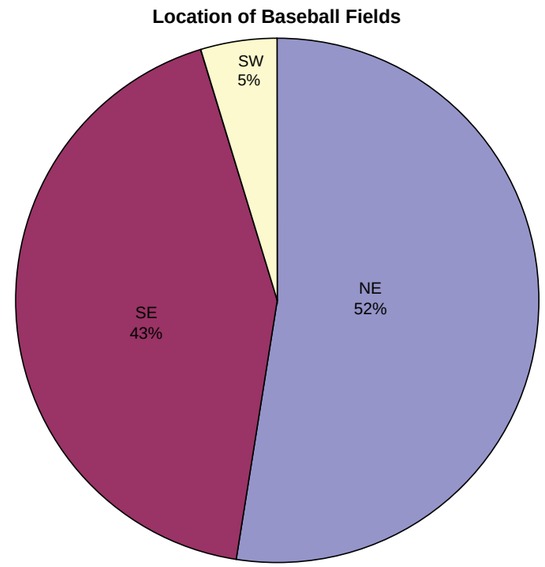
Current number of fields: 21 fields
Current level of service: 1 field per 5,350 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for 5,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 22 fields, deficit of 1 field
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 24 fields, deficit of 3 fields
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 26 fields, deficit of 5 fields

Key issues: There currently are no baseball fields located west of I-35. There is a large portion of residents living on the western side of the City, and they are currently underserved. Future population is expected to grow towards the southeast, so continued distribution of baseball facilities will be important.

Level of need: Medium need in terms of additional fields, high need in terms of distribution of fields in faster growing sectors of the City.

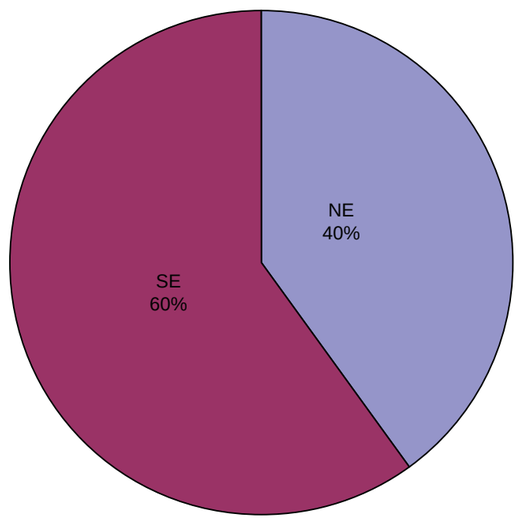
Location of existing fields:
- ► 1 field at Falls Lakeview Park
- ► 3 fields at Little Axe Park
- ► 1 field at Rotary Park
- ► 10 fields at Griffin Park
- ► 6 fields at Reaves Park



Baseball fields at Griffin Park

Baseball fields at Reaves Park

Softball fields at Reaves Park



Softball Fields

Current number of fields: 10 fields
Current level of service: 1 field per 11,235 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for 9,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 12 fields, deficit of 2 fields
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 13 fields, deficit of 3 fields
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 14 fields, deficit of 4 fields

Key issues: The City needs to provide softball fields of various sizes, both for adults and youth softball teams. The current softball fields are located in convenient locations in the center of the City. However, as Norman grows, softball fields will need to be located in the western and eastern portions of the City.

Level of need: Medium

Location of existing fields:
- ► 4 fields at Griffin Park
- ► 6 fields at Reaves Park

Softball fields at Reaves Park

Softball fields at Griffin Park

Tennis Courts

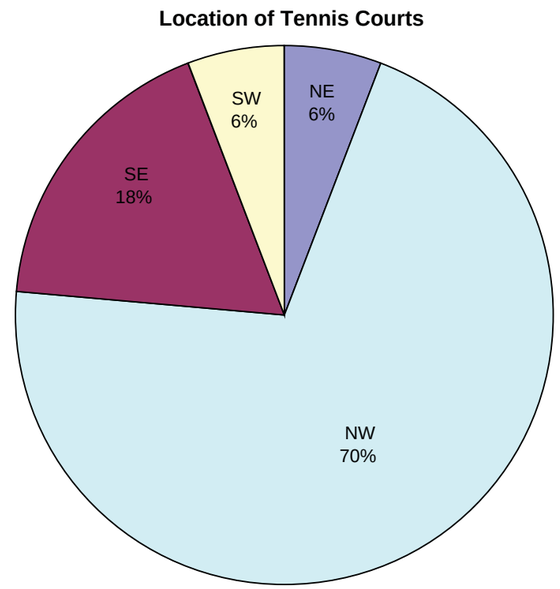
Current number of courts: 22 courts
Current level of service: 1 court per 5,107 residents

Target level of service: 1 court for 7,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 16 courts, no deficit
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 17 courts, no deficit
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 18 courts, no deficit

Key issues: The majority of tennis courts are located in Westwood Park. These courts are in good condition. The remaining courts are in adequate condition. The fence surrounding the court in Lions Park and Normandy Park need renovation.

Level of need: Low

Location of existing courts:
- ► 2 courts at Lions Park
- ► 1 court at Normandy Park
- ► 1 court at Rotary Park
- ► 12 courts at Westwood Park
- ► 4 courts at 12th Ave. Recreation Center
- ► 2 courts at Whittier Recreation Center

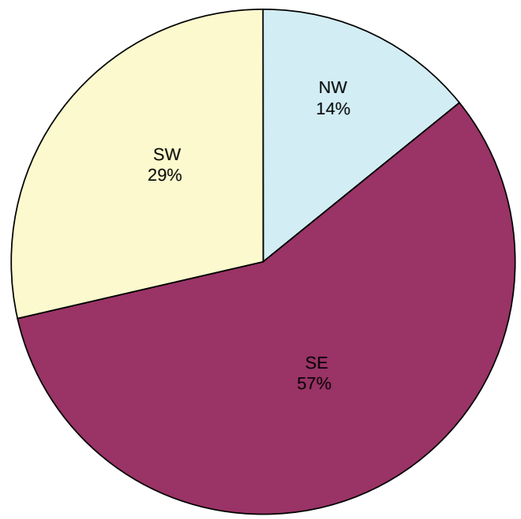


Tennis court at Lions Park

Tennis court at Westwood Park

Tennis court at Normandy Park

Volleyball court at Rotary Park



Volleyball Courts (outdoor)

Current number of courts: 9 courts
Current level of service: 1 court per 12,483 residents

Target level of service: 1 court for 11,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 10 courts, deficit of 1 court
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 11 courts, deficit of 2 courts
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 12 courts, deficit of 3 courts

Key issues: There currently are no outdoor volleyball courts in the northeast sector of the City. The volleyball courts at Normandy Park, Prairie Creek Park, and Rotary Park are in poor condition. There is no designated court layout or adequate fall surface. These three courts need to be renovated to true sand volleyball courts. Players are also required to bring their own nets. Nets are not provided by the City because of vandalism and theft.

Level of need: Medium need for additional courts, renovation of existing courts, and distribution of future courts.

Location of existing courts:
- ► 1 court at Andrews Park
- ► 1 court at Normandy Park
- ► 1 court at Prairie Creek Park
- ► 1 court at Rotary Park
- ► 4 courts at Reaves Park
- ► 1 court at Sunrise Park

Volleyball court at Reaves Park

Volleyball court at Prairie Creek Park

Basketball Courts (outdoor)

Current number of courts: 25.5 courts
Current level of service: 1 court per 4,406 residents

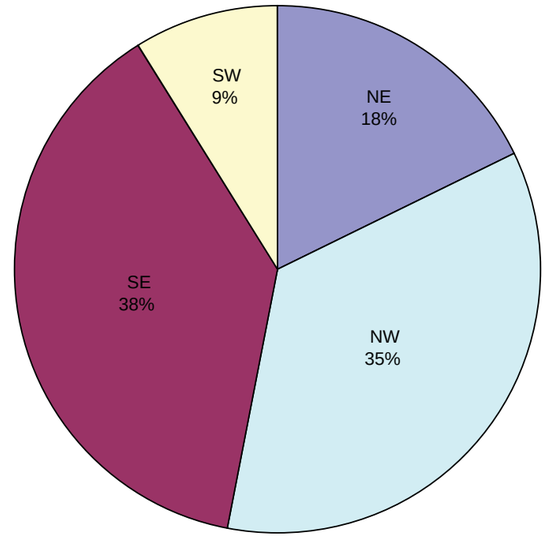
Target level of service: 1 court for 6,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 18.5 courts, no deficit
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 20 courts, no deficit
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 21.5 courts, no deficit

Key issues: 1/2 basketball courts are located in most neighborhood parks throughout the city. The distribution of the courts is good and condition of the courts is good. The rims and backboards of the courts will need to be monitored and replaced when necessary.

Level of need: Medium

Location of existing courts:
- ► 1 court at Berkley Park
- ► 1/2 court at Brookhaven Park
- ► 1/2 court at Castlerock Park
- ► 1/2 court at Cherry Creek Park
- ► 1/2 court at Colonial Commons Park
- ► 1/2 court at Doubletree Park
- ► 1/2 court at Eagle Cliff Park
- ► 1/2 court at Eastridge Park
- ► 1/2 court at Falls Lakeview Park
- ► 1/2 court at Frances Cate Park
- ► 1/2 court at Kevin Gottshall Park
- ► 1/2 court at Kiwanis Park
- ► 1/2 court at Lions Memorial Park
- ► 2 1/2 courts at Little Axe Park
- ► 1/2 court at McGeorge Park
- ► 1/2 court at W. Morgan Park
- ► 1/2 court at Normandy Park
- ► 1/2 court at Oakhurst Park
- ► 1/2 court at Prairie Creek Park
- ► 1/2 court at Deerfield Park
- ► 1 court at Reaves Park
- ► 1/2 court at Rotary Park
- ► 1/2 court at Royal Oaks Park
- ► 1/2 court at Sequoyah Trail Park
- ► 1/2 court at Sonoma Park
- ► 1/2 court at Summit Lakes Park
- ► 1/2 court at Sunrise Park
- ► 1/2 court at Vineyard Park
- ► 2 1/2 courts at Andrews Park
- ► 4 courts at Irving Rec Center
- ► 2 courts at Whittier Rec Center

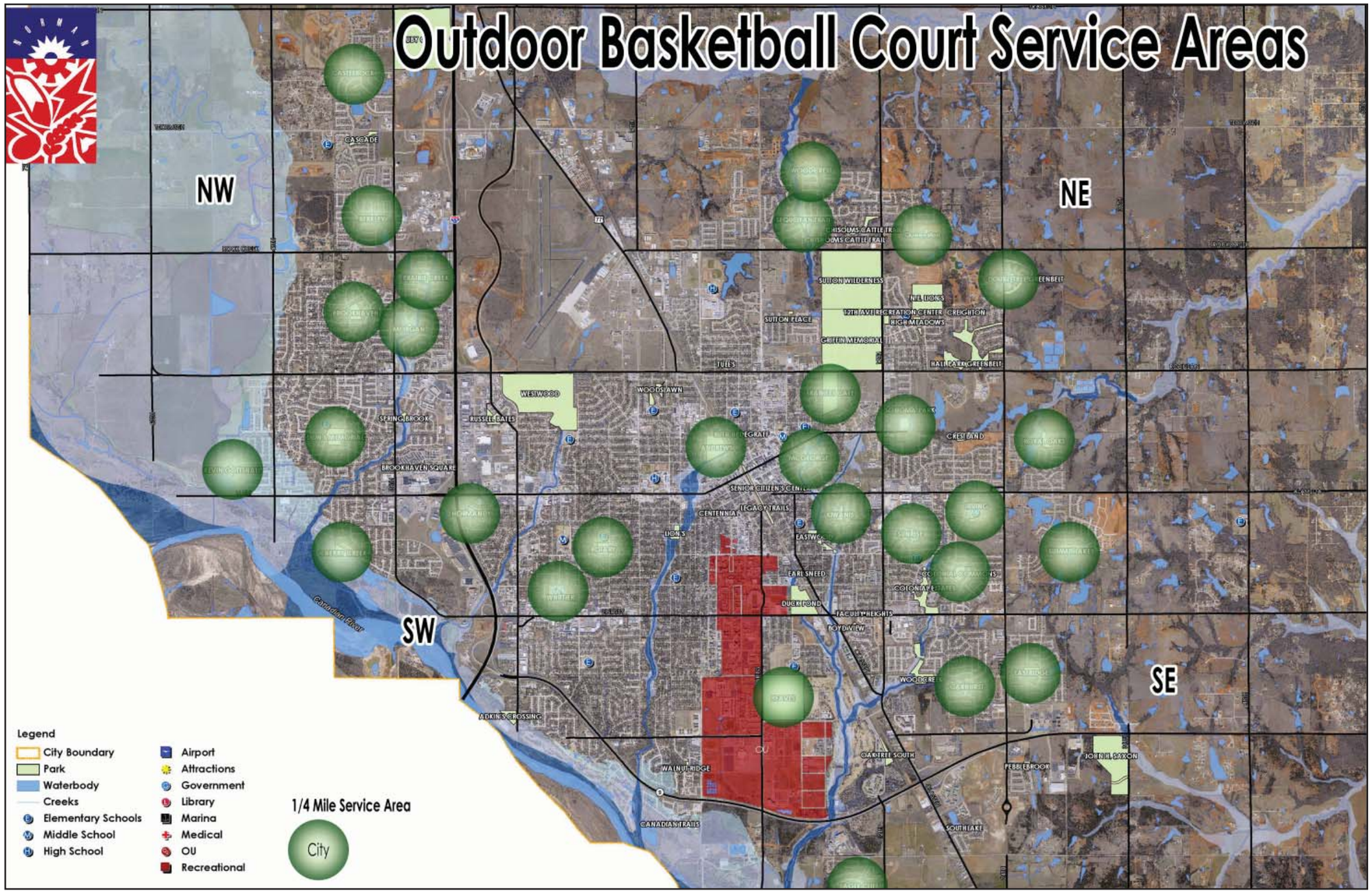
Location of Basketball Courts (outdoor)



Basketball court in Royal Oaks Park

Basketball court at Frances Cate Park

Basketball court at Morgan Park


Outdoor Basketball Court Service Areas
NW
NE
SW
SE
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area
City

HALFF

Practice Fields (baseball/softball)

Current number of backstops: 34 backstops
Current level of service: 1 backstop per 3,304 residents

Target level of service: 1 backstop for 4,000 residents

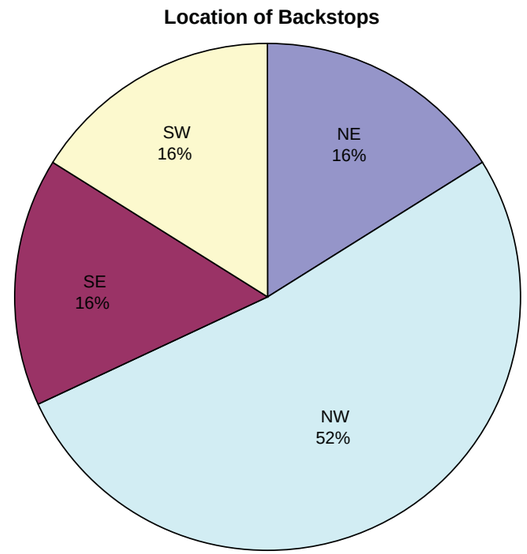
- Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 28 backstops, no deficit
- Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 30 backstops, no deficit
- Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 32 backstops, no deficit

Key issues: Practice fields are a significant part to any park system. They allow teams areas to practice that are not on game fields thus extending the life of game and tournament fields.

Level of need: Medium

Location of existing backstops:

- 1 at Berkeley Park
- 2 at Brookhaven Park
- 1 at Cascade Park
- 1 at Castlerock Park
- 2 at Colonial Commons Park
- 1 at Eagle Cliff Park
- 2 at Eastridge Park
- 1 at Falls Lakeview Park
- 2 at Frances Cate Park
- 1 at Kevin Gottshall Park
- 1 at Lions Park
- 3 at Lions Memorial Park
- 1 at Normandy Park
- 1 at Prairie Creek Park
- 2 at Rotary Park
- 1 at Royal Oaks Park
- 1 at Russell Bates Park
- 1 at Sonoma Park
- 1 at Sunrise Park
- 1 at Tulls Park
- 1 at Woodcreek Park
- 2 at Woodslawn Park
- 3 at Andrews park
- 1 at Reaves Park

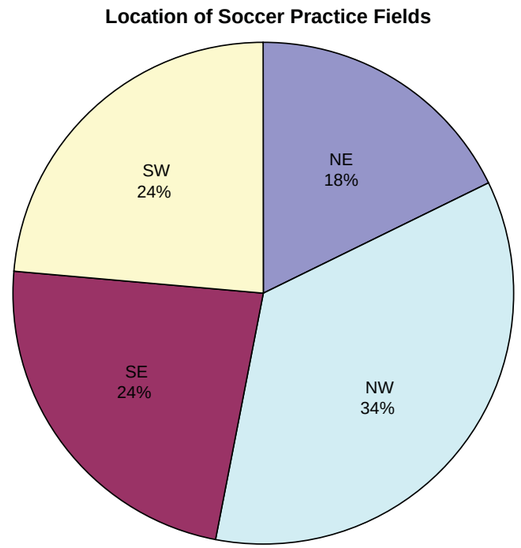


Backstop at Brookhaven Park

Backstop at Lions Memorial Park

Backstop at Kevin Gottshall Park

Practice field at Berkeley Park



Practice field at Cherry Creek Park

Practice field at Woodcreek Park

Practice Fields (soccer/football)

Current number of soccer practice: 19 fields
Current level of service: 1 field per 5,913 residents

Target level of service: 1 field for 4,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 28 fields, deficit of 9 fields
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 30 fields, deficit of 11 fields
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 32 fields, deficit of 13 fields

Key issues: Similar to backstops, practice soccer fields are important so that teams do not have to use game fields for practice thus extending the life of game and tournament fields. The soccer practice fields are evenly distributed throughout the city. This trend needs to continue as growth occurs.

Level of need: High

Location of existing soccer practice fields:
- ► 1 at Adkin's Crossing Park
- ► 1 at Berkeley Park
- ► 1 at Brookhaven Park
- ► 1 at Castlerock Park
- ► 1 at Cherry Creek Park
- ► 1 at Colonial Commons Park
- ► 1 at Deerfield Park
- ► 1 at Eagle Cliff Park
- ► 1 at Eastridge Park
- ► 2 at Frances Cate Park
- ► 1 at High Meadows Park
- ► 1 at Kevin Gottshall Park
- ► 1 at Lions Memorial Park
- ► 1 at Prairie Creek Park
- ► 1 at Royal Oaks Park
- ► 1 at Russell Bates Park
- ► 1 at Woodcreek Park
- ► 1 at Woodslawn Park

Disc Golf Course

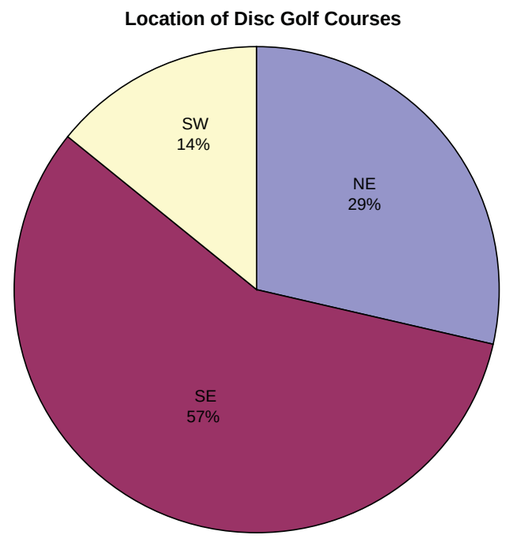
Current number of courses: 4.5 courses
Current level of service: 1 course per 24,966 residents

Target level of service: 1 course for 30,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 3.5 courses, no deficit
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 4 courses, no deficit
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 4 courses, no deficit

Key issues: There are no disc golf courses in the Northwest sector of the city. As the population grows in this area, at least 1/2 of a disc golf course should be added to serve those residents.

Level of need: Medium

Location of existing courses:
- ► 1 course at Colonial Estates Park
- ► 1 course at Griffin Park
- ► 1 course at Little Axe Park
- ► 1 course at Northeast Lion's Park
- ► 1/2 course at Oak Tree South Park



Disc golf course at Colonial Estates Park

Disc golf course at NE Lion's Park

Disc golf course at Little Axe Park

Sprayrounds at Andrews Park

Sprayrounds at Andrews Park

Sprayrounds at Andrews Park

Sprayrounds at Andrews Park

Splash Pads

Current number of sprayrounds: 2 splash pads
Current level of service: 1 splash pad per 56,173 residents

Target level of service: 1 splash pad for 25,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 4 splash pads, deficit of 2 splash pads
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 5 splash pads, deficit of 3 splash pads
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 5 splash pads, deficit of 3 splash pads

Key issues: Very popular facility with relatively low operating cost.

Level of need: High

Location of existing splash pads:
- ► 1 splash pad at Andrews Park
- ► 1 splash pad at Colonial Estates Park

Swimming Pools

Current number of pools: 1 aquatic center
Current level of service: 1 aquatic center per 112,345 residents

Target level of service: 1 aquatic center for 60,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 1 aquatic center
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 2 aquatic centers
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 2 aquatic centers

Key issues: See Aquatics Chapter 6

Level of need: High

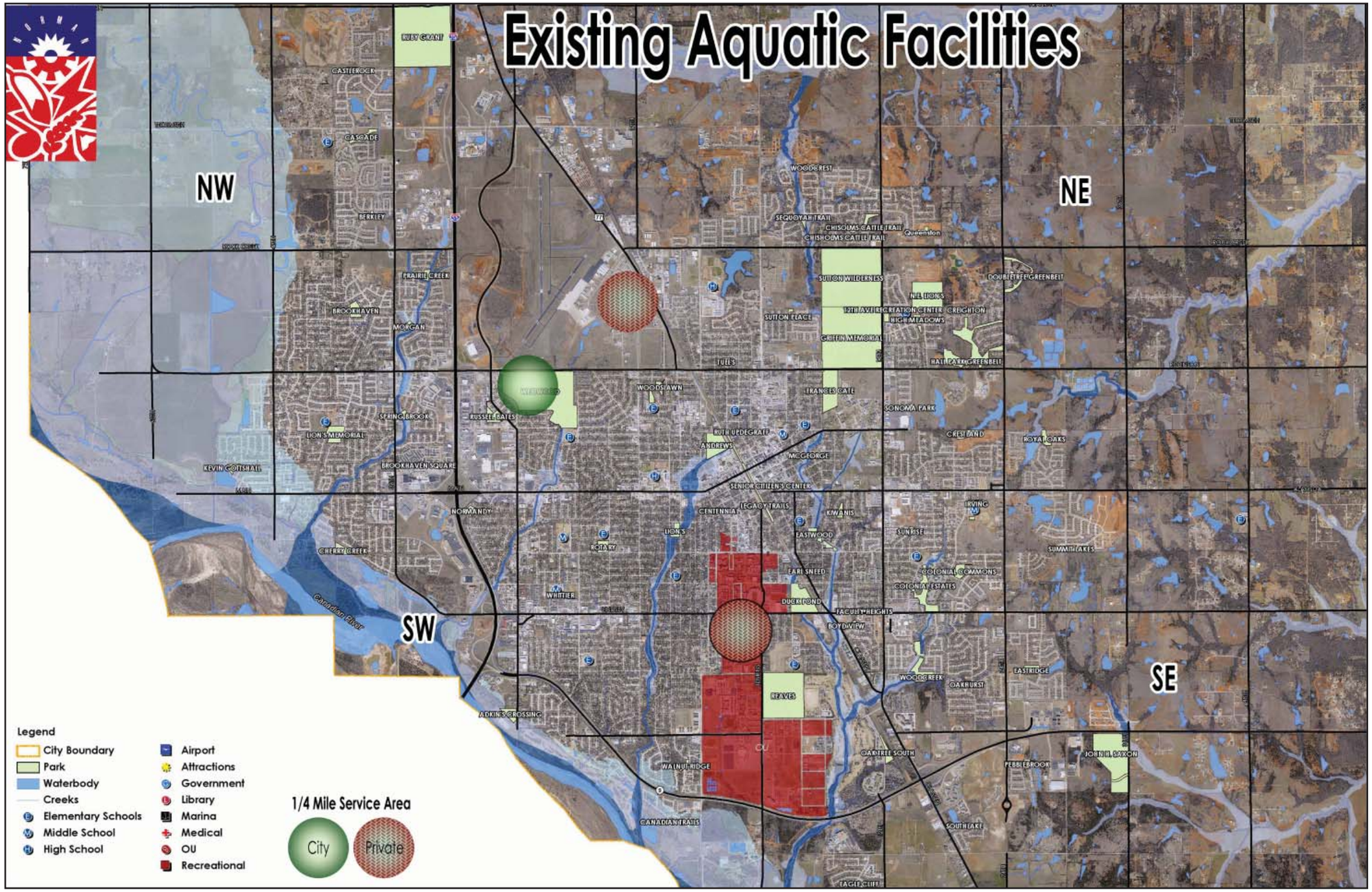
Location of existing swimming pool:
- ► 1 aquatic center at Westwood Park

Private facilities are offered at OU, the YMCA and several HOA neighborhood pools

Pool at Westwood Park

Pool at Westwood Park

Pool at Westwood Park


Existing Aquatic Facilities
NW
NE
SW
SE
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area
City
Private

Playgrounds

Current number of playgrounds: 65 playgrounds
Current level of service: 1 playground per 1,755 residents

Target level of service: 1 playground for 1,750 residents

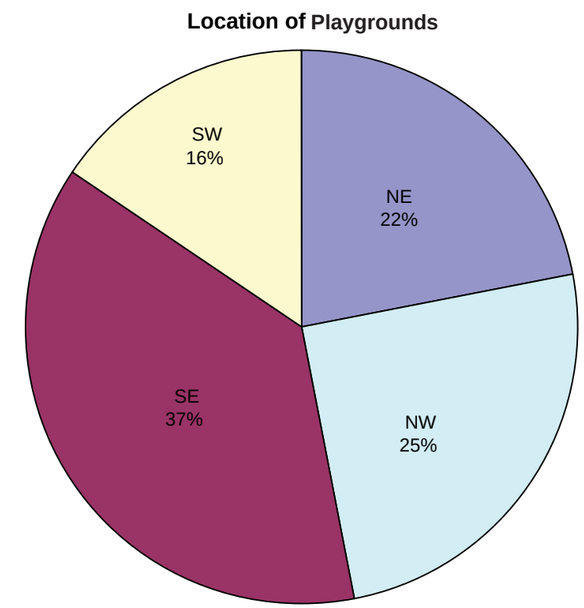
- Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 64 playgrounds, no deficit
- Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 69 playgrounds, deficit of 4 playgrounds
- Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 73 playgrounds, deficit of 8 playgrounds

Key issues: The playground equipment in some parks is older and needs replacing. All new playgrounds should be adequately covered by shade so use is possible during the hot summer months. Recent styles of playground structures encourage exercise as well as play.

Level of need: High

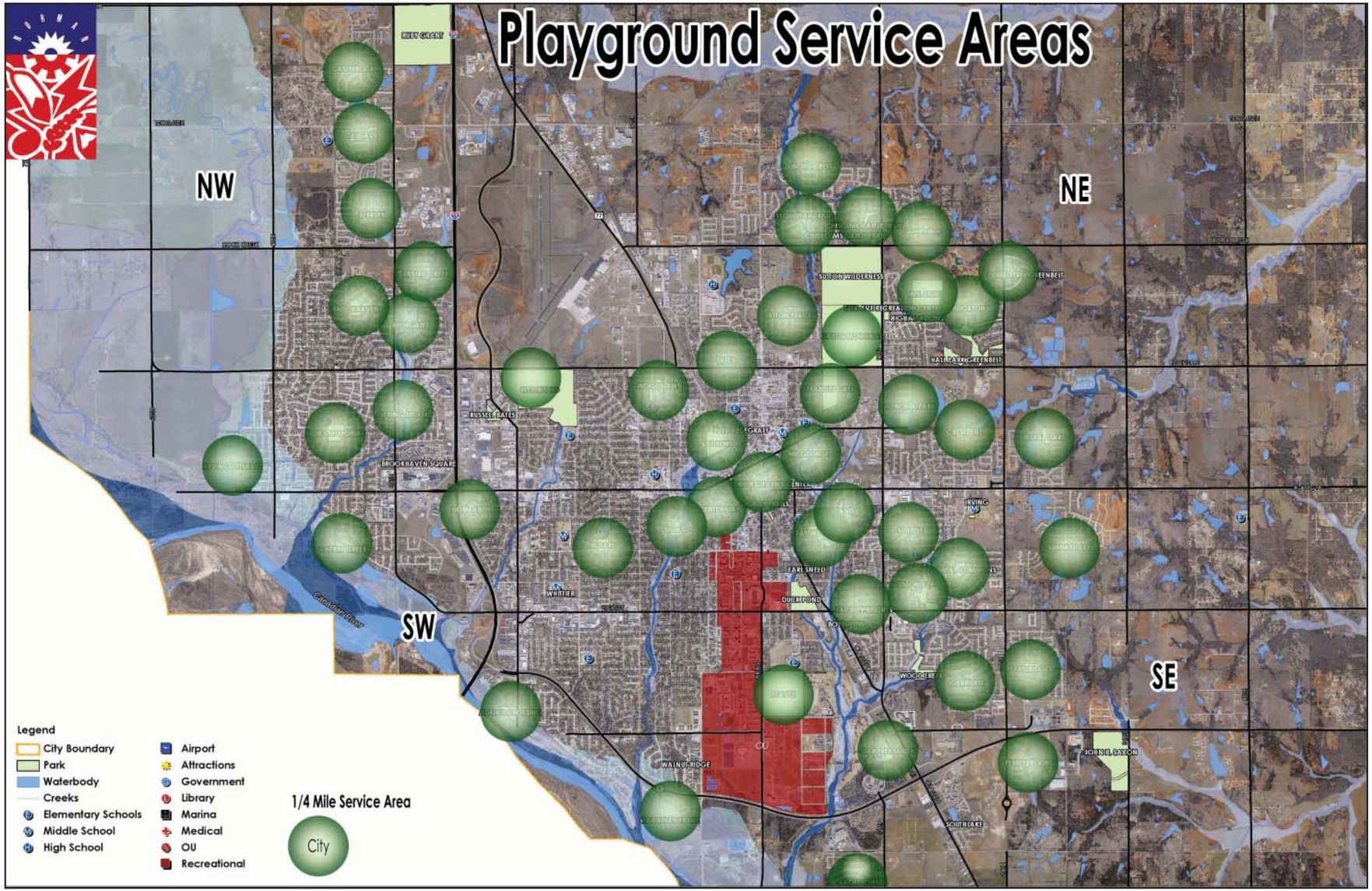
Location of existing playgrounds:

- 1 at Adkin's Crossing Park
- 2 at Berkeley Park
- 1 at Brookhaven Park
- 1 at Canadian Trails Park
- 1 at Cascade Park
- 1 at Castlerock Park
- 1 at Centennial Park
- 1 at Cherry Creek Park
- 1 at Chisholm's Trail Park
- 1 at Colonial Commons Park
- 1 at Colonial Estates Park
- 1 at Creighton Park
- 1 at Crestland Park
- 2 at Doubletree Park
- 2 at Eagle Cliff Park
- 2 at Eastridge Park
- 4 at Eastwood Park
- 1 at Faculty Heights Park
- 1 at Falls Lakeview Park
- 1 at Frances Cate Park
- 1 at June Benson Park
- 1 at Kevin Gottshall Park
- 1 at Kiwanis Park
- 2 at Lions Park
- 2 at Lions Memorial Park
- 1 at Little Axe Park
- 1 at McGeorge Park
- 1 at William Morgan Park
- 1 at Northeast Lions Park
- 1 at Normandy Park
- 1 at Oaktree South
- 1 at Oakhurst Park
- 1 at Pebblebrook Park
- 2 at Prairie Creek Park
- 1 at Deerfield Park
- 1 at Rotary Park
- 1 at Royal Oaks Park
- 1 at Sequoyah Trail Park
- 1 at Sonoma Park
- 1 at Springbrook Park
- 1 at Summit Lakes Park
- 1 at Sunrise Park
- 1 at Sutton Place Park
- 1 at Tulls Park
- 1 at Vineyard Park
- 1 at Woodcreek Park
- 1 at Woodslawn Park
- 3 at Andrews Park
- 1 at Griffin Park
- 3 at Reaves Park
- 1 at Westwood Park



Playground at Springbrook Park

Playground at Colonial Commons Park


Playground Service Areas
NW
NE
SW
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Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area
City

HALFF

Large Pavilions

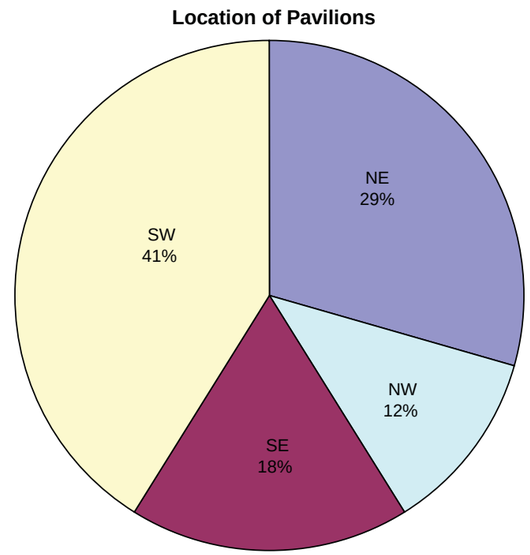
Current number of pavilions: 21 pavilions
Current level of service: 1 pavilion per 5,350 residents

Target level of service: 1 pavilion for 6,500 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 17 pavilions, no deficit
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 18 pavilions, no deficit
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 20 pavilions, no deficit

Key issues: Pavilions provide necessary shade for park users. They are popular features and can be used for a variety of activities. All community parks and large neighborhood parks should have several pavilions throughout them. Norman should invest in developing a signature pavilion style to enhance the beauty of all parks in the City.

Level of need: Medium

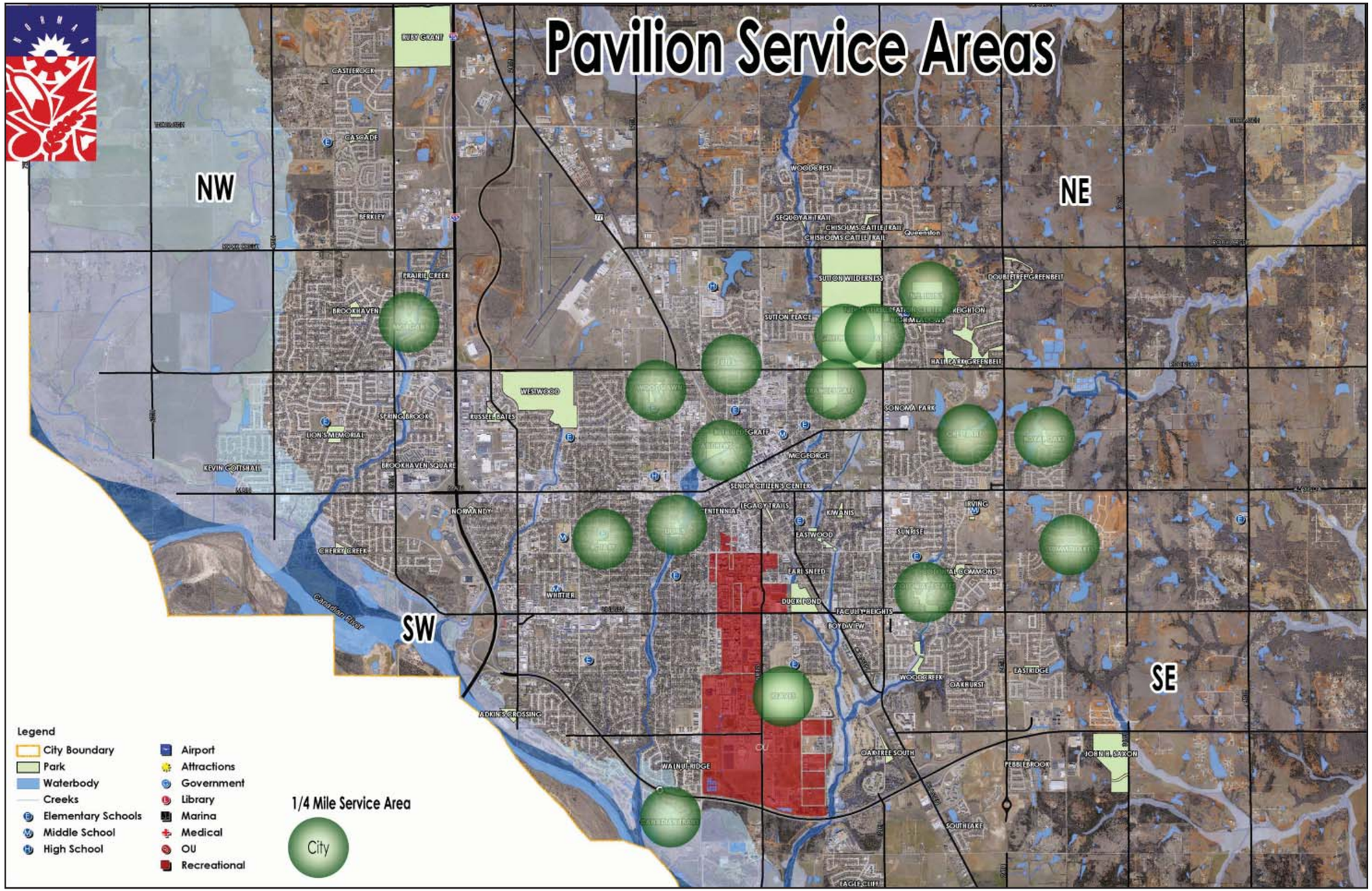
Location of existing pavilions:
- ► 1 at Canadian Trails Park
- ► 1 at Colonial Estates Park
- ► 1 at Crestland Park
- ► 1 at Frances Cate Park
- ► 1 at Lion's Park
- ► 1 at Little Axe Park
- ► 1 at William Morgan Park
- ► 1 at Northeast Lions Park
- ► 1 at Rotary Park
- ► 1 at Royal Oaks
- ► 1 at Summit Lakes Park
- ► 1 at Tulls Park
- ► 1 at Woodslawn Park
- ► 2 at Andrews Park
- ► 2 at Griffin Park
- ► 4 at Reaves Park



Pavilion at Lions Park

Pavilion at NE Lions Park

Pavilion at William Morgan Park


Pavilion Service Areas
NW
NE
SW
SE
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area
City

Picnicking Facilities

Current number of picnicking facilities: 199 picnic tables, 141 benches, 39 BBQ grills, and 7 gazebos.

Assumptions: Picnic facilities should be in all parks.

Target level of service: Plan for picnicking facilities including tables, shade and outdoor grills at all parks.

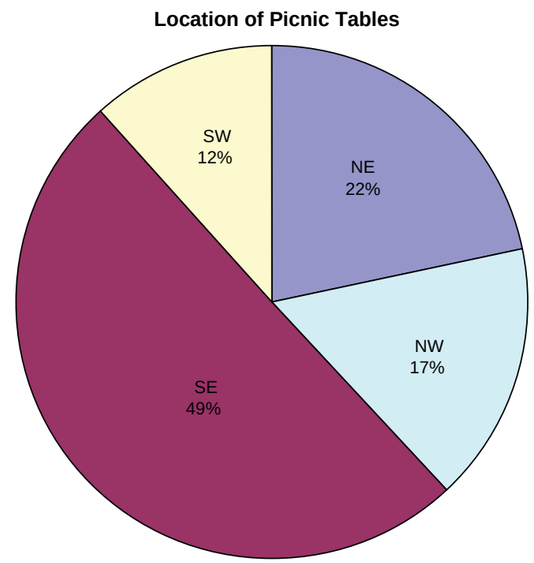
Key issues: The existing picnic facilities are unevenly distributed among the sectors. The southeast sector contains a significant majority of picnic tables and BBQ grills. All new parks should include picnic facilities, especially parks in the western portion of the city so that distribution becomes even.

Many picnic tables are older, in poor condition and need replacing. The park staff needs to monitor the condition of the remaining picnic facilities and replace when necessary.

Level of need: High

Location of existing picnicking facilities:

- ► Picnic tables are located in 42 parks
- ► Benches are located in 41 parks
- ► BBQ grills are located in 19 parks
- ► Gazebos are located in 7 parks

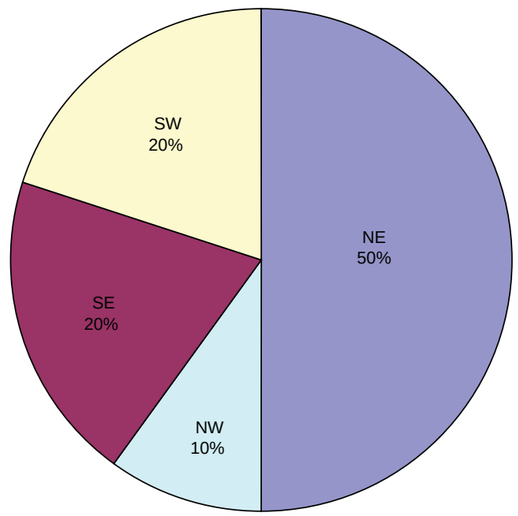


Picnic facilities at Brookhaven Park

Picnic facilities at Ruth Updegraff Park

Picnic facilities at Doubletree Park

Restrooms at Reaves Park



Park Support Facilities

Park Support Facilities include: Parking, restrooms, drinking fountains, and bicycle racks.

Current number of park support facilities: 26 bike racks, 22 drinking fountains, 16 parking lots, 10 restrooms.

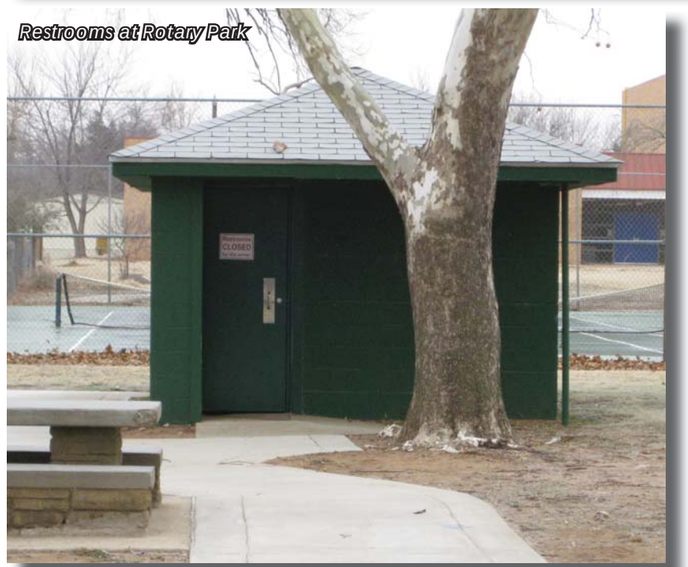
Target level of service: Plan for park support facilities to be in all parks where feasible.

Key issues: Park support facilities should be placed in all parks where feasible. Larger community parks should have all park support facilities. Because neighborhood parks are ideally within walking distance of a user's home, restrooms and parking are not recommended for a smaller neighborhood park.

Level of need: High

Location of existing park support facilities:
- ► Drinking fountains are located in 18 parks
- ► Bike racks are located in 26 parks
- ► Parking lots are located in 12 parks
- ► Restrooms are located in 7 parks

RESTROOM


Restrooms at Rotary Park

Restrooms at NE Lions Park

Indoor Recreation Centers

Current number of centers: 6 centers
Total square footage of centers: 56,844 square feet
Current level of service: 1 square foot per 0.51 residents, 6 centers per 112,345 residents

Target level of service: 1 state-of-the-art center per 75,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 1 center
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 1 center
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 1 - 2 centers

Key issues: See Indoor Recreation Chapter 7

Level of need: High

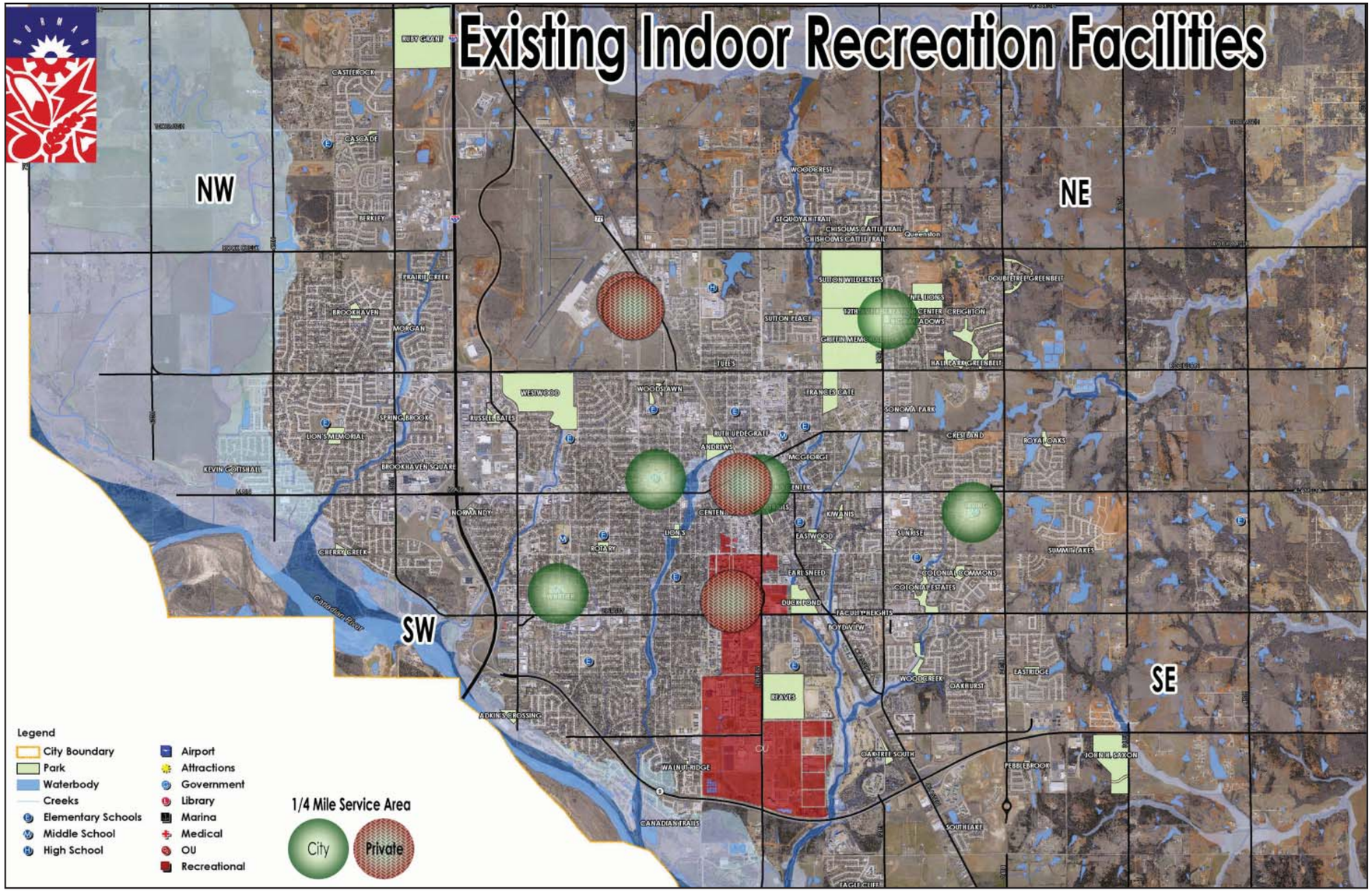
Location of existing centers:
- ► 12th Ave. Recreation Center
- ► Irving Recreation Center
- ► Whittier Recreation Center
- ► Senior Center
- ► Little Axe Community Center
- ► Reaves Dance Center
- ► The City of Norman also owns the girls' gym at Norman High School; however it is heavily used by the school. The only city program currently offered there is Tae Kwon Do.

12th Avenue Recreation Center

12th Avenue Recreation Center

Irving Recreation Center

Little Axe Community Center


Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities
NW
NE
SW
SE
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area
City
Private

Trails

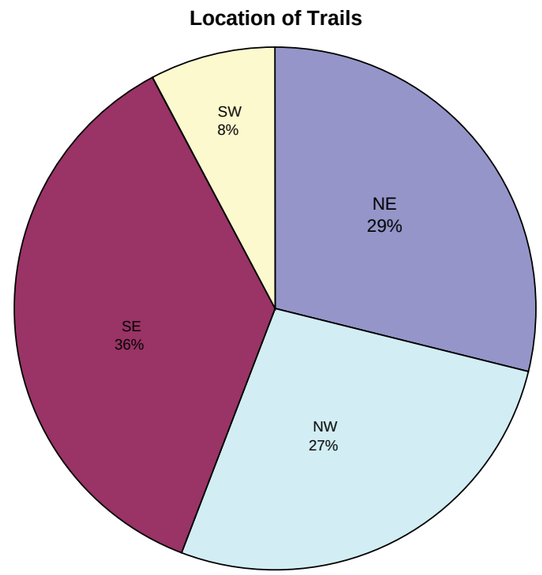
Current miles of trails: 25.74 miles
Current level of service: 0.23 miles of trail per every 1,000 residents or 1 mile per every 4,365 residents.

Target level of service: 1 to 2 miles for every 5,000 residents
- ► Current 2009 need for 112,345 population: 22.5 miles to 44.9 miles
- ► Year 2015 need for 120,152 population: 24.0 miles to 48.1 miles
- ► Year 2020 need for 128,404 population: 25.7 miles to 51.4 miles

Key issues: Trails have consistently been ranked during the public input process as a high priority and something that the citizens want. Trails should be constructed for walking, jogging and bicycling. Trails throughout the country are becoming an alternative mode of transportation, and are not just used recreationally. Building an interconnected citywide trails system will allow all residents of Norman to either bike or walk from one part of the City to another.

Level of need: High

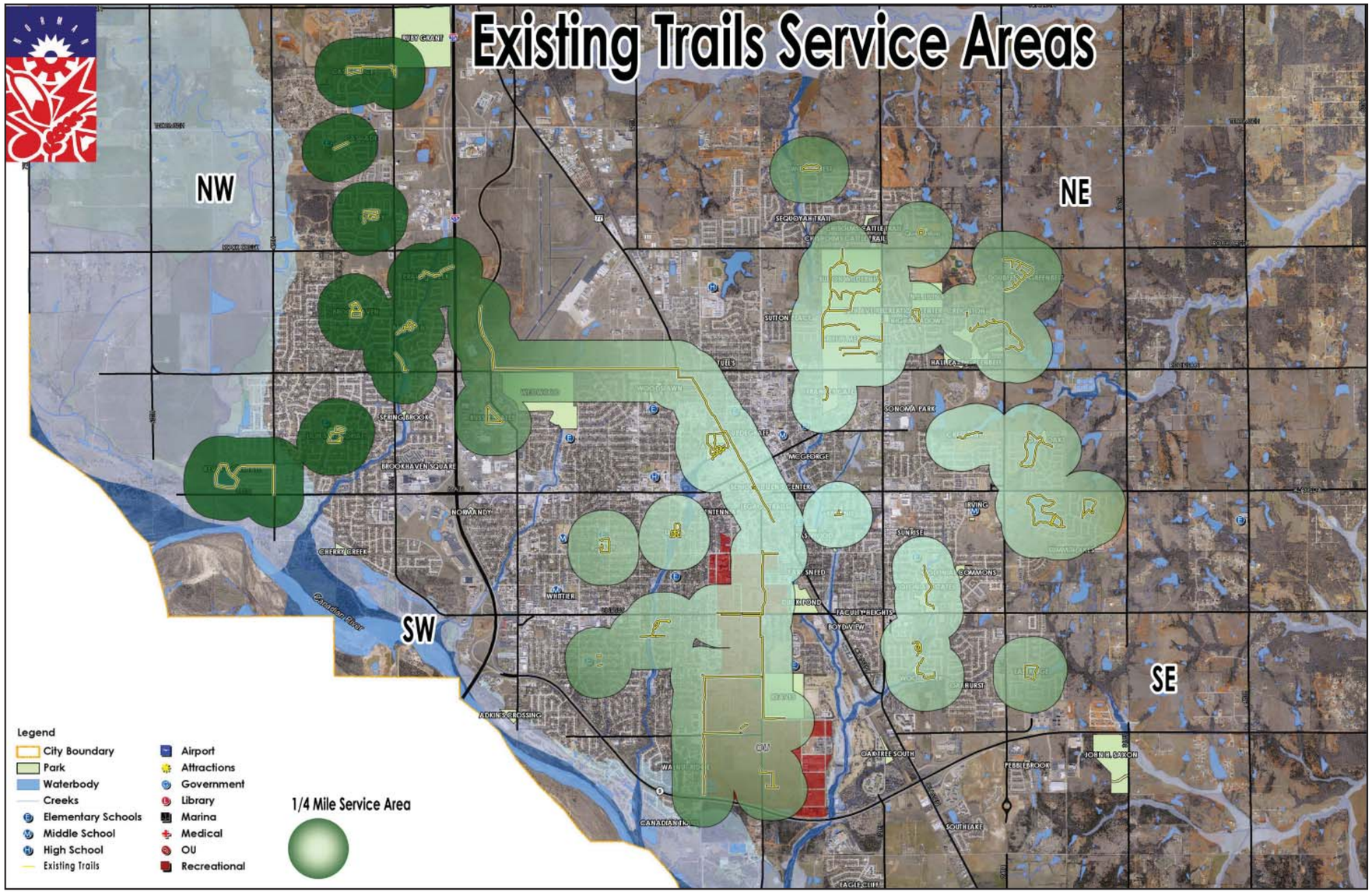
Location of existing trails in parks:
- ► Berkeley Park
- ► Brookhaven Park
- ► Canadian Trails Park
- ► Castlerock Park
- ► Colonial Estates Park
- ► Crestland Park
- ► Eagle Cliff Park
- ► Frances Cate Park
- ► High Meadows Park
- ► Kevin Gottshall Park
- ► William Morgan Park
- ► Oak Tree South Park
- ► Pebblebrook Park
- ► Eastridge Park
- ► Vineyard Park
- ► Russell Bates Park
- ► Royal Oaks Park
- ► Sequoyah Trail Park
- ► Woodcreek Park
- ► Andrews Park
- ► Griffin Park
- ► Reaves Park
- ► Sutton Wilderness
- ► Westwood Park
- ► Doubletree Greenbelt
- ► Hall Park Greenbelt
- ► Legacy Trail
- ► Kiwanis Park
- ► Lions Park
- ► Lions Memorial Park
- ► Deerfield Park



Legacy Trail

Trail at Griffin Park

Trail at Hall Park Greenbelt


Existing Trails Service Areas
NW
NE
SW
SE
Legend
City Boundary
Park
Waterbody
Creeks
Elementary Schools
Middle School
High School
Existing Trails
Airport
Attractions
Government
Library
Marina
Medical
OU
Recreational
1/4 Mile Service Area

Summary of Facility Needs

Table 5 - 2 summarizes the key facility needs to meet the target level of service set for the year 2020. Picnicking facilities, support facilities and practice fields should be added to all future parks where feasible. The trail system in Norman should continue to expand and become interconnected. Athletic fields will need to keep pace with the future growth of the City. Indoor recreation facilities and aquatic facilities need to expand and be renovated to meet the population's needs.

Table 5 - 2
Summary of Facility Needs by 2020 (in alphabetical order)

Facility	Current LOS Pop. Served	Current Amount	2020 Need	Level of Need
Baseball Fields	5,350	21	26	Medium
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	4,406	25.5	21.5	Medium
Disc Golf Course	24,966	4.5	4	Medium
Indoor Recreation Center	0.51 sf/ person	6 older centers	state-of-the -art center	High
Pavilions	5,350	21	20	Medium
Picnicking Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	High
Playgrounds	1,755	64	73	High
Practice Fields (baseball/softball)	3,304	34	32	Medium
Practice Fields (soccer/football)	5,913	19	32	High
Softball Fields	11,235	10	14	Medium
Soccer Fields	7,022	16	18	Low
Splash Pads	56,173	2	5	High
Swimming Pools	112,345	1 older complex	state-of-the -art pool	High
Support Facilities	Varies	Varies	Varies	High
Tennis Courts	5,107	22	18	Low
Trails	4,365	25.74 miles	25.7 to 51.4 miles	High
Volleyball Courts (outdoor)	12,483	9	12	Medium

Benchmarking

Benchmarks are used as a reference point on which one particular city ranks when compared to other cities with similar characteristics. A list of similar benchmark cities was complied for Norman by the steering committee, staff and consulting team. The cities that were chosen are similar to Norman in that most have a major university within or near their city limits, they are within close proximity to a large metropolitan area such as Norman is close to Oklahoma City, the populations are similar in size (between 80,000 and 120,000 residents), and most are the county seat of the county in which they reside. For the purpose of this planning process, the benchmark cities are identified as:

- Boulder, Colorado
- College Station, Texas
- Columbia, Missouri
- Denton, Texas
- Edmond, Oklahoma
- Lawrence, Kansas
- Topeka, Kansas
- Tulsa, Oklahoma
- Waco, Texas

Once the benchmark cities were chosen, they were then compared to Norman in terms of developed parkland acreage, miles of trails, square footage of indoor recreation space, type and size of aquatic facilities, budget dollars per capita, and the number of employees in the Parks and Recreation Department. A total summary of the benchmark cities and how Norman compares is shown in the table to the right.

Significant findings from the benchmarking study include:

- Norman is ranked third in terms of number of parks; however, Norman is ranked last in terms of developed parkland acreage per 1,000 residents. While Norman has a significant number of parks, large tracks of parkland are undeveloped and unused such as Ruby Grant Park and John H. Saxon Park.
- While the square footage of indoor recreation space in Norman is similar to that of the other benchmark cities, the indoor recreation centers are in need of renovation and there is no City operated state-of-the-art fitness facility.
- When compared to the benchmark cities, Norman has the start of a good trail system; however, the trails in Norman need to be more interconnected.
- Norman has the fewest number of aquatic facilities when compared to the benchmark cities. Having only one swimming pool in a city of this size does not adequately serve the population. All of the benchmark cities, except Edmond, have at least two outdoor swimming pools, and 5 of the 10 cities have at least one indoor swimming pool.
- Norman is ranked 8 out of 10 in terms of Parks and Recreation Department staff. Norman has 63 staff members where as the highest ranked city, Boulder, has 146.99 staff members for parks and recreation.
- Norman has the second lowest amount of approved budget dollars per capita for parks and recreation. Only $55.30 per capita was allocated to parks and recreation in Norman. The highest ranked city was again Boulder with $246.62 per capita allocated to parks and recreation.

Park in Boulder, CO

Flag Football in College Station, TX

Pool in Lawrence, KS

Trail in Columbia, MO

Norman Comparison of Benchmark Cities

City	Current Estimated Population	County Seat? Y/N	Of what county?	University?	Student Population of University	Total Number of Parks	Total Park Acreage	Developed Park Acreage	Developed Acreage Per 1,000 Population	Number of PARD Staff	Developed Park Acreage Per Staff	Number of Indoor Centers	Total Square Footage of Indoor Recreation / Senior / Teen Centers	Square Footage per Resident	Total Miles of Trails	Miles of Trails per 1,000 Population	# of Pools (Indoor / Outdoor)	Size of Pools	Type of Pools	2009 Approved Budget for PARD	PARD Budget Dollars per Person
1) Norman	112,345	Yes	Cleveland	University of Oklahoma	30,000	65	1,159.90	688.30	6.13	63	10.93	6	56,844	0.506	25.74	0.23	0 / 1	One 50 meter pool	1 large pool, slides	$6,212,691	$55.30
2) Boulder, CO	103,114	Yes	Boulder	University of Colorado at Boulder and Naropa University	29,000 for UCB	60	1,000.00	800.00	7.76	146.99	5.44	3	140,521	1.363	130.00	1.26	3 / 2	4 pools are 25 yards, 1 pool is 50 meters	2 indoor pools have zero depth entry, play structures, slides, lazy river, hot tub	$25,430,180	$246.62
3) College Station, TX	90,897	No		Texas A&M University	43,000	50	1,289.45	1,149.04	12.64	133	8.64	3	38,171	0.420	11.95	0.13	1 / 3	50 meter, 25 meter, 25 yard, 25 meter natatorium	50 meter pool is a water park, 25 yard pool has zero depth entry and slides	$9,187,624	$101.08
4) Columbia, MO	96,093	Yes	Boone	University of Missouri	30,000	65	2,853.00	2,101.00	21.86	43.5	48.30	1	73,000	0.760	42.08	0.44	1 / 4	Indoor pool is 12,988 square feet. One outdoor pool is 50 meters	2 outdoor aquatic centers with slides, play structures, diving boards, climbing wall. Indoor pool has slides, lazy river, play structure, zero depth entry, handicap lift	$12,679,649	$131.95
5) Denton, TX	120,126	Yes	Denton	University of North Texas and Texas Women's University	34,000 for UNT	29	1,400.00	1,209.86	10.07	124.31	9.73	7	unknown	unknown	21.00	0.17	1 / 2	unknown	One outdoor water park, one natatorium	$10,436,223	$86.88
6) Edmond, OK	83,259	No		University of Central Oklahoma	16,000	23	4,821.00	550.55	6.61	40	13.76	2	unknown	unknown	13.46	0.16	0 / 1	25 yard	Large, outdoor family aquatic center with slides, lazy river, climbing wall	$4,929,536	$59.21
7) Lawrence, KS	90,866	Yes	Douglas	University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University	30,000 for KU	52	2,965.40	1,309.40	14.41	71.78	18.24	4	43,000	0.473	14.00	0.15	2 / 2	Two 50 meter pools, One 25 yard pool	Two separate indoor and outdoor aquatic centers with zero depth entry, slides, play features, diving well. One natatorium. One wading pool	$6,991,479	$76.94
8) Topeka, KS	122,113	Yes	Shawnee	No	N/A	102	1,600.00	1,330.00	10.89	95.75	13.89	6	145,000	1.187	11.25	0.09	0 / 5	50 meter; 5,000 square feet; 170 feet long; traditional L-shape	One outdoor aquatic center with zero depth entry, slides, spray features.	$9,862,463	$80.77
9) Tulsa, OK	388,000	Yes	Tulsa	Oral Roberts University and University of Tulsa	3,790 for ORU; 4,165 for TU	125	6,000.00	5,636.65	14.53	166.6	33.83	17	unknown	unknown	47.30	0.12	0 / 22	unknown	unknown	$18,179,000	$46.85
10) Waco, TX	113,726	Yes	McLennan	Baylor University	15,000	58	1,400.00	892.95	7.85	142.7	6.26	3	unknown	unknown	26.80	0.24	0 / 2	unknown	Water park with slides, spray features	$9,111,574	$80.12

Data Source for Population and Budget Information

1) population derived from 2009 city budget. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
2) population derived from 2008 estimate from the Planning and Development Services Department. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
3) population derived from 2008 estimate from the Planning and Development Services Department. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
4) population derived from 2008 estimate from the Planning and Development Services Department. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
5) population derived from 2008 estimate from the 2008-2009 budget . Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
6)population derived from 2008 estimate from the Edmond Economic Development Authority. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
7) population derived from 2008 estimate from the Planning Department. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
8) population derived from 2006 U.S. Census estimate. Budget dollars per person is total budged expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
9) population derived from 2007 budget estimate. Budget dollars per person is total budged expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.
10) population derived from 2000 U.S. Census. Budget dollars per person is total budgeted expenditures for parks and recreation Fiscal Year 2009 divided by population.

Demand Based Needs Assessment

Demand was also used to determine what additional facilities are needed in Norman. Demand is based on both actual participation in organized activities and in use of the parks, as well as by the level of use and preferences expressed by citizens through stakeholder interviews, citywide mail-out survey, online survey, and public meetings.

Public input is a critical part of any planning process. Public entities work for their citizens by managing and providing the types of facilities that the residents and taxpayers of the community want to have. In essence, our citizens are our "customers" and it is the City's responsibility to provide what our customers seek with approved funding. In the parks planning process, public input helps identify what types of existing facilities are being used, where key deficiencies may occur, and where the citizens of Norman would like to see their funding targeted. In essence, the residents of a community determine what they want to have in their city through their current use of facilities and through their comments and input.

What Facility Is Lacking (mail-out survey)

Asking residents what one facility they feel is lacking in their part of the city is crucial to understanding what residents want. The highest response on the mail-out survey was trails with 43% of residents indicating they feel trails are lacking in their part of Norman. This demonstrates a desire to have trails throughout their neighborhood and throughout their sector of the City. The next highest response was swimming pools with 13%, followed by a neighborhood park with 11%. The top five responses to this open ended question are shown below.

Trails	43%
Pool	13%
Neighborhood Park	11%
Recreation Center/Gym	7%
Natatorium/Aquatics/Splash Pad	5%

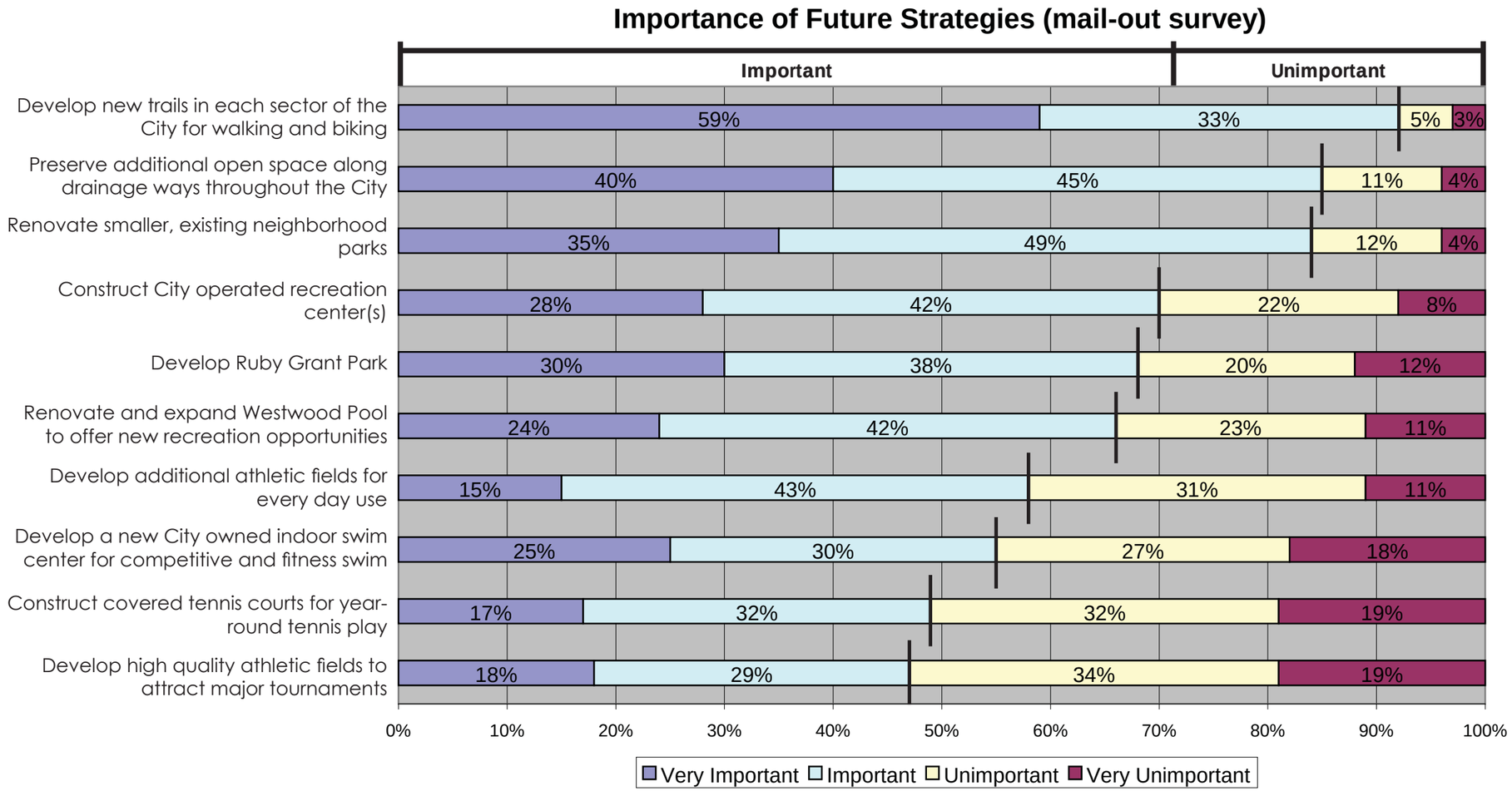
What Facility Is Lacking (online survey)

The online survey responses revealed the same top five facilities that residents feel are lacking in their part of the City. Again the number one response was trails with 23% of all residents indicating this was a high need. For the online survey, a natatorium/splash pad was the second highest item with 19% of the residents indicating this was lacking. This was followed by a pool as the third highest ranked facility with 11%. The top five results from the online survey are shown below.

Trails	23%
Natatorium/Aquatics/Splash Pad	19%
Pool	11%
Neighborhood Park	9%
Recreation Center/Gym	6%

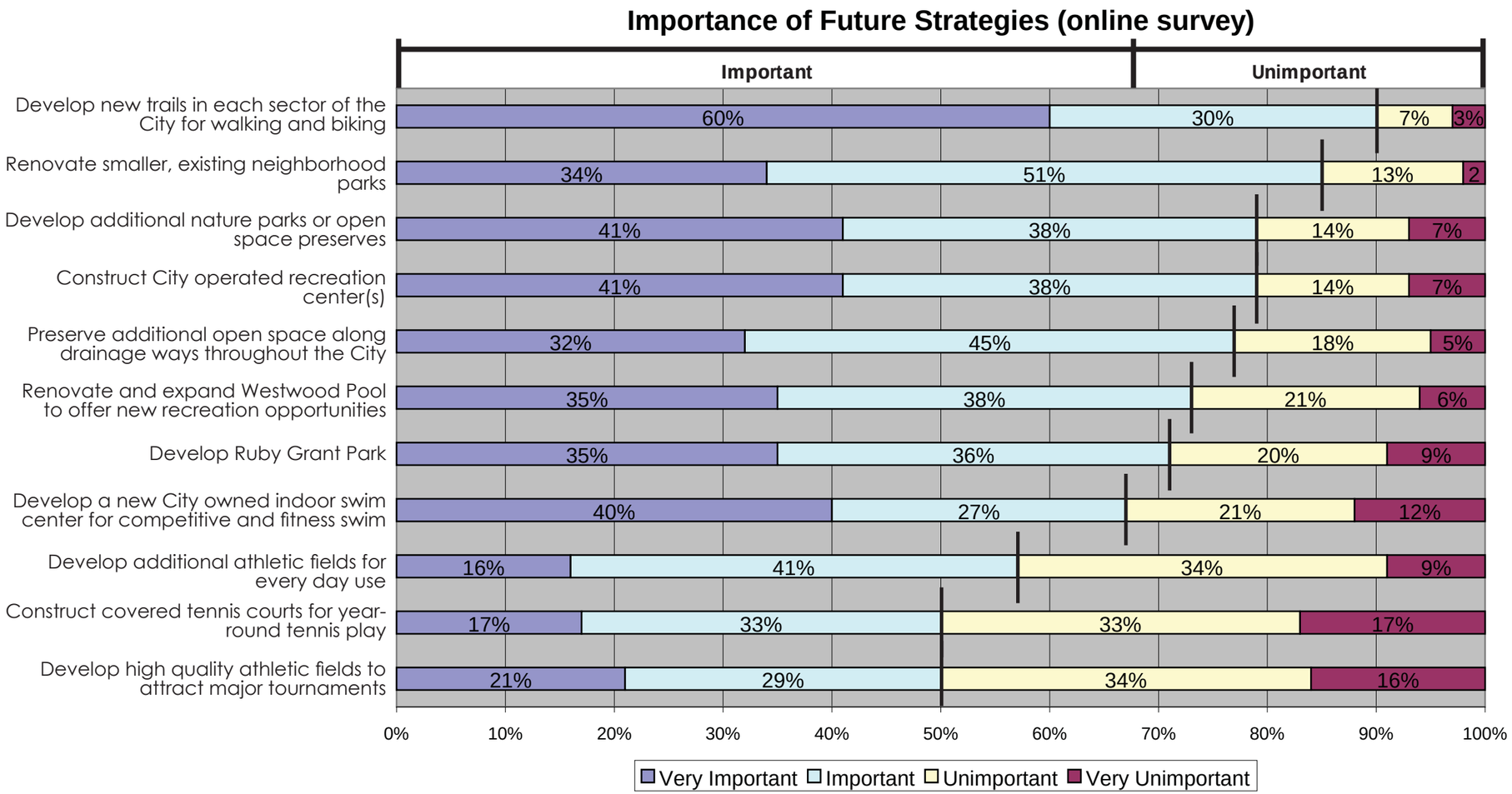
Future Strategies (mail-out survey results)

As the City creates a Parks Master Plan, it will be faced with decisions about the future direction of parks and recreation. Residents were given a list of various strategies and were asked to rate how important or unimportant they felt each strategy was. The highest rated strategy was to develop new trails in each sector of the City for walking and biking with 93% of residents indicating this was important or very important. Again, this demonstrates the high need for additional trails throughout all of Norman. The second highest rated item was preserving additional open space along the drainage ways throughout the City with 87% of residents indicating this was important or very important. The responses are shown in the bar graph below.



Future Strategies (online survey results)

The results from the online survey were similar to the mail-out survey in terms of what strategies the residents of Norman feel are important for the City. Developing new trails in all sectors of the City was again ranked as the highest strategy with 90% of residents indicating this was important or very important. The second strategy was renovating smaller, existing neighborhood parks with 85% of residents feeling this was an important or very important need. The results from the online survey are shown below.



Most Important Future Strategy

Using the listed items from the previous question, residents were asked to choose what three strategies they felt were the most important for the City to pursue. The five highest rated choices are listed below for both the mail-out and online surveys, and closely mirror the results from the previous question. Again, developing new trails was rated number one, followed by renovation/enhancement of smaller parks.

Most Important Strategy the City Should Pursue (mail-out)

Develop new trails in each sector	66%
Renovate/enhance smaller parks	48%
Preserve additional open space	35%
Construct recreation center	28%
Develop Ruby Grant Park	26%

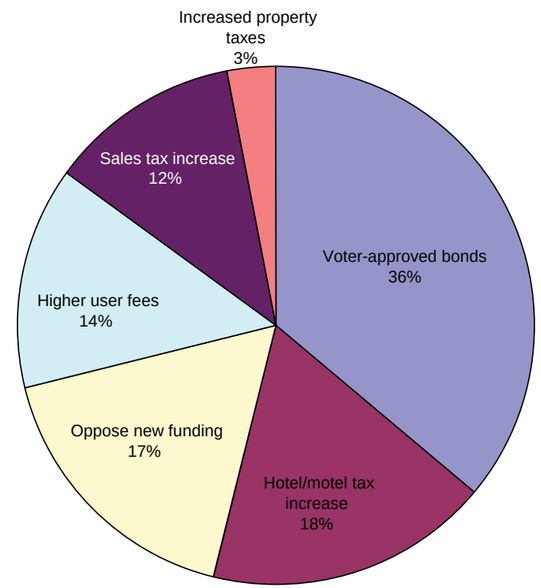
Most Important Strategy the City Should Pursue (online)

Develop new trails in each sector	19%
Renovate/enhance smaller parks	13%
Preserve additional open space	11%
Construct recreation center	11%
Develop indoor swim center	11%

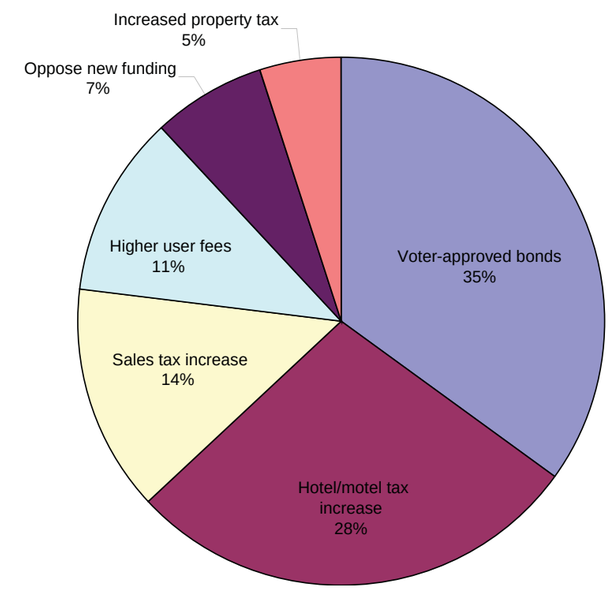
Methods of Additional Funding

In order to accomplish the various future strategies for parks and recreation, additional funding will be needed. Residents were given a list of various options and asked which method they preferred. The method receiving the highest level of preference was voter-approved bonds with 36% of the mail-out survey respondents and 37% of the online survey respondents choosing this method. The next highest rated response for both surveys was a hotel/motel tax increase. The responses are shown in the pie charts below.

Preferred Method of Additional Funding (mail-out survey)



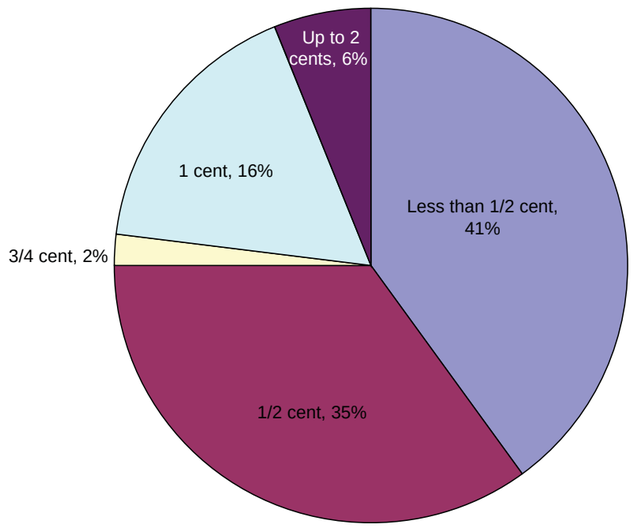
Preferred Method of Additional Funding (online survey)



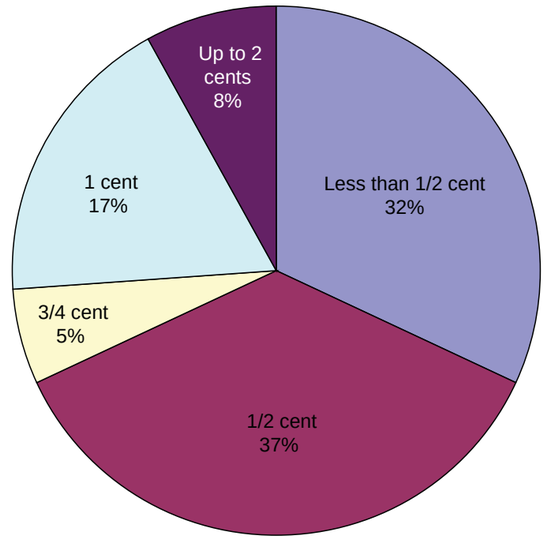
Support for Sales Tax Increase

An increase in sales tax specifically for parks and recreation improvements is the most likely method of funding after a voter-approved bond. If this method was implemented, residents were asked what was the highest amount they would support. On the mail-out, less than 1/2 cent sales tax increase received the highest level of support with 41% of residents indicating they would support this increase. The online survey results differed in that the 1/2 cent sales tax increase received the highest level of support with 37% of residents indicating they would support this increase. The results are shown in the charts below.

Most Likely Supported Sales Tax Increase (mail-out survey)



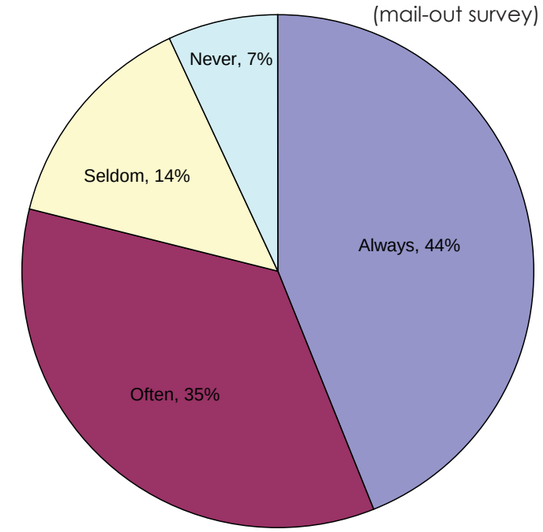
Most Likely Supported Sales Tax Increase (online survey)



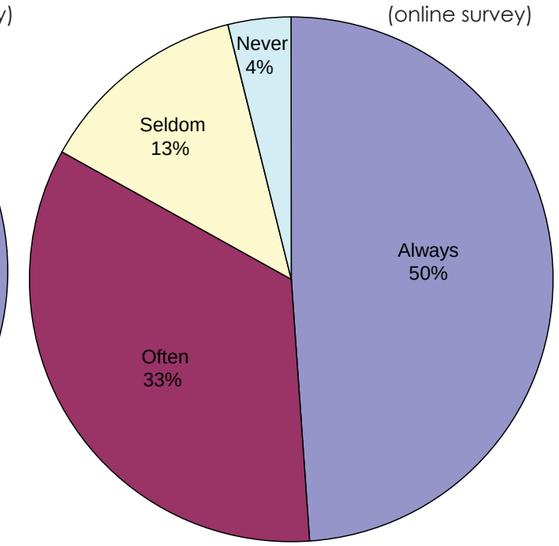
Voting in a Bond Election

Residents were asked how often they vote in a bond election. Most residents, 79% on the mail-out survey and 83% on the online survey, indicate they vote in a bond election either always or often. The results are shown in the pie chart below.

How Often Do You Vote in a Bond Election (mail-out survey)



How Often Do You Vote in a Bond Election (online survey)

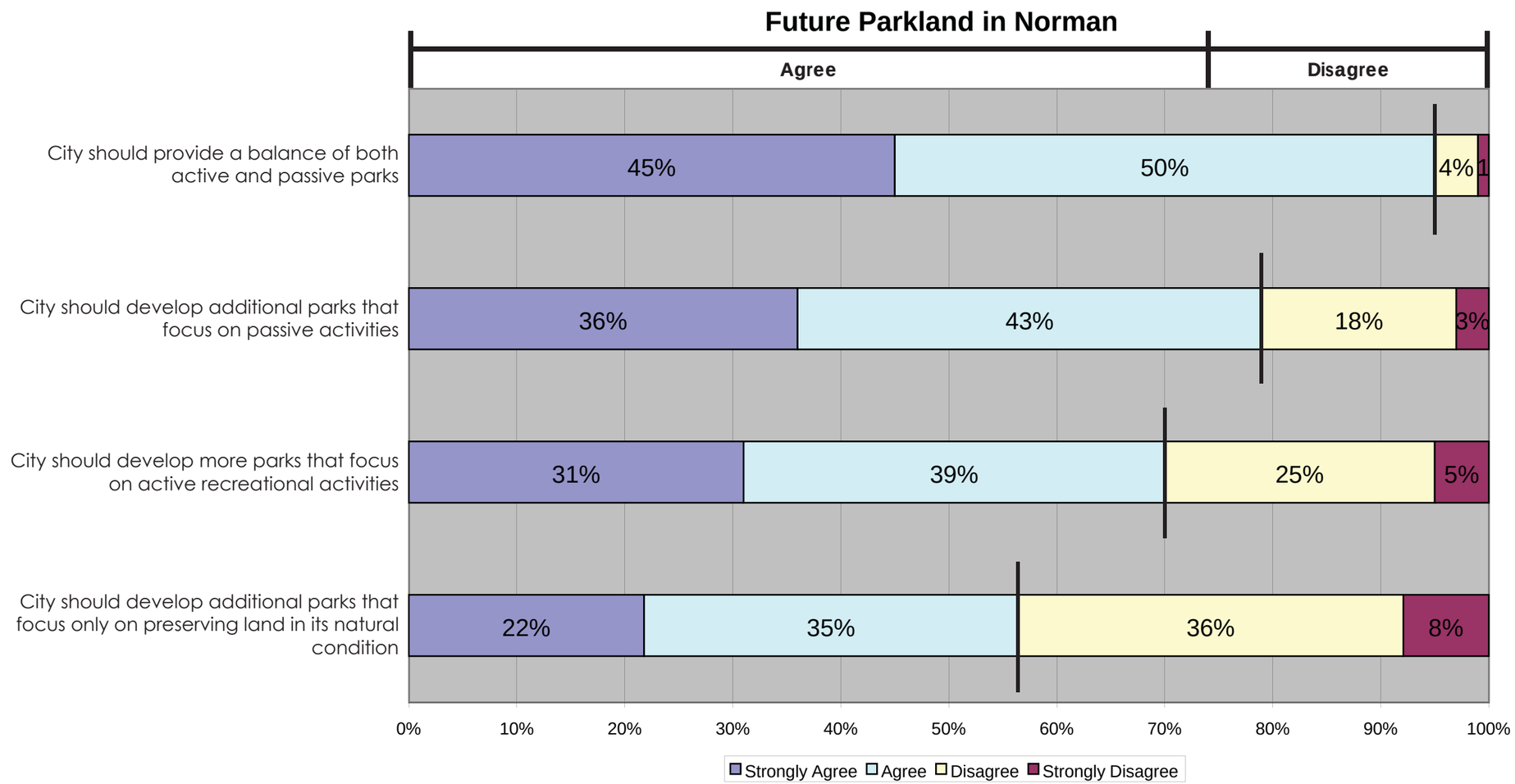


Direction for Future Parkland in Norman

Again, the online survey allows for more questions to be asked because a greater amount of space is offered. One question on the online survey asked residents whether or not they agreed with different directions the City could take regarding future parkland in Norman. A significant amount of the population, 95%, agreed or strongly agreed that Norman should provide a balance of both active and passive parks.

79% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that the City should develop additional parks that focus on passive activities such as trails, picnic areas, nature viewing areas and other non-athletic activities. Likewise, 70% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that the City should develop more parks that focused on active recreation activities such as athletic fields, play areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, and other active activities.

When asked if the City should develop additional parks that focus only on preserving the land in its natural condition, only 57% of residents either agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. This shows that while there is a desire to provide more natural parks, the residents of Norman still wish to be able to use those parks for passive activities. All results are shown in the graph to the right.

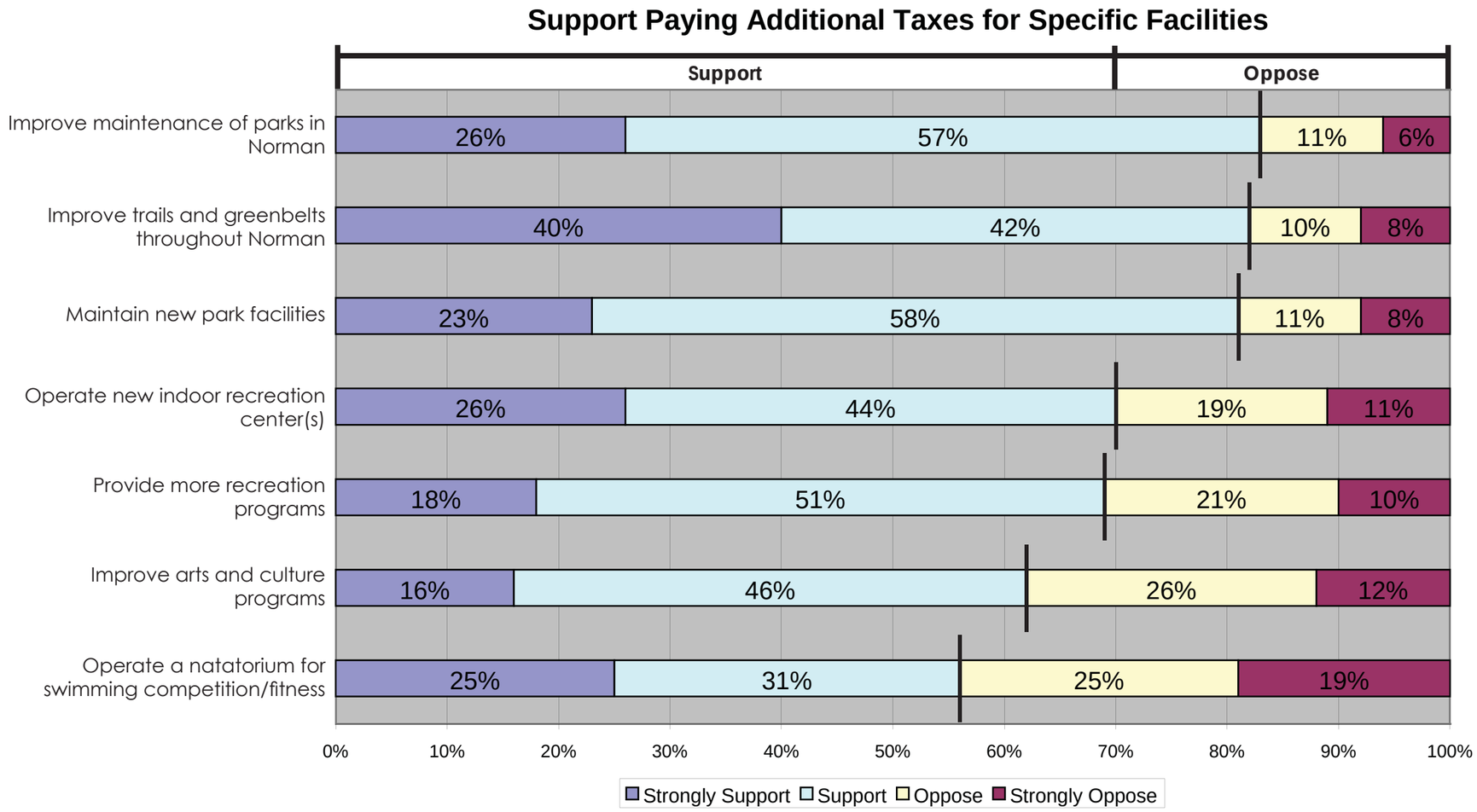


Support For Paying Additional Taxes for Specific Facilities

Also on the online survey, residents were asked how strongly they would support or oppose paying additional taxes for the construction or development of specific parks and recreation facilities. The action receiving the highest level of support was improving the maintenance of existing parks. 83% of residents would either strongly support or support paying additional taxes for this action.

The second highest rated action was improving trails and greenbelts throughout Norman. 82% of residents indicated they would strongly support or support this action by paying additional taxes. The third highest supported action was maintaining new park facilities with 81% of residents indicating they would support or strongly support paying additional taxes for this action.

All responses are shown in the bar graph to the right.



Stakeholder Needs

During this planning process, 14 stakeholder groups were interviewed to discuss the needs and desires for their specific organization. A list of the stakeholder groups and their top priority needs regarding parks and recreation are summarized in the table below.

Table 5 - 3
Demand Based Needs Assessment by Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Group	Key Needs
Aging Services	Serves many residents in the City. Meals prepared at Senior Center which is adequate for their needs. Concern over ability to continue to provide services and recreation opportunities for seniors.
Chamber of Commerce	Strong perception among business community that recreation is an important part of Norman's attractions and creates potential for economic growth. Support improvements to Norman's aging park system.
Norman Police Department	Minor problems with vandalism and graffiti, but generally crime in parks is not a serious issue in Norman.
Convention and Visitors Bureau	Similar to Chamber of Commerce comments.
Economic Development Coalition	Similar to Chamber of Commerce comments.
Football Academy	Uses fields at Griffin Park that are controlled by the Norman Youth Soccer Assoc. For a portion of the season, only one field is available. Need at least two fields for play and to allow for league growth. Griffin Park location is excellent, potential exists to expand to Frances Cate Park, south of Griffin.
Little Axe Youth Sports	Facilities at Little Axe Park need improvements (concession buildings, sidewalks, ramps). Community building is also small and needs expansion.
Norman Public Library	Potential to promote healthy lifestyle in concert with Parks and Recreation Department. New library site, if approved by voters, may be designed to incorporate community rooms, coffee shop, and outdoor areas linked to Legacy Trail.
Norman Public Schools	Concern over cost of aquatic facility, but willing to consider partnership ideas. Very open to other facility sharing ideas with Norman Parks and Recreation.
Norman Youth Soccer Association	Largest sports association in Norman. Has continued to grow steadily over the past three years. Would like to expand within Griffin Park or south of Robinson to create a regional tournament quality facility.
Optimist Club	WWII era hanger has been converted into a 5 court gym. The facility needs roofing repair, restroom and concession upgrades, improved lighting, and an HVAC system. Locaiton is excellent but gym building is dated.
Pisces	Concern over lack of indoor facility for swimming practice and competition. Very concerned over potential near-term closing of OU indoor pool and lack of access to new pool for general citizens and non-high school competitive swimmers.
Reaves Park Softball Association	Association is in good financial health. Recent improvements to facilities at Reaves Park have helped, but some additional improvements are needed to park.
YMCA	Strong membership and excellent, easily accessible location. Would like to provide satellite facility that serves southeastern areas of Norman and nearby smaller communities. Open to partnership ideas with City if feasible. Indoor pool is very popular, well used and has limited available unprogrammed time.

Demand Based on League Participation Rates

The major sports leagues and associations in Norman present their annual budget and participation rates to the Board of Parks Commissioners every year. Participation rates for the Reaves Park Softball Association, Optimist Club, Norman Youth Soccer Association, the Norman Football Academy, and the City of Nroman Youth Baseball and Softball are shown in Table 5 - 4 for the years 2005 to 2008. Some organizations report the number of teams they register while others report the number of players.

Conclusions: The Reaves Park Softball Association had steady growth since the year 2005. However the 2008 season had lower numbers than the 2007 season, both the number of teams and the number of players.

The Optimist Club offers tackle football, flag football, basketball, baseball and cheerleading. All sports have grown in participation. The participation rates shown are the combined total of all sports.

The Norman Youth Soccer Association has an increase in the number of players but fewer teams when comparing the 2008 season to the 2007 season.

The Norman Football Academy has had significant growth. This program is for adult flag football and is very popular. However, their contract only allows them use of one field at Griffin Park for their games. The league is capped out at 25 teams because of the limited number of fields. In order for this league to continue growing, it must have access to additional fields for games.

The City of Norman Parks and Recreation Department Youth Baseball and Softball League has experienced a decline in the number of participants over the past few years. This is most likely because of the growth in the Optimist Club which offers a competitive league for the same age groups. The City league is only considered recreational.

Table 5 - 4
League Participation Growth

League		2005	2006	2007	2008	Overall Percent Growth
Reaves Park Softball Association	(teams)	184	198	219	214	16% since 2005
	(number of players)	2,488	2,668	2,850	2,700	8.5% since 2005
Optimist Club	(number of players)	no data	no data	1,500	1,670	11% since 2007
Norman Youth Soccer Association	(teams)	no data	no data	167	163	-2% since 2007
	(number of players)	1,680	no data	1,593	1,755	4.5% since 2005
Norman Football Academy	(teams)	18	20	25	25	39% since 2005
City of Norman Youth Baseball and Softball	(number of players)	2,041	2,042	1,928	1,759	-14% since 2005

Resource Based Needs Assessment

The resource based assessment addresses key physical features of the City that may be incorporated as potential recreational opportunities. Both man-made and natural features can be considered. The City of Norman has a number of landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreational use and open space preservation where feasible. These are the creek system, Lake Thunderbird, rural landscapes, historic/cultural landscapes, utility right-of-ways, and railroad right-of-way.

Creek/River System

Norman has a very extensive creek and river system flowing through the City. Recommendations regarding the preservation of greenbelts throughout Norman are made in the recent Storm Water Master Plan and Greenbelt Plan. The citizen comment findings included in this planning process strongly mirror and endorse the findings of those master plans.

The City should make serious efforts to secure functional corridors along drainage ways in the City. The key criteria should be:

- Preserve the larger of the 100 year floodplain or a 300 foot wide corridor along undeveloped or underdeveloped river areas. Ensure flood control and recreation opportunities by preventing unrestricted encroachment and destruction of the forested areas along all rivers, creeks and their tributaries.
- Acquire and preserve, where feasible, drainage streams that can create linkage to adjacent neighborhoods. Preserve more than just the bare minimum for drainage purposes.
- Work with landowners and homeowners to create linear vehicular and pedestrian parkways along the edges of the floodplain, rather than backing lots up to wooded areas. Such single loaded parkways open the river and creek areas up to the benefit of informal enjoyment of all residents. Where feasible this concept should be retrofitted to existing conditions.
- Create linear trail segments in phases. Identify key trail linkages to develop first. With proper City support, funding and marketing, these trails will become the impetus for the development of similar trail connections.
- Acquire land that is regularly subjected to flooding, remove all improvements and restore the flood area to a healthy and functional ecosystem. This means returning the floodplain to the river and creeks with the benefit of flood control and recreation access.

Bishop Creek, one of the many creeks with potential to become a linear park

Developing rivers, creeks and drainage corridors will assist in answering the need for linear parks in the City. This will also provide the opportunity for the development of hike and bike trails which rated consistently as one of the most important recreation facilities to provide in the City.

Two major corridors that are recommended for preservation include the Little River and the Canadian River corridors. The Little River corridor flows along the northern portion of Norman, connecting Ruby Grant Park to Lake Thunderbird. The preservation of this greenbelt is important for flood control but also provides a significant opportunity for a linear park and major trail.

Little River corridor

The Canadian River is the southern bounty of Norman's city limits. Preservation of this river corridor provides the opportunity for a river park that is unique to Norman and also trails. Many neighborhood parks in Norman are already adjacent to the Canadian River floodplain. These parks can later serve as trailheads and access points to the Canadian River park and trail.

Lake Thunderbird

In addition to well water, Lake Thunderbird is the primary water supply for Norman. The lake and the property surrounding it are owned and controlled by the State of Oklahoma and operated as a State Park. To ensure the quality of water and the preservation of the lake, little development has been done surrounding the lake. Lake Thunderbird State Park currently offers camping, RV camping, picnicking, a marina, a nature center, few cabins and boat ramps.

Historical structures in Norman

Rural Landscapes

Rural landscapes may be described as areas of natural vegetation, wind row trees established along fence lines, agricultural lands with limited cultivation and domestic animals, as well as farmsteads. Visual rural landscapes are defined by long and open vistas, typical of the Oklahoma landscape. Such landscapes may be experienced in various ways, including the use of hike and bike trials and driving along rural roads. To be effective, it requires expansive lands seen over a distance uncluttered by development, signs, and utilities. This may be achieved with winding roads, well defined views and strong controls over signs and building structure placement.

A manner in which the rural experience can be maintained without compromising development opportunities is through the protection of floodplains along creeks and rivers, and the preservation of open space by applying principles of Conservation Planning and Design. These principles cluster homes closer together, even in 10 acre sites, leaving the remaining lands in a natural state. Key corridors include Highway 9 to Little Axe, Franklin Road, Rock Creek Road, and Alameda near Lake Thunderbird. One of the most basic principles is to demand single loaded roads whereby roads serve as access to developed areas yet at the same time provide rural experiences through views on the surrounding landscapes.

Historical/Cultural Landscapes

The Cultural Landscape Foundation defines a cultural landscape as "a geographic area that includes cultural and natural resources associated with an historic event, activity, person, or group of people. Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural land to homesteads with small front yards. They can be man-made expressions of visual and spatial relationships that include grand estates, farmlands, public gardens and parks, college campuses, cemeteries, scenic highways, and industrial sites. Cultural landscapes are works of art, texts and narratives of cultures, and expressions of regional identity. They also exist in relationship to their ecological contexts." [1]

There are several places throughout Norman that have tremendous cultural value such as Andrews Park with the WPA made amphitheater and drainage channels, and the Norman & Cleveland County Historic Museum. Other city owned cultural facilities include the Sooner Theatre, Firehouse Art Center, and Santa Fe Depot. However, the recognition and preservation of individual sites and structures are not enough. It is important to ensure the protection of the landscape as a whole, which is essential to evoke the quality and essence of the history of the area. Once a site or feature is disconnected from its context, a tremendously important part of the cultural experience is lost.

Much of the surrounding area around Norman is rich in history and culture. Key features include various historic homesteads, older barn structures, agricultural and ranch lands, outbuildings, older river and creek crossing locations, and a variety of historical sites.

Older creek crossing on the Imhoff Creek

Right-of-Ways

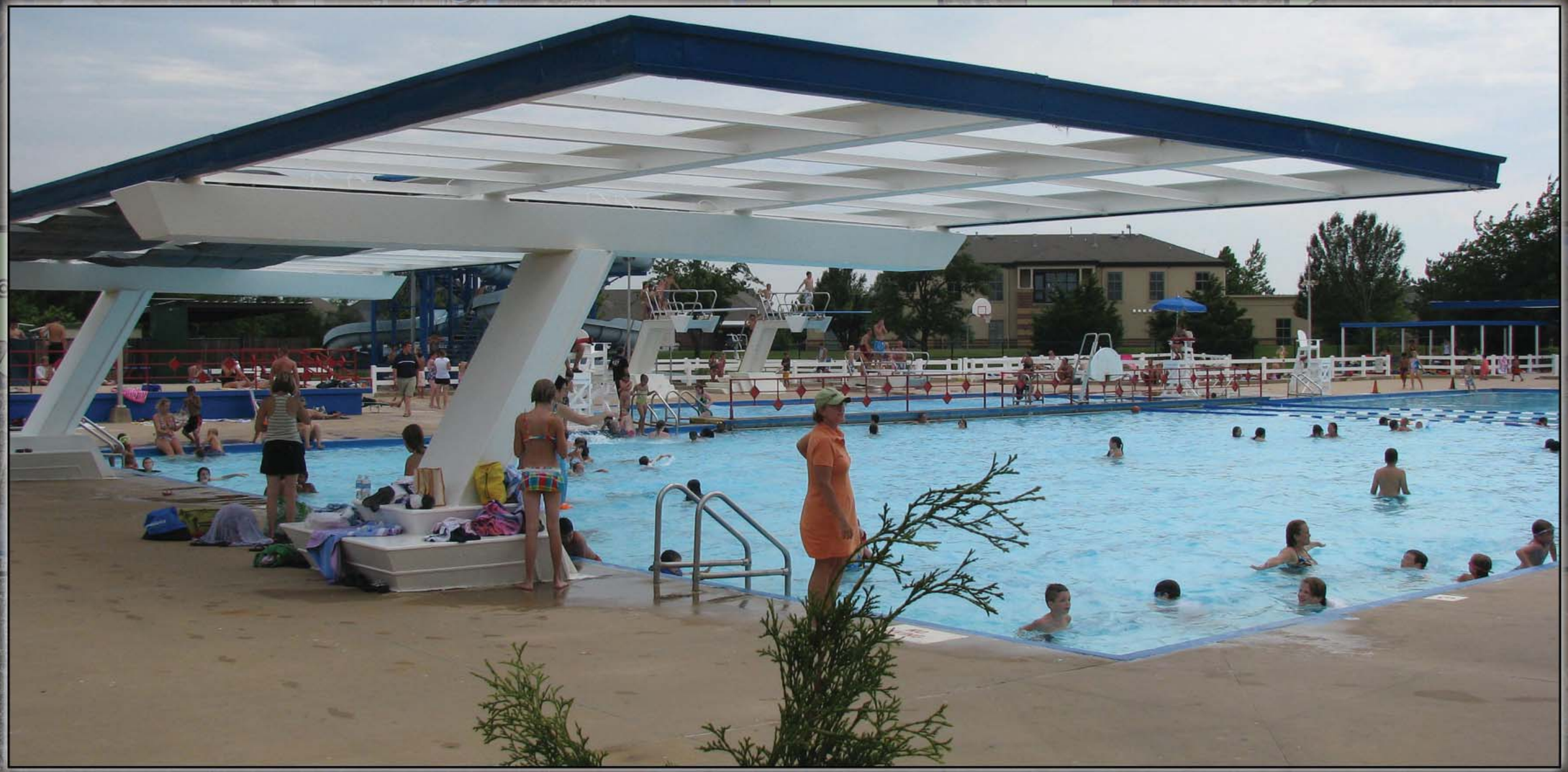
Utility right-of-ways are linear in nature which makes them ideal for hike and bike trails. Developing trails along utility right-of-ways and other easements should continue to be a top priority over the next ten years.

Railroad right-of-ways have two characteristics that also make them ideal for trails: its linear nature and its gentle topography change. An added aesthetic value of railroad right-of-ways is that trees along its length often provide special character and natural interest.

The City of Norman currently has a portion of the Legacy Trail project started which runs parallel to the railroad through the middle of the community. Expanding this project so that the trail continues along much of the entire length of Norman alongside the railroad is a continued priority over the next ten years.

Legacy Trail

[1] The Cultural Landscape Foundation. (2009). *Cultural landscapes defined.* Retrieved August 27, 2009, from Web site: http://www.tclf.org/whatis.htm

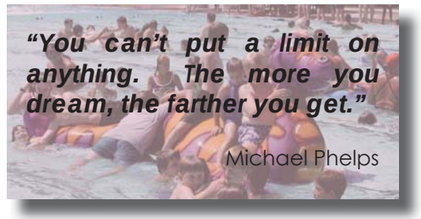


Chapter 6

Aquatics Facilities Recommendations

Chapter 6

Aquatics Facilities Recommendations



Introduction

Aquatic recreation is an integral part of establishing and sustaining a higher quality of life in Norman while highlighting an image and character that is unique to the City. To meet this goal, aquatic services will benefit the community as follows:

- Providing social benefits by connecting people within the community regardless of background, ability or income
- Providing economic benefits by improving the quality of life in the community and helping to attract residents and businesses to the City
- Providing benefits to individuals and the community by promoting physical fitness and teaching citizens how to swim
- Providing safe and healthy recreation by developing outdoor and indoor aquatic opportunities

Successful planning for public aquatic facilities relies on a process that includes community comment, demographic projections and appropriate goal setting. This parks and recreation master plan incorporates each of those items. This section provides survey results, focus group comments and aquatic goals identified during the report preparation.

This section also outlines options or alternatives, based on community preferences, demographics, identified goals and aquatic options that are appropriate for Norman to consider.

This comprehensive system wide master plan indicates the need to update the City's aquatic facilities. However, an additional detailed study is required to determine the precise level of improvements to be developed, the cost of those improvements, and the funding mechanisms to be used by the City.

Existing Condition of Aquatic Facilities in Norman Today

Norman currently has one City operated outdoor swimming pool at Westwood Park and two splash pad features at Andrews Park and Colonial Estates Park. The Westwood Pool is 17,000 square feet and its existing features include:

- 50 meter pool
- Diving pool
- Plunge pool
- Wading pool
- Junior pool
- 2 water slides
- 4 diving boards
- Shade structures
- Bathhouse
- Filter building
- Deck

The existing Westwood Pool in Norman offers a typical public aquatic program. Lessons start in the morning, with the pool open to the public around mid-day. Swim team practice also occurs, but no swim meets are held at Westwood Pool.

A typical season attendance is approximately 30,000. A peak day may be 750 patrons, with an average day of 300 +/-. This is equivalent to a participation rate of a quarter of one percent. Several surrounding communities also use the pool. Citizen comments do indicate that the pool is packed or very busy on occasion.

For a community of 110,000 plus several surrounding communities, and at a more typical average participation rate of 2%, the expected potential pool attendance would be closer to 2,500 participants per day. Either the market area offers several other aquatic choices, such as small HOA operated pools, or the current pool does not offer

what the Norman residents want. Swimming is an untapped resource in Norman, and a new or renovated outdoor pool appears to have a significant potential market. An indoor pool should also be a future goal for swimming in Norman.

The Westwood site does not allow for expansion of the pool. During the summer season, Westwood Pool reaches capacity many days; however because of the size of the pool less than 1% of the population is served on an average day. For a pool to be operationally successful, the average daily use rate should be at least 3% of the population. In Table 6 - 1, the average daily use rate for Norman and other cities is compared. Norman has the lowest average daily use rate.

Table 6 - 1
Average Daily Use Rate of Pools

City	Population	Season Attendance	Avg. Daily Use Rate
Clive, IA	12,855	68,346	6.25%
Derby, KS	17,807	132,295	8.25%
Fort Dodge, IA	35,000	119,000	4.00%
Cedar Falls, IA	36,145	117,689	3.83%
Ankeny, IA	36,161	74,062	2.41%
West Des Moines, IA	46,403	136,198	3.45%
Norman, OK	**103,000**	**28,484**	**0.31%**

2008 season. 85 day IA pool season, 90 day season for others

The splash pads in Andrews Park and Colonial Estates Park are in excellent condition. However, as shown in the previous chapter, there is a need for two to three more splash pads in Norman. These could be stand alone features similar to the one in Andrews Park, or they could be built as a component of an aquatic center.

Westwood Pool Evaluation

The existing Westwood Pool is nearing the end of its expected life cycle. Even with renovation of features, the pool equipment and structure needs will increase as the pool ages further. Features at Westwood Pool are as follows:

- ► Recirculation systems - **poor**
- ► Pool structure configuration - **poor**
- ► Pool gutters - **poor**
- ► Water treatment - **poor**
- ► Water depths - limited
- ► Pool features - limited
- ► Shade - limited
- ► Support buildings - fair
- ► Parking - fair

If the pool were rebuilt on its existing location at Westwood Park then it would be limited in the features it could offer. If a family aquatic center was constructed in another location in Norman, it could offer more features and require less operating subsidy from the City. These options will be explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Before considering a renovation option, the existing Westwood Pool condition needs to be evaluated. Both the physical condition and the ability of the current pool to fulfill the aquatic program needs of the community will be considered.

The initial Westwood facility was built in 1966 and included a 50 meter lap pool, a diving area, a junior pool and a wading pool. Support facilities included a bathhouse and a filter building. Two water slides and a plunge pool were added in 1993.

The pool shells are reinforced concrete with joints constructed with keyways and PVC water stop. The overall pool structures are in fairly good condition. A hammer test was conducted on the basin structures and found few areas of deterioration. Several areas of lane marker tile sounded delaminated in the deeper areas of the lap pool.

The lap pool is 164 feet-4 inches long and 75 feet-2 inches wide. The water depths range from 3 feet at each end and along the north side to 5 feet at the middle of the south wall. These lengths and depths do not allow competitive swimming. The lanes are too long and the end wall depths are too shallow. Training and instruction can certainly take place in the current pool, with the exception of starting platform practice. Racing dives should not be allowed from any place in the lap pool.

Total pool sizes are as follows:

► Lap pool	12,352 sq ft
► Diving pool	2,454 sq ft
► Wading pool	784 sq ft
► Junior pool	1,000 sq ft
► Plunge pool	1,032 sq ft
► **Total water surface area**	**17,622 sq ft**

The diving area is connected to the lap pool by a concrete wall with several holes, which serve to aid overall pool water recirculation. Two one-meter and two three-meter diving boards are in use. A range of diving clearance standards exist. FINA, NCAA, US Diving and NFSHSAA are typically used for competition diving. Most state health departments recommend using these standards for public pools. A key diving board manufacturer labels their boards for use on pools with these standards. These "competitive" standards are appropriate for public pools. Consider that a competitive diver is executing an athletic maneuver, is being coached, and is familiar with the board and pool. Athletes in general have not used alcohol and are not trying to "show boat" when they dive. That same cannot be said of the typical diver who is injured. If anything, a public pool diving area should be deeper than a competitive pool.

For this evaluation, the Westwood diving clearances were compared with the above mentioned standards. In addition, the Westwood pool was compared with Oklahoma regulations. Board separation is adequate, exceeding minimum standards. Water depth at the plummet (end of the diving board) is approximately 10 feet 5 inches, but should be 11 feet-six inches minimum. The three-meter boards are even further out of compliance.

There is another pool design reference, ANSI/NSPI. This voluntary design

guide lists a shallower diving area than the competitive standards mentioned earlier. It is not recommended to use those clearances for a public pool.

It is recommended that the three-meter boards be removed. Instead the one-meter boards and diving stands should be replaced with low boards, and a shorter, stiffer board. This recommendation can be difficult to accept, particularly if no serious diving injuries have occurred, but should be implemented.

The pool gutter is concrete with periodic drains. Several of the drains appear partially plugged, thus restricting the top water recirculation. The pool paint coating is in fair condition. When repainting is scheduled, it is recommended that sandblasting be done to remove all the existing coating, followed by repairing deteriorated areas prior to repainting. The tile lane markers are in fairly good condition, except near the deeper area along the diving wall separation. Tapping the tiles gave a hollow sound, indicating separation of the tile from the concrete.

Additional safety markings are needed around the pools, as required by State regulations.

The wading pool is located in a separate fenced area and provides shallow water for toddlers. At the center of the pool is a circular concrete piece that contains play features. Fixed shade structures are in place at both ends of the lap pool. Additional shade is suggested for the comfort of the patrons.

Two water slides are in use and riders end in the separate plunge pool. Adjacent to the slide area is the water treatment and pump equipment for the slides and plunge pool. Separate water treatment facilities are provided for the water slides and the plunge pool. The filters are vertical pressure sand and the pumps are end suction centrifugal. The chemicals are calcium hypochlorite and carbon dioxide.

The main water treatment system combines water from the lap, diving, junior and wading pools. A four cell gravity sand filter system (also referred to as a rapid sand filter) treats the original facility water. The filters appear to be well maintained, with no visible signs of mud balls or short circuiting. The wash water troughs are in good condition. The tight quarters in the filter room make access for operation and maintenance very difficult. The large gate valves require ongoing maintenance and can be challenging to operate. They are the appropriate valve type; however, they cannot be opened or closed too quickly which could upset the sand layers in the filter. Calcium hypochlorite and carbon dioxide are the key chemicals used for disinfection and pH control, respectively. A boiler exists in the filter room, but is not functional so heated pool water is not available.

Pool piping includes copper, cast iron and Transite (cement asbestos). Transite is also used as the headers in the main pool filters. Pool volume, not including the slide plunge pool, is approximately 518,000 gallons. The filter capacity at 3 gpm/sq ft is 1,222 gpm. If an 8 hour turnover is used for the lap and diving pools and a 2 hour turnover is used for the wading and junior pools, the combined recirculation rate would be 1,196 gpm.

Aquatics Goals for Norman

Many pool related comments and suggestions were generated during the master planning process which will be discussed later in this Chapter. Significant findings include:

- Day care providers are an important pool user during the summer season. Provide features that allow their continued access to an outdoor pool.
- An indoor pool has potential partners.
- Competition features should be included with a new pool.
- Plan space with a new community center adequate for an indoor pool.
- Pool amenities for the elderly are very important.
- Features for therapy and exercise are also very important.

The goals are reasonable and feasible as part of a responsible aquatic master plan for Norman. The key focus for these goals is on serving the entire community and improving aquatic programs and opportunities in the community. The stated goals are appropriate for public pool planning.

Based on the public comments, the following list of aquatic goals for this master plan was developed.

Aquatics Goals

- Provide for the aquatic needs for the Norman community
- Develop aquatic facilities that enhance the quality of life in Norman
- Provide aquatic facilities that serve all age groups within the community
- Consider a renovation plan, not just repairs, for the existing pool
- Consider a second outdoor pool
- Consider an indoor pool plan as part of a future recreation center phase
- Create a new pool sized to serve the needs of the community as well as allowing use by neighboring communities
- Enhance the aquatic opportunities for elderly patrons – consider lap areas, shade features, warm water therapy and separate adult areas in the pool or on the deck
- Develop an operation plan for reduced subsidy operation
- Provide competition features in the new outdoor pool
- Do not promote an oversized "regional" pool

Kids enjoying an aquatic center with spraygrounds and play features

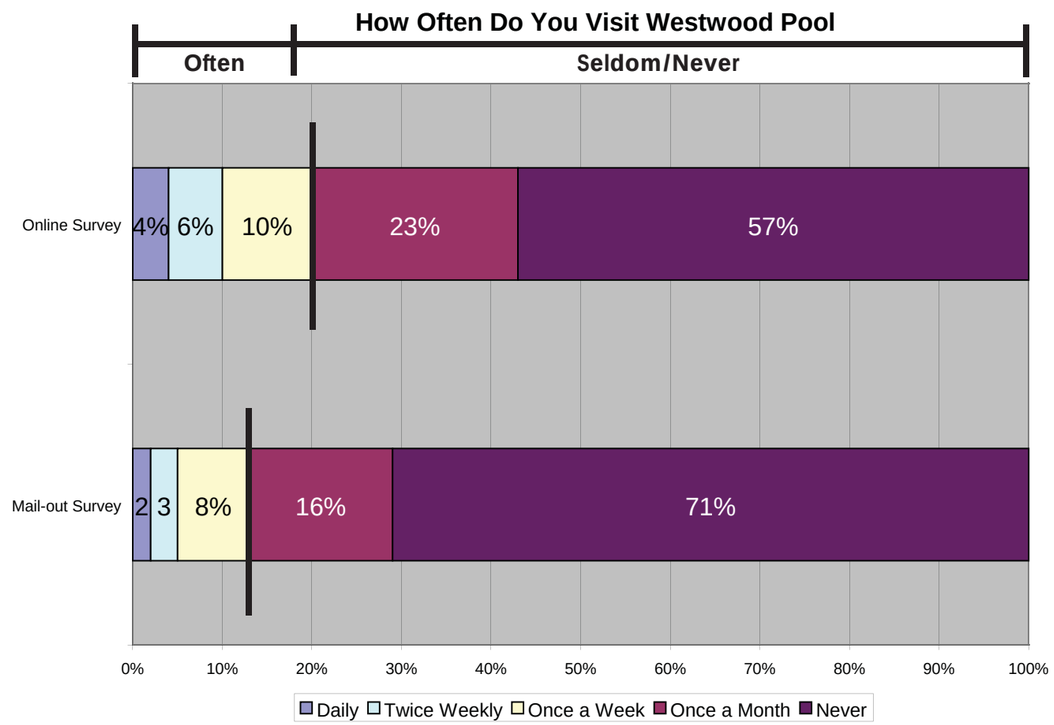
Public Input Regarding Aquatics

During the public input process and on both surveys, several questions were about aquatics and swimming. Because the only City owned swimming pool in Norman has reached the end of its expected life cycle, aquatics in Norman is at a crucial turning point. Decisions need to be made now that will guide aquatics and swimming improvements. Public input regarding aquatics and swimming was included in this process so that City staff and elected officials know which direction to take regarding aquatics and swimming.

Key findings from the public input process regarding aquatics include:

- 53% of residents would use a new pool
- 13% of residents indicate a pool is missing in their area of Norman
- 27% of mail-out survey respondents and 34% of online survey respondents indicate they use Westwood Pool
- Swimming was listed as the number one activity by 20% of the online survey respondents and the number two activity by 40% of the mail-out survey respondents.

When the residents were asked whether or not they had visited the Westwood Pool within the past 12 months, only 25% of the mail-out survey respondents and 37% of the online survey respondents answered yes. This was later confirmed in the survey when the residents were asked how frequently they utilize the Westwood Pool during the summer season. The results to this question for both the mail-out and online surveys are shown to the right. Only 13% of the mail-out survey respondents and 20% of the online survey respondents indicated that they visit Westwood Pool once a week or more. 71% of the mail-out survey respondents and 57% of the online survey respondents indicated they never utilize the Westwood Pool during the summer season.

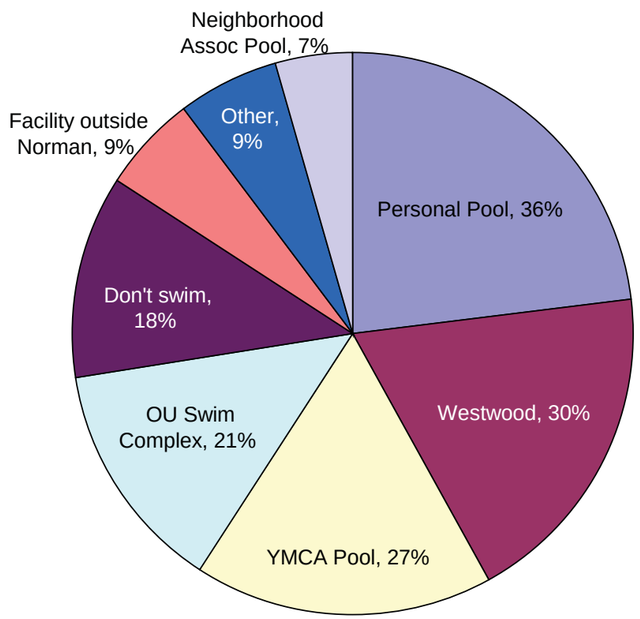


Existing Westwood Pool

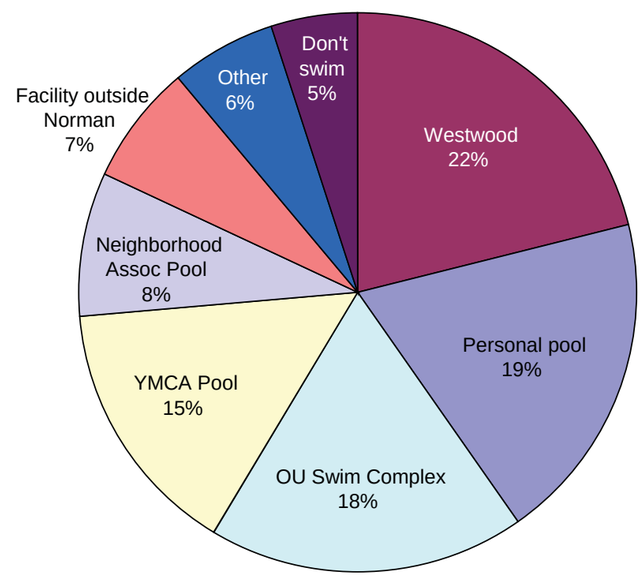
Where Do Residents Swim

Residents were given a list of different swimming facilities in and around Norman. They were then asked to check all the facilities they utilize when they or their family want to swim or participate in aquatic activities. For the mail-out survey, the most commonly utilized facility was a personal swimming pool with a 36% response rate. The second most commonly utilized facility was Westwood Pool with a 30% response rate. These two top responses were opposite for the online survey. The number one response on the online survey was Westwood Pool with a 22% response rate. The second highest rated facility was a personal swimming pool with a 19% response rate. The OU swim complex and the YMCA indoor pool were the next two most frequently used facilities. Less then 10% of the respondents in both surveys indicated that they used facilities outside of Norman. The results are shown in the charts below.

What Facility Do You Utilize to Swim (mail-out survey)



What Facility Do You Utilize to Swim (online survey)



Participation in Activities When Using a Pool

Residents were also asked what activities they usually participate in when visiting a pool. Knowing this allows the City to begin to program for future pools with all the features and amenities needed to participate in those activities.

The responses to both the mail-out and online surveys were somewhat similar. The number one activity on the mail-out survey was relaxing/sunbathing with 63% of residents indicating they normally do this activity when at a pool. This was followed by recreation for adults with a 45% response rate and then recreation for youth with a 35% response rate.

The online survey listed recreation for adults as the number one activity with a 21% response rate. This was then followed by relaxing/sunbathing with a 20% response rate; and the third highest activity was recreation for youth with a 17% response rate. The results of both surveys are shown to the right.

Swimming for fitness was a popular choice in both surveys. Competition swimming was chosen by a small number of respondents at 3% in the mail-out survey and 4% in the online survey.

Mail-out Survey

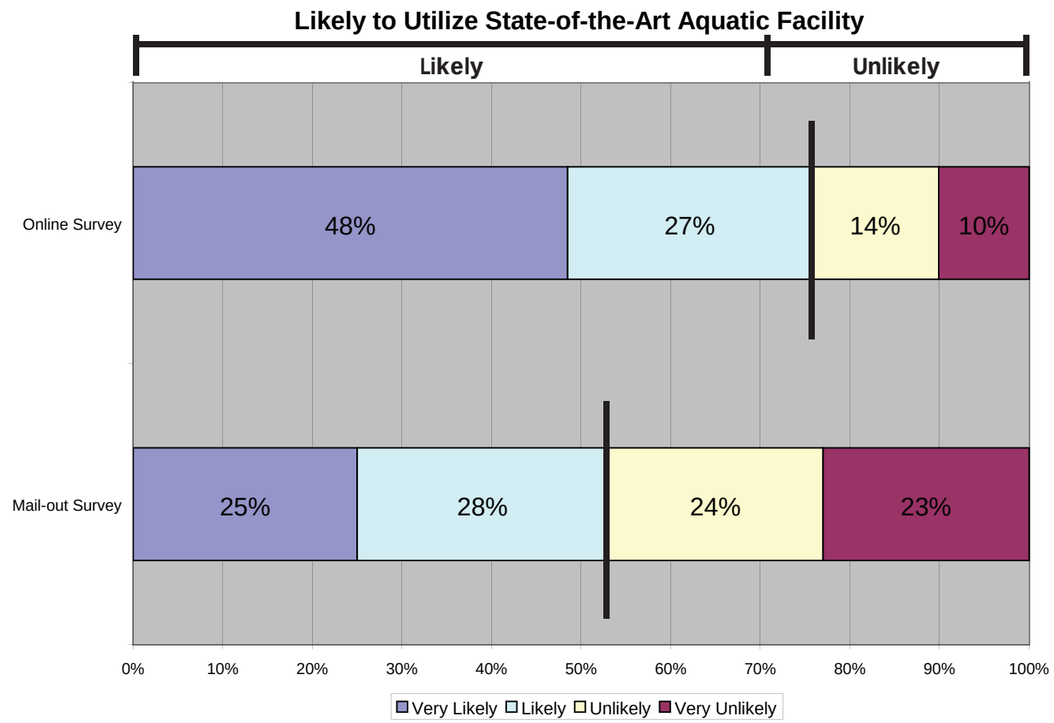
Relax/sunbathe	63%
Recreation (adult)	45%
Recreation (youth)	35%
Fitness/lap swimming	31%
Learn to swim (youth)	22%
Water aerobics	20%
Therapeutic recreation	18%
Other	6%
Water safety/Red Cross cert.	3%
Swim team/compete	3%
Learn to swim (adult)	1%

Online Survey

Recreation (adult)	21%
Relax/sunbathe	20%
Recreation (youth)	17%
Fitness/lap swimming	14%
Learn to swim (youth)	9%
Therapeutic recreation	6%
Water aerobics	5%
Swim team/compete	4%
Water safety/Red Cross cert.	2%
Learn to swim (adult)	1%
Other	1%

Likely to Utilize a State-of-the-Art Aquatic Facility

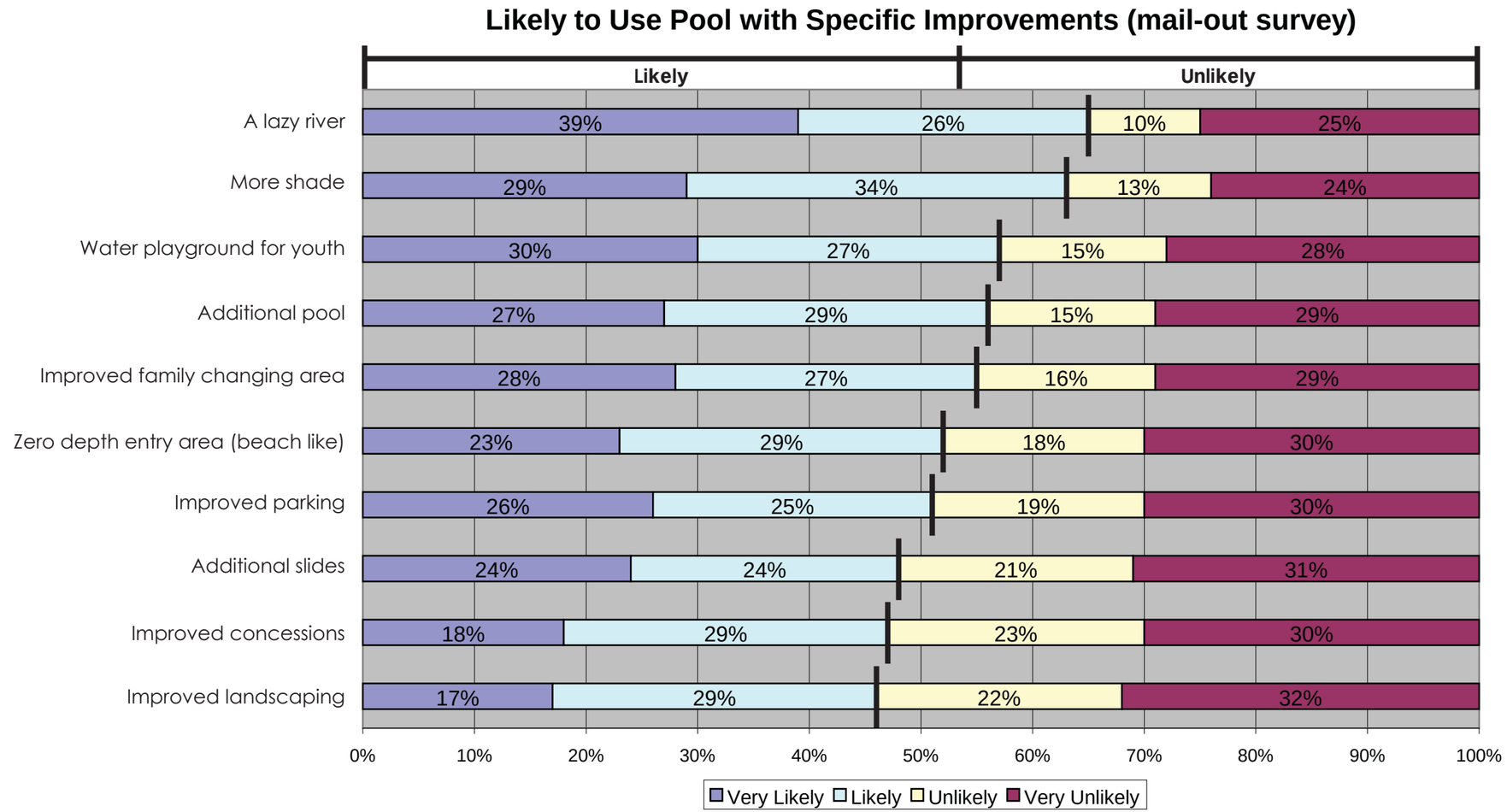
Survey participants were asked how likely or unlikely they would be to use a new state-of-the-art aquatic facility if the City were to construct one. A large portion of the population for both the mail-out and online surveys indicated they would likely use the new facility. 53% of the mail-out survey respondents and 75% of the online survey respondents indicated they would be likely or very likely to utilize the new facility. This is important because it shows that there is a potentially large segment of Norman's population that is interested in aquatics that the City is not currently reaching.



Different features that could be offered at a state-of-the-art outdoor aquatic center.

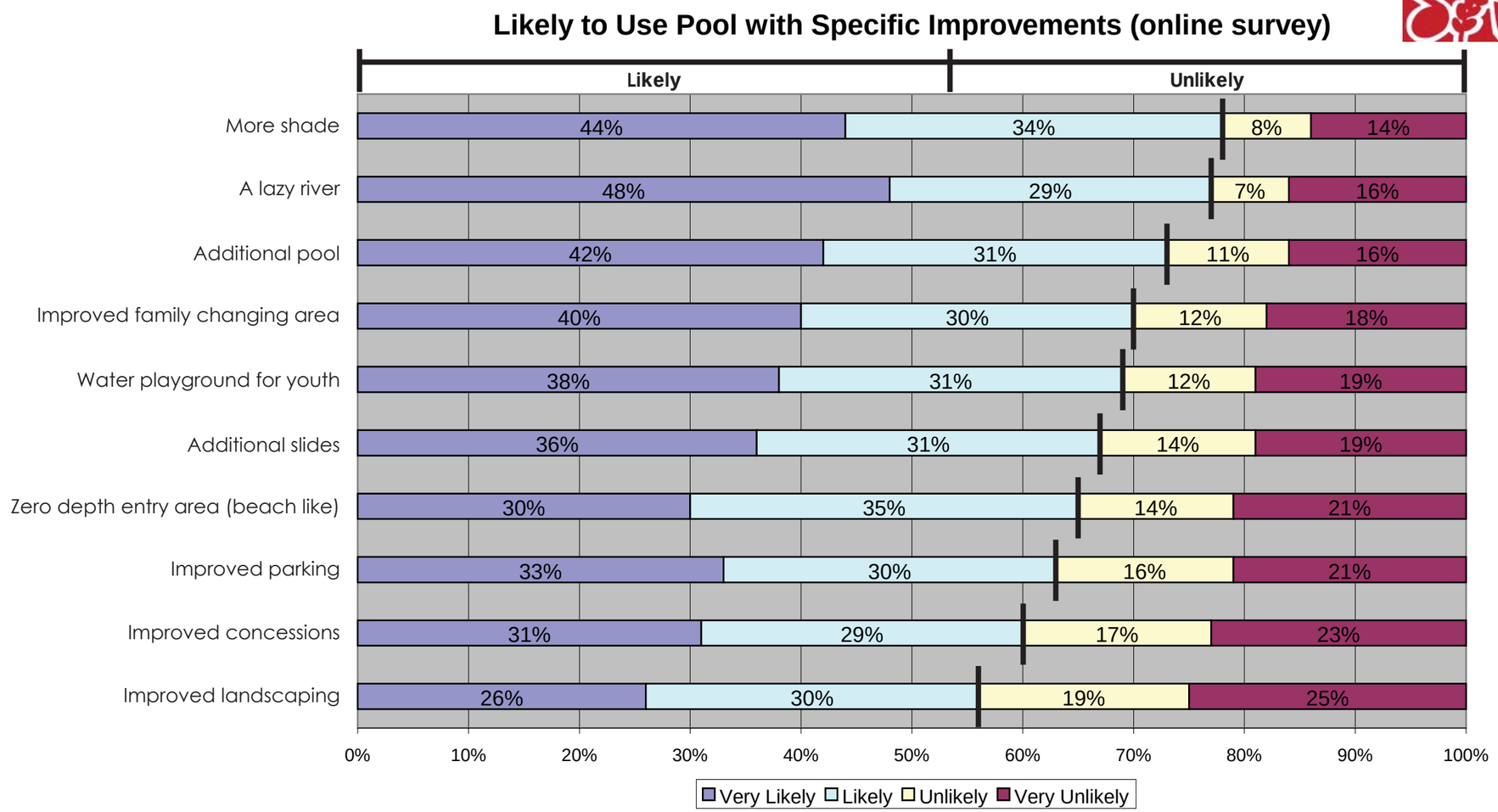
Potential Pool Features

A state-of-the-art aquatic complex can include many different options. The residents were given a list of different potential features that could be constructed into a future aquatic center. They were then asked to check how likely or unlikely they would use the swimming pool if each of those features was added. The number one feature on the mail-out survey that would most likely increase utilization was adding a lazy river. 65% of the residents indicated they would be likely to utilize a new City swimming pool if this feature was included. The results of the mail-out survey are shown in the graph to the right.



Potential Pool Features

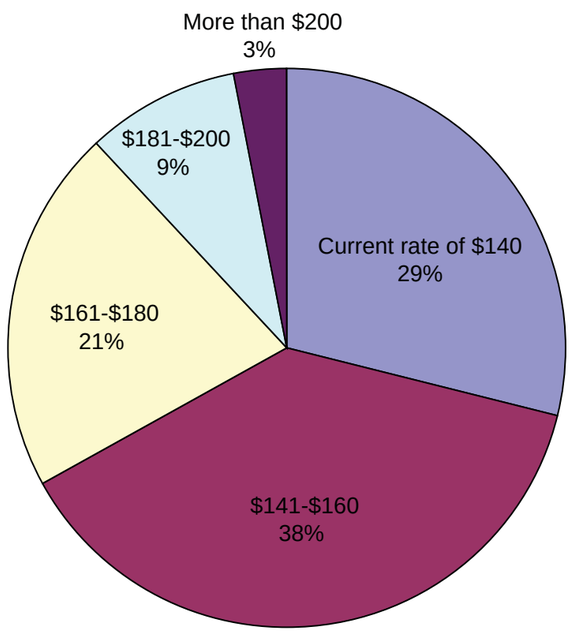
The same question was asked on the online survey with the same features offered. The highest rated feature on the online survey was more shade. 78% of the online survey respondents indicated they would be more likely to utilize a City owned pool if there was more shade. The second highest response was a lazy river. 77% of the online survey respondents indicated they would more likely use the pool if a lazy river was added. The results from the online survey are shown in the graph to the right.



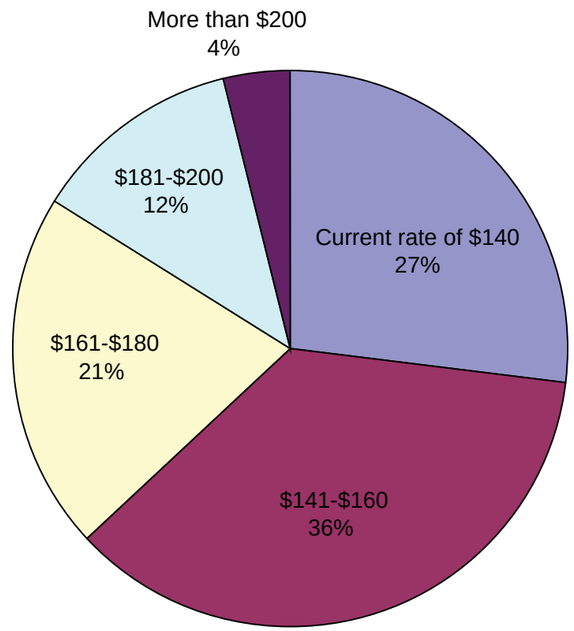
Expected Amount to Pay for Improved State-of-the-Art Aquatic Facility

Because a new facility will be significantly higher in quality and have more features, the charge for admission may have to be higher. Survey respondents were asked what they think is a reasonable amount to pay for admission to a new aquatic complex. The current rate of a family season pass to Westwood Pool is $140. On both the mail-out survey and the online the price range receiving the highest amount of responses was $141 to $160. This shows that a large portion of the population expects to pay a little more for a newer and better facility; however, the fee should not increase substantially. The results for each of the price range options and the percentage of residents expecting to pay that range are shown in the charts below.

Highest Amount You Would Expect to Pay (mail-out survey)



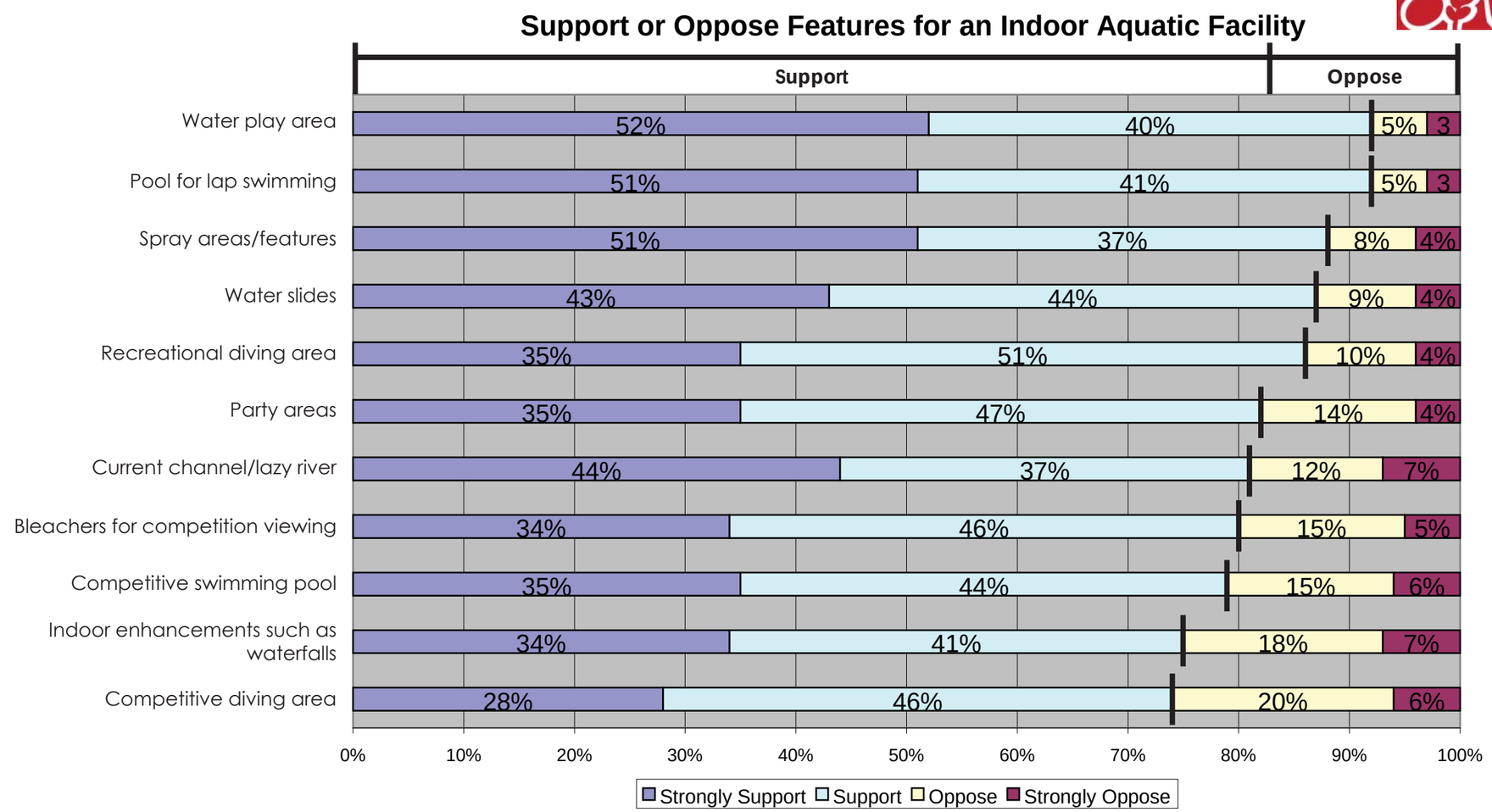
Highest Amount You Would Expect to Pay (online survey)



Different features that could be offered at a state-of-the-art outdoor aquatic center.

Indoor Aquatic Facility

Residents who took the online survey were asked how strongly they would support or oppose different features being constructed as part of an indoor aquatic center. The two features that received the highest level of support were a water play area and a pool for lap swimming. For both features, 92% of the survey respondents indicated they would support or strongly support these features. A competitive swimming pool was ranked nine out of eleven features and a competitive diving area was ranked last in terms of level of support. Nonetheless, nearly two-thirds of the respondents said they would support those features. The results from this question are shown in the graph to the right.



Potential Types of Aquatic Facilities in Norman

The hot summer climate in Norman makes swimming a very popular activity and an important part of the recreation picture in the City. Three ingredients should be considered as components of aquatics. These are an outdoor family aquatic center, water spray play areas, and an indoor natatorium/ aquatic center.

The outdoor family aquatic center - Interest in pools has evolved from the traditional pool with a diving board and a shallow area for active play. To remain popular, pools today must offer features that are interesting and appealing. The aquatic center typically combines a series of spray features, large water slides, a zero depth "beach" area, and lap lanes for fitness and swim lessons. Aquatic facilities also include both outdoor and indoor rental facilities for parties and special events. High quality concession areas and changing facilities round out the typical facility.

Outdoor aquatic center in Round Rock, TX

Outdoor aquatic center in Cedar Falls, IA

Outdoor aquatic center in Ardmore, OK

Outdoor aquatic center in Pella, IA

Outdoor aquatic center in Edmond, OK

Flow rider

Lap lanes

Zero depth "beach" entry

Different features that could be offered at a state-of-the-art outdoor aquatic center.

Play features

Lazy river

Toddler slides

Water spraygrounds or play features - Spraygrounds typically have no water depth, and involve spray play features on a self draining surface. Since there is no water depth, lifeguards and other safety staff are typically not needed. The water play features are self starting and can be timed to operate on a 5 to 10 minute cycle. The features can be combined so that water requirements can vary from as little as 10 gallons of water per minute to over 100 gallons per minute with very large bucket dumpers. Because no staff is posted at these facilities, most cities typically do not charge admission for such centers, choosing instead to absorb the water and electrical costs. Spraygrounds are often themed to respond to local cultural themes. In some cases, water spraygrounds are also included with swimming pools as an added attraction. Spray areas typically operate on city water, or recycle water through a filtration system, which adds to the operational cost of the facility but reduces water usage. Spraygrounds vary in cost from $350,000 to almost $1,000,000 for sophisticated facilities with complex and decorative features.

Andrews Park splash pad

Examples of spraygrounds

Examples of indoor aquatic centers and natatoriums

Indoor natatorium/aquatic center - Indoor facilities are typically sold as having longer operating seasons. In colder climates, where indoor pool use is more customary, seasonal use does occur. However, many cities have also experienced the phenomenon of reduced usage during colder months, even in indoor heated facilities. Swimming for fitness continues, but recreational swimming drops off significantly. Since indoor facilities are usually more costly to build and operate, many cities in the Southwest are reconsidering the development of indoor recreation pools. However, interest is growing for an indoor aquatic complex among the residents of Norman.

Outdoor versus Indoor Aquatic Centers

When aquatic facilities are discussed, it is common that communities turn to the possibility of an indoor facility. The indoor pool, with its allure of 'year-long' swimming and consistent temperature does have notable benefits. At the same time, a 'year-long' swim season also means a 'year-long' operation expense and this can often mean sizable subsidies.

With the benefits of all-season swimming, and the drawbacks of high operation costs, it is important that any community considering the possibility of an indoor pool take all factors into consideration. Generally, the pros and cons of indoor and outdoor facilities are listed in Table 6-2.

Table 6 - 2
Pros and Cons of Indoor versus Outdoor Pools

	Pros	Cons
Indoor Pools	► 12 month season ► Not limited by weather ► Supports a variety of programs from competition to therapy	► Requires proactive marketing ► Usually requires significant subsidy ► Expenses difficult to recover as fees demand multi-use design
Outdoor Pools	► Requires reduced subsidy compared to indoor pool ► Exciting summer activity ► Encourages family participation ► Requires less marketing than indoor pools	► Three month season ► Limited by staff availability ► Dependent on weather

Desired Pool Site Characteristics

Successful pool planning should carefully consider the character and quality of each proposed pool site. Preferred site characteristics that are considered in this report are summarized as follows:

- ► What is the site size (10 to 15 acres for an aquatic center)
- ► Is the location easy to find (for both residents and non-residents)
- ► What is the land cost (if necessary to be included in budget planning)
- ► Is the land available (planned for other development)
- ► How is the site configured (does shape limit project plan)
- ► Will expansion be possible (future aquatic feature additions)
- ► Are utilities available (water, sewer, 3-phase electrical, gas)
- ► Is access reasonable and safe (for both vehicles and pedestrians)
- ► Does site topography allow reasonable construction (will extensive earthwork or retaining walls be needed – another cost factor)
- ► Will the soils support the type of construction (historical use of site, hazardous area, and improper fill materials must be considered)
- ► Is drainage a limiting factor (flood plain, high groundwater, surface drainage)
- ► What is surrounding land use (compatible with park-like pool setting)
- ► Will the neighbors welcome or resist the project (traffic, light, noise concerns)
- ► What is the public perception regarding pool site (safe for kids, convenient access, good setting for pool, fair location to all in community)

Options for Norman's Aquatics

There are several options for aquatic development within Norman. This portion of the report identifies and discusses a wide range of possible aquatic options. Starting with the existing pool, improvements are considered that meet the community goals. But the goals for Norman go beyond what the existing pool can provide, so several new pool alternatives are also included for consideration.

The suggested options encompass the comments from the public, along with considerations made regarding local demographics and available facilities. In a master planning document such as this, it is appropriate to look beyond traditional public pool facilities and consider improving the quality of life in the community as a whole.

The basic options developed in this report include replacing the Westwood Pool, planning a second outdoor pool, and planning a new indoor pool. Public pool projects ultimately develop as a result of public momentum and the options in this report reflect the current community expectations.

The recommendations are based on professional experience with successful public pool projects, as well as awareness of current public opinion and preference. As the Norman community continues to grow and develop, the public demand for aquatic facilities may shift slightly to emphasize more outdoor or more indoor aquatic facilities. This report provides planning information that allows future aquatic option development beyond what is specifically recommended in this report.

Several aquatic options are considered with this report. Renovation is considered. Old pools can offer surprising potential for renovation if their basin structure is in good condition. The evaluation discusses this potential in a following section of the report. Replacement will also be considered and compared with renovation. Various combinations of indoor and outdoor pools are considered in combination with community centers and in stand-alone situations. Partners are also considered, particularly for indoor pool development.

Within each of these options, there will be choices for specific features, such as number and length of swim lanes, recreation play features vs. open water,

a current channel, water slides, etc. There will also be choices about the programs to offer, such as instruction, exercise, swim team, therapy or all the above. This report discusses the advantages, disadvantages and opportunities with each option and with each of the many feature and program choices.

Aquatic Facility Options for Norman

Option 1 – Renovate the Westwood Pool

The existing outdoor Westwood pool continues to serve the Norman community during summer months. The need to improve the aquatic features at the existing pool was identified from the public group discussions, survey responses and from an onsite pool evaluation. Overall pool use was described as strong at times, but the current pool design is focused on deep water. Enhancing the existing pool to repair deteriorated areas and to provide family features is the focus of this option.

A possible solution is to add amenities or additional features in large pool areas. These goals can be accomplished by the following actions:

- ► Install play and spray features
- ► Develop the shallow water pool with improved features
- ► Replace the wading pool with more appealing fun features
- ► Improve the bathhouse dressing rooms, concessions and ventilation
- ► Provide additional shade
- ► Provide new water treatment facilities
- ► Replace the gutter system
- ► Remove the 3 meter boards and provide drop slides
- ► Provide ADA access throughout the facilities
- ► Sandblast and recoat the pool basins
- ► Repair the tile lane markings

Details for accomplishing the above goals would be developed as part of work subsequent to this master plan, typically part of a concept planning phase. Construction cost to accomplish a basic repair of the Westwood pool would cost approximately $500,000, while an enhanced renovation would cost between $2.5 and $3 million.

Option 2 – Replace the Westwood Pool

Replacement of the current pool is physically possible on the site, depending on the planned features. The site has limited available space due to existing parking, the adjacent golf course and adjacent residential area. Replicating the current pool features is certainly possible, but expanding the features and pool size will be somewhat limited because of the site.

The pool site location within Norman is reasonable and appropriate. The citizens are familiar with the pool location. Abandoning a pool site without strong reasons is typically not received well by a community. Reasoning seems to be that the residents feel that they have a pool in their area and they do not want it taken away.

Maintaining an outdoor pool at the Westwood location is recommended. The bathhouse, wading pool, junior pool, and the lap and diving pool could be replaced. The water slides and plunge pool are relatively new and should be retained. New pool facilities can be planned around the slide complex.

Concerns with expanding the Westwood Pool include its impact on the surrounding residential neighbors and the somewhat hidden location relative to the entire community. Basically, one entry from the west is the only access point. If an entry from the north could be provided, that would improve overall access. If the pool remains configured as a community pool, the site location is adequate. If the pool is replaced as a regional facility with several exciting attractions, a second entrance and more parking should be planned.

The current 50-meter pool is not suitable for swim team competition and is limited for training. One consideration is to build a new 50-meter competition pool. When the OU pool becomes unavailable to the swim team, this would give them a pool for summer use. The 50-meter pool should be configured to support lessons, exercise, open play and diving. Another consideration is to include the diving area within the 50-meter area. This would eliminate the separate diving pool and free up space on site, perhaps for a lazy river that surrounds the slide complex.

If the new pool option is chosen, its size and features should satisfy the community goals identified by the surveys and by public meetings. An overall aquatic plan should be determined first. If a second outdoor pool is planned, then a smaller Westwood pool may be appropriate.

If the Westwood pool will be the only outdoor pool, it is recommended that the new pool size should have 20,000 to 25,000 square feet of water surface area. It should be a full featured public aquatic center, with features and programs for all ages and abilities. If a 50-meter pool is desired, then the larger water area may be needed. A short course pool would allow the smaller targeted pool size.

A budget range of $10 to $12 million should be considered. Operating cost recovery potential is 75% to 95%, depending on the summer weather and the features provided. A regional pool concept would offer greater operating cost recovery than a community pool with smaller, less exciting features. If a second outdoor pool, in addition to the Westwood pool is developed, then the Westwood pool could be reduced in size to 15,000 to 18,000 square feet. A budget of $7.5 to $10 million should be considered.

Option 3 – Build a Second Outdoor Pool

Developing a second outdoor pool in Norman is an appropriate option to consider. A community the size of Norman would typically have multiple outdoor pools and at least one indoor pool. The YMCA may be fulfilling a good part of the indoor aquatic demand, but the single outdoor pool is under serving the community.

A new outdoor pool should provide an aquatic center that would encompass many of the features mentioned in public group discussions. This second outdoor pool would not only serve the citizen's of Norman, but would most likely appeal to neighboring communities as well. The aquatic features should be selected to ensure patrons of all ages have something to do at the pool. Beyond the zero-depth entry and lap lanes that are expected in most aquatic centers, this facility should also consider a lazy river and a water slide complex.

Site selection of a second pool in Norman will be judged very important by the citizens. The location should be central and easily accessible to all residents of Norman. A specific site location is beyond this Master Plan, but the recommended site characteristics include City owned property, 8 to 10 acres in size, safe, reasonable access, moderate topography, non-flood plain, and well placed to serve all areas of Norman.

A second pool size of 15,000 to 18,000 square feet of water with a full

and balanced set of aquatic features is recommended. A budget planning range of $7.5 to $10 million should be considered. Operating cost recovery potential is 75% to 95%, depending on the summer weather and the features provided.

Option 4 – Expand the YMCA Pool

The Cleveland County YMCA includes a 10 lane indoor pool that appears to be in good condition. It is well used by the community. The potential for partnering with the YMCA should be pursued to see if indoor community aquatics center could developed further. Addition of a shallow water pool and perhaps a therapy pool are recommended considerations. It is not recommended to build another YMCA based on conversations with the current YMCA director and with a citizens study group.

Discussion with the YMCA is the first step. An operating agreement with the City would be needed. The YMCA could offer aquatic passes and program fees specific to the pool facilities. Perhaps an outpatient therapy program with the Hospital could also be arranged. As a minimum, warm water therapy facilities could be provided allowing ongoing therapy exercise.

Construction of the new pool facilities could take place with minimal disruption of the current pool use. Separate water treatment equipment for the existing pool and for any new pools will allow maintaining different water temperatures, perfect for a community indoor aquatic center.

For planning purposes, consider adding 4,000 square feet of shallow water in a building enclosure of 10,000 square feet. A project cost of $3 million should be planned.

Option 5 – Add Indoor Pool to Existing 12th Avenue Recreation Center

Indoor pools can work well alongside a community center. Adding a pool to an existing community center can be beneficial. The community center must be well-located and must have adequate space for expansion. The community center should have a variety of programs that are popular with patrons, only missing the aquatic portion. A small, poorly configured community center can benefit from a pool addition. The pool will marginally benefit from a weak community center. Indoor pools are notorious for losing money. Without the benefit of a full program community center, the pool will recover even fewer operating costs. This is not a viable option for Norman at this time.

Option 6 – Stand-Alone Indoor Pool

A stand-alone indoor pool would have the worst cost recovery potential of all the possible options for Norman. The common belief is that an indoor pool has the potential to operate at a profit compared with an outdoor pool. The opposite is actually true. Although an outdoor pool only operates for a three month season, it has no expenses for the remaining nine months. An indoor pool operates 12 months per year, but nearly all struggle to cover their expenses.

The best operation plan is to combine an indoor pool with a new recreation center and use memberships and program fees for income sources. Several partners will further help the overall operation. It is not recommended that Norman pursue a stand-alone indoor pool now or in the future. The discussion for this option is comparable to that for Option 5. An indoor pool without the benefit of a strong community center will not be viable from an operation point of view.

Option 7 – Indoor Pool with a New Community Center

Planning information for this option is offered as information for the City's consideration. Including partners to help build or to help operate an indoor pool is strongly recommended. An 80,000 square foot combined recreation facility and indoor pool would cost over $16 million. Although the cost to build such a facility is significant, the operating cost over 25 years may actually exceed the capital cost.

Option 8 – An Indoor Pool and Outdoor Pool at the Same Site

An indoor pool with an adjacent small outdoor pool is an option that communities may consider, particularly if they already have an outdoor pool at another site. The primary identified community need is for more outdoor water. An indoor pool is recommended for consideration as a future phase as part of a recreation center. A 30,000 square foot indoor pool facility could cost over $9 million. Thoughtful planning would be needed along with strategic funding efforts. Adding an outdoor pool to an indoor pool will not enhance the indoor portion enough to avoid the need for significant operating subsidy.

A small indoor pool in combination with a large outdoor pool would be more feasible relative to minimizing the operating subsidy. A small therapy pool is a consideration that some communities pursue. While this option would be more operationally cost effective, it would not satisfy the community goals, particularly for a competition pool.

An indoor pool and a new outdoor pool at the Westwood pool site is not feasible due to limited space. The ideal plan for efficient operation would be to build a new community center with an indoor aquatic center and an adjacent outdoor pool. This could require a 15 to 20 acre site and cost $20 million or more.

Option 9 – Additional Spray Grounds

The following information is offered as background for future consideration. Norman has two spraygrounds or splash pads. The first need in Norman is for an updated outdoor aquatic facility. A second outdoor pool or an indoor pool/community center may be the next priority.

As Norman continues to grow, travel time to an outdoor pool increases for the citizens. An option used successfully in other communities is to build several smaller spraygrounds or splash pads within the community. This would provide free access for anyone in the city and easier access for those without the means to travel to the main pools. It would also allow convenient access to young families with small children.

Future spraygrounds are best planned for major parks since large amount of parking is required. Each spray ground should have several water spray features, a filtration and chemical treatment system, shade structures and nearby restrooms. A planning budget amount for a sprayground is $300,000 to $600,000. Considered sites should be distributed throughout the City to reasonably complement the existing outdoor pool and any proposed second pool.

Option 10 – 50 Meter Pool Competition Pool

The ultimate indoor competition pool is a 50-meter pool. A 75-foot wide pool with a moveable bulkhead would be the most flexible, providing 10 long course lanes and allowing short course practice and competition. Diving can be overlapped with the swim lanes or provided as a separate area.

Seating is a critical design consideration for swim meets. The meet size must be considered to adequately plan seating. For a high school league meet, 300 to 400 seats is typical. For a high school state meet, 1,500 to 2,000 seats may be needed. USA Swimming meets can also vary greatly in number of participants, requiring 500 to 2,000 seats depending on the specific meet and the planned participation. Support space for judges, coaches, media, timing equipment, video equipment, and teams should not be overlooked. Appropriate space is mandatory for being selected for a large swim meet. Competition to host a meet is usually spirited and often is based on available seating and support space.

A 50-meter pool facility could demand a building size of more than 40,000 square feet, including pool, seating, filter room, pool deck, and space for dressing rooms, storage, entry area and other support spaces. At current cost conditions, the construction cost for this facility could easily approach $10 to $12 million. Operating costs for a 50-meter pool and for the building enclosure could range from $50 to $75 per square foot of pool per year. For a 13,000 square foot pool, this is equivalent to $650,000 to nearly $1 million per year.

Indoor pool operating costs vary widely based on programs, staffing levels, wages, utilities, etc. Facilities that operate with minimal staff and limited programs will have operating costs less than stated. Indoor 50-meter pools with a full range of programs, extended hours of operation and high staff costs, may experience expenses equal to or greater than stated.

The challenge with any indoor pool, but especially a competition pool is to offer programs that appeal to the full community. More importantly, programs must be offered that the community is willing to pay for and can afford. A warm water, shallow recreation pool is easier to program and market than a cool water, deep competition pool. This is not to say that a large competition pool would not be used well by the community, but more subsidies and more potential partners will be required.

Competitive swim teams are passionate advocates for competition pools. They invest significant time and money to train, travel and compete. An indoor pool, especially a 50-meter pool, would certainly benefit their teams. Currently, access to indoor swimming is limited and in great demand. The coaches, swimmers and parents in Norman expend time and money with limited facility access and continue to be successful. Teams hope to encourage support for an indoor pool by listing all the training time they will use and by describing all the out of town people who will attend the swim meets. They imply that this means income for the facility, which it does. The challenge is with the hourly fee a team is willing to pay for training and the event fee the team is willing to pay to the City for a swim meet. Based on actual hourly operating costs, the pool use fee could be as much as $10 to $15 per hour per lane. An event rental fee could range from $1,500 to over $2,000. Pool facilities vary in their approach to determining actual fees for swim teams.

Those who attend a swim meet may purchase food and fuel. They may use a hotel or even shop in the area. Income to the community will be increased for each swim meet, but direct income to the City through sales tax is much less significant. Swim meets are a major funding source for swim teams. They also benefit the community, but are not a significant income source for the facility owner, in this case, the City.

The harsh reality is that competitive indoor pools must be justified in each community by rationale other than economics. There are many desirable community programs that a 50-meter pool can provide. The large pool facility can be a key component of identity and the quality of life for a community. Operating subsidy will be a reality. Before choosing to build a 50-meter indoor pool, your community must be aware of the economic challenges as well as the overall benefits.

At this time, it is not recommended that the City should plan for an indoor 50-meter pool in Norman. The expressed preferences by the community point to an improved outdoor pool as the first priority. Planning for an indoor pool facility in Norman is appropriate as a second phase goal, particularly if partners, such as a school, YMCA, or hospital would participate.

Option 11 – Continue to Use OU Pools

The University of Oklahoma (OU) maintains an indoor pool and an outdoor pool. The Norman swim teams use the OU indoor pool for training and for swim meets. The indoor pool is schedule for replacement, potentially leaving the Norman teams with reduced access to water. They could use the YMCA pool occasionally or they could travel farther to another indoor pool. Other area swim teams will also be affected by an OU pool closure, so the competition for indoor pool time will increase. This means more cost and more travel time for reduced water time. Long term reliance on the OU pool facilities by the Norman swim teams is not feasible. A new indoor pool in conjunction with a new community center is the recommended planning approach.

Option 12 – Partner with the Schools

It is recommended that the City partner with as many entities as possible to help reduce operating subsidies for any indoor option that is planned. A potential partner that should be considered is the school system, particularly for swimming instruction and for competition swimming or diving. Norman Public Schools has expressed an interest in partnering with other entities to help build this type of facility, but would not want to operate it. Another partnering option is for the school district to pay an annual operation or use fee to the City, allowing their staff and students to use the pool at specific times for certain programs. This arrangement works in other communities and benefits the City and their partners.

Building an indoor pool is a significant project; but maintaining the building and pool is also a challenge. Paying for the operating shortfall is the key consideration. Over a 20 year period, the pool operating costs typically exceed the construction cost, so there is a value in partnerships.

Option 13 – Partner with the Hospital

As with the school district, partnering with the local hospital is another potential opportunity for the City to consider. The local hospital has a therapy program and a small therapy pool. It is recommended to approach the hospital when indoor planning for the City becomes more imminent. The hospital may currently be comfortable with the therapy programs and support equipment. As the population ages, an expanded therapy capacity may be needed.

With any community indoor pool, interest in a therapy pool is becoming more common. Whether the therapy pool would be suitable for large exercise classes or aimed at single patients, it would be a valued community service. It would also be another income source that could help the operating bottom line.

Recommendations for Aquatics in Norman

The following pages describe the recommendations for aquatic facilities in Norman. Options 1, 2, 3, 7 and 9 as shown on the previous pages are recommended as the key aquatic priorities of the City.

#1 - Replace/Renovate Westwood Pool

The number one aquatic need in Norman is to replace Westwood Pool with a new family aquatic center. The existing Westwood Pool is dated and because of the size and lack of amenities it cannot serve as a larger regional draw. The planning, design, and construction of the replacement aquatic center will require two to three years. As previously shown in this chapter, features that need to be part of the new facility include a lazy river, plenty of shade, zero depth "beach" entry, slides, spray features, lap lanes, and a pool for fitness and swim lessons. It is not uncommon for an aquatic center such as the one described here to be built in phases.

The estimated cost for the construction of a new aquatic center is $6 million to $12 million. This can be funded by a combination of sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, or potential grant funds. The potential timeframe is recommended from 2010 to 2014. There are three distinct scenarios the City of Norman should consider when locating the new aquatic center. These are discussed below.

Scenario A - Develop at Westwood Park

This scenario means that the new aquatic center will be on the same location as the current Westwood Pool. The new center will literally be replacing the existing pool.

Benefits of this scenario:

- Known location, residents are familiar with driving to Westwood Park to go swimming.
- Close proximity to freeway for regional access, which can bring in more people than just Norman residents.
- Central location in the City, all residents can equally access the location.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

- Limited space for major aquatic center without displacing other facilities. The current site of Westwood Pool is not large enough to allow for a major aquatic center. Without shifting the golf course or parking lot, which both are unlikely, a smaller aquatic center is the only facility that can be placed there. This will greatly reduce the number of features that can be constructed.
- Limited room for expansion. Again the current site of Westwood Pool is not large enough to expand the new aquatic center so no additional phases can be built. Again, only a smaller aquatic center can fit on this site.

Scenario B - Develop at Ruby Grant Park

In this scenario, the new aquatic center will be built at the currently undeveloped Ruby Grant Park. The existing Westwood Pool will then be decommissioned and closed.

Benefits of this scenario:

- Adequate space for facility and expansion. Because Ruby Grant Park is currently undeveloped, adequate space can be given to constructing an aquatic center with plans to expand that facility in the future.
- The current Master Plan for Ruby Grant Park provides for an aquatic facility but it would require adjustment to incorporate this size of facility.
- Freeway access and visibility could make the facility a regional draw. Because it will be located immediately off I-35, it will be easily accessible and draw people from the surrounding cities.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

- Distant from the east and south sectors of Norman. Although I-35 is accessible to all residents of Norman, this scenario will mean that the aquatic center is further from Norman residents who live in the south or east when compared to a central location such as Westwood.

Scenario C - Acquire Land in a Central Location

This scenario recommends that the City purchase land in a central location specifically for the development of a large aquatic center. In order to construct the large facility a minimum of 10 to 12 acres are needed.

Benefits of this scenario:

- Because the City can choose the land to purchase, the location is more likely to be central and easily accessible to all residents of Norman.
- A site can be purchased large enough to allow for future expansion or possibly for an indoor facility addition as a future component.
- If built near the existing YMCA, the large aquatic center could potentially be developed as a joint partnership.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

- Purchasing 10 to 20 acres of land in a central location will be a substantial additional cost.

#2 - Plan for and Develop an Indoor Aquatic Facility

Although an indoor aquatic facility was not ranked high on the public input surveys, there is a need for an indoor facility. Norman has two high school swim teams and one private, competitive swimming organization that currently use the University of Oklahoma indoor swimming complex for meets and practice. The University has plans to build a new swimming complex and the new facility will then only be available to OU students, OU faculty, Norman swim teams, and OU staff. When that time comes, the private swim teams may not have a readily available practice facility. An indoor aquatic center will also provide significant fitness and therapeutic opportunities for all residents of Norman.

The construction of an indoor aquatic center will approximately cost $5 million to $10 million. It can be funded with a combination of sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, or grant opportunities. The potential timeframe for this facility is 2013 to 2016. As with the outdoor aquatic center, there are different scenarios the City should consider.

Indoor aquatic center in Topeka, KS

Scenario A - Develop Next to New Indoor Recreation Center

A free standing natatorium is inefficient and loses draw after a short time. For an indoor aquatic center to be successful, it needs to be adjacent to another recreation facility. In this scenario it is proposed that the indoor aquatic center be constructed as a component of the recommended new indoor recreation/fitness center.

Benefits of this scenario:

- Allows for more efficient operations. The two facilities can share changing/locker room facilities and parking. Also, City staff can be consolidated into one facility.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

- Possibility of land having to be purchased to allow for the development of an indoor recreation center and aquatic center.

Scenario B - Develop as Expansion of Existing YMCA Aquatics or as Part of New Satellite YMCA Facility

Scenario B recommends entering into a partnership with the YMCA to either expand their current indoor pool or construct an indoor pool at a second satellite facility. If a partnership was agreed upon, all residents of Norman would be allowed to use the indoor pool for a fee regardless of whether or not they had a YMCA membership. The indoor pool would have a separate fee structure that would allow access to only the pool and not the remainder of the facility.

Benefits of this scenario:

- Allows for sharing of operational costs and more efficient programming. YMCA staff has the capability and knowledge to efficiently operate and program an indoor aquatic center.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

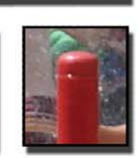
- May result in higher user fees by the YMCA so they can recoup operational costs. Because the YMCA is not subsidized and needs to recover their operational costs, they might charge a higher fee to use the indoor aquatic center than if the City owned and operated it.

#3 - Recommendations for Spraygrounds / Splash Pads

Spraygrounds are popular features and offer a low cost aquatics alternative. **Spraygrounds are recommended for both Ruby Grant Park and Little Axe Park as well as a component of the proposed outdoor aquatic center discussed earlier in this chapter.** Approximately two to four acres of land will be needed for a sprayground in Ruby Grant Park and Little Axe Park. The estimated cost is $350,000 to $800,000 per sprayground feature. Potential funding sources for these facilities include sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, or potential grant opportunities. Because of the popularity with Andrews Park splash pad, the potential timeframe for the installation of these two additional spraygrounds is 2015 to 2020.

Lessons Learned:

Oklahoma City recently converted three of their city-owned pools into spraygrounds. The spraygrounds are more popular features and cost less to operate. In one case, the City's area pool had an attendance of 5,000 people in 2008 while the spraygrounds drew 12,650 people on average. In a recent newspaper article, Oklahoma City parks spokeswoman Jennifer Lindsey McClintock said that spraygrounds are the way of the future.



A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

Action Plan 2010 - 2020

Aquatic Facility Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Very High	A - 1	**Replace Westwood Aquatic Center with new Family Aquatic Center**	Existing pool is dated and lacks facility to serve as significant regional aquatic draw. Planning, design and construction for replacement will require two-three years. Include water play area, zero entry "beach", slides, lazy river component and outdoor lap pool. Plan for future outdoor phase expansion. Consider adding indoor pool phase.	Citywide - Regional	10	20	$6,000,000	$12,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2014
		***Scenario A* - Develop at Westwood Park (or)**	*Known location; close proximity to freeway for regional access, central location in the City. Limited space for major aquatic center without displacing other facilities. Limited room for expansion.*			*Within the range shown above*					
		***Scenario B* - Develop at Ruby Grant Park (or)**	*Adequate space for facility and expansion. Master plan provides for aquatic facility, but would require adjustment to incorporate this size of a facility. Freeway access and visibility could make facility a regional draw. Distant from east and south sectors of the City.*			*Within the range shown above*					
		***Scenario C* - Acquire land in central location**	*May require purchase of land in area slated for development. Central location. Could allow for future expansion and indoor facility addition. Near existing YMCA, could be developed as joint partnership with YMCA.*			*Within the range shown above*					
High	A - 2	**Develop indoor aquatic center - include competition pool, indoor water play area**	Provides expanded capacity for fitness and competitive swimming. Develop as partnership with Norman Public Schools.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$5,000,000	$10,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity. Consider school district participation.	2013 - 2016
		Scenario A - Develop next to new indoor recreation center	Allows for more efficient operation, sharing of changing facilities and parking.								
		Scenario B - Develop as expansion of existing YMCA Aquatics or as part of new satellite YMCA facility	Allows for sharing of operational costs and more efficient programming. May result in higher user charges by partner organization to recoup cost.								
Medium Range	A - 3	**Develop a splash pad in Ruby Grant Park**	Develop major splash pad facility at Ruby Grant Park. Long range, develop neighborhood splash pad at Little Axe Park.	Northwest Sector	2	4	$500,000	$800,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
Medium Range	A - 4	**Develop a splash pad in Little Axe Park**	Develop major splash pad facility at Ruby Grant Park. Long range, develop neighborhood splash pad at Little Axe Park.	Far east Sector	2	4	$350,000	$500,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
Long Term	A - 5	**Develop a second city aquatic facility in Ruby Grant Park or Saxon Park**	Develop a satellite aquatic facility with water play area, zero entry beach, and lap pool.	Northwest and Southeast	10	20	$5,000,000	$8,000,000		Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Estimated Total Cost (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**24**	**48**	**$16,850,000**	**$31,300,000**			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $50,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 5% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Estimated Operating Costs of Aquatic Centers

One important factor to consider before constructing any facility of this size is to know approximately how much it may cost to operate.

Outdoor Aquatic Centers - Operating costs for outdoor pools with the features previously described range from under $15 to over $20 per square foot of water per season. The anticipated seasonal operating cost would be just over $200,000 to just under $400,000. The range in costs is due to weather, local wages, administrative preferences and other conditions. Cost recovery from entrance fees and programs fees would range from 80% to over 100% for average weather seasons.

Indoor Aquatic Centers - The estimated operating cost of an indoor aquatic center is $40 to $80 per square foot of water per year. One example would be an 8,000 square foot indoor pool would cost approximately $320,000 to $640,000 to operate annually.

Aquatic programs that the community members will use and actually purchase are an essential element for successful indoor pool planning. After the programs are identified, aquatic features are chosen to support the programs. The features determine the pool size and the building size follows.

An indoor pool should not be planned strictly by demographics, but should respond to the community demand for programs. This planning process is slightly different from an outdoor pool planning process, which is based on feature preferences and demographics.

When considering other sites beyond Westwood as a location for a new pool, allow $500,000 to help fund land acquisition and site development (utilities, access road, demolition, etc.).

General operational characteristics of indoor pools are as follows.

- ► Small indoor pool – used for exercise, young age group lessons, therapy, play, party rentals
  - ◊ 1,500 to 2,000 square feet of water
  - ◊ Operation cost recovery of less than 30%
- ► Medium indoor pool – used for competition, exercise, lessons, therapy, play and party rentals
  - ◊ 2,000 to 4,000 square feet of water
  - ◊ Operation cost recovery of less than 40%
- ► Large indoor pool – used for competition, exercise, lessons, therapy, play and party rentals
  - ◊ 4,000 to 6,000 square feet of water
  - ◊ Operation cost recovery of less than 50%
- ► 50-meter indoor pool – competition emphasis, also used for variety of programs
  - ◊ 10,000 to 13,000 square feet of water
  - ◊ Operation cost recovery less than 50%

A concept plan should consider multiple pools, separate bathhouse and filter buildings, diving area, lap area, shallow play area, shade, sprays, lazy river and water slides. The suggested site sizes should include space for the pools, buildings, deck, grade transition, parking and space for future expansion or addition of features.

- ► Indoor recreation pool – used for play, party rentals, swim lessons, some exercise
  - ◊ 3,000 to 5,000 square feet of water
  - ◊ Operation cost recovery of more than 50%

Summary

The first priority for Norman is the improvement of outdoor aquatic facilities. Either renovate and enhance the Westwood pool or replace it with a family aquatic center facility. If it is decided to enhance the current pool, then recommendations include improving the shallow water features, the bathhouse, and deck amenities for the patrons. If it is decided to replace the pool then recommendations include providing a 50-meter area with diving, replace the shallow pools, save the slide complex and add a lazy river.

An indoor pool would be a great addition to Norman. This is best planned together with a new recreation center and with program partners. The YMCA, the school district and the hospital should be approached during the concept planning process for an indoor facility. This is a significant and costly endeavor that demands careful and thoughtful planning. Such a facility would be a great complement to the recreation system and the quality of life in Norman, but taxpayer support is dependent on choosing a good site, creating a balanced plan and developing feasible costs.

The next step for Norman is to develop a master plan/concept plan for a new or renovated Westwood pool.

Chapter 7

Indoor Recreation Recommendations

Chapter 7

Indoor Recreation Recommendations

"If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second."

Edward Bellamy, author 1850-1898

Existing Indoor Recreation Facilities in Norman

The City of Norman currently has seven indoor recreation facilities. There are two City owned recreation centers connected to Whittier and Irving Middle Schools, a City owned gym connected to Norman High School, one senior center, one community center in Little Axe Park, the Reaves Dance Center, and the 12th Avenue Recreation Center. There are issues with each building which need to be addressed.

Senior Citizen Center - The Norman Senior Center is currently housed in the former Carnegie Library. It has three stories with small, switchback staircases which make it difficult for seniors to use. The emergency exit on the top floor has a small staircase that leads outside, but there is no handicap ramp which could be detrimental in the case of a fire. There is an elevator in the building which connects the three levels; however, an ideal senior center should be in a single story building. The current center also has limited space for activities and no fitness equipment area; however, fitness classes are held in the large room on the top story. One item that interests the seniors who visit the center is a computer lab. There currently is a room in the center where a tax preparation service is set up each year which could also be used as a computer lab. Living in a technology age, computers have become one of the most basic tools for communication, and offering computers and computer training classes will allow many seniors to remain in touch.

The cafeteria in the center, where meals are prepared Monday through Friday for visitors to the center and the Meals On Wheels clients, is in good condition. The cafeteria is on the middle floor of the building with an entrance door leading to the outside parking lot so it can be easily accessed. The upper floor is used for card playing, games fitness classes, and dances; however, space is very limited.

Middle School Gyms and Recreation Centers - There are two City owned gyms and indoor recreation areas that are attached to the middle schools at Whittier and Irving. Because the gyms look and feel like an extension of the schools, they are not clearly seen as City recreation facilities. School teams for volleyball and basketball programs use the gyms for practice and games which leaves very little time for the gyms to be used by the Parks and Recreation staff or the public. The Parks and Recreation Department also operates youth basketball and adult volleyball leagues at these facilities, so there is very little open gym time that would allow for pick up games by the residents of Norman. While the Parks and Recreation Department does offer after school programs at these two centers, they are often limited to only the arts and crafts rooms and cannot use the gyms, greatly limiting the number of children that can participate in the program. Built in the 1960s and 1970s, the gyms are in servicable condition, but have dated configurations and equipment. Alternative options for the future use and ownership of these gyms will be discussed later in this chapter.

City-owned gym at Irving Middle School

Little Axe Community Center

Little Axe Community Center - The Community Center in Little Axe serves the largely rural population in the far eastern portion of Norman. The center is home to the Little Axe area Head Start Program. The building is shared with the area fire station; and in recent years, increasing fire fighting equipment needs have gradually reduced the size of the community center component. Population growth in this area will increase the demand for community services and indoor recreation in the area. It is important to ensure proper maintenance and renovation of this building over time because it is the only recreation/community center building serving the eastern half of Norman.

12th Avenue Recreation Center - This is the largest City owned indoor recreation center in Norman. The center offers a gymnastics room, a dance room for aerobics and jazzercise, two gyms with junior sized basketball courts, an after-school media room, a small kitchen, a game room which is being remodeled, and a fitness room that is not used since it has only one piece of dated fitness equipment.

The building is extremely old (40+ years) and needs substantial renovation or replacement. The center does not provide enough equipment or fitness opportunities. Programs that are offered include jazzercise, martial arts, gymnastics, after school programs and summer camps. Many current or potential programs that could be offered to the residents of Norman are unable to grow because of limitations of the building.

Facilities at the 12th Avenue Recreation Center

Other Major Indoor Recreation Facilities in Norman

YMCA - The YMCA in Norman offers a state-of-the-art facility with fitness equipment, indoor swimming pool, basketball gyms, and child care rooms. The facility is approximately 60,000 square feet in size. It is available to members only, but all Norman residents are eligble for membership.

Huston Huffman Recreation Center at OU - The University of Oklahoma has an indoor recreation center that can be used by students, faculty, and staff. There are cardio and free weight fitness equipment, three basketball courts, a rock climbing wall, indoor walking track, concessions, locker rooms, and racquetball courts.

Church Center - The Family Life Center at First Baptist Church has an indoor basketball gym which it uses to run basketball league games and a gymnastics program. Other features include a walking track, weight room, bowling alleys, racquetball courts, and a game room.

Private Major Health Clubs - Five major health clubs in Norman provide cardio and free weight equipment for fitness and aerobic exercise. Memberships are available to Norman residents.

Optimist Basketball Complex - The Optimist Club in Norman operates an indoor basketball complex with five basketball courts. The facility is an old airplane hanger from the 1950s. Major renovations are needed to the facility.

Cleveland County YMCA

Cleveland County YMCA

Public Input Regarding Indoor Recreation

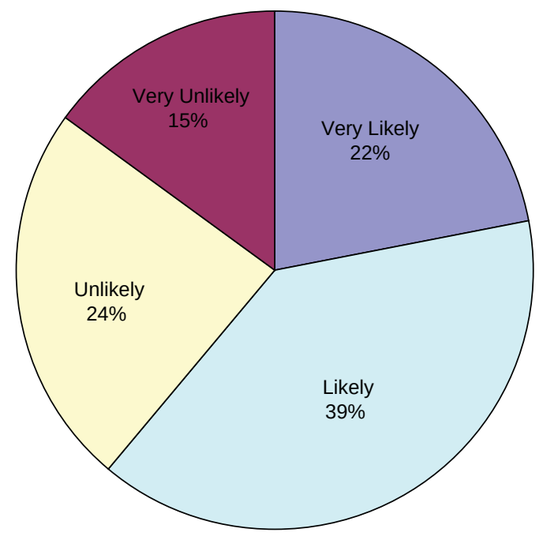
Similar to aquatic needs and desires, the public input received during the planning process regarding indoor recreation is vital to the recommendations in this report. Specific questions on both the mail-out and online survey were geared towards determining the needs and desires of the residents of Norman when it pertains to indoor recreation facilities. Public input regarding indoor recreation is discussed below and on the following pages.

First, residents were asked whether or not they had visited specific indoor facilities within the past 12 months. When asked whether or not they had visited or utilized a city-owned recreation facility, 51% of the mail-out survey respondents and 60% of the online survey respondents said yes. 16% of the mail-out survey respondents and 18% of the online survey respondents said they have participated in a class or program sponsored by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department. In regards to the Senior Center, 10% of the mail-out survey respondents and 6% of the online survey respondents indicated they have visited the Senior Center in the past 12 months. The visitation noted by residents is high and indicates potential demand for fitness programming offered by the City of Norman.

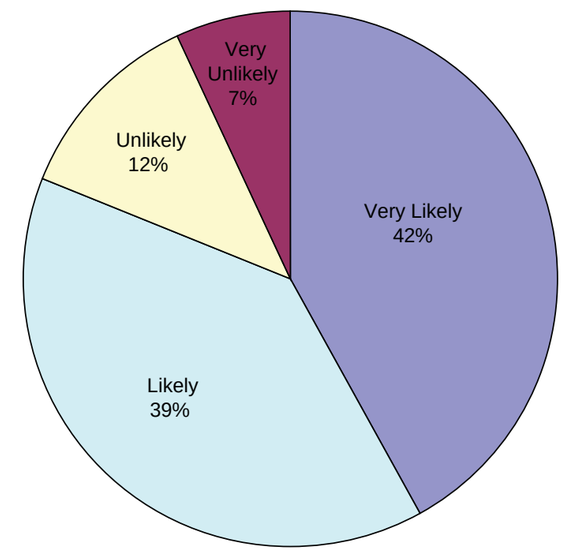
Likely to Utilize New City Recreation Facility

One recommendation of this Master Plan, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is to construct a new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center. Residents were asked how likely or unlikely they would be to use a new facility if one was constructed by the City of Norman. 61% of the mail-out survey respondents and 81% of the online survey respondents said they would be very likely or likely to utilize this new facility. This shows a great amount of interest from the public in a new, state-of-the-art indoor recreation center, resulting in the recommendation to build a new center that is discussed later in this chapter.

Likely to Use State-of-the-Art Indoor Recreation Facility (mail-out survey)



Likely to Use State-of-the-Art Indoor Recreation Facility (online survey)

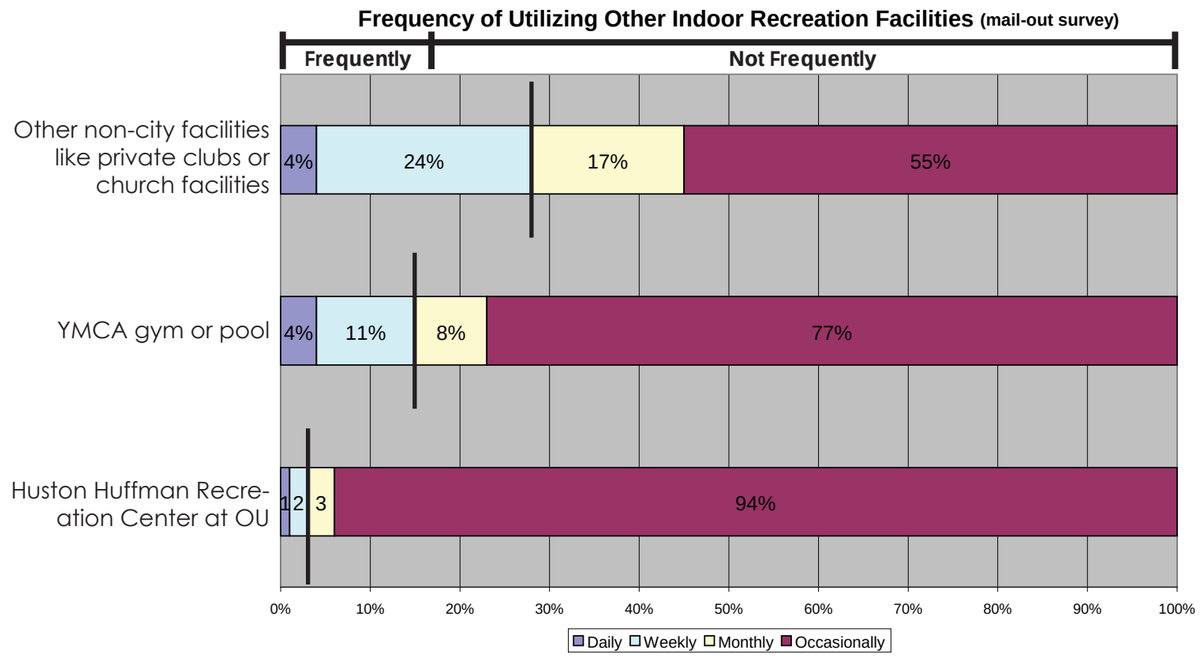


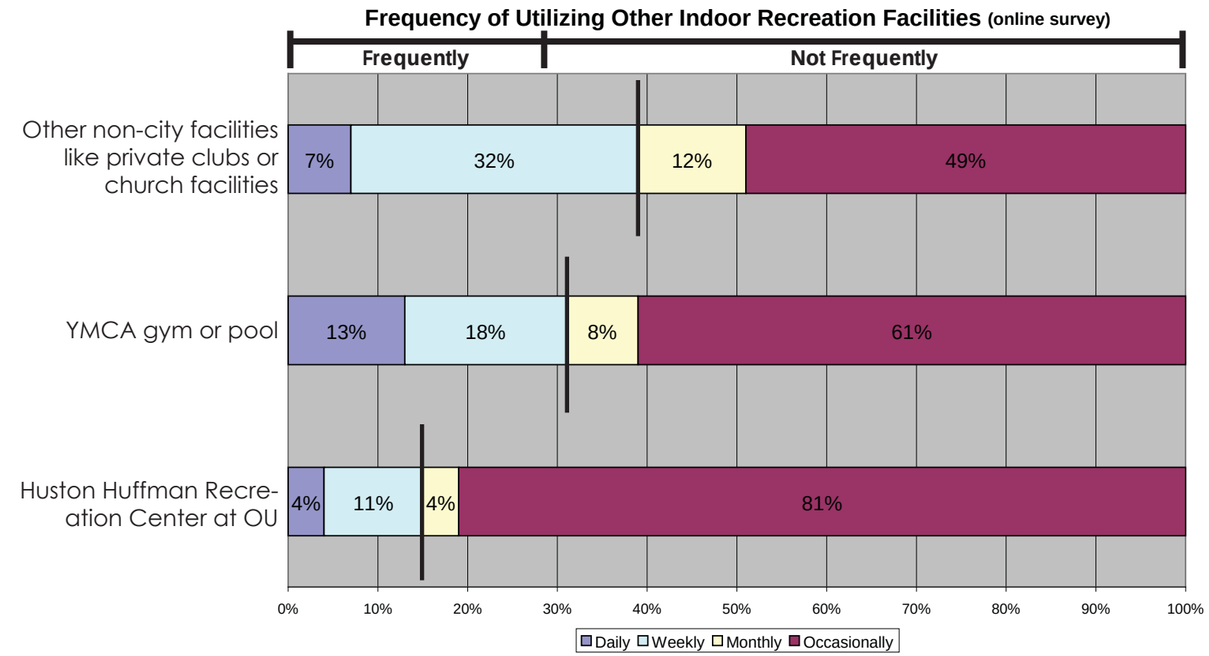
Utilizing Other Indoor Recreation Facilities

It is important to know what facilities the residents of Norman are utilizing for their indoor recreation activities. By determining what percent of the population is currently not using those facilities, the City can understand which markets are not being served and who will benefit from new indoor recreation facilities.

28% of the respondents to the mail-out survey and 39% of the respondents to the online survey indicated that they use a private club or church facility either on a daily or weekly basis for their indoor recreation needs. These facilities were ranked the highest in terms of usage. The YMCA in Norman is utilized either daily or weekly by 15% of the population according to the mail-out survey and by 31% of the online survey respondents. As for the University of Oklahoma Huston Huffman Recreation Center, a small percent of the population utilizes this facility when compared to the high percent of residents who indicate they have some association with the University (nearly 60% as shown in Chapter 4). Only 3% of the mail-out survey respondents and 15% of the online survey respondents indicate that they utilize the OU facility on either a daily or weekly basis.

This demonstrates that there is a significant portion of the Norman population that does not utilize any facility on a frequent basis. As a result, there is a gap in the service market for indoor recreation that the City can begin to fill.



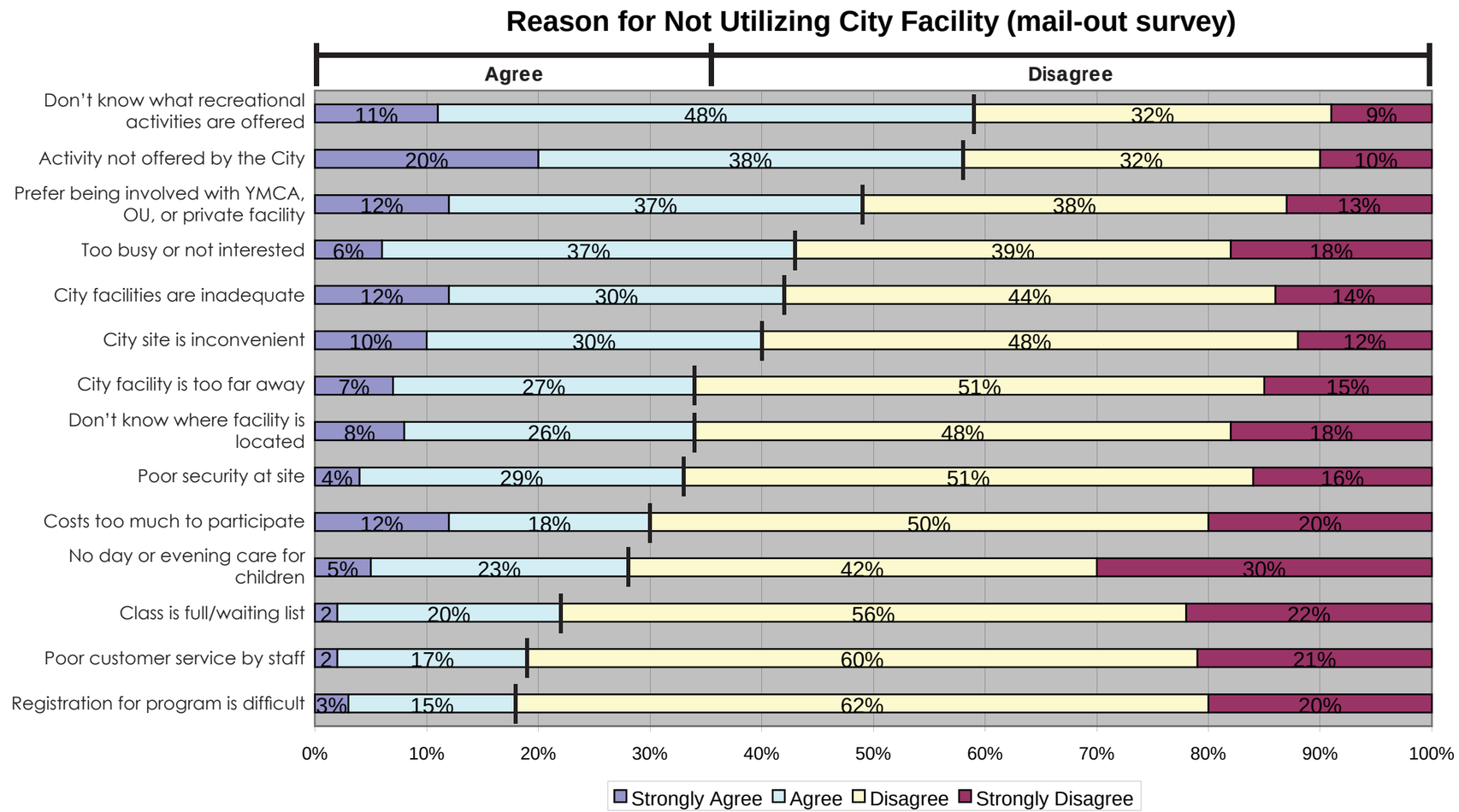


Reasons for Not Utilizing City Indoor Recreation Facility

Knowing why residents do not use the City recreation facilities for their indoor recreation activities and programs is important so that the City can begin to address these issues. Residents of both the mail-out and online survey were given a list of possible reasons for not utilizing City indoor recreation facilities. They were then asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with each reason for why they do not utilize the facility.

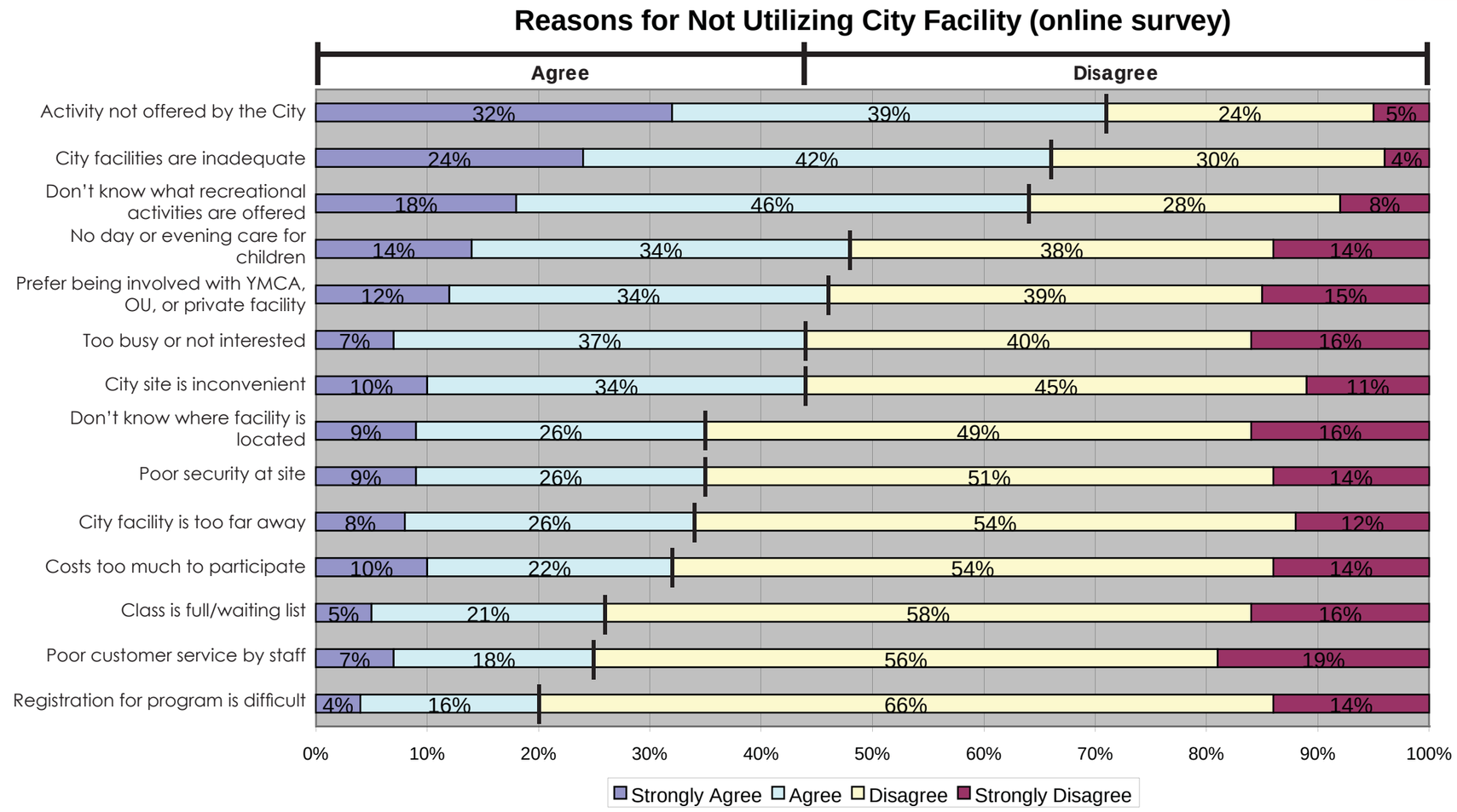
For the mail-out survey, the highest rated reason was that residents do not know what recreational activities are offered by the City with 59% of residents in agreement. 58% of residents cited that the recreational activities they prefer to be involved in are not offered by the City. 49% of residents cited that they prefer being involved with the YMCA, OU or another private facility over utilizing the City facilities.

The results from the mail-out survey are shown in graph to the right.



The online survey responses varied slightly when residents were asked why they did not utilize a City facility for indoor recreation. The highest rated response on the online survey was that the activity is not offered by the City with 71% of residents citing this as a valid reason. The second highest reason was that the City facilities are inadequate with 66% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this is a valid reason. These top two responses complement each other; since the City facilities are viewed as inadequate they are unable to offer the programs residents are interested in.

The responses from the online survey are shown in the graph to the right.



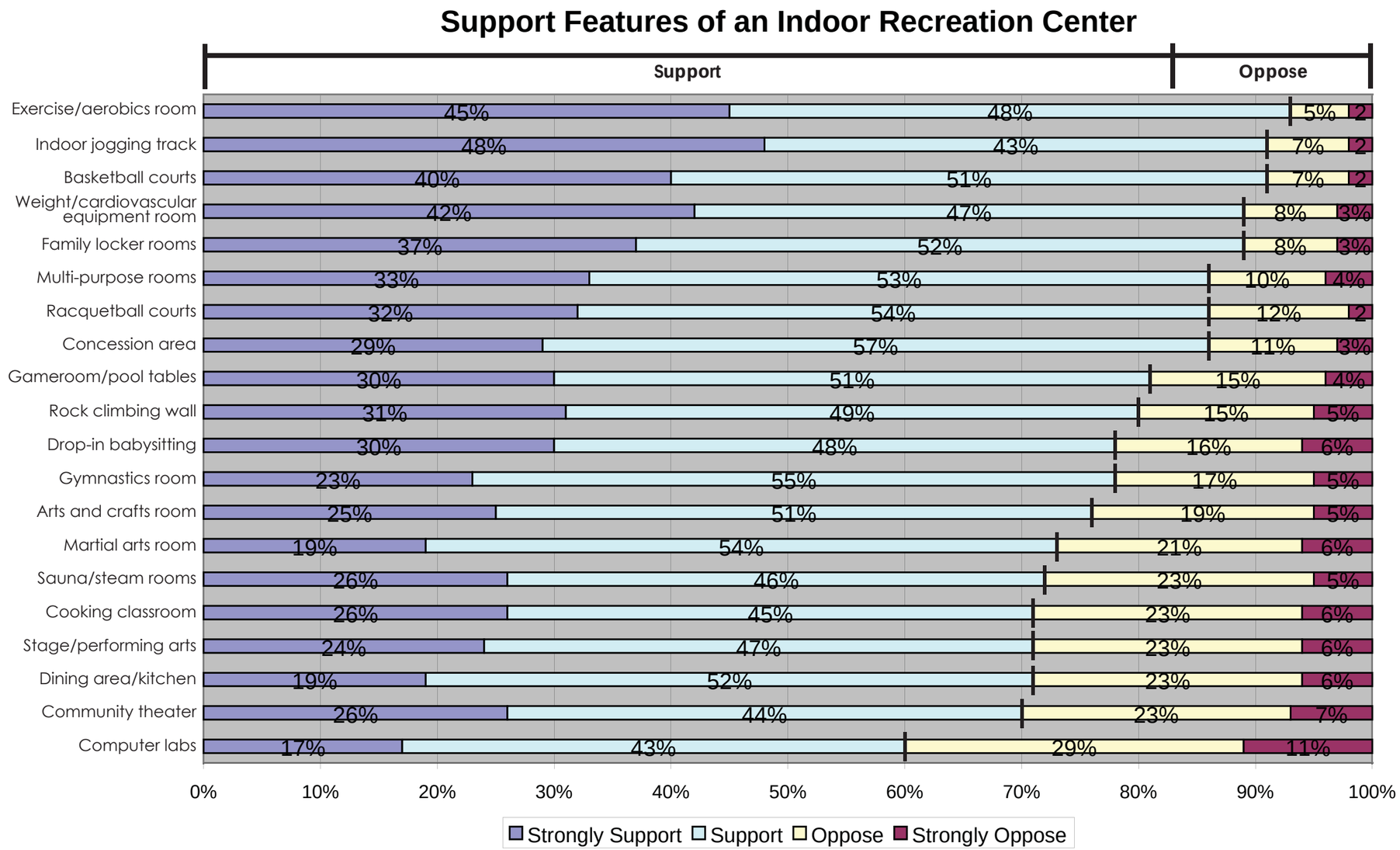
Support for Specific Indoor Recreation Center Features

Similar to the previous chapter regarding aquatics, the online survey included questions asking residents how strongly they would support or oppose specific features that could possibly be constructed as a part of a new indoor recreation center.

The highest supported feature was an exercise/aerobics room with 93% of residents indicating they would support or strongly support this feature. This room would allow for programs such as Yoga, Pilates, dance, Jazzercise, step aerobics, etc.

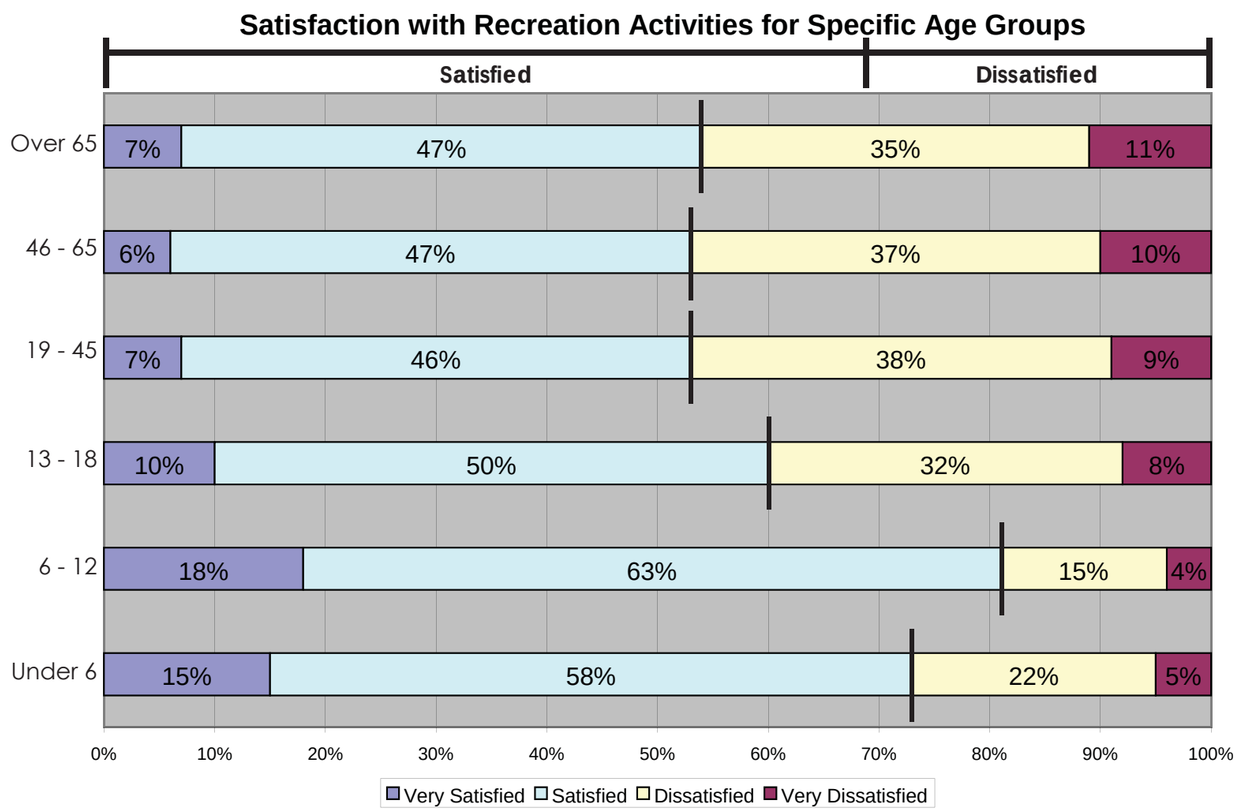
The second highest supported feature was an indoor jogging track with 91% of residents indicating they would support or strongly support this feature in a new indoor recreation center. 91% of residents also indicated they would support gyms with basketball courts.

All of the features on the list are very commonly found in typical modern recreation centers. As a result, all of them were very positively supported by survey respondents



Satisfaction with Recreation for Different Age Groups

Residents who participated in the online survey were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the recreational opportunities that are offered for different age groups. A large majority of residents are satisfied with the activities offered for children 6 - 12, and for children under age 6. Activities for adults ages 19 - 65 had the lowest level of satisfaction which indicates that a large portion of the City's programming is specifically for children with few offerings for adults. There is a relatively high level of satisfaction for activities offered for 13 - 18 year olds. This age group is usually the most difficult to reach in terms of programming and activities.



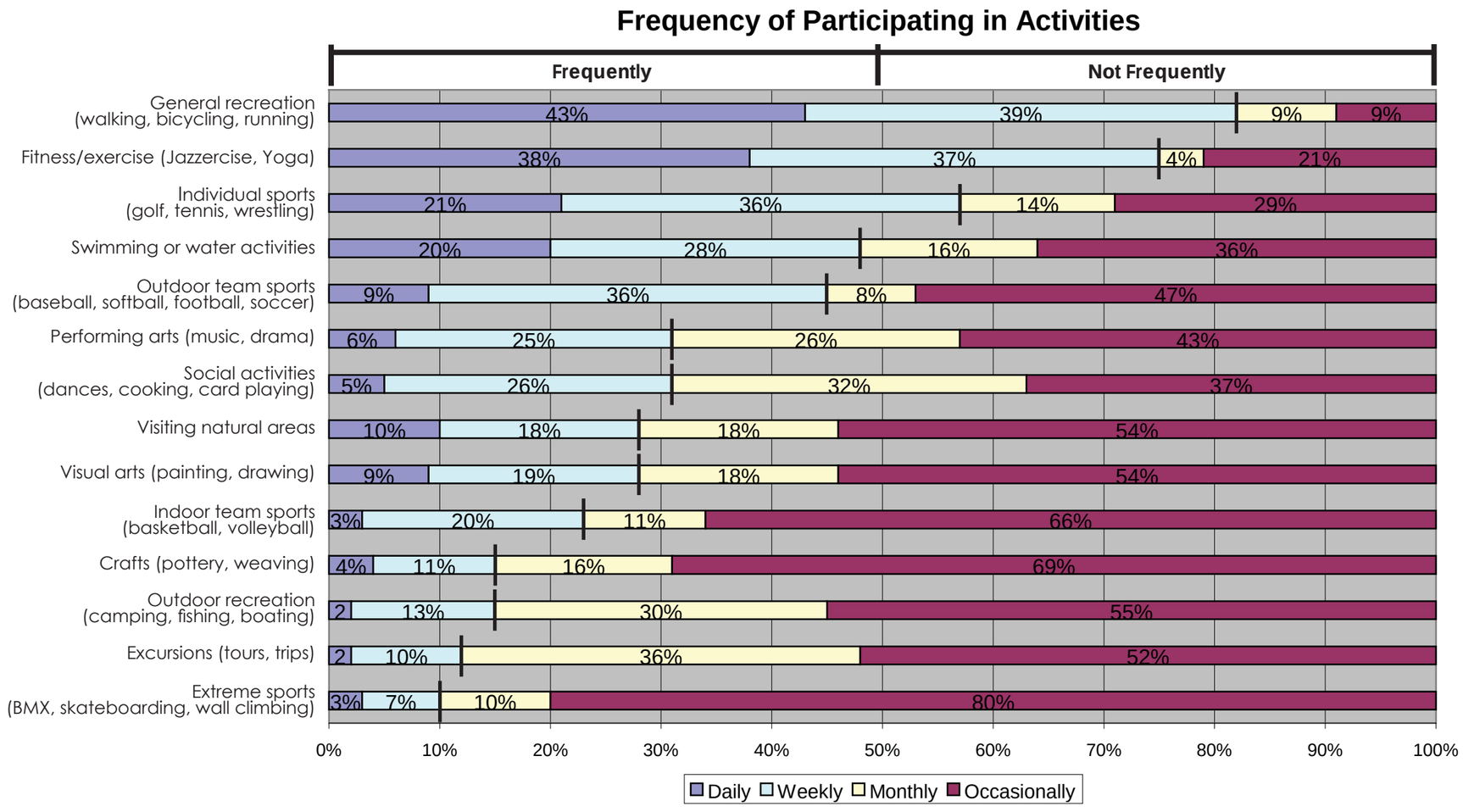
Programs for the City to Provide

Residents were asked the open-ended question of what program or activity they would like the City of Norman to provide. By asking this question, the City has a better understanding of the desires of the citizens in terms of programs and recreational activities. Six of the top 12 responses were for activities typically provided in an indoor recreation facility. The programs that were mentioned which relate to indoor recreation include exercise/aerobics/weight training as the 4th highest mentioned response with a 10% response rate. Yoga/Tai Chi/Pilates was the 6th highest mentioned response with a 7% response rate. Recreation center/indoor track was the 8th highest mentioned response with a 6% response rate. All responses are listed below.

Swimming/aquatics	48%
Walking/biking on trails	34%
Outdoor/nature activities	11%
Exercise/aerobics/weight training	10%
Programs for kids	8%
Yoga/Tai Chi/Pilates	7%
Community events/theater	6%
Recreation center/indoor track	6%
Activities for seniors/persons with disabilities	6%
Sports programs/leagues	6%
Cooking classes/arts & crafts	5%
Golf	5%

Frequency of Participating in Activities

Residents were asked how often they participate in a list of different recreational activities. Knowing how often the residents like to participate in certain activities is important so that the City offers an adequate number of facilities in which to engage in those activities. The highest rated activity was general recreation such as walking, running, or bicycling with 82% indicating they participate either daily or weekly. Second were fitness/exercise programs such as Jazzercise or Yoga with 75% indicating they participate either daily or weekly. The results are shown below.



Benefits of Participation

Residents were given a list of potential benefits that can be received from participating in recreation programs. They were then asked to check all the benefits they hope to get from participating. Knowing what benefits a person seeks when participating in a program or activity is important so that the City can target programs that meet those benefits.

The two highest rated benefits were having fun and improving health/fitness, both with a 15% response rate. Next was enjoying the outdoors (14%). The results are listed below.

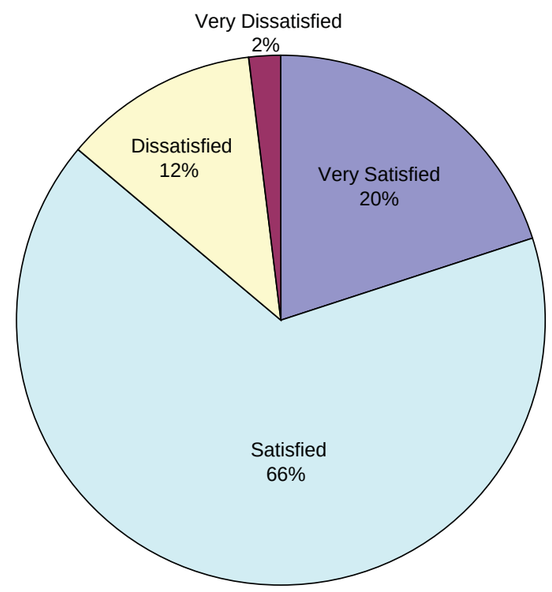
Have fun	15%
Improve health/fitness	15%
Enjoy the outdoors	14%
Interact with friends	11%
Develop new skills	9%
Make new friends	8%
Help others	6%
Participate in competitions	5%
Improve specific skills	5%
Participate in organized sports	5%
Be part of a team activity	4%
Find activity in which to excel	3%

Cultural Activities

Cultural activities in Norman include arts, theater, concerts, or festivals. Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the cultural activities that are provided by the City of Norman. 86% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied. Many of these types of activities are provided at City owned facilities such as the Sooner Theatre, the Firehouse Art Center, and the Performing Arts Studio. The results are shown in the chart below.

For those residents who indicated they were dissatisfied with the cultural activities provided by the City, they were further asked the open-ended question of why they are dissatisfied. The most common response was that too few activities are provided with 42% of the residents who are dissatisfied listing this as the reason. Other reasons for dissatisfaction include being unaware of the cultural activities (22%), not enough diversity or variety (13%), music or concerts are lacking (10%), and there needs to be better quality activities (8%).

Satisfaction with Cultural Activities



Reasons for Dissatisfaction

Too few activities provided	42%
Unaware of Cultural activities	22%
Not enough diversity/variety	13%
Music/concerts are lacking	10%
Need better quality activities	8%

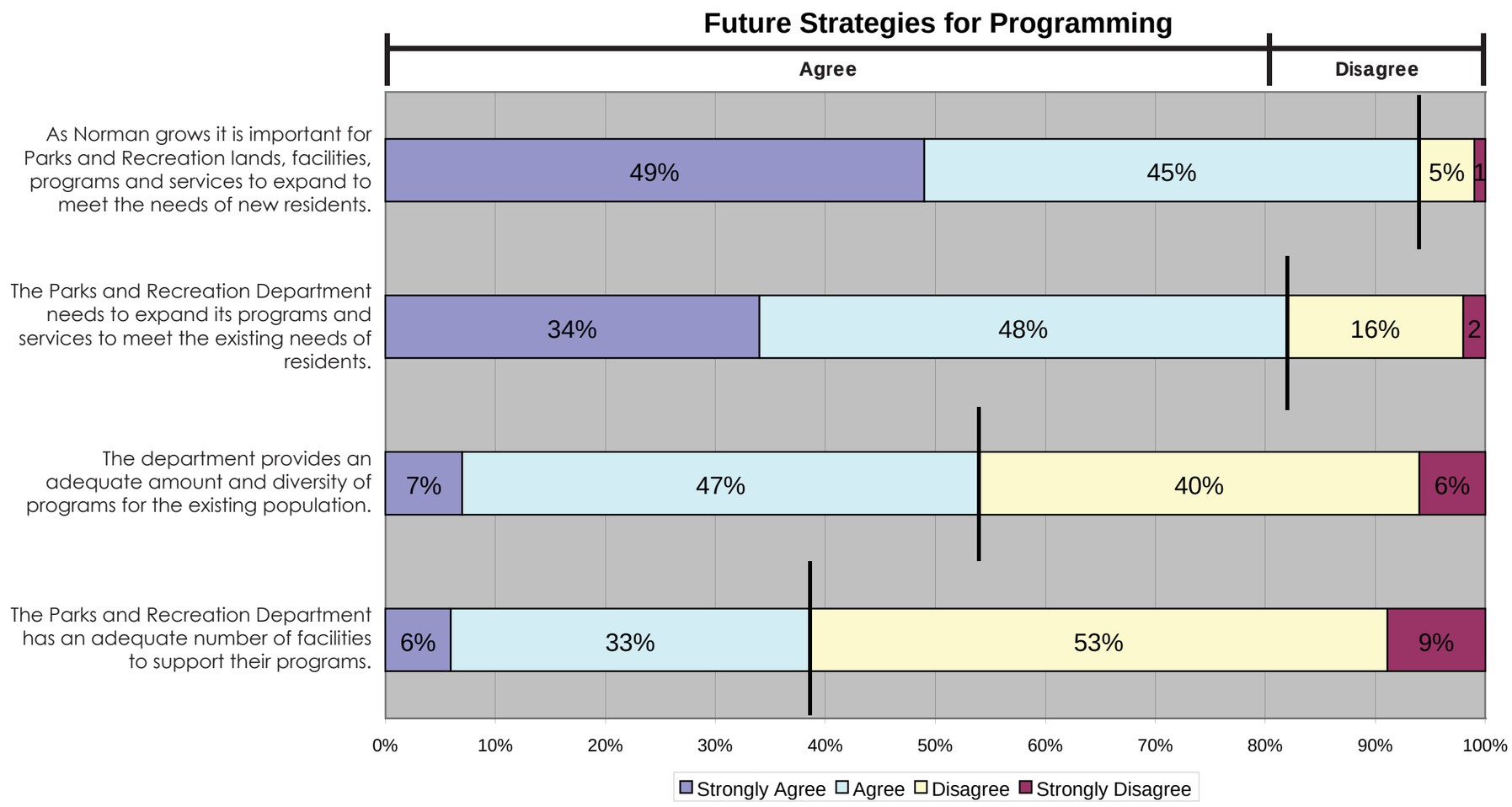
Citizen Comments on Future Programming in Norman

The residents who participated in the online survey were given a list of potential strategies the City could follow in regards to programming. The residents were then asked how strongly they agree or disagree with each strategy.

94% of residents either agree or strongly agree that is it important for parkland, facilities, programs, and services of the Parks and Recreation Department to expand as the City grows so that it meets the needs of new residents.

82% of residents either agree or strongly agree that the Department needs to expand its programs and services to meet the needs of existing residents. This demonstrates that a large majority of residents feel they are underserved by the current state of programs and services offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Similarly, only 39% of residents agree or strongly agree that the Parks and Recreation Department has an adequate number of recreation facilities to support their programs.



Potential Operation Costs of an Indoor Recreation Center

Typical operating costs for an indoor recreation facility in the 60,000 square foot range are shown below. These costs are presented at a very early stage in evaluating the need for a recreation center in Norman, and will vary and be subject to change as the purpose, size and target market of the proposed recreation centers are evaluated and adjusted. There are many variables that will impact each of the cost categories shown below; therefore, these costs are shown to simply establish an order of magnitude cost range and set the stage for much more detailed consideration of indoor facility needs in the future.

Recreation center operational projections are typically divided into four general categories, which are described as follows:

- **Personnel** – Includes the cost to staff, program and maintain a center. Full-time staff may include a center supervisor, a recreation coordinator, one to two recreation leaders, and custodial staff to maintain the facility. Part-time staff would include front desk attendants, fitness attendants, daycare staff, building attendants, and program instructors. Full time equivalent staff can range from 7 to 11 positions. Part-time staff can range from 500 to 1,000 hours of time per typical week. Staffing costs, including typical benefits, might range from $500,000 to $800,000 per year.
- **Contractual Items** – Includes utilities, professional services, printing, postage and advertizing, bank charges (i.e. for credit card purchase facilities), rental equipment such as vending machines, and staff training costs. Contractual costs may range from $250,000 to $350,000 per year.
- **Commodities** – Includes the cost of office, janitorial and recreation program supplies, maintenance and repair materials, staff dues, food and medical equipment that may be needed. These costs may range from $50,000 to $125,000 per year.
- **Capital Costs** – Annual reserve (sinking fund) set aside for the eventual replacement of equipment, furnishings and other components of the recreation building. While low in the first year, this fund should be allowed to grow to create a reserve that can be drawn upon as needed. The amount set aside on an annual basis may range from $20,000 to $30,000, and should ultimately total 2% to 4% of the overall construction cost.

Potential Revenue Generation

Revenue will depend on the hours of operation, types of programs and facilities offered, and the membership cost decided upon by the City. Typical hours of operation can range from an average of approximately 96 to 120 hours per week (6 to 7 days per week). The facility would also typically be made available to non-residents, albeit at a somewhat higher cost. In Norman, smaller communities could benefit from access to modern indoor recreation and fitness programs and facilities. Potential components of a typical indoor center's revenue picture include:

- **Daily admissions** – Walk-in attendees. With an average of 5 to 15 daily passes, daily admissions may generate an anticipated annual revenue range from $2500 to $7500 at a rate of $5 to $6 (more typical) to $10 per day.
- **Annual passes (individual and family passes)** – The number of passes sold might range from a very low 1,500 to over 4,000 individual and family passes (as a reference point, the Norman YMCA has well over 10,000 members). Passes could be anticipated to generate $150,000 to $350,000 per year, depending on the actual cost level established by the City.
- **Rental of facilities** – The rental of rooms or facilities within the building could generate approximately $10,000 to $30,000 per year.
- **Program fees** – A significant part of the revenue picture of the center is derived from the fees that are charged for each program. A typical pro-forma might project fee estimates ranging from $250,000 to over $400,000 per year.
- **Other Revenue Sources** – Other potential revenue sources can include a pro-shop, coffee or juice shop, vending, lock-in programs (with area scouts, schools, camps, etc.), child-care for parents while using the center, parties and special events and special or summer camps. Revenue from these sources can typically range from $25,000 per year to around $75,000 annually.

Table 7 - 1
Potential Annual Operations Summary

Item	Typical Annual Cost Range		Typical Percentage Range [1]	
	Low	High	Low	High
Expenditures				
Personnel	$500,000	$800,000	50% +/-	70% +/-
Contractual Items	$250,000	$350,000	25% +/-	40% +/-
Commodities	$50,000	$120,000	5% +/-	8% +/-
Capital Reserve	$25,000	$30,000	2% +/-	4% +/-
Potential Annual Total	**$825,000**	**$1,300,000**		
Revenue	**Low**	**High**	**Low**	**High**
Daily Admissions	$10,000	$20,000	2% +/-	3% +/-
Annual Passes	$150,000	$350,000	30% +/-	50% +/-
Facility Rentals	$15,000	$30,000	3% +/-	5% +/-
Program Fees	$250,000	$400,000	40% +/-	60% +/-
Other Revenues	$25,000	$75,000	5% +/-	10% +/-
Potential Annual Total	**$450,000**	**$875,000**		
Potential Cost Recovery	**Low**	**High**		
At Low Expenditure Range	55%	90%		
At High Expenditure Range	35%	70%		

[1] Represent typical ranges, but occur in different combinations - therefore these ranges do not sum to 100%

Subsidies

The vast majority of municipally operated recreation centers do not actually generate sufficient income to cover all of their hard costs. The range of subsidies varies significantly, and is established based on the affordability philosophy of each municipality. Cost recovery rates typically range from 50% to close to 90% of the annual operating cost. However, the higher the recovery rate, the higher the fees and membership rates have to be. As an example, family membership rates of around $200 to $250 per year may yield a recovery rate of 50 to 60%, while membership rates around $400 per year may yield a recovery rate that is closer to 80 or 85%.

Indoor Recreation Facility Options

Regarding indoor recreation facilities and programs, Norman is at a key juncture. Existing City owned recreation facilities at the 12th Avenue Center and supplemented by gyms at Whittier Middle School, Irving Middle School and Norman High School, are dated and provide nothing comparable to what current indoor facilities can have. Because of their age, all of the city facilities will need significant ongoing maintenance, including extensive renovations and equipment replacement in the next few years. Attendance numbers in all facilities are relatively stagnant over the past three years, indicating that programming has probably attracted as much as the dated facilities are going to be able to.

Both the modern state-of-the-art YMCA Center and Huston Huffman Recreation Center at OU serve a significant segment of the 100,000+ residents and students in Norman. Each of those facilities target a more specific market, and are not open to the general public. The public input portion of this planning effort indicates that there still is very likely a major portion of the permanent population of Norman who do not frequently use indoor recreation facilities and who have indicated that they might be interested in using a City run facility.

Three different scenarios were considered as part of the overall master planning process. While other options certainly exist, these have been deemed to be the most logical alternatives. They are:

1. Maintain the Status Quo – Continue to provide supplemental indoor recreation programs at the 12th Avenue, Irving and Whittier Recreation Centers, and the Norman High School gym. Over time and as possible, upgrade and modernize those centers. Explore ways to expand the 12th Avenue Center by approximately 30 to 50%.

2. Develop a new State-of-the-Art City owned and operated Indoor Recreation Center.

3. Assist the YMCA/other non-profit entities in developing additional Indoor Recreation facilities.

The positives and negatives of each of these alternatives are discussed on the following pages.

Alternative 1 - Maintain the Status Quo – In this scenario, the City would continue to offer most of its limited indoor recreation programs from the 12th Avenue Recreation Center. That facility would require a significant upgrade, and it would still be limited by its site and the aging condition of the existing building. The Irving and Whittier Centers, as well as the gym at Norman High School would be transferred back to the adjacent school in an agreed upon manner.

Potential Cost – Limited renovation of the 12th Avenue Center - $1,500,000 to $3,000,000.

Pros of this Option

- ► Cost would be lower than building a new larger, more comprehensive facility (but would result in fewer, lower quality facilities)
- ► YMCA could build facilities at no cost or a reduced cost to the City, and operate those facilities independently of the City.
- ► Anticipated annual operations costs are low.

Negatives of this Option

- ► Membership cost has limited ability to influence types and cost of programs that are offered.
- ► Space in 12th Avenue Center is limited, limiting the capacity of recreation programs.
- ► The existing Center is old and requires a significant renovation.
- ► YMCA may be out of reach for some residents of Norman.

Alternative 2. Develop a new State-of-the-Art City owned and operated Indoor Recreation Center – In this option, Norman would develop one to two new indoor recreation centers. The new center could include a pair of gyms, cardio fitness training room, weight training room, an indoor running track, classrooms and meeting rooms, an arts and crafts room, a computer lab, teen room/game room, and large meeting facilities with a kitchen. Such a facility would become the hub for recreation, both indoor and outdoor, in Norman. The new center could also house Parks and Recreation Department staff. Ultimately, the center could also include an indoor pool as a future phase.

A follow-up phase could include the renovation/expansion of the 12th Avenue Center to supplement the programs offered by the new center.

Potential Cost – Construction of a new 60,000+/- square foot center - $225 to $275 per square foot, or $13,500,000 to $16,500,000. This cost includes both construction and soft costs, but does not include land acquisition. A future competitive quality indoor pool would add approximately $8,000,000 to $12,000,000 to the cost of the indoor facility.

Pros of this Option

- ► A new center would provide a true center or focal point for recreation activities in Norman.
- ► Because more facilities are provided, such a center can allow for significant growth in activities and programs offered, and can provide more opportunities for a larger cross section of the population.
- ► New centers typically become a significant part of the quality of life and livability picture of their cities, and can help promote the City.
- ► The larger size consolidated into one building allows for much greater staff efficiency, rather than spreading staff across multiple centers.
- ► This option allows the 12th Avenue Center to be closed or renovated. If renovated, the 12th Avenue Center can potentially attract a larger segment of the population.
- ► Locations could be targeted to better serve all of the City, including fast growing areas.

- A new building will have a 30 to 40+ year lifespan and will incorporate current equipment, newest trends and the latest thinking on how to address recreation needs. It will also be significantly more energy efficient, and can incorporate many sustainability ideas and strategies that bolster Norman's image as an environmental leader.

Negatives of this Option

- Operational costs are typically not completely covered by fees and memberships, requiring an annual subsidy. In most cities across the United States, this is generally accepted as a way to increase recreational opportunities for that entity's population.
- Construction costs are typically not able to be paid back from the revenue that the facility generates.
- The Center may be a somewhat longer drive from some parts of the City.

Alternative 3 - Assist the YMCA / other non-profit entities in developing additional Indoor Recreation facilities – In this option, Norman's indoor recreation needs would be provided by entities other than the City of Norman. The City could enter into a partnership with the YMCA to construct a new Y satellite facility in the southeastern sector of the City, with the City's contribution determined as planning moves forward. The new facility would be operated as a YMCA, with typical Y fees and membership requirements. The City could look to other entities to also provide programming and facilities in other parts of the City.

Potential Cost – Costs for this alternative could range from $0 (if existing City owned lands are provided as the City's contribution) to a suggested upper range of $5,000,000 for the City's share of the cost. Under this scenario, the remainder of the cost of construction and operational costs would be funded by the operator of the facility.

Pros of this Option

- Potentially lower cost for the City.
- Lower or no operational cost for the City.
- Depending on fund-raising capabilities, such a facility might be built sooner than if built by the City of Norman.

Negatives of this Option

- City has limited or no control over types of programming that are offered.
- Cost to citizens of Norman would likely be higher than if the facility was operated and subsidized by the City.
- Membership would be required, resulting in some potential economic sectors of Norman not being able to afford to use the facility.
- Any surplus funds generated by programs would not be available to the City, and might not necessarily be re-injected into the same facility.

Recommendations for Indoor Recreation Facilities in Norman

A combination of all three general approaches discussed above is recommended for Norman. Citizens of Norman gain nothing by maintaining the exact status quo for existing City operated facilities that currently exists. Indeed, as noted previously, attendance and participation levels have flattened out and have reached the limits of what is possible with those existing facilities. The Cleveland County YMCA has outstanding facilities and membership levels, but has fee requirements that make it unaffordable for many residents of Norman.

As noted previously, this planning process is a comprehensive look at the Parks and Recreation system. As the recommendations of this plan are accepted and implemented, the City should engage in more detailed Indoor Recreation Feasibility studies to determine the precise program of facilities, size, location and construction cost for a new facility. At that time, the City should also confirm the revenue sources to be targeted for construction capital and determine more precise operational and cost recovery budgets.

It is recommended that the City of Norman construct a new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center. This proposed recreation center will be 60,000 to 80,000 square feet in size. It will include at least two basketball court gyms, fitness and cardio room and equipment, indoor walking track, meeting rooms, arts and crafts rooms, dance studio, and locker rooms. Future phases of the recreation center could include a senior center and an indoor aquatic component.

This facility will serve the entire City of Norman. It will require 20 to 30 acres of land for the building, parking and additional phases. The proposed timeframe for the indoor recreation center is 2012-2016. The estimated cost range is $12 million to $16 million. Potential funding sources for the design and construction of the recreation center could include a combination of sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, partnerships with other area entities, school district participation, or grant opportunities.

Similar to the previous chapter regarding aquatics, there are several scenarios the City should consider when constructing an indoor recreation center. These are discussed on the following pages.

Amenities found in a state-of-the-art indoor recreation center

Scenario A - Develop at Griffin Park

In this scenario, the new center will be built on a site at Griffin Park.

Benefits of this scenario:

- ► Griffin Park is a well known and central location. It is easily accessible from all parts of Norman.
- ► This site can incorporate both active and passive activities because of Griffin Park and Sutton Wilderness. This could provide a unique opportunity to incorporate a nature center as a component of the recreation center.

Disadvantages of this scenario:

- ► This may require displacement of existing facilities in the park. Existing facilities may have to be reconfigured to allow adequate space for the new recreation center.
- ► Space will be limited so future expansions and components may not be feasible.
- ► This scenario requires that the existing 12th Ave. Center not compete with the new facility so it will be closed or converted into another compatible use.
- ► Land is not owned by the City of Norman. It is leased from the State of Oklahoma for 50 years.

Scenario B - Develop at Saxon Park

In this scenario, the new center will be built on a site at Saxon Park.

Benefits of this scenario:
- ► This site has adequate space for the facility and future expansions.
- ► There is good visibility and access of Highway 9.
- ► Significant growth is occurring in the south and eastern parts of Norman around Saxon Park.

Disadvantages of this scenario:
- ► Saxon Park is distant from residents in the north and west sectors of the City.
- ► Currently the park is not master planned, so it is unknown what features will surround the recreation center.

Scenario C - Develop at Ruby Grant Park

In this scenario, the new center will be built on a site at Ruby Grant Park.

Benefits of this scenario:
- ► This site offers adequate space for the facility and future expansions.
- ► This site could be combined with an indoor pool and aquatic facility.
- ► This site has good visibility and freeway access which could allow for a regional draw.

Disadvantages of this scenario:
- ► Ruby Grant Park is distant from the east and south sectors of the City, forcing those residents to travel farther.
- ► The current master plan for Ruby Grant Park provides for an aquatic facility; however an adjustment would be required to incorporate a recreation and aquatic facility of this size.

Scenario D - Acquire 25+ Acres of Land For the Facility

In this scenario, it is recommended that land be bought for the development of a recreation center. The site will need to be at a central location within Norman and easily accessible off a major road or highway.

Benefits of this scenario:
- ► This scenario allows the City to choose where the recreation center can be built, ensuring that it is easily accessible to all residents of Norman.
- ► A site can be purchased large enough to include all future expansions and additional components.

Disadvantages of this scenario:
- ► The purchase cost of land can be high, especially in a central location. This cost will need to be in addition to the construction of the recreation center.

Recommendations for Middle School Centers/ Gyms and Norman High School Gym

After the new indoor recreation center is built, it is recommended that ownership of the Whittier and Irving recreation facilities, as well as the Norman High School gym, be transferred to Norman Public Schools. This will allow the City to consolidate programs and staffing into one facility. It will also alleviate the confusion of who has control over those facilities and at what time. This action recommended during the 2012 to 2016 timeframe.

Recreation center at Irving Middle School

Little Axe Community Center

Recommendations for Little Axe Community Center

The Little Axe Community Center is the only city-owned indoor facility in the eastern portion of Norman. This center serves a large number of residents that live in the rural part of the City. The center needs to be expanded so that it can continue to serve the growing area population. The center should be expanded to accommodate multiple uses. An additional 7,000 to 10,000 square feet should be planned for expansion of the center. Consideration should be given to offering recreation programs and fitness classes. The Head Start program that is currently offered at the center is popular and should continue. Planning for expansion should begin within 12 to 24 months, and with implementation of expansion within five years.

Senior Center Recommendations

As mentioned previously, the existing building of the Senior Citizens Center is not well configured for its current use. The recommendation for the Senior Center is to ultimately move out of the existing building. A new Senior Center could include:

- An area for dances and group fitness classes
- Fitness equipment
- A computer lab
- Arts and crafts room
- Gardens and plant cultivation areas
- A gift show
- Administration offices
- Kitchen for meal preparation

There are two options available to consider in creating an improved center for seniors.

Option A: There are potential bond funds available to convert the existing library into a new senior center if the library is moved to a different site. This will provide a site where all activities take place on one level, and provide more space for activities than what the current building offers.

Option B: This longer range step recommends building a senior center component as part of the new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center that is being proposed. This will provide an area specifically for senior activities, but also offer convenient access for the seniors to fitness equipment, meeting rooms, and dance room areas.

Existing Senior Center

12th Avenue Recreation Center Recommendations

A long range recommendation is to renovate the 12th Avenue Recreation Center. If the new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center is not placed in Griffin Park, then the 12th Avenue Center can be expanded to become a small, central recreation facility. Another option would be to transfer the facility to a non-profit organization in Norman for use as a basketball field house. The potential cost range of renovations is $2 million to $5 million. The estimate timeframe is beyond 2020.

Existing 12th Avenue Recreation Center

A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

Draft Action Plan 2010 - 2020

Indoor Recreation Facility Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Very High	I - 1	**Develop a new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center in a regional location.**	Develop 60,000 to 80,0000+/- sf facility. Include gym with 2+ courts, fitness and cardio component, indoor walking track, meeting rooms, arts and crafts, dance studio. Plan for Senior Center and indoor aquatic component as future phase.	Citywide - Regional	20	30	$12,000,000	$16,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, partnership with other area entities, school district participation, grant opportunity	2012 - 2016
		***Scenario A* - Develop at Griffin Park (or)**	*Known, central location; responds to growth and combines well with other active and passive activities at Griffin and Sutton Wilderness. Could be unique in having both active recreation and nature center component. May require displacement of facilities in the park. Requires that existing 12th Avenue Center not compete with new facility.*			*Within range shown above*					
		***Scenario B* - Develop at Saxon Park (or)**	*Adequate space for facility and expansion. Distant from north and west sectors of the City.*			*Within range shown above*					
		***Scenario C* - Develop at Ruby Grant Park (or)**	*Adequate space for facility and expansion. Could be combined with indoor pool and family aquatic center. Master plan provides for aquatic facility, but would require adjustment to incorporate this size of a facility. Freeway access and visibility could make facility a regional draw. Distant from east and south sectors of the City.*			*Within range shown above*					
		***Scenario D* - Acquire 25+ acres facility and develop facility**	*May require purchase of land in area slated for development. Location should be central with excellent regional access.*			*Within range shown above*					
High	I - 2	**After new facility is developed, transfer ownership of Whittier, Irving and Norman High School Facilities to Norman Public Schools**	Allows City to consolidate programs and staffing.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$0	$0	Legal	N/A	2012 - 2016
High	I - 3	**Renovate/Enhance Little Axe Community Center**	Renovate and expand this facility as an important component of indoor recreation programming in the far eastern portion of the City.	East			$2,000,000	$5,000,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2012 - 2020
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**20**	**30**	**$14,000,000**	**$21,000,000**			
Mid Term	I - 4	**Renovate/Enhance Senior Center facility**	Multiple floors make Senior Center unsuitable for older seniors. Currently in an older building that requires renovation.	Citywide	0	0	$500,000	$2,000,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, general obligation bonds, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2014 - 2018
Long Range	I - 5	**Develop second indoor recreation facility**	Develop satellite recreation facility to serve opposite sector not addressed in high priority action.	NE or SE	12	25	$12,000,000	$14,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity, partnerships	Beyond 2020
Long Range	I - 6	**Renovation of 12th Avenue Center**	Renovate and expand as central recreation facility, or transfer to other non-profit for use as basketball field house.	Central	5	10	$2,000,000	$5,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Long Range	I - 7	**Develop third indoor recreation facility**	Develop satellite recreation facility to serve opposite sector not addressed in high priority action.	NE or SE	12	25	$15,000,000	$20,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity, partnerships	Beyond 2020
Estimated Expenditure Beyond 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**69**	**120**	**$29,500,000**	**$41,000,000**			

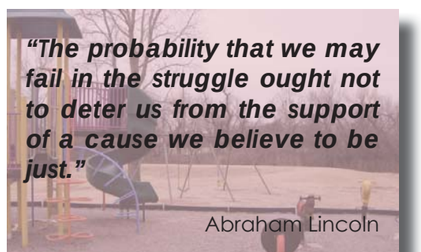
1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $50,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Chapter 8

Outdoor Recreation Facilities Recommendations

Chapter 8

Outdoor Recreation Facilities Recommendations



Recommendations Introduction

The recommendations in this chapter address all the needs for the entire park system such as trails, additional practice fields, improved sports fields, more passive parks, indoor recreation facilities, aquatic facilities, and greenbelt preservation. These sections recommend a series of actions to improve and expand the Norman parks, recreation, trails and open space system.

The recommended improvements fall into four general categories:

- Land Acquisition - both short term and long term. Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation and aquatic facilities, and open space including habitat protection where possible.
- High Profile Recreation Facilities - provide needed recreational facilities including an indoor recreation center and updated aquatic facilities.
- Development - develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority. Plan for the development of Ruby Grant Park and John H. Saxon Park.
- Existing Park Improvements - implement key improvements to existing parks throughout the City. Consider potential actions regarding renovation of larger community parks, and adding art in the parks as a way of improvement.

Philosophical Background for Recommendations

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the City are as follows:

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

The following items comprise the majority priority recommendations of the 2009 Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but are not specific concepts or actual plans. Costs that are shown are at an order of magnitude level of detail, and will vary as more detailed programming and design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. All costs include a cost escalation factor, assumed to be in the 3 to 4% per year range. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections should be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented.

Actions are divided into six categories:

- Development of aquatic facilities which was discussed in Chapter 6
- Development of indoor recreation facilities which was discussed in Chapter 7
- Parkland acquisition
- Existing park renovations
- Athletic facility improvements
- New park development

The timeframe of each recommendation priority is based on High Priority (within the next five), Medium Priority (within the next five to ten years) or Long Term Priority (beyond ten years). Note that the prioritization shown in this plan is intended to guide staff and council actions, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

The following pages illustrate a summary of the major recommendation categories in the Master Plan.

Parkland Acquisition

Acquisition of land in newly growing parts of the City should focus on the provision of neighborhood parks, additional community parks, linear parks, and the protection of habitat and open space. Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, the establishment of recreation and/or parkland easements, and donations or gifts. Norman is going to continue to grow over the next several decades and its population is expected to exceed 130,000 by 2030. The acquisition of land for parks will need to be continually considered well beyond the timeframe of this Master Plan. Fortunately, Norman has been adding parkland through its ordinance since the 1970s.

Land for Neighborhood Parks - There currently is no deficit of neighborhood parkland. However, to maintain the existing level of service of neighborhood parkland, approximately 15 acres (or 3 to 5 neighborhood parks) will need to be added by the year 2020.

- Consider donations by developers and continue enforcing the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Target sites that are easily accessible and have sufficient land to be useful.
- Consider acquisition in conjunction with Norman Public Schools so that neighborhood parks can be adjacent to future school sites.
- Park sites should be included within newly developing neighborhoods, as required by ordinance.

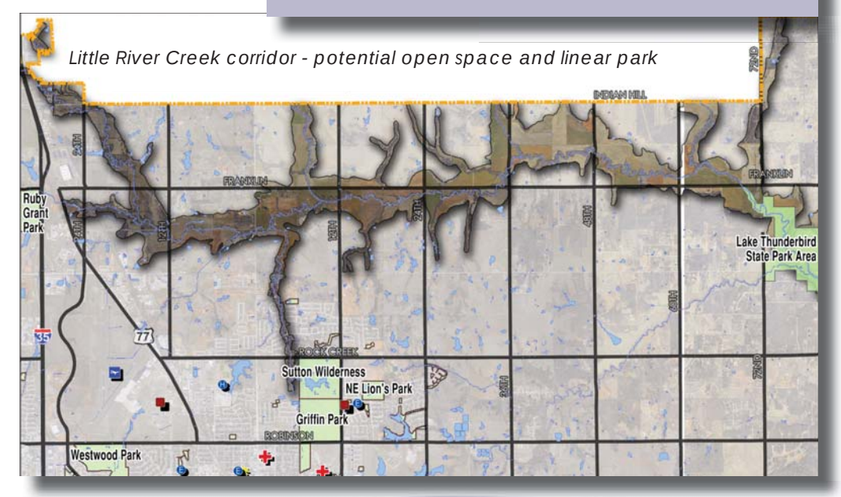
Land for Community Parks - It is recommended that community parks be at least 20 to 50 acres in size. More than 300 acres of community parkland needs to be developed to meet the 2020 target level of service. Nearly half of this acreage will be met with the development of Ruby Grant Park and Saxon Park.

City Linear Parks - Norman has several potential corridors for linear parks, the most notable are the Little River Creek corridor and Canadian River corridor. It is recommended that Norman proactively preserve linear park corridors for the development of linear parks and potential trail spines which will enhance what the City has already accomplished with the Legacy Trail. The Little River and Canadian River corridors should be preserved primarily as passive native preserves, with trails that allow some access but that maintain the natural quality of the corridors.

Open Space - Natural habitat and nature areas are of high importance for the residents of Norman. Areas that have habitat value and warrant habitat protection typically include creeks, rivers, floodplains, and wooded areas. Lands dedicated as open space will receive only minimal development. General opportunities for open space land dedication include:

- Land and/or development rights of the entire 100 year floodplain and/or lands that are regularly subjected to flooding.
- Secondary creeks that can create linkage to adjacent neighborhoods by means of trail connections.
- Land along creeks that are not necessarily part of a specific park.
- Land identified to have natural or cultural importance include wetlands and their buffers; moderate and steep slopes; groundwater resources and their recharge areas; woodlands; farmland to ensure the rural character of the city; significant wildlife habitat; historic and archaeological features; and scenic views.
- Land associated with the cultural landscape of Norman such as downtown open spaces, buffer areas around the University of Oklahoma, agricultural lands, and river overlooks.

The preservation of key remaining natural areas and wildlife corridors is deemed to be a key action item as Norman continues to grow. When so identified, these areas will be preserved in an undeveloped state. Access points and nature trails will be provided in a sensitive manner so that wildlife and native forests can continue to flourish, while allowing carefully balanced access by the public.



A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

Action Plan 2010 - 2020

Park Land and Open Space Preservation Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Very High	R - 1	**Acquire floodplain lands along the Little River corridor for Little River Nature Preserve**	Acquire floodplain lands for linear park and open space preserve. Acquire through donation, purchase, or acquire access easement.	Citywide - Regional	300	500	$0	$5,000,000	Acquisition	Stormwater fee if enacted (potential stormwater acquisition for both greenspace and flood management purposes). Other potential funding mechanisms include donation of land, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant	2010 - 2020
High	R - 2	**Acquire floodplain lands for Canadian River Preserve Park**	Acquire lands for river corridor access. Acquisition by donation is preferred. Long term city goal. Access and security issues must be addressed as this action is implemented.	Citywide - Regional	50	200	$0	$2,000,000	Acquisition	Donation of land, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2020
High	R - 3	**Acquire lands for neighborhood parks as development occurs**	Acquire new park land through parkland dedication ordinance as development occurs.	By sector	25	50	$0	$0	Acquisition	Parkland Dedication Ordinance (no funding necessary)	Ongoing as development occurs
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**375**	**750**	**$0**	**$7,000,000**			

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2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per acre, based on acreage to be acquired.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Renovations of Existing Parks

Norman is at a crucial point in its park system where renovations and improvements are vital. Preventative maintenance of park structures has fallen behind and as a result extensive renovation is needed.

The first phase renovations include items such as:

- ► Continue replacing older playground equipment
- ► Adding more shade structures and trees
- ► Replacing park guard rails/edge fencing
- ► Upgrading park signage
- ► Ensuring drinking fountains work properly
- ► Replacing older picnic tables and benches
- ► Adding more pavilions
- ► Adding practice facilities to all possible parks
- ► Improving and expanding the walking/jogging trails in parks

The first phase of parks that are recommended for renovation include:

- ► Eastwood Park
- ► Griffin Park
- ► Andrews Park
- ► Little Axe Park
- ► Tulls Park
- ► Reaves Park
- ► Northeast Lions Park

Replace Older Playground Equipment:

Examples of older style playground equipment that is found in some Norman parks is shown by the pictures to the left.

The new styles of playgrounds incorporate exercise with play as shown by the pictures to the right and below.

All playgrounds should include shade structures.

Add More Shade Structures and Trees:

Many parks in Norman lack adequate shade structures and trees. All playgrounds and picnic facilities should be protected with proper shade. The weather in Norman can be overbearingly hot during the summer months; therefore shade needs to be provided so that the parks are continually used. Below is a picture of a typical park in Norman that does not offer adequate shade.

Eastridge Park is a typical park in Norman but it has little to no shade structures and trees.

Replace Park Guard Rails:

Existing guard rails and edge fences around most parks are typically pipe fencing. These outline the boundary of most of the parks. This type of railing takes away from the aesthetic appearance of the parks and natural areas.

Below is a picture of the guard rail at McGeorge Park. These guard rails require significant maintenance and upkeep. As shown in the picture, the paint easily chips and the rails easily rust.

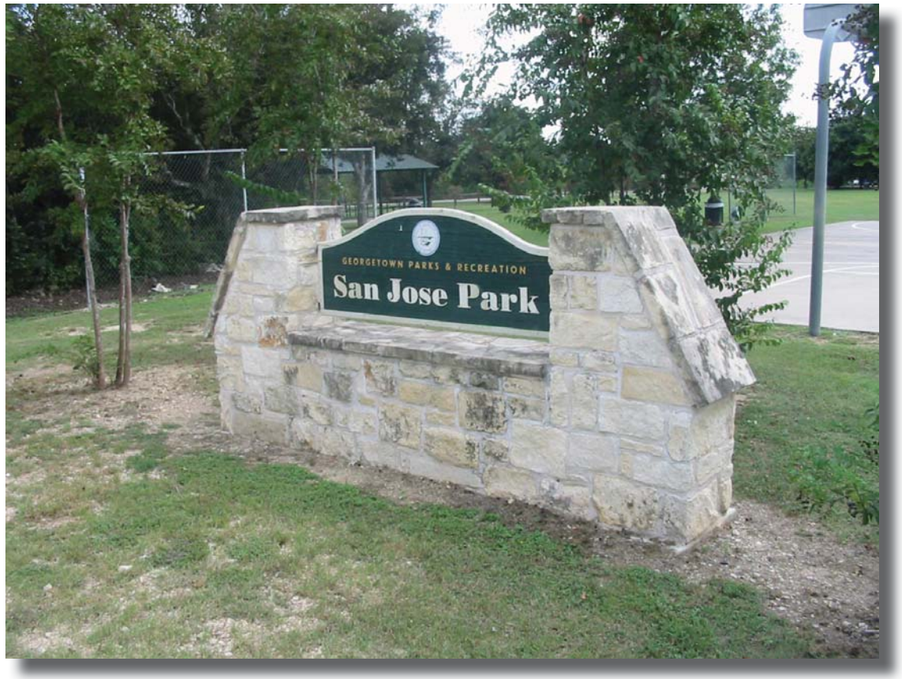
Examples of improved park fencing or bollards:

- **Top Right:** This city uses wrought iron fencing to guard around their parks.
- **Bottom Right:** This city uses natural stone boulders as park bollards to prevent vehicle traffic from entering the park.

Upgrade Park Signage:

The existing park signage is dated. Since it is made largely of wood, it can easily crack and splinter thus needing replacement often. Upgrading signage so that it is made entirely of stone will ensure a longer life of the signs. The picture below is an example of the existing signage in Norman parks. Other images on this page are examples of different stone signs.

Existing park signage in Norman



Ensure All Drinking Fountains Work Properly:

During the on-site assessment of existing parks it was noted that many of the drinking fountains did not have flowing water. Also, results from the student survey showed that drinking fountains not working were the second highest response when asked what they do not like about parks in Norman. Proper maintenance of all park amenities is important, and it is crucial that drinking fountains provide water to park users. Drinking fountains should be placed under trees or in shaded areas so that the water remains cool during summer months.

Drinking fountain at Morgan Park that was damaged during the 2008 winter freeze.

Replace Older Picnic Tables and Benches:

Many of the picnic tables, benches and gazebos in the parks in Norman are made of wood and are severely aged. These older amenities need to be replaced. There is an annual budget for parks infrastructure replacement, and items are replaced in order of priority.

Add More Pavilions:

One amenity that is consistently needed in the parks is more shade. Providing additional pavilions in all parks will give the residents more shade when using the parks. Larger community parks especially need additional pavilions to allow for large group picnic reunions and parties. This can be a source of rental revenue for the City.

Beyond just providing additional pavilions, all existing pavilions should be renovated to incorporate a theme into the parks. Stone column pillars and similar roof structures will offer consistency throughout the City of Norman parks and add to the aesthetic appearance. The picture to the left is an example of an existing pavilion in a Norman park. The pictures shown to the right and below are examples of higher quality pavilions.

Existing pavilions in Reaves Park, Griffin Park, and Northeast Lions Park.

Other pictures are examples of signature pavilion styles.

Add Practice Facilities Where Possible:

Practice fields are important to ensure that game fields remain in good quality. Norman currently has a good supply of backstops and soccer practice goals added to many neighborhood parks. It is important to continue to place these practice facilities in all new parks where possible.

Renovate and Expand Trails:

Trails were rated as the highest amenity that residents of Norman wanted more of. There are some parks in which the existing trail needs to be renovated while in other parks the trail needs to be expanded. All larger community parks should offer a looped trail throughout the entire park site.

The recently completed Greenways Master Plan proposes trail corridors throughout Norman. This Parks Master Plan reinforces the findings of that plan, and strongly recommends that trail development continue to be one of the highest priorities in the City.

Trail at Colonial Estates Park needs to be renovated.

Trail at Eagle Cliff Park needs to be renovated.

Trail at Griffin Park needs to be renovated and loop throughout park.

Trails throughout Hall Park Greenbelt need to be expanded.

A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

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Park Renovation Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations*	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Very High	R - 1	**Renovate Eastwood Park**	Replace park sign. Add new play equipment. Add walking trail. Provide accessible entry to park. Install new signature shade pavilion	Central	0	0	$250,000	$500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 2	**Renovate Griffin Park**	Create new park entrance sign. Install new fencing edge around park. Renovate and expand walking trail around the park.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$350,000	$750,000	Renovation/ Enhancement	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 3	**Renovation/Enhance Andrews Park**	Remove existing road on west side to consolidate park land. Add two major new park signs. Add landscaping and new trees. Add new signature pavilion. Add urban plaza near proposed library site. Add sculptural feature(s).	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$750,000	$1,500,000	Renovation/ Enhancement	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 4	**Renovate Little Axe Park**	Address accessibility walkways. Renovate concession / restroom buildings. Add new park sign.	Far East	0	0	$150,000	$400,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 5	**Renovate Tulls Park**	Add new park sign. Replace playground equipment. Add walking trail around the park. Add trees. Replace irrigation system if necessary.	Central	0	0	$250,000	$500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 6	**Renovate Reaves Park**	Replace three pavilions in the park. Add walking trail segments. Replace older picnic tables. Renovate or replace restroom building.	Central	0	0	$750,000	$1,500,000	Renovation/ Enhancement	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 7	**Renovate NE Lions Park**	Replace restroom building. Replace park signs. Renovate pier as necessary. Add new shade pavilion.	NE	0	0	$250,000	$500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	R - 8	**Enhance Monroe Elementary School site to become a true neighborhood park**	Enter an agreement with Norman Public Schools so that school property surrounding Monroe Elementary will truly become a neighborhood park. There is no other park in this area of the City. Enhancements should include improved playscape structure, picnicking facilities and practice facilities. School Park should remain completely accessible to the neighborhoods that surround it.	SW	0	0	$150,000	$400,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
High	R - 9	**Renovate/Enhance Colonial Estates Park**	Replace park sign. Add new play equipment. Enhance walking trail. Provide accessible entry to park. Splash pad added in 2009.	Central	0	0	$250,000	$500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
High	R - 10	**Renovate Morgan Park**	Replace park sign. Add new play equipment. Provide accessible entry to park. Install new signature shade pavilion	Central	0	0	$100,000	$250,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**0**	**0**	**$3,750,000**	**$7,650,000**			
Long Range	R - 11	**Renovate additional 5 parks in Norman**	Renovate / enhance existing parks in Norman (Group of 5 parks)	Citywide	0	0	$1,500,000	$2,500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Long Range	R - 12	**Renovate additional 5 parks in Norman**	Renovate / enhance existing parks in Norman (Group of 5 parks)	Citywide	0	0	$1,500,000	$2,500,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Estimated Expenditure Beyond 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**0**	**0**	**$3,000,000**	**$5,000,000**			

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** Preliminary recommendations for each park - detailed staff analysis will be conducted to refine and update individual parks needs as funding is allocated.*

Renovation to Athletic Facilities

In addition to renovations needed to enhance all parks in Norman, significant renovations are also needed to the athletic facilities provided by the City. Athletic facilities that need renovations are included in Griffin Park, Reaves Park and Westwood Park.

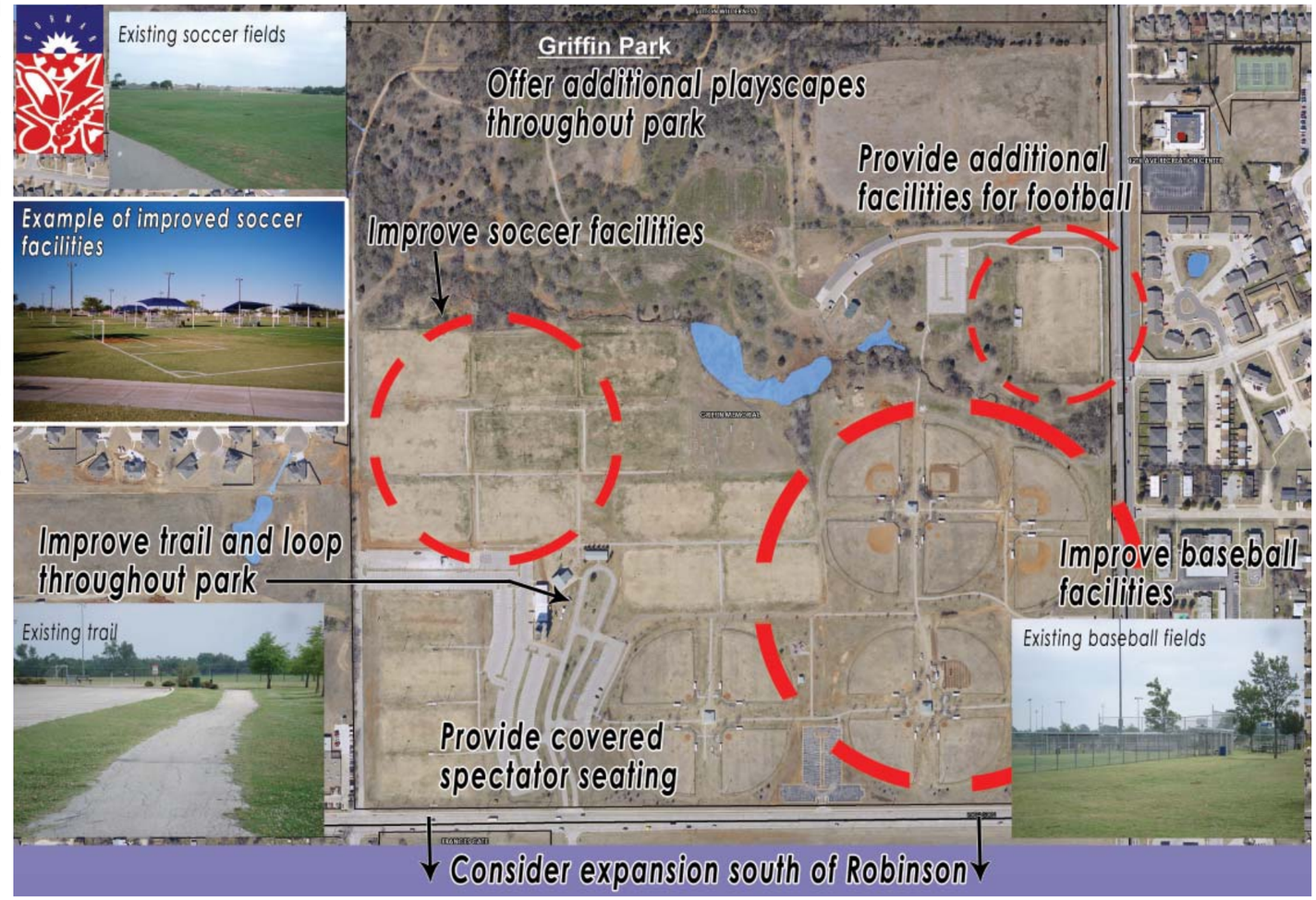
Griffin Park Athletic Field Renovations

Renovations to the athletic fields in Griffin Park include:

- ► Improving the soccer facilities
- ► Improving the baseball facilities
- ► Providing additional lighting
- ► Providing supplemental athletic fields
- ► Providing additional football facilities
- ► Providing covered spectator seating
- ► Improving the trail and loop it throughout the park
- ► Expanding to the south of Robinson, if necessary
- ► Offering additional playgrounds throughout the park

If Andrews Park is the best known park in Norman, due to the many events held there, Griffin Park is not far behind. It is the heart of Norman's youth and adult athletics programs, encompassing facilities for soccer, football, baseball and softball for both boys and girls. At almost 160 acres, it is the largest developed park in the Norman system. The great variety of things to do in the park, as well as its proximity to the Sutton Wilderness, and finally its easily accessible location make it a key part of Norman's parks system. The park has more than a mile of frontage along Robinson and 12th Avenue, but has a dated look with pipe rail and chain link fencing. It has two spectacular pavilions, one at the Soccer Complex and the second (the Stone Pavilion) at the northern end of the park. The use of stone in these pavilions should become a common characteristic for any new pavilion or park architecture feature built in the future in the City.

The asphalt trail in the park is deteriorating and needs to be replaced. There are opportunities for long straight promenades between athletic fields that can replace sections of the current asphalt trail. The bleachers at the athletic fields in the park need to be covered to provide shade relief. Landscaping, berms and replacement fencing should be added along the park perimeter at 12th Avenue and Robinson Street. Consider upgrading existing soccer practice fields at Frances Cate Park on the south side of Robinson Street to add additional tournament quality soccer facilities. Resurface the asphalt trail in the park. Install additional screening and landscaping in front of the silos in the middle of the park. Install additional directional signage throughout Griffin Park to guide visitors to the park.

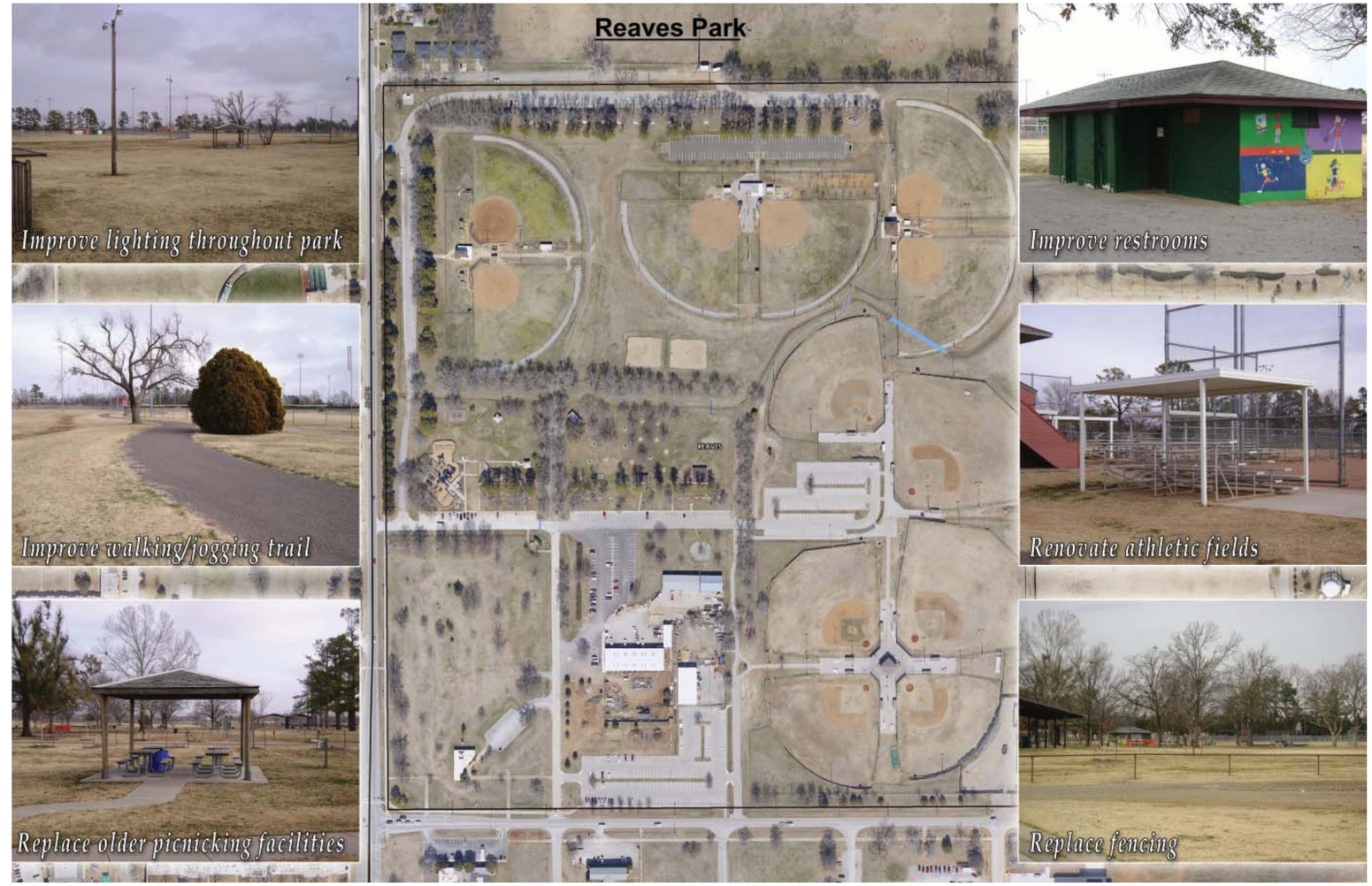


Reaves Park Athletic Field Renovations

Renovations to the athletic fields in Reaves Park include:

- Renovating the baseball/softball fields with minor field regrading and reseeding as necessary
- Improving the lighting
- Improving the trail
- Improving the restrooms and concessions, which has already begun with the new restroom in the southwest portion of the park.

Consider creating a new master plan for this park. Rebuild the picnic complex in the park with new tables, pavilions and restroom building. Use the pavilion vernacular found in Griffin Park and Andrews Park to create a character that links Reaves back to those other parks. Add multiple new park signs to identify the park as a City of Norman facility. Install cultural components such as additional outdoor art, commemoration markers or statues, and a place for large gatherings. Create new park entrances that celebrate the park. Upgrade athletic field lighting in the park, and ensure that concession/restroom facilities at the softball and baseball fields are tournament quality.



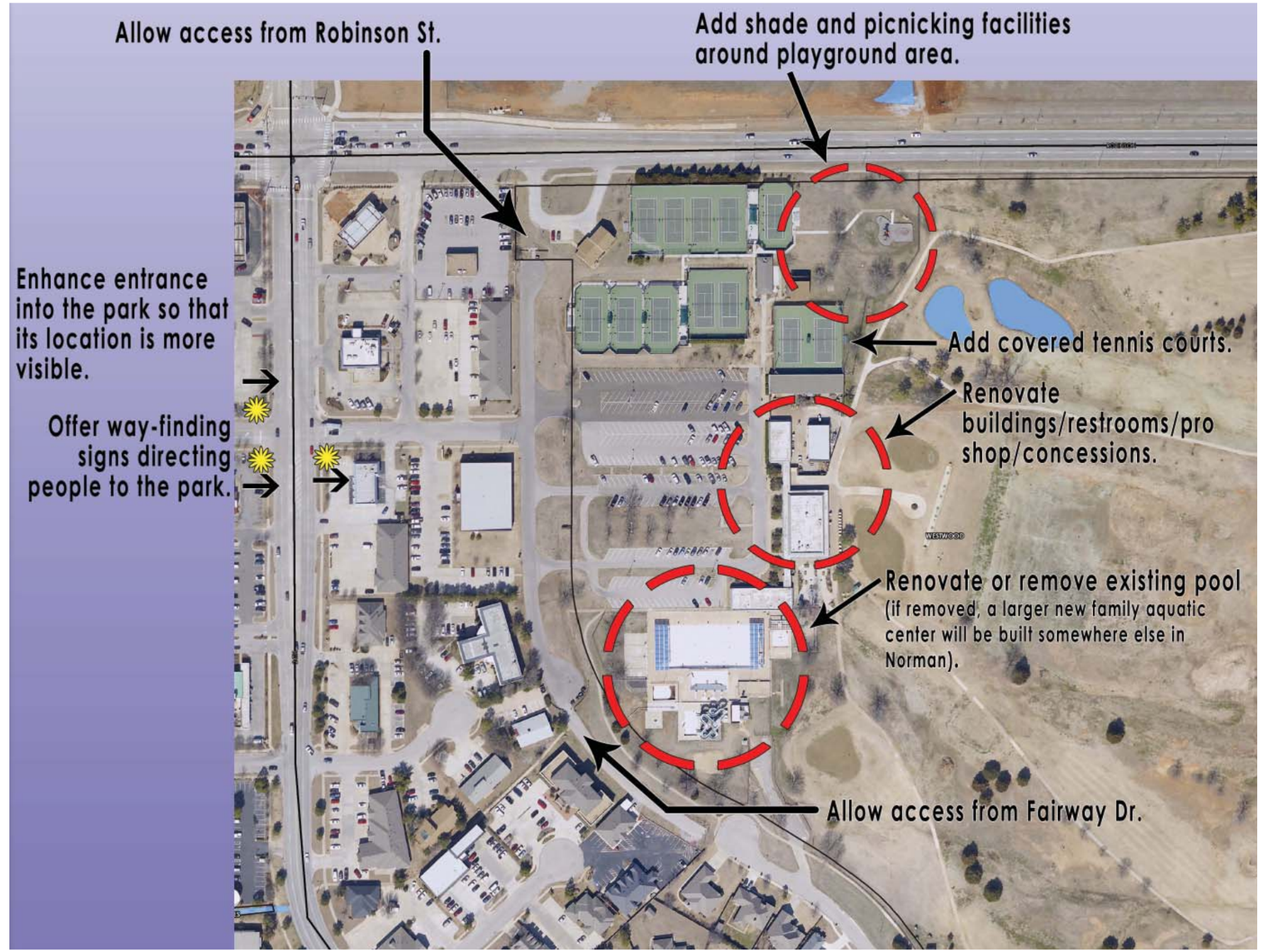
Westwood Park Renovations

Renovations to Westwood Park include:

- ► Developing a four court covered complex adjacent to the existing tennis center
- ► Replacing fence around pool area
- ► Additional shade areas are need
- ► Adding way-finding and direction signage throughout the City, leading people to the park
- ► Renovating restrooms and golf pro shop
- ► Increasing access to park from Robinson Street

Replace or renovate the Westwood Pool. As part of that effort, develop a master plan for the remaining facilities in the park, including the Tennis Center and the Golf Course Clubhouse. Consider consolidating tennis center and golf course building in one building to create space for a two to four covered tennis court building. Consider also reconfiguring parking for greater efficiency and to create usable space.

Create a new entrance to the park from Robinson Street. Add features such as pavilions and a connection to the existing Robinson Street trail that also allows this park to serve as a neighborhood park for nearby residents. Add prominent public art pieces in this highly used park.



A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

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Athletic Facility Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
High	ATH - 1	**Griffin Park - Soccer and Football Improvements**	Additional field lighting, add supplemental fields, additional shade structures, update bleachers. Expand south of Robinson Street if possible.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$1,500,000	$3,000,000	New Development / Renovation	By association, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2012 - 2016
High	ATH - 2	**Reaves Park - Baseball and Softball Facility Improvements**	Field signage, replace/upgrade fencing, minor field regrading and reseeding as necessary, concession and restroom improvements, lighting improvements	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$1,500,000	$2,000,000	New Development / Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2012 - 2016
High	ATH - 3	**Westwood Park Tennis Center Improvements**	Develop 4 covered court complex adjacent to existing tennis center. Replace fencing, add additional shade areas	SE	0	0	$2,000,000	$2,500,000	New Development / Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2014 - 2018
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**0**	**0**	**$5,000,000**	**$7,500,000**			
Estimated Expenditure Beyond 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**0**	**0**	**$0**	**$0**			

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3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Development of New Parks

Norman currently has two large community parks that are undeveloped, Ruby Grant Park and Saxon Park. By developing these two parks, the City will be closer to reaching its target level of service for developed community parkland. Other new park development includes continuing to enforce the Parkland Dedication Ordinance so that neighborhood parks are required as new development occurs. Final new park development recommendations include developing the future potential parkland sites that are acquired as mentioned previously in this chapter.

Develop Initial Phase of Ruby Grant Park

A master plan was done for this park in 2008, and awaits funding. Development of this park will include park signage, parking, trails, practice fields for soccer and baseball, signature pavilions, shade structures, regional cross-country competitive facility, lighting and park infrastructure. Consider incorporating future indoor recreation and indoor and/or outdoor aquatic facilities at this park. The estimated cost for construction of the initial phase is $4 million to $5.5 million. The proposed timeframe for construction is 2012 to 2014.

Picnic Facilities

Park Lighting

Public art and ponds

Practice Soccer Fields

Trails

Images are for representation purposes only and may vary from actual design.

Signature Pavilions

Innovative Playgrounds with Shade

Playgrounds with Shade

Trails

Fountains

Benches

Images are for representation purposes only and are pre-design. Actual amenities placed in Saxon Park may vary considerably.

Develop Initial Phase of Saxon Park

Saxon Park is a large community park in the southeast sector of the City. Heavy growth is expected to occur in this portion of Norman. This community park will be significant in serving those residents.

Initial phase of development could include park signage, parking, trails, play areas, signature pavilions, picnicking areas, open play fields, a cross country course, and park infrastructure. The estimated cost of construction is $2.5 million to $4 million. The proposed timeframe is 2014 to 2018.

Sand Volleyball

Covered Basketball Courts

Provide Minimal Improvements to the George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness

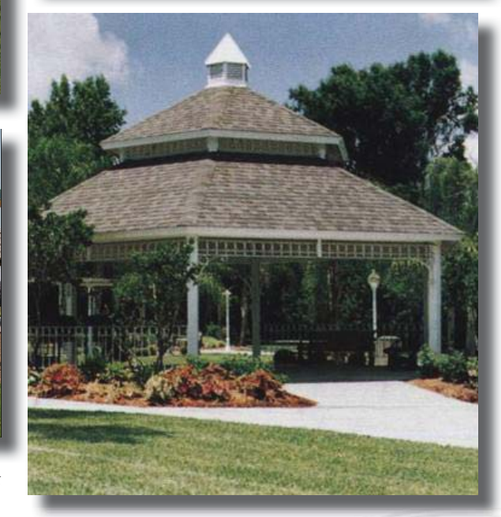
The Sutton Wilderness is a unique nature preserve in the center of Norman. Minimal development is needed to this wilderness area which will allow access to all residents of Norman. Proposed development includes adding a park access area with expanded parking, additional park interpretative signs, trail connections and accessibility ramps to the existing trail system, and a nature center for environmental education programs.

The estimated cost of development is $500,000 to $750,000. This development could be a potential candidate for sponsorships or grants to help fund a portion of the costs. The potential timeframe for development is 2015 to 2020.

Construct Neighborhood Parks in Developing Areas

Norman has a Parkland Dedication Ordinance which requires new developments to give land or a fee to be used for land purchase for the development of a park within that neighborhood. This ordinance has played a vital role in establishing a good system of smaller neighborhood parks throughout all of Norman.

New neighborhood parks should be at least three to five acres in size. Typical amenities will include playground areas, shade pavilion, picnic tables, BBQ grills, walking/jogging trails, drinking fountains, backstops, and open space for practice fields and unorganized play.

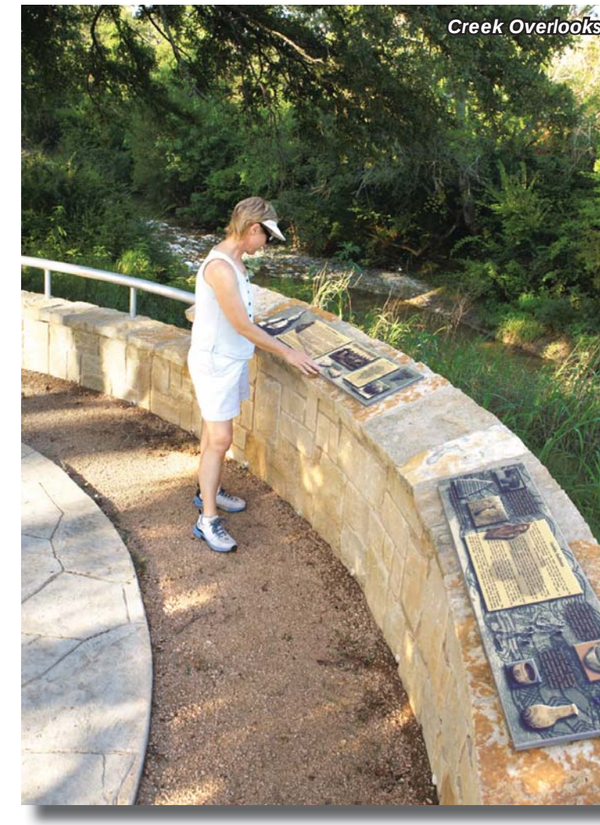


Typical amenities found in a neighborhood park

Develop Initial Phase of Little River Greenway Nature Area

Assuming the Little River corridor is acquired and preserved for a linear/nature park, the initial phase of development is proposed for beyond the 2020 timeframe. The initial development will include park entry signs, parking, trail development, trail signs, interpretive facilities, play areas, shade pavilions and picnic tables, and overlook points or nodes along the creek. The estimated cost for development, not including the acquisition of the land, is $2 million to $4 million.

Nature Trails and Trail Heads


Creek Overlooks

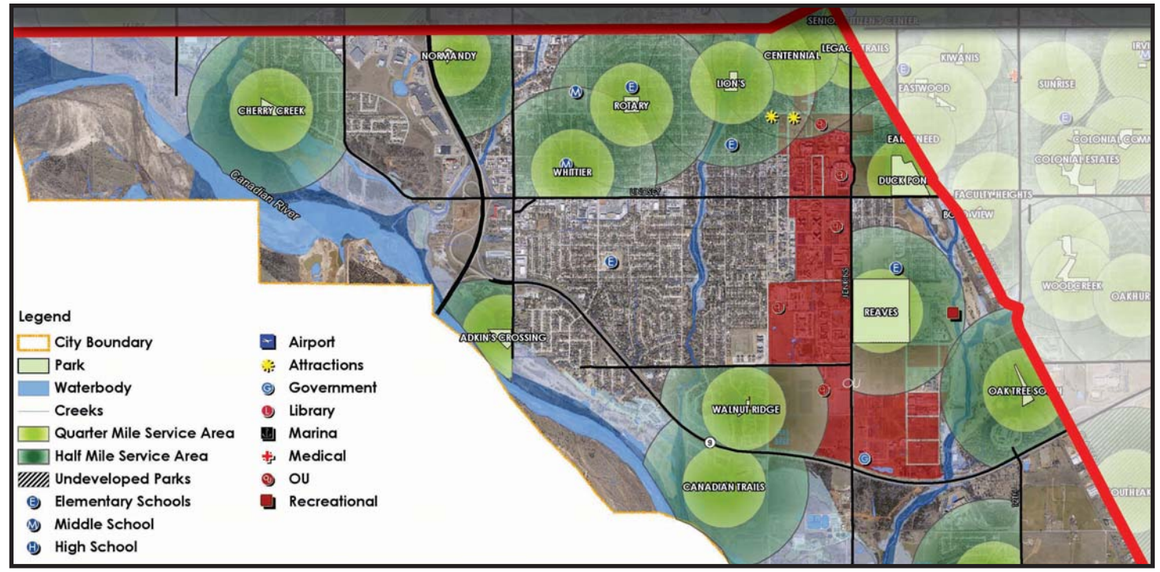
Trails Signs

Interpretive Signs

Benches and Trails Resting Points

Develop Initial Phase of Southwest Community Park

The southwest sector of Norman does not have a community park and also has the least amount of parkland to serve those residents. After acquiring land for a community park, either along the Canadian River or elsewhere, the first phase of development will include park entry sign, parking, trails, play areas, shade pavilions with picnicking facilities, restroom facilities, and park infrastructure. The estimated cost of development is $2.5 to $4 million. The proposed timeframe for development is beyond 2020.



The southwest sector of Norman is underserved in terms of community parkland.

Tennis Courts

Covered Basketball Courts

Practice Fields

Trails

Public Art

Playgrounds with Shade

Sand Volleyball

Images are for representation purposes only and are pre-design. Actual amenities placed in the community park may vary considerably.

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A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

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New Park Development Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
High	PD - 1	**Develop Initial Phase - Ruby Grant Park**	Develop initial phase - include park sign, off-street parking, trails, practice fields for soccer and baseball, signature pavilion, shade structures, regional cross-country competitive facility, lighting and park infrastructure.	NW	0	0	$4,000,000	$5,500,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2012 - 2014
High	PD - 2	**Develop Initial Phase - Saxon Park**	Develop park entry, signs, parking area, access walks, play area, signature pavilion, picnic area, cross country course, open active play field, nature trails.	SE	0	0	$2,500,000	$4,000,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2014 - 2018
High	PD - 3	**Develop Initial Phase - Sutton Wilderness Addition**	Add park access area with parking, signage. Add trail connections to existing trail system. Potentially add a nature center structure.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$500,000	$750,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
High	PD - 4	**New Neighborhood parks in developing areas (Three)**	Develop initial basic facilities for neighborhood parks as area population grows. Funding for three new parks is included in this action. Include play area, shade pavilion, picnic tables, short walking trail segment.	Per sector as growth occurs	10	15	$750,000	$1,500,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**10**	**15**	**$7,750,000**	**$11,750,000**			
Medium Term	PD - 5	**Develop Initial Phase - Little River Greenway Nature Area**	Develop initial phase - park entry, sign, parking infrastructure, trail development, trail signs, park interpretive facilities, play area, shade pavilions, overlooks and nodes.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$2,000,000	$4,000,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Medium Term	PD - 6	**Develop Initial Phase - Southwest Community Park**	Develop initial phase - park entry, sign, parking infrastructure, trail development, trail signs, park interpretive facilities, play area, shade pavilions, restroom facilities.	SW	0	0	$2,500,000	$4,000,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Beyond 2020
Estimated Expenditure Beyond 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**20**	**30**	**$4,500,000**	**$8,000,000**			

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3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Alternative Funding Projects - Development of Legacy Park

Legacy Park is a master planned park in the northern part of the City. It will be funded and constructed as part of the University North Park TIF District. The City of Norman will not pay for the development of this park; however its construction is a high priority. It will provide significant parkland to the northern portion of Norman and have unique features that will attract all residents such as an amphitheater and large fountain.

A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

Action Plan 2010 - 2020

Alternative Funded Project Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
High	AF - 1	**Develop Legacy Park**	Development of Legacy Park will be funded by the TIF district. Development is a high priority. The park is designed and awaiting funding from the TIF to begin construction. This will be a significant park in this area and will offer amenities such as an amphitheater and fountain.	Citywide, NE	0	0	$0	$0	Development	TIF District. This park will not be funded by the City of Norman, however development is a high priority.	2010-2016
Estimated Expenditure by 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**0**	**0**	**$0**	**$0**			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per acre, based on acreage to be acquired.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Chapter 9

Implementation Plan

Chapter 9

Implementation Plan

"The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian

Introduction

The parks and recreation needs of Norman are described in the previous chapters of this report. This chapter recommends a series of actions to begin addressing those needs. These actions are recommendations to guide Norman Parks and Recreation Department staff and the City Council over the next five to ten years, and should be revisited and updated on a regular basis.

Prioritization Criteria - The recommended prioritization is based on information received from public input, as well as from the needs assessment formed from facility and acreage standards shown in Chapter 5. The criteria used to prioritize the park facility needs in Norman are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input from citywide surveys;
- Level of need based on direct citizen input from public comments;
- Level of need based on level of service based needs assessment; and
- Conditional assessment of existing park facilities in the City.

A summary of key priorities are shown in Table 9-1.

Needs meeting all of the criteria were ranked as very high priority elements and are to receive the highest level of attention over the next five to ten years. The top twelve priorities that the City of Norman should accomplish are (in order of highest priority):

Table 9 - 1
Summary of Priority Needs in Norman (ranked in order of highest priority)

Additional Facilities Based on Survey Results		Additional Facilities Based on Public Meeting
Mail-out Survey	Online Survey	
1. Develop New Trails	1. Develop New Trails	1. Indoor Aquatic Center
2. Renovate Existing Parks	2. Renovate Existing Parks	2. Outdoor Aquatic Center
3. Preserve Additional Open Space	3. Preserve Additional Open Space	3. Trails
4. Indoor Recreation Center	4. Indoor Recreation Center	4. Develop Ruby Grant Park
5. Develop Ruby Grant Park	5. Preserve Drainage Corridors	5. Renovate Westwood Park
6. Indoor Aquatic Center	6. Renovate Westwood Pool	6. Open Space Preservation
7. Outdoor Aquatic Center	7. Develop Ruby Grant Park	7. Renovate Existing Parks
8. Additional Athletic Fields for Every Day Use	8. Indoor Aquatic Center	8. Indoor Recreation Center
9. Additional High Quality Tournament Fields	9. Additional Athletic Fields for every day use	9. Develop Sutton Wilderness Nature Center
Additional Facilities Based on Level of Service		**Additional Facilities Based on Existing Condition**
1. Indoor Recreation Center		1. Outdoor Aquatic Center (Westwood Pool)
2. Additional Open Space		2. Indoor Recreation Center
3. Football Fields		3. Neighborhood Parks
4. Outdoor Aquatic Center		4. Trails
5. Practice Fields		5. Playgrounds
6. Trails		6. Picnic Tables
7. Playgrounds		7. Outdoor Volleyball Courts
8. Picnic Facilities		8. Soccer Fields
9. Splash Pads		9. Football Fields

1. **Renovation of Existing Parks** - It is necessary for any city to maintain what already exists. Existing parks in Norman need subtle improvements that will greatly improve the overall image of each park and the system as a whole. The first phase of parks to be renovated is Andrews, Griffin, Reaves, Tulls, Northeast Lions, Little Axe, and Eastwood. The Monroe Elementary play area should be enhanced so that it becomes a true neighborhood/school park.
2. **Develop 3-4 Miles of Trails** - Trails were consistently ranked as a top priority by residents during the public input process. Trails should be constructed for walkers, runners, and bicyclists. Trail development has become a means of alternative transportation throughout the nation. Providing a citywide, interconnected trail system will allow residents to commute throughout all of Norman either by bike or on foot. Trails all over the City will allow residents to have a nearby place to walk or run for fun or to improve their fitness.
3. **Construct an Outdoor Family Aquatic Center** - Westwood Pool lacks amenities to serve as a significant aquatic draw. It has reached its expected life cycle and is physically dated. A new family aquatic center is proposed to replace Westwood Pool. Such a center could include amenities such as slides, a zero depth "beach" entry area, spraygrounds, a lazy river, diving and lap swimming areas, extensive shaded lounging areas, family changing areas, places for parties/special events, and improved concessions.
4. **Construct a State-of-the-Art Indoor Recreation Center** - Norman currently lacks a City-operated attractive indoor recreation center that can be used for fitness, exercise, and programming. The proposed indoor recreation center will be 60,000 to 80,000 square feet in size. It could offer amenities such as gymnasiums for basketball and volleyball, fitness and cardio equipment room, indoor walking track, meeting rooms, arts and crafts room, dance studio, locker and changing rooms, racquetball courts, climbing wall, and multi purpose rooms for programs. This is intended to be a multi-generational facility, and should have programs and space specifically marketed towards seniors. A potential future phase that includes an indoor aquatic component should be developed as the plan for the Center is created.
5. **Develop Initial Phase of Ruby Grant Park** - The development of this park will provide a significant community park in the northwest portion of Norman. Also this park is planned to have significant passive areas, and Norman currently has a deficit of passive parkland.
6. **Preserve as Open Space Sections of the Little River and Canadian River corridors** - Acquisition of lands along the Little River corridor and the Canadian River will help with flood control and provide opportunities for nature preserves. The public input process pointed out that residents want more of a balance between active parks and passive parks. Acquiring lands for nature preserves will address this need. Human access will be carefully placed to allow residents to experience these natural areas in a manner that allows wildlife to continue to flourish.
7. **Enhance Griffin Park** - Griffin Park is Norman's signature athletic complex. However, to continue to attract tournaments across Oklahoma and the US, the park needs improvements and enhancements. These include improving park areas around the soccer and baseball facilities, providing additional facilities for football, improving the trail and looping it throughout the park, providing covered spectator seating, offering additional playgrounds, and connecting the trail to the Sutton Wilderness.
8. **Enhance Reaves Park** - Similar to Griffin Park, there are enhancements needed at Reaves Park so that it continues to be a well used community park in Norman. These enhancements include improved lighting, improved restrooms, improved walking trail, continued renovations to athletic fields, and replacing older picnic facilities and park fencing. Consider developing a long range master plan for the park to guide the placement of improvements.
9. **Construct an Indoor Aquatic Center** - In order for an indoor aquatic center to be financially and operationally viable, it should be a component of either a larger outdoor aquatic center or an indoor recreation/fitness center such as the one proposed earlier. This indoor aquatic center can provide a place for swim meets and competitive swim team practice, as well as offer programs such as year-round swim lessons, lap swimming for fitness and therapeutic water aerobics.
10. **Master Plan and Develop the Initial Phase of Saxon Park** - Similar to developing Ruby Grant Park, the development of Saxon Park will provide a community park to the southeastern portion of Norman. This park is also planned to contain passive amenities and provide open space.
11. **Renovate Westwood Park** - Besides replacing the existing pool, which is recommendation #3, there are other renovations and enhancements that are needed in Westwood Park. These primarily include improvements to the Tennis Center and constructing a covered tennis court complex. Other improvements include providing way-finding signs that direct people to the park, enhancing the park entrance off 24th Avenue, allowing access from Robinson Street or Fairway Drive, adding shade and picnic facilities around the playground area, and renovating the existing restrooms and the golf pro shop building.
12. **Enhance New Neighborhood Parks in Developing Areas** - As the population of Norman grows, the Parkland Dedication Ordinance is vital to the development of neighborhood parks. Future neighborhood parks should be in central locations of those neighborhoods, should be at least three to five acres in size, and should include features such as additional shade pavilions, picnic tables, walking trails, playgrounds with shade, and open space play areas.

Action Plan

The Action Plan on the following page recommends the basic actions and tasks required in order for the City of Norman to reach the target goals for the parks and recreation system. It maps out the immediate tasks at hand, together with the costs attached. Consider the following notes when reviewing the Action Plan:

- **Sequence** - The sequence is based directly on the recommended importance and need for each action. However, some actions may take longer to occur. In that case, other actions may be easier to accomplish sooner, but should not diminish the need for the higher priority actions.
- **Funding Possibilities** - The sale of certificates of obligation may generate funding. The Action Plan is a guide, but may vary as specific needs or opportunities occur within the City. Other potential funding sources are noted but are not secured. Rather, they should be considered as possibilities to also pursue.
- **Projected Costs** - The projected costs per project are intended to establish an order of magnitude cost range. These estimates are made prior to any designs or detailed concepts being developed, and will vary as more detailed design occurs.
- **Suggested Timeframe** - The projected timeframes are approximate and are intended to establish a sequence for all actions.

A Legacy for the Next Generation

The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman

Action Plan 2010 - 2020

Key Recommendations - 2010 to 2020

Priority	Action ID	Action	Need for this Action / Considerations	City Sector	Land in Acres Low	Land in Acres High	Estimated Cost Range Low Range	Estimated Cost Range High Range	Type of Action	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
Very High	R - 1 to 8	**Renovation of key existing parks**	Renovate eight key parks in the system, including Andrews, Griffin, Reaves, Tulls, Northeast Lions, Little Axe, and Eastwood. Also enhance Monroe Elementary play area to become a true neighborhood/school park. Renovations to all parks include signs, entrance features, trails, pavilions and play features.	All Sectors	0	0	$3,000,000	$6,000,000	Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, parkland dedication fees, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	T - 1	**Trail Development (Citywide) - develop 3 to 4 miles of new trails for bicyclists, walkers and joggers**	Develop new trail segments throughout the City for bicyclists, runners, walkers.	Citywide - Regional	25	50	$3,500,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Donation of land, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2020
Very High	A - 1	**Replace Westwood Pool with a new Family Aquatic Center**	Existing pool is dated and lacks facility to serve as significant regional aquatic draw. Planning, design and construction for replacement will require two to three years. Include water play area, zero entry "beach", slides, lazy river component and outdoor lap pool. Plan for future outdoor phase expansion. Consider adding indoor pool phase if feasible.	Citywide - Regional	10	20	$6,000,000	$12,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2015
Very High	I - 1	**Develop a new state-of-the-art indoor recreation center in a regional location**	Develop 60,000 to 80,0000+/- sf facility. Include gym with 2+ courts, fitness and cardio component, indoor walking track, meeting rooms, arts and crafts, dance studio. Include a senior center as an added component of the center. Plan for indoor aquatic component as future phase.	Citywide - Regional	20	30	$12,000,000	$16,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2012 - 2016
Very High	PD - 1	**Develop Initial Phase - Ruby Grant Park**	Develop initial phase - include park sign, off-street parking, trails, practice fields for soccer and baseball, signature pavilion, shade structures, regional cross-country competitive facility, lighting and park infrastructure.	NW	0	0	$4,000,000	$5,500,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
Very High	R - 1	**Acquire floodplain lands for Canadian River Park and Little River Corridor Preserve**	Acquire floodplain lands for linear park and open space preserve. Acquisition may range from no cost donation to fee simple purchase, or may consist of acquiring access easement and development rights.	Citywide - Regional	50	200	$0	$5,000,000	Acquisition	Donation of land, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2010 - 2020
Estimated Total Cost - Very High Priority Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**105**	**300**	**$28,500,000**	**$49,500,000**			
High	ATH - 1	**Griffin Park - Soccer and Football Improvements**	Additional field lighting, add supplemental fields, additional shade structures.	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$1,500,000	$3,000,000	New Development / Renovation	By association, sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2014 - 2016
High	ATH - 2	**Reaves Park - Baseball and Softball Facility Improvements**	Replace fencing, minor field regrading, concession and restroom improvements, lighting improvements.	Citywide - Regional	10	15	$1,500,000	$2,000,000	New Development / Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2014 - 2018
High	A - 2	**Develop indoor aquatic center - include competition pool, indoor water play area**	Provides expanded capacity for fitness and competitive swimming. Develop as partnership with Norman Public Schools. **Develop as component of indoor recreation facility.**	Citywide - Regional	0	0	$8,000,000	$12,000,000	Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity. Consider school district participation.	2015 - 2020
High	PD - 2	**Develop Initial Phase - Saxon Park**	Develop park entry, signs, parking area, access walks, play area, signature pavilion, picnic area, cross country course, open active play field, nature trails.	SE	0	0	$2,500,000	$4,000,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
High	ATH - 3	**Westwood Park Tennis Center Improvements**	Develop covered 4-court complex adjacent to existing tennis center. Replace fencing, add additional shade areas.	SE	0	0	$800,000	$1,500,000	New Development / Renovation	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	2015 - 2020
High	PD - 3	**Enhance new Neighborhood parks in developing areas (Three to Five)**	Enhance neighborhood parks as area population grows. Funding for three new parks is included in this action. In key area parks, add features beyond play area, such as additional shade pavilions, picnic tables, walking trail.	Per sector as growth occurs	10	15	$1,000,000	$1,500,000	New Development	Sales tax revenue, certificates of obligation, revenue bonds, naming rights, sponsorships, grant opportunity	Ongoing
Estimated Total Cost - Very High Priority Items (note that partner participation, donations and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**10**	**15**	**$15,300,000**	**$24,000,000**			
Estimated Total Cost 2010 to 2020 (note that partner participation and grants may fund portions of the amounts shown)					**215**	**595**	**$43,800,000**	**$73,500,000**			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $25,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Funding Strategies for Recommendations

A large amount of funding is required to accomplish the goals of the Action Plan; but with a vision, commitment, and a concerted effort to secure funding from available sources, many of the recommendations can be accomplished. The very purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to provide the City of Norman with the vision to motivate the citizens of Norman to support, participate and collaborate with park development and recreation programs.

Different parks and pathways will require different funding strategies. While improvements to existing parks and most trails can be built with local funds, other park, open space, and large facility projects may be able to contend for federal and state funds. This section provides brief descriptions of these funding implementation assistance opportunities.

Key City Generated Funding Sources

General Fund Expenditures – General fund expenditures are primarily used for improvements to existing parks and facilities. Some funding should be set aside annually to cover capital costs. Norman currently has a minimum of $500,000+ set aside annually for improvements.

Sales Tax Revenue – A special sales tax is highly recommended as the preferred vehicle for improving parks in Norman. Benefits of a one-time, special sales tax is that it is specifically targeted and can have a specific target expiration date. At the current pace of retail sales in Norman, each half cent sales tax generates approximately $6,000,000 in revenue for the City of Norman on an annual basis. Over a five year span, the revenue generated could renovate or improve many park facilities in Norman. If approved by the voters of Norman, the sales tax could then be reduced to a ¼ cent, but left in place to continue to improve and maintain Norman Parks. This tax matches citizen desires to provide excellent quality of life features in the City.

Bond Funds – It is recommended that the City consider a bond program to support park and facility developments within the next five years.

Park Facility Funding through a Parkland Dedication and Parkland Development Ordinances – Continue the implementation of the Parkland Dedication and Parkland Development Ordinances so that they provide some lands and funding for the development of neighborhood parks throughout the City. Partnering with developers and private land owners is frequently possible as land is developed in Norman through the Parkland Ordinances. These ordinances provide a vehicle for development of parks, open spaces, and trails as land is developed in Norman. The City should work together with the developer to create non-motorized corridors, which will connect the new neighborhood to adjacent or future neighborhoods, schools, and other key destinations; and be beneficial to both the developer and the citizens of Norman. Monitor the parkland development fee amount (currently $200 per unit) and consider increasing it if needed to keep up with inflation and increasing park development costs.

Key Grant Funding Sources

Grants can provide a significant source of additional funding for parks, but should not be considered as the primary source for park construction.

Oklahoma Department of Commerce - Funding opportunities are divided into three categories: Human Development Program Funding, Energy-Related Funding and Community Development Block Grants. Within the Human Development Program Funding, there are three programs that qualify for grant funding. One of the programs is the Multipurpose Senior Center Program. This program offers grant funding to improve or construct a community facility that provides health, social and nutritional group activities for senior citizens over the age of 60.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - This fund is divided into two funding categories, state grants and federal acquisition. The state grants are distributed to all 50 states, DC and other territories based on factors such as population. State grant funds can be used for park development and for acquisition of parkland or easements. Oklahoma's allocation of LWCF funds is a 50/50 matching grant reimbursement. Norman has applied for and received several rounds of funding through LWCF.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) - Funding for UPARR is currently not available. Typically this funding source has supported traditional parks rather than linear parks.

Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program - This state-administered, federal-aid program is included in the SAFETEA-LU funding. This is a reimbursement grant program to be used on recreational trails and trail-related projects such as maintenance, restoration, land acquisition for trails, construction of new trails, construction of trail access for persons with disabilities and development of trail heads. The development of the Little River corridor trail may be an ideal candidate for an enhancement grant application. The City should budget for a local 20% match. Norman has applied for and received matching funds from this program.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program - This program provides monetary support for transportation activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the transportation system. Funding is on a cost reimbursement basis and projects selected are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80% of allowable costs. The City of Norman has worked with these funds for parks, public works and transportation projects.

Environmental Protection Agency - The EPA can provide funding for projects with money collected in pollution settlements, or with funding targeted at wetland and habitat preservation or reclamation.

Foundation and Company Grants - These can assist in direct funding for projects, while others exist to help citizen efforts get established with small seed funds or technical and publicity assistance.

Grants for Greenways - This is an annual grant program that is designed to help establish a national network of greenways. Grants can be used for mapping, ecological assessments, surveying, design activities, developing brochures and interpretative displays, building pedestrian bridges, or planning bike paths. Grants range from $500 to $2,500 and the deadline is June 30 each year.

Safe Routes to School - This is a federally funded reimbursement program which allows State Departments of Transportation to administer the

program. The purpose of the program is to encourage children to walk or bike to school, including those with disabilities, by promoting safer and more appealing routes and transportation alternatives. Qualified reimbursement projects can include improving sidewalks, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities, and traffic diversion improvements. Norman is currently involved with two of these grants and potentially applying for more in the future.

Partnering with Volunteer Groups - Partnering with volunteer groups can be helpful when constructing nature, bike and equestrian trails. Their efforts can be used as part of the required match for the Recreational Trails Program. There are a variety of sources for volunteers including user groups, local residents, corporate community service initiatives, and business and civic support groups. Norman Parks and Recreation Department has a long history of using organized volunteers for labor on many projects.

Policies and Ordinances

Parkland Dedication Ordinance - Norman currently has a Parkland Dedication Ordinance and Parkland Development Ordinance which have been vital in the creation of the neighborhood park system throughout the City. These ordinances should continue to be enforced.

Landscaping Ordinance - Consider establishing a landscaping ordinance that will contribute to new beautification efforts throughout the City.

Joint Planning with Norman Public Schools - Establish joint planning review sessions with Norman Public Schools to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for a partnership in acquiring land for schools and parks.

Norman City Council - City staff should provide presentations of significant changes in the Master Plan and provide brief summaries of annual updates to the documentation. Currently City staff provides a five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to Council. The updates to the Master Plan will provide the City Council with comprehensive information to assist with development decisions and updating the annually presented CIP.

Plan Updates

The Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a guide to be used by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department to address system needs over the next five to ten years. However, during that timeframe there will be changes that occur. The area population may increase more rapidly than projected; the community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations; or development of some of the recommendations listed in this master plan will occur.

A review and update of this master plan by City staff should be conducted on an annual or biannual basis or when a significant change does occur. These updates can be published in short report format and attached to this master plan for easy use. Four key areas for focus of these periodic reviews are as follows:

Facility Inventory - An inventory of new or updated city owned facilities should be recorded. This inventory should also mention any significant changes or improvements to Norman Public Schools' parks, county parks, state parks or major private facilities that could influence recreation in Norman.

Public Involvement - As mentioned previously, this Master Plan reflects current population and attitudes expressed by the citizens of Norman. However, over time those attitudes and interests may vary as the City changes. Periodic surveys are recommended to provide a current account of the attitudes of the citizens and to provide additional direction from the public on issues that may arise. In order to make an accurate comparison of the changes in attitudes, it is recommended that future surveys include similar questions to those included in this Master Plan.

Facility Use - Facility use is a key factor in determining the need and renovation of additional facilities. Updates on league participation and recreation center participation should be incorporated each season with data from each association. Most associations already present this information to the Park Board every year. Changes in participation of those outside the city limits, as well as the citizens of Norman, should also be recorded.

Action Plan - As items from the action plans in this document are implemented updates should be made to the prioritized list to provide a current schedule for City staff and elected officials.

Operation and Maintenance

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

As the park system grows, additional maintenance resources should be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department. This includes new mowing and transporting equipment, as well as park maintenance staff. Over the next ten years, as new facilities are added, park maintenance staff should grow, as a minimum, at the same rate. Operation and maintenance needs and budgets are discussed below.

The current and past parks and recreation operation and maintenance budgets are in Table 9 - 2 on the following page. For fiscal year 2009, Norman's Parks and Recreation Budget is 8.7% of the City's general fund. Of the total budget, the Parks portion of the budget is only 4.3% of the total overall City's general fund. The Recreation portion is 2.3% of the overall City's general fund. The Westwood Park Enterprise Fund is 2.1% of the City's general fund.

Table 9 - 2 Norman Parks and Recreation Budget	Fiscal Year 2007	Fiscal Year 2008	Fiscal Year 2009
Total General Fund Budget	$62,636,064	$69,332,742	$71,459,701
Parks Budget	$2,915,446	$3,077,281	$3,052,749
Recreation Budget	$1,556,605	$1,541,537	$1,672,712
Westwood Park Enterprise Fund	$1,396,219	$1,483,735	$1,487,230
Total Parks and Recreation Budget	$5,868,270	$6,102,553	$6,212,691
Percent of General Fund	9.4%	8.8%	8.7%
Excluding Westwood Park Enterprise Fund	$4,472,051	$4,618,818	$4,725,461
Percent of General Fund excluding Westwood	7.1%	6.7%	6.6%

Norman was compared to the benchmark cities determined by the Master Plan Steering Committee, City staff, and the consultant team in terms of expenditures for parks and recreation on a per capita basis. $55.30 per capita is budgeted for parks and recreation in Norman. Norman is ranked ninth out of the ten cities in terms of the per capita dollars that are budgeted for parks and recreation. Tulsa, Oklahoma was the only benchmark city that spent less per capita on parks and recreation.

Table 9 - 3 Comparison of Park and Recreation Expenditures			
City	Population	Budgeted Park and Recreation Expenditures	Per Capita Expenditures
Boulder, CO	103,114	$25,430,180	$246.62
Columbia, MO	96,093	$12,679,649	$131.95
College Station, TX	90,897	$9,187,624	$101.08
Denton, TX	120,126	$10,436,223	$86.88
Topeka, KS	122,113	$9,862,463	$80.77
Waco, TX	113,726	$9,111,574	$80.12
Lawrence, KS	90,866	$6,991,479	$76.94
Edmond, OK	83,259	$4,929,536	$59.21
Norman, OK	**112,345**	**$6,212,691**	**$55.30**
Tulsa, OK	388,000	$18,179,000	$46.85

Park Maintenance Requirements – On a system-wide basis, Norman's 29 Park Maintenance staff members average approximately 23.7 acres per employee. As large additional parks at Ruby Grant and Saxon are developed, and if greenbelt corridors along the Little River and the Canadian River are preserved, additional maintenance staff will be required. For the two larger parks, a minimum of two to four new park positions should be considered. For the larger greenbelts, one staff member per greenbelt is recommended for maintenance. The larger greenbelt parks will also challenge the City's patrolling capabilities, and one to two park ranger positions should be considered to enhance security in those parks and in Sutton Wilderness.

Table 9 - 4 compares Norman and the other benchmark cities in terms of department staff personnel to the total developed park acreage. This comparison provides a better understanding of the amount of acres the department staff is responsible to maintain. Norman is average when it comes to developed park acres per staff member, ranking sixth out of the ten cities. This shows there currently is not a major lack of park maintenance staff. However when the larger community parks such as Ruby Grant and Saxon are developed, this ratio of developed park acreage to staff members should be re-evaluated and additional park maintenance staff will need to be added.

Table 9 - 4 Department Personnel Comparisons				
City	Budgeted Park and Recreation Expenditures	Total Developed Park Acreage	Number of Department Personnel	Total Dev. Park Acres/Staff Member
Columbia, MO	$12,679,649	2,101.00	43.5	48.30
Tulsa, OK	$18,179,000	5,636.64	166.6	33.83
Lawrence, KS	$6,991,479	1,309.40	71.78	18.24
Topeka, KS	$9,862,463	1,330.00	95.75	13.89
Edmond, OK	$4,929,536	550.55	40	13.76
Norman, OK	**$6,212,691**	**688.30**	**63**	**10.93**
Denton, TX	$10,436,223	1,209.86	124.31	9.73
College Station, TX	$9,187,624	1,149.04	133	8.64
Waco, TX	$9,111,574	892.95	142.7	6.26
Boulder, CO	$25,430,180	800.00	146.99	5.44

Near-Term Implementation Actions – Some additional detail is required to provide Norman residents with specifics on actions to be funded by bonds or sales tax mechanisms. The following near-term actions and potential costs associated with each action on shown in Table 9-5 on the following page.

Table 9 - 5
Near-Term Park Master Plan Implementation Actions

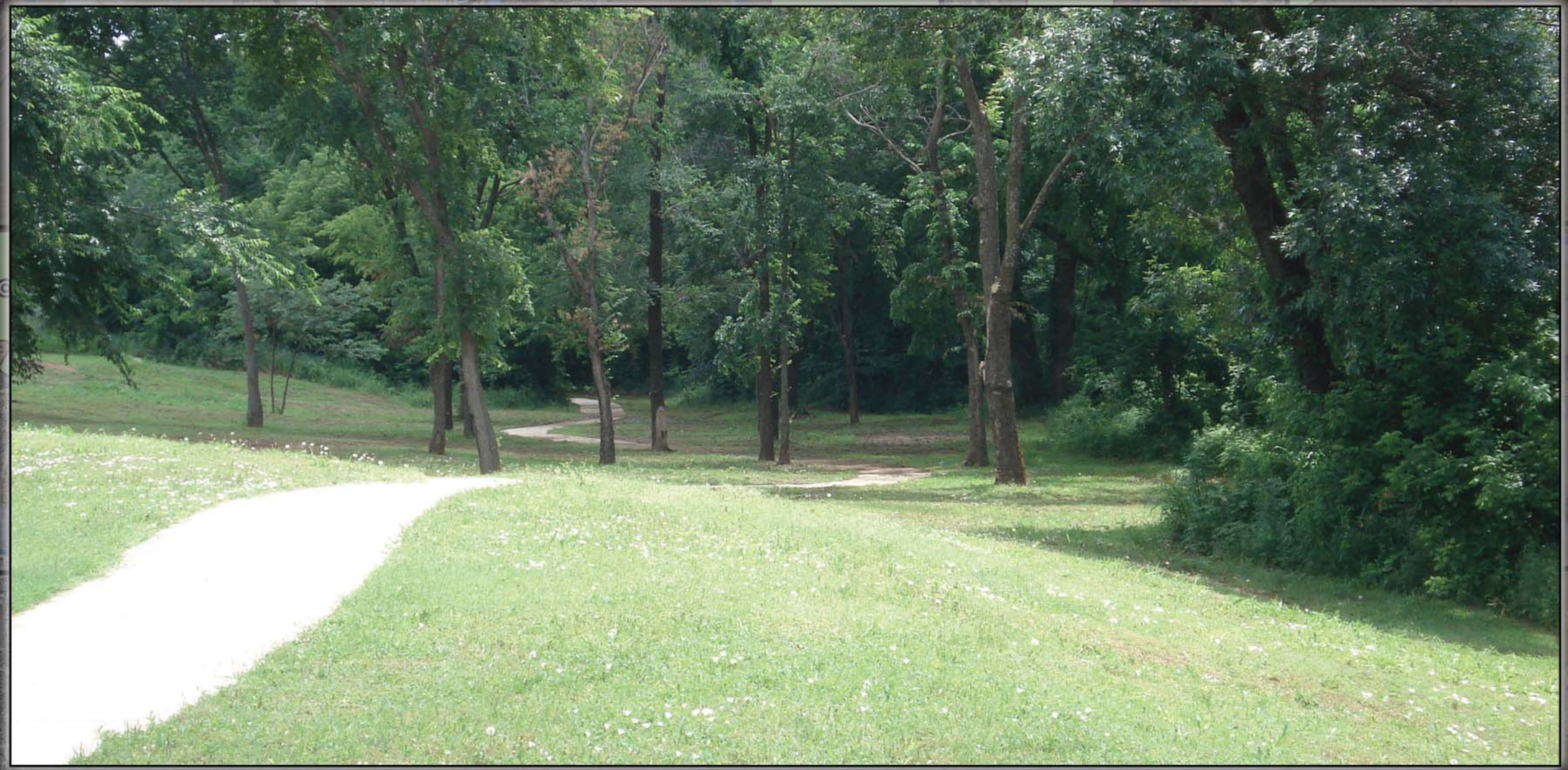
Action	Projected Cost Range	Responsibility	Time Frame
1 Conduct feasibility review for improvements or replacement facility for Westwood Pool. Include master plan for Westwood Park to consider impact on area around pool.	$25,000 to $40,000	Parks & Recreation Department	Within 6 to 12 months
2 Identify bond fund capacity for park improvements permitted by temporary 1/4-cent to 1/2-cent sales tax.		Parks & Recreation Department, Finance, City Managers Office	Within 6 months
3 Conduct survey to determine specific features for selected projects. Develop detailed cost estimates for selected projects.	$10,000 to $15,000	Parks & Recreation Department, Finance, City Managers Office	Within 6 months
4 Identify most likely and actively pursue park improvements and trail development grant opportunities. Identify source of funds for locally required match.	$0 to $10,000 (for external grant assistance if required)	Parks & Recreation Department	Ongoing over next 6 to 12 months
5 In conjunction with Norman Public Schools, develop plan and identify funding source for school park at Monroe Elementary.		Parks & Recreation Department	Within 12 months
6 Coordinate with Greenway Master Plan to identify key immediate trail expansion routes. Develop cost projections for next routes.	$10,000 to $20,000 (for master planning and cost estimate preparation if needed)	Parks & Recreation Department	Within 12 months
7 Develop detailed list and cost of near-term improvements to existing city parks.	To be determined	Parks & Recreation Department	Within 12 to 24 months
8 Prepare master plan for Saxon Park to determine short-term and long-term actions on the park site.	$25,000 to $50,000	Parks & Recreation Department	Within 24 months
9 Conduct detailed feasibility study for a phased recreation and aquatic center to determine size, location, operational costs, potential revenue, and membership cost ranges.	$50,000	Parks & Recreation Department	Within 24 months

Conclusion - A Legacy for the Next Generation

Norman has an excellent parks system, with very good access to parks found throughout the City. At one time, many in Oklahoma considered the Norman Parks and Recreation System to be among the best in the State, if not the best. However, many park facilities throughout the City are now aging and are in need of updating. Furthermore, the centerpieces of recreation and quality of life in the City, the indoor recreation centers at the 12th Avenue Center, Whittier and Irving Middle Schools and the City's one pool at Westwood Park, are very dated and not able to adequately serve the City's growing and active population. The availability of indoor swimming facilities, beyond those offered by the YMCA, is in question as the University of Oklahoma considers developing new facilities with limited general public or league access. Finally, a surging desire to have more trails and passive natural preserves throughout the City is an ever increasing priority for many residents of Norman.

With anything that is built, normal deterioration and aging takes place over time, and eventually everything must be renovated or replaced. Park facilities are no different, except that somehow we believe that since many recreation facilities are outdoors they do not really need to be repaired or improved. That is not the case, and the time has come to renovate and improve many aspects of Norman's parks and recreation system.

Parks in Norman are owned by the residents of the City. As such, the parks, trails, buildings and programs offered by the City of Norman should reflect what they want to see built and offered. When considering how to renovate Norman's parks, a unique opportunity arises. Norman has the chance to create the parks, trails, pools and unique open spaces that will become the legacy left by this generation for the next generation of Norman residents. Those future Norman residents, now only children or perhaps not even born yet, can find a City that has great parks, beautiful trails, many natural open space preserves, ponds and water features everywhere, and a variety of facilities that satisfy many different types of recreation activities. This master plan provides the road map to create that "Legacy for the Next Generation."



Appendix

Survey Results

2009 NORMAN PARKS & RECREATION MAIL SURVEY CUMULATIVE RESULTS

PROJECT 122220081 RAYMOND TURCO & ASSOCIATES JULY 2009

Instructions: Read each question and check the box that is closest to your opinion. Check only one box per question unless instructions say "Check all that apply." If you do not have an opinion, do not check any box. When completed, mail it in the enclosed envelope to: Raymond Turco & Associates, 2009 Norman Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, PO Box 1124, Norman, OK, 73070 by May 15, 2009. Should you have any questions, or need an additional copy of the survey, please contact The Norman Parks and Recreation Department at (405)366-5472. Thank you.

Sex and age of individual(s) completing survey:

Male (Question 1a)

Under 35 years	18%
36 - 45 YEARS	15%
46 - 55 YEARS	24%
56 - 65 YEARS	22%
OVER 65 YEARS	22%

Female (Question 1b)

Under 35 years	21%
36 - 45 YEARS	18%
46 - 55 YEARS	23%
56 - 65 YEARS	18%
OVER 65 YEARS	20%

2. Length of residence in Norman:

Under 1 year	1%
1 - 3 Years	7%
4 - 7 YEARS	10%
8 - 10 YEARS	10%
11 - 20 YEARS	20%
More than 20 years	52%

3. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home: (if yes, check each box that applies)

No children	64%
Under 6	16%
6 - 12	15%
13 - 18	14%

4. Do you own or rent your primary residence?

Own	92%
Rent	8%

5. Regarding the University of Oklahoma, check the boxes that best apply to you.

Student	4%
Staff member	7%
Faculty member	7%
Child attends OU	6%
Alumni	45%
Not associated with OU	40%

6. Please list one or two parks that you most frequently visit.
Andrews (57%), Reaves (47%), Lions (21%), Griffin (8%), Brookhaven (7%), Westwood (3%)

7. What would you say is the biggest reason you visit those parks?
Events/concerts/festivals/activities (23%), take kids to play/playgrounds (18%), location/close/proximity (16%), walk/jog/run/walk dogs (14%), atmosphere/beauty/scenery/quiet/clean (5%)

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following . . . .

	VS	S	D	VD
A) The quality of parks and recreation in the City	26%	64%	9%	1%
B) The quality of parks and recreation in your neighborhood	20%	49%	25%	6%
C) The amount of recreational opportunities provided by the City	23%	58%	17%	2%

9. Have you participated in or utilized the following in the past year?

	Yes	No
A) Visited a city park or park facility	93%	7%
B) Visited the City's senior center	10%	90%
C) Participated in a City run youth athletic league	15%	85%
D) Visited Westwood pool	25%	75%
E) Participated in a non-City of Norman athletic association or event	43%	57%
F) Participated in a City adult athletic league%	7%	93%
G) Walked, jogged, or bicycled on a city trail	66%	34%
H) Visited or utilized a City-owned recreation facility	51%	49%
I) Visited or utilized Westwood Golf Course	26%	74%
J) Participated in a class or program sponsored by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department	16%	84%

10. What do you generally do when you go to a city park?

Take kids to play	51%
Take kids to organized sports	18%
Participate in organized sports	6%
Bike	19%
Swim/aquatics	16%
Picnic	37%
Walk/hike	60%
Enjoy the outdoors	70%
Participate in non-organized sports	11%
Walk pets	31%
Don't go to parks	5%
Other	23%

11. How frequently do you participate in or utilize the following non city facilities . . . .
(D-Daily, W-Weekly, M-Monthly, O-Occasionally)

	D	W	M	O
A) The Huston Huffman Recreation Center at OU	1%	2%	3%	94%
B) The Murray Case Sells Swim Complex at OU	2%	2%	6%	91%
C) The YMCA gym or pool	4%	11%	7%	77%
D) Other non city facilities like private clubs or church facilities	4%	24%	17%	55%

12. If the city were to construct the following state-of-the-art facilities, how likely or unlikely would you be to primarily utilize them . . . .

	VL	L	U	VU
A) Aquatic facilities	25%	28%	24%	23%
B) Recreation center facilities	22%	39%	24%	15%

13. Please describe your favorite recreational activity for the following . . .

A) Yourself
Walking/hiking (36%), biking (8%), swimming/aquatics (8%), golf (7%), jogging/running (7%), spectator events/music/concerts/sports (7%), work out/aerobics/exercise/weight lifting (6%), soccer/volleyball/basketball/racquetball/tennis (5%), fishing/hunting/camping/boating (5%)

B) Your spouse
Walking/hiking (33%), golf (10%), biking (8%), fishing/hunting/camping/boating (7%), jogging-running (7%), work out/aerobics/exercise/weight lifting (6%), soccer/racquetball/tennis/basketball (6%), arts & crafts/sewing & knitting/reading/computers/gardening (5%)

C) Your children
Playground/playing (29%), swimming/aquatics (17%), sports in general (9%), softball/baseball/T-ball (8%), soccer (7%), walking/hiking (5%), basketball (5%)

14. Check the boxes of the organizations you or your family utilize to participate in the above activities.

City of Norman	61%
Norman public schools	24%
State Park/Lake Thunderbird	41%
Non-profit youth	9%
Private clubs	19%
Churches	31%
YMCA	24%
OU	32%
Other	14%

15. How likely or unlikely would you be to participate in you or your child's favorite recreational activities if the City provided the facility? If you currently use a city facility, check the appropriate box.

Very likely	32%
Likely	42%
Unlikey	11%
Very unlikely	10%
City facility	4%

16. How strongly do you agree or disagree that each statement below is a valid reason for not using city operated facilities to participate in your favorite activity . . . .

	SA	A	D	SD
A) Costs too much to participate	12%	18%	50%	20%
B) Don't know what recreational activities are offered	11%	48%	32%	9%
C) City facility is too far away to participate	7%	27%	51%	15%
D) No day or evening care for children	5%	23%	42%	30%
E) The city facilities are inadequate	12%	30%	44%	14%
F) Don't know where city facility is located	8%	26%	48%	18%
G) Class is full - waiting list	2%	20%	56%	21%
H) Poor customer service by staff	2%	17%	60%	21%
I) Prefer being involved with YMCA, OU, or private facility	12%	37%	38%	14%
J) Poor security at site	4%	29%	51%	16%
K) Activity not offered by City	20%	38%	32%	10%
L) Too busy or not interested	6%	37%	39%	17%
M) City site is inconvenient (location, parking)	10%	30%	48%	13%
N) Registration for program is difficult	3%	15%	62%	19%

17. If you and/or your family wants to swim or participate in aquatic activities, which of the following sites do you utilize?

City pool (Westwood, summer only)	30%
YMCA pool	27%
OU Swim complex	21%
Facility outside of Norman	9%
Personal pool	36%
Neighborhood Assoc. pool	7%
Other facility	9%
Don't swim	18%

18. When you use a pool, in which of the following activities do you participate?

Therapeutic recreation	18%
Water safety/Red Cross certification	3%
Water aerobics	20%
Recreation (youth)	35%
Recreation (adult)	45%
Swim team/compete	3%
Learn to swim (youth)	22%
Learn to swim (adult)	1%
Fitness/lap swimming	31%
Relax/sunbathe	63%
Other	6%

19. How frequently would you say you utilize the Westwood Pool during the time that it is open (summer only)?

Daily	2%
Twice weekly	3%
Once a week	8%
Once a month	16%
Never	71%

20. How likely or unlikely would you be to use Westwood Pool if the city made the following improvements . . . .

	VL	L	U	VU
A) Zero depth entry area (beach like entry)	23%	29%	18%	30%
B) Water playground for youth	30%	27%	15%	28%
C) Additional slides	24%	24%	21%	31%
D) More shade	29%	34%	13%	24%
E) Improved family changing area	28%	27%	16%	29%
F) Improved concessions	18%	29%	23%	30%
G) Additional pool	27%	29%	15%	29%
H) A lazy river (moving current channel)	39%	26%	10%	25%
I) Improved parking	26%	25%	19%	29%
J) Landscaping	17%	29%	22%	32%

21. If the pool facilities were renovated or improved and you were asked to pay an additional cost, what would be the highest total amount you would expect to pay for a family season pass (currently $140)?

Current rate of $140	29%
$141 - $160	38%
$161 - $180	21%
$181 - $200	9%
More than $200	3%

22. Rate the following recreational characteristics of city owned facilities in Norman . . . .
E-Excellent, G-Good, F-Fair, P-Poor

	E	G	F	P
A) Having parks conveniently located for people in all areas.	22%	48%	25%	5%
B) The overall quality of City parks	13%	62%	22%	2%
C) The overall safety of City parks	12%	61%	24%	3%
D) The maintenance of City parks	12%	59%	25%	4%
E) The variety of recreational facilities within parks	7%	42%	43%	9%
F) Having athletic fields conveniently located for people in all areas	11%	47%	31%	12%
G) The number of athletic fields in the city	12%	48%	30%	11%
H) The maintenance of City athletic fields	13%	58%	25%	4%
I) The overall quality of City athletic fields	12%	57%	26%	5%
J) Having practice areas conveniently located for people in all area	9%	40%	40%	12%
K) The number of practice areas in the city	7%	39%	41%	13%
L) The overall quality of practice areas	9%	44%	37%	10%
M) The amount of accessible natural areas	6%	31%	42%	21%
N) The variety of programs and events offered by the parks and recreation dept.	9%	51%	34%	6%
O) The overall quality of parks and recreation department programs and events	12%	58%	28%	3%
P) The overall quality of walking/biking trails in the city	6%	35%	33%	26%
Q) Having walking/biking trails conveniently located for people in all areas	5%	24%	38%	33%
R) Having swim facilities conveniently located for people in all areas	6%	26%	41%	27%

23. What one recreational facility do you believe is lacking in your part of the city?
Trails (36%), neighborhood park/playground (13%), pool (11%), recreation center/gym/indoor walking track (9%), sports complex/practice fields/soccer fields (6%

24. Check the three favorite athletic activities in which you or your family members participate.

Swim	39%
Skating/hockey	3%
Bicycling	37%
Basketball	13%
Soccer	13%
Walk/hike on trails	60%
Running/jogging	18%
Volleyball	3%
Exercise/work out	30%
Tennis	9%
Baseball/softball	13%
Golf	17%
Skateboarding	2%
Football	3%
Other	9%

25. In general, when in season, how frequently do you or your family participate in the athletic activities listed in the previous question?

Daily	27%
Weekly	48%
Monthly	14%
Never	10%

26. Check the boxes of the organizations where you participate in your three favorite athletic activities.

City of Norman	60%
Norman public schools	17%
State Park/ Lake Thunderbird	31%
Non-profit youth	6%
Private clubs	19%
Churches	21%
YMCA	23%
OU	26%
Other	22%

27. How important or unimportant do you believe it is for the City of Norman to do the following . . . .

	VI	I	U	VU
A) Renovate/enhance smaller parks throughout the city.	35%	49%	12%	4%
B) Develop additional athletic fields for everyday use	15%	43%	31%	12%
C) Develop high quality athletic facilities to attract major tournaments	18%	29%	34%	19%
D) Construct City operated recreation center(s) with aquatics, fitness, meeting rooms, and gym(s)	28%	42%	22%	8%
E) Preserve additional open space along drainage ways throughout the city	40%	45%	11%	5%
F) Develop new trails in each sector of the city for walking and biking	59%	33%	5%	3%

	VI	I	U	VU
G) Develop Ruby Grant Park (160 acres at Franklin & IH 35)	30%	38%	20%	12%
H) Renovate and expand Westwood Pool to offer new recreation opportunities	24%	42%	23%	11%
I) Develop a new City-owned indoor swim center for competitive and fitness swimming	25%	30%	27%	18%
J) Construct covered tennis courts for year round tennis play	17%	32%	32%	19%

28. Write the letter (A-J) of the three most important strategies you would like to see the City focus, using the list of strategies in Question #27 above.

A) Renovate/enhance smaller parks throughout the City	48%
B) Develop additional athletic fields for everyday use	14%
C) Develop high quality athletic facilities to attract major tournaments	14%
D) Construct City-operated recreation center(s) with aquatics, fitness, meeting rooms, and gym(s)	28%
E) Preserve additional open space along drainage ways throughout the City	35%
F) Develop new trails in each sector of the City for walking and biking	66%
G) Develop Ruby Grant Park (160 acres at Franklin & IH-35)	26%
H) Renovate and expand Westwood Pool to offer new recreation opportunities	19%
I) Develop a new City-owned indoor swim center for competitive and fitness swimming	20%
J) Construct covered tennis courts for year-round tennis play	14%

29. Improving or constructing new recreational facilities may require additional funding. What funding source would you most likely support to raise the necessary funds? There is also a box for opposed to new funding.

Higher user fees	14%
Sales tax increase	12%
Voter-approved bonds	36%
Hotel/motel room tax increase	18%
Increased property taxes	3%
Opposed to new funding, even to improve current facilities	17%

30. Which of the following ranges would you most likely support if a new sales tax was implemented?

Less than 1/2 cent	41%
1/2 cent	35%
3/4 cents	2%
1 cent	16%
Up to 2 cents	6%

31. Check the boxes of the sources from which you get information about recreational activities in Norman.

Oklahoma Gazette	12%
The Daily Oklahoman	27%
Norman Transcript	62%
Recreation brochures	22%
City cable channel	9%
School brochures	19%
Parks/rec. office	10%
City web site	23%
Signs	29%
Word of mouth	6%
Other	57%

32. How frequently do you vote in City-related elections, like city council or bond elections?

Always	44%
Often	35%
Seldom	14%
Never	7%

33. How strongly would you support or oppose the City amending its smoking ordinance to include the banning of smoking at city parks and special events on city parkland, except for in the parking lots?

Strongly support	59%
Support	19%
Oppose	12%
Strongly oppose	11%

34. (If you golf or utilize Westwood Golf Course) How strongly would you support or oppose including Westwood Golf Course as a facility in which smoking was not permitted, except for in the parking lot?

Strongly support	53%
Support	19%
Oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	14%

2009 NORMAN PARKS & RECREATION ONLINE SURVEY CUMULATIVE RESULTS

PROJECT 122220083 RAYMOND TURCO & ASSOCIATES JULY 2009

Dear Norman resident,

Your City is currently involved in creating a parks and recreation master plan. When completed, this plan will help the City set priorities for parks and recreational facilities for the next 5 to 10 years. As City leaders strive to improve the quality of life in Norman, plans of this nature are critical.

This process is being implemented by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department with the assistance of a team of professional consultants. A primary goal of the planning process to ensure the success of the plan is to find out what park and recreation needs are desired by the citizens of Norman. The survey below is one such key opportunity to comment about parks and recreation in Norman. The questions were designed so as to gather your opinions about parks and recreation in your neighborhood and the City in general. This survey only takes a few minutes, but the information it provides is invaluable to the City. Read each question and check the box that is closest to your opinion. You may also use your Internet browser's back button to return to a previous survey page if you need to, but your answers will not be submitted until you press the "Continue" button located at the bottom of each page.

Thank you for your input on this very important effort.

Cindy Rosenthal
Mayor, City of Norman

In which part of the City do you live? Refer to the map and choose the appropriate choice.

Northwest (red)	32%
Northeast (purple)	23%
Southwest (green)	26%
Southeast (blue)	19%

Sex and age of individual(s) completing survey:
1a. Male

Under 35	28%
36 - 45	28%
46 - 55	20%
56 - 65	16%
Over 65	8%

1b. Female

Under 35 years	30%
36 - 45	28%
46 - 55	22%
56 - 65	15%
Over 65	5%

2. Length of residence in Norman:

Under 1 year	3%
1 - 3 years	8%
4 - 7 years	12%
8 - 10 years	10%
11 - 20 years	20%
More than 20 years	47%

3. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home? (If yes, check each box that applies)

No children	39%
Under age 6	22%
Ages 7 - 12	23%
Ages 13 - 18	16%

4. Do you own or rent your primary residence?

Own	87%
Rent	13%

5. Regarding the University of Oklahoma, check the boxes that best apply to you. (check all that apply)

Student	7%
Staff member	11%
Faculty member	6%
Child attends OU	7%
Alumni	39%
Not associated with OU	30%

6. Please list one or two parks that you most frequently visit.
Andrews (26%), Reaves (23%), Lions (13%), Westwood/golf course (7%), Griffin (6%), Brookhaven (3%), George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness (2%)

7. What would you say is the biggest reason you visit those parks?
Location/close/proximity (21%), events/concerts/festivals/activities (18%), take kids to play/playgrounds/Kidspace (15%), golf/disc golf (8%), splash pad/water park/pool (6%), Soccer/sports practice/sports events (6%), walk/trails/jog/run (6%), baseball fields/softball practice (5%), atmosphere/beauty/scenery/clean/relaxation (5%)

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following? Check the box that is closest to your opinion. If you have no opinion, do not mark an answer.

	VS	S	D	VD
A) The quality of parks and recreation in the City	17%	65%	15%	2%
B) The quality of parks and recreation in your neighborhood	13%	49%	28%	10%
C) The amount of recreational opportunities provided by the City	15%	53%	27%	4%

9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the availability of the following types of parks or facilities in the City?

	VS	S	D	VD
A) Parks which contain primarily athletic facilities	13%	60%	23%	4%
B) Parks which contain primarily passive areas or facilities such as trails, picnic sites, and nature viewing areas	9%	54%	31%	7%
C) Natural areas that preserve unique existing nature features	10%	51%	32%	7%
D) Activities or facilities that primarily serve older residents of Norman	7%	56%	32%	6%

10. Please read the following statements about future park land in Norman. For each, check the box that shows how strongly you agree or disagree with each...

	SA	A	D	SD
A) I believe that the City should provide a balance of both active and passive parks throughout the City.	45%	50%	4%	1%
B) I believe that the City should develop additional parks that focus only on preserving the land in its natural condition, and that have very few facilities.	22%	35%	36%	8%
C) I believe that the City should develop additional parks that focus on passive activities, such as trails, picnic areas, nature viewing areas, and other non-athletic activities.	36%	43%	18%	3%
D) I believe that the City should develop more parks that focus on active recreation activities, such as ball fields, play areas, courts for basketball and tennis and other active activities.	31%	39%	25%	5%

11. Have you participated in or utilized the following in the past year? Check the box that is closest to your opinion.

	YES	NO
A) Visited a City park or park facility	98%	2%
B) Visited a City playground	74%	26%
C) Participated in a City-run youth athletic league	24%	76%
D) Visited Westwood Pool	37%	63%
E) Participated in a non-City of Norman athletic association or event	53%	47%
F) Participated in a City-run adult athletic league	10%	90%
G) Walked, jogged, or bicycled on a city trail	67%	33%
H) Visited or utilized a City-owned recreation facility	60%	40%
I) Visited the City's senior center	6%	94%
J) Visited or utilized Westwood Golf Course	30%	70%
K) Participated in a class or program sponsored by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department	18%	82%

12. If you play golf, which of the following courses would you say you play most regularly? Press "Continue" if you don't play golf.

Westwood	56%
The Trails	8%
Belmar	2%
Cobblestone Creek	7%
Jimmie Austin (OU)	16%
Other	11%

13. What do you generally do when you go to a City of Norman park? (Check all that apply)

Take kids to play	15%
Take kids to organized sports	6%
Participate in organized sports	2%
Bike	5%
Swim/aquatics	6%
Picnic	10%
Walk/hike	14%
Enjoy the outdoors	16%
Participate in non-organized sports	3%
Walk pets	8%
Participate in special events	11%
Don't go to parks	0%
Other	3%

14. As parks are developed or improved in Norman, how important is it to you to include the following elements?

	VI	I	U	VU
A) Nature trails	46%	40%	11%	2%
B) Picnic areas and benches	43%	48%	8%	2%
C) Outdoor games such as lawn bowling, bocce ball or horseshoes	11%	38%	45%	7%
D) Pavilions, gazebos or shaded areas	46%	48%	5%	1%
E) Areas to display outdoor art	12%	36%	40%	11%
F) Performance areas	16%	47%	32%	5%
G) Water features like fountains, ponds or lakes	37%	46%	15%	2%
H) Birdwatching or wildlife viewing areas	23%	42%	29%	7%
I) Botanical gardens or garden displays	24%	49%	22%	4%
J) Natural area preserves	30%	47%	18%	4%
K) Pleasant areas to walk	56%	38%	4%	1%
L) Interpretive features to learn about the area	16%	41%	36%	8%

15. How frequently do you participate in or utilize the following non-City facilities?

	D	W	M	O
A) The Huston Huffman Recreation Center at OU	4%	11%	4%	81%
B) The Murray Case Sells Swim Complex at OU	14%	13%	6%	67%
C) The YMCA gym or pool	13%	18%	8%	61%
D) Other non-City facilities like private clubs or church facilities	7%	32%	12%	49%

16. If a state-of-the-art indoor aquatic facility was constructed, how strongly would you support or oppose including the following indoor features:

	SS	S	O	SO
A) Water play area	52%	40%	5%	3%
B) Recreational diving area	35%	51%	10%	4%
C) Competitive diving area	28%	46%	20%	6%
D) Pool for lap swimming	51%	41%	5%	3%
E) Water slides	43%	44%	9%	5%
F) Current channel or lazy river	44%	37%	12%	6%
G) Children's play features such as spray areas	51%	37%	8%	4%
H) Competitive swimming pool	35%	44%	15%	6%
I) Party areas	35%	47%	14%	4%
J) Indoor enhancements such as waterfalls	34%	41%	18%	7%
K) Bleachers for competition viewing	34%	46%	15%	5%

17. If a state-of-the-art recreation center was constructed, how strongly would you support or oppose including the following features:

	SS	S	O	SO
A) Basketball courts	40%	51%	7%	2%
B) Racquetball courts	32%	54%	12%	2%
C) Sauna/steam rooms	26%	46%	23%	6%
D) Computer labs	17%	43%	29%	10%
E) Weight/cardiovascular equipment room	42%	47%	8%	3%
F) Multi-purpose rooms for meetings or party rentals	33%	53%	10%	4%
G) Exercise/aerobics room	45%	48%	5%	2%
H) Indoor jogging track	48%	43%	7%	2%
I) Kitchen/dining area	19%	52%	23%	6%
J) Drop-in babysitting/nursery	30%	48%	16%	6%
K) Gameroom, with pool tables, table tennis, etc.	30%	51%	15%	4%
L) Martial arts room	19%	54%	21%	5%
M) Family locker rooms	37%	52%	8%	3%
N) Gymnastics room	23%	55%	17%	4%
O) Community theater/drama	26%	44%	23%	7%
P) Arts and craft room	25%	51%	19%	5%
Q) Rock climbing wall	31%	49%	15%	5%
R) Concession area	29%	57%	11%	4%
S) Indoor stage/performing arts	24%	47%	23%	7%
T) Kitchen/cooking classroom	26%	45%	23%	6%

18. If the following facilities were constructed as state-of-the-art, how likely or unlikely would you be to utilize them instead of the locations you currently use?

	VL	L	U	VU
A) Aquatic facilities	48%	27%	14%	10%
B) Recreation center facilities	42%	39%	12%	7%

19a. Please describe your favorite recreational activity for . . . yourself.
Walking/hiking (29%), swimming/aquatics (15%), golf (11%), biking (7%), jogging/running (7%), work out/aerobics/exercise/weight lifting (7%), soccer/basketball/volleyball/racquetball (5%)

19b. Please describe your favorite recreational activity for . . . your spouse.
Walking/hiking (26%), golf (10%), swimming/aquatics (9%), soccer/tennis/basketball/racquetball/volleyball (9%), biking (9%), jogging/running (8%), work out/aerobics/exercise/weightlifting (8%)

19c. Please describe your favorite recreational activity for . . . your children.
Walking/hiking (26%), golf (10%), swimming/aquatics (9%), soccer/tennis/basketball/racquetball/volleyball (9%), biking (9%), jogging/running (8%), work out/aerobics/exercise/weightlifting (8%)

20. Check the boxes of the organizations you or your family utilize to participate in the above activities. (Check all that apply)

City of Norman	24%
Norman public schools	12%
State Park/ Lake Thunderbird	13%
Non-profit youth	4%
Private clubs	8%
Churches	10%
YMCA	11%
OU	13%
Other	5%

21. How likely or unlikely would you be to participate in your or your child's favorite recreational activities if the City provided the facility? If you currently use a City facility, choose "City facility."

Very likely	53%
Likely	22%
Unlikey	4%
Very unlikely	5%
City facility	16%

22. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with recreational activities provided by the City of Norman for people in the following age groups:

	VS	S	D	VD
A) Young children (under age 6)	15%	58%	22%	4%
B) Children, ages 6 - 12	18%	63%	15%	3%
C) Youth, ages 13 - 18	10%	50%	32%	8%
D) Adults, ages 19 - 45	7%	46%	38%	9%
E) Adults, ages 46 - 65	6%	47%	37%	10%
F) Adults over the age of 65	7%	47%	35%	10%

23. What kind of recreational program(s) would you like the City to provide? You may provide up to three responses.
Swimming/aquatics (48%), walking/biking/trails (34%), nature/outdoor activities (11%), exercise/fitness/aerobics/weight training (10%), programs for kids/activities/playgrounds (8%), Yoga/Tai Chi/Pilates/meditation/Martial arts (7%), community events/theater (6%), recreation center/gym/indoor track (6%), activities for seniors and persons with disabilities (6%), sports programs/leagues/fields/sports complex (6%), classes/cooking/arts & craft (5%), golf/golf course (5%)

24. How frequently do you or any member of your household participate in the following activities? D=daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, and O=occasionally

	D	W	M	O
A) Fitness/exercise (running, jazzercize, yoga, etc.)	38%	37%	4%	21%
B) Outdoor team sports (baseball, softball, football or soccer)	9%	36%	8%	47%
C) Indoor organized sports (basketball, volleyball)	3%	20%	11%	65%
D) Individual sports (swimming, golf, tennis, wrestling, etc.)	21%	36%	14%	28%
E) Visual arts (painting or drawing)	9%	19%	18%	54%
F) Performing arts (music, drama)	10%	18%	18%	54%
G) Crafts (pottery, weaving)	4%	11%	16%	68%
H) Excursions (tours, trips)	2%	10%	36%	52%
I) Outdoor recreation (camping, fishing, boating)	2%	13%	30%	55%
J) Social activities (dances, cooking, card playing)	6%	25%	26%	43%
K) Swimming or water activities for fitness	20%	28%	16%	36%
L) Extreme sports (BMX, skateboarding, wall climbing)	3%	7%	10%	80%
M) General recreation (walking, bicycling, running)	43%	39%	9%	9%
N) Visiting natural areas	5%	26%	32%	37%

25. Thinking about your current recreation activities and those in which you might wish to participate, what would you or members of your household like to get out of those activities? (Check all that apply)

Have fun	15%
Develop new skills	9%
Improve health/fitness	15%
Interact with friends	11%
Make new friends	8%
Participate in competitions	5%
Experience being part of a team activity	4%
Enjoy the outdoors	14%
Help others	6%
Improve specific skills	5%
Participate in organized sports	5%
Find an activity in which to excel	3%
Other	0%

26. In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your family participated in a recreation class or program sponsored by the Norman Parks and Recreation Department?

Yes	30%
No	63%
Don't remember	7%

27. How strongly do you agree or disagree that each statement below is a valid reason for not using City operated facilities to participate in your favorite activities? Check the box that is closest to your opinion. If you have no opinion, do not mark an answer.

	SA	A	D	SD
A) Costs too much to participate	10%	22%	54%	15%
B) Don't know what recreational activities are offered	18%	46%	28%	7%
C) City facility is too far away to participate	8%	26%	54%	12%
D) No day or evening care for children	14%	34%	38%	14%
E) The City facilities are inadequate	24%	42%	30%	5%
F) Don't know where City facility is located	9%	26%	49%	17%
G) Class is full/waiting list	5%	21%	58%	16%
H) Poor customer service by staff	7%	18%	56%	19%
I) Prefer being involved with YMCA, OU, or private facility	12%	34%	39%	16%
J) Poor security at site	9%	26%	51%	14%
K) Activity not offered by City	32%	39%	24%	5%
L) Too busy or not interested	7%	37%	40%	16%
M) City site is inconvenient (location, parking)	10%	34%	45%	10%
N) Registration for program is difficult	4%	16%	66%	14%

28. If you and/or your family want to swim or participate in aquatic activities, which of the following sites do you utilize? (Check all that apply)

City pool (Westwood, summer only)	21%
YMCA pool	15%
OU Swim complex	18%
Facility outside of Norman	7%
Personal pool	19%
Neighborhood Association pool	8%
Other facility	6%
Don't swim	5%

29. When you use a pool, in which of the following activities do you participate? (Check all that apply)

Therapeutic recreation	6%
Water safety/Red Cross certification	2%
Water aerobics	5%
Recreation (youth)	17%
Recreation (adult)	21%
Swim team/compete	4%
Learn to swim (youth)	9%
Learn to swim (adult)	1%
Fitness/lap swimming	14%
Relax/sunbathe	20%
Other	1%

30. How frequently do you utilize Westwood Pool during the time that it is open (summer only)?

Daily	4%
Twice weekly	6%
Once a week	10%
Once a month	23%
Never	57%

31. How likely or unlikely would you be to use Westwood Pool if the City made the following improvements? Check the box that is closest to your opinion. If you have no opinion, do not mark an answer.

	VL	L	U	VU
A) Zero depth entry area (beach like entry)	30%	35%	14%	21%
B) Water playground for youth	38%	31%	12%	19%
C) Additional slides	36%	31%	14%	20%
D) More shade	44%	34%	7%	14%
E) Improved family changing area	40%	30%	12%	18%
F) Improved concessions	31%	29%	17%	22%
G) Additional pool	42%	31%	11%	17%
H) A lazy river (moving current channel)	48%	29%	7%	16%
I) Improved parking	33%	30%	16%	22%
J) Landscaping	26%	30%	19%	24%

32. The current cost for a family season pass to swim at Westwood Pool is $140. If the pool facilities were renovated or improved and you were asked to pay an additional cost, what would be the highest total amount you would expect to pay for a family season pass?

Current rate of $140	27%
$140 - $160	36%
$161 - $180	21%
$181 - $200	12%
More than $200	4%

33. Rate the following recreational characteristics of City-owned facilities in Norman. Check the box that is closest to your opinion. If you have no opinion, do not mark an answer.

	E	G	F	P
A) Having parks conveniently located for people in all areas	19%	50%	24%	6%
B) The overall quality of City parks	11%	58%	28%	4%
C) The overall safety of City parks	13%	57%	26%	4%
D) The maintenance of City parks	10%	52%	31%	6%
E) The variety of recreational facilities within parks	6%	37%	45%	11%
F) Having athletic fields conveniently located for people in all areas	9%	45%	31%	15%
G) The number of athletic fields in the City	13%	47%	28%	12%
H) The maintenance of City athletic fields	15%	53%	25%	8%
I) The overall quality of City athletic fields	14%	52%	28%	7%
J) Having practice areas conveniently located for people in all areas	8%	39%	36%	17%
K) The number of practice areas in the City	8%	37%	38%	16%
L) The overall quality of practice areas	8%	43%	35%	14%
M) The amount of accessible natural areas	7%	31%	41%	20%
N) The variety of programs and events offered by the parks and recreation department	7%	46%	39%	8%
O) The overall quality of parks and recreation programs and events	10%	52%	33%	4%

	E	G	F	P
P) The overall quality of walking/biking trails in the City	6%	28%	35%	30%
Q) Having walking/biking trails conveniently located for people in all areas	6%	21%	35%	39%
R) Having swim facilities conveniently located for people in all areas	5%	19%	39%	37%

34. What one recreational facility do you believe is lacking in your part of the City?
Trails (23%), natatorium/aquatics/splash pad/water park (19%), pool (11%), neighborhood park (9%), specific park or facility named (7%), recreation center/gym/indoor walking track/basketball (6%), sports/complex/practice fields/soccer fields (5%)

35. Check the three favorite athletic activities in which you or your family members participate.

Swim	19%
Skating/hockey	1%
Bicycling	11%
Basketball	3%
Soccer	4%
Walk/hike on trails	20%
Running/jogging	7%
Volleyball	1%
Exercise/work out	11%
Tennis	2%
Baseball/softball	7%
Golf	8%
Skateboarding	0%
Football	2%
Other	3%

36. In general, when in season, how frequently do you or your family participate in the athletic activities listed in the previous question?

Daily	40%
Weekly	47%
Monthly	4%
Occasionally	7%
Never	2%

37. Check the boxes of the organizations where you participate in your three favorite athletic activities. (Check all that apply)

City of Norman	27%
Norman public schools	9%
State Park/Lake Thunderbird	10%
Non-profit youth	3%
Private clubs	9%
Churches	6%
YMCA	11%
OU	15%
Other	10%

38. As the City develops its parks master plan, it will be faced with decisions about the future direction of parks. How important or unimportant do you believe it is for the City of Norman to do the following? Check the box that is closest to your opinion. If you have no opinion, do not mark an answer.

	VI	I	U	VU
A) Renovate/enhance smaller parks throughout the City	34%	51%	13%	2%
B) Develop additional athletic fields for everyday use	16%	41%	34%	10%
C) Develop high quality athletic facilities to attract major tournaments	21%	29%	34%	16%
D) Construct City-operated recreation center(s) with aquatics, fitness, meeting rooms, and gym(s)	41%	38%	15%	7%
E) Preserve additional open space along drainage ways throughout the City	32%	45%	18%	5%
F) Develop new trails in each sector of the City for walking and biking	60%	30%	7%	3%
G) Develop Ruby Grant Park (160 acres at Franklin & IH-35)	35%	36%	20%	8%
H) Renovate and expand Westwood Pool to offer new recreation opportunities	35%	38%	21%	6%
I) Develop a new City-owned indoor swim center for competitive and fitness swimming	40%	27%	21%	12%
J) Construct covered tennis courts for year-round tennis play	17%	33%	33%	16%
K) Develop additional nature parks or open space preserves	41%	38%	14%	7%

39. Now, please choose the three most important strategies on which you would like to see the City focus. The list of strategies is the same as in the previous question.

A. Renovate/enhance smaller parks throughout the City	13%
B. Develop additional athletic fields for everyday use	4%
C. Develop high quality athletic facilities to attract major tournaments	5%
D. Construct City-operated recreation center(s) with aquatics, fitness, meeting rooms, and gym(s)	11%
E. Preserve additional open space along drainage ways throughout the City	5%
F. Develop new trails in each sector of the City for walking and biking	19%
G. Develop Ruby Grant Park (160 acres at Franklin & IH-35)	10%
H. Renovate and expand Westwood Pool to offer new recreation opportunities	9%
I. Develop a new City-owned indoor swim center for competitive and fitness swimming	11%
J. Construct covered tennis courts for year-round tennis play	3%
K. Develop additional nature parks or open space preserves	11%

40. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the cultural activities (such as arts, concerts, theater, etc.) provided by the City of Norman?

Very satisfied	20%
Satisfied	66%
Dissatisfied	12%
Very dissatisfied	2%

41. Why would you say you are dissatisfied with the cultural activities provided by the City?
Too few activities provided (42%), unaware of cultural activities/lack of advertising (22%), not enough diversity/variety (13%), music/concerts are lacking (10%), need better quality activities (8%)

42. How strongly would you support or oppose paying additional City taxes in order for the City to do the following?

	SS	S	O	SO
A) Improve maintenance of parks in Norman	26%	57%	11%	6%
B) Provide more recreation programs	18%	51%	21%	10%
C) Improve arts and culture programs	16%	46%	26%	12%
D) Maintain new park facilities	23%	58%	11%	7%
E) Operate a natatorium for area swimming competitions and fitness swimming programs	25%	31%	25%	19%
F) Improve trails and greenbelts throughout Norman	40%	42%	10%	8%
G) Operate new indoor recreation center(s)	26%	44%	19%	12%

43. Improving or constructing new recreational facilities may require additional funding. What funding source would you most likely support to raise the necessary funds? There is also a box for opposed to new funding.

Higher user fees	11%
Sales tax increase	14%
Voter-approved bonds	35%
Hotel/motel room tax increase	28%
Increased property taxes	5%
Opposed to new funding, even to improve current facilities	7%

44. Which of the following ranges would you most likely support if a new sales tax was implemented?

Less than 1/2 cent	32%
1/2 cent	37%
3/4 cents	5%
1 cent	17%
Up to 2 cents	8%

45. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	SA	A	D	SD
A) The Parks and Recreation department needs to expand its programs and services to meet the existing needs of residents.	34%	48%	16%	2%
B) The department provides an adequate amount and diversity of programs for the existing population.	7%	47%	40%	6%
C) The Parks and Recreation department has an adequate number of facilities to support their programs.	6%	33%	53%	9%
D) As Norman grows, it is important for the Park and Recreation lands, facilities, programs, and services expand to meet the needs of new residents.	49%	45%	5%	1%
E) The value of my property in Norman is enhanced by quality parks and services that make Norman an attractive place to live.	55%	36%	6%	3%

46. Check the boxes of the sources from which you get information about recreational activities in Norman? (Check all that apply)

Oklahoma Gazette	5%
The Daily Oklahoman	8%
Norman Transcript	21%
Recreation brochures	9%
City cable channel	2%
School brochures	10%
Parks/recreation office	4%
City web site	13%
Signs	8%
Word of mouth	19%
Other	2%

47. How frequently do you vote in City-related elections, like City council or bond elections?

Always	50%
Often	33%
Seldom	12%
Never	4%

48. How strongly would you support or oppose the City amending its smoking ordinance to include the banning of smoking at City parks and special events on City parkland, except for in the parking lots?

Strongly support	65%
Support	15%
Oppose	10%
Strongly oppose	9%

49. (If you golf or utilize Westwood Golf Course) How strongly would you support or oppose including Westwood Golf Course as a facility in which smoking was not permitted, except for in the parking lot?

Strongly support	57%
Support	11%
Oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	18%

2009 NORMAN PARKS AND RECREATION STUDENT SURVEY CUMULATIVE RESULTS

PROJECT 07092009 RAYMOND TURCO & ASSOCIATES JUNE 2009

Congratulations! As a resident of Norman, the City needs your help and your input! The City is currently involved in developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This is a document that helps the City set priorities for parks and recreational facilities for the next 5-10 years. Students such as yourself are chief users of parks, and therefore, an audience whose views about parks the City takes very seriously. Please take a few minutes to honestly answer this survey about parks and recreation in your neighborhood. Read each question and check the box that is closest to your opinion. Check only one box per question unless the instructions say, "Check all that apply." If you don't have an opinion, do not check any box. If you don't understand something or you have a question, please ask your teacher.

1. Are you…?

Male (Boy)	49%
Female (Girl)	51%

2. What grade are you in?

4th	41%
7th	31%
High school	28%

3. Name of your school?

Norman High	17%	Adams Elementary	3%
Norman North High	11%	Madison Elementary	3%
Whittier Middle	10%	Roosevelt Elementary	3%
Longfellow	8%	Kennedy Elementary	3%
Irving Middle	8%	Jefferson Elementary	3%
Alcott	5%	McKinley Elementary	3%
Truman Elementary	5%	Monroe Elementary	2%
Washington Elementary	4%	Lincoln Elementary	2%
Eisenhower Elementary	4%	Lakeview Elementary	1%
Cleveland Elementary	4%	Wilson Elementary	1%
		Jackson Elementary	1%

4. How long has your family lived in the City of Norman?

Less than 1 year	5%
1 - 3 years	13%
4 - 6 years	14%
7 - 10 years	16%
Over 10 years	52%

5. What do you like most about the parks in Norman? Write in your answer. Swings/slides/jungle gyms/equipment (18%), Fun/play/active/run/exercise (12%), Toys/equipment/playgrounds (10%), Clean/well maintained/safe/quiet (9%), Nature/trees/landscaping/wildlife/beauty (7%), Open space/fields/no fencing (6%), Events/activities/lots to do (5%)

6. What do you not like about the parks in Norman? Write in your answer. Trashy/poorly maintained/dog droppings/no recycling bins (18%), broken equipment/swings/jungle gyms/lack of parts (12%), crowded/noisy/too small/no space (8%), bad behavior/gangs/teens/kids/unsafe (7%)

7. When you visit a park, what do you normally do? (Check all that apply)

Play on a playground	65%
Walk/run on trails	42%
Go swimming	36%
Other	19%
Enjoy nature	43%
Family activity such as a picnic	33%
Participate in sports such as baseball, soccer, or football	48%
Meet with friends	66%
Play basketball or volleyball	32%
Skateboard	17%

8. What is the name of your favorite park in Norman?

Reaves	33%	Brookhaven	5%
Andrews	28%	Griffin	3%
Lyons	8%	Kids Space	3%
Westwood	7%	Miscellaneous	2%

9a. Have you ever visited the 12th Avenue Rec. Center?

Yes	33%
No	67%

9b. Have you ever visited the Whittier Rec. Center?

Yes	44%
No	56%

9c. Have you ever visited the Irving Recreation Center?

Yes	39%
No	61%

10. Have you ever visited the Westwood Aquatic Center?

Yes	69%
No	31%

11. Have you ever visited the Westwood Tennis Center?

Yes	37%
No	63%

12. Have you ever visited the spray park at Andrews Park?

Yes	74%
No	26%

13. Have you ever visited Lake Thunderbird?

Yes	81%
No	19%

14. What did you like to do at Lake Thunderbird? (Check all that apply)

Fish	50%
Swim	57%
Picnicking	35%
Boating	54%
Other	40%

15a. Did you go to a city summer camp last year?

Yes	21%
No	79%

15b. Will you go this year?

Yes	25%
No	75%

16a. Have you every played on a school play area after school or on weekends when you were not in school?

Yes	65%
No	35%

16b. At which school?

Truman	16%	McKinley	6%
Cleveland	9%	Monroe	6%
Eisenhower	8%	Jackson	5%
Irving	6%	Kennedy	5%

17a. Do you play on any city, YMCA or league teams (non school teams)?

Yes	34%
No	66%

17b. Check all the sport teams you have played on in the last year.

Baseball	22%
Tennis	13%
Soccer	37%
Softball	18%
Basketball	36%
Swimming	19%
Other	35%

18. Check the box that best indicates how interested or uninterested you would be in these recreation activities. Please check only one box for each line. 1=Very Interested (VI), 2=Interested (I), 3=Uninterested (U), 4=Very uninterested (VU). If you don't have an opinion, don't mark any box.

		VI	I	U	VU
A)	Playing baseball or softball	25%	26%	26%	23%
B)	Playing basketball or volleyball indoors	28%	30%	22%	20%
C)	Playing soccer	26%	26%	24%	24%
D)	Playing tennis	18%	29%	27%	26%
E)	Playing football	26%	21%	22%	30%
F)	Playing sand volleyball	23%	27%	23%	27%
G)	Playing outdoor basketball	27%	27%	25%	21%
H)	Swimming in a large pool with lots of fun things to do	66%	23%	6%	5%
I)	Playing disc golf	15%	24%	29%	32%
J)	Jogging, biking or roller-blading on trails	38%	33%	17%	12%
K)	Visiting with friends in a park	54%	33%	8%	5%
L)	Swimming in competitions	15%	17%	32%	36%
M)	Playing on playgrounds in a park	35%	37%	18%	10%
N)	Going to Lake Thunderbird	44%	33%	13%	10%
O)	Enjoying nature areas or learning about nature	28%	32%	25%	16%
P)	Visiting a Teen Center (a center for teens with teen activities)	11%	26%	33%	30%
Q)	Learning new activities like Tumbling, Gymnastics, Karate or others	29%	26%	23%	23%
R)	BMX or Mountain Bike riding	29%	26%	24%	21%
S)	Fishing in or around Norman	37%	29%	19%	15%
T)	Playing at an outdoor water sprayground for kids and young adults	33%	27%	24%	16%
U)	Going to festivals or events in a park	48%	34%	11%	7%
V)	Skateboarding at the Skate Park in Andrews Park	21%	17%	27%	34%

19. From the list above, write down the letter (A to V) of the one activity you would consider to be your favorite.

Swimming in a large pool with lots of fun things to do	18%
Playing soccer	9%
Playing baseball or softball	8%
Playing football	8%
Going to Lake Thunderbird	6%
Visiting with friends at a park	6%

20. What are some of the main reasons why you might not be able to do your favorite recreation activities in Norman? Check all the boxes that are reasons for you.

No place for that sport or activity near where I live	36%
Hard to get a ride to that activity or sport	30%
That sport or activity is too expensive	26%
I don't have the right equipment for that activity or sport	22%
I prefer to play at my house instead of at a park	16%
I prefer to do indoor activities like video games or watching TV	18%
Is there another reason? Please write it in here. _____	32%

Thank you very much for your input. Your assistance has been invaluable.

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