

# CHAPTER 2

## Executive Summary

*This executive summary will briefly explain the need for parks and recreation in the community, the current state of parks and recreation in Round Rock, the desired state for parks and recreation, and finally the goals of this Plan which will guide the process of moving from the current state into the desired state.*

### Plan Components:

#### Chapter 1 - Forward

- Lays the groundwork for this planning effort.

#### Chapter 2 - Executive Summary

- Highlights key elements from the Plan.

#### Chapter 3 - Round Rock Today

- Describes the existing condition of the Round Rock parks, recreation, open space, and trails system.

#### Chapter 4 - Public Input

- Analyzes and summarizes the public engagement process and results.

#### Chapter 5 - Need Assessment

- Presents a three-tiered analysis of parkland acreage and facility levels of service, opinions voiced by the community, and man-made and natural resources that offer opportunities to expand, diversify, or connect the system.

#### Chapter 6 - Goals and Recommended Actions

- Presents a series of goals and recommended actions to address the issues of connectivity, community cohesion, sustainability, natural resources and environment, and equity.



*“Parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work.”*  
~ Paul M. Sherer, The Trust for Public Land

# Round Rock’s Need for Parks and Recreation

Quality of life is an important factor to the Round Rock community. Quality of life encompasses many areas, including the ability to get good jobs, the ability to get around the City easily, the feeling that the City is a safe place to call home, and the availability of attractive homes and neighborhoods in which to live.

One of the most important aspects of a community’s character is the availability of high quality parks and recreation opportunities in the city. Parks and recreation influence every aspect of our lives. They allow us to experience new activities and encourage us to lead a healthy lifestyle. Attractive parks and natural areas are often the first place that visitors view in a community. Parks provide a very visible reminder of the beauty of the land that people choose to live in. Parks are also 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 good park and recreation system lets both residents and visitors know that the leadership of the city is interested in the well being of its citizens.

## Purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Round Rock’s original Park and Recreation Master Plan was completed in 2000. The 2000 Plan provided guidance for the City, helping the park system remain viable through a period of considerable change in both Texas and in Round Rock itself. The Master Plan was updated in 2009 (Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community) to reflect the changing demands of the City. The next decade moving forward will bring new changes and challenges on both a global and local stage. This Plan, Playbook 2030: Building a Connected Community, will be a key guiding tool for City staff and elected and appointed officials during that time.

A good parks and recreation system does not occur randomly, but rather requires a series of orderly steps. It responds to the interests of all citizens it serves. This Plan establishes goals and priorities, and provides an assessment of Round Rock’s park and recreation system in the years 2016-2017. The park and recreation planning process allows the citizens of Round Rock to determine what their preferred park and recreation priorities should be. This Plan:

- Points out deficiencies in the system and recommends alternatives to address and correct those deficiencies;

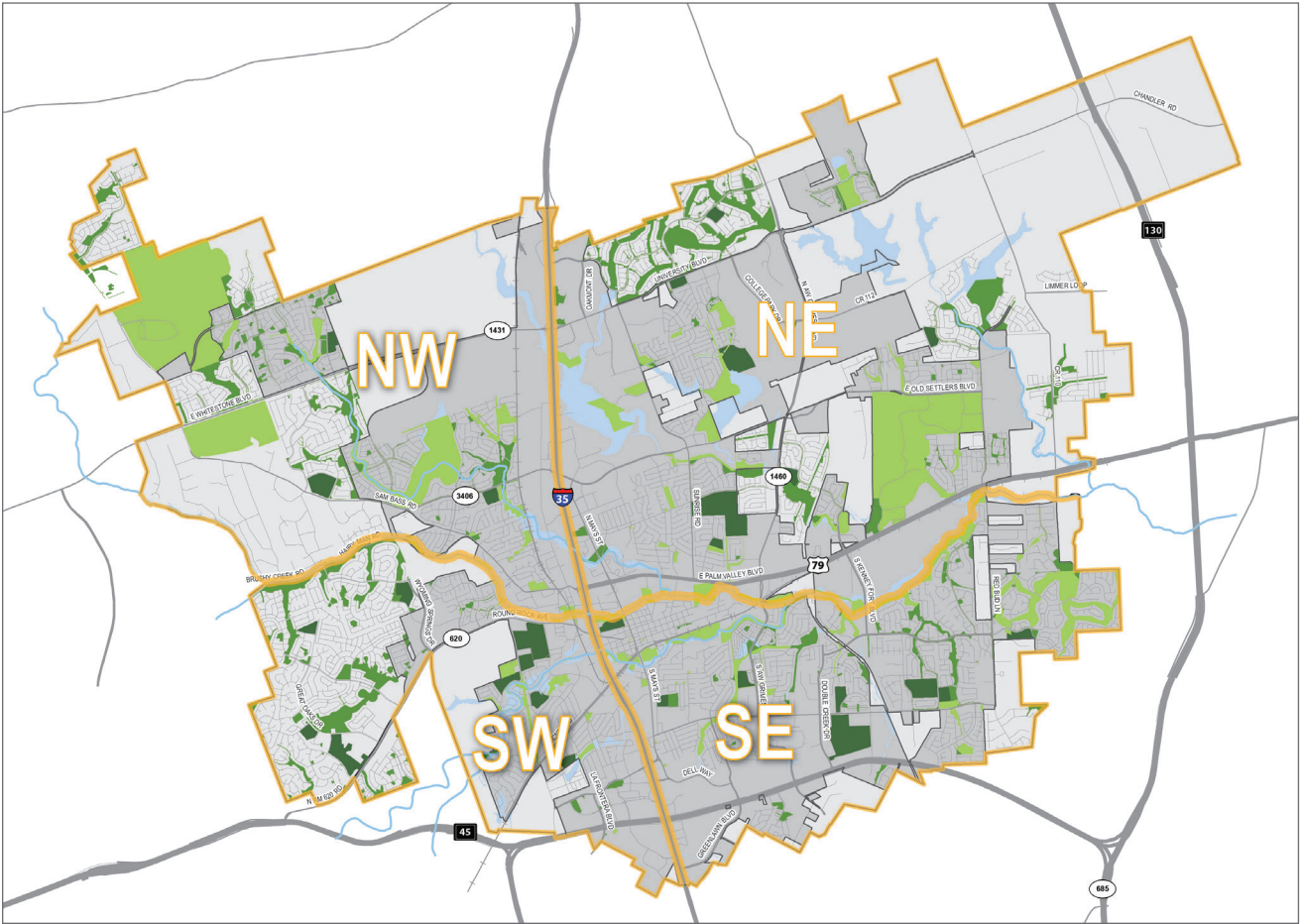
- Looks at the potential growth of the City over the next five to 10 years, and assesses where additional facilities will be needed as the City grows, and what types of facilities are most needed;
- Guides the City in acquiring land to meet current and future park and open space needs;
- Prioritizes key recommendations of the Plan so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible; and
- Is intended to guide City staff and leaders in determining where and how parks and recreation funding should be allocated over the next five years.

## Jurisdiction, Planning Area, and Time Frame

The recommendations of this Plan will be considered for implementation by the City of Round Rock. It is intended to cover all of Round Rock as well as the areas included in the City’s current extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

The Plan is formulated to address recommendations and priorities for the next 10 years and beyond. Many of the recommendations of the Plan are valid for a period of up to fifteen years, but should be reevaluated periodically. Per planning requirements issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be completely updated after a ten year period, or before, if any major developments occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the City. In addition, an annual review workshop by the Round Rock PARD team and other City staff should be conducted to review progress each year. Annual updates by City staff will also be prepared. Updates should be prepared on a more frequent basis if special needs or occurrences require modifications to the Plan. In all cases, public involvement through citizen meetings, interviews, and workshops will be included in any updating process.

Map 2.1, Planning Area





## Summary of Citywide Strategic Plan, Game On 2060

The City of Round Rock regularly updates its citywide strategic master plan which is meant to guide the City staff and elected officials over the next 50 years. In order for Round Rock to achieve its desired vision, the Strategic Plan laid out seven principles. Of these seven principles, parks and recreation can have a direct impact in at least six of them: family-friendly community, safe, distinctive by design, the Sports Capital of Texas, authentic downtown, and choice of great neighborhoods. Parks and recreation provides the community with a wide array of family-friendly opportunities including: recreation programs, youth and adult athletics, special events, and facilities that can accommodate all ages and abilities. Beyond providing safe, well-maintained facilities, parks and recreation helps keep neighborhoods safe by rejuvenating older parks and fighting visual blight. Furthermore, the City’s distinct character can be enhanced by the Parks and Recreations Department (PARD). In addition to the beautification provided by parks and streetscapes, certain projects, such as Heritage Trail, will preserve and educate visitors about the City’s rich history. The multi-use fields and variety of sports facilities found at Old Settlers Park help to brand Round Rock as the Sports Capital of Texas. Parks and recreation has assisted in creating an authentic downtown by hosting popular events there, such as Christmas Family Night, and providing beautiful public spaces, such as Prete Main Street Plaza, Centennial Plaza, and the Round Rock Amphitheater. Finally, the PARD is committed to the equitable distribution of recreation facilities and programs, making these resources easy to access from virtually any neighborhood in the City.

## Round Rock Today

The process of developing a long range parks and recreation master plan includes understanding the size and the characteristics of the population to be served. Round Rock’s parks, trails, and open spaces provide recreation facilities for the citizens of the City, as well as other residents of Williamson County and beyond. Round Rock’s growth over the past decades has been tremendous. The rapid population growth poses a challenge, as simply keeping up with the needs of the growing population will be difficult enough, much less increasing the proportional size of the system.

Round Rock’s growth has been high above the county average over the past 30 years. Round Rock is starting to slow its population growth from the boom it experienced from 1970 to 2000, but the City is not done growing. By the year 2025, Round Rock’s population is projected to increase by approximately 35,000 people to 150,776.

## Key Demographic Characteristic Findings

Based on the demographic information, the City of Round Rock’s population is largely young families. This means that the City should focus on offering family events such as Movies in the Park and July 4 Frontier Days Celebration. Youth athletic programs, afterschool care, and camps are needed; however, as the children of Round Rock grow older, a strong teen program focus will be needed in future years. The City should consider offering adult instructional classes or fitness classes at the same time as the children’s programs so that parents can enjoy activities while waiting for their children. Additionally, as the diversity of Round Rock continues to increase, greater cultural programs and events should be offered.

## Size of the Park and Recreation System in Round Rock

Currently the Round Rock parks and recreation system includes 197 park sites and amenity centers (City-owned, HOA, MUD, county-owned, etc.) and contains 4,437 acres. City-owned park and amenity sites include only 64 locations and a total of 2,270 acres. Figure 2.1, *Existing Park System in Round Rock*, summarizes the existing park facilities.

## Summary of Park Spatial Needs

Round Rock currently has a large network of public, private, and school parkland. However, with the City’s goal of providing a well-connected and evenly distributed range of parkland types throughout the community, additional parkland is needed to fill service areas gaps and address current and projected acreage deficiencies. Based on the parkland distribution and acreage analysis, key spatial needs are summarized in Figure 2.2, *Summary of Key Acreage Needs for 2017 to 2025* (on the following page).

Figure 2.1, Existing Park System in Round Rock

	Overall Area Parks (including Private and Public)	City-Owned Facilities Only
Total Number of Parks	197 Park and Amenity Sites	64 Park and Amenity Sites
Total System Acreage	4,437 acres	2,270 acres
Neighborhood Parks	259 acres	123 acres
Community Parks	312 acres	247 acres
Linear Parks	1293 acres	578 acres
Regional Parks	1,452 acres	641 acres
Metropolitan Park	469 acres	469 acres
Special Purpose Parks	518 acres	212 acres
Amenity Centers	134 acres	2 sites (Clay Madsen Center & Allen R. Baca Center)
School Areas (not included in totals)	510 acres	n/a
Largest Park	Southwest Williamson County Regional Park (811.32 acres)	Old Settlers Park (641.14 acres)
Smallest Park	Water Tower Park (0.19 acres)	Water Tower Park (0.19 acres)
Developed vs. Undeveloped	3,502 acres vs. 935 acres	1,529 acres vs. 740 acres

Figure 2.2, Summary of Key Acreage Needs for 2017 to 2025

### Neighborhood Parks

With a large number of private parks filling a substantial portion of the neighborhood parkland need, the City has adequate acreage of neighborhood parks. As additional residential development occurs, it is important that the City continue to encourage integration of homeowner association parks into growth areas. There is also an opportunity to partner with Round Rock ISD to allow school play areas to formally become neighborhood parks and practice fields for the residences in the area outside of school hours.



### Metropolitan Parks

Current acreage deficiencies and service area gaps exist for metropolitan parks. At least 110 acres of parks are needed in the near term and an additional 175 acres by 2025. Development of the existing metropolitan parks would help to serve the northwest quadrant of the City. Additional parkland should be located in the northeast, southeast, and southwest quadrants of the City.



### Linear Parks

While there is currently adequate acreage of linear parkland in the City, a number of areas remain undeveloped. The City should continue to support development of a citywide trail system through linear parks to create additional access to natural resources and provide key north-south and east-west connectivity,



### Community Parks

The City is currently deficient in community parkland. In order to meet current needs, the City should pursue or support development of at least 150 acres of community parkland in the near future and a minimum of another 140 acres by 2025. Current parkland need areas are located northwest of I-35 and FM 620, south of McNeil Road, and in the northeastern portion of the City.



### Regional Parks

The current regional parkland is meeting the minimal target level of service. However, by 2025, the City should support development of a minimum of 55 additional acres of regional parkland.



### Open Space / Citywide Acreage Needs

In order to move towards the City's vision of preserving 14 percent of the City and ETJ as parks and open space, target acquisition and preservation is needed over the coming years to ensure that sufficient land remains available while the population grows and developed areas expand. The City will need to preserve approximately 1,050 more acres of land by the time it reaches build-out.





## Summary of Key Needs for Round Rock

Through the needs analysis process, the level of need for increased parkland acreage, connectivity, recreational facilities, and programming was identified. Key takeaways of the analysis follow:

### Parkland Acreage Needs

In 2017, the City is most deficient in community, metropolitan, and regional parkland. Moving forward, the City should prioritize development of existing undeveloped parks (e.g., Behren’s Ranch and Mayfield), and acquisition and development of additional parkland which can meet the needs of residents throughout the community, with emphasis on currently underserved areas. As development continues in the northeast sector, care should be taken to ensure that future residents in that area have adequate access to parkland. The City should also continue strategic land preservation and acquisition to continue moving towards its vision of preserving 14 percent of the City and ETJ as parks and open space.

### Parkland Connectivity

Pedestrian and bicycle trails were a high priority for the community in 2009. Today, despite trail development since then, providing additional pedestrian and bicycle trails remains one of the community’s highest priorities. In coming years, it is recommended the City continue to prioritize and develop key trail segments to provide citywide access to parks, schools, downtown, and other key areas.

### Facility Needs

Based on the level of service assessment and public input, the City has a high active recreation need for field lighting, baseball/softball practice and recreational fields, soccer field amenities (e.g., spectator seating), volleyball courts, and indoor gymnasium space. High passive recreation desires include outdoor performance spaces, renovation of rental facilities and playgrounds, additional picnicking amenities, shade elements, spray grounds, trails, natural areas, and small neighborhood parks.

### Recreational Program Needs

As seen throughout the public engagement, key recreational program desires include additional community events; adult and senior fitness, leisure learning, and creative programming; environmental education; water fitness programs; and multigenerational programming.

## The Desired State for Parks and Recreation in Round Rock

The desired state for the Round Rock PARD is based on a careful combination of trend analysis and projection, public input data collection, and input from the Round Rock City Council and Mayor. From this information, the PARD has determined the ideal state in which to operate and function as a whole.

In terms of mobility and connectivity, it is recommended Round Rock provide a system of trails, greenbelts, and open space that encourages residents to be outdoors, living a healthy lifestyle and learning about local natural features. Connectivity also serves to facilitate an alternative transportation opportunity for Round Rock residents. By connecting residents to locations such as schools, public spaces, neighborhoods, places of employment, and retail destinations, the City gains a healthier, more active and close-knit community. Providing such linkages rewards the users and relieves traffic congestion.

The desired state of recreation and culture encompasses short and long range programs for development, expansion, and upgrading the Round Rock parks and recreation system. Recreation amenities would include providing an adequate number of fields for general public and league use and facilities that address the needs of all age groups, activity levels, and socioeconomic categories.

The desired state for Round Rock is one that will have provided for programs and facilities of the expanded leisure market trends. The park system should be distributed evenly throughout the City so that all residents have access to trails, athletic activities, and neighborhood and community parks. The community and character of Round Rock should be clearly visible to visitors. The City’s identity should be clearly conveyed through beautification efforts, defined entry signage, and the continuation of tree plantings along streets and in parks.

The preservation and enhancement of historic and culturally significant landscapes could result in the development of such significant features as the round rock, the Chisholm Trail Crossing Sculpture Park, Heritage Trail, Kenney Fort, and the Brushy Creek corridor. A particular emphasis will be made to celebrate the history and culture of this City.

Areas of cultural value, geological and topographic interest, and natural creek corridors will be preserved, and funding mechanisms in place to acquire more lands for protection. The Parks and Recreation Department will maintain all of the Round Rock parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition and sustainable manner. Funding and manpower resources will be in place in order to regularly/proactively ensure the safety and quality of the City’s amenities. Coordination with multi-jurisdictional entities with respect to issues that

affect recreation opportunities will actively be pursued. Relationships will be strengthened and the City will work together in order to accomplish regional solutions.

The City will develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement its limited funding resources. The Parkland Dedication and Park Development Ordinance will continue to fund land acquisition and park development. Fee structures will be assessed and cooperation with private citizens and developers will be encouraged in which development and Adopt-A-Park programs may become realized. Citizen participation will continue to be utilized in determining long-range planning to reflect the changing conditions in Round Rock.



There is a need for additional recreational programming for all ages.



The Round Rock community highly values the events offered throughout the year.

# Summary of Gaps Between the Current State and the Desired State of Round Rock’s Parks and Recreation System

Following previous discussions about the current and desired state of Round Rock’s parks and recreation system, there are several gaps between where the system is now and where it should be. Those gaps are summarized in this section. Goals and recommended actions are presented in Chapter 6 to help guide the PARC team and City elected and appointed officials in achieving components of the desired state.

During the public input process of both the 2009 plan and this Plan, the one amenity that residents of Round Rock consistently wanted was more trails. Even though the City has a number of miles of trails, many of them are interior loop trails within parks. While this is a good start, providing additional connected trails can help to increase use of the system. Use of hike and bike trails is diversifying from traditional recreational use to include use as alternative transportation routes. Developing more interconnected trails throughout Round Rock will increase the mobility of residents, provide connectivity between residences and key destinations, and continue to set Round Rock apart as a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community.

There is also a lack of balance between recreational fields that can be used for league and every day use and the number of tournament quality fields which



Residents have once again voiced a strong desire for an increased trail network.

cater to serving as the Sports Capital of Texas. Round Rock should invest in multipurpose recreational play fields that are intended to be used by the residents of Round Rock. The City should strive to provide spectator amenities at fields to create a comfortable setting for community involvement.

There are currently significant deficits in flat field practice fields and diamond practice fields. The flat field practice fields found on Round Rock ISD school property are not lighted and the time available for leagues and residents to use those fields is limited. Strengthening the partnership with Round Rock ISD so that fields can be used during greater daylight hours when school is not in session is one way to address this deficit. The strengthening of this partnership is discussed in detail at the end of Chapter 5.

Round Rock also lacks sports fields beyond baseball, softball, and soccer that can attract teams and tournaments to the Sports Capital of Texas. The City should develop tournament quality volleyball facilities to attract large-scale tournaments to meet the Sports Capital of Texas goal. Additional facilities to be considered in the future include an adult athletic complex and inclusive athletic fields.

Fitness trends that are increasing across the nation include personal and group training, yoga, outdoor activities, and exercise for weight loss. Round Rock is encouraged to continue offering boot camps, yoga, and low impact aerobics classes. In order to further capitalize on recreation trends, the City is encouraged to consider additional outdoor fitness classes or events and ensure that programs are offered at a time when working adults would be able to participate.

Similar to fitness, extreme sports are gaining in popularity in the United States. The City should consider the possibility of providing an indoor rock wall for climbing and Ultimate Frisbee leagues and tournaments. In addition, public survey respondents indicated that community special events and adult fitness and wellness programs were their top choice for recreational programs. Providing additional adventure races and/or triathlons could provide both special events and fitness opportunities, while also drawing in additional revenue for the PARC.

In terms of parkland desired to meet existing and future target levels of service, Round Rock will need to acquire an additional 500 acres of parkland and open space by the year 2025 and a minimum of 1,050 acres by the time the City reaches its ultimate build-out population. The City is most deficient in community and metropolitan parks. Community parkland is needed northwest of Interstate 35 and FM 620, south of McNeil Road, and in the northeastern portion of the City. Additional metropolitan parks are needed in the northeast, southeast, and southwest sectors of the City and the existing metropolitan parks in the northwest sector should be developed in order to truly provide diversified recreational opportunities to residents in that area. Lastly, to move towards the City’s vision of preserving 14 percent of the City and ETJ as parks and open space, target acquisition and preservation is needed over the coming years. Preservation of the remaining floodplain is recommended to serve as greenbelt corridors, where feasible.

There are also some gaps in terms of facilities between the current state and the desired state. The rental facilities at Kinningham are in need of significant renovation and are unavailable for rentals until repairs are made. The rental area and surrounding support facilities at Lakeview Pavilion in Old Settlers Park are vastly undersized to accommodate the large events, corporate gatherings, and 5K races held there on a regular basis. Upgrading and expanding the pavilion, restroom facility, and parking area should be considered in the near future. Constructing a Teen Center was identified as a desire as part of the Game On 2060 Plan. Finally, there is no large amphitheater in Round Rock that can accommodate performances for over 1,000 people.



# Summary of Goals of the Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

## Goal #1: Link the Community

One of the highest needs in the City, as demonstrated by surveys and open house responses, is the addition of more trails. As part of Round Rock’s desire to have mobility and connectivity, the City should provide an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, neighborhoods, places of employment, retail shops, restaurants, and open spaces.

## Goal #2: Community Cohesion – Creating a Sense of Place

Round Rock is a place people can feel proud to live. It is the goal of the PARD to foster that positive emotional attachment to the City by continuing projects and programs that make Round Rock special and unique.

## Goal #3: Sustainable Park and Recreation System

Creating a sustainable parks and recreation system means providing diverse and attractive parks and greenways that enhance the quality of life in Round Rock while also increasing the economic vitality of the community. More than that, it is ensuring the long-term sustainability of the park and recreation system for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations by utilizing residents’ dollars in a fiscally responsible way and maximizing the return on investment.

## Goal #4: Environmental Stewardship

The PARD should continue efforts to be good stewards of the environment. Through landscape management and maintenance decisions, natural resource preservation, and outdoor education, the PARD can continue to conserve, protect, and enhance the community’s environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

## Goal #5: Equity – Distribution of Resources

The PARD’s mission statement is to create positive and memorable experiences in people’s lives. In order to fulfill this mission statement, PARD should ensure equitable distribution of resources to all members of the community. Equity is one of the most important goals a parks and recreation department can have because it encompasses many facets of recreation. Parks and recreation equity includes, but is not limited to, providing easy access to recreational facilities and programs, offering varying types of facilities and programs, ensuring affordable access to programming, providing inclusiveness in facilities and programming, and designing facilities and programs intended for all demographics. Equity is about providing the same level of service to all residents of the community regardless of age, income level, ability level, or geographical location.



The City’s Repair and Replacement program is intended to help maintain the parks and recreation facilities throughout their lifespan of heavy use.



Preservation of environmentally sensitive corridors, such as floodplains, greenbelts, and areas with cultural significance is one of the ways PARD continues to be a good steward of the environment.



An additional recreation center is desired in the northern portion of the City to ensure that all residents have convenient access to a facility.

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