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Parks & Cultural Resources

Current Conditions

Objectives for Future Parks & Cultural Resources

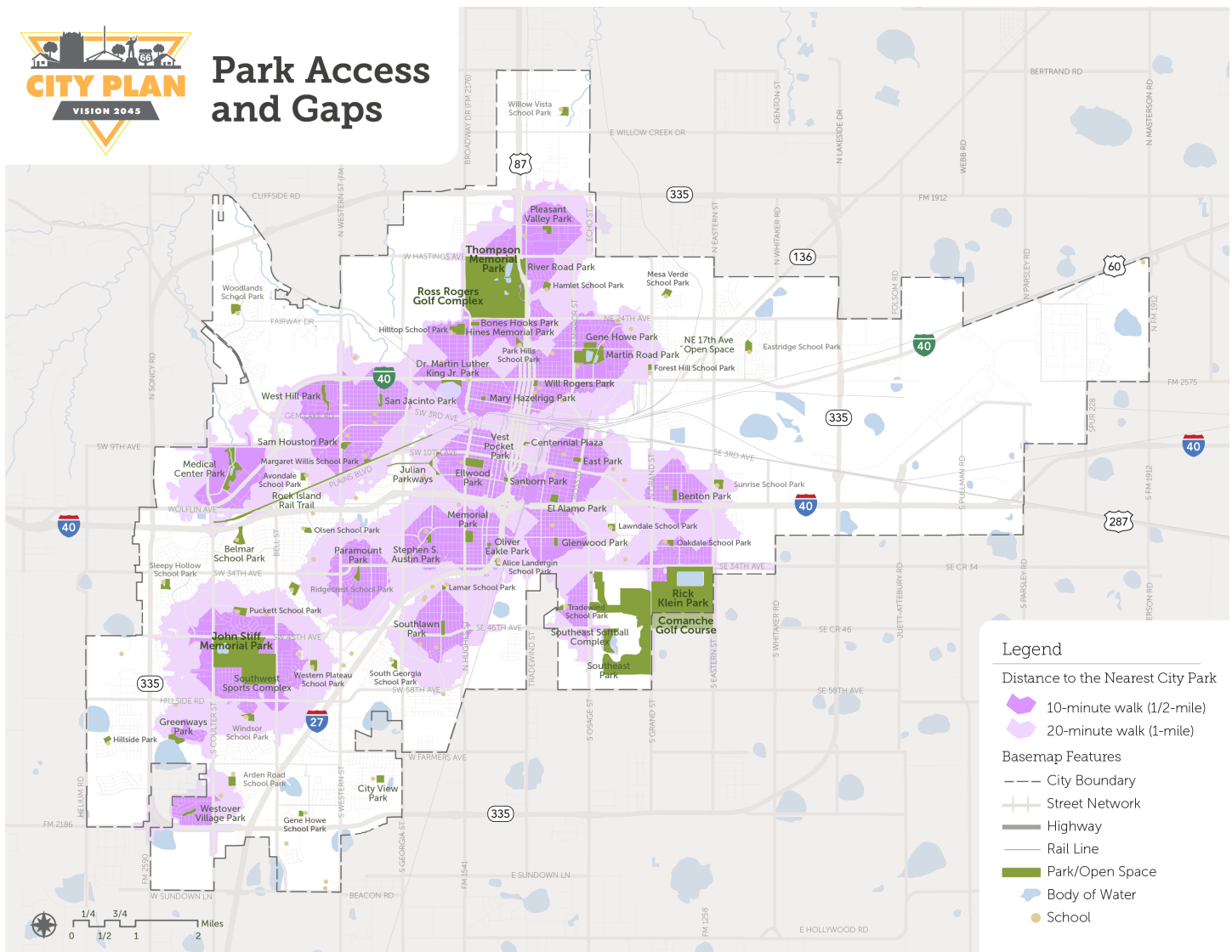
Parks & Cultural Resources Goals & Recommendations

Current Conditions

Amarillo has six large regional parks and 46 smaller neighborhood parks, which together comprise approximately 2,400 acres of land. Amarillo residents highly value existing park assets, however residents do not currently have equal access to them. The 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) identifies areas where local access to parks and recreational amenities is lacking, as illustrated in the map below. Filling these gaps, improving and enhancing existing resources, and increasing the diversity of activities, offerings, and cultural, historical, and arts-related components are top priorities of the PRMP and other recent plans.

Beyond offering amenities and gathering spaces to local residents, the City also recognizes the beneficial role that parks and cultural resource investment can play in supporting growth and economic vitality.

However, similar to mobility and infrastructure, parks are also underfunded in Amarillo. To achieve the community's desires and goals for parks, open spaces, green infrastructure, and cultural celebration, residents and City leaders will need to explore and support expanded and innovative funding sources.





Objectives for Future Parks & Cultural Resources

Opportunities for recreation, entertainment, social gathering, and cultural and artistic representation and celebration contribute to well-rounded, happy communities. These amenities and opportunities help residents feel that they belong, improve social fabric and resiliency, and support health and well-being. In turn, investment in these areas supports economic vitality, growth, and attraction for visitors, businesses, and future residents.

Amarillo has many valuable recreational and cultural assets; however disparities exist in their distribution, quality, access, and cultural inclusivity. Intentional and strategic investments, partnerships, and creative funding programs can support maintenance, enhancement, and the creation of new parks, gathering spaces, public art installations, events, community facilities, and placemaking. This will improve equity, quality of life, and economic advancement in Amarillo.

The Parks & Cultural Resources (P&C) goals and recommendations in this chapter focus on these needs, challenges, and objectives related to Parks and Cultural Resources. They expand upon the Complete Neighborhoods Scenario to provide more nuanced guidance for maintaining and enhancing existing amenities, ensuring that new development incorporates and contributes to community amenities, and elevating Amarillo’s diversity of culture, heritage, and history through meaningful, community-led approaches.

Parks & Cultural Resources Goals & Recommendations

P&C Goal 1

Implement the 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, guided by the following priorities.

Recommendations

1. Strategically Maintain and Manage Assets;
2. Create Context-Sensitive Parks;
3. Ensure Equitable Park Access;
4. Foster Trail Experiences;
5. Promote Health and Fitness;
6. Support Social Gatherings, Events and Programs;
7. Ensure Fiscal and Economic Resilience; and
8. Enrich Amarillo through Quality Services.

P&C Goal 2

Update park land dedication requirements for residential and non-residential development.

Throughout the planning process, Amarilloans expressed an interest in adjusting park land dedication requirements to include more recreation opportunities.

Recommendations

1. Developers shall provide a minimum of 2.2 acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents for neighborhood and community parks or pay fees in-lieu.
2. Explore opportunities to require common open spaces for mixed use and higher-density residential development in targeted locations.
3. Explore a park land dedication and/or a fee in-lieu requirement for non-residential development.
4. Explore acceptance of plazas, enhanced streetscapes, trails, and other hike and bike facilities to fulfill park dedication requirements for residential and non-industrial development.
5. Improve park management to ensure the longevity of trees, vegetation, and other park amenities.

Open Space Dedication

Alternatives to large neighborhood parks exist in the shape of town squares, plazas, pedestrian-friendly main streets, and trails. If designed correctly, these spaces can offer many of the same benefits as large parks without the same land-use intensity and high maintenance costs.

FUTURE: Plazas



FUTURE: Trails





The following graphics help envision how plazas and trails could fulfill the requirement for parkland dedication. Elements within the plaza space include:

- Lighting
- Seating
- Areas for native vegetation
- Gateways or public art

FUTURE: Community Parks



The trail graphic highlights examples of acceptable components such as:

- Exercise equipment area
- Children's play area
- Public art
- Areas for native vegetation



P&C Goal 3

Increase the number of people in close proximity to Regional Parks and Community Parks.

Amarilloans have communicated the importance of improved access to a robust parks network across all of Amarillo.

Recommendations

1. Promote community and neighborhood mixed use development within, adjacent to, and near Regional Parks through zoning, public-private partnerships, and incentives.
2. Support infill development and the addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in residential areas within close proximity to Regional Parks.
3. Discourage development of additional Neighborhood Parks within ½-mile of Regional Parks and Community Parks in favor of fees in-lieu for improvements to existing parks.
4. Improve connections to Regional Parks for all modes of travel, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, and automobiles.

P&C Goal 4

Increase culturally diverse programming, events, and public art throughout Amarillo, especially in Downtown and mixed use place types across the community.

Building on recent planning efforts, Amarilloans expressed a strong desire for more culturally diverse and appropriate programming, events and public art throughout the community.

Recommendations

1. Promote activation of Downtown and mixed use place types throughout Amarillo through increased programming and events.
2. Partner with neighborhood, cultural, and non-profit groups to co-create culturally diverse programming.
3. Expand the existing public art program to include public art that reflects the cultural diversity of the surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Promote collaboration and engagement across boards and commissions responsible for implementation and management of parks and cultural resources.



P&C Goal 5

Better celebrate and leverage the Route 66 Historic Corridor as a community asset and historic landmark.

Amarilloans take pride in the Route 66 Historic Corridor and expressed a desire for public and private investment to promote and preserve this important community asset.

Recommendations

1. Create a program to help restore and replace iconic signage (including large sculptural signage and neon signage) along Route 66.
2. Increase interpretive signage and other storytelling elements along Route 66.
3. Organize and promote one or more regular community events celebrating the history of Route 66.
4. Develop programs for small business retention and expansion along Route 66.
5. Provide matching grants and other incentives to encourage historically appropriate restoration and rehabilitation of commercial facades along Route 66.

P&C Goal 6

Leverage historic buildings and existing and future community facilities to celebrate Amarillo and its diverse history and cultural heritage.

Amarilloans expressed support for ideas that celebrate historic buildings and use existing (and any potential future) community facilities to tell the story of past and current residents.

Recommendations

1. Implement standards that identify and celebrate historic buildings as cultural assets.
2. Incorporate public art and interpretive elements into the interior and exterior of community facilities to help celebrate and communicate the stories of Amarilloans.
3. Host a diversity of cultural events and programs in community facilities.

