chapter 6

prioritization of needs & action plan



prioritization of needs & action plan

The importance of a **Parks, Recreation Open-Space and Trail Master Plan** reaches fruition at the point of implementation. These priorities and action plan are the response and recommendations based on all the information addressed in the previous chapters. This culmination of criteria is important in identifying and addressing the City of DeSoto's needs. To prioritize these needs, public input, as well as the needs assessment and standards, are taken into consideration.

The recommendations in this action plan were prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Need based on direct citizen input (demand-based)
- Need based on assessments and standards (standard-based)
- Opportunities based on existing conditions (resource-based)
- Industry trends/experience of consultants

Strategy

The implementation strategy is utilized to address the highest priority actions within the next five years. Once the action items are prioritized, it is then determined which category each recommendation falls under:

- Short-Term Implementation highest priority recommendations to be initiated or completed over the next 1-5 years
- Medium-Term Implementation recommendations to be initiated over the next 5-10 years
- **Long-Term implementation** recommendations to be initiated in 10 years or longer

By following this strategy, recommendations can be addressed and implemented as funding and support become available.

Short-Term - Action item recommendations, such as restroom facilities, park pavilions, and connectivity of existing trails, may be more feasible in the near future.

Medium-Term - Addressing the need of a new Recreation Center, Senior Center, and Aquatic Center may be easier to consider from a funding and operation standpoint over a longer period of time but still soon enough to meet public requests.

Long-Term Implementation - Recreation areas such as a fishing lake or new/improved parks and water parks might be a longer-term goal as they are not as high in demand.

As discussed in the plan development process, work sessions with the Park Board and City Council were held to discuss public feedback and determine priorities.

The Park Board discussion yielded the following items:

- Additional restrooms at parks and trail heads high priority
- Recreation center high priority but will take time to fund
- Water Park while the public expressed interest in one, the board is concerned it may not be as efficient of an investment
- Additional senior facilities liked the idea of utilizing Carroll Stadium next door to the existing Senior Center to provide more activities
- Trail development improvement and more awareness of trails to increase usage
- Bicycle plan would like to see well thought out system as alternative transportation



- Skate park potentially a first rate facility that would draw users from outside of DeSoto. While the public demand may not reflect the need for one, they felt it would be a desired facility
- Funding stressed the importance of development funding as well as funding for operations and maintenance.

During the City Council work session, items were discussed in relation to the implementation strategy. The following recommendations were discussed, and found to be consistent with citizen responses as well:

Short-Term - CIP items (improve/provide restrooms at needed areas), provide more senior activities, and improve trails

Medium-Term - Skate Park, Dog Park

Long-Term - Recreation Center, Indoor Aquatic Center, and Senior Center

One last factor to examine are items that were recommended and/or implemented from the previous Master Plan.

Accomplishments from previous Master Plan:

- Senior Center Expansion (renovated restrooms, fitness room, class room spaces, and new kitchen)
- Picnic pavilions were added at Grimes Park, Moseley Park, and Ernie Roberts Park.
- Kiva Park Renovation (renovated playground and shelter shade)
- Murphy Hills Park & Townsend Park Renovation (added playground and shade shelter)
- · Grimes Park trail extensions
- Moseley Park (added basketball court)

Accomplishments constructed but not identified as part of previous Master Plan:

- Grimes Park (added playground, fencing and athletic field lighting)
- Elerson Park (added playground, shade structure, and small pavilions)
- Windmill Hill Park (bridges added)
- BMX Facility (extension of facility and staging area)
- Ernie Roberts Park (added additional parking and landscaping)

Recommendations in the previous Master Plan that have not been addressed:

- Add picnic pavilions at Meadowcreek Park & 10 Mile Greenbelt
- Acquire property to build a community park
- Develop neighborhood parks on Roy Orr Trail*
- Add trails at Moseley Park and Meadowcreek Park
- Add playgrounds along Roy Orr Trail
- Develop on-street and off-street paths to parks.*
- Expand parking at Grimes Park

*Items that are being proposed in this Master Plan.

Taking each and every bit of information gathered in this assessment of the City of DeSoto, we can now prioritize recommendations to continue the strong development of DeSoto's parks, recreation, open-space and trails.

prioritization of needs

The following recreational elements have been separated into two lists; outdoor priorities and indoor priorities. These priorities are based on the culmination of input addressed in this Master Plan.

RANK	PRIORITY	DESCRIPTION**	COMPLETION DATE
	OUTDOOR		
1	Trails	Both hard and soft surface trails had 400 plus responses as a most needed facility.	0-5 years
2	Outdoor Exercise Stations for Senior Population	More than 400 survey responses warrant the need for improvemenets to senior center, especially for outdoor activities.	0-5 years
3	Picnic Facilities	A little over 400 votes chose picnic facilites as most needed.	0-5 years
4	Football/Soccer fields	Popularity and usage of existing fields suggest need for more facilities.	0-5 years
5	Fishing Lake	More than 300 people expressed they would like to see a fishing lake.	5-10 years
	INDOOR		
1	Indoor Aquatic Center	Almost 600 out of the 1330 survey responses asked for an Indoor Aquatic facility.	10-15 years
2	Senior Activity Rooms	Over 400 survey responses selected senior center as a most needed facility.	10-15 years
3	Gym - Basketball/Sport Courts	More than 300 people chose a recreation center as the most needed facility while 200 people expressed the need for more sport courts as well.	10-15 years
4	Walking Track	Walking/running was listed as the most popular adult activity. An indoor track would provide recreational activity for multi-generational activities.	10-15 years
5	Indoor Playground/Rock Climbing Wall	Almost 300 people chose playgrounds as a most needed facility. This could help provide indoor areas for children of all ages.	10-15 years
6	Activity Rooms	Multi-purpose individual rooms could provide multi-generational activities.	10-15 years
		**Reference Table 5.4 Most Needed Park & Recreation Facilities for survey results	

As stated in the introduction, the mission of this master plan is to create a living document that recognizes current socioeconomic changes by providing a flexible guide to address the current and future needs for recreation and leisure activities in DeSoto. The following action plan serves as that flexible and tangible guide for DeSoto to implement the priorities and recommendations outlined.

PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
1	TRAILS:			
1A	Mantlebrook Park \$325,000	Opportunity for Loop Trail – ½ mile in length and 8' wide. The loop trial would be the first improvement to this neighborhood park and provide access to the Roy Orr Trail system.		

1B Roy Orr Trail-Wintergreen \$90,000 Trail Connection – Extend Roy Orr Trail to connect to Wintergreen Road. Approximately 750 linear feet.



^{*}Estimated project cost is based on 2011 typical project cost for items used. Additional information and design would be required for a more accurate cost estimate. Estimated project cost could be higher or lower than what is listed.



PRIORITY	<u>LOCATION</u>	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION
	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*			DATE

TRAILS CONTINUED:

1C <u>DeSoto Ranch Nature Trail</u> \$700,000 Great opportunity for nature trail in the heavily wooded undeveloped DeSoto Ranch Park. Natural aspects of park perfect for a nature trail that could also serve as the eastern link between the Roy Orr Trail and the Veloweb Trail. There is approximately 22 acres of park-land to work with, possible perimeter trail equaling at least 1 mile trail.



1D Roy Orr Trail-Alpine \$45,000 Extend Roy Orr Trail to connect to Alpine Drive near Murphy Hills Park. Approximately 500 linear feet.



PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
1 E	TRAILS CONTINUED: Roy Orr Trail Mile Markers \$20,000	Mile marking system for the Roy Orr Trail. Provides trail users mile measurements as well as reference points for safety officials to easily access in case of emergency. Development of system is currently in process.	WART OF THE MARKENDO MAPP	
1F	Elerson Road Trail Connection \$300,000	Reference CIP. Enhance park to road trail connectivity.	BOIL Free by:	
1G	Uhl Road Connection to Meadowcreek Park \$200,000	Reference CIP. Enhance park to road trail connectivity.		71

BMX facility.

PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
2	Senior Activity Center \$250,000	Outdoor Amenities Improvements – construct pavilions, fitness stations, walking trail, and other improvements for increased programming. Provides additional opportunities to the increasing aging population. This Master plan recommends exploring the possibility of renovation to the adjacent football facility into a senior-oriented neighborhood park.	eavy existing street in	
3	Grimes Park - BMX \$735,000	Restroom improvements - A new restroom is needed in the north eastern part of Grimes Park near the	Centre Pork Blvd.	



PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
4	Multi-Generational Facility Feasibility Study/Master Plan \$100,000	Need for Recreation Center, Senior Center, and Aquatic center provides unique opportunity to combine multiple needs into one large combination facility to meet the demands. At this phase, a feasibility study and Master Plan would be necessary.		

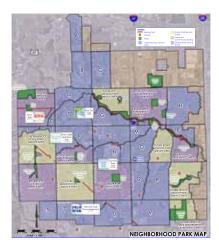
5 <u>Meadowcreek Park</u> \$500,000 Convert existing football/soccer practice field to a game field (add lighting) Practice fields would become irrigated. Increase number of practice fields for multi-purpose sports.



PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
6	Robin Meadow Park \$250,000	Opportunity for neighborhood park facilities. Small open-space in an established neighborhood, approximately 1 acre, enough to accommodate playground, pavilion, or picnic tables.	Robin Medadow Dr.	
7	Small Dog Park \$75,000	Small size dog park approximately 1/2 acre adjacent to Town Center. Creating a space for pet owners to take their dogs would be ideal near the town center as it reflects the urban development trend of mixed use and apartment living. Possible public or private use with potential funding and maintenance from developer.	TDW) Seried	

PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
8		Improve park signage throughout the City of DeSoto.	PART DESCRIPTION OF THE PART O	

9 <u>Land Acquisition</u> \$100,000 Land Acquisition of small under-served areas (reference map A.2 in the appendix).



action plan: mid-term implementation (5-10 years)

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PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
1	Multi-Generational Facility Plan & Specifications To be determined	Begin plans and specifications phase for multi-purpose facility.		
2	Large Dog Park \$150,000	Possible Tri-City initiative (DeSoto, Cedar Hill, Lancaster. Larger, regional size destination dog park for many users.		
3	<u>Land Acquisition</u> Cost varies	Land Acquisition of larger under-served areas (reference map A.2 in the appen-		

action plan: mid-term implementation (5-10 years)

PRIORITY	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION
	ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*			DATE

4 <u>Skate Park</u> \$700,000 Public input voiced interest and need for a skate park/facility. Possible location at Grimes park where extreme sports and BMX are already popular and facilitate users. However, lack of parking and space may require an alternate location be acquired/determined (alternate possibility at Meadowbrook Park) Consider Tri-City facility to help with development and maintenance costs park will need.



PRIORITY	LOCATION ESTIMATED PROJECT COST*	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE GRAPHIC	COMPLETION DATE
1	To be determined	Begin construction phase of project development of the multi-purpose/multi-generational facility.		

2 <u>Fishing Lake</u> \$150,000 Recreational fishing lake, possibly in DeSoto Ranch Park where 2 lakes exist and could be developed into recreational fishing areas. The natural passive park would be perfect for this type of recreation.





Operation & Maintenance Cost

With the recommendations of new or improved park facilities comes the necessity of operation and maintenance; for example, the implementation of an indoor aquatic center would need considerable maintenance and staff appropriate for the facility to function. These factors should be considered at all stages of development so that proper funding is available. This can be an achievable goal with the proper support and apparent public enthusiasm for such a complex. The development of any facility requiring some level of operation and maintenance cost should be carefully considered and achievable; otherwise it should not be built.

Funding Strategies for Recommendations

This Parks, Recreation, & Open-Space Master Plan has several recommendations to improve and create recreational spaces in the City of DeSoto. Once completed, these recommended improvements represent a substantial public investment in parks and open-space as the City grows and develops. The various sources of funds for these improvements are as important as the diversity of those sources. When there are several sources of funds for implementing this Master Plan, then no one source is over-burdened, and the Master Plan has a better probability of being successfully implemented.

General Fund

This source of funding is supported by ad valorem tax revenues and is generally the primary source of funds for maintenance and operation of the existing park system. The general fund is also the source for projects requiring smaller amounts of capital investment. Although projects funded by this source make a small annual contribution to the expansion of the park system, analysis over a number of years usually reflects a major accomplishment in improvements to the park system. It is important to include funding for on-going maintenance and staff requirements for new developments and improvements.

Bonds

Bonds are generally the most common source used by cities for the purchase of land and for providing development monies. There are two types of bonds which are used for parks, both of which must be approved by referendum.

General Obligation Bond

The General Obligation Bond is amortized using ad valorem taxes and is used for the funding of capital projects which are not supported by a revenue source. These projects include water service, sanitary sewer service, and park acquisition and development. The availability of bonding for parks is often dependent upon the overall municipal needs financed by this source. Capital items such as purchase of land and physical improvements with a usable life expectancy of 15 to 20 years can be funded with general obligation bonds.

Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds finance projects which produce enough revenue to retire debt; for example golf course, batting cages and enterprise-oriented park projects.

Private/Public Partnerships

This source of financial assistance would usually come from a citizen, organization, or business which has an interest in assisting with the development of the park system. Land dedication is not an uncommon occurrence when property is being developed. The location of a neighborhood park within a residential development offers additional value to residential units within that neighborhood, especially if the residential development is occupied by younger families with children. Once property is acquired through this method, the City should be prepared to improve the facility for use within a reasonable length of time.

Private donations may also be received in the form of funds, facilities, recreational equipment, art, or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued. A *Parks Improvement Trust Fund* may be set up to manage donations by service organizations, benevolent citizens, willed estates, and other donated sources. The purpose of this trust is to establish a permanent source of principle value that will increase as donations occur. The principal cannot be decreased; however, the annual interest can be used for park development.

Sales Tax Option

The passage of Senate Bill 376 in 1992 gave cities an economic development tool which provided sales tax that could be levied for park and recreation purposes.

Under S.B. 376, a corporation separate from the city must be created to manage the sales tax funds. The corporation's board of directors must have seven members appointed by the City Council. At least three of the directors must not be employees or elected officials of the city. The corporation then manages the revenue from the sales tax for park and recreation improvements. For the City of DeSoto, this is the Park Development Corporation.

Funds raised through this source can be used for a variety of purposes including, but not necessarily limited to, the following: professional and amateur sports, athletics, entertainment, tourism, convention, and public park purpose events. The funds from this source could be used for capital expenditures for land, facilities, and operational purposes. The city of DeSoto currently uses the sales tax fund to help fund new park and recreation facilities.

Grant-In-Aid Programs

Grant programs provide funding assistance for various aspects of parks and recreational facilities. The grant-in-aid programs are usually matched programs, meaning the grant matches municipal funds or services at a prescribed ratio, usually ranging from 50/50 to 80/20.

Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) Program

Texas Local Parks, Recreation, and Open-space Fund is administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The TPWD program allows a city to request matching funds for both the acquisition and construction of park facilities. Currently, funds are available on a fifty percent (50%) cost share basis; the maximum amount a grant request can be for is \$500,000. The grant is secured through submission of an application which follows a standard format for applicants. All applications received are ranked on a point system which is designed to evaluate the need for the purchase or construction being requested. Funds are distributed among the applicants having the greater number of points until all allocated funds are expended.

Applications to TPWD can be made annually, with a six-month waiting period following the submission date before the successful applications are notified. The number of applications a city may submit at any given time is based on past performance on grants and TPWD evaluation criteria. This funding source is used by many communities. The competitiveness of the program generally allows cities having bona fide park needs to prevail in obtaining funds.

Urban and Community Forest Challenge Grant

Matching grants are available on a 50/50 cost share basis from the Texas Department of Forestry. A variety of projects, including program development, beautification, staffing, and training workshops are considered. These are relatively small grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Public Improvements District (P.I.D.)

When authorized by City Council in compliance with state laws, new developments can establish a Public Improvement District (P.I.D.). As a taxing district, the P.I.D. provides funds specifically for the operation and maintenance of public facilities, such as parks and major boulevards.

Tax Increment Financing District (T.I.F.)

A T.I.F. is a tool used by local government to finance public improvements in a defined area as approved by the City Council. When an area is designated a T.I.F. district, the tax base is frozen at the current level. As development occurs within the T.I.F., the tax increment is captured with the increase of property value. The tax increments are posted to a separate fund to finance public improvements within the district.

Maintenance Fees and Non-Residential Fees

Fees collected from users are used to offset the cost associated with maintenance of the parks. Non-residents are charged a fee for the use of DeSoto facilities which is used to offset the cost associated with the programs.

Policies and Ordinances

The coordination and cooperation between all contributing bodies is important to the success of this Master plan. The recommendations in this Master plan have been influenced by citizen input, city officials, and the needs established for the City of DeSoto. Ordinances help the implementation of these recommendations by providing a legal framework to ensure development and protection.

Tree Preservation Ordinances

Whether a separate document or incorporated into the City's land-scape ordinance, tree preservation ordinances establish procedures for preserving and protecting existing trees both in natural areas and developed areas. The tree preservation ordinance also outlines a mechanism/procedure for mitigating the removal of trees, resulting from development of a site. Mitigation measures usually specify the replacement of trees on a caliper inch per caliper inch basis, e.g. if a fifteen inch (15") tree is removed five, three inch (3") replacement trees must be planted.

Watershed Management & Drainageway Ordinances

These ordinances essentially address the same subject, albeit on different scales. They provide a tool to manage the drainage and floodplains within DeSoto. The ordinances respond to Federal emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) mandates for cities. Management of these areas will preserve the undisturbed natural area of Ten Mile Creek and its tributaries within DeSoto, and possibly reduce flood damage. A reciprocal benefit of the preservation of these areas would be their use as linear greenbelts and connections to destinations throughout the City.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Since the early 1980's, it has been a common municipal policy for the citizens of a new development to pay for the public improvements within the development; these public improvements include parks, both acquisition and construction. DeSoto's existing Parkland Dedication Ordinances was approved by the City Council in 1982, which would make it one of the charter Park Dedication Ordinances in the State of Texas. Essentially, the existing ordinance stipulates a fee of \$500 per housing unit or 1.485 acres dedicated for parkland for each 100 housing units or portion thereof. In comparison to contemporary parkland dedication ordinances, these figures are small; most recent ordinances require fees or dedications in excess of 3.5 times the amount of DeSoto's current ordinance.

Plan Updates

Joint Planning with Surrounding Cities – Any facilities that may be achievable upon coordination between surrounding cities should be considered as this may aid in the development and realization of parks and recreation facilities.

Action Plan - As recommendations are implemented, priorities should be re evaluated and updated to provide as current a plan possible for city staff to go by.