

DISCOVER YOUR



Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan 2026 - 2036



ADOPTED APRIL 14TH, 2026

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all of the individuals who provided their input, insights, and expertise to support the creation of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan.

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Executive Summary

The Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan sets a ten-year vision and action framework to expand amenities in and access to parks, protect natural resources, and strengthen the County’s parks system.

The Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan establishes a clear, community-driven roadmap for the future of the Travis County Parks system over the next ten years. As one of the fastest-growing counties in Texas, Travis County faces increasing demand for outdoor recreation and access to nature, particularly in unincorporated and rapidly developing areas. This plan responds to those pressures by aligning long-term investments and partnerships around a shared vision for expanded park and greenway access, equity, stewardship, and connection to place.

Today, Travis County Parks manages more than 13,000 acres of parkland including 30 parks, over 85 miles of trails, and a growing network of greenways that protect waterways and connect communities. The park system plays a critical role in supporting physical and mental health, conserving sensitive ecological and historic resources, and providing diverse recreational opportunities, from regional destinations like Northeast Metropolitan Park and Pace Bend Park to neighborhood-scale parks and greenway trails.

This Comprehensive Plan is grounded in an extensive and inclusive community engagement process that reached thousands of residents through surveys, workshops, pop-up events, focus groups, open houses, and one-on-one interviews with County leadership. Community members consistently expressed a desire for nature-based recreation, expanded trails and greenways, improved basic amenities, and equitable access to parks and the benefits they provide, particularly in eastern Travis County, where communities experience higher social vulnerability and fewer recreational resources. These priorities directly informed the Plan’s Vision, Goals, and Recommendations.

The Plan articulates a ten-year vision for a park system that promotes health and well-being, connects people with nature, strengthens climate resilience, and celebrates Travis County’s rich cultural and historic resources. To advance this vision, the Plan is organized around seven (7) interconnected goal areas: **Park Land Management; Greenways and Trails; Visitor Experience; History and Culture; Programming and Partnerships; Park Awareness;** and **Public Safety.**

The Plan also includes a planning-area-based framework that recognizes the distinct demographics, landscapes, growth patterns, and needs of different parts of the County. By analyzing conditions and opportunities within four (4) planning areas—Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast—the Plan provides a more geographically-specific approach to prioritizing investments.

Finally, the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan is an implementation-focused guide. It identifies how the recommendations can be prioritized and advanced over time through County funding, partnerships, grants, and philanthropic support. Clear implementation metrics and partnerships are embedded in the Implementation Plan to support accountability and adaptive management.

By aligning community values with data-driven analysis and practical implementation tools, this Plan positions Travis County Parks to protect its most treasured landscapes, expand access to nature and recreation, and enhance quality of life for all residents.

Vision Statement

Read more about the development of this Vision Statement on page 20.

In the next 10 years, the Travis County Parks Department will **expand access to outdoor experiences** that promote health and well-being, connect people with nature, strengthen climate resilience, and celebrate the region’s rich cultural and historic resources. Through **inclusive, nature-based recreation** and thoughtful land stewardship, we will create a park system that **honors the past, supports the present, and prepares for the future.**

Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan Goals

Read the objectives that support these goals on page 21. Recommendations are found on page 86.

Park Land Management

Protect, conserve, and restore the quality of the natural environment and its resilience to climate change for the benefit of current and future Travis County residents.

Visitor Experience

Create an engaging, diverse, and inclusive parks system with outdoor recreational opportunities that enhance the mental, physical, and social well-being of Travis County residents.

Greenways & Trails

Develop, expand, and connect a greenway and trail network that serves all communities, enhances ecological and social well-being, improves public access to key natural and cultural sites, and links to local and regional trail systems.

History & Culture

Protect and conserve the parks’ historic and cultural resources and immerse Travis County Park visitors in the natural and cultural history of the region and identify opportunities for expanding interpretation, education, and collaboration with local partners.

Programming & Partnerships

Strengthen partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and private entities to advance public programming, recreation, and stewardship.

Park Awareness

Elevate the visibility and identity of Travis County Parks, ensuring all residents recognize, value, and enjoy the diverse recreational opportunities the park system offers.

Public Safety

Provide a safe and enjoyable park experience by deterring criminal activity, protecting natural resources, mitigating hazards, and responding to and managing emergencies.



Arkansas Bend Park on Lake Travis

Introduction

The Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan outlines a clear and forward-looking strategy for expanding access to nature, recreation, and the county's rich natural and cultural heritage. Rooted in community priorities and the County's unique landscapes, it provides a framework to guide investments, improvements, land acquisition, and stewardship over the next decade. The plan evaluates existing conditions, identifies opportunities and challenges, and sets a unified direction for park and greenway development. It also responds to the County's rapid growth and evolving needs, ensuring that parks remain engaging, welcoming, and ecologically resilient.

Your Travis County Parks

The Travis County Park System serves Travis County and beyond, providing outdoor recreational opportunities to its community members and visitors.

A Growing County

Travis County is one of the **fastest-growing counties in Texas, with the population increasing 19% from 2013 to 2023**. Much of this growth is occurring in the County’s unincorporated areas, where many of the County parks are located. The County’s diversity and distinctive character are also reflected in its ecological richness, where the Balcones Canyonlands of the Edwards Plateau meets the Northern Blackland Prairies and the Southern Post Oak Savanna. This unique landscape is home to several rare and endangered species, including the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Travis County Parks has both the privilege and responsibility of offering residents and visitors meaningful access to the outdoors—from fishing along the Colorado River at the banks of Webberville Park, to picnicking under the Pecan trees at Richard Moya Park, to hiking at Hamilton Pool Preserve, to stargazing at Reimers Ranch Park, and more.

The Travis County Parks Department

The Travis County Parks Department is a part of Travis County’s Transportation and Natural Resources Department. The current park system

includes **85+ miles of trails, 13,000+ acres of parkland, and 30 parks open to the public.**

The department’s mission is to enhance the quality of visitors’ lives through diverse outdoor experiences, connection to regional Texas history and culture, and stewardship of natural resources.



Established in 1939 with the deeding of several small neighborhood parks in western Travis County, the system has steadily expanded over the years. In its early years, the department emphasized water-based recreation and developed facility-focused metropolitan parks with amenities like the skate parks and BMX tracks. In recent years, Travis County Parks has shifted its focus toward nature-based recreation, trail and greenway development, and land conservation. The Parks Department consists of many teams that support the goals of the Department, including Park Land Management and Park Rangers. The full organizational structure of the Department can be found on page 4.

Park Land Management

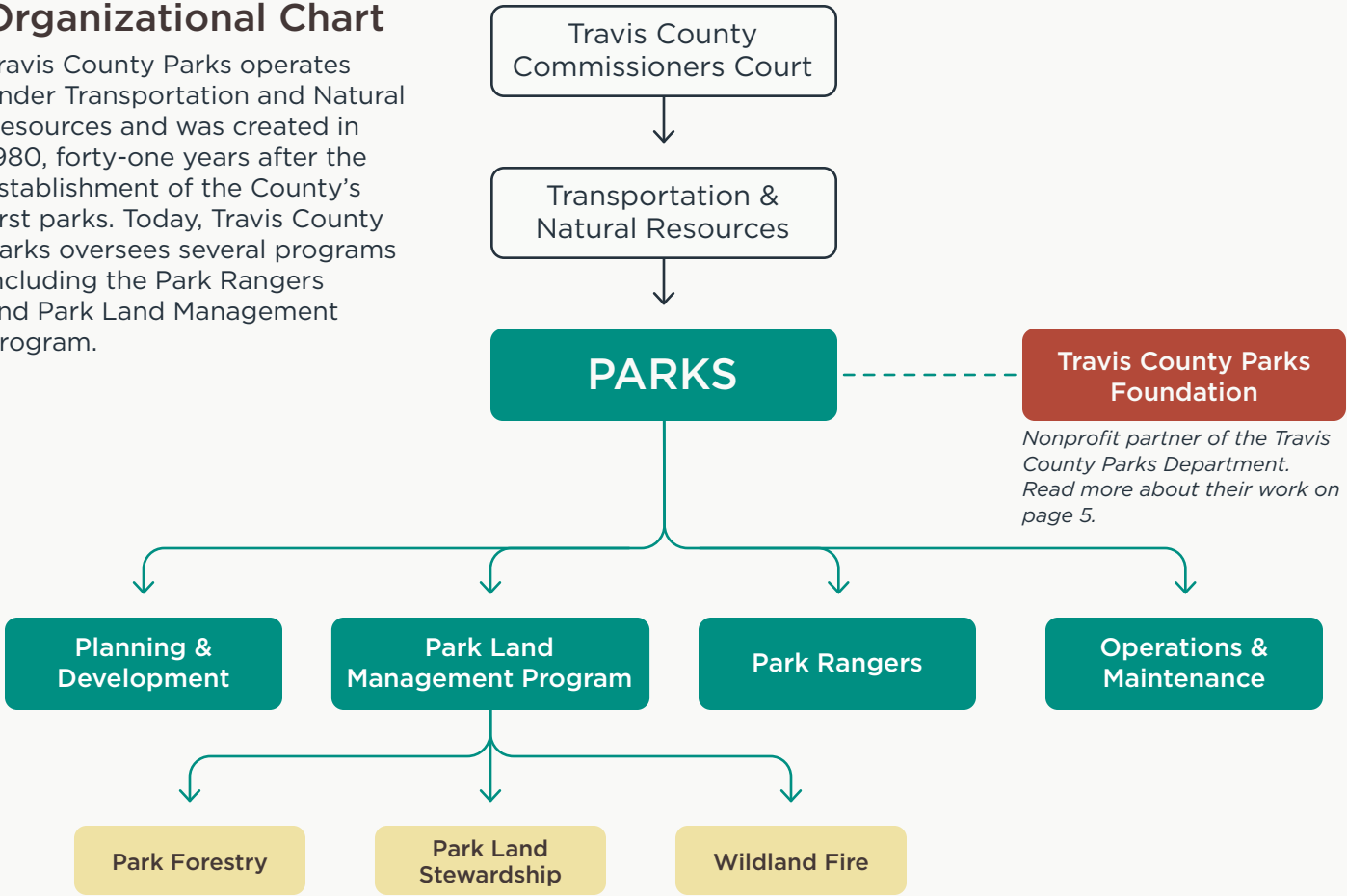
The Travis County Parks Land Management Program integrates Forestry, Stewardship, and Fire Management to manage parklands with a primary and shared focus on restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes while ensuring the safety of park visitors and surrounding communities. The program prioritizes protecting both the natural and built environment across the park system and reducing risks to county lands and adjacent communities. These efforts mitigate a range of climate and disturbance driven risks including drought, extreme heat, flooding, wildfire, and habitat degradation, while enhancing biodiversity and ecological function.

Park Rangers

The Park Rangers patrol nearly 15,000 acres of County-owned or County-managed parks and preserves. Established in 1994, officers enforce state and county laws, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) regulations, Texas Parks and Wildlife code, and educate visitors on park rules. Beyond patrolling, they staff booths at events, provide information to visitors, rescue injured wild animals found in parks, participate in park volunteer events, and are state-certified emergency medical technicians.

Travis County Parks Department Organizational Chart

Travis County Parks operates under Transportation and Natural Resources and was created in 1980, forty-one years after the establishment of the County’s first parks. Today, Travis County Parks oversees several programs including the Park Rangers and Park Land Management Program.



Travis County Parks Department Mission Statement

“Travis County Parks enhances the quality of visitors’ lives through diverse outdoor experiences, connections to regional Texas history and culture, and stewardship of natural resources.”

Travis County Parks Foundation

The Travis County Parks Foundation is the nonprofit partner of the Travis County Parks Department. They support the department by providing public programming, such as volunteerism and environmental education, as well as fundraising for park improvements. Through community-driven initiatives, immersive outdoor experiences, and impactful advocacy, they work to ensure that everyone, today and for generations to come, has access to well-maintained, vibrant parks that inspire adventure, connection, and stewardship. From expanding trails and dark sky programming to volunteer-driven conservation efforts, they champion the belief that parks are essential to our health, happiness, and shared future.



Learn more at traviscountyparksfoundation.org or follow them on facebook and instagram @heartoftcparks.

Travis County Parks Foundation Initiatives

Park Stewards

Great parks are cared for by great communities. TCPF's Park Stewards program trains and supports volunteers to become ambassadors for stewardship, conservation, and nature learning at every Travis County park. Whether leading a nature walk or restoring native habitat, Park Stewards play a vital role in keeping our parks vibrant and inviting for everyone.

Image: Volunteers train for the Night Sky Program.
Source: TCPF



Night Sky Program

Our parks are some of the last places in Central Texas where the stars still shine brightly. Through their Night Sky Program, TCPF invites the community to gather under the stars, explore the wonders of astronomy, and learn how we can protect these natural nocturnal environments for generations to come. From star parties and telescope nights to educational programs for kids and families, they are cultivating awe, curiosity, and stewardship — ensuring that the magic of the night sky remains part of our shared experience.

Image: December 2025 Star Party at Reimers Ranch Observatory.
Source: Jonathan Jackson



For the Love of Parks Festival

Travis County Parks Foundation hosts an annual festival, For the Love of Parks, a fun, family-friendly, free event for the public to celebrate Travis County parks. The third annual event was held in May of 2025 at Richard Moya Park, where community members learned more about the diverse parks in the Travis County Parks system, and highlighted the importance of accessible, well-maintained public spaces for all.

Right: Advertisement for Travis County Parks Foundation's "For the Love Parks" 2025 annual public park celebration, an event which also facilitated community engagement for the Comprehensive Plan.



Greenways Initiative

Imagine a future where you can walk, run, or bike on a continuous trail from Pflugerville to San Antonio — connecting neighborhoods, parks, and creeks along the way. Their Greenways Initiative is making that vision a reality, starting with a 70-mile greenway network in eastern Travis County. By linking communities and restoring critical habitats, they're creating spaces where people and nature thrive side by side.

Image: Gilleland Creek Greenway.
Source: RVI





Barkley Meadows Park

A Ten Year Vision

The Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan sets a bold and actionable vision for the future of the County’s park system. As a document that will guide the Parks Department through 2036, this plan charts a clear course for how Travis County will protect its most treasured natural resources, expand access to parks and trails, and meet the evolving recreational needs of a rapidly growing region.

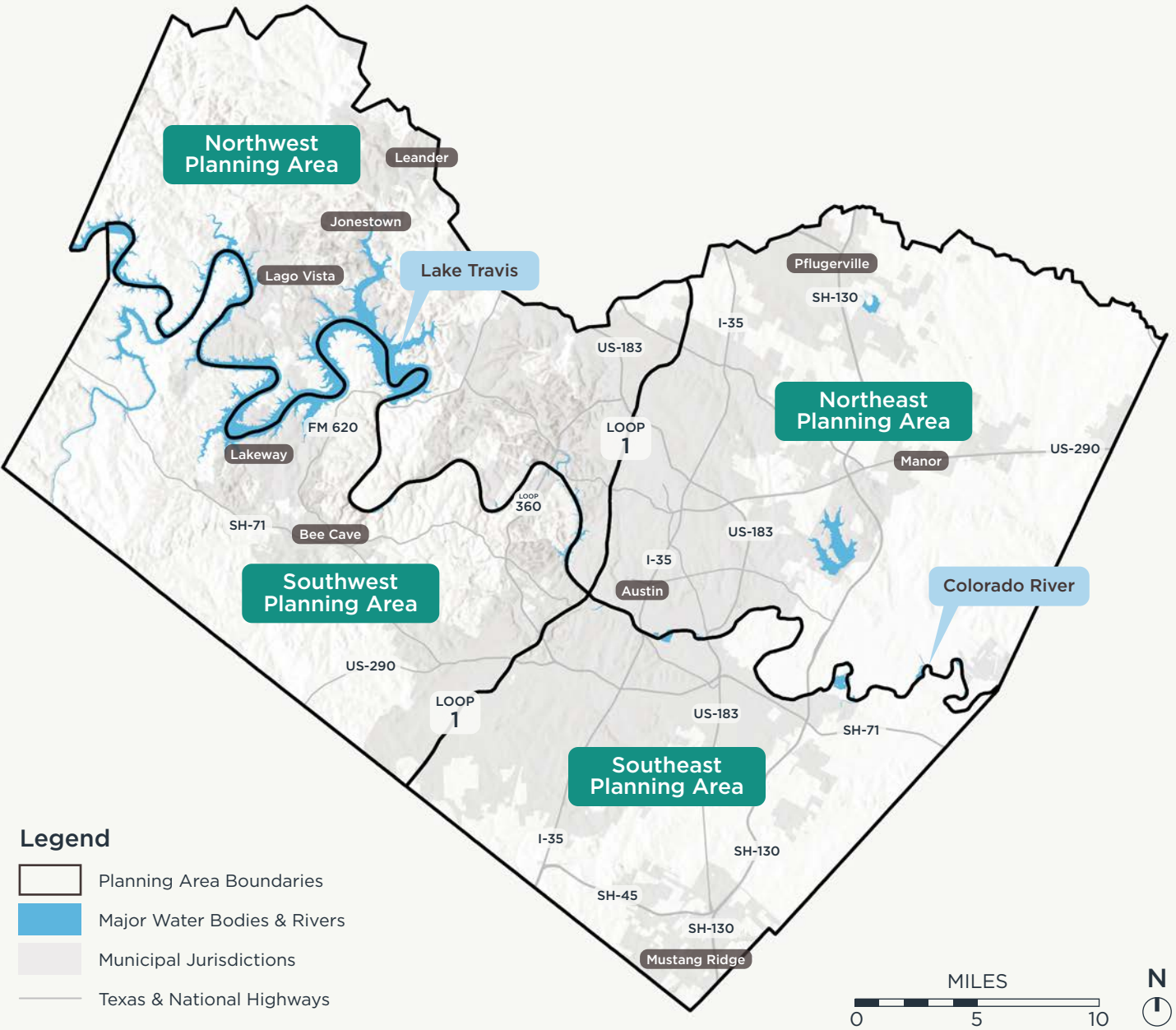
Over the next decade, Travis County Parks will face both remarkable opportunities and pressing challenges including population growth, increased demand for outdoor experiences, climate impacts, and the need to steward sensitive ecological and cultural landscapes. This plan provides a framework to navigate those changes. It identifies priorities for land acquisition, park development, resource conservation, historic preservation, and partnerships, all grounded in community input and data-driven decision making.

This Parks Comprehensive Plan positions Travis County to create a park system that enhances quality of life for all residents. By aligning investments, policies, and actions across the County’s parks, greenways, and lands, this plan will guide Travis County Parks as it continues to protect what makes the County extraordinary while expanding opportunities for everyone to experience its natural beauty.

Together, these strategies set the foundation for the next decade of parks, trails, and open spaces, ensuring that Travis County’s legacy of stewardship endures well beyond 2036.

Why Is Planning Important?

- » It establishes a clear long-term vision that aligns park investments with community needs, growth patterns, and environmental priorities.
- » It helps the County prioritize projects and allocate resources efficiently, ensuring limited funding has the greatest possible impact.
- » It protects natural and cultural resources by identifying areas that need restoration, preservation, or thoughtful management.
- » It strengthens access, equity, and connectivity across the park system by evaluating gaps and opportunities for new amenities, trails, and services.
- » It builds public trust and support by grounding decisions in community input, data, and a transparent planning process.



The Four Planning Areas

In this document, the County is divided into four (4) “Planning Areas,” which roughly divide the County into four equal quadrants along north-south and east-west axes. This allows the Plan to provide a greater level of detail in making comparisons between demographics, natural resources, and community needs. The centerline of the Colorado River serves as the divide between north and south. The division of east and west is the centerline of SHWY Loop 1 from the Williamson County border to SHWY 45, at which point the boundary extends directly to the Hays County line. This alignment

is used because it generally follows the Balcones Fault zone, a natural divide between eastern and western Travis County. Additionally, the eastern half of Travis County is experiencing faster growth and is demographically different from the western half, which tends to have less demographic and socioeconomic diversity. This document provides “Planning Area Profiles,” beginning on page 26, which highlight the demographic, social, natural features, and historical resources of each of the four (4) planning areas.



Fishing at East Metropolitan Park
Source: Travis County Parks Foundation

Community Engagement

Three phases of community engagement were held throughout the project, and featured various outreach strategies and methods of gathering information, prioritizing outreach towards under-served communities. Information was gathered to understand how the community uses the parks, which amenities and features they value most, and identifying their future priorities. Community members were also given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on draft Vision Statement, Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations.

The three (3) rounds of engagement received over 1,600 total responses, exceeding the participation needs for statistically valid insights.

Round 1

Through pop-up events, virtual workshops, online surveys, and focus groups, information was gathered about current uses of Travis County Parks and desired improvements for the future.

The first round of community engagement was held in early 2025, and provided insight into how community members and visitors to Travis County use the parks and an understanding of concerns and opportunities within the park system. This stage included a two virtual workshops, an online survey, a virtual community mapping activity, experience sharing, community pop-up events, topical focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with the Travis County Commissioners.

25+ Survey Promotions

1,095 Survey Participants

6 Pop-up Events

2 Virtual Workshops

7 Topical Focus Groups

Pop-up Events

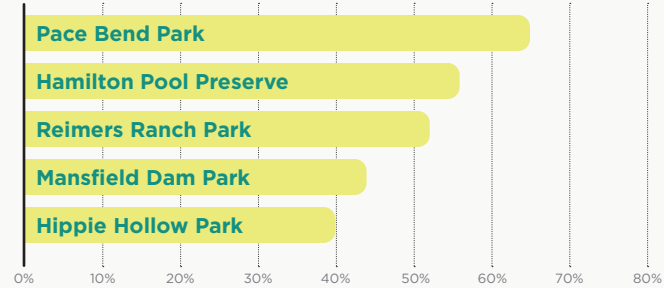
The project was promoted at community events across Travis County, where attendees were engaged through prize giveaways and interactive voting boards. The following pop-up events were attended as part of the first round of engagement:

- » Austin FC at Southeast Metropolitan Park
- » Roots & Wings Festival at Odom Elementary
- » Austin Classico at Northeast Metropolitan Park
- » Tree Folks Plant-a-Tree at Onion Creek Greenbelt
- » MLK Celebration
- » Star Party at Southeast Metropolitan Park

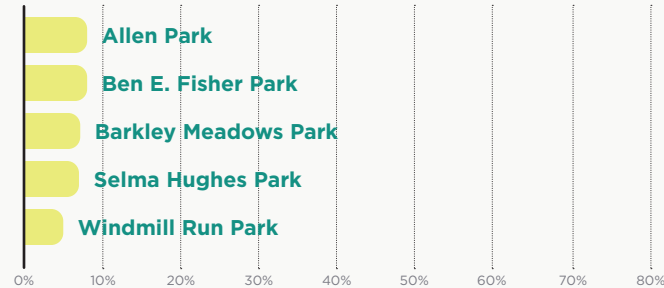
Survey

The online survey in round 1 of engagement focused on understanding park users' visitation frequency, which activities and experiences they prioritize, and their overall perception and experience of park facilities. The survey opened on January 7 and closed on February 21, with a total of **1,095 participants**.

5 Most Visited Parks



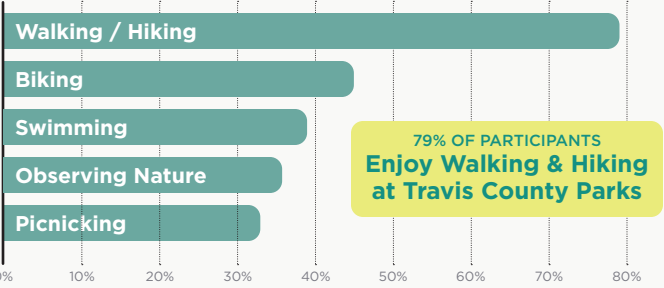
5 Least Visited Parks



Participants were asked to select which Travis County Parks they visit or have visited. **Pace Bend Park was the most visited park**, with 65% of participants reporting visiting, and **Windmill Run Park was the least visited**, with only 5% of participants reporting having visited.

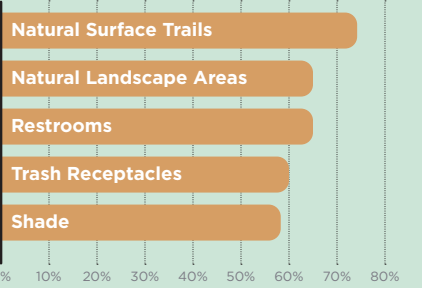
Participants enjoy using Travis County Parks to walk/hike, bike, swim, observe nature, and picnic. They desire more outdoor recreation opportunities, such as **mountain biking & BMX, biking, camping, water-based activities** (kayaking, paddle boarding, fishing, splash pads), **educational and community programming, sports facilities, nature appreciation**, and **event spaces**. They would also like to see improvements to existing playgrounds, biking trails, facilities, and signage and wayfinding.

5 Most Common Park Activities

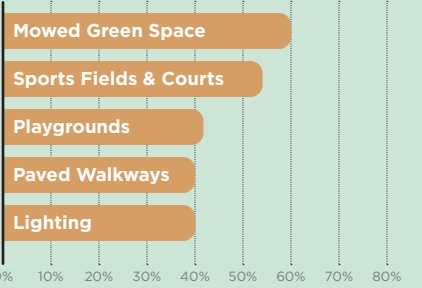


Participants were asked to **prioritize amenities** by assigning them a rating of high, medium, or low. These are the five amenities that received the highest percentage of "high priority" ratings, and the five that received the highest percentage of "low priority" ratings.

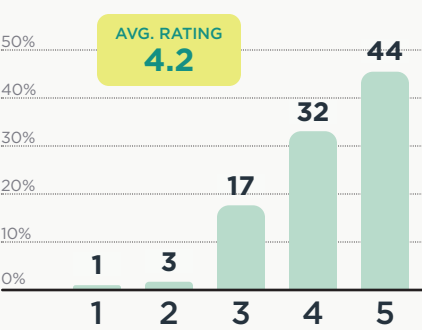
Highest Priority Amenities



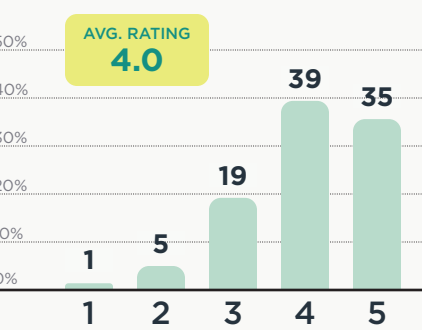
Lowest Priority Amenities



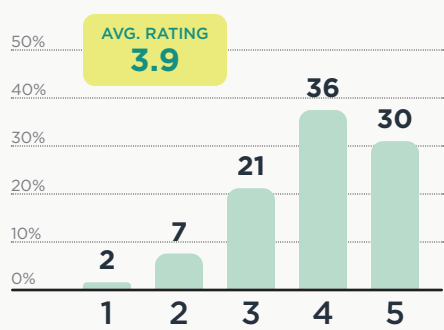
Safety Perception



Cleanliness Perception



Maintenance Perception



Over **90% of respondents travel to the parks by car**, but if transportation options were improved, 26% would prefer to travel by bicycle, and nearly 16% would prefer public transportation. When asked what prevents people from visiting Travis County Parks, the most limiting factors were:

- » The distance from home (44%)
- » Not aware of Travis County Parks (22%)
- » Nothing limits my ability or interest (22%)
- » Parks do not have features or amenities they are looking for (21%)

Other noted reasons included **cost-related barriers** (entry fees, lack of annual passes, cash-only), problems with **reservations** and wait lists, **safety concerns**, a **lack of free time**, and no off-leash **pet areas**.

Participants rated how they perceived **park safety, cleanliness, and maintenance** on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best.

Workshops

In January 2025, Travis County Parks hosted two (2) virtual workshops. Using a virtual engagement tool, attendees were introduced to the project’s purpose and process, and responded to 18 questions about their demographics, park use, and valued features. A total of 30 community members participated in the workshops.

The most frequently visited parks included Arkansas Bend Park, Northeast Metropolitan Park, East Metropolitan Park, Southeast Metropolitan Park, Richard Moya Park, Reimers Ranch Park, Pace Bend Park, Mansfield Dam Park, and Bee Creek Sports Complex. Participants expressed interest in expanded opportunities for hiking (including long-distance, connected, and ADA-accessible trails), camping, mountain biking, and educational programming. Top priorities for park improvements included restrooms, signage, trails, land acquisition, park connectivity, and upgrading payment systems. Trails were identified as the most important features, while natural landscape areas, restrooms, and shade ranked highest among amenities. Other valued features and amenities included camping, water access, climbing, natural habitats, and dark sky-compliant lighting.

Focus Groups

- » The **Operations & Maintenance** group identified several key challenges, such as resource-intensive hiring processes, funding disparities across districts, and inefficiencies in collaboration and support from other County departments. The group proposed several recommendations, including creating a mobile equipment maintenance team, expanding the use of contract services for routine maintenance, and establishing a dedicated facilities maintenance division within the Parks department.
- » The **Park Land Management** group emphasized the need for land acquisition and habitat restoration to counter rapid urban growth within the County. Key priorities included adopting adaptive, science-based restoration and management strategies and improving ecological connectivity.
- » The **Historical & Cultural** group highlighted the rich historic and cultural assets within Travis County Parks and the opportunities for preservation, multimedia interpretation, public education, partnerships and collaborations, as well as strategic land acquisition and planning.
- » The **Trails & Greenways** group emphasized the importance of prioritizing equity and access. They advocated for a holistic approach to trail development that integrates active transportation and access to nature. They also identified opportunities to collaborate with other agencies and align development efforts with the County’s Active Transportation Plan.
- » The **Park User Groups** highlighted the need for improved transit coordination and stronger partnerships with community organizations to support diverse programming. They also emphasized the importance of expanding and enhancing recreational facilities and amenities, as well as ensuring resources are more evenly distributed across the County.
- » The **Government Agencies** group urged the expansion of parkland and enhancement of trail connectivity in fast-growing areas outside of Austin, as well as closing equity gaps in eastern Travis County. They also recommended formalizing regional collaboration with the County to pool resources and improve planning coordination.
- » A survey was sent to organizations across the county serving **Socially Vulnerable Communities** with the goal of gaining an understanding of how to improve the equity of the Travis County Parks System. Respondents indicated a need for parks to be accessible by public transportation, targeted outreach to eastern Travis County, the importance of partnering with grassroots organizations on outreach, direct engagement with community on planning efforts, and providing events in parks for marginalized communities.



Project information was shared with community members at the MLK Day Celebration on February 1, 2025.

Round 2

The draft Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives were shared with the community at pop-up events and online for feedback on Travis County Parks priorities.



For the Love of Parks festival at Richard Moya Park on May 17, 2025. Source: Erika Rich

Pop-up Events

The team shared the draft Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives for feedback at various community events, including:

- » District 2 State Representative Lulu Flores Town Hall with Mayor Pro Tem Vanessa Fuentes
- » Music in the Park in Elgin, TX
- » TCPF’s For the Love of Parks event at Richard Moya Park



For the Love of Parks visitors review the Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives, and provide feedback.

Survey

The second survey was open from April 12 to May 19, 2025, with the intention to gather feedback on the Plan’s draft Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives. The statements were shared online, where community members could provide comments and “upvote” or “downvote” the statements. Generally, participants were excited by the statements and objectives and were eager to suggest specific park features, amenities, and more. Many commenters suggested changing some terminology to provide greater clarity and understanding for the general public. The Vision Statement received the most interaction from participants, with 73 likes and 59 comments.

Round 3

Draft recommendations and planning area projects were shared with the community online and in person at open houses throughout the County to identify priorities for implementation.

Online Survey

The online survey for round 3 of engagement provided community members with the opportunity to prioritize recommendations – high, medium, or low – for five (5) thematic areas and the four (4) planning areas of the County. The survey was open from September 18 through October 23, and received **592 total respondents**.

The prioritization results revealed a community vision rooted in nature, conservation, equitable access, and community partnerships. Participants clearly favored actions that protect land and water systems while expanding low-impact recreational opportunities and regional connectivity. Results also revealed a preference in investments to protect natural landscapes and expand access equitably over high-intensity recreation or purely interpretive projects.

119,161 E-blasts

592 Survey Participants

4 Open House Events

38 In-Person Participants

Open Houses

Four (4) open houses were held in October 2025, at Travis County Parks, one in each planning area, to meet folks in their neighborhoods. The events were held at Bob Wentz Park and Mansfield Dam Park on October 11, and Northeast Metropolitan Park and Richard Moya Park on October 18, with a total of 38 attendees. These open houses allowed the community to discuss draft recommendations and potential projects with project team members.



Community members at the Mansfield Dam Park Open House on October 11, 2025, discussing and prioritizing recommendations.



Printed materials such as flyers and postcards were developed for the third round of engagement, highlighting the four open houses and online survey.

Outreach Strategies

Various outreach strategies were developed to reach Travis County residents and visitors, with a focus on the underrepresented communities. To maximize reach across the county, the strategy included:

- » Distributing flyers and postcards throughout the community
- » Posting yard signs at County parks
- » Social Media promotions, including engaging local lifestyle influencers
- » Earned media coverage, such as local news stories and segments on radio stations
- » Paid media, such as targeted ads on Facebook and Nextdoor

Flyers were posted at libraries, coffee shops, and community centers, with a focus on eastern Travis County. Digital flyers were also distributed to schools across Austin ISD, Del Valle ISD, and Manor ISD. In the third round of engagement, project information and the opportunity to provide feedback were shared on KUT, a local radio station, and in an article by the Austin American-Statesman.

The Travis County Parks Foundation shared newsletters and e-blasts containing information about the survey and events. Each collaborative TCPF and Travis County Parks e-blast reached nearly 40,000 individuals, with an average open rate of 49.3%. The Foundation also distributed information about the opportunity to provide feedback during this round of engagement at community events, including:

- » Loco Trash Bash at Webberville Park
- » TCPF’s International Observe the Moon Night at Richard Moya Park
- » Colorado River Alliance’s Lake Travis Cleanup at parks in western Travis County
- » Austin FC’s 4ATX Foundation Soccer Clinic at Northeast Metropolitan Park
- » Austin/Travis County Active Living Collaborative Work Group Meeting



Yard signs were placed throughout Travis County parks to promote the project and ask the community for input.



Sunset over Lake Travis from Tom Hughes Park
Source: Travis County Parks Foundation

Vision Statement, Goals, & Objectives

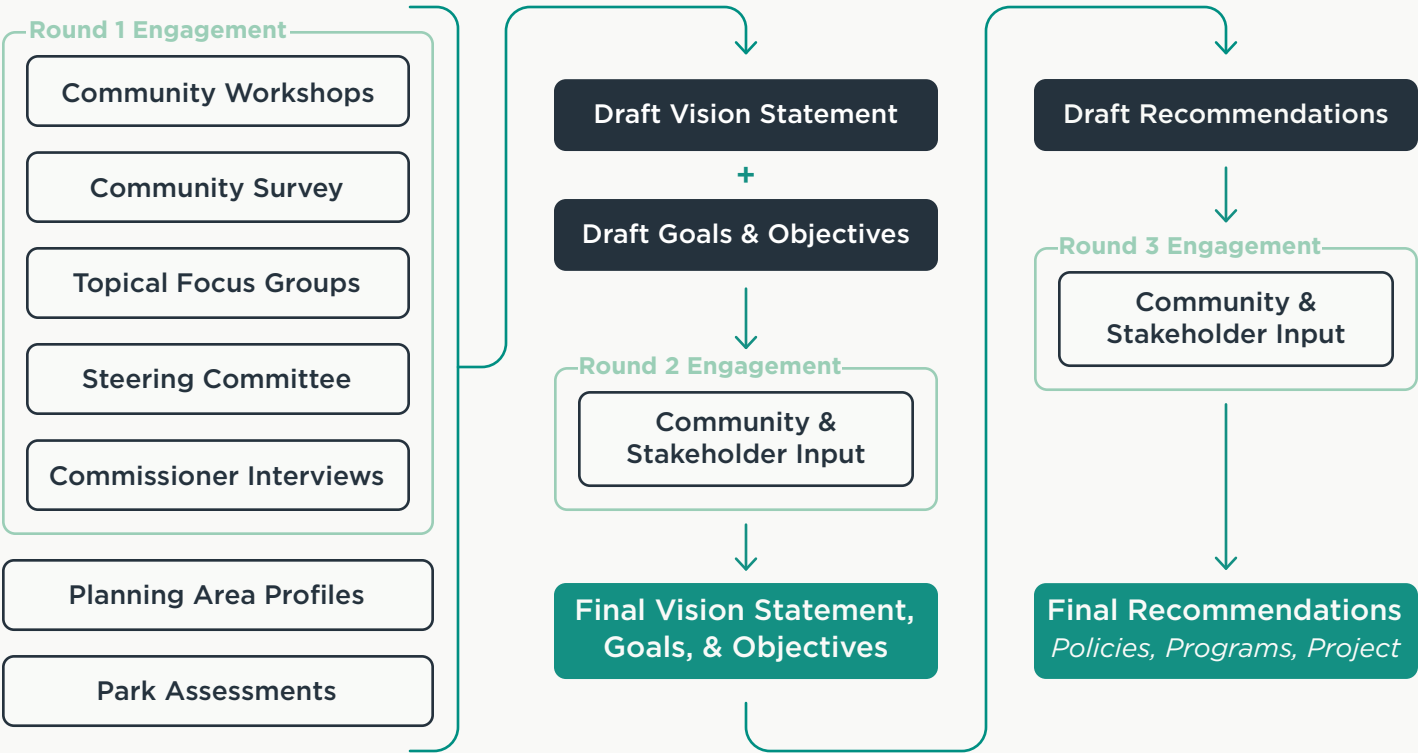
The vision statement, goals, and objectives were informed by the first round of community engagement, Focus Group discussions, Steering Committee meetings, County Commissioner priorities, and the existing conditions analysis. These statements provide the foundation for the Plan’s recommendations described in Recommendations chapter.

Process & Development

The Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives were created through reviewing existing conditions, receiving community and feedback, and conversations with the Travis County Parks staff.

The Vision Statement, Goals, and Objectives were shaped by the park assessments, focus groups, Interviews with the Travis County Judge and Commissioners, and community priorities identified during the first round of engagement, which included pop-ups, an online survey, workshops, and focus group discussions. This process helped us understand how the values and opinions of the public, Parks Department leadership, political leadership, and local experts can shape the vision of the Travis County Parks system.

After drafting initial statements, the team held a workshop with Travis County Parks staff to gather feedback and explore additional opportunities. The drafts were then refined and shared with the public online and at pop-up events during the second round of engagement. Community and stakeholder input were essential in revealing shared values and aligning broad themes. These statements were revised once more to create the final Vision, Goals, and Objectives after the second round of community engagement.



Vision Statement

In the next 10 years, the Travis County Parks Department will expand access to outdoor experiences that **promote health and well-being**, **connect people with nature**, **strengthen climate resilience**, and **celebrate the region’s rich cultural and historic resources**. Through **inclusive, nature-based recreation** and **thoughtful land stewardship**, we will create a park system that **honors the past, supports the present, and prepares for the future**.

This Vision Statement is an all-encompassing statement that will become the County’s guiding vision for the next ten years. The highlighted language emphasizes the key points of this vision statement, which are explained below.

In the next 10 years

This Travis County Parks Plan will serve as a guiding document for the next decade of the Parks Department—from 2026 to 2036—helping the Parks Department make decisions on improvements to existing parks, building new parks, and the development of other public resources, like greenways and preserves.

Promote health and well-being

Parks play a vital role in supporting community health by providing accessible spaces for physical activity, stress reduction, and social connection.

Connect people with nature

Both survey respondents and workshop participants emphasized that they use Travis County Parks to enjoy time outdoors hiking, biking, swimming, and observing nature.

Strengthen climate resilience

Travis County parks are vulnerable to climate risks, especially wildfire and floods. They can become more resilient by strengthening land management practices that help parks withstand and recover from disasters and support ecological processes.

Celebrate the region’s rich cultural and historic resources

From one-room schoolhouses to historic cemeteries to historic infrastructure, such as the bridge at Richard Moya Park, Travis County Parks are rich in historic and cultural assets. These assets have enormous potential for public appreciation and education.

Inclusive, nature-based recreation

Inclusive, nature-based recreation ensures that people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds can access the physical, mental, and social benefits of spending time outdoors. By removing barriers and designing with equity in mind, parks and natural spaces become places where everyone can connect with nature and each other.

Thoughtful land stewardship

Thoughtful, data-based land stewardship protects natural ecosystems, cultural resources, and scenic beauty for current and future generations. It also enhances the resilience of parklands to climate change and human impact, ensuring they continue to provide ecological, recreational, and educational value over time.

Honors the past, supports the present, and prepares for the future

Travis County is growing quickly. As development continues, thoughtful planning will be essential to support community needs and preserve the legacy of these cherished public spaces.

1. Park Land Management

Goal Statement

Protect, conserve, and restore the quality of the natural environment and its resilience to climate change for the benefit of current and future Travis County residents.

Objectives

- 1.1

Adopt a strategic and scientific approach to proactive land management.
- 1.2

Expand, restore, and manage natural areas in parks.
- 1.3

Enhance the ecological function of parks to maximize climate resilience and protect habitat.
- 1.4

Provide engagement opportunities for the public and Parks staff related to natural resource stewardship.

2. Greenways & Trails

Goal Statement

Develop, expand, and connect a greenway and trail network that serves all communities, enhances ecological and social well-being, improves public access to key natural and cultural sites, and links to local and regional trail systems.

Objectives

- 2.1

Develop, expand, and connect the trail system to local and regional trails and community resources.
- 2.2

Prioritize greenway and trail development in areas without trails.
- 2.3

Maximize the multiple ecological and social benefits greenways and trails provide.
- 2.4

Prioritize public access to the County's important natural, historical, and cultural features.

3. Visitor Experience

Goal Statement

Create an engaging, diverse, and inclusive parks system with outdoor recreational opportunities that enhance the mental, physical, and social well-being of Travis County residents.

Objectives

- 3.1

Expand nature-based recreational opportunities while maintaining and upgrading existing sports facilities.
- 3.2

Maintain comfortable, safe, clean, and well-managed parks.
- 3.3

Provide recreational opportunities that reflect the desires and needs of diverse park users and are distributed equitably across the County.

4. History & Culture

Goal Statement

Protect and conserve the parks' historic and cultural resources and immerse Travis County Park visitors in the natural and cultural history of the region and identify opportunities for expanding interpretation, education, and collaboration with local partners.

Objectives

- 4.1

Expand organizational capacity to integrate the region's natural and cultural history into the park experience.
- 4.2

Identify and acquire historic resources adjacent to existing parks that may allow for park expansion and resource protection.
- 4.3

Foster a culture of historic preservation within Travis County Parks through resource identification, interpretation, and stewardship.
- 4.4

Establish historic and cultural education programming through partnerships.

5. Programming & Partnerships

Goal Statement

Strengthen partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and private entities to advance public programming, recreation, and stewardship.

Objectives

- 5.1

Expand organizational capacity to engage in partnerships.
- 5.2

Improve access to information and processes for reserving park spaces and organizing recreational use.
- 5.3

Expand educational and interpretive programming through partnerships.
- 5.4

Strengthen sports and recreational programming through partnerships.
- 5.5

Establish a volunteer stewardship program through partnerships.

6. Park Awareness

Goal Statement

Elevate the visibility and identity of Travis County Parks, ensuring all residents recognize, value, and enjoy the diverse recreational opportunities the park system offers.

Objectives

- 6.1

Increase public awareness of Travis County Parks and their offerings.
- 6.2

Work with the Travis County Parks Foundation to increase public awareness, visitorship, and appreciation of the parks.

7. Public Safety

Goal Statement

Provide a safe and enjoyable park experience by deterring criminal activity, protecting natural resources, mitigating hazards, and responding to and managing emergencies.

Objectives

- 7.1

Provide vigilant enforcement of criminal activity and rule violations through diligent patrol.
- 7.2

Ensure an expeditious response to calls in parks, preserves, and other park properties.
- 7.3

Provide excellent training and resources for staff to successfully respond to emergencies, both within and beyond the park system.
- 7.4

Reinforce an organizational structure that proactively reduces risk to life, property, and natural resources through integrated practices that prioritize hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, and community resilience.



Mansfield Dam Under Construction
Source: Travis County Archives

Planning Area Profiles

Travis County is rich with natural beauty and cultural character, drawing new residents from across Texas and the Nation. These Planning Area Profiles describe the County's current park and greenway assets, highlight the diversity and needs of a growing community, and demonstrate the need to protect Travis County's unique natural resources.

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Parks & Greenways

Travis County parks offer a diverse range of natural and recreational spaces that support health, well-being, and connection to nature, totaling over 13,000 acres.

Travis County Parks

Travis County Parks vary in size and purpose—some showcase stunning natural landscapes, others provide diverse recreational amenities, and many protect endangered species. These parks are vital in enhancing quality of life, supporting public health, and strengthening the community’s environmental well-being. **The County currently manages 30 parks that are open to the public.**

Travis County’s Park system has expanded through land donations, acquisitions, and leases. Early parks like Selma Hughes Park, Tom Hughes Park, and Mary Quinlan Park were donated, while Mansfield Dam Park and Pace Bend Park were, and remain, leased from the Lower Colorado River Authority. The Parks Department was established in 1939, and key acquisitions like Southeast, Northeast, and East Metropolitan Parks, and Milton Reimers Ranch Park followed. Voter-approved bonds have supported parkland development, especially the development of greenways along creek corridors.

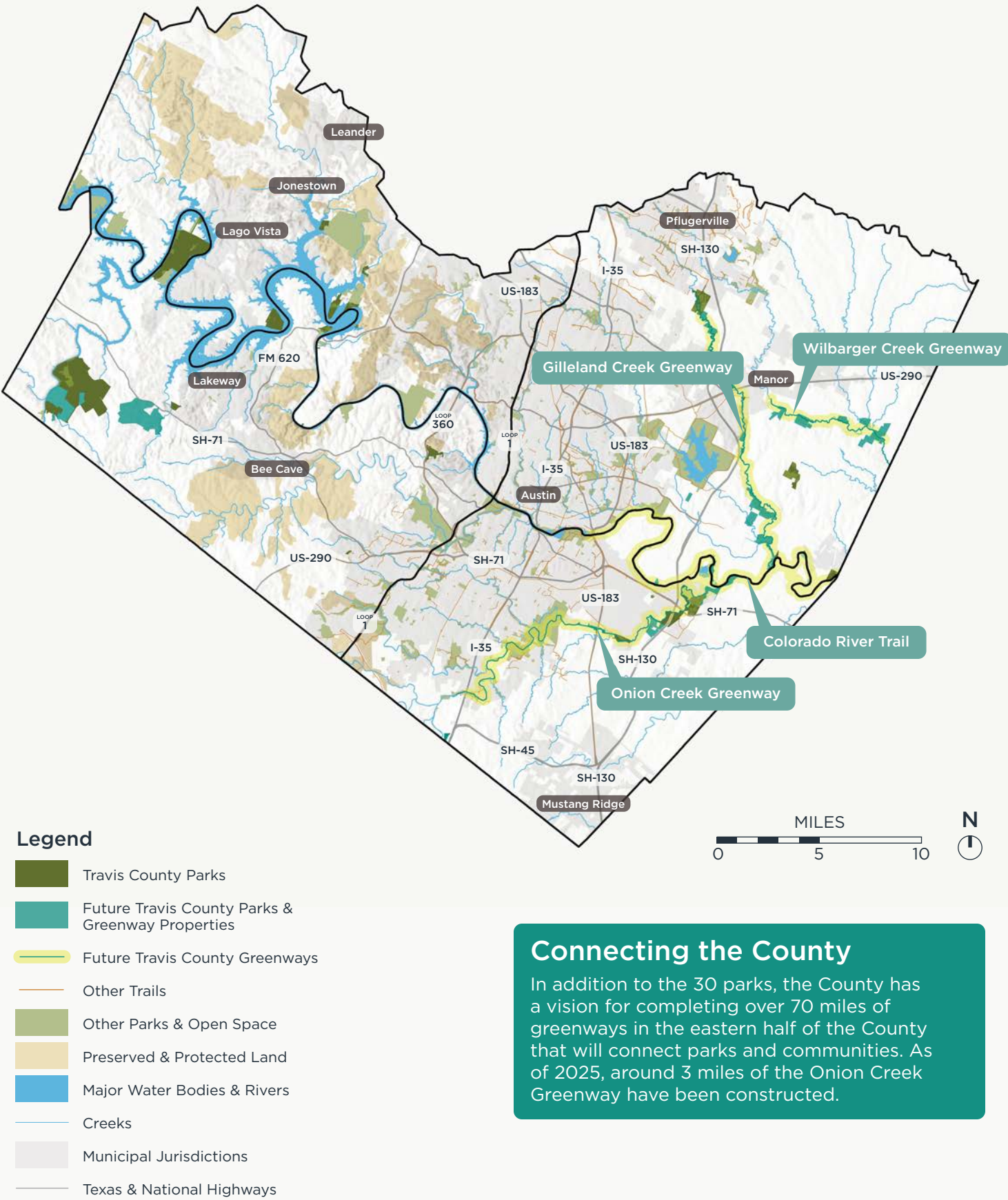
Travis County Parks promote physical and mental health and well-being by offering diverse and accessible recreational facilities for all ages and abilities, ensuring clean, safe, and enjoyable experiences. Amenities include nature-based features like boat ramps, campsites, fishing piers, swim areas, and recreation facilities like playgrounds, pools, and athletic fields. Trails range from paved multi-use paths to natural hiking and biking routes. Specialized facilities include an astronomical observatory, rock climbing areas, a BMX track, a disc golf course, mountain bike trails, and a skate park. Currently, programming is provided by partners, such as the Travis County Parks Foundation, local Master Naturalists, and organized sports groups for sports programming.

Travis County Greenways

The County has a vision of completing over 70 miles of greenways to connect parks, natural areas, communities, and to provide habitat for rare species. Managed by the Land Management Program, these properties will remain open spaces until planning, design, and construction are complete. Key ongoing projects include the **Gilleland Creek Greenway**, an envisioned 19-mile trail, the **Wilbarger Creek Greenway**, extending east from Manor, the **Onion Creek Greenway**, and the **Colorado River Trail**, which will feature trails and amenities in the southeast part of the County. There are similar opportunities in western Travis County to improve connections between existing parks and along creeks. These greenways aim to enhance mobility and access to natural areas, protect natural resources, create wildlife corridors, and improve quality of life by expanding recreational and transportation options.

Regional Park Network

The Travis County’s Park system is part of a broader regional network that includes municipal, state, and federal parks, creating a diverse mix of recreational and natural spaces. County parks provide a mix of community recreation, greenways, regional sports complexes, and nature preserves, while municipal parks, such as the City of Austin’s neighborhood parks, focus on neighborhood amenities, sports facilities, and programming. State parks like **McKinney Falls** draws visitors from across the state with opportunities for hiking, camping, and historic sites. Federal lands such as the **Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge** and the **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve** protect vital ecosystems and endangered species. Together, these parks and open spaces provide access to nature, recreation, and conservation, enhancing the region’s quality of life and environmental resilience.





Northwest Planning Area

The Northwest Planning Area has the most parks—**twelve (12) in total**—though not the largest acreage. It includes neighborhood, community, and regional parks.

Northwest Parks Summary

Park Types	7 Neighborhood Parks 2 Community Parks 3 Regional Parks
Projects Under Development	Improvements to Arkansas Bend Park



Northeast Planning Area

The Northeast Planning Area features **six (6) parks** and **three (3) greenways** in various stages of development. With the addition of the greenways, parkland acreage will more than double. This area includes neighborhood, community, and metropolitan parks.

Northeast Parks Summary

Park Types	2 Neighborhood Parks 2 Community Parks 2 Metropolitan Parks 3 Greenways (Under development)
Projects Under Development	Community Building at East Metropolitan Park Improvements to Ben E. Fisher Park Gilleland Creek Greenway Wilbarger Creek Greenway Colorado River Trail



Southwest Planning Area

Parkland in the Southwest Planning Area spans 4,224 acres, the largest in the County, with **eight (8) parks and preserves**. This area includes neighborhood, community, metropolitan, regional parks, and two preserves, including Hamilton Pool Preserve. The **future RGK Ranch Park** will add an additional 1,500 acres of open space.

*Wild Basin Preserve is co-owned and co-managed with St. Edwards University.

Southwest Parks Summary

Park Types	1 Neighborhood Park 1 Community Park 1 Metropolitan Park 3 Regional Parks 2 Preserves
Projects Under Development	Improvements to Bee Creek Sports Complex RGK Ranch Park



Legend

- Travis County Parks
- Future Travis County Parks & Greenway Properties
- Future Travis County Greenways
- Preserved & Protected Land
- Major Water Bodies & Rivers
- Creeks
- Municipal Jurisdictions
- Texas & National Highways

Southeast Planning Area

The Southeast Planning Area features **four (4) parks** and **two (2) greenways**, including the Onion Creek Greenway, which is currently under development. This area includes community, and metropolitan parks.

Southeast Parks Summary

Park Types	3 Community Parks 1 Metropolitan Park 2 Greenways (Under development)
Projects Under Development	Improvements to Southeast Metropolitan Park Onion Creek Greenway and Trailhead Timber Creek Park Menchaca Springs Park

Demographics

Eastern Travis County is younger, more diverse, and less affluent than the older, wealthier, and less diverse west.

Understanding demographics helps identify the needs, challenges, and strengths of different communities. By analyzing factors such as age, income, education, and access to resources, decisions can be made that promote equitable resource allocation and community well-being. **Demographic insights also play a key role in assessing social vulnerability, ensuring that parks and greenways investments address disparities and support communities facing greater socioeconomic challenges.**

Northeast & Southeast

The Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas represent nearly 75% of Travis County’s population and include most of the area considered downtown Austin.¹ These planning areas are more diverse than the Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas. These planning areas share high levels of poverty, unemployment, housing cost burden, uninsured

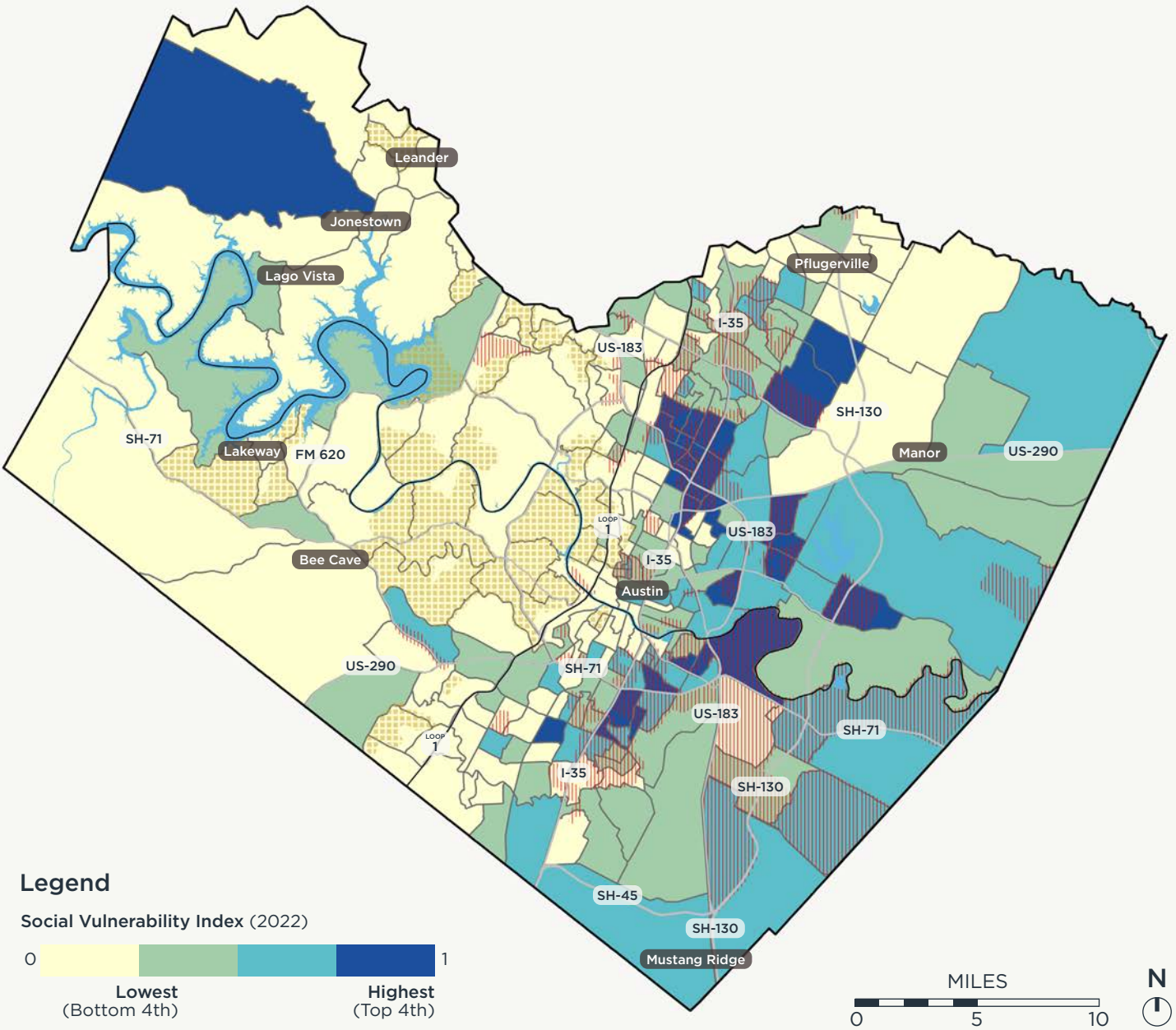
residents, and individuals without a high school diploma. Both areas have a predominantly young population, with a high concentration of individuals under 17 and fewer older adults. They also have higher percentages of civilians with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The Northeast has the highest minority population in Travis County, while the Southeast has the second highest. In the center of the County, multi-unit housing and car-free households become more common.

Northwest & Southwest

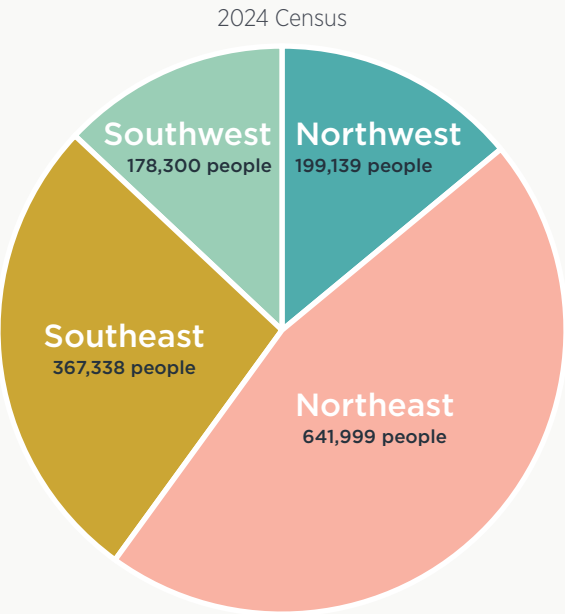
The Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas share similar demographic and social characteristics and make up roughly 25% of the total County population. Social vulnerability mapping in these planning areas show low poverty, unemployment, housing cost burden, and uninsured rates, with most residents holding a high school diploma. The Northwest Planning Area has more residents over 65. They have high English proficiency, a low percentage of civilians with disabilities, and significantly smaller minority populations than the rest of the County. In the center of the County, multi-unit housing and car-free households become more common.

Social Vulnerability

The social vulnerability index for Travis County is calculated by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) using socioeconomic and household characteristics, minority status, housing type, and transportation data. These metrics provide insights into the conditions of various communities across the County. As of 2022, the overall vulnerability score² for Travis County is **0.57**, which is considered a **medium to high level of vulnerability**.² This marks an increase in vulnerability since 2016, which reported a score of **0.44**, reflecting a low to medium vulnerability level.



Travis County Population
Total Population: 1,386,776



Legend

Social Vulnerability Index (2022)

0 1

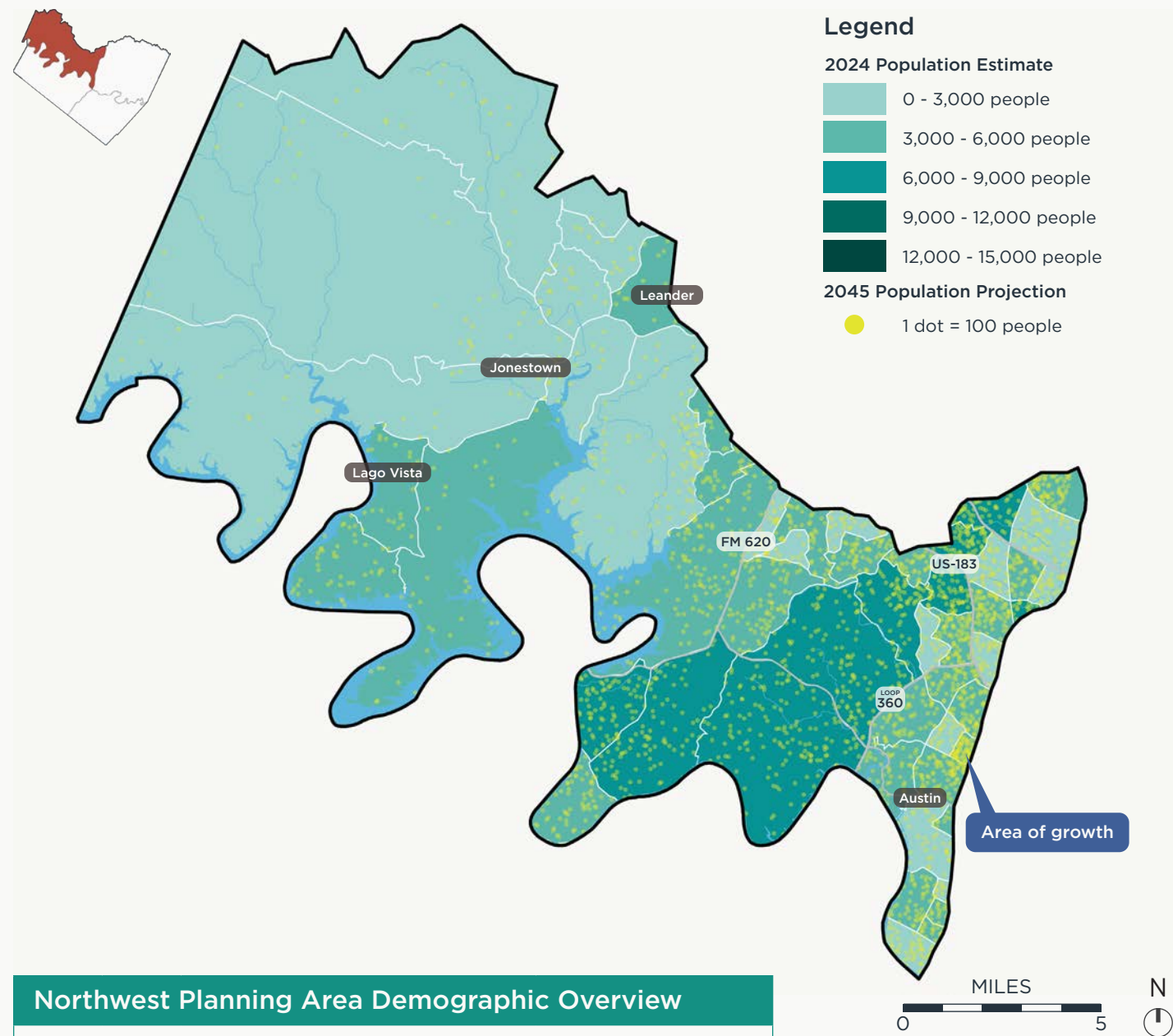
Lowest (Bottom 4th) Highest (Top 4th)

- Census Tracts with Low spending potential, High SVI
- Census Tracts with Low spending potential, Medium/High SVI
- Census Tracts with High spending potential, Medium/Low SVI
- Census Tracts with High spending potential, Low SVI

Recreational spending potential mapping is a geographic analysis that helps identify areas where consumers are more or less likely to spend on recreational activities. This mapping is based on the Spending Potential Index (SPI), which compares local consumer spending levels to the national average.

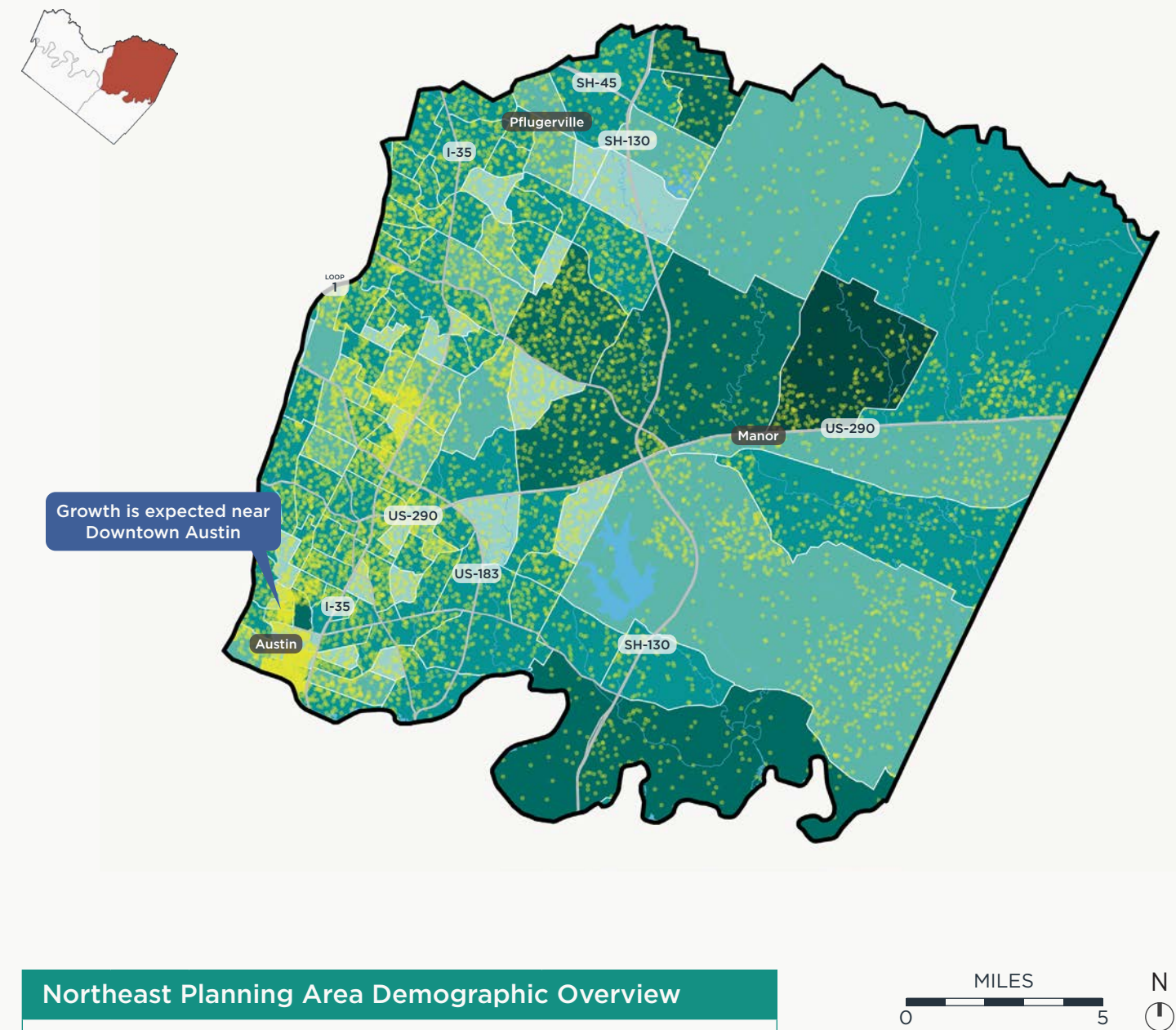
Spending Potential

This map highlights the intersection of social vulnerability and **recreational spending potential**, demonstrating that younger, lower-income communities tend to have fewer financial resources for recreation.³ These more vulnerable census tracts are concentrated in the eastern parts of the County. Parks on the east side should be designed to meet the needs of the communities they serve by prioritizing affordability, accessibility, and free recreational opportunities.



Northwest Planning Area Projected Growth

The Northwest Planning Area of Travis County comprises approximately 14% of the County's total population and is predominantly white. This region has a relatively low population density, with projected growth expected to occur in areas that are already comparatively dense.



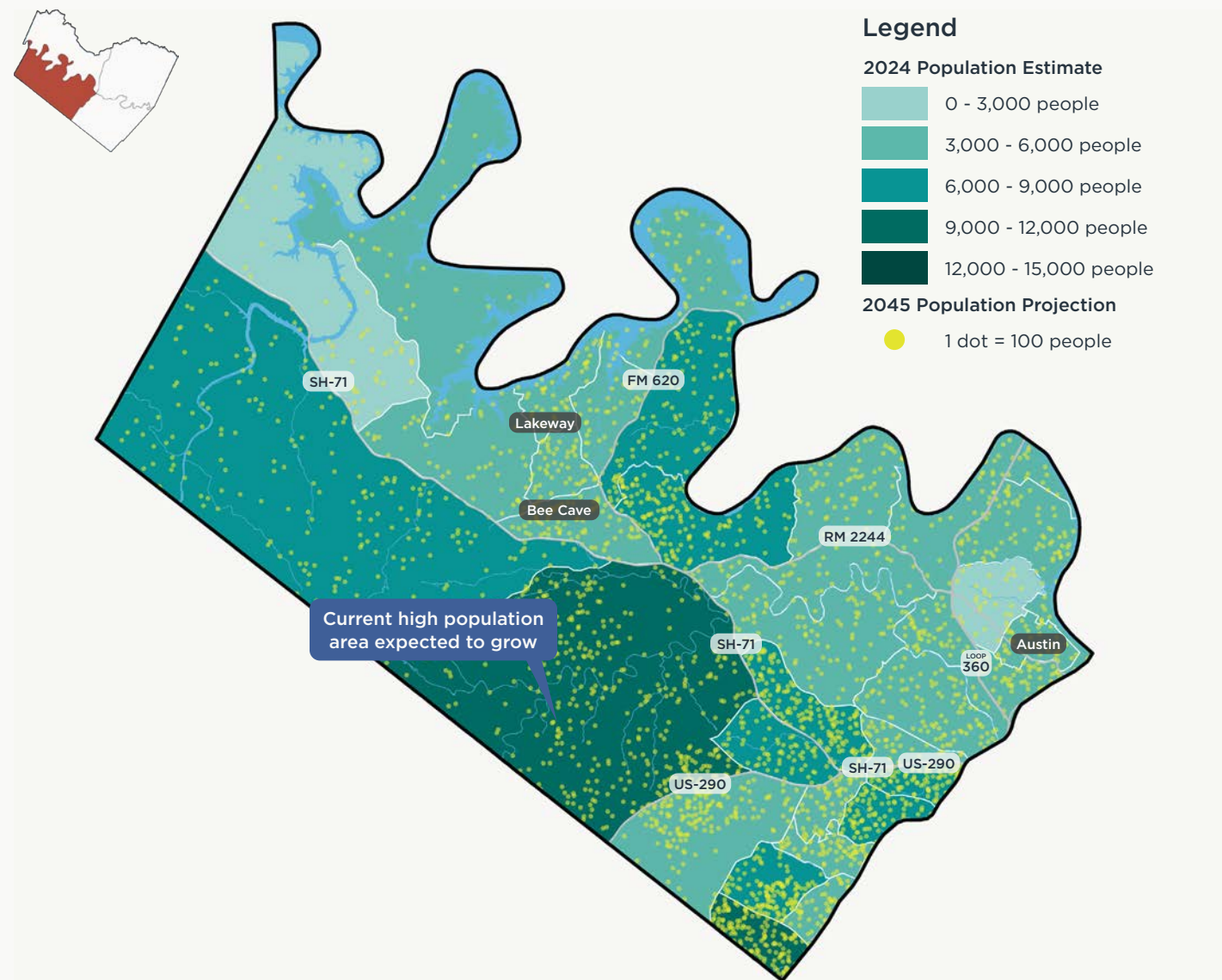
Northeast Planning Area Demographic Overview

46% of the County Population

Ethnicity			Median Household Income \$86,226	
37.5%	Hispanic			
62.5%	Non-Hispanic			
Race			Median Home Value \$489,336	
	45.3%	White	Per Capita Income \$50,212	
	12.4%	Black or African American		Median Age 33 Years
	1.1%	American Indian / Alaska Native		
	9%	Asian		
	0.1%	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander		
	14.9%	Some Other Race		
	17.3%	Multiple Races		

Northeast Planning Area Projected Growth

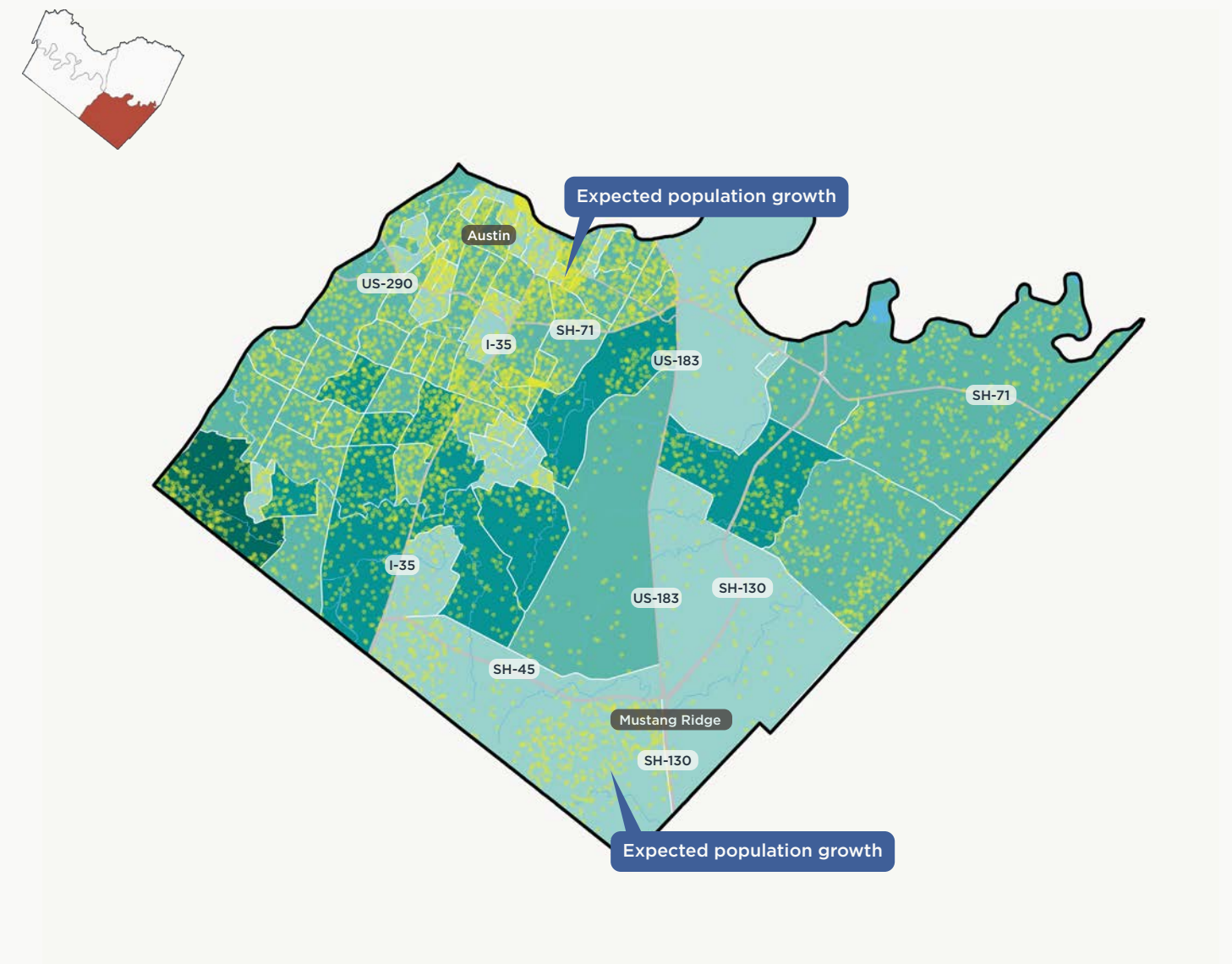
The Northeast Planning Area is home to nearly half of Travis County's total population. Manor and Pflugerville are some of the fastest growing communities in the nation. Future growth is expected to concentrate in downtown Austin, where high-rise developments are already in progress and anticipated to continue expanding over the next 20 years.



Southwest Planning Area Demographic Overview			
13% of the County Population			
Ethnicity		Median Household Income \$170,695 Median Home Value \$508,442 Per Capita Income \$86,090 Median Age 41 Years	
14.6%	Hispanic		
85.6%	Non-Hispanic		
Race			
	72.0% White		
	1.6% Black or African American		
	0.4% American Indian / Alaska Native		
	10% Asian		
	0.1% Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander		
	3.6% Some Other Race		
	12.4% Multiple Races		

Southwest Planning Area Projected Growth

According to 2045 projections, population growth is expected to occur relatively consistently across the Southwest Planning Area, rather than being concentrated in specific high-density zones. This growth may be driven by factors such as residential development, infrastructure expansion, and increased demand for housing in the region.



Demographic Overview			
27% of the County Population			
Ethnicity		Median Household Income \$84,660 Median Home Value \$508,442 Per Capita Income \$52,835 Median Age 34 Years	
44.9%	Hispanic		
55.1%	Non-Hispanic		
Race			
	51.1% White		
	6.3% Black or African American		
	1.3% American Indian / Alaska Native		
	4.4% Asian		
	0.1% Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander		
	16.5% Some Other Race		
	20.5% Multiple Races		

Southeast Planning Area Projected Growth

The 2045 population projections indicate substantial population growth in areas surrounding downtown Austin, where urban development is expected to continue expanding. Meanwhile, the southernmost edge of the County, near Mustang Ridge, currently has a low population density but is projected to see significant growth over the coming decades.

Community Health

Residents of eastern Travis County generally experience poorer health than the west side and may benefit more from the mental, social, and physical benefits parks provide.

Parks & Health

Travis County Parks play a vital role in supporting community health. They provide accessible spaces for exercise, whether through walking, jogging, hiking or recreational sports, **helping to reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease, and other health issues**. Green spaces also encourage social interaction, fostering a sense of community by bringing people together for activities, events, and casual gatherings. This helps combat loneliness and social isolation, which are linked to negative health outcomes. Additionally, parks offer **mental health benefits** by providing a peaceful environment that reduces stress and anxiety. Exposure to nature has been shown to improve mood, boost cognitive function, and enhance overall well-being. Parks also provide a refuge from urban noise and pollution, offering a restorative space for relaxation. Whether through active recreation or quiet reflection, the parks within the Travis County system contribute to a healthier, happier population by supporting physical activity, social connection, and mental restoration.



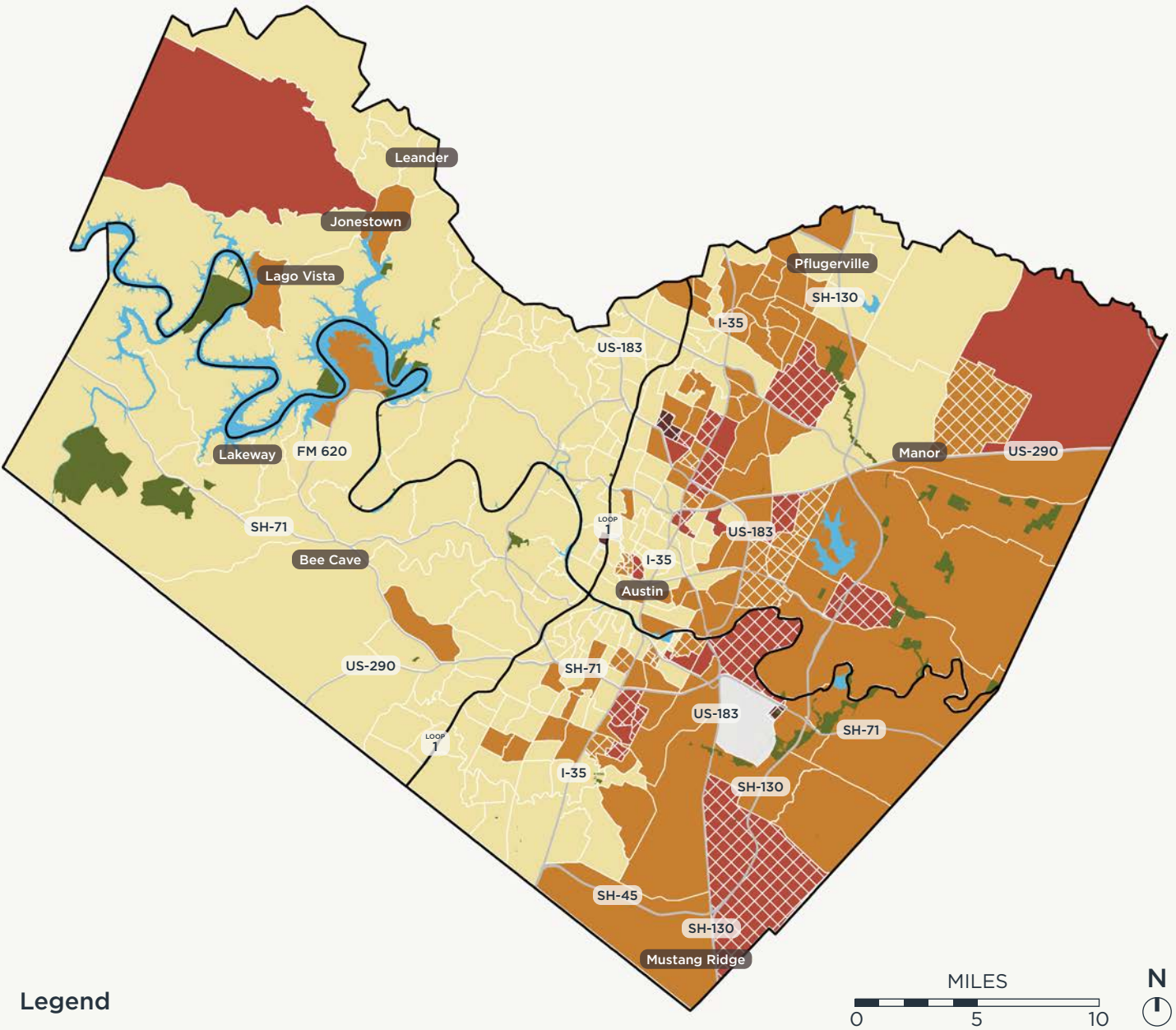
Exercising in nature has been shown to have both mental and physical health benefits.
Source: Travis County Parks

Health Outcome	% of Total County Population	National Average
Social Isolation	36%	32%
Physical Inactivity	22%	24%
Depression	22%	20%
Asthma	10%	10%
Obesity	29%	33%
High Blood Pressure	26%	32%
Diabetes	11%	12%

CDC data from 2021-2022 of adults self-reporting health outcomes.

Health in Travis County

On average, community health outcomes within Travis County align closely with national averages, with residents in Travis County experiencing slightly higher rates of social isolation and depression and slightly lower rates of physical inactivity, obesity, and high blood pressure. **Social isolation and physical inactivity in particular are two health outcomes that can be reviewed to assess how parks can improve community health.**⁴ Social isolation is measured by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as self-reported feelings of social isolation, and physical inactivity is measured as self-reported lack of leisure time physical activity. In Travis County, 36% of residents reported social isolation, and 22% reported physical inactivity. The map on page 40 identifies areas of low physical activity and high social isolation that may benefit from the mental and physical health enhancements that parks and greenways provide.



Legend

Population Reporting Low Physical Activity

- 0% - 10%
- 10% - 20%
- 20% - 30%
- 30% - 40%
- 40% - 50%

Social Isolation

- >36% of the census tract population reported feeling social isolation

Areas of Low Physical Activity & Social Isolation

Geographically, the Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas show higher rates of both social isolation and physical inactivity, with some tracts reaching up to 50% of adults reporting physical inactivity. The map also identifies census tracts with social isolation levels higher than the County overall (36%), the majority of which are located in the northeast and southeast planning areas.

Hydrology

The unique hydrology of Travis County creates many water-based recreation opportunities throughout Travis County Parks.

Water & Parks

Travis County’s hydrology is shaped by its karst limestone bedrock, which plays a crucial role in groundwater recharge. This porous rock allows rainwater to filter quickly into the Edwards Aquifer, a primary water source for the region. Springs emerge where groundwater reaches the surface, supporting diverse ecosystems and recreational opportunities within parks. In northeast and southeast Travis County, the hydrology is characterized by relatively flat topography, slow-draining clay soils, and a network of creeks that flow toward the Colorado River. Unlike the rocky, fast-draining terrain of western Travis County, the east side features wide floodplains that fill with stormwater during heavy rains and often cause localized flooding.

The Colorado River, controlled by a series of dams that create Lake Travis, Lake Austin, and Lady Bird Lake, **provides water-based recreation at Travis County Parks, such as swimming, fishing, boating, and scuba diving.** Many parks, including Webberville Park, Little Webberville Park, Loop 360 Boat Ramp, Selma Hughes Park, Mary Quinlan Park, and Fritz Hughes Park all have waterfront access to the Colorado River. The floodplains of smaller rivers and creeks throughout the County, including Onion Creek, Wilbarger Creek, and Gilleland Creek, have been identified as opportunities for the County to create systems of trails called “greenways.” **Greenways create habitat corridors and protect water recharge zones and floodplains,** helping to maintain the County’s water resources and ecological health and reduce flood risk.

Northwest Planning Area

The Northwest Planning Area is bordered on its southern edge by Lake Travis, which provides a diversity of water-based recreational opportunities. This planning area also has the highest concentration of springs, the majority of which lie within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and in identified karst locations.

Northeast Planning Area

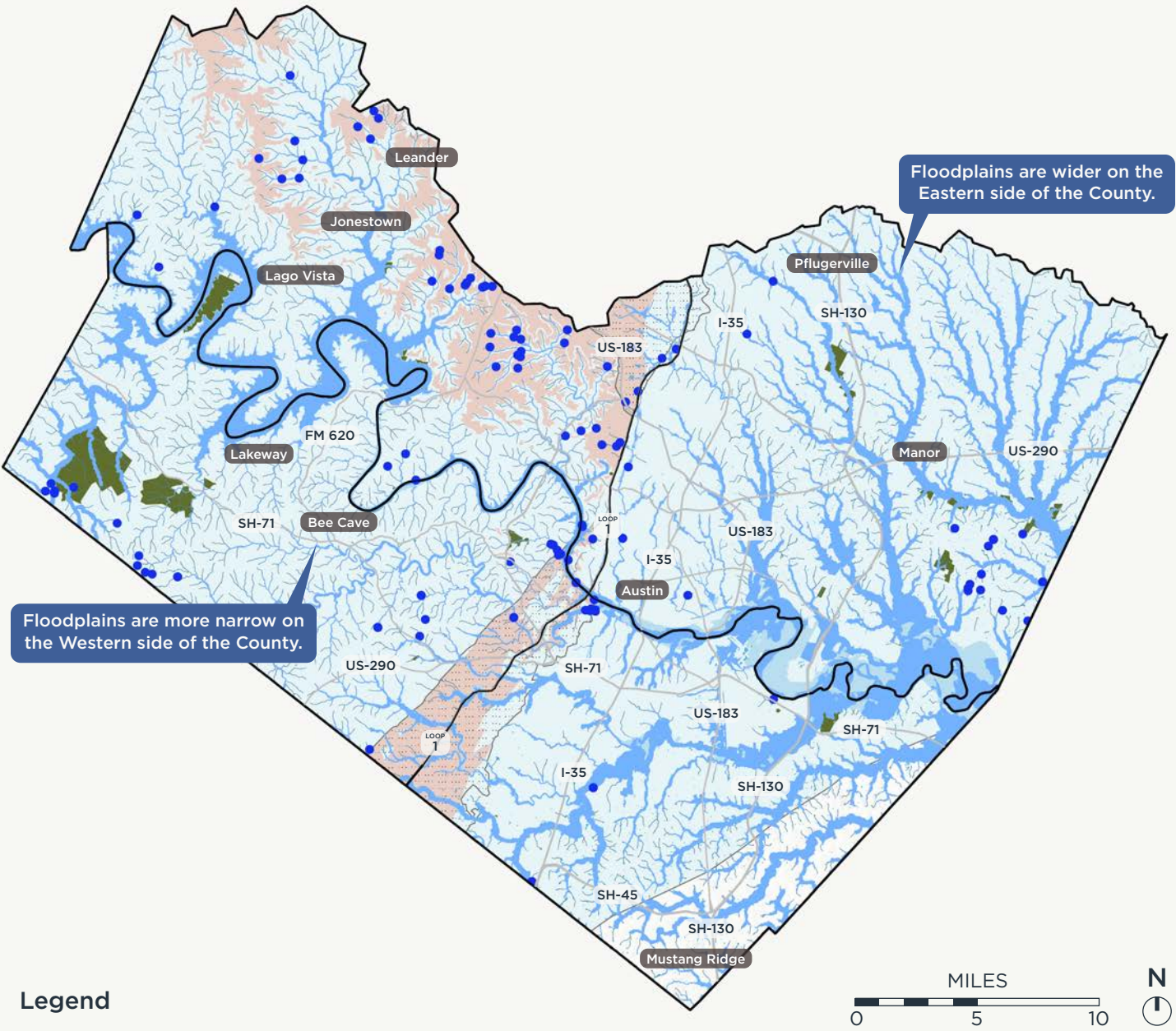
The Northeast Planning Area is bordered on the southern edge by the Colorado River and contains some of the biggest areas of the river’s floodplain. The western edge of the planning area lies within the Edwards Aquifer. The wide floodplains of creeks in this area provide opportunity for greenway development, with trails currently being planned along Wilbarger Creek, Gilleland Creek and the Colorado River.

Southeast Planning Area

About one-third of the Southeast Planning Area is located within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. The creeks in this planning area are typified by a wide floodplain, providing opportunities for greenways along waterways, such as Onion Creek, where greenways are currently under development.

Southwest Planning Area

The Southwest Planning Area has several major recreational hydrological features, including Hamilton Pool and the Pedernales River, both of which are accessible in Travis County Parks. Mansfield Dam Park is located at the dam that creates Lake Travis. Both Mansfield Dam Park and Pace Bend Park provide access to Lake Travis in this area.



Legend

- 100-year Floodplain
- 500-year Floodplain
- Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone
- Trinity Aquifer
- Karst Zones
- Travis County Parks
- Springs

Hydrological Features

Travis County’s hydrology is defined by springs, floodplains, and limestone geology that influence water flow and availability. The County’s floodplains trace waterways like the Colorado River and a network of creeks, highlighting areas vulnerable to seasonal flooding. Additionally, the region’s limestone karst geology, characterized by sinkholes and underground drainage networks, plays a crucial role in groundwater movement and aquifer recharge.

Climate Challenges & Risk

In the future, Travis County’s climate will become hotter and experience more heatwaves and droughts. Flooding risks may rise due to changing precipitation patterns and urban expansion.

Climate Projection

Travis County is expected to experience hotter temperatures and more extreme weather in the future. In Austin, climate projections predict that summers will see higher maximum temperatures, more frequent heatwaves, and a rising heat index of 2-10°F. The number of days exceeding 110°F and prolonged hot spells are projected to double or triple by the century’s end under high-emission scenarios. Cold events will become rarer, with frost days decreasing significantly, though the duration of occasional cold spells is expected to remain similar to historical trends. Precipitation patterns are uncertain, but overall rainfall amounts are expected to stay relatively stable, with a slight increase in extreme rain events.⁵ Climate change-driven reductions in rainfall are already impacting park operations and water-based recreation in Austin. Low levels in Lake Travis limit recreation, while declining groundwater makes it harder to maintain amenities like sports fields. Dry conditions also cause Austin’s clay soils to crack, leading to unsafe sports field surfaces and damage to sidewalks and other infrastructure.

Drought & Wildfire Risk

Climate change is increasing wildfire risk in Central Texas, especially **crown fires**. Higher temperatures and less rainfall dry out vegetation, making fires more frequent and intense. Longer growing seasons and droughts extend high fire danger periods. Wildfire risk is highest in the Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas, moderate-to-high in the Southeast Planning Area, and moderate in the Northeast Planning Area.

A **crown fire** is a forest fire that spreads from treetop to treetop, igniting live and dead branches, foliage, and tall shrubs above the forest floor, usually starting from a surface fire.

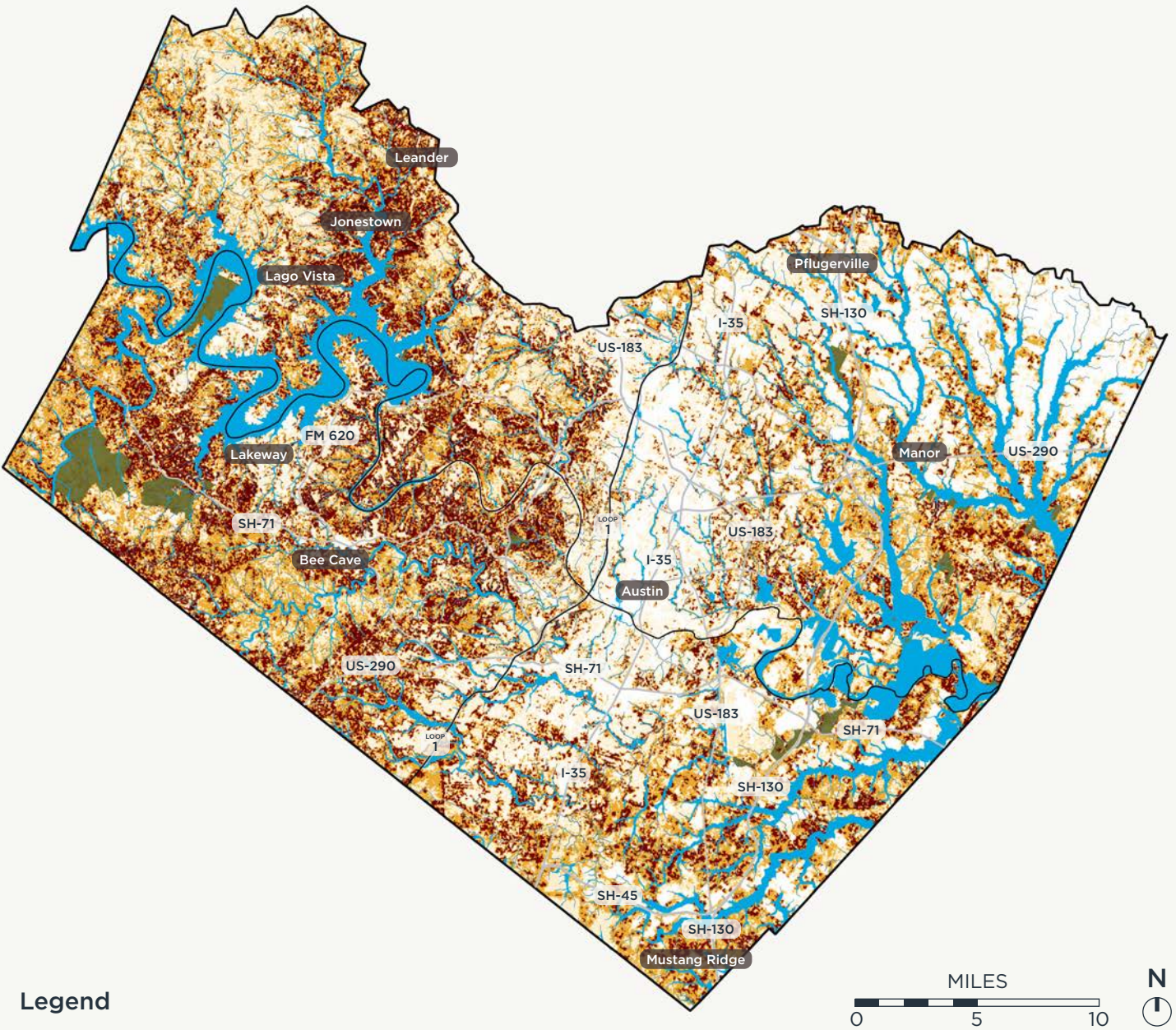
As development expands in Travis County, the growing **wildland-urban interface (WUI)** will likely increase wildfire frequency and intensity. Most wildfires in Central Texas are human-caused and ignite in the WUI, meaning expansion will lead to more fires. Currently, the Travis County Park Land Management Program reduces wildfire risk by managing fuels through prescribed fire, mowing, and mechanical thinning. Increased woodland cover and fuel buildup, combined with more ignitions and a hotter climate, will heighten the risk of frequent and intense wildfires. However, maintaining natural areas with prescribed burns is challenging due to the proximity of homes, businesses, and roads.

The **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)** is where human development meets or intermingles with undeveloped wildland and natural areas.⁶

Flood Risk

Central Texas, located in Texas’ “Flash Flood Alley,” is prone to frequent thunderstorms and flash flooding due to its terrain and climate. While all of Travis County’s planning areas are at risk, the floodplain dynamics vary across the County. The western areas, part of the Edwards Plateau Ecoregion, feature narrower, more contained floodplains, whereas the eastern areas, part of the Blackland Prairie Ecoregion, have wider, more expansive floodplains. These differences are influenced by the region’s topography and geology.

Flooding is a natural part of waterway ecosystems, but increased urbanization and more intense storms from climate change can cause damaging stormflows, erosion, and pollution. Intense rainfall can flood neighborhoods and threaten public health. In Travis County Parks, these events may damage greenways and amenities, reducing their lifespan and increasing maintenance needs.



Legend

- Wildfire Risk
 - Low
 - Moderate
 - Elevated
 - High
 - Highest
- FEMA Flood Hazard
 - 100-year Floodplain
- Additional Map Features
 - Travis County Parks

Wildfire & Flood Risk

The Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas are at greatest risk for wildfire due to steeper topography and greater tree canopy coverage. Urbanized areas, especially the city of Austin, are less likely to experience wildfires. Flood risk, however, is greater in the Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas, due to the number of creeks and the wide, low floodplains that characterize the geography of eastern Travis County.

Ecology & Conservation

Travis County sits within a transition area between two distinct ecological regions, supporting a diverse mosaic of habitats shaped by geology, hydrology, and human influence.

Travis County is within a unique ecological blending area in Central Texas where the Blackland Prairie meets the Edwards Plateau Ecoregion along the Balcones Fault. This dynamic transition zone supports a rich mosaic of habitats shaped by geological and hydrological forces. The fault formed as the land subsided after the last shallow sea retreated to the Gulf of Mexico 100 million years ago, leaving behind limestone hills to the west and fertile prairies to the east. Along different areas of the fault, the water within the Edwards Aquifer emerges through springs, seeps, and caves, creating vital water sources for diverse plant and animal communities. The interplay of groundwater dynamics, recharge zones, and environmentally sensitive areas makes this region both ecologically significant and highly vulnerable, fostering exceptional biodiversity while requiring careful stewardship to maintain its delicate balance.

Ecoregions

Texas Blackland Prairie

The Blackland Prairie once stretched approximately 300 miles from San Antonio to north Texas, dominated by tallgrass species historically shaped by fire and bison grazing.⁷ Its fertile, clay-rich soils supported diverse plant communities, including Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, and Switchgrass, while forests were limited to riparian areas. Euro-American settlement in the late 1800s led to widespread agricultural conversion, eroding soils, altering hydrology, and degrading habitat. Urbanization further diminished prairie remnants. With less than 1% of this ecosystem intact, active restoration is essential to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem functions of this **ecoregion**. This ecoregion type is found in the eastern part of the County. Floodplains and Low Terraces sub-ecoregions are a part of the Blackland Prairie and can be found in the Northeast and Southeast

Planning Areas within the broad floodplains of the Colorado River. Once dominated by bottomland forests, much of the area has been converted to cropland and pasture, altering its natural processes.

Edwards Plateau

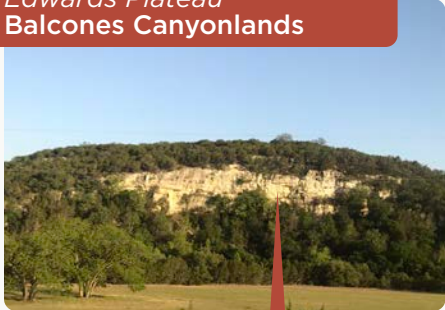
The Edwards Plateau is a rugged limestone region shaped by water and topography, with plant communities varying by moisture levels. Juniper-oak woodlands dominate slopes, while mesic riparian woodlands thrive along waterways. Fire suppression and grazing have contributed to increased Ashe Juniper cover, altering the historic grasslands of Little Bluestem and Indiangrass. The plateau’s karst landscape directly connects surface water to the Edwards Aquifer, supporting diverse ecosystems and endemic species like blind salamanders and cave-dwelling bats. This biodiversity hotspot is also home to the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler, which relies on mature Oak-juniper woodlands for nesting. This ecoregion is found in the western part of the County.

East Central Texas Plains

The Post Oak Savanna of the East Central Texas Plains is a transitional region where oak woodlands blend with prairie grasslands, creating diverse habitat for plants and animals. Its rolling terrain, with elevations from 300 to 800 feet, features soils from sandy uplands to clay-rich bottomlands, supporting native grasslands and introduced crops.⁸ These oak savannas, juniper woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands are vital for endangered and threatened species in the County.

Ecoregions are areas of land or water that contain geographically distinct climates, and groups of plant and animal species. They help conservationists understand how different environments function and how to protect them.

Edwards Plateau
Balcones Canyonlands



Source: Wikimedia Commons, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension



Limestone escarpment

Texas Blackland Prairies
Northern Blackland Prairie



Source: Wikimedia Commons, Plano Prairie Garden



Deep, clay-rich soils

East Central Texas Plains
Southern Post Oak Savanna



Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife



Sandy loam soils

Ecoregion Comparison			
Ecoregion	Edwards Plateau Balcones Canyonlands	Texas Blackland Prairies Northern Blackland Prairie	East Central Texas Plains Southern Post Oak Savanna
Planning Areas	Southwest, Northwest, Southeast	Northeast, Southeast, Northwest	Northeast
Soils (Vary across ecoregion)	Generally Shallow, Limestone Soils	Generally Deep, Clay-rich Soils	Generally Sand, Sandy Loam Soils
Dominant Plant Community (Historical)	Open Juniper-Oak Woodlands	Perennial Tallgrass Prairie	Post Oak Savanna
Dominant Plants (Historical)	Ashe Juniper (<i>Juniperus ashei</i>), Cedar Elm (<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>), Plateau Live Oak (<i>Quercus fusiformis</i>), Texas Persimmon (<i>Diospyros texana</i>)	Big Bluestem (<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>), Little Bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>), Switchgrass (<i>Panicum virgatum</i>), Yellow Indiangrass (<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>)	Post Oak (<i>Quercus stellata</i>), Cedar Elm (<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>), Yaupon Holly (<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>), Texas Persimmon (<i>Diospyros texana</i>), American Beautyberry (<i>Callicarpa americana</i>)
Major Threats	Development, fire suppression, grazing, wildfires, invasive species	Development, farmland conversion, fire suppression, erosion, invasive species	Development, farmland conversion, fire suppression, grazing, invasive species
Noteworthy Characteristic	Unique conditions such as karst features, caves, and vegetation type host endangered and threated species	Threatened ecoregion, less than 1% remaining	Sandy soils host unique bog habitats, endangered and threatened species habitat

Rare Species

The convergence of multiple ecoregions, diverse habitats, and the groundwater dynamics of the Edwards Aquifer make Travis County a biologically rich area, supporting both rare and *endemic species*. The County is home to thirteen federally endangered and seven federally threatened species, along with one state-endangered and four state-threatened species. While state listings reflect a species’ status within Texas, federal listings indicate a decline across its entire range, spanning multiple states or countries. Several species, including the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and Tricolored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), are also under consideration for federal protection. Rare species exist throughout the County, with the Blackland Prairie in the east being a highly threatened ecoregion and the Edwards Plateau in the west containing the largest area of preserved lands.

An *endemic species* is a plant or animal that lives only in one place and has special traits to survive there.

Located in the Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas, the **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve** (BCP) is one of the nation’s largest urban preserves, spanning over 33,000 acres across more than 140 tracts managed by public and private partners. Established in 1996, the BCP protects habitat for seven endangered species, including the migratory **Golden-cheeked Warbler** (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) and six cave-dwelling karst invertebrates. The recent de-listing of the **Black-capped Vireo** (*Vireo atricapilla*) highlights the preserve’s conservation successes. The Golden-cheeked Warbler nests in central Texas from March to September before migrating south for the winter. County parks with suitable habitat, such as Hamilton Pool Preserve and Reimers Ranch Park, are maintained in accordance with the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) by Travis County’s Natural Resources Program where this endangered songbird and other species have been observed. The BCP properties in the County are managed by the Natural Resources and Land Management Program in coordination with the Parks Department.

Land Management

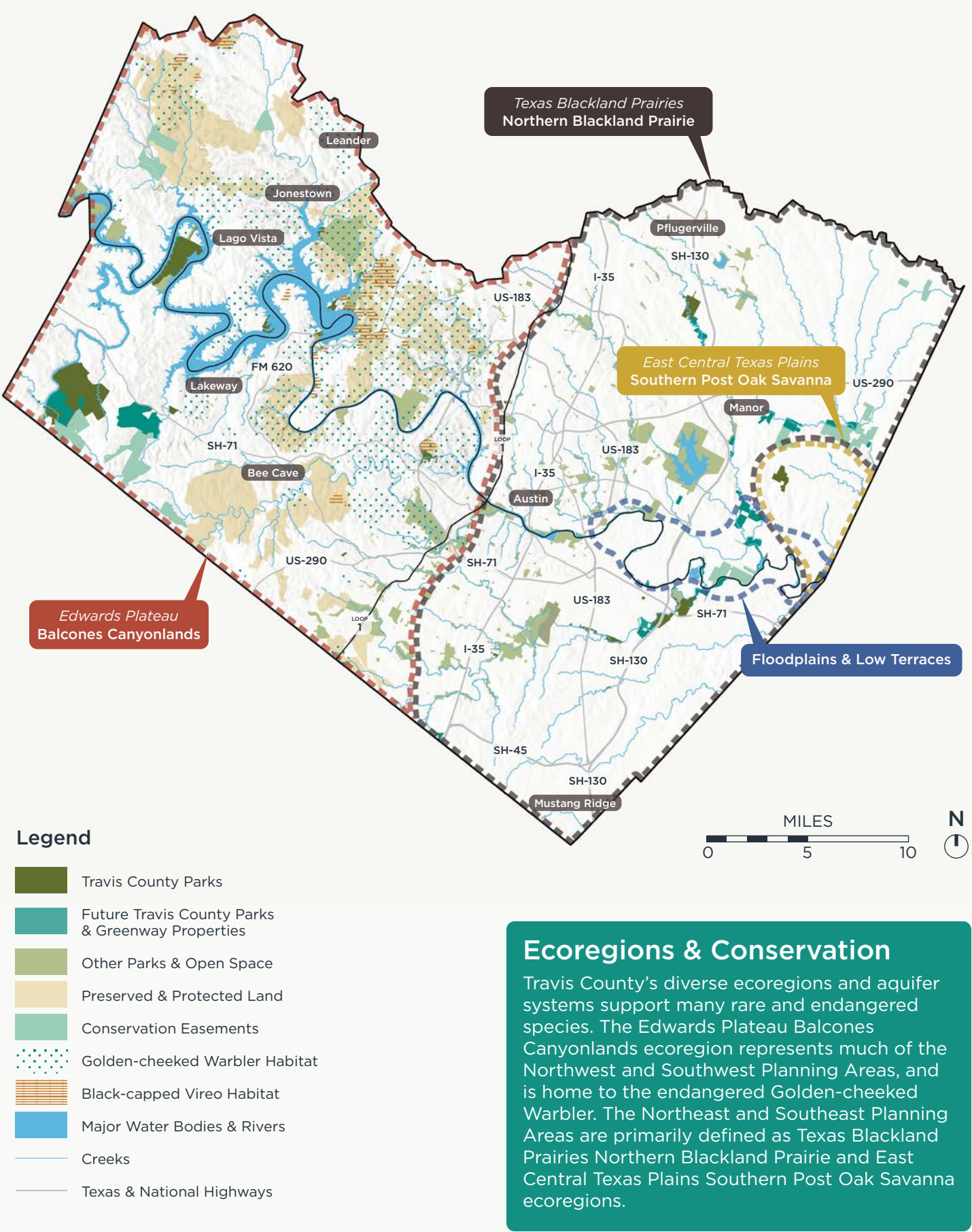
To protect rare species and restore threatened ecosystems, Travis County operates internal natural resources and land management programs. Partnering with conservation organizations, the County applies best practices in managing its natural resources. The **Park Land Management Program** cares for County parklands through its Forestry, Wildland Fire, and Stewardship programs, which work to preserve open spaces using tools such as *prescribed fire*, mechanical clearing, seeding, and tree planting to sustain healthy woodlands, grasslands, and forests.

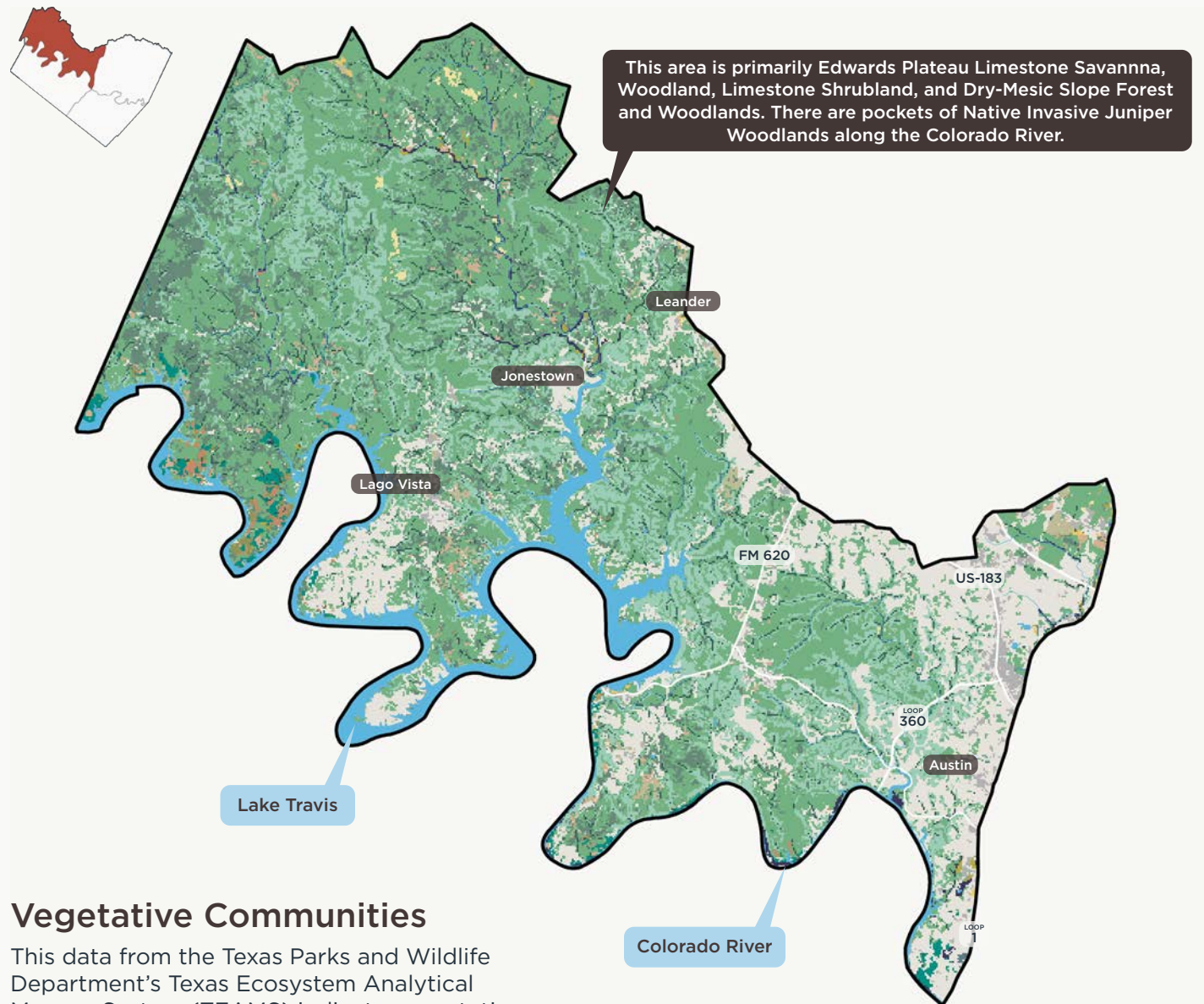
A *prescribed fire*, is a planned fire managed by experts to reduce wildfire risk, restore habitats, and increase biodiversity.

The Blackland Prairie, a rare and threatened ecoregion, depends on active restoration, with fire playing a crucial role in sustaining that ecosystem to reduce woody vegetation. Low-intensity wildfires have historically shaped Travis County’s landscapes, and today, land managers use prescribed burns to mimic these natural processes. This approach strengthens ecosystems, making them more resilient to droughts and other environmental challenges. The County’s prescribed burn program helps sustain plant and animal diversity, ensuring long-term ecological health.



Prescribed fire at Hamilton Pool used to manage Ash Juniper, increase plant diversity, increase water infiltration, and reduce the risk of wildfire.
Source: Wikimedia Commons



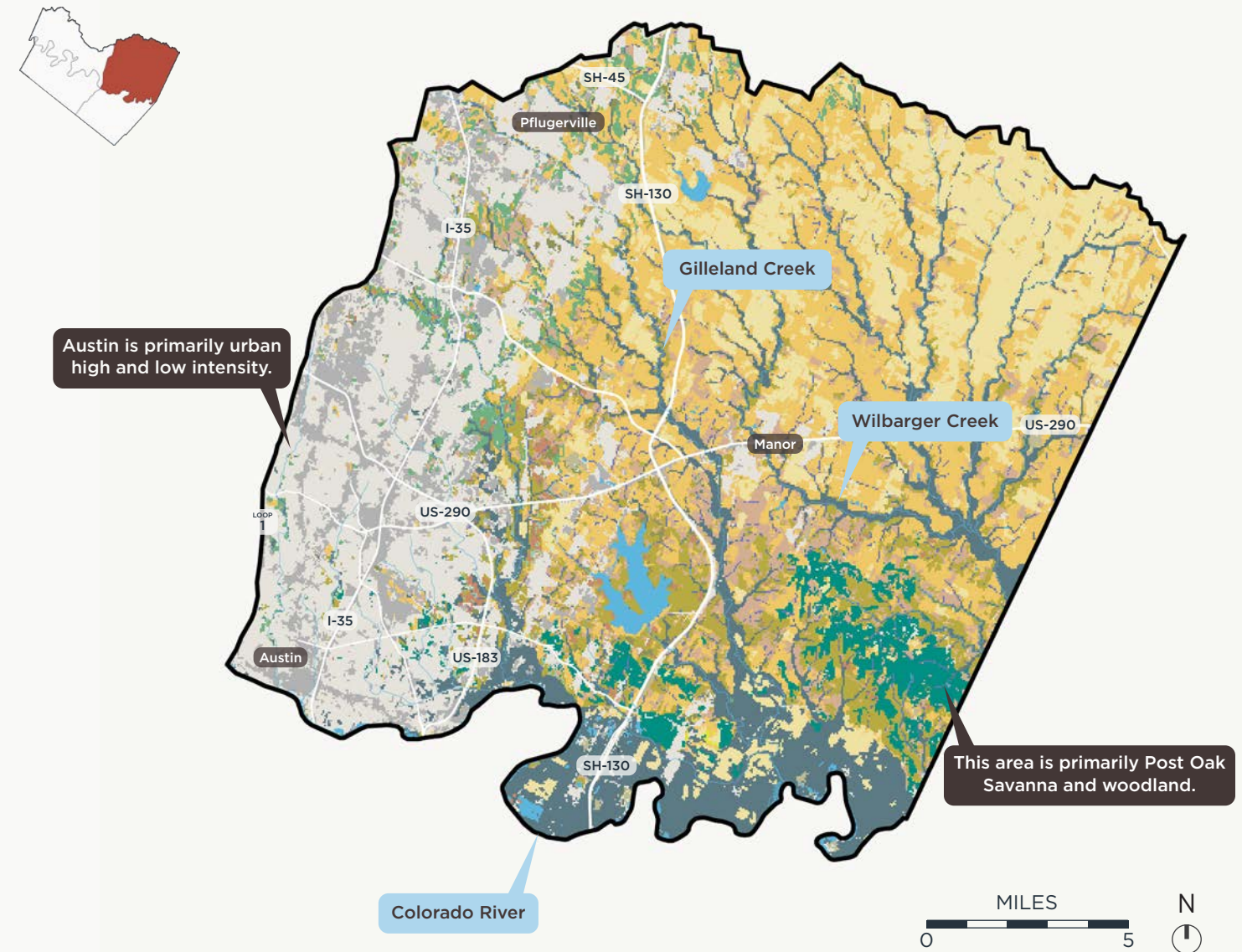


Vegetative Communities

This data from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Texas Ecosystem Analytical Mapper System (TEAMS) indicates vegetative communities across the four planning areas.

Legend

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Barren | Edwards Plateau: Riparian | Row Crops |
| Cross Timbers: Live Oak Forest & Woodland | Grass Farm | Southeastern Great Plains: Floodplain Forest |
| East-Central Texas Plains: Post Oak Savanna & Woodland | Marsh | Southeastern Great Plains: Riparian Forest |
| Edwards Plateau: Cliff | Native Invasive: Deciduous Woodland | Swamp |
| Edwards Plateau: Dry-Mesic Slope Forest & Woodland | Native Invasive: Juniper Shrubland | Texas Blackland Tallgrass Prairie |
| Edwards Plateau: Floodplain | Native Invasive: Juniper Woodland | Urban High Intensity |
| Edwards Plateau: Limestone Savanna & Woodland | Native Invasive: Mesquite Shrubland | Urban Low Intensity |
| Edwards Plateau: Limestone Shrubland | Major Water Bodies & Rivers | Texas & National Highways |

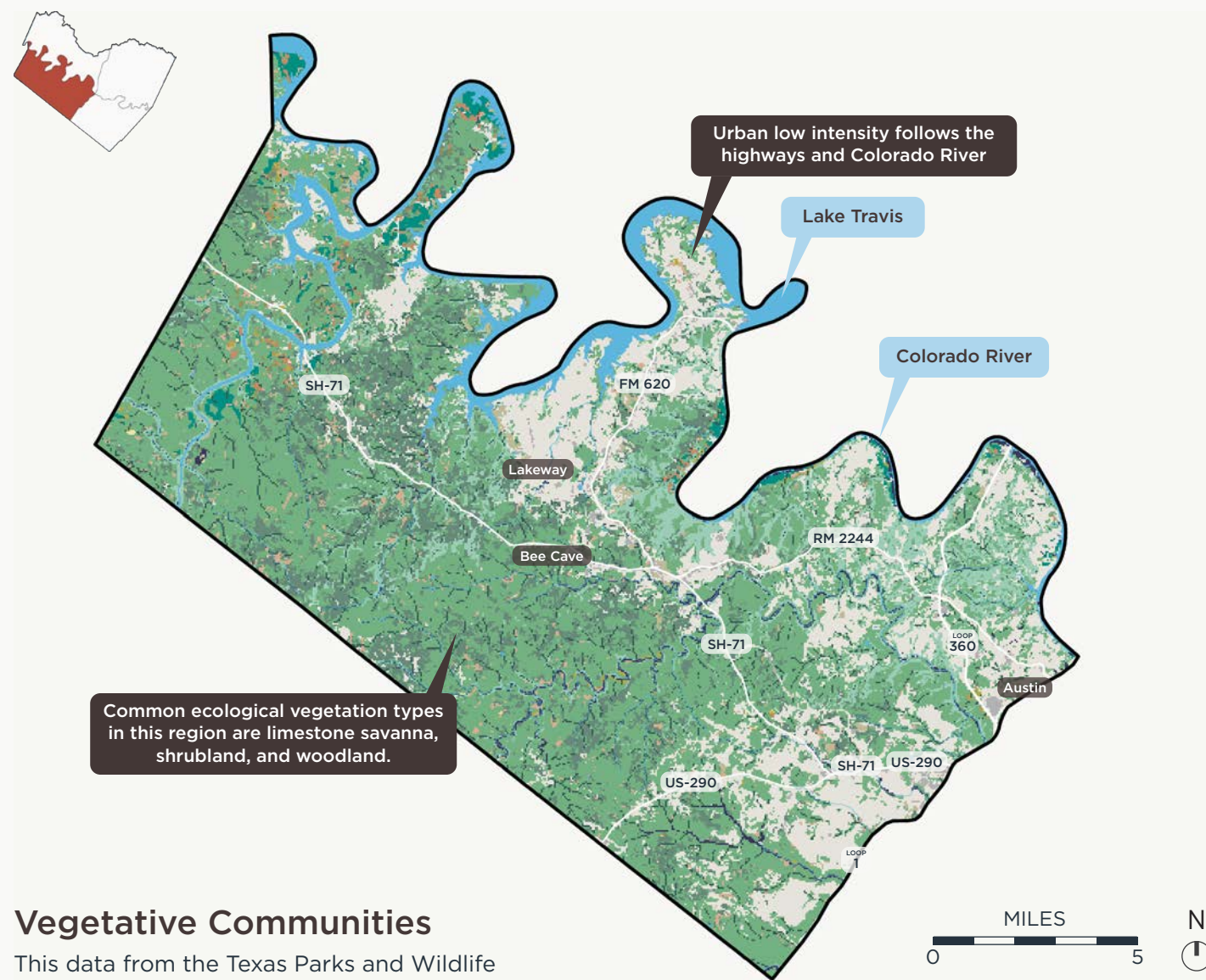


Northwest Planning Area

The Northwest Planning Area (left) features some of the highest elevations in Travis County, with rugged terrain shaped by streams like Big Sandy Creek and Cypress Creek, which drain into Lake Travis, Austin's main water source. This area lies predominantly within the Edwards Plateau ecoregion, where shallow limestone-based soils allow water to filter into the Edwards Aquifer through caves and sinkholes, supporting unique subterranean habitats. Historically dominated by grasslands and savannas, the landscape now consists of juniper-oak woodlands and ranchlands, transitioning to Blackland Prairie in the east. Home to rare and endangered species like the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Texas Blind Salamander, the area includes protected lands within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, a vital conservation effort under the Endangered Species Act.

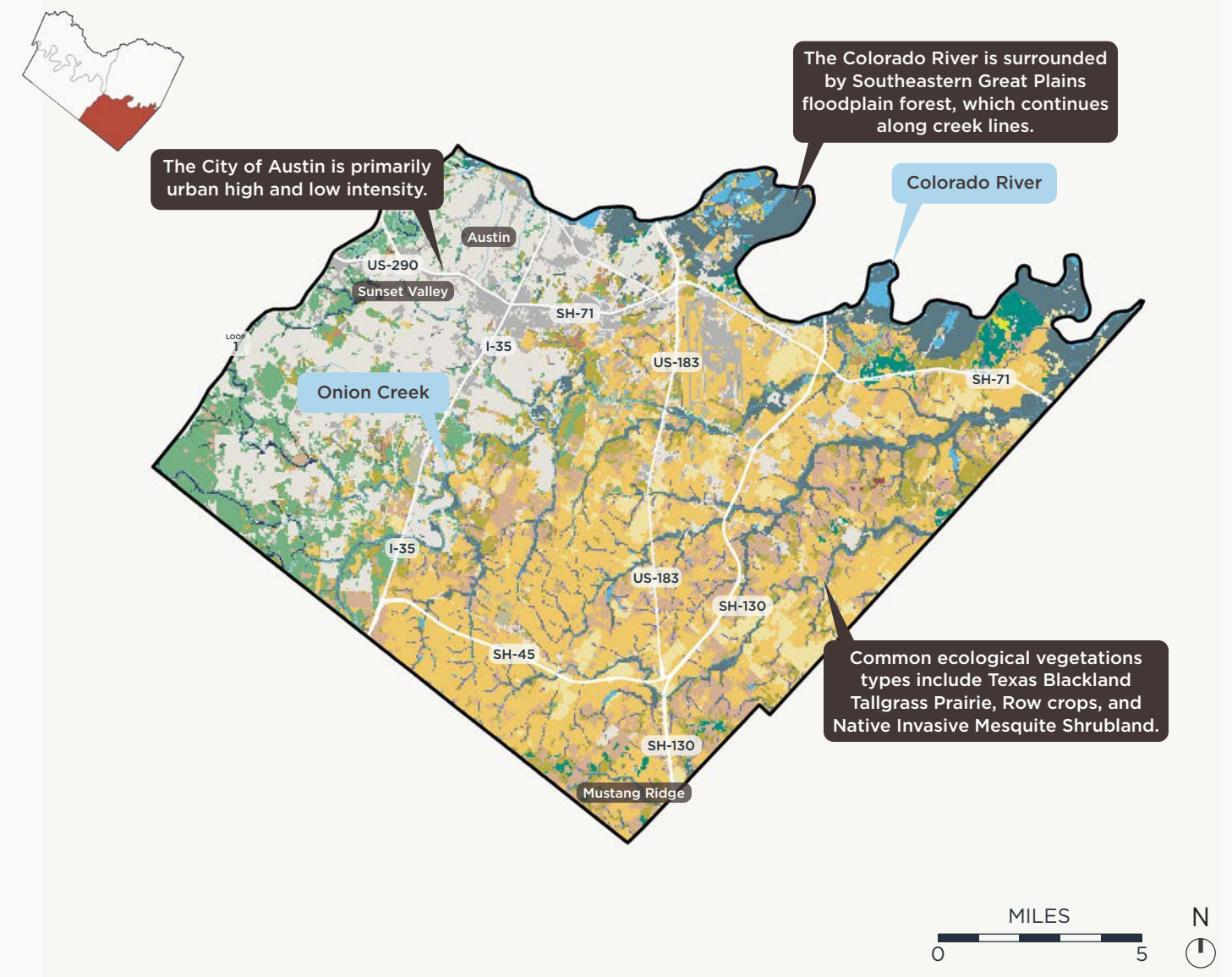
Northeast Planning Area

The Northeast Planning Area (above) has some of the lowest elevations in the County and is down river and east of the Balcones Fault. The wide floodplain of the Colorado River and the many waterways that drain southeast to it are important features in the planning area. The soils are characterized by alluvial river deposits and the rich, dark clay soils of the Blackland Prairie ecoregion. The Northeast Planning Area features a diverse mix of habitats but is primarily within the Blackland Prairie ecoregion. The planning area also includes large expanses of Floodplain and Low Terraces associated with the Colorado River, and a small area of Southern Post Oak Savanna at the eastern edge of the County.



Vegetative Communities

This data from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Texas Ecosystem Analytical Mapper System (TEAMS) indicates vegetative communities across the four planning areas.



Southwest Planning Area

The Southwest Planning Area (left), similar to the Northwest, features high elevations and lies entirely within the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. Defined by the Pedernales River and Barton Creek, which flows into Lady Bird Lake, this region has shallow, rocky limestone soils that drain quickly, making it prone to flash floods. Spanning nearly 24 million acres, the Edwards Plateau is a rugged, semi-arid landscape dominated by juniper, oaks, and honey mesquite. Rapid development has significantly impacted the area's natural systems, increasing the need for strategic planning to protect water resources, manage flooding, and preserve its unique ecological features.

Southeast Planning Area

The Southeast Planning Area (above) features diverse elevations, transitioning from the hillier landscapes of the Edwards Plateau and Blackland Prairie in the west to the broad floodplains along the Colorado River. Numerous waterways drain into the river, including Onion Creek, which experiences some of the County's most severe floods. The region's soils reflect its ecological variety, ranging from shallow limestone-based soils to deep prairie clays and alluvial floodplain deposits. This area contains most of the County's ecoregions. The Edwards Plateau appears briefly near Sunset Valley before transitioning to Blackland Prairie, the dominant ecosystem, with floodplains extending along the Colorado River.

Historic & Cultural Resources

The Travis County Parks system includes over two dozen parks near waterways and historic sites, reflecting the region’s Indigenous heritage, early settlements, and evolving land use.

The Travis County Parks system includes over two dozen parks with a variety of historic, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources. Several parks, such as Selma Hughes, Tom Hughes, and Fritz Hughes Parks were deeded to the County in the late 1930s and early 1940s, before the creation of a separate County parks department. At that time, County parks were overseen by the Commissioner’s Court. Eventually, management of Travis County Parks became the responsibility of the County’s Road & Bridge Department, which also oversaw several parks along Lake Travis on behalf of the Lower Colorado River Authority. In the 1970s and 1980s, the County expanded its park system by acquiring large parcels of land, leading to the establishment of the Travis County Parks Department in 1986. By 1991, the department became part of the Public Improvement and Transportation Division, present-day Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR).

Many Travis County Parks are situated along streams, creeks, rivers, or lakes—vital resources and essential lifelines for inhabitants of the region due to the Central Texas climate and ecology. **Long before European settlers arrived, Indigenous groups such as the Tonkawa, Lipan Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa inhabited the area.** When European, African American, Hispanic, and other settlers arrived in the area in the nineteenth century, they also established homesteads, farms and ranches, and communities near waterways. Thus, parks located adjacent to water sources have among the highest probability of archaeological and historical resources associated with Indigenous Americans and early European, African American, Hispanic, and other settlements.

Some properties that were acquired by the County functioned as ranches or agricultural farms prior to their conversion to County parks, including Milton Reimers Ranch Park, which was established as a cattle ranch in 1893. Several other parks are situated within or adjacent to historic townsites,

communities, settlements, industrial facilities, transportation routes, or large-scale infrastructure projects like the 1941 Mansfield Dam. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the Travis County Parks system grew substantially, with the introduction of large-scale parks, including Southeast Metropolitan Park, Northeast Metropolitan Park, and Del Valle Softball complex.

Historic, cultural, and archaeological resources and sites have been identified within the Travis County Parks system include archaeological deposits and ruins, transportation and infrastructure resources (historic trails, bridges, dams, and canals), and cemeteries. These resources provide opportunities for preservation and interpretation to the public, especially one-room schoolhouses, such as Nameless Schoolhouse, and cemeteries, including historically black cemeteries. Many of these assets are already **Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHTMs), Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks (RTHLs), and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).** Historic assets throughout the county, within parks and beyond, are shown in the planning area maps on page 55. These assets were taken into consideration to help prioritize lands for parkland acquisition as part of our parkland acquisition prioritization process described on page 120.

In addition to man-made resources, natural resources were also identified within Travis County Parks that have cultural and historic significance, including Comanche Peak, the only peak in the County named for Indigenous Americans, Pilot Knob, and Hamilton Pool. Given the long history of human habitation and settlement in and around parks within the Travis County Parks system, there are likely as-yet-unidentified historic and cultural resources, including the potential for **Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs).**

Predominant Historic Themes

A review of previous historic and cultural studies of Travis County Parks identified several overarching historic themes and areas of significance associated with extant resources within the County’s parks.

Indigenous History Theme

Associated with the historic occupation or movement of Indigenous peoples with ancestral homelands in Central Texas, including the Comanche, Tonkawa, Kiowa and Lipan Apache. They may include archaeological sites, natural resources, burial remains, or TCPs.

Agriculture Theme

Associated with farming, ranching, subsistence or large-scale agricultural production. It could include farms, ranches, irrigation features, residences, cultivated fields and orchards, cisterns and wells, and cattle trails. An example is the Milton Reimers Ranch property and the recently-acquired RGK Ranch.

Transportation Theme

Associated with the historic movement of goods or peoples. It could include bridges, culverts, roadways, trails, crossings, and auto-related resources (gas stations, service stations). Examples include the Onion Creek bridge and the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail.

Infrastructure Theme

Covers facilities and systems that support the functional and organizational needs of communities and societies, including dams, levees, canals, water treatment plants, etc. An example is the Mansfield Dam.

Parks & Recreation Theme

Covers the development and expansion of Travis County Parks system, and could include benches, shade structures, pools, bathhouses, pavilions, ancillary park buildings and structures, or parklands themselves. Examples are Fritz Hughes and Mary Quinlin Parks.

Early Settlement Theme (Anglo/European, African American, Hispanic)

Covers resources associated with the early settlement of Travis County, and could include early townsites, settlements, and Freedom Colonies. Examples include Nameless Cemetery, historic black cemeteries, and the former townsite of Mud.

Education Theme

Covers resources associated with education in Central Texas and may include schoolhouses (and ruins or former sites of) or ancillary structures that supported educational facilities, like gymnasiums. Examples are one-room schoolhouses and the Nameless School.

Commerce & Industry Theme

Covers resources associated with commercial or industrial development, which may include stone quarries, shops or businesses, or other commercial resources. An example is the Moore’s Crossing store.

Natural Resources Theme

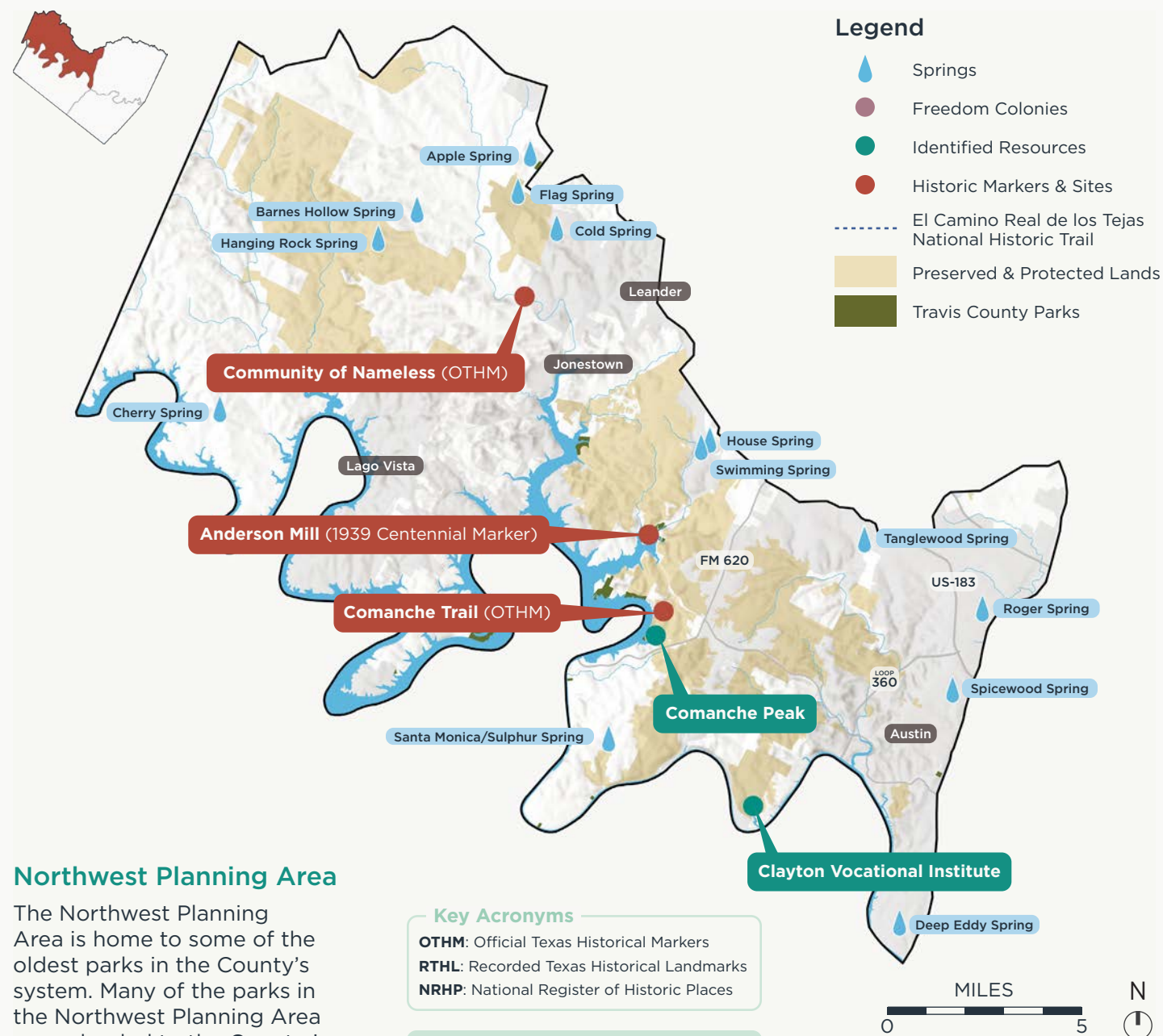
Covers naturally occurring landforms or features that have associations with historic or current communities and may include springs, bluffs, geological features or formations. The grotto at Hamilton Pool or Comanche Peak are good examples.

Traditional Cultural Resources (TCP)

A resource that is “eligible for inclusion in the National Register for its significance to a living community because of its association with cultural beliefs, customs, or practices that are rooted in the community’s history and that are important in maintaining the community’s cultural identity.” No known TCPs were identified within Travis County Parks to date, although future community outreach may result in their identification.



Sandy Creek Park
Source: Travis County Archives



Northwest Planning Area

The Northwest Planning Area is home to some of the oldest parks in the County's system. Many of the parks in the Northwest Planning Area were deeded to the County in the 1930s and 1940s. Parks in this planning area are largely concentrated along the Colorado River and Lake Travis, giving them a high probability for archaeological resources. However, the construction of Mansfield Dam in 1941 and the subsequent creation of Lake Travis means that there may be archaeological or standing structure resources that were submerged beneath the lake. The former Nameless Schoolhouse and cemetery are also located within Travis County Parks.

Key Acronyms

OTHM: Official Texas Historical Markers
RTHL: Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks
NRHP: National Register of Historic Places

Previously Designated

Resources: Maxey Cemetery (OTHM), Community of Nameless (OTHM).

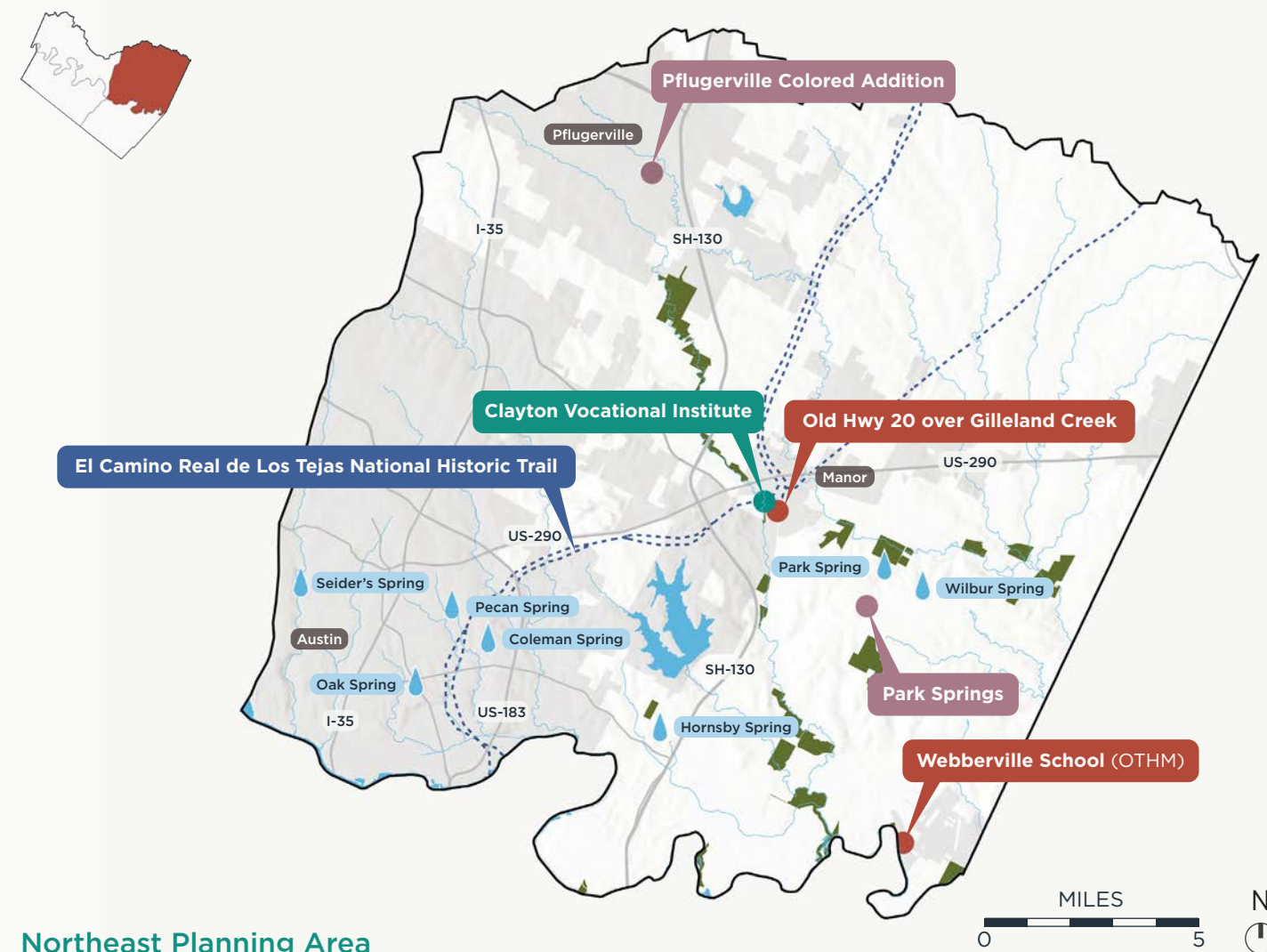
Previously Identified Resources:

Nameless Schoolhouse and Cemetery, Maxey Cemetery, Rosenbush Grave, Anderson Mill (1936 Centennial Marker - NR Eligible), Comanche Trail (OTHM), underwater bridge formerly at Lohman's Crossing, possible archaeological deposits from former Mud townsite.

Historic Themes: Indigenous History, Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Settlements and Townsites, Infrastructure, Women's History, Natural Resources.

Natural Resources (vicinity):

Comanche Peak, Flag Spring, Cold Spring, Apple Spring, Barnes Hollow Spring, Hanging Rock Spring, Santa Monica/Sulphur Springs, and Swimming/House Spring.



Northeast Planning Area

The Northeast Planning Area is the most demographically diverse quadrant with larger populations of African American and Hispanic residents. Webberville Park is located in the former rural community of Webberville, named for an early African American settler who received title to a land grant in 1827. By the mid-nineteenth century, the town included a gristmill, post office, several stores, churches, and a school. While the community declined by 1925, the area may still have significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resources associated with African American settlement. A historic African American schoolhouse is also within East Metropolitan Park.

Previously Designated

Resources: Archaeological deposits (Indigenous, Agricultural), sites of historic and cultural significance including the former Manor School, Manda School, and Gravel Hill School, and possible remains of Hayden Park School (African American). Settlements and townsites include the former African American Webberville settlement and the possible West Side Freedom Colony. Remains of historic cistern, chipping station, and agricultural resources at East Metropolitan Park.

Previously Identified Resources:

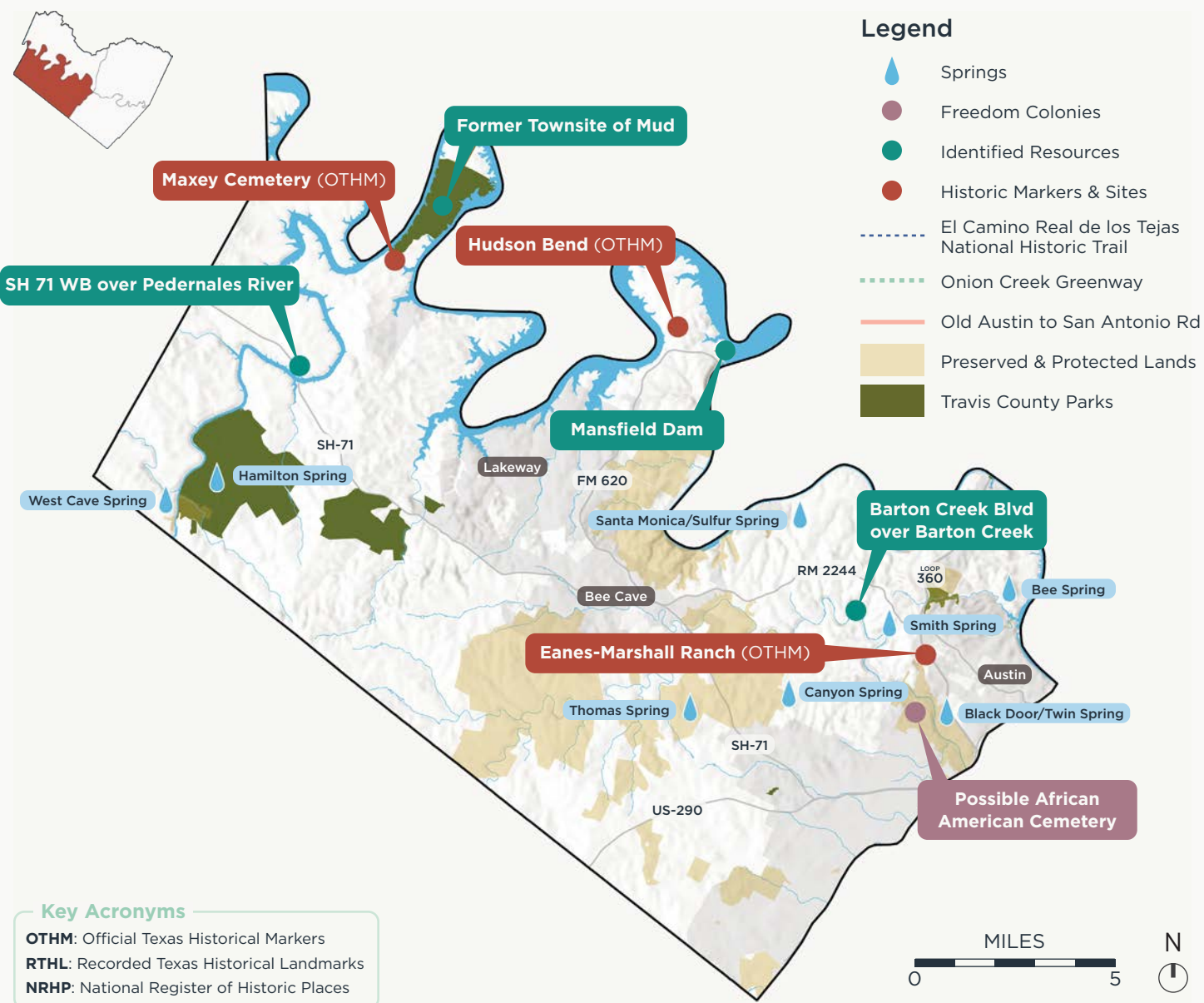
Clayton Vocational Institute, Webberville (OTHMs), El Camino Real De Los Tejas National Historic Trail.

Historic Themes:

African American and Hispanic History, Education, Indigenous History, Transportation, Agriculture, Settlements and Townsites.

Natural Resources (vicinity):

Comanche Peak, Park Spring, Wilbur Spring.



Southwest Planning Area

Travis County Parks within the Southwest Planning Area consist of several small urban and suburban parks, one of the system's largest parks (the former agricultural property at Reimers Ranch Park), and the unique natural, ecological, and recreational resource that is the grotto at Hamilton Pool Preserve. Transportation and infrastructure resources like the Mansfield Dam Park and the Loop 360 (Pennybacker) Bridge likely also have historic or cultural significance.

Previously Designated

Resources: Eanes-Marshall Ranch (OTHM), Maxey Cemetery (OTHM)

Previously Identified Resources:

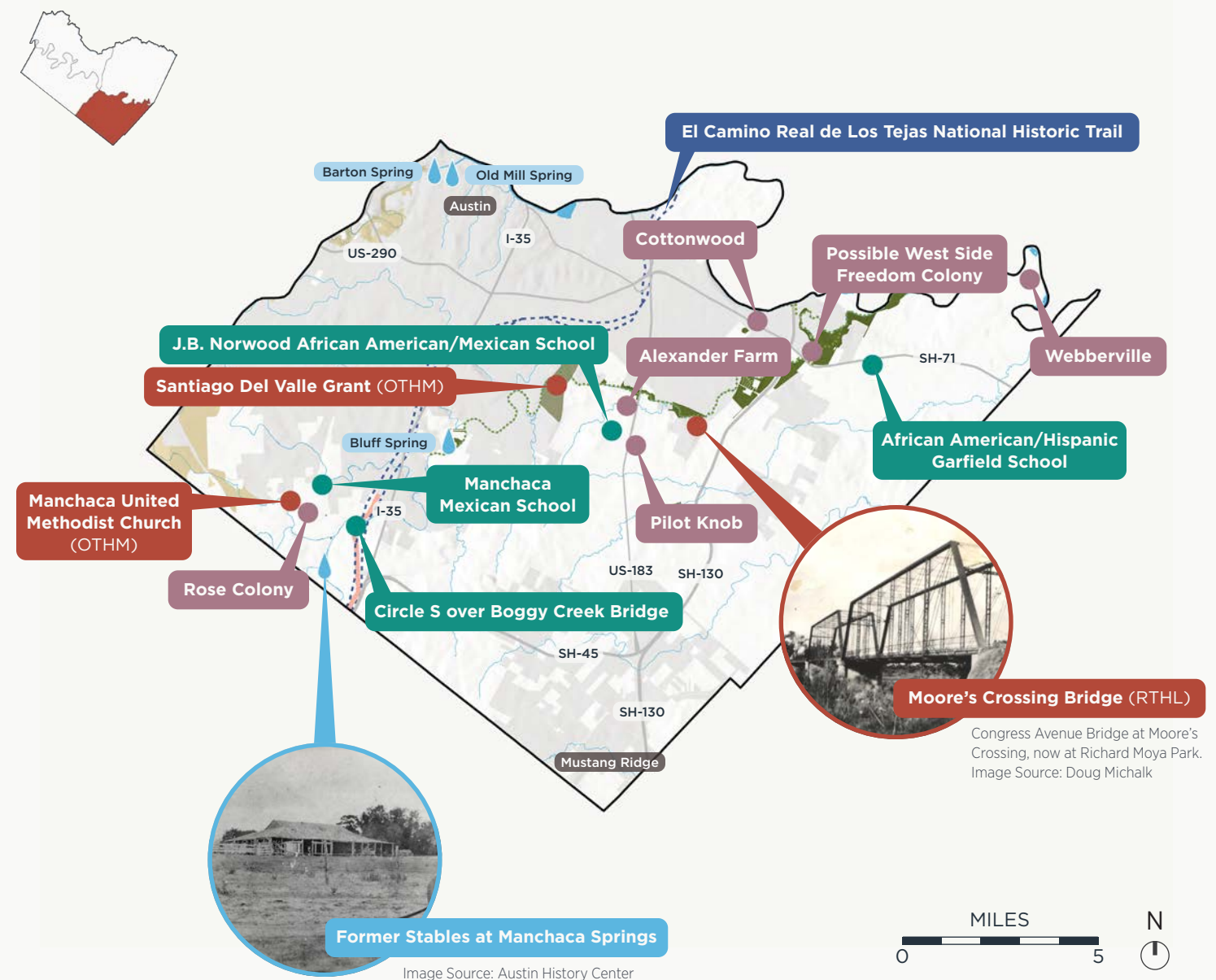
Milton Reimers Ranch Park and associated resources, Hamilton Pool Road over Pedernales River bridge (NR-eligible), Mansfield Dam, Residential, Agricultural, and Educational Ruins, Possible Cemetery (Luke Owens grave at Reimer Ranch Park), West Cave and Hamilton Springs.

Historic Themes:

Indigenous History, Settlement and Townsites, Transportation, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Infrastructure, New Deal, Agriculture, Education.

Natural Resources (vicinity):

West Cave Spring, Hamilton Spring, Smith Spring, Back Door Twin Spring.



Southeast Planning Area

The Southeast Planning Area has the fewest number of parks in the Travis County system, and some of the newest. Most of the parks in this quadrant were acquired in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Parks in this area feature large sporting complexes for athletics and recreation, along with large undisturbed green spaces. The National Register listed Moore's Crossing Historic District is partially located within the Richard Moya Park.

Previously Designated

Resources: Moore's Crossing Historic District (NRHP), Moore's Crossing Bridge (RTHL), Santiago del Valle Grant (OTHM), McKinney Homestead Historic District, Onion Creek Crossings at McKinney Falls Historic District.

Historic Themes: Indigenous History, Transportation, Agriculture, Education

Previously Identified Resources:

Historic cabin (original location unknown), Pecan orchard (Agriculture), Old San Antonio Road over Onion Creek Bridge (NRHP-eligible), Colorado School #1, Devotion School.

Natural Resources (vicinity):

Bluff Spring, Pilot Knob, Manchaca Springs (Onion Springs, Live Oak Springs).



Trail at East Metropolitan Park
Source: Travis County Parks Foundation

Park Assessments & Profiles

In this section, each park is profiled in detail and given an assessment score based on on-the-ground evaluations of park facilities, accessibility, and overall performance that inform recommendations for improvements.

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Park Types & Assessment Methods

To better understand current conditions in Travis County Parks, assessments were conducted. Each park received a score across multiple evaluation criteria.

Park Types

The Travis County Park system includes six park types, ranging from small neighborhood parks to large metropolitan and regional parks. Each type has distinct characteristics, which are outlined below and informed the development of our assessment tools and evaluation standards.

Park Types	Planning Area	Number of Parks	Description
Neighborhood Park  • 0-5 mile service area • <10 minute radius • <20 acres	NW	5	Neighborhood parks are small, day-use spaces near residential areas with picnic areas, playgrounds, and small sports facilities. These parks offer convenient access to outdoor recreation and serve as local gathering spaces.
	NE	2	
	SW	1	
	SE	0	
Community Park  • 0-25 mile service area • <30 minute radius • 20 - 200 acres	NW	2	Community parks are mid-sized spaces for day and overnight use, balancing recreation and natural conservation. Serving multiple neighborhoods, they feature picnic areas, sports facilities, and boat ramps.
	NE	2	
	SW	1	
	SE	3	
Metropolitan Park  • 0-100 mile service area • 30 minute – 2 hour radius • >200 acres	NW	5	Metropolitan parks are large, day-use parks featuring both natural areas and major recreational facilities like sports complexes, trails, and skate parks. As key greenway anchors, they connect to larger trail systems, with overnight use allowed by permit.
	NE	2	
	SW	1	
	SE	1	
Regional Park  • >100 mile service area • 2 – 6 hour radius • >200 acres	NW	3	Regional parks protect unique natural areas like Lake Travis and the Pedernales River while providing recreation such as boating, camping, and hiking. They may also feature specialized facilities like observatories for nature appreciation and education.
	NE	0	
	SW	3	
	SE	0	
Preserves  • Land managed primarily as natural areas	NW	0	Preserves are established primarily for conservation of significant or unique natural or cultural resources and may have limited public access, such as at Hamilton Pool, where public day-use is restricted to a certain number of users.
	NE	0	
	SW	2	
	SE	0	
Greenways  • Connects other parks and open space	NW	0	Greenways along creeks and rivers support trails, protect water quality, and reduce flood impacts. They also preserve wildlife habitats, facilitate animal movement, and maintain scenic rural landscapes.
	NE	3	
	SW	0	
	SE	2	

Assessment Methods

The park assessment tool was tailored to meet the specific needs of the Travis County Park system. Designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of park quality and performance, the tool evaluates each park across eight key categories: **Park Access, Park Features, Supportive Facilities, Safety & Serious Maintenance Concerns, Aesthetics, Health, Culture & Convenience,** and **Ecological Function.** These categories help identify strengths and gaps within each park, guiding future improvements and investment priorities.

1. Park Access

Park Access focuses on making parks easy to find, enter, and move through safely. This includes visible, welcoming entrances with clear signage, ADA-accessible paths where possible, and strong connections to sidewalks, crosswalks, and nearby destinations. It also ensures there is enough parking for cars and bikes, and that visitors can easily find their way to key areas within the park.

2. Park Features

Park Features focuses on the quality, condition, and usability of recreational and educational elements in the park. This includes picnic areas, plazas, and boat launches. Features are assessed for safety, maintenance, and overall appearance to ensure they are inviting, functional, and enhance the visitor experience.

3. Supportive Facilities

Supportive Facilities evaluates the essential amenities that enhance park comfort and cleanliness. This includes permanent restrooms, trash and recycling receptacles, and drinking fountains. These features are assessed for functionality, cleanliness, and appropriate quantity to support the size and use of the park, ensuring a positive and convenient experience for all visitors.

4. Safety & Serious Maintenance Concerns

Safety & Serious Maintenance Concerns looks at how safe, clean, and welcoming a park feels. This includes well-kept surroundings, good visibility, clear paths, lighting, and the absence of litter, vandalism, or inappropriate use.

5. Aesthetics

Aesthetics considers how visually appealing and thoughtfully designed a park feels. This includes the presence of trees, landscaping, high-quality materials, coordinated colors, attractive signage and furnishings, and a unique sense of style. It also assesses how well parks buffer or hide any nearby unsightly land uses and whether the sights and sounds contribute to a pleasant atmosphere.

6. Health

Health looks at how parks support physical activity, mental well-being, and environmental health. It includes trails, sports areas, and fitness activities available for all ages, as well as places for social connection, nature views, and shade. Features like diverse vegetation and sustainable stormwater systems also support a healthy, enjoyable environment.

7. Culture & Convenience

Culture and Convenience considers how parks reflect local identity, celebrate community, and provide welcoming, inclusive experiences. It includes features like public art, performance spaces, historical signage, and bilingual information. The assessment also looks at inclusive play areas, design elements that reflect community culture, and whether the park avoids unwelcoming features like hostile architecture.

8. Ecological Function

Ecological Function focuses on the park’s ability to support healthy ecosystems. It evaluates factors such as landform stability, soil condition, and hydrology, including creek health and buffer integrity. It also looks at the diversity of habitats, plant species, and vegetation structure, aiming for a variety of ecological types. The presence of invasive species or nuisance wildlife is noted.



Lake Travis's water level fluctuate, often restricting water access when low. The lake in April of 2024 was 38% full. At Mansfield Dam, this exposed the entire boat ramp, preventing water recreation.
Source: Jay Janner, American-Statesman

Assessment Scoring

Each assessment category consists of multiple criteria that the field team evaluated during site visits. For each element, the team assigned a score from 1 to 5. A score of 5 indicates abundance, high quality, excellent condition, or a strong positive presence—such as "well maintained," "highly accessible," or "culturally vibrant." A score of 1 represents scarcity, poor condition, or significant concern—such as "unusable," "unsafe," or "completely lacking."

Once scoring is complete, individual element scores within each category are averaged to produce a category score. These eight category scores are then used to calculate an overall park score. However, because each park type—neighborhood, community, metropolitan, regional, or preserve—has different priorities and functions, not all categories carry equal weight.

To address this, a weighting system was developed to reflect the unique goals and characteristics of each park type. For example, Ecological Function was weighted higher for Preserves. Park Access was weighted higher for Community and Neighborhood parks. This approach ensures that the final score more accurately represents the park's intended role and community value.

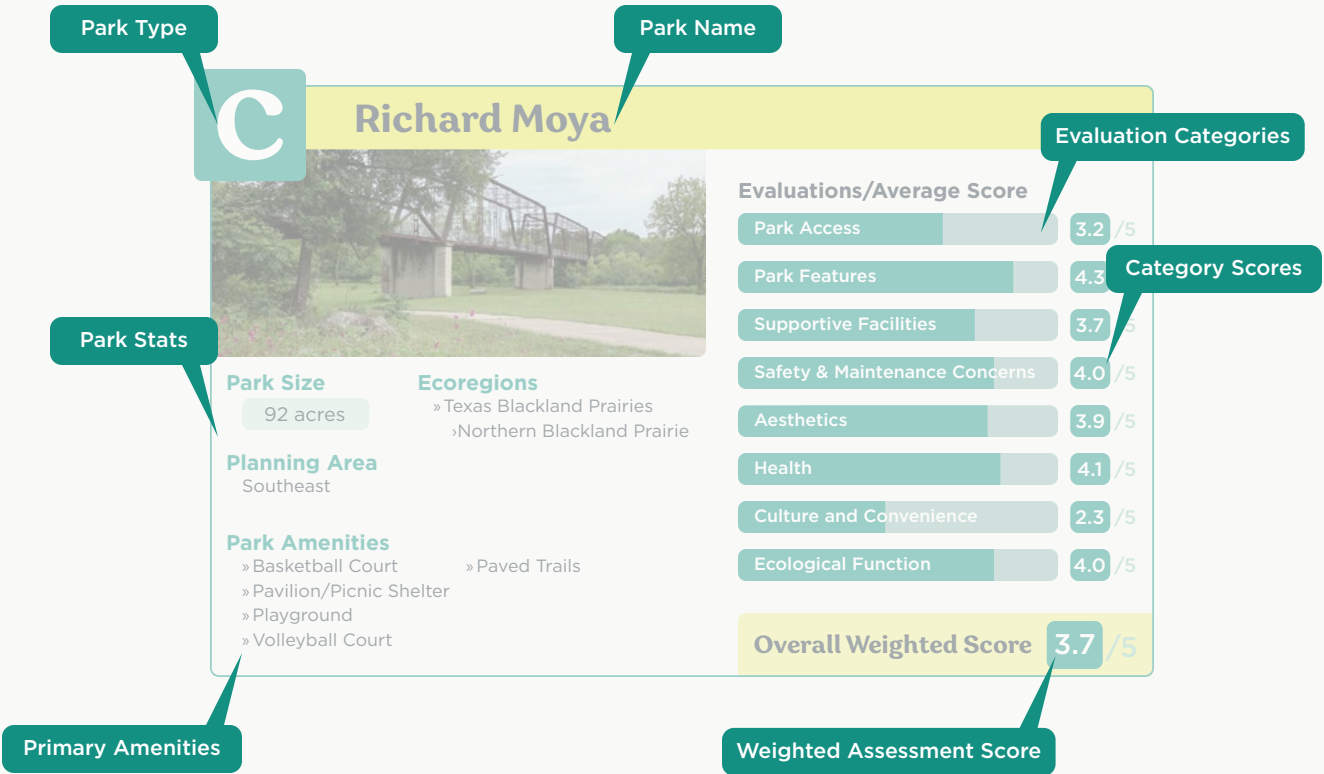
Assessment Conditions

Park assessments were completed in late winter and early spring of 2025, as Central Texas faced ongoing severe drought. By May, Lake Travis, which is part of the Colorado River system, was just 42% full, nearly 45 feet below normal levels. The prolonged dry conditions, with little relief expected, directly affected park use, especially at lakeside parks, resulting in closed boat ramps, limited swimming, and altered recreational access. This assessment acknowledges these temporary conditions and does not lower the park's score.



Team members discuss the park assessment with Pace Bend Park staff in late winter, 2025.

How to read the Park Scorecards



Park System Matrix

This table provides an overview of the facilities and amenities available at each park, along with the overall park score generated during site assessments. These scores reflect how well each park meets standards across the eight evaluation categories, offering a snapshot of quality, condition, and functionality.

Following the table, detailed park profiles are presented for every site. These profiles are organized first by planning area and then by park size—from the smallest neighborhood parks to the largest metropolitan and regional parks. Each profile includes a summary of the assessment findings and key amenities.

Park Type	Park Name	Planning Area	Acres	Water/Resource-Based Facilities						Play/Athletic/Sports Facilities								Trails (Miles)						Park Score
				Boat Ramp	Campsite	Fishing	Pavilion	Swimming	Splash Pad	Diamond Fields	Rectangular Fields	Multi-use Field	Basketball Court	Multi-use Courts	Sand Volleyball	Disc Golf	Playground	Multi-use (paved)	Multi-use (unpaved)	Multi-use	Hiking	Primitive	Mountain Bike	
Neighborhood	Allen Memorial Park	NW	10				1										1							2.5
	Athens Park	NE	1														1							2.7
	Ben E. Fisher Park	NE	6				1						2		1		1							2.4
	Fritz Hughes Park	NW	5					1			1		1				1							2.5
	Little Webberville Park	NE	4			1											1	0.02						2.5
	Mary Quinlan Park	NW	6	1				1			1		1											2.2
	Selma Hughes Park	NW	5																					2.1
	Tom Hughes Park	NW	14				1	1																2.9
	Windmill Run Park	SW	16														1							3.8
Community	Barkley Meadow Park	NE	256			1	1										1	1.6						3.7
	Cypress Creek Park	NW	50	1		1													1					3.2
	Del Valle Softball Complex	SE	12				1			3								0.1						3
	Loop 360 Boat Ramp	SW	3	1		1																		1.9
	Richard Moya Park	SE	110				5					2	1		2		4	3						3.7
	Sandy Creek Park	NW	92	1		1															1			1.6
	Webberville Park	NE	100	1		1	3				2		1		3		4							3.4
Metro.	Bee Creek Sports Complex	SW	73								5		1				1							4
	East Metropolitan Park	NE	273			1	1	1		7	4	2	3		2	1	4	5	0.1					4.1
	Northeast Metropolitan Park	NE	420				2		1	8	18		1	2			4	7.4						3.9
	Southeast Metropolitan Park	SE	308			1	1			11	4		1				3	3.4	3.6					3.9
Regional	Arkansas Bend Park	NW	395	2	1	1											1	0.1	0.8		4.9		1.4	4.7
	Bob Wentz Park	NW	222	1			21	1			1				1			0.3	0.02					3.7
	Hippie Hollow Park	NW	106					1											1					4
	Mansfield Dam Park	SW	79	1	1	1	1	1									1	1						3.8
	Milton Reimers Ranch Park	SW	3,600			1		1											3	9		3	15	4.6
	Pace Bend Park	SW	1,764	3	1	1		1											8	13	0.2			3.5
Pres.	Hamilton Pool Preserve	SW	232					1											1					4.6
	Wild Basin Preserve2	SW	163																		3			N/A
Connector	Colorado River Trail	NE/SE	82																					N/A
	Gilleland Creek Greenway	NE	1,415																					N/A
	Onion Creek Greenway	SE	522																					N/A
	Wilbarger Creek Greenway	NE	1,012																					N/A
Other	Dink Pearson Park1	NW	4																					N/A
	Menchaca Gardens Park1	SE	4																					N/A
	Menchaca Springs Park1	SE	42																					N/A
	Nameless School/Cemetery2	NW	2																					N/A
	RGK Ranch Park1	SW	1,507																					N/A
	Timber Creek Park1	SE	77																					N/A
Total Parkland			12,992	12	3	12	39	10	1	29	36	4	12	2	9	1	28	22	19	22	9	3	16	

1Undeveloped Park
2Managed by Others

N

Athens Park

Park Size

0.5 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Northeast

Park Amenities

» Playground

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

3.1 /5

Park Features

4.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

1.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.4 /5

Aesthetics

2.5 /5

Health

1.4 /5

Culture & Convenience

1.3 /5

Ecological Function

3 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.7 /5

N

Little Webberville Park

Park Size

6 acres

Ecoregions

» Eastern Central Texas Plains
» Southern Post Oak Savanna
» Floodplains & Low Terraces

Planning Area

Northeast

Park Amenities

» Playground
» Boat Ramp
» Fishing Area
» Kayak Access

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.1 /5

Park Features

2.7 /5

Supportive Facilities

1.5 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.9 /5

Aesthetics

2.3 /5

Health

2.3 /5

Culture & Convenience

1.8 /5

Ecological Function

2.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.5 /5

N

Ben E. Fisher Park

Park Size

6 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Northeast

Park Amenities

» Basketball Court
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Volleyball Court
» Hiking Trails
» Paved Multi-use

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

1.8 /5

Park Features

2.3 /5

Supportive Facilities

2.7 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

3.7 /5

Aesthetics

2.3 /5

Health

2.3 /5

Culture & Convenience

1.0 /5

Ecological Function

3.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.4 /5

C

Webberville Park

Park Size

135 acres

Ecoregions

» Eastern Central Texas Plains
» Southern Post Oak Savanna
» Floodplains & Low Terraces

Planning Area

Northeast

Park Amenities

» Barbecue grills
» Basketball court
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Soccer Field
» Softball Field
» Volleyball Court
» Boat Ramp
» Fishing Area

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.6 /5

Park Features

3.5 /5

Supportive Facilities

3.3 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

3.8 /5

Aesthetics

3.4 /5

Health

3.6 /5

Culture & Convenience

2.8 /5

Ecological Function

3.6 /5

Overall Weighted Score

3.4 /5

M

East Metropolitan Park



Park Size
273 acres

Ecoregions
» Eastern Central Texas Plains
» Southern Post Oak Savanna

Planning Area
Northeast

Park Amenities
» Baseball Field
» Basketball Court
» Climbing
» Concession Building
» Disc Golf
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Soccer Field
» Softball Field
» Volleyball Court
» Fishing Area
» Pool
» Hiking Trails
» Paved Multiuse Trails

Evaluations/Average Score	
Park Access	3.5 /5
Park Features	3.3 /5
Supportive Facilities	5.0 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.7 /5
Aesthetics	4.6 /5
Health	4.4 /5
Culture & Convenience	3.0 /5
Ecological Function	4.0 /5
Overall Weighted Score 4.1 /5	

N

Fritz Hughes Park



Park Size
5 acres

Ecoregions
» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area
Northwest

Park Amenities
» Basketball Court
» Playground
» Fishing Area
» Swim Area

Evaluations/Average Score	
Park Access	2.4 /5
Park Features	2.7 /5
Supportive Facilities	1.3 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	3.9 /5
Aesthetics	2.9 /5
Health	3.3 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.9 /5
Ecological Function	2.7 /5
Overall Weighted Score 2.5 /5	

M

Northeast Metropolitan Park



Park Size
420 acres

Ecoregions
» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area
Northeast

Park Amenities
» Baseball Field
» Basketball Court
» BMX Track
» Concession Building
» Cricket Field
» Pickleball Courts
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Skate Park
» Soccer Field
» Splash Pad
» Tennis Court
» Fishing Area
» Paved Trails

Evaluations/Average Score	
Park Access	3.7 /5
Park Features	3.8 /5
Supportive Facilities	5.0 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.5 /5
Aesthetics	3.8 /5
Health	4.2 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.2 /5
Ecological Function	3.6 /5
Overall Weighted Score 3.9 /5	

N

Selma Hughes Park



Park Size
5 acres

Ecoregions
» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area
Northwest

Park Amenities
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter

Evaluations/Average Score	
Park Access	1.9 /5
Park Features	2.0 /5
Supportive Facilities	1.3 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.4 /5
Aesthetics	2.1 /5
Health	1.9 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.1 /5
Ecological Function	2.1 /5
Overall Weighted Score 2.1 /5	

N

Mary Quinlan Park



Park Size

5.8 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Basketball Court
» Boat Ramp
» Fishing Area
» Swim Area

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

1.9 /5

Park Features

3.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

1.3 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.2 /5

Aesthetics

2.2 /5

Health

2.2 /5

Culture & Convenience

2.2 /5

Ecological Function

2.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.2 /5

C

Cypress Creek Park



Park Size

15 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Boat Ramp
» Fishing Area

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.8 /5

Park Features

3.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

2.3 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.1 /5

Aesthetics

2.6 /5

Health

3.1 /5

Culture & Convenience

3.3 /5

Ecological Function

3.9 /5

Overall Weighted Score

3.2 /5

N

Allen Park



Park Size

10 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Hiking Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.3 /5

Park Features

3.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

3.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

3.4 /5

Aesthetics

2.6 /5

Health

1.9 /5

Culture & Convenience

1.5 /5

Ecological Function

3.2 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.5 /5

N

Tom Hughes Park



Park Size

15 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Swim Area
» Hiking Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.2 /5

Park Features

4.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

3.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.3 /5

Aesthetics

3.5 /5

Health

2.6 /5

Culture & Convenience

3.5 /5

Ecological Function

4.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score

2.9 /5

C

Sandy Creek Park



Park Size

92 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Boat Ramp » Hiking Area
» Campsites
» Kayak Access
» Swim Area

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

2.2 /5

Park Features

1.3 /5

Supportive Facilities

1.3 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

2.9 /5

Aesthetics

1.3 /5

Health

1.8 /5

Culture & Convenience

1.3 /5

Ecological Function

2.8 /5

Overall Weighted Score

1.6 /5

R

Bob Wentz Park



Park Size

211 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Pavilion/Picnic Shelters » Hiking Trails
» Volleyball Court
» Boat Ramp
» Swim Area

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

3.0 /5

Park Features

3.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

5.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

5.0 /5

Aesthetics

2.8 /5

Health

3.9 /5

Culture & Convenience

3.3 /5

Ecological Function

3.3 /5

Overall Weighted Score

3.7 /5

R

Hippie Hollow Park



Park Size

109 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Swim Area
» Hiking Trails
» Paved Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

4.0 /5

Park Features

4.3 /5

Supportive Facilities

4.7 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.7 /5

Aesthetics

4.8 /5

Health

4.6 /5

Culture & Convenience

4.4 /5

Ecological Function

4.8 /5

Overall Weighted Score

4.0 /5

R

Arkansas Bend Park



Park Size

323 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Northwest

Park Amenities

» Pavilion/Picnic Shelters » Hiking Trails
» Playground » Cabins
» Boat Ramp
» Campsites

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

4.5 /5

Park Features

5.0 /5

Supportive Facilities

5.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.9 /5

Aesthetics

4.9 /5

Health

4.8 /5

Culture & Convenience

3.8 /5

Ecological Function

4.9 /5

Overall Weighted Score

4.7 /5

C

Richard Moya Park



Park Size

92 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Southeast

Park Amenities

» Basketball Court » Paved Trails
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Volleyball Court

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access	3.2 /5
Park Features	4.3 /5
Supportive Facilities	3.7 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.0 /5
Aesthetics	3.9 /5
Health	4.1 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.3 /5
Ecological Function	4.0 /5

Overall Weighted Score 3.7 /5

M

Southeast Metropolitan Park



Park Size

299 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Southeast

Park Amenities

» Baseball Field » Soccer Field
» Basketball Court » Softball Field
» Climbing » Fishing Area
» Concession Building » Hiking Trails
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter » Paved Trails
» Playground

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access	3.7 /5
Park Features	3.6 /5
Supportive Facilities	5.0 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.2 /5
Aesthetics	3.6 /5
Health	3.9 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.8 /5
Ecological Function	4.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score 3.9 /5

C

Del Valle Softball Complex



Park Size

35 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Southeast

Park Amenities

» Concession Building
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Softball Field
» Paved Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access	3.0 /5
Park Features	3.8 /5
Supportive Facilities	2.7 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	3.7 /5
Aesthetics	2.0 /5
Health	2.4 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.8 /5
Ecological Function	2.1 /5

Overall Weighted Score 3 /5

C

Barkley Meadows Park



Park Size

256 acres

Ecoregions

» Texas Blackland Prairies
» Northern Blackland Prairie

Planning Area

Southeast

Park Amenities

» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter » Paved Trails
» Playground
» Fishing Area
» Kayak Access

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access	3.3 /5
Park Features	3.8 /5
Supportive Facilities	3.0 /5
Safety & Maintenance Concerns	4.0 /5
Aesthetics	4.1 /5
Health	4.1 /5
Culture & Convenience	2.5 /5
Ecological Function	4.3 /5

Overall Weighted Score 3.7 /5

C

Loop 360 Boat Ramp



Park Size

3 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

» Boat Ramp
» Fishing Area
» Kayak Access

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

1.9 / 5

Park Features

4.0 / 5

Supportive Facilities

2.5 / 5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

3.8 / 5

Aesthetics

1.0 / 5

Health

0 / 5

Culture & Convenience

0 / 5

Ecological Function

1.9 / 5

Overall Weighted Score

1.9 / 5

R

Mansfield Dam Park



Park Size

71 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

» Chess Tables
» Climbing
» Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
» Playground
» Boat Ramp
» Campsites
» Fishing Area
» Swim Area
» Hiking Trails
» Paved Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

4.1 / 5

Park Features

3.1 / 5

Supportive Facilities

4.3 / 5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.7 / 5

Aesthetics

2.9 / 5

Health

4.0 / 5

Culture & Convenience

2.5 / 5

Ecological Function

4.1 / 5

Overall Weighted Score

3.8 / 5

N

Windmill Run Park



Park Size

17 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

» Playground
» Hiking Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

3.8 / 5

Park Features

4.0 / 5

Supportive Facilities

2.0 / 5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.7 / 5

Aesthetics

4.2 / 5

Health

3.9 / 5

Culture & Convenience

3.3 / 5

Ecological Function

4.1 / 5

Overall Weighted Score

3.8 / 5

M

Bee Creek Sports Complex



Park Size

73 acres

Ecoregions

» Edwards Plateau
» Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

» Baseball Field
» Basketball Court
» Concession Building
» Playground
» Soccer Field
» Paved Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access

4.5 / 5

Park Features

5.0 / 5

Supportive Facilities

5.0 / 5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns

4.8 / 5

Aesthetics

4.6 / 5

Health

4.1 / 5

Culture & Convenience

2.8 / 5

Ecological Function

2.2 / 5

Overall Weighted Score

4 / 5

P

Hamilton Pool Preserve



Park Size

232 acres

Ecoregions

- » Edwards Plateau
- » Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

- » Swim Area
- » Hiking Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access 4.0 /5

Park Features 4.3 /5

Supportive Facilities 4.7 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns 4.7 /5

Aesthetics 4.8 /5

Health 4.6 /5

Culture & Convenience 4.4 /5

Ecological Function 4.8 /5

Overall Weighted Score 4.6 /5

R

Reimers Ranch Park



Park Size

2427 acres

Ecoregions

- » Edwards Plateau
- » Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

- » Astronomical Observatory
- » Climbing
- » Pavilion/Picnic Shelter
- » Fishing Area
- » Swim Area
- » Hiking Trails
- » Equestrian Trails
- » Mountain Bike Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access 3.5 /5

Park Features 4.8 /5

Supportive Facilities 5.0 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns 4.5 /5

Aesthetics 5.0 /5

Health 4.7 /5

Culture & Convenience 4.2 /5

Ecological Function 5.0 /5

Overall Weighted Score 4.6 /5

R

Pace Bend Park



Park Size

1368 acres

Ecoregions

- » Edwards Plateau
- » Balcones Canyonlands

Planning Area

Southwest

Park Amenities

- » Boat Ramp
- » Campsites
- » Swim Area
- » Hiking Trails
- » Equestrian Trails
- » Mountain Bike Trails

Evaluations/Average Score

Park Access 2.5 /5

Park Features 3.2 /5

Supportive Facilities 3.5 /5

Safety & Maintenance Concerns 4.5 /5

Aesthetics 3.8 /5

Health 3.2 /5

Culture & Convenience 1.8 /5

Ecological Function 4.6 /5

Overall Weighted Score 3.5 /5



Playground and water feature at Northeast Metropolitan Park
Source: Hitchcock Design Group

Level of Service Analysis

A Level of Service (LOS) analysis for the Travis County Parks system evaluates how well current parks, trails, and recreational amenities meet the needs of residents. Results from the LOS analysis informed future planning decisions to ensure equitable and efficient park access across the County.

Population-Based Standards

A population-based level of service analysis considers the population of a community in relation to the number of amenities provided. This would typically be done by benchmarking against other counties across the nation using information provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). However, national benchmarks are not a one-size-fits-all standard.

As the fifth most populous county in Texas, Travis County differs significantly from many peer counties. Many of its municipalities, such as the City of Austin, operate robust local park systems, meaning Travis County Parks functions as a supplement to municipal park services, rather than the core provider. Additionally, Travis County’s recreation priorities do not always align with those emphasized in other organizations benchmarks, which tend to focus on traditional sports facilities (e.g., ballfields, basketball courts, disc golf courses).

Travis County Parks emphasizes nature-based recreation, such as hiking, camping, boating, and fishing. This LOS analysis does not use national benchmarking, but rather focuses on comparing County assets between the four (4) planning areas and county-wide, to ensure that all recreation opportunities are available to residents regardless of their location within the County.

The Outdoor Facilities table summarizes population-per-facility ratios for select amenities across the County and by planning area. Lower ratios indicate greater access to a given amenity, while higher ratios indicate fewer facilities relative to population. When comparing between County planning areas, there are several disparities between the amenities to note:

- » The Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas have slightly less playgrounds than the Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas.
- » The Northeast Planning Area is in need of additional pavilions to achieve parity with the other three (3) Planning Areas.
- » The Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas are in need of three (3) to four (4) more swimming opportunities to provide the same level of access as the Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas.
- » The Northeast and Southeast Planning Areas both need more fishing and boat ramp access to provide the same level of access to these amenities as the Northwest and Southwest Planning Areas.

Lowest Level of Access in this Planning Area

Highest Level of Access in this Planning Area

**These are not measured as population per facility, but rather as titled.

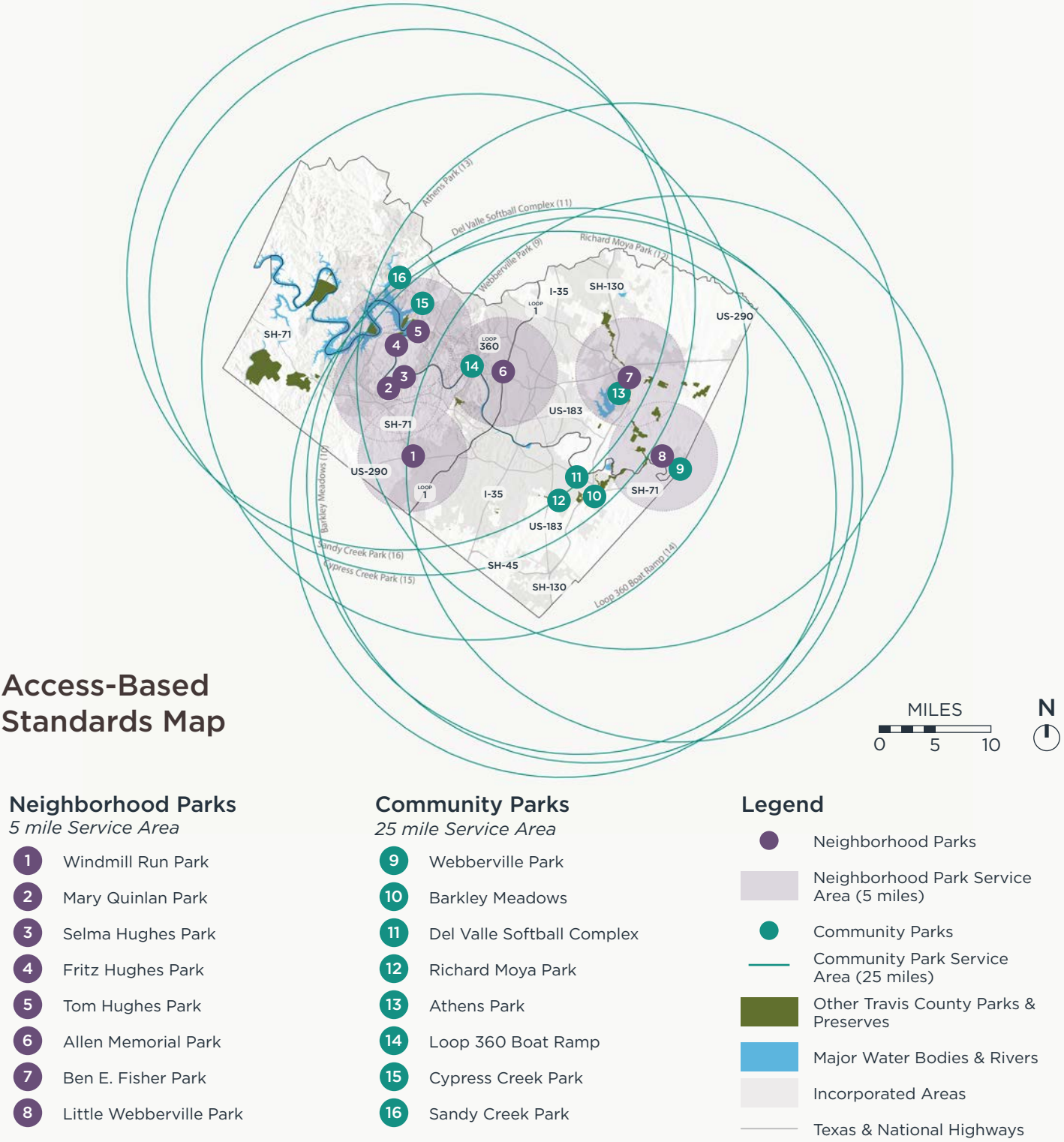
Outdoor Facilities (measured as Population per Facility*)					
Facility	Travis County	Northwest Planning Area	Northeast Planning Area	Southwest Planning Area	Southeast Planning Area
Swimming (Pool or Lake/River Access)	126,071	39,828	321,000	44,575	N/A
Pavilion/Shelter/Covered Picnic Tables	36,494	8,658	91,714	178,300	45,917
Fishing	115,565	66,380	214,000	44,575	183,669
Boat Ramp/Launch/Access	115,565	33,190	641,999	35,660	N/A
Splash Pads	1,386,776	N/A	641,999	N/A	N/A
Camping	462,259	199,139	N/A	89,150	N/A
Acres of Parkland Per 1,000 Residents**	5	3.97	1.31	23.69	1.86
Miles of Trails**	86	9.8	12.6	56.4	6.7

How to read this Table

This table presents population-per-facility ratios for select outdoor and nature-based amenities across Travis County and by planning area. Lower numbers indicate greater access to an amenity (fewer people per facility), while higher numbers indicate more limited access. “N/A” indicates that no county facility of that type is currently located within the planning area. Shaded cells highlight planning areas with the highest and lowest population-per-facility ratios for each amenity.

Access-Based Standards

An access-based level of service standard determines where new parks or amenities might be needed based on geographic analysis. The County has assigned park types to each of its parks, with corresponding “service area” for each park type. The County then uses these park types and service areas to determine where parkland dedication fees, which are incurred on housing developments, are utilized throughout the County. Parkland dedication fees must be utilized within the service area of the neighborhood or community park where the development occurs, thus, park investments can be made where new amenities are needed to serve a growing population.





Stargazing at the Milton Reimers Ranch Observatory

Recommendations

These recommendations were informed by feedback from the community, focus groups, input from County Commissioners, and Travis County Parks staff to address current and future community needs.

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Park Land Management

Goal Statement

Protect, conserve, and restore the quality of the natural environment and its resilience to climate change for the benefit of current and future Travis County residents.

1.1 Adopt a strategic and scientific approach to proactive land management.

Land management is already a strength for Travis County, but an updated, strategic approach will help the County strengthen proactive stewardship. In parallel with the Parks Comprehensive Plan, an effort is underway to create a Parks Land Management Plan, slated for completion in 2026.

“[I want a] land management plan with all staff working towards unified goals”

- Land Management Focus Group Workshop Participant

1.1.A Develop a land management plan informed by a robust climate vulnerability analysis that includes these goals:

- **Retain Existing Resources:** Protect and maintain high-quality natural assets, including mature trees, native ecosystems, soils, and hydrologic features, to preserve their ecological integrity and long-term function.
- **Build Resilience at Multiple Scales:** Advance resilience at multiple scales by strengthening habitat connectivity, diversifying community types and vegetation structure, and conserving native biodiversity across local and regional landscapes while building the social infrastructure, partnerships, and stewardship capacity needed to sustain these ecosystems over time.
- **Reduce Threats:** Address climate and ecological risks, such as extreme heat, drought, wildfire, flooding, and habitat degradation, through proactive management practices.
- **Promote Equitable Social Experience & Ecological Services:** Ensure that all communities have access to the benefits of healthy natural systems by incorporating cultural values, community input, and equitable distribution of ecological services in park planning and stewardship.

The plan aims to protect Travis County’s natural assets, strengthen ecological resilience, and proactively address climate-related risks while ensuring all communities benefit equitably from healthy natural systems.

1.1.B Develop monitoring protocols and procedures to track land management work and to inform adaptive management strategies.

Effective long-term land management relies on consistent monitoring to track progress and adapt to changing needs, and a recommended monitoring protocol will be developed as part of the Parks Land Management Plan.

1.1.C Establish and maintain formal collaboration channels (e.g., annual summits or regional working groups) to share data and coordinate land management and climate resilience strategies across jurisdictions.

In Central Texas, effective land management—particularly prescribed fire programs—depends on strong collaboration, and sharing knowledge across jurisdictions helps build a more resilient region.

1.1.D Coordinate with appropriate internal and external partners to identify, prioritize, and mitigate hazards across all parklands—including wildfire and fuel buildup, hazardous trees, flooding and erosion, steep or inaccessible terrain, wildlife and environmental exposure, transportation and access constraints, human-caused safety risks, and operational hazards to help protect public safety, staff, and surrounding communities. (See Public Safety, page 112)

In a rapidly growing county like Travis County, land management impacts public safety and presents opportunities to enhance ecological health while improving safety across multiple parks.



Parks Team Member Spotlight:

Wildland Fire

The Travis County Wildland Fire program helps to manage undeveloped County parks and conservation lands, including greenways, floodplain buyout and hazard mitigation properties. They work within the Land Management Program to plan and implement prescribed burns with assistance from other agencies and fire departments to mitigate risk of natural and man-made wildland fires that may impact residents of Travis County and as a tool to restore ecosystems.

Prescribed burn at Hamilton Pool Preserve.
Source: Travis County Parks



1.2 Expand, restore, and manage natural areas in parks.

Recent U.S. Census estimates show that Travis County is one of the fastest-growing counties in Texas, with the population increasing 19% from 2013 to 2023. As the County continues to grow, expanding parks and natural areas becomes essential for supporting both community well-being and the health of the local environment. Parks offer far more than recreation. They help clean the air and water, cool neighborhoods, support wildlife, and create healthier places for people to live.

1.2.A Expand land management programs across Travis County parklands and recently acquired properties to maintain healthy ecosystems, improve biodiversity, and reduce wildfire risk.

Travis County is already a strong steward of its public lands, and as parkland continues to grow, the same commitment to caring for and improving these landscapes will be essential.

1.2.B Restore and manage riparian buffers using native species and limit disturbance in floodplains to reduce erosion, support water infiltration, and enhance biodiversity.

The County has long invested in the health of its waterways, with many parks centered around lakes, creeks, springs, and rivers. Restoring and caring for riparian buffers helps keep these systems healthy and resilient into the future.

1.2.C Restore and manage uplands to improve water infiltration, reduce flood risk, and support aquifer recharge.

Healthy upland areas play a major role in water quality and flow. Well-managed woodlands, savannas, and grasslands can make a meaningful difference downstream.

1.2.D Prioritize biodiversity and native species suited to future climatic conditions when planning planting and restoration activities.

Diverse native plants and habitats strengthen Travis County parks, helping them better withstand climate-related challenges.

1.2.E Incorporate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) techniques in park infrastructure to support infiltration, manage stormwater, and reduce erosion (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens).

Recent park projects, like Arkansas Bend Park, have incorporated green stormwater infrastructure, and future park developments should continue using nature-based water management approaches.

1.2.F Develop a lighting management plan for the park system, guided by the Illuminating Engineering Society’s Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting and Dark Sky International’s requirements for being a Dark Sky Place.

Managing light pollution by incorporating dark skies principles is crucial because it protects wildlife that rely on natural darkness for navigation and behavior, supports human health by preserving natural sleep rhythms, and saves energy by reducing wasted outdoor lighting.

1.3 Enhance the ecological function of parks to maximize climate resilience and protect habitat.

Travis County can increase the ecological function of its parks by protecting and managing highly functional areas, expanding restoration projects to improve habitat health, and creating connected corridors to support wildlife movement.

1.3.A Protect and manage high-quality natural resources, including functional native ecosystems and undisturbed soils.

This work centers on understanding existing park resources, safeguarding high-quality natural systems, and managing them to sustain ecological health over time. The Travis County Parks Land Management Plan effort assesses current conditions to establish a baseline that informs long-term stewardship and management decisions.

1.3.B Build ecological resilience at multiple scales by addressing threats like wildfire, drought, and erosion using climate-adapted native species and active land management practices, such as using prescribed fire and brush management to maintain healthy ecosystems and reduce wildfire risk.

1.3.C Enhance landscape connectivity and habitat diversity by linking natural areas and managing for varied vegetation types and structures.

Travis County has invested in acquiring land along waterways to protect water resources, expand recreation through the creation of greenways, and create vital habitat corridors. Strengthening and diversifying these habitats helps wildlife move safely between natural areas, for example, allowing pollinators, birds, and mammals to find food, shelter, and breeding sites across the landscape.



Partner Highlight:
Austin Wildlife Rescue

Austin Wildlife Rescue, a local nonprofit, and Travis County Parks partner to find homes for orphaned, injured, or sick wildlife, including squirrels, raccoons, foxes, ring tailed cats, coyotes, birds, and more. Travis County Parks properties have served as wild release sites since the fall of 2025. Such properties include the future Timber Creek Park and RGK Ranch Park. Travis County works with Austin Wildlife Rescue to identify the ideal habitat for the animals and consider proximity to urban areas and human activity.

Opossums among wildflowers.
Source: Austin Wildlife Rescue

1.4 Provide engagement opportunities for the public and Parks staff related to natural resource stewardship.

In partnership with the Travis County Foundation and other local organizations, the County can expand public programs focused on natural resources. Internally, there are also opportunities to cross-train staff to strengthen land management skills across teams.

1.4.A Support restoration days and citizen science events led by partner organizations like the Travis County Parks Foundation.

Programs like the Travis County Parks Foundation’s Park Stewards initiative provide meaningful ways for community members to support park care and monitoring while fostering deeper connections to the County’s natural spaces.

1.4.B Create and maintain a Land Management training program that allows Parks staff and other County departments to learn and participate in activities such as prescribed burns, invasive species management, and other stewardship practices on County lands.

Land management efforts build team camaraderie and give staff a meaningful way to contribute to the long-term health of County lands. Cross-training staff not only strengthens teamwork but also helps more people understand why this work matters and how they can support it.

1.4.C In partnership with organizations like the Travis County Parks Foundation, develop interpretive signage and guided programs to connect park users with natural resource goals, including fire ecology, watershed protection, habitat restoration, and night sky preservation.

County natural resource experts at supportive organizations are valuable partners for educating the public about our natural areas through signage, art, and interactive programs.

1.4.D Educate park staff on natural resources so they can speak to the public about the park’s ecology and potentially sensitive areas.

Park staff interact with the public every day and can be empowered with engaging information about the park’s ecology and natural features, helping spark curiosity and deepen visitors’ connection to the area.

Greenways & Trails

Goal Statement

Develop, expand, and connect a greenway and trail network that serves all communities, enhances ecological and social well-being, improves public access to key natural and cultural sites, and links to local and regional trail systems.

Trails play an essential role in helping residents experience the natural beauty of Travis County. People value being able to explore creeks, rivers, and wooded areas, and noted that trails often provide the most meaningful connection to these landscapes. Throughout engagement, community members also emphasized the need for safe, continuous routes that link parks, preserves, and neighborhoods, creating a network that supports recreation, mobility, and everyday access to nature. Strengthening and expanding the County’s greenway and trail system will improve access to open space, highlight the unique character of the region’s waterways, and ensure that more communities are connected to the places they care about.

2.1 Develop, expand, and connect the trail system to local and regional trails and community resources.

Strengthening the County’s trail system will require a coordinated approach to designing, building, and maintaining high-quality facilities that connect people to parks, waterways, and community destinations. By establishing consistent design standards, improving departmental capacity, and integrating safety, accessibility, and wayfinding practices, the County can create a trail network that functions seamlessly across jurisdictions and supports recreation, mobility, and access for all users.



“It would be amazing to have a comprehensive trails plan that includes paved and natural surface trails as part of this comprehensive plan. A trails plan would look at connecting Travis County parks, improving accessibility, and expanding the region’s recreational trail network and users.”

- Community Member

2.1.A **Develop a Travis County Greenways Vision & Management Plan to establish a standard for new greenways and greenway improvements. These design guidelines should include design standards for:**

- Paved Shared Use Paths
- Paved Divided Trails (adjacent facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians)
- Unpaved Trails
- Primitive Trails
- Horse Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails

2.1.B **Expand departmental capacity to manage and maintain the Travis County Greenways system through strategic hiring, informed by the Travis County Greenways Vision & Management Plan.**

Building a dedicated team with the right expertise will help the County maintain safe, resilient, and well-managed greenways as the system grows.

2.1.C **Prioritize materials and design approaches that withstand flooding, heat, and other climate-related and human use stressors, while preserving and/or restoring native habitat.**

Using durable, climate-responsive materials will help trails remain safe and functional while also protecting and restoring the natural habitats they pass through.

2.1.D **Ensure trails are designed to meet or exceed ADA standards wherever applicable.**

Designing trails to meet or exceed accessibility standards will ensure that people of all ages and abilities can safely enjoy the County’s growing trail network.

2.1.E **Establish standards for lighting and safety (for example, emergency call boxes) along high-use trails that incorporate night sky-friendly lighting practices.**

Clear lighting and safety standards will help create secure, comfortable trail experiences while using night sky-friendly practices that protect the County’s natural character.

2.1.F **Integrate trail wayfinding standards into the broader Parks System wayfinding strategy. Signage should include:**

- Destinations accessible via the trail
- Distance
- Directional arrows and orientation markers
- Bilingual language, color-coded graphics, and icons for universal understanding



Project Spotlight:
Wilbarger Creek Greenway

The Wilbarger Creek Greenway is part of the planned eastern Travis County greenway system, connecting Manor to the Bastrop County line along historic rural communities like Litting, TX. This greenway aims to protect and restore habitat, improve water quality, and provide recreational opportunities. Conservation easement agreements between the County and landowners in this area help achieve habitat preservation and water quality improvement goals. Land for the Wilbarger Creek Greenway is currently being acquired.

Wilbarger Creek Greenway.
Source: Google Maps

2.2 **Prioritize greenway and trail development in areas without trails.**

Expanding access to trails across the County will require focusing investments in areas that currently lack safe, connected, and high-quality routes. By identifying priority corridors, improving access to parks, and ensuring specialized trail types are available equitably, the County can create a more balanced and inclusive trail network.

2.2.A **Develop a trail prioritization methodology that evaluates potential trail corridors using criteria such as:**

- Social vulnerability and equity indicators
- Connectivity to prominent natural features and areas of interest
- Ecological connectivity and corridor creation

2.2.B **Ensure every Neighborhood, Community, and Metropolitan Park has at least one safe, accessible, and high-quality non-motorized entryway, ideally linked to sidewalks, trails, or other pedestrian/bike infrastructure.**

Providing at least one safe and accessible non-motorized entry to every park will help more residents reach these spaces comfortably by foot, bicycle, or other active modes.

2.2.C **Develop a strategy to distribute specialized internal trail types equitably across the County, including:**

- Mountain bike trails
- Horseback riding trails
- Paddling trails



Project Spotlight:
Onion Creek Greenway

The Onion Creek Greenway is an envisioned future greenway that stretches from the Colorado River south into Hays County. Travis County, along with nonprofit and municipal partners, is developing the greenway from McKinney Falls State Park east to the confluence of Onion Creek and the Colorado River, with the first phase of development focused from SH-193 to the confluence. The greenway will travel through County parks including Southeastern Metropolitan Park, Barkley Meadows Park, the future Timber Creek Park, and Richard Moya Park.

Onion Creek.
Source: Jill Habegger-Cain

2.3 Maximize the multiple ecological and social benefits greenways and trails provide.

Greenways and trails offer opportunities to strengthen ecological systems, support community identity, and improve everyday access to nature. By designing trail corridors and trailheads with both environmental and social benefits in mind, the County can create spaces that protect habitat, celebrate local culture, and provide meaningful connections for residents.

2.3.A Establish regularly spaced trailheads that provide connections to neighborhoods. Include amenities such as ADA parking, picnic tables or gathering spaces, bicycle repair stations, trash and recycling disposal, and restrooms.

Well-designed, regularly spaced trailheads will make it easier for nearby residents to access the trail network and enjoy amenities that support comfortable and inclusive use.

2.3.B Ensure trailheads and interpretive signage reflect the identity and stories of the surrounding community.

Community-centered trailheads and interpretive signs can help celebrate local history and culture, creating a deeper sense of connection between residents and the landscapes they use.

2.3.C Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to extend trail connections into existing or planned bicycle and pedestrian networks, enhancing regional mobility and reducing gaps.

Working closely with neighboring jurisdictions will help create seamless trail connections that strengthen regional mobility and close gaps between local and regional networks.

2.3.D Integrate green stormwater infrastructure along trails to support watershed health, climate resilience, and habitat value.

Incorporating green stormwater features along trail corridors will improve watershed health, increase climate resilience, and enhance habitat quality throughout the greenway system.

2.3.E Establish a framework for ongoing maintenance of trails that complements existing park maintenance efforts and engages volunteers, “friends of greenways” groups, and stewardship programs in collaboration with Travis County Parks Foundation.

A coordinated maintenance framework that combines County resources with volunteer and stewardship partnerships will help keep trails safe, resilient, and well cared for over time.

2.3.F Enhance the ecological function of greenways and trails by establishing design and management standards that support habitat connectivity, protect riparian zones, and minimize ecological disturbance during and after construction. Strategies may include defined trail zones, expanded vegetative buffers, and alignment with regional wildlife corridor priorities.

Clear ecological design and management standards will help greenways function as connected habitats, protect sensitive riparian areas, and reduce disturbance both during construction and long-term use.

2.4 Prioritize public access to the County’s important natural, historical, and cultural features.

Expanding public access to the County’s most significant natural, cultural, and historic places will help more residents experience the landscapes and stories that define Travis County. By completing key greenway corridors, strengthening interpretive elements, and aligning trails with sensitive natural features, the County can create meaningful and educational connections for communities across the region.

2.4.A Complete the four (4) proposed greenways, prioritizing access to historically underserved communities and ecologically significant corridors. (Gilleland Creek Greenway, Onion Creek Greenway, Colorado River Trail, and Wilbarger Creek Greenway).

- Where needed, partner with other jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations to collaborate on trail completion.

Completing the four priority greenways will expand access to nature for underserved communities and protect key ecological corridors, especially when coordinated with partner agencies and organizations.

Project Spotlight:

Colorado River Trail

In 2012, Travis County and the City of Austin, with assistance from the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), prepared the Colorado River Corridor Plan. While this plan’s primary goal was to create a framework for orderly growth and proposed land use within the Corridor, it also identified the areas surrounding the Colorado River as potential areas for open space, recreation, and conservation. Both the City of Austin and Travis County Parks have been working to acquire new parkland for recreation and conservation since 2012. Since 2025, Great Springs Project has been working with the Travis County Parks Foundation and The Trail Conservancy, with support from the City of Austin and Travis County Parks, to develop the Lower Colorado River Watershed Restoration and Access Plan, which will help guide the development of the Colorado River Trail.



Lower Colorado River Project Area. Source: Great Springs Project, 2025

Project Spotlight:

Gilleland Creek Greenway

Gilleland Creek Greenway is a 19-mile planned greenway that will connect Northeast Metropolitan Park in Pflugerville to the confluence of the Colorado river in eastern Travis County. This greenway consists of more than 1200 acres of land, accounting for more than three quarters of parkland in the Northeast Planning Area. The trail is planned to be a 15’ wide concrete trail with bridges, low water crossings, picnic areas at trailheads, and historical and environmental interpretive signage. This project is split into two phases. Phase one includes the construction of approximately 7 miles of the greenway trail and amenities from Northeast Metropolitan Park to Ben E. Fisher Park in Manor. This phase also includes the renovation of Ben E. Fisher Park as a neighborhood park and future greenway trailhead. Phase two includes the design and engineering of the greenway from the intersection of FM 973 and SH130 near Austin’s Walter E. Long Park, south to the confluence of the Colorado River.

Gilleland Creek.
Source: RVI



- 2.4.B Coordinate with historical and cultural agencies to incorporate interpretive signage and storytelling into the trail network, particularly where trails pass near historic landmarks or culturally significant sites.**
- Partnering with historical and cultural agencies will enrich the trail experience by adding interpretive elements that highlight important stories, landmarks, and cultural traditions along the network.
- 2.4.C Align trails with natural features (e.g., rivers, creeks, areas of geological interest) while protecting them. Design with a hierarchy of access in mind, prioritizing pedestrian safety and comfort first, then bicycle access, and then other specialized uses, such as equestrian access.**
- Aligning trails with natural features will create more scenic and meaningful experiences while protecting sensitive landscapes, with designs that place pedestrian safety and comfort at the forefront.

Visitor Experience

Goal Statement

Create an engaging, diverse, and inclusive park system with outdoor recreational opportunities that enhance the mental, physical, and social well-being of Travis County residents.

Providing safe, enjoyable, accessible, and enriching outdoor experiences within Travis County parks is a priority of the Parks Department. The following objectives and recommendations focus on how Travis County can enhance existing recreational opportunities, and expand amenities that were highlighted in community engagement as important to the public, like camping, water recreation, and new trails. Park recreational opportunities should reflect the needs and desires of the diversity of park users within and beyond Travis County.

“I would like to see events and programming at park[s], such as bird walk[s] or educational talks.”

- Community Member

- 3.1 Expand nature-based recreational opportunities while maintaining and upgrading existing sports facilities.**
- Throughout the community engagement process, it was clear that County residents value access to the outdoors and recreational opportunities like natural surface trails, hiking, camping, and natural landscapes. Many community members also utilize the County’s existing sports facilities, such as the sports fields at Northeast Metropolitan Park, Southeast Metropolitan Park, and Bee Creek Sports Complex. Expanding and growing the County’s nature-based recreational opportunities, while maintaining and upgrading the existing sports fields, will provide more opportunities for nature-based experiences while supporting existing recreational sports field uses.*
- 3.1.A Expand nature-based and passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking, birding, and picnicking.**



- 3.1.B

Expand opportunities for water-based recreation, especially in eastern Travis County, including splash pads, fishing, and kayaking.
- Lake Travis and the Colorado River are incredible recreational water resources. However, most water access points in Travis County Parks are available in western parks, such as Hippie Hollow and Mansfield Dam Park. Expanding recreational access to the Colorado River in Eastern Travis County will help people utilize these resources. Where swimming access to natural bodies of water isn't possible, other opportunities for water-based recreation, such as splash pads, may be incorporated into parks.
- 3.1.C

Create more camping opportunities to expand overnight nature experiences.
- Currently, camping opportunities are available in only three (3) Travis County Parks: Arkansas Bend Park, Sandy Creek Park, and Pace Bend Park. There is currently a high demand for camping in Travis County. Expanding camping facilities in western Travis County and introducing camping opportunities in Eastern Travis County will help fill the need.
- 3.1.D

Prioritize new trails and recreation opportunities in areas of geologic, hydrologic, and environmental interest.
- Travis County's karst limestone, springs and creeks, and diverse plant and animal communities create a rich experience for hikers along Travis County's trails and greenways. Prioritizing new trails and access in these areas will deepen public understanding and appreciation of the County's unique natural features.
- 3.1.E

Expand adventure sport opportunities, such as mountain biking and rock climbing.
- 3.1.F

Create nature-based play and learning opportunities for children.
- 3.1.G

Create more ADA-accessible nature opportunities, which may include ADA-accessible trails, camping experiences, or wheelchair accessible wildlife viewing areas.
- Providing safe and accessible ADA-experiences to community members will help allow everyone enjoy all that Travis County Parks have to offer.
- 3.1.H

Continue to serve the needs of local recreational sports leagues and athletic park users through existing County athletic fields and complexes, and update facilities as needed.

“[I] would like to see better mountain bike trails and features.”

- Community Member

- 3.2

Maintain comfortable, safe, clean, and well-managed parks.
- Travis County Parks are widely recognized as safe, clean, and well cared for, with most survey respondents affirming positive experiences across the system. Maintaining this high level of quality is essential as the County continues to expand its park network and welcome increasing visitation. Prioritizing comfort, safety, cleanliness, and effective management ensures that parks remain welcoming and enjoyable for all users, protects natural resources, and extends the lifespan of County investments.
- 3.2.A

Develop design guidelines for all parks to establish a standard for new parks and park investments. These design guidelines should include universal design standards.
- Clear and consistent design guidelines will help ensure that all new parks and park improvements meet a baseline standard of quality, comfort, and accessibility. Incorporating universal design standards will support parks that are usable by people of all ages and abilities, creating a more inclusive and equitable Park System.
- 3.2.B

Create a user-friendly system for park visitors to report safety concerns and maintenance issues.
- A clear and easy-to-use reporting system will help park visitors share concerns quickly, enabling staff to respond more efficiently to maintenance needs or safety issues. This streamlined communication will support faster problem-solving and contribute to a safer, better-maintained Park System overall.
- 3.2.C

Provide consistent bilingual signage and wayfinding for internal park trails that helps users navigate trails and safety and that explains emergency protocols.



Project Spotlight:

Improvements to Southeast Metropolitan Park

Travis County Parks will be making improvements to soccer fields and softball fields at Southeastern Metropolitan Park. The park will see four soccer fields and four softball fields updated with synthetic turf, irrigation upgrades, lights, and the design, engineering, and construction for a new maintenance facility.

Synthetic soccer field at Northeast Metropolitan Park.
Source: Travis County Parks

3.3 Provide recreational opportunities that reflect the desires and needs of diverse park users and are distributed equitably across the County.

Travis County is experiencing significant growth, particularly in unincorporated areas where new communities are forming and recreational needs are rapidly evolving. When new parks are developed, community engagement is essential to understanding how different groups use parks, what types of amenities they value, and where gaps in access may exist. By grounding decisions in community input and focusing on equitable distribution of facilities, the County can ensure that all residents have access to high-quality recreational opportunities that support health, well-being, and a strong connection to nature.

3.3.A Conduct a County-wide assessment of recreational needs and preferences every five (5) years, or aligned with the year before each bond cycle, to ensure park investments reflect the evolving interests and needs of Travis County residents.

Regular assessments will help the County stay aligned with shifting demographics, emerging recreational trends, and the evolving needs of growing communities. Tying this work to the bond cycle ensures that future investments are grounded in current data and community priorities.

3.3.B Establish an ADA Coordinator position to oversee and ensure accessibility across park facilities.

3.3.C Focus park development in rural and unincorporated areas that are rapidly growing.

Southeast and Northeast Travis County are some of the fastest-growing communities in Texas, and the nation. Residents living in unincorporated areas rely on Travis County Parks to serve their recreational needs.

3.3.D When planning for the development of new parks or improvements to existing parks, use culturally competent, bilingual, inclusive, and meaningful public engagement to ensure park updates serve the existing communities.

Meaningful public engagement is essential to ensuring that park investments reflect the needs, values, and priorities of the communities they are intended to serve. Culturally competent and bilingual engagement strategies help remove barriers to participation and create more inclusive planning processes, particularly for historically underrepresented communities. Integrating these approaches into park planning and improvement efforts leads to parks that are more welcoming, relevant, and equitably used.

History & Culture

Goal Statement

Protect and conserve the parks’ historic and cultural resources and immerse Travis County Park visitors in the natural and cultural history of the region and identify opportunities for expanding interpretation, education, and collaboration with local partners.

The Travis County Parks System contains a collection of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources that reflect Indigenous history, African American history, Hispanic history, and early settler heritage. These assets include one-room African American schoolhouses, historic cemeteries, and significant archaeological sites, many of which are currently not accessible to the public. Expanding opportunities for visitors to safely view and learn from these resources, while ensuring their protection and preservation, will deepen public understanding of the region’s long and diverse history.

“Experiences, walks, interpretive programming, more camping [at the parks].”
- Community Member

4.1 Expand organizational capacity to integrate the region’s natural and cultural history into the park experience.

4.1.A Hire a staff position to support planning for, protection of, and interpretation of historical resources.

4.1.B Integrate cultural resources into all park planning efforts including property acquisition, expansion, construction, and amenity building.

Establish a framework for the identification, evaluation, and interpretation of historic and cultural sites, including cemeteries and one-room schoolhouses within the Park System. Create guidelines regarding which resources should be publicly accessible and which should be restricted, including guidance for resource protection barriers.



- 4.1.C **Develop a Historic & Cultural Resources Plan that includes the following:**
- Identification of appropriate interpretation methods that make sharing park history accessible and user-friendly, such as brochures, apps, signage, etc.
 - Interpretive themes and associated branding
 - Interpretive signage requirements, review processes, maintenance plans, a schedule for updating the signs, and goals
 - Incorporation of stakeholder groups, community members, and tribal governments in reviewing and creating interpretive materials
 - Identification of the target audience(s) for interpretive and programming activities and partners for implementation

4.1.D **Identify key historic resources within parks and collaborate with the Travis County Historical Commission on potential historical designation.**

Historical designation provides formal recognition and protection for significant resources, ensuring their preservation and enhancing public understanding and stewardship of the site’s cultural and historical value. Designations can be sought through the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, State Antiquities Landmark, or Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

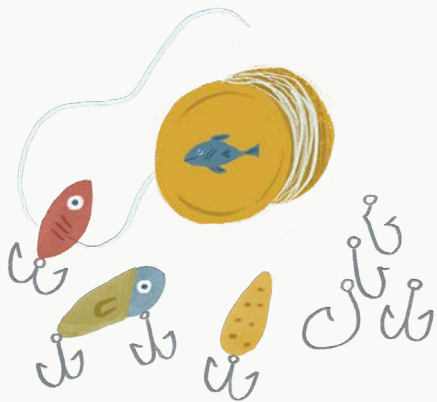
4.2 **Identify and acquire historic resources adjacent to existing parks that may allow for park expansion and resource protection.**

Historic resources located next to existing parks offer opportunities to expand park boundaries while preserving culturally significant sites that might otherwise be at risk. Acquiring these properties can enhance public access, create new connections between park areas, and protect important historic landscapes or structures through public stewardship. Integrating these sites into the Park System also enriches the visitor experience by broadening the stories and histories represented across the County’s parks.

4.2.A **Seek possible alignment of proposed new trail systems with historic trail systems to allow for historic interpretation.**

Historic trail systems or roads within Travis County include the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail and the Comanche Trail.

4.2.B **If historic sites are acquired with significant archaeological resources, especially those associated with burials, establish partnerships with affiliated tribal entities to ensure sensitive and appropriate co-management.**



4.3 **Foster a culture of historic preservation within Travis County Parks through resource identification, interpretation, and stewardship.**

Building a strong preservation ethic within Travis County Parks will ensure that historic and cultural resources are valued alongside natural and recreational assets. By consistently identifying significant sites, interpreting their stories for the public, and stewarding them with care, staff can integrate preservation into everyday decision-making. This culture of awareness and responsibility will help protect the County’s heritage for future generations.

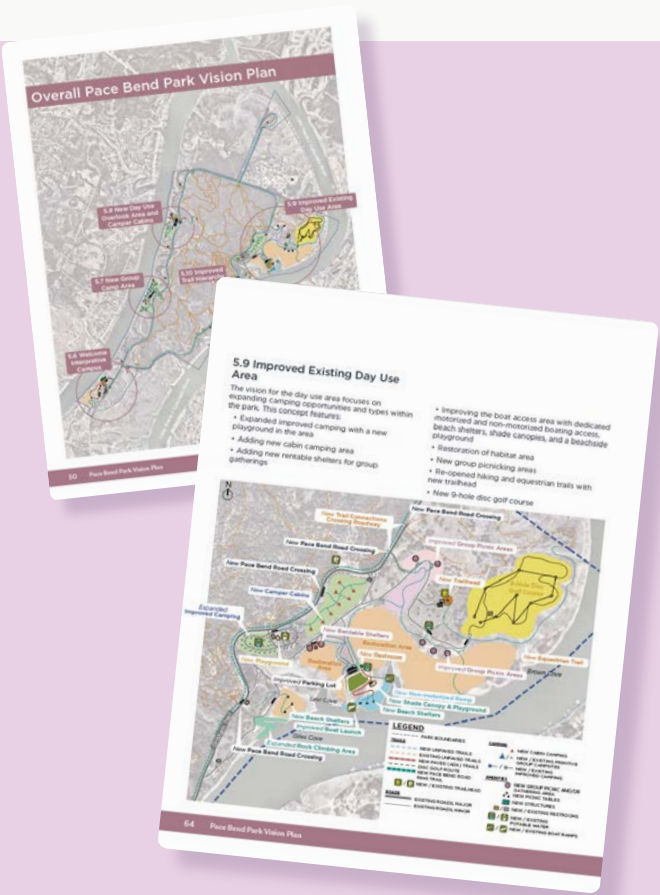
- 4.3.A **Create a digital mapping system available to Travis County Parks employees that shows all extant and identified historic resources within parks.**
- 4.3.B **Establish maintenance guidelines for historic resources.**
- Clear maintenance guidelines will help ensure that historic landscapes and archaeological features are cared for consistently and appropriately over time. Establishing these standards will support long-term preservation while reducing the risk of unintentional damage during routine upkeep.
- 4.3.C **Educate park staff on existing historic resources and historic interpretive themes in each park.**

Project Spotlight:
Pace Bend Park Vision Plan

Spanning more than 1,300 acres and nine miles of Lake Travis shoreline, Pace Bend Park is one of the most valuable natural and recreational assets in the Travis County Parks system.

The 2026 Pace Bend Park Vision Plan provides clear guidance for how the park can grow and improve over time. Building on the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan, the Vision Plan serves as a shared roadmap for future projects, ensuring investments in infrastructure, recreation, storytelling, accessibility, safety, and environmental stewardship work together under one unified vision. Developed through ten months of analysis, staff expertise, community input, and best practices in park planning and design, the plan stewards Pace Bend Park as both a regional recreation destination and an ecological and cultural resource that respects the park’s natural setting and benefits the community.

Overall Pace Bend Park Vision and the Improved Existing Day Use Areas enlargement.
Source: Pace Bend Park Vision Plan



4.4 Establish historic and cultural education programming through partnerships.

Partnering with organizations such as the Travis County Historical Commission, the Travis County Parks Foundation, Texas Freedom Colonies, and El Camino Real de los Tejas can help expand historic and cultural education programming without requiring the County to serve as the lead entity. These groups bring expertise, community connections, and established interpretive frameworks that can enrich public understanding of the region’s diverse heritage. By supporting their initiatives, Travis County Parks can help broaden access to high-quality educational experiences while advancing shared preservation and storytelling goals

- 4.4.A Identify partnership opportunities to include area school districts, history, historic preservation, and archaeology programs at area universities, and other heritage organizations, in collaboration with the Travis County Historical Commission.
- 4.4.B Co-create historic programming using existing organizational capacity at partner organizations, such as the Travis County Historical Commission.

Programming & Partnerships

Goal Statement

Strengthen partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and private entities to advance public programming, recreation, and stewardship.

Travis County Parks can utilize new and existing partnerships with local organizations to expand their capacity and expertise, build community trust, increase funding, and create and sustain programming. These recommendations focus on developing partnerships to support community programming related to nature-based education, historical and cultural interpretation, volunteer stewardship opportunities, and as a way to activate existing park amenities.

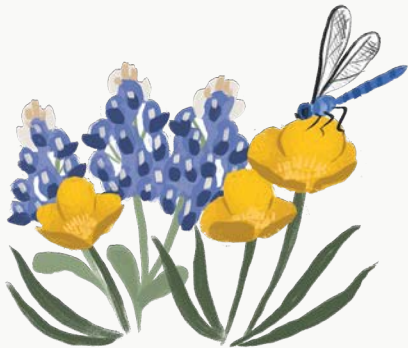
“Reservation system is complicated [and] makes it unclear how to access parks. Also need to bring cash which is incredibly inconvenient.”

- Community Member

5.1 Expand organizational capacity to engage in partnerships.

- 5.1.A Hire staff to support coordination with partners on programming.
- 5.1.B Strengthen relationships with municipalities and place-based nonprofits, especially those located and working in eastern Travis County, to improve park access, trails, and programming.

As Travis County acquires new land for conservation, parks, and greenways, it is more crucial than ever to partner with cities and other organizations to establish a cohesive network of open space.



5.2 Improve access to information and processes for reserving park spaces and organizing recreational use.

- 5.2.A Expand the park amenity reservation website to include sports facilities and picnic shelters in addition to campsites, and integrate an online payment system.
- An expanded reservation system could display which amenities are available or unavailable by date, and provide features, such as an interactive map, to visualize specific campsite locations, and online payment options.

5.2.B Develop a user-friendly online platform, in partnership with Travis County Parks Foundation, that includes information and links to volunteer opportunities, educational and interpretive programs, and public events.

An online platform will centralize information, increasing awareness and participation at upcoming public events, volunteering opportunities, and programs.

5.3 Expand educational and interpretive programming through partnerships.

Educational and interpretive programs will connect the community with parks, support conservation goals, and cultivate future volunteers and advocates. Partnerships with organizations, such as Travis County Parks Foundation, will increase both the Parks Department's capacity and resources, providing more opportunities for sustainable, robust programs.

5.3.A Work with Travis County Parks Foundation to establish nature-based educational and interpretive programming, such as nature walks, with horticulturalists, ecologists, biologists, and more.

5.3.B Work with Travis County Parks Foundation to establish educational and interpretive programming for historic and cultural properties and features, including partnering with the Travis County Historical Commission.

5.3.C Plan for the future of large assets managed in partnership with other organizations, including the Reimers Ranch Observatory in partnership with Travis County Parks Foundation, the BMX track in partnership with Capital BMX, and the pool at East Metropolitan Park with the YMCA.

Expanded and continued partnerships are crucial in managing large, specialized assets at County Parks, ensuring they are well-loved and utilized by the community.

5.3.D Support partnerships between Travis County Parks Foundation, nonprofits, and other organizations to offer summer camp programs within the parks.

Summer camps provide children safe, educational outdoor experiences, offering opportunities to explore Travis County Parks that they might not otherwise visit. Existing programming can be improved and expanded upon as demand and funding arise.

5.4 Strengthen sports and recreational programming through partnerships.

5.4.A Partner with local organizations to build, maintain, and utilize park amenities, such as mountain bike trails and wildlife viewing areas.

Partnering with local organizations leverages community expertise and support, and fosters a sense of ownership and stewardship, ensuring these resources remain safe and valued.

5.4.B Partner with local organizations to program existing park amenities, such as skate parks, the BMX track, and sports fields.

Programming existing park amenities ensures they are well-used, maintained, and accessible, while strengthening the community's connection to the parks. Local organizations can also support the community's access to sports fields by sponsoring free events and field time.

5.5 Establish a volunteer stewardship program through partnerships.

Partners help transform volunteer work from occasional help into a sustainable stewardship network of people with diverse skills and resources to benefit both the parks and the people who use them.

5.5.A Support the Travis County Parks Foundation in developing a volunteer stewardship program to assist in maintenance of parks and greenways.

TCPF serves as a facilitator for volunteer activities, supporting park-specific stewardship shaped by local needs, partners, and resident leadership, creating pathways for sustained engagement, local ownership, and ongoing care of parks.

5.5.B Build a volunteer program with local historians to offer educational and interpretive programming, and to expand and centralize Parks cultural and historic data.

Local historians and organizations, such as the Travis County Historical Commission, know the historic sites within Travis County Parks. They also bring expertise in sharing these stories in ways that engage the public and deepen connections to the parks. Centralizing this cultural and historical data makes it accessible to everyone.

“I’d like to see a huge increase in volunteer coordination. More volunteers could build trails, provide educational activities and assist in park maintenance.”

- Community Member

Partner Spotlight:

Great Springs Project

Great Springs Project is a nonprofit organization that works with a wide range of partners throughout central Texas to achieve two regional outcomes: 50,000 acres of conservation to enhance the Edwards Aquifer and over 100 miles of trails connecting the Alamo to the Capitol via the region’s four Great Springs. Travis County Parks and Great Springs Project are partnering to expand the County’s regional trail network, including the Colorado River Trail and Onion Creek Greenway.

Image: Map of the proposed 100+ mile network of trails from Barton Springs to San Antonio Springs.
Source: Great Springs Project



Park Awareness

Goal Statement

Elevate the visibility and identity of Travis County Parks, ensuring all residents recognize, value, and enjoy the diverse recreational opportunities the park system offers.

Larger Travis County Parks, such as Hamilton Pool Preserve, Reimers Ranch Park, and Hippie Hollow Park, are unique and well-known regional destinations. However, other properties within the Parks System are lesser-known to the community. The following goal statement, objectives, and recommendations guide the County in increasing the public’s awareness of the park system through cohesive branding and marketing strategies, as well as in partnering with the Travis County Parks Foundation to enhance visitation and stewardship.

“It’s not clear to me the what is a Travis County Park and a city of Austin Park. Some more signage would be good.”
- Community Member

6.1 Increase public awareness of Travis County Parks and their offerings.

6.1.A Brand Travis County Parks as uniquely different from other local park service agencies, such as the City of Austin, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and Texas State Parks.

Community members frequently referenced regional parks outside the County’s system, such as Zilker Park and Walter E. Long Park, throughout engagement. The County’s efforts to update park signage will create a cohesive brand, but additional strategies can be developed to highlight unique park features, programs, and unique historical and cultural features.

6.1.B Develop an integrated approach to marketing efforts, including paid, earned, and owned media. Leverage social media to reach a broader audience.

Marketing Travis County Parks and projects through multiple strategies will help reach more residents and generate excitement around new and recently improved open spaces, parks, and greenways.

6.1.C **Develop a parks app that includes park maps, reservations, communications about closures, and safety alerts in partnership with the Travis County Parks Foundation.**

A parks app can centralize important information, making it easier for visitors to navigate parks, plan activities, and stay informed.

6.1.D **Establish system-wide and branded standards for park amenities, such as benches, trash cans, and bike racks.**

System-wide standards for park amenities will create a more unified feel within Travis County Parks and distinguish their properties from other municipalities.

6.1.E **Partner with local schools to promote internship and employment opportunities, especially for Park Rangers and Wildland Fire programs.**

Promoting internship and employment opportunities with local schools increases awareness of these career paths, building the next generation of skilled parks and fire professionals.



6.2 **Work with the Travis County Parks Foundation to increase public awareness, visitorship, and appreciation of the parks.**

Continued collaboration with the Travis County Park Foundation provides the Parks Department with additional capacity and resources to promote and build support for Travis County Parks projects, acquisitions, and initiatives.

6.2.A **Collaborate with the Travis County Parks Foundation to facilitate community partnerships that can provide promotional opportunities through social, news, and advertising that drive awareness for Travis County Parks.**

6.2.B **Work with the Travis County Parks Foundation on public relations activations and promotions that could draw coverage from news media and provide content for the website and social media.**

6.2.C **Coordinate with the Travis County Parks Foundation to promote events and feature parks in their outlets, including their newsletter and social media.**

Travis County Parks Foundation’s network is vast, with newsletters that reach nearly 40,000 individuals and organizations.

Public Safety

Goal Statement

Provide a safe and enjoyable park experience by deterring criminal activity, protecting natural resources, mitigating hazards, and responding to and managing emergencies.

Considering public safety in a countywide Park System plan is essential to ensuring that Travis County Parks remain welcoming, accessible, and enjoyable for all users. Safety shapes how people use and experience park spaces, influences visitor confidence, and supports responsible stewardship of recreational, natural, and cultural resources. In developing these objectives, direct discussions with Travis County Parks staff and Travis County Park Rangers provided critical on-the-ground insights into current challenges, patterns of use, and emerging safety needs. Their firsthand experience helped shape recommendations that are both practical and aligned with day-to-day operations, ensuring the plan supports a safer, more resilient park system.

7.1 **Provide vigilant enforcement of criminal activity and rule violations through diligent patrol.**

Proactive police patrols in parks deter criminal activity by increasing visibility, potentially identifying unsafe conditions earlier, and reducing opportunities for unlawful behavior. The regular presence of Park Rangers encourages positive use of park spaces and discourages potential offenders.

7.1.A **Maintain the ability of Park Rangers to conduct regular inspections of parkland and maintain a presence through proactive patrols to deter criminal activity and rule violations.**

Park management should continue collaborating closely with Park Rangers to ensure regular patrols are maintained. This coordination supports consistent safety oversight and helps address issues proactively throughout the Park System.

7.1.B **Support staff level increases, especially Park Rangers, as anticipated critical equipment is received.**

Needed Park Ranger safety levels are currently limited by necessary equipment that is on order. As this equipment is received, staffing levels for Rangers and other safety personnel should be increased to ensure effective coverage and support.

- 7.1.C Ensure Park Rangers are able to allocate sufficient and appropriately trained personnel during peak times and high-risk situations to ensure timely assistance and enhance overall park safety.
- 7.1.D As anticipated equipment is received, ensure support to Park Rangers to expand patrols to a 24-hour schedule.

7.2 Ensure an expeditious response to calls in parks, preserves, and other park properties.
A deep familiarity with the Park System and individual parks and their staff enables rangers to navigate park spaces efficiently and anticipate potential hazards, allowing them to respond more quickly to critical calls. This knowledge improves response times and enhances overall safety for park visitors.

- 7.2.A Maintain the ability of Park Rangers to enforce park rules and laws through monitoring, responsive deployment, and thorough investigations of incidents and violations.
- 7.2.B Implement a system-wide digital message screen program to better communicate safety messaging to park visitors throughout the system and on a park-by-park basis.
System-wide or park-specific messaging screens can enhance emergency communications by quickly broadcasting alerts and safety instructions to park visitors. This technology ensures timely, clear information reaches park users, helping Park Rangers and park staff manage incidents more effectively and keep everyone informed.



Parks Team Member Spotlight:
Park Rangers
Travis County Park Rangers patrol around 14,500 acres of county-owned or managed parklands and preserves to protect visitors, the natural environment, and park facilities. Established in 1994, officers enforce state and county laws, Lower Colorado River Authority regulations, Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, and educate visitors regarding park rules. Park Rangers are also state-certified emergency medical technicians and respond to various calls throughout the park system and Travis County. They present public programs, staff booths at events, provide park information to visitors, rescue injured wild animals found in parks, and participate in park volunteer events.

Travis County Park Ranger
Source: Travis County Parks

- 7.2.C Maintain the capability to quickly assess, prioritize, and remove hazard trees and other dangerous vegetation that pose a threat to visitors, staff, or park infrastructure.
Park staff are uniquely positioned to assist in identifying hazardous vegetation or obstructions that could impede emergency vehicle access. Supporting an intimate knowledge of park terrain allows them to spot risks early and support timely maintenance or mitigation.

- 7.2.D Respond promptly to wildland fire incidents within park boundaries, coordinating with interagency partners to ensure rapid containment and minimize impacts to public safety and natural resources.
- 7.2.E Conduct proactive wildland fire mitigation activities, including mechanical fuels reduction, prescribed fire, and public outreach, to reduce the likelihood and severity of future wildland fire.
Mechanical fuels, dry brush, fallen trees, and accumulated debris, combined with accidents caused by park users like unattended campfires or discarded cigarettes, significantly increase wildfire risk. Regular patrols, reducing fuel accumulation, conducting prescribed fires, and having detailed knowledge of park conditions are critical in mitigating wildfire risk early. By monitoring high-risk areas, educating visitors, and coordinating hazard mitigation, park staff help prevent small risks from escalating into fire incidents, protecting both park resources and public safety.

7.3 Provide excellent training and resources for staff to successfully respond to emergencies, both within and beyond the park system.
Providing training and resources to prepare for and respond to emergency incidents is critical for park staff, especially given the wide variety of amenities and landscapes across the Travis County Park System, from trails and waterways to recreational facilities. Different park settings present unique hazards, so staff must receive specialized training to respond effectively to the specific risks of each environment.

- 7.3.A Conduct regular licensing, certifications, and accreditations training.
- 7.3.B Continue regular fire safety and first aid training. Conduct joint training with partner agencies, focusing on competencies and relationship building.



7.3.C In coordination with Park Rangers, ensure parks staff are regularly trained in best practices related to de-escalation tactics involving park visitor and wildlife conflicts.

Park staff must be trained to safely and effectively de-escalate conflicts with both park visitors and wildlife, as waiting for support from Park Rangers may not be timely enough to prevent harm. These skills enable staff to address situations safely and effectively in real time, protecting themselves, visitors, and the natural environment.

7.3.D Conduct regular emergency response training for all park staff for extreme weather events and medical emergencies. Each park should have its own emergency plan and/or evacuation plan, and it should be ensured that these plans are communicated and reviewed with staff regularly.

Park staff serve as the first line of safety during emergencies that require critical care or evacuation for both visitors and other staff. Having tailored emergency and evacuation plans for each park is essential, as the diverse amenities and landscapes across the Travis County Park System present unique challenges and risks.

7.3.E Ensure Park Rangers are equipped with all necessary equipment for enhanced medical search and rescue operations. Conduct regular training in coordination with DCPE and other partners to maintain the minimum skill level.

7.4 Reinforce an organizational structure that proactively reduces risk to life, property, and natural resources through integrated practices that prioritize hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, and community resilience.

Travis County Parks take a proactive, integrated approach to safety and risk management, rather than a reactive one. By reinforcing an organizational structure that prioritizes hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, and community resilience, Travis County Parks staff can systematically identify and address potential threats before they escalate. This approach protects lives, preserves property, and safeguards the County's natural and cultural resources, ensuring that parks remain safe and accessible for all users. Moreover, integrating these practices across departments encourages consistent training, clear communication, and coordinated response protocols, which are critical in a Park System with diverse landscapes, amenities, and visitor patterns.

“[We provide] a safe environment for the public to interact with our natural resources”

- Travis County Land Management Plan park supervisor focus group workshop participant

7.4.A Achieve adequate staffing levels to reduce fatigue and unsafe conditions.

Overworked and understaffed park teams can create unsafe conditions by reducing the ability of park staff to maintain park amenities and respond to emergencies. Insufficient staffing can increase the risk of accidents, delayed incident response, and delayed maintenance needs, compromising visitor and staff safety.

7.4.B Support a culture that encourages reporting safety concerns and prioritizes safety and quick response to concerns.

Park staff who are not encouraged to proactively prioritize safety may overlook emerging hazards or fail to take preventive actions, putting both themselves and park visitors at risk. A culture that does not support vigilance can lead to delayed responses, increased accidents, and compromised overall safety within the parks.

7.4.C Maintain safety protocol and equipment standards for all park staff during times of extreme weather conditions.

The weather extremes in central Texas, from intense heat and drought to sudden storms and flash flooding, require park staff to remain vigilant and consistently follow weather-related safety protocols. Proactive monitoring, communication, and preparedness help protect visitors, staff, and park resources from potentially dangerous weather-related conditions.

7.4.D Ensure regular maintenance and inspection of equipment, personal protective equipment, tools, machinery, and vehicles.

Delayed maintenance of park equipment, machinery, and personal protective equipment (PPE) can create hazardous conditions that increase the risk of injury for park staff. Ensuring timely upkeep and proper functioning of these tools is critical for safe operations and effective hazard mitigation.



Additional Recommendations

As the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan was under development, many topics arose from the public, stakeholders, and Travis County staff that were beyond the scope of what the Plan addresses. These Additional Recommendations provide high-level recommendations for next steps and actions led by other Travis County Departments, and future planning efforts the Parks Department may undertake.

Park Access

As part of the community engagement process for the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan, community members indicated an interest in improving accessing to parks via public transit, on foot, or via bicycle. While this type of planning is outside of the scope of the Parks Department, Parks can coordinate with the Travis County’s Long-Range Planning team on active transportation planning to include park access as a priority. The following recommendations are efforts that expand transportation options to access parks:

- » Integrate prioritizing access to parks in the Travis County Active Transportation Plan.
- » Integrate park greenways with countywide bike/pedestrian systems, proactively partnering with Transportation & Natural Resources, TXDOT, and CAMPO to extend the greenways.
- » Increase access to parks greenways through the development of sidewalk connections to neighborhoods and other active transportation investments.
- » Seek to include park trail connections in municipal and the County’s active transportation plans, ensuring transit planners recognize greenways as viable commuter corridors that build connections throughout the County.
- » Improve signage, wayfinding, crosswalks, and safe bike access routes at park entry points to enhance safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
- » Partner with other jurisdictions and major land developers to coordinate trail plans and create connections.
- » Coordinate with local municipalities and regional transit authorities to provide bus stations or weekend shuttles to parks. For example, the CapMetro Del Valle Feeder (271) could be routed slightly north of the drop off at Southeast Metro Park.



“Add transportation access for Del Valle community to attend social events and future programs for healthy living”

- Community member on proposed projects in the SE quadrant of the County.

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

As this Plan does not directly incorporate recommendations for Operations, future efforts to create an O&M Plan for the County Parks Department may take the following into consideration, based on feedback from the public, Travis County staff members, and best practices:

- » **Define levels of service for each park type and align with staff planning. Develop park maintenance plans for each park type to be used to identify park projects in annual work plans.**
- » **Leverage technology to improve park management systems and the visitor experience:**
 - Explore maintenance management systems to better track maintenance efforts and service requests
 - Develop payment facilitation systems to leverage virtual transaction tools for payments online and at park and facility sites
 - Develop a reservation system to leverage technology and digital tools for park staff to better manage visitor reservations
 - Acquire a system to track park visitation
- » **Develop and adopt a standardized set of design, construction and amenity guidelines and specifications for new parks and park renovations. Leading to identifying of parks to be updated with new standardized features and prioritization for implementation.**
- » **Improve ADA accessibility throughout the system by increasing staff support with an ADA Coordinator to identify park features and amenities needing to be brought to compliance and develop a schedule of regular ADA compliance inspections.**

Project Spotlight: RGK Ranch Park

In May of 2024, Travis County purchased the former RGK Ranch, a 1506-acre property that will be transformed into parkland. RGK Ranch was established by George and Ronya Kozmetsky in the 1970s as a private family retreat in western Travis County. Over the years, the family expanded the ranch and passed it down to their children and grandchildren. After receiving several offers from developers, the family made the generous decision to see their ranch become a park. The Kozmetsky’s daughter, Nadya Scott, donated her family’s share of the land, allowing Travis County to purchase the property with voter-approved bond funding. Planning is now underway to open this wilderness area to the public. There are also plans to connect the new RGK Ranch property to other Travis County parks – Reimers Ranch Park and Hamilton Pool Preserve – by trail.

RGK Ranch property
Source: Erich Schlegel





Lake Travis from Pace Bend Park

Planning Area Recommendations

Types of Recommendations

The following recommendations provide priorities for the next decade in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast Planning Areas. These recommendations are organized by 3 categories: Acquisitions, Planning, and Projects.

Acquisitions: Strategic land acquisitions that expand the Travis County Park System with the intention of creating new parks in rapidly growing communities, completing an envisioned greenway, or providing habitat or conservation value.

Planning: Planning and design processes for greenways or park development or improvements on land already owned by the County, or land that is anticipated to be purchased by the County.

Project: Construction and development of park and greenway improvements, such as trails or park amenities.



Boardwalk at Hamilton Pool

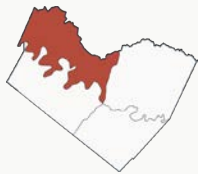
Acquisition Prioritization Process

To determine the most impactful locations for land acquisition, the project team performed a GIS suitability “hot spot” analysis to identify gaps in the existing Park System, underserved areas, areas of high conservation value, and locations that have the maximum impact to enhancing resident’s quality of life and/or protection of ecological resources. A land acquisition steering committee of Travis County staff and partner organizations was formed to help set the relative weights for the 15+ data layers. The outcomes of this mapping process are reflected as the “Acquisitions” priorities in the recommendations for each of the planning areas.

The steering committee ranked over 15+ datasets, which covered the 7 topics:

- » **Conservation Value**
 - Critical habitat
 - Targeted Conservation Areas
- » **Geography**
 - Parcel size
 - Unincorporated Areas
- » **Geology**
 - Karst
 - Slopes along floodplains
- » **Hydrology**
- » **Recreation**
 - Possible connections for existing trails
- » **Social/Demographic**
 - Community Health
 - Social Vulnerability
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
- » **Existing County Priorities**

Northwest Planning Area



- Legend**
- Travis County Parks
 - Future Travis County Parks
 - Future Travis County Greenways
 - Major Water Bodies & Rivers
 - Creeks
 - Texas & National Highways

*In 2023, Travis County voters approved a parks bond that dedicates approximately \$276 million to parkland acquisition, conservation, and improvements, providing a major source of funding to implement priority projects and advance the County’s long-term parks vision. Some of these projects are still underway.



Northwest Planning Area Recommendations

Acquisitions, Planning, & Projects

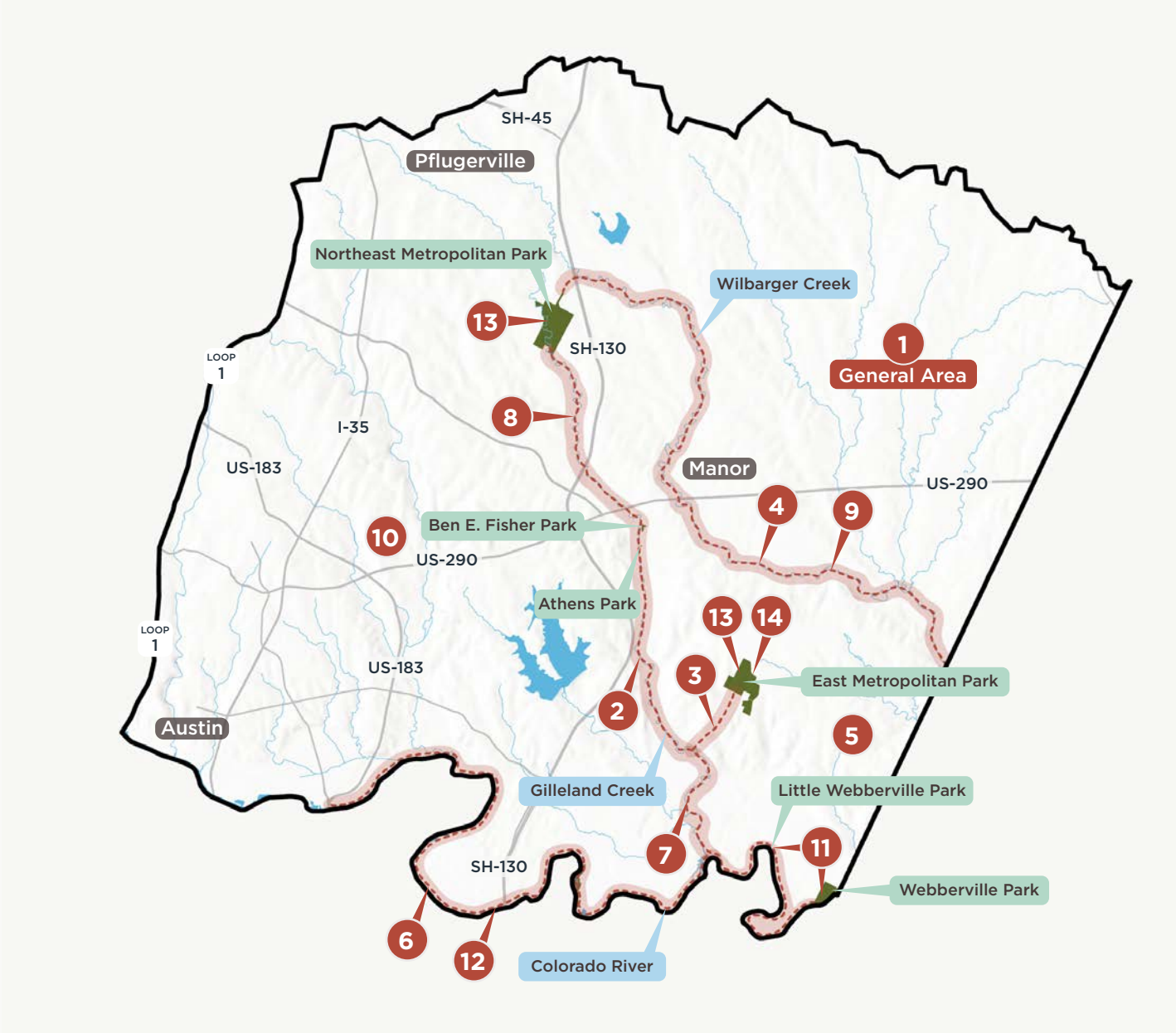
The Northwest Planning Area improvements focus on acquiring strategic Lake Travis properties to provide waterfront access to community members and acquiring land along the Cow Creek corridor to develop a future trail or greenway. Amenity upgrades are planned for neighborhood and community parks like Selma Hughes Park, Mary Quinlan Park, Fritz Hughes Park, and Allen Park.

Arkansas Bend Park will see continued investment with the development of a community group building, alongside other improvements. Sandy Creek Park is currently utilized as a construction staging area for infrastructure improvement, and will undergo remediation to return the park to its previous function, its location, and the type of recommendation

AW =Area-wide recommendations

Location	Recommendation	Park Name / Location	Type
AW	Acquire strategic Lake Travis Properties.	N/A	Acquisition
1	Acquire land along the Cow Creek Corridor.	N/A	Acquisition
2	Create a Vision Plan for Comanche Trail Parks, including Bob Wentz Park, Hippie Hollow Park, and Cypress Creek Park.	Bob Wentz Park, Hippie Hollow Park, and Cypress Creek Park	Planning
3	Remediate construction damage to Sandy Creek Park and renovate the park.	Sandy Creek Park	Project
4	Construct a community group building along with planned park improvements.	Arkansas Bend Park	Project - funded by 2023 bond*
AW	Invest in amenity upgrades to established Neighborhood and Community Parks.	Selma Hughes Park, Mary Quinlan Park, Fritz Hughes Park, Allen Park	Project

Northeast Planning Area



Legend

- Travis County Parks
- Future Travis County Parks
- Future Travis County Greenways
- Major Water Bodies & Rivers
- Creeks
- Texas & National Highways

*In 2023, Travis County voters approved a parks bond that dedicates approximately \$276 million to parkland acquisition, conservation, and improvements, providing a major source of funding to implement priority projects and advance the County's long-term parks vision. Some of these projects are still underway.

Northeast Planning Area Recommendations

Acquisitions, Planning, & Projects

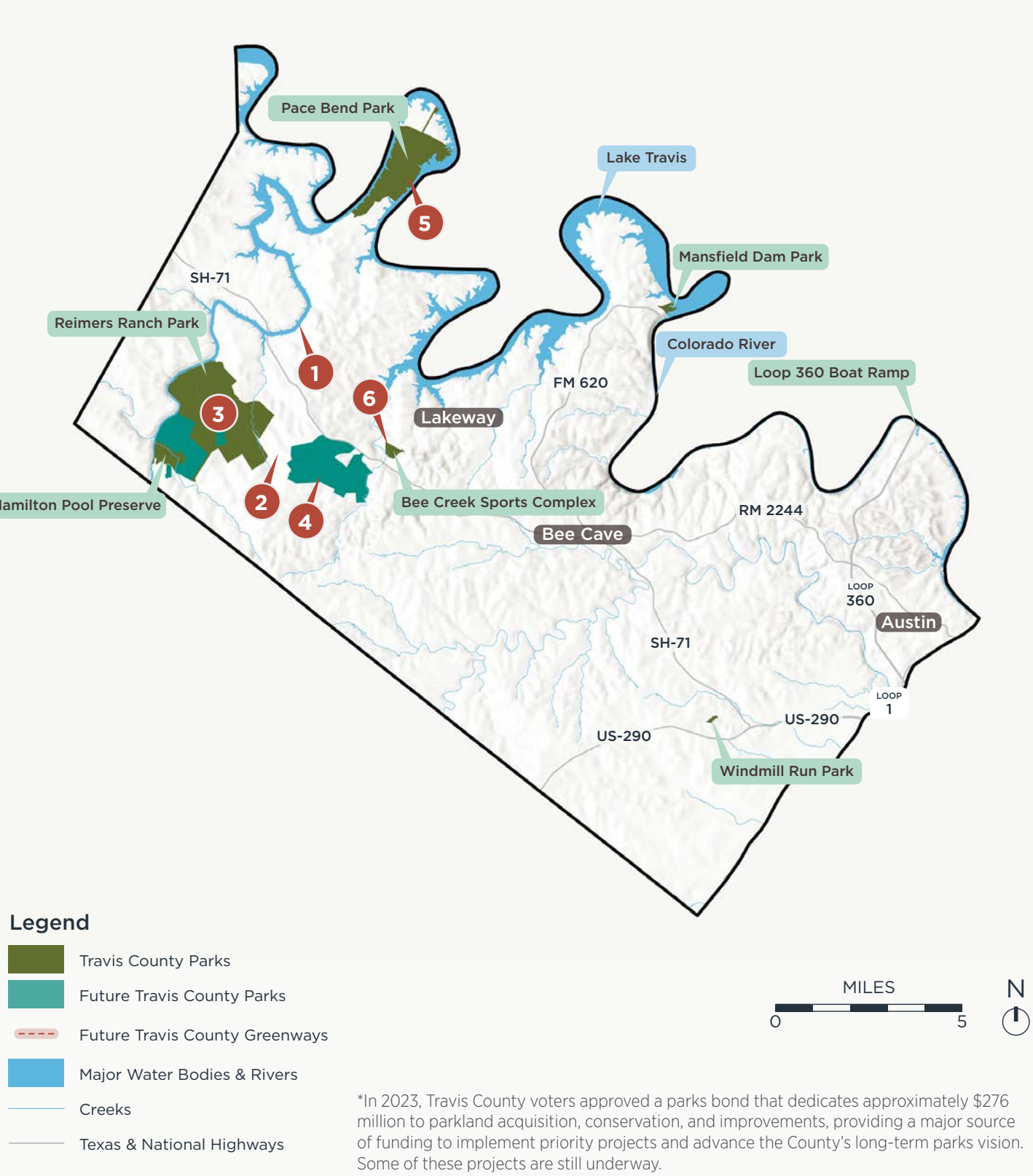
Improvements in the Northeast Planning Area focus on acquiring land that progresses the County towards the completion of the envisioned greenways along Gilleland Creek and Wilbarger Creek and developing new Regional parks in unincorporated areas experiencing high growth, especially in the northeast section of this planning area.

Projects include improvements to Ben E. Fisher Park, Webberville Park, Little Webberville Park, Northeast Metropolitan Park, and East Metropolitan Park.

AW =Area-wide recommendations

Location	Recommendation	Park Name / Location	Type
AW	Acquire strategic parkland, with location to be determined.	N/A	Acquisition
1	Develop new regional parks in unincorporated areas experiencing high growth.	N/A	Acquisition
2	Acquire land to complete the Gilleland Creek Greenway.	N/A	Acquisition
3	Acquire land to connect the future Gilleland Creek Greenway to East Metropolitan Park.	N/A	Acquisition
4	Acquire land to complete the Wilbarger Creek Greenway.	N/A	Acquisition
5	Acquire land in the Post Oak Savanna and the adjacent bluffs ecoregion.	N/A	Acquisition
6	Acquire land to create the Colorado River Trail in partnership with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Acquisition
7	Develop the Gilleland Creek Greenway.	Gilleland Creek Greenway	Project
8	Construct Gilleland Creek Greenway trails and amenities from Northeast Metropolitan Park to Ben. E. Fisher Park, including improvements to Ben E. Fisher Park.	Ben. E. Fisher Park	Project - funded by 2023 bond*
9	Develop Wilbarger Creek Greenway.	N/A	Project
10	Develop a mountain bike trail system.	N/A	Project
11	Provide or expand fishing opportunities at Webberville Park and Little Webberville Park, and locations along the planned Colorado River Trail.	Webberville Park, Little Webberville Park	Project
12	Create non-motorized boat ramps along the Colorado River to expand access to the River.	N/A	Project
13	Develop and expand synthetic turf fields.	Northeast Metropolitan Park, East Metropolitan Park	Project
14	Development of a community group building and associated park improvements.	East Metropolitan Park	Project

Southwest Planning Area



Southwest Planning Area Recommendations

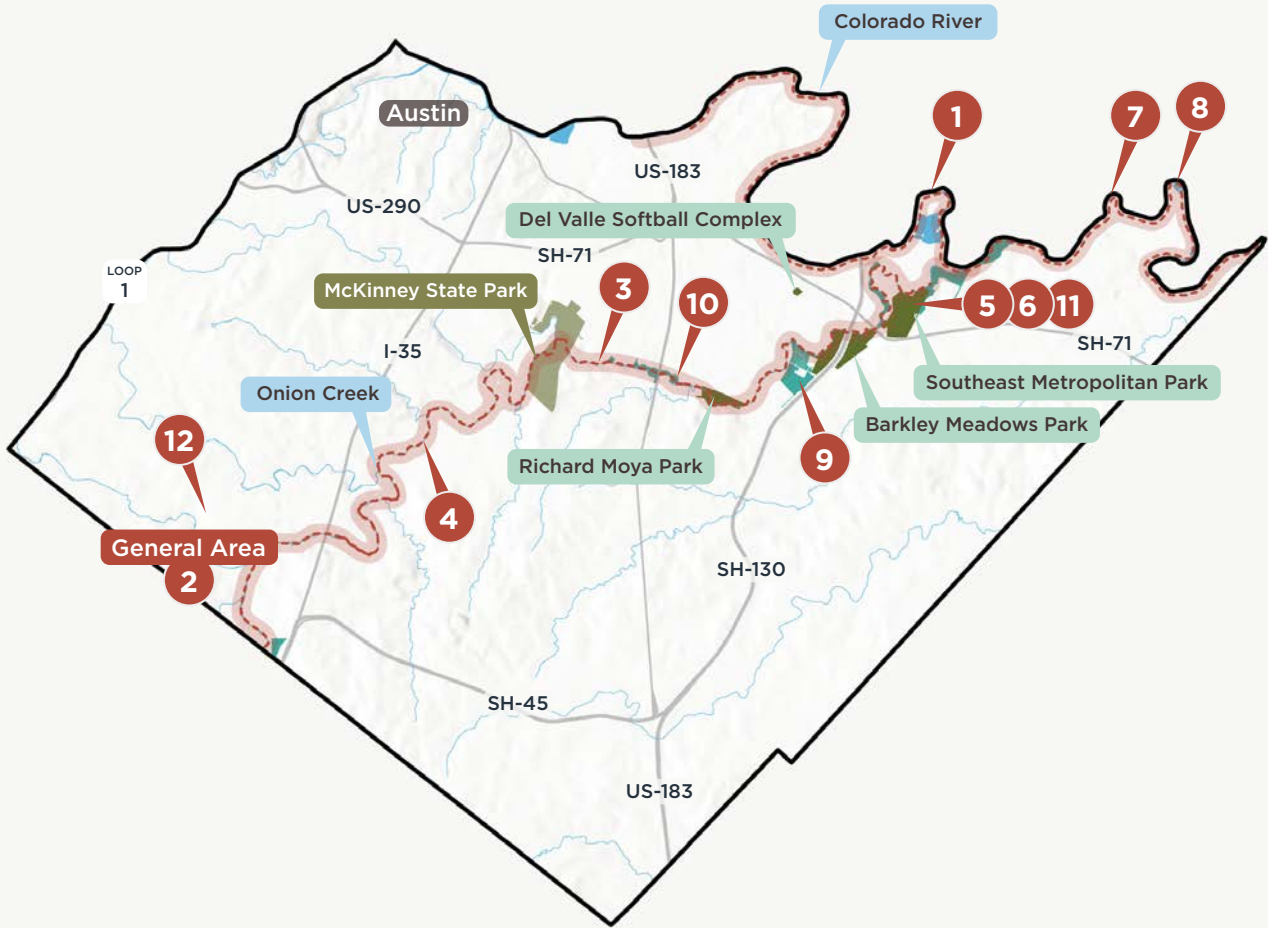
Acquisitions, Planning, & Projects

Investments in the Southwest Planning Area focus on developing plans for new County Acquisitions, such as the RGK Ranch Park, and investing in existing parks, such as Pace Bend Park and Reimers Ranch. Reimers Ranch will see the development of a Vision Plan that incorporates camping and extends trails into newly acquired property.

AW =Area-wide recommendations

Location	Recommendation	Park Name / Location	Type
AW	Acquire strategic Lake Travis Properties.	N/A	Acquisition
1	Acquire land to create the Pedernales River Corridor.	N/A	Acquisition
2	Acquire land to connect RGK Ranch Park to Reimers Ranch Park.	N/A	Acquisition
3	Develop and implement a Vision Plan for Reimers Ranch Park that incorporates the newly acquired properties and includes camping and expanded trails.	Reimers Ranch Park	Planning
4	Develop and implement a vision plan for RGK Ranch Park.	RGK Ranch Park	Planning
5	Make park-wide improvements to Pace Bend Park, based on the Pace Bend Vision Plan.	Pace Bend Park	Project
6	Construct synthetic sports fields, pavilions, and walking trails.	Bee Creek Sports Complex	Project - funded by 2023 bond*

Southeast Planning Area



Legend

- Travis County Parks
- Future Travis County Parks
- Future Travis County Greenways
- Major Water Bodies & Rivers
- Creeks
- Texas & National Highways

*In 2023, Travis County voters approved a parks bond that dedicates approximately \$276 million to parkland acquisition, conservation, and improvements, providing a major source of funding to implement priority projects and advance the County’s long-term parks vision. Some of these projects are still underway.

Southeast Planning Area Recommendations

Acquisitions, Planning, & Projects

The Southeast Planning Area will see acquisitions that focus on land for unincorporated areas experiencing high growth, especially in the southeast section of the planning area. Planned projects include the development of the Onion Creek Greenway, investments to the undeveloped Timber Creek Park and Menchaca Gardens Park, and amenity updates in Southeast Metropolitan Park.

The County will work with partners to develop the planned Colorado River Trail, as well as providing expanded access to non-motorized boats along the River.

AW =Area-wide recommendations

Location	Recommendation	Park Name / Location	Type
AW	Acquire strategic parkland, with location to be determined.	N/A	Acquisition
1	Acquire land to create the Colorado River Trail in collaboration with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Acquisition
2	Develop new Regional Parks in unincorporated areas experiencing high growth.	N/A	Acquisition, Planning
3	Develop the Onion Creek Greenway from McKinney Falls State Park to the Confluence of the Colorado River.	Onion Creek Greenway	Project
4	Connect McKinney Falls State Park to the Hays County line along Onion Creek and Bluff Springs Buyout Properties in collaboration with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Project
5	Develop a water play opportunity at Southeast Metropolitan Park.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Project
6	Expand the All Abilities Playground at Southeast Metropolitan Park.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Project
7	Provide boat access at locations along the Colorado River.	N/A	Project
8	Develop fishing and other recreational opportunities at locations along the Colorado River.	N/A	Project
9	Develop Timber Creek Park along the Onion Creek Greenway.	Timber Creek Park	Project
10	Develop greenway trails and amenities from McKinney Falls State Park east to Richard Moya Park as part of the Onion Creek Greenway.	Onion Creek Greenway	Project - funded by 2023 bond*
11	Develop synthetic sports fields at Southeast Metropolitan Park.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Project - funded by 2023 bond*
12	Develop and implement a plan for Menchaca Gardens Park.	Menchaca Gardens Park	Planning, Project



All Abilities Playground at Southeast Metropolitan Park
Source: Hitchcock Design Group

Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan translates the Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan into a practical framework for action. Recognizing that implementation will occur over the next 10 years, this section sets priorities for each of the recommendations, as determined through public engagement, the steering committee, and the project team.

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Tracking Implementation

Effective implementation of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan will require ongoing coordination, accountability, and periodic evaluation over the next 10 years.

The tables on the following pages translate the plan’s recommendations into actionable components by identifying potential funding sources, implementation metrics, and the Travis County team responsible for advancing each recommendation. While partnerships are not explicitly included, many of these recommendations will be advanced through existing partnerships the County has with nonprofit and governmental agencies, such as the Travis County Parks Foundation, the Travis County Historical Commission, Great Springs Project, and the City of Austin.

These implementation matrices are intended to serve as a practical and adaptive tool for staff and decision-makers, helping to clarify roles, track progress, and support informed budget discussions as projects move from planning to delivery. As conditions, priorities, and funding availability evolves, the information presented should be revisited and updated to ensure the plan remains responsive and achievable.



A volunteer at the Loco Trash Bash on the Colorado River.
Source: Travis County Parks Foundation

Recommendations

Topical Recommendations

Topical recommendations (i.e. Park Land Management, Greenways, etc.) are given priority levels of 1, 2, or 3, with 1 being the highest priority. These priorities were determined through input from the community, the steering committee, and the Travis County project team. These priority levels provide guidance on the level of effort and staff time allocated for the recommendation on an annual basis. For example, a recommendation with a Level 1 priority will receive more resources and staff time in the annual work planning process.

Planning Area Recommendations

Planning Area recommendations (i.e. recommendations for the Northeast Planning Area) are prioritized by the timeframe in which they will occur within the 10 years the planning document covers. Short-Term recommendations should be implemented within 0-3 years, Medium-term recommendations should be implemented within 4-6 years, and Long-Term recommendations should be implemented within 7-10 years.

How to Read the Implementation Matrices

Priority Level for Topical Recommendations	
Level 1	Addresses critical needs or high-impact opportunities that require near-term action. Level 1 recommendations receive the greatest share of staff time and resources in annual work planning.
Level 2	Supports important system goals but may be implemented incrementally or as capacity allows. Level 2 recommendations receive moderate staff time and resources and may be phased over multiple years.
Level 3	Represents longer-term opportunities or enhancements that are not immediately critical. Level 3 recommendations receive limited near-term staff time and resources and are advanced as conditions allow.

Timeframe for Planning Area Recommendations	
Short-Term (0-3 years)	Actions that are ready to move forward in the near term and can be implemented using existing or planned resources, partnerships, or funding opportunities. Many of these recommendations set the conditions for medium-term or long-term priorities (e.g., acquiring land for the future development of Greenways).
Medium-Term (4-6 years)	Actions that may require short-term activities to be completed prior to development or where investments are anticipated to be made on a longer timescale than short-term priorities.
Long-Term (7-10 years)	Actions that may require short-term or medium-term activities to be completed prior to beginning them or represent future opportunities or investments anticipated later in the planning horizon.

Travis County Teams	
This column indicates where the responsibility for implementing the recommendation falls within the Parks Department. Relevant teams include Planning and Development, Operations & Maintenance, Park Police, and Parks Leadership, with Parks Leadership including every Parks staff member above the Supervisor position. Where recommendations rely on expanded capacity to lead the initiative, such as a new historical and cultural resources hire, the corresponding recommendation that references the hire is indicated.	

Tracking Metrics	
The success of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan should be measured annually using the tracking metrics indicated in the matrix. These may be adjusted over time if better ways of measuring the success of the recommendation are determined as progress is made on the recommendation.	

Funding Sources	
Annual Budget Process	Annual funds derived from the County’s General Fund. Critical for implementing recommendations related to staffing capacity, maintenance, safety, and amenities.
Funding-Led by Partners	Travis County may play a supporting funding role, but planning and development funds are primarily sourced from a partner organization, such as Travis County Parks Foundation.
Voter-Approved Bond Funding	Funds secured through voter-approved bond measures.

Implementation Matrix

Topical Recommendations

The following matrix provides prioritization for the implementation of the topical recommendations over the next ten years, covering greenways and trails, park land management, visitor experience, history and culture, programming and partnerships, park awareness, and public safety recommendations.

Park Land Management

	Parks Land Management Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
1.1	Objective: Adopt a strategic and scientific approach to proactive land management.				
1.1.A	Develop a land management plan	1	Land Management	Plan completion and adoption	Annual Budget Process
1.1.B	Develop monitoring protocols and procedures to track land management work and to inform adaptive management strategies.	1	Land Management	Completion and adoption of protocols for monitoring data taken annually (points taken or site visited)	Annual Budget Process
1.1.C	Establish and maintain formal collaboration channels (e.g., annual summits or regional working groups) to share data and coordinate land management and climate resilience strategies across jurisdictions.	2	Land Management	# of events and meetings organized and attended.	Annual Budget Process
1.1.D	Coordinate with appropriate internal and external partners to identify, prioritize, and mitigate hazards across all parklands—including wildfire and fuel buildup, hazardous trees, flooding and erosion, steep or inaccessible terrain, wildlife and environmental exposure, transportation and access constraints, human-caused safety risks, and operational hazards to help protect public safety, staff, and surrounding communities. (See Public Safety section.)	1	Land Management	# of acres of mitigation	Annual Budget Process
1.2	Objective: Expand, restore, and manage natural areas in parks.				
1.2.A	Expand land management programs across Travis County parklands and recently acquired properties to maintain healthy ecosystems, improve biodiversity, and reduce wildfire risk.	1	Land Management	% increase in land managed by Land Management # of FTE dedicated the Land Management	Annual Budget Process

	Parks Land Management Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
1.2.B	Restore and manage riparian buffers using native species and limit disturbance in floodplains to reduce erosion, support water infiltration, and enhance biodiversity.	2	Land Management	# of linear feet and acres of riparian buffers restored and managed % increase of riparian buffers restored and managed	Annual Budget Process
1.2.C	Restore and manage uplands to improve water infiltration, reduce flood risk, and support aquifer recharge.	2	Land Management	# of acres of uplands restored and managed % increase of upland areas restored and managed	Annual Budget Process
1.2.D	Prioritize biodiversity and native species suited to future climatic conditions when planning planting and restoration activities.	1	Land Management	Regularly updated species lists for restoration work based on observed outcomes	Annual Budget Process
1.2.E	Incorporate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) techniques in park infrastructure to support infiltration, manage stormwater, and reduce erosion (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens).	2	Land Management	% of runoff from impervious surfaces within parks infiltrated through GSI # of new of GSI installations	Annual Budget Process
1.2.F	Develop a lighting management plan for the park system, guided by the Illuminating Engineering Society's Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting and Dark Sky International's requirements for being a Dark Sky Place.	3	Planning and Development	Plan completion and adoption	Annual Budget Process
1.3	Objective: Enhance the ecological function of parks to maximize climate resilience and protect habitat.				
1.3.A	Protect and manage high-quality natural resources, including functional native ecosystems and undisturbed soils.	1	Land Management	# of acres of managed land	Annual Budget Process

	Parks Land Management Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
1.3.B	Build ecological resilience at multiple scales by addressing threats like wildfire, drought, and erosion using climate-adapted native species and active land management practices, such as using prescribed fire and brush management to maintain healthy ecosystems and reduce wildfire risk.	1	Land Management	# of acres of managed land	Annual Budget Process
1.3.C	Enhance landscape connectivity and habitat diversity by linking natural areas and managing for varied vegetation types and structures.	2	Land Management	# linear feet and acres of connected, high-quality habitat	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
1.4	Objective: Provide engagement opportunities for the public and Parks staff related to natural resource stewardship.				
1.4.A	Support restoration days and citizen science events led by partner organizations like the Travis County Parks Foundation.	1	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A), Land Management	# of programs or events held per year # of volunteer hours spent on projects	Annual Budget Process, Funding Led by Partners
1.4.B	Create and maintain a Land Management training program that allows Parks staff and other County departments to learn and participate in activities such as prescribed burns, invasive species management, and other stewardship practices on County lands.	2	Land Management	% of staff trained on extreme weather safety equipment # of annual trainings held	Annual Budget Process
1.4.C	In partnership with organizations like the Travis County Parks Foundation, develop interpretive signage and guided programs to connect park users with natural resource goals, including fire ecology, watershed protection, habitat restoration, and night sky preservation.	3	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A), Planning & Development, Land Management	# of programs or events held per year	Annual Budget Process, Funding Led by Partners
1.4.D	Educate park staff on natural resources so they can speak to the public about the park's ecology and potentially sensitive areas.	1	Land Management	# of staff members trained on natural resources # of staff educational trainings on natural resources	Annual Budget Process

Greenways & Trails

	Greenways & Trails Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
2.1	Objective: Develop, expand, and connect the trail system to local and regional trails and community resources.				
2.1.A	Develop a Travis County Greenways Vision & Management Plan to establish a standard for new greenways and greenway improvements.	1	Planning & Development	% of plan completed	Annual Budget Process
2.1.B	Expand departmental capacity to manage and maintain the Travis County Greenways system through strategic hiring, informed by the Travis County Greenways Vision & Management Plan.	1	Parks Operations & Maintenance, Land Management	# of new FTEs hired specifically to maintain greenways	Annual Budget Process
2.1.C	Prioritize materials and design approaches that withstand flooding, heat, and other climate-related and human use stressors, while preserving and/or restoring native habitat.	2	Planning & Development	- Establishment of material standards % of new or rehabilitated trail miles designed using County-approved material standards	Annual Budget Process
2.1.D	Ensure trails are designed to meet or exceed ADA standards wherever applicable.	1	Planning & Development	# of miles of new ADA trails	Annual Budget Process
2.1.E	Establish standards for lighting and safety (for example, emergency call boxes) along high-use trails that incorporate night sky-friendly lighting practices.	2	Planning & Development	Adoption of County trail lighting and safety standards	Annual Budget Process
2.1.F	Integrate trail wayfinding standards into the broader Parks System wayfinding strategy.	2	Planning & Development	# of new or upgraded wayfinding signs installed	Annual Budget Process
2.2	Objective: Prioritize greenway and trail development in areas without trails.				
2.2.A	Develop a trail prioritization methodology that evaluates potential trail corridors.	2	Planning & Development	% of plan completed	Annual Budget Process
2.2.B	Ensure every Neighborhood, Community, and Metropolitan park has at least one safe, accessible, and high-quality non-motorized entryway, ideally linked to sidewalks, trails, or other pedestrian/bike infrastructure.	3	Planning & Development	% of parks with a pedestrian and bicyclist entryway	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding

	Greenways & Trails Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
2.2.C	Develop a strategy to distribute specialized internal trail types equitably across the County	3	Planning & Development	% of trail types available within a 15-minute drive from all communities	Annual Budget Process
2.3	Objective: Maximize the multiple ecological and social benefits greenways and trails provide.				
2.3.A	Establish regularly spaced trailheads that provide connections to neighborhoods. Include amenities such as ADA parking, picnic tables or gathering spaces, bicycle repair stations, trash and recycling disposal, and restrooms.	2	Planning & Development	% of greenway network served by regular trailheads and amenities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
2.3.B	Ensure trailheads and interpretive signage reflect the identity and stories of the surrounding community.	2	Planning & Development	# of sites with locally relevant interpretive signs	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
2.3.C	Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to extend trail connections into existing or planned bicycle and pedestrian networks, enhancing regional mobility and reducing gaps.	3	Planning & Development, New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	% of missing trail links completed	Annual Budget Process
2.3.D	Integrate green stormwater infrastructure along trails to support watershed health, climate resilience, and habitat value.	1	Planning & Development	# of GSI installations along greenways	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
2.3.E	Establish a framework for ongoing maintenance of trails that complements existing park maintenance efforts and engages volunteers, “friends of greenways” groups, and stewardship programs in collaboration with Travis County Parks Foundation.	2	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	Creation and annual update of a formalized maintenance plan	Annual Budget Process
2.3.F	Enhance the ecological function of greenways and trails by establishing design and management standards that support habitat connectivity, protect riparian zones, and minimize ecological disturbance during and after construction. Strategies may include defined trail zones, expanded vegetative buffers, and alignment with regional wildlife corridor priorities.	1	Planning & Development, Parks Operations & Maintenance	# of miles of continuous vegetative corridor established	Annual Budget Process

	Greenways & Trails Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
2.4	Objective: Prioritize public access to the County's important natural, historical, and cultural features.				
2.4.A	Complete the four (4) proposed greenways, prioritizing access to historically underserved communities and ecologically significant corridors.	1	Planning & Development	% completion of each of the four greenways	Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Annual Budget Process
2.4.B	Coordinate with historical and cultural agencies to incorporate interpretive signage and storytelling into the trail network, particularly where trails pass near historic landmarks or culturally significant sites.	3	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A.A), Planning & Development	# of interpretive opportunities installed through partnerships	Annual Budget Process, Partner-led Funding
2.4.C	Align trails with natural features (e.g., rivers, creeks, areas of geological interest) while protecting them. Design with a hierarchy of access in mind, prioritizing pedestrian safety and comfort first, then bicycle access, and then other specialized uses, such as equestrian access.	1	Planning & Development	% of new trail mileage that provides access to natural features of interest	Annual Budget Process

Visitor Experience

	Visitor Experience Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
3.1	Objective: Expand nature-based recreational opportunities while maintaining and upgrading existing sports facilities.				
3.1.A	Expand nature-based and passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking, birding, and picnicking.	1	Planning & Development	• # of new nature-based opportunities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Partner-led Funding
3.1.B	Expand opportunities for water-based recreation, especially in eastern Travis County, including splash pads, fishing, and kayaking.	2	Planning & Development	• # of new water-based recreation opportunities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.1.C	Create more camping opportunities to expand overnight nature experiences.	1	Planning & Development	• # of new camping opportunities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.1.D	Prioritize new trails and recreation opportunities in areas of geologic, hydrologic, and environmental interest.	2	Planning & Development	• # of new trails that make areas of geologic or natural interest accessible via trail	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.1.E	Expand adventure sport opportunities, such as mountain biking and rock climbing.	3	Planning & Development	• # of new adventure sport opportunities • # of miles of adventure sport trails developed	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.1.F	Create nature-based play and learning opportunities for children.	3	Planning & Development	• # of new nature-based play and learning opportunities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Partner-led Funding
3.1.G	Create more ADA-accessible nature opportunities, which may include ADA-accessible trails, camping experiences, or wheelchair accessible wildlife viewing areas.	2	Planning & Development	• # of new ADA-accessible opportunities • # of miles of ADA-accessible trails	Annual Budget, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.1.H	Continue to serve the needs of local recreational sports leagues and athletic park users through existing County athletic fields and complexes, and update facilities as needed.	2	Planning & Development	• # of sports leagues using athletic facilities	Annual Budget Process

	Visitor Experience Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
3.2	Objective: Maintain comfortable, safe, clean, and well-managed parks.				
3.2.A	Develop design guidelines for all parks to establish a standard for new parks and park investments. These design guidelines should include universal design standards.	2	Planning & Development, New ADA Coordinator FTE (See 3.3.B)	• Completed design guidelines	Annual Budget Process
3.2.B	Create a user-friendly system for park visitors to report safety concerns and maintenance issues.	2	Planning & Development	• Creation of reporting system • # of comments annually and response to concerns	Annual Budget Process
3.2.C	Provide consistent bilingual signage and wayfinding for internal park trails that helps users navigate trails and safety and that explains emergency protocols.	3	Planning & Development	• % of signs that offer bilingual wayfinding and other information	
3.3	Objective: Provide recreational opportunities that reflect the desires and needs of diverse park users and are distributed equitably across the County.				
3.3.A	Conduct a County-wide assessment of recreational needs and preferences every five (5) years, or aligned with the year before each bond cycle, to ensure park investments reflect the evolving interests and needs of Travis County residents.	2	Planning & Development	• Assessment is completed every five years	Annual Budget Process
3.3.B	Establish an ADA Coordinator position to oversee and ensure accessibility across park facilities.	2	Park Leadership	• ADA Coordinator is hired	Annual Budget Process
3.3.C	Focus park development in rural and unincorporated areas that are rapidly growing.	3	Planning & Development	• # of acres of new parkland in rapidly growing areas • % of Travis County residents within a 15 minute drive to a Travis County Park	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
3.3.D	When planning for the development of new parks or improvements to existing parks, use culturally competent, bilingual, inclusive, and meaningful public engagement to ensure park updates serve the existing communities.	1	Planning & Development	• # of engagement processes with with culturally competent and bilingual language	Annual Budget Process

History & Culture

	History & Culture Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
4.1	Objective: Expand organizational capacity to integrate the region’s natural and cultural history into the park experience.				
4.1.A	Hire a staff position to support planning for, protection of, and interpretation of historical resources.	1	Leadership Team	• FTE is hired	Annual Budget Process
4.1.B	Integrate cultural resources into all park planning efforts including property acquisition, expansion, construction, and amenity building.	1	Planning & Development, New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• % of new park plans and capital projects that include a documented cultural resources review • % of projects that incorporate cultural preservation or interpretation strategies	Annual Budget Process
4.1.C	Develop a Historic & Cultural Resources Plan.	1	Planning & Development, New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• Completion and formal adoption of a Historic & Cultural Resources Plan	Annual Budget Process
4.1.D	Identify key historic resources within parks and collaborate with the Travis County Historical Commission on potential historical designation.	1	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• # of resources evaluated for local, state, or national designation	Annual Budget Process
4.2	Objective: Identify and acquire historic resources adjacent to existing parks that may allow for park expansion and resource protection.				
4.2.A	Seek possible alignment of proposed new trail systems with historic trail systems to allow for historic interpretation.	2	Planning & Development, New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• # of trail projects that include historic interpretation elements	Annual Budget Process

	History & Culture Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
4.2.B	If historic sites are acquired with significant archaeological resources, especially those associated with burials, establish partnerships with affiliated tribal entities to ensure sensitive and appropriate co-management.	1	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• # of parks with documented co-management or stewardship agreements with affiliated tribal entities • # of staff trained in culturally sensitive site management practices	Annual Budget Process
4.3	Objective: Foster a culture of historic preservation within Travis County Parks through resource identification, interpretation, and stewardship.				
4.3.A	Create a digital mapping system available to Travis County Parks employees that shows all extant and identified historic resources within parks.	3	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A), Parks Leadership	• Completion of an internal GIS-based mapping system for historic resources	Annual Budget Process
4.3.B	Establish maintenance guidelines for historic resources.	2	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A), Operations & Maintenance	• Completion and adoption of maintenance guidelines for historic resources	Annual Budget Process
4.3.C	Educate park staff on existing historic resources and historic interpretive themes in each park.	1	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• % of Parks staff who have completed historic and cultural resources training	Annual Budget Process
4.4	Objective: Establish historic and cultural education programming through partnerships.				
4.4.A	Identify partnership opportunities to include area school districts, history, historic preservation, and archaeology programs at area universities, and other heritage organizations, in collaboration with the Travis County Historical Commission.	2	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• # of active partnerships supporting historic or cultural programming	Annual Budget Process, Partner-led Funding
4.4.B	Co-create historic programming using existing organizational capacity at partner organizations, such as the Travis County Historical Commission.	2	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A)	• # of partner-led historic or cultural programs delivered in parks annually	Annual Budget Process, Partner-led Funding

Programming & Partnerships

	Programming & Partnerships Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
5.1 Objective: Expand organizational capacity to engage in partnerships.					
5.1.A	Hire staff to support coordination with partners on programming.	1	Leadership Team	• FTE is hired	Annual Budget Process
5.1.B	Strengthen relationships with municipalities and place-based nonprofits, especially those located and working in eastern Travis County, to improve park access, trails, and programming.	2	Leadership Team, New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of projects or programs initiated or completed with municipalities or nonprofits in eastern Travis County	Annual Budget Process
5.2 Objective: Improve access to information and processes for reserving park spaces and organizing recreational use.					
5.2.A	Expand the park amenity reservation website to include sports facilities and picnic shelters in addition to campsites, and integrate an online payment system.	1	Leadership Team, Operations & Maintenance	• Completion of new amenity reservation website • # of successful bookings annually	Annual Budget Process
5.2.B	Develop a user-friendly online platform, in partnership with Travis County Parks Foundation, that includes information and links to volunteer opportunities, educational and interpretive programs, and public events.	1	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• Completion of online informational platform • # of visitors to the webpage	Annual Budget Process
5.3 Objective: Expand educational and interpretive programming through partnerships.					
5.3.A	Work with Travis County Parks Foundation to establish nature-based educational and interpretive programming, such as nature walks, with horticulturalists, ecologists, biologists, and more.	1	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A), Land Management	• # of nature-based programs organized in Travis County Parks per year	Annual Budget Process, Partner-led Funding
5.3.B	Work with Travis County Parks Foundation to establish educational and interpretive programming for historic and cultural properties and features, including partnering with the Travis County Historical Commission.	2	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A), New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of programs about historic features of Travis County Parks per year	Annual Budget Process, Partner-led Funding

	Programming & Partnerships Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
5.3.C	Plan for the future of large assets managed in partnership with other organizations, including the Reimers Ranch Observatory in partnership with Travis County Parks Foundation, the BMX track in partnership with Capital BMX, and the pool at East Metropolitan Park with the YMCA.	2	Leadership Team, Planning & Development, New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• Completion of a 5 or 10 year plan for large assets managed in partnership	Annual Budget Process
5.3.D	Support partnerships between Travis County Parks Foundation, nonprofits and other organizations to offer summer camp programs within the parks.	3	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of summer camps with programming held in Travis County Parks	Annual Budget Process
5.4 Objective: Strengthen sports and recreational programming through partnerships.					
5.4.A	Partner with local organizations to build, maintain, and utilize park amenities, such as mountain bike trails and wildlife viewing areas.	3	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A), Operations & Maintenance	• # of new sports and recreational amenities built through partnerships	Annual Budget Process
5.4.B	Partner with local organizations to program existing park amenities, such as skate parks, the BMX track, and sports fields.	2	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of programs held at existing park amenities annually	Annual Budget Process
5.5 Objective: Establish a volunteer stewardship program through partnerships.					
5.5.A	Support the Travis County Parks Foundation in developing a volunteer stewardship program to assist in maintenance of parks and greenways.	1	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of hours of volunteer labor per year within Travis County Parks • # of volunteers engaged per year • # of lbs of trash or invasive species removed from parks	Annual Budget Process
5.5.B	Build a volunteer program with local historians to offer educational and interpretive programming, and to expand and centralize Parks cultural and historic data.	2	New Historical Resources FTE (See 4.1.A), New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• Establishment of a volunteer program • # educational and interpretive programs related to history in Travis County Parks	Annual Budget Process

Park Awareness

	Park Awareness Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
6.1	Objective: Increase public awareness of Travis County Parks and their offerings.				
6.1.A	Brand Travis County Parks as uniquely different from other local park service agencies, such as City of Austin, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and Texas State Parks.	1	Leadership Team	• % of parks updated with consistent Travis County Parks branding, including signage and interpretive elements • % of updated public-facing materials	Annual Budget Process
6.1.B	Develop an integrated approach to marketing efforts, including paid, earned, and owned media. Leverage social media to reach a broader audience.	2	Leadership Team	• Completion and adoption of a Travis County Parks marketing plan • % increase in social media reach and engagement	Annual Budget Process
6.1.C	Develop a parks app that includes park maps, reservations, communications about closures, and safety alerts in partnership with the Travis County Parks Foundation.	3	Leadership Team	• Completion and implementation of a parks app • # of site users of the parks app per year	Annual Budget Process
6.1.D	Establish system-wide and branded standards for park amenities, such as benches, trash cans, and bike racks.	3	Leadership Team	• % of new or replaced amenities that meet Travis County Parks branding and design standards	Annual Budget Process
6.1.E	Partner with local schools to promote internship and employment opportunities, especially for Park Rangers and Wildland Fire programs.	2	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of interns or entry-level staff recruited through partner institutions annually	Annual Budget Process

	Park Awareness Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
6.2	Objective: Work with the Travis County Parks Foundation to increase public awareness, visitorship, and appreciation of the parks.				
6.2.A	Collaborate with the Travis County Parks Foundation to facilitate community partnerships that can provide promotional opportunities through social, news, and advertising that drive awareness for Travis County Parks.	1	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of promotional partnerships coordinated with the Travis County Parks Foundation	Annual Budget Process
6.2.B	Work with the Travis County Parks Foundation on public relations activations and promotions that could draw coverage from news media and provide content for the website and social media.	2	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of activations and promotions	Annual Budget Process
6.2.C	Coordinate with the Travis County Parks Foundation to promote events and feature parks in their outlets, including their newsletter and social media.	2	New Programming & Partnerships FTE (See 5.1.A)	• # of events in parks promoted through Travis County Parks Foundation outlets	Annual Budget Process

Public Safety

	Public Safety Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
7.1	Objective: Provide vigilant enforcement of criminal activity and rule violations through diligent patrol.				
7.1.A	Maintain the ability of Park Rangers to conduct regular inspections of parkland and maintain a presence through proactive patrols to deter criminal activity and rule violations.	1	Parks Police	# of ranger patrol hours per park per week	Annual Budget Process
7.1.B	Support staff level increases, especially Park Rangers, as anticipated critical equipment is received.	3	Parks Police	# of new Park Ranger positions filled relative to utilization of new equipment	Annual Budget Process
7.1.C	Ensure Park Rangers are able to allocate sufficient and appropriately trained personnel during peak times and high-risk situations to ensure timely assistance and enhance overall park safety.	1	Parks Police	Average response time during peak-use periods in parks	Annual Budget Process
7.1.D	As anticipated equipment is received, ensure support to Park Rangers to expand patrols to a 24-hour schedule.	3	Parks Police	# of parks covered by 24-hour patrols	Annual Budget Process
7.2	Objective: Ensure an expeditious response to calls in parks, preserves, and other park properties.				
7.2.A	Maintain the ability of Park Rangers to enforce park rules and laws through monitoring, responsive deployment, and thorough investigations of incidents and violations.	3	Parks Police	Average response time to reported incidents and violations	Annual Budget Process
7.2.B	Implement a system-wide digital message screen program to better communicate safety messaging to park visitors throughout the system and on a park-by-park basis.	3	Parks Police, Land Management	% of parks equipped with digital safety message screens	Annual Budget Process
7.2.C	Maintain the capability to quickly assess, prioritize, and remove hazard trees and other dangerous vegetation that pose a threat to visitors, staff, or park infrastructure.	1	Land Management	- Developed protocol for reporting hazards (reviewed and updated annually) - Average time from hazard identification to mitigation or removal	Annual Budget Process

	Public Safety Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
7.2.D	Respond promptly to wildland fire incidents within park boundaries, coordinating with interagency partners to ensure rapid containment and minimize impacts to public safety and natural resources.	1	Land Management	- Developed protocol for reporting incidents (reviewed and updated annually) - Average response time to wildland fire incidents	Annual Budget Process
7.2.E	Conduct proactive wildland fire mitigation activities, including mechanical fuels reduction, prescribed fire, and public outreach, to reduce the likelihood and severity of future wildland fire.	1	Land Management	# of acres treated annually through fuels reduction or prescribed fire # of miles and acres of fire breaks maintained	Annual Budget Process
7.3	Objective: Provide excellent training and resources for staff to successfully respond to emergencies, both within and beyond the park system.				
7.3.A	Conduct regular licensing, certifications, and accreditations training.	1	Land Management	% of staff with current required safety certifications # of accredited safety training sessions conducted annually	Annual Budget Process
7.3.B	Continue regular fire safety and first aid training. Conduct joint training with partner agencies, focusing on competencies and relationship building.	2	Land Management	# of staff completing fire safety and first aid training annually # of joint training exercises conducted with partner agencies	Annual Budget Process
7.3.C	In coordination with Park Rangers, ensure parks staff are regularly trained in best practices related to de-escalation tactics involving park visitor and wildlife conflicts.	2	Parks Police	% of staff completing de-escalation training annually	Annual Budget Process

	Public Safety Recommendation	Priority Level	Travis County Teams	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
7.3.D	Conduct regular emergency response training for all park staff for extreme weather events and medical emergencies. Each park has its own emergency plan and/or evacuation plan, and it should be ensured that these plans are communicated and reviewed with staff regularly.	1	Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance	• # of parks with current, documented emergency and evacuation plans	Annual Budget Process
7.3.E	Ensure Park Rangers are equipped with all necessary equipment for enhanced medical search and rescue operations. Conduct regular training in coordination with DCPE and other partners to maintain the minimum skill level.	1	Parks Police	• # of search and rescue training exercises completed annually in coordination with partners	Annual Budget Process
7.4	Objective: Reinforce an organizational structure that proactively reduces risk to life, property, and natural resources through integrated practices that prioritize hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, and community resilience.				
7.4.A	Achieve adequate staffing levels to reduce fatigue and unsafe conditions.	2	Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance	• Average overtime hours per staff member per month (low is preferred)	Annual Budget Process
7.4.B	Support a culture that encourages reporting safety concerns and prioritizes safety and quick response to concerns.	2	Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance, Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance	• # of safety concerns reported and addressed annually	Annual Budget Process
7.4.C	Maintain safety protocol and equipment standards for all park staff during times of extreme weather conditions.	1	Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance	• % of staff trained on extreme weather safety equipment	Annual Budget Process
7.4.D	Ensure regular maintenance and inspection of equipment, personal protective equipment, tools, machinery, and vehicles.	2	Parks Police, Land Management, Operations & Maintenance	• # of safety or other incidents attributed to equipment failure	Annual Budget Process

Planning Area Recommendations

The following recommendations provide priorities for land acquisitions, park and greenway planning work, and park and greenway projects, for the next decade in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast Planning Areas. Most land acquisitions, greenways, and large park improvements are funded by voter-approved bond funds, with smaller amenities, such as boat ramps and sports field updates, funded by the County’s annual budget process.

- » **Short-Term** recommendations should be implemented within **0-3 years**
- » **Medium-Term** recommendations should be implemented within **4-6 years**
- » **Long-Term** recommendations should be implemented within **7-10 years**

Northwest Planning Area

Northwest Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Acquire strategic Lake Travis Properties.	N/A	Long-Term	Acquisition	• # of acres of newly acquired land along Lake Travis	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land along the Cow Creek Corridor.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition	• # of acres of newly acquired land along the creek • # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Create a Vision Plan for Comanche Trail parks, including Bob Wentz, Hippie Hollow, and Cypress Creek.	Bob Wentz Park, Hippie Hollow Park, and Cypress Creek Park	Medium-Term	Planning	• Completion and adoption of a Vision Plan	Annual Budget Process
Construct a community group building along with park improvements.	Arkansas Bend Park	Short-Term	Project	• Completion of a community group building	Funded in 2023 Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Remediate construction damage to Sandy Creek Park and renovate the park.	Sandy Creek Park	Medium-Term	Project	• % progress of land restored and renovated	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Invest in amenity upgrades to established Neighborhood and Community Parks.	Selma Hughes Park, Mary Quinlan Park, Fritz Hughes Park, Allen Park	Medium-Term	Project	• # of amenity upgrades and improvements in neighborhood and community parks	Annual Budget

Northeast Planning Area

Northeast Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Acquire strategic parkland, with location to be determined.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of new parkland	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop new regional parks in unincorporated areas experiencing high growth.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of new parkland % of Travis County residents within a 15 minute drive to a Travis County Park	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to complete the Gilleland Creek Greenway.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the creek # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to connect the future Gilleland Creek Greenway to East Metropolitan Park.	N/A	Long-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the creek # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to complete the Wilbarger Creek Greenway.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the creek # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land in the Post Oak Savanna and the adjacent bluffs ecoregion.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land in the target areas (Post Oak Savanna and bluffs ecoregion)	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to create the Colorado River Trail in partnership with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the river # of miles of connected land along the river	Voter-Approved Bond Funding

Northeast Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Develop the Gilleland Creek Greenway.	Gilleland Creek Greenway	Short-Term	Project	% of design of the greenway completed % of the envisioned greenway completed # of miles of greenway constructed	Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Annual Budget Process
Construct Gilleland Creek Greenway trails and amenities from Northeast Metropolitan Park to Ben. E. Fisher Park, including improvements to Ben E. Fisher Park.	Ben. E. Fisher Park	Short-Term	Project	# of amenities constructed % completion of improvements to Ben. E. Fisher Park	Funded in the 2023 Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Annual Budget Process
Develop Wilbarger Creek Greenway.	N/A	Medium-Term	Project	% of design of the greenway completed % of the envisioned greenway completed # of miles of greenway constructed	Voter-Approved Bond Funding, Annual Budget Process
Develop a mountain bike trail system.	Central area within the NE Planning Area	Medium-Term	Project	# completion of the mountain bike trail system	Annual Budget Process
Provide or expand fishing opportunities at Webberville Park and Little Webberville Park, and locations along the planned Colorado River Trail.	"Webberville Park, Little Webberville Park"	Medium-Term	Project	# of new fishing opportunities	Annual Budget Process
Create non-motorized boat ramps along the Colorado River to expand access to the River.	N/A	Medium-Term	Project	# of new non-motorized boat ramps accessing the river	Annual Budget Process
Develop and expand synthetic turf fields.	Northeast Metropolitan Park, East Metropolitan Park	Long-Term	Project	% of planned synthetic turf fields constructed	Annual Budget Process
Development of a community group building and associated park improvements.	East Metropolitan Park	Short-Term	Project	% completion of the community group building	Voter-Approved Bond Funding

Southwest Planning Area

Southwest Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Acquire strategic Lake Travis Properties.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along Lake Travis	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to create the Pedernales River Corridor.	N/A	Long-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the river # of miles of connected land along the river	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to connect RGK Ranch Park to Reimers Ranch Park.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	% of connection made through land acquisition	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop and implement a Vision Plan for Reimers Ranch Park that incorporates the newly acquired properties and includes camping and expanded trails.	Reimers Ranch Park	Short-Term	Planning	Completion and adoption of the Vision Plan	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Make park-wide improvements to Pace Bend Park, based on the Pace Bend Vision Plan.	Pace Bend Park	Medium-Term	Project	% of recommendations completed from the Vision Plan % of design and project completed	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop and implement a vision plan for RGK Ranch Park.	RGK Ranch Park	Short-Term	Project	- Completion and adoption of Vision Plan % of recommendations completed from the Vision Plan % of design and project completion	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Construct synthetic sports fields, pavilions, and walking trails.	Bee Creek Sports Complex	Short-Term	Project	# of sports fields constructed # of pavilions constructed # of miles of walking trails constructed	Funded in the 2023 Voter-Approved Bond Funding

Southeast Planning Area

Southeast Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Acquire strategic parkland, with location to be determined.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of new parkland % of Travis County residents within a 15 minute drive to a Travis County Park	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Acquire land to create the Colorado River trail in collaboration with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Short-Term	Acquisition	# of acres of newly acquired land along the river # of miles of connected land along the river	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop new Regional Parks in unincorporated areas experiencing high growth.	N/A	Medium-Term	Acquisition, Planning	# of acres of new parkland % of Travis County residents within a 15 minute drive to a Travis County Park	Voter-approved Bond Funding
Develop the Onion Creek Greenway from McKinney Falls State Park to the Confluence of the Colorado River.	Onion Creek Greenway	Short-Term	Project	# of acres of newly acquired land along the creek # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Connect McKinney Falls State Park to the Hays County line along Onion Creek and Bluff Springs Buyout Properties in collaboration with municipal and nonprofit partners.	N/A	Medium-Term	Project	# of acres of newly acquired land along the creek # of miles of connected land along the creek	Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop a water play opportunity at Southeast Metropolitan Park.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Short-Term	Project	% completion of a water play opportunity	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Expand the All Abilities Playground at Southeast Metropolitan Park.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Short-Term	Project	% completion of the expansion of the playground	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding

Southeast Planning Area Recommendation	Park Name/ Location	Timeframe	Rec. Type	Tracking Metrics	Funding Sources
Provide boat access at locations along the Colorado River.	N/A	Medium-Term	Project	# of new access points to the Colorado River	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop fishing and other recreational opportunities at locations along the Colorado River.	N/A	Medium-Term	Project	# of new recreational opportunities	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop Timber Creek Park along the Onion Creek Greenway.	Timber Creek Park	Short-Term	Project	% construction of park completed	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding
Develop greenway trails and amenities from McKinney Falls State Park east to Moya Park as part of the Onion Creek Greenway.	Onion Creek Greenway	Short-Term	Project	% of design of the greenway completed # of miles of greenway constructed	Funded in the 2023 Voter-approved Bond Funding
Develop synthetic sports fields.	Southeast Metropolitan Park	Short-Term	Project	# of sports fields constructed	Funded in the 2023 Voter-approved Bond Funding
Develop and implement a plan for Menchaca Gardens Park.	Menchaca Gardens Park	Short-Term	Planning, Project	- Completion and adoption of a plan for the park % of recommendations completed from the plan	Annual Budget Process, Voter-Approved Bond Funding

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Funding Opportunities

A range of funding opportunities can support implementation of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan, including voter-approved bonds, the County’s Annual Budget, parkland dedication fees, partnership-based sources, and grants.

Implementing the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan will require a coordinated approach to funding that leverages local, state, federal, and philanthropic resources over time. Successful implementation will depend on aligning projects with the most appropriate funding pathways based on project type, scale, timing, and staff capacity to manage the projects. This section outlines potential funding opportunities that may support plan implementation, including voter-approved bonds, departmental operating funds, state and federal grants, and partnerships with nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, such as the Travis County Parks Foundation.

Voter-Approved Bonds

Voter-approved bonds have historically been a primary funding mechanism for major park investments in Travis County, supporting land acquisition, park development, and large-scale capital improvements that would be difficult to fund through annual operating budgets alone. Through past bond programs, Travis County has been able to secure funding for long-term assets that expand public access to parks, trails, and natural areas while distributing costs over time. Since 1997, voters have approved six bond referendums, totaling approximately \$559 million for parkland acquisition and construction of park improvements.

In the context of this Comprehensive Plan, future bond initiatives will continue to play a critical role in implementing high-cost, system-wide, or transformational projects identified in the plan. Bond funding is particularly well-suited for capital projects with long service lives, such as parkland acquisition, trail systems, major infrastructure, and facility development, and can be complemented by grants and philanthropic partnerships to maximize impact and accelerate delivery.

Annual Budget

The Parks Department’s operating funds are distributed from the County’s General Fund and support the day-to-day functions necessary to safely and effectively manage the Travis County Parks system, including staffing, maintenance, park operations, enforcement, and emergency response. These funds are allocated through the annual budget process, and are essential for sustaining the quality and reliability of park services once capital projects are delivered.

Within the context of this Comprehensive Plan, operating funds are critical for implementing recommendations related to staffing capacity, park ranger presence, maintenance standards, safety, and long-term stewardship. As the parks system expands through land acquisition and capital investment, corresponding increases in operating funding will be necessary to ensure that new and improved parks can be maintained at a level consistent with community expectations and County service standards.

Philanthropy & Partnerships

Philanthropy and strategic partnerships can play an important complementary role in advancing the recommendations of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan by augmenting public funding and leading programming, such as educational and recreational activities within the parks. For example, Travis County benefits from established nonprofit partners such as the Travis County Parks Foundation, which supports park investment through fundraising, partnerships, and community engagement, as well as regional partners like The Great Springs Project, which is collaborating with Travis County and other jurisdictions on the planning and development of the Colorado River Trail.

Increasing staffing capacity to engage in these partnerships will ensure that Travis County is able to fully benefit from these partnerships, both financially and programmatically.

Parkland Dedication

Parkland dedication is a regulatory funding mechanism that helps ensure new development contributes to the provision of public parkland and recreational amenities. Travis County’s Chapter 82, Travis County Development Regulations, requires the dedication of parkland or payment of a fee-in-lieu of parkland from developers in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City of Austin and in unincorporated areas of Travis County. These dedications or fees help offset the increased demand for park facilities generated by new development. When development occurs within the City of Austin’s ETJ, parkland dedication is directed to the service provider responsible for the park nearest to the development. Parkland dedication and fee-in-lieu revenues can support land acquisition and, in some cases, park improvements as long as they are accessible to the public. Since this ordinance was adopted in 2003, Travis County has collected approximately \$4.67 million in fees.

Federal & State Grants

Federal and state grants represent a relatively small supplemental funding source for Travis County Parks. These funds are typically competitive, time-limited, and often require local matching funds, making them best suited for advancing specific projects or project components rather than serving as a primary or ongoing funding source. In the context of this Comprehensive Plan, federal and state grants may help support priorities such as trail development, park access, safety improvements, land acquisition, and resource conservation. While grants alone are unlikely to fully fund major capital investments, they can help leverage local dollars, accelerate implementation, and enhance the scope or quality of projects when aligned with County priorities and project readiness. The Travis County Parks Department works with the Intergovernmental Relations Office to track and apply for grants.



Prescribed burning at Reimers Ranch Park

References

Research and datasets consulted and utilized in the preparation of the Travis County Parks Comprehensive Plan.

Citations

Below are the sources used in the research prepared for this report.

Planning Area Profiles

Demographics

1. U.S. Census Bureau, “County Population Totals: 2020-2024.” <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html>. Accessed 6 Feb 2025.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/ Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program. CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index 2016 and 2022 Database Texas. https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/data_documentation_download.html. Accessed 3 Feb 2025.
3. 2024 Entertainment/Recreation Spending by Block Group, ESRI Business Analyst

Community Health

4. “Places: Local Data for Better Health.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/places/index.html. Accessed 7 Feb 2025.

Climate Challenges & Risk

5. Austin Future Climate: Climate Projections For the City of Austin, June 2024, available from UT-City Climate CoLab [<https://texuslab.org/colab>].
6. U.S. Fire Administration, “Wildfire and the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI),” <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/accessed> 7 Feb 2025.

Ecology & Conservation

7. Bezanson, David. “Chapter 5: The Blackland Prairies,” *Texasprairie.org* Accessed 10 Feb 2025, https://texasprairie.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Blackland-Prairies_Bezanson_2000.pdf
8. “Texas Ecoregions.” Texas Ecoregions - Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, 16 Dec. 2022, tpwd.texas.gov/education/hunter-education/online-course/wildlife-conservation/texas-ecoregions.

Geospatial Data Sources

Existing conditions mapping data was sourced in 2025 from various sources including Travis County and national, state, and city databases.

Planning Area Profiles

Parks & Greenways

Connecting the County (p. 28)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, City of Austin, City of Bee Cave, City of Buda, City of Lakeway, City of Lago Vista, City of Leander, City of Manor, City of Pflugerville, City of Sunset Valley, FEMA, NHD, NRPA, TPWD, Travis County, TxDOT

Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, & Southeast Planning Areas (pp. 29-32)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, City of Austin, City of Bee Cave, City of Buda, City of Lakeway, City of Lago Vista, City of Leander, City of Manor, City of Pflugerville, City of Sunset Valley, FEMA, NHD, NRPA, TPWD, Travis County, TxDOT

Demographics

Spending Potential (p. 34)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, CDC/ATSDR SVI 2022, NHD, Travis County, TxDOT, U.S. Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019 and 2021 Consumer Expenditure Surveys)

Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, & Southeast Planning Areas (pp. 35-38)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, NHD, Travis County, TxDOT, U.S. Census ACS 2022 5-Year

Community Health

Areas of Low Physical Activity & Social Isolation (p. 40)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, CAMPO TAZ2025, CDC, NHD, NRPA, Travis County, TxDOT

Hydrology

Hydrological Features (p. 42)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, BCCP, FEMA, NHD, NRPA, TCEQ, Travis County, TWDB, TxDOT

Climate Challenges & Risk

Wildland & Flood Risk (p. 44)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Austin Fire & Wildfire, FEMA, NHD, NRPA, Travis County, TxDOT

Ecology & Conservation

Ecoregions & Conservation (p. 48)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, City of Austin, City of Jonestown, City of Sunset Valley, NHD, NRPA, TPWD, Travis County, TxDOT

Vegetation Communities: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, & Southeast Planning Areas (p. 49-52)

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, NHD, TPWD Ecological Mapping System, Travis County, TxDOT

Historic & Cultural Resources

Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, & Southeast Planning Areas (pp. 55-58)

Data on the location of Freedom Colonies and other African American resources are courtesy of the Texas Freedom Colonies Project and the Travis County Historical Commission. Data on designated historic and cultural resources are courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission’s Historic Sites Atlas. The depicted alignment of the El Camino de Los Tejas Historic National Historic Trail is courtesy of the National Park Service. Due to the inherent sensitive nature of below-ground resources, archeological resources and deposits are not depicted on this map.