

# Galveston Island Parks Plan



City of Galveston, Texas

*Prepared for the*

Department of Parks and  
Recreation

and

Department of Planning and  
Community Development

*Date*

June 2001\*

*\*Final ed. September 2003*

*Prepared by*



Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC



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# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Background	6
1.2 Administration and Finance	7
<b>2.0 Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Mission Statement	9
2.2 Goals	9
2.3 Time Frame	9
<b>3.0 Plan Development Process</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Planning Steps	10
3.2 Planning Committee	11
3.3 Public Input	11
<b>4.0 Area and Facility Standards</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1 General Description	12
4.2 Standards	13
4.2.1 Park Land Standards	13
4.2.2 Facilities Standards	18
<b>5.0 Inventory</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 City Resources	20
5.2 Other Resources	21
<b>6.0 Needs Assessment</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1 Methodology	24
6.2 Programming Needs	24
6.3 Recommendations	24
6.3.1 General Recommendations	24
6.3.2 Park Land Recommendations	24
6.3.3 Facilities Recommendations	29
6.3.4 Organizational Recommendations	38
<b>7.0 Plan Implementation</b>	<b>40</b>
7.1 Prioritization of Organizational Needs	40
7.2 Prioritization of Parks and Facilities Needs	40
7.3 Resources for Meeting Needs	41
7.4 Value Estimate	46
<b>8.0 Illustrations</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix: Citizen Survey</b>	<b>53</b>

**Table 4.2.1.a** Park Lands Current LOS –  
Comparative Analysis ..... 16

**Table 4.2.1.b** Park Lands Current LOS –  
Comparative Analysis, Galveston LOS Only ..... 17

**Table 4.2.2** Current LOS Provisions –  
Comparative Analysis ..... 19

**Table 5.1** Inventory ..... 23

**Table 6.3.2** Park Land Needs Analysis ..... 28

**Table 6.3.3** Facilities Needs Assessment ..... 37

**Table 7.4.1** Value Estimate ..... 48

**Figure 8.1:** Park and Open Space Opportunities ..... 50

**Figure 8.2:** Service Radii: Existing Parks ..... 51

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Galveston has several opportunities and challenges associated with its parks and recreation system.

### Opportunities

Galveston has distinct characteristics: an intensely urban fabric at its core, a proud historic awareness, as well as over thirty miles of public beaches and several acres of pristine open space and wetlands. Parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are numerous across the Island.

### Challenges

Funding is the biggest challenge within the Parks and Recreation Department. The limited budget combined with the department's broad range of responsibilities result in a poorly maintained parks system.

In addition, misconceptions regarding the parks and recreational system are an issue. Those recreational services offered by the City of Galveston are subject to varying interpretation. Many residents of Galveston do not realize the current responsibilities shouldered by the Parks and Recreation Department or what services the department should provide. Additionally, a "park" to many people means a playground; when in reality, parks are much more than just playgrounds and can offer a great range of recreational opportunities.

## Natural and Cultural Resources

Galveston Island has rich natural and cultural histories that are closely related. As a barrier island, it boasts both freshwater and saltwater estuaries and wetlands, supporting a broad variety of fish and bird species.

In addition to its distinct natural environment, Galveston also has a deep-rooted cultural element, which is present in the community's architecture and civic structure. Its proud history is reflected in architecture throughout the city.

## Demographics

Over the last 40 years the population of the City of Galveston has generally declined; however, there has been some recovery over the last decade. Compared to the Houston-Galveston region as a whole, the City's popula-



*The Plan was crafted to reflect and achieve the vision of Galveston's citizens for the future of the community.*



*Galveston's downtown area reflects its rich cultural history.*



*Extensive systems of wetlands exist in western portions of the Island.*

tion has the following characteristics: a predominance of senior citizens, lower income levels and a minority community with higher rates of unemployment and poverty. Further, the housing stock of the City is generally older and has a higher vacancy level than the surrounding region. See Appendix A for a more detailed demographic report.

## 1.2 Administration & Finance

### Unit of Government

The Parks Master Plan was created for two units of government: the City of Galveston Department of Planning and Community Development and the City of Galveston Parks and Recreation Department.

### Agency's role in providing parks and recreation opportunities

The Parks and Recreation Department's current role consists of maintaining existing parks and street rights-of-way. It offers some summer and after-school programs, *but* does not currently pursue acquisition of land for parks. See also Section 6.3.4: Department and Organizational Recommendations.



*Typical housing west of the seawall*

## *2.0 Goals and Objectives*

## 2.0 Goals and Objectives



*Parks contribute to the quality of life in a community.*



*Coordination of recreation programs*



*Preservation of natural areas*



*Provision of parks and facilities for existing and future populations*

### 2.1 Mission Statement

The Parks Subcommittee, a group consisting of members from the Galveston Comprehensive and Parks Plan Steering Committee, developed the following mission statement and goals:

*“Provide quality facilities to enable citizens to pursue healthy lifestyles, while enhancing the quality of life.”*

### 2.2 Goals

- To properly maintain existing parks and recreational facilities
- To properly equip and landscape existing parks
- To coordinate recreational programs offered by leagues, athletic associations, and other organizations
- To preserve natural areas for open space opportunities
- To provide additional facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population
- To provide new parks to meet the needs of expanding populations

### 2.3 Time Frame

This plan addresses park needs and issues for the next ten to twenty years.

## 3.0 Plan Development Process

### 3.1 Planning Steps

The Parks Subcommittee of the Comprehensive and Parks Plans steering committee, in conjunction with the City Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the consultant firm Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, took the following steps to compile this plan:

1. Collection and evaluation of the City's current resources, including an inventory of parks locations and sizes, existing park land standards and facilities level of service standards, an inventory of current facilities locations and numbers, "1995 – 2000 and Beyond: City of Galveston Parks and Recreation Master Plan", the 1988 Galveston Island Comprehensive Plan, and budget reports and capital improvement plans for the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Verification of **current** conditions of existing parks and facilities with Parks Department staff, the Parks Board, and the parks subcommittee of the plan's steering committee.
3. Establishment of standards for park lands and facilities with the City Parks and Recreation Advisory Board through two public workshops. These standards were set by studying national standards published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) as well as park land and service radii standards and current and recommended levels of service (LOS) of peer coastal communities and communities within the Houston-Galveston area.
4. Completion of a needs analysis that addresses **the quantity of additional park land and recreational facilities** needed to meet the established standards.
5. Identification and prioritizing of needs based on **Galveston's** distinct communities on the **Island**.
6. Development of a policy framework comprised of a series of recommendations addressing the general location and acquisition of additional park lands and facilities, the "infill" development of existing park land, and opportunities for partnering. Also included are recommendations for special alternative uses of parks specific to areas of the **Island** in order to accommodate the needs and lifestyles of residents as they differ across the Island. In addition, recommendations

## 3.0 Plan Development Process

are included to provide direction for the ongoing development of Galveston's park system.

7. Development of implementation techniques for maintaining existing parks and facilities, acquiring additional park lands and facilities, and creating new ordinances to protect natural environments and provide parks with new development.

### 3.2 Planning Committee

The Parks Subcommittee was organized from members of the Steering Committee of the Galveston Comprehensive and Parks Plans. This committee consists of eight people who represent a cross section of Galveston's population. Advisors to the committee include staff from both the City of Galveston Department of Planning and Community Development and the City of Galveston Parks and Recreation Department.



*Public input was received at several public meetings.*

### 3.3 Public Input

Public input was received in various ways during the planning process. Surveys were mailed to 24,000 residents of the Island and approximately 2,400 responses were tabulated. Two of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meetings were open to the public and part of an intense planning charrette. In addition, neighborhood meetings and one citywide public meeting were used to solicit input on parks issues. See Appendix B for survey results.

## 4.0 Area and Facility Standards

### 4.1 General Description

#### Mini-Parks

Mini-parks are generally **less than one acre in size** (according to the [National Recreation and Parks Association](#) (NRPA)). Commonly referred to as pocket parks, they serve a very small radius and generally facilitate few recreational needs. Existing mini-parks in Galveston usually consist of a play area and were referred to as a “playlot” in the 1995 plan.

#### Neighborhood Parks

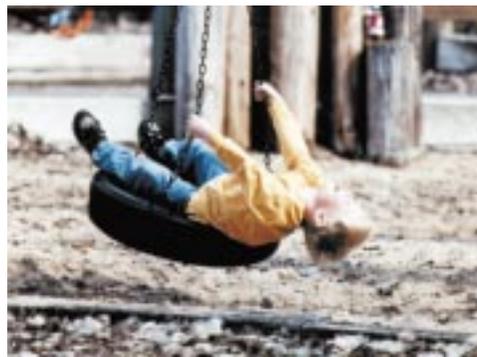
Neighborhood parks are those that are **one to ten acres** in size **and** provide a wide range of recreational facilities. Smaller parks contain only playground equipment and seating, while larger parks contain practice or game fields. These parks generally serve a ½ mile radius (or the neighborhoods contiguous to it) and are accessible by a short walking distance. Both the NRPA and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) recommend a maximum service radius of ½ mile.

#### Community Parks

Community parks are those which are generally **greater than twenty acres** in size and serve many types of recreational needs within a 2-mile service radius (according to both the NRPA and the ULI). Some community parks contain unique facilities or features, which serve a larger area, expanding beyond a simple 2-mile service radius. Many times, community parks contain groups of lighted ball fields and practice fields, as well as other active and passive recreational facilities.

#### Regional Parks

Regional parks generally **serve an area considerably larger than the municipality that they occupy** and usually **occur in conjunction with a unique natural or cultural feature**. In Galveston, the classification of a regional park is one **that** encompasses a substantial land area (over 200 acres according to the NRPA; over 500 acres according to the ULI) and serves most of the Houston-Galveston area. Currently, no land held by the [City](#) meets this requirement. However, these types of parks are found within Parks Board of Trustees and State Parks land holdings.



*Mini-parks generally provide playgrounds and small recreational areas.*



*Neighborhood parks, such as Menard, provide a wide range of recreational opportunities.*



*Community parks generally provide larger recreational areas, such as sports fields and complexes.*



*The seawall provides a regional recreational amenity.*

## 4.0 Area and Facility Standards



Wetlands make up a large portion of the open space areas on Galveston Island.

### Open Space

Open spaces are **passive use recreational areas** that can be one of several types, including public lands (such as beaches, easements, or passive recreational parks), private lands (such as undeveloped land or private open space which is part of a development), and riparian and floodplain areas. Open space can be associated with Regional Parks (see above), and it has environmental, educational, and economic values in addition to its recreational values. There are no national standards dictating the size or types of open space.

## 4.2 Standards

Establishing standards for parks, in both size and service requirements, is a common practice among municipalities. There are national organizations, such as the **National Recreation and Parks Association** (NRPA), which have established such standards for use as a guide nationwide. Each organization, whether national, **state** or local, typically classifies their parks into a number of categories, which do not coincide in many cases. For ease of discussion, parks have been grouped into three categories: regional, community, and neighborhood parks.

Current standards, found in the 1995-2000 and Beyond Parks and Recreation Master Plan, were established based on the **NRPA's** recommendations and some demand-based standards. Recommended standards have been established based on current standards, NRPA standards, comparison of neighboring and peer communities' standards, and input from the steering committee and community. See Table 4.2.1 for a detailed park land comparison. Table 4.2.2 provides a comparison of facilities standards.

### 4.2.1 Park Land Standards

See Table 4.2.1 for a comprehensive comparison of level-of-service standards for park land, including current levels of service for City parks, as well as for parks provided by county, state and other entities.

## 4.0 Area and Facility Standards

### Mini Parks (playlots in 1995 plan)

Mini parks are the smallest park type, which may include playgrounds, seating, and courts. These parks are generally less than one acre in size.

- Current Standard  
None
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
City parks only: 0.003 acres per 1000 people  
All parks: 0.003 acres per 1000 people
- Recommended Standard
  - **0 acres per 1000 people**
  - No additional mini-parks; they present a maintenance problem and offer limited potential for services or programs

### Neighborhood Parks

Under ten acres in size, neighborhood parks generally contain playgrounds, courts, seating, multi-use open play areas, and/or practice fields.

- Current Standard  
1.8 acres per 1000 people
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
City parks only: 0.90 acres per 1000 people  
All parks: 0.90 acres per 1000 people
- Recommended Standard
  - **1 acre per 1000 people**, including all parks providers
  - Service Radius: ½ mile
  - Size Range: 1 – 10 acres

### Community Parks

Generally 20-50 acres in size, these parks may contain playgrounds, courts, game fields, and special facilities.

- Current Standard  
0.75 acres per 1000 people
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
City parks only: 1.40 acres per 1000 people  
All parks: 2.40 acres per 1000 people

## 4.0 Area and Facility Standards

- Recommended Standard
  - **5 acres per 1000 people**, including county parks and Park Board of Trustees holdings. This number has been increased from the previous standard due to the **overwhelming** need expressed by the community for additional sports fields
  - Service Radius: 2 miles
  - Size Range: 20 – 50 acres

### Regional Parks and Open Space

Regional parks are generally over 100 acres in size and contain specialty facilities, such as nature centers, interpretive trails, outdoor recreation centers, or amusement facilities and concessions.

Open spaces may include nature preserves, bike paths, picnic areas, and protected natural habitats that are appropriately developed for public access. See Figure 8.1: Recreation and Open Space Opportunities.



*Beaches provide the majority of open space and regional recreational opportunities for Galveston.*



*Wetlands also contribute to the island's open space system.*

- Current Standard  
No standard
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
City parks only: 0.0 acres per 1000 people  
All parks: 48.2 acres per 1000 people
- Recommended Standard
  - **10 acres per 1000 people**; including State Parks, beaches, and open space.
  - Service Radius: Tri-county area (Brazoria, Galveston, Harris)
  - Size Range: over 100 acres

## OVERALL

For reference and a general cross-check, **Galveston should provide 16 acres of overall parkland per 1000 people** (10 acres of regional parks, 5 acres of community parks, and 1 acre of neighborhood parks).

This number includes recreational lands and facilities owned and/or operated by other agencies.

**Table 4.2.1a: Park Lands Current LOS - Comparative Analysis**

	NRPA <population>	Pensacola, FL 65,000	Corpus Christi 292,036	Port Arthur 58,000	Texas City 42,000	Baytown 71,000	1995 Standards: Galveston	Current LOS: Galveston *	2000 Standards: Galveston **
<b>Regional Park</b>									
Recommended Size (Acres)	200+ <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100+
Recommended Service Radius		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tri-county area
Acres per 1000 Population	5.0-10.0 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.0
<b>City-wide or Large Urban</b>									
Recommended Size (Acres)	50+; 75+ optimal <sup>2</sup>	over 50	over 50	over 50	over 50	over 50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Recommended Service Radius	entire community <sup>2</sup>						N/A	N/A	N/A
Acres per 1000 Population		2.9	0.2	1.0	8.8	5.6	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Community</b>									
Recommended Size (Acres)	30-50 <sup>2</sup>	20-50	20-50	20-50	20-50	20-50	no standard	over 8	20-50
Recommended Service Radius	0.5-3 miles <sup>2</sup>						no standard	2 miles	2 miles
Acres per 1000 Population	5.0-8.0 <sup>1</sup>	0.7	0.5	0.3	4.3	3.3	0.75	1.4	5.0
<b>Neighborhood</b>									
Recommended Size (Acres)	5-10 <sup>2</sup>	5-20	5-20	5-20	5-20	5-20	4-8	4-8	1-10
Recommended Service Radius	0.25-0.5 miles <sup>2</sup>						0.5 miles	0.5 miles	0.5 miles
Acres per 1000 Population	1.0-2.0 <sup>1</sup>	3.0	1.2	1.1	0.9	2.7	1.8	0.9	1.0
<b>Playground/Mini-park</b>									
Recommended Size (Acres)	2500 s.f. - 1 acre <sup>2</sup>	under 5	under 5	under 5	under 5	under 5	1000 s.f. - 1 acre	under 4	under 1
Recommended Service Radius	> 0.25 miles <sup>2</sup>						0.25 miles	0.25 miles	N/A
Acres per 1000 Population	0.25-0.50 <sup>1</sup>	2.3	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.10	0.0	0.0

<sup>1</sup> 1983 NRPA Standard

<sup>2</sup> 1995 NRPA Standard

\* Based on 57,247 year 2000 population, Parks Department parks only

\*\* Recommended Standards include all park lands available in Galveston

**Table 4.2.1b: Park Lands Current LOS - Comparative Analysis**

Galveston LOS only

	NRPA	1995 Standards Parks Dept.	1995 LOS * Parks Dept.	2000 Standards Parks Dept.	2000 LOS * Parks Dept.	2000 LOS * ALL providers	2020 LOS ** Parks Dept.	2020 LOS ** ALL providers
<b>Regional Park</b>								
Size (Acres)	200+ <sup>1</sup>	N/A		100+	100+	100+	100+	100+
Service Radius		N/A		Tri-county area	Tri-county area	Tri-county area	Tri-county area	Tri-county area
Total Acres (LOS only)		--	0 acres	--	0 acres	2761 acres	0 acres	2761 acres
Acres per 1000 Population	5.0-10.0 <sup>1</sup>	N/A	none	10.0	0.0	48.2	0.0	35.8
<b>City-wide or Large Urban</b>								
Size (Acres)	50+; 75+ optimal <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Radius	entire community <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Acres (LOS only)		--	N/A	--	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Acres per 1000 Population		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Community</b>								
Size (Acres)	30-50 <sup>2</sup>	no standard	over 8	20-50	20-50	20-50	20-50	20-50
Service Radius	0.5-3 miles <sup>2</sup>	no standard	(62.0 acres)	2 miles	2 miles	2 miles	2 miles	2 miles
Total Acres (LOS only)		--	54 acres	--	80 acres	135 acres	54 acres	180 acres
Acres per 1000 Population	5.0-8.0 <sup>1</sup>	0.75	0.94	5.0	1.4	2.4	0.7	2.3
<b>Neighborhood</b>								
Size (Acres)	5-10 <sup>2</sup>	4-8	4-8	1-10	1-10	1-10	1-10	1-10
Service Radius	0.25-0.5 miles <sup>2</sup>	0.5 miles	(33.5 acres)	0.5 miles	0.5 miles	0.5 miles	0.5 miles	0.5 miles
Total Acres (LOS only)		--	52.7 acres	83.7 acres	52.7 acres	52.7 acres	52.7 acres	83.7 acres
Acres per 1000 Population	1.0-2.0 <sup>1</sup>	1.80	0.92	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.1
<b>Playground/Mini-park</b>								
Size (Acres)	2500 s.f. - 1 acre <sup>2</sup>	1000 s.f. - 1 acre	under 4	under 1	under 1	under 1	under 1	under 1
Service Radius	> 0.25 miles <sup>2</sup>	0.25 miles	(11.4 acres)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Acres (LOS only)		--	0.2 acres	--	0.2 acres	0.2 acres	0.2 acres	0.2 acres
Acres per 1000 Population	0.25-0.50 <sup>1</sup>	0.10	0.003	0.0	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003

<sup>1</sup> 1983 NRPA Standard<sup>2</sup> 1995 NRPA Standard

\* Based on 57,247 population per the 2000 US Census

\*\* Based on HGAC's 2020 projected population of 77,200

## 4.0 Area and Facility Standards

### 4.2.2 Facilities Standards

See Table 4.2.2 for a comprehensive comparison of level of service standards for facilities.

#### Community Centers

- Current Standard  
1 per 20,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 per 19,100
- Recommended Standard  
**1 per 50,000 people; 1 square foot per person** (1 or 2 community centers with a combined total of 77,000 square feet)

#### Swimming Pools

- Current Standard  
1 per 20,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
None
- Recommended Standard  
**1 per 40,000 people; indoor pools only**

#### Baseball and Softball – GAME fields

- Current Standard  
1 per 3,000 persons (softball only)
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 baseball field per 8,180 people  
1 softball field per 9,540 people  
1 per 4,400 people combined
- Recommended Standard  
**1 GAME baseball field per 5,000 people  
AND  
1 GAME softball field per 5,000 people,  
OR  
1 GAME multi-purpose field per 2,500 people**

#### Soccer – GAME fields

- Current Standard  
1 per 20,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 per 11,450
- Recommended Standard  
**1 full-size GAME field per 7,500 people**

#### Football – GAME fields

- Current Standard  
1 per 20,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 per 57,250
- Recommended Standard  
**1 GAME field per 50,000 people**

#### Basketball

- Current Standard  
1 per 5,667 people (addition to plan)
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 per 4,090
- Recommended Standard  
**1 full court per 5,000 people**

#### Tennis

- Current Standard  
1 court per 2,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 per 2,860
- Recommended Standard  
**1 court per 2,000 people**

#### Playgrounds

- Current Standard  
1.5 acres per 1,000 persons
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 **playground** per 4,400 persons
- Recommended Standard  
**1 playground at each park**

#### Golf

- Current Standard  
No standard
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
1 course per 57,250
- Recommended Standard  
**1 public course per 60,000 people**

#### Trails and Paths

- Current Standard  
No standard
- Current Level of Service (LOS)  
No data
- Recommended Standard  
**1 mile per 5,000 people**

Table 4.2.2: Current LOS Provisions - Comparative Analysis

Facility Type	NRPA <Population>	Pensacola, FL 65,000	Corpus Christi 292,036	Texas City <sup>1</sup> 42,000	Baytown 71,000	1995 Standards: Galveston	Current LOS: Galveston	2000 Standards: Galveston
Recreation/Community Centers	no standard	1 per 5,000	no data	1 per 14,000	1 per 11,833	1 per 20,000	0	1 per 50,000
Baseball Fields - game	1 per 5,000	1 per 2,241	1 per 146,018	1 per 3,230 (mp)	1 per 6,455	no standard	1 per 8,178	1 per 5,000
Baseball Fields - practice	no standard	no data	no data	1 per 1,050 (mp)	1 per 4,176 (mp)	no standard	1 per 28,625	1 per 10,000
Softball Fields - game	1 per 5,000	1 per 3,421	1 per 292,036	see baseball	1 per 10,143	1 per 3,000	1 per 9,542	1 per 5,000
Softball Fields - practice	No Standard	no data	no data	see baseball pract.	see baseball pract.	no standard	1 per 5,725	1 per 10,000
Soccer Fields - game	1 per 10,000	1 per 9,286	1 per 97,345	1 per 21,000	1 per 5,071 (mp)	1 per 20,000	1 per 11,450	1 per 7,500
Soccer Fields - practice	no standard	no data	no data	1 per 2,210	no data	No Standard	1 per 11,450	1 per 15,000
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	1 per 5,000	1 per 2,241	1 per 7,685	no data	1 per 2,536	1 per 5,667	1 per 4,089	1 per 5,000
Football Fields	1 per 20,000	1 per 16,250	no data	1 per 21,000 pract: 1 per 42,000	see soccer	1 per 20,000	1 per 57,250	1 per 50,000
Playgrounds	no standard	1 per 1,204	1 per 3,793	no data	1 per 2,630	1.5 acres per 1,000	1 per 4,404	1 per park
Open Play Fields	no standard	1 per 4,643	no data	no data	no data	No Standard	1 per 4,089	1 per park
Pools	1 per 20,000	1 per 32,500	1 per 97,345	1 per 10,500	1 per 17,750	1 per 20,000	0	1 per 20,000
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	1 per 16,250	1 per 73,009	1 per 4,200	1 per 3,944	1 per 2,000	1 per 2,863	1 per 2,000
Golf	1 per 50,000	no data	no data	1 per 42,000	no data	no standard	1 per 57,250	1 per 60,000
Walking/Jogging Trails	no standard	1 path per 32,500	1 path per 29,204	1 mile per 3,230	1 mile per 7,561	no standard	no data	1 mile per 5,000

<sup>1</sup> Special Facilities include 1 riding arena, 1 bicycle track, 1 fitness center, 1 convention center, 1 shooting range, 1 preserve and nature center, 1 handicap park

## 5.0 Inventory

### 5.1 City Resources

The Galveston Parks and Recreation Department currently has seventeen parks totaling 107 acres. These parks have been grouped as follows:

#### Community Parks

- Schreiber Park
- Lassie Fields
- [Soccer Complex](#)

#### Neighborhood Parks

- Adoue Park (Rosenberg School)
- Alamo Park (Alamo School)
- Burnett Park (Burnett School)
- Central Park (Central Middle School)
- Crockett Park
- Jones Park
- Kempner Park
- Lasker Park
- Lindale Park
- Menard Park
- San Jacinto Park (San Jacinto School)
- Shield Park
- Wright-Cuney Park

#### Mini-Parks

- Gus Allen Sr. Park
- Playlot ([29th Street & Church](#))

Community parks comprise [most](#) of the sports fields in Galveston. Two of these facilities are located at the municipal airport on property that is not owned by the Parks and Recreation Department. Refer to table 5.1 for a complete inventory of park lands and facilities.

Several of Galveston's neighborhood parks are located in conjunction with public schools. Most of the city's neighborhood parks contain playgrounds, courts, picnic areas, and open passive recreation areas. Some contain practice ball fields.

Galveston's two mini-parks are each 1/10 acre; one contains a playground and the other includes a basketball pad.

### 5.2 Other Resources

Several of the Parks and Recreation Department holdings are in conjunction with the Galveston ISD. Additional park providers include the city's Park Board of Trustees, the State of Texas, Galveston County, the Corps of Engineers, the Galveston Bay Foundation, and neighborhood associations.

#### Park Board of Trustees

The Park Board of Trustees is appointed by the City Council and is under its direction. It operates independently of the Parks and Recreation Department. This board directs several parks, including the following:

- R.A. Apfell Park – a 655-acre park in the eastern tip of the island
- Big Reef Nature Park – Approximately 215 acres featuring interpretive trails and an observation tower. Part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail
- Seawolf Park – a 15-acre tourist destination offering a pier, visitors center, fishing area, playground, and more
- Stewart Beach – 40 acres of public beach
- Dellanera Park – a 16-acre RV parking lot with beach access



Dellanera Park

#### State Parks

The Texas State Parks and Wildlife Department owns and operates Galveston Island State Park, a 1,933-acre park on the west end of the island featuring the following:

- 170 campsites,
- 10 screened shelters,
- 60 picnic sites,
- 6 restrooms with showers,
- 1 restroom,
- 4 miles of nature trails,
- a Nature Center,
- 1.25 miles of beach, and
- 1 fish cleaning shelter.

The northern section of the park has extensive wetlands and wildlife protection areas, as designated by Texas Parks and Wildlife and the General Land Office. Programming of the park includes a recreational site, natural resource site, and Marsh Restoration Project. The state park has a joint-use agreement with Galveston Outdoor Musicals, which operates within the state park.

## 5.0 Inventory

### County Parks

Galveston County operates several pocket parks on Galveston Island, including Washington Park, a picnic area overlooking Offatt's Bayou.

- Washington Park – 1600 61st Street: a one-acre special-use facility with picnic shelters and grills, a dock and a fishing pier.
- 61st Street Boat Ramp – 1201 61st Street: a one-acre special-use facility with a boat ramp and parking.
- Beach Pocket Park #1 – FM 3005 at 7 Mile Road: a seven-acre special-use facility with paved parking. This RV park is currently not open.
- Frank Carmona Beach Pocket Park #2 – FM 3005 at 9 Mile Road: a ten-acre special-use facility with paved parking: The county is asking FEMA for replacement construction costs for the picnic pavilion, concession stand, and shower and restroom facilities due to damage sustained by [Tropical Storm Frances](#).
- Beach Pocket Park #3 – FM 3005 at 11 Mile Road: a ten-acre special-use facility with a picnic area, concession stands, restrooms and showers.
- Beach Pocket Park #4 – FM 3005 at 19 Mile Road: a 71-acre special-use facility which is undeveloped.
- Fort Crocket Seawall – Located between 38th and 45th Streets on the Seawall: a two-acre special-use facility with picnic shelters. The county has an interlocal agreement with the Park Board of Trustees for daily maintenance.

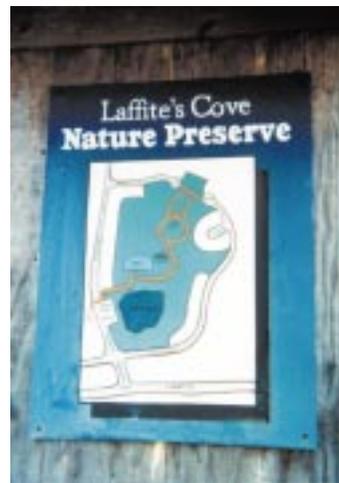
### Other Agencies

Other agencies also provide recreation or open space lands on the Island. Not all of these lands are open to the public. The following lands are owned by other agencies:

- Corps Woods – Nearly ten acres, owned by the Corps of Engineers. Part of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail.
- Galveston Bay Estuary – owned by the Galveston Bay Foundation, a private non-profit organization. This land has been restored back to native prairie and offers wetland mitigation.
- Laffite's Cove – Approximately five acres of nature preserve, owned by a community association. This nature preserve features a native oak grove, possibly the only one on the island.
- Darragh Park – A private park associated with a neighborhood.



*Washington Park*



*Laffite's Cove*

**Table 5.1: Galveston Island Parks Inventory**

	Playground	Basketball Pad	Volleyball	Tennis Court	Soccer Field	Practice/Active Rec	Football Field	Lighted Softball	Practice Softball	Lighted Baseball	Practice Baseball	Recreation Center	Passive Rec Area	Pavilion	Fishing Area	Boat Ramp	Picnic Area	Beach-Related	Parking	Date of Construction	Location	Acreage	Total Acres (by category)
<b>Regional Parks</b>																							
Galveston Island State Park <sup>1</sup>													1	1	10			60	1				
R.A. Apfell Park *												1			1					1			
Municipal Golf Course																							
Public Beaches																							2761.0
<b>Community Parks</b>																							
Schreiber Park	1	1		4	1	1		3	1	2	1							1				4	
Lassie Fields							3	6															
Soccer Complex <sup>4</sup>																							
Stewart Beach *																				1			
Seawolf Park *	1													1	1			1					
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>																							
Burnett Park (Burnett Sch)		1			1					1	1												
Lindale Park	1	1		3	1					1									1				
Adoue Park (Rosenberg Sch)	1					1							1										
San Jacinto Park (San Jacinto Sch)	1	1			1				1				1										
Kempner Park	1												1	1					1			1	
Menard Park	1	1		6				1				1	1						1				
Shield Park		3											1									1	
Central Park (Central MS)		1		2	1	1				1													
Wright-Cuney Park	1	1										1	1										
Lasker Park	1			5		1	1			1			1							1			
Alamo Park (Alamo Sch)	1	1				1			1				1								1		
Crockett Park	1	1								1												1	
Jones Park	1	1											1								1		
<b>Mini Parks</b>																							
playlot		1																					
Gus Allen Sr. Park	1																						
<b>Special Facilities</b>																							
Washington Park **															1			X					
61st Street Boat Ramp **																1							
Fort Crocket Seawall **																		X					
Beach Pocket Park #1 ** <sup>2</sup>																				X		X	
Beach Pocket Park #2 ** <sup>3</sup>																					X	X	
Beach Pocket Park #3 **																					X	X	
Beach Pocket Park #4 ** <sup>4</sup>																							
Dellanera Park *																							
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>			<b>3067.2</b>	<b>3135.1</b>

\* Operated by the Park Board of Trustees

\*\* County Parks

<sup>1</sup> 170 campsites, 60 picnic sites, 10 shelters, 6 restrooms with showers, 1 restroom, 1 fish cleaning shelter, 1 nature center, 1.25 miles beach, 4 miles nature trails

<sup>2</sup> Not open

<sup>3</sup> Storm damage

<sup>4</sup> Undeveloped

## 6.0 Needs Assessment

### 6.1 Methodology

The methodology for establishing needs utilized a combination of demand, standard, and resource-based principles. Proposed local standards clearly identified areas of need. Surveys and public input **confirmed many of these needs** and, in some cases, indicated additional **deficits**. Since Galveston Island has a distinct character as a populated barrier island, resource-based needs were also apparent.

### 6.2 Programming Needs

Programming needs were identified across the board. The City currently offers limited summer and after school programs, and should establish the position of coordinator between various recreational groups. Refer to Section 6.3.4: Department and Organizational Recommendations for additional information on this subject.

### 6.3 Recommendations

#### 6.3.1 General Recommendations

A public awareness and educational program including **maintenance of existing parks and facilities**, public relations, signage, and programs to promote public support should be implemented. In addition, a grant-writing professional should be hired to help generate alternative sources of funding.

#### 6.3.2 Park Land Recommendations

Park land and facilities recommendations were determined based on standards and demand. Current deficiencies were derived from the recommended standard applied to the 2000 Census population of 57,247 people, and the projected deficiencies applied to the 2020 projected population of 77,000 people. Park lands from all providers were included in calculations from which deficiencies have been identified. See [Table 6.3.2](#) for complete calculations.

See also Figure 8.2: Service Coverage Areas for distribution patterns of various park types.

### Mini Parks

- **Current Distribution**  
Two mini parks are both located in the eastern part of the island
- **Community Input**  
Smaller parks are problematic for the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain
- **Recommended Standard**  
0 acres per 1000 people; no additional mini parks
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: N/A  
Projected 2020 deficiency: N/A
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Do not construct additional mini parks.**

### Neighborhood Parks

- **Current Distribution**  
Neighborhood Parks are distributed across the east area of the island. Additional parks within this category include county beach pocket parks along FM 3005.
- **Community Input**  
Survey results indicate a desired increase in this type of park. Neighborhood parks in the eastern part of the island will probably not exceed two acres, the size of one city block.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 acre per 1000 people
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 4.5 acres  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 24.5 acres
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Create and implement a **Park Land Dedication Ordinance** to accommodate the construction of new parks with new residential developments.
  - Provide neighborhood parks in the **eastern** parts of the city, located to **promote infill develop-**

## 6.0 Needs Assessment

- **ment** and/or redevelopment.
- Provide neighborhood parks in the western part of the city to **serve existing neighborhoods** west of 53rd St.
- Keep and maintain existing neighborhood parks so as not to increase the projected deficiencies.

### Community Parks

- **Current Distribution**  
Existing **City** parks within this category include sports fields located at the municipal airport. All public ball fields are located mid-island. Community parks have a greater land deficit than any other park type on the island.
- **Community Input**  
Strong community desire for additional sports fields; land within this category is needed to accommodate fields.
- **Recommended Standard**  
5 acres per 1000 people
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 206.2 acres  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 306.0 acres
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Pursue **public-private partnerships** with schools, leagues, and private recreation providers to accommodate additional community park needs.
  - **Encourage multi-use agreements** with other agencies to facilitate the need for additional community park needs.
  - Pursue opportunities to provide a **Master Sports Complex**.

### Regional Parks and Open Space

- **Current Distribution**  
The City Parks and Recreation Department does not have any regional parks in its land holdings. Galveston Island State Park, as well as the Municipal Golf Course and R.A. **Apffel** Park are considered regional parks. Beaches are currently the only form of public open space.



Public beaches

- **Community Input**  
Desire for nature preserves, wildlife refuges, and preservation of wetlands
- **Other Issues**  
State beaches and the system of wetlands across the island provides the framework for a natural system in both public and private ownership.
- **Recommended Standard**  
10 acres per 1000 people
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 2342.8-acre surplus  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 1,989.0-acre surplus
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Create and **implement City ordinances** to protect wetlands and other unbuildable areas.
  - Coordinate with the Department of Planning and Community Development to **encourage conservation development** and other alternative development patterns, which conserve open space.
  - **Support the Seawall Plan** and integrate it into actions of the Parks Master Plan to encourage public investment that will stimulate economic development and enhance community character of the island. **Encourage the treatment of the Seawall and beaches as high-quality open space amenities.**



*“Encourage the treatment of the seawall and beaches as high-quality open space amenities.”*

Table 6.3.2: Park Land Needs Assessment

<b>CURRENT DEFICIT</b>						
	Current Park Land Acres	2000 Population (US Census)	Current acres per 1000 population	Recommended Ac./1000 Pop.	Total Acres Req'd to Fulfill Recommendation	Deficit: Additional Acres Req'd to Fulfill Recommendation
Regional Park	2915.3	57,247	50.92	10	572.5	(2342.8)
Community Park	80.0	57,247	1.40	5	286.2	206.2
Neighborhood Park	52.7	57,247	0.92	1	57.2	4.5
Mini-Park	0.2	57,247	0.00	0	0.0	(0.2)

<b>PROJECTED DEFICIT</b>						
	Current Park Land Acres	2020 Projected Population	Current acres per 1000 population	Recommended Ac./1000 Pop.	Total Acres Req'd to Fulfill Recommendation	Deficit: Additional Acres Req'd to Fulfill Recommendation
Regional Park	2761.0	77,200	35.76	10	772.0	(1989.0)
Community Park	80.0	77,200	1.04	5	386.0	306.0
Neighborhood Park	52.7	77,200	0.68	1	77.2	24.5
Mini-Park	0.2	77,200	0.00	0	0.0	(0.2)

### 6.3.3 Facilities Recommendations

See Table 6.3.3 for complete calculations of deficiencies.



#### Community Centers

- **Current Distribution**  
Two small community centers exist; one at Menard Park and the other at Wright-Cuney Park.
- **Community Input**  
Desire for an indoor recreation facility to include a pool, educational rooms, meeting rooms, etc. Some felt that Menard Park was a good location for a large facility. An indoor recreation center ranked #6 on the list of most-desired facilities included in the public survey.
- **Programs Issues**  
Parks Department has plans to provide a variety of programs associated with current community centers.
- **Other Issues**  
Size of centers versus number of centers – fewer large centers, which may contain numerous facilities and programs, versus more small centers which are neighborhood-oriented and provide fewer amenities.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 center per 50,000 people; 1 square foot per person
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 35,250 square foot deficit  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 55,200 square foot deficit
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Maintain and upgrade** recreation centers at Menard and Wright-Cuney.
  - **Expand center at Menard** to provide additional recreational facilities and programs **OR provide one additional community center**/indoor recreation center on the eastern end of the island pending a feasibility study.
  - **Pursue a multi-use agreement** with the **Island Community Center** for use of facilities and coordination of programs.

## 6.0 Needs Assessment

### Swimming Pools

- **Current Distribution**  
No public pools currently exist.
- **Community Input**  
A municipal swimming pool ranked third on the list of most desired facilities in Galveston, according to input received from the public survey. Lasker Park was suggested as a site for a swimming pool.
- **Programs Issues**  
Need for children's swimming programs. Partner with GISD to use Central Middle School and Ball High School's facilities for programs.
- **Other Issues**  
Integration into an indoor recreation/community center; partner with ISD, Galveston College, etc.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 swimming pool per 40,000 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 1 pool facility  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 2 pool facilities
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Partner with private providers** (such as Galveston College, etc.) or non-profit organizations for construction costs and operations. **If not possible, THEN**
  - **Provide a revenue-generating indoor swimming pool** *pending a feasibility study*, such that revenue generated will cover operating costs. This may occur in conjunction with proposed community center/indoor recreation center.



### Baseball and Softball – Lighted GAME fields

- **Current Distribution**  
Most fields are located on airport property. In addition, the following fields are joint-use ISD and city fields:
  - Burnett
  - San Jacinto
  - Sheppard Field
  - Rogue Field (Schreiber)
  - **Softball** field #3



- Alamo
- Ball High (2 fields)
- **Community Input**  
Upgrade existing fields (lighting and grounds maintenance), provide more fields for practice and games (master sports complex), provide tournament facilities, and coordinate leagues.
- **Programs Issues**  
Desire for leagues and facilities for children over 12. Private leagues are the only current source of programs.
- **Other Issues**  
Volunteer efforts from leagues aid in providing equipment and concessions. The city provides mowing, chalking, and minor repairs.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 baseball field per 5,000 people AND  
1 softball field per 5,000 people,  
OR  
1 multi-purpose field per 2,500 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 4 baseball GAME fields,  
5 softball GAME fields.  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 8 baseball GAME fields,  
9 softball GAME fields.
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Facilitate the construction of a **multi-use master sports complex** to incorporate additional game fields.
  - Encourage the use of **multi-purpose open play fields** as practice areas.



### Soccer – GAME fields

- **Current Distribution**  
Existing practice fields are located at GISD facilities and at Schreiber and Lindale parks.
- **Community Input**  
Provide additional lighted fields, as well as fields for general play and practice.
- **Programs Issues**  
Independent leagues provide soccer programs.

## 6.0 Needs Assessment

- **Other Issues**  
Participation numbers still increasing annually.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 full-size field per 7,500 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency:           3 GAME fields  
Projected 2020 deficiency:       5 GAME fields
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Facilitate the construction of a **multi-use master sports complex** to incorporate additional game fields.
  - Encourage the use of **multi-purpose open play fields** as practice areas.

### Football – GAME fields

- **Current Distribution**  
One field at Lasker Park.
- **Community Input**  
No input received.
- **Programs Issues**  
No programs currently offered.
- **Other Issues**  
Current and anticipated participation levels.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 game field per 50,000 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency:           none  
Projected 2020 deficiency:       1 GAME field
- **Recommended Actions**
  - Facilitate the construction of a **multi-use master sports complex** to incorporate additional game fields.
  - Encourage the use of **multi-purpose open play fields** as practice areas.
  - Encourage the construction of **multi-purpose soccer/football GAME fields**.





### Basketball

- Current Distribution  
Courts at most city parks.
- Community Input  
Current courts need maintenance and backstops.
- Programs Issues  
Plans to provide basketball programs.
- Other Issues  
Half-sized vs. full-sized courts.
- Recommended Standard  
1 full court per 5,000 people.
- Current and Projected Deficiencies  
Current 2000 deficiency: 3 courts surplus  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 1 court deficit
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Maintain and upgrade** existing courts.

### Tennis

- Current Distribution  
Ball High, Schreiber, Lindale, Menard, Central park (Central Middle School), Lasker.
- Community Input  
Desire for additional courts with facilities (restrooms); a tennis center can be a revenue-generating facility and can accommodate tournaments.
- Programs Issues  
Revenue-generating tennis facility with a tennis pro who charges for lessons.  
Desire for expanded leagues (co-ed, adult).
- Other Issues  
Lighting, integration of tennis center into master sports complex.
- Recommended Standard  
1 court per 2,000 people.

## 6.0 Needs Assessment

- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 9 courts  
(4 court deficiency if joint-use agreement exists with GISD).  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 19 courts  
(11 court deficiency if joint-use agreement exists with GISD).
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Maintain and upgrade** existing courts.
  - Pursue **joint-use agreements** with GISD for use of courts.
  - Provide additional courts in conjunction with the proposed **master sports complex** and/or the proposed **community center/indoor recreation center**.

### Playgrounds

- **Current Distribution**  
Playgrounds located at most city parks.
- **Community Input**  
Ranked #9 in a public survey list of desired recreational facilities.
- **Programs Issues**  
Regional playgrounds, greater variety of facility types.
- **Other Issues**  
Current equipment is in poor condition; many degrading pieces of equipment are removed and not replaced. Playgrounds for various age groups are growing in popularity.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 playground in each active recreation park.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 4 playgrounds.  
Projected 2020 deficiency: unknown.
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Replace five playground units each year** to bring all playgrounds up to current standards (2.5 years total to replace all 12 playgrounds).
  - **Immediately remove and replace any equipment that may endanger public health, safety, and welfare.**





### Golf

- **Current Distribution**  
One municipal golf course located west of the airport.
- **Community Input**  
No input received.
- **Programs Issues**  
No programs currently offered.
- **Other Issues**  
Operates under its own authority.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 course per 60,000 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: none.  
Projected 2020 deficiency: none.
- **Recommended Actions**
  - **Maintain and upgrade** existing course to remain competitive.



### Walking and Jogging Trails

- **Current Distribution**  
Few walking paths within parks; extensive path along the length of the [Seawall](#) (11 miles).
- **Community Input**  
Walking trails were the **#1 desired recreational facility** according to the public survey; bicycle trails were #2.
- **Programs Issues**  
Active seniors programs; walking is a popular activity among seniors.
- **Other Issues**  
Paths and trails to link parks and open space.
- **Recommended Standard**  
1 mile per 5,000 people.
- **Current and Projected Deficiencies**  
Current 2000 deficiency: 0.5 miles.  
Projected 2020 deficiency: 4.5 miles.



## 6.0 Needs Assessment

- Recommended Actions
  - Provide **internal walking paths** within parks.
  - Coordinate actions of the [Departments of Planning and Community Development and Public Works](#) to incorporate **bicycle paths** along existing road rights of way.
  - Facilitate the construction of new walking and bicycle paths to **link existing parks**.
  - Provide walking paths and trails within **public open space areas**.

### Special facilities

#### Skate park

In addition to sports fields and other standard recreational facilities, the need for specialty facilities has also been expressed by the community. In particular, a skate park ranked 8th among desired facilities listed on a community survey. Community input suggests potential locations at Menard Park, or other locations along the [Seawall](#). A skate park is planned for construction with the City in coordination with advocacy groups. It should be sited in a suitable area with similar adjacent uses and [those uses](#) which will generate surrounding activity, such as along the [Seawall](#).



#### Senior Centers

Since seniors make up a segment of the population that is expected to increase over the next several years, seniors recreational opportunities should be provided. Senior Olympics, active seniors programs, and walking/jogging facilities are all popular recreation. In addition, senior center space can be facilitated within community centers and combined with other uses (i.e. after school programs, etc).

#### Community Gardens

Community gardens are an increasingly popular element of city parks. Gardens installed and maintained by surrounding neighborhoods can add a sense of ownership and pride to their community. Additionally, numerous educational programs can be associated with community gardens, including horticultural programs, food preservation programs, and harvest markets where produce, flowers, and products of the garden are sold.





## 6.0 Needs Assessment

### 6.3.4 Organizational Recommendations

#### Functions of a Parks Department

Typically, parks departments for communities as large as Galveston are charged with three areas of **primary responsibilities**:

1. *Park Design and Development* – park design, site selection, allocation and construction of facilities, and ongoing maintenance (grounds and facilities).
2. *Recreational Programming* – organizational programs, training programs, sports league activity coordination, non-sports recreational activities (summer camps, nature activities, crafts, senior activities, etc.)
3. *Administration* – management of the divisions within the department, budgeting and finance, human resources, hiring and training of staff, and coordinating with partner entities.

**Secondary responsibilities** vary from city to city. The bulk of properties maintained in many cities are parks, open space, and related civic facilities. Because of these necessary maintenance requirements, a large inventory of laborers and equipment results. Many times, a parks department is then given the responsibility for maintaining additional non-recreational public properties, in addition to the department's basic duties. Such secondary responsibilities should be undertaken only to the extent that they do not compromise the three areas of primary responsibilities. Such tasks may be deemed inappropriate and reallocated to other departments, such as [Public Works](#).

#### Typical Structure of a Parks Department

Staff leadership responsibilities associated with the three primary areas of parks department responsibilities described above should have the following skills:

1. *Design and Development*: Parks Directors or Parks Superintendents require professional training and expertise in recreation and parks development. They should have a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture, Park Management, Civil Engineering or related field, [or five years' experience in park or landscape design](#) and development, maintenance operations, construction, and project management or equivalent experience.

2. *Recreational Programming:* Recreation Directors or Recreation Superintendents require professional training and expertise in recreation activities management. They should have a Bachelor's degree in Leisure Studies and Community Recreational Services, Recreation Management, Physical Education, Parks and Recreation Administration, or a related field, or five years' experience in recreation programs management, facilities operations, playground safety, and recreation leagues or equivalent experience. This is usually a senior staff position.
3. *Administration:* Directors of Parks and Recreation typically have academic training and professional experience in parks design and development and/or programming, in addition to public administration. They generally have Bachelor's or Master's degree in Parks and Recreation Administration, Leisure Services, Public Administration, or related field, or five years administrative, supervisory or equivalent experience (substantial experience at the Director or Superintendent level must be evident in most cases). In addition, many municipalities require that the Director of Parks and Recreation have the Certified Leisure Professional (CLP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) designation from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

### Recommendations

Galveston's Parks and Recreation Department currently maintains somewhat marginally adequate park and recreation facilities and offers some recreation programs. However, it is charged with the responsibility of maintaining public properties, which have no recreational purpose. In turn, it is not meeting the recreational demands of the community. Much of the department's budget is spent on maintaining (primarily mowing) parks, rights of way, and other public properties. In order to resolve these issues, the department should:

- **Reorganize responsibilities within the department and recruit qualified staff to coordinate recreational programming.**
- **Consider the reassignment of non-parks property maintenance to other departments to allow refocusing of the Parks Department on meeting recreational needs.**

## 7.0 Plan Implementation

### 7.1 Prioritization of Organizational Needs

1. Secure professional leadership in the three areas of duties and obligations of parks department (Design and Development, Recreational Programming, and Administration) and mobilize the department's organization and funding.
2. Become more aggressive in generating revenue through grants, user fees, and impact fees. Establish a policy for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to recommend fees to City Council and fees shall be reasonable and not prohibitive.
3. Pursue partnerships for funding, facilities, and recreation programs (such as YMCAs, Boys/Girls Clubs, churches, leagues, etc).
4. Coordinate capital improvements programming to begin prioritized projects.
5. Reallocate present responsibilities for non-parks and recreation property maintenance.



### 7.2 Prioritization of Park & Facility Needs

#### Immediate Needs

1. **Maintain existing park land and facilities**  
Prepare inventory evaluation of all parks and facilities, establish a repair maintenance schedule, and explore outsourcing.
2. **Prepare a proposed budget reflecting costs associated with the primary duties and obligations of a parks department**  
Prepare two budgets: one which includes the maintenance of non-parks department properties, and one which does not include maintenance of such properties.
3. **Enhance and upgrade existing facilities**  
Provide appropriate lighting, shade trees, playground equipment, sidewalks, signage, etc. and bring facilities into ADA compliance.

### Ongoing Needs

4. **Add facilities to existing parks** (i.e. walking trails, courts, restrooms, picnic areas, etc. in parks which are lacking appropriate facilities)  
Time Frame: 2-5 years
5. **Prepare a feasibility study and acquire lands for additional sports fields/master sports complex**  
Time Frame: 1-5 years
6. **Acquire lands for additional parks**  
Time Frame: 1-10 years
7. **Acquire lands for open space; advocate the creation of an open space system through private and public means**  
Time Frame: 1-10 years

### 7.3 Resources for Meeting Needs



The Parks and Recreation Department's 2000-2001 budget is \$1,096,674. Approximately half of the budget is spent on maintaining parks, road right-of-ways, and cemeteries. The department's five-year Capital Improvements Plan has a budget of \$90,000 per year. Current funding comes from two sources: the general fund and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. In addition, the department recently received a \$500,000 Texas Parks and Wildlife grant for construction of a new soccer complex.

### Funding Strategies

- **Local Option Tax Revenues**  
Special option taxes such as Local Sales Tax, Food and Beverage Tax, and Innkeepers Tax are used in many communities to support parks efforts.
- **Sponsorships and Partnerships**  
Sponsorships and strategic partnerships are exceptional resources the department can use to maximize opportunity in the community.
- **Parks and Open Space Districts**  
An administrative and financial structure as a special

## 7.0 Plan Implementation

government unit tax district, which draws the majority of its funding from levies on assessed real estate. As its own political body, a Park District with its Parks Authority has the power to tax and the power to condemn. A Park District does not necessarily follow city boundaries.

- Non-Profit Organizations  
Use non-profit organizations to structure the funding of special projects and/or programs.
- Parks Foundation  
A foundation [that](#) assists in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for the department.
- General Foundations  
Foundation funds can be sought for land acquisition, development and construction of facilities, providing programs, and special cause promotion.
- Federal and State Assistance  
Federal funding sources necessary to help finance the Master Plan recommendations have historically been available from the U. S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Currently, the funding has been halted until the passage of CARA (Conservation and Reinvestment Act). Potential funding through the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program is also available, [subject to certain eligibility criteria](#).
- Fees and Charges  
There are three different types of consumptive services provided by parks and recreation agencies that must be identified and priced accordingly:
  - Resident/Non-Resident Fees  
Pricing activities based on the benefits to the participant is necessary to create equity for the residents and residents of other communities. An out of city policy should also be considered for any of the current and future parks which have regional draws.
  - User Fees  
Fees for services, programs and/or special events
  - Membership Fees  
Fees for membership to special facilities

- **Commercial Uses and Lease Revenues**  
Lease and rental revenues are useful for financing facilities such as recreation centers, community centers, golf courses, etc. Land and/or facilities are owned publicly and the facilities are managed by a private operator who pays either a fixed lease rate or a percentage of gross revenues.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**  
A more esoteric funding source for parks is the use of TIF districts to stimulate redevelopment, particularly in urban areas. However, the unique feature of TIF districts is that they fundamentally rely on property taxes created directly by the revitalization projects in the defined district.
- **Business Improvement Districts (BID)**  
Used to recapture investments made in public open space because they help local businesses. Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin have utilized this financing method. Used to recapture businesses moving to suburbs.
- **Non-Reverting Funds or Enterprise Funds**
- **Revenue Bonds**  
A popular funding method for financing high-use specialty facilities.
- **Maintenance Endowment**  
When funds are allocated for facility development; a maintenance endowment should be included.
- **Naming Rights**  
A creative funding method for special use facilities is the contracted naming rights by organizations.
- **Hotel/Motel Tax**  
The hotel-motel tax is imposed on the gross receipt from the renting of the rooms for 31 consecutive days or less.
- **Property Tax Levy for land acquisition and capital**
- **Corporate Sponsorships**
- **Outsourcing**  
Consider out-sourcing of appropriate services and functions such as mowing.

## 7.0 Plan Implementation

### Regulatory Strategies

- **Park Land Dedication Ordinance**  
A city ordinance that requires developers to dedicate acreage for parks or in-lieu fees for which to purchase park land. The amount of land or fees is based on the size of the development.
- **Easements**  
Every landowner holds a “bundle” of rights associated with the property. In using easements to create parkland, the department leverages the property without actually purchasing the land.
- **Impact Fees**  
Another tool used in cities that are undergoing **significant** residential development, or anticipates doing so, is a developer impact fee.
- **Alternative Development Patterns**  
Encouragement of alternative development patterns, such as cluster housing, can promote private or publicly-owned open space.
- **Sensitive Lands Regulations**  
These regulations limit the development of ecologically sensitive lands such as steep slopes or wetlands. These local regulations operate in addition to federal and state regulations.
- **Scenic Road and Parkway Designations**  
Designations that regulate development along scenic roads and parkways.
- **Wetland Mitigation Banking**  
In situations where a proposed development will result in unavoidable impacts to wetlands subject to federal or state regulation, the regulatory agency (e.g. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) may permit the development on condition that the developer create, restore or enhance replacement wetlands on or off the site.

### Other Implementation Opportunities

- **Non-profit organizations and land trusts**  
A city or county-wide land trust can operate as a public-purpose nonprofit corporation, eligible to receive tax deductible donations. The organization would

solicit donations of money, land, and easements; identify priority parcels for preservation and acquisition; organize fund raising activities; and contribute to raising open space issues in the public consciousness.

- **Conservation Easements**  
Conservation easements typically entail a landowner dedicating in perpetuity all or part of the development rights on a given parcel of land. The landowner retains the right to reside on, use, and sell the land. In return, the owner is entitled to a substantial charitable gift deduction on federal income taxes. The landowner also reduces exposure to inheritance taxes and local property taxes which are generally based on the development value of the land.
- **Purchase of Development Rights**  
Purchase of development rights is a legal agreement whereby the landowner voluntarily gives up the right to develop his or her land in exchange for a cash payment. The payment is based on the difference between the property's value as open space and its development value. The end result is a conservation easement held by a government entity or private organization such as a land trust.
- **Tax Title and Owners Unknown Properties**  
Many communities have on their tax rolls parcels, which are delinquent in their tax payments (tax title properties) and parcels for which there is no known owner. Such parcels may possess sensitive resources such as wetlands that restrict their development potential and may be potentially valuable as open space.
- **Land Exchanges and Sales**  
Exchange of publicly-held land for a more valuable piece for the entire parks system.
- **Service Clubs and Volunteers**  
Volunteer work for maintenance
- **Coordination with Other Agencies and Organizations**  
Coordination with agencies such as the Park Board of Trustees, Galveston County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and/or Galveston Independent School District for multi-use agreements, etc.

## 7.0 Plan Implementation

### 7.4 Value Estimate

The following comprises an order of magnitude estimate of capital costs for implementing the master plan over the next twenty years. This estimate is general in nature and is not intended to be the basis for capital improvement budget proposals. The following items were included in the estimate:

#### Land Acquisition

Land acquisition costs have been based on the cost of land in Galveston in the year 2000 and the amount of park land that is needed according to the level of service standards and master plan concepts.

#### Capital Improvements

Capital improvements, including upgrades to all existing parks, development of new parks, and facility upgrades, expansions, and construction have been calculated based on the estimated cost to upgrade or develop park land, as well as the projected number of facilities needed to serve Galveston's population in twenty years.

#### Operations and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance costs are estimated based on the proposed land and capital improvements costs. The estimated cost of operations and maintenance, *on average over the first ten years of the project*, is 30% of the cost of land and capital improvements.

Therefore, the value of the overall system can be estimated as follows:

Land	\$0.27 million/year
Capital Improvements	\$1.1 million/year
<u>Operations / Maintenance</u>	<u>\$0.4 million/year</u>
TOTAL	\$1.77 million/year

This estimate assumes that all costs will be assumed by the city. However, creative financing measures can significantly reduce these numbers.

### Cost Reduction Measures

The cost of land acquisition can be reduced 60% by the use of alternate funding. Some of the land needed for new park and trail development is already in public ownership. Easements can be obtained along properties already owned by the government, thus reducing the cost of land to the city. In addition, easements along private properties can also reduce this cost. Sponsorships, as well as the acquisition of low-priced, undevelopable land for park and open space use, will also reduce the cost. Easements along private land, as well as the implementation of a parkland dedication ordinance also decreases the amount of land that will need to be acquired.

Likewise, capital improvements can be reduced approximately 30% by the receipt of grants and sponsorships for public parks and facilities, as well as by increasing revenues by user fees to that of market level.

Operations and maintenance costs may be reduced 30% by increasing operational efficiencies within the parks department. Likewise, moving from subsidies to earned income centers, as well as establishing a maintenance endowment, can also reduce this cost.

Therefore, the annual target program is as follows:

Land	60% reduction to \$0.1 million/year
Capital Improvements	30% reduction to \$0.8 million/year
<u>Operations /Maint.</u>	<u>30% reduction to \$0.3 million/year</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1.2 million/year</b>

## 7.0 Plan Implementation

**Table 7.4.1: Value Estimate**

<b>LAND ACQUISITION</b>	Need (acres)	Cost per acre	Category Total
Regional Park Land	0	\$10,000	\$0
Community Park Land <sup>1</sup>	80	\$40,000	\$3,200,000
Neighborhood Park Land (10-16 new parks)	24.5	\$40,000	\$980,000
Trail Connections	28	\$40,000	\$1,120,000
<b>SUBTOTAL (LAND)</b>	<b>132.5</b>		<b>\$5,300,000</b>
<b>GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS *</b>	Need (acres)	Cost per acre	Category Total
New Regional parks (10% of total ac.)	0	\$50,000	\$0
New Community parks (50% of total ac.)	40	\$50,000	\$2,000,000
New Neighborhood parks (100% of total ac.)	25	\$50,000	\$1,225,000
Trail Connections (25% of total ac.)	7	\$50,000	\$350,000
<b>SUBTOTAL (IMPROVEMENTS)</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>\$3,575,000</b>
<b>EXISTING PARK UPGRADES **</b>	Need (acres)	Cost per acre	Category Total
All currently developed parks	133	\$5,000	\$664,500
<b>SUBTOTAL (IMPROVEMENTS)</b>	<b>133</b>		<b>\$664,500</b>
<b>FACILITIES</b>	Need (units)	Cost per unit	Category Total
<b>MAJOR FACILITIES</b>			
Community Center Expansions <sup>2</sup>	40,000 sq. ft. total	\$195	\$7,800,000
Aquatic Center / skate park	20,000 sq. ft.	\$325	\$6,500,000
<b>FIELDS AND COURTS</b>			
Baseball / Softball Fields - competition	17	\$20,000	\$340,000
Lighted Soccer Fields - game	5	\$100,000	\$500,000
Playgrounds (new)	4	\$75,000	\$300,000
<b>TRAILS</b>			
12' Asphalt Walking/Jogging Trails (miles)	4.5	\$125,000	\$562,500
<b>RENOVATIONS &amp; UPGRADES</b>			
Existing Playgrounds: improvements	12	\$75,000	\$900,000
<b>SUBTOTAL (FACILITIES)</b>			<b>\$16,902,500</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$26,442,000</b>

NOTE: ALL COST FIGURES ARE IN 2001 DOLLARS

NOTE: Recommendations based on 77,200 2020 projected population

\* Includes grading, parking, landscape, lighting, and open play fields

<sup>1</sup> Community parks include an 80-acre sports complex

<sup>2</sup> Community center expansions include 20,000 additional sq. ft. at Menard and 20,000 sq. ft. at Wright-Cuney. this price reflects the cost to construct an indoor pool at one of the two centers. Option B: Construct one new 40,000 sq. ft. community center with an indoor pool in lieu of expanding existing centers. Cost is \$7,800,000.



Figure 8.1: Park and Open Space Opportunities

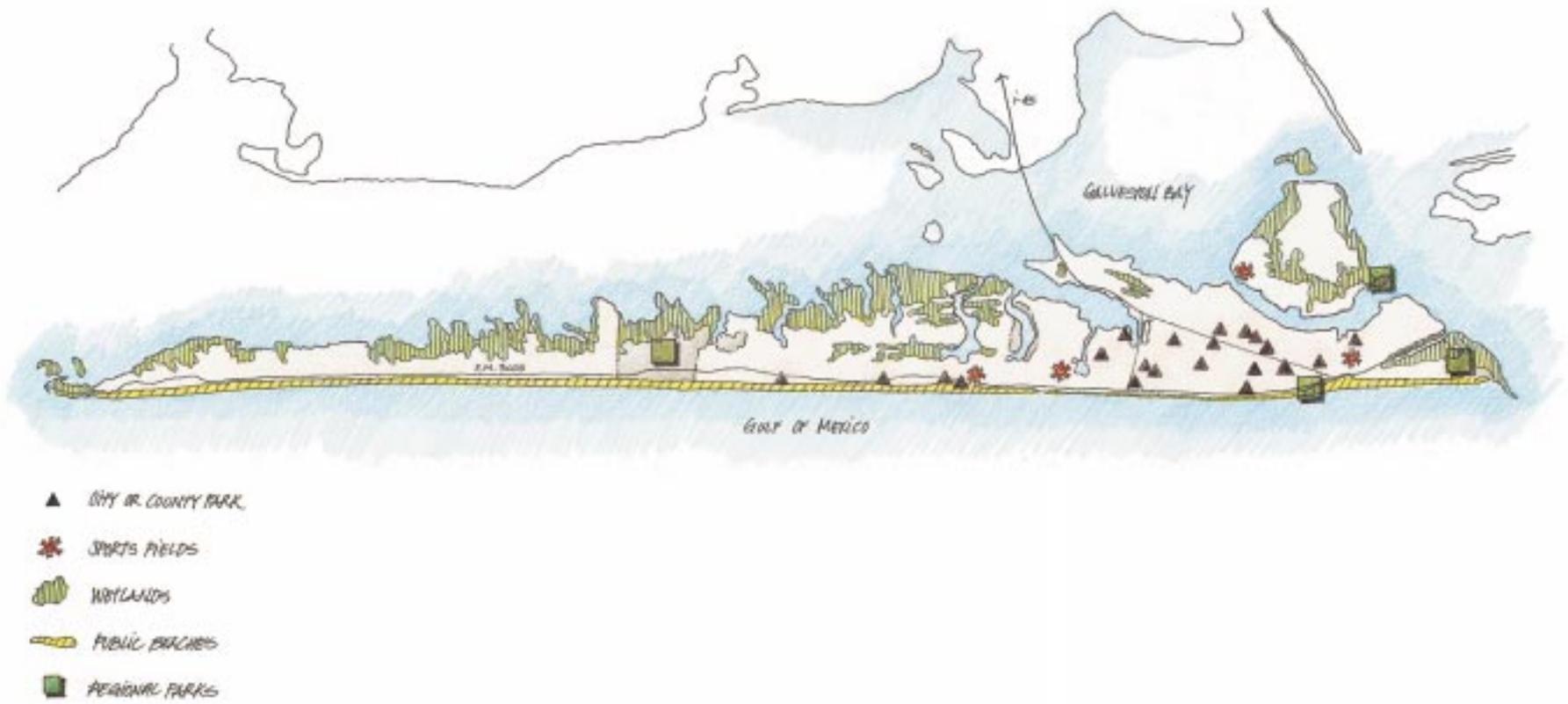
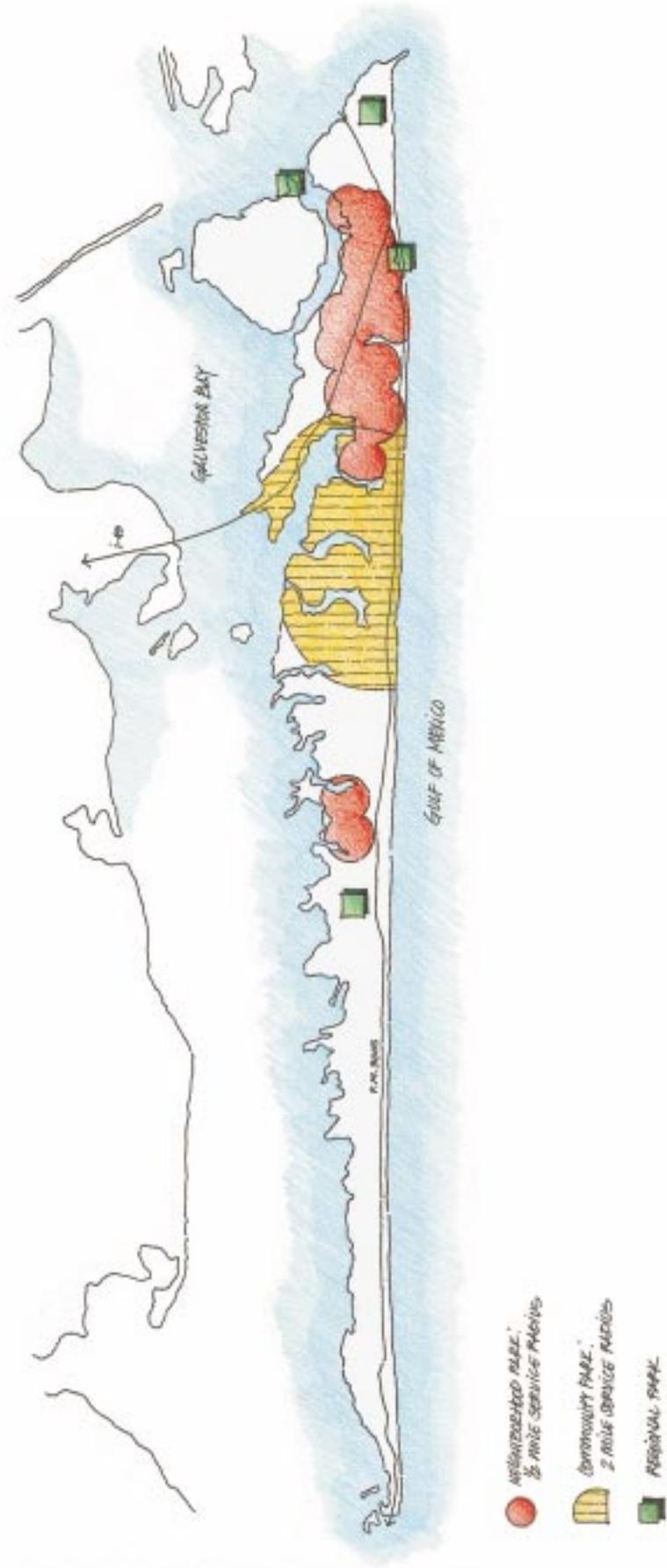


Figure 8.2: Service Radii: Existing Parks





**SURVEY: Parks Master Plan**      2464 surveys

1. How often do you visit a public park in Galveston? (check one)

579 More than 10 times per year      794 Never  
925 Less than 10 times per year

2. How often do you visit the beach in Galveston? (check one)

1220 More than 10 times per year      262 Never  
817 Less than 10 times per year

3. Does Galveston have enough parks?(circle one)      YES (1150)      NO (1315)

4. If no, what types of parks would you like to see more of in the future? (check two)

252 Mini-parks (1/2 acre or less)      267 Large urban parks (5 – 20 acres; with civic uses)  
694 Neighborhood parks (1/2 – 5 acres)      229 Island-wide parks (over 20 acres)  
357 Community parks (5 – 20 acres; such as ball fields, etc.)

5. How would you prioritize the importance of the following parks issues?

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Construction of new parks	488	686	756
Location of parks and relationship to neighborhoods	905	739	301
Maintenance of existing parks	1673	301	84
Need for additional athletic facilities	653	742	526
Nature Preserves	1312	483	213
Properly equipped existing parks and related facilities	1358	508	114
Organized Recreational Programs	884	705	354
Shaded areas/Trees	1536	397	123

6. What facilities do you feel Galveston has a shortage of to serve the needs of its residents? (circle six)

128 Football fields	258 Open play fields
290 Tennis courts	69 Extreme sports
1385 Walking/jogging trails	123 Rock climbing
617 Existing Parking	266 Campgrounds
501 Skate parks	915 Natural areas
194 Soccer fields	162 Baseball/Softball fields
211 Basketball courts	618 Indoor recreation centers
1120 Bicycle paths	927 Municipal swimming pools
237 Golf courses	356 Aquatic facilities (boating, etc.)
434 Playgrounds	310 Amphitheaters/pavilions
801 Picnic areas/grills	

7. In order to better maintain Galveston's parks, would you participate in a program that encourage private organizations, neighborhood groups, or local families in maintaining parks? (circle one)      YES (1280)      NO (1184)

8. Would you support additional city spending on the following?

	Yes	No
Additional maintenance of current and future parks	1631	833
Construction of community recreation centers	959	1505
Construction of new parks	968	1496
Maintenance of city cemeteries	1477	987
Maintenance of beaches	1812	649
Maintenance of esplanades and right-of-way	1645	819

9. Is there a park conveniently located to serve you? (circle one)      YES (1353)      NO (1111)