



**City of Watauga, Texas  
Parks and Open Space  
2017- 2027**

**MASTER PLAN**

*Prepared by:*  
The City of Watauga,  
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&  
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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction and Purpose</b> .....	1
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	2
<b>Community Profile</b> .....	3
Race and Ethnicity.....	3
Park acres per capita (Table 1).....	4
External Influences (Map).....	5
<b>2017 Parks and Open Space Goals and Objectives</b> .....	6
<b>Park Classification and Inventory</b> .....	7
1. Neighborhood Park.....	7
2. Community Park.....	8
3. Linear Park/Hike and Bike Trails.....	8
4. Special Purpose Park.....	8
5. Pocket Park.....	8
6. Streetscapes.....	8
7. Nature Preserves and Open Spaces.....	8
<b>Park Classifications (Table 2)</b> .....	9
<b>Existing Parks and Open Spaces</b> .....	10
1. Virgil Anthony Park.....	10
2. Capp Smith Park.....	11
3. Foster Village Park.....	12
4. Indian Springs Park.....	13
5. BISD Park.....	14
6. Park Vista/Whites Brank Creek Trail.....	15
7. Hillview Park.....	16
<b>Trails- Needs</b> .....	17
Park System and Inventory (Table 3).....	18
<b>Methodology</b> .....	19
<b>Level of Service (Map)</b> .....	20
<b>A Vision for The City of Watauga</b> .....	21
Park Upgrades- Needs.....	22
Future Project Areas.....	23
A Plan For Watauga.....	24
<b>Recommendations and Priorities</b> .....	24
<b>Capital Improvement Projects (Table 4)</b> .....	25
Recommended Implementation Schedule.....	26
Existing and Available Mechanisms.....	28
<b>Summary</b> .....	30
Appendix 1: Park Master Plan Survey Questions	
Appendix 2: Weighted Survey Results	



## **Introduction and Purpose**

The intent of this document is to provide the City of Watauga an update on the information obtained through the 2007 Park Master Plan created by **MHS Planning and Design Group**. It is a guide to assist in the decision making process as it relates to parks, recreation and open spaces. These decisions are based on the desires of the citizens of Watauga and feasibility through various funding sources for recommended projects.

The leadership of Watauga recognizes that parks and recreation play an important role in the quality of life for its citizens and that a strong parks system creates a healthy environment, improves well-being, enhances economic development, builds social capital and develops a sense of community.

For many citizens, the importance of natural and open space is often overlooked because the concept of “open space” does not always coincide with the idea of land programmed for an activity which requires regular landscape maintenance. That reason could be its greatest asset by offering visual pleasure, outdoor enjoyment, and ecological sustainment. Natural preserves and open spaces shall be an integral part in the development of this Master Plan.

The importance of natural open spaces with a contribution of designed streetscapes, quality parks and a trail system that connect the community with schools, businesses and surrounding parks agrees with the City’s “**One Watauga**” Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This vision will inspire, encourage and enlighten our residents, City Council, Parks Development Corporation Directors and city staff.

This Master Plan update will achieve urban connectivity to nature through future park development and street improvements and will contain goals and objectives for the city’s parks and open space system by methods used in the development of a plan and inventory of existing facilities which make up the Watauga park system. This plan will recognize local needs that include parks, recreation and open space priorities. This plan will be used in conjunction with the 2016 Comprehensive Land Use document to formulate strategic planning in the development of connecting trails throughout the community.

This Master plan should be viewed as a tool that will assist staff and the community on decisions as they relate to parks, trails and open spaces and should be periodically reviewed and updated for usefulness.

**Acknowledgement**

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**Community Profile -“Snapshot”**

Watauga, is a name derived from the Cherokee Indians who first settled in the area and means “the land of many springs”. The City of Watauga was incorporated on October 11, 1958 and is home to 24,187 residents. Located in Tarrant County, Texas, Watauga is bordered by the City of Keller to the north, North Richland Hills to the east, Haltom City to the south and Fort Worth to the west. Almost all of the city’s land area is located east of Highway 377 and west of Rufe Snow Boulevard, which borders North Richland Hills and makes up a 4.2 square mile area.

**Race and Ethnicity**

Race refers to sets of physical characteristics, usually the result of ancestry, while ethnicity is a group of people who identify with each other based on nationality or a shared culture. The 2013 census estimates the racial makeup of Watauga as:

White	63%	15,504
Hispanic	24%	6109
Black	5.7%	1391
Asian	3.5%	868
Other	3.1%	580

Due to the increasing growth rates in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, many municipalities surrounding Watauga have realized the need for expansion, making opportunities for Watauga to incorporate adjacent unincorporated properties realistically impossible. For this reason, Watauga will remain landlocked and remain below the National Standard for park acreage per capita,(10 acres per 1,000 residents). The current average in the City of Watauga is 3.5 acres per 1,000.

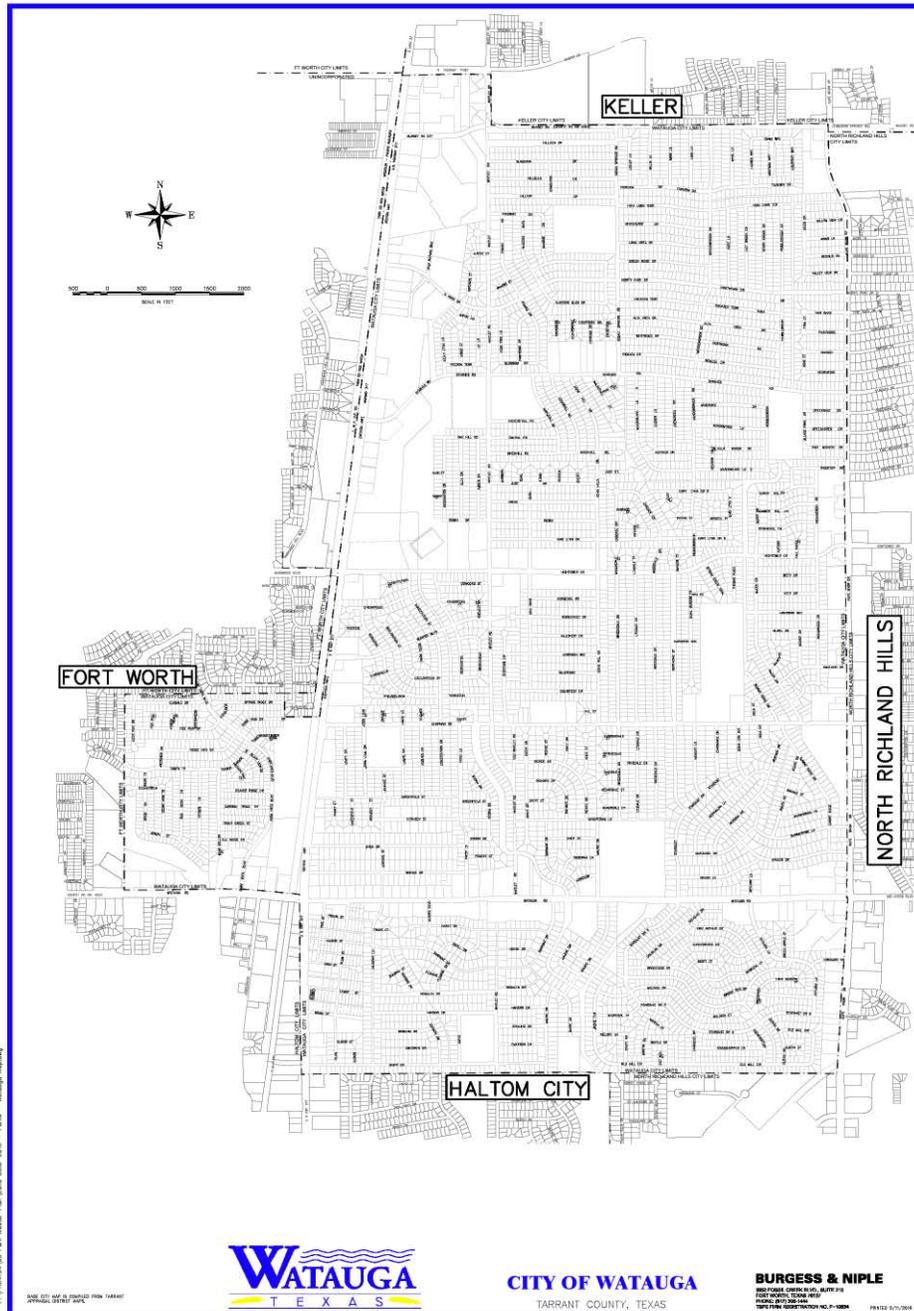
**TARRANT COUNTY CITIES ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS**

<b>City</b>	<b>Public Park space (Acres)</b>	<b>Private Parks/open spaces (Acres)</b>	<b>Total Park Space (Acres)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Public Park Space per 1,000</b>	<b>Private Park and Open space Per 1,000</b>	<b>Total Park Space per 1,000</b>
Watauga	76.73	8.0	85	24,187	3.5	0.00003	3.8
Keller	381	105.54	486.54	42,907	8.88	2.46	11.34
North Richland Hills	835		835	67,317	12.40		12.40
Haltom City	195.59		195.59	42,409	4.61		4.61
Fort Worth	9,551.23	2,171.49	11,722.72	792,727	12.05	2.74	14.79
Southlake	628.20	577.70	1,205.90	26,575	23.64	21.74	45.38
Grapevine	1,320.78	232.34	1,553.12	46,334	28.51	5.01	33.52
Colleyville	225.24	301.70	526.94	22,807	9.88	13.23	23.10
Arlington			4,710	379,577			12.41
Hurst			280.15	37,337			7.50
Bedford			139.50	46,979			2.97

**Table 1. Park acres per capita comparison.**

## External Influences

Bordering Fort Worth, Keller, North Richland Hills and Haltom City, Watauga is land locked and has no room for expansion or the ability to annex any surrounding properties. The land area today will be the same ten years from now. Currently, there are minimal properties left for park expansion or open spaces.



## **2017 Parks and Open Space Goals and Objectives**

The goals are established to serve as a policy and philosophical framework for the Park Master Plan. They serve to give direction and guidance in park planning even as staff and city leaders change over the course of time. These goals are to ensure a balanced park and open space system for the enjoyment of the citizens of Watauga.

The goals and objectives for the 2017 and beyond for the Parks Master plan will focus on:

- Providing a variety of recreational opportunities to meet the needs of the citizens.
- To provide consistency within the parks plan the physical form and appearance of our parks with those of the city.
- To preserve and enhance the city's open spaces, cultural landscape, and natural resources.
- To continue upgrading and improving the existing park facilities.
- To improve on the city's existing trail system by linking schools, neighborhoods and local shopping opportunities.
- To maintain safe practices and continue to meet the current safety guidelines and accessibility standards.
- To pursue, where available, the acquisition of land for future park development in concert with standards and priorities set forth by the City of Watauga.
- To develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement the city's limited resources.
- To encourage and include participation by citizens in the planning and design process of park projects.
- To continue updating the Park Master Plan by conducting periodic surveys to monitor changes in public needs.





## **PARK CLASSIFICATION AND INVENTORY**

The quality of parks, open spaces, preservation of natural resources and creek side protection along with trail connectivity are all important factors in achieving a “One Watauga” vision. The purpose of the Parks and Open Space Inventory is to determine the quality of the parks and recreational system.

The National and State guidelines identify three broad categories of parks, which are:

- Local, Close to Home Spaces, usually located within the community served by the facility, which include pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks.  
The category “close to Home Parks”, is significant and unique as it provides day to day facilities for all ages and abilities. In addition, “Close to Home Parks” are usually within walking or driving distance from where one lives.
- Unique Spaces, which may be local or regional and are defined as unique in some way due to physical features or because of the types of facilities that are provided, such as, linear parks, special use parks or land conservancy.
- Regional Spaces, are usually located within an hour or more of driving distances. Parks in this category serve several communities and include regional metro parks and park preserves.

### **1. Neighborhood Parks**

These parks provide the foundation for recreation in the local “Close to Home” category. They provide amenities and recreational spaces for the entire family and are within easy walking or biking distances to the citizens they serve.

2.

### **Community Parks**

This type of park is larger and serves a group of neighborhoods or a portion of the city. It can usually be reached by a vehicle and many residents adjacent to the park can ride a bike or walk to it. A variety of recreational facilities/amenities are provided, such as, trails, sports fields, fishing, and swimming which can accommodate many users doing different activities at once.

3.

### **Linear Parks/ Hike and Bike Trails**

Linear parks, also called open space parks, generally follow some natural or man- made feature, linear in nature. This could include creek sides, railroad tracks, rights of way or utility corridors. These properties are developed for pedestrian and cycling opportunities and can serve to link other parks, schools and local shopping destinations. There are no specific standards that apply to linear linked parks other than they need to be large enough to accommodate the resource they follow. They can also be greenbelts which preserve open spaces and natural areas.

4.

### **Special Purpose Parks**

These types of parks are designed to accommodate specialized recreational activities. Because the facility needs for each activity are different, each special purpose park usually provides for one or a number of activities.

5.

### **Pocket Parks**

These parks are usually small gathering spaces, one acre or less. They have few amenities and parking is minimal if any.

6.

### **Street-Scapes**

These parks are generally not considered as part of the city's park system, but can be considered as being a distinct entity of the urban fabric. In addition, park standards were developed as if available park land were infinitely available. Such is not the case in many cities, and even if it were not so, many cities consider the real aesthetics and economic values in cultivating the attractiveness and pedestrian quality of their streets. A well landscaped street can add to the diversity of a neighborhood and bring together all parts of the community creating a framework of the concept of "One Watauga".

7.

### **Natural Preserves and Open Spaces**

Conservation is valuable as natural resources disappear in our cities and as natural habitats are eliminated. The value of strolling through natural open space is very beneficial and can be difficult to measure. The opportunity to protect our natural resources and habitats is becoming rare, and for most communities and metro areas, urgency is needed in identifying and proactively protecting them for future generations.

## PARK CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Service Area	Size	Population Served	Type of Facilities	Development Cost
Neighborhood Parks	½ mile	5 acres to 10 acres	2,000 to 10,000	Playgrounds, picnic areas, pavilion, ball fields, parking.	\$80,00 To \$100,000 Per acre
Community Parks	2 miles	40 to 150 acres	10,000 to 150,000	Courts, sports fields, playgrounds, pavilions, trails, swimming pool, open spaces, restrooms, and parking.	\$100,000 To \$250,000 Per Acre
Linear Parks Greenbelts	Varies	Varies	5,000 to entire community	Multipurpose trails, landscapes, bench stations, information kiosks, exercise stations.	\$200,000 To \$500,000 Per acre
Pocket Parks	¼ mile	2,500 sq. ft. to 1 acre	500- 2,500	Playground, sidewalks, bench stations, shade structure	\$65,000 To \$100,000 Per acre

**Table2: Park Classification-Development costs do not reflect land acquisition.**



**EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

The Watauga parks are classified in the existing parks and open spaces inventory in the appendix, Parks and Open Spaces Inventory.

**VIRGIL ANTHONY PARK**

This 4.6 acre neighborhood park is located on the southern edge of the Watauga city limit and was developed in the year 2000 thru a \$100,000 matching grant provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife outdoor recreation grant program. This park includes a pavilion, ¼ mile walkway, small half basketball court, picnic tables, pavilion, a new playground structure and recently updated irrigation system, trees and landscaping installed in the year 2013.



## **CAPP SMITH PARK**

Capp Smith Park is a 37.7 acre Community Park located in the west central portion of the city. This park was developed in two phases and was completed in 1998. Since the 2007 Park Master Plan, several upgrades have occurred. In 2012, the city expanded the parking area at the main entrance of the park and added a restroom facility at the north end of the park. The amphitheater was reconstructed to increase the seating capacity and shade was installed to cover spectators during events. In addition, a tree planting program was developed to provide shade over the 1.2 mile trail that expands around a 5.4 acre spring fed lake. In 2014 the City of Watauga celebrated Veterans Day by dedicating a Veterans Memorial located at the entrance of the park and in the same year upgraded the playground equipment, meeting compliance for safety and accessibility standards.



Capp Smith Veterans Memorial



Capp Smith Playground



**FOSTER VILLAGE PARK**

Considered more of a special purpose and community park, Foster Village is home to our youth athletic associations, Little Miss Kickball, Fossil Creek Baseball Association, Watauga Women’s Kickball and YMCA Youth Baseball.

This park is 12 acres in size and is located on the eastern end of the community and has received several upgrades since the 2007 Park Master Plan.

In 2013, the concession stand was refurbished and brought to code standards, three kickball fields were constructed, a new pavilion was installed to complement the community center and scoreboards were erected on two of the sports fields.

Foster Village Park Community Center was remodeled in 2008 and is used for various public events. The park also has two tennis courts, an outdoor basketball court with several picnic stations and a playground.



Foster Village Park Ball Fields



Foster Village Community Center

## **INDIAN SPRINGS PARK**

Indian Springs Park is a 15.2 acre neighborhood park and is home to the Watauga Community and Senior Center. The park has three multipurpose sports fields, (soccer and football), and a newly designed concrete skate park installed in 2014. In addition, each field has shade and bleachers to accommodate the many spectators that visit the park for youth activities. The park is surrounded by a ½ mile walking trail with several bench stations, a workout station, restroom facility and playground. In addition, the community center will undergo a major project in the summer of 2016 by constructing a senior adult activity center that will tie into the existing community center, expanding the facility by 5,400 square feet for additional activities.



Indian Springs Sports Fields



Indian Springs Skate Park

**BISD PARK**

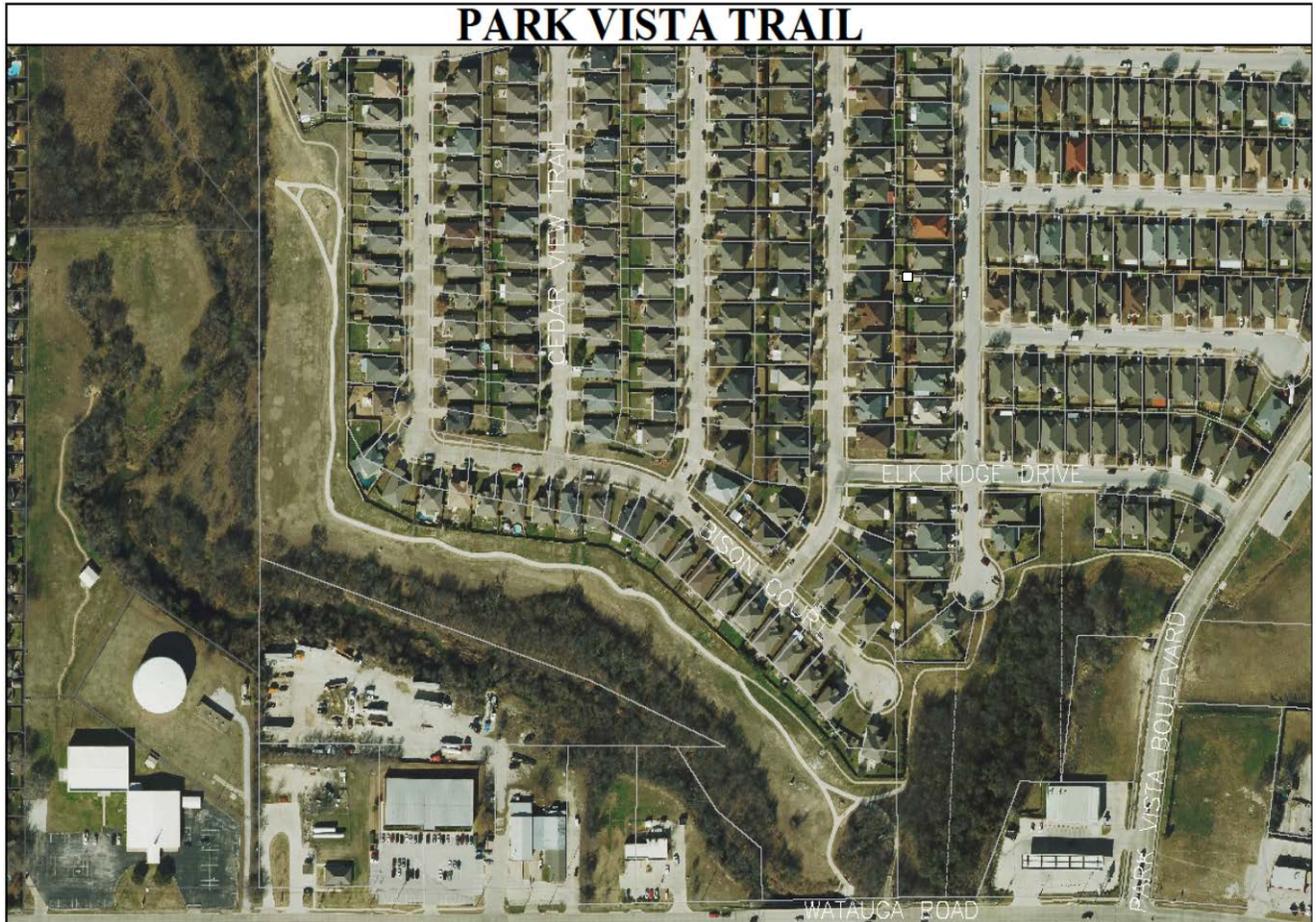
BISD Park is a 7.61 acre neighborhood park leased to the City of Watauga in perpetuity by the Birdville Independent School District. The city has recently replaced the playground equipment and has upgraded the entrances for handicap accessibility. The park has two large ballfield backstops, two covered pavilions with picnic areas, a one half mile walking trail and a pitch for a local cricket club league. The park has a large open space area for general play and sports practice, a parking area and received an entire irrigation replacement in 2014.



BISD Playground

## PARK VISTA/WHITES BRANCH CREEK TRAIL

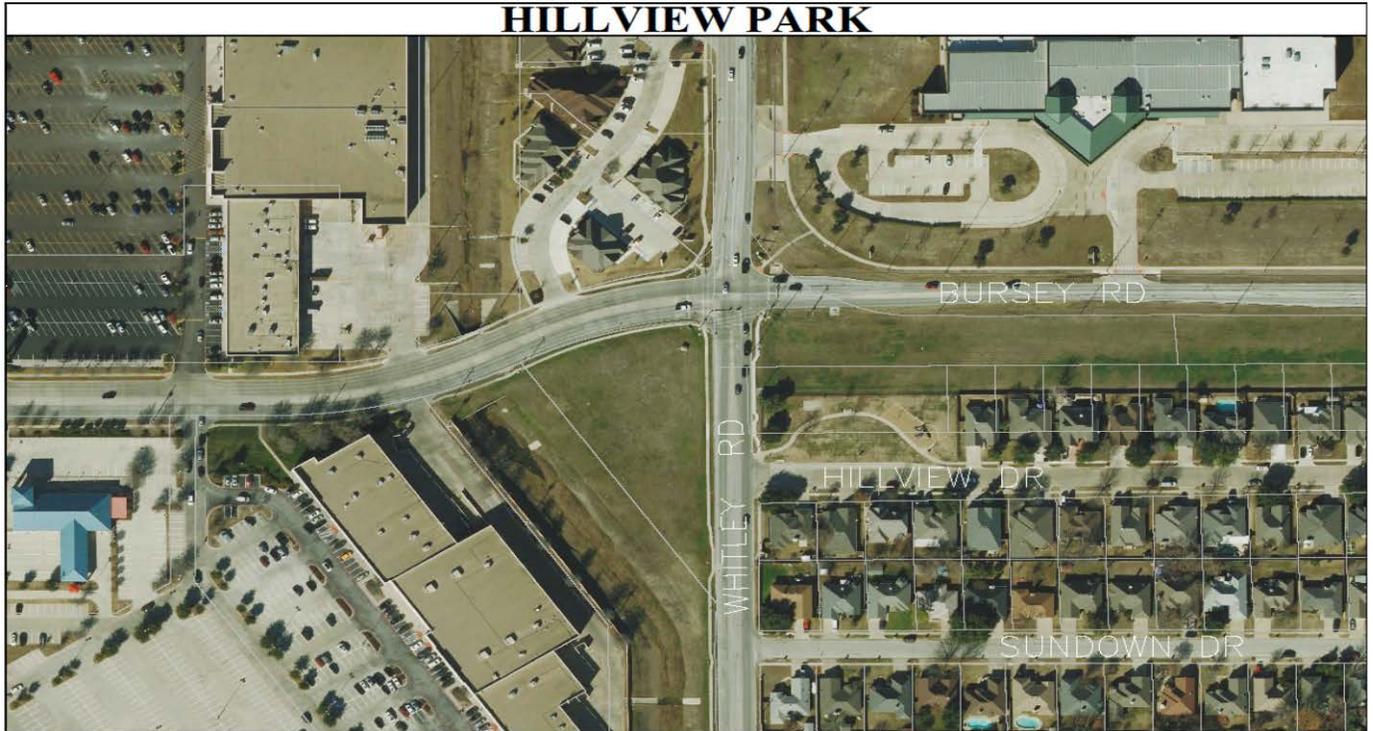
The City of Watauga and the City of Haltom City through an inter- local agreement and assistance from the Texas Parks and Wildlife outdoor recreation grant program obtained funding in 2012-13 to connect both communities through the Whites Branch Creek Trail system. The trail runs from the northwestern edge of the park and connects with Buffalo Ridge Park at the northern end of Haltom City. There are hopes that the City of Fort Worth will connect the Arcadia Park trail with the Whites Branch Creek Trail in 2016-17. In addition, the trail is well lit and has several rest stations, and plenty of open space for additional projects such as nature preserves and wildlife stations.



Whites Branch Creek Trail

**HILLVIEW PARK**

Hillview Park is located on the northern end of Watauga. It is a small pocket park, .60 acres with a playground, small basketball court, a walking trail and park benches.



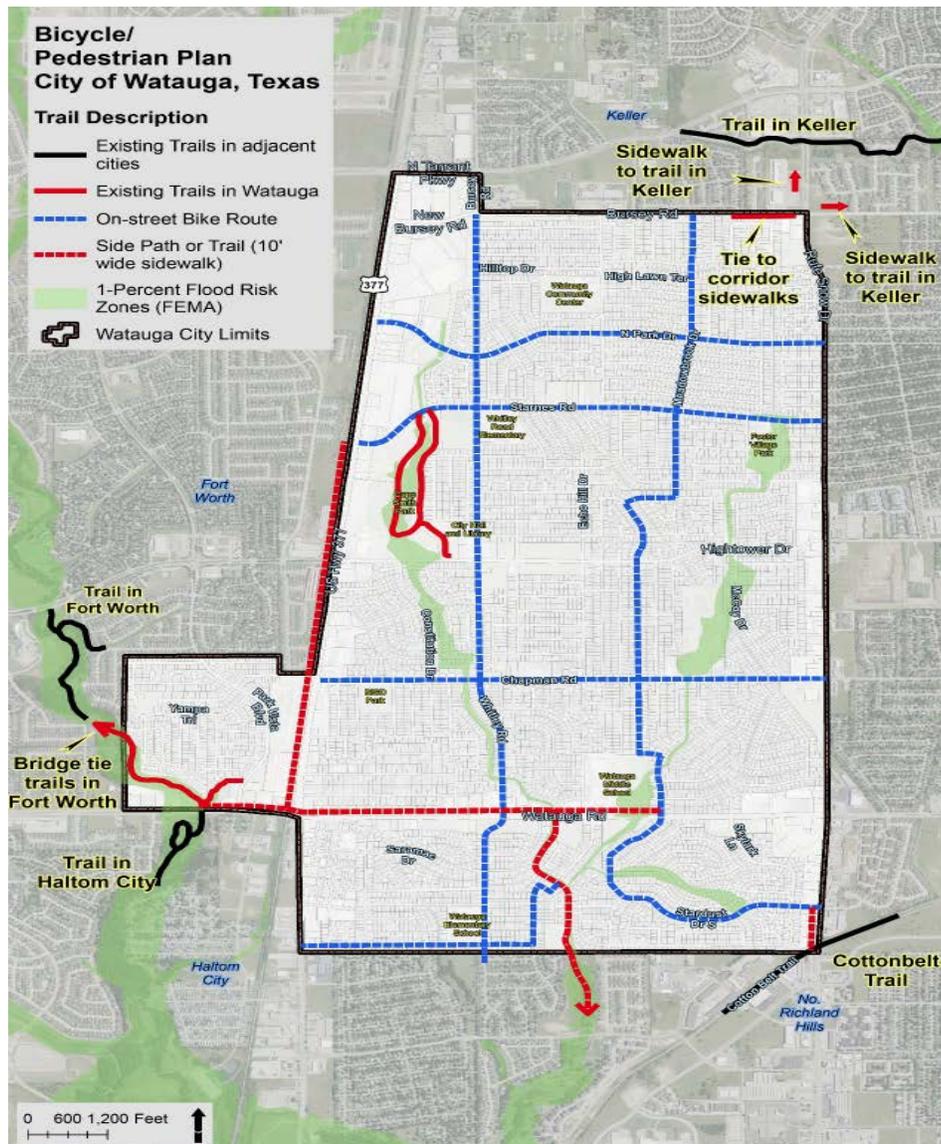
Hillview Park Playground

## TRAILS – NEEDS

Currently, all parks in the Watauga system provide trails or walk ways for area residents. Trails were the primary desired amenity expressed in the citizen survey. Citizens expressed a desire for trails that would link them to natural settings which would provide opportunities to view wildlife and open space. Based on the Park Classification System, the Citizens Survey and the adopted Goals and Objectives, there is a need to continue to provide additional trails in the park system.

By adopting an active policy of utilizing property along creeks, drainage easements and floodways, additional trails can be formed to meet many of the resident desires for future projects that meet with passive recreational opportunities.

In 2012/13, Whites Branch Creek in the Park Vista subdivision was created. This half mile trail was connected with Haltom City's Buffalo Ridge Park and will soon be connected to the Basswood Trail in Fort Worth. Similar projects should be considered with connecting Virgil Anthony Park along Singing Hills Creek with the Cotton Belt Trail in North Richland Hills, Texas. If a neighborhood park can be developed on the Browning Heights property along Singing Hills Creek, it would provide a pedestrian friendly route through the southern end of Watauga to neighboring communities.



## Watauga Parks System And Inventory 2016

Name of park	ACRES	BASEBALL FIELD	BASKETBALL COURT	BBQ GRILL	BENCH	BIKE RACK	BLEACHERS	DOGGY BAG DISPENSAR	CONCESSION/ STORAGE	FOOTBALL FIELD	FOOT BRIDGE	IRRIGATION SYSTEM	LANDSCAPE BEDS	PAVILION/AMPHITHEATER	PICNIC TABLE	PLAYGROUND	POND	RECREATION CENTER	RESTROOM	SOCCER FIELD	SWING SET	TENNIS COURT	TRAIL	TRAIL LIGHTS	TRASH CAN	WATER FOUNTAIN	WORK OUT STATION
<b>Community Park</b>																											
Capp-Smith Park	34	1	4	22	1		3	2		3	8	13	5	10	1	1		2		1		1	212	19	2	3	
Indian Springs Park	15			18	1	6	2	1	3		2	6	8	3	1		1	1	3	1		1		13	1	1	
<b>Greenbelts</b>																											
Whites Branch Creek Trail	16			5																		1	10	4			
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>																											
BISD Park	7.2	2	1	10		2	1				1		2	2	1					1		1		10			
Foster Village Park	12	4	1	5	15	1	13		1	2	2	2	2	7	1			1		1	2	1		20	2		
Virgil Anthony Park	3.9	1	1		4			1			1	1	1	3	1								1		2		
<b>Playground Park</b>																											
Hillview Park	0.6		1	3	1						1				1						1		1		3		
Skate Park	0.3			2										1											3		
<b>DEVELOPED ACRES</b>	<b>85</b>																										
<b>UNDEVELOPED ACRES</b>	<b>31.48</b>																										
<b>Level of Service</b>	<b>5.13</b>																										
<b>Operational cost per developed acre</b>	<b>\$7,953</b>																										
<b>Operational cost Per capita</b>	<b>\$30.13</b>																										
<b>Acres per 1,000 people<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>3.5</b>																										

Table 3. Park System Inventory

## **METHODOLOGY**

In the 2007 Park Master Plan, the objectives were to evaluate the parks and open spaces in the city and to establish an inventory of those facilities and the recreational resources within the city. A current level of service was identified and from 2007 to date, several upgrades to all of the city parks have been accomplished. The existing parks were again evaluated against the National Standards established through the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway guidelines published by the National Recreation and Parks Association, (NRPA), to allow for the objective review of the park system.

As mentioned previously, the City of Watauga is built out with minimal properties to obtain for parks and recreational needs. What the community does have are opportunities to enhance and build on the existing park land, incorporate new amenities and branch out through the development of connective trails.

Based on citizen input, the city obtained data to reflect recreational needs and desires through the use of four methods:

- A city wide survey
- Focus group presentation to stakeholders and youth associations
- Public Input Meeting
- Strategic Planning Council Workshop.

Within each survey and questionnaire group, there were strong areas of concentrated facility interests as distinguished from facility choices across all groups.

Based on the citizen responses, existing inventory and available resources, each park project was prioritized based on the local demand and the available resources as well as taking into account a funding reduction of ¼ cent sales tax from ½ cent sales tax that went into effect in May of 2012 to subsidize needed street improvements in the community.

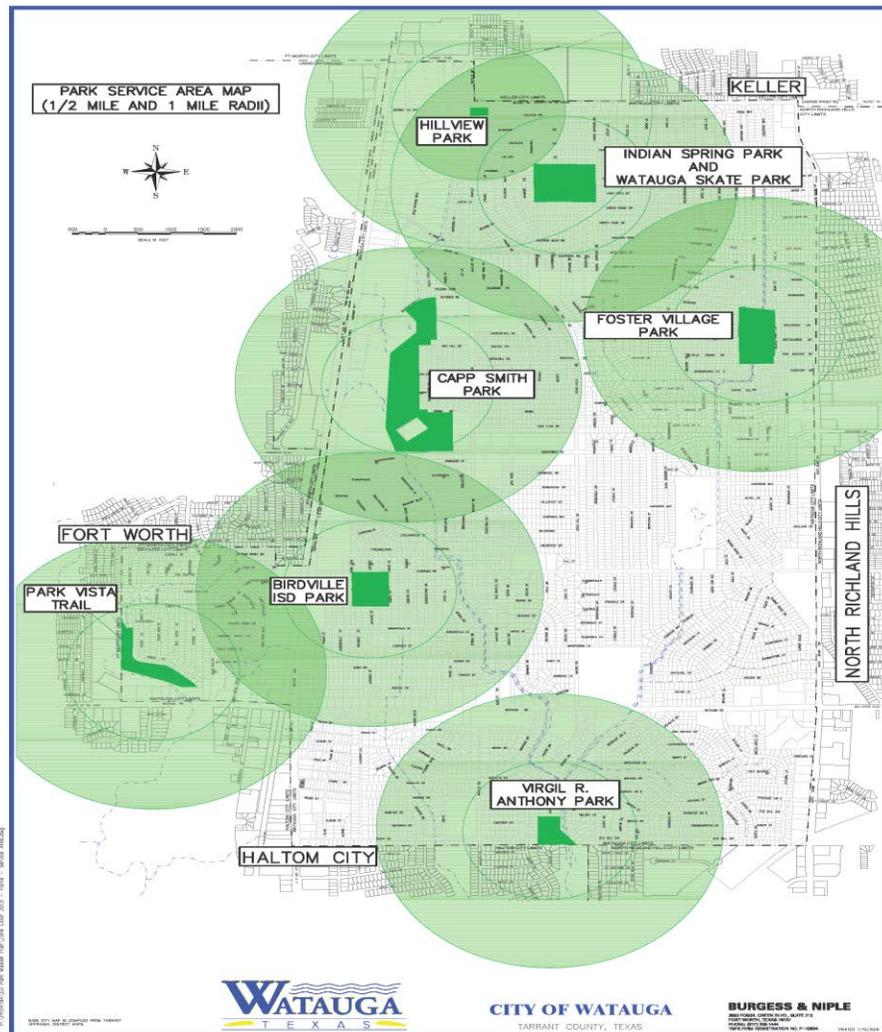
Through the city wide survey, a wide range of projects were identified that can effectively change the sculpture of the Watauga Park System. These projects are listed in the results of the citizen survey distributed in February of 2016.

Focus Groups or stakeholders involving youth associations were presented with specific questions that related to the use of a special purpose park, i.e., (Foster Village and Indian Springs ball fields). Questions were related to conditions of the playing surface, parking issues, scheduling game time, and a need for ball field lighting.

The Public Input Meeting addressed questions involving specific needs at different park locations. The group expressed the need for more public input as it relates to the selection of park amenities, landscape designing and the development of park projects. These groups would assist staff in planning and decision making that pertain to making improvements to the parks and would allow staff to update the citizens and users of specific projects that are being considered.

The Strategic Planning Council Workshop allowed council members to give insight into several civic matters which included park and recreational activities that stressed “enhancement of quality of life through recreational, cultural and educational services”, building on ways in which the city could create more event venues, connection trails, food truck opportunities and communication connectivity in the parks.

The Parks Development Corporation and the city staff were constantly involved throughout the citizen based planning process. Their participation insured the plan resulted in a feasible and balanced park program for the city and once implemented, will serve the active and passive recreational needs of the community.



## **LEVEL OF SERVICE**

The level of service describes the importance the park system plays in a community. It is expressed in useable acres of park land per 1,000 citizens. A standard target level of service for communities nationally has been 10 acres per 1,000 residents, but recently the standard has been modified to specifically reflect unique characteristics of a community and a range of levels of service has been more widely utilized. Based on specific needs of a community, levels of service ranging from 5 acres to 15 acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents are typically targeted.

It is important to understand that the level of service for parks and open spaces is based on useable space. Therefore, undeveloped or unusable land should not be a factor in the level of service calculation. Although private recreational facilities and golf courses should be considered when establishing a desired level of service for that activity to be provided by a community, the actual acreage is not typically used in the

calculation. Similarly, outdoor recreational facilities and open spaces on public school campuses are considered in the level of service only if they are available to the general public for use during non- school hours.

To date, the current level of service in the City of Watauga is 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

### **A Vision for the City of Watauga**

The Parks and Community Services Department is devoted to enhancing the well- being of all of its residents. “Enhance the quality of life through responsible services as they relate to our residents from a recreational and community services standpoint”. The concept of vision “One Watauga” fits well with the goals and Mission of the Parks and Community Services Department.

“One Watauga” speaks with mindfulness about the people of Watauga and enthusiastically supports public health and well-being. A healthy city promotes a vibrant relationship between its residents and the environment.

The recreational needs were determined using three planning approaches: demand based, standard based and resource based. This combination allowed the desires for recreational opportunities expressed by citizens with different interests to be compared with NRPA standards while at the same time recognizing the unique natural attributes of the city.

The ideal of “One Watauga” breaks from the stereotypical notion of parks as “once in a while”, occasional elements in a city, or serving as an escape from day to day urbanism.

A needs assessment was conducted to determine what users would like to experience as it related to parks and recreational activities, as well as facilities and upgrades to the existing facilities. Local input was obtained through a public forum, strategic planning workshop and a citizen survey of which the results will be a balanced analysis that will reflect the needs and desires of the community of Watauga through the year 2027.

In the spring of 2016, a citizen survey was distributed and 396 surveys were returned and tabulated. The survey results are located on page 33-34. Key information received from the distribution and percentages from responses included the following information based on the questions answered.

Q. Is there a park in Watauga that is accessible to your residence?

**335** of those surveyed responded with yes.

Q. Which park in Watauga do you visit the most?

**277** responded that they visit Capp Smith Park.

**42** visited Foster Village Park.

**39** visited Indian Springs Park.

**16** Visited BISD Park.

**10** visited Virgil Anthony Park.

**10** visited whites Branch Creek Park.

**5** visited Hillview Park.

Q. How would you rate the parks in Watauga?

175 responded that the parks in Watauga were in excellent.

180 responded that the parks in Watauga were average.

9 responded that the parks were below average and 32 did not respond.

The survey asked participants to rank five specific amenities they would like to see in the Watauga Parks. Based on the results of those responses, the rankings are as follows:

1. 15.5% responded that they would like to see improvements in Hike and Bike trails.
2. With a combined percentage of 18, citizens would like to have a swimming pool or splash pad.
3. 13.5% responded that they would like to have more nature areas in our existing parks.
4. 11% of those surveyed would like to see additional shade over playground areas.

By conducting public participation through surveys, public forum, and strategic planning sessions, the Watauga Parks and Community Services Department can develop a unique plan to support the quality of life for Watauga citizens. What has been determined are needs for natural open spaces for general play and activities, connected trails to surrounding schools, communities, shopping areas and local parks. Additionally, there is a desire for a swimming area, a splash park or combination of both, and shade structures over existing playgrounds and picnic areas should be included.

### **Park Upgrades-Needs**

A main concern observed in the 2007 Park Master Plan, was to improve upon the existing playground equipment in all the city parks. Upgrades were made to all of the playground structures and currently meet the National Safety Standards and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The public's input is a vision of establishing a "back to nature" environment. Locations need to be established where individuals can stroll peacefully and reconnect with the natural resources our city has to offer. Natural areas, open spaces, picnic grounds, play grounds that are more traditional with slides, swings and merry-go-rounds which families with children age four and under are a focus of development.

Specific needs for area parks included a playground area for Whites Branch Creek Park, an addition of connective trails that will link Virgil Anthony Park to the Cotton Belt Trail on the southern end of the city, installation of shade structures over the existing playgrounds and adding a swimming pool or splash pad to Capp Smith Park or Indian Springs Park.

Due to the limited park space in the community, the organized youth sports programs would remain at Foster Village and Indian Springs Parks. Youth sports stakeholders expressed that their programs would benefit greatly by having sports field lighting at their locations, better drainage on the ballfields and additional parking. In doing so, scheduling league play would be easier, and crowd control and parking overflow could be better managed.

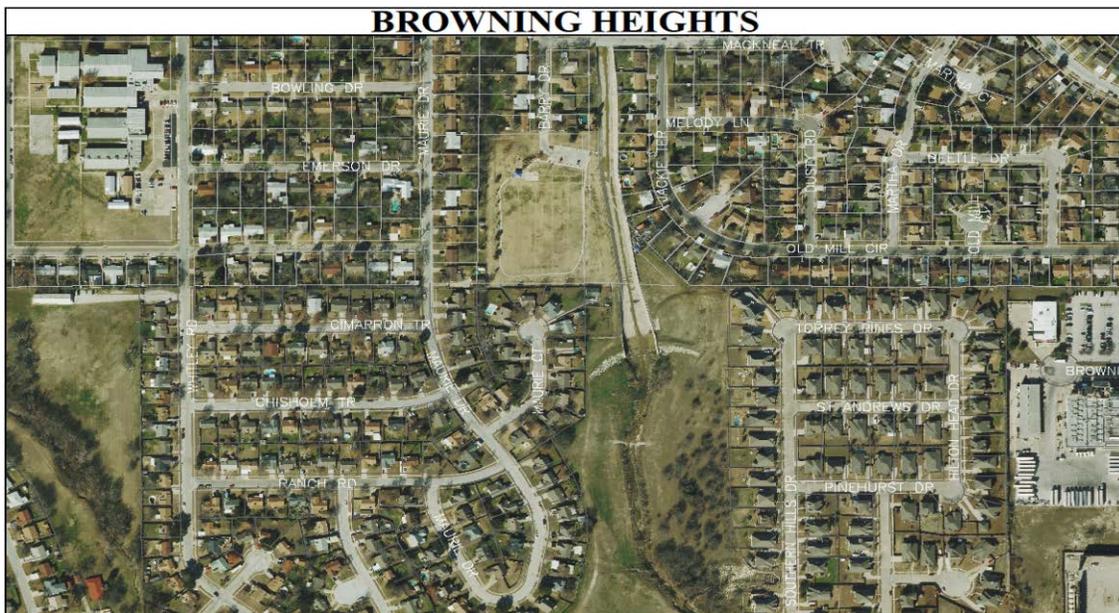
Other suggestions included a Dog Park, and a Food Truck Park either of which could be located on a property off Watauga Road. Utilization of the Whites Branch Creek Trail in Park Vista and the development of Browning Heights along the Singing Hills Creek property could host additional open space and nature areas.



## Future Project Areas



Development of natural open space areas throughout the Whites Branch Creek Trail and connect with the City of Fort Worth's Arcadia Park Trail.



Create a linear trail system that would link Virgil Anthony Park to the Cotton Belt Trail in North Richland Hills, Texas.



Capp Smith Park Splash Pad

## A Plan for Watauga

Based on the needs assessment through the survey responses and public input provided, the following recommendations by staff should be viewed as potential projects for the community for this Park Master Plan time frame and should be as follows:

- Where possible, the City of Watauga should acquire additional properties to add to the existing park system.
- The City of Watauga should consider the development of park land along Watauga Road and Browning Heights Blvd.
- The city should continue the development of park trails to include connectivity to schools, shopping areas, local parks and other communities.
- The community should consider adding a water feature, (splash pad or spray ground) to an existing park.
- There is a desire to have more nature areas and picnic pads where space may be available.
- Shade canopies over playground structures should be included in new playground design.
- Restrooms should be considered for all neighborhood parks.
- Where needed, infrastructure throughout the park system should be upgraded.

## Recommendations and Priorities

Based on the citizens survey and resources available, the following Parks and Community Services facility priorities, which are shown in descending order should be considered and adopted.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>
1	Hike and Bike Trails
2	Nature Areas
3	Swimming Pool/splash pad
4	Shade Structures
5	Picnic Pads
6	Playgrounds
7	Open Spaces
8	Fishing Spots
9	Youth/Adult Sports Complex
10	Sand Volleyball Court
11	Lighted Sports Fields
12	Tennis Courts
13	Practice Fields
14	Dog Park
15	Skate Park
16	Tree Planting
17	Community Garden

**Note: Appendix 2, page 33**

Based on the needs analysis, citizens survey, public input and resources available, the following projects for parks, recreation and open spaces are recommended. The cost estimates shown for each project represent the range of probable cost and are not actual construction costs.

**Capital Improvement Projects**  
**Watauga Parks Master Plan 2017-2021**

			<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>FY15-16</b>	<b>FY16-17</b>	<b>FY17-18</b>	<b>FY18-19</b>	<b>FY19-20</b>	<b>FY20-21</b>
<b>Projects</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Cost</b>							
<b>Parks</b>		<b>\$2.8M</b>		\$40,000					
Shade Structure/Irrigation	Capp Smith/ Foster Vill.	\$40,000	PDC	\$40,000					
Shade Structure City Wide	City Parks	\$95,000	PDC		\$16,000	\$22,000	\$27,000	\$30,000	
Playground Equipment	Park Vista	\$92,000	PDC			\$92,000			
Picnic Shade Structures	City Parks	\$42,000	PDC			\$42,000			
Dog Park	TBD	\$100,000	PDC						\$100K
Lake Wall Repair	Capp Smith	\$200,000	PDC		\$200,000				
Splashpad/ Trails, other	City Parks	\$1.5M	CO		\$1.5M				
Bridge and Sidewalk Improv.	Foster Village	\$150,000	PDC			\$150,000			
Irrigation System	Capp Smith	\$25,000	PDC			\$25,000			
Lighting Repl.	Capp Smith	\$350,000	PDC						\$350,000
Tennis/Basketball Ct. Repl.	Foster Village	\$175,000	PDC						\$175,000

**Park Projects 2017-2027**

**1. Capp Smith Park**

- A. Replace lake retention wall throughout the park
  - Initial Phase to be completed in 2017 \$200,000
  - Additional Funding to be determined at later date \$1,000,000
- B. Construct Water Spray Ground during fiscal 2017/18 \$300,000
- C. Lighting replacement throughout the park \$350,000
- D. New playground structure at north end of park \$100,000
- E. Upgrade Irrigation system \$ 25,000

**2. Foster Village Park**

- A. Shade Structure Install over playground in 2017 \$ 16,000
- B. Bridge and walk way improvements, 2017/18 \$150,000
- C. Fencing improvements 2017/18 \$ 75,000
- D. Outdoor tennis and basketball court repairs \$175,000
- E. Shaded picnic pads 2017/18 \$ 42,000

F. Maintenance Facility Upgrades	\$ 50,000
G. Ball Field Lighting TBD	\$300,000
<b>3. Indian Springs Sports Fields</b>	
A. Address drainage issues on all fields	\$ 40,000
B. Modify existing storage facility for concessions capability	\$100,000
C. Construct new maintenance building	\$200,000
D. Install shade structure to existing playground	\$ 22,000
E. Ball Field Lighting	\$300,000
<b>4. Park Vista/Whites Branch Creek Trail</b>	
A. Install Playground 2017/18	\$100,000
B. Create Nature scape throughout the park trail	\$ 75,000
C. Construct local dog park TBD	\$120,000
<b>5. BISD Park</b>	
A. Install playground amenities to existing facility 2017	\$ 30,000
B. Construct restroom facility TBD	\$250,000
C. Install shade structure over existing playground 2018	\$ 30,000
<b>6. Virgil Anthony Park</b>	
A. Install Shade Structure over existing Playground	\$ 27,000
B. Connect Virgil Anthony and Browning Heights Property To Cotton Belt trail in North Richland Hills	\$250,000
<b>7. Hillview Park</b>	
A. Install shade structure to existing playground	\$ 18,000

**Note: These costs are estimates only and prepared without the benefit of detailed engineering data. All costs are based on 2016 dollar estimates and final costs may vary.**

**Recommended Implementation Schedule**

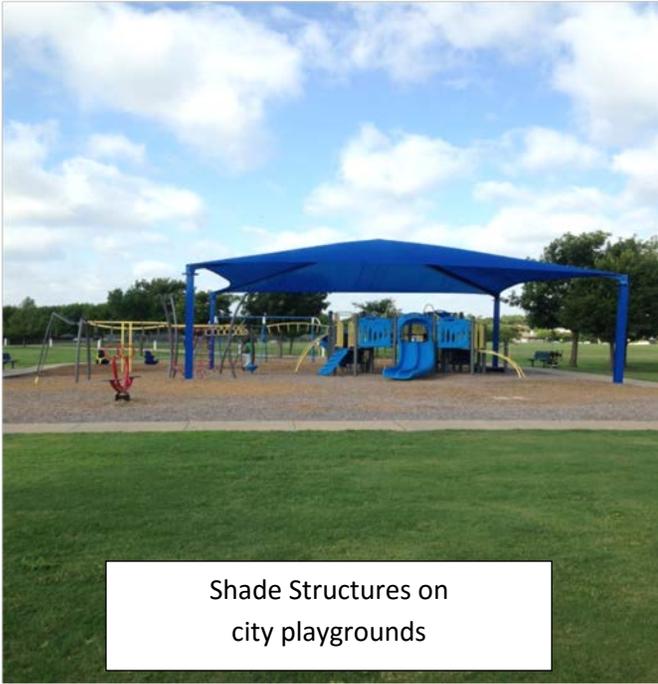
The following table depicts the project priorities with suggested completion dates. It is important to note that the following schedule is intended to be a flexible guide for development of parks and recreational facilities over the next ten years for the City of Watauga. The city should evaluate and take advantage of any unforeseen opportunities that may arise that are not identified in the schedule or change the order of implementation if necessary.



Capp Smith  
Lake Wall Repair



Foster Village  
Ball Field Lighting



Shade Structures on city playgrounds



Trail connections throughout the Watauga Community

**PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
1	Capp Smith Lake retention wall repair	2017 2019	1.2 M	Parks Development Corporation Certificate of Obligation Texas Parks and Wildlife
2	Connectivity Trail from Virgil Anthony Park thru Singing Hills Creek to Connect with the Cotton Belt Trail in North Richland Hills	2017 2018	\$250,000/\$350,000	Parks Development Corporation Texas Parks and Wildlife Certificate of Obligation
3	Playground Shade Structures	2017 2020	\$90,000	Parks Development Corporation Texas Parks and Wildlife
4	Spray Ground/Splash Pad	2018	\$350,000 +	Certificate of Obligation Texas Parks and Wildlife
5	Develop Nature areas within our open spaces	Ongoing	\$50,000/\$75,000	Parks Development Corporation
6	Picnic area with shade structures	2018/19	\$45,000	Parks Development Corporation Corporate Sponsorships Texas Parks and Wildlife
7	Irrigation upgrade to Capp Smith Park	2017/18	\$30,000	Parks Development Corporation
8	Playground Equipment Park Vista/Whites Creek Branch Park	2017/18	\$95,000	Parks Development Corporation Texas Parks and Wildlife

9	Trail Improvements for Foster Village Park	2018/19	\$150,000	Certificate of Obligation Texas Parks and Wildlife Parks Development Corporation
10	Repair of Tennis/basketball courts Foster Village Park	2019/20	\$175,000	Parks Development Corporation Corporate Sponsorships Texas Parks and Wildlife
11	Lighting replacements Capp Smith Park	2021/22	\$350,000	Certificate of Obligation Parks Development Corporation
12	Dog Park TBD	2023	\$150,000	Texas Parks and Wildlife Parks Development Corporation
13	Food Truck Park TBD	2025	\$250,00	Corporate Sponsorship Parks Development Corporation

Note: Costs are preliminary estimates only and prepared without the benefit of detailed engineering data. All costs shown are based on 2016 estimates. Final construction prices may vary.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION- EXISTING AND AVAILABLE MECHANISMS**

In order to implement this park and open space plan, there are a variety of funding sources and tools available for use by the City of Watauga. These include and are not limited to:

**SENATE BILL 376-4B-** Funds generated by this special sales tax can be used for developing and maintaining public recreational and park facilities. Currently, the City of Watauga through a one quarter cent sales tax generates approximately \$700,000 per year used for operational and personnel costs.

**TEXAS RECREATIONAL TRAILS FUND-** Texas Parks and Wildlife Department administers the National Recreational Trail fund through a provision from the Federal Highway Administration. This Federally funded program receives its funding from a portion of federal gas taxes paid on fuel used in non-highway recreational vehicles. The grant can be up to 80% of project cost with a maximum of \$200,000 for non-motorized trail grants and currently there is not a maximum amount for motorized trail grants. Funds can be used for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail projects such as the construction of new recreational trail projects, to improve existing trails, to develop trailheads or trailside facilities, and to acquire trail corridors. Eligible sponsors include city and county governments, state agencies, river authorities, water districts, MUDs, school districts, federal land managers, non-profit organizations and other private organizations.

**TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE LOCAL GRANT PROGRAM-** This program consists of 5 individual programs that assist local units of government with the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities throughout the State of Texas. The program provides 50% matching grants on a reimbursement basis to eligible applicants. All grant assisted sites must be dedicated as parkland in perpetuity, properly maintained and open to the public. Eligible applicants include political subdivisions of the State of Texas legally responsible for providing public recreation services to their citizens. This includes cities, counties, river authorities, municipal utility districts, and other special districts.

Local Park Grants are funded annually following the October 1<sup>st</sup> application deadline each year. All applications will be accepted through the Recreation Grants Online Form only.

**NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION- (NFWF)**, provides funding on a competitive basis to projects that sustain, restore and enhance our nation's fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats. Each of the initiatives has a business plan developed by scientists and other experts which is approved by the Board of Directors. Grants are available to support the actions identified in the business plan. Additional programs support diverse projects for wildlife and habitat conservations across the country. The foundation leverages public dollars with corporate, private, and other non-profit funds. Funds are available on an as-need-basis.

**PAY AS YOU GO-** This method of financing park improvements involves budgeting for land acquisition, development and maintenance of park facilities through the city's annual budget process. Allocations for park improvements are made and spent annually through the standard budget process.

**GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS-** These bonds are issued by the city following an election in which the voters authorize their issuance for specific stated purposes, as well as the necessary tax increase to support them. These bonds pledge the property or ad valorem taxing power of the city.

**CERTIFICATE OF OBLIGATION-** these certificates have basically the same effect as general obligation bonds except they do not require an election to authorize. These certificates are issued on the authorization of the City Council. Repayment is based on the property taxing power of the city, utility system revenues or a combination of them both.

**USER FEES-** This method of financing requires the eventual user of each park to pay a fee for the use of each facility. Fees to be charged users can be established to pay for debt services, maintenance and operation of the park.

**PRIVATE AND CORPORATE DONATIONS-** Donations from foundations, corporations and private individuals are often used to acquire and develop parks. The city should constantly identify and pursue opportunities to receive such funding for park projects. One way for obtaining these types of donations is through the use of the Texas Parks and Recreation Foundation. This foundation was developed to assist all communities in the State of Texas to maximize the benefits of donations of land, property and money.

**LOCAL UTILITY BILLING DONATIONS-** These donations can be made through local utility payment where funds are collected for specific projects or department use.



## **SUMMARY**

Today, the Watauga Parks network has approximately 85 acres of developed park land. This figure represents parks and open space owned by the city, and maintained by city staff. When compared to the existing population in the service area of 24,187, the resulting level of service of developed park land is 3.5 acres for every 1,000 residents.

This Parks and Open Space Master Plan outlines park projects which could add approximately 33 acres of developed park land to the overall system. Those projects would include the development of the Nat Brooks property, 3.2 acres off Watauga Road and the Browning Heights property, 20 acres located just south of the Virgil Anthony Park location and the open spaces that are provided by both the Birdville and Keller Independent School Districts. If projects are implemented within the planning period, based on projected population of 25,380, the level of service in the year 2027 will be at 4.5 acres of developed park land for every 1,000 residents. Thus, the existing level of service would have increased approximately 47% over the next ten years. It is important to note that the addition of natural open space with passive, active and educational recreation opportunities will enhance Watauga's parks for the entire region.

This plan will be used as a flexible instrument which should be reviewed annually and updated periodically to continue to reflect the unique recreational needs of the area. The city should take advantage of any opportunity not identified in this plan, such as land donations and or facility donations as long as the actions meet the intent of the goals, objectives and recommendations of this plan.

With the proposed additions to the park system that are outlined in this plan will come additional maintenance and operational needs in order to best utilize, manage and maintain both the new facilities and those that exist today. The proposed recommendations contained in this plan will enhance the quality of life in the region and help ensure that the City of Watauga continues to be a pivotal point in the growing needs of our citizens. The resulting benefits include an enhanced quality of life, economic value, increased property value, a potential for tourism and pride in the residents of this community.



**Appendix 1.**



**Park Master Plan Survey**

The Watauga Parks and Community Services Department would like to hear from you. Your input is very important on how we approach making decisions as they relate to the Watauga parks system. Our staff can better serve the needs of our citizens now and for future generations. If you will please take a few moments of your time to complete this survey, we will become more aware of what our citizens would like to see in our parks, and staff can move forward and continue to enhance the a “quality of life” in Watauga.

1. Is there a park in Watauga that is accessible to your residence?      Yes – No
  
2. Which park in Watauga do you visit the most?
  - a. Foster Village
  - b. Capp Smith
  - c. Virgil Anthony
  - d. Indian Springs
  - e. BISD
  - f. Hillview
  - g. White’s Creek Branch
  
3. How would you rate the Parks in Watauga?
  - a. Excellent      b. Average      c. Below average
  
4. What new feature would you like to see in the Watauga Park System?

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**Please check five features with 1 as your top priority and 5 your lowest priority:**

Rank	Choice	Rank	Choice
	Playgrounds		Nature Areas
	Open Spaces		Spray ground
	Sports Practice Fields		Picnic Areas
	Shade structures on Playgrounds		Tennis courts
	Skate Parks		Hike and Bike Trails
	Fishing areas		Swimming Pool
	Lighting for Sports Fields		Youth Sports Complex
	Sand Volleyball court		Adult Softball Fields
	Other(specify):		Other (specify):

5. At what time of day are you normally at the park?

- A. Morning      B. Midday      C. Evening

6. How often do you see or interact with park staff?

- A. Often      B. Sometimes      C. Never

7. Does any person in your family participate in organized youth activities? If yes, what activity and at which facility?

8. If any, what keeps members of your household from using Watauga Parks and Community Services facilities?

Please add any other comments you would like as it relates to the Watauga Parks?

**OTHER COMMENTS:**

**Considering the size of Watauga, I think the parks are well designed and maintained.**

**We enjoy the nature walks and would like to see the geese come back.**

**Need to accommodate the seniors with more places to sit and walk your dog.**

**I don't think the upkeep of the parks is as good as it was in 2015.**

**Love Capp Smith park and all the trees, it is very family oriented.**

**Spray more for mosquitos.**

**Would like to see more shaded areas at the playgrounds.**

**Enforce the fog waste rule or clean it up regularly.**

**Would like to see more trees and another playground at the north end of Capp Smith**

**I think the utility bill should offer to help with the parks. Add a section where one can donate.**

**Wish Capp Smith had a volleyball court.**

**There should be more sports activities for kids with disabilities.**

**We need more restrooms at our parks.**

**Would love to see a spray pad or swimming pool in Watauga.**

**Private business should not be allowed to operate in our parks.**

**Enforce the leash law.**

**Need to stock the lake with more fish and have more police bike patrols.**

**Would like to see mile markers ¼, ½ and one mile at Capp Smith.**

**Back pack, cycling with hills and trails would be nice.**

**Keep up the good work.**

**Love walking at Capp Smith.**

**More Parking at the parks would be nice.**

**Need better lighting at the parks.**

**Love the duck pond but need more shade.**

**Would love to thank all the staff for the work involved in beautifying the parks.**

**Too much drug use at Virgil Anthony. Need better lighting and more police presence.**

**A drinking fountain at Virgil Anthony and BISD park would be nice.**

**More bike trails and better side walks.**

**How about a fenced dog park.**

**A Food Truck Festival.**

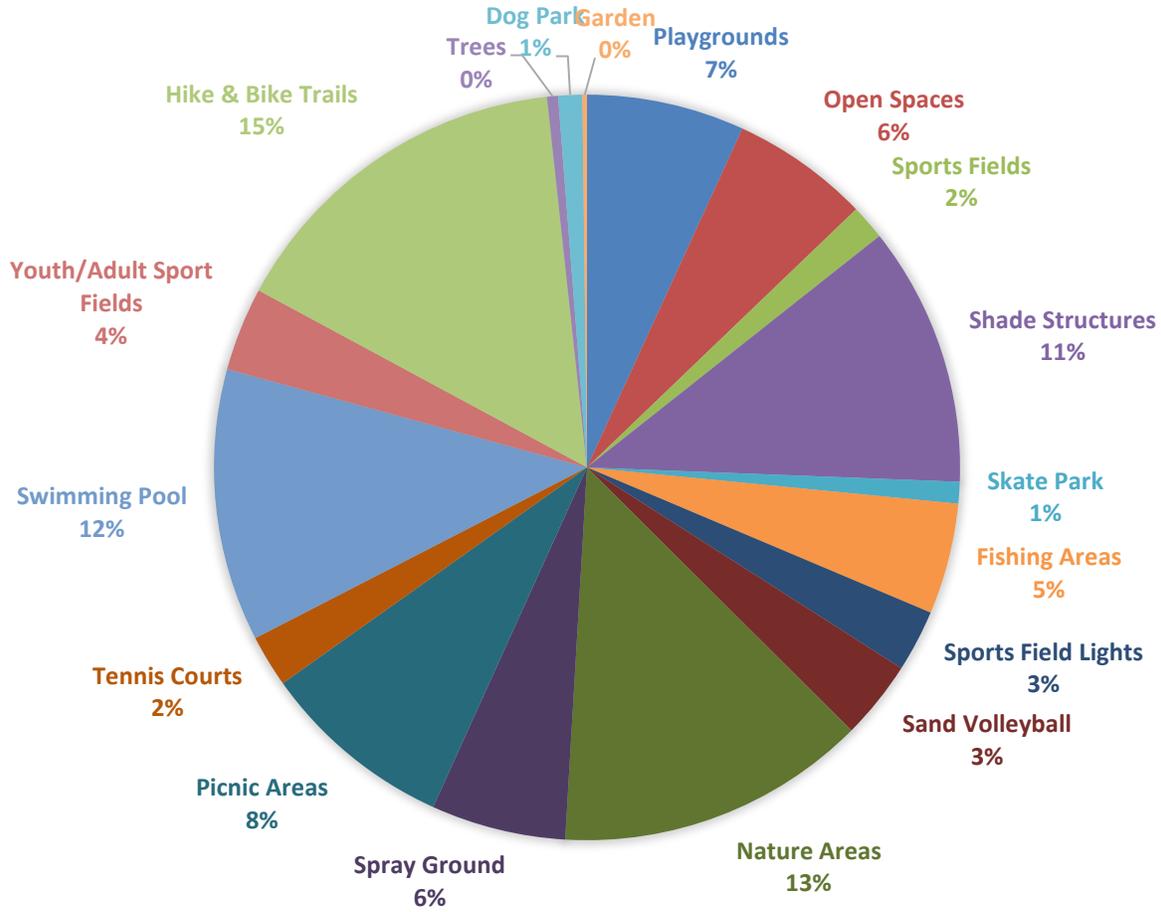
## Appendix 2.

Ranks were given weight to emphasize higher rankings from the survey results, with 1 being the highest rank and 5 being the lowest. A ranking of 1 received 5 points, ranking of 2 received 4 points, a ranking of 3 received 3 points a ranking of 4 received 2 points and a ranking of 5 received 1 point.

### Weighted Survey Results

Park Amenities							
	Rank						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total Points	Weight
Playgrounds	28	19	17	22	18	415	6.84%
Open Spaces	16	21	23	18	16	363	5.98%
Sports Fields	5	5	4	5	6	92	1.52%
Shade Structures	48	34	33	22	28	684	11.27%
Skate Park	2	2	4	3	10	57	0.94%
Fishing Areas	10	12	14	33	17	292	4.81%
Sports Field Lights	9	6	10	8	15	163	2.69%
Sand Volleyball	12	6	12	16	9	207	3.41%
Nature Areas	47	52	43	27	22	817	13.47%
Spray Ground	16	29	14	13	18	354	5.83%
Picnic Areas	14	29	31	41	34	510	8.41%
Tennis Courts	5	5	10	11	9	137	2.26%
Swimming Pool	66	33	23	15	19	717	11.82%
Youth/Adult Sport Fields	10	7	19	12	13	220	3.63%
Hike & Bike Trails	65	49	40	37	29	935	15.41%
Trees	2	0	3	1	2	29	0.48%
Dog Park	6	2	1	4	1	63	1.04%
Garden	2	0	0	0	0	12	0.20%

## PARK AMENITIES



## Park Amenities

