



WEST COLUMBIA

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Texas

2011 Parks Master Plan



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City of West Columbia 2011 Parks Master Plan

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1. Acknowledgements

Mayor

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Council

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Randy Gilbert

Parks and Recreation Board

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City of West Columbia

Debbie A. Sutherland, City Manager

Kelli R. Kuban, City Secretary



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2. Methodology and Executive Summary

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan encompasses the City of West Columbia's adopted Park Master Plan originally created in 1999. At that time, the Parks Board was reformed by the City Council and was charged, through an address by Mayor Robert R. Dixon, with evaluating the facilities of the city and identifying potential opportunities for further development. Previous Parks Board committees had made many strides in West Columbia but very little new development had occurred.

The Parks Board was successful in securing a grant through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department which utilized approximately 26 acres of vacant land. That park is First Capitol Park and is widely used by not only West Columbia residents but surrounding areas as well. Part of that process included the development of a Parks Master Plan.

The Parks Master Plan is now out dated and must be adopted, again by City Council, before seeking any additional Texas Parks and Wildlife funding.



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3. Introduction

The City of West Columbia is a small town, south of the Houston metropolitan area. It is located in Brazoria County, the “Cradle of Texas History”. Throughout its history, the City’s population has fluctuated. In the 1830’s, when West Columbia was the first Capitol of the Republic of Texas, there were some 3,000 people in the area. West Columbia’s current population is 4,183 that is down from the 2000 census of 4,255. (www.City-data.com)

West Columbia is primarily a residential community. The average age of an adult living in West Columbia is 34.9 yrs. Many people work in the larger nearby cities and industries. West Columbia families make up 68.4% of the population, educating their children through the Columbia Brazoria Independent School District. Because of the need to serve these family groups, the Parks Board was reformed in 1993 due to a lack of facilities in the City.

West Columbia also serves areas adjacent to its city limits. Subdivisions and small communities lie a short distance from the city, yet these residents utilize the city’s facilities. A 2005 demographics profile indicates that approximately 96,000 individuals are within a 15-mile radius of the city, while a 25-mile radius indicates a population of approximately 192,000. Lack of sufficient softball fields in the area draws teams from other communities who utilize West Columbia’s facilities.

After completion of the First Capitol Park and its dedication in October 1999, very little further development on the City’s park system was conducted outside of routine maintenance items. This was due primarily to the expense of paying off the note for the construction of the First Capitol Park and the large price tag associated with its upkeep.

In 2009, the Parks and Recreation Board was once again, revitalized to assess the city’s needs and establish a priority for the many opportunities that are beginning to present themselves. The city received the designation of a Certified Retirement Community from the Texas Department of Agriculture in 2009, completion of the State Highway 35 widening project in 2009 and new construction projects indicate that West Columbia is on the move!



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4. Inventory

An integral part in the development of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan is the critical step of understanding the existing parks and facilities within the city. This is provided through on-site inventories and verification of existing park facilities within the city. (See Appendix A for map of all identified spaces)

City-Owned Developed Parkland

This category includes all park facilities that are recognized as parks owned and maintained for the City of West Columbia.

Non-municipal owned facilities

1. Kitty Nash Rehabilitation Center grounds-Practice field for Little League and soccer
2. Varner Hogg State Historical
3. Columbia-Brazoria ISD Properties
4. West Columbia Little League
5. Boy Scout Hut
6. Texas Historical Commission property across North FM 2852
7. Veterans Memorial Park
8. Museum Pocket Park
9. Rosenwald Historical Park
10. Capital of Texas Park



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Loggins Street Park



Name	Loggins Park
Location	800 Loggins Dr.
Classification	Pocket Park
Size	200 ft x 85 ft
Facilities	5 swings, 1 infant 1 balance beam 1 climbing rack 1 slide 2 picnic tables parking



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First Capitol Park



Name	First Capitol Park
Location	1300 N. 13th Street
Classification	Area Park
Size	32 acres
Facilities	Walking/jogging trail lake for fishing only 3 lighted softball fields lighted pavilion w/restrooms 25m outdoor pool w/bathhouse soccer field playground horseshoe/washer pits 2 sand volleyball courts variety of BBQ pits & tables 10 RV sites with full hookups



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Robert R. Dixon Memorial Unity Park



Name	Robert R Dixon Memorial Unity Park
Location	N. 17 th St.
Classification	Neighborhood Park
Size	1.9 acres
Facilities	Basketball Court Parking Remainder undeveloped



5. Needs Assessment

The Parks and Recreation Board conducted a community survey to determine the needs of the community. Surveys were obtained by direct contact with the community at schools and other community functions, and at City Hall.

The results are as follows:

<u>Ages</u>	<u>22-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>
Responses	42	26	14	9	17	140	700

<u>Questions:</u>	<u>Points Scored</u>
An equestrian area and soccer fields located near First Capitol Park.	378
An area designated for kayaks, birding and hiking trails.	459
Unity Park with the opportunity to add a pavilion, walking trail, playground Equipment, basketball courts and benches.	469



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6. Standards and Guidelines

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) provides the most common standards for park planning guidelines. The NRPA recognizes the importance of establishing and using parks and recreation guidelines as:

1. A national expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of urban and rural communities.
2. A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation areas and facilities.
3. A basis for relating recreation needs to spatial analysis within a community wide system of parks and open space areas.
4. One of the major structuring elements that can be used to guide and assist regional development.
5. A means to justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land use pattern of a region or community.

Previously NRPA had directed a minimum of 10 acres of parkland per 1000 population.

For the purposes of this master plan, the City of West Columbia has divided park classifications into the following sections:

Park Classification

I. Pocket Park

Use - relaxation and play ground activities

Service Area - less than one-quarter mile

Desired Size - less than an acre

Desirable Characteristics – located within a residential area outside the reach of Neighborhood Parks and for high concentration areas such as apartment complexes

II. Neighborhood Parks

Use – medium level recreation activities

Service area – less than one mile

Desired size - 1-5 acres

Desirable Characteristics – Easily accessible by neighborhood area to include non-organized field game and play ground equipment.

III. Area Parks

Use – High-level recreational activities multi-use parkland

Service area – area wide

Desired size – 20+ acres



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Desirable Characteristics – diverse environmental qualities with open parks land and field sports, bodies of water if applicable, large open land.

IV. Specialized Parks

Use – specific such as historical, rally area or special program area

Service area – area wide

Desired size – as needed

Desirable Characteristics – Historical structures, outdoor theaters, gazebos, etc.

Existing Parkland Acreage within the City of West Columbia.

This table documents City-owned and other inventory acreage as indicated in the Inventory section of this master plan.

Park Classification	Existing and Proposed Park	Acreage
Pocket Park	Loggins Park	.390
Neighborhood Park	Robert R Dixon Memorial Unity Park	1.939
Area Park	First Capitol Park	32.000
Specialized Park		<u>0.00</u>
	Total Acreage	34.329



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7. Recommendations

The recommendations indicated in this section are a combined result of the evaluation of the needs assessment survey and discussions with City Staff and the Parks and Recreation Board.

The City of West Columbia's 2011 Parks Master Plan is a resource for the City of West Columbia to plan for the continued growth of its recreational and green space needs. The overlying theme from West Columbia residents, City leadership and staff, and the West Columbia Parks and Recreation Board is to add parkland and recreational opportunities to provide connectivity via trails from residential neighborhoods to parks, schools and other cultural and natural resources in the community.

Outlined below are the projects that may be pursued to integrate the City of West Columbia's 2011 Parks Master Plan into the growth patterns of the City and implement the vision of parks, trails, and open space in the City of West Columbia.

1. Prepare Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) Recreational Grant

March 31 is the deadline for applying for a TPWD Recreational Grant. The grant consists of a 50/50 match for the development of the Robert R. Dixon Memorial Unity Park. The 50 percent match from the City may consist of cash, in-kind services, or cost of materials.

2. Investigate Future Phase Development of the First Capitol Park.

The Texas Historical Commission recently purchased 220 acres directly across from the First Capitol Park. THC has expressed an interest in partnering with the city on the use of a portion of this property for low-key recreational activities. As funding and in-kind services for improvements become available, the city will explore recreational amenities at this location to increase the number of resource-based amenities outlined in this documents.

3. Explore Future Development of Pedestrian Friendly Trails.

Over the last year, members of the West Columbia Parks and Recreation Board developed an application for a Sidewalk Enhancement Grant through the Texas Department of Transportation. It was not funded, however, the benefit of developing a trail corridor between recreational, historical, schools, downtown, and other public places remains. Although this system was not officially designated as parkland in the City of West Columbia Park inventory, it would serve the recreational needs of a good portion of West Columbia. (See Appendix B)

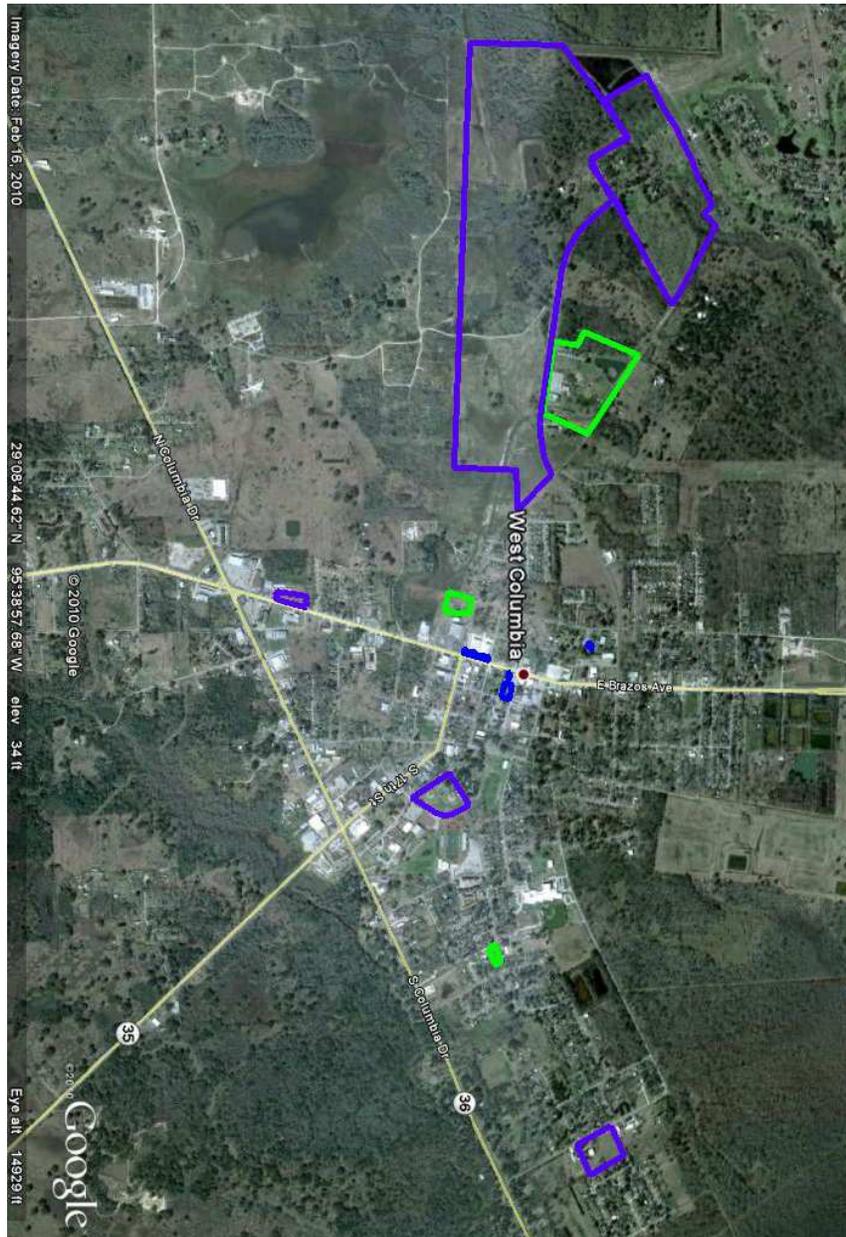


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Appendix A

Map of Identified Recreational Space
Green – City owned spaces
Blue – Non-Municipally owned spaces





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Appendix B

Yellow - Pedestrian Friendly Trails

