

## Chapter 6

### Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommends a series of actions to improve and expand Wylie’s park system, recreational opportunities, and quality of life. These recommendations stem from the vision outlined in Chapter 1 (*fingers of green, embrace the lakes, and diversity, choice & image*) and they address acquisition of park land, general improvements to existing parks, the development and provision of recreation facilities, operations and maintenance, and City policy. The recommendations should be implemented or initiated over the general life of this Master Plan, which covers the next five to 10 years (recommended items in this chapter are prioritized in Chapter 8 – Implementation).

*The recommendations fall into four general categories:*

- ***Open Space Protection*** – Recommendations to preserve and protect Wylie’s “fingers of green” and other important open space areas in the city.
- ***Embrace the Lakes*** – Actions designed to better incorporate the lakes into Wylie’s parks, recreation and open space system and as image-defining features of the community.
- ***Strategic Policy*** – Strategies and policies to ensure the maintenance of Wylie’s unique small town character and wealth of park land.
- ***Parks & Facilities*** – Physical recommendations for the parks, recreation and open space system.

### OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

The protection and preservation of open space, which includes natural areas, creek corridors, prairies, floodplains, lakeshores, wooded areas, and other types of undeveloped land, is an increasingly important goal for the City of Wylie. There are a multitude of potential physical and policy-based actions which the City can and should take in order to insure the protection of the unique natural areas that make Wylie special; however, the following actions are arguably the most important for the City to take over the next five to ten years.

#### Protect Floodplains

Floodplains are typically the most environmentally diverse and valuable locations within any city. This is definitely true for Wylie, which has an impressive 3,600 acres of floodplain within its boundaries. Besides providing recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, visual interest, and character, floodplains also provide “environmental services” for the community including water quality enhancement, flood protection, and other actions which occur naturally, thereby saving the City the money, time, and effort that it would need to expend in order to provide these same services if ample, healthy floodplain were not available. As such, the protection and preservation of floodplains, especially those along Muddy Creek and Rush Creek, is of vital importance not just from a recreation point of view, but also from a quality of life and public health and safety point of view.

### ***Floodplain Protection Plan***

It is recommended that the City of Wylie's Engineering Department (in cooperation with the Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Divisions) create a Floodplain Protection Plan which identifies the fully-developed, 100 year floodplain at build-out conditions for all drainage corridors within the City. It is important to consider fully-developed conditions (that is, identifying what the floodplain will be when Wylie is 100% developed) in order to ensure the long-term health and quality of floodplains and economic sustainability of the City. Furthermore, protecting the fully-developed floodplain today affords more opportunities for recreational uses, such as trails and nature preserves, along creek corridors.

### ***Floodplain Management Strategy***

While the development and implementation of a Floodplain Protection Plan might be a longer-term action, the City can take immediate actions which will provide long-term benefit to the community. It is recommended that the City adopt a floodplain management strategy that includes policies relative to three concepts:

- Consider allowing no reclamation within the 100 year fully developed hydrological floodplain. Reclaiming floodplain impacts public safety, water quality, erosion, wildlife habitat, visual quality, tree cover, and greatly reduces recreation opportunities.
- Acquire floodplain land for public use or otherwise ensure its protection and acquire access easements for linear trails. While preserving the floodplain (regardless of ownership) is the primary goal, it is also important to ensure that people can access floodplains and creek corridors by means of trails.
- Do not allow high-intensity recreation facilities within the floodplain. Even ball fields and other recreation facilities often require floodplain reclamation, the removal of trees and disturbance of the floodplain vegetation that has the function of slowing down surface water and filtering pollutants. While it is often desirable to have parks which include these types of facilities adjacent to creek corridors, it is important to ensure that the highly-developed portions of these parks are outside of the floodplain.

### **Develop an Environmental Resource Inventory**

Wylie has many areas of unique environmental quality ranging from the creek corridors mentioned above, to wetlands at the north end of Lake Ray Hubbard, to fragments of native prairie. Protecting ecologically valuable areas requires having a firm grasp on what resources exist and the relative quality and quantity of each. It is recommended that the City create an Environmental Resource Inventory of the ecologically important areas within Wylie that provide wildlife habitat, cultural landscapes, environmental services, and/or other characteristics that warrant their protection. Developing and maintaining such an inventory will aid the City in guiding future development actions, developing policy, and prioritizing open space acquisition.

### **Acquire Open Space**

While ensuring the preservation of open space is important, it is also important to actually acquire open space for public use. It is recommended that the City acquires at least enough open space to provide trails along all major creeks and floodplain areas in the City as well as space for trailheads and access points for these trails. Further helping to establish a "fingers of green" model for the city's parks and open spaces, it is recommended that the City strive to locate many

of its parks along these corridors so that the establishment of a network of open spaces and trails will also serve as linkages between parks.

## **EMBRACE THE LAKES**

The opportunities presented by Lake Ray Hubbard and Lavon Lake are extensive and capitalizing upon them has been one of the primary results of the public involvement process and needs assessment. Taking action to “embrace” the lakes (that is, take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the lakes) is one of the most important recommendations in this Master Plan. The following individual recommendations have been developed to help the City achieve this goal.

### **Utilize Regional Parks**

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) owns and maintains four large regional parks within Wylie’s city limits (East Fork Park, Avalon Park, Lavonia Park, and Clear Lake Park). Each of these parks provides great opportunities to the City because of their size and location along the shores of Lavon Lake. It is recommended that the City partners with the USACE to make improvements to each of these parks (especially East Fork and Avalon). Specific recommended improvements include:

- Improve bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular access to and from these parks
- Expand upon the amenities in each park and improve the overall quality of the parks
- Enhance the visibility of the parks as a key part of Wylie’s character, image, and urban form

The impetus for these recommendations is the need for Wylie to utilize opportunities provided therein as a way to provide a greater diversity of recreational offerings for the community. If a situation ever arises where the USACE desires to transfer management of one or more of these parks to a local entity and the City of Wylie determines it has the resources to operate and maintain one or more of these parks, such a transfer could result in great benefit to the community by allowing the City to redevelop these parks to best suit the needs of Wylie. Such a transfer of management might negate the need for costly land acquisition elsewhere.

### **Provide Physical and Visual Connection to the Lakes**

Allowing people to view and have access to the lakes is one of the key ways in which Wylie can embrace the lakes. It is recommended that the City, in partnership with the USACE and other entities, develop a system of trails along the shores of both lakes to provide recreational opportunities for the community. In addition, it is also important to develop trails along creek and utility corridors to connect these lakeshore trails with central and western Wylie. Because of its proximity to the two lakes, Wylie is well-situated to become a hub for two regional systems of intercity shoreline trails.

### **Develop Lakeside Parks**

In addition to capitalizing upon the opportunities offered at the existing USACE parks, there are opportunities to provide smaller parks (such as neighborhood parks and nature preserves) along the shores of both lakes. The City should strive to develop parks in these locations whenever possible so that citizens can have access to the lakes, which will provide recreational benefit as

well as help solidify the presence and importance of the lakes as components of Wylie's character and image.

### **Become the “City Between Two Lakes”**

Beyond the tangible tasks of providing facility and physical improvements, there are intangible actions which should be taken to capitalize upon the presence of the lakes. It is important for the City to become the “City Between Two Lakes” by establishing an identity for Wylie as being the only city in North Texas to be located between two major lakes. Physical improvements, as recommended above, will make great strides toward creating this identity, but other actions, such as holding festivals and events at lakeside parks or a branding/marketing campaign, will help to reinforce this identity.

## **STRATEGIC POLICY**

While the provision of facilities is often the main result of a plan of this type, the importance of developing strategic policies to help Wylie achieve the vision set forth earlier is a key component of this Master Plan. This Master Plan is not intended to replace the City's policies and actions related to development and planning. However, based upon the input from the public, Wylie's rapid development, and the major interrelatedness between the City's development patterns and the quality and quantity of park land and open spaces, it is important to establish a paradigm in which the City can reach its maximum development potential while enhancing quality of life for all of Wylie's citizens. The following strategic policies and actions, which also reflect the goals of Wylie's current planning efforts, go beyond the sole responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Divisions. However, these actions greatly impact the ability for the Divisions (and Wylie as a whole) to achieve its goals and can be greatly supported by actions taken by the Divisions.

### **Encourage Conservation Development**

Conservation development, also known as “cluster development” or “density equivalent development,” is a practice that will allow Wylie to accommodate continued residential development while at the same time preserving and protecting open space, increasing property values, and improving the visual character of the community. The basic concept behind conservation development is to preserve the natural features of a site that provide ecologic, cultural, and aesthetic value while maintaining the same or higher overall gross density within the subdivision. The method in which this is achieved is to allow smaller lots, clustered together, and leave other land open as public open space. Allowing and encouraging conservation development in Wylie will not only improve the overall amount of open space, but will also enhance the quality of development in the community.

### **Adopt a Wylie Transect**

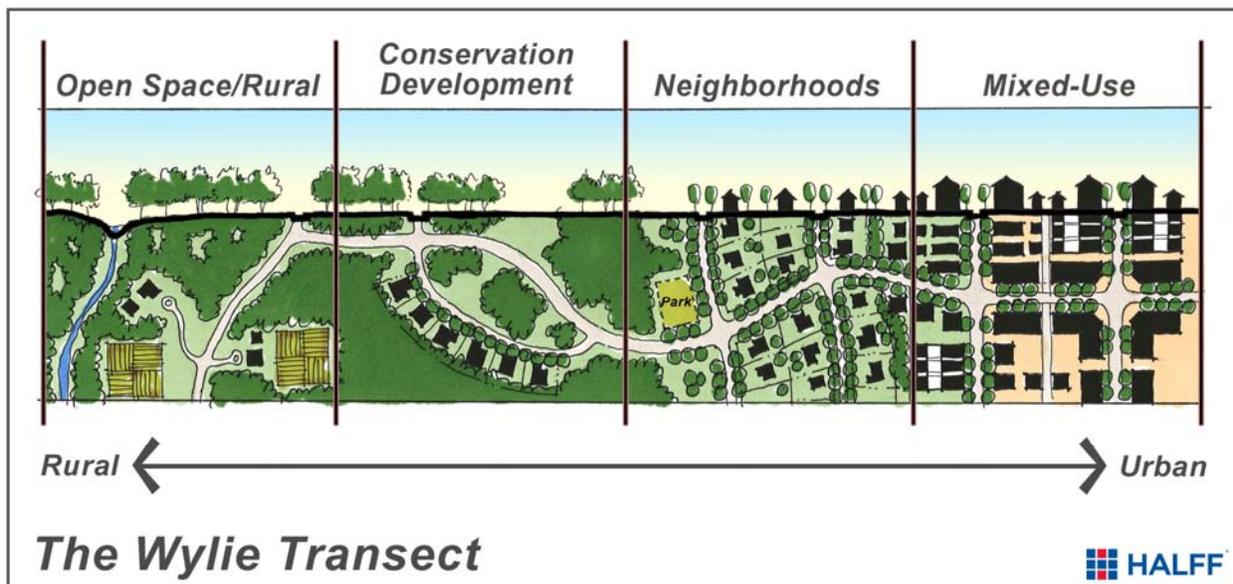
Based upon the current goals of both the Planning Department and the Parks and Recreation Divisions, a “development transect” has been created to augment the vision of the existing Comprehensive Plan by outlining four broad zones of increasing density and urban character into which current zoning and development standards can be categorized. Adopting this transect is an important recommendation of this Master Plan for two primary reasons: 1) such a transect will help to protect and preserve open space by more effectively guiding high-intensity development away from ecologically-sensitive areas and 2) it will aid the Parks and Recreation Divisions in developing strategies for providing parks and facilities within the various

development patterns currently present in Wylie and expected in the near future. Specifically, the City of Wylie has taken efforts recently to redevelop the historic core of Wylie as a mixed-use area by expanding its Downtown Historic District and creating the South Ballard Overlay District and is seeking to preserve the rural character of the City through alternative development strategies, including conservation development. The four transect zones recommended are:

- **Open Space / Rural** – This zone contains natural areas, agricultural land, and ranches. Key locations for this zone are along floodplains, along the lakes, and the edges of the city.
- **Conservation Development** – This zone is more rural in nature than typical neighborhoods. Conservation development is a concept which allows developers to trade density within a subdivision so that large areas of heritage farmland, open space, or other desirable features can be preserved. This type of development pattern should be used adjacent to open space / rural zones in order to provide a transition between those zones and Neighborhood zones.
- **Neighborhoods** – This zone resembles the traditional subdivisions that already exist within Wylie and will likely make up the bulk of land use within the City. Neighborhood zones provide a good transition between conservation development and mixed-use zones.
- **Mixed Use** – This zone represents the highest density areas (urban nodes) of Wylie. Downtown and South Ballard Street are two existing examples of mixed-use zones.

Subsequent to this Master Plan, the City should create a map that illustrates which areas of Wylie should correspond with which of the four transect zones. As a general rule, floodplains and the edges of the city should be abutted by open space / rural zones and mixed-use zones should be located at locations which include high-intensity development.

**Figure 6.1**  
*Potential Transect for Development in Wylie*



The Parks and Recreation Divisions can play a key role in establishing and maintaining these zones within Wylie. Besides being the key department for acquiring and protecting open space,

the success of each of the other zones is dependent on how park facilities are provided. Each district will require unique consideration for parks provision. As an example, while pocket parks are inefficient and ineffective in neighborhood areas, they are well suited and very valuable in mixed-use areas. Similarly, parks in open space/rural areas and conservation development areas should generally be low-intensity and more passive in nature so as not to detract from the quality of the natural environment.

### **Revise the Parkland Dedication Ordinance**

Ensuring the adequate provision of park land and open space in the face of rapid development requires adopting a Parkland Dedication Ordinance on par with similar communities in North Texas. Doing such will help the City maintain a good park acre per capita ratio as Wylie grows and help the City to acquire land before it is all gone. The following calculations illustrate Wylie's current Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the changes recommended as part of this Master Plan.

#### ***Existing***

1. ***Conveyance of Land Requirements:***
  - a. 5 acre / 100 DU for single family and multi-family development.
  - b. Land within floodplains is accepted as a fulfillment of this requirement on a case-by-case basis.
  - c. No dedication of less than five acres accepted
2. ***Payment in lieu of land:*** based upon density of development as follows:
  - a. Five or more single-family dwelling units per acre - \$1,500 / lot
  - b. Three or four single-family dwelling units per acre - \$2,000 / lot
  - c. One or two single-family dwelling units per acre - \$3,000 / lot
  - d. Individual multi-family dwelling unit - \$800 / du
  - e. Non-residential – None<sup>1</sup>
3. ***Park Improvement Fee:*** None

#### ***Revision***

In order to allow developers to share the burden of providing neighborhood park facilities, revise the Park Land Dedication Ordinance as follows:

1. ***Conveyance of Land Requirements:***
  - a. No change
  - b. Do not accept floodplain land as whole or partial fulfillment of the Parkland Dedication requirement.
  - c. Allow parkland dedication of less than 5 acres, subject to approval of the City Council, in Mixed Use areas where pocket parks might be desirable.
2. ***Payment in lieu of land:*** No change
  - a. No change
  - b. No change
  - c. No change

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Wylie formerly required a parkland dedication fee of \$1,000 per acre, or prorated portion thereof, for non-residential development.

- d. No change
  - e. No change; however, it is recommended that the City continually investigate opportunities for commercial development to contribute to the parks and open space system.
3. **Park Improvement Fee:** Adopt a fee of \$1,300 per dwelling unit (single and multi-family) to assist the City in developing neighborhood parks. This fee is based on the cost of developing an average neighborhood park as follows:
- a. Cost for developing an average neighborhood park in North Texas = \$1.2 million;
  - b. One neighborhood park serves 3,000 to 4,000 people
  - c. Cost to develop an average multi-generational neighborhood park: \$1.2mil/3,000 = \$400/person.
  - d. The average household in Wylie contains 3.23 persons;
  - e. Neighborhood park development fee is calculated as:  

$$\$400 \times 3.23 = \$1,292/\text{DU}$$

**Summarized Revisions**

In summary, the major recommended revisions to the Parkland Dedication Ordinance are to no longer accept floodplain land as applying to the required land dedication, to begin accepting parks under five acres in size if they are dedicated as part of a mixed-use development project and are approved by City Council, and to adopt a Park Improvement Fee to contribute to the cost of developing neighborhood parks (see Table 6.1).

Table 6. 1 Proposed Parkland Dedication Ordinance Revisions		
	Existing	Proposed Revision/New
<b>Conveyance of Land</b>	5 acres / 100 DU*	No change
<b>Payment in lieu of land</b>	\$800 to \$3,000 / DU**	No change
<b>Park Improvement Fee</b> (single & multi-family)	None	\$1,300 / DU*
<b>Floodplain Dedication Ratio</b>	1:1	Do not accept
<b>Minimum Dedication</b>	5 acres	5 acres unless as part of a mixed-use development and approved by City Council
<p><i>*For Single-Family and Multi-Family Development</i>  <i>**Varies based on development density:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$800/du for multi-family</li> <li>• \$1,500/du for five or more single-family dwelling units per acre</li> <li>• \$2,000/du for three or four single-family dwelling units per acre</li> <li>• \$3,000/du for one or two single-family dwelling units per acre</li> </ul>		

## PARKS & FACILITIES

The remainder of this chapter focuses on recommendations for improvements to parks and facilities in Wylie. These are the types of recommendations most typically associated with a master plan of this type. This section focuses on four primary series of recommendations:

- **Land Acquisition** – Recommendations for acreage acquisition of various types in specific sectors of Wylie.
- **Athletic Facilities** – Recommendations for the number, type, and location of additional athletic facilities to meet demonstrated needs in the near future.
- **Neighborhood Park Development Guidelines** – This section provides a series of guidelines for the City of Wylie to use when developing new neighborhood parks and renovating or expanding existing neighborhood parks.
- **Community Park Development Guidelines** – Similar to the neighborhood park development guidelines, this section provides guidelines for the development, renovation, and expansion of community parks.

### Land Acquisition

Ensuring that adequate land is available for future improvements is the determining factor in developing a quality, sustainable parks, recreation, and open space system. In addition to simply providing space for needed facilities, it is important for the City to acquire land in order to maintain the target levels of service and park service areas set forth by this Master Plan (see pages 5 – 3 and 5 – 4) as the city continues to grow. In the Citizen Attitude Survey, 96% of respondents agree that “as Wylie grows, it is important for the parks and recreation lands, facilities, programs and services to meet the needs of new residents.” When asked if it is important for the City to “acquire land for future park and open space development,” 88% agreed that it is indeed important (see Chapter 3). The following specific acquisition actions are recommended per sector (these sectors correspond with the City’s current Park Zones).

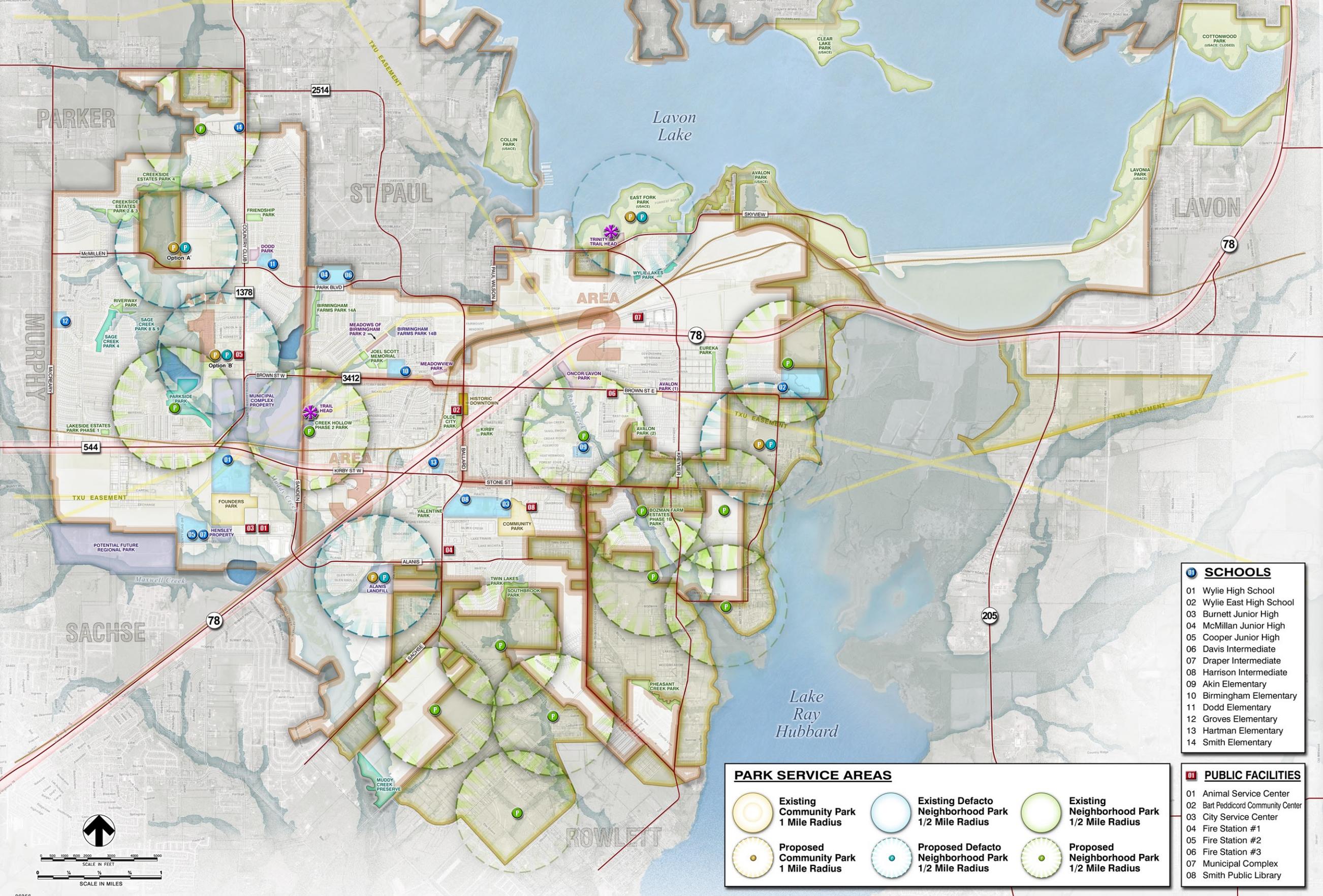
- **Sector 1 (Western portion of the City)** – 1 Neighborhood Park, 1 Community Park
- **Sector 2 (Eastern portion of the City)** – 5 Neighborhood Parks, 2 Community Parks
- **Sector 3 (Central portion of the City)** – 4 Neighborhood Parks, 1 Community Park

### Neighborhood Parks

While some of the land to be acquired might need to be purchased outright by the City, it is the intent that the majority of the necessary land acquisition illustrated above for neighborhood parks will occur through parkland dedication during the development process (either through outright dedication or acquired fees in lieu of land) so that accommodating the needs of additional residential growth in Wylie is shared between the City and the development community.

The **Proposed Neighborhood & DeFacto Neighborhood Parks** map on page 6–9 illustrates the location and ½ mile service radius of proposed neighborhood parks in Wylie.

The **Existing & Proposed Neighborhood & DeFacto Neighborhood Parks** map on page 6–10 illustrates the location and ½ mile service radius of existing and proposed neighborhood parks in Wylie.



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 Wylie High School
  - 02 Wylie East High School
  - 03 Burnett Junior High
  - 04 McMillan Junior High
  - 05 Cooper Junior High
  - 06 Davis Intermediate
  - 07 Draper Intermediate
  - 08 Harrison Intermediate
  - 09 Akin Elementary
  - 10 Birmingham Elementary
  - 11 Dodd Elementary
  - 12 Groves Elementary
  - 13 Hartman Elementary
  - 14 Smith Elementary

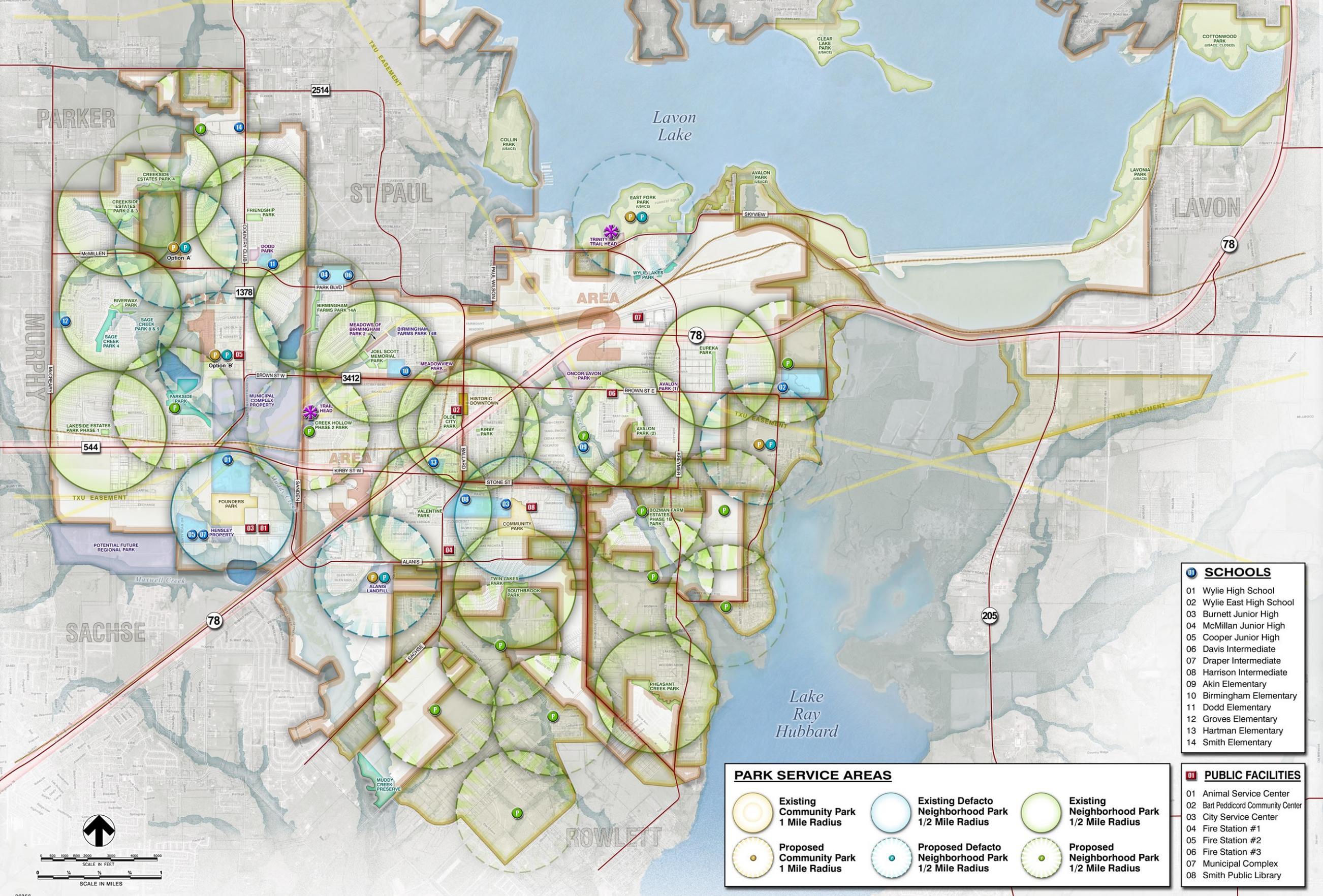
- 01 PUBLIC FACILITIES**
- 01 Animal Service Center
  - 02 Bart Peddicord Community Center
  - 03 City Service Center
  - 04 Fire Station #1
  - 05 Fire Station #2
  - 06 Fire Station #3
  - 07 Municipal Complex
  - 08 Smith Public Library

**PARK SERVICE AREAS**

	<b>Existing Community Park 1 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Existing Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Existing Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>
	<b>Proposed Community Park 1 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Proposed Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Proposed Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>

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March 25, 2010

# PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD & DEFACTO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 Wylie High School
  - 02 Wylie East High School
  - 03 Burnett Junior High
  - 04 McMillan Junior High
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**PARK SERVICE AREAS**

	<b>Existing Community Park 1 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Existing Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Existing Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>
	<b>Proposed Community Park 1 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Proposed Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>		<b>Proposed Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius</b>

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# EXISTING & PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD & DEFACTO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

CITY OF WYLIE, TEXAS



### ***Community Parks***

The recommendation of four additional community parks is driven by future facility need based on the target levels of service illustrated in Table 5.3. While that table only illustrates needs over the next five years, if the same needs are extrapolated to Wylie’s build-out population, there will be a need for 25 athletic competitive and practice fields which will require approximately 75 to 150 acres of additional land. As such, it is important to note that while four future community parks are recommended, it is likely that only two or three of these community parks will have these types of active facilities (such as those currently in Founders Park and Community Park). The remaining one to two additional community parks are recommended as more passive-oriented parks that have significant amounts of natural, undeveloped open space for people to enjoy and also include other special types of amenities such as spray parks, dog parks, or other types of facilities not necessarily included in a neighborhood park. Determining which of these parks should be active in nature or passive in nature should be guided by the character of the land which is used. Specifically, the Alanis Landfill site is well-suited to be an active community park because it has few trees, is relatively flat, and is easily accessible. There are two options shown for the second potential active community park (both located near the intersection of McMillen Road and Country Club Road).

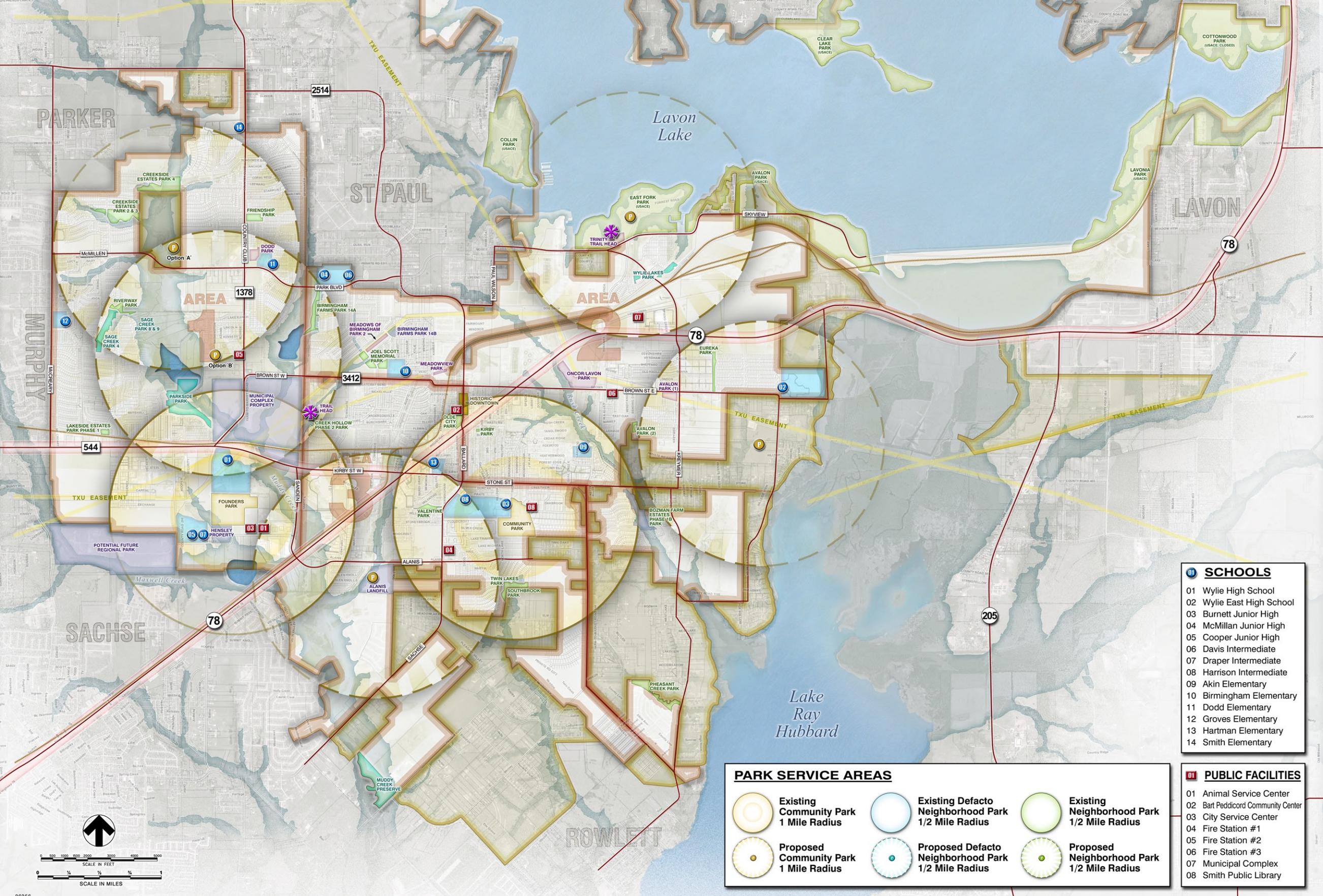
As a final note about acquiring land for community parks, the opportunity exists for the City to partner with the US Army Corps of Engineers to improve the accessibility, function, and character of East Fork and Avalon Parks (which are located along the southern shore of Lavon Lake) so that these parks can better serve the community and actually function as community parks. Such an action would not only provide a better recreation experience with views of the lake, but would also reduce the burden on the City to purchase land to meet the needs of the community.

The ***Existing & Proposed Community Parks*** map on page 6–13 illustrates the location and 1 mile service radius of existing and proposed community parks in Wylie.

The ***Parks & Trails Master Plan*** map on page 6–14 illustrates the location of all existing and proposed parks in Wylie and their relationship to schools and the previously adopted Trails Master Plan

2010 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan





- 01 SCHOOLS**
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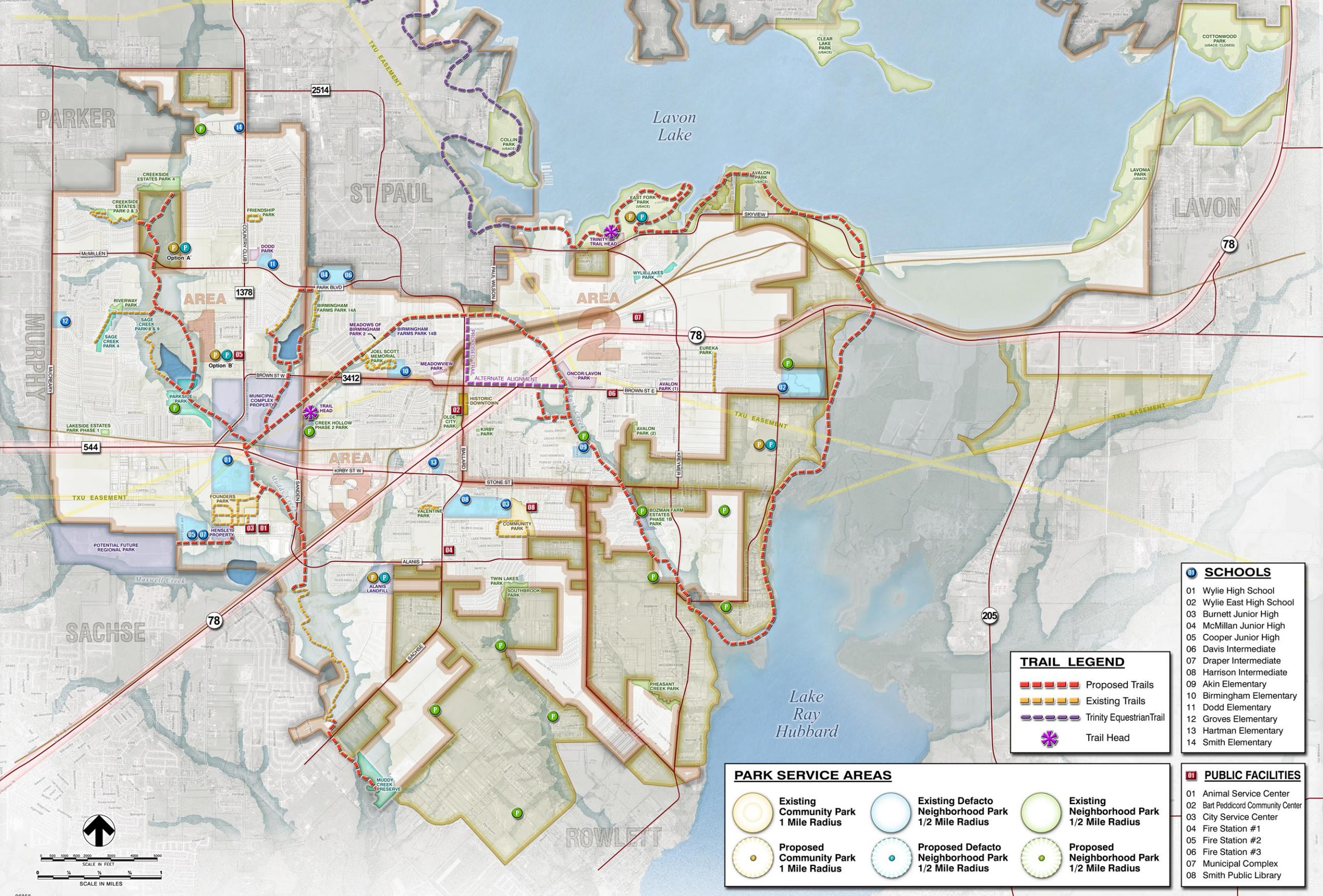
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**PARK SERVICE AREAS**

	Existing Community Park 1 Mile Radius		Existing Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius		Existing Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
	Proposed Community Park 1 Mile Radius		Proposed Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius		Proposed Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius

# EXISTING & PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARKS

CITY OF WYLIE, TEXAS



- 01 SCHOOLS**
- 01 Wylie High School
  - 02 Wylie East High School
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**TRAIL LEGEND**

- Proposed Trails
- Existing Trails
- Trinity Equestrian Trail
- Trail Head

**PARK SERVICE AREAS**

- Existing Community Park 1 Mile Radius
- Existing Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
- Existing Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
- Proposed Community Park 1 Mile Radius
- Proposed Defacto Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius
- Proposed Neighborhood Park 1/2 Mile Radius

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# PARKS & TRAILS MASTER PLAN

CITY OF WYLIE, TEXAS



## Athletic Facilities

As discussed in the previous section, there is a need to provide additional athletic facilities in Wylie. While the previous section discussed a need at build-out of 25 additional fields, the recommendations in this Master Plan focus on the needs of the next five years as trends often change and the exact number of facilities needed at build-out will likely vary. The following facilities are recommended to be constructed in the next five years in order to meet the needs of the community which was demonstrated through public meetings, the telephone survey, and benchmarking with surrounding communities:

### *Competitive Facilities*<sup>2</sup>

- *Baseball Fields* – 4 fields
- *Softball Fields* – 4 fields
- *Soccer Fields* – (no immediate need)
- *Football Fields* – 1 field

### *Practice Facilities*

- *Baseball/Softball Backstops* – 8 backstops
- *Multi-Purpose Practice Fields*<sup>3</sup> – 4 fields

## Neighborhood Park Development Guidelines

Neighborhood parks are the backbone of Wylie’s park system. The development and general design of neighborhood parks is of crucial importance in order to ensure that they serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. But beyond simply meeting certain levels of service, it is important to ensure that neighborhood parks are unique in character, respond to the surrounding environment, provide unique experiences for the park’s users, and bring the neighborhood together informally. The following development guidelines – which focus on size, location, facilities, design, and parking – were developed to ensure that the City is able to efficiently provide the best possible neighborhood parks for its citizens.

**Size** - The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to the physical location of the park and condition of the site. Generally, neighborhood parks should be five to ten acres or larger. A typical neighborhood park should generally serve no more than 3,000 to 4,000 residents per park.

**Location** - If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in the neighborhoods they serve and should consider the following location attributes:

- Neighborhood parks should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served. Ideally neighborhood park facilities should be located within a one-quarter mile radius (five minute walk) or one-half mile radius (ten minute walk) of the residents who will use those facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> These recommended facilities are in addition to the new facilities being constructed at Founders Park (at the time of writing).

<sup>3</sup> Fields for soccer and football practice. These often include combination soccer/football goals.

## 2010 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

- These parks should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets which do not allow high-speed traffic. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets and should be far enough from major streets that traffic noise is not obvious in the park.
- When located close to or on the City boundary, it is important to provide access to all residents living within a quarter mile of the park, whether in Wylie or an adjacent city. Residents typically do not discriminate between cities and it is neighborly to share facilities.
- It is desirable to locate neighborhood parks adjacent to creeks, greenways, and lakes which allow for trail connections to other parks and City amenities.
- Neighborhood parks are frequently located adjacent to elementary schools in order to share acquisition and development costs with the school district. Adjacencies of park and school grounds allow for joint use and sharing of facilities. It also lends itself to the community's involvement with the school grounds and vice versa, leading to a synergistic result that adds to the quality of life for everyone.

**Facilities** – All future neighborhood parks should include the following facilities:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing
- Unprogrammed free play areas
- Adequately sized pavilions with multi-tiered roofs
- Loop trails or connection to the City-wide trails system

Additional facilities often provided in a neighborhood park include (but are not limited to):

- Unlighted basketball courts and half courts
- Picnic areas with benches, picnic tables, and cooking grills
- Unlighted tennis courts
- Skate parks
- Basketball courts
- Security lighting
- Drinking fountains

**Design** – The overall design and layout of a neighborhood park is an important determinant of its final quality and timelessness. These parks should generally be designed with the programmed space – playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, etc. – clustered into an “activity zone” within the park. These areas need ample seating and shade to be hospitable year round. Siting these areas near existing stands of trees is strongly recommended as this eliminates the years of waiting for shade trees to mature. The open/unprogrammed space should be visible from this activity area but should be clearly delineated through plantings and hardscape features such as paved trails and seatwalls. Finally, a loop trail is today considered an essential component of a neighborhood park. When a segment of the city-wide trails system passes through a neighborhood park (which is strongly recommended), it is important to connect the loop trail to it.

**Adjacency & Interaction** – How the park integrates with the surrounding land uses – residences, schools, wooded areas, etc. – is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. When a road borders the park, the houses across the street should face the park. It is recommended that at least 80% of the park's boundary be bordered by single-loaded roads such as these. No more

than 20% of any park’s boundary should be bordered by the backs of houses. When houses must back up to a park, the fencing between the houses and the park should be transparent (such as wrought iron fencing or similar) rather than opaque wooden fortress fencing. Transparent fencing allows a softer transition between park and residence and provides for informal surveillance of the park. High-limbed trees along the fence line furthermore allow for a combination of privacy and transparency. When a park is constructed adjacent to a school, the two sites should interact. That is, there should be paved connections between the school and the park and it could even be recommended that when new schools are designed, windows overlooking the park should be provided.

**Parking** – In general, the use of shared-use trails, sidewalks, bike routes, and public transportation should be encouraged to decrease automobile traffic in and around neighborhood parks. When parking is deemed necessary, the exact amount of parking spaces will vary based on the size of the park, the facilities it contains, and the number of users. Generally, depending on the carrying capacity of adjacent streets, parallel on-street parking may provide sufficient parking space. Opportunities to share parking may be beneficial to different yet compatible functions, such as churches, schools, libraries, and other City facilities.

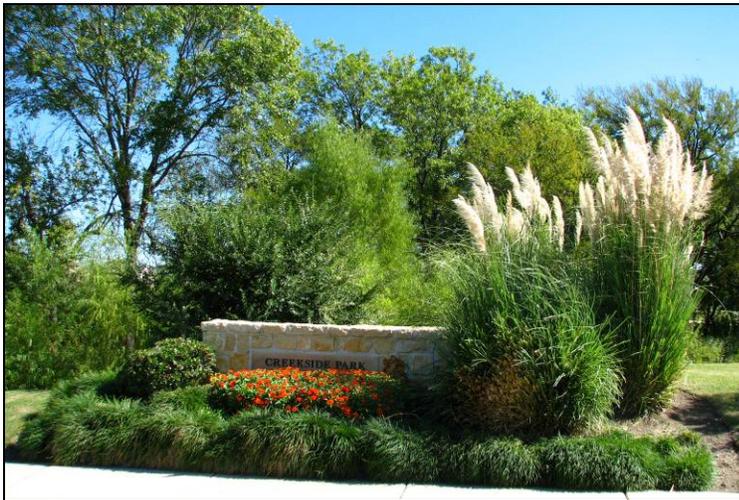
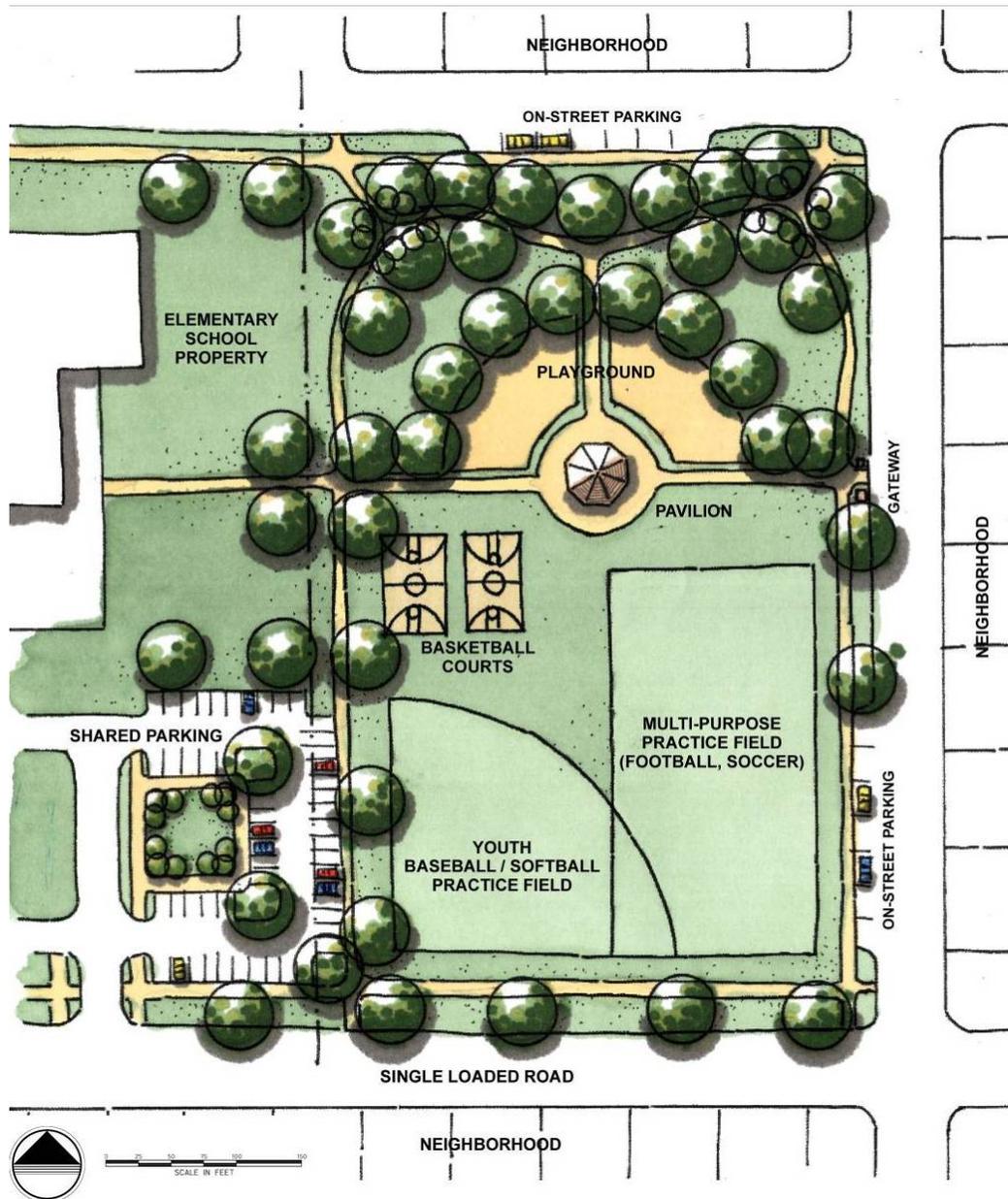


Figure 6.2 illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed as a unique part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

*Figure 6.2  
Typical Neighborhood Park*



## Community Park Development Guidelines

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and serve much larger portions of the City. These parks typically include facilities that serve the entire community (such as lighted playing fields for competitive sports) and therefore have a greater service area, attract more users, and require higher-intensity facilities such as considerable off-street parking. While the primary function of community parks is to serve a broad population and geographic area, it is also important to develop them in such a way that they are integrated into the surrounding area. Because they are often in fairly close proximity to neighborhoods, community parks have the ability to function as *de facto* neighborhood parks – that is, while they are not classified as neighborhood parks, they can serve double-duty as a neighborhood park because of their similar basic amenities and proximity to residential areas. As such, it is crucial to consider the needs of the immediately surrounding residents as well as the community as a whole when developing a community park.

**Size** – The size of a community park should be large enough to provide a variety of amenities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation, practice space, and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion as new facilities are required. Community parks may vary in size from 20 acres to over 70 acres depending on needs and site opportunities.

**Location** – Because they are intended to serve large portions of the city, community parks should be centrally located and easily accessible by major thoroughfares and trails. When connected by major trails and greenbelts, community parks are not only more easily accessed, but they also serve as a hub for the trails system and other parks in the community. Care should be taken when locating a high-intensity community park adjacent to or near residential areas. In these instances, it is important to provide adequate buffers to minimize noise and bright lights at night when possible. Because of the requirement for lighted facilities, it is often desirable to have higher-intensity or “active” community parks located adjacent to commercial, retail, and/or light industrial areas, rather than residential neighborhoods.

**Facilities** – All future community parks should include the following facilities:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing
- Unprogrammed free play areas
- Adequately sized pavilions with multi-tiered roofs
- Picnic areas
- Unlighted multi-purpose practice fields for soccer and football
- Backstops for baseball and softball practice
- Loop trails or connection to the City-wide trails system
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park

Additional facilities often included in a community park include (but are not limited to):

- Restrooms
- Natural open space where available or present including access to these areas via trails
- Lighted competitive baseball, softball, soccer, and football fields (the actual type and number of competitive fields should be based on demonstrated need as per the facility target LOS put forth in this Master Plan)

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- Lighted multi-purpose practice fields
- Recreation center, community center, senior center, or environmental learning (nature) center
- Security lighting
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as fishing adjacent to ponds, swimming pools, amphitheaters, etc.

*Design* – The design of a community park is largely dependent on the intended character of and facilities included in each individual park and can generally be classified as active or passive. Wylie’s two existing community parks (Founders Park and Community Park) are both active in nature due to their inclusion and focus on high-intensity facilities such as lighted competitive game fields and manicured landscaping. Passive community parks, on the other hand, typically have low-intensity uses such as hiking, picnicking, and free play and generally have a large amount of natural and un-programmed space in the park. The general design of a park, therefore, will vary depending on the intended character of the park – as such, the amount of natural open space, number of game fields, amount of parking, and spatial orientation of amenities will vary.

As with neighborhood parks, the overall design and layout of a community park is important to the park’s final quality and timelessness. Similarly, activity zones of programmed space are also important within community parks. Playgrounds, pavilions, and basketball courts make up one type of activity zone while ball fields, concession stands, and equipment storage buildings make up another type. Providing shade by means of siting the former of these two activity zone types near existing stands of trees is strongly recommended, as is the provision of benches and picnic tables. In community parks and other large parks, it is often desirable to delineate between activity zones and unprogrammed areas by the use of natural features, such as stands of trees and creek corridors. This helps to break up the park visually and delineate space. Paved trails should connect these various areas with each other, as well as provide a walking/jogging loop for recreational use.

The interaction between a community park and the surrounding areas is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. Because community parks are often located outside of neighborhoods, there are different considerations than there are with neighborhood parks. As with neighborhood parks it is important that the park is bordered by single-loaded roads and creeks or other natural areas. When development does border the park, how the edge is addressed depends on the type of development. If the development is residential, the fencing between the houses and the park should be transparent (such as wrought iron fencing or similar) or a row of trees and/or shrubs should be used along this fence line to soften its appearance. However, if the development is industrial in nature or otherwise aesthetically unpleasing or potentially a nuisance, the border should be well-screened with dense plantings of trees and shrubs to soften this edge. It may also be desirable to place a fence and/or masonry wall at these borders for safety reasons (such as reducing the likelihood of a ball rolling out of the park or debris entering the park). Community parks often interface well with schools. In such instances, work with the ISD to have windows on the side of the school that faces the park and paved connections between the two.

As a final consideration, it is important to understand that community parks themselves can sometimes be a nuisance if near residential neighborhoods. Bright lighting at night, excessive noise from cheering spectators, or the overflow of parking onto neighborhood streets can all become major issues. If a park is to be developed in close proximity to a neighborhood, take measures to address these issues and identify any other potential issues. Specifically related to the issue of light impacts, a good option to be considered is “cut-off” lighting, which allows light patterns to be controlled, thus avoiding nuisance to neighbors.

**Parking** – This varies based on the facilities provided and the size of park. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of five spaces per programmed acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park, such as pools or ball fields. The actual amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park. Even so, consideration should always be given toward the concept of “shared parking.” The benefit of shared parking is the reduction in the number of parking spaces that need to be built. There are two ways shared parking can be implemented in a park:

- Typically, the number of spaces required to be constructed in a park is determined by the peak parking requirements of each of the uses. This can result in the provision of excessive amounts of parking. Instead, determine the number of parking spaces by considering the different peak parking schedules of various uses, thereby potentially reducing the number of parking spaces needed by “sharing” parking between uses (i.e., football fields and baseball fields can share parking since football and baseball games are not played concurrently).
- The traditional concept of shared parking is to create an agreement with adjacent land uses like schools, churches, and other City facilities so that parking can serve both the park and the adjacent land use.

Finally, in addition to reducing the overall amount of off-street parking, it is important to consider the design and construction of parking and its impact on the park and the environment. In order to offset the surface water runoff and pollution from large areas of parking, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to the use of permeable paving combined with shade trees and bio-swales to bio-filtrate runoff water.

Figure 6.3 below illustrates a typical community park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each community park should be designed according to the specific needs of the community.

*Figure 6.3  
Typical Community Park*

