

CITY OF ALVARADO, TEXAS
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan
2010 - 2020



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ORDINANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INSERT COUNCIL RESOLUTION

(Follow Texas Parks and Wildlife format provided on their website: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants>)

LOCAL PARK GRANT PROGRAM

SAMPLE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION

A RESOLUTION OF THE city/county/etc., TEXAS HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS "APPLICANT," DESIGNATING CERTAIN OFFICIALS AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR, ACTING FOR, AND ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT IN DEALING WITH THE TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS "DEPARTMENT," FOR THE PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE LOCAL PARK GRANT PROGRAM, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "PROGRAM"; CERTIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE PROGRAM ASSISTANCE; CERTIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT MATCHING SHARE IS READILY AVAILABLE; DEDICATING THE PROPOSED SITE FOR PERMANENT (OR FOR THE TERM OF THE LEASE FOR LEASED PROPERTY) PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATIONAL USES; AND CERTIFYING THAT THE APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR THE TEXAS REVIEW AND COMMENT SYSTEM (TRACS) REVIEW.

WHEREAS, the Applicant is fully eligible to receive assistance under the Program; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant is desirous of authorizing an official to represent and act for the Applicant in dealing with the Department concerning the Program;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE APPLICANT:

SECTION 1: That the Applicant hereby certifies that they are eligible to receive assistance under the Program, and that notice of the application has been posted according to local public hearing requirements.

SECTION 2: That the Applicant hereby certifies that the matching share for this application is readily available at this time.

SECTION 3: That the Applicant hereby authorizes and directs its (title of individual) to act for the Applicant in dealing with the Department for the purposes of the Program, and that (name of individual) is hereby officially designated as the representative in this regard.

SECTION 4: The Applicant hereby specifically authorizes the official to make application to the Department concerning the site to be known as (project name) in the (city/county) of (name of city or county) for use as a park site and is hereby dedicated (or will be dedicated upon completion of the proposed acquisition) for public park and recreation purposes in perpetuity (or for the lease term, if legal control is through a lease). Projects with federal monies may have differing requirements.

SECTION 5: That the Applicant hereby certifies that a copy of the application has been submitted to the appropriate regional council of governments for Texas Review and Comments System consideration.

Introduced, read and passed by the affirmative vote of the "Applicant" on this ____ day of ____, 20__.

Signature of Appropriate Official

Typed Name and Title

NOTE: ALL INFORMATION SHOWN IN THE "SAMPLE RESOLUTION" MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE SPONSOR APPLYING FOR PROGRAM FUNDS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY COUNCIL

- Mayor - Tom Durlington
- Ward 1 - Council Member David Bayless
- Ward 1 - Council Member Tom Moore
- Ward 2 - Vacant
- Ward 2 - Council Member Joe Sain
- Ward 3 - Council Member Dwayne "Coach" Richters
- Ward 3 - Council Member Bruce Clark

PARKS BOARD

- Chairman – Scott DeGrant
- Vice Chairman – Tom Head
- David Bayless
- Judy Durlington
- Danny Elam
- Terri Fulton
- Tina Steele
- Sammy Stell
- Ruth West

CITY STAFF

- Don Ives – City Manager
- Terry Hafer – Public Works Director

CONSULTANT

- The DFL Group, LLC

Special recognition goes to the citizens of Alvarado who provided much needed input into the preparation of this document. As best as possible, this plan addresses the needs and attitudes of the public.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Like many communities in the United States, the City of Alvarado is facing the need to provide quality outdoor recreational opportunities for its citizens. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, individual health has become a priority to many Americans. At the same time, citizens have begun to expect their cities to offer public facilities promoting mental and physical well-being, and foster social interaction. Municipal recreational opportunities are therefore assuming a major role in promoting healthy lifestyles and community cohesiveness.

This plan presents an ideal opportunity for Alvarado to continue addressing its parks, recreation and open space needs in a thoughtful, proactive way. This small city is largely undeveloped, offering the community a wide variety of options to consider in developing parks and preserving open space. Its city leaders, recognizing its current deficiencies and anticipating inevitable growth, wish to protect the city's image and unique natural resources by adopting the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan set forth herein.

The plan will also assist the city in the acquisition and development of parks, trails and open space for the next 10 years. It has been developed under the direction of the Alvarado Park Board and City Council and formatted for approval by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. It is intended to promote the viability of Alvarado as a desirable place to live by presenting a well conceived Parks Plan that is aggressive and farsighted, yet practical and realistic.

BACKGROUND

“Alvarado, the oldest city in Johnson County, is at the junction of U.S. Highways 67 and 81 and Interstate Highway 35W, fifteen miles east of Cleburne in eastern Johnson County. In the winter of 1849, William Balch staked out a claim near an old Indian trail and two years later, Balch and a fellow settler, G. H. Sigler, laid out half-acre town lots. The community's first sheriff, A.H. Onstott, is credited with naming Alvarado for Alvarado, Vera Cruz, Mexico, where he fought in a battle during the Mexican War. By the summer of 1854 Alvarado had an estimated 100 families and postal service. The focus of the town was a two-story building, where the Masonic lodge held its meetings and an elementary school conducted classes. There was also an Alvarado College, operated by John C. Collier. The town had four churches, more than a dozen businesses, and 350 residents.

In 1881 the tracks of the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas railroads arrived. Within a few years the population surpassed 1,000. Residents voted to incorporate in June 1885. By that time the community had a bank chartered in 1880, a newspaper named the *Alvarado Bulletin*, two schools, a number of gins, a hotel, and an opera house. By 1890 a second bank opened and the reported population exceeded 2,000.

By the mid-1920s Alvarado had an estimated 1,200 residents and more than fifty businesses. Unlike many of its sister communities, Alvarado did not decline during the Great Depression and World War II, when the town actually managed to grow. The population reached 1,324 in 1943 and 2,129 in 1988, when sixty local businesses were in operation. Proximity to Cleburne and the Dallas-Fort Worth area contributed to the growth. In 1990 the population was 2,918.” (2004 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan)

Today, Alvarado is approximately 5 1/2 square miles in size. Its strategic location on I-35, less than 20 miles south of Fort Worth, suggests that it will continue to grow in both area and population.

2004 PARKS RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

In 2004, the Alvarado City Council adopted a parks master plan intended to address the needs of the community until 2014. Although a ten year plan is fairly typical, in order to comply with Texas Parks and Wildlife requirements, the plan must be amended every five years and completely rewritten every ten years. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) compliance is essential if Alvarado intends to compete for funds from the TPWD Outdoor Recreation Grants Program.

The 2004 plan was submitted and approved by TPWD, but has since expired an updated plan is now necessary. Although this plan offers significant data which is still relevant, revisions are now required by TPWD. This is consistent with the goals of the Alvarado Park Board as well. Old goals and objectives may have been completed and new demographics may completely change the City’s needs. This plan responds to the latest recreational and demographic data available.

2010 MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS SUMMARY

The master planning process began in July of 2009 when the City Manager’s Office initiated a public mail-in survey offered to all households in Alvarado. Data was collected, compiled, and presented to The Alvarado Parks Board at their August meeting. At this meeting a formal public hearing was also held to solicit additional input. Demographic information for the City was also researched and reviewed at the meeting as well. The Parks Board continued to meet monthly until plan completion in

April 2010. Broad based goals and objectives were developed as well as a system to classify parks by size and use. A standards-based approach was chosen to develop a needs assessment. The Board researched National Recreation and Park Association standards, as well as those of neighboring cities. These standards were compared to public input, and local standards were developed. A comparison of Alvarado's standards with current resources and existing/projected population growth gave an accurate indication of the community's needs. Once needs were identified, they were prioritized by park district and formatted such that Texas Parks and Wildlife could evaluate development progress. An implementation plan was also prepared that identified specific projects the City hoped to address in a five-year period. Associated drawings and charts were also developed to support findings.

In April 2010, the plan was endorsed by The Alvarado City Council. A five-year update will be prepared in 2015 and submitted to Texas Parks and Wildlife.



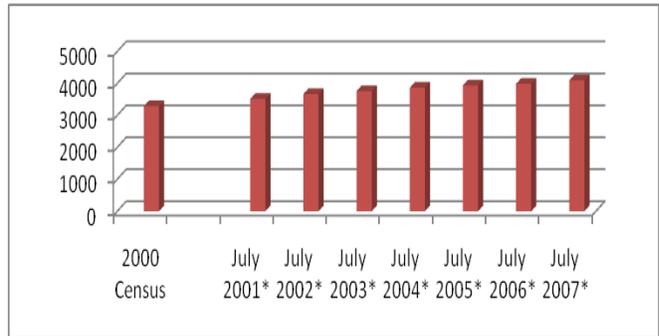
SECTION 2 - COMMUNITY PROFILE

Generally located at the intersection of State. Highway 67 and Interstate I35, the City of Alvarado is a well-rounded community which provides a variety of housing levels, multi-family, commercial, industrial, quasi-public and public land uses. Vacant land remains available for development of various land use classifications.

POPULATION

According to the 2000 US Census, the growth in population from 1990 to 2000 was 12.7% or 2918 people in 1990 to 3288 people in 2000. When the Parks Master Plan was last updated in 2004, the population increased to 3864 or another 17.5 %. This dramatic rise seems to indicate that development has continued to expand from the Dallas Fort Worth area and may be impacting Alvarado. The 2010 projection confirms that the number will continue to increase and it is estimated to approach 4250. It is important that the City of Alvarado considers these increases and pinpoints the specific areas of household growth within the city as we plan for events and programs for both indoor and outdoor recreation as well as park planning in the future. Refer to data below for detailed information.

2000 Census	3288
July 2001*	3515
July 2002*	3667
July 2003*	3759
July 2004*	3864
July 2005*	3941
July 2006*	3986
July 2007*	4097
July 2008**	4147
July 2009**	4198
July 2010**	4250
July 2011**	4302
July 2012**	4355
July 2013**	4409
July 2014**	4463



* - Texas State Library and Archives Commission

** - Based on US Census Bureau projected annual growth rate for Texas of 1.23%

INCOME

In 2000, the mean (or average) household income of Alvarado was \$37,277, well below the Texas mean income of \$54,412. In fact, nearly 55% of Alvarado households were considered low income, earning less than \$35,000 annually. This is consistent with many rural communities in Texas. However, as development continues, and more people leave urban areas for a country atmosphere, Alvarado will see a rise in income. Its location less than an hour south of Fort Worth makes it a prime location for commuters. Refer to data below for detailed information.

Household Income Comparison - US Census 2000

Less than \$10,000	15.0%
\$10,000-14,999	6.6%
\$15,000-19,999	9.4%
\$20,000-24,999	10.0%
\$25,000-29,999	6.1%
\$30,000-34,999	7.5%
\$35,000-39,999	7.3%
\$40,000-44,999	8.0%
\$45,000-49,999	7.0%
\$50,000-59,999	7.9%
\$60,000-74,999	4.1%
\$75,000-99,999	8.2%
\$100,000-124,999	2.2%
\$125,000-149,999	0.4%
\$150,000-199,999	0.0%
\$200,000 and over	<u>0.3%</u>
	100.0%

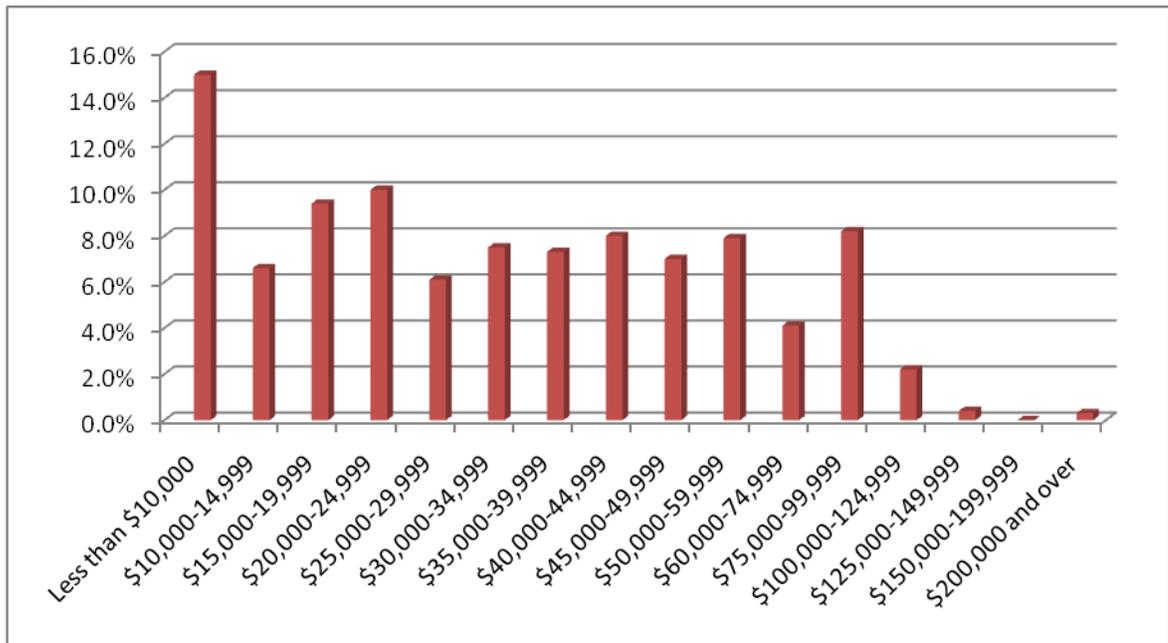
Mean (average) Income:
\$37,277

Median (middle) Income:
\$31,166

Texas Mean Income:
\$54,412

Texas Median Income:
\$39,927

Income



AGES

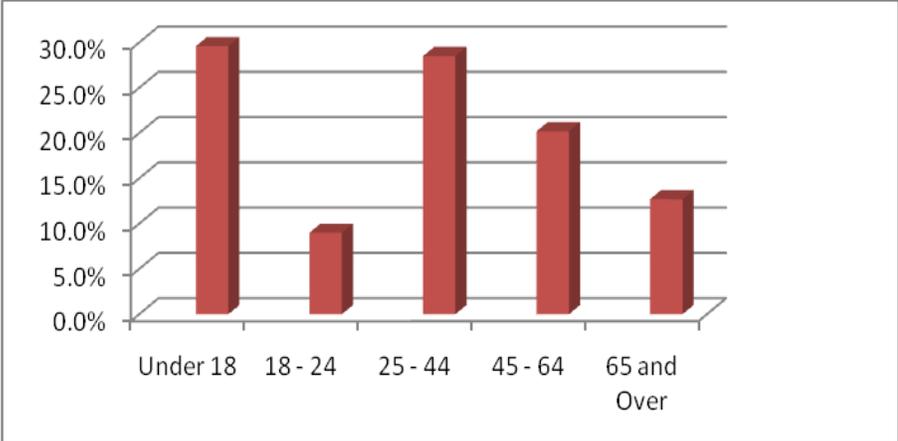
The 2000 Census reported that Alvarado's median (middle) age was 32.2. The greatest percentage population is under age 18 at 29.6%, while the second highest group is between ages 25-44 or 28.5%. This seems to suggest that most of Alvarado's families are young couples with children, certainly an indicator of where much of the city's recreational resources should be targeted. Refer to data following for detailed information.

Age Comparison - US Census 2000

Age

Under 18	29.6%
18 - 24	9.0%
25 - 44	28.5%
45 - 64	20.2%
65 and Over	12.7%

Note: Median Age 32.2



Ages



SECTION 3 - PLAN FUNDAMENTALS/CITY GUIDANCE

CITY OF ALVARADO MISSION STATEMENT

On behalf of the citizens of Alvarado, the City Council will promote the safety, health and general well-being of the community within the bounds of fiscal responsibility while preserving and advancing the quality of life, resulting in unique community spirit.

FUNDAMENTALS

The first step in the Master Plan process required City leadership to discuss, explore and reach consensus about a foundation for the ultimate plan. The City Council ultimately directed the City Parks Board to lead a process that would:

- Define the City's role in providing parks and recreation opportunities to its citizens; and,
- Set core values to guide parks and recreation development

The City's Role in Providing Parks and Recreation Opportunities

- Provision of basic recreational opportunities
- Administration and management of the City's system of parks and recreational opportunities
- Provision of material and other resources in support of the development and maintenance of the City's parks and recreation system
- Enactment of regulations and zoning necessary to maintain the quality and availability of recreational resources to citizens
- Establishment of cooperative agreements with other entities, such as school districts and neighboring cities to expand the supply of public recreational facilities
- Emphasis on low maintenance facilities and landscape, and multi-use facilities for greater efficiency of operation
- Pursuit of citizen input in planning parks and utilizing this input in the preparation of periodic needs assessments
- Acquisition and preservation of parkland, greenbelts, natural areas, and open space
- Development of funding opportunities for park development, maintenance and operation

Alvarado Parks and Recreation: Core Values to Guide Development

- Parks and recreation planning should reflect the preferences of the citizens of Alvarado.
- The City should make the most of its Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan in preserving the "rural" feeling of the community, despite development pressure.
- As Alvarado grows, developers who reap the gains of this growth have a responsibility to provide land or funds for parks and recreation development.
- Land for parks, recreation and open space should be designated and acquired early in the process while it is still available and affordable.

- New parks should be designed so that each has a unique “sense of place.”
- Planning should be coordinated with adjacent communities.
- The City should acquire and develop parks in combination with other public facilities to achieve cost effective delivery of public services. Park property should be jointly developed with facilities such as schools, fire and/or police stations, libraries and/or other public entities.
- Parks and City facilities should be linked via a system of trails and greenbelts.
- Park equipment should be constructed of high quality, long-lasting, safe materials.
- If possible, floodplains should be protected from heavy development and designated for trails and open space.
- Parks should be planned so that they require the lowest possible maintenance costs.
- A Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be updated on a regular basis (at least every 5 years) after its implementation.

The views of City leaders were only part of the picture, however. The next step was to determine the opinions of Alvarado citizens about parks and recreation.

SECTION 4 - CITIZEN ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Determining what Alvarado citizens want in the way of parks and recreation facilities and priorities was an important component of the Master Plan process. From August 2009 through April 2010, Park Board meetings were held to discuss the plan and allow citizens an opportunity to provide input. Park Board input was critical to the compilation of data for the plan. During that period, Mayor Tom Durlington attended several meetings in order to communicate findings to the City Council. Public Works Director Terry Hafer was present at nearly every meeting as a representative of City staff. As appointed representatives of the public, the Park Board along with City staff served as ambassadors for the general public. Data provided by those sources became the foundation for the plan and its recommendations.

CITYWIDE SURVEY

In addition, the City invited public input through a mail-in survey. A non-scientific survey was mailed to every household (1,386) in Alvarado. Sixty surveys were returned, or approximately 4.3% of Alvarado's households. While this response number may seem low, it is actually quite comparable to other surveys of this nature.

A summary of the findings follows:

- 17% of Alvarado families visited parks at least once a week, while 17% never visited parks. A majority of families (39%) used parks at least a few times a year.
- 52% of families stated that parks were well maintained and only 27% felt they were in a fair or poor condition.
- Only 8% of respondents claimed they participated in organized city recreational programs.
- 32% felt that overall there were a fair amount of recreational opportunities offered; 28% felt that there were poor opportunities.
- When asked what specific recreational programs were important, the greatest interest related to fitness, swim, water play and exercise. In-line hockey and racquetball ranked lowest.
- Athletic park needs varied, with basketball identified as the most important need. Baseball, soccer, football, and softball fields also ranked high as did volleyball courts. While tennis courts ranked fairly high, it is widely believed that most citizens are unaware that Alvarado Junior High courts are available for public use.

- Swimming opportunities (from water play to indoor and outdoor pools) were identified as the highest general park need. Shelters/pavilions, playgrounds, and multi-purpose trails were also a high priority.
- When asked if the City needed to acquire more parkland/open space, 80% responded in favor.

Refer to Appendix ‘A’ to review the survey and ‘B’ for the summary of results.

Once information about the views of Alvarado citizens was complete, the stage was set to begin work on the Master Plan itself.



SECTION 5 - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Decisions relative to long-range recreation and parks planning reflect the City's sense of purpose, to be fulfilled through successful services and programs. The programs and/or services offered by the City of Alvarado are based upon its philosophies, vision, and mission.

These goals and objectives were formulated from information gathered from a public survey, the 2004 Master Plan, public hearings, the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Board, and City staff.

Goal 1: Develop a diversified park system that will satisfy the varied recreational needs of a growing population and protect and enhance the quality of life in Alvarado.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement programs that encourage public participation in both active and passive outdoor recreation programs to help increase safety and security such as adopt-a-park, neighborhood park watches, park patrols and other innovative programs where appropriate.
2. Revise plans on a regular basis, with citizen preferences serving as a major input to this process.
3. Ensure that all relevant demographic groups are represented in parks planning.
4. Explore the development of a Capital Improvement Program, including bond funds.
5. Encourage and cultivate citizen input and expression of opinion as it relates to recreational needs.
6. Develop, update and/or renovate existing parks and recreational facilities, structures, fixtures and amenities.
7. Design outdoor recreation facilities, to include picnic areas, fields, courts, playgrounds, trails, parking lots, restrooms and other active and supporting facilities to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income, and activity interests.

8. Incorporate public art into the parks, recreation, and leisure services where appropriate.

Goal 2: Create a system of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle linkages (connections) between residential neighborhoods, businesses, linear greenbelts, schools, public administrative facilities, and other activity centers, as an alternative to automobile transportation.

Objectives:

1. Utilize trails, wherever possible, to connect residential areas with schools, parks and other public facilities.
2. Require developers to provide walking, jogging, cycling and skating pathways within large private developments through parkland dedication guidelines.
3. Design an interconnected, multifunctional parks and open space system which protects important natural, cultural and visual resources while providing appropriate opportunities for recreation.
4. Integrate planned trails with other public and private trail plans where possible.
5. Coordinate planning efforts with those of adjacent cities.
6. Implement and support a plan that would include identifying and creating on-road bicycle routes, widening city sidewalks to trail width in certain areas and dedicating certain areas as trail easements.
7. Create trailhead improvements that furnish trail systems with appropriate supporting services including interpretive and directory signage, rest areas, drinking fountains, landscaping, restrooms, parking and other services.
8. Install trail lighting, telephones, emergency call boxes, or other means at major trailheads or other appropriate locations by which trail users can summon fire, emergency aid, police, and other safety and security personnel should the need arise.

Goal 3: Preserve and protect Alvarado’s natural environment and native ecosystems to the greatest extent possible.

Objectives:

1. Identify and designate protected areas from future development that are wildlife corridors such as: ponds, creeks, wetlands, unique natural areas with established understory tree canopies, ecologically sensitive areas and other areas that support wildlife.
2. Encourage development designed to minimize impact upon the community’s natural resources and visual appeal.
3. Conserve and protect ecologically sensitive and naturally beautiful areas, such as flood plains along creeks, and high points with scenic views toward Lake Alvarado, etc.
4. Establish and/or enhance green space and natural areas along floodplains, and promote public access to greenbelt areas with a multifunctional trail system (e.g., equestrian, cycling, hiking trails).
5. Preserve and respect areas with natural features such as steep slopes native grasses/wildflowers and/or scenic views.
6. Encourage and promote water conservation through the use of native plant materials, xeriscape plantings and other methods.
7. Maintain high standards for groundwater quality due to the proximity of Lake Alvarado.
8. Maintain high air quality standards.

Goal 4: Provide for high quality image, landscape, and visual unity for the entire city through planning and expanding beautification efforts.

Objectives:

1. Develop a city-wide landscape plan that incorporates the design and conservation elements of native plant materials while maximizing and highlighting beautification efforts in city medians, rights-of-way, gateways, entry points, facilities and parks through plantings and other

visual imagery.

2. Continue beautification efforts through landscape design and general maintenance with qualified staff personnel and/or third party contractors where feasible.
3. Work with developers on landscape selection to include manageable trees, location of planted trees, shrubs, etc. in medians and rights-of-way where feasible.

Goal 5: Use private, county, state and national resources as well as city resources to improve the park system.

Objectives:

1. Leverage City and private funding against County, State and Federal funding to obtain the most cost effective use of funds.
2. Use training provided by other agencies to build the City's expertise.
3. Enter into joint ventures with private agencies where feasible.
4. Explore the possibility of a public/private partnership to develop a water park.

Goal 6: Expand economic growth, improve the quality of life for citizens and promote economic development opportunities through parks, recreation and open space planning and programming.

Objectives:

1. Aggressively promote the benefits of parks and recreation through creative planning and programming realizing that these benefits can be an effective tool for increasing property values, promoting economic development by attracting new businesses, and improving the city's image.
2. Plan and design parks and recreational facilities that are accessible to all individuals and meet the needs of the community they serve.
3. Create, promote and participate in events which address the core values of the community.

4. Develop landscape plans for high visibility areas that include parks, major thoroughfares, intersections and public facilities.
5. Develop a landscape and tree preservation ordinance for proposed developments through the City's unified development code.



SECTION 6 - PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The city's park classification system is broken down into six major categories. These park categories have been drawn from the 2004 Master Plan and modified to meet current demographics.

POCKET PARKS

A pocket park is a small (usually less than 1 acre) park developed with elements such as sidewalks, fountains, shelters, benches, and in residential areas playgrounds and picnicking. Pocket parks are meant to serve only residents in the immediate area with no parking provided.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

A neighborhood park is a site of approximately 5 to 10 acres and serves an area within a one-half mile radius with both active and passive recreational opportunities. Facilities typically found in neighborhood parks include play apparatus, picnic areas, shelters, play courts, unlighted play fields, restrooms, walking/jogging trails, natural open space, parking, swimming pools, and tennis courts. Occasionally, a neighborhood park may include a small parking lot, but most users walk from their homes to the park.

COMMUNITY PARKS

A community park is a site of approximately 40 to 150 acres with a service radius area of two miles. Facilities usually included in such a park are tennis courts, shelters, separate or multi-purpose sports fields, play apparatus, picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, recreation centers, swimming pools, open space, and restrooms. Since community parks draw from a large area, parking must be provided. Because of the recreational opportunities provided, community parks often also serve as neighborhood parks.

CITY PARKS

A city park can range in size, but holds special significance within a municipal park system. Its service area is intended to encompass the entire city. It may support a variety of recreational facilities including athletic fields, trails, playgrounds, natural areas and open space. Major city parks are generally located with special attention given to the historical significance, natural characteristics, amenities, wetlands, easements and/or floodplains. Major city parks should be located adjacent to a major thoroughfare to accommodate the traffic volumes

generated by the recreational facilities located on the major city park.

SPECIAL USE PARKS

A special use park is similar to a city park in that it draws users from the entire city. However, it differs in that recreational opportunities are limited to one or possibly two facilities. Facility space requirements are the primary determinants of site size and location. For example, a golf course may require 150 acres, whereas a community center with parking may only require 10 or 15 acres. Potential special uses include baseball/softball complexes, soccer complexes, tennis centers, sports stadiums, performing arts facilities, amphitheaters, lake parks, community centers and golf courses.

OPEN SPACE AREAS

Open space, greenbelts and natural areas are usually developed around a significant natural resource such as creeks, rivers, significant vegetation, lake shore, or other major natural feature. The potential benefits of these parks are numerous. Not only can they preserve valuable open space and natural habitat, they can provide a natural environment for walking, jogging, and bicycling trails, provide a transportation corridor linking neighborhoods to parks, schools, and shopping areas. These parks can provide a variety of passive recreational opportunities free, or relatively free, from automobile interference. They also serve as natural buffers between developed properties, may store floodwaters, and can sometimes be acquired at a relatively inexpensive price due to the restrictions on development.

Design standards for greenbelts or linear parks are relatively loose in order to allow the maximum use of the natural environment in the design. These corridor widths are often determined by the existing topography, severity of flooding, and other unique natural features. Greenbelt corridors of less than fifty (50) "useable" feet should be avoided and narrow corridor sections kept to a minimum. One-hundred foot corridor widths and wider give flexibility in design and are encouraged wherever possible.

Natural areas are prime open space opportunities, sometimes containing ecosystems in a non-disturbed state with minimal man-made intrusions. These areas lend a certain aesthetic and functional diversity to a park network and urban landscape. Although the benefits of natural areas are hard to quantify, they are numerous and include preservation of wildlife habitat and opportunities for nature study. When floodplains are preserved as natural areas they offer a resource to aid in the protection from flooding. A resource based approach to natural area planning should be used in Alvarado, due to the unique character and availability of natural resources. This approach enables the City to identify the natural resources unique to the area,

such as the lakes and creeks and rivers, and define how those areas will be integrated into the parks system in order to best satisfy the needs of the citizens. There are no national standards for natural areas within a city due to the extreme variations in natural resources from region to region. Alvarado should adopt open space policies which reflect the unique natural resources of the community. Open space with environmental significance should be included in the level of service standard only to the extent to which they provide users with passive and active recreational opportunities. Open space, such as perennial wetlands and/or inaccessible areas, which do not provide users with recreational opportunities may not be a desirable acquisition.

The Framework Plan in Section 12 identifies potential open space opportunities.



SECTION 7 - PARK INVENTORY

EXISTING PARKS/PUBLIC ASSETS

Alvarado is conveniently situated south of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, within easy driving distance to both cities. This small community provides a tranquil lifestyle to Dallas/Fort Worth commuters as well as others who simply wish to live in a small city with a rural character.

The city lies in the Blackland Prairie of north central Texas, an area of significant historical and environmental character. Native blackland prairie vegetation, an increasingly rare ecosystem, which has been all but destroyed by agriculture and development was once abundant here.

At present, Alvarado has five dedicated parks (Moore Park, Weaver Park, Gazebo Park, Lake Park, and Parkway Park.). Parkway is the City's most highly developed park. Improvements primarily include a trail system, playground, skateboard park, picnicking, and a pavilion. Moore Park is primarily used for baseball. However the field is unfenced and unlighted. Concepts have been developed for developing the park into a major sports complex. The park also includes an out-of-date playground and picnic shelter. Gazebo Park provides valuable open space in the heart of downtown Alvarado. The gazebo offers a unique opportunity for public gatherings near City Hall. Weaver Park is undeveloped, but will eventually provide recreational opportunities for an underserved residential neighborhood. Land contiguous to Weaver, currently held by the State, is a promising acquisition. Lake Park offers a public boat launch on the north edge of Lake Alvarado. Limited picnic facilities are available in an attractive wooded setting.

The Alvarado Youth Park is a privately owned sports complex leased by the City for public use. The complex is highly used, but in need of renovation. Three baseball fields, a practice field, and an unimproved playground are the major recreational features. Stonegate Park is undeveloped and owned by a private agency. It is currently held in trust for eventual dedication as official park land. A portion of the site is an attractive pond and the potential exists to expand the site to include the entire water feature. The City is also considering the development of public land immediately east of City Hall as a park.

Refer to Tables 7.1-7.3 for a detailed inventory of park assets.

TABLE 7.1

**Inventory of Outdoor Recreation Areas, Facilities
and Amenities**

Park Name	Park Classification	Site Area (Acres)
Alvarado Youth Association Park*	Special Use Park	20
Downtown Gazebo	Special Use Park	0.25
Lake Park	Special Use Park	3.4
Moore Park	Community Park	6.4
Parkway Park	Neighborhood Park	3
Stonegate Park**	Neighborhood Park	8.26
Weaver Park	Pocket Park	0.9
	TOTAL	42.21

* - Privately owned facility, leased to City

** - Stonegate Park is currently held in a private trust, to become dedicated parkland at a future date

TABLE 7.2
INVENTORY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
FACILITY BY PARK SITE

	Youth Association Park	Downtown Gazebo	Lake Park	Moore Park	Parkway Park	Weaver Park	Stonegate Park
T-ball/Basetball							
Baseball-Game Field	3****						
Baseball-Practice Field				1			
Boat Ramp			1				
Softball-Game Field							
Softball-Practice Field							
Basketball Courts							
Bird Watching Station							
Fishing Piers							
Historic Tree							
Outdoor Classroom							
Playground	1***			1***	1**		
Splash Pads							
Skateboard					1		
Soccer -Game Field							
Soccer-Practice Field	1						
Tennis Courts							
Trail-Paved (Lighted)					.25 Miles		
Trail-Unpaved							
Trail -Widths							
Volleyball Courts							
Washer Pit					2		

* With table & group grill

*** Unimproved

** Multi unit piece; swing set

**** 2 pony & 1

colt

TABLE 7.3

INVENTORY OF SUPPORT FACILITIES BY PARK SITE

	Alvarado Youth Association Park	Downtown Gazebo	Lake Park	Moore Park	Parkway Park	Weaver Park	Stonegate Park
Gazebo		1					
Benches		2			6		
Concession Bldg	1						
Exercise Stations							
Grills			1		2		
Irrigation					Yes		
Lighting	Yes	Yes			Yes		
Parking Spaces (Paved)	No	Yes	No	No	No		
Pavilion					1		
Pedestrian Bridges							
Restrooms	2						
Picnic Tables			3	2*	8		
Shelter				2	1		
Water Fountains					1		

*Covered



MOORE PARK



PARKWAY PARK



DOWNTOWN GAZEBO



STONEGATE PARK (Held in private trust)



ALVARADO YOUTH ASSOCIATION



ALVARADO LAKE PARK

SECTION 8 - PARKS STANDARDS/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The population of a city is an important driver of parks and recreation needs. In fact, the ratio of parks acres per population is considered to be a broad indicator of parks and recreation service, and a benchmark for comparison to other cities. Alvarado's parks and recreation standards have therefore been determined based upon projected future population.

The 2009 population of the City of Alvarado was estimated at 4,200. The city is expected to have nearly 4,500 residents by 2014 and its long-range objective is to have at least 14 acres of park land for every 1000 residents.

Table 2.1 following shows the standards Alvarado's leaders and staff have established for a variety of future parks and recreation facilities desired by city residents. These standards (Appendix 'C') were derived by reviewing facility standards used by other cities similar to Alvarado in size and growth potential, then adapting these standards to Alvarado's unique situation.

It should be noted that the City has set ambitious standards for parks land and for trails. This is appropriate, given that the designation and acquisition of public open space are key enablers to four of the six Master Plan goals previously described.

Important recreational needs identified included playgrounds, park shelters, basketball courts, athletic fields (both formal and practice), and picnic stations. Tennis courts are available for public use at Alvarado Junior High School and therefore are not considered a high priority.

A moderate priority was placed on the development of a far-reaching pedestrian trail system connecting residential neighborhoods to schools and parks. This is an extremely important need for citizens, since much of the existing vehicular infrastructure offers no paved walkways. Not only are these connections needed as pedestrian connectors, but also as opportunities for passive recreation for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists.

While the proximity to Lake Alvarado was recognized as an outstanding natural resource, the City is afforded only one realistic opportunity for access – the existing Lake Park. Further recreational development near the lake is limited by private ownership. In addition only one recreation center is proposed for the City. This is a fairly low priority need, only to be addressed as the city nears build-out.

City of Alvarado Table 8-1

PARK ACRES/RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Facility	Units Per Population
Local Park Land (Acres/1000 population)	14
Pavilions (1/Population)	2,000
Picnic Tables (1/Population)	200
Shelters (1/Population)	1,200
Traditional Playgrounds (1/Population)	750
Inclusive Playground (1/Population)	4,500
Basketball Courts (1/Population)	2,000
Tennis Courts (1/Population)	6,000
Volleyball Courts (1/Population)	4,000
Fishing/Boating (1/Population)	4,000
T Ball/Shetland Field (1/Population)	4,000
Buddy Ball/Miracle Field (1/Population)	4,500
Pony Baseball (1/Population)	4,000
Mustang Baseball (1/Population)	4,000
Bronco Baseball (1/Population)	4,000
Pinto/Coach Pitch (1/Population)	4,000
Softball Field - Girls (1/Population)	1,500
Softball Field - Adult (1/Population)	2,000
Practice Field (1/Population)	500
Soccer Fields (1/Population)	1,000
Football Fields (1/Population)	4,000
Trails (1 Mile/Population)	500
Horseshoe Pit (1/Population)	3,000
Shuffleboard Court (1/Population)	3,000
Washer Pit (1/Population)	3,000
Aquatic Facilities (1/Population)	20,000
Recreation Centers (1/Population)	8,000
Splash Pad (1/Population)	2,000
Skateboard (1/Population)	4,000
Dog Park (1/Population)	15,000

Alvarado's adopted standards were applied against city population estimates to develop specific assessments of the City's immediate and long term parks and recreation needs. The results of this assessment appear in Table 2-2. Both immediate needs and long term needs (5 Years) are shown.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

The needs assessments were then compared to the City's present inventory of parks and recreation facilities. The results of these comparisons show that, as of January 2010, the City is below its adopted standards with those types of recreational facilities that are important to its citizens. The City does not have enough parkland for 2010 needs, with only 42 acres of the needed park acres. For many types of needed facilities, the City has no facilities at all. When the assessment of present needs is held up to the Goals and Objectives of this Plan, it is evident that the City's most urgent needs are for parkland acquisition, trails and athletic field development.

LONG TERM NEEDS

The needs assessment was also carried into the future to examine projected needs for the year 2014. This analysis revealed that there are some facilities that will be relatively easy to bring up to the long term standards. Because they are inexpensive and easy to situate, small facilities such as picnic tables fall in this category. Two basketball courts will be ultimately needed, so this need should also be filled with no difficulty.

Other needs will be moderately easy to meet. Four playgrounds are ultimately needed, but while safe and high quality playground equipment is relatively expensive, these facilities do not require large amounts of land. Playgrounds can often be placed in "pocket parks" near residential areas for optimal accessibility.

The needs for other types of facilities will be difficult to meet. Organized play fields for baseball, softball, T-ball and soccer require considerable land that may need to be cleared and leveled. Citizens often prefer to have additional recreational amenities, such as lighting, bleachers, concession stands, rest rooms, pavilions and playgrounds at organized play fields. These amenities are expensive to construct. Small cities like Alvarado often locate such facilities in central athletic complexes. These require a significant outlay of funds for initial construction. To protect a city's investment, there must also be a commitment of ongoing maintenance funds for such facilities.

The greatest long-term challenge to Alvarado mirrors its immediate challenge: the need to acquire acreage for parkland and develop athletic fields. City staff and elected leaders have begun to implement methods to move the plan forward, including a 4B sales tax which may be used for parks. Staff has also begun to work closely with private

developers to acquire park land. These and other innovative strategies must be considered if Alvarado is to meet these needs.

NEEDS FOR THE ELDERLY

Community input received from the public survey, the public hearing, and numerous Park Board Meetings indicated a requirement to address recreational needs for the elderly. These needs continue to escalate as the elderly population grows. Most important to this age group are passive recreational opportunities, such as trails, gardens, nature areas, rest stops, and game tables. Of particular importance to the elderly is an assurance that these facilities are safe and in some instances physically separated from more active recreation areas.



Alvarado Recreational Needs Assessment Table 8-2

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014
 4,250 4,302 4,355 4,409 4,463

Facility	Units Reqd	Per Capita	Based on population numbers. Units needed as of:					Exist Units as of 1-1-10	Needs as of 1-1-10	Needs as of 12-1-14
			<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>			
Park Land (14 acres)	1 Per	1,000	60	60	61	62	62	42	18	20
Pavilions	1 Per	2,000	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Picnic Tables	1 Per	200	21	22	22	22	22	13	8	9
Shelters	1 Per	1,200	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1
Traditional Playgrounds	1 Per	750	6	6	6	6	6	3	3	3
Inclusive Playground	1 Per	4,500	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Basketball Courts	1 Per	2,000	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Tennis Courts	1 Per	6,000	1	1	1	1	1	6	-5	-5
Volleyball Courts	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Fishing / Boating	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
T-Ball/Shetland	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Buddy Ball/Miracle Field	1 Per	4,500	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
Pony Baseball	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	2	-1	-1
Mustang Baseball	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Bronco Baseball	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Pinto/Coach Pitch	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Softball Field - Girls	1 Per	1,500	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3
Softball field - Adult	1 Per	2,000	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Practice / Informal Field	1 Per	500	9	9	9	9	9	0	9	9
Soccer Fields	1 Per	1,000	4	4	4	4	4	0	4	4
Football Fields	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Trails (in miles)	1 Per	500	9	9	9	9	9	0.25	8	9
Horseshoe Pits	1 Per	3,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Shuffleboard Courts	1 Per	3,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Washer Pits	1 Per	3,000	1	1	1	1	1	2	-1	-1
Aquatic Facilities	1 Per	20,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recreation Centers	1 Per	8,000	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Splash Pad	1 Per	2,000	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Skateboard	1 Per	4,000	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Dog Park	1 Per	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Six existing tennis courts at Junior High School are available for public use.

SECTION 9 - ACTION PLAN

While the *Goals & Objectives* section outlines general, long-term suggestions for consideration, this section summarizes specific tasks that should become a focus for development. A priority list and an implementation plan will assist the city in the development of its park facilities. This is essential in the acquisition of supporting funds from outside agencies such as Texas Parks and Wildlife. Cost estimates are included in this section so that park development budgets can be prepared well in concert with planning efforts.

A number of resources were evaluated in the finalization of these recommendations including:

- Surveys of residents
- City Council recommendations
- Park Board public meetings
- Current and projected demographics
- Existing land use and open space opportunities
- City staff priorities
- Available and projected capital
- Texas Parks and Wildlife criteria
- Needs assessment findings

PRIORITIES

The establishment of priorities is essential not only as a guide for the City's development, but it is also a requirement of Texas Parks and Wildlife. These priorities shall assure the State that Alvarado is addressing its recreational needs in response to the findings of this document.

DISTRICT 1 - NORTH

Priorities

1. Parkland acquisition
2. Walking trails
3. Picnicking
4. Fishing access
5. Playground
6. Athletic fields

DISTRICT 2 – EAST

Priorities

1. Parkland acquisition
2. Basketball court
3. Playground
4. Picnicking
5. Trail system/exercise stations
6. Splash pad

DISTRICT 3 – SOUTH

Priorities

1. Parkland acquisition
2. Acquire nature area preserve
3. Playground
4. Soccer fields
5. Picnicking
6. Picnic shelter

DISTRICT 4 - WEST

Priorities

1. Parkland acquisition
2. Baseball field renovations
3. Trail system
4. Picnicking
5. Playground
6. Pavilion

CITY-WIDE INDOOR

Priorities

1. Gymnasium
2. Multi-use rooms
3. Weight/exercise room

FIVE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan identifies specific projects that are critical to address current and future needs. These projects are not prioritized, but do in many cases address the priorities listed previously. In all cases, project completion is contingent upon available funding approved for specific uses.

1. Develop a barrier-free baseball field and playground that promotes interaction between physically challenged and able bodied children.
2. Where possible, acquire and preserve open space for future park development, including sites identified as Fannin, Wellborn, and the dedication of Stonegate, currently held in trust.
3. Transfer the retired sewage treatment plant to parkland inventory.
4. Transfer the approximate 40-acre site south of the new sewage treatment plant to parkland inventory and maintain as permanent open space/nature preserve.
5. Acquire the State owned open space contiguous to Weaver Park.
6. Acquire the remainder of the pond/open space at Stonegate.
7. Acquire enough developable open space to accommodate the construction of a major athletic complex large enough to host tournament play.
8. Upgrade and improve Moore Park to meet current standards as well as other sites that do not meet modern safety and accessibility standards.
9. Acquire and preserve creek corridors when available, particularly Buddy Goldsmith Creek.
10. Continue in the beautification of the City's entryways, parks, medians, and other public spaces.
11. Begin to develop a pedestrian trail system that links schools, parks, and neighborhoods.
12. Identify and where possible, preserve and enhance significant stands of native vegetation and wetlands.
13. Work with the Alvarado youth organizations to develop, renovate and expand athletic fields and support facilities.
14. Consider the development of the historic wagon mill east of City Hall as a park with additional municipal parking.

COST ESTIMATES

The following cost estimates are provided as a general guide for development. Construction cost opinions are based on the latest available data. Actual costs will vary as a result of timing, program, and site conditions. These figures should be used as a general guideline to help establish budgets and should be adjusted as necessary on a project by project basis.

Table 9-1

IMPROVEMENT	ESTIMATED COST
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	
Water/Electric Service	\$10,000
Parking Lot (20 cars)	\$40,000
Playground	\$75,000
Trail (.5 mile, 8' wide)	\$100,000
Basketball Court	\$45,000
Picnic Facilities (5 units)	\$15,000
Practice Athletic Fields	\$45,000
Picnic Shelter	\$45,000
Landscaping/Irrigation	\$20,000
Site Lighting	\$20,000
SUBTOTAL	\$415,000
Bonds/Insurance/General Conditions	\$41,500
Contingency	\$41,500
TOTAL	\$913,000

POCKET PARK	
Water/Electric Service	\$10,000
Playground	\$75,000
Picnic Facilities (5 units)	\$15,000
Shelter	\$50,000
Volleyball Court (unlighted)	\$10,000
Landscaping/Irrigation	\$20,000

Site Lighting	\$40,000
SUBTOTAL	\$220,000
Bonds/Insurance/General Conditions	\$22,000
Contingency	\$22,000
TOTAL	\$264,000

COMMUNITY PARK	
Water/Electric Service	\$10,000
Parking Lot (50 cars)	\$100,000
Playground	\$75,000
Trail (1.5 mile, 8' wide)	\$300,000
Basketball Court	\$45,000
Picnic Facilities (15 units)	\$45,000
Athletic Fields (2 lighted)	\$500,000
Pavilion	\$130,000
Volleyball Court (lighted)	\$20,000
Tennis Courts (2 lighted)	\$150,000
Landscaping/Irrigation	\$40,000
Site Lighting	\$40,000
Restroom	\$150,000
SUBTOTAL	\$1,605,000
Bonds/Insurance/General Conditions	\$160,500
Contingency	\$160,500
TOTAL	\$3,531,000

Two sources are currently available, including a 4B Sales Tax for Economic Development and a Park Fee/Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Both of these sources are fairly limited, however. The 4B Tax can also be used for other economic development projects and is therefore fairly competitive. Parkland dedication is solely dependent upon private residential development. If development is slow, land acquisition opportunities are affected.

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding for park maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and new park development is becoming difficult for local governments and other recreation providers. Communities throughout the state are often interested in large regional parks that serve multiple purposes, especially in areas likely to experience rapid growth in the coming decades. Efforts to develop such facilities are partly driven by state and federal grant programs that encourage regional solutions to infrastructure-related issues. Development of large parks within a park system is expensive, and often requires multiple funding sources. Concurrent with the demand for large regional parks, park and recreation departments continue to confront requests for well-maintained neighborhood parks that are within easy walking distance of residences and other traditional park infrastructure such as ball fields and sports courts.

In addition to the demands described above, there is a slight shift in what the public demands of a park system. Parks are increasingly becoming mechanisms that help to determine the nature of a community. While ball fields, playgrounds, and traditional park infrastructure continue to define park systems, communities often want new types of recreational facilities. Within the past decade, new park elements, such as spray parks, dog parks (leash free zones), large open spaces with wildlife habitat and trails along water courses, and nature tourism, are beginning to play a prominent role in park development.

Once infrastructure demands have been met, communities are faced with increasing costs of maintenance and policing. Many parks are typically “high use” facilities. Unfortunately, like most highly-used public infrastructure, park facilities wear out, increasing the cost of maintenance. Communities are recognizing that policing of parks in order to keep them free of graffiti, vandalism, and drug use is a cost that strains even well-funded police departments.

This section discusses some possible avenues the county may consider to fund park system enhancements. To fully take advantage of the entire funding quilt often requires the use of consultants or not-for-profit organizations well-versed in weaving together multiple funding sources to maximize public resources. This is especially important when pursuing funding opportunities that rely on grants for construction of park

infrastructure; park programming, such as efforts that benefit the elderly and youth development; and acquisition of open space with low-impact public use for the benefit of water quality and wildlife.

Local Financing

Local government funds are a common method to finance park development. Typical funding streams include property taxes, sales taxes, user fees, and other sources of revenue used for the general operation of the local government. Since these funds are paid, for the most part, by local residents, and may require increases in taxes and/or fees, public entities must consider the tax burden on local citizens, the value of taxable property, and other considerations, such as property types (residential, commercial, industrial) and community poverty rates.

Most state and federal government grants require some type of local match, often up to 50 percent. Local government funds frequently serve as a match for these grants.

Types of Local Funds Include:

Sales Taxes: Cities, counties, and special purpose districts¹ (municipal utility districts, recreation districts, economic development zones) all may impose sales taxes. Alvarado currently has an approved 4B Sales Tax for Economic Development. This source is fairly limited, however. The 4B Tax can also be used for other economic development projects and is therefore fairly competitive.

Reserve Funds: The use of reserve funds is made possible by accumulating funds in advance for capital acquisition or development. The accumulation may result from surplus or earmarked operational revenues, funds in depreciation reserves, or the sale of capital assets.

Enterprise and Revenue Funds: Many local governmental entities establish accounts which are earmarked for park and recreation programs. These accounts are used to fund programs and to acquire, operate, and maintain facilities.

General Obligation Bonds: This method involves the taxing power of the jurisdiction pledged to pay the interest and principal to retire the debt. General obligation bonds can be sold to finance permanent types of improvements, such as park and recreational areas and facilities. The classic public policy argument for use of bonds to support park acquisition and development is that long-term borrowing, bonding, is justified because the project often has a permanent or near-permanent public benefit. In others words, the life of the project likely meets or exceeds the length of time it takes to pay off the bond obligation.

¹ Many special districts must be established by the Texas Legislature. Enabling legislation often defines the types of taxation that may occur to support the district.

Lease-Purchase: Local governments utilizing this innovative financing approach prepare standards and specifications for the development of a park by a private company. The facility is then leased to the jurisdiction for a specified period of time. Title to the park and facilities can be conveyed to the local government at the end of the lease period without future payments. The rental over time will have paid the total original cost plus interest.

Impact Fees/Mandatory Dedication: Some cities ask commercial developers to pay a fee to support park construction. However, a high level of development, where demand is so great that the addition of a tax has a limited effect on future economic development efforts, is often a criterion that communities use before imposing such a tax. Alvarado has an approved Park Fee/Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Both of these sources are solely dependent upon private residential development. If development is slow, land acquisition opportunities are affected.

User Fees: User fees may be an effective cost recovery technique to recoup a reasonable portion of the costs to administer, operate, and maintain public parks and open space. Examples of user fees include registration or entry fees for recreational programs, admission to swimming pools, and equipment and facility rental charges.

Other Local Entity Support: Communities often develop their own private mechanisms to help support parks and park programming. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax exempt “friends of the parks” organization is one such entity that can raise private funds and muster volunteers to support park improvements and programming. Other options include engaging businesses or community groups in an Adopt-A-Park program to help maintain park facilities.

State and Federal Financing

Federal support for local park initiatives is generally limited. In Texas, most federal parks funds flow through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TPRA). Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grants include:

Outdoor Recreation Grants

This Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grant program provides 50 percent matching grant funds to municipalities, counties, Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and other local units of government to acquire and develop parkland or to renovate existing public recreation areas. Each year the Department conducts two funding cycles. The maximum grant award is \$500,000. Projects must be completed within three years of approval. The deadlines for grant applications are January 31 and July 31 of each year, with master plan submission deadline 60 days prior to application deadline.

Indoor Recreation Grants

TPWD's Indoor Recreation Grant Program provides 50 percent matching grant funds to municipalities, counties, MUDs and other local units of government to construct recreation centers, community centers, nature centers, and other facilities (buildings). The maximum grant is \$750,000. The application deadline is July 31st each year, with master plan submission deadline 60 days prior to application deadline.

Recreational Trail Grants

TPWD administers the National Recreational Trails Fund in Texas under the approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This federally-funded program receives its funding from a portion of federal gas taxes paid on fuel used in non-highway recreational vehicles. The grants can be up to 80 percent of project cost with a maximum of \$200,000 for non-motorized trail grants. Currently there is no maximum amount for motorized trail grants. Funds may be spent on both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail projects, such as the construction of new recreational trails, to improve existing trails, to develop trailheads or trailside facilities, and to acquire trail corridors. The application deadline is May 1 of each year.

Boating Access Grants

This TPWD grant program provides 75 percent matching grant funds for the construction of public boat ramps. Local government sponsors must make an application, provide the land and access to the proposed boat ramp, supply 25 percent of the development costs, and accept operation and maintenance responsibilities for a minimum 25-year period. These funds are allocated annually and are supported by the federal Sport Fish Restoration Act. The deadline for this program is October 31 of each year.

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants

TPWD administers the Texas apportionments of LWCF through the Texas Recreation and Parks Account. TPWD allocates LWCF as part of the awards for its outdoor infrastructure program and does not accept applications specific to the LWCF.

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

The program is available for planning and technical assistance on projects emphasizing environmental protection, open space accessibility, and construction. This program is available to qualified private organizations and local governments, but public involvement is a requirement.

Private Financing

The use of incentives to encourage private financing, public-private partnerships, land dedication, or donation can be an effective strategy to develop a park and recreation system without relying on local funds to fully fund the program.

Voluntary Land Donation

Property owners may be willing to donate land to the county for use as a public park. Donations can be encouraged subject to established guidelines for the development of park and recreational areas. Considerations include the suitability of the land for park development, conformance with the objectives of the park plan, approval by the Commissioner's Court, and the sentiments and desires of the surrounding communities. Often there is a federal income tax incentive that benefits the individual or organization donating the property. Because of past abuses, the Internal Revenue Service often closely examines the valuation of the donated property when examining the donor's tax returns.

Trust Funds

Some individuals will endow a trust fund to support a local park or park system through the establishment of a trust. Funds are sometimes established through a gift or series of gifts while the donor is alive, or as part of the settlement of an estate. Some trusts are established independently through trust companies and banks, while others become a "fund" that is part of a community foundation.

Community Foundations

Community foundations are umbrella organizations authorized by the federal tax code and designed to solicit individual contributions in support of community-wide goals. Community foundations are designed to encourage large donors to establish "funds" within the foundation instead of establishing their own foundation. By collectively managing, investing, and granting funds, community foundations reduce the overall cost of foundation giving. Unlike organizations such as the United Way, community foundations build an endowment, where often only the interest on the endowment is distributed in the form of grants. Kendall County falls within the giving area of the San Antonio Area Foundation.

Private Foundations

Texas is home to over 3,200 private foundations, and there are 75,000 grant-making foundations nationally. Private foundations come in all sizes and have different giving criteria and interests. Some give locally; others give statewide. Some focus on one or two issues, such as disadvantaged youth and education, while others consider a wider range of issues. In the San Antonio area, perhaps the largest private foundation that consistently gives to parks, recreational, and wildlife organizations is the Albert & Bessie Mae Kronkosky Foundation. This group has provided invaluable assistance to Kendall County for park system planning efforts.

Because of the large number and diversity of foundation-giving opportunities, significant research is often required to identify foundations that fit local parks and recreational needs. Much of this research can be done online through sources such as the Directory of Texas Foundations. An on-line version is hosted by the Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas (www.nprc.org). The directory is also available in book form. Texas Nonprofits

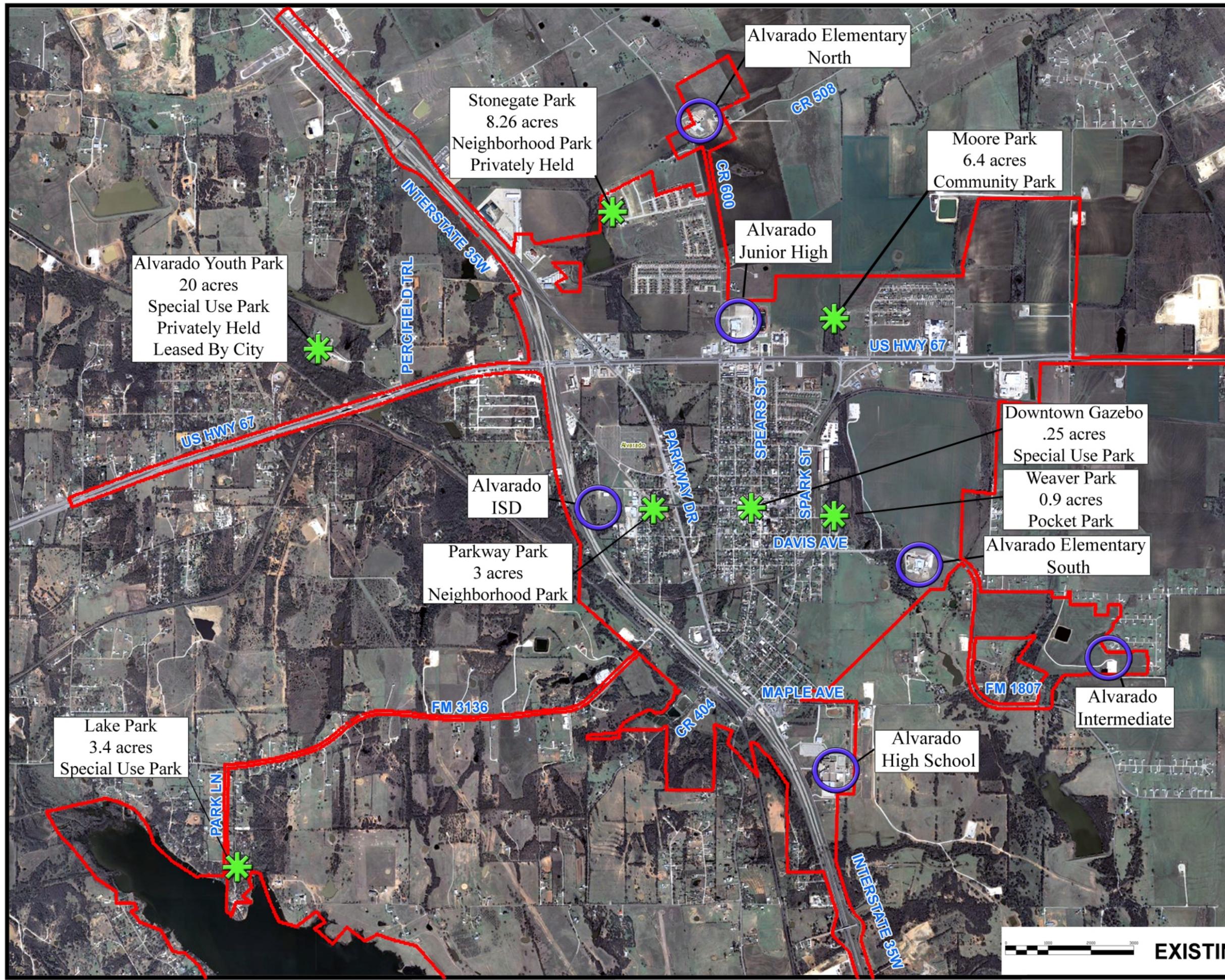
also offers an on-line, searchable database that includes corporate giving. The Foundation Center based in New York City provides searchable databases of foundations by location and giving interests. The on-line database sources are available for a fee. There are also for-profit providers of foundation databases.



APPENDICES



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Alvarado Youth Park
20 acres
Special Use Park
Privately Held
Leased By City

Stonegate Park
8.26 acres
Neighborhood Park
Privately Held

Alvarado Elementary
North

Moore Park
6.4 acres
Community Park

Alvarado
Junior High

US HWY 67

PERCIFIELD TRL
INTERSTATE 35W

US HWY 67

Downtown Gazebo
.25 acres
Special Use Park

Alvarado
ISD

Weaver Park
0.9 acres
Pocket Park

Parkway Park
3 acres
Neighborhood Park

Alvarado Elementary
South

Lake Park
3.4 acres
Special Use Park

FM 3136

MAPLE AVE

Alvarado
Intermediate

Alvarado
High School

PARK LN

GR 404

INTERSTATE 35W

LEGEND

- Park Area
- School Site

Date APR 1, 2010
Drawn By GAC
Checked By JRF
Revisions



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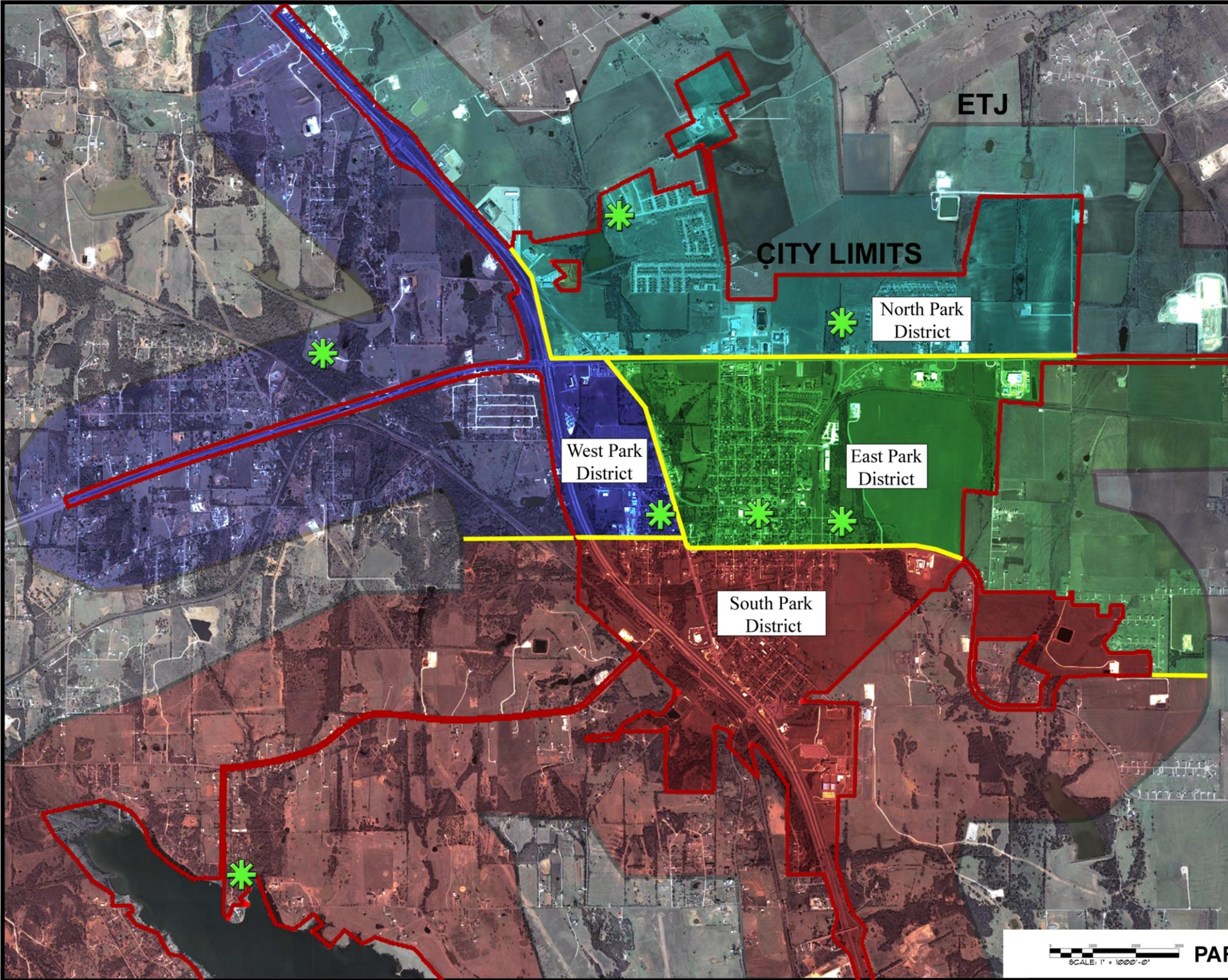
ALVARADO PARKS MASTER PLAN
ALVARADO, TEXAS

Sheet No.
L-1
OF 3



EXISTING FACILITIES

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- LEGEND**
-  Park Area
 -  City Limits
 -  District Boundary
 -  ETJ Boundary

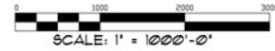
Date APR 1, 2010
Drawn By GAC
Checked By JRF
Revisions



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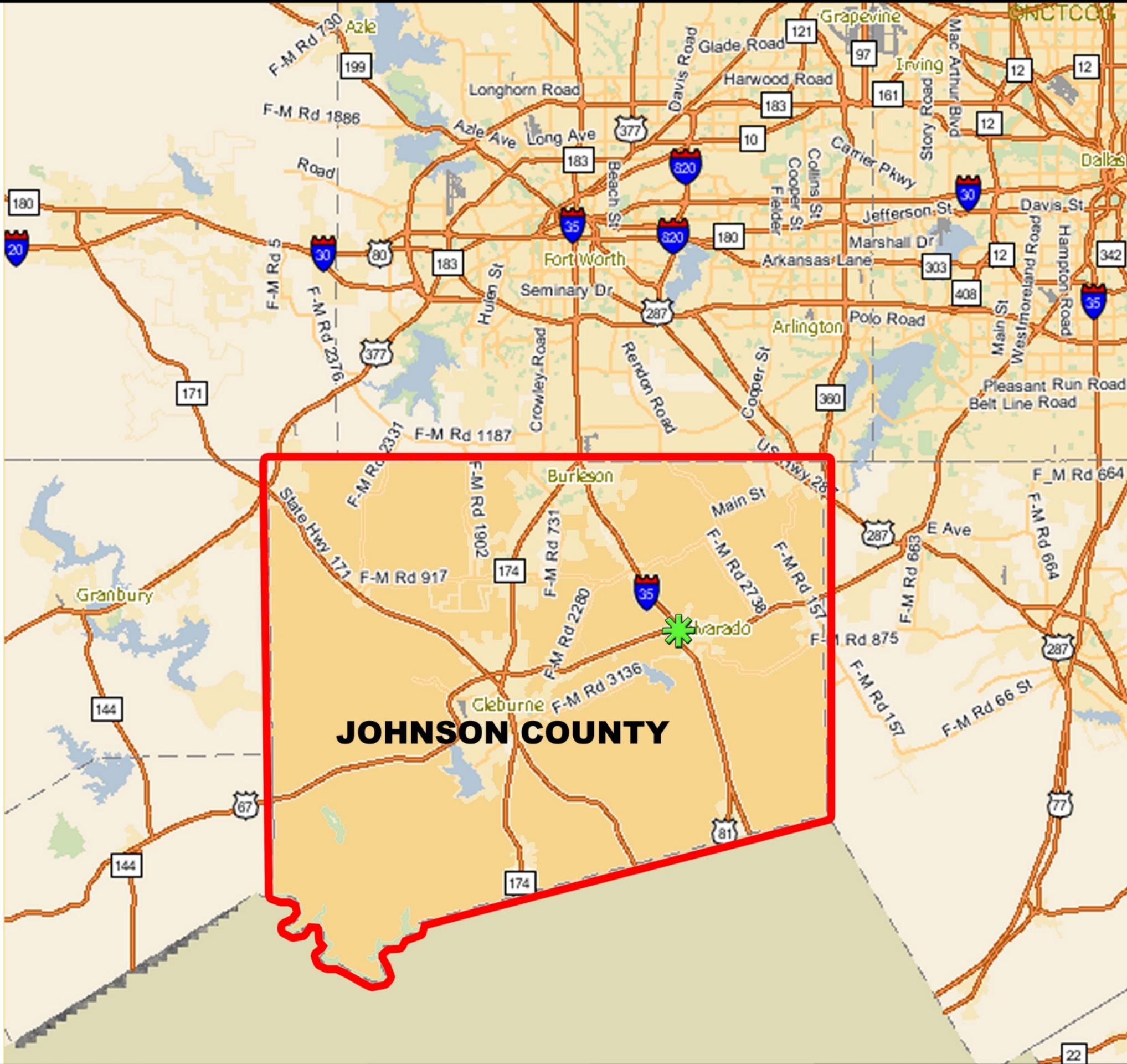
ALVARADO PARKS MASTER PLAN
ALVARADO, TEXAS

Sheet No.
L-2
OF 3



PARK DISTRICTS

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LEGEND

 CITY OF ALVARADO



**APPENDIX D
COUNTY MAP**

Date MAR 29, 2010
Drawn By GAC
Checked By JRF
Revisions



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**ALVARADO PARKS MASTER PLAN
ALVARADO, TEXAS**

City of Alvarado - Parks and Recreation Survey - 2009

The City of Alvarado is in the process of preparing an update to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. We are asking for Alvarado citizens to participate in this study so the City can plan future parks and recreation programs based upon your needs. Please complete this survey by circling the answers that best reflect your attitudes and opinions.

Please return within 10 business days to:

City of Alvarado.
 Attn: Don Ives
 104 West College
 Alvarado, Tx 76009

Your opinion is important and the City would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey.

About the Parks/Recreation Facilities in Alvarado

1. How often have you and members of your household visited City of Alvarado parks during the past year?
 1 - At least once per week 3 - At least once per month 5 - Never
 2 - A few times per month 4 - A few times during the year

2. How would you rate the physical condition of the parks in Alvarado? Would you say;
 1 - Excellent 2 - Good 3 - Fair 4 - Poor 5 - Don't know/Not Familiar

3. Have you or other members of your household participated in any PROGRAMS offered by the City of Alvarado?
 1 - Yes 2 - No-Skip to Q5.

- How would you rate the recreation programs offered by the City? Would you say;
 1 - Excellent 2 - Good 3 - Fair 4 - Poor 5 - Don't know/Not Familiar

5. Overall, how would you rate the parks, recreation opportunities and open space in Alvarado? Would you say;
 1 - Excellent 2 - Good 3 - Fair 4 - Poor 5 - Don't know/Not Familiar

Recreation Programs

6. In which recreation programs or activities would you or members of your household be most interested in participating? (Circle those you would be most interested in participating)
- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 01 -Baseball | 07 -Tennis | 13 - Hiking | 19 – Health/Wellness |
| 02 - T-Ball | 08 - Volleyball | 14 - Biking | 20 - Fitness classes |
| 03 - Softball | 09 -Sand Volleyball | 15 - Fishing | 21 - Water Exercises |
| 04 - Soccer | 10 - Racquetball | 16 -Swim Lessons | 22 –None/not interested |
| 05 - Football | 11 - Gymnastics | 17 - Dance/Drama | 23 - Other: _____ |
| 06 - Basketball | 12 - In-line Hockey | 18 - Nature Study | |

CITY OF ALVARADO - MASTER PLAN UPDATE SURVEY 2009

APPENDIX 'B'

Surveys Sent: 1,386 Surveys Returned: 60 4.3% Returned

About Parks/Recreation Facilities							
1	<u>How often have you and members of your household visited City of Alvarado parks during the past year?</u>	<u>Once/week</u> 10	<u>Few Times/Month</u> 6	<u>Once/Month</u> 9	<u>Few Times/Year</u> 21	<u>Never</u> 10	
2	<u>How would you rate the physical condition of the parks in Alvarado?</u>	<u>Excellent</u> 5	<u>Good</u> 28	<u>Fair</u> 15	<u>Poor</u> 1	<u>Don't Know</u> 7	
3	<u>Have you or any other members of your household participated in any programs offered by the City?</u>	<u>Yes</u> 5	<u>No</u> 48				
4	<u>How would you rate the recreation programs offered by the City? Would you say</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u> 4	<u>Fair</u> 2	<u>Poor</u> 2	<u>Don't Know</u> 4	
5	<u>Overall, how would you rate the parks, recreation opportunities and open space in Alvarado?</u>	<u>Excellent</u> 1	<u>Good</u> 17	<u>Fair</u> 19	<u>Poor</u> 8	<u>Don't Know</u> 7	
Recreation Programs							
6	<u>In which recreation programs or activities would be most interested in participating?</u>	<u>Baseball</u> 12	<u>T-Ball</u> 6	<u>Softball</u> 11	<u>Soccer</u> 10	<u>Football</u> 8	
		<u>Basketball</u> 18	<u>Tennis</u> 10	<u>Volleyball</u> 11	<u>Sand Volleyball</u> 7	<u>Racquetball</u> 4	
		<u>Gymnastics</u> 7	<u>In-Line Hockey</u> 1	<u>Hiking</u> 16	<u>Biking</u> 12	<u>Fishing</u> 18	
		<u>Swim Lessons</u> 20	<u>Dance/Drama</u> 11	<u>Nature Study</u> 13	<u>Health/Wellness</u> 18	<u>Fitness Classes</u> 24	
		<u>Water Exercises</u> 21	<u>None</u> 5	<u>Other</u> Bathrooms, Jogging, Gym, Golf			
Needed Park and Recreation Facilities							
7	<u>Do you feel there is a need for any of the following athletic facilities to be added to existing/future parks?</u>		<u>Volleyball Courts</u>	<u>Basketball Courts</u>	<u>Baseball Fields</u>	<u>Softball Fields</u>	<u>Soccer Fields</u>
		Definitely Need	18	28	19	15	19
		Somewhat Need	9	10	14	20	11
		Not Needed	13	5	6	6	5
	No opinion	6	6	7	7	6	
			<u>Football Fields</u>	<u>Practice Fields</u>	<u>Tennis Courts</u>	<u>Other</u>	
	Definitely Need	17	12	17	Water Park/Golf Course/		
	Somewhat Need	10	11	16	Trails/Play for tots/		
Not Needed	9	10	9	Tracks/Golf/Splash Pad			
No opinion	7	7	6	Bathrooms			
8	<u>Do you feel there is a need for any of the following recreational facilities to be added to existing/future parks?</u>		<u>Multi-Purpose Ctr</u>	<u>Water Play</u>	<u>Senior Center</u>	<u>Hike/Bike Trails</u>	<u>Skateboard Park</u>
		Definitely Need	29	34	25	29	12
		Somewhat Need	15	9	11	12	14
		Not Needed	5	5	8	6	12
	No opinion	1	1	1			
			<u>Outdoor Pool</u>	<u>Indoor Pool</u>	<u>Open Spaces</u>	<u>Fishing Areas</u>	<u>Shelters/Pavilions</u>
	Definitely Need	39	29	25	23	31	
	Somewhat Need	9	7	14	10	12	
Not Needed	4	9	8	9	5		
No opinion					1		

		Definitely Need	30	20		
		Somewhat Need	11	10		
		Not Needed	3	13		
		No opinion	1	1		
9	<u>How should the City pay for new and added parks and recreation facilities?</u>		<u>Bond Programs</u> 32	<u>General Fund</u> 27	<u>User Fees</u> 35	<u>Other</u> No support; Gas royalties;Sales tax; Fund raisers; Tickets; Grants
10	<u>Do you feel the City should acquire more park land/open space?</u>		<u>Yes</u> 48	<u>No</u> 8		
Household Information						
11	<u>How long have you been a resident in the City?</u>		<u>Less than 2 Years</u> 1	<u>2-5 Years</u> 14	<u>6-10 Years</u> 11	<u>11-20 Years</u> 9 <u>Over 20 Years</u> 25
12	<u>How many people live in your home?</u>		<u>One</u> 4	<u>Two</u> 25	<u>Three</u> 6	<u>Four</u> 17 <u>Five</u> 4 <u>Six or More</u> 3
13	<u>Your age?</u>		<u>Under 18</u> 1	<u>19-24</u> 2	<u>25-34</u> 10	<u>35-44</u> 9 <u>45-54</u> 12
			<u>55-64</u> 12	<u>65-74</u> 11	<u>75 or over</u> 3	
14	<u>How many children live with you in each of the following groups?</u>		<u>Pre School/Young</u> 12	<u>Elementary School</u> 23	<u>Middle School</u> 3	<u>High School</u> 6 <u>College or Older</u> 12
			<u>Total Children at Home</u> 57			
15	<u>What is the single most important issue or need concerning Parks and Recreation?</u>					
	- No parks; focus on roads	- More for grandchildren	-Restrooms	-Opportunities to meet & socialize		
	- Lake campsites	- No more skateparks	-Safety, variety	-Opportunities for children to play		
	- Programs for youth	- Repair our roads	-Acquire lake in Indian Trails sub	-Offer a variety of opportunities		
	- Restrooms at Lake Alvarado (even portable)	- Clean up poison ivy	-Recreational opportunities needed	-Water aerobics for heart patients		
	- Water play facilities/restrooms	- Safe water recreation	-Convenient parking	-Splash pool; variety		
	- Activities for young people	- Water activities for all	-Develop creek floodplains	-Do not locate parks in older parts of town		
	- Programs for school age children	- Something for teenagers	-Acquire lake behind Brookshire's	-Something for children		
	- Golf Course	- Accessible parking - Parkway	-Something affordable for families	-Keep costs down; some are on fixed income		
	- Pavilion reservations	- Share trails with seniors	-Safety for all children and elderly	-Need to advertise special events		
	- Alternatives for youth	-Sheltered bus stops	-More recreation means less crime	-Something for young people to meet and play		
	- Just some place to go	- Need bathrooms	-A pool for children	-Teach children good fitness habits		
	-Restrooms	-Better maintenance	-Pool/fitness center	- Recreation center to keep teens busy & something for adults		
	- Better parking	-Do not raise taxes for parks	-Need a gym/pool for exercise	-Parkway skateboarder language not appropriate for young children		
	- Love current improvements	- Keep skateboards off streets	-Clean and secure parks	-Fences, better signage, bathrooms, drinking fountains		

APPENDIX 'C' Comparative Standards

Facility	Arlington	Lucas	Oak Point	Allen	Plano	McKinney	Eules	National Recreation & Park Association
Local Park Land (Acres/1000)	13	10	5.7	8.5	10	8.5	8.5-13	5.25-10.5
Pavilions (1/Population)	40,000	3,000	4,500	NA	NA	NA	7,000	60,000
Picnic Tables (1/Population)	800	250	350	343	1,000	200	NA	NA
Shelters (1/Population)	15,000	1,500	2,500	NA	NA	NA	13,000	10,000
Playgrounds (1/Population)	7,500	1,000	2,000	2,307	5,000	3,939	2,800	NA
Basketball Courts (1/Population)	12,000	2,000	7,000	13,333	NA	7,000	15,000	5,000
Tennis Courts (1/Population)	7,000	6,000	9,000	2,400	2,148	4,000	5,500	2,000
Volleyball Courts (1/Population)	NA	4,000	6,000	15,000	NA	10,000	10,000	NA
Fishing/Boating (1/Population)	NA	4,000	20,000	NA	NA	NA	25,000	NA
Disc Golf (1/Population)	NA	8,000		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
T Ball Field (1/Population)	NA	2,000	10,000	NA	NA	NA	10,500	NA
Football (1/Population)							50,000	
Splash Pad							25,000	
Little League Baseball (1/Population)	10,000	2,000	3,500	1,818	2,500	3,733	4,000	5,000
Softball Field - Girls (1/Population)	10,000	2,000	7,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	5,000
Softball Field - Adult (1/Population)	50,000	4,000	7,000	NA	NA	NA	6,500	30,000
Practice Field (1/Population)	NA	2,000	4,000	NA	NA	NA	4,500	NA
Soccer Fields (1/Population)	12,000	1,000	4,000	2,222	5,000	7,000	5,500	10,000
Trails (1 Mile/Population)	7,000	500	675	NA	NA	NA	5,000	10,000
Horseshoe Pit (1/Population)	NA	3,000	7,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Shuffleboard Court (1/Population)	NA	3,000	7,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Washer Pit (1/Population)	NA	3,000	8,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Equestrian Facilities (1/Population)	NA	8,000		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Aquatic Facilities (1/Population)	50,000	20,000	20,000	30,000	43,333	20,000	50,000	20,000
Recreation Centers (1/Population)	70,000	25,000	20,000	24,000	37,143	25,000	NA	NA
Dog Park			20,000					