

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Hillsboro initiated the *Parks & Trails Master Plan and Natural Resource Analysis* in January 2008 to update the City's last *Parks Master Plan* and to create a community supported blueprint for providing high quality parks and recreation facilities and services for all residents.



The 2003 plan charted a course that has resulted in substantial improvements to the park system, including the renovation of the Shute Park Aquatic & Recreation Center, the opening of the Glenn & Viola Walters Cultural Arts Center, the development of multiple new parks and facilities, and the accompanying increase in recreation programs and activities. This plan builds on the high quality park system and recreation services that Hillsboro residents and employees enjoy, providing a comprehensive plan for leisure services that respond to community needs now and into the future.

According to the results of the planning process, City of Hillsboro residents clearly value the many benefits provided by parks and recreation. While the City has established top quality services and has built award-winning facilities, there are still a number of community needs for parks and recreation. Meeting all community recreation needs, while not an easy task, is not unrealistic. The goals of this plan are to identify ways to develop existing sites to their greatest potential and best use, to identify remaining opportunities to add park land to the park system, and to look for opportunities to partner with others, including developers, schools, public agencies, and community members, to enhance the City of Hillsboro's parks and recreation system. This Plan will also support the efforts of the department to achieve agency accreditation through CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies). Most importantly, this plan aspires to rally community support for parks and recreation, aiding Hillsboro Parks & Recreation in their efforts to make Hillsboro a model for providing park services, meeting community needs, and creating an innovative, efficient, interconnected, and diverse park system.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Parks & Trails Master Plan was organized into four phases, as depicted in Figure 1 on the next page.

**Phase I: Where Are We Now?** Phase I reviewed the planning context, the inventory of parks and facilities, and an evaluation of assets. This phase included a brief demographic profile, review of land use and development patterns, and a synopsis of relevant previously completed planning studies. This phase also included introductory workshops with park staff and the Parks & Recreation Commission to identify key issues for the Plan.

FIGURE 1: PLANNING PROCESS



**Phase II: Where Do We Want to Be?** Phase II involved significant outreach to the community through a series of public involvement efforts. Through these forums, community members identified major park and recreation needs and priorities, as well as a vision for the future. In addition to the qualitative community input, the planning team conducted technical analysis of the park system, facilities and trails; as well as an analysis of recreation programs.

**Phase III: How Do We Get There?** Based on the findings of the first two phases, the planning team developed policies and recommendations to help the community realize its vision for parks and recreation. These recommendations address parks and facilities, trails, recreation programs, park maintenance, and natural areas.

**Phase IV: Adoption:** In Phase IV, the *Parks & Trails Master Plan and Natural Resource Analysis* underwent a public review process, where the plan was presented to staff, residents, Parks & Recreation Commission, and the City Council for refinement and adoption.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



To develop a solid foundation for the *Hillsboro Parks & Trails Master Plan and Natural Resource Analysis*, Hillsboro solicited feedback from a broad spectrum of residents regarding their needs, preferences, attitudes, and vision for parks and recreation services. A variety of activities were conducted throughout the planning process to ensure participation from a cross-section of the community, including various age groups, language groups, and diverse special interests. Each of the community engagement opportunities is described below.

- **www.hillsboroparksplan.org** – A website was developed for the project to provide public information and allow members of the public to submit open comments regarding any issue.
- **Community Intercept Event** – One intercept event was held in Hillsboro during the planning process. Project staff hosted a booth at the Hillsboro Tuesday Marketplace on June 24, 2008. The booth included interactive displays, flyers about the project website and the recreation questionnaire, and information about Hillsboro Parks & Recreation programs and activities.
- **Telephone Survey** – A statistically valid telephone survey was administered during July and August 2008 by Leisure Vision, using bilingual interviewers. A total of 508 Hillsboro residents aged 19 and older participated in the survey, providing a margin of error of +/-4.3%.
- **Recreation Questionnaire, Adult** – English and Spanish versions of a recreation questionnaire were available on the project website, designed to provide an opportunity for adults to provide input on priorities and needs. This was available from June 2008 through January 2009 and 130 adults participated.
- **Youth Questionnaire** – Between July and September 2008, youth in the City of Hillsboro were invited to provide input on how and why they use parks and recreation facilities. A questionnaire was available online through the project website and paper copies were distributed by Hillsboro Parks & Recreation youth program coordinators. The web version was presented in both English and Spanish versions. More than 200 youth participated.
- **Focus Groups** – Focus groups were conducted with members of key stakeholder groups in Hillsboro. Planning staff attended regularly scheduled meetings of the Hillsboro Arts & Culture Council (July 2008) and the Latino Outreach Advisory Committee (October 2008) to obtain input. In July 2008, the planning team held a series of three meetings with senior citizens—the first with

Silver Sneakers program participants, the second after the lunch program at the Community/Senior Center, and the third with the Board of the Community Senior Center of Hillsboro. In addition, in October 2008 the planning team convened a focus group with natural resource advocates recruited from Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve staff, volunteers, and other interested members of the public to discuss needs and issues.

- **All-Staff Workshop** – The planning team conducted a workshop for all Hillsboro Parks & Recreation staff in February 2008, as part of the annual departmental retreat. This workshop included an all-staff brainstorming and a small group exercise where staff members were tasked with identifying strengths and weaknesses of the City's parks and recreation services.
- **Community Workshops** – The Hillsboro community was invited to two workshops in September 2008. One workshop was held at the Glenn & Viola Walters Cultural Arts Center and the other was at the Park & Recreation Administration building. The workshops were held to provide participation opportunities in two geographic locations.
- **Trail Count** – Project staff and volunteers participated in the 2008 Metro bicycle and pedestrian trail count survey in September 2008, gaining input on the use of trails in Hillsboro. Seven locations were designated for volunteers to count and survey trail users primarily along the Rock Creek Trail. Over 200 residents were counted during the survey.
- **Public Open House** – One public open house was held in June 2009 at the Civic Center. The event was held to present the draft Master Plan and allow for public comments on the Plan.



This plan draws from the crucial insights and perspectives derived from community members, reflecting community values and vision.

## BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreation provides communities with personal, social, economic, and environmental benefits that contribute to a higher quality of life for community members. The City of Hillsboro has made parks and recreation a priority because of the many benefits these services provide.

In the 2008 *Community Attitude and Interest Survey*, residents in the City of Hillsboro were asked questions about the benefits of recreation,

including which benefits they thought were most important to them and which were most important to the future of the City of Hillsboro. From a list of ten options, the top three choices for both questions are: to improve physical health and fitness, make Hillsboro a more desirable place to live, and improve mental health and reduce stress.

Residents who participated in the Community Intercept event were also asked about the benefits of recreation, with slightly different benefit options. The top choices at the Intercept event were protecting the natural environment and providing opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and nature.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

In addition to a strong base of community input, this plan was developed within the context of other Hillsboro planning efforts and initiatives.

### *Citywide Vision*

The *Hillsboro 2020 Vision and Action Plan* serves as a guide for long-term planning in Hillsboro. The plan, developed through an extensive public participation process and originally adopted by the City Council in 2000, identifies specific strategies and actions related to park planning and development. The plan was updated in 2005 and continues to be a community-based guide for shaping the future of Hillsboro. This *Parks & Trails Master Plan and Natural Resources Analysis* was designed to support the direction of the Hillsboro 2020 Vision and Action Plan. Hillsboro Parks & Recreation can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2020 Vision by implementing the strategies designed to improve the City's park and recreation resources within the Vision and Action Plan's six topic areas:



- Strengthening a common sense of community
- Enhancing all neighborhoods and districts
- Preserving the environment
- Fostering economic opportunity
- Expanding support for and access to arts and cultural activities
- Promoting community health and safety

### *Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Mission and Vision*

The *Three Year Marketing and Communication Plan* is a strategic document developed by Hillsboro Parks & Recreation staff and the

Parks and Recreation Commission. This document seeks to define the department and determine how to communicate the resulting message. An important part of this effort was the development of a mission statement, core values, and vision to define the purpose and values of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation. The mission, values and vision guide all department services, including the provision of recreation programs and services.

### Mission Statement

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation is dedicated to providing diverse, innovative and exceptional recreational and cultural opportunities that enrich the lives of our citizens.

### Vision

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation's long-term vision is to be a progressive and well-respected agency providing exceptional and widely accessible facilities and services that meet the needs, and contribute to the health and strength of a diverse community. We will have an acknowledged position as providing a community service that is critical to the prosperity and quality of life in Hillsboro. Furthermore, we will maintain highly skilled and motivated staff that understand and believe in our mission, core values, vision and goals.

### Core Values

Hillsboro Parks & Recreation is made up of a dedicated team that believes in and operates by the following core values:

***Customer Service and Value*** – we strive to serve residents through responsiveness, honesty, flexibility, equitability, and access to high quality, innovative parks, facilities and services.

***Fostering Community*** – we believe in being connected to and anchored in the community as we aspire to provide solutions to community challenges and work to create positive opportunities for residents.

***Environmental Stewardship*** – we make every effort to be good stewards of the environment and protect natural resources on behalf of the community, as well as provide residents with ample access to the natural environment.

***Encouraging Recreation and Healthy Living*** – we strive to provide recreational and cultural experiences that encourage healthy living and human development for residents of all ages and abilities.



***Responsible Use of Resources*** – we endeavor to achieve efficiency and cost effectiveness in everything we do, and to utilize public resources in serving the community in the most fiscally responsible way possible. We believe that these core values are key elements in the past and current success of the department, and that they will continue to be critical to our future success in serving the needs of the diverse and growing community.

This *Parks & Trails Master Plan* is designed to further the mission and vision for the department, and to respond to the core values.

### ***Other Planning Efforts***

Various City plans and reports are significant in the development of the *Hillsboro Parks & Trails Master Plan and Natural Resource Analysis*, including the Hillsboro 2020 Housing Needs Study and the Hillsboro Comprehensive Plan. These and other key documents are summarized in Appendix A.