

Section 6

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

City of Lancaster Comprehensive Plan

*A Summary of:
The 1997 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan*

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PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The City of Lancaster's Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan was prepared in 1997 by the firm of Carter & Burgess, Inc. in collaboration with the Recreational Development Corporation (4B) Board, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and the citizens of Lancaster. This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides a brief summary of the 1997 Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan. The Master Plan in its entirety is available as a separate document. The purpose of the Master Plan, and the goals and objectives on which the Plan is based, are described herein.

THE PURPOSE:

- ♦ Provide the framework for orderly and consistent park and open space planning and development that function compatibly with the other subsystems within the City.
- ♦ Provide detailed data concerning the recreational needs of the community, and the role of the community and the Parks and Recreation Department in meeting those needs.
- ♦ Provide a community-based needs analysis to establish priorities for park and open space needs.
- ♦ Provide direction in the acquisition and development of park land to meet future needs.

THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- ♦ Distributing active and passive recreation opportunities equally throughout the City to meet the diverse needs of all residents of Lancaster.
- ♦ Creating an open space system to link parks, schools, greenbelts and open spaces in the City while respecting the physical and environmental constraints of the land.
- ♦ Guiding acquisition of park land and the development of outdoor recreation facilities.
- ♦ Enhancing the image and identity of the community.
- ♦ Protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
- ♦ Encouraging coordination between public and private entities within the City and multi-jurisdictional efforts with adjacent cities with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.
- ♦ Making recommendations that consider the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Lancaster.

Carter & Burgess prepared the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan in two phases, and the methodology involved in the Plan's creation is described below

THE FIRST PHASE

An inventory/supply analysis of existing parks and recreation facilities in the City was conducted, which included:

- ♦ The public park and recreation areas owned by the City;
- ♦ The joint facilities of the City and the School District; and
- ♦ The participation levels of all recreation associations and organizations currently using the park facilities.

This section of the Master Plan also compared the standard analysis of the Lancaster park system as compared to the standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. In addition the existing supply of park land and facilities were compared to that of other communities within the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The National Service Research group, as a part of the Carter & Burgess consultant team, then conducted a needs assessment for the City of Lancaster. This assessment was conducted through focus group sessions and citizen surveys, which provided an overview of the needs and priorities for park facilities as identified by the citizens of the City of Lancaster. The information gathered in this phase was analyzed in order to direct the second phase of the process.

THE SECOND PHASE

The following steps were taken within the second phase of the Plan:

- ♦ Ranking the priorities for future park facilities based on citizen input gained during the needs assessment step conducted during phase one;
- ♦ Illustrating the general location of recommended parks, as well as linkages between parks, recreation areas, and open spaces;
- ♦ Establishing guidelines and recommendations to help direct the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks, recreation areas, and open spaces;
- ♦ Generating budget estimates for the list of park facility needs;
- ♦ Making recommendations in terms of policies, ordinances, and sources of funding to help public officials in implementation of the Master Plan;
- ♦ Developing a five-year action plan that provides priorities and budget estimates.

The evaluation of existing park acreage in Lancaster by Carter & Burgess in the Master Plan shows that the City of Lancaster operates six public parks (see Plate 6-1). The park system in 1997 included seven lighted baseball diamonds, twelve tennis courts (out of which ten are lighted), one swimming pool, and a creative playground on two acres of land. In addition, the City operates a recreation center and an 18-hole *Class A* golf course on 150 acres.

The evaluation of existing recreational facilities in Lancaster by Carter & Burgess in the 1997 Master Plan shows that the City of Lancaster has:

- ◆ 4 baseball fields,
- ◆ 11 basketball courts,
- ◆ 3 football field,
- ◆ 5 pavilions/picnic shelters,
- ◆ 41 picnic tables,
- ◆ 11 playgrounds,
- ◆ 15 soccer fields (league),
- ◆ 8 softball fields (league),
- ◆ 1 swimming pools,
- ◆ 14 tennis courts,
- ◆ 0.75 miles of trails, and
- ◆ 3 outdoor volleyball areas.

The priorities for park facilities as identified by the local citizens of the City of Lancaster (ranging from high priority to low priority) in the need-assessment and priority-ranking phase of the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan are as follows:

- ◆ Community Recreation Center,
- ◆ Hike/Bike/Walk Trails,
- ◆ Picnic Shelters/Tables,
- ◆ Playgrounds And Play Equipment,
- ◆ Additional Outdoor Pool,
- ◆ Nature Park,
- ◆ Additional Park Restrooms,
- ◆ Landscaping in Parks,
- ◆ Additional Outdoor Basketball Courts,
- ◆ Community Theater,
- ◆ Amphitheater,
- ◆ Additional Park Parking,
- ◆ Lighted Soccer Fields,
- ◆ Concession Stands,
- ◆ In-Line Hockey Rink,
- ◆ Additional Tennis Courts,
- ◆ Football Fields,
- ◆ Athletic Practice Fields,
- ◆ Additional Sand Volleyball Courts,
- ◆ Additional Lighted Softball Fields, and
- ◆ Additional Lighted Baseball Fields.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for parks by Carter & Burgess on the basis of priorities in the 1997 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan are as follows:

HIGH PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ♦ Acquire land; plan and construct a community recreation center;
- ♦ Acquire approximately 100 acres in north-central Lancaster for a community park;
- ♦ Plan and develop a community park;
- ♦ Upgrade Stanford Park;
- ♦ Plan and develop the *Green Street Site* as a neighborhood park;
- ♦ Upgrade Verona Park;
- ♦ Develop a Trail Master Plan;
- ♦ Plan and develop the undeveloped park property (in Sector 7);
- ♦ Acquire land along Deep Branch; and,
- ♦ Increase maintenance staff and equipment to support additional parks.

MODERATE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ♦ Plan and develop the Indian Canyon property in (Sector 8);
- ♦ Acquire 3-5 acres in Sector 9;
- ♦ Plan and develop a neighborhood park in Sector 9; and,
- ♦ Plan and develop the nine-acre site as a component of the linear trail system.

LOW PRIORITIES:

- ♦ Develop the Rocky Crest site as a joint-use neighborhood park;
- ♦ Acquire 3-5 acres in Sector 6;
- ♦ Acquire 3-5 acres in Sector 7;
- ♦ Provide fishing opportunities at Ten Mile Creek or construct a City Lake; and
- ♦ Acquire 50-100 acres in Sector 9 for a community park.

The 1997 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan also provides:

- ♦ Specific park recommendations,
- ♦ Park land recommendations,
- ♦ Site development guidelines,
- ♦ Park landscaping designs,
- ♦ Design guidelines for park facilities, and
- ♦ Recommendations for open space pertaining to drainageways, floodplains, utility easements, geological formations and steeply sloped areas, wildlife areas, historic and cultural sites, City entries, and thoroughfares.

In addition, the Plan provides maintenance and staffing recommendations and an expenditure analysis for each action item mentioned in the recommendations. This Plan then proceeds to identify policies, ordinances and funding methods, outlining ways of implementing the Plan recommendations.

REVISIONS TO THE MASTER PLAN

The following should be incorporated into the 1997 Park, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan as revisions and additional/updated recommendations.

City–Wide Facilities	Phase II Community Park Facilities
1. Develop a Trail Master Plan	1. Four-Plex Softball Complex
2. Develop Spies Roberts/Indian Canyon Park	2. In-line Hockey/Skate Park/Extreme Park
3. Replace Playgrounds with ADA Compliant equipment – Verona Park, Stanford Park, Kids Square	3. Outdoor pool with water park features
4. Develop neighborhood parks in Planning Sectors 3, 6, 10	4. Special Events Area
5. Renovation of Activity Center Auditorium	5. Additional walking/jogging trails
6. Obtain grants to purchase 189 acres from Lancaster 600	6. Tennis Complex with Pro Shop
7. Renovation of library for new Senior Citizens Center	7. Soccer Complex
8. Preserve green/open space through purchase, land dedication	8. Picnic Pavilion (2)
	9. Frisbee Golf Course
	10. Playground
	11. 2nd Youth Football Field
	12. Rock Climbing Tower
	13. Ropes Course/Outdoor Challenge Course