



**The City of Port Aransas**

# **Parks & Open Space Master Plan**

*City of Port Aransas, Texas*



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# A COMMUNITY EFFORT

On behalf of the City of Port Aransas and the Parks & Recreation Department, it's with great excitement that we bring you the 2022 Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Currently, the City has several ongoing projects that will shape Port Aransas' future. This is no different for the Parks and Recreation Department. As we rebuild our parks to be better after Hurricane Harvey, we are keeping local needs at the Plan's forefront while addressing the city's relationship with ecotourism. The principles set out in this plan will help us implement improvements in our existing park system and plan and prepare for longer-term resilient growth.

Your Parks & Recreation staff will continue to work in step with City Council, area partners, and residents to implement the vision, goals, and actions set out in this plan. We look forward to creating and developing a parks system that provides improved natural spaces with more opportunities for recreation, education, and resilience. We hope that this summary plan accurately captures and reflects your aspirations for the future of the Port Aransas parks and open space system.

Respectfully,  


Colleen Simpson  
Director of Parks & Recreation  
City of Port Aransas

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous individuals provided knowledge, assistance, and insight throughout the process of developing the Port Aransas Parks & Open Space Master Plan. Halff Associates would like to extend special thanks to the many residents and community leaders who offered their insight and support throughout the duration of this study. The following individuals are greatly appreciated for their significant contributions.

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

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# ABOUT PORT ARANSAS

Located on Mustang Island, a barrier island off the Gulf Coast of Texas; the City of Port Aransas, a city of 4,123, is home to a wide variety of people. As the seasons change, so does the City’s population. Vacation homes, rentals, and hotel rooms fill with families and tourists looking to spend their summer on the beach. In the colder months, the city sees an influx of “Winter Texans”; those who travel south in the winter to escape colder temperatures up north. The location is a hot spot for fishing, birding, and coastal recreation. The small-town charm and energy of the tourism and fishing industries combine to create an atmosphere in Port Aransas that is truly unique. The characteristics of Port Aransas continue to attract visitors and permanent residents as the years go by, creating a greater need for a parks and recreation system that can meet the demands of tourists and permanent residents alike.

The Parks and Recreation Department is in charge of managing and maintaining all park properties owned by the City of Port Aransas. These properties include traditional parks, nature preserves, playing fields, cemeteries, and the beach. In total, the Parks and Recreation Department manages and maintains 14 properties that encompass over 1,500 acres of land. There are currently eight members on the Parks and Recreation staff that manage the parks system, recreational programming, Surf Rescue, the Pool at Community Park, Park Grounds, and the Nature Preserve.

Additionally, the Department meets regularly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Advisory Board ) which consists of community stakeholders. The Advisory Board is focused on the direction of the Parks System for the betterment of the community to make decisions and provide updates on the state of the Parks System. While Port Aransas’ population is under 5,000, tourist seasons and special events can bring park system users up to around 80,000 during heavy visitor times. This creates an interesting dynamic that the Parks and Recreation Department has to manage during decision-making processes. Additionally, the population of Port Aransas varies widely in age and sex categories, requiring recreational programing to be very diverse. This dynamic will be explored further in the demographics section.



## CITY PLANNING EFFORTS

Parks and Open Space Master Plans create a nexus between a community’s social, economic, and environmental health, helping to set a framework that guides policy direction and contributes to a community’s quality of life.

Topics addressed in park plans, including land use, transportation, recreational activities, capital programming, economic development, and hazard mitigation, are comprehensive in scope, necessitating input from the community members and visitors who integrate the parks and trails systems and programming into their daily lives. A variety of stakeholders, decision-makers, and city departments reference, implement and monitor the plan, which informs operational, financial, and land use decision-making and outcomes.

The City of Port Aransas is committed to planning for the long-term health and resilience of its year-round residents, beach and business community, and its natural habitats and ecosystems.

The Parks and Open Space Masters Plan is an integral part of the City’s planning efforts to meet the needs and improve the quality of life of this growing community. Current planning efforts and projects that are relevant to the implementation of the Parks and Open Space Plan are illustrated in the graphics on the right hand side of the page.

### PORT ARANSAS CURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS



## PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE

From heavy downpours associated with tropical storms, periods of extreme high tide and rising sea levels, the majority of Port Aransas’ parks are likely to experience inundation at some point in their life cycle. The many Nature Parks and Preserves in the park system and the beaches and dunes that line the City’s Gulf side offer a valuable resilience service. Life on a barrier island carries many risks, and although healthy natural areas will not prevent damages altogether, they can significantly reduce the amount of cost and disruption that occur.



# PARKS OVERVIEW



## REGIONAL PARKS

- Roberts Point Park

## COMMUNITY PARKS

- Community Park

## NATURAL AREAS & GREENSPACES

- Charlie's Pasture Nature Preserve
- Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond
- Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center
- Port Aransas Beach
- Wetland Park

## ATHLETIC FIELDS

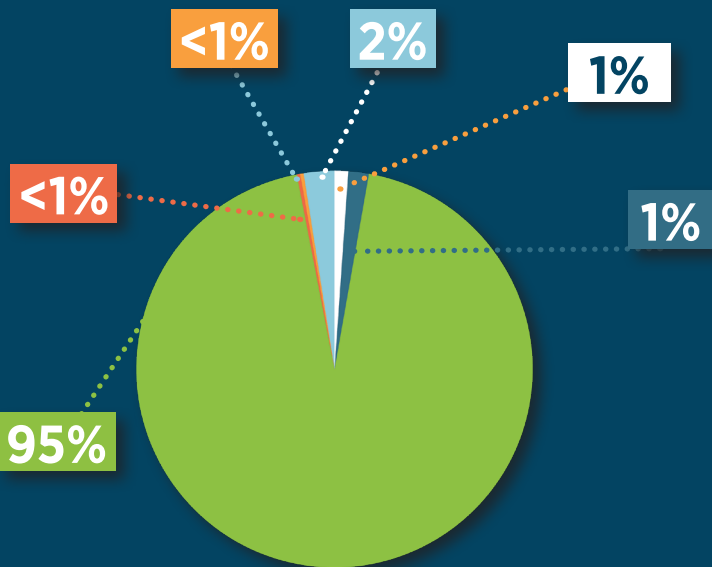
- Jerry McDonald Field

## OTHER PROPERTIES

- Ancel Brundrett Fishing Pier
- Mercer Cemetery
- Royal Palm Cemetery

## NEW PROPERTIES

- 33-Acre Nature Parcel
- Port Aransas Community Center Open Space



Percent Acreage per Park Type

Review a full parks and inventory map on P. 16

**14**  
PARKS &  
NATURAL  
AREAS

**1,491**  
PARK ACRES

**7**  
MILES OF  
TRAIL

**40**  
PARKS &  
RECREATION  
PROGRAMS

**4**  
RECREATION  
LEAGUES

**32**  
UNIQUE  
AMENITIES





# 2 | PLANNING PROCESS

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# PLAN OBJECTIVES

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Port Aransas Parks and Open Space Master Plan was initiated in 2021 to establish an updated vision and strategy for the City’s system of parks and trails, recreation facilities, and recreational programs to address the evolving needs and growth of the community over the next 10 years while supporting the City as a local beach destination. Initiation of the Plan occurred in conjunction with other long-term planning initiatives commissioned by the City, and the resulting Plan document has been drafted to replace the City’s original 2011 parks and recreation master plan following consideration of public preferences identified during the planning process.

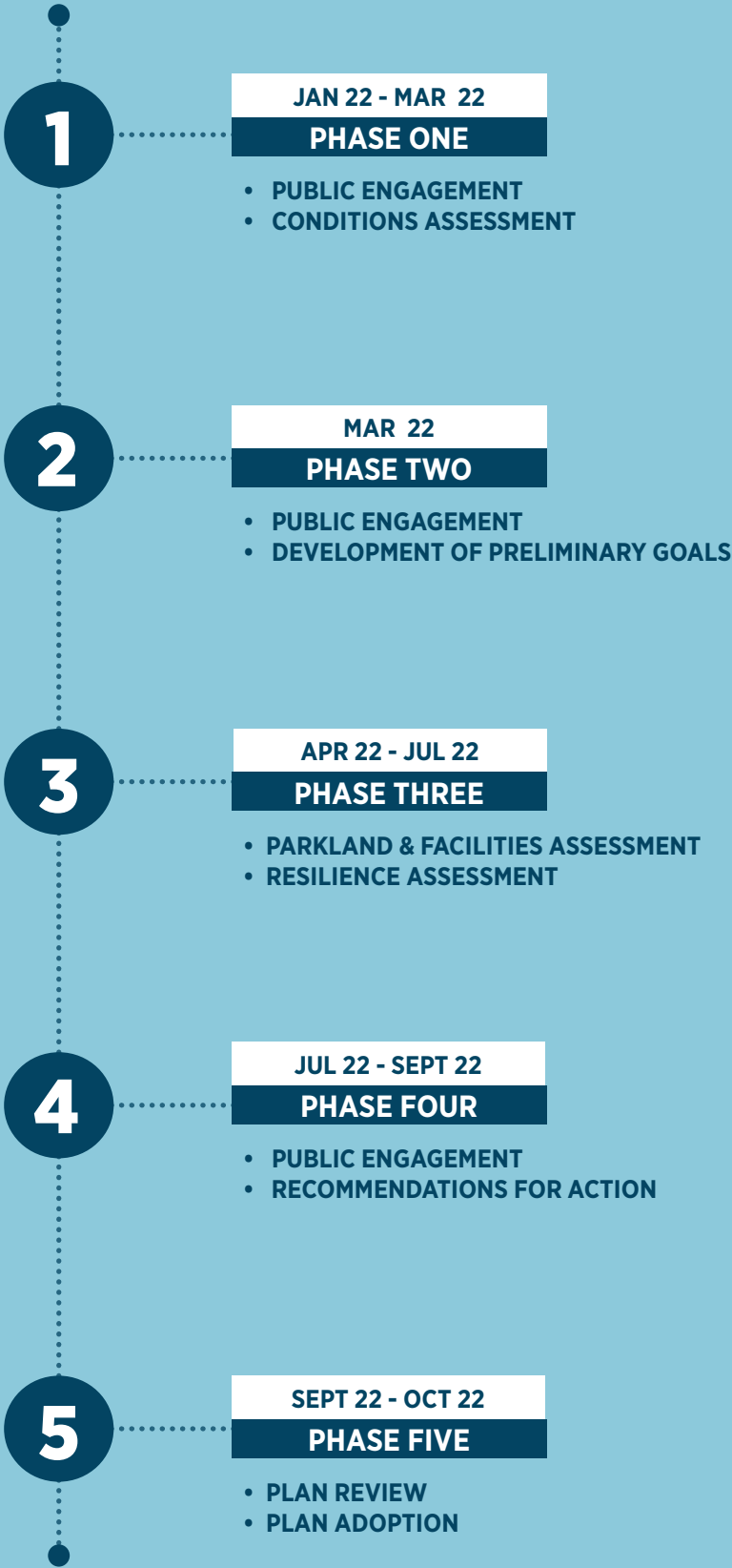


The **Port Aransas Parks and Open Space Master Plan** includes the following:

- A **demographic snapshot** of the local community.
- An **inventory of current park systems and facilities** assets and conditions.
- A **needs assessment** based on parks systems and facilities’ current conditions and future population growth.
- Prioritization of **park improvement projects and investments** to maintain and enhance current facilities.
- A summary of the **community’s vision and preferences** for the current and future Parks and Recreation System.
- **Conceptual designs** for future park layouts and programmatic opportunities.
- A **set of Goals** that address the community’s vision for the Parks and Recreation system and the City’s overall quality of life.
- A set of **prioritized actions** to achieve the Plan’s Goals.

This document provides a high-level, graphic overview of the planning process, analysis and outcomes, and recommendations. Technical memos that detail the community outreach process, park evaluation criteria and assessment, and the park growth and resilience assessment are provided in the Plan’s Appendix.

## PLANNING TIMELINE





# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

The year-long planning effort focused on identifying the features and resources of the parks system valued most by the local community and critical to accommodating visitors and local attractions. Additionally, opportunities to enhance the user experience of parks and trails and recreational programming was explored. The information collected during this process created the foundation from which the goals and actions are built. Public engagement methods and outcomes included the following:



286  
ONLINE SURVEY  
RESPONSES



1  
PUBLIC  
WORKSHOP



4  
PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS



25  
STAKEHOLDER  
INTERVIEW  
PARTICIPANTS



25+  
PARKS DAY  
OF SERVICE  
VOLUNTEERS



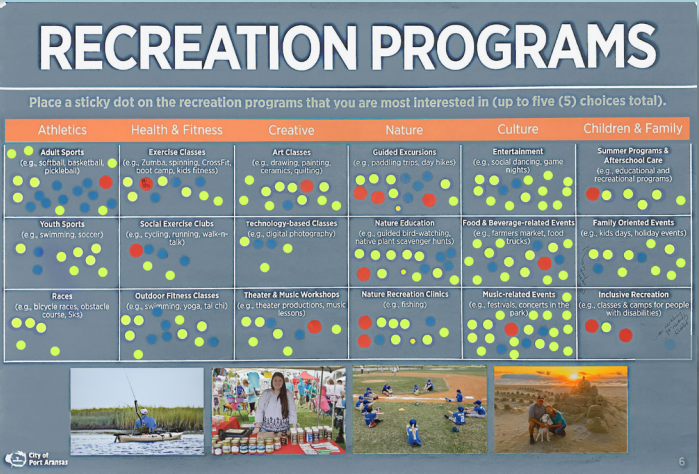
4  
COMMUNITY  
DESIGN SESSIONS

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The City of Port Aransas held an open house to allow the public to further share their perspectives about how parks should grow and change in the future. Visitors mingled in a “come and go” fashion throughout the 4-hour event and were encouraged to attend one of four Park Design Sessions.

Interactive boards were set up to gather individual public opinion. Guests cast their votes using sticky dots and shared how they use the parks today, issues they would like to see resolved, and visions for the parks of the future. The interactive boards shown below are a few examples of the feedback received from the community at the Public Open House.

During the open house, residents spoke of utilizing roadways to walk or bike to parks but expressed a desire for safer pedestrian connections. This is illustrated in the interactive board shown on the left, with trail connections between parks receiving the highest number of votes (25). The results of the second board shown indicate a need for programs geared toward teenagers and adults, a common topic brought up throughout the event. Music Related Events (22), Adult Sports (19), and Food/Beverage Related Events (17) were the top 3 activities for which participants voted.



## PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE



With a significant portion of Port Aransas’ economic activity being attributed to ecotourism, improving park resilience will be essential to the future of the community. Parks and nature preserves are the first line of defense against rising waters and coastal storms. They are also the heart of what attracts visitors and residents to the City.



# ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

## ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

The public engagement process yielded the below insights into the community’s vision, priorities, and expectations for the current and future parks system. These insights contributed to the overarching goals of this Plan.

- SUPPORT LOCAL NATURE-BASED TOURISM WHILE BALANCING THE NEEDS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS.
  - RESPECT AND PRESERVE NATURAL HABITS AND ECOSYSTEMS.
  - IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF TRAILS AND PARKS.
  - PROVIDE A WIDER VARIETY OF MULTI-GENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING.
- FIND FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE PARK CONDITIONS, EXPAND PROGRAMMING, AND GENERATE PARK REVENUE.
  - INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES WHEN CONSTRUCTING NEW PARKS AND DEVELOPMENTS.
  - IMPROVE THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING.
  - PRIORITIZE THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ALL-PURPOSE RECREATION FACILITY.



Day of Service





# 3 | COMMUNITY PROFILE

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# PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Since the City’s founding in the early 1900s, natural spaces, ecosystems, and recreation have been an integral part of developing and sustaining Port Aransas’ identity and economy. Over the past century, the City has prioritized numerous planning efforts, conducted studies, and established programming that helps protect and enhance the natural environment and parks and recreation activities and amenities. The previous City of Port Aransas Parks & Open Space Master Plan was adopted in 2011 and provides an extensive inventory and assessment of the city’s parks and the amenities within them. The first Master Plan informed the history and evolution of the parks system, helping to set the framework for the existing conditions assessment of the current parks and trails.

Additionally, the plan’s previous survey results and recommendations were cross-referenced to evaluate the needs of the community that are still being vocalized today; including multiple calls for an indoor, public space dedicated to recreational activities. The progress of the plan’s implementation was most recently updated in 2018, allowing room for the City to review the challenges and progress of implementing the plan’s goals. The City’s responses were considered when creating the current Master Plan recommendations. The previous Parks & Recreation Parks and Open Space Master Plan also used National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines to provide a Level of Service Assessment for the City. The NRPA guidelines have changed since the last update of this plan, but still provide insight into what the needs of the community were and how they’ve progressed.

In collaboration with other City Departments, the Parks and Recreation Department has prioritized multiple on-going planning efforts. This includes the Comprehensive Plan Update and the new Harbor Master’s Office as a part of the Harbor Master Plan. The City has made plans through the Marina Market Water Development Study to expand waterfront access through an additional marina and improvements to current conditions. The Parks & Recreation Department is currently participating in a project to improve wayfinding through the use of branded signage and, in addition to new projects, the Parks & Recreation Department is still conducting recovery efforts as a result of Hurricane Harvey, which includes the restoration of multiple piers and trails.



Harbor Master Plan | Gignac Architects

# COMMUNITY & PARKS HISTORY

- 1910** — Citizens began calling their city Port Aransas.
- 1931** — Creation of a toll road between Aransas Pass and the Port Aransas Ferry Landing.
- 1941** — The University of Texas Marine Science Institute was formed.
- 1970s** — Protection and preservation of dunes, beaches, and wetlands became a community priority.
- 1992** — Park Needs Assessment developed.
- 1996** — Port Aransas begins celebrating its annual Whooping Crane Festival.
- 2001** — Birding Master Plan completed.
- 2002** — Development of the Nature Preserve at Charlie’s Pasture.
- 2011** — First Parks & Recreation Parks and Open Space Master Plan was developed.
- 2015** — Marina Market Waterfront Development Study was conducted.
- 2017** — Community impacted by Hurricane Harvey.
- 2021** — Harbor Master Plan unveiled to the public.
- 2022** — Parks and Open Space Master Plan update initiated.

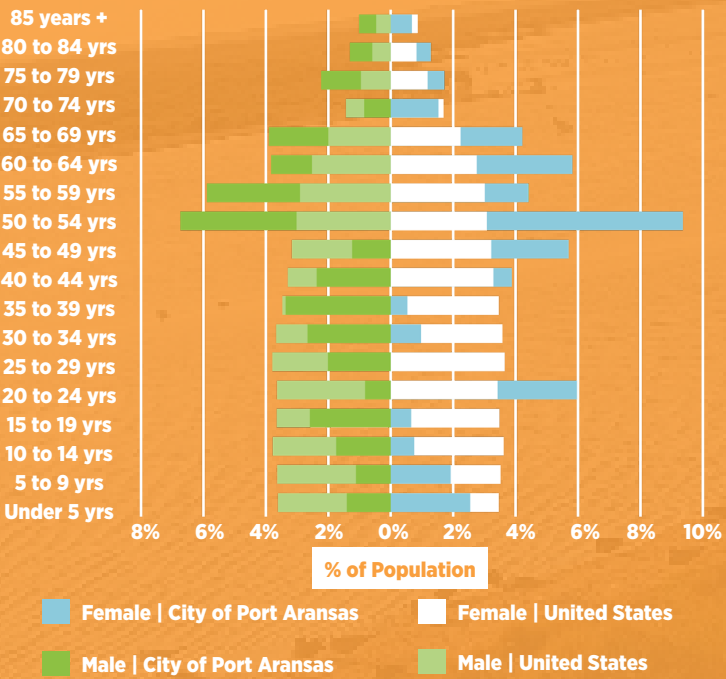




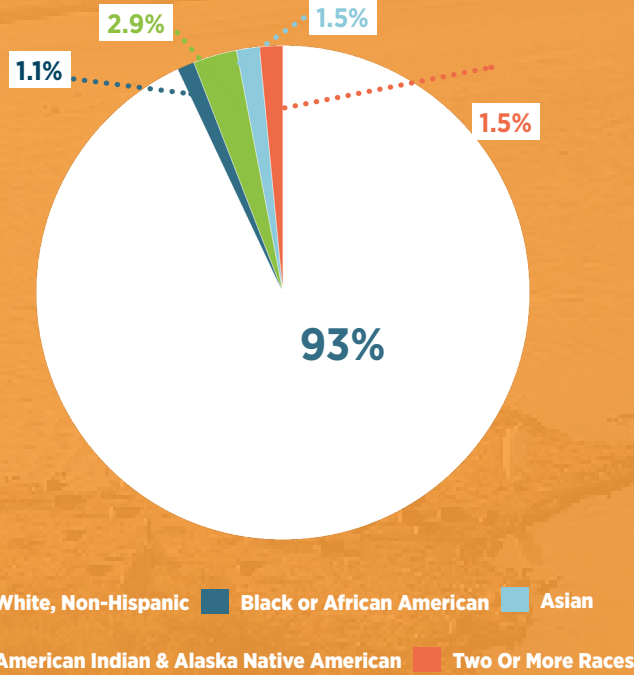
# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The following graphics illustrate demographic trends that are present within Port Aransas. These trends include population size, age and sex, race, income, education, and employment characteristics for the population within the City. All of these factors are essential in determining the current level of service of community parks as well as future recreation needs, as the population grows and changes. There are currently 4,123 people living within Port Aransas (2019 ACS). Generally, the City of Port Aransas has a relatively high median age and is experiencing significant growth. The City's population is extremely homogeneous, with low levels of diversity. Families are generally more educated and higher paid than those of the county and the state.

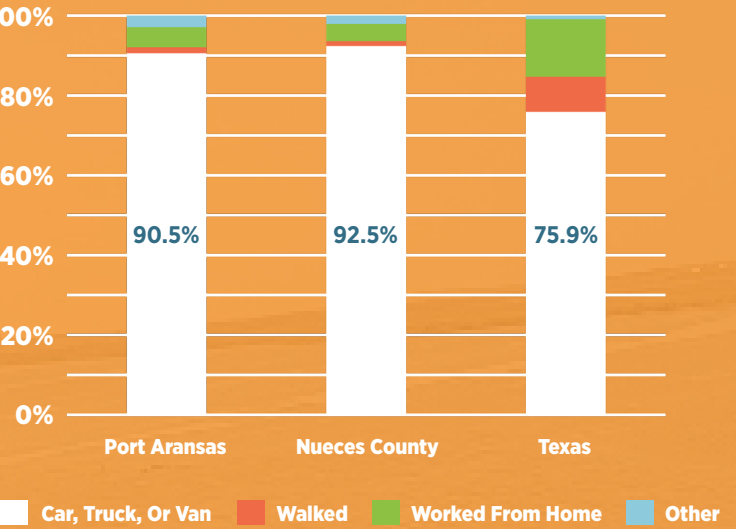
AGE DISTRIBUTION



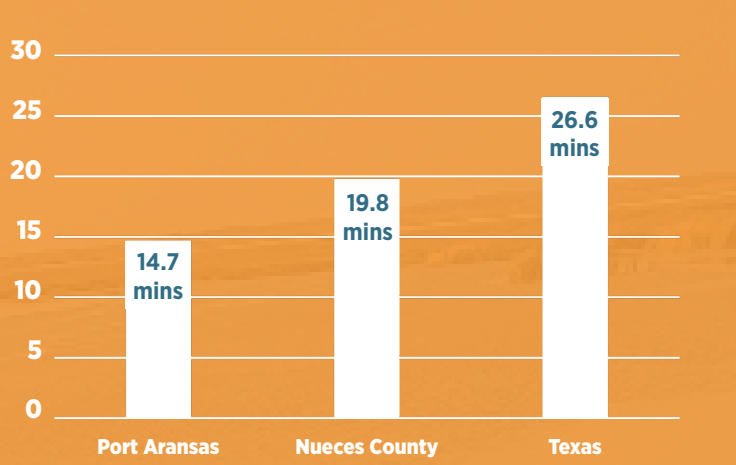
RACE



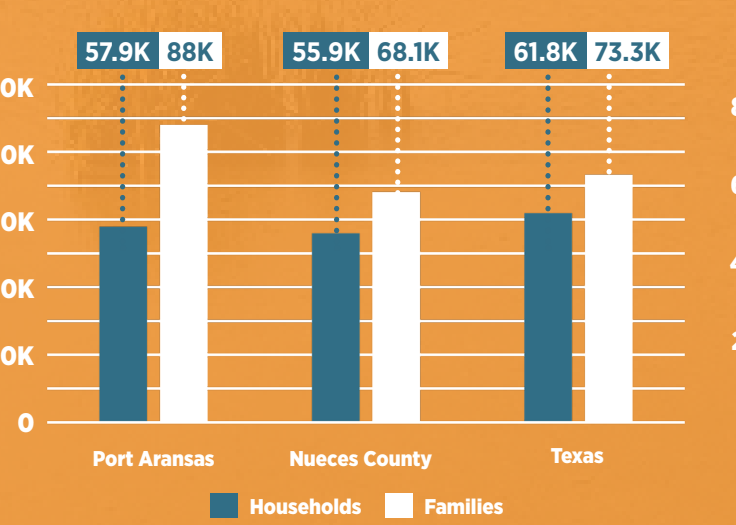
MODE OF TRANSPORTATION



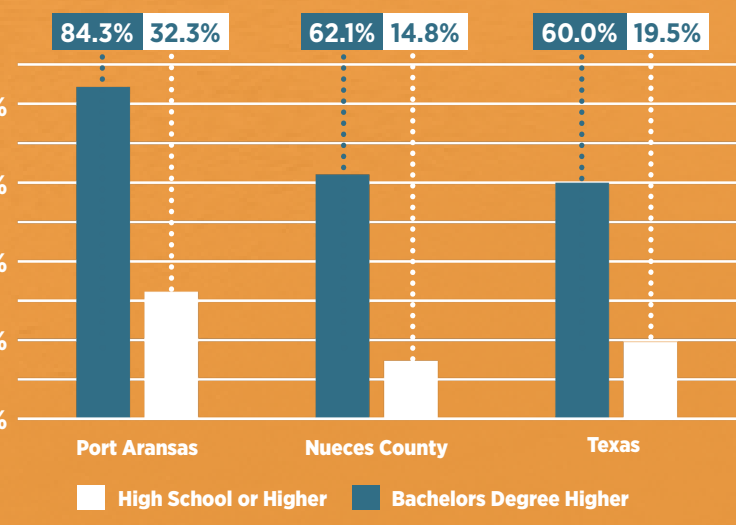
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



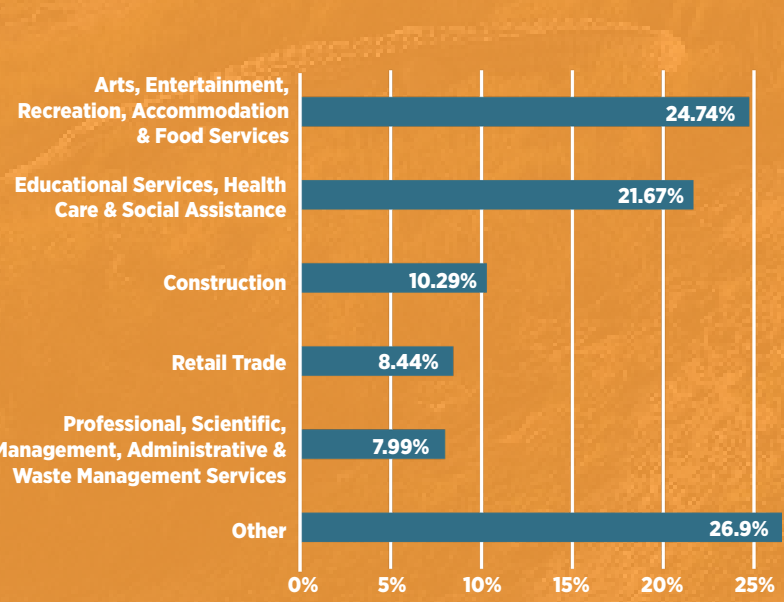
MEDIAN INCOME



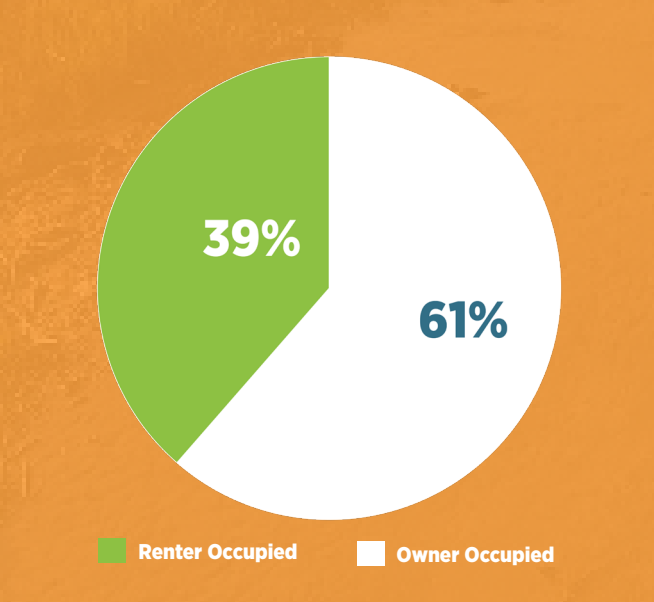
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



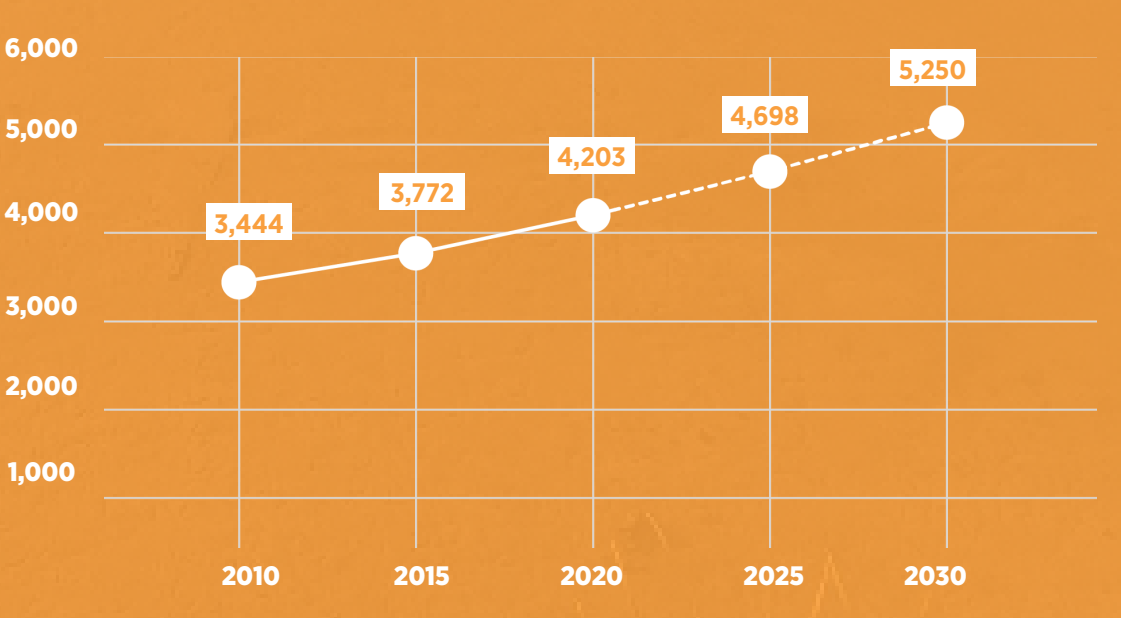
OCCUPATION BY INDUSTRY



HOUSING TENURE



HISTORICAL & PROJECTED POPULATION



# 4 | EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

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CURRENT CONDITIONS

The following chart provides an overall understanding of the types of parks available in Port Aransas and their distribution throughout the community is necessary to determine whether the public is well-served with recreation opportunities.

PARK #	PARK NAME	ATHLETIC FIELDS <sup>1</sup>	PLAYSCAPES	SPORTS COURTS <sup>2</sup>	AQUATICS <sup>3</sup>	WALKING PATHS (MILES)	EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE	OBSERVATION DECK/TOWER	PAVILIONS	BBQ GRILLS	PICNIC UNITS	BENCHES	TRASH CANS	DOG PARKS	DISC GOLF COURSE	GAZEBO	SKATEPARK	PUBLIC RESTROOM	ADDRESS	ACREAGE
Regional Parks (Reg.)																				
1.	Roberts Point Park	1	1	2	0	1.52	0	2	1	6	10	17	8	0	0	0	0	1	301 J C Barr Blvd.	15
Total Reg. Parks		1	1	2	0	1.52	0	2	1	6	10	17	8	0	0	0	0	1		15
Community Park (Comm.)																				
2.	Community Park	5	2	5	1	0.54	0	0	0	0	4	6	8	1	1	0	1	1	700 Clark Pkwy.	20
Total Comm. Park		5	2	5	1	0.54	0	0	0	0	4	6	8	1	1	0	1	1		20
Green Space & Natural Areas																				
3.	Charlie's Pasture Nature Preserve	0	0	0	0	2.64	8	4	1	0	5	6	5	0	0	0	0	1	Port St. / HWY-361	1,217
4.	Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond	0	0	0	0	0.1	2	5	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	410 Cut-Off Rd	2
5.	Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center	0	0	0	0	0.48	2	5	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1356 Ross Ave	0.5
6.	Port Aransas Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Marker D – Marker 9	200
7.	Wetland Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1112 TX-361	0.5
Total Greenspace & Natural Areas		0	0	0	0	3.735	12	14	1	0	7	18	8	0	0	1	0	1		1,420
Athletic Fields																				
8.	Jerry McDonald Field	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	112 S Alister St	2
Total Athletic Fields		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1		2
Other Properties																				
9.	Ancel Brundrett Fishing Pier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	N. Station St.	0
10.	Mercer Cemetery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	Mercer St.	0.2
11.	Royal Palm Cemetery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Royal Palm Ln.	3.19
Total Other		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	0	0	1	0	2		3.21
New Properties (Undeveloped)																				
12.	33-Acre Nature Parcel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	HWY-361	33
13.	Port Aransas Community Center Open Space	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2201 E. Veterans Memorial BLVD.	0.61
Total Other		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		33.61
Total Parks System		7	3	7	1	5.8	12	16	2	6	21	47	32	1	1	2	1	6		1,491

1 Baseball, softball, football, and soccer, 2 Basketball, tennis, sand volleyball, and pickleball, 3 Swimming pools or splash pads.

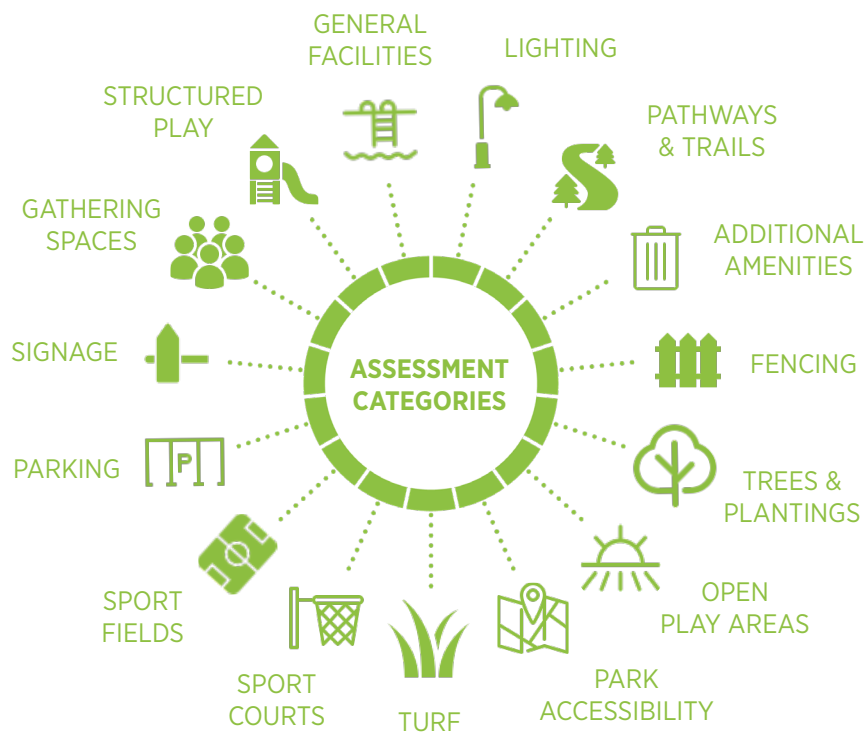




# PARKS CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The conditions-based assessment measures whether a park space and the facilities located on the site are maintained in a condition suitable to be used safely, or to otherwise encourage continued visitation and usage by surrounding residents and other potential users.

The assessment ranks the condition of parkland grounds and facilities according to the 15 categories shown on the right. All properties received a score of one to five for each of the categories. As shown below, the parks with the highest quality conditions are ranked 5.0, whereas failing conditions receive a score of 1.99 or lower.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Overall, the Port Aransas parks system scored **3.21 out of 5** on a weighted scale. This means that the system scored on the lower end of the moderate condition category. Illustrated below are the highest and lowest scoring categories in the Port Aransas Park System. As shown by the assessment scores in the following graphic, there were no parks in the Great Condition category or the Failing Condition category. Seven parks scored high enough to be considered moderate condition and only one park scored in the poor condition category.

### HIGHEST SCORING CATEGORIES



PATHWAYS & TRAILS  
[ 4.2 ]



GATHERING SPACES  
[ 3.8 ]



LIGHTING  
[ 3.6 ]



SIGNAGE  
[ 2.8 ]

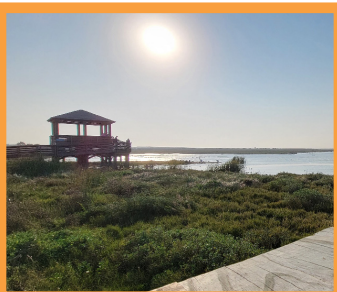


ADDITIONAL AMENITIES  
[ 2.6 ]



SPORT COURTS  
[ 2.5 ]

## ASSESSMENT SCORES



Leonabelle Turnbull  
Birding Center [ 3.67 ]



Jerry McDonald Field  
[ 3.44 ]



Nature Preserve at  
Charlie's Pasture [ 3.33 ]



Roberts Point Park  
[ 3.25 ]



Community Park  
[ 3.13 ]



Wetland Park  
[ 3.13 ]



Port Aransas Beach  
[ 3.00 ]



Joan & Scott Holt  
Paradise Pond [ 2.71 ]

Great [ 5.0 ]	This category is relatively difficult to achieve except with new facilities.
Good [ 4.0 - 4.99 ]	This category reflects properties which are maintained in a good condition across all aspects of the property. Public perception of these properties tends to be high.
Moderate [ 3.0 - 3.99 ]	This category reflects properties beginning to show signs of deterioration across multiple assessment categories. Public perception can shift depending on if park condition is trending upward or downward over time.
Poor [ 2.0 - 2.99 ]	This category reflects properties which are older and haven't seen significant upgrades or been well-maintained. Public perception tends to be negative and reflects increasing concerns about overall health and safety.
Failing [ < 1.99 ]	This category reflects properties which have been neglected and show obvious signs of disinvestment. Public perceptions of these properties most likely limit park usage.

The park conditions assessment and scores are detailed in the Conditions Assessment Memo and can be reviewed in the Plan's Appendix.



# CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

The following page provides preliminary system wide recommendations to improve the overall conditions of the parks and trails system. These are supported by the park condition assessment.

## COMMUNITY GOAL

Strive to establish and maintain a parks and trails system where all facilities and amenities are maintained in a good condition (i.e., 4.0 or better on a park condition reassessment).

## BENCHMARK TARGETS

- Improve the condition of at least 50% of the overall parks and trails system to achieve good condition by 2027.
- Improve the condition of at least 75% of the overall parks and trails system to achieve good condition by 2030.
- Improve and maintain the condition of all parks and trails to achieve a good condition by 2033.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop an official Parks to Standards Program to ensure all parks and trails are all consistently maintained across the system.
- Conduct a park condition assessment every five years or with each plan update.
- Develop a formalized playground risk management inspection schedule and replacement plan.
- Identify and prioritize funding to proactively and comprehensively improve the general site conditions of parks categorized as poor condition by 2027.
- Identify and prioritize funding to proactively improve the general site conditions to good by 2030 for at least 50% of parks currently categorized as moderate condition.



All of the Parks in the Port Aransas Parks System have a significant portion of their land area within the 100-year floodplain, as well as some areas within the Nature Preserve that are within the 500-year floodplain. Following the park specific recommendations laid out in the Conditions Assessment will help improve resilience of the parks throughout the community.

## 5-MINUTE WALK MAP

As illustrated in the 5-minute Walk Map, a good portion of the city is located within 5-minute walking distance to a park. This walking distance is illustrated by a ¼ mile buffer around the perimeter of each park. A majority of the recreational and sporting facilities offered to the public are in Regional and Community Parks located in the northernmost portion of the City. The figure also highlights poor accessibility in the southern portions of Port Aransas, with options limited to Natural Areas and Greenspaces only. This area of the city is mainly comprised of residential areas that would benefit from having parks and facilities closer in proximity.



**Legend**

- Parks
- Cemeteries
- City Limits
- Roads
- Schools
- Trails
- 5-Minute Walk to Park**
  - Regional Parks
  - Community Parks
  - Natural Areas

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community



# 5 | PARK GROWTH

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# THE FUTURE OF OUR PARKS

In order to identify the current and future needs of the community, a growth needs analysis was conducted for Port Aransas. The intent of the analysis is to develop a clearer picture of the overall system (i.e., understanding the gaps, overlaps and deficiencies) and to make targeted recommendations for the future. In Port Aransas, the planning team employed the three Texas Parks and Wildlife Department assessment methodologies illustrated below to discover the current needs of the community and explore how those needs will evolve in the future. The full results of all assessments can be found in Appendix A.

## DEMANDS-BASED ASSESSMENT

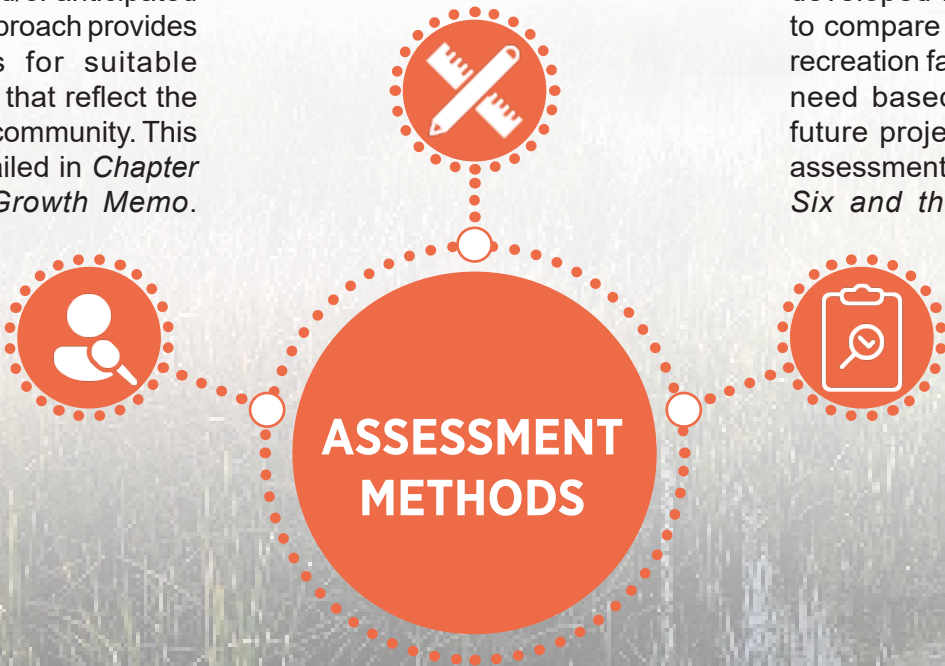
This assessment uses citizen input to determine actual and/or anticipated park usage. This approach provides recommendations for suitable recreation facilities that reflect the desires of the local community. This assessment is detailed in *Chapter Two & the Park Growth Memo*.

## CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

This assessment analyzes the physical condition of facilities and amenities to reach conclusions regarding the performance of the system as a whole and its individual elements. This assessment is detailed in *Chapter Four and the Conditions Assessment Memo*.

## STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT

This assessment uses the locally developed level of service ratios to compare existing parkland and recreation facilities to the projected need based on the current and future projected population. This assessment is detailed in *Chapter Six and the Resilience Memo*.



## RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT



Due to the City’s coastal location, a resilience assessment was conducted in addition to the aforementioned assessment methods. This assessment considers how to maintain a park system that is more resilient to environmental shocks and stressors. The details of this assessment are addressed throughout the Plan and in the *Resilience Memo*. The maps on the following pages illustrate the findings of the park system’s resilience to future floods and other environmental stressors.

## PARK & TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Due to the diverse nature of parks and their functions, four park classifications were developed to better understand how the community is served. This master plan also identifies two trail classifications.

### PARKS




### TRAILS







PARK RESILIENCE | WETLAND MAP


**Legend**


 Parks

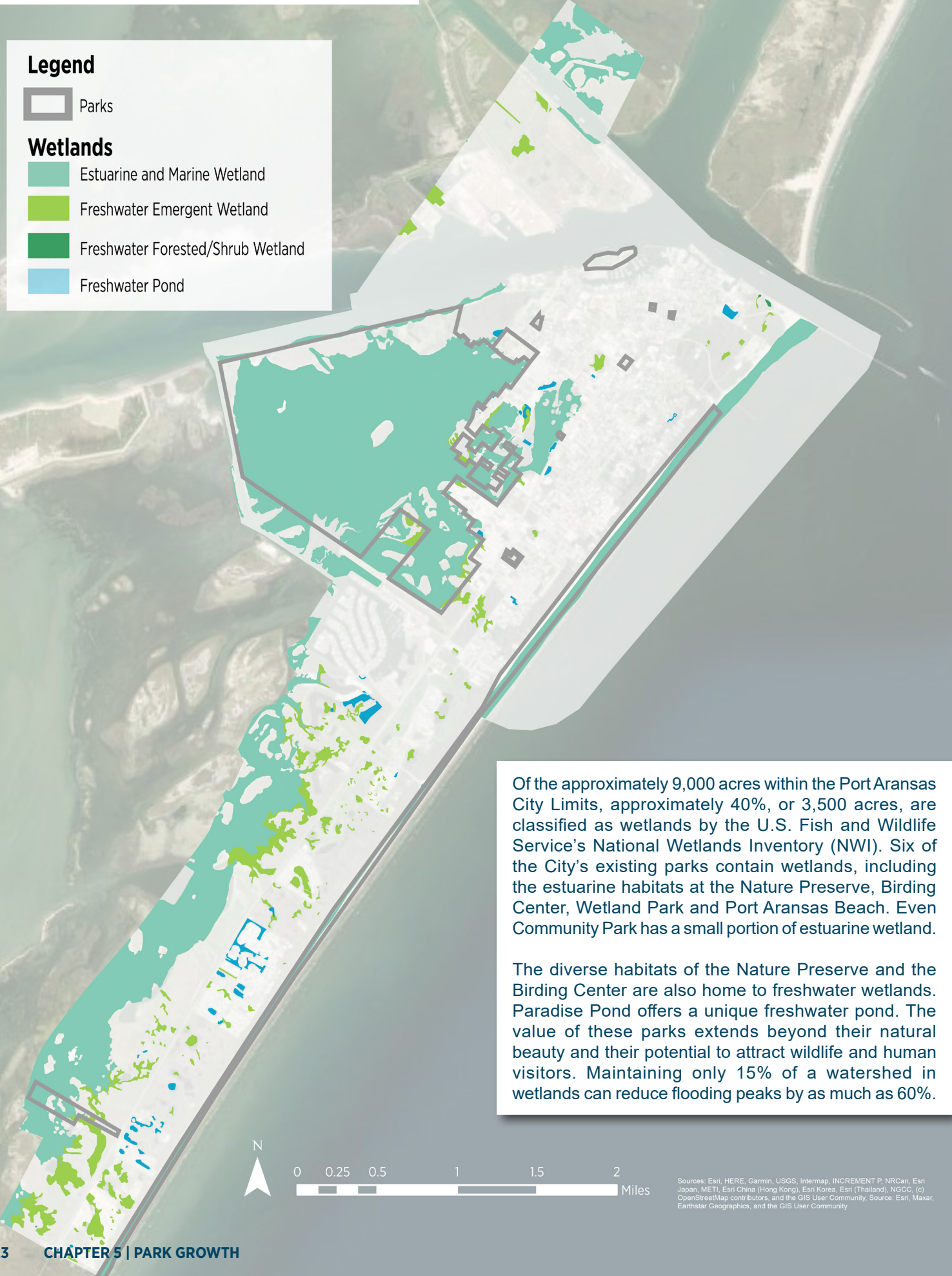
**Wetlands**

 Estuarine and Marine Wetland

 Freshwater Emergent Wetland

 Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland

 Freshwater Pond




Of the approximately 9,000 acres within the Port Aransas City Limits, approximately 40%, or 3,500 acres, are classified as wetlands by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). Six of the City's existing parks contain wetlands, including the estuarine habitats at the Nature Preserve, Birding Center, Wetland Park and Port Aransas Beach. Even Community Park has a small portion of estuarine wetland.

The diverse habitats of the Nature Preserve and the Birding Center are also home to freshwater wetlands. Paradise Pond offers a unique freshwater pond. The value of these parks extends beyond their natural beauty and their potential to attract wildlife and human visitors. Maintaining only 15% of a watershed in wetlands can reduce flooding peaks by as much as 60%.


Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community


PARK RESILIENCE | FLOOD ZONES


**Legend**


 Parks

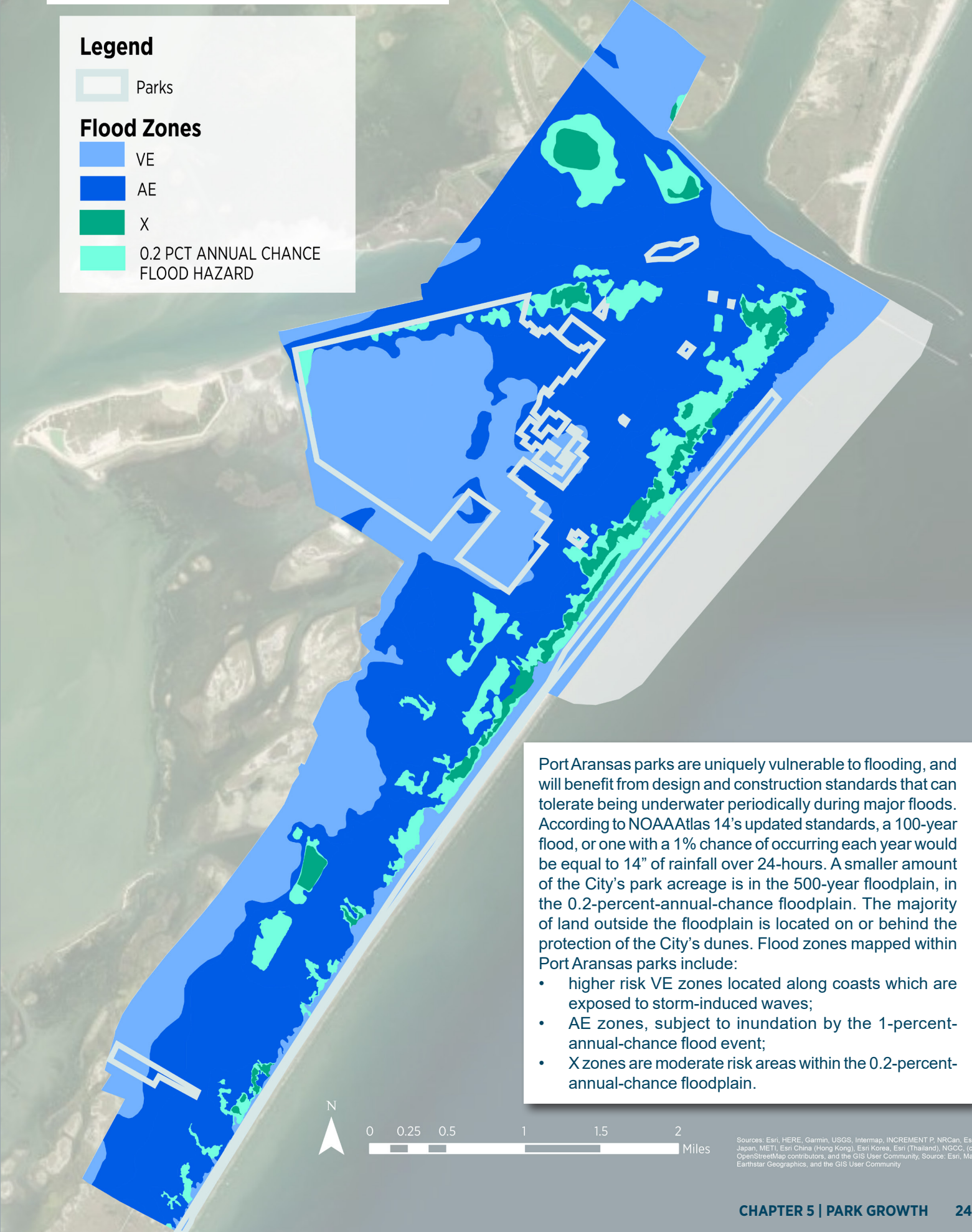
**Flood Zones**

 VE

 AE

 X

 0.2 PCT ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD



Port Aransas parks are uniquely vulnerable to flooding, and will benefit from design and construction standards that can tolerate being underwater periodically during major floods. According to NOAA Atlas 14's updated standards, a 100-year flood, or one with a 1% chance of occurring each year would be equal to 14" of rainfall over 24-hours. A smaller amount of the City's park acreage is in the 500-year floodplain, in the 0.2-percent-annual-chance floodplain. The majority of land outside the floodplain is located on or behind the protection of the City's dunes. Flood zones mapped within Port Aransas parks include:

- higher risk VE zones located along coasts which are exposed to storm-induced waves;
- AE zones, subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event;
- X zones are moderate risk areas within the 0.2-percent-annual-chance floodplain.

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community



# PARK OPPORTUNITIES

## GROWTH TARGETS

Today, the City’s current inventory of parkland acreage as a whole is sufficient but has existing gaps and will not adequately serve the future needs of the population. The City’s current acreage of Regional parks and Neighborhood parks is at a deficit, -5.6 ac. and -4.1 ac. respectively. While in terms of acreage, the deficit is slight, due to the size of the community and its ecotourism-based economy, these deficits are felt significantly. The Regional Parks classification is only lacking by approximately 5 acres, however, there is no Neighborhood Park acreage in the City. It’s important to note that the Natural Areas & Greenspaces classification does not have a set recommendation for acreage but is at a surplus. This is largely due to the magnitude of the Nature Preserve and beach. The acreage of these spaces creates breathing room for the influx of visitors during tourism seasons but will not be enough to fill the gaps in park function as the City grows.

CURRENT PERCENT OF NEED MET BY EXISTING PARKS ONLY, 2021						
PARK CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING ACREAGE	CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (AC. PER 1,000 RESIDENTS <sup>1</sup> )	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (AC. PER 1,000 RESIDENTS <sup>1</sup> )	TARGET ACREAGE	ACREAGE SURPLUS/ DEFICIT	% OF NEED MET (2020)
Regional Parks	15.0	3.6	2.0 to 5.0 ac.	9 to 21 ac.	+6 to -6	182% to 73%
Community Parks	20.6	5.0	3.0 to 5.0 ac.	13 to 21 ac.	+7 to -1	162% to 97%
Neighborhood Parks	0.0	0.0	1.0 to 2.0 ac.	5 to 9 ac.	-5 to -9	0%
Natural Areas & Greenspace	1450	351.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup>The population is based upon 2019 Census Bureau data of 4,123 persons.

FUTURE PERCENT OF NEED MET BY EXISTING PARKS ONLY, 2021						
PARK CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING ACREAGE	2030 EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE (AC. PER 1,000 RESIDENTS <sup>1</sup> )	2030 TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (AC. PER 1,000 RESIDENTS <sup>1</sup> )	TARGET ACREAGE	ACREAGE SURPLUS/ DEFICIT	% OF NEED MET (2030)
Regional Parks	15.0	2.9	2.0 to 5.0 ac.	11 to 27 ac.	+4 to -12	143% to 57%
Community Parks	20.6	3.9	3.0 to 5.0 ac.	16 to 26 ac.	+4 to -6	127% to 76%
Neighborhood Parks	0.0	0.0	1.0 to 2.0 ac.	6 to 11 ac.	-6 to -11	0%
Natural Areas & Greenspace	1450	276.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup>The population is based upon 2030 projection of 5,250 persons.

In order to meet the demands of the projected future population, existing parks will need to be improved and new parks will need to be acquired. The Parks Growth Opportunity Map shown on the right illustrates the accessibility of existing parks and provides suggestions for future park locations that would increase the equability of park access to the whole city. The following conceptual plans illustrate how existing parks in the system can be improved and how new spaces can be designed to serve the communities current and future needs.

## PARKS GROWTH OPPORTUNITY MAP

When determining the level of service needs of the community, it is important to analyze both quantity and location of parkland acreage. A generic goal to strive for to achieve optimal pedestrian-based accessibility is for at least one park to be within a five-minute walking distance to all residents. This comes from the idea that the five-minute walk is the average distance a pedestrian is willing to walk before choosing to drive. Typically, this translates to ¼ mile.





# PARK GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

## ROBERTS POINT PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Roberts Point Park is Port Aransas' only regional park. It is often the site of holiday festivals, live music and unique sporting events. The geography of the park attracts locals and visitors who are interested in viewing the boats and wildlife that frequent Aransas Pass. With a few improvements, the space within Roberts Point Park can be maximized to meet the needs of the various types of users who visit the park.

### ROBERTS POINT PROSPERED PARK AMENITIES

- 1

BOARDWALK FISHING ZONE
- 2

BOARDWALK WALKING ZONE AND TRAIL LOOPS
- 3

AMPHITHEATER
- 4

RESTROOMS
- 5

ALL-PURPOSE FIELD
- 6

COVERED COURTS
- 7

PAVILION
- 8

NEW PLAYGROUND
- 9

OBSERVATION TOWERS
- 10

CONTINUOUS GREENSPACE
- 11

INDIVIDUAL COVERED PICNIC BENCHES
- 12

FISHING PIER
- 13

INTERACTIVE FOUNTAIN
- 14

OBSERVATION POINT
- 15

RECONFIGURED PARKING



## ROBERTS POINT PARK CONCEPT PLAN



Notable features of this park concept include various shade structures positioned throughout the park that allow visitors to enjoy both passive and active recreation while limiting sun exposure. Additionally, a widened trail along the bulkhead provides dedicated space for fishermen and pedestrians.



# PARK GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

## COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Community Park is a hub for various types of recreation and sporting events. In addition to the ballfields, the park is also the site of the Community Pool, a skate park and a dog park. Trails connect this park to the Nature Preserve at Charlie's Pasture and a hike and bike trails connects the park to the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center. The following concept plan provides improvements that will elevate the user experience at Community Park.

### COMMUNITY PARK PROPOSED AMENITIES

- 1

BALLFIELDS
- 2

CONCESSIONS/RESTROOM
- 3

BATTING/PITCHING CAGE
- 4

NEW PLAYGROUND
- 5

PAVILION
- 6

PICKLEBALL COURT
- 7

SKATEPARK
- 8

POOL
- 9

SPLASH PAD
- 10

DOG PARK
- 11

PARK DEPARTMENT ADMIN
- 12

INDOOR COURTS
- 13

TRAILS
- 14

MAINTENANCE DEPOT



### PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE

Given the many threats posed by its coastal location, the Port Aransas park system is relatively resilient. The City's unique natural setting is part of its identity, providing restorative spaces to residents and visitors. The nature parks and greenspace in the parks system enhance the city's identity, create an economic base and shelter homes, businesses and infrastructure from the changes that are inevitable in a barrier island environment. Investment in the restoration and renewal of the City's natural habitats may have benefits that go far beyond attracting residents and visitors for up close encounters with wildlife. Particularly along the Corpus Christi Bay, these areas can be a lifesaver for future generations. There are a number of different avenues that the City could explore to enhance its protective buffer against high waters, which might include acquiring more parkland, but also include market-driven strategies that may increase local attractions and have a positive impact on the City's economy. Targeted upgrades and improvements have the potential to make a significant impact on the resilience and popularity of existing parks.

## COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT PLAN



Due to the popularity of the park and its current functions, Community Park is a great potential site for an indoor recreation center.



# PARK GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

## COMMUNITY CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD PARK CONCEPT PLAN

A new parcel has been acquired adjacent to the Community Center. The land will act as a small park with gathering spaces, walkways, and additional parking access.

### COMMUNITY PARK AMENITIES

- 1

PAVILION
- 2

SHADED PEDESTRIAN PATH
- 3

WAYFINDING & HISTORICAL SIGNAGE
- 4

BENCHES & TABLES
- 5

SCULPTURE/WATER FEATURE
- 6

OPEN LAWN/FLEX SPACE



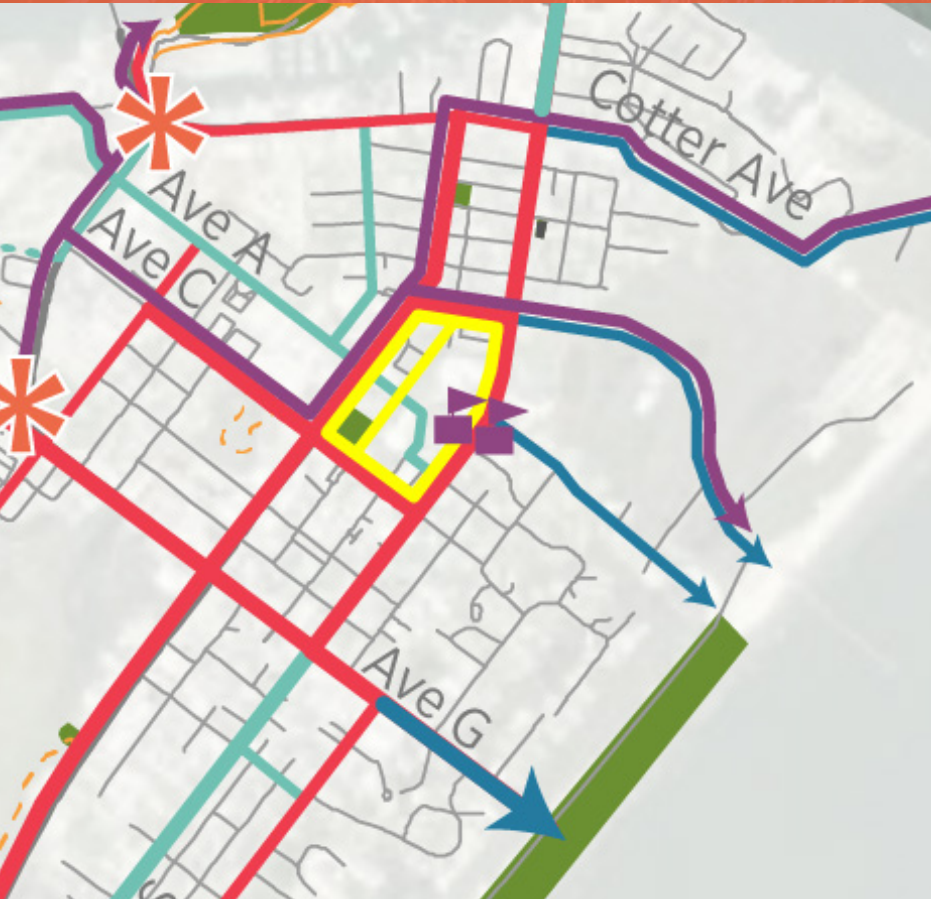


# PARK MOBILITY & ACCESS

A well-established trail network connects the public to multiple areas of interest and can encourage adjacent development. Designated bike lanes, sidewalks, and other facilities provide an easy and safe way for people to access parks. There are approximately 6.8 miles of trails in Port Aransas. Much of this trail network was destroyed by Hurricane Harvey but is in the process of being rebuilt. Many of the trails in Port Aransas are located within parks, however, progress is being made toward creating trails that connect parks and other locations. Provide below are a list a benefits that trail provide.

## TRAIL BENEFITS:

- Trails can support and assist the facilitation of economic development through the creation of greenways which, can be used to revitalize existing areas, improve neighborhoods, provide access to local businesses and restaurants, and provide tourism opportunities
- Trails encourage a healthy lifestyle by creating opportunities to participate in exercise whether by walking, running, and biking
- Trails can offer a variety of options for recreation for multiple age groups
- Trails can be planned to connect parks, and major destinations like schools and the beach
- Trails can improve the transportation system by providing alternative ways to get to important destinations and provide regional connections
- Accessible trails offer aging residents and visitors the opportunity to remain connected to nature and their community



## SCHOOL ZONE MOBILITY NETWORK

School sites generally provide some level of recreational access for the area's youth. They also act as connection points between residents and parks because of how often students come and go from campuses. Situating parks near schools and neighborhoods can provide a safe place for children and teenagers to gather and play. The next step is to make the City's campuses more accessible through a network of connective trails, on-street cycling paths and sidewalks.

## PARKS MOBILITY MAP



**Legend**

Parks

Cemeteries

City Limits

Roads

Schools

**Mobility Classifications**

Major Street Based Corridor

Minor Street Based Corridor

Trail Corridor

Future Bike & Pedestrian Corridor

Future Nature Trail

Beach Access Corridor\*

Parks Connector\*

Routes to School

Future Intersection Improvements

\*Heavier lineweight indicates development priority.



# 6 | PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

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# TOP TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Port Aransas Parks and Open Space Master Plan was the result of a year-long, community-driven planning process that focused on identifying key challenges and opportunities the City will need to address over the next decade. The below recommendations address the top priorities for the community. A set of **5 Goals and 116 Actions**. Park Recommendations, provide direction for future planning efforts to achieve the community’s vision for the current and future parks and trail system.

- 1    **ROBERTS POINT PARK RENOVATIONS**
- 2    **MULTI-PURPOSE PARKS OFFICES & RECREATION FACILITY**
- 3    **PARKLAND DEDICATION ORDINANCE IMPROVEMENTS**
- 4    **COMMUNITY CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD PARK**
- 5    **NEW NATURE PARK & PADDLING ACCESS**
- 6    **WAYFINDING & INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**
- 7    **ENHANCE PARKS & TRAILS CONNECTIONS**
- 8    **EXPAND & UPDATE AQUATICS FACILITIES**
- 9    **NEW PARKLAND FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & FLOOD MITIGATION**
- 10    **EXPAND SURF RESCUE SERVICES**

\*Recommendations to achieve this top ten list are included in the following section.





# GOALS & ACTIONS

## COMMUNITY GOALS

The information gleaned from discussions with City Staff, the existing conditions analysis, and the public engagement process informed the focus areas critical to realizing the community’s vision and addressing the parks system’s needs assessment. With the direction of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, these insights were used to develop **Five Goals** which address the key topics identified as important to the community and the long-term success of the Parks and Recreation System. The Goals include:



GOAL 1

RESIDENT & VISITOR NEEDS

The Port Aransas Parks System provides recreational spaces and amenities that meet the needs of the local residents, contributing to a strong sense of community and bolstering the experiences of visitors.



GOAL 2

SAFE & CONNECTED

The Port Aransas Parks System knits the community together, providing safe and vibrant connections to the city’s local destinations and resources.



GOAL 3

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Port Aransas Parks System is a steward of the environment, with parks, trails, and recreational amenities designed to promote the preservation of existing habitats, resources, and local ecosystems services.



GOAL 4

DESIGN FOR AN ACTIVE LIFE CYCLE

The Port Aransas Parks System creates space for all ages, stages, and capabilities, through inclusive design best practices and recreational and cultural programming opportunities.



GOAL 5

RESILIENT DESIGN

The Port Aransas Parks System considers and incorporates the natural and built environment into its design to enhance the resilience of all public spaces, parks, and recreational facilities to withstand future natural and man-made hazards and cascading events.

## NEXT STEPS

A set of corresponding actions that address immediate, actionable projects as well as longer-term policy and programmatic initiatives were developed to achieve each Goal. In total, there are 116 Actions. Actions were designed to address the core functions and activities of the Parks and Recreation Departments, specifically actions that address the following:

- Operational & Maintenance Needs:**  
Actions help address the daily and ongoing procedures and projects developed and managed by City Staff to protect and preserve natural open and recreational spaces for unstructured and programmed recreational activities.
- Recreation & Programming Needs:**  
Actions help address specific projects and long-term policy initiatives to enhance the design and amenities of parks, trails, and facilities to meet the needs of the current and future community and improve the overall user experience.
- Communication Needs:**  
Actions help address ways to promote and communicate with the community and visitors about parks programming and initiatives and to enhance the overall accessibility and safety of the parks and trail system through branding and wayfinding.

Actions have been grouped into four implementation timeframes, as illustrated in the below graphic. The actions will be implemented over a ten-year horizon, and will address immediate projects and opportunities as well as long-term strategies that will help the city plan for and fund future park improvement, concepts, programming, and strategic initiatives.

1 YEAR	2 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	6-10 YEARS
IMMEDIATE	SHORT TERM	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM

The recommendations that follow represent the City’s steps forward to implementing the Plan. The Plan is a living document and should be reviewed by the City on an annual basis to track and evaluate the progress of the Plan’s implementation and to assess the Plan’s priorities and actions. Milestone dates should be established every two to three years to determine if updates to the Plan are necessary to better reflect the current conditions and goals of the community.







## GOAL ONE RESIDENT & VISITOR NEEDS

The Port Aransas parks system provides recreational spaces and amenities that meet the needs of the local residents, contributing to a strong sense of community and bolstering the experiences of visitors.

### FEEDBACK THEMES

TARGETED  
TOURISM

LAND  
ACQUISITION

COMMUNITY  
GATHERING SPACES

HEALTH & SAFETY

MARKETING &  
EDUCATION

### 1 YEAR

#	ACTION
1	Develop and maintain an inventory of vacant and undeveloped parcels and create a strategy timeline for purchasing and developing sites for local parks and recreation facilities.
2	Identify local, county, and regional partners to develop, promote, and manage tourism opportunities throughout the parks system.
3	Using National Recreation Parks Association (NRPA) standards, establish performance measures for parks and recreation operations.
4	Create a plan for regular upkeep of park conditions and specialized maintenance efforts; prioritize projects for Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding.
5	Establish local public-private partnerships to explore potential sponsorships and opportunities to promote and finance parks programming and services.
6	Reassess fees for special events rentals, as well as both local and out-of-town sporting events.
7	Update City ordinances to more clearly link new residential development to dedication of parkland or “in lieu of contribution” to the development of new recreation facilities.
8	Conduct an audit of all current recreational programs opportunities to determine attendance, cost, staffing needs and program history and recommendations for streamlining current program offerings.
9	Coordinate with Chamber of Commerce wayfinding project to develop location and design standards for future wayfinding and interpretive signage to be added as an addendum to the Parks Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan.
10	Develop a neighborhood park design for the parcel adjacent to the Community Center.
11	Develop a funding strategy that identifies funding sources, timelines and park project eligibility.
12	Identify potential locations for an all-purpose recreation facility.

### 2 YEARS

#	ACTION
13	Develop an official Parks Standards Program to ensure all parks and trails are all consistently maintained across the system.
14	Identify how programming opportunities can generate increased tourism revenue for the Parks System.
15	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to identify strategies to manage the impact of tourism on local resources and amenities, including neighborhood parks, natural habitats, and roadway, trail, and parking facilities.
16	Enhance and improve the community Dog Park through beautification projects and with additional amenities, such as shading, seating options, landscaping and vegetation improvements, and designated areas for small and large dogs.
17	Work with Parks Board to evaluate the needs of residents, business and non-profit communities, and tourists to develop and market programming and activities for an all-purpose recreation facility.
18	Partner with local public safety authorities and the beach lifeguarding program to develop a “Parks and Recreation Public Safety Manual” and marketing campaign to educate residents and tourists on best practices to maintain a safe environment, particularly in high tourist seasons.
19	Improve signage at the entrance to Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond.
20	Build out the design for the Community Center neighborhood park.

### 3-5 YEARS

#	ACTION
21	Purchase leased lot at Community Park.
22	Continue to improve the quality and maintenance of the public restroom at Roberts Point Park.
23	Expand interactive water amenities, such as splashpads, fountains, pools, slides, changing area/locking room, and water structures and facilities to meet the needs of local residents and to support tourism opportunities.
24	Partner with local non-governmental organizations and non-profits to develop temporary programming and activate open spaces in local neighborhoods, such as pop-up parks, farmers’ markets and other events.
25	Enhance the community’s status as an ecotourism destination by designating beach access points with special resources for ecotourism activities, including interpretive signage and facilities which may include benches, picnic shelters, bird blinds, showers or others as appropriate.

### 6-10 YEARS

#	ACTION
26	Identify and prioritize funding to proactively improve the general site conditions to good by 2030 for at least 50% of parks currently categorized as moderate condition.





## GOAL TWO SAFE & CONNECTED

The Port Aransas Parks System knits the community together, providing safe and vibrant connections to the city’s local destinations and resources.

### FEEDBACK THEMES

WAYFINDING

CONNECTED  
TRAIL SYSTEMS

BIKE & PEDESTRIAN  
INFRASTRUCTURE

MARKETING &  
MESSAGING

#### 1 YEAR

#	ACTION
27	Identify opportunities to develop new trailheads and connect trails to neighboring communities, parks, public spaces, and tourist and commercial destinations.
28	Identify pedestrian and biking trail connections through the preparation of a Trails and Bikeways Plan.
29	Improve enforcement of restrictions for bicycles and domestic animals at the Nature Preserve sites by increasing the frequency of police patrols.
30	Ensure that all park amenities are compliant with state statutes in order to promote public health and safety.

#### 2 YEARS

#	ACTION
31	Identify barriers to accessing parks, facilities, and public spaces.
32	Identify strategy for increasing beach safety by adding additional lifeguard stations and emergency response signage, such as mile markers.
33	Establish a Mobility Technical Committee with the public works, engineering, and parks departments to coordinate the timing and priority of new and maintenance construction CIP projects related to trails, parks, and bicycle infrastructure.
34	Work with local business and tourism community to promote the use of multi-modal transportation.
35	Add security cameras to Community Park & Roberts Point Park for police.
36	Create safer passage for pedestrians by adding striped crosswalks leading to parks and natural areas throughout the city.
37	Develop wayfinding signage, safety guidelines, and educational marketing to designate visitor destinations and to promote the safety of pedestrian and multi-modal users in public spaces and right-of-way, such as golf carts, cyclists, and individuals on scooters.
38	Consider adding parking to southern portion of McDonald Field.
39	Improve access and visibility to the Nature Preserve at Charlie’s Pasture entrances through wayfinding, gateway features, and marketing.

#### 3-5 YEARS

#	ACTION
40	Increase the frequency and visibility of beach safety signage to warn residents and visitors about surf, tidal conditions and seasonal concerns such as jellyfish rip currents.
41	Create and maintain bicyclist and pedestrian crash site inventory to identify locations for potential street infrastructure and crossing enhancements.
42	Improve pedestrian access to Community Park by enhancing street crossings and designating locations for multi-modal infrastructure including bike racks, lanes, scooters and golf cart routes to encourage the use of alternative mobility options connecting parks.

#### 3-5 YEARS (CONTINUED)

#	ACTION
43	Explore sidewalk fee program to dedicate in-lieu fees to sidewalk construction and repairs in and around public parks to complete sidewalk gaps and promote pedestrian safety.
44	Adopt a Shared Use resolution and work with the public works department to implement a Safe Routes to Parks and Schools program.
45	Add call boxes or security cameras to Port Aransas Beach to assist with surf rescue and police response.
46	Add sidewalks along the southwest side of Cut-Off Road at Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond towards Ross Ave.
47	Improve access (vehicular and pedestrian) and appearance of the entrance to Joan & Scott Holt Paradise Pond to avoid conflicts with the restaurant on site.
48	Repair minor cracks in sidewalk and throughout the parking lot at Roberts Point Park.
49	Add lights in and around the pavilion and playscapes at Roberts Point Park.
50	Slow traffic at Ross Avenue in front of the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center by adding signage and controlled speed zones and/or traffic calming measures (speed bump, pedestrian crossing, rumble strip, etc.).
51	Install new wayfinding signage that clearly showcases designated bicycle lanes, pedestrian spaces, and golf cart zones in public spaces including parks, boardwalks, and street networks.
52	Add additional warning to drivers by providing crosswalk signage, flashing lights, etc. on the existing crosswalk at Wetland Park.

#### 6-10 YEARS

#	ACTION
53	Add a sidewalk from the entrance of Wetland Park towards the south on Hwy 361.
54	Consider new connection points between neighborhoods and the Nature Preserve at Charlie’s Pasture.
55	Adopt a Vision Zero program to increase the health and safety of all users of roads, sidewalks, and trails system.





## GOAL THREE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Port Aransas parks system is a steward of the environment, with parks, trails, and recreational amenities designed to promote the preservation of existing habitats, resources, and local ecosystems.

### FEEDBACK THEMES

PRESERVATION  
& CONSERVATION

ENVIRONMENTAL  
DESIGN STANDARDS

ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROGRAMMING

BEAUTIFICATION  
OPPORTUNITIES

### 1 YEAR

#	ACTIONS
56	Develop lighting and signage standards to promote in public parks and recreational and natural areas, including turtle safe and bird-friendly lighting and Dark Sky lighting.
57	Create a beautification project schedule that utilizes Keep Port Aransas Beautiful Funds in accordance with planting and restoration strategies.
58	To reduce maintenance costs and incorporate local ecosystem features in manicured parkland, identify No-Mow zones where minimal maintenance will be required.
59	Partner with Chamber to implement a marketing campaign centered around best practices of environmental stewardship while enjoying ecotourism activities (educational and directive signage regarding littering, sensitive vegetation, dunes, wildlife, water safety, etc.).
60	Improve educational signage at Port Aransas Beach.

### 2 YEARS

#	ACTION
61	Formalize practices with respect to planting and natural area restoration, including the development of a planting list of appropriate species to be included in parks projects as well as procedures for invasive species removal and planting methods for restoration.
62	Adopt a resolution to become a Dark Sky Community through the International Dark Sky Association.
63	Update City ordinances to more clearly link new residential development to dedication of parkland and or the development of new recreation facilities. Encourage or require future master-planned developments to provide public recreation space “in lieu of contribution.”
64	Identify areas to be designated as “Ecological Zones” around naturally sensitive areas to curtail disruptive activities in areas with local habitats, resources, and species.
65	Create additional educational programming for families visiting the Nature Preserve sites.
66	Replace trash receptacles at Roberts Point Park to improve the efficiency of trash collection and avoid stray refuse.
67	Utilize educational signage along walkways to encourage “Leave no trace” practices regarding litter.

### 3-5 YEARS

#	ACTIONS
68	Adopt an Urban Forestry Plan to prioritize the planting of trees and greenery to address shading gaps in public parks and recreational spaces.
69	Continue to incorporate educational signage along the new pier.
70	Improve fencing to prevent visitors from crossing into the natural area in the Nature Preserve.





## GOAL FOUR

### DESIGN FOR AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

The Port Aransas parks system creates space for all ages, stages, and capabilities, through inclusive design best practices and recreational and cultural programming opportunities that meet the needs of residents and visitors at all stages of life.



#### FEEDBACK THEMES

- YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING
- MULTI-GENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- FACILITY & FIELD GAPS
- ADA ACCESSIBILITY

1 YEAR	
#	ACTIONS
71	Explore adding and developing additional parkland on the City's south side to fill spatial gaps in the parks system.
72	Evaluate gaps in existing tree canopy and shade structures to mitigate urban heat island effects and minimize risk of sunburn and heat stroke.
73	Identify location for additional splash pads and/or interactive fountains to expand play opportunities, provide cooling and add visual interest to parks.
74	Identify the appropriate location for covered basketball court in both Community Park and Roberts Point Park.
75	Consult the results of the Parks Master Plan survey on communication preferences to update the delivery of parks and recreation news, programming and event opportunities.
76	Expand pool hours and hire more staff to accommodate a wider time frame, where feasible.
77	Move forward with the determination of appropriate program, funding and preliminary design for multipurpose recreation center.
2 YEARS	
#	ACTIONS

78	Identify public gathering spaces that can be adjusted to meet or exceed Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards to accommodate different sizes and types of events for a wide range of physical abilities.
79	Using public events as a data and information gathering opportunity, survey community to better understand multi-generational programming needs and scheduling preferences for recreational activities and programming.
80	Upgrade play equipment in Roberts Point Park and develop a playground risk management inspection schedule and replacement plan.
81	Improve safety and user experience of hike and bike lane between Community Park and Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center from Ross Avenue.
82	Plan for gathering spaces and infrastructure geared toward water sports such as kayak launches and access points from the 33 Acre Parcel.
83	Install shade, such as shade canopies and trees, to the seating areas and throughout Community Park.
84	Add shade area and seating near the playground at Roberts Point Park, and provide continuous shade through the park and along the waterfront pathway.
85	Coordinate with the Wayfinding program to create or identify a permanent physical space to advertise news, upcoming events, etc. (large marquee, sign or billboard, large community bulletin board) at the entrance to Roberts Point Park.

3-5 YEARS	
#	ACTIONS
86	Develop events of high interest to pursue including cultural, food and beverage-related, and music-related.
87	Improve maintenance and add new sod at Jerry McDonald Field.
88	Update fencing at the pool at Community Park & Pool.
89	Expand access to aquatic facilities in order to ensure that they meet a wide range of leisure and recreational needs for populations including at a minimum, families with children, teens, lap swimmers and water aerobics participants.
90	Add shade around the bleachers and on the sidelines and increase tree cover along the sidelines at Jerry McDonald Field.
91	Develop a reverse text message alert system to share updates on Parks and Recreation Department events and safety considerations.
92	In partnership with the Wayfinding Program, identify locations for gateway, monument, and branding opportunities to clearly designate park and trail entrances and to create cohesive branding throughout the parks system.
93	Consider adding shading features and seating where appropriate in gathering and play areas at Port Aransas Beach.
94	Identify locations and install drinking fountains throughout Community Park.
95	Widen the walkway on the waterfront at Roberts Point Park for both fishing and pedestrian activity, including along the new pier.
96	Add a drinking water source and restroom at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center.
97	Integrate a water feature that provides both aesthetic and play features at or near The Point to provide a draw to that area of Roberts Point Park.
98	Provide a multipurpose recreation space that could offer programs and activities for all ages and abilities. Potential activities could include sports courts and basketball courts, weight room, childcare, and gathering spaces.





## GOAL FIVE RESILIENT DESIGN

The Port Aransas Parks System incorporates natural and built environment features that enhance the resilience of all public spaces, parks, and recreational facilities to future natural and man-made hazards and provide a buffer to mitigate damages to adjacent residential and commercial districts.

### FEEDBACK THEMES

SEA LEVEL-RISE  
MITIGATION

ADAPTION  
ACTIONS

HABITAT &  
FACILITY RESTORATION

MAINTENANCE &  
STAFFING NEEDS

LOW-IMPACT DESIGN  
BEST PRACTICES

### 1 YEAR

#### # ACTIONS

- 99** Identify the presence of invasive species in all City Parks, and develop a schedule for their removal and restoration with native species.
- 100** Select water wise native vegetation in landscaping to minimize water required for maintenance and better withstand periods of drought.
- 101** Identify critical habitat areas for protection to increase the health of local habitats and increase buffering from waves and flooding.
- 102** Complete repairs of bulkhead, piers and trails at Charlie's Pasture and restore tidal flats and marsh habitat destroyed by Hurricane Harvey.
- 103** Replace the current play structures at Roberts Point Park which are showing signs of rust with new structures that are better adapted to the park's salt air and periodic inundation.
- 104** Develop plans for the new 30-acre wetland park as a nature preserve with recreational activities that minimize footprint on marsh and wetlands, while sharing information that encourages ecological stewardship.
- 105** Develop outreach and implement strategy to inform the public on the progress of post-Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts, notably the progress of the pier restoration and trails.
- 106** Improve the pool covering system to allow for easier installation during storm preparation in order to minimize damage in future storms.

### 2 YEARS

#### # ACTIONS

- 107** Adopt Park Design Development Guidelines that incorporates "Design with Nature" best practices in appropriate locations within parks.
- 108** Develop incentives for green infrastructure and native landscaping in new developments and redevelopment projects.
- 109** Explore parking fee programs around tourist locations and attractions to finance facility maintenance needs and the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas.

### 3-5 YEARS

#### # ACTIONS

- 110** Work with the Public Works Department to Develop maintenance for beach road at Port Aransas Beach that reduce multi-day ponding following extreme high tides and heavy rains.
- 111** Add shade over the playscape that can withstand high winds and saltwater at Roberts Point Park.
- 112** Enhance the vegetative buffers with native plants to increase infiltration of stormwater and to create an attractive boundary while decreasing the intrusion of water into the park.
- 113** Explore strategies to mitigate sea level rise in Nature Preserve on tidal flats and marsh habitats.
- 114** Identify natural areas for future acquisition that can enhance city's buffer against storm surge and help manage flooding.

### 6-10 YEARS

#### # ACTIONS

- 115** Develop procedures manual for dune maintenance and revegetation.
- 116** Acquire wetlands behind the IGA grocery store to provide additional local habitat and increase stormwater infiltration from surrounding neighborhoods.



