

Parks and Recreation Budget Evaluation for Tarrant County

The University of Texas at Arlington
CAPPA Department of Public Affairs

Public Administration Capstone
Fall 2021

Dr. Joseph Portugal, ICMA-CM

Project Team Members

Jeremie Atilano
Shane Cappelletti
Rena Crutchfield
Christopher Dickinson
Jody Waddell

November 24, 2021

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Public Administration in the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs of
the University of Texas at Arlington



UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS
ARLINGTON

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction and Background.....	5
Methodology.....	8
<i>Methods</i>	8
<i>Results</i>	10
<i>Validity and Reliability</i>	11
<i>Limitations</i>	12
Municipality Scope and Data.....	13
<i>City of Azle, TX</i>	13
<i>City of Bedford, TX</i>	13
<i>City of Benbrook, TX</i>	13
<i>City of Blue Mound, TX</i>	14
<i>City of Burleson, TX</i>	14
<i>City of Colleyville, TX</i>	14
<i>City of Crowley, TX</i>	15
<i>City of Dalworthington Gardens, TX</i>	15
<i>Town of Edgecliff Village, TX</i>	15
<i>City of Euless, TX</i>	16
<i>City of Everman, TX</i>	16
<i>City of Flower Mound, TX</i>	16
<i>City of Forest Hill, TX</i>	17
<i>City of Grapevine, TX</i>	17
<i>City of Haltom City, TX</i>	17
<i>City of Haslet, TX</i>	18
<i>City of Hurst, TX</i>	18
<i>City of Keller, TX</i>	18
<i>City of Kennedale, TX</i>	19
<i>City of Lake Worth, TX</i>	19
<i>City of Lakeside, TX</i>	19

<i>City of Mansfield, TX</i>	20
<i>City of Newark, TX</i>	20
<i>City of North Richland Hills, TX</i>	20
<i>Town of Pantego, TX</i>	21
<i>City of Pelican Bay, TX</i>	21
<i>City of Reno, TX</i>	21
<i>City of Richland Hills, TX</i>	22
<i>City of River Oaks, TX</i>	22
<i>City of Saginaw, TX</i>	22
<i>City of Sansom Park, TX</i>	23
<i>City of Southlake, TX</i>	23
<i>City of Trophy Club, TX</i>	23
<i>City of Watauga, TX</i>	24
<i>Town of Westlake, TX</i>	24
<i>City of Westworth Village, TX</i>	24
<i>City of White Settlement, TX</i>	25
Improved Health Benefits.....	27
Funding Considerations.....	32
<i>Funding Options</i>	32
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	34
References.....	35
Appendices.....	37
<i>Appendix 1. Parks and Recreation Programs' Effect on Property Values</i>	37
<i>Appendix 2. Park and Recreations Survey to Municipal Entities</i>	38
<i>Appendix 3. Economic Survey</i>	40
<i>Appendix 4. National Park and Recreation Marketing and Communications</i>	42

Executive Summary

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs (CAPPA) has assigned a team of graduate students to assess parks and recreation programs of local governments in Tarrant County. With forty-one cities in the county, thirty-seven were reviewed based on size to determine the availability and benefits of their parks and budget appropriations. In addition, parks have been shown to positively affect the quality of life, business attraction, and property values. This analysis aimed to conclude the percentage of the budget in relation to the benefit received from a well-designed park department and determine if municipalities have budgeted enough or need to adjust in providing funding for their community to enjoy the benefits of a park. The Capstone team has explored the amount of capital that has been budgeted within the Tarrant county municipalities through a series of analytical examinations. This project needed completion as it emphasizes the quality of life for over 2.1 million residents (Tarrant, n.d., About Tarrant). In addition to the benefits, the consequences of not having an adequate park system related to business expansion and the overall property values of the community was explored. While the municipalities need to be financially conservative, it is unacceptable not to provide the proper funding to ensure each community can further their quality of life through community parks. This research reviewed the data for each municipality to make an informed decision regarding proper budgeting as it relates to their priority to accommodate different facets of their community.

Introduction and Background

Tarrant County is a thriving urban county that balances the heart of western culture with the technological advancement of aerospace and defense contractors. This "diverse spectrum of businesses" plays a significant role in the economic basis of the county (Tarrant, n.d., About Tarrant) and is home to "approximately 2.1 million citizens" combined (Tarrant, n.d., About Tarrant). "Tarrant County's economy has been transformed into one of the most vibrant and diverse in the nation and is leading the regional resurgence in business relocations and expansions, retail development, and new housing construction" (Tarrant, n.d. About Tarrant.) These businesses draw in employees and families. Still, the culture, heritage, and "quality of life" available within Tarrant County are what drive population and economic growth. Individually, each of the forty-one municipalities operates a budget that includes line items for parks and recreation. This line item includes things considered quality of life issues. Each city, while working independently, are all pursuing the same goals as they relate to a parks and recreation division. Satisfaction of residents through a better quality of life from an established parks and recreation division is the goal.

Additionally, the mission of Tarrant County states that it strives to "enhance the satisfaction level for the residents and businesses of Tarrant County through the effective delivery and equitable administration of justice, public safety, health, transportation and human and other services" (Tarrant, n.d., About Tarrant: Mission), or in short, to enhance the satisfaction of quality-of-life. The Capstone team completed the task of analyzing the thirty-seven of the forty-one municipalities within Tarrant County to determine the current state of each park and recreation entity. The thirty-seven towns being researched range in populations from 76,555 to 992.

This analysis focuses on all the cities in Tarrant County, except for Fort Worth, Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Westover Hills. Also, the team will explore the economic value, environmental impact, and quality of life these departments bring to each community. This exclusion consists of the largest and smallest municipalities to examine these geographically linked parks and recreation departments (PRD) more equitably. In trying to identify issues surrounding parks and recreation, one must first understand that the necessity of these programs is a quality-of-life concern. An adequate parks and recreations program can enhance the wellbeing of its citizens. Resources invested in these areas tend to yield advantages indirectly through population growth and economic sustainability.

Since benefits are not seen directly, some municipalities prioritize their resources differently toward public parks and recreational enterprises. This oversight could stifle growth opportunities for these cities. Prospective residents, businesses, and visitors prefer an environment that is aesthetically inviting. Well-maintained walking trails, community centers, parks, pools, and sports complexes draw workers, students, families, and employers to an area. These considerations are commensurate reduced crime rates, educational opportunities, and improved commute times when people consider purchasing or renting a home.

When it comes to economic growth and attracting new business to a community, parks and recreation play a significant role. A strong parks and recreation department could lead to specialty shops opening that service the park. If there are plenty of baseball fields, soccer fields and sporting activities, a sporting goods store may choose to open a location close to the park. This brings new jobs to the community and produces more tax income for the municipality. Having a parks and recreation department creates city jobs as well as private industry. The more available employment

the more discretionary spending is available within that community. Parks promote economic activity that makes cities and towns more prosperous. As visitors enter a community for an event at a park, they are more likely to spend money from outside the community and bring it within. This spurs tourism and feeds money into hotels, restaurants, and specialty stores. This helps the city have a healthier bottom line which in turn means the city can provide better services to the community. This is a trickledown effect which eventually leads to higher property values and more tax dollars to be consumed by the city. As more money comes in, more parks and recreation activities can be funded, extending the cycle of prosperity. Local park and recreation agencies not only help raise the standard of living in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities, they also spark economic activity that can have ripple effects well beyond any initial expenditure in creating jobs and prosperity throughout our nation.

Another issue for analysis is the public policies regarding these cities' parks and recreation services or lack thereof. Researchers have concluded that "Public policy associated with parks and recreation is driven by public interest and is often debated in the absence of relevant research to demonstrate the determinants and correlates of parks and recreation to address prevailing social conditions (Spangler & Caldwell, 2007)." This is particularly valid in the construct of communal health benefits of an adequate parks and recreations program. City policies, if present, need to be analyzed and revised if not in consent with current research.

Methodology

Methods

The capstone team conducted a multi-tiered study to analyze parks and recreation services. The team analyzed 37 cities in its quantitative and qualitative practices from verified federal census reporting, public information acts, city-level reporting, and verified local surveying and pool sampling. The principal survey excluded Fort Worth, Arlington, Grand Prairie, and Westover Hills. The collection methods included primary data such as city population, annual budget, and parks and recreation budget allocations. Secondary data such as parks, activities and senior programs, quality of life improvements, and policy issues and priorities were also included. Within the analysis, qualitative documents including each city's existing policies regarding their parks and recreation were utilized. Also, information regarding commercial properties was examined to understand what impacts affect parks and recreation. Quantitative data such as population in each city was examined. Surveys and database reports were also examined for public health ratings, property value assessments, budget allocation, and other numerical variables that may be crucial in observing which municipalities currently are or could be providing efficient parks and recreation to their citizens.

Apart from the work plan, the team reviewed the scope and resources such as inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of these departments. We sought to understand revenue allocation of these programs, staff assignments, and equipment, activities these programs undertake, how these departments measure success and how those measures connect to healthier environments, create financial sustainability, and build strong communities. By understanding the scope of these

municipalities, we can better make recommendations to identify and satisfy limitations. Limitations that were analyzed throughout the cities included variables that disproportionately impact parks and recreation departments and budget allocations to the department. Measures such as quality of life, depreciation, theft, vandalism, property values, economic value, environmental impacts, limited budget, and expenditures presented constraints as Community supplemental funding, local-level parks and recreation competition with other sports organizations, schools, churches, and nonprofit youth programs also impacted the quality of parks and recreation.

Sources of the data included survey development for direct information from each target community and serviced population. Data collection pertaining to obesity and medical conditions among adults and children from The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) was solicited. The team was also tasked with reviewing performance management systems utilized as a framework to determine actions and outputs that lead to the cities' outcomes. Economic considerations such as population growth, transportation, and admissions costs were collected from each city's public information acts, local-level data, and federal census reporting. Data was collected from NRPA to understand how residents are informed, the access they are afforded, time constraints, and overall interest levels in programs available. We found 76 percent of parks and recreation agencies print a program catalog or guide to promoting their services (Appendix 4). Forecasting audits of the financial statements of the governmental activities in Tarrant County, we collected data regarding the structure of parks and recreation departments, sustained funding for park maintenance, and data regarding budget allocated for capital improvement.

Results

Based on the linkage between the results of this analysis, existing theory, and research, we discovered some interpretations of the findings to make connections relevant in quantitative and qualitative data. The presence of parks and green areas within municipalities promoted local tax bases and increased property values of surrounding commercial and residential dwellings. Recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association, a 25-part study conducted by Texas A & M found that Parks and Recreation increase the value of privately owned land when in proximity (National Parks & Recreation Association, 2010). With the increase in private property value, the property tax revenues are directly related to local economic improvement. "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity (National Parks & Recreation Association, 2010, pg. 2)." Within the review, Texas A&M found that 20 of the 25 studies found that property values were higher. A Survey was prepared to conceptualize the validity of these evaluations to understand how important parks and recreation services were to residents and how programs' impact property values (Appendix 1).

Quality parks and recreation are expressed as one of the top three reasons that businesses cite in relocation decisions in several studies. Main considerations from employers to relocate include labor, transportation, quality of life, energy costs and more. In comparison to a business decision location study, we discovered a multiple comparison test to identify if there is any significant difference between labor and transportation or between transportation and quality of life. We also were able to prove that labor is significantly more important than the quality of life,

and there are any differences between quality of life, levels of taxation, or proximity to research universities and parks (Decker & Crompton, 1990).

Main Point Allocations for Location Factors by Companies and A Summary of Multiple Comparison Test	
Labor (LAB)	26.8
Transportation (TRAN)	21.3
Quality of Life (QOL)	16.8
Levels of Taxation	8.9
Proximity to Suppliers (SUPP)	8.8
Proximity to Research Universities (UNI)	8.0
Energy and Utility Costs (ENER)	5.3
State and local government incentives	4.2
Source: <i>Decker & Crompton (1990)</i>	

To test the reliability, a survey for municipalities was created (Appendix 2). Parks and recreation programs generated revenue directly from fees and charges, but more importantly, provided significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. In addition, economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is of true and sustained value to local and regional economies.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are conceptualized as trustworthy processes to enhance the dependability of quantitative research. Validity and reliability testing concepts used to evaluate the quality of research will be targeted using various methods. Criterion Validity will be used to

understand how the result of each test is married to correspond to the results of a different test (Appendix 2). The goal is to ensure what is being measured is an accurate representation of what is intended to be measured. In addition, we will test Content Validity to ensure surveys, test and measurements cover all relevant aspects to produce valid results (Appendix 1).

Limitations

Our study had some limitations which needed to be carefully reviewed. The research listed here is limited by the measures used. In addition, the study takes place within 37 municipalities, so it is limited in terms of the transferability of findings. Since the study is exploratory in nature and the qualitative method is applied, the findings cannot be generalized. Considering population size and time constraints was not possible to conduct a random sampling of main point allocation location factors for employers. Additionally, survey respondents were limited, which may have affected conclusions.

Municipality Scope and Data

Given the sizeable pool of municipalities requiring review and analysis, the publicly posted information provided by each city or township was used as our source information. For the thirty-eight entities reviewed, the following is the location of the data and the summary information for each:

City of Azle, TX

The information gathered from the following source:

<https://www.cityofazle.org/DocumentCenter/View/6923/City-of-Azle-FY-2020-21-Budget>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Azle maintains four parks, three community buildings, a golf course, disc golf course, softball and soccer fields, pickle ball court, and several programs including recreation classes, mosquito control and prevention, and a Music in the Park event. It is also responsible for maintaining the municipal buildings landscaping and various city owned lots.

Budget

\$1,185,897 (8.7% of total city budget)

City of Bedford, TX

The information gathered from the following source: <https://bedfordtx.gov/384/Budget-Breakdown>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Bedford maintains 10 parks and an aquatic center, several senior citizens programs (5 listed on city website), 3 parks programs including a scavenger hunt, end of summer event, and a "creature feature", and a music fest.

Budget

\$2,643,817 (3.3% of total city budget).

City of Benbrook, TX

The information gathered from the following source: <https://www.benbrook-tx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8098/City-of-Benbrook-FY-2020-21-Budget>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Benbrook maintains 6 parks, 14 sports facilities, 8 building landscapes, 192 mosquito traps collected, 132.5 acres mowed, 3 acres of ROW landscaped and maintained. Maintenance of the city cemetery and all city buildings' grounds.

Budget

\$1,044,265 (4.6% of city total budget).

City of Blue Mound, TX

The information gathered from the following source: https://c9a635f4-50a7-4c21-9015-513b2fff1e56.filesusr.com/ugd/dc629b_76bea42e75c74c07b8658a101f1fb8fd.pdf

Facilities & Parks Resources

One small family, neighborhood park is provided with limited playground apparatus. The \$349 was spent in repair and maintenance.

Budget

\$349 (0.1% of total city budget).

City of Burleson, TX

The information gathered from the following source:

<https://www.burlesontx.com/420/Annual-Reports-Adopted-Budgets>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Burleson maintains 11 parks, with future land acquisition and infrastructure planned in this fiscal year. Also, there are 4 recreational trails, a dog park, a sports facility/field, a splash pad, and 174 medians in which the P&R department is responsible.

Budget

\$6,780,192 (4.7% of total city budget).

City of Colleyville, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.colleyville.com/home/showpublisheddocument/8497/637619402080300000>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Colleyville maintains 6 parks, a trail system with a nature center, a sports complex, landscaped medians, and city-owned buildings, and contracts out the mowing. It also manages

the youth sporting associations and provides a myriad of classes and programs, including dance, art, Lego, tennis, fitness, and engineering classes for children. It holds several events throughout the year, including a winter ball, a mother/son and daddy/daughter dance, an easter egg hunt, and a fishing day. Also, the city conducts three large events throughout the year, including a music festival, a haunted trail, and an annual tree lighting celebration.

Budget

\$1,824,964 (7.1% of total city budget).

City of Crowley, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

https://www.ci.crowley.tx.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/finance/page/2950/09c_09172_020_fy2020-21_budget_summaries_exhibit_ord_09-2020-407.pdf

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Crowley maintains 2 parks, a recreation center, a veteran's memorial, and a sports complex.

Budget

\$900,631 (7% of total city budget).

City of Dalworthington Gardens, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

https://www.cityofdwg.net/documents/243/FY_20-21_Adopted_Budget-Website.pdf

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Dalworthington Gardens maintains 2 parks.

Budget

\$188,601 (5.6% of total city budget).

Town of Edgecliff Village, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://cour60.wixsite.com/evgov>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Edgecliff Village facilitates a July 4th parade and Halloween Carnival each year.

Budget

There was no published budget information for this city. Team Leader Jeremie Atilano called to request a copy but had to leave a voice mail, no response has been received to this date.

City of Euless, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.eulesstx.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/2144/637475307214830000>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Euless maintains a senior center, an aquatics program, 17 parks, hiking trails, 3 amphitheaters, a golf course, an ice rink, and a fitness center.

Budget

\$2,518,835 (5.6% of total city budget).

City of Everman, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://evermantx.opengov.com/transparency#/5058/query=BB487EE008F159C7389760487309DE9A&embed=n>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Everman maintains one city park with a pavilion available to rent.

Budget

\$706,961 (10.2% of total city budget).

City of Flower Mound, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.flower-mound.com/DocumentCenter/View/31813/FY-2021-2022-Proposed->

Budget

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Flower Mound facilitates and operates several community cultural events, an aquatic, and youth sports program, a senior center, and two parks.

Budget

\$9,247,879 (12.1% of total city budget).

City of Forest Hill, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.foresthilltx.org/media/Departments/Finance/Budget%20FY%202020-2021>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Forest Hill maintains 8 city parks with various sports fields and equipment, along with a Veterans Park to honor veterans.

Budget

\$686,425 (3.6% of the total city budget).

City of Grapevine, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://grapevinetexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7393/Grapevine-FY20-Budget>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Grapevine maintains several lake parks, a golf course, a recreational center, pools, hiking trails, athletic complexes, indoor rental facilities, and a public art program.

Budget

\$11,965,977 (6.5% of total city budget).

City of Haltom City, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.haltomcitytx.com/fiscal-year-2021-budget-book>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Haltom City maintains 11 parks, walking trails, a recreation center, a Veterans Memorial, an 18-hole disc golf course, rental facilities, a senior center, sports fields, and an aquatic spray ground. The city also provides a variety of classes including Karate, and dance, and hosts a myriad of community events such as holiday contests, car shows, a 5k marathon, and a Halloween carnival. Finally, the city facilitates youth associations and sports leagues.

Budget

\$1,691,813 (5.5% of total city budget).

City of Haslet, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.haslet.org/DocumentCenter/View/2983/City-of-Haslet-Adopted-Budget-2020-2021>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Haslet maintains two parks that include an 18-hole disk golf course, a sand volleyball area, a basketball court, a large, covered pavilion, swings, play structures, restrooms, and walking trails. The city also offers several classes such as Tia Chi and Yoga. Finally, the city facilitates several special events during the year, including holiday in the park, movie nights, a 5k marathon, and a Memorial Day celebration.

Budget

\$227,816 (2.5% of total city budget).

City of Hurst, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.hursttx.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/10000/637473389734800000>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Hurst maintains an aquatic center, a tennis center, pavilion rental facilities, a recreation center, a cemetery, three city parks, several neighborhood parks, a dog park, and fishing ponds. Along with these listed facilities, the city offers several programs and facilitates adult and youth sporting leagues.

Budget

\$7,333,888 (10% of total city budget).

City of Keller, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.cityofkeller.com/home/showpublisheddocument/25495/637438066544670000>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Keller maintains more than 300 acres of developed park land, 11 park sites and more than 26 miles of hike and bike trails. The city also runs a fitness and aquatics facility, a senior activities center; and organizes more than 25 special community events each year.

Budget

\$3,429,316 (4% of total city budget).

City of Kennedale, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.cityofkennedale.com/DocumentCenter/View/5633/Fiscal-Year-2020-2021-Adopted-Budget-PDF>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Kennedale maintains three city parks, along with a senior center, a splash pad, a disk golf course, sports fields, and pavilion rental facilities. The city also facilitates youth sporting leagues.

Budget

\$122,920 (1.7% of total city budget).

City of Lake Worth, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

https://www.lakeworthtx.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf756/f/pages/ord_1189.pdf

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Lake Worth maintains eight parks, a dog park, pavilion rental facilities, a Veterans Memorial, a senior center, and organizes sports leagues for adults and children.

Budget

\$517,949 (4.1% if total city budget).

City of Lakeside, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://lakesidetexas.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2019-2020-Audit-Report.pdf>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Lakeside maintains one park and a ball field. Both facilities are available for rental for a nominal fee.

Budget

\$104,214 (8% of total city budget).

City of Mansfield, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.mansfieldtexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8369/Budget-Document-2020-2021-PDF>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Mansfield maintains 2,900 acres of parks, a lake, two golf clubs, a trail system, a theatre, a museum, two sports parks, a for-profit water park, a 17,000 sqft library, and incorporates a master park plan.

Budget

\$5,536,215 (7.7% of total city budget).

City of Newark, TX

The information gathered from the following source: <https://newarktexas.com/finance-1>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Newark maintains three city parks.

Budget

\$20,027 (2% of total city budget).

City of North Richland Hills, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.nrhtx.com/DocumentCenter/View/10756/Volume-I-Operating-Budget-FY-20-21?bidId=>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of North Richland Hills maintains 800 acres of park land, 34 parks, facilities, and trails and 30 miles of hike and bike trails. Additionally, the city offers many athletic opportunities, community events, public art pieces and cultural arts programs.

Budget

\$11,721,069 (9.3% of total city budget).

Town of Pantego, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.townofpantego.com/media/Finance/2020-2021%20Final%20Budget.pdf>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The town of Pantego maintains one park with a playground and a walking trail, along with a community center and park pavilions available for rental.

Budget

\$154,525 (1.8% of total city budget).

City of Pelican Bay, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

https://cityofpelicanbay.com/wp-content/uploads/minutes-agendas-newsletters/budget_2020-10-01.pdf

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city website has a departmental page for Parks and Recreation; however, the page results in an error and provides no information. Therefore, no official information is available for the City of Pelican Bay parks and recreations services. Google maps page does show three local pinned park locations that are possibly under the city jurisdiction.

Budget

\$1,600 (.2% of total city budget).

City of Reno, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.renotx.gov/government/financial-transparency/>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Reno maintains one city park and a walking trail.

Budget

\$0 (0% of total city budget).

City of Richland Hills, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.richlandhills.com/home/showpublisheddocument/14115/637547741963800000>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Richland Hills maintains five city parks, a special event/recreation center, along with athletic programs, fitness classes, after school childcare programs, senior programs, 9 yearly special community events.

Budget

\$389,629 (5.5% of total city budget).

City of River Oaks, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.riveroakstx.com/doc/AdoptedFY2022BudgetF.pdf>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of River Oaks maintains an event center with a park. The city also hosts music nights, dog obedience classes, and Zumba classes.

Budget

\$66,872 (1.1% of total city budget).

City of Saginaw, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.ci.saginaw.tx.us/DocumentCenter/View/13416/2021-22-Adopted-Budget-Document?bidId=>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The City of Saginaw maintains seven parks, including a memorial park and pavilion rentals, along with an aquatic center, a recreation center, a senior center, and a community center. The city also offers a wide range of recreation programs, fitness, and sports programs and classes for all ages.

Budget

\$538,607 (3.2% of total city budget).

City of Sansom Park, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

https://sansompark.org/DocumentCenter/View/814/Ordinance-No_-560-19---Adopting-the-Annual-Budget-for-FY2019-2020

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Sansom Park does not have a parks and recreation department.

Budget

\$3000 (.1% of total city budget).

City of Southlake, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.cityofsouthlake.com/3821/Adopted-FY-2021-Budget>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Southlake maintains 1,100 acres in 20 parks, including a dog park, 11 ponds, 44 athletic fields, and 21 tennis courts.

Budget

\$5,551,920 (13.1% of total city budget).

City of Trophy Club, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.trophyclub.org/159/Budget>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Trophy Club maintains 1,000 acres of park space, to include 4 parks, a dog park, ATV accessible trails, a disc golf course, boating facilities, and an equestrian center.

Budget

\$2,656,059 (14.8% of total city budget).

City of Watauga, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.cowtx.org/Archive.aspx?ADID=1622>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Watauga maintains 76 acres within seven parks, including one skate park.

Budget

\$882,505 (1.9% of total city budget).

Town of Westlake, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<https://www.westlake-tx.org/DocumentCenter/View/3712/Town-of-Westlake-Texas-Budget-FY-2020-2021>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of Westlake maintains 15 miles of trails and the Westlake Civic center.

Budget

\$318,273 (1% of total city budget).

City of Westworth Village, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.cityofwestworth.com/uploads/file/Budgets/Budget%20Docs%20FY%2020-21/2020-2021%20Budget%20ADOPTED%2009152020.pdf>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The City of Westworth Village maintains a system of jogging trails throughout the city.

Budget

\$750,630 (7.5% of total city budget).

City of White Settlement, TX

The information was gathered from the following source:

<http://www.wstx.us/DocumentCenter/View/1577/Fiscal-Year-2020-2021>

Facilities & Parks Resources

The city of White Settlement maintains more than 200 acres of developed park land, to include three community parks, six neighborhood parks, and a recreation center.

Budget

\$755,353 (6.7% of total city budget).

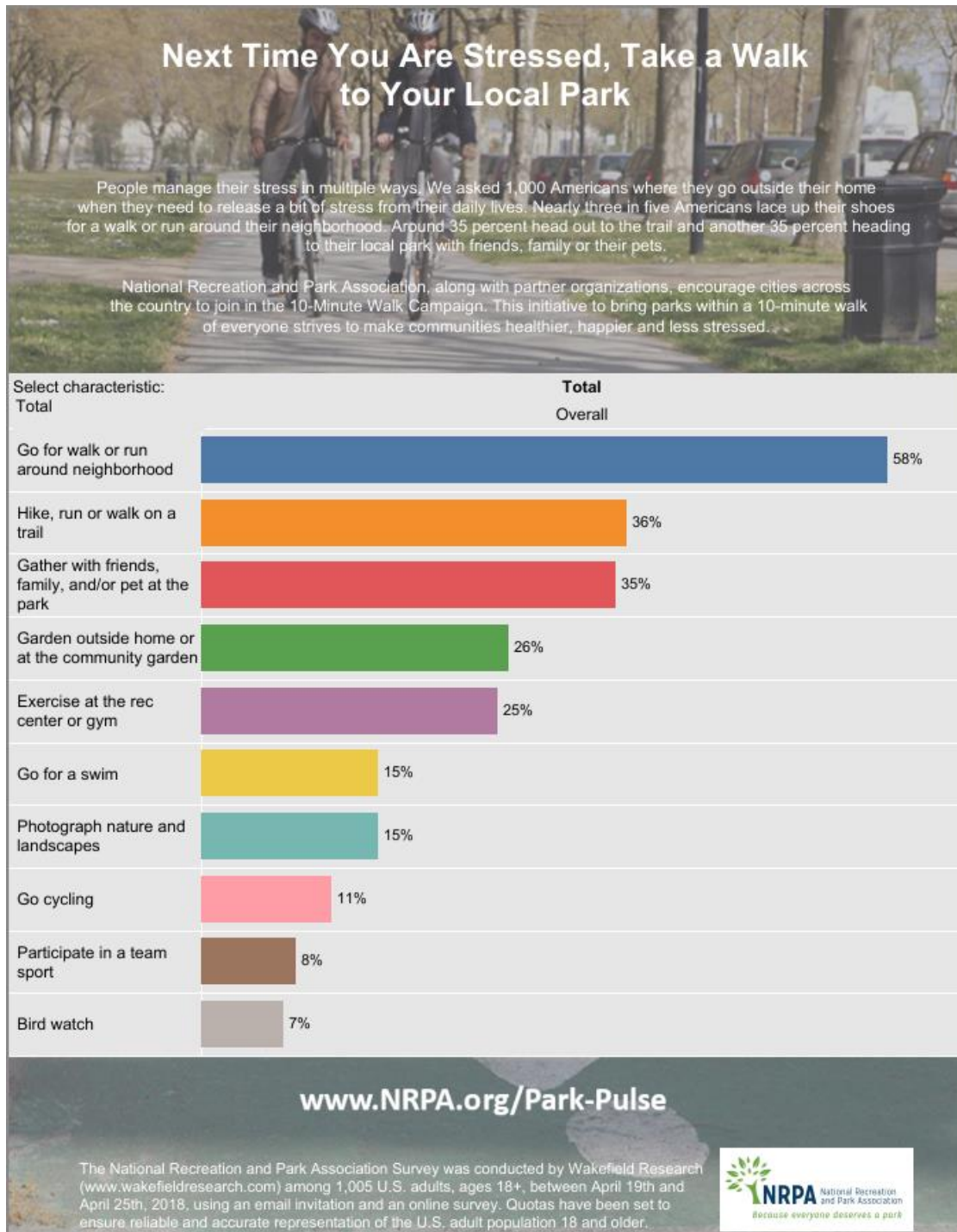
On average individual cities and municipalities in Tarrant County, excluding Arlington, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, and Westover Hills, spend 5% of their budget dollars on parks and recreation. The figure below (Figure 1) shows the population demographic of the city, the percentage of that population when compared to the county population, the amount budgeted for each entity in comparison to the budget for each entity, and the corresponding percentage of the overall budget used on parks and recreation for that entity.

City/Municipality	Population	Percentage of County Population	Recreation Allocation of Budget	Total Annual Budget	Percentage of Parks & Rec to Ttl
Lakeside	1,616	0.09%			
Edgecliff Village	2,776	0.15%			
Reno	2,494	0.14%			
Blue Mound	2,394	0.13%	349.00	695,827.00	0.05%
Sansom Park	4,686	0.26%	3,000.00	5,748,237.00	0.05%
Pelican Bay	1,547	0.09%	1,600.00	903,304.00	0.18%
Westlake	992	0.05%	318,273.00	32,800,000.00	0.97%
River Oaks	7,427	0.41%	66,872.00	6,022,837.00	1.11%
Kennedale	8,645	0.48%	122,920.00	7,314,655.00	1.68%
Pantego	2,394	0.13%	154,525.00	8,586,434.00	1.80%
Watauga	23,497	1.30%	882,505.00	47,236,770.00	1.87%
Newark	1,005	0.06%	20,026.96	982,632.67	2.04%
Haslet	1,923	0.11%	227,816.00	9,169,883.00	2.48%
Bedford	46,979	2.60%	2,643,817.00	78,997,340.00	3.35%
Forest Hill	75,956	4.20%	686,425.00	19,075,267.00	3.60%
Keller	47,213	2.61%	3,429,316.00	86,494,362.00	3.96%
Benbrook	21,243	1.17%	1,044,265.00	22,583,668.00	4.62%
Burleson	36,690	2.03%	6,780,192.00	145,066,742.00	4.67%
Saginaw	19,806	1.09%	2,319,610.00	48,031,725.00	4.83%
Richland Hills	7,801	0.43%	389,629.00	7,112,995.00	5.48%
Haltom City	43,874	2.43%	1,691,813.00	30,488,673.00	5.55%
Dalworthington Garder	2,188	0.12%	188,601.00	3,350,081.00	5.63%
Eules	51,277	2.83%	2,518,835.00	44,720,044.00	5.63%
Grapevine	53,317	2.95%	11,965,977.00	183,125,631.00	6.53%
White Settlement	16,116	0.89%	755,353.00	11,344,969.00	6.66%
Crowley	12,838	0.71%	900,631.00	12,902,040.00	6.98%
Colleyville	22,807	1.26%	1,824,964.00	25,856,146.00	7.06%
Westworth Village	2,472	0.14%	750,630.00	9,994,429.00	7.51%
Mansfield	56,368	3.12%	5,536,215.00	72,024,330.00	7.69%
Lake Worth	4,896	0.27%	878,241.00	10,403,405.00	8.44%
Azle	10,947	0.61%	1,185,897.00	13,555,666.00	8.75%
North Richland Hills	63,343	3.50%	11,721,069.00	125,963,030.00	9.31%
Hurst	38,655	2.14%	7,333,888.00	73,635,846.00	9.96%
Everman	6,108	0.34%	706,961.00	6,963,688.00	10.15%
Flower Mound	76,555	4.23%	9,247,879.00	76,213,483.00	12.13%
Southlake	26,575	1.47%	5,551,920.00	42,513,904.00	13.06%
Trophy Club	8,024	0.44%	2,656,059.00	17,960,049.00	14.79%

Figure 1: Data Collection Summary

Improved Health Benefits

Well-designed parks and trails are valued parts of our environment. Research examining the connection between parks, trails, and health has helped identify the value that parks provide to people. Parks and recreation can promote physical activity and community engagement while also providing both environmental and mental health benefits. When well-designed, parks have been shown to reduce stress and foster community interaction. The benefits of local parks, both large and small, have multiple positive health benefits including, improved mood, stress reduction, improved mindfulness, and building social capital to name a few. "The research about active living and opportunities to avoid chronic diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory problems) is particularly relevant to large parks where people can enjoy walking and bike paths and playing fields. But, equally as important is the role of small parks and nature spaces for health (Wolf, 2017)." By fostering parks and recreational facilities, communities can impact positive changes in residents' health care costs. Physical activity is critical to good health, and parks and recreation can provide those means for community residents. "Obtaining objective data may be very helpful to support decisions about investments in facilities, infrastructure, and programming, as well as to assess the impact of changes (Cohen et al, 2014)." The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) through research conducted by Wakefield Research, surveyed 1,000 people aged 18 and older in 2018 found that 58% surveyed manage their daily stress by running and walking throughout their neighborhood. Others in the survey rely on local parks and recreation to relieve stress. It is important for community leaders, stakeholders, and citizens to encourage maintenance and growth of their local parks and recreation for both individual health and social capital.



The Environmental Protection Agency created the "National Walkability Index" to compare and analyze walkability among US communities. The index elements include design,

distance to transit, and diversity of land uses. Associations between the index and walking behavior have not been examined. Walkability in Tarrant County is decreased in communities further from downtown Ft. Worth. Proximity to parks and recreation facilities has been linked to increased physical activity in communities as well as providing positive impacts on chronic diseases such as, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular ailments.

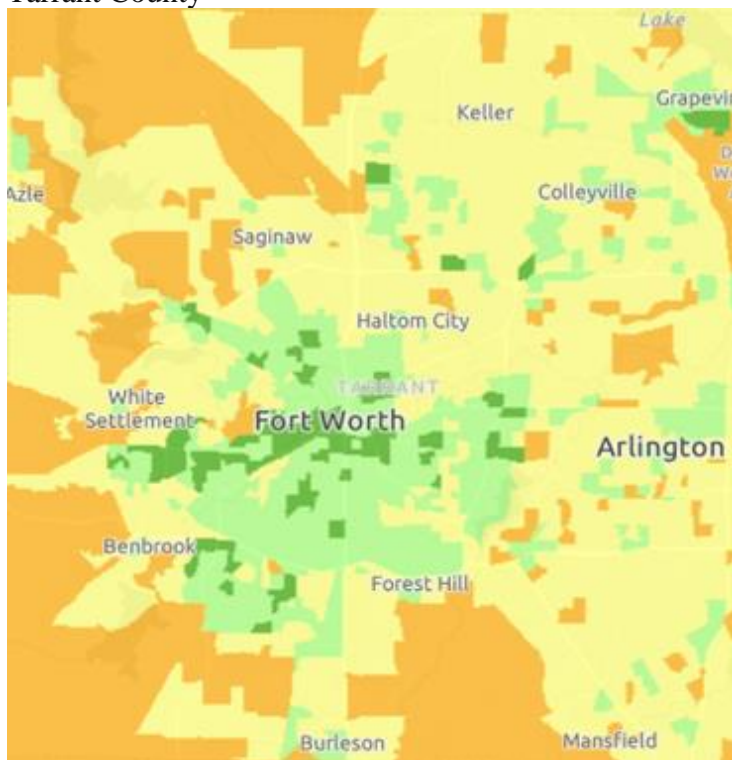
Legend

WalkabilityIndex

NationalWalkabilityIndex

- 1 - 5.75 (Least Walkable)
- 5.76 - 10.50 (Below Average Walkable)
- 10.51 - 15.25 (Above Average Walkable)
- 15.26 - 20 (Most Walkable)

Tarrant County



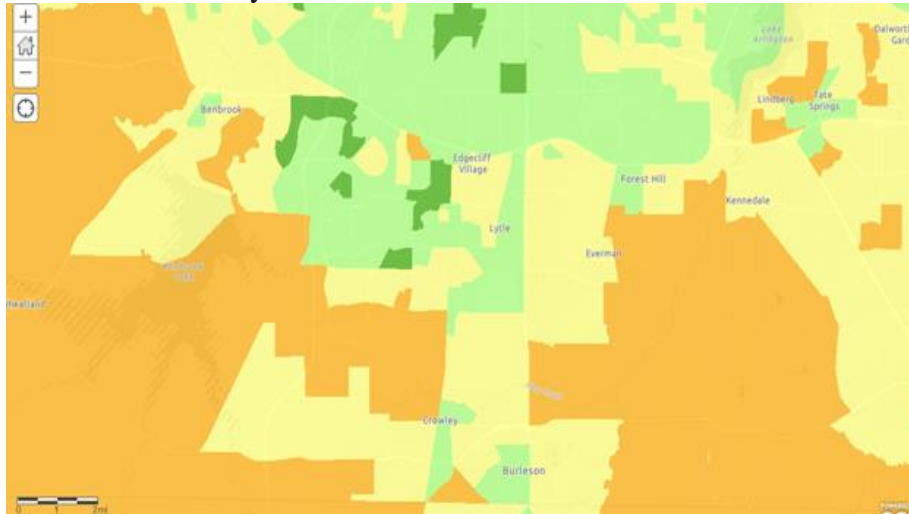
Legend

Walkability Index

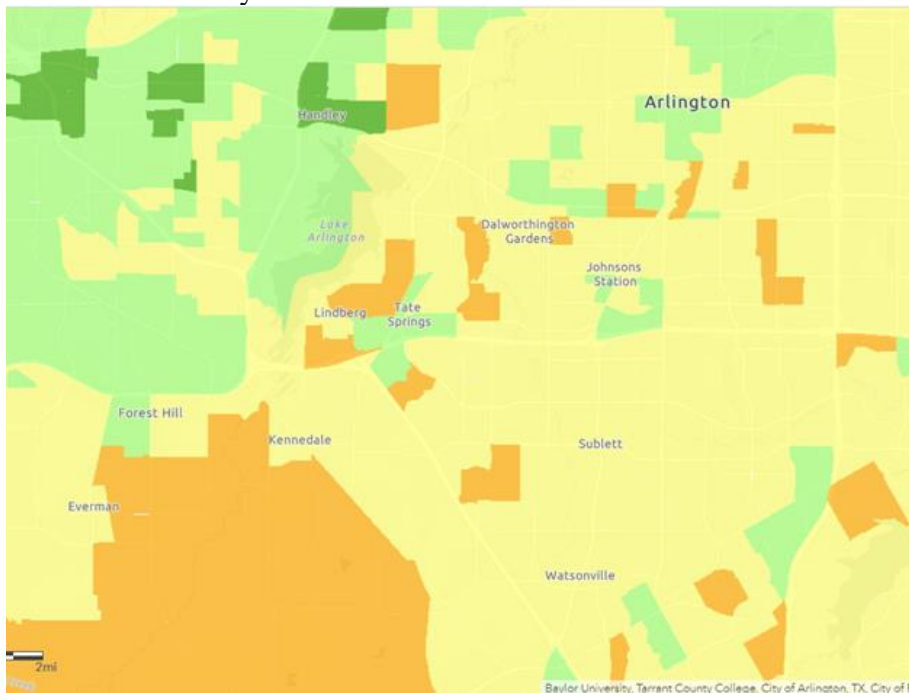
National Walkability Index

- 1 - 5.75 (Least Walkable)
- 5.76 - 10.50 (Below Average Walkable)
- 10.51 - 15.25 (Above Average Walkable)
- 15.26 - 20 (Most Walkable)

S.W Tarrant County



S.E Tarrant County



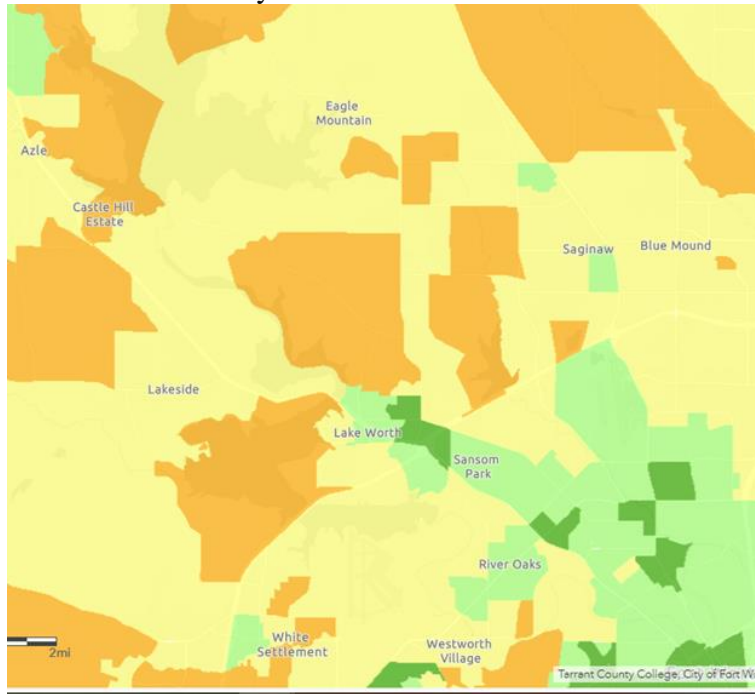
Legend

Walkability Index

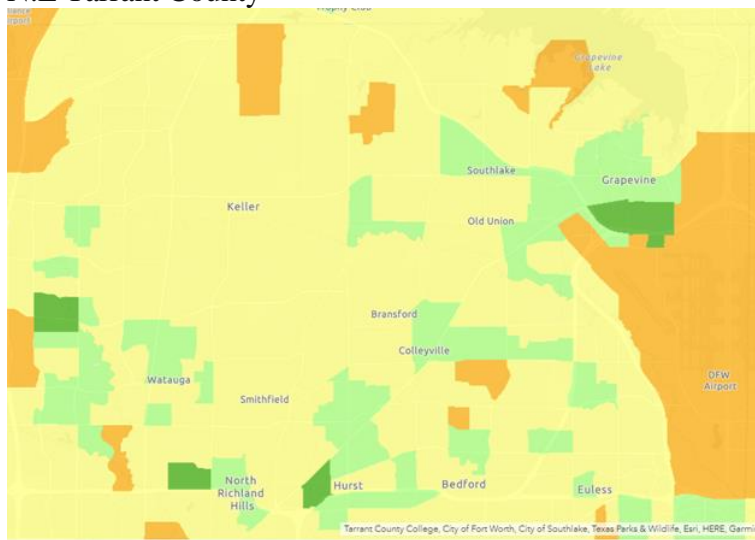
National Walkability Index

- 1 - 5.75 (Least Walkable)
- 5.76 - 10.50 (Below Average Walkable)
- 10.51 - 15.25 (Above Average Walkable)
- 15.26 - 20 (Most Walkable)

N.W Tarrant County



N.E Tarrant County



Funding Considerations

Of the budgets reviewed, all but 3 have a general fund that supports the parks and recreation department. Larger municipalities utilize bonding and capital programs. Smaller municipalities count on donations and grants. Depending on the scope of the parks and recreation department services, there are usage fees available and grant funding available for support. Additional, creative funding such as permit revenues, beverage tax, Splash Dayz Fund, and other such programs.

Funding Options

- General Fund - Ad valorem and/or sales tax revenues, property tax revenues, franchise tax, water & sewer charges.
- Bonds – Few cities consider issuing bonds to fund growth and development in parks and recreation departments.
- Capital Campaign - Establish a capital campaign committee that would work on fundraising activities that can fund a portion of the project.
- Grants
 - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
 - Texas Parks and Wildlife Grants
 - Professional Sports Leagues Foundations
 - Texas Rangers Baseball Foundation: Globe Life, the Texas Ranger Baseball Foundation and FOX Sports Southwest provide grants to youth baseball and softball organizations to promote and support through Texas Rangers territory. The foundation is committed to supporting the sport's growth and making sure that every child is afforded the opportunity to experience joy and community through baseball and softball. This grant is designed to continue to build base and softball by providing funding for field renovations, equipment needs, uniforms and league development for teams through Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP): Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant was awarded to the City of Westworth Village to construct and enhance a trail system through the city. the fund awarded was \$1.7M.
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA): for recreational trails.
- Crime Prevention Grant
- Park User Fees & Donations: pavilion and building rentals, activity fees, concession sales, bingo fees, sports registration fees; boat ramp fees, ATV fees, and various donations

Conclusions and Recommendations

The capstone team was tasked with assessing the parks and recreation facilities in Tarrant County and the quality-of-life concern when it comes to these services. Throughout the project, the team obtained and analyzed information to understand the current state of parks and recreation offered by 37 of the 41 municipalities in the county. After analyzing each municipality's budget, it offered the team a chance to recognize how parks and recreation are prioritized in each community. The information in these budgets on top of the population, local economics, facilities, and resources offered helped the team prepare this analysis and create recommendations for the quality of life in each community. After reviewing all information obtained it is apparent that not all municipalities in Tarrant County place emphasis on quality-of-life issues like parks and recreation. Parks and recreation can be a tangible reflection of the wellbeing of a community. Our recommendations for each municipality include:

1. In-depth assessment of current parks and recreation departments
2. Utilization of available grants and donations
3. Collaboration with surrounding entities and county for creative funding alternatives
4. Review economic and health benefits

These are a few areas that can hopefully impact growth in communities throughout the county. Our hope is to make each municipality in Tarrant County a more equitable community for its residents through our research and analysis.

References

- Arnold, M. & Shinew, K. (1998). The role of gender, race, and income on park use constraints. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 16, 39-56.
- Cohen, D. A., Sturm, R., Han, B., & Marsh, T. (2014). Quantifying the Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity and Health: Introducing SOPARC. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt14bs3fd>
- Earls, F., & Buka, S. L. (1997). Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods. National Institute of Justice.
- Harnik, P. & Hoagland, E. (2011). The Economic Benefits of the Park and Recreation System of Virginia Beach, Virginia. <https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/about-us/Documents/tpl-study-econ-benefit.pdf>
- Jill M. Decker & John L. Crompton (1990). Business Location Decisions: The Relative Importance of Quality of Life and Recreation, Park, and Cultural Opportunities. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 8(2), 26-43.
- Miller, J. (2017, February 8). Park use influences perceived health, study shows. Retrieved from PENN STATE NEWS: <https://news.psu.edu/story/449875/2017/02/08/research/park-use-influences-perceived-health-study-shows>
- National Parks and Recreation Association. (2010). Parks and recreation as Essential Public Services. NRPA. Retrieved November 26, 2021, from <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>.
- Nicholls, S., & Crompton, J. L. (2005). Impacts of Regional Parks on Property Values. *Journal of Park and Recreation Management Administration*, 87-108.
- Pitas, N. A., Barrett, A. G., Mowen, A. J., Graefe, A. R., Godbey, G. C., & Sciamanna, C. N. (2014, January 5). The Relationship Between Self-Rated Health and Use of Parks and Participation in Recreation Programs, United States, 1991 and 2015. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2016/16_0441e.htm

- Scott, D., Herrera, S. L., & HUNT, K. (n.d.). Constraints to Outdoor Recreation among Ethnic and Racial Groups. Retrieved October 5, 2021, from https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/4902/psw_2004_4902_017_scott.pdf.
- Spangler, K. J., & Caldwell, L. L. (2007). The implications of public policy related to parks, recreation, and public health: A focus on physical activity. *Journal of physical activity & health*. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17672224/>
- Tarrant County. (n.d.). About Tarrant. Retrieved October 3rd, 2021, from <https://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/county/about-tarrant.html>
- Tarrant County. (n.d.). About Tarrant: Mission, Vision, Goals. Retrieved October 3rd, 2021, from <https://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/county/about-tarrant/mission-vision-goals.html>
- Texas Health and Human Services. (2021). Texas Healthy Communities Program Community Assessment Guide. www.dshs.state.tx.us/txhc/PDFs/FY21-TXHC-AssessmentGuide.pdf
- Wolf, Kathleen. (April 3rd, 2017). The Health Benefits of Small Parks and Green Spaces. *Parks & Recreation Magazine*. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2017/april/the-health-benefits-of-small-parks-and-green-spaces/>

Appendices

Appendix 1. Parks and Recreation Programs' Effect on Property Values

- How important to you are parks and recreation services **in your city/municipality**?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important
- Does the availability of parks and recreation services near your home affect your decision to live in a specific location?
 - Yes, parks and recreation services *are* a determining factor
 - Sometimes, I like having parks and recreation services available to me, but it's not a deal-breaker
 - Not at all, parks and recreational services are *not* a determining factor
- What priority should the budget for Parks and Recreation be in your home city/municipality?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important
- How important are parks and recreation services **near your home**?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important
- Would you pay more for a home located nearer to a park or recreational area?
 - Yes, I would pay more for the right house
 - No, I don't think the location makes a difference
- What is your preferred range of distance from your home to the nearest parks and rec location?
 - Less than 600 feet
 - 500-600 feet
 - More than 600 feet
- Which type of park and recreation location is your greatest preference near your home?
 - Regularly active sports facility
 - Regularly active recreational park (including the playground)
 - Somewhat active sports facility
 - Somewhat active recreational park (including the playground)
 - Passive recreational park, which includes walking areas
 - Passive recreational park, which includes water and walking areas
- What size park do you prefer near your home?
 - Larger parks with parking lots and multiple uses
 - Medium-sized parks with various uses and varying visitation
 - Smaller parks with single purpose uses

Appendix 2. Park and Receptions Survey to Municipal Entities

General

1. Does this municipality have a parks and recreation (P&R) department? Yes No
2. If so, does this department have a mission statement or city-mandated objective to measure effectiveness? Yes No
If so, please provide (or cut and paste a link): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
3. How much importance does this city place on its parks and recreation programs? (Check all that apply)
 - a. The city does not see the importance of an effective P&R program and does not prioritize these endeavors during planning.
 - b. The city sees the importance of an effective P&R program but cannot provide the necessary resources to effectively support the services.
 - c. The city funds a P&R program but places these services low on the list of priorities.
 - d. The city believes that an effective P&R program is important to the city and adequately funds it as such.
4. Does this city consider the number of residents to be serviced when planning, maintaining, improving, or eliminating P&R services and facilities? Yes No
If yes, what is the target equation? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
5. On average, how many residents share each park? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
6. How much money per capita is spend on P&R services? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
7. Does this city provide P&R services that generate revenue? Yes No
If so, what is the percentage of revenue to the operating expenditures? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
8. Other than providing a place for recreational activity, does this city provide other services or facilitate other activities through the P&R department? Yes No

If so, what other services or activities are provided/facilitated? Click or tap here to enter text.

Health

9. Check each statement this city believes accurately describes its role in the health and wellness of its citizens:
- This city takes specific actions to ensure their health and wellness programs and services promote health equity.
 - this city provides fitness and exercise program to the community.
 - This city is a leader in addressing public health threats, such as physical inactivity, chronic diseases, and social isolation.
 - This city offers food and nutritional services to youth in the community.
 - This city offers food and nutritional services to adults in the community.
 - A portion of the nutritional services offered to the community are federally funded.
 - A portion of the nutritional services provided are locally funded.
 - This city's P&R services provide an opportunity for volunteering.

Appendix 3. Economic Survey

1. How important are parks/open spaces to you as a business owner?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
2. When looking to expand your business to other locations, how important is it to you to consider the distance of the location to a park/open space?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
3. How important are parks/open spaces regarding economic growth for your business?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
4. How important are festivals or planned events at a park regarding bringing new customers to shop at your business?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
5. What priority should a city give to its Parks and Recreation Division?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
6. Regarding the economic development of a city, how important are parks/open spaces?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
7. When attracting potential employees to join your business, how important is a good parks and recreations division as it relates to recruiting employees?
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
8. How important are Parks/open spaces as it relates to quality of life?
 - a. Very Important

- b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
9. How important are parks/open spaces to your employees?
- a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important
10. When choosing a new low location, how important is the quality of Parks/Open spaces in your decision making?
- a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Indifferent
 - d. Not important

Appendix 4. National Park and Recreation Marketing and Communications

