

III. Plan Development Process

Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan

Initiation of the Planning Process

In October 1996 the City of Lufkin City Council funded the Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan in the budget. A Park Master Plan Advisory Committee was appointed to develop the plan and report their findings to the Council. To support the Committee's efforts, a Staff Team comprised of the Parks and Leisure Services Director City Engineer, City Planner, Director of Planning, Superintendent of Parks and Superintendent of Recreation were appointed. The team served to provide information, resources, surveys and guidance to the Committee.

Public Participation

Public participation began with the development of a Task Force of representatives from civic groups, agencies, chamber of commerce, neighborhood associations, and groups with programs in the parks. Interested individuals who had made suggestions to or contact with the Parks Department were invited to participate on the Task Force.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee began meeting in November 1996. Representatives of the various Task Force groups attended the noon meetings. They submitted written requests and explanations of their needs and desires. In this process the Advisory Committee had the opportunity to learn of new activities and facilities.

Following all of the presentations the Advisory Committee met to consider the development of the plan. Prior to the meeting a survey was sent to each committee member to rank the projects. The results of the survey contributed to the development of the overall park system concept, goals and priority projects for five to ten years. The final plan document was developed by the staff.

III. Plan Development Process

Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan

An important element in the plan development was the citizen awareness efforts. In order to reach as many residents as possible, an article on the plan was written for the city newsletter. The newsletter is sent to every address on the water meter billing list. The article explained the planning process and the goals for the parks. Additional efforts were made to contact citizen leaders to gather additional input to the Advisory Committee's and staff work so that the result would be a plan that represented the interests of the community as a whole.

Representatives of the youth and adult sports associations and individuals that use City facilities or participate in City sponsored leagues were contacted to assess their current and future participation levels and needs. The sports represented included youth baseball, soccer, football, basketball, girls softball, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, bow hunters, Adult softball, basketball and volleyball.

Surveys

In 1995, a City of Lufkin Citizen Survey was prepared by the Department of Political Science and Geography of Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. An element of the citywide survey was a question that asked the citizens to express their level of satisfaction with the Recreation Programs and Facilities. The survey compilation indicated that 12.5 percent of the 439 respondents were very satisfied with the programs and facilities, 72.7 percent were satisfied, while 12.8 were dissatisfied and only 2.1 percent were very dissatisfied.

Another survey was conducted in late 1997 that was specifically for the Parks and Recreation Department. This survey had questions that addressed the needs and desires of the citizens with respect to park usage, age and sex of user, opinions as to the provision of more parks and programs, rating of maintenance and programs, needs for facilities, financing options,

III. Plan Development Process

Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan

designation of funding priorities and access to the parks. Numerous comments on needs and desires as well as usage were included by the 53 respondents. The results of this survey are further detailed in the Section VI, Needs Assessment and Identification of this plan. A copy of the survey is in the Appendix.

In May 1997 the Angelina County Board of Realtors conducted a City of Lufkin Service Survey. The respondents to this effort indicated that better city parks and youth programs were needed.

A public hearing was held on December 11, 1997 to receive comments on the proposed park plan.

1998-99 Plan

In July 1998 a new effort to develop a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan was initiated. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was charged with overseeing the development of the new plan, which incorporates the previous public input and needs assessments. The meetings and activities of the Board were open for public input and comment. A consulting firm was contracted to assist in the preparation of the Plan.

Mapping

To develop the Plan, a base map of the City with the locations of the current parks was prepared in digital format. This base map was utilized to identify the park inventories, neighborhood, school and community park service areas and priority needs.

Inventory

Each of the park sites facilities were visited and a list of the contents made. This information was compiled and utilized to determine the needs and standards in this Plan. The information was compiled in a spreadsheet and a complete description of each park is found in Section V.

Public Meetings and Input Opportunities

A public meeting was held by the Parks and Recreation Advisory on December 11, 1997. This meeting was advertised in

III. Plan Development Process

Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan

the newspaper and the city newsletter. Public comment on the Plan was solicited from citizens and interested parties.

The Plan is available in the public libraries, City Hall, and the Chamber of Commerce so citizens can review the Plan. Comment sheets that could be returned to the Parks and Recreation Department were available with the copies.

The City Council held a public meeting to receive comments on the Plan prior to adopting the Plan by resolution on December 15, 1998. The meeting notice was published in the newspaper.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will adopt the Plan as a part of the current Comprehensive Plan following approval of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.