

VIII. Operations and Maintenance Standards

Lufkin Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs Master Plan

A plan for the development of a park system would be incomplete without standards for the improvements to be implemented. Equally important is the recommended staffing that would be necessary to implement the priorities and activities set forth in the Plan. The following are recommendations for these areas.

Park Improvement Standards

Development of parks and recreational facilities can not be properly programmed without considering criteria for the design and maintenance. Improvements made to parkland should be standardized in order to facilitate maintenance and repairs, maximize durability and longevity, and establish a minimum quality level. Through careful design and selection of materials, attractive park facilities can be developed that require minimum staff attention.

All park improvements shall be in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), local building codes and all applicable restrictions and requirements. The following standards are presented as guidelines for park improvements:

Roads and Parking Lots: All roads and parking lots shall be concrete or asphalt, with concrete preferred. Parking lots shall be striped.

Gates and Fences: Parks may be fenced and/or gated to control access. Fences and gates may be specifically designed for each park.

Park Buildings (Picnic Pavilions, Restrooms, Offices, Maintenance Buildings, etc.): Buildings shall be constructed of metal, wood, brick or concrete block with metal or other appropriate roofs. Exterior painted finishes shall be avoided.

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Structures should be designed to discourage pigeons from roosting, i.e., no exposed rafters.

Playground Equipment: Equipment shall meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines and American Society for Testing Materials Standards (ASTM). Play equipment shall be galvanized or galvanized and powder-coated metal, plastics and plastic coated expanded metal or punched steel. No wood play equipment shall be used unless it meets the requirements and would serve as an enhancement to the site.

Playground Fall Surfaces: All play equipment shall have a resilient fall surface in accordance with CPSC Guidelines and ASTM Standards. Acceptable materials are poured rubber, rubber tiles, sand, gravel and wood chips. No bark shall be used. In play zones where the entire fall surface is not accessible in accordance with ADA requirements, the play structure shall be made accessible in part through use of rubber fall surfacing within the loose fall surface material.

Picnic Tables: All picnic tables and connected benches shall be plastisol coated expanded metal, wood, aluminum or concrete. All picnic tables shall be located on concrete pads or within pavilions. Handicap accessible picnic tables shall be provided at all facilities.

Benches: All benches shall be either treated wood, plastisol coated expanded metal, concrete or galvanized metal legs with treated wood slats. All wood benches shall be the same in order to facilitate replacement of damaged slats.

Trash Receptacles: All trash receptacles shall be painted or powder-coated metal drums mounted on two treated wood posts or concrete containers. A concrete pad beneath the receptacle will facilitate mowing and edging.

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Grills: All grills shall be galvanized metal, permanently mounted with concrete footings. Grills shall not be placed in close proximity to play equipment.

Bleachers: All bleachers shall be aluminum.

Sports Facilities: All sports facilities shall meet standards for intended league play. All goals shall be adequately anchored in place to prevent falling when climbed on or pushed.

Sidewalks: All sidewalks shall be concrete or asphalt, with concrete preferred.

Walking/Jogging Trails: All walking or jogging trails shall be fly ash, decomposed granite, or sand, bark and asphalt mixture. Accessible trails shall be a minimum of 8 feet wide, optimum of 10 feet wide, with a maximum slope of 5%.

Equestrian Trails: All equestrian trails shall be surfaced with mulch. A recycled Christmas tree program can provide mulch.

Mountain Biking Trails: Undeveloped trail surface of natural materials.

Maintenance Standards

In order for the parks to be perceived as an asset to City of Lufkin, they must be well maintained at all times. At public meetings, citizens pointed out that City of Lufkin is noted for the high level of quality throughout its residential developments. The City Parks System should maintain that level of quality. It is essential that maintenance budgets be adopted as new park facilities are developed. If sufficient funds are not available, park land should be held in reserve in its natural state until money can be dedicated for both construction and maintenance of facilities.

Park Maintenance Standards, a publication of the National Park and Recreation Association, contains a Maintenance

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Standard Classification System which outlines six general levels of maintenance:

Mode I—State of the Art Maintenance: State of the art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, governmental grounds or high visitation parks.

Mode II—High Level Maintenance: Maintenance associated with well developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.

Mode III Moderate Level Maintenance: Maintenance associated with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation or with agencies that because of budget restrictions can't afford a higher intensity of maintenance.

Mode IV—Moderately Low Level Maintenance: Maintenance usually associated with low level of development, low visitation, undeveloped areas or remote parks.

Mode V—High Visitation Natural Areas: Maintenance usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes and parking lots.

Mode VI—Minimum Level Maintenance: Maintenance associated with low visitation natural area or large urban parks that are undeveloped.

The standards for these categories generally outline maintenance tasks and frequencies. Mode I will be applicable in specific cases. Parks may have different levels of maintenance within them, i.e. sports fields might be Mode II while natural areas might be Mode V. As individual parks within the system are programmed and developed, the Classification Plan should be

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utilized to budget maintenance costs for each park. Estimated man-hours per task and labor rates are included in *Park Maintenance Standards*. Another resource document is the *Public Works Handbook*. See excerpts in the Appendix.

Maintenance Tasks

The following tasks have been identified through review of *Park Maintenance Standards* and interviews with representatives from the City of Lufkin Parks and Recreation Department. They represent common maintenance tasks that must be accomplished routinely.

Mowing: In Texas, most turf areas must be mowed year-round, although the frequency and demand increases seasonally. Mowing is typically done in cycles: the mowers begin in one area and mow continually, cycling back to the same area at a regular interval. Some cycles average 10 days during the growing season. Less intensive cycles average 3 weeks during the growing season. *Park Maintenance Standards* suggests different mowing intervals for different levels of maintenance.

Weeding/Edging: This task typically follows the same cycle as mowing and is accomplished by the same crew.

Fertilizing: Fertilizing is typically done only at community centers or special memorial areas. In some areas, leagues leasing sports facilities are responsible for fertilizing the fields they lease.

Watering: Typically only special memorial areas are irrigated in city parks. They are watered as required by the nature of the plantings. Hose bibs are located at sports fields. Leagues leasing the fields are responsible for watering and turf care.

Trash Collection: Trash collection from barrels and litter pick-up of heavily used areas is done daily. Cities typically use

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their own garbage trucks or contractors and make a daily trip to a dump.

Restrooms: Permanent restrooms are cleaned daily, and hand towels and toilet paper are replenished. Port-a-cans rented for overflow crowds at special events or to replace restrooms closed for flooding, etc. are generally serviced by the leasing company twice weekly or more often, if necessary.

Picnic Pavilions: Park staff must schedule reservations for the facilities and make sure they are clean before guests arrive. In addition, pavilions must be cleaned daily and inspected for damage, vandalism, burned out lights, etc.

Picnic Grills: Grills must be cleaned and replaced as necessary, particularly following weekends and holidays.

Lights: Police, deputy constables or park rangers patrolling the parks after dark should note any broken or burned out lights. The parks department should replace light bulbs or have city staff electricians do so with bucket trucks.

Jogging Trails: Asphalt trails must be re-topped every 4 or 5 years. Fly ash or decomposed granite trails must be re-topped every 2-4 years depending on usage.

Equestrian Trails: Some entities use mulch obtained through its Christmas Tree recycling program to re-top the trails once a year.

Tree Work: Trees in developed areas must be pruned to maintain their health, to improve their appearance and to allow views into parks from surrounding streets for security. Particularly dense trees located near security lights should be Class I pruned to allow light to penetrate the canopies. Dead, damaged or diseased trees in developed areas and along trails in natural areas may need to be removed. Dead trees pose a hazard to

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visitors in that they may fall in high winds. Some departments in Texas contract with tree specialists for pruning and removal. They do their own cutting and chipping, using the resulting mulch in the parks. In addition, trained park personnel transplant trees within with two tree spades.

General Repairs: Painting and minor carpentry, etc. can be performed by park personnel on an as needed basis. Plumbing and electrical work can be done by qualified park personnel or by other City employees. City divisions typically bill each other for such tasks. Graffiti resistant surface treatments should be considered for building surfaces and facilities.

Wildlife Management: Animals in natural areas can be fed to maintain their populations.

Insect Control: Park personnel should be alert for fire ants and other hazardous insects as they perform their routine duties. Trained park personnel should eliminate hazardous insects as soon as they are discovered.

Sports Facilities: Many city sports facilities are developed for and leased to organized leagues. Concessionaire Agreements have been developed for that purpose. It states that leagues are responsible for fertilizing, watering, mowing and litter pick-up. The local government pays water and electricity bills and empties trash receptacles daily. The park superintendent inspects all sports facilities every 30 days. It is particularly important to inspect the bleachers to make sure that they are structurally sound.

Tennis Courts: Tennis courts must be cleaned weekly with a leaf blower as needed.

Offices and Community and Recreation Centers: All buildings must be cleaned daily and inspected for any damage.

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Community centers shall require personnel to make reservations and be present during open hours.

Personnel

Although the titles vary from city to city, state to state, the positions required to run a city park system efficiently are fairly well defined. The positions described below indicate personnel that may be desirable for City of Lufkin. These descriptions will need modification to meet the personnel requirements of the City.

Park Director: The Park Director manages the entire park system, hires staff seeks new park land and reports to the City Council .

Park Superintendent: Supervisor who directs operation of a city park, including managing maintenance staff, leasing and inspecting sports facilities, taking reservations for picnic pavilions, etc.

Recreation Superintendent: Supervisor over the recreational programs including League supervision, pool management and other similar requirements

Park Ranger/Park Police: The park rangers patrol the parks and alert the appropriate law enforcement officials if dangerous activities are observed.

Park Operator/Caretaker: Semi-skilled field worker who supervises and performs maintenance and upkeep tasks in parks.

Maintenance Supervisor: Responsible for the repair and maintenance of facilities and equipment.

Operations Supervisor: Inspects equipment, collects water samples.

Horticulturist: Manage greenhouses and assistant Horticulturists and supervises and assists in field activities such as soil analysis, ornamental landscaping, fertilizing, pruning,

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transplanting trees and shrubs, application of insecticides, repairs of irrigation systems.

Community or Recreation Center Superintendent: In charge of scheduling programs run by Community Center, managing Community Center personnel, ordering supplies, in charge of scheduling transportation for senior citizens, youth, etc. participating in programs, may drive bus or van

Custodian/ Building Maintenance

Laborers

Recreation Instructors/Specialists: Arts and crafts, exercise instructors, youth directors, coaches, etc. who teach classes offered by the Community Center by contract.

Specialized Requirements

It should be noted that staffing for the Ellen Trout Zoo has its own special and separate requirements and job descriptions that are beyond the scope of this Plan.