

III. Plan Development Process

Overview

A lengthy planning process went into the creation of the Harris County Master Plan - Phase I.

This planning process involved the review and analysis of the County's recreational facilities. Numerous interviews and work sessions were conducted with:

- Harris County Infrastructure Department
- Harris County Flood Control District
- Harris County Precincts I, II, III, & IV Administration and Staff
- The Katy Prairie Conservancy
- The Legacy Land Trust
- The Park People

Citizen input was gathered from responses to a random telephone survey, as well as, numerous interviews with representatives of sports leagues. Augmenting the citizen-based process were community-accepted standards based on recognized national park planning information.

Existing Park System

A review and analysis of the existing County park system inventory was conducted and the information gathered was utilized as a baseline level of service of the park system. Contractually limited to reviewing only the inventory of County facilities, this plan is based on the premise that the County is responsible for only 40% of the total County population's recreational needs. The remainder of the population's recreational needs is being met with facilities provided by the City of Houston and the other 30 + municipalities, schools districts, subdivisions and the private sector groups located within the County.

Standards

The ideal sizes, functions and service areas of recreational facilities are based on national standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and serve as guidelines in the master planning process. The utilization of these guidelines provides a benchmark against which the existing and proposed park system is evaluated. The service area standards are used to evaluate and identify specific areas of deficiency within the park system from a geographical standpoint.

Public Input

In addition to the national standards the unique needs of the residents of Harris County became a major guiding force in the development of this Master Plan. To obtain citizen input information was gathered through interviews of representatives of 81 separate sports leagues that currently use County facilities. These 81 leagues are comprised of approximately 3,779 teams and 50,0434 players. Additionally, an independent random telephone survey was conducted with 400 respondents equally divided among the four

County precincts. Furthermore, precinct parks administration and staff conveyed information gathered from general park users.

Plan Development

The formulation of the Master Plan evolved through a process that included all of the above sources. First the development of the Goals and Objectives as outlined previously in this report followed by the proposed level of service required by the citizens of Harris County. Finally the recreation needs were identified and priorities were established for specific projects to meet those needs.