

VIII. Implementation Funding

A variety of funding mechanisms is available for use by Harris County in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Pay As You Go

This method of financing park improvements and acquisition involves budgeting for land acquisition, development and maintenance of the park facilities through the County's annual budget process. Allocations for park improvements are made and spent annually through the standard budget process.

This method is currently the primary vehicle used for developing projects via interlocal agreements with HCFCD; and HCFCD uses this method for its land acquisitions. Furthermore, Pay As You Go is used by the County to cover facility maintenance costs.

General Obligation Bonds

The County may issue these bonds following an election in which the voters authorize their issuance for specifically stated purposes as well as the necessary tax increase to support them. These bonds pledge the property or ad valorem taxing power of the county.

Certificates of Obligation

These certificates have basically the same effect as general obligation bonds except that they do not require an election to authorize them. An election can be petitioned by five percent of the registered voters of the County. These certificates are issued on the authorization of the County Commissioners Court. Repayment is based on the property taxing power of the County, utility system revenues or a combination of the two.

Senate Bill 376-4B – Sales Tax Revenues

Funds from this special sales tax can be utilized for developing and maintaining public recreational facilities.

Texas Recreation and Parks Account Program

This program administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife is a 50% - 50% matching grant program that may be used to aid communities in acquisition and development of parks and open space. A limit of \$500,000 in State funds is available and one application per review cycle (twice yearly) will be accepted.

House Bill 2108 - Texas Recreation and Parks Regional Park Grants

This program administered by Texas Parks and Wildlife is a 50% - 50% matching grant program that may be used to develop regional parks in urban areas. A limit of \$750,000 in State funds is available and one application per review cycle (twice yearly) will be accepted.

Community Development Funds

Federal grants funding for up to 100% of the cost of developing public recreational facilities.

TEA-21 CMAQ

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

Jointly administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), this program provides federal funds to be utilized for developing transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Recreational Trails Program

A federal program of FHWA under TEA-21 which is administered in Texas by TPW. This program provides funding for the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail users. The program provides funding for up to 80% of the project costs.

Private or Corporate Donations

Donations from foundations, corporations and/or private individuals are often used to acquire and develop parks. The County should constantly identify and pursue opportunities to receive such funding for parks. One avenue for receiving donations is through the development of a Park Foundation. The County should research the benefits of establishing such a foundation.

Fees Collected from Leagues

The County does not run recreation programs; rather it provides facilities for which leagues pay fees to use. These fees are used to defray the cost of maintenance and utilities. The potential of utilizing league fees to offset operation costs should be considered when budgeting for additional park facilities.