

### Citywide – El Paso - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations

As a whole, issues facing the Parks System are both facility related and systematic changes that need to be addressed. Park facilities have not kept up with the growth of the city over the past three decades, and only in the last five years have new facilities been developed to meet that demand. In particular, neighborhood and community parks in fast growing parts of the city have not been provided, in part due to loopholes in the parkland dedication and advanced park planning areas. Open space has not been much of a front burner issue, and valuable areas of open space that could have been acquired in a less expensive manner may now be gone or are much more costly.

Funding for the system has been very low, and the continued reliance on self generated revenue, while a good idea in principle, has forced the system to ignore core programs that benefit a high number of people and focus instead on activities that generate revenue. New park management staff has provided professional guidance for the system, and internal staff can bolster their local experience with additional training in parks and recreation strategies that have been adopted nationwide.

#### Key Overall Needs

1. Neighborhood park service is very poor throughout much of the city.
2. Community parks are well distributed, but tend to be smaller than in most other communities.
3. The city lacks true regional parks, which would be comparable to Ascarate Park in size and the variety of facilities that are provided.
4. Pools in the city, while many have been updated, are not keeping up with new trends that incorporate more leisure facilities.
5. Revenue opportunities are almost non-existent in the current system.
6. There are few actual in town open space preserves, although many opportunities exist.
7. The city has a very significant lack of trails.
8. Area recreation centers are well placed, but are few in numbers and small. Many are neighborhood based and not able to serve large populations.
9. Linkage opportunities throughout the city exist but have not been utilized.
10. Land for future parks has not yet been formally designated, nor has it been funded. Land in the growing area north of Hwy. 54, although discussed and shown on maps, has not been permanently designated and reserved.
11. The system does not have ready access to data on usage and facility maintenance. Much of this data is not currently tracked by up to date management software.
12. Land management crews have huge distances to cover, and cannot adequately maintain all of the parks in the system. New parks are being added without corresponding increases in manpower to maintain them.
13. Parks have significant levels of turf, which require high levels of irrigation. Selected areas in parks should be converted to desert landscapes.
14. The area lacks links to the Franklin Mountains. These should be developed in concert with Texas Parks and Wildlife.
15. The system lacks facilities that can generate revenue, such as golf courses, festival grounds, or even concession stands in many of the athletic parks.
16. The El Paso County parks system has significant parks that can help to address some of the key needs in the city. The City of El Paso and El Paso County should work together to revitalize those parks that are within the city limits. If appropriate, the city should consider assuming management of those parks. A business plan study is recommended prior to taking that step.
17. The Department should continue to infuse its staff with additional training and key professional staff members that can continue to bring new ideas to the system.

## Summary of Key Master Plan Recommendations

Key recommendations for the entire city as well as each planning area are summarized in this chapter, and correspond to the recommendations for each facility category discussed earlier in the document. Recommendations for each area are prioritized based on the findings of the master plan.

General recommendations that address operational and recreation programming issues are as follows.

### I. Summary of Key Operations Findings

#### Land Management

1. Travel time is too high for the crews that are now averaging an hour and fifteen minutes per person per day. A redistribution of parks and facility maintenance responsibility is warranted to reduce the staff time. This is especially true given the new facilities that will be on line within the next year.
2. The Land Management Division has a shortage of manpower in Planning, Maintenance and Facilities.

**a. Planning** - The department depends upon the cooperation of other departments such as Engineering, Development Services and Purchasing in the fulfillment of the planning and construction of the parks. The parks needs are for the most part secondary to the needs of other departments and therefore each and every project is slow to complete. There needs to be a consolidation of activities within the department. This can be accommodated in two ways; one by hiring additional staff

or secondly by transferring the needed staff from other departments, in the following areas;

1. Engineer
2. Park Technician
3. Park/Trails Planner/Trails
4. Project Inspector
5. Purchasing Agent

**b. Maintenance** - Travel time is a major obstacle particularly with the new parks that will be coming on line. The addition of three new land districts will need to be addressed as the various annexations progress. This will require the addition of 30 to 40 new staff members over the next ten years.

**c. Facilities** - This area is in dire need of assistance from both a staffing and funding perspective. There is no life-cycle maintenance program in place for the 30 plus facilities and the number of staff assigned; electricians, plumbers, carpenters and HVAC, painters and mechanics are unable to keep up. There needs to be an influx of tradesman in this area.

#### Facilities Management

1. Institute use of a facilities management system to create cost and work histories or otherwise identify the most critical maintenance issues associated with cyclical replacement of equipment. This can create a major saving of funds. What data is collected and stored is essentially not available, because the staff has neither the time nor the full capability to properly analyze the data.
2. The Capital Projects Unit currently has three staff and they are augmented by involvement from both the Land Management and Facilities Management Divisions. The Unit is responsible for tracking and administering all

parkland dedications, and shepherding new development and rehabilitation projects through the Engineering Department and Purchasing in order to get the projects to bid. Most effective capital park development processes in other jurisdictions around the country assign the park system the initial responsibility and only perform an engineering review (by a P.E.) if it is required by law.

## II. Summary of Recreation Programming Findings

1. The Recreation Services Division does not have a systematic method for collecting, tabulating, and analyzing operational and program data that is important to an effective revenue generation system.
2. The Recreation Services department has no automated or manual Recreation Business Management System
3. Sports league, childcare, and facility rentals and leases exceed the instruction of classes and programs as a source of revenue. It appears that the majority of facility use is for quasi –public or private uses.
4. Attendance data is missing to establish the scale of the services, programs and rentals attendance at facilities.
5. The operating procedures and policies are inconsistent, especially as they relate to hours of operation and staffing.
6. The current staff has some significant skills and abilities to address the challenges and issues in their neighborhoods and at their centers. These qualities are particularly fine tuned to the current operation. Changes to enhance the recreation benefits to the citizens will require some additional training and structural realignments.

Consideration should be given to the time and cost of developing the employee skills to successfully address the new challenges.

7. The current staff is still 10 to 12 members short from the losses suffered over the previous two budgets. This has major impacts on the department's ability to provide core programs at the Recreation Centers and to ensure consistent hours of operation.

### Aquatics

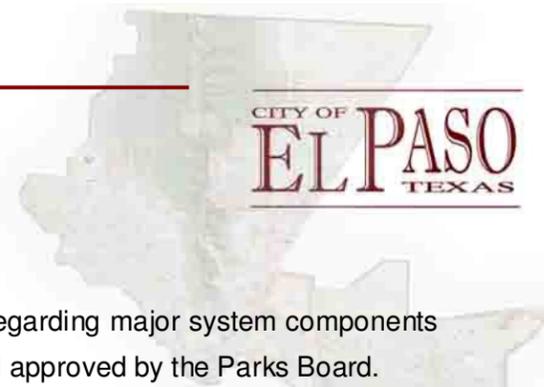
1. The Aquatics program and related facilities needs further study. A review of the system and facilities is recommended in the near future.

## III. Summary of Key Funding Recommendations

1. The Department needs a stable source of operational funding. At this point in time, the funding for maintenance of both parks and facilities is not adequate to maintain the facilities to a sustainable standard. In addition, funding is inadequate to keep the facilities open the expected amount of time. The revenue requirement for programs has effectively eliminated what most communities considered to be public access or core courses.

**Current Requirement 2006-07.** (To maintain status quo) **\$22.6 million dollars** - at an estimated 634,000 population cost would be \$36.00 per capita.

**Future Requirement 2011-12** Will need a projected operating fund of **\$27 million dollars** (\$38.00 per capita assuming 700,000)



2. Build revenue-producing facilities with capital dollars that enhance recreation opportunities. Ideas include create golf courses; Ascarate with festival grounds, design water park and other features; provide shelters and rentals of reserve spots for large gatherings; internalize the sports program under city control and rent facilities for availability; increase access to recreation facilities with better hours; institute a new naming policy and others.
3. Identify other suitable tax sources that could be tapped to provide for maintenance of facilities. Examples include tourism taxes and real estate transfer charges.
4. Aggressively consider a move to a Park District system to provide a more stable funding source for the parks system.

#### **IV. Summary of Key Governance Findings**

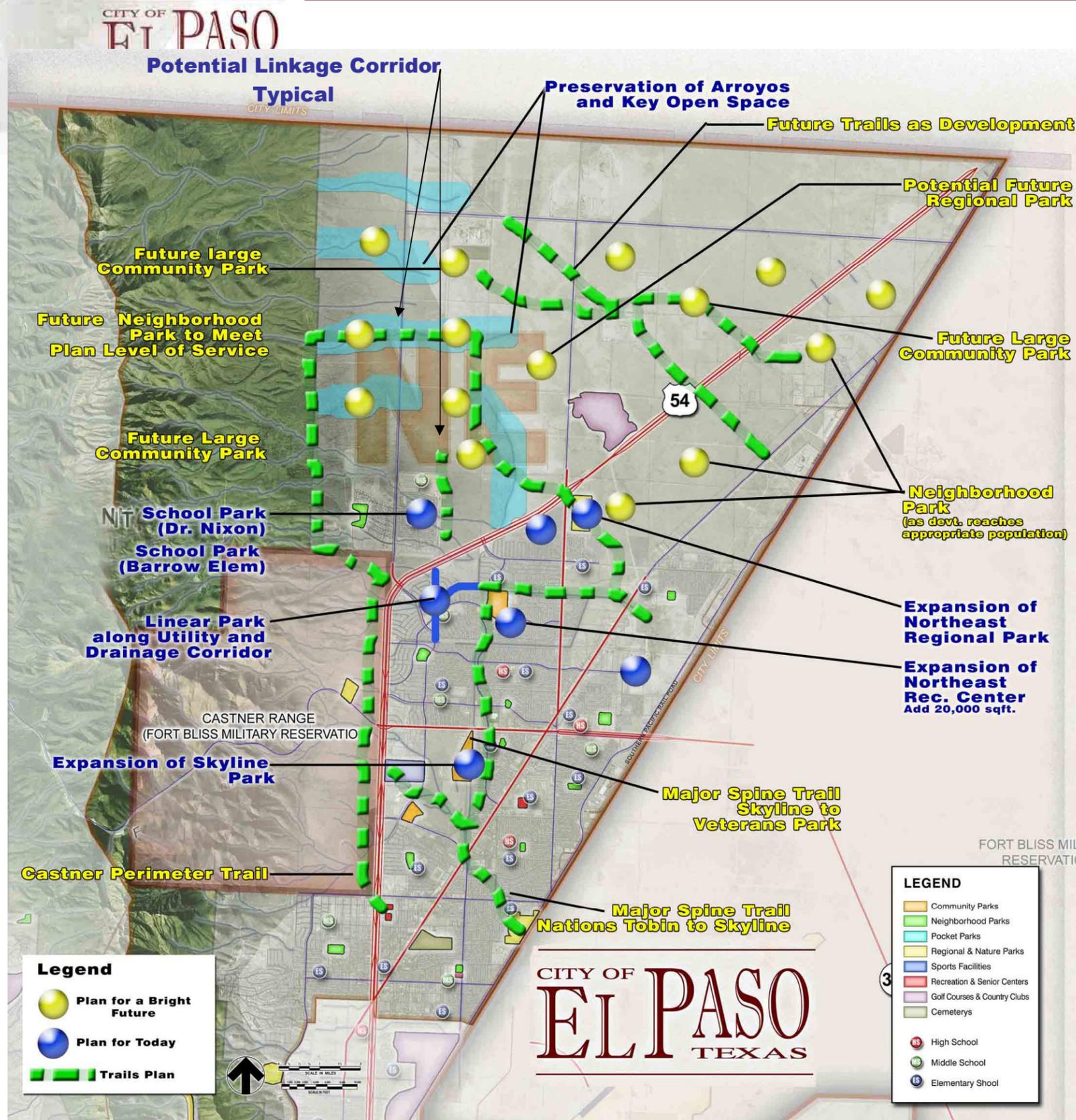
1. Adequate funding must be provided to maintain and operate facilities that are available.
2. The mission of Parks and Recreation facilities should be to provide services for the citizens of El Paso, and not to generate funding to make up for budget inadequacies.
3. Funding should be distributed and allocated on an equitable basis citywide, based on need. Funding needs should not be based on arbitrary citizen requests without adequate determination of need.
4. The Parks Advisory Board should take on a stronger policy role, as authorized by the City Council. The Advisory Board has value as a sounding board for park and recreation system decisions. The Advisory Board should be allowed to truly advise the Council; therefore key

department decisions regarding major system components should be reviewed and approved by the Parks Board.

5. Beginning with the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the department budget should include a capital expenditures line item. This is especially critical given the age of many of the park and building facilities in the city. This is intended to address key maintenance needs in a timely fashion so as to extend the useful lifespan of city assets.
6. This amount should begin at an amount equal to 1% of the total value of the Parks and Recreation system infrastructure. If overall department park and building assets are valued at \$200,000,000, then the annual capital expenditures budget should eventually total \$2,000,000+/-.
7. An immediate policy change for Recreation facilities is recommended, so that recreation centers can offer programs and facilities that provide the most benefit to the citizens of El Paso. The Entrepreneurial system should begin with the 2006-2007 budget year.
8. Land Management staff recommendations should be implemented immediately by adjusting grades and by providing additional staff as recommended in this section.

#### **V. Summary of Key Park and Facility Findings and Recommendations**

Recommendations for each of the five major planning areas in the city are shown on the following pages, along with the key issues and priorities for each area. These recommendations should be considered collectively rather than only one at a time. They can be addressed in a different order if the opportunity to resolve a key need arises out of sequence.



**Northeast El Paso - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations**

The Northeast planning area has a greater amount of parks than any other part of the city, but only because of the new Northeast Regional Park and the presence of other larger community parks such as Sue Young and Skyline Youth Park.

**Key Overall Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

1. The area has no major trails, although many opportunities for trails exist in the area.
2. The area lacks a major leisure pool facility. Area pools are conventional and have difficulty attracting users.
3. The area has few actual open space preserves, although many opportunities exist.
4. The area lacks a major indoor recreation center. Area centers are smaller and lack major amenities.
5. Land for future parks has not yet been formally designated. Land in the growing area north of Hwy. 54, although discussed and shown on maps, has not been permanently designated and reserved.
6. The area lacks additional close in neighborhood parks (although it has more than other parts of the city).
7. The area lacks links to the Franklin Mountains.

**Key Recommendations for this area**

**Immediate**

1. Develop a minimum three to four miles of trails over the next five years. Use power line and drainage corridors. Develop these corridors as linear parks.
2. Permanently preserve open space lands in the area, including Public Service Board lands, the Castner Range, and major drainage ponding areas. Designate as open space along with other uses. Provide access points to the Franklin Mountains.
3. Develop a major leisure pool in the area over the next ten years. Consider a location in Veterans Park to serve both existing and new parts of the area.
4. Enhance the pool at Nations Tobin.
5. Develop enhanced indoor recreation facilities at Nations Tobin and Veterans Parks.
6. Provide additional recreation facilities in neighborhood parks.

**Medium and Longer Term**

7. Develop additional trails in the area.
8. Develop school parks and additional neighborhood parks to meet growing demand.
9. Add athletic facilities at the Northeast Regional Park and at Skyline Youth.
10. Enhance area holding ponds to make them more attractive and to serve as open space.
11. Develop a new far northeast Recreation Center.

**Northeast El Paso**

**Key Facility Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

1. Trails and trail access facilities
2. Acquisition of park lands
3. Shade shelters in parks
4. Picnicking facilities in parks
5. Open play areas in parks
6. Leisure pool
7. Expanded recreation center
8. Preservation of key open space assets
9. Athletic facilities
10. Desert landscapes in parks

**East El Paso - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations**

The East planning area has fewer parks than any other area, with the exception of the Central planning area. The area Distribution issues are critical, with large portions of the area having poor immediate access to open space or parks. The area continues to grow very quickly, and will need extensive land acquisition and facility development actions in the immediate future.

**Key Overall Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

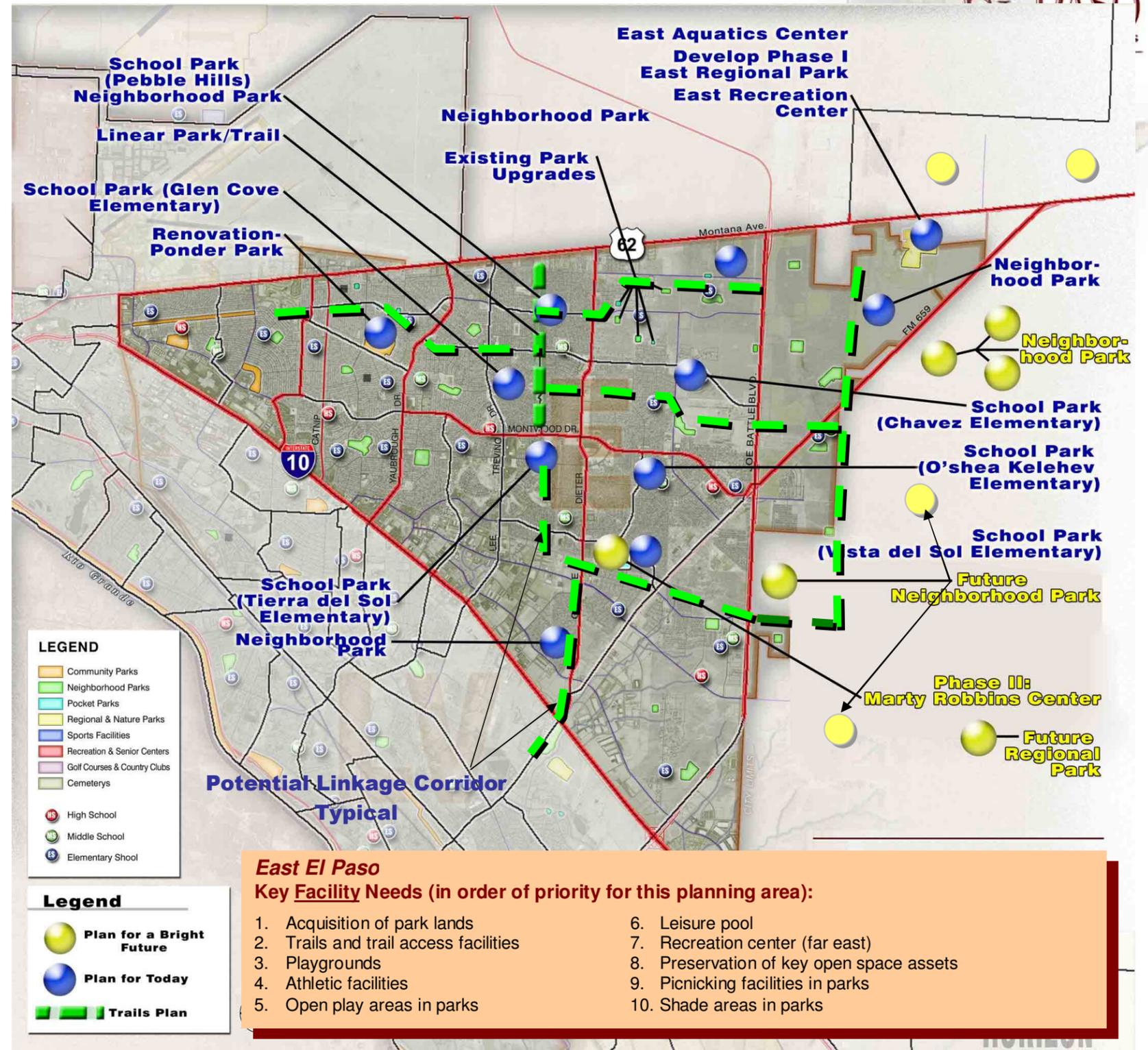
1. The area has no developed regional park.
2. The area lacks a significant number of neighborhood parks, especially in the area between Yarborough and Loop 375.
3. The area lacks large community parks with a variety of facilities in them.
4. The area has no major trails, and opportunities for trails are not as readily available as in other parts of the city.
5. The far East area lacks a major recreation center east of Loop 375.
6. The area lacks a major leisure pool facility. Area pools are conventional and have difficulty attracting users.
7. The area lacks baseball fields, especially in the far east part of the area.
8. The area has almost no open space preserves. Opportunities exist only farther to the east where development has not yet occurred.

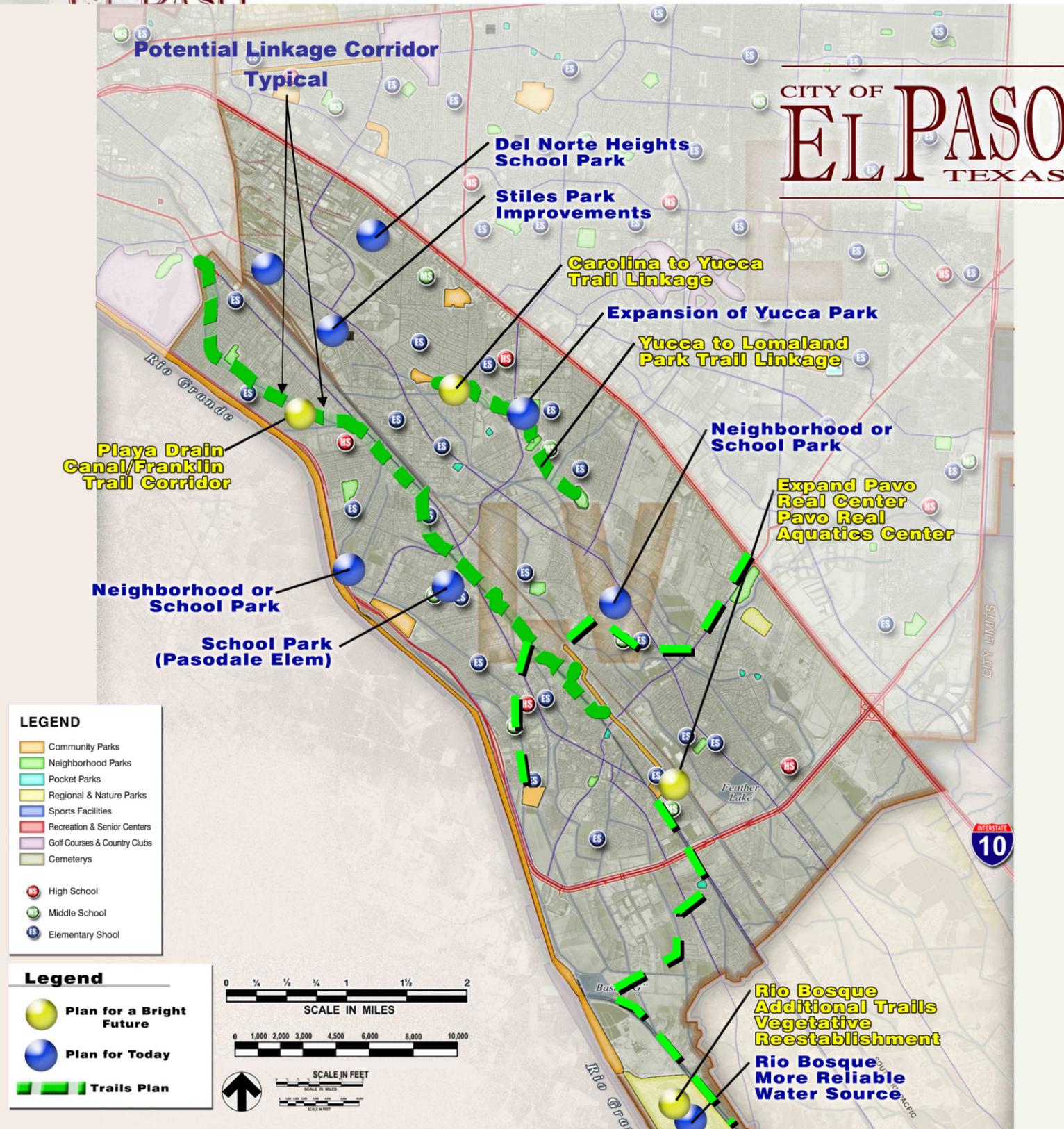
**Key Recommendations for this area**  
**Immediate**

1. Develop three to four new school parks in the area to immediately address close in park needs in areas that have no access to parks.
2. Emphasize the continued development of neighborhood parks, primarily by developers, as new residential growth occurs. As many as ten new neighborhood parks may be needed over the next five years.
3. Develop the initial phase(s) of the East Regional Park. Consider acquiring land to increase the size of that park. Plan as a "regional" sized center to serve a very large population.
4. Develop a minimum three to four miles of trails over the next five years. Use power line and drainage corridors. Some trail corridors may be along boulevards. Develop all of the trail corridors as linear parks.
5. Convert two to three ponding areas into small neighborhood parks or extensions of existing parks as shown.
6. Acquire land for additional neighborhood and community parks from developers and through purchase.
7. Permanently preserve open space lands in the area, primarily east of Loop 375. Work with property owners to gain dedication of drainage areas and aquifer recharge areas.
8. Develop a major leisure pool in the area over the next ten years. Consider a location in the new East Regional Park to serve both existing and new parts of the area.
9. Complete the second phase expansion of the Marty Robbins Recreation Center.
10. Develop two new large community parks in the area.

**Medium and Longer Term**

11. Build a new super regional recreation center at the far Eastside Regional Park.
12. Develop additional trails in the area, up to at least four additional miles by 2020.
13. Continue to develop neighborhood and community parks as growth occurs, working towards the target levels of service established by this plan.
14. Preserve open space lands in the far eastern areas of the county in anticipation of eventual growth to that area.





**Mission Valley - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations**

Growth in the Mission Valley area is more moderate, allowing the city to get closer to target levels of service for the area. Emphasis in this area needs to be on linear parks and trails along drainage and irrigation canals, providing additional neighborhood parks in underserved areas, and preserving vestiges of the rural agricultural heritage of the area even as full development occurs.

**Key Overall Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

1. Five neighborhoods in the area lack nearby small parks.
2. The area lacks trails.
3. Existing drainage canals and pond in the area are used as linear corridors but have no park amenities or features to improve safety.
4. Smaller community parks in the area are over-utilized and need to be expanded.
5. The area lacks a large recreation center, requiring that one of the existing centers be expanded. Area centers are smaller and are aging.
6. While there are portions of the area that are not yet developed, the area lacks significant in-town open space reserves. Remnant agricultural areas are disappearing quickly, and some need to be preserved immediately.
7. Beyond the Rio Bosque Park, the area lacks links to the Rio Grande River corridor.

**Key Recommendations for this area**  
**Immediate**

1. Develop two linear parks in the area adjacent to drainage canals. Include trails and beautification features.
2. Develop an additional two miles of trails for the area, some along linear parks discussed in item 8 above.
3. Enhance the Pavo Real Pool by enclosing it or covering it with shade, and provide additional amenities for the pool.
4. Acquire land adjacent to both Lionel Forti (ponding area) and Yucca Park, and expand both parks.
5. Develop two to three school parks in the area to provide service in underserved neighborhoods.
6. Expand two of the recreation centers in the area, including Pavo Real and Carolina to provide enhanced services and facilities.
7. Expand Pavo Real Park to make it a regional park for the area.
8. Work with El Paso County to improve Ascarate Park.

**Medium and Longer Term**

9. Expand Blackie Chesser Park to encompass nearby undeveloped lands.
10. Over this plan's life, develop the Rio Grande Trail corridor from Ascarate to Rio Bosque.
11. Expand Shawver Park by adding on adjacent drainage areas and undeveloped properties.
12. Replace the Lionel Forti Pool.

**Mission Valley - Key Facility Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Open play areas in parks/linear corridors | 6. Improvements to area open space       |
| 2. Trails and trail access facilities        | 7. Recreation center expansion           |
| 3. Lighted soccer fields                     | 8. Preservation of key open space assets |
| 4. Athletic facilities                       | 9. Picnicking facilities in parks        |
| 5. Shade areas in parks                      | 10. Access to river corridor             |

**Central El Paso - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations**

The Central planning area has fewer parks than other areas of the city. Parks in this area tend to be smaller but receive a very high amount of use. In almost every type of facility category, the Central area has major deficiencies.

**Key Overall Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

1. Major portions of the area lack close in neighborhood parks, and have a very low ratio of small parks for the population that is served.
2. The area lacks community parks and the variety of facilities that large parks provide.
3. The northern part of the area lacks a major indoor recreation center.
4. The area lacks trails.
5. The area has few actual open space preserves, although many opportunities exist.
6. Land for future parks has not yet been formally designated. Land in the growing area north of Hwy. 54, although discussed and shown on maps, has not been permanently designated and reserved.

**Key Recommendations for this area**  
**Immediate**

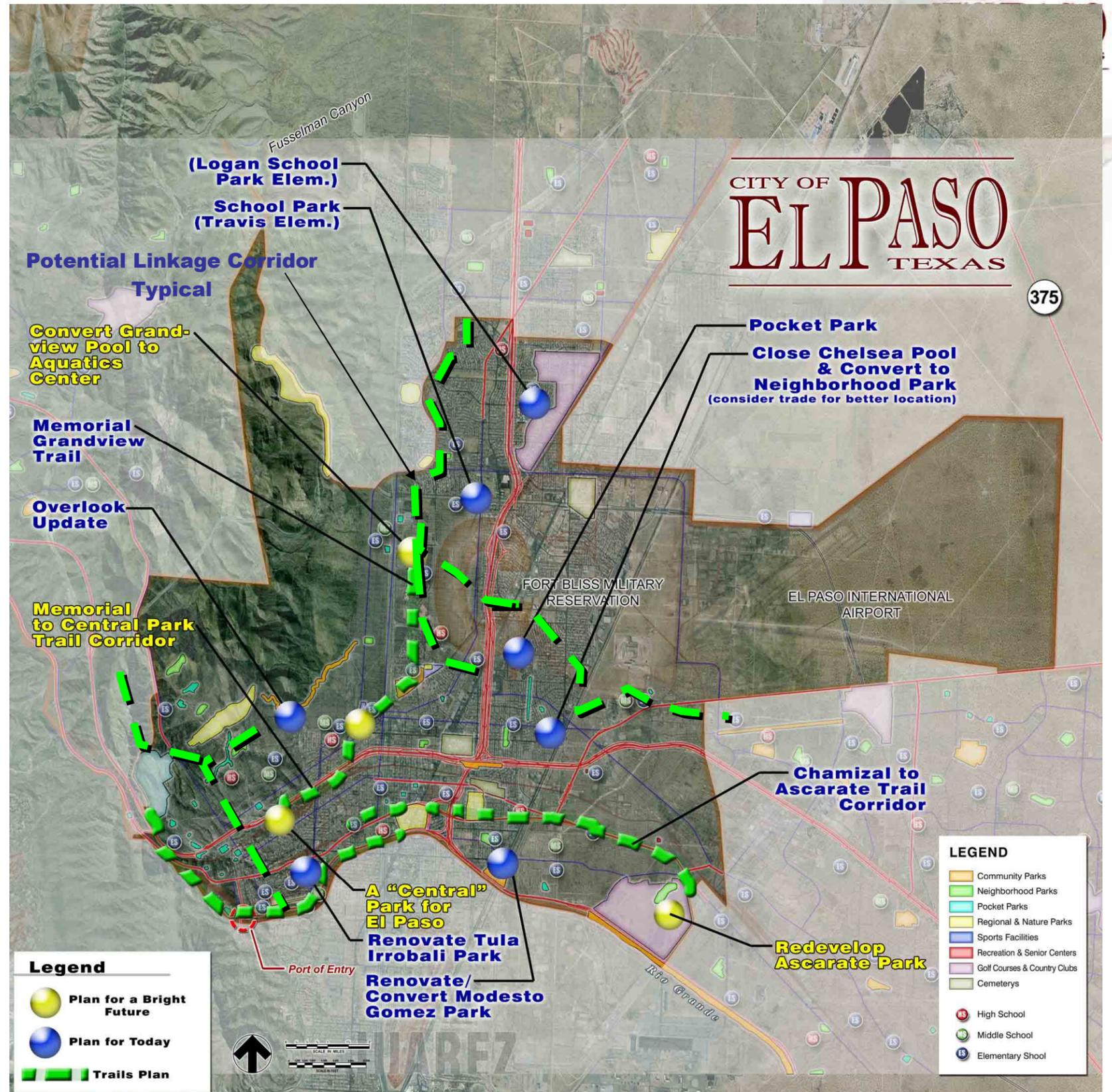
1. Identify and acquire locations for additional neighborhood parks in the area, especially in the area northeast of Hwy. 54 and I.H.10. Use both school sites and land that potentially can be acquired.
2. Identify and acquire locations for new community parks in the area.
3. Develop up to five new neighborhood parks in the area. These may be school/parks if feasible.
4. Develop up to two community parks in the area.
5. Develop new athletic facilities to serve the central area.
6. Permanently preserve open space lands in the area that are the foreground to the Franklin Mountains.
7. Develop a recreation center in the vicinity of Memorial Park. Consider converting and expanding the current Senior Center into both a senior and a multi-purpose recreation center.
8. Convert Modesto Gomez Park to alternative uses once other area athletic facilities become available.
9. Close the Chelsea Pool facility and develop a new pool elsewhere to serve the area. Convert Chelsea site into a neighborhood park with a spray grounds.
10. Develop one to two miles of trails for the area. These may occur in linear parks.
11. Work with El Paso County to improve Ascarate Park and to add facilities to the park.

**Medium and Longer Term**

12. Develop a new large "central" park for El Paso in underused industrial or railroad properties.
13. Develop linear parks with trails and neighborhood amenities along the river and border highway corridor.
14. Develop additional downtown plazas as part of downtown redevelopment efforts.
15. Acquire additional open space assets as opportunities arise.

**Central Area - Key Facility Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Land or sites for new parks       | 6. Replacement pool                      |
| 2. Playgrounds in parks              | 7. Recreation center in underserved area |
| 3. Multi-field baseball complex      | 8. Preservation of key open space assets |
| 4. Trail and trail access facilities | 9. Picnicking facilities in parks        |
| 5. Shade areas in parks              | 10. Access to river corridor             |



# CITY OF EL PASO TEXAS

## Potential Linkage Corridors (Typical)

Acquire Land for Future Regional Park

Future Community Park

Open Space Arroyo Preservation (where feasible)

Second Phase Westside Park

Future Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Park  
School  
Comm. Center

Renovate Thorn Park

Keystone Athletic Facilities  
Keystone Regional Park

Potential Linkage Corridors (Typical)

FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

Future Community Park

Open Space Arroyo Preservation  
Develop Three Hills Aquatic Center

Expand Three Hills Rec. Center

Open Space Arroyo Preservation (where feasible)

Develop Neighborhood Park

Renovate/Expand Cloudview School/Park

### LEGEND

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks
- Regional & Nature Parks
- Sports Facilities
- Recreation & Senior Centers
- Golf Courses & Country Clubs
- Cemeterys

- High School
- Middle School
- Elementary School

### Legend

- Plan for a Bright Future
- Plan for Today



## Northwest El Paso - Summary of Key Needs and Recommendations

The Northwest planning area has experienced significant growth over the past few years, and has lagged behind other areas in terms of major facilities. Recent new development will go a long way to address needs in the area, but additional facilities will be needed to meet growing demand.

### Key Overall Needs (in order of priority for this planning area):

1. Remaining open space and natural area assets in the Northwest are not currently preserved.
2. The area lacks additional trails that utilize the many opportunities in the area.
3. The area continues to lack major athletic facilities, even with the addition of the Westside Sports Complex and the initial phase of the Three Hills Regional Park.
4. The area lacks linear parks, even though many opportunities for linkage parks exist in the area.
5. The area lacks easily accessed walking links to the Franklin Mountains.
6. The area lacks large indoor recreation centers. Area centers are smaller and lack major amenities.
7. The area west of I.H. 10 lacks both neighborhood and community parks,
8. The area has few actual open space preserves, although many opportunities exist.

### Key Recommendations for this area

#### Immediate

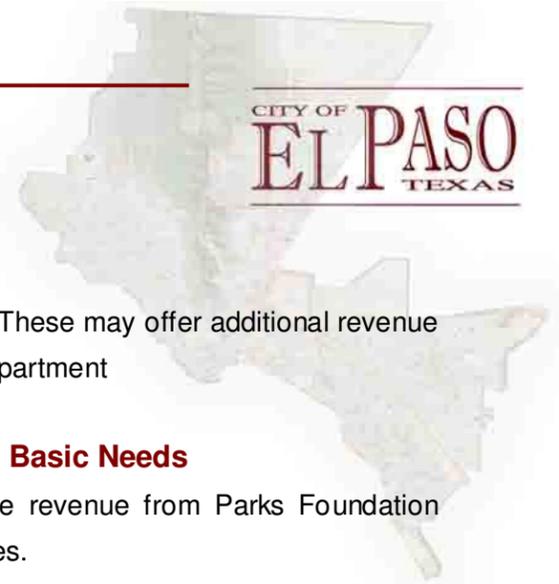
1. Identify and permanently preserve remaining open space assets in West El Paso through acquisition or non-development agreements.
2. Expand the new recreation center at Three Hills, converting that center into a super regional center.
3. Develop athletic facilities in future phases of Three Hills and Westside Sports Complex quickly.
4. Develop a major leisure pool in the area over the next ten years. Consider a location at Three Hills Regional Park.
5. Replace the Leo Cancellare pool with a new leisure and competitive swimming pool facility.
6. Develop up to five infill neighborhood parks/school parks where needed.
7. Develop a community park west of I.H. 10.
8. Develop two to four miles of trails in the area, including trails along irrigation canals and additional phases of the River Trail to link to UTEP and downtown El Paso.
9. Provide a school based community/recreation center facility west of I.H. 10.
10. Acquire land for a large future regional park for the entire area. Create the park by combining multiple arroyo systems together to develop a unique desert park.

#### Medium and Longer Term

11. Acquire land around Keystone Heritage Park and convert that park into a regional park with an emphasis on nature facilities.
12. Develop up to four miles of additional trails in the area.
13. Master plan and develop initial phase of large regional park.
14. Improve access to lower fringe area of the Mountain preserve area.

### Northwest El Paso - Key Facility Needs (priorities for this planning area):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Preservation of key open space assets | 6. Leisure / competitive swimming pool |
| 2. Trail and trail access facilities     | 7. Shade facilities in parks           |
| 3. Athletic facilities                   | 8. Linear park corridors               |
| 4. Expanded recreation centers           | 9. Nature park facilities              |
| 5. Land or sites for new parks           | 10. Neighborhood park facilities       |



## VI. Implementation

Key recommended implementation steps over the next ten years are as follows:

### Year One – Laying the Groundwork for the Future

1. Identify sites for school parks and develop agreements with school districts for use as school parks (citywide, with emphasis on the Central, East and Mission Valley areas)
2. Conduct business plan study of Ascarate Park.
3. Discuss complimentary management and improvement strategies for in-town El Paso County park facilities with County staff, and if feasible develop joint agreement.
4. Actively pursue preservation agreements for most critical open space properties throughout the city until funding becomes available.
5. Conduct individual assessments in each recreation center service area to determine what basic core programming in each should be.
6. Begin to expand land management and facility operations staff.
7. Complete refinements to the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.
8. Begin process of evaluating and legislating the creation of a Park District for the El Paso area.
9. Establish new data management software and train staff.
10. Assess follow-up potential revenue generating actions within the System that can provide positive funding.
11. Consider operating some additional athletic leagues to improve access for younger age groups in the city. Emphasis should be on recreational value of the sport, not

its competitive nature. These may offer additional revenue opportunities for the Department

### Year Two – Addressing Basic Needs

1. Begin push to generate revenue from Parks Foundation and naming opportunities.
2. Continue to develop neighborhood parks as funded through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.
3. Increase department funding allowances for recreation centers to begin transition to greater program offerings and gradual weaning from programs and rentals that are primarily driven by revenue potential.
4. Allocate fund for priority acquisitions of key infill parklands and open space assets for immediate acquisitions where necessary.
5. Establish a Capital Replacement fund in the 2007-2008 annual budget. Begin with \$1,000,000 and increase in subsequent years.
6. Begin planning and preliminary design for major actions that can be funded in next bond cycle. This will help confirm required funding and generate excitement as planning for the next cycle occurs.
7. Conduct Aquatics system detailed review and study.
8. Increase land and facility management operations staffing to account for new parks and facilities that come on line.

### Year Three – Towards a Bright Future

1. Continue recreation system transition from revenue producing programming to core services programming.
2. Continue to develop neighborhood parks as funded

through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.

3. Increase land and facility management operations staffing to account for new parks and facilities that come on line.
4. Fund and establish three to four man trail building crew that can assume year round construction of trails throughout the city. Crew should be adequately funded to build up to five miles of basic trail infrastructure annually. Specialty components such as bridges, electrical and landscape can be sub-contracted and constructed subsequently.
5. Conduct final push for establishment of Park District in State Legislature (if deemed appropriate).
6. Continue planning and preliminary design for major actions that can be funded in next bond cycle.
7. Continue to identify and preserve open space properties throughout the city.

#### **Years Four to Six – Towards a Bright Future**

1. Begin implementing Park District
2. Develop parks bond package and establish approval timeframe. This should be the first of at least three bond cycles aimed at funding critical citywide park needs. The package should include both basic needs such as infill parks in highly developed areas, as well as major future items such as the redevelopment of Ascarate Park (if managed by the City of El Paso), the acquisition of other open space properties and the development of trails and major regional parks.
3. Implement improvements funded by Bond program, if approved by voters. Implement over a two to three year

cycle.

4. Continue to allocate funding to maintain new park facilities that are being developed.
5. Conduct preliminary assessment of master plan goals, to determine if basic needs and issues identified in 2006 are being resolved, and where emphasis should be over the next five year period.

#### **Years Seven to Ten – A Bright Future**

1. Continue planning and preliminary design for major actions that can be funded in second major bond cycle.
2. When feasible, prepare second major parks bond package and establish approval timeframe. This will be the second of at least three bond cycles aimed at funding critical citywide park needs. The package should continue to include both basic needs such as infill parks in highly developed areas, as well as major future items.
3. Build toward and arrive at adequate target funding level and maintain in subsequent years. Reassess target level of \$38 to \$40 per capita goal – determine if adequate for funding needs of the system in seven to ten years.
4. At end of period, conduct major assessment of master plan and its target actions, and develop master plan update for next five to ten year cycle.

## **VII. Conclusion – Towards a Bright Future**

Fundamentally, El Paso has the framework for a world-class parks system. The natural features of the area and the manmade form of the city have left the Department with a wonderful palette with which to work. The creativity is there – witness the many beautiful parks and buildings that exist all over El Paso. And the citizens of El Paso use and appreciate their parks as much as anyone else in the United States.

The one major weakness has been the inability to adequately fund the system. This has resulted in not being able to keep up with development of new facilities to address population growth and the under-sizing of facilities when they are built. It has led to management, operational practices and decision making that by necessity must focus as much on the potential for revenue as they do on addressing the core needs of the residents of El Paso. It has led to a system that has literally learned to survive and not to thrive.

But look at what the infusion of funding from the 2000 and 2004 Bond packages resulted in. Park upgrades have occurred everywhere, and first class parks, recreation buildings and pool upgrades are being created all over the city.

**The challenge then will be threefold** – continue to look ahead and determine what should be done to improve the system, create ways in which to better fund both development and operations, and look increasingly at partnerships to build and operate parks that can serve the needs of a dynamic and growing population.

- Planning and thinking ahead is a process of always asking “what else can we do?” or “what should we do differently or better?”
- Funding should include both the critical needs of today as well as paying for actions that lead to a better system.
- Partnerships will be a major part of the future success of the system. They will involve every governmental entity, from the City and County to each of the school systems and the State of Texas. They will also include other city departments and functions, all working to make El Paso a better place. Corporations and the newly strengthened Parks Foundation will also be critical building blocks to fund the parks system of tomorrow.

**This plan creates the vision, first for today, and then for a “Bright Future” for everyone who lives in El Paso. The future is very bright for the Parks System in El Paso.**