CHAPTER

4 Recommendations & Implementation

Recommendations & Implementation

Summary of Highest Priority Needs

This Plan outlines the most urgent parks and recreation needs in Harlingen, based on extensive community feedback, a detailed needs assessment and input from City staff and stakeholders. These high-priority items reflect community expectations for improved access, safety, amenities and quality of life. Focusing investment on these areas will guide future park improvements and strengthen the City's competitiveness for grant funding.

New facilities needed based on community input	New facilities needed based on level of service	Upgraded facilities needed based on existing condition
1. Indoor Recreation Center 2. Splash Pad 3. Dog Park 4. Farmers Market or Flexible Event Pavilion 5. Community Gardens	1. New neighborhood parks in underserved areas 2. Extended trails and greenbelt connections 3. Additional restrooms 4. Shaded seating areas 5. ADA accessibility upgrades	1. Playground replacements 2. Restroom renovations 3. Improved park lighting and safety 4. Trail surface repairs 5. Drainage improvements in older parks

Top 6 Cumulative Facility Needs in Harlingen

1. Playgrounds — Replace aging equipment with inclusive, safe and shaded play areas suitable for all ages.

2. Restrooms — Add and modernize restrooms in high-use parks to support longer visits and larger crowds.

3. Indoor Recreation Center — Develop a year-round indoor facility to expand programming and community access during extreme weather.

4. Trail and Greenbelt Extensions — Expand the Arroyo Colorado Greenbelt and fill trail gaps to improve walking and biking connections citywide.

5. Splash Pads — Introduce splash pads in key parks to provide accessible, family-friendly aquatics options.

6. Dog Park — Establish a fenced, off-leash dog park with shaded seating, water access and waste stations.

Parks & Recreation Mission

The mission of the Harlingen Parks and Recreation Department is to provide high-quality, equitable and inclusive recreational opportunities and public spaces that enrich the health, well-being and quality of life for all residents and visitors. The Department is committed to excellent customer service, sustainability and the responsible stewardship of Harlingen's natural and built environments.

Parks and Recreation Vision

Harlingen envisions a safe, connected and resilient parks and trails system that celebrates the City's natural beauty, supports active and healthy lifestyles, and fosters a strong sense of community pride. The system will offer diverse, accessible recreation opportunities that meet the evolving needs of all ages and neighborhoods, while promoting environmental sustainability and equitable access for all.

System-Wide Goals and Recommendations

These recommendations apply broadly across all Harlingen parks and recreational facilities, as well as address park department operations and maintenance. They guide citywide standards for maintenance, connectivity, safety and funding to keep the system vibrant and resilient. By addressing trail linkages, signage, partnerships and equitable access, these strategies help build a thriving park network that supports community health and quality of life.

Park-Specific Action Plan

These actions focus on targeted improvements for individual parks across the Harlingen park system. The recommendations highlight clear priorities for upgrades, enhancements and new features, along with suggested timeframes and potential cost ranges to guide future implementation and funding efforts.



System-wide Goals & Recommendations

1: Provide Close-to-Home Parks Within One-Half Mile of All Homes in Harlingen

1.1 Acquire parkland in target areas

- Proactively pursue the acquisition of additional parkland acreage in the target areas, as noted in the target areas map; with a focus on West Harlingen, Rangerville, Palm Valley and La Feria where there are notable service gaps.
- Add neighborhood and pocket parks to address the projected 71-acre deficit by 2025 and 190-acre deficit by 2035.

1.2 Update the Parkland Dedication Ordinance

- Ensure the parkland dedication requirements are adequate to provide the necessary park access for new communities.
- Encourage the dedication of land over fee-in-lieu, unless extenuating circumstances arise or the City has a strategic reason to decline the land.

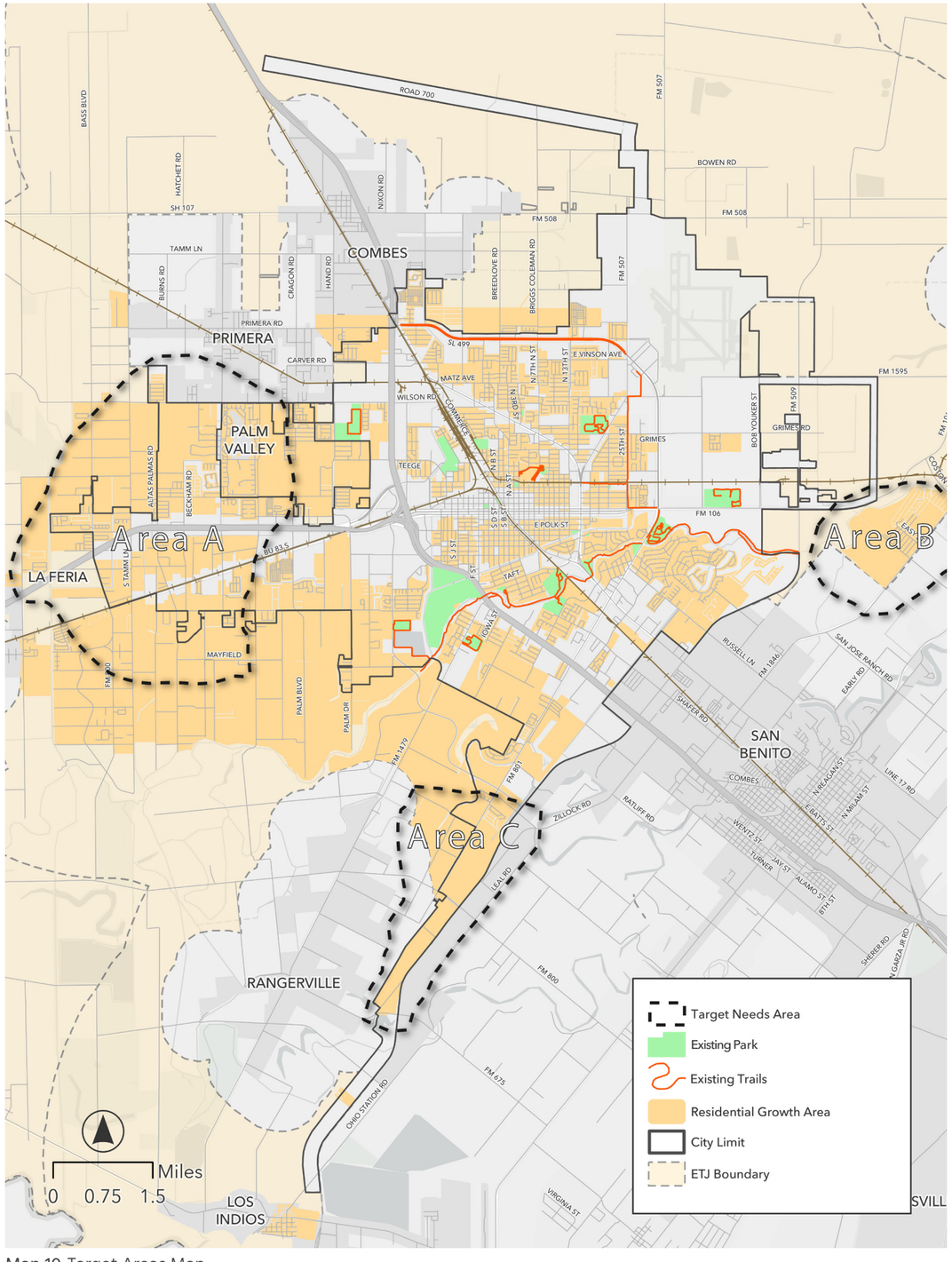
2: Improve Connectivity Between Parks and Residential Areas

2.1 Expand and enhance trail and sidewalk connections

- Extend the Arroyo Colorado Greenbelt and develop new trails and safe sidewalks that link neighborhoods, schools and parks.
- Provide sufficient parking and bike racks at busy parks and trailheads to support increased use.
- As new parks are proposed and completed, update the Trails Plan to provide trail connectivity to those new parks.

2.2 Enhance route safety and wayfinding

- Install crosswalks and pedestrian signals where the trail network crosses major thoroughfares.
- Install dedicated bike lanes where the trail network utilizes on-street infrastructure.
- Install branded entrance signs, trail markers and directional wayfinding to make it easy for residents and visitors to navigate the system.
- Install lighting on trails, at crossings and near entrances to increase safety, especially in high-use evening areas.



Map 10. Target Areas Map

3: Strengthen Park Operations and Maintenance

3.1 Ensure adequate funding and staffing accompany park system expansions and increased expectations of residents.

- The City should conduct a staffing assessment to determine needs for additional staff. The assessment should consider increased maintenance regularity, capacity to quickly address safety and security concerns, and handle recreational programming as the parks and recreation network in the City expands.
- As the City develops additional park facilities, it is crucial to budget adequate funding and staffing to allow for increased park system maintenance, repairs and program/event production at the same quality level of service.

3.2 Develop and implement a maintenance plan

- A maintenance plan should focus on proactive updates and quickly addresses any equipment safety concerns should be created. Proactive maintenance can help prevent unexpected costs and undue risk for the City as well as allow staff to identify the most efficient and effective way to maintain parks. At a minimum, this Plan should include:
  - An inventory of park assets.
  - Maintenance plans and schedules for each park that addresses landscaping, trash removal, safety checks and seasonal repairs.
  - Accounting for regular replacement or upgrade plans for furniture and amenities.

3.3 Monitor and track maintenance using centralized tools

- Use digital systems to log and resolve maintenance requests quickly and efficiently.

3.4 Address deferred maintenance and prioritize repairs

- Prioritize repairs based on the following order: safety hazards, ADA compliance issues, anything that impacts access and usability and highest-use areas.
- Create a 5-year funding and work plan to update old playground equipment and renovate restrooms across the system for safety, accessibility and comfort.

3.5 Develop Park Design Guidelines.

- These guidelines should be applied to all new park design and construction projects as well as any park renovations. The guidelines should consider providing guidance on the following, and more as deemed necessary:
  - Accessibility requirements.
  - Signage design and location.
  - Park lighting policies and guidelines per park classification, including the use of dark skies strategies for all park lighting.
  - Contextual considerations; buffers, etc.
  - Plant species selection; native plantings, low water use plantings, etc.
  - Reduction of light pollution.
  - Use of low-maintenance, high-quality materials and furnishings.
  - Resilience and sustainability strategies. The City may consider utilizing Sustainable SITES strategies to improve environmental performance; even if certification is not desirable, Sustainable SITES can still be used as a framework for designing, implementing and maintaining parks for better performance.

3.6 Keep the Parks Plan updated.

- The community's parks and recreation needs and desires will change as the population grows and demographics shift. The City should plan to update the Parks Plan periodically to ensure that it reflects current needs and priorities. The TPWD recommends updating the Plan every five years or before any new major developments occur that significantly change the parks and recreation needs of residents. This can also help the City during a TPWD grant funding evaluation, as TPWD places a higher point value on submittals that demonstrate that a plan has been updated within the previous five years. All Plan updates should include a public involvement process. The City should review and update the Plan per the following:
  - Annually: Staff review implementation to identify progress and provide an annual report to the City Commission.
  - Every five years (or sooner if needed): Conduct a full review and make needed updates to the inventory, needs assessment, recommendations and prioritization, if needed.

3.7 Keep parks data and GIS layers updated

- The Parks and Recreation Department should work with the City's GIS staff annually to update the City's parks-related shapefiles including trails and parkland names, locations and status (undeveloped, under design/construction, completed, etc.)

4: Enhance the Usability of all Parks

4.1 Seek opportunities to increase shade.

- In Texas's climate, shade is an important element in making the parks usable and comfortable and in promoting community health and wellness in public spaces. It is recommended that the City provide additional shaded areas in all parks. This can be through the use of shade structures, shade fabric or the planting of more shade trees. Shade trees is the preferred shade strategy, since tree planting brings additional multi-benefits to the community. Shade investments should be focused around gathering areas, at amenities and along walking trails.

4.2 Improve park beautification.

- Beautifying parks helps to increase community pride, attract greater usage and improve the City's overall image. The City should create a beautification program for existing parks that includes enhanced landscaping in high-visibility areas, upgrading materials for durability and aesthetics (e.g., furnishings and pavilions) and proactively repairing and replacing amenities as needed. Beautification efforts are a great opportunity to bring out community members for park clean-up and planting days.
- Develop a program for the installation of art in public places, including in parks and along trails.

4.3 Enhance park safety.

- Install improved lighting, emergency call stations and hydration points to enhance safety and usability.
- Incorporate regular patrols and security presence to deter crime and increase visitor confidence.
- Apply CPTED strategies to improve visibility, access control and overall park safety.

4.4 Provide ADA-compliant features.

- Incorporate ADA-compliant features such as accessible pathways, entrances, restrooms, seating and play equipment to ensure all park amenities are usable by visitors of all abilities.

4.5 Offer free Wi-Fi.

- The City should consider providing public WiFi access at all neighborhood and community level parks.
- The City can also utilize QR code quick links on signs throughout the parks to allow people to report an issue, learn about a recreation opportunity, educate themselves about natural features or participate in organized activities (e.g., digital scavenger hunt).

4.6 Provide Clear Signage and Information.

- Install clear, visible signage showing park rules and hours of operation to guide visitor use.
- Include signage with information on available resources for homeless outreach, as noted in community recommendations.

5: Address High-priority Facility and Amenity Needs

5.1 Evaluate opportunities to provide a city-wide market pavilion and festival plaza.

- Based on community input, there is a strong desire for a more frequent farmers market and more locally focused community events. The City should conduct a feasibility study to determine the viability, location, programming, cost and potential funding sources and partnerships for such a program. The location identification should consider:
  - Space for a festival plaza that is primarily hardscape.
  - Space for a permanent market stalls/pavilion.
  - Pedestrian-oriented.
  - Parking availability.
  - Adjacency or connectivity to other City destinations or activity centers where events are held, such as Downtown Harlingen.

5.2 Evaluate opportunities to provide an indoor recreation center.

- Based on community input, there is a strong desire for a community or recreation center in Harlingen that would support year-round programming, especially during extreme heat and inclement weather. It is recommended that the City undertake a recreation center feasibility study to determine the viability, location, programming, cost and potential funding sources for such a facility. The study should consider space needs for:
  - Provide rentable spaces for meetings and events of various sizes.
  - Include a teen lounge featuring a student-staffed coffee shop/café, an e-sports room and comfortable lounge furniture.
  - Ensure adequate parking to accommodate all planned programming.
  - Offer after-school programs for youth of all ages.
  - Explore potential partnership opportunities to support programming and operations.
- The site of the new recreation center should connect to the city-wide trails network and specifically to the middle and high schools via safe multi-modal routes.
- Following identification of the preferred location, programming and funding or partnership strategy, the City should proceed with the design, construction and management of an indoor recreation center.

5.3 Create a community garden program.

- Community gardens were an identified need by the community and can provide a variety of health and wellness benefits for community members. The City should seek to provide community garden plots in their parks as noted elsewhere in these recommendations. Along with the provision of the physical garden, there must be a program in place to ensure proper use and maintenance of plots. This can be a community or City-led program that is responsible for member and plot management as well as the communal elements of the garden, such as:
  - General area upkeep and workdays.
  - Communal tools.
  - Rules and security.
  - Educational programs, either for members or external groups.
  - Care trades (for when members are out of town and need extra help caring for their plot).

6: Broaden Community Programming and Events

6.1 Activate parks with year-round events and activities

- Host family-friendly festivals, outdoor movies, fitness classes and cultural events to encourage residents to gather and enjoy public spaces.

6.2 Expand recreational programs for all ages and interests

- Offer new programs such as youth camps, senior wellness activities, arts and crafts, and community gardening workshops.

6.3 Partner with local schools, nonprofits, and community groups

- Collaborate to share spaces, co-host events and offer programs that reflect Harlingen's diverse community needs.

6.4 Create flexible spaces for community markets and pop-ups

- Develop adaptable event spaces or pavilions within parks that can support farmers markets, food trucks and pop-up cultural gatherings throughout the City.

7: Design for Environmental Resilience and Natural Enjoyment

7.1 Create Ecological Restoration and Maintenance Plans (ERMPs) for appropriate parks.

- Future climate conditions and the possible impact of those on plants and animals in the parks should be studied as a part of these plans, and recommendations should be made that carefully consider this. Develop an ERMP for parks with natural areas that focuses on:
  - Preserving the biodiversity of the parks.
  - Restoring habitat and removing invasive species.
  - Improving water quality.
  - Enhancing soil health.
  - Promoting access to the natural features.

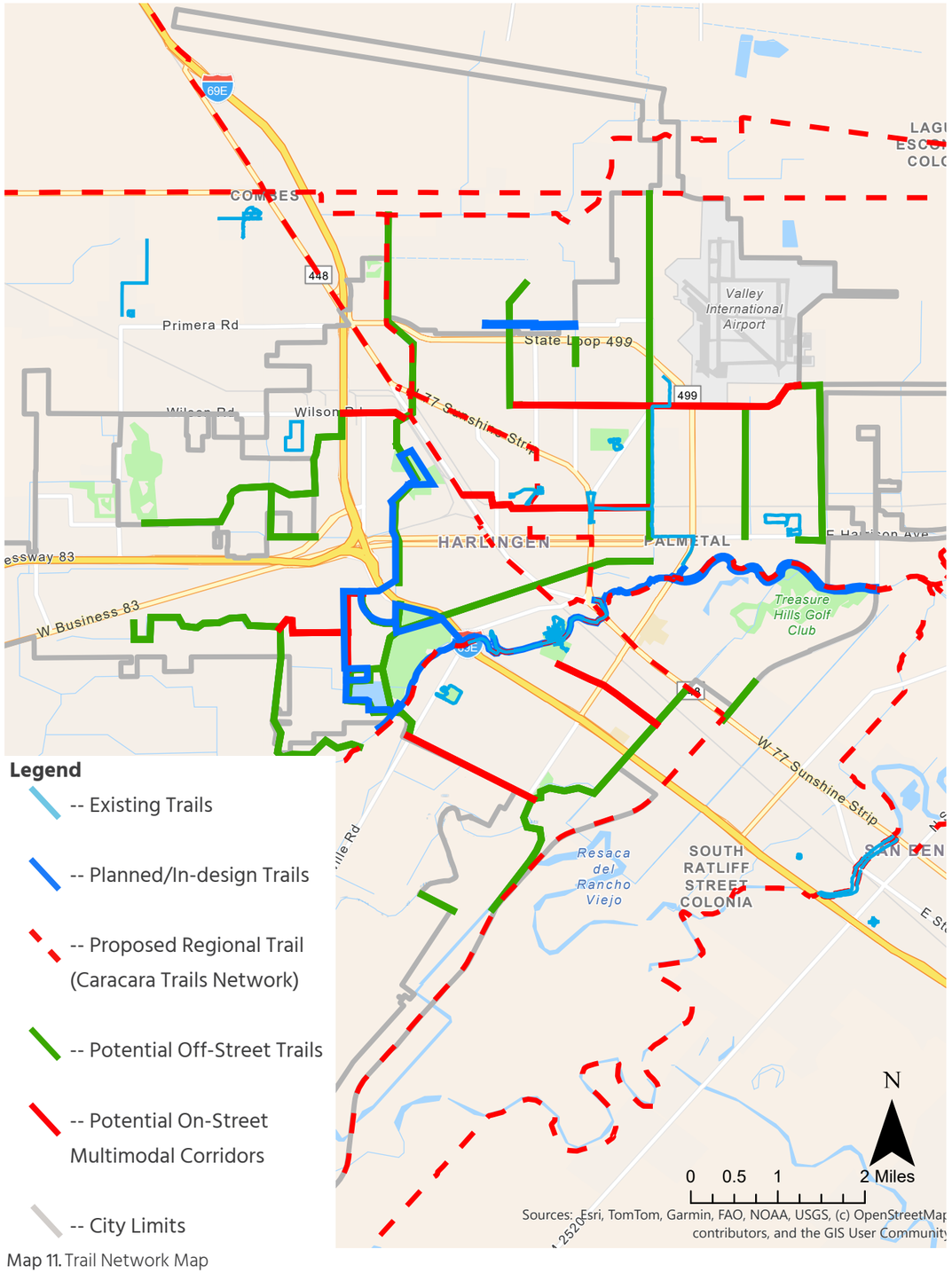
7.2 Use Parks to Build Environmental Stewardship.

- Provide demonstration areas in parks that highlight native trees and wildflowers, birdwatching areas and habitat, pollinator gardens, drought-tolerant lawns, rainwater harvesting, etc.
- Install interpretive signage at demonstration locations and near important natural features to promote environmental awareness.

7.3 Adopt sustainable maintenance practices for parks.

- Fleet and equipment/tool upgrades to electric or higher-efficiency vehicles and equipment.
- Implement no-mow, low-water, low-fertilizer, integrated pest management and similar policies and practices as appropriate.
- Utilize nature-based solutions (NbS), green infrastructure (GI), rain gardens, etc. for stormwater management in parks where feasible and effective, and ensure staff are properly trained to maintain these unique features.
- Assess extreme weather events (heat, drought, rain, freeze) and their potential impacts on park assets, infrastructure and maintenance and develop strategies to mitigate or adapt to these impacts.





Map 11. Trail Network Map

8: Trail Design and Standards

8.1 Adopt Consistent Trail Design

- Establish a consistent set of trail design standards that unify the system and guide future projects. These standards ensure that all trails provide a safe, accessible, and recognizable experience.
- Build primary multi-use trails at widths that safely support walking, running, and bicycling, and use narrower surfaces only in sensitive natural areas.
- Ensure all trail segments, crossings, and access points are ADA-compliant and aligned with state and national standards.
- Standardize furnishings such as benches, lighting, trash receptacles, and kiosks to establish a consistent Harlingen trail identity.
- Use native landscaping, permeable surfaces, and durable materials to reduce costs and extend the lifespan of facilities.

8.2 Implement Wayfinding and Signage Standards

- Establish consistent wayfinding and signage standards across the trail system to improve navigation and strengthen identity. Branded and bilingual signs reflect Harlingen's community and ensure that both residents and visitors can use the trails with confidence.
- Install entrance signs, mile markers, and directional signage to clearly guide users between parks, downtown, and other major destinations.
- Add interpretive signs that highlight local history, natural resources, and cultural features.
- Apply a standardized signage template with consistent colors, fonts, and branding elements across all trail segments.
- Coordinate wayfinding with regional partners to align Harlingen's system with regional priorities and create a seamless experience for trail users moving between communities.

8.3 Incorporate Safety Features

- Integrate safety features into all trail projects so residents and visitors feel secure and comfortable using the system. Design elements such as lighting, clear signage, and safe crossings make trails accessible for all ages and abilities.
- Install lighting at trailheads, access points, and along high-use corridors to improve visibility in the evening.
- Provide high-visibility striping, refuge islands, or flashing beacons at major street crossings to protect walkers and cyclists.
- Post rules of use, etiquette signage, and hours of operation at all trailheads to promote safe, shared use.
- Add emergency call boxes, wayfinding markers, or location IDs on longer trail segments to support user confidence and assist with emergency response.
- Manage vegetation to maintain clear sightlines and apply design strategies that improve visibility and deter crime.

9. Trail Connectivity and Regional Integration

9.1 Expand Arroyo Colorado Trail as a Spine Corridor

- Position the Arroyo Colorado as the primary spine of Harlingen's trail system, creating a continuous corridor that connects parks, neighborhoods, and regional destinations. Organizing future trail investments around this framework gives the system a clear identity and citywide reach.
- Strengthen the Arroyo corridor as a year-round recreation destination by adding trailheads, rest areas, and overlooks.
- Make the Arroyo the first priority for closing gaps in the trail system so residents can travel long distances within the city without leaving the corridor.
- Partner with conservation groups and drainage authorities to balance habitat protection and flood control needs with expanded trail use.
- Feature the Arroyo Colorado Trail in marketing and tourism efforts as Harlingen's signature link in the Valley-wide trail network.

9.2 Link Trails to Regional Network

- Use Harlingen's central location in Cameron County to position the city as a hub for active transportation. Strengthening regional trail links will connect residents and visitors to destinations across the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
- Coordinate with the Rio Grande Valley MPO, TxDOT, and Cameron County to align Harlingen's trail investments with the multi-county network envisioned in the Active Plan.
- Prioritize projects that tie Harlingen's trail system into regional destinations such as coastal resources, wildlife refuges, and nearby communities.
- Partner with tourism and economic development organizations to promote Harlingen as a gateway city for regional trail and cycling events.
- Work with adjacent cities to pursue joint funding applications that highlight the regional benefits of intercity trail connections.

9.3 Strengthen School and Park Access

- Make schools and parks a top priority for trail connections, since they are among the city's most frequented destinations. Stronger access will give families, students, and youth sports participants safe, realistic options to reach these places without a car.
- Partner with Harlingen CISD to coordinate shared-use agreements and connect trails directly to campuses where possible.
- Expand trailheads, crossings, and sidewalks around major community parks to support heavy youth and family use.
- Build new trail segments that create safe, direct routes for students walking or biking to nearby schools.
- Incorporate Safe Routes to School principles into trail planning and prioritize improvements in high-demand areas identified by parents and school staff.

10. Health, Tourism, and Economic Impact of Trails

10.1 Promote Trails as Health Infrastructure

- Position trails as Harlingen's most accessible form of health infrastructure, offering daily opportunities for walking, running, and cycling. Framing trails as part of the City's wellness strategy emphasizes their role in improving quality of life and reducing preventable health costs.
- Build partnerships with healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations to promote trails as tools for prevention, fitness, and everyday wellness.
- Expand trail access near schools and neighborhoods so children, families, and older adults can safely incorporate physical activity into daily routines.
- Add hydration stations, shaded rest areas, and lighting to make trails usable during early mornings, evenings, and hot summer months.
- Monitor trail use and track health data to demonstrate benefits and strengthen eligibility for outside funding

10.2 Position Harlingen as a Trail Tourism Hub

- Establish Harlingen as a hub for trail-based tourism by building on its parks, nature areas, and regional trail links. Expanding trail-related tourism strengthens the city's role in the Valley, complements coastal attractions, and generates new spending in local businesses.
- Coordinate with regional partners to package Harlingen's trails with nearby birding centers, cultural sites, and nature preserves.
- Host and expand annual events such as bike rides, runs, or birding festivals to draw visitors from across Texas and northern Mexico.
- Support local businesses in offering services near trailheads, including rentals, guided tours, and food or beverage options.
- Promote Harlingen's trail system in tourism campaigns and visitor materials to raise visibility as an active travel destination.

10.3 Leverage Trails for Economic Development

- Position trails as a tool for economic growth by linking them to neighborhood planning, business recruitment, and redevelopment. Trails raise nearby property values, attract new residents, and make commercial areas more appealing, connecting quality of life with economic opportunity.
- Incorporate trail access into new business parks, residential areas, and redevelopment projects to ensure growth areas are tied into the citywide network.
- Encourage small businesses such as cafes, rental shops, and service providers to cluster near trailheads and high-use segments.
- Collaborate with local business and economic development partners to highlight trails as assets that support investment and community growth.
- Pursue funding sources that connect trail expansion with workforce development, housing, and tourism to broaden the economic return of the system.

11. Trails for Access, Connectivity, and Natural Systems

11.1 Expand Access Through Trails

- Position trails as a way to reach parts of Harlingen with limited park and recreation options, giving every resident a short connection to the system. Expanding access in this way creates a more balanced network across the city.
- Identify neighborhoods with limited park acreage and prioritize trail routes that extend into those areas.
- Use utility corridors, drainage channels, and vacant parcels to bring trails into underserved parts of the community.
- Establish neighborhood-level trailheads with safe entry points and wayfinding to make the system easy to navigate.
- Fill short gaps in the network that currently prevent residents from walking or biking directly into the trail system.

11.2 Connect Trails to Transit and Daily Needs

- Link trail corridors with local bus stops to give residents more choices for reaching work, shopping, and parks. Integrating trails with transit strengthens Harlingen's transportation system and supports households that rely on more than one mode.
- Locate trailheads near transit stops and equip them with bike racks, shade, and wayfinding information.
- Improve intersections where trails meet major roads so residents can safely continue to nearby shopping areas and services.
- Work with transit providers to align future bus routes and stops with existing and planned trail corridors.
- Promote trail-to-transit connections through maps, apps, and signage so users understand how the two systems work together.

11.3 Align Trails with Natural Systems

- Design trail corridors to work with natural systems by managing drainage, protecting habitat, and showcasing ecological assets. Trails planned in this way are more durable, cost-effective, and integrated into Harlingen's landscape.
- Incorporate bioswales, permeable paving, and native plantings into trail design to manage stormwater and reduce maintenance needs.
- Route trails along drainageways and flood corridors where feasible, turning underused land into safe and functional public space.
- Protect habitat areas by creating natural buffers and directing activity to designated paths.

11.4 Celebrate Heritage and Nature through Trails

- Use trails to highlight Harlingen's cultural identity alongside its natural environment. Combining heritage and nature in the trail experience builds pride of place and fosters awareness of local resources.
- Install interpretive features that share the history of neighborhoods and landmarks together with information about native plants, wildlife, and water systems.
- Incorporate murals, art, and design elements at trailheads and nodes to reflect community character.

Park-Specific Action Plan

One of the most important elements of a parks plan is having actionable recommendations that clearly outline the initial steps to being implementing the plan. The following implementation table provides individual actions that will help achieve the vision established by the community. The table is organized by specific parks that were assessed as part of this project. For each action, an associated time frame for implementation and potential cost ranges are identified to assist with planning and completing the action.

Prioritization Strategies

While this plan provides suggested timelines for specific actions, and therefore prioritizes some actions over others, the City may elect to take on a project sooner or later based on a variety of considerations. Some of these considerations include:

- Equity: A desire to invest in underserved neighborhoods with limited walkable access to parks and trails.
- Alignment with Population Growth: To coordinate park development with ongoing housing development.
- Capitalizing on Funding: Opportunities may arise to fund certain parks or initiatives, the City should take advantage of those opportunities regardless of the plan timeframe for the action.



Using the Action Plan

Action Items

The action items include recommended strategies paired with corresponding action keys. They are developed based on assessments and community input across various topics outlined in this Plan. These action items represent practical strategies that the City can implement to achieve the vision set forth in this Plan.

Implementation Time Frame

This Plan provides a phased approach to implementation to help the City identify achievable actions in the near future and distinguish them from long-term actions that might need extensive studies and preparation. The recommended actions are categorized into the following time frames.

Ongoing

Recommendations that are continuously being implemented or should be revisited regularly throughout the life of the recommendation or implementation of the Plan.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

Actions that are typically “low-hanging fruit” or easier to achieve because they do not require a large amount of capital.

Mid-Term (4-6 years)

Actions that may require more planning and capital than the short-term 3-year horizon.

Long-Term (7+ years)

Actions that generally need a large amount of capital, require significant planning and coordination for completion, or other steps must take place before implementation. In some cases, there may be opportunities to make some initial progress in the short- or mid-term.

Potential Cost Range

Each action item is assigned a rough cost estimate using dollar signs to indicate scale. This helps the City prioritize actions based on available funding and anticipated expenses.

$ – Minimal cost: covers maintenance, signage or small-scale repairs (e.g., new signs, benches)

$$ – Moderate cost: minor infrastructure, equipment or landscaping improvements (e.g., shade structures, lighting)

$$$ – Significant cost: new amenities, courts, restrooms or trail extensions (e.g., splash pads, playgrounds)

$$$$ – Highest cost: large-scale projects such as major park renovations, new construction or multi-phase expansions (e.g., new indoor rec center, multiple sports fields)

* As of 2024, the City of Harlingen allocates approximately $3.5 to $4 million annually to Parks and Recreation operations and maintenance expenses.

#	Action Item	Initiation Time Frame	Potential Cost Range
Arroyo Park			
1	Add shade structures over playgrounds and outdoor exercise equipment.	Short-Term	$$
2	Renovate restrooms and drinking fountains.	Short-Term	$$$
3	Enhance trail lighting and safety signage.	Short-Term	$
4	Expand creek access and rest areas.	Medium-Term	$$$
Lon C. Hill Park			
1	Add sand volleyball courts near the northwest corner.	Short-Term	$$$
2	Improve pedestrian crossings and pathway lighting.	Short-Term	$$
3	Expand splash pads and shaded picnic shelters.	Medium-Term	$$$$
4	Add outdoor fitness equipment and accessible play areas.	Medium-Term	$$$
Victor Park			
1	Upgrade tennis court windscreens and lighting.	Short-Term	$$
2	Improve irrigation, parking lot layout and new park signs.	Short-Term	$$
3	Renovate the swimming pool and pool deck.	Medium-Term	$$$$
4	Install a splash pad and native butterfly garden.	Medium-Term	$$$$
Rangerville Park			
1	Replace aging playground and install modern safety surfacing.	Short-Term	$$$
2	Build new restrooms and picnic shelters with shade structures.	Short-Term	$$$
3	Install canopy over basketball court and light multipurpose field.	Medium-Term	$$$
4	Create bird and butterfly habitat with educational signs.	Medium-Term	$$
Pendleton Park			
1	Upgrade trail pavement and add shade structures over exercise equipment.	Short-Term	$$
2	Renovate basketball courts with new surfacing and lights.	Short-Term	$$$
3	Improve crosswalks on Grimes Street and add directional signs.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Add new multipurpose fields and improve soccer field turf.	Long-Term	$$$$

#	Action Item	Initiation Time Frame	Potential Cost Range
McKelvey Park			
1	Add a dog park and shade structures near main lawn.	Short-Term	$$
2	Build permanent stage for community events.	Short-Term	$$$
3	Improve landscaping buffers and park signage.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Expand parking and upgrade trail entrances.	Long-Term	$$$
Hugh Ramsey Nature Park			
1	Add welcome center and interpretive signage.	Medium-Term	$$$
2	Add native pollinator gardens and educational markers.	Medium-Term	$$
3	Expand boardwalks and birdwatching lookouts.	Long-Term	$$$
4	Collaborate with schools for environmental programming.	Long-Term	$
Thicket Nature Park			
1	Install benches and picnic tables along trail loops.	Short-Term	$
2	Add clear trail wayfinding and habitat interpretation signs.	Medium-Term	$$
3	Construct shaded rest shelters and water fountains.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Partner with schools and youth groups for nature tours.	Long-Term	$
Dixieland Park			
1	Expand disc golf course layout and repair greens.	Short-Term	$$
2	Build a lighted basketball or sand volleyball court.	Short-Term	$$$
3	Upgrade trail pavement, add benches and water fountains.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Construct picnic shelters and improve irrigation.	Medium-Term	$$
Lake Harlingen			
1	Upgrade pedestrian crossings linking to Liberty Gardens.	Short-Term	$
2	Improve trail surfacing and add trail edge lighting.	Short-Term	$$
3	Add benches, shaded rest spots and native planting beds.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Restore shoreline habitat for birds and pollinators.	Long-Term	$$$
Vestal Park			
1	Build a splash pad to provide summer recreation.	Medium-Term	$$$
2	Construct shaded pavilions and picnic shelters.	Medium-Term	$$$
3	Upgrade playground with inclusive, shaded structures.	Medium-Term	$$$
4	Expand parking, add lighting and ensure ADA connections.	Long-Term	$$$$

#	Action Item	Initiation Time Frame	Potential Cost Range
C.B. Wood Park			
1	Create bird and butterfly garden near pavilion.	Short-Term	$
2	Upgrade existing shelter and signage.	Short-Term	$
3	Add multi-purpose field on northern edge.	Medium-Term	$$$$
4	Expand parking and create a new restroom facility.	Medium-Term	$$$$
Liberty Gardens			
1	Install picnic tables and shaded seating.	Short-Term	$
2	Improve pedestrian crossings to Lake Harlingen and nearby amenities.	Short-Term	$
3	Add new identity signage and wayfinding markers.	Medium-Term	$
4	Plant additional native trees and enhance lawn irrigation.	Medium-Term	$$
McCullough Park			
1	Install park entry sign and directional signs.	Short-Term	$
2	Improve entrances and ADA access.	Short-Term	$
3	Develop looping trail with benches and fitness stops.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Add a playground and community picnic areas.	Medium-Term	$$$
Windsor Park			
1	Construct lighted pickleball court on northern perimeter.	Short-Term	$$
2	Install sidewalks along E Filmore Ave for safe access.	Short-Term	$
3	Build additional picnic pavilions and benches.	Long-Term	$$
4	Upgrade playground shade canopy and fencing.	Long-Term	$$
Bonham Park			
1	Install shading structure over playground.	Short-Term	$
2	Add clear signage to distinguish from nearby school.	Short-Term	$
3	Construct two basketball courts and large pavilion.	Long-Term	$$$
4	Improve landscaping and add pathway lighting.	Long-Term	$$$
Bowie Park			
1	Construct eight pickleball courts with seating and shade.	Short-Term	$$$
2	Improve park entry paths and ADA access.	Short-Term	$$
3	Add security lighting and enhance wayfinding.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Incorporate landscape edges and shaded benches.	Medium-Term	$

#	Action Item	Initiation Time Frame	Potential Cost Range
Centennial Park			
1	Add benches, tables and a small covered pavilion.	Short-Term	$
2	Install lighting near mural and gathering area.	Short-Term	$
3	Build event-ready infrastructure for pop-up markets.	Short-Term	$$
4	Coordinate programming with local businesses and events.	Short-Term	$
Gutierrez Park			
1	Upgrade lighting, repair sidewalks and restrooms.	Short-Term	$$
2	Install playground shade structure.	Short-Term	$$
3	Add benches and picnic tables throughout.	Medium-Term	$
4	Improve park entry with signage and landscaping.	Medium-Term	$
Hunter Park			
1	Build lighted basketball court on west side.	Short-Term	$$
2	Enhance landscaping and update play equipment.	Short-Term	$$
3	Construct large covered pavilion with tables.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Add multipurpose field near north boundary.	Long-Term	$$$
Revere Park			
1	Install playground with safety surfacing.	Short-Term	$$
2	Add picnic tables, benches and shade trees.	Short-Term	$
3	Build dog run or small pet area.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Add park entrance sign and lighting.	Medium-Term	$
Lozano Plaza			
1	Build covered stage for performances and community events.	Short-Term	$$
2	Construct restrooms to support events and markets.	Medium-Term	$$$
3	Add power, lighting and pop-up market pads.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Partner with local businesses to host regular activities.	Medium-Term	$
Soccer Complex			
1	Add shaded seating areas and hydration stations.	Short-Term	$$
2	Construct additional soccer fields and expand Phase II.	Medium-Term	$$$
3	Upgrade trail pavement and add security lighting.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Expand parking lot and build additional restrooms.	Long-Term	$$$

#	Action Item	Initiation Time Frame	Potential Cost Range
Tom Wilson Sports Complex			
1	Expand parking and add tree shade islands.	Short-Term	$$
2	Build additional multi-purpose fields for sports tournaments.	Medium-Term	$$$
3	Improve pavilion and seating for large events.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Upgrade trails and add interpretive signage.	Long-Term	$$
Henry Roberts Loop Trail			
1	Add adaptive trail spur with safety surfacing.	Short-Term	$$
2	Install new directional signage and entry markers.	Short-Term	$
3	Place benches and shaded rest stops every half mile.	Medium-Term	$
4	Coordinate connections with other trail segments.	Long-Term	$$
Meg Jorn Memorial Trail			
1	Add shade structures and hydration stations.	Short-Term	$$
2	Install trail lighting.	Short-Term	$$
3	Add wayfinding and interpretive ecological signs.	Medium-Term	$
4	Connect trail to Soccer Complex and neighborhood paths.	Long-Term	$$
Arroyo Colorado Hike & Bike Trail			
1	Add lighting and emergency call stations for safety.	Short-Term	$$
2	Install trailhead signage and rest stops with hydration stations.	Short-Term	$
3	Enhance trailhead landscaping and parking.	Medium-Term	$$
4	Expand trail phases to reach new residential growth areas.	Long-Term	$$$

Funding Mechanisms

- **Municipal General Funds:** Funded via ad valorem taxes, most suitable for maintenance, small capital projects and operations.
- **General Obligation Bonds:** Funded by property taxes, best for land acquisition and long-term infrastructure projects.
- **Revenue Bonds:** Ideal for self-sustaining amenities like golf courses or event venues.
- **Economic Development Corporations (EDCs):** Utilize Type B sales tax revenues to support parks as economic development catalysts. Can align with Harlingen EDC's goals to promote livability and business attraction. This may be especially applicable to fund trail expansions or a recreation center.
- **Developer Contributions:** Require land dedication, trail easements or fee-in-lieu payments as part of subdivision approval. Helps ensure new development contributes to park infrastructure proportionally.
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Grants:**
  - Local Park Grants: For acquisition, development and renovation.
  - CO-OP Grants: For programming targeting underserved populations.
  - Recreational Trail Grants: Funded through federal gas taxes, good for expanding the Arroyo Colorado Trail.
- **Private Donations, Sponsorships and Partnerships:**
  - Solicit land, funding, equipment or services from individuals, organizations and local businesses and establish a Parks Improvement Trust Fund to manage contributions.
  - Work with RGV Birding Festival and similar local organizations to co-fund nature-based infrastructure (e.g., blinds, signage, boardwalks).
  - Private foundations like the Meadows Foundation or Houston Endowment may support nature education and environmental justice in underserved areas.
- **Public Improvement Districts (PIDs):** Potentially useful in new residential areas (e.g., West Harlingen, Rangerville) to maintain and fund public green space.
- **Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ):** Capture increased property tax revenue from revitalized areas like Downtown Harlingen for reinvestment in public amenities.
- **School District and County Partnerships:** Collaborate with Harlingen Consolidated ISD and Cameron County to share athletic facilities and develop shared use parks that double as both school and community assets.
- **Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC):** Partner on regional planning grants, especially for transportation-related trail connectivity and to access Valley Metro initiatives for integrated trails and transit infrastructure.
- T**exas General Land Office (GLO):** Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) can fund dual-purpose parks that provide stormwater detention and recreation, especially in flood-prone zones near the Arroyo Colorado.
- **USDA Rural Development Programs:** Harlingen and nearby ETJ areas may be eligible for Community Facilities Grants for an indoor recreation center.
- **The Brownsville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and CAMPO (Cameron County):** May offer transportation enhancement funds for trails, bicycle facilities, ADA improvements and wayfinding in parks.
- **Several tracts in Harlingen may fall within Opportunity Zones:** Encourage public-private partnerships in these areas for mixed-use development that incorporates public parks and open space.