



CITY OF LA GRANGE

PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS (PROST) MASTER PLAN

The City of La Grange would like to thank the community members who participated in this essential process to plan the future of the City's parks system. The knowledge, assistance and insight they provided have been critical to the development of this PROST Plan.

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A photograph of a playground with a red slide, a yellow and blue play structure, and a black fence in the background. The image is overlaid with a dark green semi-transparent rectangle.

1 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Parks and recreation opportunities are essential quality-of-life amenities for La Grange residents. Developing a high-quality parks and recreation system takes time and thoughtful planning. Similarly, decisions about park amenities and recreational offerings should be made with a unified community vision, not in isolation. A cohesive vision for La Grange's parks and recreation system must be established, along with clear guidance for phased implementation over time.

This Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan:

- Identifies the implications of current community demographics and projected population growth as it relates to parks and recreation
- Analyzes the current state of the City's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.
- Identifies parks and recreation deficiencies and needs.
- Establishes goals, objectives, and recommendations for the next five to ten years.
- Prioritizes improvements to the parks and recreation system
- Supports the City in seeking funding opportunities.

This document should serve as a strategic planning tool for City staff, elected and appointed officials, residents, and the private development community to understand community desires and work toward long-term success. The plan is also intended to help coordinate local efforts in La Grange and foster partnerships with Fayette County, area school districts, local organizations, and sports leagues.

BENEFITS OF PARKS

Access to quality parks and recreation is an important component of a high-quality community. Planning for a successful, equitable parks system ensures that all residents can experience these key benefits:

Overall Well-Being Benefits



- Contact with nature helps to improve overall well-being and quality of life.
- Recreation provides multi-generational opportunities for mental, physical, social, and emotional stimulation.

Health Benefits



- Access to nature and recreation increases frequency of fitness and improves psychological health.
- Play provides crucial developmental opportunities for children.
- Physical activity helps to reduce obesity, depression, and many other health problems.

Environmental Benefits



- Parkland helps to mitigate climate, air, and water pollution impacts.
- Preserved open space protects vital habitat for plants and wildlife.
- Parks foster environmental stewardship in citizens.

Economic Benefits



- Parkland increases property values within close proximity.
- Quality parks and recreation can attract new residents and businesses.
- Unique park and recreation amenities can encourage tourism and associated economic benefits.

PLANNING PROCESS & TIME FRAME

In 2025, the City of La Grange commissioned Freese and Nichols, Inc. to prepare a new Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan. This effort reflects the City's commitment to improving quality of life amenities and responding to the evolving needs of residents. Community input, along with an evaluation of existing park conditions and facilities, shaped the direction, goals, and recommendations of this standalone Parks Plan.

The PROST Plan follows a structured process to produce a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) compliant plan. Recommendations should be periodically re-evaluated to ensure they remain relevant. TPWD guidelines recommend updating the plan every five years or sooner if significant changes in development or community needs arise.

LA GRANGE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The La Grange Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the planning, programming, and maintenance of the City's public parks and recreation facilities. Staff oversee operations at the Randolph Recreation Center and support citywide programming that includes youth camps, after-school programs, open court activities, senior luncheons, and community classes. While the Recreation Center serves as a flexible, multi-use facility for all ages, the department also maintains public rights-of-way and coordinates with local partners on recreational programming.

The department currently operates with limited staff capacity:

- One full-time Recreation Director
- Six full-time staff under the Cemetery/Maintenance division
- Two part-time Recreation Assistants
- Up to eight part-time Recreation Assistants that work seasonally during the school-year.
- Staffing is also supplemented during peak periods such as summer camps, where 12+ seasonal employees are brought on to support programming.



PLANNING AREA

The planning area outlined in this Plan includes the entire city limits of La Grange, as depicted in the map on the following page. Located in Fayette County along the Colorado River, La Grange is strategically positioned between Austin and Houston, with strong regional connectivity and a rich cultural and historical heritage.

The City of La Grange is the primary governmental entity responsible for planning and maintaining parks, recreation, and community facilities. While the City leads the implementation, the long-term success of these efforts depends on strong community participation and support. This includes local residents, civic groups, schools, and businesses. These partners play a vital role in ensuring the ongoing improvement and success of La Grange's parks and recreational facilities.



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

La Grange, Texas, is a small but steadily growing community with an estimated population of 4,416 and a notably higher median age of 47 years, reflecting an older than the state average, stable population base. The city's demographic makeup is predominantly White and Hispanic or Latino, with a balanced mix of age groups and a strong emphasis on family households and local commuting.



Total population
4,416



0.6% Growth in last
2 years



Median Age 47
Female 51.2% Male
48.8%



Total Households
1,870



Average Household
size 2.3 persons



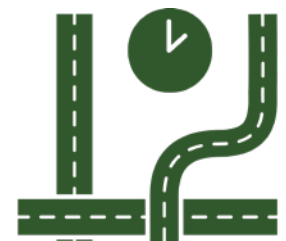
Homeownership
Rate: Owned 62%
Rented 38%



Median Home Value
\$195,300



Mean Household
Income \$76,525



Mean Commute
Time is 14.2 Minutes

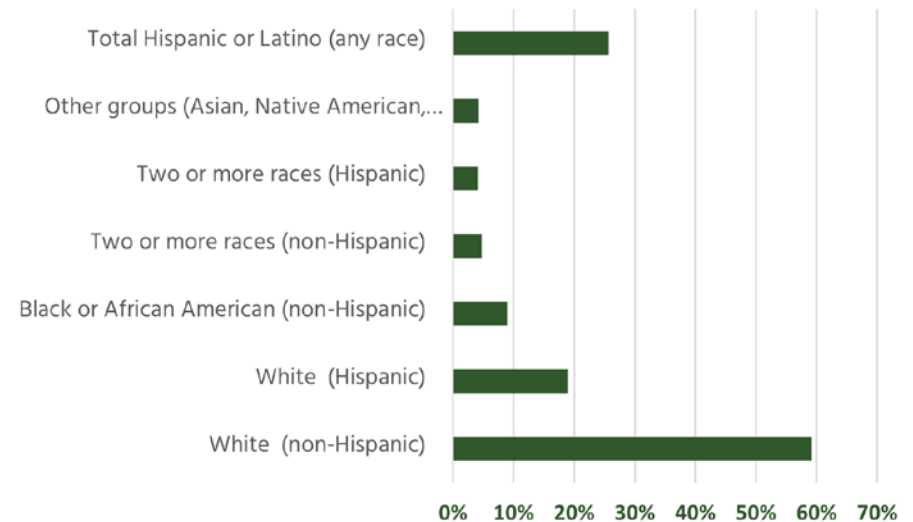


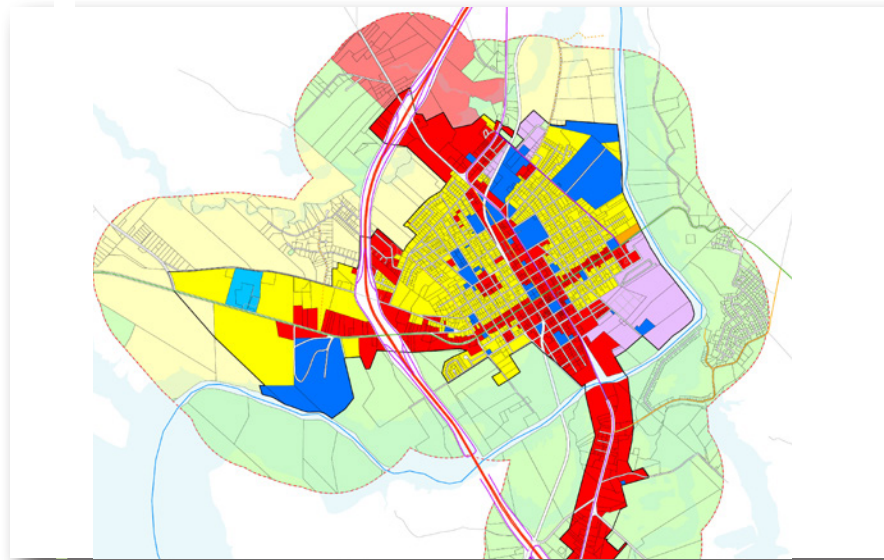
Figure 1. Race and Ethnicity

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2022

RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2018

The La Grange Comprehensive Plan provides a long-term vision for managing growth and development. It addresses land use, housing, infrastructure, downtown revitalization, transportation, and parks and recreation. The plan was shaped through community engagement and includes a Future Land Use Map (FLUM), downtown streetscape strategies, and economic development goals that reflect La Grange's small-town character and rich cultural heritage. Emphasis was placed on preserving historic assets, improving mobility, and strengthening recreational opportunities across all age groups.



Future Land Use Map in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN THE 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2018 La Grange Comprehensive Plan emphasized the revitalization of the historic downtown as a key priority. It recognized downtown as the cultural and economic heart of the community, with opportunities to support small businesses, encourage mixed-use development, and enhance the area's unique character.

The plan recommended improving walkability, upgrading streetscapes, and creating stronger connections between downtown, nearby parks, and the Colorado River. These ideas laid the groundwork for continued investment in public spaces and infrastructure to support a more vibrant and active town center.



Downtown Revitalization in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

PARKS AND RECREATION IN THE 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of La Grange incorporated parks and recreation into broader citywide planning efforts, most notably through the La Grange Comprehensive Plan. That plan identified the importance of parks, trails, and open space as essential to quality of life and community health. The City has steadily invested in park upgrades, including new playground equipment, enhanced athletic facilities, and partnerships with local schools. These efforts reflect a long-term commitment to improving recreational opportunities and creating a more connected, active La Grange for all residents. Parks and recreation-related goals from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan are presented below.

Goal 5.2: Provide and maintain pedestrian friendly space	
Objective 5.2.1: Create more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly routes to and from schools by 2022.	
Action 5.2.1.1	Design final routes of the trail system between the parks.
Action 5.2.1.2	Build the final trail system and install adequate signage for wayfinding.
Goal 7.2: Well-connected and sustainable utility services throughout the community	
Objective 7.2.1: By 2030, provide high-speed internet service throughout the City.	
Action 7.2.1.2	Create a high-speed internet infrastructure plan that includes installing wi-fi capabilities into public spaces (i.e. parks, downtown, outside the library).
Objective 7.2.2: Coordinate with the housing and economic development departments to synchronize infrastructure expansions and improvements as needed.	
Action 7.2.2.1	Generate an infrastructure improvement plan.
Action 7.2.3.2	Implement Rainwater Harvesting Program.
Action 7.2.3.3	Implement a Dry Landscape Rebate Program.
Goal 7.4: Engaging facilities and programs that promote the welfare of residents of all ages	
Objective 7.4.1: Enhance the already present collaborative network devoted to recreation services.	
Action 7.4.1.1	Establish a city-wide recreation services committee that services multiple generations, specifically youth (tweens and teens) and seniors.
Action 7.4.1.2	Establish an online platform for City-wide volunteering, involvement, and information access included with City-wide calendar.
Action 7.4.1.3	Create a detailed inventory of existing facility types and assess the needs of each existing facility.

Action 7.4.1.4	Regularly update all of the facilities websites to reflect current services.
Action 7.4.1.5	Develop and plan for growth of new community facilities to be placed outside of the floodplain.
Action 7.4.1.6	Develop and strategically plan to place recreational parks within the floodplain (i.e. soccer fields, football fields, basketball courts, baseball fields etc.).
Objective 7.4.2: Identify and support multi-generational opportunities.	
Action 7.4.2.1	Create a program that engages senior citizens through active exercise programming that operates 2-3 times a week, similar to Forever in Motion.
Action 7.4.2.3	Expand and diversify after- school and summer programming events for tweens and teens that encourage socialization. Activities could include photography, computer skills, coding, or cooking.
Action 7.4.2.4	Utilize the park system for tween and teen activities, including zumba, canoeing, kayaking.
Action 7.4.2.5	Continue to collaborate and support the youth development program at the library.
Action 7.4.2.6	Identify, support and encourage spaces for tweens and teens to gather and congregate (movie theater, drive-in movie theater, skate park, downtown public space, etc.).
Action 7.4.2.7	Eliminate laws and rules that discourage youth congregation in places that are designed to attract youth participation.
Action 7.4.2.8	Develop and expand transportation services to increase senior and youth mobility for City-wide events, programs, and activities. (i.e. extensive summer programs, Friday night live).
Goal 8.1: Inviting and functional parks	
Objective 8.1.1: Provide proper maintenance of parks and public open spaces by 2023 to raise all City parks to the same level of appearance and usage.	
Action 8.1.1.1	Complete an inventory and assessment of use on all parks.
Action 8.1.1.2	Increase monitoring of parks by establishing a maintenance schedule to improve functionality of all parks.
Action 8.1.1.3	Create a separate fund for park maintenance.
Action 8.1.1.4	Collaborate with local organizations to fund upgrades to parks.
Action 8.1.1.5	Install new equipment in parks with inadequate facilities (restrooms trashcans, and seating).
Action 8.1.1.6	Redevelop Heritage Park with seating, technology and ADA accessibility.
Action 8.1.1.6*	Complete an assessment of use on other amenities at parks such as playgrounds, baseball fields, and swimming pools. If any currently existing amenities are not used, determine cost-benefit.

Goal 8.2: Develop a private-public partnership to develop a river trail that is accessible, preserves the natural environment, and is a prime source of educational advancement.

Objective 8.2.1 Provide educational opportunities for people of all ages to learn about the ecological benefits.

Action 8.2.1.1	Program monthly activities along the river park to increase usage. Additionally, institute monthly public activities at lesser-used parks such as Northside Park and the fairgrounds. (i.e. MS 150 Bicycle Meet).
Action 8.2.1.2	Identify and reach out to properties that would be a good fit for a conservation easement or dedicated open space along the river and within the floodplain.

Objective 8.2.2 Make the river more accessible and user friendly.

Action 8.2.2.3*	Build desired access points along the river and coordinate with the Lower Colorado River Authority.
Action 8.2.2.4	Develop a public private partnership to install a rental equipment facility for items such as kayaks, bicycles, fishing equipment, skateboards, etc.
Action 8.2.2.5	Create various workout stations along the river trail that are user-friendly to all ages. Install stationary recreational equipment.
Action 8.2.2.6	Develop a public private partnership to install a bridge halfway down the river to connect one side of the river to the other. Build environmentally friendly bridges and trails that are both adaptable as well as permeable to flood waters. Convert existing vehicle bridge to pedestrian/bicycle crossing.
Action 8.2.2.7	Develop a public private partnership to design and implement wheeled sports elements into recreational sights to encourage a safe place to skateboard, rollerblade, etc.
Action 8.2.2.8	Place a map of the trail at all access points. Install mile markers.
Action 8.2.2.9	Develop a public private partnership to design and establish phases of trails connecting the Fayette County Fairgrounds, Northside Park, Buffalo Trail Park, and White Rock Park to schools, residences, and business.

Objective 8.2.3: Preserve natural environment.

Action 8.2.3.1	Work closely with the Monarch Butterfly Waystation program to educate visitors about the habitat on the river trail.
Action 8.2.3.2	Install bio swales and retention ponds in various areas to collect excess rainwater and reduce flooding near the river trails in various areas along the river to manage rainwater.
Action 8.2.3.4*	Create a volunteer based program for maintenance or crime watch. Plan monthly trash pickups.

*Numbering error in the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The planning process offered numerous opportunities for public engagement, ensuring that community input shaped the PROST Plan effectively. These opportunities included:

- Public engagement events.
- Stakeholder focus groups.
- A community survey.
- A project website with an interactive mapping activity.

Summarization of the parks-specific outcomes and feedback are presented in the demand-based assessment section of this Plan.

Public Outreach Events

The planning team organized three in-person public engagement events to involve the community in shaping the PROST Plan. The first event was held on June 26, 2025, at City Hall, and the second was on August 26, 2025, at the Fayette County Fairgrounds during the Fayette County Fair. The final public engagement event was held on October 16, 2025, at the Casino Hall.

These events introduced the plan to the community, gathered input on park needs, priorities, and ideas, and included interactive mapping and activity stations. To ensure broad participation, project materials and online feedback opportunities were also available for those unable to attend in person.

Stakeholder Focus Groups

Multiple stakeholder focus group sessions were conducted during the development of the PROST Plan. These sessions provided opportunities for stakeholders to discuss the current parks and recreation system, identify strengths and gaps, and offer input on improvements, programming, and investment priorities. Some stakeholder sessions were held in person to coincide with onsite team visits, while others were conducted virtually to accommodate participant preferences and scheduling. The stakeholder focus groups included the:

- Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center
- Fayette County Fair Association
- La Grange High Schoolers
- Senior Board
- Rotary Club
- Lions Club
- Bluebonnet Lions Club
- City Staff
- Emergency Management and Response Officials
- Ministerial Alliance

Online Survey

The La Grange PROST Plan survey launched on June 10, 2025, and remained open through August 5, 2025. The survey received a total of 380 respondents. It was promoted through the City's website, social media, and during various public events. In addition to the online format, a paper version was made available during the first public engagement to reach more residents. Responses collected through these multiple channels helped the planning team understand how residents use parks today and what improvements and amenities they would like to see in the future.

Project Website and Interactive Map

To ensure all stakeholders had convenient access to information and updates regarding the La Grange PROST Plan, a dedicated project website was launched. The site featured details about the planning process, summaries of previous efforts, upcoming engagement events, and a direct contact form for the project team.

An interactive map was also included to collect community feedback on park conditions, desired improvements, and new amenity ideas. Participants were able to identify specific locations in La Grange where changes were needed. The map engaged 4 participants, who contributed a total of 6 comments that helped guide plan recommendations.