

DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation

STAFF COORDINATOR:

COUNCIL DISTRICT IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Adoption and approval of the SA Parks System Plan

SUMMARY:

This resolution recommends the adoption and approval of the SA Parks System Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Parks and Recreation Department first adopted a comprehensive system strategic plan in 1999 in an effort to anticipate the community's short and long term service needs. In 2006, the plan was updated with the adoption of the 2006-2016 Parks and Recreation System Strategic Plan. This plan has played an integral role in shaping the Parks and Recreation system - providing programmatic, operational and capital improvement guidelines and strategies, as well as growth strategies.

The SA Parks System Plan will provide a foundation to guide future planning decisions impacting service delivery to the citizens of San Antonio concerning capital improvement needs, operations and recreation programs. The plan will also include an assessment of the Parks and Recreation Department's Urban Forestry Program and will demonstrate consistency and implementation of the City's SA Tomorrow Plan: Comprehensive, Sustainability and Multimodal Transportation Plans.

From October 2017 through April 2018 various community engagement efforts in both English and Spanish were undertaken to provide the public with an opportunity to share their priorities for San Antonio's park system. These efforts consisted of community workshops, free community events, and an on-line and paper survey with over 2,800 completed responses were received. The information gathered was the basis in the formation of the draft system plan which identifies four primary goals to guide the parks system over the next ten years: 1.) San Antonio has a **RESPONSIVE** park system; 2.) The Park System is **RESTORATIVE** to the community's health; 3.) San Antonio is more **RESILIENT** because of parks and recreation; and 4.) The City is **RESOURCEFUL** in creating, maintaining and changing the parks and recreation system. The Urban Forestry Program Assessment of the system plan evaluates the program and provides recommendations and strategies for expansion in eight categories: 1.) Code and Institutional Changes; 2.) Additional Tree Planting Goals; 3.) Management of the Program; 4.) Education; 5.) Green Corridors; 6.) Promotion; 7.) Partnerships; and 8.) Maintenance. These goals, recommendations and strategies are a reflection of the input received from the community, stakeholders, user groups and park staff.

In mid-December 2018 the draft plan was released online through the Parks and Recreation Department's website and was provided to Mayor and Council. Public feedback of the plan was accepted through February 15, 2019. During this period, QR Code cards providing the public access to the System Plan homepage were distributed at various program sites, public events and public

input meetings. Park staff conducted an email marketing campaign to promote the plan and solicit feedback. A public input meeting for the draft system plan was held on January 24, 2019. To augment this input, the Parks and Recreation Department participated in the City's second ever Telephone Town Hall Meeting. Approximately 2,300 San Antonio residents participated in a public forum where the project team fielded questions regarding the plan.

Based on the input received during this period public comments fell into three categories: 1.) subject matter addressed in the plan – natural resource protection and sustainability; 2.) comments on specific park facilities to be reviewed by staff for further action but too specific to be included in the plan due to the document's macro-level approach; and 3.) text level changes that focused on grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, improving the flow of the document.

A common concern registered in the public's comments was the need to protect our natural resources and wildlife habitat through use of resource-driven access, development and design. These along with public feedback regarding sustainability were interwoven with natural resource protection. Moreover, public feedback expressed the importance of maximizing resources to provide more multi-purpose facilities that incorporate water quality and flood control while providing outdoor recreation opportunities. In order to address these concerns, several strategies in the final system plan were enhanced to advance these efforts.

ISSUE:

The adoption of the SA Parks System Plan is necessary to guide how the Parks and Recreation Department will provide services to the City of San Antonio for the next ten years. Adoption of the Plan will ensure eligibility for priority scoring consideration as outlined in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Local Park Grants Program and will ensure consistency with the City's SA Tomorrow Plans: Comprehensive, Sustainability and Multimodal Transportation Plans.

ALTERNATIVES:

The 2006-2016 Parks and Recreation System Strategic Plan will continue to guide future planning decisions impacting service delivery concerning capital improvements, operations and recreation programs until a new or updated planning document is adopted.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the SA Parks System Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this resolution recommending City Council adopt the SA Parks System Plan.