

CITY OF PORT ISABEL

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PLANNING PERIOD 2005-2015

APRIL, 2005

H. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

The Office of Rural Community Affairs in conjunction with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development furnished financial support to the Activity described in this publication which does not necessarily indicate the concurrence of the Office of Rural Community Affairs or of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development with the statements or conclusions contained in this publication

The data, information, analysis, and recommendations presented herein are exclusively for planning and budgeting purposes and do not constitute engineering analysis or detailed cost estimates. Engineering for each of the recommended tasks are beyond the scope of these studies and should be performed in the customary fashion as projects are defined and implemented.

Prepared by:

RG CONSULTANTS

RICARDO GOMEZ & ASSOCIATES

Urban Planning & Management Consultants

CITY OF PORT ISABEL

•CITY OFFICIALS •

MAYOR

PATRICK H. MARCHAN

MAYOR PRO -TEM

JOE VEGA

COMMISSIONERS

MARIO TAMAYO
GUILLERMO “MEMO” PEREZ
MARTIN CANTU

CITY MANAGER

ROBERTO GARCIA

CITY SECRETARY

NANCY DAVALOS

Prepared by:
RICARDO GOMEZ & ASSOCIATES
Urban Planning & Management Consultants
P.O. Box 671
Rio Hondo, Texas 78583

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	
History	
6	
Purpose	7
Location and Service Area	9
Demographics	9
Population	9
Income/Poverty	11
Age, Sex, Race	12
GUIDELINES TO PARK PLANNING	
Guidelines to Park Planning	13
Local Consideration in Park Development	14
<u>SECTION 1 PORT ISABEL'S PARK PLAN</u>	
Inventory of Existing Park and Recreation Facilities	17
<u>SECTION 2 LOCAL INPUT TO PORT ISABEL'S PARKS NEEDS</u>	
Methodology	20
Local input to Port Isabel's Park Needs	20
Elements of the Park Plan	20
Exhibit C, Planning Process	23
<u>SECTION 3 CITY AND REGIONAL OPEN SPACE</u>	
Open Space Areas in the City	24
Privately or Quasi-Public Recreation Facilities	24
Regional Recreational Complexes	24
<u>SECTION 4 PORT ISABEL'S PARK STANDARDS</u>	
Parks Standards	25

Parks Standards Established for the City of Port Isabel in the 2004 Park Plan	25
<u>SECTION 5 PORT ISABEL’S PARK ANALYSIS</u>	
Park Acreage Analysis	27
Exhibit D, Classification & Acreage	28
Regional Recreational Needs Expressed by the 1990 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan	28
<u>SECTION 6 PORT ISABEL’S PARK PLAN</u>	
Goals for Parks and Open Space	31
Short Range Recommendations	31
Short Range Strategies	31
Recommended Upgrade of Existing Parks	32
Recommended Development of Future Parks	32
<u>SECTION 7 NEEDS ASSESSMENT</u>	
Research Methodology	33
Survey Findings	33
<u>SECTION 8 PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS</u>	39
Plan Implementation Recommendations	40
<u>SECTION 9 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</u>	42
APPENDIX	44
SURVEY SAMPLE	46
PARK SITE DESCRIPTIONS/PICTURES	48
SAMPLE RESOLUTION	50
MAPS	51

CITY OF PORT ISABEL

PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This planning document was developed to assist the City in formulating ways to improve the recreation, open spaces and other leisure infrastructure facilities within the City of Port Isabel. This parks master plan was originally prepared by Ricardo Gomez & Associates over five years ago to comply with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) requirement regarding participation in the Texas Recreation & Parks Account Program (TRPA). Without such plans, the State Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) would not grant the City points through the “TRPA Project Priority System” for projects which meet priorities identified in TPWD approved, locally-endorsed parks, recreation, and open space master plans; in effect, severely limiting the City’s ability to compete for State park funds. A requirement of the Plan is that the City is obligated to *update the plan every two years* to remain eligible for TPWD program funding. *A completely new plan is required every five years.* Since this requirement had not been met by the City, the objective of this plan is to provide for plan that meets all requirements of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and to the funding agency, the Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA). In 1999, the City of Port Isabel had two (2) open space parks, one (1) memorial park and one (1) small leisure park and one (1) public boat ramp park. The main recreational park, Washington Park, had deteriorated to a point that it was completely renovated in 1996 through a Texas Community Development Program (CDBG) Grant. Facility improvements and replacement of equipment plague the City’s recreational resources. Some tools used by the City in formulating this plan consisted of: an inventory of the City’s existing park sites and recreation facilities, public meetings, published reports and studies, input from various public officials and entities, established general park standards, projected annexation and population growth and established goals, objectives and a mission statement for the

City's future park needs. The principal component of this plan is to assist local officials in future land use planning and budgetary needs.

History

The land area presently occupied by the City of Port Isabel was first discovered by Europeans in 1519 when the Spanish Explorer Pineda was on an expedition mapping the coastline of Texas. The Spanish controlled the south Texas region from the 16th century on, but it was not until the later part of the 18th century was the Point Isabel area settled. These first settlements were established by ranchers from Mexico. In the 1830's the first permanent settlement was made by the Garcia family which had received the land as a grant from the Mexican government. The settlement was known as Fronton de Santa Isabel and served as the headquarters for the Garcia family.

Point Isabel became part of the Republic of Texas in 1836 and eventually became involved in the War with Mexico in 1846. The Point Isabel area and its port served as a station for receiving wounded from the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma which were fought north of the present location of Brownsville. At the end of the conflict Point Isabel served as a supply station for the military. In 1851, the Point Isabel lighthouse was constructed as a navigational guide to the increasing number of ships which passed through the Brazos Santiago pass. During the Civic War, Confederate troops occupied the Point Isabel area and lighthouse. Union troops in 1863 captured the Point as part of the Union's effort to blockade Southern Ports. The State of Texas recently recognized this port's historical importance by erecting a historical marker for the Port of Matamoros.

For the remaining years of the 19th century the Point Isabel area served as a port for shipping agricultural products from the region. The 20th century brought a decline in shipping and the lighthouse was closed in 1905. The lighthouse remains as a landmark of the City and is the most prominent historical structure.

On April 2, 1928, the process that started the City of Port Isabel was begun. Mayor Charles Champion held a meeting of the City Commissions to signal the start of the official record keeping for the City. Some of the original City records are still held by the City and are in good condition. On June 5, 1928, the Proclamation of

Incorporation was received and entered into the City records, thus beginning the official recognition of the City of Port Isabel.

After World War II, shrimpers from Louisiana moved to Port Isabel to find what is one of the largest shrimping fleets in the Gulf of Mexico. This was the economic impetus which gave the City its character.

The process of planning began in 1959 when the City began its urban renewal program. The first Master Plan for the City was published on 1960. The implementation of the plan brought about major improvements to the South Shore Heights neighborhood, removing obsolete military-style housing and promoted the redevelopment of the neighborhood and surrounding areas.

Purpose

Pressure, resulting from extensive development and rapid population increases since 1990 for quality community parks and services, has created a demand for new and expanded park facilities, recreation programs and open space areas on the City of Port Isabel. The availability of localized facilities will add to the desirability of future home purchases and development in the City. The City of Port Isabel parks began with the original platting of the City on April 02, 1928. In June 25, 1985 the City adopted an ordinance establishing a Parks and Recreation Board. The expanding business and residential community of Port Isabel have contributed to its continued growth. Extensive development and rapid population increases since 1980 are placing pressure on the community for quality City parks and services. This need creates a demand for a new and expanded park facilities, recreation programs, and open space areas.

In order to continue planning for growth and meet the needs of the diverse populations with the City of Port Isabel, the City commissioned Ricardo Gomez & Associates to prepare a Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan which would address the needs of the City for a period of at least ten (10) years. The purpose of the Master Plan is to:

- A. Provide the framework for orderly and consistent planning and development.

- B. Provide detailed researched facts concerning the community and the role of the parks and recreation.
- C. Establish priorities and statements of direction based on researched and documented facts, and a needs analysis.
- D. Provide direction in the area of acquisition and development of park land to meet future needs.

This document outlines the methods, results and recommendations of the Master Plan study and is intended to be used as a guide for future parks, recreation and open space development with the City of Port Isabel. **The recommendations herein apply specifically to the next ten (10) years.**

Empowerment Zone Designation

In 1993, President Clinton initiated the Federal Empowerment Zone program. Six urban and three rural zones would receive the Empowerment designation and thus eligible to receive \$100 million for urban zones and \$40 million of rural zones. These funds are to be used by the community to empower themselves and increase their standard of living and the quality of their lives. The Rio Grande Valley was awarded a rural empowerment zone and Port Isabel was included in this zone gaining a designation as a sub-zone. The economic development activity designated by the influx and leverage of millions of dollars has had a direct positive affect on Port Isabel. Empowerment has dramatically accelerated growth and therefore demand on the City. Many new businesses have opened in the past year. Expansion of the Texas Pack Shrimp Processing Plant has affected the local economy. The Golden Aloe Juice processing plant added production workers. Several more industrial prospects are negotiating with the zone for expansion and/or startup. This new growth is evident by the construction of several new businesses in the City including a new Wal-Mart Super Center, a new hotel, several restaurants and an expansion to the HEB grocery store.

Job creation and future labor demands are bringing new hope for the local population and surrounding areas. The economic activity generated has also attracted workers from surrounding towns.

An important requirement for businesses to take advantage of the zone benefits is for workers to live in the zone designation. This requirement has forced people to move into Port Isabel and immediately surrounding areas placing additional but customary residential demands on the City. The City is prepared to accept the responsibility of the new residential demands and preparing adequate parks in just one step.

Location & Service Area

The City of Port Isabel is a small community of approximately 5,000 inhabitants located at the eastern end of Cameron County in South Texas. The City is twenty miles north, by highway, from Mexico and is bordered on the east by the Laguna Madre Bay of the Gulf of Mexico. The City resides on the western end of the Causeway leading to South Padre Island. The City is easily assessable from Brownsville through State Highway 48 and from State Highway 100. Listed below is the relative distance to our nearest neighbors.

<u>City</u>	<u>Distance</u>
Brownsville	22 miles
Corpus Christi	142 miles
Harlingen	30 miles
San Antonio	258 miles
South Padre Island	3 miles

DEMOGRAPHICS

A. Total Population, Population by Census Tract:

The City of Port Isabel has experienced fluctuations in its population during the past fifty years. The 1970 population shows a loss of 508 persons over the period from 1960. This loss of population corresponds with city’s urban renewal program of the 1960’s, which may be responsible for a percentage of the total loss. Another population loss was experienced between 1984 and 1990. A decline in the shrimping industry is blamed for this loss. The loss can also be attributed to the outward migration of the Vietnamese community who has settled in Port Isabel just a few years earlier. Table 1 shows the population growth from 1950-2000 for the City of Port Isabel.

TABLE H-1 Port Isabel Population Growth 1950 - 2000		
YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE
1950	2,372	-
1960	3,575	+50.7
1970	3,076	-13.9
1980	4,298*	+39.7
1984	5,015*	+14.8
1990	4,467	-10.9
2000	4,865**	+ 8.9
2003	5,269***	+ 8.3
2004 (Est.)	5,415*	+ 2.77

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1983, 1990. 1995 Update & 2000.

* RGA Consultant's Estimated

** U.S. Census 2000

*** U.S. Census 2003 Update estimate

It is expected that the population for the City of Port Isabel will increase at a rate of 2.77 percent *annually* as Cameron County and the City continues to develop based on U.S. Census data. The population projections for the City are summarized in Table 2, Port Isabel Population Projections 1980-2010. These projections indicate a growth rate of 2.01 percent for the 10 year period ending in the year 2010.

TABLE H-2 Port Isabel Population Projections 1980 – 2015		
YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE
1980	4,298*	+39.7 %
1985	5,245**	+14.8 %
1990	6,698**	+17.1 %
1990	4,447***	-14.8 %
2000	4,865****	+ 9.4 %
2010	5,295*****	+8.8%
2015	5,524*****	+4.3%

SOURCE: * U.S. Census 1980

** Port Isabel Projections, 1984 Estimate, Community Profile, U.S. Census

*** U.S. Census 1990

**** U.S. Census 2000

***** RGA Estimates, based on U.S. Census estimated projections.

**TABLE H-3
Population of the City of Port Isabel
And Surrounding Towns in 1990 and 2000 Estimate**

CITY	1990*	2000**	2004 Staff Est.***
Bayview	117	323	351
Laguna Vista	1,166	1,658	1,799
Los Fresnos	2,473	4,512	4,897
Port Isabel	4,467	4,865	5,412
South Padre Island	1,677	2,422	2,629
Laguna Heights (colonia)	1,677	1,990	2,160

SOURCE: * 1990 U.S. Census

** 2000 U.S. Census

***RGA estimates based on U.S. Census projections of 2.77 average yearly increase except Port Isabel's estimate reflects a 2.97 increase for the period from 2000 to 2003 and a county average of 2.77 from 2003 to 2004.

A total estimated population in an 18-mile radius of the City of Port Isabel, including South Padre Island, Laguna Vista, Bayview, Laguna Heights and Los Fresnos was 15,770 in 2000. The estimate 2004 estimate is 17,248. See Table 3.

Income and Poverty

Table 4 below shows the comparison of income and poverty in Port Isabel compared to the County in which it is located and other areas of the State. Compared to the City of Houston and other parts of the nation, the number of families with incomes below the poverty level in Port Isabel is more than double.

**TABLE H-4
Comparison of Income and Poverty Levels**

City/County	Per capita income	Household Median Income	below poverty level
Port Isabel	\$11,239	25,323	21.7%
Cameron County	\$10,960	26,155	28.2%
San Antonio	\$17,478	41,331	14.0%
Houston	\$20,101	40,443	16.0%
U.S. average	\$21,587	41,331	9.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Age, Sex, Race and Minority Origin

The difference in sex between males and females in Port Isabel is consistent to the rest of the County of Cameron (see Table 5). It is pretty much split fifty-fifty between the two and Hispanics comprise about 50% of the population, a big difference from the adjacent Hidalgo County, which has over a 75% Hispanic population. According to national and state predictions, it is anticipated that the Hispanic population in Cameron County will double within the next ten years and will growth to approximately 80 %. When planning for parks and recreational facilities, one should take into account that age is a significant factor in the development of these facilities. Referring to Table 6, approximately 10% of the City’s population is under five years old. This would indicate that toddler recreational areas are needed to accommodate this age group. Furthermore, approximately 10% of the population is over sixty-five years old, which would indicate that this age group too, requires much consideration.

TABLE H-5 Sex, Race, and Minority Origin							
City/County	All Persons	Sex		Race			
		Male	Female	White	Hispanic	Black	other
Port Isabel	4,865	2,358	2,507	3,867	3,619	50	756
Cameron County	335,227	160,509	174,718	269,139	282,736	1,617	53,581

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

TABLE H-6 Population by Age Groups in 2000					
City/County	All Persons	Under 5	18 and over	65 and over	Median age
Port Isabel	4,865	405	3,385	592	32.3
Cameron County	335,227	31,744	221,932	37,375	29.0

Source: U.S. Census 2000

TABLE H-7 Population by Age Groups in 1990 For Comparison purpose only:					
City/County	All Persons	Under 5	18 and over	65 and over	Median age
Port Isabel	4,467	418	2,982	461	29.0
Cameron County	260,120	23,151	169,280	27,5154	27.4

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

GUIDELINES TO PARK PLANNING

Open space land is defined as land in a community that is not being used for buildings or structures, also roadways, parks, and water areas can be considered as open space areas. These open space areas are located in most urban and rural areas. Three functions that are basically derived from open space areas are:

1. Open spaces can meet positive human needs in recreation amenities through the physical and psychologically senses.
2. Open space enhances and protects our natural resources such as air, water, soil, plants and animals.
3. Open space influences economic development decisions and affects development patterns and real estate values.

Health benefits are derived from fresh air, sunlight, physical exercise, and psychological release connected with parks and open space. Recognition of the importance of open space and outdoor recreation facilities for citizens of all ages had a start in the 1920's from early zoning legislation. Although recreational facilities within large urban places are not considered essential to the development of an attractive community, rural communities are also seeing the need to develop and coordinate recreational facilities. Many times, these facilities are developed in cooperation with the local school system and local sport organizations to prevent duplication of services and to joint forces in financing and maintaining the facilities.

Some of the significant changes that have occurred in people's life style through the years which reflect the need for developing more parks and recreation facilities and open space are:

1. Leisure time for many of our citizens increased during the past decades through technological advancements.

2. Parks and other recreational facilities are now recognized as having a distinct economic value. These facilities influence the desirability of the city as a place in which to reside or to locate new industrial or commercial developments.
3. An increased number of senior citizens with retirement benefits make it essential that recreational facilities be provided. Many of these citizens have ample leisure time to take advantage of recreation facilities.

Local Considerations in Park Development

Important local considerations and priorities in developing park and recreations sites in a community:

General Priorities

1. Inventory existing recreational facilities at City Parks;
2. Inventory existing recreational facilities at School sites;
3. Inventory existing preservation areas, if any;
4. Where possible, locate lighted and noisy park activities away from residential areas;
5. Large park sites with major active facilities, such as lighted baseball fields, should be located adjacent to a major street;
6. Small park sites, where major facilities are children's playground equipment, need to be located adjacent to residential and collector streets away from busy highways;
7. Adhere to NRAP Park Area Standards as a guide;
8. Inventory conditions of existing park facilities and make necessary improvements;
9. Inventory available land and its potential;
10. Meet with Elected Officials and Staff for recommendations.

Immediate Priorities (One to Three years)

1. Prevent the further deterioration of existing facilities, if any;
2. Update Master Park Plan every two years;
2. Continue with rehabilitation and revamping facilities at school grounds for large or special festivities;
3. Examine the feasibility of utilizing existing recreation facilities at school grounds for large or special demand;
4. Secure waterfront property before land supply is exhausted by commercial and residential demand;
5. Maintain outstanding landscaping at municipal buildings;
6. Elected Officials to pass a park ordinance requiring new residential developments or annexations over a set acreage amount or over a land density percentage to provide open space for future park development;
7. Follow through with Elected Official and City Staff recommendations on a as-needed basis;
8. Protect all sensitive wildlife and ecological areas;
9. Apply for funding for New Waterfront Park;
10. Repair and expand boat ramp facilities;
11. Create or designate a Parks Director.

Short-Term Priorities - Three (3) to Five (5) years

1. Create the Parks Master Plan within the fifth (5) year;
2. Provide a secondary waterfront park in the western part of town adjacent to a growing population;
3. Increase the full-time employees (FTE's) in the parks and recreation department to meet the growing acreage of open space;
4. Develop enough park land to comply with 50% of NRAP Standards;
5. Review/Amend Park Advisory Board Ordinance.

Long-Term Priorities - Five (5) to Ten (10) years

1. Use the Master Park Plan as a guide in all future park development;
2. Purchase, safeguard or otherwise set-aside sufficient waterfront land to meet future park development.
3. Conduct maintenance and safety inspections and perform necessary repairs.

SECTION 1 - PORT ISABEL'S PARK PLAN

Inventory of the Park and Recreation Facilities

Conducting an inventory of public recreation or organized private recreation facilities is the first item to be considered in preparing Port Isabel's Master Park Plan. A facility inventory is instrumental in analyzing and determining recreation facility needs for existing and forecasted population. No private or semi-private facilities were identified. Below is a listing of each park and school and a list of the recreation facilities found at each site. (See **Table H-8 / Exhibit A.**) Exhibit B lists the park and recreation areas or sites located in the services area of the City of Port Isabel.

TABLE H-8 EXHIBIT A Existing Park Inventory			
Washington Park	Laguna Madre Park	Pompano Park	Railroad Park
4 Benches	1 Lighted Softball field		Parking area
2 Playscapes 5-12 years	1 Lighted Pone League ball field	1 public boat ramp	No other Improvements
6 Picnic Tables/grills	3 picnic tables	Restrooms Men/Women (Handicapped Accessable)	
1 wood fitness station	1 small peewee field	Large Parking area (No Handicapped signage)	
Restrooms(men and women/handicapped assess.)	1 soccer field	1 water fountain	
4 spring bouncing toys	2 Restrooms Men/Women (Handicapped Accessable)		
1 gazebo 20' x 20'	5 shelters, 3 picnic table sites		
2 basketball courts	1 lighted Little League ball field		
3 swing sets	Concession Stand		
29 parking spaces(2 Handicapped)	3 T-ball backstops		
1 Playscapes 2-5 years	1 practice field		
3 water fountains			

Table H-8, continued:

Beulah Lee Park	Veteran's Park	Laguna Heights County Park	Isla Blanca County Park (SPI)	Attwood Park County Park (SPI)
One 10' small gazebo	No improvements	One large playscape	1 Pavilion and concession w/restrooms	5 picnic shelters with grills
1 large 50' x50' gazebo	One small bench	Street side parking	UT-Pan American Coastal Studies Laboratory	Jerma Pavilion and concession. 1 Kiddy slide, various picnic tables, grills and beach walkway
12 parking spaces (1handicapped space/no sign)		Bird Overview	Full service R.V. park with 586 R.V. spaces	Sandy Piper Pavilion, various picnic tables and grills, 1 Kiddy station with 4 swings

Note: There exists a small strip area designated as a park named Berrel Mock Park on S. Shore Dr. It has no improvements and the new El Paseo de Santa Isabel provides pedestrians with biking and walking trails. The trails will eventually link several historical sites, parks and other points of interest in the City.

Garriaga Elementary(<i>Closed to the Public--fenced</i>)	Derry Elementary(<i>Closed to the Public--fenced</i>)	High School and Jr. High
3 playscapes, one seasaw	One swimming pool.	No Park Facilities
1 swingset, one exercise station	Small play area with 5 swings & 1 slide. One monkey bar.	
One Seesaw	2 basketball hoops	

EXHIBIT B

**EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS WITHIN
THE CITY OF PORT ISABEL CITY**

CITY

Washington Park
Veteran Park
Pompano Park
Laguna Madre Park
Beulah Lee Park
Railroad Park

County

County Park(Laguna Heights)
County Park (Isla Blanca)
County Park (Edwin King Atwood)

SCHOOLS

Point Isabel High School (grades 9-12)
Point Isabel Junior High School (grades 6-8)
Derry Elementary (grades 2-5)
Garriga Elementary (pre-K- 1)

LAGUNA MADRE WATER DISTRICT

The Laguna Madre Water District does not have nor maintain any parks in Port Isabel.

COUNTY

Cameron County has a small park in Port Isabel located in the Laguna Heights area and two parks in South Padre Island (see Park Map located at end of Plan for accurate park locations) It also maintains several beach access points.

SECTION 2 - LOCAL INPUT TO PORT ISABEL'S PARK NEEDS

Methodology

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was prepared using a two phase process. Phase 1 involved the inventory analysis, standards analysis and the needs. Phase 2 involved the recommended priorities/action plan, budget analysis and funding methods. The result of the Citizen input obtained at public meetings became one of the primary considerations for the master plan recommendations within Phase 2.

In developing park facilities for local use, it is very important to obtain information from the public. To this extent, the Commission held public hearings and held several meetings with public and civic groups.

Public Hearing

On January 17, 2005, the City Commission invited citizens to attend a public hearing at the City's Hall for the purpose of hearing from the general public on needed park facilities. The purposed Master Park Plan was discussed and made available to the general public. Subsequent meetings with the public and the Parks Advisory Board were scheduled.

Elements of the Park Plan

PHASE I

Step 1 – Inventory

The first step involved a complete inventory of all the existing parks and recreation facilities in the City of Port Isabel. An inventory was prepared of all existing parks owned by the City of Port Isabel. Existing recreational programs were evaluated by obtaining citizen input during the needs phase. No specific recommendations are included for recreation programming within this Master Plan.

Step 2 – Standards and Guidelines

This step involved a thorough review of existing park facilities in and around Port Isabel as compared to published national standards by the National Recreation Park Association (NRPA) and the 1995 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP).* Items such as acreage standards and facility standards based upon population numbers were

analyzed. This allowed for an objective review of the City park system as compared to these standards.

Step 3 – Needs

The needs analysis implemented a two step approach. The first step was comprised of citizens actively involved in Port Isabel through politics, sports associations, recreation programs, etc. The second step was comprised of citizens of Port Isabel polled at random and RGA in creating a list of needs and priorities for park facilities. Besides the various needs outlined in this plan, many citizens expressed the need to preserve the waterfront public access recreational areas. The concern of the citizens was that most waterfront access is privately owned. They did not want it to get to the point that there will no longer be any public access to the waterfront for the youth, the elderly and tourists to enjoy. This led to the idea of developing a waterfront park. The type of citizens that were a part of this process included church groups, civic leaders, and other interested citizens.

**Note: Any reference made of the TORP is for guidance and reference only since Texas lawmakers passed legislation which divorced the state grant programs from the TORP by requiring needs to be determined at the local level when applying for TRPA grant moneys.*

PHASE 2

Step 4 – Recommendations/Priorities for Master Plan

This step involves a process of ranking the priorities for future park facilities from the highest needs to lowest needs. The citizen input obtained was considered the most significant factor, and therefore, was weighted more in the priority ranking. Other factors considered in prioritizing the recommendations included City staff's input, the NRPA, the TORP as applied to Port Isabel, City Commission input and Ricardo Gomez and Associates' staff recommendations.

After a summary of priorities was established, budget estimates were generated for the list of park facility needs. This Master Plan document establishes the guidelines and recommendations which will direct the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks, recreation areas, and open space for the next five to ten years.

Step 5 – Implementation

The final step establishes the framework and methods for public officials to use in implementation of the Master Plan. Policies and sources of funding are recommended so that the plan can become a reality. Also, a ten year action plan provides specific priorities and budget estimates for the first ten years.

Planning Process Diagram

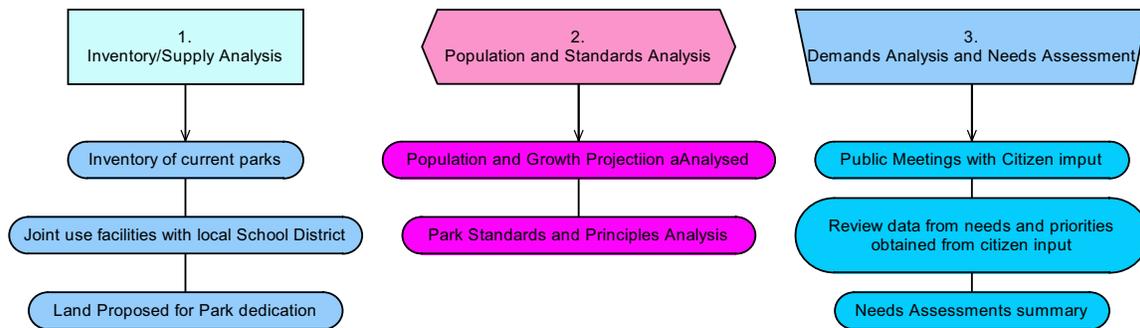
This Master Plan process is a continuous one which requires annual evaluation by the Parks and Recreation Department and the City Commission. *Every two years the plan should be evaluated and updated* to provide current priorities, action plans and budget estimates for implementation. *Every five years the City should develop a new plan.* The following diagram **Exhibit C**, illustrates the planning process for the Park Master Plan.

EXHIBIT C PLANNING PROCESS

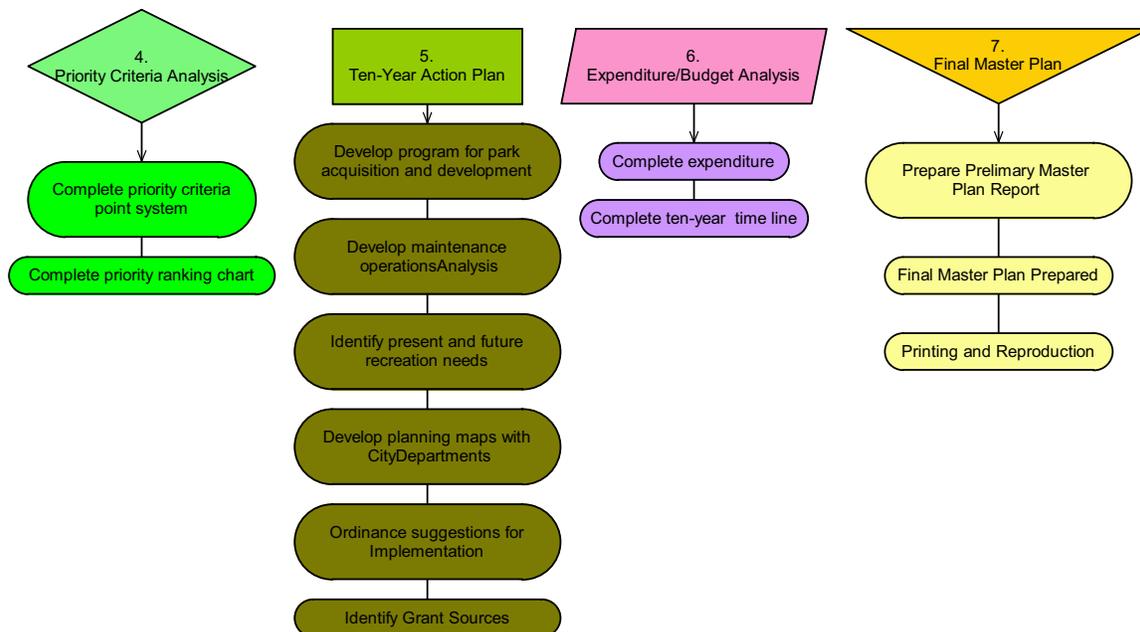
Planning Process

This Master Park Plan process is a continuous plan, which requires annual evaluation by the City Commission and Parks and Recreation Board. Every two years, the plan should be evaluated and updated to provide current priorities, action plans and budget estimates for implementation. The following diagram illustrates the planning process for the Park Master Plan.

PHASE 1



PHASE 2



SECTION 3 - CITY AND REGIONAL OPEN SPACES

Open Space Areas in the City

A major ingredient to Port Isabel's development is the "open space" concept, the majority of which is in private property. No large public landscape area exists in the City. No open space park area exists on the waterfront and with the economic impact that the Federal Empowerment Zone designation is having on the area, property located directly on the Laguna Madre Bay will become more expensive and harder to find in the future.

Privately or Quasi-Public Recreation Facilities

Neither the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Corporation nor the Laguna Madre Water District has recreation facilities or opportunities. Recently, the City of Laguna Vista, located adjacent and just west of Port Isabel completed an 18-hole golf course.

Regional Recreational Complexes are:

East, in South Padre Island	2.2 miles
South, in the City of Brownsville	22.0 miles
Northwest, the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.	12.5 miles

SECTION 4 - PORT ISABEL'S PARK STANDARDS

Park Standards

The National Recreation Association Park Standards (NRAPS) recommends that a city should have for each 1,000 persons:

Ten (10) acres of park land for recreational use:

Ten (10) acres in green belt areas such as scenic parks, streams, parkways, etc.:

Ten (10) acres in reservation or a natural state area:

In 2000, the City's population was 4,865. The Texas National Resource Conservation Committee projected the population for the year 2,000 to be at 5,436. In developing this Park Plan, the population forecasted will be used in relating the National Recreation Association criteria to the community. Based on the NRAPS criteria, it is calculated that the City should presently have approximately forty-nine (49) acres for recreational use, approximately forty nine (49) acres for green belt areas and forty-nine (49) acres in reservation natural state for a total of one-hundred forty-seven (147) acres of active and passive park land. In fact the City of Port Isabel has approximately thirty (30.8183) acres for recreational use, approximately four (4.132) acres for green belt, this includes areas on Highway 100, and zero (0) acres in reservation natural state. These figures do not include the land located in the County park system located in South Padre Island since these park facilities are owned by another public entity outside the City's control.

Park standards established for the City of Port Isabel in the 2004 Park Plan are:

- Develop ten (10) acres of park land per 1,000 persons for recreational and leisurely purposes;
- Achieve an open space standard of ten (10) acres per 1,000 persons;
- No set acreage limit is established for park land, submersible water, environmental and wildlife preservation;
- To ensure that new residential development incorporates open and park space in compliance to this Park Plan;

- To ensure that local residents are not locked out of the natural beauty and environment of the Gulf's bay water due to the high-priced demand of bay-front property for residential and commercial use;
- To offer alternative activity sites for our youth through recreational activities;
- To not only sustain but to improve the quality of life in Port Isabel;
- To ensure that the City has the proper planning instrument to anticipate future growth and it's anticipated fiscal impact on the City's coffers.

SECTION 5 - PORT ISABEL'S PARK PLAN ANALYSIS

Park Acreage Analysis

Based on the City's 2000 population of 4,865 and the established City park standard of ten (10) acres of active park land per 1,000 residents, the City should have had 49 acres of active park land in 2000. With the forecasted population of 6,394 for the year 2010, the active park land should be approximately 64 acres.

Illustrated by Exhibit F, the Parks and Open Space acreage in the City of Port Isabel is inadequate, with thirty acres. Acreage used by the school system for recreational purposes is useful to the City's total recreational area, but the City's total recommended standard of ten (10) acres per 1,000 persons or 49 acres of park land is a standard to assist local citizens twelve (12) months of the year. To meet the recommended park acreage standard, the City should increase the 2010 park acreage by a minimum of eighteen (18) acres. As mentioned in a previous section, these figures do not include the County operated park system, located across the Laguna Madre Bay in South Padre Island.

Possible Problems associated with the Park system:

1. Lack of open space.
2. Inadequate financing for maintenance & operations.
3. Insufficient financial resources for new parks.
4. Lack of adequate local support.
5. Lack of full-time parks department.

These ranking were determined by reviewing the adequacy of open space availability, or the lack thereof, reviewing the City's budget for park maintenance and operations and by noting the local lack of enthusiasm and commitment for the creation of new parks as demonstrated at public meeting, gatherings and private conversations. The lack of a full-time parks department goes part and parcel with the second ranking and as such, was considered last as a stand along item. The following **Exhibit D** shows the Open Space Classification and Acreage.

**EXHIBIT D
PORT ISABEL'S 2004 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
CLASSIFICATION AND ACREAGE**

PARK TYPE	MINIMUM SIZE	CITY PARK/ OPEN SPACE	SIZE
Mini Park	1 - 5 acres	Washington Park	3.2 acres
		Pompano Park	1.4 acre
		Veteran's Memorial	.23
		Beulah Lee	.69
		County Park	2.01
Neighborhood Park	5 - 20 acres	None	None
Community Park	20 - 100 acres	Laguna Madre Park	23.24 acres
City	100 acres	None	None
Regional	250 acre+	None	<u>None</u>
TOTAL 2004 PARKS and OPEN SPACE - Port Isabel			30.8183 acres

Source: *F. Steward Chapin, Jr. And Edward J. Kaiser, Urban Land Use Planning. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979;*
City of Port Isabel land maps; and Government Service Agency, Inc.

See Appendix A for Park Descriptions/Pictures

Regional Recreational Needs Expressed by the 1995 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan

The “1995 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan” published by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department included a projection of needed recreation facilities and resources for the Lower Rio Grande Valley North Region (21), a three county area. The recommendations in the 1990 TORP were used by the Parks and Wildlife Department in reviewing grant applications through 1994. Even through the “1990 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan” is not being used by the Parks and Wildlife Department in projecting local park needs for the new applications, the information provided by the “1995 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan” is a great resource for park planning. Information taken from the “1990 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan” which is referenced in the 1995 Update, is shown in **Exhibit E and Exhibit F.**

They are used here *for illustration and comparison purposes only*, since projections were made though the year 2010.

EXHIBIT E

**ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES/RESOURCES
NEEDED IN REGION 21 FOR 1990, 1995, 2000**

Facility/Resource	Facility Supply 1986	1990	Facilities Needed Above the 1986 Supply		
			1995	2000	2010
Baseball fields	57	39	49	58	67
Basketball Goals	95	49	63	77	91
Boat Ramp Lanes FW	4	44	48	53	58
Boat Ramp Lanes SW	28	47	53	60	67
Campsites	31,295	--	--	--	1
Fishing Structures, FW Lin. Yd.	62	1,190	1,306	1,422	1,538
Fishing Structures, FW Lin. Yd.	11,398	5,330	6,827	8,325	9,823
Golf Holes	231	--	--	--	1
Hiking Trail Miles	0	20	22	24	26
Horseback Riding Trail Miles	0	11	12	13	14
Lake Acres (BFS Suitable), FW	3,300	--	--	--	--
Off-road Vehicle Riding Acres	50	72	84	96	108
Picnic Tables	3,148	--	--	--	--
Playground Areas, Equipped	189	164	198	232	266
Soccer/Football Fields	99	69	79	89	99
Softball Fields	31	79	89	99	109
Swimming, FW Sq. Yd. (000)	2	10	112	121	130
Swimming, SW Sq. Yd. (000)	100	1,759	1,912	2,064	2,216
Swimming Pool Sq. Yd. (000)	22	3	5	8	11
Tennis Court	104	55	70	84	98
Trail Miles, Multi-use (Walk, Bike, Trails)	31	<u>44</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>68</u>
DEVELOPED LAND ACRES	2,187	2,480	2,768	12,735	14,791

Source: *CPS, Parks Division, TPWD, 1988*

Note: See the 1990 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for key points to interpret the table and an explanation of research methods.

Exhibit F shows the 2000 need from the Parks and Wildlife Department for 21 regional recreational facilities and how they rank by need from most to least within the region. Rankings are based on a combination of two measures of need: the needed quantity relative to existing supply and the amount of projected user occasions that would go un-served if the needed facilities were not added.

EXHIBIT F

RANKING OF OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITY/RESOURCE NEEDS IN REGION 21 (LOWER RIO GRAND VALLEY) THROUGH 1995

<u>Need Rank</u>	<u>Facility/Resource</u>
1	Soccer/Football Fields
2	Softball Fields
3	Trail Miles, Multi-Use (Walk, Bike, Jog)
4	Swimming, SW Sq. Yd.
5	Swimming, FW Sq. Yd.
6	Playground Areas, SW (Non-Motorized)
7	Boat Ramp Lanes, FW Lin. Yd.
8	Fishing Structures, FW Lin. Yd.
9	Boat Ramp Lanes, FW
10	Baseball Fields
11	Swimming Pool Sq. Yd.
12	Basketball Goals
13	Hiking Trails
14	Fishing Structure, SW Lin. Yd.
15	Off-Road Vehicle Riding Acres
16	Tennis Courts
17	Horseback Riding Trail Miles
18	Picnic Tables
19	Lake Acres (BFS Suitable)
20	Golf Holes
21	Campsites

Source: CPS, CPB, Parks Division, TPWD, 1988

SECTION 6 - PORT ISABEL'S PARK PLAN

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

This section presents the goals and facility recommendations for parks, open space and recreation for the City of Port Isabel. These recommendations are based on the previous analysis of the existing facilities, community growth trends and forecasted population.

Goals for Parks and Open Space

The recommended goals for the City of Port Isabel park system are:

1. To provide public park, recreational and open space facilities of adequate scope and variety to serve all age groups.
2. To provide required parks and open space in advance of need.
3. To locate needed facilities to be conveniently accessible to the residents they are to serve.
4. To provide both active and passive facilities for use during all seasons.

Short Range Recommendations

The following recommendations expand on the previously mentioned goals and provide a focus for short range actions in improving the City's park system.

- It is recommended that the City expend the Park System in 2005 to provide facilities that have been recommended by local citizens and elected officials at various civic meetings and public hearings.

Short Range Strategies:

- Prepare and submit a Parks and Wildlife Application on or before January 31, 2006 to assist in the development of a waterfront park.
- Seek additional input from local citizens on the type of recreational facilities that they would like developed at the park.

- Work with County of Cameron, the State of Texas and the Point Isabel School District in coordinating the development of recommended park activities and how governmental bodies can work together in developing the park.
- Work with local organizations and private individuals to determine where they can assist in the development of the proposed new park site.

Recommended Upgrade of Existing Parks

The City of Port Isabel should refurbish park equipment at Washington Park. Beulah Lee Park's landscape is being well-maintained and the City should continue applying its landscape principles which serve to maintain the attraction at this small park. Additional park benches should be added too. The City should develop a park design plan for Veterans Park to honor the areas veterans. Pampano Park should be upgraded with picnic table and grills and landscaped and with addition of a second boat ramp. The City should study the ideas for promoting fishing at this park and upgrading or refurbishing the pier and boardwalk. Upgrading these facilities is a priority to the City of Port Isabel as well as requiring open park space area(s) for new developments.

Recommended Development of Future Park(s)

The City of Port Isabel recommends the development of a waterfront park to meet the immediate needs of the community. Future park needs are being anticipated should also be planned with any residential developments in the city's limits. This should be accomplished utilizing the City's Subdivision Ordinance by mandating dedication of land for park development from new subdivisions.

SECTION 7 – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Research Methodology

As part of the needs assessment, the Consultant team utilized a survey instrument with which a survey was conducted, using the sample survey form NRAP. A copy of the survey instrument can be found at the end of the Plan. Results of the data tabulations are reflected on the following tables in this section.

Group Findings

Various discussions have been conducted as part of the needs assessment for the recommendations provided in this report, based on the results of the existing inventory, and the forecast population growth for the City of Port Isabel. These meetings were conducted to review and address the following issues:

- 1) Attitudes and opinions of resident of the City of Port Isabel.
- 2) Types of recreation programs in which residents currently participate.
- 3) Suggestions for needed and desired recreation facilities.

The meetings were held to gather input and suggestions. The following recommendations for park improvements are examples of populace expressions of desire for City-Provided Facilities:

- 1) Need of a community Center.
- 2) Need for picnic tables and grills.
- 3) Need for a walking and jogging trail.
- 4) Need for more families oriented parks.

Survey Findings

This section presents findings and conclusions for the survey of the City of Port Isabel residents. The findings resulted in 121 households being surveyed. In addition to a narrative summary, this report presents tables of responses.

Demographics

Data were collected on several demographic variables including, length of residency, persons in households, distance to nearest park and household participation and others.

Residency

Table H-7-1 shows that most of the persons surveyed have resided in the City of Port Isabel for greater than 20 years. This is a significant number of years to be devoid of the NRAP recommended recreational and park facilities acreage. The table further confirms the increased new population growth by the percentage of new residents with less the 5 years in the City, coming in at twenty and one-half (20 ½) percent.

Table H-7-1 Length of Residency in the City of Port Isabel		
Amount of Years	Number of Households	Percent of Responses
Less than or equal to 5 years	25	20.5%
6 to 10 years	22	18.1%
11 to 15 years	6	4.9%
16 to 20 years	8	6.5%
Greater than 20 years	60	50%
Total Households	121	100%

Age Groups for Park Attendance

During the planning process, it is important to account for the different age groups so that all age groups receive the representation they warrant and that infrastructure and recreational considerations are properly designed. Obviously, toddlers require different activities than do teenagers or the elderly. However, sufficient data is required to substantiate this. Table H-7-2 shows that most children identified in the survey, those under 19 years of age, live in larger family households of 3 persons or more. Since this age group tends to visit parks and recreational facilities at a higher rate than other groups, it is important when planning projects, that the needs of this group be considered with a higher degree of need.

Table H-7-2			
Average Household Size and Children Per Household			
Persons/Household	Households per Category	Households with Children by 1 st Column Amount	Percent of Responses
1	7	0	5.8%
2	29	0	23.9%
3	21	21	17.4%
4	22	22	18.2%
5	25	24	20.7%
6	8	2	6.6%
Greater than 6	9	9	7.4%

Persons per Household

Over 70.3% of the persons surveyed reported household of three or more persons per household, which represents 100% of the households surveyed with child ages 19 and under. Again, this demonstrates the need to plan for this group.

Gender

Table H-7-3 demonstrates the ratio difference between the two gender groups of children under the age of nineteen (19) years old still living at home. The male population accounts for fifty-two (52) percent of the total surveyed and the balance of females amounts to forty-eight (48) percent. This is very typical of other surveys and studies conducted in surrounding communities.

Table H-7-3		
Gender of Children Under Nineteen (19)		
MALES	FEMALES	PERCENT OF TOTAL
63	58	Males-52% Females-48%

Distance to Parks

The figure in Table H-7-4 are typical of a south Texas community like Port Isabel whose original town site is laid-out in grid system with a plaza or park usually at it's center. In this case, Washington Park is that plaza or park. Most persons surveyed live less than one-half (½) mile from a park, in many cases, just a few blocks. Since the City has not experience the suburban growth other Valley communities have recently experience, most of the growth that has occurred has been within the original boundaries of the City, thus providing for the short distances to parks and recreational facilities.

Table H-7-4 Distance to Nearest Park Facilities		
Distance in Miles	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Less than ½ Mile	82	68%
½ but less than 1 Mile	22	18%
1 to 3 Miles	17	14%
4 to 7 Miles	No response	0
8 to 10 Miles	No response	0
Over 10 Miles	No response	0

Visitation to Parks

Table H-7-5 demonstrates that over thirty-four (34) percent of those surveyed visited the parks at least weekly, and that over thirty-three (33) percent visited the parks at least monthly. If one accepts that the survey results are a true representation of residents of Port Isabel, this means that over fifty (50) percent of people of Port Isabel, visit a park or recreational facilities at least monthly and that over ninety (90) percent of the total population, visits a park and recreational facility at least yearly. This should be a good indicator to the governing body of the significance of a sound parks and recreation program.

Table H-7-5 Frequency of Park Visits		
Frequency	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Daily	2	1.7%
Weekly	42	34.7%
Monthly	33	27.3%
Quarterly	27	22.3%
Annually	6	4.9%
Never	11	9.1%
Total Responses	121	100%

Ranking of Recreation Facilities

Rankings of recreational facilities gathered from this survey are described in Table H-7-6. As noted, Table H-7-6 displays that those responding to the survey, ranked Playgrounds/playground equipment as their number one priority, and followed by picnic shelters/tables/grills as the second priority. This is indicative of the family oriented philosophy of the City. Interestingly enough, the need for soccer, a major sport in this area of the country, appears as the number eight (8) priority. It should be important to note that while some political groups and some social and civic groups usually prefer “community centers” or “sport center”, the vast majority of the residents prefer simply things, such as nice family oriented parks with playground equipment and family gathering places, such as those provided with picnic facilities. In this case however, when the survey asked for community center with recreational facilities, the responses were dramatically increased and the ranking placed community/recreation activity center at the number 3 ranking.

**Table H-7-6
Desired Facilities Priority Rankings**

Activity/Facility	Ranking
Playgrounds/playground equipment	1
Picnic Shelters/tables/grills	2
Multipurpose recreational community center	3
Security Lights in Parks	4
Landscaping at parks	5
Outdoor swimming pool	6
Hike/bike/walk trails	7
Soccer Fields	8
Softball Fields	9
Baseball Fields	10
Handicapped accessible facilities	11
Sand Volleyball Courts	12
Outdoor Basketball Courts	13
Other	14

In addition, survey respondents made the following recommendations, not specific to any surveyed activity. The following is a partial listing.

- 1) “we need bird watching parks, and bicycle/walking lanes”
- 2) “more children’s parks”
- 3) “more family oriented parks”
- 4) “I was just dreaming about a track or trail for walking”
- 5) “needs are—not just for toddlers & mid-teens”
- 6) “Washington Park is in dire need of repair”
- 7) “My kids would like to play soccer, but—“
- 8) “need parks director”
- 9) “Why have more, when we can’t keep up with what we’ve got.”

SECTION 8-PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

Priority Summary

As a means of incorporating the needs analysis input from the various meetings with City staff, Public Officials, the general public, and the Consultant’s judgment, the following priorities for outdoor and indoor recreation are listed below. Table H-8-1 shows the recreational facilities rankings as per the Survey conducted. Table H-8-2 shows the implementation recommendations. Estimated construction costs are shown on Table H-3.

Table H-8-1 Recreational Facilities Rankings	
Activity/Facility	Ranking
Playgrounds/playground equipment	1
Picnic Shelters/tables/grills	2
Multipurpose recreational community center	3
Security Lights in Parks	4
Landscaping at parks	5
Outdoor swimming pool	6
Hike/bike/walk trails	7
Soccer Fields	8
Softball Fields	9
Baseball Fields	10
Handicapped accessible facilities	11
Sand Volleyball Courts	12
Outdoor Basketball Courts	13
Other	14

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**Table H-8-2
Recreational Facilities Implementation Recommendations**

PRIORITY	FACILITY LOCATION	IMPROVEMENT	TIME FRAME
1	Waterfront Park #1	Acquire necessary permits, e.g. U.S. Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, etc. Construct erosion constrains/walking ramp, fill, non-motorized boat access facilities.	Immediately
2	Laguna Madre Park	Add picnic facilities and playground equipment; add play structure and toddler play area, a walking/jogging trail, security lighting and landscaping.	2005
3	Pompano	Add picnic facilities, new boat ramp and re-furbish restrooms.	2006
4	Veterans	Add public facilities such as veterans memorials and landscape.	2006
5	Tarpon Field Proposed Park	Construct playground facilities.	2006
6	Railroad Park	Construct cultural/historical/nature park	2006
7	Laguna Madre Park	Construct walking and jogging trail	2007
8	Waterfront Park	Plan and prepare water trail system.	2007
9	Waterfront Park	Construct waterfront park, with playground equipment, walking/jogging trial, parking landscaping, and restrooms and concession.	2008
10	Beulah Lee	Construct additional picnic facilities	2008
11	Waterfront Park #2	Acquire necessary permits, and acquire land from private owners.	2009
12	New Nature Park	Acquire additional park site as a general environmental friendly park to include bird watching, natural trails, Xeriscape, butterfly gardens, etc.	2012

**Table H-8-3
Proposed Recreational Facilities Costs**

PRIORITY	FACILITY LOCATION	ESTIMATED	COST
1	Waterfront Park #1 (Permit)	\$ 250,000.00	Local funds
2	Community Center Complex	\$ 6,000,000.00	Bond Issue
3	Pampano (Picnic Facilities)	\$ 25,000.00	Local funds/grants
4	Veterans (Public Work)	\$ 25,000.00	Local and private funds
5	Railroad Park	\$ 200,000.00	Local funds
6	Laguna Madre Park (construct trails)	\$ 125,000.00	Local funds/grants
7	Waterfront Park	\$ 1,000,000.00	Grants/TPW
8	Beulah Lee (Picnic facilities)	\$ 25,000.00	Local funds/grants
9	Waterfront Park (Land Acquisition)	\$ 500,000.00	Local funds/grants
10	Laguna Madre (Picnic Facilities)	\$ 150,000.00	Local funds/grants
11	New Nature Park	\$ 500,000.00	Local/private funds/grants

SECTION 9 -- POTENTIAL FINANCING SOURCES

Possible funding sources for park and open space improvements include the City's General Fund, the sale of General Obligation Bonds, the issuance of Certificates of Obligation, matching grants from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Community Development Program, the Texas Coastal Management Program and the Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA). The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department administer the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Texas Local Parks, Recreation and Open Space Fund Grant Programs. Both of these programs provide fifty percent (50%) matching funds for the acquisition of park sites and the development of outdoor recreation facilities. All types of outdoor recreation improvements (swimming pools, ball fields, etc.) are eligible for funding under these programs, which typically provide \$12 to \$14 million for financial assistance to local government each year. There are two funding cycles (January 31 and July 31 of each year) and the awarding of funds is very competitive. According to Department staff, the grants are awarded based on a review of current population projections, a review of the city's existing recreational facilities, and the identification of what are termed "deficit opportunities" (recreational needs that cannot be met at the local level).

The City should also investigate all available private assistance programs for establishing and developing parks and recreation from private developers. The City should adopt a Subdivision Ordinance that requires new developments to contribute to the development of new parks by either donating at least 5% of their developmental land or a money equivalent of the developed value of said land. A variety of private grants are available from foundations like the Ford Foundation, Adolphus Busch, the Moody Foundation, the Meadows Foundation and HEB Foundation for such facilities as ball fields, and hiking trails and signs for the handicapped.

The City can also increase its financial resources through expanded community activities and assistance. An example might be, utilizing volunteers and civic and church groups to provide park maintenance. Utilizing such a resource could expand the use of City personnel and expertise for other municipal programs. Many cities have found that

by naming parks after civic and local organizations has helped to increase volunteer support from those organizations (e.g., George Washington Park, Lion's Club Park). Churches and other groups can also sponsor soccer or little league programs and help provide needed maintenance of play.

APPENDIX

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS FOR AMERICAN CITIES

The National Park and Recreation Association recommends a total of 30 acres of park land per 1,000 persons. This amount can be allocated in any combination of park types, from playground parks to City or regional parks. Each park type has standards for typical facilities, land per 1,000 persons, and radius of service area. The recognized standards below are recommended guidelines for the City's park and open space system. However, they can not be applied rigidly in all cases, but guidelines must be flexible to meet local area needs. The definitions and standards for playground, neighborhood, community, city and regional parks are presented below.

Playground Parks

A playground park is an existing park or school site with limited facilities serving residents in small residential areas. Facilities typically found in these parks include playground, equipment for children from preschool through school age, benches/picnic tables, landscaping, a drinking fountain, and a hard surface play area for variety of activities. Because the playground park is designed to fill a need for small residential areas, the minimum size for a playground park varies from 2,500 square feet to one acre, and the service area is typically two or three blocks.

Neighborhood Parks

The neighborhood park plays the key role in the overall system of providing active and passive recreational space for a neighborhood area or group of several small residential areas. Typically facilities in a neighborhood park include playground areas with equipment similar to the playground park and other active play areas such as multi-purpose athletic fields for practicing football, soccer, and softball/baseball, a paved multi-purpose court with basketball goals, a shelter with picnic facilities, landscaping to define different use areas and to provide shading for the playground and picnic areas, a wading or spray pool, and a jogging trail or exercise course. The minimum size for a

neighborhood park is 5-20 acres, with a maximum service area of between one-quarter and one-half mile.

Community Parks

The community park typical contains many of the facilities in a neighborhood park, plus multi-purpose courts for volleyball, basketball, and other sports requiring a paved surface, lighted athletic fields for competitive football, soccer, or softball/baseball, a recreation center with lighted tennis courts and a swimming pool, open play space for free to play and field games, picnic facilities, and adequate off-street parking located adjacent to high use activity areas. The minimum size for a community park is 20-100 acres, with a maximum service area of one-half mile to three miles, which can encompass the service areas of several neighborhood parks.

City Parks

In addition to containing an expanded variety of the specialized activities found in the community park, such as lighted ball fields, tennis courts and a swimming pool, the city park provides space for day camps, limited overnight camping, a band shell/performance area, or other specialized uses for city-wide participation. The minimum size for a city park is 100 acres, with the service area being the entire city, usually of 5,000 or more persons.

Regional Parks

A regional park provides facilities which can accommodate a wide range of active and/or passive recreational pursuits, and can serve more than one community. They often provide activities and facilities which cannot be accommodated in the city of community parks, such as large organized campgrounds, boat launches, nature trails, etc. The minimum size for a regional park is 250 acres, with the service area within a one-hour's etc.

SAMPLE

PORT ISABEL AREA PARK SURVEY, 2004

1. How long have you lived in this area? _____
2. How many children under 19 years of age are in your household? _____

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
One-month/less than 3 years	_____	_____
3-years---less than 6 years	_____	_____
6-years---less than 12 years	_____	_____
12-years---less than 19 years	_____	_____

3. Number of Persons in Household? _____ Gender? Male _____ Female _____

4. What is the nearest park to your house? _____

5. What is the approximate distance to the nearest park? _____

6. How often do you visit a park? (choose one only)
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every day | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly (4 times year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a Year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |

7. Which park do you visit more often and where is it located? _____

8. Do any children in your household participate in an organized event at School owned facility? _____

If yes, which Activity do they participate in?

Baseball _____	Basketball _____
Softball _____	Jogging/Running _____
Soccer _____	Other: _____
Football _____	

9. Do any children in your household participate in an organized event sponsored by some other organization or group?(e.g. Boys & Girls Club, church, etc.) _____

If Yes, which Activity do they participate in?

Baseball _____	Basketball _____
Softball _____	Jogging/Running _____
Soccer _____	Other: _____
Football _____	

10. Do any adults in your household participate in any organized recreational activities at school facilities? _____

If Yes, which Activity do they participate in?

Softball _____ Basketball _____
Soccer _____ Jogging/Running _____
Football _____ Other: _____

11. Which sport, class, event or other program would the Adults in your household be most interested in participating?

Softball _____ Basketball _____
Soccer _____ Jogging/Running _____
Football _____ Other: _____

12. If your children do not participate in any activities, what was the reason?

Transportation problems _____ Not interested _____
Location inconvenient _____ Children too young _____
Hours inconvenient _____ No information _____
Do not have time _____ Other _____

13. If the Adults do not participate in any recreational activity, what was the reason?

Transportation problems _____ Not interested _____
Location inconvenient _____ Children too young _____
Hours inconvenient _____ No information _____
Do not have time _____ Other _____

14. List Other comments or opinions:

15. List other recreational facilities you think are needed in the community.

17. Rank the following facilities in order of importance to you. (For example: Softball fields 1, Soccer fields 4, etc. number 1, being the most important)

___ Multipurpose indoor recreation center
___ Hike/bike/walk trail
___ Handicapped accessible facilities
___ Outdoor swimming pool
___ Sand volleyball courts
___ Outdoor basketball courts
___ Softball fields
___ Baseball fields
___ Soccer fields
___ Landscaping at parks
___ Picnic shelters/tables/grills
___ Playgrounds/playground equipment
___ Security Lighting in Parks
_____ Other

Washington Park



Port Isabel Swimming Pool



Resolution No. _____

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF PORT ISABEL, ADOPTING THE PORT ISABEL 2005 MASTER PARK PLAN AS THE CITY'S OFFICIAL PARK PLAN AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY'S MASTER PARK PLAN WHICH CONTAINS RECOGNIZED STANDARDS FOR PARK ACREAGE, PARK INVENTORY AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS, EXISTING FACILITIES AND PROJECTED NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE CITY'S PARK SYSTEM AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

WHEREAS, public recreation facilities are located at several local parks and it is the desire of the City to increase the local parks acreage and recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City will continue to work with the City's Park's and Recreation Board, the Port Isabel School District and the Cameron County to provide needed recreational facilities for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the City will continue to work with other public entities to avoid possible duplication of recreational facilities and to work for joint use of recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, the City designates the City Manager to oversee the implementation of the City's Master Park Plan and to take action to keep the Plan up to date.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PORT ISABEL, TEXAS:

That the 2005 Master Park Plan has been presented to the City and it is hereby accepted as the official Master Park Plan.

That the Mayor is hereby authorized to sign the 2005 Master Park Plan Resolution as an act of acceptance by the City Commission.

PASSED and APPROVED this the _____ day of _____, 2005.

Patrick H. Marchan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Nancy Davalos, City Secretary

PARK MAP