



# CITY OF WIMBERLEY PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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# SECTION 1

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

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This Master Plan outlines the needs for parks and recreation facilities in Wimberley, Texas along with the proposals adopted by the City Council of the City of Wimberley to meet those needs. Wimberley, an incorporated municipality of approximately nine square miles, is located in south central Hays County and lies in a valley formed by the Blanco River and Cypress Creek.

Transportation to and from Wimberley is achieved via several roadway systems which service the community. The primary highway system through Wimberley is Ranch Road 12 which runs in a northwest to southeast direction from San Marcos to Dripping Springs. In addition, Ranch Road 3237 runs in a northeast to southwest direction from Wimberley to FM 150, which leads to Kyle. A secondary roadway system serving the community is FM 2325 which runs from Wimberley to Blanco. It also is important to note that Interstate 35 is approximately 15 miles from Wimberley.

### ***History***

European settlement in the Wimberley area began in the 1840s near the confluence of Cypress Creek and the Blanco River. One of the earliest known land purchases was by William Winters who in 1856 acquired a tract of land along Cypress Creek where he built a mill and rock home. Pleasant Wimberley bought the mill and home in 1874, and the settlement soon took his name. The mill remained the focus of economic, social and cultural life in the community into the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rugged landscape, lack of suitable farming land, and remoteness from major roadways produced slow growth and low population densities for many decades. Narrow, winding roads converging on a village-like square created the focus for a rural community that valued its rustic heritage and naturally beautiful environment.

In the early 1900s, Wimberley was home to a small permanent population along with a group of weekend visitors who often owned second homes but did not make unmanageable demands on the community's infrastructure. Some landowners turned their waterfront properties along Cypress Creek and the Blanco River into campgrounds and youth camps, creating a new revenue source for the community.

Soon after World War II, more families began moving to the area as permanent residents, the subdivision of small ranches in the area began, and people who first came to the area for weekends or summer camps began to build modern homes on tracts of one to ten acres. This movement of urban refugees and retirees accelerated sharply in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creating a landscape of thousands of small tracts of less than one acre which dotted the hills and valleys of the area. Along with the population growth came degradation of the traditional lifestyle and character of the community as unregulated subdivision and building accelerated. The land

along the community's two watersheds, the Cypress Creek and Blanco River, as well as along the four main roads into Wimberley, was sold for housing, retail development, schools, churches or other private use. The unavoidable consequence of this growth was the development of rural traffic jams, as thousands of vehicles a day, including many large tractor-trailer rigs, tried to negotiate the dog-leg bends of the two-lane road through the Square in Downtown Wimberley and across Cypress Creek.

Wimberley residents began to recognize that these trends threatened the community's unique natural beauty and unhurried pace. In May 2000, residents voted to incorporate as a general law municipality for the purpose of protecting the environment, ambiance and traditions of the community. As stated in the City's Comprehensive Plan: *"The future growth and development of Wimberley will be guided by the dominant principles of retaining the unique and traditional character of the city and ensuring that the city becomes a better place for its citizens to live and work....Wimberley chooses to preserve its rural character within a rapidly urbanizing county."*

Among the many tasks facing the new municipal government was that of creating public green space, parks, and recreation facilities suitable for a divergent population. In 2000, the only public facility in Wimberley was a State-owned roadside park on Ranch Road 12, just south of the city. All access to streams, creeks and the river was privately owned. Attempts to create resting areas under trees and walking areas through the commercial center relied entirely on the willingness of private landowners to make space available, and on volunteer workers to put in and maintain amenities or infrastructure. Suitable indoor or outdoor recreation opportunities for all population groups were extremely limited.

## ***Population***

At the time of incorporation in May 2000, the estimated population of the nine-square mile area now known as the City of Wimberley was approximately 5,000 people. That compares to an estimated population of less than 750 people in 1990. The rapid growth is expected to continue with some experts projecting the population of Wimberley almost doubling by the year 2050.

Gross figures from the 2000 Census for census tracts in the Wimberley area show that the population identifies itself as approximately 94 percent white, approximately 7 percent Hispanic or Latino, and less than half a percent African-American. As of the last quarter of 2008, there has been no significant change in these percentages despite the growth in population. An important demographic group in the Wimberley area is older retired/semi-retired people. A 1997 study commissioned by the Wimberley Independent School District (WISD) showed that the area had a significantly higher percentage of its population in the 45 to 64 and 65+ age groups than did both Hays County and the State of Texas.

The City of Wimberley is located in the heart of one of the fastest growing areas of Hays County. Projections show the population of western Hays County, which includes the cities of Wimberley, Dripping Springs and Woodcreek, could increase from approximately 21,000 people to almost 85,700 people by the year 2030.

Growth is not unique to Wimberley. The population of Hays County, as a whole, is projected to increase from an estimated 97,000 people in the year 2000 to almost 440,000 people in the year 2050.

The Hays County growth figures are important in planning for Wimberley because, currently, the largest single piece of public parkland in the county is the Blue Hole Regional Park owned by the City of Wimberley. The purchase of this property was funded in large part by grants from Hays County, Texas Parks and Wildlife and other regional entities. Users of this park come not only from communities in Hays and neighboring counties but from all over Texas.

### ***Tourism***

Understanding Wimberley's permanent resident population is only one element of the parks and recreation planning effort. Wimberley undergoes substantial increases in population every year, with the arrival of vacation residents (who may spend from one to six months in summer residences), seasonal tourists and weekend shoppers. Bed and breakfast operations are the single largest economic activity registered with the local Chamber of Commerce, with more than 100 such operations known in the area. In addition to the population added by short-to-medium stay tourism, several local organizations host special events that draw from hundreds to thousands of people to the area for periods from a weekend to a week. The largest of these events is the Lions Club Market Days on the first Saturday of each month from April through December. This large open-air market usually attracts from 6,000 to 10,000 people each weekend. Other events include the annual Fourth of July Parade, an annual jazz festival in February, a crawfish festival in May, and the VFW Rodeo in July which, together, attract several thousand participants and visitors.

## SECTION 2

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### ***PURPOSE***

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Increased development and the rapid population increase since the 1990s are placing pressure on Wimberley for quality City services. This need creates a demand for 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 within the City, the Wimberley City Council in early 2001 directed the Wimberley Parks Advisory Board to prepare and present for approval a Parks and Recreation Master Plan which would accomplish the following:

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

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was a result of a collaborative effort between the City Council, the Parks Advisory Board, the City staff, and most importantly the citizens of Wimberley. Extensive research was conducted in the preparation of the plan and there were numerous opportunities for public input prior to the plan's adoption in July 2001 (Appendix 1.0). In subsequent years, the plan has undergone periodic reviews and was updated in the Fall of 2008 by the Parks Advisory Board following three public meetings.

The Master Plan includes specific recommendations for future land acquisition, park expansion, and park development to serve the growing population and needs of Wimberley. The recommendations are intended to provide a framework for fiscal planning for future park expansions, renovations, and new park sites. This document should be the basis for the future development and fiscal planning of the Wimberley park system for the next seven years. It is suggested that annual reviews of the Master Plan be conducted by the City to ensure that the implementation is on course with the proposed plan, and that any specific changes in priorities can be addressed by staff and the City Council.

## SECTION 3

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### ***INVENTORY OF EXISTING FACILITIES***

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As of 2008, the City of Wimberley owns the following parks or recreational properties:

**1. *Cypress Creek Nature Trail and Preserve:*** A 7.2 acre tract of property along Cypress Creek located less than 100 yards from the Square in Downtown Wimberley. The park property was acquired in 2001 by the City and features a playscape, pavilion, public restroom and walking trail along Cypress Creek. *(Acquired and developed since original 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

**2. *Wimberley Community Center:*** An 8,000 square foot facility located one block from the Square in Downtown Wimberley. The City facility features a variety of meeting space used by numerous local groups for public meetings, programs, and indoor recreation such as card and board games. *(Acquired and developed since original 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

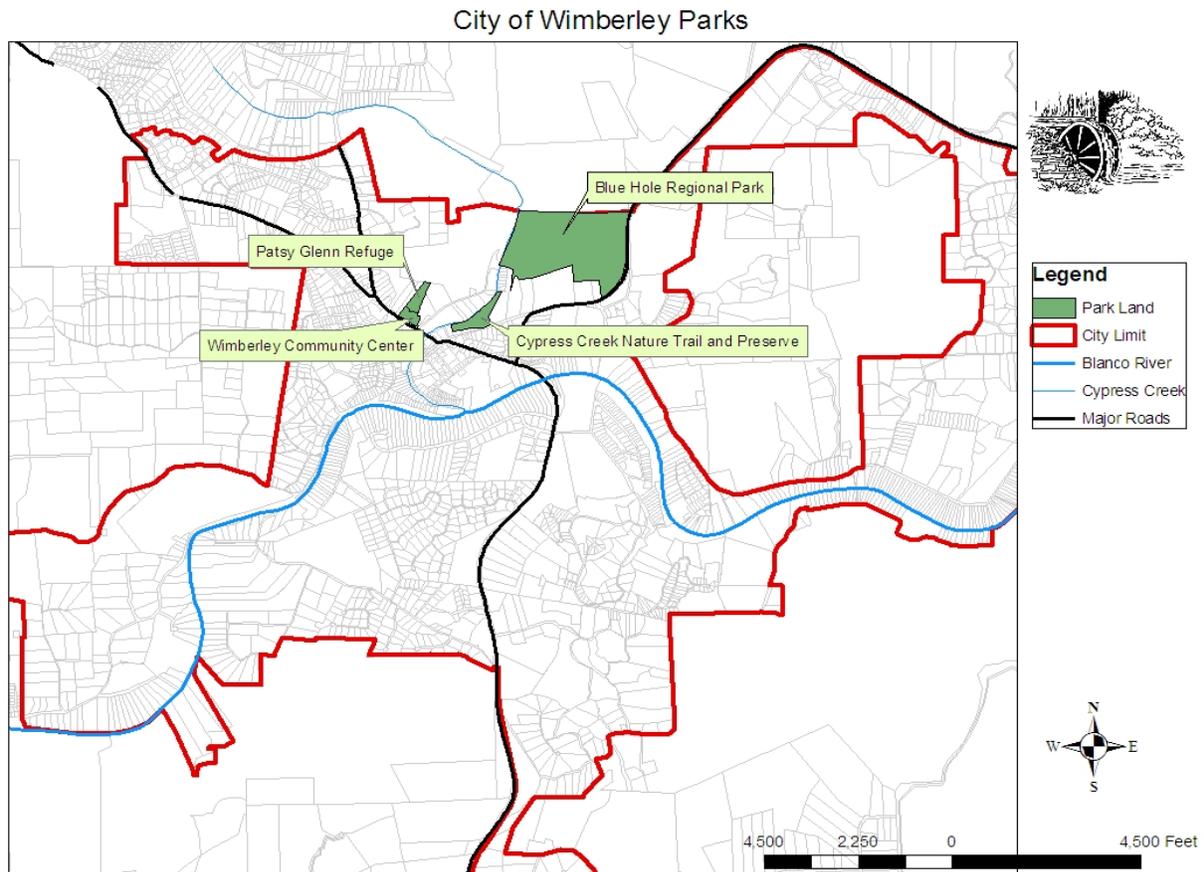
**3. *Patsy Glenn Refuge:*** A 1.7 acre tract of undeveloped property located adjacent to the Wimberley Community Center, one block from the Square in Downtown Wimberley. The property is managed as a bird refuge and environmental education site by a local non-profit group, the Wimberley Birding Society under an agreement with the City. *(Acquired and developed since original 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

**4. *Blue Hole Regional Park (BHRP):*** A 126-acre tract of property acquired by the City in 2005, with a nature swimming area on the Cypress Creek as its current main recreation feature. A separate Master Plan for the BHRP was developed in 2006 by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center staff in collaboration with a Wimberley stakeholders group. When fully developed, the park will feature accessible open space, tennis courts, soccer fields, volleyball courts and restroom facilities, along with natural swimming and pedestrian areas, trails, and primitive camping areas. *(Acquired since original 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

In addition to these four properties owned by the City of Wimberley, there is a State-owned roadside picnic area on Ranch Road 12 within the city limits, south of the Square in Downtown Wimberley. There are numerous other private and commercial parks and recreational facilities in the Wimberley area. These range from school and church recreation facilities to parks, picnic and barbeque areas owned by subdivision or property owners' associations, and private guest houses with large areas maintained as undeveloped and natural areas (Appendix 2.0).

Acquisition of each of the three City park properties noted above was accomplished with major grant funding from Texas Parks & Wildlife, Hays County, Lower Colorado River Authority, Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, Wimberley Lions Club, local sports associations, and numerous other business and individual donors from Wimberley and other communities.

It is important to note that the financial base for the City of Wimberley is limited to a one percent sales tax, franchise fees and certain fees associated with development. The City does not levy an ad valorem property tax. As such, development of future infrastructure such as sports fields, trails, picnic and pavilion areas, and other facilities to meet the needs of the community will continue to require grant funds from many sources, cooperative agreements with land owners, and the continued support and volunteer contributions of the community.



## SECTION 4

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### ***NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION***

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The assessment of parks and recreation needs typically uses either a demand-based, standards-based, or resource-based approach. As a small community, with limited personnel and financial resources which has relied on volunteers to develop basic planning guidelines, the City of Wimberley has chosen to integrate information and perspectives from each of these methodologies to produce this Master Plan that sets out what Wimberley can and should accomplish within a seven year period.

#### ***Demand- Based***

The initial City of Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan contained an extensive summary of surveys taken in 1996 and 2001 relating to the demand for open space, natural areas, parkland, and recreational facilities in Wimberley and Hays County (Appendix 3.0). Although no later surveys of public opinion in these areas have been taken, there have been no indications that their findings of strong support for public parks and recreation are now invalid.

#### ***Standards - Based***

Standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) should be used to provide a basis for determining progress towards the goals of this Master Plan. Since the plan was first adopted, significant progress in meeting the goals of the plan has been achieved, as the description of existing facilities in this plan indicates. Some basic needs remain unfilled, however, and the NRPA standards are still useful as a nationally accepted yardstick against which to measure both our achievements and our needs. Those standards are included as an appendix to this plan along with a comparison of the City's existing parks and recreation facilities to the NRPA standards (Appendix 4.0).

Progress toward fulfillment of this plan will require adaptability, flexibility, imagination, and dedication to continued improvement of the community. The long-term success of the plan will be largely determined by the community's ability to adapt both planning and action to opportunities that develop as the real estate market, business and economic conditions, population shifts, city finances, and other factors individually and collectively come into play over time.

## ***Resource-Based***

The physical setting for Wimberley has been the most prominent element in any description of the area since Europeans arrived more than 150 years ago. The community lies in a broad valley near the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau, surrounded by hills covered with native oaks, elms, junipers and many other plant species in a relatively small and confined ecosystem. Cypress Creek and the Blanco River have long provided twin focal points for recreation and relaxation for residents and visitors, as attested by the early development of guest ranches, summer camps, and tourist facilities along both streams. Both waterways meander across limestone ledges and outcrops, their banks lined with bald cypress, American sycamore, black walnut and other hydric plants. Hill slopes and areas away from the streams provide magnificent contrast in environments, with mesic and xeric plant communities, lower tree canopies of differing hues, and broader visual aspects, creating the overall effect of a small place of rare beauty and appeal for those seeking unspoiled land, clean air and water. Yet as settlement in the area has grown, with small-acreage lots proliferating, the area has been recognized as fragile and subject to significant human disturbance placing the community's natural elements at risk.

Cypress Creek and the Blanco River are the heart of the community. They are featured in virtually all tourist literature and promotions for Wimberley. These waterways provide an incalculable economic benefit to the area in the amenity value they add to the lives of residents, the value they add to nearby properties, and the money spent by visitors drawn by them, among others.

## SECTION 5

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### ***GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

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This document outlines goals and objectives that are intended to be used as a guide for future park, recreation and open space development within the City of Wimberley over the next seven years, but farther reaching recommendations and priority statements are also enclosed.

**Goal 1:        Develop a balanced mix of multipurpose sports and recreational facilities for all age groups.**

*Objective 1:* Work with non-profit organizations, local businesses and other groups to facilitate creation, expansion and improvement of sports fields, playgrounds, and parks on City park lands.

*Objective 2:* Seek opportunities to develop hike and bike trails using federal, state, and county grants and other appropriate resources to fund such improvements.

*Objective 3:* Develop cooperative agreements with the YMCA/YWCA and other private groups to provide public sports and recreation programs on City properties as appropriate.

**Goal 2:        Continue to acquire and protect open space, natural areas and park land for all citizens of Wimberley.**

*Objective 1:* Acquire property along waterways for protection as natural scenic areas, reflective of the character of Wimberley's setting and history.

*Phase A:* Work with non-profit organizations, land conservation trusts and other interested parties to acquire property along Cypress Creek and the Blanco River.

*Phase B:* Seek funding for development of appropriate infrastructure from foundations, donations, grants, and other resources.

*Phase C:* Encourage land donations suitable for park or preservation uses.

**Goal 3: Develop pocket parks on small sites in and near the commercial center of Wimberley.**

*Objective 1:* Support Wimberley Senior Citizens Activities, Inc. and Wimberley Birding Society programs to develop appropriate recreational facilities and outdoor environmental education programs.

*Objective 2:* Encourage and work with business enterprises in commercial areas to locate benches, picnic tables, landscaping, or other facilities for the public as appropriate.

**Goal 4: Encourage developers and other land managers to include green space, park land, playgrounds, and other recreation facilities when platting and developing property.**

*Objective 1:* Work with City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission to encourage developers to include park and recreation land in residential developments.

**Goal 5: Develop information strategies for recreational programs and facilities.**

*Objective 1:* Develop materials to educate the community, financial sponsors and donors of the need for continued development of adequate park land and recreational facilities in Wimberley.

*Objective 2:* Develop communication systems within Wimberley to circulate event and program information to all audiences.

*Objective 3:* Develop relationships with area media outlets to publicize events and programs.

## SECTION 6

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### ***PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS***

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Wimberley's parks and recreation needs can be grouped into three types: park land and open space; outdoor sports and recreation land with appropriate infrastructure; and indoor recreation. As a community with an increasingly diverse population in income level, age structure, and interest, different segments of the community have different needs when it comes to parks and recreation. Establishing priorities of need requires a balance between opportunity and demand.

#### ***Youth Sports & General Use Recreation Facilities***

Since its incorporation, the City has acquired properties for recreational use, but the infrastructure of recreation - sports fields lined and properly marked, parking areas, picnic tables, pavilions, etc. - must now become the focus of City efforts. The development of youth sports and general use recreation facilities is now the highest priority. In descending order of priority, Wimberley's recreation facility needs are:

1. Hiking and biking trails
2. Soccer fields for all age and competition levels
3. Tennis courts
4. Swimming and wading pools
5. Youth baseball and softball fields
6. Basketball courts
7. Picnic areas
8. Public pavilion/Outdoor meeting area
9. Environmental education sites
10. Interpretive signs for nature study areas
11. Lawn Bowling Pitch
12. Equestrian trails

The provision of funding for the maintenance and management of these facilities must also be ensured.

## ***Open Space & Water Access***

The acquisition of the 126-acre Blue Hole Regional Park in 2005 has provided Wimberley and the greater Hays County community with a rare opportunity to selectively develop parts of this mostly natural tract for a range of outdoor recreational activities. Local sports organizations provided strong financial and public support for acquisition of the property and participated in the development of a master plan for the park. The need now is for funding for full development of phases one and two of the Blue Hole Regional Park Master Plan, including the infrastructure and recreational programming needed to benefit the widest possible participant groups.

The City's other park, the Cypress Creek Nature Trail and Preserve, provides seven acres of heavily shaded natural Hill Country riparian area only a few yards from the center of Wimberley. A small picnic area with a children's playscape and pavilion at the entrance to the trail is available to shoppers and visitors to the downtown area, and a natural surface trail leads along a quarter mile of Cypress Creek. Although now fully developed, the park requires continued maintenance and support, some of which is provided by local volunteer groups.

At present, there does not appear to be any restraints, economic or other, on the continuing rapid population growth in the Wimberley area. Under these pressures, undeveloped land along waterways continues to become so expensive that the City is not able to afford it and it will become increasingly difficult to acquire such sites for public use. The strong public support shown in community surveys for protecting open space and providing water access makes this a second priority for the City.

## ***Funding***

All municipal operations in Wimberley are funded with revenue from a one percent sales tax, franchise fees paid by utilities and other users of public rights of way and permit fees charged for municipal services and oversight activities such as building permits and inspections. The permit and inspection fees are scaled only to cover the cost of providing the specific service for which they are charged. The City does not collect an ad valorem tax.

For the foreseeable future, these revenue sources will not be adequate for any significant City expenditures for land purchases or recreational infrastructure development. For the short term, the City will have to seek funding for parks and recreation programs from grant sources, as well as relying on cooperative agreements with existing or potential providers. At some point in the very near future, the City will have to make budgetary commitments to management and continued development of parks and recreation facilities. Securing such funding is a significant priority for the City.

## SECTION 7

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### ***IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES***

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The following implementation strategies are proposed to accomplish the City's priority projects relating to parks and recreation. Accomplishing any of these projects must be a flexible process that responds to many factors that change with time, particularly the needs and wishes of Wimberley's residents and the opportunities to acquire both land and funding.

***Priority No. 1:*** Develop sports fields and other recreation facilities in Blue Hole Regional Park (BHRP) according to priorities and needs identified in that park's master plan.

**Implementation Strategy:**

- A. Seek grant funding for specific facilities and recreation needs
- B. Work with sports and recreation associations already invested in BHRP to develop their respective facilities
- C. Ensure creation of dedicated funds permanently set aside and identified for on-going maintenance and repair of all facilities developed at BHRP
- D. Identify sources of trained recreation management personnel to provide staff for facilities at BHRP

**Timeline:** Identification of specific sites to begin immediately; construction to begin when full funding for completion is available; search for maintenance and repair funds on-going

***Priority No. 2:*** Develop hike-and-bike and equestrian trails

**Implementation Strategy:**

- A. Seek grants from county, state and federal sources for trail development in BHRP and connecting to trail along Winters Mill Parkway
- B. Develop cooperative agreements with commercial property owners, as needed, for completion of a network of trails through the downtown area to the Winters Mill Parkway

**Timeline:** Continuing, depending on availability of property and funding

**Priority No. 3:** Create sports grounds, playgrounds and athletic facilities in areas outside the city center to create better distribution of facilities.

**Implementation Strategy:**

- A. Explore possibilities for dedication of private undeveloped land to community recreational property through all available options.
- B. Continue to seek grant funding for purchase of selected property.
- C. Establish partnerships with the Wimberley ISD to allow uses of select public school recreation facilities

**Timeline:** On-going, depending on availability of property and funding.

**Priority No. 4:** Develop small park sites in and near the commercial center of Wimberley.

**Implementation Strategy:**

- A. Work with commercial property owners in downtown area to explore possibilities for creation of pocket parks with benches and green space for public use
- B. Explore possibilities for small park sites in other areas of concentrated commercial development

**Timeline:** On-going

**Priority No. 5:** Acquire additional property along waterways for protection as open space and for use as park land

**Implementation Strategy:**

- A. Explore possibilities for dedication of private undeveloped land as park land through inclusion in land conservation trusts, use of tax incentives, and all other available options
- B. Continue to seek grant funding for purchase of selected property

**Timeline:** On-going, depending on availability of property and funding

***Priority No. 6:*** Develop information strategies to inform all appropriate groups of park lands and recreational opportunities in Wimberley

***Timeline:*** Outline of information and education program drafted by Spring 2009; material development and distribution are a continuing process as local situations change; maintain media relationships

***Priority No. 7:*** Encourage and work with business owners in commercial areas to provide benches, picnic tables, landscaping, or other facilities for public use as appropriate

***Timeline:*** Continuing and indefinite

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# APPENDIX

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## Appendix 1.0

### **Master Plan Development Process**

*(Excerpt from July 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

This plan was developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee of the Wimberley City Council, under the leadership of Council Member Martha Knies, who is responsible for the parks and recreation portfolio. Committee members are: Kris Cusack, Committee chair, Kathleen Cline, Fred Franz, Jane Morton, Thad Nance, and Dell Hood, Committee secretary. Bob Shearer served the Committee from its creation until March 2001, when he resigned for personal reasons.

The Parks and Recreation Committee was organized by Council member Knies and had its first meeting on December 17, 2000. To learn what Wimberley did and did not have and to help in deciding what was needed, the Committee took as its first two tasks drafting a brief statement of purpose, and identifying and cataloging existing facilities in the area. The Committee contacted Texas Parks & Wildlife (TPW) for information on grants for land acquisition and facilities development. After reviewing the TPW materials, the Committee agreed in February to draft a Master Plan and began collecting information and plans from other jurisdictions in Central Texas for models.

All of the Committee's meetings were open to public participation.

Following are the dates of Committee or City Council meetings at which public comments on parks and recreation were received:

May 24, 2001 - City Council meeting to discuss the first park acquisition by the City, with public forum attended by approximately 65 people;

June 3,10,19 - Parks Committee meetings with Citizen Forums on draft Parks & Recreation Plan and proposed City park; total attendance approximately 45 people;

June 21 - City Council meeting with presentation of petition from Cypress Creek Neighborhood Association on proposed City park and discussion of priorities for grant applications to Texas Parks & Wildlife, attended by approximately 50 people;

July 10 - Committee meeting with Citizen Forum and review of Master Plan, followed by public meeting on Wimberley Community Center, attended by approximately 50 people;

July 12 - Public meeting on Parks & Recreation Master Plan, attended by approximately 40 people;

July 19 - City Council meeting to adopt Parks & Recreation Interim Master Plan.

This plan would become an integral part of the Comprehensive Master Plan of the Village of Wimberley as that plan is developed over the next year.

## Appendix 2.0

### *Inventory of Existing Facilities*

(Excerpt from July 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)

The following inventory of park land and recreation facilities was done by members of the Parks Committee in the period January-May, 2001. Sources for this information include the Wimberley Chamber of Commerce, the Wimberley Independent School District, the Wimberley Emergency Medical Service office, and numerous individual and business contacts. Committee members tried to verify information to the greatest extent possible, through individual visits to sites, telephone contacts, and third party sources when no others were available. Aware of its responsibility to the City Council and to the community as the body charged with parks and recreation, the Committee also tried to make this list as comprehensive as possible. However, because all facilities in the Wimberley area, except for a Texas Department of Transportation roadside park, are owned by either individuals or many separate and dispersed corporate bodies, it is not possible to determine the completeness and accuracy of this list.

#### **A. Guest Ranches, Summer Camps**

1. 7-A Ranch/Pioneer Town- Private, commercial, Wayside Drive; 142 acres of land with half a mile of Blanco River frontage; includes volleyball and tennis courts, horseback riding, swimming pool, games arcade, and cabins for guest use.
2. Old Glory Ranch - Private, commercial; 3633 River Road, 460 acres of land with half a mile of frontage on both side of Blanco River; no lodging or recreational facilities; site may be rented for events.
3. John Knox Ranch - Private, non-profit owned and operated by Presbyterian Church; 1661John Knox Road; 300 acres of land with half a mile of river frontage; summer camps and facilities for family reunions.
4. El Rancho Cima-Boy Scout Ranch - Private, non-profit; Ranch Road 32; cabins, dirt roads, Blanco River frontage on both sides; for use only by Houston area Boy Scout troops.
5. Rocky River Ranch - Private, commercial children's camp; Flite Acres Road; 26 acres with frontage along Blanco River; swimming pool, horseback riding, volleyball and tennis courts; during non-summer months facilities may be rented for group events.

#### **B. Subdivision Parks**

All the facilities in this group are privately owned and are reserved for use by residents or members and guests of the subdivision property owners group.

1. Blanco River Estates, Haschke Lane; 12 acres along the river are set aside for park use.
2. Blanco River Rapids, Haschke Lane; no information available.
3. Burnett Ranches, Farm to Market 2325; 11 acres with about 6,000 feet of frontage on both sides of Blanco River.

4. Cedar Oaks Mesa, River Road; along Blanco River, no information available.
5. Cypress Creek Acres; Summit Drive; park area, no further information available.
6. Deer Run Estates, Wayside Drive; 290 feet of Blanco River frontage, no improvements.
7. Falcon Woods, Ranch Road 12; picnic tables with B-B-Q pit and jungle gym.
8. Las Lomas, Farm to Market Road 3237; tennis court with restrooms and a pavilion.
9. Lost River Ranches, Flite Acres Road; park land with Blanco River access.
10. Lost Spring Ranch, Farm to Market Route 2325; park land with Blanco River access.
11. Paradise Hills/Paradise Valley, Ranch Road 12; park with Blanco River access.
12. Rancho Grande, off Farm to Market Road 3237; park with access on Lone Man Creek.
13. River Bend, Flite Acres Road; homeowners' park with Blanco River access.
14. River Meadows, River Road, homeowners' park with Blanco River access.
15. River Mountain Ranch, Farm to Market 3237; homeowners' river park with a small pavilion.
16. River Oaks, Wayside Drive; homeowners' park with Blanco River access.
17. Rolling Oaks, Farm to Market 3237; homeowner's pool, park and picnic area
18. Saddle Ridge, Ranch Road 12; clubhouse and park with playground equipment.
19. Summer Mountain Ranch, Farm to Market 3237; riding and nature trail.
20. Wagon Wheel, Flite Acres Road, homeowners' park with Blanco River access.

**C. Commercial Facilities**

1. Blue Hole, Old Kyle Road; swimming hole on Cypress Creek near Village Square, with primitive camping sites, picnic area, RV hookups, restroom; sells one-day memberships as well as seasonal family memberships.
2. Lookout Mountain, County Road 221; restaurant in private residence, on hill top, with nature trails, guided nature tours and plant identification, bird watching programs.
3. Woodcreek Resort, in City of Woodcreek, Ranch Road 12; includes 18-hole golf course open to the public for a daily fee; day-use rates available for tennis courts and swimming pool.
4. Woodcreek North, off Jacob's Well Road, a development separate from Woodcreek; has a nine-hole golf course, picnic area and a sports complex with swimming pool, tennis courts, facilities for sand volleyball, basketball, badminton, horseshoes, ping pong; daily and seasonal rates for individuals and families.

**D. Miscellaneous**

1. Emily Ann Theater, Farm to Market 2325, a non-profit corporation for student theater training and presentations, including "Shakespeare Under the Stars" program in summer; has nature trails, picnic tables, and water features on a five-acre site open to public; in process of acquiring adjoining 6.7 acre lot along FM 2325 to be managed as natural green space.
2. VFW Hall - Chester Franklin arena, approximately four miles from city on County Road 182; 20+ acres, with softball field; hosts annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Rodeo in the arena; hall can be rented for meetings.

3. Hill Country Recreation Association (HCRA), Ranch Road 12; maintains baseball fields and manages Little Leagues for baseball and Little Dribblers for basketball games, which are played in the school gyms.
4. Camp Young Judaea, Woodcreek Subdivision; private camp on Cypress Creek, with five soccer fields, swimming pool, tennis, volleyball and ropes course.
5. Southwest Texas State University Camp, Flite Acres Road; 126 acres along Blanco River, owned by SWTSU in San Marcos; 2 lodges, 6 camp sites, 4 day-use areas, 2.5 mile trail system, available for University groups.
6. EMS (Emergency Medical Services), Twilight Trail and Melody Lane; lighted sand volleyball court available to any groups.
7. Ozona National Bank, Ranch Road 12; two picnic tables and several benches in grassy area on north bank of Cypress Creek, available free to public.
8. Johnson Field, FM 2325; approximately four-acre field used for youth soccer.
9. Texas Department of Transportation roadside park, Ranch Road 12, approximately 3 miles south of Square, picnic tables; this is the only public recreation facility in Wimberley area.

#### **E. Schools**

1. Scudder Elementary School, Green Acres Road; 2 playscapes with playgrounds; gymnasium.
2. Bowen Middle School, RR 12; softball field, playscape, gym with stage, basketball court.
3. Danforth Junior High School, Texan Blvd.; gymnasium, 2 tennis courts, football field, baseball field, practice field, track, picnic tables.
4. Wimberley High School, Carney Lane; gymnasium, theater, picnic tables.
5. Wimberley Alternative School, Farm to Market 2325; parking lot used for community events.
6. Katherine Ann Porter School, Farm to Market 2325; indoor sports court; school hosts community music and art festivals.

#### **F. Churches**

1. St. Mary's Church, Ranch Road 12; a one-acre meditation park open to the public.
2. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Farm to Market 3237, seven miles from Square; nature trail, benches and picnic tables.
3. Baptist Church, Old Kyle Road; youth center.
4. Presbyterian Church, Farm to Market Road 2325; after school youth program.
5. Methodist Church, County Road 1492; basketball court.
6. Cypress Creek Church, South River; many youth programs.

## Appendix 3.0

### Public Opinion

*(Excerpt from July 2001 Wimberley Parks and Recreation Master Plan)*

In April and May 2000, the Scripps Howard Texas Poll conducted a formal survey for the Hays County Commissioners Court on park and recreation needs in the county. This mail survey used county resident addresses purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc., of Fairfield, Connecticut.

An initial and one follow-up mailing elicited 929 valid responses out of a sample of 2,000 county residents. Following are some of the findings of this survey:

1. River or creek access was considered the highest public recreational need in the county by an overwhelming majority, with 28 percent of respondents ranking it their first priority. No other recreational need was given first priority by more than eight percent of respondents.
2. Park land along rivers and creeks was rated from extremely important to moderately important by a total of 87 percent of respondents.
3. Protection of buffer land along streams to preserve habitat, natural environment and water quality was rated between extremely and moderately important by 85 percent of respondents.
4. Eighty-nine percent of respondents agree that it is important to preserve open space for future generations. Only 4 percent disagreed with this statement.
5. Public park land with fields for ball and other team sports was rated from extremely to moderately important by 54 percent of respondents.

While this survey covered all of Hays County, 136 or 15 percent of valid responses came from the Wimberley zip code. Following are the responses by only those respondents with Wimberley addresses:

#### Moderately Important to Extremely Important

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Acquire parkland along rivers and creeks               | 88.7 percent |
| Acquire buffer land along streams for flood protection | 89.1 percent |
| Acquire large parks to be left mostly natural          | 71.8 percent |
| Preserving open space and parkland                     | 71.4 percent |

On a related question, 92.3 percent of Wimberley residents said they agree or strongly agree that it is important to preserve open space for future generations.

Another indicator of public opinion on parks and recreation needs can be drawn from hundreds of individual comments collected during an informal day-long charrette in Wimberley on September 28, 1996. The meeting was a free-wheeling discussion session with a focus on the future of the community, organized by professors and graduate students in the Department of

Geography and Planning at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. Each of nine working groups in the charrette undertook the following tasks:

1. To describe the attractive attributes of the community;
2. To identify constraints and limitations on those attributes;
3. To develop a vision statement of how they would like Wimberley to be in the future;
4. To identify ways to accomplish their vision.

Although the report prepared after the charrette does not represent a formal survey of the community, it does present the thoughts of the 80 members of the community who were committed enough to the betterment of Wimberley that they were willing to spend an entire autumn Saturday in thoughtful discussion of complicated issues which arouse strong opinions in any setting.

Following are excerpts from the comments collected by each of the nine groups:

#### *Attributes of Wimberley*

1. Wimberley is: a scenic area with views; a place with clean water, rivers, creeks, full of trees and greenery.
2. Wimberley has: the potential to establish parkland, especially in the floodplains (for example), with a trail system along Cypress Creek (from a private swimming hole to a scenic area on the Blanco River); a unique beauty; open space; natural beauty with problems of trees being cut and water and air being polluted; water aesthetics; woodlands.

#### *Constraints and Limitations*

1. Wimberley is limited: by the lack of recreation facilities; by tearing up of land and trees by development; by limited visitor access to the river; by threats to a fragile environment.
2. Wimberley needs: to establish a public park; green space; water access; walk and bike trails; a community park.

#### *Vision Statement*

1. Wimberley is a community that: is visually beautiful, is preserving natural resources (water, wildlife, quiet, open space, etc.).
2. We want Wimberley to: maintain its natural beauty and resources; to create parks and hike and bike trails.

#### *Accomplishing the Vision*

Almost all comments under this rubric suggested a broad range of political and civic actions, including incorporation, control of the factors acting negatively on the community, and the development of the infrastructure necessary for managing growth. One team specifically cited parks, open space, sidewalks, hike and bike trails.

Taken as a whole, the 1996 charrette provides numerous statements supporting protection of the physical qualities that make Wimberley attractive. Many people cited the natural environment, the attractiveness of the setting, and the beauty and appeal of the Blanco River and Cypress Creek. Many also recognized the need for public protection of these streams and for creation of public recreation facilities.

Equally as pressing, however, is the need for a variety of recreational opportunities for all residents of Wimberley. The Wimberley community has long asserted its spirit of volunteerism and community action. The most significant such effort, in both financial terms and the numbers of people involved, has been the work of a local non-profit group, Wimberley Senior Citizens Activities, Inc. (WSCAI), which has been vigorously raising funds to create a Community Center. By mid-2001, WSCAI has collected \$750,000 in contributions from the Wimberley community, grants, and in-kind donations. These community contributions indicate a strongly felt demand for an indoor recreation facility. Because this fund-raising effort has reached the point at which construction of the center can begin if matching grant funds are available, the City Council has approved the Community Center as the highest priority recreation project. By working cooperatively with WSCAI and the volunteer force it can mobilize for community projects, the city can develop multiple resources for the benefit of all.

## Appendix 4.0

### Area Facility Standards

Standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) to help communities plan optimal park land and recreation facilities are included here to provide a basis for determining progress toward the goals of this plan. These guidelines are contained in NRPA's publication, *Park, Recreation, Open Space & Greenway Guidelines*. Of particular importance for Wimberley is the NRPA recommendation that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with 6.25 to 10.5 acres of open space per 1,000 population. By this criterion, the Wimberley Valley, which includes the cities of Wimberley and Woodcreek and the immediate surrounding unincorporated areas, requires a minimum of 87 acres, and optimally up to 147 acres, of park land for an estimated Valley population of 14,000.

Indoor recreation facilities are not sufficient for the growing population of retired, elderly and physically handicapped residents of Wimberley, and although no specific guidelines or criteria are cited for them, they must be provided for. The need for indoor facilities is inferred from the high proportion of the area's population in the older age categories and the growth projected for this age group.

Most athletic facilities have specific size and construction requirements established by sports governing bodies. Where possible, the City should consult these requirements and follow them so as to make the facilities eligible as host sites for competitive sporting events. However, if space, cost or other limitations prevent the City from meeting these standards, it should not prevent their construction if the need exists.

It must be emphasized that the standards in the following table are only guidelines created to provide some base line for the City to use in planning. They will be modified and adjusted as the park and recreation system is developed to make them realistic and achievable in Wimberley.

National Park and Recreation Association Standards

| Component | Use   | Service Area            | Desirable Size | Acres/1,000 Population | Desirable Site Characteristics   |
|-----------|---|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|
| Mini-park | Specialized facilities to serve limited, isolated or unique recreational needs for specific groups such as tots or senior citizens. | Less than ¼ mile radius | 1 acre or less | 0.25 to 0.5 acre       | Within neighborhoods and close to denser housing areas (apartment complexes, townhouses, housing for elderly). |

| Component                     | Use  | Service Area   | Desirable Size   | Acres/1,000 Population  | Desirable Site Characteristics   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| Neighborhood park, playground | Area for intense recreational use, such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus, picnicking, etc.  | 1/4 to 1/2-mile radius, to serve a population up to 5,000.   | 5 acres at a minimum, 10-15 acres or more where possible.                | 1.0 to 2.0 acres  | Easily accessible to neighborhoods, geographically centered with safe walking and bike access.   |
| Community Park                | Area of diverse environmental quality; may include areas for intense recreational use; may be area of natural quality for outdoor recreation; or combination.          | Several neighborhoods; 1 to 2 mile radius.   | 25 acres or more   | 5.0 to 8.0 acres  | May include natural features such as water bodies; can be in areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to area served.   |
| Linear Park                   | Area developed for one or more modes of recreational travel (hiking, biking, horseback riding, etc.). May include active play areas.                                   | No applicable standard.  | Sufficient width to protect the resource and provide maximum use.        | Variable  | Natural or built corridors, such as watercourses, bluff lines, utility rights-of-way, vegetation patterns, or other elements that link together other components of the recreation system. |
| Natural resource area         | Land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open spaces, visual aesthetics, buffering; recreation use a secondary objective. | No applicable standard.  | Variable depending on resource availability and opportunity.             | Variable  | Variable depending on resources to be protected.   |
| Sports Complex                | Consolidates heavily used athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites.   | Community level; may be centralized for smaller communities, strategically dispersed in larger cities. | Determined by demand; usually a minimum of 25 acres, larger as possible. | Measured by units (fields, courts, etc.); varies greatly from sport to sport. | Variable.  |

The following table shows the availability of existing resources in comparison with the standards of the above table, using a population of 14,000 people.

Existing Facilities vs. Recommended Supply

| Park Type             | Existing Acreage in Wimberley   | NRPA Standard Acres per Type | Suggested Acreage per 1,000 People | Total Acreage Suggested | Wimberley Status |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Mini Park             | None                            | Up to 1 acre                 | 0.25 to 0.5                        | 3.5 to 7 acres          | Adequate         |
| Natural Resource Area | 1.7                             | No applicable standard       | Variable                           | Variable                | Adequate         |
| Neighborhood          | None                            | 15+ acres                    | 1 to 2 acres                       | 14 to 28 acres          | Deficit          |
| Community             | 126                             | 25+ acres                    | 5 to 8 acres                       | 70 to 112 acres         | Adequate         |
| Linear                | 7.2                             | Variable                     | Variable                           | Variable                | Deficit          |
| Sports Complex        | Only individual separate fields | Variable                     | Variable                           | Variable                | Deficit          |

A limited sales tax income base available to the City makes it very difficult for City leaders to take full financial responsibility for creating parks and recreation facilities adequate to meet needs of the area’s diverse and growing population. Residents must rely upon developers to assume a cooperative role in meeting the City’s parks and recreation needs through the dedication of land, open space, and undisturbed natural areas for park land, and/or the building of recreation infrastructure where appropriate.

The Wimberley Parks and Recreation Board strongly endorses the requirements for park land dedication set forth in City of Wimberley Code of Ordinances. Although the requirement for dedication of one acre of park land per 150 new dwelling units in a subdivision may not produce the optimal park acreage suggested by NRPA standards, the precedent of requiring that park land be a part of any subdivision is new to the Wimberley area and crucially important to providing residents the parks and recreation opportunities they deserve.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Acre:* A measure of land containing 43,560 square feet.

*Baseball Field:* A baseball field or baseball diamond is the field upon which the game of baseball is played.

*Basketball Court:* A playing surface consisting of a rectangular floor with baskets at either end. In professional or organized basketball, especially when played indoors, it is usually made out of a hardwood, often maple, and highly polished. Other indoor surfaces include suspended plastic interlocking tiles. Outdoor surfaces used include plastic interlocking tiles (suspended athletic courts), asphalt, blacktop, or similar materials are used.

*Bike Path (Shared Use Path, Bicycle Path, Bike Trail, Multi-use Path/Trail):* Any corridor that is physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier, and that is either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. Besides bicycles these paths may also be shared by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers, and other non-motorized users. The term bicycle path is becoming less common, since such facilities are rarely used exclusively by bicyclists.

*Camp (Campsite, Camping):* Living outdoors in a tent or trailer while on vacation or as a recreational activity. A site where overnight stays are permitted.

*Citizen:* A person who lives, works, or owns property in Wimberley.

*Citizen Participation:* Public involvement in the city's policy formation and implementation.

*City Council:* A six member elected body of Wimberley residents responsible for governing the city and making decisions regarding the provision of city services and resolution of civic issues.

*Community Center:* Facility in which public services for residents are provided, including recreational and cultural services, and services for youth or seniors.

*Conservation:* The restoration, stabilization, management, and wise use of natural and heritage resources for compatible educational, recreational, aesthetic, agricultural and scientific purposes, or environmental protection.

*Creek:* A body of flowing water smaller than a river. A small stream.

*Development:* The physical extension and/or construction of land uses. Development activities include subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of water and sewer systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill; and clearing of vegetative cover.

*Downtown:* The business center of a city or town.

*Environmental Education:* Activities that use a structured process to build knowledge, in students and others, about environmental topics.

*Equestrian Trail:* A path or route that provides for the use of horses.

*Green Space:* Natural areas, open spaces, trails, and greenways that function for both wildlife and people.

*Greenway:* A linear open space established along a natural corridor, such as a river, stream, ridgeline, rail-trail, canal, or other route for conservation, recreation, or alternative transportation purposes. Greenways can connect parks, nature preserves, cultural facilities, and historic sites with business and residential areas.

*Growth Areas:* Areas of the community that best accommodate future growth allowing an increased focus on creating or enhancing transportation systems and infrastructure coordinated with development activity.

*Habitat:* The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

*Hiking Trail:* Any outdoor trail passing through a natural environment where people choose to walk.

*Implementation:* In the context of the Master Plan, implementation is an action, procedure, program or technique that is the way Master Plan policies are carried out.

*Infrastructure:* Public services and facilities, such as sewage disposal systems, water supply systems, other utility systems, streets and roads, parks, schools, etc.

*Interpretation:* Communicating information about the natural and/or cultural resources and their associated stories and values found at a specific site or along a trail. Tours, signs, brochures, and other means can be used to interpret a particular resource.

*Kiosk:* A small structure (sometimes not much more than a sign) often located at trailheads to provide visitors with information regarding the trail.

*Lawn Pitch Bowling:* A game where players deliver oddly weighted balls, called bowls, towards a smaller, target ball. The weight bias on the bowls causes them to take a curved path when delivered, making the game more challenging. Points are scored by landing bowls closer to the target than the opponent. The highest amount of points wins the end and the winner of the most ends wins the game.

*Live/Work/Play Relationship:* Land use relationships where the places that people live, are employed, and recreate are in close proximity to each other to reduce travel distances.

*Local Parks:* Parks that serve local, or nearby residents, communities and workers; are easily accessible; and offer active or passive recreational facilities, or both, in suburban centers, suburban neighborhood and mixed use centers.

*Mini-park:* A small neighborhood park of approximately one-half to one acre.

*Native Plants:* Plants indigenous to an area or from a similar climate and requiring little or no supplemental irrigation once established.

*Natural Area:* An area of land or water with predominantly native vegetation or natural geological features that is allowed to respond to the forces of nature with minimal human influence.

*Nature Trail:* Nature Trails are a fairly specific category of trail and are generally short loops (usually between a half mile and couple of miles in length) designed specifically for casual viewing of nature. They are usually well-maintained, well-marked trails with fairly gentle grades (though some may have some moderately steep sections).

*Neighborhood:* A part of the city defined by distinct characteristics that may include distinct economic characteristics, housing types, schools, or boundaries defined by physical barriers such as major highways and railroads, or natural features, such as rivers. Neighborhoods are often self-defined by the residents or by homeowner associations in a neighborhood.

*Open Space:* Any parcel or area of water or land that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purpose of (1) the preservation of natural resources; (2) the managed production of resources; (3) outdoor recreation; or (4) public health and safety.

*Outdoor Recreation:* Leisure activities involving the enjoyment and use of natural resources primarily outdoors.

*Park:* A tract of land, designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation.

*Passive Recreation:* Leisure activities that involve relatively inactive or less energetic activities, such as walking, nature walks, sitting, picnicking, card games, chess, checkers, and similar table games or simply enjoying the natural environment.

*Picnic Area:* Day-use area with one or more picnic tables where meals can be eaten outdoors.

*Playground:* A piece of land used for and usually equipped with facilities and structures for recreation especially designed for children.

*Public/Private Partnership:* A merging of public and private resources to achieve an end result or product that would be difficult to achieve through public or private activity alone. It may refer to the delivery of services, such as child care or to the construction of buildings, such as cultural facilities.

*Recreation Facility:* A place designed and equipped for the conduct of sports and leisure-time activities.

*Regional Park:* Parks that are distinguished from, yet supplement and enhance municipal park systems, and seek to preserve and protect regionally-significant areas of particular ecological, scenic or historic value and provide recreational facilities to serve users throughout the Wimberley area.

*Right of Way:* The strip of land over which certain transportation and/or other public facilities are built, including roads, railroads, and utility lines.

*River:* A natural stream of water of considerable volume, larger than a brook or creek.

*Signage:* General term referring to public and private signs and their design attributes.

*Soccer Field:* A field also known as the pitch, the rectangular area where soccer matches are played.

*Softball Field:* A field composed of a dirt or grass infield which contains the diamond and running areas, and a grass outfield. There are 4 bases on the infield (first base, second base, third base, and home plate); the bases are arranged in a square and are typically 45 to 65 feet apart. Near the center of this square is the pitcher's circle, and within the circle is the "rubber", a small flat rectangular area. The object of the game is to score more runs (points) than the other team by batting (hitting) a ball into play and running around the bases, touching each one in succession.

*Special Event:* Special events are activities where large numbers of persons may gather or participate. Such events may include parades, cultural programs, festivals, musical rock concerts, religious gatherings, block parties, community activities, and First Amendment Rights activities.

*Swimming Pool:* A swimming pool, swimming bath, wading pool, is an artificially enclosed body of water intended for swimming or water-based recreation. There are many standard sizes; the largest and deepest is the Olympic size. A pool can be built either above or in the ground, and from materials such as metal, plastic or concrete.

*Tennis Court:* A Tennis Court is a rectangular, flat surface, usually grass, clay, or a hard-court of concrete and/or asphalt. Additional clear space around the court is required in order for players to reach overrun balls. A net is stretched across the full width of the court, parallel with the baselines, dividing it into two equal ends.

*Tourism:* The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes."

*Trails:* A shared-use pedestrian, equestrian, cyclist route or system which is not paved.

*Vision:* A shared dream of the future characterized by long-term idealistic thinking. Provides the foundation for the development of the goals, policies and programs. A vision is not a binding goal and may not be achievable in the lifetime of those participating in the drafting of the General Plan.

*Watercourse:* A lake, river, creek, stream, wash, arroyo, or other channel over which water flows at least periodically. "Watercourse" includes specifically designated areas in which substantial flood damage may occur.

*Waterway(s):* The volume of water distinguishes waterways. Rivers have the greatest volume, followed by streams, creeks, and brooks.