

3.3 Parks and Recreation

OVERVIEW

A key contributor to the unique character and quality of life in Bee Cave is the abundance of open space, comprised of parks, golf courses and other recreational facilities, as well as trails and conservation lands. Today, Bee Cave has two City parks (Bee Cave Central Park and Bee Cave/Falconhead West Primitive Park), as well as the Bee Cave Sculpture Park with rotating exhibits. There are a number of privately (HOA) owned neighborhood parks, sports facilities, and trails within the City and its area of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). In addition, Bee Cave is home to two golf courses within its City limits and ETJ: Falconhead Golf Club and Spanish Oaks Golf Club. The City is surrounded by several large conservation lands - Barton Creek Habitat Preserve, the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, and the City of Austin Water Quality Protection Land (WQPL) - which add to Bee Cave's rural and Hill Country character and provide important conservation and water quality treatment benefits.

Bee Cave completed its current Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan in 2006. It was the first stand-alone parks master plan for the City and established goals, guidelines, and potential development sites for Bee Cave's open space and trails system. When the Master Plan was prepared in 2006, Bee Cave did not have any formal, municipally owned parks. Since that time, the City and its partners have implemented some of the Master Plan recommendations and have developed the current park and open space network, including Central Park and the Sculpture Park Exhibit, as they exist today.

The City recently completed a Hike and Bike Trail Connectivity Plan which elicited wide community support for an improved network of multi-use trails connecting Bee Cave's neighborhoods with the rest of the City. The Connectivity Plan provides a loop system for recreational purposes around the central hub; provides connections to all the neighborhoods in Bee Cave; reduces traffic congestion; improves safety for pedestrian and cyclists; provides connections to retail, restaurants, schools, and offices and to the Bee Cave Central Park and other parks; and establishes standards for each facility type depending on conditions.



Bee Cave Central Park

Where are we now?

- ◆ Growing system of parks and plans to expand trail network.
- ◆ Private recreational offerings.
- ◆ Few active use parks within neighborhoods.

What is our Vision?

- ◆ An expanded network of parks, trails, recreational and sports facilities, and open spaces.
- ◆ Family-oriented community investing in recreation and sports.
- ◆ Parks, greenways, and environmental resources are integrated into the community fabric and health.

PARK FACILITIES AND OPERATION

The City of Bee Cave does not currently have a Parks and Recreation Department; instead the Economic Development Board (EDB) has taken the lead on development of parks and recreational facilities in Bee Cave. Ongoing operations and maintenance for each park are through unique partnership arrangements with the City of Bee Cave.

- Bee Cave Central Park, perhaps the City's most prominent park, opened in 2009, and was donated to the City as part of the Hill Country Galleria development approval. It includes a large and small pavilion with playscapes, restrooms, and a dog park, and features ongoing seasonal events. The EDB recently completed the relocation of the Dog Park and expansion of the Hike and Bike Trail System through Central Park.
- Bee Cave / Falconhead West Primitive Park, is the largest Bee Cave park and located in the Falconhead West neighborhood. The park has a primitive hike and bike trail system, with minimal disruption of the natural environment for the purpose of preserving open space, stormwater management, and enjoying the outdoors. The park is managed by the Economic Development Board, which funds maintenance through a portion of the City's sales tax. The Bee Cave Police Department provides security. There is a small parking lot, and the park does not have restrooms.
- Bee Cave Sculpture Park Exhibit is a recent addition to the City and provides a unique, natural setting that includes a spring-fed pond, large oak trees, and diverse native plants. The exhibit was created by the Bee Cave Arts Foundation, in coordination with volunteers, the City, and the Economic Board, and includes a combination of permanent and rotating sculptures. It is managed by the Arts Foundation and maintained by the City of Bee Cave. The land is leased from the City and is not technically classified as a park, but it does provide trails and outdoor sitting areas.

SPORTS FACILITIES AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

While many cities provide public recreational programs, such as competitive sports leagues for youth and adults, given its small size in Bee Cave these facilities and programs are offered by private organizations including non-profits and businesses. These include some of the top competitive facilities and programs in the region, including a competitive swimming training facility, tennis program, and baseball. There are several organizations in the region that offer a range of youth team sports programs.

ESTIMATED LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The City has over 240 acres in active and passive parkland which includes Primitive Park and Central Park. In addition, Bee Cave has a Sculpture Garden that includes rotating sculptures around a pond. Active parkland typically includes recreational uses such as playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, or skate parks, while passive parkland refers to open space with trails / paths requiring little or specialized parkland development or maintenance.

Bee Cave's 2006 Master Plan recommends Level of Service standards (or acres of parkland per person) for community and neighborhood parks at 5-9 acres for every 1,000 residents, which is typical for a city the size of Bee Cave. Given its large size and mostly passive character, the Bee Cave Primitive Park would typically be excluded from this type of Level of Service calculation. If we consider the gross acreage of Central Park and the various HOA / neighborhood parks, Bee Cave exceeds the recommended park acreage standard providing 11.3 acres for every 1,000 residents in terms of gross acres. This calculation, however, does not differentiate between active and passive open space (see Table 3.1), or private vs public open space.

In addition to total acres of parkland, it is important to consider access, location, and type of facilities when evaluating how well a city's park and recreation system is meeting the needs of the residents. Figure 3-4 illustrates 1/2-mile and 1-mile buffers around Bee Cave's parks to show areas of the City that would be within a comfortable walking distance of existing parks. Many areas of the City are within the 1/4 mile and 1/2 mile service areas in terms of distance; however the parks are not necessarily accessible via walking and biking. Future analysis should consider entrances and walkability through the sidewalk network and trail system to better determine Level of Service for existing parks and accessibility.

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS & STRATEGIES

Goal PR-1:

Provide a comprehensive system of greenbelts with multi-use trails and parks that is compatible with the environment, provides green infrastructure benefits, and improves non-motorized connectivity throughout Bee Cave.

The City developed a *Hike and Bike Trail Connectivity Plan* in 2015 with the objective of creating a trail system plan to provide: “a safe, convenient, and functional transportation link across the City for pedestrians and bicyclists who seek to utilize nonmotorized modes of transportation to meet their regular travel needs as well as for recreational purposes all while maintaining the natural beauty of the City of Bee Cave.” The

Connectivity Plan builds on the *2006 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan* which found that residents strongly supported new trails and linear parks.

Improving connectivity by creating multi-use trails for walking, biking, and running has been one of the priorities expressed by residents. The original goal of the Connectivity Plan was to create a complete off-street trail network; however, given the existing constraints of topography and road network, the plan recommends a combination of off-street and on-street facilities. Construction of the first phase of Bee Cave’s “Connectivity Trail” is slated to begin near the Falconhead subdivision at the intersection of Falconhead Boulevard and RR 620. The trail will ultimately provide a safe and convenient link for non-motorized travel and recreation through the City, and greatly improve the overall ease of walking and biking throughout the City.

Table 3.1: Existing Parks and Estimated Level of Service

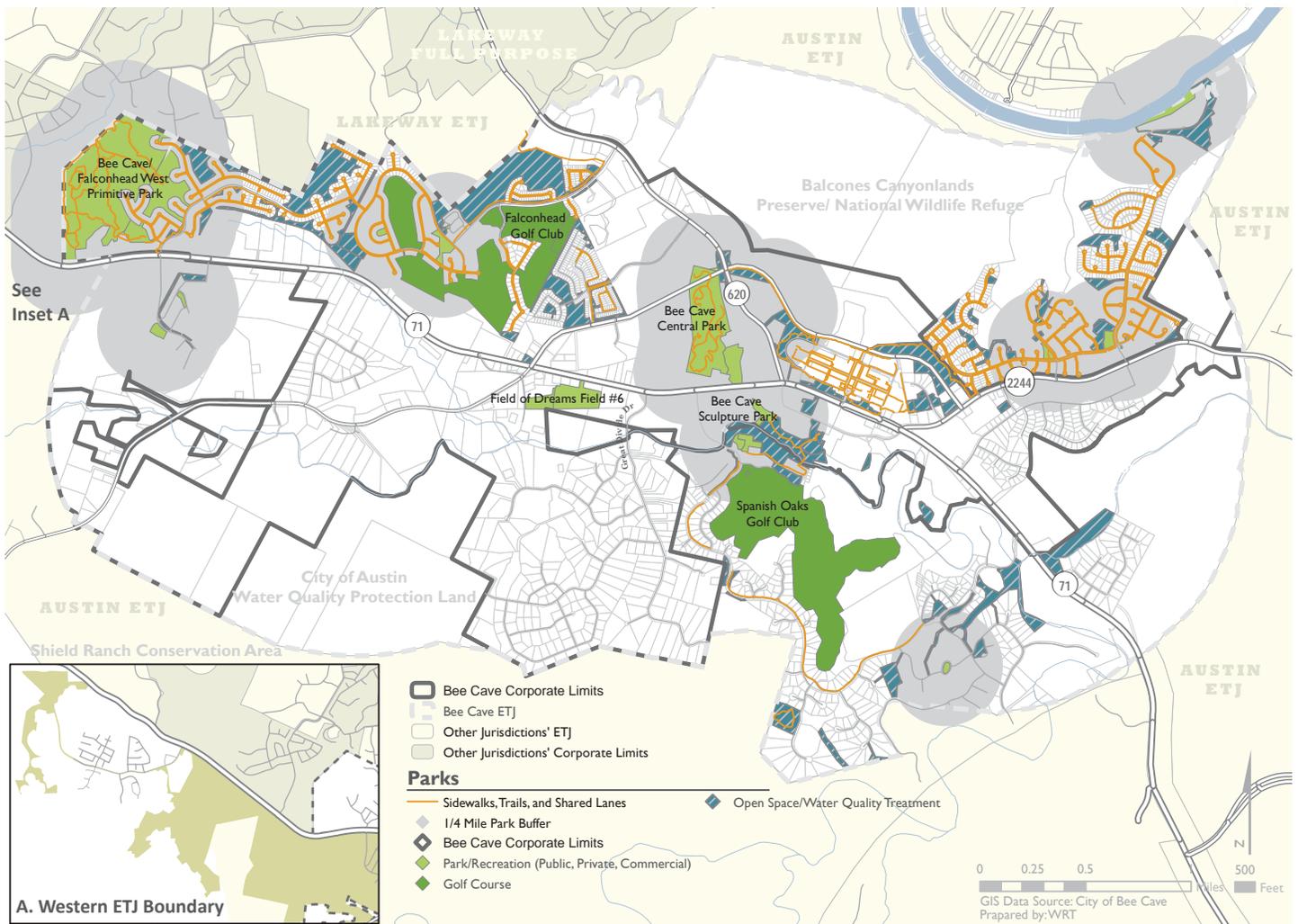
<i>Bee Cave Parks</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Facilities / Uses</i>
Public Parks		
<i>Bee Cave Central Park</i>	<i>60 acres</i>	<i>Large and small pavilions (can be reserved for activities with fewer than 50 / 25 persons), 2 playgrounds, restrooms, interpretive area, dog park, paved loop trails, basketball courts, open space, benches, parking</i>
<i>Bee Cave / Falconhead West Primitive</i>	<i>160 acres</i>	<i>Natural resources type park; 6 miles of hiking / mountain biking primitive trails, scenic outlooks, limited parking</i>
Special Use Facilities		
<i>Other private / neighborhood HOA parks</i>	<i>17.5 acres</i>	<i>Community / HOA parks in City limits; including Field of Dreams site</i>
Total Park and Special Use Acres	<i>245 acres</i>	
<i>Total Community and Neighborhood Park Acres</i>	<i>77.5 acres</i>	<i>*Excludes Primitive Park; Sculpture Park</i>
<i>Total City Population (2015 est)</i>	<i>6,515 p</i>	
<i>Estimated Community Park Acres / 1,000 persons*</i>	<i>9.2 acres</i>	
<i>Estimated Neighborhood Park Acres / 1,000 persons*</i>	<i>2.7 acres</i>	
<i>Total Community and Neighborhood Park Acres / 1,000 persons*</i>	<i>11.9 acres</i>	

- 3.1 Implement the Hike and Bike Trail Connectivity Plan priorities for an off- and on-street trail network (e.g., Inner Loop Trail) through public private partnerships, development agreements, and phasing strategies. (See also FLU 1.7, M 2.7). Work with developers and property owners to create new trails consistent with the plan and increase sidewalk widths to accommodate overlap with trails.
- 3.2 As areas of the City develop or redevelop, require property owners to work to obtain easement agreements to complete gaps in the planned multi-modal network and encourage

greenbelt / parks space dedication through the development review process. (See also FLU 1.7, M 2.7). Work with developers and property owners through the development review process to ensure that dedicated parkland includes active recreational uses that fill the needs of Bee Cave residents.

- 3.3 Continue to require land set aside for water quality treatment areas to add to the regional stormwater treatment and green infrastructure network, and look for opportunities to create usable open space (e.g., with walking trails) within these areas. (See also PFS 6.6).

Figure 3-4: Park Service Areas and Access



- 3.4 Require the provision of pedestrian, equestrian and/or bicycle pathways within and between private developments.
- 3.5 Utilize utility and powerline easements, as well as floodplain easements to set aside open space and develop greenway corridors with multi-use trails. Consider low-impact trails within floodplain corridors and in required open space buffers, where feasible.
- 3.6 Provide safe and convenient routes to connect to and from the City's trail system, schools, community buildings, and Central Business District. (See also ECE 8.10). Potential interventions include filling in gaps in the sidewalk network, adding share the road signage / sharrows, and working with LTISD to identify and support Safe Routes to Schools.
- 3.7 Improve public enjoyment of Bee Cave's open spaces, including the large conservation areas within the City's ETJ. (See also ERP 7.3). Consider approaching conservation area land owners to explore opportunities for primitive hiking trails, environmental education, and volunteer opportunities.
- 3.8 Encourage conservation development (clustered small lot residential subdivisions with permanently protected open space) with linkages to both public and private parks and trails.

Goal PR-2:

Operate and maintain parks, plazas, and recreational facilities through new and existing partnerships to allow opportunities for all Bee Cave residents and visitors to experience and enjoy the City's open space and recreation.

Through the planning process, including the 2014 Preparatory Survey, the community expressed strong support for new and improved open space, parks and recreational opportunities, and multi-use trail connections in Bee Cave. The EDB and the City have been successful at developing parks and services through innovative public-private partnerships. As the

population continues to grow, Bee Cave should consider adding capacity to meet the growing demand for parks and recreation services, while continuing to develop innovative partnerships. Parks and open space provide residents interaction with nature, which generates a multitude of social and health benefits.

- 3.9 Update the 2006 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan to reflect the population growth, current resident priorities and needs, and changes to the park and open space network that have occurred since the plan was developed. The plan was recommended for a 5-10 year period and Texas state guidelines recommend updates at least every 10 years. An update should include a survey of residents' preferences and needs for parks and recreational activities and programming.
- 3.10 Strengthen the City's capacity to develop partnerships supporting the development of parks and provide opportunities for full life-cycle active recreation, for all ages, in Bee Cave. Bee Cave should consider adding a Parks and Recreation Department or staff position to plan, manage, and coordinate the City's efforts related to parks, trails, and open space. While the City of Bee Cave will continue to maintain its legacy of creating strong public-private partnerships and limited (cost-efficient) government services, parks and recreation is an area that is strongly desired by residents and will benefit from the City's financial resources and commitment to planning for future services as the population grows. As this growth occurs, the City will need to anticipate and plan for new parks and facilities, at the same rate as the growth is occurring, that are appropriate for all ages.

Goal PR-3:

Expand the role of parks and recreation in providing overall opportunities for improved community health, community events, including family-friendly programming and "things to do" in Bee Cave.

Parks serve many different purposes including providing opportunities for physical and social interaction,

helping children learn, and providing economic benefits through enhancing property values and serving as community attractions. Through the planning process, many residents commented that they would like to have more options for recreation and activities in Bee Cave. The Bee Cave Sculpture Park is a great example of a park that serves several purposes and provides a way for residents to enjoy arts and culture in an outdoor setting. Bee Cave should continue to explore options for educational programming, events and festivals, and permanent / rotating activities and food options within the City's park and open spaces.

3.11 Consider adding rotating family-friendly events (e.g., concerts, festivals) and new programs to Bee Cave parks. Consider parking capacity, options for shared parking, and access needs to support events.

3.12 Promote Bee Cave's parks and recreational opportunities and activities for community use. The City should consider the use of the hotel tax to help fund events and activities that support local businesses, provide opportunities for recreation, and support the local tourism industry. Other potential efforts include a promotional / educational campaign to increase awareness of parks and recreational activities, such as organized trail hikes or bicycle rides, or the creation of a "Friends of" Parks group to support Bee Cave's parks and recreational resources.

3.13 Encourage the continued recreational and community use of the "Field of Dreams" site.



Bee Cave Sculpture Park