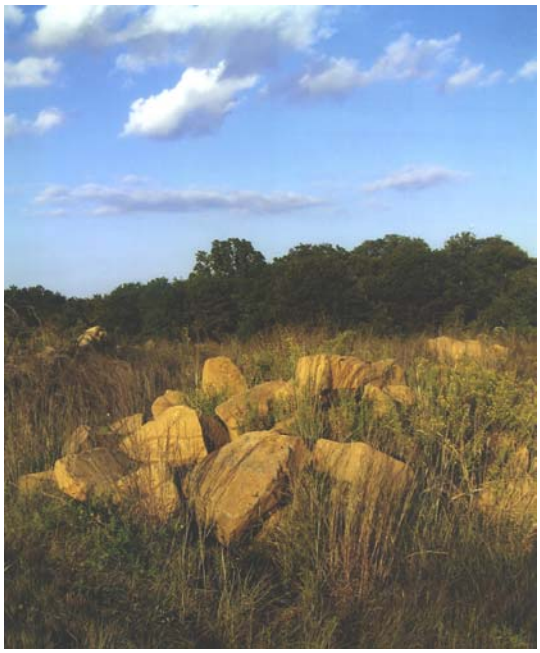
Section 5 Park Concepts, Purpose, and Standards for Development

This section details the park design concepts and standards based on the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA - http://www.nrpa.org/) recommendations by defining different types of parks. The next part of this section then applies these standards in the context of the city by establishing priority design elements by type of park. Finally, establishing appropriate park types by land use categories from the Southlake 2025 Plan will help bridge the gap between park planning and land use planning.

5.1 Park Concepts

In order to provide the parks, recreation, and open space facilities needed by the City's residents, a set of standards and design criteria should be followed. The NRPA has developed such standards for parks, recreation and open space development that are intended to guide communities in establishing a hierarchy of park areas.

These areas are defined by:
(1) the various types of activities that are to be furnished, and
(2) their type, size and service area.



The following describes a commonly used classification system that follows guidelines similar to those set forth by NRPA. Each park type is discussed in order to:
(1) identify the function of the park;
(2) identify the recreational activities associated with each park; and
(3) define the general service area and the physical relationship of each park to the population residing within its service area.

Southlake has previously used the following classification types to inventory its parks:

- neighborhood parks,
- community parks,
- city parks,
- special purpose parks,
- linear parks, and
- natural areas and/or open space.

Neighborhood Park

The neighborhood park is to be one of the most important features of a park system because of its ability to define the character of neighborhoods through its design. Its primary function is the provision of recreational space for the neighborhood that surrounds it. There are six parks within Southlake that can be classified as neighborhood parks. When it is possible to combine an elementary school with this type of park, the two features further enhance the identity of the neighborhood by providing a central location for recreation and education, and by providing a significant open space feature within the neighborhood. A neighborhood park should be located near the center of the neighborhood, and should have a service area of approximately one-half mile to three-fourths mile. As with all the following park types, these service areas are shown as existing (solid circles) and proposed (dashed circles) in Figure 17 – Existing and Proposed Parks. Safe and convenient pedestrian access (sidewalks or hike-and-bike trails) is important to a neighborhood park location. Generally, the location should not be adjacent to a heavily traveled major thoroughfare. Facilities normally provided at a neighborhood park consist of the following:

- Playground equipment for small children
- A multiple-purpose, surfaced play area
- An athletic area (non-lighted) for games such as baseball, football and soccer, and a surfaced area for such sports as volleyball, basketball and similar activities
- Pavilions for picnics with tables and grills are desirable, as well as restrooms and drinking fountains
- A passive area is a desirable part of the playground facility and should include landscaping, trees and any natural areas
- Walking trails

Neighborhood parks are designed to serve a small population area. An appropriate standard in relation to size and population for this type of park is 2 acres per 1,000 persons. These parks normally serve a population base of 1,000 to 2,500 persons, and generally range in size from 5 to 10 acres per park. The most critical aspect of acquiring, sizing, locating, and constructing neighborhood parks is that the park is easily accessible from the surrounding

neighborhoods. Therefore, trail linkages, comfort stations, and family-friendly amenities take priority.

Community Park

A community park is a larger area than a neighborhood park, and is oriented to provide active recreational facilities for all ages. A community park serves several neighborhood areas; therefore, it should be conveniently accessible by automobile, and it should include provisions for off-street parking. The service area (or radius) of these park types is typically three-fourth (¾) to 1 mile. Activities provided in these parks may include:

- Game and practice fields for baseball, football, soccer, softball, lacrosse, etc. (lighted)
- A small community building/recreation center
- Tennis courts
- A surfaced multiple-purpose play area
- Playground structures
- A passive area for picnicking; and
- Other special facilities such as disc golf, dog parks, BMX facilities, etc.

The service radius of a community park play field is one-half (1/2) to two miles. Many of these facilities around the country are located adjacent to, or as a part of, a junior high or high school. Community parks are designed to serve a medium population area. An appropriate size standard for these parks in relation to size and population is 4 acres per 1,000 persons. These parks normally serve a population base of 2,500 to 5,000 persons, and they generally range in size from 40 acres to 100 acres. The only park to which mostly Community Park classifications apply in Southlake is the Southlake Sports Complex, though it is undersized to perform more than one or two specialty athletic functions. The only other parks which may share common characteristics with a Community Park are Bob Jones and Bicentennial Parks which are classified as City Parks.

City Parks

Areas that may reach 100 (or more) acres in size, which provide both passive and active recreational facilities, are considered to be city parks. These parks can serve all age groups, often have athletic fields, and are usually the largest parks in a city's system. Much of this derives from the fact that city parks are usually destination venues, attracting most residents and a fair share of regional visitors. It is desirable that a balance of active and passive recreational facilities be provided in a large park. Such facilities may include picnicking, fishing, water areas, and hiking and natural areas. Dependent upon location, need, and possibly topography, some community park features may be placed in the large park. These parks are often lighted athletic fields and have multi-purpose functions. A minimum standard of 3 acres per 1,000 persons is commonly

recommended for city parks, and they normally serve a population base of 5,000 to 7,500 persons. Southlake's two city parks, which also serve community park purposes in many areas, are Bicentennial and Bob Jones Parks. The service radius for these parks is typically the entire city, as their components draw visitors citywide. City Parks may include:

- Athletic complexes
- Internal road system and parking facilities
- Viewpoints or overlooks
- Nature trails and interpretative areas
- Equestrian trails and associated facilities
- Pond or lake with fishing pier and boating-canoeing
- Tennis center
- Aquatics center
- Botanical garden or arboretum
- Community Center
- Amphitheater
- Recreation Center

Special Purpose Parks

Examples of special purpose parks include golf courses, squares, plazas,ponds and water features, ornamental areas, botanical gardens, and special athletic-purpose or other single-purpose parks. Standards for these facilities are variable and dependent upon the extent of services provided by the special facility. The Coker property, a hike/bike trailhead, and Southlake's Town Square parks – urban pocket parks – would be considered special purpose parks. These parks have a service radius of the entire city. However, future mixed use developments may incorporate squares and plazas that serve adjoining neighborhoods or districts.

Linear Parks

Linear parks come in many shapes and sizes, but are generally intended to provide a pleasant passive area that forms a linear connection from one area to another. They may also serve as part of the city's trail system.

The Kirkwood/Sabre Linear Park dedicated by Sabre in 2000 is a good example of an undeveloped linear park. Dedication of, and acceptance of, linear park corridors should be supported by the recommendations of both parks and trails plans. With the plans in place, it may be possible to persuade developers of the intrinsic fact that well-planned linear corridors add value to adjacent property and provide well-established self-policing qualities. In addition to providing natural linkages, linear parks also provide permeable land area in floodplains and/or adjacent to creeks to assist in the natural filtration of run-off and serve to slow

volume and velocity of storm water. These parks serve the entire city. Typical facilities found in Linear Parks include:

- Landscape buffers
- Hike/bike rest stations
- Picnic shelters
- Low-impact, non-traditional venues such as disc golf, bird-watching

Natural Areas and/or Open Space

These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, but are not necessarily characterized as land preservations. No organized, active recreational uses are usually accommodated in these areas; they are primarily intended for passive recreational use. The Corps of Engineers lease area (218 acres), most of the Farhat property (30 acres), and the Tucker property (60 acres) will be considered natural areas for the purpose of the 2005 plan update. These areas have a large service radius (much like City Parks, above) and Southlake's standard for these types of areas is at a ratio of 11 acres per 1,000 population.

The following table contains a listing of Southlake parks and their acreages, as well as projections of acreage deficiencies or surpluses based on the projected population and the ratios described above.

Table 5.1 Parks and Acreage Inventory and Standards

	Southlake Standard (ac.:pop)	2005 Inventory	2005 – 24,550 Population		2010 – 29,030 Population		2015 – 30,305 Population		2020 – 30,920 Population		Buildout – 31,500	
			Req.	Def./ Sur.	Req.	Def./ Sur.	Req.	Def./ Sur.	Req.	Def./ Sur.	Req.	Def./ Sur.
1. Neighborhood Parks	2:1,000	70.8	49.1	21.7	58.0	12.8	60.6	10.2	61.8	9.0	63.0	7.8
2. Community Parks	4:1,000	16.7	98.2	-81.5	116.0	-99.3	121.0	-104.3	123.6	-106.9	126.0	-109.3
3. City Parks	3:1,000	222.0	73.7	148.3	87.0	135.0	90.9	131.1	92.7	129.3	94.5	127.5
4. Special Use Parks	N/A	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5. Linear Parks	1:1,000	15.1	24.6	-9.5	29.0	-13.9	30.3	-15.2	30.9	-15.8	31.5	-16.4
6. Natural Area / Open Space	11:1,000	308.0	270.0	38.0	319.0	-11.0	333.0	-25.0	340.0	-32.0	347.0	-39.0
TOTALS	21:1,000	632.6*	515.6	117.0	609.0	23.6	635.8	-3.2	649.0	-16.4	662.0	-29.4

** Total parks inventory does not include special purpose parks.*

1. Includes Koalaty, Noble Oaks, Chesapeake, R.A. Smith, Lonesome Dove, Liberty Park at Sheltonwood, Oak Pointe, Estes Park
2. Includes Southlake Sports Complex
3. Includes Bob Jones (excludes Tucker and Farhat) and Bicentennial
4. Includes Coker and Town Square
5. Includes the Kirkwood and Sabre area dedications
6. Includes Tucker property, Farhat property, and C.O.E. lease

5.2 Park Design Priorities and Criteria:

The following table (Table 5.2) consolidates the design standards from the previous section and establishes design priorities for the development of private parks in conjunction with new development in the city. The extent to which a public or private park proposed in conjunction with new development receives park dedication credits (as required by the city's Subdivision Ordinance, as amended) shall depend upon the extent to which the proposed park meets the design, location, and context criteria established. All proposals for public or private parks in conjunction with new development shall be evaluated based on the land use and design criteria outlined in the following tables.

Table 5.2 Park Type	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	City Park	Special Purpose Park Squares	Plazas	Golf Courses	Linear Park	Natural Areas (also called Environmental Preserves)
Design Elements								
1. Size	5 – 10 acres	40 – 100 acres	>100 acres	≤ 2 acres	≤ 1 acre	No Limit	No limit	No limit
2. Service Area	¼ - ¾ mile radius	¾ - 2 mile radius	Entire city	¼ - ½ mile radius	¼ - ½ mile radius	Neighborhood/City wide	Neighborhood/City wide	Neighborhood or city wide
3. Design Priorities	- Preserving natural assets of the site -Add value to development	-serves a variety of recreation needs - May also provide active play fields.	-Serves a variety of recreation needs – both passive and active facilities -May incorporate specialized facilities such as arboretums, nature centers, etc.	-Maximize frontage along public streets -Formal design with paving and landscaping. -Minimize surface parking adjoining squares; parking should be on-street. -Activated by adjoining uses	-Maximize frontage along public streets -Formal design with paving and landscaping is optional. -Activated by adjoining uses -May be an extension of a sidewalk	-Minimize impact on any environmental assets on the site -Special attention to water conservation in the design and maintenance of the course	-Preserving creeks and stream buffers -minimal impact on the natural environment -Provide connection to other public or private open spaces -Providing connections between neighborhoods, employment, shopping, and schools.	-Preserving any identified environmentally sensitive areas (based on the ERP Map). -Design should be low-impact, low maintenance and emphasis on retaining the area in a natural state.
4. Locational Criteria	- Central to the neighborhood it serves and be accessible by foot to most of the neighborhood - Maximize development frontage along the park	- Generally co-located with school facilities -Should be located on a collector or arterial because it may serve multiple neighborhoods,	-Should be located at an arterial or near significant environmental features (Lake Grapevine).	-Should be located at prominent locations in a development -Should form the focal point of the development	-Should be located at secondary prominent locations in a development -Should form minor focal points of the development	- located to preserve natural assets on the site -may be located along an arterial or collector if it is a public golf course.	-Generally located as greenways along creeks -May also be along major roadways or rail corridors to provide regional connectivity	-Generally located where environmentally sensitive areas are identified (both in public and private parks) -Emphasis on connecting natural areas to other existing or proposed linear parks or open spaces in the vicinity
5. Amenities	- Children's play areas, picnic pavilions, ponds, and walking trails.	-Lighted game fields -Recreation centers -Various (see the standards under Community Park)	-See standards under City Parks in this section	-Passive recreational amenities with formally laid foot paths and benches. -Band stands and pavilions may be permitted.	-Passive recreational amenities only -Sidewalk cafes and other retail uses that utilize the open space are okay.	- Golfing and passive recreation such as walking.	-Passive recreation with amenities to bikers and walkers such as rest rooms, drinking fountains, etc. Also see standards under Linear Parks in this section.	-Passive recreational areas wholly subordinate to the conservation goal.
6. Active Rec. Areas	-None, but open fields for informal games may be appropriate -Tennis courts may be okay if they are not visually intrusive	Yes	Yes	None	None	None	Low-impact uses.	None
7. Adjoining Land Uses	-Residential uses -Civic uses (such as community centers)	- Minimize residential frontage - Adjacent to existing schools or other lower intensity office uses.	-Residential (if park is a major environmental asset) or commercial/residential (if park is along an arterial)	-Mostly commercial retail uses or mixed use buildings.	Mostly retail or mixed use buildings	Mostly residential	Varies depending on the location of the linear park.	Residential, other parks, or agricultural uses.
8. Transition Issues	-No specific standards for passive areas -Screening of tennis courts	- Need special consideration with respect to directional lighting of fields and minimizing the visual impact of any active recreation facilities on adjoining residential.	- Need special consideration with respect to directional lighting of fields and minimizing the visual impact of any active recreation facilities on adjoining residential.	-Adjoining uses should define the square and form the "walls" for the square -Lined by public streets designed as "main streets" on at least two sides. (see street typology definitions in the Mobility Plan)	-Adjoining uses should define the plaza and form the "walls" for the plaza -Lined by a public street designed as a "main street" on at least one side. (see street typology definitions in the Mobility Plan)	- Special attention to safety aspects of pedestrian facilities and residential uses adjoining golf courses.	-The linear park itself may become a transition between uses -Emphasis on retaining tree buffers or other landscaping features along linear parks.	- Low intensity residential or non-intrusive adjoining uses
9. Access (pedestrian, bike & auto)	-Required to provide pedestrian and bicycle access from the neighborhood.	-Will have multi-modal access to adjoining neighborhoods (bike, pedestrian, and auto)	-Will have multi-modal access to adjoining neighborhoods and the city's street network (bike, pedestrian, and auto)	-Maximize pedestrian access from adjoining neighborhoods to the square -Parking should be on street parking (parallel or angled)	-Maximize pedestrian access from adjoining neighborhoods to the square -Parking should be on street parking (parallel or angled)	-Mostly pedestrian and automobile access from the adjoining neighborhoods	-Ensure pedestrian and bicycle access from all adjoining uses to the linear park.	-Mostly pedestrian and bicycle access through other parks such as linear parks or city parks. -Minimal automobile access.
10. Preservation of natural amenities	High priority	Medium priority	High priority	Medium priority (due to the formal nature of the open space)	Medium priority	High priority	High priority	High priority
11. Maintenance	City or private HOA or combination	City	City	City/ private association/ HOA or combination	City/ private association/ HOA or combination	HOA or similar organization	City or private HOA or combination	City or private HOA or combination
12. Ownership	Could be city owned or HOA owned	City	City	City/private association/HOA	City/private association/ HOA	HOA or similar organization	City or HOA	City or private HOA or combination
13. Park Dedication Credits	Negotiated between the developer and the city based on the extent to which it meets the above criteria	Generally none	Generally none	Negotiated between the developer and the city based on the extent to which it meets the above criteria	Negotiated between the developer and the city based on the extent to which it meets the above criteria	-No credits if it is a private golf course -Credits may be negotiated between the developer and the city if it is a golf course open to the public	Negotiated between the developer and the city based on the extent to which it meets the above criteria	Credits for new development based on the quality and quantity of environmentally sensitive areas preserved.

5.3 Appropriate Park Type by Land Use Designation

The table below (Table 5.3) establishes the relationship between the appropriate park types and land use categories based on the scale, context, and mix of land uses appropriate in land use category. Both the 1998 and the 2005 Consolidated Land Use Plans include a land use category for Public Parks and Open Space. This land use category is a catch all land use category for all public parks. This following table is not intended to contradict that land use designation, rather it attempts to better link the design and type of all future parks based on the land use category in which they are proposed.

The following table, when used in conjunction with the table in the preceding section, provides citizens, decision makers, and developers information on the appropriate park design based on land use category. This can in turn be used to evaluate the design of new parks based on their development context.

Table 5.3 Open Space by Land Use Category

Land Use Category	**LD-Res**	**MD-Res**	**RCS**	**Retail Comm.**	**Office Comm.**	**Mixed Use**	**T-1/ T-2**	**EC**	**Town Center**
Open Space Type									
Neighborhood Park	X	X	X				X	X	X
Community Park		X				X		X	
City Park				X	X	X			
Special Purpose Parks:									
○ **Squares**				X	X	X	X	X	X
○ **Plazas**				X	X	X	X	X	X
○ **Golf Courses**		X				X		X	
Linear Parks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Natural Areas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X