

*Chapter 7:
Parks and Trails Assessment*



*MIDWEST CITY, OKLAHOMA
Comprehensive Plan 2008*

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Introduction

A vital component of an urban area is the space devoted to satisfying active and passive community recreational needs. The quantity of recreational space and its distribution within the population generally indicates the quality of the local park and recreation services. Furthermore, all these spaces collectively are considered elements that enhance and contribute to the quality of life found in the community. Fredrick Law Olmstead, the man considered to be the father of landscape architecture in this country and famous for designing Central Park in New York City, advocated the concept that parks, recreation areas, and public open spaces should be “planned as integrated systems so that the components could function in conjunction with one another.”

7-1

The purpose of this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to examine and analyze existing park and recreation spaces and facilities, to identify issues related to present and future community needs and to make recommendations on how the City’s park and recreation



Illustration 7-1
BICENTENNIAL PARK



Illustration 7-2
LIONS PARK



Illustration 7-3
SOLDIER CREEK NATURE TRAIL

facilities can be integrated into a cohesive system. This *Parks and Trails Assessment* (1) evaluates existing facilities, (2) establishes facility criteria and standards, (3) provides a comparative analysis of Midwest City’s park system to accepted park standards, and (4) identifies park-related issues that Midwest City will need to address in the short- and long-term.

Midwest City is continuing its long history of park planning with the concept of a recreation center. A committee was formed to investigate the possibility of establishing a City recreation center. This committee developed recommendations concerning the type of facility, location, and estimated facility cost.



Park Analyses & Open Space

In order for the City to provide the most efficient and adequate parks, recreational, and open space facilities, a set of standards and design criteria should be developed. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed standards for parks, recreation and open space developments that are intended to guide communities in establishing a hierarchy of park areas.



Illustration 7-4
KIWANIS PARK

The following sections describe two types of analysis for park planning that are commonly used. One is based on the facilities/activities that are or should be provided, and the other is based on the various classifications of park areas that are or should be provided. Existing park facilities and future recommendations for parks and recreation facilities are shown on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*.

Activity/Facility Standards Analysis

Recreational Facilities In Relation to Population

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a common source for facility standards used by many municipalities. From community to community, however, differences will be found in physical design, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, and in climatic conditions. Therefore, the range of demands and preferences for recreational activities will vary with these differences.

Table 7-1 contains information on various types of activity. The activity list is not exhaustive; in general, the activities most prevalent in the southwest have been shown. The “NRPA Standards” column in the table shows the related NRPA standards for the quantity of activity that should be provided based on a ratio of activity to population. The “Current Midwest City Inventory” column shows the facility inventory of that activity in Midwest City. The far right columns show recommendations for the number of facilities that should be provided in relation to the current and future population in Midwest City. It should be noted that the NRPA ratios have been adjusted to more accurately reflect the number of facilities to the amount of population that are usually provided by municipalities. The third column shows what the facility inventory should ideally be in relation to the City’s existing population of 55,000 people based on the adjusted NRPA ratios. Then, the fourth column shows what the facility inventory should be for the projected built-out population of 63,000 people in Midwest City, which is projected to occur between 2030 and 2035 (see Chapter 4 for further information regarding the built-out population).

ACTIVITY	NRPA Standards	Current Midwest City Inventory	Recommendation for Current Population of 55,000	Recommendation for Future Projected Population of 63,000 (Built-out population)
Basketball	1/5,000	5	1/4,000 = 14	1/4,000 = 16
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	4	1/4,000 = 14	1/4,000 = 16
Baseball	1/5,000	13	1/5,000 = 11	1/5,000 = 13
Youth Softball	1/5,000			
Adult Softball	1/5,000			
Football	1/20,000	1	1/20,000 = 3	1/20,000 = 4 ⁽¹⁾
Soccer	1/10,000	9	1/5,000 = 11	1/5,000 = 13
Playgrounds	NS	31	(2)	(2)
Picnic Tables	NS	160	1/200 = 275	1/200 = 315
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	1	1/20,000 = 3	1/20,000 = 3
Volleyball	NS	4	1/10,000 = 6	1/10,000 = 7
Trails	NS	5 miles	As many as possible ⁽³⁾	As many as possible ⁽³⁾
Recreation Center	NS	0	1/25,000 = 2	1/25,000 = 2

Notes: NS - No Standard
NRPA = National Recreation and Parks Association

⁽¹⁾ Can be supplied by the school districts
⁽²⁾ One playground should be installed in each neighborhood, community and regional park
⁽³⁾ As many as possible in order to provide a comprehensive system of pedestrian trails that connect residential areas to parks, schools, and open space areas.

Source: Sefko Planning Group

The following example for soccer fields illustrates how **Table 7-1** functions. The NRPA ratio of soccer fields and population is one soccer field for every 10,000 people. With nine fields, Midwest City actually has one field for every 6,000 people. Therefore, given the popularity of soccer in Midwest City (as discovered in the comprehensive planning process), the NRPA ratio is probably too low for

Midwest City's recreational needs. Consequently, an adjusted ratio has been used to establish the recommendations for how many soccer fields should be provided for the current and future populations. The adjusted ratio for soccer fields is one for every 5,000 people, resulting in a recommendation of 13 soccer fields for a future population of 63,000 in Midwest City between 2030 and 2035.

Using the NRPA facility standards and the related adjusted ratios is a valid approach to help determine the scope and extent of recreational activities or facilities for a given population estimated to occur at some time in the future. A continual fine-tuning of the ratio will be needed to assure that reasonable facilities are being furnished. The analysis within **Table 7-1** (previous page) for



Illustration 7-5
JOE B. BARNES REGIONAL PARK
Facilities Include Picnic Table and Grills

the future projected population of 63,000 should be used in conjunction with the park area recommendations contained later within this *Parks and Trails Assessment* to help the City in its decision-making process regarding the overall park system and what types of facilities are most needed.

Additionally, school sites provide facilities that help meet the recreational needs of the public (e.g., playgrounds, football fields, etc.). Most school sites have playgrounds or other recreational facilities that can be used by residents. However, certain facilities are not open to the public, such as a high school baseball or football field. Furthermore, school parks are typically only open to the public during non-school hours. Therefore, school sites are generally not considered to be primary contributors to the *Parks and Trails Assessment* but do serve as supplements to the City's park system. School sites from the Mid-Del School District, Oklahoma City School District, and Crutcho School District

have been identified on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map* (no Choctaw-Nicoma Park Schools are located within the City).

Recreational Activities in Relation to Facility Capacity

Another way in which to analyze whether park facilities within a municipality are meeting the demands of the population is to assess the number of league teams playing a sport in relation to the number of fields available for the related sport. **Table 7-2** contains this information for Midwest City. The columns within the table can be explained as the following:

- *Games Per Week Per Field Capacity* - The number of league games played in a week, as scheduled by the league.
- *Teams Per Field Per Week* - The number of teams playing per field per week.
- *Existing Teams* - The number of teams each league reports to the City.
- *Existing Number of Fields* - The number of fields available in the City of Midwest City's inventory.
- *Field Requirement Per Standard* - The number of fields required to serve the City's population (as referenced in the table describing NRPA Park Facility Standards on the previous page).
- *Number of Fields Needed to Meet Standard* - The number of fields required to meet the field requirements (equivalent to the *Field Requirements per Standard* column minus the *Existing Number of League Fields* column).

ACTIVITY	Games Per Week Per Field Capacity	Teams Per Field Per Week	Existing Teams	Existing Number of Fields	Field Requirement Per Standard	Number Of Fields Needed To Meet Standard
Youth Baseball	60	120	60	11	11	0
Youth Softball	15	30	15	3	11	8
Adult Softball	40	80	40	3	11	8
Football	35	70	35	4	2	0
Adult Flag Football	4	8	8	1	2	1
Soccer	60	120	60	12	6	0

Note: Does not include tournaments.
Source: Sefko Planning Group & City of Midwest City Parks Department

The last column, the *Number of Fields Needed to Meet Standard*, is the most important column in the table because the numbers within this column reflect whether the City is lacking in terms of facilities. The facilities found lacking within Midwest City are the adult softball, youth softball, and adult flag football facilities. Notably, the softball facilities, both youth and adult, may not truly be lacking because



Illustration 7-6
BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELD IN MIDWEST CITY

these activities could utilize the baseball fields; however, scheduling conflicts may prevent these activities from utilizing the same fields. For the foreseeable future, the leagues in Midwest City, with the exception of softball, generally have adequate facilities. As the City's population grows and the leagues expand, additional fields will need to be added for specific uses.

Park Area Standards Analysis

There are various classifications of parks that range in size and in what types of facilities are provided within them. Each of the classifications is important to the overall park system in that they provide the diversity of recreation options generally desired by citizens. The park areas discussed are defined by 1) the various types of activities that are to be furnished, and 2) their type, size, and service area. Each park type is discussed below in order:

- To identify the function of each park type;
- To identify the recreational activities generally associated with each park type; and
- To define the general service area and the physical relationship of each type of park to the population residing within its service area.

These various park types, along with the facility analysis discussed previously, will be used within this *Parks and Trails Assessment* as a basis for the specific park and open space needs related to Midwest City's park system that will be discussed later herein. **Table 7-3** contains information about the various existing parks in Midwest City (shown graphically on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*) and their related classification and size.

Table 7-3
EXISTING PARK & RECREATION AREAS IN MIDWEST CITY
Midwest City, Oklahoma

#	NAME	Park Classification	Address	Acres
1	Joe B. Barnes Regional Park	Regional	8700 E. Reno Ave.	165.00
2	John Conrad Golf Course	Special	711 S. Douglas Blvd.	138.00
3	Municipal Golf Course (9-Hole)	Special	3210 Belaire Dr.	29.50
4	Tom Poore Park*	Community	920 Hazelwood Dr.	28.00
5	Reed Baseball Complex	Special	2401 S. Post Rd.	23.00
6	Mid-America Park	Community	4310 N. Shadybrook	16.19
7	Fred Myers Civic Park	Special	9555 S.E. 15th St.	12.50
8	ESA Park	Community	1621 N. Spencer Rd.	12.20
9	Kiwanis Park	Community	1101 S. Midwest Blvd.	11.12
10	Shirley Darrell Telstar North Park	Special	9600 N.E. 19th St.	9.90
11	Shirley Darrell Telstar South Park	Community	9601 N.E. 16th St.	9.10
12	Tinker Bicentennial Park	Special	7200 S.E. 29th St.	7.33
13	Lions Park	Neighborhood	2201 S. Midwest Blvd.	6.59
14	Salisbury Park	Neighborhood	1155 N. Midwest Blvd.	5.50
15	Optimist Park	Neighborhood	1001 S. Westminster Dr.	5.00
16	Pecan Grove Park	Neighborhood	8000 NE 10th	4.80
17	Quinlan Park	Neighborhood	2441 Sandra Dr.	3.50
18	Tall Oaks Park	Neighborhood	3133 Woodside Dr.	3.50
19	Willowind Park	Neighborhood	9800 S.E. 15th	3.50
20	Frolich Park	Neighborhood	10301 Alicia Dr.	3.40
21	Post Oaks Park	Neighborhood	10300 Canton Pl.	2.60
22	Holoway Park	Neighborhood	721 Holoway Dr.	1.60
23	Applegrove Park	Neighborhood	10500 Applegrove Cir.	1.58
24	Omni Park	Neighborhood	9825 N.E. 4th St.	1.45
25	Cardinal Park	Neighborhood	616 Woodland Dr.	1.20
26	Crescent Court Park	Neighborhood	527 W. Silvermeadow	1.20
27	Elks Park	Neighborhood	305 Marshall Dr.	1.20
28	Miller Park	Neighborhood	1801 Honeysuckle Ln.	1.20
29	Zachry Park	Neighborhood	1751 N. Post Rd.	0.88
30	Lynn Fry Park	Neighborhood	9757 E. Reno Ave.	0.79
31	Eastridge Park	Neighborhood	8600 Parkridge Dr.	0.60
32	East Haven Park	Neighborhood	10300 S.E. 15th St.	0.49
33	Barnett Park	Neighborhood	9901 Hunters Run	0.32
Total Park Acreage				512.74
* Includes 12 acres listed formally as Alfalfa Park with 2 soccer fields and 2 base/softball fields Source: Sefko Planning Group & City of Midwest City Parks Department				

Park Classifications

Mini-Park

A mini-park is a small area generally used as a children's playground or as a passive or aesthetic area by senior citizens. Mini-parks are designed to serve a very small population area and are often owned or maintained by a property association, such as a homeowners association. These parks normally serve a population base of 500 to 1,000 persons and although they range in size, they are typically about one acre. The primary function and use of this type of park is generally to provide recreational space for preschool-age children and elementary school-age children near their residences. Any future development of mini-parks should be private in nature, as should ownership and maintenance responsibilities. These parks are generally not conducive to ownership by municipalities due primarily to required maintenance costs. Midwest City has a number of parks on one acre or less that could be classified as mini-parks.

Neighborhood Park

The neighborhood park, sometimes referred to as a playground, is generally thought of as one of the most important features of a park system and is often considered one of the major cohesive elements in neighborhood design. Its primary function is the provision of recreational space for the neighborhood that surrounds it. 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. **Safe and convenient pedestrian access via sidewalks or 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; and



Illustration 7-7
EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL NEIGHB

• NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

- An area (non-lighted) for unscheduled practice games such as baseball, football and soccer, and a surfaced area for such sports as volleyball, basketball and similar activities.

Other desirable elements for neighborhood parks include:

- Pavilions with tables and grills for picnics;
- Restrooms;
- Drinking fountains;
- Tennis courts; and
- A passive area with landscaping, trees and natural elements.

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 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons. These parks normally serve a population base of 1,000 to 2,500 persons, and they generally range in size from five to ten acres. Lions Park and Optimist Park are both considered neighborhood parks.

Community Park

A community park is larger than a neighborhood park and is oriented toward providing active recreational facilities for all ages. Community parks serve several neighborhood areas; they should be conveniently accessible by automobile and should include provisions for off-street parking. Activities provided in these parks generally include:



Illustration 7-8
KIWANIS PARK

- Game and practice fields for baseball, football, soccer and softball;
- A 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 frisbee golf, if space is available.

Often community parks are constructed adjacent to, or as a part of, a junior high or high school; this is considered desirable. Community parks are designed to serve a medium population area. An appropriate size standard for these parks in relation to size and population is three acres per 1,000 persons, and they generally range in size from 20 acres to 100 acres depending on configuration and location to roadways. The parks in Midwest City that are serving as community parks are labeled in **Table 7-3**.

Regional Parks

Areas that are 100 or more acres in size, which provide both passive and active recreational facilities, are considered regional parks. These parks can serve all age groups, and often have unique amenities such as fishing, boating, hiking, and natural areas. There is one regional park within Midwest City at this time, Joe B. Barnes Regional Park.

Special Parks

Golf courses, linear parks/greenbelts, trails, school parks, botanical gardens, special athletic and community centers are considered special types of recreational facilities. Standards for this type of facility are variable and dependent upon the extent of services provided by the special facility. The John Conrad Golf Course, which includes an 18-hole golf course and driving range, and the Tinker Bicentennial Park Trail are examples of special parks.



Illustration 7-9
JOHN CONRAD GOLF COURSE



Illustration 7-10
BICENTENNIAL PARK



Illustration 7-11
RENO SWIM & SLIDE

Open Space, Reservations, Preserves and Greenbelts

These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, and can be referred to as preserves. Although active recreation can be accommodated within these areas, they are primarily intended for passive recreational use. Presently, there are no locations within the City classified as preserves. Although the City does have a bird watching area designated along the Soldier Creek Trail.

Summary of Park Types / Classifications

The following table, **Table 7-4**, is a summary of the key characteristics of the park types/classifications.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 7-4 SUMMARY OF PARK TYPES / CLASSIFICATIONS Midwest City, Oklahoma</p>					
PARK TYPE	Description	Size	Pop-ulation Served	Service Area (Radius)	NRPA Standard of Acres per 1,000 People
Mini-Park	A small area generally used as a children's playground or as a passive or aesthetic area by senior citizens. Designed to serve a very small population area and are often owned or maintained by a property association, such as a homeowners association.	±1 acre	500 - 1,000 People	N/A	N/A
Neighborhood	Primary function is the provision of recreational space for the neighborhood that surrounds it.	5 to 10 acres	1,000 - 2,500 People	0.5 to 0.75 miles	2.5
Community	Oriented toward providing active recreational facilities for all ages. Serve several neighborhood areas; they should be conveniently accessible by automobile and should include provisions for off-street parking.	20 to 100 acres	Entire City	Entire City	3
Regional	These parks can serve all age groups, and often have unique amenities such as fishing, boating, hiking, and natural areas.	100+ acres	Entire City	Entire City	5
Special	Golf courses, linear parks/greenbelts, trails, country clubs, school parks, botanical gardens and special athletic and community centers are considered special types of recreational facilities.	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Open Space, Reservations, Preserves and Greenbelts	These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, and can be referred to as preserves. Although active recreation can be accommodated within these areas, they are primarily intended for passive recreational use.	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable

Source: Sefko Planning Group

Recommendations

Future Park Area Needs

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established recommendations for overall park acreage in relation to population, which is 15 to 17 acres per 1,000 people (or 1.5 to 1.7 acres for every 100 people), as well as park acreage in relation to population for each type of park. Midwest City currently has approximately 512.74 acres of parkland, including both municipal golf courses. This amount of park acreage calculates into approximately 9.50 acres of parkland per 1,000 people or 0.95 acres for every 100 people in the City. Consequently, Midwest City is below the NRPA recommended standard for overall park acreage.

The NRPA recommendations that are applicable to Midwest City's park system are shown in **Table 7-5**. As can be seen from the table, only the special parks acreage is above NRPA standards, and the City's acreages for neighborhood, community, regional, and greenbelt parks are below NRPA standards. The calculation for future park acreage need, based on the projected population of 63,000 people within Midwest City between 2030 and 2035, is approximately 977 acres. **Plate 7-1, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, graphically shows the recommendations related to parks and trails that are discussed herein.**

PARK TYPE	NRPA Standard of Acres per 1,000 People	Existing Park Acreage	NRPA Park Acreage Standard for Current Population of 55,000	NRPA Park Acreage Standard for Projected Population of 63,000 People between 2030-2035
Neighborhood	2.5	51	135	158
Community	3	77	162	189
Regional	5	165	270	315
Special	3 (Variable)	220	162	189
Greenbelts	2 (Variable)	0	108	126
TOTAL	15.5	513	837	977

Note: The City's existing trail system is included in park acreage
Source: Sefko Planning Group

Creating Greenbelt Areas

As **Table 7-5** shows, the amount of acreage for greenbelt parks is especially lacking; however, this could be addressed through the City establishing a policy related to its floodplain areas. Floodplains offer prime property for greenbelt development because they are often natural undisturbed areas wherein no active uses can be accommodated. Numerous floodplain areas are within Midwest City's current City limits. Through planning and park design, these floodplain areas could become a positive characteristic of the City by providing a large amount of passive recreational open space in the form of greenbelt parks for local citizens. **In fact, Midwest City could proactively use its floodplain areas to become a community known for its greenbelt park system.**

Additional Neighborhood Parks

Several new neighborhood parks have been recommended within the east and north sections of the City, as can be seen on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*. Neighborhood parks are intended to serve a population of between 1,000 and 2,500 people and they range in size from five to ten acres. The recommended locations for future neighborhood parks within the City limits have been spaced accordingly within areas planned for residential land use on the *Future Land Use Plan* map. In addition to the residential population to be served, other considerations for locations included proximity to existing neighborhoods and to existing and planned roadways. Another consideration was providing neighborhood park locations that could be linked with pedestrian access via trails (trails are discussed in detail later within this chapter).

Neighborhood parks serve a radius of approximately one-and-one-half mile. Existing neighborhood parks have been shown, along with trail locations. It should be noted that **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, shows the generalized location of recommended future neighborhood parks; specific locations within the City limits should be determined as development occurs and as population warrants.

Additional Community Parks

At a population of 63,000, which the City should reach between 2030 and 2035, the community park standard is 189 acres. Currently, the City has approximately 77 acres and should have approximately 162 acres for its current population.

The City is in need of additional community park acreage. A location for another community park has been recommended in the City's eastern section, as **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, shows. This location would enable Midwest City to serve the community park needs of its citizens to the

east. It is also in proximity to a large floodplain area and to the recommended trail system (discussed later on in this chapter). All of these factors make the recommended location a prime area for a community park.



Illustration 7-12
LIONS PARK

Additional Regional Parks

As seen on **Table 7-5**, Midwest City is lacking in park acreage for regional parks. The City currently has 165 acres and according to NRPA standards, the City should have approximately 270 acres to meet current demand and 315 acres to meet the regional park demand between 2020 and 2030. Consequently, there is a need for the City to expand the regional park acreage. This may be accomplished in two of the following ways:

- 1) First, the City has the option to expand the existing Joe B. Barnes Regional Park.
- 2) Second, the City also has the option to develop a new regional park in a different area of the City.

The first option would expand Joe B. Barnes Regional Park to areas adjacent to or in close proximity to the park's existing boundaries. Since much of the existing park site is developed, little room is available to add new facilities without additional acreage. Any adjacent acreage would likely require the purchase of existing developed property.

2000 0 2000 4000 Feet

Sofko Planning Group
Freese and Nichols
Urban Planning Consultants - Dallas, Texas

Date: July 8, 2008

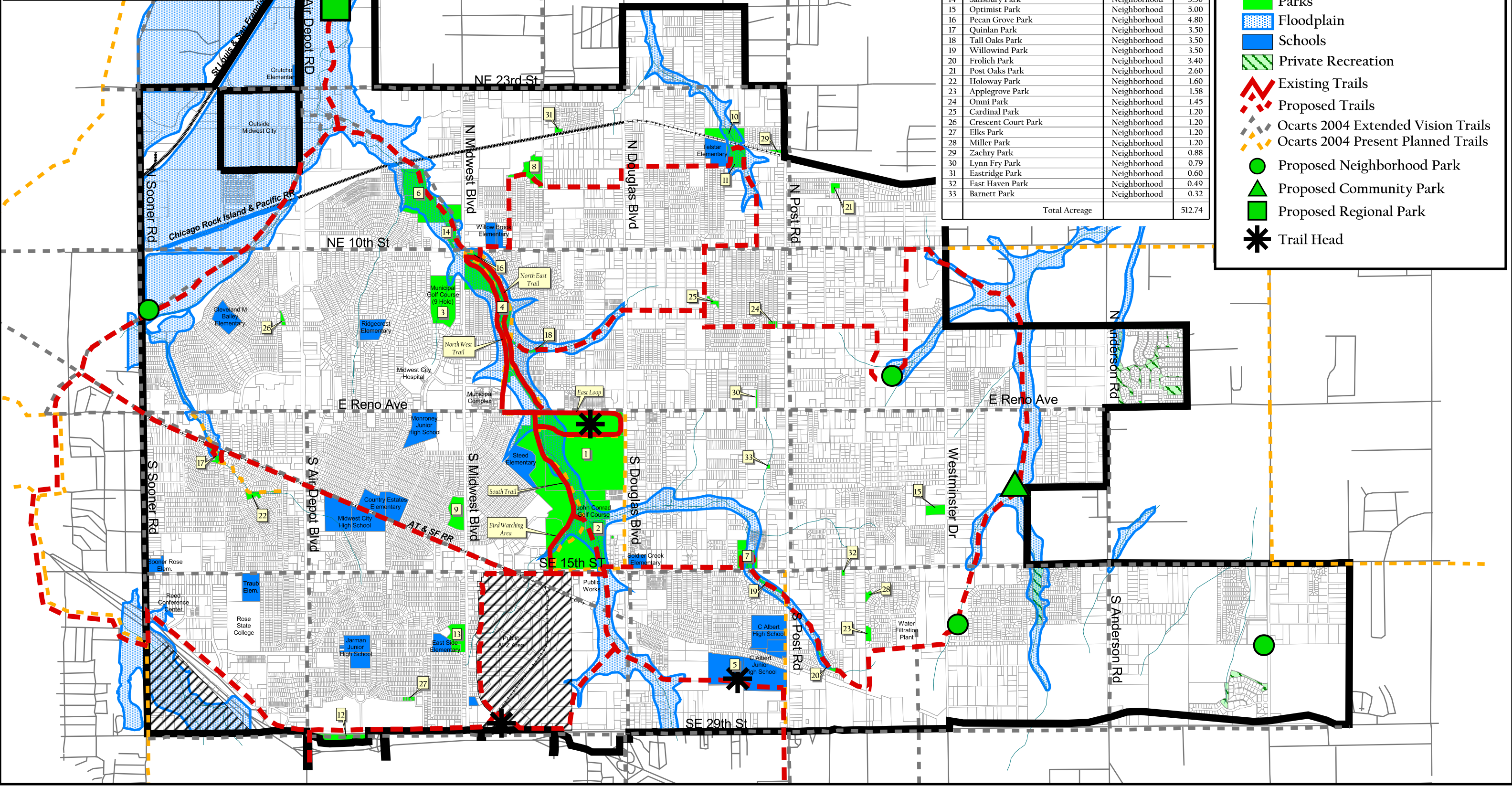


Plate 7-1 Existing & Proposed Parks

Midwest City, Oklahoma

No.	Name	Park Classification	Acres
1	Joe B. Barnes Regional Park	Regional	165.00
2	John Conrad Golf Course	Special	138.00
3	Municipal Golf Course (9-Hole)	Special	29.50
4	Tom Poore Park	Community	28.00
5	Reed Baseball Complex	Special	23.00
6	Mid-America Park	Community	16.19
7	Fred Myers Civic Park	Special	12.50
8	ESA Park	Community	12.20
9	Kiwanis Park	Community	11.12
10	Shirley Darrell Telstar North Park	Special	9.90
11	Shirley Darrell Telstar South Park	Community	9.10
12	Tinker Bicentennial Park	Special	7.33
13	Lions Park	Neighborhood	6.59
14	Salisbury Park	Neighborhood	5.50
15	Optimist Park	Neighborhood	5.00
16	Pecan Grove Park	Neighborhood	4.80
17	Quinlan Park	Neighborhood	3.50
18	Tall Oaks Park	Neighborhood	3.50
19	Willownd Park	Neighborhood	3.50
20	Frolich Park	Neighborhood	3.40
21	Post Oaks Park	Neighborhood	2.60
22	Holoway Park	Neighborhood	1.60
23	Applegrove Park	Neighborhood	1.58
24	Omni Park	Neighborhood	1.45
25	Cardinal Park	Neighborhood	1.20
26	Crescent Court Park	Neighborhood	1.20
27	Elks Park	Neighborhood	1.20
28	Miller Park	Neighborhood	1.20
29	Zachry Park	Neighborhood	0.88
30	Lynn Fry Park	Neighborhood	0.79
31	Eastridge Park	Neighborhood	0.60
32	East Haven Park	Neighborhood	0.49
33	Barnett Park	Neighborhood	0.32
Total Acreage			512.74

- Parks
- Floodplain
- Schools
- Private Recreation
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Ocarts 2004 Extended Vision Trails
- Ocarts 2004 Present Planned Trails
- Proposed Neighborhood Park
- Proposed Community Park
- Proposed Regional Park
- ✱ Trail Head



In accordance to the second option, a proposed regional park has been designated on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, and is shown in the northwest corner of the City. This location has been previously reviewed for the possible development of a municipal lake and is primarily located within a floodplain. Other locations for a new regional park may present themselves as valid options to what is shown on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*. However, the location for a regional park should consider other factors such as economic factors. For instance, the City has several economic development incentive districts (shown on **Plate 8-1**, the *Special Incentive District Map*, in Chapter 8, *Economic Development Strategies*) in which a park may consume land that would be better utilized by a business, which may provide more benefits to the community as a whole. Therefore, if a location other than that shown on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, is considered for a park site, then a review should be conducted to find the most suitable location.

Notwithstanding, the location of a new regional park location or whether a new park is created or the existing Joe B. Barnes is expanded, it is a key recommendation of the *Parks and Trails Assessment* that the regional park acreage is expanded to meet the recreational needs of the community.

General Recommendations for Future Park Acreage

In recent years, park and recreation experts have begun to rely more heavily on facility-based park planning than on acreage-based. **It is recommended that Midwest City concentrate on providing citizens with quality facilities rather than acreage.** The City has already begun to pursue this course of action through the construction of quality parks. As noted earlier within this *Parks and Trails Assessment*, in terms of providing citizens with quality recreational facilities consistent with the quantity of such facilities needed, Midwest City is lacking in both acreage and facilities.

Expansion of the Existing Trail System

The expansion of the existing trail system in Midwest City is strongly supported by this *Parks and Trails Assessment*. There are numerous reasons that such a system would be a positive element for the City. First, an integrated, cohesive trail system would help set Midwest City apart from other communities in the area; no other city in the vicinity appears to have such an extensive system. Second, trails are a recreation amenity that can be used and enjoyed by all age groups, which is not true of a playground or ballpark; all citizens, young and old, benefit from the availability of trails. Third, it has been proven in recent studies that property values are positively affected by being in close proximity to a trail; people are generally willing to pay an increased amount for such a residence. As a result, Midwest City's existing neighborhoods would benefit greatly. As one study⁷⁻² reports,

- Urban trails are regarded as an amenity that helps to attract buyers and to sell property. For residents of single-family homes adjacent to a trail:
 - 29 percent believed that the existence of the trail would increase the selling price of their home (and 43 percent said it would have no effect);
 - 57 percent of the residents felt that the trail would make the home easier to sell (with 36 percent saying no effect);
 - 57 percent had lived in their homes prior to construction of the trail; and;
 - 29 percent were positively influenced by the trail in their decision to buy the home.
- Results were similarly positive for residents who lived near but not adjacent to the trail.



Illustration 7-13
EXISTING TRAIL IN MIDWEST CITY IN JOE B. BARNES REGIONAL PARK

A Community-Wide Trail System

Pedestrian access between parks, public spaces, and neighborhoods can enhance citizens' sense of community. This type of access can also provide a means for residents to move through the community and meet their neighbors and can provide a safe way to increase children's mobility. A functional network of trails will help Midwest City maintain a unique, community atmosphere as the City's population grows. **A trail system can be integrated along rights-of-way for railroad lines and floodplains to provide a comprehensive system of trails and open space amenities.**

General Considerations

Plate 7-1, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*, shows the recommended primary trail system with a red dashed line. The general concept in laying out a trail system is to incorporate as many positive features of an area as possible. Elements to consider when making decisions regarding trail locations include the following:⁷⁻³

- Natural openings and scenic views;
- Light brush;
- Access to, and view of, waterways, such as creeks;
- Safe crossings of roads, railroads, and waterways;
- Good access to and from parking; and
- Minimal conflict with existing land uses.

Each of these elements was considered when determining the most appropriate layout for Midwest City's trail system.

Specific Considerations

The primary concept for this trail system was to provide a continuous pedestrian connection throughout the City. Principle consideration was also given to providing continuous access between the following important features within the City:

- Existing parks;
- Proximity to existing trails and sidewalks;
- 29th Street redevelopment area;
- Hospitality district;
- The recommended future neighborhood, community, regional park locations;
- The floodplain areas;
- Tinker Air Force Base;
- Tinker Air Force Base Accident Potential Zone (APZ); and
- Connecting points to surrounding cities.

Participation in the trail system in developed areas will most likely be the responsibility of the City of Midwest City, but developer participation can be solicited in areas that are currently vacant as they develop. The City should adopt a policy that all new subdivisions should provide points of access to a designated trail segment. These access points should be located such that they provide connections with trails on adjacent properties.

Sidewalks

The City has already participated in an extensive sidewalk paving/replacement program. Sidewalks have been constructed along many arterials (i.e., Reno Avenue) and have contributed to the pedestrian circulation system. The City should continue this program. However, priority should be given to integrating or connecting sidewalks to the existing or proposed trail system.

Trail Integration

In previously developed areas, the City will have to decide the best way in which to establish these trails along existing roadways. **This is a tremendous opportunity for the City to leverage its existing sidewalk program with trail connections.** Illustration 7-14 shows three ways this can be effectively done. Integrating pedestrian access within existing neighborhoods is challenging, and the illustration is intended to show how existing neighborhoods can be included within the overall trail system, depending primarily upon the amount of right-of-way available. It is recommended that the City work with residents and neighborhood associations to gain public input on how citizens would like any new trail construction in existing neighborhoods to be accomplished.

Trail Construction

Trails should generally not be less than eight feet wide and should be ten feet wide wherever possible. The materials used for trail construction vary widely, however some are better than others are in terms of

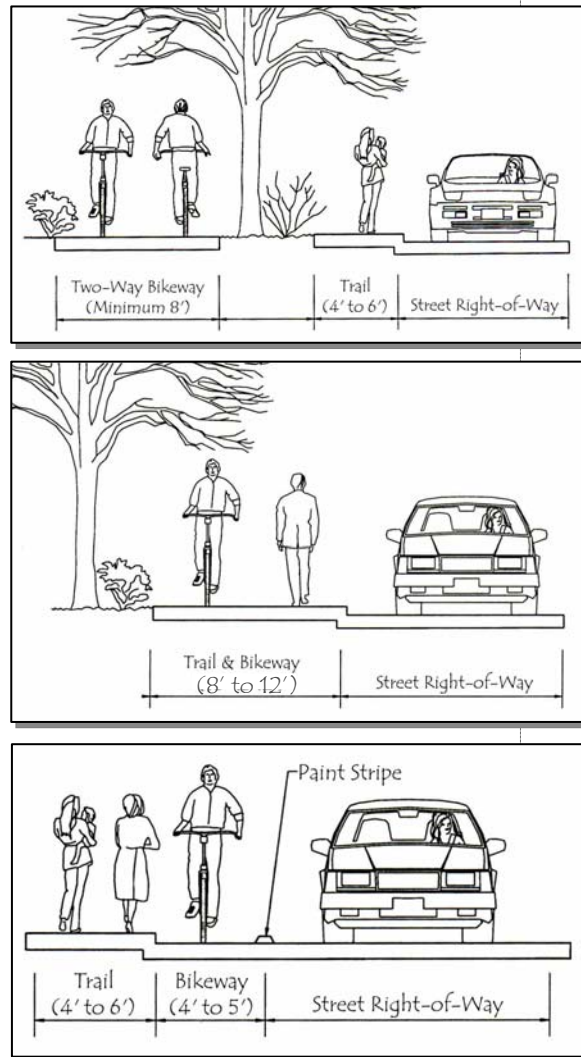


Illustration 7-14
WAYS TO INTEGRATE A TRAIL ALONG AN EXISTING

maintenance and impact on the pedestrian; construction materials also must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which is another important consideration. Concrete material should be used for construction of trails in Midwest City. Although there are concerns about the adverse impacts that long-term walking and running on concrete can have on

users, other materials sometimes used for trail construction have maintenance and cost issues. For instance, trails constructed with asphalt or with crushed granite are less expensive than concrete, but such trails have proven to be high in maintenance costs. Notably, the hard surfaces of both types of trails are similar to concrete in terms of their impact on users.

Another material that could be used is rubberized material (usually red or black in color), which is low-impact on users and requires only slightly more maintenance than concrete, but is cost-prohibitive for most cities. In addition, although rubberized material is ADA-compliant, it is also generally not conducive to supporting bicycles, in-line skates, skateboards, etc. Given all of these factors, it is recommended that the City use concrete material for its trail system.

Generally trails should first be constructed where the costs to develop the land is low. One potential site, as seen in **Illustration 7-16**, is the area surrounding the Tinker Accident Potential Zone (APZ) between Midwest Boulevard and Douglas Boulevard (refer to **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*). In order to develop this site, the City must seek a collaborative effort with Tinker AFB that would benefit both the City and the base. For instance, Tinker AFB and its personnel could benefit from a trail along the APZ. Specifically, the *Parks and Trails Assessment* attempts to provide a linkage to the base in order for base personnel to have additional recreational opportunities. It is recommended that in order to develop the segment of the trail along the perimeter of the APZ that the security chain-link fence (which currently surrounds the APZ) be moved back further from the street to allow for an eight or 10 foot-wide trail to be constructed. Some of this area has existing trees that should be protected; therefore, moving the perimeter fencing will require cooperation with Tinker AFB.



Illustration 7-15
CRUSHED GRANITE TRAIL
(top, not recommended) & CONCRETE TRAIL
(bottom, recommended)



Illustration 7-16
POTENTIAL SITE FOR THE TRAILS CONCEPT

The Rails-with-Trails Concept

The *Rails-with-Trails* idea evolved from the concept of *Rails-to-Trails*, which is based on converting abandoned or unused rail corridors into public trails. The difference between these concepts is that *Rails-with-Trails* utilizes unused portions of railway rights-of-way along railroad lines that are still active.

The old Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe rail line is not currently in service. This rail line terminates just north of Tinker Air Force Base (AFB) and is owned by the State of Oklahoma. This *Parks and Trails Assessment* recommends that a trail be run along side the old rail line, see **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*. However, even though this line is abandoned it should be considered, for planning purposes, as an active line due to its potential reuse as a light rail/commuter rail line, as discussed in other chapters of this Comprehensive Plan. This rail line connects to downtown Oklahoma City and may serve as a critical component for a regional light rail/commuter transit system, and therefore its functionality should be preserved. Consequently, the construction of any trail on this abandoned right-of-way should not preclude the potential reuse of this rail line in the future. **Under no circumstances should the City abandon this right-of-way.**

In considering the *Rails-with-Trails* concept, the most common concern is that establishing a trail within a railroad right-of-way, in close proximity to an active railroad, would be a dangerous



Illustration 7-17
 EXAMPLES OF RAILS-WITH-TRAILS PROJECTS
 Both Trails Shown Are Along Active Rail Lines



Illustration 7-18
 POTENTIAL SITE FOR THE
 RAILS-WITH-TRAILS CONCEPT

proposition. In fact, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy maintains that “rails-with-trails can be safer than trails next to roads.”⁷⁴ Some factors to give special attention to in terms of safety are⁷⁵:

- Ensuring adequate distance between the trail and the railroad track – the average separation distance is approximately 33 feet;
- Constructing and maintaining a barrier and/or grade separation between the trail and the railroad track;
- Designing safe railroad crossings, either at-grade or otherwise; and,
- Establishing adequate trail-user signage.

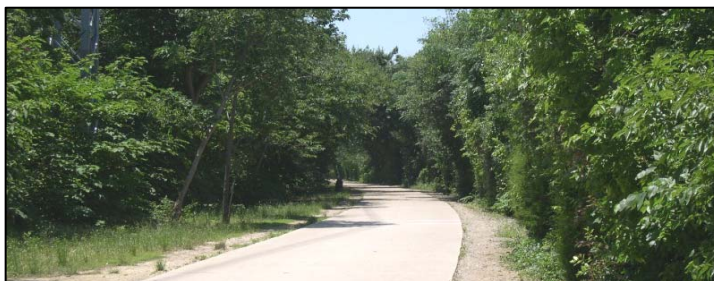
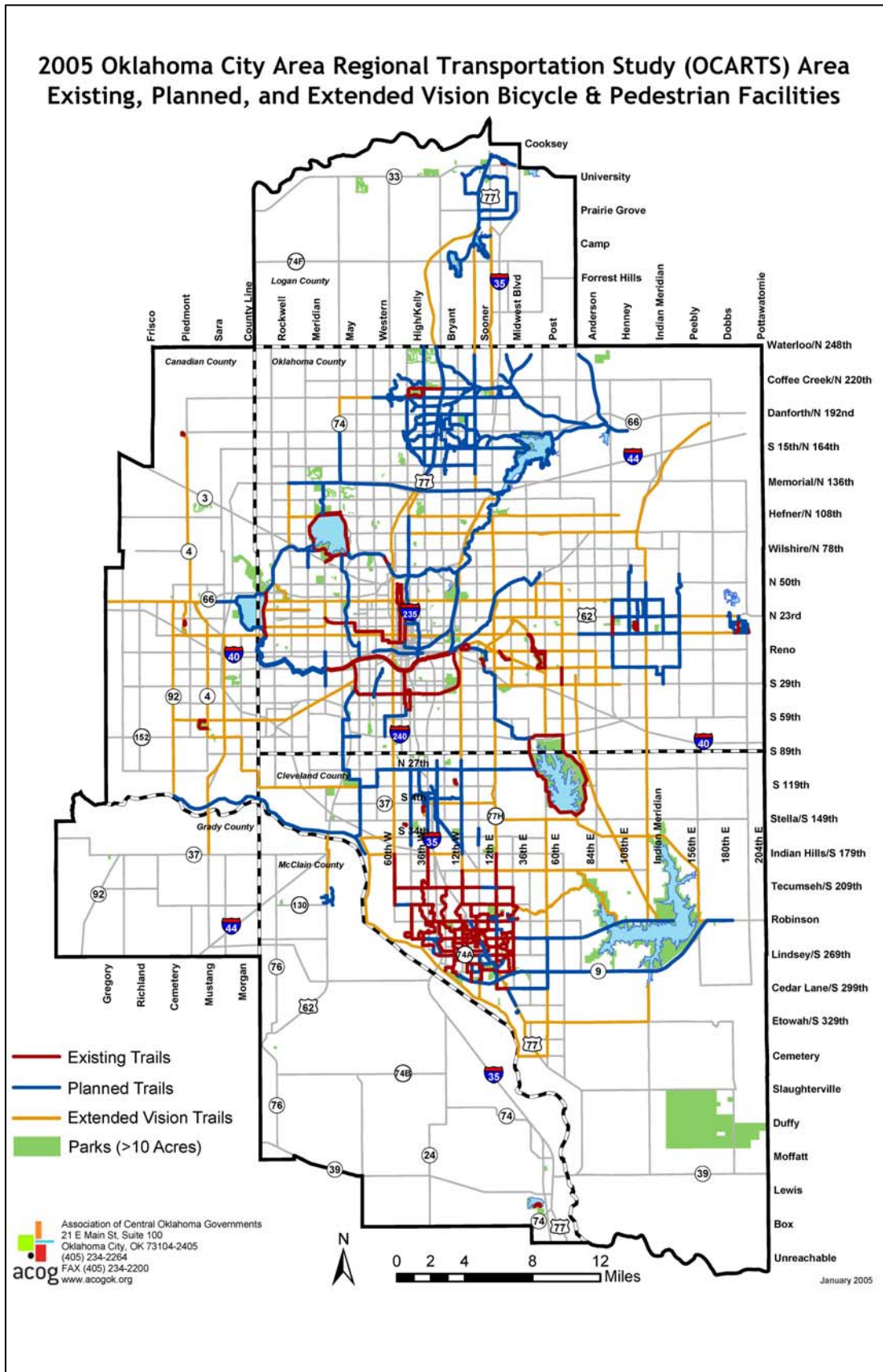


Illustration 7-19
EXAMPLE OF A TRAIL

Regional Trail Considerations

It is recommended that the City continue to consider implementing a regional trail system, as outlined in the 2030 OCARTS (Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study). This would allow residents to enjoy the benefits of an integrated trail system that would extend throughout the Oklahoma City region. Such a trail system would provide for a truly multi-modal experience accommodating pedestrians, joggers, and bicyclists.

The purpose of the 2030 OCARTS Plan is to describe how the region will manage, operate and invest in its multi-modal transportation system over the next three decades. The plan describes goals and objectives for the region, policies to help achieve the goals, and actions to support the policies. The plan views transportation in terms of the movement of people and goods, not just vehicles. For development of the trails component of the Plan, input was gathered from local government staffs and elected officials, as well as from area citizens through the regional transportation survey, the public open houses and a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Notably, during the public input process citizens indicated the importance of connecting communities through continuous trails development, without regard for municipal boundaries. **Therefore, it is recommended that the City promote the recommendations of the 2030 OCARTS and continue to plan for regional trails.**



Trailheads

Access to the Midwest City trail system is an important planning concept to consider for developing the trails portion of the *Parks and Trails Assessment*. People who do not live close to a trail should have a means to access it. Therefore, trailheads have been designed to give people a point of access to the system. Trailheads would include parking lots and sitting areas to provide a place where people may leave their cars and utilize the trail system. These locations are identified on **Plate 7-1**, the *Existing and Proposed Parks Map*.

Tree Preservation

As mentioned in Chapter 4, tree preservation is an important concept for the entire City. Specially, tree preservation can enhance the City's park system, as well as the entire City, by maintaining the existing natural environment. As new areas develop, tree preservation should be considered in relation to providing areas for parks and trails. **Illustration 7-20** provides examples of tree preservation in a newly built subdivision.



Illustration 7-20
EXAMPLE OF TREE PRESERVATION IN A NEW SUBDIVISION

Conclusion

Five-Year Action Plan/Priority List

The Five-Year Action Plan/Priority List as outlined in **Table 7-6** represents the culmination of the Parks Assessment. The input received from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was an important factor in establishing the recommendations. Consistent utilization of the priority listing will provide a solid basis with which to analyze needs and expenditures for land acquisition, improvements, and new facilities that will ultimately enhance Midwest City’s parks and open space system.

Table 7-6 RECREATIONAL FACILITY DEVELOPMENT - PRIORITY LIST Midwest City, Oklahoma				
PRIORITY	Facility	Timing	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source
1	Multi-Use Trail	2006-2011	\$237,5000 per mile (10'-wide)	Grants, Donations, Park Dedication Ordinance (recommended) Fees, Bonds, General Budget
2	Picnic Facilities	2006-2011	Varies	
3	Playgrounds	2006-2011	\$60,000	
4	Multi-Purpose Courts	2006-2011	\$45,000	
5	Community/Regional Parkland Acquisition	2006-2011	Depends on site location	
6	Neighborhood Parkland Acquisition & Open Space	2006-2011	Depends on site location	
7	Adult Softball	2008-2013	\$350,000	
8	Sand Volleyball	2008-2013	\$30,000	
9	Youth Softball Fields	2008-2013	\$175,000	
10	Adult Soccer	2008-2013	\$275,000 per field	

Note: The costs identified above are only for single recreational activity and do not include restrooms, concessions, and parking infrastructures.
 Source: Sefko Planning Group

Trail Cost

The cost of establishing lengths of trail can vary depending on the construction materials, local labor costs, the cost of clearing land, and other related items. The width of the trail is also a primary consideration when assessing the cost of establishing a trail. The recommendation herein has been for the City to construct trails of at least eight feet, with ten feet being the preferred width.

Table 7-7 contains information on estimated costs for both an eight-foot wide and a ten-foot wide trail, one-mile in length and constructed with concrete materials. These cost estimates do not include land acquisition costs and are based on a material cost of \$4.50 per square foot. Possible funding sources have been outlined. As may be expected, it is less expensive to construct an eight-foot wide trail, but a ten-foot wide trail would allow for a greater number of users and would likely be more beneficial to the City in the long-term.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Table 7-7</i> ESTIMATED TRAIL COST FOR A ONE MILE LENGTH Midwest City, Oklahoma</p>		
FACILITY-TYPE	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Sources
8-Foot Wide, Concrete	\$190,000 per mile	Grants, Donations, Park Dedication Ordinance Fees, Bonds, General Budget
10-Foot Wide, Concrete	\$237,500 per mile	
<p><i>Note:</i> Based on \$4.50 per square foot of trail; estimated cost does not include land acquisition. <i>Source:</i> Sefko Planning Group</p>		

Neighborhood Park Cost

Table 7-8 contains information on the cost for a typical neighborhood park, with the various elements that are often included as part of a neighborhood park itemized. The total estimated cost for a neighborhood park, including an 8-foot wide trail that is one-half-mile in length, is approximately \$365,000. Funding sources listed are consistent with those listed for the community park (**Table 7-9**) and the trail system (**Table 7-7**). The cost estimate does not include land acquisition costs.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Table 7-8</i> ESTIMATED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK COST Midwest City, Oklahoma</p>		
FACILITY-TYPE	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Sources
8-Foot Wide Concrete Trail, ½ Mile Long ⁽¹⁾	\$95,000	Grants, Donations, Park Dedication Ordinance <i>(recommended)</i> Fees, Bonds, General Budget
Playground	\$60,000	
Practice Backstop	\$10,000	
15-Space Parking Lot	\$25,000	
Multi-Purpose Court	\$45,000	
Turf & Irrigation (10 acres) ⁽²⁾	\$100,000	
Drinking Fountain	\$5,000	
Picnic Shelter (5 Tables)	\$45,000	
Park Benches (6)	\$5,000	
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	\$390,000	
<p>⁽¹⁾ Based on \$4.50 per square foot of trail ⁽²⁾ Includes 10 trees with a minimum 3" Note: Estimated cost does not include land acquisition. Source: Sefko Planning Group</p>		

Community Park Cost

Table 7-9 contains information on the cost for a typical community park, with the various elements that are often included as part of this type of park itemized. The total estimated cost for a community park, with typical elements including an 8-foot wide trail that is one-mile in length, is approximately \$3.7 million. It should be noted that the funding sources listed are consistent with those listed for neighborhood parks (**Table 7-8**) and the trail system (**Table 7-7**). The cost estimate shown does not include land acquisition costs.

FACILITY-TYPE	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Sources
8-Foot Wide Concrete Trail, 1 Mile Long ⁽¹⁾	\$190,000	Grants, Donations, Park Dedication Ordinance (recommended) Fees, Bonds, General Budget
Playground	\$60,000	
4 Lighted Soccer Fields	\$900,000	
4 Lighted Little League Fields	\$800,000	
4 Adult Softball Fields	\$1,400,000	
1 Concession/Restroom Facility	\$350,000	
Picnic Pavilion with 10 Tables	\$90,000	
50 Parking Spaces (Concrete) Per Field - Total of 600 Parking Spaces	\$650,000	
Other Elements (Concrete Access Park Roads, Water & Sewer Lines, Electrical Services, Irrigation & Turf Establishment)	\$325,000	
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST	\$4,765,000	

⁽¹⁾ Based on \$4.50 per square foot of trail
 Note: Estimated cost does not include land acquisition.
 Source: Sefko Planning Group

In Summary

Anticipating change and adjusting to it may be one of the most challenging aspects related to local government provision of services and facilities. Just as the City is always changing, so should the City’s parks and recreation system. Midwest City should generally plan its parks and recreation facilities based on its existing and projected population, and should concentrate not necessarily on providing park acreage but on providing a facility-based park and recreation system. The City should also concentrate on expanding the regional park acreage, adding additional neighborhood parks in the north and east sections of the City and expanding the existing trail system. These amenities would allow for unique opportunities for Midwest City to provide its citizenry with recreational elements that are not available in any community in the vicinity. Various methods of funding and providing new park areas, including park dedication ordinance criteria, will be included in the *Implementation Strategies Plan*, Chapter 9. The recommendations made within this *Parks and Trails Assessment* are summarized within **Table 7-10**.

<p><i>Table 7-10</i> SUMMARY OF PARK MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS City of Midwest City, Oklahoma</p>
<p>Specific Recommendations for Neighborhood Parks</p>
<p><u>New Neighborhood Parks</u> The City should construct two or three new neighborhood parks within the east and north sections of the City, as can be seen on Plate 7-1.</p>
<p>Specific Recommendations for Expanding Regional Park Acreage</p>
<p><u>Increase Regional Park Acreage</u> The City should increase the regional park acreage within the City by either expanding Joe B. Barnes Regional Park or finding a site for a new regional park to be used in addition to Joe B. Barnes Regional Park.</p>
<p><u>Feasibility Study</u> A site feasibility study should be performed to evaluate the benefits and costs of either adding adjacent land to Joe B. Barnes Regional Park or developing a new regional park.</p>
<p><u>Location for a New Regional Park</u> The City has several economic development incentive districts and careful consideration should be given to locating any park within these districts. An analysis should be conducted to evaluate the need and benefit of a park site against the need to preserve that site, within an incentive district, for economic development opportunities.</p>
<p><u>Location for a New Regional Park</u> The City should consider land in the northwest section as a potential site for additional regional park facilities.</p>

Table 7-10 (Continued)
 SUMMARY OF PARK MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
 City of Midwest City, Oklahoma

Specific Recommendations for the Trail System

Trail Expansion

Extension of the existing trail system should be a priority for the City to accomplish.

Trail Locations

Midwest City should use **Plate 7-1** as a guide for locating lengths of the trail.

Trail Concept – Floodplains

A trail system can be integrated along floodplains to provide a comprehensive system of trails and open space amenities.

Access to the Trail

The City should adopt a policy that all new subdivisions should provide points of access to a designated trail segment. These access points should be located such that they provide connections with trails on adjacent properties.

Sidewalks

The City has already participated in an extensive sidewalk paving/replacement program. The City should continue this program. However, priority should be given to integrating or connecting sidewalks to the existing or proposed trail system.

Citizen Input

The City should solicit public input as to how citizens would like any new trail construction in existing neighborhoods to be accomplished.

Trail Width

Trails should generally not be less than eight feet wide and should be ten feet wide wherever possible.

Trail Construction

The City should adopt a policy that all new subdivisions should provide points of access to a designated trail segment.

AT&SF Trail Segment

The old Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe rail line, not currently in service and owned by the State, is an ideal location for a portion of the trail system. It is recommended that a trail be run along side the old rail line. However, even though this line is abandoned it should be considered, for planning purposes, as an active line due to its potential reuse as a light rail/commuter rail line.

Regional Trail Considerations

It is recommended that the City continue to consider implementing a regional trail system as outlined in the 2030 OCARTS (Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study).

Trailheads

Trailheads have been designated to provide points of access to the trail system. Trailheads would include parking lots and sitting areas to make available places where people may leave their cars and utilize the trail system.

Tree Preservation

As new areas develop, tree preservation should be considered in relation to providing areas for parks and trails.

<p><i>Table 7-10 (Continued)</i></p> <p>SUMMARY OF PARK ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>City of Midwest City, Oklahoma</p>	
General Park Recommendations	
<u>Guide for Future Park Acreage</u>	
<p>Midwest City should use Table 7-5 as a guide for ensuring future park acreage is provided in accordance with local population numbers. Based on the projected population of 63,000 people within Midwest City between 2030 and 2035, 977 acres of parks will be needed (approximately 464 acres more than Midwest City currently has).</p>	
<u>Quality Parks</u>	
<p>While adequate acreage is needed for Midwest City's park system, the City should ultimately concentrate on providing quality park facilities rather than on ensuring that the proper amount of acreage is available.</p>	
<u>Creating Greenbelt Areas</u>	
<p>The City should use its floodplain areas for greenbelts to become a community known for its greenbelt park system.</p>	
<u>Additional Community Park</u>	
<p>Midwest City should use Plate 7-1 as a guide for locating another community park to the east in conjunction with the proposed trail.</p>	
<u>Park Dedication Requirements</u>	
<p>The City should review its park dedication requirements and consider revising its procedures to limit the dedication of land, especially small park and open space areas less than one acre in size, in favor of contributions of money to support the park system.</p>	
<u>Park Dedication Requirements</u>	
<p>The City should require that land for parks and trails be dedicated in accordance with the City's approved Comprehensive Plan (notably Plate 7-1) and if land is developed where no park facilities are planned then fees in lieu should be required to assist in funding the park system.</p>	
<p><i>Source: City of Midwest City's Parks & Trails Assessment.</i></p>	

⁷⁻¹ Alexander Garvin, December 2000, "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: A Twenty-First Century Agenda," *American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 497/498*, p.13.

⁷⁻² Suzanne Webel, "Trail Effects on Neighborhoods: Home Value, Safety, Quality of Life," *Boulder Area Trails Coalition, Resources and Library Directory*; ADDRESS: <http://americantrails.org/resources/adjacent/sumadjacent.html>.

⁷⁻³ "Trail Design," from the University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation; ADDRESS: <http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/Extension/pubtxt/for5b.htm>.

⁷⁻⁴ "Rails-with-Trails: Design, Management, and Operating Characteristics of 61 Trails Along Active Rail Lines," from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, November 2000, p.7.

⁷⁻⁵ Ibid.