

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Claire Powell, City Manager

**FROM:** Stacie Anaya, Director of Parks and Recreation

**DATE:** February 1, 2023

**SUBJECT: Public Hearing – Consideration of the Adoption of the Healthy Infrastructure Plan**

### **BACKGROUND**

An update to the current Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was approved by the City Council and, subsequently, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in March 2018. Per TPWD guidelines to maintain eligibility for park development grants, the plan must be renewed every 10 years and updated every 5 years or when a significant change impacts city operations and service delivery.

In November 2021, City Council approved agreements with Halff Associates and the University of North Texas to assist in the development of a Healthy Infrastructure Plan (HIP) to accommodate the annexation of Castle Hills and the March 2023 date for submitting a new plan to TPWD for review. The HIP is a three-pronged master plan that includes parks, trails and the urban tree canopy. Funding for the plan was made available via the 4B Fund and Tree Mitigation fees.

The development of the plan included enhanced community engagement activities. The first step was the appointment a diverse steering committee to guide the process. Coupled with updating the Park Board regularly, the steering committee members enabled the team to have focused discussions on the recreation needs of the entire community. In addition, the team worked with students from the University of North Texas Applied Environmental Research Institute (UNT-AERI), Lewisville Independent School District (LISD) and used Play Lewisville On Wheels (PLOW) deployments to meet residents where they are at instead of only holding public meetings to get feedback. Finally, booths at community events (Colorpalooza and Western Days), and using various web-based platforms helped to solicit input from the widest range of residents and park users.

Upon its completion and adoption, the development of the HIP will have taken 18 months including the following:

- Project Initiation and Existing Conditions Mapping (Oct 2021 - Apr 2022)
- Community Engagement (entire process)
- Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space and Canopy Review (Feb – June 2022)

- Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space and Tree Canopy Recommendation Development (Jul – Oct 2022)
- Implementation Plan Development (Nov 2022 – Jan 2023)
- Report Preparation and Final Adoption (Dec 2022 – Mar 2023).

## **ANALYSIS**

Explore More Lewisville is a Healthy Infrastructure Plan to provide Lewisville residents with healthy opportunities to play, explore and connect. The extensive community engagement, analysis of the current parks and open space system, as well as research of industry trends and standards has led to a comprehensive master plan to guide the development and management of Lewisville’s parks, trails and urban tree canopy for the next 10 years.

This plan provides an overview of Lewisville’s existing system. A variety of needs assessments were performed to create plan initiatives and recommendations to improve the system for all residents. The assessments were based on community input, best practices, and innovations in healthy infrastructure. An implementation action plan will guide future expenditures for parks and recreation, trails infrastructure, tree canopy investments, and open space considerations with a specific focus on providing a quality park with a 10-minute walk of each resident. This plan complies with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) requirements for grant funding and agency accreditation.

The draft includes eight chapters:

1. Purpose and Background
2. Lewisville Today (community context)
3. Lewisville Tomorrow (engagement snapshots and establish plan vision/goals)
4. More Play (review of existing park system and assessment)
5. More Nature (tree canopy study and recommendations)
6. More Connections (trail and walkability analysis and recommendations)
7. More Access (health and social equity index and analysis)
8. Recommendations (prioritized implementation strategies).

The vision established for the plan by the steering committee and Parks Board is “We believe that equity, preservation, sustainability, and inclusivity should be the foundation of a healthy and quality park system. The Lewisville Healthy Infrastructure Plan will ignite opportunities for play, connect people to nature and each other and ensure that all people have a 10-minute walk to a safe park, trail and recreation space. The Lewisville Parks and Recreation Department will grow to become the regional leader in park standards.”

The Explore More Lewisville draft includes six overarching goals, 18 objectives for the desired outcome related to the goal and 111 strategies for achieving the vision. The goals include:

1. Connect the Community

2. Raise Awareness and Ignite Learning
3. Ensure the System is the Standard for the Region
4. Reinforce Community Building
5. Utilize Nature as a Green Centerpiece
6. Embrace and Support Diverse Experiences.

Each strategy in the implementation program is categorized by type, timeframe for being initiated (not necessarily completed), potential partners and cost ranges. A complete list of strategies included in the implementation program can be found in Chapter 8 of the plan. The strategies designated as the highest priority to implement in the near-term include:

1.1.1: Implement trail and sidewalk improvements that take advantage of existing infrastructure and improve connectivity and access to parks.

1.1.2: Develop and activate currently undeveloped parkland as resources are available.

1.3.5: Implement improvements based on the individual park master plans to Vista Ridge Park, Spillway (East Hill) Park, Thrive Nature Park, and Lake Park.

2.1.1: Install additional wayfinding signage throughout the community to direct to major park amenities.

2.3.2: Identify preferred site, create a design, and seek funding and partnerships for a nature center near LLELA.

3.3.2: Implement improvements to the ten audit parks assessed in this master plan.

3.3.6: Acquire property for additional multi-use sports fields.

4.1.4: Continue to work with surrounding communities on identifying paddling trail launch sites along Lewisville Lake.

4.2.6: Create options for recreation-based sports programming in addition to existing sports leagues.

4.3.3: Encourage the development and establishment of friends of the park groups for fundraising efforts.

5.2.4: Create a dataset that prioritizes suitable planting species.

5.2.9: Establish an urban forestry unit within the Parks and Recreation Department.

6.1.5: Incorporate parks and open spaces with the redevelopment of older multi-family buildings and older commercial development.

6.2.4: Prioritize recreation programs identified as most needed through this process – adult fitness and wellness, outdoor concerts, and senior programs.

This list will help convey priorities when applying for grant funding from TPWD and other partners.

The first draft of the plan was presented to the public during an open house prior to the joint Planning and Zoning Commission and Park Board meeting held on January 11. Both bodies voted to recommend the adoption of the plan by City Council. The plan was presented to City Council at the City Council Workshop after a second open house held on February 6, 2023. In addition, a copy of the draft plan has been available on the Parks and Recreation Department's website since January 11, 2023.

A copy of the plan has been attached for Council's review.

**STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the City Council approve the Healthy Infrastructure Plan as presented in the caption above.