

“Inspiring Exemplary Cultural Landscapes”

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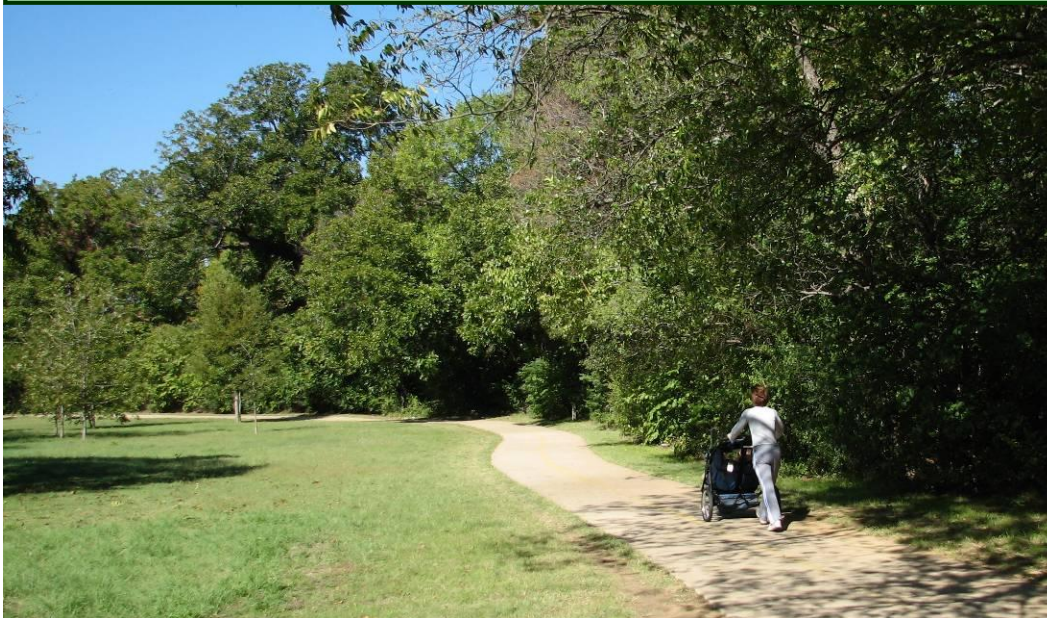
*The **Existing Parks and Open Space Map** on page 3-82a) depicts the parks, recreational facilities, open space and cemeteries in the City of Keller.*

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12.

Big Bear Creek Greenbelt

Type: Linear Park
Size: 36.2 Acres



The relatively dense vegetation along the trail frames views, creates a sense of calm and offers patches of sun, shade and dappled light to enjoy.

Comments

Keller citizens are fortunate to have a greenbelt associated with Big Bear Creek as a major feature of the city’s park system. The Big Bear Creek Greenbelt traverses Keller east to west crossing Areas II and III south of Bear Creek Parkway. The greenbelt is important for the protection it affords the creek “corridor”; that is, the creek itself and the native, riparian vegetation associated with it. Trail users are treated to an experience that is rich and varied, as the trail follows the creek.

The trail and greenbelt link six parks along its winding 5.4 mile way, from the westernmost area of Keller at the Keller Sports Park, to the eastern Milestone Park at Davis Boulevard. The intermediate parks are Bear Creek Park, The Parks at Town Center and Keller-Smithfield Activity Node. The golf course, Sky Creek Ranch Golf Course, is not an ecologically sound feature along the creek, as the riparian vegetation is not preserved in its natural state and extensive areas are covered with manicured turf. Nevertheless, the trail and corridor offer Keller residents – as well as visitors from other communities – a richly varied, refreshing, and memorable experience for which any city would be proud.

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The hike and bike trail sweeps gently from under the road bridge along the northern edge of the Sky Creek Ranch Golf Club.



A cyclist cycles along Bear Creek Parkway.

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Another cyclist enjoys physical exercise along the trail in the Big Bear Creek Greenbelt where it runs through The Parks at Town Center.

Existing Amenities in Big Bear Creek Greenbelt

<p>Programmed Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.4 miles Hike and bike trails 	<p>Natural Resources/ Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creek/ Nature Area
<p>Built support/ amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Gazebos • 3 Picnic tables • 12 Benches • 3 Footbridges 	

Recommendations for Big Bear Creek Greenbelt

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Provide restrooms as required at major trailheads, ideally within community or special purpose parks.
- Provide drinking fountains at trailheads.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Continue to protect native plantings and riparian vegetation.

Sustainable Opportunities

- Add educational signage about creek plant life, wildlife and conservation.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate.
- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.

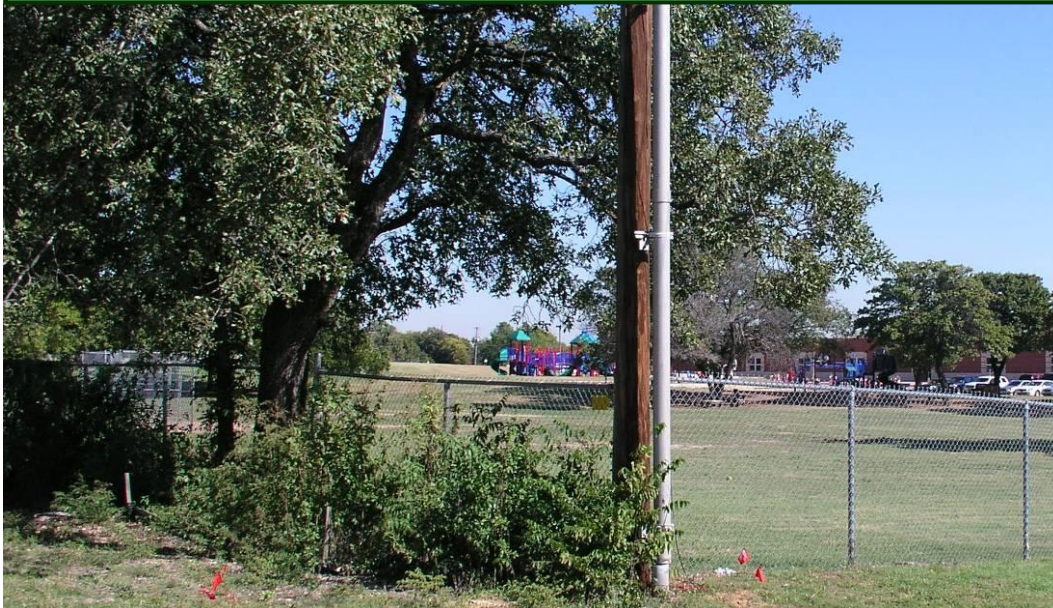
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13.

Cherry Grove Linear Park

Address: Keller-Smithfield Road

Type: Linear Park
Size: 6.0 Acres (Undeveloped)



Although this park land is a long sliver of land between curb and chain link fence, its adjacency to an elementary school could benefit both by recognizing this special relationship.

Comments

The elongated park land between the curb and the chain link fence demarcating the property line of a local elementary school makes sense logically as a linear park. At the northern end, the area widens, so that one could imagine a seating or rest area, or gathering place as children make their ways home.

The essential strength of the adjacent relationship to the school suggests a more positive relationship with the park than the chain link infers. Replacing a portion of the chain link with wrought iron, perhaps including a celebratory gate, would elevate the sense of welcome at this park. Trails connecting school and home, perhaps with hopscotch and the school children’s artwork could make this the pride of the area.

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The grounds of the elementary school have a variety of mature trees, such as pecan and post oaks, set around the play areas.

Recommended Park Elements for Cherry Grove

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Prepare and implement a design plan for the park that incorporates shaded walkways, jogging trails, picnic amenities, signage and a park entryway.
- Design a park that strengthens the connection and relationship to the adjacent elementary school.
- Initiate a program that encourages school children to contribute art work as part of their park.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- N/A

Sustainable Opportunities

- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate
- Add educational signage, perhaps created by children, to interpret native plantings.
- Continue to implement an integrated fertility and pest management program to maximize multi-use play area conditions, plant health and safety; place preference on the use of

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14.

Little Bear Creek Linear Park

Address: Little Bear Creek

Type: Linear Park
Size: 1.6 Acres (Undeveloped)



Current ordinances require wrought iron fencing along new properties adjacent to parks. Where pre-existing wood fences occur, landscape buffers are a positive alternative, serving to emphasize the public park land, though this treatment lacks the additional benefit of informal surveillance of the park.

Comments

The Little Bear Creek Linear Park originates near Willis and Meandering Trail, extending eastward to the City boundary east of CreekrIDGE Drive, providing an important linkage as trail users may continue into North Richland Hills, and visa versa. From the single-loaded access street, Pebblecreek Drive, the natural area is flanked by a perimeter trail. This is a lush natural creek corridor, replete with a variety of native vegetation. A number of large shade trees and a winding trail all about make the experience delightful and interesting.

At the North Tarrant trailhead, east of Willis Lane, entry gates or “monuments” would help announce this amenity and provide collector points, with an opportunity to inform users through additional, relevant signage. The existing erosion control fence is failing in several places and is a temporary-looking, unfinished eyesore. The paved trails at this important node should eventually all be a uniform, 10’ width (currently they are jaggedly offset and narrow at 4’ width) and connect with the school as proposed in the Parks Master Plan. Along the creek corridor itself, the 10’ width is generous and inviting. The concrete

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embankment near the trailhead creek overpass is unattractive and should be improved with more natural stone or other treatment.

Along the Little Bear Creek Linear Park, “Fall Creek” refers specifically to the undeveloped section of east - west trail running from the existing Little Bear Creek Trail west of North Tarrant, crossing Rufe Snow, and at the other end connecting with the north – south fork of Meandering Trail. The completion of the Fall Creek Trail, which is the critical east – west link between these trails, will enhance the trail system.

Park User Interview – A creek area resident, a new mother, was just returning home with her infant from a morning walk along the creek side trail. The Planning Team asked what she thinks of the trail alongside the creek. She said she uses the trail a lot, and that it is a ‘popular amenity for the community’.



The native grasses and pioneer vegetation maintain the creek’s vitality.



The low water pedestrian crossing at the creek has reflectors on either side which makes it safer at night. Ideally, the width should be increased to 12’ minimum to allow cyclists and other users to pass safely, which is wider than the city’s current standard of 10’ minimum.

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Dense, native vegetation forms a varied backdrop, creating a sense of calm and enhancing the trail experience.

Park User Interview – The Planning Team asked a Creek Vista homeowner whose property is adjacent to the trail if he thought the trail was a nuisance or safety issue or had other concerns with it being so close to his home, his immediate reply was that he ‘loves it’.

Recommended Park Elements for the Development of Little Bear Creek Linear Park

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Prepare and implement a design plan for the park that incorporates shaded walkways, hike and bike trails, picnic amenities, signage and a park entryway.
- Encourage existing homeowners to use open, metal fencing adjacent to park, to increase surveillance of the public land as well as recognition of the park as a desirable asset.
- Consider widening the low water crossing over the creek.
- Develop the remaining linking “Fall Creek” portion of the trail.
- Widen all trails to a uniform, 10 foot width.
- Provide a gateway and educational signage to announce this park land.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Implement maintenance procedures that encourage the protection of the native vegetation.
- Stabilize the creek banks with riparian plantings.
- Add appropriate native riparian vegetation in eroded areas.

Sustainable/LEED issues

- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate
- Add educational signage, perhaps created by children, to interpret native plantings.
- Continue to implement an integrated fertility and pest management program to minimize and/or eliminate reliance on chemicals and pesticides, and to maximize field conditions, plant health and safety; place preference on the use of naturally fertile compost and protective mulch.

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15.

Keller Smithfield Activity Node

Address: 416 Keller Smithfield Road

Type: Linear Park
Size: 3.0 Acres



Trees and shade structures provide ample shade. Playgrounds are not only for children – parents and friends socialize through a common interest and concern: their children.

Comments

This park that was recently renovated is well conceived, with ample play elements including a sand box. Located at the northeastern edge of the Parks at Town Center and along the Big Bear Creek Greenbelt, this park is bounded by the busy Keller-Smithfield Road. The well executed design provides a grade differential which affords both visual and auditory buffering from vehicular sight and noise.

From the entry, announced with stone signage that is the prototype for all new park signs, the parking area sidewalk leads to a group of play areas. The parking serves both the park and trail. Although located adjacent to a busy road, which provides for good access, the level difference between road and park creates a sense of safety.

A small gazebo has seating for visitors, and several benches along the trail provide a place to rest and watch children, or take in the wooded area to the west.

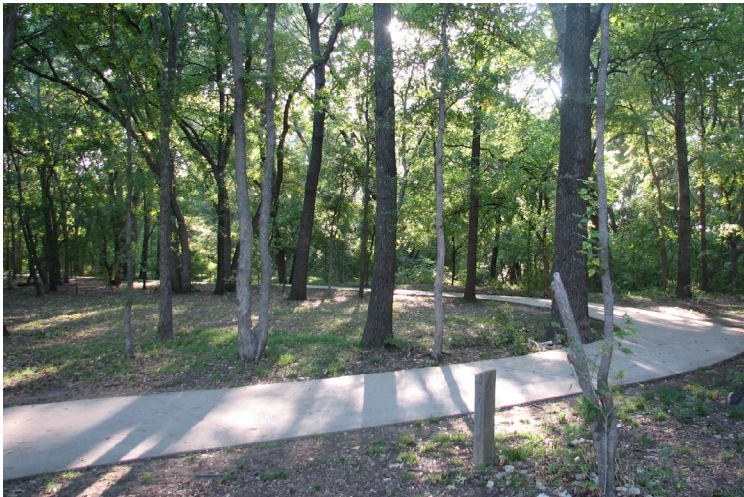
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The designed play areas are effectively contrasted with the natural areas accessible by the trail. Additionally, the park is located along the City’s trail network which allows for access by foot or bicycle from the surrounding community. As the trails enter the wooded area, the sense of being in nature immediately calms as one escapes the urban realm. Cyclists, moms running with babes in strollers, joggers – all enjoy the continuously changing views and sinuous trails.

Along the wooded trail, the land below the trees appears barren and subjected to sheet erosion. It is suggested that the leaf litter is left in place and that the establishment of the native shade tolerant grass inland sea oats is encouraged to establish among the trees.

Dark surfaces of play features should be limited or protected by shade wherever possible to protect from heat build up. A feature two mothers of toddlers mentioned they’d like to see is a restroom facility. Planned to be installed during the summer of 2007, it will be an amenity that is especially helpful for young children and mothers.

Park User Interview – The Planning Team encountered several residents visiting the park. They shared a positive appreciation for the park. Features that these mothers of youngsters mentioned they particularly like are the shade structures and climbing features. They also like the wooded natural area adjacent to the play area, and the connecting trails.



The trail provides good access to the natural areas that surround the park. It is recommended to install the shade loving wild sea oats, “Chasmanthium latifolium” to arrest sheet erosion.

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Informal, soft surface trails reveal park features such as this natural, winding creek.



Park signage, with the City logo, announces arrival to this park.



Parents of young children say they love this park with its shade structures, climbing features and its setting, set into shade trees and offering a trail experience along the Big Bear Creek Greenbelt.

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Existing Amenities in Keller Smithfield Activity Node

Programmed Space

- 1 Playground
- 1 Sand box

Natural Resources/ Open Space

- Creek adjacency

Built support/ amenities

- 1 Small pavilion
- 2 Picnic tables
- 2 BBQ Grills

- 4 Benches
- 1 Drinking fountain

Recommended Park Improvements for Keller Smithfield Activity Node

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Exchange dark for light colored slides.
- 1 Restroom (Planned for construction summer 2007)

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Place shade tolerant inland sea oats native grass amongst trees for erosion control.

Sustainable/LEED issues

- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate.
- Add educational signage to interpret native plantings.
- Continue to implement an integrated fertility and pest management program to maximize field conditions, plant health and safety; place preference on the use of naturally fertile compost and protective mulch.

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16.

Shady Grove Greenwalk

Address: 900 Shady Grove

Type: Linear Park
Size: 4.5 Acres (Undeveloped)



This utility easement will provide a sunny corridor for the future Shady Grove Greenwalk, with views along it to the densely vegetated grove.

Comments

The utility easement runs from west of S. Main Street southeasterly to the intersection of North Tarrant and Keller-Smithfield. Traversing the City of Keller as it does, it will provide an important regional trail connection to the Little Bear Creek Trail in adjoining North Richland Hills to the east, as well as on into Fort Worth to the west.

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Recommended Park Elements for Shady Grove Greenwalk

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Prepare and implement a design plan for the park that incorporates hike and bike trails, signage and a park entryway.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- N/A

Sustainable Opportunities

- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate
- Add educational signage to interpret native plantings.
- For maintenance; place preference on the use of naturally fertile compost and protective mulch.