

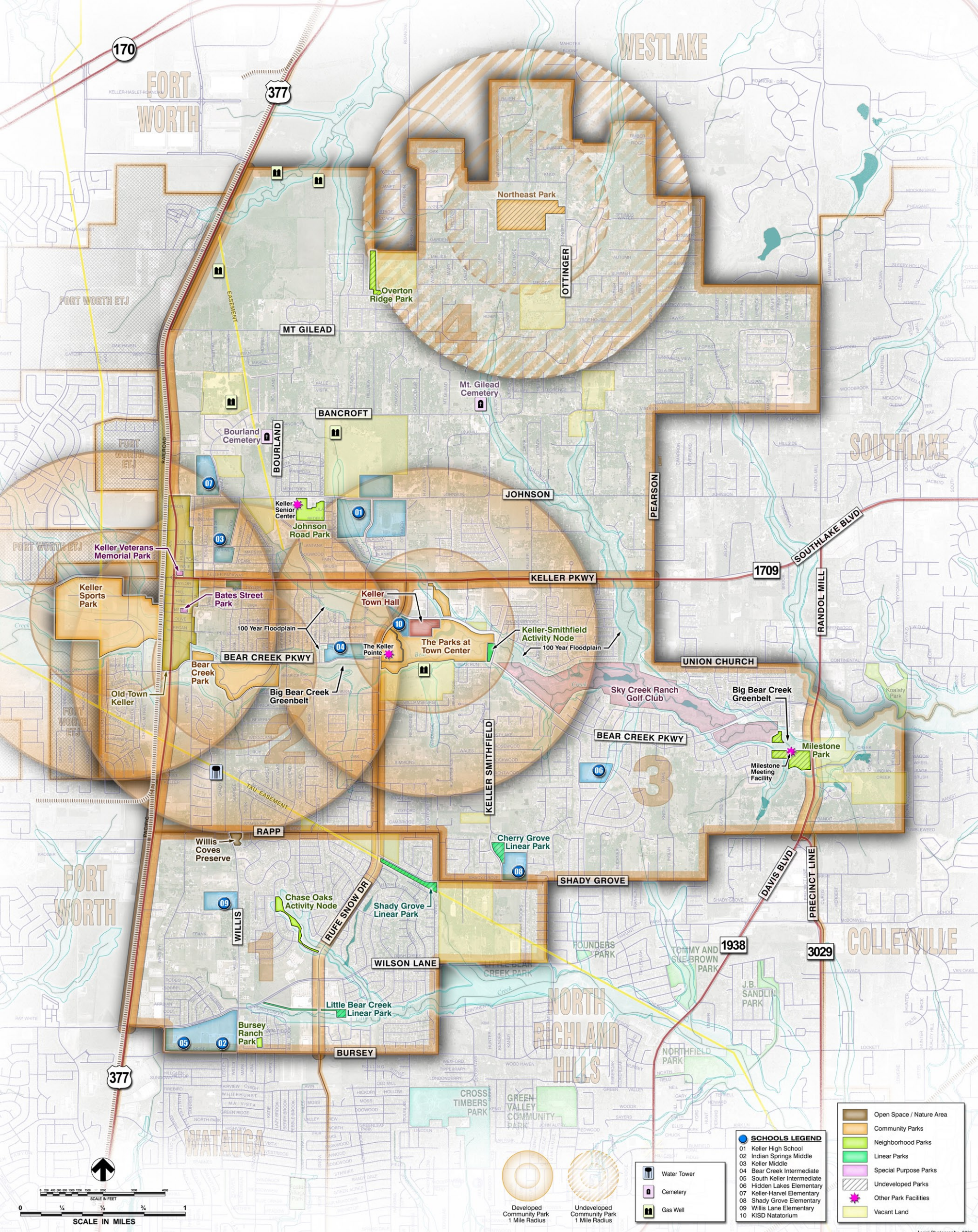
“Inspiring Exemplary Cultural Landscapes”

**3.6
Community Parks**

Index of Community Parks:

- 6. Bear Creek Park**
- 7. Keller Sports Park**
- 8. Northeast Park**
- 9. The Parks at Town Center**

*The **Existing Community Parks Map** on the next page depicts the relationship between the existing schools and parks in the City of Keller including a service radius of 1 mile which is typical for Community Parks.*



August 30, 2007

EXISTING COMMUNITY PARKS

CITY OF KELLER, TEXAS

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6.

Bear Creek Park

Address: 400 Bear Creek

Type: Community Park

Size: 44 Acres



An elderly lady with parasol and dog strolls past the trumpet-like fountains along the creek.

Comments

Bear Creek Park is characterized by its linear configuration and large shade trees, especially along Big Bear Creek. The creek itself is the spine and inspiration of the park, supporting life in and on the water as well as along its banks. Along the creek edge, there is evidence of some bank instability, as evidenced by the sheared sides along some portions of the creek. This erosion requires corrective measures, including natural water edge plants and a wide no-mowing zone to prevent further damage.

The configuration of the park is successful on many levels: Zones running parallel to the creek serve different functions in logical arrangement. Expansive multi-use play areas act as an intermediate sound buffer, reducing the noise from street traffic by sheer distance to the children’s play areas beyond. Large, mature shade trees form a wide belt surrounding play and picnic areas, creating a cool, intimate environment that is appealing and peaceful. A natural buffer to the parking lot, the creek zone attracts users to the sight and sound of water, as well as to the ducks, geese, turtles and other creatures living there.

Infrastructure such as parking is well handled in this heavily used park. Vehicular parking and trail access along the densely vegetated south side of the park fade to produce minimal impact. Amid the overarching natural growth, the parking is

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buffered along both its long sides. From this parking area, access into the park is provided by bridges. Crossing the creek acts as a special kind of park entry portal, connecting users to the park and activities beyond.

With the ample amenities and attractive features Bear Creek Park offers, it is no surprise that this park is a favorite destination for many users. The park is host to varied activities, from young adults and teenagers who gather to play volleyball, to citywide events, such as the Keller “Wild Wild West Fest”, and “Concerts in the Park”. During sports practices and festivals, the nature areas/ open space adjacent to the multi-use play areas serve temporarily to handle overflow parking.

In the case of the in-line hockey rink, its popularity and years of service are evident and signs of wear are planned to be addressed at the two proposed in-line hockey rinks, identified in the Keller Sports Park Master Plan.



A father holding his toddler son, comments “Bear Creek Park is unique – there’s really not another park like it anywhere else.”



Sheered creek banks show signs of erosion. Water edge plants and a wide, no-mowing zone is recommended along the edge of the creek.

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Park User Interview – A father and resident of Keller asked his daughter to name her favorite park and the reason. She answered, ‘Bear Creek Park...it has ducks, turtles, a creek and shade.’ A visitor from a nearby city enjoys the scenery with the creek, ducks and shade trees, remarking, “Everything is here.”



The “Wild Wild West Fest” in September attracted throngs of visitors and featured a great number of activities for all ages, including the Planning Team’s booth, which helped gain valuable input from residents regarding parks and recreation.



When a toddler meets an eye-catching canine “Wild Wild West Fest” visitor such as this one, both seem to appreciate the opportunity to simply enjoy such interesting encounters while making new friends.

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Birds such as this egret add to the serenity of the park.



Wide, shady trails are easily accessible and popular with every age.



Walking is a favorite past time in Bear Creek Park.



True to being a community park, Bear Creek Park provides the opportunity for a wide variety of recreation activities.

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| Existing Amenities in Bear Creek Park | |
|--|---|
| <p>Programmed Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Basketball Court • 5 Backstops • 2 Multi-use play areas • 4 Volleyball courts • 1 In-line hockey rink • 1 0.6 mile Hike and bike trail • 2 Playground units | <p>Natural Resources/ Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Creek • 1 Fishing pond |
| <p>Built support/ amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Gazebos • 1 Large pavilion • 27 Picnic units • 10 BBQ grills • 12 Benches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Bleachers • 3 Drinking fountains • 2 Foot bridges • 1 Restroom |

Recommended Park Improvements for Bear Creek Park

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- In-line hockey rink will be removed and replaced with one, possibly two rinks at the Keller Sports Park, as shown in the Keller Sports Park Master Plan.
- Install educational signage relating to creek ecology.
- Update Bear Creek Park Master Plan.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Control creek erosion with bank stabilization measures and use of native riparian plants.
- Plant native, shade-suited ground cover such as inland sea oats (*Chasthamium latifolium*) at bare areas under trees.

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
- 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.

General

- Consider a **“Friends of Bear Creek Park”** committee selected from the surrounding community to take ownership and stewardship of the park in terms of general maintenance, security and order.

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7.

Keller Sports Park

Address: 265 Golden Triangle

Type: Community Park

Size: 148 Acres



The pedestrian walkway needs additional heraldic elements including a gateway and approach that is lined with shade trees to emphasize the character and human experience of the park.

Comments

Located to the west of Highway 377 just south of Golden Triangle Boulevard (west of Keller Parkway), this park serves a singular community function as a multi-sport complex. The park contains soccer, multi-use/ equestrian arena, trails, a pond, fishing pier, sand volleyball courts, playgrounds and a wildflower meadow. The baseball and softball areas use space efficiently in a cloverleaf configuration, with the concession building at the center.

Celebratory elements should create views to the diamonds that highlight the human quality in a spirited, unique manner, adding to the overall quality of the park. The pedestrian access, while defined, does not go far enough to celebrate the procession to the park center. The two existing pedestrian approaches to the concession stands at the baseball diamonds need to be emphasized and made more attractive, relating to human scale.

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Opportunities to orient the user should be realized in the form of gateways, special plantings and signage to add functionality and character overall. The row of crape myrtles blocking a visual axis to the softball diamonds misses an orienting opportunity, perhaps with a symbolic gateway, providing needed identity as well. Effective heraldic signage evoking human spirit would enhance approaches, both vehicular and pedestrian, while providing needed functional, orienting information. The Keller Sports Park Master Plan shows sign and flag poles as welcoming elements. The concession stand itself needs architectural study to determine the best treatment to make it prominent. Such enhancements would transform this area into one that is vibrant, attractive, and speaks to the human activities of this park. The Keller Youth League’s diamonds have a friendly, relaxing aspect. They benefit by the natural wildscape buffer adjacent to vehicle access and parking. In addition, there is also an attractive trail which parallels this green buffer.

In the park by the soccer fields, the central core concession stand likely has inherent organizational efficiency in serving customers; however, although its design does provide peripheral shade, it is not designed to provide much needed shade and shelter to large groups and families. Adding a shaded, large group picnic pavilion would provide sun protection in this expansive, open park. Such an amenity located near the concession stand would be very useful.

The sea of parking throughout the sports complex needs lots of trees and identifying signage to orient users to the park, perhaps by unique plantings to distinguish areas dedicated to baseball, soccer, etc. When the parking is not in use, it adds heat and surface water run-off to the city.

There are two playgrounds; the children’s play area off in the west corner near the soccer fields, while out of harm’s way, seems small in proportion to the park and its amenities. This play area should be larger and well shaded. It is recommended that a general analysis of use be conducted to determine strategic locations for additional play areas and group shade structures.



As an horseback and pedestrian entry way to Keller Sports Park, this relocated old bridge adds character and a sense of identity to park.

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Existing Amenities in Keller Sports Park

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Programmed Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 Baseball fields (4 T-ball fields) • 4 Softball fields • 5 Soccer pads • 2 Football fields • 2 Sand volleyball courts • 1 mile Hike and bike trail • 2 Playground units • 1 multi-use, equestrian Arena • Equestrian Trail | <p>Natural Resources/ Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing pond • Creek adjacency • Designated Wildflower Area | | |
| <p>Built support/ amenities</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="375 821 776 1010"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation deck/ fishing pier • 1 Large pavilion • 10 Picnic units • 1 BBQ grill • 5 Concession buildings • 47 Benches </td> <td data-bbox="971 804 1451 995"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 Bleachers • 9 Drinking fountains • 1 pedestrian/ equestrian Foot bridge • 5 Restrooms • Off street parking • Handicapped parking </td> </tr> </table> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation deck/ fishing pier • 1 Large pavilion • 10 Picnic units • 1 BBQ grill • 5 Concession buildings • 47 Benches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 Bleachers • 9 Drinking fountains • 1 pedestrian/ equestrian Foot bridge • 5 Restrooms • Off street parking • Handicapped parking |
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Recommended Park Improvements for Keller Sports Park

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Continue to develop the park according to the Keller Sports Park Master Plan.
- Enlarge children’s play area by the soccer fields.
- Provide shade trees around the play area.
- Add shade trees along pedestrian approaches to ballparks.
- Add shade trees at parking lot.
- Provide a large pavilion with a multi-tier roof to reduce heat build up.
- Add architectural treatment to bring prominence to the centrally located concession stand at the baseball diamonds.
- Add orienting banners or other heraldic signage.
- Complete construction according to approved Keller Sports Park Master Plan.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Encourage the long term health of creek associated vegetation.

Sustainable Opportunities

- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate
- 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.
- Consider future replacement of paved parking with permeable surface material.

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8.

Northeast Park

Address: 1792 Ottinger

Type: Community Park

Size: 43 Acres



Even though the Northeast Park is at present undeveloped, children from the surrounding neighborhood enjoy exploring the western edge of the park. Asking them what they would like to see in the future park, their immediate reaction was ‘trails for walking and bicycling’. The concrete pathway allows for a relatively steep access from the residential development beyond.

Comments

The forested edges of the undeveloped Northeast Park are enjoyed by children as exciting play areas. This property, once the site of a quarry/borrow pit, is relatively inaccessible. The only road access is currently from the short east side which creates a sense of isolation. The pedestrian access from the new residential development on the west side is extremely limited with a steep concrete pathway that is non-ADA compliant. The park site is at present denuded of both trees and topsoil.

With innovative design, the topography of the land can be employed to create a functional and beautiful amenity for the community. In order to make this park useable, functional and safe, it is important to create both visual and physical transparency between the neighboring communities. The ideal tool for this is a single loaded road between the park and the surrounding developments. However, it appears that the residential developments currently under construction to the east, north and west have their properties’ backyards oriented

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towards the park. This is unfortunate. In fact, the worst possible scenario for the park will be gated communities on all four of its sides. It is suggested that single loaded roads be required for future residential developments that abut the park. In addition, all neighboring developments should be required to provide multiple, wide and easily accessible pedestrian access ways to the park.

Park User Interview – The Planning Team asked some children between ages 10 and 13 what they would like to see in the park. Their first and immediate reaction was: ‘trails for walking and bicycling.’



Denuded of all trees, this parkland site appears barren and heavily damaged as seen from the west side. However, with innovative design, the topography of the land can be employed to create a functional and beautiful amenity for the community.

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| Existing Amenities in Northeast Park | |
|--|---|
| Programmed Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A | Natural Resources/ Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exciting topography |
| Built support/ amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A | |

Recommended Park Improvements for Northeast Park

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Prepare and implement a Northeast Park Master Plan for the park that incorporates shaded children’s play areas, walkways, jogging trails, picnic amenities, a multi-tier roof pavilion, signage and a park entryway, with citizen input.
- Install an ADA compliant hike and bike/jogging trail to access the park.
- Design the park with a theme suited to the character of its wooded area.
- Use transparent fences wherever residential properties are adjacent to park land.
- Provide a large pavilion with a multi-tier roof to reduce heat build up.
- Install educational signage relating to native vegetation.
- Require all neighboring residential areas to provide public trail connections to the park land.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Incorporate the topographic change of the site in an innovative and creative manner.

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 topography change and 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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9.

The Parks at Town Center

Address: 1100 Bear Creek

Type: Community Park

Size: 154.73 Acres



The columnar fountain jet acts as a focus for the Town Hall and park users.

Comments

At the heart of Keller’s park system is Keller Town Center, the “hub” and administrative center of the City. As such, it holds a unique position among all the parks in Keller: one that imparts a special sense of civic pride, of celebration, ceremony and also of particular sensitivity to the land. The Keller Town Hall itself presents two fronts: one that faces the street, the urban side and the opposite side whose large glass expanses offer maximum opportunities to appreciate the beauty of the landscape.

The park’s elegant, modern design marries itself to the architecture of the Town Hall. The landscape surrounding Keller Town Hall contains formal elements, yet the overall composition and feel is relaxed and flowing. The linear quality of the views and landscape create a sense of harmony, community and connection to the world beyond.

The water itself is not taken in as a whole in one view. As such, it adds to the grace and community feel of the park: you are drawn into it and invited to explore it. From every direction, the sound of cascading water from the columnar fountain jet audibly orients and reaffirms itself as central focus of this quietly magnificent space that opens before the Town Hall.

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Along the water feature, gently curving trails pull the user into the landscape, tracing the perimeter of the pond. In contrast to the lovingly manicured, more formal landscape, new views gradually unfold, revealing the great open, natural meadow beyond the pond. Tall dead branches provide excellent observable perches for native birds. In this space, one can appreciate the sight and sounds of indigenous birds, in an atmosphere of abundance and pleasure that only nature provides.



The stately, urban façade from the street complements the park façade’s transparency. The equestrian sculpture in front of the entry was on display during the sculpture show, which gave residents opportunity to appreciate the artistry of sculpture indoors as well as in this outdoor setting.



The gently curving terraces echo the rippling pattern of the fountain at the center of the pond, on axis with the Town Hall.



New views gradually unfold, revealing the great open, natural meadow.

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Reflections create their own, ever-changing, art form.



The trail that runs through The Parks at Town Center is popular with joggers.



A runner keeps a steady pace along the curving trail opening into natural meadowland.

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| Existing Amenities in The Parks at Town Center | |
|---|---|
| <p>Programmed Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 miles Hike and bike trail • 1 Nature trail • 1 Playground unit | <p>Natural Resources/ Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Nature area • 2 fishing ponds • Native plant demonstration garden |
| <p>Built support/ amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Large pavilion • 7 Picnic units • 13 Benches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Drinking fountain • 2 Foot bridges • Interpretive signage |

Recommended Park Improvements for The Parks at Town Center

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Complete construction per The Parks at Town Center Master Plan, including the amphitheater.
- Add signage explaining the value of dead trees in the landscape, “open space”, and native wildlife, water fowl, etc.
- Add drinking fountains along the trails.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Implement maintenance procedures that minimize disturbance to natural areas and maximize natural plant growth.
- Implement maintenance practices that aim to protect the natural vegetation and ecology of the park.

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 field conditions, plant health and safety; place preference on the use of naturally fertile compost and protective mulch.