

**“Inspiring Exemplary Cultural Landscapes”**

**1.**

**Introduction**

**1.1  
Background**

The City of Keller is an attractive city in the northwestern part of the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex. It is a place that is very desirable to live, work and play.

It is also a place that is fortunate to have so many residents who have not only their roots but also their affection firmly in Keller. From its open spaces to its lush mature trees of the Eastern Cross Timbers region, residents of Keller feel proud to be part of a community that treasures and seeks to cultivate the image, health, safety, and welfare of the City and its people.

Keller residents have a huge appreciation for parks and the benefits they bring to the quality of life in a city. In fact, compared to other communities in the metroplex, Keller residents are the frontrunners in the usage and enjoyment of parks, which is telling of their attitudes about parks.

When Keller residents are asked to describe Keller in a word or image, it is invariably the rural character of the City with ample open space that comes through in their predominantly positive remarks:

Relaxed...country... small town feel...TREES...an oasis... peaceful...  
friendly...green...spectacular...rural...spacious...  
a community within Greenspace...

These residents also believe that such character is important to preserve where it exists. The country feel is also an extremely important quality of the City that residents wish to see retained and preserved.

Such concern, even ardor, is evident in residents’ appreciation of parks and recreational facilities in Keller. *Almost all* of Keller residents – 93% of attitude survey respondents – utilize the parks and recreational facilities that the city has to offer. They like what they experience in the parks and they want to see more. Keller’s parks even draw people from *outside the community*, such is the attraction. Not many cities can boast such popularity of their parks and recreational facilities.

The only remarks from residents which have any negativity reflect a concern about rapid change they’ve experienced in Keller: ‘Growing... crowded... growing too fast!’ Change, particularly growth in population and development, is an important aspect of Keller. Most recently, the city’s growth has increased

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dramatically. Population in Keller has *almost tripled* from 13,683 in 1990 (according to the U.S. Census) to more than 37,685 today, as estimated by the Keller Department of Economic Development. Build-out population for Keller has been revised from 45,000 to upwards of 51,300, according to City projections.

Growth brings economic prosperity and pressures whose effects ripple out to the entire community. Keller is “locked” on all sides, geographically and, thus, does not have an unlimited ability to expand, nor an extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), for that matter. As development continues, the City is faced with choices which will affect the community for generations. Choices in the past already have made their mark in shaping the city: the commercial and retail zoning running north-south along the railroad and Highway 377 on the westernmost side of the City and the east to west retail usage along Keller Parkway, which bisects the City, north to south. Today, Keller lacks park land sufficient for its population, and further suffers seriously from a geographic imbalance in park distribution for its residents.

It is important that, as growth occurs, open space be carefully preserved and trail connections designed and implemented. Development that acknowledges and responds to the character of the land will contribute to a high quality of life in Keller.



*Rural landscapes like this are fast disappearing in the metroplex without a concerted effort to protect such relaxing views.*

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Protected natural areas, rural landscapes and well-developed parks are often the first place that visitors view in a community. In fact, park and open space conservation, including protection of the features of the natural landscape, are some of the most visible elements that can instill a strong sense of pride in the residents of a community. A good park and open space system lets both citizens and visitors know that the leadership of the City is interested in providing the best for its citizens.

***“Many community leaders feel they must choose between economic growth and open space protection. But no such choice is necessary. Open space protection is good for a community’s health, stability, beauty, and quality of life. It is also good for the bottom line.”***

- Will Rogers,  
President, Trust for Public Land; 1999.

Open space protection combined with outdoor recreation play an essential role in the quality of life in cities universally, and in Keller. A strong, diverse and balanced parks and recreation system provides for a healthier environment, improves the well-being of children and young adults, and reduces the potential for crime in the City.



*Children and young adults benefit tremendously from physical exercise.*



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In order to do proper planning for parks and recreation in the future, it is essential to understand the demographics of the community. The current population of 37,685 is expected to increase by roughly 38.75% to a build-out population of 52,000. Growth within the next 10 years is expected to be steady, with an increase of approximately 10% for a population of 40,500 in 2017. A population of children and young adults up to age 34 is almost matched by the population of 35 to 65 year olds with 50% and 46% respectively. Over 60% of the City's population is adult. On the other hand, children under 15 years of age accounted for 28.6% of all residents for the year 2000. It appears that Keller is a desirable place for folks of all ages.

**1.2**

***Aim of the Parks Master Plan***

The purpose of this 2007 Keller Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to set the stage for future parks and recreation development. The park planning process allows the citizens of Keller to determine what their preferred park and recreation priorities should be for the next five to ten years.

A “Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan” is exactly what its name indicates: “Parks” typically refer to land dedicated to outdoor areas programmed for “Recreation”, which refers to both active and passive recreation activities including ball play, jogging, picnicking, etc. “Open Space” refers to land dedicated for conservation and preservation due to its ecological value, wildlife habitat quality, cultural significance, and/or its functional role to assist with flood management, etc. Active recreation is typically not the purpose of “Open Space”, which is often very valuable for passive experience including bird and wildflower observation, hiking and contemplation. Strategically, dedication of open space can contribute significantly to attaining and preserving a sense of rural character in a city environment.

The importance of open space is often overlooked since the concept of open space does not always fit the idea of land programmed for a particular recreational activity that would require regular landscape maintenance. However, the very reason for it not requiring regular attention can be a great asset, offering outdoors enjoyment, visual pleasure and ecological function at minimum cost.

The 2007 Parks Master Plan is a tool that:

- Guides City Council, staff and Parks and Recreation Board in acquiring land to meet current and future park and open space needs;
- Points out opportunities for park development;

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- Looks at the potential growth of the City over the next 5 to 10 years, and assess where facilities will be needed as the City grows, and specify what types of facilities are most needed;
- Prioritizes key recommendations of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible;
- Guides City staff and City leaders in determining how and where parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years.



*This image of pasture land wildflowers and grasses is telling of the bucolic calm and rural quality in Keller.*

**1.3**

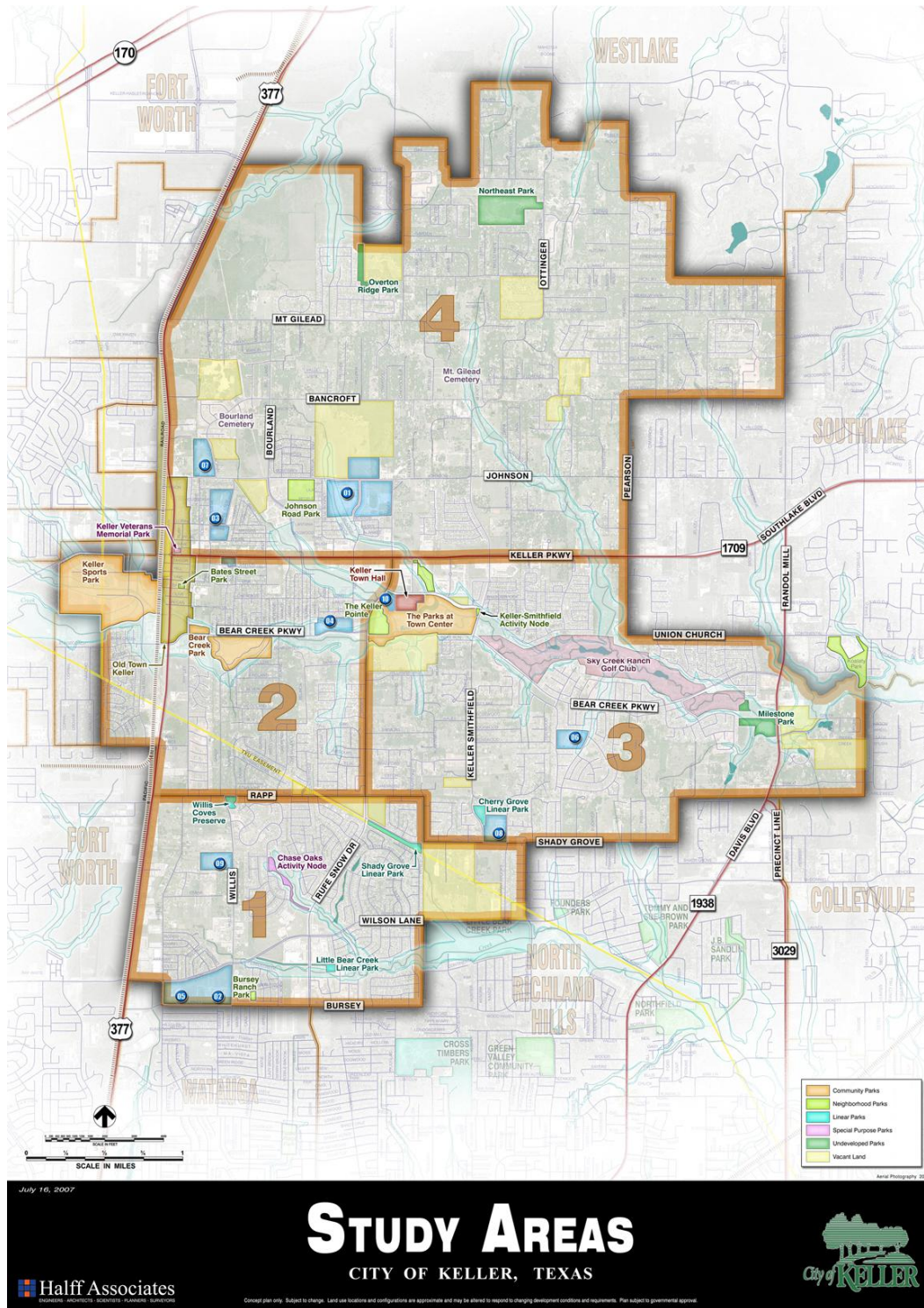
***Jurisdictional and Planning Area***

At present, the area within the City limits measures 18.5 square miles, or 11,840 acres. The Keller Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is intended to cover all of the City of Keller. The City should consider the recommendations of this Parks Master Plan in future deliberations and decisions.

**Figure 1.1** on the next page details the study area of this Master Plan.



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**Figure 1.1**  
**Study area of the 2007 Keller Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan**

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**1.4**

***Role of the City of Keller in Providing Recreational Opportunities***

The City of Keller is the primary governmental entity charged with providing recreational facilities for the citizens of Keller. Ancillary recreational facilities may be provided by the State of Texas through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Keller Independent School District, Tarrant County, and through various homeowners associations.

**1.5**

***Parks Master Plan Components***

The Park Master Plan follows the general guidelines for local park master plans established by TPWD. This document also is intended to meet the requirements of the Department of Interior for the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program.

This master plan includes all components to meet the requirements of Park Master Plans as established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grant program (see Figure 1.2 below).



***Figure 1.2***  
***Components of a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, as specified by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department***

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**1.6**

**Parks Master Plan Timeframe**

The 2007 Keller Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is formulated to address the time frame from the year 2007 until the year 2017. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department requires that the City’s Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan be completely updated at minimum after a ten year period; otherwise, three to five years or more often if any major developments occur which significantly alter the recreation needs of the City. In addition, an annual review by the Keller Parks and Recreation Board and Parks and Recreation Department staff will be conducted to review progress over the previous year. Biannual updates will be prepared by the Parks and Recreation staff or on a more frequent basis if special needs or occurrences require modifications to the Master Plan. In all cases, public involvement will be included in any updating process.

The following **Figure 1.3** describes the planning and implementation cycle for the Keller Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.



**Figure 1.3**  
**Components and Sequence of the Parks Master Plan and Implementation Cycle**