

The City Council of the City of Seabrook met in regular session on Tuesday, February 6, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in Seabrook City Hall, 1700 First Street, Seabrook, Texas to discuss, consider and if appropriate, take action on the items listed below.

THOSE PRESENT WERE:

GLENN R. ROYAL	MAYOR
KIM MORRELL – Ex. Abs.	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 1
MIKE GIANGROSSO	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 2
PAUL R. DUNPHEY	MAYOR PRO TEM &
	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 3
DON HOLBROOK.	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 4
THOM KOLUPSKI	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 5
LAURA DAVIS	COUNCIL PLACE NO. 6
KELLY TEMPLIN	CITY MANAGER
STEVEN L. WEATHERED	CITY ATTORNEY
MICHELE L. GLASER	CITY SECRETARY

Mayor Royal called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

1.1 Mayor, City Council and/or members of city staff may make announcements about city/community events. (Council)

Council members announced upcoming events, including Yachty Gras, Men Who Cook and the Trash Bash.

2.0 SPECIFIC PUBLIC HEARING(S)

2.1 Consider proposed Ord. No. 2012-04, "Add 'RV Parks' as a Conditional Use in the Light Industrial (LI) District. (P&Z)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE CITY OF SEABROOK APPENDIX A, "COMPREHENSIVE ZONING", ARTICLE 3, "ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING DISTRICTS AND ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS", SECTION 3.15 "COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE REGULATION MATRIX," BY ADDING "RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK" AS A CONDITIONAL USE WITHIN THE FOLLOWING LAND USE DISTRICT, "LIGHT INDUSTRIAL" (LI); PROVIDING A PENALTY IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2000 FOR VIOLATION OF ANY PROVISION HEREOF BY INCLUSION INTO THE CODE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT OR IN CONFLICT HERewith; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

There were no comments from the public.

46 **3.0 CONSENT AGENDA**

47 **3.1 Appoint O. J. Miller as a CLEMC representative for the City. (Royal)**

48
49 **3.2** Removed from the Consent Agenda.
50

51 **3.3 Approve a special events permit request and a waiver of fees for a Fun Run to Support**
52 **Organ Transplant Awareness on Tuesday, March 13, 2012 from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00**
53 **p.m. in Meador Park pending receipt of correct proof of insurance. (Applicant)**
54

55 **3.4 Approve request by Robby Sabban for a special events permit in Meador Park and**
56 **trails on March 17 and 18, 2012 for the Lucky Trails Marathon, permission for**
57 **temporary signs, request for waiver of fees and permission to serve beer in the park.**
58 **(Applicant)**
59

60 **3.5 Approve request by Lucky Trails Marathon for waiver of rental fees for use of the**
61 **Community House on Sunday, March 11; Thursday, March 22; and Friday, March 23,**
62 **2012. (Applicant)**
63

64 **3.6 Approve the second and final reading of proposed Ord. No. 2012-03, "Junked Vehicles,**
65 **including Aircraft and Watercraft" (Landis)**
66

67 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 55 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF
68 THE CITY OF SEABROOK, ENTITLED "NUISANCES AND MISCELLANEOUS
69 PROVISIONS", ARTICLE IV, DIVISION 2, "JUNKED VEHICLES" TO UPDATE
70 PROVISIONS AND TO INCLUDE NEW STATUTORY REVISIONS TO ADDRESS
71 AIRCRAFT AND WATERCRAFT; PROVIDING FOR A PENALTY IN AN AMOUNT
72 NOT TO EXCEED \$200 OR AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED BY LAW; REPEALING ALL
73 ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT OR IN CONFLICT
74 HERewith AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY.
75

76 **3.7 Approve the Investment Reports for First Quarter FY 2011/12. (Lab)**
77

78 **3.8 Approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting on January 17, 2012. (Glaser)**
79

80 Motion was made by Councilor Holbrook and seconded by Councilor Kolupski
81

82 To approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Item 3.2.
83

84 MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.
85

86 **END OF CONSENT AGENDA**
87
88
89

3.2 Approve excused absences for Kim Morrell for the meetings of February 7 and February 21. (Glaser)

Councilor Dunphey stated that this item had been removed from the Consent Agenda in error.

Motion made by Councilor Holbrook and seconded by Councilor Giangrosso

To approve Item 3.2.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Consider approval of first reading of proposed Ord. No. 2012-04, "Adding the use of 'Recreational Vehicle Park' as a Conditional Use in the LI (Light Industrial District)." (Council/P&Z)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE CITY OF SEABROOK APPENDIX A, "COMPREHENSIVE ZONING", ARTICLE 3, "ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING DISTRICTS AND ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS", SECTION 3.15 "COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE REGULATION MATRIX," BY ADDING "RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK" AS A CONDITIONAL USE WITHIN THE FOLLOWING LAND USE DISTRICT, "LIGHT INDUSTRIAL" (LI); PROVIDING A PENALTY IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2000 FOR VIOLATION OF ANY PROVISION HEREOF BY INCLUSION INTO THE CODE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT OR IN CONFLICT HERewith; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Motion was made by Councilor Davis and seconded by Councilor Giangrosso

To approve Ordinance No. 2012-04 on first reading with the reading of the caption serving as the reading of the Ordinance.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

4.2 Consider approval of first and final reading of proposed Ordinance No. 2012-05, "Amendments to the 2010/11 Budget." (Lab)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 1, 2010 AND ENDING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2011 FOR THE CITY OF SEABROOK

Motion was made by Councilor Holbrook and seconded by Councilor Kolupski

To approve Ordinance No. 2012-05 on first and final reading with the reading of the caption serving as the reading of the Ordinance.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

4.3 Consider approval of first and final reading of Proposed Ord. No. 2012-06, "Calling the May 12, 2012 General Election and a Runoff Election if necessary." (Glaser)

AN ORDINANCE CALLING AND ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE GENERAL CITY OFFICERS' ELECTION FOR COUNCIL POSITIONS 1, 3 AND 5 TO BE HELD ON MAY 12, 2012; ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR A RUNOFF ELECTION TO BE HELD ON JUNE 16, 2012 IF NO CANDIDATE RECEIVES A MAJORITY OF VOTES CAST IN THE MAY GENERAL ELECTION; AND MAKING OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED THERETO

Motion was made by Councilor Davis and seconded by Councilor Holbrook

To approve first and final reading of Ordinance No. 2012-06 with the reading of the caption serving as the reading of the Ordinance.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

City Attorney Steve Weathered left the meeting at this time with the consent of Council.

5.0 OLD BUSINESS

5.1 Consider approval of Open Space Wish List for parks projects. (Templin)

Motion was made by Councilor Davis and seconded by Councilor Holbrook

To approve the list as presented.

Mr. Chairez stated that the list contained small projects that could be completed by a volunteer group. Mr. Chairez stated that if Council approves the list tonight, he will not have to appear at future meetings to have individual projects approved. Councilor Giangrosso stated that he would like notification after the project has been completed so the volunteer group can be recognized.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

5.2 Review/Consider the Parks Master Plan presented by the Open Space, Beautification and Preservation Committee. (Holbrook)

Open Space Committee members participating in the review were: Sally Antrobus, Helen Burton, Heather Cable, John Coggeshall and Debra Harper.

Motion was made by Councilor Dunphey and seconded by Councilor Giangrosso

To review the plan.

Council and Committee Members reviewed pages 1-23, through Section 3.4.4. Specific changes are shown on Attachment A which is made a part of these minutes. No formal vote was taken on any of the changes.

6.0 ROUTINE BUSINESS

6.1 Approve the Action Items Checklist. (Council)

Motion was made by Councilor Davis and seconded by Councilor Giangrosso

To approve the Action Items Checklist.

MOTION CARRIES BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

6.2 Establish future meeting dates and agenda items. (Council)

Council scheduled a work session on Monday, February 13, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. to continue review of the Parks Plan.

Upon motion, Mayor Royal adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Approved this 21st day of February, 2012.


Glenn R. Royal, Mayor


Michele Glaser, TRMC
City Secretary



This includes revisions made on 2/7/12 ending at Section 3.4.4. on original page 23.

Seabrook Open Space and Parks Master Plan



Seabrook City Council
~~September~~ February 2011

Comment [mlg1]: Replace all current logos with new logo





Comment [mlg2]: Insert new logo

Seabrook City Council

Glenn Royal, Mayor
Laura Davis
Paul Dunphey
Mike Giangrosso
Don Holbrook
Thom Kolupski
Kim Morrell

Open Space, Beautification and Preservation Committee

Helen Burton, Chair
Dori Nelson, Vice Chair
Sally Antrobus
Heather Cable
John Coggeshall
Debra Harper
Karen Tisdell

Acknowledgments

Senior City staff Chuck Pinto, Kelly Templin and Arthur Chairez carry primary responsibility for efficient administration of parks and green space. Everyone in Seabrook is indebted to them. Special thanks go to Meredith Brant for clerical support and to Faith Shallis for help with maps and processing public input. Dick Bricker and Sally Antrobus supplied photographs.

For thoughtful critique we are grateful to professional park planners John DeBessonnet of Harris County, Wendy Kovach of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Chien Wei of the League City parks department, and Charles Burditt of Burditt Consulting; to the Galveston Bay Foundation's Bob Stokes and Scott Jones; public lands consultant Linda Shead; Chris LaChance of the Texas Coastal Watershed Program; and more than 70 Seabrook residents who reviewed the draft plan and provided feedback.

Cover photograph by Richard W. (Dick) Bricker

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Comment [m1g3]: Page numbers will be updated when review is completed.

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149 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

150 ~~~~~

151 ~~The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe around us,~~
152 ~~the less taste we shall have for destruction.~~

153 —Rachel Carson

Comment [mig4]: Delete all quotes.

154
155
156
157
158 Seabrook is known and admired for quality parks, trails and natural areas. Residents repeatedly identify the
159 city's waterfront and natural areas as key community assets. This Open Space and Parks Master Plan is
160 intended to ensure that parklands, open space, and waterfront views remain prominent public assets and
161 components of Seabrook's appeal as the city grows.

162
163 Goals are based on a three-pronged approach:

- 164
- 165 • Best use of existing park holdings
 - 166 • Explicit focus on open space and natural settings
 - 167 • Selective acquisition to serve the anticipated increase in residents
- 168

169 Making the best use of existing parkland is a baseline objective. Parks include two recently acquired
170 properties for which uses are still being refined (Drusilla Carothers Coastal Gardens; 40-acre addition to
171 Seabrook Wildlife Refuge). Proposals for conserving natural space and expanding park holdings for future
172 needs are an effort to respond to public preferences. Using locally adapted trees and plants is favored for
173 beautification.

174
175 Current park acreage is about 200 acres, or about 5 percent of the city's land area. ~~This is below both~~
176 ~~national and Texas averages.~~ Among the goals of this plan is to increase open space areas. The projected
177 ten-year budget is nevertheless quite modest at some \$2 million. Every effort has been made to keep costs
178 within the range of feasibility. Recommendations interface with other funded projects in the city, such as
179 roadway development and renewal of the Waterfront District.

180
181 Note that this is one of three companion documents in a single 2009-2011 suite of parks planning. It should
182 be read in conjunction with the *Seabrook Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan* (March 2010) and *Drusilla*
183 *Carothers Coastal Gardens Master Plan* (February 2010). The present plan includes both a priority facilities
184 listing (section 2.1), which addresses short-term needs; and a set of longer-term goals (section 2.2),
185 representing an overall vision.

186
187 A cornerstone of this vision is caution about adding amenities that carry high operating costs. Trail expansion
188 and keeping certain lands in a natural condition are ~~widespread~~ public preferences. Not everyone uses parks,
189 but everyone benefits from them. Even people who never set foot in a city park enjoy scenic components of
190 the local environment, green islands in the urban fabric, and the resulting sense of peace.

Comment [mig5]: City Manager to provide definitions of park, open space & green space

191 **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

192 ~~~~~

193 **1.1 DEFINITIONS**

194

195 For the purpose of this document, certain terms and words are to be used and interpreted as defined in
196 this Section.
197

198 A Park is a protected area, in its natural or semi-natural state, or planted, and set aside for human
199 recreation and enjoyment, or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats.

200 Open space is a planning and conservation ethics term used to describe areas of protected or conserved
201 land or water on which development is indefinitely set aside. The term green space or is often used in the
202 same manner.

203 Green Space is a plot of undeveloped land separating or surrounding areas of intensive development that
204 is maintained for recreational enjoyment.

205 Greenway/greenbelt is a linear open space or a recreational corridor that often links parks and/or other
206 open space.

207 Common Open Space means a parcel or parcels of land or an area of water or a combination of land and
208 water designed for the use and enjoyment of residents. Common open space as defined herein includes
209 both passively landscaped sites without improvements of any kind or complimentary structures and
210 improvements as necessary and appropriate for the enjoyment of residents.

211

212

Comment [m1g6]: Term "natural space" is also used throughout the document.

Too often, the look of the urban landscape is determined by developers (usually from out of town), who fundamentally shape the kind of living experience people will have when they go home from work every night.

—Jill Nokes, *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest*

Comment [m1g7]: Remove quote

1.4.2 Vision, Scope and Public Process

Seabrook takes public pride in its park system, trails network, waterfront, and natural areas as hallmarks of the community. This plan responds to public concerns about ensuring the continued prominence of these community assets as the city grows. Recommendations are provided for emphasizing the known priorities of park excellence and public waterfront access; for ensuring effective use of existing park holdings; and for keeping pace with population growth through careful open-space acquisition of property for parks, open space and green space.

The plan is wider in scope than past parks planning documents, based on guidance emerging from opinion surveys. Parks, trails, the waterfront, and natural areas are high on the list of most valued aspects of Seabrook in three major surveys (see Appendix A for summaries of survey results from 1998, 2004, and 2009); the waterfront and waterfront access are at the top of the 2009 identification of community assets, as conducted by Seabrook's Master Plan Commission. Parks and trails are second, by a narrow margin. "Small town charm" ranked third in the 2009 identification of assets. Clearly these features are key factors in why people choose Seabrook.

Methods for gathering public opinion for this parks and open space plan were to:

- use past surveys as a basis for drafting a new parks master plan
- make the draft plan available for public comment
- circulate the draft to selected advisors and City committee volunteers for comments
- invite comment on the draft by members of the public
- revise the draft in light of comments received (see Appendix E for full compilation of comments)

1.2 Background and Related Plans

The last plan for Seabrook's parks (*Seabrook Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, 1998) was prepared by Clark Condon Associates, Landscape Architects. It was later partially amended by Duke Landscape Architecture and Planning. In 2009 the Open Space, Beautification and Preservation Committee was assigned to produce a new master plan for parks and open space. Two other documents are part of the same 2009-2011 suite of planning work: the *Pine Gully Park and Carothers Coastal Garden Master Plan* (October 2009), prepared by Burditt Consultants, and the *Seabrook Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan* (March 2010), prepared by the Open Space Committee.

In effect the present document is part 1 of the new parks master plan, while the trails plan is part 2, and the Carothers plan is part 3 (although the Carothers and trails plans were produced earlier). Goals for all three are given in section 2.0.



Figure 1. Kayakers have several launch options in Seabrook, including the Boat Ramp at the south end of the city. A launch site specifically for their use is among plan recommendations.

Three related documents and projects involve urban infrastructure. The *Seabrook Comprehensive Master Plan 2030* (April 2010), prepared by Master Plan Review Commission, provides population projections and an overarching context of objectives for the city. The *South Seabrook Waterfront Development Plan* (June 2006), prepared for Seabrook's Economic Development Corporation by JJR Consultants, provides more detailed guidelines for the waterfront. And Furthermore, TxDOT's plans for development of Highway 146 through Seabrook will bring significant changes.

Three more involve local wildlife habitat. The *Seabrook Habitat Island Feasibility Study* (August 2009), prepared by AECOM for the Galveston Bay Foundation and Seabrook Economic Development Corporation, provides specifications for a project that has components of storm protection, economic recovery, and habitat restoration (see section 4.2). Restoration is also the core of a project envisaged for the northern bayou called Pine Gully (see section 4.3).

The *Seabrook Slough Restoration Plan and Ecotourism Initiative* (September 2002) is a proposal for creating marshes in the Slough near Second Street. Ownership issues resulted in no action on this plan. However, land

that has subsided to become shallow, sheltered open water remains a good candidate area for marsh restoration. Marshes are key nursery habitat for many marine species of fish and shellfish, and loss of marshland has been extensive all around Galveston Bay. In time this proposal (see Appendix L for a summary) or a variation of it may warrant reconsideration.

Actions in surrounding cities also have bearing, illustrating the widening commitment to parks, trails, and open space as a source of economic benefits as well as public health benefits. The City of Houston has intensified its emphasis on parks in recent years, most notably with Discovery Green, successfully anchoring a surge of downtown redevelopment by creating, right in the city center, a major new green attraction complete with performance space and events (opened in April 2008; see www.discoverygreen.com/). League City's ambitious 20-year plan for 200 miles of hiking trails warrants note (*League City Trails Master Plan, Draft*, December 2009), as does the even more ambitious Houston Wilderness coordination of a giant network of greenways linking local ecosystems in a great ring around the metropolitan area.

It is worth noting one more document, local evidence for the importance of parks to home buyers. In the new subdivision Searidge, off Todville Road, the construction company Bayway Homes has a sales catalogue featuring eight home designs in plan view. The house styles are called the Baybrook, Bayside, Miramar, Meador, Friendship, Robinson, Wildwood, and Pine Gully. As noted in the catalogue, they are all named for City parks "connected by a 10-mile hike/bike path that runs directly through the entrance of our beautiful subdivision!" (Bayway Homes 2010, emphasis theirs).

1.3 Using This Plan

Goals and priority needs are listed in section 2.0. ~~The~~ A fuller needs review in section 3.0 provides background on the basis for these goals and priorities. Section 4.0 addresses special projects that dovetail with this plan, some of which were initiated by other bodies and are already in process. Section 5.0 provides recommendations for reaching the identified goals. Costs and financial strategies for implementation are presented in section 6.0.

Seabrook is fortunate in the presence of high quality natural resources. ~~More than 75 percent of 2010 survey respondents called for more trails and natural areas (see Appendix E.).~~ Trails and natural areas are considerably easier and less expensive to operate and maintain than are built recreational facilities or intensively managed landscapes.

~~Note that the terms green space, open space and natural space are used interchangeably in this plan, although strictly they span a range of meaning from mown lawns to gallery forest. Refining the desired proportions of each is a task for the future.~~

317 **2.0 GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

318 ~~~~~

319

320 *Once it's ruined, it's ruined. But once it's saved, then each generation has to keep saving it.*

321 —David Duncan, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea* (PBS series)

322

323

324 The priorities and goals listed here are intended both to achieve ongoing excellence in parks and to honor
325 residents' wishes for Seabrook's flavor as a city. Facility improvements and renewals are needed within
326 particular parks to achieve best use of existing park holdings. These are the primary short-term needs and are
327 given first. Longer-term goals for the system as a whole follow, giving more focus to open space, green space
328 and parks and proposing selective acquisitions to serve anticipated increases in residents.

329

330

331 **2.1 Priority Facilities**

332 These priorities were set by the Open Space Committee following a City Council request. All parks should
333 receive new signage with the city's new logo.

334

335 **Priority #1 – Pine Gully Park**

336

337

338

- Plant shade trees
- New playground equipment
- Bench on the pier
- Natural looking signs identifying trees and wildlife; possible ~~Boy~~ Scout project

340

341 **Priority #2 – Miramar and Meador Parks**

342

- Plant shade trees and install benches around perimeter

343

344

345 **Priority #~~11~~ 3 – Brummerhop Park**

346

347

348

- Fill in retention pond to create a practice field
 - Refurbish playground equipment
 - Connect trail
- (Note: This park was given lower priority due to Repsdorph roadwork interfering with access)

350

351 **Priority #~~3~~ 4 – Robinson Park**

352

353

354

355

356

357 **Priority #4 5 – Seabrook Wildlife Refuge**

358

359

360

361 **Priority #5 6 – Boat Ramp**

362

- Provide restrooms/portapotties

Comment [m1g8]: Make document gender neutral.

Comment [m1g9]: Move Brummerhop Park from Priority 11 to Priority 3 and renumber subsequent parks

- Refresh sign and stripes for parking
- Priority #6 7– Bayside Park**
 - Repair bulkhead
 - Refurbish sign
 - Provide kayak launch
- Priority #7 8 – Friendship Park**
 - Provide backstop
 - Provide bleachers
 - Build a pavilion with concrete slab and 4-6 picnic tables
- Priority #8 9 – Hester Park**
 - Add parking with the installation of a culvert
 - Signs identifying plants and wildlife; possible Boy Scout project
 - Pooper scooper receptacle
- Priority #9 10– Baybrook Park**
 - Plant shade trees
 - Provide benches
 - Tennis backstop
 - Tennis scoreboard
- Priority #10 11– McHale Park**
 - Provide more seating on platform
 - Sign to identify birds and indicate park is on Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail
- Priority #12 – Wildwood Park**
 - Purchase property by sewer lift station for kayak launch
 - Add benches
 - Plant shade trees



Figure 2. A bronze bell and traditional fireplace at the new Drusilla Carothers Coastal Gardens are among features in this park that evoke the area’s Spanish land grant history.

2.2 Open Space and Parks Goals

A hallmark of Seabrook's public profile is natural assets including bay and lake waterfront views, bayous, and woodland. Naturalness is valued within the community and often commented upon by visitors to the city. The longer-term goals of this plan aim to respond to this public sense of attraction to natural qualities. See sections 5.0 (Recommendations) and 6.0 (Implementation) for more detailed proposals for achieving these nine goals.

Goal 1: Expand bay, lake and slough waterfront access for walkers, cyclists, and kayakers.

Goal 2: Preserve views, with emphasis on open space and naturalness.

Goal 3: Maintain and enrich conditions that sustain local wildlife.

Goal 4: Ensure best use of existing park holdings.

Goal 5: Establish appropriate guidelines for operating new types of parks.

Goal 6: Adjust park facilities in response to shifting community preferences.

Goal 7: Conduct selective land acquisition for future needs.

Goal 8: Identify choice wetlands and green space for conservation by various means.

Goal 9: Prepare for post-flooding buyouts in case future rapid action is needed.

Comment [m1g10]: Was this word to be deleted?

2.3 Trails Plan Goals

The city's trails plan, as noted, should be viewed as part 2 of this document. Recommendations are for a Figure 8-shaped trails network throughout the city as illustrated in Map 1 (see next page). The layout calls for an additional 25 miles of hike and bike trails, including crossings of Highway 146. Goals are as follows (*Seabrook Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan*, March 2010, p. 8):

1. Connect the people of Seabrook via a citywide trail system that ties neighborhoods to one another and to natural areas for recreation.
2. Focus trail expansion on Highway 146 crossings and fuller trail development in the western and southwestern parts of the city least well served by existing trails.
3. Create spurs that improve residents' access to the network directly from their homes without needing to drive.
4. Encourage the inclusion of a park land dedication requirement in the subdivision regulations to facilitate the development of trails to and through future neighborhoods.
5. Preserve easements and rights-of-way to maintain views and future trail opportunities.
6. Promote trail design and maintenance standards aimed at providing safe and secure ways for users to enjoy local natural areas.
7. Extend City trails to connect them with regional trails, notably to Armand Bayou Nature Center and along the Red Bluff Road corridor.



Map 1. Proposed Trails (red = tied to roadway work; blue = connecting parks)

2.4 Carothers Plan Goals

The Carothers plan should be viewed as part 3 of this document. This 8.5-acre property adjoining Pine Gully Park was acquired by bond referendum in 2007. It was formally opened in April 2011, following alterations to bring the main building into compliance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Goals are as follows (*Pine Gully Park and Carothers Coastal Garden Master Plan*, October 2009, p. 8):

- Provide a destination for event rental
- Control access to site with gated entry
- Cater for more than one small function at a time
- Financially self supported
- Restore wetlands
- Walking track and different use zones

Fees for use of park properties can be found on the City website. The Seabrook Community House has long been the city's main publicly owned events venue, and to some degree its operation has prepared the way for a second such venue at Carothers Coastal Gardens.

169 **3.0 Inventory and Needs Assessment**

170 ~~~~~

171
172 ~~Forget about golf courses, swimming pools and clubhouses.~~
173 ~~Buyers in large planned developments prefer hiking among lush greenery.~~
174 ~~—Steve Kerch, "The 10 Must-Have Features in Today's New Homes"~~
175

176 When a link to a draft of this plan was posted in the City newsletter, some 70 Seabrook residents looked at
177 the draft, answered a short survey on it, and provided comments. Their feedback is shown in full in Appendix
178 E. A majority of ~~respondents more than 75%~~ favored expanding the trail system, preserving more natural
179 areas, and expanding access to the waterfront. ~~More than 50%~~ supported holding a bond vote to accomplish
180 the goals in the open space plan. ~~Less than 25% of them~~ thought Seabrook had enough parks and trails.
181 Following is a sampling of one dozen comments:

Comment [m1g11]: Directive was to remove percentages. Sentences will need to be reworded.

- 182
- 183 • *A city is only as inviting as its park system is beautiful.*
- 184 • *It is very refreshing and heartening to see a community that is working hard to preserve and enhance*
185 *its ecological heritage.*
- 186 • *You can never have too many parks and trails!*
- 187 • *We need a waterfront park and public boat launch on Clear Lake.*
- 188 • *Can't the City do something with the 25-foot private strip of land fronting the Seabrook-Kemah*
189 *Channel? As public waterfront it would be an ideal focus for redevelopment at the Point.*
- 190 • *One of the reasons I moved to Seabrook seven years ago is because one can still see the night sky*
191 *here.*
- 192 • *The reason I love Seabrook is its parks and trails. I value the trails the most.*
- 193 • *Please work hard to maintain our waterfront views and to connect all of the trails together.*
- 194 • *Have we examined the waterfront access opportunity that Repsdorph Road represents? It is a county*
195 *road that reaches all the way to the Clear Lake waterfront. The end segment is not currently in use as*
196 *a roadway . . . It may offer us some interesting options.*
- 197 • *Our City needs to establish a "public face" that will attract new residents, as well as commercial*
198 *business. . . [Sustaining local wildlife] will, in my view, lend to an enhanced "public face."*
- 199 • *When my wife's and my family and friends visit . . . they are ecstatic seeing nearby deer, possum, and*
200 *raccoon plus blue jays, cardinals, monk parakeets, sparrows, humming birds, and other birds in our*
201 *backyard.*
- 202 • *The parks and trails attracted us to Seabrook.*
- 203

204 In contrast, some people do not use parks, consider it problematic that lands are removed from the tax base,
205 and feel that open space is "just nothing." We do have Community House and Carothers rental records and
206 gate data at Pine Gully Park based on gate fees. There is an absence of user data for most city park systems in
207 the nation (Walls 2009), including ours.

208 This nationwide data gap means that even if local information were available, there would be little with
209 which to compare it. For this reason the needs assessment in the present plan is instead based on accepted
210 national standards used in parks planning, and on recent state and national reviews of parks acreages and
211 facilities.

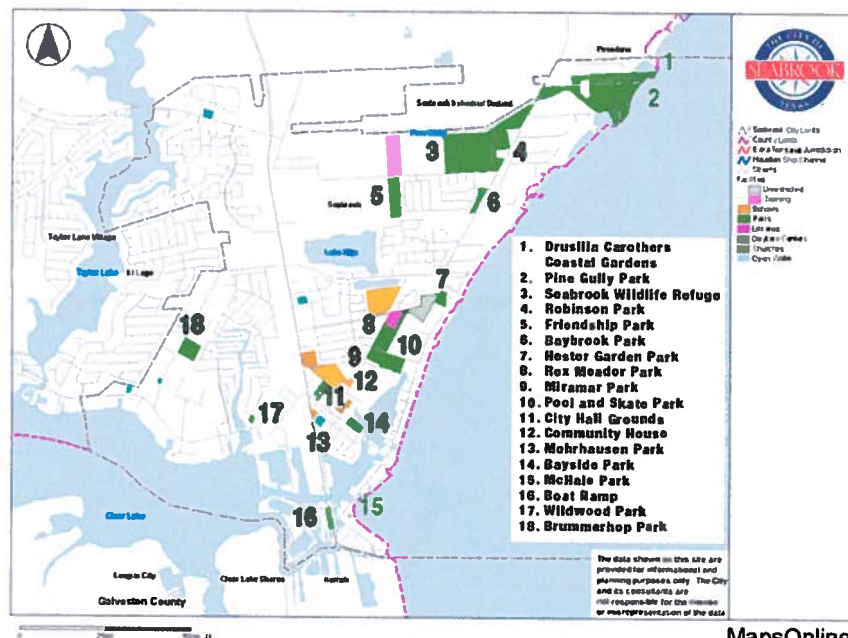
212
213

3.1 Parks Inventory

Seabrook has 18 park properties covering almost 200 acres. Eight parks are small parcels, such as the McHale Park pelican-viewing platform and Wildwood Park of less than half an acre. The remaining ten range in size from the 5-acre Miramar Park with pool to the 50-plus wooded acres of Pine Gully Park and the Seabrook Wildlife Refuge.

See Appendix B for an inventory showing acreage and facilities at each park, and see Map 2 for park locations. The City website provides fuller details of amenities available, fees where relevant, and applicable rules and regulations (see <http://www.ci.seabrook.tx.us/>).

Map 2. Seabrook Parks



MapsOnline

Built amenities exist in most of the parks. These include active recreational amenities—a swimming pool, tennis courts, ball fields, basketball facilities, playgrounds, pavilions, boat launch facilities, and a skate park and disc golf course. Installations also include picnic tables, barbecue grills, gazebos, and informational signage. At the extremes in terms of amenities are Carothers Gardens, which is a fully fledged event venue, and the Seabrook Wildlife Refuge, which is almost completely undeveloped.

The city has established a reputation for excellence in parks, trails, and natural areas, and this needs assessment is intended to ensure that this reputation is maintained. It is an important aspect of Seabrook's "branding" as part of the greater Houston metropolis. It is also a component of the "small town charm" often mentioned.

3.1.1 Acres of parkland per 1,000 people

TPWD collected information from 388 Texas cities for its 2005 *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan*. A summary of findings is given in Appendix D; source: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_pl_e0100_0867/land_priorities/park_analysis/

Findings were that mean park acres per 1,000 population for Texas cities of over 100,000 population is 15.5 acres; mean acres per 1,000 for cities of 20,000 to 100,000 is 11.4 acres; and mean acres per 1,000 for cities under 20,000 population is 15.6 acres. Of the 388 cities, 133 (38 percent), have less than 10 acres of local parks per 1,000 population.

With about 200 acres of parkland and a 2008 population of 11,577, Seabrook's acreage per 1,000 people amounted to 17.2 acres—a fairly strong number for the present, slightly above the state average of 15.6 acres for small cities. However, the strength of that number threatens to dip as population grows. Projected Seabrook population growth is indicated in the city's 2010 comprehensive plan (*Seabrook Comprehensive Master Plan 2030*, p. 7) as follows:

12,102 for 2010
15,388 for 2020
17,859 for 2030
19,994 for 2040

Our acreage per 1,000 population thus starts to drop rather quickly, to:

16.6 acres for 2010
13.0 acres by 2020
11.1 acres by 2030
10.0 acres by 2040

Obviously as population grows, there will also be less land available for designation as parkland. ~~The time for acquisitions is as soon as possible.~~ The city should always look for opportunities to acquire land.

3.1.2 Acres of parkland as a percentage of city land area

An alternative way to view the proportion of parkland available to residents is through an assessment based on the *proportion* of city land in park uses. A 2006 *Trust for Public Lands* study found a national average for 60 cities surveyed to be 9.8 % of city land in parks; the median was 8.5% (Center for Park Excellence 2007).

~~Among low density cities (i.e., cities most comparable to Seabrook in density), the highest scoring included Albuquerque at 28.7% and El Paso at 19.2 %. Only 6 out of 22 low density cities had less than 5% of their acreage in parks.~~

~~Our city's land area is 3,648 acres, and we have 200 acres in parkland. It sounds like a lot of land, but 10% of our land area is 368.4 acres—and we are well short of this. At 200 acres of parks, we have only a little over 5% of our land area in parks. In this light Seabrook compares most closely to the lowest one third of the low density cities reviewed.~~

~~Need identified:~~

~~Increase park acreage to 10 percent of city land area.~~

3.1.3 Skate Park, Disc Golf Course, Dog Park

These are relatively new categories of amenities, absent from many cities and without national standards per 1,000 population. In the dozen years since the skate park was built in Seabrook and half dozen years since the disc golf course was built, both have become popular and receive steady use.

Disc Golf Course: The nine-hole disc golf course is low-maintenance, trouble free, and complaint free. Players take pride in it, hold tournaments there, and promote use via players' associations. Expansion to twelve holes has been considered. ~~The Open Space Committee identified no particular needs.~~

Skate Park: The skate park gets substantial after-school use. Recommendations for the park include a rewards program for tips about vandals; creating a local skating event ("First Annual Seabrook World Championship Challenge"); and occasionally inviting notable skaters to demonstrate their skills.

Dog Park: A dog park has received discussion; such parks generally receive high use (Walls 2009). However, given Seabrook's large existing parks and extensive trails, multiple opportunities exist for walking dogs, and a dog park is not currently proposed.

3.2 Open Space Inventory and Needs

The key idea driving conservation of community open space is that it is a way of enhancing a city's development trajectory in ways favored by existing residents and likely to attract future residents. Promoting open space and parks thus also serves to promote development.

3.2.1 What to Protect

Waterfront Access: Physical access to the waterfront has traditionally been provided at two parks. The Boat Ramp is a launch point, and Pine Gully Park has a fishing pier and waterfront walking trail. The Drusilla Carothers Coastal Gardens has a small beach, but as currently envisioned, rental of the entire facility is required to access its shore. McHale Park provides bay viewing at a single point. In a city with several miles of bay and lake shorelines, the amount of physical waterfront access for residents is extremely limited.

Green Space: The central and northeastern parts of the city have large parks. City-owned green space in western sections of the city is limited to Brummerhop Park (7 acres) and Wildwood Park (0.47 acres). Small private parcels belonging to homeowners' associations are the only other designated green space in most of the western half of the city. East of Highway 146, most remaining wooded parcels are privately owned and destined for development. Public green space is nonexistent at the Point and very limited in Old Seabrook.

Views: Views are intangible and not easily quantified, but they are nevertheless an important component of quality of life for local residents. It is risky to assume that view assets will always be there and to take them for granted. They are easily lost through lack of foresight. Many people choose Seabrook because of proximity to the water, as surveys clearly show. Being near the water becomes a much lesser asset if you can hardly see the water while going about ordinary life. It would be a loss to all if water views were gone. They ~~need to be part of the civic conversation and remain part of the landscape.~~ The city should work with developers to retain open view corridors.

Needs identified:

- Expand physical waterfront access
- Increase green space in underserved portions of the city

Comment [m12]: Lines 632-633 – Is this the change Council wants?

- Protect public waterfront views

3.2.2 Resource Inventory

A community visioning process and work group are preferred modes for cities to assess community opinion and identify opportunities for conservation of open space (*Local Open Space Planning Guide* 2007). In the absence of a budget for this, the Open Space Committee consulted with city staff and others to develop an initial identification of open space features of note.

A preliminary inventory of the city's open space resources was drawn up and is presented on Maps 3 and 4.

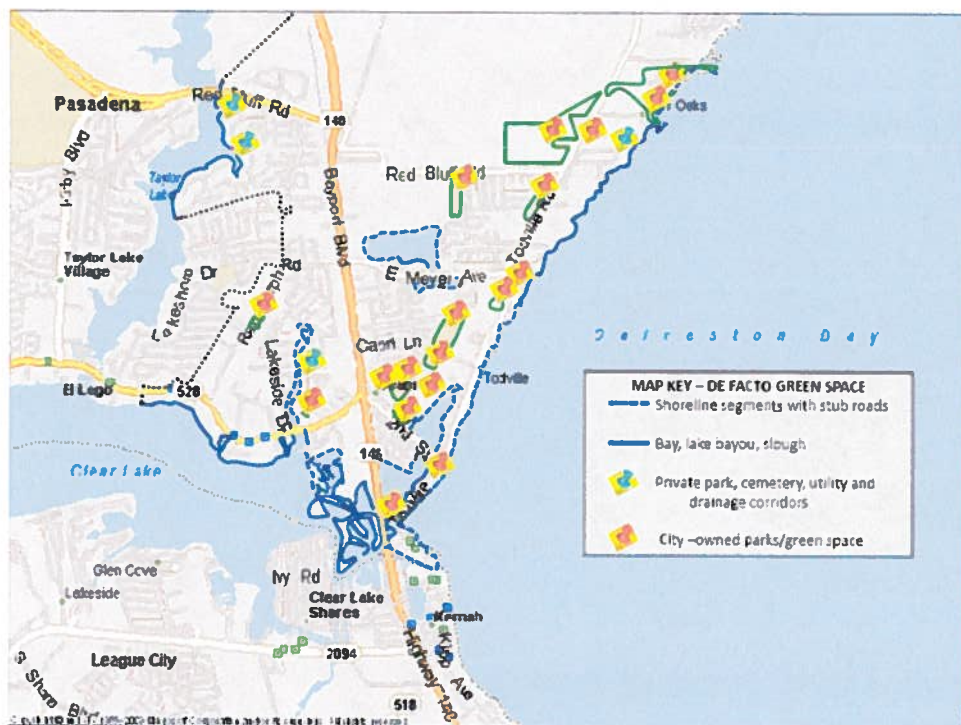
Fuller ~~Further~~ discussion and GIS mapping are still needed to refine the options and to begin reviewing appropriate locations to consider for management as open space resources. The City does have the GIS capability and staff knowledge to conduct this type of inventory in-house, although staff time to assist with this is at a premium.



Comment [m13]: Private park near Lakeside is shown on the wrong side of the Bayou.

Map 3. Shoreline View Resources. Bay and lake shores (blue lines), showing publicly accessible bay segments limited to Pine Gully Park and the Boat Ramp (pink lines). Pins show three private parks.
Map 4. De Facto Green Space (see text below for types of entities identified).

Comment [m14]: Private park near Lakeside is shown on the wrong side of Mud Bayou.



Properties of note from an open space perspective (pins on Map 4) include:

Parks: Major assets are Pine Gully, Carothers, Wildlife Refuge, Hester, Meador, and Brummerhop

Drainage easements: Upper Pine Gully, Lake Cove

Rights of way: Railroad/power line/pipeline easements are a green corridor along Highway 146

Roadways with bay views: Todville Road, the Point, Second Street, Repsdorph, Baywood

Slough and lake views: Old Seabrook, marinas, Lake Mija, Sandpit Lake

Stub roads: Roads ending at the bay and Slough are view resources and public rights of way

Wooded lands: These provide a sense of wildness although slated for development

City-owned lands: City yard, fire house and training facility, sewage plant

Other: School district-owned ball fields, Girl Scouts-owned camp, cemeteries, homeowner association-owned parks, private holdings where people fish unauthorized

The resources indicated on Maps 3 and 4 are combined on Map 6 with parks and trails and are the basis for several of the open space goals and recommendations given in section 5.0. Key findings are that the amount of bay and lake shorelines open to the public is limited; that waterfront views from roadways are becoming compromised; that de facto open space assets such as cemeteries and utility corridors are present; that remaining wooded land exists. Most is destined for development, but some of the above lands will remain green and have potential for such actions as tree planting.

3.2.3 Relevant Public Input

A survey that contained numerous detailed questions about natural qualities was conducted in 2004. Some examples of results are:

Wildlife habitat along the shoreline and bayous should be preserved.

Yes	292 (162 strongly agree + 130 agree)
-----	--------------------------------------

No	13
----	----

No opinion	11
------------	----

The City should support ecology based activities, i.e. bird watching, trails, etc.

Yes	283 (145 strongly agree + 138 agree)
-----	--------------------------------------

No	19
----	----

No opinion	15
------------	----

Should Seabrook enhance its appearance by conserving or creating green belts and open space?

Yes	254
-----	-----

No	42
----	----

No opinion	18
------------	----

The City should provide access to bodies of water around the city to the public.

Yes	234 (109 strongly agree + 125 agree)
-----	--------------------------------------

No	65
----	----

No opinion	17
------------	----

These are positive answers with very large margins—more than twice as many respondents favor the City providing water access, and more than ten times as many favor maintaining wildlife habitat.

3.3 Gathering Current Public Input about Needs

The Open Space Committee consulted at some length with parks and survey professionals regarding how best to achieve strong public input for this plan. Individual discussions were held with the local PR company Griffin Marketing; with faculty at Rice University and the University of Houston-Clear Lake who specialize in opinion surveys; with public lands consultant Linda Shead, formerly of the Trust for Public Lands; and with HGAC parks specialist Rachel Powers.

The span of options and costs for surveys is wide. Some entities favor brief telephone surveys on a limited range of questions (perhaps 50 respondents answering 3-5 questions). One UH faculty member advocated reducing survey questions to a very small number or even a single highly focused topic. The committee considered such surveys too limited to provide useful understanding of community preferences.

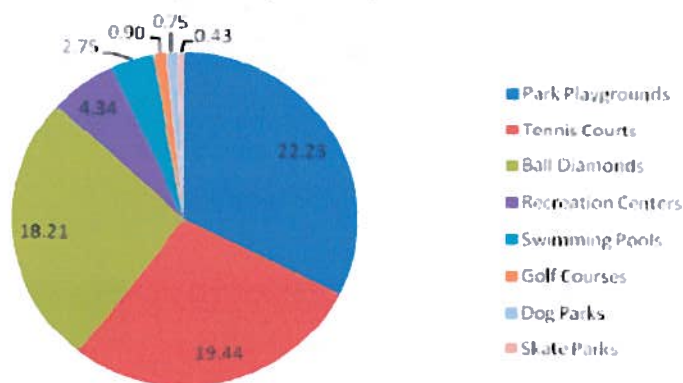
At the opposite extreme, another UH faculty member emphasized getting all questions answered in quantifiable ways and advocated a minimum of 1,500 responses, with location and income data, to achieve truly random representative sampling. Given limited budget and manpower, trying for 1,500 responses seemed over-ambitious. The course selected was therefore to draft the new plan based on *prior* public inputs, make the complete draft publicly available, invite comment on it, and then incorporate that feedback into the final plan. See Appendix E for feedback received.

3.4 Amenities per 1,000 Population

In the absence of dedicated surveys to establish actual demand in Seabrook, the Open Space Committee based the needs assessment for facilities on national standards as described in Walls (2009). This report provides tabulations of 2008 Trust for Public Land assessment of parks as a percentage of city land area and park space per 1,000 people. A proper national database is nonexistent; the Trust for Public Land annual sampling is the best available data for national trends and expectations.

Findings were that Seabrook is well supplied with recreational amenities—pool, ball fields, and playgrounds—when compared in line with national standards or with other Texas cities.

Figure 3. Average Number of Various Park Facilities per 100,000 People



Source: Trust for Public Lands Center for City Park Excellence's *City Park Facts* database. Available at <http://www.tpl.org/ccpe>

Seabrook's population is close to 12,000. The numbers per 100,000 people in the Center for City Park Excellence pie chart (above) were then converted in Table 1 (next page) to numbers per 1,000 population and per 10,000 population, for ease of comparison with the figures that are presented in Table 2 for other Texas cities.

These two tables reveal that the numbers of major sporting facilities in Seabrook compare favorably with national averages. Additional facilities will in due course be needed as the city's population expands, but there do not appear to be urgent expansion needs for major sporting amenities in the next ten years.

Comparison with other cities in Texas is also available in the Trust for Public Lands review (http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=20531&folder_id=3208). Seabrook numbers were not included in that review.

752 Table 1: Average of Facilities per 1,000 and 10,000 Population

754 Facility	1,000	10,000	Seabrook Parks
756 Playgrounds	0.22	2.22	6
757 Tennis courts	0.19	1.94	2
758 Ball fields	0.18	1.82	7 4 (5 3 soccer, 2 1 baseball)
759 Recreation centers	0.04	0.43	0
760 Swimming pools	0.03	0.27	1

762
763 Table 2. Average of Facilities in Other Texas Cities

765	
766	Park playgrounds per 10,000 people
767	Fort Worth 2.3
768	Dallas 1.5
769	Houston 1.4
770	San Antonio 0.9
771	Average for all cities in TPL study is 2.2 park playgrounds per 10,000 people
772	Seabrook 6
773	
774	Baseball diamonds per 10,000 people
775	Houston 1.1
776	Fort Worth 0.7
777	San Antonio 0.4
778	Dallas 0.3
779	Average for all cities in TPL study is 1.8 ballparks per 10,000 people
780	Seabrook 2 (plus 5 soccer fields)
781	
782	Dog parks per 10,000 people
783	Houston 0.3
784	Dallas 0.2
785	Forth Worth 0.2
786	San Antonio 0.2
787	Average for all cities in TPL study is 0.7 dog parks per 10,000 people

788
789
790

791 3.4.1 Playground Equipment

792 The national standard calls for a minimum of 0.50 playgrounds per 1,000 population. With a present
793 population of about 12,000 people, this means Seabrook should have at least six playgrounds. Six
794 playgrounds do exist in city parks (see Appendix B for locations). In addition, several homeowners
795 associations have installed play equipment in their private neighborhood parks (e.g., Lakepointe Forest,
796 Seabrook Island, Lake Cove).

Comment [m15]: Why is Seabrook compared with large urban cities, instead of cities comparable in size, characteristics and population with Seabrook?

Comment [m16]: Correct spelling.

In the absence of use data, the Open Space Committee conducted informal spot-checking of park playgrounds. Patterns observed include: notes that ways to increase playground usage would be to add more shade and to locate playgrounds within subdivisions whenever possible.

- most use of Friendship and Brummerhop Park playgrounds on weekday evenings
- most use of Miramar Park playground on summer weekdays
- most use of Pine Gully Park playground on summer and holiday weekends
- little use observed at Wildwood and Baybrook Park playgrounds
- main pattern observed except at Brummerhop Park was low use



Figure 4. The Pine Gully Park playground gets use on holiday weekends but is too far from concentrations of homes to receive use by resident children during most days of the year. It also illustrates how exposed to the full sun some playgrounds are.

Play equipment stands idle much of the time. For example, a spot check in nice weather at 1:00-2:00 pm on Saturday, May 8, 2010, revealed no children using the playground equipment at either Friendship Park or Baybrook Park; one child on a swing at Miramar Park; and four children using the Pine Gully playground at a time when there were 38 cars in the park. At Pine Gully it is worth noting that the heaviest playground use at times when most park visitors are nonresidents, based on gate fee records.

Two factors appear responsible for the low playground use observed. One is that most playgrounds have little shade, making them uninviting for large portions of the year because children are exposed to the full sun, and the equipment itself gets hot. (In comparison, playgrounds at Bay Area Park and the Pinebrook neighborhood park, for example, provide plenty of inviting shade.) A second factor appears to be location: some public playgrounds are not in the heart of neighborhoods but at the fringes (e.g., Wildwood, Baybrook); and the Pine Gully Park playground is distant from all homes.

Overall, spot checking and informal observations indicate that demand for playgrounds is met and that that some equipment is underutilized. Reviewing survey data since 1998 confirmed that demand for play equipment is modest. Of 44 comments in 2009 about parks challenges, three identified playground equipment as needing renewal (*Seabrook Comprehensive Master Plan 2030*). Of 330 respondents rating amenities in 1998, 208 people ranked playgrounds in the bottom four out of eight preferences (66 ranked them last).

Yet One third of 2010 survey respondents favored additional playgrounds (23 out of 68; Appendix E). As the city grows, the likelihood is that homeowners' associations will provide additional play equipment where desirable—in the heart of new neighborhoods.

Needs identified:

- Updating to include more appealing newer styles of equipment
- Planting shade trees to make existing playgrounds more appealing.
- Review 2010 survey responses to identify zones where people want more play equipment.

3.4.2 Baseball, Soccer and Basketball

National standards indicate one baseball field per 6,000 residents. Seabrook has ~~two~~ one city field for 12,000 residents. (~~belonging to the Clear Creek Independent School District~~). In addition, Seabrook has ~~five~~ three soccer fields at Friendship Park and has basketball courts and/or hoops at five parks: Baybrook, Brummerhop, Friendship, Meador and Wildwood. Pressure for more was not evident in the 2009 Master Plan Commission survey, but ten respondents to the 2010 survey on this plan called for softball facilities (see Appendix E). Conversion of some soccer fields may provide a way to address this request.

3.4.3 Pool

The national standard indicates one pool per 15,000 population. Although its population remains below that level, Seabrook has long had a public swimming pool. Need for a second was not identified.

3.4.4 Other Amenities

Appropriateness of these facilities depends less on population than on local conditions and demand.

Piers: The pier at Pine Gully Park attracts fishermen and received increased user pressure after Hurricane Ike destroyed other piers in 2008. Casual estimates by park personnel indicate that a high percentage of use is by nonresidents. Resident pressure for additional piers was not noted.

Gazebos: These exist at Second Street and Robinson parks, adding shade and visual interest, and occasionally being used for small-scale events. As relatively low-cost and low-maintenance structures, and with a welcoming quality as rest stops with shade, gazebos may be worth considering for one or two more of the city's parks.

Picnic Tables, Ramadas and BBQs: ~~Demand for these entities from local residents is low, based on survey results. From observation of park use, especially at Pine Gully Park, use of picnic tables and associated shade structures and BBQs is largely by nonresidents. On fine summer weekends and holidays, these attract large parties of people from neighboring cities. These items should be monitored on a regular basis in order to maintain them.~~

Comment [m1g17]: Definition of Ramada is porch or trellis. Is this the correct word for this item?

Butterfly Garden: Created by the Eco-Tourism Committee partnering with Lyondell, the Butterfly Garden in Hester Garden Park has benefited from ongoing volunteer maintenance and has occasionally attracted event use (as a free venue, without closure of the surrounding park or trail system).

Note: Opinion gathering in recent years has not been sufficiently detailed for much clarity on how popular these amenities are or whether additional need exists, but absence of requests for more of the above suggests that the level is about right. **END OF REVIEW ON 2/7/12.**