

## **Section 10: City Services**

### **10.0 CITY SERVICES**

#### **10.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL 10: Provide the highest level of City services possible to meet the current and future needs of its residences and businesses.

Objective 10.1: Locate and adequately equip libraries, parks, recreational facilities and police stations that will provide protection of life and property as efficiently and economically as possible.

Objective 10.2: Develop a digitized geographical information system including occupied lots, unoccupied lots, utility locations, updated road locations, and accurately identify the city limits and extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Objective 10.3: Maintain and update the Rockdale web page to allow citizen access to City Forms, Building Code, Zoning Code, and City Calendar, news, and other pertinent information.

Objective 10.4: Identify new opportunities for and work with the citizens and other applicable organizations to provide high quality parks and recreation facilities that meet current and projected park and recreation needs.

Objective 10.5: Initiate and develop recreational programs needed by the community that private associations or private interests are not able to provide.

Objective 10.6: Utilize as much of the City's drainage corridors and floodplain areas as possible for open space, private parks, and other uses that are compatible with the flood hazard. Develop a system of walking trails throughout the community and coordinate a hike and bike trail.

#### **10.2 OVERVIEW**

City Services are one of the fundamental factors that define the quality of life for the citizens of Rockdale. City Services comprise the very functions necessary for people to live together in a civilized community. The breadth and quality of services available make the difference between an ordinary versus an outstanding place to live. The Rockdale City Library provides access to recreational reading, information, and learning opportunities which helps enrich

the quality of life for all citizens of the community. Our parks and recreation facilities allow us to enjoy the outdoors and enjoy our neighbors. Our police department protects our lives and property. American Medical Response is the primary provider for emergency medical services within Rockdale. Fire services are provided to Rockdale through the Rockdale Volunteer Fire Department.

## **10.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **10.3.1 Library**

The library operates 38 hours per week, closed on Sunday and Monday. With a staff of three and an active volunteer program, a variety of programs and services are offered to patrons of all ages. We are a very user friendly library. We welcome resident and non-resident patrons to all library resources, microfilm readers, microfilm printer, computers, copy equipment, etc. The library currently works closely with the Milam County Genealogical Society and is a member of the Central Texas Library System and TexShare through the Texas State Library & Archives. In the past, the library has received Texas Book Festival Grants, Tocker Grants, and TIF grants. In addition to its classic and reference collection, the library has a special area for children and for young adults, computers for patron use, audio books, city government documents, and large print books. The library also offers reading programs for preschool and school-age children. The main objective of the library is to provide resources and services necessary to meet the evolving educational, recreational and informational needs of the public, thus enhancing individual and community life. Materials, services, and programs shall be planned to satisfy the needs of individuals and members of groups with concern given to all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities and levels of education. The library will continue to search for methods of service that will satisfy the needs of those who have not traditionally been library patrons, while providing the best possible service to library patrons. Today with its extensive collection of books, the children's library, public computers, as well as art and furniture placed throughout the building for the public to enjoy, the library has become a remarkable state-of-the-art hub of literary activities. The Milam County Genealogical Society Research Center, which opened in 2003, provides extensive genealogical and historical information. To project future expansion, including children and adult reading programs, it will be necessary for the library to monitor the growth of the surrounding population. In order to continue to be

a focal point for the gathering of knowledge of local, regional, national and world events, the library will need additional library staff and funding.

### **10.3.2 Parks and Recreation**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Rockdale's purpose in developing this City Plan for parks, recreation and open space is to guide the future development of parks and recreational facilities in the community and to put the role of parks, leisure and open space into the overall plans for the future of the community. The City Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space was developed with input from city staff, the Parks Board, the Rockdale Municipal Development District and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The City Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space is comprised of the following sections:

- Introduction
- Goals and Objectives
- Public (City and School) Parks and Facilities
- Privately Owned or Operated Facilities
- Recreational Facility Standards
- Public Demand
- Analysis
- Prioritization of Needs
- Plan Implementation
- Conclusion

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Goal 1: The City should incorporate more facilities for community functions and activities into its plans for Parks and Recreation

Objective 1: The City should use objective measures, such as those developed by the National Recreation and Park Association to determine the adequacy of recreational facilities.

Objective 2: The City, the school district and private interests should cooperate and coordinate the use of facilities to avoid, where possible, duplication of facilities.

Goal 2: The City should assess the need to provide opportunities for special populations.

Objective 1: Evaluate the design of current parks to identify the needs of underserved special populations, such as the elderly, the very young, disabled and at-risk youth.

Objective 2: Develop a park providing opportunities for passive recreation

Objective 3: Develop a system of walking trails

Objective 4: Provide sponsored recreation programs directed at youth-at-risk

Objective 5: Provide programs and facilities to accommodate disabled person

Goal 3: The city should develop open spaces and conservation areas in accord with its land use plan.

Objective 1: Develop a network of trails to tie together its parks and to provide easy access for their users.

Objective 2: Provide safe, pedestrian access to recreational facilities for all of Rockdale's residents.

Objective 3: Utilize, as appropriate, utility right-of-way and rights-of-ways for trails, linkages and greenbelts

Goal 4: The city should identify and designate important natural resource areas that can be acquired and held as "Open Space" or "Preservation" areas.

Objective 1: Encourage developers to dedicate flood plain land for walking trails.

Objective 2: Include "Open Space" in park design, where practical.

Objective 3: Preserve unused land in its natural condition as a legacy to future generations.

Objective 4: Promote the community-wide benefits of conserving natural resources by incorporating conservation measures and demonstrations into the design of parks and recreation facilities.

Objective 5: Develop a preserve for native plants and animals, combining conservation efforts, education and awareness programs, and opportunities for passive and naturalistic recreation.

Goal 5: The city should develop and implement a plan for publicizing its parks, events and recreation facilities.

Objective 1: Create a brochure describing the City's attractions.

Objective 2: Develop and execute an advertising campaign to promote awareness of the City's facilities and to encourage visitors to the community.

Objective 3: Utilize the City's and Chamber of Commerce's websites to promote park facilities and events.

Goal 6: The city should coordinate its planning process with the schools, county, state, Municipal Development District, Chamber of Commerce and other interested parties.

## **PUBLIC (CITY AND SCHOOL) PARKS AND FACILITIES**

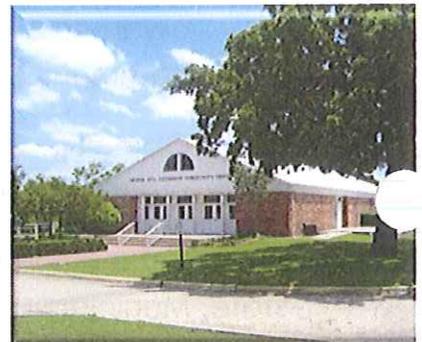
Fair Park. Fair Park is located at 200 Walnut Street. Current amenities include barbecue grills, bleachers, folding chairs, concession stands, electrical hookups for campers/RVs, 3/8<sup>th</sup> mile oval horse exercise track, horseshoe pits, livestock pens, livestock show arena, pavilion, restrooms, rodeo arena and stage. Fair Park is home to the Rockdale Fair and Rodeo and the Jubilee Days. The New Salem building and the George Hill Patterson Community Center are located at Fair Park. The following chart shows the events held at facilities in Fair Park for the period from May 1, 2010 until April 30, 2011:



**Figure 1-Fair Park**

Facility	Number of Days Rented
Arena	33
Concession	11
Livestock Barns	6
Carnival Area	8
Fair Park-all	1
Pavilion	6
BBQ area	2
Horseshoe Pits	1

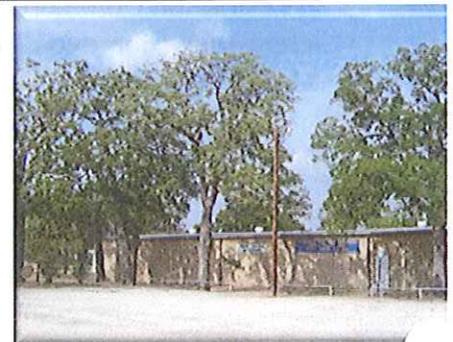
George Hill Patterson Community Center. The George Hill Patterson Community Center is located at 609 Mill Street and contains 6200 square feet of space. The center includes adjustable lighting, adjustable seating, air conditioning, folding chairs, conference room, dance floor, kitchen, paved parking, podium, projection screen, restrooms, sound system, folding tables and water fountains. The center can host events such as wedding, family reunions, or meetings. The following chart shows the number of events held at the Patterson Center for the period from May 1, 2010 until April 30, 2011:



**Figure 2-Patterson Community Center**

	¼ building	½ building	Whole building
½ day	6	17	12
All day	0	6	16

New Salem Building. The New Salem Building is located at 308 Walnut Street. The building contains a meeting room, cooking kitchen, and multipurpose room.



**Figure 3-New Salem Building**

Post Oak Place Park. The park on Post Oak Place is an undeveloped park. The park primarily serves the neighborhood. No amenities are located in the park on Post Oak Place.



**Figure 4 Post Oak Place Park**

Moultry Park. Moultry Park is located at the end of Moultry Street. The park contains a baseball field, basketball court, picnic area, playscape and restrooms.



**Figure 5-Moultry Park**

Softball field. The City owns a softball field located adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant on Beverly Drive. The softball field is currently not utilized.



**Figure 6-Softball Field**

Skate Plaza. The Skate Plaza is located at the intersection of Mill and Wilcox Streets. The Plaza has a bowl and a half pipe ramp. The plaza is open during daylight hours only.



**Figure 7-Skate Plaza**

Sumuel Park. Sumuel Park is located at the corner of Fourth Street and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. The park has barbecue grills, a half-court basketball court, butterfly garden, picnic area, playscape and shade cover. The park is being built with grant funds from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and through volunteer contributions.



**Figure 8-Sumuel Park**

Veterans Park. Veterans Park is located at the corner of Brazos Street and Mistletoe Lane. The park includes three playscapes, swings, picnic tables, tennis courts, walking trail, butterfly garden and a pavilion. The pavilion is available of a first-come, first-served basis. Veterans Park also contains the municipal swimming pool, which is open during the summer months for residents of all ages. The swimming pool is more than fifty (50) years old and maintenance of the pool can be costly.



**Figure 9-Veterans Park**

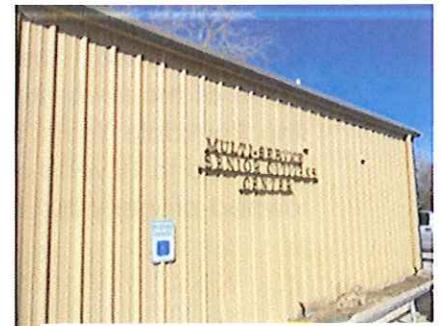
The table below shows the publicly owned facilities and their amenities:

	Fair Park	Moultry Park	Skate Plaza	Softball Field	Sumuel Park	Veterans Park	Elementary School	Intermed. School	Jr. Hi. School	High School
Barbecue grills	X				X	X				
Baseball field		X							X (Backstop only)	X
Basketball court		X			X		X	X		
Bleachers	X									
Butterfly Garden					X	X				
Horse Exercise Track	X									
Horseshoe Pits	X									
Football field									X (Practice field)	X

	Fair Park	Moultry Park	Skate Plaza	Softball Field	Sumuel Park	Veterans Park	Elementary School	Intermed. School	Jr. Hi. School	High School
Lighting	X			X		X				
Park Benches					X					
Pavilion	X					X				
Picnic Area		X			X	X				
Playscape		X			X	X				
Restrooms	X	X				X				
Rodeo Arena	X									
¼ mile Running Track										X
Shade Cover			X		X	X				
Skateboard ramps			X							
Soccer field								X (Practice field)		X (practice field)
Softball field				X						X
Stage	X									
Swimming Pool						X				
Swings					X	X				
Tennis Courts						X			X	
Walking trail						X				
Water fountains						X				

**Table 1-Public (City and School) Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

Rockdale Senior Citizens Center. Senior citizens in Rockdale are served by the Rockdale Senior Center. The Senior Center offers a variety of activities and programs including very low impact aerobics, cards, dominos, bingo and parties.



**Figure 10-Rockdale Senior Citizens Center**

## PRIVATELY OWNED OR OPERATED FACILITIES

Rockdale Country Club. The Rockdale County Club is a privately-owned golf course located approximately 3.3 miles from the city. The golf club has a nine-hole golf course, a driving range, club house, tennis courts and a swimming pool. The club offers memberships and play on the golf course and driving range is open to the public.



Figure 11-Rockdale Country C

Wolf Park. Wolf Park is located at 106 Main Street. Wolf Park is owned by the Rockdale Chamber of Commerce. The park contains park benches and a pavilion and hosts special events.

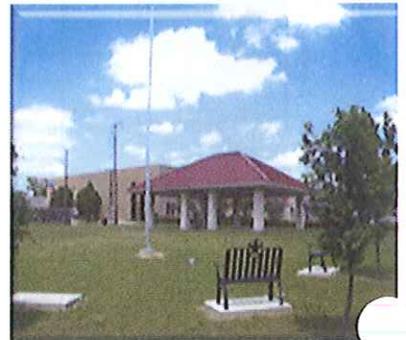


Figure 12-Wolf Park

Girls softball field. The girls softball fields are located at the end of Bushdale Road. There are four fields, a playground and a concession stand. League ages are from four (4) years old to fifteen (15) years old.

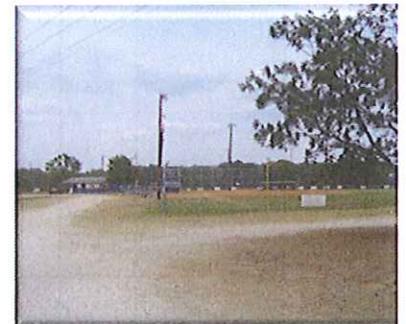


Figure 13-Girls Softball Field

Baseball fields. There are five boys baseball fields located at the end of Copeland Street. The fields are of various sizes for different ages of boys. Three of the fields are lighted for nighttime play. The fields are home to the Rockdale Youth Baseball Little league. Boys ranging in age from 4 years old to 14 years old are eligible to play. The fields are located on city-owned property but the maintenance and operation of the facilities are



Figure 14-Baseball Field.

by volunteers.

The Rockdale Municipal Development District is actively working to attract a Y (formerly TMCA) to Rockdale. If a Y is attracted to Rockdale, it will provide indoor recreation and potentially manage outdoor recreational programs for the community. The Y can also provide a variety of recreational programs for all groups.

The table below shows the privately owned recreational facilities and their amenities:

	Boys Baseball Fields	Girls Softball Fields	Rockdale Country Club	Senior Citizens Center	Wolf Park
Bleachers	X	X			
Concession Stand	X	X	X		
Driving Range			X		
Golf Course			X		
Indoor Recreation				X	
Park Benches					X
Pavilion					X
Swimming Pool			X		
Tennis Courts			X		

**Table 2-Privately Owned or Operated Recreational Facilities**

## RECREATIONAL FACILITY STANDARDS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recognizes the importance of establishing and using park and recreation standards as:

- A national expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of urban and rural communities;
- A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation areas and facilities;

- A basis for relating recreational needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide system of parks and open space areas;
- One of the major structuring elements that can be used to guide and assist regional development; and
- A means to justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land-use pattern of a region or community.

Source: [www.prm.nau.edu/prm423/recreation\\_standards.htm](http://www.prm.nau.edu/prm423/recreation_standards.htm)

The NRPA has developed guidelines, but not requirements, for the kinds of park and recreational facilities that a community should have to accommodate a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The table below shows the NRPA guideline for each type of recreational facility and how closely Rockdale meets that guideline (ice hockey and beach areas which are included in the NRPA guidelines have been omitted):

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
<b>Badminton</b>	1620 sq. ft.	Singles-17' x 44' Doubles-20' x 44'	1 per 5000	No city owned, no school or privately owned
<b>Basketball</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> </ul>	2400-3036 sq. ft.	46-50'x84'	1 per 5000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No city owned. 3 outdoor basketball courts at the elementary school, 1 outdoor basketball court at the intermediate school.</li> <li>• 1 outdoor basketball court at Moultry Park; ½ outdoor basketball court being built at Samuel Park.</li> </ul>

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High School</li> </ul>	5040-7280 sq. ft.	50' x 84'	1 per 5000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No city-owned, no school or privately owned</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collegiate</li> </ul>	5600-7980 sq. ft.	50' x 94'  With 5' unobstructed space on all sides	1 per 5000	
<b>Handball (3-4 wall)</b>	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall  1000 sq. ft. for 3-wall	20' x 40'— minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance	1 per 20,000	No city-owned, no school or privately owned
<b>Tennis</b>	Minimum of 7,200 sq. ft. single court (2 acres for complex)	36' x 78'. 12' clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both ends	1 court per 2000	4 tennis courts are located at Veterans Park. They are all lighted. 4 tennis courts are located at the junior high school.
<b>Volleyball</b>	Minimum of 4,000 sq. ft.	30' x 60'. Minimum 6' clearance on all sides.	1 per 5000	No city -owned
<b>Baseball</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official</li> </ul>	3.0-3.85 acres min.	Baselines-90'. Pitching distance 60.5'. Foul lines-	1 per 5000	No city owned. 1 school-owned. No

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little League</li> </ul>	1.2 acres min.	<p>min. 320'. Center field-400+'.</p> <p>Baselines-60'. Pitching distance-46'. Foul lines-200'. Center field-200'. Center field-200'-250'.</p>	<p>Lighted-1 per 30,000.</p> <p>1 per 5000</p> <p>Lighted-1 per 30,000.</p>	<p>privately owned.</p> <p>No city-operated. 1 backstop located at the junior high school. No school owned. 5 privately-operated and maintained fields.</p>
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 acres	180' x 300' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	1 per 20,000	No city owned, school owned or privately owned.
Football	Minimum 1.5 acres	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.	1 per 20,000	No city owned. 1 football field located at high school. 1 football practice field located at the junior high school.
Soccer	1.7-2.1 acres	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with a minimum 10' clearance on all sides	1 per 10,000	No city owned. 1 practice soccer field at the intermediate school. 1 practice field located at high school.
Golf-driving range	13.5 acres for minimum of 25 tees	900' x 690' wide. Add 12' width for each additional tee.	1 per 50,000.	No city owned. 1 privately owned (Rockdale Country Club)
¼ mile running track	4.3 acres	Overall width—276', Length—	1 per 20,000	No city owned. 1 school owned.

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
		600.02'. Track width for 8 to 4 lanes is 32'.		
<b>Softball</b>	1.5 to 2 acres	Baselines-60'  Pitching distance-46' (women 40').  Fast pitch field: radius from plate-225' between foul lines.  Slow pitch-275' (men); 250' (women)	1 per 5,000 (if also used for youth baseball)	1 city owned (unused). 1 school owned (for girls), 4 privately operated and maintained fields (for girls).
<b>Multiple recreational court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)</b>	9,840 sq. ft.	120' x 80'	1 per 10,000	No city owned, indoor or outdoor. 5 indoor multiple courts located at the schools (1 at elementary school, 1 at intermediate school, 1 at junior high school and 2 at the high school) which are not suited for tennis.
<b>Trails</b>	N/A	N/A	1 system per region	No city owned.
<b>Archery range</b>	Minimum 0.65 acres	300' length x minimum 10' wide between targets. Roped clear space on sides of range minimum 30'. Clear space behind	1 per 50,000	No city owned, school owned or privately owned.

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
		targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.		
<b>Combination Skeet and Trap Field (8 stations)</b>	Minimum 30 acres	All walks and structures occur within an area approximately 130' wide by 115' deep. Minimum cleared area is contained within 2 superimposed segments with 100-yard radii (4 acres) Shot-fall danger zone is contained within 2 superimposed segments with 300-yard radii (36 acres).	1 per 50,000	No city owned or privately owned.
<b>Golf</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Par 3 (18 hole)</b></li> </ul>	50-60 acres	Average length vary 600-2700 yards	-----	No city owned or privately owned.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>9-hole standard</b></li> </ul>	Minimum 50 acres	Average length- 2250 yards	1 per 25,000	No city-owned. 1 privately owned (open to public)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>18-hole</b></li> </ul>	Minimum 110 acres	Average length- 6500 yards	1 per 50,000	No city-owned or privately owned.
<b>Swimming Pools</b>	Varies on size of	Teaching-minimum	N/A	1 city-owned pool

Activity/Facility	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended No. of Units per Population	No. of Units in Rockdale
	pool and amenities. Usually ½ to 2 acre site	<p>of 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3 to 4 ft.</p> <p>Competitive- minimum of 25 meters x 16 meters. Minimum of 27 square feet of water surface per swimmer. Ratios of 2:1 deck vs. water</p> <p>Diving board depth- 3.4 meters.</p>		that is 72 feet long, and 25' at its narrowest and 53 feet at its widest point. No diving board is at the pool. 1 privately owned swimming pool (Rockdale Country Club).

**Table 3-NRPA Standards Comparison**

## **ANALYSIS**

This analysis shows that Rockdale is deficient in many areas of recreational facilities. The City currently does not have a formal recreational program other than operating the swimming pool during the summer months. The Girls Softball Association and the Rockdale Little League provide recreation for youths during the summer months and the Rockdale Independent School District provides extra-curricular activities, such as sports, during the school year. A local church provides youth basketball at the high school during the winter months.

The City of Rockdale is seriously deficient on adult recreational facilities. The only facilities to accommodate adult recreation are the swimming pool, tennis courts and walking track at Veterans Park; the basketball court at Moultry Park; and, the basketball court at Samuel Park. All of these parks are active parks (parks with facilities that support physical exertion or exercise). No organized adult softball leagues exist in Rockdale at the current time. No public (City or School) passive parks exist in Rockdale for residents who want to read, play chess/checkers, relax or just enjoy nature. Wolf Park is a privately-owned passive park that holds special events. Rockdale has a walking trail for residents who want to walk and another walking trail is being built at

Sumuel Park. There are no linear parks in the community that utilize drainage areas or other undevelopable spaces for parks.

None of the parks have irrigation systems. Consequently, the turf in each park has sparse areas of vegetation.

There is no park specifically dedicated to very young children. Parks designed around very young children can help improve the playing experience of those children since they are not competing with older children for the use of the equipment.

No dog park exists in Rockdale for pet owners. Dog parks are becoming popular places not only for residents to exercise and socialize their pets but to also socialize with other pet owners.

None of the parks has a particular "theme" to it to assist in development or purchase of parks equipment or facilities. The development of a theme for each park can assist in compatible designs and target specific populations of the community.

The swimming pool is more than fifty (50) years old. The pool was constructed, as were most swimming pools at the time, in the "bathtub" style (generally rectangular with vertical walls). The modern concept is to have a water park with various components such as zero-entry (where one wades into the pool rather than steps off the side into the pool), water spray equipment, a large swim area, water slides, aqua activators, and water dumping features. Some water parks also have a lazy river feature or a surfing feature. Many water parks are built around a theme such as an ocean theme, pirate theme, sports theme, or nature theme.

Indoor recreational programs are currently limited to the school facilities and programs, the utilization of the Patterson Civic Center and the Senior Citizens Center. The Rockdale Municipal Development District is working on plans to increase the utilization of the community center. The MDD is exploring ways to create an amphitheater to the west side of the community center, improve acoustics to the building, enlarging the kitchen and redesigning the entrance to the building, improving the lighting, adding storage space, improving the aesthetics to the building, adding a cover to the patio on the west side of the building, adding a gazebo, adding a water feature on the west side that may include artistic designs, sculptures or lighting, adding walkways and improving the landscaping.

The City staff has also been working on plans to increase the utilization of the community center. A playscape, play equipment, a beach volleyball court, horseshoe pits, washers pits, park benches, water fountains, a barbecue area, decorative lighting, and a six foot fence should be added to the eastern side of the community center.

The Rockdale Fair Association (RFA) has constructed many facilities and improvements at Fair Park for use by the public. The facilities include the New Salem Building, livestock buildings, a show arena, fencing, pavilion, walk-in cooler, restrooms, concession area improvements, road and landscaping improvements. The RFA has raised funds for these improvements through holding the annual fair and rodeo. The RFA has plans for additional improvements to Fair Park including restrooms, purchase of land, a new storage building, moving the ticket booth and repairing the fencing.

## **PUBLIC DEMAND**

Rockdale's park usage consists of City residents, residents in the ETJ and visitors. The challenge of park planning is to balance the needs of these groups so as to focus resources on the central city while promoting the construction of public neighborhood parks in new developments.

The City's Subdivision Ordinance requires a fee for purchase of future park land or, at the City Council's discretion, dedication of land in lieu of a fee. Plats of ten (10) acres or less are excluded from park fees. The area of land to be dedicated must not be less than eight percent (8%) of the total area proposed within the subdivision, inclusive of adjoining street rights-of-way. No more than fifty percent (50%) of a park land dedication may be within the 100-year floodplain. Should new subdivisions of ten (10) acres or more be built in Rockdale, the acquisition of new parks will help maintain property values in the area; however, new parks also mean that the operating expenses of the City for park maintenance will increase.

The limited range of recreational opportunities has somewhat affected the City's citizens and the local economy. Because there are not many choices in Rockdale, its residents are tempted to travel to Taylor, Hutto or Round Rock for recreational diversity. This represents a flow of dollars away from Rockdale, depriving its businesses of access to local customers.

Rockdale businesses also are competing for skilled employees, some of whom place value on the recreational opportunities afforded by the area in which they would live. Likewise, Rockdale wishes to attract new businesses; parks and recreational facilities may help to convince some businesses to choose one community over another.

## **PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS**

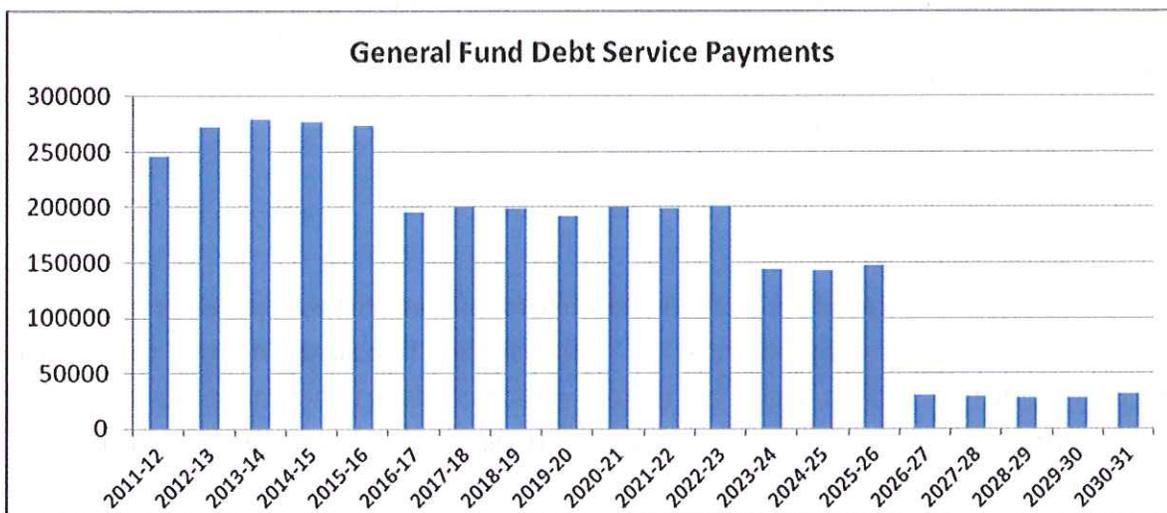
The following priorities have been established by the Parks Advisory Board to provide guidance for future projects and to quantify the parks, recreation and open space needs of the community.

Rank	Project	Location	Timeframe
1	Construct a passive park	Next to city hall	within 1 year
2A	Install lighting	Veterans Park	within 1 year
2B	Install lighting	Sumuel Park	within 1 year
2C	Install lighting	Moultry Park	within 1 year
3	Construct drainage around tennis court	Veterans Park	within 2-3 years
4	Re-plant turf	All parks	within 1 year
5	Irrigate parks	All parks	within 3-5 years
6	Construct sprayground	Veterans Park	within 5 years
7	Install restrooms	Skate Plaza	within 10 years
8	Expand parking	Veterans Park	within 5 years
9	Improve/repair softball field on Beverly Drive through new sod, new fences, new backstop	Softball field on Beverly Drive	within 5 years
10	Provide summer recreation programming and offer more tournaments by hiring summer recreation director	Public Works Center	within 5 years
11	Construct passive park	Post Oak Circle	within 1 year
12	Construct restrooms	Sumuel Park	within 2 years
13	Install parking	Sumuel Park	within 2 years
14	Construct sprayground	Community Center	within 10 years
15	Construct an indoor recreation center	Acquire land or vacant building	within 10-15 years
16	Construct linear parks	Drainage areas	within 7 years
17	Pave parking	Moultry Park	within 10-15 years
18	Install playscape	Fair Park	within 10 years

19	Develop a theme for each park	All parks	within 1 year
20	Construct a dog park	Next to animal control center	within 10-15 years
21	Construct a soccer field	Work with RISD to construct field at high school	within 15-18 years
22	Construct an aquatics center	Acquire land	within 20 years
23	Construct sprayground	Skate Park	within 20 years
24	Construct a young children's park	Acquire land	within 20 years

### PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The current economic climate has caused the City to cut back on the parks maintenance staff and severely limits the City's ability to maintain or operate new facilities. Because of the severely limited resources, priorities are critical to determining what improvements, if any, can be undertaken. Many cities construct park improvements through annual appropriations in the City's General Fund or through the issuance of General Obligation Bonds approved by voters. Because of the current economy, it is not seen in the immediate future that General Fund appropriations will be available to construct or improve many of the items listed under the Prioritization of Needs. The City's current debt service payments are shown below:



As the chart shows, no drop off in debt service payments are scheduled to occur until after the 2015-16 fiscal year. Depending on the economy at the time, the City may have a bond election and ask the voters to approve bond projects, which could include park improvement projects. However, when deciding on what projects to put before the voters, the City Council will have to consider street and sidewalk improvement projects, drainage projects, public safety facilities, airport improvements, library improvements as well as parks, recreation and open space projects. The ability of the City to absorb new debt and the impact on tax rates will be critical factors in deciding on the bond propositions to put before the voters.

Another source of funds for parks, recreation and open space projects are funds by private individuals and organizations. Individuals or organizations could be approached to see if they would be willing to purchase a particular piece of equipment or furnishing for a park, dedicate land for a park, provide funds to be used for a park or provide labor to construct park facilities. Samuel Park is an example of private individuals and organizations providing the land and funds for equipping the park.

Grants from the State of Texas or the federal government have been sharply reduced. It is not anticipated in the near future that grants from State or federal agencies will be available. Should the economy improve and such grants become available, the City should pursue those grants and solicit private funds for the matching portion of the grant(s).

## **CONCLUSION**

Over time, the City expects to make steady progress toward addressing its parks, recreation and open space needs. Should new housing and new businesses develop, the City will have additional resources which may be applied towards these needs. This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan should be reviewed every five years to make any additions, deletions or changes as necessary due to the changing economic, political and social environment of the community.

### **10.3.3 Police**

The City of Rockdale is located on the boundary of the fastest growing areas of the state. There's an abundance of affordable housing in the city and surrounding county which is likely to attract residents from the larger cities, who are looking to escape the big cities, while remaining in a reasonable distance for commuting to work and shopping. It's imperative that we increase salaries to maintain a strong proactive police force and reduce turnover.

The aging facility which houses the Police Department and jail wasn't designed for the purpose and will be an ongoing expense and liability to maintain. For that reason plans should be made for a new facility specifically designed for the purpose. This would reduce liability and increase efficiency.

#### **10.3.4 Medical Care**

Rockdale is fortunate to have professional health care facilities that provide quality care for all ages. The current Medical System, which includes the local hospital and three outpatient medical clinics, is focused on providing patient centered care to the community and surrounding area. The hospital and clinics offer numerous services and specialty physician care which includes but is not limited to Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Internal Medicine, Orthopedics, Podiatry, Allergy, Pulmonologist, Sports Medicine and Urology. The hospital has a critical care emergency room and a family care clinic that is staffed 24 hours seven days per week. The hospital contracts with a service that provides emergency life flights to major critical care hospitals, such as Scott & White Hospital in Temple and St. David's Health Care System in Austin, for patients that need more intensive care.

In addition to the hospital clinics, there are facilities in Rockdale that specialize in renal dialysis, family care, dental health, physical therapy, Alzheimer treatment and senior citizen residential long term care.

Emergency ambulance service is jointly contracted by the City of Rockdale, Milam County and the City of Cameron. Their responsibility is to provide emergency or advanced life saving services and to transport patients to the closest health care facility equipped to handle the patient's medical needs.

#### **10.3.5 Digital Information Systems**

The City of Rockdale has historically worked with City maps depicting boundaries and infrastructure lines. This may have been sufficient when growth was minimal and changes were made infrequently. Today changes occur on a constant basis. Smart growth and efficient city planning depend on an accurate understanding of existing conditions. Indeed, balancing the fulfillment of human needs with the protection of the natural environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future, will accommodate growth without diminishing present quality of life.

The advent of computers has revolutionized cartography. Most commercial-quality maps are now made using computer software. One type of software (GIS) is a system for capturing and analyzing data spatially referenced to the earth. That is, it is a computer system capable of managing geographically-referenced information. The most common method of data creation is digitization, where a hard copy of a map or survey plan is transferred into a digital medium through the use of a computer-aided design (CAD) program.

A growing demand for GIS in regional and community planning has resulted in lower costs and continual improvements in the hardware and software components of GIS. The City of Rockdale will need to acquire this computer-based mapping capability as soon as feasible and should explore now the products that are available. The quality of our community depends on smart, sustainable development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **10.3.6 All Other City Services**

The City of Rockdale currently has a web site, [www.rockdalecityhall.com](http://www.rockdalecityhall.com), which provides helpful information about departments, some city policies and the City's Code of Ordinances. Additionally, it lists contact information for key staff, meetings and public notices and links to other community services. The web site should be further developed and upgraded to provide a dynamic source for city forms, government documents and interactive communication with city services, e.g. message boards or virtual forums.

The Street Department is responsible for roadside mowing, tree trimming, herbicide application and other landscaping activities. The department also maintains roadways including culvert repair, street patching and traffic control signs installations.

The Community Services Department serves all citizens of Rockdale by ensuring that building and development occur in a safe and organized manner. Department responsibilities include:

- Administering building permits and fees
- Administering the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances
- Enforcing city nuisance ordinances
- Permitting and inspection of building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical activities in the city limits
- Providing advice to the city manager, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council concerning zoning and planning matters

The department consists of the Building Inspections and Permits Division and The Code Enforcement Division. Each division monitors and enforces the adopted codes and ordinances of the City of Rockdale.

The Utility Department includes Utility Administration, Water Services, Sanitation, Sewer Services, Water Treatment Plants and Wastewater Treatment Plant. The department provides for meter reading, utility billing, initiation and termination of services, maintenance of fire hydrants and effluent disposal systems operation and maintenance. All water wells and water quality maintenance processes are conducted by the Utility Department. The city presently contracts its sanitation and recycling services.

City government in Rockdale includes the departments of Administration, Community Service, Fire Department, Municipal Court, Public Works (Airport, Streets, Parks, Water, Wastewater and Sanitation) and Police. These departments provide for the many functions necessary to maintain the activities of the City. Administrative functions include posting and notification of all meetings and events, open records request, annexation requests, maintaining official city records, among many others. The Municipal Court is involved in the scheduling and prosecution of all Municipal Court proceedings including jury trials. Accounts Receivable and Payable as well as cash management and investments are managed by the City Treasurer. In addition, the City Treasurer generates monthly and annual financial reports. The city contracts with the Rockdale Chamber of Commerce for the management of hotel occupancy tax funds.

#### **10.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Encourage the City Council to support the Library's Long Range Plan for future growth and development.
2. Develop hiking trails and scenic viewing trails throughout the community.
3. The City should initiate and develop recreational programs for all citizens, the youth thru the elderly. The city's drainage corridors and flood plain areas should be utilized for open space, parks and walking trails.
4. Ensure the salaries of the city staff is as competitive as feasible with other communities in order to retain qualified staff.
5. Provide adequate staffing levels to accommodate high quality service levels and projected growth.

6. Explore various GIS software products in order to complement efficient city planning.
7. Continue to expand the use of the city website for public access of information and documents.
8. Encourage the City, County, School District, Hospital District, Municipal Development District and the Chamber of Commerce to work together to provide quality public services.