

Parks and Recreation

Goal and Work Plan Priorities

Goal Statement

Strive to enrich the lives of our residents and visitors by providing essential parks, greenways, trails and recreational facilities and access and to provide programs, cultural experiences, and services that accentuate the experience and protect our natural environment found throughout Duncan's parks and lakes.

Work Plan Priorities

General Parks and Recreation Priorities

Make recreational opportunities more accessible for those with disabilities

One in four individuals in the United States has a disability and many more will experience disabilities through the course of their lives. Duncan needs to continue to remove barriers of the past that limit access by individuals that may not be as mobile so that all can enjoy the recreational experiences that the community offers. To ensure access is available to all, Duncan needs to implement policies and plans that remove physical barriers while building spaces that serve everyone, provide information to citizens letting them know what is waiting for them at their destination before they arrive, make sure those with disabilities are included in future planning efforts, and raise awareness and promote inclusion for everyone. These steps will help build Duncan as a community that cares and provides opportunities for all to enjoy.



Improve safety at parks and lakes

Recreational spaces, whether that is the city parks or city lakes, need to feel safe to be inviting to the public. Safety not only means that of personal wellbeing, which is very important, but also the perception of the public space needs to be clean, attractive, and inviting. Citizens have shared their concerns about some sites in the community that have debris on the ground, signs of drug use occurring, and areas that seem overgrown that could allow someone to hide with ill intent. To combat this, steps need to continue to focus on providing proper trash receptacles, regular maintenance that identifies areas that are "hidden" and regular patrols by both city staff and the Duncan Police Department. These steps will foster citizens' desire to use the space which in turn will lead to more use and improved safety.

Develop "Friends of the Parks" and "Friends of the Lakes" programs

Duncan's residents care about our local parks and city owned lakes and understand that added value that these amenities and experiences offer to our community. To help further enrich these amenities and build upon the experiences that residents and guests enjoy, consideration is needed for the creation of non-profit organizations like "Friends of the Parks" and "Friends of the Lakes." Establishing these types of organizations will allow those that have a greater attachment to outdoor recreation to help fund future projects that may otherwise go unaddressed. To help



guide these non-profit organizations, the City of Duncan will need to maintain active plans for the parks and lakes that will allow for greater success with the private/public partnerships.

Make the parks and lakes destinations through placemaking practices

To be a destination, the parks and lakes need to offer diverse and engaging amenities, unique natural features, ability to host and promote community events, be accessible for all, and be actively marketed for community events that go beyond the immediate neighborhood or district. Common components implemented in other communities include adding multi-generational amenities, improved water features, establish sports facilities, allow for nature exploration and education, and install sculptures or interactive art pieces to enhance the aesthetic appeal. Once these amenities have been identified or added, regular programming for community events will need to be prioritized – an outdoor stage does the community no good if there is not an organization that is actively seeking talent to use the stage. This, along with ensuring the destination is accessible and inclusive, will create a vibrant space that will attract residents and visiting guests to take part and enjoy Duncan.



Continue to improve landscaping and beautification

The Duncan Enhancement Trust Authority, DETA, was established in 2016 as an effort to focus on beautification and image improvement and is funded through fees included in citations that are processed through municipal court. DETA has been integral in replacing park signs, setting design standards for wayfinding, involved in placemaking practices, and driving Duncan to be a more attractive community for residents and businesses. The beautification efforts have also begun to spill over into projects that the parks board and lakes commission recommend, improvements at the airport, and celebrating the culture and heritage of Duncan. Continuing these efforts will help drive increased use of our parks and lakes but will also help drive future economic growth opportunities and tourism in Duncan.



City Parks Priorities

Conduct a feasibility study to develop an Aquatic Center to replace aging water/pool features in the community

The municipal pool in Fuqua Park was a WPA project and is now nearly 90 years old and is at a point where ongoing maintenance is quickly outpacing any fees collected during the limited summer use. To better serve the Duncan community, citizens have expressed the desire to see a new aquatic center be built that could host future state high school swim events as well as being home to the Penguins Swim Team – a team that



has traveled internationally and brought medals back to Duncan! Ideally the new facility would meet the state requirements to host larger events which will bring new tourism opportunities to Duncan, be a facility that could see year-round use, and with new technology in pools and aquatic systems see a reduction in operational costs. The aquatic center also has potential for a strong partnership between the City of Duncan, Duncan Public Schools, and the Simmon's Center.

Make restrooms more available for public use

The citizens of Duncan have indicated that they want to see the public restrooms in our parks become available for public use again. It is understood that vandalism has dictated when and how the public restrooms are made available, but as the community grows events and opportunities at our parks there will be a growing need for public access while balancing security. Design of new restrooms will also be integral to limiting vandalism in public restrooms, so as funding becomes available research will be required to find the right materials and construction to limit potential damage.



Establish a pickleball court/complex

The growing sport of pickleball has come to Duncan, and residents would like to see outdoor courts developed at our parks. Currently, pickleball players use the Simmon's Center for regular play and will occasionally set up on an underused tennis court as weather permits. With proper planning, establishing a network of pickleball courts or a pickleball facility could result in more citizens engaging in physical activity as well as being a program that draws leagues and tournament play to Duncan.



Address aging park infrastructure and plan for sustainability

Many of our parks have been updated with new playground equipment that includes accessible activities for the inclusion of children regardless of the physical abilities, social status, or economic situation. This effort began in 2017 when Duncan was awarded a grant that allowed for updated equipment to be installed at Olen Sledge Park. Since then, each year the City Council has allocated capital improvement funds for park upgrades and the parks board has worked diligently with the parks department to make sure neighborhood needs and desires are being met. There are still several parks that have dated equipment, or not equipment at all, and continued efforts and funding is needed to address these needs and sustainability.



Establish more multi-generational activities and opportunities in city parks

Multi-generational parks are designed for children ages 1 to 100 to enjoy physical, emotional, and social benefits that are found within the park environment. Currently, Duncan has one park that has begun to meet the multi-generational needs of the community – the Ron Burton Rotary Park and the musical instruments, picnic tables, traditional playground equipment, and access to the Duncan Senior Citizens Center within a short walking distance. Citizens



have taken notice and would like to see similar components added to other parks throughout the community to attract greater use and enjoyment for all that live, work and play in Duncan.

City Lakes Priorities

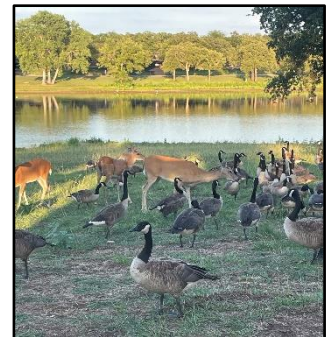
Research and investigate programs that provide rental equipment at the lakes for public use

With ongoing reinvestment in the four lakes owned and operated by the City of Duncan, and growing interest in visitors to our community wanting to enjoy amenities at the lakes, the City of Duncan is encouraged to investigate public/private partnerships with companies that operate equipment rental programs. The ability to rent a canoe or kayak to enjoy a day on the water, yard games to play at your campsite, or necessary items to enjoy a family cookout that might have been left at home would be a beneficial opportunity to improve the quality use of our lakes. Several communities throughout Oklahoma have already implemented these partnerships with success and are seeing increased usage at their lake facilities. This would be another quality amenity to bring to the Duncan owned lakes that are already seeing increased recreational use based on recent improvements being made.



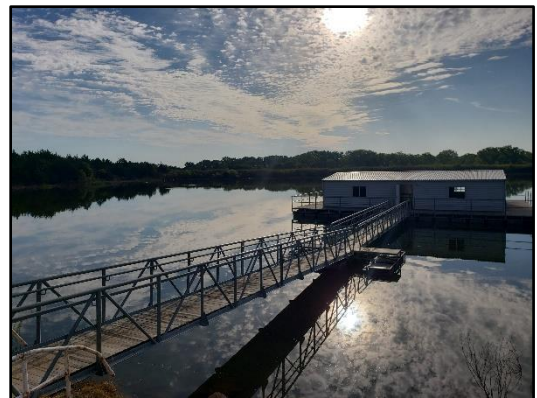
Grow existing programs and opportunities that already exist at the lakes

Like the parks throughout the City of Duncan, improvements have been ongoing for programs and opportunities at the four lakes owned by Duncan. Reinvestment in fishing houses has been ongoing, city departments are seeking grants to rebuild fishing docks and install walking trails, improved patrols by Duncan Police Department and Code Enforcement is now occurring, and lake staff continues to upgrade and maintain the grounds for residents and guests alike. It is anticipated that these actions will continue, and local leaders are now able to begin considering new improvements based on the Lakes Improvement Plan that was prepared in 2018. The plan not only addresses current amenities but lists several new amenities that can be added to improve the quality of life, and the quality of use, for our lakes.



Improve fishing docks, fish houses, and hunting activities at the lakes

Over the years, the city lakes have been neglected due to financial constraints and the need to invest capital funding into other infrastructure projects. As such, the fishing docks, fish houses, and amenities tied to hunting activities have deteriorated over time. Thankfully the current leadership team for Duncan understands the benefits and return on investment that is associated with the four lakes and the opportunities to grow and improve the existing amenities. The City of Duncan is actively seeking state and federal grants that can be matched with local dollars to be used to rebuild fishing docks, improve the fish houses, allow for continued



hunting activities, promote wildlife restoration, and install walking trails that are accessible to all citizens and guests. Our citizens have also expressed the strong desire to see these improvements and maintenance plans continue as the lakes have been identified as an important community asset that can be used for tourism, economic growth, and improved quality of life.

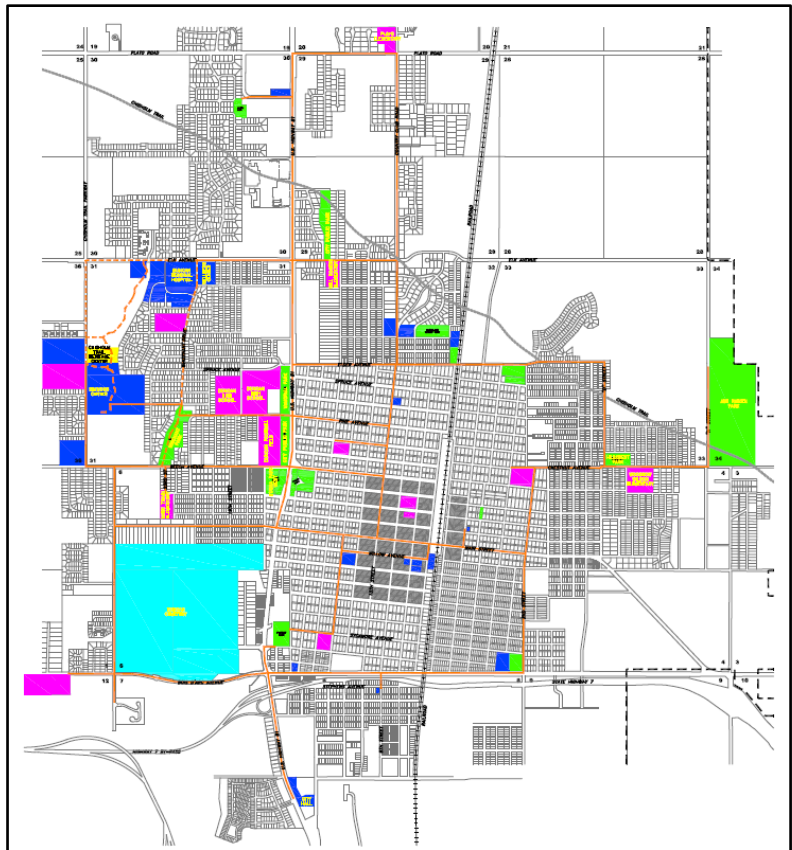
Trails and Greenways Priorities

Establish design guidelines for potential developments along current and future trails, sidewalks, and greenways

Historically, Duncan has not been motivated to be a walkable community, but that mindset is beginning to change across all demographics. Throughout this planning process, citizens have stressed the importance of amenities and resources being accessible, and much of that can be addressed through proper design guidelines and ordinance proposals for future development. Such design guidelines that need to be considered include pedestrian-friendly designs, well-lit spaces, mixed-development access, ADA accessible components, and a strong sense of community built around the trails, sidewalks and greenways. The city will also need to set policies for perpetual maintenance as future legs of the Heritage Trail and the interconnecting network of sidewalks are built.

Continue to work towards completion of entire trail system

The first 5K of the Heritage Trails is nearly complete and the system already sees extensive community use day and night, thus showing that the community's desire to be interconnected with trails and sidewalks exists. The early success has already inspired those that have been involved with the initial segment to begin planning for the next set of phases, and the City of Duncan staff has been working on mapping out what the larger trail network will look like and how potential funding can be secured. Based on community engagement conversations about walkability and the trail system, the city's Public Works Department has updated the original map produced in the early 2000s to better represent connectivity to neighborhoods, public facilities, schools, and city parks. Implementation of this plan should continue to occur as funding is available, and public input will be needed if future modifications to the trail network is required to make Duncan a more walkable community.



Work Plan Priorities Matrixes

General Parks and Recreation Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Make recreational opportunities more accessible for those with disabilities	Ongoing	Ongoing	Public Works, Parks Board, Community Development, City Council
Improve the safety at parks and lakes	Ongoing	Ongoing	Police Department, Public Works, Parks Department, City Council
Develop “Friends of the Parks” and “Friends of the Lakes” programs	2025	Short-Range	Public Works, Community Development, City Council
Make the parks and lakes destinations through placemaking practices	2025	Mid-Range	Public Works, Parks Board, Lakes Commission, Community Development, City Council
Continue to improve landscaping and beautification	2025	Mid-Range	Public Works, Parks Board, Lakes Commission, DETA, City Council

City Parks Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Conduct a feasibility study to develop an Aquatic Center to replace aging water/pool features in the community	2025	Short-Range	Public Works, Community Development, City Council, Duncan Public Schools, Simmon’s Center
Make restrooms more available for public use	2025	Mid-Range	Public Works, Parks Department, City Council
Establish a pickleball court/complex	2025	Mid-Range	Public Works, Simmons Center, Community Development, City Council
Address aging park infrastructure and plan for sustainability	2025	Long-Range	Public Works, Parks Board, Parks Department, City Council
Establish more multi-generational activities and opportunities in city parks	2025	Long-Range	Public Works, Parks Board, Parks Department, City Council

City Lakes Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Research and investigate programs that provide rental equipment at the lakes for public use	2025	Short-Range	Public Works, Lakes Commission, Community Development
Grow existing programs and opportunities that already exist at the lakes	2025	Mid-Range	Public Works, Lakes Commission, City Council
Improve fishing docks, fish houses, and hunting activities at the lakes	2026	Mid-Range	Public Works, Lakes Commission, City Council

Trails and Greenways Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Establish design guidelines for potential development along current and future trails, sidewalks, and greenways	2025	Short-Range	Community Development, City Council
Continue to work towards completion of entire trail system	2025	Long-Range	Public Works, Community Development, Simmon's Center, Duncan Regional Hospital, City Council

