



**HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
MASTER PLAN
2018-2028**

PREPARED BY P, R & S, LLC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Precinct 2	Commissioner Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Precinct 3	Commissioner Joe M. Flores
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
DEMOGRAPHICS	6
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	9
NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT	12
Precinct 1	15
Precinct 2	17
Precinct 3	18
Precinct 4	19
IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITY LISTING	20
County Priority List:	20
David Fuentes, Commissioner Precinct 1 Priority List:	21
Eduardo “Eddie” Cantu, Commissioner Precinct 2 Priority List:	21
Joe Flores, Commissioner Precinct 3 Priority List:	22
Joseph Palacios, Commissioner Precinct 4 Priority List:	22
PARK INVENTORY	23
Appendix	29
Online Survey	29
Commissioner Court Agenda	32
Commissioner Court Resolution	33

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Hidalgo County Map	1
Figure 2: Hildago County residents 25 and older	6
Figure 3: Comparison of Hildago residents 25 and older	7
Figure 4: Hidalgo County Number of surveys by precinct	13
Figure 5: Percentage of surveys returned by precinct	13
Figure 6: Map of Precincts	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

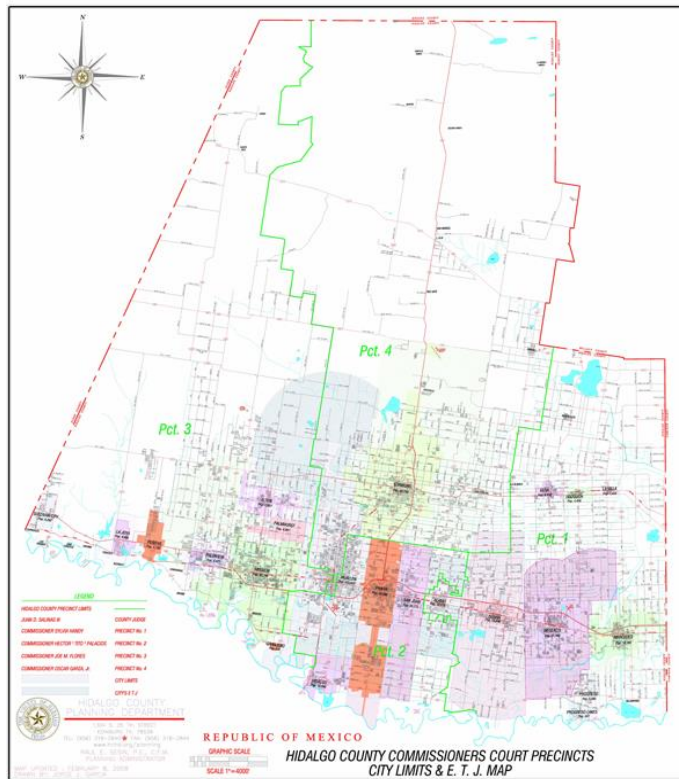
The County of Hidalgo located along the border with Mexico. It is one of the largest counties in Texas without a major city. The County's previous Parks Master Plan expired in 2012. For consistency, references to the 2012 Master Plan will be noted in the 2017-2027 Master Plan.

The County is divided into four (4) precincts plus the County Judge (See [Figure 1](#)). Each precinct will be identified in the Park Inventory of Section (7). The Implementation Section (6) will identify priorities for park amenities for the County as well as for each precinct.

Hidalgo County has embraced the concept that parks, recreation facilities and programs are an essential part of a healthy environment. The County has included park development as a primary function of the County along with roads, water/sewer lines and drainage. Each precinct has funding for park maintenance and development. As the County population grows, the need for increased parks for residents use increases. Beginning the planning process early is a positive factor for the County.

There are several cities located within the County that provide parks and recreational services. The parks and services noted in the County Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (the Plan) is in addition to those offered by the cities of the county. To avoid duplication of services, it is beneficial to the County to develop partnerships with local government entities, non-profits, schools and other organizations to provide park and recreational facilities and programs. While the County is interested in park development, fiscal responsibility to the citizens of the County is a primary concern. Partnerships will facilitate the fiscal responsibility the citizens are requesting.

FIGURE 1: HIDALGO COUNTY MAP



The Goals for the “The Plan”:

- Establish a regional parks system that preserves the existence of natural, historic, and cultural resources. (Same goal as 2005 Master Plan)
- Maximize efficient use of resources to develop and maintain a first-class system of parks, public spaces and recreational improvements and facilities.
- To upgrade the existing parks to meet current standards.
- To utilize open space, flood corridors, and canals to develop linear parks, and hike and bike trails. Develop a complete network of trails connecting all sections of the County.
- To initiate and develop partnerships with other public, semi-public and private entities to fund the development of parks and open spaces.
- To promote policies at the County level and advocate changes in any current policies related to land preservation and urban revitalization. (Same goal as 2005 Master Plan)

The goals identified above will be expanded in Section 4. The goals that remained the same as the 2012 Master Plan are items relevant to the operation of Parks and Recreation. Those goals remain consistent on an annual basis. The goals are for the entire County. Each Commissioner can expand those goals for their areas of the County. These goals were formulated based on the community meetings held in Precinct 1 and 4, documents prepared by Texas A&M AgriLife for Precinct 3 and meetings with Commissioner Staff.

A Needs Assessment was conducted with the residents of Hidalgo County through the County’s website, through the Head Start Program and at the community meetings. The County secured 956 surveys. The surveys and the community meetings developed the priority listing for each precinct and the County.

The Implementation Plan, (Section 6) identifies the County priority listing, with funding opportunities for the next ten (10) years. Priority lists for each of the precincts was available through the surveys and have been identified in Section 6. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grant applications provide additional points for a master plan, as well as points for the items in the priority listing included in the grant application.

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan does include park classification systems from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The 2017 Plan does not include the details of numbers of people per acres and types of amenities as in the 2012 plan. Those classifications have remained constant, with the same descriptions, acreage, and amenities.

The NRPA Standards are reflective of a city with a population near. The County population is diverse and divided in rural areas versus urban. Reference to those classifications will be made in the Plan but actual statistics can be reviewed in the 2012 plan. Secondly, there are no cost estimates included in the Plan. The Plan is for ten (10) years. Cost estimates would be outdated and require updating prior to use. Once a project is developed, accurate cost estimates should be acquired by the owner prior to finalizing the project.

The top ten (10) priorities for the County do not match the same priorities for the precincts. Although there are very similar patterns in the needs of the constituents in the County. The precincts have unique needs based on whether the precinct includes cities or are rural in nature. The top ten (10) priorities are comprised of amenities that can be used repeatedly in grants with Texas Parks and Wildlife and score points. The priorities comprised of total points calculated from the online survey in both English and Spanish without taking into effect which precinct was represented. The individual precinct ratings are in Chapter 6.

The online survey identified several projects that would benefit the County as the top priorities. These included a Nature Center, Motorized Trails, Dog Park and Disc Golf. While several of the urban areas have these facilities, County residents have identified those as needs in their areas. Developing partnerships and joint advertising the facilities would reduce the County's investment in construction and provide the same services to the residents

The Top Ten (10) park amenities recommended through the survey process are:

- 1. Youth Softball Fields**
- 2. Youth Soccer Fields**
- 3. Leisure Pool**
- 4. Dog Park**
- 5. Nature Center**
- 6. Motorized Trail**
- 7. Trails**
- 8. Youth Baseball**
- 9. Disc Golf**
- 10. Tennis**

HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL DATA

Hidalgo County, located in South Texas, is bordered by Cameron County to the east, Brooks County on the north, Starr County to the West, and Mexico to the South. The County seat is Edinburg, located at the junction of U.S. Highways 107 and 281. Other communities located in the County include McAllen, Mission, Weslaco, Pharr, San Juan, Alamo and Donna. The County comprises 1,596 square miles of the Rio Grande delta. Elevation ranges from 40 feet along the Rio Grande River to 200 feet.

Indians have called the area home for 11,000 years. Artifacts dating to the Archaic Period indicate the inhabitants of the region were hunters and gatherers. The people were farmers with no domestic animals except a few dogs. The area is classified as the South Texas Plains which is conducive to farming. The Coahuilteco and Karankawa Indians called South Texas home. The Coahuiltecos hunted a variety of animals and fished, gathered berries and fruits. The Lipan Apaches, were forced out of Colorado and New Mexico by the Comanches, entered Texas in 1700s. They gained control of South Texas by 1775. The Comanches followed them and arrived in South Texas by the nineteenth century.

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca traveled in the area in 1528 after his shipwreck. In August 1638 Jacinto Garcia de Sepulveda crossed the Rio Grande into area at the site of Mier searching for Dutch sailors who were reported in Texas. In 1687 a second expedition of Alonso De Leon in search of Fort St. Louis also followed the river route. In 1747 Miguel de la Garza Falcon inspected the northern bank of the river looking for a suitable site for a settlement. He determined it was unsuitable and condemned it as uninhabitable. Despite his report the Spanish crown was interested and in 1749 Jose de Escandon was assigned to colonize the area. He established four towns on the southern bank of the Rio Grande River – Reynosa (1749), Camargo (1749), Mier (1750), and Revilla (now Guerrero 1752). Settlers from these areas crossed the river and settled on the north side. Nineteen grants were issued in the future Hidalgo County by the Spanish and Mexican governments.

A settlement called La Habitation, also known as Rancho San Luis or San Luisito, is the present-day site of Hidalgo, Texas established in 1774. A second land grant site was Jose Manuel Gomez, who received the Santa Anita grant in 1798. In 1797 he established the Santa Anita Ranch which was still in operation in 1995 under the name of the McAllen Ranch.

With the Texas Revolution, that land became disputed territory with Mexico claiming it as part of Tamaulipas and Texas claiming it as part of its southern border. During the Mexican War, Zachery Taylor laid out Old Military Road to supply his men in northern Mexico. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, the land became part of San Patricio County. The same year the region was further subdivided and became part of Cameron County. Hidalgo County was formed in 1852 and named for Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who gave the “cry for Mexican independence” from Spanish rule.

By 1852 the County had between 40 and 45 ranches. In 1852 La Habitation was renamed Edinburg and made the County Seat. The first County Court was held on September 2, 1852. Its first act was to issue ferry licenses at Hidalgo, San Luis, Penitas, and Las Cuevas. Jose M.J. Carabajal was the first Court Reporter. County residents felt neglect from state and federal officials and adopted the name “Republic of Hidalgo.” This isolation and ineffective law enforcement led to general chaos and lawlessness, as exhibited by cattle raids and shootouts. Hidalgo County did not prosper from the Civil War like Cameron County, but found itself battling cattle rustlers, who were joined by both Union and Confederate deserters. April 2, 1875, Capt. Leander H. McNelly and a band of Texas Rangers arrived to help.

It was not until 1882 when John Closner was elected Deputy Sheriff, that cattle rustling was controlled. Closner became Sheriff in 1890 and became the County’s political boss. He brought peace to the County and was such an effective political leader that he was nicknamed “father” of Hidalgo County. The first newspaper, Hidalgo Advance, went into publication in March 1903 for the sole purpose of attracting a railroad. The railroad arrived in 1904, the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway.

In 1920 the population was 38,110 and by 1940 the population increased to 106,059. The growth in the County has continued with it being the eight largest County in the State. The County has never experienced a decrease in population. Hidalgo got its first military base in 1941, when Moore Air Field was built 12 miles northwest of Mission. Hidalgo County income was generated in part from Mexico both through trade and sales in the County. The peso devaluation of 1976 did not have an immediate effect on the economy of the Rio Grande Valley. It was not until the mid-1980’s when local merchants who catered to Mexican nationals began to see negative effects on devaluations that had occurred in that decade.

Hidalgo County population is 91 percent Hispanic with primarily roots in Mexico. Many of the traditions, holidays, and recreational activities are derived from this background. The primary labor force was in agriculture which was comprised of migrant workers. Thus, the labor force that made this a prosperous agriculture region made it one of the poorest in the nation. In 1987, the per capita was \$7,001.

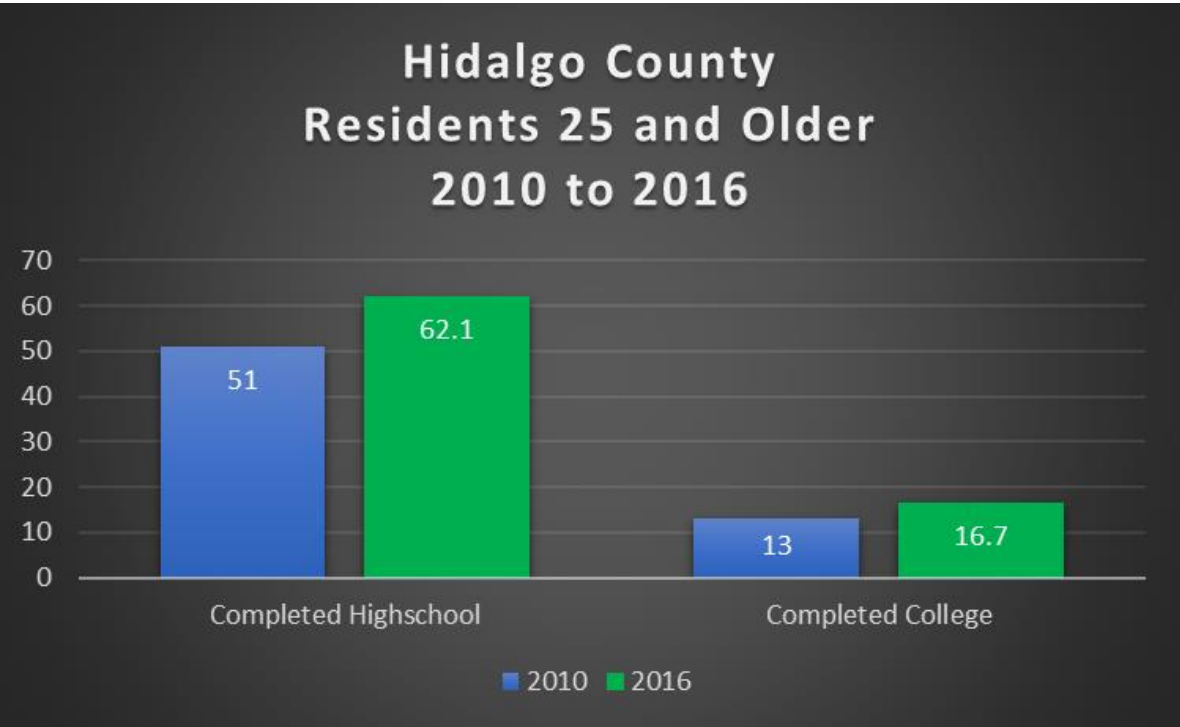
In the 1980’s, the County saw an increase in the retired population moving to the Rio Grande Valley. By 1988 Hidalgo County hosted over 80,000 “Winter Texans”. Retail sales rose 22.6 percent that year. “Winter Texans” had become an economic boom for the area. This group also brought new recreation challenges to the area. Winter Texans from other states participate in different types of recreational services that had never been offered in the Valley previously. The County and related cities had to learn about the facilities and events to meet the needs.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The U.S. Census counted 849,843 individuals living in Hidalgo County in 2016. In 2010, Hidalgo County had 774,769 people living in the County which is a 9.7 percent increase. The state of Texas had a 10.8 percent increase in population for the same census period. The census noted about 91 percent of the population were Hispanic and 7.3 percent Anglo. Hidalgo County is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. The County provides health and justice to the residents of the County as well as services to residents who live outside the city limits of the cities in the County.

In the 2010 census, of residents who were 25 and older, 51 percent had completed high school, and 13 percent had college degrees. In the 2016 data those who completed high school was 62.1 percent and those with college degrees was 16.7 percent. This compares to the State average of 81.9 percent graduating from high school and 27.6 percent from college. The national average is 86.7 percent graduating from high school and 29.8 percent with college degrees. The total number of persons living below the poverty level is 31.1 percent which is higher than the State average of 15.6 percent and the national average of 12.7 percent. One way to reduce this statistic is to improve the education levels and the number of students graduating from high school, attending college and graduating.

FIGURE 2: HILDAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS 25 AND OLDER



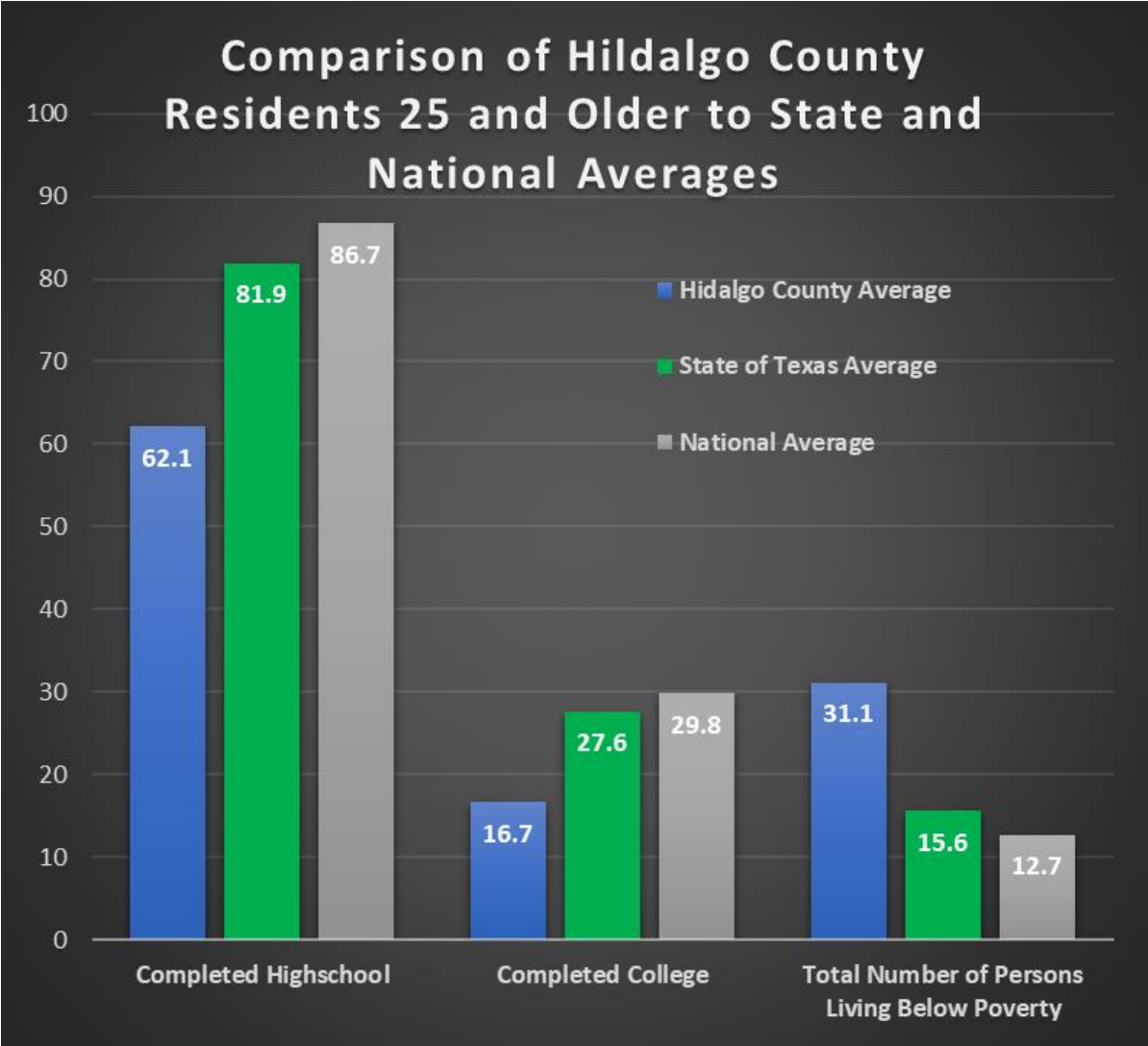


FIGURE 3: COMPARISON OF HILDAGO RESIDENTS 25 AND OLDER

The County is home to the University of Texas of the Rio Grande Valley in Edinburg, Texas A&M University in McAllen, South Texas College (McAllen, Weslaco) and several vocational schools. Area school districts have incorporated college preparatory classes to encourage youth to attend college. With two major universities located in the County, area youth will not have to travel out of the area to obtain a university degree. With the per capita income being low, universities in the area will assist those students with a college education.

The ability for the County and area cities to coordinate recreational programming with the universities allows for greater services to the community. The universities provide staffing for the County to provide the programs and services to the residents. Parks and Recreation

providers have historically provided part-time positions to area college students. This brings new ideas and programs to the agencies while providing employment for the students.

In the early twenty-first century food processing and other agribusinesses, tourism and mineral operations were important elements of the local economy. In 2002 the County had 2,104 farms and ranches covering 593,158 acres, 68 percent were devoted to crops and 28 percent to pastures. That year farmers and ranchers earned \$202,073,000; crop sales accounted for \$182,431,000 of the total. Sugar cane, vegetables, grain, citrus, cotton, and cattle were the chief agricultural products. There were more than 2,777,000 barrels of oil, and 234,486,500 thousand cubic feet of well gas, were produced in the County in 2004. By the end of 2004 110,100,000 barrels of petroleum had been taken from County lands since 1934. The change in education offers new positions in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) areas for future generations.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan have been developed to outline and provide for the future role of the County in parks development. The Hidalgo County Parks Master Plan has been developed to encourage shared resources, evaluate needs, and coordinate facilities. A previous plan was developed and expired in 2012, where applicable references will be made to those goals and objectives as to whether they were met or pending.

Goal 1: Establish a regional parks system that preserves the existence of natural, historic, and cultural resources. (Same goal as 2005 Master Plan)

Objectives:

- Designate, preserve, and restore significant natural resource areas within the park system.
- Identify, preserve, and restore significant historic sites and buildings and other resources within the parks and recreation system.
- Ensure the construction, maintenance, and other activities protect natural and cultural resources within the parks by integrating resource preservation into project planning, programming and training parks personnel on issues.
- Increase public awareness of natural and cultural resources in the County parks through public education and interpretive programs.

Goal 2: Maximize efficient use of resources to develop and maintain a first-class system of parks, public spaces and recreational improvements and facilities.

Objectives:

- Design facilities according to national recognized guidelines that respect the character of each park while developing a unified park system.
- Develop circulation systems that provide safe and convenient access for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Utilize modern techniques in developing water, sewer, and electrical systems for parks and recreation facilities.
- All facilities and parks to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities) guidelines.
- All facilities and parks designed to promote safety and security for staff and participants.

Goal 3: To upgrade the existing parks to meet current standards.

Objectives:

- Annual evaluation of parks in each precinct; develop five (5) year maintenance plan for improvements
- Identify small grant opportunities for each precinct for upgrades.
- Develop “Friends” group for each park to assist with maintenance.

- Adopt a maintenance plan for each park. Set standards for each park, with specific maintenance time frames.

Goal 4: To utilize open space, flood corridors, and canals to develop linear parks, and hike and bike trails. Develop a complete network of trails connecting all sections of the County.

Objectives:

- Maintain regular coordination and develop partnerships with governmental agencies and private organizations who have an interest in a County wide trail system.
- Maintain coordination with bicycle organizations in County.
- Investigate funding options for a County wide trail plan.
- Identify all municipal and County owned canals and drainage areas which could be used for trail systems.
- Develop a committee to begin working on a trail plan, set time lines, and funding opportunities.

Goal 5: To initiate and develop partnerships with other public, semi-public and private entities to fund the development of parks and open spaces.

Objectives:

- Identify potential partnerships.
- Identify funding opportunities.
- Encourage communication with cities and school districts within the County for joint use of facilities.
- Develop working relationship with State departments with funding opportunities.

Goal 6: To promote policies at the County level and advocate changes in any current policies related to land preservation and urban revitalization. (Same goal as 2005 Master Plan)

Objectives:

- Optimize the benefits of land preservation. Recommended strategies:
- Identify best combination of tools for all jurisdictional levels (market based tools)
- Promote sustainable development.

- Develop a cost-benefit analysis for the various preservation tools.
- Influence and utilize State and Federal legislation and policies. Recommended strategies:
- Advocate changes in laws at the State level that will enhance land preservation efforts at the County level.
- Monitor changes to State and Federal laws.
- Encourage County policy choices consistent with the goals of this plan. Recommended strategies:
- Provide County planning staff/technical resources for master plan ordinance development and updating, and parks/recreation planning.
- Collaborate with cities to develop GIS capabilities for the entire County.
- Encourage/implement a policy to filter for “non-use land” decisions that affect land use.
- Investigate the option of securing property from developers for parkland development. The construction can be completed at a future date or, a developer can complete the park and donate to the County for maintenance. This was a high initiative of the County Chief of Staff for each Commissioner.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The planning process for the Master Plan began with a review of Hidalgo County current documents, the 2012 plan, current plans for park development, Master Plans from other cities in the County, meetings with Commissioner’s staff, meetings with County Planning Department and review of historical and data documents. This information was included in the plan under the Historical and Demographics sections to highlight the uniqueness of Hidalgo County.

Review of the 2012 Parks Master Plan detailed information concerning the parks in all the cities located in Hidalgo County. This information is educational but not necessarily relevant to the development of the County Parks Master Plan. The cities located in each precinct will be noted in their sections to outline which precincts have more parks in un-annexed areas.

The 2017 plan incorporated an online survey (1029 results) with two (2) community meetings (Precinct 1 and 2), and a report prepared by Texas A&M AgriLife for Precinct 3. The online survey allowed the capture of information for the entire County as well as each precinct.

FIGURE 4: HIDALGO COUNTY NUMBER OF SURVEYS BY PRECINCT

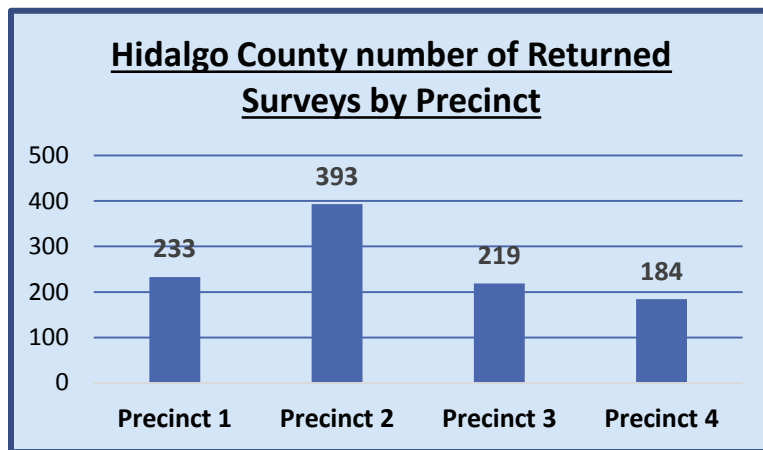
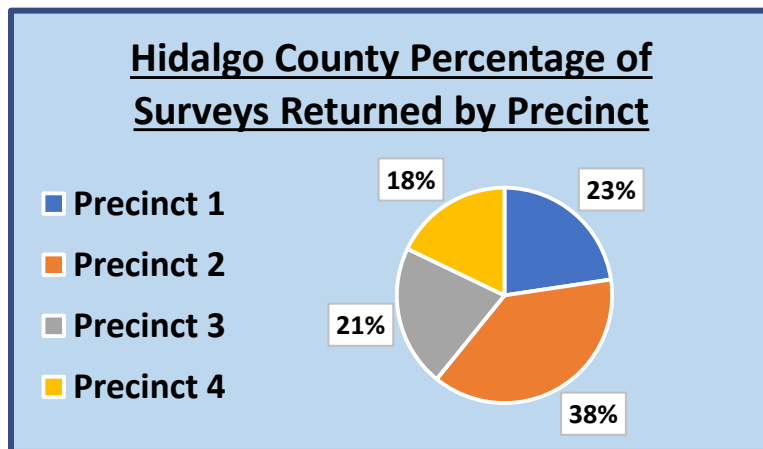


FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE OF SURVEYS RETURNED BY PRECINCT



Overall the county residents are satisfied with the County park system.

Comments included:

- Need for more parks.

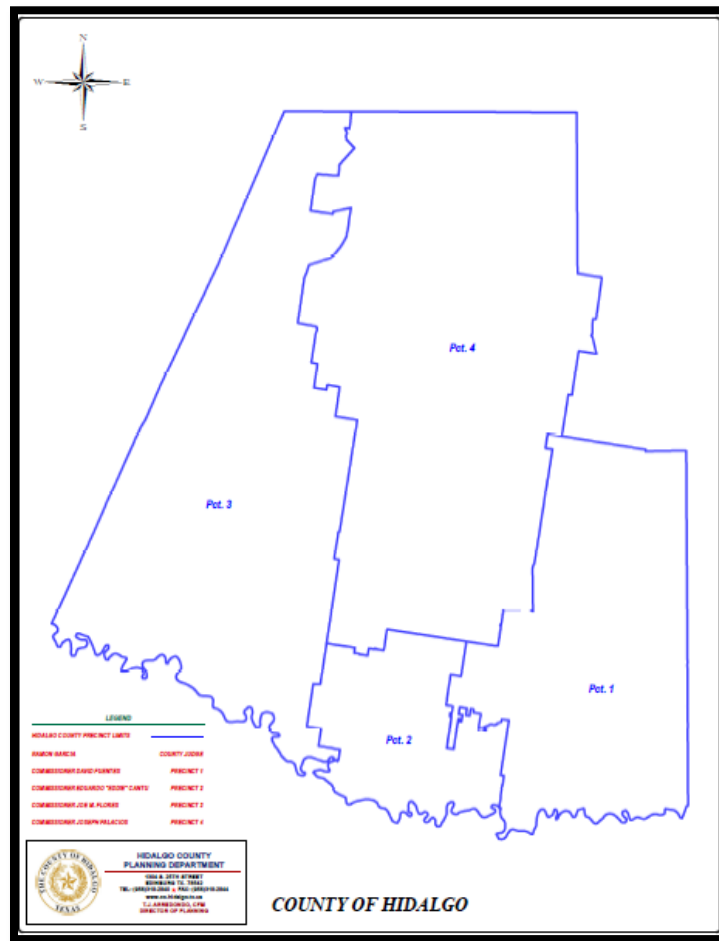
- Confusion as to what was a City park and what was a County park. Felt like County parks needed more advertising.
- More lights in the existing parks.
- Felt like some of the areas were “left out” with no park.
- Concern some of the amenities, i.e. playgrounds were old and had not been upgraded.
- The need for more athletic fields.
- There were comments the parks were well maintained and just as many stating they were not maintained. This depended on the precinct.
- Information was received primarily through social media.
- Majority of respondents had children they would like to be able to take to a park.
- Transportation is a problem, so parks should be located near bus routes, so people can get to the parks.
- There is a need for parks for children with disabilities.

The survey was both in English and Spanish. The number of Spanish survey results returned were twice as high as the English ones. This is due to the high percentage of Hispanics in the area that only speak Spanish at home. Both English and Spanish surveys were totaled together. People living in the County receive their information about the County through social media, and the County internet or website.

The precinct with the highest number of survey results was Precinct 2. This precinct has a higher concentration of individuals living within cities who have participated in survey previously for parks master plan. These individuals understand the need for participation. The precincts are divided equally by population. However, that does not mean the land mass is the same. The map shows the difference in land mass for each precinct and the problem with providing equable park sites. The higher concentration of population is in urban areas which already have existing parks, so the County does not have to provide as many parks. Those in the urban areas are being requested to build more parks. The budgets for all precincts are equal.

Map of Precincts

FIGURE 6: MAP OF PRECINCTS



Precinct 1

Precinct 1 serves eastern Hidalgo County from Mercedes west to Alamo and from Hargill on the north precinct border, south to Progresso Lakes. Precinct 1 had a total of 233 survey completed.

Survey Comments for Precinct 1 included:

- More parks north of Weslaco in the County
- Need parks with shade
- Lighting on the parks, solar lights do not work
- More parks north of Interstate 2
- Splash parks
- Sport areas for youth
- Some parks are old and need to be upgraded
- Do not know how many parks are in the precinct

This precinct is primarily rural and many of the comments related to City parks. Residents do not know the difference between City and County parks so there needs for better marketing and promotion of County parks.

Comments from the Focus Group Meeting held September 26, 2017 at the Commissioners Conference Room included:

- The need for more sport fields. Youth sports are expanding but there is no place for the youth to play.
- The need for additional parks.
- Groups that are working with the youth for sports are paying for everything. Help from the County is needed.
- Would like to see more parks developed with the schools.
- County to secure the park in Hargill from a private organization. County to maintain the park.
- Develop a community center.

These comments will be incorporated into the priority listing in the Implementation Chapter.



Precinct 2

Precinct 2 serves southern Hidalgo County including the cities of Hidalgo, McAllen, Pharr and San Juan and the unincorporated area south of Alamo. Precinct 2 had a total of 393 surveys completed.

Survey Comments for Precinct 2 included:

- There is not enough shade in the parks.
- There needs to be more playgrounds.
- There needs to be more parks in the rural areas.
- The area is finally getting a hike and bike trail.
- Cities are providing parks, but the County is not.
- There is insufficient funding for maintenance of parks.
- Better security and lighting.
- Great place for families.
- Great rental areas.
- Restrooms need to be cleaned more often.

There are cities located in Precinct 2 with park systems (McAllen, Pharr, San Juan and Hidalgo). McAllen provides a park system with recreational amenities and programs. Pharr provides a Water Park/Natatorium. San Juan is the home to Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge Area, and Hidalgo has a World Birding Center site. These recreational amenities increase the opportunities for the County residents living in this precinct to participate in programming.

The Precinct received a \$6.44 million-dollar grant for 7.74-mile trail development through three (3) county cities – San Juan, Pharr and McAllen. The plan is for the trail to expand to Edinburg to the University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley. This would be one of the longest trails in the state. The trail would also be used to promote health and wellness to reduce the Valley epidemic of diabetes and heart disease. Precinct 2 is the smallest of the precinct in land size. The precincts are divided based on population. The population in Precinct 2 equals the other 3 precincts.



Precinct 3

Precinct 3 serves western Hidalgo County from Cuervitas at its western border and then north to Cipres including approximately 20 miles east of FM 107, and part of the City of Hidalgo to the south. Precinct 3 had a total of 219 surveys completed.

Survey Comments for Precinct 3 included:

- Need more parks
- Cities do not have parks
- Playgrounds are empty, old equipment
- There is no maintenance on the parks
- Trails for walking
- Upgrade the parks

Texas A&M Agri Life prepared a report for Precinct 3 to improve Katarina Park in Peñitas. The plan would have upgraded the park, included new amenities, lighting and additional picnic areas. Texas A&M AgriLife provided constituent meetings, draft designs, and potential cost estimates. The plan has not been acted upon. The plan is a good basis for development in the area. Precinct 3 has many smaller communities that do not have recreational amenities for the Residents.



Precinct 4

Precinct 4 serves northern Hidalgo County, including ranchland north of San Manuel to where the county borders Brooks County, south to parts of McAllen, and as far east as the border of Hargill and points north. Precinct 4 had a total of 184 surveys submitted.

Survey comments for Precinct 4:

- More parks, like those in Austin and other cities
- Upkeep of the nature and open spaces
- Teach staff how to maintain properly
- Upgrade playground equipment
- Build in a timely manner, not take 2 to 3 years to complete a project
- Not all parks are maintained the same, need to improve upon this

A community focus group meeting was held on September 19, 2017 at the Sunflower Community Center and Park. At the community center children were participating in computer classes and outdoor activities. There were approximately 25 people in attendance.

The comments were:

- Construction of a swimming pool
- Development of hike and bike trails
- Soccer fields, baseball fields
- Splash pads
- Shade
- Park amenities – benches, water fountains
- L



nd security

IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITY LISTING

The comments from the online survey, the focus groups and reports centered around the growth of the County and the desire by the citizens to have amenities offered by other government entities. As the County continues to grow and subdivisions develop, there will continue to be a need for the County to determine how these needs can be met. Counties cannot create parkland dedication ordinances to supplement parkland development, but the County should investigate the opportunity to work with developers to set aside certain portions of properties within subdivisions for parks. The developer could develop the site and turn it over to the County for maintenance, thus creating parks with minimal County investment.

Hidalgo County is one of the fastest growing Counties in Texas and the Country.

Park development needs will continue to grow. The County Commissioners are working to address those needs through the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, and working with smaller communities to develop Master Plans and securing grants for development.

The online survey provided priority listing for the County and for each precinct. The County can apply for larger grants while the precinct secures funding for smaller projects.

County Priority List:

The top ten (10) park amenities are the result of all survey documents being totaled together.

There was no distinction based on precinct to County wide

- | TOP TEN COUNTY PRIORITY LIST | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Youth Softball Fields |
| 2. | Youth Soccer Fields |
| 3. | Leisure Pool |
| 4. | Dog Park |
| 5. | Nature Center |
| 6. | Motorized Trail |
| 7. | Trails |
| 8. | Youth Baseball |
| 9. | Disc Golf |
| 10. | Tennis Courts |

distinction based on precinct to County wide secure the priority list.

David Fuentes, Commissioner Precinct 1 Priority List:

The list for Precinct 1 is only based on responses on surveys from Precinct 1. The focus group stressed the need for youth sport fields due to the increased in youth activities and the lack of fields. The schools are not allowing the youth leagues to use their fields. The precinct has several new areas being developed increasing the number of families with children who would use parks.

1. Trails
2. Youth Soccer Fields
3. Playgrounds
4. Dog Park
5. Youth Softball Fields
6. Skate Park
7. Pavilions
8. Nature Center
9. Leisure Pool
10. Splash Park

Eduardo “Eddie” Cantu, Commissioner Precinct 2 Priority List:

Precinct 2 had the largest number of respondents. The priorities are very similar to the other precincts. This is the precinct that includes several of the larger cities in the County.

1. Youth Soccer Fields
2. Youth Softball Fields
3. Youth Baseball Fields
4. Indoor Basketball
5. Outdoor Basketball
6. Competition Swimming Pool
7. Recreation Swimming Pool
8. Splash Park
9. Indoor Recreation Center
10. Pavilion

Joe Flores, Commissioner Precinct 3 Priority List:

Precinct 3 has the smallest number of parks resulting in the fewest recreational amenities. The precinct does not have any larger cities with major parks so there is a lack of recreational amenities everywhere in the precinct.

1. Youth Soccer Fields
2. Youth Softball Fields
3. Leisure Pool
4. Dog Park
5. Disc Golf
6. Tennis
7. Youth Baseball Fields
8. Nature Center
9. Basketball Courts
10. New Community Park

Joseph Palacios, Commissioner Precinct 4 Priority List:

Precinct 4 has begun to build and upgrade parks. The Commissioner has made parks a priority and current development can be seen in several areas of the precinct.

1. Motorized Trail
2. Youth Soccer Fields
3. Picnic Areas
4. Nature Center
5. Trails
6. Adult Basketball
7. Additional Lights at Parks
8. Youth Baseball
9. Skate Park
10. Dog Park

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan must be updated every 5 years. The priority listing can be evaluated to determine if the listing for the County as well as the individual precincts meets the current demands. The priority listing can be adjusted at the 5-year update.

Several amenities remained constant in all the surveys:

- **Motorized Trails** – this would be for off road vehicles. There are grants through Texas Parks and Wildlife for these trails.
- **Nature Center** – there are several nature centers in the Valley available to residents. Advertising and promotion of those sites, sharing the information rather than building a new facility would be beneficial to the County.
- **Sport Fields** – there is a lack of sport fields for youth and adults. As the population continues to grow the need for additional fields to accommodate the growing population will become even a higher priority. Those urban areas with sport fields are experiencing the same growth concerns. The lack of fields.
- **Swimming Pools** – these are expensive to operate and serve the population for 3 to 4 months in the year. Splash Parks have become a cost-efficient method to furnish outdoor water amenities without the high cost of a swimming pool and can be operated for longer periods especially in the Valley.
- **The natural beauty of Hidalgo County must be preserved and enhanced for future generations through the priority listing for park development.**

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is divided into sections that follows the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) guidelines for Master Plans, the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP), and the TPWD Guidelines for Grant Applications.



PARK INVENTORY

Existing park inventories are important to determine availability and opportunities for improvements. The park inventory form is divided by Precinct. Future park plans should evaluate the current inventory compared to the priority list to determine what needs are not being met in the precinct.

The park inventory is only reflective of the Hidalgo County Park system. Other park systems for schools and municipal districts were not included in the plan. Those government entities serve unique populations. The County could develop joint use agreements for schools and municipal parks especially those that border the County boundaries. This would capitalize on the resources for both agencies. As noted in the Goals, cooperation and partnerships is one of the main goals for the County over the next ten (10) years. Parks are excellent projects to begin.



Precinct 2 Park Inventory

1. Baseball/ Softball 2. Basketball Courts 3. Restrooms 4. Public Building			5. Picnic area/ Shelter 6. Swimming Pool 7. Play apparatus 8. Volley Court					9. Tennis Court 10. Pond access 11. Trails 12. Barbeque				13. Soccer 14. Wetlands/Birding 15. World Birding Center					
PARKS	ACRES	Type of Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Las Milpas Park	10.0	C		X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X		
Lopezville Park	7.2	N	X	X	X		X		X				X	X			
Palmer Pavilion Park	6.5	N			X	X	X		X					X			
San Juan Park		N	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			
Alamo Park		N	X		X		X		X				X		X		
7.74 Miles Hike and Bike Trail		R			X		X						X				

Precinct 3 Park Inventory

1. Baseball/ Softball 2. Basketball Courts 3. Restrooms 4. Public Building			5. Picnic area/ Shelter 6. Swimming Pool 7. Play apparatus 8. Volley Court						9. Tennis Court 10. Pond access 11. Trails 12. Barbeque				13. Soccer 14. Wetlands/Birding 15. World Birding Center				
PARKS	ACRES	Type of Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Anzalduas Park	96	R	X		X	X	X		X			X		X			X
Veterans Memorial Pavilion	4.96	N			X	X			X					X			
Los Ebanos	1.50	P			X	X	X		X				X	X			
Abram Pavilion	3.49	N			X	X	X							X			
Messinas Pavilion	1.32	P			X	X	X							X			
Katarina Park North	6.0	C		X			X								X		
Katarina Park South	3.0	C		X	X		X								X	X	
Los Ebanos Baseball Park	3.0	N	X												X		

Precinct 4 Park Inventory

1. Baseball/ Softball 2. Basketball Courts 3. Restrooms 4. Public Building			5. Picnic area/ Shelter 6. Swimming Pool 7. Play apparatus 8. Volley Court					9. Tennis Court 10. Pond access 11. Trails 12. Barbeque				13. Soccer 14. Wetlands/Birding 15. World Birding Center					
PARKS	ACRES	Type of Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
J. R. Milo Ponce Park	17.42	C	X	X						X			X	X			
Sunflower Park	7.2	R	X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X			
Brewster School	New park to be built 2018																

[Appendix](#)

Online Survey

Survey can be modified for Survey Monkey 2017 COUNTY OF HIDALGO
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Survey

Dear Hidalgo Resident:

The County of Hidalgo will be updating the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and would like community input as to how to develop the County, parks and recreation areas over the next 10 years. Your answers are very important, and will help guide the County in future park acquisitions and development. Please provide the answers and comments in the space provided.

Please return the completed survey online, or mail to:

All surveys to be returned by September 30, 2017.

Questions? Contact Valde Guerra, Thank you for your assistance.

Valde Guerra,

1. WHAT PRECINCT OF HIDALGO DO YOU LIVE IN? PLEASE CHECK.

PRECINCT 1, COMMISSIONER DAVID FUENTES

PRECINCT 2, COMMISSIONER EDUARDO "EDDIE" CANTU

PRECINCT 3, COMMISSIONER, JOE M. FLORES

PRECINCT 4, COMMISSIONER, JOSEPH PALACIOS

2. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE QUALITY OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN THE COUNTY?

Very Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very Dissatisfied

3. Explain what you like or dislike about the Hidalgo County Park System.

4. FROM THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES, WHICH ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO CONSTRUCT IN THE COUNTY? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Amphitheater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Skatepark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor Recreation Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Baseball Fields | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilions for Group Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball Courts | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Pool | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Football |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Splash Park | <input type="checkbox"/> New Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add Lights at Current Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorized Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade Maintenance at Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Baseball |

5. CHOOSE 3 THAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO BUILD?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

6. IN THE AREA IN WHICH YOU LIVE, WHAT ONE RECREATION FACILITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE CONSTRUCTED?

7. DO YOU CHILDREN USE THE PARKS IN YOUR AREA? YES NO

8. ARE YOUR PARK MAINTAINED WELL? YES NO

9. DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18? YES NO

10. FROM WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCES DO YOU GET INFORMATION ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTY OF HIDALGO? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Internet or City Web Site Flyers
- Television Word of Mouth
- Newspapers (Name of Paper) _____
- Social Media (Types) _____
- Parks and Recreation Office

PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER CONCERNS OR NEEDS CONCERNING PARKS AND RECREATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THE CITY TO ADDRESS.

Commissioner Court Agenda

Commissioner Court Resolution