

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN

2018

SUMMARY PLAN



PLAN PURPOSE

The Williamson County Comprehensive Parks Master Plan establishes a planning framework for recreational opportunities within the parks and open space system of Williamson County. A system of parks, trails, and preserves creates places for citizens to congregate, learn about, and enjoy these natural and cultural resources.

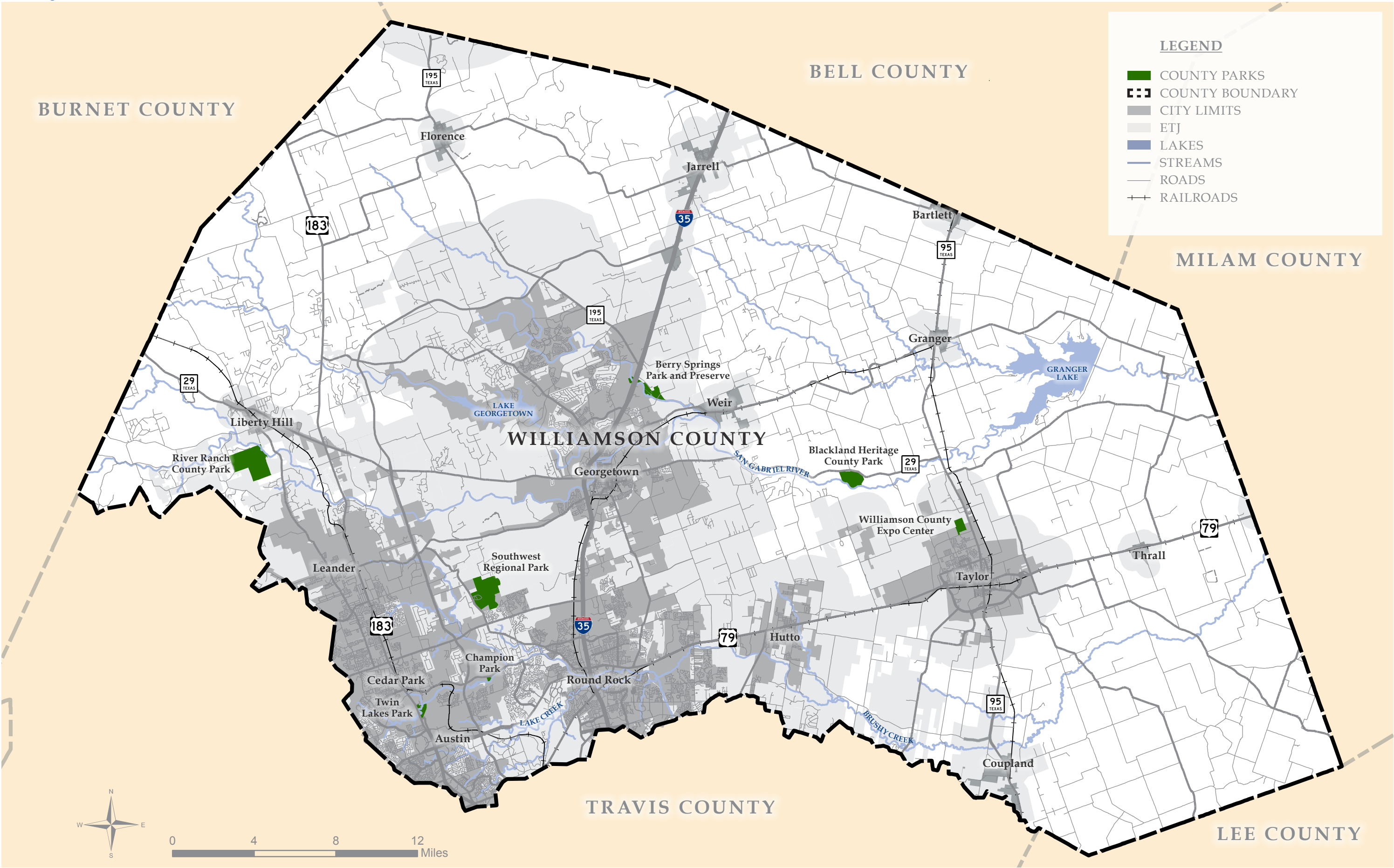
The purpose of this plan is to identify steps that can be taken to account for the growth, development, and operations of the park and trails system and identify opportunities for partnerships with other entities. A parks master plan also identifies the priorities of the public and positions the County to apply to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for grant funding for priority actions. This citizen-supported vision document becomes a guide for elected officials and staff to make decisions regarding land acquisition, park and trail improvements, and maintenance of existing and future recreation amenities.

PLANNING TIME FRAME

The Williamson County Comprehensive Parks Master Plan is an update to the County's existing 2008 Comprehensive Park Master Plan. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) recommends that parks master plans retain validity for 10 years and should include a five-year update. While the plan covers an implementation period of 10 years, the planning horizon is much farther into the future.



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VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement that articulates the aspirational desires for the parks system is the foundation upon which a master plan’s basic principles and goals are established. Based upon the results of feedback from the public and the County elected officials and staff on the desired direction of the parks system, the Williamson County Comprehensive Parks Master Plan vision statement is as follows:

Williamson County will continue to provide beautiful public parks, trails and preserves for the passive enjoyment of natural open spaces across the county. Conservation and education will remain at the forefront of recreational amenities within the parks system, and the County will partner with cities and other public parks systems to seek a regional, connected trail system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The vision statement is further refined through six guiding principles that provide the basis for specific focus areas, plan goals and actions.

County parks and recreation offerings should have separate goals and focus than neighborhood, city/community, state, and federal entities.

The conservation of natural and sensitive lands should be the priority while also integrating recreation, activity, and access.

New park offerings should be large, regional destinations focused on conservation, education, and passive recreation.

The County should continue to partner with area municipalities to create a county-wide regional trail plan that connects population centers with regional destinations.

Consistent level of amenities, operations and maintenance should be established and maintained across all existing and future County parks and trails.

Increased public awareness and communication needed for all County parks, trails, education, and events.



PLAN FOCUS AREAS

Regional Trail Plan

Park System Expansion

Parkland Improvements

Operations and Maintenance

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GOALS

RTP-1	Facilitate and coordinate a county-wide regional trail plan.
RTP-2	Establish a consistent set of standards to ensure effective implementation of the regional trail plan.
RTP-3	Establish a funding strategy for the construction and maintenance of the regional trail system.
RTP-4	Update the Williamson County Trails Master Plan.
PSE-1	Evaluate opportunities for land acquisition.
PSE-2	Emphasize education and conservation as primary themes in new parks.
PI-1	Efficiently develop and enhance park facilities and amenities.
PI-2	Seek financial partnerships through shared-use facilities and sponsorships.
OM-1	Ensure consistent, quality maintenance of park system facilities.
OM-2	Identify the operational and resource needs necessary to implement this Parks Master Plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A significant part of the planning process, particularly for quality-of-life services like parks, is understanding the needs and expectations of park patrons and those who make decisions on parks. The demand assessment for this plan was completed through several public engagement efforts conducted as part of the master planning process. These efforts included a public survey, community open houses, meetings with community stakeholders and valuable input from staff and elected officials.

CITIZEN SURVEY

Survey respondents were asked to select their top three amenities. Of these choices, the top three selections were nature trails for hiking within parks, paved walking and biking trails and a regional greenway for walking/running/biking.

Trails, bikes and parks are the top three activities that survey respondents would like to see in Williamson County. Specific trails types that respondents would like to see in their community include regional trails and nature trails.

Amenities Most Important to Households



What Type of Other Experiences or Activities Would You Like to Have in Williamson County Parks That Have Not Been Mentioned in This Survey?



WILLIAMSON COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS SNAPSHOTS

Park Classifications

REGIONAL PARKS/TRAILS

Regional Parks are intended to be used by multiple communities in a greater geographic region. Traditionally, regional park land was dedicated as such due to regional, state or national significance. Recently, regional and community parks have become significant economic development drivers. Often, they vary in size from 50 acres to 1,000s of acres. Berry Springs Park and Preserve and Southwest Regional Park are currently the two regional parks in Williamson County.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are parks that typically serve a smaller geographic area. Both active and passive uses make up this type of park, although higher intensity recreational uses traditionally may be prominent. Passive recreational uses (e.g., picnicking, trails) are also predominate in community parks. The size of community parks can vary from 10 to 50 acres. Champion Park and Twin Lakes Park are two examples of community parks in Williamson County.

Source: This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan includes the guidelines for park classification established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as included in the 1990 printing of *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines* and the 1995 printing of *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. The NRPA guidelines have generally been the most widely accepted and used guidelines of their type.

EXISTING TRAILS



24
miles

Regional trails can accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists, such as Brushy Creek Regional Trail.



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WILLIAMSON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

The table below shows a detailed breakdown of the amenities that are offered in the parks and along the trails in the County. The acreage of each park as well as the length of each trail are also listed. Some of the amenities that are shown below include pavilions, benches, playscapes and fishing piers.

Williamson County Parks and Recreation System

PARK NAME	COUNTY MAP QUADRANT	ACREAGE	TRAIL MILES	PARKING SPACES	AMPHITHEATER (SMALL)	PICNIC TABLES (NON-PAVILION)	PICNIC TABLES (PAVILIONS)	PAVILION(S)	BENCHES	BBQ GRILLS (PICNIC)	DRINKING FOUNTAIN(S)	PLAYSCAPE(S)	BODY OF WATER	FISHING PIER	SPLASH PAD	OUTDOOR SHOWER	DISC GOLF	EXERCISE STATION(S)	EQUESTRIAN TRAIL	HISTORIC CEMETERY	MINI TRAIN	COVERED ARENA	CAMPING (PRIMITIVE)	CAMPING (TENT ONLY) ⁶	CAMPING (RV) ⁶	RESTROOM(S) W/ SHOWERS	RESTROOM(S) W/O SHOWERS
LINEAR PARKS/TRAILS																											
Brushy Creek Regional Trail	SW	165.0	7.0	10 Trailheads					12		6		1					1									5
Brushy Singletrack Trails	SW	10.0	7.5										1														
Lake Creek Trail	SW	1.5	1.5	22		4			2				1														
Sub-total		189	16.0	32.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	14.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
PARKS																											
Berry Springs Park & Preserve	Central	300.0	4.3	133	1	11	13	2	16	7	2	1	1	1					1	1			10	17		1	1
Blackland Heritage County Park ¹	E	348.0																									
Champion Park	SW	33.0	0.3	84		11	16	2	6	2	2	4	1		1	1		1		1							1
Expo Center	E	93.5		600																		1					3
Quarry Splash Pad ⁵	SW			95		9	24	4	2	2	2				1	2											1
River Ranch County Park ¹	W	1011.0																									
Southwest Regional Park	SW	850.0	3.7	983		6	16	3	30	5	6	1	1				1				1					1	2
Twin Lakes Park (YMCA-Managed & Operated)	SW	50.0		479	1	36	43	4	14		3	5	1	4	1												3
Sub-total		2685.5	8.2	2301.0	2.0	77.0	112.0	15.0	82.0	16.0	21.0	11.0	7.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	10.0	17.0	0.0	2.0	17.0
Totals		2,862.0	24.2	2,333.0	2.0	81.0	112.0	15.0	96.0	16.0	27.0	11.0	10.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	10.0	17.0	0.0	2.0	22.0

¹ Undeveloped.
² Sports Fields: Soccer (10), Tennis (8), Basketball (6), Softball (2), Track (1), Football (1) & Cricket (1)
³ Located in the Southwest Williamson County Regional Park.

REGIONAL TRAIL PLAN

Access to a regional trail system is one of the growing demands of new homebuyers and the general public not just locally but throughout the country. An integrated regional trail system can be used to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks and regional destinations without requiring a vehicle. One of the primary recommendations of this plan is to work with local communities to create a connected, regional system of parks and trails. The map on the next page depicts a concept where trails could eventually connect cities and destinations throughout the County.

Building such a network will not come from any individual governmental entity, developer or regional organization; instead, support of all entities will slowly and steadily build the network together. Williamson County is uniquely suited to be a leader in this effort to plan for and implement this regional trail system.

PRIORITIZATION TIMEFRAME

This plan contains a list of recommended actions, including an implementation table where such actions are ranked by priority and timeframe, as shown below:

Priority Action Timeframe

0-2
YEARS

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

In the next two years (2018-2020), these actions need to be the focus. Often, these actions can be started and finished within this time. These are the County’s highest priorities for implementation.

3-5
YEARS

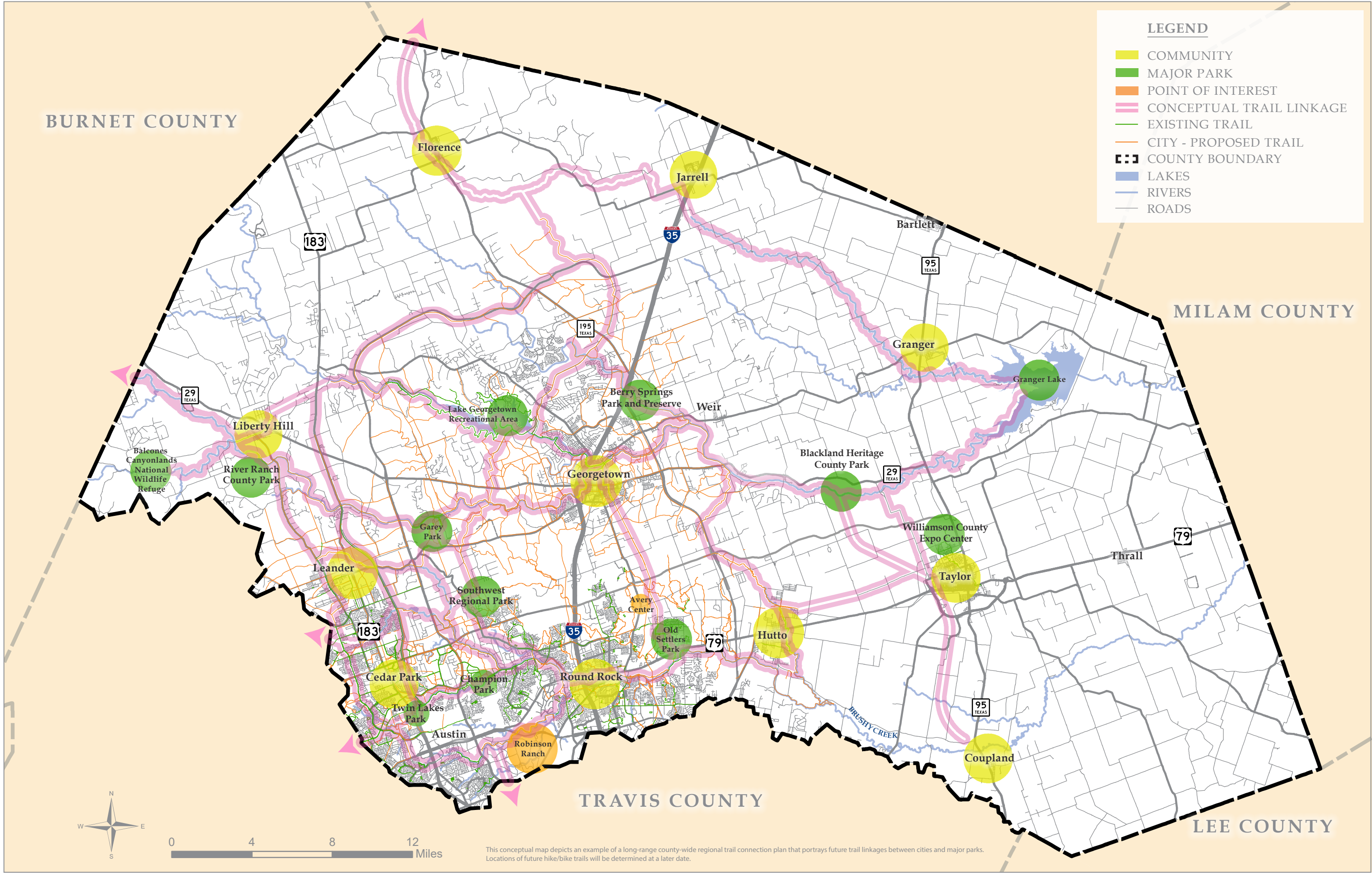
MODERATE PRIORITIES

In the next three to five years (2021-2023), these actions need to be the focus. In the next Comprehensive Parks Master Plan update, some of these unfinished actions may become the highest priorities.

6-10
YEARS

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

Actions which are supposed to continually lead the County to its ideal future parks and recreation vision. Many of these actions will be considered over the long-term (2024-2028) and will be further re-prioritized in later updates.



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