

Local parks are...



Essential for families.



Essential for healthy living.



Essential for the environment.



Essential for economic prosperity.

Local parks are essential to your community.

**It is Essential for the TEXAS Legislature to fully
restore the LOCAL PARK GRANT PROGRAMS!**

Texas Parks Coalition



**To Support Texas Local Parks
www.supporttexasparks.com**

Local parks are...



Essential for families.

The family is the most important institution of our society. Countless resources are expended to promote and strengthen this institution in modern life. Few other resources have the ability to promote and encourage strong families in as many ways as do local parks. Parks are places where families can connect and interact and share important experiences. These are places that promote a sense of community, and enhance cultural values. A park can be a place where neighbors can meet and engage in activities that can make those neighborhoods safer.

Consider some of the ways local parks benefit families:

- Local parks provide children with the opportunity to experience nature, and learn more about their world.
- Local parks provide exposure to outdoor activities and environmental learning for families that may not traditionally have such opportunities.
- Local parks increase physical activity to promote healthier lifestyles
- Parks are places where parents can teach their children self-respect and promote mutual respect of others.
- Access to parks offers support for social opportunities and spontaneous play, where parents and children can connect with other peer groups. Local Parks help families build stronger bonds with the community and nature.
- Local Parks help families learn life-long outdoor skills and increase self esteem.
- Local parks provide alternatives for educational opportunities outside of school classrooms.
- Local parks are places where families can spend quality time together and create lasting memories.
- Formal and informal outdoor recreation activities create a sense of being connected to the larger community.
- Parks have the ability to bring people together, be it families, neighbors, festival goers, sports fans or nature enthusiasts. Community building can occur through joint efforts for beautification, such as volunteer clean ups, and can reinforce a sense of pride and belonging.
- Parks and recreation are especially important for reducing criminal activity in our youth. "Safe parks and recreation centers" topped the list when researchers asked adolescents what they wanted most during their non-school hours.

Local parks are...



Essential for healthy living.

Spending time in a local park is an enjoyable experience, and a break from what is often a hectic urban daily life. Local parks are a vital tool to promote and enhance the health of the citizens they serve. Parks offer resources for health and exercise that can be found in few other places, and are often more affordable alternatives to promote healthy living and reduce soaring health care costs. There are a number of well-documented health benefits that can be directly attributed to parkland and other community green space. For a community, having parks is important for individuals, the environment, and the community as a whole.

Consider some of the following health benefits of local parks:

Mental Health Benefits

- Local parks have been shown to have a positive effect on self-esteem, impulse control, resilience to stress, and one's ability to reduce stress.
- Self-discipline has also been shown to have significant improvement when individuals have easy access to parks or outdoor spaces.
- Parks provide people with contact with nature, known to confer health benefits and enhance well being.

Obesity and Preventable Diseases

- Obesity is costing not only lives but also dollars for Texas residents. A review of more than 200 studies concluded that in order to curb this epidemic it will take an increase in physical activity. Local parks offer this environment for healthy living choices.
- One study looked at proximity to parks and the level of physical activity engaged by the surrounding populations. The study concluded that park space is the number one reason individuals engage in any activity at all, beyond normal daily movement. This was especially true for minority populations.
- An American Heart Association study concluded that every \$1 spent on building biking trails and walking paths would save an estimated nearly \$3 in medical expenses.
- Level of fitness is known to be the strongest predictor of lower blood pressure.

Community Health Benefits

- Local parks offer a safer alternative to many activities. In one city, after opening the park up late at night and offering activities, gang related homicides were reduced by 57% in the area surrounding the park.
- In addition to reducing community costs from youth crime, local parks and recreation programs also play a major role in creating safe, healthy, and productive people and neighborhoods.
- Parks provide places to reduce the impacts of negative environmental factors on public health.

Local parks are...



Essential for the environment.

Local parks mitigate climate, air and water pollution impacts on environmental resources and public health. They also promote and educate urban citizens about conservation and environmental stewardship. From protecting water resources to increasing air quality; local parks and green spaces can positively influence a community on several environmental levels.

Air Quality

- The green coverage that local parks offer helps reduce carbon dioxide (a dominant greenhouse gas) by directly removing and storing carbon dioxide and indirectly by reducing air temperature and building energy use in and near parks.
- Urban park trees in the United States remove 75,000 tons of air pollution annually, with a value of \$500 million, thus, in addition to environmental benefits, urban park trees also have a positive economic impact on communities.

Water Quality

- In recent decades, parklands (and the urban natural systems they support) have been proven to provide a natural, cost-effective form of water quality protection.
- Water quality is positively correlated with forested land cover, thus, an increase in urban forests and parkland leads to improved water quality.
- Parks provide a needed source for groundwater infiltration as well as offer a buffer to the effects of floods, by building and maintaining parks, a community can strategically place parkland and other greenways around its city to significantly reduce storm water management costs. They often also protect sensitive wetlands.

Conservation of natural and cultural resources

- Local parks protect sensitive environmental resources for the enjoyment of current citizens and future generations.
- Local parks often protect and interpret important historical and cultural resources.
- Parks provide venues to teach young Texans about the natural environment and are often the first line of opportunity to expose urban youth to the importance of conservation.
- Local parks provide an opportunity for a community to engage in sustainable (green) construction techniques and demonstrate the value of these methods to its citizens while conserving natural resources.

Local parks are...



Essential for economic prosperity.

Local parks are often the centerpiece of life to modern communities. They are a source of economic vitality for those communities, and are frequently the reason families and industries choose to locate there. Parks are increasingly important to attracting certain types of desirable corporate locations, particularly those involving high numbers of knowledge workers. Local Parks increase local tax revenue due to tourism and special events, enhance property values and improve the quality of life for citizens in their communities.

Local parks are the primary venue for the expenditure of families' recreational budgets for sporting goods, a huge industry in Texas. Retail sales of recreation equipment in Texas totals well over \$1.5 billion each year.

A study by the Texas economists at The Perryman Group concluded that "Every county and metropolitan area in the state benefits from the presence of local parks, and expenditures to support them represent a good investment of tax dollars." Many other studies demonstrate the value added to the local and state economies by the presence of parks and recreation facilities.

As evidence of the role local parks play in the economic engine of Texas' prosperous communities, consider the following:

- **Property values increase 20%** abutting a passive park area (Perryman Group).
- Over **38,000 jobs** are created from business activity related to local parks (Perryman Group).
- Local parks across the state lead to the creation of **45,623 jobs** through their maintenance and operations activity, capital investment and direct tourism (Perryman Group).
- The incremental net fiscal revenue to the State government from local parks activity is approximately **\$171.6 million per year** (Perryman Group).
- Some local parks are tourist destinations, and others enjoy sporadic inflows of tourists for sporting events, festivals, and other activities. In a typical year, the tourism effects of local parks lead to gains in business activity across the state including **\$1.502 billion in spending and 11,331 jobs**. (Perryman Group).

Local Park Grants are...Essential



Texas Local Park Grants to Local Governments and Non- Profits

For the past 34 years the Texas Legislature and Texas Parks and Wildlife have partnered with Texas' Local Governments and Non-Profits to provide close to home parks, recreation and conservation experiences for our citizens. Since 1979 Texas Parks and Wildlife Local Park Grant Programs have invested more than \$390.2 million (matching funds) grant dollars in 1,630 projects throughout the state. This investment has provided for the acquisition and development of local park and recreation sites, and provided resources to supplement local park and conservation programs that introduce children and families to the outdoors. These grants have been made from the Local Park Grant Programs, reinvesting sales taxes paid by Texas citizens in close to home recreation opportunities.

Local Park Grant Programs (Chapter 24 TPWD Code)

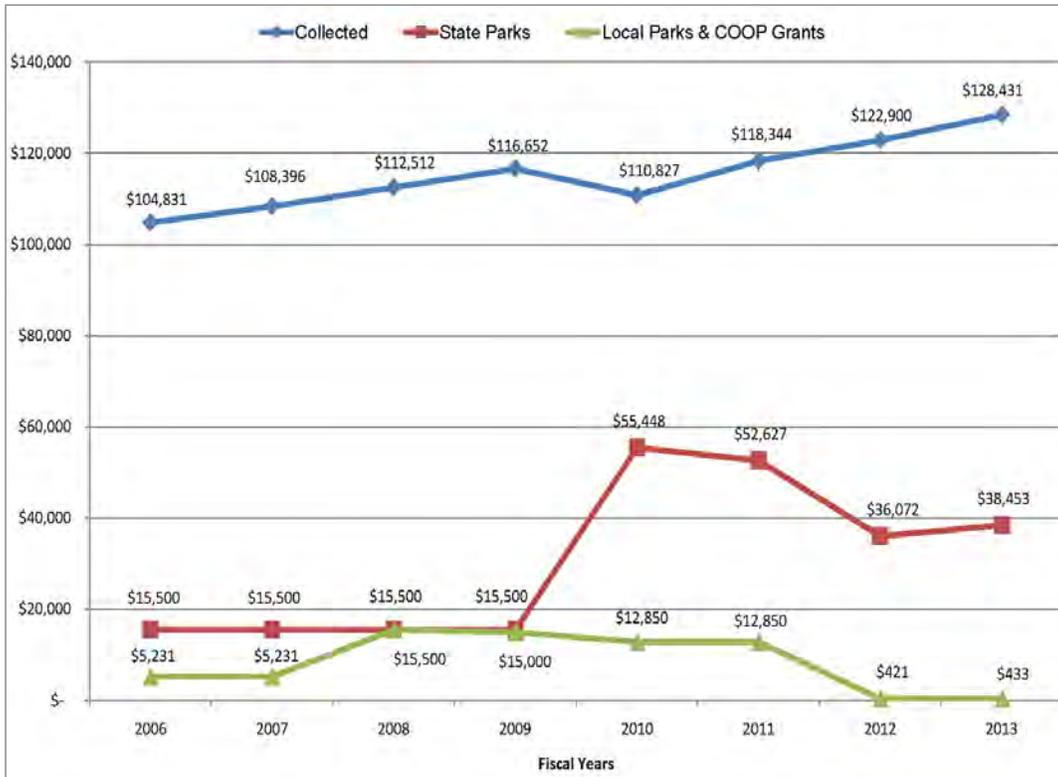
Program Details:

- Matching grants for local park and recreation facilities and land acquisition
- Development of active recreation like organized sports facilities, trails, swimming pools, playgrounds *and group outdoor event facilities*
- Acquisition of natural resource conservation and public park lands
- Development of passive and natural outdoor facilities
- Development of indoor recreation facilities like municipal recreation centers and nature interpretative facilities
- Program grants to introduce children and families to outdoor recreation and conservation experiences
- Separate programs for urban and smaller Texas communities

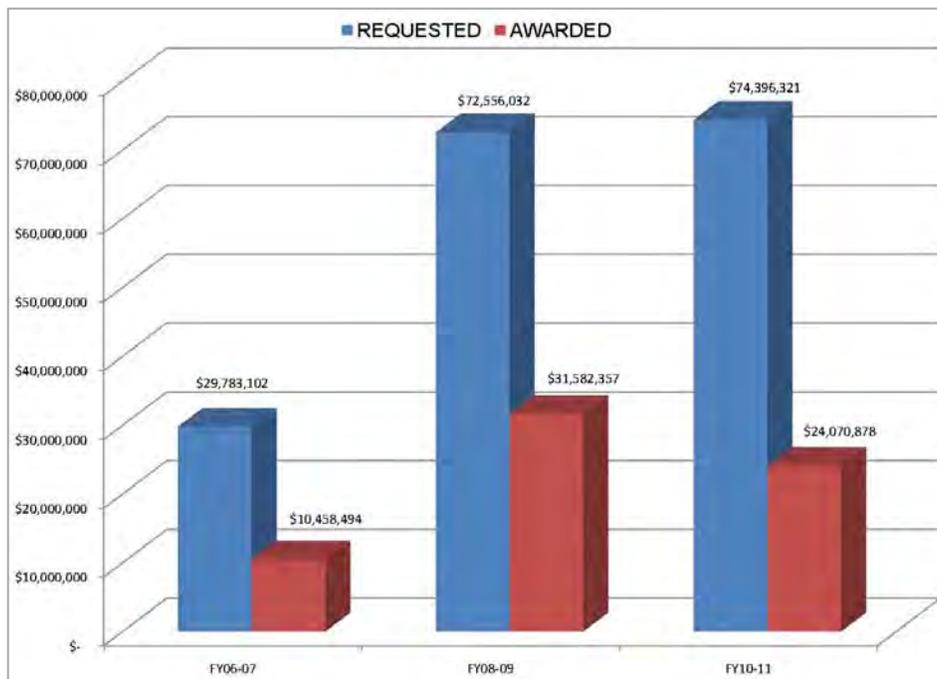
Investment Details:

- State sale taxes on sporting goods reinvested in local park and recreation facilities
- Matching grant partnerships that partner State and local Government and non-profit resources to accomplish mutual goals (leveraging limited tax resources further)
- Local and non-profit investments of tax funds and partnership resources almost always far exceed State funds
- Encourage donations of lands, funds and in-kind resources from the public and private sectors to broaden partnerships
- Most construction projects use local builders, reinvesting in their local economy
- Parks are created that promote local economic activity, growth, better health and quality of life and promote values like water conservation
- Texas communities consider their parks to be part of basic community infrastructure and are proven to improve property values

We Can Afford This Investment!



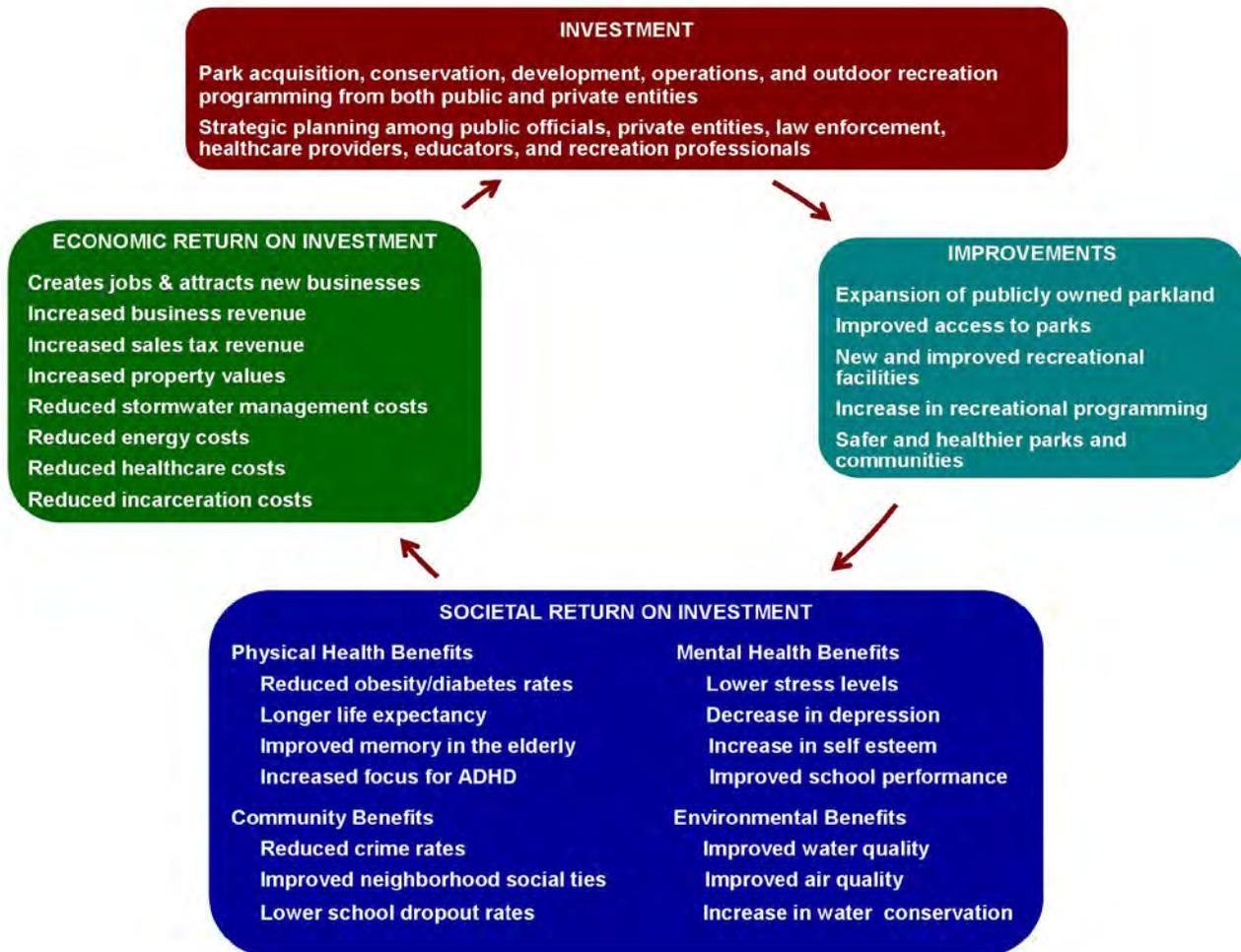
Demand for Local Park Grants Far Exceed Available Funding



Funding for these grant programs was suspended by the Texas Legislature for Texas state budget years 2012-2013.

LET'S TELL TEXAS LEGISLATORS WE NEED FUNDING FOR THE TEXAS LOCAL PARK GRANT PROGRAMS RESTORED!

Investment in Parks and Recreation Benefits Us All And Can Pay For Itself



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