

White Rock Lake Park MASTER PLAN UPDATE Parks, Trails, and the Environment Committee

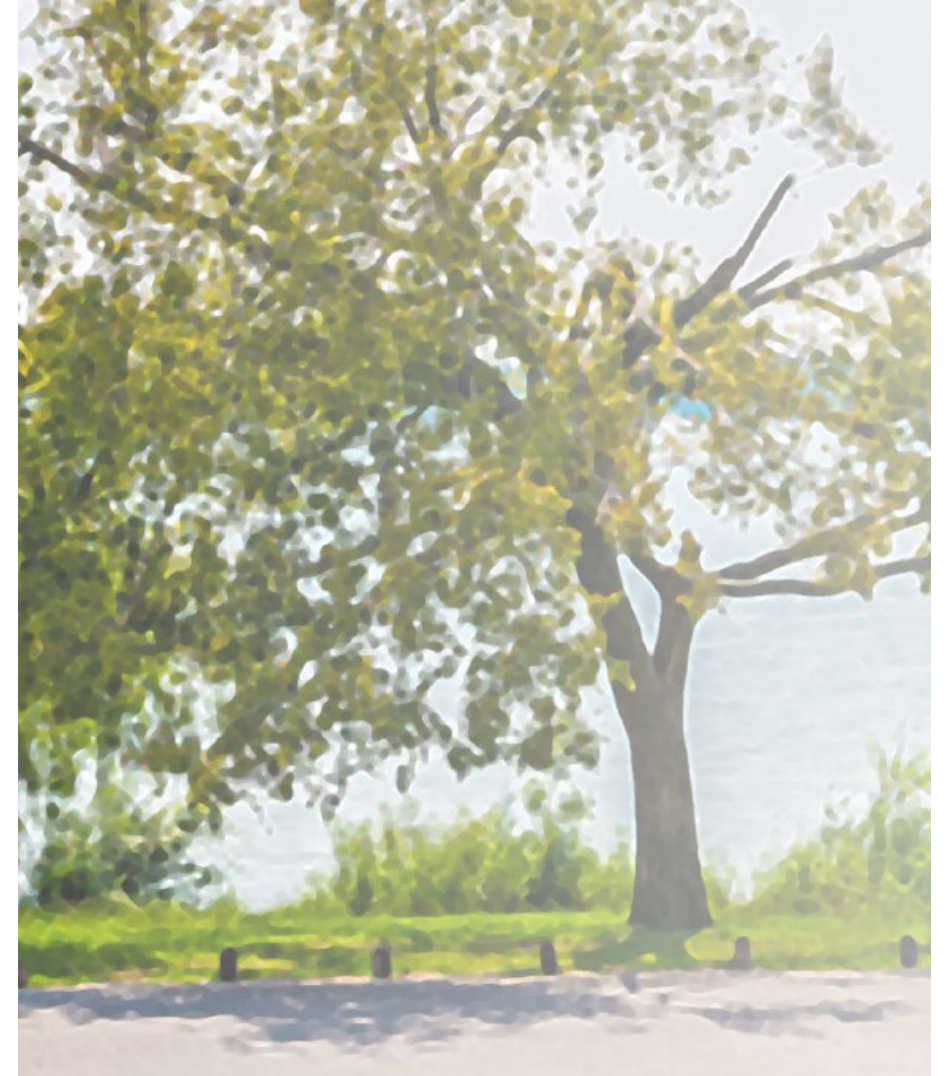
December 1st, 2025

Purpose

PURPOSE

The vast number of resources dedicated to planning enhancements at White Rock Lake provide multiple different guidelines, some of which have become obsolete as new construction technologies and additional park users have expanded the functions of the park.

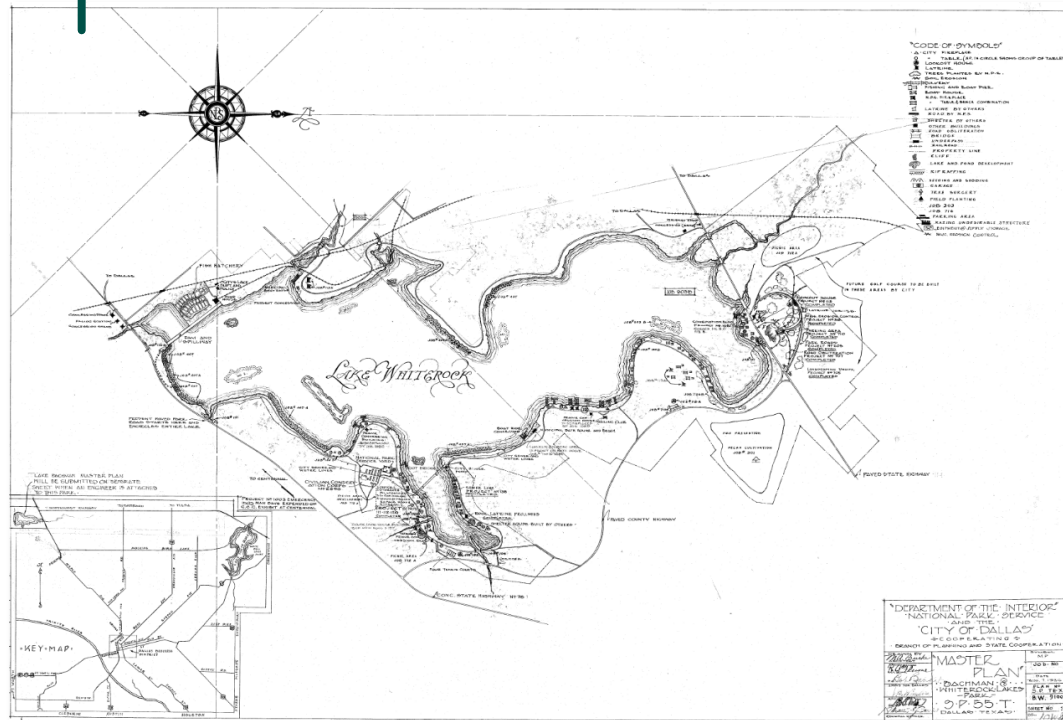
The 2025 White Rock Lake Master Plan Design Guidelines conducts a comprehensive analysis of previous studies, master plans, and design guidelines. The goal is to provide recommendations for enhancements within a Master Plan based on community feedback, previous study recommendations, as well as stakeholder and consultant input.



Previous Planning Efforts

NPS Lake White
Rock Master Plan

1936



Biologic Survey of
White Rock Park

1942

A Study for White
Rock Lake

1959

Improvement
Program for White
Rock Lake Park

1971

Management
Program for White
Rock Lake

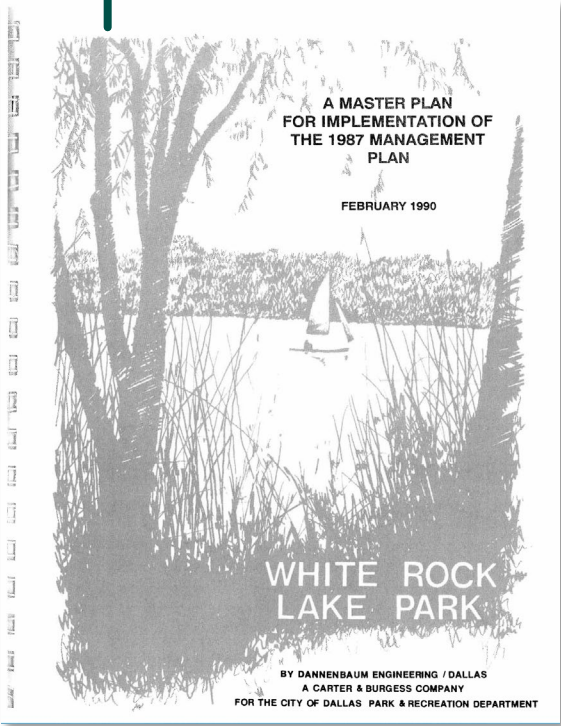
1987



Previous Planning Efforts

A Master Plan for
the Implementation
of the 1987
Management Plan

1990



Shoreline Tree
Enhancement

1991

White Rock Lake
Park Design
Guidelines

1994



Diagnostic
Feasibility Study
(Dredging)

1996

White Rock Lake
Diagnostic Study

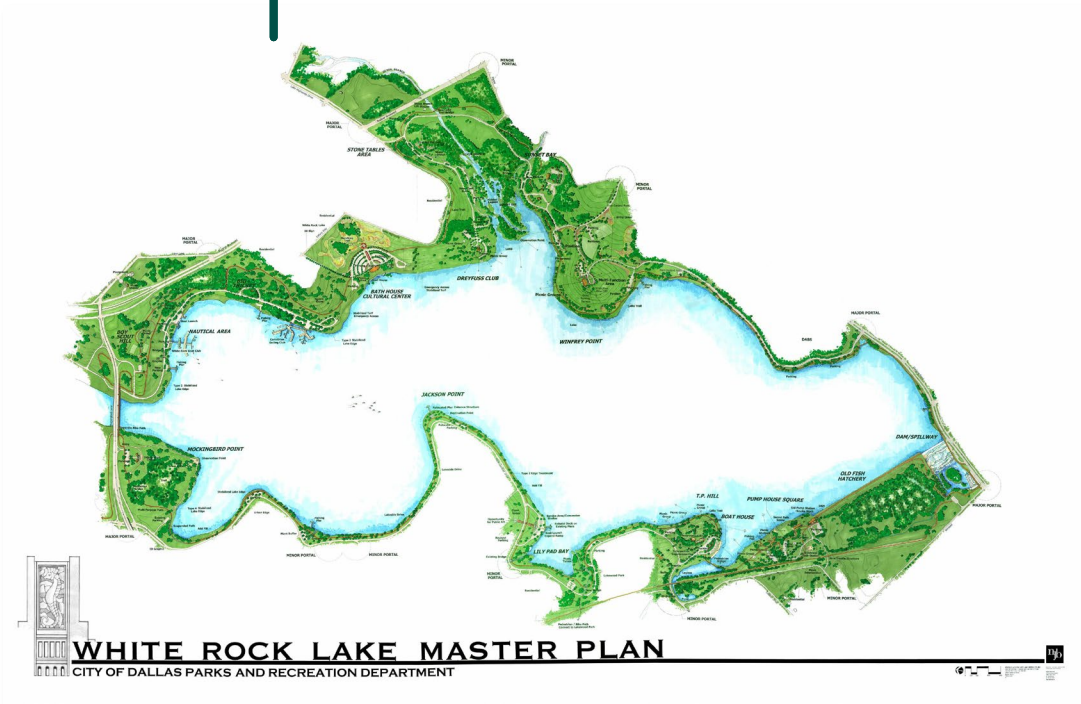
1996

Lake Wide
Strategies

Previous Planning Efforts

NJB White Rock Lake Master Plan

2002



Design Guidelines –
Reflection Point at
Lakewood Pedestrian
Gateway

2003

Environmental Graphic
Design Development
Package

2003

White Rock Lake Park
Lighting Master Plan and
Design Guidelines

2009

White Rock Lake Park
Maintenance Plan

2022



Physical Site
Improvements and
Recommendations

Subject Matter
Specific Plans

Stakeholder Feedback



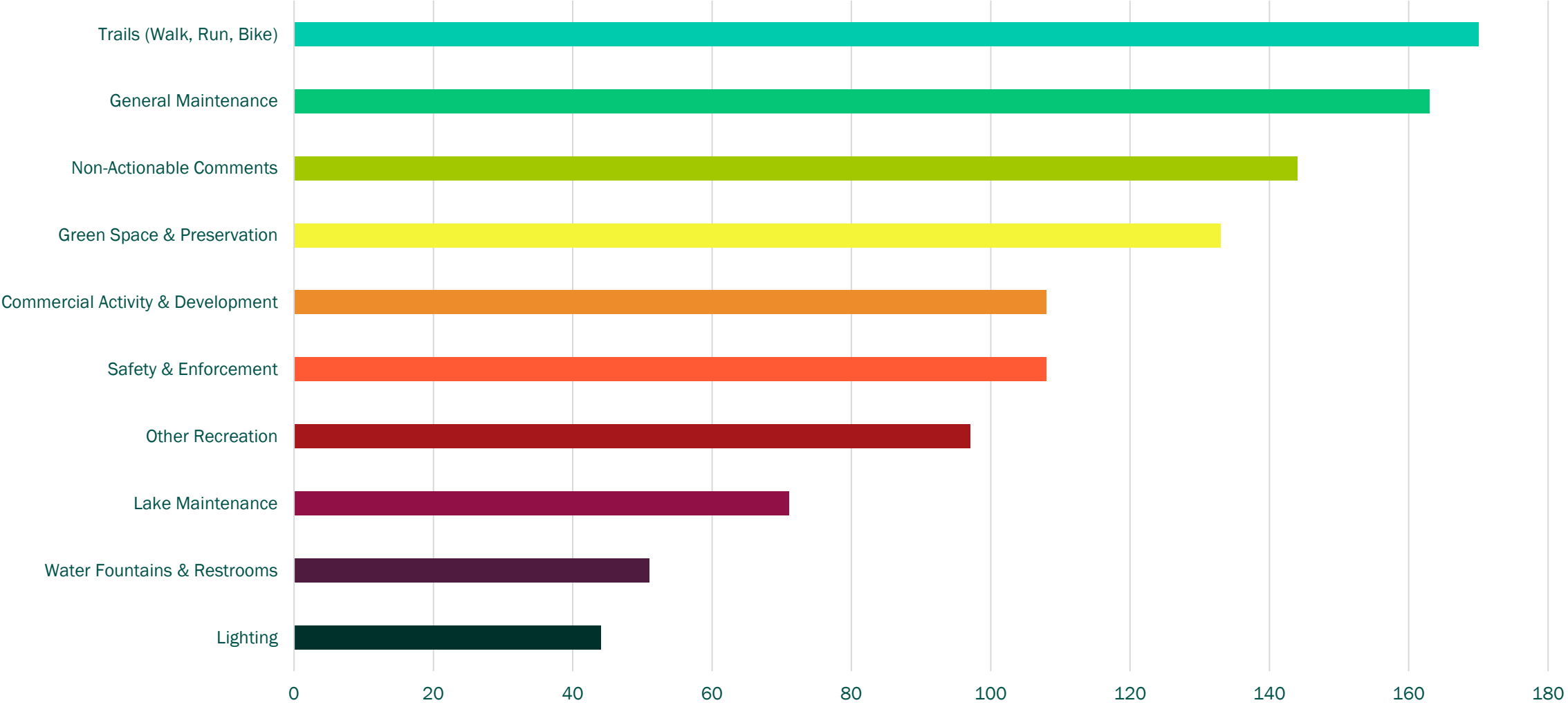
1. Winfrey Point
July 18, 2023 | 6 PM

2. Bath House Cultural
November 6, 2023 | 6 PM

3. Winfrey Point
March 4, 2024 | 6 PM



Stakeholder Feedback Composite



Stakeholder Feedback – Common Themes



Maintenance + Lake Edge Control

Attendees were concerned with lake maintenance and the condition of the lake's shoreline. Park Users recommended dredging feasibility studies, lake edge restoration, and pollution control measures.



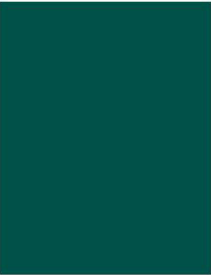
Preservation + Restoration

White Rock Lake's vistas and natural ecologies were important to multiple user groups. Preservation of the prairie and natural areas, protection of habitat for urban wildlife, and specific studies of the existing ecological functions were recommendations we heard.

Security + Safety

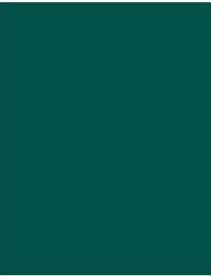
Access was important for trail users and park maintenance staff alike. Staff recommended controlled access points for specific parking areas, while trail users recommended additional lighting, visibility measures, and rest stops.

Stewardship of White Rock Lake Park



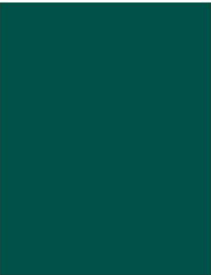
LAKE HEALTH

Protecting the lake’s health is a foundational part of the park’s long-term future. Efforts to support water quality, manage erosion, and maintain lake depth should continue to be treated as ongoing priorities. A well-cared-for lake helps sustain the park’s natural systems and supports a wide range of user experiences.



ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESTORATION

Restoring and protecting the park’s natural areas and cultural features helps preserve its unique character and sense of place. This includes caring for sensitive habitats like the rare Blackland Prairie, maintaining native landscapes, and safeguarding historic structures. Education, stewardship, and community engagement play important roles in advancing these efforts over time.



ONGOING MAINTENANCE

Ongoing maintenance is key to keeping the park safe, welcoming, and resilient. The 2022 Maintenance Plan offers a framework for addressing regular needs across both natural and built areas. Continued investment in upkeep supports long-term park health and user satisfaction.



OPERATIONS AND POLICY

Well-coordinated operations, clear policies, and steady management contribute significantly to the park’s long-term success. While this Master Plan focuses on spatial layout and future design, it complements other efforts that guide day-to-day operations and policy. Strong partnerships and collaboration across agencies, staff, and community stakeholders help ensure the park remains functional, accessible, and valued into the future.

These four foundational topic areas highlight key components essential to supporting the park’s health and ongoing care. They have been consistently identified across past and current efforts as priorities and should guide implementation and decision-making for this Plan. While the 2025 White Rock Lake Master Plan aims to support and align with these efforts, its success depends on them.

How to Use This Plan

SECTIONS	PURPOSE	PAGE RANGE
Stewardships Guiding Principles	Outlines four foundational areas: Lake Health, Restoration, Maintenance, and Policy.	pg. 10-11
Previous Planning Efforts	Reviews historical plans and strategies from 1936 to 2022.	pg. 16-49
White Rock Lake Today	Describes current site conditions, ecological context, and recreational assets.	pg. 50-68
Opportunity and Constraints	Identifies site-specific challenges and potential improvements across 20 park zones.	pg. 58-66
Community Engagement	Summarizes public input, surveys, and stakeholder feedback that shaped the plan	pg. 66-68
Master Plan	Provides conceptual recommendations for each park zone and outlines “Big Ideas.”	pg. 74-120
Design Guidelines	Offers standards for trails, parking, lake edge, amenities, signage, vegetation, and architecture	pg. 130-160

White Rock Lake Park

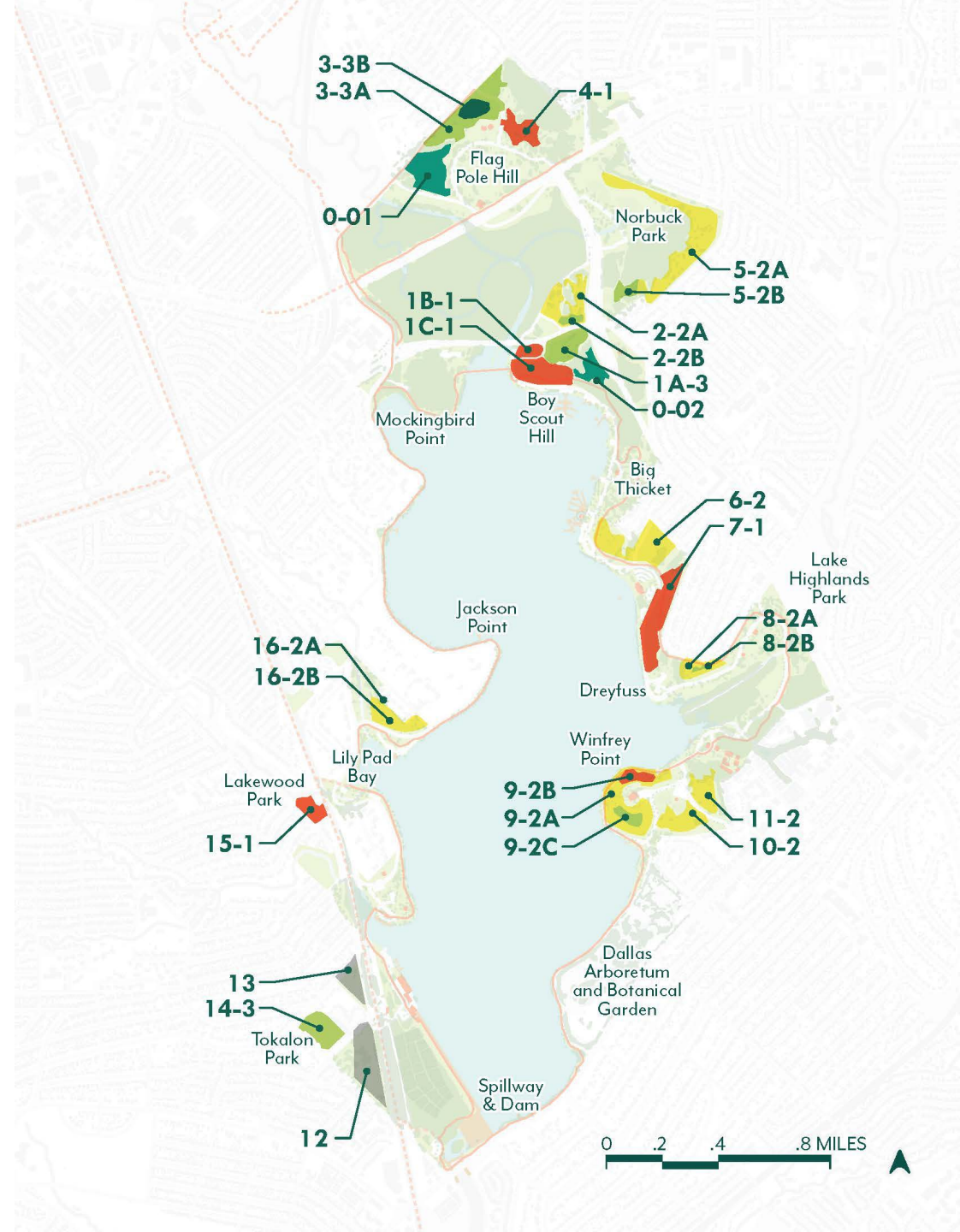
Existing Conditions



White Rock Lake Park

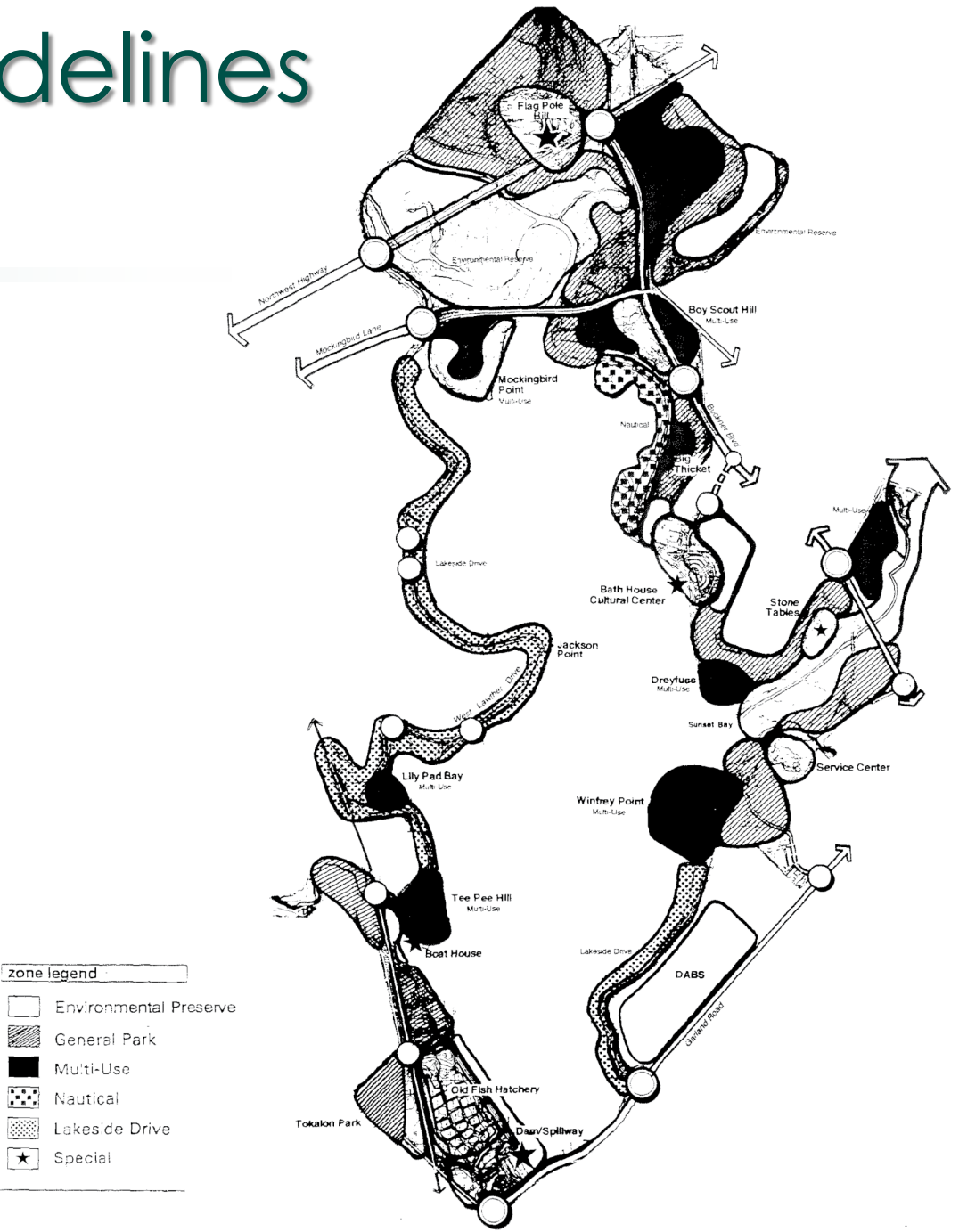
2016 – Prairie Remnant Assessment

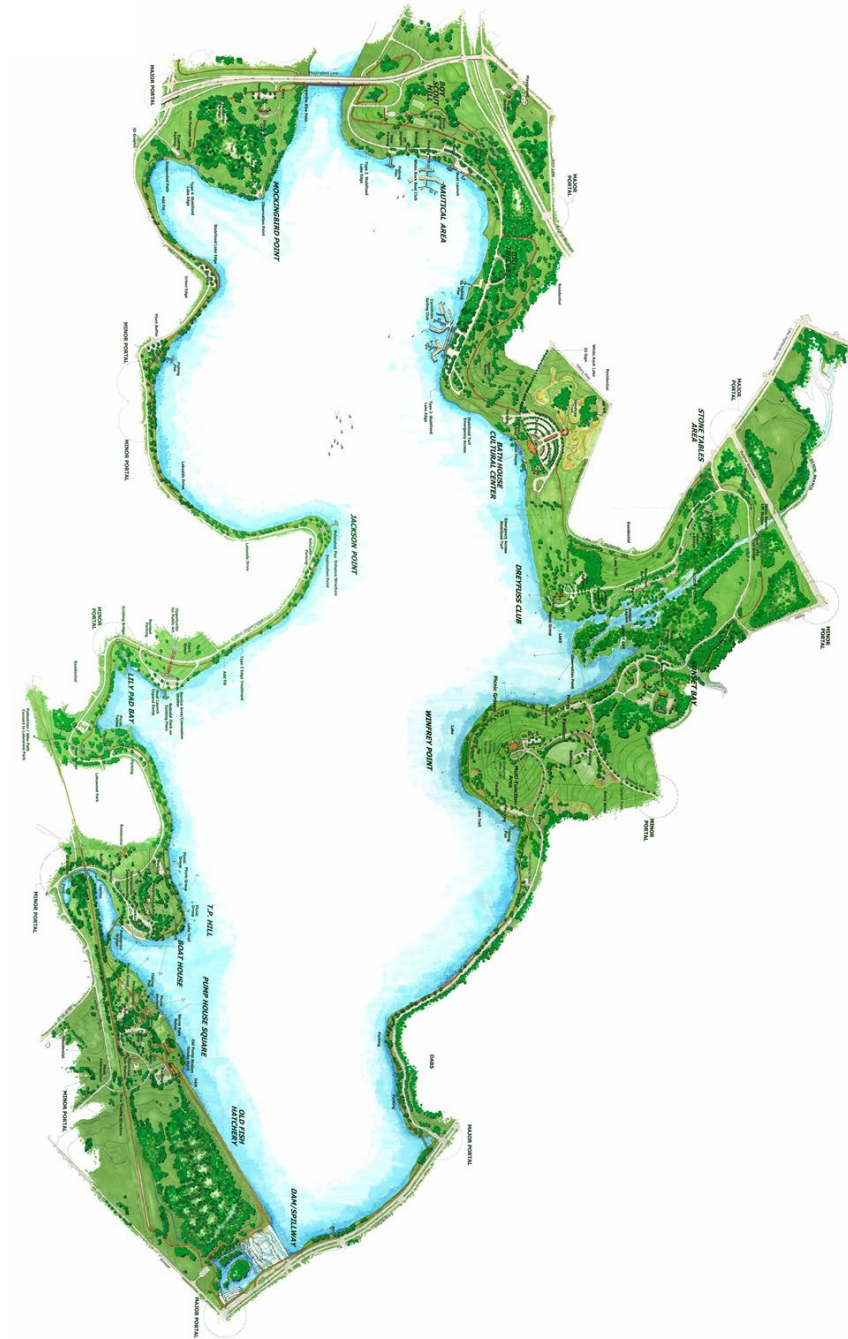
Map Color	Category	Description
	RARE	No disturbance, maintain extents and prairie health as much as possible. Do not introduce any non-endemic vegetation.
	Excellent	Limit disturbance and aim to protect remnant boundaries and vegetative health. Prioritize stewardship and education in these areas.
	Moderate	Protect boundaries of remnant areas and aim to improve health with endemic seed mixes and stewardship opportunities.
	Poor	Limit restoration efforts to areas that can be effectively maintained, and prioritize the use of endemic seed mixes to enhance site-specific ecological integrity. Continuously monitor environmental conditions and conduct site-specific evaluations to inform adaptive management strategies and align with programmatic goals.
	Not Assessed	Areas 0-01 and 0-02 were not assessed as part of this study but recorded as having prairie characteristics Reduce mow recommended.
	Other	Areas 12 and 13 were designated and assessed as 'Not Prairie'.



1994 WRL Park Design Guidelines

Concept Plan





2024 WRL Park Preliminary Master Plan

Goal:

Provide a **conceptual framework** to guide future improvements within White Rock Lake Park.

Opportunities:

Recommendations based on previous planning studies, current community input, staff interviews, and site review.

Design Influences:

Unique Characteristics:

Site specific characteristics to account for when further defining detailed design responses.

Recreational Assets:

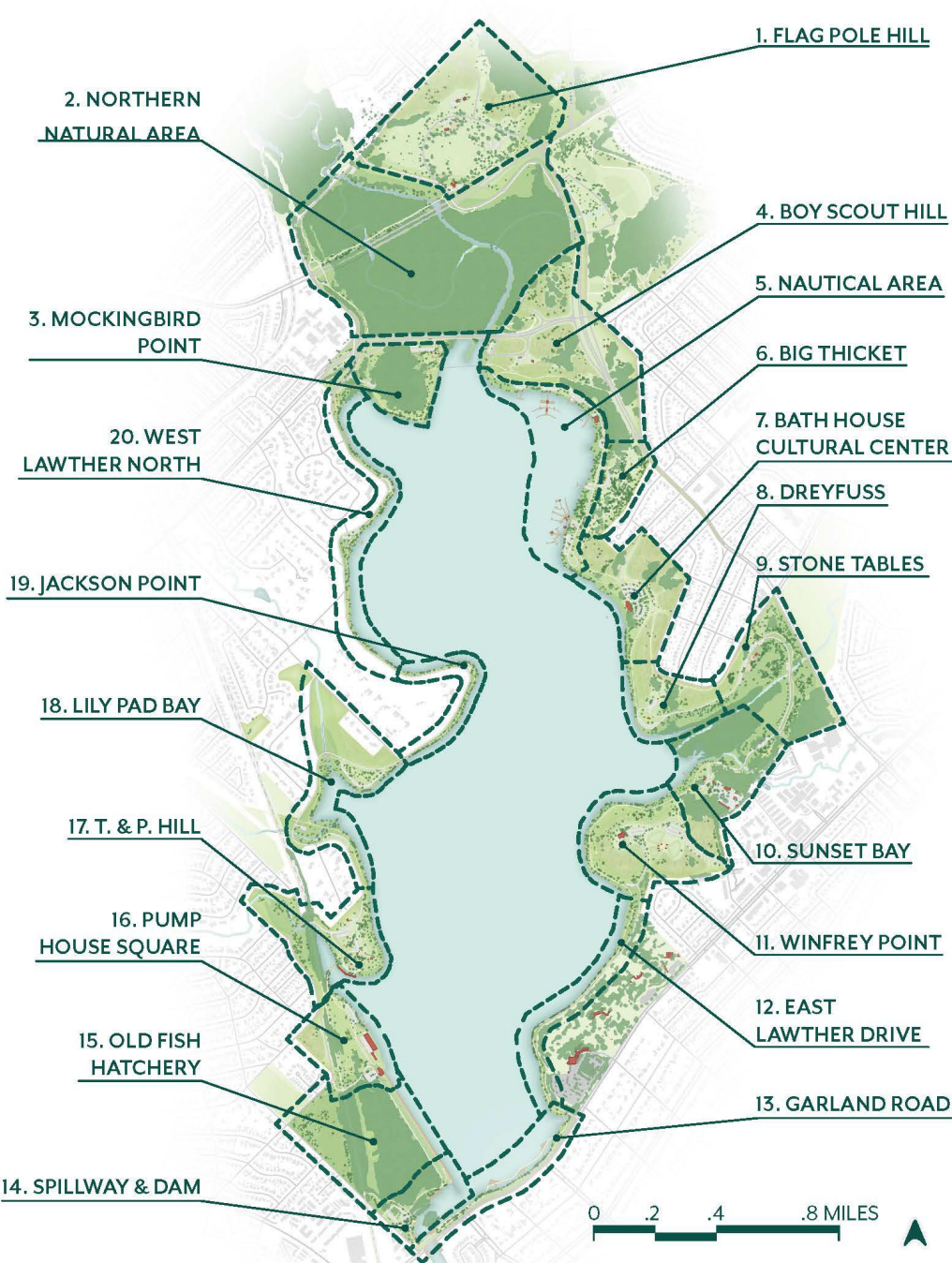
Existing Park assets supportive to the master plan vision that should be maintained and improved.

Surrounding Influences:

Adjacencies to specific areas that should be taken into consideration when improving specific park assets.



2024 WRL Park Master Plan



Boy Scout Hill

BOY SCOUT HILL

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Prairie ecosystem
Park gateway

RECREATIONAL ASSETS

Parking
Overlook
Pavilion & picnic areas
Trail connections

SURROUNDING INFLUENCES

Mockingbird Lane
East Lawther Drive
White Rock Lake Trail
Boat Clubs
White Rock Creek
Buckner Blvd

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reforestation around picnic shelters
Reforestation of East Lawther entry roads from Mockingbird Lane
Wildflower reseeding with WRLP seed mix on slopes at Boy Scout Hill
Preservation of prairie areas
Improve parking lot surfaces near picnic shelters.
Study potential of East Lawther pedestrian overpass
Organize & enhance parking
Pathway connections
Connections to neighborhoods along Mockingbird Lane
Potential playground adjacent to pavilion
Upgrade trail informational signage and trail head



Nautical Area

NAUTICAL AREA

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Multiple vehicular/pedestrian conflicts

Varied surfaces for vehicular circulation

Roadway adjacency to shoreline

RECREATIONAL ASSETS

Waterfront access

Boat ramps

Fishing piers

Parking areas

Picnic areas

SURROUNDING INFLUENCES

East Lawther Drive

White Rock Lake Trail

Boy Scout Hill

Shoreline

Boat Clubs

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Reforestation along shoreline.

Preserve canopy and plant material per reforestation recommendations.

Provide alternative to existing “temporary” on-shore rowing club facility consistent with other nautical area permanent structures

Parking lot lighting improvements on shore and pier

Consolidate parking.

Organize & enhance parking

Evaluation of roadway cross section to accommodate side paths for pedestrians

Consistent roadway edge treatment

Reclamation of green space from inefficient parking

Restore public boat ramps

Pedestrian bridge approach/overpass

Enhanced piers

Enhanced picnic areas along shoreline

Enhanced restroom/portalet enclosures



Winfrey Point

WINFREY POINT

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- Downtown & Lake Views
- Natural areas/Blackland prairie
- Historic structure
- Rentable venue

RECREATIONAL ASSETS

- Group gathering space
- Parking areas
- Multi-use facility
- Trailhead parking

SURROUNDING INFLUENCES

- East Lawther Drive
- East Lawther Trail
- Shoreline
- Emerald Isle Drive

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop focused master plan for Winfrey Point
- Reforestation
- Wildflower reseeding with WRLP seed mix on slopes around rental facility
- Consolidate picnic areas, provide major picnic area.
- Upgrade baseball fields.
- Consolidate parking.
- Provide a new playground area that is recessed into existing grade.
- Improve southern entry to building and oval drop-off area.
- Realign main access drive to provide more direct vehicular access.
- Provide identification signage at intersections and street trees to strengthen vehicular approach.
- Realignment of Entry Roads.
- Parking lot upgrades & re-organization
- Explore options for trails/paths from building to trail
- Picnic areas and potential fishing piers



Garland Road

GARLAND ROAD

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- Small Land Area
- Adjacency to Spillway

RECREATIONAL ASSETS

- Overlooks
- Trail Connection

SURROUNDING INFLUENCES

- Garland Road

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:
Shoreline erosion control.
Reforestation
Options for safe pedestrian/trail areas adjacent to Garland Road
Explore options for over the water boardwalk



T & P Hill

T. & P. HILL

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- Lake views
- Boathouse

RECREATIONAL ASSETS

- Boating access

SURROUNDING INFLUENCES

- West Lawther Drive

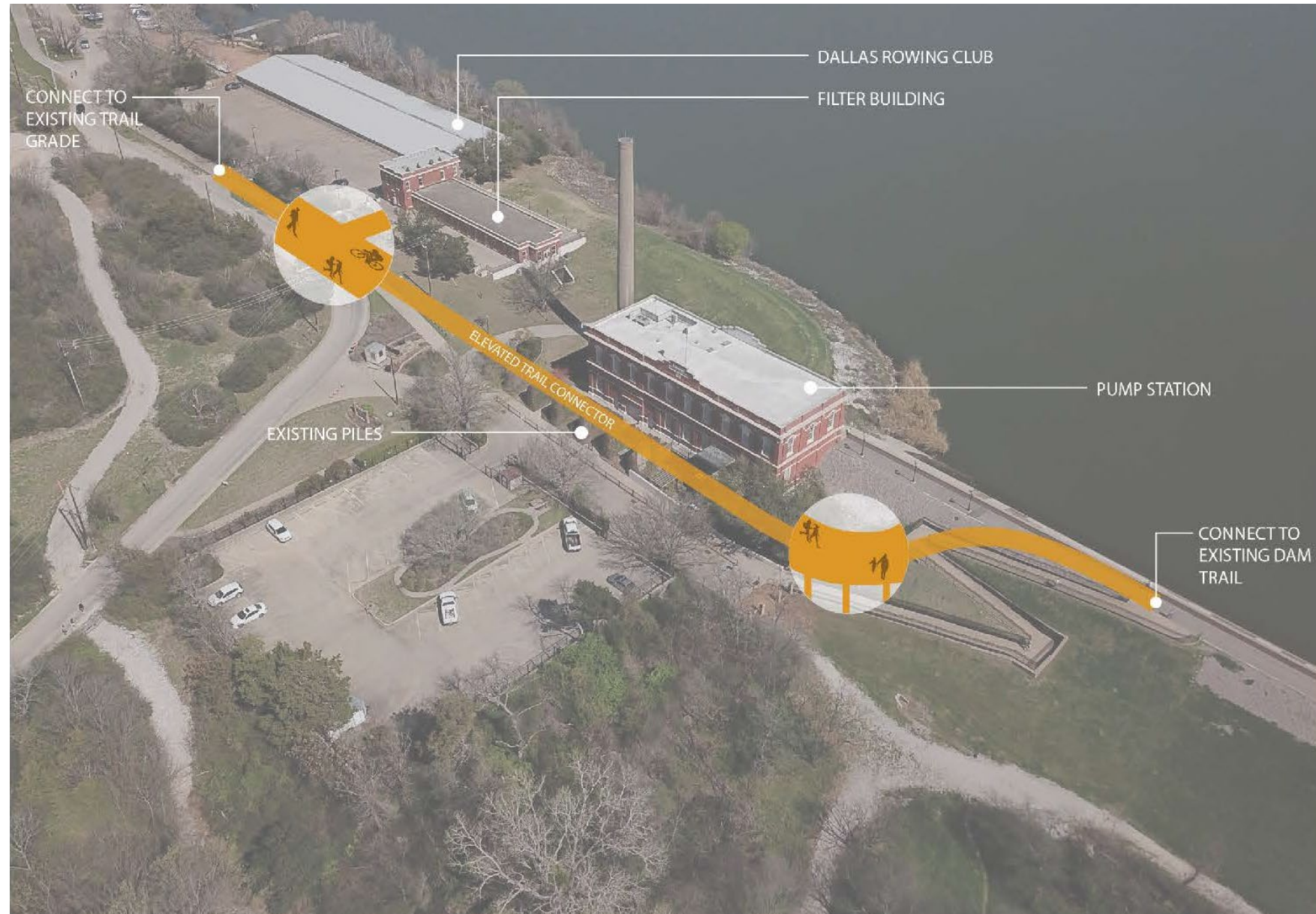
OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:
Reforestation along shoreline
Parking lot upgrades (lighting)
Trail alignment/circulation study improvements
All season water fountain
Boathouse preservation
Preservation and restoration of existing restroom



Big Ideas – Garland Road



Big Ideas – Pump House Trail



Design Guidelines - Trails

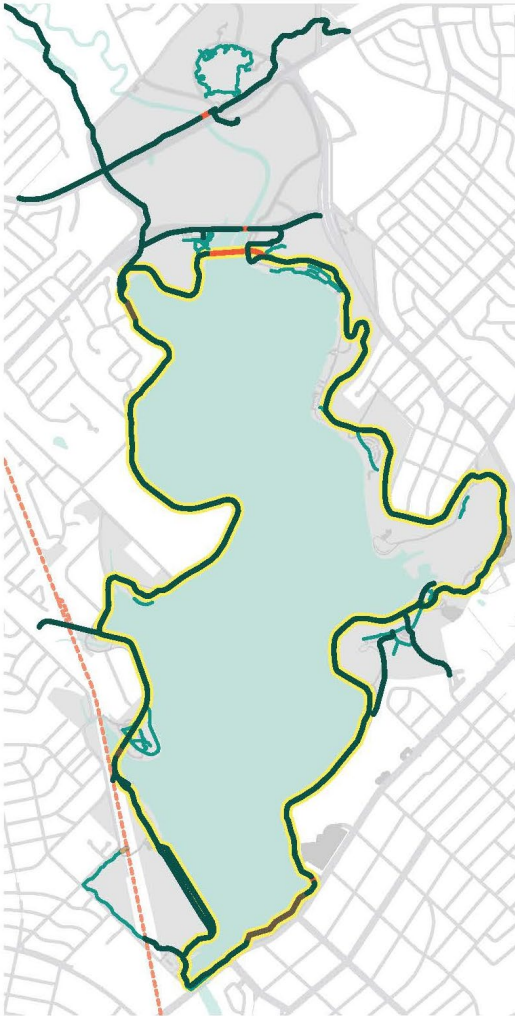
1.0 TRAILS

The White Rock Lake Trail encircles the lake with 9.3 miles of continuous paved trail. The majority of the trail is paved with asphalt, while some sections feature concrete, bridges, or boardwalks to cross tributaries or sections of the lake. The trail typologies defined in the adjacent map illustrate the design intent for trail development at White Rock Lake Park.

The 1994 White Rock Lake Park Master Plan & Design Guidelines first defined the trail typologies which are the standard for the Park. These typologies were spurred from recommendations in the 1987 Management Plan that called for 12 foot wide trails. (Pages 11-12, 25, 28-29 of the 1987 Management Plan). Unless otherwise noted, those requirements still apply today. A summary of each trail type is provided on the following pages but planners should directly reference the 1994 Master Plan when planning any new trail.

Map Legend:

- Multi-Use Trail
- 6'-8' Sidewalk
- Boardwalk
- Bridge
- Soft Surface Trail



MULTI-USE TRAIL

As stated in the 1994 plan, "... new trails and existing 8 foot trails should be designed or refurbished according to the following guidelines" then fully described on page 11 of the reference document. Those guidelines are still applicable today and should be directly referenced when planning new trail development. In summary, multi-use pathways should be 14 foot wide concrete with a 3 foot grass shoulder on either side. Trails should follow AASHTO guidelines, be striped for two-way traffic, and the trail should maintain its full width as much is feasible. (Page 11-13, 1994 Master Plan).



Multi-Use Trail

SOFT SURFACE TRAILS

This trail type is intended to be a low-impact improvement in environmentally sensitive or naturally maintained areas. This is a secondary trail type for minor pathways and may require additional maintenance. This trail type should be prioritized where interpretive signage is planned, while still minimizing the overall impact of planned improvements in these natural areas. Specific design guidance can be found on page 13 of the 1994 Master Plan. Special consideration for maintenance access and upkeep should be given when laying out these trail types. (Page 13, 1994 Master Plan).



Soft Surface Trail

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES

Specific design standards for pedestrian bridges can be found on page 15 of the 1994 Master Plan. It is important that pedestrian bridges reflect the character of the park and implement architectural features where possible. (Pages 13-15 1994 Master Plan).



Steel Pedestrian Bridge

TRAIL MAINTENANCE (2022 AMENDMENT)

Maintenance strategies of the trail loop and secondary paths at White Rock Lake are defined in the 2022 White Rock Lake Operations & Maintenance Plan (Pages 28-30). A summary of the recommendations is provided below for general design intent, however all planners should directly reference the 2022 Maintenance Plan for detailed guidance.

PLAN CONTENTS:

- Perform weekly, or following any major storm or flooding event, inspections of trails to address maintenance needs. Perform written inspection of trails at least monthly as part of the general park inspection process.
- Monitoring and inspection criteria for trails, handrails, and pedestrian bridges.
- Restripe multi-use trails when visibility falls below 25%, evaluated annually as part of the general park inspection.
- Trail closure guidelines.



Steel Pedestrian Bridge



Stone Pedestrian Bridge

DESIGN GUIDELINES

MULTI-USE BOARDWALK (2025 AMENDMENT)

Not previously defined, but however mentioned in the 1994 Master Plan were boardwalks. This addition to the design standards at White Rock Lake Park is meant to build on the 1994 precedent and provide further clarification for planning improvements. (Page 13, 1994 Master Plan.)

Boardwalks may provide trail connectivity through wetland areas, adjacent to West Lawther Drive, or other similar areas where limited land width or standing water present challenges for trail connectivity.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Planned improvements must thoroughly consider the site's natural features and minimize any disruption to the local ecology and wildlife.
- Boardwalks should use hardy materials that would minimize the need for repairs and maintenance in these more sensitive areas. Slip resistant materials should also be considered, especially in areas prone to wetness.
- Prioritize matching the existing character of the wooden bridges and stonework where possible for new boardwalks.
- Consider implementing rest stops outside the trail circulation path for wildlife viewing and to reduce congestion.



Lady Bird Lake Boardwalk - Austin, TX



Concrete Boardwalk

Design Guidelines - Parking

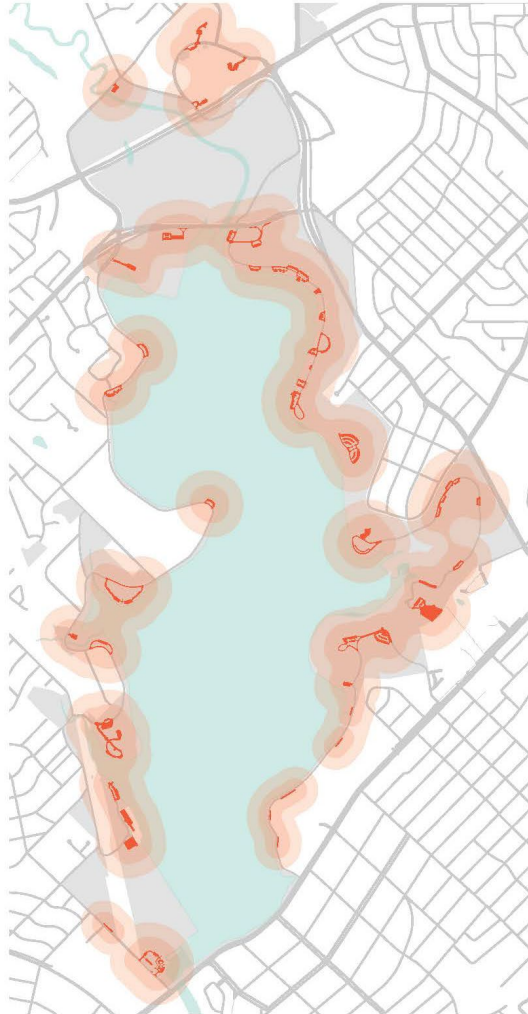
2.0 PARKING

Parking Guidelines were defined by the 1994 Master Plan and are still relevant today. This section will summarize the design intent of these guidelines, but planners and designers should directly reference the 1994 Master Plan for full design criteria when planning improvements at White Rock Lake Park. (Pages 15-17, 1994 Master Plan.)

The diagram at right illustrates the parking areas that exist and are proposed as elements within the 2025 Master Plan.

General Considerations from the 1994 Master Plan include:

- Larger parking areas at Mockingbird and Lily Pad Bay should be redesigned with parking lot islands for tree plantings.
- Single loaded parking should have a linear tree island. And multiple-double loaded should be separated by a continuous tree island a minimum of 20 feet wide.
- Islands should be located no more than 12 spaces apart.
- Tree island widths should be at least one parking space wide.
- Placement of islands on opposite sides should be staggered in random, natural patterns.

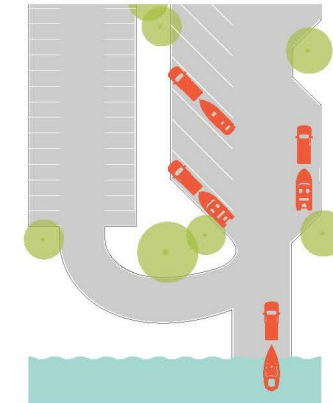


BOAT & TRAILER PARKING (2025 AMENDMENT)

Not previously defined in any precedent planning document for White Rock Lake Park are guidelines for Boat & Trailer parking. Boat and trailer parking areas are specifically designed to accommodate the size and maneuverability needs of vehicles with trailers, providing ample space for turning and parking.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Boat and trailer parking are located near boat launch areas or docks. Layout of parking should not disrupt high traffic pedestrian zones or multi-use trails.
- Boat and trailer parking spaces should use best design practices. Minimum parking dimensions for trailer parking are 12 foot wide, with a length of 35 feet. Consider the design intent for the dock or launch area when determining the length of parking spaces for trailers.



Functional Diagram of Trailer Parking



Existing Boat Parking at Lily Pad Bay

Design Guidelines - Parking

3.0 LAKE EDGE CONTROL

The following documents provide important guidance for managing the shoreline at White Rock Lake Park and should be referenced when planning any improvements:

- 1987 Management Plan
- 1990 Master Plan
- 1991 Shoreline Tree Enhancement Plan
- 1994 Design Guidelines
- 2022 Operations & Maintenance Plan

When planning any shoreline improvements at White Rock Lake Park, designers should be aware of the prior recommendations and plans listed above.

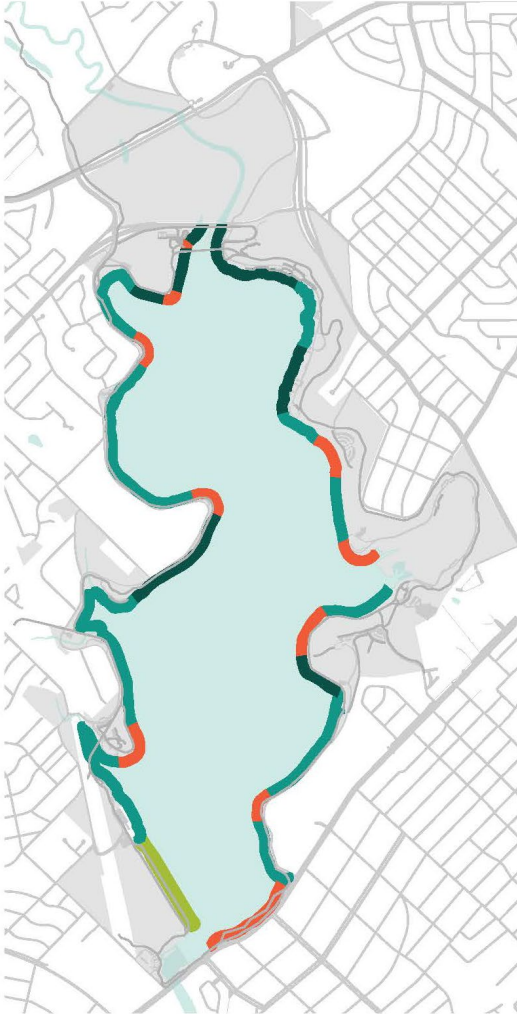
Legend:

Critical

High Priority

Moderate Priority

Stable/ Low Priority

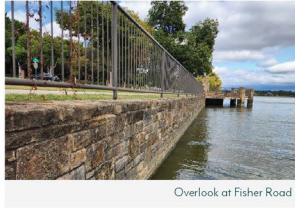


The following examples illustrate potential shoreline treatment applications appropriate for White Rock Lake. Each approach should be considered based on site-specific conditions, and all treatments will be reviewed and approved by the Dallas Park and Recreation Department (DPARD).

ARCHITECTURAL (PREVIOUSLY TYPE 1)
Architectural shoreline control methods are described on page 18 of the 1994 Master Plan. Architectural lake edges have been implemented at the Fisher Road Overlook.

A summary of the design intent from the 1994 Master Plan carried forward in the 2025 Master Plan is listed below.

- DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:**
- The design methodology are concrete walls with a stone veneer.
 - This method is suitable for areas where man-made facilities meet or exist at the lake edge. Such facilities include fishing piers, overlooks, and bridges.



SHEET PILING (2025 AMENDMENT)
Sheet piling are vertical barriers made of steel, vinyl, composite, or concrete that stabilize soil and prevent erosion. They form a continuous, watertight wall, protecting shorelines and embankments from wave action, heavy rain, and fluctuating water levels. These structures provide long-term stability in high-erosion areas.

- DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:**
- Best for shoreline stabilization at piers or docks with steep banks, high wave action, and erosion susceptibility.
 - Extensive site planning and engineering design is necessary to properly plan and construct sheet piling infrastructure in these dock areas.
 - Materials and veneers should reflect the site character and match existing materials where feasible.



STABILIZED EDGE (PREVIOUSLY TYPE 2)
Stabilized edges are previously defined in the 1994 Master Plan as Gabion or Armor Flex Paver Systems. Best management practices should be tailored to the specific conditions of each site. Designers are encouraged to pursue solutions that minimize environmental impact while maximizing functional and ecological benefits.

A summary of the design intent from the 1994 Master Plan carried forward in the 2025 Master Plan is listed below.

- DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:**
- Shorelines exposed to extensive wave action erosion that need a stabilized edge may be suitable for gabion edges.
 - Gabions support vegetation growth both within and beyond their structure, helping to soften their appearance and making them well-suited for general park use.



ORGANIC STABILIZATION (PREVIOUSLY TYPE 4)
Organic Stabilization techniques are previously defined by the 1994 Master Plan on page 19. In summary, this technique is best suited for environmentally sensitive areas that are less susceptible to wave action and erosion. This type is suitable for most park areas due to its low visual impact.

A summary of the design intent from the 1994 Master Plan carried forward with new, additional guidance is listed below.

- DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:**
- Best for ecologically sensitive and wildlife habitat areas.
 - Can be used temporarily to help establish natural vegetation and shoreline plantings.
 - Best suited for sites with gentle slopes and stable soils.
 - Plantings should be native and riparian.
 - Requires additional maintenance considerations for plant pruning and wildlife management.
 - Bio-engineered organic stabilization techniques may be incorporated which include live staking, brush layering, and erosion control blankets or coir logs.
 - This approach can serve as a cost effective shoreline management strategy, offering long-term benefits despite the need for ongoing maintenance.



Design Guidelines - Stonework

7.0 STONEWORK

Stonework is not previously standardized in any previous planning documents, yet it plays a vital role in maintaining both the structural integrity and aesthetic quality of White Rock Lake Park's built environment. As a material deeply connected to the park's natural setting, well-executed stonework should complement the landscape while providing durability against weathering, erosion, and heavy public use. Thoughtful construction techniques ensure longevity, prevent structural failures, and maintain visual harmony with the surrounding environment.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Stones should be carefully selected and arranged to interlock securely
- Stonework should match adjacent installations in form, and color ,
- Avoid chinking
- Avoid long continuous horizontal joints
- Avoid notching
- Edges of walls/structures should be chisled and squared
- Avoid excessive use of small stones



Stone work at Big Thicket



Stone work at Stone Tables

Design Guidelines – Site Furniture

PICNIC TABLES

(2025 AMENDMENT)

The standard park picnic table is a Green Perforated Metal Picnic Table. An option style that reflects the WPA character is a rustic wood picnic table. Wooden picnic table installations should only be used in appropriated locations with DPARD approval.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Tables should be located and grouped according to the design guidelines in the 1994 Master Plan on pages 60-62.
- Mount tables according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Provide ADA-compliant picnic tables with any installation.
- Metal site furnishings should not be used where WPA architectural elements or stonework are present to preserve the character of the site.



Standard Park Table - Green Perforated Metal



Optional Park Table - Rustic Wood (NPS Style)

PARK BENCHES

(2025 AMENDMENT)

The standard park bench is a wood and metal backed bench with armrests. A secondary powder-coated green, metal bench may be used where appropriate.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Locate benches in shady areas away from circulation paths, and where they may take advantage of park views.
- Mount benches according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Benches may be suitable at all Park Facilities: Fishing Piers, Playgrounds, Rest Stops and Restrooms.
- Metal site furnishings should not be used where WPA architectural elements or stonework are present to preserve the character of the site.



Park Bench - Wood with center armrest



Park Bench - Green Metal Strap

Next Steps

- Internal Department Review
- White Rock Lake Task Force - Sub-Committee for the White Rock Lake Master Plan
- Park Board Adoption