

Chapter 6

Needs Assessment



6.1 Introduction

The Needs Assessment is one of the most critical components of the Community Development Master Plan. An assessment of the current state of The Colony’s parks system, recreation opportunities, city image, arts, history, and culture is vital so that deficiencies and needs can be identified and so that actions can be developed to address those deficiencies. It is also important to determine future needs relative to recreational trends and the changing needs of the City’s residents and to develop the necessary action plan to address these needs effectively.

A needs assessment is an analytical way of assessing what facilities, actions, and programs are most needed and desired by the citizens of The Colony and prioritizing actions to address these needs. The assessment of these needs is both quantitative and qualitative as is discussed in Section 6.2.

6.2 Assessment Methods

There are three techniques which are used to evaluate the current and future community development needs of The Colony. These techniques follow general methodologies accepted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for local park master plans and by the Department of the Interior for local park system Recovery Action Plans (RAP). These three techniques are as follows:

Standard-Based

Parks, recreation, and open space are the only subject areas that can be assessed by the use of standards. This is due entirely to the fact that standards or similar assessment methods do not exist for art, culture, history, or beautification.

The standard-based technique for parks, recreation, and open space uses standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 1995 and target standards from benchmark cities in the surrounding region. These standards are based on park acreage (by park type) per 1,000 residents and by number of specific recreation amenities (such as basketball goals) per number of residents.

A target Level of Service (LOS) is developed for The Colony for park acreage and recreation amenities by adjusting the NRPA standards and the benchmark cities' target standards based on the unique attributes and characteristics of The Colony. This target LOS is then used to assess the surplus or deficit of park acreage at build-out population and various recreation amenities for The Colony today and the next five to ten years. This is in recognition of the fact that recreation facility needs change over time due to changing trends, demographics, and so forth whereas park acreage needs are relatively constant.

Demand-Based

This approach uses participation rates, league usage data, surveys, public input events, and questionnaires to determine how much the population uses and desires certain types of recreation facilities, park amenities, and activities for which land needs to be acquired, facility provision needs to be made, or programming needs to be provided.

Resource-Based

This approach is based on the usefulness of available physical resources to provide recreation opportunities. For example, the City's lakeshore and creek system provides opportunities for trail corridors.

All three methods are important in their own regard, but individually do not represent the entire picture. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities and park requirements are needed in The Colony.

Chapter 6A

Standard Based Needs Assessment

National guidelines and standards are based on demographic trends rather than specific local desires, requiring that they be fine-tuned to meet local conditions. It is important to recognize that national standards are simply guidelines or benchmarks that are intended to serve as a starting point for park planning (again, arts, culture, history, and beautification are all areas that do not have standards by which to perform this particular analysis). Each city has its own unique geographic, demographic, and socio-economic composition, and as such, the arbitrary application of national standards, as is often done, would not necessarily meet the needs of that particular community.

Standards exist and are applied in three primary ways:

- **Spatial or Park Acreage Standards** – These define the acres of park land needed and are usually expressed as a ratio of park acreage to population.
- **Facility Standards** – These define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular recreation need. Facility standards are usually expressed as a ratio of units of a particular facility per population size. For example, a facility standard for basketball might be one court for every 5,000 inhabitants.
- **Development Standards** – These define the exact spatial requirements for a specific recreation area (such as a Neighborhood Park versus a Community Park). *These recommended standards are discussed in Chapter 5.*

6A.1 Acreage Standards

The Need for Park Acreage

Developing and applying a target Level of Service or “standard” for park acreage results in acreage standards for different types of parks and park land. Neighborhood Parks and community parks, however, are the primary park types to focus on as they provide close-to-home park space as discussed in Chapter 5. Additional acreage is required both in order to serve the existing and future population but also to allow for the development of additional Neighborhood and Community Parks evenly spaced throughout the City, with the goal of providing close-to-home parks within ¼ to ½ mile of each resident in The Colony.

On the map on page 5-19a, both Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks are shown with the ¼ mile and ½ mile service radii of a typical Neighborhood Park. The reason that Community Parks are included in this coverage analysis is that they typically contain the elements of a Neighborhood Park and thus function as *de facto* Neighborhood Parks. By inclusion of both park types in this study, the maximal coverage of existing “Close to Home” parks is depicted. Other types of parks such as Special Purpose or Linear Parks typically are not included in such a service coverage analysis. The reason for this is that each is unique and may only be found where a particular function or resource opportunity exists.

The overall goal is to provide **walking distance (¼ to ½ mile) service** to all residents, throughout the City of The Colony. The areas covered with the service radii are well served, whereas the areas that are exposed or not covered indicate the highest need for neighborhood type recreational facilities and parks.

6A.1.1 Park Acreage Standards

The purpose of spatial standards for parks and recreational areas is to ensure that sufficient area is allocated to allow for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. They allow the City to plan ahead, so that park land can be targeted and acquired before it is developed. These spatial standards are expressed as the number of acres of park land per 1,000 inhabitants.

The NRPA-recommended spatial standards for cities in general are shown in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1
Park Acreage Guidelines Based on National (NRPA) Recommended Standards

NRPA Recommended Standards:	
Close to Home Parks	
• Neighborhood Parks:	1.0 to 2.0 acres / 1,000 population
• Community Parks:	5.0 to 8.0 acres / 1,000 population
Total recommended close to home parks per NRPA:	
6.0 to 10.0 acres / 1,000 population	
<hr/>	
Other City Wide Parks:	
• Special Purpose Parks:	Variable standard
• Linear Parks / Linkage Parks:	Variable standard
• Nature Preserves / Open Space:	Variable standard
• Regional Parks:	5.0 to 10.0 acres / 1,000 population

6A.1.2 Target Park Acreage LOS

The nationally recommended spatial standards as presented in Figure 6.1 above were adapted to develop target standards for The Colony’s particular set of needs. Target Levels of Service (LOS) were developed only for Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks because other park types – special purpose parks, linear parks, nature preserves, and regional parks – are only developed when the specific need or opportunity for such park is determined. These park land target levels of service for The Colony are presented in Table 6.1 and are summarized in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2
Park Acreage Target Levels of Service for The Colony

Close to Home Parks	
• Neighborhood Parks:	2 acres / 1,000 population
• Community Parks:	6 acres / 1,000 population
Total recommended close to home parks:	
8 acres / 1,000 population	

The city-wide recommended target LOS for The Colony is 8 acres per 1,000 population for Neighborhood and Community Parks. This falls within the NRPA’s recommended 6 to 10 acres per 1,000 population while being comparable to other cities in the region (for Neighborhood and Community Parks). It should be noted that The Colony has other types of parks that provide additional acreage of park land for the population. Table 6.1 on the following page displays this information and indicates that The Colony today has 48 acres of park land¹ and open space per 1,000 population. **However, there are only 7.1 acres of Neighborhood and Community park land per 1,000 population (including HOA parks); this is not sufficient to serve The Colony’s current park acreage needs.**

Table 6.1 Park Land Standards on the next page describes the acreage standards and resulting needs from 2008 until build-out conditions for each park category.

¹ The additional 40 acres per 1,000 population is comprised of land dedicated to special purpose parks (including golf courses), open space, and USACE Wildlife Management Areas along the shore of Lewisville Lake.



The Colony Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

Table 6.1 - Park Land Standards



Facility Type	N.R.P.A. Size/ Acres	Total Existing Acres	Current Level of Service	NRPA Target Standard (1)	2008 Target Level of Service (2)	2008 \approx 39,828 pop. (3)	Build-out (2030) \approx 80,500 pop. (3)
Park Category							
Neighborhood Parks	5 - 10 acres	85 acres (4)	2.13 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	1 - 2 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	2 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	80 Acres (surplus of 5 acres)	161 Acres (deficit of 76 acres)
Community Parks	According to function; usually 30 - 50 acres	198 acres	4.97 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	5 - 8 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	6 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	239 Acres (deficit of 41 acres)	483 Acres (deficit of 285 acres)
TOTAL		283 acres	7 Acres / 1,000 pop.	6 - 10 Acres / 1,000 pop.	8 Acres / 1,000 pop.	319 Acres (deficit of 36 acres)	644 Acres (deficit of 361 acres)
Special Purpose Parks incl. Linear Parks & Aquatic Park	Varies by function	766 acres (5)	19.00 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	Variable	No target	19 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	10 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
Natural Areas/Open Spaces	Varies by resource protection & opportunity	157 acres	3.94 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	Variable	No target	4 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	2 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
TOTAL		923 acres	23 Acres / 1,000 pop.			23 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	12 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
CITY PARK GRAND TOTAL		1206 acres	30 Acres / 1,000 pop.			30 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	15 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
Regional Parks (6)	Wildlife Management Area (USACE)	1187 acres	29.80 Acres/ 1,000 pop.		No target	30 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	15 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
Regional Parks (6) NRPA = Metropolitan	100 - 500+ acres	705 acres	17.70 Acres/ 1,000 pop.		No target	18 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	9 Acres/ 1,000 pop.
TOTAL		1892 acres	48 Acres / 1,000 pop.			48 Acres/ 1,000 pop.	24 Acres/ 1,000 pop.

Comparable adopted park land standards in other nearby cities.

- Waxahachie's adopted park land standards = **20 acres per 1,000 residents.**
- Prosper's adopted park land standards = **20 acres per 1,000 residents.**
- Lancaster's adopted park land standards = **23 acres per 1,000 residents.**
- Frisco's adopted park land standards = **13-19 acres per 1,000 residents.**
- Keller's adopted park land standards = **18 acres per 1,000 residents.**
- Rowlett's adopted park land standards = **17-25.5 acres per 1,000 residents.**

(1) 1995 NRPA standards.

(2) Standard allows The Colony to establish general target service levels.

(3) Population projections were provided by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (number is rounded)

(4) Includes HOA parks (17.2 acres)

(5) Total includes Additional Park and Recreational Facilities.

(6) Regional Parks: The Colony currently has no regional park standard established prior 2008.

Population Density

Population (39,828) / city acreage 10,048 = 3.96 persons per acre



6A.1.3 Existing Conditions in The Colony

The following figures relate the existing acreage of park by type of park, the target LOS for each park type, the target acres at build-out, and the acreage needed to meet the target LOS. The Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks sections include a discussion on the current spatial distribution of parks within the City.

Neighborhood and HOA Parks

The Colony currently has only half of the acreage for Neighborhood Parks needed for the projected build-out population (this includes considering HOA parks in this analysis):

Figure 6.3
Existing Conditions – Neighborhood Parks

Existing Acreage	85 acres
Current LOS	2.13 acres / 1,000 population
Target LOS	2 acres / 1,000 population
Target Acreage at Build-Out*	161 acres
Acreage to Acquire to meet Target	76 acres

Existing acreage is 53% of the target for build-out conditions
*Population of 80,500

Neighborhood Parks and HOA Parks in The Colony are relatively well distributed throughout the City. However, with a service radius of ½ mile each, only about half of the City is covered (see Map on page 5-19b).

When the service radius of neighborhood parks is applied to community parks that serve as de facto neighborhood parks, the service coverage increases significantly, although large areas are still left under served (see Map on page 5-19c)

Community Parks

The Colony currently has only 40% of the acreage for Community Parks needed for the projected build-out population:

Figure 6.4
Existing Conditions – Community Parks

Existing Acreage	198 acres
Current LOS	5 acres / 1,000 population
Target LOS	6 acres / 1,000 population
Target Acreage at Build-Out*	483 acres
Acreage to Acquire to meet Target	285 acres

Existing acreage is 41% of the target for build-out conditions
*Population of 80,500

Community Parks are fairly well distributed throughout the currently developed portions of The Colony. However, there are large areas in the northern (Wynnewood Peninsula) and southern (Austin Ranch Area) that are not well-served by Community Parks. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 5, improvements must be made to the Five Star West Community Complex and the Municipal Community Park in order for them to be fully considered Community Parks.

Special Purpose Parks

The Colony currently has a relatively high quantity of Special Purpose Park acreage per 1,000 persons compared to other cities in the region. Much of this can be attributed to the City’s past tendency to provide certain athletic facilities as stand-alone parks, rather than as part of a Community Park, which is the more common practice in this region.

*Figure 6.5
Existing Conditions – Special Purpose Parks*

Existing Acreage	816 acres
Current LOS	20 acres / 1,000 population
Target LOS	No target
Resulting Acreage at Build-Out*	10 acres / 1,000 population**

**Population of 80,500
**If no further acreage is acquired*

Natural Areas / Open Space

The Colony currently has a relatively high quantity of Natural Areas and Open Space acreage per 1,000 persons compared to other cities in the region. This can partially be attributed to the specific resource opportunity within the City – Lewisville Lake has an extensive shoreline within The Colony and the various creek corridors in the City contain undevelopable floodplain. This figure also includes the acreage of the United States Army Corps of Engineers’ Wildlife Management Areas along the shore of Lewisville Lake, which the City has (as of 2008) agreed to manage.

Figure 6.6
Existing Conditions – Natural Areas / Open Space
(including USACE Wildlife Management Areas)

Existing Acreage	1,348 acres
Current LOS	33 acres / 1,000 population*
Target LOS	No target
Resulting Acreage at Build-Out**	17 acres / 1,000 population***

**Current LOS shown is the combination of the 3.5 acres per 1,000 population shown on Table 6.1 for Natural Areas / Open Space and the 29.8 acres per 1,000 shown for Regional Open Space (USACE WMA)*

***Population of 80,500*

****If no further acreage is acquired*

Regional Parks

The Colony currently has a relatively high quantity of Regional Park acreage per 1,000 persons compared to other cities in the region. The primary reason for the wealth of regional park acreage in the City is due to Hidden Cove Park – a former Texas Parks & Wildlife State Park that is now managed by the City and operated by a private corporation.

Figure 6.7
Existing Conditions – Regional Parks

Existing Acreage	705 acres
Current LOS	18 acres / 1,000 population*
Target LOS	No target
Resulting Acreage at Build-Out*	9 acres / 1,000 population**

**Population of 80,500*

***If no further acreage is acquired*

Summary of Acreage Needs

Considering Table 6.1, Figure 6.3, and Figure 6.4, The Colony needs to acquire or repurpose 361 additional acres of land. Neighborhood Parks require 76 additional acres and Community Parks require 285 acres.

Currently, additional land acquisition is not recommended for the use of Special Purpose Parks or Regional Parks. However, land of unique environmental value should always be acquired if it becomes available for the provision of Open Space for the community. It should be noted that land currently dedicated to Special Purpose and Regional Parks could be repurposed for the needs of Neighborhood and Community Parks (only if such repurposing is done while meeting the definition as to what constitutes such parks).

6A.2 Facility Standards

Facility standards and target Levels of Service (LOS) define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular type of recreation need. They are expressed as the number of facilities per population size. The target LOS shown are based on comparisons with the national standard and other similar cities in Texas, as well as the actual number of facilities in The Colony and the amount of use each facility receives.

For the purposes of the Community Development Master Plan, only facilities operated by the City were considered in the development of these target LOS, though recreation facilities are provided by the Lewisville ISD². Special Purpose indoor facilities such as the Community Center, the Recreation Center, and the Aquatic Park are included and considered as a part of this Community Development Master Plan.

Current Levels of Service

The Current Levels of Service are expressed as the number of current recreation facilities per population size.

Target Levels of Service

The recommended Levels of Service for recreation facilities are specifically based on demonstrated needs, the actual number of facilities in the City, and the amount of use each facility receives. They are expressed as the number of facilities per population size. The Levels of Service are determined by the current needs, the community's recreation goals, and recognized standards. As with the acreage standards discussed in Section 6A.1, the facility target LOS figures are adjusted based on The Colony's unique recreation goals.

The target LOS for each type of facility is determined as a guide to provide the most basic recreation facilities to the community. The target timeframe for each facility is five years, or 2009 to 2014. The target LOS is the projected number of facilities based upon the target standard established for the City of The Colony.

Developing Target Levels of Service for Centers

As opposed to the development of target LOS for other recreation amenities (which is done through the comparison of national standards, the City's existing facilities, and the knowledge of current trends), the development of target LOS for recreation and senior centers occurs through the examination of benchmark cities.

Recreation Centers

The benchmarks for Recreation Centers were established by developing ratios of square footage for centers relative to the populations of benchmark cities (including Plano, Allen, Frisco, Keller, Coppell, and Farmers Branch³). Of the comparison facilities, all

² These facilities are not included because they are not considered to be openly accessible to the general public.

³ These cities were used for comparison because of available data on recreation center square footage and are not all considered to be cities comparable to The Colony.

included some indoor aquatics except one. Comparison numbers included both built and planned facilities for actual and projected populations. Results ranged from a low of 1,000 SF per 1,000 population for larger cities to a high of 1,400 SF per 1,000 population for smaller cities. An average of 1,200 SF per 1,000 population was used for the purposes of projecting The Colony's square footage needs for Recreation Centers.

Senior Centers

Senior facilities are not currently included in any standards that are accepted in the industry. Senior Centers typically transition from the reuse of vacated facilities until they have matured to the point of requiring centers designed specifically for the needs of senior citizens. The surrounding communities of Plano, Allen, and McKinney⁴ all have relatively new centers developed in the last ten years. The study relative to the population finds that the square footage size of the example cities *combined* equals 160 SF per 1,000 population. The typical size for a Senior Center is considered to be approximately 20,000 square feet (depending on programming components).

Other Centers and Facilities

Civic/Art Centers and Environmental Learning Centers also fall into the category of having no standards that are used in the industry. Because they are not very prevalent in the region, it is difficult to develop benchmarks for these types of centers.

Assessing Recreation Needs

The need for recreation facilities is based on comparisons with national standards and benchmark cities as well as the actual number of recreation facilities in The Colony and the amount of use each facility receives. Table 6.2 on the next page summarizes The Colony's 2008 Current Levels of Service and target standards for each type of facility.

Table 6.2: Recreational Facility Level of Service (LOS) on the next page describes a recommended target standard and level of service for recreation facilities expressed as a ratio of the number of facilities per 1,000 population.

⁴ These cities were used for comparison because of available data on senior center square footage and are not all considered to be cities comparable to The Colony.



Table 6.2

Recreation Facility Level of Service (LOS)

The Colony, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan



Facility Type	Existing City & School	NRPA Target Strd (1)	2008 LOS for 39,828	2008 Target LOS	Five Year Required addition at (~ 46,000 pop.)
Competitive Facilities					
Baseball	11 fields	1 / 5,000 pop.	1 / 3621 pop.	1/ 5000 pop.	9.20 ~ 9 Fields (need for 0 fields)
Youth Softball	2 fields	1 / 5,000 pop.	1 / 19914 pop.	1/ 6000 pop.	7.67 ~ 7 Fields* (need for 5 fields)
Adult Softball	2 fields	1 / 5,000 pop.	1 / 19914 pop.	1/ 6000 pop.	7.67 ~ 7 Fields (need for 5 fields)
Soccer	13 fields	1 / 10,000 pop.	1 / 3064 pop.	1/ 4000 pop.	11.50 ~ 11 Fields (surplus of 2 fields)
Football	2 fields **	1 / 20,000 pop.	1 / 19914 pop.	1/ 10000 pop.	4.60 ~ 4 Field (need for 2 fields)
Practice Facilities					
Baseball/Softball	2 backstop	n/a	1 / 19914 pop.	1/ 3000 pop.	15.33 ~ 15 Backstops (need for 13 backstops)
Multi-purpose Practice Fields	0 fields	n/a	0	1/ 5000 pop.	9.20 ~ 9 Fields (need for 9 fields)
Other Athletic Facilities					
Basketball Goals (Outdoor)	9 goals	1 / 2,500 pop.	1 / 4425 pop.	1/ 3000 pop.	15.33 ~ 15 Goals (need for 6 goals)
Tennis Courts	2 courts	1 / 2,000 pop.	1 / 19914 pop.	1/ 8000 pop.	5.75 ~ 5 Courts (need for 3 courts)
Sand Volleyball (Outdoor)	4 courts	1 / 5,000 pop.	1 / 9957 pop.	1/ 10000 pop.	4.60 ~ 4 Courts (need for 0 courts)
Racquet Ball	1 courts ***	1 / 20,000 pop.	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 20000 pop.	2.30 ~ 2 Courts (need for 1 courts)
Gymnasium (Indoor basketball, volleyball etc.)	1 Gym	1 / 20,000 pop.	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 15000 pop.	3.07 ~ 3 Gyms (need for 2 gyms)
Non-Athletic Facilities					
Paved Hike, Bike Trails	8.2 miles	n/a	1 m / 4857 pop.	1 m / 1500 pop.****	30.67 ~ 30 Miles (need for 22 miles)
Soft Surface Trails	2 miles	n/a	1 m / 19914 pop.	1 m / 3000 pop.	15.33 ~ 15 Miles (need for 13 miles)
Playgrounds	18 play units	1 / 1,000 pop.	1 / 2213 pop.	1/ 2000 pop.	23.00 ~ 23 Units (need for 5 units)
Fitness / Lap Pool	1 pools	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 20000 pop.	2.30 ~ 2 Pool (need for 1 pool)
Leisure Pool	1 pools	1 / 20,000 pop.	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 20000 pop.	2.30 ~ 2 Pool (need for 1 pool)
Family Water Park	1 centers	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 50000 pop.	0.92 ~ 1 Center (need for 0 centers)
Water Spray Park	1 park	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 30000 pop.	1.53 ~ 1 Parks (need for 0 parks)
Skate Park	1 skate parks	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 50000 pop.	0.92 ~ 1 Park (need for 0 parks)
BMX Park	0 BMX parks	n/a	0	1/ 50000 pop.	0.92 ~ 1 Park (need for 1 parks)
Horse Shoe Pits	4 pits	n/a	1 / 9957 pop.	1/ 10000 pop.	4.60 ~ 4 Pits (need for 0 pits)
Golf Courses	27 holes	n/a	1 / 1475 pop.	1/ 1400 pop.	32.86 ~ 33 Holes (need for 6 holes)
Disc Golf Course	9 holes	n/a	1 / 4425 pop.	1/ 2200 pop.	20.91 ~ 21 Holes (need for 12 holes)
Dog Parks	0 dog parks	n/a	0	1/ 40000 pop.	1.15 ~ 1 Park (need for 1 park)
Support Facilities					
Recreation Center	15,225 ft ²	n/a	382 ft ² / 1,000 pop.	1,200 ft ² / 1,000 pop.	96,600 Square Feet***** (need for 81,375 square feet)
Senior Center	6,725 ft ²	n/a	126 ft ² / 1,000 pop.	160 ft ² / 1,000 pop.	12,880 Square Feet***** (need for 6,155 square feet)
Civic/Arts Facility (Theater, Art Galleries, Meeting rooms, etc.)	1 center	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 40000 pop.	1.2 ~ 1 Units (need for 0 units)
Environmental Learning Center	0 center	n/a	0	1/ 30000 pop.	1.5 ~ 1 Units (need for 1 units)
Amphitheaters	1 units	n/a	1 / 39828 pop.	1/ 20000 pop.	2.3 ~ 2 Units (need for 1 units)
Pavilions/ Gazebo	12 units	1 / 2,000 pop.	1 / 3319 pop.	1/ 2000 pop.	23.00 ~ 23 Units (need for 11 units)

* A decimal need of 0.8 and higher is rounded to the next whole number.

(1) 1995 NRPA standards

** Currently 4, but two football fields will be lost due to the development of the Public Services Facility

*** Currently 2, but one racquet ball court will be lost due to the need for a classroom

**** With the high demand for trails in most cities, many adopt a standard of 1 mile per 1,000 population

*****At Build-Out

Note: Population figures were provided by The City of The Colony Planning Dept.

6A.2.1 Key Facility Needs

Table 6.2 on the previous pages shows deficits in the quantity of several recreation facilities in the next five years. These are discussed below in the same categories that these facilities are assessed in Table 6.2

Competitive Facilities

While The Colony is known for its competitive athletic facilities, there are deficiencies in two areas: Softball (both youth and adult) and Football. Additional fields for each are needed.

*Figure 6.8
Key Facility Needs – Competitive Facilities*

Competitive Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Youth Softball Fields*	5 Fields
• Adult Softball Fields*	5 Fields
• Football Fields	2 Fields

*Can potentially be shared use fields

Practice Facilities

There is a need in The Colony for additional practice facilities to meet the needs of existing and future league and non-league baseball, softball, soccer, and football use.

*Figure 6.9
Key Facility Needs – Practice Facilities*

Practice Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Baseball/Softball Backstops	12 Backstops
• Multi-Purpose Practice Fields*	9 Fields

*Fields designed for football and soccer practice

Other Athletic Facilities

Non-league use athletic facilities are generally lacking in The Colony. Outdoor Sand Volleyball is the only facility that will adequately serve the population in the next five years.

Figure 6.10
Key Facility Needs – Other Athletic Facilities

Other Athletic Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Outdoor Basketball Goals	6 Goals*
• Tennis Courts	3 Courts
• Gymnasiums**	2 Gyms
• Racquetball Courts	1 Court
*Three full courts, 6 half courts, or any combination thereof	
**Gyms should include at a minimum the striping, goals, and netting necessary for indoor basketball and volleyball	

Non-Athletic Facilities

The term “non-athletic facilities” constitutes many types of facilities that serve both passive and active recreation users. To better illustrate the facility deficiencies, they have been categorized further:

Trail Facilities

The Colony has a deficit of both paved and soft-surface trails. These are considered as separate facilities because each provides different user experiences. Paved trails exist in natural areas, developed parks, and along streets while soft surface trails are typically found in environmentally sensitive natural areas or in areas where these types of trails serve a special purpose (such as for mountain biking).

Figure 6.11
Key Facility Needs – Trail Facilities

Passive Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Paved Hike & Bike Trails	22 miles
• Soft Surface Trails	13 miles

Support Facilities

Support facilities include amenities that help Neighborhood and Community Parks meet the needs of the community. Playgrounds and Pavilions / Gazebos should be placed in every Neighborhood and Community Park. Larger parks can include multiple units while smaller parks (such as Neighborhood Parks) typically contain only one of each facility type. Due to its size and need for parking, amphitheaters are best suited for Community Parks.

Figure 6.12
Key Facility Needs – Support Facilities

Support Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Playgrounds	5 units
• Pavilions/Gazebos	11 units
• Amphitheater	1 amphitheater

Special Purpose Facilities

These facilities are those that are designed to meet specific recreational needs and serve specific user groups. They are considered to be special purpose needs because they provide a place for users to engage in types of activities that require special facilities and that would otherwise be incompatible with the design of the City’s parks system. Such facilities are often provided in (or as) Special Purpose Parks.

Figure 6.13
Key Facility Needs – Special Purpose Facilities

Special Purpose Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• BMX Park	1 park
• Golf Course Holes	6 holes*
• Disc Golf Course Holes	12 holes*
• Dog Parks	1 park

*Holes are used instead of courses because golf and disc golf courses can vary in number of holes (always multiples of nine). This information shows that the City will not require additional golf course holes in the next five years (because course additions occur in multiples of nine holes). The City will require a nine-hole disc golf addition over the next five years.

Aquatic Facilities

There is a deficit of aquatic facilities and pools in The Colony. Specifically, the City is lacking in indoor fitness / lap pools and in leisure pools. Leisure pools can be either indoor or outdoor (or a combination of the two), though national trends suggest that indoor leisure pools are preferable because they allow year-round use, including swimming, scuba instruction, water polo, and kayaking.

Figure 6.14
Key Facility Needs –Aquatic Facilities

Aquatic Facility Needs (2014 or 5 Year Target)	
• Fitness / Lap Pools*	1 pool
• Leisure Pools**	1 pool

*Indoor
**Either indoor or outdoor

Recreation & Senior Center Facilities

Based upon the projected 80,500 build-out population⁵ for The Colony, there is a need for **96,600 SF** of Recreation Center or Centers. While the current Recreation Center provides 15,225 SF of space, this space does not function well as a City-wide recreation center (it functions more as a neighborhood center); therefore, there remains a deficit of **96,600 SF** of Recreation Center space. This additional needed square footage could be addressed as an addition to the existing Center to provide one city-wide or regional facility or it could be addressed through the creation of another, similarly sized facility. Which ever option is chosen, the new Recreation Center space should include a minimum of two gymnasiums and one racquetball court (as shown in Figure 6.10).

One factor that impacts whether this is one regional facility or two or more smaller facilities is the geographic layout of the City boundaries. Based upon the boundary limits of the City, the Planning Team envisions a potential regional facility combining Recreation and Indoor Aquatics of approximately 75,000 SF to serve the central and southern areas of city with a more modest recreation facility located in the northwest region of the City sized at 30-35,000 SF.

Once again considering the projected 80,500 build-out population for The Colony, there is a need for **12,880 SF** of Senior Center. Comparing this with the square footage of the existing Senior Center, there is a deficit of **6,155 SF** of Senior Center space. This additional needed square footage could be addressed as an addition to the existing Center or as an expansion into the current Parks and Recreation Department Offices (which could provide approximately 2,275 additional SF). This would require the Parks and Recreation Staff to move to another location.

***Figure 6.15
Key Facility Needs – Recreation & Senior Center Facilities***

Recreation & Senior Center Facility Needs (at Build-Out)		
	<i>Need</i>	<i>Deficit</i>
• Recreation Center*	96,000 square feet	96,600 square feet
• Senior Center*	12,880 square feet	6,155 square feet

*Total area needed in one or more centers

⁵ Unlike using the 2014 population estimate, which is used to estimate the needs for other recreation facilities, build-out population is used for defining square footage needs for Recreation and Senior Centers. Build-out population is used in this instance because it is more efficient to work toward the final square footage goal rather than provide piecemeal expansions.

Chapter 6B

Demand Based Needs Assessment

Demand-based needs can be summarized as “what people want” and represents what is most desired by the unique population living within The Colony. Standard-based needs, on the other hand, depict what is needed based on a population number while resource-based needs depict what opportunities are available. Demand-based needs are expressed on a community-wide basis, by the needs of organizations that are active within The Colony, and national and regional recreation trends.

6B.1 Community-Wide Needs

The primary source for identifying community-wide demand-based needs is public involvement – that is, the public input events and questionnaire that occurred as part of the CDMP process and the 2006 DirectionFinder® Survey. A detailed review of these can be found in Chapter 4. The demand-based needs as expressed through community-wide public input can be categorized as follows:

Image & Identity

There is a need to improve the physical image of the City through beautification, art, gateway features, and signage as well as the need to improve the identity internally and externally of The Colony and its citizens. This latter facet includes improving community involvement, community spirit, and the City’s reputation.

Trails

Citizens of The Colony expressed a need to develop more trails within the City to serve as recreational amenities and as means to support alternative transportation. These trails should connect schools, residences, and parks as well as the Lake and natural areas. They should also connect residences to commercial areas so that users can walk or bike for shopping and dining trips.

Recreation / Community Center

The provision of a facility that provides expanded recreational opportunities, flexible use space, and places for people to gather is in great demand by the community. This was often expressed as one of the top needs throughout the public input process.

Lewisville Lake & Natural Areas

The protection of and access to the natural areas surrounding Lewisville Lake and the shoreline are a high priority of the citizens of The Colony. People expressed their desire to capitalize on the Lake’s recreational opportunities, its natural habitat and open space, and its ability to improve The Colony’s image and identity.

Youth, Families & Seniors

Providing opportunities for recreation and enrichment of the diverse population of The Colony is expressed as a significant need by the community. Expanded programming

offered through the City and the provision of facilities, both indoor and outdoor – that meet the needs of the full cross-section of the population of the City are paramount to the citizens. This includes expanding programming beyond league athletics, which is typically provided for children up to twelve years old, to meet the needs of user groups currently not fully served by the City.

6B.2 Organization Needs

At the onset of the Community Development Master Plan process, requests for information (RFI) were sent to all of the known athletic and cultural groups active in The Colony. These RFIs were designed to gain information about the size, organization, activities, and needs of the various groups within the City. Several groups expressed needs for the future growth and success of their organizations. Many of the same or similar needs were expressed by many groups; these needs are categorized below:

More Indoor Space

By far, the most mentioned need throughout all of the RFIs was some form of “we need more indoor space.” Often the requests were for both small and large meeting and multi-purpose rooms (there were requests for space of various sizes, ranging from small meeting rooms to space for 100 to 350 people). There were also requests for additional special-use space such as larger library facilities and enhanced space for theater productions.



Expand and Improve Athletic Facilities

Expanded and improved athletic facilities were mentioned as a need. Specifically, the need for an additional softball field at the Five Star Community Complex, pitching and batting cages, and improved upkeep and maintenance for the soccer fields at both Five Star and the Turner Street Soccer Complex were mentioned.

Provide Support

Several organizations referenced a need for support from the City from an operational point of view. These requests included help with background checks and First Aid and CPR training, increased funding, and additional paid staff.

Other Needs

Finally, there were needs that were expressed by single organizations. These include the need for an expanded, 36 hole golf course, a dog park, an intercity trail system, and additional aquatic facilities including outdoor activity stations, an expanded indoor pool, indoor recreational swimming amenities, and improved signage and landscaping at the Aquatic Center.

6B.3 Recreation Trends

Because we are such a mobile society today, the recreational offerings of a city play a large role in determining where people choose to reside. It is therefore important to understand regional and national trends in recreation and cultural amenities in order to ensure that The Colony can attract and retain residents into the future. Below are two groups of the most prevailing trends in recreation and culture today. These are expected to carry forward into the near future and to be relevant for the lifespan of this Community Development Master Plan.

Recreation Centers, Indoor Aquatics, & Community / Senior Centers

- A movement away from multiple smaller Recreation Centers to larger regional centers that are within 15-20 minutes travel time of its users is a current trend. This trend responds to increased diversity of programming that can be provided at these larger centers, while also being more convenient for families to recreate together, and increasing staff efficiency.
- There is a trend of combining dry side recreation with indoor aquatics for wellness and leisure activities. This again reduces initial cost and reduces continuing costs of staff and operations while providing more activity choices for visitors.
- Locating separate senior activity areas within a large Community Center is another trend. The senior component would generally have its own exterior entrance distinct from that of the recreation center. This would provide autonomy of the senior component while providing convenient access to the various opportunities in a recreation center including indoor walking track, warm water exercising and properly sized exercise areas.
- Many cities today are seeking a higher fee structure to help offset operational costs. We have seen this range from a 50-60% recapture rate all the way to a 100% recapture rate in the North Texas Region.

- University students today have elaborate recreation aquatic facilities at their disposal. This is the first generation coming out of the university that has expectations for cities to provide comparable facilities. Quality of life is an important component of their job search and residence decision and has influenced what new centers will provide.

Theater, Civic and Entertainment Venues

- There is an added emphasis today on the place of arts in our society. There are typically many common-interest citizens groups active in the arts (dance, theater, vocals, etc.) that do not typically have a sizable enough membership or audience within the community to justify dedicated or stand-alone facilities and therefore often use shared facilities. While there is a need and a benefit to providing facilities for the arts, survey data and the results of the public input process do not show a high-priority demand for a dedicated arts center. However, while the CDMP does not demonstrate the current need for a stand-alone arts facility, the feasibility of such a facility should be studied as part of an Arts Master Plan.
- To address the needs of citizen arts groups, partnering with other entities such as high schools, community colleges, or even other cities has proven successful.
- Providing a large meeting room in community centers with stage, lights, and sound systems to accommodate modest seating (200-300) are being provided in many centers today to partially address these needs.

6B.4 Prioritized Needs

Through reviewing the results of the Public Input Process and the Organization Needs and comparing these with current recreation and culture trends, a ranking of the demand-based needs can be created. The prioritization of this list was both quantitative and qualitative and combines the input received through various manners and methods throughout the planning process. This list does not contain all of the needs that were expressed through the Public Input Process, RFI responses, and the Planning Team's analysis – nor are they the only needs that will be addressed through this CDMP. Rather, they are prioritized as being the five most imperative needs in The Colony today.

**Table 6.3
Prioritized Demand-Based Needs**

	Rank
Improve the City’s Image	1
Construct a New Community Center that Includes Recreation, Cultural, and Civic Elements	2
Develop More Hike & Bike Trails	3
Update & Improve Neighborhood Parks	4
Ensure a Diverse Array of Programming and Resources for Varied Interests	5

Each of these high-priority needs relates to at least two of the Values and their respective Goals as described in Chapter 4 (most of these needs relate to all five of the Values). These top needs, along with the Values and Goals in Chapter 4 will form the basis of the Recommendations and Implementation Plan in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, respectively.

Chapter 6C

Resource Based Needs Assessment

In addition to determining needs based on standards and the demand of the citizens, a city's resources provide opportunities that can be viewed in the same way that other types of "needs" are. The fact that an opportunity is presented to the City often warrants actions be taken to protect and utilize this resource for the benefit of the community. For example, if a large, undevelopable piece of wooded land is available within the City, this becomes an opportunity for the protection of an open space and/or development of a nature preserve.

In The Colony, there are several resources that should be protected and/or adapted for recreational use. Each of these resources provide opportunities for the City in different ways. Some provide opportunities for open space protection and image enhancement while others provide recreational opportunities. The use of each resource should be approached individually, but all of the resources should be considered together as each impacts other resources.

6C.1 Lewisville Lake

Lewisville Lake is perhaps the greatest resource available to The Colony; indeed, it is the source of the City's identity as "The City by the Lake" as evidenced by the design of the current City logo. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the Lake provides a multitude of ecological and recreational opportunities and its shoreline constitutes approximately half of The Colony's city limits. In total, twenty six (26) miles of the Lake's shoreline fall within The Colony providing a great opportunity for further recreational development and access. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which manages the Lake, identifies a floodplain elevation limit which extends further inland than the Lake's typical shoreline. This floodplain elevation delineates the maximum level which the Lake's water level will reach in a flood event; development is restricted from this area, which provides a considerable amount of open space between the shoreline and existing and future development. This area provides habitat protection opportunities and the possibility for trails along the lake (such as the under-construction Shoreline Trail).



There are many opportunities provided by the Lake and the shoreline. The Lake itself provides both recreational and non-recreational opportunities. Water sports, including boating, sailing, skiing, and wakeboarding are very popular in North Texas and at Lewisville Lake in particular. The Colony currently has multiple boat ramps and one marina under construction (to open Summer 2009). Another opportunity are views toward the lake; developing and maintaining such views will build the City's Image, increase real estate value, and provides opportunities for quality of life-enhancing development such as entertainment, commercial, and restaurant areas with views toward the Lake. The shoreline of Lewisville Lake similarly provides many opportunities for the community, including water-related activities like shoreline fishing and canoeing and trails, which are a natural use of the shoreline due to its linear nature.

In 2008, the USACE confirmed an agreement with the City of The Colony to assign the responsibility of the management of almost 1,200 acres of Wildlife Management Area (WMA) along the shore of the Lake to the City. This new responsibility adds to the workload of the City Parks and Recreation Department, but provides the potential for additional accessible open space along the shoreline for the community. Indeed, such a resource is very unique for any city to have access to the quality and quantity of open space provided in the WMA. The land included in the WMA provides opportunities for many low-impact outdoor activities including wildlife observation, fishing, environmental education, adventure based recreation, and potentially eco-tourism (such as establishing and maintaining waterfowl habitat along the shoreline for birdwatchers).



6C.2 Indian Creek

In the southern part of the City near Austin Ranch, Indian Creek flows east to west into the Trinity River. The result of this creek flowing for millennia is the dramatic

topography changes that can be experienced when driving or cycling along Windhaven Parkway and Plano Parkway. Along with the topography change, there exists a multitude of native vegetation and wildlife in this area which create distinctive ecologic zones and a place unlike any other in The Colony.

The natural features and zones that make up this area extend into the City of Plano as well as Arbor Hills Nature Preserve; many of the participants in the Public Input Process expressed an interest in developing a similar park in The Colony.

Besides providing access to these beautiful areas, it is important to preserve and protect the Indian Creek basin and floodway in order to avoid excessive erosion and the destruction of this creek as well as the Trinity River, which Indian Creek feeds into.

6C.3 Wynnewood Nature Area

Wynnewood Nature Area, a 100 acre park on Wynnewood Peninsula in the northern part of the City, is one of the largest pieces of park land and open space in The Colony. While the vegetation in this area is considerably young (this area was farm land prior to the construction of the Lewisville Lake Dam and Reservoir) the area is generally covered with native trees and shrubs of various species. Mesquite trees are prevalent and while the vegetation in Wynnewood Park is not typical of a dedicated natural area, the park provides a unique open space that could also be partially developed as ball fields. That is to say, while the area is vegetated, the clearing of this vegetation would not be as ecologically damaging as the clearing of old-growth forest along a creek corridor.

Therefore, the Wynnewood Nature Area provides many opportunities for recreational use as open space, as potential ball fields, and for other, related uses, such as hiking trails, pavilions, and playgrounds. It should be noted that while there is little development near this area now (other than the Tribute Golf Course), the Tribute residential development, which is currently under construction, will place homes fairly near to this area.

6C.4 Utility Easements

Two of the most visible features in The Colony are the two utility easements (one of them electricity and one natural gas) that pass through the city in a roughly north-south manner. These easements, though arguably not the most attractive part of the City, provide opportunities for trail connections, trailheads, and “destination” parks (unique places along a trail that serve as “destinations” for people to walk to) along them. The 2006 Trails Master Plan already includes both of these easements as trail corridors, but additional opportunities for vegetation, site furnishings, and destination points exist.

6C.5 Bridges Cemetery

Bridges Cemetery – an important cultural destination within The Colony – can also be considered a resource or an opportunity for the community. This cemetery (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3) is one of the oldest in Denton County and the only cemetery in The Colony. It therefore inherently contains cultural and historical value for the community and provides opportunities for the education and celebration of The Colony’s

culture and the history that led to the development of the City as it is today. Efforts to provide visual or physical access to Bridges Cemetery can help add to the quality of life in the community but should be done in a careful, sensitive manner so as to avoid damage or degradation of the fragile nature of the cemetery.

6C.6 Utilizing Resources

Resources that provide opportunities for recreation and community development can be both natural (as is the case for Indian Creek and Wynnewood Nature Area) and man made (such as the utility easements). They can also blur the lines between the two; such is the case with the Lake, which is arguably man-made but also appears to be natural and provide habitat such as a natural lake would. As such, the use or development of each resource should be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the unique characteristics of each location and the opportunities that can be afforded without damaging environmentally sensitive features. However, it is important to approach the use and development of these various resources in a unified, coordinated manner so as to realize the best results from each.

6C.7 Conservation Development

One of the most effective ways to ensure the protection and effective management of natural resources like open space and creek corridors is through the method of Conservation Planning and Development. It is in essence a tool that ensures the protection of the character of the City, the protection of important ecological habitats, the protection of scenic views and landscapes and the economic sustainability by protecting the assets that add value and quality of life to the community. Conservation Planning and Development is a concept whereby developers are encouraged to implement “open space planning” and “conservation development” in which large tracts of land are protected by clustering development on smaller parcels of land, with the resultant open space a communal asset to be enjoyed by everyone. Access to the larger open space as an amenity consistently results in higher property values. Such an approach derives a result in which the whole is more than the sum of the parts. For further information on Conservation Development, reference the works of Randall G. Arendt including the books “Growing Greener” and “Conservation Design for Subdivisions.”

Chapter 6D

Beautification Needs Assessment

The Colony identifies itself as “The City by the Lake.” This phrase is the central branding idea or image for the City as an organization and for the community as a whole. While the idea exists, it needs to be expanded to meet the expectations of the community and to help improve the image of The Colony, which in turn can serve to attract new businesses and residents to the community.

The importance of expanding this idea in the community is apparent. Through the Public Input Process, the 2006 Survey, and previous surveys and public comments beautification and improving the Image of the City is identified as the greatest need in The Colony. As discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2, the City’s image is comprised of two components: 1) community cohesion or spirit and 2) the City’s physical character or appearance. Much of what comprises The Colony’s physical character or appearance is derived from the proximity of Lewisville Lake and other geographic features such as Indian Creek. However, some of the most visible and effectible factors in the quality of the City’s physical appearance are constructed places in the public realm such as streetscapes, parks and public buildings.

Improving the built environment through beautification is one of the most effective means by which to improve The Colony’s image and quality of life. Each piece of the built environment requires a unique approach to beautification – unique in that each piece requires a different design approach as well as a different regulatory approach – but, as with addressing the City’s resource-based needs, implementing beautification projects in a coordinated manner will yield the best results. As such, the implementation of components of each of the various items within this assessment will help to extend and knit together all parts of the community (albeit at various levels and stages).

6D.1 Streetscapes

Streetscapes – the streets, adjacent right-of-way, medians, and façades of structures that face the streets – are the most visible and most often seen part of any city, including The Colony. Adjusting and enhancing the appearance and character of these spaces is paramount to improving and shaping the City Image. Rather than merely improving the landscaping and site furnishings along roads (though this is unquestionably important), improving streetscapes requires looking holistically at the interface between the public realm (the streets) and the private realm (development).

6D.1.1 *Placemaking*

Streetscape planning and design is all about placemaking. The quality of the street experience and pedestrian focus tells much about the City’s values and creates positive expectations for development and lifestyles. The elements that enhance the aesthetics of a street environment are varied. Streets are in essence “corridors” that are enhanced by the creation of a recognizable rhythm, human scale elements at nodes of interchange,

focal points, balance between hardscape (paving) and softscape (plants) and the creative use of color and plant material to provide sensory delight and beauty. Well-chosen and well-placed art and sculptural pieces assist in creating places with a sense of wonder and excitement.

The manner in which people move along streets and the views that they experience leaves an impression that is either compelling and lasting or uninteresting and fleeting. The normal experience of our cities is primarily from within an automobile. As such, most of our cities are planned accordingly, and the arteries are planned for vehicle movement. What is lost is not only the human experience of moving from one place to another and the associated healthful benefits, but a lack of a human sense of place.

People need public spaces that enhance quality of life along with safe, public connections to physically access them. Other modes of transportation that provide more opportunity for social interaction include walking, bicycling, trolley, and even rail travel. The purpose is to identify and emphasize the unique elements along the way and find creative solutions to people's inherent need to "belong" and feel at home.

Well-executed streetscaping encourages shared experiences, by people in cars, by pedestrians, by cyclists, by people walking their dogs, and the like. The space utilized by cars on the road and pedestrians on sidewalks is defined by elements like trees, curbs, trellises, paving patterns, paving texture and building facades. The psychology of such spaces is of the utmost importance in providing a sense of safety and well being to the user. View corridors and sight lines, informal surveillance by shop keepers and pedestrians, way finding and informational signage are but a few of the many aspects of a streetscape that are considered when planning is done for the treatments and beautification of streets. Functions like bus stops, railway stations, and street side cafes are typical and natural gathering spaces that pose the opportunity for creative place making in a city environment.

People attract people – and well-conceived streetscape enhancements can lead to the revitalization of a city environment.

People attract people – and well-conceived streetscape enhancements can lead to the revitalization of a city environment. In fact, businesses flourish where people feel welcome and relaxed. As an example, bus stops combined with cafes, coffee houses, and newsstands meet the needs of commuters and provide a sense of community. Therefore, The Colony should consider placemaking as the basis of streetscaping and beautification because of the direct and indirect benefits that it has on community development, economic development, and quality of life.

6D.1.2 Town Center

The Community Development Master Plan supports the implementation of a Town Center at South Colony Boulevard and Paige Road as is recommended in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan describes the Town Center as a place which is "responsive to the changing climate of the city's retail environment and is

central and connected to several surrounding neighborhoods” with a mix of uses – including retail, entertainment, office, civic, and residential – housed in buildings that are “concentrated around core pedestrian areas” and are “oriented to the principal street frontages.” Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Town Center is vital and, as is discussed in the Comprehensive Plan, the City’s trails network should connect the Center with other neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The Comprehensive Plan mentions including civic uses in the Town Center but does not specify particular institutions and facilities to be located there. Civic and Governmental uses are central to an authentic downtown or town center as they introduce a sense of legitimacy and permanence to the Place while providing non-commercial reasons for people to visit the area. The Planning Team emphasizes the importance of including civic facilities in the Town Center because the inclusion of such use adds solidarity to the Place by making it the symbolic civic hub for the City. The Team further recommends locating civic facilities including a branch Post Office, offices for City Staff, and the City Hall in the new Town Center.

The benefits for beautification and community development of developing a Town Center are many. The immediate benefit is the replacement of tired, outdated shopping centers with a new commercial district surrounded by an already established consumer market. The civic purpose of the Town Center is great, ensuring a steady flow of visitors and a captive audience to enjoy amenities provided at the Town Center. Other benefits are that a well-designed Town Center will improve and interact with improved streetscapes and will help build a City-wide Image of high-quality design. Being civic in nature, the City has the opportunity to direct and influence the aesthetics of the Town Center to celebrate all that constitutes The Colony – its people, its location, its character, and its history. Finally, a Town Center will provide a commercial and civic “hub” or a focal point for the City – something that is currently lacking in The Colony.

6D.1.3 Main Street Corridor

The Texas Department of Transportation is currently in the planning stages of expanding Main Street (FM 423) to a six lane divided road within the next five years. This will increase traffic capacity and volume and will include the construction of sound walls and other mitigation techniques to reduce the negative impacts of the road on the surrounding community. As Main Street is one of the main commercial corridors in The Colony, it is imperative that the City meets regularly with TxDOT to coordinate the design to be both amenable to the traffic flow requirements set out by TxDOT and to incorporate aesthetic and functional design considerations that will benefit the community and surrounding commercial properties. A tool that helps to keep the human scale of a street in place is to consider a road like Main Street less as a thoroughfare and more like a welcoming destination in itself with a wealth of vibrant activity. The Comprehensive Plan outlines actions for maximizing the benefit to The Colony of the Main Street reconstruction project – the CDMP supports these actions as well as the depiction of commercial corridor nodes to be developed in coordination with the road reconstruction.

In the reconstruction of Main Street, it is important to ensure that placemaking is a foundation and component of its redevelopment and that the City has input on the design of the landscaping, sound walls, and other amenities (such as a sidewalks or trails) to ensure an aesthetically pleasing design is implemented. Furthermore, the coordinated redevelopment of commercial zones along Main Street at North Colony Boulevard and South Colony Boulevard should be coincident with the development of urban design standards. Such redevelopment of the corridor will further beautify the City and enhance the City's Image.

6D.1.4 Trees & Landscaping

One of the most effective manners in improving the beauty of a city is through the landscaping of streetscapes, public buildings, parks, and any other area under the City's influence. This is especially important along streets and in parks, which often receive less landscaping during their initial development.

Currently, many of the rights-of-way and medians in The Colony are devoid of trees and are simply landscaped with turf grasses. However, streets such as Morningstar Drive between Memorial Drive and Baker Drive enjoy quality landscaping that turn what would otherwise be merely a street into an enjoyable place to walk and a gateway to and from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The City should consider adopting a large and medium shade tree palette; a mixture of two or three tree species within each category (rather than utilizing a single species) along any given street is paramount. The reason for this is twofold: first, it offers protection against disease that has potential to destroy all of a particular species, so a mixture will mean that only one of every three trees, for example, must be replaced, rather than all of them. Secondly, it maximizes the year round effect of different blooming periods, so that careful species selection will yield a variety of appearance to the street trees, depending on the season. This, too, is something which refreshes, especially for drivers routinely traveling the same route. Such elements add a great deal of visual appeal, and enrich the experience for people using all modes of transportation.

6D.1.5 Gateways & Focal Points

Creating a sense of arrival when entering The Colony appeals to visitors and residents alike on the emotional and aesthetic levels. Providing a sense of arrival, through gateways and focal points throughout the City, will aid in 1) creating a positive identity for The Colony, 2) beautifying the City, and 3) providing landmarks that help people navigate the City. Developing gateways that are unique to The Colony can serve to celebrate the City's cultural and historic traditions.

Entry Monuments

Gateways are most effectively developed through the use of entry monuments – large stylized features often constructed out of stone, brick, and/or concrete. Entry monuments can be used throughout the City at different scales. Large monuments are desirable near major city entrances (such as along SH 121 and Main Street) while smaller monuments work effectively as neighborhood entrance gateways. Gateways can each be unique but

should follow similar design themes, so that the gateways form a cohesive, unified theme throughout the City.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage and City gateway locations are fundamental to a successful, pedestrian friendly and unique city. These elements not only provide a useful function, but also portray City character in an aesthetic manner, which reflects the City Image. Wayfinding signage can often double as an entry monument (and vice versa) or can take the shape of informational signs designed on the pedestrian-scale and automobile-scale. These signs guide people to various parts of the City, including parks, public buildings, and different neighborhoods.

Celebratory Intersections

Intersections, where traffic has slowed or stopped, are ideal places to add elements of identity and interest, such as architectural monuments and decorative paving, crosswalks and sidewalks. Recommendations for intersection urban design concepts include the following locations:

- Main Street at North Colony Boulevard
- Main Street at South Colony Boulevard
- Main Street at Memorial Drive
- Main Street at SH 121
- North Colony Boulevard at Paige Road
- South Colony Boulevard at Memorial Drive
- Memorial Drive at Morningstar Drive
- Plano Parkway/Paige Road at SH 121
- Plano Parkway at Windhaven Parkway

These locations were chosen based on streets that serve as major thoroughfares through the City, streets that connect The Colony with other cities, and the intersection's proximity and relationship with the City Limits.

6D.1.6 Streetscape Needs

While each component discussed in the sections above has its own unique needs, it is important to develop solutions for these needs in a comprehensive manner. Completing a Streetscape Master Plan that includes design standards, landscaping standards, and recommendations for adjacent development will aid in the implementation of streetscape improvements.

6D.2 Utilizing Art, Culture & History

Utilizing key components of art and The Colony's culture and history in beautifying the City will lend beauty, originality, and meaning to the City's beautification efforts.

6D.2.1 The Role of Public Art

Public art serves many purposes in the public realm. This ranges from simple beautification, to City branding, to aiding in wayfinding. Good examples of the way that

public art can impact City branding include the “Blueprints at Addison Circle” sculpture. This large, blue sculpture located in the center of the roundabout at Addison Circle has become an icon for the City of Addison and appears stylistically in many publications and on the City’s website. Similarly, such pieces of public art can aid in wayfinding and result in directions being given such as “turn left at the big sculpture” or “past the mural.”



Blueprints at Addison Circle – Designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Mel Chin. Photo by: Jay R. Simonson

The horse sculptures located at the intersection of Plano Road and Windhaven Parkway are a good example of public art in The Colony. These sculptures (privately built and maintained by Austin Ranch) serve to beautify the streetscape and are a clear wayfinding aid. While these have not become a branding icon for The Colony, they certainly have for Austin Ranch and they have helped develop an image for the “south of SH 121” / Austin Ranch area of The Colony.

6D.2.2 Celebrating History & Culture

As discussed in Chapter 3, The Colony has a unique history and ensuing culture to be celebrated and expanded upon. History and culture should both be addressed and celebrated through beautification efforts. Specifically, implementing themes that embody The Colony’s history and culture in public art, monuments, gateways, and wayfinding signage can help to portray the character and atmosphere of the community. It is also important to beautify and provide visual access to key areas that have historic and

cultural significance in the community, such as Bridges Cemetery and Office Creek (which was named after and flows near the former site of the Peter’s Colony Office).

6D.3 Creeks, Ponds & the Lake

As with all of North Texas, creeks are where the greatest level of biodiversity and – arguably – natural beauty exist. Creeks, along with ponds, have two primary purposes (also defined as “ecological services”) – that of providing habitat and drinking water to wildlife and providing drainage ways for rain and floodwater. It is important, therefore, to keep in mind these primary purposes when addressing the beautification of creeks and ponds.

6D.3.1 Creek Preservation

Preserving creeks in their natural state helps to reduce stream bank erosion and habitat degradation. Many creeks corridors have been cleared of undergrowth vegetation because some feel this is more aesthetically pleasing – such devegetation destroys habitat, increases water flow rates, and encourages erosion. The natural vegetation plays a large role in slowing the flow of water and anchoring the soil. Although this vegetation often catches litter during a flood, this is simply the undergrowth performing as it should and reducing the amount of litter that would otherwise end up in nearby ponds, rivers, and lakes. Natural vegetation also provides habitat to wildlife, which itself adds to the character and beauty of a creek environment.

6D.3.2 Proper Drainage Way Design

With increased development, drainage ways in addition to existing creeks must be designed and constructed to address increased runoff during rain events. Constructed drainage ways are quite often aesthetically unattractive and barren, but through proper design, they can be visually pleasing while performing better than their unattractive counterparts. Proper drainage way design includes many features, but the two key issues are the minimization of concrete and the use of proper vegetation.

Concrete lined drainage ways affect beautification in several ways. First, concrete as a measure to prevent erosion is typically regarded as aesthetically unattractive. It also invites graffiti and other vandalism. Concrete lined drainage ways also increase the flow rate of flood water causing increased erosion downstream and creating very dangerous conditions during and after heavy flooding.

Appropriate vegetation in drainage ways will improve their physical appearance while also improving their performance in erosion protection and water filtration. Many drainage ways built today are vegetated simply with turf grass. Under high-flow rain events, this grass does little to slow water flow or filter out pollutants. The most effective manner to vegetate a drainage way is by allowing the growth of tall, inundation-tolerant grasses along the center of the channel and woody shrubs and trees higher along the banks of the drainage way (for aesthetics and to anchor the soil). Such plantings will slow water flow and will filter out pollutants (which will limit pollutants from reaching Lewisville Lake, a source of The Colony’s drinking water).



Bioremediation

Beyond minimizing concrete and using proper vegetation, the next step in addressing drainage in an ecological, aesthetically pleasing, and efficient manner is the use of bioremediation techniques. These are techniques of constructing drainage features that mimic natural features. They help to slow water runoff, reduce erosion, and filter pollutants and include grassed swales, bioretention swales, and filter strips. Information on the design and performance of these bioremediation techniques can be found in the Stormwater Best Management Practice Design Guide: Volume 2 – Vegetative Biofilters manual produced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

6D.3.3 Viewing Lewisville Lake

A beautification need for The Colony is to promote, celebrate, and access views toward Lewisville Lake. Establishing and developing such views through regulatory measures and development methods will increase the capability of the Lake in adding to The Colony’s unique character and a sense of beauty to the City. Means to achieve such views include the development of single-loaded roads that allow viewing the Lake while driving by – similar to “scenic roads.” Visual access to the Lake, when created in a sensitive manner will add greatly to the beauty of The Colony.

