

MINERAL WELLS

PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN

DECEMBER 2023

BURDITT
Land | Place



CITY OF MINERAL WELLS, TEXAS

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

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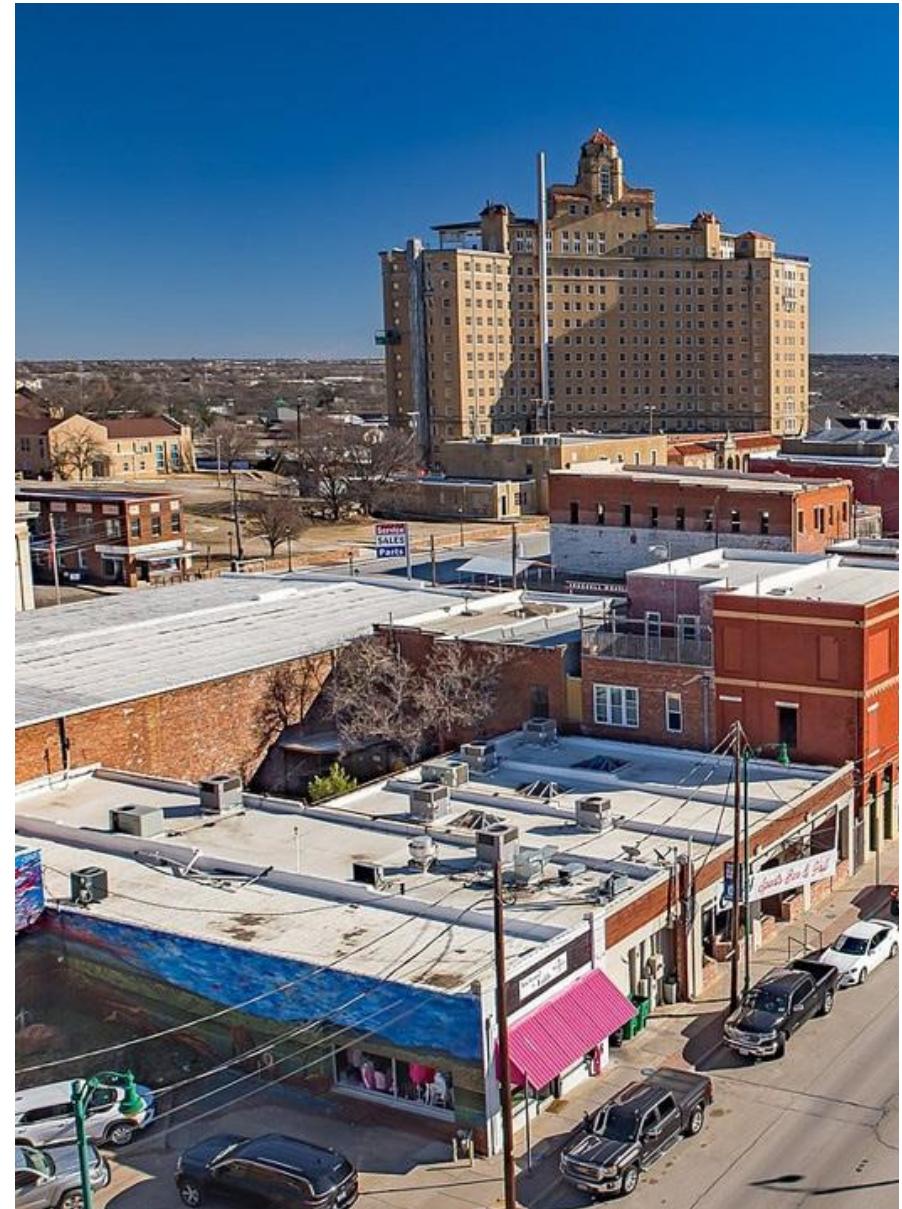


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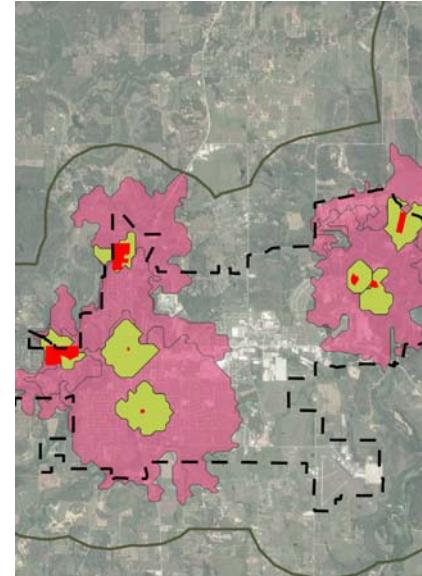


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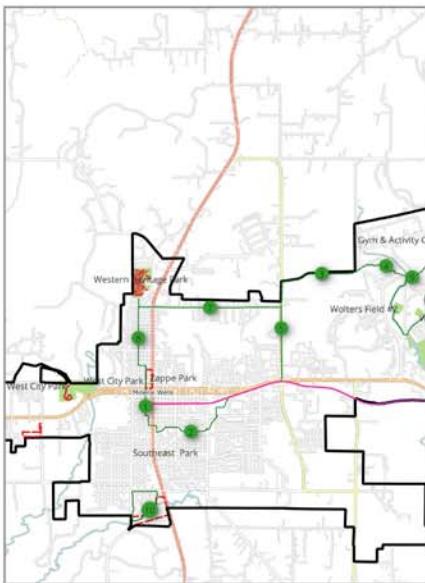
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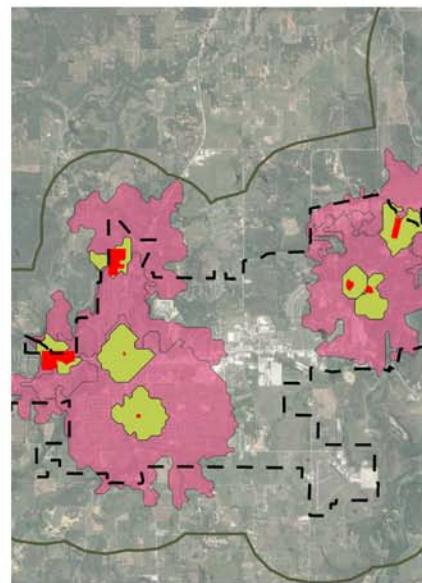
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Project Overview

The City of Mineral Wells, Texas is updating its Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the development, operation, and management of parks and recreational facilities in a way that best serves the needs and interests of the community. By providing a clear and coordinated vision for the future of parks and recreation, the plan can help to ensure that resources are allocated in a strategic and effective manner, and that the community is able to enjoy high-quality, accessible, and sustainable parks and recreational opportunities. The City's previous Parks and Open Space Plan has not been updated since 1996.

The Inventory and Analysis phase of plan development assesses current resources for recreation that have been identified within Mineral Wells. The inventory of resources contained in this plan considers both the recreation resources within the City's parks and trails, and facilities as well as the private recreation providers such as gyms, State Parks, campgrounds, and Mineral Wells ISD.

Needs Assessment

Stakeholder engagement activities and the Inventory and Analysis form the basis of recommendations within the plan. Some of these are recommended capital projects for improvements to the parks system, while others may be recommendations for building partnerships with other entities, land acquisitions, or opportunities identified through the planning process.

The Needs Assessment included engagement of residents at the Crazy Water Festival, a pop-up event at the Let's Grow Crazy Farmer's Market, an online survey of residents' recreational needs, collaboration with the Comprehensive Plan development team, and discussions with Staff, City Council, and the Parks Board.

Some key priorities from the Needs Assessment include the following:

- Renovate West City Park
- Address Indoor Recreation Needs
- Upgrade or Add Aquatics Facilities
- Convert Old Tennis Courts to Pickleball
- Develop Off-Street Hike and Bike Trails

Develop Activities for Youth Although not an extensive list of wants/needs, combined with an understanding of park and recreation trends and the evaluation of current park resources in the community verifies that these are indeed priorities.

Renovations:

- Renovation of West City Park
- Renovation of West City Park Sports Complex
- Improvements at Mineral Wells Gym and Activity Center
- Wolters Field #2 - Convert Tennis Courts to Pickleball
- Expansion of Southeast Park

New Recreation Opportunities

- New Dog Park and Regional Detention Facility
- Addressing the Need for Indoor Recreation
 - * New Recreation Center and Natatorium
 - * Small Community Recreation Center
- NW 1st Avenue Parks and Greenspace Master Plan
- Expanding the Parks and Recreation System
 - * School Park Partnerships
 - * City-Owned Properties
 - * Old Community Pool Site
- Pocket Parks and Other Small Public Spaces
- Destination Facilities

Methodology

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed using a three-fold technique that follows general methodologies accepted by TPWD for local park master plans and by the Department of the Interior for local park system Recovery Action Plans (RAP). The following approaches were implemented:

1. Standard-Based Approach – uses standards established by the local jurisdiction to determine the quantity of park facilities required to meet the City's needs a given population. Standards are usually expressed as the quantity of park facilities needed to adequately serve every 1,000 citizens of the City.

Standards are established to provide the level of service that the particular jurisdiction believes is most responsive to the amount of use and interests of its citizens. This plan establishes individual standards for the City.

2. Demand-Based Approach – uses public meetings, participation rates, league usage data, and a student survey to determine how much the population uses and desires certain types of recreation facilities.

3. Resource-Based Approach – is based on the usefulness of available physical resources to provide recreation opportunities. For example, the City's street rights-of-way, floodplains, and drainage corridors provide opportunities for trail connections.

All three methods are important in their own manner, but individually do not represent the entire picture. The assessment component of the project utilizes all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities and park requirements are needed.

Typical assessments evaluate *Level of Service*. While this is important, we believe it is also critical to also understand and evaluate the *Quality of Service*. *Quality of Service* evaluation requires intense community involvement and yields critical information of how the facility or park amenity is performing according to the expectations of citizens overall. *Quality of Service* is most easily identified through conversation. Engaging park users is the most direct method of understanding the user experience for a given facility.

As national guidelines and standards are based on demographic trends rather than specific local desires, they must 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. 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 Mineral Wells.

Recreation Trends

Regional, state and national trends in recreation are also considered, as the types of facilities and activities desired by the public are ever-changing. This includes review of the NRPA's Agency Performance Report, published annually, to evaluate benchmarks for communities of similar size.

Priority Projects and Implementation

The results of data collection, analysis and stakeholder input result in the identification of priority projects for enhancement of Mineral Wells' parks and recreation system. Some of these projects are recommended to provide upgrades and improvements to existing facilities, whereas others are opportunities to add new features to the parks system that address growing needs for recreation.

Projects have been studied to determine feasibility and probable costs to the level of detail appropriate at the conceptual level. Further study during a "design development" phase with a planning and design consultant will be needed to further vet the details, programming and costs for a given project.

Other recreation opportunities are also identified that may require land acquisition or participation from other entities. The planning of land acquisition for City projects requires savvy on the part of decision makers in order to avoid negatively influencing the prices of land and inhibiting acquisition opportunities.

MINERAL WELLS TODAY



“Parks role is so significant that it is impossible to understand fully the functioning of cities and suburbs or plan adequately for their future without a deep appreciation of parks and the way they affect every aspect of our lives.”

- Alexander Garvin,
Public Parks, The Key to Livable Communities

Life in Mineral Wells
Benefits of Parks and Open Space
Growth in Mineral Wells

Community Profile

History of Mineral Wells

Mineral Wells is a city in Palo Pinto County, Texas, located about 50 miles west of Fort Worth. The city is named for the mineral springs that were discovered in the late 1800s.

The history of Mineral Wells dates back to the 1870s when a community began to develop around the site of the mineral springs. The springs were believed to have healing properties, and people came from all over to bathe in the water and drink from the wells.

In the early 1900s, Mineral Wells became a popular resort town, with numerous hotels, bathhouses, and spas. The city's population grew rapidly, and it became a hub for tourism and health-related businesses. Many famous people, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, visited Mineral Wells to take advantage of the mineral springs and other health treatments.

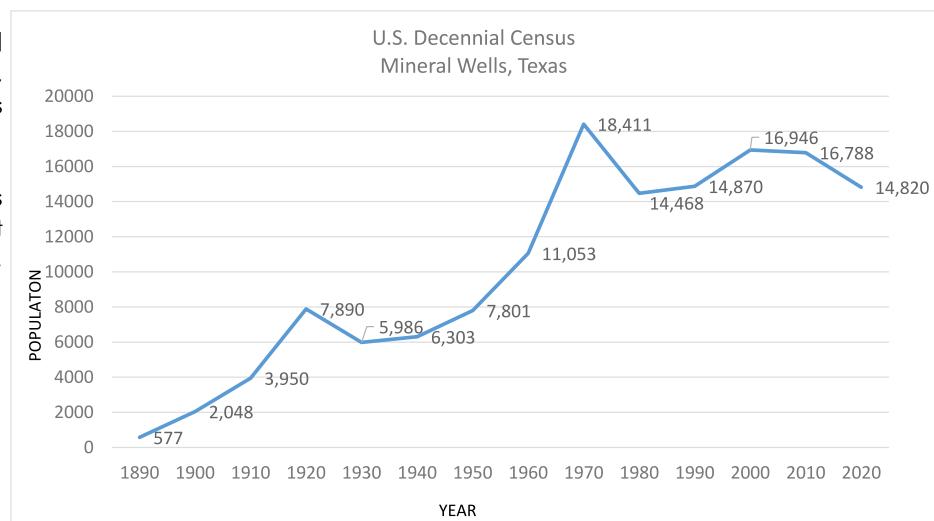
During World War II, Mineral Wells was home to several military training facilities, including Camp Wolters, which trained soldiers for combat. The influx of soldiers and military personnel helped to further boost the city's economy.

After the war, the popularity of Mineral Wells as a resort town began to decline, and many of the hotels and bathhouses were closed or converted to other uses. However, the city has continued to grow and evolve, with a diverse economy that includes agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism.

The population of Mineral Wells rose significantly during the 1970s as Fort Wolters became the primary helicopter training facility during the Vietnam War. Since that time the population fluctuated with a census record of 14,820 residents as of 2020.



Mural in Downtown Mineral Wells. Murals can be found throughout the areas and are a popular spot for photography. Source: visitmineralwells.org



Mineral Wells Today

Local Attractions

Mineral Wells offers a number of local attractions for visitors to experience. Whether it's outdoor recreation at the Lake Mineral Wells State Park or visiting the Clark Gardens Botanical Park, there's something for everyone. Some highlights include the following destinations:

- The Baker Hotel (under renovation)
- Mineral Wells Fossil Park
- Clark Gardens Botanical Park
- The Famous Mineral Water Company
- Lake Mineral Wells State Park
- Possum Kingdom State Park
- The Brazos River
- National Vietnam War Museum Complex
- Crazy Water Festival



The Mineral Wells Fossil Park is a popular destination while visiting the community. Visitors can dig for ancient marine fossils and learn about the history of the region. Source: authenticTEXAS.com

Growth in Mineral Wells

The landscape for small cities across the State of Texas is changing for a number of reasons including the rising cost of housing in metropolitan areas, and as was discovered during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability for many companies to provide work-from-anywhere options using modern technologies. This phenomenon has created a demand for small town living, which Mineral Wells is ideally suited for. Significant residential development hasn't occurred in Mineral Wells for decades, but proposed new neighborhoods such as The Wells by DMK Properties are expected to bring new residents to the community. Along with new residents comes new demand for parks, public spaces, and recreation amenities that they have grown accustomed to in other places.



Conceptual rendering of an entrance to The Wells, the new 113 acre planned development in Mineral Wells. This will provide 486 new homes to the community. Photo source: DMK Properties and Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Trends in Recreation

Keeping Up with the Times

The world of parks and recreation is an ever-changing landscape. Some programs, facilities and activities remain popular through the ages, while changes in technology, interests, popular culture and local or regional demographics and economy can heavily influence the demand for certain types of programs and amenities. For instance, the "kiddie pool" has been replaced by the splash pad as the most desirable aquatics facility for young children. The standard slide and a swingset style of playground has been, if not replaced, at least supplemented by the wide range of play equipment options available in the marketplace that offer enhanced play value, accessibility and attraction.

Current Trends

Current trends in parks and recreation across the nation are leaning towards health-oriented activities. A key factor for encouraging healthy, active lifestyles is providing access to parks and facilities.

Walkability and Fitness

Research demonstrates that people who have easy access to parks are 47 percent more likely to walk at the daily-recommended level than those who do not have easy access. Moreover, when the distance from a park doubles, the likelihood of park use decreases by almost 50 percent. Agencies are installing outdoor fitness equipment in parks in a variety of styles and functions.

Social Media

The means by which residents and visitors find information about a city's parks, facilities and programs is evolving. Where once the City's website may have been the go-to portal for disseminating important information to residents, social media has rapidly become the most effective tool. Facebook and other platforms such as Twitter, Pinterest and Snapchat can provide access to a captive audience of followers to provide updates about programs and activities and promote events, with less effort than is needed to update a website. The City currently maintains a Facebook presence but may wish to expand to other platforms. While the social media platforms change in popularity and usefulness, some important tips can help to reach users effectively and keep them engaged:

- Keep the content light - Talk more about the community and less about the City. Keeping posts brief makes them easy to read, "like" and forward to friends.
- Diversify - Maintain a variety of platforms for communication. Social media platforms can become less popular to some audiences over time.
- Keep em' coming back - Offer incentives to keep up with the City such as occasional give-aways or prizes for participating in surveys and other activities.

Art Walks & Public Art

A growing trend in communities across the country is the inclusion of the arts in parks and recreation programs. Cities are providing space and opportunities for the creation of public art in the form of sculptures, murals, decorative benches and more on city property to enhance parks and facilities. Sculptures can become play structures with proper design and consideration for safety and location and can serve as a backdrop to other park features or as climbable elements that encourage social play and imagination. Other public art may be decorative in nature and can serve to provide insight into local culture and history. Many cities will commission artists for specific projects or even host a competition upon which a winner will have their work permanently on display at public parks or facilities.



INVENTORY & ANALYSIS



Level Of Service
Park Inventory
Recreation by Others

Inventory & Analysis

Mineral Wells Parks and Facilities

The parks, open space, and facilities provided by the Mineral Wells Parks and Recreation Department are vital to maintaining the quality of life that residents have come to expect. Periodically it's important to review the level-of-service that a parks and recreation agency is providing in terms of the types of parks and facilities, the quantity needed to meet local demand, and the quality of user experience. Traditionally, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has utilized a set of standards for measurement of the quantity of park land, amenities, and facilities based on population size. While these standards remain useful today, the NRPA recommends using standards and benchmarks as a starting point and then looking to local demand and trends to determine recreation needs.

Park Level of Service

Comparison of a community's parks and facilities to other national, regional or local standards and benchmarks is useful in helping the community to keep up with the expectations of an ever-changing and growing population. The NRPA publishes an agency performance report of municipalities every year. Comparing the key features of Mineral Wells' park performance with comparable sized cities, state averages, and national averages provides a general sense of how adequate Mineral Wells' parks and facilities are and what may need to be improved or added in the future.

The City of Mineral Wells has a population of over 14,902 residents as of July, 2021. Mineral Wells has a total of 194.3 acres of park land which equates to 13.04 acres total developed park land per 1,000 residents. This is on the high end of the recommended range from NRPA of 6.25 to 10.25 acres per 1,000 residents. However, some of the park land is under-utilized, such as open space available at the Mineral Wells Gym & Activity Center property.

With an estimated population of 14,902 residents, the amount of park land available equates to 2,129 residents per park. This is close to the national average of 2,323 residents per park, and well above the average for agencies serving populations of less than 20,000 (1,233 residents per park).

These figures indicate that Mineral Wells is not lacking in park land and may find that resources are better directed towards improvements to existing parks and facilities. However, as the population of Mineral Wells increases over time, it will be important to keep up with the increased demand for parks and amenities.

Benchmarks for Park Agencies

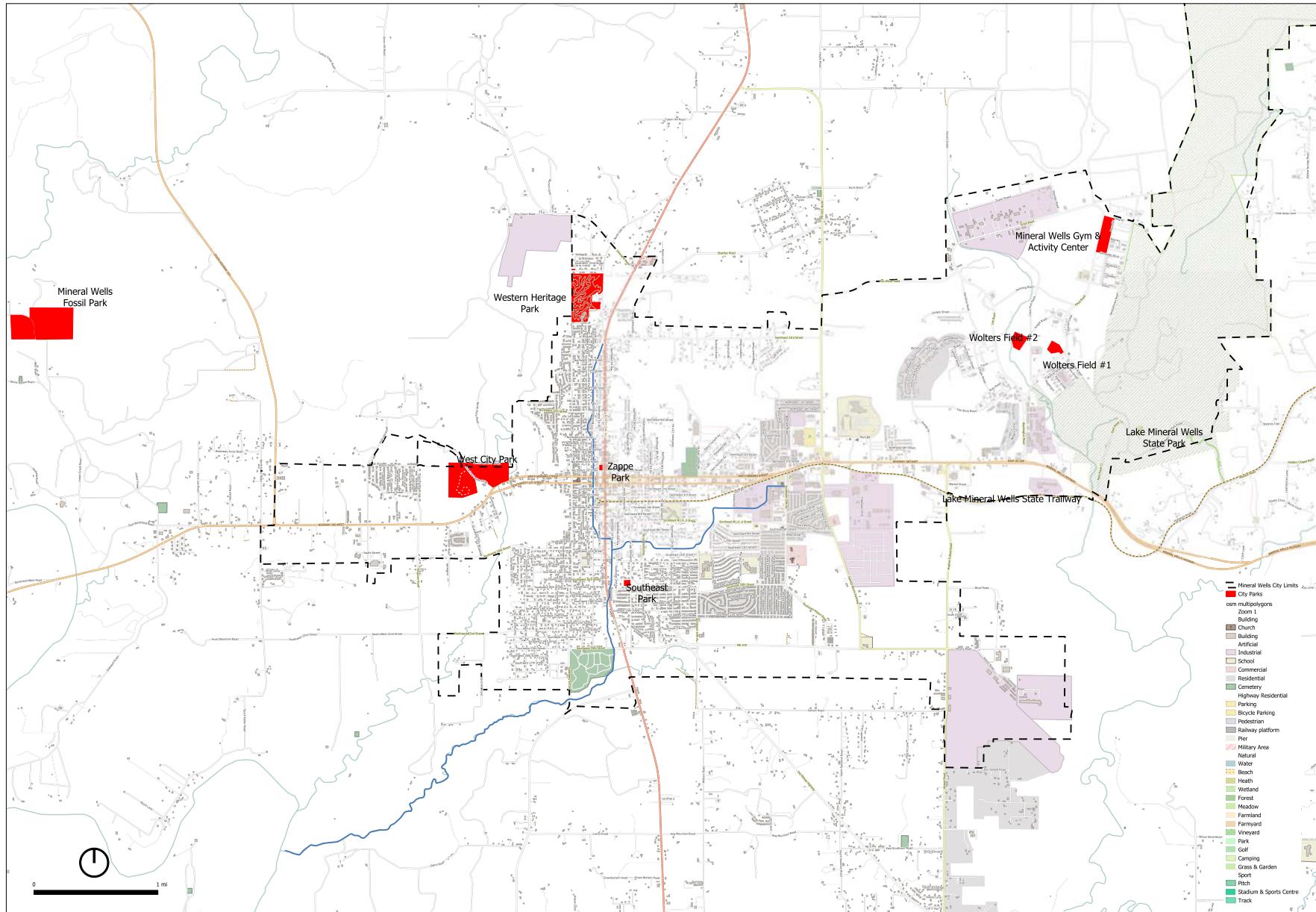
	City of Mineral Wells	National Average 2022 (All Agencies)	Agencies Less than 20,000 Pop.
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents	13.04	10.4	12.9
Full-Time Equivalent Employees Per 10,000 Residents	5.37	8.9	11.8
Residents Per Park	2,129	2,323	1,233
Operating Expenditures Per Acre of Park Land	\$4,045	\$7,823	\$9,817
Operating Expenditures Per Capita	\$52.73	\$93.01	\$117.36

Table 1 Park standards comparison

* NRPA 2022 Agency Performance Review Survey of 1,000 Agencies across USA

Inventory & Analysis

The Mineral Wells Parks System



Inventory & Analysis



Western Heritage Park



West City Park



Mineral Wells Gym & Activity Center



Zappe Park



Wolters Field #1



Southeast Park



Wolters Field #2



Mineral Wells Nature Trail



Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Inventory of Parks and Facilities

Park Name	Owner	Location	Acres	Amphitheaters	Baseball/Softball Diamonds	Rectangular Fields	Backstop	Batting Cage	Basketball Court	Indoor Basketball Court	BBQ Grills	Concession Buildings	Restrooms	Drinking Fountains	Pavilions	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Areas	Gazebos	Kitchen	Racquetball Court
West City Park	City of Mineral Wells	1200 W Hubbard	30.621	5			5	2	1		7	2	2	1	4	21	1			
Southeast Park	City of Mineral Wells	300 SE 15th ST	1.218				1		1		1				2	1	4			
Zappe Park	City of Mineral Wells	NW 1st Street & NW 1st Avenue	0.459												1		4			
Mineral Wells Fossil Park	City of Mineral Wells	2375 Indian Creek Road	52.01										1		1					
Western Heritage Park (Pollard Park)	City of Mineral Wells	3051 North Oak Avenue	52.006	1											1					
Mineral Wells Gym & Activity Center	City of Mineral Wells	735 Hood Road	14.75			1	1			1			2	2				1	1	
Wolters Field #1 (Hood Rd)	City of Mineral Wells	Hood Road	4.393		1		1								1	1				
Wolters Field #2 (Crosspost Rd)	City of Mineral Wells	Crosspost Road	6.61		1	1	1													
Mineral Wells Nature Trail	City of Mineral Wells		32.28																	
194.3																				

Park Name	Owner	Location	Acres	Benches	Playgrounds	Skateparks	Swimming Pools	Trails/Pathways (in miles)	Parking Spaces	Trash Can	Tennis Courts	Sand Volleyball Court	Athletic Practice Field	Gymnasium	Fitness Equipment	Weight Room	Indoor Volleyball Court	Class Room	Banquet Hall
West City Park	City of Mineral Wells	1200 W Hubbard	30.621	15	6	1	1			X	2	1							
Southeast Park	City of Mineral Wells	300 SE 15th ST	1.218	5	1					3			1						
Zappe Park	City of Mineral Wells	NW 1st Street & NW 1st Avenue	0.459	4					10	3									
Mineral Wells Fossil Park	City of Mineral Wells	2375 Indian Creek Road	52.01	2						X									

West City Park

Address:

1200 W Hubbard

Size:

30.621 Acres

West City Park is the flagship of the Mineral Wells parks system. The park has a diverse selection of activities and amenities to meet the recreation needs for residents and visitors. West City Park provides the opportunity for passive recreation such as picnics and playgrounds, aquatics programs, basketball, baseball & softball, a skatepark, sand volleyball and more.

Amenities:

- Baseball/Softball Diamonds - 5
- Batting Cages - 2
- Basketball Court - 1
- BBQ Grills - 7
- Concession Buildings - 2
- Restrooms - 2
- Drinking Fountains - 1
- Pavilions - 4
- Picnic Areas - 21
- Gazebo - 1
- Play Structures - 6
- Skatepark - 1
- Swimming Pool - 1
- Sand Volleyball Court - 1

Observations:

West City Park is the most frequently-visited park in Mineral Wells. The rich array of offerings caters to a wide range of recreation interests. The park amenities are generally in working order, but many of the features are aging and in need of replacement. Renovation of the park will require consideration of the following key issues:

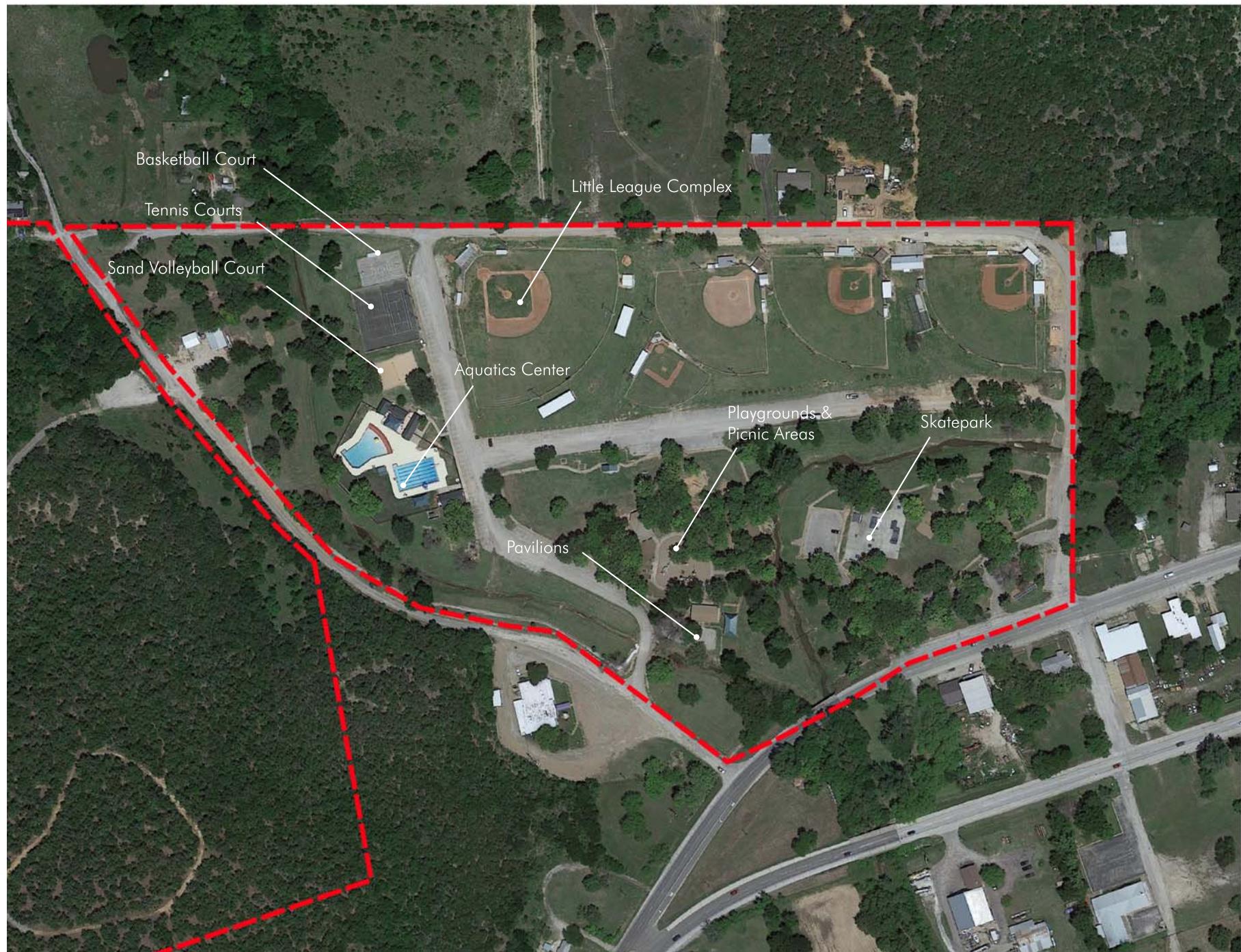
- Pedestrian connectivity throughout the park is limited due to the limited walking paths and the presence of the creek that bisects the property. Renovation should include additional and/or re-routed sidewalks. At one time there was a pedestrian bridge that connected activity areas and parking lots. A replacement bridge would significantly improve the user experience.
- Some of the areas along the creek banks are eroding and present a potential problem for a number of trees. Without resorting to tree removal, some erosion control measures could be taken utilizing engineered materials to reduce the potential for additional erosion.
- Parking has been reported by users to be insufficient for days when baseball and softball activities are occurring. Future designs should include adding more parking spaces.
- The ball fields and associated amenities are functional but are aging and in need of replacement.
- The swimming pool facility is a popular feature in Mineral Wells and is well-used during the summer months. The filter system is original to the facility and is functional but due for replacement. The pool decking, although resurfaced in 2016-2017, is showing signs of failure with bubbling and peeling of the coating. The decking should be sanded down and repainted to prevent cuts on patrons' feet.
- The creek is within the regulatory floodway and is prone to routine flooding during rain events. Although most of the park is not within the floodway or the 100-year floodplain, the low-water crossing to access the ball fields is subject to flooding.
- Accessibility for disabled visitors is limited in some areas of the park due to lack of sidewalks and ramps to recreation areas and amenities. Any renovation should include a complete review and design to include accessibility components in accordance with the standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Various areas throughout the park experience erosion due to sheet flow of stormwater. Regrading of these areas will be needed during park renovation.



0 200 ft

West City Park

Park Boundary



Inventory & Analysis

West City Park



Baseball fields at West City Park are well-used but due for replacement.



A play structure built from timbers and stormwater pipe. The wooden components are significantly weathered and splintering.



Recent addition of a stairway behind the baseball fields to address pedestrian access from rear parking area along the street.



Location of the former pedestrian bridge that connected activities areas across the creek.

West City Park



Erosion of soil along the bank of the creek threatens the longevity of trees growing on the banks.



A shade structure/pavilion near the picnic areas. Silt from a recent rain event has been deposited on the slab, indicating the need for regrading of some areas of the park.



A drinking fountain build from a section of pipe filled with concrete.



One bench on this concrete picnic table has been broken and is due for replacement.

Mineral Wells Nature Trail

Address:

218 American Legion Drive

Size:

32.28 Acres

The Mineral Wells Nature Trail provides an opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of Palo Pinto County and experience the varied topography, flora, and fauna of the region. The trailhead is a simple gravel parking lot located across the street West City Park, just past the American Legion lodge. The trail climbs to the top of the hill with a loop that directs visitors back down to finish the hike.

Amenities:

- Hiking Trail - 0.43 Miles

Observations:

- Wayfinding signage is minimal for this park, and it may be limiting the number of people that are aware of its existence.



Trailhead parking area.



View of hiking trail.



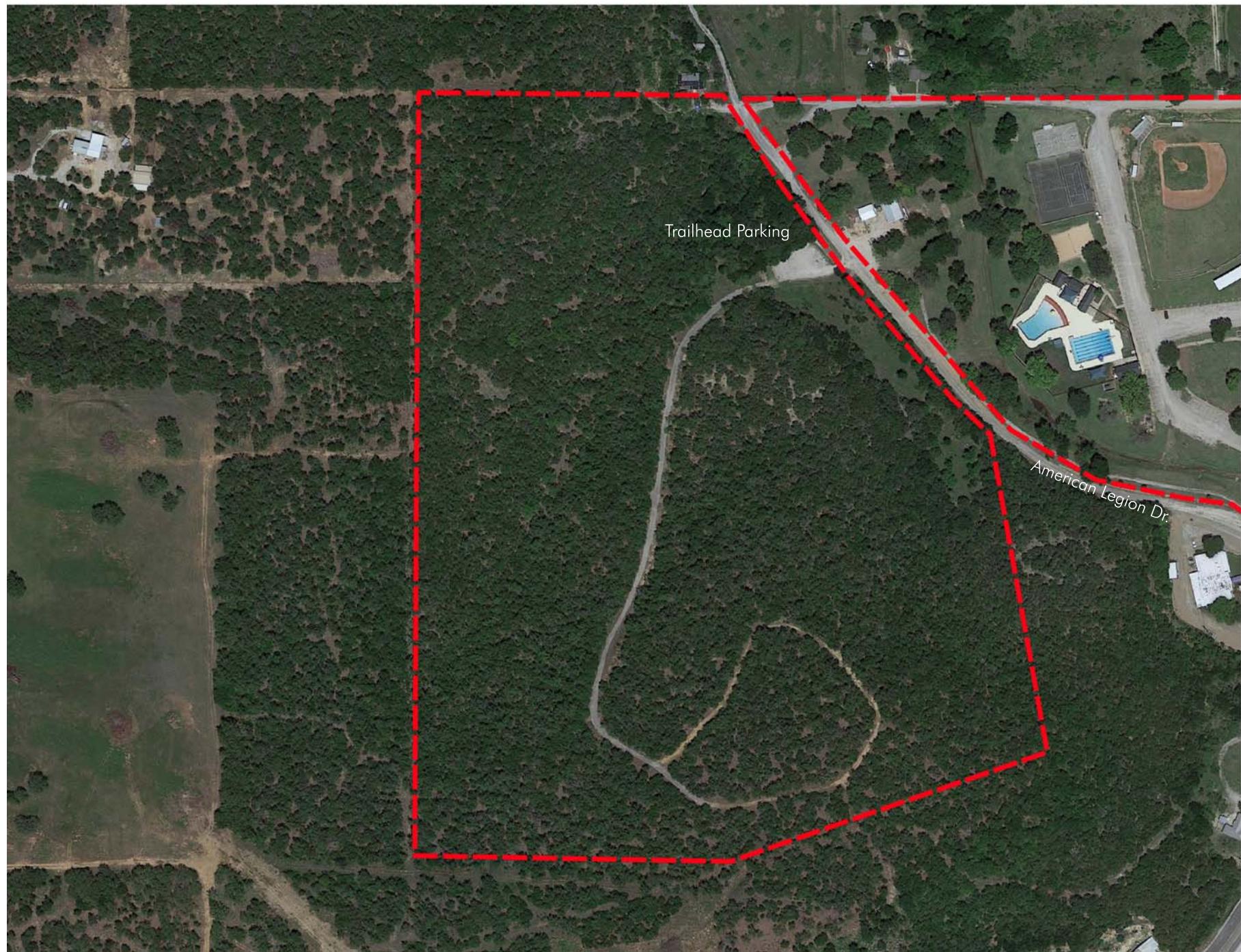
Boulders along trail edge.



0 200 ft

Mineral Wells Nature Trail

Park Boundary



Southeast Park

Address:

300 SE 15th Street

Size:

1.218 Acres

Southeast Park was newly renovated in the Spring of 2022. The renovation included site grading, new play structures, new shade structures, new restrooms, and sidewalks.

Amenities:

- Baseball Backstop - 1
- Basketball Court - 1
- BBQ Grills - 1
- Pavilions - 2
- Picnic Shelters - 1
- Benches - 5
- Play Structures - 3
- Athletic Practice Field - 1
- Sensory Play Features



New play structures and shade structures at Southeast Park.



View of the new park from the street.



0 50 ft

Southeast Park

Park Boundary



Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Address:

300 SE 15th Street

Size:

52.01 Acres

The Mineral Wells Fossil Park is a unique offering for a parks system. Located a few miles outside of town, the park allows visitors to dig for ancient fossils. "The park as it exists today is a result of 20 years of erosion of the old City of Mineral Wells landfill's borrow pit, which was closed in the early 1990s. The erosion of the borrow pit has revealed fossils documenting ancient sea species of crinoids (sea lilies), echinoids (urchins), brachiopods, pelecypods (clams and oysters), bryozoans, corals, trilobites (arthropods), plants and even primitive sharks". Visitors are allowed to dig for fossils at their leisure and even keep them for personal use.

Amenities:

- Shade Structure
- Portable Toilet
- Educational Signage



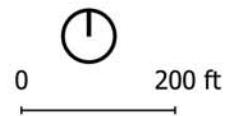
Shade structure and picnic tables for visitors.



Trail leading from the parking lot to the Fossil Pit.

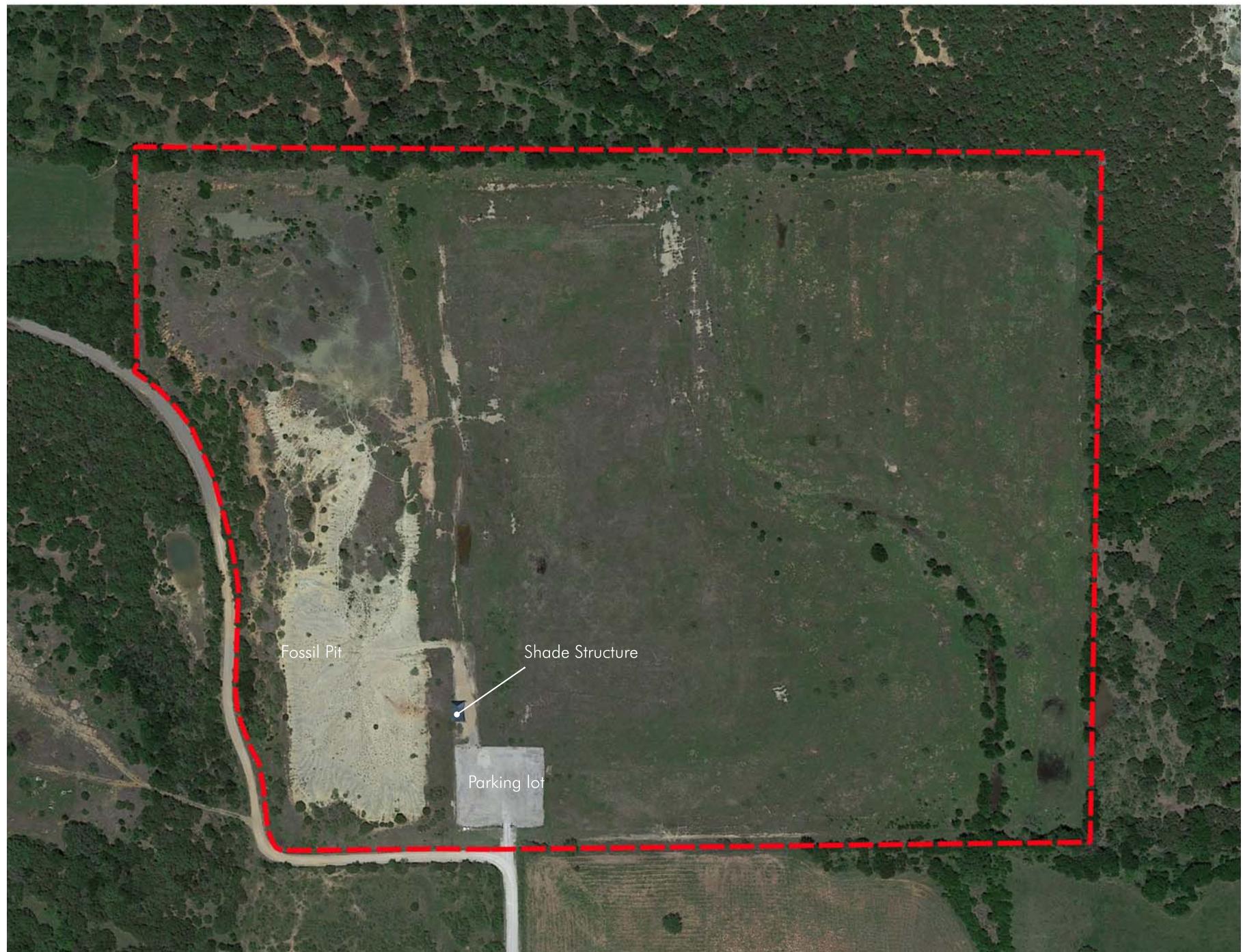


Trail with handrail leading down into the Fossil Pit.



Mineral Wells Fossil Park

Park Boundary



Zappe Park

Address:

NW 1st Street & NW 1st Avenue

Size:

0.459 Acres

Located in the heart of Downtown Mineral Wells, Zappe Park provides a break in the urban landscape for quiet relaxation and small gatherings. The site offers a small gazebo, picnic tables, and a formal landscape nestled among historic buildings in the central business district. The site is being studied as a part of a larger concept to create a linear park in the northwest part of Downtown Mineral Wells.

Amenities:

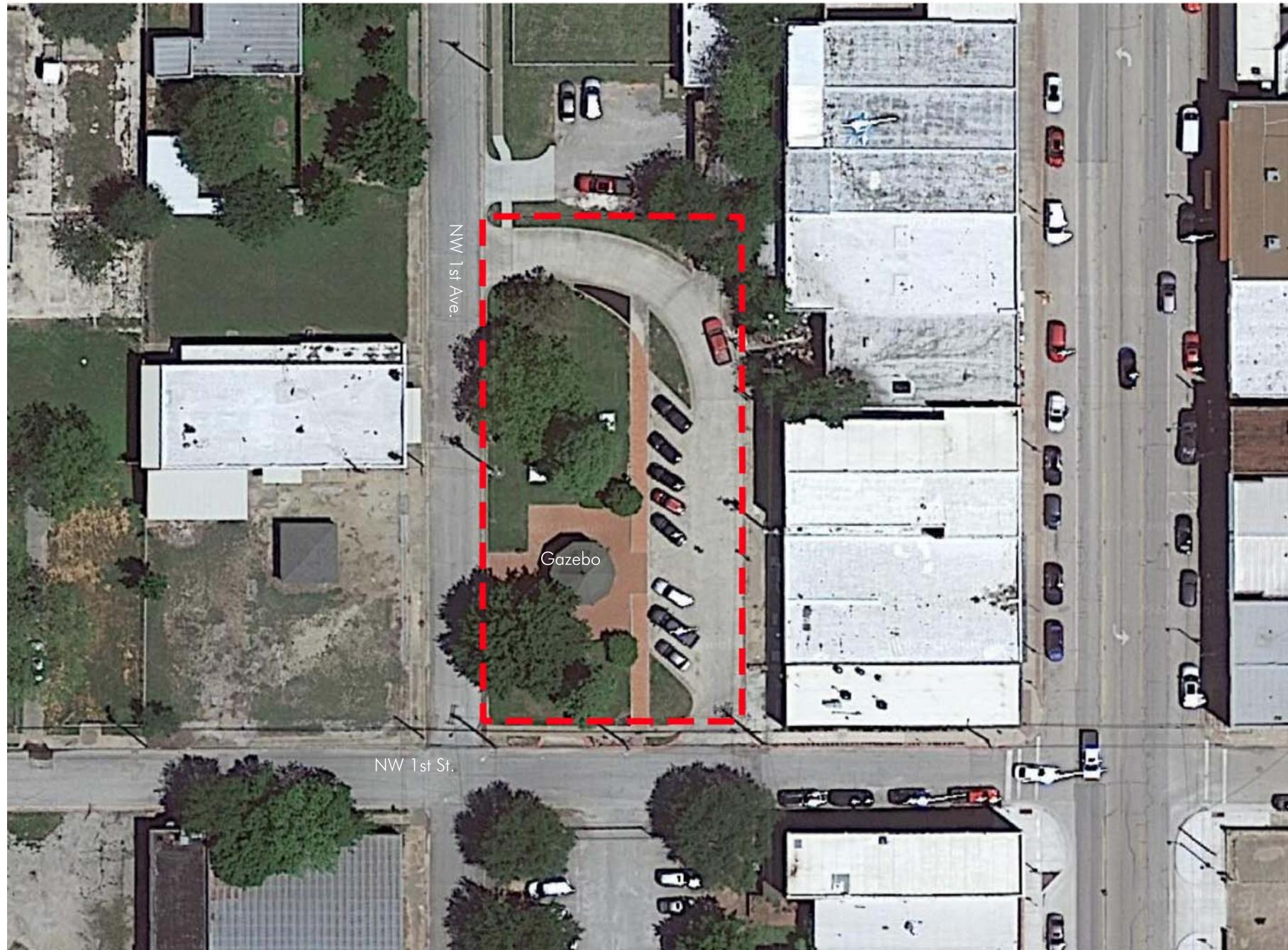
- Gazebo
- Picnic Areas
- Park Spaces (10)



0
40 ft

Zappe Park

 Park Boundary



Western Heritage Park

Address:

3051 North Oak Avenue

Size:

52.006 Acres

Located on the north side of town, Western Heritage Park (formally known as Pollard Park) provides a chance to enjoy open space, forests, and topography for hiking, mountain biking, and general relaxation. An event stage with a large lawn is available for concerts and other performances. An additional group pavilion offers shade and a place for barbecues and other events. Interpretive signs detail the history of the region. The Weatherford Mountain Bike Club maintains the park under agreement with the City of Mineral Wells.



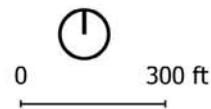
Interpretive signs showing the location of trails and describing the history of the area.



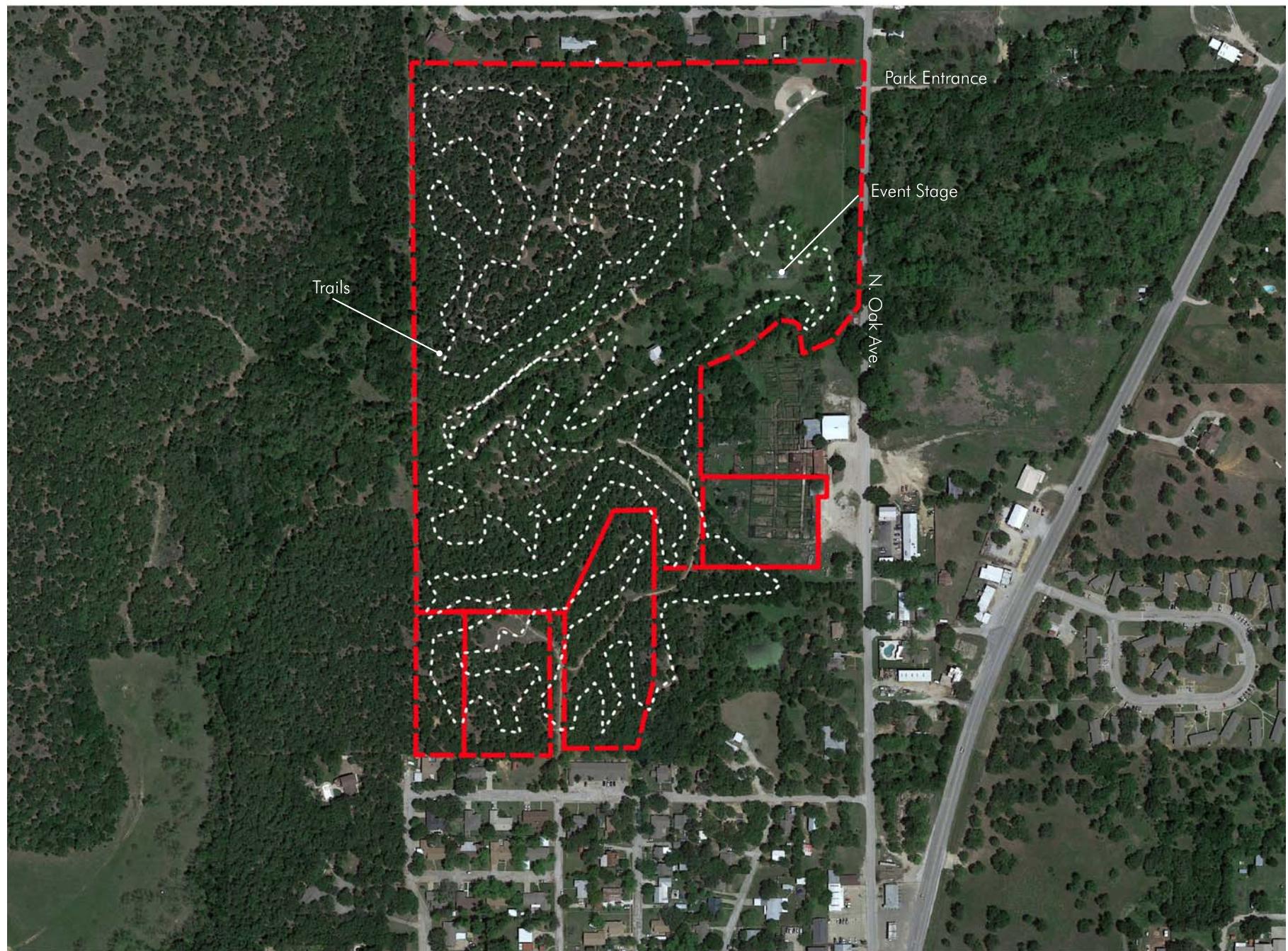
The event stage is used periodically throughout the year for concerts and similar events.



A picnic pavilion near the lawn area of the event stage.



Western Heritage Park



Mineral Wells Gym & Activity Center

Address:

735 Hood Road

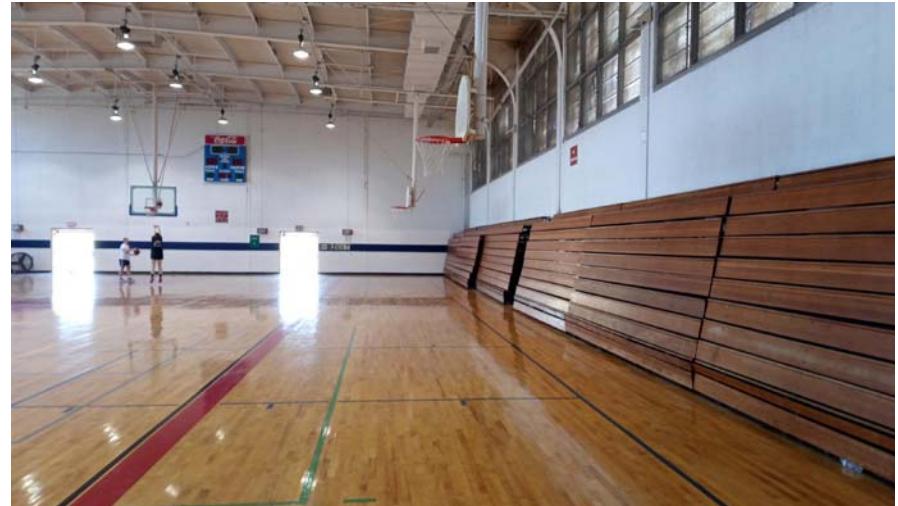
Size:

14.75 Acres

Located on the former site of Fort Wolters, a military installation, the Mineral Wells Gym and Activity Center are examples of adaptive re-use of structures to meet community needs. The gym is an old but functional structure that provides a gymnasium, workout space, and some exercise equipment. The Activity Center provides a large banquet hall and a variety of smaller meeting spaces for rental. Some activities available at this complex include basketball, volleyball, pickleball, martial arts, weddings, quinceaneras, and more. These structures are both aging and have significant needs for maintenance and upgrades. It will be important to weigh the costs of renovation with the opportunities for new construction depending on the demand for additional space and activities.



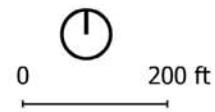
The banquet hall of the Activity Center is frequently rented for family events. There are numerous deferred maintenance items to address, but it is a well-used facility.



The gym floor was replaced in 2017 and is due for maintenance. The floor needs to be sanded, re-striped, and sealed. The Gym is well-used in all but the summer months due to a lack of functional air conditioning.



Smaller activity rooms are available for a range of fitness and recreation programs.



Park Boundary

