

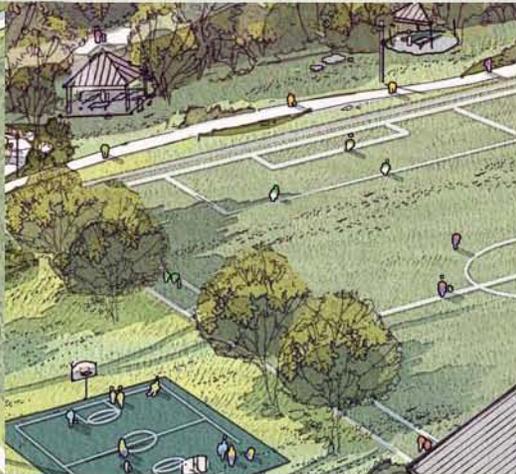
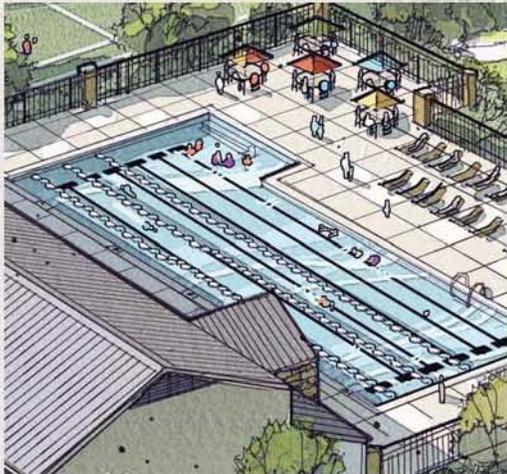


# COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN

## Seguin, Texas

prepared by:

**RIALTO  
STUDIO**



July, 2010

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Executive Summary ..... 2  
 Introduction..... 3  
 Process ..... 5  
 Site Analysis ..... 6  
 Program Analysis..... 10  
 Description of the Master Plan ..... 12  
 Summary of Recommendations / Phasing ..... 23  
 Acknowledgements..... 26

**TABLE OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Process..... 5  
 Figure 2: Site Inventory ..... 7  
 Figure 3: Master Plan..... 12

**TABLE OF PHOTOS**

Photo 1: Aerial Photo of Property..... 6  
 Photo 2: Walnut Branch Improved Channel..... 8  
 Photo 3: Historic Structure.....

**TABLE OF GRAPHICS**

Graphic 1: Playground ..... 13  
 Graphic 2: Athletic Field and Basketball Court..... 14  
 Graphic 3: Aquatic Center ..... 15  
 Graphic 4: Community Center..... 16  
 Graphic 5: Restroom Facility..... 17  
 Graphic 6: Pedestrian Bridge ..... 18  
 Graphic 7: Picnic Unit ..... 19  
 Graphic 8: Group Pavilion..... 20  
 Graphic 9: Entry Sign ..... 21  
 Graphic 10: Open Play Field..... 22

Report Prepared by:  
 Rialto Studio, Inc.  
 2425 Broadway, Suite 105  
 San Antonio, TX 78215  
 210.828.1155

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Seguin purchased approximately 47 acres of property - commonly known as the Hoermann Property – in June 2007; the property is currently unoccupied. The City's master plan identifies the property as potential parkland. In September 2009, the City of Seguin commissioned Rialto Studio to analyze the site, develop a program, and prepare a master plan for a park on the site.

Rialto Studio worked closely with key City staff and with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board through a series of public meetings to develop design alternatives and, ultimately, a final master plan for the development of a Community Park on the site. The proposed park fulfills several needs as identified in - and contains elements consistent with - the City of Seguin's 2005 (updated in 2008) *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board approved the master plan in January 2010, recommending that it be forwarded to City Council for final action.

The plan was approved by City Council at its meeting on 20 July 2010.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the project was to analyze the site, develop a program of activities and facilities, and prepare a design master plan for a park that would utilize the property in ways beneficial to Seguin's citizens and visitors, while respecting environmental concerns. Specific project objectives considered by Rialto Studio in the approach to the master plan included:

- To provide new and varied recreational opportunities for park users of all ages
- To conserve and interpret cultural resources
- To protect or restore natural resources and habitat
- To provide opportunities for outdoor education
- To promote environmentally sustainable designs
- To enhance existing and proposed creek improvements

The park described herein – once developed - will satisfy certain Goals and Objectives of the City of Seguin's *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. Specifically, these include:

### **Goal 1 - To expand park and open space resources for the citizens of Seguin, Texas.**

Objective 1: Acquire and develop park property along Walnut Branch: *The acquisition of the 47-acre site accomplishes this*

Objective 3: Acquire land in North or Northwestern segment of the City for a future community park development containing both active and passive recreation facilities: *The acquisition of the 47-acre site accomplishes this*

Objective 5: Provide an Indoor Recreation Center available to the youth and the citizens of Seguin: *This is one of the park development program items*

Objective 6: Provide a Competitive Swimming Pool / Aquatic Center available to the youth and citizens of Seguin: *This is one of the park development program items*

### **Goal 2 - Conserve and protect the natural resources of the City of Seguin in an attempt to provide environmental protection and beautification of the City of Seguin.**

Objective 1: Seek to protect the trees, creeks, rivers, stream and other natural resources to provide an atmosphere that will be compatible with the protection of established eco-systems: *This will be a guiding objective of the park's development*

### **Goal 3 - Develop, implement, provide and maintain quality recreation programming utilizing available resources.**

*The Community Park described herein will add a significant resource for the citizens of Seguin.*

To develop the master plan, Rialto Studio proposed a process that included development of concept alternatives and consensus-building public meetings to present and discuss alternatives, so that the plan was fully explored in an inclusive public process. The concepts developed by Rialto Studio were guided by Seguin's *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, and also recognize and are consistent with the recommendations of the *Walnut Branch Master Plan Report* (prepared by Jacobs, 2009), as they relate to the portion of the creek running through the park site.

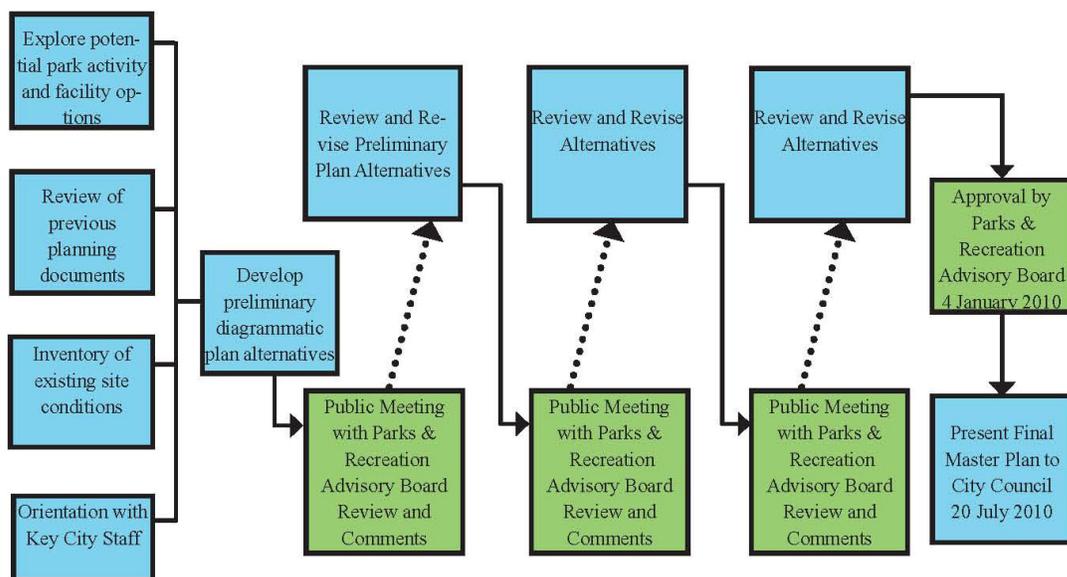
The final master plan is, then, one that has the support of City staff, City Council, and the citizens of Seguin. The master plan will give Seguin a tool to begin exploring funding sources, will guide future development of park facilities at the site, and will allow for phased implementation of facilities.

**PROCESS**

Rialto Studio developed a process for project delivery composed of the following key steps:

- Orientation with key City staff
- Inventory of existing physical conditions
  - Site visits, photography
  - Compilation of mapping data and aerial photographs
- Review previous planning documents
  - City of Seguin Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (City of Seguin, 2005, 2008)
  - The Seguin Comprehensive Master Plan* (MESA Design Group, 2008)
  - Walnut Branch Master Plan Report* (Jacobs, 2009)
- Explore potential park activity and facility options
- Develop preliminary diagrammatic plan alternatives
- Public meeting / Parks Advisory Board: 5 October 2009
- Review and revise preliminary plan alternatives
- Public meeting / Parks Advisory Board: 2 November 2009
- Revise selected alternative plan
- Public meeting / Parks Advisory Board: 7 December 2009
- Prepare final master plan
- Public meeting / Parks Advisory Board: 4 January 2010
- Present final master plan to City Council: 20 July 2010
- Publish final master plan: July 2010

Throughout, the design process was inclusive and transparent, intended to build support and consensus for the final recommended plan.



**Figure 1 : Process**

### SITE ANALYSIS

The northwestern-most portion of the park site is at the corner of San Antonio Avenue and Vaughn Street, and the park is bounded by those two streets on its north and west borders respectively. Its east and south borders abut other properties. It is approximately 47 acres in size and is bisected by Walnut Branch, which divides the property into parcels of approximately 8.3 and 34.3 acres, respectively (the remaining acreage is assigned to the creek bed proper). The creek has been improved and features sloped, grass-covered embankments; it flows water intermittently. A 100-year flood plain is associated with the creek, but only a small portion of the flat, cleared area of the site (where the bulk of facilities is anticipated to go) is affected by this.

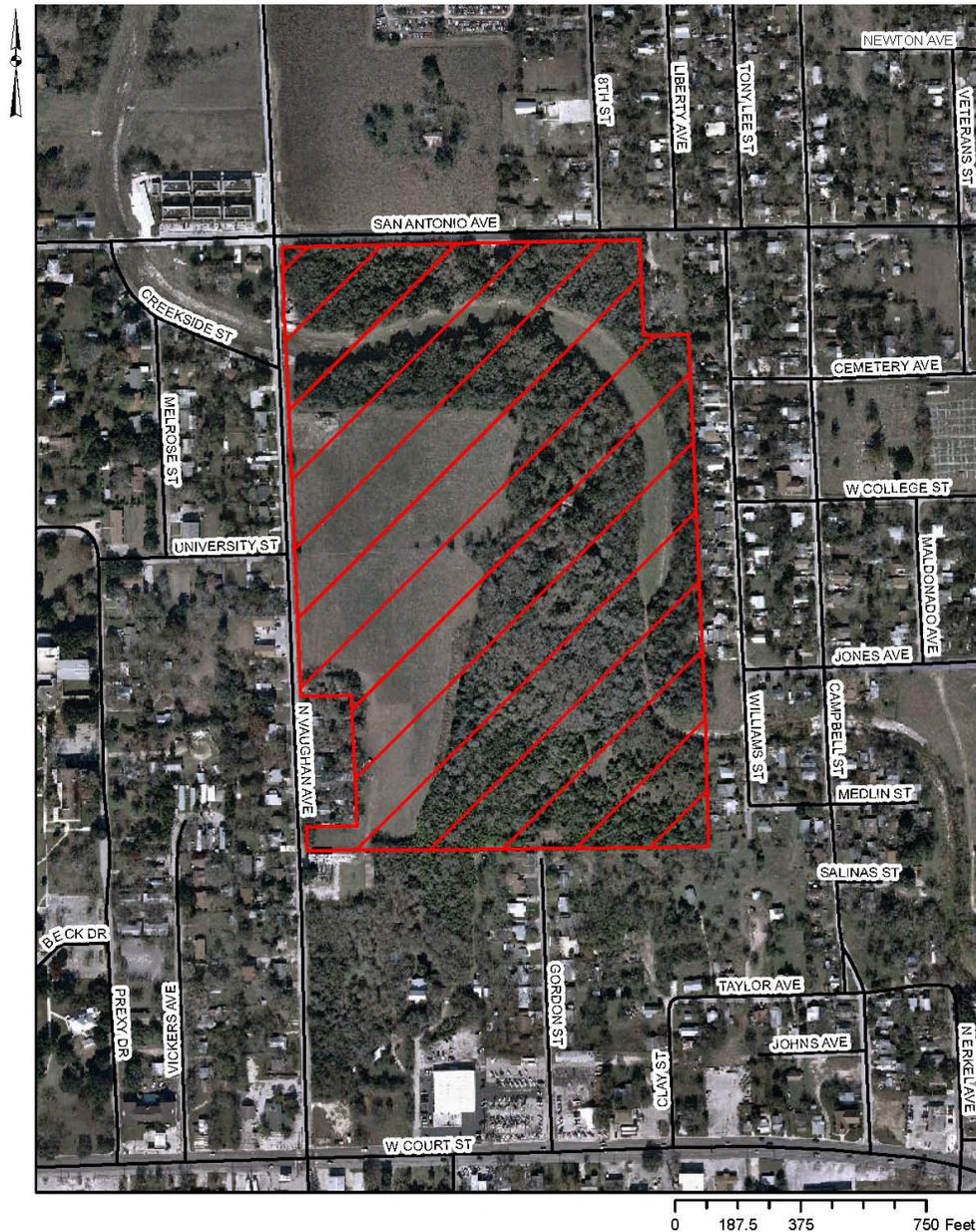


Photo 1: Aerial Photo of Property



**Figure 2: Site Inventory**

Of the 34.3 acres, approximately 20 acres is tree-covered and the remaining acreage is cleared; the 8.3 acres are largely tree-covered. The tree cover features many mature live oaks, cedar elms, and other species. Some of the vegetation is considered invasive (chinaberry, ligustrum, and bamboo, for example) and will require mitigating attention as the park is developed. Aside from the creek banks, the property is essentially flat. An abandoned residence that has historic relevance is located in the 34.3-acre portion. (The structure is intended to remain, but will be fenced off from the rest of the park as it is developed until such time as renovations to it are possible.) The property is periodically maintained by mowing of the cleared area of the site. Few, if any, other physical improvements are visible.



**Photo 2: Walnut Branch Improved Channel**



**Photo 3: Historic Structure**

In summary, the site lends itself well to development for recreational purposes, which would be concentrated in the open portion – approximately 14 acres – so that the existing mature tree cover is not compromised. Residential properties should be buffered from the future public uses of the site. The creek will be retained in its current state to avoid any hydrologic issues.

## PROGRAM ANALYSIS

At the project's inception, the City believed that a Neighborhood Park would be the most suitable use for the property. Almost immediately, Rialto Studio realized that the site is too large for simply a Neighborhood Park (which range in size from 1 – 15 acres, typically). The next higher category – Community Park – is typically a development of between 15 and 60 acres. The site's 47-acre size was more suited to the development of a Community Park.

There are significant differences between the programs of development for Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks. Simply put, a Neighborhood Park would contain fewer amenities and features, due to its smaller size. Accordingly, it also would serve a smaller service area (one square mile) while a Community Park is intended to serve an area of approximately 4 to 6 square miles.

Still, because the genesis of the master plan project was to evaluate the feasibility of the site to support a Neighborhood Park, Rialto Studio began with that premise. Relying on criteria found in the City of Seguin's 2005 (updated in 2008) *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, Rialto Studio developed diagrams for a master plan for a Neighborhood Park. After developing these initial schemes for a Neighborhood Park, Rialto Studio recognized that a development more on the order of a Community Park was a more appropriate use for the site, and that clearly, the site had a higher potential use based on its size and location. Indeed, a Community Park is defined in the *Plan* as serving "...a diverse population with intense recreational facilities and/or areas of natural quality"; this description perfectly fits the park site and its potential impact on Seguin.

Rialto Studio then created diagrams depicting a master plan for a Community Park, for use in comparing the two approaches and formulating a recommendation on which to pursue. Both sets of diagrams were presented to City staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, with a recommendation that a master plan depicting a Community Park be pursued. Staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board concurred and encouraged development of a Community Park master plan.

A program of development for a Community Park was proposed for the site, consistent with criteria contained in the City of Seguin's 2005 (updated in 2008) *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, and other available sources. Certain items on the list of program elements also supported the *Plan's* ranked priorities for long-range planning and implementation purposes. These priorities include:

- Walnut Branch Park Development (Priority 1)
- Community Park – Northwest (Priority 3)
- Indoor Recreation Center (Priority 5) and
- City Swim Center (Priority 6)

The program elements selected for inclusion in the master plan included:

*OFF-STREET PARKING*  
*PLAYGROUND*  
*ATHLETIC PLAYING FIELD*  
*AQUATIC CENTER*  
*BATHHOUSE / RESTROOM*  
*COMMUNITY CENTER*  
*BASKETBALL COURT*  
*RESTROOM*  
*TRAILHEAD*  
*NATURE TRAIL*  
*PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE*  
*PICNIC UNITS*  
*GROUP PAVILION*  
*ENTRY SIGN*  
*OPEN PLAY FIELD*  
*COMMUNITY GARDEN*  
*DEMONSTRATION GARDEN*

Rialto Studio devised alternative preliminary schemes for placing the elements above onto the site, and presented them to City staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. After refinements were suggested, the plans were revised and vetted in subsequent meetings until consensus was achieved. The final draft of the proposed Community Park Master Plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, with a recommendation that it be forwarded to City Council for final action. Seguin's City Council approved the plan on 20 July 2010.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN

As envisioned, the new Community Park will provide a wide range of recreational activities and facilities for the citizens of Seguin and visitors. The site ideally offers the opportunity for intensive active use as well as being blessed with well-vegetated natural areas that will support more passive recreational uses. The master plan proposes development of facilities on both sides of Walnut Branch, with a pedestrian bridge connecting the two. The majority of new facilities will be located on the larger of the two parcels. The proposed new park – fully developed – may include the following:



**Figure 3: Master Plan**

**OFF-STREET PARKING.** The plan depicts paved parking, accessible from Vaughn Street, for approximately 125 cars. The plan leaves room for additional non-paved temporary or overflow parking (for approximately 125 cars) in the buffer area between Vaughn and the park proper. Over time, this temporary overflow parking area could become paved, as needs dictate. In keeping with the residential neighborhood aesthetics, it is recommended that each of the two parking areas will be situated behind a landscaped buffer. An additional 30 parking spaces, accessed from San Antonio Avenue, will serve the smaller portion of the park north of Walnut Branch and serve as a trail head for the future development of the linear park's hike and bike trail. The paved parking lots will be lighted.

*PLAYGROUND.* The playground area will feature permanent manufactured play equipment appropriate to multiple age groups of children; the different play units will be located distinctly separate from each other. The playground will have a defined edge and it will have a protective play surfacing. It will be located in association with individual picnic units and trails, and is near to parking. Shade the playground utilizing existing trees or provide cover to portions of the playground to allow for year round use.



**Graphic 1: Playground**

*ATHLETIC FIELD.* A formal sports playing field, sized to accommodate various organized team sports, will be located in the existing large open space. It will be constructed of special sports-related turf; irrigation is strongly recommended. Due to its proximity to the adjacent residences, sports field lighting is not recommended.

*BASKETBALL COURT.* A full-size, hard-surface outdoor court is proposed adjacent to the parking lot. It should be located near parking, restrooms and drinking fountain. Seating for spectators should also be included. It will not be lighted.



**Graphic 2: Athletic Field & Basketball Court**

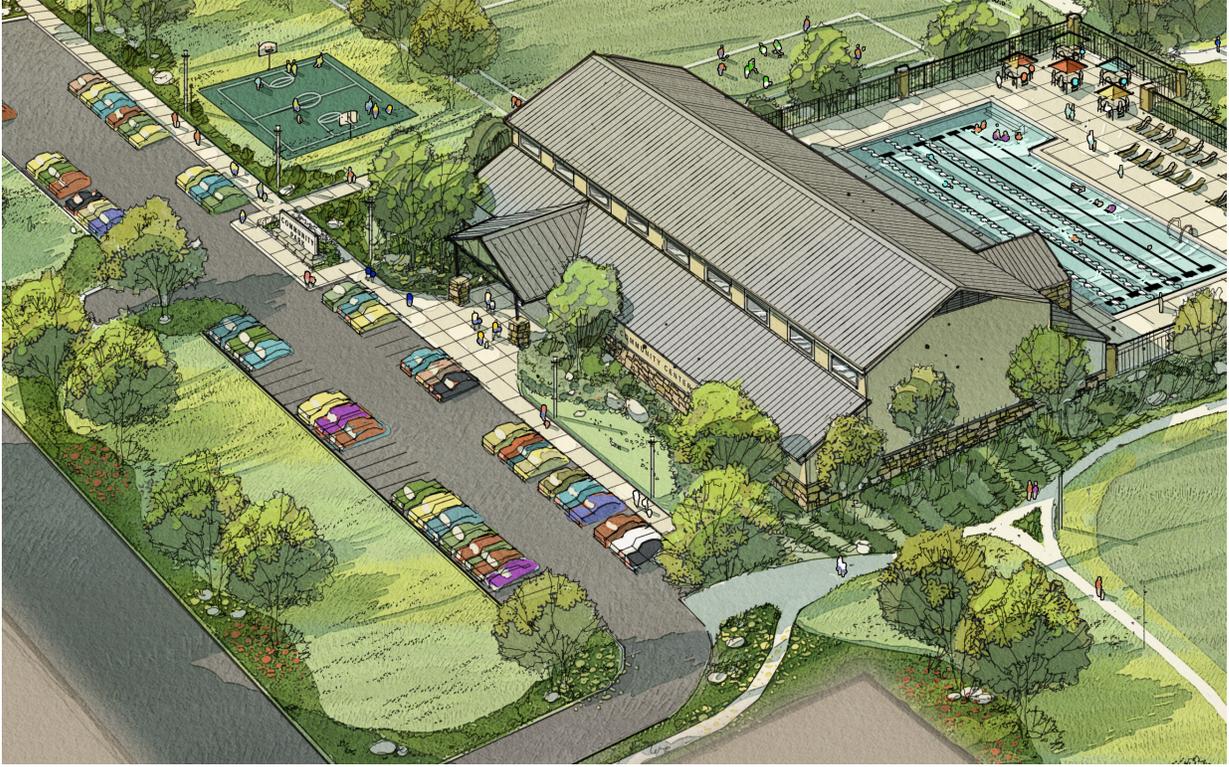
*AQUATIC CENTER.* The aquatic center will be anchored by a swimming pool of a size suitable for hosting competitive events with associated pool deck, and a separate splash play area for younger patrons. The splash play area will provide firm, safe footing and a variety of water spray and splash interaction. Parental supervision will be accommodated by nearby seating and a shade structure will provide relief from the sun. Changing rooms and restrooms will be required, and will be provided either in a stand-alone building or as part of the community center. The days and times of the year the pool will be open will be dependent upon staffing available.



**Graphic 3: Aquatic Center**

*BATHHOUSE / RESTROOM.* This is envisioned to be a component of the proposed community center building for use by visitors to the pool. It may also be a stand-alone building.

*COMMUNITY CENTER.* This important park element is envisioned as a multi-functional facility that will provide activities for all ages. It may contain an indoor basketball-sized court, rooms for community meetings or classes, and other indoor recreational activities. It will also support swimming pool activities on a seasonal basis.



**Graphic 4: Community Center**

*RESTROOM.* A stand-alone restroom facility will be located adjacent to the athletic field, playground, and picnic areas and is envisioned to be a modular, pre-fabricated unit to conserve project costs.



**Graphic 5: Restroom Facility**

*TRAILHEAD.* A trailhead will be located at several key access points to the park – at street crossings and remote from the park’s parking lots - to welcome pedestrians, bicyclists, and non-motorized visitors. Each trailhead will have expanded paved areas for safety, benches, location maps, and shade.

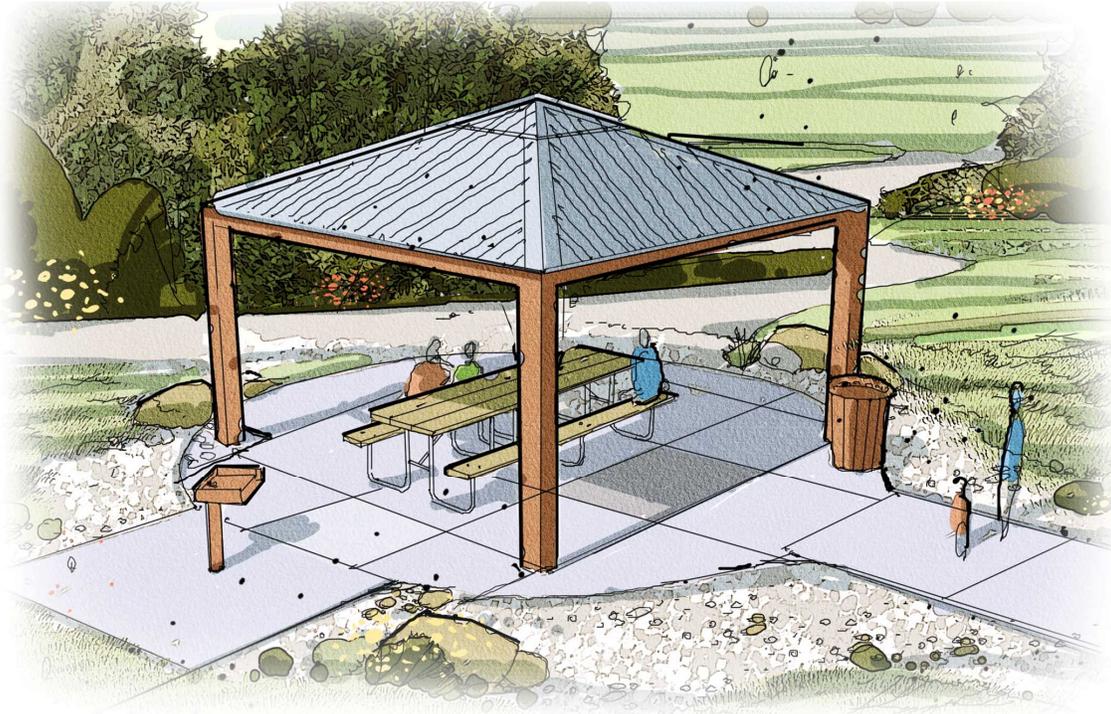
*NATURE TRAIL.* The park will be laced with trails. Some will be hard-paved and lighted for security; others will be mulch or gravel trails. The trails will be linked together to provide a variety of walking distances and experiences. The paved trails will be accessible and capable of supporting a small maintenance vehicle and emergency vehicles. A portion of the proposed network of trails will fulfill the vision for a trail along the creek, as recommended by Jacobs in their *Walnut Branch Linear Park Master Plan*, completed in January 2009.

*PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE.* Because trails are proposed on both sides of Walnut Branch, they will be connected by a pedestrian bridge, so that complete and accessible pedestrian circulation is provided throughout the park. The bridge will be capable of supporting a small maintenance vehicle and will be designed as a clear span structure, to minimize issues of conflict with the hydrologic function of the channel.



**Graphic 6: Pedestrian Bridge**

*PICNIC UNITS.* A series of individual picnic units will be located adjacent to paved trails and generally in the vicinity of the playground and adjacent to parking for convenience. In addition to tables and benches, each site will feature a BBQ grill and trash receptacle. The units each will be under a roof, approximately 15' x 15' in size.



**Graphic 7: Picnic Unit**

*GROUP PAVILION.* A larger picnicking facility will be provided for use by groups, again located in proximity to trails and parking. It will feature amenities similar to the ones at the individual units.



**Graphic 8: Group Pavilion**

*ENTRY SIGN.* The park will be designated with a name to be determined later; this will be located in a prominent position for ease of visibility and will identify the park's main vehicular entrance.



**Graphic 9: Entry Sign**

*COMMUNITY GARDEN.* An area will be designated for a garden for use by Seguin citizens. This leisure activity will be available to most age groups.

*DEMONSTRATION GARDEN.* An area will be designated for use by local garden organizations (Master Gardeners, for example) to plant and maintain as a source of civic involvement and education.

*OPEN PLAY FIELD.* A portion of the existing open space on the site will be designated for open, free play. It will be capable of serving as back-up athletic field, but its primary purpose is for unstructured play.



**Graphic 10: Open Play Field**

In addition to the easily-identifiable physical elements above, the master plan will also:

- Provide full accessibility for users in the majority of the park;
- Provide lighting for security at paved parking, paved trails, and certain other key spots, but the park will not be lighted for nighttime recreational use;
- Endeavor to be a model for the use of native plant species, including the planting of new Texas-native material and the removal of noxious, invasive species in the park (china berry and bamboo, for example);
- Provide for emergency vehicle access to interior portions of the park from the parking lot; and
- Encourage the renovation of the historic on-site structure.

In conclusion, the proposed Seguin Community Park will be a welcoming, organized open space in the city; will provide a variety of needed recreational opportunities and facilities; and is envisioned as a source of community pride.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS / PHASING

The Community Park Master Plan is an ambitious document. It proposes development of a number of structures and venues that – in the whole – will comprise a wonderful facility for the City. And Rialto Studio recommends full implementation of the master plan. It will provide a needed expansion of the City’s inventory of recreational facilities; it will bring parks and recreational services to an area of the city where there is need; and it will take advantage of the foresight of acquisition of a significant property that is ideally suited for park development.

But, it is unlikely that the park will be built completely at one time. It is expected that the plan’s elements will likely have to be implemented over time in a series of planned, phased improvements. At this time, it is not possible to identify a specific number of phases that might be required to achieve the recommended plan in its entirety. The phases will certainly be dependent upon funding and a variety of funding mechanisms likely will apply here.

### PHASE ONE

In the interest of moving at least a portion of the master plan forward, a possible Phase One development is proposed – again wholly dependent on a given level of funding. It would provide a level of recreational services for the public and include at a minimum implementation of the following:

*UTILITY WORK.* Bring or extend necessary infrastructure to the property in anticipation of ultimate need.

- Water
- Irrigation controller and backflow preventer
- Power
- Sanitary sewer

*PARKING.* Build at least a suitable amount of parking in support of the other Phase One items to be constructed. The parking can always be expanded upon as needs dictate.

- Asphalt paving and driveways
- Asphalt striping
- Curbs and gutters
- Pedestrian sidewalk at Vaughn Street
- Buffer planting and irrigation
- Security lighting

*PLAYGROUND.* Construct this park amenity.

- Play structures
- Protective play surfacing
- Sidewalk (trail)
- Lighting

Drinking fountain  
Minimal landscape and irrigation upgrade

*RESTROOM STRUCTURE.* Provide the stand-alone structure adjacent to the playground.

Restroom structure  
Sidewalk (trail)  
Minimal landscape and irrigation upgrade

*BASKETBALL COURT.* Construct this recreation amenity.

Concrete play court  
Court sports surface  
Equipment  
Benches  
Drinking fountain  
Sidewalk (trail)  
Minimal landscape and irrigation upgrade

*PICNIC SHELTER.* Provide one or more individual picnic facilities.

Concrete slab  
Shelter structure  
Picnic table  
BBQ grill  
Sidewalk (trail)  
Minimal landscape and irrigation upgrade

*GROUP PAVILION.* Construct this park support structure.

Concrete slab  
Pavilion structure  
Picnic tables  
BBQ grills  
Minimal landscape and irrigation upgrade

*NATURE TRAIL.* Construct the concrete-paved trail and an alternate-surface trail.

Concrete trail  
Stabilized base trail (not concrete)  
Benches  
Lighting

*ATHLETIC FIELD.* Construct the organized sports play field.

Grading  
Soil and amendments  
Sports turf (sod)  
Irrigation  
Equipment  
Trees

*MISCELLANEOUS.* Provide also for the following:

- Park signage
- Demonstration garden

Implementation of the above will provide a basic but still varied level of service for the citizens of Seguin. As funding becomes available, the other elements of the master plan may be implemented over time. The two biggest items in terms of cost will be the Aquatic Center and the Community Center (including indoor sports courts.) Using this document as a support tool, the City of Seguin should seek out all potential sources of potential funding to effect a full build-out of the Community Park.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rialto Studio and the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Seguin would like to express appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance and support during the preparation of the Seguin Community Park Master Plan:

Mayor Betty Ann Matthies and the Seguin City Council Members:

- Manuel Cevallos, District I
- Mary Louise Gonzales, District II
- Nick L. Carrillo, District III
- Tomas Castellon Jr., District IV
- Carlos Medrano, District V
- Stephen Tschoepe, District VI
- Don Keil, District VII
- Bob Pees, District VIII

City Secretary, Thalia Stautzenberger

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

- Joe Patterson, Chairperson
- Lynn Glenewinkel, Vice Chairperson
- Nancy Masterson, Secretary
- Bill Keller
- Pat Gilbertson
- Troy DePalermo
- Paul Soto

City Manager, Douglas Faseler

Assistant City Manager, Ricardo Cortes

Director of Planning, Donald Smith

The Parks and Recreation Department Staff:

- Timothy Patek, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Crystal Miranda, Parks and Recreation Superintendent
- Chandra Jobb, Recreation Program Coordinator
- Helena Perez, Administrative Assistant