



The Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS) is a nonprofit education and professional organization founded in 1937 to advance the profession of parks, recreation, and leisure services in Texas. **TRAPS advocates for the enhancement and preservation of our parks and recreational areas to promote a quality of life for all.** Despite the surge in usage, investments in these vital spaces have struggled to match the pace of need.

TRAPS is comprised of over 2,300 individual members and organizations and also maintains professional [affiliate relationships](#) with several state universities, athletic and civic organizations, recreational entities, state agencies, and commercial vendors who provide services or programs related to parks, recreation, and leisure service management. With its reach across the state, TRAPS serves as a clearinghouse of information and resources to help with a wide range of challenges facing park, recreation, leisure service, and therapeutic recreation professionals.

The Texas Recreation & Park Society (TRAPS) approach to the 2025 Texas Legislative session is guided by principles that spring from a deeply rooted TRAPS legislative philosophy:

SPORTING GOODS SALES TAX

In 2019, Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment (88.02% voted yes) that permanently appropriates all sporting goods sales tax (SGST) revenues to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Historical Commission. TRAPS supports the continued appropriation of funds to the Texas Recreation and Parks Account, which funds TPWD local park and recreation grant programs. TRAPS will oppose any legislation that prevents the full appropriation of the Sporting Good Sales Tax.

Support

- Additional land acquisition by the TPWD for the protection of and access to natural resources for our growing population.
- Investing state funds towards lowering deferred maintenance of Texas State Parks and Natural Areas (est. \$781 million in 2019).
- Funding for additional acquisition or conservation of parks and open spaces in Texas.
- Additional funding for TPWD grant programs.

Oppose

- Local park and recreation grant appropriation riders that subvert TPWD's competitive grant process unless they are funded through general revenue appropriation riders.

10-MINUTE WALK TO A PARK

Public parks and recreation areas are the key to strengthening local economies, enhancing quality of life, creating vibrant communities, and improving resident well-being. However, not all have equal access to public parkland. One-third of U.S. residents, totaling over 100 million people, including 28 million children, do not have a park or green space within a 10-minute walk of their home. The “10-Minute Walk to a Park” is a Texas Recreation & Park Society and National Recreation & Park Association approved standard.

Support

- The Trust for Public Land’s “10-Minute Walk to a Park” campaign, ensuring that Texans have public spaces to enjoy nature nearby.
- Expanding public access to green spaces for everyone through the acquisition, conservation, development, and enhancement of public parks and recreational areas that promote increased public green space and equitable park access.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to public green spaces for people with varying abilities, including those with disabilities.

PARKLAND DEDICATION

Parkland dedication programs serve as a mechanism, sometimes financial, to provide public parkland and park amenities in newly developed regions without placing an undue tax burden on current city residents. An increase in park use derived from new dwelling units impacts park amenity wear and tear and maintenance costs. These expenses are typically supported by the general fund, adversely impacting the tax rate to support additional maintenance costs. Parkland dedication ordinances provide developers with a monetary contribution alternative to constructing public parks and recreational areas. This monetary contribution enables municipalities to acquire and enhance park facilities to support population growth rather than taxing existing park and recreational areas and taxpayers. TRAPS will oppose any legislation that limits municipal parkland dedication ordinances.

Support

- Municipal authority to require a development to dedicate a portion of land for parkland use, impose a parkland dedication fee, or both require the dedication and impose the fee.
- Municipal authority to require a development to dedicate a portion of land for parkland use, impose a parkland dedication fee, or both require the dedication and impose the fee for hotel and motel developments.
- Municipalities using appraisal district average land value calculations without exemptions on an annual basis and the ability to enforce an independent land appraisal at the developers’ expense if exemptions exist.
- Municipalities collecting parkland dedication fees as a precondition to plat.
- Authorizing developers to request municipalities to waive the statutory 60-day period of time to appeal parkland dedication requirements, thereby tabling the item until additional information or clarification of issues before the commission or governing body may act on the appeal and so the appeal is not otherwise upheld negatively impacting the landowner or developer.

Oppose

- Limiting municipal authority to include the number of affordable dwelling units proposed by the plan when requiring a development to dedicate a portion of land for parkland use, impose a parkland dedication fee, or both require the dedication and impose the fee.
- Limiting municipal authority to require a parkland dedication fee to a percent of median family income.
- Requiring municipal payment to developments for negative parkland dedication calculations due to affordable dwelling units proposed by development plans.

EXTERNAL FUNDS (HOT TAX, 4B SALES TAX, ETC.)

Support

- Utilizing Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues for park and recreation infrastructure projects.
- Utilizing 4B Sales Tax for quality of life improvement projects like professional and amateur sports and athletics facilities, park and recreational areas, tourism, and entertainment facilities.
- Funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- Funding from the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Great American Outdoors Act.
- Funding from the US Department of Transportation Recreational Trails grant program.

Oppose

- Amending the certificate of formation of 4B Tax corporations that would have a negative financial impact on existing park and recreation services, operations, and maintenance developed or improved by the corporation.
- Municipalities altering or terminating the corporation's existence by a written resolution of the authorizing unit's governing body when it would have a negative financial impact on existing park and recreation services, operations, and maintenance developed or improved by the corporation.
- Limiting the authority of existing or future 4B Tax corporations to provide quality of life improvement projects.
- Exemptions on sales tax for sporting goods. For example, tax-free weekends on sporting goods.
- Exemptions that substantially erode the tax base.
- Any legislation that would erode municipal authority, impose an unfunded mandate, or otherwise be detrimental to cities and their ability to provide a better quality of life to their communities.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a light has been shone on parks and recreation facilities and services regarding their ability to provide benefits beyond providing opportunities for fun and socialization. Parks and recreation provides affordable access to services that enhance mental and physical health, wellness, prevent chronic disease, reduce obesity, and expand opportunities for the development of community networks. TRAPS supports legislation for services and programs that promote improved public mental and physical health, wellness, prevent chronic disease, and reduce social isolation.

Support

- Funding for programs and services that improve mental health through parks and recreation providers.
- Increase in funding for the connection of communities to nature and the outdoors.
- Reducing screen time and promoting physical activity including recreation in the outdoors.
- Legislation that enables parks and recreational professionals to assist in reducing suicide, substance use, obesity, diabetes, and other health and wellness epidemics.
- Enhancing awareness and education regarding serious health issues facing Texans today, such as suicide, substance use, obesity, diabetes, and other health and wellness epidemics, and promoting programs and education that conveys parks as invaluable places that can help people become more active and improve their quality of life regardless of ability, sex, age, socio-economic background, and ethnicity.

ACCESS FOR ALL

TRAPS advocates for funding initiatives that enable all communities to provide programs and facilities including underserved communities and individuals with disabilities. We believe in access to recreational opportunities for all Texans, and we are committed to ensuring that every community has the resources necessary to create accessible recreational spaces.

Support

- Increase in state funding for services and programs that ensure access for people with disabilities.
- Identifying underserved populations and promoting programs and facilities in those communities.
- Eliminating barriers, whether physical or conceptual, to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to access and enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation.
- Increasing coverage of Recreation Therapists in Medicaid and other insurance plans.