

Better NB

**Case Studies of City Initiatives
Making New Braunfels a
Better Community**

Beyond Playgrounds: Continued Expansion of the New Braunfels Parks System Underway



Zipp Family Sports Park is currently under construction and set to open in Spring 2026.

The local park system in New Braunfels is in the midst of a dramatic expansion thanks to several recent land acquisitions, upcoming park openings, and ongoing enhancements to current parks, all in an effort to offer residents a diverse array of outdoor experiences.

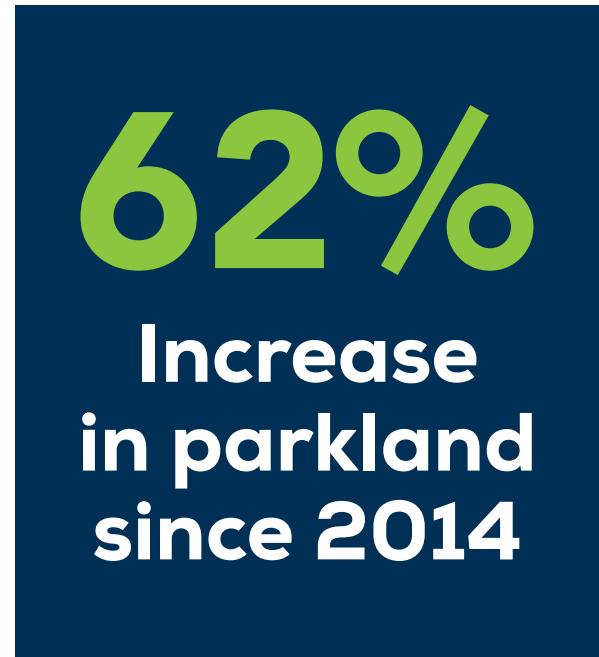
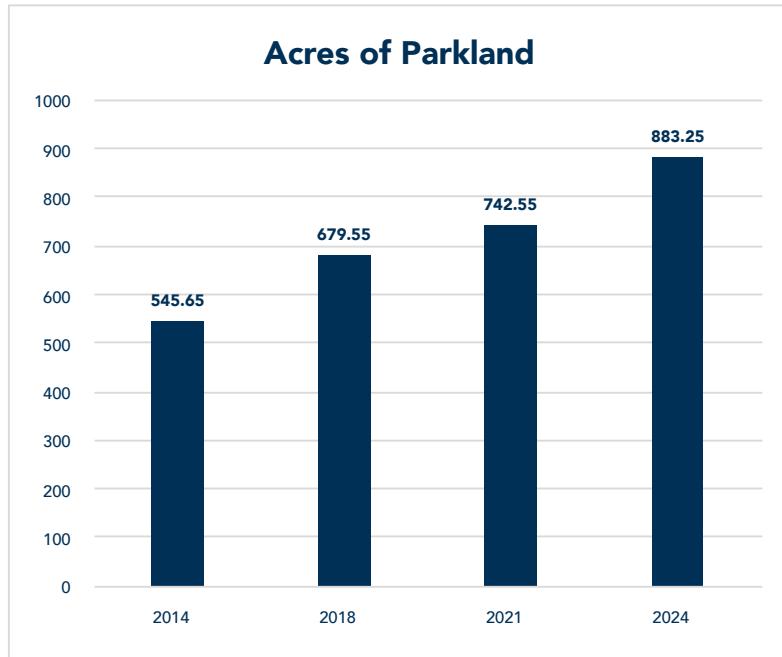
Northwest Park: A Future Landmark

One of the most significant recent acquisitions is the 131-acre property on the northwest side of town. While an official name is still in the works, this property is poised to become the City's largest park. The \$8 million purchase was funded by the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation and includes two parcels of land on the north side of the City along FM 1102, south of Conrads Lane. It is also adjacent to a 15-acre parcel of land currently held by the New Braunfels Parks Foundation.



The Foundation plans to donate this to the City to be a part of the new park. This will bring the total size of the new park to 146 acres, making it almost three times as large as Landa Park (51 acres) and more than double Fischer Park (62 acres). Currently in the early phases of the master planning process, a public meeting will be held later this summer to gather input on the kinds of features and programming that should be offered there. What makes this future park particularly unique is its natural layout. The upper portion of the property is ideal for programmed recreational activities, while the lower area near Alligator Creek will provide a contrasting, more serene nature experience.

"This large addition of parkland is directly in line with the City's Strategic Plan to expand our park system, connecting that growing area of the City with other parks, trails, and greenways, like the Alligator Creek Trail," said Deputy City Manager Jordan Matney. "About 70 acres of the land is relatively flat and has the potential for the development of structures and recreation facilities. There is also approximately 50-acres that are wooded and has the potential to be developed for trails and conservation."



Willard Canyon: A Gift to the Community

Another recent parkland acquisition came to the City thanks to a generous donation from Dr. Fred and Mrs. Colleen Willard. The 10-acre Willard Canyon is now open to the public and features a peaceful walking trail that winds through a tranquil wooded setting. Thanks to funding from the New Braunfels Parks Foundation, the second half of the trail is already under construction and set to open in August. Once completed, the trail will span approximately one mile, offering a complete loop for walkers and nature enthusiasts.

Zipp Family Sports Park: A Game Changer

Among the most anticipated additions is Zipp Family Sports Park, the future home for local youth sports. The park, which is nearing the end of Phase 1 construction, includes:

- Four baseball fields
- Four softball fields
- Four full-sized soccer fields (that are adaptable for junior soccer and other sports)

The New Braunfels Little League, New Braunfels Youth Softball Association, New Braunfels Youth Soccer Association, and other local associations will all benefit from this much needed facility. Grass installation is slated for later this summer, with an expected park opening in 2026.

Mission Hill Park – Phase 2: A View from the Top

Construction on Phase 2 of Mission Hill Park is also underway, expanding the park that first opened in 2022. The approximately 10-acre park is located on Independence Drive near Highway 46 West and the \$12.2 million expansion of the park was funded by the voter-approved 2023 bond. Phase 2 introduces a striking three-story observation tower that will sit on the city's highest elevation, nestled among the tree canopies. One of the park's standout features will be a skywalk that begins at ground level, winds through the treetops, and ends on the second story of the new structure, with scenic stops along the way for photo opportunities. The project also includes new trailheads, parking, restrooms, and an event space. Construction on this elevated experience is expected to wrap up in 2026.



From Oak Creek to Creekside: The Alligator Creek Trail Expansion

In 2021, the City completed the preliminary design for the Alligator Creek Trail to provide a recreation and alternative transportation asset in a rapidly growing area of the community. With segments located on both sides of IH-35, the Alligator Creek Trail will ultimately connect multiple residential and commercial areas while also providing protection and stewardship of the watershed. The West segment has been recently constructed, providing 1.1 miles of trail near the Oak Creek Estates neighborhood. The East segment is in final design, which will connect the Creekside commercial area with Resolute Hospital and FM 1101 with approximately 4 miles of trail within the next few years.



New Trails on the Horizon

In addition to Willard Canyon and the Alligator Creek Trail, additional projects will add miles to the New Braunfels trail system. Preliminary designs are currently underway for the Waterway Lane Hike & Bike Trail that will connect Gruene Road to Old FM 306. The Dry Comal Trail – Segment 1 is in its final design phase, with construction expected to begin in 2026. This segment will contribute about one additional mile of trail, enhancing connectivity and recreational opportunities throughout the city.

"New Braunfels City Council and city management are dedicated to actively improving and expanding our local parks system," said Parks and Recreation Director Chad Donegan. " Not only have we been able to acquire new parkland and expand current facilities, but we are also taking on an ambitious project to upgrade and enhance existing parks."

System-Wide Upgrades Underway

In addition to new park developments and expansions, New Braunfels is also making system-wide upgrades at many of the City's existing parks. These improvements include:

- More than 250 new concrete picnic tables
- New grills, trash cans, and BBQ pits
- Awnings, fencing, and landscaping
- Facility repairs, fresh paint, and new signage
- Enhancements to walking paths and pavilions

These upgrades are in various stages of progress and will continue over the next 18 months across the park system.

With a mix of thoughtful planning, generous community support, and exciting new features, New Braunfels is investing in a vibrant and accessible park system for future generations to enjoy.

