

A large, stylized star graphic composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue shapes. The star is centered in the background and has a five-pointed appearance. The points are formed by the intersection of various circular and triangular segments in different shades of blue.

City of Waco

Senior Programming and Facilities

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Jonathan Cook, Director of Parks & Recreation

Senior Programming and Facilities

Overview

- Demographics and Trends
- Looking at Other Cities
- Current City Initiatives and Programming
- City Senior Facilities
- Looking Ahead



Definitions

Senior Adult

It is generally considered that anyone who reaches the age of 65 is considered a senior adult. It can also be described as one who is retired or has reached the age of retirement.

Senior Centers

Facilities that connect members with resources and services they need, host activities and classes, and foster a sense of community among members.

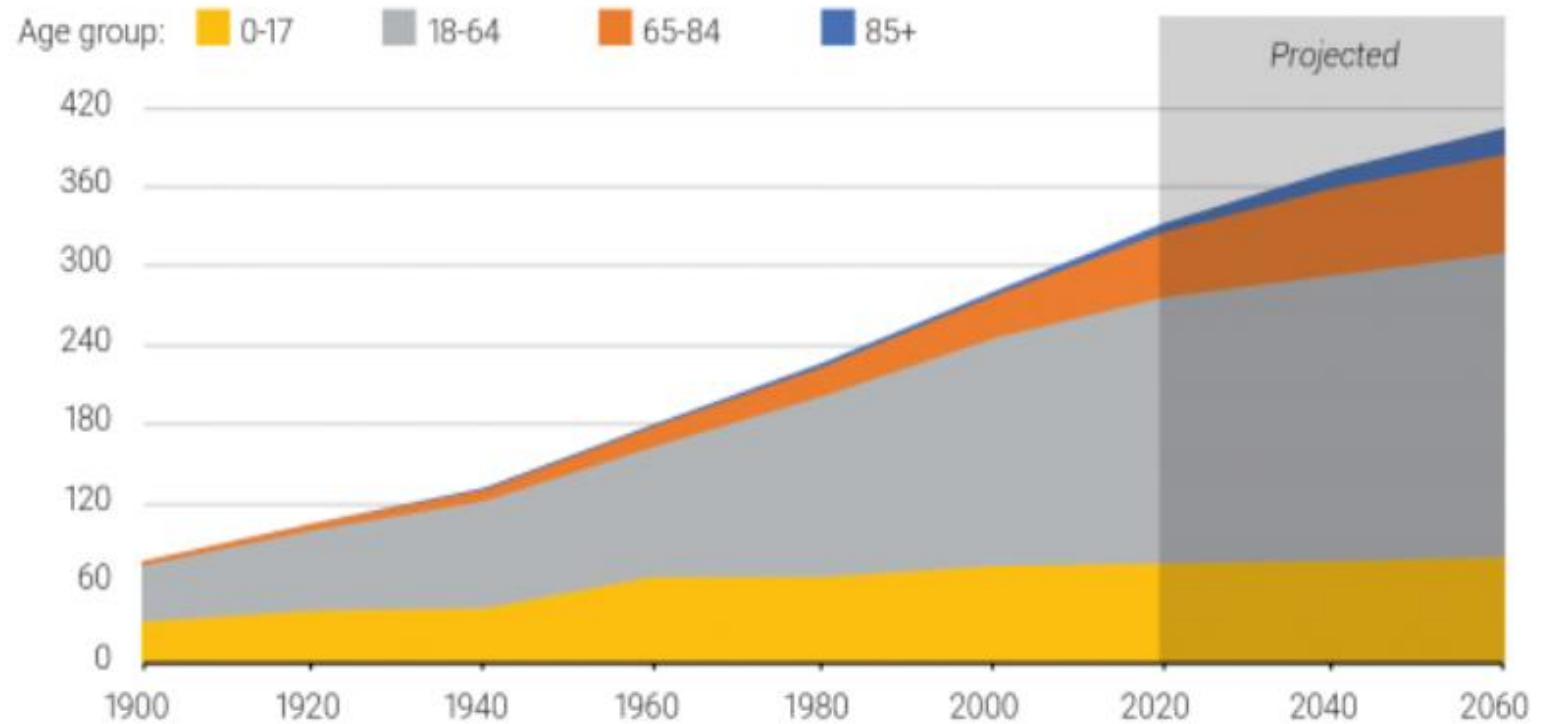
Senior Programming

According to the National Recreation and Park Association, ninety-two percent of municipal agencies offer resources and programs related to older adults.

Ninety-five percent of agencies say that promoting social connection and addressing social isolation are top benefits of their older adult programming.

- Waco's current senior population is 14.2%.
- The national average is 18%. The average is projected to increase to 23% in the next 20 years.

Figure 1. U.S. Population by Age Group (millions), 1900 to 2060



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses and vintage 2017 population projections (2020-2060).

Senior Population is Evolving

According to the Population Reference Bureau:

- Current growth of the population ages 65 and older is unprecedented in U.S. history.
- This aging of the U.S. population has brought both challenges and opportunities to the economy, infrastructure, and institutions.
- The number of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to increase from 58 million in 2022 to 82 million by 2050 (a 47% increase).
- The older population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse – and more active!



HEALTHY AGING IN PARKS & RECREATION



9 IN 10 PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES

DEDICATE FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMING TO OLDER ADULTS

MOST COMMON PARK AND RECREATION
OFFERINGS TO OLDER ADULTS:



91%
EXERCISE
CLASSES



58%
OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER
IN RECREATION CENTERS



70%
FIELD TRIPS,
TOURS, VACATIONS



58%
EVENTS & FESTIVALS
FOR OLDER ADULTS



67%
ARTS & CRAFTS
CLASSES



Looking at Other Cities

	TYPES OF PROGRAMMING	POPULATION	% OVER 65	CITY-OWNED SENIOR CENTERS	CITY-OWNED COMMUNITY CENTERS
COLLEGE STATION	Special events and field trips, fitness, games, education, meals, art, music, senior night out	125,192	7%	1	2
ROUND ROCK	Fitness, social engagement, education, arts, lifestyle - gardening, book club, music and dance, games, entertainment, day trips	130,406	10%	1	1
WACO	Fitness, social engagement, education, arts, games, entertainment, meals	144,816	14%	2	3
DENTON	Special events and field trips, fitness, travel, UNT lifelong learning, arts, music, education, socializing games, meals	158,349	12%	2	3
ARLINGTON	Special events and field trips, land and water fitness, education, games and socializing, art and development	398,431	11%	1*	7
FORT WORTH	Special events and field trips, fitness, travel, learning, arts, music, education, socializing, games, meals	978,468	10%	0	23





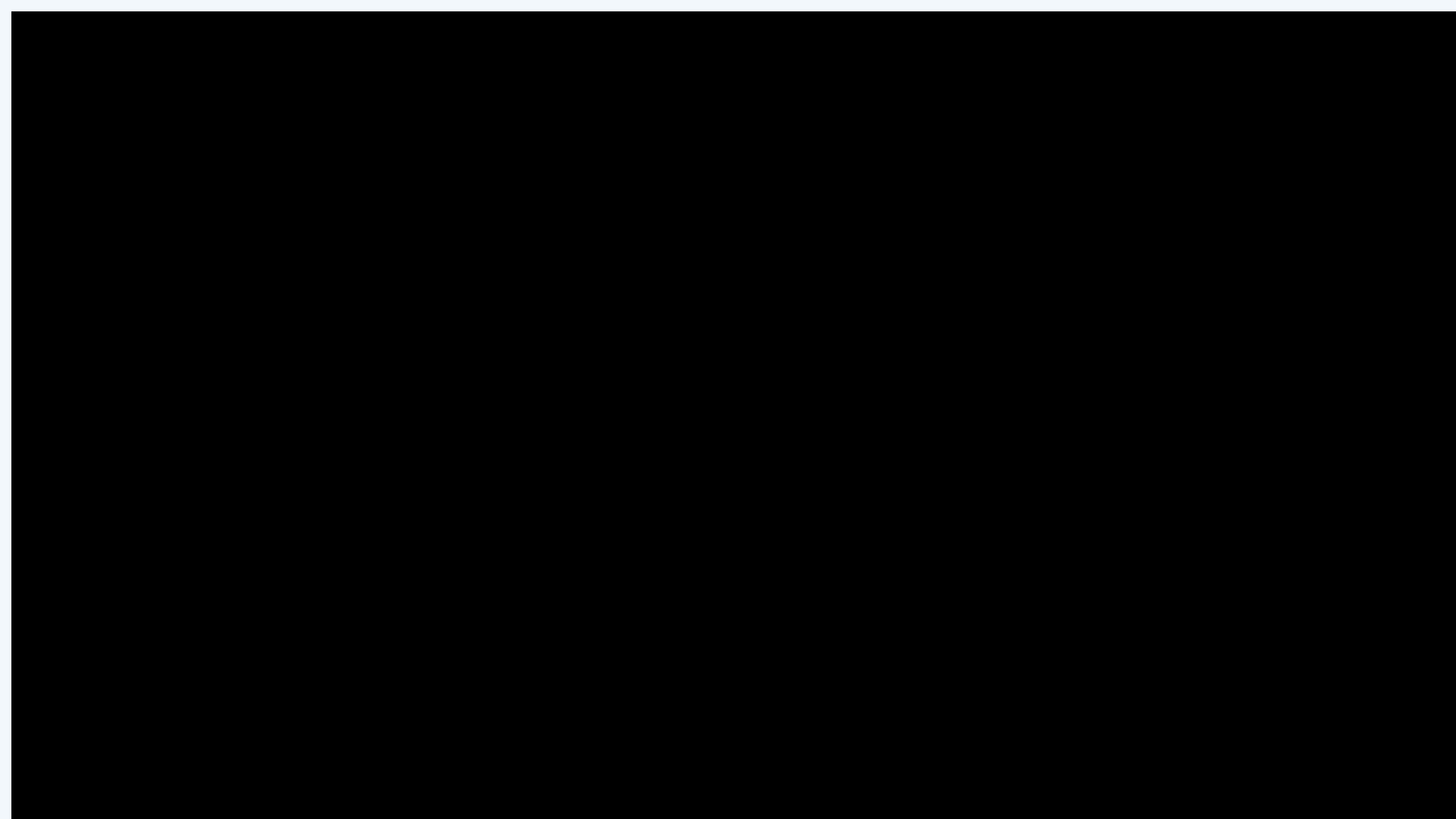
City of Waco Initiatives

- Property Tax Break For Homeowners 65 and Older
- Waco-McLennan County Public Health District
 - Healthy Aging Classes
 - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEP)
 - Mental Health
- Central Texas Senior Ministry
 - Meals on Wheels
 - Pet Programs
 - Congregate Programs
 - Heater and Fan Drives
 - Groceries to Go



City of Waco Initiatives

- Waco Transit
 - Curb-to-Curb Transportation (partnership with Meals on Wheels)
 - Reduced Local Fares – Senior and Medicare Card Holder
- Waco-McLennan County Library
 - Genealogy Classes, Computer Education, Book Clubs, Crafts, History
- Housing and Community Development
 - Rehabilitation Programs for building ramps or interior changes for those with mobility issues
- Cottonwood Creek Golf Course
 - Senior league with 200 members
- Parks and Recreation Community Centers





Dewey, Doris Miller & South Waco Community Centers

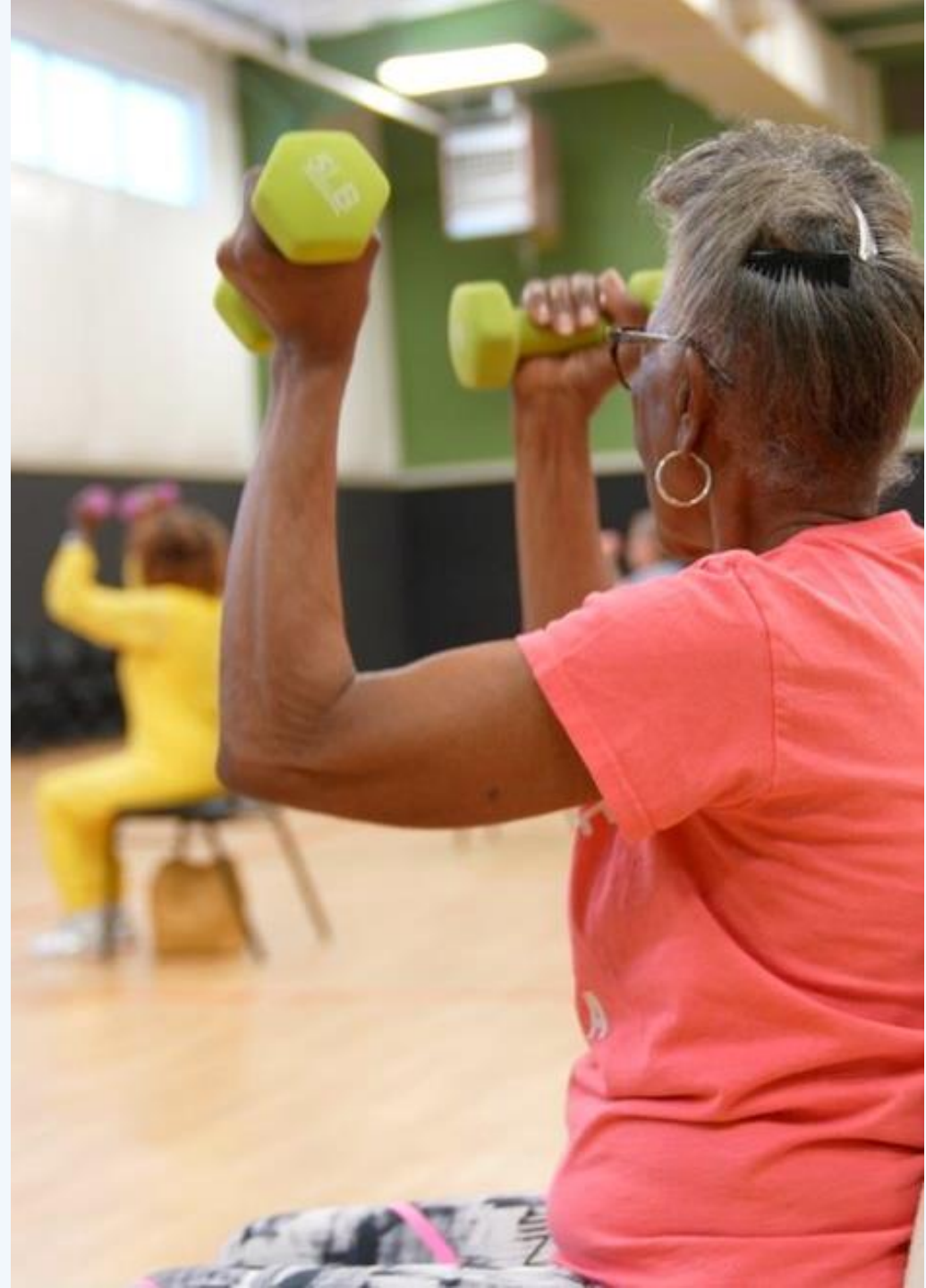


- Renovations: South Waco (2011), Dewey (2016), Doris Miller (2023), Bledsoe-Miller STEM (2025)
- Multi-functional buildings with more than 20,000 square feet of space
- Classrooms, fitness rooms, gyms, computer labs
- Staff present at facilities who host programs and collaborate with local agencies
- Provide activities for all ages daily and specific programming for the senior population
- Serve as community child-care facilities



Current Programming for Seniors

- Weekly Senior Groups Programs
- EnhanceFitness through National Recreation and Park Association
- Fitness Centers
- Meals on Wheels locations
- YMCA for Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring
- Waco-McLennan County Health District for Healthy Aging Classes
- Nutrition classes with Baylor University and Texas AgriLife Extension
- Granny Basketball
- Coming Soon Aquatics and STEM Classes





Harrison Senior Center

- 3,800 square foot facility located on 42nd Street, next to Lions Club and Lions Park
- Built in 1980 with support from W. Earl Harrison, Lions Park Committee and Parks and Recreation Commission
- Small facility with needed repairs and technology updates
- Serves as a community rental room on the weekends
- No dedicated city staff; programming coordinated with other agencies:
 - CTSM / Meals on Wheels Programming
 - Waco Herb Society
 - Waco Coin Club



Sul Ross Senior Center

- 15,000 square foot facility that is located at Waco Drive and 14th Street, next to Sul Ross Park
- Converted from a synagogue to the City's first recreation center in the early 1960s. Improvements made in 1980 with efforts from the Waco Senior Citizens Club.
- Aging facility with needed repairs and technology updates. Potential renovations included in current CIP request plan.
- No dedicated city staff; programming coordinated with other agencies:
 - CTSM / Meals on Wheels Programming
 - Bridge Club
 - Sul Ross Boot Scootin' Dance Club
 - Dance USA
 - Waco Art Group





Strategic Solutions

To maintain quality operations and facilities, senior centers rely on a variety of resources and collaborate with community organizations

- Primary Funding Source – Municipal and County
- Federal and State Governments
- Public and Private Grants
- Fundraising Events
- Businesses
- Bequests
- Participant Contributions
- In-Kind Donations
- Volunteer Hours

Looking Ahead

Opportunities

- Cohesive approach to programming and staffing
- Collaboration with organizations to create equitable and inclusive programming opportunities
- Plan to create or modernize facilities for more safe, accessible spaces for senior programming

THANK YOU.

Questions: Jonathan Cook, Director of Parks & Recreation
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