

# Cypress Creek Greenway

## *Trails Master Plan*

**Inventory  
and  
Analysis of  
Existing  
Conditions**





# Existing Conditions

## *The Study Area*

For purposes of this Trails Master Plan the study area includes approximately 5.5 miles of frontage along Cypress Creek. The study area includes 13.5 square miles and is roughly defined as Spring Cypress Road on the north, Old Louetta and Cutten Roads on the east, Grant Road on the South, and Eldridge Parkway and Grant Road on the west.

## *Population*

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the study area contains roughly 61,000 residents. Significant growth is happening both east and west of the study area, while the Hwy 249 area has experienced a 17.2% increase. This is perhaps due to a lack of undeveloped land within the study area. Multi-family developments near Vintage Park and along Hwy 249 have increased overall density. Demographics and population trends are discussed more thoroughly in the Needs Assessment chapter.

## *Land Use*

The study area contains numerous types of land use, with single family residential being predominant, especially in the western portion of the study area. Prestonwood, Lakewood Forest and portions of Malcomson were developed in the 1970's. The creation of Compaq's campus in the early 80's spurred commercial and office growth in the area, especially along the Highway 249 corridor. Compaq was bought by Hewlett-Packard in 2002 and the campus experienced some changes. Lone Star College - University Park as well as other tenants now occupy some of the campus. In 2006, Vintage Park, a retail shopping center, began development on the east side of Hwy 249 at Louetta. Recent years have seen an increase of multi-family complexes near the development.

## *Jurisdiction*

The study area is governed by multiple entities. The entire study is located within Harris County, Texas. The County is divided into four precincts which are determined by overall County population, each



Figure 2.1 Study Area

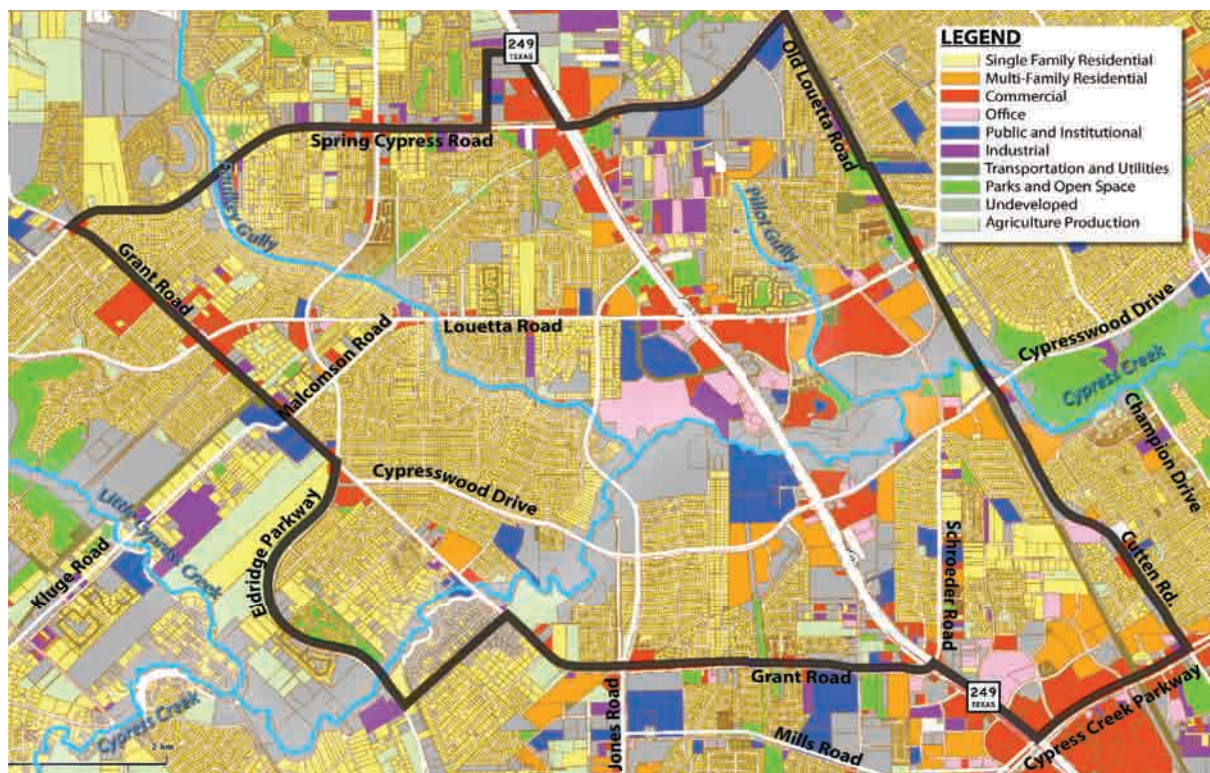


Figure 2.2 Land Use

precinct boundary representing one quarter. 6.61% of the study area falls within Precinct 3, while the remaining 93.39% falls within Precinct 4.

While the majority of the study area falls within the City of Houston's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, areas along Highway 249, Louetta Road, and Cypresswood Drive are within the City's limited purpose boundary, which is typically a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the City and another entity. A small portion of the study area, located at Hwy 249 and Cypress Creek Parkway (FM 1960) is within the City limits.

Fourteen (14) Municipal Utility Districts (MUD) are located within the study area (Fig 2.3). A political subdivision of the State of Texas and a Special Purpose District, MUDs generally provide water and sewer service to the area they manage and can also fund drainage, solid waste, and recreational projects. Regulated by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ), MUDs have the ability to levy taxes and incur debt through the sale of tax bonds.

Three public school districts are located within the study area. Klein ISD students within the study area attend Klein High School, Ulrich and Kleb Intermediate Schools, and Krahn and Brill Elementary Schools. Only Ulrich Intermediate School is located within the study area and enrolls about 1,000 students. A future Klein ISD High School is proposed adjacent to Ulrich on Spring Cypress Road at Cutten Road.

Tomball ISD enrolls 12,464 students. Within the study area students attend Tomball Memorial High School, Willow Wood Junior High, and Lakewood Elementary School. Lakewood Crossing Elementary School is located within the study area and currently enrolls 774 students.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (Cy-Fair ISD), the largest recognized school District within the state of Texas also contains the largest portion of the study area. Students attend Cy-Fair and Cy-Creek High Schools, Hamilton and Bleyl Middle Schools and Hamilton, Moore, Matzke, and Hancock Elementary. Hancock and Moore Elementary schools area located within the study area.

### *Transportation*

The primary mode of transportation within the study area is by personal vehicle. Harris County Major Thoroughfares include Spring Cypress, Louetta, Cypresswood, Grant, Eldridge, Jones, Cutten and Schroeder. Kluge/Malcomson Road is the only major collector within the area. State Highway 249, referred to as the Tomball Parkway, bisects the study area in a south-east, north-west direction and is six lanes plus three to four feeder lanes. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) operates and maintains Hwy 249, while the rest of the roadways within the study area are maintained by Harris County.

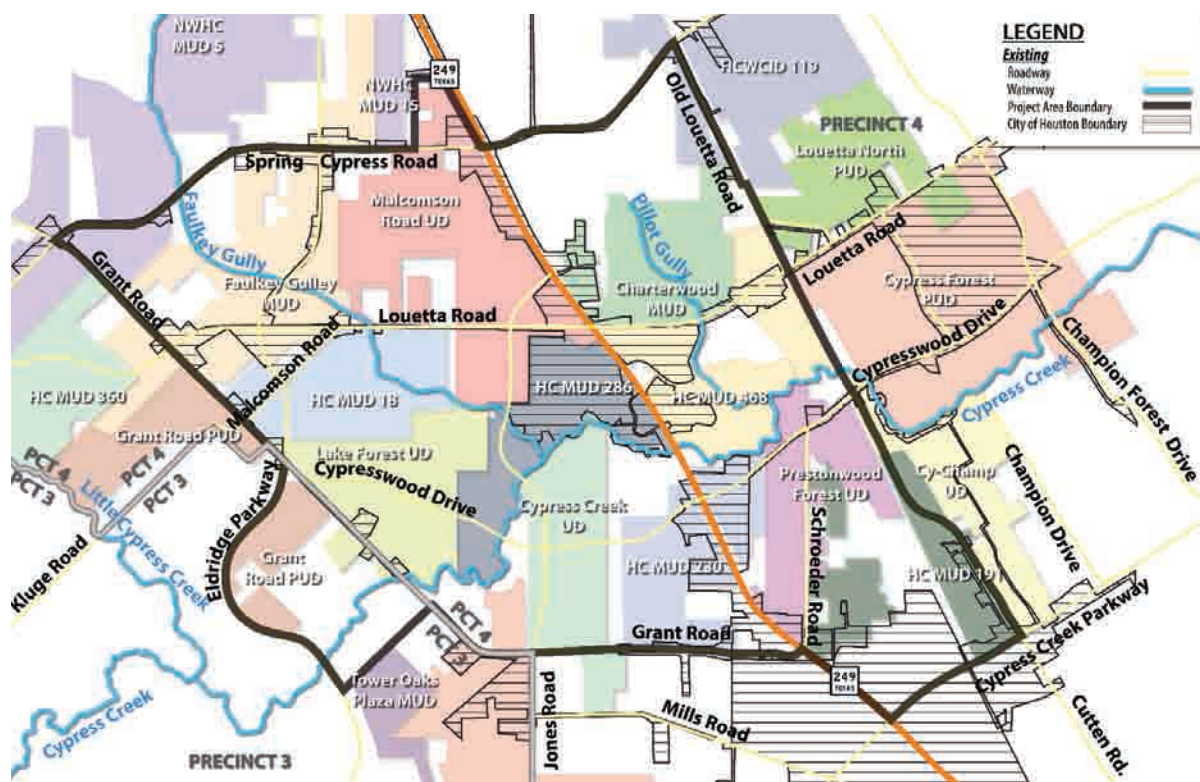
The entire study area falls within the Houston Metro service area. There are 20 Metro bus stops along routes 86 and 44 within the study area, located along Highway 249 and FM 1960. The nearest park and ride is located on Seton Lake Drive near Hwy 249 and Beltway 8 and is located approximately 4 miles from the study area.

### *Major Destinations*

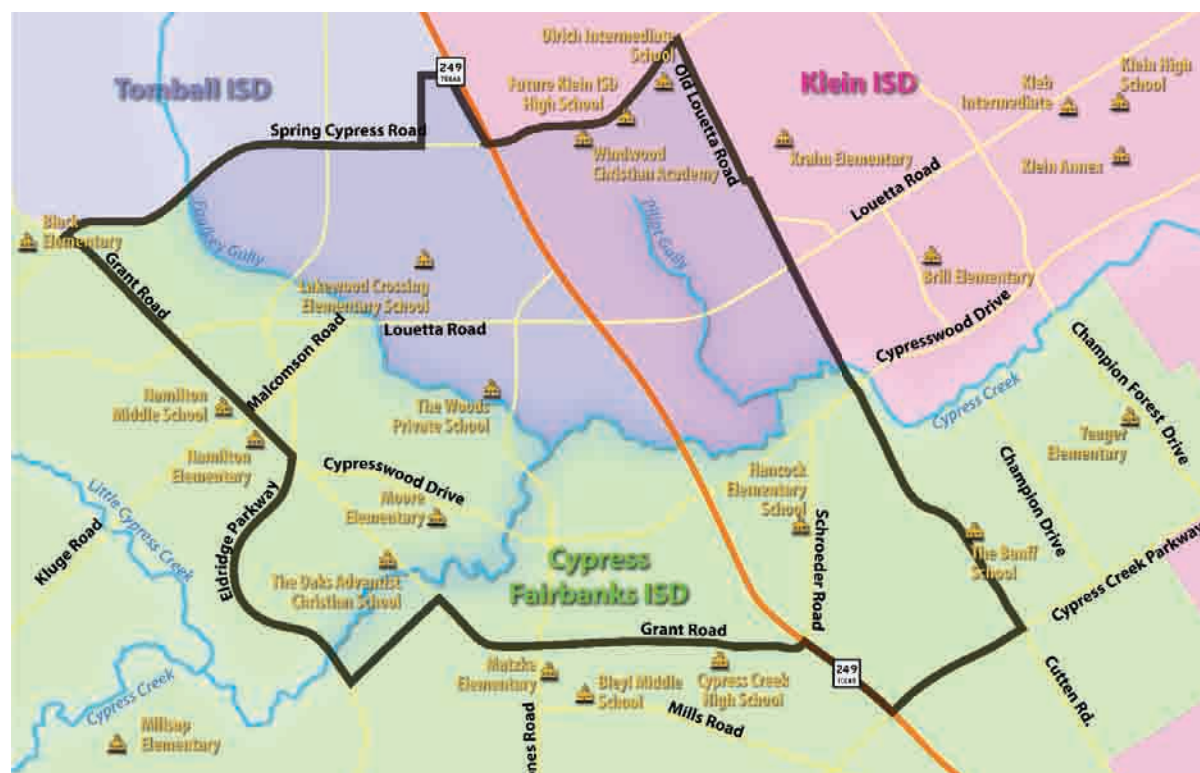
The former Compaq Center Headquarters, now owned and occupied by Hewlett-Packard (HP), is a major office space complex at Highway 249 and Louetta. HP still occupies the majority of the complex, but tenants such as Noble Energy Inc. and Lone Star College - University Park are leasing some space. There are over 9,500 students currently enrolled at the Lone Star campus. Overall, the complex draws approximately 20,000 people, each day, to the area.

The Chasewood Technology Park boasts over 45,000 Sq. Ft. of premium office space adjacent Highway 249. Two more multi-story office buildings are planned and a hotel is currently being constructed on the site.

The Vintage is a 630 acre mixed-use, master planned development at the south-east corner of Highway 249 and Louetta. Vintage Park includes retail shopping, services and restaurants. The development includes office space, a hotel, St. Luke's Hospital and a Kelsey Seybold Clinic. The Vintage is adjacent to the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve, 81.8 acres set aside by the developers and conveyed to Harris County for a future County Park.



### Figure 2.3 Jurisdiction



### Figure 2.4 School Districts and Locations

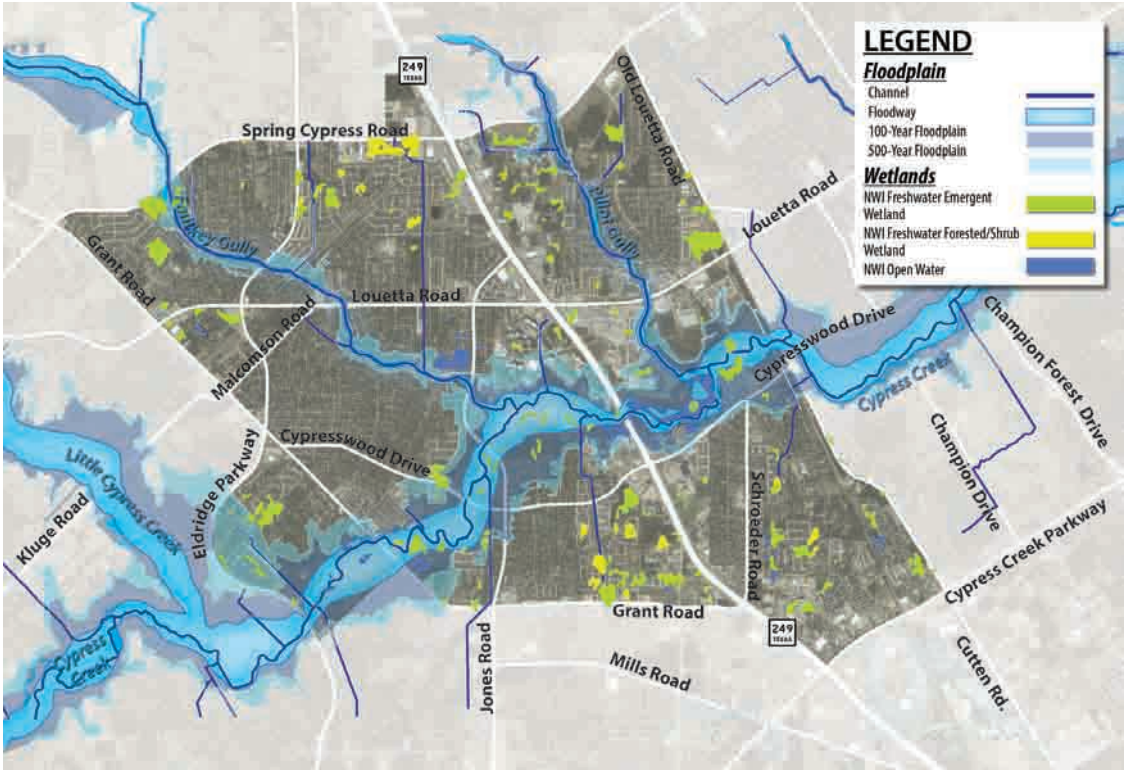


Figure 2.5 Floodplain, Floodway, and Potential Wetland locations

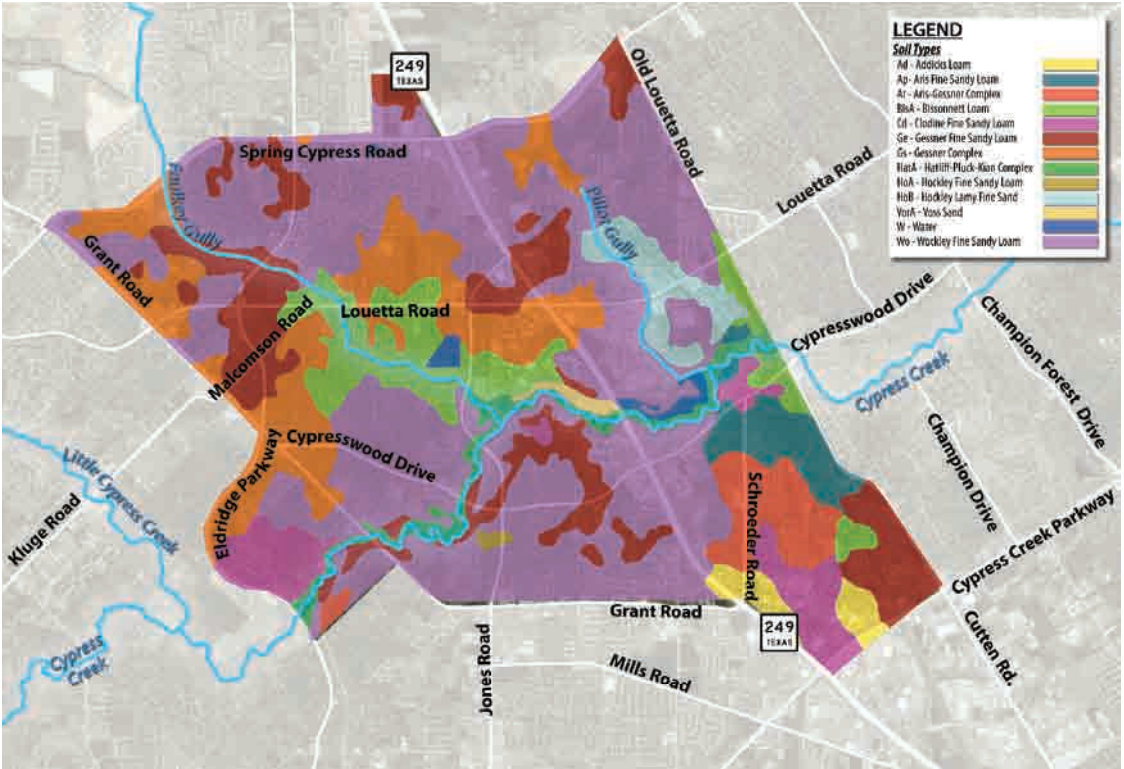


Figure 2.6 Soils

## *The Creek*

Cypress Creek winds its way from Waller County through northern Harris County for over 53 miles. Its watershed is over 300 square miles and includes Little Cypress Creek, Snake Creek, Mound Creek, Faulkey Gully, Pillot Gully, and Turkey Creek. The Creek, along with its tributaries equal 250 miles of open waterways within the watershed. The Creek varies from 1' in width at its source and extends to over 200' wide in some locations. Within the project area, the Creek is an average of 40' wide. Normal depth of the overall creek ranges from 1' - 50', and is approximately 2' - 5' deep within the study boundary. 28,550 Linear Feet of Cypress Creek is included within the study area, as well as portions of Faulkey and Pillot Gullies.

## *Floodplain and Floodway*

Approximately 15.5% of the study area is located within the 100 year floodplain, or 1,350 total acres. These areas are located along Cypress Creek, Pillot Gully, and Faulkey Gully. The floodplain of Little Cypress Creek also extends into the western portion of the study area.

Development is restricted within the 100 year floodplain, and permits are required for any grading within the zone. Any fill within the 100-year floodplain must be offset by a compensating cut within the floodplain; as no net fill is allowed. Fill is not allowed within the regulatory floodway limits. Any proposed crossing (pedestrian bridge, drainage culvert, etc.) of a FEMA-studied stream would require a hydraulic impact analysis, and potentially a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) approved by the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

## *Wetlands*

Utilizing the National Wetlands Inventory maps, National Hydrography Database maps, The Texas Natural Diversity Database, the U.S. Geographic Survey topographic maps and historical aerial images of the study area, locations that would be likely to contain significant natural resources were researched. In total,

104 forested wetland areas, constituting approximately 243 acres were identified. Wetland delineation would need to be performed before proposed trail routes could be finalized for formal design.

## *Soils*

Per the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), twelve (12) soil types are found within the project area. These soils range from very fine sandy loam to loams of varying make-up. Several of the soils are identified as hydric soils for Harris County, and therefore have the potential to promote the formation of wetland areas where water is able to remain for a sufficient period of time during the growing season.

## *Endangered Species*

Three protected species known to occur within the vicinity of the project are Texas Prairie Dawn (*Hymenoxys texana*), Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), and the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The Texas Natural Diversity Database (TxNDD) does not identify any known records of these species within the project area, however, more detailed studies should be performed before designing specific trail routes.

## *Cultural Resources*

Approximately 25% of the study area has been previously surveyed for cultural resources. 57 archaeological sites have been recorded, and a majority of these sites are located along Cypress Creek. Two of these locations are listed as State Antiquities Landmarks (SALs) and are both open campsites of undefined prehistoric age located on terraces overlooking Pillot Gully. Upon review, there is low probability for significant archaeological deposits within much of the study area, however locations immediately adjacent to Cypress Creek remain relatively undisturbed and may contain medium-to-high probability for intact archaeological deposits. Field surveys should be conducted once trail alignments have been defined, in more detail, to identify archaeological resources.



# Recreation

## Existing Park Facilities

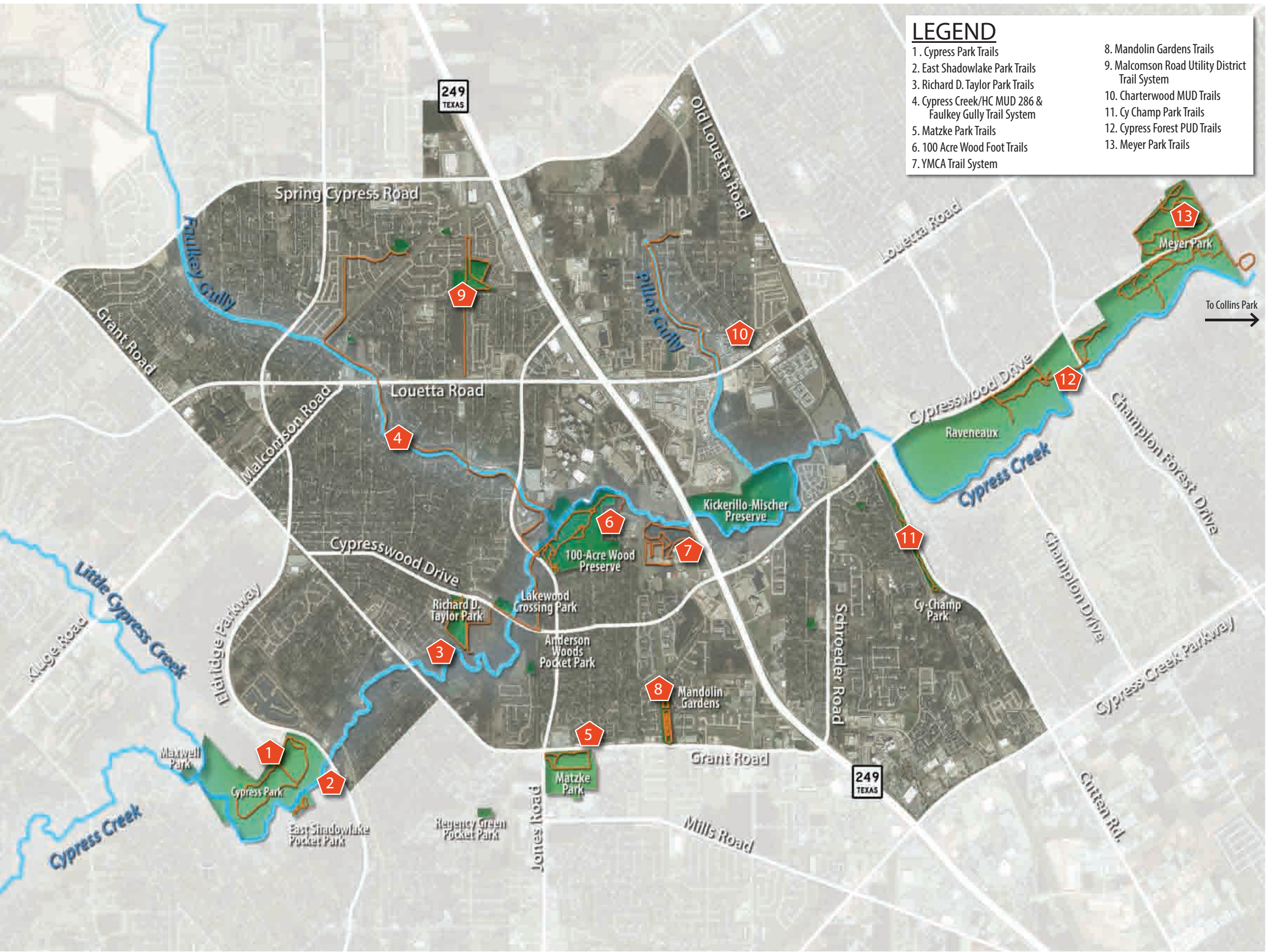
There are over 230 acres of existing park facilities within the study area. The two largest parks, the 100 Acre Wood preserve (98.04 acres) and the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve (45 acres) are located adjacent to Cypress Creek. Both parks are owned by Harris County and have limited development. The 100-Acre Wood preserve is primarily forested and contains over two miles of natural trails. Harris County is currently constructing a 10-foot asphalt trail through the preserve. The Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve contains a 40 acre lake. A master plan was developed for the site in 2007 and is pending, due to lack of funding.

Semi-private and private park facilities also exist within the study area including Home Owner Association facilities, designated for residents within a specific neighborhood as well as some utility district funded recreational projects in Lakewood Forest and Malcomson. The D. Bradley McWilliams at Cypress Creek YMCA is a large members only complex located near HWY 249.

Just outside the study area, along Cypress Creek, large County Parks provide additional recreation. Cypress Park, recently developed at Eldridge Parkway by Harris County Precinct 3 includes a large detention basin, exercise stations and walking trails. Meyer Park, a 180 acre facility has multiple ball fields, playgrounds, and trails. Collins Park, at 55 acres, contains numerous ballfields including baseball, softball, and soccer.

## Existing Trails

Over 16 miles of trails currently exist within the study area. These trails vary in width and material and have been developed by various entities. Existing asphalt trails along Faulkey Gully and Cypress Creek serve as major trails and provide greater distances. Shorter, minor trails exist within neighborhoods and parks and are typically loop trails. Each trail is described in more depth on the following pages, including material, ownership, and total length.







# Existing Trails



**Cypress Park Trails**  
Harris County Flood Control

- Asphalt Trails
- 7,340-feet



**East Shadowlake Park Trails**  
Harris County

- Asphalt Trails
- 1,795-feet



**Richard D. Taylor Park Trails**  
Lake Forest Utility District

- Asphalt Trails
- 4,370-feet



**Cypress Creek/HC MUD 286 & Faulkey Gully Trail System**  
HC MUD 286 & Faulkey Gully Greenbelt Association

- Mixture between Asphalt and Concrete Trails
- 22,075-feet



**Matzke Park Trails**  
Harris County Precinct 4

- Asphalt Trails
- 4,004-feet



**100 Acre Wood Trails**  
Harris County

- Compacted Earth Surfaces
- 12,100-feet



**YMCA Trail System (Private)**  
Cypresswood YMCA

- Mixture of Compacted Earth, Decomposed Granite, and Asphalt Trails
- 7,500-feet



**Mandolin Gardens Trails**  
HC MUD 230

- Concrete Trails
- 8,450-feet



**Malcomson Road Utility District Trail System**  
Malcomson Road Utility District

- Mixture between Asphalt and Decomposed Granite Trails
- 8,660-feet

10



**Charterwood MUD Trails**  
Charterwood MUD

- Asphalt Trails
- 9,370-feet

11



**Cy Champ Park Trails**  
Cy Champ PUD & HC MUD 191

- Mixture of Decomposed Granite and Asphalt Trails
- 12,650-feet

12



**Cypress Forest PUD Trails**  
Cypress Forest PUD

- Concrete Surfaces
- 6,400-feet

13



**Meyer Park Trails**  
Kleinwood MUD

- Asphalt, Concrete and Compacted Earth Trails
- 30,350-feet

# Malcomson Road Utility District

## General Information

District Size: 894.1 Acres

Parks: Lakewood Grove Community Park, Lakewood Grove Park, Hermitage Oaks Pocket Park

Adjacent Trail: Faulkey Gully Trail System

Existing Trail Surfaces: Asphalt, Decomposed Granite, Concrete

## Overview of Existing Conditions

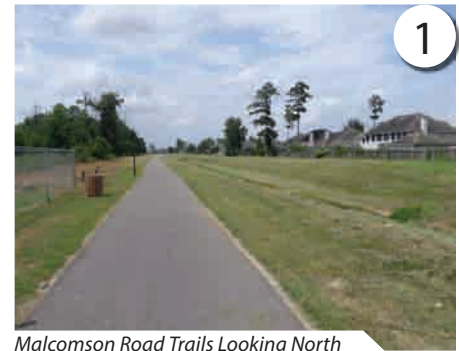
Malcomson Road Utility District has numerous existing trail facilities which provide connectivity to recreational facilities. Concrete sidewalks within the Lakewood Grove subdivision allow residents to travel safely to the Lakewood Grove Community Park as well as a pocket park. These sidewalks also connect to the existing asphalt trails along Faulkey Gully and the K142-05-00 drainage channel. Decomposed granite trails surround the detention basin near the center of the District with direct connectivity into the neighborhood and the drainage channel trail which connects south to Louetta Road.

## Opportunities

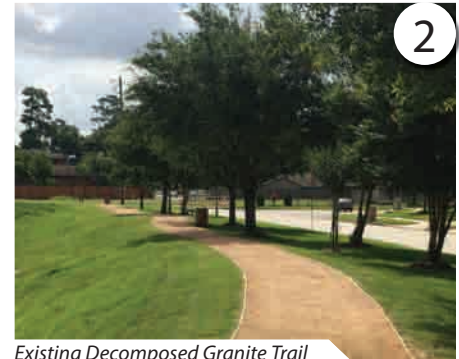
- A utility easement in the northern part of the District could be utilized for an off-road path
- The trail along K142-05-00 could be extended across Louetta Road to the Faulkey Gully trail
- Sidewalks along Jones Road could provide a major connection
- A loop trail system could be developed around a detention basin, just outside the District near Spring Cypress Road

## Constraints

- Louetta and Spring Cypress Road have few controlled intersections
- Limited right-of-way, as well as extensive utility boxes and roadway signage may provide challenges to a future sidewalk



Malcomson Road Trails Looking North



Existing Decomposed Granite Trail



View South of Utility Easement



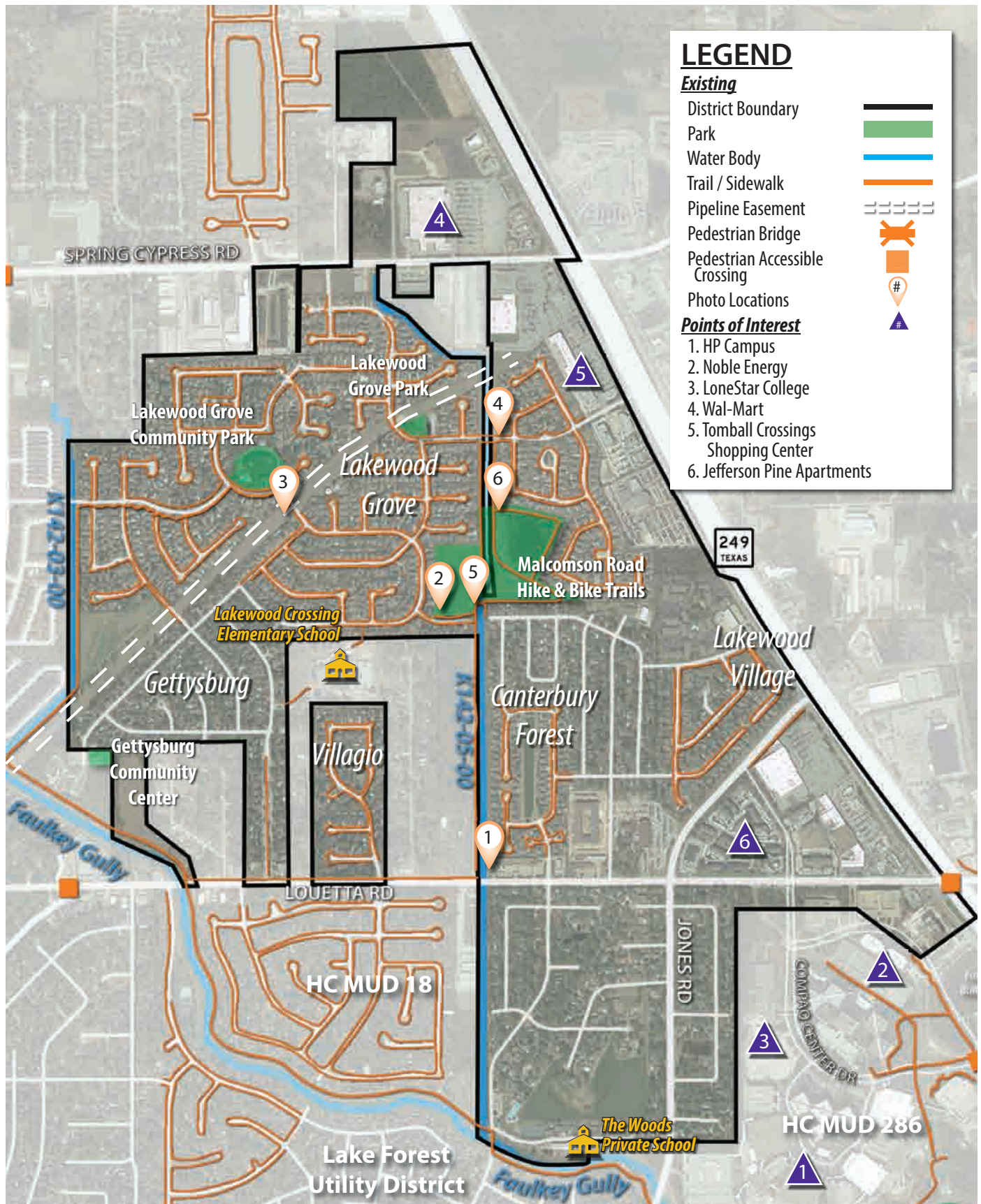
View of Malcomson Road Trailhead



Bench Along Trail



Exercise Equipment Along Trail



# Lake Forest Utility District

## General Information

District Size: 570 Acres

Parks: Richard D. Taylor Park

Adjacent Parks/Trails: Lakewood Crossing Park, Faulkey Gully Trail

Existing Trail Surfaces: Asphalt

## Overview of Existing Conditions

Lake Forest Utility District is primarily an established residential neighborhood divided by Cypresswood Drive. Although there are no internal sidewalks, the existing Faulkey Gully trails can be accessed at the northern edge of the District from Lakewood Forest Drive. Richard D. Taylor Park, a District owned and maintained park, contains existing asphalt trails and connects to out-of-District trails to the east. Cypress Creek to the south of the District has no direct trail access at this time.

## Opportunities

- The Lakewood Forest Fund, homeowner association for Lakewood Forest residents may be a good partner for future projects
- A HCFCD owned parcel at the southern end of the District could provide direct access to Cypress Creek
- Pedestrian improvements along Grant Road could provide access to Hamilton Elementary
- Median along Cypresswood Drive could be utilized for a pedestrian trail although current regulations do not allow
- Future re-design and construction of Grant Road could include pedestrian improvements

## Constraints

- Homes front directly onto Cypresswood Drive, making a future sidewalk along the corridor challenging



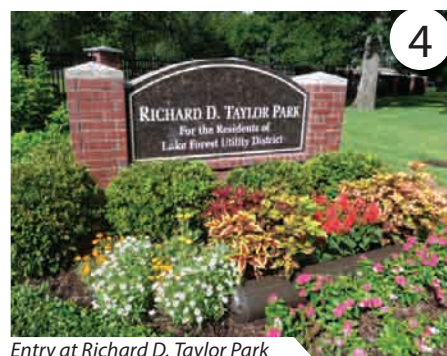
View of Grant Road



Trail Along Faulkey Gully



View of Richard D. Taylor Park Trail



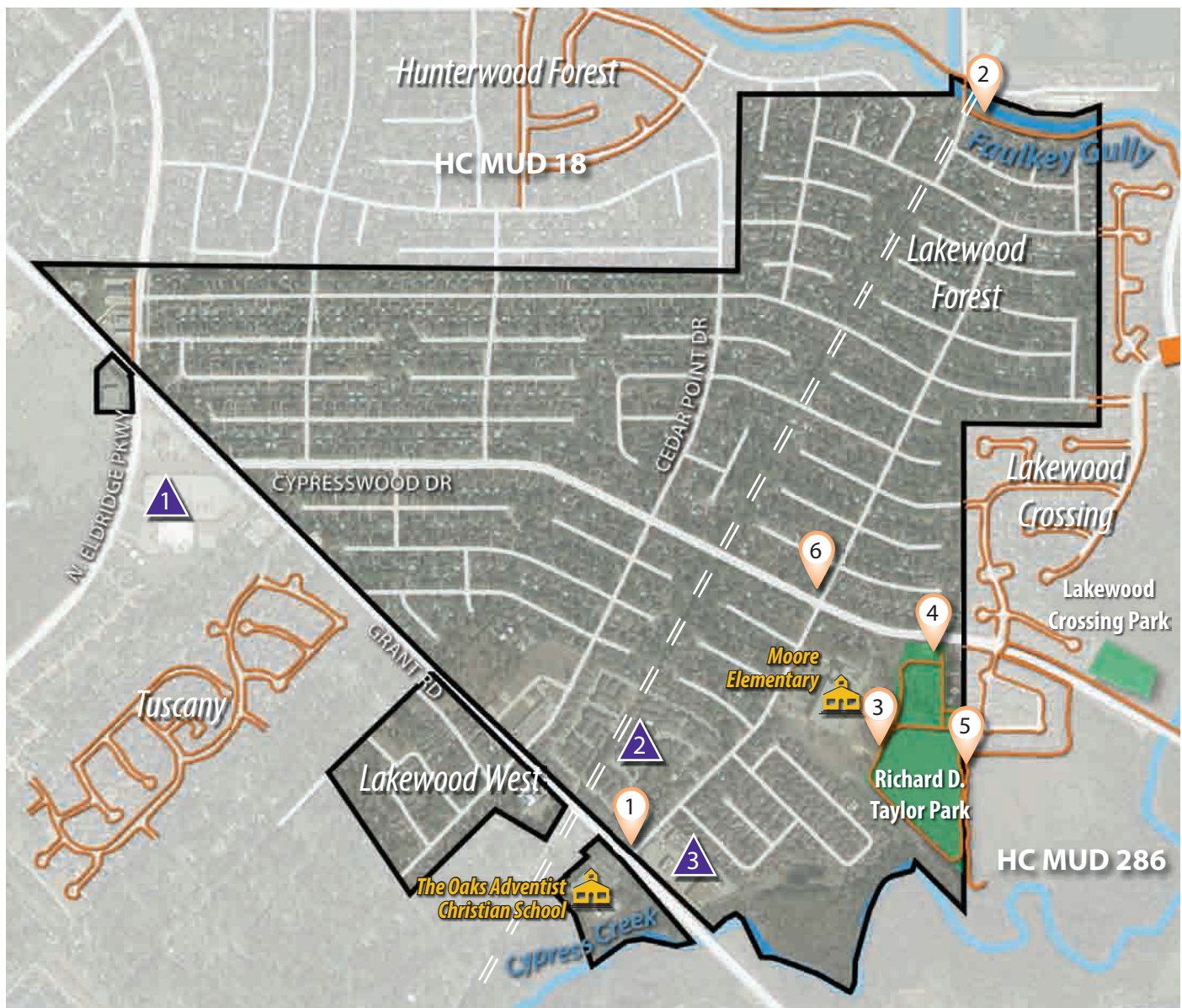
Entry at Richard D. Taylor Park



Wooded Area of Richard D. Taylor Park



View Along Cypresswood Drive



## LEGEND

### Existing

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| District Boundary              |  |
| Park                           |  |
| Water Body                     |  |
| Trail / Sidewalk               |  |
| Pipeline Easement              |  |
| Pedestrian Accessible Crossing |  |
| Photo Locations                |  |

### Points of Interest

1. Walmart Shopping Center
2. Village in the Woods Apartments
3. Lakewood Forest Shopping Center

# Harris County MUD No. 286

## General Information

District Size: 454.7 Acres

Parks: Lakewood Crossing Park

Adjacent Parks: 100-Acre Wood Preserve, Richard D. Taylor Park, Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve

Existing Trail Surfaces: Asphalt, Concrete, Decomposed Granite, Compacted Earth

## Overview of Existing Conditions

Extensive frontage along Cypress Creek, as well as multiple mixed-use developments provide Harris County MUD No. 286 with future trail opportunities. Existing major trails along Faulkey Gully connect the Lakewood Crossing neighborhood to trails along the K143-00-00 drainage channel, south, to Cypresswood Drive. Existing sidewalks within Lakewood Crossing and a signalized intersection at Jones Road and Lakewood Crossing Boulevard provide safe paths for residents to Cypress Creek.

Directly south of the District, extensive natural trails within the 100 Acre Wood Preserve are heavily used by the areas off-road biking enthusiasts as well as nature lovers. Although not maintained, existing natural paths along Cypress Creek, within the HP complex, are still being utilized.

## Opportunities

- Frontage along Cypress Creek where more trails could be developed
- Trails within HP property could benefit both employees and others
- Off-road trails provide minimal pedestrian - vehicle conflict points
- Some parcels owned by HCFCD
- Multiple access points to Cypress Creek

## Constraints

- Maintenance and formalization of HP trails would need a sponsor and agreement from HP for public usage
- Environmental/cultural studies may be needed for proposed corridors near Cypress Creek



View of Faulkey Gully



Natural Surface Trail at LoneStar Campus



Natural Surface Trails at HP Campus



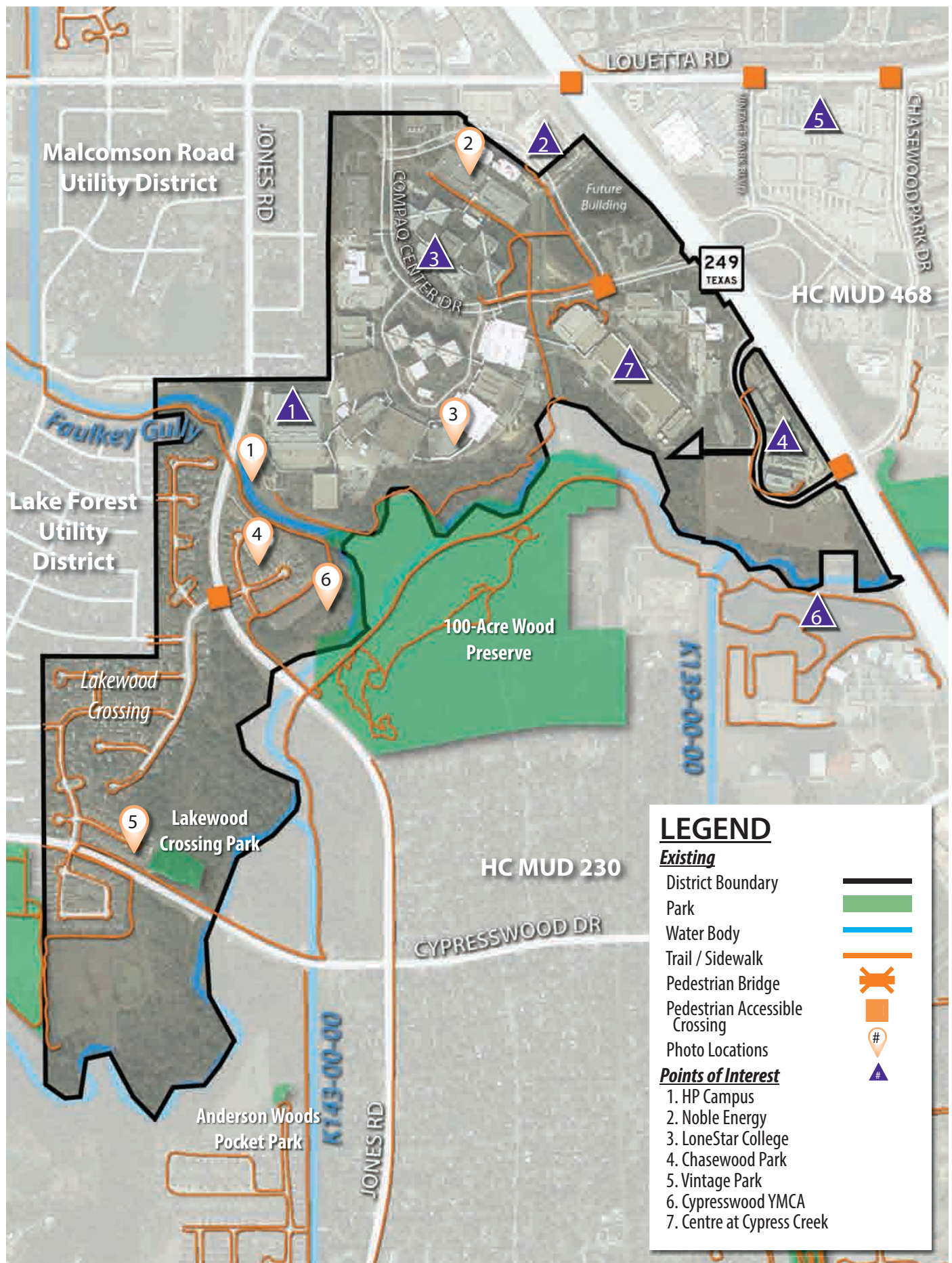
HC MUD 286 Trail Along Cypress Creek



Playground at Lakewood Crossing Park



View of Cypress Creek from 100 Acre Wood



# Harris County MUD No. 468

## General Information

District Size: 529.1 Acres

Parks: Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve

Adjacent Trails: Charterwood MUD Trails

Existing Trail Surfaces: Concrete

## Overview of Existing Conditions

Harris County MUD No. 468 is a mixed-use District which includes retail, restaurants, medical, office and commercial space within the Vintage Park Development. The Vintage Royale subdivision is located across Louetta Road as well as several multi-family developments located throughout the District. Although existing trails are limited, future plans to develop the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve will provide 85 acres of natural and passive recreation and would quickly become a regional destination. Existing trails within Charterwood MUD, provide access for residents to the north of the District to the Vintage Park Development.

## Opportunities

- Sidewalks could be developed through the Vintage Park area to provide more pedestrian activity.
- Extending trails along Pillot Gully could tie into the Preserve
- An undercrossing of Highway 249 at Cypress Creek would extend trail distances and provide access from HP Complex to retail/restaurants
- A District owned detention facility would be a prime location for a loop trail system

## Constraints

- Although a master plan has been developed for the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve, no funding has been allocated
- Lack of sidewalks throughout Vintage Park limits pedestrian traffic to future trail systems along Pillot Gully and Cypress Creek



Vintage Park Boulevard



Charterwood MUD Trails



View South on Cutten Road



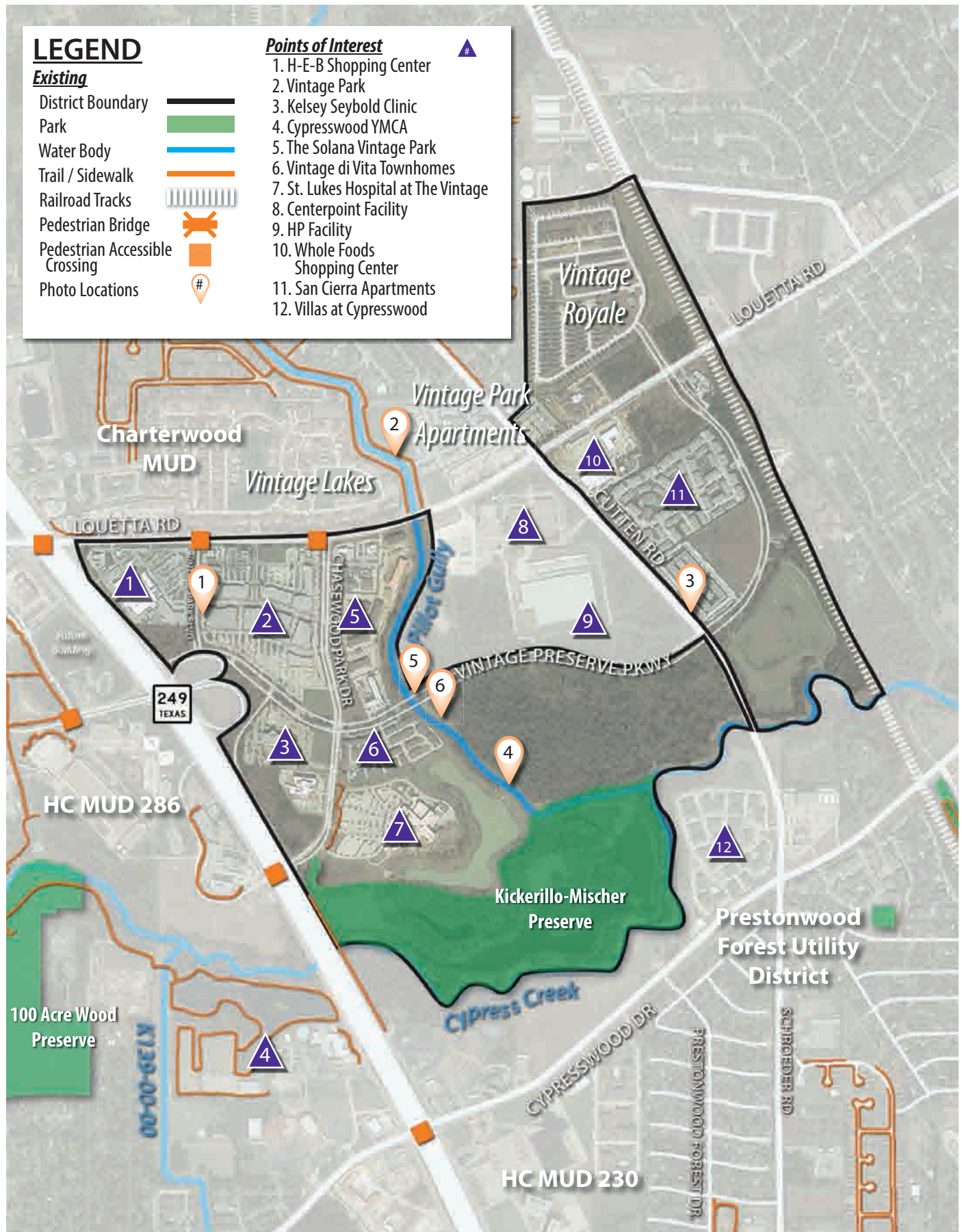
Panorama Behind St. Luke's Hospital



Vintage Preserve Parkway Looking East



Pillot Gully Looking South



# Prestonwood Forest Utility District

## General Information

District Size: 423.8 Acres

Parks: Prestonwood Forest Community Pool, Prestonwood Forest Park

Adjacent Parks/Trails: Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve, Cy-Champ Park

Existing Trail Surfaces: Concrete and Compacted Earth

## Overview of Existing Conditions

Prestonwood Forest Utility District is primarily single family residential, as well as two multi-family developments. The only existing trails within the District are located in the Prestonwood Forest Park, adjacent to Hancock Elementary School. The northern edge of the District borders Cypress Creek and the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve. The lack of internal sidewalks within the District, as well as SH 249 on the south, and railroad on the east provides some challenges to connectivity.

## Opportunities

- Frontage along Cypress Creek where more trails could be developed
- The former Volunteer Fire Department facility, adjacent to Cypress Creek, is owned by the District. This location could serve as a future trail head and/or crossing location for Cypress Creek into the Preserve
- Properties owned by Malcomson Road UD, Tomball Road UD, and HCMUD 230, adjacent to Cypress Creek could also be included in a trail head facility
- A pedestrian crossing of the railroad at Cypresswood Drive would allow access to Cy-Champ Park which is heavily used by Prestonwood residents
- A large utility corridor along the south side of Cypresswood Drive may allow for a trail

## Constraints

- Existing driveways along Prestonwood Forest Drive limit ability to construct sidewalks
- The nearest controlled intersection with pedestrian crossing is located at Highway 249



Typical Streetscape



Natural Trail at Hancock Elementary



Volunteer Fire Department Building



View of Cypress Creek



Prestonwood Forest Drive



Utility Corridor Along Cypresswood Drive

