



NEWS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Corpus Christi Ranks #1 in Texas Cities! Ties at 28th Nationally in Trust for Public Land's 2014 ParkScore Index

Corpus Christi, TX – Corpus Christi debuted in a tie for 28th among the 60 largest U.S. cities on The Trust for Public Land's 2014 ParkScore[®] ranking list.

Corpus Christi ranked best of the seven Texas cities analyzed by the ParkScore system. Austin ranked 33rd, while Arlington and Dallas tied at 36th, Fort Worth tied with Houston for 48th and San Antonio finished at 53rd. Corpus Christi shared its 28th place rank with Detroit, Honolulu, Phoenix, and Tampa.

This follows recognition at the state level in February of this year with top honors from the Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS). The City of Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation Department was awarded the Gold Medal Class I Award. In the face of seemingly devastating budget reductions and the obsolescence of an aging infrastructure, the department realigned resources, implemented new leadership principals and cultivated essential community partnerships to reframe the department's role in the community and re-establish confidence in their programs and services. By using the 2012 Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a map, the team is systematically improving an aged park system by focusing on community parks, designing improvements that reduce maintenance and operational costs, and providing a variety of amenities that appeal to a wide variety of ages and interests.

This year, the ParkScore evaluation system expanded its ranking list from the 50 largest U.S. cities in 2013 to the 60 largest. This change was a very good thing for Corpus Christi since it is the 60th largest city in the nation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

With a recorded 4.5 playgrounds per 10,000 residents, Corpus Christi scored one of the highest in the nation on playground access. ParkScore rated Corpus Christi at 70 percent for park access accounting for local residents living within a 10-minute walk of a local park, which is well above the

national average of 64 percent. The city was found lacking for median park size, which was assessed by the percentage of city acreage reserved for parks, as well as for spending per capita on parks, receiving below average ParkScore marks.

“You can't have a great city without great parks,” said Adrian Benepe, Senior Vice President and Director of City Park Development for The Trust for Public Land. “Parks provide a place for children and adults to be physically active, and they serve as community meeting places where friendships are built and a sense of community is strengthened.”

While the ranking serves to show where Corpus Christi stands among the 60 other largest U.S. cities, the findings assessed from the ParkScore measurements also indicate that Corpus Christi lacks parkland and that it would benefit from adding a few larger parks. These findings and recommendations gleaned from this evaluation may be incorporate into a future parks master plan to enhance the city.

“We are extremely pleased to be recognized by The Trust for Public Land as the best in Texas,” said Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation Director Michael Morris. “A new Parks Master Plan was created and adopted by the City Council in 2012. It echoes the findings of this index. Corpus Christi has a gem of a park system, but going forward we should work toward creating larger parks and the resources to service them more thoroughly. The citizens of Corpus Christi should be very proud of this designation because it demonstrates the City’s commitment to parks and recreation.”

About ParkScore

For more information about the ParkScore collection methods and criteria, visit www.parkscore.tpl.org. It is an in-depth free and public online resource with a wealth of data and tools available for local leaders to use as a guide for park improvements.

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. Learn more at www.tpl.org.

About Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation Department

The Department is responsible for overseeing 2,100 acres of developed and undeveloped open spaces (parks, City beaches, natural habitats, etc.) and facilities (recreation centers, pools, gyms, ball fields, senior centers, tennis and golf courses, etc.) to enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike. Its team invites everyone to utilize its many excellent services and facilities. It offers a wide-range of recreational, social, nutritional and educational activities for all ages and interests. Its programs emphasize health and fitness, quality of life, accessibility and affordability. The department provides an environment to enhance everyone’s lives in their pursuit of happiness and encourages positive lifestyle choices for life-long well-being. For more information, visit www.ccparkandrec.com. **Live. Learn. Play!**