



5. Public Input

5.1 Introduction

The recommendations of the 2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan are designed to reflect the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of Waxahachie. Citizen input is key to determining what facilities are most needed, where key needs exist, and what level of emphasis the citizens of Waxahachie would like to place on key recommendations of the Parks Master Plan.

Several methods were used to gain citizen input. These included public presentations to the Parks and Recreation Board, an extensive and scientifically accurate City wide attitude (telephone) survey, and a presentation at a public meeting.

5.2 Public Involvement

Public involvement is a key part of the process of developing the Parks Master Plan. The goal of the Public Involvement Program was to obtain input from City of Waxahachie stakeholders about their community priorities and understand the unique characteristics of the City of Waxahachie. The program also familiarized citizens with the master planning process and created awareness of opportunities for improvement. An estimated 430 individuals participated in one or more components of the Public



Involvement Program. This enabled citizens to develop a sense of ownership and support for the overall Parks Master Plan.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather citizen input. The Public Involvement Program had two components: telephone survey and a public meeting.

Citizen Attitude Survey

A 2005 Parks and Recreation Attitude Survey was conducted. This public opinion poll captured attitudes on parks and recreational issues in Waxahachie from respondents that were randomly selected from phone-matched households. A total of 400 respondents were interviewed using a comprehensive telephone questionnaire that collected attitudinal data on a variety of issues including ratings of existing facilities, need for additional facilities/amenities, and overall satisfaction with recreational options. A strategic summary of findings from the telephone survey is presented at the end of this chapter.

Public Meeting

The Consultant Team participated in a public event at City Hall on April 24, 2006. Attendees viewed a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the project and outlined some of the preliminary findings. Attendees were also given the opportunity to view project exhibit boards, talk one-on-one with the consultants, and complete a written questionnaire. Each participant had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about parks and recreation.

5.3 *Citizen Attitude Survey*

Raymond Turco & Associates conducted the city's 2005 Recreation Needs Assessment and Attitude Survey, a component of city's parks and recreation master plan update. This public opinion poll captured attitudes on parks and recreational issues in the community from respondents randomly selected from phone-matched households. The full sample of 400 respondents was interviewed with a comprehensive questionnaire that collected attitudinal data on a variety of recreational issues including quality ratings of facilities, need for construction of additional amenities, and satisfaction with recreational characteristics.

The advantage of a telephone survey is that it is randomly conducted and therefore less susceptible to bias by the respondents. The information that is gathered in this report allows City leaders to better understand the recreational needs and desires of its citizenry.

Below is a Strategic Summary of the City of Waxahachie 2005 Parks and Recreation Attitude Survey. See also Addendum A: Public Participation – Telephone Survey.

5.4 *Strategic Summary of the Attitude Survey*

Better than four of five residents (84%) were satisfied (63%) or very satisfied (21%) with the quality of parks and recreation in Waxahachie, while twelve percent were either dissatisfied (10%) or very dissatisfied (2%). The remaining 4% had no opinion. The ratio of satisfied to dissatisfied respondents was seven to one.



Park usage over the previous 12 months, rated as follows:

Table 5.1: Parks and Recreation Facility Usage		
Facility Usage		Facility Type
Visited or used a municipal park or park facility	86%	Passive
Visited a city playground	70%	Passive
Visited or used a city park pavilion	64%	Passive
Used a municipal hike and bike trail	60%	Non-athletic
Visited Lake Waxahachie	56%	Passive
Visited or used a municipal athletic field	50%	Athletic
Participated in a youth athletic league	30%	Athletic
Utilized a municipal facility for a meeting	27%	Passive
Participated in an adult athletic league	16%	Athletic
Used a municipal tennis court located at the high school	8%	Athletic

From this response it is clear that the majority use of park and recreation facilities are for passive and non-athletic purposes.

The respondents rated the overall recreation facilities the City are lacking as follows (open ended question):

Table 5.2: Recreation Facilities Lacking			
	Facility	Overall	Facility Type
1	Park	24%	Support
2	Pool/natatorium/aquatic center	13%	Non-Athletic
3	Multi-use trails/track	11%	Non-Athletic
4	Playgrounds	11%	Non-Athletic
5	Skate park/rink	7%	Non-Athletic
6	Gym/health club	6%	Non-Athletic
7	Senior citizen center	6%	Support
8	Miscellaneous	5%	
9	Golf course	4%	Non-Athletic
10	Theater/game room/billiards	4%	Support
11	Camping/barbecue	3%	Support
12	Tennis courts	2%	Athletic
13	Sports complex	2%	Athletic
14	Teen/youth center	2%	Support

As an open-ended question, it is noticeable that non-athletic facilities rate as the highest that are lacking in the City. The demand for parks and park land is very high as the number one priority, followed by a aquatic facility, trails and playgrounds.



The importance to construct new or additional recreational facilities out of 36 choices:

Table 5.3: Importance of Constructing Additional Recreational Facilities				
	Facility	Overall Importance	Ratio	Facility Type
High Majority Interest				
1	Park restrooms	90%	10:1	Support
2	Senior citizens center	88%	8:1	Support
3	Picnic tables	86%	6.6:1	Support
4	Playgrounds	83%	6.6:1	Non-Athletic
5	Recreation center	81%	4.5:1	Support
6	Natural habitat/nature areas	78%	3.9:1	Support
7	Additional access for picnicking along the shores of Lake Waxahachie	77%	4.8:1	Support
8	Jogging/biking trails	75%	3:1	Non-Athletic
9	Rental picnic/reunion pavilions	74%	3.2:1	Support
10	Lake Waxahachie rental facility for water-related items such as paddleboats, canoes, etc.	72%	2.9:1	Non-Athletic
11	Natorium	71%	2.8:1	Non-Athletic
12	Additional access for hiking along the shores of Lake Waxahachie	70%	3.3:1	Non-Athletic
Majority Interest				
13	Amphitheater	70%	2.4:1	Support
14	Basketball courts	68%	2.5:1	Athletic
15	Exercise stations along trails	68%	2.2:1	Non-Athletic
16	Aquatic center	67%	2.4:1	Non-Athletic
17	Water spray park	67%	2.2:1	Non-Athletic
18	Volleyball courts	60%	1.9:1	Non-athletic
19	Meeting space	60%	1.6:1	Support
20	Racquetball or handball courts	59%	1.7:1	Athletic
21	Gymnasiums	59%	1.5:1	Non-athletic
22	Youth softball fields	57%	1.6:1	Athletic
23	Tennis courts	56%	1.6:1	Athletic
Limited Interest				
24	Soccer fields	55%	1.5:1	Athletic
25	Baseball fields	55%	1.4:1	Athletic
26	Skateboard park	54%	1.3:1	Non-athletic
27	Dog park	54%	1.3:1	Passive
28	Additional boat ramps along Lake Waxahachie	52%	1.6:1	Passive
29	BMX bicycle course	52%	1.3:1	Non-athletic
30	Bird watching facilities	51%	1.1:1	Passive
31	In-line hockey rink	48%	1:1	Athletic
32	Horseshoe pits	46%	1:1	Non-athletic
33	Adult softball fields	45%	1.6:1	Athletic
34	Disc golf course	45%	1:1	Non-athletic
Minority Interest				
35	Football fields	45%	0.9:1	Athletic
36	Shuffleboard courts	39%	0.7:1	Non-athletic



For the choice of one facility only, the rating is as follows:

Table 5.4: Most Important Facility if only one is to be Constructed			
	Facility	Percentage Support	Facility Type
1	Senior citizens center	31%	Support
2	Recreation center	13%	Support
3	Jogging/biking trails	8%	Non-Athletic
4	Natatorium	6%	Non-Athletic
5	A lake rental facility at Lake Waxahachie for water-related items such as paddleboats, canoes, etc.	5%	Non-Athletic
6	Playgrounds	4%	Non-Athletic
7	Skateboard park	4%	Non-athletic
8	Park restrooms	3%	Support
9	Aquatic center	3%	Non-Athletic
10	Natural habitat/nature areas	2%	Support
11	Additional access for hiking along the shores of Lake Waxahachie	2%	Non-Athletic
12	Water spray park	2%	Non-Athletic
13	Gymnasiums	2%	Non-athletic
14	Additional boat ramps along Lake Waxahachie	2%	Passive

Overall level of support for capital improvement projects being funded, rated as follows:

Table 5.5: Support for Capital Improvement Projects		
Development	Support	Ratio
Strong Majority Support		
Renovate and redevelop neighborhood parks	92%	13.1:1
Construction of a senior citizen's center	92%	11.5:1
Construction of restrooms in small neighborhood parks	89%	7.4:1
Construction of a recreation center	84%	6.0:1
Purchase additional land for parks	83%	5.5:1
Expand the city's trail system	78%	7.3:1
Construction of recreational facilities at Lake Waxahachie	78%	4.1:1
Construction of a children's spray water park	76%	3.3:1
Majority Support		
Construction of a natatorium	67%	2.3:1
Expand community meeting space	66%	2.2:1
Construction of a skateboard park in the city	55%	1.3:1
Minority Support		
Construction of a dog park	47%	0.9:1



Beautification

The overall level of agreement with statements regarding beautification efforts in the City rated as follows:

Table 5.6: Agreement with City Beautification Statements		
Statement	Agree	Ratio
Majority Agreement		
Improved landscaping of city streets will help to improve our city image	85%	5.7:1
I support the city developing "gateways to the city" so that people know they are entering Waxahachie	81%	4.7:1
I believe the city should plant more trees and improve landscaping along streets and intersections	75%	3.1:1
I am satisfied with how streets and intersections are landscaped in Waxahachie	63%	1.7:1
I would like to see more public art in Waxahachie	62%	1.9:1
Majority Disagreement		
I do not believe that landscaping city streets and intersections is all that important	25%	0.3:1

5.5 Summary of the Public Meeting

(See meeting notes presented in Addendum B: Public Participation – Town Hall Meeting)



Town Hall Public Meeting for Parks Master Plan public input.



The statistics for attendance to the April 25 public meeting are as follows:

Number of signed-in attendees: 28 attended

Number completed questionnaires: 17

The most pertinent information that is derived from the questionnaires is as follows:

The image of Waxahachie

Question: Describe Waxahachie in one word or image:

Charming

*

Hometown

*

Comfortable

*

Historic preservation

*

Beautiful

*

Potential

*

Awesome

*

Stuck in the 1950's

*

Safe

*

Rural

*

Has a "soul"

*

Quality of life

Recreation Facilities

In a question to choose the top five out of a list of 30 recreational amenities to be included in the future parks, amenities mentioned at least 4 times or more include the following:

- Jogging/Bike trails (9 x mentioned)
- Children's Water Spray Park (6 x mentioned)
- Natural Habitat (5 x mentioned)
- Picnic Pavilions (5 x mentioned)
- Amphitheater (5 x mentioned)
- Playgrounds (4 x mentioned)
- Access to Lake Waxahachie (4 x mentioned)
- Recreation Center (4 x mentioned)
- Skateboard Park (4 x mentioned)
- Dog Parks (4 x mentioned)

Out of the list of 30 facilities mentioned, athletic facilities were mentioned 2 times or 1 time only.



Trails

Question: If Waxahachie had safe pedestrian / bicycle routes connecting neighborhoods, schools, recreation and civic uses, would you use them instead of driving?

- Fourteen (14) respondents said “yes”
- Two (2) respondents said “no”

Rural character with ample open space

Question: How important is it to you that Waxahachie maintains a rural feel with ample open space?

- Twelve (12) respondents expressed that it is VERY IMPORTANT that Waxahachie maintains a rural feel with ample open space.
- Four (4) respondents expressed that it was IMPORTANT.
- None of the respondents indicated that it was either unimportant or very unimportant.

5.6 Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Citizen Advisory Board

The Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Board is an important citizen participation component of the Parks Master Plan. Regular meetings between the Board, City staff and the Planning Team ensured continuous involvement and collaboration in the preparation of the 2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Board is a citizen advisory board to provide recommendations to the City Council and to establish policies regarding the City of Waxahachie's parks system and recreation programs. The board focus may be described as enriching the quality of life for all Waxahachie citizens.



Meeting of the Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Board to discuss the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.