



7. Recommendations for a Vision of Excellence

“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

Anatole France; Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 1921

7.1 Introduction

Ideas fundamental to achieving uniqueness for the City of Waxahachie include:

- Protection of the entire 100 year flood plain at build-out conditions;
- Establishment of a creek protection buffer beyond the 100 year flood line;
- Protection of scenic road corridors;
- Protection of views towards the Ellis County Courthouse;
- Protection of the rural character of the City; and
- Protection of Lake Waxahachie as a recreation amenity.



The implementation of such ideas requires visionary leadership. The tools are many and amongst others, include Conservation Planning and Design, which by definition recognize, define, and respect important natural and cultural features within a community and find ways to incorporate those creatively in the development. The end result is higher property values, a beautiful City, and increased quality of life for the citizens.

This Chapter 7 summarizes the findings of the Needs Assessment and recommends a series of actions to improve and expand Waxahachie's park system. These recommendations address matters of City Policy, acquisition of park land, the development of land already acquired and dedicated for parks, general improvements to existing parks, the development and provision of recreation facilities, and parks operation and maintenance.

The recommendations should be implemented or initiated over the general life of this master plan, which covers the next five to ten years. However, this section also includes other longer range recommendations, such as the acquisition of land for future parks.

Recommended items in this chapter are prioritized in Chapter 8, The Implementation Plan.

The recommendations fall into six general categories:

- City Policy
Adopt City policies that will ensure the implementation of the vision for the City of Waxahachie based on priorities established by citizen input and recommendations in this Parks Master Plan.
- Land Acquisition
Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation facilities, and open space including habitat protection where possible.
- Park Development
Develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority.
- Recreation Facilities
Provide needed recreational facilities.
- Park Improvements
Implement key improvements to existing parks as described per individual park in Chapter 3.
- Operations and Maintenance
Establish procedures and funding for effective the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”
Eleanor Roosevelt; U.S. Diplomat and Politician, (1884-1962)



7.A – City Policy

7.2 A Vision of Excellence - Achieving Uniqueness and Quality in Waxahachie

Many cities and towns have great and commendable visions for their future image, with aspirations of a multitude of recreational opportunities and park developments. However, such visions and aspirations are often compromised, knowingly or unknowingly, by inadequate or weak policies, inconsistent enforcing of city and town ordinances, and lack of a “will to work it out” when obstacles to the vision are encountered. In order to maintain focus of the vision, it is paramount to understand the fundamental policies that are needed to ensure an achievement of the “big picture”, as opposed to less important policies that have little, if any ability to change old habits, preconceived ideas, and archaic approaches to city and regional planning.

“Visionary Leaders Attract Commitment and Energize People.”

Through comprehensive public participation, a vision has been established for the City of Waxahachie’s physical image, parks, open space, and recreation. This Vision of Excellence, in short, comprises maintaining the rural quality of the City, the acquisition of additional park land, development of trails, and the provision of recreation facilities. The following describes four essential policies that Waxahachie requires to make this Vision of Excellence a reality.

7.2.1 Conservation Planning and Development

The purpose of Conservation Planning and Design is to create a community-wide network of open space and natural preserves. While not all land lends itself to Conservation Development, properties with unique ecological or physical attributes may lend themselves to be considered for this type of development pattern. It allows for half (or more) of the buildable land of a property or properties to be set aside as open space *without* “down zoning”: that is, it achieves the same number of homes that can be built by traditional development, except in a less land-consumptive manner. This allows for the balance of the property to be permanently protected and added to an interconnected network of community green spaces. Conservation Planning and Design do not involve public costs, do not diminish landowner equity, and are not onerous to developers.

It is recommended that the City commits to the following:

- Pre-identify and **preserve a community-wide network of conservation lands** or “linked landscapes” that includes both natural and farm land i.e. grazing land and land under cultivation.
- Purposefully **seek developers** that are amenable and/ or accustomed to the concept of Conservation Planning and Development.
- **Create incentives** to attract and encourage developers to consider and implement Conservation Planning and Development e.g. streamlined and shortened approval



processes, deferred tax agreements and revised impact fees (especially due to compact infrastructure along shorter routes).

- **Prepare a resource inventory** (Resource Map) of the following principal resources:

Resource Inventory	
1. Wetlands and their Buffers	7. Productive Farmland
2. Floodplains	8. Significant Wildlife Habitat
3. Moderate and Steep Slopes	9. Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Features
4. Groundwater Resources Recharge Areas	10. Cultural Landscapes
5. Woodlands	11. Scenic Features
6. Representative stands of Blackland Prairie	12. Viewsheds from Public Roads

Figure 7.1 - Resource Inventory

- Subject to the results of the Resource Inventory, it is suggested that land identified for Conservation Planning and Development may include all land within 1,500 feet adjacent to the 100 year flood line of all creeks and their tributaries.
- Revise the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to make provision for the implementation of Conservation Planning and Development.
- Follow the guidance as provided in the “Model Language for Conservation Subdivisions” of the publication: Arendt, R.; Growing Greener, Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances; Island Press; 1999.

“One measure of a development project’s success should be the increase in the number of songbird species inhabiting a site after it has been developed.”
 William McDonough
 Dean: School of Architecture; University of Virginia

7.2.2 Creek, Stream and Drainage Easements

Creek buffer recommendation

Creek corridors provide a tremendous opportunity for recreation in conjunction with flood control. Other than the Flood Prevention Management Area (FPMA) which entails the entire 100-year floodplain area plus a creek and drainage maintenance easement, the creek corridor also includes a buffer area along and above the (FPMA) containing the habitat and wildlife associated with the creek environment. In addition to flood control which has in itself an economical and huge public safety benefit, creek corridors have tremendous value from an ecological and recreational point of view. The plant life associated with creeks provide habitat for birds and animals and the linear nature of creeks provides ecological linkages to different parts of the City. The recreational value of creek corridors lies in the creek itself, views up and down the corridor, shade and the linearity that provides for excellent trail connections with the minimum disturbance of the land. Plants, especially native grass above and below the 100-year floodplain limits, act



as an important bio-filter removing sediments and pollutants from the surface runoff. The width of the floodplain alone is often insufficient to provide an effective bio-filter. For a description of the value of creek corridors, see Addendum D: Creeks and Streams.

When City financial resources allow, it is recommended that the City initiates a **Creek Corridor Study** to establish an integrated riparian corridor management system for the City of Waxahachie. Refer to Addendum D: Creeks and Streams / Further Studies. Amongst others, the study needs to take the following into account:

- Flood management in terms of 1% and 0.2% probabilities;
- Delineation of the 1% floodplain;
- Stream bank stability;
- Flow velocities, valley storage and water quality; and
- Environmental inventory including riparian vegetation, wildlife, cultural and scenic value.

The precedent for a Creek Corridor Study is found in the Linear Greenbelt Park Study conducted by the City of Allen, Texas in 1986. Based on this study Allen has ordinances and regulations in place that ensure the optimal protection and use of creek corridors for the benefit of the community as a whole. The end result 21 years later is a noticeable quality of life experience that is exemplary in the region.

The recommended **Creek Corridor Study** for the City of Waxahachie is a framework that will better define and further validate decisions to be made about floodplain reclamation and the establishment of a creek buffer.

From a flood prevention, water quality and ecological point of view, the ideal is that no floodplain reclamation be allowed. However, practical considerations including bridges may necessitate reclamation. Reclamation considerations should be guided by the **Creek Corridor Study** with trade-offs established to offset the affect of reclamation, even if it is only for the loss of open space and natural areas.

Addendum D of this document, recommends a creek protection buffer above the 100-year floodplain. The purpose of such a buffer is to ensure the protection of the creek corridor including unique features e.g. tree cover, topography, prairie land etc. and to provide an adequate bio-filter of pollutants deriving from upland sources. The occurrence of unique features is not constant along the length of the corridor due to amongst others, the impact of agricultural activity e.g. over grazing and cultivation. Where feasible an attempt should be made to restore such disturbed environments with prairie grass and trees associated with a creek corridor.

Creek Buffer Implementation

Implementation of a creek protection buffer beyond the FPMA will require creative solutions and the willingness of developers to brainstorm with City officials, P&Z and Parks Board to achieve the goal of protecting the very essence of what makes Waxahachie special and unique. Its implementation is not a mandate, but an option to achieve a Vision of Excellence whereby the natural and cultural landscapes of Waxahachie are protected with residents enjoying quality of life through physical and visual access to natural areas and open space. Prescriptive regulations could lead to legal actions, whereas collaboration will lead to mutually beneficial results.



Methods of Implementation

Guided by the future **Creek Corridor Study** that will identify sensitive areas along the creek that necessitate protection, the options to achieve adequate protection include:

- Clustered or Conservation Development whereby the quality places on the property are left untouched as accessible communal open space with clustered development – the obvious benefit to the developer is cost savings including less infrastructure. Addendum E makes a case for Conservation Development.
- A land gift from the developer who understands the value of the open space and how its protection in fact increases the value of individual units and thus leads to an increase in his bottom line.
- Purchase agreement between the City and the developer.
- Involvement of a Land Trust to assist with acquisition.
- Acquisition of Development Rights.

Protecting quality areas along the creek will prove beneficial not only in terms of the land itself and the view and vistas that it afford, but will lead to better quality development that seeks integration rather than separation from the natural environment with the many benefits that contact with nature afford people. The end result will be a community that is attractive for many reasons and that will ensure better than normal return for the developers and investors.

The opportunities for Conservation Planning and Development as well as Creek, Stream and Drainage Easements are presented in the map: **Creek Protection and Conservation Development** on Page 6-46a).

7.2.3 Park Land Dedication

The City of Waxahachie is currently being developed at a relatively fast pace. With land continually being slated for residential and other development, now is the time to acquire adequate acreage that will meet the requirements for parks in the next 10 to 20 years.

It is recommended that the Park Land Dedication Ordinance be revised to include the following considerations:

Basic principles

- Set aside all land and site features as identified in the Resource Map (see Conservation Planning and Development above) and ensure their protection and maintenance by the Home Owners' Associations or through the involvement of a variety of Conservation Trusts in Texas that have as their aim the conservation of open space (see www.texaslandtrusts.org).
- Provide unimpeded public access to these identified and protected site features through a combination of trails, single loaded roads, and dedicated easements.
- Ensure that the definition of "open space" includes the concept of open space as defined by Conservation Planning and Development.
- Increase the Park Improvement Fee to \$1,600 for both single and multi-family dwelling units.*



- Add a Park Improvement Fee of \$1,200 per acre for non-residential development (business, commercial and industrial enterprise).**
- Establish a Park Acreage Dedication of 1 acre per 30 single family dwelling units and 1 acre per 30 multi-family dwelling units.***
- Contrary to the existing ordinance, open space and park and recreational areas required by this ordinance should NOT be restricted to the private use and enjoyment of the citizens of the particular development or subdivision.
- The 100 year flood plain of all creeks, including drainage areas and easements should not be accepted as land dedicated for parks.
- In addition to the requirement that each park must have ready access to a public street, it is required that single loaded roads be established between a subdivision or part thereof and land set aside for park land and/or open space protected areas.

* Dwelling Unit Park Improvement Fee Comparison:

- City of Colleyville: \$1,802 / DU
- City of Frisco: \$1,561 / DU
- City of Lancaster: \$1,400 / DU

** Non-residential Park Improvement Fee Comparison:

- City of Wylie: \$1,000 / acre
- City of Colleyville: \$ 800 / acre

*** Park Dedication Comparison:

- City of Wylie: 1 acre / 20 DU
- City of Colleyville: 1 acre / 25 DU
- City of Lancaster: 1 acre / 50 DU
- City of Frisco: 1 acre / 50 DU

7.2.4 Overlay Districts

The very essence of an overlay district is to look at the particular area in a comprehensive manner in which the recommended implementation measures are applied consistently according to the shared goals and objectives. Three Overlay Districts are recommended for the City:

i) IH 35 Overlay District

This proposed Overlay District will address architectural and signage standards that aim to create a unique identity and character along the highway that will make Waxahachie stand out as a destination of distinction amongst the neighboring cities along IH 35.

ii) Prong Creek Watershed Overlay District

The quality of water in Lake Waxahachie is largely dependent on the protection of the Prong Creek watershed. It is recommended that an overlay district be established for the entire watershed, whereby strict rules are laid down with regard to development practices. One of the prime tools to consider for such an overlay district is iSWM (Integrated Stormwater Management), which is a set of design manuals for construction and site development that assists cities and counties to achieve their goals of water quality protection, streambank protection, and flood control. In fact, such a tool is not only to be applied in a watershed overlay district, but should be applied throughout the City and even the County.



iii) Lake Waxahachie Overlay District

Lake Waxahachie is one of the most important recreation amenities in the City. The lake is relatively small, although it is large enough to provide for an array of recreation opportunities on the water and along its banks many of which are as yet untapped.

Access to the waterfront land is ideal from a recreational point of view, especially due to its linear nature that is ideally suited for hike and bike trails and occasional park sites. A good example is the White Rock Lake trail on the banks of White Rock Lake in the City of Dallas. This trail is extremely popular amongst the residents of Dallas. However, at Lake Waxahachie, the majority of the lake frontage is inaccessible to the public due to exclusive private water access from the adjacent properties. Being a publicly funded amenity, Lake Waxahachie should ideally have unimpeded public access around its edge.

In addition, water based activities on Lake Waxahachie should be limited to low noise level, low impact type activities. In addition, no motorized boating should be allowed in the upper reaches of the lake where the wave action of fast moving boats has the potential to destroy fish spawning habitat.

A focused recreation study of Lake Waxahachie is required to ensure that its full potential as a public recreation facility is achieved. Such a study may result in the establishment of an overlay district for the properties surrounding the lake, the area of land between the property boundaries, and the water surface itself. Thereby, the enjoyment of this tremendously valuable amenity may be protected and secured for now and future generations.



View of Lake Waxahachie as seen from the abandoned railroad bridge.



7.B – Land Acquisition

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision.”
Theodore Hesburgh

7.3 Land Acquisition

From the telephone Attitude Survey, it is very clear that the citizens of Waxahachie demand more parks and park land. In fact in an open question about the recreation facilities that lack the most, parks rated the highest. As a majority interest, the incorporation of natural habitat/nature areas into the parks system, received 78% support.

The respondents’ support for the acquisition of park land is overwhelming with 83% that indicated support for Capital Improvement fund allocation, over the next five to ten years, for the purchasing of additional land for parks.

Acquisition of land should be focused on the provision of neighborhood parks, community parks, linear parks, and the protection of habitat and open space. Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, the establishment of recreation and/or park land easements, purchasing of development rights, and the involvement of Conservation Trusts (www.texaslandtrusts.org).



The layers of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers create a beautiful scene with depth, color and texture.

“Divine Nature gave the fields, human art built the cities.”
Marcus Terentius Varro - Roman Scholar(116 BC – 27BC)



See the following maps for land acquisition:

- **View Corridors and Culture Features** (P. 6-33a)
- **Creek Protection and Conservation Development** (P. 6-44a)
- **Utility Easements and Railroads** (P. 6-47a)
- **Existing and Proposed Parks** (P. 7-10a)
- **Proposed Regional Park and Nature Preserves** (P. 7-12a)

(See Table of Contents for easy reference)

*The map: **Existing and Proposed Parks** on the following page illustrates the existing and proposed parks for the entire City including the ETJ. The purpose is to cover as much as possible of the City with the half mile service radius that surrounds each park.*

The following recommendations target such land acquisition.

i) Land for Community Parks

About eighteen (18) additional community parks are recommended for Waxahachie at build-out conditions. At a size of 40 to 70 acres, this constitutes 720 to 1,260 acres to be acquired over the next 10 to 15 years. This will bring the City close to the target standard of 875 acres or 7 acres per 1,000 population at build-out population of 125,000.

The map: **Existing and Proposed Parks** indicates general geographic locations where future community parks may be provided.

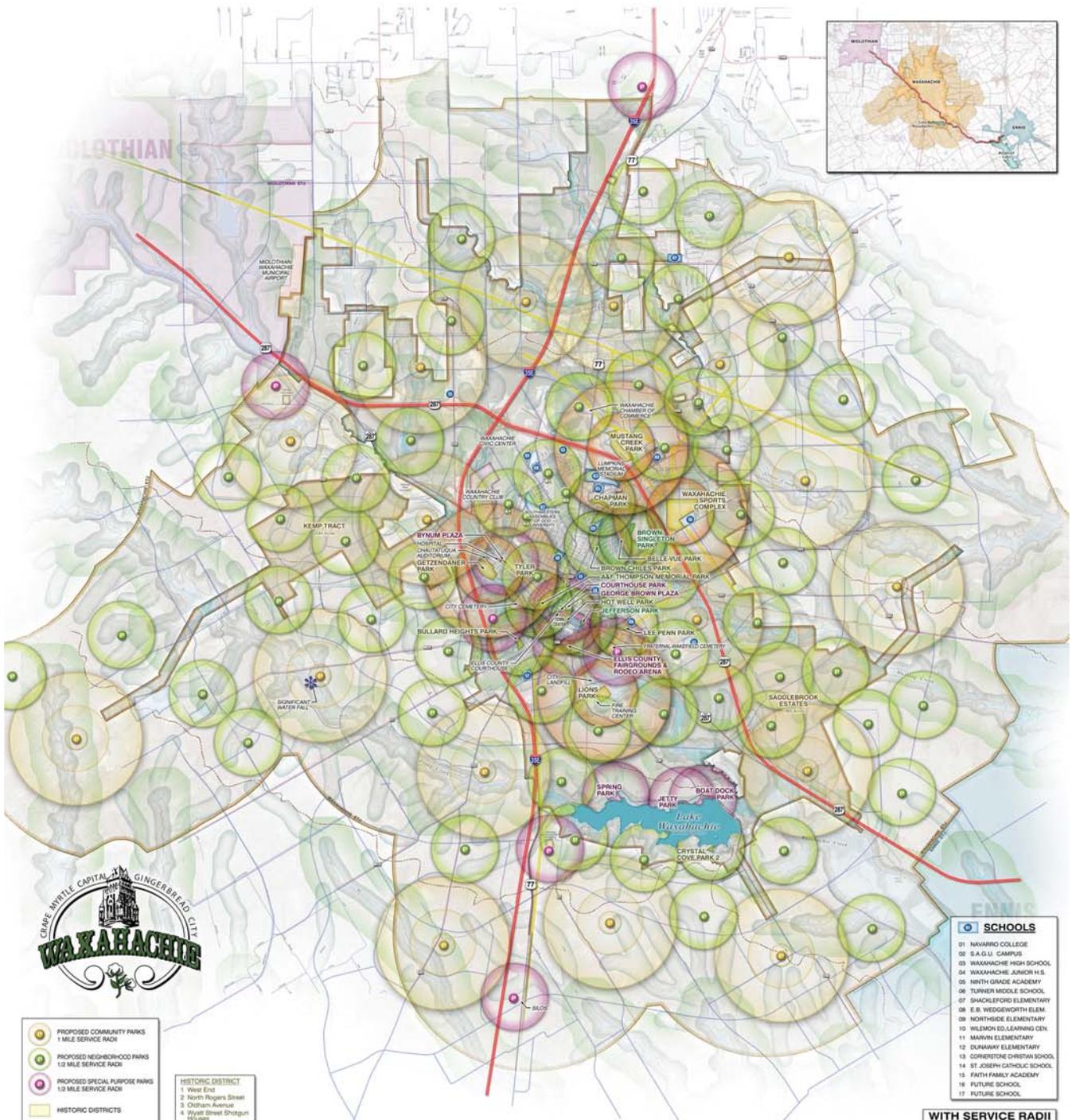
ii) Land for Neighborhood Parks

About fifty (50) new neighborhood parks are recommended for the entire City. At a size of 5 to 10 acres per park, this constitutes 250 to 500 acres to be acquired over the next 10 to 15 years. This will bring the City well into the target standard of 250 - 375 acres or 2 – 3 acres per 1,000 population at build-out population of 125,000.

- Consider donations by developers as new communities are built. Target 5 acre + sites that are easily accessible and that have sufficient land that is useful for multi-purpose ball field development.
- The map: **Existing and Proposed Parks** indicates general geographic locations where future neighborhood parks may be provided.
- Consider acquisition of land for neighborhood parks in conjunction with the school district's needs in order to ensure the development of parks and schools adjacent to each other.

iii) Land for Linear Parks

Linear Parks are typically called such for the reason that they are located adjacent to a linear landscape feature including a creek and/or utility easement. Their linear nature calls for trail development. If land is to be required for a trail only, the following guideline may be followed to determine the need for land acquisition: A trail surface width of 12 feet plus a 3 foot shoulder on each side plus about 15 feet each side of the trail constitutes about 45 to 50 feet. One mile of trail with a trail easement of 50 feet wide, constitutes about 6 acres. It is suggested that the City commits to acquiring 60 acres of land each year. Over a period of 5 years, this will constitute 300 acres or equal to



- PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARKS
1 MILE SERVICE RADIUS
- PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
1/2 MILE SERVICE RADIUS
- PROPOSED SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS
1/2 MILE SERVICE RADIUS
- HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- HISTORIC DISTRICT**
- 1 West End
 - 2 North Rogers Street
 - 3 Chatham Avenue
 - 4 Wyatt Street Shotgun Houses

- SCHOOLS**
- 01 NAVARRO COLLEGE
 - 02 S.A.G.U. CAMPUS
 - 03 WAXAHACHIE HIGH SCHOOL
 - 04 WAXAHACHIE JUNIOR H.S.
 - 05 NINTH GRADE ACADEMY
 - 06 TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 07 SHACKLEFORD ELEMENTARY
 - 08 E.B. WEDGEWORTH ELEM.
 - 09 NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY
 - 10 WILSON ED. LEARNING CEN.
 - 11 MARION ELEMENTARY
 - 12 DUNNWAY ELEMENTARY
 - 13 CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
 - 14 ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
 - 15 FAITH FAMILY ACADEMY
 - 16 FUTURE SCHOOL
 - 17 FUTURE SCHOOL

WITH SERVICE RADII



potentially 50 miles of trail. Over a period of 10 years 600 acres of Linear Parks will be close to the target of 625 acres per build-out population of 125,000.

The general need for linear parks occurs along creeks, railroads and utility easements where a hike and bike trail is recommended. The recommended buffer of 300 to 500 feet wide adjacent to the 100 year flood plain of creeks, provide the ideal opportunity for the establishment of a creek associated trail.

The need for a specific linear park includes Lake Waxahachie Linear Park, for which it is recommended that 20 acres along the shores and of Lake Waxahachie and along the road surrounding the lake, be acquired as a start to create a linear park and trail that will eventually surround the entire lake. The first of that may be a “board walk” type trail development between Boat Dock Park and Jetty Park.

v) *Land for Special Purpose Parks*

The size of one individual Special Purpose Park may vary depending on the specific need and function. Its establishment is based on as and when the need arises. At present, five special purpose parks that constitute a total of about 52 acres are recommended at the following areas:

▪ **Ellis County Courthouse Vista Park**

Acquire land (+/- 30 acres) along the eastern side of IH 35 between FM1446 and the next high point to the north. The vantage point is from a stretch of IH 35 between FM1446 and the next high point to the north. It is important to protect the entire context of the site that adds to the visual experience including the vegetation and rural landscape along FM 1446, the northern high point, as well as the meadow and trees along the view towards the Courthouse. Measures may include conservation easements, acquisition of development rights, or purchasing of the land. It is suggested that county, state and private agencies including Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Conservation Trusts of Texas (www.texaslandtrusts.org) be approached for a joint venture with Waxahachie to acquire and manage the land.

▪ **Silos Vista Special Purpose Park**

Acquire land (+/- 6 acres) to secure the view of the silos east of IH 35 at the northwest corner of Johnston Road and HWY 77 to create a southern gateway to the City and to ensure an unimpeded visual access to the silos and downtown from the bypassing traffic.

▪ **Fraternal-Wakefield Special Purpose Park**

Acquire land (+/- 8 acres) associated with the Fraternal-Wakefield Cemetery in order to protect the cemetery’s integrity and its peaceful enjoyment.

▪ **Lakeview Memorial Special Purpose Park**

Acquire land (+/- 8 acres) associated with the Lakeview Memorial Park Cemetery in order to protect the cemetery’s integrity and its peaceful enjoyment.

▪ **Sardis Special Purpose Park**

Acquire land (+/- 8 acres) associated with the Sardis Cemetery in order to protect the cemetery’s integrity and its peaceful enjoyment.

vi) *Regional Parks / Nature Preserves*

An ecological important aspect of the City’s creek system is the creek confluences - the areas where tributaries meet the main channel. Such areas call for special protection in



the form of Creek Confluence Nature Preserves. It is recommended that land be set aside for about 10 such nature preserves. At an average size of about 100 acres each, this constitutes about 1,000 acres (see map: **Proposed Regional Park and Nature Preserves**). It is suggested that city, county, state, and private agencies including the Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Conservation Trusts of Texas (www.texaslandtrusts.org) be approached for a joint venture with Waxahachie to acquire and manage the land for such natural preserves.

The Prong Creek Regional Park is recommended in the upper watershed of Prong Creek as a measure to ensure not only the protection of the rural character of the area, but also the protection of the water quality of Lake Waxahachie. It is recommended that an area of about 2,000 acres be set aside for this regional park (see map: **Proposed Regional Park and Nature Preserves**). It is suggested that city, county, state, and private agencies including the City of Midlothian, Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Conservation Trusts of Texas (www.texaslandtrusts.org) be approached for a joint venture with Waxahachie to acquire and manage the land for such a regional park.

The **Proposed Regional Park and Nature Preserves** Map on the next page, describes the areas recommended for the establishment of a regional park and nature preserves.

vii) Rural Landscape, Open Space, and Protected Areas

Natural habitat and nature areas rank relatively high in importance for the citizens in the citizen attitude survey. Areas that have habitat value and warrant habitat protection typically include creeks, floodplains, creek corridors, wooded areas, areas of topographic change and high lying sites with views. Open space also includes cultural landscapes which are either landscapes with historic value or at present managed as farmland.

Opportunities for open space land dedication include the following:

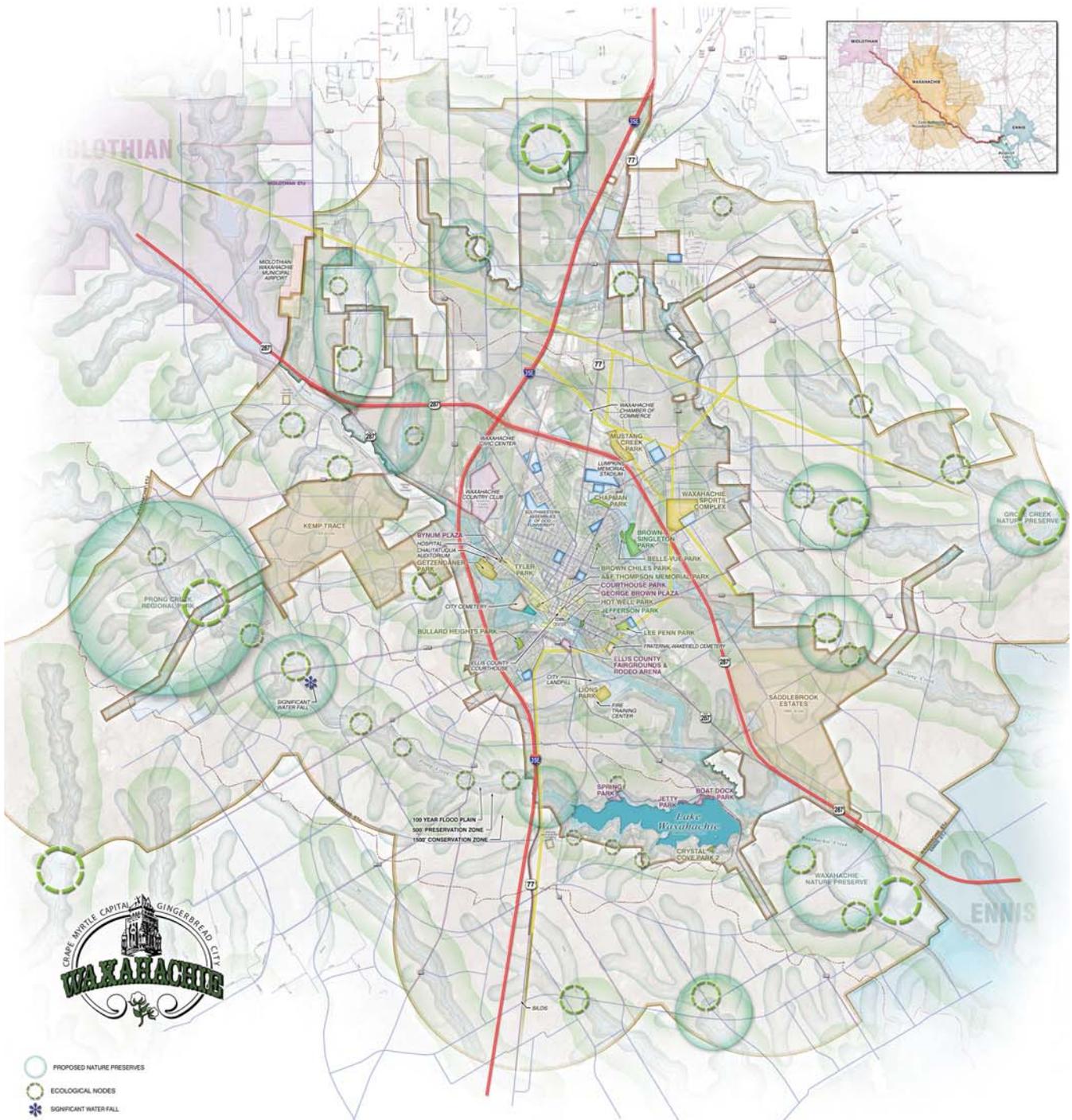
- Creek corridors that include a buffer area beyond the 100-year floodline of 300 to 500 feet wider depending on unique site features.
- Secondary tributary streams or swales that can create linkage “fingers” to adjacent neighborhoods by means of trail connections.
- Land identified as possessing natural and cultural importance including wetlands and their buffers; moderate and steep slopes; groundwater resources and their recharge areas; woodlands; farmland to ensure the rural character of the City; significant wildlife habitat; historic and archaeological features, and scenic viewsheds.

Conservation Development

Specific opportunities for open space land dedication by means of Conservation Development include the 1,500 feet stretch of land along the 100 floodline at build-out conditions (see map: **Creek Protection and Conservation Development**).

View Corridors

The means by which creeks are experienced determines the way in which the community cherishes and protects this important resource. Single loaded roads, vistas, and view corridors are but two tools that provide visual access to creek environments. In order to be effective, view corridors at creek crossings require that four view triangles be established between the road and creek to keep it free from building structures and



- PROPOSED NATURE PRESERVES
- ECOLOGICAL NODES
- ★ SIGNIFICANT WATER-FALL



vegetation destruction that will compromise these views. The map: **View Corridors and Cultural Features**, describes the general areas where such view corridors is to be established. As a priority, it is recommended to establish such view corridors through a view corridor easement along the major creeks. As a priority, it is recommended that view corridors be established at the following specific crossings:

- Waxahachie Creek Crossing
Establish a ten acres easement where IH 35 crosses over Waxahachie Creek to preserve the views up and down the creek.
- Prong Creek Crossing
Establish a ten acres easement where IH 35 crosses over Prong Creek to preserve the views up and down the creek.
- Grove Creek Crossing
Establish a ten acres easement where FM 813 crosses over Grove Creek to preserve the views up and down the creek.

Road Sections

As per Chapter 6.12.2, specific road sections that warrant protection for enhancing the rural and/or visual quality of the landscape experience include:

1. FM 877 between FM 66 and Lake Waxahachie
2. HWY 77 between HWY 287 and FM 877
3. Rogers Street and Cantrell Street (FM 1446) between IH 35 and HWY 77
4. Business HWY 287
5. IH 35 between HWY 287 and FM 66
6. Grove Creek Road north of FM 813
7. Rural roads in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)



Rural roads are about far vistas and open views, but the pedestrian experience of urban roads are about shade, connections, intimacy and sensitive edge treatments, illustrated by this image along E. Marvin Avenue. The tree lined sidewalk “orientates” the pedestrian away from the road, towards the friendly front porches of the homes.



7.C – Park Development

7.4 Park Development

The following section describes general, as well as specific, recommendations for park development in Waxahachie.

Guiding Philosophy for Park Development

Key design points that should guide the design of every existing or new park in the City are as follows:

- Each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of Waxahachie by incorporating historical plaques and features that allude to the neighborhoods around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users and levels of activity. Parks should be multi-faceted.
- Parks should incorporate art and should be an example of the sophistication of the Waxahachie of today and tomorrow.
- A single loaded road adjacent to all parks should be demanded in order to protect open space for purposes of informal surveillance and prevent crime in areas that may pose danger for park and open space users.
- A transparent metal rod fence between all residential lots and parks and/or open space should be demanded where a single loaded road is not possible.
- Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park. Playgrounds should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park.
- All pavilion structures should consist of a multi-tier roof system to prevent heated air from being trapped under the roof.
- Implement storm water bio-swales to allow for temporary retention of storm water in order to allow for infiltration and bio-filtration of run-off water before the excess water leaves the site.
- Community input should be welcomed and included in the design of every park in the City.
- Provide park lights on photocells as an energy saving measure.

Parks are about green open spaces and trees. It is suggested that the City consider the following in terms of a planting strategy:

- Every park should be considered as an urban oasis in Waxahachie.
- Place preference on the application of drought tolerant landscaping and native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.
- Parks should be developed and upgraded in order to reduce maintenance. Automatic irrigation systems attuned to plants with low water requirements should be a key component of every park, as should simple features that make every park easier to take care of.
- In 1997, the Texas State Legislature designated the City of Waxahachie as the Crape Myrtle Capital of Texas. Although this status may be important to the citizens



of Waxahachie, it is necessary to recognize that the crape myrtle ornamental tree (*Lagerstroemia indica*) is an exotic plant that is native to the Country of India. The very fact of this being a practical, drought tolerant small tree with many blossoms and colorful bark, has caused this tree to be overused extensively as the ornamental tree of choice from the western states of Florida and the Carolinas, across the country to California, making the planted landscapes of this immense area uniform and somewhat boring. In fact, it may be argued that this is one of many contributing factors that have affected the uniqueness of communities.

It is recommended that crape myrtle trees be used judiciously and with intent. With that in mind, this tree with its abundance of flowers should be used sparingly as focal points rather than creating a uniform spread with little visual variance and excitement.

It is, after all, the natural surroundings, including native plants, that determine the unique and special quality of a place. The use of crape myrtles should, therefore be offset by the use of a palette of Texas small trees including Eve's necklace (*Sophora affinis*), Indigobush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Mexican Buck Eye (*Ungnadia speciosa*), Mexican Plum trees (*Prunus mexicana*), Possumhaw trees (*Ilex decidua*), Texas Red Bud (*Cercis Canadensis var. Texensis*), and Rusty Black Haw Viburnum (*Viburnum rufidulum*). In addition, natural areas maintained in a natural state should receive no crape myrtles whatsoever. Exotic plants that ecologically do not fit is a mistake that compromise and effect the natural appearance of a site.

Following the approach of using crape myrtles sparingly and only in gardens as apposed to natural sites, will ensure both the protection of our native plant species, as well as placing crape myrtles in the position of focused attention in Waxahachie, known as the Crape Myrtle Capital of Texas.

Rural Landscapes, Open Space and Nature Preserves

Protection of the natural and cultural environment is an important component of the Parks Master Plan. Actively pursue implementation measures to ensure such protection including:

- Establish Nature Preserves to allow access for educate and enjoyment by the community, yet that provides adequate protection of sensitive ecological environments and engaging views and vistas.
- Develop a Resource Map for the entire City and ETJ to include ecological, cultural and aesthetic features and components of the landscape.
- Adopt Conservation Planning and Development principles and ordinances.

Considering LEED for Park and Facility Development

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, LEED, is a national rating system for the design, construction and operation of buildings and sites. Administered by the US Green Building Council, the system evaluates performance in five areas: sustainable site development, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. It is recommended that the City of Waxahachie similar to cities like Dallas and Frisco mandate all public structures be constructed to meet the requirements for LEED certification and that private entities be encouraged to do the same (see www.usgbc.org).



Aspects that lend positive, measurable results include: on-site storm water management and permeable paving to not increase run-off which contributes to flooding; native plantings to reduce erosion, water consumption and irrigation dependency; organic maintenance programs to reduce chemicals and pesticides that infiltrate ground water and city utility and treatment systems; photocell systems for lighting to reduce energy costs; selection of sustainable materials (recycled and rapidly renewable resources) to use resources to maximum effect. Such results not only produce benefits for the environment, but for the owner and users as well. It is noticeable that the first LEED park, rated Silver and awarded in 2006, was Virginia Avenue Park in Santa Monica, California.

The Sustainable Sites Initiative is currently being developed and will provide additional guidance in establishing and maintaining sustainable parks and open space. The initiative grew from concerns that conventional land development and management practices often limit, rather than enhance the ability of landscapes to benefit humankind and other organisms by providing valuable ecosystem services.

According to the website www.sustainablesites.org “landscapes (similar to buildings) can conserve resources or degrade and waste them. However, landscapes are unique in that they also have the additional capacity to enhance and regenerate natural resources. Because a sustainable site can provide ecosystem services, it can actually improve environmental quality rather than simply minimizing the damage to natural systems.”

i) Community Parks

General planning and design approach for community parks:

- Develop and implement a concept plan for each parcel of land acquired for the purpose of a Community Park.
- Include all the basic facilities that make up a Community Park with specific reference to the recreation facilities as identified in the needs assessment.
- In addition to the recreation facilities, incorporate children’s play areas covered with shade structures, walkways, jogging trails, areas for unorganized play, multi-purpose practice fields, picnic facilities, and a park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof.
- Provide signage and a uniquely designed gateway.
- Place preference on the application of native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.

ii) Neighborhood Parks

General planning and design approach for neighborhood parks:

- Prepare a design concept for each undeveloped neighborhood park that incorporates children’s play areas covered with shade structures, walkways, jogging trails, areas for unorganized play, multi-purpose practice fields, picnic facilities, and a park pavilion with a multi-tiered roof.
- Provide good pedestrian access to all parks including signage and a wide, welcoming gateway.
- Develop parks adjacent to existing and future schools with easy access from the school grounds. Not only will this add to the quality of life for the community, but also funding is more likely available through collaborative action.



- Place preference on the application of native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.



To the left of this picture is the site of Tyler Refrigerator, which potentially is earmarked for clean-up. Its subsequent development into a neighborhood park will greatly benefit the community to the right of the picture. Focused public participation by this community is recommended once planning and design for this park site is under way.

iii) Linear Parks

Linear parks are characterized by their linear nature that makes them ideal for the implementation of hike and bike trails, which in essence become the “spine” of each particular park. Linear parks may be associated with creeks, railway or utility corridors, and are ideal to create connections between different destination points. Whereas trail development typically includes amenities like trail heads, rest stops, overlooks, benches and light fixtures, linear parks may include additional amenities and facilities e.g. picnic pavilions, playgrounds, basketball, and volleyball courts.

iv) Special Purpose Parks

The following describes recommendations for the development of special purpose parks:

- **Ellis County Courthouse Vista Park**
In addition to acquiring the land as a measure to protect the view towards the courthouse, it is suggested to develop a viewing site that is accessible from the service road. Such a view site could possibly be on top of the high point with the approach from its northern side so as not to compromise the view as seen from IH 35. It is suggested that county, state, and private agencies including Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Conservation Trusts of Texas (www.texaslandtrusts.org) be approached for a joint venture with Waxahachie to develop the viewing site.
- **Cemeteries**
Provide facilities that are compatible with cemeteries and that lead to contemplation, meditation and prayer. Facilities may include pavilions, benches and walking trails. Children play areas may be provided without interfering with the purpose and intent



of the cemetery as a place of quiet reflection. Informational and education signage may refer to the history of the particular cemetery as well as grave sites of important cultural and historical value.

v) Regional Park / Nature Preserves

Collaborate with Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas Land Trust to establish the Creek Confluence Nature Preserves. With cognizance of the ecological sensitivity of the creek confluence areas, design and implement vehicular and pedestrian gateways, a network of hard and soft surface trails, trail heads, pedestrian bridges across the creeks, and interpretational signage.

Collaborate with the City of Midlothian, Ellis County, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas Land Trust to establish the Prong Creek Regional Park. With water source protection as the goal, consider appropriate land uses that will support such a regional park. Design and implement vehicular and pedestrian gateways, a network of hard and soft surface trails, trail heads, pedestrian bridges across the creeks, and interpretational signage.

vi) Rural Landscapes and Open Space

- Prepare a Resources Map for the entire City of Waxahachie according to Paragraph 7.2 City Policy above.
- Adopt Conservation Planning and Development principles and develop the necessary ordinances to make this happen. (See Model Language for Conservation Subdivisions as described in Arendt, R.; Growing Greener, Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances; Island Press; 1999; p.151 – 194.)
- This document describes an ordinance language for two distinct planning components:
 - a) Zoning; and
 - b) Subdivisions

The **Zoning Ordinance Language** provides wording as it relates to Conservation Design Overlay Districts and include:

- Purpose;
- Use Regulations;
- Dimensional Standards;
- Density Determination;
- Design Standards;
- Greenway Land Use;
- Greenway Protection Through Conservation Easements;
- Discretionary Density Bonuses; and
- Ownership and Maintenance of Greenway Land and Common Facilities.

The **Subdivision Ordinance Language** provides wording as it relates to:

- Plan Content Requirements;
- Plan Processing Procedures;
- Resource Conservation and Greenway Delineation Standards; and
- Supplemental Design Standards.



7.D – Recreation Facilities

7.5 Development of Recreation Facilities

The Citizen Attitude Survey identified needs for very specific recreation facilities. The following are the key facility needs in Waxahachie, based on facility standards and citizen input combined. The facilities are presented in order of priority.

Key facility needs in order of priority for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities include:

Table 7.1 Key facility needs in order of priority	
	<u>Facility Type</u>
<u>Indoor Facilities</u>	
1. SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER	Support
2. RECREATION CENTER	Support
3. NATATORIUM	Support
<u>Outdoor Facilities</u>	
1. JOGGING, HIKE AND BIKE TRAILS	Non-competitive
2. PLAYGROUNDS	Non-athletic
3. NATURAL HABITAT / NATURE AREAS	Support
4. LAKE WAXAHACHIE RECREATION FACILITIES	Support
5. PAVILIONS AND PICNIC TABLES	Support
6. HIKING ALONG LAKE WAXAHACHIE	Non- competitive
7. SKATEBOARD PARK	Non- competitive
8. AQUATIC CENTER/WATER SPRAY PARK	Non-athletic
9. BOAT RAMPS ALONG LAKE WAXAHACHIE	Support
10. BASKETBALL COURTS	Non- competitive



Recommendations per key facilities

Indoor Facilities

I) Senior Citizen Center

The seniors in our communities are an extremely important component of the fabric of our society. Not only do they deserve the respect for their societal contribution, but seniors often have unparalleled wisdom and experience to impart to all of us, particularly the young. It is thus prudent to develop senior citizen centers in close proximity to places frequented by children and young adults. Examples include recreation centers, schools, and parks. Another very important requirement is that the senior citizen center be connected to the City's trail network.

For the design and construction of the Senior Center, it is recommended to consider compliance to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) which is a program whereby better and healthier buildings are constructed through sustainable site design, energy and water conservation, and healthy interiors. For more information visit the World Wide Web at www.usgbc.org/leed.

Not only must cities provide for the recreational needs of seniors, it is also important to create the opportunity for adults as they become seniors to stay within the City and close to their loved ones. Examples include "granny flats" whereby grandparents live in garden cottages with their children and retirement villages with amenities incorporated with the everyday fabric of life. The goal is to make retirement options in the City of Waxahachie attractive so that people stay rather than leave as they become older.

ii) Recreation Center

The following strategy is recommended for the development of an indoor recreation center with sport facilities:

- Identify partners to assist in the development of a recreation center e.g. the Waxahachie Independent School District.
- Determine the preferred location for such a center, preferably central to the City.
- Consider a location in a park-like setting with ample views from the inside to the outside.
- Consider compliance to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) which is a program whereby better and healthier buildings are constructed through sustainable site design, energy and water conservation, and healthy interiors. For more information visit the Internet at www.usgbc.org/leed.
- Determine what the center should contain – a marketing and feasibility analysis should be conducted by the City to determine the preferred contents of the center.
- Estimate the annual cost to operate the facility, and determine what fees would be assessed to recover some or all of the operational costs of the center.
- Determine the mechanism for funding the potential center.
- Determine the timeframe for implementation of this recommendation. Such a facility could be built within the next 10-year planning period.



Outdoor Facilities

ii) *Jogging, hike and bike trails*

The value of trails is demonstrated by the high level of usage of the City's first official trail, the Waxahachie Creek Hike and Bike Trail. The momentum of its success is ideal for the creation of a true City-wide trails network. Trails were among the highest desired elements in the citizen survey. Now is the time for Waxahachie to begin the process of developing a cross-city trail that begins to link parks, schools and other facilities.

"There is nothing like walking to get the feel of a country. A fine landscape is like a piece of music; it must be taken at the right tempo."

Paul Scott Mowrer

Reasons for developing a City wide trail system:

- Provides alternate travel arteries from one location to another during much of the year when the weather is favorable.
- Creates a very visible recreational element that contributes to the perceived quality of life in the City.
- Trails may be heavily used by all age groups.
- Trails are relatively easy to maintain, as opposed to many other types of recreation facilities.

The Parks Master Plan recommends a City-wide network of hard surface trails, soft surface trails (nature walks) and sidewalk enhancements. Hard surface trails need physically to be wide enough to allow for multi-use including walking, jogging, biking, and skating. A width of between 8 and 12 feet should be considered for this purpose.

Proposed Trail Features and Amenities

In order for the Waxahachie trails system to be a successful community amenity, the trails should appeal to a wide variety of users. To achieve this, the trails should be designed to provide a high level of user conveniences. Recommended trail amenities include:

- Benches: Utilize wood composites with metal detailing.
- Arbor swings: Where appropriate in areas that warrant peaceful contemplation.
- Bike racks: Staple racks are inexpensive and most effective.
- Milepost markers: Mileposts greatly increase use of the trail by joggers and cyclists looking for set work out distances. It is recommended to incorporate milepost markers onto fixed wood or concrete bollards. Signage should be consistent with other trail signage.
- Trash receptacles: The trail should establish the National Park Service ethic of "pack it in, pack it out."
- Dog waste pickup stations: Dog waste pickup bag dispensers should be placed at trailheads and key neighborhood access points along the route. Signs should be placed along the trail notifying dog owners to pick up after their dogs.



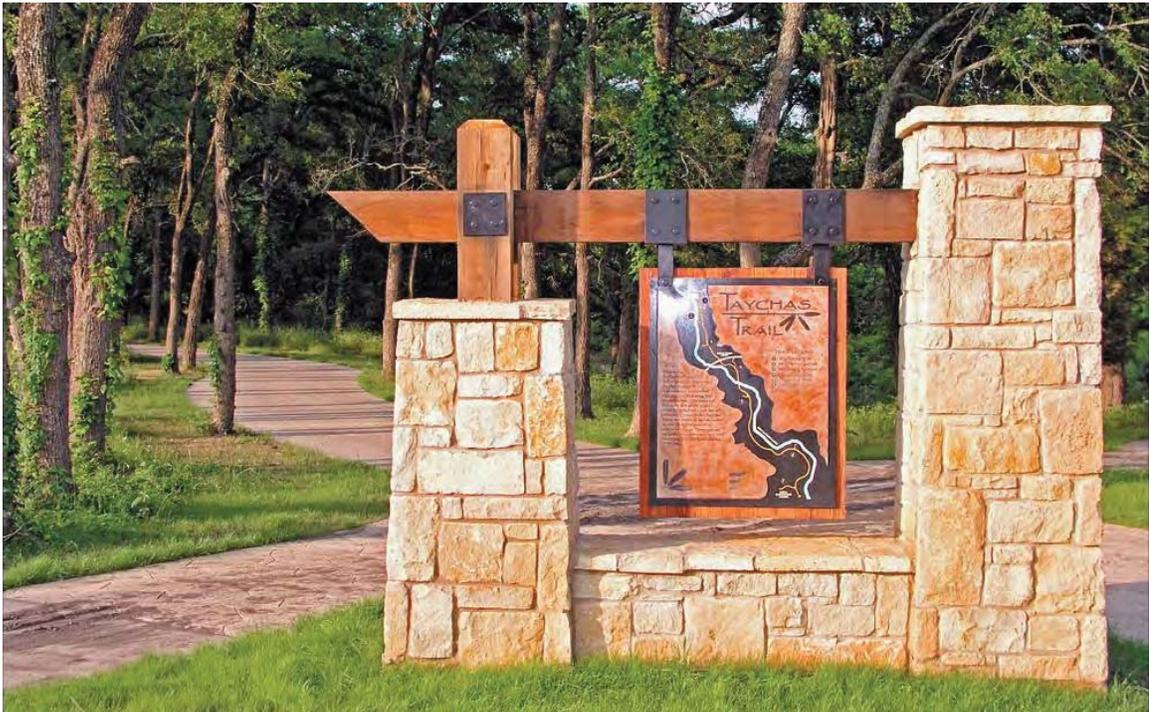
- **Information kiosks:** Trailhead stations should provide trail users with information and the rules and regulations of the trail. Involving school children and civic organizations in the research, design, and construction of these kiosks is an ideal community activity.
- **Directional signage:** The directional signing should impart a unique theme so trail users know which trail they are following and where it goes. The theme can be conveyed in a variety of ways: engraved stone, medallions, bollards, and mile markers. A central information installation at trailheads and major crossroads also helps users find their way and acknowledge the rules of the trail. They are also useful for interpretive education about plant and animal life, ecosystems, and local history.
- **Restrooms:** Where appropriate at major trailheads.

*The map: **Existing and Proposed Parks and Trails** on the following page illustrates the existing and proposed parks and trails for the entire City including the ETJ.*

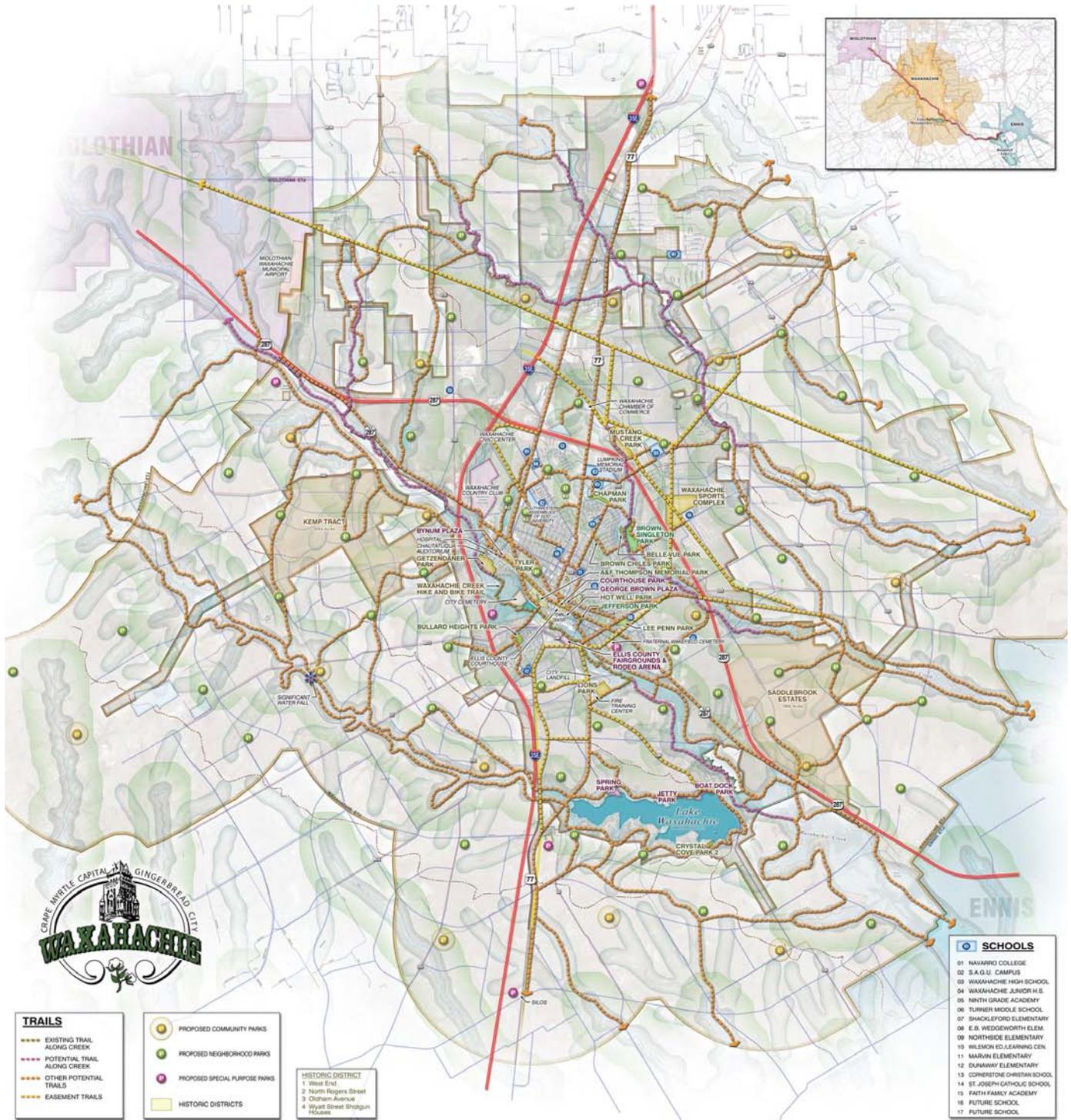
“Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very fast.”

Thomas Jefferson

The following images are examples of trail features and amenities designed by Halff Associates.



Information signage; West Rowlett Creek Trail, Frisco Texas (design: Halff Associates).



TRAILS

- EXISTING TRAIL ALONG CREEK
- POTENTIAL TRAIL ALONG CREEK
- OTHER POTENTIAL TRAILS
- EASEMENT TRAILS

- PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARKS
- PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- PROPOSED SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS
- HISTORIC DISTRICTS

HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. West End
2. North Rogers Street
3. Ocham Avenue
4. Wyatt Street (Straggon House)

SCHOOLS

- 01 HAWKINS COLLEGE
- 02 S.A.O.U. CAMPUS
- 03 WAXAHACHE HIGH SCHOOL
- 04 WAXAHACHE JUNIOR H.S.
- 05 NINTH GRADE ACADEMY
- 06 TURNER MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 07 SHACKLEFORD ELEMENTARY
- 08 E.B. WEDGEWORTH ELEM.
- 09 NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY
- 10 WILSON E.L. LEARNING CEN.
- 11 MARVIN ELEMENTARY
- 12 DUNAWAY ELEMENTARY
- 13 CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
- 14 ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
- 15 FATH FAMILY ACADEMY
- 16 FUTURE SCHOOL
- 17 FUTURE SCHOOL

EXISTING & PROPOSED PARKS & TRAILS

CITY OF WAXAHACHE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN



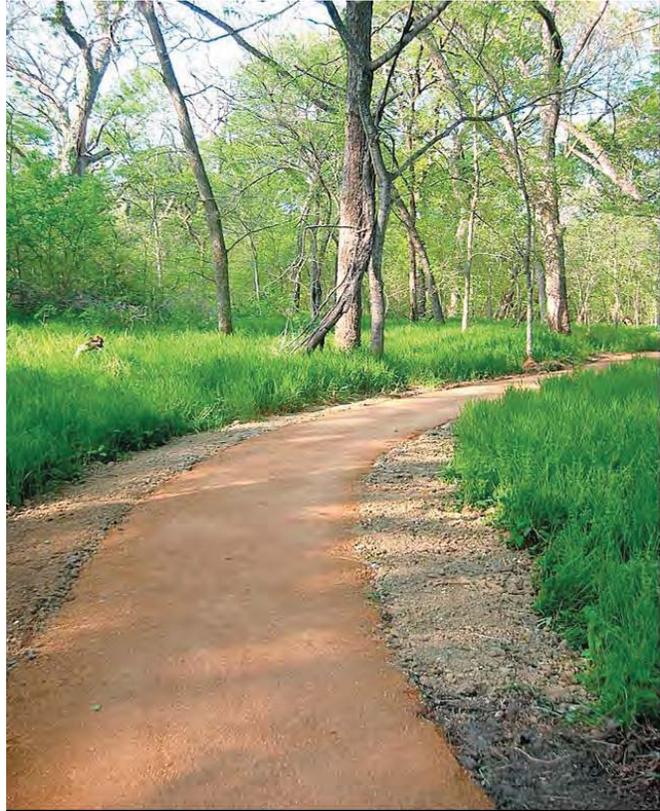
Trail gateway and information signage; West Rowlett Creek Trail, Frisco Texas.



Gateway at Trails in the Woods, Allen Texas. Note the stone columns, wood archway, stone and wood bench, and decomposed granite surface.



Soft surface nature trail: note that the decomposed granite surface with crushed recycled concrete on the shoulder of the trail. This type of trail is particularly successful in a natural setting.



An example of interpretative information signage at Trails in the Woods, Allen Texas.





People of all ages enjoy hike and bike trails.

ii) Playgrounds

Playgrounds are important gathering sites for families and parents to stimulate and promote social interaction in the community. It is recommended to plan and design for the development of playgrounds in all existing and future parks. Develop the playgrounds in such manner as to benefit from shade provided by existing trees. If that is not possible, instead plant a dense stand of shade trees adjacent to the playground and consider steel supported shade structures.

iii) Natural habitat / natural areas

Through objective public participation efforts, many cities learn about the strong need that most citizens have to experience natural habitat and natural areas within the City. However, most cities/towns have never considered acquiring land for conservation purposes, partly because it is not “programmed” space. However, land with no particular program may fulfill the function of wildlife habitat and flood control. If managed correctly, such land typically requires the least amount of maintenance.

Nature areas and natural habitat also provides a sense of visual, emotional and psychological relief to citizens. The provision of such land does not include the acquisition of undeveloped land only, but may include areas within existing parks where the establishment of native trees, wildflowers and native grasses is encouraged. This in turn allows for activities including bird watching and wildflower enjoyment.

The conservation of open space and natural areas also makes economical sense. It has been proven that the value of property adjacent or close to open space often has a substantial premium over the value of property in the same vicinity but not identified with the open space.



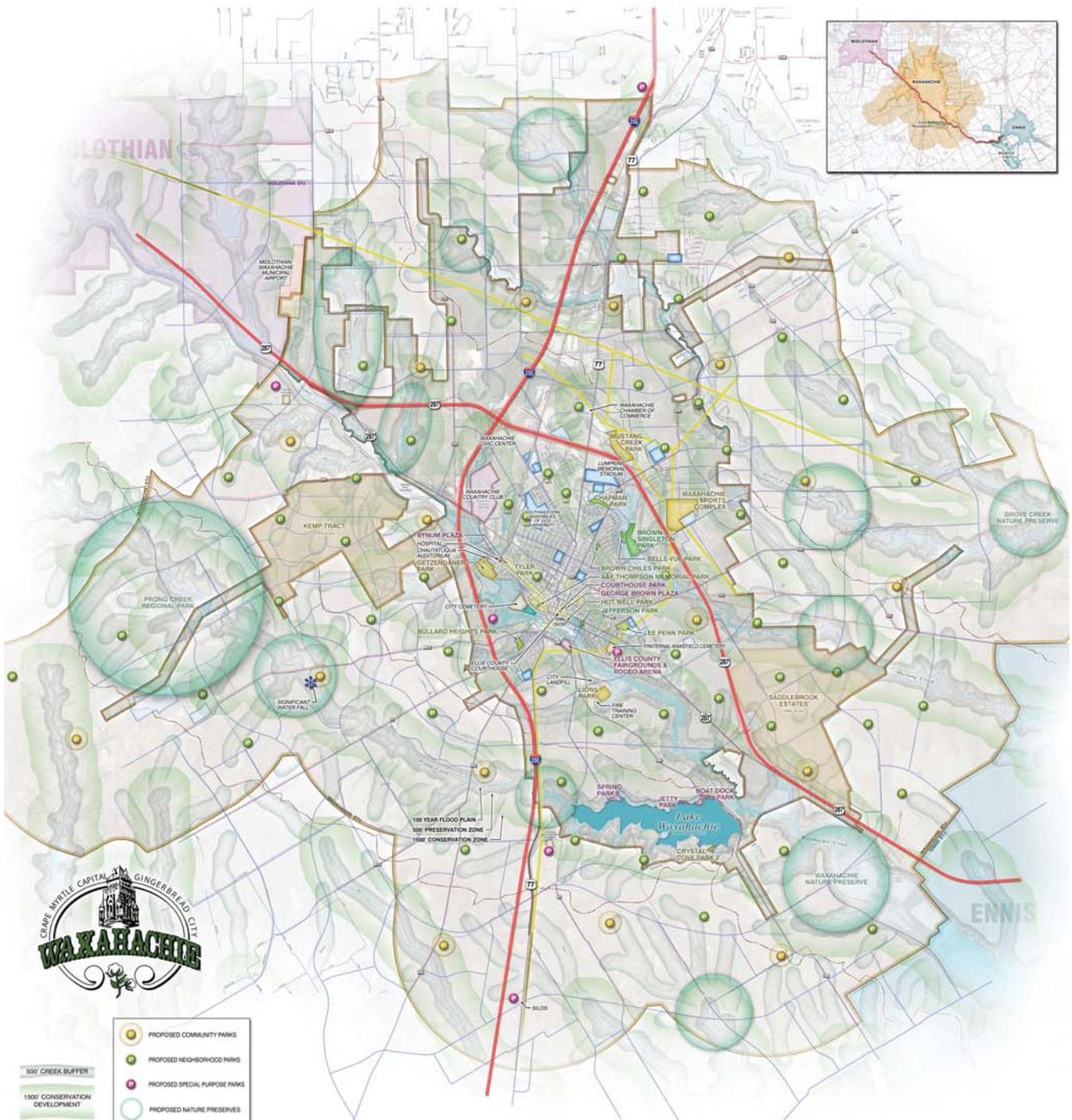
“Many community leaders feel they must choose between economic growth and open space protection. But no such choice is necessary. Open space protection is good for a community’s health, stability, beauty, and quality of life. It is also good for the bottom line.”

Will Rogers, President: Trust for Public Land; 1999.

Every effort should be made to secure the protection of existing natural areas and to restore disturbed sites. It is recommended that the City adopts Conservation Planning and Development principles to ensure developers to work “with” rather than “against” the land (See Paragraph 7.2 City Policy: Conservation Planning and Development). In addition, it is recommended that the City appoints a naturalist to assist in implementing such a policy.

As the watershed for Lake Waxahachie, Chapter 6 identifies Prong Creek as important from a water quality point of view. The same chapter describes creek confluences throughout the City as nodes of ecological significance. For this reason, the Prong Creek Regional Park and a number of nature preserves are recommended for establishment.

*The map: **Proposed Parks and Nature Preserves** on the following page illustrates the existing and proposed parks and nature preserves for the entire City including the ETJ.*



PROPOSED PARKS & NATURE PRESERVES

CITY OF WAXAHACHIE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN





iv) Lake Waxahachie Rental Facilities

Lake Waxahachie is an important recreation resource as was apparent from lake associated activities that were mentioned multiple times in the telephone Attitude Survey. Enjoyment of this beautiful amenity will be enhanced through the provision of both land and water based rental facilities. The former includes pavilions and the latter includes boats, fishing rods, etc. The main concern from an operation point of view, however, is the management of the rental activity, which will require additional manpower specifically based on the edge of the lake. On the other hand, facilities may generate rentals revenue for the City.

v) Pavilions and Picnic Tables

Pavilions and other shade shelters with picnic tables are frequently used and requested by the citizens.

- Reasons for additional picnic facilities:
 - Serve many diverse age groups.
 - Are key to recreational use during the warm seasons of the year.
 - Larger facilities may generate rentals revenue for the City.
- Distribution should remain balanced throughout the City so that all City areas have a good supply of park pavilions and tables.
- Design and construction of pavilions that allow for airflow through the roof by means of a two-tiered roof structure.

vi) Hiking Along Lake Waxahachie

Lake Waxahachie has a tremendous appeal as a recreation amenity, especially along the water's edge with its compelling long and wide vistas. Being linear in nature, this is the ideal location for trails. It is recommended that serious consideration be given over the long term, for the development of such a trail. As a first exercise, it is recommended that a trail connection be provided between Boat Dock Park and Jetty Park. Such a connection that runs past three to four water front properties may be constructed in the form of a raised board walk.

vii) Skateboard Park

Skate parks are only successful when located in high use areas with high visibility and good supervision. Good locations include a recreation center, community park and/or aquatic center. Predetermined operating times with adequate supervision is further essential to ensure the successful use of a skate park.

viii) Aquatic Center/Water Spray Park

Water spray parks follow a trend in many cities, whereby the excitement of water is provided in a safe and clean environment. The principle is spray nozzles, drop buckets, and other features that either regularly or intermittently (for a sense of surprise) spray and/or drop water on children excited with expectation. The water is collected directly in surface drains and re-circulated after proper treatment. Important factors to consider for the selection and preparation of an appropriate site are accessibility and visibility, wind, leaves, or other material that can possibly clog the drain system. The attractive aspect of water spray parks is that such facilities provide interest and excitement on a relatively small scale in a contained environment and can easily be added as a component of an existing park.



A water spray park may be provided as a stand-alone amenity or be combined with other aquatic facilities to create an aquatic center with splash pools, water slides, and sun bathing decks. Some cities are successful in creating additional income from such a facility e.g. NRH₂O Water Family Park in North Richland Hills, in the Mid Cities. However it requires the right location, professional management and innovative marketing to make it works. Seasonal use further complicates the attempt to make such a facility profitable. In the City of Keller, the aquatic center is located adjacent to a state of the art recreation center.



Water Spray Park in Sherman, Texas



ix) Boat Ramps along Lake Waxahachie

The value of Waxahachie as a recreation destination has been mentioned many times over. What is important is the public facilities provided to enjoy that resource. Boat ramps are a given need in any lake situation. However, water front parks with boat ramps with its associated infrastructure have a different use and therefore feel than parks without. It is suggested that certain parks be designed with boat ramps, and other parks be designed and developed with other uses, including picnicing, game fishing, bird watching, and hiking.

x) Outdoor basketball courts

Where appropriate consider one half basketball court (one goal) at existing and new neighborhood parks. The value of basketball courts allows for neighborhood kids to practice their skills at their own time. At community parks provide a number of full basketball courts in close proximity to enable tournament and league playing.

Other facilities (not within the top 12 priority list)

i) Gymnasium

It is recommended that a gymnasium be developed in conjunction with the potential new recreation center. In addition:

- Estimate the annual cost to operate the facility, and determine what fees would be assessed to recover some or all of the operational costs of the center.
- Determine the mechanism for funding the potential center.
- Determine the timeframe for implementation of this recommendation.



- Consider compliance to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) which is a program whereby better and healthier buildings are constructed through sustainable site design, energy and water conservation, and healthy interiors. For more information visit the Internet at www.usgbc.org/leed.

ii) Soccer fields

Provide multi-purpose practice fields in existing and future neighborhood parks. Develop competitive level league fields in the City's community parks.

iii) Baseball fields

Where possible, provide backstops in all existing and future neighborhood parks as part of multi-purpose practice fields. Should the need for baseball facilities increase in the future, develop competitive level league fields in the City's community parks.

iv) Amphitheater

The City may consider investing in a facility that offers:

- An elevated performance stage at least 20' x 25' in size;
- Adequate electrical service of a minimum of 200 amps, or larger service;
- Shaded spectator seating;
- Close proximity to adequate restrooms and parking;
- Water and electrical service for temporary utilities for entertainers vehicle connection;
- Prior provision for stage lighting and sound; and
- Concession vendor accommodations.

v) Youth softball fields

Where possible, provide backstops in existing and future neighborhood parks. Develop at least one competitive level league field in the City's community parks. Should the need for youth softball facilities increase in the future, develop competitive level league fields in the City's community parks.

vi) Exercise stations along trails

Exercise stations along trails provide excellent opportunities for a relatively comprehensive out door workout. Research shows that the most common and preferred physical activity of older adults is walking; so, exercise stations provide a perfect complement to any walking routine. Exercise station equipment is readily available from recognized and reputable retailers.

vii) Park Restrooms

Although expressed as a need by respondents to the attitude survey, it is recommended that restrooms are provided at community parks only. The provision of restrooms at neighborhood parks is discouraged. Compared to community parks, neighborhood parks typically have irregular use with fewer visitors. This makes it more prone to vandalism. Neighborhood parks are also typically in walking distance to the visitors' home and restrooms are thus less of an urgent need.

It is recommended that organizers of large functions and gatherings in a neighborhood park, should be required to arrange for portable restrooms to be brought to the park.



7.E – Park Improvements

7.6 High Priority Existing Park Improvement

7.6.1 Individual Parks

Recommendations are made for each park in the City's park system. These are preliminary master plan level recommendations, and are intended only to define the magnitude of the improvements for each park. Each park should be programmed and master planned as it enters the design phase, and extensive area citizen and user group input should be included in the design process. Specific facility improvements per individual park are recommended in Chapter 3.

7.6.2 City wide

The following City-wide key improvements to existing parks are recommended during the next 10-year period.

Renovation of existing parks

- Ensure that all improvements meet ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements.
- Increase shade in all parks by planting additional trees where practical.
- For additional landscape improvements, place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Provide shade structures at the children's play areas where feasible.

Park Signage

- Develop a branding concept for the City's signage, to be applied consistently at all the existing and future parks; a well-conceived and designed signage theme will add to the unique identity and character of the City of Waxahachie.
- Based on the branding concept, develop and install identification, informational, interpretative, and directional signage at all City parks.
- Install additional directional signage throughout the City.

Park Maintenance

It is recommended that the Parks Department play an active role in implementing a holistic plant management program throughout the parks and grounds. Implement appropriate practices to promote a healthy soil micro-fauna and root system of all plants. Emphasize native and naturalized plants that are better adapted to the Waxahachie and North Central Texas region.

Wi-Fi Access

Access to the Internet in parks is popular in many cities. Consider providing Wi-Fi access in the Community Parks.

Wi-Fi is short for *wireless fidelity*, which allows the user to connect to the Internet without the need for hard-wire cabling. Wi-Fi-enabled computers use radio technologies to send and receive data within the range of a base station or *hotspot*, which is a connection point for a WiFi network.



Art in Public Places including Parks

Explore and develop a policy to include environmental and outdoor art in parks and open space. Pursue a “Percentage for Art Program”, where a portion of the funding for all public projects is dedicated to outdoor art. Fund every major park construction project for art. At a minimum, fund at least one installation every 2 to 3 years. Place at prominent locations, and pursue joint placements with other entities such as local schools.

Reasons for public art: Art has a tremendous potential to add additional layers of meaning to the landscape and to encourage contemplation as a manner of passive recreation. It also will set Waxahachie apart as a City that appreciates quality of life. Examples of art in parks around the State of Texas are shown on this and the next pages.



City of Odessa, TX



City of Frisco, TX



City of North Richland Hills, TX



City of North Richland Hills, TX



Sculpture along the port promenade in San Diego, CA



A simple seating bench improved by tile artwork created by children at the Children's Museum of Art, San Diego, CA



Port promenade in San Diego, CA



City of Abilene, TX

“Let’s build bigger parks and smaller parking spaces.”
Pop-up slogan on the Mini USA website



7.F – Operation and Maintenance

7.7 Operation and Maintenance Assessment

With the recommendations for additional parks, open space, and trails, additional manpower would be needed for the required maintenance of these various projects. The number of additional staff needed to attend to these proposed facilities will vary depending on the use of these facilities. However, positive support and the provision of adequate staffing must be included as each facility is developed, or the facility should not be built. The current City’s Parks and Recreation Operation and Maintenance budget and needs are discussed below.

7.7.1 Operations and Maintenance Expenditures

Table 7.2 Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Budget *			
	Fiscal Year 2005	Fiscal Year 2006	Fiscal Year 2007
Total General Fund Budget	\$15,800,200	\$18,856,700	\$20,274,800
Parks Budget	\$792,400	\$896,300	\$1,036,000
Parks / General Fund	5%	5%	5%
Recreation Budget	\$2,522,500	\$2,849,800	\$3,555,200
Recreation / General Fund	16%	15%	18%
Total Parks & Recreation Budget	\$3,314,900	\$3,746,100	\$4,591,200
Overall Parks & Recreation Percentage of General Fund	21%	20%	23%

* City of Waxahachie Finance Department; rounded to the closest 100

For the 2007 fiscal year, Waxahachie’s Parks and Recreation Budget is 23% of the City’s General Fund.

As a percentage of the overall General Fund, Waxahachie’s expenditures were compared with other cities in the area. See Table 7.3 below.



**Table 7.3
Comparison of Overall Park Expenditures Relative to General Fund**

City	Overall General Fund	General Fund per Capita	Park Expenditures including recreation	Percent of General Fund	City size in Acres*
Waxahachie (06-07) 27,880 population*	\$20,274,800	\$727	\$4,591,200	23%	89,400
Allen (2004-05) 66,400 population	\$35,900,000	\$ 540	\$4,642,000	13%	16,640.0
Addison (2004-05) 14,450 population	\$8,660,000	\$600	\$3,521,700	41%	2,816.0
Burleson (2004-05) 28,350 population	\$3,362,000	\$ 120	\$1,094,300	33%	12,544.0
Carrollton (2004-05) 116,500 population	\$66,346,645	\$ 570	\$9,100,000	13%	23,424.0
Colleyville (2004-05) 21,000 population	\$23,730,000	\$1,130	\$1,300,000	5%	8,320.0
Corinth (2005-06) 18,550 population	\$10,199,000 (06/07)	\$550	\$1,260,000	12%	4,992.0
Denton (2004-05) 96,200 population	\$69,100,000	\$ 718	\$7,230,000	10%	39,808.0
Duncanville (2004-05) 36,150 population	\$21,850,000	\$ 604	\$1,700,000	7.7%	7,168.0
Frisco (2005-06) 73,900 population	\$50,000,000	\$ 677	\$3,700,000	7.4%	44,800.0
Grapevine (2004-05) 44,850 population	\$45,700,000 (6/07)	\$ 1,040	\$4,700,800	10%	22,912.0
Highland Village (2004-05) 14,150 population	\$8,390,000	\$ 593	\$1,134,600	13%	4,096.0
Lancaster (2005-06) 39,000 population	\$17,938,600	\$ 460	\$2,045,300	11%	24,000
Mesquite (2003-04) 133,600 population	\$84,340,000	\$ 631	\$5,494,000	7%	27,776.0
Rockwall (2004-05) 27,300 population	\$15,600,000 (05/06)	\$572	\$1,800,000	12%	14,464.0
Rowlett (2004-05) 52,250 population	\$30,500,000	\$584	\$2,124,700	7%	12,928.0
Southlake (2004-05) 24,900 population	\$23,000,000	\$923	\$2,663,700	12%	14,336.0
Terrell (2004-05) 15,400 population	\$13,612,000	\$884	\$511,000	4%	11,904.0
Wylie (2004-05) 29,800 population	\$15,988,000	\$537	\$1,061,900	7%	21,248.0

* City of Waxahachie Planning Department (City Limits: 31,800 acres; ETJ: 57,600 acres)



It is noticeable that Waxahachie's Parks and Recreation Budget as a percentage of the overall General Fund, is above average compared to the Cities above.

The following table illustrates the per capita expenditure for parks compared with a number of cities.

**Table 7.4
Comparison of Park Operations and Maintenance Expenditures
(excluding special or performance funds)**

City	Population *	Budgeted Park Expenditures in 2004/05	Per Capita Expenditure
Waxahachie	27,880 **	\$1,036,000 (06/07)	\$37
Allen	66,400	\$4,642,200	\$70
Addison	14,450	\$3,521,800	\$244
Burleson	28,350	\$1,094,300	\$39
Carrollton	116,500	\$9,100,000	\$78
Colleyville	21,000	\$1,300,000	\$62
Corinth (2006)	18,550	\$1,260,000	\$68
Denton	96,200	\$7,230,000	\$75
Duncanville	36,150	\$1,716,950	\$48
Flower Mound	60,450	\$2,808,600	\$46
Frisco	73,900	\$3,700,000	\$50
Grapevine	44,850	\$4,700,000	\$108
Highland Village	14,150	\$1,134,600	\$80
Lancaster	39,000	\$1,991,600	\$51
Mesquite	133,600	\$5,494,100	\$41
N Richland Hills	61,650	\$2,422,300	\$39
Rockwall	27,300	\$1,800,000	\$66
Rowlett	52,250	\$2,124,800	\$41
Southlake	24,900	\$2,663,800	\$107
Terrell	15,400	\$511,000	\$33
Wylie	29,800	\$1,061,100	\$36

* 2006 North Central Texas Council of Governments – Estimated Population

**2007 - City of Waxahachie Planning Department

Compared to other cities, Waxahachie's Park Operations and Maintenance Expenditure appears to be below average.



Expenditure calculations for cities with other operating funds (special or performance funds) are presented in Table 8.7 below.

Table 7.5 Comparison of Overall Park and Recreation Expenditures including special or performance funds			
City	Population*	Budgeted Park Expenditures in 2004/05	Per Capita Expenditure
Waxahachie	27,880 **	No other funds	-
Allen	66,400	\$9,670,250	\$146
Addison	14,450	No other funds	-
Burleson	28,350	\$1,164,300	\$41
Carrollton	116,500	\$9,137,000	\$78
Colleyville	21,000	No other funds	-
Corinth	17,800	No other funds	-
Denton	96,200	\$10,516,900	\$109
Duncanville	36,150	\$1,730,450	\$48
Flower Mound	60,450	\$3,266,000	\$54
Frisco	73,900	No other funds	-
Grapevine	44,850	No other funds	-
Highland Village	14,150	\$1,336,900	\$94
Lancaster	39,000	No other funds	-
Mansfield	45,000	\$1,994,350	\$44
N Richland Hills	61,650	\$10,081,900	\$164
Rockwall	27,300	\$1,905,000	\$70
Rowlett	52,250	\$2,863,600	\$55
Southlake	24,900	\$4,691,800	\$188
Terrell	15,400	\$623,800	\$41
Wylie	29,800	\$1,686,900	\$57

* 2005 North Central Texas Council of Governments

** 2007 - City of Waxahachie Planning Department



7.7.2 Parks and Recreation Personnel

Table 7.6 Parks Department Acreage and Personnel Comparisons					
City	Overall Budget (1)	Total Park Acres	Overall Budget/ Park Acres (closest 100)	Number of Personnel (2) ;(3)	Total Park Acres/Staff Member
Waxahachie (06/07)	\$4,591,200	309	\$14,900	23	13
Allen	\$4,642,200	427	\$10,900	51	8
Addison	\$3,521,800	143	\$24,600	38	4
Burleson	\$1,094,300	198	\$5,500	14	14
Carrollton	\$9,100,000	1,793	\$5,100	142	13
Colleyville	\$1,300,000	190	\$6,800	13	15
Corinth (06)	\$1,260,000	179	\$7,000	18	10
Denton	\$7,230,000	1,222	\$5,900	91	13
Duncanville	\$1,716,950	227	\$7,600	23	10
Flower Mound	\$2,808,600	545	\$5,200	29	19
Frisco	\$3,745,350	869	\$4,300	59	15
Grapevine	\$4,117,800	1,511	\$2,700	67	23
Highland Village	\$1,134,600	320	\$3,500	17	19
Lancaster (05/06)	\$2,045,300	545	\$3,800	21	26
Mesquite	\$5,494,100	1,427	\$3,900	116	12
N Richland Hills	\$2,422,300	720	\$3,400	33	22
Rockwall	\$1,800,000	443	\$4,000	29	15
Rowlett	\$2,124,800	983	\$2,100	22	45
Southlake	\$2,663,800	636	\$4,200	36	18
Terrell	\$511,000	200	\$2,600	7	29
Wylie	\$1,061,100	545	\$1,900	12	45

- (1) Budgets and staff levels for general comparison purposes only. Maintenance of non-park areas such as medians is not included but does impact staff levels.
- (2) Excludes Indoor recreation and /or golf course staff.
- (3) Includes parks facilities and recreational programming personnel.



Staff Levels - Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Department staff levels for the 2006 fiscal year are shown in Table 8.9 below.

Approximate Park Acres Maintained	Park Acres per Personnel	Number of Personnel	Management, Supervisory & Clerical staff	Horticultural Staff	Skilled & Unskilled Staff
309 acres (2006)	18 acres	17	2	-	15

* Maintenance of park facilities only (recreational programming staff excluded)

Waxahachie Parks Department Personnel for 2006 includes the following:

Parks and Recreation Director (1)

Parks Maintenance

- Parks Crew leader (1)
- Parks Senior Maintenance Worker (2)
- Parks Maintenance Worker (6)
- Parks part-time (14, effectively 7)

Recreation

- Recreation Superintendent (1)
- Recreation Senior Maintenance Worker (1)
- Recreation Maintenance Worker (4)
- Recreation part-time (1, effectively 0.5)

The total number of Parks Department personnel for 2006 was 23 people.



7.7.3 Recommendations for the Parks Department Staffing, Operations and Maintenance

The City's needs pertaining to parks and recreation facilities operations and maintenance are addressed in terms of:

- staffing;
- potential changes to operations and maintenance techniques, equipment or strategies; and
- establishment of a parks and operations maintenance facility.

Staffing Recommendations - based on the adoption of the recommendations of the Master Plan, the following additional staffing needs should be implemented:

1. **Naturalist** is needed to ensure the effective establishment and management of the proposed creek corridors and assist the City in adopting the and applying Conservation Development in the City. A total of \$60,000 is recommended as a budget for this position (including salary and indirect costs.)
2. **Park Planner** is needed to coordinate the development and implementation of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan including trails. Additionally, this position should be the City Landscape Administrator. A total of \$60,000 is recommended as a budget for this position (including salary and indirect costs.)
3. **Special Projects Crew** (1 foreman and 3 technicians). This crew would handle landscape construction to include: Irrigation system maintenance and repair, playground inspection, maintenance, repair, and construction, installation of park signage, landscape plantings, repair and renovation of park facilities. The amount of \$40,000 is recommended as a budget for a foreman and \$30,000 per technician (including salary and indirect costs.) The total budget for a special projects crew is \$90,000.
4. **Additional General Labor:** Due to the increase in additional park acreage, hike and bike trails, right of way maintenance, additional athletic fields, and other duties assigned to the Department, additional grounds maintenance labor must be added. The amount of \$25,000 is recommended as a budget per laborer (including salary and indirect costs). The total budget for five additional general laborers is \$125,000.
5. **Grant Writer** is needed to identify and pursue grants. This grant writer should be skilled in preparing grant applications. A total of \$60,000 is recommended as a budget for this position (including salary and indirect costs.)
6. City should invest additional funding for **staff development** in the areas of continuing education, licensing, and certifications. The amount of \$10,000 per year is recommended for staff development.

The collective impact of the recommended staff, labor costs, and additional funding comes to \$330,000 annually for the above new positions.



7.7.4 Annual Expenditure Recommendations

**Figure 7.2
Annual Expenditure Recommendations**

Annual expenditures per maintained acre of park today are in the order of **\$14,858** (**\$4,591,200/ 309 acres**) rounded to **\$14,900** per acre. Maintaining that current ratio, the addition of approximately 800 acres (excluding natural open space and the Creek Crossings Parks) during the next five years will require a budget increase of approximately \$11,920,000 by the year 2012; the addition of approximately 1,000 acres in the 2012 to 2017 year period will further increase the budget with approximately \$14,900,000. Total expected annual expenditures for 2017 will increase this amount to approximately \$31,400,000 for about 2,100 acres of park land excluding natural open space and flood plains.

The staffing and budget recommendations shown above are approximate, and will require adjustments to meet current fiscal conditions and the specific design needs of parks as they are improved. However, citizen support for a high level of quality in the parks system, as well as dramatic steps to beautify the city, is unquestioned, and can be read as support for higher park department budget levels.

7.7.5 Operations and Maintenance Techniques, Equipment or Strategies

In order to ensure future effectiveness and efficiency of the City's parks operations and maintenance programs, the following is recommended for consideration as and when the need arises:

1. Parks Maintenance Staff should have an **operations center** to professionally manage all parks, athletic fields, municipal grounds, median, and right of way maintenance.
2. The City should invest in **standardization of all park name signage**.
3. The City should invest in **standardization of informational signage** in all parks (i.e., park operation hours, lease ordinance, rental information, no motorized vehicles, etc.).
4. **Athletic fields must be managed** for safety of participants and to maximize utilization of athletic field resources.
5. The City should invest in **automated athletic field lighting** for all existing facilities to maximize utilization of athletic field resources.
6. The City should invest in **multi-purpose athletic practice facilities** to ensure high quality game fields for competition. These facilities should have minimal practice field lighting and an irrigation system.
7. The City should adopt a policy of **minimal interference or maintenance of natural areas** and open space. The goal should be to preserve these areas in their natural state for which a public awareness campaign should be developed. The staffing of a naturalist as recommended above will greatly assist in finding the best approach.



Establishment of a Parks Operations and Maintenance Facility

Parks Maintenance should have an adequate central maintenance facility which may include:

- EPA approved storage facilities for Chemicals and Pesticides
- Above ground fuel storage and fueling station
- Small engines service area and parts storage
- Irrigation parts storage
- Covered storage for all motorized equipment
- Storage binds for bulk storage of soil amendments
- Greenhouse for propagation and holding of bedding materials
- Wash rack for cleaning mowing equipment
- Adequate office space for supervisory staff
- Adequate break room and restrooms for department staff
- Adequate parking for staff vehicles and City vehicles
- Storage for seasonal items such as Christmas Decorations, Banners, portable stage, etc.

Other parks operations and maintenance issues include:

1. The City should develop a plan to implement native plant material with low water requirement in all landscape situations where possible.
2. The City should implement an annual tree planting program in all parks to provide for additional shade, to phase the cost for these trees, and to ensure healthy grouping of old and young trees together.
3. The City should establish a tree farm for the propagation of trees native to North Central Texas. These trees are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and will result in superior tree cover, shade, and drought tolerance.
4. The City should continue the practice of producing compost and expand the existing composting facility whereby tree and plant clippings are chipped and mulched for re-use as compost on all City property. The purpose is to implement an integrated and organic maintenance approach for the entire City that minimizes reliance on chemicals and pesticides.
5. The City should invest in a City wide irrigation system that is a computerized central control system radio linked for the efficient management of irrigation, including an automated irrigation added to all athletic practice fields to improve the safety of participants, improve the quality of the turf, and improve the vitality and resilience of the turf.