

City of Waxahachie 2007 Comprehensive Plan

CHAPTER 8: COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN



A livable community is one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.



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CHAPTER 8: COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN





Introduction

Public buildings that house the various governmental and service functions of a municipality are generally of two types: (1) those requiring a nearly central or a common location and that serve the entire municipal area, and (2) those serving segments of the community on a "service-area" basis. Waxahachie's City Hall is an example of a governmental building that serves the entire community, while local fire stations represent a public building that has a service-area relationship with the community.

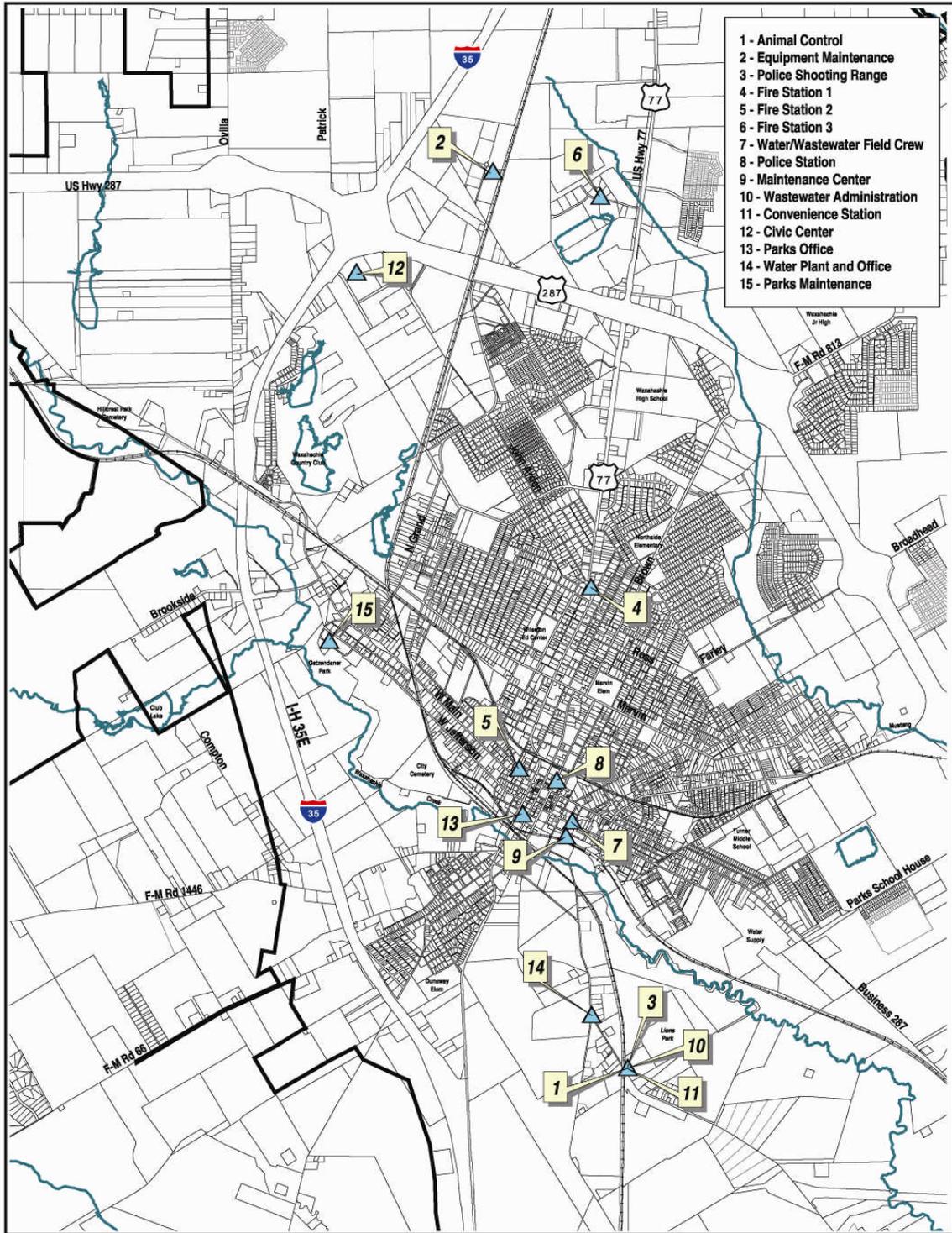
The *Community Facilities Plan* element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the expectations that a community's residents have regarding public services and the facilities needed to provide these services. The *Community Facilities Plan* is a general assessment of several of Waxahachie's services and related building space needed to provide such services. This assessment includes City administration, library, police, and fire services. Policies at the end of this chapter outline the way in which Waxahachie's leaders should address public service and facility needs in the years to come as the population continues to increase.

Local governments face growing pressure and increased expectations with respect to promoting economic development, addressing social problems and improving the quality of life for all members of the community. At the same time, they are constrained by cost factors and limits to the ways in which they can generate revenue.

Direct investment and program creation are key policy responses. Yet equally important is the ability of local governments to convene key players who can take concrete action on these problems. Local governments can harness resources from a wide range of sectors. They can engage a variety of groups and organizations to work collaboratively towards the achievement of their overall vision and specific goals. In short, local governments can play a central role in building safe, healthy and caring communities.

Caledon Institute of Social Policy. *Strategies for a Caring Community: The Local Government Role*. Caledon website.



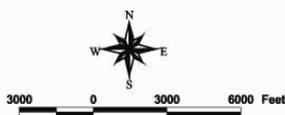


- 1 - Animal Control
- 2 - Equipment Maintenance
- 3 - Police Shooting Range
- 4 - Fire Station 1
- 5 - Fire Station 2
- 6 - Fire Station 3
- 7 - Water/Wastewater Field Crew
- 8 - Police Station
- 9 - Maintenance Center
- 10 - Wastewater Administration
- 11 - Convenience Station
- 12 - Civic Center
- 13 - Parks Office
- 14 - Water Plant and Office
- 15 - Parks Maintenance



WATAHACHIE

Plate 8-1



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Community Facility Locations

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City Services & Facilities

City Employees & City Hall

Table 8-1: City Employees By Department & Location

Many of Waxahachie’s administrative departments and services are currently operated out of the City Hall facility, which is located in the heart of Downtown Waxahachie. Other departments and operational services are distributed throughout the City, as shown on *Plate 8-1. Table 8-1* to the right outlines the various departments and number of employees, and shows which operate out of City Hall. Typically, about 25 percent of a community’s employees are housed in the city hall facility; Waxahachie is comparable, but slightly below, this percentage.

Waxahachie expanded its existing City Hall in 1999 by adding space to the original historic structure, but there is not much room for accommodating additional personnel without expansion. The only direction in which the present City Hall can expand is south of its current location. It is preferable that the City maintain its City Hall services in the Downtown area. Any expansion should incorporate an area-wide design, with Waxahachie Creek and any proposed Downtown amenities a part of such design.

The number of additional employees (part-time and full time) that need to be

Department & Location		Employees	
		Full-Time	Part-Time
City Hall Location	Administration	5	0
	Building Inspection	9	0
	Economic Development	1	0
	Engineering Department	5	2
	Finance Department	5	1
	Health Department	5	1
	Human Resources	3	0
	Information Technology	2	0
	Municipal Court	3	2
	Planning/C3 Program	1	1
	Utility Administration	3	0
	Utility Billing	3	0
	SUB-TOTAL	45	7
	<i>Sub-Total Percent of Total</i>		19%
Other Locations Throughout the City	Animal Control	3	0
	Building Maintenance	2	0
	City Garage	3	0
	Civic Center Management	7	2
	Convenience Station Management	2	1
	Fire Department	44	0
	Meter Reading	5	0
	Mid-Way Airport	2	0
	Parks and Recreation*	9	17
	Police Department	62	0
	Refuse Collection	1	0
	Sports Complex	6	1
	Streets	12	6
	Wastewater Collection	7	0
	Wastewater Treatment	12	0
	Water Distribution	6	0
	Water Production	11	0
	SUB-TOTAL	194	27
<i>Sub-Total Percent of Total</i>		81%	
TOTAL		239	34





accommodated within a City Hall facility could almost double in 10 years to meet the needs of the City’s anticipated population growth. *Table 8-2* on the following page shows this calculation, along with the amount of space and number of employees Waxahachie may need to meet the needs of its ultimate population. Refer to *Policy #1* for further discussion of City Hall improvements and recommendations.

Table 8-2: City Hall – Employees and Population Ratios Based on Future Population Growth

	Current	Projected Population*		
		2016	2026	Ultimate
Population	26,700	42,200	57,650	167,042
City Hall Staff	49	82	112	325
City Hall Square Footage	24,608	38,670	53,234	115,507
* Refer to Chapter 5, the <i>Future Land Use Plan</i> , for information on population projections and ultimate population calculations.				

Library Services & Facilities

Citizens of Waxahachie are provided library service through the Sims Library. The library is centrally located near the Downtown area along West Main Street, as shown on *Plate 8-1*. The library currently has 5,600 square feet of building space. The Sims Library is the only local library location (i.e., there are no branches), and it is independent of the City, but is operated by a Board of Directors supported by the City and Ellis County. A portion of the City’s tax rate is dedicated to the Library – 0.063 per \$100 valuation. The Board sets the budget and oversees operation.



The Sims Library

The American Library Association (ALA) standard for library space in relation to population is 0.75 square feet per library patron. When this ratio is applied to a city’s population, it needs to be adjusted for the number of citizens that are actually library patrons. This adjustment results in a ratio of 0.50 square feet per population, which is used in *Table 8-2* to show the square footage needed for library services in Waxahachie. (Population projections are discussed within the *Future Land Use Plan*, Chapter 5.)





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Table 8-2: Library Service – Square Footage Need Based on Current & Future Population

Basis & Needs	Current Square Footage	Current Need	Projected Population*		
			2016	2026	Ultimate
Population	5,600	26,700	42,200	57,650	167,042
Square Footage Needed Based on Adjusted ALA Standard		13,350	21,100	28,825	83,520

* Refer to Chapter 5, the *Future Land Use Plan*, for information on population projections and ultimate population calculations.

Based upon the standard of 0.5 square feet per person, the current City population requires approximately 13,350 square feet of library space. Therefore, the present library space of 5,600 square feet is insufficient to serve the existing population. (This does not include any service calculations for the County, i.e., outside the City limits.)

The Sims Library was built during 1903 - 1904 after a local farmer and investor named Nicholas P. Sims left the bulk of his estate for the establishment of a library for the people of Waxahachie and Ellis County. The land for the new library was given to the city of Waxahachie by its first mayor, Captain W. H. Getzendaner. The site where the library is located was once known as Getzendaner Park. Sims Library opened to the public on April 26, 1905 and has stayed open continuously since then. Sims Library was one of the first 10 public libraries constructed in Texas, and one of the first privately endowed libraries in the state.

Quoted from www.waxahachiedowntown.com, Library link

The Board is currently working with an architect to design an expansion of the Library.

Important to note in this discussion is that the phrase "library service" has changed in recent years. It is no longer adequate to provide only books and other traditional research materials. Libraries need to be more diverse, with computer and internet related services as well. So, when the City (or Board) considers additional library services, these newer technology-related services also need to be considered along with the traditional provisions.

There are a number of ways the City, in cooperation with the Sims Library Board of Directors, could provide additional library services, if it is determined that expansion of Sims Library is not feasible for financial or spatial reasons. For example, library needs could be met with a satellite facility in another part of Waxahachie. Another way to provide such services is not with additional building space, but with additional services that are not tied to traditional "brick-and-mortar." These include outreach services, such as book service programs (i.e., delivery) for children and the elderly, tutoring programs, and cooperative-use programs with local school districts (i.e., for books, research materials, etc.). Other types of services which are becoming more common with the advent of the internet include checking books and research materials out electronically with downloads, paying late fees on-line, or re-checking out books online. Establishing such programs would require some City



and/or Library Board investment, but would likely be less expensive than building additional facilities to meet short-term needs.

Police Services & Facilities

Police service is an extremely important factor in assessing a community's quality of life. Safety is often a prime consideration for people when deciding where to establish a home. A high crime rate (or perception of crime) can cause people to decide not to locate in a particular area. Conversely, a low crime rate can be an attractor for population growth. Suburban communities like Waxahachie often experience population growth partly due to the feeling of safety that a low crime rate provides. As shown in *Figure 8-1*, Waxahachie has a crime rate that is comparable with that of other cities in the area. Waxahachie and other surrounding cities all have much lower crime rates than Dallas.

Figure 8-1: Crime Rates in 2005 – Dallas, Waxahachie, & Surrounding Cities

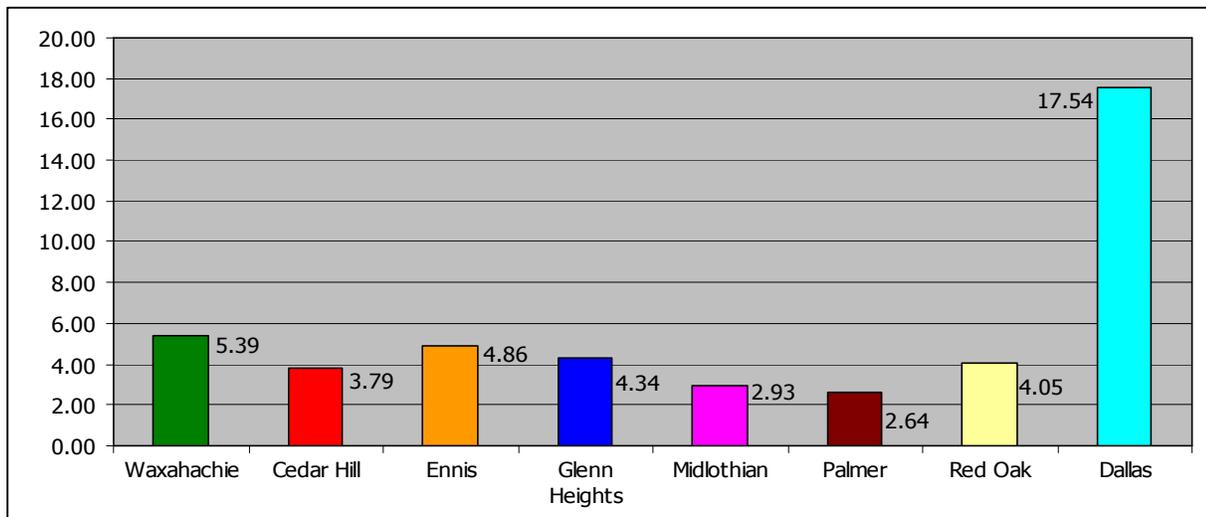


Table 8-3: Ratio Analysis of Future Police Service Needs

Current # of Officers	Current Ratio of Officers to Population	Planning Ratio of Officers to Population	Future # of Officers Needed for Future Population*		
			Population of 42,200 in 2016	Population of 57,650 in 2026	Ultimate Population of 167,042
46	1.72	2 Per 1,000	84	115	334

* Refer to Chapter 5, the *Future Land Use Plan*, for information on population projections and ultimate population calculations.





Police Officers

Within the Police Department, Waxahachie currently has 46 full-time police officer personnel, including the Chief, Deputy Chiefs, lieutenants, sergeants, and officers. There are also 13 support staff personnel, such as dispatchers and administrative people. The ratio of police officers to population is commonly used to ensure that the police force can properly serve the citizenry. The Waxahachie Police Department uses a ratio of 2 officers per 1,000 population. This consistent with the national FBI recommended ratio of approximately 1.8 officers per 1,000 people.⁸⁻¹

The City currently has a ratio of 1.72 officers per 1,000 people. This is a good ratio in that it is almost equivalent to the Police Department's planning ratio. *Table 8-2* (previous page) projects the number of police officers needed in the future correlated with future population projections in 2016, 2026, and at build-out capacity. Many more officers will be needed in the next 10 years if Waxahachie's population growth occurs as anticipated within this *Comprehensive Plan*.



A Public Space in Downtown Waxahachie

Police Department Space

Waxahachie's Police Department currently operates out of one facility that is located on College Street and that is approximately 9,400 square feet. This facility is currently at capacity for the number of personnel within the department. Given that the Police Department will need to grow in correlation with population growth, this immediate need should be addressed as soon as possible. Refer to *Policy #1* toward the end of this chapter for recommendations related to the Police Department.

Fire Services & Facilities

Like police service, fire service is important to local quality of life. In addition to fighting fires, a community's fire personnel are often called on to provide emergency management service (EMS), alongside police and traditional ambulance services. Fire service and facilities are therefore a significant element in one of municipalities' main functions – ensuring the public's health, safety and welfare. A major factor in terms of fire protection service is the service-area of fire stations to the geographic area

⁸⁻¹ U.S. Department of Justice (website).



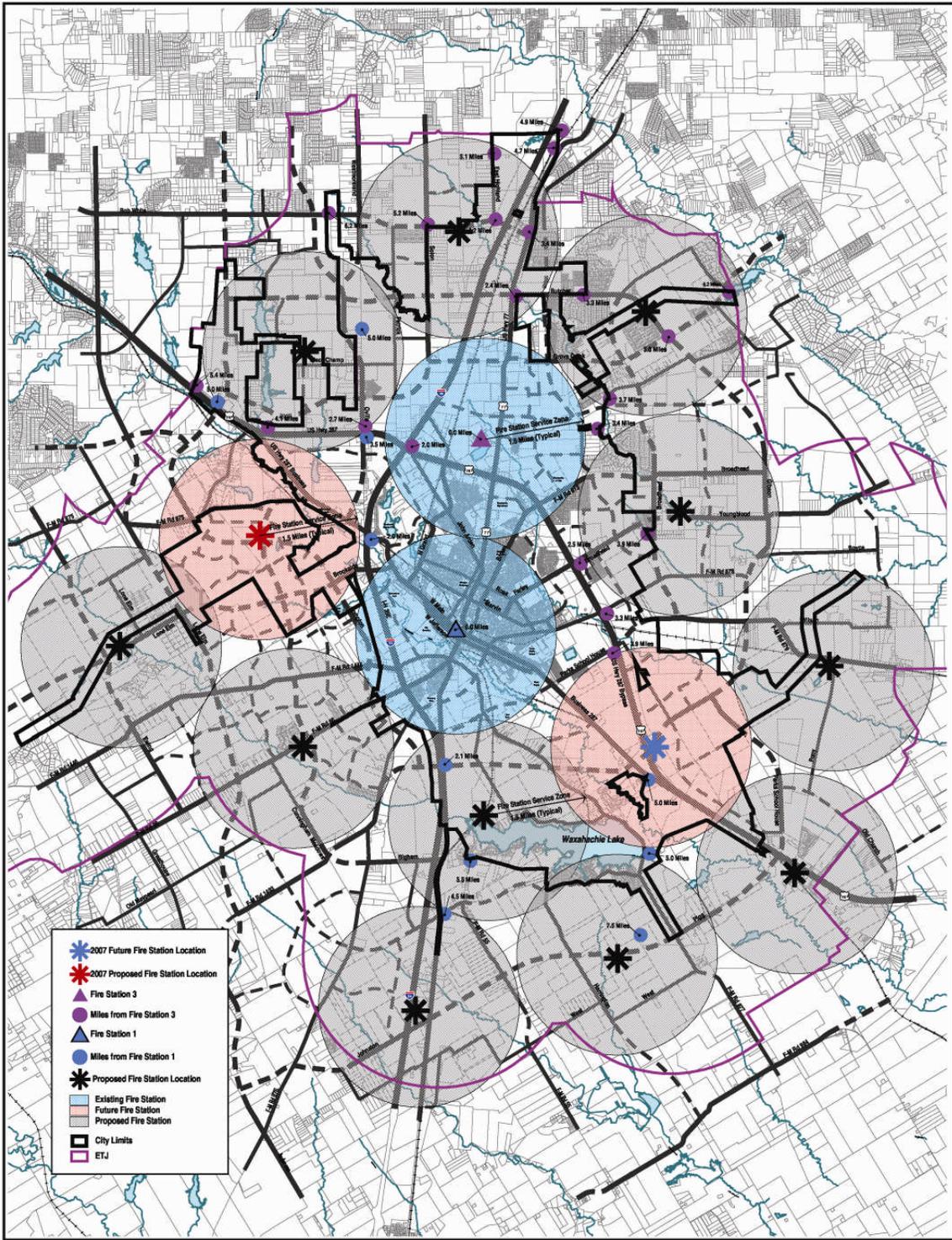




Plate 8-2

Fire Station Locations



 5000 0 5000 10000 Feet

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 Date: October 2007





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of the community. According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), the generally accepted fire service area for urban areas is 1.5 miles, while for rural areas, it is 2.5 miles. These distances correspond to the NFPA standard of a 4-minute maximum response time.

Waxahachie currently has two fire stations used for fire protection services. Another station is leased out to East Texas Medical Service, which provides ambulance service for the City. These existing stations are shown on *Plate 8-2*. The radii that they encompass (one-and-one-half mile) generally covers the City's currently developed area.



The Central Fire Station

As the City grows, new fire stations will be needed to maintain adequate coverage. For Waxahachie, the NFPA's urban-area standard of one-and-one-half mile has been recommended for the planning of future stations. *Plate 8-2* shows existing and recommended station locations based on these coverage standards.

The City has been proactive in ensuring that future fire stations will be available as development occurs. Land has been dedicated for a fire station in the Villages of Mustang Creek (on the SH 287 bypass), and construction is scheduled to begin in three to five years. Land has also been reserved for a fourth fire station in Kemp Estates development (along IH 35 and Brookside Road); construction for this station does not currently have a timeframe. Another site is being planned south of Lake Waxahachie.

Fire stations can also be combined with other municipal uses such as water and wastewater facilities. Stations can also be funded through cooperative efforts with other governmental entities if the fire station coverage area will overlap with other jurisdictions, which often is the case. Refer to *Policy #1* within this chapter for further discussion on recommended City policies related to fire service.

New Service Center

Currently, City field office and maintenance-related services are operated from offices in various locations throughout Waxahachie. Many cities have found that consolidating these types of services into one or two locations is more efficient than operating numerous locations. For example, having fuel services on-site with park maintenance vehicles would save the personnel time from having to drive to a separate site to fuel their vehicle. Components of a new service center could include:



- ❖ Equipment Maintenance,
- ❖ Water/Wastewater Field Crew Office,
- ❖ Maintenance Center,
- ❖ Convenience Station, and
- ❖ Park Maintenance.

Consolidation of services into one area can be very cost-effective and good for time management. Refer to *Policy #1* for recommendations related to a possible new service center.

Educational Facilities

The *Future Land Use Plan* provides areas for expansion of residential neighborhoods throughout the City and ETJ. Growth in residential land uses within Waxahachie and outer areas will invariably result in increases in the school-age population. The increases in this sector of the local population will directly impact the Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD) in terms of its needs for expanded or new educational facilities, services, and administration.



Waxahachie School District Administration Building

The maintenance of a high quality school district is and will continue to be important to Waxahachie. Many aspects of the City are affected by the quality of local schools, including economic development and population growth. One of the best ways in which to ensure that the quality of the WISD is maintained for the betterment of both Waxahachie and the WISD itself is to establish a cooperative and proactive planning effort between the City and the school district. The City's role in this cooperative effort will be to facilitate communication between the WISD and the development community at the earliest possible stages of the development review process. This would ensure

that the WISD is consistently informed about residential development activity and will allow the WISD to respond accordingly. *Policy #2* in the next section outlines specific concepts related to City and WISD cooperation.





Community Facilities Policies

Following are recommended policies related to public services and facilities. The *Implementation Strategies*, Chapter 9, will outline specific ways in which the City can implement these policies, along with other recommended policies from within this *2007 Comprehensive Plan*.

1. Provide for Public Safety Services in Advance of Population Growth

As stated previously within this *Community Facilities Plan*, providing for public safety and meeting other citizen needs are the primary function of government. Therefore, the City needs to be ready to meet these objectives as population growth occurs. The following are various recommendations that support the above *Policy #1*.



The Waxahachie City Hall in Downtown

- ❖ Although present needs are being met by the existing City Hall, there will likely not be enough room to meet service needs 10 years from now. Since these types of capital facilities need much lead time for planning and design, it is recommended that within the next 5 years, the City hire an architectural firm to conduct an in-depth space needs analysis. This analysis should include various options on how City Hall can be expanded in its current location.
- ❖ There should be a policy that City Hall remain in the Downtown area. Downtown has been – as should continue to be – the City’s center for governmental services.
 - This is supported by the *C³ Master Plan*, which discusses the need to maintain the “civic importance” of the Downtown area, and that any decentralization of civic uses would not be positive (page 5 of the *Form Analysis* chapter).
 - If City Hall cannot be efficiently expanded to accommodate enough additional personnel, the option of locating some departments in another building in the Downtown area should be explored.



- ❖ The City should work with the Library Board to determine what is needed in terms of an expansion of library services. Given the historic importance of the Sims Library, the building may not be able to be enlarged to provide additional square footage. However, other services such as outreach programs, satellite locations, and greater internet access to books should be considered to help expand the local library system.
- ❖ Along with the previously recommended needs analysis for the City Hall, an analysis of the need for a consolidated Service Center – with acreage and square footage analyzed – should be conducted in the next 5 years as well. The City needs to consider which departments would be better served, and could therefore better serve the public, if they were consolidated into one location.
- ❖ The City should proactively plan for police service expansion. The Police Department is already at capacity in terms of the space out of which it operates, and given the number of personnel and police vehicles Waxahachie will require as the population continues to grow, these spatial challenges will only increase. A new location or an expansion of the central station should be considered in the immediate future. One possibility for a sub-station would be a joint site location with a new service center (discussed below).



Waxahachie Fire Station #1

- ❖ The City should continue to proactively plan for fire service expansion. As the City grows in population, new fire stations must be built to maintain adequate coverage. The next location needed should be decided upon in the next year to two years, and property should be purchased if the new location is not already dedicated. General criteria that the City should use in assessing a piece of property as a potential fire station location are as follows:

- The property should be at least one acre in size.
- The property should not be located along a major thoroughfare, unless no other option is available. Ideally the location should be within approximately 500 feet of an arterial roadway.
- The property should not be located along a major physical barrier, such as a rail line.
- The property should not be located at an intersection.
- The property should be located with consideration to service areas, as shown on *Plate 8-1*.





- ❖ The reasons that Waxahachie may need a consolidated service center are discussed within the text of this chapter (page 8.10). General criteria that the City should use in assessing a piece of property as a potential service center location are as follows:
 - The property should be sized to accommodate current service-related needs as well as possible expansion in the future as additional needs arise.
 - The property should have good access to a major thoroughfare.
 - The outside storage areas that will be needed for operation and maintenance services should be shielded from major thoroughfares. These areas should also not be directly adjacent to a residential area.
 - Future fire stations and police services should also be considered for inclusion on this site. Including as many services as possible may make a new service center more economically feasible.

2. Increase Cooperative Efforts for Quality Local Education

The availability of educational resources is key to an educated citizenry. The quality of the local school district is often cited as one of the primary reasons that people move into or out of a community.

Source: Waxahachie ISD Website

As one non-profit organization that is focused on factors related to overall livability asserts, "without question, education is a critical component of a livable community."⁸⁻²

Given the importance of education to a community's livability and sustainability, Waxahachie should continue to foster close relationships with the local school district by working with the Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD) to coordinate where future school sites will



Wedgworth Elementary School in Waxahachie

be needed in relation to population and development. The following efforts should be undertaken to establish a formalized cooperative process with the WISD to ensure that the WISD is aware of new development:

- ❖ A WISD verification form should be included in the developers' application requirements that states that the WISD has been contacted, and that states whether the WISD has a need for additional educational facilities within the boundaries of the proposed project;

⁸⁻² Local Government Commission Website. Community Design link; Schools link, ADDRESS: <http://www.lgc.org/communitydesign/schools.html>.



- ❖ Basic criteria should be established with the WISD for new educational sites, including:
 - Maximum desirable enrollment by campus type (elementary, middle, high),
 - Typical acreages required by campus type,
 - Locational criteria by campus type (i.e., elementary schools within a neighborhood, high schools along major roadways, etc.); and
 - Proximity to adequate public infrastructure such as water and sewer.
- ❖ The City and WISD should work together to coordinate the use of sites such that they are mutually beneficial for both – for example, sites should be established that allow elementary schools to be placed next to public parks.
- ❖ The City should partner with the WISD on issues important to both the City and the WISD – examples include state legislation on financing issues and economic development incentives for businesses.

3. Work Cooperatively with Other Government Entities to Provide Services & Facilities

Inter-jurisdictional cooperation is recommended for public services and facilities. Not only can the cost of constructing facilities be shared, but so can the operation and maintenance costs. Adjacent cities and Ellis County are the most likely entities with which Waxahachie could partner.

- ❖ The City should investigate ways in which it can work with adjacent communities to provide public services and facilities.
 - Other communities that are near Waxahachie must also provide adequate levels of services, especially in terms of fire safety, to their citizenry. Fire station service areas provide a radius of service coverage, as shown on *Plate 8-2*. The service radii of several recommended station locations extend almost into Midlothian, Red Oak, and Pecan Hill. Shared coverage areas could result in the cost of new fire stations being shared between Waxahachie and these communities. This is just one example of a possible type of shared facility. Other examples include parks, library services, and water and wastewater facilities.
- ❖ The City should investigate ways in which it can work with Ellis County to provide public services and facilities.
 - Some counties provide their cities with funding for various types of projects, including public facilities. Matching funds from the cities is often a requirement for such funding. The City should investigate the availability and opportunity for funding from Ellis County for future public facilities and services such as library services, community buildings, and public safety needs (e.g., vehicles, materials, etc.).





Conclusion

One of the primary functions of government is to provide citizens with essential services. This *Community Facilities Plan* outlines ways in which Waxahachie can most effectively provide such services, such as City administration, police, and fire. Other services that may not be essential, but are closely tied to the local quality-of-life, such as library services and school district services, are also discussed. If followed, these recommendations and policies should help the City be able to continue to provide its citizens with high quality and efficient services and facilities.

