

# City of Waxahachie 2007 Comprehensive Plan

## CHAPTER 9: PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY BY HALFF ASSOCIATES



*Building on the unique quality of the City of Waxahachie's built environment, rural landscapes, open space and natural features, the 2007 Parks Master Plan establishes a Vision of Excellence expressed as a function of the nexus:*

***WHERE CULTURE MEETS NATURE.***

*Planning Team for the 2007 Parks Master Plan*





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# Overall Concepts of the Parks Plan

## 1. The Vision – *Establishing a Vision of Excellence for Waxahachie: Where Culture Meets Nature*

The 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan proposes a *Vision of Excellence* as a function of the nexus “*Where Culture meets Nature*”, for the City of Waxahachie. This vision is based on the unique qualities that the City has to offer in terms of its built environment, rural landscapes, and natural open space and features.

Ideas fundamental to realizing this Vision of Excellence and achieving long lasting uniqueness for the City of Waxahachie include:

- ❖ Protection of the entire 100-year flood plain at build-out conditions;
- ❖ Establishment of a creek 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.

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.*

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.

Other tools for implementing this vision, include watershed wide integrated stormwater management or iSWM as proposed by NCTCOG, and the establishment of nature preserves along areas of unique ecological value.

## 2. City Image and Character

Waxahachie's character is defined by the rich history and unique ambiance of the downtown area, four historic districts, ample rural open space, four major creeks and Lake Waxahachie, which is visited by Waxahachie residents as well as visitors from neighboring cities.

The purpose of the *2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is to incorporate all the above elements and features in an intelligent manner to celebrate their uniqueness, enhance their appearance, ensure their preservation, and make their value known to the community. The objective of the planning process is to produce a vibrant *Park Master Plan* that is practical in maintaining and enhancing the unique image and character of the City of Waxahachie.

## 3. Demographics and Study Area

For planning purposes, the 2007 population is taken at 26,700. The population estimate for the year 2017, which is the end of the ten-year planning period for the *Parks Master Plan*, is 39,400. As per the *2007 Waxahachie Comprehensive Plan*, the build-out population is established at 125,000. The surface area of the entire City is 89,400 acres including the 31,800 acres City proper and the 57,600 acres Extra-Territorial Jurisdictional (ETJ) area.

## 4. Goals of the 2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

The 2007 Parks Master Plan aims to:

- ❖ Find ways to enhance and celebrate the unique image and character of the City of Waxahachie;
- ❖ Point out opportunities and recommend alternatives for improving the park system;
- ❖ Look at the potential growth of the City over the next five to 10 years, and assess where additional facilities will be needed as the City grows, and what types of facilities are most needed;





- ❖ Guide City staff in acquiring land to meet current and future park and open space needs;
- ❖ Prioritize key recommendations of the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible;
- ❖ Guide City staff and City leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years.

The importance of open space is often overlooked by a city's parks department since the concept of open space does not always fit the idea of land programmed for a particular recreational activity that would require regular landscape maintenance. However, the very reason for it not requiring regular attention can be a great asset, offering outdoors enjoyment, visual pleasure, and ecological function at a minimum cost.

In addition, the park planning process allows the citizens of Waxahachie to determine what their preferred park and recreation priorities should be for the next five to 10 years.

## 5. Public Input

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

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

The facilities and amenities that feature the highest on the needs list are mostly passive activities and include the following:

1. **Senior citizen center** – People are growing older and more active in their old age, making senior citizen centers an important amenity in all communities.
2. **Trails** including hike, bike and jogging trails – Not only for Waxahachie residents are trails very important but trails also feature consistently high as a need for all communities in Texas and across the country.
3. **Natural habitat/nature areas** – Rapid urbanization make people yearn for natural areas that are uncomplicated, uncluttered, relaxing and that offer the opportunity to learn about nature

and the ecology; the general public is also much more knowledgeable about the importance of preserving nature than before.

4. **Playgrounds and picnic pavilions** – Both these facilities form the backbone of most park systems.
5. **Recreation Center** – People are today more health conscious and need opportunities for physical work out as well as mental stimulation through educational programs.
6. **Lake Waxahachie recreation** – Residents want access to this unique and beautiful amenity in terms of picnic facilities, hiking along the lake shores and rental opportunities.

Others facilities and amenities listed as high on the list of importance include:

- ❖ Natatorium
- ❖ Skateboard park
- ❖ Park restrooms
- ❖ Aquatic center/water spray park
- ❖ Amphitheater

Of the athletic facilities that receive majority support but that are lower on the list of importance include:

- ❖ Basketball courts
- ❖ Volleyball courts
- ❖ Racquetball or handball courts
- ❖ Youth softball fields
- ❖ Tennis courts
- ❖ Soccer fields
- ❖ Baseball fields





# Needs Assessment

## Need for Park Acreage

Citizens want to see more parks and are in strong support for the acquisition of additional land for parks and open space. The *Parks Master Plan* establishes the following standard (in *Figure 9-1*) for park acreage as a ration of acres to population.

*Figure 9-1: Park Acreage Standards*

<i>“Close to Home” parks:</i>	<i>14 acres min. per 1,000 population</i>
<i>Other municipal parks and open space:</i>	<i>6 acres min. per 1,000 population</i>
<i>Regional parks:</i>	<i>10 acres min. per 1,000 population</i>
<b><i>Total park land City-wide:</i></b>	<b><i>30 acres min. per 1,000 population</i></b>

Land acquisition is probably the single most important priority for most communities that experience the level and intensity of development as currently seen and expected in the City of Waxahachie. Many communities lament a lack of foresight early in the growth of their cities and towns when land was still affordable and available. Now is the time for the City of Waxahachie to act and to acquire and secure land for future parks and open space.

A summary of the need for park land acreage at the build-out population of 125,000 is contained in *Table 9-1* on the following page.

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.*



*Table 9-1: Summary of Key Acreage Needs for Build-out Population of 125,000 (Standard Based)*

Park Category	Target Standard Per 1,000 Population	Land Requirement
<b><i>"Close to Home" Parks</i></b>		
Neighborhood Parks	2 to 3 acres	207 acres
Community Parks	7 acres	655 acres
Linear Parks	5 acres	625 acres
<b><i>Other Municipal Parks and Open Space</i></b>		
Special Purpose Parks	3 acres	375 acres
Open Space & Natural Areas	3 acres	375 acres
<b><i>Regional Parks</i></b>		
Regional Parks	10 acres	1,250 acres
<b><i>Total Acreage Needs</i></b>		
<b><i>Citywide Acreage Needs Sum of all target goals at build-out population of 125,000</i></b>	<b><i>30 acres</i></b>	<b><i>3,750 acres</i></b>

# Needs for Recreation Facilities

The standard-based top 10 priority recreation facilities to construct in the next five years are presented in *Table 9-2* below.

*Table 9-2: Top 10 Priority Recreation Facilities to Construct (Standard Based)*

Recreation Facility	Suggested Implementation Over the Next 5-Year Period	Total Number of Facilities/ Amenities
1. Hike and Bike Trails	5 - 6 miles per year	27 miles
2. Pavilions / Picnic Shelters	3 - 4 structures per year	17 structures
3. Playground Units	3 units per year	16 units
4. Basketball Goals	2 goals per year	10 goals
5. Multi-purpose Practice Fields (S&F)	1 - 2 fields per year	7 fields
6. Backstops	1 backstop per year	5 backstops
7. Soccer Fields (competitive)	1 - 2 fields every second year	4 fields
8. Baseball Fields (competitive)	1 field every year	5 fields
9. Volleyball Courts	1 - 2 courts every second or third year	3 courts
10. Tennis Courts	1 - 2 courts every second or third year	3 courts





# Resource Based Assessment- *Natural and Visual Resource Assessment, Protection and Management*

The City of Waxahachie has a number of landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreational use and open space preservation where feasible. These are the Blackland Prairie, rural and visually attractive landscapes and road sections, Lake Waxahachie, the City's creek system, TXU Utility Rights-of-Way, and the Railroad Right-of-Way.

The *Parks Master Plan* recommends creek buffers, integrated stormwater management, nature preserves, and Conservation Development as methods to ensure the protection and effective management of the natural and visual resources of the City.

The *View Corridors and Cultural Features Map* on the next page describes areas of visual and cultural interest including visual nodes, areas of high visual quality, and cultural features including cemeteries and gateways.

## Summary Needs Assessment

The key outdoor and indoor recreation facilities and amenities in order of priority are presented in *Table 9-3*.

*Table 9-3: Key Facility Needs in Order of Priority*

<b>Outdoors</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>
1. Jogging, Hike and Bike Trails (special mention along Lake Waxahachie)	Non-Athletic
2. Playgrounds	Non-Athletic
3. Natural Habitat / Nature Areas	Support
4. Lake Waxahachie Recreation Facilities(Rental and Boat Ramps)	Support
5. Skateboard Park	Non-Athletic
6. Aquatic Center/ Water Spray Park	Non-Athletic
7. Park Restrooms	Support
8. Picnic Pavilions and Tables	Support
<b>Indoors</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>
11. Senior Citizen Center	Support
12. Recreation Center	Support





# Recommendations for a Vision of Excellence

The recommendations for a *Vision of Excellence: Where Culture Meets Nature*, fall into six general categories:

- ❖ City Policy
- ❖ Land Acquisition
- ❖ Park Development
- ❖ Recreation Facilities
- ❖ Park Improvements
- ❖ Operations and Maintenance

## City Policy

It is recommended that the City adopts specific policies that will ensure the implementation of the Vision of Excellence for the City of Waxahachie. Such City policies are to address four issues key to the success of implementing this Vision of Excellence.

### Conservation Planning and Development

The purpose of Conservation Planning and Development is to create a community-wide network of open space and natural preserves. It allows for half (or more) of the buildable land 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.

It is recommended that the City commits to the following:

- ❖ Pre-identify and preserve a community-wide network of conservation lands or “linked landscapes”.



- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Prepare a resource inventory (Resource Map) of the following principal resources in *Figure 9-2*.

*Figure 9-2: 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

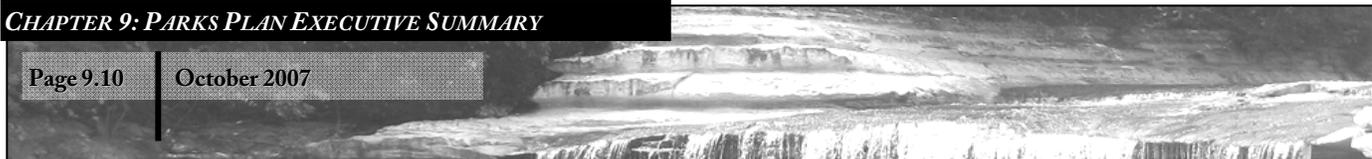
## Creek, Stream and Drainage Easements

As a first step and as a matter of priority it is recommended that the City initiates a Creek Corridor Study to establish an integrated riparian corridor system for the City of Waxahachie. 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 Waxahachie Creek Corridor Study will form the basis for decisions to be made about floodplain reclamation and the establishment of a creek buffer in terms of quality and dimension.

Minimal floodplain reclamation should be allowed and the utmost attempt should be made to discourage reclamation. Implementation of up to a 500 feet creek protection buffer beyond the Flood Plain Management Area (FPMA) requires 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





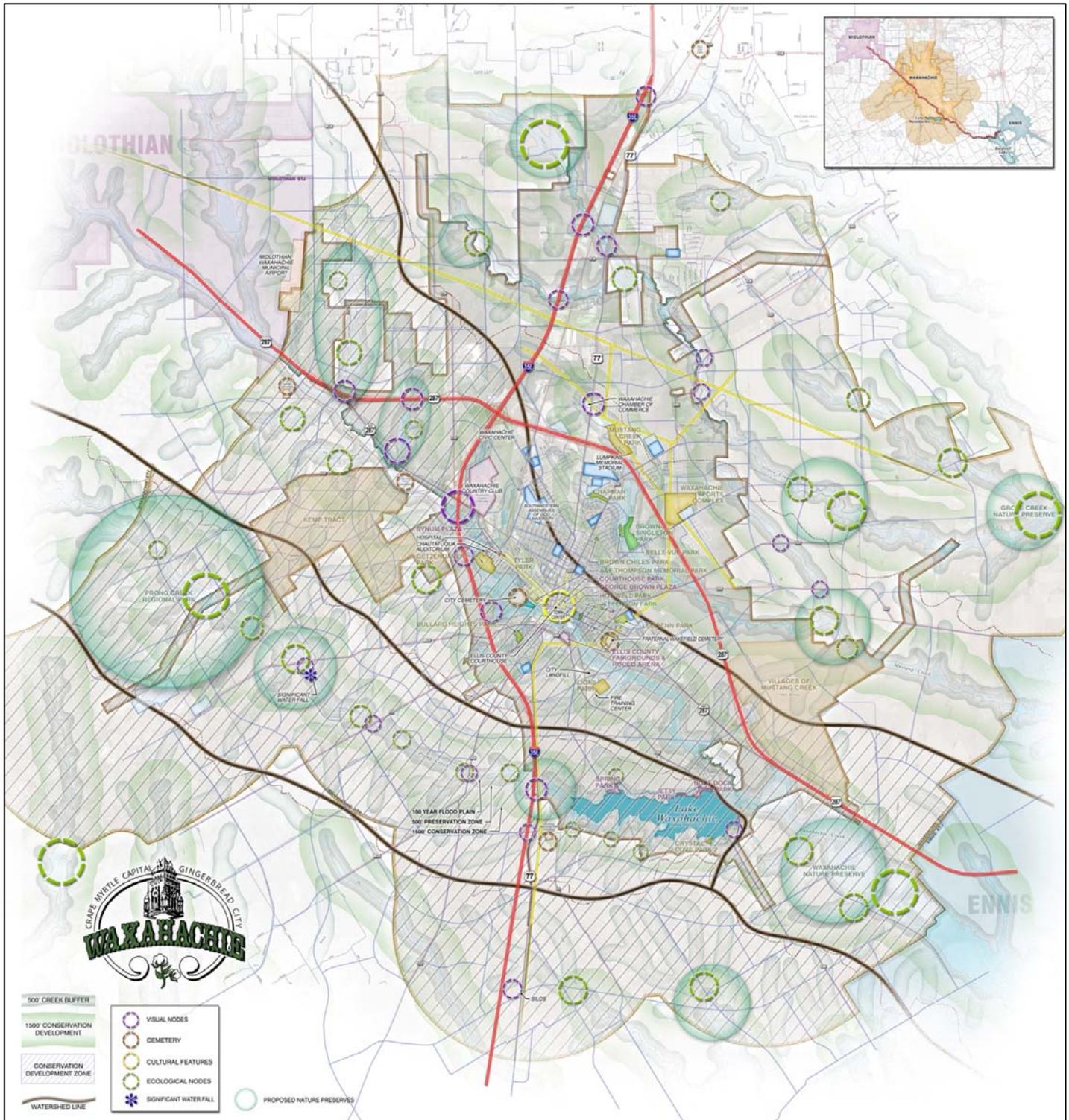
Waxahachie special and unique. The end result will be a community that is attractive for many reasons and that will ensure better than normal return for the developers and investors.

The *Creek Protection and Conservation Development Map* on the next page depicts Ecological Nodes, the 100-year floodplain of major creeks, 500-foot Creek Protection Buffer, 1,500-foot Conservation Development, Potential Conservation Development and Watershed Lines.

## Parkland Dedication

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

- ❖ 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](http://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 dwelling units and 1 acre per 30 multiple-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.



May 18, 2007  
**Plate 9-2 CREEK PROTECTION & CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT**  
 CITY OF WAXAHACHIE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

Half Associates





## Overlay Districts

Three Overlay Districts are recommended for the City:

❖ 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.

❖ Prong Creek Watershed Overlay District

It is recommended that an overlay district be established for the entire Prong Creek 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).

❖ Lake Waxahachie Overlay District

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.

## Land Acquisition

Acquire land for future parks, park expansion, new recreation facilities, and open space including habitat protection and nature preserves.

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](http://www.texaslandtrusts.org)). Recommended land acquisition is illustrated in the following Maps:

- ❖ View Corridors and Cultural Features
- ❖ Creek Protection and Conservation Development
- ❖ Park, Trails and Nature Preserves
- ❖ Existing and Proposed Parks and Trails



**TRAILS**

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

- PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARKS
- PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- PROPOSED SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS
- PROPOSED NATURE PRESERVES

**HISTORIC DISTRICT**

- 1 West End
- 2 North Rogers Street
- 3 Dicham Avenue
- 4 Wyatt Street Shotgun Houses

**SCHOOLS**

- 01 NAVARRO COLLEGE
- 02 S.A.O.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 NORTH SIDE ELEMENTARY
- 10 WILSON ED. LEARNING CEN.
- 11 MARVIN ELEMENTARY
- 12 DUNAWAY ELEMENTARY
- 13 CONROBERT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
- 14 ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
- 15 FAITH FAMILY ACADEMY
- 16 FUTURE SCHOOL
- 17 FUTURE SCHOOL

Plate 9-3

# PARKS, TRAILS & NATURE PRESERVES

CITY OF WAXAHACHIE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN





# Park Development

Develop parks according to the specific need and in order of priority. The following section describes general, as well as specific, recommendations for park development in Waxahachie.

## Guiding Philosophy for Park Development

- ❖ 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-tiered 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 to be 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.
- ❖ Expand the single use of crape myrtles as ornamental trees to include small trees native to Texas for example: 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*). 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 education and enjoyment by the community, while providing 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.





## Recreation Facilities

The Citizen Attitude Survey identified needs for very specific recreation facilities. Based on facility standards and citizen input combined the key facility needs in Waxahachie are presented in *Table 9-3*. The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in Waxahachie are as follows:

- ❖ Level of need based on citizen input on a Citywide basis (demand based need);
- ❖ Level of need based on standards assessments (standard based need);
- ❖ Opportunities for recreation facilities and parks based on existing physical conditions in Waxahachie (resource based need); and
- ❖ Based on experience of consulting in the parks and recreation field.

Lake Waxahachie features relatively high on the need for recreation facilities. It is a true gem in the City's system of parks and a concerted effort should be made with the provision of additional and improved facilities around the lake. Playgrounds, pavilions and picnic facilities are accounted for in the improvements of existing parks and the development of new parks. Park restrooms to be provided in community parks are accounted for in the development of new community parks.

Natural habitat and nature areas feature high on the list of priority needs. Every effort should be made with the development of new parks, new trails, and through Conservation Planning and Development, to provide for more natural habitat in the City.

## Park Improvements

### Individual Parks

The Parks Master Plan recommends key improvements for each individual 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.

### City-Wide

The following City wide key park improvements recommended during the next 10-year period, include:

### 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

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

Consider providing Wi-Fi access in the future community parks.

### Art in Public Places, Including Parks

Explore and develop a policy to include environmental and outdoor art in parks and open space.

## Operations and Maintenance

Establish effective procedures and funding for the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.

- ❖ Staffing – Additional parks, open space, and trails require additional manpower.
- ❖ Operations and maintenance techniques, equipment or strategies – Consider and anticipate potential changes based on the goal to achieve higher efficiency in energy and water use.
- ❖ Parks and operations maintenance facility – Establish a centralized and modern maintenance facility.





# Implementation

The *Existing and Proposed Parks and Trails Map* on the next page illustrates the existing and proposed parks and trails for the City core.

## 2007-2017 Action Plan

An implementation strategy is recommended to address the City's key recreation needs over the next five years and longer.

The listing of the projects is categorized as follows:

1. Land Acquisition
2. Existing Park Improvements
3. New Park Development
4. Development of Recreational Facilities

## Funding Strategies

A large amount of funding is required to realize the Action Plan, but with vision, commitment, and a concerted effort to secure funding from available sources, many of the recommendations can be accomplished. Opportunities for funding implementation assistance include:

- ❖ City Generated Funding Sources
- ❖ Governmental Grant Sources
- ❖ Private and Quasi Private Funding Sources



Plate 9-4

# EXISTING & PROPOSED PARKS & TRAILS

CITY OF WAXAHACHIE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

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# Policies and Ordinances

## General Policy Action

### Development Review

One of the most significant opportunities for cities to ensure the implementation of the vision and intent of the Parks Master Plan is during the review of proposed residential and non-residential developments. The Parks Master Plan provides a Development Review Checklist as a tool for the reviewers to have a checklist as a reference and guide in the decision making process. The following is a summary of these guidelines:

1. Protection of the 100 year floodplain of all creeks and streams
2. Minimize reclamation of flood land below the 100 year flood line
3. Up to 500 feet buffer along the 100 year floodplain of creeks
4. Single loaded roads along parks and open space
5. Visually transparent wrought iron fences along parks and open space
6. Appropriate park land dedication
7. Protection of unique features
8. Multi-tier roof pavilions
9. Creek road crossings with a trail underpass
10. Physically and aesthetically accessible detention ponds
11. Mandatory site visits to all proposed developments

### Ordinance Support for Trail System Development

Utilize Park Land Dedication Ordinance to assist in the implementation of a City wide trail system. Trail corridors can be integrated into developments as the development goes through the platting process. Land for trail corridors can be donated in a fashion similar to the dedication of land for traditional parks, and each adjacent development can be required to construct its portion of the overall trail system, or other trails that connect to the main trail network.

### Parks and Recreation Board

City Staff should provide presentations of significant changes in the Parks Master Plan and provide brief summaries of annual updates to the documentation. This will provide the Board with comprehensive information to assist with development decisions.

### Joint Planning with the Neighboring Cities of Midlothian, Red Oak, and Ennis

Establish joint planning efforts with these neighboring cities to provide additional options to address recreation needs in Waxahachie.

### Joint Planning with Waxahachie ISD

Establish joint planning review sessions with Waxahachie ISD to allow for coordination of facilities usage and development.

### Joint Planning with Ellis County

Continue joint planning efforts with Ellis County to provide additional options to address recreation needs in Waxahachie. An example would include the regional park along the upper reaches of Prong Creek.

## Specific Policy Actions

1. Establish a City Ordinance that requires a minimum of 80% compliance for single loaded roads along all future parks, buffers, floodplains, and open space. Single loaded roads allows for accessible parks that are safe and inviting. Safety is generally achieved by the informal surveillance provided by the residents overlooking the park.
2. Establish a City Ordinance that requires transparent metal rod fences in lieu of solid wood fences along private properties bordering parks, trails, creek corridors, and open space so as to contribute to a sense of openness and safety.
3. Adopt policies, which emphasize the importance of the preservation and protection of the City's tree cover and creek system. Plan ahead to protect and preserve the City's 100-year floodplains including up to a 500 feet buffer beyond the floodplain.
4. Establish a City Ordinance that mandates the donation of floodplain lands along creeks. Such land is not developable, yet provides habitat and corridors of movement for fauna and the opportunity for use as open space, greenways, and trails.
5. Establish a City Ordinance that reduces the amount of reclamation of any floodplain land for purposes of residential and non-residential development.
6. Endorse the establishment of creek corridors beyond the 100 year floodline.
7. Continue to work directly and continuously with the Waxahachie Independent School District, so as to acquire lands for neighborhood parks in conjunction with school district property acquisitions and to develop park facilities that can be used jointly by school children and residents.





8. Identify school sites that may be developed jointly with the school district as publicly accessible parklands.
9. Establish a formal process and agreements for working directly and continuously with the various utility districts and other City departments that can assist in acquiring parks lands or in jointly developing facilities. These include the City's Public Works Department, the City's Development Department, schools, private entertainment providers, as well as other City of Waxahachie departments.
10. Pro-actively search for parklands to target for acquisition over the next five years. Include Waxahachie ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction) in this search.
11. Endorse the park to population ratios established by this Parks Master Plan to guide the acquisition and development of parks in all sectors of the City. These are 2 to 3 acres per 1,000 population for neighborhood parks, 7 acres per 1,000 population for community parks, 3 acres per 1,000 population for special purpose parks, 3 acres per 1,000 population for linear parks, 10 acres per 1,000 population for regional parks, and 3 to 5 acres per 1,000 population for open space.
12. Endorse the creation of linear park corridors that bisect and link parts of the City. Use the corridors identified in this plan as the major corridors throughout the City. Incorporate additional trail linkages to ensure that everyone in the City is within walking distance of a trail that links with the overall City Trail network.
13. Establish standards for developing land adjacent to linear park corridors. These include helping to fund linear parks, providing pedestrian connections to the parks, minimum amounts of landscaping along those corridors, and signage regulations adjacent to or within the linear park corridors.
14. Ensure that adequate maintenance personnel are provided to take care of parklands in the City. Expect and provide an exceptional level of care for high visibility parks.
15. Endorse the need for the acquisition and preservation of open space preserves throughout the City limits. Consider acquiring these lands in conjunction with needed park areas as well as through Conservation Planning and Development (see discussion under *Land Acquisition*, page 9.13).
16. Pursue alternative methods of funding park system and programming improvement, such as partnerships with non-governmental entities, grant funding sources, establishing "Friends of..." organizations, and contracting out programs or operations. Consider these and other methods only where feasible and financially sound.

## Other City Plans

The success of the Parks Master Plan implementation goes hand-in-hand with other City plans and ordinances e.g. Comprehensive Plan; Drainage and Flood Management Plan; and Thoroughfare Plan. Parks Master Plan concepts and ideas to be addressed by these documents include the following:

### ❖ Comprehensive Plan

- Conservation Development;
- Single loaded roads; and
- Protection of unique features in the City.

### ❖ Flood Drainage Prevention Ordinance

- Creek corridor protection; and
- No platting allowed further to the creek than the edge of the Flood Prevention Management Area (FPMA).

### ❖ Thoroughfare Plan

- Road alignment and creek crossings; and
- More specifically, the following should be considered:
  - Align the road grid to follow the creek pattern to allow for shorter, 90 degree crossings as far as possible.
  - Avoid ecological nodes or "hotspots" as identified in the *2007 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*.
  - Limit creek crossings; do not provide any creek crossing closer than ½ mile from each other; ideally creek crossings should be ¾ to 1 mile apart to limit destruction of the creek environment.
  - Utilize existing crossings as far as possible.
  - Creek crossings should make allowance for 11 to 12' free board below bridge to allow for under-bridge trail connections, which is important to consider for any future bridges and the upgrade of existing bridges.
  - Creek crossings to stay away from tributary connections (identified as important ecological nodes in the *Parks Plan*).
  - The *Parks Plan* recommends single loaded roads along all creek corridors and other open space including parks. Thoroughfare roads that parallel creeks should be at a distance far enough to make development including such single loaded roads, possible.
  - The *Parks Plan* recommends up to a 500 feet buffer along creek corridors measured from the 100 year floodplain line as calculated at build-out conditions – keep this in mind when considering the *Thoroughfare Plan*.





# Parks and Recreation Marketing Implementation

A plan to “market” park facilities, programs, and events should be a key component of the continued growth and expansion of the Waxahachie Parks Department. Components of the marketing plan should include:

- ❖ Promotional materials, including flyers and seasonal newspaper inserts;
- ❖ An updated internet website;
- ❖ Periodic presentations to the City Council regarding park facilities;
- ❖ Promotional events; and
- ❖ Periodic public announcements and special features on local radio and television to discuss new features and programs provided by the Parks Department.

## Plan Updates

The *2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* is a guide to be used by the City to develop the existing system for future needs over the next five to 10 years, and up to 25 years. There will be changes that occur during the time frame of this plan:

- ❖ Population may increase more rapidly than projected;
- ❖ The community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations; and
- ❖ Development of recommendations will occur.



The Waxahachie Creek Hike and Bike Trail is extremely popular and used by all age groups.

A review and update of this Parks Master Plan by City staff should be conducted every two years or when a significant change does occur. These updates can be published in short report format and attached to this Master Plan for easy use. Four key areas for focus of these periodic reviews are as follows:

- ❖ Facility Inventory
- ❖ Facility Use





- ❖ Public Involvement
- ❖ Action Plan

By implementing the recommendations and Action Plan of the *Parks Master Plan*, City of Waxahachie will achieve the *Vision of Excellence: Where Culture Meets Nature*.

