



Report Overview

1. The Vision

Chapter 1: Introduction, sets the stage for establishing a **Vision of Excellence** as a function of the nexus, “**Where Culture meets Nature**” for the City of Waxahachie 2007 Parks Master Plan. This vision builds on the unique qualities as expressed in the City’s natural landscape, cultural heritage and rural character.

2. City Image and Character

Chapter 2: City Context, discusses how 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 an extremely popular recreation destination.

3. Existing Parks

Chapter 3: Existing Parks, illustrates the City’s existing parks, recreation facilities and amenities provided, and recommendations for park improvements.

4. Park Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Chapter 4: Park System Goals, describes the goals and objectives of the Parks Master Plan, which include a determination of the parks and recreation opportunities, and recommendations for alternatives to improve the park system.

5. Public Participation

Chapter 5: Public Input, presents the findings of public opinions and attitudes as expressed during an extensive and scientifically accurate citywide telephone survey, and a presentation at a public meeting. The facilities and amenities that feature highest on the priority list are mostly passive amenities and include in order of priority a Senior Citizen Center; Jogging, Hike and Bike Trails; Natural Habitat and Nature Areas; Playgrounds; Picnic Pavilions, and a Recreation Center.

6. Parks, Recreation and Open Space Needs Assessment

Chapter 6: Needs Assessment provides an assessment of the park acreage needs based on a pre-determined standard for the City, level of service required for various athletic and non-athletic recreation activities, and the needs and opportunities presented by the City’s natural and cultural resources. The top four outdoor recreational facilities needed in order of priority include Jogging, Hike and Bike Trails, Playgrounds, Natural Habitat/ Nature Areas, and Lake Waxahachie Recreation Facilities. The top two indoor recreational facility needs, in order of priority, include a Senior Citizen and a Recreation Center.

7. A Vision of Excellence: Where Culture meets Nature

Ideas fundamental to realizing the **Vision of Excellence: Where Culture meets Nature**, and to achieve long lasting uniqueness for the City of Waxahachie, include i) protection of scenic road corridors; ii) views towards the Ellis County Courthouse; iii) the rural character of the City; iv) Lake Waxahachie as a recreation amenity; and v)



protection of all creek corridors comprising the entire 100 year flood plain at build-out conditions including a creek protection buffer.

Chapter 7: Recommendations for this Vision of Excellence, comprise six general categories, namely i) City Policy, ii) Land Acquisition, iii) Park Development, iv) Recreation Facilities, v) Park Improvements, and vi) Operations and Maintenance. Highlights include the following:

- a) Recommended City policy measures include Conservation Planning and Development, a Creek Corridor Study to establish an integrated riparian corridor system, Park Land Dedication, and Overlay Districts.
- b) Conservation Planning and Development aims to concentrate the bulk of the land around dedicated and preserved communal open space with dwelling sites located to gain views of the natural and/or rural landscape. Thereby, conservation development succeeds not only in preserving the environment; it also succeeds financially for the developer, resident, and city by decreasing the cost for providing services, reducing road construction cost, and moreover, increasing the property value and desirability of each dwelling unit. Not unlike a golf course estate, the open space in conservation development is unprogrammed and naturally maintained land, similar to a nature preserve. The Parks Master Plan recommends that the City purposefully seek developers that are amenable and/ or accustomed to the concept of Conservation Planning and Development, and to create incentives to attract and encourage developers to consider and implement this unique development strategy.
- c) For the Park Land Dedication Ordinance It is recommended to include the following considerations:
 - A Park Improvement Fee of \$1,600 for both single and multi-family dwelling units.
 - A Park Improvement Fee of \$1,200 per acre for non-residential development (business, commercial and industrial enterprise).
 - Park Acreage Dedication of 1 acre per 30 single dwelling units and 1 acre per 30 family dwelling units.
 - 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.
- d) Overlay Districts are recommended for IH 35, prong Creek Watershed and Lake Waxahachie.
- e) Land acquisition may include direct purchasing, the establishment of recreation and/or parkland easements, purchasing of development rights, and the involvement of Conservation Trusts.



- f) Park development recommendations include:
- A transparent metal rod fence between all residential lots and parks and/or open space to be constructed where a single loaded road is not possible.
 - Playgrounds to be covered where feasible.
 - All pavilion structures to consist of a multi-tiered roof system to prevent heated air from being trapped under the roof.
 - Place preference on the application of drought tolerant landscaping and native plantings including native trees, wildflowers and native grasses.
 - Expand the single use of crape myrtles as ornamental trees to include small trees native to Texas.
 - Establish Nature Preserves to allow access for education and enjoyment by the community, yet that provide 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.
 - All new public structures to meet the requirements for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification with private entities encouraged to do the same.

8. **Achieving the Vision of Excellence: Where Culture meets Nature**

Chapter 8: Implementation, presents the **2007 to 2017 Action Plan** and recommends a strategy to address the City's key recreation needs over the next five years and longer.

This chapter includes Development Review Guidelines as a reference and guide tool for reviewers of development applications in the decision making process.

Policy implementation actions include:

- The protection and preservation of the City's 100-year floodplains including a creek protection buffer beyond the floodplain.
- A requirement that mandates the donation and/or protection of floodplain lands along creeks.
- A requirement that mandates no reclamation of any floodplain for purposes of residential and non-residential development.
- Conduct a Creek Corridor Study as framework that will better define and further validate decisions to be made about floodplain reclamation and the establishment of a creek buffer.
- A requirement for the donation of floodplain land along creeks.
- An endorsement for the need to acquire and establish open space preserves throughout the City limits.

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.

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 5 to 10 years, and up to 25 years. City staff should review and update this Parks Master Plan every two years or when significant changes occur.