



4. Park System Goals

4.1 Introduction

Goals are included in the park planning process to serve as a guide for the continual improvement of the parks system. Addressing the quality of life in a city, goals are an expression of a city's vision and desired physical, social and economic environment.

Goals are established so as to serve as a policy and philosophical framework for the master plan. They serve to guide park planning in the city even as councils and staff change over the years. Goals can be as specific or general as the planners of the park system feel comfortable with, but once established should be followed diligently and consistently.

The goals for the 2007 Waxahachie Parks Master Plan focus on:

- Provide a variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the ultimate recreational needs and desires of the City of Waxahachie's growing population.
- Create a park system that will improve the physical form and appearance of the City of Waxahachie.



- Preserve and enhance Waxahachie's open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources, especially areas with topography change and/or indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding.
- Provide an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, open spaces and cultural landscapes.
- Provide a tool to coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.
- Continue to maintain all of the Waxahachie parks and recreational facilities in a superior and sustainable condition.
- Develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement the City's limited funding resources.
- Include a citizen participation process in all ongoing park planning and design, as well as updating of the Parks Master Plan.

4.2 Goals Terminology

Definitions - The terms "policies", "goals", and "objectives", as used in this report, follow the definitions shown below.

- **Policies:** Planning Policies consist of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan itself and specific actions and ordinances created by the Waxahachie City Council to implement the goals established in this document.
- **Goals:** Goals are general statements concerning an aspect of the City's desired ultimate physical, social and economic environment. Goals address the desired quality of life.
- **Objectives:** Objectives express the actions or approach that is necessary to achieve the stated goals, or portions of those goals, without assigning responsibility to any specific actions. Objectives are often expressed as actions that can be measured.

4.3 Purpose of the 2007 Parks Master Plan

The purpose of the 2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is to:

- Provide the framework for orderly and consistent planning, development and improvement of the park system.
- Establish priorities based on researched and documented facts and a community based needs analysis.
- Guide City leaders in acquisition and development of park land to meet current and future park and open space needs.
- Guide City leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years.
- Conform to the preparation of guidelines for local Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plans, prepared by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for Texas Recreation and Parks Account local parks grant program.



4.4 Parks Master Plan Goals & Objectives

Goals are included in the park planning process to serve as a guiding force for the continual improvement of the parks system during the next ten years. The following is a set of goals and objectives of the 2007 Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Goal # 1

Provide parkland and a variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the changing recreational needs and desires of the City of Waxahachie's population.

- 1.1 Develop short and long-range programs for development, expansion and upgrading of Waxahachie's parks system.
- 1.2 Provide recreational facilities that address the needs of all age groups, young and old, active and passive, and in all socio economic categories.
- 1.3 Identify park-planning areas with the greatest need for park facilities and pursue the acquisition and development of facilities in those areas.
- 1.4 Use diverse and reasonable criteria to identify park needs, including needs by sector, reasonable calculations of potential level of use, but also the ability of each facility to respond to Citywide needs in a cost effective manner.
- 1.5 Develop land acquired and dedicated to future parks in a consistent and focused manner.
- 1.6 Balance the distribution of park facilities, including neighborhood parks, community parks, athletic facilities, and trail corridors throughout the City.
- 1.7 Include the extra-territorial jurisdictional (ETJ) area in the planning process.
- 1.8 Periodically update the long-range plan and standard to reflect changing conditions in the City and to provide a forum for citizen input.

Goal # 2

Create a park system that will improve the physical form and image of the City of Waxahachie.

- 2.1 Acquire park and open space sites that are prominent and highly visible in the neighborhoods that surround them.
- 2.2 Utilize landscape design at key City entryways and along selected street medians to create a positive and attractive image of the City.
- 2.3 Encourage tree planting in parks, street frontage, and on private properties.

Goal # 3

Preserve and protect open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources, especially areas with topography change, indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding within the City and its extra-territorial jurisdictional (ETJ) lands.

- 3.1 As part of the Citywide park planning and development process, establish criteria to identify key open space areas, cultural landscapes and natural areas worthy of preservation throughout the City and its ETJ.
- 3.2 Protect areas and landscapes of cultural value including general view sheds, specific views and vistas, sites of Indian history, agricultural and archaeological sites.
- 3.3 Protect areas with geological and topographical interest.
- 3.4 Protect areas with significant indigenous tree cover.



- 3.5 Acquire and preserve suitable channels and natural floodplain areas as public open space and possible future trail corridors.
- 3.6 Acquire and preserve publicly accessible greenbelts along the edges of all creeks.
- 3.7 Establish funding mechanisms to acquire lands for protection through acquisition, purchase of easements, or outright dedication of floodplain lands where these are deemed to have open space and conservation value. Focus on high quality natural or opens space areas that are likely to be developed with incompatible uses in the near future.
- 3.8 Establish policies that encourage private landowners to preserve and protect key cultural landscapes including significant vistas, agricultural land and farmsteads, sites of Indian history and natural areas within the City including areas of topography change, indigenous tree cover and land prone to flooding.
- 3.9 Encourage and motivate “conservation development” principles whereby development is clustered in order to preserve open space, cultural landscapes and natural resources as communal amenities between groups of clustered developments.
- 3.10 Encourage educational institutions, semi-private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage and maintain cultural and natural open space conservation areas within the City.

Goal # 4

Provide an open space system which links parks, schools, greenbelts, neighborhoods, business/retail areas, traditional gathering spaces and open spaces.

- 4.1 Create a trail system throughout the City that will provide opportunity for recreation as well as alternative modes of transport e.g. cycling, skating, jogging and hiking.
- 4.2 Research the use of utility easements; sidewalks within the street right-of-way and drainage ways as potential trail connections.
- 4.3 Create an Inter-Cities Trail System incorporating all cities that border Waxahachie including Midlothian, Oak Leaf, Red Oak, Pecan Hill, Palmer, Ennis, Forreston and Maypearl.

Goal # 5

Provide a tool to coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts with the relevant county, adjacent cities and the local school district with respect to issues that affect recreational opportunities in the community.

- 5.1 Emphasize a multi-jurisdictional approach to the provision of recreation facilities in the Waxahachie region, including Ellis County and the Cities of Midlothian, Oak Leaf, Red Oak, Pecan Hill, Palmer, Ennis, Forreston and Maypearl.
- 5.2 Continue to foster the current relationship between the City of Waxahachie and the Waxahachie Independent School District that supports “facility sharing” for various programs and events.
- 5.3 Examine the opportunity to create a comprehensive Multi-Creek Trail System incorporating all adjacent cities that are connected through the trail system.
- 5.4 Work with Ellis County to encourage “conservation development” in the ETJ area so as to ensure the protection of cultural landscapes, natural resources and open space.



Goal # 6

Continue to maintain all of the Waxahachie parks and recreational facilities in a superior condition and sustainable manner.

- 6.1 Provide City parks staff with the manpower and funding resources to maintain all parklands and facilities in a superior manner. Provide additional operations and maintenance resources as new recreational facilities are developed and added to the Waxahachie parks system
- 6.2 Improve the quality of operations and maintenance through continued evaluation of the Parks Department's current operations.
- 6.4 Implement renovation/improvement plans for each park as they age over time and identify a tentative schedule for phasing in improvements.
- 6.5 Address key safety and accessibility needs as quickly as possible.
- 6.6 Continue to promote the use of native plant materials to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs in parks and on City properties.
- 6.7 Use low-maintenance design techniques for future park properties.
- 6.8 Research and consider an organic landscape maintenance program for City property to decrease and/or eliminate the use of potentially harmful chemicals and to invigorate the planted landscape.
- 6.9 Explore and implement innovative techniques to partner with other governmental, non-profit or private organizations to reduce the City's park maintenance burden.
- 6.10 Actively promote beautification of key corridors in the City.

Goal # 7

Develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement the City's limited funding resources.

- 7.1 Develop and ensure an effective Park Dedication and Park Development Ordinance to help fund land acquisition and park development.
- 7.2 Update the current Park Development fee structure to reflect current costs of park and recreation development.
- 7.3 Work to create partnerships with Waxahachie Independent School District and Ellis County to actively and aggressively pursue grant funding from local, state and federal sources.
- 7.4 Continue to foster a close working relationship between the City of Waxahachie and the Waxahachie Independent School District to share funding of joint projects.
- 7.5 Continue to foster a close working relationship between the City of Waxahachie and the Ellis County to share funding of joint projects.
- 7.6 Encourage private cooperation through donations of parkland, labor, and financial contributions.
- 7.7 Establish a program where community and business groups and neighborhood associations can help improve and maintain parks and open space areas.
- 7.8 Encourage the assistance of the private sector in providing landscaping along private and public properties including public rights-of-way and medians.
- 7.9 Encourage the establishment of local organizations that can assist with providing park and recreation facilities and programs for the residents of Waxahachie.
- 7.10 Encourage the establishment of "friends of the ..." organizations to participate in the upkeep and maintenance of relevant park land and landscape features.



Goal # 8

Include a citizen participation process in all ongoing park planning and design, as well as updating of the Parks Master Plan.

- 8.1 Periodically update the long-range plan and standards to reflect changing conditions in the City e.g. demographics and to provide a forum for citizen input.
- 8.2 Encourage and provide multiple opportunities for citizens to provide input in the development, maintenance, and operation of the City's parks and open space system.
- 8.3 Utilize citizen surveys, meetings with key user groups, public meetings, workshops and regular meetings of the Parks and Recreation Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council to achieve this goal.

4.5 Summary of Parks Master Plan Goals

1. Meet the recreational and open space needs of the citizens.
2. Manage the park system to improve the image of the City.
3. Preserve Waxahachie's open space and natural resources.
4. Link parks, schools, greenbelts and open spaces.
5. Encourage multi-jurisdictional recreational efforts.
6. Ensure Waxahachie parks to be superior and sustainable.
7. Develop funding mechanisms other than City's.
8. Include citizen participation in all park development and future Park Master Plan updates.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (Tyrannus forficatus)
State bird of Oklahoma

Achieving the goals of the Parks Master Plan will not only benefit people with their needs for recreation - it will also ensure the protection and appreciation of wildlife and natural habitat, which is crucial to the survival of animals and birds in a City environment.