6. Needs Assessment

6.1 Introduction

The Needs Assessment is the most critical component of the parks master planning effort. An assessment of what deficiencies exist in the parks system is vital so that actions can be developed that address those deficiencies. It is also important to determine future needs and develop the necessary action plan to address these effectively.

In essence, a needs assessment is an analytical way of assessing what facilities are most needed and desired by the citizens of Waxahachie, and determining which needs are the most critical. All identified needs are prioritized to form the basis for recommending an action plan for the city.

The City’s immediate needs are additional land acquisition for parks, development of the land already acquired, renovation of existing parks and establishing policies to ensure the protection of open space including rural landscapes and natural areas. Waxahachie’s needs are also expressed by the desire of the city’s residents to focus on the creation of a citywide trail system for walking, hiking, jogging and bicycling.
6.A - Park and Open Space Needs in Waxahachie

6.2 Methods of Assessing Park Needs

Three techniques were used in evaluating the City of Waxahachie’s current and future park needs. These techniques follow general methodologies accepted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for local park master plans and by the Department of the Interior for local park system Recovery Action Plans (RAP).

1. **Standard-Based Approach** - uses standards established by the local jurisdiction (in this case the City of Waxahachie) to determine the quantity of park facilities required to meet the City’s needs at a given population. Standards usually are expressed as the quantity of park facilities needed to adequately serve every 1,000 citizens of the City.

   Standards are established to provide the level of service that the particular jurisdiction believes is most responsive to the amount of use and the interests of its citizens. This plan establishes individual standards for the City of Waxahachie.

2. **Demand-Based Approach** - uses participation rates, league usage data, and surveys to determine how much the population uses and desires certain types of recreation facilities.

3. **Resource-Based Approach** - is based on the usefulness of available physical resources to provide recreation opportunities. For example, the City’s creeks, floodplains and drainage corridors provide opportunities for trail connections; Lake Waxahachie is a unique recreational resource and the City’s historic downtown provides for a main destination along the trail system.

All three methods are important in their own way, but individually do not represent the entire picture. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities and park requirements are needed in Waxahachie.
6.3 Standards Based Needs

National guidelines and standards are based on demographic trends rather than specific local desires, requiring that they be fine-tuned to meet local conditions. It is important to recognize that national standards are simply guidelines or benchmarks that are intended to serve as a starting point for park planning. Each city has its own unique geographic, demographic, and socio-economic composition, and as such, the arbitrary application of national standards, as is often done, would not necessarily meet the needs of that particular community.

Local needs and desires are used as the guiding criteria to mold national guidelines to meet the expectations of the citizens of Waxahachie in a realistic manner.

Three types of park standards were used to analyze the parks and recreation needs of the City of Waxahachie. These include:

- **Spatial or Park Acreage Standards** - these define the acres of park land needed, and are usually expressed as a ratio of park acreage to population;

- **Facility Standards** - these define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular recreation need. Facility standards are usually expressed as a ratio of units of a particular facility per population size. For example, a facility standard for trails might be one mile for every 1,000 inhabitants of a city; and

- **Development Standards** - these define the exact spatial requirements for a specific recreation area e.g. a neighborhood park versus a community park. These recommended standards are contained in Chapter 3.

Figure 6.1 – Types of Standard Based Assessments

6.4 Park Acreage Standards

The recommendations for each type of standard and approach are as follows:

The purpose of spatial standards for parks and recreational areas is to ensure that sufficient area is allocated to allow for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. They allow a city to plan ahead, so that parkland can be targeted and acquired before it is developed. These spatial standards are expressed as the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 inhabitants.

The national recommended spatial standards for cities in general are shown in Figure 6.2 below.
The nationally recommended spatial standards as presented in Figure 6.2 above were adapted to develop target standards for Waxahachie’s particular situation. These are expressed in terms of:

- Neighborhood Parks (developed and undeveloped)
- Community Parks
- Special Purpose Parks
- Linear Parks
- Open Space
- Regional Parks

6.5 Target Standards for Waxahachie

The Waxahachie 2007 target standards for park acreage are based on the national and metroplex averages followed by consultant interpretation. These parkland target standards for Waxahachie are presented in Table 6.1 and are summarized in Figure 6.3 below.

Table 6.1: Park Land Standards on the next page describes the recommended park acreage standards for each park category including a comparison with the metroplex, national and City of Dallas averages.
Table 6.1
Park Land Standards
City of Waxahachie Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Total Existing Acres</th>
<th>NRPA Target Standard (1)</th>
<th>Waxahachie Target Standard (2)</th>
<th>2007 Population (3)</th>
<th>2012 Population (3)</th>
<th>2015 Population (3)</th>
<th>Built-out Population (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td>43 acres</td>
<td>1 - 2 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>2 to 3 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>53 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 10 acres)</td>
<td>65 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 22 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Parks</td>
<td>220 acres</td>
<td>5 - 8 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>7 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>186 Acres</td>
<td>(surplus of 34 acres)</td>
<td>228 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 22 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Purpose Parks</td>
<td>15 acres</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>3 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>80 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 65 acres)</td>
<td>98 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 83 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Parks</td>
<td>30 acres</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>5 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>133 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 103 acres)</td>
<td>163 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 133 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>0 acres</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>3 to 5 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>80 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 80 acres)</td>
<td>98 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 98 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>308 acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>532 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 224 acres)</td>
<td>652 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 344 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Parks</td>
<td>0 acres</td>
<td>5 - 10 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>10 Acres / 1,000 pop.</td>
<td>265 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 265 acres)</td>
<td>326 Acres</td>
<td>(deficit of 326 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOA Parks</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Standard allows city to establish general target service levels.
(3) Populations projected for Waxahachie as per NCTCOG website.

Citywide developed and undeveloped park area
Current City of Waxahachie park acreage = 303 acres
At the target goal of 20 acres per 1,000 residents, and with a built-out population of 125,000
the deficit park and open space acreage for Waxahachie is 202 acres (excluding regional parks).

The Metroplex average is 14.17 acres per 1,000 residents, which translated to Waxahachie as 1.771 acres with build-out population of 125,000 which constitutes a deficit of 1.463 acres.

Park area as a percentage of city area
Current City of Waxahachie acreage = 31,800 + 57,600 (ETJ) = 89,400 acres
Current park area in City of Waxahachie = 0.3% calculated as 308 / 89,400 acres (ETJ included)
Metroplois average = 4.8% (translated to Waxahachie = 4.290 acres)
National average = 8.1% (translated to Waxahachie = 7,240 acres)
City of Dallas = 10% (translated to Waxahachie = 8,940 acres)
With ETJ included, the deficit park and open space acreage for Waxahachie is:
4,290 acres compared to the metroplex average
7,240 acres compared to the national average
8,940 acres compared to the City of Dallas

Population per city area
Population (125,000) / city acreage (89,400) = 1.4 persons per acre
**Figure 6.3 – Park Acreage Target for Waxahachie**

### Park Acreage Target for Waxahachie

**Close to Home Parks**
- **Neighborhood Parks** - Target Standard – 2 to 3 acres per 1,000 population
- **Community Parks** - Target Standard – 7 acres per 1,000 population
- **Linear Parks** - Target Standard – 5 acres per 1,000 population*

**Total Recommended Close to Home Parks Standards – 14 acres minimum per 1,000 population**

**Other City Wide Parks**
- **Special Purpose Parks** – Target Standard – 3 acres per 1,000 population
- **Open Space** – Target Standard – 3 acres per 1,000 population

**Total Recommended Standards for Other Municipal Parks - 6 acres per 1,000 population**

**Parks of Regional and Conservation Importance**
- **Regional Parks** – Target Standard – 10 acres per 1,000 population

**Total Recommended Standards for Regional Parks and Preserves - 10 acres per 1,000 population**

* Linear Parks are included as “Close to Home Parks” for the City of Waxahachie. One of the goals of a City’ wide network of trails is to provide each resident with walking distance access to a trail that connects with the rest of the City.

The 2007 target standard for park land acreage including all type of parks other than regional parks is 20 acres minimum per 1,000 population. For the projected 2017 population of 39,400 this standard translates to a target of 767 acres park land for the City of Waxahachie and for the built-out population of 125,000 the standard translates to a target of 2,500 acres park land.

Park acreage currently dedicated to park land (both developed and undeveloped parks) totals 308 acres. **At built-out population of 125,000 the deficit in acreage will be 2,192 acres.**
6.6 Park Acreage Comparisons

Reasoning for the recommended spatial target standard for Waxahachie is in part based on a comparison with nationally recommended standards and existing national and local spatial ratios.

Existing park acreage compared to the nation and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

**City wide developed and undeveloped park area per 1,000 residents**

- Current City of Waxahachie developed and undeveloped park acreage = 308 Acres.
- This is an equivalent to 2.46 acres parkland for every 1,000 residents in Waxahachie for the build-out population*.
- The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex average is 14.17 acres per 1,000 residents, which translated to Waxahachie, is 1,771 acres for the build-out population*. Waxahachie is thus 17% of the metroplex average, which constitutes a **deficit of 1,463 acres**.

**Park area as a percentage of City area**

- Park area in City of Waxahachie = 0.3% (308 / 89,400 acres**).
- National average = 8.1% which translated to Waxahachie is 7,240 acres and constitutes a **deficit of 7,240 acres**.
- City of Dallas = 10% which translated to Waxahachie is 8,940 acres and constitutes a **deficit of 8,632 acres**.
- DFW Metroplex = 4.8% which translated to Waxahachie is 4,290 acres and constitutes a **deficit of 3,982 acres***.

* The projection build-out population is 125,000.
** City area including the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
*** It is important to note that the comparison of park acreage as a percentage of city area can be misleading. The comparison with other cities in the DFW Metroplex includes both undeveloped and build-out cities. Undeveloped cities typically will have less acreage dedicated to park land thus resulting in a relatively low ratio of park acreage per city area.

In addition, a substantial amount of acreage in Waxahachie is recommended for dedication to Regional Parks (10 acres per 1,000 population = 1,250 acres at 125,000 build-out population). It is a fact that most cities in the metroplex do not have regional parks which will decrease their parkland / population ratio dramatically.

Based on the Waxahachie target standard of 20 acres per 1,000 population, the deficit for Waxahachie at build-out population of 125,000 is 2,192 acres for municipal parks and 1,250 acres for regional parks and preserves.
6.7 Existing Conditions in Waxahachie

It is imperative that land banking is crucial and a program should be put in place to ensure the acquisition of a park land on a consistent and goal orientated manner. Although large areas of Waxahachie are still undeveloped, development is happening at an unprecedented rate and a concerted effort should be made to acquire sufficient land for future park needs. Various options are available to acquire land including existing vacant land, land subject to flooding along the creeks and drainage channels, and land dedicated to parks as a requirement of developers to fulfill the requirements of the City’s Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Not all land will be suitable, though. The criteria for suitable land for parks include size, location and potential connectivity to schools, other parks, and places of worship.

Neighborhood Parks in Waxahachie

Table 6.2 below summarizes the Citywide Neighborhood Park supply in Waxahachie.

| Table 6.2 |
| Neighborhood Parks in Waxahachie |
| Current Acres - 43 Acres |
| **Target Standard – 2 to 3 acres per 1,000 population** |
| Future Need with 125,000 projected build-out population - **250 to 375 acres** (deficit of 207 to 332 acres). |
| Existing acreage is **13% to 20% of target standard** for build-out population. |

The standard of 2 to 3 acres of neighborhood parks for every 1,000 residents reflects the importance of having nearby parks for the residents of Waxahachie. Waxahachie currently has 43 acres of land dedicated to neighborhood parks. *On a citywide basis, the City will have a deficit of 207 to 332 acres with build-out population of 125,000.*

Neighborhood Park distribution

Within the City proper, the neighborhood parks are concentrated south and or east of Main Street and SH77. One of the goals of neighborhood parks is that they be associated with schools. Of the thirteen schools and colleges, none of Waxahachie’s neighborhood parks are associated with a school or college.
Community Parks in Waxahachie

Table 6.3 below summarizes the Citywide Community Park supply in Waxahachie.

Table 6.3
Community Parks in Waxahachie

- Current Acres – 220 Acres
- **Target Standard – 7 acres per 1,000 population**
- Future Need with 125,000 population – **875 acres** (deficit of 655 acres).
- Existing acreage **25% of target standard** for build-out population.

Based on a recommended standard of 7 acres per 1,000 population for Community Parks, the City has a deficit of 655 acres for build-out population of 125,000.

The existing Community Parks contain various facilities, and as a result, these parks are highly utilized. Since these parks also serve as *de facto* neighborhood parks for the areas around them, they are heavily used and could potentially deteriorate from overuse.

Community Park distribution
The four community parks cover a fairly large area of the City. However, there is a huge need to provide additional community parks especially in the north, northwest and south and southeast side of the City.

Special Purpose Parks in Waxahachie

Table 6.4 below summarizes the Citywide Special Purpose Park supply in Waxahachie.

Table 6.4
Special Purpose Parks in Waxahachie

- Current Acres – 15 Acres
- **Target Standard – 3 acres per 1,000 population**
- Future Need with 125,000 population – **375 acres** (deficit of 360 acres).
- Existing acreage is **4% of target standard** for build-out population.

Based on a recommended standard of 3 acres per 1,000 population for Special Purpose Parks, the City has a deficit of 360 acres for build-out population.

There are various resource based needs for open space in Waxahachie that will be fulfilled with Special Purpose Parks including land associated with cemeteries, land views towards the Ellis County Courthouse and land for City gateways.
Linear Parks in Waxahachie

Table 6.5 below summarizes the Citywide Linear Park supply in Waxahachie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Acres</th>
<th>Target Standard for Linear Parks, Linkage Corridors, &amp; Greenbelts</th>
<th>Future Need with 125,000 population</th>
<th>Existing acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 Acres</td>
<td>5 acres per 1,000 population</td>
<td>625 acres (deficit of 595 acres)</td>
<td>4.8% of target standard for build-out population of 125,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waxahachie has significant opportunities for linear parks along its creeks, drainage corridors, utility corridors, railroad corridors and right-of-ways that traverse the city. Linear parks can connect parks and key areas of the City, e.g. schools, and are relatively inexpensive to develop. These corridors can be used for trails and to address the need for additional park acreage in the City.

The City will benefit from linear parks especially when it is associated with creek corridors where it can fulfill the purpose of flood protection, ecological conservation, environmental education, and recreation through trails. The value of creeks and streams in the urban and semi-urban environments is discussed in Addendum D: Creeks and Streams.

Open Space in Waxahachie

Table 6.6 below summarizes the Citywide Open Space supply in Waxahachie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Acres</th>
<th>Target Standard for Open Space</th>
<th>No land in Waxahachie is currently dedicated to Open Space.</th>
<th>Future Need with 125,000 population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Acres</td>
<td>3 to 5 acres per 1,000 population</td>
<td></td>
<td>375 to 625 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No land is at present dedicated as open space in Waxahachie. Yet, the participants at the public meeting consistently stressed the importance of maintaining the City’s rural character. A concerted effort should be made by the City to ensure that the protection of open space be secured, either by land acquisition through easements, purchasing of development rights, or outright purchasing of land. The sense of country, which is so highly prized by citizens can also be secured by a public/private partnership whereby developers are encouraged to implement “conservation development” and “open space
planning” whereby large tracts of land are protected by clustering development on smaller parcels of land. The resultant open space then becomes a communal asset to be enjoyed by everyone. Access to the larger open space as an amenity consistently results in higher property values. Such an approach truly speaks for the whole that is more than the sum of the parts.

It is important for cities to have land that remains in an undeveloped state. One only has to travel into other cities that are rapidly developing in Texas to see the need and importance of open space preserves. These preserves add green space to the City, and break up the continuous bands of buildings and streets that characterize most cities. Open space is defined as land, which is not programmed for any specific active recreation purpose. However, its value may typically be defined as visual, ecological, providing compensation for impermeable surfaces including parking lots and roofs, as well as for bio-filtering and buffering between incompatible land uses. Open spaces are becoming increasingly valuable and precious in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

Specific recommendations for open space protection are discussed in Chapter 6.12.8 Conservation Planning and Development and Chapter 7.3 vii) Rural Landscape, Open Space and Protected Areas.

Regional Parks in Waxahachie

Table 6.7 below summarizes the Citywide Regional Park supply in Waxahachie.

Table 6.7
Regional Parks in Waxahachie

- Current Acres – 0 Acres
- **Target Standard for Regional Parks – 10 acres per 1,000 population**
- No land in Waxahachie is currently dedicated to Regional Parks.
- Future Need with 125,000 population – 1,250 acres

Based on a recommended standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population for Regional Parks, the City has a deficit of 1,250 acres for build-out population of 125,000. A standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population may appear to be extraordinary high. However, the various resource based needs for open space in Waxahachie justify the development of a number of nature preserves with regional importance and prominence. With the regional value in mind, it is appropriate to consider involvement of the Ellis County as well as Texas Parks and Wildlife to secure land for regional parks and nature preserves.
Table 6.8 below summarizes the key spatial needs for Waxahachie at build-out population and forms a crucial part of the park master plan recommendations in Chapter 8.

Table 6.8  
Summary of Additional Key Acreage Needs for Build-out  
Population of 125,000

**Neighborhood Parks**
- Current acres are 17% of the target standard.
- Need to acquire additional land of 207 acres to meet target standard.

**Community Parks**
- Current acres are 25% of the target standard.
- Need to acquire additional land of 655 acres to meet target standard.

**Special Purpose Parks**
- Current acres are 4% of the target standard.
- Need to acquire additional land of 375 acres to meet target standard.

**Linear Parks**
- Current acres are 4.8% of the target standard.
- Need to acquire additional land of 625 acres to meet target standard.

**Open Space and Natural Areas**
- No land currently dedicated to Open Space.
- Need to acquire additional land of 375 acres to meet target standard.

**Regional Parks**
- No land currently dedicated to Regional Parks.
- Need to acquire additional land of 1,250 acres to meet target standard.

**Citywide Acreage Needs**
- Sum of all target goals (including Regional Parks) recommends a minimum of 30 acres per 1,000 population.
- This represents a target goal of 3,750 acres of parks and open space in the City of Waxahachie for build-out population of 125,000.
6.8 Park Facility Standards, Needs and Levels of Service

Facility standards define the number of facilities recommended to serve each particular type of recreation. They are expressed as the number of facilities per population size. The standards shown are based on comparisons with the national standard, as well as the actual number of facilities in Waxahachie and the amount of use each facility receives. Table 6.9 summarizes the Waxahachie 2007 target standards and level of service (LOS) for each type of facility.

School Facilities Included

The Parks Master Plan includes school outdoor recreation facilities along with City facilities as a true reflection of the total facilities provided to the citizens of Waxahachie.

The joint use agreements between the City of Waxahachie and various entities, provide for access and use by Waxahachie citizen of a number of facilities. The City has the following Local Use Agreements in place:

Waxahachie Independent School District
- Tennis Courts –
  - WISD provides public courts, City provides lights
- Summer Recreation –
  - WISD provides an open gym and City provides staff
  - WISD provides sports camps and City provides the coordinator
- Sports Complex –
  - WISD will from time to time use the complex for play and practice
- Project Barns –
  - WISD uses the Old Fair Grounds for the purpose of raising FFA show animals

Texas Baptist Home
- The Texas Baptist Home provides the use of six acres for softball practice, City provides grounds maintenance

Optimist Club
- City provides funds for the operation of pool
- City provided funds for baseball lighting and restroom building

Chautauqua Association
- City provides the Chautauqua facility for the Association’s assemblies

Community Theatre
- City provides the Chautauqua facility for their plays

Symphony Association
- City provides the Chautauqua facility for their events

Boy's and Girl's Club
- City provides the pool for the club’s summer activities

Downtown Merchants
- City provides weekly litter patrol of sidewalks and alleys
- City provides seasonal decor
Levels of Service - The recommended Levels of Service for recreation facilities are specifically based on demonstrated needs, the actual number of facilities in Waxahachie, and the amount of use each facility receives. They are expressed as the number of facilities per population size. The Levels of Service are determined by the current needs, the community’s demand and recognized standards.

Current Levels of Service (CLOS) – The Current Levels of Service are expressed as the number of current recreation facilities per population size. An evaluation of the current use by each league in a city is used to develop strategies to meet both current and future recreation facility demands.

Minimum Levels of Service (MLOS) – The MLOS for each type of facility are determined as a guide to provide the most basic recreation facilities to the Community. The MLOS as determined by a small/young city or town may be more than the ideal target standard per existing population size, whereas the MLOS for a large/old city may be lower than the ideal target standard. In other words, the MLOS does not reflect the ideal goal for that particular recreation facility, but rather the minimum facility requirement that that particular city should have at present based upon the particular demand of its citizens, regardless of the size of the population.

Current Needs Assessment – This section reviews current recreation facilities, league participation, and anticipated need for additional facilities or improvements to existing facilities for each type of sport, activity, or amenity.
**Demand Based Needs** – The citizens’ demand for recreational facilities are determined based on their expressed needs and attitudes. Respondents to the Citizen Attitude Survey were asked to indicate which facilities they would most likely participate in and what recreation activities they would prefer. A summary of citizen participation is provided in Chapter 5, Public Input, and is also contained in the Addendum A: Public Participation – Telephone Survey.

**Standards Based Needs** – This need is based on comparisons with the national standard, as well as the actual number of recreation facilities in Waxahachie and the amount of use each facility receives. Table 6.9 on the next two pages summarizes the Waxahachie 2007 Current Levels of Service and target standards for each type of facility.

**Table 6.9: Waxahachie Major Recreational Facility Level of Service (LOS)** on the next page describes a recommended target standard and level of service for recreation facilities expressed as a ratio of the number of facilities per 1,000 population.

### 6.9 Athletic Facility Evaluation

The Parks Master Plan includes school athletic facilities along with City facilities as a true reflection of the total facilities provided to the citizens of Waxahachie.

League participation at the Waxahachie Sports Complex includes the following:

- **YMCA**  
  Youth Soccer, Youth Softball, Youth Baseball, Youth Flag Football, Adult Coed Softball, Adult Flag Football.
- **Central Ellis County Soccer**  
  Youth Soccer
- **Pee Wee Football**  
  Youth Tackle Football
- **WISD**  
  Baseball, Cross Country, Soccer including playgrounds *(to be confirmed)*
- **Faith Family Academy**  
  Football, Softball
- **Cornerstone Christian**  
  Football, Baseball
- **SAGU**  
  Baseball
- **Ovilla Christian**  
  Softball, Baseball
- **Waxahachie Girls Softball Association**  
  Softball

Each sport association was contacted for their participation projection and future facility needs but only the YMCA and Waxahachie Girls Softball Association responded (see Addendum C: Sport Organization Input).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Current Levels of Service</th>
<th>NRPA Target Standard (1)</th>
<th>Waxahachie Target LOS (2)</th>
<th>2007 Target (~ 26,700 pop.)</th>
<th>2012 Target (~ 33,700 pop.)</th>
<th>2017 Target (~ 39,400 pop.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competitive Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>3 fields</td>
<td>1 / 8900 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 5,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 5000 pop.</td>
<td>5.34 ~ 5 Fields (deficit of 2 fields)</td>
<td>6.74 ~ 7 Fields (deficit of 4 fields)</td>
<td>7.9 ~ 8 Fields (deficit of 5 fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 1 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>12 fields</td>
<td>1 / 2225 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 5,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 5000 pop.</td>
<td>5.34 ~ 5 Fields (surplus of 7 fields)</td>
<td>6.74 ~ 7 Fields (surplus of 5 fields)</td>
<td>7.9 ~ 8 Fields (surplus of 4 fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 1 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>13 fields</td>
<td>1 / 2054 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 10,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 2000 pop.</td>
<td>13.4 ~ 13 Fields (deficit of 0 fields)</td>
<td>16.85 ~ 17 Fields (deficit of 4 fields)</td>
<td>19.7 ~ 20 Fields (deficit of 7 fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 0 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>2 fields</td>
<td>1 / 1350 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 20,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 10000 pop.</td>
<td>2.87 ~ 2 Fields (deficit of 0 fields)</td>
<td>3.37 ~ 3 Fields (deficit of 1 field)</td>
<td>3.9 ~ 4 Fields (deficit of 2 fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 2 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball/Softball</td>
<td>6 backst</td>
<td>1 / 4450 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 3000 pop.</td>
<td>8.90 ~ 9 Backstops (deficit of 3 backst)</td>
<td>11.23 ~ 11 Backstops (deficit of 5 backst)</td>
<td>13.1 ~ 13 Backst (deficit of 7 backst)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 5 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-purpose Practice Fields</td>
<td>15 fields</td>
<td>1 / 1780 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 1500 pop.</td>
<td>17.80 ~ 18 Fields (deficit of 3 fields)</td>
<td>22.47 ~ 22 Fields (deficit of 7 fields)</td>
<td>26.3 ~ 26 Fields (deficit of 11 fields)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 3 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Athletic Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Goals</td>
<td>7 goals</td>
<td>1 / 3814 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 2,500 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 2000 pop.</td>
<td>13.35 ~ 13 Goals (deficit of 6 goals)</td>
<td>16.85 ~ 17 Goals (deficit of 10 goals)</td>
<td>19.7 ~ 20 Goals (deficit of 13 goals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Outdoor) (Schools: 2 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Volleyball</td>
<td>0 court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 / 5,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 10000 pop.</td>
<td>2.87 ~ 2 Courts (deficit of 2 courts)</td>
<td>3.37 ~ 3 Courts (deficit of 3 courts)</td>
<td>3.9 ~ 4 Courts (deficit of 4 courts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Outdoor) (Schools: 0 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 / 2,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 3000 pop.</td>
<td>8.9 ~ 9 Courts (deficit of 1 court)</td>
<td>11.23 ~ 11 Courts (deficit of 3 courts)</td>
<td>13.1 ~ 13 Courts (deficit of 5 courts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Schools: 8 available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Line Hockey</td>
<td>0 rink</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 / 20,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Rink (deficit of 1 rink)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Rink (deficit of 1 rink)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Rink (deficit of 1 rink)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Type</td>
<td>Existing City &amp; School</td>
<td>Current Levels of Service</td>
<td>NRPA Target Standard (1)</td>
<td>Waxahachie Target LOS (2)</td>
<td>2007 Target (~ 26,700 pop.)</td>
<td>2012 Target (~ 33,700 pop.)</td>
<td>2017 Target (~ 39,400 pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved Hike and Bike Trails</td>
<td>7 miles</td>
<td>1 mile / 3814 pop.</td>
<td>1 mile / 1000 pop.</td>
<td>26.70 ~ 27 Miles</td>
<td>33.70 ~ 34 Miles</td>
<td>39.4 ~ 39 Miles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Trails</td>
<td>0 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mile / 10000 pop.</td>
<td>2.67 ~ 2 Miles</td>
<td>3.37 ~ 3 Miles</td>
<td>3.9 ~ 4 Miles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>18 play units</td>
<td>1 / 1483 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 1000 pop.</td>
<td>26.7 ~ 27 Units</td>
<td>33.70 ~ 34 Units</td>
<td>39.4 ~ 39 Units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Center</td>
<td>0 center</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 20,000 pop.</td>
<td>1.1 ~ 1 Center</td>
<td>1.35 ~ 1 Center</td>
<td>1.6 ~ 1 Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>14 centers</td>
<td>1 / 1907 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 5000 pop.</td>
<td>5.3 ~ 5 Center (surplus of 9 centers)</td>
<td>6.74 ~ 7 Center (surplus of 7 centers)</td>
<td>7.9 ~ 8 Center (surplus of 6 centers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool</td>
<td>1 pool</td>
<td>1 / 26700 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Pool (deficit of 0 pools)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Pool (deficit of 0 pools)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Pools (deficit of 0 pools)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natatorium/Aquatic Center</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 / 20,000 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Center (deficit of 1 center)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Center (deficit of 1 center)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Center (deficit of 1 center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Spray Park</td>
<td>0 parks</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 20000 pop.</td>
<td>1.34 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>1.69 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>2.0 ~ 2 Parks (deficit of 2 parks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate Park</td>
<td>0 skate parks</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Parks (deficit of 1 parks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses</td>
<td>0 golf course</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 40000 pop.</td>
<td>0.67 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 0 courses)</td>
<td>0.84 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 1 course)</td>
<td>1.0 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 1 course)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc Golf Course (Frisbee)</td>
<td>0 courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 1 course)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 1 course)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Course (deficit of 1 course)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support Facilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Existing City &amp; School</th>
<th>Current Levels of Service</th>
<th>NRPA Target Standard (1)</th>
<th>Waxahachie Target LOS (2)</th>
<th>2007 Target (~ 26,700 pop.)</th>
<th>2012 Target (~ 33,700 pop.)</th>
<th>2017 Target (~ 39,400 pop.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Pavilions/Picnic Shelter</td>
<td>17 units</td>
<td>1 / 1571 pop.</td>
<td>1 / 2000 pop.</td>
<td>26.70 ~ 27 Units (deficit of 10 units)</td>
<td>33.70 ~ 34 Units (deficit of 17 units)</td>
<td>39.4 ~ 39 Units (deficit of 22 units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Park</td>
<td>0 dog parks</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 / 30000 pop.</td>
<td>0.89 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>1.12 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td>1.3 ~ 1 Park (deficit of 1 park)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Based on population projections for Waxahachie as adopted by Waxahachie City Council

2. General goals for comparison only. Standard allows City to establish general target service levels.
3. A surplus or deficit of 0.7 or higher is rounded to the next whole number.
A specific review of each type of major athletic facilities, current usage, the locally adopted standard for each facility, key issues, and the recommended Minimum Levels of Service associated with each type of facility follows.

MAJOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Baseball

Supply and Standard

Competitive Facilities
- Current Number of Competition Fields: 3 fields (City: 2 / schools: 1)
- Current Level of Service: 1/8,900 population
- **Target Standard: 1 field per 5,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is equal to the NRPA standard and results in a deficit of 2 baseball fields for 2007 and a deficit of 4 baseball fields for 2012.

Practice Facilities
- Current Number of Practice Backstops: 6 backstops (City: 1 / schools: 5)
- Current Level of Service: 1/4,450 population
- **Target Standard: 1 backstop per 3,000 population**
  The 2007 standard results in deficit of 3 backstops for 2007 and a deficit of 5 backstops for 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, baseball does not feature on the list of 14 facility types.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, respondents had limited interest: baseball fields feature as number 25 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, baseball fields garnered limited support: 1.4 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues / Needs
- The YMCA indicates 85% of 400 participants to be from Waxahachie which equals 340 residents that participate in baseball.

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**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for baseball fields**

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 7 lighted and 11 practice baseball fields (including softball). In order to meet this requirement, it is required that 4 additional lighted baseball fields and 5 additional backstop be provided in the next 5 year period. The best location for these fields would be in an existing or future Community Park.
Softball

Supply and Standard

Competitive Facilities
- Current Number of Competition Fields: 12 fields (City: 11 / schools: 1)
- Current Level of Service: 1/2,225 population
- **Target Standard:** 1 field per 5,000 population
  The 2007 standard is equal to the NRPA standard and results in a surplus of 7 fields for 2007 and a surplus of 5 fields for 2012.

Practice Facilities
- See baseball above.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, softball is not featured on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, youth softball fields feature as number 22 and adult softball fields as number 33 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, youth and adult softball fields garnered limited support: 1.6 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs

Waxahachie Girls Fastpitch League
- Hosts 2 – 4 tournaments drawing teams from Waco to as far as Oklahoma.
- In the next 5 -10 years, the league expects to grow from its current size of 14 teams (140 girls) to 40 teams (400 girls).
- The facilities the league requires to meet demand in the next 5 -10 years is 4 dedicated, fastpitch fields.
- Field specifications are for slow pitch (300 ft.). The Girls Fastpitch League needs temporary fences or a girls fast pitch (200 ft.) facility

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for softball fields

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 7 lighted softball fields for which the requirement has been exceeded. Any need for practice facilities, will be met by the provision of backstops as discussed in the previous Baseball section). The best location for these practice fields would be in a future Community Park.
Soccer (Youth)

Supply and Standard
Competitive Facilities
- Current Number of Competition Fields: 13 fields (City: 13 / schools: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 1/2,054 population
- **Target Standard: 1 field per 2,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is five times higher than the NRPA standard and results in a surplus of 0 fields for 2007 and a deficit of 4 fields for 2012.

Practice Facilities
- Current Number of Practice Multi-purpose Fields (soccer and football combined): 15 fields (City: 12 / schools: 3)
- Current Level of Service: 1/1,780 population
- **Target Standard: 1 field per 1,500 population**
  The 2007 standard results in a deficit of 3 fields for 2007 and a deficit of 7 fields for 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, soccer does not feature on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, soccer fields feature as number 24 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, soccer fields garnered limited support: 1.5 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- Recent years have seen a tremendous growth of soccer in the Dallas / Fort Worth metroplex.
- The YMCA indicated the need for additional soccer practice fields.

**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for soccer fields**

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 17 lighted soccer fields. The requirement for additional competitive fields is 4 fields. Additionally, it is recommended that 7 multi-purpose practice fields be provided in the next 5 year period. The best location for these fields would be in a future Community Park.
Football

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of Competition Fields: 2 fields (City: 0 / schools: 2)
- Current Level of Service: 1/13,350 population
- **Target Standard: 1 field per 10,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set at twice the NRPA standard which results in an adequate supply for 2007 and a deficit of 1 field for 2012.

Practice Facilities
- See soccer above.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, football does not feature on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, football fields feature as number 35 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, football fields garnered minority support: 0.9 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- The YMCA indicated that 50 adults are at present involved with Adult Flag Football.

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**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for football fields**

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 3 lighted football fields. This requirement represents 1 additional lighted football field to be provided in the next 5 years, which may be provided by the WISD as is the case with the existing two fields. Additionally, the need for practice fields will be met by developing the multi-purpose practice fields as recommended for soccer above. As mentioned, the best location for such a field would be in a future Community Park.
OTHER ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Basketball Goals (Outdoor)

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of Goals: 7 goals (City: 5 / schools: 2)
- Current Level of Service: 1/3,814 population
- **Target Standard: 1 basketball goal per 2,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is higher than the NRPA standard which results in a **deficit of 6** goals in 2007 and a **deficit of 10** goals for 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, basketball did not feature on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, basketball courts feature as number 14 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, basketball courts garnered majority support: 2.5 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- No sports organization expressed a need for additional basketball courts.

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**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for basketball goals**

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 17 basketball goals. This requires the addition of 10 goals in the next 5 years. Basketball courts may be considered as part of the development of future Community Parks. Cities often provide half courts (one goal) at neighborhood parks due to their convenient access for one person practice. These practice courts are typically unlit.
Tennis

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of Tennis Courts: 8 courts (City: 0 / schools: 8)
- Current Level of Service: 1/3,338 population
- **Target Standard: 1 court per 3,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set a third lower than the NRPA standard and results in a deficit of 1 court in 2007 and a deficit of 3 in 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, tennis features as number 12 on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, tennis courts feature as number 23 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, tennis courts garnered majority support: 1.6 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- No sports organization expressed need for additional tennis courts at this time.

**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for tennis courts**
Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 11 lighted tennis courts. This requirement will be met with the 3 lighted tennis courts. Should the demand for tennis increase during the next 5 years, tennis courts may be considered as part of the development of future Community Parks.
Sand Volleyball (Outdoor)

Supply and Standard

- Current Number of Volleyball Courts: 0 courts (City: 0 / schools: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 0
- **Target Standard: 1 court per 10,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set at one half the NRPA standard and results in a deficit of 2 courts in 2007 and a deficit of 3 courts in 2012.

Attitude Survey Results

- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, sand volleyball did not feature on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, volleyball courts feature as number 18 on a list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, volleyball courts garnered majority support: 1.9 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs

- No sports organization expressed the need for sand volleyball courts at this time.

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for outdoor volleyball courts

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 3 outdoor volleyball courts. In order to meet this minimum Level of Service, it is recommended to provide three volleyball courts in a future Community Park. Cities often provide volleyball courts at neighborhood parks due to their convenient access, however experience has taught that more than one court together garners much more interest when multiple games can be played at a time.
In-Line Hockey Rink

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for an in-line hockey rink

Limited interest has been identified for an In-Line Hockey Rink at this stage. Should such a need be identified in the future, the NRPA standard of 1 rink per 30,000 population may be followed as a guide.

It should be mentioned though that Parks Department provision of inline skating facilities over the Christmas period has receive much interest from the community.

The skating facility provided by means of a synthetic skating surface proved to be popular with residents over Christmas.

Photograph: courtesy Waxahachie Parks and Recreation Department.
6.10 Other Recreation Facilities Evaluation

Other recreation facilities include facilities for non-athletic and passive activities. A review of each type of facility follows:

**Paved Hike and Bike Trails**

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of paved Hike and Bike Trails: 7 miles (City: 7 / schools: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 1 mile per 3,813 population
- **Target Standard: 1 mile per 1,000 population**
  
  The 2007 standard results in a **deficit of 20 miles** for 2007 and a **deficit of 27 miles** for 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, multi-use trails feature as number 2 on the list of 14.
- As a preference for non-athletic recreational facilities in Community Parks, hike and bike trails feature as number 8 on a list of 36.
- If only one activity were to be provided, trails garnered high majority support: 3 in favor to 1 against.
- It is clear that respondents to the attitude survey rated jogging/biking trails consistently as one of the most important recreational facilities to be constructed, emphasized by their passionate response and singled out from a list of 22 options. In addition, the respondents rated multi-use trails as sorely lacking in the City.

Key Issues/Needs
- There is currently a nation wide increase in the popularity of trails that can be enjoyed by all age groups. Accessibility, security and visual interest along the way are a few of the important considerations when developing trails.

**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for paved hike and bike trails**

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 34 miles of trails. In order to meet this requirement, it is required that the minimum of 5 miles of trails be constructed every year for the next 5 year period. The ideal location for trails is along creek corridors, TXU easements and the railroad corridor as well as along roads as sidewalk enhancements.
Playground Units

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of playgrounds: 18 units (City: 13 / schools: 5)
- Current Level of Service: 1/1,483 population
- Target Standard: 1 playground per 1,000 population
  
  The 2007 standard is set at the same as the NRPA standard and results in a deficit of 9 playground in 2007 and a deficit of 16 playgrounds in 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, playgrounds feature as number 4 on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, playgrounds feature as number 4 on the list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, children playgrounds garnered high majority support: 6.6 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- The demand for children’s playgrounds is generally high in all communities. Waxahachie is no exception as seen in the Attitude Survey. Playgrounds typically are a basic facility provided at all neighborhood parks.

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for playgrounds

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 34 playgrounds. In order to meet this requirement, 16 additional playgrounds are be provided in the next 5 year period which constitutes about 3 each year. The best location for playgrounds is neighborhood parks. However, playgrounds should also be considered at future Community Park.
Indoor Recreation Center

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of Recreation Centers: 0 centers (City: 0 / schools: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 0
- **Target Standard: 1 recreation center per 25,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set 1.25 times lower than the NRPA standard and results in a **deficit of 1** for 2007 and 2012.

Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities other than athletic facilities that respondents would support an indoor recreation center does not feature on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, the indoor recreation center features as number 5 on the list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, the recreation center garnered high majority support: 4.5 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- A recreation center is a huge investment. However, once established and well managed, it may become a source of revenue for the City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for an indoor recreation center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 1 recreation center to be constructed as part of a future Community Park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outdoor Swimming Pool / Indoor Aquatic Facility

Supply and Standard
- Current Number of outdoor swimming pools or indoor aquatic facilities: 1 pool / aquatic facility (City: 1 / schools: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 1/26,700 population
- **Target Standard: 1 recreation center per 30,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set 1.5 times lower than the NRPA standard and results in a **0 deficit** for now and in 2012.
Attitude Survey Results
- For recreational facilities other than athletic facilities that respondents would support, an outdoor swimming pool / natatorium / aquatic center features as number 2 respectively on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, the outdoor swimming pool / natatorium / aquatic center features as number 11 on the list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, the outdoor swimming pool / natatorium / indoor aquatic facility garnered high majority support: 2.8 in favor to 1 against.

Key Issues/Needs
- Many cities invest in aquatic centers rather than an outdoor swimming pool. Some of these aquatic centers are extremely successful in addition to be a good source of income. However, the requirement for it to be successful is a large enough population.
- The Optimists Club provides an additional swimming pool facility. Although it is privately owned, it is open to the public and enjoys a City subsidy.

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for an outdoor aquatic center and outdoor swimming pool

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 1 indoor aquatic facility or outdoor swimming pool until the demand for additional facilities increases substantially.

Skate Park

“If your city does not have a skate park, it is one.”
2006 National Skate Park Conference

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for a Skate Park

Considerable interest has been identified for a Skate Park, ranking fifth out of 14 facilities the city is lacking. Moreover, Skate Parks have gained popularity with many communities in recent years. The Minimum Level of Service for now and 2012 is 1 Skate Park.
6.11 Support Facilities

**Park Pavilions / Picnic Shelters / Outdoor events**

**Supply and Standard**
- Current Number of pavilions / picnic shelters: 17 units (City: 17 school: 0)
- Current Level of Service: 1/1,571 population
- **Target Standard: 1 pavilion / picnic shelter per 1,000 population**
  The 2007 standard is set at double the level of the NRPA standard and results in a **deficit of 10 pavilions / picnic shelters for 2007 and a deficit of 17 units for 2012.**

**Attitude Survey Results**
- For recreational facilities in which respondents rated the City as most lacking, attending parks for outdoor events features as number 1 on the list of 14.
- As a preference for recreational facilities in Community Parks, picnic tables feature as number 3 and pavilions or shelters as number 9 on the list of 36.
- If only one facility were to be provided, park pavilions garnered high majority support: 3.2 in favor to 1 against.

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**Water Spray Park**

**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for a water spray park**

Strong interest has been identified for a water spray park at this stage. In fact, Water Spray Parks have gained a substantial level of interest with many communities in recent years. Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 1 Water Spray Park.

**Disc Golf Course (Frisbee)**

**Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for a disc golf course**

Disc golf is a sport typically played by students and up and coming young professionals. Limited preference has been identified for a Disc Golf Course at this stage. Should a need for Waxahachie be identified in the future, the target standard of 1 disc golf course per 30,000 population is recommended as a guide.
Key Issues/Needs

- The demand for pavilions, shelters and picnic areas are generally high in all communities. Waxahachie is no exception as seen in the Attitude Survey.

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for pavilions /picnic shelters

Based on the above assessment, the Minimum Level of Service for the next 5 years is recommended to be 34 pavilions / picnic shelters. In order to meet this requirement, 17 additional pavilions /picnic shelters are to be provided in the next 5 year period. Both neighborhood parks and community parks are ideal for the provision of pavilions /picnic shelters.

Dog Park

Key Issues

- The purpose of dog parks is mainly twofold: running opportunities and dog socializing (even owner socializing). A third purpose is more applicable in dense multi-family apartment housing where a dog park is the only opportunity for the animals to have access to an exterior landscaped environment. Depending on what is allowed or not, dog parks need to be of a certain size to absorb animal droppings not picked up by owners. If droppings are to be picked up, policing becomes an important factor. The typical issues about dog parks include the NIMBY “not in my backyard” factor, as a result of potential noise, odor and traffic, including the need for parking.

Year 2007 – 2012 Minimal Level of Service for a dog park

Limited preference has been identified for a Dog Park at this stage. Should a need for dog parks in Waxahachie be identified in the future, the target standard of 1 Dog Park per 30,000 population is recommended as a guide.
Table 6.10
Summary of Current and Minimum Levels of Service (CLOS & MLOS) and Required Additions per Recreation Facility for the next 5 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Facility</th>
<th>Current Level of Service/ Population</th>
<th>Long Term Target Standard</th>
<th>2007 - 2012 MLOS/ Facility #</th>
<th>5 Year Required Addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Fields (Competitive)</td>
<td>1/8,900</td>
<td>1/5,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball/Softball (Backstops)</td>
<td>1/4,450</td>
<td>1/3,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball Fields (Competitive)</td>
<td>1/2,225</td>
<td>1/5,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Fields (Youth)</td>
<td>1/2,054</td>
<td>1/2,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football Fields</td>
<td>1/13,350</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose Practice Fields (Soccer and Football)</td>
<td>1/1,780</td>
<td>1/1,500</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Goals (Outdoor)</td>
<td>1/3,814</td>
<td>1/2,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball Courts (Sand - Outdoor)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>1/3,338</td>
<td>1/3,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Line Hockey Rinks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hike and Bike Trails (Paved)</td>
<td>1 miles/3,814</td>
<td>1 mile/1,000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Trails</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground Units</td>
<td>1/1,483</td>
<td>1/1,000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Recreation Centers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/25,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Swimming Pool</td>
<td>1/26,700</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Natatorium/ Aquatic Center</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Spray Parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate Parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Course</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/40,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc Golf Course</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavilions / Picnic Shelters</td>
<td>1/1,571</td>
<td>1/1,000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To be reconsidered should need increase.
The standard based recreation facilities to construct in the next 5 years are presented in Table 6.11 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Facility</th>
<th>Suggested Implementation over the next 5 year period</th>
<th>Total Number of Facilities/ Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major Athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Fields (competitive)</td>
<td>1 field every year</td>
<td>5 fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstops</td>
<td>1 backstop per year</td>
<td>5 backstops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Fields (competitive)</td>
<td>1 - 2 fields every 2nd year</td>
<td>4 fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football Fields</td>
<td>1 field</td>
<td>1 field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-purpose Practice Fields (S&amp;F)</td>
<td>1 - 2 fields per year</td>
<td>7 fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Goals</td>
<td>2 goals per year</td>
<td>10 goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball Courts</td>
<td>1 - 2 courts every 2nd or 3rd year</td>
<td>3 courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>1 - 2 courts every 2nd or 3rd year</td>
<td>3 courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Athletic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hike and Bike Trails</td>
<td>5 - 6 miles per year</td>
<td>27 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Trails</td>
<td>1 mile per year</td>
<td>3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground Units</td>
<td>3 units per year</td>
<td>16 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Swimming Pool</td>
<td>1 pool</td>
<td>1 pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Natatorium/ Aquatic Center</td>
<td>1 center</td>
<td>1 center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Spray Parks</td>
<td>1 park</td>
<td>1 park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate Parks</td>
<td>1 park</td>
<td>1 park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavilions / Picnic Shelters</td>
<td>3 - 4 structures per year</td>
<td>17 structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.12 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, historic / cultural landscapes, 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.

6.12.1 Blackland Prairie

Waxahachie is located within the Blackland Prairie ecological area. The Blackland Prairie region is gently rolling and level land covering 23,500 square miles. The region is underlain by Upper Cretaceous marine chalks, marls, limestones, and shales which gave rise to the development of the characteristic black, calcareous, alkaline, heavy clay soils. It is named for the rich, deep, fertile black soils that once supported the original tallgrass prairie communities and today support crop production and cattle ranching.
Prior to the seventeenth century, this area in North Central Texas had 12 million acres of tallgrass prairie; now there are less than 5,000 acres. It is the grassland communities themselves - the big bluestem, little bluestem, switchgrass, sideoats, and associated herbaceous flora that make these prairies unique. Agriculture and development have threatened the remaining grassland communities with extirpation from Texas.


One of the most important benefits of the tallgrass prairie is the deep root system of these grasses with the following effect:

- It decreases flood potential due to the deep root system that soaks up potential runoff like a sponge releasing it again over time.
- Water quality increases due to filtration before entering the creek system.

The other, most obvious value of the tallgrass prairie, is the unique habitat that it creates for many animal and bird species.

The manner in which the Blackland Prairie as a natural resource can be celebrated and included in the recreational experience, is through concepts of sustainable design and flood plain protection. Remnants of good examples of Blackland Prairie should be inventoried and protected by land acquisition for park land and/or inclusion in developments conceived through Conservation Planning and Design.
6.12.2 Rural and Visually Attractive Landscapes and Road Sections

The public participation process including the telephonic conducted Attitude Survey and the public meeting revealed that the citizens of Waxahachie place strong emphasis on the importance of maintaining the rural character of the City and providing access to natural areas. A rural character for Waxahachie typically means a natural landscape representing the Blackland Prairie and an agricultural landscape including cultivated lands, ranch land with cattle and/or horses, farm buildings and/or farm structures. One way to maintain this rural character is by preserving views and vistas from various vantage points including views along the road system and the character of the specific road itself. A number of such vantage points and road sections have been identified and is represented on the attached map: View Corridors and Cultural Features.

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.

- One of the most impressive views of the Ellis County Courthouse is seen from IH 35. The vantage point is from a stretch of IH 35 between FM 1446 and the next high point to the north. The view comprises a grass field/meadow foreground, middle ground of trees with the courthouse on the horizon. What is important about protecting this view, is that the entire context of the site adds to the visual experience including the vegetation and rural landscape along FM 1446, the northern high point as well as the meadow and trees along the view towards the courthouse. Measures may include conservation easements, acquisition of development rights, or purchasing of the land. In order to make this view more accessible, it is suggested to develop a viewing site that is accessible from the service road. Such a view site could possibly be on top of the high point with the approach from its northern side so as not to compromise the view as seen from IH 35.
This late afternoon view of Ellis County Courthouse is impressive with the trees and meadow in the foreground.

- The view of the silos east of IH 35 at the northwest corner of Johnston Road and HWY 77 at the southern end of Waxahachie is impressive and is representative of a rural farm environment. In addition, this view is conducive to establishing a south gateway to the City. It is important though that the City take steps to preserve this view by establishing an easement, acquiring the development rights or purchasing the land between IH 35 and the silos.
The silos along IH35 at the south side of Waxahachie serve as a southern gateway to the City.

The silos have a strong presence and introduce the visitor to the agricultural and rural character of the City of Waxahachie.
General areas that add to the visual quality of the landscape experience include road crossings over creeks. Such areas are typically well established with trees. The aim is to preserve the views along the creek corridors. This requires that four view triangles be established between the road and creek in order to keep it free from structures and vegetation removal that will compromise these views. It is recommended that the dimensions of such view triangles be calculated from the creek crossing at a minimum distance of 1,000 feet along both the road and creek. Good examples are where IH 35 crosses over Waxahachie Creek and Prong Creek, and where FM 813 Road crosses over Grove Creek.
Specific road sections that warrant protection for enhancing the rural and/or visual quality of the landscape experience include:

- FM 877 between FM 66 and Lake Waxahachie
  - This stretch of road is truly beautiful with horse and cattle ranches to the east and crop land to the west. In general, the land drops toward Waxahachie Creek which affords various vistas to tree groves and windrows offset by open fields.
  - It is suggested that a pre-determined width of the road edge (approximately 100 feet to the west and 300 to 400 feet to the east) be zoned agricultural conservation land with the understanding that such land can only contain farm structures (including farm houses) at a pre-determined density and either crop land, ranch land, or local prairie vegetation.
  - Where appropriate views toward Waxahachie Creek should be established further than the 400 feet limitation of development.

- HWY 77 between HWY 287 and FM 877
  This stretch of road is the subject of a separate study; however, the important points are the following:
  - It is expected that TXDot will require the same road standards that they have for similar roads, since this road is a state highway. However, where this road section traverses the downtown area, it needs to have special allowances from TXDot to complement the urban character of the area. In fact, the road should be seen as a destination in itself, rather than a thoroughfare to convey vehicles from the one side of downtown to the other. Treated as a destination one will expect on-street parking, narrow lanes, wide parkways, and street corners with extra wide sidewalks.
Rogers Street and Cantrell Street (FM 1446) between IH 35 and HWY 77. These two roads are two of the many entrances to the City of Waxahachie off IH 35. The approaches down these roads have a special character with historic structures, some of which are relatively close to the road and "tree tunnels" where the roads are completely in shade. These charming roads call for special protection of the tree cover and retaining the residential character.

Roger Road is bordered by a well established tree cover.

Business HWY 287
This road has distinct sections each of which call for special treatment.
- The stretch from North Prong Creek down to IH 35 is unique with beautiful views towards and across Waxahachie Creek to the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railway line that runs parallel to the road. The north side of the road is beautiful in itself with general rural views and specific views up Irving Branch. It is suggested that the entire area between Business HWY 287 and the railroad be preserved through a conservation easement, acquisition of development rights, or land purchasing.
- The stretch from IH 35 to Downtown has a particular charm due to a number of factors:
  - The underpass under the railroad creates a unique entry to the City and is regarded as an important gateway.
  - Much of the land to the south and west of the underpass is under the 100 year floodline.
  - The numerous historic houses along Business HWY 287 introduce the visitor to the historic character of the City.
  - Measures should include no future widening of the road, ongoing protection of the historic houses, protection of the natural areas in the flood plain, special design criteria for new structures, and marking of the railroad underpass to celebrate this entry to the City.
The stretch from Downtown to the east is characterized by older structures, both homes and shops. The character is small town America that should be celebrated with ample sidewalks (to encourage people to walk along the road edge), protection of important buildings through restoration efforts, and design standards that will assist to unify and preserve the character of the street.

One specific point worth mentioning is the intersection of Wyatt and Main Street. This is the ideal place to create a local business center with street corner cafes, and small businesses. The existing two-story building creates a natural gateway to the neighborhood both along Wyatt and Main Street.

- IH 35 between HWY 287 and FM 66
  The visual value of this section of IH 35 lies in the following:
  - Topography change – approaching from the north, the relatively flat landscape drops at the Waxahachie Civic Center. From this point onwards the landscape is undulating up to FM 66 where the landscape generally levels out again.
  - Views and vistas to the surrounding landscape include the following:
    - Waxahachie Civic Center, which has a strong presence in the landscape; its prominent locations adds a –gateway“ quality to it.
    - Views downstream and upstream along Waxahachie Creek – the dense stand of trees has a prominent presence in the landscape.
    - The floodplain area opposite Getzendaner Park with a grass field in the foreground and a tree line in the middle ground. The view is prominent and well worth protecting.
    - View towards Ellis County Courthouse immediately north of FM 1446 as discussed above.

It is recommended that a highway overlay district be established for this stretch of IH 35 with emphasis on view protection, design standards, acknowledgement of the surrounding topography as an important feature of the roadside landscape (general leveling of the land is discouraged), and viewing sites along the service road at important vantage points.
Grove Creek Road north of FM 813
This road section is worth mentioning for the ambiance created by a narrow, tree lined road with ample shade. It has the feel of a country road and every effort should be made to protect this scenic road. Should additional lanes be needed in the future, it suggested that these be added for a distance to the side of the existing road in order to maintain the tree lined edge.
Rural roads in the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
The Waxahachie ETJ contains many rural roads, some with especially beautiful views to the surrounding landscape. Such scenic roads are important for city dwellers to connect with the land, albeit artificially through the windscreen of a car. Conservation Planning and Development is a particular useful tool to ensure the protection of these rural roads when the pressure for development gets stronger. However, it takes a commitment from the City and collaboration by developers to make this happen successfully.

6.12.3 Cultural / Historical Landscapes

The National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior describes Cultural landscapes as “settings we have created in the natural world. They reveal fundamental ties between people and the land “ties based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, meet requirements for recreation, and find suitable places to bury our dead. Landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed: plants and fences, watercourses and buildings. They range from formal gardens to cattle ranches, from cemeteries and pilgrimage routes to village squares. They are special places: expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land.”

From: Nps-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline:
http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nps28/28chap1.htm, Aug-2002

For this part of Texas, historical and/or cultural sites and features include the following items: cemeteries, homesteads, barns, outbuildings, Native American Camp Sites, creek crossing locations, nineteenth century recreation, and gathering areas and archaeological sites.

The recognition and preservation of individual sites and structures are not enough to ensure the protection of the landscape as a whole, which is essential to evoke the quality and essence of the history of the area. In fact, Waxahachie’s historical and cultural heritage is inextricably linked to the natural environment. Once a site or feature
is severed from its context, a tremendously important part of the cultural experience is lost. Within the context lie visual clues as to the way in which people from an earlier generation and era related to their environment. Thus, it is important to protect the integrity of the entire landscape in which the cultural features and sites are contained.

In the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Congress declared that "the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people." This act was passed in response to the destruction of historic and prehistoric resources by actions such as highway construction, water impoundments, and urban renewal.

If warranted, the Parks Master Plan will recommend a historic landscape district in the City of Waxahachie. If not, all the individual cultural and historical sites need to be inventoried and through the process of Conservation Planning and Design, their integrity can be secured.

6.12.4 Lake Waxahachie

The entire area surrounding Lake Waxahachie is extremely important from a natural, recreational, and visual resource point of view. The lake frontage is beautiful all around and every effort possible should be made to protect the views from the surrounding areas to the lake and from the lake to the land. A particularly important scene is the view from the vehicular bridge crossing to the exposed landform and natural vegetation beyond to the south. Should any development be allowed to happen along the edge, the entire view will be compromised and spoiled. It is suggested that a conservation easement be put in place in order to prevent any future development above the lake edge for a distance of at least 500 feet.

Access to the waterfront land is ideal from a recreational point of view, especially due to its linear nature that is ideally suited for hike and bike trails and occasional park sites. However, large stretches of lake frontage are inaccessible to the public due to exclusive private water access from the adjacent properties. Being a publicly funded amenity, Lake Waxahachie should ideally have unimpeded public access around its edge. A focused recreation study of Lake Waxahachie is required to ensure that its full potential as a public recreation facility is achieved.
The protection of this view as seen from the bridge crossing over Lake Waxahachie is extremely important. No development or disturbance of the landscape should be allowed to occur on the flat land above the lake bank for any distance that it would be visible or 500 feet whatever the greater.

6.12.5 Creeks and Streams

The creeks and streams fulfill an extremely important role in towns and cities. Protected and managed correctly, they have a tremendous economic, ecological, and recreational value for the community. One of the best ways to ensure the protection of creeks and streams is through the establishment of creek corridors. The value of creeks and streams in the urban and semi-urban environments, the establishment of creek corridors, the importance of watershed management, and integrated stormwater management are presented in Addendum D: Creeks and Streams.

Waxahachie’s creeks and streams " Waxahachie’s creek system consists of four main creeks from north to south: Grove Creek, Mustang Creek, Waxahachie Creek, and Prong Creek. All these creeks run generally in a southeastern direction.

Grove Creek runs partially through the City for a distance of about 3 miles. A stretch of about 2.5 miles runs along the City’s eastern edge. Sections of this creek are beautiful with exposed limestone and its characteristic white color. In some areas, housing and roads have encroached dangerously close to the creek; it is important that every effort be made to prevent this in new areas to be developed. In addition, future road improvements should be kept well away from the delicate and sensitive stream edge.

Mustang Creek originates in the City and runs for a distance of 6 miles through the City where it is bordered by many new developments that cause an increase in run-off peaks
and volume. The creek is further relatively heavily impacted by infrastructure that intersects with the creek at various points.

Waxahachie Creek runs through the city for a distance of about 9 miles. It borders the city for a distance of 4 miles on its western edge. This creek is the very reason for the location and name of the City of Waxahachie. Various City facilities and parks are located on its banks, the most important one from a recreation point of view being Getzendaner Park and the more than 4 miles long Waxahachie Creek trail.

Prong Creek is a tributary of Waxahachie Creek. It runs for a distance of about 4.5 miles through the City of which 3 miles are inundated by Lake Waxahachie before it enters Waxahachie Creek.

As is the case with creeks in urban environments, Waxahachie and Mustang Creeks generally suffer from more than natural concentrated and higher volume floodwater, causing the creeks to erode excessively. Sections of the banks along the Waxahachie Creek are relatively unstable with trees precariously holding on with their root system.

The creeks in Waxahachie have tremendous aesthetic appeal including the excitement of running water, the peacefulness of quiet flowing water, the sound of water rushing or trickling down its course, and the sounds and movements of birds and animals associated with the water. Ecologically, the linear configuration of creeks makes them extremely valuable as landscape corridors for wildlife. Animals and birds move up and down these corridors for their protection and to forage. Recognizing the ecologic value of creeks leads to better management and the opportunity for education and various nature experiences for the citizens of Waxahachie.

**Trail connections** - The nature of creek and drainage systems is that they are linear and thus ideal corridors for activities like hiking, jogging, and biking while providing connections between various destination points.

The City should make serious effort to secure functional corridors along the system of creeks and drainage systems. The key criteria should be:

- Where possible, acquire development the 100-year floodplain calculated according to each watershed’s projected build-out conditions plus a buffer of 300 to 500 feet wide corridor along all creeks and their tributaries to ensure flood control and recreation opportunity by preventing unrestricted encroachment on creeks and destruction of the forested areas along creeks.

- Acquisition of land may include purchase of property, donation as undevelopable, or the purchase of development rights. The implication is that the City becomes the custodian of the land by holding the development rights in perpetuity with an agreement that it will never be developed. The model of the Texas Nature Conservancy may be followed in acquiring these development rights.

- Acquire and preserve, where possible, tertiary tributary streams or swales that can create linkage "fingers" to adjacent neighborhoods.
• Work with land and homeowners to create linear, vehicular and pedestrian parkways along the edges of the floodplain, rather than backing lots up to the wooded areas. Such single loaded parkways open the creek area up for the benefit of and enjoyment by all and not just a few residents, with the added benefit of informal surveillance. Where feasible, this concept should be retrofitted to existing conditions.

• Create linear trail segments in phases. Identify key trail linkages to develop first. With proper City support, funding and marketing, these trails will become the impetus for the development of similar trail connections.

• Where possible, streams that have been piped should be "day-lighted" in order to re-introduce a healthy ecosystem. The City should also make a concerted effort to prevent piping of any existing open streams.

• Acquire land that is regularly subjected to flooding, remove all improvements and restore the flood area to a healthy and functional ecosystem. This means "returning the floodplain to the creek" with the benefit of flood control and recreation access.

Developing creeks and drainage corridors will assist in answering the need for linear parks in the City. This will also provide the opportunity for the development of hike and bike trails, which rated consistently as one of the most important recreational facilities needed in the City. In addition, the protection of creek corridors ensures protection against flood damage. An important consideration is that respondents indicated strong and enthusiastic support for trails as part of capital improvement in the City.

6.12.6 Utility Rights-of-Way

An important characteristic of the City's utility rights-of-way is that they cross various boundaries including roads, creeks and property boundaries. This together with the linear nature of utility rights-of-way for gas, electricity and water, make them ideal as hike and bike trails.

It is significant that the existing utility easements already allow for easy access and connections between a number of schools and parks.

A northern utility easement runs from Midlothian, immediately north of the Midlothian / Waxahachie Municipal Airport, over IH 35 and through Waxahachie along Grove Creek towards the City of Ennis. Another utility easement connects this northern line with the railroad easement on the east side of Waxahachie past two schools and the

The Creek Protection and Conservation Development Map on the next page depicts Ecological Nodes, the 100 year floodplain of major creeks, up to a 500’ Creek Protection Buffer, 1500 feet wide Conservation Development alongside creeks, other Potential Conservation Development and Watershed Lines.
Waxahachie Sports Complex. From the railroad, the same utility easement runs past Turner Middle School and Lee Penn Park, across and partially along the Waxahachie Creek Hike and Bike Trail past the Ellis County Fair Grounds and Rodeo, from where it connects with Dunaway Elementary.

The **Utility Easements and Railroads Map** on Page 6-48a) depicts Utility Easements.

![Utility easement in the area of Mustang Creek.](image1)

![View towards the northeast along a utility easement as seen from the vicinity of the Ellis County Fairgrounds and Rodeo.](image2)
6.12.7 Rail right-of-way

Two characteristics of a rail right-of-way make it ideal as a hike and bike trail: its linear nature and gentle topography change as a function of the railroad.

The Utility Easements and Railroads Map on the next page depicts both Utility and Railroad Easments.

The City of Waxahachie is blessed with a number of railroad sections that run across the entire City from north to south and west to east. The use of the railroad as a freight line and future potential commuter line places limitations on the use of the right-of-way for trails. However, the use of the right-of-way for trails has been negotiated successfully with rail authorities at other places in the State of Texas specifically in and around the City of Dallas.

A compelling view of the railroad bridge across Lake Waxahachie.

The minimum distance allowed between rail track centerline and edge of trail is often set at 25 feet. Should it pose an obstacle in Waxahachie, the City should consider acquiring easements along the rail right-of-way.
The main north-south railroad connects Navarro College, E.B. Wedgeworth Elementary, the campus of Southwestern Assemblies of God, the site of Tyler Refrigeration that may become a future neighborhood park, the City Cemetery, A&F Thompson Neighborhood Park, through Downtown, past the old silos and historic railroad station, past the Ellis County Fairgrounds and Rodeo towards Lions Community Park, from where it connects with Highway 77 along the upper reaches of Lake Waxahachie.

The main northwest to southwest railroad line runs all along the Waxahachie Creek with beautiful and compelling views and vistas.

One section of the railroad that is abandoned runs from Nina Road in the South to Riser Road in downtown. Being abandoned makes it an ideal route for a trail. It also will connect key areas along the way, including the silos gateway at the south end, Lake Waxahachie, Lions Park, Ellis County Fairgrounds and Rodeo, and downtown.

The abandoned railroad offers unique access to and vistas over the upper reaches of Lake Waxahachie.
6.12.8 Conservation Planning and Development

One of the most effective ways to ensure the protection and effective management of open space and creek corridors is through the method of Conservation Planning and Development. It is, in essence, a tool that ensures the preservation of the character of a city by protecting:

- important ecological habitats,
- scenic views, and
- rural landscapes.

Moreover, it enhances the city’s economic sustainability by protecting its unique assets that add value and quality of life to the community.

The concept and value of Conservation Planning and Design as a planning tool are presented in Addendum E: A Case for Conservation Planning and Design.

In addition refer to the maps: View Corridors and Cultural Features on page 6-33 a) and Creek Protection and Conservation Development on page 6-46 a).

“The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity.”

John Crompton, Texas A&M University; 2000

Trees, views to the country side and long vistas all contribute to making this driving experience along Business Road 287 unique and pleasurable.