
City of Willow Park

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

February 2002



CITY OF WILLOW PARK

ORDINANCE NO. 484-02

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK, TEXAS; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALER AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the City of Willow Park, is a municipal corporation duly and legally formed in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the City is a general law municipality with specific powers delegated to it to provide for the health, safety and general welfare of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 213 TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE "*Municipal Comprehensive Plans*" delegates to municipalities the authority to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long range development of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the authority granted to the City of Willow Park, Resolution No. 08-00, approved by vote of City Council, September 19, 2000, designated the Planning and Zoning Commission, in conjunction with citizens and staff, to develop a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the City retained a professional planning consultant to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission in preparation of a new comprehensive plan. The plan was to consist of a coordinated set of recommendations, by subject and geographic area, to guide development and developmental regulations, and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission held at least five public hearings providing an opportunity for members of the public to provide testimony or written evidence; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission did review the Comprehensive Plan as prepared and did, in a report to the City Council, recommend its adoptions; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Willow Park did conduct a public hearing in which it considered the Comprehensive Plan as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission and afforded an opportunity for members of the public to give testimony and present written evidence on the Comprehensive Plan

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK, TEXAS:

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION

The Mayor, or appropriate City Official or Mayor's designee is hereby authorized and directed to implement the applicable provisions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Willow Park, prepared with the assistance of planning consultant Dunkin, Sefko and Associates, Inc., as amended by City Council at a called City Council meeting July 2, 2002, is hereby adopted as the long range planning guide for the City. The Comprehensive Plan, or master plan, for the City of Willow Park, Texas is intended to provide guidance for development in the City of Willow Park and make certain recommendations concerning zoning, land subdivision, thoroughfare adequacy, utility infrastructure and growth management. The comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries; and

SECTION 3. PUBLIC ACCESS

The City Secretary is hereby instructed to maintain a copy of the Comprehensive Plan, as amended, for public use and reference. A map depicting the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and illustrating proposed future land use, shall be displayed in an area accessible to the public in the municipal building and contain a clearly visible statement thereon: "A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SHALL NOT CONSTITUTE ZONING REGULATIONS OR ESTABLISH ZONING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES."

SECTION 4. LIMITATION

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the City Council of the City of Willow Park does not limit the ability of the municipality to prepare other plans, policy or strategies as required or necessary to promote the health, safety and welfare of the public.

SECTION 5. REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES

All Ordinances in conflict herewith be and the same are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict; and any previous comprehensive plan is particularly repealed.

SECTION 6. SEVERANCE

If for any reason any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause, phrase or provision of this Ordinance shall be held invalid, it shall not affect any valid provisions of this or any other Ordinance of the City of Willow Park to which these rules and regulations relate.

SECTION 7. RECITALS

The City Council hereby finds and declares all precatory language herein to be true and correct and approves and adopts the same herein as part of this Resolution.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect from and after its adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 2nd day of July, 2002.

[Signature]

Mayor

ATTEST:

[Signature]

City Secretary/Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

[Signature]

City Attorney

The Willow Park City Council in acting on Ordinance No. 484-02, did on the 2nd day of July 2002 vote as follows:

	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
James H. Poythress, Mayor	_____	_____
Scott Rule, Place 1	<u>X</u> _____	_____
Terry Skaggs, Place 2	<u>X</u> _____	_____
Brad Johnson, Place 3	<u>X</u> _____	_____
Jason Ellerbusch, Place 4	<u>X</u> _____	_____
Hale Alderman, Place 5	<u>X</u> _____	_____



Comprehensive Plan

February 2002

City of Willow Park, Texas

[SEAL]

OFFICIAL PLAN

Mayor, City of Willow Park

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**SECTION 1:
BASELINE ANALYSIS**



SECTION 1: BASELINE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The Baseline Analysis component of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide background (historical) information, a foundation of facts regarding the City of Willow Park, and documentation of the physical and socioeconomic (demographic) characteristics of the community. The information contained within the following report will be used to formulate goals and objectives pertaining to various aspects of the community, and will also prove useful in generating the final recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan for Willow Park.

The identification of major issues within the community began early in the comprehensive planning process, and served as a basis for creating the following components of this analysis:

- Historical Background
- Regional Relationship
- Influence of Regional Factors
- Population Characteristics: City and County
- Physical Factors Influencing Development
- Public Facilities and Services
- Existing Development Regulations
- Existing Land Use

Each section of the following report contains information pertaining to the subject topic in addition to graphic support, as appropriate. The Baseline Analysis provides documentation of basic information about the community, which then forms the foundation of the comprehensive planning process in Willow Park. It presents an overview of the City's history and its physical characteristics, as well as general insight into the community's urban pattern. The primary objective of this report is to document current conditions within Willow Park, and to identify various opportunities and constraints the community must consider in addressing and shaping its future form and character. The secondary objective of the Baseline Analysis is to ensure that the information being used in the planning process accurately portrays the community.

In order to determine where the City is going, it is important to understand where it has been and the factors that will influence it in the future.

HISTORY

In the late 1840s, pioneers began settling what is now Parker County. The Comanche and Kiowa Indian tribes controlled this 903.6 square mile area. Parker County was still very much part of the Texas frontier in 1855, when the county was established the Texas Legislature on December 12. In spite of its creation, Parker County was a harsh place to live and work with Indian raids and attacks a frequent occurrence through the early 1870s.

Willow Park was incorporated in 1963, when 32 voters petitioned its incorporation. However, its history predates its date of incorporation. As a portion of the territory that eventually became Parker County, Willow Park was officially regarded as part of the frontier and not “Proclaimed Free of Indians” by the Texas Governor until 1877.

The community of Willow Park finds its roots in the creation of the Elm Grove Church, which was established by Simeo Wright, Reverend B.A. Kemp, and Reverend J.W. Chalk in May 1854. The Elm Grove Church was later named Willow Springs due to the springs located east of the Willow Springs Cemetery. Eventually, the Willow Springs School was built a couple miles south of the cemetery.

As Parker County was secured from hostile Indian activity, it began to experience a significant period of prosperity that continues today. By the early 1900s, settlers had created a relatively substantial population and agricultural base. In the meantime, the City of Weatherford just to the west had been designated as the County Seat and had evolved as the County’s economic and distribution center. The area to eventually become Willow Park was located ideally to the City of Weatherford and by 1925 it was sparsely populated by farms and ranches.

The advent of the automobile ushered in a period of dramatic change and the concept of community. In the 1950s, U.S. and State thoroughfares were constructed through Willow Park. Highways 80 and 180 were built in addition to a series of farm-to-market roads. The new road systems expanded the area’s regional significance and enhanced the City of Weatherford’s importance as a retail and shipping point for North Texas farmers and ranchers.

Construction of Lake Weatherford began in 1956 and was completed in 1957. It provided a community water source to serve a growing regional residential and industrial population. It also provided a new source of regional recreational

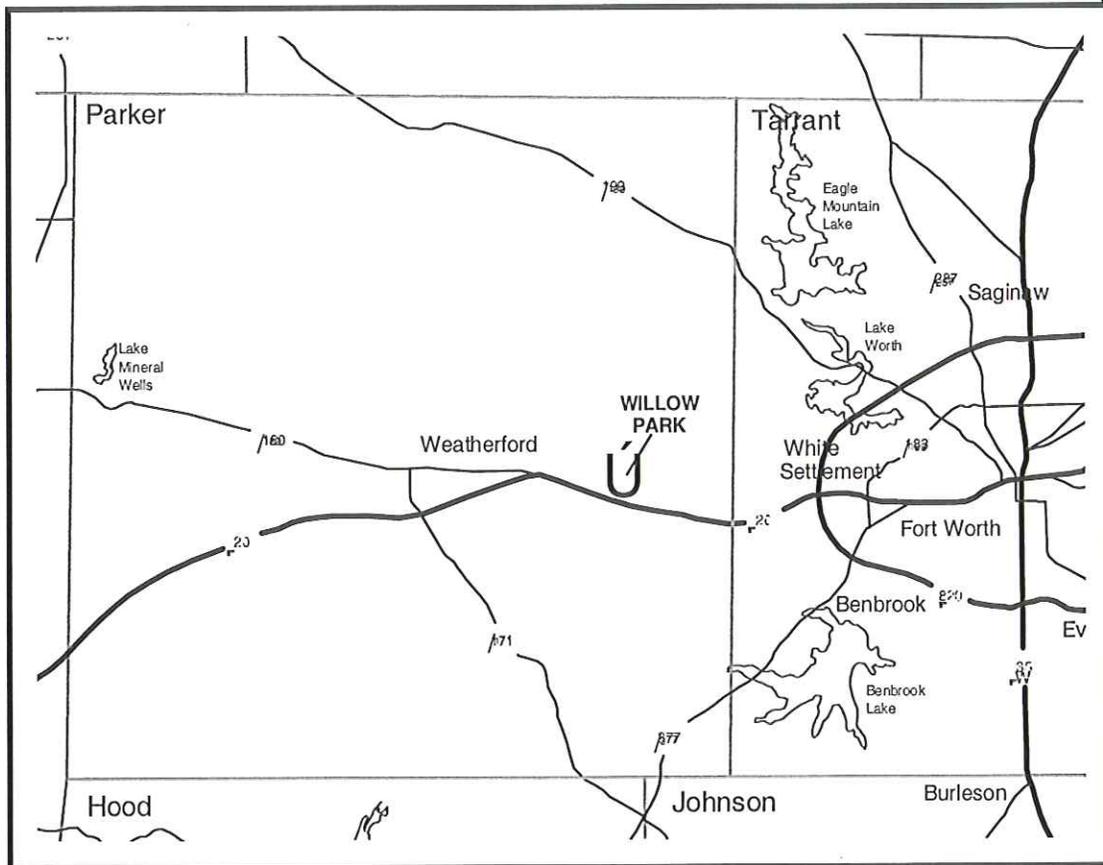
opportunities in addition to attractive residential sites, each of which helped to generate additional economic activity.

The 1970 U.S. Census estimated a total population of 230 for the City of Willow Park. By 2000, the U.S. Census reported that the total population had grown to 2,849. The City represents 3.2 percent of the County's total population of 88,495. As the non-residential base in the region and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex continue to grow, the City of Willow Park is expected to continue to realize substantial increases in residential development as well as the commercial and retail establishments to serve the population's growing demands.

REGIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Willow Park is located at the intersection of Interstate Highway 20 and Ranch House Road, approximately 20 miles west of the City of Fort Worth and approximately 50 miles west of the City of Dallas. Interstate 20 runs along the city's southern boundary and provides for major access to Fort Worth and Dallas.

Illustration 1-1
Regional Map



Willow Park's proximity to this major urban area has had a direct effect. Residents may find themselves able to achieve a rural lifestyle without sacrificing the conveniences of a major metropolitan area with world-class shopping, health care, education, museums, and fine arts a short drive away. Its location also offers residents ready access to one of the globe's most dynamic, high-tech employment centers. In fact, data indicate that many of Willow Park's residents commute into the Metroplex to work.

Much of the city's commercial and retail growth has evolved primarily to serve its residential population. Willow Park is located centrally to Parker County's most active residential development area and, due to its location off of I.H. 20, may ultimately house some of the region's nonresidential development. The City of Weatherford, approximately 5 miles to the west, has the potential to evolve as a major commercial and industrial center. The growth of the commercial and industrial sectors in Weatherford will potentially have a substantial impact on the City of Willow Park. Willow Park will provide an attractive area for future

residential development to serve the housing needs generated by the job growth in Weatherford.

INFLUENCE OF REGIONAL FACTORS

Historical unemployment rates and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex growth pattern are two regional factors that are likely to have a substantial impact on the City of Willow Park. The area's low unemployment rates mean that more people must move into the area while the "donut-hole" pattern of growth means that the Metroplex is continually expanding outward.

Historically, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex has enjoyed an extremely low unemployment rate. It has also enjoyed the growth of a diverse economic base, especially in the area of industrial technology. As the high-tech industry expands into the greater Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, of which Willow Park is a part, it will be required to import and expand the local work force. This type of growth will necessitate additional housing opportunities. It will also generate growth of the retail and service sectors, since this in-migration will elevate the demand for goods and services.

The Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex has typically grown outward in a ring radiating from the central cities of Fort Worth and Dallas. Growth has moved into those areas where vacant land has been plentiful and relatively inexpensive. Generally, this growth has moved in a northerly direction. This ring of growth has now extended itself as far as 40 miles north of Fort Worth and Dallas. Central cities such as Coppell and Flower Mound are now relatively built-out and this growth has crept northward to McKinney, Denton, and Sanger. As the northward region has built-out, this growth pattern has gained momentum to the south. Cities along the U.S. Highway 287 and Interstate 20 corridors are now starting to see substantial residential development. Convenient access to Fort Worth and Dallas is an extremely important element influencing the residential growth pattern throughout the Metroplex. As vacant land to the north and south is used up, the growth will pick up momentum to the west. Interstate 20 provides ready access to the west and vast amounts of vacant land with gentle terrain may prove to be enticing for substantial amounts of residential development in the near future.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS: CITY AND COUNTY

Citizens are the single most important resource for any community. Collectively, the population determines the character and texture of a city. The primary characteristics of the citizenry also determine the necessary services that should be provided by the city and an analysis of the existing population is critical in order to prepare a comprehensive plan that truly meets the needs of its populace.

Population Growth

Over the last 30 years, the City of Willow Park has experienced a rate of growth more than double that experienced throughout Parker County. Willow Park's share of the county population has grown from 0.7 percent in 1970 to 3.2 percent in 2000. Hudson Oaks, immediately adjacent to the City's western boundary, has grown at a comparable rate of growth over the same time period. The central portion of Willow Park is developed and the City's ability to maintain current levels of residential development will be its ability to accommodate growth to the northeast and south. It is anticipated that the I.H. 20 corridor east of Weatherford will continue the recent development trend as residential growth radiates westward from Fort Worth toward Willow Park. **Table 1-1** shows population growth for Willow Park, Parker County, and selected cities in Parker County from 1970 to 2000.

Table 1-1
Population Growth: 1970 to 2000

Place	Population Estimate				Growth 1990-2000		Compound Annual Growth Rate	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	Change	% Change	1970-2000	1990-2000
<i>Willow Park</i>	230	1,113	2,328	2,849	521	22%	8.8%	2.0%
Parker County	33,888	44,609	64,785	88,495	23,710	37%	3.3%	3.2%
Aledo	620	1,027	1,169	1,726	557	48%	3.5%	4.0%
Hudson Oaks*	--	309	711	1,637	926	130%	8.7%	8.7%
Springtown	1,194	1,658	1,740	2,062	322	19%	1.8%	1.7%
Reno	688	1,174	2,322	2,767	445	19%	4.7%	1.8%
Weatherford	11,750	12,049	14,804	19,000	4,196	28%	1.6%	2.5%

* Compound annual growth rate calculated from 1980 to 2000.

SOURCE: 1970 U.S. Census, 1980 U.S. Census, 1990 U.S. Census, 2000 U.S. Census.

Parker County grew at a rate less than half of that for the City of Willow Park over the 30-year period of 1970 to 2000. According to these U.S. Census figures,

Willow Park's rate of residential growth has dropped substantially over the last 10 years. Overall the four fastest growing cities for this same 10-year period, Hudson Oaks (8.7%), Aledo (4.0%), Weatherford (2.7%), and Willow Park (2.0%), are all located south and west of Willow Park along I.H. 20.

From 1990 to 2000, population for the City of Willow Park grew by 521 people and accounted for 2.2 percent of the county's total growth. With a combined growth in population of 6,200, the top four cities (Willow Park, Aledo, Hudson Oaks, Weatherford) accounted for 26 percent of the county's overall growth. It is evident that a large portion of growth within the county is occurring in unincorporated areas.

It is anticipated that the county population will continue to grow and that the City of Willow Park will capture an increasing share of this growth. Willow Park is located ideally within a regional context and is able to offer a high quality-of-life to its residents.

Age, Ethnicity, Gender, and Educational Attainment

The societal makeup of a community can provide some insight into the types of facilities and services that may be needed in the future. An analysis of age composition as well as other population characteristics can ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is tailored to meet Willow Park's evolving needs. The age composition for the City of Willow Park in 1990 is documented in **Table 1-2**.

**Table 1-2
 Age Composition: 1990**

Age Group	Population	Distribution
Young (0-11 years)	404	17.4%
Middle School, High School (12 to 17 years)	248	10.7%
College, New Families (18 to 24 years)	145	6.2%
Younger Labor Force (25 to 44 years)	793	34.1%
Older Labor Force (45 to 64 years)	586	25.2%
Elderly (65 years and older)	152	6.5%
TOTAL	2,328	100.0%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

The largest group comprising Willow Park’s citizenry is the younger labor force, individuals between the ages of 25 to 44, representing 34.1 percent of the population. Willow Park also has a large proportionate share of young and school-aged population, 28.1 percent. This orientation toward younger families with children directly influences the types of services and facilities expected of the City. For example, a younger population tends to desire a greater amount of active recreational facilities such as ball fields and playgrounds while more mature populations desire more passive facilities.

Table 1-3 compares the City’s ethnic composition for 1990 and 2000:

**Table 1-3
 Ethnic Composition: 1990**

Race	1990		2000	
	Population	%	Population	%
White	2,264	97.3%	2,744	97.2%
Black	14	0.6%	9	0.3%
American Indian	5	0.2%	21	0.7%
Asian	19	0.8%	13	0.5%
Other	26	1.1%	36	1.3%
TOTAL	2,328	100.0%	2,823	100.0%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census, 2000 U.S. Census.

These estimates indicate that the ethnicity of Willow Park’s total population is relatively homogenous, with Whites comprising the bulk of the city’s total population. Statewide forecasts project that the distribution of the Hispanic population will increase substantially over the next 30 to 50 years. It is anticipated that Whites will remain the largest ethnic group in Willow Park for some time but its proportionate share will decrease as the minority populations, primarily Hispanic, will significantly increase.

Educational attainment is an important descriptor of a given population. The educational background provides an indication of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the general population and is a major determinant of the types of industry and economic development that may be appropriate for a given community. **Table 1-4** shows educational attainment for the City of Willow Park for the 1990 workforce aged 25 and older and how the workforce compares to that of Parker County.

Table 1-4
Educational Attainment Willow Park and Parker County
Workforce 25 Years of Age and Older: 1990

Educational Attainment	Willow Park		Parker County	
	Count	%	Count	%
No High School Diploma	110	7.2%	10,489	25.5%
High School Graduate	345	22.5%	12,920	31.4%
Some College, No Degree	401	26.2%	9,555	23.2%
Associate's Degree	151	9.9%	2,455	6.0%
Bachelor's Degree	372	24.3%	4,047	9.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	152	9.9%	1,678	4.1%
TOTAL	1,531	100.0%	41,144	100.0%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

Overall, the City of Willow Park has a workforce with a level of educational attainment higher than that for Parker County. The relative distribution of those having earned a degree is more than twice that of the County, 34.2 percent compared to 13.9 percent. This educational trend is expected to continue and is indicative of the relocation to Willow Park of individuals who commute into the Metroplex to work in addition to the growth of the regional commercial and industrial base.

Economic/Work Force Characteristics

Willow Park's economy is greatly influenced by several historical, political, and geographic factors. Its history as a part of Parker County in addition to its relationship to the region establishes a core economy that has continued to thrive. Meanwhile, the City's relative location to the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex places it conveniently to one of the world's largest economic engines where it now holds a specific niche.

Agriculture remains Parker County's primary industry. It is well known for its produce, namely peaches and watermelons. Farming has continued to grow through recent years. **Table 1-5** compares the county's agricultural performance to that for the State of Texas from 1987 to 1997.

**Table 1-5
State of Texas vs. Parker County
Census of Agriculture: 1987 to 1997**

Item	State of Texas			Parker County		
	Year		Percent Change 87-97	Year		Percent Change 87-97
	1987	1997		1987	1997	
Farms (#)	188,788	194,301	2.9%	1,943	2,301	18.4%
Land in Farms (Acres)	130,502,792	131,308,286	0.6%	403,385	479,807	18.9%
Land in Farms - Average Size of Farms (Acres)	691	676	-2.2%	208	209	0.5%
Total Cropland (Farms)	147,174	149,104	1.3%	1,536	1,884	22.7%
Total Cropland (Acres)	35,610,951	37,662,040	5.8%	121,320	169,855	40.0%
Irrigated Land (Farms)	19,806	18,756	-5.3%	86	101	17.4%
Irrigated Land (Acres)	4,271,043	5,484,663	28.4%	892	1,200	34.5%
Total Cropland Harvested (Farms)	110,358	108,169	-2.0%	1,048	1,315	25.5%
Total Cropland Harvested (Acres)	16,521,315	19,607,847	18.7%	121,320	169,855	40.0%
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold (\$1,000)	\$10,548,907	\$13,766,527	30.5%	\$31,585	\$43,837	38.8%

The agricultural industry for Parker County outperformed that for the entire State of Texas from 1987 to 1997. The data contained in **Table 1-5** indicate that Parker County significantly outpaced the State of Texas in terms of the increase in both the land used for agricultural purposes and the market value of agricultural products sold.

As mentioned, Willow Park's proximity to the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex has created a dichotomy in terms of the people who reside there. Its convenient access to Fort Worth and Dallas has also made it a desirable home to many who commute into the Metroplex to work. **Table 1-6** contains the travel to work characteristics for the workforce aged 25 and older.

Table 1-6
City of Willow Park
Travel Time to Work: 1990

Time	Count	%
Less Than 20 Minutes	272	22.7%
20 to 29 Minutes	425	35.5%
30 to 39 Minutes	319	26.6%
40 to 59 Minutes	116	9.7%
60 Minutes or More	66	5.5%
TOTAL	1,198	100.0%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

The majority of the workforce, aged 25 and older, travel between 20 to 39 minutes to work each way. It may be inferred from this data that many of these commuters are traveling into the Fort Worth area to work. As regional commercial and industrial development occurs, it is expected that this particular workforce characteristic will continue.

An analysis of occupational characteristics for the workforce aged 16 and older also underscores the dual nature of Willow Park's residents. **Table 1-7** compares Willow Park's 1990 occupational characteristics to those of Parker County.

Table 1-7
City of Willow Park and Parker County
Occupational Characteristics: 1990

Occupation	Willow Park		Parker County	
	Count	%	Count	%
Executive/Administrative/Managerial	232	19.0%	3,427	11.6%
Professional Specialty	260	21.3%	3,442	11.6%
Technicians	72	5.9%	1,101	3.7%
Sales	182	14.9%	3,503	11.8%
Administrative Support	185	15.1%	4,733	16.0%
Private Household	-	0.0%	620	2.1%
Service	80	6.5%	2,551	8.6%
Farming/Forestry/Fishing	7	0.6%	918	3.1%
Precision Production/Craft/Repair	114	9.3%	4,891	16.5%
Machine Operators/Assemblers/Inspectors	31	2.5%	1,962	6.6%
Transportation and Material Moving	32	2.6%	1,417	4.8%
Handlers/Equipment Cleaners/Helpers/Laborers	28	2.3%	1,082	3.6%
TOTAL	1,223	100.0%	29,647	100.0%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census.

A much higher proportion of Willow Park's workforce is employed in the management and professional fields as compared to Parker County, 40.3 percent to 23.2 percent respectively. Willow Park may be generally characterized as a white collar community while the greater County population may be characterized as blue collar, primarily farming and agricultural.

PHYSICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DEVELOPMENT

The shape and form of a city is directly relational to the various natural and man-made features of the surrounding region. These physical characteristics will often influence the potential and pattern of urban expansion. It is important to understand the relationships between man and the environment, the results of this interaction, and the influences of this interaction upon the community and its residents. An understanding of these relationships will help the residents of a community to identify positive and negative aspects of the area, and to possibly minimize any negative influences or accentuate the positive aspects of community character. It is also important to document these existing features, as they will likely have a significant effect upon the types of land uses that can be planned within various portions of the City.

NATURAL FEATURES

Flood Prone Areas Including Rivers, Creeks, and Sloughs

Willow Park's primary drainage features are Squaw Creek and Reservoir Number 23. These two major water features bisect the City's center on a north/south axis. The Clear Fork of the Trinity River, which runs just south of the City limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction, also impacts the planning area. Squaw Creek and Reservoir Number 23 serve to separate the community and provide challenges to the east/west flow of traffic. The City's existing transportation network and land use pattern runs parallel to these major drainage features.

Generally, each of the waterways may be characterized as densely vegetated areas that provide natural habitats for birds and other wildlife. The various creeks and tributaries may offer opportunities for the development of linear park systems and other passive recreational opportunities that will allow the community to take advantage of these valuable assets.

Vegetation and Soil Assessment

Willow Park is located at the heart of the Cross Timbers and Prairies vegetational area. This area may generally be characterized by sharp contrasts in vegetational cover where patches of oak woodland are interspersed with grassland. Variations in the vegetative cover are directly attributable to differing soils and topography. Upland soils are typically light colored, acidic sandy loam or sands while bottomland soils range from light brown to dark gray acidic sandy loams and clays.

The Cross Timbers area was named by early settlers for the belts of woodland crossing the prairie grasslands. Native grasses within the Cross Timbers soils consist of big bluestem, little bluestem, hooded windmillgrass, sand lovegrass, indiangrass, switchgrass, and many species of legumes. The Cross Timbers areas contain a cumulative area of approximately 15 million acres of tree stands consisting primarily of shinnery, blackjack, post, and live oaks.

The prairie areas have been named the Blackland Prairies for the deep, fertile black soils that are predominant in the area. "Black gumbo," as the soil is commonly known, supports the following indigenous tall grasses: bluestem, little bluestem, indiangrass, switchgrass, Canada wildrye, sideoats grama, hairy grama, tall grama, tall dropseed, Texas whitegrass, blue grama, and buffalo grass. These fertile soils make the plains attractive for agricultural uses and, as a result, much of the original prairie has been cultivated for food and forage crops. Black gumbo has a substantial shrink-swell characteristic that could result in severe foundation problems without appropriate engineering and design considerations.

TOPOGRAPHY

An important factor to consider when making development decisions is the degree of variance in the topography of the land. Topography throughout the planning area varies from gently rolling hills to relatively steep grades. The gentlest terrain is located in the southern portions of the planning area. Terrain in the northern sections of the planning area contains the greatest variations and steepest slopes. Elevations throughout the planning area vary from an elevation of approximately 700 to 1,275 feet above sea level.

THOROUGHFARES

Thoroughfare Routing Study/Existing Street System

The thoroughfare system is the means by which people, goods, and services are transported throughout the community and is the city's lifeline to the region beyond its boundaries. An effective thoroughfare system coordinates the street grid system with the specific needs of each area served. It also ensures the efficient and orderly flow of traffic through the community to lessen congestion, minimize negative environmental impacts, and improve public safety.

Regional access is provided to Willow Park primarily via Interstate Highway 20 (I.H. 20). To a lesser extent, F.M. 5 and Ranch House also provide regional access.

The following is a list of major traffic generators in the city:

- City Hall
- Lockheed Squaw Creek Golf Course
- Lake Weatherford

Problems and Deficiencies

A thoroughfare system that is able to accommodate the expanding volume of vehicular traffic is essential. The system must continue to provide convenient and efficient access to the existing major traffic generators while also expanding to meet growing local and regional needs.

I.H. 20 provides major regional access to the south of the city. It provides a convenient thoroughfare for major east/west traffic. Willow Park's existing circulation system provides limited north/south and east/west through access. All local industrial, commercial, and residential traffic is funneled onto Interstate Highway 20, which must compete with the local traffic and regional traffic generated along this, the city's major retail and commercial corridor. Funneling all this competing traffic along this limited corridor creates a host of compatibility issues that decrease the entire system's capacity and efficiency. Any anticipated residential growth must be accommodated through both the appropriate expansion of the existing street grid and the construction of new thoroughfares designed to meet the needs created by the new development. Through access for north/south traffic is limited to the following two streets:

- Ranch House Road and
- Crown Road

The location and configuration of the exit ramps for both Ranch House Road and Mikus Road may prove inadequate to meet the traffic circulation needs for non-residential development along the I.H. 20 corridor. Currently, these exit ramps do not provide the appropriate amount of vehicle stacking space nor enough accessible direct frontage required for office, retail, and commercial uses. Each ramp should be relocated further east to provide additional vehicle stacking and to increase accessibility.

Through access for east/west traffic is limited to White Settlement Road.

Improvements to Willow Park's street grid should consider a series of appropriately spaced, continuous minor arterials throughout the planning area. It

is anticipated that congestion along the existing major thoroughfares and local streets will increase as the residential and business communities continue to grow.

MAN-MADE FEATURES/CONSTRAINTS

Man-made features and constraints, such as outlying development, extraterritorial jurisdiction and major transportation routes are factors that exert both a positive and a negative influence on urban development patterns within a city or a region.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) may be defined as the land area that an incorporated city may legally annex for the purpose of future growth and development. The Texas State Legislature established the amount of land area that a municipality may annex based upon the amount of its population. The City of Willow Park has an ETJ area that generally extends one-half mile outward from its corporate limits. ETJs may not overlap and cities are unable to encroach into those of other municipalities.

The Cities of Weatherford and Hudson Oaks border Willow Park on the west. The Cities of Annetta North and Aledo are located within one to one and one-half miles to the south. Ultimately, Willow Park may not annex beyond its southern ETJ it would otherwise encroach into the ETJs and/or corporate limits of its neighboring cities. Generally speaking, Willow Park's corporate limits to the west are fixed with the exception of the residential area bounded on the north by White Settlement Road and on the west by Valley Road. Willow Park's corporate limits abut either the limits or the ETJ of the adjacent communities. Likewise, the ETJ to the east is fixed due to the City of Fort Worth's existing ETJ. Willow Park may not annex further than ½ mile from its current eastern limits.

Willow Park's greatest growth potential lies to the due north. This is an area of unincorporated Parker County that does not currently lie within the ETJ or limits of any other municipality. Furthermore, the City of Fort Worth is the only other municipality that is likely to encroach into this area over the next several years. It is recommended that apportionment agreements be reached with surrounding cities in order to establish Willow Park's ultimate boundaries within this area.

Outlying Development within the County

Existing development within the ETJ may be generally characterized as rural, large-lot single family residential. Much of the land within this area is still largely vacant and agricultural.

Vast amounts of vacant land immediately surrounding the City offer the potential for substantial positive and negative impacts. Development evolving according to a well-defined and efficient pattern of growth guided by sound policy will contribute to the City's and the region's overall economy and quality of life.

Conversely, haphazard growth has the potential to create substantial negative impacts that become costly to correct after the fact.

Major Transportation Routes

Willow Park is located conveniently to the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and is beginning to feel the effects of the sustained growth of one of the State's most active economic engines. It is located close to the Parker County Seat and within the most populous area of the County. Because of its ready access to the Dallas/Fort Worth and the region's expanding employment base, Willow Park is primed for a period of sustained growth.

Interstate Highway 20 (I.H. 20) serves as a significant travel corridor for regional traffic through the southern portion of the City. Convenient access to I.H. 20 will serve as a major impetus for residential and commercial growth to the south of the planning area. As vacant land to the south builds-out and property values rise, substantial development is expected to move into the northern portion of the planning area that has ready access to I.H. 20. Secondary east-west access through Willow Park occurs along White Settlement Road, which extends through the northern portion of the planning area.

Primary north-south access through the planning area is limited to Ranch House Road. An active retail and commercial node is evolving along each side of I.H. 20 and is centered at the Ranch House Road/I.H. 20 intersection. Alternative north-south thoroughfares will be necessary to meet increasing demand.

EXISTING LAND USE

Many different factors influence the way a city grows and develops over time. The existing land use pattern is a reflection of the effect these factors have on the community. When combined with ever-changing market demands, the land use pattern continually evolves and changes to satisfy the requirements of a growing community. The diverse activities of a community's residents create a need for residential, office, retail, commercial and industrial areas. The development of these areas in turn generates the need for efficient thoroughfare and utility systems. Growth and development occurring within Willow Park in the future will require the conversion of vacant and agricultural land to more intensified urban uses. The conversion process and how it occurs will be very important to the City in that it is one of the primary factors that will determine the community's urban form. It will not only have an impact upon how Willow Park develops economically, but the relationships of existing and future land uses will shape the character, attractiveness and livability of the community for many years to come. Likewise, these relationships will be reflected in the provision of services and facilities throughout the community. An orderly and compact land use arrangement can be served more easily and efficiently than a random and scattered association of unrelated uses. Providing for the orderly and efficient use of land should be a major planning consideration for Willow Park.

A better understanding of the use of land in the City and the influence land use has on the City's physical environment is gained through an evaluation and analysis of the present types of land use, the land use pattern, and other characteristics found in the urban areas resulting from the use of land. Using this data as a basis for formulating land use decisions and projections results in a sound and meaningful plan for the future.

Existing Land Use Survey

A land use survey was conducted to provide a basis for evaluating present land use and to develop the data necessary for the formulation of a Future Land Use Plan. The nature of the survey was a parcel-by-parcel inventory to establish current land uses throughout the City and its extra-territorial jurisdiction. Uses were placed into one of several categories. A land use category is defined as a group of similar uses. This similarity refers to their nature and compatibility. Existing land uses are shown on **Plate 1.1**. The following categories are those used in the survey for classifying use of land:

Residential Uses

- Single-Family – one family, detached dwellings and related accessory buildings

The existing land use pattern will influence the manner in which the City will grow.

- Townhome – one family, attached dwellings and related accessory buildings
- Two-Family – duplex dwellings and related accessory buildings
- Group Home – institutional facilities (i.e. retirement centers, orphanages)
- Multi-Family – apartments, rooming houses and related accessory buildings
- Manufactured Home Park – single tract containing two or more manufactured homes or other non-site, built structure used as a residence

Office/Retail Uses

- Professional/administrative offices, doctors, dentists, real estate, architects, accountants, secretarial services, etc.
- Retail stores, shops and personal service establishments, shopping centers, service stations, banks and any associated off-street parking facilities

Commercial Uses

- Commercial amusements, building materials yards, automobile garages and sales lots, automobile body repair, warehouses, telecommunications/broadcasting towers and facilities, wholesale establishments, sale of used merchandise, welding shops, and cabinet shops

Parks and Open Spaces

- Parks and associated facilities, playgrounds and public or private open spaces

Public/Semi-Public Uses

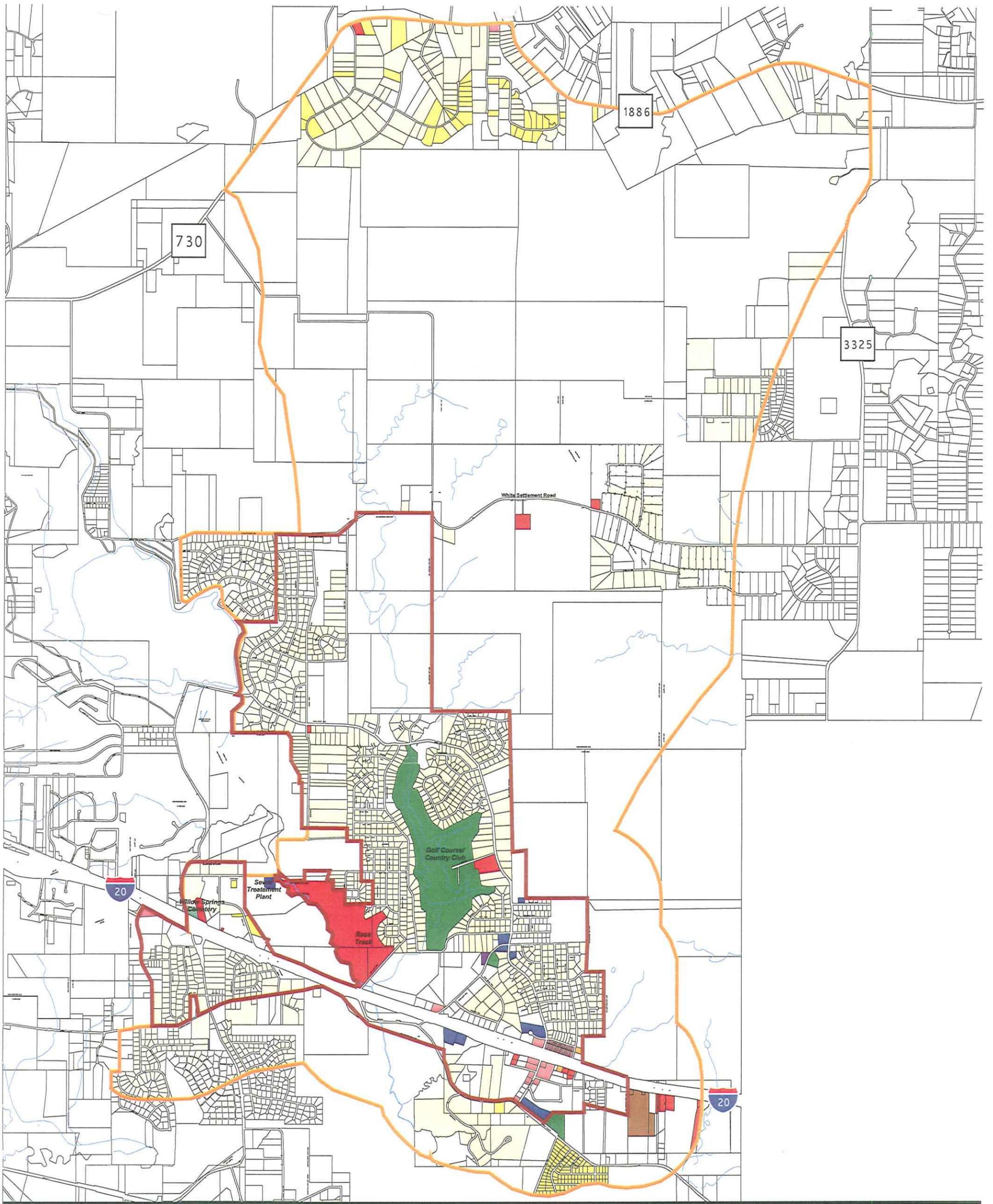
- Schools, churches, cemeteries, public utility structures and public buildings

Right-of-Way

- Land dedicated to public use for street, alley and railroad, whether open or closed to use

Vacant and Agricultural Uses

- Vacant land having no apparent use (including small bodies of water), or land used for agricultural purposes (ranching/farming)



Existing Land Uses

- Vacant/Agricultural
- Single Family Detached
- Manufactured Home
- Office/Retail
- Commercial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Park/Open Space
- Cemetery

- Creeks
- City Limits
- Planning Area Boundary
- Parcel Line

City of Willow Park

Existing Land Uses

September 2001



Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.
Urban Planning Consultants



Existing Land Use Analysis

Generally, Willow Park and its extra-territorial jurisdiction may be considered a low-density, rural area whose development consists primarily of large-lot single-family development. The city's incorporated area and extraterritorial jurisdiction contains approximately 8,002.1 acres. Approximately two-thirds of the entire planning area has been classified as *Agricultural and Vacant*. The remaining one-third of the planning area is primarily residential with approximately 1,969.1 acres or 78.2 percent of the developed land comprised of *Residential Uses*. **Table 1-8** below shows the distribution of land uses throughout the city limits and E.T.J.

Table 1-8
Existing Land Uses – 2001
Willow Park and E.T.J.

Land Use Category	Acreage	% Developed
Residential	1,969.1	78.1%
Single Family	1,964.7	99.8%
Townhome	-	0.0%
Duplex	-	0.0%
Group Home	-	0.0%
Multi-Family	-	0.0%
Manufactured Home	5.1	0.3%
Manufactured Home Park	-	0.0%
Office/Retail	41.2	0.2%
Commercial	229.1	1.1%
Industrial	-	0.0%
Parks and Open Spaces	248.3	4.0%
Public/Semi-Public	34.0	2.0%
TOTAL DEVELOPED LAND	2,521.7	26.6%
Right-of-Way	573.3	8.0%
Agricultural and Vacant	4,907.1	65.5%
TOTAL LAND AREA	8,002.1	100.0%

SOURCE: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc., May 2001.

Parks and Open Spaces occupy approximately 4 percent of the existing developed acreage. It should be noted that this figure includes the Country Club and Golf Course. Actual public open spaces consist of two community parks consisting of approximately 13.5 acres, or 0.5 percent of the total developed acreage. Lake Weatherford is located within one mile of Willow Park's northwestern boundary. The lake provides a major regional recreational facility

that has a direct impact on Willow Park's land use pattern, quality of life, and economic environment.

The land use survey revealed that Willow Park does not contain any industrial or manufacturing uses. Non-residential uses are comprised entirely of *Retail/Office* and *Commercial* uses. Typically, Texas cities with healthy or diverse economies include a land use mix with approximately 3 percent of the total developed land being occupied or preserved for industrial uses. Willow Park is somewhat unique in that the opportunity for industrial development has been limited due to its regional relationship, topographical characteristics, existing infrastructure, and existing land use pattern. Weatherford has an evolving industrial base and water/wastewater distribution system that should serve the area's industrial needs over the next several years. However, it is appropriate that the City of Willow Park explore the opportunities for potential industrial and heavy commercial development in order to maximize the local economic base and ensure its long-term fiscal viability.

The majority of the acreage attributed to commercial uses is occupied by the horse track just north of I.H. 20. The City's remaining commercial operations may be characterized as locally owned and operated concerns that are typically well established and offer steady employment and economic diversity to the community. Land use policies should take these operations into consideration and, where appropriate, encourage them as important and integral members of the community. As with industrial uses, commercial developments offer sustainability and the opportunities for the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life currently enjoyed by everyone in the City of Willow Park.

An analysis of the per capita distribution of land uses provides some insight into future land use demand. Assumptions can be made regarding the future consumption of land based upon these relationships, balanced with the community's own desired goals and objectives. **Table 1-9** shows the land uses related to population by acres per 100 persons for the City of Willow Park. These calculations are based on the North Central Texas Council of Governments' 2000 population estimate of 3,600 for the City of Willow Park.

**Table 1-9
Per Capita Land Use
City of Willow Park – 2001**

Land Use Category	Acreage	% Total Land Use	Acres per 100 Persons
Residential	1,493.5	38%	41.5
Office/Retail	31.3	1%	0.9
Commercial	225.9	6%	6.3
Industrial	-	0%	-
Private Park/Open Space	227.3	6%	6.3
Public Park/Open Space	13.4	0%	0.4
Publi/Semi-Public	34.0	1%	0.9
TOTAL DEVELOPED LAND	2,025.4	51%	56.3
Right-of-Way	427.9	11%	11.9
Agricultural and Vacant	1,479.6	38%	41.1
TOTAL LAND AREA	3,932.9	100%	109.2

SOURCE: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc., May 2001.

Based on its current population, the City of Willow Park enjoys a healthy share of office/retail land uses. The relationship of retail and commercial uses to the total population is on-target with these generally accepted ratios. The ideal office/retail mix is usually targeted for 1.0 acre per 100 persons with retail uses averaging from 0.5 to 0.6 acres per 100 persons on the low end to 0.8 to 0.9 persons on the high end. At 0.9 acres per 100 persons, Willow Park is considered average. At 6.3 acres per 100 persons, the commercial/population ratio is very healthy. Higher retail and commercial ratios generally represent either a strong market with a large population with disposable income (high-income families) or they imply that retail and commercial sales are being captured or imported from other areas. The latter assumption is the most likely scenario for Willow Park, considering the racetrack is factored into the commercial land use calculation. Removing the track from the calculation drops the commercial acreage to approximately 20.2 acres with a ratio of 0.6 acres per 100 population. This ratio is considered somewhat low and, considering long-term issues pertaining to the racetrack, should be addressed by the future land use policies.

Also noteworthy is the large ratio of acreage to population. This is a factor of larger lots and ample open spaces. As residential development occurs, this ratio is expected to drop. Future housing policies will determine the ultimate planned population density throughout the planning area.

The following statements summarize the major features of the existing land use pattern for the Willow Park planning area:

1. The predominant land use is single-family residential.
2. The greatest concentration of single-family residential land uses is located at the Willow Park City center.
3. Future development will be directly limited by the availability and capacity of the water and wastewater systems.
4. The majority of new single-family residential growth is occurring in the central and southern portions of the planning area.
5. An active office/retail center has evolved in strips along the north and south sides of I.H. 20 and the east and west sides of Ranch Road, south of I.H. 20.
6. The City of Willow Park enjoys a healthy office/retail base that meets that of other Texas communities.
7. Overall, the City enjoys an extremely healthy mixture of commercial uses. However, the City's commercial base includes approximately 205 acres occupied by the racetrack. The long-term plans for the track will have a substantial impact on the City's land use pattern and economy, especially as the remaining commercial base is somewhat lower than that of other Texas communities.
8. Squaw Creek and the reservoir bisect the planning area. These are major geographic barriers that physically bisect Willow Park from north to south.
9. The thoroughfare system funnels all local and regional traffic through downtown Willow Park along Ranch House Road.
10. The thoroughfare system provides limited alternative access to I.H. 20.
11. Willow Park is currently served by water and wastewater distribution and treatment systems designed and built primarily to serve a rural community. Future residential and non-residential development will be somewhat limited by the capacities of these systems.
12. The City of Weatherford is developing an industrial base that will cause direct residential and commercial traffic impacts on the City of Willow Park.
13. Willow Park is a rural area with large tracts of vacant land that offer many opportunities for a variety of residential and non-residential development.



**SECTION 2:
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**



SECTION 2: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

The Goals and Objectives section of the Plan reflects the ideology and values of the community. Goals are philosophical in nature and are a guide to the community's shared vision of what Willow Park should and will become. The objectives discussed in this section are similar to implementation-oriented policies, which help to shape and direct growth and development of the City for the next ten years and beyond. The "Goals & Objectives" section of this Comprehensive Plan articulates the community's aspirations for the future through broadly termed goals and provides specific objectives that will enable the City to lead toward the citizens' desired vision for their community.

The following goals and objectives have been developed to guide the community's vision of itself as it grows, matures and ultimately attains its anticipated build-out configuration. They establish a framework for specific actions (i.e., policies), to be conceived during later phases of the comprehensive planning process, that will help the citizens and stakeholders of Willow Park achieve their ultimate vision of the City's future.

General ideas of citizen's views regarding the City of Willow Park were derived from the workshops held through June 2001 in addition to a citizen survey conducted by the City of Willow Park. This input, as well as dialogues with the City Staff, assisted in formulating these goals and objectives for the City's Comprehensive Plan. These discussions clearly indicated those views expressed concerning the quality of life in Willow Park, as well as Willow Park' strengths and weaknesses. The discussion investigated the following areas of interest:

- ◆ Elements about the City that are liked or considered positive by the residents;
- ◆ Elements about the City that are disliked or considered to need improvement;
- ◆ Elements or aspects of the City that require change;
- ◆ Top issues facing Willow Park that will affect the City most in the future.

Goals and Objectives establish the guiding principles used to create the long-range vision for the Community.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives were formulated using input received in the community workshops in addition to input received from the community survey, City staff, elected and appointed officials, and other interested individuals. In general, goals, objectives and policies can be distinguished by their following definitions:

Goals are general statements concerning an aspect of the City's desired ultimate physical, social and/or economic environment. Goals set the tone for development decisions in terms of the citizens' desired quality of life.

Objectives express the kinds of action that are necessary to achieve the stated goals without assigning responsibility to any specific action.

Policies will clarify the specific position of the City regarding a specific objective, and will encourage specific courses of action for the community to undertake to achieve the applicable stated objective. Policies are often associated with Plan recommendations, and they will be developed during that phase of the comprehensive planning process.

The goals and objectives formulated during the comprehensive planning process pertain to the following areas:

- ◆ Transportation and the Thoroughfare network
- ◆ Land Use
- ◆ Parks and Open Space
- ◆ Public Services and Facilities
- ◆ Infrastructure and Utility Systems

TRANSPORTATION AND THE THOROUGHFARE NETWORK

Safe and Efficient Travel

GOAL 1: To provide a transportation system that will effectively and economically serve the existing and projected travel needs of the community in a safe and efficient manner.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Maintain a continuous, coordinated transportation planning process that addresses long-term needs while emphasizing short-term problem solving.
- 1.2 Define "adequacy" standards for the transportation system.
- 1.3 Plan roadways that are adequate to carry traffic that will be generated by anticipated future development and density levels (e.g., traffic impact analysis for larger projects, etc.).
- 1.4 Identify and plan for various roadway types based upon how they are expected to function and upon expected traffic volumes.
- 1.5 Promote compatibility between roadway alignments/improvements and land use patterns, community character, and the environment.
- 1.6 Promote transportation efficiency in new development proposals.
- 1.7 Minimize disruption of residential areas by minimizing traffic volumes and by planning for the efficient dispersion of traffic from neighborhoods.
- 1.8 Include transportation system considerations in the development review process for the planning and alignment of future roadways, and to promote safe, efficient on- and off-site access and vehicular circulation.
- 1.9 Develop a unifying "theme" or other visual concept for the consistent streetscape treatment of I.H. 20 and other appropriate thoroughfare rights-of-way and/or medians and intersection corner areas.

LAND USE

Physical Form of the City

GOAL 2: To provide opportunities for coordinated, well-planned growth and development, while retaining the natural setting and “small-town” character of the City.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Maintain a continuous and coordinated planning process that involves citizens, stakeholders, City Council, City boards/commissions, City departments, and other public and private entities in policy development and decision-making.
- 2.2 Provide for the efficient use of land, coordinated with the provision of essential public infrastructure and facilities.
- 2.3 Promote the future development of a variety of land uses.
- 2.4 Utilize the Future Land Use Plan in daily decision-making regarding land use and development proposals.
- 2.5 Develop companion policies and guidelines to assist in the review of zoning and development requests.
- 2.6 Determine appropriate locations for future residential and nonresidential development, while considering existing neighborhoods and natural features.
- 2.7 Separate or create transitions/buffer areas between conflicting or incompatible land uses.
- 2.8 Implement cooperative efforts with the school districts in planning for the projected population of the City with respect to educational needs.
- 2.9 Develop cooperative efforts with Parker County and the City of Fort Worth to plan and prepare for growth, especially in unincorporated areas within close proximity to the City.

GOAL 3: Encourage development of high quality residential neighborhoods that are aesthetically pleasing, yet meet the diverse housing market needs of the community.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Consider development of design guidelines for future single-family and/or multi-family developments to ensure provision of safe, attractive places for people to live.
- 3.2 Identify areas on the Future Land Use Plan that are appropriate for a variety of residential densities (e.g., low, medium, and high). Specifically, multi-family units shall comprise no more than 30 percent of the total housing stock.
- 3.3 Provide for the build-out of single-family residential development at an overall density not to exceed 1.75 dwelling units per acre.
- 3.4 Provide for the build-out of multi-family residential development at an overall density not to exceed 20 dwelling units per acre.
- 3.5 Preserve and protect single-family neighborhoods from high traffic volumes, congestion, and through traffic generated by commercial and high-density residential areas.
- 3.6 Consider various housing programs and grants for the purpose of rehabilitating dilapidated or deteriorating housing in some areas of the City.
- 3.7 Encourage infill housing within the City as opposed to creating residential subdivisions in the outskirts of the City.
- 3.8 Encourage the development of high-quality, attractive housing for the elderly and the disabled.
- 3.9 Consider adoption of development guidelines that ensure future residential development is compatible to any adjacent existing residential development.

GOAL 4: Encourage quality nonresidential development that is aesthetically pleasing, yet meets the market and economic development needs of the community.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Consider development of design guidelines (and possibly overlay zoning districts) for commercial properties fronting along I.H. 20, and other regional traffic arterials (e.g., addressing signage, landscaping, parking, building orientation and setbacks, etc.).
- 4.2 Identify areas suitable for future commercial, industrial and/or business park development within the City.
- 4.3 Consider development of design guidelines that suggest different landscaping techniques for transition/buffer areas between nonresidential developments and residential neighborhoods that are more environmentally pleasing.
- 4.4 Identify a community theme and develop design elements and /or guidelines that are in keeping with this theme (e.g., addressing signage, landscaping, parking, building orientation and setbacks, etc.).
- 4.5 Achieve a balance of residential to non-residential uses to ensure the economic diversity and viability of the community. Specifically, expand the retail and service sectors to provide services locally, increase sales tax revenue, and increase local employment opportunities.

GOAL 5: Provide for coordinated growth and physical expansion of the City.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Plan for continued growth and development that improves the City's overall quality of life and economic viability.
- 5.2 Plan for future development that is compatible with the City's natural features and existing residential neighborhoods.
- 5.3 Continue cooperative efforts (e.g., coordination in site planning, school locations, traffic flow patterns, etc.) with the local school districts in

planning for adequate school facilities to serve the educational needs of the City's growing population.

GOAL 6: Encourage and positively influence the development of existing vacant properties within the City of Willow Park.

Objectives:

- 6.1 Explore various alternatives and programs for enhancing areas of significance to the City.
- 6.2 Consider establishment of new programs and/or ordinances, as well as enhance existing ones, related to the enforcement of City codes which are intended to protect the public health, safety and welfare and to keep the community attractive (e.g., removal of hazardous/unsightly structures and junk, mowing high grass and weeds, litter control, etc.).

GOAL 7: Develop a strategy and plan for a Town Center that will reflect the area's heritage and character, serve as the "heart" of the City, and increase community pride.

Objectives:

- 7.1 The Town Center is intended as an area for open space and recreational opportunities (i.e. use of flood-plains), specialty shops and other small retail establishments, cafes and restaurants, professional offices, attached residential dwellings located above business establishments, and government services (i.e. Post Office, City Hall).
- 7.2 The Town Center should be conducive to pedestrian activities; multi-modal access is encouraged.
- 7.3 Designate an appropriate area for the Town Center, which is centrally located with convenient access and full utility services.
- 7.4 Develop a list of desired land uses for the Town Center and surrounding areas.
- 7.5 Encourage public and private investment within the Town Center to help ensure its long-term economic viability, to cultivate a "small-

town” heritage and atmosphere, and to develop its use as a “people” place for social interaction and commerce (i.e., a pleasant location to shop, eat, conduct business, relax, be entertained, etc.).

- 7.6 Explore creative initiatives within the Town Center area such as formation of a public/private partnership to handle ideas and issues, development of incentives for building structures, and enhancement of open areas for public assemblies and functions.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Conservation of Open Spaces

GOAL 8: To promote respect, conservation and enhancement of important natural features and resources within the community.

Objectives:

- 8.1 Conserve and protect ecologically sensitive areas. The City should develop guidelines that continue to allow water infiltration within areas that are characterized by the floodplains (e.g., maximizing permeable surface areas, minimizing paving and building coverage, etc.).
- 8.2 Conserve natural areas of vegetation, especially those along flood plains and creeks.
- 8.3 Promote and provide public access to publicly owned open space and natural areas.
- 8.4 Provide and assist privately owned properties with conservation options.
- 8.5 Establish and/or enhance green space and natural areas along existing floodways and within the 100-year flood plain.
- 8.6 Restrict development in flood prone areas.
- 8.7 Encourage public and private streetscape enhancement strategies (i.e., medians with street trees, etc.).

Park System

GOAL 9: Provide a system of parks to meet the passive and active needs of all citizens, including the elderly and the young.

Objectives:

- 9.1 Establish a City-wide, hierarchical park system comprised of the following types of parks:
 - 9.1.1 Mini Park: A small area developed in conjunction with a residential block and designed to serve 500 to 1,000 persons. Typically comprised of .25 acres per park and intended primarily to serve pre-school aged children and other passive needs.
 - 9.1.2 Neighborhood Park: A park designed and built to serve an entire neighborhood. Typically contains 5 to 10 acres with playgrounds and multi-purpose athletic fields.
 - 9.1.3 Community Park: A park area intended to serve the active needs of several neighborhoods. Typically contains 10 to 60 acres with ball fields, walking trails, and playgrounds.
 - 9.1.4 Large/Regional Parks: A park designed to serve the passive and active needs for a larger section of the community. Typically contains 60 or more acres with ball fields, walking trails, and playgrounds.
 - 9.1.5 Special Park Areas: Any recreation facility designed to serve a specific need or function such as golf courses, greenbelts, community centers, etc.
 - 9.1.6 Parkways and Ornamental Areas: Special landscaped areas built to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the community. These facilities include medians, scenic drives, etc.
- 9.2 Provide a pedestrian linkage for the park system via hike-and-bike trails, floodplains, rights-of-way, access easements, or other such public use areas.
- 9.3 Encourage provision of landscaped paths or sidewalks for walking in neighborhood areas.
- 9.4 Create landscaped areas in floodplains with benches, walking paths, and canopied reading areas.
- 9.5 Develop guidelines for the preservation and development of park and open space infrastructure.

Recreational Facilities

GOAL 10: Encourage the recreational needs of youth in the City.

Objectives:

- 10.1 Coordinate efforts with organizations like the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA to maximize and enhance the local recreational infrastructure.
- 10.2 Encourage the private sector to establish recreational facilities such as skating rinks, movie theatres, 'state of the art' exercise/workout facilities and such.
- 10.3 Coordinate recreation and park development activities with the local school districts to develop multi-use facilities.
- 10.4 Develop guidelines for the preservation and development of park and open space infrastructure.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Provision of Public Services

GOAL 11: Ensure that public services and facilities (e.g., police and fire protection, library services, administrative facilities, etc.) will adequately serve present and future residents and businesses.

Objectives:

- 11.1 Define standards for adequate response/service levels for public services and facilities:
 - ♦ Police protection
 - ♦ Fire protection and emergency medical services
 - ♦ Library services
 - ♦ Water supply and storage management
 - ♦ Solid waste management
 - ♦ Public administrative facilities
 - ♦ Public transportation and accessibility
- 11.2 Provide public services and facilities for all residents and businesses in the most efficient, equitable and fiscally responsible manner possible.
- 11.3 Use the Future Land Use Plan and future land use projections to help plan where public service/administrative facilities will be needed.

- 11.4 Wherever possible, co-locate public facilities with other municipal facilities or with those of other quasi-governmental jurisdictions (e.g., School District, etc.).
- 11.5 Utilize recycling and other solid waste management techniques when they are financially feasible and environmentally responsible.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY SYSTEMS

Provision of Service

GOAL 12: Ensure that utility and infrastructure system (e.g., water supply, wastewater treatment, storm drainage, etc.) will adequately serve present and future residents and businesses.

Objectives:

- 12.1 Define standards for adequate service levels for public utility infrastructure systems:
 - 1. Water treatment, storage and distribution
 - 2. Wastewater collection and treatment
 - 3. Storm water/drainage management and erosion control (including non-point pollution prevention)
- 12.2 Provide utilities and infrastructure for all residents and businesses in the most efficient, equitable and fiscally responsible manner possible.
- 12.3 Update capital recovery tables/schedules to ensure the above listed utility services are fiscally maintained for all customers.
- 12.4 Use the Future Land Use Plan and future land use projections to help plan where infrastructure improvements will be needed.
- 12.5 Encourage new development to occur within areas that are already served by necessary utilities/infrastructure, or where utility extensions can be realistically provided.
- 12.6 Address future water and sewer demands within areas not already served, and within areas that will be difficult to serve.
- 12.7 Coordinate planning efforts with the City of Weatherford to ensure an adequate supply of surface water to meet anticipated demand.

- 12.8 Explore opportunities to either expand the existing wastewater package plant or contract with a regional wastewater service provider to accept and treat wastewater.
- 12.9 Encourage private/franchise utilities (e.g., telephone, gas, electricity, cable TV, etc.) to provide service to newly developing areas as quickly and efficiently as possible, and to place utility lines underground and within shared conduits, wherever possible.
- 12.10 Ensure that private/franchise telecommunications facilities and services are coordinated with City planning efforts.
- 12.11 Update capital recovery mechanisms to recoup the costs associated with infrastructure needed to serve new developments (e.g., impact and other capital recovery fees, etc.) based upon recommendations contained within the new Comprehensive Plan.
- 12.12 Use the development review process to help coordinate development with the provision of essential public infrastructure and utilities.
- 12.13 Consider development of guidelines and other mechanisms that will help to ensure that storm water runoff, and potential non-point pollution problems, will not adversely affect floodplains, surrounding properties, or other properties. Guidelines should also be complimentary to development density objectives.
- 12.14 Coordinate efforts with other agencies and entities (e.g., applicable water and utility districts, etc.) to ensure the long-term provision of adequate utility commodities and services for Willow Park's residents and businesses.
- 12.15 Infrastructure planning and calculations should be based on the future land use plan and current zoning.
- 12.16 Develop a strategy for providing utility services within the City's E.T.J. prior to or simultaneous with annexation.
- 12.17 Regulate development within the E.T.J. in a manner consistent with the City objectives for future City expansion and managed growth.
- 12.18 Limit municipal water and wastewater services to those parcels included within the City's corporate boundaries.

- 12.19 Incorporate adequate public facilities policies into the Subdivision Regulations that prohibit the adoption of preliminary or final plats and/or the issuance of building permits for new residential or non-residential structures when the water and/or wastewater systems do not have the capacity to serve the proposed structures or where provision has not been made to provide adequate capacity to serve the proposed development(s) or structure(s).



**SECTION 3:
THOROUGHFARE PLAN**



SECTION 3: THOROUGHFARE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Through the various public hearings and the citizen survey, the top issue of concern expressed by the community was the existing thoroughfare system. A common theme was the frustration caused by the lack of connectivity between various sections of the City and the fact that all local traffic is forced into one major corridor (Ranch House Road) where it is also forced to compete with regional and commercial traffic. The inefficiency of the current thoroughfare system will be amplified as residential and non-residential development continues throughout the community.

Willow Park is beginning to feel the initial impacts of a substantial period of residential growth. This growth is accompanied by an expansion of the retail and office sectors as well. Additional growth equates to additional transportation demands being placed on this system, which is already failing to meet the current traffic demand.

The Thoroughfare Plan is designed and intended to provide an efficient, structured framework for the smooth flow of traffic throughout the study area that will result from future growth and development. Improving certain key aspects of the system also ensures that existing traffic movement may be accommodated. The Thoroughfare Plan is an overall guide that will enable individual developments and roadways within the City to be coordinated into an integrated, unified transportation system. The Plan encourages the creation of neighborhoods with a minimal amount of through traffic, while providing high capacities for routes intended to move both regional and local traffic through the community. Because of the relationship that Willow Park has to I.H. 20 and its context within the Metroplex, people live in surrounding areas and travel into and through the City to work, conduct business, or to buy goods and services. While this has a positive relationship for the City of Willow Park, it also tends to have a tremendous impact upon its traffic circulation system.

The thoroughfare system is one of the most visible and permanent elements of the urban structure. Once the alignments and rights-of-way of major transportation facilities are established and adjacent properties are developed, it becomes very difficult to make significant changes to the system. Therefore, it is

*The
Thoroughfare
Plan provides
a framework
for
development.*

important that the existing system be evaluated, with particular attention given to enhancing the overall system's capacity and efficiency. The continued growth of Willow Park will depend largely upon the efficiency of local and regional thoroughfares and of the overall regional transportation system.

It is essential that a comprehensive thoroughfare system be developed for Willow Park that is capable of accommodating the expanding vehicular traffic volumes that growth is creating, and to also provide convenient access to major traffic generators.

The Thoroughfare Plan includes multi-modal transportation options such as bicycles and pedestrian facilities. The Thoroughfare Plan is intended to provide a system that is safe and enjoyable for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians alike.

FUNCTIONS OF THOROUGHFARE PLANNING

The Thoroughfare Plan defines a hierarchy of roadway functions that provide for both traffic movement and property access. The Plan also provides a clear statement of future roadway alignments, capacities and right-of-way requirements throughout the planning area. It has been developed in support of the Future Land Use Plan and will help facilitate the orderly development of the community.

The Plan serves as a guide for determining the ultimate configuration of the thoroughfare network. It establishes parameters whereby appropriate transportation corridors are preserved and/or developed to provide adequate levels of service. It also serves as a guide for programming improvement projects. The Plan should reflect community goals, provide efficient, continuous traffic routes, complement expected land use patterns and characteristics, integrate with both the regional freeway/highway and arterial system, as well as the roadway systems of surrounding local jurisdictions, be sensitive to topographical features and constraints, and be responsive to changing conditions.

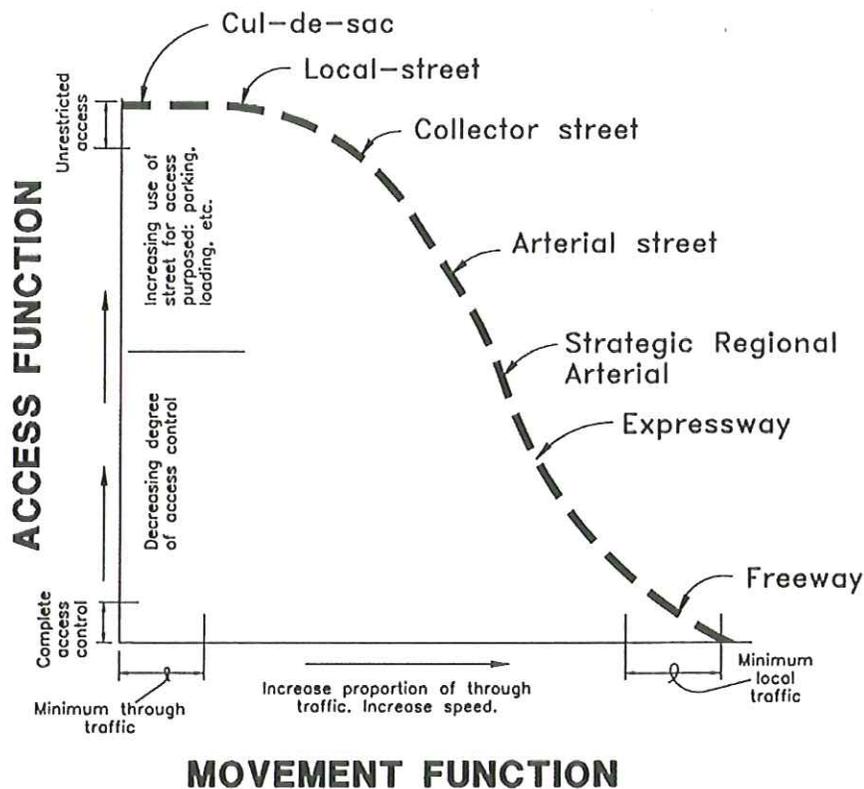
This element was prepared by analyzing the existing system of thoroughfares and by proposing changes and recommendations for future thoroughfares based upon goals and objectives formulated during the comprehensive planning process.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND THOROUGHFARE STANDARDS

A functional classification system is proposed that reflects the role or function of each roadway within the Plan. This system translates into physical design features that include thoroughfare cross-sections, pavement standards, pavement widths and access management.

Illustration 3-1 helps depict the functional street system, or hierarchy, for the community as a whole. The *movement function* refers to the accessibility of adjacent properties from a particular street or thoroughfare. As the illustration indicates, local streets provide the most access to the adjacent properties, but function poorly in terms of mobility. Freeways function very well mobility-wise but, because of speeds and volumes, they serve very poorly as access to adjacent roads and properties. With this in mind, streets that carry higher volumes of traffic should have a limited number of “curb cuts” (driveway openings) so traffic movement will not be impeded. This concept is referred to as the property *access function*.

**Illustration 3-1
 Functional Street System**



A system consisting of the following thoroughfare types is proposed:

- Freeways – high capacity highways in which direct access from adjacent properties is eliminated or significantly reduced, and where ingress and egress to the traffic lanes is controlled by widely spaced access ramps and interchanges (i.e. I.H. 20)
- Major Thoroughfares or Arterials – provides for continuity and high traffic volume movement between major activity centers (neighborhoods, commercial centers, etc.)
- Collector Streets – collects and distributes traffic from local access streets, as in residential neighborhoods, to a major arterial or the major street system
- Local Residential Street – internal streets within a neighborhood that provides access to residential lots and building sites and should be arranged to discourage most through traffic, except that which is directly related to the area

Freeways

Freeways are typically funded through the Federal Highway Administration and are administered through the Texas Department of Transportation. No new freeways are anticipated through Willow Park in the near future.

Major Thoroughfares or Arterials

These thoroughfares are usually spaced at one-mile intervals unless terrain or other physical barriers create a need for major deviation. The minimum cross section consists of four moving lanes, two in each direction, within 100 to 120 feet of right-of-way.

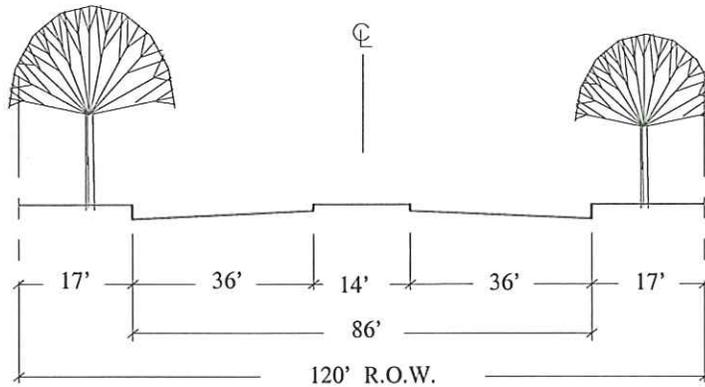
Often, four lanes are constructed within the full right-of-way, leaving a wider median than for a six-lane thoroughfare. This concept allows for an interim solution until traffic volumes warrant the construction of the additional two inside lanes. These thoroughfares will carry traffic volumes ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day and it is essential they have continuous and direct alignment and that they interconnect to freeways.

*A
hierarchical
roadway
system is
proposed.*

*Each type of
roadway is
intended to
serve a
specific
travel
function.*

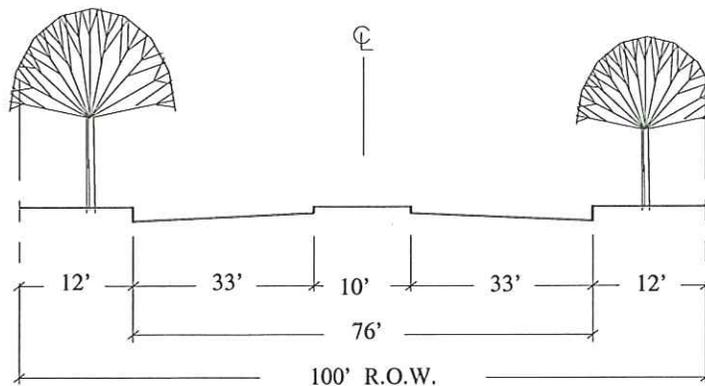
- **Type “AA” Major Regional Arterial** – provides three twelve-foot wide lanes in either direction with a 14-foot wide median.

Illustration 3-2
Type “AA” Major Arterial



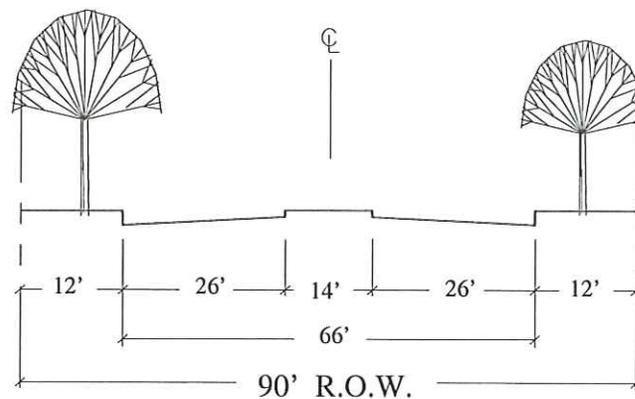
- **Type “A” Major Arterial** – provides three lanes in either direction (i.e. six lanes total) with a center median. The median may be the “lay down” or painted type, which allows more flexibility in access for emergency vehicles. The median may also be raised to create a divided roadway. A minimum right-of-way of 100 feet is required.

Illustration 3-3
Type “A” Major Arterial



- **Type “B” Minor Arterial** – provides a 4-lane divided or undivided thoroughfare. This arterial has a 26-foot wide pavement section and a 14-foot center median that may be the “lay down” or painted type, which allows more flexibility for emergency vehicle access. The median may also be raised to create a divided roadway. These streets are intended where traffic volumes are more moderate, 20,000 to 25,000 vehicle trips per day. A minimum right-of-way of 90 feet is required.

Illustration 3-4
Type “B” Minor Arterial

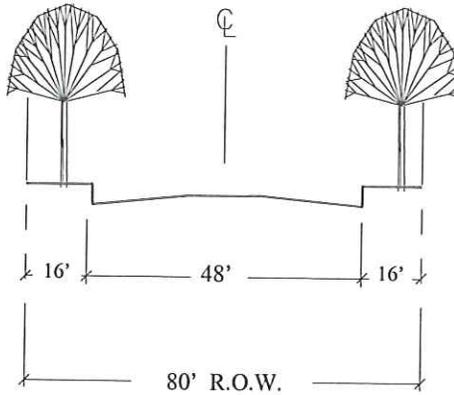


Collector Streets

These streets may be placed in a manner that discourages through traffic movement. To discourage through traffic, they are typically disrupted at some point by off-setting intersections or by incorporating curvilinear design. The collector street may also be used as a local street internal to industrial areas or adjacent to multi-family areas as well as access routes to elementary schools and neighborhood playgrounds.

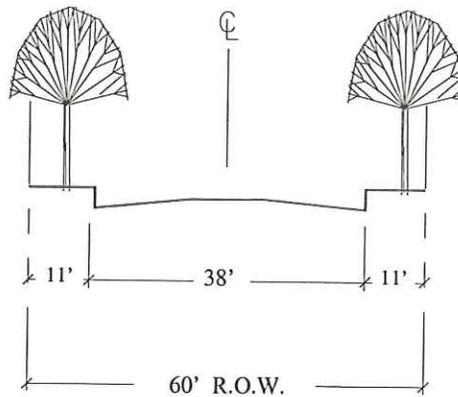
- **Type “C” Major Collector** – low to moderate volume facilities whose primary purpose is to collect traffic from smaller streets within an area to convey to the nearest principal or secondary arterial. Average daily volume should not exceed 10,000 trips per day. Provides for 80 feet of right-of-way with 48 feet of paving.

Illustration 3-5
Type "C" Major Collector



- **Type "D" Minor Collector** – low to moderate volume facilities whose primary purpose is to collect traffic from smaller streets within an area to convey to the nearest principal or secondary arterial. Average daily volume should not exceed 10,000 trips per day. Provides for two moving lanes of traffic and incidental on street parking on 36 to 40 feet of pavement within 60 feet of right-of-way. Minor collectors should be shorter than one-mile in length.

Illustration 3-6
Type "D" Minor Collector



Local/Residential Streets

The alignment of residential streets should be either of curvilinear, discontinuous, looped, cul-de-sac or court configurations. Limited traffic is attracted to residential streets and they may have narrower rights-of-way and pavement widths.

- **Type “E” Local Residential Street** – usual minimum paving width is 30 feet within a minimum right-of-way of 50 feet. These streets are designed to accommodate up to 500 vehicle trips per day.

- **Type “F” Rural Street** – utilized in areas with minimum lot sizes of 25,00 square feet. The following standards should be used to determine if rural streets are appropriate:
 - 25,000 square foot lot size;
 - Runoff 5 cubic feet per second or less;
 - Proper swale design; and
 - Concrete edges.

Other Transportation Elements

Certain roadways can be designed to include extra pavement and/or right-of-way width to accommodate bicycle lanes/routes. Willow Park has several natural drainage or creek areas that could be used to develop an off-street trail system, but it will likely require the utilization of roadway rights-of-way in many locations in order to create a fully integrated bicycle trail system. In many areas, the use of street pavement and/or right-of-way for bicycle transportation purposes will be possible if the roadways are properly sized and designed. For collectors or arterials that are designed as part of the bicycle route system, extra right-of-way may be required to accommodate bike lanes.

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND TRAFFIC CAPACITY

Capacity is the measure of a street’s ability to accommodate the traffic volume along the street. *Level of Service* (LOS) is a phrase representative of several factors, including speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, and operating cost of a traffic facility (roadway), used to measure the quality of the facility. In addition, a roadway link refers to a specific length of roadway, usually between two intersections. Levels of service “A” through “F”, from best scenario to worst scenario, are defined in the following table.

**Table 3-1
Definition of Level of Service for Roadway Links**

Level of Service (LOS)	Description	Example
A and B	Light, free-flowing traffic volumes. Virtually no delays with smooth progression of traffic, and speed is generally unaffected by other vehicles. Slight decline in the freedom to maneuver from A to B.	Residential or Rural Streets
C	Basically satisfactory to good progression of traffic, but at that point where individual drivers become affected by interactions with other vehicles. Light congestion, and speed is affected by the presence of other vehicles.	Urban Thoroughfares at Off-Peak Hours
D	High density, but stable traffic flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are restricted. Small increases in traffic flow will cause significant operational problems. This LOS is generally used to justify thoroughfare improvements.	Secondary CBD Streets (at Peak Hours)
E	Operating conditions at near capacity level. All speeds are reduced to low, but remain relatively uniform, meaning generally not stop-and-go. Operations at this level are usually unstable, because small increases will cause severe speed reductions.	Primary CBD Streets at Peak Hours
F	Forced flow. Heavy congestion. Total breakdown with stop and-go operation. Queues (i.e., vehicle stacking) at intersections on these lengths may exceed 100 vehicles.	Downtown Areas Usually in Larger Cities at the A.M. or P.M. Peak Hours

SOURCE: North Central Texas Council of Governments.

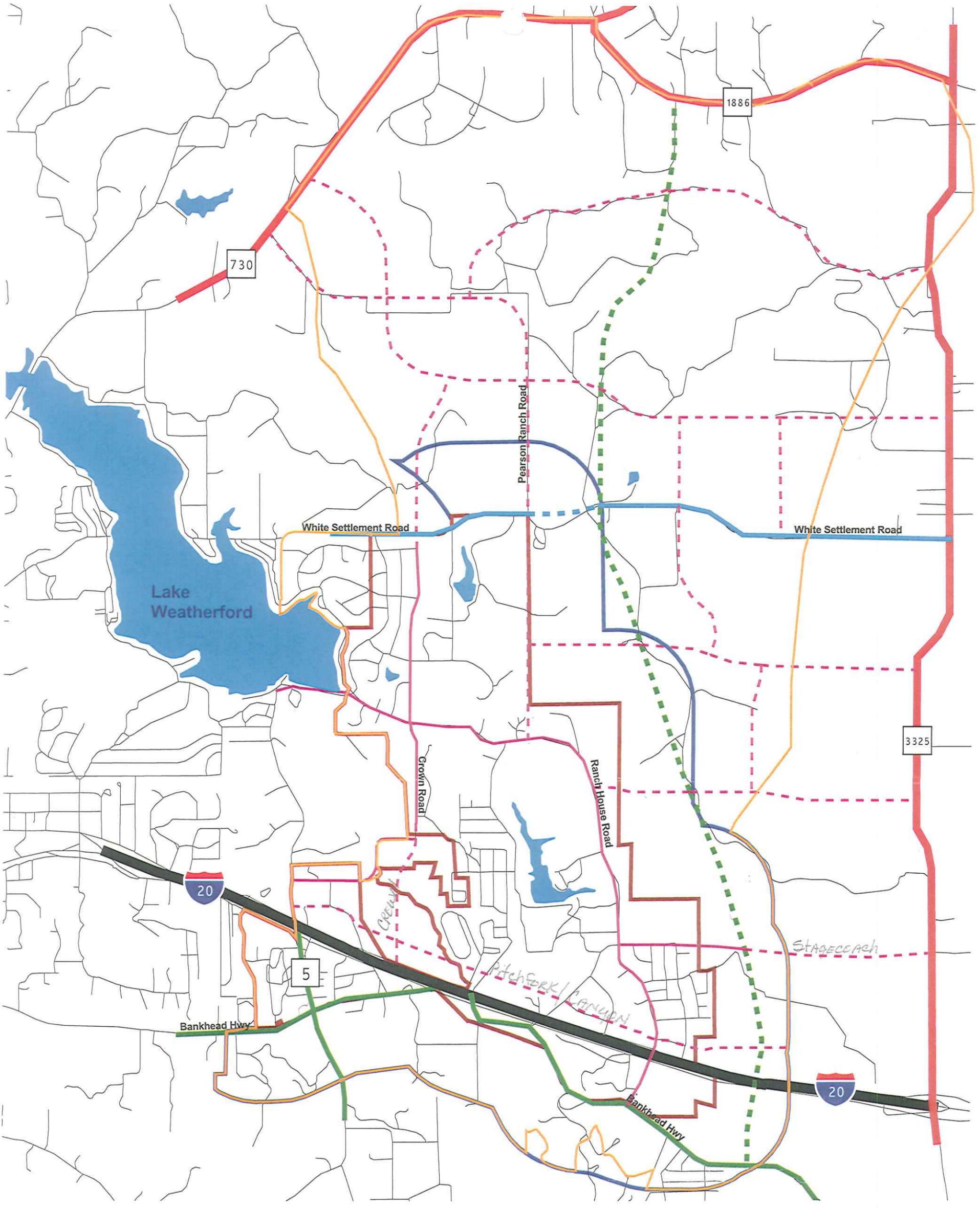
Level of service “C” is generally the recommended level of service in most cities, and is also the recommended level for roadway design purposes. With the exception of some roadway links that are congested during peak time periods, most thoroughfares operate within levels “C” and “D.”

THE THOROUGHFARE PLAN

A number of elements must be considered in the process of developing a Thoroughfare Plan, including the Future Land Use Plan, travel demands, traffic movement and access requirements, and existing physical constraints to roadway construction. The types of land uses that are existing and planned for an area affect the roadway capacity and access needs for that area. Moreover, special efforts will be required in the thoroughfare planning process to ensure that the integrity of residential neighborhoods is protected from unwanted and undesired vehicular traffic.

Balancing the movement and access functions of the thoroughfare system is another consideration in the planning process. Roadways serve two competing functions: the movement of traffic and access to individual properties. Inherent conflict exists where ingress and egress maneuvers from individual properties impede the efficient movement of traffic on major roadways and where high traffic volumes impede turning movements into and out of private driveways. Controlling access so that these two competing functions occur on separate sections of the thoroughfare system is a primary objective of the planning process.

The primary purpose of the Thoroughfare Plan is to provide a long-range plan to assist in thoroughfare facility planning and the dedication of needed rights-of-way to implement such a plan. The recommended major Thoroughfare Plan is shown on **Plate 3.1**. One of the benefits of the Thoroughfare Plan is the identification of streets upon which resources can be concentrated for improvements, ensuring that these monies are spent efficiently. The Thoroughfare Plan is designed to identify the proposed location of collector and arterial streets with the intent to facilitate movement and serve higher volumes of traffic that will occur with future development.



- Thoroughfares**
- Freeway -- Existing
 - Type AA -- Existing
 - Type A -- Existing
 - Type A -- Future
 - Type B -- Existing
 - Type B -- Future
 - Type C -- Existing
 - Type C -- Future

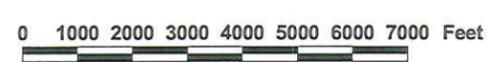
- Roads
- Lakes
- Study Area Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

City of Willow Park Thoroughfare Plan

January 2002



Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.
Urban Planning Consultants



THOROUGHFARE PLANNING ISSUES

The following five broad issues have been considered in developing policies for the Thoroughfare Plan:

1. ***Maintaining an adequate, appropriate and efficient roadway network.***
Increased population as well as increased single-person trips will increase traffic on existing roadways, especially as growth continues in the areas surrounding the City's core area and along I.H. 20. The system should include a hierarchy of streets, with each class of street designed to serve a specific function. Each class of street must be designed with relation to the anticipated use, speed and traffic volume. Increased development will mean increased demand and additional resources to expand the system to keep pace with growing needs.
2. ***Coordinating roadways and adjacent development'***
Land use planning and thoroughfare planning are closely linked. Failure to successfully merge the two can drastically reduce the effectiveness of adjacent roadways and poorly planned roadways can reduce the viability of adjacent land uses. Zoning and development activity as well as major natural features have impacted transportation planning in Willow Park. Older roadways are now carrying higher traffic volumes than they were originally designed to carry. Coordinating roadways with existing and future development can help minimize some of the compatibility issues between the land use pattern and the street system.
3. ***Cost-effective infrastructure investment.***
Building and maintaining an efficient street network requires significant investment of local resources. Careful planning is needed to ensure that the most cost-effective investments in the street network are made for the community as a whole. Funding is usually based on general obligation bonds and impact fees. Other funding sources should be considered in the future.
4. ***Network for non-automotive (multi-modal) transportation.***
Through appropriate design and planning, a relatively low-cost system of trails and paths that encourage residents to travel by foot or bicycle can be developed throughout the community. Increased use of other modes of transportation would improve the health of local residents, and would have a positive impact upon the environment and community character.
5. ***Regional access throughout the area.***
The large floodplain area bisecting the central portion of the planning area in addition to the existing land use pattern acts as a barrier to transportation planning. Opportunities for regional north/south access are limited to the eastern portion of the planning area. The development of this major north/south thoroughfare is a critical issue that will help to ensure the preservation of existing neighborhoods in addition to facilitating the desired land use pattern as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

Willow Park must address two competing issues with regard to its existing thoroughfare system, it must expand the system to meet growing demand and it must fund improvements to address existing system failures. The current system funnels all traffic onto I.H. 20. As traffic demand grows, alternative routes must be implemented to ensure safety, protect existing neighborhoods, and maximize economic development opportunities. It is recommended that the following specific items be addressed with regard the thoroughfare system:

1. A collector should be constructed paralleling the north side of I.H. 20 to offer opportunities to develop the retail and commercial properties along the corridor.
2. Construct a collector on the west side of the City, utilizing the existing alignment of Crown Road to provide additional north-south traffic circulation.
3. Upgrade the existing White Settlement Road as a Type B Minor Arterial to provide east-west regional traffic circulation.
4. Preserve the right-of-way and secure construction for a Type B Minor Arterial extending from I.H. 20 to F.M. 1886 to provide adequate circulation for the higher-density residential and non-residential development indicated by the Future Land Use Plan.
5. Upgrade Ranch House Road as a Type D Minor Collector to ensure safe travel along one of the City's primary thoroughfares.
6. The existing major watersheds should be preserved and utilized as primary linkages for a community-wide trail system.
7. Alternatives should be investigated to tie existing residential neighborhoods into an overall trail system.
8. A 5-year capital improvements program (C.I.P.) should be established to provide a regular project scheduling and funding program to ensure substantial completion of transportation system improvements.
9. Provide "Texas U Turns" where Mikus and Ranch House Roads intersect I.H. 20 to provide for the smooth and efficient flow of traffic along the I.H. 20 corridor.

10. For west-bound I.H. 20, the exit ramps for the Ranch House Road and Mikus Road interchanges should be shifted eastward as appropriate to facilitate appropriate vehicle stacking distance and to ensure the developability of commercial tracts along the I.H. 20 corridor. Specifically, opportunities to utilize the existing exits for the truck weigh stations should be evaluated.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING POLICIES

The following statements describe the recommended policies to guide Willow Park's transportation planning efforts:

1. **Plate 3.1** shows the proposed major Thoroughfare Plan. This plan should be used to determine the classification of planned roadway segments. Additional collector streets may be needed to serve traffic within new developments. The alignment and capacity of these streets should be determined as part of any action on a preliminary plat, final plat, site plan or zoning case. Any plat, site plan or zoning case not in conformance with the Thoroughfare Plan should not be approved unless an acceptable alternative is developed and approved.
2. Willow Park should use the general planning guidelines for roadways in addition to the detailed specifications found in the Subdivision Ordinance to determine the appropriate design standards for planned roadway improvements.
3. Willow Park should seek to maintain a minimum level of service (LOS) standard of "C" on their respective roadways. This standard should be used in reviewing the transportation needs of future development proposals.
4. Transportation system improvements should be prioritized, phased and scheduled in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and the ability to fund the improvements.
5. On-site local and collector streets constructed by developers must be in compliance with the City's regulations. Willow Park may also require off-site improvements needed to provide adequate access to the development. This policy should be implemented through specific provisions of the City's subdivision and zoning ordinances.
6. Willow Park should coordinate with TxDOT, the NCTCOG and other local jurisdictions when planning transportation improvements.
7. Streets should be designed in a comprehensive fashion considering street trees, ADA-accessible pedestrian walkways, bike lanes, signage, lighting and air quality whenever any of those factors are applicable. Citizen involvement in major street-widening projects should be sought.

8. All alternatives for increasing roadway capacity should be considered before physical road widening is recommended for roadways with existing neighborhoods.
9. Commercial and other non-residential uses that generate high volumes of traffic should be limited to locations where arterial streets provide sufficient access for non-local traffic.
10. Except as specifically approved by the City, all development should provide adequate on-site parking for normal operations. Exceptions to this condition can be made for specific areas, for example special redevelopment or historic areas. This policy should be implemented through specific provisions in the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances.

THOROUGHFARE IMPLEMENTATION

The proper administration of the Thoroughfare Plan will require the following actions:

- *Coordination of Capital Improvements*
Many of the major thoroughfare improvements will involve cooperation with the NCTCOG and TxDOT. In many cases, these improvements will require some financial participation. Willow Park will likely be required to assume the responsibility for constructing a reasonable portion of its thoroughfare system as it expands its physical boundaries. It should be understood that the system would be constructed on an incremental basis over an extended period of time (20 to 30 years).
- *Subdivision Control*
The subdivision of land into building sites represents the first step in the development of urban land uses and the creation of traffic generators. Reasonable land (i.e. right-of-way) must be set aside at the time of platting so that adequate thoroughfares can be created without adversely impacting the value, stability and long-range character of the area being developed. ***Specifically, right-of-way must be dedicated in accordance with the Thoroughfare Plan as each plat is approved.*** Right-of-way protection and reservation within the City's ETJ is particularly significant.
- *Zoning and Land Use Control*
The adequacy of existing and planned thoroughfares must be taken into account in all changes of zoning and land use. When such changes occur, the space for street use (i.e. right-of-way) should be provided commensurate with the overall use contemplated within the area.
- *Building Lines*
Where widening of an existing thoroughfare right-of-way is contemplated, buildings should be set back to allow for the planned widening to ensure that the use functions properly with the new thoroughfare after the proposed improvement is made. In some cases, it will be desirable to establish

building lines by ordinance to help ensure the orderly and uniform development of thoroughfare frontage.

- *Other Considerations*

Certain aspects of the Plan, such as access controls along major arterials, should be implemented through other design and technical standards that may or may not be included in the City's Subdivision or Zoning Ordinances. Examples of other standards that need to be implemented are sight and visibility standards and joint (i.e. shared) access standards. Impact fees should also be established under separate process.



**SECTION 4:
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**



SECTION 4: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 65.5 percent of the total land area within the City of Willow Park planning area is currently vacant and agricultural. The existing development pattern is generally characterized by a core of low-density residential development in the central portion of the planning area. A substantial node of low-density residential development has also occurred to the southwest, generally along the F.M. 5 corridor south of I.H. 20. A commercial/retail node has developed at the intersection of Ranch House Road and I.H. 20. Other primary non-residential features include the racetrack at Kings Gate Road and I.H. 20 and the proposed development west of the track. That acreage beyond the developed sections remains primarily vacant with some limited agricultural uses. The development pattern has been influenced greatly by the availability of water and wastewater utilities. A critical need identified by the plan is the improvement and extension of these systems. These improvements will directly influence the pattern and pace of both residential and non-residential development throughout the planning area. The land uses specified in this section provide for a recommended pattern of development that conforms to the goals and objectives established by the City in addition to providing an interrelated pattern of land uses that will provide for the orderly development of the community and its immediate area.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended as a guide for growth. It is not a zoning ordinance and does not contain any provisions that otherwise govern the use of land. It is a guide that will provide the primary basis for day-to-day land use decisions. The land uses designated here provide City staff and City officials a guide for considering development proposals, such as zoning and platting petitions. Land use proposals that do not substantially conform to the plan are likely contrary to the vision of the community as stated herein. However, the plan is intended to be flexible and should be revised from time to time as new land uses not envisioned by the plan arise and as the community evolves.

The Future Land Use element describes the planning process used by all entities in relating development decisions to the community's ultimate vision of what it can and will become. A series of policies defines how these decisions are to be made.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended as a guide for growth.

The Future Land Use Plan is not zoning and does not govern the use of land.

LAND USES

The Land Use Plan considers development within the corporate limits as well as the existing extraterritorial jurisdiction. It provides a pattern of development consisting of the following uses:

- Residential – Rural
- Residential – Semi-Rural
- Residential – Mixed Use
- Office/Retail
- Town Center
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Park/Open Space

An important element considered by the Future Land Use Plan is the relationship between residential and non-residential uses. The trend toward more intense uses of retail, office and commercial sites creates more opportunities for conflicts between new and existing areas of development. **Table 4-1** below shows the distribution of future land uses throughout the planning area.

Table 4-1
Future Land Use Distribution
Willow Park Planning Area – 2000

Use	Acres	%
Residential -- Rural	10,299.3	63.7%
Residential -- Semi-Rural	4,160.9	25.7%
Residential -- Mixed Use	156.4	1.0%
Office/Retail	371.6	2.3%
Town Center	214.1	1.3%
Commercial	630.5	3.9%
Industrial	63.6	0.4%
Park/Open Space	250.0	1.5%
Public	23.3	0.1%
TOTAL	16,169.7	100.0%

SOURCE: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, September 2001.

The Future Land Use Plan provides for a balance of land uses throughout the study area.

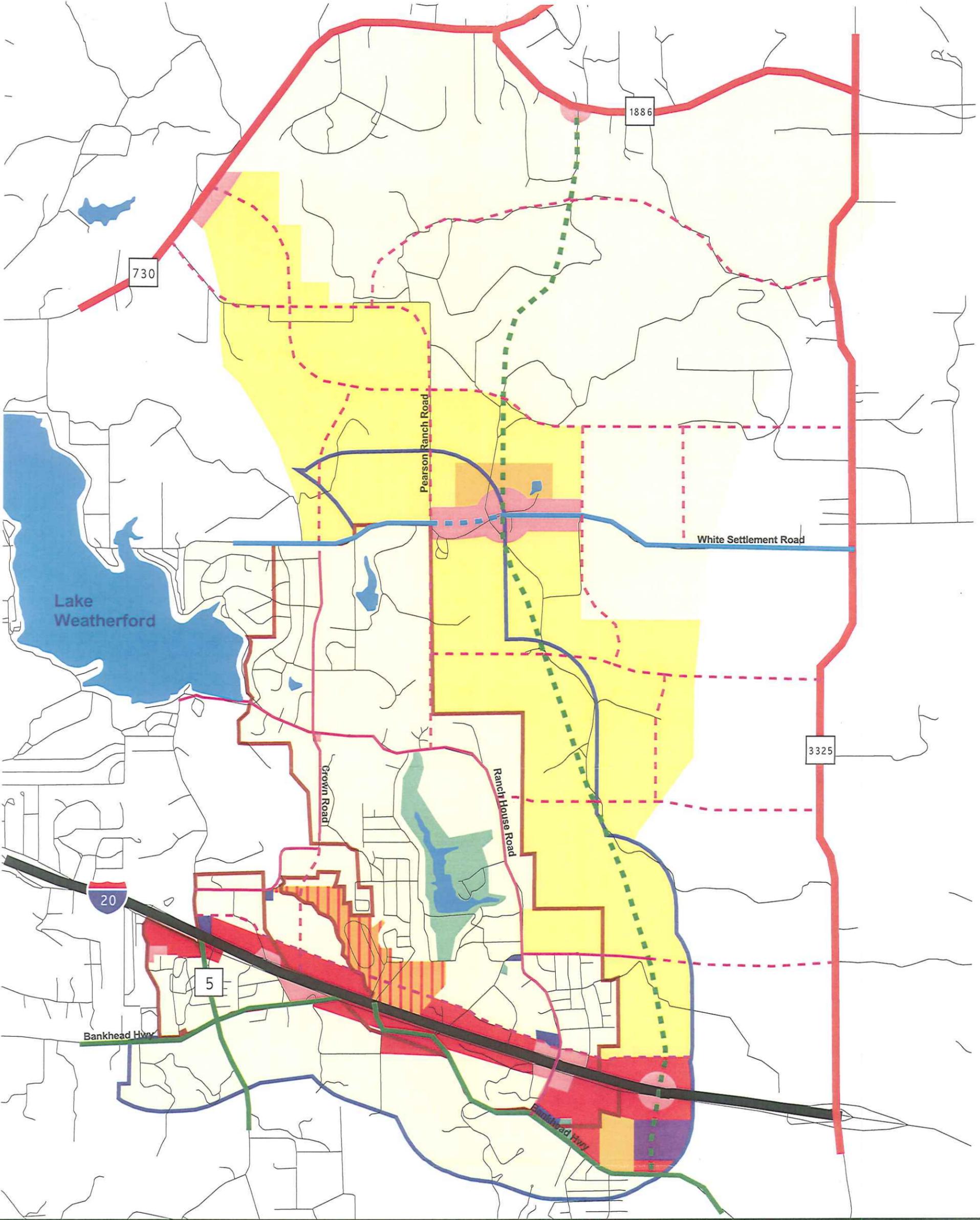
Plate 4.1 on the next page contains the Future Land Use Map with the land use categories described above. At build-out, the total population is estimated to be approximately 25,000. This estimate assumes an occupancy rate of 95 percent for all residential dwelling units.

The ultimate holding capacity has been calculated for the proposed future land use pattern shown in **Plate 4.1**. The ultimate holding capacity represents the total estimated housing and population counts that could be accommodated at build-out throughout the planning area. **Table 4-2** shows the ultimate residential holding capacity estimates.

Table 4-2
Ultimate Residential Holding Capacity

Future Land Use	Housing Units	Population
Residential -- Rural	3,239	8,616
Residential -- Semi-Rural	4,704	12,512
Residential -- Mixed Use	1,064	1,516
Town Center	1,456	2,075
TOTAL	10,463	24,719

SOURCE: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, January 2001.



- Future Land Uses**
- Residential -- Rural
 - Residential -- Urban
 - Residential -- Mixed Use
 - Retail
 - Town Center
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Public
 - Park/Open Space

- Thoroughfares**
- Freeway -- Existing
 - Type AA -- Existing
 - Type A -- Existing
 - Type A -- Future
 - Type B -- Existing
 - Type B -- Future
 - Type C -- Existing
 - Type C -- Future

- Roads
- Lakes
- Study Area Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

City of Willow Park

Future Land Use Plan

January 2002



Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.
Urban Planning Consultants

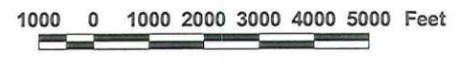


PLATE 4.1

RESIDENTIAL

Single-family residential uses comprise the greatest use of land throughout the planning area, 89.8 percent. Plan objectives specifically call for the preservation of the existing housing stock as well as encouraging high quality residential neighborhoods that meet the City's diverse housing needs.

The Future Land Use Plan specifies three types of residential land uses. These uses are defined on the basis of residential density.

Residential – Rural

Acres: 10,299.3

Percent of Planning Area: 63.7%

Density: 0.37 Dwelling Units per Acre

Single Family Residential – Low Density uses are located where existing development matches this type of development and in the northern portion of the planning area. Development within these areas may be typically characterized as large-lot residential, with many lots exceeding 2.5 acres. Development within this land use category is intended to be rural with street cross sections that provide for a “country” feel. Low-density uses are located with respect to the physical features of the planning area, limitations of wastewater utility services, and to preserve existing pockets of low-density residential developments.

These are the lowest-intensity uses specified by the Future Land Use Plan and should be set back from Willow Park's major highways and thoroughfares. In addition, this use should be buffered from non-residential land uses via major natural and man-made physical features and/or transitional land uses. The land use pattern has been designed to minimize situations where *Residential – Rural* uses directly abut highways and major thoroughfares as well as higher-intensity residential and non-residential uses. However, it is extremely difficult to eliminate all such situations and, where appropriate, these other potentially incompatible land uses should be designed so that they are integrated with the residential character of the neighborhood areas they abut.



Illustration 4.1
Typical Residential Rural
Development

Residential – Semi-Rural

Acres: 4,160.9
Percent of Planning Area: 25.7%
Density: 1.33 Dwelling Units per Acre

Residential – Semi-Rural uses are concentrated within the central portion of the planning area. Development within these areas will evolve in a more urban environment, with an average lot size of .75 acres. The volume of daily traffic warrants the location of these uses within close proximity to major thoroughfares and with direct access to major collectors. It is anticipated that these areas will be served with full utility services, especially including wastewater collection and treatment.

Due to the urban nature of this land use category, it is appropriately located adjacent to high-intensity residential, office, retail, and commercial uses. *Residential – Semi-Rural* uses serve as a transition for the *Residential – Rural* uses. It is appropriate that local retail establishments and professional offices be located directly adjacent to *Residential – Rural* uses since they often provide those goods and services consumed by those living in close proximity.

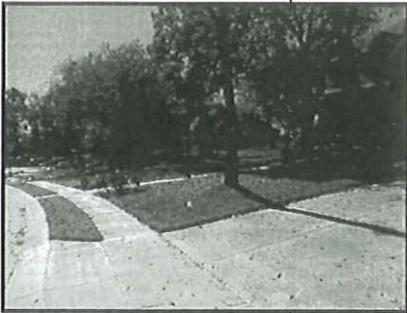


Illustration 4.2
Typical Residential Semi-Rural Development

Residential – Mixed Use

Acres: 156.4
Percent of Planning Area: 1.0%
Density: 10.0 Dwelling Units per Acre

Residential – Mixed Use uses are targeted to specific areas and are intended primarily as transitional land uses that either buffer other single family residential developments or

take advantage of existing natural features. Development within this land use category is intended to provide the opportunity for a mixture of residential types and densities. Appropriate residential uses include multi-family residential, duplexes, townhomes, and “patio homes.”

Overall, development within these areas should not exceed 10.0 dwelling units per acre. Multi-family development within these areas should not exceed a density of 20.0 dwelling units per acre.

Residential – Mixed Use uses are appropriately located along major thoroughfares and collectors. They generate high volumes of residential traffic and should be designed to discourage through traffic through lower-density residential neighborhoods. They are also appropriately located immediately adjacent to multi-family, office, retail, commercial and industrial uses. However, where multi-family and non-residential uses directly abut *Residential – Mixed Use* uses, they should be designed to integrate with the neighborhoods.

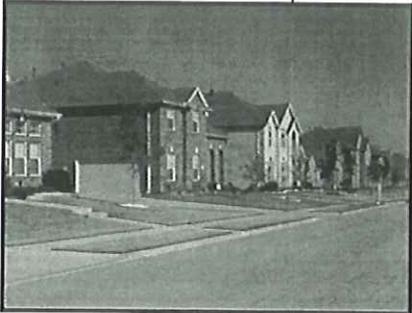


Illustration 4.3
Typical Single Family Development



Illustration 4.4
Typical Multi-Family Development

OFFICE/RETAIL

Acres: 371.6

Percent of Planning Area: 2.3%

The growth of Willow Park's residential sector has resulted in the growth of retail and office uses along I.H. 20. As housing and population totals within and immediately adjacent to the current City limits continue to rise, it is anticipated that the non-residential uses will also grow to serve the increasing local demand. Furthermore, once the population has reached a certain point it is anticipated that the intensity of retail and commercial uses will also increase and major retailers or "big box" developments will be attracted to the City.

While major retailers may prove to be a positive sign of economic growth, they generate unwanted noise, traffic and pollution. Accordingly, major retail nodes should be located primarily along highly visible travel corridors. The Future Land Use Plan provides two major retail nodes that are located at intersections with major thoroughfares where appropriate access may be provided to facilitate proper traffic circulation. Existing and/or planned single-family residential developments should also be buffered from major retail nodes by either transitional land uses or major physical features.

Small-scale office and retail operations, which house small operations such as professional offices and neighborhood-oriented establishments, are appropriately located immediately adjacent to single family and multi-family residential uses. The Future Land Use Plan provides for the location of these uses along major thoroughfares. These uses buffer existing and planned residential developments from these major transportation corridors.

Office and retail development for both large and small-scale developments that are within close proximity to single family residential areas should take into consideration the following:

- Lighting of parking lots, signage and building security;
- Hours of operation,
- Loading and unloading of freight and merchandise;



Illustration 4.5
Typical Office Development



Illustration 4.6
Typical Retail Development

- Primary and secondary site access (access through neighborhoods should be prohibited);
- Drive-through operations;
- Storm water management; and
- Architectural and site design.

TOWN CENTER

Acres: 214.1

Percent of Planning Area: 1.3%

One of Willow Park's greatest challenges is the creation of a sense of place. The way a community is viewed from the road has greatly impacts the perceptions of citizens and its visitors. Furthermore, a City center is an extremely important element in establishing a sense of place and a sense of community.



Illustration 4.7
Typical Town Center Development

Retail development occurring along the I.H. 20 corridor does not offer diversity or uniqueness in terms of its architectural design and layout. It is occurring according to a typical strip development pattern. Ultimately, this type of development creates a "commercialized" feel that is similar to many other places throughout the Country and fails to provide that unique identity that is important to the City of Willow Park.

The *Town Center* use is intended to provide the City of Willow Park with a concentrated, mixed-use focal point and center of business/government near the heart of the City. This area is also intended to provide the community with additional tax revenues and jobs that are close to home. A mixture of land uses is appropriate for the *Town Center* area, as it is intended to remain a place for local residents to shop, conduct personal and government-related business, reside at the same location as their business (i.e. loft apartments above retail shops), meet neighbors, eat at a local café, enjoy arts/cultural facilities (such as a local museum), gather for community events and festivals, and other similar activities. A public plaza/open space area and landscaping should be encouraged within this area. Open storage should be prohibited to ensure an attractive appearance from neighboring properties. In addition, a comprehensive streetscape program is recommended to create a welcome, pedestrian friendly environment.

COMMERCIAL

Acres: 630.5

Percent of Planning Area: 3.9%

Commercial uses generate noise, odor, dust and pollution that make them generally incompatible with single-family residential uses. They are appropriately located immediately adjacent to major thoroughfares and should be buffered from residential uses through transitional land uses and/or physical buffers.



Illustration 4.8
Typical Commercial Use

The Future Land Use Plan provides a major commercial corridor along I.H. 20. It also provides for a major commercial node at the southeast corner of the planning area, at the intersection of I.H. 20 and the planned primary arterial. Commercial tracts should contain at least 800 feet in depth with shared drive access requirements to facilitate traffic circulation. Special guidelines for commercial development should be adopted that require:

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area;
- Strict signage and parking area design guidelines;
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards; and
- Minimum exterior building façade standards.

These guidelines will help create development corridors that enhance the view from the road. They will also help ensure that open storage, site design and building types for commercial uses will blend with the future vision for the City's major entryways as well as for the community as a whole. If this strategy is followed, the City of Willow Park should realize higher visual quality and higher property values along these corridors.

INDUSTRIAL

Acres: 63.6

Percent of Planning Area: 0.4%

Willow Park has designated an area for industrial development that provides the opportunity to capitalize on a variety of industrial land use types. The greatest obstacle to short-term industrial expansion within the community is the lack of transportation facilities and utility services within the existing City limits.



Illustration 4.9
Typical Industrial Development

The Future Land Use Plan has specified an industrial node south of the intersection of I.H. 20 and the planned primary thoroughfare. This node is buffered from surrounding single-family residential uses to the south and west by transitional land uses. This area is intended to be developed in a campus setting with appropriate design characteristics that will ensure compatibility with the *Residential – Mixed Use* area designated immediately to the west. This node is appropriate for a broad range of commercial, light, medium, and heavy industrial uses.

Development guidelines should be adopted for construction of or expansion to industrial uses that address the following:

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Minimum standards for the discharge of particulate matter, smoke, and dust;
- Minimum access requirements to major thoroughfares and major collectors;
- Minimum standards for the generation of noise;
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area;
- Strict signage and parking area design guidelines;
- Buffering and screening where adjacent to residential uses;
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards; and
- Minimum exterior building façade standards.

Application of these guidelines will help to ensure development of an industrial area that is both compatible with the community's vision and future land use pattern. They will also help to mitigate any negative environmental impacts and assure sustained property values within the node as well as for any adjacent properties.

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

Acres: 23.3

Percent of Planning Area: 0.1%

Communities require a variety of public services to meet the needs of the community. These services are provided by several different organizations that provide services pertaining to the health, safety, welfare and quality of life throughout the community. These services are mostly provided by “public” or not-for-profit entities that require physical facilities to provide their respective services.



Illustration 4.10
Typical Public/Semi Public Use

The public facilities shown on the Future Land Use Plan include properties owned by local and regional governments in addition to those of other semi-public agencies like churches. The *Public/Semi-Public* uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan include:

- Municipal facilities (i.e. City Hall, police, fire, utility, solid waste);
- Public school facilities (i.e. W.I.S.D., Willow Park College);
- County facilities (i.e. County Courthouse, County Annex);
- State facilities (i.e. Texas Department of Public Safety);
- Federal facilities (i.e. U.S. Post Office); and
- Other (i.e. churches, VFW).

As the population grows, additional public and semi-public facilities will be required to provide the same level of service throughout the community.

PARK/OPEN SPACE

Acres: 250.0

Percent of Planning Area: 1.5%

Park/Open Space uses are those areas set aside or developed for passive or active recreational uses or for the preservation of natural areas to be left undisturbed. No active uses are generally accommodated in areas designated for open spaces. For many citizens, the parks and open space system correlates directly to the quality of life enjoyed by those residing within the City of Willow Park. The Park/Open Space Plan strives to outline a strategy to develop and enhance the City's system of neighborhood, community and regional recreational facilities. The Park/Open Space Plan contains the following major components:

- Conservation of open spaces,
- Expansion of the rail-trail system,
- Creation of a leisure park system, and
- Expansion of the existing active recreational facilities.

Future park and open space needs are projected as a function of population growth and pursuant to park standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Parks are sited so that they are located equitably to the populations they are intended to serve.



Illustration 4.10
Typical Private Recreational Use

FUTURE POPULATION INCREASE

The population growth of Willow Park will likely be regulated by a great extent by the rate at which the housing inventory can be expanded in price ranges that will permit and encourage persons to reside within the community. The general increases in housing costs will, however, tend to be a factor in moderating any rapid expansion of the population. Housing activity within Parker County will likely continue to increase, as will the number of proposed housing developments, and therefore, continued population gains can probably be expected for at least the next several years in the City of Willow Park. Over the last ten years, Willow Park has experienced a steady increase in population, due mainly to the area's healthy economy, increased interest in a rural lifestyle, and the dramatically increasing cost of housing within close proximity to the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth.

Population projections are significant to the process of assessing the quantity of land that should be allocated to each land use and how intensely land should be used in order to support desired population numbers. As previously discussed, in the Baseline Analysis, the estimated 2000 population is approximately 2,953 persons. Using this population estimate as a base year population, a series of projections were made for planning purposes. **Table 4-3** compares three growth scenarios.

Willow Park is expected to experience a substantial increase in its rate of growth over the next 30 years.

**Table 4-3
Projected Population Growth**

Year	Historic (2.0%)		Recommended (3.5%)		High (5.0%)	
	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate
1970*	230	---	230	---	230	---
1980*	1,113	17.1%	1,113	17.1%	1,113	17.1%
1990*	2,328	7.7%	2,328	7.7%	2,328	7.7%
2000**	2,953	2.4%	2,953	2.4%	2,953	2.4%
2010	3,603	2.0%	4,164	3.5%	4,813	5.0%
2020	4,395	2.0%	5,871	3.5%	7,846	5.0%
2030	5,362	2.0%	8,278	3.5%	12,789	5.0%

* U.S. Census Estimate.

** Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc., August 2001.

The growth scenarios shown in **Table 4-3** represent a reasonable range of growth rates for the City of Willow Park. The higher projection (“C”) would require a housing response and an influx of population that, under prevailing conditions, is not occurring. The lowest projection (“A”) indicates a rate of growth that is similar to that experienced over the last several years. The middle growth scenario (“B”) reflects a rate of residential growth that is almost twice that of the current rate of growth

Scenario “B” is recommended for planning purposes. It assumes that the housing growth trend will continue to increase and that the City of Willow Park will start capturing a greater percentage of the county’s population increase. As Willow Park’s wastewater collection and treatment system is expanded, the City will develop several new pockets of residential development.

INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

At times, the City will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Careful consideration should be given to any development proposal that is inconsistent with the Plan. When such a proposal is presented to the City of Willow Park, it should be reviewed based upon the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the proposed site and the surrounding area?
- Is the proposed change a better use than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or, will the proposed use be compatible with, or even enhance, adjacent residential properties?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to either the City or the community as a whole in terms of public health, safety and/or welfare (i.e. would it address a physical or social need of the community or its citizens; would it be to the City's economic advantage; would it add needed jobs in a particular employment sector, etc.)?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or which do not meet its general intent) should be reviewed based on the above questions. It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown on the Plan for a particular area. This may be due to changing market, development and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future, after the Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City, then these proposals should probably be approved unless they would have a negative impact upon the surrounding area and/or the City in general. Each development proposal should be reviewed on its own merit, and it should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that the proposal would enhance the community based upon the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and upon community objectives and values.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP INTERPRETATION POLICIES

Rezoning or other development approvals for land uses not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or Comprehensive Plan) should not be approved until the Plan has been amended, as appropriate, to provide for such land uses.

If a rezoning proposal is consistent with the Plan (i.e. is the same or very similar), then the request should be processed as any other request is processed. A statement/determination should be made in a municipal staff report that the proposed request is consistent with the Plan. This should not mandate approval by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the City Council, but should be the first prerequisite in the review process. The request should still be reviewed on its own merit based upon additional criteria such as traffic impact, compatibility with surrounding uses and adjacency standards, among others.

If a rezoning proposal is not consistent with the Plan, then an amendment to the Plan should occur prior to approving the request. It should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence proving that the proposed rezoning is better or more consistent with land uses in the surrounding area than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan map. If this is the case, then Willow Park could initiate a Plan amendment process. To expedite the process, Plan amendments may be processed simultaneously with rezoning change requests. The Plan map should be updated at least once or twice annually to ensure that it reflects any Future Land Use Plan amendments.

FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES

The following statements describe recommended policies that should guide Willow Park's future land use planning efforts:

1. Willow Park should use the Future Land Use Plan and the associated policies in this report to establish the general pattern of development within the community. This pattern of development should be implemented through the City's development regulations.
2. The Future Land Use Plan provides the general description of land use categories, and the text in this report provides an explanation of key components of the Plan. Willow Park should maintain the Future Land Use Plan to provide areas for different types of land uses and intensities, and should plan for public services and facilities appropriate for the planned land uses. The Plan establishes the general pattern of future land use, as appropriate, to achieve the City's goals and objectives as well as those of the community as a whole.
3. Willow Park should identify sufficient locations for residential and non-residential development (especially in the ETJ) to accommodate projected growth with provision of additional land use capacity for market choice and flexibility.
4. Willow Park should plan areas for a variety of residential housing types and densities.
5. Willow Park should implement improvements to its thoroughfare system to support the land use pattern specified in the Future Land Use Plan. Specifically, the City should initiate and implement a 5-year capital improvements program for the orderly and consistent improvement of the system to meet growing demand.
6. The planned industrial area should be of sufficient size and should be appropriately located to support the community's economic development goals and strategies.
7. Willow Park should use its planning and development regulations to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible activities, or from land uses that may have a negative impact upon a residential living environment.

8. Residential developments adjacent to park or to public open spaces should be designed to facilitate public access to and use of the park/trail, while minimizing potential traffic conflicts between park users and residents of the neighborhood.
9. In reviewing development proposals, the City should consider issues of community character, compatibility of land use, residents' security and safety, and efficient service provision, since these are important qualities of any community and should be emphasized.
10. Willow Park should encourage future patterns of development and land use that would reduce infrastructure construction costs and would make efficient use of existing and planned public facilities.
11. The official copy of the Future Land Use map will be on file in the City of Willow Park. The boundaries of the land use categories as depicted on the official map should be used to determine the appropriate land use category for areas that are not clearly delineated on the smaller scale Future Land Use Plan contained in the Comprehensive Plan document.
12. A rezoning proposal's density should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. The actual density approved should take into consideration the parcel zoning, adjacent land uses, the nature of the proposed development, and other relevant policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
13. Non-residential development proposals should be evaluated according to the types of uses, and the ability of existing or planned infrastructure to provide adequate services to these uses.
14. Design guidelines should be established for development within areas that are planned for non-residential uses to ensure these areas develop with a high quality, compatible design. Standards and guidelines should address elements including, but not limited to, minimum lot size, building scale, building setbacks, lighting, landscaping, screening and fencing, signage, internal circulation, and building materials.

Willow Park should periodically evaluate its development review and approval process, and should revise its process as needed to ensure the following: (1) that adequate opportunity is provided for public input in appropriate development projects; (2) that consistency and predictability are maximized for all parties involved in the process; and (3) that the process helps to achieve the goals and implement the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



**SECTION 5:
PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN**



SECTION 5: PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Public Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the expectations a community's residents have regarding specific public services and the facilities that are needed to provide these services. Public buildings that house the various governmental and service functions of a municipality are generally of two types:

1. Those requiring a nearly central or common location and that serve the entire municipal area.
2. Those serving segments of the community on a service area basis.

The Willow Park City Hall is an example of a governmental building that serves the entire community, while a fire station represents a public building that has a service area relationship to the community.

The demands for public building space at all levels of government normally increase as the population served grows and as the level of service expands. As a general rule, increased levels of service are required as population grows. When the ultimate population of 25,000 is reached, an estimated 250 employees and/or service providers, including independent contractors, may be required to accommodate the essential municipal functions, including fire, police and utilities. Assuming the 20-year projection shown in the *Future Land Use Plan*, the 2020 population is estimated to be 5,871. An estimated 59 employees and/or service providers may be required by 2020. The service level that exists today will likely need to be increased in the future. Generally, increases in the population lead to increases in the demand for higher levels of service. Additional office and operational space will be required to house additional employees and expanded City services. Buildings and services will continue to grow as Willow Park approaches its ultimate capacity.

Additional public buildings will be required in order to meet the needs of the City's growing population.

FUTURE BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Most public buildings tend to be fairly long-term investments, and therefore, they should be initially scaled to meet the needs of the community. However, the expansion or construction of new facilities should always consider growing needs and, where appropriate, should be able to accommodate evolving service requirements. The following is an estimate of basic facilities needed pursuant to the estimated potential population for the Willow Park planning area.

CITY HALL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

Of the estimated 220 total estimated City employees needed to serve the ultimate population, approximately one-quarter could be located in the City Hall and/or other municipal office buildings or annexes. Based on a ratio of 100 square feet per citizen, the eventual office and administrative space to house administrative personnel would contain approximately 25,000 square feet.

Assuming the 2020 population estimate of 5,871, approximately 5,900 square feet of office and administrative space will be needed over the next 20 years.

POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES

The City of Willow Park currently employs 8 Police full-time Department Personnel, housed entirely within the existing City Hall building. This staff is comprised of a Police Chief, a Captain, two Sergeants, three Patrol Officers and an Administrative Assistant. The City also has available 9 Reserve Officer positions, six of which are filled as of the date of this report. Inclusive of patrol personnel and the necessary command structure, Willow Park employs 2.4 officers per 1,000 population. Assuming that the current ratio is maintained, a total of 60 officers will be required to serve the ultimate population of 25,000. The Police Department must also employ support personnel, such as dispatchers and clerks, necessitating an additional estimated 25 employees. Accordingly, a total of 85 police department personnel will be required at build-out. Assuming the 2020 estimate of 5,871 persons, a total of 14 police officers and 6 support personnel will be required over the next 20 years.

As the City's population continues to expand from the City center, it is assumed that satellite stations will eventually be established to ensure comprehensive and efficient service throughout the community. Satellite stations will be located centrally to a specific or targeted area.

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Fire protection services are currently provided via volunteer services located within a fire hall located centrally within the community. As the community grows, its need for fire protection services will also grow. The types of fire protection services will also evolve to provide protection to a much more urban level of development. Taking into account anticipated levels of urbanization and response times, it is recommended that fire stations be placed at three mile intervals with each station serving an area with a 1.5 mile radius. With these assumptions, a total of 4 fire stations would be needed at build out. Only one station of stations will be required to serve the estimated 2020 population of 5,871. Placement of these facilities should take into account the physical features and constraints of the population and commercial centers to be served. Specifically, site selection and location should take into account anticipated response times and alternative emergency service routes.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The standard typically recommended by the American Library Association (ALS) is 0.75 square feet per library patron. Assuming this ALS standard, approximately 16,500 square feet of library space will be needed to serve the build-out population of 22,000. Over the next 20 years, a total of 4,400 square feet of library space will be required to serve a population of 5,871. It is recommended that the 20-year and ultimate library facilities be built within one central location. The public library would be appropriately located within the Town Center or could be coordinated with any future educational facilities.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that rapidly changing technology and operation methods often modify the spatial needs of municipal employees over time. These recommendations are intended to provide general guidance, however, citizen opinion should be taken into account and detailed architectural evaluation should be undertaken prior to initiating the design of any new facility or modification of any existing public facility. It is recommended that in approximately five years (unless population occurs more rapidly than projected) the City of Willow Park establish a detailed public facilities plan and architectural evaluation of municipal services and buildings to determine if the expansion of existing facilities or the construction of new facilities is necessary. Some communities have jointly developed certain public buildings and services, such as fire protection services, police protection services and animal shelters. Willow Park should consider this option due to its many advantages, including lower construction and operational costs. In addition, the City should evaluate and maximize appropriate opportunities to enter into joint projects with other governmental entities to maximize services and minimize duplication of services and/or facilities. For example, all viable options to integrate schools with public libraries and community centers would maximize the construction dollars and minimize the operations budgets of each entity.



**SECTION 6:
PARKS, RECREATION AND
OPEN SPACE PLAN**



SECTION 6: PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

A vital component of any community is the space devoted to satisfying active and passive recreational needs – the need to relax and play. The quantity and type of park facilities and open space areas should be a direct reflection of the quality of life enjoyed by residents. The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to examine and analyze existing recreational opportunities within the City of Willow Park, and to provide a master plan for the open space system that is consistent with present and future community needs.

EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS

Currently, public park facilities are very limited. A total of 245.2 acres has been developed for park, recreation, and open space uses. However, all but 13.5 acres has been developed for private use. The amount of public park space is well below the standard outlined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The facility located off of Ranch House Road, adjacent to City Hall, contains a play area for smaller children in addition to some passive amenities. The park located off of Bankhead Highway provides contains ball fields and provides for more active recreational activities.

PARK TYPES AND RECOMMENDED STANDARDS

Most municipal park systems have a hierarchy of park areas that defines the various types of activities that are to be furnished by each type of park in the system. When a functional classification system is used, parks can be broadly identified by their type, size and service area. Application of this process and approach to drafting and formulating the Parks and Open Space Plan results in parks placed within the appropriate areas of the community, as well as maximizing their cost of improvement. The following describes a commonly used classification system that follows guidelines similar to those set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Adequate park and recreation facilities are an extremely important element for a high quality of life within the Community.

Each park type is discussed below in order to: (1) identify the function of the park; (2) identify recreational activities associated with each park; and (3) define the general service area and the physical relationship of each park to the population residing within its service area.

A. Mini-Park

A mini-park is a small area used as a children's playground or for use as a passive or aesthetic area by citizens.

- ◆ Mini-parks are designed to serve a very small population area. Appropriate size standards range from 0.25 to 0.3 acre per one thousand persons. These parks normally serve a population base of 500 to 1,000 persons, and they generally range in size from 0.125 to 0.25 acres per park.
- ◆ If used, the primary function should be to provide recreational space for preschool-age children and elementary school-age children near their residences.
- ◆ Where substantial development of high-density housing is proposed, it is appropriate that the mini-parks be provided as an integral part of the residential development.
- ◆ Because of maintenance costs that are required to maintain a mini-park, it is recommended that these parks be developed and maintained privately.

B. Neighborhood Park

The neighborhood park, sometimes referred to as a playground, is considered to be one of the most important features of a park system, and is often considered to be one of the major cohesive elements in neighborhood design. Its primary function is the provision of recreational space for the entire neighborhood that surrounds it.

- ◆ When it is possible to combine an elementary school with this type of park, the two features further enhance the identity of the neighborhood by providing a central location for recreation and education, and by providing a significant open space feature within the neighborhood.
- ◆ A neighborhood park should be located near the center of the neighborhood, and should have a service area of approximately one-half mile to three-fourths mile.

- ◆ Safe and convenient pedestrian access (walkways or hike-and-bike trails) is important to a neighborhood park location.
- ◆ Generally, the location should not be adjacent to a heavily traveled major thoroughfare.
- ◆ Facilities normally provided at a neighborhood park consist of:
 - Playground equipment for small children;
 - A multiple-purpose, surfaced play area;
 - An athletic area (non-lighted) for games such as baseball, football and soccer, and a surfaced area for such sports as volleyball, basketball and similar activities;
 - Pavilions for picnics with tables and grills are desirable, as well as restrooms and drinking fountains;
 - Tennis courts for casual play are considered a desirable feature of a neighborhood park;
 - A passive area is a desirable part of the playground facility and should include landscaping, trees and any natural areas; and,
 - It is not desirable to light larger athletic facilities due to the fact that lighting is often objectionable to nearby residents.
- ◆ Neighborhood parks are designed to serve a small population area. These parks ideally range in size from five to 10 acres.

C. Community Park

A community park, sometimes referred to as a play field, is usually a larger area than a neighborhood park, and is oriented primarily to have active recreational facilities for all ages.

- ◆ A community park serves several neighborhood areas; therefore, it should be conveniently accessible by automobile, and it should include provisions for off-street parking.
- ◆ Activities provided may include:
 - Practice fields for baseball, football and soccer;
 - A community building;
 - Tennis courts;
 - A surfaced multiple purpose play area;
 - Some play apparatus;
 - A passive area for picnicking; and,
 - Other special facilities, such as Frisbee and golf, if space is available.
- ◆ The service radius of a play field is one-half to two miles, and a location adjacent to, or as an integral part of, a junior high or high school is considered desirable.

- ◆ Community parks are designed to serve a medium local population area. They generally range in size from 10 acres to 60 acres.

D. Large/Regional Parks

Areas that are 60 to 100 (or more) acres in size, which provide both passive and active recreational facilities as listed under community parks, are usually classified as large parks (sometimes called athletic fields). It is desirable that a balance of active and passive recreational facilities be provided in a large park. Such facilities may include picnicking, fishing, water areas, camping and hiking and natural areas. Dependent upon location, need, and possibly topography, some community park features may be placed in the large park. These parks are often lighted and have multi-purpose functions.

E. Special Park Areas

Golf courses, historic areas or sites, linear parks/greenbelts, country clubs, zoos, botanical gardens and special athletic and community centers, including civic centers, are considered to be special types of recreational facilities. These park areas can be of any size, and standards for this type of facility are variable and dependent upon the extent of services provided by the special facility.

F. Parkways and Ornamental Areas

Plazas, street medians, scenic drives and grounds of public buildings and similar facilities are important aspects of the overall park system and should receive careful attention for their development and maintenance.

G. Open Space

These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, but are not necessarily characterized as preserves. No active uses are usually accommodated in these areas.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The recreational facilities the cities offer its residents should generally be in accordance with the current needs of the City of Willow Park, as well as with the anticipated or expected of needs that may arise in the future. Anticipated needs can be forecasted based on sound standards and development guidelines that are related to the population to be served. Expectation of needs is usually determined through the analysis of material and data furnished by persons actively engaged in some type of recreational activity. When both are considered and set forth in a logical plan and program for implementation, a sound Parks and Open Space Master Plan for active and passive uses can evolve within the community.

This section of the study sets forth the needs assessment for determining future facilities. This assessment and evaluation utilizes two approaches for determining park and recreation needs: (1) demand-based and (2) standard-based.

I. Demand-Based

This approach, used to assist in assessing future needs, relies on information and data from citizens and user group sources, or other sources familiar with the wants for certain types of facilities. The method used to attain input for this phase of the needs assessment is to consider requests from citizens and user groups, separated by respective activities.

Based on the input gained from a public workshop during which parks were discussed, the following needs were expressed by citizens of the City of Willow Park.

- ◆ A hiking-and-biking trail system, with opportunities for equestrian activities, linking residential areas to other areas throughout the City, including the proposed Town Center;
- ◆ Local open space for passive recreation located in areas within the City where residents and visitors would be able to enjoy scenic views and picnicking; and
- ◆ Neighborhood Parks.

II. Standard-Based

This approach is used to assist in assessing future recreational needs by following established, recognized standards for assessing the quantity of park land needed, as well as the number of facilities needed, in order to meet the needs of a given population.

Park Area Standard

THE TYPES OF PARKS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED IDENTIFIED VARIOUS PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS THAT MAY BE APPLICABLE TO THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK'S FUTURE PARK AND TRAIL SYSTEM. RECOMMENDED STANDARDS ARE SUMMARIZED IN TABLE 6-1, AND ARE COMPARED TO THE EXISTING AVAILABLE PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS CURRENTLY WITHIN THE CITY AND ITS ETJ.

TABLE 6-1
PARK AREA STANDARDS⁽¹⁾
City of Willow Park and the ETJ Area

Park Type	Recommended Standard (per 100 persons)	Current Acreage ⁽²⁾	Acreage for 5,781 Persons	Acreage for 25,000 Persons
Neighborhood	0.25 acres	0.00 acres (total 0 acres)	15 acres	62.5 acres
Community	0.55 acres	0.46 acres (total 13.5	32.3 acres	137.5 acres
Open Space	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Area per 100 Persons	0.80 acres	0.46 acres	47.3 acres	200 acres

Source: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.

⁽¹⁾ Based on the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards

⁽²⁾ Based on the current estimated population of the City and ETJ area, approximately 2,953 people.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Few facilities and sites are provided within the City of Willow Park to meet the recreational needs of residents. The Parks and Open Space Plan (see **Plate 6-1**) does not reflect a system of urban-style parks. Instead, the Plan attempts to depict a network of hiking/biking/equestrian trails that would be more useful (and enjoyable) to residents in a semi-rural community. The following sections describe each component of the community's parks and open space system along with recommendations for the long-term use and development of each one. During the formulation of goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan, many members of the Steering Committee and local citizens expressed the opinion that the City should develop a pedestrian-oriented system in order to reduce dependence on the automobile within the City. In furthering this objective, it is necessary to establish a conceptual plan to consider where and how this can be integrated into future development decisions. The principle elements and recommendations shown on the attached Parks and Open Space Draft Plan (**Plate 6-1**) are the following:

◆ **Additional Neighborhood Parks**

As mentioned, the City of Willow Park currently has one park of this type. As **Table 6-1** shows, however, the City only has 0.18 acres per 100 persons, and this is below the accepted ratio of 0.25 acres per 100 persons. More parks of this type are needed in Willow Park. It is important for residents of the City to be able to easily walk to a park space. Locating small parks intermittently throughout residential areas will help to ensure their accessibility. Recommended locations are shown in a generalized way on **Plate 6-1**.

◆ **View Parks**

The concept of this park is to provide the residents of and visitors to the City of Willow Park with access to the scenic Hill Country views in and around the City. In addition, the preserve areas that are located within the City's ETJ are not accessible to the public, however, the natural views that these areas provide should be. By establishing view parks at various high points throughout Willow Park, such views will be able to be enjoyed by everyone, and not reserved for enjoyment by a single landowner or by residents of a single neighborhood. In addition, the establishment of these parks at the high points would protect ridgelines

from intense development that would harm the integrity of these areas. Several parks of this type are shown in recommended locations on **Plate 5-1**, primarily in the western portions of the City and the ETJ.

♦ **Linkages Throughout the City**

Since large areas of the City are not yet developed, opportunities exist to create an integrated, continuous system of trails and pathways throughout the community. Developing a trail system in Willow Park is likely the best way to allow residents multi-modal access to the various areas throughout the City. Priority areas to be integrated into a community-wide system include existing and proposed residential neighborhoods, park and open space areas, retail and office areas, the new Town Center, and the City Municipal Hall. Hike-and-bike trails should be at least eight feet wide and should be composed of crushed stone (compacted to ensure ADA compliance) or similar material. Equestrian trails should be included wherever possible. In many cases, equestrian trails can parallel hike-and-bike trails.

The ideal location for these trails would be parallel to floodways and other major drainageways throughout the planning area. However, there are several places where these areas have already been developed or are privately owned, and therefore may not be available for the incorporation of a trail system. The City should attempt to overcome this limitation by utilizing alternative trail alignments and construction options, such as street rights-of-way, and by working closely with landowners and business owners to ultimately create a fully integrated trail throughout Willow Park. Participation in the hike-and-bike trail system will not be mandatory in areas already developed.

The City of Willow Park may be able to acquire funding for this expensive venture through requirements such as impact fees and dedication programs. Regardless of the challenges, the implementation of a trail system is a significant quality-of-life issue, and therefore it is an objective that should be pursued in the City of Willow Park.

Insert Plate 6-1: Parks and Open Space Plan

RESIDENTIAL

Single-family residential uses comprise the greatest use of land throughout the planning area, 89.8 percent. Plan objectives specifically call for the preservation of the existing housing stock as well as encouraging high quality residential neighborhoods that meet the City's diverse housing needs.

The Future Land Use Plan specifies three types of residential land uses. These uses are defined on the basis of residential density.

Residential – Rural

Acres: 10,299.3

Percent of Planning Area: 63.7%

Density: 0.37 Dwelling Units per Acre

Single Family Residential – Low Density uses are located where existing development matches this type of development and in the northern portion of the planning area. Development within these areas may be typically characterized as large-lot residential, with many lots exceeding 2.5 acres. Development within this land use category is intended to be rural with street cross sections that provide for a “country” feel. Low-density uses are located with respect to the physical features of the planning area, limitations of wastewater utility services, and to preserve existing pockets of low-density residential developments.

These are the lowest-intensity uses specified by the Future Land Use Plan and should be set back from Willow Park's major highways and thoroughfares. In addition, this use should be buffered from non-residential land uses via major natural and man-made physical features and/or transitional land uses. The land use pattern has been designed to minimize situations where *Residential – Rural* uses directly abut highways and major thoroughfares as well as higher-intensity residential and non-residential uses. However, it is extremely difficult to eliminate all such situations and, where appropriate, these other potentially incompatible land uses should be designed so that they are integrated with the residential character of the neighborhood areas they abut.



Illustration 4.1
Typical Residential Rural
Development

Residential – Semi-Rural

Acres: 4,160.9
Percent of Planning Area: 25.7%
Density: 1.33 Dwelling Units per Acre

Residential – Semi-Rural uses are concentrated within the central portion of the planning area. Development within these areas will evolve in a more urban environment, with an average lot size of .75 acres. The volume of daily traffic warrants the location of these uses within close proximity to major thoroughfares and with direct access to major collectors. It is anticipated that these areas will be served with full utility services, especially including wastewater collection and treatment.

Due to the urban nature of this land use category, it is appropriately located adjacent to high-intensity residential, office, retail, and commercial uses. *Residential – Semi-Rural* uses serve as a transition for the *Residential – Rural* uses. It is appropriate that local retail establishments and professional offices be located directly adjacent to *Residential – Rural* uses since they often provide those goods and services consumed by those living in close proximity.

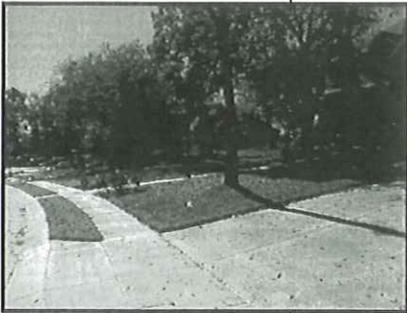


Illustration 4.2
Typical Residential Semi-Rural Development

Residential – Mixed Use

Acres: 156.4
Percent of Planning Area: 1.0%
Density: 10.0 Dwelling Units per Acre

Residential – Mixed Use uses are targeted to specific areas and are intended primarily as transitional land uses that either buffer other single family residential developments or

take advantage of existing natural features. Development within this land use category is intended to provide the opportunity for a mixture of residential types and densities. Appropriate residential uses include multi-family residential, duplexes, townhomes, and “patio homes.”

Overall, development within these areas should not exceed 10.0 dwelling units per acre. Multi-family development within these areas should not exceed a density of 20.0 dwelling units per acre.

Residential – Mixed Use uses are appropriately located along major thoroughfares and collectors. They generate high volumes of residential traffic and should be designed to discourage through traffic through lower-density residential neighborhoods. They are also appropriately located immediately adjacent to multi-family, office, retail, commercial and industrial uses. However, where multi-family and non-residential uses directly abut *Residential – Mixed Use* uses, they should be designed to integrate with the neighborhoods.

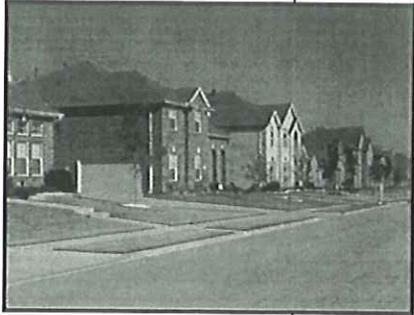


Illustration 4.3
Typical Single Family Development



Illustration 4.4
Typical Multi-Family Development

OFFICE/RETAIL

Acres: 371.6

Percent of Planning Area: 2.3%

The growth of Willow Park's residential sector has resulted in the growth of retail and office uses along I.H. 20. As housing and population totals within and immediately adjacent to the current City limits continue to rise, it is anticipated that the non-residential uses will also grow to serve the increasing local demand. Furthermore, once the population has reached a certain point it is anticipated that the intensity of retail and commercial uses will also increase and major retailers or "big box" developments will be attracted to the City.

While major retailers may prove to be a positive sign of economic growth, they generate unwanted noise, traffic and pollution. Accordingly, major retail nodes should be located primarily along highly visible travel corridors. The Future Land Use Plan provides two major retail nodes that are located at intersections with major thoroughfares where appropriate access may be provided to facilitate proper traffic circulation. Existing and/or planned single-family residential developments should also be buffered from major retail nodes by either transitional land uses or major physical features.

Small-scale office and retail operations, which house small operations such as professional offices and neighborhood-oriented establishments, are appropriately located immediately adjacent to single family and multi-family residential uses. The Future Land Use Plan provides for the location of these uses along major thoroughfares. These uses buffer existing and planned residential developments from these major transportation corridors.

Office and retail development for both large and small-scale developments that are within close proximity to single family residential areas should take into consideration the following:

- Lighting of parking lots, signage and building security;
- Hours of operation,
- Loading and unloading of freight and merchandise;



Illustration 4.5
Typical Office Development



Illustration 4.6
Typical Retail Development

- Primary and secondary site access (access through neighborhoods should be prohibited);
- Drive-through operations;
- Storm water management; and
- Architectural and site design.

TOWN CENTER

Acres: 214.1

Percent of Planning Area: 1.3%

One of Willow Park's greatest challenges is the creation of a sense of place. The way a community is viewed from the road has greatly impacts the perceptions of citizens and its visitors. Furthermore, a City center is an extremely important element in establishing a sense of place and a sense of community.



Illustration 4.7
Typical Town Center Development

Retail development occurring along the I.H. 20 corridor does not offer diversity or uniqueness in terms of its architectural design and layout. It is occurring according to a typical strip development pattern. Ultimately, this type of development creates a "commercialized" feel that is similar to many other places throughout the Country and fails to provide that unique identity that is important to the City of Willow Park.

The *Town Center* use is intended to provide the City of Willow Park with a concentrated, mixed-use focal point and center of business/government near the heart of the City. This area is also intended to provide the community with additional tax revenues and jobs that are close to home. A mixture of land uses is appropriate for the *Town Center* area, as it is intended to remain a place for local residents to shop, conduct personal and government-related business, reside at the same location as their business (i.e. loft apartments above retail shops), meet neighbors, eat at a local café, enjoy arts/cultural facilities (such as a local museum), gather for community events and festivals, and other similar activities. A public plaza/open space area and landscaping should be encouraged within this area. Open storage should be prohibited to ensure an attractive appearance from neighboring properties. In addition, a comprehensive streetscape program is recommended to create a welcome, pedestrian friendly environment.

COMMERCIAL

Acres: 630.5

Percent of Planning Area: 3.9%

Commercial uses generate noise, odor, dust and pollution that make them generally incompatible with single-family residential uses. They are appropriately located immediately adjacent to major thoroughfares and should be buffered from residential uses through transitional land uses and/or physical buffers.



Illustration 4.8
Typical Commercial Use

The Future Land Use Plan provides a major commercial corridor along I.H. 20. It also provides for a major commercial node at the southeast corner of the planning area, at the intersection of I.H. 20 and the planned primary arterial. Commercial tracts should contain at least 800 feet in depth with shared drive access requirements to facilitate traffic circulation. Special guidelines for commercial development should be adopted that require:

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area;
- Strict signage and parking area design guidelines;
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards; and
- Minimum exterior building façade standards.

These guidelines will help create development corridors that enhance the view from the road. They will also help ensure that open storage, site design and building types for commercial uses will blend with the future vision for the City's major entryways as well as for the community as a whole. If this strategy is followed, the City of Willow Park should realize higher visual quality and higher property values along these corridors.

INDUSTRIAL

Acres: 63.6

Percent of Planning Area: 0.4%

Willow Park has designated an area for industrial development that provides the opportunity to capitalize on a variety of industrial land use types. The greatest obstacle to short-term industrial expansion within the community is the lack of transportation facilities and utility services within the existing City limits.

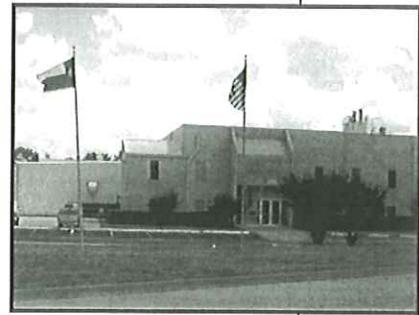


Illustration 4.9
Typical Industrial Development

The Future Land Use Plan has specified an industrial node south of the intersection of I.H. 20 and the planned primary thoroughfare. This node is buffered from surrounding single-family residential uses to the south and west by transitional land uses. This area is intended to be developed in a campus setting with appropriate design characteristics that will ensure compatibility with the *Residential – Mixed Use* area designated immediately to the west. This node is appropriate for a broad range of commercial, light, medium, and heavy industrial uses.

Development guidelines should be adopted for construction of or expansion to industrial uses that address the following:

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors;
- Minimum standards for the discharge of particulate matter, smoke, and dust;
- Minimum access requirements to major thoroughfares and major collectors;
- Minimum standards for the generation of noise;
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area;
- Strict signage and parking area design guidelines;
- Buffering and screening where adjacent to residential uses;
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards; and
- Minimum exterior building façade standards.

Application of these guidelines will help to ensure development of an industrial area that is both compatible with the community's vision and future land use pattern. They will also help to mitigate any negative environmental impacts and assure sustained property values within the node as well as for any adjacent properties.

PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC

Acres: 23.3

Percent of Planning Area: 0.1%

Communities require a variety of public services to meet the needs of the community. These services are provided by several different organizations that provide services pertaining to the health, safety, welfare and quality of life throughout the community. These services are mostly provided by “public” or not-for-profit entities that require physical facilities to provide their respective services.



Illustration 4.10
Typical Public/Semi Public Use

The public facilities shown on the Future Land Use Plan include properties owned by local and regional governments in addition to those of other semi-public agencies like churches. The *Public/Semi-Public* uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan include:

- Municipal facilities (i.e. City Hall, police, fire, utility, solid waste);
- Public school facilities (i.e. W.I.S.D., Willow Park College);
- County facilities (i.e. County Courthouse, County Annex);
- State facilities (i.e. Texas Department of Public Safety);
- Federal facilities (i.e. U.S. Post Office); and
- Other (i.e. churches, VFW).

As the population grows, additional public and semi-public facilities will be required to provide the same level of service throughout the community.

PARK/OPEN SPACE

Acres: 250.0

Percent of Planning Area: 1.5%

Park/Open Space uses are those areas set aside or developed for passive or active recreational uses or for the preservation of natural areas to be left undisturbed. No active uses are generally accommodated in areas designated for open spaces. For many citizens, the parks and open space system correlates directly to the quality of life enjoyed by those residing within the City of Willow Park. The Park/Open Space Plan strives to outline a strategy to develop and enhance the City's system of neighborhood, community and regional recreational facilities. The Park/Open Space Plan contains the following major components:

- Conservation of open spaces,
- Expansion of the rail-trail system,
- Creation of a leisure park system, and
- Expansion of the existing active recreational facilities.

Future park and open space needs are projected as a function of population growth and pursuant to park standards established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Parks are sited so that they are located equitably to the populations they are intended to serve.



Illustration 4.10
Typical Private Recreational Use

FUTURE POPULATION INCREASE

The population growth of Willow Park will likely be regulated by a great extent by the rate at which the housing inventory can be expanded in price ranges that will permit and encourage persons to reside within the community. The general increases in housing costs will, however, tend to be a factor in moderating any rapid expansion of the population. Housing activity within Parker County will likely continue to increase, as will the number of proposed housing developments, and therefore, continued population gains can probably be expected for at least the next several years in the City of Willow Park. Over the last ten years, Willow Park has experienced a steady increase in population, due mainly to the area's healthy economy, increased interest in a rural lifestyle, and the dramatically increasing cost of housing within close proximity to the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth.

Population projections are significant to the process of assessing the quantity of land that should be allocated to each land use and how intensely land should be used in order to support desired population numbers. As previously discussed, in the Baseline Analysis, the estimated 2000 population is approximately 2,953 persons. Using this population estimate as a base year population, a series of projections were made for planning purposes. **Table 4-3** compares three growth scenarios.

Willow Park is expected to experience a substantial increase in its rate of growth over the next 30 years.

**Table 4-3
Projected Population Growth**

Year	Historic (2.0%)		Recommended (3.5%)		High (5.0%)	
	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate
1970*	230	---	230	---	230	---
1980*	1,113	17.1%	1,113	17.1%	1,113	17.1%
1990*	2,328	7.7%	2,328	7.7%	2,328	7.7%
2000**	2,953	2.4%	2,953	2.4%	2,953	2.4%
2010	3,603	2.0%	4,164	3.5%	4,813	5.0%
2020	4,395	2.0%	5,871	3.5%	7,846	5.0%
2030	5,362	2.0%	8,278	3.5%	12,789	5.0%

* U.S. Census Estimate.

** Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc., August 2001.

The growth scenarios shown in **Table 4-3** represent a reasonable range of growth rates for the City of Willow Park. The higher projection (“C”) would require a housing response and an influx of population that, under prevailing conditions, is not occurring. The lowest projection (“A”) indicates a rate of growth that is similar to that experienced over the last several years. The middle growth scenario (“B”) reflects a rate of residential growth that is almost twice that of the current rate of growth

Scenario “B” is recommended for planning purposes. It assumes that the housing growth trend will continue to increase and that the City of Willow Park will start capturing a greater percentage of the county’s population increase. As Willow Park’s wastewater collection and treatment system is expanded, the City will develop several new pockets of residential development.

INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

At times, the City will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Careful consideration should be given to any development proposal that is inconsistent with the Plan. When such a proposal is presented to the City of Willow Park, it should be reviewed based upon the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the proposed site and the surrounding area?
- Is the proposed change a better use than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or, will the proposed use be compatible with, or even enhance, adjacent residential properties?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to either the City or the community as a whole in terms of public health, safety and/or welfare (i.e. would it address a physical or social need of the community or its citizens; would it be to the City's economic advantage; would it add needed jobs in a particular employment sector, etc.)?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or which do not meet its general intent) should be reviewed based on the above questions. It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown on the Plan for a particular area. This may be due to changing market, development and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future, after the Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City, then these proposals should probably be approved unless they would have a negative impact upon the surrounding area and/or the City in general. Each development proposal should be reviewed on its own merit, and it should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that the proposal would enhance the community based upon the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and upon community objectives and values.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP INTERPRETATION POLICIES

Rezoning or other development approvals for land uses not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or Comprehensive Plan) should not be approved until the Plan has been amended, as appropriate, to provide for such land uses.

If a rezoning proposal is consistent with the Plan (i.e. is the same or very similar), then the request should be processed as any other request is processed. A statement/determination should be made in a municipal staff report that the proposed request is consistent with the Plan. This should not mandate approval by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the City Council, but should be the first prerequisite in the review process. The request should still be reviewed on its own merit based upon additional criteria such as traffic impact, compatibility with surrounding uses and adjacency standards, among others.

If a rezoning proposal is not consistent with the Plan, then an amendment to the Plan should occur prior to approving the request. It should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence proving that the proposed rezoning is better or more consistent with land uses in the surrounding area than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan map. If this is the case, then Willow Park could initiate a Plan amendment process. To expedite the process, Plan amendments may be processed simultaneously with rezoning change requests. The Plan map should be updated at least once or twice annually to ensure that it reflects any Future Land Use Plan amendments.

FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES

The following statements describe recommended policies that should guide Willow Park's future land use planning efforts:

1. Willow Park should use the Future Land Use Plan and the associated policies in this report to establish the general pattern of development within the community. This pattern of development should be implemented through the City's development regulations.
2. The Future Land Use Plan provides the general description of land use categories, and the text in this report provides an explanation of key components of the Plan. Willow Park should maintain the Future Land Use Plan to provide areas for different types of land uses and intensities, and should plan for public services and facilities appropriate for the planned land uses. The Plan establishes the general pattern of future land use, as appropriate, to achieve the City's goals and objectives as well as those of the community as a whole.
3. Willow Park should identify sufficient locations for residential and non-residential development (especially in the ETJ) to accommodate projected growth with provision of additional land use capacity for market choice and flexibility.
4. Willow Park should plan areas for a variety of residential housing types and densities.
5. Willow Park should implement improvements to its thoroughfare system to support the land use pattern specified in the Future Land Use Plan. Specifically, the City should initiate and implement a 5-year capital improvements program for the orderly and consistent improvement of the system to meet growing demand.
6. The planned industrial area should be of sufficient size and should be appropriately located to support the community's economic development goals and strategies.
7. Willow Park should use its planning and development regulations to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible activities, or from land uses that may have a negative impact upon a residential living environment.

8. Residential developments adjacent to park or to public open spaces should be designed to facilitate public access to and use of the park/trail, while minimizing potential traffic conflicts between park users and residents of the neighborhood.
9. In reviewing development proposals, the City should consider issues of community character, compatibility of land use, residents' security and safety, and efficient service provision, since these are important qualities of any community and should be emphasized.
10. Willow Park should encourage future patterns of development and land use that would reduce infrastructure construction costs and would make efficient use of existing and planned public facilities.
11. The official copy of the Future Land Use map will be on file in the City of Willow Park. The boundaries of the land use categories as depicted on the official map should be used to determine the appropriate land use category for areas that are not clearly delineated on the smaller scale Future Land Use Plan contained in the Comprehensive Plan document.
12. A rezoning proposal's density should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. The actual density approved should take into consideration the parcel zoning, adjacent land uses, the nature of the proposed development, and other relevant policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
13. Non-residential development proposals should be evaluated according to the types of uses, and the ability of existing or planned infrastructure to provide adequate services to these uses.
14. Design guidelines should be established for development within areas that are planned for non-residential uses to ensure these areas develop with a high quality, compatible design. Standards and guidelines should address elements including, but not limited to, minimum lot size, building scale, building setbacks, lighting, landscaping, screening and fencing, signage, internal circulation, and building materials.

Willow Park should periodically evaluate its development review and approval process, and should revise its process as needed to ensure the following: (1) that adequate opportunity is provided for public input in appropriate development projects; (2) that consistency and predictability are maximized for all parties involved in the process; and (3) that the process helps to achieve the goals and implement the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



**SECTION 5:
PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN**



SECTION 5: PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Public Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the expectations a community's residents have regarding specific public services and the facilities that are needed to provide these services. Public buildings that house the various governmental and service functions of a municipality are generally of two types:

1. Those requiring a nearly central or common location and that serve the entire municipal area.
2. Those serving segments of the community on a service area basis.

The Willow Park City Hall is an example of a governmental building that serves the entire community, while a fire station represents a public building that has a service area relationship to the community.

The demands for public building space at all levels of government normally increase as the population served grows and as the level of service expands. As a general rule, increased levels of service are required as population grows. When the ultimate population of 25,000 is reached, an estimated 250 employees and/or service providers, including independent contractors, may be required to accommodate the essential municipal functions, including fire, police and utilities. Assuming the 20-year projection shown in the *Future Land Use Plan*, the 2020 population is estimated to be 5,871. An estimated 59 employees and/or service providers may be required by 2020. The service level that exists today will likely need to be increased in the future. Generally, increases in the population lead to increases in the demand for higher levels of service. Additional office and operational space will be required to house additional employees and expanded City services. Buildings and services will continue to grow as Willow Park approaches its ultimate capacity.

Additional public buildings will be required in order to meet the needs of the City's growing population.

FUTURE BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Most public buildings tend to be fairly long-term investments, and therefore, they should be initially scaled to meet the needs of the community. However, the expansion or construction of new facilities should always consider growing needs and, where appropriate, should be able to accommodate evolving service requirements. The following is an estimate of basic facilities needed pursuant to the estimated potential population for the Willow Park planning area.

CITY HALL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

Of the estimated 220 total estimated City employees needed to serve the ultimate population, approximately one-quarter could be located in the City Hall and/or other municipal office buildings or annexes. Based on a ratio of 100 square feet per citizen, the eventual office and administrative space to house administrative personnel would contain approximately 25,000 square feet.

Assuming the 2020 population estimate of 5,871, approximately 5,900 square feet of office and administrative space will be needed over the next 20 years.

POLICE PROTECTION SERVICES

The City of Willow Park currently employs 8 Police full-time Department Personnel, housed entirely within the existing City Hall building. This staff is comprised of a Police Chief, a Captain, two Sergeants, three Patrol Officers and an Administrative Assistant. The City also has available 9 Reserve Officer positions, six of which are filled as of the date of this report. Inclusive of patrol personnel and the necessary command structure, Willow Park employs 2.4 officers per 1,000 population. Assuming that the current ratio is maintained, a total of 60 officers will be required to serve the ultimate population of 25,000. The Police Department must also employ support personnel, such as dispatchers and clerks, necessitating an additional estimated 25 employees. Accordingly, a total of 85 police department personnel will be required at build-out. Assuming the 2020 estimate of 5,871 persons, a total of 14 police officers and 6 support personnel will be required over the next 20 years.

As the City's population continues to expand from the City center, it is assumed that satellite stations will eventually be established to ensure comprehensive and efficient service throughout the community. Satellite stations will be located centrally to a specific or targeted area.

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Fire protection services are currently provided via volunteer services located within a fire hall located centrally within the community. As the community grows, its need for fire protection services will also grow. The types of fire protection services will also evolve to provide protection to a much more urban level of development. Taking into account anticipated levels of urbanization and response times, it is recommended that fire stations be placed at three mile intervals with each station serving an area with a 1.5 mile radius. With these assumptions, a total of 4 fire stations would be needed at build out. Only one station of stations will be required to serve the estimated 2020 population of 5,871. Placement of these facilities should take into account the physical features and constraints of the population and commercial centers to be served. Specifically, site selection and location should take into account anticipated response times and alternative emergency service routes.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The standard typically recommended by the American Library Association (ALS) is 0.75 square feet per library patron. Assuming this ALS standard, approximately 16,500 square feet of library space will be needed to serve the build-out population of 22,000. Over the next 20 years, a total of 4,400 square feet of library space will be required to serve a population of 5,871. It is recommended that the 20-year and ultimate library facilities be built within one central location. The public library would be appropriately located within the Town Center or could be coordinated with any future educational facilities.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that rapidly changing technology and operation methods often modify the spatial needs of municipal employees over time. These recommendations are intended to provide general guidance, however, citizen opinion should be taken into account and detailed architectural evaluation should be undertaken prior to initiating the design of any new facility or modification of any existing public facility. It is recommended that in approximately five years (unless population occurs more rapidly than projected) the City of Willow Park establish a detailed public facilities plan and architectural evaluation of municipal services and buildings to determine if the expansion of existing facilities or the construction of new facilities is necessary. Some communities have jointly developed certain public buildings and services, such as fire protection services, police protection services and animal shelters. Willow Park should consider this option due to its many advantages, including lower construction and operational costs. In addition, the City should evaluate and maximize appropriate opportunities to enter into joint projects with other governmental entities to maximize services and minimize duplication of services and/or facilities. For example, all viable options to integrate schools with public libraries and community centers would maximize the construction dollars and minimize the operations budgets of each entity.



**SECTION 6:
PARKS, RECREATION AND
OPEN SPACE PLAN**



SECTION 6: PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

A vital component of any community is the space devoted to satisfying active and passive recreational needs – the need to relax and play. The quantity and type of park facilities and open space areas should be a direct reflection of the quality of life enjoyed by residents. The purpose of this element of the Comprehensive Plan is to examine and analyze existing recreational opportunities within the City of Willow Park, and to provide a master plan for the open space system that is consistent with present and future community needs.

EXISTING PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS

Currently, public park facilities are very limited. A total of 245.2 acres has been developed for park, recreation, and open space uses. However, all but 13.5 acres has been developed for private use. The amount of public park space is well below the standard outlined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The facility located off of Ranch House Road, adjacent to City Hall, contains a play area for smaller children in addition to some passive amenities. The park located off of Bankhead Highway provides contains ball fields and provides for more active recreational activities.

PARK TYPES AND RECOMMENDED STANDARDS

Most municipal park systems have a hierarchy of park areas that defines the various types of activities that are to be furnished by each type of park in the system. When a functional classification system is used, parks can be broadly identified by their type, size and service area. Application of this process and approach to drafting and formulating the Parks and Open Space Plan results in parks placed within the appropriate areas of the community, as well as maximizing their cost of improvement. The following describes a commonly used classification system that follows guidelines similar to those set forth by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Adequate park and recreation facilities are an extremely important element for a high quality of life within the Community.

Each park type is discussed below in order to: (1) identify the function of the park; (2) identify recreational activities associated with each park; and (3) define the general service area and the physical relationship of each park to the population residing within its service area.

A. Mini-Park

A mini-park is a small area used as a children's playground or for use as a passive or aesthetic area by citizens.

- ◆ Mini-parks are designed to serve a very small population area. Appropriate size standards range from 0.25 to 0.3 acre per one thousand persons. These parks normally serve a population base of 500 to 1,000 persons, and they generally range in size from 0.125 to 0.25 acres per park.
- ◆ If used, the primary function should be to provide recreational space for preschool-age children and elementary school-age children near their residences.
- ◆ Where substantial development of high-density housing is proposed, it is appropriate that the mini-parks be provided as an integral part of the residential development.
- ◆ Because of maintenance costs that are required to maintain a mini-park, it is recommended that these parks be developed and maintained privately.

B. Neighborhood Park

The neighborhood park, sometimes referred to as a playground, is considered to be one of the most important features of a park system, and is often considered to be one of the major cohesive elements in neighborhood design. Its primary function is the provision of recreational space for the entire neighborhood that surrounds it.

- ◆ When it is possible to combine an elementary school with this type of park, the two features further enhance the identity of the neighborhood by providing a central location for recreation and education, and by providing a significant open space feature within the neighborhood.
- ◆ A neighborhood park should be located near the center of the neighborhood, and should have a service area of approximately one-half mile to three-fourths mile.

- ◆ Safe and convenient pedestrian access (walkways or hike-and-bike trails) is important to a neighborhood park location.
- ◆ Generally, the location should not be adjacent to a heavily traveled major thoroughfare.
- ◆ Facilities normally provided at a neighborhood park consist of:
 - Playground equipment for small children;
 - A multiple-purpose, surfaced play area;
 - An athletic area (non-lighted) for games such as baseball, football and soccer, and a surfaced area for such sports as volleyball, basketball and similar activities;
 - Pavilions for picnics with tables and grills are desirable, as well as restrooms and drinking fountains;
 - Tennis courts for casual play are considered a desirable feature of a neighborhood park;
 - A passive area is a desirable part of the playground facility and should include landscaping, trees and any natural areas; and,
 - It is not desirable to light larger athletic facilities due to the fact that lighting is often objectionable to nearby residents.
- ◆ Neighborhood parks are designed to serve a small population area. These parks ideally range in size from five to 10 acres.

C. Community Park

A community park, sometimes referred to as a play field, is usually a larger area than a neighborhood park, and is oriented primarily to have active recreational facilities for all ages.

- ◆ A community park serves several neighborhood areas; therefore, it should be conveniently accessible by automobile, and it should include provisions for off-street parking.
- ◆ Activities provided may include:
 - Practice fields for baseball, football and soccer;
 - A community building;
 - Tennis courts;
 - A surfaced multiple purpose play area;
 - Some play apparatus;
 - A passive area for picnicking; and,
 - Other special facilities, such as Frisbee and golf, if space is available.
- ◆ The service radius of a play field is one-half to two miles, and a location adjacent to, or as an integral part of, a junior high or high school is considered desirable.

- ◆ Community parks are designed to serve a medium local population area. They generally range in size from 10 acres to 60 acres.

D. Large/Regional Parks

Areas that are 60 to 100 (or more) acres in size, which provide both passive and active recreational facilities as listed under community parks, are usually classified as large parks (sometimes called athletic fields). It is desirable that a balance of active and passive recreational facilities be provided in a large park. Such facilities may include picnicking, fishing, water areas, camping and hiking and natural areas. Dependent upon location, need, and possibly topography, some community park features may be placed in the large park. These parks are often lighted and have multi-purpose functions.

E. Special Park Areas

Golf courses, historic areas or sites, linear parks/greenbelts, country clubs, zoos, botanical gardens and special athletic and community centers, including civic centers, are considered to be special types of recreational facilities. These park areas can be of any size, and standards for this type of facility are variable and dependent upon the extent of services provided by the special facility.

F. Parkways and Ornamental Areas

Plazas, street medians, scenic drives and grounds of public buildings and similar facilities are important aspects of the overall park system and should receive careful attention for their development and maintenance.

G. Open Space

These areas are natural and are generally left undisturbed, but are not necessarily characterized as preserves. No active uses are usually accommodated in these areas.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The recreational facilities the cities offer its residents should generally be in accordance with the current needs of the City of Willow Park, as well as with the anticipated or expected of needs that may arise in the future. Anticipated needs can be forecasted based on sound standards and development guidelines that are related to the population to be served. Expectation of needs is usually determined through the analysis of material and data furnished by persons actively engaged in some type of recreational activity. When both are considered and set forth in a logical plan and program for implementation, a sound Parks and Open Space Master Plan for active and passive uses can evolve within the community.

This section of the study sets forth the needs assessment for determining future facilities. This assessment and evaluation utilizes two approaches for determining park and recreation needs: (1) demand-based and (2) standard-based.

I. Demand-Based

This approach, used to assist in assessing future needs, relies on information and data from citizens and user group sources, or other sources familiar with the wants for certain types of facilities. The method used to attain input for this phase of the needs assessment is to consider requests from citizens and user groups, separated by respective activities.

Based on the input gained from a public workshop during which parks were discussed, the following needs were expressed by citizens of the City of Willow Park.

- ◆ A hiking-and-biking trail system, with opportunities for equestrian activities, linking residential areas to other areas throughout the City, including the proposed Town Center;
- ◆ Local open space for passive recreation located in areas within the City where residents and visitors would be able to enjoy scenic views and picnicking; and
- ◆ Neighborhood Parks.

II. Standard-Based

This approach is used to assist in assessing future recreational needs by following established, recognized standards for assessing the quantity of park land needed, as well as the number of facilities needed, in order to meet the needs of a given population.

Park Area Standard

THE TYPES OF PARKS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED IDENTIFIED VARIOUS PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS THAT MAY BE APPLICABLE TO THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK'S FUTURE PARK AND TRAIL SYSTEM. RECOMMENDED STANDARDS ARE SUMMARIZED IN TABLE 6-1, AND ARE COMPARED TO THE EXISTING AVAILABLE PARK AND OPEN SPACE AREAS CURRENTLY WITHIN THE CITY AND ITS ETJ.

TABLE 6-1
PARK AREA STANDARDS⁽¹⁾
City of Willow Park and the ETJ Area

Park Type	Recommended Standard (per 100 persons)	Current Acreage ⁽²⁾	Acreage for 5,781 Persons	Acreage for 25,000 Persons
Neighborhood	0.25 acres	0.00 acres (total 0 acres)	15 acres	62.5 acres
Community	0.55 acres	0.46 acres (total 13.5	32.3 acres	137.5 acres
Open Space	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Area per 100 Persons	0.80 acres	0.46 acres	47.3 acres	200 acres

Source: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.

⁽¹⁾ Based on the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standards

⁽²⁾ Based on the current estimated population of the City and ETJ area, approximately 2,953 people.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Few facilities and sites are provided within the City of Willow Park to meet the recreational needs of residents. The Parks and Open Space Plan (see **Plate 6-1**) does not reflect a system of urban-style parks. Instead, the Plan attempts to depict a network of hiking/biking/equestrian trails that would be more useful (and enjoyable) to residents in a semi-rural community. The following sections describe each component of the community's parks and open space system along with recommendations for the long-term use and development of each one. During the formulation of goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan, many members of the Steering Committee and local citizens expressed the opinion that the City should develop a pedestrian-oriented system in order to reduce dependence on the automobile within the City. In furthering this objective, it is necessary to establish a conceptual plan to consider where and how this can be integrated into future development decisions. The principle elements and recommendations shown on the attached Parks and Open Space Draft Plan (**Plate 6-1**) are the following:

◆ **Additional Neighborhood Parks**

As mentioned, the City of Willow Park currently has one park of this type. As **Table 6-1** shows, however, the City only has 0.18 acres per 100 persons, and this is below the accepted ratio of 0.25 acres per 100 persons. More parks of this type are needed in Willow Park. It is important for residents of the City to be able to easily walk to a park space. Locating small parks intermittently throughout residential areas will help to ensure their accessibility. Recommended locations are shown in a generalized way on **Plate 6-1**.

◆ **View Parks**

The concept of this park is to provide the residents of and visitors to the City of Willow Park with access to the scenic Hill Country views in and around the City. In addition, the preserve areas that are located within the City's ETJ are not accessible to the public, however, the natural views that these areas provide should be. By establishing view parks at various high points throughout Willow Park, such views will be able to be enjoyed by everyone, and not reserved for enjoyment by a single landowner or by residents of a single neighborhood. In addition, the establishment of these parks at the high points would protect ridgelines

from intense development that would harm the integrity of these areas. Several parks of this type are shown in recommended locations on **Plate 5-1**, primarily in the western portions of the City and the ETJ.

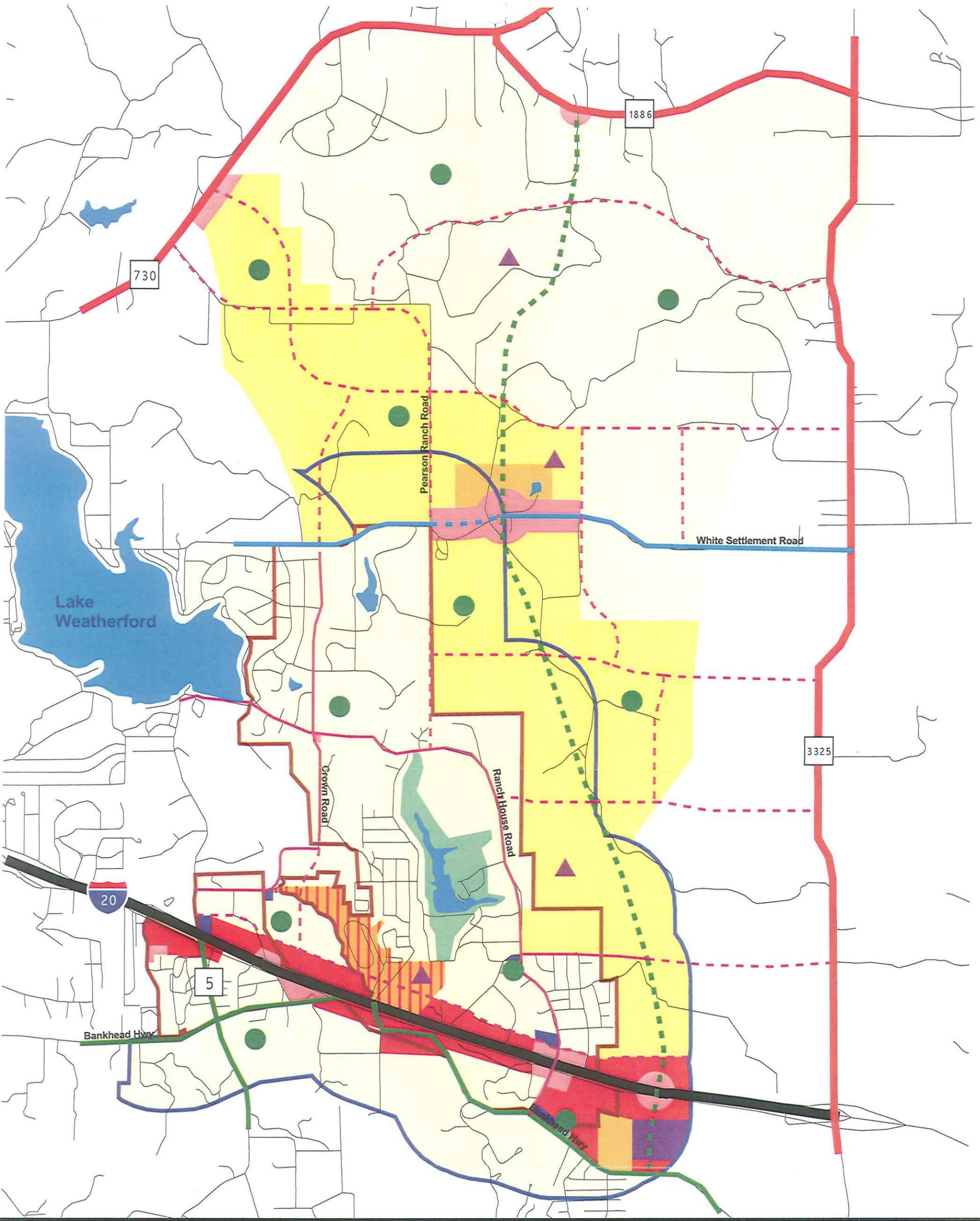
♦ **Linkages Throughout the City**

Since large areas of the City are not yet developed, opportunities exist to create an integrated, continuous system of trails and pathways throughout the community. Developing a trail system in Willow Park is likely the best way to allow residents multi-modal access to the various areas throughout the City. Priority areas to be integrated into a community-wide system include existing and proposed residential neighborhoods, park and open space areas, retail and office areas, the new Town Center, and the City Municipal Hall. Hike-and-bike trails should be at least eight feet wide and should be composed of crushed stone (compacted to ensure ADA compliance) or similar material. Equestrian trails should be included wherever possible. In many cases, equestrian trails can parallel hike-and-bike trails.

The ideal location for these trails would be parallel to floodways and other major drainageways throughout the planning area. However, there are several places where these areas have already been developed or are privately owned, and therefore may not be available for the incorporation of a trail system. The City should attempt to overcome this limitation by utilizing alternative trail alignments and construction options, such as street rights-of-way, and by working closely with landowners and business owners to ultimately create a fully integrated trail throughout Willow Park. Participation in the hike-and-bike trail system will not be mandatory in areas already developed.

The City of Willow Park may be able to acquire funding for this expensive venture through requirements such as impact fees and dedication programs. Regardless of the challenges, the implementation of a trail system is a significant quality-of-life issue, and therefore it is an objective that should be pursued in the City of Willow Park.

Insert Plate 6-1: Parks and Open Space Plan



- Parks**
- ▲ Community
 - Neighborhood

- Future Land Uses**
- Residential -- Rural
 - Residential -- Urban
 - Residential -- Mixed Use
 - Retail
 - Town Center
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Public
 - Park/Open Space

- Thoroughfares**
- Freeway -- Existing
 - Type AA -- Existing
 - Type A -- Existing
 - Type A -- Future
 - Type B -- Existing
 - Type B -- Future
 - Type C -- Existing
 - Type C -- Future

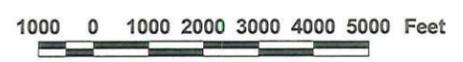
- Roads
- Lakes
- Study Area Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

City of Willow Park Master Park Plan

January 2002



Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.
Urban Planning Consultants



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The community's approach to implementing the Parks and Open Space Plan should be to develop a strategy for securing partial funding from the annual budget, initiating a mandatory park/open space dedication program for new development, and submitting applications for all applicable grants (such as from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department) after the completion of the Parks and Open Space Plan. A Capital improvement Program could also be established specifically for the purpose of developing a park and trail system.

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies projects, establishes their cost, prioritizes each project by need and year for completion, and identifies the sources of funding. This approach is designed to allow annual review and a reassessment of projects to determine if rescheduling is required because of need or possibly funding. The program does make a statement of intent to accomplish improvements in an orderly manner as funds are foreseen to be available.

The City of Willow Park should also incorporate mandatory park and/or trail dedication requirements into the City's Subdivision Ordinance. The actual parkland dedicated should be based on the number of housing units within the development, and should be required of all developers establishing new residential areas within the City's jurisdiction, including the E.T.J. This would help the City reach the recommended standards for the provision of neighborhood parks, and would contribute to the cost involved in the construction of parks and/or the trail system.

Establishing an integrated open space/greenbelt system within the City will not occur overnight - rather it will likely take a substantial amount of time and investment that will require cooperative efforts between the City and private developers. The Parks and Open Space Plan must be revisited on a regular basis to ensure that it is meeting the needs and expectations of the residents it is intended to serve.



**SECTION 7:
IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES**



SECTION 7: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

With the publication and adoption of this Comprehensive Plan document, the City of Willow Park has taken an important step in shaping the future of the community. The Plan will provide a very important tool for City staff and civic leaders to use in making sound planning decisions regarding the long-term growth and development of the community. The various elements of the Plan are based upon realistic growth objectives and goals for City of Willow Park that resulted from a comprehensive planning process involving citizens, City staff, elected and appointed officials.

The future quality of life within City of Willow Park and the environment of the community will be substantially influenced by the manner in which Comprehensive Plan recommendations are administered and maintained.

The Comprehensive Plan should never be considered a finished product, but rather a broad guide for community growth and development that is always evolving and changing in scope.

Over time, changes in the City's socioeconomic climate and in development trends will occur that were not anticipated during preparation of the Plan necessitating adjustments to this document. Elements of the community that were treated in terms of a general relationship to the overall area may, in the future, require more specific and detailed attention. Planning for the community's future should be a continuing process and the Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a dynamic tool that can be modified and periodically updated to keep it in tune with changing conditions and trends.

The full benefits of the Plan for the City of Willow Park can only be realized by maintaining it as a vital, up-to-date document. As changes occur and new facets of the community become apparent, the Plan should be revised rather than ignored. By such action, the Plan will remain current and effective in meeting the community's decision-making needs regarding growth and development into the next century and beyond.

The Plan is intended as a guideline. It should be flexible and be revisited routinely to ensure that it remains relevant.

THE PLAN AS A GUIDE FOR DAILY DECISION-MAKING

The current physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each subdivision that is platted, each home that is built, each new school, church or shopping center represents an addition to the City's physical form. The composite of all such efforts and facilities creates the community as it is seen and experienced by its citizens and visitors. If planning is to be effective, it must guide each individual decision, whether it is that of a private homeowner or of the entire community. The City, in its daily decisions pertaining to whether to surface a street, to approve a subdivision, to amend a zoning ordinance, to enforce the City codes or to construct a new utility line, should always refer to the basic proposals outlined within the Comprehensive Plan. The private builder or investor, likewise, should recognize the broad concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts become part of a meaningful whole in planning the community. Those investments are, over the years, reinforced and enhanced by the City's form, development pattern, and economic vitality.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS AND PERIODIC REVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Willow Park is intended to be a dynamic planning document – one that responds to changing needs and conditions. Plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of amendments to the Plan. The City Council and other City officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies and whether it will be beneficial for the long-term health and vitality of the City of Willow Park.

At approximately one-year intervals, a periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan with respect to current conditions and trends should be performed. Such ongoing, scheduled reevaluations will provide a basis for adjusting capital expenditures and priorities. These reevaluations will also reveal changes and additions that should be made to the Plan in order to keep it current and applicable over the long-term. It would be appropriate to devote one annual meeting of the City Planning and Zoning Commission to reviewing the status and continued applicability of the Plan in light of current conditions, and to prepare a

report on these findings to the City Council. The Commission should submit its comments and findings to the City Council at least 60 days prior to the scheduled annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. Those items that appear to need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. By such periodic reevaluations, the Plan will remain functional and will continue to give civic leaders effective guidance in decision-making. Periodic reviews of the Plan should include consideration of the following:

- ◆ The City's progress in implementing the Plan;
- ◆ Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- ◆ Community support for the Plan's goals, objectives & policies; and,
- ◆ Changes in State laws.

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Comprehensive Plan should undergo a complete, more thorough review and update every five years. The review and updating process should begin with the establishment of a citizen committee, thereby encouraging citizen input from the beginning of the process. Specific input should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders and major stakeholders, developers, merchants, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

An informed, involved citizenry is a vital element of a democratic society. The needs and desires of the public are important considerations in the City of Willow Park's decision-making process. Citizen participation takes many forms, from educational forums to serving on City boards and commissions. A broad range of perspectives and ideas at public hearings helps City leaders and the City Council to make more informed decisions for the betterment of the community as a whole. The City of Willow Park should continue to encourage as many forms of community involvement as possible as the City implements its Comprehensive Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are two primary methods of implementing the Comprehensive Plan – proactive and reactive methods. Both must be used in an effective manner in order to successfully achieve the recommendations contained within the Plan.

Proactive methods include:

- ◆ Developing a capital improvements program (CIP), by which the City expends funds to finance certain public improvements (e.g., utility lines, roadways, etc.), meeting objectives that are cited within the Plan;
- ◆ Establishing/enforcing Zoning Ordinances;
- ◆ Establishing/enforcing Subdivision Ordinances; and,
- ◆ Coordinating with/lobbying TxDOT and Parker County to influence roadway planning, funding, and construction.

Reactive methods include:

- ◆ Rezoning because of a development proposal that would enhance the community;
- ◆ Site plan review; and
- ◆ Subdivision review.

Several specific implementation strategies for City of Willow Park's Comprehensive Plan are described within the following sections.

There are two ways to implement the Plan, proactive and reactive.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING

The Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations on the various public improvements that will be needed to accommodate growth and development envisioned for the City over the next 20 years or more. Many of the changes involve improvements that will be financed by future improvement programs. It will be a desirable practice to invest regularly in the physical maintenance and enhancement of the City of Willow Park rather than to undertake large improvement-type programs at longer time intervals. A modest amount of money expended annually and on a regular basis in accordance with Plan recommendations will produce a far greater return to the community than will large expenditures at long intervals.

It is also recommended that the City implement a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) showing a recommended, generalized plan for capital facilities within City of Willow Park. The CIP should identify priorities and the approximate cost of improvements over a specific period of time. After voters approve funding for capital improvements, projects should be constructed within three years. Priority projects should be determined annually and should be scheduled for review on a two- or three-year basis to ensure that their level of priority has not changed.

At least one annual meeting of the City Council should be devoted to reviewing the status of the CIP. A joint review meeting of the City Council, the City Manager, and City staff would be desirable. A report and review meeting with a "citizens' planning committee" would also be recommended. It should be recognized that the City staff's role in the capital improvement programming process is advisory, and that the financing and priority decisions are the City Council's responsibility. In their advisory role, staff should seek to achieve programs which are geographically balanced (equitable) and which include all important aspects of the community's development from parks to transportation and utilities. Capital improvements programming should be viewed as a continuation of the ongoing comprehensive planning process.

ANNEXATION AND EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

Annexation is the process by which communities extend municipal services, regulations, voting privileges and taxing authority to new territory with the purpose of protecting the public's health, safety and general welfare. Chapter 43 of the Texas Local Government Code prescribes the process by which communities can annex land within Texas. Annexation is essential to the efficient and logical extension of urban services. Because the City of Willow Park is a general law municipality, it cannot annex land on a non-consensual basis.

It is in the best interest of the City of Willow Park, however, to require areas within the ETJ to be annexed prior to development rather than after development has occurred. Annexation procedures for general law municipalities are outlined in Chapter 43 of the Texas Local Government Code. Prior to development, the City of Willow Park will be able to affect development in a more meaningful way, especially in terms of ensuring that the City's development standards are met. However, the Texas State statute has established service and other requirements to keep general law municipalities from misusing their annexation power. Annexation is important to the long-term well being of communities; therefore, such action should be carried out in accordance with established policies.

The City of Willow Park must develop a policy stating that water and wastewater connections will not be provided to areas in the ETJ unless the property owner requests annexation. Many general law communities in Texas have similar policies, and the City of Willow Park must incorporate this element into its ordinances in order to ensure the provision of adequate public facilities in the ETJ.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Each zoning action and subdivision decision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable proposals contained within the Plan. The Plan allows the City to review proposals and requests in light of an officially prepared document adopted through a sound, thorough planning process. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making.

The act of subdividing land to create building sites is one of the most important and significant activities and will likely have the greatest effect on the overall design and image of the City. Much of the physical form of the City is currently created by the layout of streets, easements, alleys, and lots. In the future, the physical form will be further affected by elements such as new developments and the implementation of the park and trail system. As mentioned previously, many of the growth and development proposals contained within the community's Comprehensive Plan can be achieved through the exercise of subdivision control and other "reactive" practices. Some elements of the Plan, such as major thoroughfare rights-of-way, drainage easements, and linear parkways, can be influenced, guided and actually achieved during the process of subdividing the land. Once the subdivision has been filed (recorded) and development has begun, the subdivision becomes a permanent, integral part of the community's urban fabric. It can, thereafter, be changed but only through expending great effort and expense.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is probably one of the most important, yet most difficult, aspects of the comprehensive planning process. Without viable, realistic mechanisms for implementation, the recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan can never be realized. The following points specify ways to implement the various recommendations within the Plan:

Recommendations:

Develop a regular proactive program to coordinate with and lobby TxDOT and Parker County to promote transportation and roadway planning, funding, and construction.

Adopt an ordinance to mandate periodic updating of the Comprehensive Plan.

Implement a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for the purposes of funding necessary projects and improvements within the City of Willow Park. Such projects should be prioritized and reviewed on an annual basis.

Investigate the feasibility of enacting an impact fee (capital recovery fee) ordinance as prescribed by the Texas Local Government Code to assist in financing the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

Amend the City Zoning Ordinance text to implement the guidelines, proposals, and standards recommended within the Comprehensive Plan.

Amend the City Subdivision Ordinance text to implement the guidelines, proposals, and standards recommended within the Comprehensive Plan.

Adopt recognized review procedures for implementing policies and other guidelines that are not incorporated within current codes and ordinances.

Offer short courses and other educational classes or seminars concerning planning and zoning procedures to the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other interested City staff.

An annual report should be prepared by the Planning and Zoning Commission or City staff recommending any changes or amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and identifying items for implementation or further study.