

## **Introduction**

Like many communities in the United States, the City of Oak Point is facing the need to provide quality outdoor recreational opportunities for its citizens. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, individual health has become a priority to many Americans. At the same time, citizens have begun to expect their cities to offer public facilities promoting mental and physical well-being, and foster social interaction. Municipal recreational opportunities are therefore assuming a major role in promoting healthy lifestyles and community cohesiveness.

The Comprehensive Plan presents an ideal opportunity for Oak Point to begin addressing its parks, recreation and open space needs in a thoughtful, proactive way. This small city, which wants to be known as a “Country Place,” is largely undeveloped, offering the community a wide variety of options to consider in developing parks and preserving open space. Its city leaders, anticipating inevitable growth, wish to protect the city’s image and unique natural resources by adopting the Parks and Trails Master Plan set forth in this chapter.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, this Parks and Trails Master Plan will assist the city in the acquisition and development of parks, trails and open space for the next 5-10 years. It has been developed under the direction of the Oak Point Parks Board and City Council and formatted for approval by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This present chapter is intended to promote the viability of Oak Point as a desirable place to live by presenting a well conceived Parks and Trails Plan that is aggressive and farsighted, yet practical and realistic.

## **Parks and Trails Master Plan Process**

A master plan provides a framework for city planning and funding of parks, recreation areas and open space. When properly developed, a master plan can enable a municipality to qualify for Federal and state funding opportunities. It can also set the stage for a city to take advantage of State of Texas enabling legislation requiring the mandatory dedication of parkland or payment of fees-in-lieu of land.

At the City of Oak Point, the following actions occurred as part of its Parks and Trails Master Plan process:

- Gaining consensus among City leaders about the Plan’s fundamentals
  - The City’s role in providing parks and recreation opportunities
  - Core values for parks and recreation development
- Determining citizen attitudes and preferences regarding parks and recreation in general, and specific types of facilities desired
- Developing goals and objectives to guide the Master Plan process
- Inventorying current recreational facilities
- Recommending development standards for new facilities
- Determining present and future needs, based on population, for each type of park or facility

- Identifying future parks and recreation opportunities, improvements and priorities
- Preparing a prioritized implementation plan

This process has been intended, from its outset, to result in a facility-driven, needs-based, prioritized plan for development of Oak Point's parks and recreation resources.

## **Guidance Provided by City Leaders: Plan Fundamentals**

The first step in the Master Plan process required City leadership to discuss, explore and reach consensus about a foundation for the ultimate Plan. City leaders ultimately agreed upon two general philosophies:

- A definition of the City's role in providing parks and recreation opportunities to its citizens; and,
- A set of core values to guide parks and recreation development

### **The City's Role in Providing Parks and Recreation Opportunities**

- Provision of basic recreational opportunities
- Administration and management of the City's system of parks and recreational opportunities
- Provision of material and other resources in support of the development and maintenance of the City's parks and recreation system
- Enactment of regulations and zoning necessary to maintain the quality and availability of recreational resources to citizens
- Establishment of cooperative agreements with other entities, such as school districts, neighboring cities and the Army Corps of Engineers, to expand the supply of public recreational facilities
- Emphasis on low maintenance facilities and landscape, and multi-use facilities for greater efficiency of operation
- Pursuit of citizen input in planning parks and utilizing this input in the preparation of periodic needs assessments
- Acquisition and preservation of parkland, greenbelts, natural areas, and open space
- Development of funding opportunities for park development, maintenance and operation

### **Oak Point Parks and Recreation: Core Values to Guide Development**

- Parks and recreation planning should reflect the preferences of the citizens of Oak .
- The City should make the most of its Parks and Trails Plan in preserving the "rural" feeling of the community, despite development pressure.
- As Oak Point grows, developers who reap the gains of this growth have a responsibility to provide land or funds for parks and recreation development.
- Land for parks, recreation and open space should be designated and acquired early in the process while it is still available and affordable.

- New parks should be designed so that each has a unique “sense of place.”
- Planning should be coordinated with adjacent communities.
- The City should acquire and develop parks in combination with other public facilities to achieve cost effective delivery of public services. Park property should be jointly developed with facilities such as schools, fire and/or police stations, libraries and/or other public entities.
- Parks and City facilities should be linked via a system of trails and greenbelts.
- Park equipment should be constructed of high quality, long-lasting, safe materials.
- If possible, floodplains should be protected from heavy development and designated for trails and open space.
- Parks should be planned so that they require the lowest possible maintenance costs.
- A Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be updated on a regular basis (at least every 5 years) after its implementation.

The views of City leaders were only part of the picture, however. The next step was to determine the opinions of Oak Point citizens about parks and recreation.

## **Citizen Attitudes and Preferences**

Determining what Oak Point citizens want in the way of parks and recreation facilities and priorities was an important component of the Master Plan process. From January through August 2006, seven Park Board meetings were held to discuss the plan and allow citizens an opportunity to provide input. In addition during that period, consultants and staff presented findings to the City Council and public on two occasions. Park Board input was critical to the compilation of data for the plan. As appointed representatives of the public, the Park Board along with City staff served as ambassadors for the general public. Data provided by those sources became the foundation for the plan and its recommendations.

Once information about the views of Oak Point citizens was complete, the stage was set to begin work on the Master Plan itself.

## **Master Plan Goals and Objectives**

Information about citizen attitudes and preferences, coupled with the consensual views of City leadership was utilized to establish a set of goals and objectives for the Master Plan.

Goals are broad statements of the needs and priorities of citizens, and they represent general areas of emphasis for the plan. Objectives are clear statements of intent, representing specific steps to be taken in accomplishing each goal. These goals and objectives were intended to ensure the final plan was on track with community wants and needs. The goals and objectives for Oak Point’s Parks and Trails Master Plan (which appear below in priority order) are consistent with the overall Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives (outlined in Chapter 2).

**Goal 1: Create a system of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle linkages (connections) between residential neighborhoods, linear greenbelts, schools, public administrative facilities, and other activity centers, as an alternative to automobile transportation.**

Objectives:

1. Utilize trails, wherever possible, to connect residential areas with schools, parks and other public facilities.
2. Require developers to provide walking, jogging, cycling and/or equestrian pathways within large private developments.
3. Design an interconnected, multifunctional parks and open space system which protects important natural, cultural and visual resources while providing appropriate opportunities for recreation.
4. Integrate planned trails with other public and private trail plans where possible.
5. Coordinate planning efforts with those of adjacent cities.

**Goal 2: Provide a network of trails and open space to serve as a greenbelt connecting residential neighborhoods. This system should help define community form and preserve the community's desired rural character.**

Objectives:

1. Ensure that the Parks and Trails Plan addresses needs for leisure and open space at both the neighborhood and community levels.
2. Require greenbelt and open space dedication during the development review process.
3. Explore new recreational and leisure programs for all age groups, especially for the community's youth and teens.

**Goal 3: Oak Point's natural environment and native ecosystems contribute positively to the essential character of the community. These assets should be preserved and protected to the greatest extent possible.**

Objectives:

1. Encourage development approaches designed to minimize impact upon the community's natural resources and visual appeal.
2. Conserve and protect ecologically sensitive and naturally beautiful areas, such as flood plains along creeks, and high points with scenic views toward Lake Lewisville, etc.
3. Establish and/or enhance green space and natural areas along floodplains, and promote public access to greenbelt areas with a multifunctional trail system (e.g., equestrian, cycling, hiking trails).
4. Preserve and respect areas with natural features such as steep slopes native grasses/wildflowers and/or scenic views.
5. Encourage and promote water conservation through the use of native plant materials, xeriscape plantings and other methods.
6. Maintain high standards for groundwater quality due to the proximity of Lake Lewisville.
7. Maintain high air quality standards.

**Goal 4: Design a park system that will satisfy the varied recreational needs of a growing population and protect and enhance the quality of life in Oak Point.**

Objectives:

1. Revise plans on a regular basis, with citizen preferences serving as a major input to this process.
2. Ensure that all relevant demographic groups are represented in parks planning.

**Goal 5: Use county, state and national resources as well as city resources to develop a park system.**

Objectives:

1. Leverage City and private funding against County, State and Federal funding to obtain the most cost effective use of funds.
2. Use training provided by other agencies to build the City's expertise.

**Inventory: Current Parks and Recreation Assets**

Oak Point is strategically situated halfway between Denton and Frisco on a north shore peninsula of Lake Lewisville, the largest Army Corps of Engineers lake in north central Texas. This bedroom community provides a tranquil lifestyle to Denton/Dallas/Fort Worth commuters who wish to live in a small city with a rural character.

The city lies in the Cross Timbers Region of north central Texas, an area of significant historical and environmental character. Indigenous native oak vegetation is found in abundance throughout the community. Native blackland prairie land, an increasingly rare ecosystem, which has been all but destroyed by agriculture and development, may also be found here.

At present, Oak Point has two public areas designated for parks and recreation. Jake's Place is a community park of approximately 8.4 acres, deeded to the City as part of the Emerald Sound development. This park features a playground, sand volleyball court, basketball court, horseshoe arena, picnic area with grills and tables, a league baseball field, and practice athletic field. A second major recreation asset is a boat ramp leased from the Corps of Engineers. In addition, private recreation areas exist for use of residents of the Emerald Sound, Crescent Oaks and Eagles Landing subdivisions.

Despite the present scarcity of public parks and recreational land, Oak Point enjoys rich future potential. The Corps' lakefront property immediately adjacent to Oak Point – largely undeveloped open space of over 500 acres – offers restricted recreational possibilities. There is a great deal of undeveloped land within city boundaries, a situation that gives City leaders many options and a great deal of flexibility in planning for the future.

## **Parks and Recreation Standards**

The population of a city is an important driver of parks and recreation needs. In fact, the ratio of parks acres per population is considered to be a broad indicator of parks and recreation service, and a benchmark for comparison to other cities. Oak Point's parks and recreation standards have therefore been determined based upon projected future population.

The 2006 population of the City of Oak Point was estimated at 3,475. The city is expected to have 11,252 residents at build-out and its long-range objective is to have at least 5.7 acres of park land for every 1000 residents.

Table 1 following shows the standards Oak Point's leaders and staff have established for a variety of future parks and recreation facilities desired by city residents. These standards (Addendum 1) were derived by reviewing facility standards used by other cities similar to Oak Point in size and growth potential, then adapting these standards to Oak Point's unique situation. Oak Point's adopted standards appear in column 2 of Table 1.

It should be noted that the City has set ambitious standards for parks land and for trails. This is appropriate, given that the designation and acquisition of public open space are key enablers to three of the five Master Plan goals described above. A high priority was therefore placed on the development of a far-reaching pedestrian trail system connecting residential neighborhoods to schools, parks, and the FM 720 Corridor Overlay District. This is an extremely important need for citizens, since the existing vehicular infrastructure offers no paved walkways. Not only are these connections needed as pedestrian connectors, but also as opportunities for passive recreation for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists.

Other important recreational needs identified included playgrounds, park shelters, and picnic stations. Moderate needs included basketball and tennis courts, volleyball courts, and organized play fields.

While the proximity to Lake Lewisville was recognized as an outstanding natural resource, the City is afforded only one realistic opportunity for access – the existing Corps of Engineers site. Further recreational development near the lake is limited by private ownership and steep, difficult banks. In addition only one recreation center and water playground are proposed for the City. These are low priority needs, only to be addressed as the city nears build-out.

**Table 1: City of Oak Point Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment**

<i>1</i> Facility	<i>2</i> City of Oak Point Adopted Standard: 1 Per (# of Residents):	Units Needed by		<i>5</i> Present Inventory (as of 8-1-06)	<i>6</i> Immediate needs (as of 8-1-06)	<i>7</i> Projected Needs @ City Buildout
		<i>3</i> <u>2006</u>	<i>4</i> <u>City@ Buildout</u>			
Park Land (in acres)	175	20	64	10	10	54
Pavilions	4,500	1	3	0	1	3
Picnic Tables	350	10	32	4	6	28
Shelters	2,500	1	5	0	1	5
Playgrounds	2,000	2	6	1	1	5
Basketball Courts	7,000	0	2	1	-1	1
Tennis Courts	9,000	0	1	0	0	1
Volleyball Courts	6,000	1	2	1	0	1
Fishing / Boating	20,000	0	1	1	-1	0
T-Ball Fields	10,000	0	1	0	0	1
Little League Baseball Fields	3,500	1	3	1	0	2
Softball Field - Girls	7,000	0	2	0	0	2
Softball field - Adult	7,000	0	2	0	0	2
Practice / Informal Field	4,000	1	3	2	-1	1
Soccer Fields	4,000	1	3	0	1	3
Trails (in miles)	675	5	17	0	5	17
Horseshoe Pits	7,000	0	2	1	-1	1
Shuffleboard Courts	7,000	0	2	0	0	2
Washer Pits	8,000	0	1	0	0	1
Aquatic Facilities	20,000	0	1	0	0	1
Recreation Centers	20,000	0	1	0	0	1
Water Playground	20,000	0	1	0	0	1
Dog Park	20,000	0	1	0	0	1

## **Needs Assessment**

Oak Point's adopted standards were applied against city population estimates to develop specific assessments of the City's immediate and long term parks and recreation needs. The results of this assessment also appear in Table 1. Immediate needs are shown for Oak Point (column 3); long term needs (at buildout) are shown in column 4.

### Immediate Needs

The needs assessments were then compared to the City's present inventory of parks and recreation facilities (column 5). The results of these comparisons show that, as of August 2006, the City is below its adopted standards with those types of recreational facilities that are important to its citizens. While the City does have enough playgrounds, basketball courts, practice fields, and fishing/boating facilities for 2006 needs, it only has half of the needed park acres, and 2/3 of the needed picnic tables. For many types of needed facilities, the City has no facilities at all. When the assessment of present needs is held up to the Goals and Objectives of this Plan, it is evident that the City's most urgent needs are for additional park acres (10) and for trail miles (5).

### Long Term Needs

The needs assessment was also carried into the future to examine projected needs at buildout (approximately 2025). This analysis revealed that there are some facilities that will be relatively easy to bring up to the long term standards. Because they are inexpensive and easy to situate, small facilities such as picnic tables, horseshoe pits and shuffleboard courts fall in this category. Two basketball courts will be ultimately needed, and there is already one in place, so this need should also be filled with no difficulty. Similarly, there are adequate fishing and boating facilities for the long term.

Other needs will be moderately easy to meet. Six playgrounds are ultimately needed, but while safe and high quality playground equipment is relatively expensive, these facilities do not require large amounts of land. Playgrounds can often be placed in "pocket parks" near residential areas for optimal accessibility.

The needs for other types of facilities will be difficult to meet. Organized play fields for baseball, softball, T-ball and soccer require considerable land that may need to be cleared and leveled. Citizens often prefer to have additional recreational amenities, such as lighting, bleachers, concession stands, rest rooms, pavilions and playgrounds at organized play fields. These amenities are expensive to construct. Small cities like Oak Point often locate such facilities in central athletic complexes. These require a significant outlay of funds for initial construction. To protect a city's investment, there must also be a commitment of ongoing maintenance funds for such facilities.

The greatest long-term challenge to Oak Point mirrors its immediate challenge: the need to acquire acreage for parkland and trails. The city will require 54 acres of parkland, and 17 miles of trails. At present, there are only 10 acres of parkland and no trail miles. City

staff and elected leaders have begun to implement methods to move the plan forward, including passage of a 4B sales tax which may be used for parks. Staff also works closely with private developers to develop cost sharing agreements for recreational development. These and other innovative strategies must be considered if Oak Point is to meet these needs. Refer to Park Revenue Estimates that follows for additional information.

## **Oak Point's Future: Parks and Recreation Opportunities, Improvements and Priorities**

With the recent passage of a 4B sales tax, Oak Point now has a revenue source to help in the implementation of this plan. However, these finances will not totally fund planned acquisitions and improvements. The city must continue to work with developers and other public agencies to implement innovative and creative plans to construct parks and open space. Cost sharing projects with local school districts as well as potential state and federal grants are achievable and must be considered.

The following plan is based on the latest available revenue estimates, including potential donations and Texas Parks and Wildlife grants. Cost estimates were applied to the priorities established in the Needs Assessment. The projects were then prioritized through input from citizens, elected/appointed officials, and staff. Lastly the projects were assigned target implementation dates based on potential available funding for the next five years.

It is important to note that the factors that were used to develop the plan will continue to evolve and as they do, so too will the plan itself. Although the plan provides the city with a good chart for development, the changing needs of the community must take priority.

**Table 2 – Five Year Prioritized Action Plan**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Yearly Expenditures</b>
1	2007	Pavilion in Jakes Place	\$130,000	
2	2007	Trail Development 8' Width (0.5 mile)	\$100,000	
3	2007	Volleyball Court in Jake's Place	\$7,000	
4	2007	Fencing & Signage for Jake's Place	\$17,000	\$254,000
5	2008	Acquire Parkland by Donation	\$0	
6	2008	Trail Development 8' Width (1 mile)	\$200,000	
7	2008	Build (5) Picnic Stations	\$15,000	
8	2008	Construct Playground	\$75,000	
9	2008	Build (1) Picnic Shelter	\$45,000	
10	2008	Soccer Field	\$45,000	
11	2008	Basketball Court	\$45,000	\$425,000
12	2009	Event Seating for Jake's Place	\$25,000	
13	2009	Acquire Parkland by Donation	\$0	
14	2009	Neighborhood Park Development	\$90,000	
15	2009	Trail Development 8' Width (0.5 mile)	\$100,000	\$215,000
16	2010	Acquire Parkland by Donation	\$0	\$0
17	2011	Neighborhood Park Development	\$100,000	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$994,000</b>	<b>\$994,000</b>

## **City of Oak Point Parks and Trails Plan**

City leaders have, with involvement of citizens, drafted a parks and trails plan, as the first step bringing this master plan to reality. The prioritized list of projects appears as Table 2. This section describes how the Oak Point Parks and Trails Plan addresses all the goals and objectives established at the beginning of the master plan process.

Goals 1 and 2 are closely related, and these goals speak to Oak Point’s need for a trail and greenbelt system of citywide linkages. The plan defines a system that will provide an alternative to automobile transportation and preserve Oak Point’s rural character. This system will ultimately link neighborhoods, schools, parks and other key areas of the city. Over half of the estimated cost of new facilities will go to support trail development.

Goal 3 addresses the preservation of the city's natural environment and native ecosystems. The plan identifies possible future park locations in Oak Point, giving City leaders a roadmap for the acquisition and protection of appropriate park resources.

Goal 4 articulates the aim of having park system that will satisfy the varied recreational needs of a growing and diverse community. The plan acknowledges the importance of existing recreational assets and builds new ones in line with the desires of Oak Point citizens. It creates locations for relaxing family outdoor gatherings, such as neighborhood parks, playgrounds and picnic facilities. It also provides venues for the excitement of organized sports, such as basketball, volleyball and soccer.

Goal 5 defines the City's desire to leverage resources from outside the city to help provide a first-class parks system. As described below, the plan lays out an approach to the acquisition of funding from both public and private sources to bolster Oak Point's recreational facilities.

### **Table 3 - Park Revenue Estimates**

**2005-2006**  
**2006-2007**  
**2007-2008**  
**2008-2009**  
**2009-2010**

#### **Revenue Sources**

Infill Building

Commercial

**Development Agreements**

Cross Oak Ranch

**4B Sales Tax**

**TPWD Grant  
(Potential)**

**TOTALS**

**Cumulative Totals**

\* - Potential grant is matched with value of possible land donation

\*\* - Potential grant is matched by revenue

## **Challenges the City Will Face in Implementing Plan**

Challenges are:

- Crafting a strategy for the preservation and development of land to govern how the City will work with developers.
- Designating appropriate land for parks and trails now – before it is consumed by development.
- Linking planning for parks with that for other public facilities (like school, libraries, etc.)
- Establishing coordination mechanisms and processes with adjacent communities and other government agencies (like the Corps of Engineers).
- Ensuring commitment to quality and low maintenance facilities to hold down life cycle costs.
- Gaining commitment of City leaders to revisit and update this plan every five years.
- Developing partnerships with public and private agencies to provide recreational facilities for all residents.

### **“A Country Place”**

Oak Point’s location and character will continue to be a magnet for potential homeowners, developers, and builders from throughout the Metroplex. Its convenient, but protected, location along with its extensive environmental resources give this city a unique opportunity, one that is unmatched in most areas. But these very advantages also offer challenges that city leaders must address. As the city continues to grow, staff must be given the tools to address rising recreational needs or those very citizens who moved to Oak Point because of its peaceful nature will be forced to recreate elsewhere.

# Addendum 1

## PARK ACRES/RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

### Comparative Standards

Facility	Arlington	Lucas (Proposed)	Allen	Plano	McKinney	Collin County	National Recreation & Park Association
Local Park Land (Acres/1000)	13	10	8.5	10	8.5	12	5.25-10.5
Pavilions (1/Population)	40,000	3,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	60,000
Picnic Tables (1/Population)	800	250	343	1,000	200	375	NA
Shelters (1/Population)	15,000	1,500	NA	NA	NA	NA	10,000
Playgrounds (1/Population)	7,500	1,000	2,307	5,000	3,939	5,000	NA
Basketball Courts (1/Population)	12,000	2,000	13,333	NA	7,000	5,000	5,000
Tennis Courts (1/Population)	7,000	6,000	2,400	2,148	4,000	2,600	2,000
Volleyball Courts (1/Population)	NA	4,000	15,000	NA	10,000	15,000	NA
Fishing/Boating (1/Population)	NA	4,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Disc Golf (1/Population)	NA	8,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
T Ball Field (1/Population)	NA	2,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Little League Baseball (1/Population)	10,000	2,000	1,818	2,500	3,733	5,000	5,000
Softball Field - Girls (1/Population)	10,000	2,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	5,000
Softball Field - Adult (1/Population)	50,000	4,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	30,000
Practice Field (1/Population)	NA	2,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Soccer Fields (1/Population)	12,000	1,000	2,222	5,000	7,000	4,500	10,000
Trails (1 Mile/Population)	7,000	500	NA	NA	NA	NA	10,000
Horseshoe Pit (1/Population)	NA	3,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Shuffleboard Court (1/Population)	NA	3,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Washer Pit (1/Population)	NA	3,000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Equestrian Facilities (1/Population)	NA	8,000	NA	NA	NA	250,000	NA
Aquatic Facilities (1/Population)	50,000	20,000	30,000	43,333	20,000	26,000	20,000
Recreation Centers (1/Population)	70,000	25,000	24,000	37,143	25,000	25,000	NA