

Town of Enchanted Oaks, Texas

Parks and Trails Master Plan

January, 2014



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Organization

This plan is organized into seven sections:

1. Introduction
2. Needs Assessment and Park Inventory
3. National Standards and Park Definitions
4. Enchanted Oaks Parks and Trails Master Plan
5. Design Elements and Standards
6. Implementation and Management
7. Conclusion

These elements provide a snapshot of the town, background information, current parks and facilities, goals and objectives, resident and local area needs, standards, a town master plan and stewardship of current and planned parks and trails.

1.2 General Overview

The Town of Enchanted Oaks is situated on approximately nine miles of shoreline at Cedar Creek Lake, Texas. Timbered with tall oak trees, it is a retreat of unsurpassed rustic beauty.

Enchanted Oaks covers 227 acres and is located between Gun Barrel City and Malakoff off Highway 198, about 60 miles Southeast of Dallas.

- The Enchanted Oaks addition was developed in 1967, and a Property Owners Association was born in 1973. The Town of Enchanted Oaks was incorporated on December 14, 1974.
- There are approximately seven-(7) miles of streets running through Enchanted Oaks.
- The town has a town hall, fire station, swimming pool, playground, library, and two boat ramps, soccer and baseball field.

Current parks have been developed with the local area in mind as places for children and adults to experience these natural areas. The existing parks are the only facilities South of Gun Barrel City and West of Eustace where children have access to parks with recreational playgrounds, soccer and baseball fields.

This Parks and Trails Master Plan provides a documented reference point for current and future planning purposes allowing for modification dependant on future and /or changed needs.

The plan acknowledges environmental concerns for the natural beauty of the community and the local areas needs for environmental green space, without disturbing the current atmosphere surrounding the mature oak trees and natural wildlife areas.

1.3 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of our town are established knowing that resources are limited and that maximum use of available green space is paramount.

Being a small town of less than four-hundred residents with a mean age of fifty-six and 60% of the population over forty-five it is necessary to provide maximum utilization of open space for a diversified group, including neighboring residential areas where park systems are non existent.

The existing park areas are small and not fully developed, and should be considered as a park system for future development, considering demographics and anticipated growth. And since we see little growth we must consider the influx of residents during the non winter months where attraction is based on lake activities.

Recent acquisition of seventeen acres for public use is one area that may be developed for future use.

This newly acquired green space along with the other two parks, pool and two boat ramps should be considered for upgrade to include walking trails, picnic areas, shelters and possible other leisure activities for all age groups.

This said, the number #1 goal of our town is to enhance the overall quality of life for our residents providing an opportunity to experience outdoor activities in a safe natural setting.

2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PARK INVENTORY

2.1 Needs Assessment

The town's demographics are moving towards a younger age group with more children and young adults in their pre-twenties. The mean age is still in the 50's but is trending lower and should therefore be considered for planning purposes. In addition, local residential areas surrounding the town are of a younger age group with limited resources. And the summer influx of the town's residents is substantially younger with a large number of young children.

No significant park facilities exist within 5-10 miles of Enchanted Oaks.

The creation of walking trails, shelters, picnic areas and other leisure activities within the green space will only enhance the activities for all residents.

To better manage these activities and plans for the future Enchanted Oaks has prepared this Parks and Trails Master Plan as guide to future green space development, utilization and maintenance.

2.2 Park Inventory

The existing park and recreation facilities for town residents are very minimal and are in need of improvements and expansion to cover our growing age differential.

Currently there is one small mini park designed for children 3- 12 years of age located adjacent to town hall that has some playground equipment.



Several years ago the town developed a soccer and base ball field which is located next to the fire station and supports practice sessions for organized leagues and individuals in surrounding areas. There are no other soccer or baseball fields within the 5-10 mile radius of the town.

The town has currently obtained an additional 17 acres adjacent to the fire station and soccer field that is a natural area that may potentially be developed into walking trails, dog park, and recreational areas for local family enjoyment.



The newly acquired 17 acre natural area is an ideal location with available space for development into a true green space that will fully support the current and future needs of the community and surrounding areas. Preserving these as natural park settings is a major priority for our town.

Fig. 1 below is a map of Enchanted Oaks identifying all existing areas available as park space. Only one of these areas next to city hall has been developed or expanded to support our young or aging population.

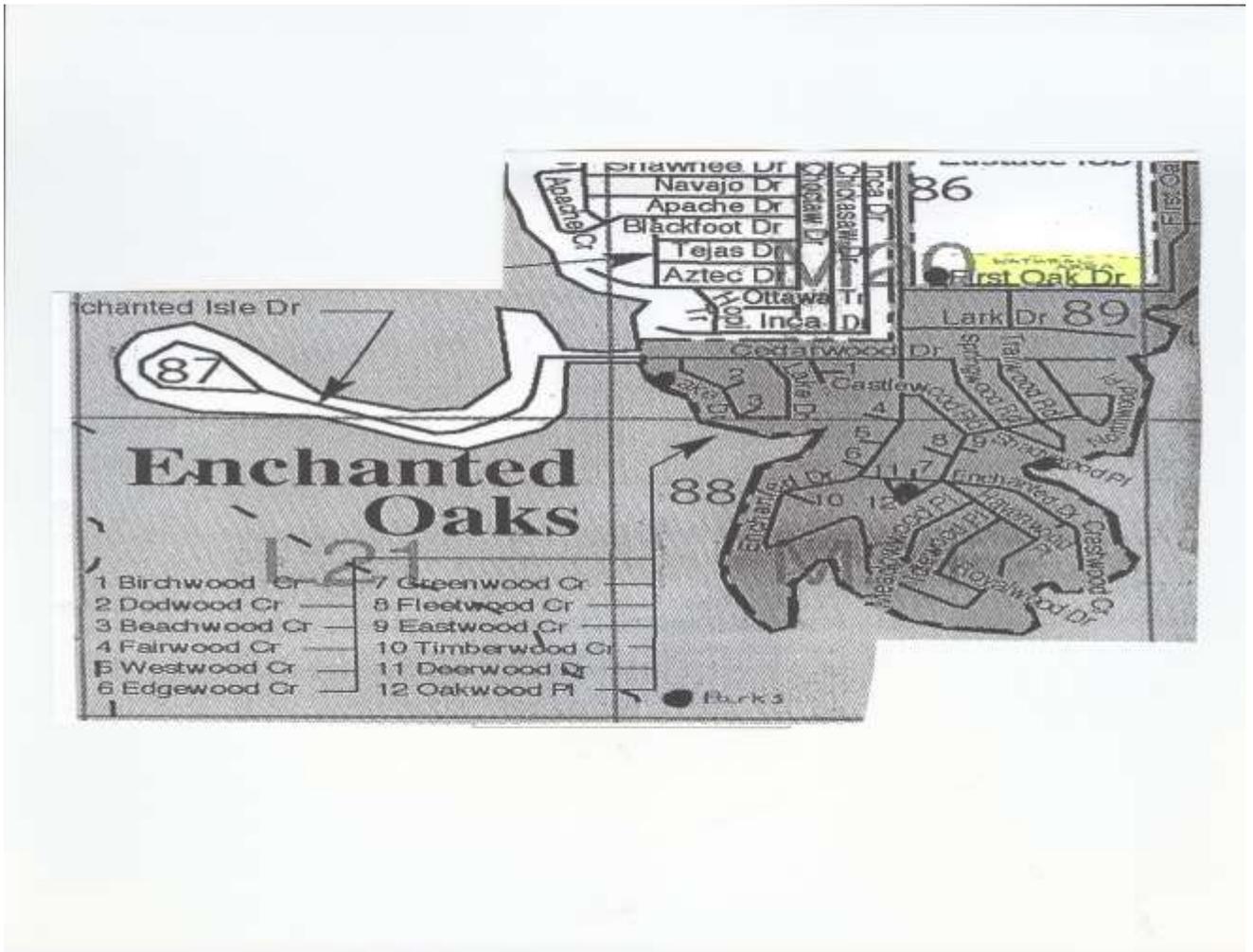


Fig. 1-Town of Enchanted Oaks Park Master Plan Map

- Indicates location of existing facilities
- Indicates 17 acre natural area available for park expansion

3. NATIONAL STANDARDS AND PARK DEFINITIONS

The National Recreation and Parks Association published guidelines in 1996 for different classification standards for parks and open space. These standards although relevant can only be utilized as a guide in establishing standards for Enchanted Oaks since the town covers less than one square mile and has a population of less than 400.

All parks within Enchanted Oaks shall be considered mini or neighborhood parks of less than 1 acre or 10-20 acres respectively.

Since Enchanted Oaks has a large percentage of senior citizens all parks and recreation areas will be developed with them as an element of design consideration.

Parks and trails shall be multi-use and consider all residents when being developed or expanded. Due to the size of our community, parks and trail designs shall consider life cycle maintenance as a primary factor, with an emphasis on maintaining natural areas with minimal requirements for mowing or irrigation.

4. TOWN OF ENCHANTED OAKS PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Parks and Trails Master Plan for Enchanted Oaks consist of three small mini-parks and one large multi-use neighborhood park and trail complex. All parks and trails are located within one-half mile of all residents as depicted in figure 1.

A Parks Committee has been established and a survey of residents has been released for input on what the residents prefer in the way of expanding the existing parks and development of the newly acquired natural area adjacent to the fire station.

The Park Committee will assess the survey results, conduct workshops and provide their recommendations to the town council for consideration and funding.

Currently, the newly acquired natural area has scheduled dirt work for erosion control improvements, which is considered Phase I of the Park and Trails Master Plan.

Once the committee recommendations are adopted the town will move forward with phased implementation of the natural area. This will become the Neighborhood Park, with expansion and upgrade to the existing Mini Parks, to include new equipments, benches and structural renovations.

Utilization of the existing park system elements by incorporation of the newly acquired natural area (Neighborhood Park) eliminates any consideration for additional park placement, since all parks are within short walking distance of all residents.

A walking trail when established would be ideally located within the newly acquired natural area that would become a Neighborhood Park, since it eliminates crossing of streets and offers a safer walking environment for all residents.

5. DESIGN ELEMENTS AND STANDARDS

Throughout the park and trail system, design elements shall be used and implemented in order to further enhance the system, and ensure lifetime recreation facilities for the town's residents and surrounding communities.

Design elements shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Safety
- Security
- Emergency access
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Life cycle maintenance and reliability
- Water conservation
- Park design best practices
- Consideration of adjacent residents
- Maintaining of natural areas and respect for the environment

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Parks and Trails Master Plan has been designed to allow for future growth or population shifts and will support young and older residents. The plan incorporates flexibility in allowing for growth within the newly acquired natural area and existing park system without need for additional park land.

6.1 Priorities

Preliminary priorities for expansion and upgrade of the park system are listed below, and shall be finalized based on committee and resident comments.

Phase I – 2014-2015

- Erosion control work on newly acquired 17 acre natural area
- Paving and repairs to both boat ramps and docks

Phase II – 2015-2016

- Phased development of 17 acre natural area into Neighborhood Park
- Upgrade to Mini Park at town hall
- Paving and repairs to both boat ramps and docks

Phase III – 2016- 2020

- Continue phased development of 17 acre natural area into Neighborhood Park

6.2 Funding

Funding for elements of the park plan shall come from annual budgeted capital projects and as available grant awards provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Other funding sources may be considered as identified.

No new user fees for implementation of this plan are anticipated at this time based on park design and current expansion planning.

6.3 Management

Management of the parks system shall be an ongoing operation in order to retain their value to the residents for years to come. The parks system made up of three Mini Parks and one Neighborhood Park are being designed for long term use and enjoyment by all residents of Enchanted Oaks. One of the design features and considerations has always been and will continue to be life cycle maintenance and security.

The town council shall ensure that:

- Administration
- Safety
- Maintenance
- Funding, continue to be a priority.

Parks and trails shall continue to be patrolled by the Enchanted Oaks Police Department as they are currently. Design of the parks and trails shall continue to allow sufficient access for emergency personnel when required.

Park safety shall be an ongoing requirement to ensure that facilities present no unidentified or potential hazards. Warning signs shall be posted as appropriate. Access shall be restricted to hours where security is not an issue.

Parks and trails shall be maintained by a small dedicated staff that oversees mowing and maintenance to the same quality standards that are currently in place.

Enchanted Oaks Park and Trail Maintenance and Inspection Schedule

TASK	DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	ANNUAL	COMMENTS
Security	X				EOPD
Safety Insp.			X	X	EOVFD
Mowing		X			Or as required
Landscape				X	Budget
Funding				X	Budget

7. CONCLUSION

The Enchanted Oaks Parks and Trails Master Plan has been developed to document the current and future plans for the town’s park system. It is, however, intended to be a dynamic document that is available to town planners. At the same time it lays out a plan that can be visualized and therefore funded annually, based on available funding, as part of the towns capital project priorities.

In approving this plan the town council acknowledges the need for a plan and emphasis on the town’s park system as a priority along with roads, police, and fire departments.

The implementation of this plan will provide better oversight of the park system by identification of areas that need annual funding through grants or capital projects.

8. REFERENCES

Gun Barrel City, Texas. Master Parks and Trails Plan 2008
www.gunbarrelcity.net

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Recreation Grant Programs
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Municipal Research and Service Center of Washington- Park Planning
and Design and Open Space
www.mrsc.org

Best Management Practices
www.nps.gov

RESOLUTION NO.2043

**RESOLUTION GOVERNING THE ADOPTION OF A PARKS
AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Town of Enchanted Oaks has several parks without a documented plan for maintenance or future development.

WHEREAS, the proposed plan provides flexible options for life cycle planning, expansion and or development of proposed and existing parks.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Enchanted Oaks adopts the presented Parks and Trails Master Plan for future planning purposes based on available funding.

Passed and Approved this 11th day of February, 2014.



**Donald G. Warner III, Mayor
Enchanted Oaks, Texas**

Attest: 

**Pam Foster
City Secretary**