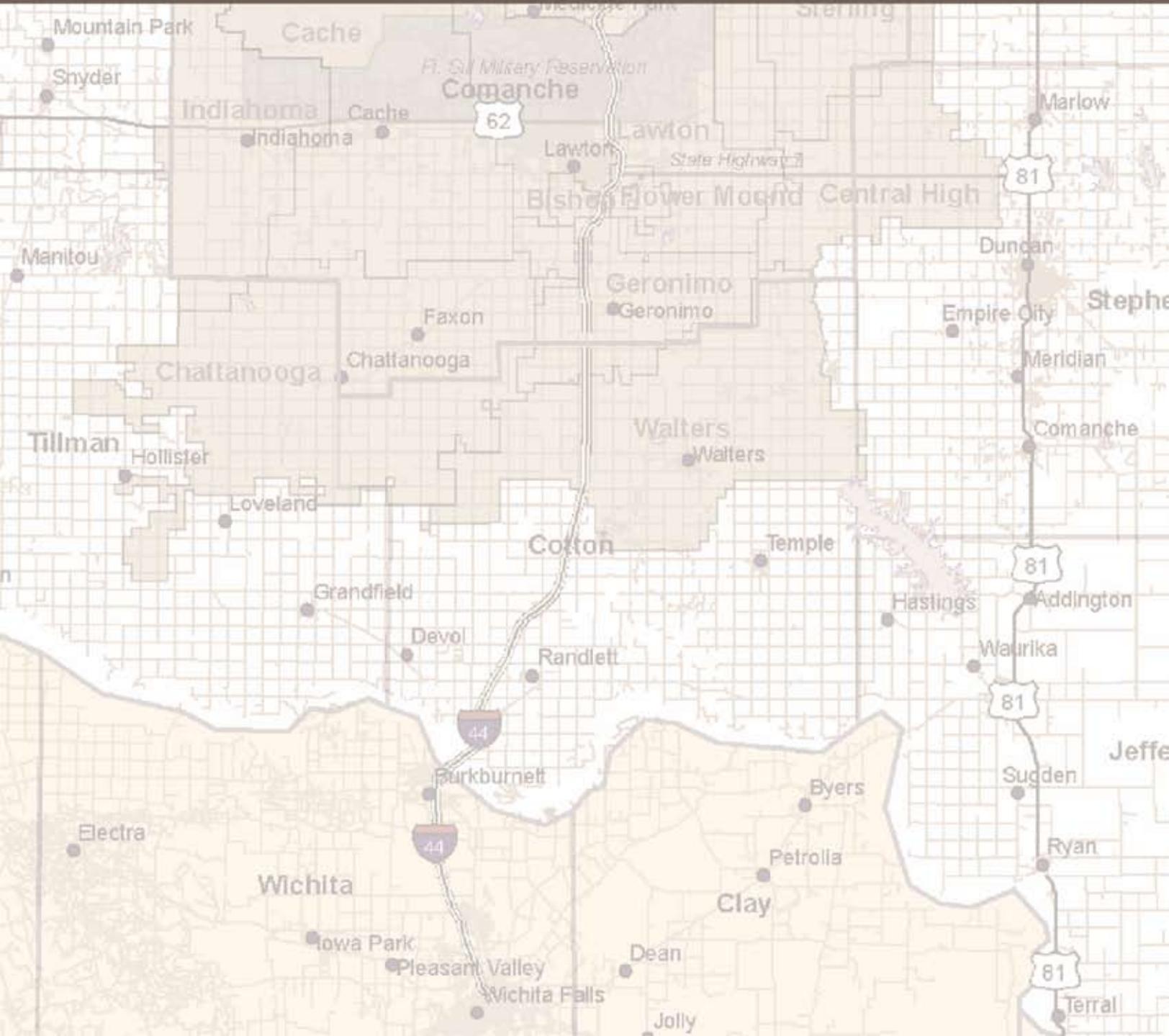


CHAPTER 11 QUALITY OF LIFE





CHAPTER 11

Introduction

This section of the Growth Management Plan report identifies and assesses the culture and recreation assets of the community to determine their adequacy in providing for a strong and vital quality of life in the Lawton/Fort Sill region. Traditionally, planners and economic development specialists have emphasized a region's employment and educational opportunities and its overall low cost of living as the factors that contribute significantly to a region's growth rate. Increasingly, however, family connections and quality of life factors within a region are of particular concern to potential job seekers. Based on the recent surveys and research completed during Lawton's marketing and public relations campaign and information sessions with the Fort Bliss personnel and associated contractors, these issues of family and quality of life were of particular concern. Accordingly, this section provides an overall assessment of the impact on local parks, recreation and cultural elements due to the anticipated growth and development from BRAC.

Previous chapters of this Plan have presented an assessment of key community items such as roads, utilities, schools, healthcare and other related physical and social infrastructure elements that are necessary to promote and accommodate growth and development throughout the region. These factors contribute significantly to the region's quality of life and this report has documented the community's current status and efforts to maintain or improve the capacity and efficiency of these networks to meet current and future needs. But the quality of life evident in the Lawton/Fort Sill region is more than have clean water, good roads and adequate schools. Quality of life extends to all facets of the community, including less tangible elements that appeal

to a person (or family's) desire to recreate, participate in the fine arts or enjoy the cultural heritage and assets of their newly adopted community. Thus, this section evaluates the parks, recreation and cultural assets that are currently available or planned to determine their need for additional improvements or support as a larger part of the overall fabric of the region's quality of life.

Furthermore, these factors are of critical importance to the long term health and vitality of the region, even after the BRAC deployment impacts are absorbed and accommodated. The area's recreation and cultural opportunities can and will influence both the short term (i.e. BRAC-related) moving decisions of families and job-seekers to Lawton, as well as the long term appeal of the region to military families transitioning to public life, potential spin-off industries and businesses to Fort Sill and other necessary and important service sector professionals that may choose to stay or locate in the area long after the impacts of BRAC are felt. With good planning and proper infrastructure investments, the region can become a place that, in addition to BRAC jobs, begins to attract additional spin off businesses and young professionals that will view the region as "home" and build careers, families and retirements in southwest Oklahoma.



Parks/Recreation and Cultural Asset Planning in the Study Area and Key Information Sources Used

From the onset of the planning efforts, the value ascribed to the outdoors and the cultural heritage of the area formed a strong foundation for the region's understanding and beliefs about the key elements of their quality of life. The unique geography of the southwest Oklahoma (in particular the areas in and around the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge) and the region's rich history related to the native American heritage were clearly viewed as important elements in the region's everyday life and valued as integral pieces of the region's overall infrastructure. While jobs, housing and good utilities and roads were critical factors in the economic and financial networks within the region, it is clear that recreational opportunities and cultural activities are identified as important planning and quality of life criteria also. As such, the planning activities focused on these elements.

In order to develop as comprehensive base of knowledge as possible about these outdoor and cultural components, the planning team evaluated several published reports and sources in the area (see box), and then supplemented this information with data and perspectives from interviews with local leaders and additional information from public websites. This research primarily focused on the planning and coordination efforts emanating from the City of Lawton, since most of the major recreational and cultural activities are located in this community. Due to the city's size and financial capabilities, the parks and recreation and cultural events and activities in Lawton was far greater than any other community.

Related Studies and Information Sources

- *Lawton Parks and Recreation Ten Year Strategic Plan, City of Lawton, 2003*
- *Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in process*
- *Various documents from the Lawton Arts and Humanities Council, City of Lawton, 2007-2008*
- *Capital Improvements Plan and Program Budgets, 2000 and 2005, City of Lawton*
- *Various monthly newsletters, Association of Friends of the Wichitas (non-profit advocacy group for the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, 2007-2008)*

Additionally, since the majority of the growth related to BRAC is anticipated to occur within the confines of the Lawton, Cache and Elgin communities, our research and analysis was primarily focused on the communities located in Comanche County, particularly these "primary impact area" cities. While the smaller communities within the region will experience some growth due to the BRAC deployment and since many of these communities utilize the Lawton area's recreation/parks and cultural assets as their own, the existing level of recreation and cultural activities in these communities, combined with the current and planned activities in Lawton, was deemed to be sufficient to accommodate future growth.

Methodology

In general, our analysis of the region's parks and recreation and cultural assets included an overall review and analysis of: (1) the existing inventory of facilities and services and their general conditions; (2) a review of current and future demands for recreation space and outdoor activity areas based on national standards; and (3) interviews with local leaders and review of cultural assets to form an overall perspective of the cultural environment of the area and what, if any, elements were missing or needed improvement. The results of this research were used to form an overall perspective of the quality of life infrastructure within each community and how the region's overall network was coordinated. The primary emphasis of the methodology was to identify any shortcomings in the capacity of the parks component since it was most easily measured and was identified as a potential shortcoming within the communities.



Existing Conditions

Overall, the Comanche County area (including the cities of Lawton, Cache and Elgin) is an area possessing a wide array of cultural activities and facilities and an abundance of parks and recreation opportunities. The unique landscape of the region provides a natural setting for outdoor activities and the rich history of land settlement and Native American heritage provides a multi-cultural palette of activities and events for these communities. This section provides a summary review of the capacity of each community's park and recreation assets and the reach and extent of the cultural facilities, museums, etc.

Parklands and Facilities in Lawton

City parks have historically been the community gathering places for the residents of southwest Oklahoma and they provide an important place for the community to gather, socialize and recreate. The city of Lawton has developed an extensive system of over eighty (80) parks and recreation facilities across the City, comprising a total of approximately 1,380 acres. Exhibit 11.1 provides a graphic map and listing that depicts the locations and names of the parks across the City. These parks range from comprehensive, regional parks like Elmer Thomas Park in north Lawton to numerous neighborhood parks scattered across the City. In general, these facilities provide an excellent range of park lands, facilities, equipment and activity types for the community.

The City of Lawton has consistently valued these park resources within their community, thus on the whole, the facilities are well-maintained and provide adequate recreation, leisure and athletic opportunities and facilities for their constituency. The Parks Department has a professional staff of program coordinators and specialists and grounds/maintenance crews that have enabled the community to benefit from well manicured facilities. Additionally, the Department has completed a Ten Year Strategic Plan for their department and facilities, but the report is now somewhat dated and does not adequately assess the impact on population and development growth trends due to BRAC. As such, the planning team reviewed the current system of parks within the City against the projected population baseline that is anticipated due to BRAC.

The National Recreation and Parks Association, a nationwide industry and advocacy group for parks and recreation facilities across the United States, publishes data and statistics that provide a starting point for communities wishing to assess their overall parks and recreation system against peer communities across the U.S. These NRPA standards are commonly accepted within the industry, thus they represent a logical benchmark for the Lawton region.

Figure 11-2 (below) provides summary standards established initially by NRPA and then adjusted by the planning team to suit local/regional variances and preferences. When Lawton's 2008 population (estimated at 97,550 persons) and the City's projected 2020 population of 115,760 persons is examined, the City's level of service for parklands and facilities should total approximately 1,500 acres in 2008 and 1,800 acres in 2020. With almost 1,400 acres of developed parkland currently in the City, the City is generally meeting the established demand for park facilities. The demand for these areas, however, will outstrip the supply of park acreage in the near future with the anticipated growth from BRAC.

Park Service Standards - Acres per 1,000 Residents		
Park Classification	Service Area Description	Service Standard
Mini-Parks	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting	None Specified
Neighborhood Parks	Approx. ½ mile radius	1.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Community Parks	Several neighborhoods up to 1.5 mile radius	3.0 acres per 1,000 persons
City/Regional Park	Several communities. 1 hour driving time	5.5 acres per 1,000 persons
Open Space/Linear Parks	No applicable standard	Variable
Trails/Open Space	No applicable standard	1.0 acres per 1,000 persons
	Summary Level of Service Standard Total	10.5 Acres of Parkland per 1,000 persons

Notes: Service standard is based on NRPA standards with minor adjustments to reflect local and statewide preferences.

Figure 11-1: NRPA Parks Level of Service Standards



Exhibit 11.1



Parkland and Facilities in Cache and Elgin

On the other hand, the relative small size of Cache and Elgin render these broad standards cumbersome in these communities, because in many instances, Cache and Elgin's parks provide community and neighborhood facilities and activities at one location. Thus, the city may be providing sufficient facilities and services, but because it is in one location, their adherence to these standards seems lacking. If viewed in strict relationship to the number of acres of parkland per capita versus the number of acres of particular parkland types per capita, the cities of Cache and Elgin demonstrate a strong level of service for their community. Cache has almost 10 acres per 1,000 residents and Elgin's ratio is over 13 acres per 1,000 residents. When compared to a commonly accepted standard of approximately 10 acres (combined total of all types and nature of park lands and facilities) per 1,000 residents used across the U.S., Cache and Elgin compare favorably but are somewhat lower than the national average.

The lower than average level of service available in Cache and Elgin is not unusual for cities of their size. Both cities have limited publicly-owned lands and financial resources to dedicate to park lands, and even if these resources were available, with no formal parks staff to manage these facilities, the burden would have to be assumed by the private users and ultimately the overall condition of the facilities would suffer. Cache's facilities are in a state of needed repair, however, the Elgin park benefits from a strong user group that helps to maintain the facilities. In the end, many of these residents choose to travel to Lawton or the Wildlife Refuge for their leisure or outdoor activity needs.

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1901, Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 546 refuges throughout the United States managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The 59,020 acre Refuge hosts a rare piece of the past - a remnant mixed grass prairie, an island where the natural grasslands escaped destruction because the rocks underfoot defeated the plow. This Refuge is a popular destination for many local residents and visitors from outside the area, with total estimated visitation approximating 1.5 million visitors per year.

The Refuge provides habitat for large native grazing animals such as American bison, Rocky Mountain elk, white-tailed deer, Texas Longhorn cattle also share the Refuge rangelands as a cultural and historical legacy species. More than 50 mammal, 240 bird, 64 reptile and amphibian, 36 fish, and 806 plant species thrive on this important refuge.

Additionally, as depicted in Exhibit 11.2 (next page), the WMWR has an extensive system of nature trails that serve as excellent physical fitness adventures and/or educational opportunities for the local communities and region. This system of trails offers a wide range of difficulty; from easy to moderate climbs to aggressive/expert trails in more remote areas. Beginning in 2008, the WMWR initiated its Comprehensive Conservation Plan that will serve as a guide for managing the unique resources of the Refuge over the next 15 years, and habitat and wildlife management and preservation are considered the most sensitive and compelling issues for the Refuge and its management/planning team.



Exhibit 11.2



Cultural Facilities in Primary Impact Area Communities

Due to its rich history as one of the original outposts of the American frontier and the continuing rich heritage of the Native American people from the region, the Lawton/Fort Sill community continues to place a strong emphasis on culture and arts in their community. Not only does the City of Lawton have numerous events, activities and facilities that encourage and support the arts, most of the smaller communities within the study area have their own festivals and programs that provide a strong and enduring cultural impact on their respective communities.

This section of the chapter examines the broad category of arts and culture in the primary impact area communities of Lawton, Cache and Elgin and provides an indication of the access to and number of arts-based activities that are available in the area. An assessment of the community's quality of life based on its arts/cultural environment by necessity will be broad and very subjective, because art and culture are not easily quantified or measured. Even if quantifiable measures can be determined (i.e. level of financial support, number of museums, library branches, etc.), these measures may not accurately reflect the community's perception of the value these activities/facilities provide for the region.

The intrinsic value of these activities to the overall quality of life in the Lawton/Fort Sill community was experienced by the planning team in various interviews and discussions with community leaders throughout the planning process. Considering the size of the region (and the City of Lawton in particular), there are a significant number of quality, cultural facilities in the area that support and encourage the arts as an important of the region's quality of life and common day environment. While there are a number of venues and facilities across the region, the majority of the major cultural facilities are within the city of Lawton and Lawton serves as the cultural center of the region.

Figure 11-2 (below) provides a listing of the most prominent and visited activities and facilities in the area, as well as a listing of the major arts/cultural programs in the City.

Lawton Area Arts and Culture Facilities	
Lawton Community Theatre	Holy City of the Wichitas
Percussive Arts Society Museum	Leslie Powell Foundation & Gallery
Great Plains Museum	Phillips Music Education Center
McMahon Memorial Auditorium	Southwest Songwriter's Association
Fort Sill Museum	Great Plains Coliseum
Lawton Heritage Association & Mattie Beal Historic Home	

Figure 11-2: Arts/Cultural Facilities in Lawton Area

Lawton Arts and Humanities Council

The Lawton Arts and Humanities Council is the primary agency/group involved in the development and fostering of arts and culture in the Lawton area. Their mission is to encourage and to coordinate cultural endeavors and activities and to promote knowledge and appreciation of the fine arts in the City of Lawton, and its metropolitan area. Formed in April of 1969, this public trust was created for the benefit of the City of Lawton, Oklahoma, and currently, there are fifteen trustees appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the governing body of the City of Lawton. These council members are residents of Southwest Oklahoma who are interest in and support all forms of the arts and humanities, and to the extent possible, the Council includes at least one representative of Fort Sill; one employee from Cameron University; and one employee from the Lawton Public Schools. Annually, the Council recognizes area individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the cultural life of our community, and the Council supports several programs throughout the community, including "One to Six" Art Purchase Competition, Children's Theatre, Native American projects, Art Grants (\$10,000 annually given), International Festival, and School of the Arts fro Children, and a quarterly publication, Lawton Arts and Entertainment Magazine.



Arts for All, Incorporated

The Arts for All organization is a Lawton-based, non-profit advocacy group whose stated mission is to support and foster arts in southwest Oklahoma. This organization works closely with the Lawton Arts and Humanities Council and other regional arts organizations to foster the development of arts and cultural events across the region. Arts for All, Inc. has a 41 member board that assists in planning and developing its programs for the purpose of furthering the performing arts, the visual arts and the literary arts in the region. The annual Arts for All festival raises funds to help support and assist their seven member organizations (Lawton Community Theatre, Lawton Philharmonic Society, Southwest Oklahoma Opera Guild, Wichita Wildlife Photographic Society, Lawton/Fort Sill Art Council and the Lawton Pro Musica) and to assist their affiliate member organizations, including the 77th United States Army Band from Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Public Libraries in the Primary Impact Area Communities

Nearly every town in the study area had a public library available to its citizens, thus ensuring that each community had a facility that could serve another gathering place for its residents and offering a venue to gain knowledge and understanding of their community and its relationship to the broader state, region, nation and world. Lawton has a central library, located in its downtown area, which provides the latest volumes of fiction, reference and non-fiction materials and serves as a community meeting venue. Additionally, a branch library is located in northwest Lawton to serve that growing area of the community.



Needs Assessment

To a large degree, the cities of Lawton, Cache and Elgin have prepared their community with adequate and well maintained parks and recreation facilities, and with the addition of the outdoor activity areas and trails located within the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, the region is well-served with parks, recreation and arts/cultural facilities and opportunities. Outlined below is the summary assessment and analysis of the parks and recreation needs within each community.

City of Lawton Parks/Recreation Gaps & Needs

The department's current Ten Year Strategic Plan has provided a sound basis for future parks and recreation programming and facility development in the Lawton area. The Plan's recommendations were used to gain support for a new Eastside Community Park in east Lawton in the last couple of years, and this new facility will provide needed capacity and park features for this growth area. Overall, the city's network of neighborhood parks is more than adequate to service the existing and forecasted population.

On the other hand, the new growth anticipated with BRAC will generate new park user demands in areas of town that are presently underserved in terms of comprehensive community scale facilities. The Ten Year Plan mentions two other areas of town that are in need of support and further development as indicated by our planning analysis (see Exhibit 11.3 on the next page). As the BRAC deployment begins in early 2009 through 2012, the high growth areas of southwest Lawton, northwest Lawton and east Lawton will likely need community park facilities to address new population centers. Exhibit 11.3 indicates current and proposed service zones for the major parks in the Lawton inventory, but it is clear that geographic and functional service "gaps" will exist in the future if growth occurs as anticipated in these areas. The neighborhood parks provide good opportunities and features for small area recreation (i.e. playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis, etc.), but these smaller parks do not permit the full scale development of community-scale facilities, such as softball/baseball complexes, soccer fields, and other larger scale park uses.

Finally, based on commonly-accepted national park standards, the city of Lawton also is deficient in comprehensive, indoor recreation center spaces to accommodate their user groups requiring these type facilities. It is anticipated that a new facility east of Interstate 44 will be required and a new facility on the west side of the city will be required due to BRAC-induced residential growth.



Exhibit 11.3



City of Cache Parks/Recreation Gaps & Needs

The analysis indicated that the current facilities in Cache are sufficient in terms of their quantity, but our investigations revealed that their condition and scope of park features was insufficient to meet future needs. A fuller compliment of park elements, features, and equipment is needed in Cache, and based on interviews and investigations with local leaders, these elements should be located in a new park setting that provides a more accessible and central location for the City (see Chapter Five – Land Uses and Planning for additional information regarding future park location in Cache). Additionally, the City's current infrastructure system lacks a non-motorized connectivity network that could benefit the city's future school-age populations as they travel from home to school to the park and back. Future improvements to the parks/recreation network should also include a trail system or network that can connect and link new housing areas with the proposed and existing city park sites.

City of Elgin Parks/Recreation Gaps & Needs

The City of Elgin's current park inventory results in a good geographic and functional coverage for the City. The new community park and sports complex near Interstate 44 provides good access for the majority of the city's residents, and the facilities and features at the site compliment the remainder of the city's park inventory.

With the anticipated BRAC growth in Elgin, the most pressing parks/recreation needs for the City will be the development of neighborhood park facilities (i.e. playgrounds, basketball, tennis, walking/jogging trails) in the newly-developing areas. In addition, the city should plan now for the connectivity network features (i.e. sidewalks, bikeways/trails systems) that will be needed across the city to improve the safe access to these park facilities by the local youth. Future improvements to the parks/recreation network should also include a trail system or network that can connect and link new housing areas with the proposed and existing city park sites.

Recommendations

Based on a review of applicable level of service standards, the current residents of Lawton, Cache and Elgin have easy access to a number of quality parks within their own communities or within the region. These parks provide a variety of activities, features and athletic elements which are desired by the region's user groups, and when combined with the natural areas and trail system that exist in the Wildlife Refuge, the Lawton/Fort Sill area's quality of life is particularly enhanced with outdoor activity opportunities.

In addition, the cultural and arts environment within these communities is particularly strong, with Lawton serving as the center of the activities and facilities for the region. Public and private, non-profit funding is made available from the cities and other Lawton area foundations or groups and these efforts have created a vital community that supports and fosters arts and culture across southwest Oklahoma.

The population growth that is anticipated to occur as a result of the BRAC deployments and improvements will generate additional demands for park facilities and areas in these primary impact area communities. Outlined below are recommendations regarding capital needs and potential operational/funding strategies that are needed in each community to maintain the levels of service currently provided in their City.

City of Lawton – Parks and Recreation Recommendations

As described and noted in previous chapters of this Plan, private real estate developers and builders have already planned, designed or permitted over 5,800 new residential units in the high growth areas of west, southwest and east Lawton, and at full build-out, these planned units could add 13,000 – 17,500 potential new park users in the City of Lawton. Accordingly, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Develop an Updated Ten Year Strategic Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department:** The



current Ten Year Plan and its recommendations require adjustment and revisions based on the latest population and demographic projections provided in this regional planning effort. While some of the recommendations from the current Plan have been implemented, many of the capital facilities recommendations in the future growth areas have not yet been put in place. An updated Ten Year Plan will serve as a guiding tool for park development in the City to ensure that future capital spending and facility improvements create a coordinated and comprehensive parks and recreation system and program for all of Lawton, thus enhancing the current quality of life and recreation standards within the community.

- **Plan, Design and Implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects that provide the necessary services to high growth areas:** The west, southwest and eastern portions of Lawton are poised for growth and the previous policy decisions by the leaders of Lawton have essentially committed the City to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the growth and development of these areas. As such, the City should be proactive in their purchase of adequate land in these areas in advance of the new housing in order to develop the following major park improvement projects. All projects listed below are based on preliminary investigations and research conducted in this report and should be fully vetted and confirmed during the more detailed park planning that would occur in an update to the Ten Year Strategic Plan:

1. *New Community Park and Community Center – Southwest Lawton:* Although the exact park elements and features are not yet determined for this facility, this high growth area will create demand for playgrounds, ballfields, trails, exercise areas, and other recreational/wellness activity areas within the park. In addition, the need for additional indoor recreation space and community gathering spaces was noted, and this park would represent a logical and coordinated location for a comprehensive indoor facility that is paired with a comprehensive outdoor park setting. Estimated cost for this facility is in the range of \$10.0 to \$13.0 million.
2. *New Community Park - Northwest Lawton:* The West Wolf Creek Sewer Trunk Main project, when complete, will open up new development areas in the northwestern reaches of the city and create additional park demand in this already popular and growing area of the City. New demand for comprehensive community-scale park activities and features will be created. Estimated cost is \$3.0 to \$5.0 million.
3. *New or Expanded Eastside Community Park and Community Center – East Lawton:* The planning and development of sanitary sewer services into the Nine Mile Creek sewer basin will generate new housing and development in east Lawton, which in turn, will create new demand for parks and recreation areas. The recent development of the Eastside Community Park has created a quality facility that can meet this demand in the near term, but the long term growth of this area will likely burden this new facility. An expanded Eastside Park or a new community park will likely be needed based on anticipated growth, and a new comprehensive indoor facility will also be in demand at the end of the planning period (2017-2020). Estimated cost is \$10.0 to \$13.0 million.

- **Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a separate Park Impact Fee or “In lieu of” park dedication provision for developments in the high growth areas of Lawton:** The current system of parks within the City are generally adequate to meet the needs of the current population base, thus any new development (and the subsequent park users that would accompany it) would generate new, additional demands for park land that are connected directly to this growth. As such, the City should evaluate the opportunity to transfer the costs of the needed park facilities in these growth areas to the new developments and housing that are creating the demand. A park impact fee (separate and distinct from the current impact fee) could be developed or an “In lieu of” park dedication provision (i.e. donating park land to the city in lieu of paying an impact fee) is warranted in these high growth areas where land values are likely to appreciate quickly.



City of Cache – Parks and Recreation Recommendations

While the number of units projected for the Cache area does not approach the volume anticipated in Lawton, their growth projections represent a similar order of magnitude impact on the city's existing parks and recreation system as Lawton's growth numbers will have on its overall parks network. Private real estate developers and the City have already planned, designed or permitted over 300 new residential units in the City, and accordingly, the following recommendations for future parks and recreation improvements are offered:

- **Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a Park Impact Fee or “In lieu of” park dedication provision for developments in the City:** Although the current parks network within the City is limited, this system is generally adequate to meet the needs of the current population base, thus any new development (and the subsequent park users that would accompany it) would generate new, additional demands for park land that are connected directly to this growth. As such, the City should evaluate the opportunity to transfer the costs of the needed park facilities in these growth areas to the new developments and housing that are creating the demand. A park impact fee could be developed or an “In lieu of” park dedication provision (i.e. donating park land to the city in lieu of paying an impact fee) could be evaluated as a means to shift these infrastructure costs to those developments and housing units that are creating the demand.
- **Plan, Design and Implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects that provide the necessary services to future residents:** The northern and eastern portions of the City are the most likely locations for future growth in the City and thus warrant the first inspection of possible park sites. The existing park facilities were not deemed adequate (due to size and access restraints) to accommodate the new park/recreation uses and features that may be required at the new facility. As such, the City should be proactive in their purchase of adequate land in these areas in advance of the new housing in order to develop the following major park improvement projects:
 1. *New Community Park:* Although the exact park elements and features are not yet determined for this facility, the City's future population base will likely warrant expanded, community-scale park features and facilities (i.e. ballfields, playgrounds, tennis, trails, exercise areas, and other recreational/wellness activity areas within the park). The location of this facility is undetermined, but the more central the location to the city's core, the better the geographic reach the facility will have. In addition, the community has discussed the development of a comprehensive sports competition complex within Cache that could serve the community, as well as providing a tourist attraction for area softball, baseball or soccer tournaments. This type of facility development is beyond the “need” of Cache's population base, but it may represent a viable economic development opportunity for the City. The estimated cost for a “need-based” community park facility is in the range of \$2.0 to \$3.0 million.
 2. *New Connectivity Improvements - Citywide:* The relatively compact development patterns in Cache provide a great opportunity to develop a city-wide system or network of connectivity improvements (sidewalks, bikeways, off-street trails) that would permit the community to access public and civic facilities or buildings without the use of a motorized vehicle, thus potentially reducing the congestion and traffic volumes on critical city streets. A comprehensive survey of potential routes and a plan for priority projects should be developed and implemented as new development and growth occurs. Estimated average cost per mile of connectivity trail is approximately \$75,000 per mile (off street trail) and \$7,500 per mile (on street lanes).



City of Elgin – Parks and Recreation Recommendations

The growth projections for the Elgin area are larger than those estimated for Cache but much smaller than Lawton, but like Cache, the number of units projected for Elgin presents similar order of magnitude issues for their current parks infrastructure system. Elgin's growth potential is significant with long term growth projections of 500 – 1,000 homes estimated. This growth will strain the current parks and recreation facilities beyond their capacity. Accordingly, the following recommendations are offered:

- **Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan:** The city has the potential of doubling in size over the next ten years, and with this growth will come new opportunities and demand for parks and recreation features. The city should evaluate the level of service needed to accommodate this demand, both from a facility standpoint and from a maintenance and operational standpoint. The current operations may not be adequate to serve the expanded network and programming of park sites in the future, thus a coordinated approach and Master Plan is needed. This Plan will serve as a guiding tool for park development in the City to ensure that future capital spending and facility improvements create a coordinated and comprehensive parks and recreation system and program for Elgin, thus enhancing the current quality of life and recreation standards within the community.
- **Evaluate/Investigate the need for an Indoor Recreation Facility (long term need) in coordination with Elgin Public Schools:** The growth and development of the city's housing areas and public schools may warrant a detailed investigation and feasibility study of providing an indoor recreation/community center for the Elgin area. Many communities are viewing these indoor facilities as integral to their parks and recreation programs, and when combined with the assembly, recreational and meeting space needs of the local schools, these projects become affordable and efficient uses of public capital dollars.
- **Plan, Design and Implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects that provide the necessary services to high growth areas:** The northern, western and eastern portions of the City are the most likely locations for future growth in the City and thus warrant the first inspection of possible park sites. The existing park facilities in many of these areas were not deemed adequate (due to size and access restraints) to accommodate the new park/recreation uses and features that may be required at the new facility. As such, the City should be proactive in their purchase of adequate land in these areas in advance of the new housing in order to develop the following major park improvement projects:
 1. *New Neighborhood Parks:* Although the exact location and park elements are not yet determined, the City needs to develop a coordinated network of neighborhood parks across the community that provide recreational and outdoor activity areas for their residents. The estimated cost for a neighborhood park facility is in the range of \$500,000 to \$1.2 million.
 2. *New or Expanded Community Park – Interstate 44 area:* The recent development of the Elgin Community Park (near Interstate 44) has created a quality facility that can meet the current community demand in the near term, but the long term growth of this area will likely burden this new facility. An expanded park at this location or a new community park will likely be needed based on anticipated growth, and a new comprehensive indoor facility will also be in demand at the end of the planning period (2017-2020). Estimated cost is \$8.0 to \$10.0 million
 3. *New Connectivity Improvements - Citywide:* The relatively compact development patterns in Elgin provide a great opportunity to develop a city-wide system or network of connectivity improvements (sidewalks, bikeways, off-street trails) that would permit the community to access public and civic facilities or buildings without the use of a motorized vehicle, thus potentially



reducing the congestion and traffic volumes on critical city streets. A comprehensive survey of potential routes and a plan for priority projects should be developed and implemented as new development and growth occurs. Estimated average cost per mile of connectivity trail is approximately \$75,000 per mile (off street trail) and \$7,500 per mile (on street lanes).

- **Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a Park Impact Fee or “In lieu of” park dedication provision for developments in the City:** Although the current parks network within the City is limited, this system is generally adequate to meet the needs of the current population base, thus any new development (and the subsequent park users that would accompany it) would generate new, additional demands for park land that are connected directly to this growth. As such, the City should evaluate the opportunity to transfer the costs of the needed park facilities in these growth areas to the new developments and housing that are creating the demand. A park impact fee could be developed or an “In lieu of” park dedication provision (i.e. donating park land to the city in lieu of paying an impact fee) could be evaluated as a means to shift these infrastructure costs to those developments and housing units that are creating the demand.

Implementation

The following pages indicate the specific implementation steps, processes, participants and costs for the recommendations included in this chapter.



Lawton Fort Sill Growth Management Plan Implementation Checklist Subject: Parks and Recreation - Quality of Life				Responsibilities	Timing	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
				Primary	Secondary		
Issue: Future development and growth will strain the capacity of the city of Lawton's parks and recreation systems and potentially limit long term growth and development needed to adequately address BRAC population growth projections							
Recommendation: Plan, develop, adopt, design and implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects in these areas to provide long term capacity and adequate quality of life services for future growth							
Develop, advertise and solicit technical assistance consultant for the development of an Updated Ten Year Strategic Plan for the Parks and Recreation department that will serve as a guiding tool for park development in the City to ensure that future capital spending and facility improvements create a coordinated and comprehensive parks and recreation system and program for all of Lawton							
Action 1:	Revise the current Capital Improvements Plan and budgets for the city of Lawton to include the following parks and recreation capital projects			CITY	PARK, WMWR	Near	\$105,000 LOCAL, OEA
Action 2:	Plan, design and begin construction on a new community park in the southwestern portion of the City (separate community/recreation center included later in the planning period)			CITY	PARK	Mid	\$5.0 Million LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.1	Plan, design and begin construction on a new community park in the northwestern portion of the City			CITY	PARK	Long	\$5.0 Million LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.2	Plan, design and begin construction on a new Indoor Recreation/Community Center in southwest Lawton (preferably on the site of the new community park)			CITY	PARK	Long	\$8.0 Million LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.3	Plan, design and begin construction on an expanded Eastside Community park (or a new park location) and a new Indoor Recreation/Community center in the eastern portion of the City			CITY	PARK	Long	\$13.0 Million LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.4	Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a separate Park Impact Fee or "In lieu of" park dedication provision for developments in the high growth areas of Lawton (particularly southwest, northwest and east Lawton) to offset the capital costs of developing new park facilities to accommodate new residential growth and development			CITY	PARK	Near	NA
Action 3:				CITY, CoC	PARK	Near	NA
Issue: Future development and growth will strain the capacity of the city of Cache's parks and recreation systems and potentially limit long term growth and development needed to adequately address BRAC population growth projections							
Recommendation: Plan, develop, adopt, design and implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects in these areas to provide long term capacity and adequate quality of life services for future growth							
Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a Park Impact Fee or "In lieu of" park dedication provision for developments in the city to offset the capital costs of developing new park facilities to accommodate new residential growth and development							
Action 1:	Revise the current Capital Improvements Plan and budgets for the city of Cache to include the following parks and recreation capital projects			CITY	CoC	Near	NA
Action 2:	Plan, design and begin construction on a new community park in the central portion of the City			CITY		Long	\$3.0 Million LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.1	Plan, design and begin construction of a coordinated and comprehensive 'connectivity' trail system and network throughout the city to encourage alternative travel methods to civic facilities/buildings						estimated at \$1.0 Million for trail network
Action 2.2				CITY		Long	LOCAL, FEE
Implementation Agencies							
CITY - Local government planning departments or city administrations CO - County governments PARK - Lawton Parks and Recreation Department OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment WMWR - Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge CoC - Chamber of Commerce (real estate members)							
Timing							
Near - 2008-2009							
Mid - 2010 - 2011							
Long - 2012+							
Funding Sources							
LOCAL - bond/general revenues from local governments							
STATE - state revenue source							
FEE - Impact Fees from new development							
OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment							

Lawton Fort Sill Growth Management Plan Implementation Checklist Subject: Parks and Recreation - Quality of Life		Responsibilities		Timing	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
		Primary	Secondary			
<p>Issue: Future development and growth will strain the capacity of the city of Elgin's parks and recreation systems and potentially limit long term growth and development needed to adequately address BRAC population growth projections</p> <p>Recommendation: Plan, develop, adopt, design and implement a coordinated set of Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement projects in these areas to provide long term capacity and adequate quality of life services for future growth</p>						
	Develop, advertise and solicit technical assistance consultant for the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that will serve as a guiding tool for park development in the City to ensure that future capital spending and facility improvements create a coordinated and comprehensive parks and recreation system and program for all of Elgin	CITY	CoC	Near	\$50,000	LOCAL, OEA
Action 1:	Revise the current Capital Improvements Plan and budgets for the city of Elgin to include the following parks and recreation capital projects					
Action 2:	Plan, design and begin construction on new neighborhood parks in the high growth areas as warranted by future development	CITY		Mid, Long	\$500,000 to \$1.2 million per park	LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.1						
Action 2.2:	Plan, design and begin construction on a new or expanded Elgin Community park and Indoor Recreation Facility in the Interstate 44 area in coordination and conjunction with the Elgin Schools	CITY	SCHOOL	Long	\$10.0 Million	LOCAL, FEE, SCHOOL
	Plan, design and begin construction of a coordinated and comprehensive 'connectivity' trail system and network throughout the city to encourage alternative travel methods to civic facilities/buildings	CITY		Long	estimated at \$2.0 Million for trail network	LOCAL, FEE
Action 2.2:						
Action 3:	Evaluate/Investigate the need for an Indoor Recreation Facility (long term need) in coordination with Elgin Public Schools	CITY	CoC	Mid	\$50,000	LOCAL, SCHOOL
Action 4:	Investigate/Evaluate the Benefits of Developing a Park Impact Fee or "In lieu of" park dedication provision for developments in the city to offset the capital costs of developing new park facilities to accommodate new residential growth and development	CITY	CoC	Near	N/A	NA
<p>Implementation Agencies</p> <p>CITY - Local government planning departments or city administrations CO - County governments PARK - Lawton Parks and Recreation Department OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment WMWR - Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge CoC - Chamber of Commerce (real estate members)</p> <p>Timing Near - 2008-2009 Mid - 2010 - 2011 Long - 2012+</p> <p>Funding Sources LOCAL - bond/general revenues from local governments STATE - state revenue source FEE - Impact Fees from new development OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment</p>						

