

**FORT WOLTERS LAND USE ANALYSIS:
TECHNICAL MEMO**

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FORT WOLTERS LAND USE ANALYSIS

APRIL 2024

INTRODUCTION

Fort Wolters is situated in the far western area of North Central Texas, primarily in Parker County and stretching into Palo Pinto County. Only a small portion of Fort Wolters is located within the city limits of Mineral Wells. The Dallas-Fort Worth region is growing rapidly, and population and employment are expanding further west, making Mineral Wells much closer to the outer limits of the metropolitan area. Counties in Texas do not have zoning authority, so since most of the land around the perimeter of Fort Wolters is in unincorporated county area, there is no ability to control growth or development around the perimeter of the installation.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

The North Central Texas Council of Governments Research & Information Services department provides land use data based on compilation and analysis of information on development in the North Central Texas region. RIS land use codes were first developed based on United States Geological Survey classifications, but have since been revised to suit local needs, according to the NCTCOG 2020 Land Use Inventory Methodology. Land uses near Fort Wolters are shown in **Figures 1-2**, which show land uses for 2015 and 2020, respectively.

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Figure 1

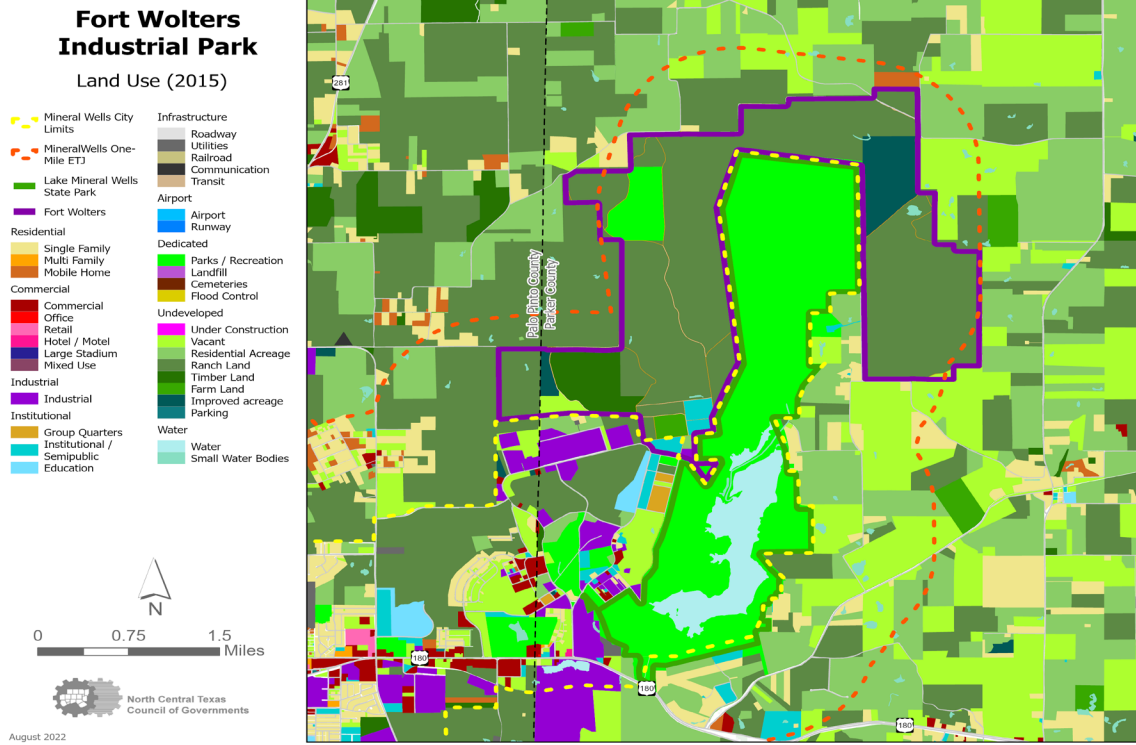
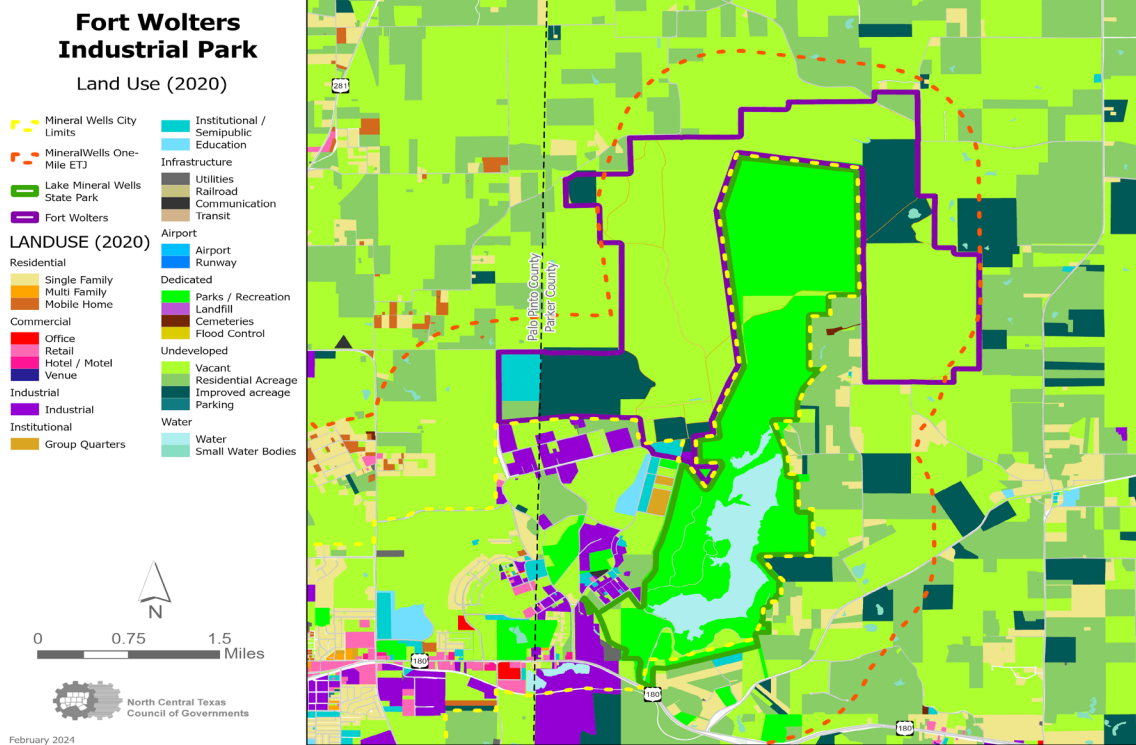


Figure 2



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Not many parcels appear to have changed land uses in the 2015-2020 time period. There is an area at the far northeast corner of Fort Wolters that shows as a mobile home area in 2015 and then some parcels are showing as single family residential in 2020. This is an area that is rapidly developing and even more single family homes are apparent using Google maps in 2024. There is an additional new single family residential development on the eastern perimeter of Fort Wolters that has been built since 2020, but that area shows as vacant in **Figures 1** and **2**. Much of the difference between the 2015 and 2020 maps are based on the differences in how the RIS Department categorizes land use. These challenges are documented in the separate white paper on the NAS JRB Fort Worth land use analysis.

Because Fort Wolters is used primarily as a small arms training site as well as for drop zone training, there are not guidelines for compatible development near this type of installation. There are surface danger zones established based on the training occurring at Fort Wolters, as shown in **Figure 3**. Where the SDZs cross just outside the boundary of Fort Wolters on the west side of the installation, there is no development and the land remains vacant.

As a complementary effort to the current implementation grant, project staff have been mapping a potential land acquisition from Mineral Wells State Park for the mostly unused northern portion of the park, which features only primitive trails, to allow for additional contiguous land for Fort Wolters. As documented in a separate white paper on this effort, the land acquisition would allow for additional types of arms training, the building of an assault landing strip, and expansion of the drop zone, among other mission enhancements. The land acquisition plan is shown in **Figure 4**.

As an additional complementary effort to the current implementation grant, NCTCOG has engaged with Mineral Wells leaders on economic development potential of the Fort Wolters Industrial Park, immediately south of the administrative offices of Fort Wolters, as well as further into the city. While this effort did not advance very far, efforts will continue. Project staff was able to assess the vacant land as well as publicly owned land, as shown in **Figures 5-6**. Because most of the land with the potential for redevelopment near Fort Wolters is privately owned, it will be more difficult to implement an economic development plan. However, as mentioned in the introduction section, with population growth extending westward towards Mineral Wells from the DFW region, it may be only a matter of time before this area is ripe for redevelopment.

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Figure 3

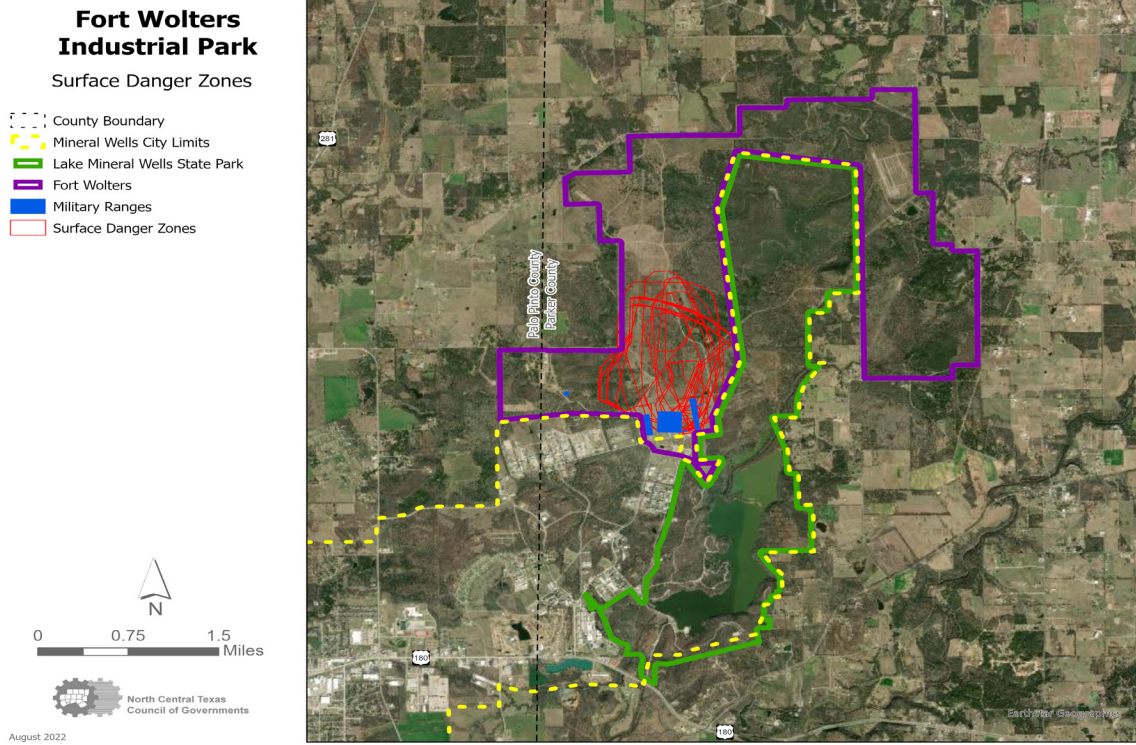


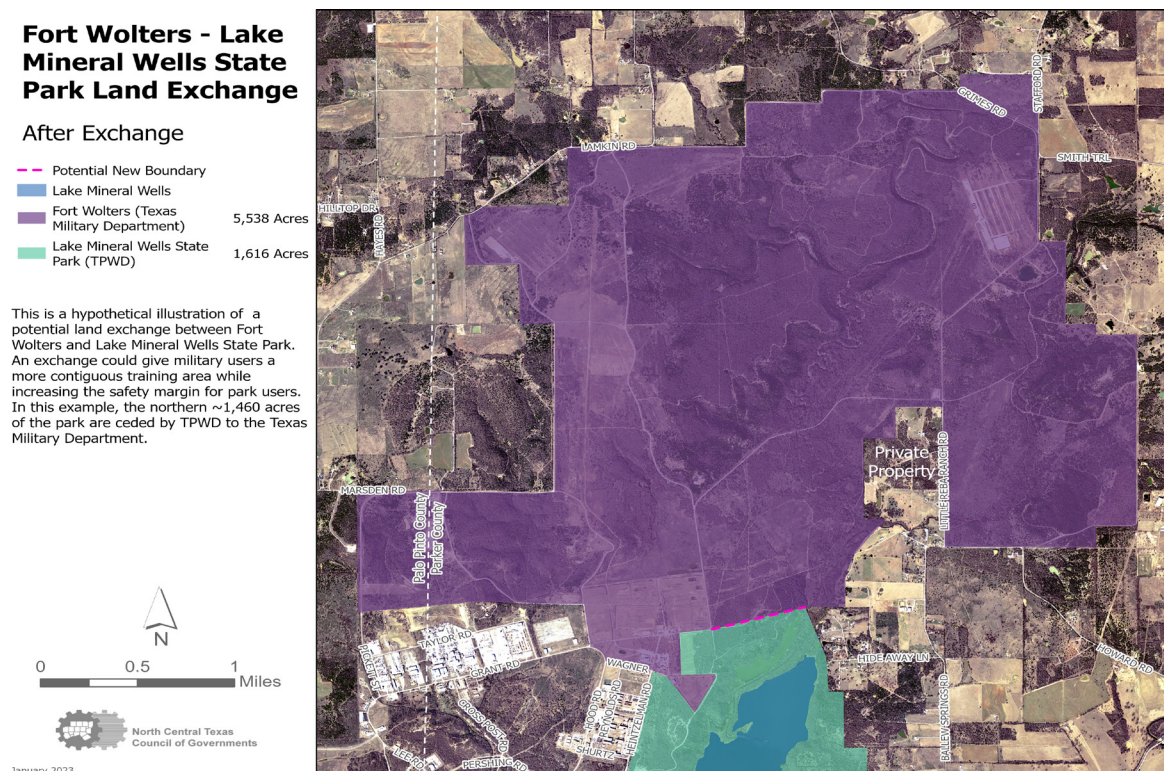
Figure 4

Fort Wolters - Lake Mineral Wells State Park Land Exchange

After Exchange

- Potential New Boundary
- Lake Mineral Wells
- Fort Wolters (Texas Military Department) 5,538 Acres
- Lake Mineral Wells State Park (TPWD) 1,616 Acres

This is a hypothetical illustration of a potential land exchange between Fort Wolters and Lake Mineral Wells State Park. An exchange could give military users a more contiguous training area while increasing the safety margin for park users. In this example, the northern ~1,460 acres of the park are ceded by TPWD to the Texas Military Department.



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Figure 5

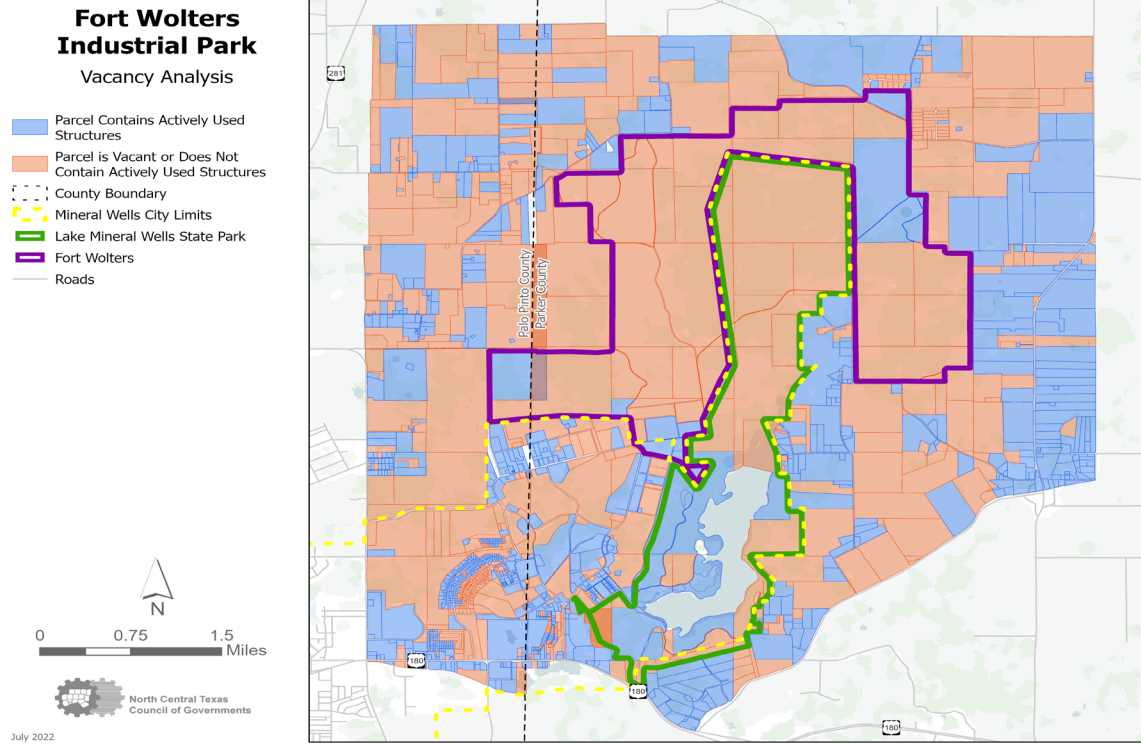
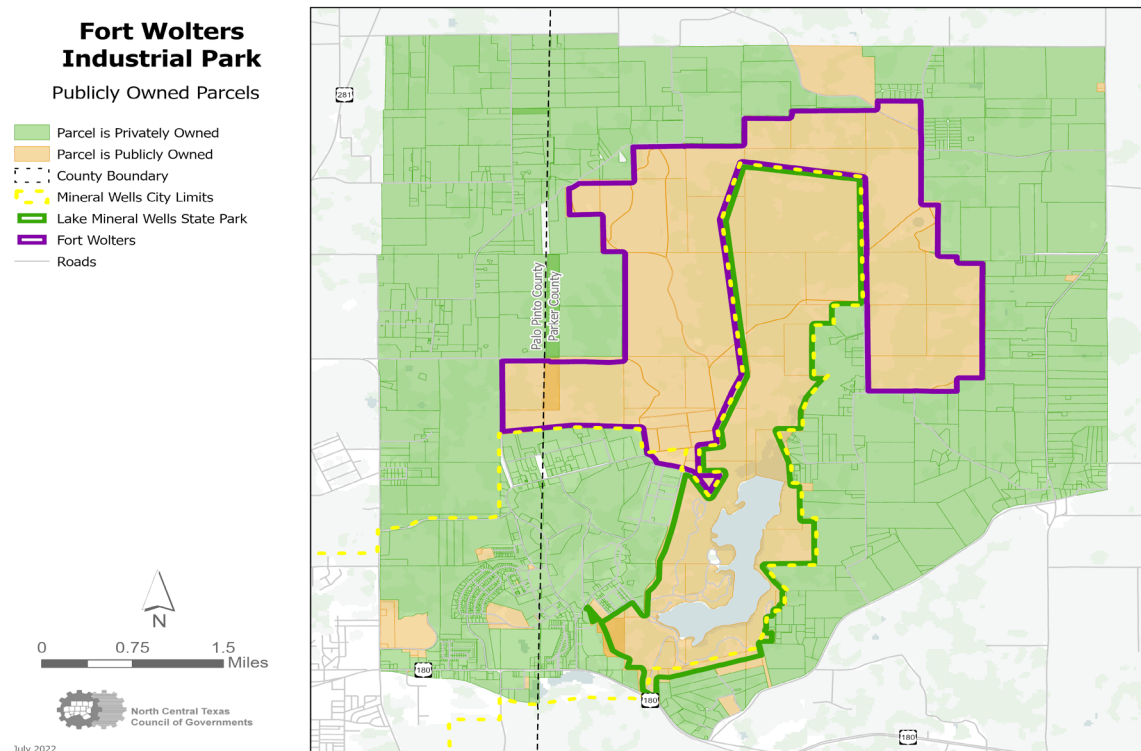


Figure 6



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NEXT STEPS

NCTCOG will pursue the land acquisition with Texas Parks & Wildlife in coordination with the Texas Military Department. In addition, NCTCOG will continue to work with Mineral Wells on economic development initiatives to assist the city in regaining lost opportunity following the closure and significant downsizing of Fort Wolters in the 1970s.