

“If you don’t know where you’ve come from, you don’t know where you are.”

– James Burke (1936-)



CONTEXT

2012 PARKS, RECREATION, TRAILS & OPEN SPACE
VISIONING MASTER PLAN

2.1 BACKGROUND

Cedar Hill is located approximately 18 miles southwest of downtown Dallas. The City is mostly situated in Dallas County, with some small portions located in Ellis County. Cedar Hill is bisected by US Highway 67, which is the primary gateway into the City. Cedar Hill is surrounded by the cities of Dallas, Duncanville and DeSoto to the north and east, and Glen Heights, Ovilla, Midlothian and Grand Prairie to the south and southwest. Joe Pool Lake and Cedar Hill State Park are to the west. According to the US Census Bureau, Cedar Hill comprises a total area of 35.2 square miles.

Founded in the 1850s, Cedar Hill was originally the county seat of Dallas County. Its place in Texas history is highlighted by the branch of the Chisholm Trail that once passed through the area. In 1856, a tornado struck the town destroying most of the buildings and homes. Shortly after, the county seat was moved to Dallas. In 1890, the population had grown to over 500 people. By 1915, the town had three churches, two banks, several businesses, and other professional services. The City officially incorporated in 1938. The nearby Joe Pool Lake was constructed in the 1980s, providing recreational opportunities for Cedar Hill and the region. Around the same time, Cedar Hill's population grew rapidly (tripling between 1980 and 1990), largely because of this new resource.



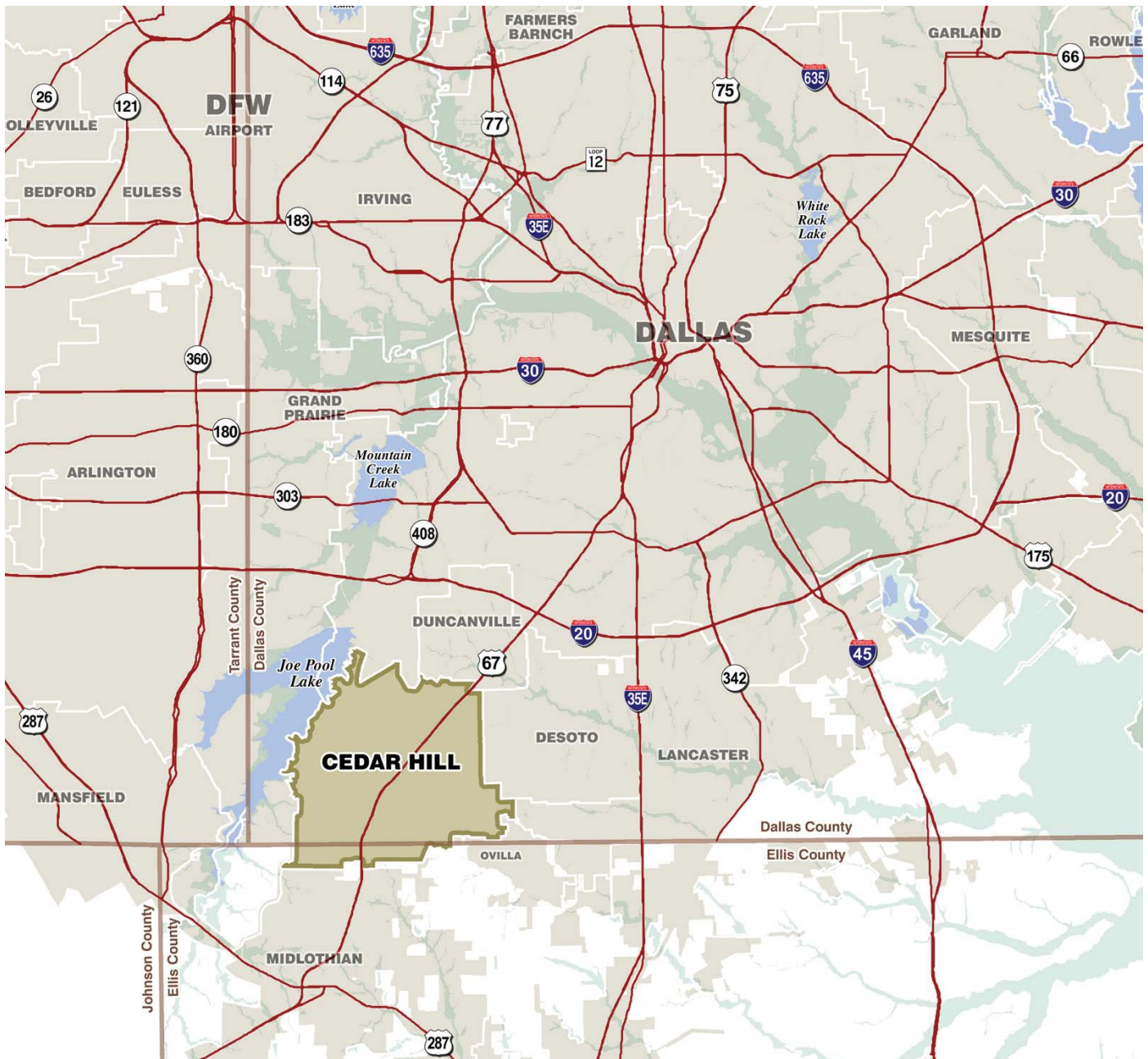


Figure 2.1 – Regional Context

Cedar Hill is in southwestern Dallas County and is conveniently located along US Highway 67. The City is 18 miles from downtown Dallas, 30 miles from downtown Fort Worth, and 27 miles from DFW Airport. Joe Pool Lake constitutes much of the City's western border.

2.2 NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Often referred to as “The Hill Country of the Metroplex,” Cedar Hill contains the highest elevation point in Dallas County. In addition, it is the highest point between the Red River and the Texas Gulf Coast, with an elevation of 830 feet. It is for this reason that our trademark radio towers are located in Cedar Hill. Because of the elevation, topography, and groves of native cedar trees, Cedar Hill is one of the most distinctive cities in the Metroplex.

The natural and cultural resources in Cedar Hill are numerous and provide ample opportunities for recreational use while also serving to influence and define the character of the community, thereby shaping the City’s branding and vision for the future.



Balcones Escarpment

The rugged, undulating topography between Joe Pool Lake and US Highway 67 is a familiar sight and can be experienced by driving along FM 1382 or Mansfield Road. However, it is not readily apparent that this area is actually the most prominent and visible part of a much larger limestone formation known as the Balcones Escarpment. The beauty and unique physical and ecological character of the Escarpment are defining features for Cedar Hill, as is demonstrated by the number of Escarpment-related areas preserved by the City, Dallas County, the State of Texas, and the Audubon Society. Continuing to preserve the escarpment and its associated landscape through development restrictions, providing greater public access via trails, and building upon this unique feature as a marketing and branding tool are among the most important considerations for the future.



Creeks and Streams

The natural beauty of Cedar Hill’s creek corridors contributes to the image and quality of the City, serving as natural gateways where they intersect with streets and roads. Cedar Hill’s creeks and their floodplains also provide environmental services such as flood protection, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality through natural filtration. In addition, these corridors provide excellent recreation opportunities for trails, linear parks, and “green ribbons,” throughout the City. While Red Oak Creek and Bentle Branch Creek are perhaps Cedar Hill’s most prominent creeks and greenbelts, there are also several smaller creeks and streams. Because the highest point in the City is near downtown, Cedar Hill’s creeks flow in all directions away from the center of the City, which can serve as the foundation for an exemplary greenbelt and trail system. It is important to ensure that these areas remain to provide the full recreational, ecological and economic benefits for the community.

A Regional Detention Study has been developed for the City of Cedar Hill, which broadly explores the opportunity to develop regional detention ponds across the city. The study identified 18 potential detention sites along creeks and streams, which were narrowed down to six sites for which more detailed studies were recommended. These six to 18 sites provide opportunities for locating parks, open space, and other recreational amenities in conjunction with the detention ponds.

Cedar Hill State Park

The 1,826 acre state park is located on the west side of the City and the eastern shore of Joe Pool Lake. This urban nature preserve was acquired in 1982 and opened in 1991. It is the most visited state park in Texas, with over a half million visitors per year. Owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers and operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Cedar Hill State Park offers camping, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, picnicking, fishing, swimming, and boating. The location of this park within Cedar Hill is an opportunity not present in any other Metroplex city in terms of protected open space and recreational amenities. Opportunities to connect to the State Park via trails for bikes, pedestrians, and possibly horses should be explored.



“The natural and cultural resources in Cedar Hill are numerous and provide ample opportunities for recreational use while also serving to influence and define the character of the community.”

Rural & Cultural Landscapes

As with many cities, Cedar Hill is transforming from a once rural community to a highly-urbanized area. In order for our community to recognize and sustain our cultural roots, we must protect the cultural landscapes that are representative of our rural and farming history.

The National Park Service describes cultural landscapes as follows:

Settings we have created in the natural world. They revive fundamental ties between people and the land—ties based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, meet requirements for recreation, and find suitable places to bury our dead. Cultural Landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed: plants and fences, watercourses and buildings... They are special places: expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land.

There are many areas in Cedar Hill that are rich in history and culture—including amongst others, various historic homesteads, barns, and out-buildings; old river and creek crossings; areas of pasture and crop land; prairies; and other places that can be considered “Americana” including the historic presence of the Balcones Escarpment. The protection of these types of historic elements is important in preserving Cedar Hill’s culture.





A prime example of a very visible cultural landscape in Cedar Hill is the grazing fields and farm structures to the north of FM 1382 as it traverses the Balcones Escarpment. Another area with tremendous cultural value is Cedar Hill's historic downtown. The historic district and surrounding area encompasses a number of historical properties, homes, and archaeological sites that represent some important aspects of the early settlement and subsequent development of Cedar Hill and the surrounding area.

Protecting Natural and Cultural Landscapes

Preservation of Cedar Hill's natural and rural character does not mean turning away from new development. Rather, it means focusing on preserving key components of the landscape for future generations to continue to experience Cedar Hill's natural beauty, cultural history, and rural qualities.



The recognition and preservation of individual historic sites and structures are not enough to ensure the protection of the cultural landscape as a whole, which is essential in evoking the quality and essence of the history of the area. In fact, Cedar Hill's historical and cultural heritage is inextricably linked to the natural environment. It is thus imperative to protect the integrity and context of the entire landscape in which the cultural features and sites are contained.

It is important to make a determined effort to identify and preserve the most valuable components of the natural and cultural landscapes within and around the city. This may mean acquiring land where possible and partnerships between the City, landowners, and homeowners to preserve Cedar Hill's natural and rural landscapes. Future development can also help to preserve natural and rural landscapes through applying the principles of Conservation Planning and Design¹ to the development's layout.

1 See: Arendt, Randall, and Holly Harper. *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: a Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*. Washington, D.C.: Island, 1996. Print.



*“Preservation
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natural and
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This view from FM-1382 toward pasture land and a farm house at the foot of the escarpment quintessentially represents the natural and rural character of Cedar Hill that is worth preserving for the enjoyment and appreciation of future generations.

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Understanding the current and future size and characteristics of the population to be served is a key part of the park and recreation master planning process. Demographic characteristics and projected populations contained in this section are derived from the 2010 U.S. Census as well as the Cedar Hill Economic Development Corporation, the Texas Water Development Board, and North Central Texas Council of Governments. The population projections shown are approximate, but they do indicate the general size of the service area population.

Population Growth

Table 2.1 shows the population growth of Cedar Hill since 1970. The growth in Ellis County and Dallas County is also shown. This table illustrates the substantial growth that occurred in the 1980s, largely contributed to the completion of the Joe Pool Dam in 1985 and subsequent opening of Joe Pool Lake.

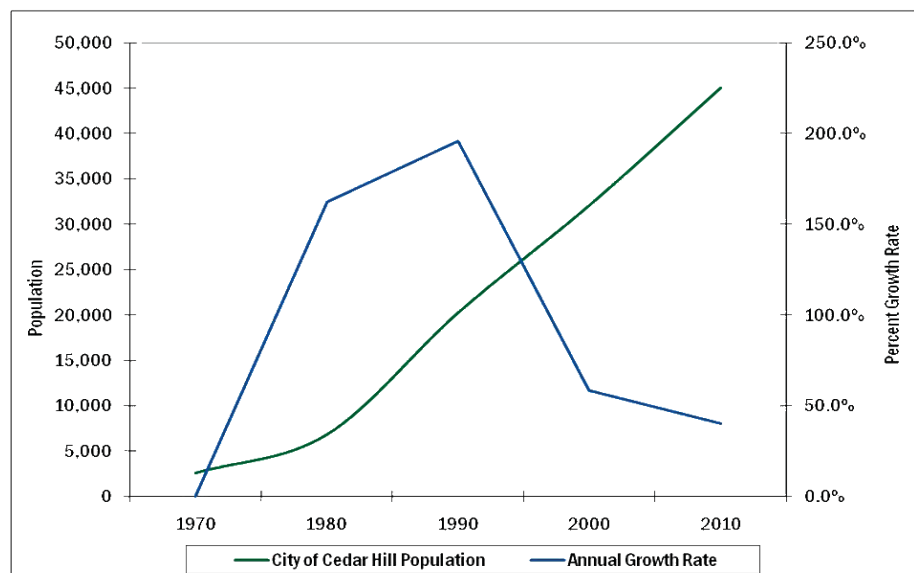
Table 2.1 – Population Growth in Cedar Hill

Year	<i>Cedar Hill</i>		<i>Dallas County</i>		<i>Ellis County</i>	
	Population	Growth	Population	Growth	Population	Growth
1970	2,160	--	1,327,321	--	46,638	--
1980	6,847	162.3%	1,556,390	17.3%	59,743	28.1%
1990	20,267	196.0%	1,852,810	19.0%	85,167	42.6%
2000	32,093	58.4%	2,218,889	19.8%	111,360	30.8%
2010	45,028	40.3%	2,368,139	6.7%	149,610	34.3%

Source: United State Census Bureau; 2010 Census

Figure 2.2 – Historic Population Growth in Cedar Hill

This figure illustrates the growth of Cedar Hill's population between 1970 and 2010. The Annual Growth Rate line (shown in blue) depicts the City's growth boom in the 1980s and 1990s. While the growth rate has decreased over the last 20 years, the City's population has continued to grow steadily and at a rate much higher than that of Dallas and Ellis Counties.



Projected Population Growth

The 2010 population is from the 2010 Census and the estimated population for 2011 is sourced from the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The population projections for the City of Cedar Hill were derived from the Texas Water Development Board. The projected population shows significant growth is expected to continue for the next decade; that is, through the lifetime of this Master Plan.

Table 2.2 – Projected Population Growth in Cedar Hill

Year	Projected Population	Growth
2010	42,028	--
2011	45,260	7.7%
2020	66,728	47.4%
2030	78,085	17.0%

Source: United State Census Bureau (2010 Data); NCTCOG (2011 Data); Texas Water Development Board (2020 and 2030 Data)

Age Characteristics

Cedar Hill has a population that is fairly similar when compared to the State of Texas as a whole. One-third of the Cedar Hill population is school-aged children and youth, which is an important consideration when determining the types of recreation and programs to offer. Young families with children and adolescents are significant users of recreation facilities and point to the need for active recreation facilities and programs within the City.

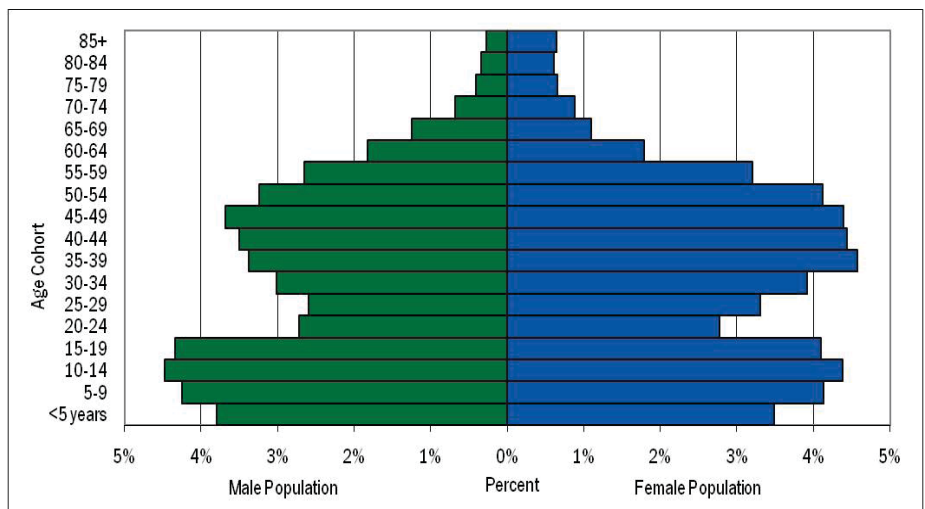
Table 2.3 – Age Characteristics

Age Group	Cedar Hill		Texas	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
19 and Younger	14,846	33.0%	7,621,714	30.3%
20-24	2,471	5.5%	1,817,079	7.2%
25-44	12,935	28.7%	7,071,855	28.1%
45-59	9,587	21.3%	4,858,260	19.3%
60 and Older	5,189	11.5%	3,776,653	15.0%

Source: United State Census Bureau; 2010 Census

Figure 2.3 – Population Pyramid (Population by Age and Sex)

This figure shows the population of Cedar Hill broken down by 5-year age cohorts and sex. The “onion dome” shape of this pyramid is typical of suburban communities where young adults typically move away, only returning when they are ready to have children.



Racial Characteristics

The racial characteristics of Cedar Hill are shown in Table 2.4. The United States Census Bureau does not consider Hispanic/Latino a race in and of itself; rather, it is considered an ethnicity. A person of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity may be of any race. Therefore, in the table, the percentages add up to more than 100%.

Table 2.4 – Racial Characteristics of Cedar Hill

Race	Percent of Population
Black/African American	54.9%
White	35.4%
Other	10.0%
Two or More Races	2.8%
Hispanic/Latino	18.7%

Source: United State Census Bureau; 2010 Census

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2.4 OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANS

This section serves as an overview of the City's previous plans that are most relevant to the development of this Master Plan.

2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

The 2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan identified a series of goals and objectives to achieve the 2006 vision for parks, recreation, and open space in Cedar Hill. It also developed a ten-year action plan to guide implementation of the goals and objectives, identifying the Park Board, City staff, Community Development Corporation, and City Council as key implementers of the plan.

The goals of the 2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan were:

- Provide a system of outstanding parks and open space areas which are responsive to the leisure needs of the City of Cedar Hill and sensitive to the conservation of natural resources.
- Offer a variety of facilities, programs and park areas to meet the recreational needs of a diverse population with various levels of ability and skill.
- Provide an equitable geographic distribution of parks and recreational facilities.
- Plan for the orderly replacement of existing parks and recreational infrastructure to ensure existing recreational opportunities are not lost within the park system.
- Encourage cooperation with the County, community organizations and other agencies, to provide cost-effective services and optimize benefits to citizens.

The 2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan also included a trail system element. The plan recognized trails as an important component of the recreation and transportation systems of the city and their role in regional planning purposes. Linking the local network to regional networks was emphasized throughout the document.

The plan identified a prioritized list of park improvements in the form of a 10-Year City Action Plan List. That list prioritized specific recreational facilities for outdoor activities and indoor recreation.

Table 2.5 identifies the progress the City has made toward implementing the plan as measured by the 10-Year Priority Recommendations for park improvements

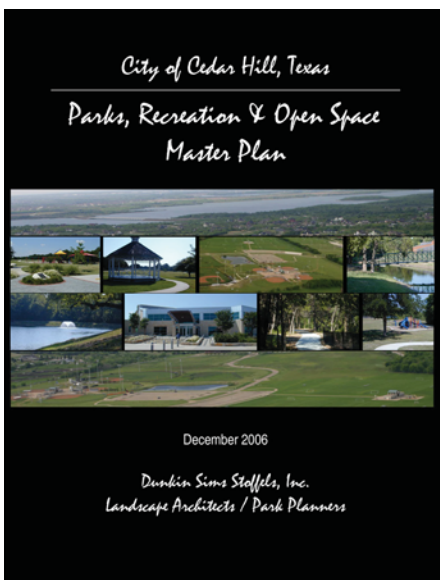


Table 2.5 – 10-Year Priority Recommendations for Park Improvements from the 2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

Recommendation	Status
1 Provide assistance to Audubon Texas, developing Dogwood Canyon, and providing additional trail/educational opportunities.	The Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center was constructed and opened in 2011.
2 Develop an overlook along the Escarpment in Cedar Mountain Preserve that is accessible via the city's trail system.	Not implemented; to be reviewed by this 2012 Master Plan.
3 Develop existing neighborhood parks and develop additional parks to address park distribution deficiencies. These include Highland Recreation Area, Bear Creek Subdivision, and Neighborhood Parks in the southeast sector.	Not implemented; to be reviewed by this 2012 Master Plan.
4 Develop second phase of the recreation center, including additional parking estimated at approximately 100 spaces; 4 spaces per 1,000 sq. feet of indoor aquatic space. An aquatic facility of approximately 25,000 square feet is recommended, to include a leisure pool, therapy pool, and lap lanes for recreational swimming.	The need for these actions is studied in this 2012 Master Plan (see Chapter 4).
5 Upon completion of the aquatic facility, phase out the outdoor park and bathhouse at Crawford Park.	Not implemented; to be reviewed by this 2012 Master Plan.
6 Develop 2.25 miles of trails, starting with the core system of trails. Develop other trails opportunistically as development or major improvements occur.	The first phase of the core spine trail system—Red Oak Creek Trail—will be complete at the end 2013.
7 Acquire land for a 75 to 100 acre community park on the east side of the city.	Not implemented; two potential community park sites are identified in this 2012 Master Plan (see Chapter 3)
8 Acquire land (5-10 acres) for a neighborhood park on the far eastern side of the city, as development requires.	The City acquired the former YMCA property on Joe Wilson Road, an unnamed neighborhood park near Plummer Elementary, and David Rush Neighborhood Park.
9 Develop an additional 11.25 miles of trails focusing on the core system of trails.	Trails along Mansfield Road, FM-1382, Lake Ridge Parkway, Pleasant Run Road, and the Dogwood Canyon trail connection to the existing Cedar Mountain Preserve Trail are in various stages of planning or construction.
10 Develop neighborhood parks, as required, on the eastern side of the city.	Not implemented; to be reviewed by the this 2012 Master Plan.

*“The Cedar Hill
Comprehensive Plan
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[to guide] plans
to maintain and
improve our premier
community.”*
– *Comprehensive
Plan Mission
Statement*

2008 Comprehensive Plan

The Cedar Hill 2008 Comprehensive Plan guides the City’s leaders and decision makers as they address issues facing the community. The mission statement of the Comprehensive Plan reads:

The Cedar Hill Comprehensive Plan will be a statement of policy, priority, and direction that will be used to guide the City, community organizations, and businesses as they develop plans to maintain and improve our premier community.

Incorporated within its Transportation, Future Land Use, Livability, Community Facilities, and Housing and Neighborhood elements, the plan includes several specific goals and objectives related to parks, recreation, and open space planning. The Implementation Strategy of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan identifies a number of prioritized actions that will be wholly or partially addressed by this Master Plan.

Through a public process, the 2008 Comprehensive Plan identified the characteristics and issues affecting the community. Among the strengths of Cedar Hill as identified by this analysis are many of the city’s natural resources, such as the topography, its natural beauty, the Balcones Escarpment, Joe Pool Lake, Cedar Hill State Park, the elevation, and open/green space. Among the opportunities are views of the lake, preserving natural features, tourism related to the State Park, and natural resources. Through the 2008 Comprehensive Plan process, citizens identified the importance of the city’s natural resources to themselves and the future of Cedar Hill.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan also includes a Streetscape Plan that is based upon and supersedes the concepts developed in the 2006 Streetscape Plan. This plan was created to enhance the identity and character of Cedar Hill through roadway beautification at key gateways and intersections. The plan identifies four corridor types and gateways. The corridor types are parkways, approaches, core loop, and freeway. These earlier planning efforts provide guidance for the preparation of the streetscape component of this 2012 Master Plan.

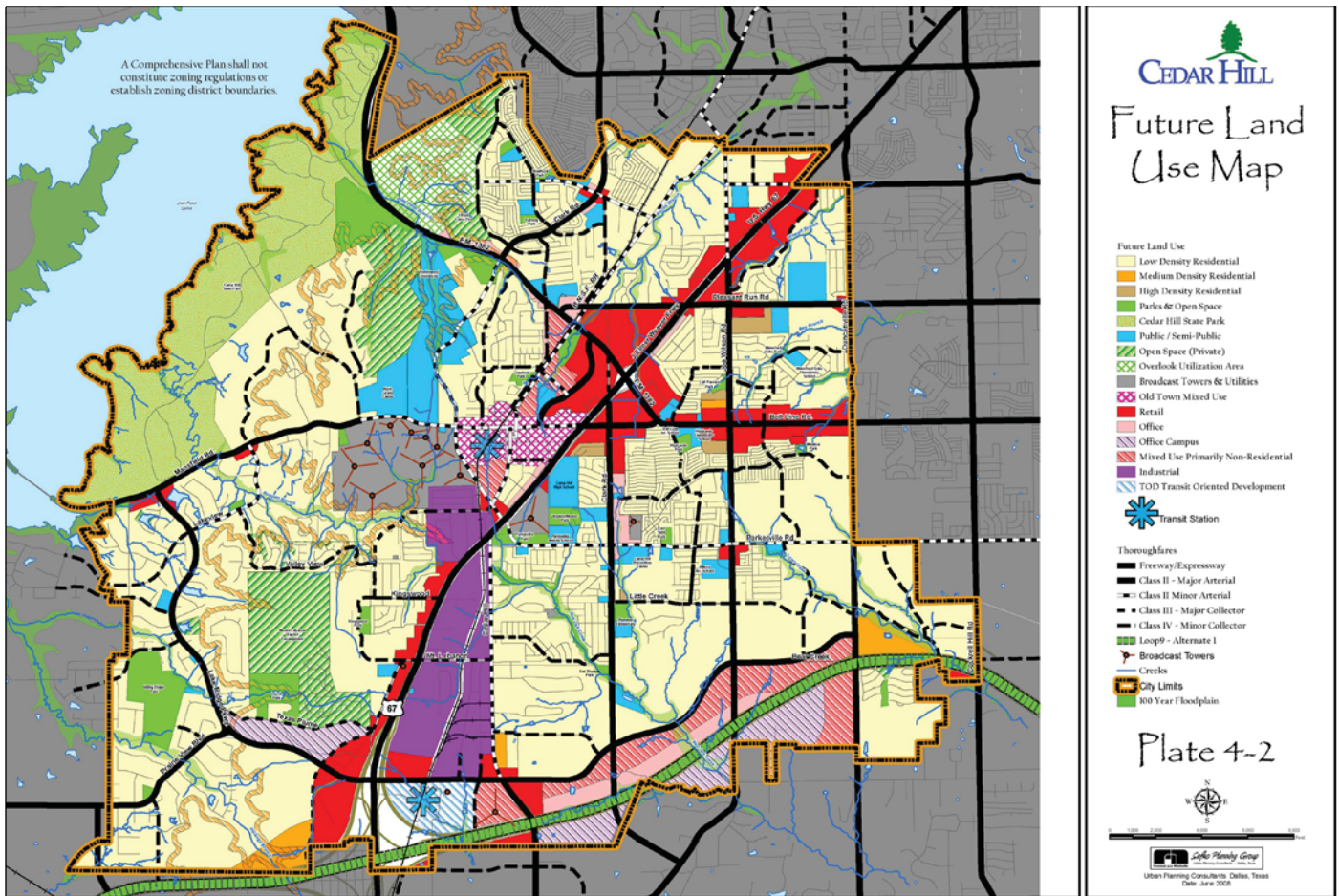


Figure 2.4 (above) – Future Land Use Map from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan

This map shows the planned development patterns for Cedar Hill's long-term future. This provides a basis for the location and character of future parks, recreation facilities, trails, and streetscape improvements.

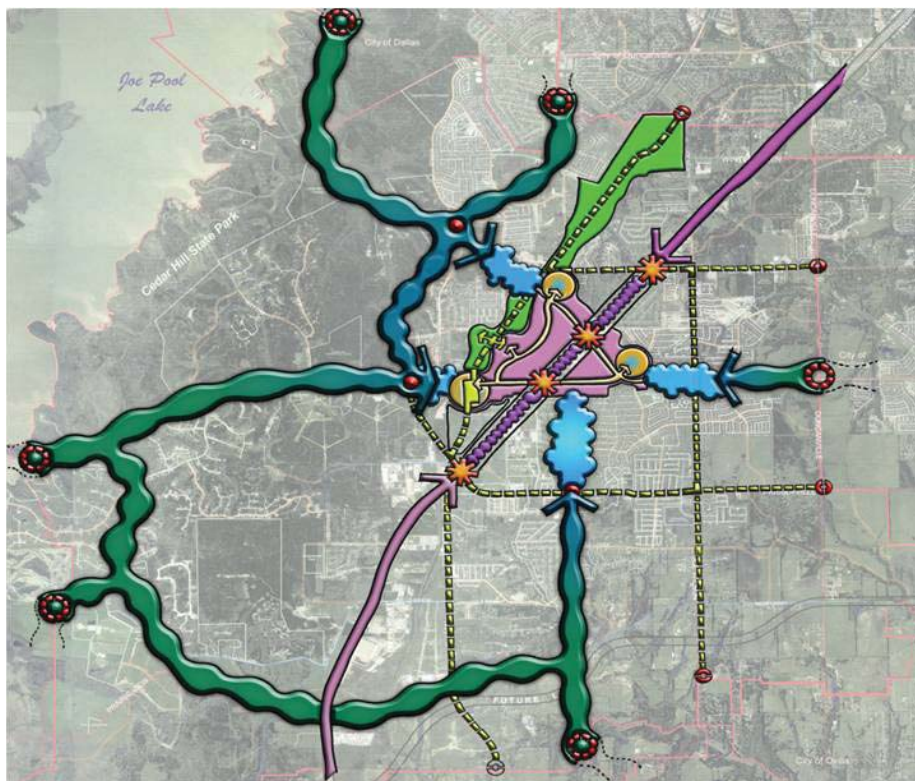


Figure 2.5 (left) – Streetscape Concept from the 2006 Streetscape Plan and 2008 Comprehensive Plan

This map illustrates the streetscape concept developed in the 2006 Streetscape Plan, which was elaborated upon and superseded by the 2008 Comprehensive Plan's Streetscape Plan component.

2010 City Center Vision Plan

In 2010, the Cedar Hill City Council adopted the City Center Vision Plan, a document prepared as part of the first phase of the City Center initiative—a transit-oriented development in Cedar Hill. This document established a vision and goals for this area that promote a more sustainable future by addressing air quality, water and energy resources, and maintaining a high quality of life in Cedar Hill. The vision for the Cedar Hill City Center is:

We envision the City Center as a premier transit-oriented destination, building upon unique local character, promoting safe community interaction, and expanding local opportunities for a sustainable future.

The plan provides additional direction and guidance as to park and open space, bicycle, trail, and streetscape planning in the City Center area of Cedar Hill (see Figure 2.6). With a focus on trails, open space, Complete Streets, streetscapes, and public space, the goals of the City Center Vision Plan help support the purpose of this Master Plan.

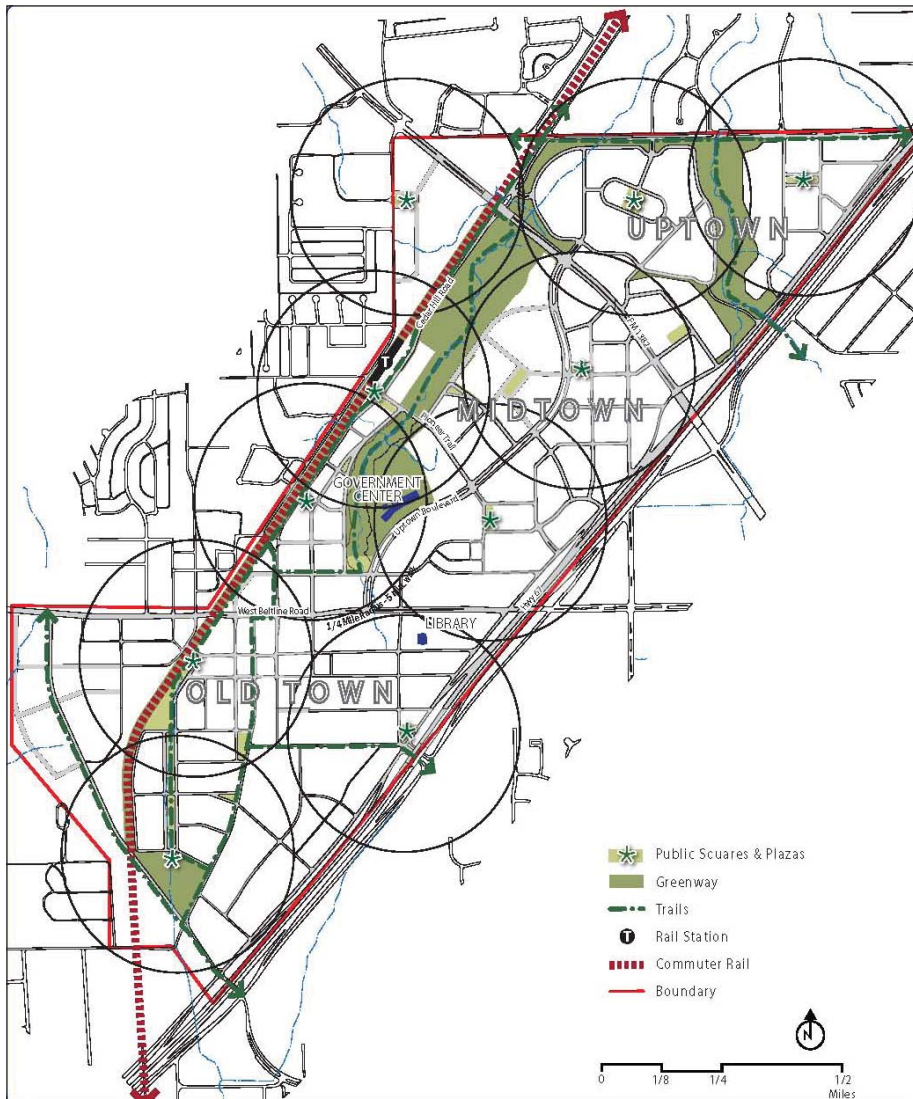


Figure 2.6 – Public Space Network Concept Plan from the City Center Vision Plan

This map shows the planned locations of public squares, plazas, trails, and greenbelts as they relate to the future development of the City Center Transit-Oriented Development. The circles indicate 1/4 mile radius service areas for the public squares and plazas included in the plan.

2.5 TRENDS IN PARKS & RECREATION

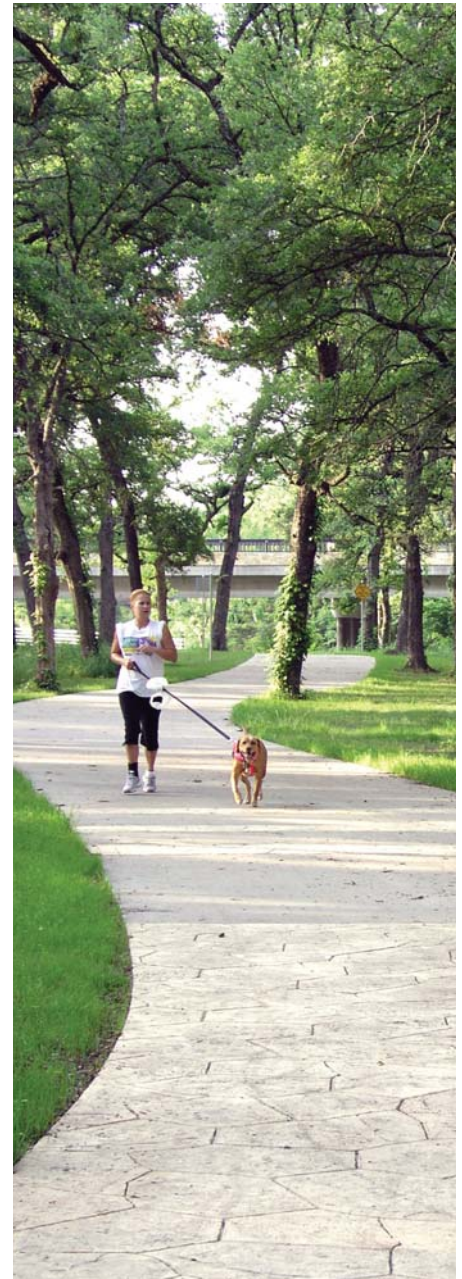
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The parks, open spaces, and recreational offerings of a city play a large role in defining quality of life and the city’s identity and image. Relative to the mobile nature of society today, especially in North Texas, these offerings play a large role in determining where people choose to reside, which consequently affects population and economic growth. It is therefore important to understand regional and national trends related to parks and recreation facilities. Below, several of the most prevalent national trends in the recreation profession are discussed. They are expected to carry forward into the near future and be relevant for the lifespan of this Master Plan.

- **More Options** – We have many more leisure activity choices. Greatly increased at-home leisure opportunities are available today, such as hundreds of channels on television, sophisticated computer games, and the internet.
- **Safety** – Safety is a great concern to parents. Many parents do not allow their children to go to parks unattended. In many places the use of neighborhood parks has gone down.
- **Instant Gratification** – We live in an era of instant gratification. We expect to have high quality recreation, and to be given activities that we will like. We have many other leisure activities and outlets, and can pick and choose what we want to do. Cities must be willing to provide a much broader menu of recreation activities, but must draw the line if those activities become too costly.
- **High Expectations** – Through the media and internet, we are exposed to the best from around the world. Because of this, we expect our facilities and activities to be of the highest quality possible.
- **Health** – Concern over the health of our population is rapidly growing. Obesity is now recognized as a nationwide problem. Funding to reduce obesity rates by increasing outdoor activities may be more readily available in the future. It may also be a source of grants for parks and recreation programs and facilities.
- **Limited Funds** – New revenue sources for public funding are difficult to come by. The federal surpluses briefly experienced at the turn of the century are now a thing of the past, and deficit spending is probable for the next decade. As a result, little assistance can be expected from the federal government, and even popular grant programs such as enhancement funds for trails and beautification may not always be available. In addition, less available outside funding also means an increased level of competition for these funds.

Outdoor Recreation Trends

- ***Passive Recreation*** – One of the most important and impactful trends in parks and recreation today is the increased demand for passive recreation activities and facilities. Passive recreation, as compared to active recreation, includes activities such as walking on trails, cycling, picnicking, enjoying nature, and bird watching. It focuses on individual recreation rather than organized high-intensity pastimes like league athletics (which has long been the focus of parks and recreation departments nationwide). People desire opportunities to use parks and open space on their own time and in their own way.
- ***Trails*** – Across the North Texas region, the provision of trails is the top priority for citizens. Numerous telephone surveys, public meetings, questionnaires, and in-person interviews have shown that people, on average, place the importance of trails above the provision of any other single type of recreation amenity or facility. Many factors contribute to this, including the demand for passive recreation (as discussed above), greater focus on health, rising transportation costs, and increasing funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- ***Open Space Protection*** – Related to the previous two trends, the protection of and access to open space and natural areas is growing in popularity across the nation. As people are increasingly using trails, they generally prefer to use trails that are located in scenic areas in order to enjoy being outdoors.
- ***Changing Participation Rates*** – While passive recreation is in greater demand, active recreation activities still play a large role in city parks and recreation systems. One major trend in the Metroplex over the last few years has been changing participation rates in various City-sponsored league sports. Examples of these changing participation rates include decreased participation in youth softball, dramatically increased participation in youth soccer, and the emergence of new league sports such as adult soccer and youth lacrosse. It continues to be the case that league sport participation rates vary greatly from city to city depending, in part, on activities offered by the school district and other organizations such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and in some cases churches.





Indoor Recreation Trends

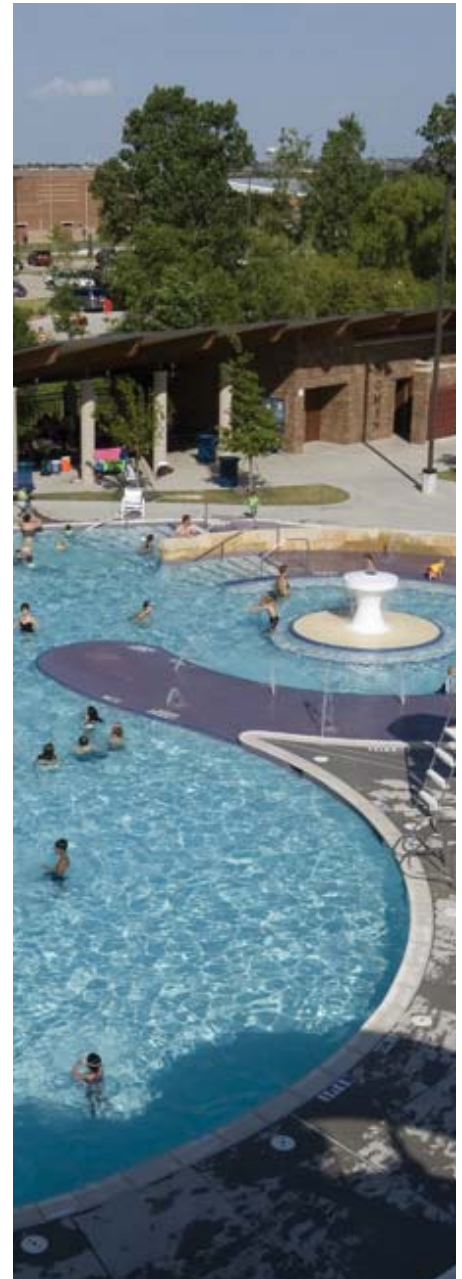
- ***Consolidated Recreation Centers*** – There is a movement away from providing multiple smaller recreation centers to providing a single large center that is within a 15 to 20 minute travel time of its users. This trend responds to increased diversity of programming that can be provided at these larger centers, while also being more convenient for families to recreate together. These types of centers also provide increased staff efficiency.
- ***Combined Facilities*** – There is a trend of combining dry side recreation with indoor aquatics for wellness and leisure activities. This reduces initial costs and reduces continuing operation costs for staff while providing more activity choices for its visitors.
- ***Integrated Senior Activity Space*** – There is a trend of providing dedicated senior activity areas within a large community center. Such an area with a distinct entrance separate from the main center entrance provides the desired autonomy of seniors while providing convenient access to the various opportunities in a recreation center including indoor walking track, warm water exercising, and adequately-sized exercise areas. Furthermore, different time periods of use make the combination of senior centers within a larger community center more feasible.
- ***Cost Recovery*** – Many Cities are seeking higher fee structures to help offset operational costs. Observation reveals a range from 50–60% operational cost recapture rate all the way to a 100% recapture rate in the North Texas region.
- ***Quality of Life*** – University students today have elaborate recreation and aquatic facilities at their disposal. New graduates are leaving their universities with expectations for cities to provide comparable facilities. Quality of life is an important component of a new graduate's job search and decision about where to live and has influenced what new centers will provide.

Outdoor Aquatics Trends

- ***Multifunctional Leisure Aquatics*** – Outdoor aquatic facilities have seen dramatic shifts in the last 15 to 20 years. They have transitioned from square boxes with barbed wire around the tops of fences located in numerous spots around town to more consolidated and larger leisure aquatic centers. These typically have spray pads, current channels, zero beach entries, play features, large slides, multiple shade areas, and 25-yard lap pools.
- ***Entertainment*** – The new generation of aquatic centers have the entertainment value to create attendances that allow operators with modest fees to actually generate more revenues than expenses. This has allowed cities to develop fewer and larger centers to properly serve its citizens.

General Trends

- ***Open Space Value*** – As North Texas cities continue to grow and expand, citizens are becoming increasingly aware of the diminishing amounts of open space and natural areas in and around their communities. Similarly, this increased awareness parallels an increased interest in preserving open spaces, rural landscapes, and natural areas along creeks, lakes, wooded areas, prairies, and other environmentally and culturally significant locations.
- ***Changing Development Patterns*** – There is an increased interest among citizens to consider alternative development strategies in order to improve their communities. These improvements include preserving and providing access to natural areas, decreasing traffic congestion, encouraging walking and bicycling, enhancing property values, and increasing and enhancing recreation opportunities. Alternative development strategies often considered include mixed-use development, new urbanism, conservation development, context sensitive solutions (CSS), and complete streets.
- ***Quality Environment*** – The attributes of a community play a large role in attracting (or detracting) people to a city or region. Research shows that the quality of a city's environment (its climate, park space, and natural resources) is the most significant factor in attracting (or detracting) new residents. As such, high-quality, high-quantity parks and open space systems will attract people while low-quality, low-quantity parks and open space systems will detract people.





Baby Boomer Trends

It is projected that there are 77 million Americans born between the years of 1946 and 1964. The Baby Boomer generation comprises one-third of the total U.S. population and over one-fourth of Cedar Hill's population. With such a significant portion of the population entering into the retirement age, Baby Boomers are essentially redefining what it means to grow old. According to Packaged Facts, a demographic marketing research firm, trends that are beginning to take off because of the Baby Boomers include:

- Prevention-centered healthcare to keep aging bodies free from disease.
- Anti-aging products and services that will keep mature adults looking as young as they wish.
- Media and internet technology to facilitate family and social ties, recreation and lifelong learning.
- Innovation in housing that allows homeowners to age in place.
- Increasing entrepreneurial activity among those who have retired, along with flexible work schedules that allow for equal work and leisure time.
- Growing diversity in travel and leisure options, especially with regard to volunteer and eco-friendly opportunities.
- Opting not to retire at a traditional retirement age and therefore remaining in the workforce longer.

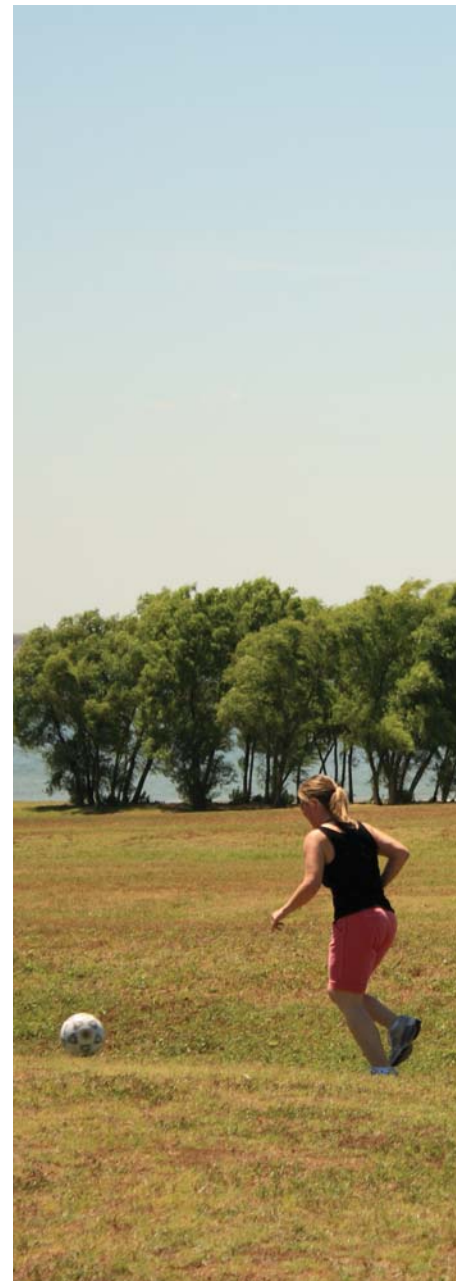
The relevance of these facts comes to light when considering the active recreation needs of this significant population and the impact that these needs will have on traditional senior center programming and attracting and retaining these residents.

High School Sports Trends

The National Federation of State High School Associations records the number of high school students participating in sport activities every year. These trends can have an influence on the types of programs that are offered by a city's parks and recreation department. A city can focus on offering youth leagues in the same sports for those that are interested from an early age; as well as offer different teen sports so that services are not duplicated by the athletic opportunities offered by the school system.

The top ten sports for **girls** in Texas for the 2010/2011 season (most recent data available) by number of students participating are:

1. Basketball – Approximately 23% of all high school girls participating in sports play basketball. However, this sport has seen a decline in the number of overall participants since the year 2007.
2. Track and Field – On a national scale, this sport was the most popular girls' sport. However, it is only the second-most popular in Texas and has seen a decline every year in the number of participants since 2007.
3. Volleyball – This sport experienced a significant drop in participation in the 2004/2005 season, but has steadily increased since.
4. Fast Pitch Softball – This sport has experienced a slight increase in participation every year since 2007.
5. Cross Country – This sport has decreased in overall participation every year since 2007, with the most significant drop in participation experienced in this reporting period (2010/2011).
6. Soccer – A significant increase in participation occurred in the 2007/2008 season and growth has occurred every year since.
7. Tennis (individual) – This sport has experienced moderate levels of increased participation every year since 2005.
8. Team Tennis – A significant increase was experienced for a number of years in the mid-2000s, but it has annually declined since 2009.
9. Swimming and Diving – This sport has had steady growth in participation since 2003. It has experienced the highest percentage growth of all the sports in this list.
10. Golf – This sport has a tendency to slightly fluctuate in the number of participants every year, some years it will increase while other years it decreases.





The top ten sports for **boys** in Texas for the 2010/2011 season by number of students participating are:

1. Football – This sport has the highest number of participants (approximately 35% of boys that participate in sports) and has experienced relatively stable rates of participation with minor fluctuation since 2003.
2. Track and Field – Similar to the girls sport, this has experienced a decrease in participation every year since 2007.
3. Basketball – This sport has experienced a decrease in participation every year since 2008.
4. Baseball – This sport has had a slight increase in the number of participants every year since 2003.
5. Soccer – There was a significant increase in participation in the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 seasons, and it has experienced a steady increase every year since 2008.
6. Cross Country – This sport has experienced significant decreases in participation every year since 2007.
7. Tennis (individual) – This sport experienced steady growth in the past, but has declined in total participation over the last two years.
8. Golf – This sport has experienced an increase in participation over the past two years; however, it experienced a decline in the two years prior.
9. Team Tennis – This sport had a slight decline in the number of participants in the past two years; however, it had significant increases every year for the three years prior.
10. Swimming and Diving – Based on percentage growth, this sport had the largest amount of growth when compared to any other high school sport. For the first time, swimming and diving replaced wrestling in the list of top ten boys sports in Texas.

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2.6 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Public input is a critical part of any planning process. The City of Cedar Hill works for the citizens by managing and providing the types of facilities that the residents and taxpayers of the community want to have. In essence, our citizens are our “customers” and it is in the City’s interest to provide what our customers seek. In the planning process, citizen input helps identify what types of existing facilities are being used, where key deficiencies may occur, and how the citizens of Cedar Hill would like to see the City allocate its resources. In essence, the residents of Cedar Hill determine what they want to have in their community through their current use of those facilities, their comments, and expressed desires.

“The residents of Cedar Hill determine what they want to have in their community through their current use of facilities, comments, and input.”

Community Outreach Process

This Master Plan incorporates a large amount of public input, utilizing several different methods. By using these methods of public input, feedback from many varying parts of the community were received, leading to a broader consensus on the direction that the Master Plan should take. The methods used to generate citizen input during the planning process included workshops with City leaders, Visioning Committee meetings, three focus group meetings, a public workshop, a citywide statistically valid telephone survey, and a questionnaire.

City Leaders’ Workshops

Cedar Hill’s leadership—the elected and appointed officials, City management, and department heads—provided a wealth of knowledge regarding the City’s history and future plans. They also have a strong sense of the community’s priorities and needs, which served as a starting point for the community outreach process. In order to learn from the City leaders, three workshops were held to discuss technical and operational issues, a broad vision for the future of Cedar Hill, over-arching goals, and branding.



Visioning Committee

A Visioning Committee made up of City Council, Park Board, and the Cedar Hill Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) Board members served as the primary reviewing body for the Master Plan. The Committee helped define the vision and goals for the Master Plan; influenced and participated in the community outreach process; and reviewed the Master Plan outcomes at several stages during the process.

Focus Group Meetings

Three focus group meetings were held, each catering to different user and stakeholder groups as follows:

- ***Meeting 1: March 29, 2011*** – Representatives from various government and public agencies (Best Southwest Cities, Cedar Hill State Park, Dallas County, Cedar Hill Independent School District (CHISD), and the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center).
- ***Meeting 2: March 29, 2011*** – Representatives from various non-profit organizations and local businesses (Northwood University, Friends of the Library, Rotary Club, Boy Scouts of America, Tourism Committee, Main Street Board, Chamber of Commerce, and Uptown Village)
- ***Meeting 3: March 31, 2011*** – Representatives from special interest groups (Senior Center, Homeowners Associations, and Sports Associations).

Public Workshop – April 30, 2011

An open public workshop was held to give the general public—people not specifically affiliated with any sports organization, club, non-profit, or other group—an opportunity to give their input on the Master Plan. Several people from the Focus Group Meetings, the Visioning Committee, and the City Leadership also attended. The workshop was held in the Government Center Court Chamber and was organized as an open house, with four booths focused on different topics. The meeting began with a presentation that provided an overview of the Master Plan process and the work completed to-date. People were then invited to visit each of the booths—Parks & Open Space, Trails & Bikeways, Streetscapes, and Indoor Recreation Facilities & Aquatics—and provide their comments, as well as fill out a questionnaire.



Telephone Survey

A citizen telephone survey was conducted as part of the planning process. The survey was designed to examine residents' participation in recreational activities; it also helped to assess the recreational needs in Cedar Hill. The survey allows elected officials and City staff to better understand the recreational needs and desires of its citizenry. The survey was conducted by a professional public input firm with extensive experience in recreation attitude surveys.

The survey used telephone contacts rather than a mail-out format to ensure unbiased and statistically relevant results. The contact time for each survey lasted approximately 20 minutes. A total of 326 surveys were completed, resulting in a statistically valid sampling (with an error rate of +/-5.6% at 95% confidence level).

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed as a way to gain input from the Focus Group Meeting and Public Workshop attendees and was also made available to homeowner/neighborhood associations. In total, 158 responses were received. As compared to the telephone survey, the questionnaire is not statistically valid because it was not randomly administered. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were the same as or similar to questions in the telephone survey, but many of the questions were unique.



Community Outreach Results

There is a strong level of support across the community for beautifying Cedar Hill's streetscapes and public spaces, providing additional trails and on-street bikeways, developing parks in under-served areas, and developing an indoor aquatic facility. The top priorities from the community outreach process are shown in Table 2.6. These priorities were primarily determined by the statistically-valid telephoner survey, which ranked responses. These priorities were indirectly confirmed during focus group and public meetings.

Table 2.6 – Top Priorities from the Community Outreach Process

Rank	Description
1	Develop a network of multi-use trails and greenways along roadways, creeks, and other linear features that weave throughout the City and connect to adjacent cities.
2	Acquire and protect environmentally-sensitive and aesthetically-valuable open space areas, especially along the Balcones Escarpment and the City's creeks.
3	Enhance and beautify streetscapes to convey Cedar Hill's distinctiveness and provide safe and comfortable corridors for bicycles and pedestrians.
4	Develop an indoor aquatics center including exercise areas, lap lanes, play features, and slides as part of the Cedar Hill Recreation Center.
5	Acquire land for future parks to meet the needs of current and new residents as the City continues to grow.
6	Improve existing parks by increasing the diversity of amenities provided—such as tennis courts, upgraded playgrounds, picnic pavilions, shade, and restrooms.



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