

*“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that...parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.”*

*– John Muir (1838-1914)*



# PARKS & OPEN SPACE

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



## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Some of the most beautiful and fascinating parks and open space areas in the State of Texas are located in Cedar Hill. From Cedar Hill State Park, which receives more than a half million visitors per year, to Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, which has one of the greatest naturally occurring varieties of plant species in the region, parks in Cedar Hill are famous and well-known destinations. We also have a variety of neighborhood and community parks, which provide places for people to play and relax, and a system of greenbelts that will one day include trails to connect the entire city. Unique opportunities in Cedar Hill include utilizing regional stormwater detention/retention basins for open space preservation and context-sensitive streetscapes as linear parks.



The enhancement and expansion of Cedar Hill's parks and open space system is critical in achieving all three of the primary vision components of this Master Plan. An interconnected park and open space network linked by greenbelts is the primary way to become a City Within a Park. Acquiring additional land for new parks and nature areas will help us achieve our goal of 20% Open Space. Finally, the design of individual parks will help to celebrate the Nature/Urban Interface across Cedar Hill.

### Goals

- Acquire land to preserve Cedar Hill's distinctive natural landscapes, serve the city's growing population, and achieve the vision of open space comprising 20% of Cedar Hill's land use.
- Create a City Within a Park by integrating parks, greenbelts, streetscapes and other public spaces into urban areas.
- Implement sustainability measures in parks and open spaces that minimize environmental impact and reduce maintenance needs.
- Design parks that are multi-functional and provide recreation and leisure opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Develop a world-renowned parks and open space system that establishes Cedar Hill as the greenest city in Texas.
- Partner with other entities, including Northwood University, Cedar Hill State Park, Cedar Hill ISD, churches, private developers, surrounding Cities, and Dallas and Ellis Counties to enhance open space protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

### Purpose

This chapter includes an analysis of Cedar Hill's existing parks, recreation, and open space facilities; an assessment of needs based on standards and level of service; and a series of priorities for studies and policies, land acquisition, park development, and outdoor recreation facilities.



## Pertinent Citizen Input

The focus group meetings, public meetings, and telephone survey provided a significant amount of insight regarding the public's opinion on Cedar Hill's parks and open space. One of the primary goals of the community is to acquire and protect environmentally-sensitive and aesthetically-valuable open space areas, especially along the Balcones Escarpment and the City's creeks. The community has also identified the need to acquire land for new parks and improve existing parks to meet the needs of current and new residents as the City continues to grow. Through actions like developing new athletic facilities to host tournaments, there is support for making Cedar Hill a destination for outdoor activities. Finally, the community identified needs for tennis courts, additional playgrounds, shade and trees in parks, and other additional amenities.

The telephone survey included several questions regarding parks and open space.

- 87% of respondents agree that the Balcones Escarpment is a very valuable feature and needs to be protected. 77% think it is important to acquire land to preserve the Escarpment.
- Nearly all (97%) agree that natural areas are important and should be preserved where available. 80% think it is important to acquire land to preserve environmentally sensitive areas in general.
- Regarding future park development actions, 82% think it is important to renovate and expand existing parks. 78% think it is important to acquire land for future parks.
- There is strong support for developing linear parks along creeks (82%) and small neighborhood parks (81%).
- In general, the survey revealed that there is a significantly higher level of support for non-athletic recreation facilities (especially picnic areas and playgrounds) than for athletic facilities.





## 3.2 CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In analyzing Cedar Hill's current parks and open space system, it is important to identify the functional classification of each of the City's parks. While each park in the City is unique in its own right, each can also be assigned to one of three categories. The neighborhood and community park categories represent the backbone of Cedar Hill's park system and are considered "essential infrastructure." They should be plentiful, adequately-sized, and well-distributed across the City to serve the entire population. The other parks category comprises several sub-types of parks that are provided as opportunities or special needs arise.

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are typically between 5 and 10 acres in size (larger parks being most desirable for efficient maintenance and operation) and are designed and located to serve the surrounding neighborhoods. Located within 1/4–1/2 mile of the neighborhoods they serve, these parks are accessible by walking or bicycling. Neighborhood parks constitute the core of the parks system and generally serve 3,000 to 4,000 residents. As a rule of thumb, all neighborhood parks should have a playground, pavilion, a loop trail, and open areas for free play. Additional amenities often provided at neighborhood parks include benches, picnic tables, basketball courts, multi-purpose fields (for formal practice and/or informal play), and backstops. There are more neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill than any other single type of park.



### Community Parks

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks – typically 25 to 100+ acres in size – and have more amenities. Although these parks often serve specific neighborhoods, it is ideal to evenly distribute these parks across the City so that they are easily accessed by all residents. The ideal distribution is such that all residents are within a 1 to 2 mile radius of a community park. Typically, community parks will have all of the amenities of a neighborhood park (playgrounds, pavilions, open areas for free play, trails, basketball courts, multi-purpose practice fields, backstops, etc.). In addition, these parks usually have amenities such as lighted competitive athletic fields, larger areas of open space for free play, natural areas, and restrooms. Quite often, community parks will include special facilities such as recreation centers and skateboard parks.

*“Neighborhood  
and community  
parks serve as  
the backbone of  
Cedar Hill’s park  
system...”*

## Other Parks

There are also many other types of parks within Cedar Hill. These are parks that are designed to meet special needs, capitalize upon opportunities, and/or complete the parks system.

### Special Purpose Parks

This subcategory includes 1-3 acre pocket parks, 1-2 acre trailheads, 0.25-1 acre plazas, athletic complexes, and practice fields. It also includes “special interest” parks that are not otherwise part of another neighborhood or community park. Examples of special interest parks include dog parks, skate parks, or any other type of park designed to accommodate a limited number of specific recreation activities. While parks less than 5 acres are typically discouraged because they are often difficult to maintain efficiently, small park areas are often necessary to serve special purposes. Smaller parks are also desirable in highly urbanized and dense mixed-use areas, such as around Uptown, Downtown, and future commuter rail stations.

### Greenbelts & Wildlife Corridors

Greenbelts are corridors typically following creeks, railroads, or utility lines and in unique situations as part of the roadway system (such as Greenway streetscapes; see Chapter 7). Greenbelts usually contain trails and are therefore ideal for providing alternative, non-motorized transportation to parks, schools, neighborhoods, libraries, retail, and other major destinations. Other than simply providing connections, these parks provide recreational value by themselves. In fact, using trail facilities is one of the most popular recreation activities in most, if not all, communities. In addition, greenbelts along creeks have the added benefit of providing habitat and migration/movement corridors for wildlife. They also provide opportunities for improving watershed management in an aesthetically-pleasing and sustainable manner.

Unique to Cedar Hill and not found in most parts of the Metroplex, wildlife corridors and management zones exist due to the abundance of healthy habitat in the Balcones Escarpment area. In addition to protecting wildlife, these areas help preserve open space, which adds to Cedar Hill’s distinctive character.

*“[Other parks] are designed to meet special needs, capitalize upon opportunities, and/or “round out” the parks system.”*



### **Open Space Preserves/Nature Areas**

These parks serve to protect and provide access to natural areas such as along creeks, floodplains, wooded areas, the shores of Joe Pool Lake, prairies, and the Balcones Escarpment or other areas of topographic change. As unprogrammed space, an added benefit is that these areas are “self-maintaining.” While there may be the occasional need to check for hazards, maintenance is generally not a significant factor.



### **Other Significant Public & Private Facilities**

A unique aspect of Cedar Hill is the large amount of park and open space land owned and managed by other entities present within the City limits. These include the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, Camp Ellowi, Mount Lebanon Baptist Camp, Cedar Hill State Park, and Northwood University. These areas constitute more than 3,000 acres of land that is either public or semi-public with the expectation that it will be preserved in perpetuity as open space in its natural state. These areas are crucial in achieving and maintaining Cedar Hill’s goal to have 20% of its area protected as parks and/or open space.

The presence of these facilities presents the opportunity for joint ventures with the City of Cedar Hill. The City and the Cedar Hill State Park are currently considering an opportunity to improve facilities at the State Park. The State Park would provide the funding for an enclosed pavilion and easement for 3.6 miles of trail (see Figure 5.4) and the City would provide funding for the trail construction and manage the development of the projects. Joint opportunities of this magnitude should become high priorities as they arise.

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### 3.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

#### *Cedar Hill's Existing Neighborhood Parks:*

*Bear Creek Park*

*Bradford Park*

*Calf Pasture Park*

*David Rush Park*

*Dot Thomas Park*

*Highlands Recreation Area*

*J.W. Williams Park*

*Kingswood Park*

*Liberty Park*

*Longhorn Park*

*Meadows Park*

*Prairie View Park*

*Ramsey Park*

*Waterford Oaks Park*

*Wildwood Park*

*Windsor Park*

*Unnamed Park near  
Plummer Elementary*

Neighborhood parks constitute the most prominent type of park in Cedar Hill. As the category name implies, these parks are typically located in neighborhoods within easy access of surrounding residents.

#### Development Guidelines

Neighborhood parks are the backbone of Cedar Hill's park system. The development and general design of neighborhood parks is important to ensure that they serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. But beyond simply meeting certain levels of service, it is important to ensure that neighborhood parks are unique in character, respond to the surrounding environment, provide a variety of experiences for the park's users, and unify the neighborhood informally. The following development guidelines (that focus on size, location, facilities, design, and parking) were developed to ensure that the City is able to efficiently provide the best possible neighborhood parks for its citizens.

##### Size

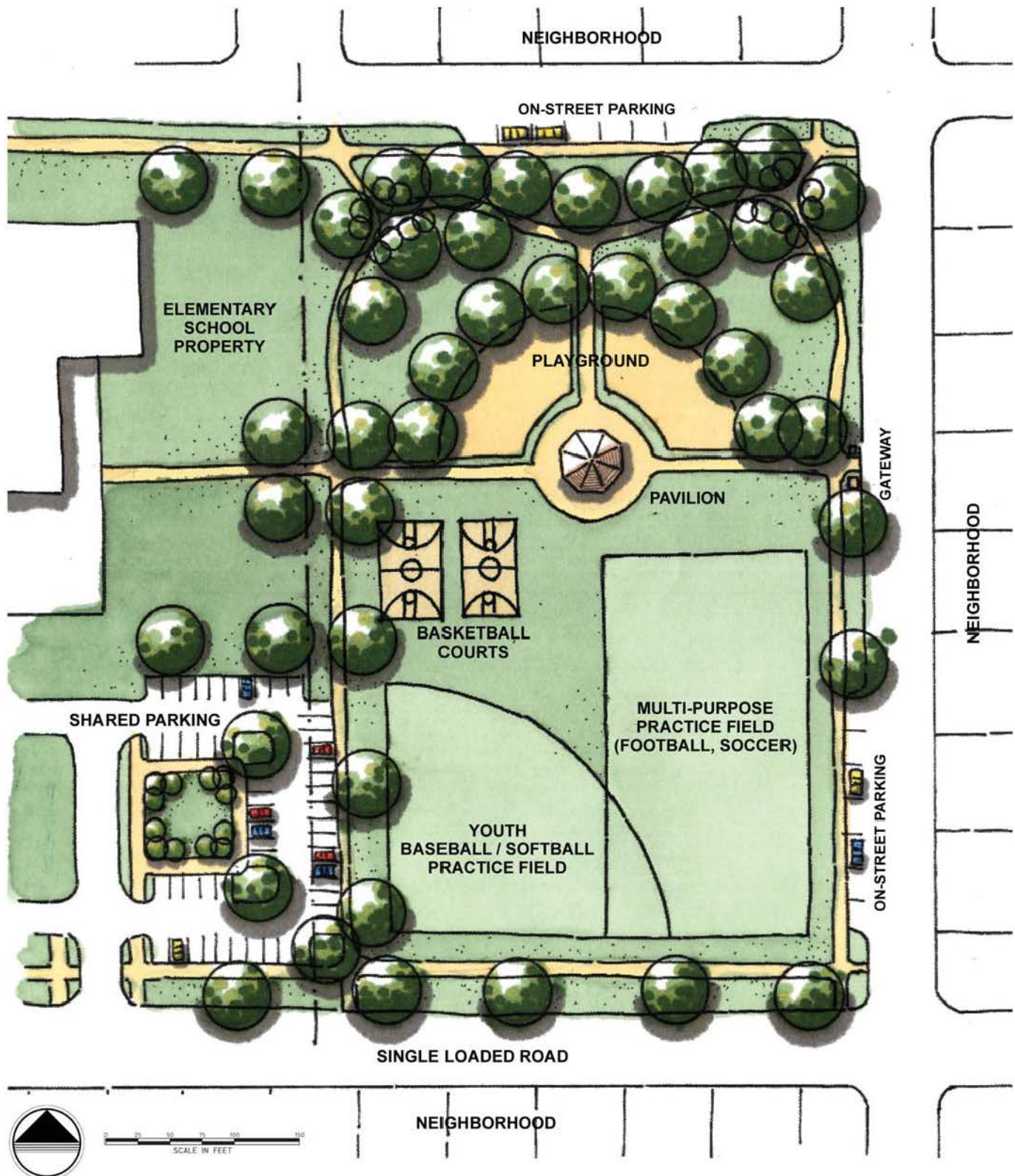
The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to the physical location of the park and condition of the site. Generally, neighborhood parks should be 5 to 10 acres or larger, with 10 acres being the ideal size. A typical neighborhood park would generally serve 3,000 to 4,000 residents per park.

##### Location

If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in the neighborhoods they serve and should consider the following location attributes:

- Neighborhood parks should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served. Ideally, neighborhood park facilities should be located within a one-quarter mile radius (five minute walk) or one-half mile radius (ten minute walk) of the residents who will use those facilities.
- These parks should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets that do not allow high-speed traffic. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets and should be far enough from major streets that traffic noise is not obvious in the park.
- It is desirable to locate neighborhood parks adjacent to creeks and greenways, which allows for trail connections to other parks and City amenities.





**Figure 3.1 – Typical Neighborhood Park Layout**

*This figure illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed in the context of the neighborhood that surrounds it.*



- It is ideal for neighborhood parks to be located adjacent to elementary schools in order to share acquisition and development costs with the school district. Adjacencies of park and school grounds allow for joint use and sharing of facilities, such as parking, which is typically not necessary for a stand-alone neighborhood park. It also lends itself to the community's involvement with the school grounds and vice versa, leading to a synergistic result that adds to the quality of life for everyone.

#### Facilities

Neighborhood parks would ideally include the following facilities:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing
- Playground equipment that allows for easy use by children with disabilities or limited mobility impairment
- Unprogrammed and unstructured free play areas
- Adequately sized pavilions with multi-tiered roofs
- Loop trails or a connection to the city-wide trails system

Additional facilities often provided in a neighborhood park include (but are not limited to):

- Unlighted basketball courts and half courts
- Picnic areas with benches, picnic tables, and cooking grills
- Unlighted tennis courts
- Skate parks
- Security lighting
- Drinking fountains



#### Design

The overall design and layout of a neighborhood park is an important determinant of its final quality and timelessness. These parks should generally be designed with the programmed space (playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, etc.) clustered into an “activity zone” within the park. These areas need ample seating and shade to be hospitable year round. Placing these areas near existing stands of trees is recommended as this eliminates the years of waiting for shade trees to mature. The open/unprogrammed space should be visible from this activity area but should be clearly delineated through plantings and hardscape features such as paved trails and seatwalls. Finally, a loop trail is a preferred component of a neighborhood park. When a segment of the city-wide trails system passes through a neighborhood park (which is recommended), it is important to connect it to the park's loop trail.





### Adjacency and Interaction

How the park integrates with the surrounding land uses (residences, schools, wooded areas, etc.) is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. When a road borders the park, the houses across the street should face the park. It is recommended that at least 80% of the park's boundary be bordered by single-loaded roads or creeks. No more than 20% of any park's boundary should be bordered by the backs of houses. When houses must back up to a park, the fencing between the houses and the park should be transparent (such as wrought iron fencing or similar) rather than opaque wooden fortress fencing. Transparent fencing allows a softer transition between park and residence and provides for informal surveillance of the park. High-limbed trees along fence lines can allow for a combination of privacy and transparency. When a park is constructed adjacent to a school, the two sites should interact. That is, there should be pedestrian connections between the school and the park and it could even be recommended that when schools are constructed, expanded, or renovated, windows overlooking the park should be provided.

### Parking

In general, the use of shared-use trails, sidewalks, and bike routes should be encouraged to decrease automobile traffic in and around neighborhood parks. Therefore, off-street parking is not typically needed as part of neighborhood park development. When parking is deemed necessary, the number of parking spaces will vary based on the size of the park, the facilities it contains, and the number of users. Generally, depending on the carrying capacity of adjacent streets, parallel on-street parking may provide sufficient parking space. Opportunities to share parking may be beneficial to different yet compatible functions, such as churches, schools, libraries, and other City facilities.





## Inventory & Analysis

Cedar Hill currently has 16 neighborhood parks, most of which are located on the more developed portions of the City. The neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill range in age, size, and level of amenities and include parks like J.W. Williams Park and Ramsey Park (which are both older, about 6 acres in size, and include numerous amenities) and Bear Creek Park and an unnamed park near Plummer Elementary School (which are 5 and 6 acres in size, respectively, and are not yet developed). Neighborhood Parks total more than 115 acres.

**Table 3.1 – Neighborhood Park Inventory**

Name	Size (acres)	Playgrounds	Pavilions	Paved Loop Trail (miles)	Open Play Areas	Other Amenities
Bear Creek Park	5.00			0.60		
Bradford Park	5.60			0.65	1	Fishing pond, gazebo
Calf Pasture Park	10.07	1	1	0.50		Basketball court, backstop
David Rush Park	8.24					
Dot Thomas Park	6.5	1		0.3	1	2 Baseball competition fields, basketball court
Highlands Recreation Area	8.25			0.25		Backstop, 2 soccer practice fields
J.W. Williams Park	6.00	1	1	0.40	1	Backstop, football/soccer field, 2 tennis courts, fitness course
Kingswood Park	12.50	1	1	0.30	1	
Liberty Park	6.92	1	1	0.20		
Longhorn Park	8.60	1	1	0.50		Fitness course
Meadows Park	3.00	1	1	0.20		Basketball court
Prairie View Park	6.60	1	1		1	Backstop
Ramsey Park	6.02	1	1	0.30	1	Football/soccer field, backstop, 2 tennis courts, multi-purpose court, fitness course
Waterford Oaks Park	6.37			0.40		Fishing pond, gazebo
Wildwood Park	5.58	1		0.25	1	
Windsor Park	4.03	1	1	0.30		
Unnamed Park near Plummer Elementary	5.98			0.20		
<b>Total</b>	<b>115.26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5.35</b>	<b>7</b>	

*This figure illustrates the location and spatial distribution of neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill. Included in this map are community parks, which are considered “de facto” neighborhood parks because in addition to ball fields, recreation centers, etc., they also include all of the amenities of a typical neighborhood park.*

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### ***Existing Neighborhood Parks***

The following pages include analyses of each of the existing neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill.



#### **Bear Creek Park**

- Size: 5.0 Acres
- Location: 1620 Midlake Drive

Bear Creek is an undeveloped park in the southeastern portion of the community. It is surrounded on all sides by streets and has a row of trees that run along what was likely an old fence line. Aesthetically, the row of trees serves to define the park. The location of this park in a developing portion of Cedar Hill makes it an important site for a future neighborhood park. Its relatively open and flat nature could make it a prime location for sports practice fields. Consideration must be given to connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood and nearby planned trails.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Develop as a neighborhood park: \$1,200,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$1,200,000***



#### **Bradford Park**

- Size: 5.6 Acres
- Location: 401 W. Wintergreen Drive

This park is located in the northern portion of the community. It is a constrained site due to its linear shape and the presence of the large detention pond in its center. However, these characteristics lend to the park's quaint charm. While the park and the surrounding neighborhood would benefit from a playground, site constraints might lend this unfeasible. Minor improvements (e.g., the introduction of native plants and grasses) will help refresh the park.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Widen Trail from 5' wide to 8' wide: \$57,000
- Additional landscaping: \$30,000
- Standardize and replace tables/benches and park sign: \$30,000
- Restore or replace existing gazebo: \$100,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$217,000***



### Calf Pasture Park

- Size: 10.07 Acres
- Location: 335 N. Joe Wilson Road

Being the ideal size for a neighborhood park, Calf Pasture is located along a major roadway. Some vegetative screening has been provided as a buffer, but additional physical buffers may be desirable. However, it is important to not make the park feel secluded. The primary recommendation for this park is that its playground and pedestrian bridge be replaced or refurbished.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Lights for paved path or trail: \$105,600
- Shade structure for playground: \$25,000
- Replace playground: \$70,000
- Replace pedestrian bridge: \$50,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$260,600**

### David Rush Park

- Size: 8.24 Acres
- Location:

David Rush is an undeveloped park in the eastern portion of Cedar Hill, near Duncanville Road between Pleasant Run and Belt Line Roads. This park has a unique opportunity to serve the neighborhood to the north by including a pedestrian bridge and trails when the park is designed.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Develop as a neighborhood park: \$1,200,000
- **Total:** **\$1,200,000**



#### **Dot Thomas Park**

- Size: 6.5 Acres
- Location: 1401 S. Clark Road
- Classification: Special Purpose Park

This park is located at the southern extent of the new Red Oak Creek Trail. The primary function of this park is baseball league play. With only two fields, however, this park does not efficiently serve the needs of the baseball league. Therefore, the opportunity to redevelop and repurpose Dot Thomas as a neighborhood park should be explored. The cost indicated below includes parking improvements, a loop trail, demolition, playground replacement, and repurposing the current athletic field area. Proper drainage must also be provided.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Develop as a neighborhood park: \$1,000,000
- **Total:** ***\$1,000,000***



#### **Highlands Recreation Area**

- Size: 8.25 Acres
- Location: 225 Sims Drive

Located between Highlands Elementary School and Beltline Intermediate School, this neighborhood park lacks the primary neighborhood park amenities (see page 3-8). In addition, its openness and lack of vegetation in the form of trees make the park feel exposed.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Loop trail: \$60,000
- Pavilion: \$50,000
- Playground: \$75,000
- Landscape and irrigation: \$60,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** ***\$255,000***

### J.W. Williams Park

- Size: 6 Acres
- Location: 1605 High Pointe Lane

This park is located in the northern portion of Cedar Hill. It is well integrated into the surrounding neighborhood and is adjacent to West Intermediate School. The park includes a good variety of amenities, but many of them are aged and should be replaced. In addition, the line of residential wooden fences that constitute one edge of the park are unsightly and should be replaced with transparent wrought iron fencing (or similar) or otherwise screened. Fence replacement may be achieved through a City-wide incentive to improve parks with similar conditions. This park is a good example of how an elementary school and a neighborhood park can be symbiotic.



#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Improve landscaping and irrigation \$100,000
- Replace playground and add shade structure: \$100,000
- Replace picnic tables and grills: \$25,000
- Vegetative buffer along fences: \$45,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- Refurbish backstop: \$5,000
- **Total:** **\$285,000**

### Kingswood Park

- Size: 12.5 Acres
- Location: 1528 Sharon Drive

Kingswood Park is located in the southwestern portion of Cedar Hill. It is a fairly secluded park, bordered by the backs of houses on one side and by forested areas on the other three sides. Transparent wrought iron fencing (or similar) will help alleviate the sense of seclusion. Because of the park's very large size, the opportunity exists to provide additional amenities at this location or feature large areas of grasslands and forest.



#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Develop the remaining 6 acres of the park: \$600,000
- Trail development (3,500 L.F. x 8'): \$165,000
- Irrigation and additional landscaping: \$120,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$995,000**





#### Liberty Park

- Size: 6.92 Acres
- Location: 301 Capricorn Drive

This park is located in the southern portion of Cedar Hill along the new Red Oak Creek Trail. The park is bordered on one side by a single-loaded road and on the other by the wooded Red Oak Creek corridor. The park serves its function well and will become a more popular destination upon the completion of the trail.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Playground shade structure: \$25,000
- Enhance pavilion: \$50,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$85,000***



#### Longhorn Park

- Size: 8.6 Acres
- Location: 425 E. Parkerville Road

This park is uniquely situated to provide access from two locations opposite each other while being surrounded by the backs of houses on three sides. The park includes the basic neighborhood park amenities and an attractive grove of Cedar trees. The primary need is for additional minor amenities and repainting several of the existing elements within the park. In addition, property owners should be encouraged to install transparent wrought iron fencing (or similar).

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Additional benches, tables, trees: \$50,000
- Playground shade structure: \$25,000
- Relocate exercise stations to improve drainage: \$10,000
- Repaint metal surfaces as needed: \$5,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$100,000***

### Meadows Park

- Size: 3 Acres
- Location: 1555 Hamilton Road

This small but attractive park is located in the northern portion of Cedar Hill, directly on the border of Duncanville. The wooded edge enhances the aesthetics of this park and makes it a comfortable place to be. The primary consideration for this park is its proximity to the Veloweb and other planned, regional trails. The park may serve as a minor trailhead in the future. For now, the incorporation of additional minor amenities is the main recommendation.



### *Recommended Improvements*

- Additional benches, tables, trees: \$50,000
- Install basketball goal: \$500
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$60,500**

### Prairie View Park

- Size: 6.6 Acres
- Location: 2600 Prairie View Boulevard

This is one of Cedar Hill's newest neighborhood parks. As such, no recommendations are made at this time. Currently, the lack of mature vegetation lends a feeling of exposure within the park. However, this will dissipate as the park ages and vegetation matures. The pavilion appears somewhat stark; a cost-effective improvement would be to clad the bottom half of the metal posts with stone. Landscaping will further help to define the space associated with the pavilion.



### *Recommended Improvements*

- Landscaping and irrigation: \$100,000
- Site grading to improve drainage: \$50,000
- Pavilion improvements: \$8,000
- **Total:** **\$158,000**



#### Ramsey Park

- Size: 6 Acres
- Location: 1313 High Pointe Lane

This park is located adjacent to High Pointe Elementary school. It is bordered by the backs of houses on two sides and a road on another. Many of the facilities in this park are aged and should be replaced or renovated. Otherwise, the park is appropriately-located and serves its function well.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Additional benches, tables, trees: \$50,000
- Playground shade structure: \$25,000
- Replace pavilion: \$50,000
- Renovate playground: \$20,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- Replace exercise course: \$20,000
- **Total:** **\$175,000**



#### Waterford Oaks Park

- Size: 6.37 Acres
- Location: 320 N. Waterford Oaks Drive

This park is linear in form and consists primarily of a large detention pond set in the center of the site. It is bordered by single-loaded roads on both sides and wooded areas on both ends. The park site is very attractive and the use of its space is generally maximized. The park would benefit from a wider loop trail. However, the topography around the edges of the park will make such an action challenging.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- Widen loop trail: \$100,000
- **Total:** **\$110,000**



### Wildwood Park

- Size: 5.58 Acres
- Location: 2415 Lakeview Drive

This relatively new park benefits from a wooded backdrop provided by a tree-lined drainageway. However, little vegetation exists within the park itself, which is the primary recommendation for this site. Of mention is the park's innovative design, that forgoes a traditional pavilion for a curved pergola that wraps around the playground.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Additional trees, landscaping, and irrigation: \$70,000
- Add a pavilion: \$50,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$130,000***



### Windsor Park

- Size: 4.03 Acres
- Location: 200 Lakeside Drive

This park is located in the eastern portion of Cedar Hill. It is bordered by single-family residential, a senior living facility, and undeveloped land. A large portion of the park's area is dedicated to a pond, which serves as an amenity and as a detention vessel. A trail loops around the pond and the park. The park is accessible to the surrounding neighborhood and serves its function well.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Landscaping and irrigation: \$100,000
- Additional playground shade: \$20,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$130,000***





**Unnamed Park near Plummer Elementary School**

- Size: 5.98 Acres
- Location: Clark Road

This unnamed park is undeveloped, other than a sidewalk along one of its sides. This park is bordered on two sides by roads, one side by a Plummer Elementary School, and one side by a creek corridor (along which a trail is planned). The park is fairly well wooded and is an attractive site.

***Recommended Improvements***

- Develop as a neighborhood park: \$1,200,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$1,200,000***

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## Needs Assessment

In addition to citizen input, needs for neighborhood parks are determined by analyzing level of service (LOS) for park acreage and service area.

### Acreage LOS

Acreage LOS is typically expressed as a per-capita figure. For example, the acreage LOS for neighborhood parks might be expressed as “*X acres per 1,000 population.*” Referencing the established National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) standard as a starting point, a unique target LOS (TLOS) was developed for neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill. This TLOS goes beyond the NRPA standard, reflective of Cedar Hill’s commitment to achieve the goal of 20% open space.

- **NRPA Acreage Standard:** 1-2 acres/1,000 population
- **Cedar Hill Acreage TLOS:** 2.5 acres/1,000 population

### Service Area TLOS

Park Service Area LOS represents the spatial distribution of neighborhood parks. For example, a target park service area LOS might be expressed as “*one neighborhood park within one half-mile of every residence in Cedar Hill.*” The regional benchmark for neighborhood park service area TLOS is:

- **Neighborhood Park Service Area** – quarter-mile to half-mile radius, or approximately a five to ten minute walk

This service area is general. While a half-mile radius is a good guideline for the area that is well-served by a neighborhood park, not all parks will fully serve these areas. Physical barriers (such as railroads and major thoroughfares) limit connections between parks and access from some of their intended service areas. Consideration should be given when developing new parks to the physical barriers that separate it from some or all of the neighborhoods that it is intended to serve.

### Needs Assessment Results

Currently, Cedar Hill has approximately 52% of the acreage for neighborhood parks required at build-out based upon the 2012 TLOS for neighborhood parks (see Table 3.2). Considering that Cedar Hill’s current population is at approximately 51% of its anticipated build-out, the City is generally on-track in terms of neighborhood park acreage compared to the current population. Beyond acreage LOS, there is a moderate park service area deficit as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

**Table 3.2 – Current and Target Level of Service for Neighborhood Parks**

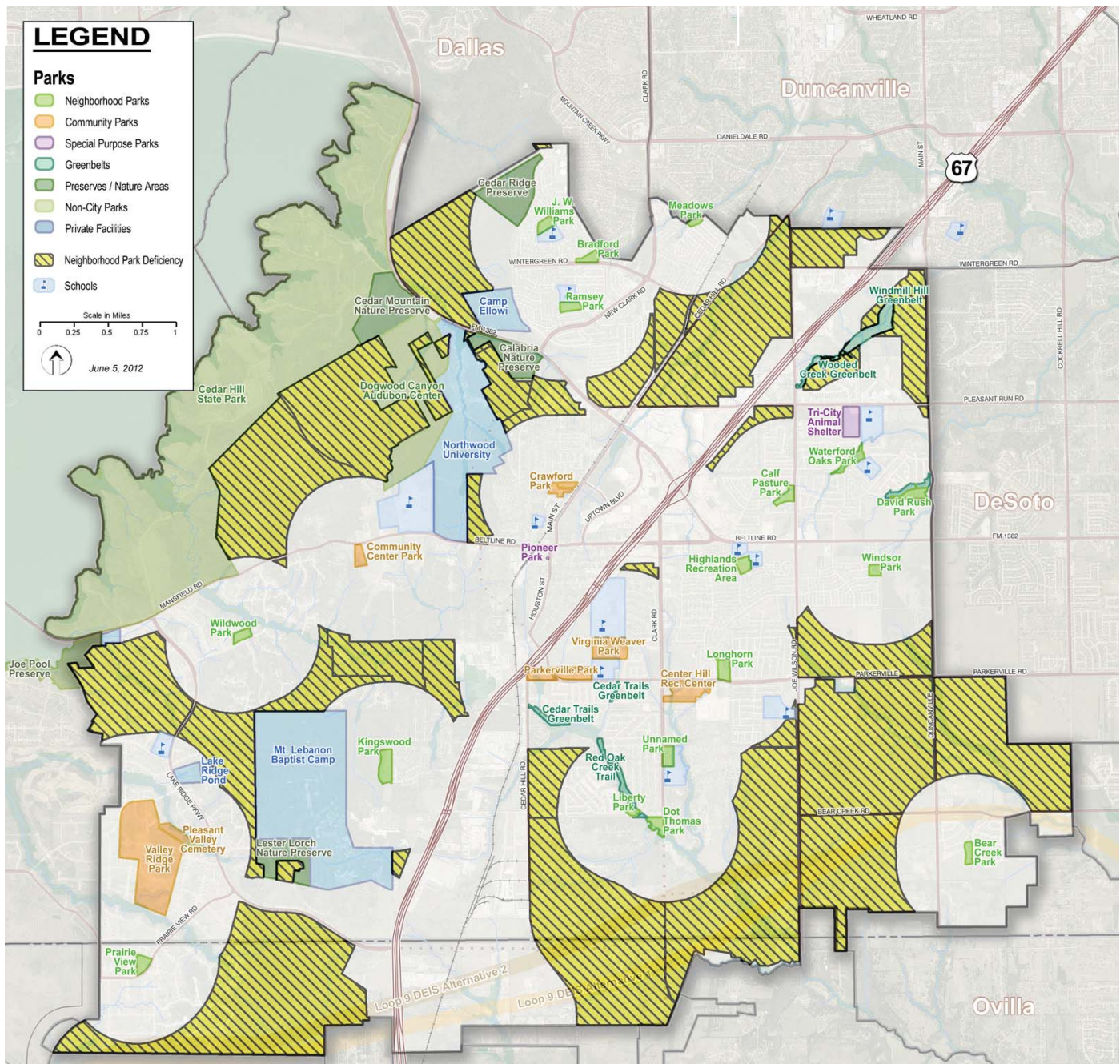
Existing Acreage	115.26
Current LOS	2.5 Acres/1,000 Population
Target LOS	2.5 Acres/1,000 Population
Target Acreage at Build-Out*	222
Acreage to Acquire to meet Target	106.74

Existing acreage is 52% of the target for build-out conditions.

\*Population of 88,956

**Figure 3.3 – Neighborhood Park Service Area Deficit**

The yellow areas in this figure indicate the residential areas according to the City's Future Land Use Plan that are not within a half-mile of an existing neighborhood park. As it can be seen, there are significant areas within the northern and southern portions of the community that are currently under-served.



**Figure 3.3 – Neighborhood Park Service Area Deficit**

## Recommendations

### ***Land Acquisition & Park Development***

Cedar Hill's current and future LOS indicates a need for 107 additional acres of land for neighborhood parks, as well as a significant service area deficit. In order to address these needs, 11 additional neighborhood parks are recommended to accommodate Cedar Hill's population at build-out conditions (forecasted for the year 2030). While some of the land to be acquired might need to be purchased outright by the City, it is the intent that the majority of the necessary land acquisition will occur through parkland dedication during the development process (either through outright dedication or acquired fees in lieu of land) so that accommodating the needs of additional residential growth is shared between the City and the development community. In addition, one of the proposed park sites is located on existing City-owned land. This would reflect a reallocation of land, rather than an acquisition.

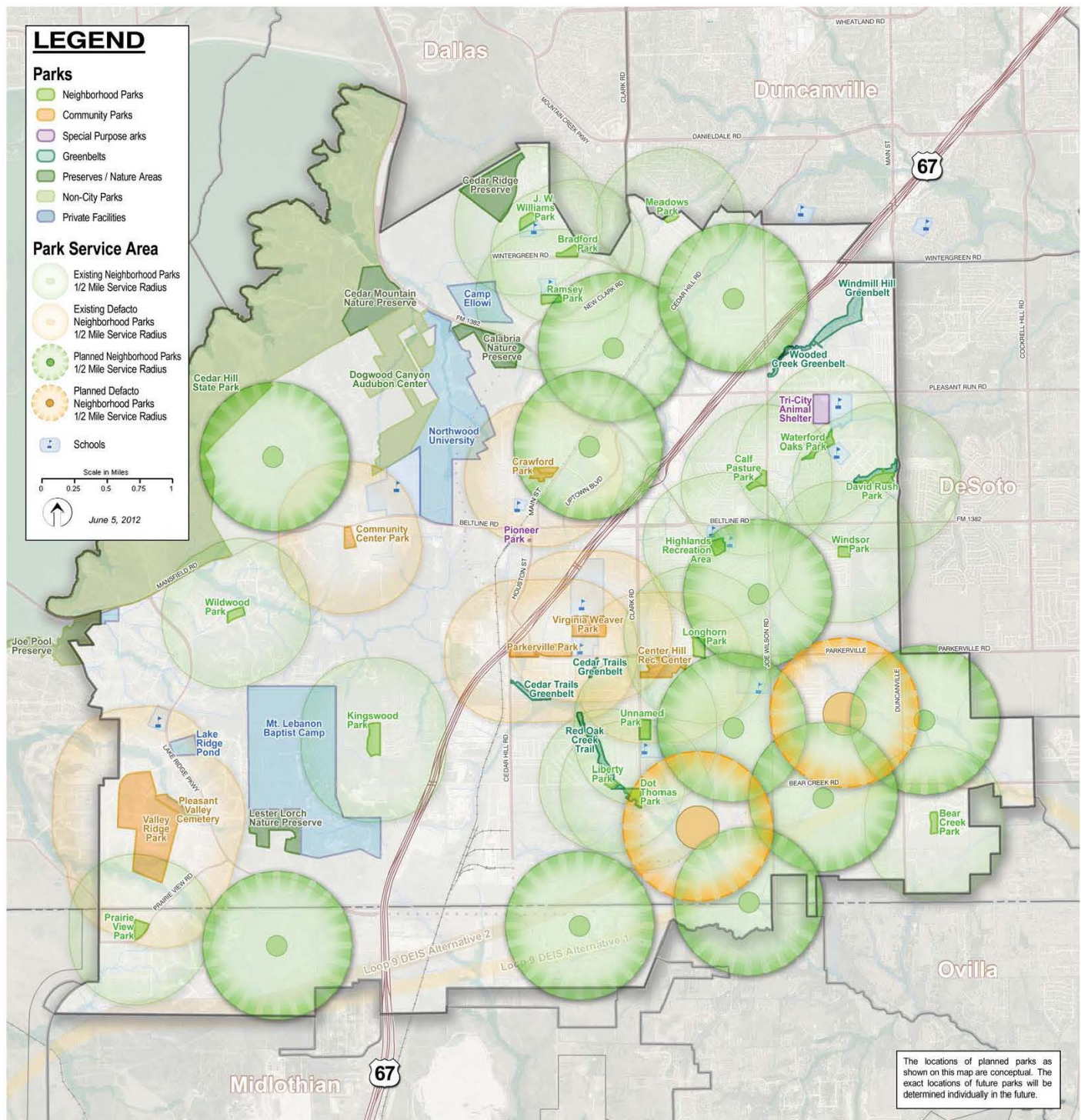
Figure 3.4 shows locations of existing, potential, and "de facto" neighborhood parks. The locations for new parks were chosen based on perceived land availability, proximity to natural features and potential trail corridors, and their ability to provide service area coverage for existing and future residential areas. A "de facto" neighborhood park indicates the location of a community park, which also serves as a neighborhood park because of the amenities that it provides. The potential neighborhood parks shown along Joe Wilson Road between Belt Line Road and Parkerville Road would not require land acquisition since this land is already owned by the City

The following specific acquisition and park development actions are recommended per sector for neighborhood parks (these sectors correspond with the study areas used during the telephone survey).

- ***Sector 1*** (East of US-67/South of FM-1382):  
6 Neighborhood Parks (one on existing City-owned land)
- ***Sector 2*** (North of FM-1382):  
2 Neighborhood Parks
- ***Sector 3*** (West of US-67/South of FM-1382):  
3 Neighborhood Parks

Figure 3.5 on page 3-28 shows the location of proposed neighborhood parks by sector.

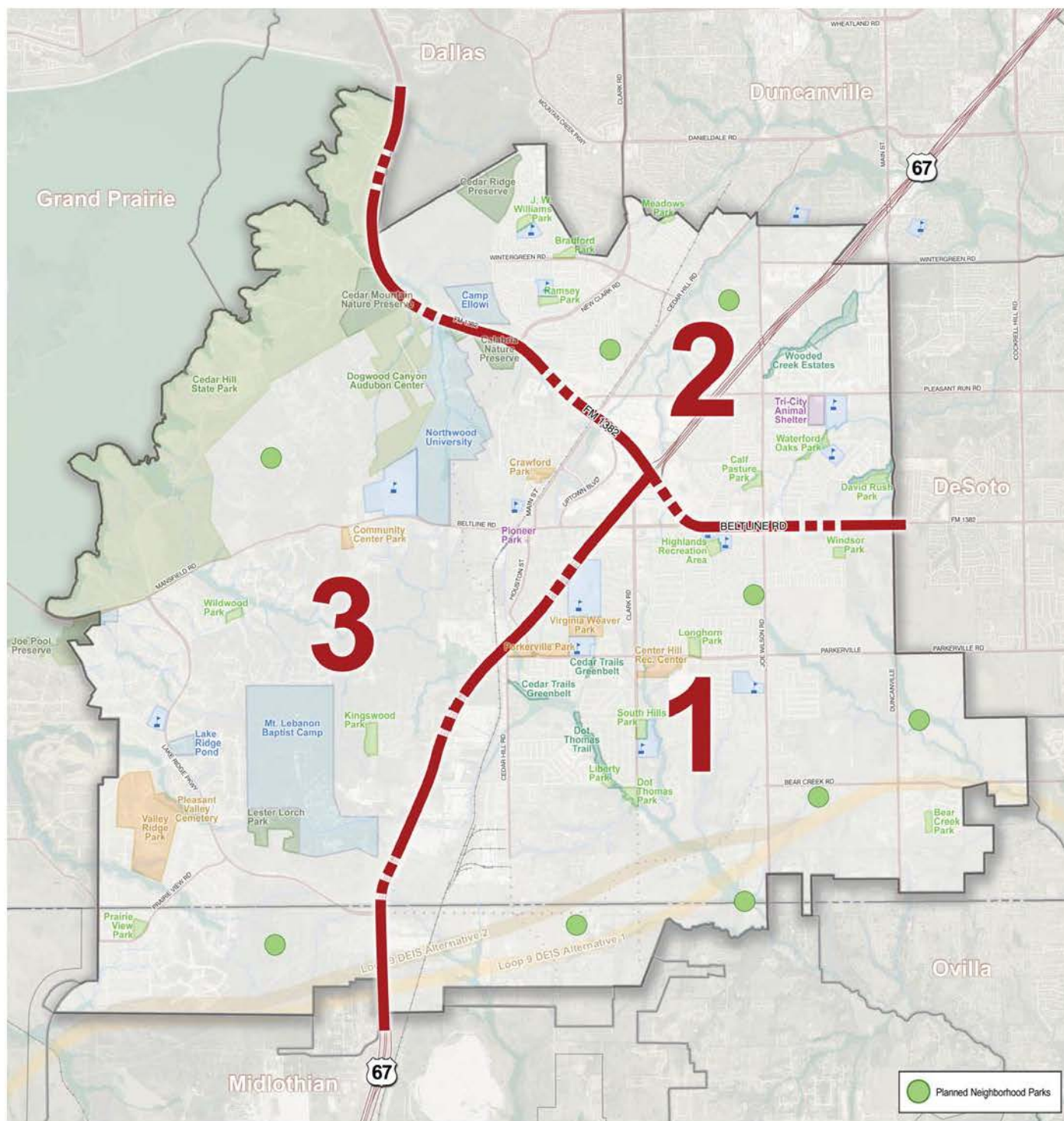




**Figure 3.4 – Existing & Proposed Neighborhood & De Facto Neighborhood Parks**

*This figure illustrates the location of existing and proposed neighborhood and “de facto” neighborhood parks in Cedar Hill. “De facto” parks are community parks that also serve as neighborhood parks because in addition to ball fields, recreation centers, etc., they also include all of the amenities of a typical neighborhood park.*





**Figure 3.5 – Proposed Neighborhood Parks by Sector**

*This figure illustrates the location of proposed neighborhood parks by city sector. These sectors correspond with the study areas used during the telephone survey.*

### Neighborhood Park Action Plan

Table 3.3 lists the action items for these neighborhood park recommendations.

**Table 3.3 – Neighborhood Park Action Items**

Action ID	Action
1	<b>Land for New Neighborhood Parks</b> – Acquire and/or reallocate 105 acres of land for 11 future neighborhood parks (average of 10 acres each). Includes 5 acres of City-owned land at the former YMCA site.
2	<b>Develop 10 New Neighborhood Parks on Dedicated Land</b> - Develop 10 neighborhood parks on future park land dedicated to the City through Parkland Dedication as development occurs.
3	<b>Develop Neighborhood Park Amenities in Four Undeveloped Parks</b> - Develop neighborhood park amenities on existing park land (City-owned land at the former YMCA site, David Rush Park, Bear Creek Park, and the unnamed park near Plummer Elementary School)
4	<b>Neighborhood Park Improvement</b> - See recommendations as per the park reviews on pages 3-14 to 3-22 (one park per year).
5	<b>Redevelop &amp; Repurpose Dot Thomas Park</b> - Redevelop Dot Thomas Park as a neighborhood park with a trail head and passive open space.
6	<b>General Athletic Facility Development</b> – Develop baseball/softball competitive and practice fields, a multi-purpose practice field, and outdoor basketball goals with new park development.
7	<b>Support Facility Development</b> – Develop playgrounds, pavilions, loop trails, and open play areas with new park development.
Total	



## 3.4 COMMUNITY PARKS

Along with neighborhood parks, community parks serve as the backbone of Cedar Hill’s park system. Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and include a wider array of amenities, which may include lighted sport fields, swimming pools, amphitheaters, and much more. Because they also include the amenities typically found in neighborhood parks—playgrounds, pavilions, loop trails, free play areas—community parks also double as “*de facto*” neighborhood parks, thereby serving two roles simultaneously.

### *Cedar Hill’s Existing Community Parks:*

---

*Community Center Park*

*Crawford Park*

*Parkerville Park*

*Recreation Center Park*

*Valley Ridge Park*

*Virginia Weaver Park*

### **Development Guidelines**

Community parks typically include facilities that serve the entire city (such as lighted playing fields for organized sports) and therefore have a larger service area, attract more users, and require higher-intensity facilities such as considerable off-street parking. Because they are often in fairly close proximity to neighborhoods, community parks can serve many of the same functions as neighborhood parks because of similar basic amenities. As such, it is crucial to consider the needs of the immediately surrounding residents as well as the community as a whole when developing a community park.

#### **Size**

The size of a community park should be large enough to provide a variety of amenities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation, practice space, and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion as new facilities are required. Although a standard size is between 25 and 100 acres, community parks may be over 200 acres depending on needs and site opportunities.

#### **Location**

Because they are intended to serve large portions of the city, community parks should be centrally located and easily accessible by major thoroughfares and trails. When connected by major trails and greenbelts, community parks are not only more easily accessed, but they also serve as a hub for the trails system and other parks in the community. Care should be taken when locating a high-intensity community park adjacent to or near residential areas. In these instances, it is important to provide adequate buffers to minimize noise and bright lights at night when possible. Because of the requirement for lighted facilities, it is often preferred to have higher-intensity or “active” community parks located adjacent to commercial, retail, and/or light industrial areas, rather than residential neighborhoods.



**Figure 3.6 – Typical Community Park Layout**

*This figure illustrates a typical community park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each community park should be designed according to the specific needs of the community.*





#### Facilities

Community parks would ideally include the following facilities:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing
- Playground equipment that allows for easy use by children with disabilities or limited mobility impairment
- Unprogrammed and unstructured free play areas
- Adequately sized pavilions with multi-tiered roofs
- Picnic areas
- Unlighted multi-purpose practice fields for soccer and football
- Backstops for baseball and softball practice
- Loop trails or connection to the City-wide trails system
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park

Additional facilities often included in a community park include (but are not limited to):

- Restrooms
- Natural open space where available or present including access to these areas via trails
- Lighted competitive baseball, softball, soccer, and football fields (the actual type and number of competitive fields should be based on demonstrated need as per the facility target LOS put forth in this Master Plan)
- Lighted multi-purpose practice fields
- Security lighting
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as fishing piers near ponds, swimming pools, open air amphitheaters, etc.





## Design

The design of a community park is largely dependent on the intended character of and facilities included in each individual park and can generally be classified as active or passive. Active community parks tend to include and focus on high-intensity facilities such as lighted competitive game fields, aquatic centers, and manicured landscaping. Passive community parks, on the other hand, typically have low-intensity uses such as hiking, picnicking, free play, and generally have a large amount of natural and un-programmed space in the park. The general design of a park, therefore, will vary depending on the intended character of the park; as such, the amount of natural open space, number of game fields, amount of parking, and spatial orientation of amenities will vary.

As is the case with neighborhood parks, the overall design and layout of a community park is important to the park's final quality and timelessness. Activity zones of programmed space are important within community parks. Playgrounds, pavilions, and basketball courts make up one type of activity zone while ballfields, concession stands, and equipment storage buildings make up another type. Providing shade by means of placing the former of these two activity zone types near existing stands of trees is recommended, as is the provision of benches and picnic tables. In community parks and other large parks, it is often desirable to delineate between activity zones and unprogrammed areas by the use of natural features, such as stands of trees and creek corridors. This helps break up the park visually and delineate programmed space. Paved trails should connect these various areas with each other, as well as provide a walking/jogging loop for recreational use.

The interaction between a community park and the surrounding areas is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. As with neighborhood parks, a community park should be bordered by single-loaded roads and creeks or other natural areas. When development does border the park, the type of neighboring development dictates how the edge is addressed. If the development is residential, the fencing between the houses and the park should be transparent (such as wrought iron fencing or similar). In addition, a row of trees and/or shrubs may be used along this fence line to soften its appearance. However, if the development is industrial in nature or otherwise aesthetically unpleasing or potentially a nuisance, the border should be well-screened with dense plantings of trees and shrubs. It may also be desirable to place a fence and/or masonry wall at these borders for safety reasons (such as reducing the likelihood of a ball rolling out of the park or debris entering the park). Community parks often interface well with schools. In such instances, work with the school district to provide visual and physical connections between the school and the park.





As a final consideration, it is important to understand that community parks themselves can sometimes be a nuisance to nearby residential neighborhoods. Bright lighting at night, excessive noise from cheering spectators, or the overflow of parking onto neighborhood streets can all become issues. If a park is to be developed in close proximity to a neighborhood, take measures to address these issues and identify any other potential issues. Specifically related to the issue of light impacts, a good option to be considered is “cut-off” lighting, which allows light patterns to be controlled, thus minimizing light spill-over into surrounding areas.

### Parking

This varies based on the facilities provided and the size of the park. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of five spaces per programmed acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park, such as pools or ballfields. The actual amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park. Even so, consideration should always be given to the concept of “shared parking.” The benefit of shared parking is the reduction in the number of parking spaces that need to be built. There are two ways shared parking can be implemented in a park:



- Typically, the number of spaces required to be constructed in a park is determined by the peak parking requirements of each of the uses. This can result in the provision of excessive amounts of parking. Instead, determine the number of parking spaces by considering the different peak parking schedules of various uses, thereby potentially reducing the number of parking spaces needed by “sharing” parking between uses (i.e., football fields and baseball fields can share parking since football and baseball games are typically not played concurrently).
- The traditional concept of shared parking is to create an agreement with adjacent land uses like schools, churches, and other City facilities so that parking can serve both the park and the adjacent land use.

Finally, in addition to reducing the overall amount of off-street parking, it is important to consider the design and construction of parking and its impact on the park and the environment. In order to offset the surface water runoff and pollution from large areas of parking, it is recommended that consideration be given to Low Impact Development (LID), which includes the use of permeable paving combined with shade trees and bio-swales to bio-filtrate runoff water.

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## Inventory & Analysis

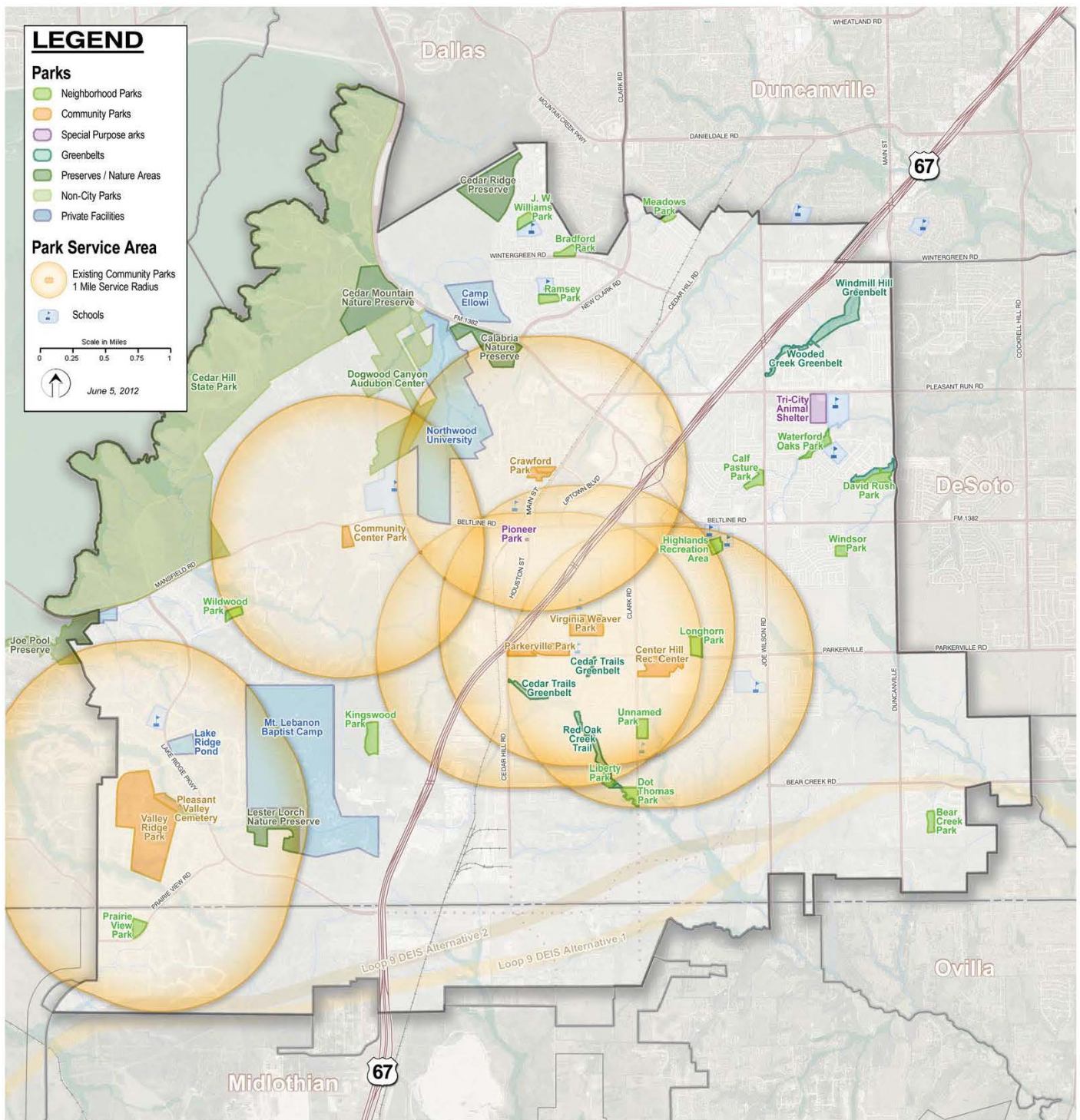
Six community parks currently exist in Cedar Hill. These parks vary in character from Crawford Park, which is smaller and offers more passive amenities (such as playgrounds, natural areas, open play areas, tennis courts, and a swimming pool), and Valley Ridge Park, which offers predominately active amenities (specifically, competitive baseball, softball, football, and soccer fields). At just over 6 acres, Community Center Park, which is where the Senior Center is located, is the smallest community park in the City. Valley Ridge Park is the largest at 164 acres. There are 261 acres of community park land in Cedar Hill.

**Table 3.4 – Community Park Inventory**

Name	Size (acres)	Baseball Fields*	Softball Fields*	Soccer Fields*	Football Fields*	Open Play Areas	Basketball Courts	Playgrounds	Large Pavilions	Paved Loop Trail (miles)	Other Amenities
Community Center Park	6.50	2						1		0.30	
Crawford Park	10.76					1	3	1	1	0.25	Backstop, 2 soccer practice fields, 2 tennis courts, swimming pool
Parkerville Park	24.10	5				1		1			Baseball, softball, football, and soccer practice, as well as spill-over games for these sports.
Recreation Center Park	28.43							1			Observation deck
Valley Ridge Park	164.00	6	4	18	3	1		4		1.50	Multi-purpose court, fishing pier, amphitheater
Virginia Weaver Park	27.64		4 <sup>†</sup>				1	1	1	0.30	
<b>Total</b>	<b>261.43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.35</b>	

\*Competitive game fields

<sup>†</sup>Adult softball fields



**Figure 3.7 – Existing Community Parks**

*This figure illustrates the location and spatial distribution of community parks in Cedar Hill.*

*Community parks best serve households within a short driving distance. As such, community parks are each shown with a one-mile service radius (which roughly equates to a five-minute drive). These radii are calculated from the edge of the park, resulting in a polygon rather than a circle. The service area radii should be seen as guidelines, as physical barriers such as railroads, major roads, and creeks often prevent a park from serving the entire area within its ideal service area.*

**Existing Community Parks**

The following pages include analyses of each of the existing community parks in Cedar Hill.



**Community Center Park (Senior Center location)**

- Size: 6.5 Acres
- Location: 1740 Mansfield Road

This park is very small for a community park; however, it is considered as such due to its amenities. In addition to housing the Senior Center, this park includes a playground, two baseball competition fields, and a small amount of wooded open space. The park is adjacent to Cedar Hill’s famous communications towers and large amount of surrounding vacant land. Opportunities to extend paved or natural surface trails into these large wooded areas should be explored in the future (the Trails Master Plan shows such a trail connection). Future improvements to the park should focus on amenities geared toward senior citizens given their existing presence in the park.

**Recommended Improvements**

- Master plan for site development when the planned east side community park is under design: \$50,000
- Provide additional benches, tables, and shade trees: \$20,000
- Improve the parking lot and improve ingress/egress: \$100,000
- Replace the playground: \$50,000
- Upgrade irrigation: \$15,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$245,000**



### Crawford Park

- Size: 10.76 Acres
- Location: 401 Straus Road/530 Krantz Road

Crawford Park is also smaller than typical for a community park. But, as with Community Center Park, it is considered a community park due to the types of amenities it provides (multiple practice fields, tennis courts, and a swimming pool). This park is somewhat difficult to access due to the surrounding street network. Pedestrian/bicycle connections along and over or under the adjacent railroad tracks would improve access to the park. Otherwise, the primary issue with Crawford Park is that it is in need of general repair and renovation. A discussion on the long-term viability of the swimming pool can be found in Chapter 4.



### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Master plan for park development when the  
Recreation Center expansion is under design: \$50,000
- General repairs and renovations of several elements: \$100,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$110,000***



#### Parkerville Park

- Size: 24.10 Acres
- Location: 501/701 West Parkerville Road

The primary function of this park is to provide space for youth sports practice and league play. There is currently an ownership dispute regarding this property. Resolving this dispute and ensuring the land's long-term availability for park use is highly important. Otherwise, the park's facilities would need to be provided elsewhere, which would likely require the acquisition and development of additional land. As shown in the Trails Master Plan (see Chapter 5), this park has the opportunity to be connected to Virginia Weaver Park.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Master plan for park development when the planned east side community park is under design: \$50,000
- Provide standardized park sign: \$10,000
- Pavilion: \$50,000
- **Total:** **\$60,000**



#### Recreation Center Park

- Size: 28.43 Acres
- Location: 310 E. Parkerville Road

Primarily known as the Recreation Center site, this park contains a sizeable amount of undeveloped land that will eventually house various community park amenities. In addition, the expansion of the Recreation Center to include indoor aquatics should occur in the future (see Chapter 4). Considering the existing and future development on this land (the Recreation Center, its future expansion, and the large parking lots), this park will likely never be a site for sports fields. Instead, the park is a prime site for specialty facilities, such as a skate park and spray park. The specific program for the park should only be determined after a dedicated master plan for the site has been developed along with community input.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Master plan for park development as part of the: Recreation Center expansion: \$50,000
- Park Development: \$3,000,000
- **Total:** **\$3,050,000**

### Valley Ridge Park

- Size: 164 Acres
- Location: 2850 Park Ridge Drive

In comparison with Cedar Hill’s other community parks, Valley Ridge Park is very large. With 31 athletic fields, four playgrounds, a multi-purpose court, and a large amphitheater, it also provides a greater number of amenities than all of Cedar Hill’s other community parks combined. The southern portion of the park—a large wooded area including multiple ponds—is relatively undeveloped. It is recommended that this area remain in its natural state with minimal improvements other than nature trails to provide access and encourage exploration.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Master plan remaining undeveloped park land: \$60,000
- Provide walking trails with signage: \$500,000
- Shade structure package for fields: \$500,000
- Benches, tables, and shade trees: \$20,000
- Replace and redesign large park entry signs: \$250,000
- **Total:** **\$1,330,000**

### Virginia Weaver Park

- Size: 27.64 Acres
- Location: 631 Somerset Drive

Situated between Cedar Hill High School, Permenter Middle School, and open space that surrounds a broadcast tower, this park provides adult softball fields and a large, community-built wooden playground structure. Almost all of the park’s land has been developed to some degree, limiting the addition of amenities. The condition of the wooden playground, which is aging and requires regular maintenance, must be monitored constantly. Though it has sentimental value, the replacement of the playground should be evaluated to minimize long-term maintenance and repair costs.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Evaluate playground and replace: \$300,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$310,000**



## Needs Assessment

In addition to citizen input, needs for community parks are determined by analyzing level of service (LOS) for park acreage and service area:

### Acreage LOS

Acreage LOS is typically expressed as a per-capita figure. For example, the acreage LOS for community parks might be expressed as “*X acres per 1,000 population.*” Based on established National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA), a target LOS (TLOS) was developed for community parks. This TLOS is reflective of Cedar Hill’s commitment to achieve the goal of 20% open space.

- **NRPA Acreage Standard:** 5-8 acres/1,000 population
- **Cedar Hill Acreage TLOS:** 7 acres/1,000 population

### Service Area TLOS

Park Service Area LOS represents the spatial distribution of community parks. For example, a target park service area LOS might be expressed as “*one community park within one mile of every residence in Cedar Hill.*” The regional benchmark for community park service area TLOS is:

- **Community Park Service Area** – 1 mile radius, or approximately a five minute drive

This service area is general. While a 1 mile radius is a good guideline for the area that is well-served by a community park, not all parks will fully serve these areas. Physical barriers (such as railroads and major thoroughfares) limit access between parks and some of their intended service areas. Consideration should be given when developing new parks to the physical barriers that separate it from some or all of the neighborhoods that it is intended to serve.

### Needs Assessment Results

Currently, Cedar Hill has approximately 42% of the acreage for community parks required at build-out based upon the 2012 TLOS for community parks (see Table 3.5). Considering that Cedar Hill’s current population is at approximately 51% of its anticipated build-out, this represents a slight deficit in terms of park acreage compared to the current population. In order to meet the TLOS at build-out, it is essential that land be acquired while it is still available and at a relatively low cost. In addition to a deficit with regard to acreage LOS, there is also a moderate park service area deficit as illustrated in Figure 3.8.

**Figure 3.8 – Community Park Service Area Deficit**

*The yellow areas in this figure indicate the residential areas according to the City's Future Land Use Plan that are not within one mile of a community park. As it can be seen, there are significant areas in the northern, eastern, and southern portions of the community that are currently under-served.*

\*Population of 88,956



## Recommendations

### ***Land Acquisition & Park Development***

Cedar Hill's current and future LOS indicates a need for 362 additional acres of land for community parks. In order to address these needs, additional community park land is recommended in the southeastern portion of the City. In addition to generally addressing the acreage deficit, additional community park land can help address the need for athletic and non-athletic facilities (namely baseball and softball fields, practice space, tennis courts, and a skate park).

While this Master Plan considers acreage in terms of needs at build-out, it considers outdoor recreation amenities (e.g., sport fields) on a five year horizon since league participation rates fluctuate regularly. If the near-term needs for sport fields is extrapolated to the build-out population, this indicates a need for approximately twice the number of athletic fields as are currently provided by the City. As such, there are two scenarios for the provision of future community park space. Both scenarios assume the resolution of the Parkerville Park ownership dispute.

#### **Scenario 1**

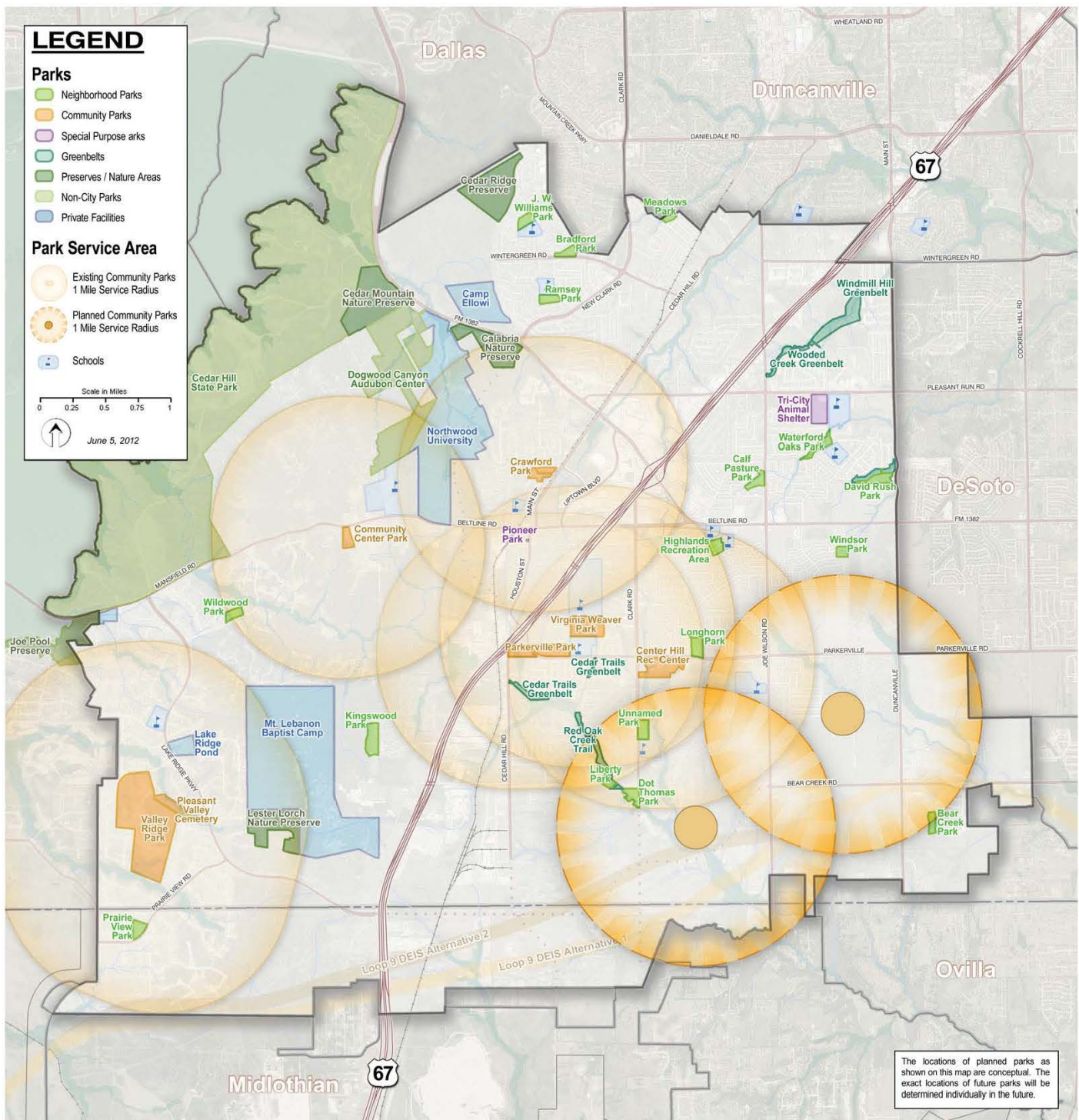
An additional community park on the scale of Valley Ridge Park would be provided as one of the two proposed community parks shown in Figure 3.9. A second community park that is more passive in nature—somewhat similar to Crawford Park—and incorporates preserved open space would also be provided. A passive community park would include basic amenities such as one or more playgrounds, pavilions, trails, open play areas, and protected open space.

#### **Scenario 2**

Alternatively, a single, very large community park could be provided. This could serve the build-out population's needs and combine active and passive characteristics and amenities, allowing all needs to be met.

It is important to locate future community parks such that they have access to an existing or future arterial thoroughfare. In addition, consider potential locations alongside with new schools, which can increase the apparent size of the parks without requiring additional land acquisition. Community parks can be located along with regional detention/retention ponds, which can serve double-duty as amenities. Both Parkerville Park and the eastern planned community park shown on Figure 3.9 are in close proximity to potential future regional detention ponds.





**Figure 3.9– Existing & Proposed Community Parks**

*This figure illustrates the location of existing and proposed community parks in Cedar Hill.*

**Considerations for Parkerville Park**

Parkerville Park (which is located on land originally leased by the City in 1964) serves an essential function in Cedar Hill's system of community parks. It should ideally remain available to the community. However, it will be necessary to replace its facilities elsewhere if its use is terminated.

**Community Park Action Plan**

Table 3.6 lists the action items for these community park recommendations.

**Table 3.6 – Community Park Action Items**

Action ID	Action
1	<b>Parkerville Park</b> - Resolve contested land ownership issue.
2	<b>Land for New Community Parks</b> - Acquire 350 acres of land for two future community parks (one active community park and one passive community).
3	<b>New Community Park Development</b> – Develop two future community parks or one combined community park. Include facilities to replace those removed from Dot Thomas Park, Crawford Park, and Community Center Park (see Table 3.3).
4	<b>General Athletic Facility Development</b> – Develop baseball/softball competitive and practice fields, a multi-purpose practice field, and outdoor basketball goals with new park development.
5	<b>Tennis Center Development</b> – Develop an eight-court tennis center. (Alternatively, develop four tennis courts for a lower cost).
6	<b>Support Facility Development</b> – Develop playgrounds, pavilions, loop trails, and open play areas with new park development.
<b>Total</b>	

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## 3.5 OTHER PARKS

The “Other Parks” category includes any other type of park within the City that is not a “close-to-home” park—namely, special purpose parks, greenbelts and wildlife corridors, and open space preserves/nature areas. The majority of parks that fall within this category are greenbelts (five of Cedar Hill’s parks) and open space preserves (three of Cedar Hill’s Parks).

### *Cedar Hill’s Existing Special Purpose Parks:*

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*Pioneer Park*

### **Classification**

Detailed development guidelines have not been created for parks in the other parks category, as the design of each park is unique to its context and purpose.

### **Special Purpose Parks**

Special purpose parks are provided in order to meet a specific need or take advantage of a unique opportunity and therefore are not of any one typical design. Rather, the design of the park—including size, layout, and parking—is determined by the need for which the park is provided.

### *Cedar Hill’s Existing Greenbelts:*

---

*Cedar Trails Greenbelt*

*Regional Detention Pond*

*Waterford Oaks East  
Greenbelt*

*Windmill Hill Greenbelt*

*Wooded Creek Greenbelt*

### **Greenbelts & Wildlife Corridors**

Greenbelts usually do not provide many amenities other than trails and their support facilities (such as benches, picnic tables, and interpretive signage). Wildlife Corridors typically do not provide any amenities and often do not allow public use. Along creek corridors, development should be sensitive to prevent impacts on floodplains and stream banks. Greenways may also be defined as greenbelts when purposefully designed as recreation corridors with adequate landscaping that includes the application of Low Impact Development principles. Parking is typically unnecessary unless a trailhead exists within the greenbelt.

### *Cedar Hill’s Existing Open Space Preserves/ Nature Areas:*

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*Calabria Nature Preserve*

*Cedar Mountain Nature  
Preserve*

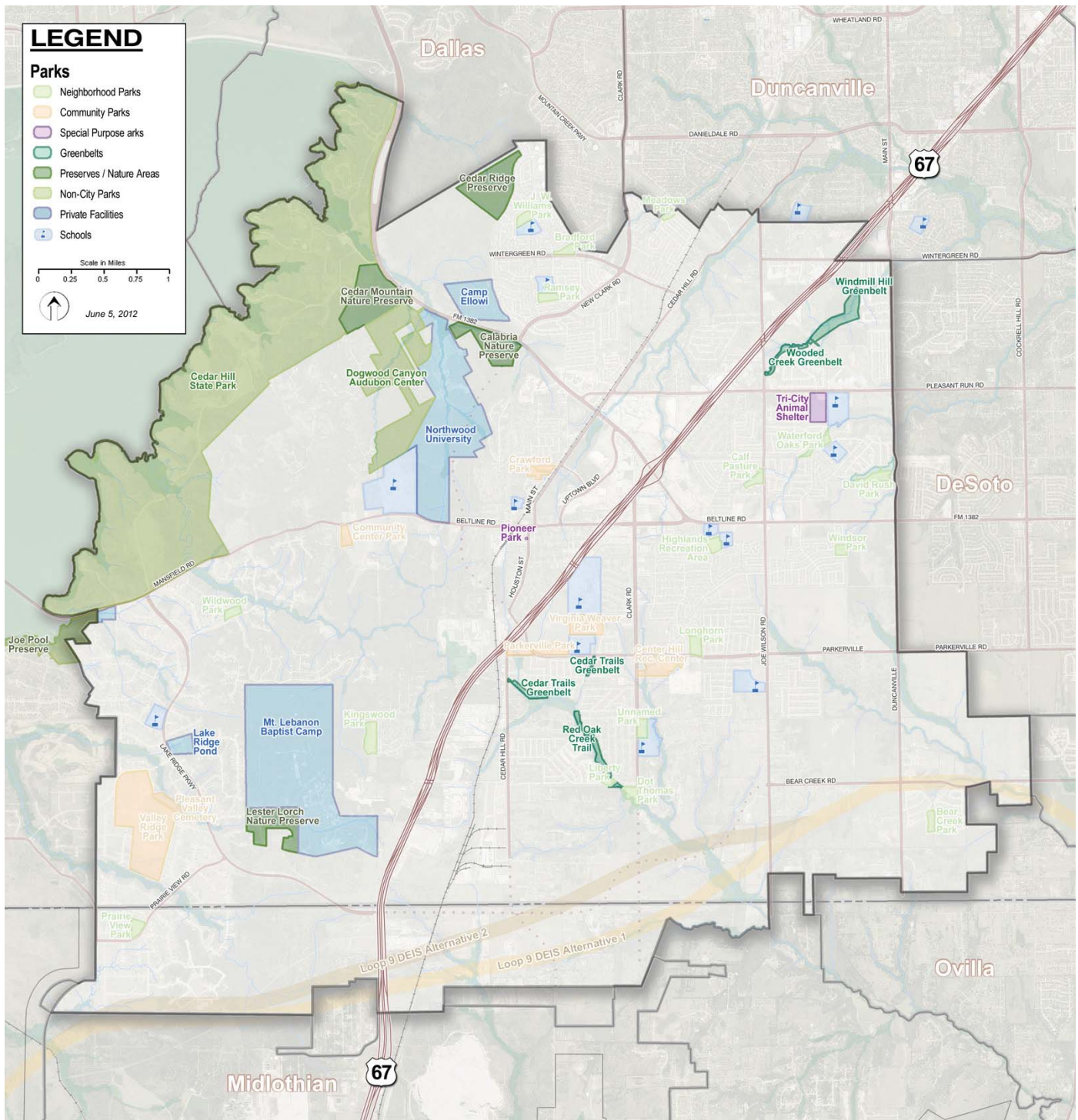
*Lester Lorch Nature Preserve*

### **Open Space Preserves/Nature Areas**

Open space preserves and nature areas vary in size depending on the scale of the unique or ecologically valuable land that is identified as important to protect. These areas typically have very few facilities other than trails, interpretive signage, small parking lots, and perhaps gathering spaces.

### **Inventory & Analysis**

Currently, Cedar Hill has one special purpose park—Pioneer Park. This park is considered a special purpose park because it provides one primary recreation function (live performances). In addition, Recreation Center Park and Community Center Park (which are classified as community parks) as well as Dot Thomas Park (which is classified as a neighborhood park) would generally be considered special purpose



**Figure 3.10 – Other Existing Parks**

*This figure illustrates the location and spatial distribution of special purpose parks, greenbelts, and open space preserves/nature areas in Cedar Hill. In addition, non-city parks (such as the State Park) and significant private facilities (such as Northwood University) are shown.*

parks in their current state. However, if the recommendations of this Master Plan are implemented, they would exist as true community or neighborhood parks.

Cedar Hill has six greenbelts totaling nearly 41 acres of park land. The majority of these parks exist along creeks and drainage ways and many include trails.

There are currently four open space preserves/nature areas in Cedar Hill that are owned, managed, or otherwise supported by the City. These range in size from the nearly 52 acre Calabria Nature Preserve to the 110 acre Cedar Mountain Nature Preserve. This category also includes Lester Lorch Park (owned by Dallas County and maintained by the City). Although not included in the City's inventory, it is important to note that 74 of the 600 acres in the Cedar Ridge Preserve (owned by Dallas County, managed by Audubon Dallas) are in Cedar Hill. In total, this category constitutes approximately 248 acres of park land within Cedar Hill.

**Table 3.7 – Other Parks Inventory**

Name	Size (acres)	Amenities
<b>Special Purpose Parks</b>		
Pioneer Park	0.25	Band shell
Subtotal	0.25	
<b>Greenbelts</b>		
Cedar Trails Greenbelt	13	Basketball court, playground, pavilion
Regional Detention Pond	11-12	
Waterford Oaks East Greenbelt	6.37	0.6 miles of paved loop trail, fishing pond
Windmill Hill Greenbelt	3.0	0.3 miles of paved loop trail
Wooded Creek Greenbelt	7.0	0.6 miles of paved loop trail, playground, pavilion
Subtotal	40.87	
<b>Open Space Preserve/Nature Areas</b>		
Calabria Nature Preserve	51.86	
Cedar Mountain Nature Preserve	110.00	0.3 miles of paved loop trail, 0.7 miles of nature trail
Lester Lorch Nature Preserve	86.00	7.3 miles of natural surface trail, 36 hole disc golf course, fishing pond
Subtotal	247.86	
<b>Total</b>	<b>288.98</b>	



The following pages include analyses of each of the existing special purpose parks, greenbelts, and open space preserves/nature areas in Cedar Hill.

### ***Special Purpose Parks***

#### **Pioneer Park**

- Size: 0.25 Acres
- Location: 600 Cedar Street
- Classification: Special Purpose Park

This small plaza is situated in historic downtown and includes a band shell, landscaping, and a historical marker. Its amenities are limited due to its size. The plaza is located on a corner and is bordered on two sides by the brick walls of adjacent buildings.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Paint murals on buildings: \$10,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$20,000***

### ***Greenbelts***

#### **Cedar Trails Greenbelt**

- Size: 13 Acres
- Location:
- Classification: Greenbelt

This greenbelt serves as the land on which the new Red Oak Creek Trail will be constructed. In addition to the trail, the greenbelt contains a basketball court, a playground, and a pavilion, in separate locations. This greenbelt provides excellent connectivity within the south-central part of Cedar Hill, linking Dot Thomas, Liberty, and Virginia Weaver Parks, as well as the Recreation Center and Permenter Middle School.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- New park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$20,000***



#### Waterford Oaks East Greenbelt

- Size: 6.37 Acres
- Location: Stoney Hill @ Duncanville Road
- Classification: Greenbelt

This narrow greenbelt runs along a wooded creek surrounded by houses. It provides connections to Waterford Oaks Park, Bessie Coleman Middle School, and Waterford Oaks Elementary School.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- New park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$20,000**



#### Windmill Hill Greenbelt

- Size: 3 Acres
- Location: Duncanville Road @ Wintergreen Road
- Classification: Greenbelt

This short greenbelt is located along a beautiful creek corridor at the far northeastern corner of Cedar Hill. It contains a trail that is very close to the top of the creek's bank, which provides dramatic views but will cause maintenance issues in the future. Already, a significant amount of erosion and undercutting has occurred at the trail's northern end.

#### *Recommended Improvements*

- Erosion Mitigation: \$200,000
- New park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$210,000**

### Wooded Creek Greenbelt

- Size: 3 Acres
- Location: Joe Wilson Road @ Pleasant Run Road
- Classification: Greenbelt

This greenbelt and its accompanying trail run parallel between the creek and Wooded Creek Drive. At its southern end, there is a small pocket park environment with a playground and a pavilion. Although park signs are not essential for greenbelts, one is recommended here because of its inclusion of additional amenities.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$10,000***

### ***Open Space Preserves/Nature Areas***

#### Calabria Nature Preserve

- Size: 51.86 Acres
- Location: 750 W. FM 1382
- Classification: Open Space Preserves/Nature Area

This nature preserve—located in the beautiful wooded area between the top of the Balcones Escarpment and Joe Pool Lake—is protected in its natural state. Because of the beauty and sensitive nature of the land, nature trails, overlooks, and basic support amenities are all that is appropriate for this park.



#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Master plan for future development: \$30,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- Future low-impact park development: \$500,000
- Low-impact trails that connect to future trails  
along FM-1382 and Northwood University: \$300,000
- ***Total:*** ***\$840,000***





#### **Cedar Mountain Nature Preserve**

- Size: 110 Acres
- Location: 1300 W. FM 1382
- Classification: Open Space Preserves/Nature Area

This land is owned by Dallas County and managed by the City of Cedar Hill. It is located between the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center and the Cedar Hill State Park. The park includes basic improvements—namely a concrete trail and a trailhead with parking. The trail provides users with beautiful views of the rugged terrain present in the area.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Construct overlook and extend trail: \$25,000
- Study feasibility of trail opportunities: \$500
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$35,500**



#### **Lester Lorch Nature Preserve**

- Size: 86 Acres
- Location: 1823 Texas Plume Road
- Classification: Open Space Preserves/Nature Area

Lester Lorch Nature Preserve is owned by Dallas County and managed by the City of Cedar Hill. This large park includes several miles of trail and two of North Texas' premier disc golf courses. A large pond in the middle of the park provides habitat for many water-oriented species of wildlife.

#### ***Recommended Improvements***

- Update the west entry, driveway, and parking lot: \$250,000
- Standardize and replace park sign: \$10,000
- **Total:** **\$260,000**

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## Needs Assessment

In addition to citizen input, needs for other parks are determined by analyzing level of service (LOS) for park acreage. Park service area does not apply to the “Other Parks” category.

### Acreage LOS

Acreage LOS is typically expressed as a per-capita figure. For example, the acreage LOS for special parks might be expressed as “X acres per 1,000 population.” A target LOS was developed for the entire “Other Parks” category. Individual TLOS were not developed for each of the types of parks that comprise this category because the need for such park land is variable over time. This TLOS is reflective of Cedar Hill’s commitment to achieve the goal of 20% open space and is based on the desire to improve the current LOS in order to preserve open space and to accommodate the need for future special purpose facilities.

- *NRPA Acreage Standard:* (none)
- *Cedar Hill Acreage TLOS:* 8 acres/1,000 population

### Needs Assessment Results

Cedar Hill currently has approximately 40% of the acreage for Other Parks (special purpose parks, greenbelts, open space preserves / nature areas, and all other City-owned park land other than neighborhood and community parks) required at build-out based upon the 2012 Target LOS for other parks (see Table 3.8). This results in a need to acquire about 428 acres of other park land by build-out. As park service area is not a significant consideration for Other Park types, there is not a need to perform a service area deficit analysis such as was performed for neighborhood and community parks.

**Table 3.8 – Current and Target Level of Service for Other Parks**

Existing Acreage	288.98
Current LOS	6.38 Acres/1,000 Population
Target LOS	8 Acres/1,000 Population
Target Acreage at Build-Out*	712
Acreage to Acquire to meet Target	423

Existing acreage is 41% of the target for build-out conditions.

\*Population of 88,956



## **Recommendations**

The provision of new special purpose parks, greenbelts, and open space preserves/nature areas is largely dependent on specific needs and opportunities. It is impossible to accurately forecast all of the needs for parks of these types for this reason. The recommendations for new parks of these types are therefore broad, except where specific, immediate needs have been identified.

### ***Special Purpose Parks***

Special purpose parks are provided in order to meet specific needs or to take advantage of specific opportunities. The size, location, and character of land acquired for parks of this type will depend on the park's intended purpose. Many special-purpose recreational facilities can be provided on existing park land. However, some may require the acquisition of additional land in order to accommodate the facility's size or site requirements. Three specialty facilities are recommended by this Master Plan—three water spray parks, a skate park, and a dog park. These specialty facilities could be developed as stand-alone special purpose parks. The dog park is earmarked to be located on the 10 acre piece of land behind the Tri-City Animal Shelter and will be a joint-venture between Cedar Hill, DeSoto, and Duncanville.

### ***Greenbelts & Wildlife Corridors***

It is recommended that the City acquire or otherwise ensure the protection of key pieces of natural open space along creek corridors for use as greenbelts and wildlife corridors. In general, the City should target land that is along a planned trail corridor or that has unique ecological value. Potential maintenance challenges should be considered when determining whether a parcel of land should be acquired. In some instances, the City may choose to acquire a permanent trail easement rather than purchase land. This will reduce overall costs to the City and might require less maintenance. Another opportunity is to utilize existing and future regional stormwater detention/retention sites as greenbelts themselves or as links between greenbelts. Access to these areas via public roads is critical for maintenance and operations and public safety.

### ***Open Space Preserves/Nature Areas***

While Cedar Hill already has almost 250 acres of land (including regional detention ponds) dedicated to open space preserves and nature areas, the acquisition of additional acreage may be desirable to protect key, unique pieces of land or to help implement the proposed Floodplain Protection & Regional Detention Plan and Balcones Escarpment Protection Plan.

### ***Trailheads***

Expanding the City's trail system is one of the citizens' top priorities. In addition to constructing additional trails, it is important to provide trailheads to allow access to the system. Each existing park that is connected to the trail system can automatically serve as a trailhead if appropriate facilities are provided. However, it may also be necessary for the City to acquire land for stand-alone trailheads in order to meet citizen demand for trail access. These sites should be evenly distributed across the City and along the trails.

### Other Parks Action Plan

Table 3.9 lists the action items for recommendations and associated actions related to the “Other Parks” category.

**Table 3.9– Other Parks Action Items**

Action ID	Action
1	<b>Special Purpose Parks</b> - Acquire 20 acres of land for special purpose parks including trail heads, trail gateways, a dog park, a skate park, and other as yet unforeseen special purpose use.
2	<b>Open Space Acquisition and Protection (Floodplain)</b> - Acquisition of 180 acres along creek corridors (100' wide corridors along ~15 miles of floodplain or the 100-year floodline at build-out conditions, whichever is greater).
3	<b>Open Space Acquisition and Protection (out of Floodplain)</b> - Acquisition or non-acquisition protection programs of 230 acres of other important Open Space land not within the floodplain.
4	<b>Support Facility Development</b> – Develop playgrounds, pavilions, loop trails, and open play areas with new park development.
5	<b>Water Spray Parks</b> – Develop three water spray parks.
6	<b>Skate Park</b> – Develop a skate park as a joint-venture with surrounding cities.
7	<b>Dog Park</b> – Develop a dog park as a joint-venture with surrounding cities.
Total	



### 3.6

## OUTDOOR FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following recommendations for outdoor facilities are based on an analysis of level of service (LOS), public demand, and the needs of Cedar Hill's sports organizations. These recommendations relate to the provision of new facilities and the redevelopment of existing facilities. Many of the recommended new facilities can be provided at existing parks. However, some of the larger, higher-intensity, or specialized facilities might require land acquisition.

#### Athletic Facilities

Overall, the City is adequately meeting the majority of the community's athletic facility needs. However, there are a few key recommendations for new or expanded facilities that should be considered within the next five years. There is a significant need for competitive baseball fields, competitive softball fields, and tennis courts. It is recommended that priority be given to developing these facilities. As discussed earlier, tennis courts are typically provided in intervals of four in a single location. This makes them functional for tournaments and league use and allows for efficient maintenance and operations. Similarly, baseball and softball fields are typically provided in intervals of four or five fields in a single location for the same reasons.

The specific recommendations for athletic facilities are:

- ***Competitive Baseball Fields*** – 4 or 5 fields in an existing or future community or special purpose park.
- ***Competitive Youth Softball Fields*** – 5 fields in an existing or future community or special purpose park.
- ***Baseball/Softball Practice Fields*** – 1 field with a backstop in an existing or future neighborhood, community, or special purpose park. Baseball/softball practice fields can range from a backstop in an open field to a more defined practice facility with fencing, dirt infield, and lighting.
- ***Multi-purpose Practice Fields*** – 1 field with combination football uprights/soccer goals in an existing or future neighborhood, community, or special purpose park. A multi-purpose practice field is a facility that is used primarily for soccer and football practice but can also be used for baseball or softball practice. Striping, lighting, and the provision of goals or backstops are optional for these facilities.
- ***Outdoor Basketball Goals*** – 3 goals (3 half-courts or 1 full-court and 1 half-court) in existing or future neighborhood, community, or special purpose parks.

- **Tennis Courts** – 4 traditional tennis courts or 8 tennis courts in the form of a tennis center with locker rooms and concession area that provides a higher level of service for the community with the added benefit of league tournament possibilities.

### Support Facilities

There is a set of core facilities, including playgrounds, pavilions, open play areas, and loop trails, that should be provided at every neighborhood and community park in the City. These can also be provided in special purpose parks to add recreational value. The following specific facilities are recommended:

- **Playgrounds** – As a general practice, the City should provide a playground at each neighborhood park and community park. A playground should be added at six existing neighborhood parks without playgrounds as well as the nine proposed neighborhood parks and two proposed community parks identified earlier in this chapter.
- **Pavilions** – As with playgrounds, the City should generally provide a pavilion at every neighborhood and community park. These should be provided at the seven neighborhood parks that do not currently have pavilions or large shade structures. In addition, each of the proposed neighborhood and community parks should include pavilions.
- **Loop Trails & Circulation** – Simple yet very popular, a loop trail can be as short as one-eighth of a mile and as long as the park allows (though it is generally desirable to provide cut-offs or short-cuts that provide quarter-mile loops). It is recommended that loop trails be provided within every neighborhood and community park. It is desirable to connect these loop trails to the City-wide trail system where possible (see Chapter 5). At a minimum, loop trails or trails connecting to the City-wide trail system should be eight feet wide to be comfortable for multiple user types—walkers, joggers, strollers, etc.
- **Open Play Areas** – It is important for each park to have a balance between programmed and unprogrammed space. Open play areas provide space for playing catch and informal games and should be provided at each neighborhood and community park. Baseball/softball practice fields and multi-purpose practice fields for football and soccer can help meet the need for open play areas. It is important to ensure that many existing open play areas remain and additional areas are provided at new parks.

### Specialty Facilities

Specialty facilities provide an additional level of recreational value beyond the core facilities and athletic facilities discussed previously. They are intended to diversify the recreational offerings of the City's parks system and to meet the needs of often under-served groups.

- ***Water Spray Park*** – Also called “spray grounds” or “splash pads,” water spray parks provide unique recreation opportunities for children. As a relatively low-cost aquatic facility, they include amenities like water jets and cannons, fountains, and dump buckets. It is recommended that three water spray parks be provided where and when the opportunity arises.
- ***Skate Park*** – Skate parks have rapidly become popular with teenagers and young adults. They provide active recreation opportunities for youth that do not participate in traditional sports programs. It is recommended that the City construct a skate park either in one of its existing parks or on new park land. As they serve regional users as well as local, skate parks are good joint-development opportunities with nearby cities.
- ***Dog Park*** – Dog parks are increasingly popular amenities, both with people that have yards and those that do not. They offer the opportunity for dogs and their owners to socialize and play freely. Typically, a dog park will have a small dog side (for dogs 30 pounds or less) and a big dog side (for dogs over 30 pounds). The small dog side is usually smaller (0.5 to 1 acre) while the big dog side is larger (1 to 2 acres). In addition to the fact that big dogs need more space, they also cause more wear and tear on the turf than do small dogs. A larger space allows the dogs to disperse and thereby reduce turf damage. Dog parks typically contain seating areas for owners, water fountains (for people and dogs), and one or two hose-down areas. It is recommended that a dog park be placed along an existing or future trail and also have an adequately-sized parking lot. Choosing a site with existing trees will provide a more enjoyable environment for dog owners. Finally, this type of amenity is also a good joint-development opportunity with nearby cities.



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## 3.7 SYSTEM WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The over-arching greatest needs identified for this component of the Master Plan are to upgrade and modernize existing parks, preserve open space, and prepare for the future park, recreation, and open space needs created by the City's future growth.

### Achieving the 20% Parks & Open Space Goal

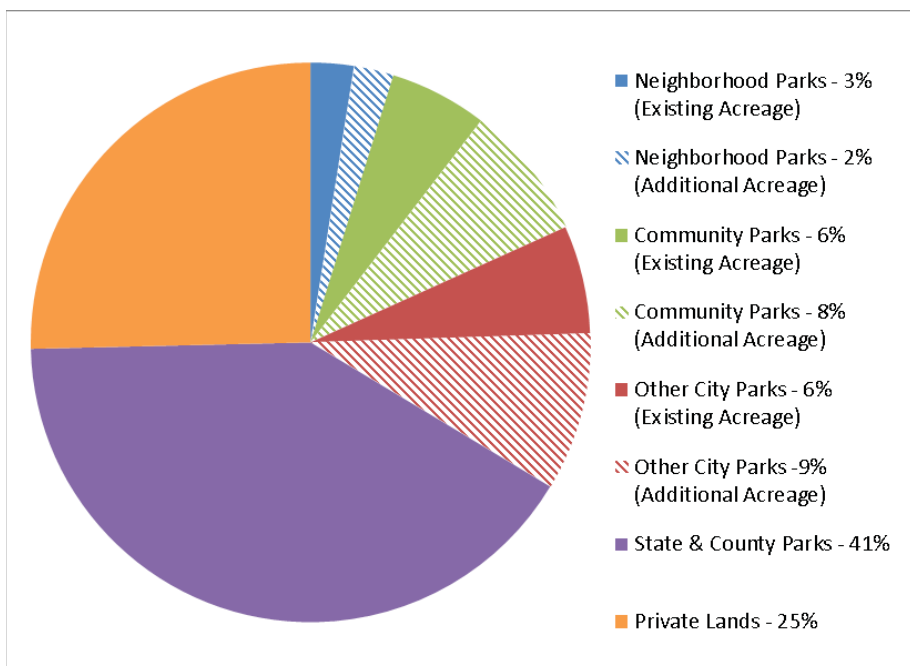
One of the three primary goals of this Master Plan is to have 20% of the City's land area dedicated to parks and open space at build-out. This figure will include City parks, State and County parks, and private lands that will be held as open space in perpetuity (such as Mount Lebanon Baptist Encampment and Northwood University). Currently, these areas total 3,729 acres, which constitute 16.3% of Cedar Hill's land area. Compared to cities across the country, Cedar Hill's existing percentage is comparable with some of the highest-ranking cities. Our goal of 20% would place us near the top of the list (see Table 3.10).

**Table 3.10– Park Land Percentage of City Area Comparison**

Cities with Large Percentages of Park Land	Park & Open Space Acres as Percent of Land Area
Anchorage, AK	39.9%
Albuquerque, NM	30.5%
New Orleans, LA	25.3%
San Diego, CA	22.7%
Virginia Beach, VA	21.2%
<b>Cedar Hill (Goal)</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
New York City, NY	19.5%
Washington, DC	19.4%
El Paso, TX	18.4%
San Francisco, CA	18.0%
Raleigh, NC	16.9%
Austin, TX	16.7%
<b>Cedar Hill (Current)</b>	<b>16.3%</b>
Portland, OR	15.7%
Dallas, TX	13.4%

Source: The Trust for Public Land, 2010 City Park Facts

Achieving the 20% goal will require an additional 903 acres of public and private open space, resulting in a total of 4,632 acres. Two-thirds of the land comprising the 20% goal is non-City-owned land (primarily Cedar Hill State Park). Of the remaining one-third of the 20% total (the proportion related to City parks), slightly less than half of the needed acreage exists within Cedar Hill's park system currently. Significant land acquisition for neighborhood, community, and other parks will be necessary to reach the 20% goal. However, partnerships with private entities, the County, the State, and others can help Cedar Hill protect open space and ultimately reach this goal. See Figure 3.11.



**Figure 3.11 – 20% Open Space Goal Composition**

*This chart illustrates the break-down of open space types that will ultimately comprise the 20% of Cedar Hill's land area dedicated to parks and open space.*





## **Cultural Landscape & Open Space Preservation**

The protection and preservation of open space, which includes natural areas, creek corridors, prairies, floodplains, wooded areas, and especially the Balcones Escarpment, is an increasingly important goal for the citizens. In the Citizen Attitude Survey (telephone survey), 97% of respondents agreed that “natural areas are important and should be preserved where it is available.” There are a multitude of potential physical and policy-based actions which the City can and should take in order to ensure the protection of the distinctive cultural landscapes and natural areas that make Cedar Hill unique; however, the following actions are arguably the most important for the City to take over the next five to ten years.

### ***Floodplain Protection & Stormwater Management Study***

Rivers, creeks, and streams provide both challenges and opportunities for Cedar Hill. On the one hand, drainage systems are by nature dynamic and change over time through erosion and sedimentation processes, typically exacerbated by upstream development. Therefore, creeks and streams must be carefully managed in order to ensure adequate flood conveyance and to protect water quality and public safety. On the other hand, they also provide ample opportunities for recreational use, as well as corridors and habitat for wildlife and unique areas of vegetation. Therefore, these pieces of “green infrastructure” are of vital importance to the health of the community and should be protected in a comprehensive manner.

In order to manage floodplains for public use, public safety, water quality, and the protection of open space, it is recommended that the City (through a joint effort by the Public Works Department, Planning Department, and Parks and Recreation Department) create a City-wide Floodplain Protection Plan. The major component of such a plan would be the development of a detailed hydraulic and hydrology study that identifies the fully-developed 100-year floodplain at anticipated build-out conditions for all major drainage corridors in the City. It is important to consider fully-developed conditions in order to ensure the long-term health and quality of floodplains and economic sustainability of the City. Furthermore, protecting the floodplain at fully-developed conditions affords more opportunities for recreational uses, such as trails, nature exploration, and open space preserves, along creek corridors.

In addition, it is suggested that the City build upon the Draft Regional Detention Study by beginning to implement its recommendations. Specifically, more detailed studies of six of the 18 individual detention sites identified in the study be further investigated to confirm their viability in providing regional detention hydraulic benefits to each watershed. It is also recommended that the City restudy/update the hydrology, hydraulics, and floodplain mapping for any watershed areas where regional stormwater detention will be pursued further (i.e. the 6 suggested sites). A city-wide Stormwater Management Study would accomplish this as well as complete the final planning and selection process for regional stormwater detention within the City. During this studies, opportunities for simultaneously acquiring additional land for parks and open space should be considered.

### ***Floodplain Management Strategy***

In addition to the Floodplain Protection & Stormwater Management Study (as described above), the City can take immediate actions that will provide long-term benefit to the community. It is recommended that the City adopt a floodplain management strategy that preserves its creek corridors by means of guidelines, public-private partnerships, and developer incentives. Such a strategy may include policies relative to five concepts:

- Consider allowing no reclamation within the 100-year fully-developed hydrologic floodplain. Reclaiming floodplain can impact public safety, water quality, erosion, wildlife habitat, visual quality, and tree cover, as well as greatly reducing outdoor recreation opportunities. Otherwise, the City should provide best practice guidelines for limited floodplain reclamation, the placement and design of structures, and the provision of trails and other amenities in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Acquire floodplain land for public use or otherwise ensure its protection and acquire access easements for linear trails. While preserving the floodplain (regardless of ownership) is the primary goal, it is also important to ensure that people can access floodplains and creek corridors by means of trails.
- Do not locate high-intensity recreation facilities within the floodplain. Ball fields and other recreation facilities often require floodplain reclamation, the removal of trees, and disturbance of floodplain vegetation, which has the function of absorbing floodwater and filtering pollutants. While it is often desirable to have parks that include these types of facilities adjacent to creek corridors, it is important to ensure that the highly-developed portions of these parks are outside of the floodplain.





- Develop guidelines regarding the management of floodplain land (including the clearing/removal of vegetation, mowing, and wildlife management). Educate landowners (large and small) and developers on the value of floodplains and provide them with these floodplain management guidelines.
- The City should consider incentivizing developers for exercising LID (Low Impact Development, a form of stormwater best management practices) and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Sustainable Sites practices. Employing these practices can result in improved water quality, reduced property damage, the slowing of water runoff thereby reducing erosion, and the reduction of flood intensity.

### ***Cultural & Environmental Resource Inventory***

Cedar Hill has unique cultural and natural characteristics, including the Balcones Escarpment, creek corridors, Joe Pool Lake, prairie remnants, and historic neighborhoods. Protecting culturally and ecologically valuable areas requires having a firm grasp on what resources exist and the relative quality and quantity of each. It is recommended that the City creates a Cultural and Environmental Resource Inventory of the important areas within Cedar Hill that provide wildlife habitat, reflect the City's identity, provide ecosystem services (such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, and pest control), and/or include other characteristics that warrant their protection. This inventory should specifically include key areas within and around the Balcones Escarpment that are critical to its ecological and aesthetic integrity—this inventory would then serve as the basis for the Balcones Escarpment Protection Plan discussed below. Other benefits of developing and maintaining such an inventory include aiding the City in guiding future development actions, developing policy, and prioritizing open space acquisition.

### ***Open Space Acquisition & Protection***

While ensuring the preservation of open space through ordinances and regulations is important, it is also essential to actually acquire open space or gain permanent access easements to allow public use. It is recommended that the City acquires at least enough open space to provide trails along all major creek corridors in the City and through the Balcones Escarpment area between Lake Ridge Parkway and Northwood University, as well as space for trailheads and access points. Other areas may include sites of important ecological value including tree covered areas, zones of topographic interest, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers land along Joe Pool Lake. It is recommended that the City strive to locate many of its parks along open space corridors so that the



establishment of a network of trails and open spaces will also serve as physical linkages and habitat corridors between parks.

In addition to acquiring land or permanent easements, the protection of private open space is also important. Open space protection may be accomplished through restrictive ordinances (limiting development, clearing, etc.) or incentives (via tools such as purchase/transfer of development rights, which encourages landowners to preserve their property; see page 3-73). The previously-described Floodplain Protection & Regional Detention Plan should incorporate mechanisms to protect open space along creek corridors. Similarly, the following Balcones Escarpment Protection Plan should specifically address protection strategies for the Escarpment area.

### ***Balcones Escarpment Protection Plan***

The Balcones Escarpment is an incredibly valuable natural resource for many reasons. It is aesthetically beautiful, it provides wildlife habitat, and it offers many recreation opportunities. However, perhaps most importantly, it is one of the most powerful image-defining elements within Cedar Hill, making the City truly unique within the Metroplex. Its protection is paramount for the preservation of Cedar Hill's distinctive character and natural beauty. It is recommended that a Balcones Escarpment Protection Plan be developed that includes strategies relative to five concepts:

- Maintain the aesthetic value of the area by minimizing the visual impact of new development. Identify and maintain important viewsheds so that new development is not visible from Cedar Hill State Park, Dogwood Canyon, Calabria Nature Preserve, or Cedar Mountain Nature Preserve. New development should be restricted from topographical high points—or if allowed, not visible from surrounding areas.
- Identify and protect landscapes that are visually contextual to the escarpment. Protect landscapes that are representative of the cultural and farming history of Cedar Hill. A prime example is the pasture land north of FM-1382, east of Camp Ellowi. Protect natural and cultural landscapes that serve as the foreground to Escarpment views. For example, unobstructed views from FM-1382 toward the Escarpment are key to maintain its visual quality.





- Avoid the reduction and segmentation of wildlife habitat. Understand the species living within the area, their movement patterns and habitat requirements, and accordingly preserve contiguous habitat areas and corridors. In addition to benefitting wildlife, maintaining adequate habitat will reduce the displacement of animals that would otherwise end up in neighborhoods and backyards.
- Acquire land or permanent access easements for trail corridors. Trails are one of the most cost-effective and least invasive ways to provide recreational opportunities within nature areas. The Trails Master Plan (see Chapter 6) outlines potential trail corridors through the area. Trails may be paved or constructed using less impactful methods.
- Minimize the impact of tree and understory clearing. Clearing trees and brush is often necessary for the construction of new structures in the area. Minimize the level of clearing performed on and around the Escarpment; when clearing is necessary, provide guidelines and assistance to developers and landowners regarding selective and low-impact clearing.
- Determine the maximum percentage of the area that is allowed to be developed. Base this percentage on habitat requirements, potential run-off and drainage issues, and the maintenance of the area's aesthetic integrity. Once this maximum percentage is reached, do not allow the construction of a new structure until an existing structure with a footprint of equal or greater size is removed.

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## **POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

### **3.8 *Municipal Bonds***

Debt financing through the issuance of municipal bonds is the most common way in which to fund park and open space projects. This type of funding is a strategy wherein a city issues a bond, receives an immediate cash payment to finance projects, and must repay the bond with interest over a set period of time ranging from a few years to several decades. General obligation bonds—the most common form of municipal bond—is the primary bond type for park and open space projects.

#### ***Developer Requirements***

This tool can be used to require new development to provide a dedication of land for neighborhood and community parks (or fee-in-lieu of land) and park development fees to offset the City's costs. This is accomplished through the Park Land Dedication Ordinance, which is recommended to be revised, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

#### ***Tax Increment Financing/Public Improvement Districts***

These related tools allow a development district to divert a portion of its property taxes to fund infrastructure improvements within its area. This can include plazas, pocket parks, linear parks, and other types of facilities.

#### ***Private Sponsorship Programs/Naming Rights***

Obtaining private sponsorship for parks and recreation facilities—often by selling naming rights—can be an effective tool for acquiring additional financing. The long-term success of this financing tool depends greatly on a concerted effort by the City to ensure the ongoing prominence of the sponsored facilities through appropriate marketing efforts and a commitment to an excellent maintenance program.

#### ***Outdoor Recreation Grants***

This Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) program provides 50% matching grant funds to municipalities and other local units of government with a population less than 500,000 to acquire and develop park land or to renovate existing public recreation areas as identified and described per a TPWD-approved Parks Master Plan. There are two funding cycles per year with a maximum award of \$500,000. Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, municipal utility districts, river authorities, and other special districts. Projects must be completed within three years of approval. Application deadlines are March 1st and August 1st each year (the Parks Master Plan submission deadline for TPWD

approval is 60 days prior to application deadline). Award notifications occur six months after deadlines.

### ***Purchase and Transfer of Development Rights***

Purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) are programs for landscape preservation whereby a municipality, county, or other entity can pay landowners (typically farmers and ranchers) to limit development on their land. Through PDR, landowners are paid an amount relative to the development potential of their land, required to maintain their land generally as-is (greatly limiting any future development), and maintain ownership of the land and residence. The land is thereby conserved, either in a natural or cultivated state. Taking the PDR model a step further, TDR programs conserve rural landscapes through “trading” potential development intensity between sending areas and receiving areas. Areas to be protected (significant cultural, rural, or natural landscapes) are designated as sending areas while areas where more intense development is desirable are designated as receiving areas. In this model, landowners in sending areas are allowed to sell their right to develop their land to developers in receiving areas. Both of these programs can offer a financially competitive alternative to selling land for development.

### ***Tree Mitigation Funds***

The source of such a fund results when a city levies fines against developers for removing quality trees for development. The revenue generated is used to plant trees and to irrigate city properties, thereby enhancing the community.

### ***Electric Utility Partnerships***

This type of partnership can be established for the purpose of providing and enhancing linear parks and trails along utility easements. This partnership typically does not involve monetary contributions. However, through use agreements and/or easements, it makes land for trail corridors accessible at little or no cost to the community.

### ***Utility Bill Contributions***

In many cities, residents are allowed to electively add a small amount to their utility collection bills to fund park improvements. As an example, the City of Colleyville has a Voluntary Park Fund, which allows citizens to donate \$2.00 per month through their water utility bills. This results in approximately \$150,000 per year, which is used to fund park improvements throughout their community.

### ***Land Trusts***

Land trusts provide a valuable service to municipalities across the country in helping to acquire natural areas, open space, and other land for public use. Typically, land trusts not only assist in funding land acquisition but also assist in managing the transaction and financing. Often, each land trust will have a specific set of requirements for the types of land they are willing to help acquire and/or how that land will be used. The Texas Land Trust Council can be contacted for more information.