



The Cedar Hill Experience Tourism Strategic Plan 2024-2027

July 2024



Developed by:



FOREWORD

After working in destinations across the country, Cygnet Strategies has found that the most successful destination development strategies are focused on a holistic approach to understanding place through assessing the built environment, natural landscapes, and human interactions in context with one another. This discovery process provides a shared understanding of where you've been, where you are, and where you want to go from here. It highlights the people and the stories—told and untold—that help shape the experiences and the perceptions surrounding a destination or district.

Tourism creates significant economic development opportunities. Communities who are able to recognize those opportunities and turn them into success stories understand and approach every visitor encounter appropriately. They provide hassle-free experiences and services that meet visitors' needs and exceed their expectations.



This project, funded by the City of Cedar Hill, began with an honest assessment of the destination and concludes with this Action Plan. The project was launched in the fall of 2023 with a Visitor Experience Assessment that included both a destination marketing and onsite assessment report that can be found in the Appendix.

Our team also attended Latin Fest and collected a variety of community feedback. Amidst a complex and rapidly changing political, social, and public health landscape, we conducted stakeholder interviews, destination-specific research, as well as performed a SWOT analysis for Cedar Hill as a destination.

Work then began with the Tourism Plan Steering Committee articulating the status quo and setting a vision for the future through the creation of a destination identity vision and supporting pillars for The Cedar Hill Experience. Along the way, we coordinated with other professional firms and city staff to ensure relevant and timely adjustments were made to the process.

This plan, presented to the City of Cedar Hill, actually belongs to the community—government leaders, public servants, nonprofit organizations, non-governmental entities, cultural, historic, and economic development organizations and entities, the educational systems, and most importantly the residents of Cedar Hill—each of them is integral to helping transform the community into a vibrant destination immersed in nature, where visitors experience new heights and create lasting memories.

Sincerely,

Vicky Soderberg, CEO
Betsy McCarthy, COO
Sarah O'Brien, Project Specialist



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of this strategic action plan was a collaboration between Cygnet Strategies staff, elected officials from the City of Cedar Hill, the Tourism Plan Steering Committee, the Historic Downtown Advisory Board, local organizations, businesses, and various tourism and downtown stakeholders.

We want to express our gratitude for the hours, ideas, and resources contributed by the various participants who helped make this plan a reality.

The information and recommendations contained in this plan are based upon our broad-based experience working with communities and destinations combined with local workshops, independent research, previous planning efforts, interviews, informal conversations, and best practices.

Any plan is only as effective as its implementation effort. As Herb Kelleher so wisely stated, “We have a strategic plan, it’s called doing things.”



*This plan is for the betterment of the
Cedar Hill community*

Tourism Plan Steering Committee

Alan E. Sims, Mayor Pro Tem
Shirley Daniels, Council Member
Neil Bolton, Parks Board Member
Rachel Laca, Cedar Hill State Park
Renee Tims, Hillside Village
Vernon Folks, business owner
Bailey Siegler, business owner
Henry Florsheim, Economic Development
Alison Ream, Assistant City Manager
Greg Porter, City Manager

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Tourism is an enormous economic driver for the State of Texas. In 2022, visitors spent \$91.7 billion resulting in \$8.5 billion in state, local, and county tax revenues. By supporting 1.2 million jobs statewide, tourism is responsible for 1 in 11 Texas jobs. More specifically, visitors to Cedar Hill in 2023 had the following estimated impacts:

- **Total Direct Spending: \$75.1 million**
- **Total Direct Employment: 490 FTE**
- **Total Direct Earnings: \$27.8 million**
- **Total Local Tax Receipts: \$12.1 million**

Source: travelstats.com/dashboard/texas

Clearly, tourism is a strong partner in terms of economic development and business retention with a pleasant side effect: local residents spend more of their money at home when their community offers new and different experiences, retailers, restaurants, and activities. This helps stop the leakage—the cash residents spend someplace else—and strengthens local pride.

Cedar Hill has engaged in tourism development and marketing efforts since the first Tourism Plan was developed in 2012. As the community has grown, and the travel industry has evolved, new opportunities are available. The purpose of this plan is to leverage existing assets and consider additional options that will add sustainability and resiliency in the current environment.

Communities that successfully attract visitors combine a strong identity and strong sense of place backed by solid product, engaging experiences, and effective marketing. When you deliver on the promise you make to your visitors, they are eager to return and will share their positive experience with friends, family and on a variety of online channels.

Throughout the development of this plan, consistent themes emerged. This document focuses on the identified themes and provides a roadmap for improving the visitor experience, creating visitor loyalty, and increasing the area's visibility as a tourism destination. The analysis and recommendations are aimed at building a foundation for future tourism efforts that positively impact the area's quality of life. A foundation that supports residents, business owners, and stakeholders in providing hassle-free experiences and services that meet visitors' needs and exceed their expectations.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

*“The power of
the place is not
what you see.
The power of the
place is what you
feel.”*

—City Manager Greg Porter

Project Overview

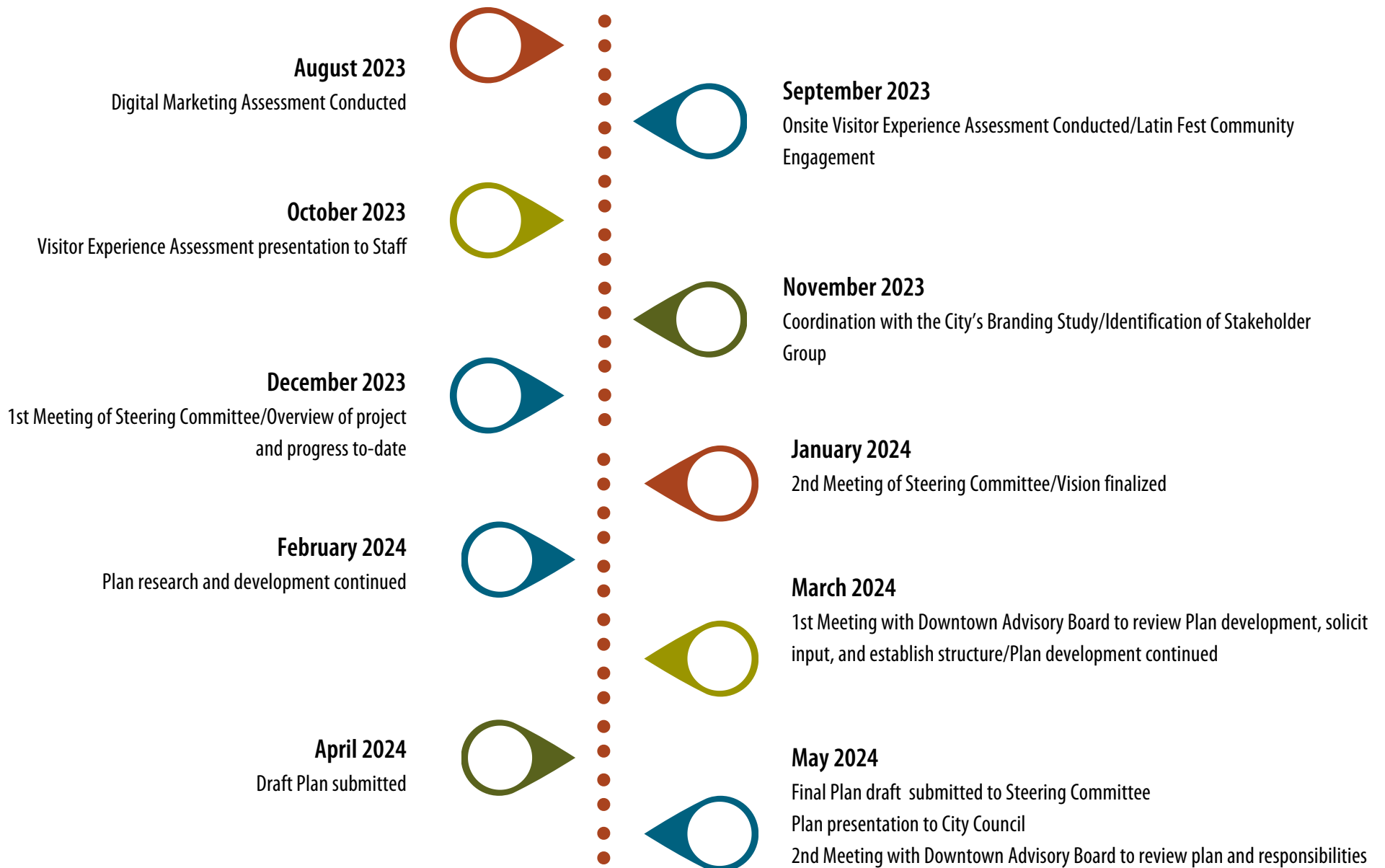
The purpose of this strategic plan is to define, articulate, and enhance the Cedar Hill visitor experience as well as develop, connect, and align tourism and hospitality providers with the community. In turn, enhancing the overall health, strengthening the economic vitality, creating destination advocates, and instilling civic pride in and for the City of Cedar Hill.

This plan was developed in conjunction with the City of Cedar Hill, to define, articulate and enhance The Cedar Hill experience. It is intended to provide guidance to the City of Cedar Hill staff, alongside their partners and stakeholders, when structure, policy, and funding decisions are made. It focuses on Cedar Hill’s built and natural experiences, defines its identity as a destination, provides strategies for tourism business support, makes recommendations to enhance the appeal of the destination, and provides guidance on how to leverage Cedar Hill’s story.

Cedar Hill’s successful implementation of this plan can only be achieved when the plan is embraced and has buy-in from the destination as a whole. Everyone plays a part in creating and elevating The Cedar Hill Experience, building a destination worth remembering and returning to. By working collaboratively to support the tourism industry, the community, and the experiences Cedar Hill provides, the City can become a regional competitor for leisure visitors, outdoor enthusiasts, and experience-seeking travelers.

By amplifying Cedar Hill’s voice, community members will develop a shared understanding and mutual desire to embrace and share Cedar Hill’s culture, traditions, and experiences personally and when interacting with visitors. The City of Cedar Hill must emerge as a strong economic contributor, diverse community builder, and dynamic place advocate moving forward. Collaboration has never been more critical for success. Partnerships between the public and private sectors are needed to market and manage any destination. Cedar Hill Tourism is the architect of the destination’s identity, the advocate for the community and visitors, and the passionate storytelling champion for the places they represent, however, they do not bear total responsibility for creating The Cedar Hill Experience.

PROJECT TIMELINE



TOURISM FUNDAMENTALS

Tourism Fundamentals

(1) Visitors are on vacation

Both business and leisure visitors want things to be easy, they want to enjoy themselves. They're looking for experiences and opportunities that they can't get closer to home.

(2) Not everyone uses a smartphone

Even if your visitors have smartphones, they're not necessarily using them for anything other than phone calls, texting, taking pictures and checking email. Don't assume they'll always be looking online for information. Be sure to provide alternatives that are available beyond business hours on weekdays.

(3) You love your town but visitors don't know your town like you do

It can be difficult to see your community through fresh eyes. Can visitors navigate easily? Do they feel welcome? Are your "hidden gems" too well hidden? Shop and restaurant owners should stand across the street from their businesses at least once a week and look at the impression their business makes. Are the windows clean? Are displays (including menus) fresh, attractive and inviting? Can people tell the business is open?

(4) Your visitors have interesting places and cool shops and restaurants in their towns too

People travel—whether for an afternoon or for several days—to see and experience something different. Every community has its own sense of place, its own personality. Help visitors experience and appreciate what makes your community different, what makes it worth their time and money. Don't try to be everything to everyone and don't create experiential expectations that you can't meet. Not every town will appeal to every visitor and that's okay.

(5) Some of your visitors may have challenges related to vision, hearing or mobility

There are little things you can do to provide accessibility. Making sure the videos are closed captioned and that written materials can be accessed in auditory format goes a long way toward providing a rich experience. Historic buildings and public spaces often have uneven surfaces and awkward transitions. Do what you can to mitigate these or provide alternatives.

(6) Public restrooms are the #1 tourist destination in the world

If you want visitors to frequent your nature corridor and spend time downtown, it is essential to have clean, safe and well maintained public restroom amenities.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Destination Management

Destination management and development is more important than ever in today's rapidly changing environment. Convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs) and tourism departments seeking future success need to pivot and shift away from their traditional roles of visitor service providers and destination marketers (DMOs). Being a CVB or a DMO is no longer enough. Organizations must become the voice, advocate, champion, and change maker for their communities.

This means transforming roles and organizations into experience managers and product developers and expand into Destination Management. Tourism organizations must actively advocate and contribute to community development that elevates the experience and expands the destination's offerings.

Cedar Hill's tourism efforts have traditionally focused on a Convention & Visitors Bureau format focusing on marketing, advertising, media, business development, tradeshow promotion, and event planning. While those core competencies remain relevant, the City's role in destination marketing must expand to include management of the community's role in the visitor experience.

definition [def-uh-nish-uhn]

See synonyms for definition on Thesaurus.com

noun

- 1 the act of **defining**, or of making something definite, distinct, or clear:
We need a better definition of her responsibilities.

Destination management consists of the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourism destination. Destination management takes a strategic approach to link-up these sometimes very separate elements for the better management of the destination. Joined up management can help to avoid overlapping functions and duplication of effort with regards to promotion, visitor services, training, business support and identify any management gaps that are not being addressed. Destination management calls for a coalition of many organizations and interests working towards a common goal, ultimately being the assurance of the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism destination. The Destination Management Organization's (DMO) role should be to lead and coordinate activities under a coherent strategy in pursuit of this common goal.

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-is-a-dmo-3252439>

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) oversee, create, and implement marketing campaigns and promotions to inspire travelers to visit their destinations. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) advocate for increased investment to enhance the visitor experience. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) formulate campaigns to attract conventions, meetings, and events to their destination. They work closely with meeting planners to plan events that display the destination and its attractions in the most favorable and enticing manner. Destination Marketing Organizations interact with leisure, vacation, meeting, incentive, conferences and exhibitions, meeting professionals, conventioners, business travelers, tour operators, and travel agents with both fully independent and group travel clientele.

<https://www.unwto.org/policy-destination-management>

A Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) provides information, resources, and support for the hospitality and tourism industry. Through the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) you can learn about hotels and convention facilities in the area. They can also provide information about the area and help identify properties that can be helpful when planning an event. The Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is especially helpful in the initial stages of planning. They can help identify hotel and lodging facilities that meet your requirements for the number of rooms needed. You can also find out about the types of conference services available, entertainment options in the area, and restaurant and dining options. While you will want to work with the individual facilities to plan specific details, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) can point you in the right direction when you are starting your research in an area.

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-role-of-convention-and-visitors-bureaus-in-event-planning.html>

DEFINING THE TOURISM ENVIRONMENT

Defining the Tourism Environment

Tourism strengthens the local economy and quality of life in much bigger ways than simply servicing visitors and marketing a destination. In fact, recent industry studies show that 70% of traditional DMO or CVB leaders agree that their organization needs to change or evolve its current mission and purpose, and 41% stated that they recognize the need to transform their organization in response to current industry trends such as technology consumer demands and the local support needed from policymakers and residents in the destinations they serve.

Destination management and development is more critical for local tourism organizations to champion than ever before. CVBs must actively advocate and contribute to community development that elevates the experience and expands the destination's offerings. The City of Cedar Hill must go from a tourism department and look beyond a traditional CVB or DMO to become the voice, advocate, champion, and change maker for The Cedar Hill Experience. Simultaneously, in order to effectively compete in today's destination landscape, the City of Cedar Hill should implement this strategic tourism plan by beginning with a focus on tourism and downtown infrastructure, provide strategic leadership for connecting the local hospitality and tourism industry, and remain focused on both the visitor and the community.

**If you build a place
people want to visit,
you build a place
where people want
to live.**



**If you build a place
where business has to
be, you'll build a place
where people have to
visit.**



**If you build a place
people want to live,
you'll build a place
where people want
to work.**



**If you build a place
people want to work,
you'll build a place
where business
needs to be.**



<https://www.simpleviewinc.com/blog/stories/post/the-destination-management-cycle-featuring-maura-gast/>

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE

The Cedar Hill Experience

In considering what community and place mean for your visitor experience, you begin with what defines a great destination. Traditionally, the focus has been on consumable tourism products—hotel accommodations, cultural attractions, or sporting events. These types of products are only a part of the appeal of any given destination. Tourism is also about the experiences a visitor encounters while in a particular place.

The demand for "experiential" opportunities extends beyond your typical vacation event or attraction. Experiences are being sought inside the doors of main street retailers, from the back of the house of the trendiest restaurateurs, on stage at performance halls, inside the artist's studio, along the trails at nature observatories, on the playing fields, and in the middle of the showroom floor. Cedar Hill must work with attractions, local businesses, and public sector stakeholders to enhance the community's experiential offerings.

While customer service and product delivery are also factors that contribute to making visitor experiences positive or negative, they are no longer enough to elevate a community's tourism product to destination status. Well-crafted tourism experiences that provide guests with options worth remembering are paramount. What was once considered to be a "fad" is now a universal expectation of visitors. Experience-based travel will continue to grow and transform the tourism landscape. Savvy small retailers are developing exclusive experiences and most major hospitality brands have already shifted from marketing their "products" to marketing the emotional benefits of their offerings. Destination marketers must do the same and appeal to potential visitors by highlighting the experiences and memories to be made in their destinations.

"Travelers are seeking awe-inspiring transformative experiences, specifically those in the great outdoors, and they want to stay somewhere that authentically reflects its surroundings – from design and branding to programming and food and beverage. They are looking for hotels with a unique point of view, which offer creative restaurants that stand out from limited-service brands, and partner closely with local communities."

[https://roadbook.com/travel/best-travel-trends-2024-tourism/#~:text=%E2%80%9CLocal%20gastronomy%2C%20nature%2C%20wellness,World%20Tourism%20Organization%20\(UNWTO\).](https://roadbook.com/travel/best-travel-trends-2024-tourism/#~:text=%E2%80%9CLocal%20gastronomy%2C%20nature%2C%20wellness,World%20Tourism%20Organization%20(UNWTO).)

99% of visitors will need a clean, safe restroom at some point during their time in Cedar Hill.

1/3 of all tourist spending is devoted to food.

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE

DEFINING THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE

This document is built for the purpose of helping Cedar Hill strengthen itself as a visitor destination in a way that becomes The Cedar Hill Experience. This isn't a phrase that is necessarily used for marketing, but a shorthand way of expressing what you're trying to create. While this plan was created for the City of Cedar Hill, the development of an overall experience with various dimensions and options requires support from many others—Economic Development, tourism stakeholders, nonprofit groups and organizations, private businesses, and the community as a whole.

Communities cannot be all things to all people. Narrowing your focus, identifying your points of differentiation, and building your identity upon existing assets and the desired quality of life for residents is the most effective and sustainable approach.

The Cedar Hill Experience identity is comprised of two things—an identity vision and identity pillars .

Identifying your points of differentiation and building your tourism identity upon existing assets and the shared values you wish to provide for residents is the most effective and sustainable tourism, community, and economic development approach. This isn't about branding as much as it is about having a vision of the identity you strive to establish and communicate. By solidifying the destination's market position with a clear identity vision, you begin fueling a spirit of collaboration and abundant energy. This traction helps propel awareness and drive loyalty amongst your market audiences, the residents, and your visitors. This type of synergy and success can be found in communities and destinations that share one thing—adoration of place by those who are fortunate enough to reside and enjoy respite there.

The pillars supporting your vision work just like the pillars on a building, they provide support—carrying the weight of making the vision happen. These pillars are the core characteristics of the types of experiences you're striving to provide for visitors as part of The Cedar Hill Experience.

Both the identity vision and its supporting pillars developed by the Tourism Strategic Plan Steering Committee are short, succinct, and compelling while leaving room for a future full of adaptable and imaginative experiences and memories. This allows the City of Cedar Hill and its partners to pick up their own brush and paint the destination's picture. The vision is realistic, achievable, and flexible. Last but not least, the pillars are strong enough to withstand conditions such as a pandemic or natural disaster so that they are resilient and work to strengthen and uphold the vision.



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE

Your identity vision IS:

What you aspire to become.

Your Identity Vision is an internal statement that concisely describes the identity you are striving to establish—a vision of what The Cedar Hill Experience will ultimately be for both residents and visitors. It is an umbrella under which a variety of marketing collateral, imagery, advertising campaigns, events, and group and visitor experiences can be developed.

Identity Vision

**A vibrant destination
immersed in nature,
where visitors experience
new heights and create
lasting memories.**

Your identity pillars ARE:

The support structure for the vision and experience.

Identity Pillars

Family Friendly

**All ages enjoy abundant
opportunities to create
rich and meaningful
connections**

Natural Settings

**A destination rooted in
nature, where both
serenity and adventure
thrive**

Local Experiences

**A vibrant array of cultural,
shopping, dining, and
entertainment options to
explore**

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE



"One thing is certain, if you do it for the local, the visitor will come. If you do it for the visitor you will lose the local, and eventually the visitor, because it's the local who gives a place character."

-Roberta Gratz on Jane Jacobs

Goals

In addition to the identity vision and pillars developed by the Tourism Strategic Plan Steering Committee, four goals were created. These goals are specific to the City of Cedar Hill as part of developing and communicating The Cedar Hill Experience in a way that creates an emotional connection for visitors while cultivating community pride. Accomplishing these goals will amplify Cedar Hill's voice, support the visitor experience, and help the community become a regional competitor for leisure visitors and outdoor enthusiasts.

Goals

- (1) Destination Management: Reimagine Cedar Hill's Tourism initiatives as Destination Management efforts.
- (2) Storytelling: Provide a consistent and complimentary messaging framework for tourism and economic development
- (3) Visitor Friendly Infrastructure: Establish Cedar Hill's role as a partner in community development projects that impact Cedar Hill as a destination, including all downtown projects
- (4) Product Development: Partner with Economic Development to foster recruitment and retention of businesses and experiences that support The Cedar Hill Experience

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

VISITOR FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE

All visitors have basic needs—food, drink, lodging, things to do, places to shop and spend their money, places to get information, but most importantly, they need somewhere to use the restroom. In fact, gas stations added convenience stores because they understood the opportunity—provide restrooms in a way that requires people to walk past tempting merchandise and revenues would skyrocket.

If visitors' basic needs are not met or are difficult to meet, it can be all a visitor remembers about their experience in Cedar Hill. Make it easy for them to access what they need when they need it.

In addition, visitors want to feel welcome. They appreciate a community that makes a good first impression, is easy to navigate, and provides various ways to obtain information and have their questions answered. Many are unfamiliar with the community and may prefer personal recommendations and printed materials while others will get everything they need from their phones.

And finally, all visitors need environments that they consider safe and clean, that create a sense of security for them. These critically important, yet often overlooked or taken for granted destination essentials, are the foundation of any destination's visitor-friendly infrastructure. And like all infrastructure, they must be funded, supported, maintained, and evaluated regularly to ensure they are meeting the needs of a changing world.

"True hospitality consists of giving the best of yourself to your guests."

-Eleanor Roosevelt



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V1: Lodging

Currently Cedar Hill has four limited service hotels with around 300 rooms. To support this room inventory and add an overnight experience that complements the Identity Vision, a variety of outdoor and nature friendly lodging options should be pursued. Overnight accommodations where visitors can experience nature would help cement Cedar Hill as an outdoor destination.

V 1.1 Informal Tourism Accommodations

Informal accommodations, such as Airbnb and VRBO rentals can provide unique stay options for visitors. Consider adopting an ordinance governing short-term rentals in order to promote non-traditional options, capture hotel occupancy taxes (HOT), and ensure compatibility with existing residential neighborhoods.

Priority: 2024/25

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, City Council

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff Time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Develop ordinance*
- *Adopt ordinance*

V 1.2 Lodging Options

Creating a variety of lodging options that cannot be found elsewhere in the area and are compatible with outdoor recreation, can provide a distinctive experience for visitors.

V 1.2.1 Hotel/Convention Center -The City has long identified the development of a hotel and convention center as a priority. Continue to pursue options for a public /private partnership to achieve this goal. The property's look and feel should complement Cedar Hill's outdoor focus.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC, City Council,

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Economic Incentives TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify locations for Hotel/Convention Center*
- *Contract with developers for Hotel/Convention Center*

V 1.2.2 Eco-Resort - Cedar Hill's unique natural environment and access to waterfront recreation creates opportunity for development of an eco resort that would provide a distinct experience in this region. Continue to pursue opportunities for a waterfront resort.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC, City Council,

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Economic Incentives TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify locations*
- *Contract with developers*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

1.2.4 Additional lodging ideas include:

- Glamping
- Tipis
- Yurts
- Overnight Stays that include Packages with bikes and/or boats included

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC, City Council

Responsible to track/report: EDC, Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Varies

Measurable Objectives:

- Identify locations
- Recruit investors/new businesses
- Develop 4 overnight packages with different lodging options



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V2: Meeting Facilities

Cedar Hill's existing meeting facilities are only suitable for small groups from outside the community. This makes it difficult for Cedar Hill to recruit even medium-sized groups (over 50) from outside the community. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. You have the opportunity to focus on non-traditional spaces and settings and continue to set Cedar Hill apart from other communities in the region.

V 2.1 Hotel/Convention Center

As mentioned in the Lodging section (V1.2,1), the City has long identified the development of a hotel and convention center as a priority. Continue to pursue options for a public /private partnership to achieve this goal.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC, City Council,

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Economic Incentives TBD, private funding

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify locations for Hotel/Convention Center*
- *Contract with developers for Hotel/Convention Center*

V 2.2 Outdoor Meeting Venues

One of Cedar Hill's most significant needs, one that would enable it to be more competitive as a meeting and conference destination, is the development of a variety of outdoor venues to host sports and nature enthusiast meetings and events.

Priority: 2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Public & Private Investment TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create inventory of existing venues*
- *Develop 1 new venue each year*

V 2.3 Meeting Amenities

Start with local businesses to determine what they need to improve their meetings in Cedar Hill and create customized local meeting planning kits that include using local assets. Even if meetings are held elsewhere, evening activities or team-building options could be held in Cedar Hill.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff Time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Contact 10 major employers or organizations each year*
- *Create local meeting planning kits*
- *Distribute kits to 10 major employers or organizations each year*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V3: Trail Developments

Cedar Hill has more than 36 miles of paved trails and visitors to the area can access more than 25 miles of natural surface trails. Leveraging trail usage by visitors by encouraging and simplifying access to places for them to spend money is important.

V 3.1 Kiosks

Adding kiosks at trailheads and access points with maps of the area and current information about events and activities reminds visitors that there is more to Cedar Hill than the trails.

Priority: 2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$700-\$1,200 per Kiosk

Measurable Objectives:

- *Develop kiosk design*
- *Develop kiosk content*
- *Identify locations*
- *Install kiosks*
- *Update kiosks monthly*

V 3.2 Bike Share/Rentals

Establish a bike-share or bike rental program accessible for visitors to allow them to take advantage of the trail system and other amenities. Rental options are needed in various locations for bicycles, kayaks, and other equipment. The program at the library is great and it should be better marketed and expanded. This will keep people in the area longer and encourage overnight stays. Adding more bike racks downtown, at hotels, and in nature areas will also encourage people to get off their bikes and linger.

Priority: 2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$5,000

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify 2 locations*
- *Contract with concessionaires*

V 3.3 Repair Stations

Add repair stations downtown and along the trails to make it easier for visitors to stay longer if they encounter mechanical issues.

Priority: 2026

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$1400 per station

Measurable Objectives:

- *Purchase and install repair stations*

V 3.4 Trail Maps

Improving access to trail maps will increase the visibility and usage of the trails. Maps that fold up compactly are more easily used by cyclists and could include QR codes linking to food and drink options. Trail maps should be available at trailheads (in weatherproof boxes), at lodging facilities, at convenience stores, and online.

Priority: 2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$750 annually

Measurable Objectives:

- *Design and produce maps*
- *Upload map to destination website*
- *Distribute trail maps to lodging facilities*
- *Install boxes at trailheads*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V 3.5 Continue Trail Development

More than 120 miles of multi-use trails and bikeways are planned in Cedar Hill. Continue to develop the City's trail network to connect activity hubs, attractions, and visitor amenities.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Parks & Rec, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Parks & Rec

Estimated Investment: Included in General Fund Budget

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify activity hubs, attractions and amenities for trails to connect*
- *Identify any required adaptations to the planned trails and bikeways to accomplish the necessary connections*
- *Complete trail development*



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V4: Visitor Services

As The Cedar Hill Experience develops it will be important to have visitor information available throughout the community.

V 4.1 Visitor Information

It is imperative to make sure all information kiosks remain updated with current information, special events and area attractions—both downtown and at Hillside Village. In addition, consider micro visitor information points elsewhere. These can be everything from kiosks to outdoor brochure holders located in places where people congregate like the State Park and other local amenities. While the electronic kiosks at area hotels are excellent visitor assets, we noticed a lack of information available in other areas of town. Anywhere that people congregate or stand in line is an excellent opportunity to share visitor information. A downtown visitor center would be a significant asset and should be considered as a capital improvement project as downtown revitalization efforts continue.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Ongoing Staff Time + Capital Costs of Visitor Center

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify activity hubs and attractions to place kiosks*
- *Design kiosks*
- *Install kiosks*
- *Keep kiosks up-to-date*
- *Identify location for downtown Visitor Center*

V 4.2 Restrooms

Restrooms are the #1 tourist destination in the world. As visitor traffic grows downtown, consider options to make public restrooms available.

Priority: 2026

Responsible to implement: Parks & Rec, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$450,000

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify location*
- *Design restrooms*
- *Construct restrooms*

V 4.3 Safety

Safety and cleanliness are critical to a positive visitor experience. Monitoring places where visitors gather to ensure trash is picked up, weeds are removed from sidewalks and gutters, and unkempt properties are addressed increases the welcoming feel Cedar Hill strives to maintain. The actions, along with addressing physical safety concerns, help establish a sense of safety (that visitors are in a place that is well-cared for and cherished.)

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Beautification and Environmental Sustainability Board, Keep Cedar Hill Beautiful

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Annual Maintenance Costs

Measurable Objectives:

- *No negative social media postings about safety or the street environment*
- *Spot checks show no trash or weeds*
- *Property maintenance regulations are enforced consistently and in a timely manner*

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V5: Third Places

Your first place is your home, your second place is where you work, your third place is where you hang out—spending both your leisure time and your money. Third places often grow organically but they can also be created and nurtured. Coffee shops and breweries are traditional third places. Strong third places allow you to linger, eat and drink in welcoming, friendly environment where people feel they belong. Nurture and encourage new ones that appear. They are integral to making Cedar Hill a destination where locals want to hang out and those are the places your visitors will want to be as well.

V 5.1 Public Spaces

Adding public spaces near Joe Pool Lake or near Hillside Village would provide additional event space and expanded options for each of these areas to meet the needs of residents and visitors. It also could bring visitors and events to areas beyond downtown.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Parks & Rec, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Parks & Rec

Estimated Investment: \$250,000-\$500,000

Measurable Objectives:

- Identify potential locations
- Design Space
- Construct Space

V 5.2 Outdoor Market & Event Space

A permanent covered structure in downtown for the farmers market could have other uses the rest of the week. Existing structures could possibly be adapted for this use and still contribute to the character and charm of downtown.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Chamber of Commerce

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$300,000

Measurable Objectives:

- Identify location
- Develop structure
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce to increase market dates from 12 per year to 24, including holiday markets between Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Recruit 2 additional events per month

V 5.3 Organic Third Places

Notice where people naturally congregate, particularly in the evenings. Are there amenities that could be added? Food trucks? A food and drink business in a kiosk? Seating areas? Talk to the people who linger there, find out what they'd like to see. Remember, visitors like to hang out where the locals hang out.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Parks & Rec, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Parks & Rec

Estimated Investment: TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- Enhance 2 public spaces to use as Third Places



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V6: Transportation/Accessibility

While there is ample parking signage downtown, as someone planning a trip to downtown Cedar Hill from outside of the community someone planning a trip would have no idea as to whether or not they would easily find a parking space downtown.

V 6.1 Parking Inventory

Take an inventory of downtown parking spaces in the district and produce a digital downtown parking map to post on the Cedar Hill Tourism and downtown webpages and distribute printed copies to downtown business/property owners/hoteliers so they can educate their customers online and in person of where to park when wanting to patronize downtown. Do the same thing for Hillside Village and the various trailheads and parks.

Priority: 2024

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, HDAB

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff and Board time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Conduct inventory*
- *Create parking map*

V 6.2 Accessibility

Host a downtown accessibility tour with city officials and downtown stakeholders. An informal Saturday or Sunday morning "walk" equipped with a bicycle, wheelchair, blindfold, and ear muffs can transform the participants views of how they interact with the built environment and will open eyes to the need for more inclusive consideration to streetscape, parking, and walkability infrastructure downtown. Review all major visitor locations to ensure visitors with different accessibility levels can access and experience amenities and attractions.

Priority: 2024-2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, HDAB, City staff & officials, Stakeholders, Residents

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Host event*
- *Document and address findings*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V7: Wifi/Electricity

Getting people to linger longer means meeting their needs in the place you want them to linger. In the next section—Product Development—there are recommendations for ways to activate downtown, including the addition of food trucks for more than events. Providing food trucks and other vendors with necessary amenities will make downtown a more attractive venue for them.

V 7.1 Public Wifi

Add Public Wifi downtown and to other event venues to make it easier for food trucks and vendors to take electronic payments and perform other business activities.

Priority: 2024-2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$3500 installation + monthly service costs

Measurable Objectives:

- *Install and maintain Wifi access*



V 7.2 Power Access

In addition to the seven existing pedestals, review the power accessibility in all areas of downtown where food trucks and vendors might set up and add power where needed. Reducing their need to use generators creates a more environmentally-friendly (and quieter) experience for everyone.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Conduct annual evaluation of need for additional pedestals*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

V8: Downtown Environment

Think of downtown as Cedar Hill's front porch, a place where people want to hang out and linger. In 2023, the city completed the first phase of street improvements that will transform the downtown environment with wider sidewalks, enhanced landscaping, and street furniture among other improvements. Consider what additional amenities they need to feel relaxed and welcome.

V 8.1 Shade

Add and encourage more shade by using storefront awnings and canopies as well as more street trees. Also add colorful, UV-rated sail shades to public spaces for daytime shade with string lights for evening atmosphere.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Parks & Rec, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$25,000 per installation

Measurable Objectives:

- Purchase and install sail shades
- Provide grant funds for installation of storefront awnings
- Maintain at least 6 shade trees per block, installing additional trees as necessary

V8.2 Business Signs

Encourage perpendicular signs for businesses (below awnings/canopies) to assist pedestrians in knowing what businesses are down the block.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Private Investment

Measurable Objectives:

- Adopt downtown sign ordinances (see V8.4)
- Contact downtown business owners
- Provide grant funds for installation of signs

V 8.3 Landscaping

Using either beds or containers, expand current landscaping with native plants that are both colorful and drought-tolerant.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Keep Cedar Hill Beautiful

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$12,000 annual planting costs

Measurable Objectives:

- Identify locations for plantings
- Install and maintain plantings



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V8.4 Downtown Ordinances

As part of the City's planned development code update, review and revise downtown ordinances to ensure they are aligned with downtown goals as more changes are implemented. Making changes before an ordinance unintentionally becomes an issue saves time and emotional energy. Is outdoor dining allowed? Are awnings, canopies, and perpendicular signs appropriate? Can visitors walk around with alcoholic beverages in non-glass containers? Do mural and public art guidelines protect unpainted brick walls? NOTE: A mechanism for facilitation of discussion and approval by City Council of ideas initiated by the Historic Downtown Advisory Board and the Destination Manager would be helpful.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, HDAB

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff and Board time

Measurable Objectives:

- Conduct annual analysis of downtown ordinances
- Draft revisions and new ordinances as necessary

V8.5 Facade Grants

Consider a facade grant program to assist small businesses in making improvements to their awnings, signage and storefronts. Create process for Historic Downtown Advisory Board members (many of whom own downtown businesses) to have equal eligibility for grants

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, HDAB

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff and Board time + \$25,000 annual grant match

Measurable Objectives:

- Establish program
- Provide 4 grants per year



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the process of identifying product development recommendations for Cedar Hill, three themes emerged: (1) access to nature-based tourism could be enhanced; (2) downtown has potential for growth; and (3) local events do not necessarily draw visitors, but the right events could be a regional draw.

These recommendations provide a roadmap for improving the Cedar Hill Experience, creating visitor loyalty, and increasing Cedar Hill's visibility as a destination. The aim is to build a foundation for future tourism efforts in a way that enhances quality of life. There are three components that work together to build a robust experience:

- Primary lures—activities and experiences that draw people to the community. These are different things visitors can't get closer to home and are the primary reason for visiting.
- Secondary diversions—activities and experiences people participate in once they are in a community. These may be things they can do closer to home, but people will do them in the community they're visiting because they're already in town.
- Sense of Place—the overall feel, or ambiance of a place, is critical, however, ambiance alone will not create a successful tourism destination. Hundreds of communities have beautifully restored buildings, impressive fountains, and lush landscaping in their downtowns, but there are no people on the streets. Public art helps, but without things for people to do—activities to participate in, experiences to enjoy—visitors will go elsewhere. The successful implementation of this plan will more clearly define Cedar Hill's tourism identity, enhance its primary lures and secondary diversions, and preserve its sense of place.

"You can design and create and build the most wonderful place in the world but, it takes people to make the dream a reality."

-Walt Disney



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P1: Downtown Business Recruitment

Increasing visitation to downtown depends upon many things, one of which is the number and breadth of businesses located within a walkable footprint. Recommendations have been developed with input from the Economic Development Strategic Plan and recommendations from both the HDAB and the plan steering committee.

P 1.1 Economic Development

- Assist in development efforts by increasing its recruitment of hospitality industry businesses in a coordinated effort with tourism/downtown leadership. Suggested targeted efforts should be focused on businesses like:

- Retail incubator
- Restaurant/food-related business incubator
- Boutiques
- Biking/outdoor-related
- Experiential food experiences
- Live music venues
- Restaurants with outdoor seating
- Bakery
- Food truck area with power/wifi
- Artist co-ops
- Pop-up shops
- Butcher shop
- Help bookstore and sno-cone shop be more visible and open more hours
- Escape room

- Survey downtown residents to determine their needs to create an on-going "Top 10" business recruitment list that appeals to both residents and visitors.
- Create public/private partnerships to develop a micro market with tiny spaces (10 X 4) tucked into the front of professional buildings.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: \$75,000 construction costs for micro market + \$25,000 annual operation costs

Measurable Objectives:

- Conduct survey
- Identify site for micro market and create business plan
- Develop Micro Market

P 1.2 Downtown Home-based Businesses

- Work with downtown residents to understand that they can have businesses in their homes and what type of businesses would be appropriate.
- Build a tiny home village with some spaces allocated for live-work space for artists and artisans.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + Economic Incentives for Construction

Measurable Objectives:

- Assist in establishment of 1 home business annually
- Recruit developer of tiny home village

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P2: Alcohol

Current alcohol regulations may make it difficult to develop experiences and entertainment options that visitors and community members desire. The City might consider adjusting alcohol regulations in the Old Town district in order to allow businesses such as those outlined below.

P 2.1 Alcohol-related businesses that could be appropriate for downtown

- Speakeasy
- Jazz club
- Dance hall
- Tasting rooms
- Brewpub

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + Potential Private Investment

Measurable Objectives:

- Addition of 1 alcohol-related business annually

P 2.2 Manufacturing (with tours and tastings)

- Beer
- Wine
- Spirits

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC

Responsible to track/report: EDC

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + Potential Private Investment

Measurable Objectives:

- Addition of 2 manufacturing facilities



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P3: Cultural

Learning and engaging with artists and artisans makes people more likely to purchase. It gives them an experience that they can't get closer to home and helps cultivate the local arts economy by providing an accessible, easily tested market entry point with minimal investment. Engaging experiences with music, spoken word events, and access to food and drink will help people say, "I wonder what is happening in Cedar Hill?" Build upon their Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

P 3.1 Arts Development

- Develop dedicated public funding for art opportunities
- Consider the creation of a dedicated arts organization specifically for public art programming
- Identify and convene local artists
- Provide space and opportunity for temporary pop-up studios, work in the open, or in empty spaces to demonstrate their skills. This allows people to watch the creation process and make connections.
- Combine an artisans market with every downtown music event.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$100,000 annually

Measurable Objectives:

- Establish dedicated public art fund (2025)
- Establish Public Arts Board (2025)
- Host 4 pop-up studio events annually

P 3.2 Interactive Public Culture

- Add dimension by building opportunities for people to engage in the creation of a work of art or pop-up performance art.
- Create a process for buskers to set up during the evening or at events.
- Consider spoken word, poetry slams, one-act plays, or improv nights in Pioneer Square.
- Add a water feature downtown.
- Add murals or sculptures that encourage selfies, climbing or sitting, or kinetic movement.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + Public Art, Water Feature Costs TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- Develop and implement busker regulations
- Add 6 non-music event at Pioneer Square
- Add water feature
- Add 2 interactive art installations

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P4: Customer Service

Old-school customer service training is no longer enough. Businesses need to understand that the customer service experience no longer begins at the front door. It begins long before that and is a 24/7 opportunity. Bring in trainers who understand the new world of customer service to provide situational training for owners, managers, and staff.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Chamber of Commerce, business owners/managers

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$750-\$1,250 per training

Measurable Objectives:

- *Host quarterly trainings for staff*
- *Host annual trainings for owners and managers*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P5: Outdoors

Cedar Hill's nature and outdoor assets set it apart from other destinations in the region. As Cedar Hill continues to expand its trail system and outdoor recreation experiences, more visitors will want to take advantage of them.

P 5.1 Equipment

Rental options in various locations are needed for bicycles, kayaks, and other equipment. The library's backpack program could also be expanded and marketed to visitors. This could keep people in the area longer and encourage overnight stays.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: \$6500 for Equipment + Staff Costs

Measurable Objectives:

- *Expand library backpack program to visitors*

P 5.2 Programming

Diversify programming in parks, open spaces, and natural areas that will appeal to visitors such as Geocaching, nature education, or outdoor skills workshops.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Parks & Rec, Cedar Hill State Park

Responsible to track/report: Parks & Rec

Estimated Investment: Staff Time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create a comprehensive calendar of all outdoor programming and keep it up-to-date*
- *Add 4 new activities or events annually*

P 5.3 Sporting Events

Recruit more outside groups to bring their events to Cedar Hill. These events don't have to be competitive. Activities like bike rides, parkruns, and learn to canoe/kayak/fish events would complement the triathlon hosted at the State Park.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$20,000 annually in Incentives/Sports Marketing Dollars

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create list of appropriate events to recruit*
- *Recruit 2 new sporting events annually to use Cedar Hill as a venue*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P 5.4 Birding

With nearly 100 species found in Dogwood Canyon, Cedar Hill can compete as a solid destination for some of the 51 million birders across the United States. Work with the Audubon Center and Cedar Hill State Park to create overnight packages that includes species checklists and tips for viewing.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff Time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create and distribute a Cedar Hill Birding Guide*
- *Create and market 3 overnight packages for birders*

P 5.5 Trailhead Development

Develop food, drink and entertainment options at trailheads and within easy access of natural areas to attract and extend visitation.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Public & Private Investment TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify trailheads with heavy use*
- *Recruit 1 food/drink provider for each identified trailhead*

P 5.6 Adventure Seeking Experiences

Pursue development of entertainment products that are compatible with preservation goals, such as zip lines, aerial adventure parks, and water recreation.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, EDC, Parks & Rec

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Public & Private Investment TBD

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify locations*
- *Recruit businesses/developers*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P6: Events

Events are frequently seen as the lifeblood of a community. They bring people together to celebrate, commemorate, and just have fun. Events are also a draw for visitors, especially when they offer something different than they can get closer to home. Cedar Hill can establish itself as a place for families by increasing the number and novelty of events it provides for families and multi-generational groups.

P 6.1 Family Fun Days

Bring in art and activities from other cultures in multi-day events that happen regularly. Add a parade that includes the option for visitors to join in and follow the parade to where additional activities are occurring. Other ideas for themes include:

- March 14—Pie (Pi) Day
- First Saturday in April—International Pillow Fight Day
- May 4—Star Wars (may the force be with you)

The idea is to celebrate quirky holidays in creative ways. Remember, you want people to always be wondering. “What’s happening in Cedar Hill?”

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Events Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Events Coordinator

Estimated Investment: \$3,00-\$7,000 per event

Measurable Objectives:

- Add 3 Family Fun Day events annually

P 6.2 Event Impact

Evaluate all current events to determine if they are attracting visitors or are primarily attended by locals. If it is a city-sponsored event (or receives grant funds), considering the ROI (non-local spending) and overnight stays are critical if HOT funds are being used for the event. Quantify and enhance the impact of special events by tracking impact through data collection, survey methods, and overall community feedback. Conduct and encourage post-event surveys with meeting hosts, sports event organizers, and event producers to help determine economic impact, get ideas for improvement, and develop historical data.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$4,000 per event

Measurable Objectives:

- Define information requirements
- Identify methods of collection
- Compile and report results

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

P 6.3 Competitions

Create competitions in areas other than athletics. Anything goes—from cooking with new ingredients to creating clothing or a working machine from recycled materials. These can be youth-focused only or get the entire family involved.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + \$500-\$750 per event

Measurable Objectives:

- *Establish 2 competitions annually*

P 6.4 Signature Events

Big, bold events draw visitors from outside neighboring communities IF it's something different, something people haven't experienced elsewhere. The HDAB should take on this task for downtown and establish a stellar, multi-day event to showcase Cedar Hill.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: HDAB, Destination Manager, Events Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Events Coordinator

Estimated Investment: \$25,000-\$50,000

Measurable Objectives:

- *Develop Signature Event*
- *Hold Signature event annually*

P 6.5 Third Party Event Organizers

Develop a plan to recruit outside event production partners to enhance the offering of special events in Cedar Hill.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Events Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Events Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff Time + Potential Incentives \$5,000 per event

Measurable Objectives:

- *Identify appropriate groups to recruit*
- *Add 2 third party events annually*



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

STORYTELLING

The City of Cedar Hill plays an important role in tourism marketing and destination advocacy and is assisted by residents, the local hospitality industry, partnership organizations, business leaders, and city officials in sharing Cedar Hill's story. However, the Cedar Hill story is only as powerful as its storytellers. Marketing messages should rely less on facts and figures and more on personal stories and relationships.

As today's DMOs make the shift from destination marketers to community managers, the shift in thinking to both champion the value of tourism as well as managing tourism efforts can help articulate the visitor story to a broad set of residents and stakeholders. Fortunately for Cedar Hill, unlike other destinations, tourism leaders have not been asking residents to sacrifice their quality of life for the economic return that tourism can provide. To continue integrating tourism into the fabric of Cedar Hill without diminishing quality of life, Cedar Hill tourism can help facilitate interactions between locals and visitors to create destination advocates and industry champions. By actively determining how to best manage tourism's contributions to the community and articulating that value, DMOs like Cedar Hill's can optimize the economic impact of tourism, influence future product development, and foster destination loyalty amongst an ever-increasing group of community advocates.

True visitor engagement is about experiencing community. People, not products, are what propels destinations into being repeat-worthy. An important aspect of Cedar Hill's visitor engagement is through word-of-mouth communications and authentic storytelling. Everyone from visitors to niche influencers, non-traditional partners, and residents are touchpoints for engagement. They provide the content for experiences and the stories that visitors share with others. Cedar Hill can influence those stories through content and community champions.

"Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell."

-Seth Godin



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S1: Assessment Short-Term Actions

Several short-term actions were outlined in the Visitor Experience Assessment. (see Appendix for full document)

- Leverage visitors coming to Babe's and Sam's
- Promote Film-Friendly designation more prominently
- Distribute a monthly event/activity schedule
- Work with local businesses to claim their listings on Google, Tripadvisor, and Yelp
- Website updates
- Instagram recommendations

S2: Promote Local

The concept of shopping and promoting local is to support businesses owned and operated by local residents that are not a chain. In Cedar Hill, as in many communities, there are many areas with a concentration of chain offerings. These businesses are managed and staffed by local residents and can be strong community partners. Focusing on independent retailers and restaurants encourages a diverse economic base and provides visitors with opportunities they cannot get closer to home.

S 2.1 Shop Small/Downtown Events

Consistently build on annual downtown events and shop small/local campaigns. Small Business Saturday on the Saturday after Thanksgiving and Artists Sunday, held the next day, should be celebrated annually. Consider starting a local retail and restaurant holiday shopping month campaign after Halloween. This could include one night a week that they stay open later, preferably Thursday or Friday, to extend the weekend.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator, Events Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Events Coordinator

Estimated Investment: \$1200 annually

Measurable Objectives:

- Create and 4 host events
- Survey businesses to determine impact

S 2.2 Buy and Refer Local

A citywide "Buy and Refer Local" business-to-business campaign could take many forms. Business FAM tours would help partners learn more about each other so they can make referrals and have more information about what they can purchase locally. Cross-promotion helps everyone and provides a strong customer experience. When businesses are knowledgeable about one another and encourage customers to visit other shops and restaurants, it enhances the welcoming "home away from home" feel.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: \$3500 per tour

Measurable Objectives:

- Establish program
- Host quarterly business FAM tours for owners, managers, and staff

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S3: Distributing Materials

Creating marketing materials is only the first step. Distributing them in places where visitors gather or spend time increases impact. When visitors are already in Cedar Hill, they need information to encourage them to stay longer and spend more money.

S 3.1 Lodging

Make sure downtown marketing materials are at all surrounding hotels, Airbnbs, and event rentals.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time + Printing costs of marketing materials

Measurable Objectives:

- Identify local short-term lodgings
- Distribute to all hotels and short term lodging owners

S 3.2 Retailers and Restaurants

In addition to providing owners, managers, and front line staff with FAM tours (see S2.2), printed materials and QR codes should be available for distribution to visitors who are looking for maps or more information.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Distribute to businesses frequented by visitors

S 3.3 Outdoor Attractions

Attractions like Cedar Hill State Park, the Audubon Center, and Dallas County Open Space are excellent partners and open to cross-promotion. Create materials specific for their visitors to encourage including Cedar Hill and downtown in their stay.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time + Printing costs of marketing materials

Measurable Objectives:

- Create audience specific materials
- Distribute to appropriate locations



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S4: Business Assistance

To be successful, many small and independently-owned businesses, whether new or established, need support in ways that chain businesses do not. Identifying and meeting these needs create a stronger, more sustainable overall business climate and adds resiliency by diversifying the economy

S 4.1 Guidelines

Develop guidelines and a framework for training opportunities for individual businesses to learn how to script, stage, and tell their story consistently to residents and visitors.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create and distribute guidelines*
- *Host quarterly trainings*

S 4.2 Online Presence

Assist businesses in improving their online presence to build the community's overall digital footprint. The more businesses and attractions that have active, accurate listings and websites, the more Cedar Hill will show up in overall search results.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time + cost for trainer

Measurable Objectives:

- *Host quarterly trainings*

S 4.3 Assistance Needs

Identify the additional types of assistance tourism stakeholders need by conducting an annual feedback survey about what they feel is working and what they need help with.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Chamber of Commerce

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Conduct annual survey*
- *Identify new trainings requested*
- *Host requested trainings*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S5: Marketing

Marketing is the formal way that Cedar Hill will share its story with both residents and visitors. The world of marketing options is large and should be approached strategically with emphasis on the reality of what Cedar Hill has to offer. You aren't trying to be all things to all people. You don't have something for everyone. Cedar Hill has specific assets that appeal to key target markets and needs to keep its message focused.

S 5.1 Annual Plan

Create an annual plan broken into monthly themes to focus on events, seasonal activities, and partnerships. Use these themes to narrow the focus for social and print campaigns to create a targeted, powerful message. Keep the plan flexible to allow you to take advantage of societal changes or new opportunities.

Priority: mid-2025 and later

Responsible to implement: Marketing Manager

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create annual marketing plan*
- *Update plan quarterly*

S 5.2 Website

The Destination Management department needs a new website. Visitor websites require a more flexible and robust framework than what is provided by CivicPlus.

Priority: mid-2025

Responsible to implement: Marketing Manager

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Manager

Estimated Investment: \$20,000-\$30,000 + \$5,000 annual maintenance costs

Measurable Objectives:

- *Launch new website in mid-2025*

S 5.3 Business Websites

Work with businesses, attractions, and facilities to go through a basic checklist for their websites:

- Phone (including area code) and address (including city and state) should be on every page in the header or footer.
- Current hours—be sure to update this as changes occur seasonally or due to holidays or special events.
- Check links—this needs to happen on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- Use great photos and change them often.
- Use at least an 18-point font—even though it's easy to change the font size when viewing a webpage, many people don't know how to do this or get irritated when it's necessary.
- Keep content up-to date.
- Be sure website visitors can quickly tell what type of business or attraction you are.
- Confirm that the website is mobile friendly.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Manager

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- *Work with 10 businesses per quarter*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S 5.4 Local Recommendations

Monitor social media and Facebook groups for local recommendations. Solicit feedback on Instagram, Tripadvisor, and Yelp. Visitors and potential visitors seek information from third-parties more than they do from tourism entities. If negative reviews occur, assist the business in addressing them in a timely, professional manner.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Review monthly
- Address concerns in timely manner

S 5.5 Friends and Family

Friends and family are one of the largest visitor groups and the goal is to keep them in Cedar Hill. Create an on-going “Kitchen Table Concierge Desk” campaign by distributing information to residents. Help them find reasons to keep their dollars, and those of their visitors, in the community and remind them that Cedar Hill exists as more than just a place to live.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time + \$5,000 in marketing support

Measurable Objectives:

- Create Kitchen Table Concierge Desk materials
- Distribute to residents
- Provide QR code for update links

S 5.6 HOT Grants

Develop an appropriate structure, including application and criteria, for groups seeking funding via HOT grants.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Create clear, equitable criteria for HOT Grants
- Create application
- Establish committee to review applications
- Award grants bi-annually

S 5.7 Facebook Marketing Approach

Highlight activities, events, and businesses; create events, share relevant posts from tourism partners; ask trivia questions. Use Facebook live to share input from visitors and residents or take followers into businesses and to events.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Reactivate VisitCedarHillTX page
- Post 5 times/week
- Grow followers by 25% each year
- Grow engagement by 15% each year

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S 5.8 Instagram Marketing Approach

Maintain a mix of photos/videos of architecture, landscapes, businesses, events, activities and iconic places, with and without people. Your goal is to evoke an “I wish I was there” feeling. Share photos and videos from partners as well.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff time + \$3500 photography

Measurable Objectives:

- Post 3 times per week
- Grow followers by 15%
- Grow engagement in year 1 (currently at 0)
- Grow engagement by 25% in year 2

S 5.9 Trade Shows/Public Presence

Leisure trade shows are important, however, it is more important at this stage to be a part of events in the area. Start local before expanding out regionally. Take the opportunity to educate residents about what is happening and how it benefits Cedar Hill. You may also be connecting with people who can bring a meeting, workshop, or other event to town. You never know where the next lead might come from.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: \$2,000 for booth set up (table cloth, promotional items, display stands) + \$1,000 annual costs

Measurable Objectives:

- Have presence at community events in year 1
- Have presence at Major events in year 2 and forward

S 5.10 Public Relations

Put together an online press room with a list of article ideas, current press releases, and available photos. Pitch ideas with a narrow focus, this provides the opportunity for more stories and a more targeted audience.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Establish online press room
- Update online press room at least quarterly



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S6: Content Development

Part of Cedar Hill Tourism's role is the creation and distribution of content. This content is used in a variety of ways through a variety of media. Sustaining a steady flow of creative messaging requires an industry-wide effort and collaboration to craft a cohesive message. The goal is to build a reputation for The Cedar Hill Experience, as it grows and evolves, that competitively positions Cedar Hill and encourages overnight stays.

S 6.1 Food stories

Food is a foundation for any visitor experience and helping visitors and residents get to know the staff and stories behind the offerings in Cedar Hill creates personal connections. From sno-cones to gourmet meals, people are interested in knowing "the rest of the story." Travel, even for a few hours, thrives on the emotional connections visitors make with a place. A positive food experience rises to a higher level when people know and share the stories in addition to talking about and taking pictures of their food.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Post 2 short form food stories each month
- Post 1 long form (with video) food story each month

S 6.2 Messaging

All external messaging should support the Cedar Hill identity vision. Internal (local) messaging should drive awareness by aligning with community values and civic pride. Combined, these strategies will help expand the appeal of the destination, its reach, and its influence.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Develop and implement identity guidelines for messaging

S 6.3 Community Tools

Analyze your community messaging tool sets like social media, printed materials, paid placements, and other external communications to explore partnership possibilities, share story ideas, and determine which tools are aligned with new technologies to keep pace with how consumers are planning travel.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Review communication tools bi-annually to determine whether changes need to be made

S 6.4 Collaboration

Cedar Hill Tourism doesn't have the sole responsibility for telling Cedar Hill's story. Individual businesses have a role to play as well. Not just to tell their own story but to know their neighbors' stories as well as maintaining a current, visible online presence to help create positive visitor experiences.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report: Marketing Coordinator

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- See S4.1 for trainings

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S7: Balance

Maintaining balance between efforts focused on downtown versus the rest of the community is important and is easy to lose sight of.

S 7.1 Nature Corridor Brand

Execute the newly established brand identity for the Nature Corridor through print and digital media, signage, promotional items, and a variety of other marketing strategies.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator, Parks & Rec, Communications

Responsible to track/report: Parks & Rec

Estimated Investment: Included in General Fund

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create collaborative marketing plan*
- *Implement assigned tasks*

S 7.2 Community Survey

A community survey can be useful for identifying the ways tourism may be affecting the quality of life and address any negatives before they become problems. If a resident survey is conducted about quality of life issues, tourism-related questions can be added.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Communications

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: Staff time + \$1,000 marketing survey locally

Measurable Objectives:

- *Create questions for community survey and analyze results to mitigate negative impacts by visitors*

S 7.3 Preservation Month

- Participate in Preservation Month every May to begin instilling a sense of value associated with historic preservation throughout the community.
- Create a preservation awards program to recognize the efforts of individuals and businesses that warrant an award for their successes.
- Host downtown walking tours every Saturday in May or present preservation-specific training for the planning and zoning commission.
- Expand your ROI by teaming with local entities who are already working in the preservation space to find ways to combine forces and highlight the importance of preserving and maintaining Cedar Hill's past in a manner that is flexible and adaptable for the future.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, Historic Preservation

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$2200 awards programming

Measurable Objectives:

- *Celebrate Preservation Month annually*
- *Host 4 walking tours annually*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

S 7.4 History

Cedar Hill's history extends beyond downtown and those stories need to be developed and shared.

- Expand historic property designations beyond downtown.
- Have students collaborate to research and draft copy for interpretive signs.
- Promote the new museum along with a range of stories, including the quirky ones.
- Highlight items from the museum's collection along with their stories.

Priority: 2026-2027

Responsible to implement: Marketing Coordinator

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: Staff time

Measurable Objectives:

- Add 2 historic property designations annually
- Promote museum and Cedar Hill's stories on social media monthly



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Shifting from a Convention & Visitor Bureau (CVB) focused on marketing to a Destination Management Organization (DMO) is an important move for Cedar Hill. This change will also include overseeing downtown under the umbrella of the DMO, allowing for a more cohesive visitor experience and marketing approach. Destination management also increases the effectiveness of branding, and Cedar Hill's competitiveness.

Having a central entity responsible for overseeing the development of activities and experiences while partnering with Economic Development on business expansion, retention, and recruitment (especially downtown) helps Cedar Hill maintain a focused effort on creating The Cedar Hill Experience. Collaboration will also be more effective when stakeholders know who's in charge. This will also create a coordinated approach that can still be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions.

Another key task in destination management is monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives. There are no guarantees for the success of destination enhancement efforts. Timing, societal issues, and unanticipated occurrences can cause sudden and dramatic shifts that impact everything. Having diversified offerings with efforts funneled through a single department will help mitigate any challenges and enable Cedar Hill to recover more quickly.

*"It is good people who
make good places."*

-Anna Sewell



THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

D1: Staffing

In order to effectively develop and sustain a full-scale destination experience, the following staffing structure is recommended:

- Destination Manager (Immediately)
- Marketing Coordinator (Ideally within 12 months)
- Events Coordinator (Ideally within 24 months)

Many of the duties associated with the Marketing Coordinator and Events Coordinator can be handled by the Destination Manager and existing City Staff at the onset but as The Cedar Hill Experience takes shape the need to increase staff capacity will be evident.

Priority: 2024-2025

Responsible to implement: City Manager, Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report:

Estimated Investment: \$120,000 Year 1, \$220,000 Year 2, \$300,000 Year 3

Measurable Objectives:

- *Hire Destination Manager*
- *Hire Marketing Coordinator*
- *Hire Events Coordinator*

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

D2: Destination Manager

This position has broad responsibilities for the development and ongoing enhancement of The Cedar Hill Experience. They oversee both Cedar Hill's Tourism efforts and Historic Downtown in the following ways:

- Implementing this plan to increase Cedar Hill's attractiveness as a destination.
- Researching market trends and understanding visitor preferences.
- Working with residents, government agencies, and community stakeholders to create sustainable tourism practice, preserve and enhance cultural heritage, and support the local economy.
- Continuously monitoring customer feedback and analyzing visitor satisfaction metrics to identify areas for improvement.
- Curating authentic local experiences.
- Creating a seamless and memorable journey for every visitor.
- Enhancing hospitality standards, developing training programs, and implementing quality assurance measures.
- Leveraging shared resources, knowledge, and expertise to drive destination growth while ensuring the well-being of the community and the environment.
- Working with marketing staff to develop campaigns and raise awareness of Cedar Hill as a destination.
- Developing a series of Lunch & Learns for local businesses, attractions, experiences, and cultural facilities where topics relate to improving the visitor experience.
- Providing training for local groups and organizations seeking to host events that will draw attendees from outside of Cedar Hill.
- Working with the Historic Downtown Advisory Board to accomplish goals.

Priority: 2024

Responsible to implement: City Manager

Responsible to track/report: City Manager

Estimated Investment: \$120,000

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

D3: Marketing Coordinator

This position reports to the Destination Experience Director and, once a significant enhancement to the visitor experience has been accomplished (estimated to be one year), they will be responsible for:

- Developing annual marketing calendar.
- Implementing marketing strategy.
- Developing print advertising and collateral, including for events.
- Updating and maintaining website.
- Creating and maintaining an online press room.
- Exhibiting at trade shows.

Priority: mid-2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$100,000

D4: Events Coordinator

This position reports to the Destination Experience Director and is responsible for recruiting third-party events that use Cedar Hill as a venue as well as City-sponsored events that attract out-of-town visitors and overnight stays. (Event recommendations are found in P6)

Priority: mid-2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$80,000

THE CEDAR HILL EXPERIENCE PLAN

D5: Industry Organizations

Participating in statewide organizations provides networking with peers, continuing education, and targeted resources. Plan to participate in:

- Texas Downtown Association—annual conference and regional workshops.
- Texas Association of CVBs—annual conference and regional workshops.
- Texas Travel Alliance—send staff to Travel College and Summit.
- Texas Lakes Trail Region—regional events and cross-promotion opportunities.

Priority: 2025-2027

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$5750 annually (Dues & Training)

Measurable Objectives:

- Attend industry annual conferences
- Participate in TTA's Tourism College

D6: Historic Downtown Advisory Board (HDAB)

Downtowns evolve over time and their boards need to evolve with them. This plan has many downtown-related recommendations for the HDAB to work on with the Destination Management staff in order to effectively merge downtown and destination goals, the following recommendation is being made:

D6.1 HDAB Reconfiguration

Consider creating a new Destination Advisory Board that would provide strategic input and advice to the City Council on the implementation of the Tourism Plan, including matters pertaining to downtown revitalization, tourism service delivery, and visitor experience development. Membership of the board should consist of stakeholders from tourism attractions, local retail and restaurant owners, downtown businesses owners, and citizens.

Priority: 2025

Responsible to implement: Destination Manager, City Manager, City Council

Responsible to track/report: Destination Manager

Estimated Investment: \$2,500 Board Training & Development Annually

Measurable Objectives:

- Redefine role of HDAB to include tourism
- Appoint members to new hybrid board

APPENDIX