





4

ADMINISTRATION

PARKS & RECREATION MANAGEMENT

The administrative and maintenance practices of a parks and recreation agency serve as a determinant to the quality of a city's parks and facilities. A high-level review of the department's practices was performed to provide recommendations to align with agency resources and national best practices.

STAFFING & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

CORE FUNCTIONS

The Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation Department operates under a vision statement of "Connecting Community through Quality Experiences." The Department's core functions are provided below.

- Administration
- Park Facility Maintenance & Irrigation
- Recreation & Aquatics
- Special Events
- Nature & Open Space

STAFF LEVELS

As of 2024, the Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation Department employs 58.53% (75.18) full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members. **Figure 4.1** and **4.2** provide insight on staff organization in the Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation Department.

- 44 full-time staff (58.53%)
- 13.58 part-time staff (18.06%)
- 17.6 seasonal staff (23.41%)

The Department is overseen by the Parks and Recreation Director, who supports the core functions of the Department through four divisions. This structure offers efficient management of resources and services, facilitating the delivery of quality experiences to the community.

Cedar Hill's current staffing levels may be sufficient to meet demands today, but as the city grows it will need to increase staffing levels to fully meet the demands placed on the department.

The City manages hundreds of acres across the park system with 37.78 maintenance staff. Given the growing service demands and the large park system, additional full-time staff are recommended to ensure the department can effectively maintain the parks and meet operational expectations.

STAFF COMPARED TO RESIDENTS

The Department employs approximately 15.30 staff members for every 10,000 residents (75.18 FTE for a population of 49,148). This figure is at or above the national median for communities of a similar size.

FIGURE 4.1 | PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFFING

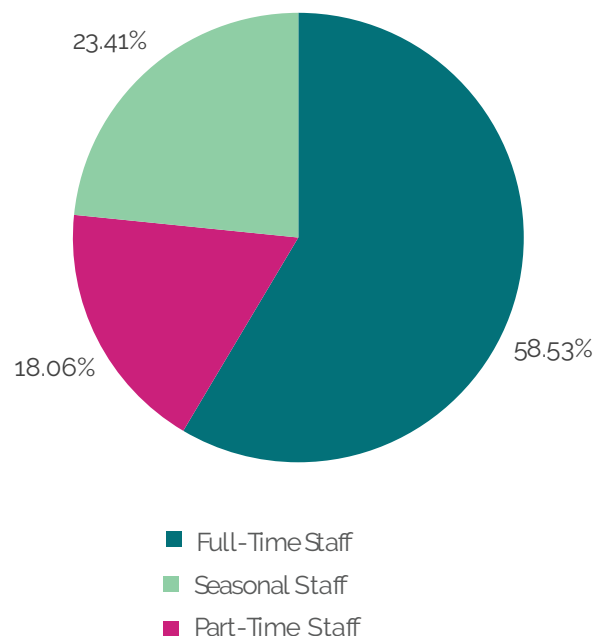
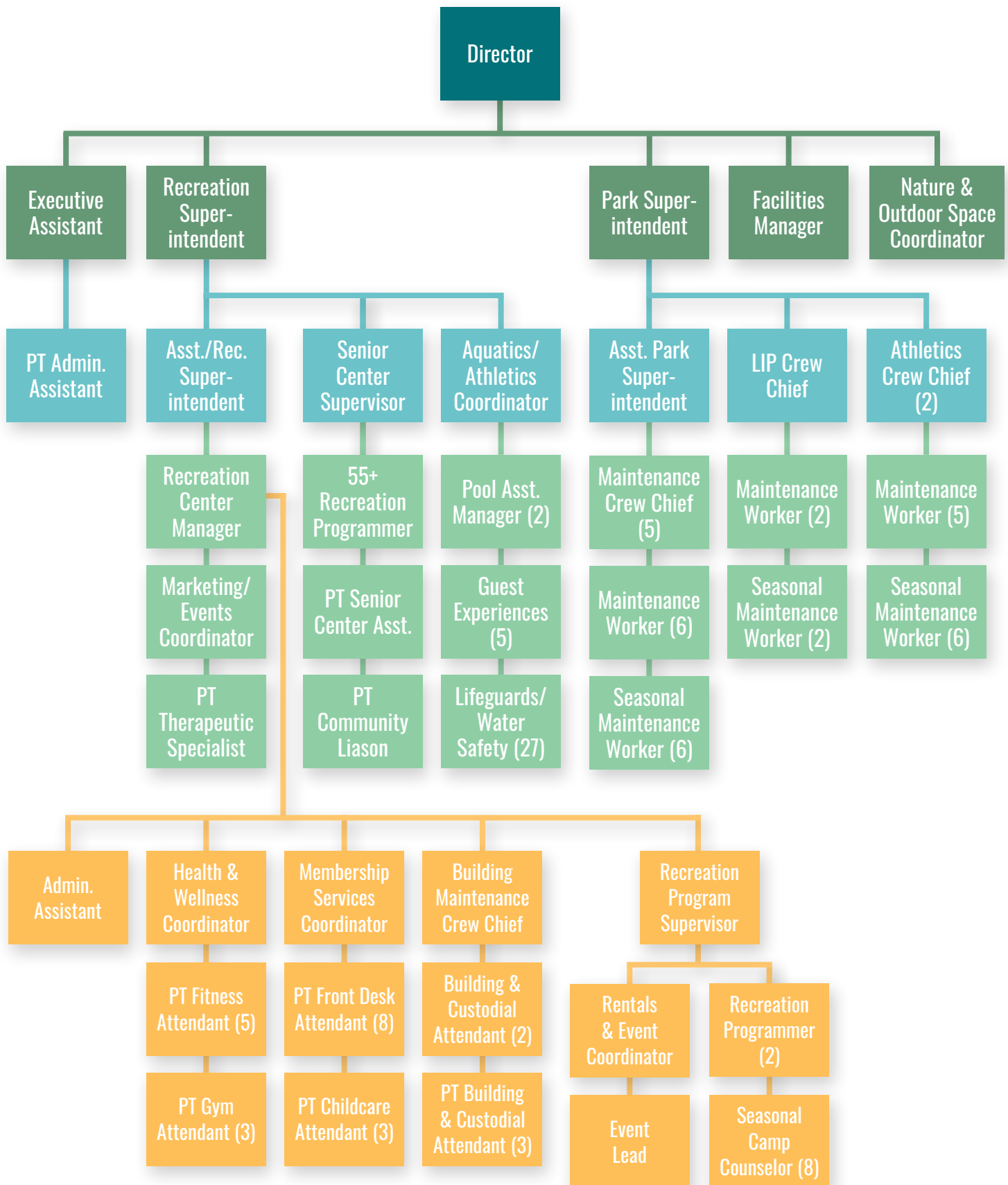


FIGURE 4.2 | CEDAR HILL STAFF ORGANIZATION CHART



PARKS & RECREATION BUDGET

The Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation Department budget for fiscal year 2024 (FY24) totals \$5,350,148. The operating budget is divided into parks budget, recreation budget and capital.

- \$3,620,177 (Maintenance)
- \$1,158,971 (Recreation)
- \$571,000 (Operating Capital Costs)

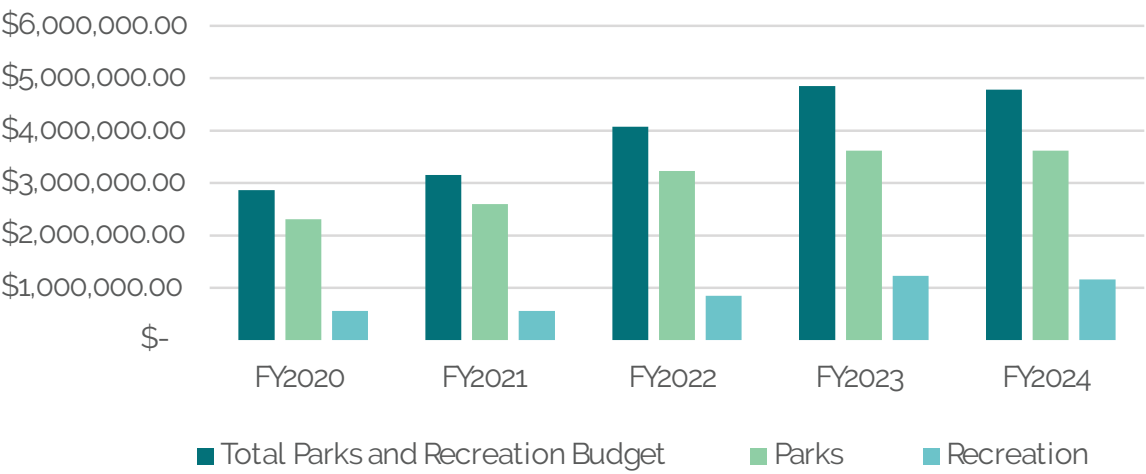
According to the 2024 NRPA park metrics, Cedar Hill's budget is on par with the median for communities of a similar size, sitting on the lower end of the population range, as shown in **Table 4.1**. The Department's operating expenditures for FY24 were \$108.86 per capita—not too far below the median for similar sized communities (\$120.72).

TABLE 4.1 NRPA PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2024 COMPARISON					
	POPULATION	TOTAL ACRES	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL FTES	LEVEL OF SERVICE
CEDAR HILL FY 2024*	49,158	1,947.2	\$5,350,148	75.18	34.45
NRPA 2024	50,000 - 99,999	N/A	\$7,710,000	70.30	10.20

*Total identified from select 2024 Capital Improvements

Demonstrated in **Figure 4.3**, there is a steady increase in the overall Parks and Recreation budget from FY2020 to FY2023, growing from \$2,866,531 in FY2020 to a peak of \$4,848,925 in FY2023. However, in FY2024, there is a slight decrease to \$4,779,148, due to 3% decreases across all citywide departments. Both Parks and Recreation budgets appear to stabilize in FY2024 after several years of growth, aligning with the completion of major initiatives such as the Lagoon and Signature Park. This stabilization suggests a shift toward maintaining and refining existing programs and facilities. However, the city's long-term vision remains ambitious, with the plan calling for continued expansion to meet the goal of conserving 25% of land for parks and open space. While immediate budget priorities may focus on sustainability and efficiency, strategic investments will be necessary to achieve this high standard for parkland dedication and future growth. Overall, this historical budget data shows a period of growth, especially in recreation, followed by a period of stabilization, indicating a maturation of the department's initiatives.

FIGURE 4.3 | PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET



RECREATION BUDGET

The total Recreation budget for FY24 is \$1,158,971 and it includes all parks and recreation staff for the Cedar Hill Senior Activity Center, Alan E. Sims Recreation Center, and The Lagoon at Virginia Weaver Park. Staff are dedicated to serving the Senior Activity Center, as well as the Alan E. Sims Recreation Center, athletics, and aquatics. A few noted specialized positions include two staff for Health and Wellness, a marketing and events coordinator, and one membership services coordinator. Due to the seasonal nature of many recreation programs, such as summer camps and events at the The Lagoon, an additional 42 seasonal staff are brought in to support recreation services during the summer months.

FUNDING SOURCES

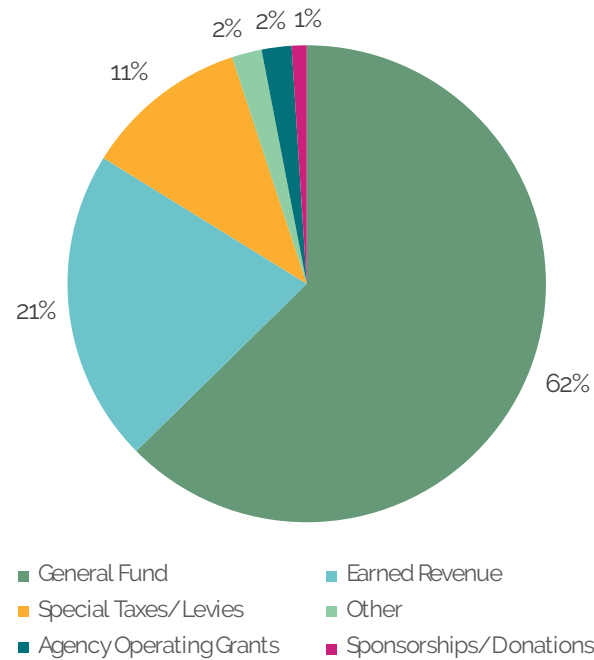
Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation is funded through a diverse range of sources, including general funds, 4B sales tax revenue, park development funds, and general obligation (GO) bonds. The 4B funds support major initiatives such as the Alan E. Sims Recreation Center, Valley Ridge Park, trail maintenance, and capital improvement projects. A unique feature of the Alan E. Sims Recreation Center is that the Community Development Corporation (CDC) provides operations funding. No general funds are used to support the recreation center. GO bonds help finance larger-scale capital projects, ensuring that the City can continue to develop and maintain its parks and recreational spaces effectively.

MAINTENANCE BUDGET

In order to ensure the proper upkeep and functionality of its parks and recreational facilities, Cedar Hill allocates specific budget items toward maintenance and equipment care. These allocations cover various aspects of facility maintenance, contracts, and equipment management. Below is a breakdown of the key maintenance expenses for the upcoming fiscal year (2024-2025):

- Building/Park Maintenance: \$600,315 (funded by Community Development Corporation (CDC) and General Fund)
- Maintenance Contracts: \$525,000 (funded by CDC and General Fund)
- Equipment Maintenance: \$100,000 for motorized equipment (funded by General Fund)

FIGURE 4.4 | NRPA SOURCES OF OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES (ALL COMMUNITIES)



Source: 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

In order to understand the potential needs of the park system, it is essential to assess the existing conditions of Cedar Hill's parks. A conditions assessment measures whether a park space and associated facilities are maintained in a condition that is safe and enticing to users.

Due to the size and quantity of parks in Cedar Hill, only 10 parks were assessed during the conditions assessment based on park classification, popularity, size, number of amenities and guidance from City staff. The results of the assessment highlight needed improvements or recommended enhancements by category.

Categories used to assess park conditions in Cedar Hill are listed below:

- Sport Courts
- Athletic Fields
- Pathways & Trails
- Public Gathering Spaces
- Structured Play
- Open Play Areas
- Parking
- Fencing & Retaining Walls
- General Site Facilities
- Additional Site Amenities
- Planting & Trees
- Turf
- Signage
- Site Lighting
- Park Accessibility
- Shoreline (Any pond, creek, or drainage area)



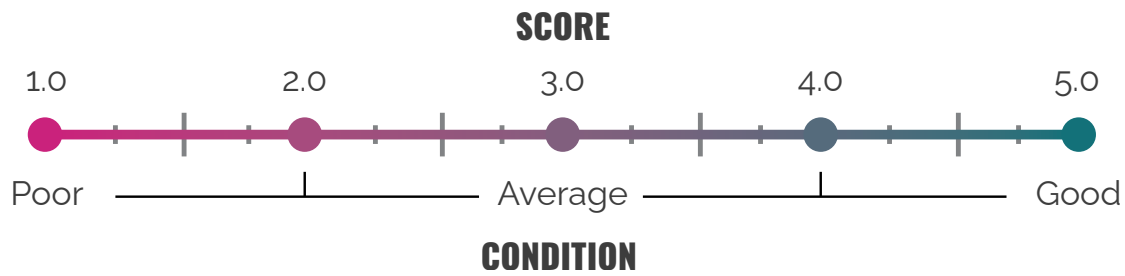
Parkerville Park (Lowest Scoring Park)

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Community feedback has reflected a generally positive perception of Cedar Hill's parks, with residents appreciating the well-maintained green spaces and recreational amenities available throughout the City. The parks are seen as hubs for outdoor activities, providing areas for sports, family gatherings, and passive recreation.

When parks are in poor condition—such as having damaged infrastructure, litter, or overgrown areas—community attendance at parks tends to decline, diminishing their positive impact. A park system that is perceived as accessible, inviting, and well-maintained not only attracts visitors but also contributes to improved community health, social cohesion, and overall quality of life. For example, Valley Ridge Park, which scored the second highest overall in the conditions assessment, is the most favored park in the system according to survey results.

The Parks Department's commitment to maintaining the parks in excellent condition helps foster a sense of pride and strengthens the community's connection to these vital public spaces.



PARK CONDITIONS

Park properties were assigned a score from 1 to 5 for each of the 16 categories assessed – with “1” representing a negative score and “5” representing a positive score. Each park is assigned an average score based on the cumulative results of all categories assessed – where an assessment feature is non-existent or not applicable, a score of “0” is assigned, and the category is excluded from the average score of the applicable park property. A score of 1.0 to 1.99 is considered “poor;” 2.0 to 3.99 is considered “average;” and, a score of 4.0 or greater is considered “good.”

TABLE 4.2 | PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT SCORES

#1	Red Oak Creek Trail	4.67
#2	Valley Ridge Park	3.87
#3	Virginia Weaver Park	3.87
#4	Wooded Creek Greenbelt	3.83
#5	Prairie View Park	3.82
#6	Cedar Trails Greenbelt	3.75
#7	Singleton Preserve	3.67
#8	Crawford Park	3.5
#9	Community Center Park	3.08
#10	Parkerville Park	2.00

LOW SCORING PARKS

Only one park that was assessed received a score below 3.0 (see **Table 4.2**). There are two general reasons parks receive lower scores:

- Facility features are insufficient, outdated or need repair
- Limitations in ownership or lease agreements, which restrict the city's ability to invest in upgrades and enhancements.
- Infrequent use reduces demand for continued investment and maintenance prioritization

While many parks had high quality amenities such as wayfinding, trash receptacles and seating areas, the quantity of the amenities present at some parks is not enough to support potential or future use. Another overall common characteristic of parks was lack of shade. Strong outliers that contributed to lower scores also include minimal walking paths at Parkerville Park and sports field conditions at Community Center Park and Parkerville Park.

HIGH SCORING PARKS

Generally, parks that receive high conditions scores have one or both of the following characteristics:

- Recent investments and upgrades
- The park is more popular and is a component of shared community-wide pride

Common elements of high scoring parks in Cedar Hill include healthy vegetation and turf, presence of amenities and gathering spaces, and high-quality walking trails. Some of the highest scoring amenities at these parks include structured play at Valley Ridge Park and trail conditions at Red Oak Creek Trail and Wooded Creek Greenbelt.

TABLE 4.3 | PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT SCORES BY CATEGORY

Park Name	Park Classification	Acres	Sport Courts	Sport Fields	Park Pathways Trails	Public Gathering Spaces	Structured Play	Open Play Areas	Parking	General Fencing & Retaining Walls	General Site Facilities	Additional Site Amenities	Planting & Trees	Turf	Signage	Site Lighting	Park Accessibility	Shoreline (Any pond, creek, or drainage area)	Ranked Categories	Weighted Average
Valley Ridge Park	Regional	164.0	-	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	15	3.87
Prairie View Park	Neighborhood	6.6	-	-	3	3	3	3	4	-	4	4	4	4	5	-	5	-	11	3.82
Community Center Park	Community	5.1	-	2	4	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	-	13	3.08
Crawford Park	Community	10.8	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	16	3.50
Wooded Creek Greenbelt	Linear Parks & Trails	7.0	-	-	5	4	3	-	3	5	4	3	5	4	1	-	4	5	12	3.83
Cedar Trails Greenbelt	Linear Parks & Trails	15.0	3	-	4	3	3	-	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	-	3	-	12	3.75
Parkerville Park*	Community	24.1	-	2	1	2		3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3		13	2.00
Virginia Weaver Park	Community	27.6	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-	15	3.87
Red Oak Creek Trail	Linear Parks & Trails	4.7	-	-	5	3	-	-	5	-	-	4	5	5	5		5	5	9	4.67
Singleton Preserve	Greenbelts & Preservation	30	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	4	-	4	4	-	-	3	-	6	3.67
Ranked Categories	-	-	3	5	10	9	7	5	9	8	9	9	10	10	9	5	10	4	-	-
Weighted Average	-	-	3.7	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.0	3.8	4.0	-	3.60

*Leased property, City managed

PARK SYSTEM AVERAGES

The total average score for the evaluated parks in the park system is slightly above average, at 3.6. As shown in **Table 4.3** on page 58, a majority of the average amenity scores were between 3.5 and 4.0. Similarly, a majority of the assessed parks received a score between 3.5 and 4.0. This signifies that while there is some room for improvement, Cedar Hill's park system is in good condition overall.

A few outliers in the system brought average scores down slightly. These outliers include a lack amenities at Parkerville Park, as well as lack of signage at Wooded Creek Greenbelt and the condition of the creek shoreline/retaining wall at Crawford Park. One simple way to improve overall scores would be to update signage at parks that do not have the standard entryway monumentation or wayfinding.

Positive outliers in the evaluated system include a majority of the plantings and trees in evaluated parks, and structured play at Valley Ridge Park. Landscaping and pathways at Wooded Creek Greenbelt and Red Oak Creek Trail were in excellent condition.

Some scores were more significantly affected by outlier scores due to the total number of amenities present in the evaluated systems. The smaller the amount of amenities evaluated in a category or park, the more of an effect outliers have on the average score.

UNEVALUATED PARKS & FACILITIES

There are many other parks in Cedar Hill that vary in function, size, and condition. Newer additions to the park system such as Signature Park would likely receive high average conditions scores compared to others. Special facilities such as The Lagoon at Virginia Weaver Park and the Alan E. Sims Recreation Center require special consideration outside of the conditions assessment.



Trail and Gathering Space at Community Center Park



Trailhead Amenities at Red Oak Creek Trail



Sport Fields at Valley Ridge Park



MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

Well-maintained parks and recreational facilities are essential for delivering high-quality programs and services. The quality of maintenance significantly affects user perceptions of safety, overall park usage, and community pride in the parks system. According to the community survey conducted during the planning process, respondents identified the parks and facilities they visited most frequently, with Virginia Weaver Park (43%), Crawford Park (41%), and Valley Ridge Park (39%) topping the list. Similarly, trail usage was highlighted, with Lake Ridge Trail (54%), Red Oak Creek Trail (33%), and Pleasant Run Trail (30%) being the most visited.

Given that these parks and trails experience the highest frequency of attendance and host numerous events, they likely require more attention and resources for maintenance to ensure they remain safe, clean, and enjoyable for all users. The community survey indicated positive ratings for the parks and facilities, with 30% of respondents rating them as “excellent” and 58% as “good.” For the trails, 29% rated them as “excellent,” and 61% rated them as “good.” This positive feedback underscores the importance of maintaining these popular spaces to continue fostering community engagement and pride. It is the Parks and Recreation Department's responsibility to ensure all properties are properly maintained, whether through direct maintenance by Department staff, by volunteers, or through agreements with contractors.

To track and manage the various maintenance responsibilities, many recreation providers will establish a maintenance plan that details a maintenance schedule by park, amenity, or facility type. The Maintenance Division does have a documented standard operating procedures manual – Operational Plan and Maintenance Standards Manual (SOP).



PARK MAINTENANCE

Park properties are subject to a comprehensive maintenance program to ensure safety, cleanliness, and aesthetic appeal. Regardless of the maintenance frequency category, parks are visited daily for the removal of litter, debris, hazards, and graffiti. Any discovered damage or graffiti is documented, reported to the Cedar Hill Police Department, and repaired immediately after proper documentation.

SPECIAL EVENTS SUPPORTED BY PARK MAINTENANCE

In addition to day-to-day operations, the maintenance team plays a crucial role in supporting various special events throughout the year. Park Maintenance staff served as primary logistics leads for 13 events that required maintenance assistance to ensure a successful and clean experience for attendees. This can include responsibilities such as:

- Setup & Logistics
- Trash Management
- Post-Event Cleanup
- Venue Preparation
- Operational Support

GENERAL WEATHERIZATION PLAN

Given Texas' unpredictable and often abrupt winter conditions, it is essential that park maintenance staff carefully review and prioritize weatherization tasks. Being prepared in advance helps the department act swiftly when temperatures drop unexpectedly, minimizing damage and ensuring smooth operations. Prioritizing these tasks will increase staff efficiency, protect assets, and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to continue providing safe, well-maintained spaces for the community year-round. By addressing the needs of both facilities and the public, the department will enhance long-term sustainability and the enjoyment of the city's parks and recreational spaces for all seasons.

STEPS TOWARDS SUCCESS

This plan recommends several strategies to improve the short and long-term success of the City of Cedar Hill's parks and recreational practices. The strategies below have been selected to address key findings of this assessment and align with community needs.

POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS

ORGANIZATIONAL

ENHANCED STAFF TRAINING:

- Continuous Education on Best Practices - Stay updated with best practices in park maintenance and operations through workshops, webinars, or conferences.
- Cross-Training Employees - Provide training to staff in multiple areas (e.g., horticulture, landscaping, facilities management) to create a versatile workforce that can adapt to varying demands and reduce overtime costs.
- Promote Professional Development Opportunities that Strengthen Staff Skills - The Department should continue to identify and fund select accreditation and certification for staff members, as determined by City administration.



CAPRA ACCREDITATION:

- Pursue CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association. A CAPRA accreditation affirms that a parks and recreation agency is providing its community with the highest level of service. CAPRA accreditation is organized into 10 major categories, which represent the key areas of focus for park and recreation agencies. These standards guide agencies in achieving national accreditation and serve as a benchmark for operational excellence. A total of 154 standards must be met to assess performance and demonstrate evidence of best practices. These standards help agencies improve their operations, guide planning processes, and deliver high-quality services to the community. Currently, only 213 agencies in the nation are CAPRA accredited and 28 in Texas.

STRENGTHEN INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION:

- To further enhance collaboration, the city can formalize cross-departmental roles, create a centralized event coordination framework, and establish clear processes for resource allocation. Additionally, leveraging data and community feedback from past events can help refine planning strategies, boost participation, and ensure events align with broader city goals.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

- Develop a program that coordinates, manages, and tracks all volunteers for the department. The program will focus on recruiting, training, evaluating, and recognizing volunteers, with an emphasis on outreach to individuals and partner organizations. A key component of the program will be tracking volunteer hours and quantifying contributions, which will be essential for budgeting and future grant requests. This program will help expand the Department's capacity by engaging community members, building strong partnerships, and ensuring volunteers feel valued and supported.

TARGETED MARKETING:

- Collaborate with the Cedar Hill Communications team to develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns that promote municipal parks and recreational programs. A key focus will be placed on engaging teens and young adults through relevant platforms and content. The community survey revealed that 58% of residents hear about events through word of mouth and 40% rely on the city website, social media, and street banners. Although only 28% currently hear about events through email, a majority of residents would prefer this method of communication. Develop a targeted email strategy aimed at increasing engagement and click-through rates. This will involve crafting compelling subject lines, incorporating visually appealing content, and creating clear calls to action that resonate with the specific audiences.

SPECIAL EVENTS SPECIALIST/LIAISON:

- Add a new staff position to coordinate special events for the city and community groups. This position would be dedicated to coordinating and managing special events, sponsorships, and vendor contracts for the Department. This role will streamline the planning and execution of events by serving as the central point of contact for all external groups, ensuring efficient communication and consistency across all events. In addition to managing events, the Special Events Specialist/Liaison will oversee vendor contracts, enhancing vendor relations and ensuring seamless operations across all department activities involving outside partners. This strategy aims to boost event quality, increase community engagement, and strengthen partnerships with sponsors and vendors.

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY:

- Expand Inclusivity and Diversity in Events - Continue to enhance Cedar Hill's event lineup by expanding diversity-related celebrations and ensuring ADA-inclusive events. By focusing on a range of culturally significant celebrations, the city can strengthen community engagement and foster a more inclusive environment for all residents.
- Increase Youth-Focused Events - Address the potential gap in direct engagement with younger residents by increasing the number of youth-specific events, such as a Youth Summit or Kids Triathlon. This strategy aims to provide more opportunities for youth participation and involvement in community activities, promoting a sense of belonging and connection.

SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

- Promote Sustainability and Environmental Awareness - Continue to leverage Cedar Hill's proximity to natural areas to expand environmentally-focused events and educational workshops on sustainability. Introduce an annual joint nature pass that grants membership to the Dogwood Audubon Center and access to various park events. This initiative will encourage deeper engagement with Cedar Hill's natural spaces and foster environmental stewardship through hands-on learning and active participation in city-led nature programs.

ACTIVE & OLDER ADULT (55+) PROGRAMS:

- Build on existing active and older adult (55+) programs to strengthen connection within the community - Per the Older Adult Livability Study, transition all references of "senior programs and center" to potential alternatives such as Active and Older Adult (55+) to be more inclusive, including staff titles like Active and Older Adult Activity Center Supervisor and Assistant.

PARK MAINTENANCE

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

- Native Plant Landscaping - For community and neighborhood parks, work with conservation staff and stakeholders to identify locations where there is opportunity to replace non-native grass and plants with native species that require less water and maintenance, reducing irrigation costs and enhancing biodiversity.
- Rain Gardens and Green Infrastructure - Work with conservation staff and stakeholders to pilot rain gardens or permeable surfaces in neighborhood parks to manage stormwater, promote sustainability, and reduce maintenance on traditional lawns.



VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

- Regular Volunteer Days - Organize community clean-up or planting days to foster community pride and reduce maintenance burdens. Coordinate with conservation and recreation staff to recruit and track volunteers and activities.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS:

- Routine Inspections and Maintenance - Update the preventive maintenance schedule for park facilities, equipment, and landscaping to identify and address issues before they escalate, thus reducing long-term costs.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION:

- Maintenance & Asset Management - Utilize software solutions for communication among maintenance staff, tracking maintenance activities, scheduling tasks, and managing park assets efficiently. Integrate with GIS where possible.
- Smart Systems - Enhance existing smart technologies for irrigation systems that adjust watering schedules based on weather conditions to conserve water and reduce costs. Additionally, explore smart technology for mowing schedules, lighting systems, and security measures to enhance operational efficiency and improve safety across the parks. Smart mowing systems can optimize cutting frequency based on grass growth and usage patterns, while smart lighting can adjust based on occupancy or time of day to improve energy efficiency. Enhanced security measures in partnership with public safety, such as surveillance cameras or motion sensors, can provide real-time monitoring and increase safety for park visitors.



DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING:

- Utilize GIS Technology - Implement Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and analyzing park usage patterns, helping inform maintenance schedules, resource allocation, and planning for new amenities.
- Integrate Asset Management into GIS - Incorporate asset management data into GIS to visualize and manage park facilities, maintenance needs, and resource allocation more effectively, enabling better decision-making and prioritization of projects.
- Visitor Tracking and Feedback - Collect visitor data and feedback, enabling tailored services and improving user experience. This could be done with QR codes at entrances, aerial photography, and manual or automated counters.

