

THE GREEN IMPRINT

CEDAR HILL PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

Adopted April 2025



WELCOME STATEMENT

It is with great pride and excitement that I introduce The Green Imprint: Cedar Hill's Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. This plan reaffirms our city's commitment to preserving the natural beauty that defines us while creating spaces that enrich the lives of those who live, work, and play here. Building on the foundation of the 2012 Parks Master Plan and its 2019 update, The Green Imprint reflects our community's vision for more recreational access, more green spaces, and greater social connection.

Cedar Hill residents and visitors alike have long cherished our city's rich natural beauty, expansive parklands, and vibrant community spaces. Cedar Hill stands apart as a green oasis where the harmony of nature and urban life thrives. With The Green Imprint, we are excited to build on this legacy and invite you to join us in shaping a future that reflects our community's unique spirit and shared values.

This plan is more than a document - it is a vision for a sustainable and connected future. It seeks to preserve our city's remarkable natural features, enhance neighborhood connectivity, and create more opportunities for both indoor and outdoor recreation.

The Green Imprint is a call to action for residents, businesses, and community organizations to come together and invest in our shared future. Whether through preserving more green spaces, supporting more gathering places, or building more trails, your involvement is crucial to realizing this vision. This plan highlights goals and actionable recommendations that will guide Cedar Hill toward becoming recreationally connected and committed to green city efforts.

As we move toward implementation, I encourage you to explore this plan and discover the ways you can contribute to Cedar Hill's green legacy. Together, we will ensure that Cedar Hill leaves an enduring green imprint - one that preserves our natural beauty while fostering a healthier, more vibrant, and inclusive community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Mason', is placed over the teal background.

Mayor Stephen Mason



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PLANNING FOR PARKS



CEDAR HILL'S GREEN IMPRINT

Imprinting in nature symbolizes a deep, lasting connection to a habitat, as seen in birds or other creatures returning year after year to the same nesting grounds. For Cedar Hill, “green imprinting” embodies the city's commitment to shaping a legacy where the environment, community, and regional connectivity are inextricably linked. As a part of this commitment, Cedar Hill has pledged to conserve 25% of its land for parks, open spaces, and natural preservation, ensuring a lasting connection between people and nature.

This enduring connection to nature and community forms the foundation of The Green Imprint, Cedar Hill's 2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan. Building on the guiding principles introduced in the 2012 Parks Master Plan and updated in 2019, as well as the city's cherished network of parks, trails, and open spaces, The Green Imprint reflects Cedar Hill's continued dedication to protecting nature while growing and prioritizing the needs of its residents.

The development of The Green Imprint was inspired by the community's unwavering support for green spaces and their ongoing commitment to preserving the city's unique natural features. Cedar Hill's parks system, bolstered by regional parklands, state parks, and beloved local parks, serves as the cornerstone of this legacy. The community's enthusiasm for outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship has made Cedar Hill the greenest spot in the DFW area, creating vibrant spaces where residents and visitors can gather, connect, and enjoy.

Through The Green Imprint, Cedar Hill reaffirms its dedication to maintaining its distinctive character while reevaluating the needs of existing parks, trails, and open spaces.

The plan prioritizes location-specific enhancements, expanding citywide connectivity, integrating green spaces into urban environments, and preserving natural areas, aligning with the city's ambitious goal of conserving 25% of its land for future generations. At the same time, it seeks to enhance operational efficiencies, streamline management, and optimize resource use to meet the community's evolving recreation needs.

Cedar Hill's well-established parks network—including the scenic Cedar Hill State Park, which boasts lush landscapes and breathtaking views of the Balcones Escarpment—highlights the city's exceptional green legacy. From amenities like hiking trails, camping areas, and wildlife-watching spots to newer developments such as Signature Park and the Balcones Trail, the city exemplifies the seamless integration of urban and natural spaces.

By fostering a community where health, inclusivity, and sustainability are intertwined, The Green Imprint extends Cedar Hill's green legacy. The plan focuses on enhancing neighborhood parks, connecting the community through trails, supporting gathering spaces, and preserving natural areas. It aligns with the city's comprehensive plan and vision while complementing existing plans such as the Cedar Hill Next and the Dallas County Open Space Plan.

By committing to conserving 25% of its land, Cedar Hill safeguards its natural heritage, reinforcing a future where growth and green space thrive in harmony.

PLAN PURPOSE

This plan reflects Cedar Hill's dedication to preserving natural areas while growing and prioritizing the community's needs. The City's 2012 Parks Master Plan, updated in 2019, introduced three guiding principles that remain central to its vision and goals. To advance the three goals, Cedar Hill has developed *The Green Imprint*, a 10-year roadmap to enhance the city's parks, recreation, trails, and open spaces. Through its implementation, Cedar Hill aims to preserve its unique natural features, maintain its distinctive character, and create vibrant spaces where residents and visitors can gather, connect, and enjoy.

The Green Imprint further reevaluates the needs of existing parks, trails, and open spaces. This process included a comprehensive review of the park system, assessing conditions, amenities, and usability to identify opportunities for improvement. The plan prioritizes location-specific enhancements to aging infrastructure, modernizing amenities, and expanding citywide connectivity through a well-integrated network of trails and greenways. Informed by community input and data-driven analysis, *The Green Imprint* offers actionable recommendations to guide the future of Cedar Hill's park system.

NATURE/URBAN INTERFACE

Cedar Hill aims to enhance areas where nature and urban space meet.

25% OPEN SPACE GOAL

Cedar Hill aims to dedicate 25% of the City's land area to public and private open spaces.

CITY WITHIN A PARK

Cedar Hill aspires to transform from a City that simply has parks, to a city seamlessly integrated in a park-like environment.

WHY PLAN FOR PARKS?

Parks and recreation facilities and programs offer several benefits to a community. They bring family and friends together, provide enrichment and learning opportunities for youth, as well as contribute to conserving natural resources, improving air and water quality, and overall enhancing the community. These benefits are outlined in **Figure 1.1**.

Parks also play a vital role in enhancing what the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) considers to be the three pillars of a community, Health and Wellness, Conservation, and Social Equity. These three pillars guide inclusive decision-making within our park system, shaping everything from the development of new parks to expansion of diverse programming. Cedar Hill Parks and Recreation embodies and supports the NRPA's three Pillars of Recreation.

FIGURE 1.1 | BENEFITS OF PARKS



A map of the Cedar Hill area in Texas, showing its location relative to surrounding cities and geographical features. Cedar Hill is highlighted in green and is situated southwest of Dallas, along Joe Pool Lake. The map includes labels for cities such as Arlington, Grand Prairie, Dallas, Duncanville, DeSoto, Lancaster, Mansfield, Glenn Heights, Ovilla, Red Oak, Oak Leaf, Pecan Hill, Midlothian, and Maypearl. Major highways like 20, 287, 35, and 67 are marked. A scale bar and a north arrow are located at the bottom right.

FIGURE 1.2 | COMMUNITY CONTEXT MAP

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Cedar Hill, located southwest of Dallas along Joe Pool Lake and positioned in both Ellis and Dallas counties, sits over 300 feet above Dallas, just north of the prominent Balcones Escarpment. This geological feature, visible along FM 1382 and Mansfield Road, stretches from the Red River to Del Rio. Founded in 1846, Cedar Hill grew steadily until the construction of Joe Pool Lake in 1989 triggered a population surge, nearly tripling its size within a decade. By the 2000s, the city was home to 786 businesses and 32,093 residents. **Today, Cedar Hill prides itself as being known as the “greener side” of the Metroplex.** With its scenic landscapes, residents, and visitors, can enjoy a variety of neighborhood and community parks, trails and recreational spaces including the new Signature Park, Balcones Trail, and The Lagoon, an outdoor aquatic facility. Cedar Hill State Park features fishing piers, hiking and biking trails, a swimming area, and 350 developed campsites. Beyond these, Cedar Hill offers an impressive selection of partnership parks, including Cedar Hill State Park, Lester Lorch Park, and Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center. These parks provide opportunities for residents and visitors to explore nature and hike extensive trails contributing to the City’s rich natural spaces and recreational offerings.

0 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles

WHO WE SERVE

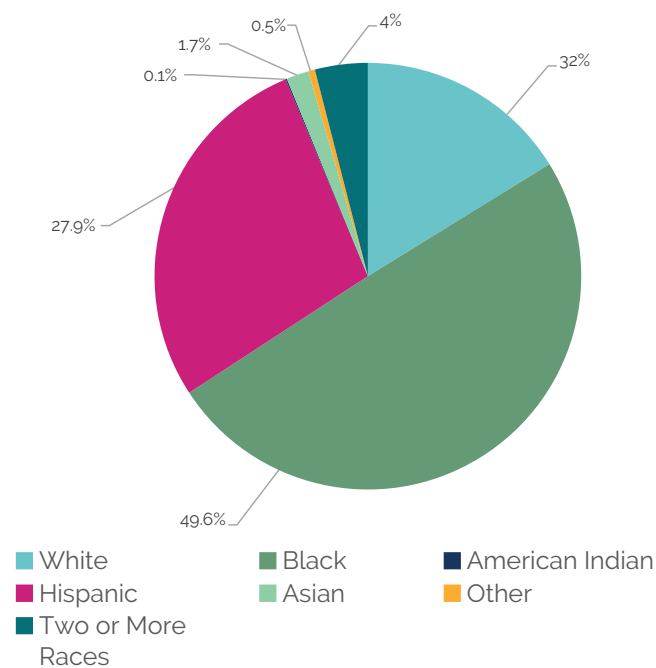
Cedar Hill is home to 49,148 people and covers an area of 35.88 square miles. The City boasts over 3,000 acres of parks, natural spaces, and trails that continues to expand.

The median home value within the city is \$246,300 and the median household income is \$84,132, compared to \$72,284, the median household income for the state.


POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

The community of Cedar Hill is vibrant and diverse. **Figure 1.3** outlines the racial and ethnic makeup of Cedar Hill's population. The majority of the population in Cedar Hill is Black. Over the years, Cedar Hill's population has steadily grown, and this increase reflects the expanding diversity of the community. In particular, the Hispanic population has experienced notable growth and the city has also seen a rise in its multi-racial (two or more races) population. This rich mix of racial and ethnic groups underscores Cedar Hill's status as a dynamic and evolving community, with a broad and inclusive population that continues to shape its cultural and social fabric.


FIGURE 1.3 | CEDAR HILL POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY




Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2019-2023 Five-Year American Community Survey




35.88
sq mi




49,148
population (2020)



13,531 (28%)
children in households (<18)



\$84,132
median household income



\$246,300
median home value



POPULATION BY AGE & GENDER

As shown in **Figure 1.4**, the largest age group in Cedar Hill consists of children aged 10 to 14, followed by those aged 45 to 49. Cedar Hill has a balanced middle-aged population, while the older population (60+ years) represents a smaller percentage. Notably, females outnumber males in the oldest age groups.

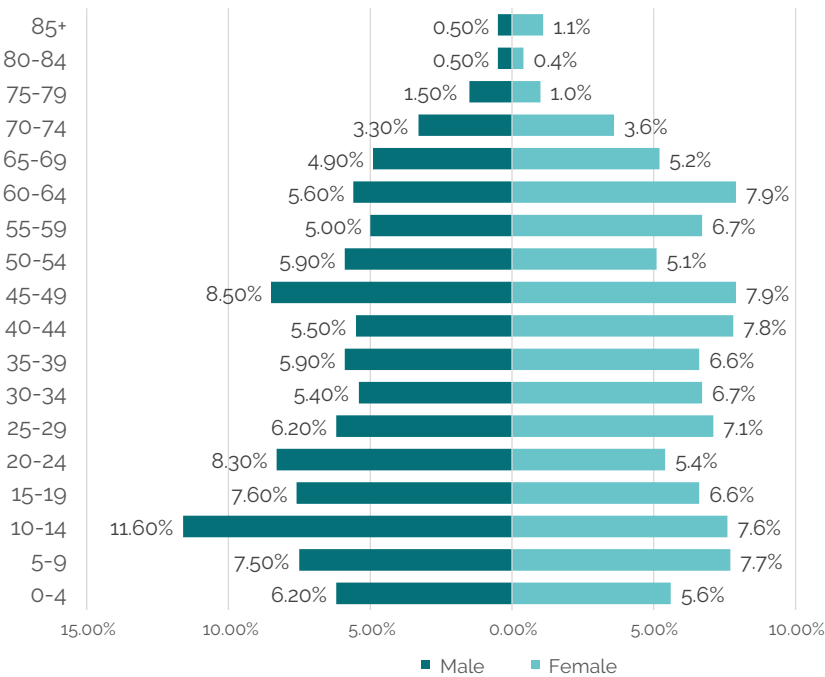
This population pyramid reflects Cedar Hill's family-oriented nature, highlighting both a significant youth presence and a moderately aging population. This demographic profile emphasizes the need to consider both younger residents and the moderately aging population in future park development plans.

POPULATION DENSITY & GROWTH

The population of Cedar Hill is largely concentrated in the northeast portion of the city limits and toward major roadways in close proximity such as Highway 67 and FM 1382, shown in **Figure 1.5**. This reflects a regional pattern of high population density moving toward Dallas' city center.

It will be important to consider levels of population density throughout the City when evaluating community needs and addressing gaps in park access.

FIGURE 1.4 | CEDAR HILL POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2018-2022 Five-Year American Community Survey Estimates

FIGURE 1.5 | POPULATION DENSITY OF CEDAR HILL

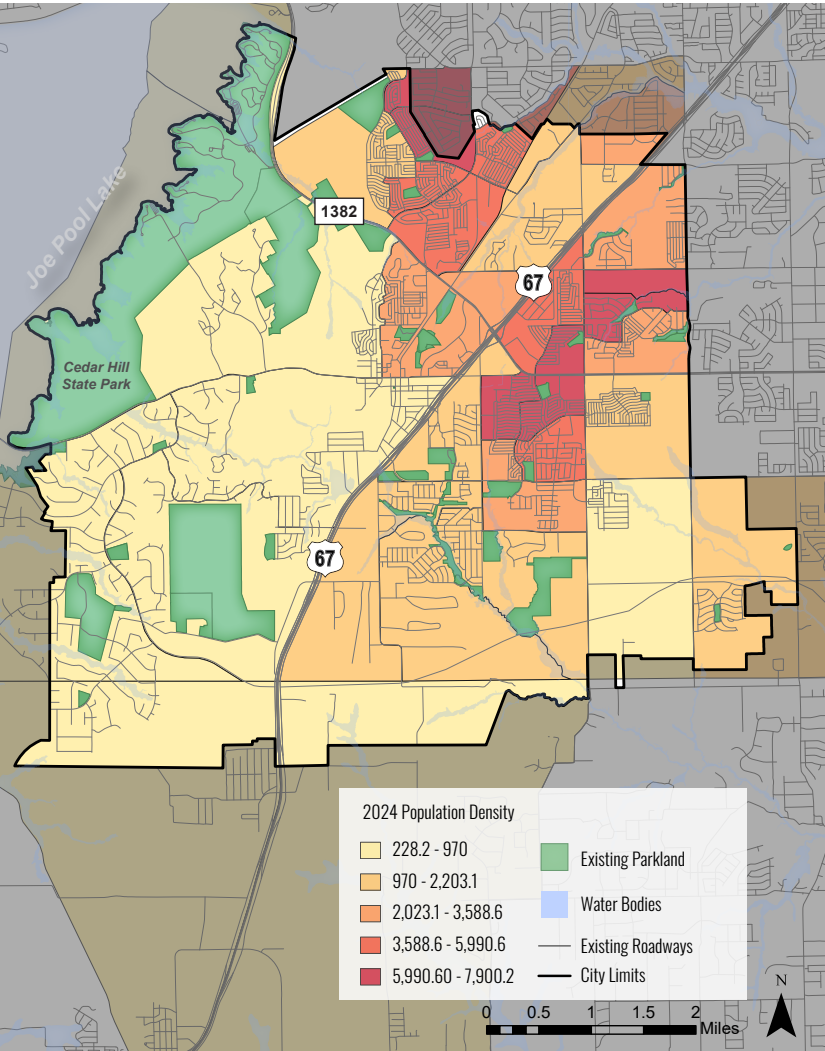
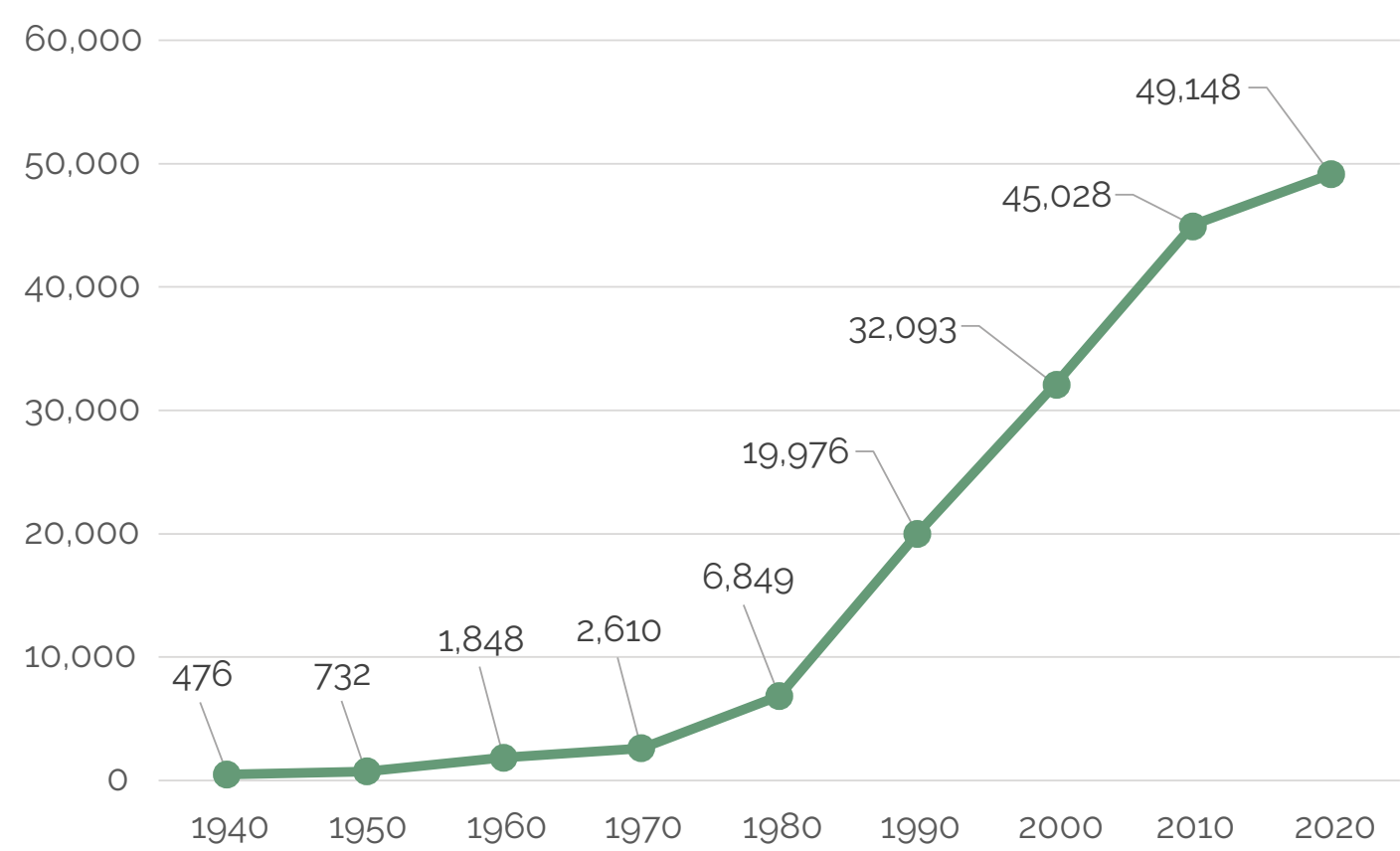


FIGURE 1.6 | CEDAR HILL HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). 2010-2020 Decennial Census

Figure 1.6 shows the historic population growth of Cedar Hill since 1940. The significant population boom in Cedar Hill during the late 1900s is illustrated on the graph, which can be attributed to the construction of Joe Pool Lake. Since then, the city has experienced steady population growth. According to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), this trend is expected to continue, with a projected increase of approximately 8-9% per decade over the next 60 years.

TABLE 1.1 2026 TWDB REGIONAL WATER PLAN POPULATION PROJECTIONS						
	DALLAS COUNTY	% GROWTH	ELLIS COUNTY	% GROWTH	CEDAR HILL	% GROWTH
2030	2,744,243		241,747		53,645	
2040	2,899,298	5.65%	290,486	20.16%	58,553	9.15%
2050	3,045,184	5.03%	346,554	19.30%	63,911	9.15%
2060	3,162,467	3.85%	397,716	14.76%	69,070	8.07%
2070	3,277,308	3.63%	455,844	14.62%	74,646	8.07%
2080	3,372,187	2.90%	513,797	12.71%	80,672	8.07%

Source: Texas Water Development Board, 2026 Regional Water Plan Board - Adopted Population and Municipal Demand Projections

PLAN APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the city’s parks and recreation system and facilities, there were multiple methods used to gain further insight on existing issues in the system and potential solutions. This Plan utilized four techniques addressing park conditions, park access, existing and future park demand, and resources. Access, demand, and resource-based assessments are modeled after methodologies created by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

DEMAND-BASED ASSESSMENT

This technique is a qualitative analysis that utilizes community input in order to determine public perception and desired park usage. The information gathered will help guide what direction park improvements need to move in order to satisfy the unique needs of the community.

STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT

The access-based assessment analyzes the current quantity and location of parkland and facilities to determine if the needs of the population are being met. This technique uses level-of-service ratios of facilities to population to project future needs as the population grows

RESOURCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

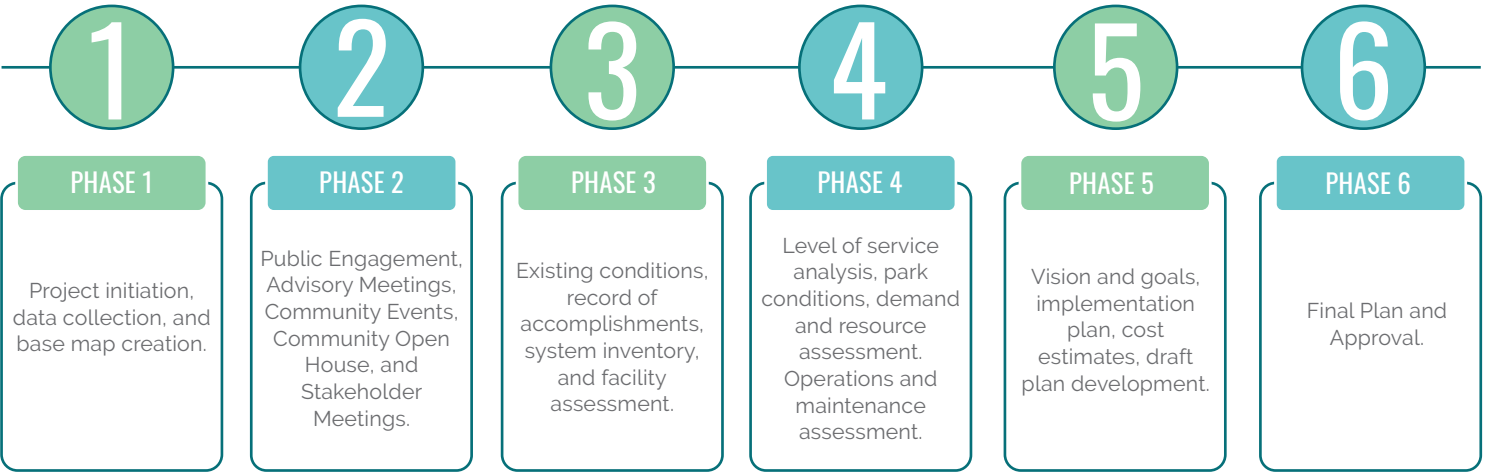
This technique included the evaluation of potential in local man-made and natural resources with expansion and further development in mind, including consideration for the community’s ability to attract visitors and support the local economy.

CONDITIONS-BASED ASSESSMENT

This technique involved on-site assessments of parks and amenities to evaluate their current conditions. The conditions-based assessment focuses on the maintenance of park grounds and facilities, using a uniform scoring system to pinpoint where critical maintenance and service enhancements are most needed.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

This Plan was initiated in March 2024 to develop a vision for how the City’s system of parks, recreation facilities and programs can meet both current and future needs of its residents and spanned the course of a year. The planning effort is divided into six overlapping phases. Initial phases focus on gathering information and engaging with the community, while later phases are dedicated to analysis and formulating an implementation strategy.



LAND LEGACY

The goals and policies outlined in this Plan remain aligned with those established in the 2019 plan update. These goals aim to create a "City within a Park," with 25% green and open space, and a seamless relationship between the natural-urban interface.

Through the City's partnerships with external organizations and proactive parkland acquisitions, such as those at Willis and Singleton, there has been a significant expansion of the City's park system, contributing to the pursuit of achieving 25% open space. Additionally, recent trail projects have worked to improve natural and urban connections. More information on how the City can continue to work towards these goals can be found in **Chapter 2**.

25%
OPEN SPACE GOAL

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS PLANS

As the City continues to grow, staff and community members will rely on a variety of planning efforts and documents to support future desires and development. This Plan was developed with the knowledge and goals of the previous parks plan and existing City Comprehensive Plan in mind, as well as other recent planning efforts relevant to parks and recreation.

Recent planning efforts in the City and throughout the region are listed below:

- 2012 Cedar Hill Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan and 2019 update
- 2020 Cedar Hill Older Adult Livability Study
- 2020 North Central Texas Council of Governments Veloweb Trail Master Plan
- 2022 Cedar Hill Comprehensive Plan
- 2023 Cedar Hill West Midtown Master Plan
- 2023-2025 Cedar Hill Economic Development Strategy
- 2024 Dallas County Open Space Plan

Not only does this Plan aim to continue the pursuit of the three major goals identified in the previous parks plan, it also aims to establish new goals and standards for the growing community. These goals aim to align with the city's priorities and distinguish Cedar Hill from other Texas cities, particularly in the DFW region, further enhancing its reputation and appeal.

PRIOR PLANNING EFFORTS

2012 CEDAR HILL PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The previous Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Master Plan was developed to identify city needs and address recreation opportunities while recognizing the unique natural features within Cedar Hill. This plan was based on three innovative goals:

- To grow as a “city within a park”
- 25% of Cedar Hill’s land will be open public and private space (updated from 20% in the 2022 Cedar Hill Comprehensive Plan)
- Celebration of the natural and built interface

Following this plan, the 2019 update was created to celebrate the achievements since the original plan, recognize current needs and desires, and provide direction for future city development.

2020 CEDAR HILL OLDER ADULT LIVABILITY STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess how well the livability factors identified by AARP are being addressed for older adults in Cedar Hill. The study explored the specific needs and interests of this age group and highlighted needs for additional facilities.

Major conclusions included the following:

- Three of the seven livability aspects require attention: transportation, health and well-being, and socialization
- Development of potential programs list
- Need for additional space to accommodate program requirements
- Availability of volunteers in the community willing to assist

2022 CEDAR HILL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2022, updating the previous version from 2008. The new plan titled “Cedar Hill Next, Preserving the Past. Cultivating the Future,” envisions a reimagined future for the city. It focuses on the overall community, as well as policy framework for zoning, land-use, development, transportation, economic growth, and operating budgets; all of which go towards assisting with citywide decision-making.

2023 CEDAR HILL WEST MIDTOWN MASTER PLAN

The plan for the West Midtown area aims to capitalize on the rolling terrain and central location between downtown and the Government Center to create a cohesive district that aligns with Cedar Hill’s vision of fostering natural growth opportunities. The vision is to establish a vibrant cultural hub with diverse housing and economic opportunities, ensuring that these investments complement each other and create a unique, memorable place in Cedar Hill.

2023-25 CEDAR HILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This plan set a new economic development strategy for Cedar Hill aimed to promote business attraction, support existing businesses, and foster small business growth. The strategy addresses the current community and business environment and outlines a path to position the city as a location with distinctive character, natural beauty, and excellent amenities in order to attract new residents, businesses and tourists.

2024 DALLAS COUNTY OPEN SPACE PLAN

First established with the 1980 Open Space Plan, the Dallas County Open Space Plan resulted from local interest in preserving the open space within the county as it grows. The plan provides recommendations for operations and maintenance, enhancements and connectivity of its 21 preserves throughout Dallas County.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

In collaboration with City staff and K Strategies, a local public relations firm, a community engagement strategy was developed to effectively engage Cedar Hill residents in the development of this plan using a variety of in-person and online methods.

In-person engagement methods included:

- Advisory Committee Meetings
- Stakeholder Listening Sessions
- Pop-up Community Events
- Public Meetings

Plan project information was made available to the community on the city’s website. This site provided an overview of the project, including Master Plan details, a project timeline, opportunities for community involvement, and a resident survey.

In addition to the online survey, a statistically-valid parks and recreation survey was administered by ETC Institute as part of the process. The survey was mailed to a random number of households in the city and participants were asked to mail in their responses or complete the survey online. With a goal of receiving at least 400 complete responses, combined final survey participation totaled at 788 participants.

The final step in the engagement process is documenting and analyzing public input to help identify the community’s needs. A summary of all engagement methods and results can be found in the Demand Assessment Memo of the **Appendix**.

KEY THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

KEY THEMES

- Preservation of open space and natural areas
- High-quality public spaces and facilities
- The “Third Place” - places people can congregate outside of work and home
- Desire to go above and beyond

PARK PRIORITIES

- Shade
- Connections to nature
- Gathering Spaces and Picnic Pavilions
- Special Use Parks:
 - Dog park
 - Adaptive playgrounds
 - Community gardens
 - Aquatic facilities

RECREATION NEEDS

- Indoor facilities
- Trail connections
- Inter-generational needs
- Programming:
 - Nature education
 - Fitness classes
 - Arts & culture events

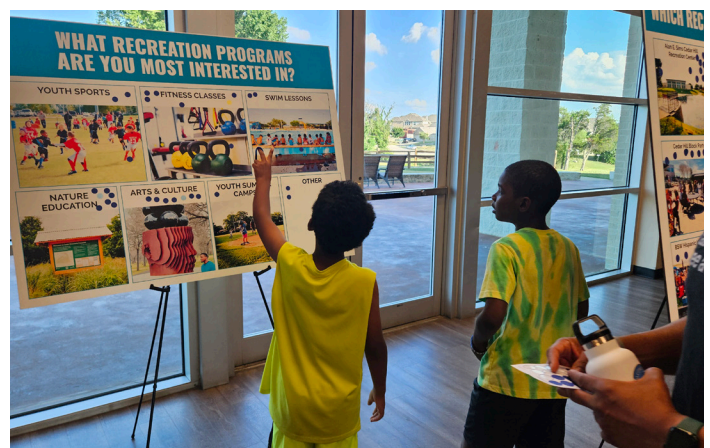
4 OUTREACH EVENTS

3 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3 STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

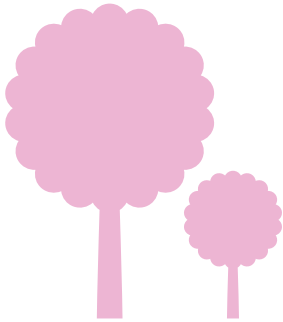
2 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

2 SURVEYS



VISION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Community feedback gathered throughout the engagement process creates the foundation for the vision and guiding principles of this plan. Not only does the Cedar Hill community seek high quality recreation amenities such as sports and aquatic facilities, residents also want to prioritize opportunities to interact with nature in the City and the preservation of greenspace. The vision statement shown on the following page and the guiding principles below aim to support future action that is cohesive and reflects the unique desires of the entire community.



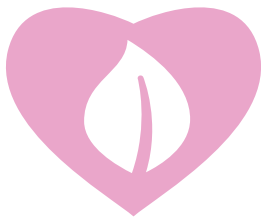
CONSERVING & PRESERVING

Cedar Hill is dedicated to evolving into a city where urban and natural environments are seamlessly integrated. The City is committed to conserving 25% of our land area for public and private natural spaces, enhancing the quality of urban life while preserving vital natural resources. By expanding parks and natural infrastructure, and improving transitional areas between built and natural environments, we aim to connect neighborhoods, public plazas, and existing infrastructure. This approach will transform these spaces into community landmarks, highlighting our natural features, inspiring future design, and promoting an active and healthy community.



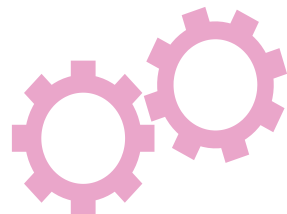
GATHERING & PLACEMAKING

Cedar Hill is focused on creating vibrant, active gathering spaces that foster community engagement and strengthen connections among residents. The City is dedicated to designing well-crafted, inclusive public areas where people can come together to learn, meet their neighbors, and build a strong social fabric, enriching the community experience and enhancing our city's cohesion.



AGES & ABILITIES

Cedar Hill is dedicated to fostering meaningful connections with residents of all ages by creating engaging, educational, and recreational spaces and programs that evolve with the changing needs of families. The City is committed to designing inclusive and accessible parks and public areas that adapt to the needs of residents throughout their lives, from young families to seniors, ensuring that our facilities and programs support and inspire a vibrant, active community.



ENHANCING & MAINTAINING

Cedar Hill is committed to continuously enhancing and maintaining public spaces and infrastructure to ensure they remain vibrant, functional, and welcoming. By investing in ongoing improvements and diligent upkeep, the City aims to provide high-quality environments that meet the evolving needs of our community and support a sustainable, engaging urban experience.

VISION STATEMENT

**CEDAR HILL'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES
WILL BE VIBRANT HUBS FOR RECREATION,
CONNECTION, AND NATURE.**

**PRIORITIZING INCLUSIVITY,
ACCESSIBILITY, AND CONSERVATION,
OUR PARKS WILL ENHANCE RESIDENTS'
QUALITY OF LIFE, PRESERVE NATURAL
SPACES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, AND
CREATE A DESTINATION WHERE LOCALS
AND VISITORS CAN EXPERIENCE THE
BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS.**