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Introduction – Why Plan for Parks?





Planning to Address Future Park and Recreation Needs

Cedar Park is located northwest of Austin, Texas in Williamson and Travis Counties, and has been one of the fastest growing communities in Texas over the past decade. The city's ideal location and highway access to both Austin and to the Hill Country make it a highly desirable place to live in the greater Austin area. The demand for quality housing has resulted in much of Cedar Park being developed as master planned communities with a good network of smaller neighborhood parks. But the city's quick growth has also led to a significant increase in demand for active park facilities and recreation amenities.

A strong park system and many recreation choices contribute to the real and perceived quality of life in a community such as Cedar Park. Parks are visible reminders of the quality of a community and whether or not it is a great place to live and work in.



As a result of the city's high rate of growth, Cedar Park decided to update the existing citywide park and open space master plan in 2004. This document is the culmination of the park planning effort, and is intended to guide the staff and elected officials of the city as they decide how best to meet and prioritize the recreation needs of a growing city over the next ten years.

Purpose of the Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Purpose - This master plan establishes goals and priorities, and provides an assessment of the existing park system. The plan:

- Builds upon the recommendations and actions in the 2000 Parks Master Plan
- Points out deficiencies in the system and recommends alternatives to address and correct those deficiencies
- Looks at the potential growth of the city over the next five to ten years, and assesses where





additional facilities will be needed as the city grows, and what types of facilities are most needed;

- Guides city staff in acquiring land to meet current and future park and open space needs
- Prioritizes key recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible
- Is intended to guide city staff and city leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years

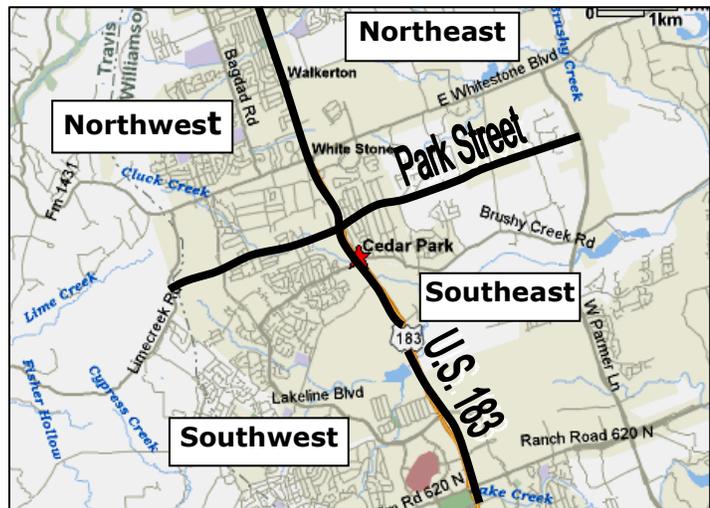
Jurisdiction and Planning Area

Jurisdiction Covered by the Plan - Cedar Park is the primary governmental entity charged with providing recreational facilities for the citizens of Cedar Park and the residents of areas in the City's extra territorial jurisdictional (ETJ). Ancillary recreational facilities are provided by other area municipalities, such as Leander, Austin, Round Rock, and Williamson and Travis Counties. The Leander Independent School District, which provides public education for the residents of Cedar Park, also provides some recreational opportunities on many of its campuses in Cedar Park.

This plan is intended to cover all of the city as well as the areas included in the current extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Planning Areas - The city has been divided into four general planning areas. These areas are shown in the illustration on this page, and for the purposes of this report are referred to as follows:

- **Northwest Area** – North of Park Street, and West of U.S. 183
- **Northeast Area** – North of Park Street, and East of U.S. 183
- **Southeast Area** – South of Park Street, and East of U.S. 183
- **Southwest Area** – South of Park Street, and West of U.S. 183



The Parks and Open Space Master Plan follows the general guidelines for local park master plans established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).



Plan Time Frame and Updating

The plan is formulated to address the time frame from the year 2006 through 2016.

Plan Time frame - Many of the recommendations of the plan are valid for a period of up to ten years, but should be evaluated periodically. Local planning requirements issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recommend that a Parks and Open Space Master Plan should be completely updated after a ten-year period, or before if any major developments occur that significantly alter the recreation needs of the city.

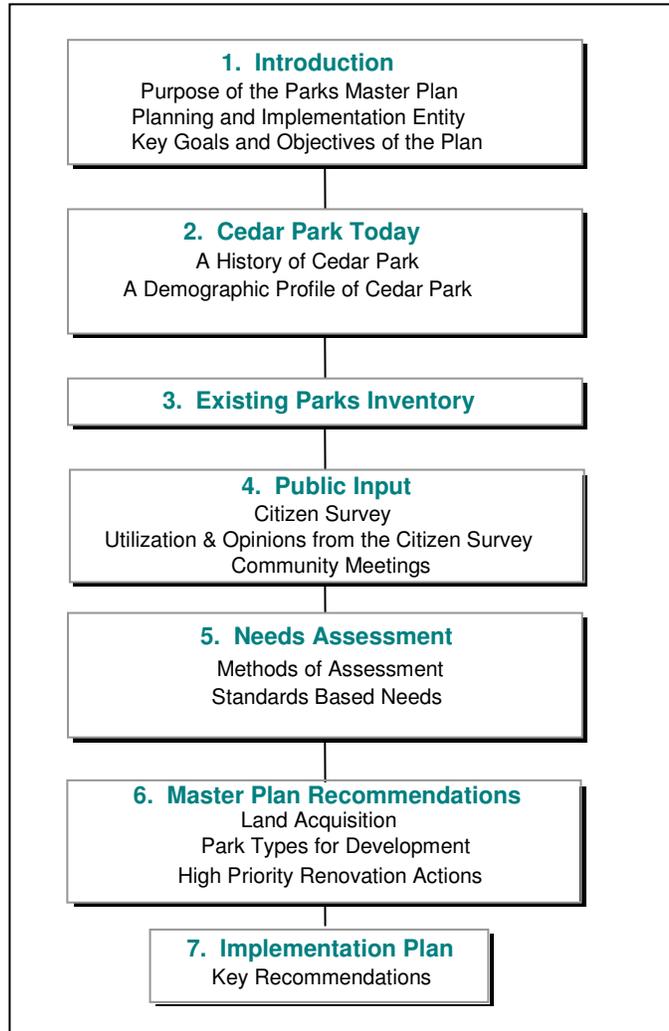
Periodic Review of the Plan - An annual review workshop by the Cedar Park Park Advisory Board and city staff will be conducted to review progress and annual successes. Bi-annual updates by city staff will also be prepared by the Parks Advisory Board for review and adoption by the City Council. More frequent updates may be required if special needs or occurrences require modifications to the plan. In all cases, public involvement through citizen meetings, interviews, and workshops will be included in any updating process.





Components of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Plan Components - This master plan includes the components shown on this page, and meets the requirements for a Parks and Open Space Master Plan as established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.



Components of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan



Goals of the Cedar Park Parks System

Why goals are important - Goals are an important part of the park planning process. The goals expressed in this master plan reflect the desires of the citizens, boards, elected officials, and staff of Cedar Park, and provide the underlying philosophical framework for the decisions that the City of Cedar Park will make when evaluating the need for park or recreation improvements. They will also guide decision makers on issues that are not specifically addressed in the master plan.

The Importance of Goals - Goals are an important part of the park planning process. They provide the underlying philosophical framework for decisions and also guide decision makers on issues that are not specifically addressed in the Parks & Open Space Master Plan.

How goals are developed - These goals are based on input received from the citizen survey, during public meetings, and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Department, City Management staff and the City Council of Cedar Park.

The goals of the 2006-2016 Parks and Open Space Master Plan are as follows:

Goal # 1

Maintain Cedar Park's park system as one of the premier park systems in Central Texas.

- 1.1 Implement a long-range program for continued improvement of Cedar Park's parks system based upon the City of Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- 1.2 Identify benchmarks that will indicate progress towards meeting this goal.
- 1.3 Identify park planning areas with the greatest need for park facilities, pursue the acquisition of land or resources as needed, and develop facilities where needed.
- 1.4 Identify sites for a premier location for citywide festival events, and develop strategies to fund the development of the festival site.

Goal # 2

Provide an even and adequate distribution of park facilities citywide.

- 2.1 Use diverse and reasonable criteria to identify park needs, including needs by sector, reasonable calculations of potential level of use, and the ability of each facility to respond to citywide needs in a cost effective manner.
- 2.2 Focus on addressing indoor as well as outdoor recreation needs over the next five to ten years.
- 2.3 Preserve the ability to respond to unique acquisition or development opportunities as they arise, even if out of the proposed sequence of improvements, provided that they respond to key needs and goals.
- 2.4 Provide adequate funding and resources to ensure that the park and recreation needs of all citizens are met.



- 2.5 Encourage and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in planning, development, maintenance, and operation of the city's parks and open space system.
- 2.6 Periodically update the long-range plan and standards to reflect changing conditions in the city and provide a forum for citizen input.

Goal # 3

Plan neighborhood parks to become focal points in the city and to promote the beautification of Cedar Park.

- 3.1 Incorporate design features so that each park becomes a green focal point of the neighborhood around it.

Goal # 4

Preserve and protect unique natural open spaces, floodplain corridors, and drainage corridors within the city and its extra-territorial jurisdictional (ETJ) lands.

- 4.1 Establish criteria to identify key open space areas and natural areas worthy of preservation throughout the city and its ETJ.
- 4.2 Identify key natural space corridors and lands with unique natural qualities throughout the city, and prioritize areas for preservation.
- 4.3 Establish policies and methods to preserve key natural areas in and around the city. Use mechanisms that preserve needed floodway and drainage ways.
- 4.4 Establish policies that encourage private owners to preserve and protect key natural areas within the city and its' ETJ.
- 4.5 Encourage educational institutions, semi-private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage, and maintain natural and open space conservation areas within the city and its' ETJ.

Goal # 5

Promote partnerships with other public, semi-public, and private entities to most efficiently use public funding to provide parks and open space in Cedar Park.

- 5.1 Work to strengthen local organizations that can assist with providing park and recreation facilities and programs for the residents of Cedar Park.
- 5.2 Actively pursue partnerships to develop greenbelts and trails throughout the city.
- 5.3 Continue to actively pursue mechanisms that allow the private sector to build or fund some park and recreation facilities in Cedar Park.
- 5.4 Review the Parkland Dedication Ordinance to ensure that it remains current with accepted practices in the State.
- 5.5 Coordinate extensively with other recreation providers in the area. Consider joint development of park and recreation facilities and programs where those opportunities can be shown to adequately fulfill the needs of the citizens of Cedar Park.
- 5.6 Actively promote the continued beautification of key city corridors.





Goal # 6

Continue to maintain all City of Cedar Park parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition

- 6.1 Provide city parks staff with the manpower and funding resources to maintain all parklands and facilities in a superior manner. Continue to provide adequate operations and maintenance resources as new recreational facilities are developed and added to the parks system.
- 6.2 Use native plant materials and xeriscape techniques where appropriate to reduce maintenance and irrigation costs in parks and on city properties.
- 6.3 Explore and implement innovative techniques to partner with other governmental, non-profit or private organizations to enhance the city's park maintenance.

Goal # 7

Continue to develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout Cedar Park.

- 7.1 Work towards creating pedestrian and bikeway corridors and pathways to connect all parts of the city such as neighborhoods, parks, schools, civic facilities and businesses.
- 7.2 Preserve and utilize drainage, utility and natural creek corridors as potential linkage corridors throughout the city.

