



Executive Summary

Introduction

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.

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 10 years.

Plan Timeframe - 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.

Goals of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan - 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 take 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.

These goals are based on input received from the citizens of Cedar Park. The goals of the 2006-2016 Master Plan are as follows:

1. Maintain Cedar Park's park system as one of the premier park systems in Central Texas.
2. Provide an even and adequate distribution of park facilities citywide.
3. Plan neighborhood parks to become focal points in the city and to promote the beautification of Cedar Park.
4. Preserve and protect unique natural open spaces, floodplain and drainage corridors within the city and its extra-territorial jurisdictional (ETJ) lands.
5. Promote partnerships with other public, semi-public, and private entities to most efficiently use public funding to provide parks and open space.
6. Continue to maintain all City of Cedar Park parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition
7. Continue to develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout Cedar Park.

Population Growth - The table below illustrates the population growth of Cedar Park since 1970. The growth in the extra territorial jurisdictional areas (ETJ) around the city are also shown, given that Cedar Park is the central provider of recreational facilities for a significantly larger area than just the area within the City's current limits.

Table I.1 Population Estimates & Forecasts*			
<u>Year</u>	<u>City Population</u>	<u>ETJ Population</u>	<u>Total Service Area Population</u>
2000 Census	26,049		
2000	28,675	12,590	41,265
2006	44,749	20,848	65,597
2010	53,875	25,099	78,974
2015	63,674	29,665	93,339

*Prepared by Cedar Park Planning Department for end of year shown





Per the 2000 Census, Cedar Park has a relatively young population, as shown in Table 2.2 below. 35.6% of the population is 19 years of age or younger, compared to 32% for the state of Texas as a whole. The population of the working age group, ages 20 through 59 is 58.3%, compared to 56% for the state of Texas. Lastly, 6.2% of the population is over 60 years old, versus 13% for the state. The median resident age in Cedar Park is 31.1 years.

Size of the Existing Park System in Cedar Park - the parks system in Cedar Park includes a total of 48 park sites containing a total of approximately 848 acres of parklands and natural areas. This includes city owned, homeowner controlled park facilities and association owned parklands (LCPY Complex) in the planning area. An inventory of the existing facilities in each park can be found in Chapter 3.

Citizen Input - the recommendations of the 2006 Parks and Open Space Master Plan are designed to reflect the recreational needs and desires of the citizens of Cedar Park. Citizen input helps determine which current facilities are most used, where key needs exist, and what level of emphasis the citizens of Cedar Park would like to place on recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

During the planning process, multiple methods were used to generate citizen input. These included presentations to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, interviews with key area entities that influence recreation, an extensive citywide mail out survey, and citywide public meetings and hearings. A detailed summary of all citizen input received during the planning process can be found in Chapter 4.

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment is the most critical component of the parks master planning effort. An assessment of what deficiencies exist in the parks system is vital so actions can be developed that address those deficiencies.

The key findings of the Standards based assessment, the demand based assessment, and the resource based assessment were combined to create the following summary of key recreational needs in Cedar Park for the 2006-2016 and beyond time period. The findings are divided into land and acreage needs, park type needs, facility needs, and other special needs or opportunities driven by specific existing resources.

Land and Park Type Needs

- **Neighborhood Parks** – the city has an excellent supply of neighborhood parks, but has small pockets where additional park facilities could be added if feasible. These mostly occur in the older sections of the city, and can primarily be addressed through the development of larger parks that serve larger sectors of the city.
- **Community Park Needs** – continuing the findings of the previous master plan, the city continues to face a significant shortage of large parks. Elizabeth Milburn and Brushy Creek Lake Park remain the only two large





parks in the city. Addressing the constantly increasing need for large parks should be the highest priority over the next decade.

- **An athletic Park** – the potential loss of the LCP Athletic Complex to re-development could severely impact active sports in Cedar Park. The city should begin planning for replacement facilities or consider the acquisition of development rights to the LCP property.
- **Linear Parks** – additional linear park corridors throughout the city should be included as a key long term form-giver in Cedar Park. Preservation of these corridors will primarily occur in the un-developed portions of the city.

Key Facility Needs

Key facility needs are based on a combination of the different methods of assessing each type of recreation facility. The following are the top eleven key facility needs in Cedar Park, based on the city's facility standards, current number of facilities, facility usage, and citizen input through the survey and public meetings.

1. **Aquatic facilities** – the city's current facilities meet only 33% of the desired level and citizens have repeatedly expressed a desire for a major new leisure pool facility. Locations for competitive swimming are also needed, but will require joint development with other area governmental and non-profit recreation providers.
2. **Trails** – the city has a significant number of trails, but should continue to develop public trails in areas of the city that are underserved. Trails are particularly needed in the north and northwest areas of the city.
3. **An indoor recreation center** – the city lacks a central location that can serve as a hub for recreation activities. Most cities with a comparable population have a recreation center; Cedar Park should address this deficiency in the next five years.
4. **Undeveloped open space and land for additional parks** – as the city continues to grow, undeveloped areas should be preserved through acquisition or preservation easements.
5. **Picnic facilities** – additional picnicking facilities, especially with covered tables, are critically needed in the larger parks. Picnic facilities were the second most requested facility by citizens.
6. **Additional picnic pavilions** – outdoor family gatherings are one of the most popular recreation activities in the city for all age groups. Hot weather makes shade a critical component to encourage the use of public park space. The city could use additional pavilions at the new community parks.
7. **Practice fields for baseball and soccer** – new practice areas for baseball, softball and soccer should be provided in all parks and school sites where feasible. This may entail drainage improvement and adding backstops.
8. **Basketball courts** – the city has a significant deficiency of outdoor courts, including large shaded courts for summer play. Courts were one of the most requested facilities by citizens.
9. **Baseball fields** – additional baseball fields will be required as the city continues to grow. New facilities can be added in new community parks





throughout the city. Softball fields are also required, but the immediate need will be met at the new Brushy Creek Recreation Park once it opens.

10. Soccer fields – soccer will remain popular and new facilities will be needed as the city continues to grow. Fields can be added to new community parks throughout the city. The immediate need will be met at the new Brushy Creek Recreation Park once it opens.

11. A festival/large event site – a location and funding sources for the development of a large outdoor citywide events facility needs to be identified. Development should occur within the next five to ten years.

Master Plan Recommendations

The 16 items shown on the following table comprise the major priority recommendations of the 2006-2016 Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Costs that are shown are before any real design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. All costs include a cost escalation factor, assumed to be in the 5% per year range. Detailed concepts and fully developed cost projections will be developed as each recommendation begins to be implemented. Costs should be reviewed as soon as new escalation and inflation data becomes available.

These recommendations should be implemented over the general life of this master plan, which covers the next 5 to 10 years. Other longer range recommendations, such as the acquisition of land for future parks as well as trails to be developed in the future are also included as part of the recommendations of this master plan.

Prioritization – Actions are divided into three categories, based on the level of need

- **High Priority Items** – to be initiated or completed within the next five years.
- **Medium Priority Items** – to be initiated or completed within the next five to ten years.
- **Long Range Priority Items** – to be initiated as opportunities occur, or beyond the immediate 10 year timeframe of this master plan.

The prioritization shown in the Master Plan is intended to guide staff and council actions, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Plan Updates

The 2006-2016 Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan is a guide to be used to develop the existing system over the next 5 to 10 years. However, during that time frame changes will occur that impact the recommendations of the master plan. For example, the population may increase more rapidly than projected; the community may indicate a special need for a facility not listed in the recommendations; or development of some of the recommendations listed in this master plan will occur. A review and update of this master plan by city staff should be conducted every two years or when a significant change does occur.

