The 2015 Parks & Open Space Master Plan for Cedar Park

HALFF

March 2015

City of Cedar Park

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN 2015-2025

March 2015

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March, 12 2015

Mr. Curt Randa, Director
Parks and Recreation Department
City of Cedar Park
1435 Main Street
Cedar Park, Texas 78613

Reference: 2015 Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Dear Mr. Randa:

Halff Associates Inc. is pleased to submit the 2015 Parks and Open Space Master Plan. This document is the culmination of an extensive planning process involving the elected officials, staff, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and most importantly, the citizens of Cedar Park. Our purpose has been to create a timeless document that represents the vision for the Parks System over the next ten years. This document is intended to guide the Parks system, but also incorporates flexibility in responding to unique opportunities as they arise.

We have enjoyed working with the citizens and staff of the City, and believe that this document will help guide Cedar Park as it creates one of the best park systems in the State of Texas.

Sincerely,

HALFF ASSOCIATES, INC.

James E. Carrillo

Jim Carrillo, FAICP, ASLA
Vice President, Director of Planning

Acknowledgements

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan would not have been possible without the feedback, input, and support provided by Cedar Park's citizens. We'd like to thank all participants in the planning process, other interested individuals who gave their feedback on this planning effort, and members of City staff. The following individuals are recognized for their significant contributions to the preparation of the 2015 Parks and Open Space Master Plan for Cedar Park.

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Julie Hastings
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Previous Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Maria Talamo, Chair
Dick Lewis
Kathy Cook
Jessica May
Gail Lindholm

Special thanks are extended to those interested citizens who participated in the public meetings held throughout this master planning process.

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Executive Summary

Why Do We Plan for Parks?

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 in which to live and work. 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 Central Texas 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. The City's quick growth over the past decade led to a significant increase in demand for active park facilities, and now the demand is shifting again towards more passive nature facilities and preserved open space.

As a result of the accomplishments made since 2006, the rapid growth in population, and changes in citizens' opinions, the City of Cedar Park determined it was necessary to update the Parks and Open Space Master Plan that was adopted in 2006. 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 the City over the next ten years.

Goals of the Cedar Park Parks System

The goals expressed in this master plan 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. These goals are adapted from the 2006 Master Plan and are based on input received from the citizen survey, during public meetings, and meetings with City staff.

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.

Goal 1: Maintain Cedar Park's park system as one of the premier park systems in Central Texas.

Goal 2: Provide an even and adequate distribution of park facilities citywide.

Goal 3: Plan neighborhood parks to become focal points in the City and to promote the beautification of Cedar Park.

Goal 4: Preserve and protect unique natural open spaces, floodplain corridors, and drainage corridors 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.

Goal 6: Continue to maintain all City of Cedar Park parks and recreation facilities in superior condition.

Goal 7: Continue to develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout Cedar Park.

Size of Existing Parks

The parks system in Cedar Park includes a total of 47 city-owned park sites containing a total of approximately 927 acres of parkland and natural areas. In addition to city-owned parks, there are other parks managed by the YMCA, Williamson County, CTRMA trailhead, and Cedar Park Youth Baseball and Softball Complex in and near Cedar Park which contribute an additional 909.8 acres of parkland. Furthermore, the HOA parks within Cedar Park total approximately 255 acres for the residents of those neighborhoods in the City.

Summary of Park Needs

Cedar Park is quickly approaching build-out; however, the City still has opportunities for better utilized parkland. There are two large community parks that are still undeveloped (Lakeline Park and Town Center Park), and many of the existing smaller parks have the potential to be enhanced. Park needs are discussed below.

- **Neighborhood Parks** – The City has an excellent supply of neighborhood parks, especially when the private HOA parks are counted. In fact, the areas of the City that are currently lacking in neighborhood parkland are areas that are zoned for commercial purposes or large-lot residential. These

areas currently do not have City services, and it is expected that neighborhood parks will not be needed in these areas throughout the duration of this master plan because of the land use classifications.

- **Community Park Needs** – The most significant parkland need is to develop the remaining community parks within the City. Two of the City's community parks, Town Center Park and Lakeline Park, are mostly or entirely undeveloped. Developing these two parks should be the highest priority over the next decade.

- **Linear Parks** – The existing greenbelt corridors should be developed with trails and other amenities such as benches, lighting and trailheads where feasible and as funding becomes available. 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 remaining undeveloped portions of the City and can be done through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.

- **Parks in older parts of the City** – Parks with historical significance, that preserve key open spaces, or that frame and compliment major civic or community facilities should be developed as opportunities occur, especially in the central, older part of the City.

Summary of Key Facility Needs

The prioritization of needs is based on information received from public input as well as from the needs assessment formed from facility & acreage levels of service. The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in Cedar Park are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input from a citywide basis – needs were in top ten most important as listed by Cedar Park citizens
- Level of need based on direct citizen input from public comments
- Level of service needs established by comparing target levels to actual levels
- Opportunities for recreation facilities based on existing physical conditions in or near Cedar Park
- The condition of existing park facilities in the City

Table E.2
Key Needs Summary

Citywide Online Survey
- Trails
- Nature areas/nature preserve
- Playgrounds
- Picnic areas
- Amphitheater

Public Meeting Input
- Preserved land/open space
- Additional trails
- Markers and signs along trails
- Tennis center
- Lighted fishing pier
- Organizing programs for youth and low income families

Available Natural Resources
- Linear park corridors along creeks and drainage ways
- Water based parks, using remaining conservation lake
- Cave and open space preserves
- Reuse of treated effluent water for irrigation

Level of Service Assessment
- Trails
- Nature preserves/natural areas
- Group pavilions
- Flat fields (soccer, football, lacrosse)
- Sand volleyball courts

Areas of deficiency meeting all or most of the criteria shown above were ranked as high priority elements, and are slated to receive the highest level of attention over the next five to ten years. The following are the top ten key facility needs in Cedar Park.

1. **Trails** – The City has a significant number of trails, but should continue to develop connected trails in all areas. Trails are particularly needed in the north and northeast, and the extension of the Brushy Creek Regional Trail to the west is a high priority. Cedar Park should also explore opportunities for different types of trails within the City. Paddling trails and birding trails can be offered along Brushy Creek, and mountain biking trails can be available at the nature and cave preserve areas in the west.

2. **Nature areas/nature preserves –** As the City continues to grow, residents are seeking opportunities to be in nature. Preserved natural areas are a

high priority and should be designated in areas where it is feasible. Natural open space could be defined as a natural preserved area, an outdoor classroom, an interpretive area, or cave preserves.

3. **Additional large 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 all year. The City should add one to two more pavilions at the existing community parks, and at least four pavilions when development of Lakeline Park and Town Center Park occurs.

4. **Flat fields (for soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.) –** Soccer and football will remain popular sports in Texas, and lacrosse is quickly growing in participation. New flat fields are needed to meet these demands. Fields should be added to the new community park, Lakeline Park.

5. **Sand volleyball courts** – For many young people in some communities, sand volleyball is an opportunity to "see and be seen." This requires sand volleyball courts to be placed in a highly visible location as well as clumping them together. Town Center Park would be an ideal location for additional sand volleyball courts in Cedar Park. These courts, as well as basketball and bocce ball courts within the City, should be lighted where it is determined to be appropriate and needed.

6. **Picnic facilities** – Additional picnicking facilities, especially with covered tables, are needed in all the larger parks. Picnic facilities are often times one of the most heavily used amenities in parks. Because of such high use, picnic facilities should be inspected annually with minor damaged being repaired as needed, and they should be replaced approximately every ten years.

7. **Aquatic facilities (sprayground)** – Long term, the City should invest in a second sprayground facility, possibly at Lakeline Park. Spraygrounds provide a popular and lower cost aquatic facility for residents.

8. **Practice fields for baseball and soccer** – Currently many of the elementary schools in Cedar Park offer practice backstops which help meet the demand for practice space. These amenities are available for public use and are not fenced off; however, it is unknown if the facilities will always be available. Therefore, new practice areas for baseball, softball, football and soccer should be provided in all city parks where feasible.

9. **Tennis courts –** While the current supply of tennis courts may be adequate, the distribution of the courts is very poor. The existing tennis leagues in the City do not have an adequate supply of tennis courts that they can program for practice, games and tournaments. The City should consider conducting a tennis center feasibility study to help determine if a tennis center is needed, what size of a center the community could support, and where an appropriate location would be for such a facility. The study should also

explore the potential demand for multi-use courts for other sports such as racquetball, squash or pickle ball.

10. **Fishing opportunities** – Cedar Park has many opportunities to offer fishing facilities at the various lakes and ponds that are within the existing parks. Fishing piers similar to what is offered at Brushy Creek Lake Park should be programmed into both Town Center Park and Lakeline Park. Lakeline Park also has the potential to offer a lighted fishing pier for evening use.

Recommendations

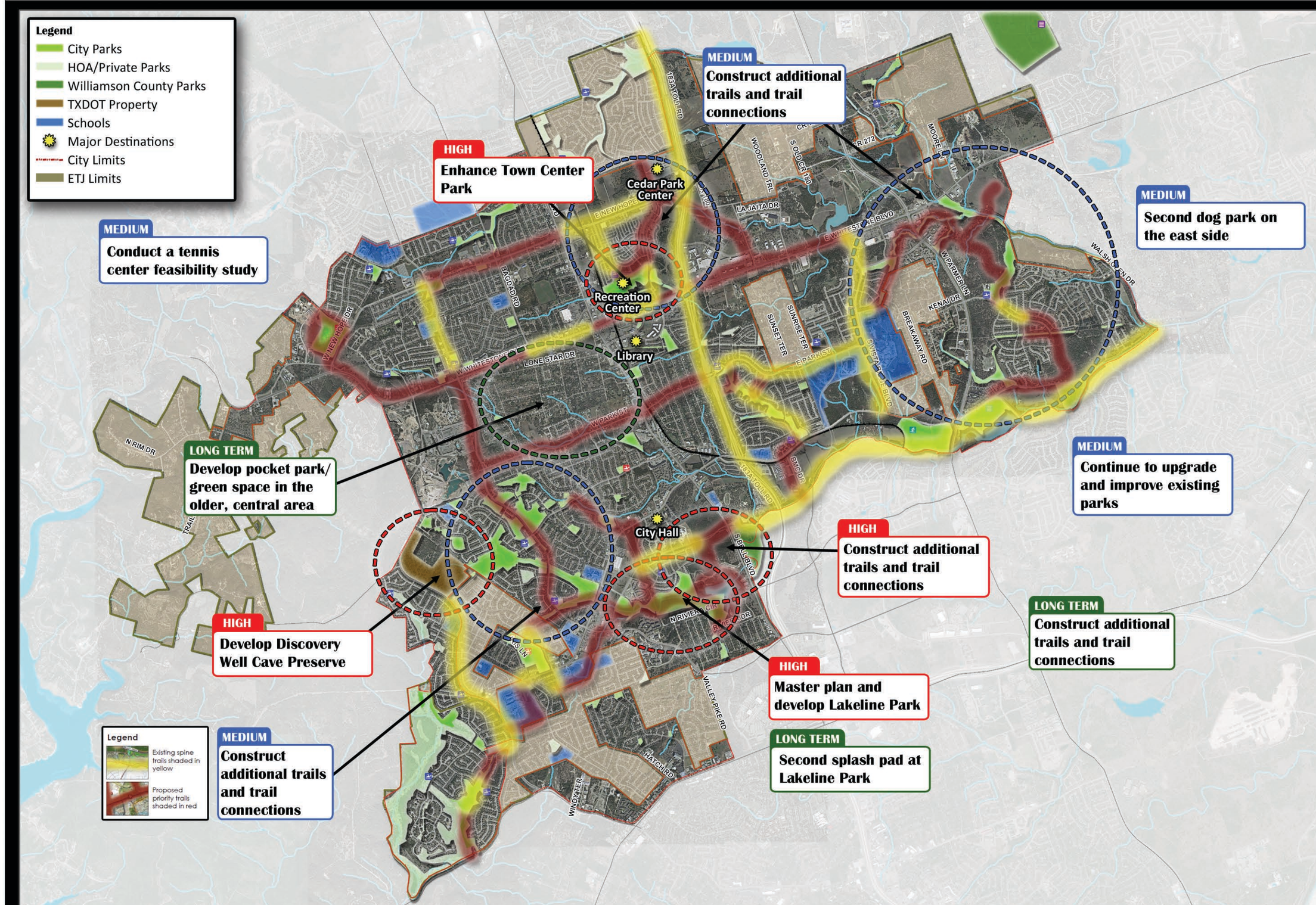
The following items comprise the major priority recommendations of the 2015 Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but are not specific concepts or actual plans. Costs that are shown are also predesign, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. Construction costs should be monitored, and changes to the Action Plan costs should be revised as costs fluctuate. Detailed project costs, based on actual designs should be prepared as each recommendation begins to be implemented.

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 Term Priority Items** – To be initiated as opportunities occur, or beyond the immediate 10 year timeframe of this master plan.

The map on the following page illustrates the overall parks recommendations for the entire City. Note that the prioritization shown in this plan is intended to guide staff and council actions, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise. The following should be considered when reviewing the Action Plan:

- **Sequence** – The sequence is based directly on the recommended importance and need for each action. However, some actions may take longer to occur. In that case, other actions may be easier to accomplish sooner, but should not diminish the need for higher priority actions.
- **Funding Possibilities** – The sale of certificates of obligation may generate funding, such as a Quality of Life Bond. Other potential funding sources are noted in the table, but are not secured. Rather, they should be considered as possibilities to also pursue.
- **Projected Costs** – The projected costs per item are intended to establish an order of magnitude cost range. These estimates are made prior to any designs being developed, and will vary as more detailed design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar types of facilities and efforts.
- **Suggested Timeframe** – The suggested timeframes are approximate and are intended to establish a sequence for all actions. The prioritization is intended to guide staff and city leaders, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.



Recommendations of the Master Plan

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

CEDAR PARK

HALFF

Cedar Park Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Action Plan 2015-2025

Priority	Action	City Sector Impact	Estimated Cost Range		Type of Dev.	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
HIGH PRIORITY - YEARS 1 THROUGH 5			**Low Cost Range**	**High Cost Range**			
1	**Master plan and develop Lakeline Park**	**Citywide**	$5,000,000	$10,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2017
2	**Develop Discovery Well Cave Preserve (with TXDOT)**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$3,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2017
3	**Enhance Town Center Park**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
4	**Construct additional trails and trail connections**	**West**	$1,000,000	$3,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
Estimated Total for Year 1 through 5 High Priority Items			**$10,000,000**	**$21,000,000**			
MEDIUM RANGE PRIORITY - YEARS 6 THROUGH 10							
5	**Second dog park (1-2 acres) at an existing park on the east side of the City**	**East**	$20,000	$40,000	Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
6	**Conduct a feasibility study for a tennis center**	**Citywide**	$30,000	$50,000	Feasibility Study	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2021
7	**Continue to upgrade and improve existing parks**	**Citywide**	$1,000,000	$3,500,000	Redevelopment, Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2025
8	**Construct additional trails and trail connections based on high priority recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2021-2025
Estimated Total for Year 6 through 10 Medium Priority Items			**$3,050,000**	**$8,590,000**			
LONG RANGE PRIORITY - 10 YEARS AND BEYOND			**Low Cost Range**	**High Cost Range**			
9	**Acquire pocket/neighborhood park in the older, central area of the City**	**Central**	$500,000	$750,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2021-2025
10	**Second splash pad at an existing park on the west side of the City (possible location Lakeline Park or Town Center Park)**	**West**	$425,000	$600,000	Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	Beyond 2025
11	**Construct additional trails and trail connections based on high priority recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan**	**Citywide**	$2,500,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	Beyond 2025
Estimated Total for Long Range Priorities			**$3,425,000**	**$6,350,000**			
Total Potential Expenditure Range For 2015 to 2025 Planning Timeframe and Beyond - (note that grants and donations may fund portions of the amount shown)			**$16,475,000**	**$35,940,000**			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants, partner participation and donations may fund portions of the amounts shown and may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $50,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $20,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

Chapter 1

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 two decades. 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 Central Texas 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. The City's quick growth over the past decade led to a significant increase in demand for active park facilities, and now the demand is shifting again towards more passive nature facilities and preserved open space.

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 in which to live and work.

As a result of the accomplishments made since 2006, the rapid growth in population, and changes in citizens' opinions, the City of Cedar Park determined it was necessary to update the Parks and Open Space Master Plan that was adopted in 2006. 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 the 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 2006 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, and assesses where and what type of additional facilities will be needed as the City grows
- Prioritizes key recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan so that the most significant deficiencies are addressed as quickly as possible
- Acts as a guide for City staff and City leaders in determining where and how parks funding should be allocated over the next five to ten years

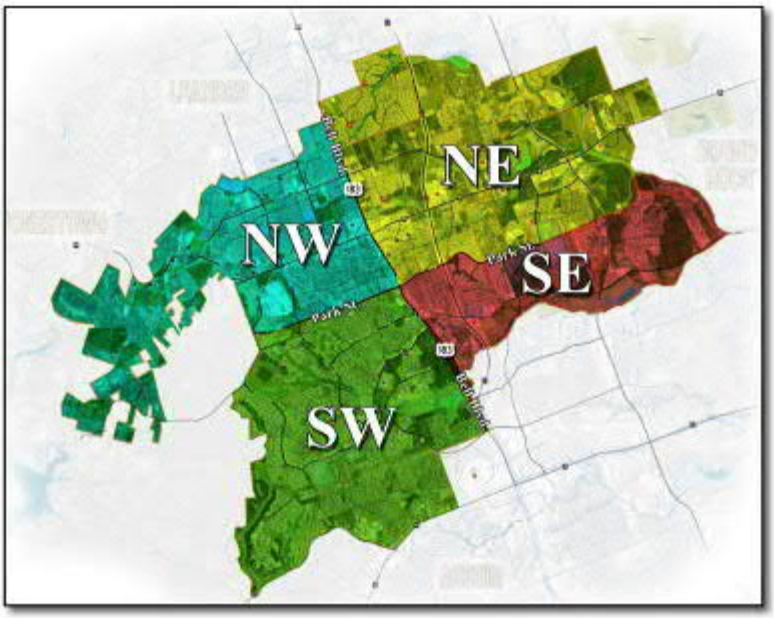
Jurisdiction and Planning Area

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. Finally, many homeowners associations and neighborhoods provide smaller park and aquatic facilities to their neighborhood residents.

This plan is intended to cover all of the City as well as the areas included in the current 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 Timeframe and Updating

The plan is formulated to address the time frame from the year 2015 through 2025.

Plan timeframe - Many of the recommendations of this 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 should be conducted to review progress and annual successes. 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 this 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 the following page, and meets the requirements for a Parks and Open Space Master Plan as established by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

1. Introduction
Purpose of the Parks Master Plan
Planning and Implementation Entity
Key Goals and Objectives of the Plan

2. Cedar Park Today
A History of Cedar Park
A Demographic Profile of Cedar Park

3. Existing Parks Inventory
Park Standards for Cedar Park
Existing Inventory

4. Public Input
Citizen Survey
Opinions from the Citizen Survey
Public Meeting

5. Needs Assessment
Methods of Assessment
Standards Based Needs
Demand Based Needs
Resource Based Needs

6. Master Plan Recommendations
Future Park Development
Trail Development
Priority Renovations and Enhancements

7. Implementation Plan
Action Plan Recommendations
Funding Strategies
Maintenance and Operations
Future Updates

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. They 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 help guide decision makers on issues that are not specifically addressed in the master plan.

How goals are developed - These goals are adapted from the 2006 Master Plan and are based on input received from the citizen survey, during public meetings, and meetings with City staff and the City Council.

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.

The goals of the 2015 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 Continue to develop and enhance the existing undeveloped parkland that is currently owned in the City.

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 planning area, 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 Provide adequate funding and resources to ensure that the park and recreation needs of all citizens are met.

2.3 Encourage and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in planning, development, maintenance, and operation of the City's parks and open space system.
2.4 Periodically update the long-range plan and standards to reflect changing conditions in the City and provide a forum for citizen input.
2.5 Preserve the ability to respond to unique development opportunities as they arise, even if out of the proposed sequence of improvements, provided that they respond to key needs and goals.

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 ETJ.**

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.**

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 corridors in the City.

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.

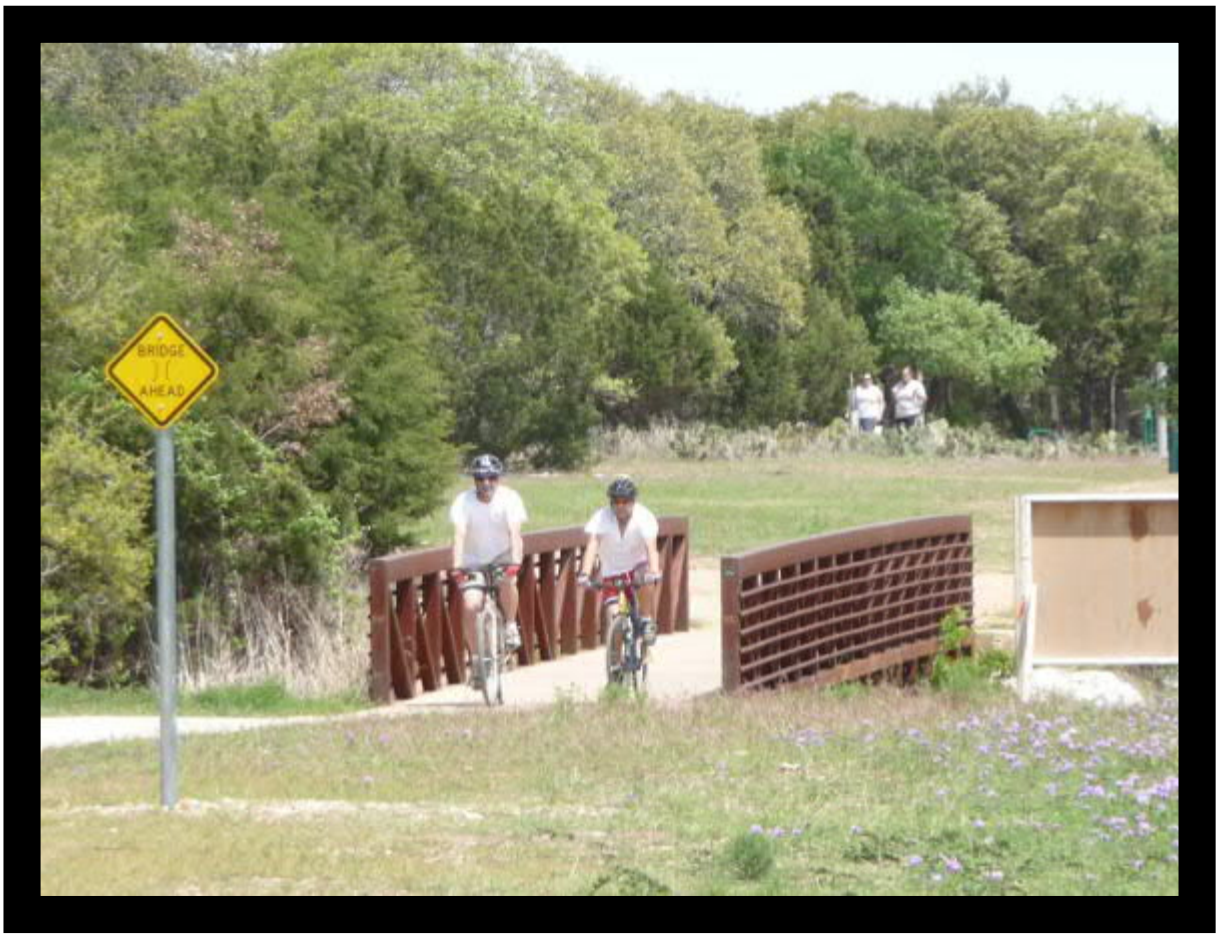
6.3 Explore and implement innovative techniques to partner with other governmental, non-profit or private organizations to enhance the City's park maintenance.

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.

7.3 Continue implementing the recommendations of the 2010 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan.

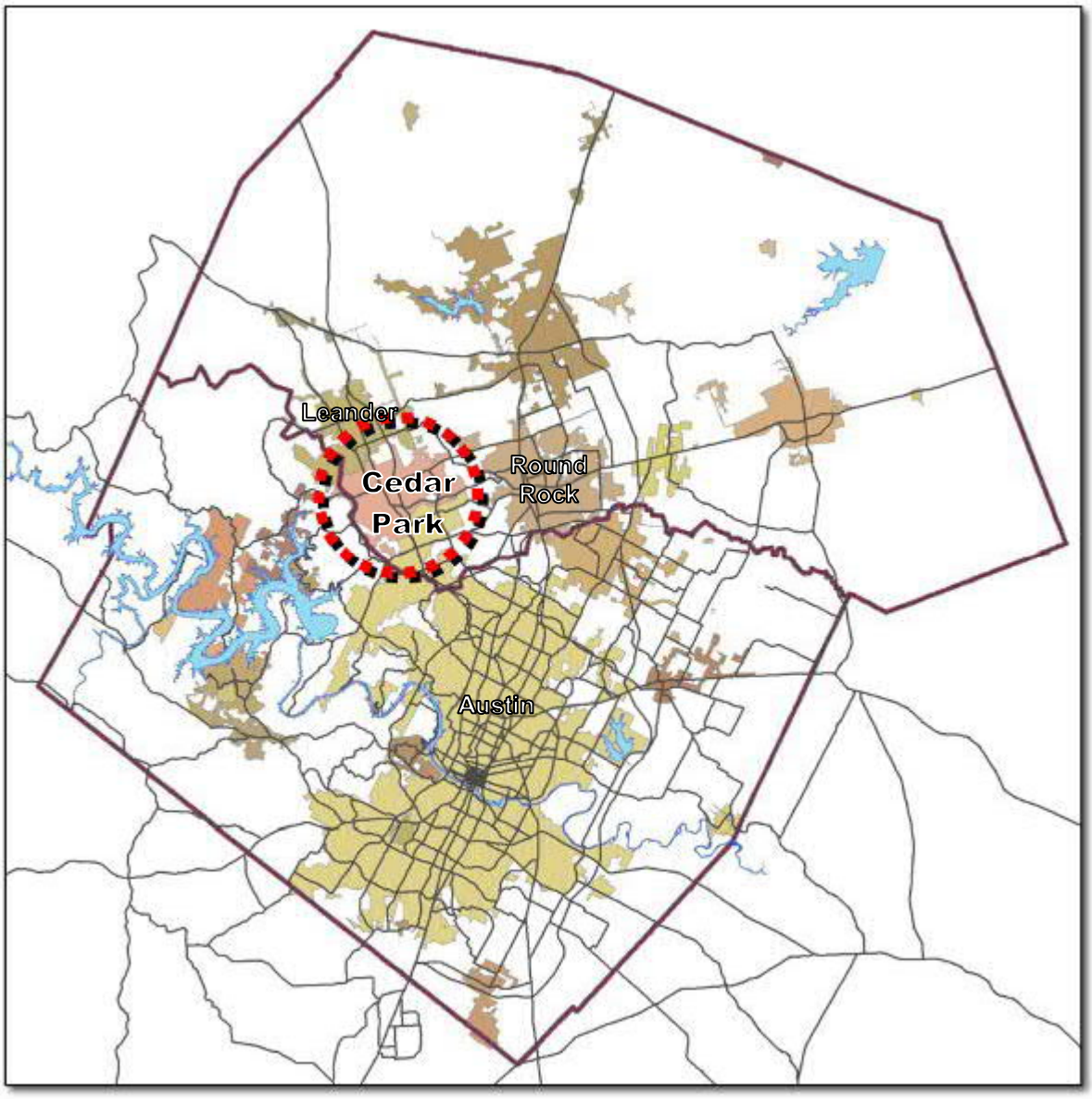


Chapter 2
Cedar Park Today

Introduction

Why include history and demographics in this master plan? - Understanding the context of the City is a key part of the park planning process. Both the physical and the demographic makeup of the City help determine the current and future recreation needs of its citizens.

Cedar Park's geographic location - As shown below, Cedar Park lies largely within southwest Williamson County, with a portion of the City's southwesterly edge in adjacent Travis County. The City is surrounded by Leander on the north and northwest, Round Rock on the northeast and east, Jonestown on the west, and Austin on the southwest, south, and southeast.



A Brief History of Cedar Park

1800 **Early settlement of the Cedar Park area** - Archaeological explorations along the banks of Buttercup Creek and Brushy Creek have found indications of Native American sites in the Cedar Park area dating back 10,000 years. Native Indian tribes such as the Tonkawas lived in the Cedar Park area until Texas became a republic in 1836. Concerted efforts by the Texas government to resettle the Indian populations in the 1840's opened up the land to the northwest of Austin for settlement.

1873 **Settlement by George and Harriet Cluck** - George and Harriet Cluck settled in the Running Brushy area in the early 1870s, soon after they returned from a cattle drive on the Chisholm Trail. They built a log home and were instrumental in the community's development. In 1873, George and Harriet Cluck purchased a large amount of land in what would later be known as Cedar Park. The Running Brushy post office was established in 1874 with Harriet Cluck serving as an early postmistress. When the railroad came through Running Brushy in 1882, George Cluck sold the railroad company a lot adjoining the railroad. At this time the railroad company changed the name of the community to Brueggerhoff, the name of a partner of a company official.

1887 **Cedar Park is named** - The deed of land to the Railroad Company also called for a park. The park site became a landscaped park with benches, pebbled walkways and flower beds, and for years the park was used as a community meeting place. In 1887 the town of Running Brushy was renamed Cedar Park after the beautiful park.

Cedar Park was the scene of much growth and activity during the latter years of the nineteenth century. A community school and church building were constructed, and by 1892, the landscaped park had appeared along the rail line. George Cluck took advantage of the growing popularity of barbed wire and opened a cedar yard to sell cedar posts.

Fact – Cedar Park was named after the small but beautiful park established along the rail line in Brueggerhof in the 1880'S.

1892 **Buttercup becomes part of Cedar Park** - Buttercup (also called Doddville and Dodd's Store) was a stage stop on the route from Austin to Liberty Hill and was located on Buttercup Creek just south of the subdivision with the same name. Buttercup, situated on the old road from Bagdad to Austin, had a store, a church, a school, a gin, a mill, and two doctors by the early 1880's. A post office was located there from 1880 to 1894. In 1892, Buttercup had a population of forty inhabitants.

1960 **Growth begins in Cedar Park** - Cedar Park, which included earlier settlements of Buttercup and Running Brushy, remained a small rural town until the 1960's when it became a low cost residential extension of Austin. Over the coming decades, Cedar Park continued to grow as new arrivals continued to stream into the area in search of lower cost housing while commuting to work in Austin. On February 24, 1973, Cedar Park citizens voted to incorporate. After reaching a

population of 5,000 residents in 1987, Cedar Park citizens voted to become a home rule city.

The Physical Environment of Cedar Park

Physical land form - Cedar Park's terrain is flat to slightly rolling, excepting lands close to creeks and the moderate to steep slopes of the far western extent of its ETJ, where landforms fall away toward the Colorado River and Lake Travis. The porous nature of certain areas of the underlying limestone and the karst and cave features that have resulted from limestone erosion have provided habitat for numerous insect species, three of which have been designated as listed species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Endangered species in the area - The thick cover of red cedar, interspersed with native oaks and other trees and shrubs on the western edges of Cedar Park and the areas beyond are also habitat to two birds listed under the Endangered Species Act: the Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler. The Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan was established in the 1980's to preserve key areas of habitat for these species, and the lands protected under this program are now free from development. Under rules established for the BCCP by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, public access to its lands is severely restricted. On the other hand, the protected landscape as viewed along Lime Creek Road presents a scenic resource that can be enjoyed by travelers; any future recreational trails along this corridor approved by the BCCP would provide recreational benefits as well. Several cave precincts are also protected within City-owned parkland and provide educational and scientific interest benefits to residents and visitors.

Floodplains and Creek Corridors - Brushy Creek is the largest watercourse in Cedar Park. Its principal branch, North Brushy Creek, drains water from the city's other creeks, including Cottonwood Creek, Block House Creek, and Spanish Oak Creek. Brushy Creek itself receives waters from two other creeks, Buttercup Creek and Cypress Creek. In addition to serving as scenic and environmental-interest resources, the creeks, their floodplains, and their broader corridors serve as potential routes for hiking, walking, nature observation, school access, bicycling, and employment and civic facility access. Floodplains and bluffs also serve as de facto open space, adding landscape value to adjoining neighborhoods.

Lakes - Four broad and attractive lakes are found in Cedar Park, each of which was created by earthen dam construction by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service

(now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) under Public Law 566, the Small Watershed Act. These are:

- Lake Cedar Park (S.C.S. Site #6), just west of Highway 183 on Brushy Creek;
- Lake Brushy Creek (Site # 7), beginning upstream of Parmer Lane and continuing downstream of it and now the site of Brushy Creek Lake Park;
- a lake on Cottonwood Creek (Site #4), a few hundred yards north of F.M. 1431 and west of the future extension of Parmer Lane; and
- Lake Lakewood (Site #3), on Block House Creek a half mile to the east of the future Highway 183 bypass. Two small lakes also exist in Twin Lake Park, just to the east of Highway 183. The Brushy Creek Water Control Improvement District, located in Taylor, oversees regulation of the lakeshore easements, dams, and spillways.

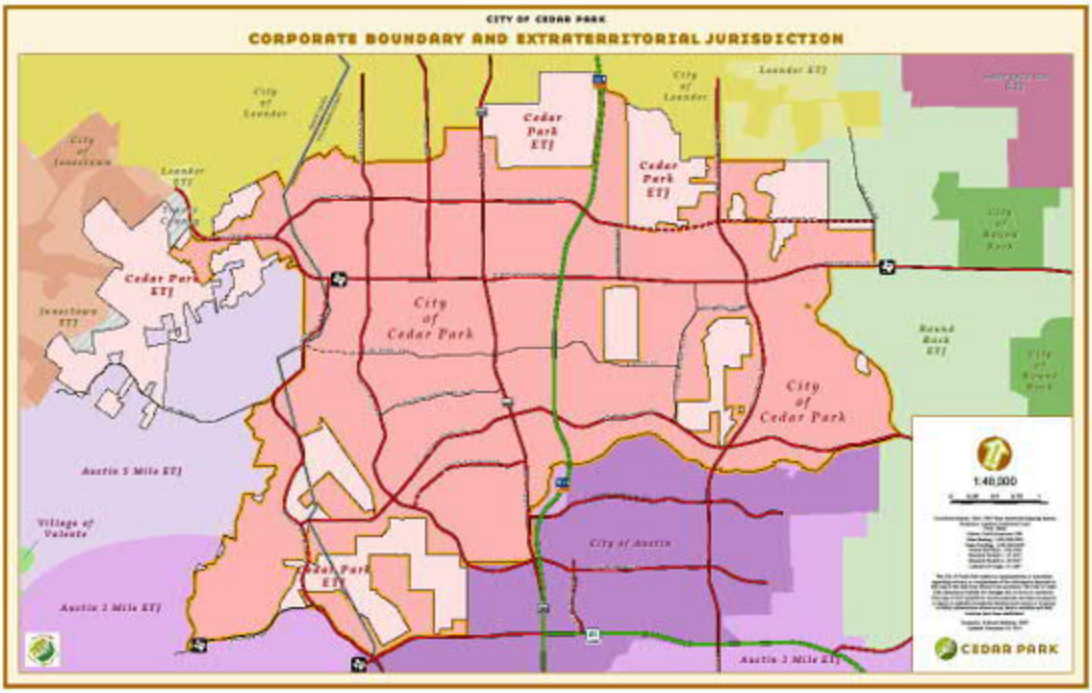


Image source: City of Cedar Park Development Services Department, GIS Division

Other recreational providers – The Twin Lakes Family YMCA currently sub-leases the former State Dairy and Hog Farm, a tract of several hundred acres situated astride Brushy Creek on the east of Highway 183. In addition to the two ponds and Brushy Creek that passes through it, this land features scenic bluffs, rolling landforms, and attractive woods, and pasture. The YMCA offers amenities such as fitness rooms, gymnasium, indoor aquatic center, and an outdoor pool with splash pad.

Land Uses in Cedar Park Today

Future Land Use – The city limit boundary covers approximately 25.5 square miles, and is centered on U.S. 183 and FM 1431/Whitestone Boulevard. Cedar Park's ETJ covers approximately 7.8 square miles, resulting in an ultimate size of over 33 square miles . The illustration on the following page shows the areas within the City and in the ETJ that are included in the master planning process.

Much of Cedar Park's growth since the 1970's has been through master planned communities. Among the first subdivisions of this period were the Cedar Park Ranchettes Unit 1, Riviera Springs, Spanish Oaks, Forest Oaks, and Buttercup Creek. The 1980's and 1990's saw development of Cypress Creek Ranch, Nelson Ranch, Carriage Hills and Cypress Mills subdivisions, among others.

The pattern of master planned communities is significant from a parks standpoint, since most of these communities provide a high level of recreational opportunities for their residents, including small neighborhood parks, trails, neighborhood pools, and community buildings. This allows the City to focus on providing larger park amenities that serve the entire community.

The Impact of Master Planned Communities in Cedar Park - *The pattern of master planned communities is significant from a parks standpoint, since most of these communities provide a high level of recreational opportunities for their residents, including small neighborhood parks, trails, neighborhood pools, and community buildings. This allows the City to focus on providing larger park amenities that serve the entire community.*

Future Land Use – The map below illustrates the projected future land uses for the City and ETJ areas from the City's recently approved 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

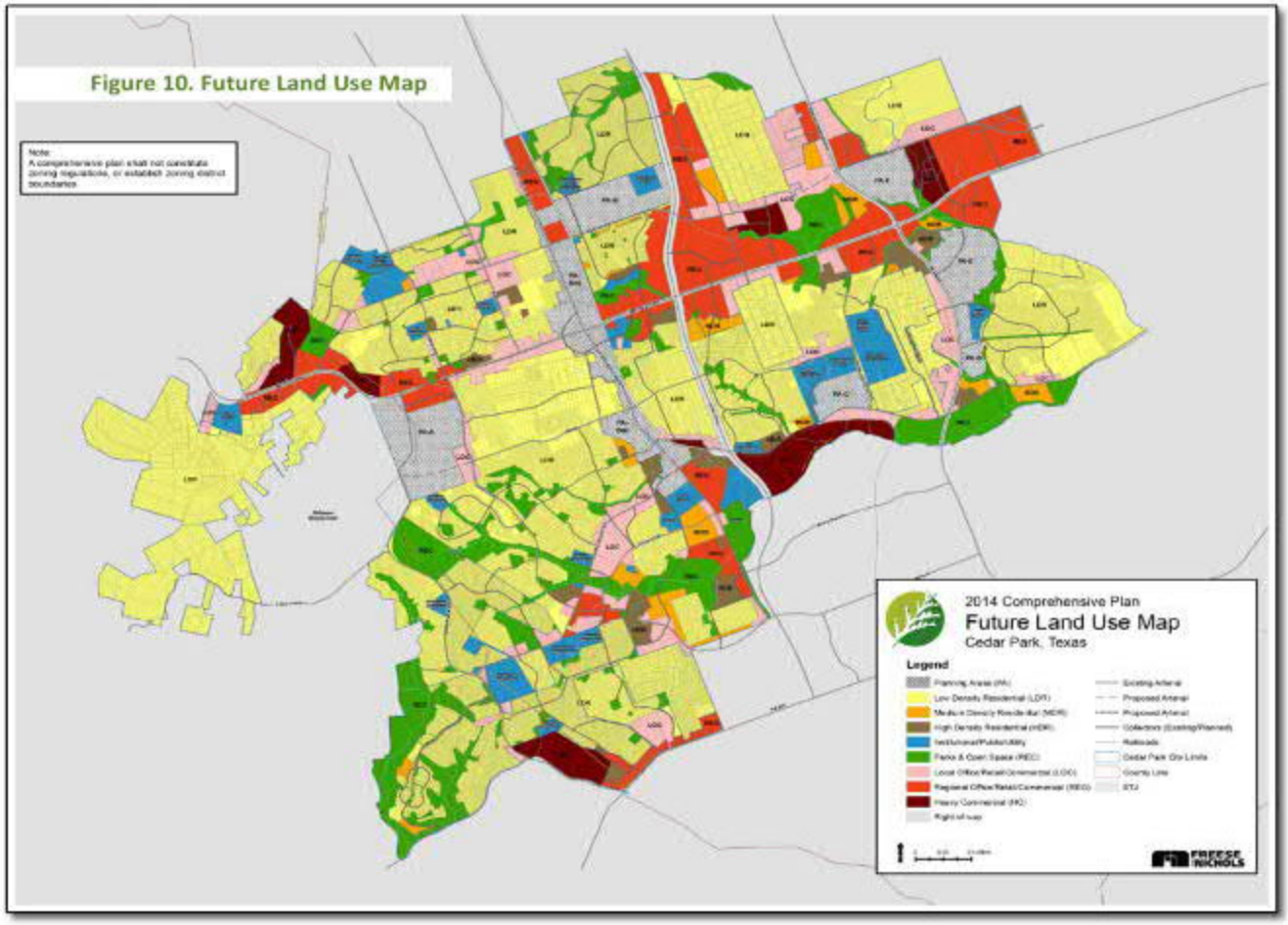


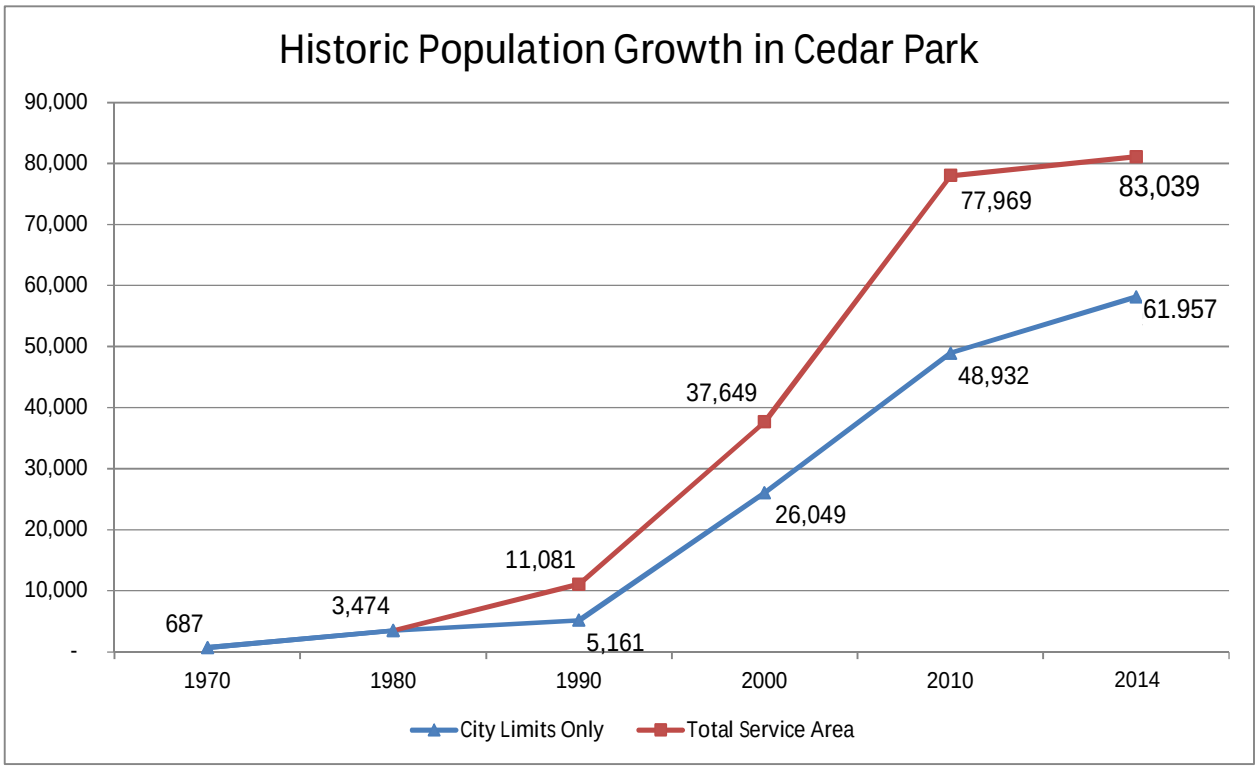
Image source: City of Cedar Park 2014 Comprehensive Plan; Freese and Nichols

A Demographic Profile of Cedar Park

Source of Demographic Information - Projections and demographic characteristics contained in this section are derived from the US Census and from population updates and future projections prepared by the City's Utility Department.

Population Growth - The table below illustrates the historical 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. **Cedar Park is land locked and quickly approaching its ultimate build-out population which is projected to be approximately 110,000 residents within the total service area.**

Table 2.1 Population Estimates		
Year	**City Population**	**Total Service Area Population**
1970	687	-
1980	3,474	-
1990	5,161	11,081
2000	26,049	37,649
2010	48,932	77,969
2014	61,957	83,039
Source: City of Cedar Park Planning Department		



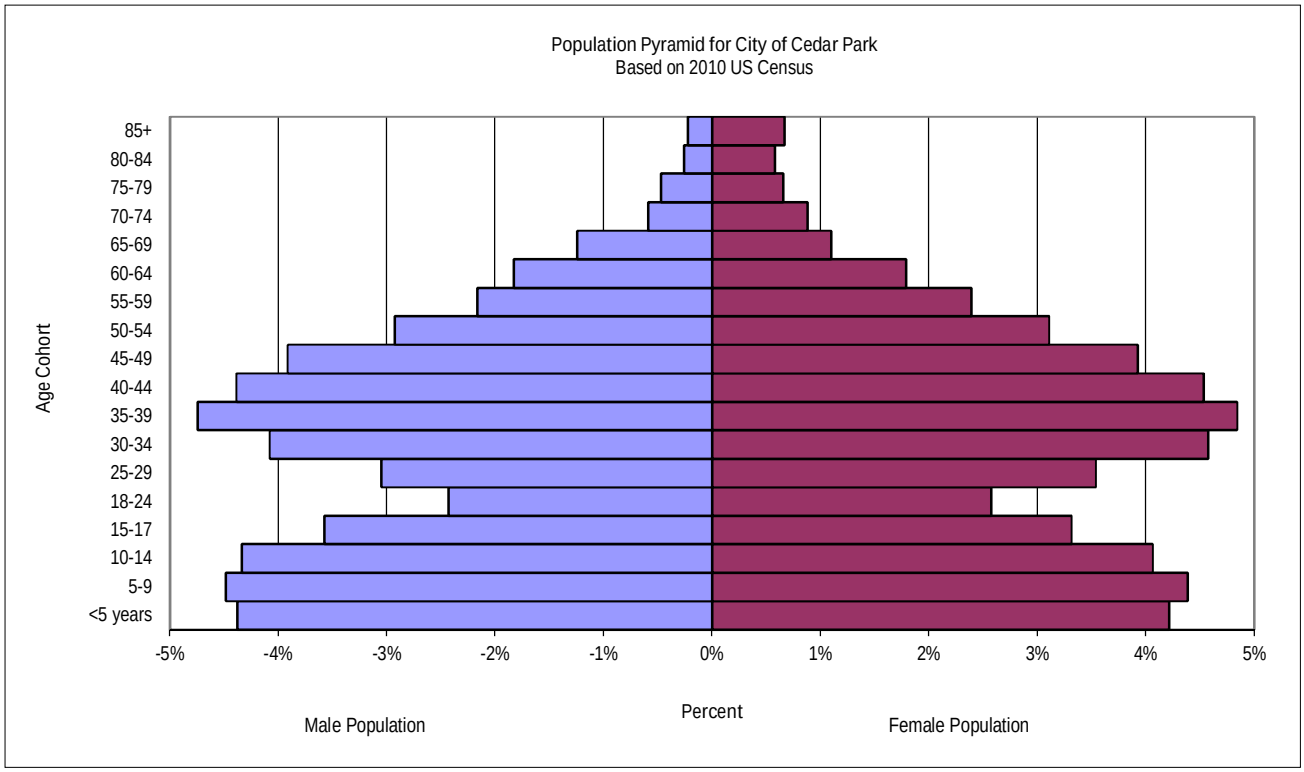
Source: City of Cedar Park Planning Department

Per the 2010 Census, Cedar Park has a relatively young population, as shown in Table 2.2 below. More than 32% of the population is 19 years of age or younger, compared to 30% for the state of Texas as a whole. The population of the working age group, ages 20 through 59 is 57.2%, compared to 54.7% for the state of Texas. Lastly, 10.1% of the population is over 60 years old, versus 15.1% for the state. **The median resident age in Cedar Park is approximately 33.4 years**.

Table 2.2
Age Characteristics – Year 2010

Age	% Cedar Park	% Williamson County	% Texas
0 - 14	25.9%	24.3%	22.9%
15 - 19	6.9%	6.7%	7.5%
20 - 34	20.3%	20.2%	21.6%
35 - 59	36.9%	35.5%	33.1%
60 - 74	7.3%	9.7%	10.6%
75 +	2.8%	3.5%	4.5%

Source: 2010 US Census



Racial characteristics for Cedar Park are shown below. Over 81% of the population is Caucasian, versus 78% for Williamson County and 70% for Texas. The Hispanic or Latino percentage of the population is 19% which is significantly lower when compared to Texas overall at 37%.

Table 2.3
Racial Characteristics – Year 2010

	Race	Cedar Park	Williamson County	Texas
Racial Distribution	White	81.4%	78.1%	70.4%
	Black or African American	4.3%	6.2%	11.8%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
	Asian	5.1%	4.8%	3.8%
	Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
	Other	5.3%	6.9%	10.5%
	Multiple Races	3.4%	3.2%	2.7%
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity		19.0%	23.2%	37.6%
Source: 2010 US Census				

Median Income – Income levels for Cedar Park are above those of Texas as a whole, as are the median home values in the city. Table 2.4 below shows Median Income levels from the US Census. Cedar Park also has a significantly higher percent of the population with a household income over $100,000 (33.2%) when compared to the State of Texas overall (21.1%).

Table 2.4
Household Income – Year 2011

	Cedar Park	Texas
Less than $15,000	4.2%	13.0%
$15,000 – $24,999	5.3%	11.1%
$25,000 - $34,999	7.7%	11.0%
$35,000 - $49,999	11.5%	14.1%
$50,000 - $74,999	22.2%	18.0%
$75,000 - $99,999	16.0%	11.8%
$100,000 - $149,999	22.4%	12.2%
More than $150,000	10.8%	8.9%
Median household income	$74,030	$50,920
Median house value	$201,134*	$70,777
Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, US Census		
**Source: City of Cedar Park FY 2013-2014 Annual Budget*		

Occupations by Industry – The most common industries for employment in Cedar Park are (1) educational services, health care, social assistance and (2) professional, scientific, management, administrative. This is a larger percent of the working population in the retail trade and finance industries when compared to the State of Texas overall, and fewer Cedar Park residents employed in the construction and transportation industries.

Table 2.5
Occupation by Industry – Year 2011

Industry	Cedar Park	Texas
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	0.4%	2.9%
Construction	4.7%	8.3%
Manufacturing	11.3%	9.6%
Wholesale trade	2.2%	3.2%
Retail trade	15.2%	11.5%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	2.2%	5.6%
Information	3.1%	2.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate	10.0%	6.8%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative	14.4%	10.6%
Educational services, health care, social assistance	21.1%	21.2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food services	6.6%	8.3%
Other services	3.7%	5.3%
Public administration	5.2%	4.4%

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, US Census

Previous Planning Efforts in Cedar Park

Part of the planning process for a citywide parks system includes knowing what was envisioned and proposed in previous plans. Often times, the recommendations of other plans can directly relate to the needs that were discovered in this planning process. The following pages summarize many different master plans in Cedar Park, including the ongoing Comprehensive Plan effort, the 2010 Trails Master Plan, and the 2006 Parks & Open Space Plan.

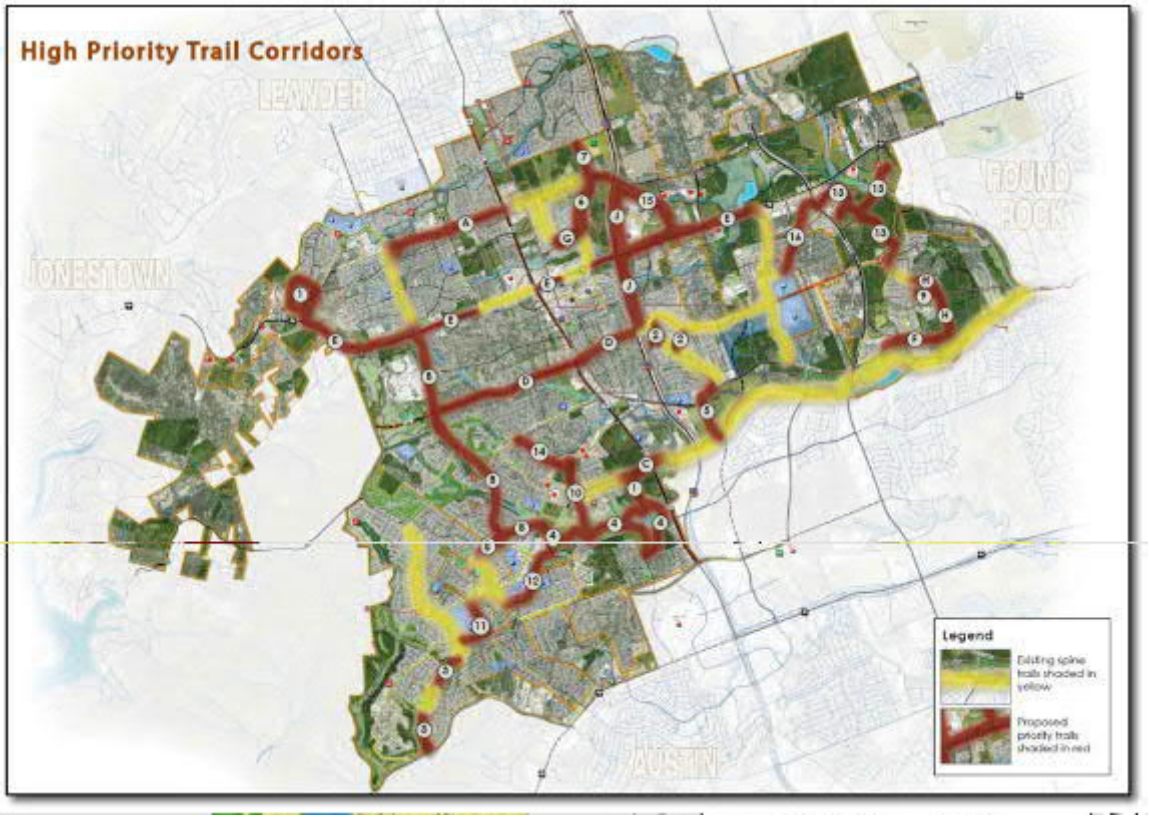
2014 Comprehensive Plan – The Cedar Park Comprehensive Plan was approved in 2014, and included extensive public input using Mind Mixer, an online town hall website, to gain feedback from residents. Many of the comments that were received include support for trails and preserved open space. Some of the comments residents gave include:

- *We need to continue our parks system while we still have the land. This includes new parks, linking existing parks and greenways into a comprehensive system which meets a diverse variety of uses: walking, biking, sports, swimming, or simply enjoying a shaded natural setting with trees and wildflowers.*
- *Make it easier for residents to get to destinations by walking and biking.*
- *That's why Brushy Creek Lake Park is such a big hit- it's a place worth caring about.*

- *Arts, Crafts, Antiques, Restaurants, surrounding a public square/ events area that can serve as a Farmer's Market, or host an event or festival.*
- *We need more areas to go to with family for recreation. Our community is growing daily and we need to keep up with the population increase.*
- *Creating more parks is never a bad idea.*
- *Open green spaces help the community keep its sanity.*
- *If Cedar Park is to really leverage the natural resource we have in the Brushy Creek trail, we need to make it more accessible to the half of the city that lives west of Bell by creating a more pedestrian-friendly corridor down Cypress Creek.*

2010 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan – The City adopted a Trails Master Plan in 2010. This master plan includes detailed recommendations for both off-street trail corridors and on-street bicycle facilities. Key goals of the trails plan were:

- Create a citywide network of trails
- Promote a feeling of security on all trails
- Access to the trail system should be maximized
- Trails should enhance Cedar Park
- Provide a variety of trail opportunity types
- Trails should promote the character of the City
- Enhance linkages between parks, neighborhoods, schools, retail and key civic and community destinations
- Create partnerships with other entities



Sixteen trail corridors were designated as high priority, for a total of nearly 18 miles of proposed trails to be added within ten years.

2006 Parks and Open Space Master Plan – The previous parks master plan has served the City well over the past several years. Many of the recommendations in that plan have been accomplished or are currently being initiated. Key recommendations of the 2006 plan are shown in the table below.

Table 2.6
Status of the Recommendations of the 2006 Master Plan

Recommendation	Status	Recommendation	Status
Initial development of Brushy Creek Sports Park	Complete	**Develop initial phase of Lakeline Village PUD Park**	**Not Initiated**
Design Community Pool and Recreation Center	Complete	Acquire 40 to 100 acres for community park in NE	Need being re-evaluated
Develop new community pool at Veterans Memorial Park	Complete	**Improvements to existing neighborhood parks (longer term)**	**Ongoing**
Initial development of Veterans Memorial Park	Complete	Final phase development of Veterans Memorial Park	Complete
Improvements to existing neighborhood parks (near term)	**Ongoing**	Acquire land for athletic complex	Need being re-evaluated
Develop 2 to 4 miles of trails (near term)	Complete	**Develop an additional 2 to 4 miles of trails (medium term)**	**Ongoing**
Develop initial phases of TxDOT preserve (Discovery Well Cave Preserve)	**Master plan complete / funding TBD**	**Develop an additional 2 to 4 miles of trails (long term)**	**Not Initiated**

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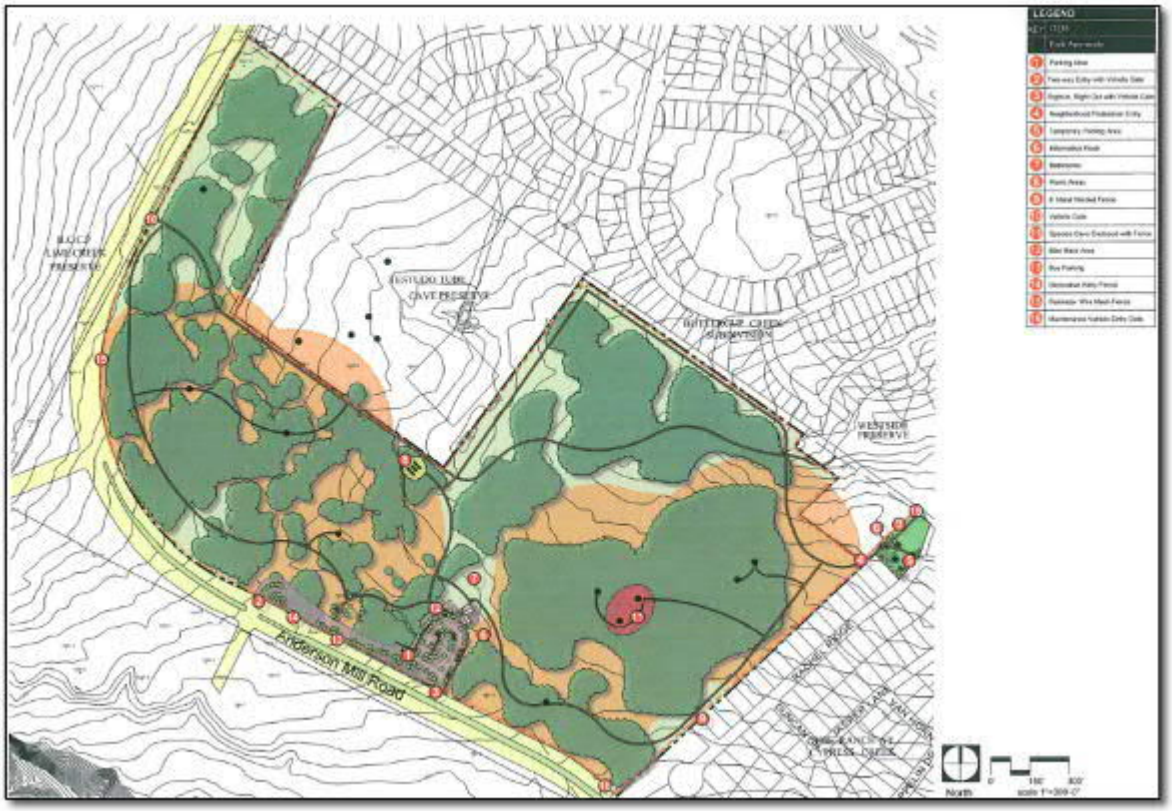
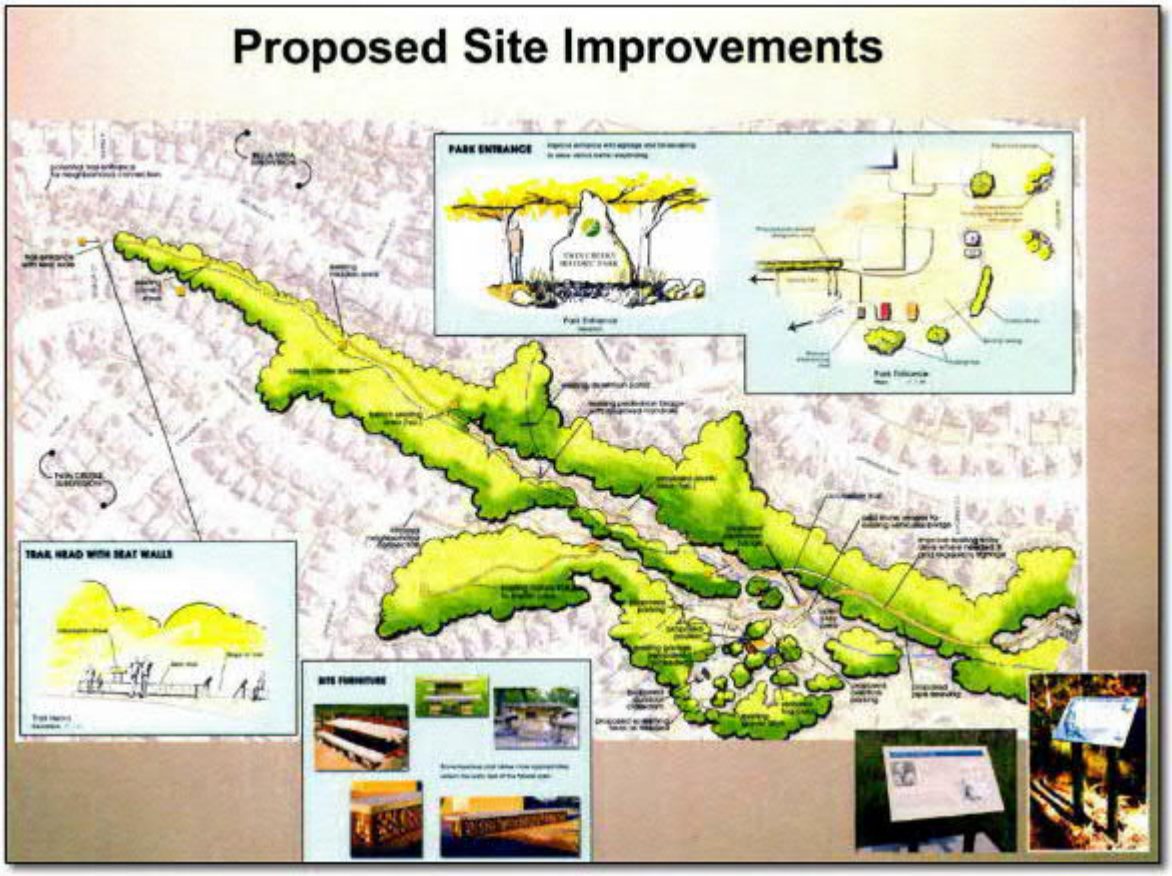
Discovery Well Cave Preserve Master Plan – The Discovery Well Cave Preserve is a TXDOT owned property that the City of Cedar Park has a lease agreement to partially develop as a nature park. Portions of the property are designated as protected areas and would not be available for nature trails or other recreational facilities. However, there are proposed nature trails on the perimeter of the property as well as picnic areas, a parking area, fencing, and entry features.



Twin Creeks Historic Park Master Plan – Twin Creeks Historic Park was dedicated to the City in 2004. This nature park includes trails and a log cabin that was built in the second half of the 19th century. The master plan for the park site includes four goals: preserve historic integrity of the park and King log house; preserve the natural features of the park; develop the building area for event and meeting use; and improve the amenities of the park to increase use. Improvements for the park were divided into two phases. Improvements that were recommended in that plan included park entry improvements off Volente Road, trail improvements, building area improvements, constructing a parking lot, upgrades and expansion of pavilions and picnic areas, adding interpretive signs, and an outdoor classroom. However, upon further design of the property, it was determined that constructing this park according to the master plan would be an engineering challenge and not cost effective. This master plan recommends reevaluating this park site and master plan so that it is more feasible to construct. For instance, the historic log cabin could be moved to a more prominent location within the City, and the park site could be developed as a nature park with trails and open space.



Chapter 3
Existing Park Inventory

Introduction

A key part of the park planning process is to understand what park and open space facilities are currently available, to assess the condition of those facilities and to determine whether or not they are addressing the park and open space needs of the City. By comparing the available park facilities with the number of people that the parks system serves, the need for new or improved recreational facilities can be determined. Cedar Park has an established network of both neighborhood and larger community park facilities. Many of the existing park sites are well placed and are well maintained.

Components of the Existing Parks Inventory - This inventory of existing parks reviews several aspects of each park in the Cedar Park system. These are:

- **Classification:** What is the purpose of a given park? Is it intended to serve a local neighborhood around it, giving children and young adults a place to play? Is it intended to serve a much larger population, providing fields for organized league play? This determines whether a park should be classified as a neighborhood park, a community park, a special purpose park, or a linear park.
- **Location:** Where is the park located in relation to the population that it serves? Is it accessible?
- **Service Area:** What are the limits of the area served by each park? Are there any major thoroughfares or physical features that create barriers to accessing the park?
- **Size of the Park:** How big is the park? Is it large enough to adequately accomplish its intended purpose?
- **Facilities in each Park:** What does the park contain? Are the facilities appropriate for the type of park?
- **Layout*:*** Is the arrangement of facilities in each park appropriate?
- **Condition of the Park**: What is the general condition of the facilities in each park?
- **Special Considerations:** In general, does the park provide facilities for the physically challenged that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act?

Park Classification

National and state guidelines identify three broad categories of parks, which are:

- **Local, Close-to-Home Space** usually located within the community that is served by the facility. Subset park types contained within this category include pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks.
- **Regional Space** can be located up to an hour or two driving distance. Parks in this category serve a number of communities, and include metropolitan parks, or county and state parks such as Williamson County Regional Park.
- **Unique Space** may be either local or regional. These parks can be defined as areas that are unique in some way, whether because of physical features or because of the types of facilities provided. Parks in this category may include linear parks, special use parks, or land conservancies. The Discovery Well Cave Preserve is an excellent example of a unique park resource in Cedar Park.

Local, close-to-home parks are the most important category by addressing day to day facilities for all ages and activities, and are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live. The five close-to-home park types that are found in Cedar Park are:

- Pocket parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Community parks
- Special use parks
- Open space/nature parks/detention areas

A description of the general types of parks included in the Cedar Park parks system follows:

Pocket Parks

This type of park is usually less than one acre in size. Pocket parks are accessed by walking or bicycling. Vehicle access and parking is not typically needed because of their small size. Amenities in pocket parks can include benches, landscaping, playgrounds, and other focal features. Size is not a key factor of the typical pocket park, but rather the quality of the landscaping and features that go into the park. These parks are generally found in a residential or urban context, such as in a downtown. They are meant to serve as pockets of open space in the midst of mainly developed areas.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the foundation for recreation in the Local Close-to-Home park system. Ideally, they provide facilities and recreation space for the entire family, but are within easy walking or bicycling distance of the people they serve. The key aspect of neighborhood parks is their accessibility from the surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, this plan adopts a goal that ultimately most residents of Cedar Park will live within a ten minute walking distance from a park, or no more than a ¼ mile.

The neighborhood park typically serves one large or several smaller neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood park in Cedar Park should serve no more than 2,000 to 4,000 residents per park, and should generally range up to 10 acres in size. Neighborhood parks should be accessible to residents who live within a one-half mile radius of the park, and are generally meant to be walked to. *As a goal of this plan, neighborhood park facilities should be located within a quarter-mile radius of the residents that will use those facilities*. Neighborhood parks are generally located away from major arterial streets and provide easy access for the users that surround it. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets.

Size - The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to physical constraints and geographical locations around the City. An ideal size for neighborhood parks in Cedar Park should be around three to ten acres. Parks may range in size from a minimum of less than one acre to a maximum of 15 acres.

Location - If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in neighborhoods they serve. The park should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served, and should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets which do not allow high-speed traffic.

Facilities - Facilities generally located in neighborhood parks include the following:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing
- Unlighted practice fields for baseball, soccer, and football, etc.
- Unlighted tennis courts
- Unlighted multi-purpose courts for basketball and volleyball
- Open areas for unorganized play
- Picnic areas with benches, picnic tables and cooking grills
- Shaded pavilions or gazebos
- Jogging and exercise trails
- Security lighting

Restrooms are typically not placed in neighborhood parks because they increase maintenance, and generally these parks are located close to a person's home.

Figure 3.1 Example of a typical neighborhood park

Parking – Should vary based on the size of the park and facilities provided. A minimum of eight spaces per new neighborhood park are recommended with an additional two handicapped parking spaces per each neighborhood park. The exact amount of parking needed will vary based on the size of the park, the availability of safe on-street parking adjacent to the park, the facilities the park contains, and the number of users attracted to the park.

Figure 3.1 illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed as a unique part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. Community parks are usually reached by automobiles, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or bicycle to it. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike/bike trails and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users. **Elizabeth Milburn Park** is an ideal example of a well located community park with a variety of facilities.

Size - The typical community park should be large enough so it can provide a variety of facilities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion, as new facilities are required. A typical community park varies in size from 10 acres to over 50 acres.

Location – Community parks should be located near a major thoroughfare to provide easy access from different parts of the city. Because of the potential for noise and bright lights at night, community parks should be buffered from adjacent residential areas.

Facilities - Facilities generally located in community parks may include:

- Play equipment
- Active free play areas
- Picnic areas and pavilion(s)
- Restrooms
- Jogging, bicycle or nature trails, sometimes lighted for evening use
- Lighted ball fields, suitable for organized competitive events
- Recreation center (if appropriate)
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park
- Lighting for evening use
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as nature trails or fishing adjacent to ponds, swimming pools, amphitheaters etc.

Parking - This varies based on the facilities provided and the size of park. The NRPA recommends a minimum of five spaces per acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park such as pools or ball fields. The specific amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park.

Figure 3.2 Example of a typical community park

Elizabeth Milburn, Veterans Memorial Park and Brushy Creek Lake Park are the developed community parks in Cedar Park today.

Linear Parks

Linear parks are open park areas that generally follow some natural or man-made feature that is linear in nature, such as creeks, abandoned railroad rights-of-way or power line and utility corridor easements. Properly developed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel, these parks can serve to link or connect other parks in the local system, as well as schools, libraries, and other major destinations. No specific standards apply to linear/linkage parks other than the park should be large enough to adequately accommodate the resources they follow. They can also serve as linear greenbelts which preserve open space. Williamson County's Brushy Creek Trail is an example of a linear park corridor.

Special Use Parks

Special use parks are designed to accommodate specialized recreational activities. Because the facility needs for each activity type are different, each special purpose park usually provides for very specific activities. Examples of special use parks include:

- Athletic fields or complexes
- Nature centers or large natural preserves
- Swimming pool centers
- Tennis complexes
- Golf courses

Athletic complexes and golf courses are the most common types of special purpose parks in most cities. Athletic complexes seek to provide fields for organized play in a location that can accommodate the traffic and noise that a large number of users can generate. A key issue at athletic complexes is the inclusion of sufficient fields so that leagues can congregate at one facility and not have to spread out in different locations. The CPYL is an example of an athletic complex in Cedar Park.

An additional type of special use park is a "special interest park" which typically is a skate park, dog park, or some other park designed to accommodate a special recreational need. Many cities only accommodate one park of each special interest type (e.g. only one skate park per city). Although in the future, demand from residents might be able to sustain two or more of each type of special interest park. Another popular alternative is incorporating special interest park areas into larger community or regional parks.

Natural Area Parks or Preserves

Nature parks and preserves are a critical part of the land use system in any city. They provide wildlife habitat, flood control, and places for passive recreation.

These parks can greatly vary in size depending on the resources available, but are meant to have a citywide service radius. The benefit and inclusion of places that are natural areas or unprogrammed open space has been largely overlooked in the context of typical park master plans. Conservation and preservation are especially valuable as, over time, natural resources disappear in our cities and natural habitat is wiped out. The value of walking through historic and natural places that have been left untouched is immeasurable. Such opportunities are rapidly becoming rare, and the identification and protection of such areas is urgently needed in most cities today. Cities that marshal the will and act quickly to conserve natural resources demonstrate the foresight and resolve necessary to ensure that future generations may enjoy something of beauty and timelessness.

Natural areas and open space are part of a city's resources and are its natural gems. The value of such land may have visual, historic, and cultural appeal that imprints upon the visitor, creating a sense of place and lasting memories. Wilderness, creeks, ponds, prairies and particular geologic formations or topographic change may all be considered elements worthy of protection, public access, and celebration. As unprogrammed space, there is the added benefit of these areas as self-maintaining. There may be the occasional need to check for hazards, but maintenance is generally not a significant factor. Other than recreational and aesthetic opportunities afforded by natural areas, they also have huge economic value to society in terms of ecological services provided – functions such as water and air purification, carbon sequestration, flood control, pollination, air cooling, and positively effecting human health and wellbeing.

Discovery Well Cave Preserve

Large areas that are intended to provide access to nature, or to preserve key natural assets in a city are a unique category of parks. Buttercup Creek Natural Area and the Discovery Well Cave Preserve are major open space assets in Cedar Park. These areas typically have little development beyond parking and trails.

Size and Inventory of the Existing Parks System in Cedar Park

The parks system in Cedar Park includes a total of 47 city-owned park sites containing a total of approximately 927 acres of parkland and natural areas. In addition to city-owned parks, there are other parks managed by the YMCA, Williamson County, CTRMA trailhead, and Cedar Park Youth Baseball and Softball Complex in and near Cedar Park which contribute an additional 909.8 acres of parkland. Furthermore, the HOA parks within Cedar Park total approximately 255 acres for the residents of those neighborhoods in the City.

CEDAR PARK PARKS AMENITY MATRIX

Park Number	PARKS	PARK TYPE	ADDRESS	ACREAGE	BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	BACKSTOP	BASKETBALL COURT	BBQ GRILL	BOCCE COURTS	DISC GOLF	DOG PARK	FISHING	GAZEBO	GROUP PAVILION	PARKING	PICNIC AREA	PLAYSCAPE	RESTROOM	BMX TRACK	SKATE PARK	SOCCER FIELD	SWIMMING POOL	SPRAYGROUND	HOA POOL	TENNIS COURT	TRAILS (miles)	VOLLEYBALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1	Bagdad Park	NB	1351 Bagdad Road	4.3		2																						
2	Janet Bartles Park	NB	1100 Buttercup Creek Blvd.	8.5			1	1					1		X	1	1				1				2	0.3	2	
3	Brushy Creek Lake Park	C	3300 Brushy Creek Road	89.2				1	2			1		4	X	10	2	1					1			2.1	1	Pavilions may be reserved online or by calling the Parks & Recreation Office. Water Playscape operational May through September. 2 Bocce Courts located near the Redbud pavilion. The loop track is 1 mile long.
4	Brushy Creek Sports Park	C	2310 Brushy Creek Road	54.0	2		1			1				1	X		1	1		1	3							To reserve a sport field, please call Parks and Recreation
5	Buttercup Creek Cave Preserves	NP	Buttercup Creek Blvd./Lakeline Blvd.	92.4																						1.00		Limited Access. Call the Parks & Recreation Office for more information
6	Buttercup Creek Natural Area	NP	502 Timber Trail	12.1																								Undeveloped
7	Buttercup Creek Park	NB	411 Twin Oaks Trail	3.5				1							X	1						1			2			Pool may be reserved online or by calling the Parks & Recreation Office
8	Carriage Hills Park # 1	NB	1613 Carriage Hills Trail	1.6			0.5							1		1	1											
9	Carriage Hills Park # 2	NB	1600 Country Squire	0.5												1	1											
10	Carriage Hills Park # 5	NB	1801 Lakeline Blvd.	0.5												1												
11	Chimney Swift Park	NB	2900 Chimney Swift	1			0.5	1								1	1											
12	Cluck Creek Park	D	901 Rambling Trail	8.7											X	1					2							Detention area
13	Rosemary Denny Park	NB	2400 East Riviera	9.1			1	1				1		1	X	1	1	1										Pavilions & Clubhouse may be reserved by calling the Parks & Recreation Office.
14	Discovery Well Cave Preserve	NP	15000 Anderson Mill Road	106.0																						2.6		Cave preserve, natural area with trails. Limited access.
15	Forest Oaks Park	NB	521 Lynnwood Trail	22.07										1		1	1									0.7		
16	Gann Ranch Park	NB	2000 Cougar Country Drive	8.6				1						1	X	1	1									0.2	1	HOA swimming pool
17	Peggy Garner Park	NB	2400 Peach Tree Lane	6.8		1	1	1						1	X	1	1	1										Pavilion may be reserved online or by calling the Parks & Recreation Office
18	Goldfinch Park	NB	2503 Goldfinch Drive	2.8		1		1								1	1									0.2		Includes 2.2 acres of detention area
19	Heppner Bend Park	NB	1208 Heppner Drive	2.5				1								1	1											Includes 1.5 acres of detention area
20	Heritage Oak Park	NB	875 Quest Parkway	1				1								1												Historical Landmark
21	Heritage Park	NB	1110 Heritage Park Drive	7.7			0.5	1						1		1	1											Includes 4 acres of detention area and HOA swimming pool
22	Lakeline Boulevard Park	NB	902 Lakeline Blvd.	1									1													1.00		Benches
23	Lakeline Park	C	1700 Little Elm Trail	117.6																								Undeveloped
24	William T. Laws, Jr. Park	NB	1200 N. Lakeline Blvd.	3		1									X											0.3		Includes HOA swimming pool
25	Dayna Lawson Park	NB	1205 Comfort Street	1.5			0.5	1								1	1											
26	Lone Tree Park	NB	2500 Stapleford	4.2										1		1	1											
27	Elizabeth Milburn Park	C	1901 Sun Chase Blvd.	42.4		1	1	1						1	X	1	1	1	1		2	1			2	1.0	5	Climbing Wall, BMX track and three whiffle ball/T-ball fields. Pavilions, pool may be reserved online; call Parks and Recreation for questions about the community garden
28	Nelson Ranch Park	NB	905 Nelson Ranch Road	3.7			1	1						1	X	1	1	1							2	1.00		Restroom key available with deposit
29	New Hope Park	D	1900 N. Lakeline Blvd.	8.5		4																						8.5 acres of detention area
30	Oakmont Forest Park	NB	1414 Colby Lane	1.9			1	1								1	1											
31	Oakwood Glen Park	NB	2600 Oakwood Glen	1.6										1		1	1											
32	Park Place Park	NB	101 Vale Drive	6.2			1									1	1											

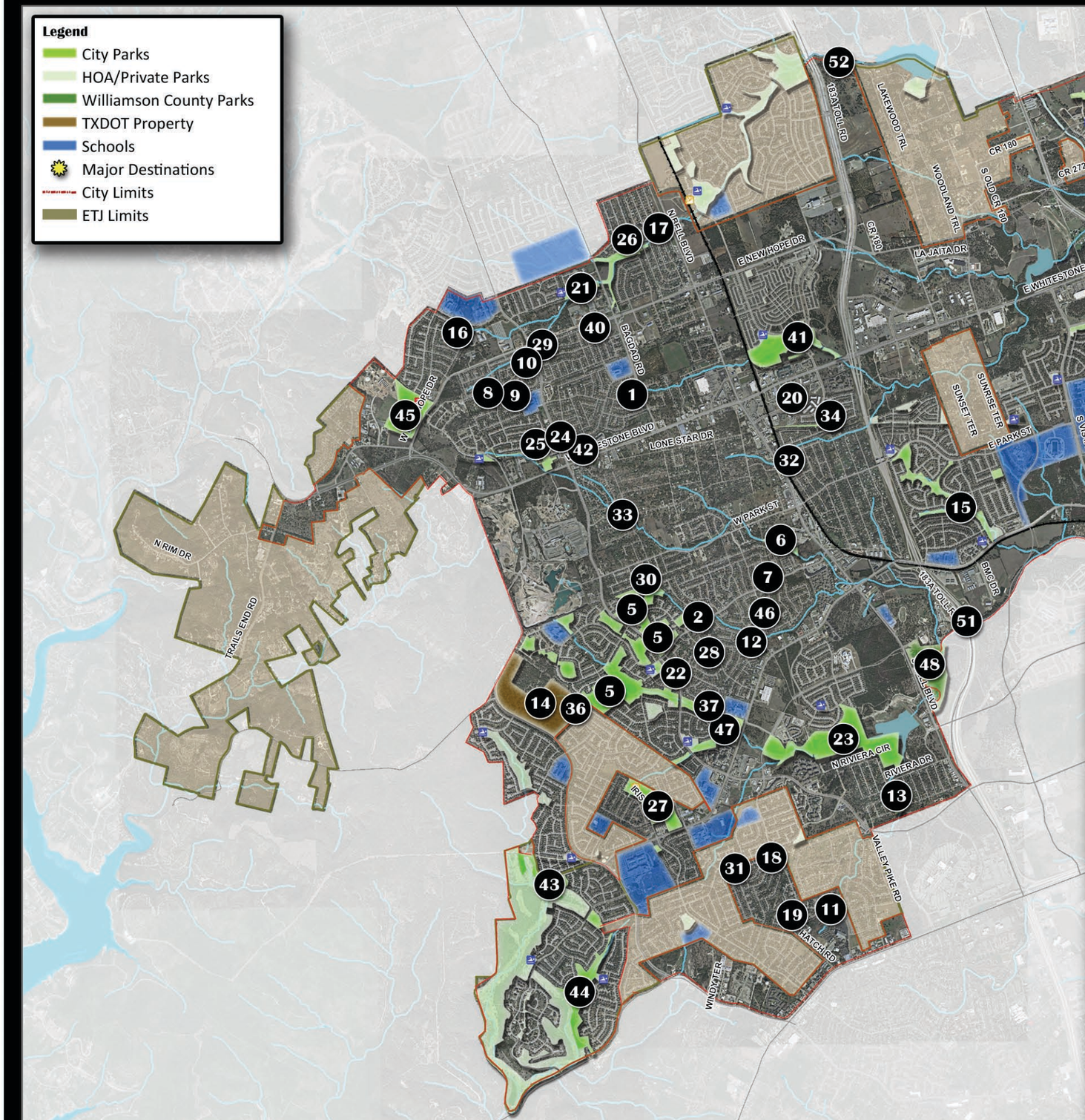
CEDAR PARK PARKS AMENITY MATRIX

Park Number	PARKS	PARK TYPE	ADDRESS	ACREAGE	BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	BACKSTOP	BASKETBALL COURT	BBQ GRILL	BOCCE COURTS	DISC GOLF	DOG PARK	FISHING	GAZEBO	GROUP PAVILION	PARKING	PICNIC AREA	PLAYSCAPE	RESTROOM	BMX TRACK	SKATE PARK	SOCCER FIELD	SWIMMING POOL	SPRAYGROUND	HOA POOL	TENNIS COURT	TRAILS (miles)	VOLLEYBALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
33	Prize Oaks Park	NB	1407 Cedar Park Drive	0.7				1						1		1	1									1.00		
34	Quest Village Park	NB	614 Stallion	11.4				1					1			1	1									0.8		Includes 8.1 acres of detention area
35	Ranch Trails Park	NB	3701 Ranch Trails	13.87			1							1													1	
36	Ranch at Cypress Creek Park	NB	2003 Rachel Ridge	0.79													1											Park benches only
37	Rattling Horn Park	D	1305 Rattling Horn Cove	1.8		1																						1.8 acres of detention area
38	Silverado Springs Park North	NB	12920 W. Parmer Lane	62.7																						0.4		Undeveloped
39	Silverado Springs Park South	NB	3525 Brushy Creek Road	22.21																						0.5		Includes 5 acres of detention area
40	Timberwood Park	NB	1912 Timberwood Trail	2		1																						
41	Town Center Park	C	1435 Main Street	43.0																						0.8		Parks and Recreation Office (as of June 2009)
42	Treeline Park	NB	1400 Treeline Drive	4.5		4																						Includes 3.8 acres of detention area
43	Twin Creeks Greenbelt	NP	2610 Copford Lane	23.4																								Undeveloped
44	Twin Creeks Historic Park	NP	2900 King Monument Lane	46.4												1										0.5		Historic Landmark - Pedestrian access only
45	Veterans Memorial Park	C	2525 W. New Hope Drive	47.6		1	1				1			1	X	1	1	2				1			1	1.2		Pool and poolside umbrellaa, amphitheater, and park pavilion may be reserved online or by calling the Parks & Recreation Office; The 5-acre fenced in dog park is now open!
46	Wildrose Park	NB	700 Cluck Creek Trail	2.1		1	1	1						1		1	1											
52	Scottsdale Crossing	NB		15.7																								
	TOTAL			932.6	2	18	13.0	18	2	1	1	2	3	19	0	37	26	8	1	1	8	3	1	0	9	15.5	10	
	OTHER PARKS:		OTHER PARKS:																									
47	CP Youth Baseball & Softball Complex	SU	1225 Cypress Creek Road	21.1	9																							Operated by CP Youth League.
48	Twin Lakes Park (YMCA)	R	204 E. Little Elm Trail	53.0	2							1			X	1	1											Williamson County Park that is operated by YMCA.
49	Southwest Regional Park (Wiiliamson County)	R	3005 County Road 175 Leander, TX	800.0	2		6			1				1	X		1	1			12				8			Disc golf & softball fields.
50	Champion Park (Williamson County)	R	Brushy Creek Road, Cedar Park, TX 78613	33.2				1				1		1	X	1	1	1								1.8		A bridge across the creek connects the park to Avery Ranch subdivision.
51	CTRMA Shared use path	SU	Between South Brushy Creek and RM 1431	2.5																						2.2		A parking area and trailhead is located off the 183A frontage road south of Brushy Creek Road/Cypress Creek Road.

NB=neighborhood; C=community; NP=nature preserve; D=detention; SU=special use; R=regional

HOA Parks

PARKS	PARK TYPE	ADDRESS	ACREAGE	BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	BACKSTOP	BASKETBALL COURT	BBQ GRILL	BOCCE COURTS	DISC GOLF	DOG PARK	FISHING	GAZEBO	GROUP PAVILION	PARKING	PICNIC AREA	PLAYSCAPE	RESTROOM	BMX TRACK	SKATE PARK	SOCCER FIELD	SWIMMING POOL	SPRAYGROUND	HOA POOL	TENNIS COURT	TRAILS (miles)	VOLLEYBALL
Anderson Mill West	HOA		5.36			1							1			1								2		
Apache	HOA		2.08											X		1							1			
Bella Vista Amenity Center	HOA		2.38											X		1							1			
Blockhouse Creek Greenbelt	HOA		30.80																							
Cabello Ranch Amenity Center	HOA		1.15											X		1							1			
Cabello Ranch Greenbelt	HOA		10.86																							
CP Town Center Amenity Center	HOA		2.29											X		1							1			
CP Town Center Pocket Parks	HOA		2.77																							
Comanche Park	HOA		3.76																						0.22	
Creekview Amenity Center	HOA		2.00											X		1							1			
Crossing at Heritage Hills	HOA		1.07											X									1			
Deer Creek Amenity & Swim Center	HOA		2.33			1								X		1							1			
Deer Creek Chula Vista Park	HOA		0.60																							
Deer Creek Greenbelt	HOA		28.13																							
Deer Creek Swim Center	HOA		1.09											X									1			
Deer Creek Waterline Trail	HOA		1.94																						0.29	
Deer Creek Zambia Park	HOA		4.52									1				1										
Fall Creek Cave Preserve	HOA		7.24																						0.39	
Forest Oaks Community Center	HOA		2.56											X		1							1			
Forest Oaks Detention	HOA		7.77																							
Forest Oaks Greenbelt	HOA		3.65																							
Forest Oaks Swim Center	HOA		2.28			1								X									1			
Heritage Park Amenity Center	HOA		0.34																				1			
Highlands at Gann Ranch	HOA		0.48											X									1			
Jumano Park	HOA		39.67																							
Kay Reddin Park	HOA		2.57											X		1							1			
Lakewood Country Estates Park	HOA		12.67																							
Ranch at Brushy Creek Amenity Center	HOA		3.81											X		1							1			
Red Oak Amenity Center	HOA		1.59			1/2								X		2							1			
Silver Oak Park	HOA		4.87																						0.35	
Silverado Ranch Parkland	HOA		1.05																							
Silverado Ranch Community Center	HOA		3.05											X		2							1			
The Park at Lakeline Oaks	HOA		2.85			1							2	X		2								2		
The Reserve at Brushy Creek	HOA		0.63																							
Tonkawa Park	HOA		12.66										1	X		1									0.71	
Tumlinson Park	HOA		20.81		1	1							4	X									1	2		1
Twin Creeks Country Club	HOA		7.88											X		1							1			
Twin Creeks Golf Course	HOA		402.92																							
Twin Creeks Greenbelt	HOA		5.41																							
Westside at Buttercup Amenity Center	HOA		5.60											X		1							1			
Westside Buttercup Parkland	HOA		1.32																							
Whitestone Oaks Amenity Center	HOA		0.95											X		1							1			
TOTAL			657.76	0	1	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	6	2.0	1
RECREATION AMENITIES AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS																										
Block House Creek Elementary					2	1										3										
CC Mason Elementary					2											2										
Cox Elementary					2											2										
Cypress Elementary																1										
Deer Creek Elementary					2											2									0.25	
Faubion Elementary				1												1										
Giddens Elementary					2											2										
Knowles Elementary					4											2										
Naumann Elementary						0.5										2									0.19	
Reagan Elementary					4	1										2										
Westside Elementary					3	1										1										
TOTAL				1	21	3.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.44	0



Parks Number Legend

1 Bagdad Park
2 Janet Bartles Park
3 Brushy Creek Lake Park
4 Brushy Creek Sports Park
5 Buttercup Creek Cave Preserves
6 Buttercup Creek Natural Area
7 Buttercup Creek Park
8 Carriage Hills Park #1
9 Carriage Hills Park #2
10 Carriage Hills Park #5
11 Chimney Swift Park
12 Cluck Creek Park
13 Rosemary Denny Park
14 Discovery Well Cave Preserve
15 Forest Oaks Park
16 Gann Ranch Park
17 Garner Park
18 Goldfinch Park
19 Heppner Bend Park
20 Heritage Oak Park
21 Heritage Park
22 Lakeline Blvd. Park
23 Lakeline Park
24 William T. Laws, Jr. Park
25 Dayna Lawson Park
26 Lone Tree Park
27 Milburn Park
28 Nelson Ranch Park
29 New Hope Park
30 Oakmont Forest Park
31 Oakwood Glen Park
32 Park Place Park
33 Prize Oaks Park
34 Quest Village Park
35 Ranch Trails Park
36 Ranch at Cypress Creek Park
37 Rattling Horn Park
38 Silverado Springs Park North
39 Silverado Springs Park South
40 Timberwood Park
41 Town Center Park
42 Treeline Park
43 Twin Creeks Greenbelt
44 Twin Creeks Historic Park
45 Veterans Memorial Park
46 Wildrose Park
47 CP Youth Baseball & Softball Complex (CP Youth League)
48 Twin Lakes Park (YMCA)
49 Southwest Regional Park (Williamson County)
50 Champion Park (Williamson County)
51 CTRMA Shared Use Path Trailhead
52 Scottsdale Crossing Park

CEDAR PARK

Existing Parks

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

HALFF

Chapter 4
Citizen Input

Introduction

The recommendations of the 2015 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 the recommendations.

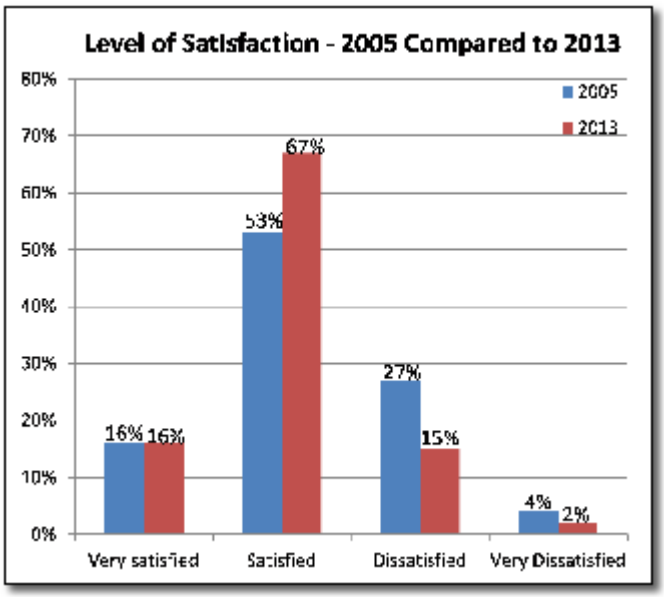
During the planning process, multiple methods were used to generate citizen input. These included presentations to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, a citywide open house/public meeting, an online survey, and an online town hall forum on Mind Mixer.

Citizen Online Survey

Why use an online survey - To better understand the recreational needs and desires of Cedar Park residents, an online survey was conducted as part of the parks planning process. The survey was designed to examine residents' participation in recreational activities, as well as to assess recreational needs throughout Cedar Park. The information that was gathered in this report allows elected officials and city staff to better understand the recreational needs and desires of its citizenry.

Survey methodology – The online survey was made available to all residents of Cedar Park via a link off the City's homepage website. The survey was active for over three months. Approximately 331 residents completed the survey.

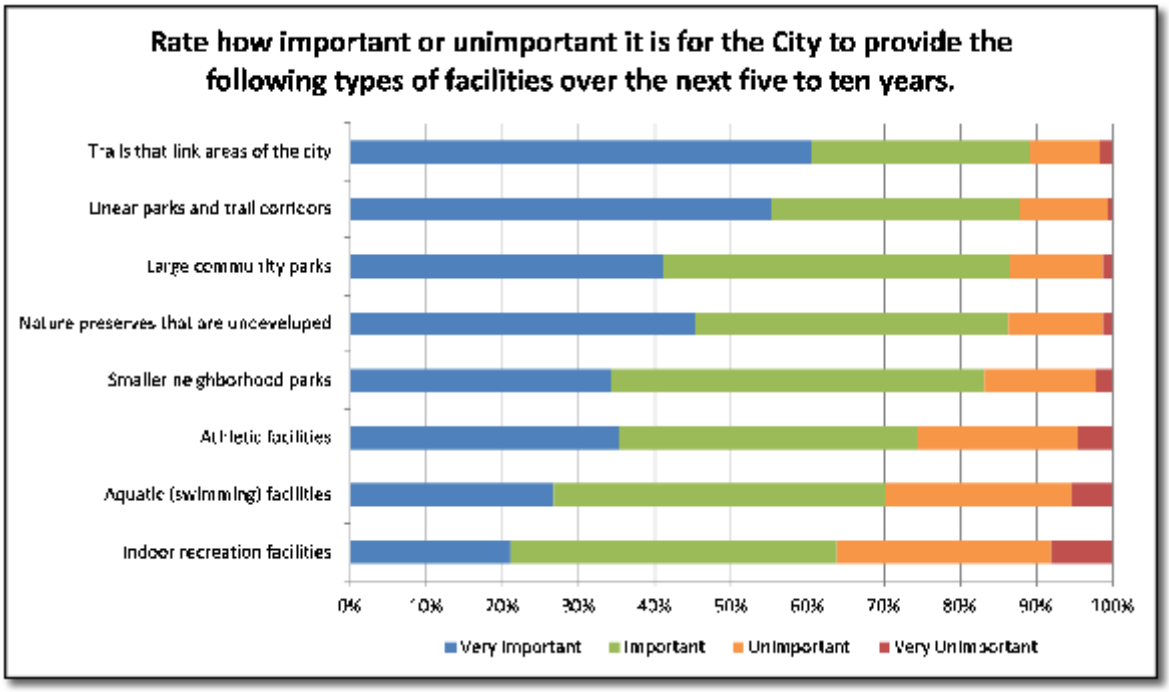
Location of Responders – To help identify needs in different parts of the city, Cedar Park was divided into four major sectors, using Park Street and U.S. 183 (Bell) as the dividing boundaries. The largest portion of responses came from residents in the southwest (36%). The remaining planning area were relatively equally dispersed with 19% from the northeast, 16% from the northwest, 14% from the southeast and 15% from the ETJ area.



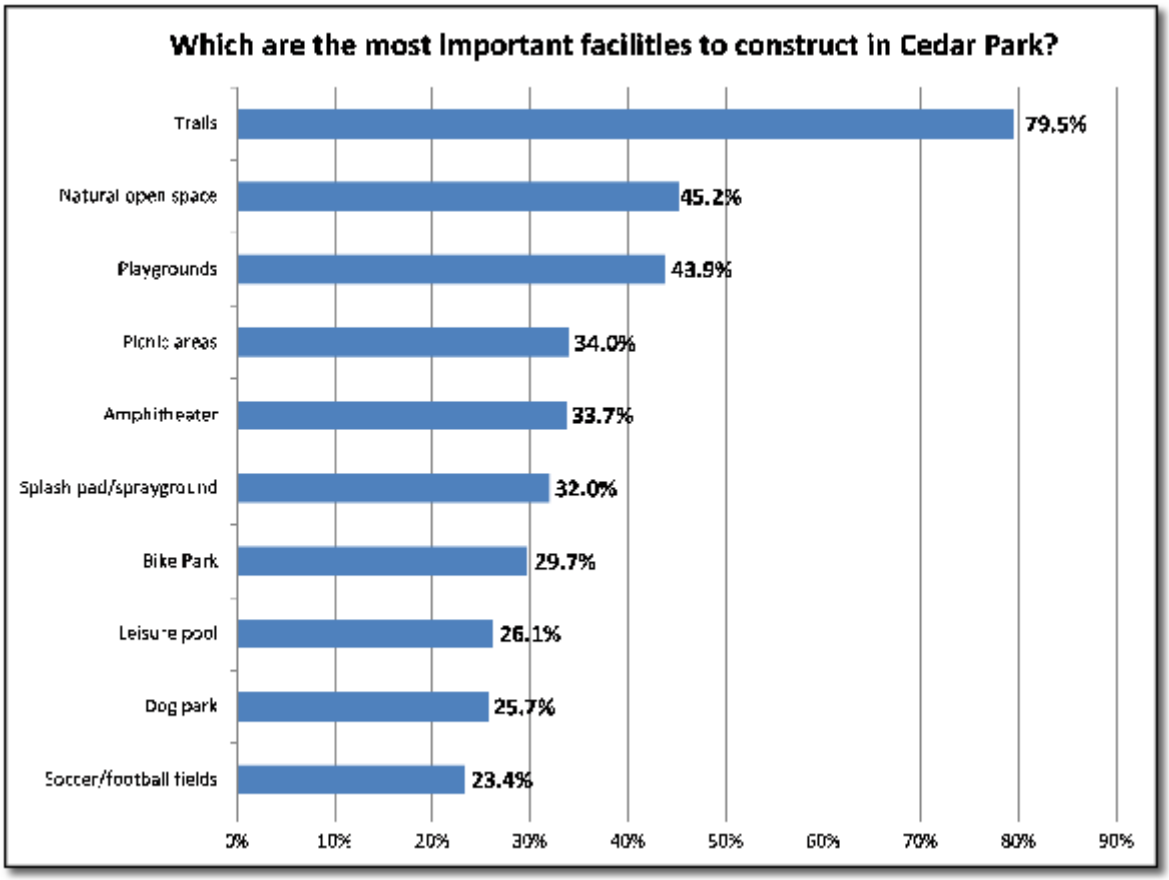
Current level of satisfaction – Residents were asked to note their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of parks and recreation in the City. This question is very important because it can be tracked in subsequent surveys over time. During the 2005 citizen survey, the total

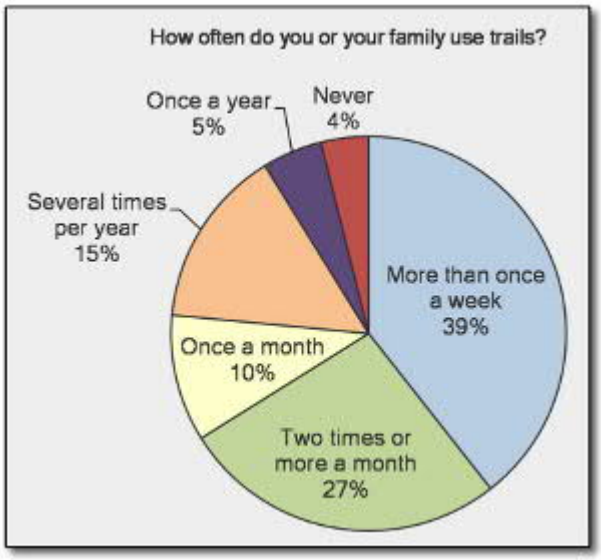
satisfaction was 69% for both very satisfied and satisfied. Currently, the online survey in 2013 revealed a satisfaction rate of 83% for both very satisfied and satisfied. Although the 2005 and the 2013 were conducted using very different methodologies (statistically valid telephone verses online), it can be assumed that generally the level of satisfaction has increased among residents since the last master plan was completed.

Level of Importance for Park Types – The survey participants were given a list of potential park facilities and park types, and then asked how important or unimportant they felt it was for the City to provide those facilities over the next five to ten years. The facility receiving the highest level of importance was trails that link areas of the City with 89% of respondents indicating this was either important or very important. The second highest was also trail related with linear parks and trail corridors at 88% important. The results are shown in the graph below. Respondents also felt that large community parks and nature preserves that are undeveloped are important, both having an importance rating of 86%.



Importance of Park Facilities – Similarly, the survey respondents were given a list of different park facilities that could be offered within the existing parks in Cedar Park. They were then asked to check all of the facilities that they felt were the most important to construct. Overwhelmingly, respondents were interested in trails. The top ten highest facilities in terms of importance are shown in the graph below. It is important to note that for the purpose of this master plan, natural open space could be defined as a natural preserved area, an outdoor classroom, an interpretive area, or an indoor nature center building.





Because of the expected popularity of trails, the survey asked how often the respondent utilizes trails. Two-thirds (66%) indicated that they or their family use the trails several times per month or more.

The survey respondents were also given a list of trail related statements, and asked how strongly they agree or disagree with each one. 86% agreed that they would like to see trails developed as an alternative way to commute or get around Cedar Park. 77% agreed they would use their bike, or allow their kids to use their bikes, to get to school if trails were more accessible in their neighborhood. 74% agreed they would support widening some roadways where feasible to allow for bicycle lanes. Finally, 54% agreed they would use their bike to get to work if trails were more accessible to their employment area.

What facility is lacking – Respondents were asked the open ended question of what one recreational facility they felt was lacking in their part of Cedar Park.

Some of the more popular responses were:

- Trails
- Amphitheater
- Tennis courts
- Dog park
- Lacrosse fields
- Practice fields
- Athletic fields
- Indoor lap swimming pool

Open House/Public Meeting

An open house/public meeting was held at the City's recreation center in July 2013. Approximately 15 +/- residents were in attendance. The residents who attended had specific interests in organizing programs for youth and low income families, a tennis center, adding markers and signs that identify the trails, adding a lighted fishing pier in the City, and preserving land for parks.

During the open house, residents were shown a series of illustrations that depicted potential improvements and recommendations of the master plan. They were asked to mark with a sticker dot how important they felt each recommendation was to them and their family. The attendees mostly supported master planning and developing Lakeline Park, preserving open space, extending the Brushy Creek Regional Trail, and developing more trails.

Mind Mixer

The City of Cedar Park is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan as well as this parks master plan. The comprehensive plan used an online town hall website called Mind Mixer as one of their many methods of gathering public input from the residents. Many of the discussion topics on the Mind Mixer website were directly related to parks and recreation. Many residents who participated in the site voiced their support for more trails and preserved open space. Some of the direct quotes from the site include the following:

"We need to continue our parks system while we still have the land. This includes new parks, linking existing parks and greenways into a comprehensive system which meets a diverse variety of uses"

"Make it easier for residents to get to destinations by walking and biking. We live

in Cypress Mill and would love to be able to walk or ride our bikes to Lakeline Station, shopping, restaurants, and the new Alamo Drafthouse that is opening at 183 and S. Lakeline."

"We need more areas to go to with family for recreation. Our community is growing daily and we need to keep up with the population increase."

"Arts, Crafts, Antiques, Restaurants, surrounding a public square/events area that can serve as a Farmer's Market, or host an event or festival - much like Fredericksburg, which is packed every weekend with educational and entertaining events, and draws tourists for hundreds of miles around."

"There are many places in the Northeast end of Cedar Park that would be ideal for community gardens, perhaps adjacent to Water Catchment Areas in residential neighborhoods that can't be developed because they are in a watershed area."

Park and Recreation Advisory Board

A presentation was given to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members in November 2013. The presentation included a summary of the needs assessment of the master plan, the public input that had been received, and potential recommendations of the plan. The members of the board were supportive of the plan, and had a few recommendations of their own such as adding a pavilion program similar to the current shade structure program. Other ideas the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members had:

- *Acquire land for athletic complex with flat fields and sports*
- *Develop tennis center with back boards, and outdoor racquetball*
- *Add trails with accessibility and connectivity*
- *Add a trail connection between Little Elm and Brushy Creek Regional with a bridge or tunnel*
- *Develop a Nature center with birding opportunities and outdoor classroom*
- *Develop an observatory*
- *Develop fairgrounds with amphitheater for events like music festival*
- *Incorporate "skate spots" within existing parks.*
- *Add lighting at two or three of our existing parks for evening Bocce and Basketball play*
- *Develop remaining land at Town Center Park with fishing pier, amphitheater and trails*
- *Add a large sandbox with benches in a community park*
- *Develop natural amenities like birding in parks where there is water*

Parks, Arts, and Community Enrichment (PACE) Board

Review by the newly formed PACE board occurred in the late Fall of 2014, with the Board considering input on the need for tennis, bicycle, mountain biking and BMX facilities, as well as the need for future park space. The PACE board recommended the plan on to the City Council in January of 2015.

Chapter 5

An Evaluation of Current and Future Park Needs

Introduction – What is a Needs Assessment?

This section, *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.

It is important to recognize that the criteria and standards established in this section primarily serve to establish a baseline for facilities and to help the City see whether it is providing an adequate number and distribution of facilities. These levels of service can and should be adjusted periodically to meet changing conditions in the City.

Methods of Assessing Park Needs

This master plan used three techniques to evaluate current and future parks need. These techniques follow general methodologies accepted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for local park master plans in Texas.

All three methods are important in their own way, but individually do not represent the entire story. This assessment, and the recommendations resulting from it, uses findings from all three methods to determine what types of recreation facilities are needed in Cedar Park.

1. **Level of Service-Based Needs Approach** uses levels of service standards established by the local jurisdiction to determine the quantity of park facilities required to meet the City's needs at a given population. Standards usually are expressed as the quantity of park facilities needed to adequately serve every 1,000 citizens of the city. Standards are established to provide the level of service that the particular jurisdiction believes is most responsive to the amount of use and the interests of its citizens.

2. **Demand-Based Approach** uses participation rates and surveys to determine how much the population uses and desires certain types of recreation facilities.

3. **Resource-Based Approach** is based on the usefulness of available physical resources to provide recreation opportunities. For example, creeks and open space cave preserves provide opportunities for interesting natural parks and trail corridors in Cedar Park.

Level of Service-Based Needs Assessment

National guidelines and standards are often used to develop quick assessments of the types of recreation facilities that a community may need. However, each city has its own unique geographic, demographic, and socio-economic composition, and as such, the arbitrary application of national standards, as is often done, probably will not adequately calculate the needs of that particular community. **Local needs and desires, expressed as desired "levels of service" are used by this master plan as the guiding criteria to develop guidelines that meet the expectations of the citizens of Cedar Park in a realistic manner.**

Three types of park level of service or standards were used to analyze the parks needs of Cedar Park. These include:

Spatial or Park Acreage Levels of Service defines the acres of parkland needed, and are usually expressed as a ratio of park acreage to population.

Facility Standards or Levels of Service - defines the number of facilities recommended serving each particular recreation need. Facility standards are usually expressed as a ratio of units of a particular facility per population size. For example, in Cedar Park a facility standard for baseball fields might be one field to serve every 8,000 inhabitants of the City.

Development Standards - defines the exact spatial and dimensional requirements for a specific recreation area or facility. These recommended standards are contained in Chapter 3, and serve as guides for new parks.

Park Acreage Levels of Service

Spatial levels of service for parks and recreational areas are established so that sufficient area is available to allow for all the outdoor recreation needs of a community. Cedar Park is a landlocked city that is quickly approaching build out. The City must now focus on maximizing its existing parkland resources to their fullest potential. These levels of service will allow Cedar Park to plan ahead so that parkland can be designed and built to accommodate the needs of the City and the desired uses for the space. **These spatial levels of service are typically expressed as the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.**

Play features at Veterans Memorial Park

Table 5.1
Target Levels of Service for Cedar Park

Close-to-Home Parks

- **Neighborhood Parks** – Recommended level of service – 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard recognizes the significance of smaller parks in the many residential communities in the city.
- **Target LOS for Access to Parks** – ¼ mile
- **Community Parks** – Recommended standard – 4.0 to 6.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

Total Recommended Close to Home Parks – 7.0 to 9.0 acres per 1,000 residents

Other Citywide Parks

- **Regional Parks** – No standard suggested or currently deemed to be needed, since Cedar Park residents can use nearby Williamson County regional park facilities.
- **Special Purpose Parks** - Variable standard, none established (special purpose parks can include athletic parks, tennis centers and golf courses)
- **Linear Parks/Linkage Parks** variable standard, but a general level of service of 1.0 to 2.0 acres for every 1,000 residents is recommended.
- **Open Space Preserves** - Variable standard, recommended goal of 5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 residents. Note that this excludes creek and drainage lands that are undevelopable. Overall, an ultimate target level of service of 10 to 15 acres of open space for every 1,000 residents is desired.

Total Recommended Standards for Other Parks - 11 to 17 acres per 1,000 residents within the service area of Cedar Park

Overall Recommended Goal for Parks and Open Space Acreage – 18 to 26 acres per 1,000 residents within the service area of Cedar Park

Comparison of Spatial "Levels of Service" to Current Conditions

The recommended spatial standards outlined above were compared to the actual number of park acres in the City. Area park facilities provided by Williamson County are included in the spatial level of service calculations, but are treated as having a broad service area that includes 250,000 residents of southwest Williamson County, including residents of Cedar Park.

Neighborhood Parks in Cedar Park

The standard for neighborhood parks set at 3.0 acres for every 1,000 residents is a comparatively high level of service for neighborhood parks, but simply reflects what Cedar Park already has. Master planned residential communities developed in Cedar Park over the past 20 years have place a high importance on including neighborhood parks, and as a result Cedar Park has a good system of smaller parks. The current ratio of total neighborhood parks to population in Cedar Park's service area is 203% of the recommended goal for neighborhood parks.

Park Fact: *Currently* ***60%*** *of residences in Cedar Park are within ¼ mile of a park or green space and* ***94%*** *are within ½ mile of a park or green space. The ultimate goal of this plan is for all residences to be within ¼ mile of a park.*

Because of the master planned communities throughout Cedar Park that offer their own internal system of neighborhood parks, Cedar Park currently does not have a deficit of smaller parks. It is also expected that future residential developments will continue the trend of providing neighborhood park facilities to their residents, to the existent that is required by the City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Table 5.2 below summarizes the current neighborhood park acreage on a citywide basis, and the future needs based on the ultimate build-out population.

Forest Oaks Park is a typical neighborhood park

Table 5.2
Neighborhood Parks for Cedar Park

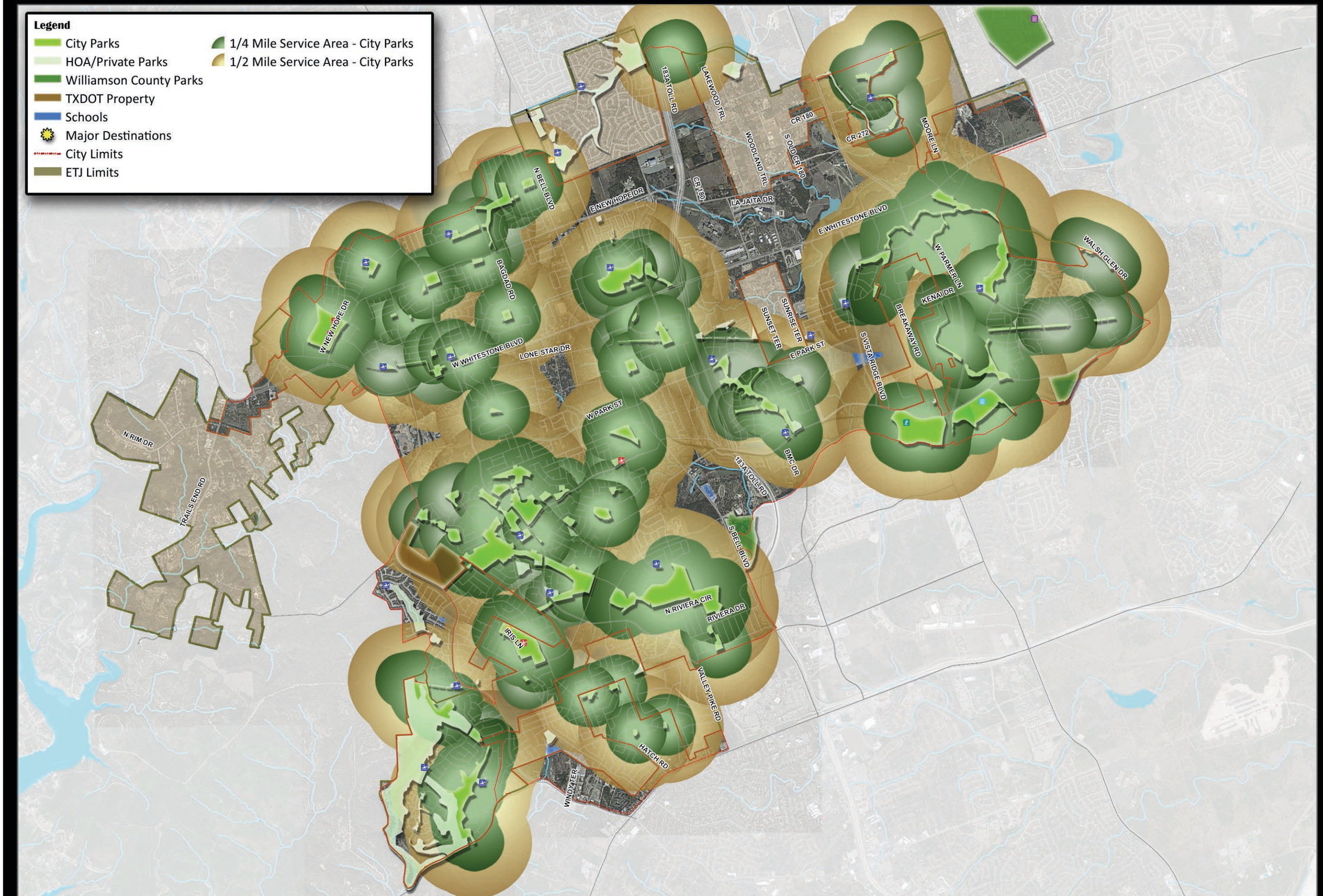
Current Acres – 240 acres +/- (City-owned only)
Current Acres – 255 acres +/- (HOA only)

Current Level of Service – Ratio of total neighborhood parks (City and HOA) to city population = 8.5 acres per 1,000 residents
Current Level of Service – Ratio of total neighborhood parks (City and HOA) to service area population = 6.1 acres per 1,000 residents

Recommended Level of Service – 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents

Current 2015 Needs
Current Needs with 61,957 city population – 185 acres (no deficit)
Current Needs with 83,039 service area population – 249 acres (no deficit)

Future Build-Out Needs
With 110,000 service area population – 330 acres (no deficit when taking into account City-owned and HOA neighborhood parks)



Neighborhood Park Service Areas

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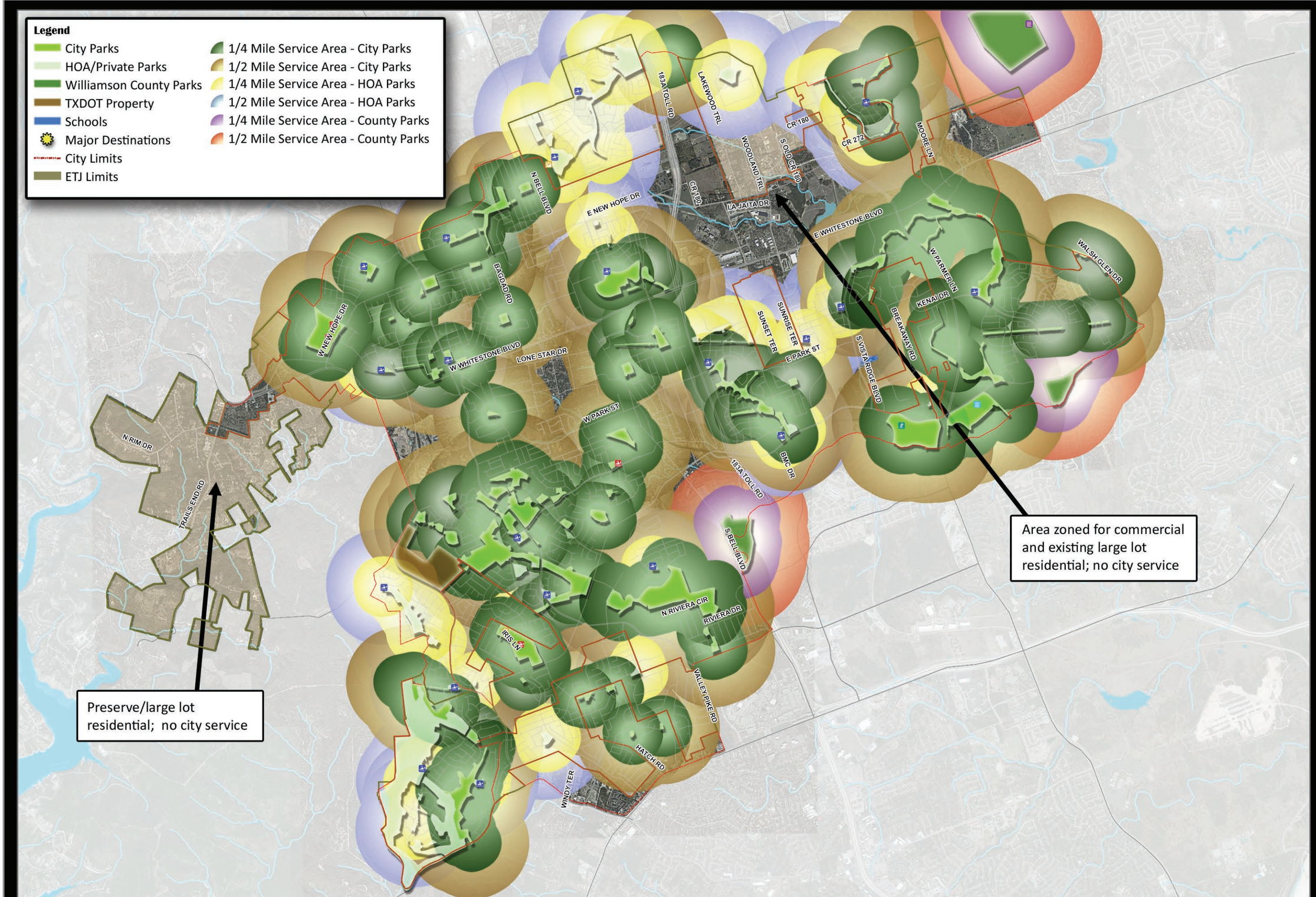

Neighborhood Park Service Areas

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

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Key neighborhood park needs are as follows:

- Neighborhood parks are generally well distributed throughout the city.
- Many of the older HOA neighborhood parks are smaller in size. Newer HOA parks tend to be larger as a result of changing marketing approaches.
- The current areas of the City and ETJ that are underserved by neighborhood parks are mostly areas zoned as commercial, preserves or large lot residential, all of which have no city services and are expected to not need neighborhood parks in the future.

Community Parks in Cedar Park

Existing Community Parks - Cedar Park has an adequate distribution of developed community parks throughout the City. However, one community park is currently undeveloped, Lakeline Park, and Town Center Park is under-developed which currently has the indoor recreation center on site and some trails, but lacks other important park features.

The current developed acreage of community parkland is only 48% to 72% of the target level of service.

Key Community Park Findings - community park size and distribution issues in Cedar Park include:

- The current service level for developed community parks is 48% to 72% of what is required for the population of the entire service area in 2015.
- Cedar Park currently has the parkland available to alleviate that deficit with two large undeveloped parks – Lakeline Park and Town Center Park, which total approximately 160 acres.
- The undeveloped 160 acres +/- of community parkland would address much of the City's community park needs.
- With the development of the remaining community park sites, only the northeast sector of the City will lack community park service. However, because of its close proximity to the Williamson County Regional Park, the residents in the northeast are served by that park. The Williamson County Regional Park can then be counted as the de facto large scale park in the northeast area.
- Cedar Park should focus on continued development of its two existing undeveloped community parks over the next decade.

Veterans Memorial Park is Cedar Park's newest community park

Table 5.3
Community Parks for Cedar Park

Total Acreage – 393 acres +/-

Current Developed Acres – 233 acres
- Brushy Creek Lake Park - 89 acres
- Brushy Creek Sports Park - 54 acres
- Elizabeth Milburn Park - 42 acres
- Veterans Memorial Park - 48 acres

Current Undeveloped Acres – 160 acres
- Lakeline Park – 117 acres (100% undeveloped)
- Town Center Park – 43 acres (75% +/- undeveloped)

Current Level of Service – Ratio of community parks to city population (developed parks only) = 3.76 acres per 1,000 residents
Current Level of Service – Ratio of community parks to service area population (developed parks only) = 2.8 acres per 1,000 residents

Current Level of Service – Ratio of community parks to city population (all community parks) = 6.3 acres per 1,000 residents
Current Level of Service – Ratio of community parks to service area population (all community parks) = 4.7 acres per 1,000 residents

Recommended Level of Service – 4.0 to 6.0 acres per 1,000 residents

Current 2015 Needs
- Current Needs with 61,957 city population – 248 to 372 acres (deficit of up to 139 developed acres)
- Current Needs with 83,039 service area population – 332 to 498 acres (deficit of 99 to 265 developed acres)

Future Build-Out Needs
- With 110,000 service area population – 440 to 660 acres (deficit of 207 to 427 developed acres)
- Once Lakeline Park and Town Center Park are developed, remaining deficit of only 47 to 267 acres.
- However, there is no deficit when considering Williamson County Regional Park which can serve as the de facto community park in the northeast planning area.

Community Park Service Areas

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

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Other Park Types in Cedar Park

Other types of parks that respond to specific physical conditions in the City or to specific needs are also part of the park system. These include special purpose parks, linear or linkage parks, regional parks, and open space or natural preserves. These park types are discussed below.

Special purpose parks – Cedar Park has three types of special purpose parks: the CPYL, CTRMA Trailhead, and detention pond parks.

- **The CPYL Baseball and Softball Complex** is owned by the City of Cedar Park; however, it is managed and operated by the Cedar Park Youth League under a long term lease agreement.
- **The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA)** has developed a premier shared use path (trail) facility along the 183A Tollroad. One of the main trailheads for this facility is located along 183A underneath the Brushy Creek Road overpass bridge. The trailhead has amenities such as parking, benches, directional signs, and fitness equipment.

- **Detention pond parks** – Cedar Park currently has three parks designated as detention pond parks. These detention areas, such as New Hope Park, consist entirely of practice areas contained within sunken storm water detention areas. The city currently has a total of 19 acres of detention areas.

Regional parks – The City of Cedar Park has no regional parks, but Williamson County provides two regional parks that primarily serve the citizens of Cedar Park, Round Rock Leander and southwest Williamson County. These are the Williamson County Regional Park and Champion Park.

Park Fact - Williamson County's two parks near Cedar Park currently provide approximately 3.3 acres of regional park space for every 1,000 residents of the greater southwest Williamson County region.

- The Williamson County Regional Park, at 800 acres, and Champion Park at 33 acres, together currently provide approximately 3.3 acres of regional park space for every 1,000 residents of the greater southwest Williamson County region.
- Additional regional park facilities are provided by the YMCA at Twin Lakes Park which total 53 acres. This park is also a County park; however, it is currently operated and maintained by the YMCA of Greater Williamson

County. The park has pavilions, sports fields, an archery range, swimming areas, and other amenities. It is also currently the site where the Brushy Creek Regional Trail terminates.

Linear parks – The City of Cedar Park currently has a good supply of linear greenbelt corridors. However, almost all of these corridors are undeveloped. In total, the greenbelts add 412 acres +/- of linear park space to the City which is approximately 7.1 acres of linear park for every 1,000 residents of Cedar Park. The key recommendation is to develop these linear parks with trails and other amenities over time, especially in the eastern portion of the City.

Park Fact – Less than 10% of the existing greenbelt linear park corridors in Cedar Park are currently developed with trails and other amenities.

Open Space Needs in Cedar Park

Preservation of undeveloped natural areas in Cedar Park is a key element in maintaining the quality of the City. These open space areas stand out from the developed parts of the City and are highly valuable. Most of these areas are associated with creeks, but open space should also focus on preservation of trees and forested areas. Areas that have habitat value and warrant habitat protection typically include creeks, floodplains, wooded areas, and areas of topographic change. The preservation of open space is an ongoing issue that will face Cedar Park as it approaches build-out. New residential development is consuming open land around the City, and opportunities to preserve open space are becoming increasingly difficult.

Open space plays a critical role in the long term visual quality of the City as it becomes much more intensely developed. The value of the green space relief provided by an undeveloped creek corridor or a large tract of land in the middle of a highly urbanized city is immeasurable, especially once the city is largely developed and open tracts of land no longer remain.

The Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan (BCCP) lands located adjacent to the southwest sector of the City do provide a significant open space resource for the area. Including the Discovery Well Cave Preserve, Cedar Park currently has approximately 673 acres of open space within the current city limits. An analysis of the projected minimum current and future open space target levels of service are shown in Table 5.4 on the following page. Note that these do not represent ideals, and any additional greenbelt or linear preserve areas will ultimately contribute greatly to the livability of Cedar Park.

The long range preservation of 1,100 to 1,650 total acres of open areas is not a large amount, considering the over 33+ square miles and 21,000 acres that the entire service area covers. Furthermore, all open space that is preserved does not need be owned by the City, but can be preserved as greenspace attached to portions of new developments or in undevelopable natural drainage corridors.

Currently only around 12% of the land area within the City limits of Cedar Park is classified as undeveloped. As these properties are developed, a key priority will be to preserve all remaining areas within the floodplain and adequate drainage corridors to create open space and possible linear park corridors.

Table 5.4
Open Space and Nature Preserves in Cedar Park

Current Acres – 673 acres

- Buttercup Creek Cave Preserves – 92 acres
- Buttercup Creek Natural Area – 12 acres
- Discovery Well Cave Preserve – 106 acres
- Additional cave preserves – 51 acres
- Citywide Greenbelts – 412 acres

Current Level of Service – Ratio of open space/nature preserves to city population = 10.9 acres per 1,000 residents

Current Level of Service – Ratio of open space/nature preserves to service area population = 8.1 acres per 1,000 residents

Recommended Level of Service – 10.0 to 15.0 acres per 1,000 residents

Current 2015 Needs

- Current Needs with 61,957 city population – 619 to 929 acres (deficit of up to 250+ acres)
- Current Needs with 83,039 service area population – 830 to 1,245 acres (deficit of 157 to 570+ acres)

Future Build-Out Needs

- With 110,000 service area population – 1,100 to 1,650 acres (deficit of 427 to 977 acres)

Park Facility Levels of Service / Key Needs

Facility levels of service are used to help provide a variety of recreation opportunities throughout the City as growth occurs. These target levels of service are used prioritize the need for individual types of park facilities so that the city's resources can be better focused.

Major Recreation Facilities

A review of the key needs and issues associated with each major type of outdoor facility follows. Facility needs are based on:

- Current and future population needs
- The amount of demand for each type of facility, based on user information where available

Note: For the following level of service calculations, needs are calculated using the population for the current city limits and the future build-out projection.

Baseball and Softball Fields

Current Number of Fields: 13 fields

- 9 fields at the Cedar Park Youth League Complex
- 2 fields at Twin Lakes Park
- 2 fields at Brushy Creek Sports Park

Current Level of Service: 1 field per every 4,766 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 field for every 8,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 8 fields (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 14 fields (deficit of 1 field)

Key Needs – Baseball for youth is currently provided by the CP Youth League and by the Cedar Park YMCA. Both of these leagues currently serve people living outside the City of Cedar Park. **While the number of facilities is adequate to meet the population of Cedar Park, it is important to continue to monitor the demand for additional fields over time because the leagues in Cedar Park serve a wider area than just Cedar Park residents.**

Level of Need – Low

Flat Fields (Soccer, Football, Lacrosse, etc.)

Current Number of Fields: 8 fields

- 3 fields at Brushy Creek Sports Park
- 2 fields at Elizabeth Milburn Park
- 1 field at Janet Bartles Park
- 2 fields at Cluck Creek Park

Current Level of Service: 1 field per every 7,745 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 field for every 8,000 residents of Cedar Park

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 8 fields (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 14 fields (deficit of 6 fields)

Key Issues – One of the top athletic facility needs in the City is more flat fields. Multi-purpose flat fields can provide space for many different types of leagues such as soccer, football, lacrosse, field hockey, etc. All of those sports have quickly grown in participation over the past several years in Texas, and it is anticipated that the participation growth will continue. **Future flat fields should be programmed into the development of Lakeline Park. Practice space for these sports is also an important facility to provide so that the game quality fields can have adequate recovery time between uses.**

Level of Need – High

Basketball Courts

Current Number of Public Courts: 22 courts

- 11 full size courts at 11 parks
- 4 half size courts at four parks
- 5.5 courts in HOA parks
- 3.5 courts at elementary schools

Current Level of Service: 1 court per every 2,816 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 court for every 5,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 12 courts (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 22 courts (no deficit)

Key Issues – While currently there is no projected deficit of basketball courts, basketball courts are often times one of the most utilized amenities within parks. Furthermore, the park-like amenities on elementary schools are currently not fenced and can be available to the public during non-school hours. However, it should not be assumed that these facilities will always be open to the residents in those neighborhoods. **Therefore, one to two additional courts should be added to each community park when funding becomes available.**

Level of Need – Low

Group Pavilions

Current Number of Pavilions: 28 pavilions

- 19 pavilions at 16 city parks
- 8 pavilions at 4 HOA parks
- 1 at Champion Park (Williamson County)

Current Level of Service: 1 pavilion per every 2,200 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 pavilion for every 3,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 21 pavilions (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 37 pavilions (deficit of 9 pavilions)

Key Issues – Group pavilions are one of the most popular amenities in parks. They provide shade to park users, as well as places to gather. Large scale pavilions can also be rented for birthday parties, reunions, company picnics, and other events. **Group pavilions need to be added to both Lakeline Park and Town Center Park. One to two additional pavilions should be constructed in other community parks such Veterans Memorial Park and Brushy Creek Sports Park, similar to what is available at Brushy Creek Lake Park.**

Level of Need – High

Picnicking Facilities

Current Number of Facilities:

- Most parks have at least one picnic area with a table and possibly a barbeque grill and trash bin.

Level of Service Recommendation: No specific standard other than to provide picnic facilities with shade and outdoor grills in every park. For smaller parks up to five acres in size, add two to three picnic areas, and for larger parks provide a minimum of one picnic area for every three acres of park.

Key Issues – Continue to add picnic tables in shaded locations in all parks. Include shelters under trees or with covered shade. Provide accessible pathways to at least one to two tables in each park. **Add two to three additional small shade shelters in community parks.**

Level of Need – Medium

Playgrounds

Current Number of Playgrounds: 67

- 26 in city parks
- 2 in county parks
- 21 in HOA parks
- 20 at elementary schools

Current Level of Service: 1 playground per every 925 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 playground for every 3,000 residents of Cedar Park

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 21 playgrounds (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 37 playgrounds (no deficit)

Key Issues – Although current supply is good, emphasis on replacing older play areas should be continued, since playgrounds are the primary recreation facility for younger children up to age 10. The City should continue the shade structure program, the purpose of which is to cover all playgrounds in city parks with a shade structure so they can be used throughout the year especially during the hot summer months. **In larger parks, the City should provide a mix of play features for both young and older users, including some more challenging features like the ones at Veterans Memorial Park.** Similar to basketball courts, this analysis includes the playgrounds that are currently available on elementary school properties. The playgrounds are currently not fenced and can be open to the public during non-school hours. If that changes at some point in the future, the City should re-evaluate its need for additional playgrounds.

Level of Need – Low

Tennis Courts

Current Number of Courts: 15 courts

- 9 courts at five city parks
- 6 courts at three HOA parks

Current Level of Service: 1 court per every 4,130 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 court for every 8,000 residents of Cedar Park

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 8 courts (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. – 14 courts (no deficit)

Key Issues – While the number of courts is currently adequate, the distribution of the courts is poor. The current configuration is one or two courts at a handful of parks. There is no tennis facility in Cedar Park that could accommodate league play and tournaments. While the existing tennis leagues can use the school district's courts, they have no ability to program that space. The school district only allows their courts to be open for public use outside of school hours and when the school is not using them. The tennis leagues cannot schedule routine practices, games or tournaments. **It is recommended that the City pursue a tennis center feasibility study to determine whether or not such a facility is needed in Cedar Park, and if so, where it should be located.** The study should also look at the usage of other court types such as racquetball and bocce ball to determine if there is a need for those types of facilities.

Level of Need – High for a tennis center feasibility study

Outdoor Sand Volleyball Courts

Current Number of Courts: 11 courts

- 10 courts at five city parks
- 1 court at one HOA parks

Current Level of Service: 1 court per every 5,632 residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 court for every 8,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 8 courts (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. – 14 courts (deficit of three courts)

Key Issues – Sand volleyball is a popular activity, and can be a relatively easy addition to existing parks. **A minimum of two courts should be added to Town Center Park, ideally located near picnic and pavilion facilities. A second court should be added to Ranch Trail Park and Gann Ranch Park long term if feasible.**

Level of Need – High

Practice Fields and Backstops

Current Number of Practice Fields: 40 practice fields

- 18 practice fields in 11 City parks
- 1 practice field in one HOA park
- 21 practice fields at elementary schools

Practice fields are found in area elementary schools, and in many city parks and detention pond areas throughout the City. Adequate practice facilities are essential so that game fields do not get overused.

Current Level of Service: 1 practice field per every 1,550 residents
Recommended Levels of Service: 1 practice field for every 3,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - 21 locations (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - 32 locations (no deficit)

Key Issues – Currently many of the elementary schools have areas available for practice space that are open to the public during non-school hours. Because of these added facilities, the City is not facing a deficit. However, there is no guarantee that those school practice facilities will always be available. Given the high number of player participants, new areas for practice should be developed. **The City should add one to two practice backstops in neighborhood parks where backstops are not currently available and where space allows, and improve drainage in detention areas to continue use as practice facilities.**

Level of Need – Medium

Special Interest Parks: Skate Park, Dog Park, Bike Park, Disc Golf Course, Bocce Ball Courts

Current Number of Special Interest Parks:

- 1 dog park at Veterans Memorial Park
- 1 skate park at Brushy Creek Sports Park
- 1 disc golf course at Brushy Creek Sports Park
- 2 Bocce ball courts at Brushy Creek Lake Park

Recommended Level of Service: typically 1 to 2 of each type of special interest parks per city

Key Issues – Each of these special interest parks accommodate very popular activities, but usually only for a smaller portion of the population. That being said, these facilities are relatively inexpensive to install and can easily be added to existing parks where space is available. **The City is currently exploring options for adding its first bike park. The existing dog park is so popular that a second dog park should be added to the eastern side of the City. Additional disc golf courses should be added to one to two more community parks.**

Level of Need – Medium

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

Current Number of Pools: 23 pools, 2 spraygrounds

- 3 City pools
- 1 City sprayground
- 1 County regional sprayground
- 20 HOA pools

Current Level of Service: 1 pool per every 2,500+/- residents of Cedar Park

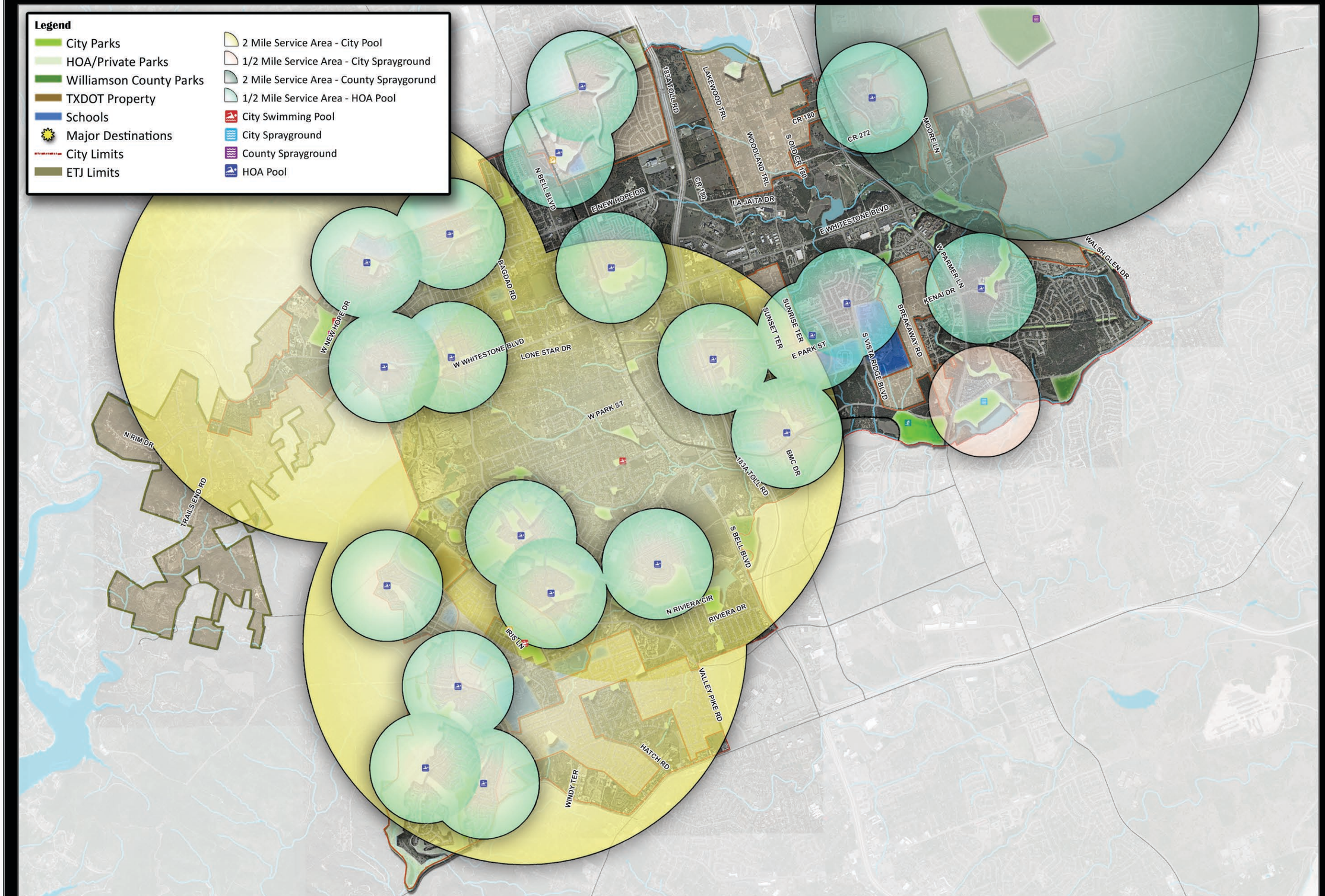
Recommended Level of Service: 1 city-operated pool for every 30,000 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. - Two city pools (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. - Three city pools (no deficit)

Key Issues – The City's newest pool at Veterans Memorial Park is considered an activity pool with modern recreational amenities including slides, water basketball, and water play features. Elizabeth Milburn Pool also offers a slide and water play features; however, it is much smaller. The City's third pool, Buttercup Pool, is an older pool and does not offer as many as attractions as the more recent pools. Any renovations to Buttercup Pool should include recreation amenities such as slides and spray features if possible. HOA pools are generally smaller with fewer amenities, and use is restricted to member homeowners.

The City offers one sprayground at Brushy Creek Lake Park, and it is extremely popular among residents. Williamson County also offers a large sprayground at the Williamson County Regional Park. **Because spraygrounds provide a lower cost aquatic facility, the City should consider adding a second sprayground, possibly at Lakeline Park, long term.**

Level of Need – Low for additional swimming pools; medium for an additional sprayground long term.



Existing Aquatic Facilities Service Areas

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

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Trails

The citizens of Cedar Park continue to rank trails as one of the most popular recreation features in the City, as demonstrated in both the 2006 Plan and during the public input phase of this planning process. The Brushy Creek Regional Trail is extremely popular, and extending that trail into the western portion of the City is a top priority. The City currently has a high level of service for trails, and should seek to maintain that high level.

Current Miles of Trails: Approximately 31.5 miles +/- (includes nature trails, sidepaths, shared use paths, and trails within parks)

Current Level of Service – 1 mile of trail per every 1,970+ residents of Cedar Park

Recommended Level of Service: 1 mile of trail for every per 2,500 residents

- Current 2015 Need for 61,957 pop. – 25+/- miles of trails (no deficit)
- Build-out Need for 110,000 pop. – 44.0 miles of trails (deficit of 12.5 miles)

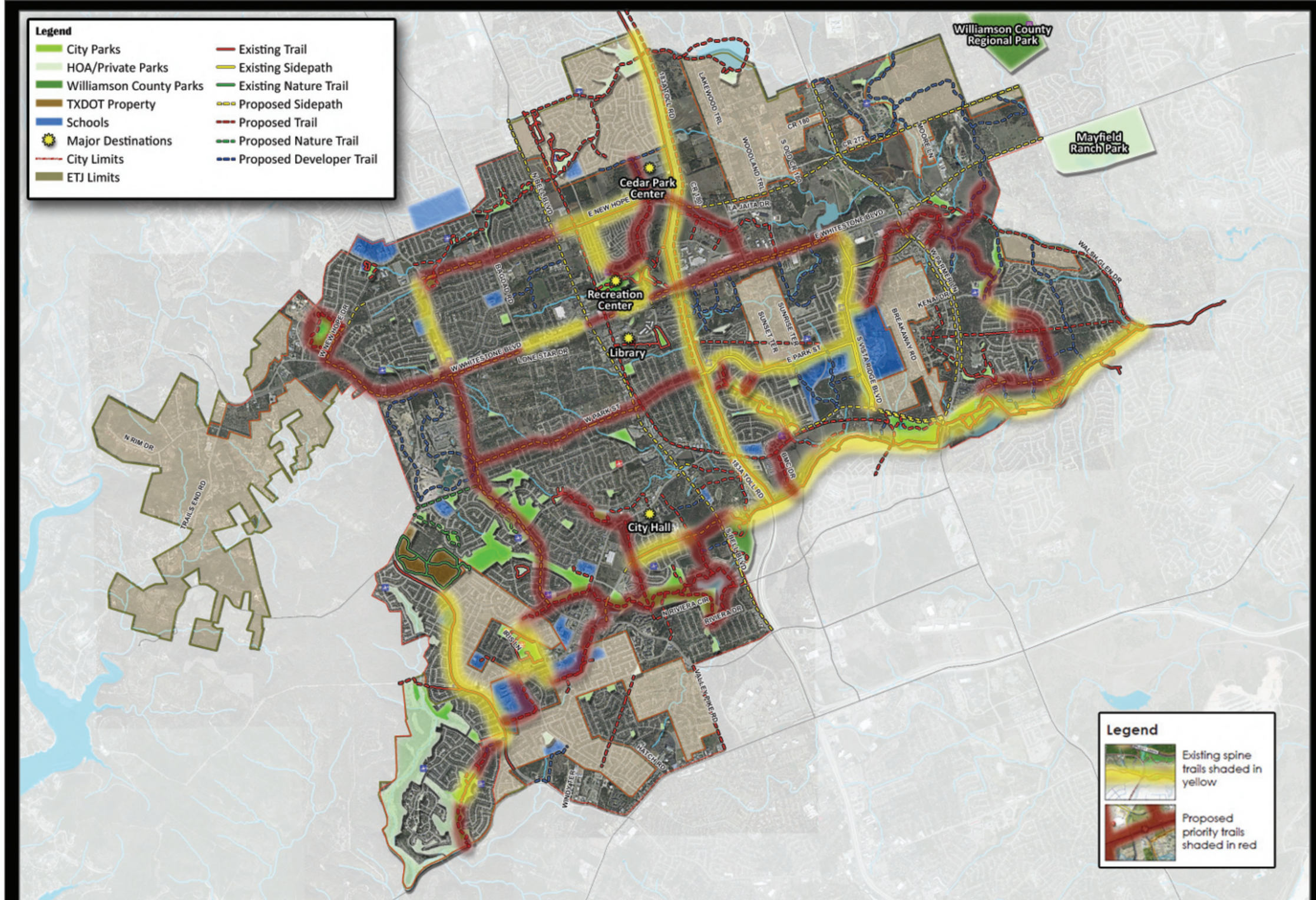
Key Issues – Cedar Park already has a significant network of trails, but many are within residential communities, and do not connect to other destinations. Besides the Brushy Creek Regional Trail in the far southern portion of the City and the 183A Shared Use Path that runs north/south through the center of the City, Cedar Park lacks major cross town trails that link multiple parks and community features. The desired level of service is very high and recognizes the importance of trails. Because of this, the City developed a Trails Master Plan in 2010. Many of the recommendations of that plan are still relevant to this planning effort. **The City should continue to implement the Trails Master Plan.**

Level of Need – High

Demand-Based Needs

Demand for parks was also used to determine what additional facilities are needed in Cedar Park. Demand is based both on the level of use where data is available and preferences expressed by citizens through surveys and public meetings.

By Citizen Survey and Expressed Need - Respondents to the citizen survey were asked to indicate their favorite recreation activities, as well as which facilities they thought were most needed in the City. A summary of citizen input is provided in Chapter 4, Citizen Input. The ranking of items by citizens is shown in Table 5.5 below.



CEDAR PARK

2010 Trails Master Plan

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

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By Citizen Feedback – Public participation comments are contained in Chapter 4. In general, citizens expressed a need for connected trails throughout all parts of the City, more open space and natural areas, more pavilions, and more flat fields for soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.

Table 5.5
Overall Importance of Building Additional Recreational Facilities
(Ranked by very important and important)

GENERAL TYPES OF FACILITIES
Rank of importance for the next 5 to 10 years (Very Important + Important = %)

1.	Trails that link all areas of the City	89%
2.	Linear parks and trail corridors	88%
3.	Large community parks and	86% (tie)
	Nature preserves that are undeveloped	86% (tie)
4.	Smaller neighborhood parks	83%
5.	Athletic facilities	75%
6.	Aquatic (swimming) facilities	70%
7.	Indoor recreation facilities	64%

MOST IMPORTANT FACILITIES TO BUILD
Rank of most important facilities to construct in Cedar Park

1.	Trails	80%
2.	Nature areas/cave preserves	45%
3.	Playgrounds	44%
4.	Picnic areas	34%
5.	Amphitheater	33%
6.	Splash pad/sprayground	32%
7.	Bike park	30%
8.	Leisure pool	26%
9.	Dog park	25%
10.	Soccer/football fields	23%

Resource Based Needs Assessment

In the resource based assessment, key physical features of the City that may create recreational opportunities are assessed. Both man-made and natural features can be considered. The City of Cedar Park has several unique features that should be preserved and adapted for recreational use and open space preservation where feasible. These are:

Area drainage and soil conservation lakes – Small area lakes that were created when Cedar Park was largely an agricultural and ranching center can become significant park assets in the future. Brushy Creek Lake Park is an excellent example of the conversion of one of these lakes into a memorable and beautiful park. Another opportunity is to develop Lakeline Park in the western portion of the City. This is one of the remaining undeveloped large parks that has natural areas and a lake feature.

Brushy Creek Lake Park is an excellent example of the conversion of an existing natural resource into a city park.

Area Creeks and Streambeds – Multiple dry and active creeks and streambeds cross the City, with most running in an east/west direction. These low areas are vital for storm drainage in Cedar Park, but can also be maintained as linear parks. The Brushy Creek corridor on the eastern edge of Cedar Park is a great example of a well preserved linear park along a body of water. Developers should be encouraged to maintain public access to creek areas by using parallel roadways along the edges of creeks instead of backing homes up to the creek areas.

Drainage Corridors – Manmade swales can be used as trail connections, or at a minimum beautified to serve as open space features in the City. Currently, many drainage corridors in Cedar Park are unattractive. Little flat area has been left for trails, and homes typically back up to these corridors, reducing the usefulness of them. The planting of young trees along these corridors, as well as standards that discourage land uses backing up to the drainage corridors, can ultimately turn these drainage corridors into attractive corridors that beautify the City and that serve as trail corridors.

Utility Easements – Utility easements and right-of-ways are linear in nature which makes them ideal for trails. There were a few key utility easement corridors that were identified in the City's 2010 Trails Master Plan as being ideal places for trail connections.

The power line corridor in the southwest part of the City has the potential to connect to Lakeline Park and the Brushy Creek Trail.

A Summary of Key Needs in Cedar Park

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 2015-2025 and beyond time period. The findings are divided into park type needs, facility needs, and other special needs or opportunities driven by specific existing resources.

Summary of Park Needs

Cedar Park is quickly approaching build-out; however, the City still has opportunities for better utilized parkland. There are two large community parks that are still undeveloped (Lakeline Park and Town Center Park), and many of the existing smaller parks have the potential to be enhanced. Park needs are discussed below.

- **Neighborhood Parks** – The City has an excellent supply of neighborhood parks, especially when the private HOA parks are counted. In fact, the areas of the City that are currently lacking in neighborhood parkland are areas that are zoned for commercial purposes or large-lot residential. These areas currently do not have City services, and it is expected that neighborhood parks will not be needed in these areas throughout the duration of this master plan because of the land use classifications.

- **Community Park Needs** – The most significant parkland need is to develop the remaining community parks within the City. Two of the City's community parks, Town Center Park and Lakeline Park, are mostly or entirely undeveloped. Developing these two parks should be the highest priority over the next decade.

- **Linear Parks –** The existing greenbelt corridors should be developed with trails and other amenities such as benches, lighting and trailheads where feasible and as funding becomes available. 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 remaining undeveloped portions of the City and can be done through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.

- **Parks in older parts of the City** – Parks with historical significance, that preserve key open spaces, or that frame and compliment major civic or community facilities should be developed as opportunities occur, especially in the central, older part of the City.

Summary of Key Facility Needs

The prioritization of needs is based on information received from public input as well as from the needs assessment formed from facility & acreage levels of service. The criteria used to prioritize the park facilities needs in Cedar Park are as follows:

- Level of need based on citizen input from a citywide basis – needs were in top ten most important as listed by Cedar Park citizens
- Level of need based on direct citizen input from public comments
- Level of service needs established by comparing target levels to actual levels
- Opportunities for recreation facilities based on existing physical conditions in or near Cedar Park
- The condition of existing park facilities in the City

Table 5.6
Key Needs Summary

Citywide Online Survey
- Trails
- Nature areas/nature preserve
- Playgrounds
- Picnic areas
- Amphitheater

Public Meeting Input
- Preserved land/open space
- Additional trails
- Markers and signs along trails
- Tennis center
- Lighted fishing pier
- Organizing programs for youth and low income families

Available Natural Resources
- Linear park corridors along creeks and drainage ways
- Water based parks, using remaining conservation lake
- Cave and open space preserves
- Reuse of treated effluent water for irrigation

Level of Service Assessment
- Trails
- Nature preserves/natural areas
- Group pavilions
- Flat fields (soccer, football, lacrosse)
- Sand volleyball courts

Areas of deficiency meeting all or most of the criteria shown above were ranked as high priority elements, and are slated to receive the highest level of attention over the next five to ten years. The following are the top ten key facility needs in Cedar Park.

1. **Trails** – The City has a significant number of trails, but should continue to develop connected trails in all areas. Trails are particularly needed in the north and northeast, and the extension of the Brushy Creek Regional Trail to the west is a high priority. Cedar Park should also explore opportunities for different types of trails within the City. Paddling trails and birding trails can be offered along Brushy Creek, and mountain biking trails can be available at the nature and cave preserve areas in the west.

2. **Nature areas/nature preserves –** As the City continues to grow, residents are seeking opportunities to be in nature. Preserved natural areas are a high priority and should be designated in areas where it is feasible. Natural open space could be defined as a natural preserved area, an outdoor classroom, an interpretive area, or cave preserves.

3. **Additional large 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 should add one to two more pavilions at the existing community parks, and at least four pavilions when development of Lakeline Park and Town Center Park occurs.

4. **Flat fields (for soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.) –** Soccer and football will remain popular sports in Texas, and lacrosse is quickly growing in participation. New flat fields are needed to meet these demands. Fields should be added to the new community park, Lakeline Park.

5. **Sand volleyball courts** – For many young people in some communities, sand volleyball is an opportunity to "see and be seen." This requires sand volleyball courts to be placed in a highly visible location as well as clumping them together. Town Center Park would be an ideal location for additional sand volleyball courts in Cedar Park. These courts, as well as basketball and bocce ball courts within the City, should be lighted where it is determined to be appropriate and needed.

6. **Picnic facilities** – Additional picnicking facilities, especially with covered tables, are needed in all the larger parks. Picnic facilities are often times one of the most heavily used amenities in parks. Because of such high use, picnic facilities should be inspected annually with minor damaged being repaired as needed, and they should be replaced approximately every ten years.

7. **Aquatic facilities (sprayground)** – Long term, the City should invest in a second sprayground facility, possibly at Lakeline Park. Spraygrounds provide a popular and lower cost aquatic facility for residents.

8. **Practice fields for baseball and soccer** – Currently many of the elementary schools in Cedar Park offer practice backstops which help meet the demand for practice space. These amenities are not fenced off from public use; however, it is unknown if the facilities will always be available. Therefore, new practice areas for baseball, softball, football and soccer should be provided in all city parks where feasible.

9. **Tennis courts –** While the current supply of tennis courts may be adequate, the distribution of the courts is very poor. The existing tennis leagues in the City do not have an adequate supply of tennis courts that they can program for practice, games and tournaments. The City should consider conducting a tennis center feasibility study to help determine if a tennis center is needed, what size of a center the community could support, and where an appropriate location would be for such a facility. The study should also explore the potential demand for multi-use courts for other sports such as racquetball, squash or pickle ball.

10. **Fishing opportunities** – Cedar Park has many opportunities to offer fishing facilities at the various lakes and ponds that are within the existing parks. Fishing piers similar to what is offered at Brushy Creek Lake Park should be programmed into both Town Center Park and Lakeline Park. Lakeline Park also has the potential to offer a lighted fishing pier for evening use.

Chapter 6

Recommendations of the Master Plan

Introduction

Based on the needs assessment developed in Chapter 5, a series of park improvements are recommended for Cedar Park. These recommendations address the need for development of the existing large community parks, additional flat field improvements, new trails and general improvements to existing parks. These recommendations should be implemented over the general life of this master plan, which covers the next 5 to 10 years.

The recommended improvements fall into three general categories:

- **Improvements to Existing Parks** – Making key improvements to existing parks throughout the City.
- **Development of Existing Parks** – Developing the remaining community parks and nature parks in the City.
- **Trail Development** – Developing a citywide connected trails system based on the recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan.

Philosophical Background for Recommendations

Key design points that should guide the design and enhancements of every existing or new park in the City have been discussed throughout this master plan. These points are as follows:

- **Every park should be considered as a green oasis in Cedar Park -** Parks should be carefully sited so that they are prominent features in their respective neighborhoods, and should include extensive mature trees and landscaping.
- **Parks should follow a consistent citywide design theme -** As discussed in previous sections, fundamental items such as park signs, high quality pavilions with rock faced columns, and the preservation of existing hill country vegetation and trees should be used in every park to create a consistent and recognizable park nomenclature that unites the parks in Cedar Park.
- **Where possible, each park should truly celebrate the history and culture of Cedar Park -** Parks can incorporate historical plaques and features that allude to the area or neighborhood around the park or the circumstances that caused the park to be created.
- **Every park should include features for a wide variety of park users -** Park facilities should be multi-faceted, and should follow the guidelines for each park type presented in Chapter 3.
- **Parks should be designed so as to reduce maintenance -** Automatic irrigation systems should be a key component of every park, and in conjunction, each park should have native grasses and trees to reduce

watering consumption. The use of treated effluent reuse water for irrigation purposes should be utilized in all parks where feasible.

- **Shade should be incorporated into many features of every park -** Playgrounds and basketball courts should be covered where feasible, and several covered picnic tables should be included in every park, no matter how small the park is. The City should continue the shade structure program, and possibly look at expanding it to include pavilions.
- **Bodies of water should be highly valued -** Existing areas of water, whether in the form of ponds, small lakes or creeks should be preserved as a recreational asset.
- **Community input should be welcomed -** Input from neighborhoods surrounding each new or renovated park should be included in the design of every park in the City.

The following items comprise the major priority recommendations of the 2015 Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Illustrations included with each of these items are intended to convey the essence of each recommendation, but are not specific concepts or actual plans. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar efforts. Construction costs should be monitored, and changes to the Action Plan costs should be revised as costs fluctuate. Detailed project costs, based on actual designs should be prepared as each recommendation begins to be implemented.

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 Term Priority Items** – To be initiated as opportunities occur, or beyond the immediate 10 year timeframe of this master plan.

The map on the following page illustrates the overall parks recommendations for the entire City.

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

High Priority Recommendations

Action 1 – Master plan and develop Lakeline Park

Need for this Action – The 118 acre Lakeline Park was acquired by Cedar Park in the fall of 2005, and is the largest undeveloped park in the City. Master planning and developing this park will be crucial to effectively meet the recreational needs of the City. Furthermore, development of this park can relieve much of the overuse of nearby Elizabeth Milburn Park.

The site should be master planned, and the initial phase that is identified should be developed. Uses for the park site could include trails, flat fields for athletics, pavilions and picnic facilities, a splash pad, festival area, and undeveloped open areas in the park. There is also the potential for a lighted fishing pier and nature trails to be added to the park site.

Estimated Cost Range – $5,000,000 to $10,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Design will be initiated in 2015 and improvements should begin by the end of 2017.

Lakeline Park Concept

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

CEDAR PARK

N

0 350 700 Feet

HALFF

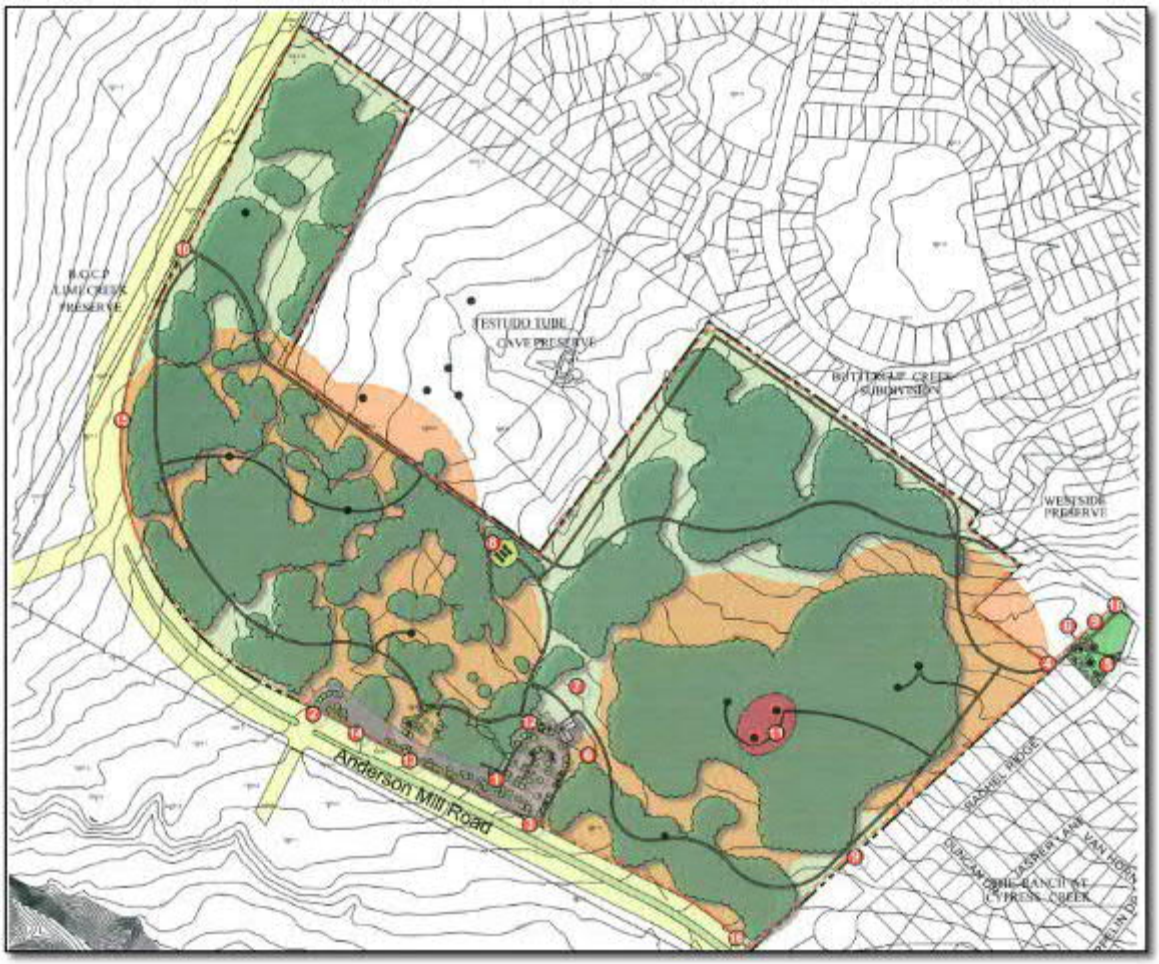
Action 2 – Develop the Discovery Well Cave Preserve

Need for this Action – The Discovery Well Cave Preserve is the second largest cave preserve in the City's inventory. A master plan for the site was designed in 2007, with the need for development of this property more to preserve the natural beauty of the site by proactively guiding citizens walking on the property.

A parking area, guiding signs and natural surface trails are proposed in order to tell visitors where they can walk and where they should not walk, so as to preserve the fragile nature of the site. Additional pavilions and picnic facilities can be placed in disturbed portions of the property, but the real intent of the site is not for active use, but rather as a preserve of a unique natural resource. The master plan also proposed an educational/interpretive center.

Estimated Cost Range – $2,000,000 to $3,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Improvements should be completed by the end of 2017, or within two to three years.

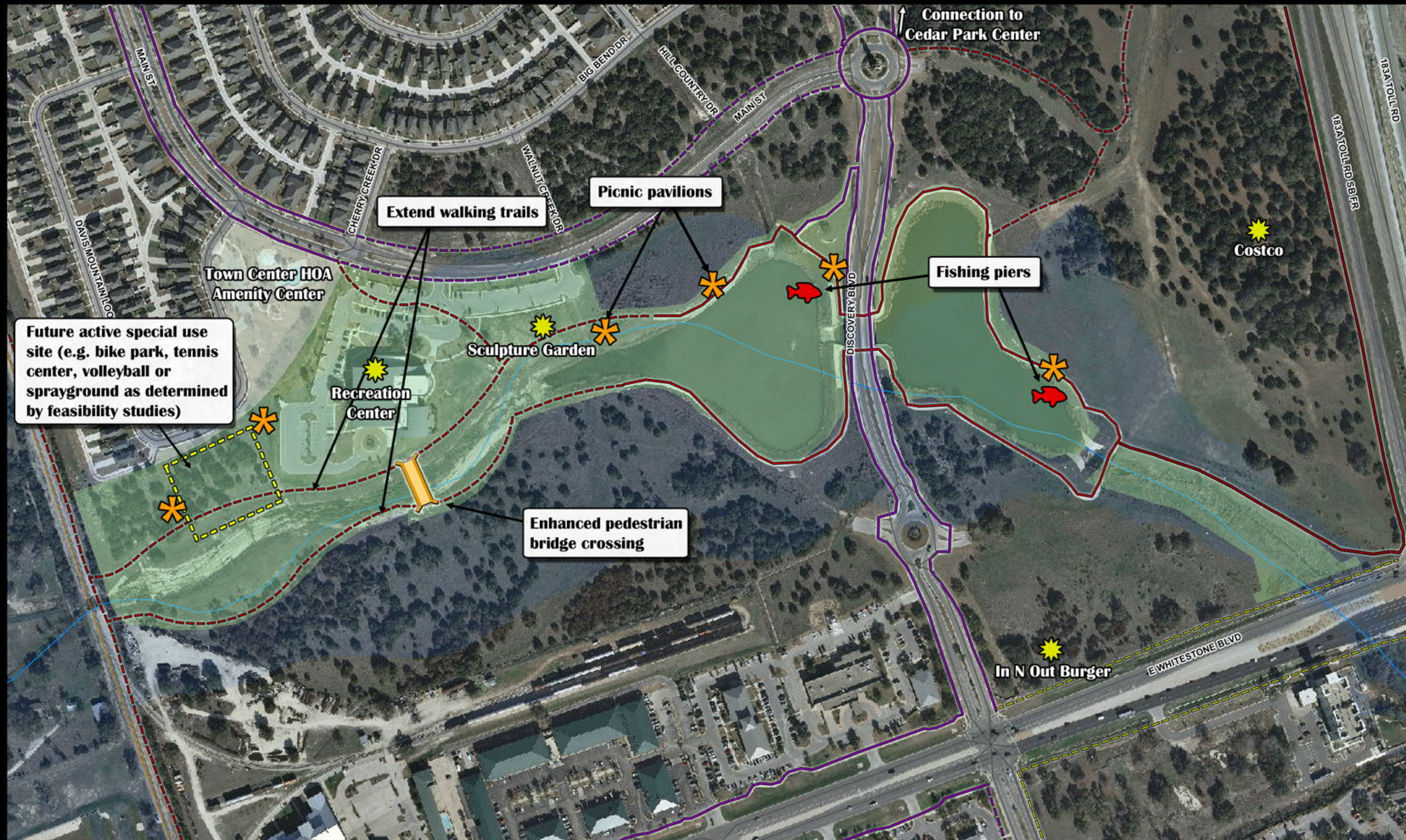


Action 3 – Enhance Town Center Park

Need for this Action – The Town Center area in Cedar Park is quickly becoming a major destination with quality retail and attractions such as Costco, the In & Out Burger, and the 1890 Ranch shopping center. Because of its prominent location in the City, Town Center Park has the opportunity to develop into a premier, signature park for the City and become another key attraction for the area. The current park site is largely undeveloped, other than the state-of-the-art recreation center that was constructed on the property in 2008. The site includes two large ponds and an existing trail system that loops around them. Further enhancements to this park could include picnic areas with covered pavilions, extending the trail around the entire park site, sand volleyball courts, adding a fishing pier, additional public art, and adding way-finding signs to the park along FM 1431. A large, oversize pavilion is also recommended, which could double as an event area for festivals or concerts in the park.

Estimated Cost Range – 2,000,000 to $5,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Improvements should be completed by the end of 2019, or within three to four years.



CEDAR PARK

Town Center Park

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

HALFF

Action 4 – Develop additional trails and trail connections

Need for this Action – Similar to other communities across Texas, trails were consistently ranked as a high priority among the residents of Cedar Park. The City already has two primary spine routes – Brushy Creek Regional Trail in the south that travels east/west, and the 183A Trail in the central area that travels north/south. The City also developed a Trails Master Plan in 2010 with detail recommendations to connect neighborhoods and key destinations. One of the high priority recommendations of that plan was to extend the Brushy Creek Regional Trail west of Bell Blvd. The near term opportunity for extending the trail is constructing an enhanced crosswalk where Bell Blvd. and Little Elm intersect. This crosswalk ideally would have a painted crosswalk, pedestrian crossing signals that are separated from moving vehicle traffic, a median refuge, and vehicle stop bars that are farther removed from the crossing intersection. Long term, the ideal solution would be to construct a pedestrian underpass tunnel that crosses below Bell Blvd.

Once Brushy Creek Regional Trail is extended across Bell Blvd., it can then be extended and developed as part of the Lakeline Park development. This trail development will then connect the neighborhoods in the western portion of Cedar Park to the regional trail system.

Estimated Cost Range –$1,000,000 to $3,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – By 2019, within four years

Concept illustrations of enhanced pedestrian crossings

Medium Priority Recommendations

Action 5 – Add a second dog park on the eastside of the City

Need for this Action – According the Trust for Public Land, dog parks are the fastest growing segment among city parks, with a 34% increase from 2005 to 2010. The City's first dog park, located at Veterans Memorial Park, has no doubt been a huge success. The park is well utilized by residents and visitors, and continues to grow in popularity. Over time, there will be a need for a second dog park on the eastside of the City to prevent overcrowding and to relieve some of the demand from the first dog park. A second dog park should be added to an existing city-owned park on the eastside of the City. This second dog park can be smaller than the existing one, and is recommended to be one to two acres in size. The dog park will still need two separated areas for smaller dogs and large dogs.

When considering a site for the future dog park, the City needs to consider potential noise, odor, traffic and the need for parking. The fencing of a dog park should be buried at least one foot in the ground to prevent dogs from digging out. Also, there needs to be two gates at the entrance for an exchange gate area, which allows the owner and the dog to enter one gate, remove the leash, then enter the second gate in to the dog park area without worrying about another dog accidently escaping. Dog parks also need large maintenance gates on the side to allow for easy access into the dog park for the mowing crew. Typical dog parks should include water stations, waste dispenser/disposal stations, and shade for both the dogs and their owners.

Estimated Cost Range – $20,000 to $40,000

Potential Development Time Frame – By 2019, within four years.

Action 6 – Conduct feasibility study for a tennis center

Need for this Action – During the public input process, the needs of the tennis community in Cedar Park were brought to light. The distribution of courts in the City is poor, with only one to two courts located at five parks throughout the City. While the tennis courts at Leander High School are also available for public use during non-school hours, the tennis leagues in Cedar Park have no control over that space. They are unable to schedule practice time, and cannot use the courts to program matches or tournaments. Effectively, there is no facility within Cedar Park to offer a structured tennis program. Therefore, this plan recommends that the City undergo a tennis center feasibility study. A more detailed study that focuses on the sport of tennis will be able to determine whether or not there is a need for a large scale tennis center, what the design and components a tennis center should include, and suggest ideal locations for a tennis center to be constructed. The study should also determine whether or not there is a demand for multi-use courts for racquetball, squash and pickle ball, etc.

Estimated Cost Range – $30,000 to $50,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Conduct study by end of 2021, within six years.

Action 7 – Continue making improvements to existing parks

Need for this Action – The City has done a good job over the past decade upgrading many of the existing parks. These upgrades and improvements should continue throughout the lifespan of this plan. For the past year, the City has incorporated a shade structure program which uses 4B tax funds to purchase and install canopy shade structures over playgrounds at city-owned parks. This program has already covered nine playground units, and an additional six have been approved for the upcoming year. The City should also pursue a similar program to install picnic pavilions for additional shade in the parks.

Additional park improvements include ongoing maintenance and replacement of older park amenities such as playgrounds every 15 years +/- and picnic tables, benches and grills every 10 to 15 years or as needed.

Enhancements to existing parks could include additional "skate park spots" within existing parks, adding lighting to key basketball and bocce ball courts for evening use, developing natural amenities such as birding opportunities at area lakes and ponds, and creating a signature feature such as large sandbox at an existing community park.

Estimated Cost Range – $1,000,000 to $3,500,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Ongoing improvements throughout the lifespan of this master plan.

Shade structure at Heritage Park as part of the City's shade structure program

Rosemary Denny Park could be one of many potential birding opportunities

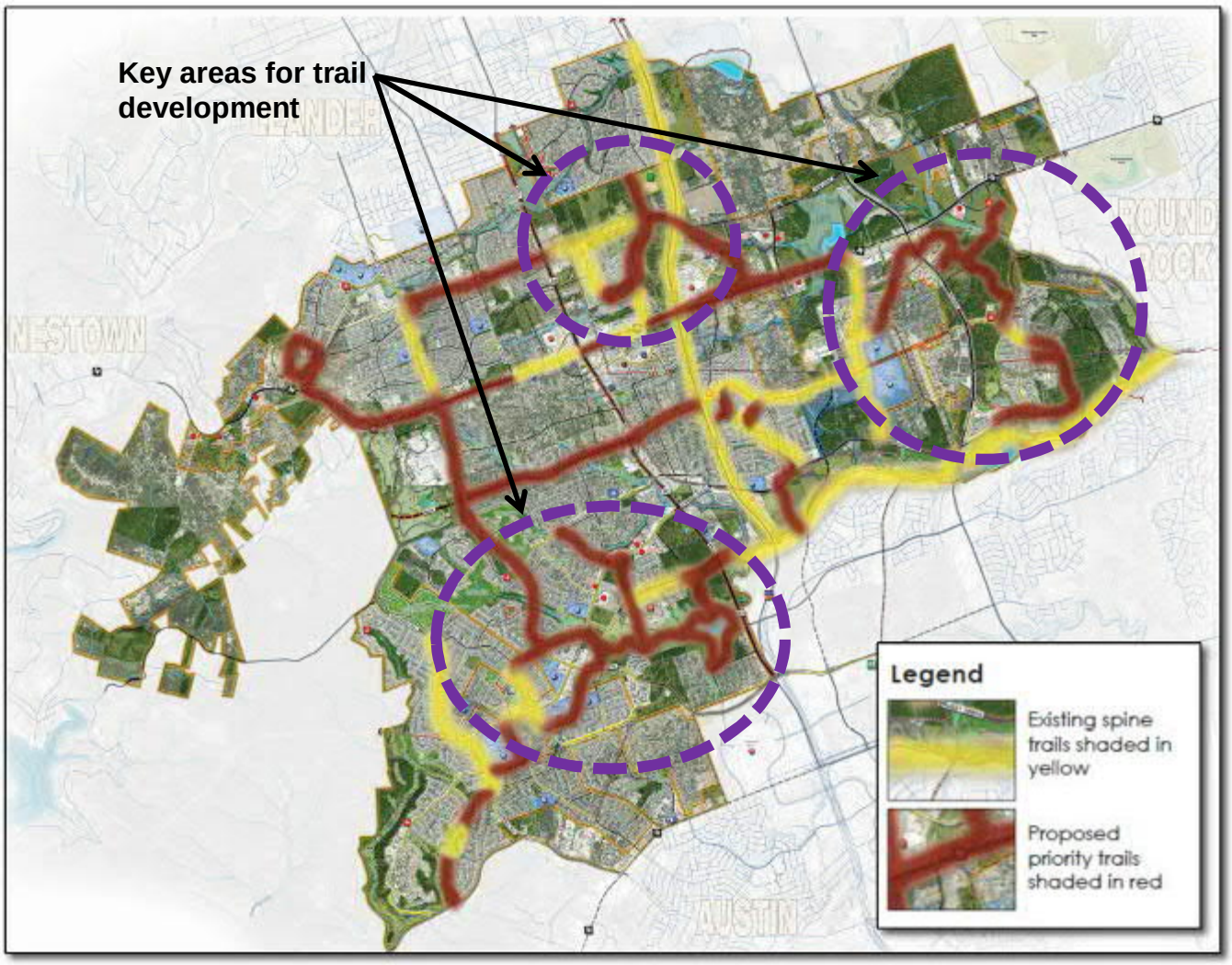
Because of the popularity of the City's first skate park, smaller skate spots could be added to other parks

Action 8 – Develop additional trails and trail connections

Need for this Action –The City should continue implementing the high priority recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan. Key connections should be making the connection from Town Center Park and Recreation Center to the Cedar Park Center, continuing the Brushy Creek Regional Trail into the western neighborhoods, and looking to develop trails along the greenbelts in the eastern side of the City. Opportunities should also be evaluated for paddling trails along Brushy Creek and at Lakeline Park, and birding trails within the natural areas and cave preserves within the City.

Estimated Cost Range –$2,000,000 to $5,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Design will be initiated by 2021 and improvements should be completed by the middle to end of 2025, or within five to ten years.



High priority recommendations from the 2010 Trails Master Plan

Long Range Priority Recommendations

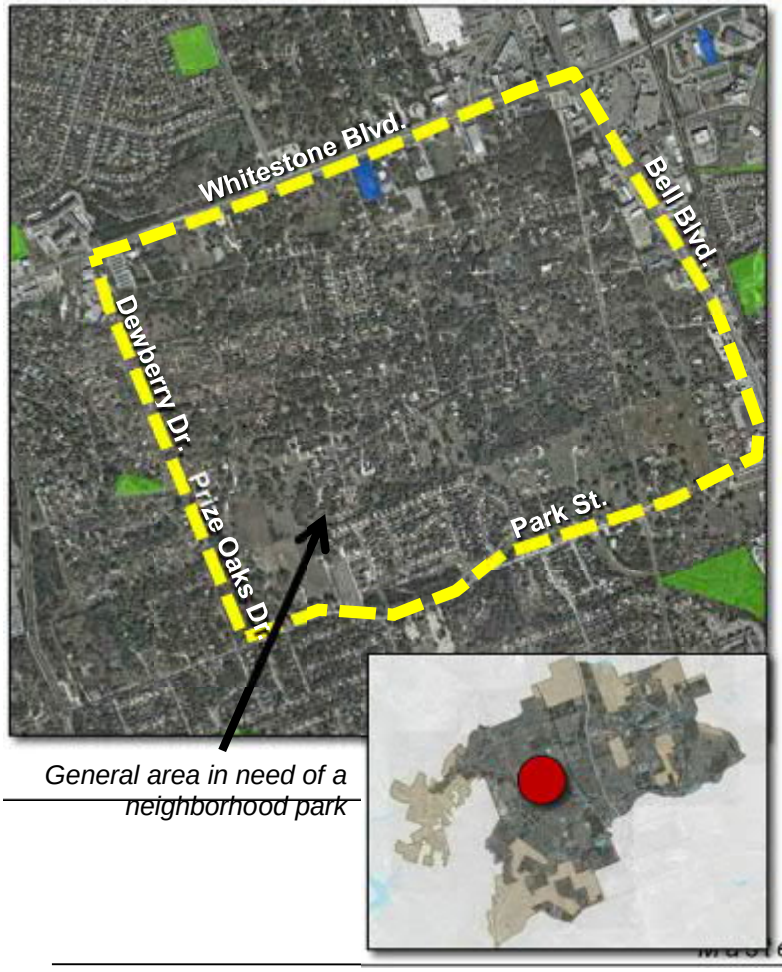
Action 9 – Acquire smaller neighborhood park in the older, central area

Need for this Action – The central, older area of the City is one of the few areas with limited access to a neighborhood park. The City should look for possible acquisition opportunities in the area north of Park Street, south of Whitestone Blvd., east Lakeline Blvd., and west of Bell Blvd. Developing vacant property or even portions of the already city-owned property along Park Street into a neighborhood park will serve the residents in this area that currently do not have adequate access to a park.

The neighborhood park should be two to three acres in size if feasible. Development of this park could in picnic facilities, a group pavilion, playground area, a basketball court and possibly a sand volleyball court. However, access to the park is the most important feature, and it is recommended that the park be located adjacent to a neighborhood collector street if feasible.

Estimated Cost Range – Park site could be acquired through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance as redevelopment of the area occurs. Park development $500,000 to $750,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Acquire and develop by 2025.



General area in need of a neighborhood park

Action 10 – Add a second splash pad on the west side

Need for this Action – Because of the popularity of the existing splash pad, and because of the low cost to operate and maintain a splash pad compared to other aquatic facilities, it is recommended that the City add a second splash pad to an existing park on the west side long term. A potential location could be Lakeline Park; therefore, it is important to include a splash pad in the original design of the park so that it is not constructed as an afterthought.

Estimated Cost Range – $425,000 to $600,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Beyond 2025

Action 11 – Develop additional trails and trail connections

Need for this Action – Trails will continue to be popular features in Cedar Park, and this action allows the City to maintain a strong position as one of the trail leaders in Central Texas.

Trails should be built throughout the City, as opportunities along linear corridors occur. Include trailhead amenities such as parking, drinking fountains, pavilions for resting, interpretive signs and displays. Entry markers are also important to set the tone for the new trail corridors.

Again, the City should also pursue opportunities for alternative trail types such as establishing paddling trails along Brushy Creek, birding trails within natural areas such as Lakeline Park, and mountain biking trails within the cave preserves.

Estimated Cost Range –$2,500,000 to $5,000,000

Potential Development Time Frame – Beyond 2025

Implementation and Action Plan

Key implementation steps are listed on the table on the following page, and consist of the Action Plan for this Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The following should be considered when reviewing the Action Plan:

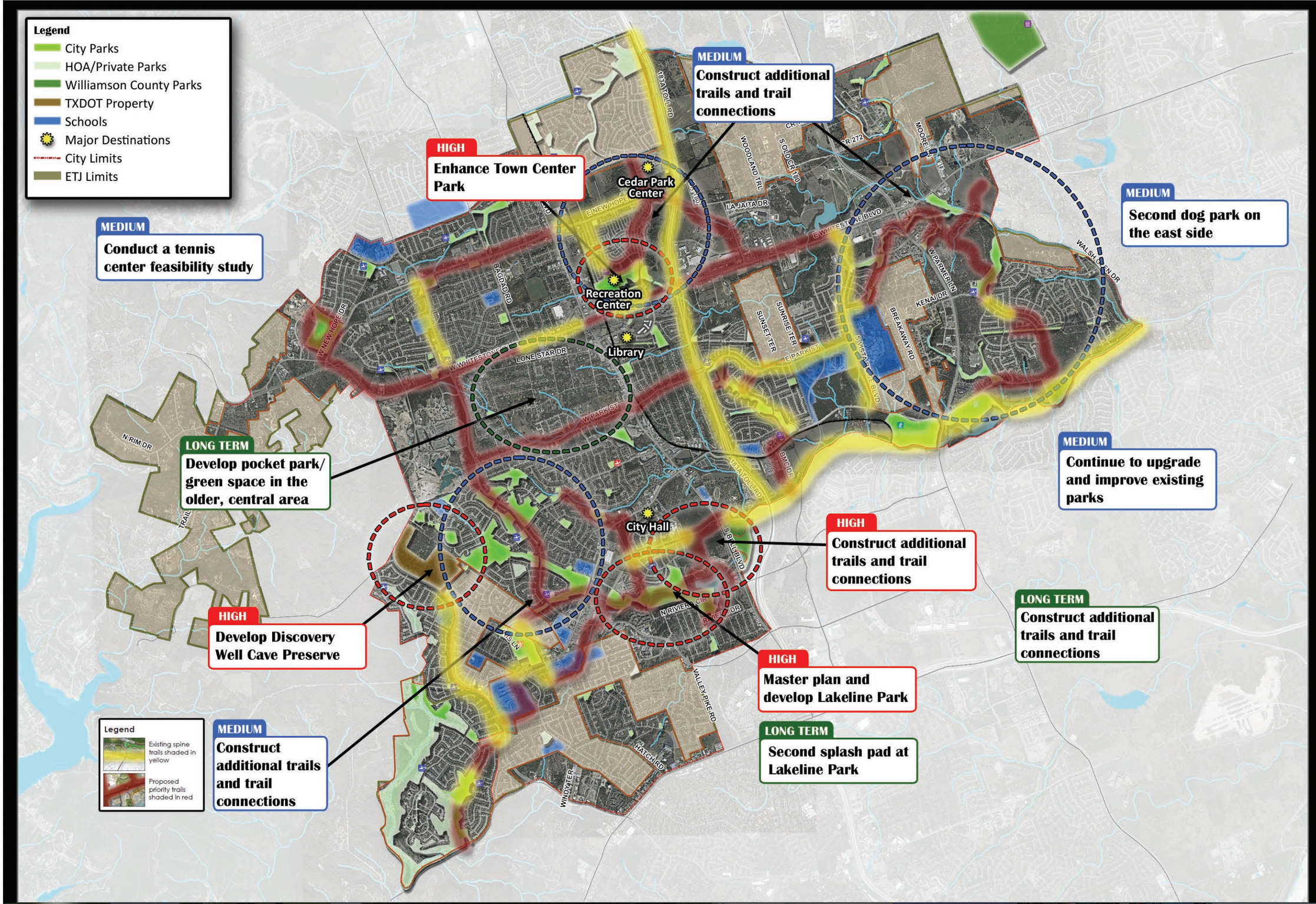
- **Sequence** – The sequence is based directly on the recommended importance and need for each action. However, some actions may take longer to occur. In that case, other actions may be easier to accomplish sooner, but should not diminish the need for higher priority actions.
- **Funding Possibilities** – The sale of certificates of obligation may generate funding, such as a Quality of Life Bond. Other potential funding sources are noted in the table, but are not secured. Rather, they should be considered as possibilities to also pursue.
- **Projected Costs** – The projected costs per item are intended to establish an order of magnitude cost range. These estimates are made prior to any designs being developed, and will vary as more detailed design occurs. Costs that are shown are also pre-design, and are based on staff and consultant experience with similar types of facilities and efforts.
- **Suggested Timeframe** – The suggested timeframes are approximate and are intended to establish a sequence for all actions. The prioritization is intended to guide staff and city leaders, and any item may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise.

Cedar Park Parks & Open Space Master Plan

Action Plan 2015-2025

Priority	Action	City Sector Impact	Estimated Cost Range		Type of Dev.	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
HIGH PRIORITY - YEARS 1 THROUGH 5			**Low Cost Range**	**High Cost Range**			
1	**Master plan and develop Lakeline Park**	**Citywide**	$5,000,000	$10,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2017
2	**Develop Discovery Well Cave Preserve (with TXDOT)**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$3,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2017
3	**Enhance Town Center Park**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
4	**Construct additional trails and trail connections**	**West**	$1,000,000	$3,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
Estimated Total for Year 1 through 5 High Priority Items			**$10,000,000**	**$21,000,000**			
MEDIUM RANGE PRIORITY - YEARS 6 THROUGH 10							
5	**Second dog park (1-2 acres) at an existing park on the east side of the City**	**East**	$20,000	$40,000	Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2019
6	**Conduct a feasibility study for a tennis center**	**Citywide**	$30,000	$50,000	Feasibility Study	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2021
7	**Continue to upgrade and improve existing parks**	**Citywide**	$1,000,000	$3,500,000	Redevelopment, Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2015-2025
8	**Construct additional trails and trail connections based on high priority recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan**	**Citywide**	$2,000,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2021-2025
Estimated Total for Year 6 through 10 Medium Priority Items			**$3,050,000**	**$8,590,000**			
LONG RANGE PRIORITY - 10 YEARS AND BEYOND			**Low Cost Range**	**High Cost Range**			
9	**Acquire pocket/neighborhood park in the older, central area of the City**	**Central**	$500,000	$750,000	Acquisition and New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	2021-2025
10	**Second splash pad at an existing park on the west side of the City (possible location Lakeline Park or Town Center Park)**	**West**	$425,000	$600,000	Enhancement	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	Beyond 2025
11	**Construct additional trails and trail connections based on high priority recommendations of the 2010 Trails Master Plan**	**Citywide**	$2,500,000	$5,000,000	New Development	Bonds, Donations, TPWD Grants, 4B Sales Tax, Park Ordinance Funds	Beyond 2025
Estimated Total for Long Range Priorities			**$3,425,000**	**$6,350,000**			
Total Potential Expenditure Range For 2015 to 2025 Planning Timeframe and Beyond - (note that grants and donations may fund portions of the amount shown)			**$16,475,000**	**$35,940,000**			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants, partner participation and donations may fund portions of the amounts shown and may reduce the cost of each item.
2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between $50,000 and $75,000 per acre.
3. Cost include an annual 3% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest $20,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.



Recommendations of the Master Plan

Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Chapter 7

Funding and Operation Strategies

Funding Strategies for Recommendations

Funding strategies will differ for each type of facility. However, the majority of the funding required to address the city's park needs must come from local sources, primarily bond funding and sales tax revenue. While improvements to existing parks and most sidewalks can be built with local funds, other park, open space and trail projects may be able to contend for federal and state funds. This section provides brief descriptions of these funding implementation assistance opportunities.

Key City-Generated Funding Sources

4B Sales Tax Revenue – Revenue generated from ½ cent of the 2 cent city sales tax allocation has helped Cedar Park construct numerous recreation facilities over the past several years. This funding is administered through the Cedar Park Community Development Corporation. Currently the fund is contributing to the shade structure program with the mission of covering all the playgrounds in city parks will shade structures so that they can be better utilized during warmer and summer months. In the past, park projects that were funded through the Development Corporation included:

- Brushy Creek Lake Park water playscape
- Milburn Park improvements
- Tree pruning
- Brushy Creek Lake Park
- Park improvements and upgrades
- Park signage program
- Leander-Cedar Park Baseball Complex Expansion Study
- Gann Ranch Park improvements phase II
- Milburn Park wiffleball fields
- Quest Park trail and bridge phases I & II
- Prize Oak Park improvements
- Master plans for Brushy Creek Recreation and Founders Park
- Brushy Creek Lake Park road/parking lot expansion, drainage improvements, and irrigation
- Brushy Creek Regional Trail partnership
- Skate park
- Leander-Cedar Park phase one improvements
- Brushy Creek Recreation Park phase one improvements

To the extent possible, this revenue source should be used to continue to fund the shade structure program, possibly starting a pavilion program, and for future facility construction. It is recommended that this fund source not be used to cover operational or maintenance costs.

General Fund Expenditures are primarily used for improvements to existing parks and facilities. Some funding should be set aside annually to cover upgrades to at least one park. An amount of at least $250,000 should be budgeted annually for general improvements and replacement costs.

Voter Approved Bond Funds – Recent bond issues in other central Texas cities for park and open space preservation needs have been successful, and point to a continued desire for increased spending on quality of life items in the fast growing cities of the area. Bond sales referendums for park related expenses in the past have also been well received by the citizens of Cedar Park. A bond referendum to fund many of the larger development items recommended by this master plan will be required over the next two to four years. Specifically, the development of Lakeline Park, which is one of the highest ranked items noted by the citizens of the City, will need to be primarily funded by bond sales.

Park Facility Funding through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance –This ordinance provides a vehicle for development of parks, open space and trails through private developers as land is developed in Cedar Park. Specific considerations for the ordinance are discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter. However, the building of neighborhood based park facilities by developers and Homeowner associations should be encouraged and continued as it currently occurs.

Partnership with Williamson County – County trails and parks provide enormous benefits to the residents of Cedar Park, and the City should continue to actively participate and provide funding to help cost share nearby facilities. Active joint planning with Williamson County is recommended as part of ongoing activities of the department.

Key Grant Funding Sources

Grants can provide a significant source of additional funding for parks, but should not be considered as the primary source for park construction.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) is the primary source for parks grants in Texas, and in addition, provides funding for recreational trails. Up to a 50 percent match can be obtained, up to $500,000 for new parks and trail facilities. Grant applications that stress joint funding and support from two or more local entities may have a greater chance of contending for the TRPA grants. These grants are highly competitive, and in recent years there have been far fewer grants available or awarded due to State budget restrictions. When the grants are available, the typical deadline to submit an application is March 1st and August 1st every year.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - This fund is divided into two funding categories: state grants and federal acquisition. The state grants are distributed to all 50 states, DC, and other territories based on factors such as population. State grant funds can be used for park development and for acquisition of parkland or easements.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program - This program provides monetary support for transportation activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the transportation system. Typically, funds can be used for trails and streetscape related projects. Funding is on a

cost reimbursement basis, and projects selected are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80% of allowable costs. This funding program is not available on a yearly basis, but intermittently only, often in two to five year periods. These funds, while more time-consuming to work with, and should be seriously considered since they remain one of the few sources of outside funds.

Indoor Recreation Grants – These grants are available to local governments for the construction or renovation of indoor recreation facilities. This assistance is in the form of 50% matching grant funds up to $750,000. Local governments must apply, permanently dedicate the building for public recreational use and assume responsibility for operation and maintenance. This grant program is currently suspended, and funding amounts may be limited over the next few years.

LCRA Grants - The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has a grant program to help "local governments and nonprofit organizations fund capital improvement projects to benefit the public." The grants are awarded to projects that emphasize energy efficiency, water conservation, household hazardous waste facilities, or volunteer fire departments. The maximum grant is $25,000 and any application requesting over $5,000 must have at least 20% in matching funds.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – These funds can be spent to construct new recreational trails, improve/maintain existing trails, develop/improve trailheads or trail side facilities, and acquire trail corridors/easements. It is a cost reimbursement program. Projects may range in total cost between $5,000 and $100,000.

Environmental Protection Agency – The EPA can provide funding for projects with money collected in pollution settlements, or with funding targeted at wetland and habitat preservation or reclamation.

Foundation and Company Grants – These can assist in direct funding for projects, while others exist to help citizen efforts get established with small seed funds or technical and publicity assistance.

Grants for Greenways – This is a national listing that provides descriptions of a broad spectrum of both general and specific groups who provide technical and financial support for greenway interests.

Partnering with Volunteer Groups – Partnering with volunteer groups can be helpful when constructing trails or playground equipment. Their effort can be used as part of the required match for many grants such as the Recreational Trails Program. There are a variety of sources for volunteers including: user groups, local residents, corporate community service initiatives, and business and civic support groups.

Parks Foundation - Parks foundations are non-profit organizations and another source for volunteers. People can make tax deductible donations to a foundation, which in turn provides financial support and volunteer time to a city's parks system. Parks foundations often assist with physical improvements to a park or

support recreational programming. They essentially help fill the gap between what needs to be done and what a parks department can afford to do.

Policies and Ordinances

Parkland Dedication Ordinance - The parkland dedication ordinance provides a land or cash in lieu of land requirement for new residential development in the City. The quantity of land required as well as the dollar value required for cash in lieu of land transactions appears to be adequate, but should be reviewed every two to three years to ensure that the ordinance is providing a sufficient level of land and funding. As Cedar Park approaches build-out, it is critical that the remaining residential developments that are planned in the City provide the necessary parkland to serve those residents.

Trail Development Ordinance – A trail development ordinance is usually a component of a Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Similar ordinances have been enacted in other cities in Texas, and have proven successful in helping to get trails constructed. Often the city will fund regional trails and trailhead development, and then require complete developer construction of key trail segments that fall within their property limits. Credits for landscaping, pavement, or other infrastructure elements could be given in return for trail construction outside of the City's Trails Master Plan. A central point to consider is that most developments will add trails automatically; therefore, such a mandatory trail development ordinance only serves to create a level playing field between the many developments that include trails and those that will build them only if required to do so. The current ordinance does not account for trail dedication, although the City can legally require this dedication and construction as a part of the transportation system. This is particularly true if just requiring the trails be located in a pedestrian access easement rather than as a full right-of-way taking. The public input process for both the Comprehensive Plan and this master plan has indicated strong support for trails development.

Joint Planning with LISD - Establish joint planning review sessions with the Leander Independent School District to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for a partnership in acquiring land for schools and parks.

Joint Planning with Williamson County and the City of Leander - Establish joint planning review sessions with Williamson County and the City of Leander to allow for coordination of facilities and possible pooling of resources for a partnership to jointly develop park and trail facilities.

Staffing Levels

Current Staffing Levels - The Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 578 acres of developed parkland throughout the City. Parks and Recreation Department maintenance responsibilities include City parks as well as street rights-of-way, City Hall, Police Department, City

Library, detention ponds and greenways. The present maintenance staff includes 11 full-time maintenance workers, four crew leaders, and one parks foreman. On average, each staff member is responsible for maintaining 53 acres.

Staffing Goal - Over the five to ten year life span of this master plan, the department is anticipated to develop and maintain at least 250 acres +/- of additional parks because of the anticipated development of Lakeline Park, Town Center Park and Discovery Well Cave Preserve. In order to reduce the average acres per maintenance staff to around 40, at least ten new maintenance staff members and the corresponding level of equipment will be required (at the time of the 2006 plan, the average number of acres was 34 per maintenance staff member). Staffing requirements should be projected and approved by City Management and the City Council prior to the development of any new parks, to ensure that operations and maintenance staff members are available to properly maintain new parks. If staff levels cannot be increased, new parks should not be developed.

To assist in maintaining an attractive environment throughout the City, a full time arborist should be added to the Park Department staff. This was recommended in the previous master plan, and is still a need in 2015. Such a person would be responsible for development reviews and enforcement of the City's landscape requirements, as well as helping to guide the preservation of the existing tree stock in the City.

Budget Levels

Budget Level – The Fiscal Year 2013-2014 budget for parks and recreation is $3,241,107. For a current projected population of 58,125 residents, per capita expenditures are approximately $55.76 per resident of the City. This is somewhat below per capita expenditures by other area cities, except for the City of Leander. Spending by other cities is as follows:

- Leander, approximately 30.82 per capita
- Kyle, approximately $61.88 per capita
- Pflugerville, approximately $63.70 per capita
- Austin, approximately $71.08 per capita
- Round Rock, approximately $90.51 per capita
- San Marcos, approximately $91.68 per capita
- Georgetown, approximately $118.75 per capita

As the City constructs additional large scale community parks, the budget levels will need to increase over the next five to ten years to allow for additional maintenance staff.

Operations and Maintenance

With the recommendations of additional developed parks, recreation facilities and trails, it should be recognized that additional manpower is needed for the required maintenance of these various projects. The number of additional staff

needed to attend to these proposed facilities will vary depending on the use of these facilities. The provision of adequate staffing must be included as each facility is developed or the facility should not be built. As the park system grows, additional maintenance resources should be provided to the Parks and Recreation Department. This includes new mowing and transporting equipment, as well as park maintenance staff. Over the next ten years, as new facilities are added, park maintenance staff should grow at the same rate.

A Sustainability Approach to Maintenance

Often parks and recreation agencies are the single largest landowner in a city or community. As such, stewardship of the community's natural resources and recreation amenities is a key parks department responsibility, all the while managing the conscientious expenditure of tax dollars. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), "Good stewardship requires management practices that protect and enhance the recreational, environmental, social and cultural values of public lands and natural and cultural resources in a manner that is cost-effective and sustainable for future generations."

The role of the Cedar Park Parks and Recreation Department in the conservation of natural and recreation resources, while implementing "sustainability" in its approach to resource management, not only contributes to the health and welfare of its residents, it also reduces operations and maintenance costs, particularly for mowing and irrigation.

The "sustainability" approach to natural resource management is not only an environmentally sensitive management strategy; it is "good business" for the City and its residents.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is defined as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Basically, sustainability embraces a stewardship approach that conserves our natural resources for use by future generations. These natural resources include:

- Clean water
- Clean air
- Nutrient rich topsoil
- Wildlife habitat
- Trees and vegetation
- Harnessing of wind and solar energy to reduce the use of fossil fuels
- Develop parks with water conservation in mind, e.g. smart irrigation and treated effluent reuse water

The Cedar Park Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the care and maintenance of approximately 940 acres, throughout the City in 47 locations. To provide the highest level of park and recreation facilities and amenities, while maintaining these facilities in the most cost-effective manner, the Parks and Recreation Department should implement a "sustainability" based approach to park development and maintenance. This approach includes:

- Planting native tree and grass species that are water conserving and hardy to the Central Texas climate. This approach will encourage the

"greening" of parks, while limiting the amount of long-term maintenance required to achieve attractive facilities.

- Developing active areas in parks and greenways that will be maintained to levels dictated by the intended use. For example, high intensity use areas such as athletic facilities or playgrounds will have a higher degree of maintenance and cultivation. On the other hand, areas that are less used or do not require a high level of care, such as disc golf courses or open play areas, can receive a less frequent or less intensive maintenance.
- Planting more trees in parks in mass plantings rather than lines or rows create more shade, bird habitat, rainfall absorption and summer cooling effect.
- Planting native grasses and wild flowers in peripheral areas of parks and in park sites that are planned as natural or habitat areas. These areas will only need to be mowed once or twice per year, and rarely fertilized, reducing maintenance costs.
- Provide beds of native and drought tolerant ornamental shrubs and perennial plants for color in "high-impact" areas, such as park entrances. These beds can be mulched with recycled green waste such as Christmas trees, chipped branches and dead trees, and lawn clippings to help the soil retain moisture and reduce irrigation demand.
- Changing irrigation practices to water only those areas that are designated as "high intensity use" areas, such as playground and adjacent picnic areas, designated sports practice fields, and athletic facilities that host league play. This approach will conserve water and reduce costs by discouraging turf growth except in priority locations.
- Implementing drip irrigation for ornamental planting beds.
- Implementing temporary drip irrigation systems for new tree plantings which will then be decommissioned after a three year establishment period.
- Implementing the use of treated effluent at areas where direct human contact can be managed.

Plan Updates

The 2015 Cedar Park Parks and Open Space Master Plan is a guide to be used to develop the existing system for future needs over the next 5 to10 years, with the ultimate life of this plan being 10 years. However, during that timeframe changes will occur that impact the recommendations. For example, 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. These updates can be published in short report format and attached to this master plan for easy use. Four key areas for focus of these periodic reviews are as follows:

Facility Inventory - New facilities should be added to the parks inventory, as well as any significant improvements to LISD and Williamson County parks or facilities. Improvements by other major private entities such as the YMCA that could influence recreation in Cedar Park should also be noted.

Public Involvement - As mentioned previously, this master plan reflects current population and attitudes as expressed by the citizens of Cedar Park. However, over time those attitudes and interests may change as the City changes. Periodic opinion surveys are recommended to provide a current account of the attitudes of the citizens and to provide additional direction from the public on issues that may arise.

In order to make an accurate comparison of the changes in attitudes and interests, it is recommended that future surveys follow the general format of the citizen survey conducted in this master plan, which mirrors the survey conducted for the 2006 Master Plan. An interval of every four to five years is recommended, and may be combined with other citywide citizen satisfaction surveys.

Facility Use - Facility use is a key factor in determining the need for renovation of additional facilities. Updates on league participation of sports facilities should be gathered each season with data from each association. Key efforts should be made to compile data on usage at all facilities, both existing and new. Changes in participation by citizens of Cedar Park as well as residents outside the city limits should also be recorded.

Action Plan - As items from the action plan discussed earlier in this section are implemented, updates should be made to this prioritized list to provide a current schedule and priority list for city staff.

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