

THE LAGOON



CEDAR  
HILL



# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT

# MESSAGE FROM MAYOR STEPHEN MASON

What an exciting time to be in Cedar Hill. In 2023, we celebrated the opening of a new outdoor aquatic center, welcomed new businesses with quality jobs to Cedar Hill, cut the ribbon on infrastructure improvements in Historic Downtown, launched a senior transportation pilot program, and made significant investments in public safety equipment and personnel.

We celebrated these milestones as we continued to plan for our future - adopting strategic plans for economic development and public safety and embarking on the planning process for parks and recreation, tourism, water, and sewer, among others.

As I reflect on the many highlights of 2023, I am filled with gratitude for the work of the city council, boards and commissions, staff, and community members that made it all happen. It's my hope that this report inspires you to get engaged in your city. I can't wait to see the great things we accomplish together in 2024.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Mason'.

## CEDAR HILL CITY COUNCIL



**Cedar Hill City Council, from left:** Mayor Pro Tem Alan E. Sims, Gregory Glover, Maranda Auzenne, Mayor Stephen Mason, Shirley Daniels, Daniel C. Haydin, Jr, Chad A. McCurdy



## PUBLIC SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS

- Cedar Hill has experienced a 44% reduction in crime index since 2016 and continues to have the lowest violent crime rate and the lowest property crime rate among cities in the Best Southwest area.
- The Cedar Hill Fire Department led the implementation of a new regional public safety radio system. The new system improves communication among first responders throughout the region, enhancing emergency response. The project was recognized by the North Central Texas Council of Governments, winning a Regional Cooperation Award.
- The City Council made significant investments in public safety personnel and equipment through the FY2023-24 budget process. An updated compensation plan improved recruitment and retention of quality personnel, and the budget funded the replacement of critical police, fire, and EMS equipment.
- The City continued to engage the community around public safety through the Youth Summit, National Night Out, Citizens Police and Fire Academies, Teen Fire Academy, Special Needs Dance, Crime Watch meetings, and the award-winning Neighborhood Walk program.
- Cedar Hill continued to lead in the area of mental health and resiliency resources for first responders and the public through partnerships with Dallas County and our neighboring cities.
- The City Council established the Cedar Hill Municipal Court as a Court of Record, expanding its services and effectiveness in serving the community.

Safety is a top priority of the city council, and it is a core driver of quality of life and economic development in Cedar Hill. **Sixty-five percent of the City's budget is dedicated to public safety**, funding nationally-recognized police, fire and emergency medical services that make Cedar Hill the safest city in the Best Southwest.

# BOND PROGRAM PROGRESS

In 2017, Cedar Hill voters approved the issuance of \$45 million in general obligation bonds to finance a six-year program for infrastructure, parks and recreation, and library improvements. Over the past six years, the City has renovated 10 neighborhood and community parks, completed street and drainage repairs, updated the senior activity center, and opened a new outdoor community pool - The Lagoon at Virginia Weaver Park.

## THE LAGOON AT VIRGINIA WEAVER PARK

Over Memorial Day Weekend, the community celebrated the grand opening of the new community pool. The Lagoon at Virginia Weaver Park features almost 10,000 square feet of water surface, including a zero-depth entry pool, separate lap swim pool, lazy river, three-turn slide, and splash feature.

More than 27k users visited The Lagoon during its first season, with visitors from 98 cities and 12 different states. Patrons enjoyed splashing around during open swim, working on mobility during dedicated senior swim times, learning water safety at swim lessons, and making memories with cabana and party room rentals.

Cedar Hill residents and adults 55+ receive discounted admission and season passes.



## LIBRARY, MUSEUM & SIGNATURE PARK

Construction of the new Library, Museum, and Signature Park is 85% complete, and the facility is set to open in April 2024.

The state-of-the-art library will be 40k square feet and feature community and event space, innovative technology, and program areas for all ages. It will be integrated with a new signature park and trail, highlighting Cedar Hill's natural beauty.

# PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

This year, the city council began implementation of the award-winning comprehensive plan, Cedar Hill Next, by allocating funds to update the City's development codes. The city council also adopted a development plan for the West Midtown area and secured Dallas County participation in the City's Tax Increment Financing Zone to spur economic development in Downtown, Midtown, and Uptown.

The City welcomed new corporate neighbors in 2023, including Pratt Industries. Pratt opened a regional manufacturing and innovation center in the High Point 67 industrial campus, bringing more than 150 jobs to Cedar Hill and investing more than \$200 million in equipment, inventory, and building improvements.



# COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Cedar Hill is an engaged community, and 2023 brought new opportunities to connect with neighbors. The year began with a sold-out State of the City address and ended with a bang at the annual Holiday on the Hill tree lighting.

Cedar Hill celebrated Hispanic heritage with the second annual LatinFest event, where residents and visitors enjoyed food, kids activities, and cultural performances. New residents were welcomed with a bilingual Welcome Tour.

In October, thousands came out to Historic Downtown for Country Day on the Hill, and Cedar Hill hosted a Veterans Resource Fair in partnership with the local chapter of Disabled American Veterans #240.

2023 was also a year of celebrating major community milestones, and hundreds showed up to make a splash at the ribbon-cutting for The Lagoon and to dedicate the newly renovated Dot Thomas and Ramsey Parks.



# AWARDS & ACCOLADES

**L.P. Cookingham Career Development Award**  
*(Presented to City Manager Greg Porter from the International City/County Management Association)*

**Bird City Texas**  
*(from Texas Parks & Wildlife and Audubon Texas for the City's efforts to preserve habitat and engage the community)*

**Achievement of Excellence in Libraries**  
*(from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association)*

**Economic Excellence Recognition**  
*(from the Texas Economic Development Council)*

**Hire Vets Gold Medallion Award**  
*(from the U.S. Department of Labor for the City's outreach efforts to veterans)*

**Aa1 Bond Rating from Moody's Investor service**  
*(upgraded from Aa2 rating based on the City's strong financial position.)*

**Regional Cooperation Award**  
*(from the North Central Texas Council of Government for implementation of the new regional public safety radio system)*

**Mission: Lifeline Silver Award for Excellence in Heart Attack and Stroke Care**  
*(from the American Heart Association)*

**Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting**  
*(from the Government Finance Officers Association)*

**Distinguished Budget Presentation Award**  
*(from the Government Finance Officers Association)*

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