

'Stability married to progress': Cedar Hill fosters industry while preserving natural beauty

BY BRANDI SMITH

"We have several long-tenured tenants in our business park. That's almost 30 years' worth of relationship building. City leadership and staff laid that groundwork with business owners, with whom we have mutual trust."

The beauty of Cedar Hill is really unmatched in North Texas. The community of about 50,000 has found a home in the middle of nature, bordered by Cedar Hill State Park and Cedar Ridge Preserve.

"You can live in the Hill Country and drive to Dallas in 30 minutes," said Kim Buttram, economic development director of Cedar Hill Economic Development Corporation.

Protecting that beauty is an important part of the planning process in Cedar Hill, which dedicates 20 percent of its land to the preservation of nature. To do so, city leaders have also been very thoughtful about where and how companies can settle, thrive and expand. The EDC has also played an important role.

"One thing our EDC is really good at is anticipating the land use and preparing the land for the appropriate use," Buttram said. "It's been instrumental in laying the groundwork and infrastructure to support industry."

The result is the city's industrial district, which includes the Cedar Hill Business Park.

"The planning of the industrial district has always been one of the most pivotal things for the city because it positions industry within the natural environment," said EDC marketing and research manager, Andy Buffington. "The leadership of the city has really taken that to heart to be discerning. It's always been a very delicate balance."

Incorporated just over 30 years ago, the business park boasts tenants such as Dallas Aeronautical Services, Delta Steel and PepWear. As we go to print, only three lots totaling 21.3 acres remain available, for which the EDC is seeking out tenants focused on advanced manufacturing.

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Cedar Hill is located southwest of Dallas, just about equidistant from Fort Worth, with easy access to US 67, I-35, I-45 and I-20. In about a half an hour, you can be at either Love Field or DFW Airport. The accessibility of Cedar Hill, which sets it apart from other cities in the Metroplex, is about to improve

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further. TxDOT is working on plans for Loop 9, a six-lane frontage road system that would connect US 67 with I-20. In doing so, it would run right through Cedar Hill’s Industrial District, adding another level of access.

“Another advantage here is that we are not as congested as other areas of the Metroplex and our land costs are more accessible than northern areas,” Buttram said.

Those attributes are drawing investors and developers to Cedar Hill. In September, Hillwood announced the purchase of 120 acres with plans to start construction on a \$75 million, 1.5-million-square-foot endeavor. The company, founded by Ross Perot, Jr., will begin construction next spring and is scheduled to deliver Phase 1, approximately 380,000 square feet as soon as Spring 2022 with completion in Spring 2023.

“We are so excited to work with Hillwood to attract the best tenants possible for

that space,” said Buttram. Added Buffington, “Everyone is really pleased that they’ve chosen Cedar Hill.”

Not only are investors, such as Hillwood, choosing Cedar Hill, companies continue locating and growing here. PepWear is a perfect example. Since it relocated to Cedar Hill in 2011, the apparel company has expanded twice. Another tenant, though small now, already land banked a location in Cedar Hill for future growth.

“All that planning is really paying off big dividends now,” Buffington said.

The lure of Cedar Hill is two-fold. Companies are attracted to the corporate amenities available, such as direct access to Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and a number of freeways, as well as the city’s proximity to Dallas.

“We really do have a nice location to utilize the Metroplex to your advantage,” said Buttram.

Similarly, an educated and driven workforce chooses to call Cedar Hill home because of its small town feel and affordability with big city access, not to mention all the natural amenities that surround it.

“It really does usher in a work-life balance. That’s what we hear a lot from new residents or new business owners who are investing in the city: this just felt like the right place,” Buffington said. “It’s an experience when people actually get here and see and feel all that Cedar Hill has to offer.”

The city is also in the process of redeveloping its historic downtown, recently adding a brewery and winery.

“You can live in a place that’s so natural and beautiful, while enjoying the benefits of the Metroplex,” said Buttram. “You don’t feel like you’re in a suburb here. It’s like paradise. It truly is.”

And that’s why Cedar Hill city and EDC leadership are so focused on planning. Leaders here know how important it is to encourage growth while preserving what makes this city so special and unique.

“In the years to come, we’ll make sure to have the right blend of stability married to progress. We have specific areas laid out to grow and change and transform,” Buttram said. “But the people who come here will always be able to



depend on the part of Cedar Hill that makes it unique and beautiful. That will not change. I think that’s comforting to know.”

For more information about development in Cedar Hill, contact the Cedar Hill Economic Development team at 972.291.5132.



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