A photograph of a muddy river flowing through a wooded area with sandy banks. The river is the central focus, winding through the landscape. The banks are composed of light-colored sand and some sparse vegetation. The background is filled with dense green trees under a cloudy sky.

Cypress Creek Greenway

Trails Master Plan

**Needs
Assessment**

Needs Assessment

Population

The study area boundary was overlaid on U.S. Census tracts in order to determine existing population. Per the 2010 U.S. Census, population within the Cypress Creek Trails Master Plan study area was just over 61,000.

Although population is not expected to increase as dramatically as other portions of the Creek's corridor, several multi-family developments are currently planned east of Highway 249. Utilizing a 1.5 mile buffer around the entire Cypress Creek, 2010 population was estimated at nearly 240,000. This estimation would imply that our study area comprises roughly 25% of the entire Cypress Creek Greenway population.

Population is projected to increase by 20% in 2020, bringing the study area population to 73,200. The increase will most likely strain already overburdened roadways within the area, and further development may alter or remove some of the existing natural resources within the area.

Demographics

Of the 61,000 people living within the study area, 12% are over 65 years of age. Ethnicity percentages are 77% White, 8% African American, 8% Asian, 1% American Indian Alaska Native, 0% Native Hawaii or Other Pacific Islander, 4% Other Race, 2% Two or More Races. According to the American Community Survey 2012, the educational background of 95% of the study area are high school graduates or higher. 44% of the residents in the study area have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. The median annual income for the region is \$54,635.

Gathering Public Input

In order to assess the recreation and connectivity needs and desires of residents within and adjacent to the study area, public input was gathered in multiple ways. Stakeholder interviews and public meetings provided interested parties the ability to discuss existing trail facilities and brainstorm potential future routes and destinations. Online media was utilized to develop a short questionnaire that could easily be distributed through email, facebook, and print materials.

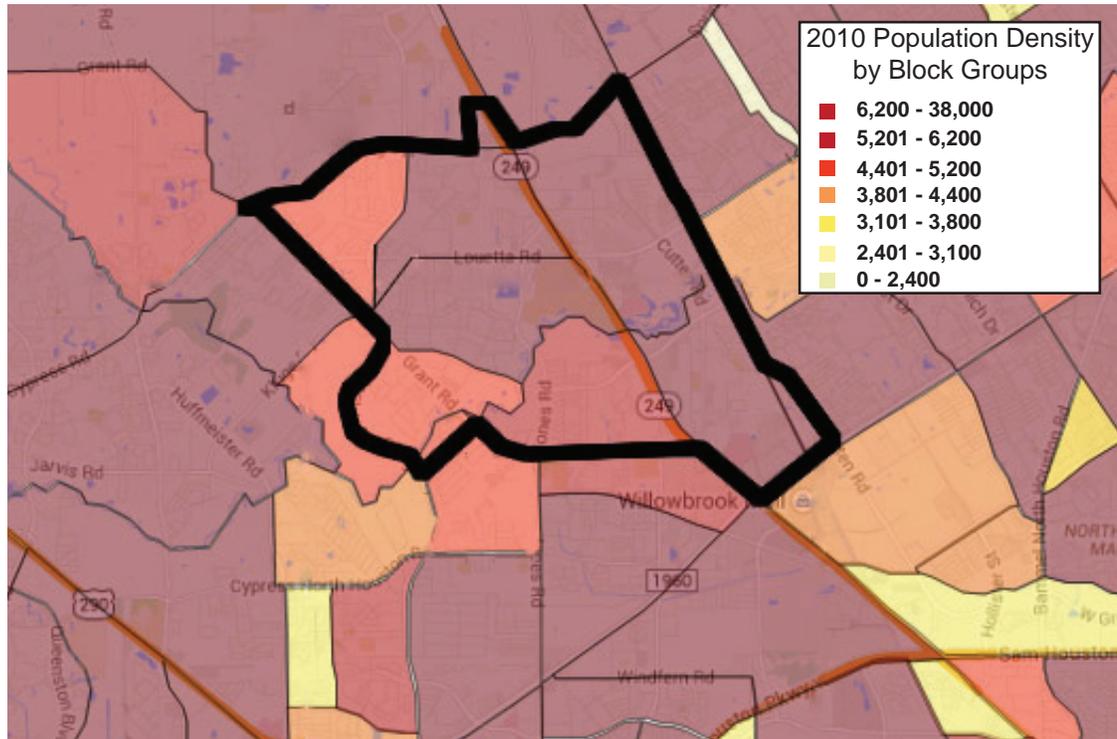


Figure 3.1 Population Distribution within the Study Area

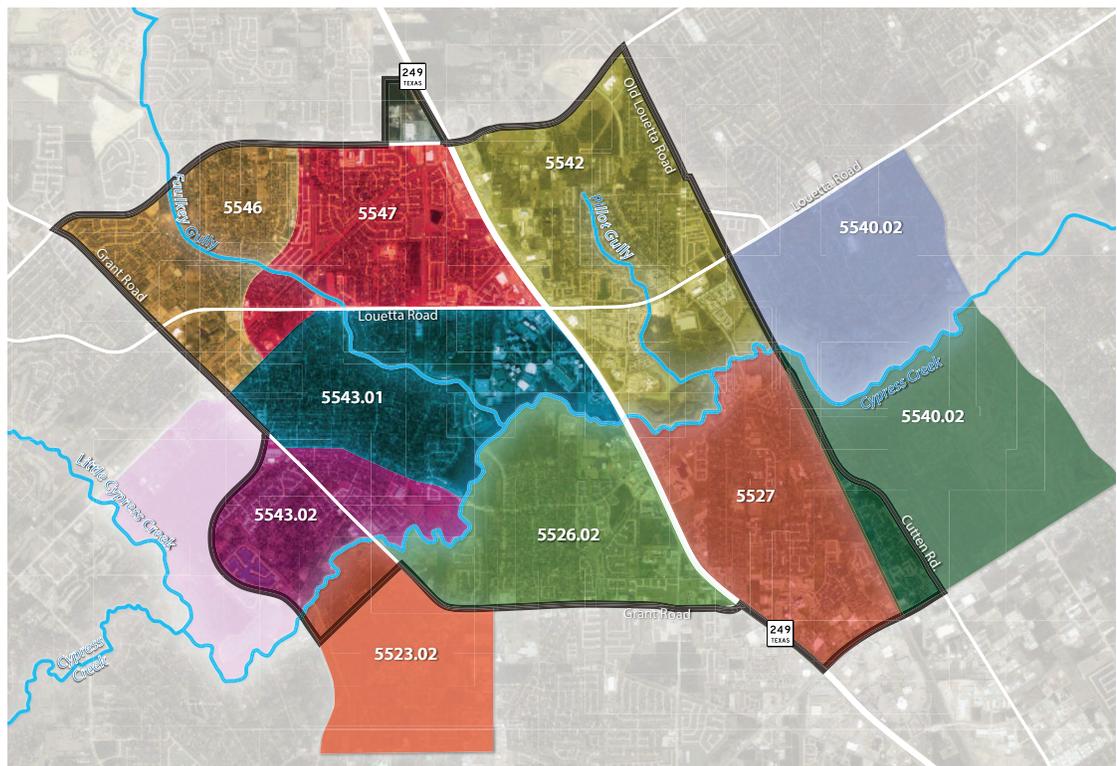


Figure 3.2 Census Tracts

Stakeholder Interviews

Separate meetings were held for the study partners in order to determine their individual goals. Although each of the partners had assigned one member to the Coordinating Board, it was important to recognize each entity and discover how they wanted to use the plan. A few of the partner Utility Districts, such as Malcomson Road UD have already begun park and trail development within their District. Other District's have just begun to understand the value of developing these types of facilities for their residents.

Meetings were also held with Lone Star College staff and tenants and owners along Compaq Center Drive, including Hewlett-Packard and Noble Energy.

Additional meetings were coordinated with Harris County and Harris County Flood Control staff to understand their roles in recreational development and what projects they are currently developing. A meeting with local off-road biking associations including GHORBA helped to understand how they currently use land and trails along Cypress Creek and also their desires for additional, more challenging trails.

Meetings or phone calls were also coordinated with Bayou Land Conservancy, Cy-Fair ISD, Tomball ISD, Klein ISD, among others.

Public Meetings

Due to the large size and numerous groups within the study area, public meetings were coordinated through the study partners. Each partner provided input as to what type of meeting, who to invite and how to extend invitations as well as meeting locations.

Survey

A short survey was developed and distributed through online media as well as printed copies available at public meetings. The survey was available from August until mid-December and a total of 765 responses were collected. The survey was posted on flyers along existing trail corridors, distributed at public meetings, emailed to stakeholder groups and individuals and posted on the studies facebook page, and thus linked to other partner organization pages. Of the 765 respondents, 69% lived within the study area while 35% indicated that they worked within the study area.

Age distribution of survey respondents ranged from under 18 to over 75 with the median age group being 45-55. 69% of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 64. Lone Star's University Campus enrolls over 9,500 students (as of Fall 2014), but we were unable to distribute the survey via email. Flyers with a QR code to link to the survey were distributed to students, in person, during one school day.

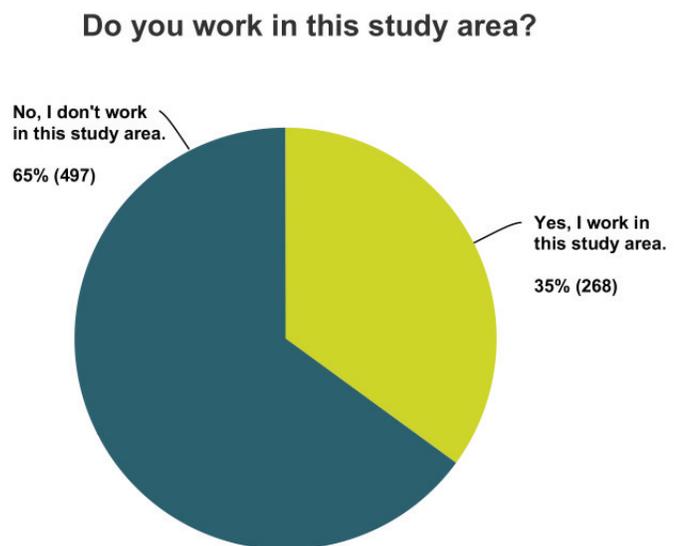
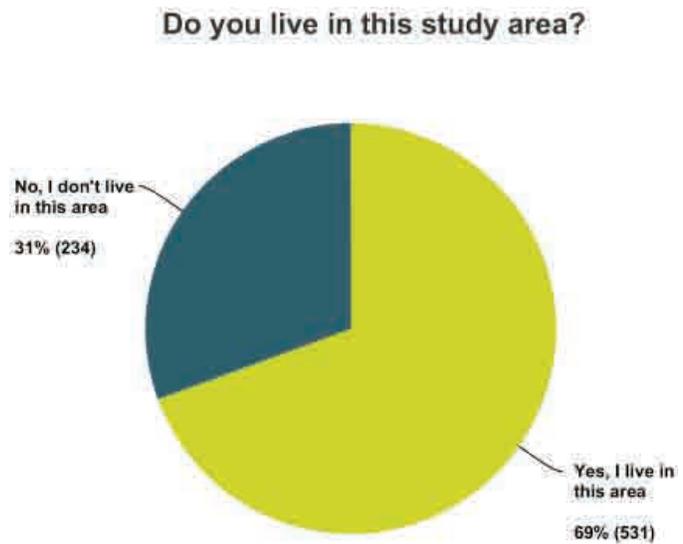


Figure 3.3 Survey Distribution of Respondents

Current Trail Usage

Survey respondents were asked how they currently utilize existing trails within the study area. Over half of the respondents selected walking and/or walking their dog as their main activity while 94% said they utilized trails for some sort of cycling including off-road, on-road, and for leisure. 81 people enjoy horseback riding along the trails. 54 people (7%) responded that they do not currently use trails within the study area. 42% or 315 respondents indicate they utilize the trails weekly, while 21% (156) say they use the trails daily. 48% rate their overall satisfaction with existing trails as good. Although connectivity and longer distances are lacking, people are definitely using, and enjoying the current trails.

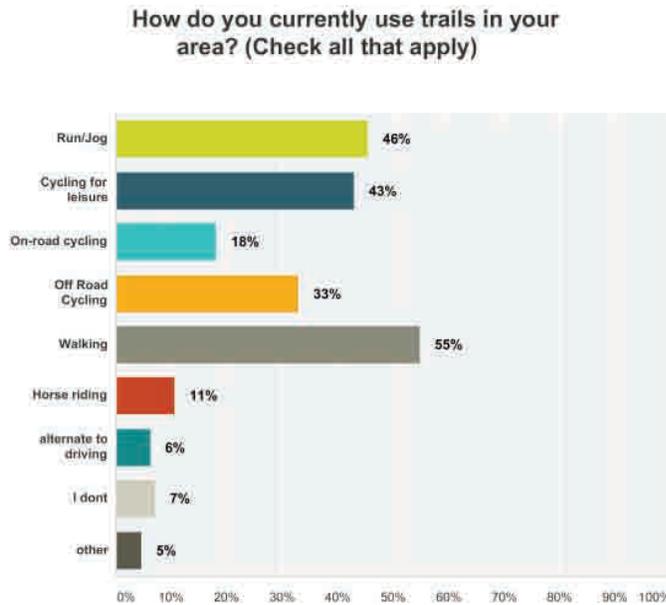


Figure 3.3 Survey Responses of Current Trail Usage

Roadblocks

When asked what hinders them from utilizing the trails more often many people stated lack of time, something that everyone would most likely agree to. 89 people admitted they were not aware of any existing trails. 54% indicated frustrations with the current system including lack of connectivity to desired destinations, and/or lack of access to the trails including parking facilities. Safety was also selected as a concern to utilizing the existing trails.

Future Trail Usage

If additional trails were built, respondents were asked how would they like to utilize them, as well as how

they would recommend funding the construction and maintenance of the facility. Percentages of usage were fairly similar to how the trails are currently being used, with slight increases in all categories, indicating that additional people would use them for more uses. An increase of 10% occurred utilizing trails as an alternate to motorized transportation. The location of office, educational, commercial and retail along Highway 249, with multiple residential subdivisions surrounding as well as current traffic congestion provides a great opportunity to more pedestrian traffic.

Over 75% of survey respondents indicated they would support both volunteer construction and maintenance of the trails. Surprisingly, over one-third of respondents said they would support an increase in taxes to develop more area trails.

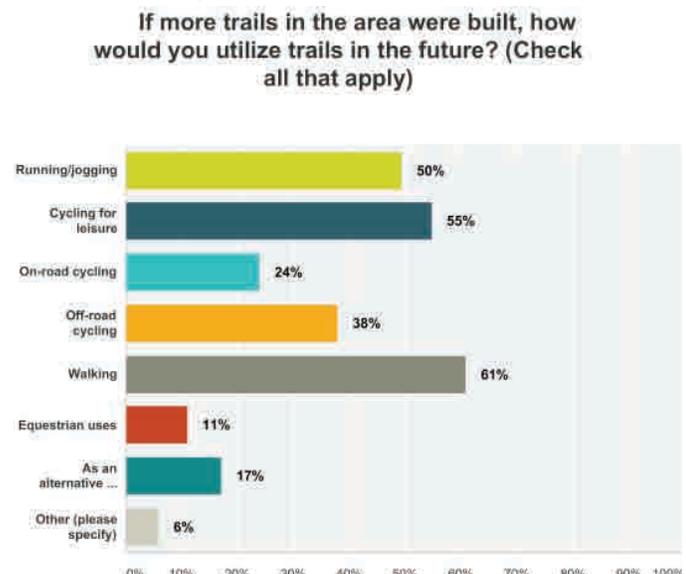


Figure 3.4 Survey Responses to Future Trail Usage

Future Trail Development

If additional trails were built, respondents were asked what types of trails do they prefer and where would like to go. 84% indicated they preferred more formalized, hard surface trails including asphalt, concrete, and decomposed granite. 44% preferred natural surface trails while 28% would like to see a combination of both hard and natural surface trails.

82% would like to see trails connect existing and future park facilities which is expected for recreational use. 38% would like to connect to work or school and perhaps use trails as an alternative to motorized vehicles. Almost all respondents said they would like to connect to services included in the Vintage Park

development including grocery stores, retail, and restaurants. Respondents also indicated a desire for trail connections to the YMCA, to visit friends in other neighborhoods, park and rides, companies within the HP Campus, library, gym, and bar/pubs.

The last question of the survey was open-ended and allowed survey participants to share any additional comments. A summary of some of the comments are below. The full list of comments can be found in the appendix.

Connectivity

- It would be great if the trails can connect to other major trails
- Create some kind of connection from North of Louetta Rd, and create a connection to Cypress Creek/Faulkey Gully. Also, can there be a bike lane on Cypresswood Dr? I rode my bike there once or twice, and it was a pretty hairy
- I would love to be able to walk to more places. Currently I use the trails for exercise.
- Lack of sidewalks limits access to trails. No way to cross busy streets like Louetta, Highways like 249
- We need to encourage a pedestrian lifestyle; it's healthier and greener.
- It would be nice if [trails] connected so that I didn't have to loop the same section several times.

Materials/Surfacing

- The Cypress Creek Trails offer a unique opportunity for equestrian use in the city of Houston. There are very few other opportunities for horseback riding on public lands. The natural areas should be left as wild as possible.
- Need this for community, community exercise and resale. Connect to Meyer Park safely on a trail that is easy on the person to walk/run - in other words good foundation, smooth trail.
- Please build more single-track bike trails - even if they are adjacent to main trails.
- Sometimes soft trails won't work in areas that flood

regularly.

- No concrete, it's hard on joints and equipment.

Amenities

- Shade trees along the trails would help during hot weather.
- Currently enjoy the Trails greatly. Appreciate the community support in keeping the trails clean, and providing benches.
- Needs better dog leash signage. Too many people think its ok to walk dogs without a leash.
- We need more trails with easy trailer parking for equestrian use. Walking/hiking/biking is much more available, but we are lacking equestrian space.
- I can see trails while driving on Jones Rd and surrounding roads but I can't find a place to park to get to them!
- Please put in a dog park and bathrooms.
- Lights along all of the trails would lead to increased use as would more maps.

Funding

- I do trail maintenance work at the volunteer events and on my own. There are many others like me that volunteer countless hours to have GREAT off road biking in this area.
- Colorado Springs, CO has a tax on sporting gear to support the construction and maintenance of trails for recreational use.
- Need professionals to build trails, but volunteer help can be used to do some of the maintenance work. Some entity needs to organize it.
- I would DEFINITELY be opposed to an increase in taxes.
- We would hope that most funding would be covered by corporate philanthropy or existing local/state parks budgets.
- Let those that use them, pay for them.