IMAGINEAUSTIN

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Vibrant. Livable. Connected

City Council Adopted
June 15, 2012

Amended 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the residents of Austin and Central Texas, as well as over 300 City of Austin employees, whose thoughtful discussions, insights, and ideas provided the basis for the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.*

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Mayor Lee Leffingwell

Council Member Place 1: Chris Riley

Council Member Place 2: Mike Martinez

Council Member Place 3: Kathie Tovo

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Former Mayor Will Wynn

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Geraldo Castillo*

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Mandy Dealey

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Cid Galindo*

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Alfonso Hernandez

Saundra Kirk

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Dave Sullivan (chair)

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* Former Planning Commissioners

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Perla Cavazos*

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Rob D'Amico*

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Wilhelmina Delco

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Ceci Gratias

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Karl-Thomas Musselman*

Jonathan Ogren*

Juan Padilla

Lori Renteria*

Danny Rodriguez

Regina Rogoff*

Cookie Ruiz*

Frederick Steiner*

Evan Taniguchi*

Donna Tiemann

Carol Torgrimson*

Candice Wade

Allen Weeks

Jerry Winetroub

Ira Yates*

Mark Yznaga*

*Member at adoption

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Austin Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission

Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities

Austin Music Commission

Bond Election Advisory Task Force

Community Development Commission

Design Commission

Downtown Commission

Early Childhood Council

Electric Utility Commission

Environmental Board

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Community Oversight Team

Historic Landmark Commission

Library Commission

Parks and Recreation Board

Public Safety Commission

Resource Management Commission

Sustainable Food Policy Board

Urban Forestry Board

Urban Renewal Board

Urban Transportation Commission

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Zoning and Platting Commission

Austin Energy

David Lambert

Jenna Neal

Sonny Poole

Austin Resource Recovery

Robert Gedert

Jessica King

Austin Transportation Department

Gordon Derr

Caleb Gutshall

Teri McManus

Robert Spillar

Austin Water

Randy Alexis

Teresa Lutes

City Manager's Office

Marc Ott

Sue Edwards

Marie Sandoval

Communications and Public Information Office

Jill Goodman

Doug Matthews

David Matustik

Kay Owens

Larry Schooler

Nicole Sherbert

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office

Jill Fagan

Greg Kiloh

Janet Seibert

Health and Human Services

Filip Gecic

Philip Huang

Library

Brenda Branch

John Gillum

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Rebecca Geillo

Kelly Nichols

Planning and Development Review

Meredith Bossin

Greg Claxton

Paul DiGiuseppe

Matt Dugan

Kathleen Fox

Paul Frank

Greg Guernsey

Carol Haywood

Melissa Laursen

Francis Reilly

Ryan Robinson

Garner Stoll

Margaret Valenti

Mark Walters

Surbhi Bakshi

Cheryl Van Allen

Steve Sadowsky

Michael Embisi

Diane Dohm

Greg Dutton

Jacob Browning

Public Works

Nadia Barrera

Annick Beaudet

Howard Lazarus

Sustainability Office

Lucia Athens

Katherine Gregor

Human Resources

Sheila Balog

Mike Hockmuller

Watershed Protection

Jean Drew

Matt Hollon

Mike Personett

Erin Wood

Consultants

Wallace Roberts & Todd (Lead)

AngelouEconomics

Canales-Sondgeroth & Associates

Carter Design Associates

Criterion Planners

Estilo Communications

ETC Institute

Group Solutions RJW

Kimley-Horn And Associates

Raymond Chan & Associates

Civic Collaboration

Hahn, Texas / Rifeline

Robyn Emerson

AMENDMENTS TO IMAGINE AUSTIN

The City Council unanimously adopted Imagine Austin on June 15, 2012. By City Charter, the Planning Commission reviews the comprehensive plan annually and may recommend amendments to Council. The Council has amended the plan as follows:

September 2013	CPA- 2013-0001 - Minor additions and corrections
September 2014	CPA-2014-0001 - Added Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan
	CPA-2014-0002 - Amendment to align Imagine Austin with the City endorsed Austin Travis County School Readiness Action Plan
	CPA-2014-0003 - Added Public Safety
	CPA-2014-0004 - Removed “Affordable” from Related Vision Components for Priority Program 8 - Revise Austin’s development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city (Typographical correction only. Priority Program 6- Household Affordability is a separate Priority Program)
November 2014	Ordinance 20141106-085 - Added South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan
December 2014	Ordinance 20141211-197 - Added Colony Park Master Plan
October 2015	CPA-2015-0001 - Added Vision Zero
	CPA-2015-0003 - Corrected Typographical Errors
June 2016	Ordinance 20160616-074 - Added South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan
October 2016	CPA-2016-0003 - Added Activity Corridor on Guadalupe Street from 29th Street to 51st Street
	CPA-2016-0004 - Added Vision Zero Action Plan
	CPA-2016-0005 - Added Age-Friendly Amendments
November 2016	Resolution 20161103-049 - Added Age-Friendly Austin Plan
April 2017	Ordinance 20170413-010 - Added Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint
June 2018	Ordinance 20180614-015 - Added Austin Area Master Community Workforce Plan

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IMAGINE AUS

Chapter One
The Roadmap and The Road Ahead

Describes the need for a comprehensive plan providing a roadmap for Austin to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, core principles for action to achieve a sustainable future, and how we will use those principles to turn the plan into reality. It is useful for those who may not wish to read the plan "cover to cover."

Chapter Two
Experiencing Austin: Who Are We Today?

Contains information on the current state of Austin and what it means for the city's future, such as how affordable it is to live here, how people are getting around, and how our parks and services are performing.

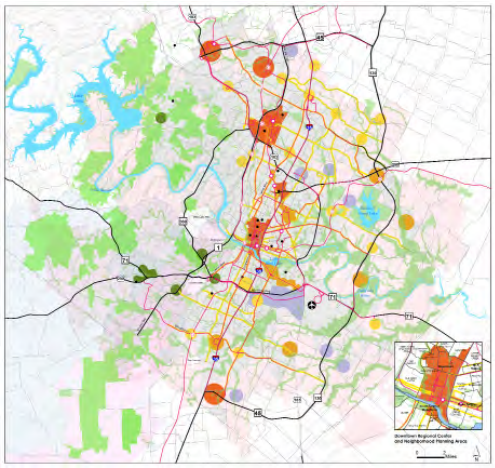
Growth Concept Map

Is the geographic guide for applying the vision to the city's physical pattern. Created through a public scenario-building process, the Growth Concept Map illustrates priority locations for activity centers, corridors, transportation, open space, and resource preservation.

TIN
AT A GLANCE

Chapter Three
Imagining Austin: Our Vision Of a Complete Community

Presents the *Imagine Austin* vision statement, developed with the input of thousands of residents. It describes the Austin we aspire to be in 2039, the 200th anniversary of the city's founding. Our city will be one of a "complete communities" that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and which values and respects all Austinites. The vision statement defines the destination that the plan policies, actions, and programs are designed to reach.



Chapter Four
Shaping Austin: Building The Complete Community

Includes the Growth Concept Map and the plan's policy guide. The plan's policies organized by 7 building blocks (e.g., Land Use and Transportation, Economy). This chapter includes key issues, challenges, and best practice ideas from other communities facing similar challenges.

Chapter Five
Implementation And Measuring Success

Addresses how *Imagine Austin*'s vision and framework will be implemented. It identifies eight priority programs based on hundreds of ideas developed by public working groups, provides guidance for decision-making, and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor implementation progress.

AUSTIN
MOTEL
AUSTIN
WISHES YOU
SAFE JOURNEY

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN: IMAGINE AUSTIN AT A GLANCE

The comprehensive plan is organized into five chapters:

Chapter One: The Roadmap and The Road Ahead describes the need for a comprehensive plan providing a roadmap for Austin to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, core principles for action to achieve a sustainable future, and how we will use those principles to turn the plan into reality. It is useful for those who may not wish to read the plan "cover to cover."

Chapter Two: Experiencing Austin: Who Are We Today? contains information on the current state of Austin and what it means for the city's future, such as how affordable it is to live here, how people are getting around, and how our parks and City services are performing.

Chapter Three: Imagining Austin: Our Vision of a Complete Community presents the *Imagine Austin* vision statement, developed with the input of thousands of residents. It describes the Austin we aspire to be in 2039, the 200th anniversary of the city's founding. Our city will be a city of "complete communities" that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and that values and respects all Austinites. The vision statement defines the destination that the plan policies, actions, and programs are designed to reach.

Chapter Four: Shaping Austin: Building the Complete Community sets a two-part framework for action to realize our vision of a city of complete communities. The Growth Concept Map shows in general terms where new development over the next 30 years should be located. The building blocks define specific policies to guide decisions on topics ranging from land use and transportation to economy to creativity. The core concepts of *Imagine Austin*—complete communities and compact, connected centers—are two sides of the same coin. These policies are the foundation of the action ideas and programs contained in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Implementation and Measuring Success addresses how *Imagine Austin*'s vision and framework will be implemented. It identifies eight priority action programs based on hundreds of ideas developed by public working groups, provides guidance for decision-making, and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor implementation progress.

Photo courtesy of Bat Conservation International.

THE ROADMAP AND THE ROAD AHEAD

A Comprehensive Plan for the 21st Century

Thinking Big: The Beauty of a Comprehensive Plan

6 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Securing a Sustainable Future

Imagine Austin Core Principles for Action

The Road Ahead

A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.

Through the process of comprehensive planning and the preparation, adoption and implementation of a comprehensive plan, the city intends to preserve, promote, protect and improve the public health, safety, comfort, order, appearance, convenience and general welfare; prevent the overcrowding of land and avoid undue concentration or diffusion of population or land uses; facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, wastewater, schools, parks, recreational facilities, housing and other facilities and services; and conserve, develop, utilize and protect natural resources.

- Article X. Planning; Charter of the City of Austin, Texas

All images: courtesy of City of Austin, unless otherwise noted.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROADMAP AND THE ROAD AHEAD

There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them.

- Denis Waitley, author and keynote speaker

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Austin today is a model of livability, widely acclaimed as one of the top cities in the country. We have a distinctive and appealing vibe, a resilient economy, a growing national profile, good job and business opportunities, a fun and relaxed way of life, a beautiful natural setting for outdoor living and recreation, a thriving arts and live music scene, and a reasonable cost of living for a big city. In fact, we're so attractive that we draw more than one million visitors and many thousands of new residents annually.

Known as a "smart" city, we are also smart enough to not rest on our laurels. Maintaining our enviable economy and quality of life requires continuous adaptation as the world evolves around us. As a fast-growing city whose population is projected to nearly double over the next three decades, we are becoming more urban and diverse each year. Our attractiveness brings a central challenge: how to accommodate more people, in a considered and sustainable fashion, while preserving what we value so that we get better not just bigger.

Many of the changes Austin has seen are positive. Growth in recent decades has brought more employers and varied job opportunities; more interesting people with whom to meet and connect; a broader population base to support the visual, performing, media, and interactive arts, as well as our many nonprofits; a revitalized downtown; new transportation options; and greater tolerance and diversity. We have gained public parkland, a wealth of entertainment and dining choices, and many other amenities to enjoy with family and friends.

Children playing at Butler Park.

Austin has a true sense of place and culture. To be from Austin means something to people, conjuring images of Barton Springs, music, food, outdoor recreation. . . open-mindedness. It's a little grungy, a little hippie, and a little country all rolled into one.

– *Imagine Austin* Community Forum Series #1 participant

But other changes are negative. We now suffer from serious traffic congestion, loss of natural and open space to urban sprawl, Central Austin housing that is increasingly unaffordable for individuals and families, a sense of loss about a simpler Austin of the past, and too many low-wage jobs that lag behind Austin's cost of living. Most troubling, at least 20 percent of our children live in poverty, go to bed hungry, go without health insurance and adequate healthcare, and fail to graduate from high school.

The challenge now before us—in shaping the Austin of the 21st century—is to energetically leverage our strengths as we grow, while turning around the negatives. The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* provides the roadmap.

The stakes are high. We must embrace the future that we want and work to make it happen.

THINKING BIG: THE BEAUTY OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We are not lacking in the dynamic forces needed to create the future. We live immersed in a sea of energy beyond all comprehension.

- Thomas Berry, cultural historian and Earth scholar

The distinctive benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it confronts big issues in a big-picture way. Other City of Austin plans are more focused and deal with topics such as parks, solid waste, transportation, water, or smaller geographic areas. But only a comprehensive plan fully considers how the whole community's values, needs, people, and places are interrelated and interdependent. In creating this plan, we identified the defining issues that are central to Austin's future success.

Today, Austin tops numerous state, national, and international "Best Of" lists. This visibility is accelerating our attractiveness and population growth. As we grow and evolve, how can we preserve and amplify the special things we value about Austin? How can we face our more difficult problems, improve the city, and meet our challenges head-on?

6 KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Preserving Our Livability

Austin is a great place to live. We have a wealth of natural resources and recreational opportunities, friendly neighborhoods, a robust economy, and a thriving arts scene. As we welcome future generations, how can we best expand and share all of these amenities? How can we preserve our character and history, remembering the many different experiences and cultures that have made Austin what it is today? How will we increase housing and transportation choices for different types of individuals and families throughout Austin? How will we keep Austin healthy, safe,
beautiful, and affordable?

Expanding Transportation Choices

Austin is a big city, so it's time to build a "big-city" transportation system. We need good roads, and we need to move people around the city and the region conveniently and safely, with or without a car. How can we offer more transportation choices? How can we encourage Austinites to walk, bike and take transit? How can we build the kind of transportation network we'll need for sustainable development?

Tackling the Ethnic Divide

Austinites of color are now the majority and our city is quickly becoming more diverse. Yet we are still dealing with the legacy of segregation and racism. Poverty and people of color both are concentrated east of Interstate 35. Overall, Austinites living east of Interstate 35 are poorer, less healthy, lag academically, and share less equally in Austin's celebrated quality of life. How can we improve their lives while also protecting longtime Eastside residents from displacement? As a city, we want to tackle this divide and close the opportunity gaps. How can we help all Austinites have a voice, material comforts, and a reason to believe in a brighter future?

Protecting Our Natural Resources

Austinites enjoy an easy connection with nature and have a strong environmental ethos. We get out on our trails and greenways, lakes and rivers, parks and natural lands, and consider them a core part of what makes Austin special. But suburban growth is pushing Austin outward and encroaching upon and consuming these resources. How can we protect our waterways and watersheds, other natural resources, and agricultural lands? How can we better connect our community with healthy, natural open spaces? How can we ensure an ample water supply for the Austin of 2050 and beyond?

Promoting Prosperity for All

Austin is an innovation leader, known for its high-tech industries, colleges, and universities; youthful population; attractiveness to creative professionals; support for local independent businesses; and unique music and arts community. We need a strong business climate for large and small businesses. How do we help all Austinites find good jobs in our high-skill economy? How do we ensure that musicians, young families, and hourly workers aren't priced out of Austin? How can we help wage growth catch up to the rising costs of living, closing the affordability gap? How can we expand job opportunities and enhance the skills of our labor force?

Collaborating Regionally

As the biggest city in Central Texas, Austin has a duty to provide regional leadership and invite its regional partners to collaborate on solutions. Issues such as transportation, water resources, growth and development, environmental protection, climate change, and economic prosperity are regional in scale and scope. We need a platform for regional governance and coordinated comprehensive planning for our collective future. How can Austin lead the way to forge a productive dialogue and set of agreements?

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Austin is a big, fast-growing 21st century city. We could sit back and simply let change happen, in ways we may or may not like. Or we can energetically shape our own destiny using this plan as a common playbook. By being unified in vision and proactive about solutions, we can capitalize on our strengths, carry forward our values, and channel growth as a positive force.

Change isn't easy. Actively preparing for change and uncertainty can be tough. However, the potential rewards can outweigh the discomforts. Choosing a different path for our city will require doing things differently. Having imagined a better Austin, it is incumbent upon us to realize our vision.

Swimmers and sunbathers enjoying Barton Springs Pool.

The view of Lake Austin from Mount Bonnell.

SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Right now more than 70 percent of the world population is convinced that something serious has to be done about the dangers facing the planet.... Most of humanity wants to know how to make the change. It's one of those tipping-point times where things can change unbelievably fast.

- Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, coauthors of *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*

The Austin City Council established "sustainability" as the central policy direction of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*.

Sustainability means considering not only the needs of today, but also whether these needs are being met in ways that conserve resources for future generations. Sustainability means finding a balance among three sets of goals: 1) prosperity and jobs, 2) conservation and the environment, and 3) community health, equity, and cultural vitality. It means taking positive, proactive steps to protect quality of life now and for future generations.

This comprehensive plan focuses on creating a sustainable city. The way Austin has grown for the last 60 years comes at a troubling price in terms of social segregation and isolation, public health, air and water quality, loss of natural open space and agricultural lands, and climate change. Sprawling, low-density development drives up the public costs for roads, water lines, and other infrastructure that must be continually extended to far-flung new development. Austin simply can't afford to ignore the costs associated with the way we've grown. The patterns of the past decades are neither environmentally nor fiscally sustainable.

Growing in accordance with this plan offers us a way to do it better. It offers us more choices for where and how to live. A compact and connected city reduces the distances that people drive between work, shopping, and home. This reduces stress and frees up precious time for more pleasant and meaningful pursuits.

"SunFlowers, an Electric Garden" is a public art gateway to the Mueller community. The sunflowers were designed by Mags Harries and Lajos Heder, of Harries/Heder Collaborative.

As we look to the future and follow this comprehensive plan, we have an important opportunity to be more intentional about the next chapters in Austin's development. The magnitude of our past and projected population growth, in a time of constrained resources and climate change, could amplify existing problems within Austin and Central Texas. Growth can have tremendous benefits for Austin, but not if we repeat our past actions and continue to incur ever-growing environmental, fiscal, and social costs. That's why we need to make some changes.

We all want Austin to prosper, innovate, and lead. Toward that end, we must be wise stewards of our natural world and its resources—the original "infrastructure." This comprehensive plan promotes sustainable and responsible growth and the conservation practices required to protect and enhance Austin's future.

Image: City of Austin
Office of Sustainability.

SHAPING IMAGINE AUSTIN

Thousands of Austinites shaped *Imagine Austin* throughout the public process. Some key numbers are included here:

18,532 inputs from the community over more than 2 years

4 rounds of public input, including:

- **5** rounds of surveys
- **21** public meetings
- **422** Meetings-in-a-Box distributed
- **57** traveling team events
- **112** speaking events

Each round built on input gathered during the previous round

More than **150 articles and stories** in local media

2,535 email subscribers
2,224 Facebook likes
1,153 Twitter followers

7 building block Working Groups, with **373** participants, **22** meetings, and **2** surveys

38-member Citizens Advisory Task Force, meeting more than **100** times over more than 2 years

Monthly oversight meetings with the Task Force, a committee of the Planning Commission, and a committee of City Council

19 Boards or Commissions briefed twice each

55 stakeholder interviews with key interest groups

5 neighborhood or Contact Team meetings and presentations, plus **1** survey of Contact Teams

Support from more than **300 staff member**s across all City departments

See Appendix B for more information.

IMAGINE AUSTIN CORE PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community.... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.

- Cesar Chavez, labor leader and civil rights activist

Sustainability is the basis of the *Imagine Austin* vision statement and its hundreds of policies and actions developed through the input of thousands of community members. These policies and actions express six core principles for action to make our "imagined" Austin a reality for Austinites of today and tomorrow.

Grow as a compact, connected city

Austin's long-term sustainability requires a fresh focus on redevelopment and infill within the city's developed areas. Favoring compact growth presents an alternative direction to earlier decades of sprawling, low-density development. More compact growth contains costs by capitalizing on the land and infrastructure already in place. It also enhances human connections, innovation, and urban vibrancy. Creating a more compact and efficient city is critical to our ability to connect people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to homes, jobs, schools, arts and cultural amenities, and other destinations with a more complete transportation system that is affordable to build, operate, and maintain.

Integrate nature into the city

A beautiful system of outdoor places for recreation and environmental protection will define Austin as a world-class city. We need to use our creeks, their tributaries and floodplains, Lady Bird Lake, and the Colorado River to create a network of connected greenways and waterways. As we grow into a more compact city, we will also have an increased need for parks and open spaces distributed across these new urban places. By strengthening our "green infrastructure"—parks, the urban forest, urban trails, greenways, rivers, creeks, lakes, gardens, urban agriculture, open spaces, and wildlife habitat and the relationships between them and the rest of the city—Austin can protect the natural environment and enhance recreational opportunities.

Provide paths to prosperity for all

Austin can harness its strong economy to expand opportunity and social equity for all residents. Developing new economic sectors through partnerships between the business community, city government, and institutions will help employ a diverse workforce and expand opportunities for young and old. To ensure our economic strength, it is critical to preserve Austin's mix of large and small businesses, local entrepreneurs, major employers, clean industries, educational institutions, and government jobs. Growing our economic base should provide jobs and career paths for workers of all education and skill levels. Prosperity for all means reducing the number of people living in poverty by providing workforce training and services to help residents attain living-wage jobs. It also means capitalizing on the city's creative industries, cultural heritage, and diverse population to position the city as a national and international center for innovation and knowledge-based industries. We can maintain economic resiliency by staying attuned to global trends and emerging technologies and by preparing our children academically and socially to lead Austin's future.

Develop as an affordable and healthy community

As development and change occurs, we must strive to contain Austin's cost of living, while increasing wages and the number of good jobs. We must provide high public value with tax dollars to deliver quality, affordable amenities that all Austinites can enjoy. An affordable community can only exist if we make sure that the people who work in Austin — at all income levels — can afford to live here. Through incentives and partnerships, the City of Austin can encourage more affordable housing to be distributed throughout the city. New mixed use areas need to have affordably priced housing, be walkable and bikable, and be linked by transit to jobs and other centers, so residents can choose to avoid the costs of car ownership, matching the needs of Austin's increasingly diverse households and wooing families back to the city. Healthy communities depend on easy, safe access to walking, biking, and recreation, healthy and nutritious food, quality healthcare, schools, police, and other community services.

Sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources

Sustainability is about considering the needs of present and future generations. As a city, we need to respect our natural constraints, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and conserve water, energy, land, and other natural resources. The City will enact public policies and make choices on the basis of long-term costs and consequences. We will also need to develop relationships with our Central Texas neighbors to address these issues on a regional basis. Austin can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by promoting community health, encouraging walking, biking, and other daily exercise, and making fresh, local food accessible. We have a responsibility to future generations to go even greener, encourage energy independence, reduce individual, household, and commercial water use, and protect clean air and water. By respecting our natural resources, we can build a sustainable foundation for Austin's enduring prosperity.

Think creatively and work together

Austin's spirit of creativity most openly manifests itself in our local music and arts scenes and by those engaged in these and other creative enterprises. However, it also transcends Austin's creative community, to shape our entrepreneurs and businesses, local government, non-profits, and community at large to embody a broader, innovative mindset and approach to solving problems. The challenges of a growing population, finite natural and fiscal resources, and a changing climate will require Austinites and their local government to become ever more resilient. Resilience — the ability to adapt to challenges and change — will be a hallmark of successful communities in the 21st century. Innovation is one of the key attributes of resiliency. Sustaining our culture of creativity and harnessing the collective energy of our people are essential to realizing the future envisioned by *Imagine Austin*.

WITH HOUSING AND SIDEWALKS FOR ALL

As outlined by the vision statement, *Imagine Austin* strives to make our city a place where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible for all current and future Austinites. We hope to convey that amenities, features, and services should be inclusive of the various needs of all Austinites, including children, teens, adults, seniors, families, singles, artists, musicians, teachers, civil servants, small business owners, residents of North, South, East, West, and Central Austin, those with mental or physical disabilities, native Austinites, immigrants, all races and ethnicities, all religions, all cultures, all lifestyles, and all socioeconomic classifications.

Throughout the plan, you will find that many policies and actions call for anticipated or desired services and infrastructure such as affordable housing, accessible sidewalks, and a connected network of trails, parks, and open space. What you will not often find is a mention of specific groups or segments of the community identified as targeted recipients of such benefits. We have done this deliberately because we recognize that these gaps in service and infrastructure provision affect a large swath of the community and should be made available to all those in need, whether they belong to a specified profession, demographic group, income bracket or not.

THE ROAD AHEAD

We meet tonight at a crossroads, a point of decision. Shall we expand, be inclusive, find unity and power; or suffer division and impotence.

— Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist and author of "Common Ground and Common Sense"

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* provides a platform for moving forward. It clearly defines where we are today and where we want to go. It provides policies and actions for each building block of the plan. It contains a wealth of community-defined priorities for sustainability, livability, mobility, equity, and prosperity. Now, Austinites and their city government must work collaboratively to make the plan bear fruit. Four action steps are required as we move forward:

1 Get to work

Austinites are united by their desire to see the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* yield results. We all want to see completed projects that make Austin better. In adopting this plan, the City of Austin is inviting everyone — residents, local companies and business groups, philanthropists and nonprofits, governmental agencies, and others — to partner with it to realize the plan. A collaborative commitment is essential. The action plan must start strong and be sustained in the years ahead.

Set priorities

The Austin of our dreams won't be built in a day. This plan contains hundreds of transformational ideas for our future. From these, we must prioritize an achievable handful at a time and successfully execute them. Seeing visible results steadily emerge from this comprehensive plan will be important. Which goals within the plan most merit our immediate attention and can be translated into relatively quick, inspiring wins? How can public-private partnerships advance big, exciting projects that achieve multiple objectives at once?

Agree to work together

The greatest benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it is a single playbook from which everyone works. We can accomplish far more by pulling in the same direction. The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* sets the stage for a new era defined by advancing common objectives. When challenging issues and choices arise, the plan guides both the municipality and the community in thinking about the good of the whole.

Leadership will be important moving forward. The plan needs leaders — within the community and city government — who are committed to realizing its potential and power, and are skilled at the coalition-building required to move forward together.

Commit to action

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* lays a strong foundation for taking action. Grounded in community values and needs, it has been crafted to positively shape Austin over the next five to 30 years. But its impact will only be as strong as the actions and programs that Austinites undertake to realize it.

The City Charter requires that elected officials and city government use the comprehensive plan as a guide for policies and practices, including budgeting. The City of Austin is already committed to action, as it references this long-term plan to set annual budget, program, and project priorities. But the aspirations of the comprehensive plan are far bigger and deeper than what municipal government can accomplish alone. To fully realize the community benefits it outlines, visionary individuals, groups, agencies, and plans will also need to commit to action. The whole community must sustain the work that enacts the plan, through projects small and large.

Set priorities. Tackle transformational projects. Repeat.

Act for the whole

The comprehensive plan challenges us to look beyond our personal interests and act for the good of the whole. To think of the entire pie, not just our slice. To be good stewards for generations to come. To understand single elements—parks, transportation, water, housing—within the context of a larger system. To remember and protect those who lack a voice, money, and power.

When we think long-term and work to make the city as a whole better, everyone stands to benefit.

Think big-picture

Considering Austin as a whole means seeing all of its different pieces and identities and how they all fit together. We must understand Austin on a number of levels: as a collection of distinctive, yet interconnected neighborhoods; as an educational and technological innovator; as a system of homes and jobs that need to be connected by more transportation choices; and as a government center, an expanding creative hub, and economic heart of Central Texas.

Comprehensive thinking requires that we consider small areas in the context of how they fit together and how they fit into the whole. Reading this plan in full creates the opportunity to understand what the whole is. As Austin continues to grow, it will take a big-picture view to bring everything together.

Think holistically

This comprehensive plan is holistic in its consideration of big themes like livability, sustainability, and complete communities. In addition to planning for land use, transportation, and other physical issues, it considers the provision of services, economic development, cultural needs, public health, resource efficiency, and equity. It provides a framework for how the physical, economic, and social pieces of the city and the region interconnect.

Think of the less fortunate

The faces and voices of Austin are varied and grow more diverse each day. Social and economic gaps are widening between many segments of our population. Austinites are compassionate; we hope to bring everyone along as we move ahead into a bright future. This comprehensive plan provides direction for actions that will benefit not just a fortunate few, but all Austinites.

3

Expand the growth-shaping toolkit

Pair regulatory tools with this plan

This comprehensive plan defines what Austinites want and how that can be realized. Redevelopment is a primary tool to advance many of the plan's goals. In that sense, the plan serves as a counterpoint to many governmental regulations, which often focus on prohibiting things we don't want. Updated comprehensive plans typically need to be supported with updated land use regulations. We can respect property rights, while also making it easier to "do the right thing." We will also need land use regulations that make it easier and more cost effective to develop sustainably and create compact and walkable places.

Use both zoning and incentives

Zoning is an important tool to guide land use, but it is best used in combination with other tools and a realistic understanding of market forces. New approaches that utilize both zoning and incentives are needed to implement this plan. By offering incentives in the form of grants, loans, infrastructure investments, or innovative regulatory approaches, Austin can encourage good projects that deliver numerous community benefits. These benefits can include affordable housing, great design that beautifies our city and creates lively public places, operational improvements, more transportation options, pocket parks, low-impact development, new jobs, an expanded tax base, and so on. Incentives matter to people who want to improve our community, and they can generate goodwill while helping us reach our goals.

Look to peer cities

Austin appears on many national and even international "Best Of" lists. In these rankings, our closest peers are other resilient, progressive, large cities. All are having similar debates about growth, resource conservation, linking jobs and homes with expanded transportation choices, and preserving community character. We're in a class with the most innovative of our peers. However, Austin is growing much faster than many long-established cities. As we seek to maintain and improve Austin's position as a sustainable, "most livable" city, we can greatly benefit by studying and sharing best practices with peer cities around the nation and the world.

Focus on urban design

In the past, Austin development debates were often simplistically framed as developers versus neighborhoods or the environment. Increasingly, we have a more sophisticated understanding. Sustainability requires redeveloping the central city in "green" ways that advance multiple environmental, economic, and community goals. Well-designed new development can create community amenities and make the city more beautiful. City codes can create certainty and shape projects so they fit sensitively into neighborhood contexts. By establishing high sustainability standards—for locating projects, green building practices, site design and landscaping, and multi-modal transportation corridors—Austin can harness the positive, transformative power of redevelopment.

Partner up!

The City of Austin will work to advance the strategies in this plan, but it will need many partners to achieve its comprehensive vision. This is especially the case in its extraterritorial jurisdiction, where partnering with county governments is critical. Austin's strong private sector, institutions, and non-profit organizations share responsibility for shaping the future. These groups have significant resources and relationships and can do many things city government cannot. Where the right organization does not exist, a new one may need to be created. Implementing this plan will require strong partnerships among government, institutions, businesses, and community groups.

4 Measure progress and adapt

Be transparent

As required by the City Charter, the City of Austin will review progress on the plan annually and assess the plan at least every five years. It will consider updates based on those reviews. Austinites also need to engage in community-wide "how are we doing?" evaluations. It will be helpful to adopt a set of easily understood tools to measure and report on progress, and to assess the results of policies, programs, and projects. The measures and reporting should be highly visible to promote accountability. Ideally, we can all reference an ongoing community report card to see how we're doing with plan implementation.

Practice continuous learning

By implementing this comprehensive plan, Austin is embarking upon an exciting and visionary path. By definition, implementation will involve a learning curve. If our "report card" doesn't show the progress we had hoped for, we will need to make adjustments — perhaps to the actions or even to the goals themselves. As circumstances change, we'll need to update the plan accordingly.

A comprehensive plan is a living, evolving document. However, a long-range comprehensive plan typically must be followed for at least five years to see clear results. As adopted, the plan provides a strong framework to guide city actions at all levels. The vision and principles of the plan need to be respected. But over time, the community should expect to revisit and refine individual policies.

Be steadfast, but be flexible.

The Plan of the City of Austin, 1839 was created by Judge Edwin Waller. The plan consisted of a grid system where the north/south streets were named after the rivers of Texas while the east/west streets were named after native trees . The plan also identified a location for the Capitol for the Republic of Texas, parkland, and established Congress Avenue as the ceremonial main street for the new capital city. This pattern remains largely intact.

EXPERIENCING AUSTIN: WHO ARE WE TODAY?

We Are a Unique Community

- Population and Households
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Economy
- Environmental Resources
- City Facilities and Services
- Society And Health
- Arts and Culture

Developing a Regional Perspective

CHAPTER 2

EXPERIENCING AUSTIN: WHO ARE WE TODAY?

Austin is an exemplary city. We are a state and national leader. A city filled with entrepreneurs and innovators. A funky, offbeat destination. A city of compassion and environmental responsibility. A beautiful, accepting community.

We also know that we face real challenges and we have to define and measure our current successes and deficiencies. What are we getting right? Where are we falling short? Through a detailed look at the city as it exists today, we can decide what works and what can be done better. This analysis will identify gaps and lead to questions resulting in new solutions. The Austin of 2012 will be the baseline against which our success in achieving the plan's vision will be measured.

WE ARE A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

Our progressive spirit, environmental ideals, and innovative character distinguish us from other metropolitan areas in Texas. Many of the City's past policy choices show an early understanding of growth and economic issues that many Texas cities only recently have begun to address. This contrast has enhanced Austin's community identity, creating a strong sense of our uniqueness in relation to the rest of the state and the nation.

THE AUSTIN SPIRIT

There's a spirit that animates Austin's people and special places. Something both laid back and passionate, built on unlikely pairings, like the State Capitol and the University of Texas, blocks away but worlds apart. Sometimes these happen in brief, beautiful moments, like the coming together of college students and cowboys at Threadgill's Tavern and later at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Sometimes it's a generations-long courtship, the way Austin's most substantial pro-development effort, rural electrification of the 1930s and 1940s, later led to the creation of one of Austin's defining and beloved environmental features, the Highland Lakes, and then to the country's premiere efforts in green energy and green building. Even the land brings together the Hill Country to the west and the Blackland Prairie to the east.

While no City program is ever going to be responsible for this spirit, nurturing it in whatever forms it takes in the future is as important to Austin's success as anything else in this plan.

One of the Austin Bike Zoo's pedal-powered puppets at Viva! Streets, an open streets festival held on Sixth Street to encourage walking, bicycling, and other active uses for city streets.

Austin's Historical Context

Before it was Austin, the future capital of the State of Texas was a small settlement named Waterloo, located on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River. In 1839, it became the capital of the Republic of Texas and was renamed in honor of the "Father of Texas," Stephen F. Austin. Austin was selected as the capital city due to its steady water supply, hills, pleasant surroundings, and central location within the state. Already the seat of state government, Austin became an educational center in the 1880s with the establishment of the University of Texas. The government and educational sectors became mainstays of the local economy and began attracting people from across the state.

Unfortunately, our history also includes a story typical of many American cities: slavery followed by legally-enforced racial inequalities. Past land use planning contributed to the divide within Austin. The City of Austin's 1928 "A City Plan for Austin Texas," strongly reinforced racial segregation by designating an official "negro district." This district was created to address the "race segregation problem" by calling for:

> "All facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This will eliminate the necessity of duplication of white and black schools, white and black parks, and other duplicate facilities for this area."

Almost 50 years after the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, we still have reminders of our segregated past in our residential patterns and economic landscape.

The city we know today had its beginnings in the last half of the 20th century. Confronted with serious economic and environmental problems, the choices made to address these difficult issues transformed Austin. In the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, Austin experienced a population boom, growing more than 35 percent each decade. However, the city's economy did not grow at the same pace. To address this disparity, Austin's leaders strategized on how to expand the economy. This resulted in new directions that leveraged the city's role as an educational center to attract high-tech employers such as IBM. Our new economic identity was a progressive one, dependent upon innovation and a highly-skilled and educated workforce.

During the early 1970s, an overtaxed electrical grid caused a series of major brownouts. These brownouts, coupled with the rising price of natural gas and the national energy crisis pointed to the need for new electricity sources. To supply the needed electricity, coal-fired energy plants were constructed as an alternative to natural gas. Following a close election in 1973, voters approved the City of Austin's participation in a partnership to construct a new nuclear power plant, the South Texas Nuclear Project. Major cost overruns, project delays, and nuclear energy issues generally; and pollution caused by coal-fired power plants, proved highly divisive. In 1981, Austin voters authorized the sale of the City's 16 percent share in the project, though no buyers could be found. The issues associated with nuclear energy and the concerns over the pollution and greenhouse gas emissions of coal-fired plants, colored by Austin's "green" sensibility, led to the development of alternative energy sources and increased energy efficiency programs.

During the 1980s, elements of the city's character began to change further. Multi-family construction experienced a marked increase over previous decades, resulting in a number of sprawling "apartment cities" located throughout the city. Two major high tech research consortium companies, Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation and Sematech opened in Austin. By the early 1990s, the region had about 400 high-tech manufacturers. Throughout that decade, Austin's population grew at phenomenal rates, which led to concerted efforts to protect environmentally sensitive areas from development. These efforts are exemplified by the passage of the Save Our Springs ordinance and initiation of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan. The health of Austin's urban environment was also a concern and was reflected in the closing and relocation of the "Tank Farm" (a large gasoline storage facility) in 1993 and the decision to decommission the Holly Street Power Plant in 2007. Austin's pursuit of economic transformation and its reaction to the local and national energy crisis catalyzed a new civic consciousness. Rapid population growth during the 1970s also created new transportation and environmental pressures as Austin struggled with the stresses of a growing city. We emerged from the decade with a new environmental focus and economic direction that form the cornerstones of our current sustainability principles. Well before most Texas cities recognized connections between livability and sustainability, we were at the vanguard of the "green" movement.

The Holly Street Power Plant was decommissioned in 2007. Since then, the surrounding neighborhood has seen reinvestment.

Celebrating our creativity (by branding Austin as "The Live Music Capital of the World," for example) has attracted talented, artistic, and entrepreneurial individuals, contributing to our eclectic small business community and the growth of the creative and technology sectors. We have confronted difficult issues and taken risks that have set us apart.

Austin is also a place where the funky and offbeat are accepted and celebrated. These qualities attract people from across the country who are looking for a place where they feel comfortable and one that provides opportunities not readily available in most other cities. The spirit of acceptance extends across the spectrum to include people of all faiths, ethnicities and races, sexual orientations, political leanings, and personal interests. The spirit of creativity and acceptance has created a place where people want to be and has set the stage for our current and future economic success.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

We are a growing city, becoming more diverse, older, and urban.

Key Facts/Trends

Population

- Austin's population grew by 20 percent between 2000 and 2010, making it the 14th most populous city in the U.S. About two-thirds of this growth is attributable to natural expansion (more births than deaths) and new residents moving into Austin, while about one-third of the new population was added through annexation.

- Austin added an estimated 30,221 people between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2011 to reach a total population of 820,611, making it the 13th most populous city in the U.S.

- Austin's share of the Austin-Round Rock region's population has been declining. In 1960, 65 percent of the region's population lived within the Austin city limits. By 2000, this had dropped to 52.5 percent, and by 2010 it dropped to 46 percent.

- Austin's planning area (city limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction; see Figure 2.1) is projected to add approximately 750,000 more people by 2039.

CHANGE IN POPULATION, 1960 - 2010

Year	Population	Percent Change
1960	186,545	--
1970	253,539	35.9
1980	341,665	34.8
1990	465,622	36.3
2000	656,562	41
2010	790,390	20.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Households

- Proportionally, Austin has far fewer family households (two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption) than Texas as a whole, but a similar percentage of married-couples-with-children households. In 2010, only 52 percent of Austin households were family households, and of these, 34 percent were married with children. In comparison, in 2010, 70 percent of Texas households were family households; 34 percent were married with children.

- In 2010, more than 48 percent of Austin households were non-family households. Seventy-one percent of these were single-person households.

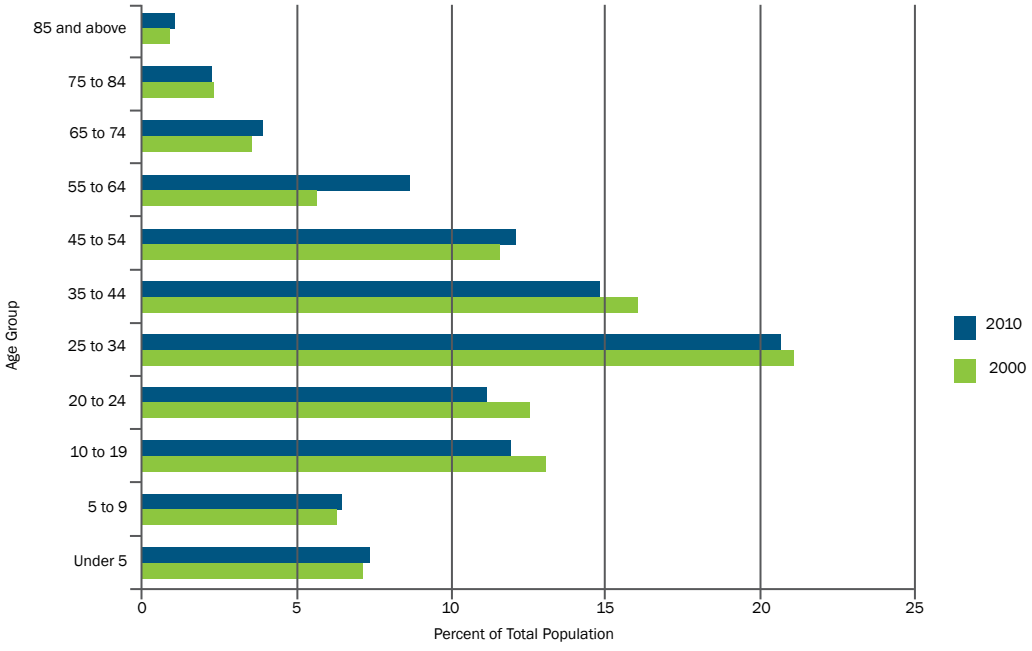
Age Distribution

- Austin is a young city. In 2010, more than 57 percent of the population was under 35 years old, and more than 72 percent was under age 45. The largest age group is 25-34 year olds, which is more than one-fifth of Austin's population.

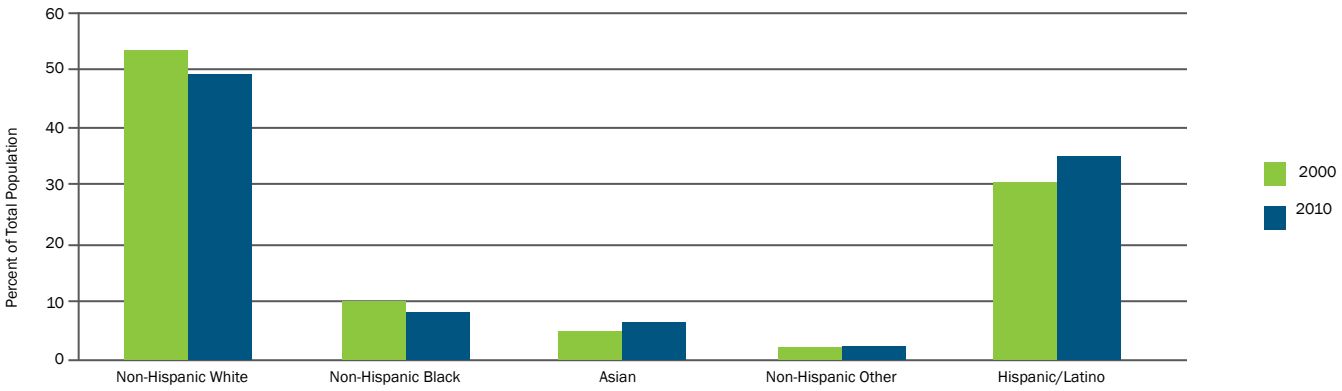
- The Baby Boomer generation reaching retirement age is having an impact on Austin. The largest rate of growth since 2000 has been in those age groups of 55 and older. In the past decade, Austin saw an 84 percent increase in residents aged 55-59; a 97 percent increase in residents aged 60-64; and a 52 percent increase in residents aged 65-69.

- Other age groups have grown significantly as well. Austin's youth and senior populations have grown since 2000. In the past decade, Austin has experienced a 23 percent increase in children under age 10; a 26 percent increase in residents aged 80-84; and a 31 percent increase in residents aged 85 and above.

AGE DISTRIBUTION (2000-2010)



RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION (2000-2010)



MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME	
City	Median Family 2009 inflation-adjusted
Seattle, WA	$85,432
San Diego, CA	$75,492
Charlotte, NC	$63,516
Austin	**$63,431**
Portland, OR	$62,189
Minneapolis, MN	$61,510
Jacksonville, FL	$58,497
Sacramento, CA	$57,081
Denver, CO	$56,909
Raleigh, NC	$56,909
Nashville, TN	$56,452
Fort Worth	$55,405
Indianapolis, IN	$53,491
Columbus, OH	$52,917
San Antonio	$51,540
Houston	$47,278
Dallas	$44,083

Racial/Ethnic Composition

- The racial and ethnic composition of the city has changed over the past decade. In 2010, non-Hispanic whites comprised a smaller proportion of the population then in 2000: 48.7 percent, compared with 52.9 percent in 2000.
- The Hispanic population increased, rising from 30.5 percent in 2002, to more than 35 percent in 2010. Eighty-three percent of these residents were of Mexican origin.
- Austin's Asian population also increased, with its share growing from 4.7 percent in 2000 to 6.3 percent in 2010.
- The proportion of African Americans in Austin decreased from 9.8 to 7.7 percent over the past 10 years. This reflects a decline in the total African American population in Austin. Despite this, the region's African American population grew over the same period.
- Almost 20 percent of Austin residents are foreign-born. More than half come from Mexico and about a quarter from Asia. Of those born in Asia, the majority are from India, followed by Vienam, China, and Korea.

Median Incomes and Cost of Living

- Median incomes in Austin are higher than most other Texas cities. In 2009, Austin's median household income was $50,132 and the median family income was $63,431; while for the state, the median household income was $48,259 and the median family income was $56,650.
- The Austin-Round Rock metro's area cost of living is similar to other regions in Texas. For example in 2011, the Austin region had an estimated cost of living index of 93 (compared to a national average of 100, 96 in Dallas, and 91 in Houston). However when compared to peer metro areas across the country, the cost of living is even more affordable. Comparable regions such as Portland, Oregon (111), Seattle, Washington (120), and San Diego, California (131), had higher index scores indicating a higher cost of living.

Poverty

- In 2011, 21 percent of Austin's residents lived below the poverty line. Almost one-third of all children under age five lived in poverty. Nearly 10 percent of the city's residents over the age of 65 lived in poverty. The 2011 Federal poverty level for a family of four is $22,350.

- Nearly 83 percent of Austin children under age five living in poverty in 2010 were Hispanic. More than 45 percent of Hispanics under age five live in poverty.

- Twenty-seven percent of the individuals living in poverty in 2010 were foreign-born. Thirty-seven percent of individuals living in poverty resided in households where the head of household had not received a high school diploma.

- Additionally, 40 percent of Austin residents earned less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level in 2010.

- The 2011 Point In Time Count conducted by the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition identified 2,357 homeless individuals. Of these, 1,681 were single adults; the rest were families including at least one child.

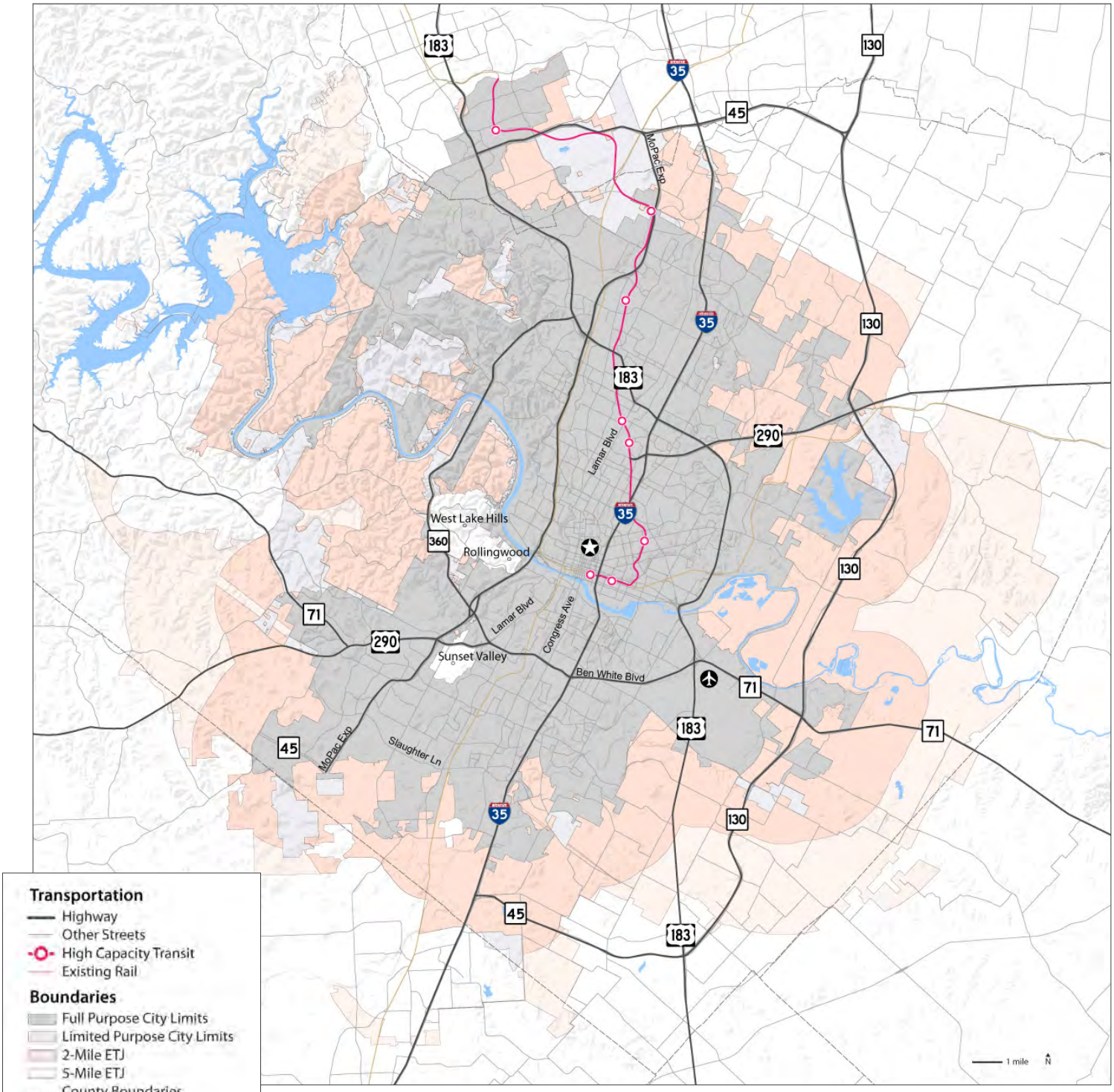
Educational Attainment

- Austin's population is well-educated. In 2010, 44 percent of residents aged 25 and older had at least a bachelor's degree, and almost 16 percent had graduate or professional degrees. These rates are much higher than the state as a whole: in 2009, only 27 percent of all Texans aged 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree, and nine percent had a graduate or professional degree.

- In 2010, 14 percent of Austin residents aged 25 and older did not have a high school diploma.

- If no intervening actions are taken, the percentage of Austinites with post-secondary education levels is expected to decline from 65 percent to 55 percent by 2040. The cost to Austin will be a loss of $2.4 billion in annual income due to reduced career opportunities and earning capacities.

Figure 2.1 **The Planning Area in 2011: City and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction**



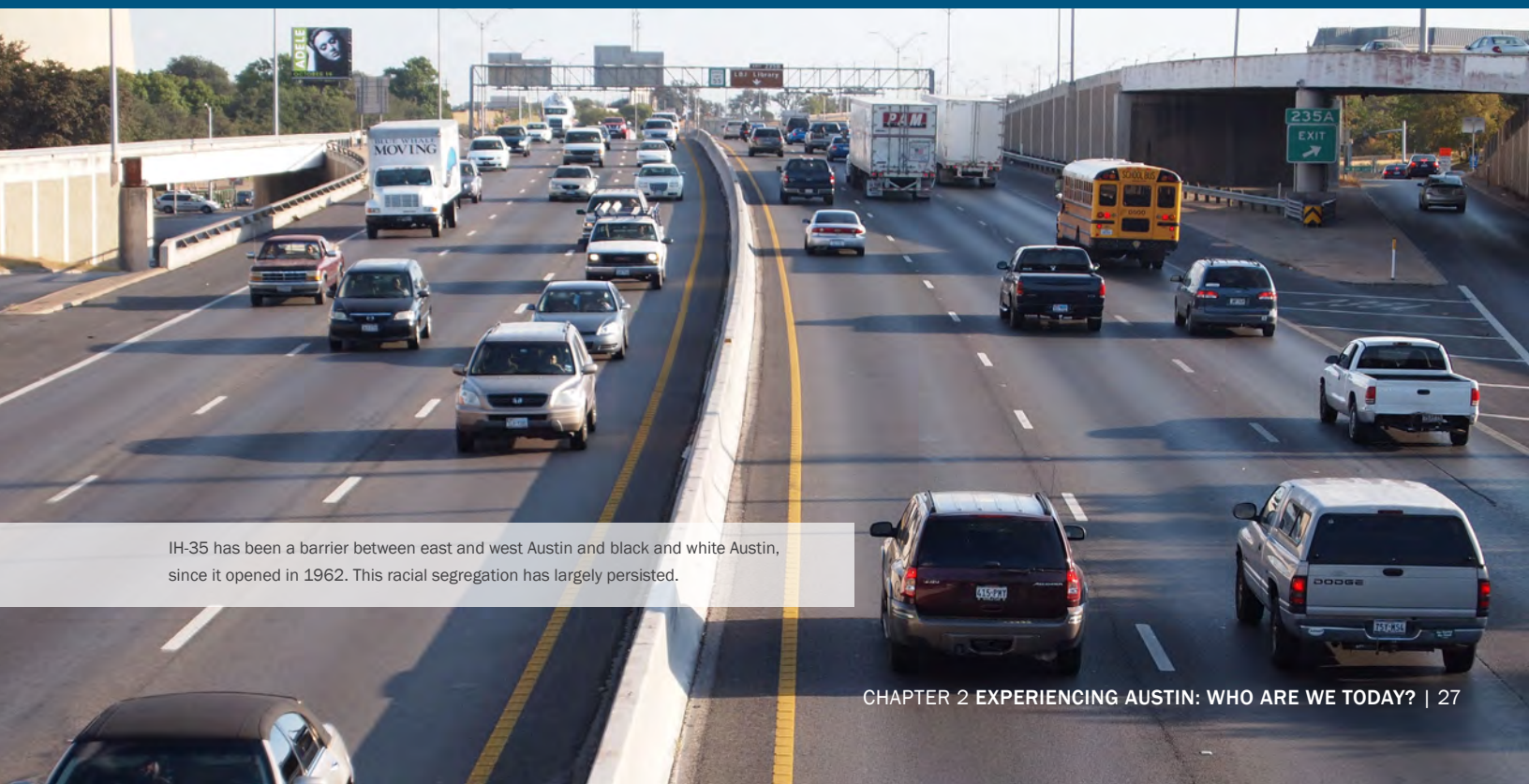
The geographic scope of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* is Austin's current city limits and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, mostly located in Travis County but also encompassing parts of Bastrop, Hays, and Williamson Counties. The extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's boundary that is not within the city limits or extraterritorial jurisdiction of another city. It is the territory where Austin alone is authorized to annex land.

What Does It Mean?

Population and Growth

- Population projections show that Austin will almost double in population in 30 years. This will place heavy demands on infrastructure, resources, and services. Some of this growth will occur through annexation of unincorporated areas, but much of the growth will need to be accommodated through development within the city.
- Austin still has strong patterns of racial, ethnic, and income segregation.
- The growing number of older residents, aged 55 and above, has generated greater demand for services, different housing options, and amenities.
- The increase in the number of young children will affect Austin's school districts over the next decade.
- The large number of younger, educated residents, such as married couples without children and single-person households, may signal increasing demand for housing other than single-family detached units. Many of these people already live in the urban core, and an increased demand for urban living may be met with redevelopment that includes townhouses, condominiums, and apartments.
- Services to address poverty and limited job skills are needed in Austin.
- Median household and family incomes may be higher than those of the rest of the state, but Austin's high housing and transportation costs may consume greater proportions of household budgets, relative to other Texas cities.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, 2010 Census; City of Austin Community Inventory; Kiplinger Cost of Living Index (from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census, Martin Prosperity Institute); "An Investment in the Future of Central Texas, AARO."



IH-35 has been a barrier between east and west Austin and black and white Austin, since it opened in 1962. This racial segregation has largely persisted.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

We have a variety of neighborhoods but limited housing choices. Our housing costs are rising.

Key Facts/Trends

Housing Units

- In 2010, Austin had an estimated 354,241 housing units. Total housing units increased by 28 percent from 2000 to 2010.

- Single-family detached housing made up about 46 percent of total housing stock in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of single-family detached remained about the same, while the percentage of multi-family housing in 10-19 unit buildings increased and the percentage in 20 or more unit buildings decreased.

Home Ownership

- Austin has lower rates of homeownership than Texas: in 2010, 67 percent of Texans owned their own homes, while 50 percent of Austinites were homeowners. However, Austin had higher rates of homeownership than Dallas (46 percent) and Houston (49 percent).

- Hispanic and African American households have lower homeownership rates than White and Asian households. In 2010, 53 percent of White households and 41 percent of Asian households were homeowners, but only 34 percent of Hispanic households and 32 percent of African American households owned their homes.

- Seventy percent of Austin's married households own their home, compared with 42 percent of single-person households in 2010. Younger singles under age 35 were much more likely to rent.

Housing Values/Affordability

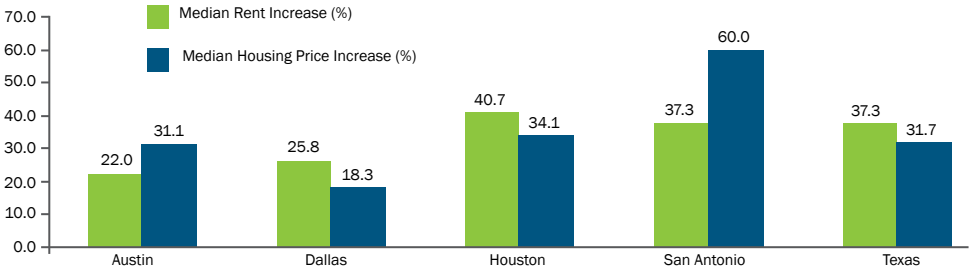
- Over the last 10 years, median housing costs have risen by 85 percent, while household incomes have grown at a much lower rate. Between 1998 and 2008, the median single-family house price increased by almost 90 percent ($129,900 to $240,000) while the percentage of all single-family houses considered affordable declined from 42 to 28 percent. During the same period, Austin's median family income increased by only 36 percent.

- Assessed property values have generally increased in Austin between 1995 and 2010, with declines in 2004 and 2011. Despite a generally declining property tax rate over that period, total taxes paid have risen, substantially in some parts of Austin.

Rents

- In 2010, Austin's median rent was $901. This is higher than the 2010 Texas median of $801 and a 24 percent increase since 2000. Due to tighter capital markets caused by the recent recession, the current supply of apartments has not kept up with demand, causing a marked increase in rents that is expected to continue into the middle of this decade.

INCREASE IN MEDIAN RENT AND MEDIAN HOUSING PRICES, 2000-2009



- Some affordable apartment rental units have been converted to condominium use, contributing to a shortage of units in the rental housing market, especially for households with incomes less than $20,000.

Housing Cost Burden

- Rising housing prices impose higher monthly costs on Austin's households. In 2010, 30 percent of homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their incomes in housing costs and 12 percent paid more than 50 percent.

- Austin's renter population is particularly affected by rising housing costs. In 2010, 53 percent of renter households were paying 30 percent or more of their incomes in rent. Twenty-nine percent were paying 50 percent or more for rent. This is an increase from 2000, when 42 percent of renter households paid more than 30 percent of income in rent and 20 percent paid 50 percent or more for rent.

Neighborhoods

- Austin's neighborhoods built prior to World War II are characterized by mixed housing and lot sizes, interconnected streets, diverse architectural styles, and compact character. These neighborhoods typically have a school and park within their boundaries.

- Neighborhoods built since the late 1950s are more uniform in size and character and are designed in a fashion that increasingly requires an automobile in order to travel between home, work, shopping, and services.

- There are a growing number of neighborhoods throughout Austin where immigrants, largely from Latin America, are increasingly settling. Language and cultural differences between this growing community and the rest of Austin have led to isolation, which makes it difficult for the City to provide these residents with critical services such as basic infrastructure maintenance, building code enforcement, emergency response, public safety, and health services.

- In the last ten years, neighborhoods in east and south Austin—where market values have been historically lower than other Austin neighborhoods—have seen new development, reinvestment, and revitalization. This trend has raised the issue of long-time, often less affluent residents being displaced by more affluent residents.
- Some residents are concerned about the real and perceived effects of new development on the character of older, inner-city Austin neighborhoods.
- In 1997, the City of Austin initiated a neighborhood planning program; to date, 48 neighborhood planning areas have completed the process and adopted neighborhood plans (see Appendix G). These plans cover about 16 percent of land area in the planning area and 52 percent of the population in the planning area.

The Bouldin neighborhood integrates new housing with traditional houses.

What Does It Mean?

Housing and Neighborhoods

- Housing costs are rising in many close-in neighborhoods. As a result, many long-time residents of Austin, particularly low-income renters, are finding that they no longer can afford to stay.

- As the Austin housing market has become more expensive, the geographic distribution of units affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of the local median family income has changed. Housing options for moderate and low-income households have moved to increasingly distant suburban areas of Austin, which in turn increase transportation expenditures.

- Austin is a majority renter city due, in large part, to the significant numbers of college and university students, recent graduates, and other young people who live here. This demographic bulge, as well as the needs of other Austinites of more modest means, highlights the need for more affordable rental housing. This demographic group has also demonstrated a market preference for more urban amenities and lifestyles.

- Higher housing costs and slower-growing household incomes may prompt many families to rent rather than purchase a home.

- High demand for rental units translates into demand for housing products other than single-family detached homes.

- To accommodate the increasing diversity of Austin area households, more housing options will be needed to address our demographic changes.

- Infill development and redevelopment in centers and along major roadways will be needed to meet the growing demand for higher-density, closer-in affordable housing. Creating harmonious transitions between adjacent neighborhoods is an important component of the development process.

- As the city's housing stock ages, home repair costs will create additional burdens on low-to moderate-income residents. Home repair services can help low-income households stay in their homes, mitigating gentrification pressures in historically low-income neighborhoods near the urban core.

- Though the numbers are declining, many people in Austin continue to be homeless. Both housing and services are necessary to help these very-low income residents transition to stability.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, City of Austin Community Inventory.

LAND USE

We continue to rapidly urbanize, largely developing outward on lower-cost land in lower-density suburban patterns.

Key Facts/Trends

- Over the last sixty years, the growth dynamic in Austin and the surrounding region has been characterized by increasing population, rapid urbanization of land, and outward expansion. Between 2000 and 2010, Austin's land area grew by more than 19 percent.

CHANGE IN LAND AREA, 1950 - 2011

Year	Land Area (in sq miles)	Percent Change
1950	37.5	--
1960	55.1	45
1970	80.1	45
1980	123.9	55
1990	225.6	82
2000	257.9	14
2010	307.8	19

Source: City of Austin

- During the past decade there has been a modest trend of infill development and redevelopment in established areas of Austin; however, the pace of urban core development lags far behind new development in suburban areas and beyond.

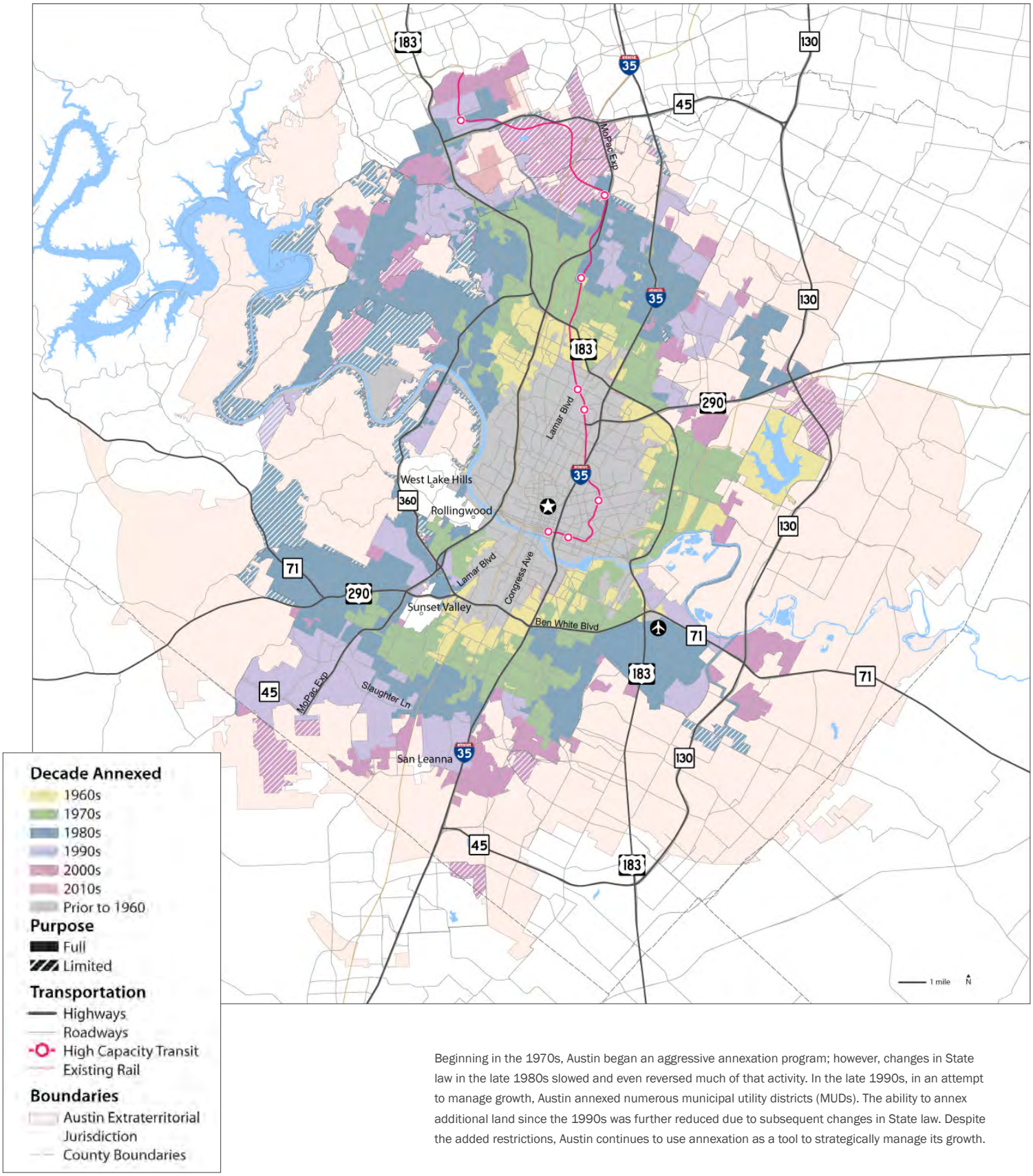
- In 2010, Austin was more dense (2,653 persons per square mile) than in 2000 (2,477 persons per square mile) but it remains less dense than most major cities in Texas, as well as our peer cities across the country.

AVERAGE DENSITY IN AUSTIN AND COMPARABLE CITIES (2010)

National	Density (people per square mile) in 2010
Seattle, WA	7,254
Minneapolis, MN	7,084
Portland, OR	4,376
San Diego, CA	4,020
Dallas, TX	3,517
Houston	3,501
San Antonio, TX	2,880
Raleigh, NC	2,826
Austin, TX	**2,653**
Charlotte, NC	2,457
Fort Worth	2,181
Jacksonville, FL	1,100

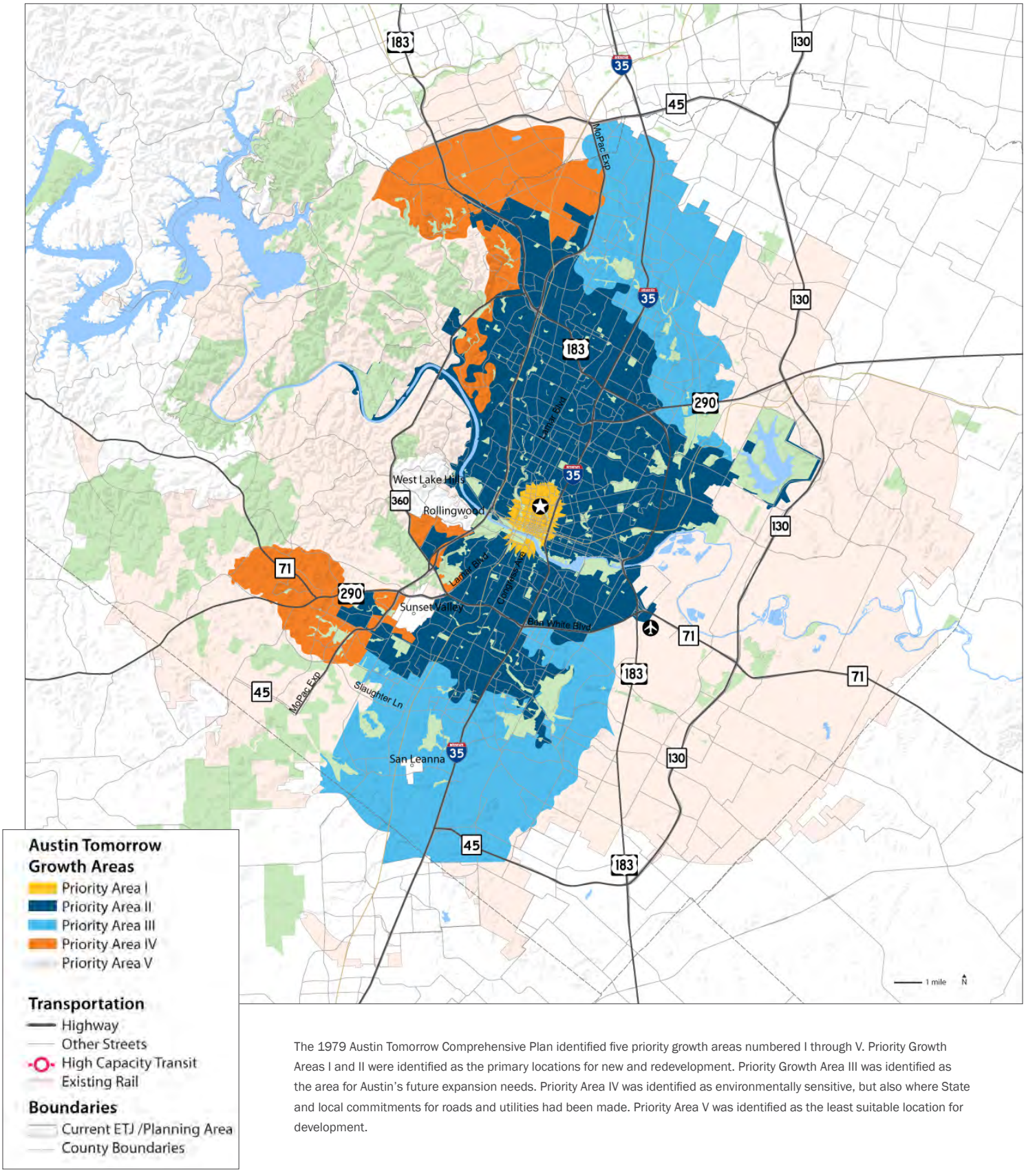
Source: Census Data, 2010

Figure 2.2 **Annexation by Decade**



Beginning in the 1970s, Austin began an aggressive annexation program; however, changes in State law in the late 1980s slowed and even reversed much of that activity. In the late 1990s, in an attempt to manage growth, Austin annexed numerous municipal utility districts (MUDs). The ability to annex additional land since the 1990s was further reduced due to subsequent changes in State law. Despite the added restrictions, Austin continues to use annexation as a tool to strategically manage its growth.

Figure 2.3 **1979 Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan Map**



The 1979 Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan identified five priority growth areas numbered I through V. Priority Growth Areas I and II were identified as the primary locations for new and redevelopment. Priority Growth Area III was identified as the area for Austin's future expansion needs. Priority Area IV was identified as environmentally sensitive, but also where State and local commitments for roads and utilities had been made. Priority Area V was identified as the least suitable location for development.

- Single-family residential and open space makes up the largest percentage of "developed area" in the city and extraterritorial jurisdiction. Not surprisingly, the percentage of acreage classified as undeveloped and large-lot single-family decreased from 2003 to 2010.

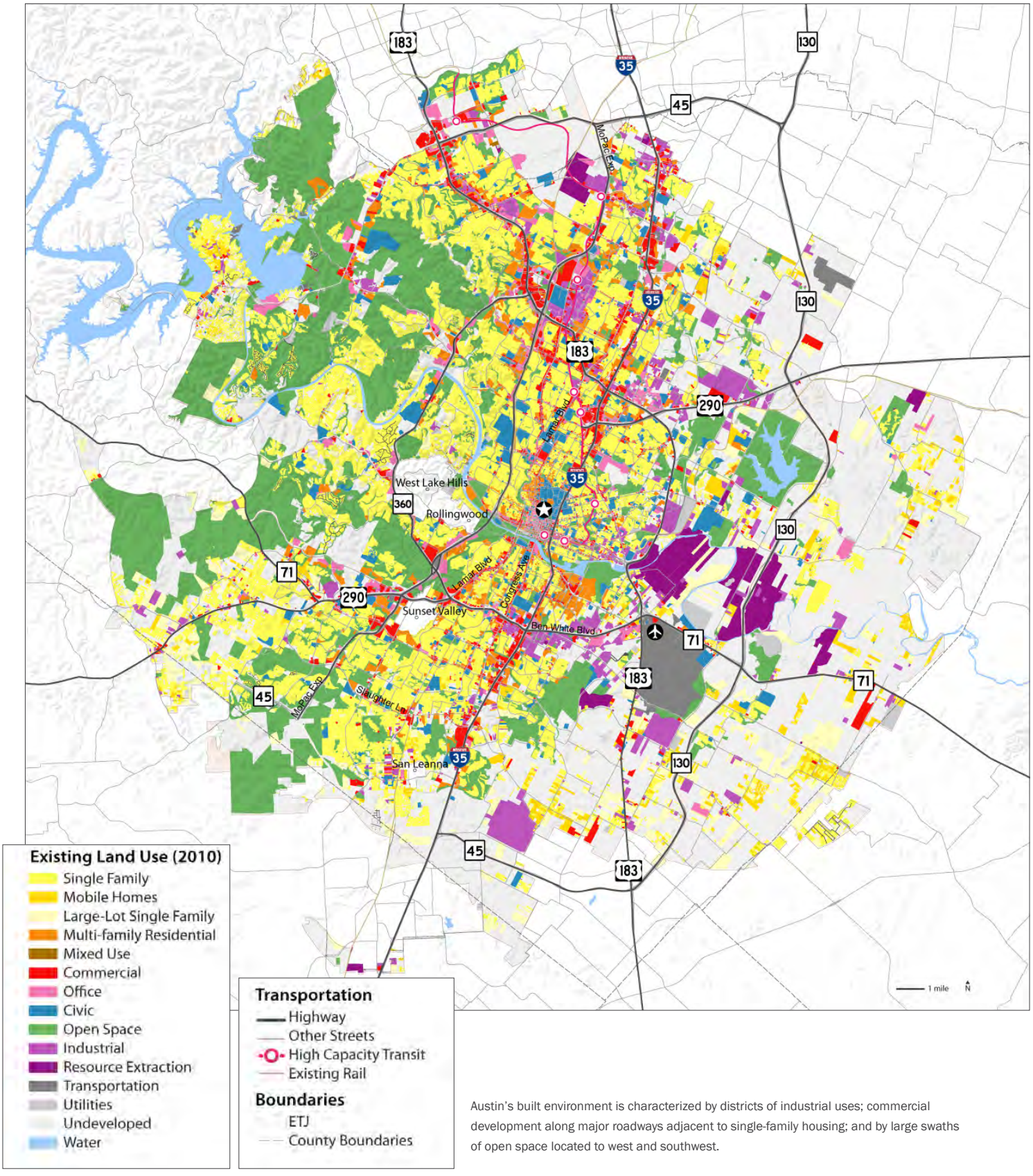
- The percentage of total developed area increased from 53 percent in 2003 to 64 percent in 2010, while the total percentage of undeveloped and large-lot single-family land decreased. Total land area increased as a result of annexation during this period (see Figure 2.2).

- Although 34 percent of Austin's land area is classified as "undeveloped," much of it has environmental constraints, such as floodplains or steep slopes, or is in large-lot single-family use. In 2009, approximately 73,000 acres were undeveloped and had no environmental constraints. However, of this undeveloped acreage, only 1,581 acres were located in urban watersheds. More than 50,000 acres of undeveloped land with no environmental constraints are located in suburban watersheds in the eastern part of the city.

LAND USE IN AUSTIN AND THE ETJ (2003 - 2010) - SEE FIGURE 2.4					
Use	**Acres in 2003**	**Acres in 2010**	**Percent Change**	**Percentage of Total Land Area in 2003**	**Percentage of Total Land Area in 2010**
Single-Family	61,703	69,011	12 %	15 %	17 %
Multi-Family	9,013	10,777	20 %	2 %	3 %
Mobile Homes	6,478	7,000	8 %	2 %	2 %
Residential Subtotal	**77,194**	**86,788**	**12 %**	**19 %**	**22 %**
Commercial	8,031	10,317	28 %	2 %	3 %
Office	6,174	6,618	7 %	2 %	2 %
Industrial	9,662	13,624	41 %	2 %	3 %
Mixed use	n/a	102	n/a	n/a	n/a
Commercial Subtotal	**23,868**	**30,660**	**28 %**	**6 %**	**8 %**
Civic	9,496	10,994	16 %	2 %	3 %
Utilities	6,117	2,766	-55 %	2 %	1 %
Open Space	55,104	69,292	26 %	14 %	17 %
Resource Extraction	5,419	6,687	23 %	1 %	2 %
Institutional/Utility Subtotal	**76,136**	**89,739**	**18 %**	**19 %**	**22 %**
Transportation	4,770	5,533	16 %	1 %	1 %
Streets and Roads	32,224	44,254	37 %	8 %	11 %
Transportation Subtotal	**36,994**	**49,788**	**35 %**	**9 %**	**12 %**
TOTAL DEVELOPED AREA	**214,192**	**256,975**	**20 %**	**53 %**	**64 %**
Undeveloped	145,437	118,679	-18 %	36 %	29 %
Large-Lot Single-Family	31,836	17,782	-44 %	8 %	4 %
TOTAL UNDEVELOPED AREA	**177,273**	**136,462**	**-23 %**	**44 %**	**34 %**
Water	10,521	10,137	-4 %	3 %	3 %
TOTAL AREA	**401,985**	**403,574**	**0.4 %**	**100 %**	**100 %**

Source: City of Austin, Note that the mixed use category was added after 2003.

Figure 2.4 **Existing Land Use (2010)**



Austin's built environment is characterized by districts of industrial uses; commercial development along major roadways adjacent to single-family housing; and by large swaths of open space located to west and southwest.

Historic Preservation

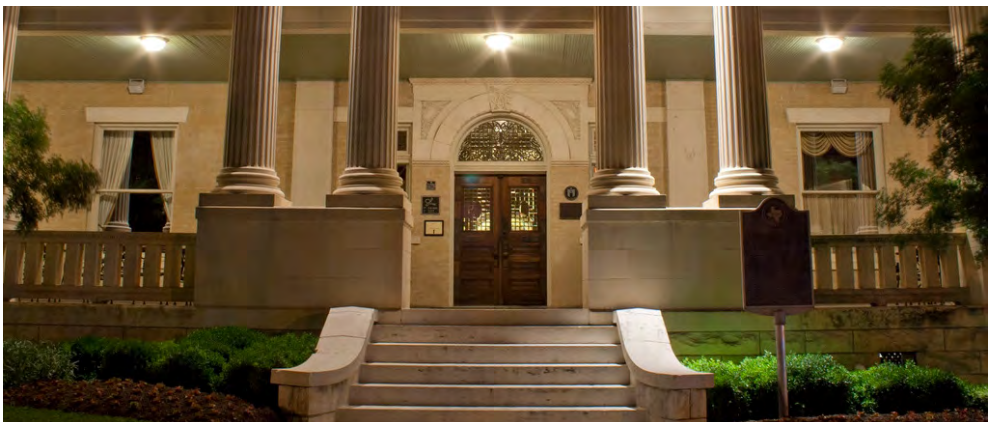
- Austin has designated more than 550 local Historic Landmarks. These are properties which have architectural, historical, archaeological, or cultural significance. This designation rewards property owners with a tax exemption in exchange for regulation of the property. Owners must maintain the property's architectural integrity and are required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior changes.

- In 2007, Austin amended the Land Development Code to allow Local Historic Districts. These districts include groups of related architecturally and historically significant properties. Property owners within a district must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to make exterior changes to these properties. To establish a district, more than 50 percent of the affected property owners must agree. Austin has designated three Local Historic Districts: the Harthan Street Historic District, the Castle Hill Historic District, and the Hyde Park Historic District.

- Austin has 190 properties designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. This is a state-level designation awarded by the Texas Historical Commission to properties of local, regional, and/or state significance. The designation carries legal protection for the exterior of the historic property, with required review for any proposed exterior alterations. Recorded landmarks are eligible for state preservation grant funds and also qualify owners for technical assistance.

- Austin contains 164 historic properties and 15 historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is an honorary designation recognizing properties of greater-than-local significance. The City, however, adopted regulations preventing National Register properties from being demolished without an approved permit.

- Austin is home to a number of history-related museums that include the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, the Republic of Texas Museum, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, the French Legation Museum, and the Austin History Center. Two University of Texas facilities operate as historic research centers: the Harry Ransom Center and the Center for American History.



The historic Goodall Wooten house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, operating today as a boutique hotel and restaurant.

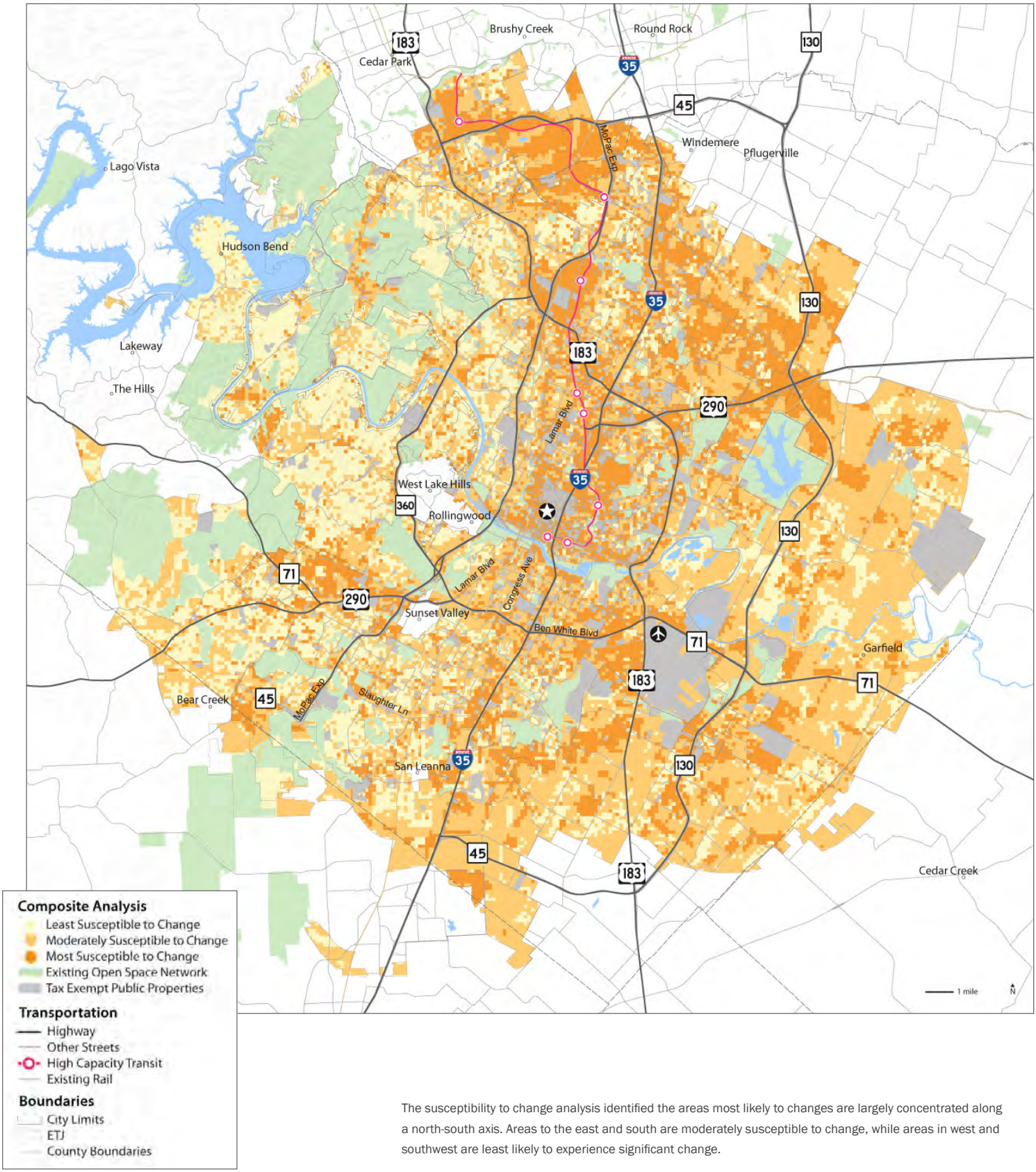
Susceptibility to Change Analysis

Given the city's population and employment projections for the next three decades, it is clear that Austin's existing land use pattern must change to accommodate this growth in a more sustainable manner. To inform the comprehensive planning process, an analysis was conducted to determine which areas of the city have the greatest likelihood of developing or redeveloping (Figure 2.5). The analysis considered more than ten factors and combined them to determine areas more or less likely to change. The analysis factors included owner occupancy, land status, land value, zoning, pending development cases, projected employment growth, road access, availability of other infrastructure, and other indicators of redevelopment potential. In general, the analysis found that:

- Areas most likely to change are concentrated in a north-south axis, particularly from downtown Austin north to Williamson County, between Loop 1 and State Highway 130.
- Areas in the eastern and southern portions of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction are moderately susceptible to change.
- Areas in the western portion of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction are least susceptible to change.

The Susceptibility to Change Analysis map illustrates North Lamar Boulevard is an area highly susceptible to change.

Figure 2.5 **Susceptibility to Change Analysis**



The susceptibility to change analysis identified the areas most likely to changes are largely concentrated along a north-south axis. Areas to the east and south are moderately susceptible to change, while areas in west and southwest are least likely to experience significant change.

What Does It Mean?

Land Use

- Very little undeveloped land is available within the city's urban core. In the absence of policy or regulatory changes, new growth will likely occur in outlying areas where land values are lower.
- Total developed land is increasing. As land values in suburban areas rise, owners are selling undeveloped or agricultural land as a result of higher property taxes or returns.
- Growth within the city's urban core will involve redevelopment and increases in density.
- As a governmental and educational center, Austin has a large percentage of institutional uses. These uses are not likely to change.
- Austin has an active historic preservation program.
- The city has a substantial amount of agricultural land that may be converted to other uses as land values rise.
- Generally, less intensive land use changes will occur in the western part of the city due to environmental constraints.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, City of Austin Community Inventory, City of Austin GIS.

Over the past decade, Downtown has seen significant reinvestment and redevelopment.

TRANSPORTATION

We are experiencing increasing traffic congestion and transportation costs. There is a renewed interest in creating a system incorporating all transportation choices.

Key Facts/Trends

Transportation Costs

- The average household in the Austin-Round Rock region spends 23.3 percent of income on transportation costs. Austin's transportation expenditure falls within the range of comparable cities such as Dallas (22.6), San Diego (22.9), Portland (23.7), Nashville (25.4), and Seattle (25).

Transportation Modes and Travel Time

- In 2009, 73 percent of Austin's working population drove alone to work and 10 percent carpooled. This rate of car usage, however, was less than Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and the state of Texas as a whole. Motorists in Austin who drove alone to work earned approximately 1.2 times Austin's median household income.

- During the same year, five percent of Austin's working population rode a bus to work, one percent bicycled, and 2.3 percent walked. Workers choosing these modes of transportation earned approximately 60 percent of Austin's median household income.

- In 2009, the majority of Austin's workers had commutes of 30 minutes or less, generally shorter than those in Houston, Dallas, or peer cities such as Seattle or San Diego.

- A 2008 Brookings Institution study found that between 2002 and 2006 Austin led the nation's largest metropolitan areas in reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled. During this period, Austin's vehicle miles traveled per capita decreased more than 12 percent. In 2006 the city's vehicle miles traveled per capita (4,974 miles) ranked 77th out of 100, which was much less than that of Raleigh (17th) Minneapolis (58th), and Seattle (64th).

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, 2009

Commute Time	Percentage of Workers								
	Austin	Dallas	Houston	San Antonio	Raleigh, NC	San Diego, CA	Portland, OR	Seattle, WA	Minneapolis, MN
Less than 30 minutes	71.8	63.9	61.1	68.9	74.8	74.0	70.3	63.8	73.2
30-59 minutes	23.8	30.1	31.8	26.8	21.6	22.5	25.4	30.7	23.1
60 minutes or more	4.4	6.1	7.0	4.3	3.6	3.5	4.3	5.5	3.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Roads/Highways

- Austin's major highways have shaped growth patterns in the city and the its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Interstate 35 facilitated Austin's north-south development orientation, but also created a physical barrier between east and west Austin. Other freeways and arterials that are part of the highway pattern, such as the Loop 1 (Mopac Expressway), Loop 360, U.S. 290, U.S. 183, and State Highway 71, led to lower density development spreading away from Austin's urban core.

- Older freeways, including Interstate 35 and Loop 1, have reached their capacity.

Transit

- Capital Metro operated 83 bus routes in Fall 2011, including regular, commuter/express, university, and late night buses. System-wide weekday ridership averaged 131,440 boardings.

- Opened in 2010, Capital Metro's MetroRail line (the Red Line) has nine stations and extends from downtown Austin to the City of Leander. Weekday ridership in Fall 2011 was approximately 1,800 boardings.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

- The Bicycle Master Plan recommends 900 miles of bicycle lanes (130 miles currently exist) and 350 miles of multi-use trails (50 miles currently exist). When the plan is fully realized, there will be bicycle lanes on 21.3 percent of Austin's roadways.

- Since adopting the Bicycle Master Plan in 2009, the Bicycle Program has installed or improved 15 bicycle lane-miles per year.

- The Sidewalk Master Plan indicated that there were approximately 3,500 linear miles of roads without sidewalks. About 10 percent of these gaps in the sidewalk network are along arterials with the remaining 90 percent along collectors or residential streets.

Recommended Improvements in Existing Plans

- The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan recommends $3.6 billion in regionally funded roadway projects, $2.9 billion in public transportation projects, and $444 million in bicycle and pedestrian projects. Projects are prioritized based on funding availability.

- Prompted by the inability of the gas tax to provide sufficient revenue to support expansion of the freeway system, recommended highway improvements in Texas center on toll roads. In the Austin area, these include the northern Loop 1 extension, State Highway 45, State Highway 130, and the U.S. 183A Expressway.

- The Lone Star Rail District proposes a regional commuter rail line paralleling Interstate 35 between San Antonio and Georgetown. An additional commuter rail line (the Green Line) is planned to provide service between downtown Austin and Elgin. In addition, the City of Austin is exploring the possibility of a rail line serving Central Austin and connecting to other transit systems.

- The Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Master Plan projects passenger activity to double from 2007-2026 (8.7 million-17.5 million annually). There are also future plans for a third runway as traffic increases.

Austin's first cycle track on Rio Grande Street is one example of how Austin is committed to becoming a world-class bicycling city.

What Does It Mean?

Transportation

- Transportation infrastructure responds to and shapes growth. Austin's sprawling development away from the urban core is partially the result of transportation decisions that prioritized highway construction. As a result, the city and region have been slow to develop a comprehensive transit system. Limited commuter rail and bus service to suburban areas has stressed the area's highway system, due to few transportation options beyond the car.

- The absence of a strong transit system makes it more difficult for Austin to encourage efficient land use patterns.

- Despite Austinites' limited transportation options, residents and workers are less automobile dependent than those in other major Texas cities.

- In 2005, about 7 percent of households did not have access to a motor vehicle and 43 percent had one vehicle available. Transportation choices other than an automobile can provide lower-cost options; however, transit route and service limitations and gaps in sidewalk and bicycle networks can increase travel times and reduce access to jobs and services throughout the greater Austin area. In addition, limited transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks reduce the attractiveness of other modes and pose safety risks.

- In the past decade, Austin has worked to change the focus of its transportation policies toward its growing transit, bicycle, and sidewalk network.

- The average household in the Austin region spends one-quarter of its income on transportation, contributing to unaffordability in Austin and the region.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey; City of Austin Community Inventory; Capital Area Metropolitan Transportation Organization; Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Brookings Institution, "The Road . . . Less Traveled: An Analysis of Vehicle Miles Traveled Trends in the U.S." (2008); CNT Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (2010).

ECONOMY

We have a thriving economy, resilient due to its diversity and entrepreneurial spirit; however, we need to prepare our workforce to adapt to emerging employment sectors and technological changes.

Key Facts/Trends

Labor Force

- Between 1990 and 2010, Austin's labor force grew by more than 50 percent—or more than double the national rate.
- Austin's unemployment rate was 7.4 percent in September 2011, the highest in twenty years. However, this was lower than the Texas rate of 8.5 percent or the U.S. rate of 9.1 percent.
- In 2010, more than 72 percent of Austin's population aged 16 and over was in the workforce.
- Among the working adult population, African Americans had the highest unemployment rate at 13.4 percent.
- Unemployment was also related to levels of educational attainment, with those with less than a high school degree or G.E.D. experiencing greater unemployment (13.9 percent) than those completing college (4.6 percent).
- The percentage of Austin's workers with college degrees continues to rise and is far above the rest of the state.
- Almost 20 percent of adults older than 25 have begun but not completed a college education.
- Young professionals aged 25-44 comprises 34 percent of Austin's population. This group is recognized as a vital part of the city's creative sector, which includes art, film and visual media, gaming and digital media, and music, and serves as a strong driver of innovation and a significant consumer of urban amenities.
- The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) projects that Travis County will have over one million jobs by 2035, most of which will be located in Austin. Austin's downtown will still be a regional employment center, but many employers will locate in outlying areas along major highways.

Employers/Business Sectors

- Gross domestic product in the Austin-Round Rock region grew by 65 percent between 2001 and 2010 (from about $52 to $86 billion). Even after adjusting for inflation, the Austin region's gross domestic product rose by 34 percent during this period.
- Business formation growth was strong between 2001 and 2010. The total number of establishments in the Austin region grew by 34 percent.

Team members of The Butler Bros, Coloring Book Studio, Bret Stiles Design, Shiny Object, Bold Muse, and do512 holding a creative lab at The Butler Bros office. Creative businesses, such as graphic design, digital media, film, and gaming are important contributors to Austin's economy. Photograph courtesy of Travis Wurges.

- The largest employers in the greater Austin area in 2009 included government, universities, technology, warehouse and distribution, and health care.

- Since 2000, Austin has experienced significant increases in multiple job sectors: health care; professional and management; and arts, entertainment, and food. During the same period, the number of manufacturing jobs decreased by over five percent.

- The State of Texas faces a critical shortage of health care professionals.

- The Austin region is consistently regarded as one of the top regions in the nation for small business. Small businesses grew by 1.5 percent between 2007 and 2008 (the most recent period for which statistics are available), at a much higher rate than any other region (no other region had a growth rate higher than 0.6 percent). Firms with fewer than 20 employees accounted for 81% of total growth in businesses in 2007.

- Local businesses contribute three times the economic impact to Austin's economy as national merchants, according to a 2002 study for the Austin Independent Business Alliance.

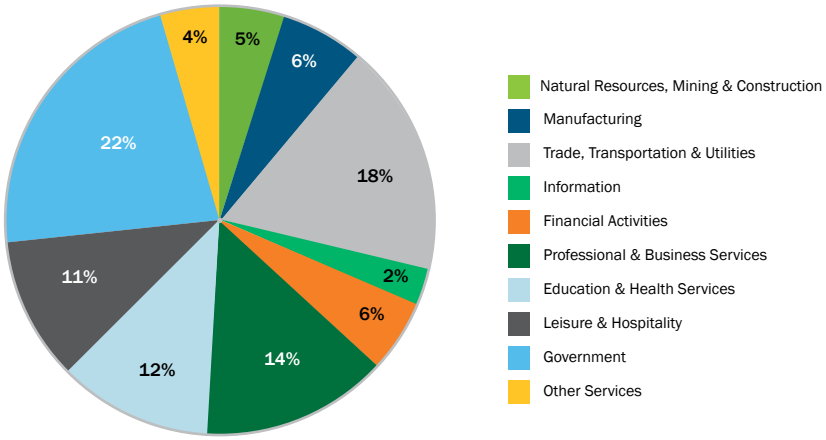
- Austin's traditional high-tech base is being forced to move into other sectors. As "offshoring" continues to affect the manufacturing and electronics base, the city is refocusing on other high-tech industries such as medical and life sciences; clean energy, which includes sustainable design and building, smart grid technologies, and solar energy; creative industries such as gaming, digital media, film, post-production; data centers; and professional services and corporate headquarters.

- The clean energy sector presents a key growth and job creation opportunity. The city has emerged as a center for clean energy technologies, with a supportive local utility and forward-thinking public policies focused on sustainability.

- The majority of employment growth within Austin over the next 20 years is projected to occur in the eastern part of the city (extending out to State Highway 130).

SELECTED MAJOR EMPLOYERS		
Employing 6,000 or more	**Employing 2,000-5,999**	**Employing 1,000-1,999**
Austin School District	Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	3M
City of Austin	Texas State University-San Marcos	ACS State Healthcare
Federal Government	National Instruments	Lower Colorado River Authority
IBM	Austin Community College	Austin American-Statesman
Dell	Travis County	Capital Metro Transportation Authority
State of Texas	AT&T	Emerson Process Management
University of Texas at Austin	Applied Materials	Harte-Hanks Response Management
Seton Healthcare Family	Freescale Semiconductor	Hospira
	St. David's Healthcare Partnership	Girling Healthcare
	Round Rock School District	Cisco Systems
Source: City of Austin, Community Inventory		Apple

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN AUSTIN MSA, 2010



Wages

- Average salaries for Austin workers indicate the existence of high-wage industries in the city. However, Austin's wages do not compete with those of east and west coast metropolitan areas.

- In Travis County, a household with one adult and one child must earn an hourly rate of about $17.00 in order to pay typical monthly household expenses. Typical hourly wages in food preparation, personal care, farming, construction, production, and transportation and shipping are below this wage.

Commercial Real Estate Market

- The Austin region added more than 12 million square feet of total office space between 2002 and the third quarter of 2011. The construction of new office space slowed significantly in 2009; however, the third quarter of 2011 saw an uptick, with the net absorption of over 644,000 square feet of office space. Vacancy rates remain high, particularly in suburban office space. In the third quarter of 2011, office space in the Central Business District had a 13.7 percent vacancy rate and suburban office space had a 16.5 percent vacancy rate. For the entire Austin region, vacancy rates in the third quarter of 2011 for Class A office space were 18.6 percent and vacancy rates for Class B office space were 12.7 percent.

- Austin's percentage of the region's office space has dropped as more suburban spaces have been constructed.

- Most of Austin's retail growth since 1960 has occurred outside of the Central Business District, but more retail space has been leased in Central Business District since 2005 than in the last 40 years.

- Austin's share of regional retail sales has been declining over the past decade. In 2002, 63 percent of all retail sales occurred in the city; however, by 2010, this figure had dropped to 54 percent.

What Does It Mean?

Economy

- Suburban commercial and office development is diminishing Austin's position as the regional economic leader.
- The government, technology, medical, and institutional sectors form the base of Austin's economy.
- Austin's highly-educated workforce makes the city attractive to high-growth companies seeking to relocate or establish operations in the greater Austin area.
- Austin's economy continues to produce professional and skilled service jobs. However, access to these jobs is limited for many minorities and individuals with lower educational attainment.
- Austin's creative sector is key to our continued economic growth.
- There are many factors that make Austin an ideal environment for small business growth: high amounts of venture capital funding, a well-educated and young population, a creative and independent spirit that strongly favors originality, and local businesses versus national big-box retail stores.
- Austin's lower wages (relative to other major U.S. cities) creates an impediment to attracting talented workers who perceive that they can secure better pay elsewhere.
- Entrepreneurship and the ability of existing businesses to adapt to new technologies will continue to drive Austin's economy.
- Investment is needed in workforce development programs to address shortages in critical healthcare professions and blue-collar workers.

Data sources: Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University; City of Austin Community Inventory; Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, 2009 American Community Survey; The Living Wage Project; Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bureau of Labor Statistics; CoStar Group; 2002 Economic Impact Analysis, Civic Economics for the Austin Independent Business Alliance; Business Journals.

The University of Texas at Austin, along with the City of Austin, State of Texas, AISD, and other government agencies and educational institutions are some of the largest employers in Austin.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

We are rich in natural resources, but the effects of development and climate change put them at risk.

Key Facts/Trends

Biodiversity

- Austin lies at the boundary of four physical geographic regions: the Edwards Plateau ("Hill Country"), the Rolling Prairie, the Blackland Prairie, and the Colorado River Terraces. The city contains a variety of terrains, soils, habitats, flora, and fauna due to its location within numerous transition zones.

- The region has diverse plant and animal habitats that transition from east to west. The karst landscapes of the Balcones Escarpment and Edwards Plateau are home to many unique, endangered species of birds, salamanders, and invertebrates, some of which are listed as endangered under federal law. Austin is also located beneath the Central Flyway for North American bird migration.

Water Resources

- Austin is known for its creeks, rivers, lakes, and springs, and includes such landmarks as Barton Creek, Barton Springs, Bull Creek, Lady Bird Lake, Lake Austin, and the Colorado River. The area covered by the comprehensive plan, Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, is situated in 76 watersheds within the Colorado River basin, the Brazos River basin, and the Guadalupe River basin. This area encompasses 396,395 acres out of the 983,001 total acres of the 76 area watersheds.

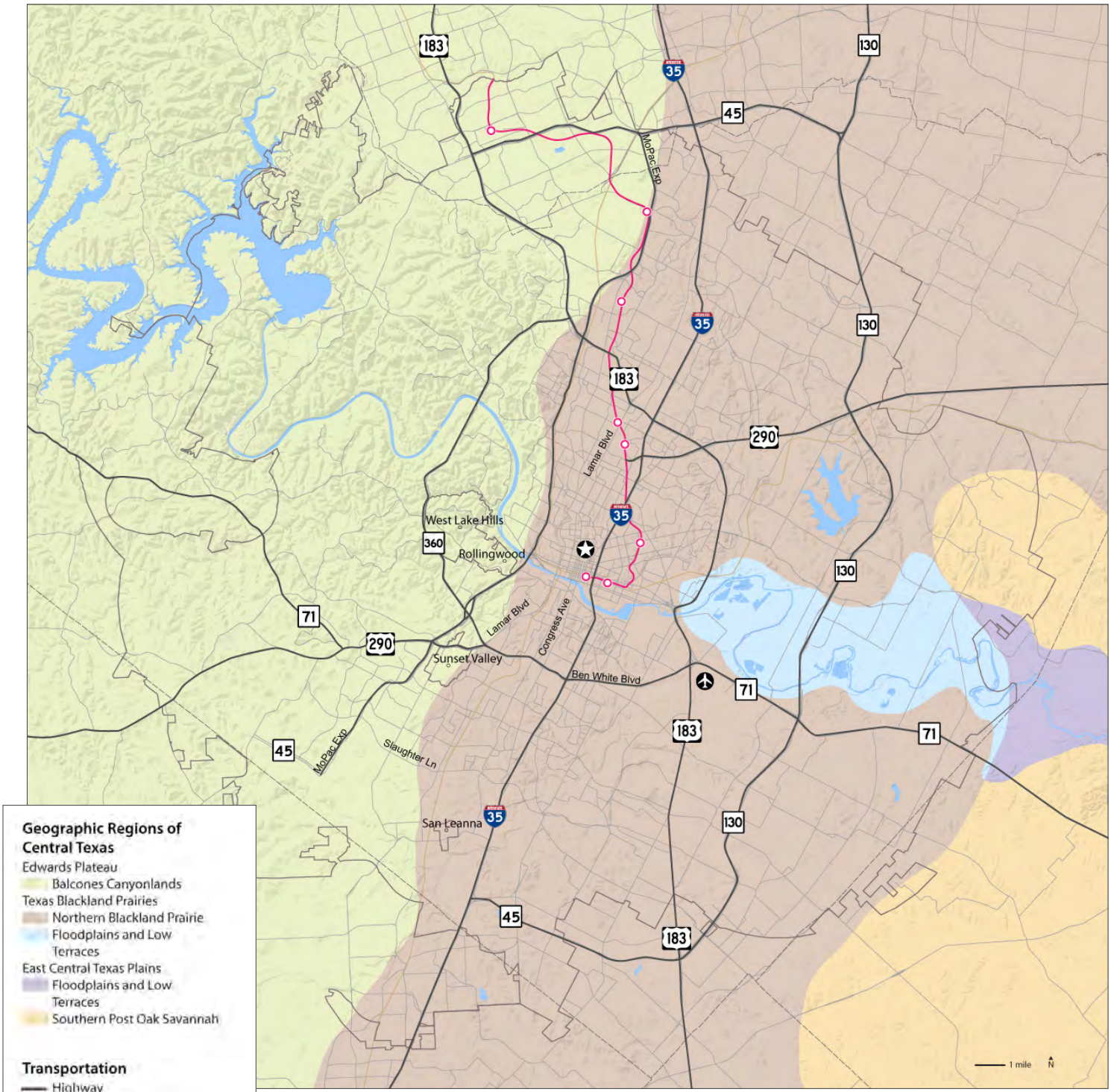
- The Colorado River provides the vast majority of Austin's water supply. The City of Austin has contracts for a "firm" supply of raw water, or water that has not been treated and purified, available even during dry periods or drought to meet demand at least through 2050.

- The Edwards Aquifer, one of the most important and sensitive aquifers in Texas, feeds a number of springs in Austin, including Barton Springs and its pool. Portions of its 500-square mile recharge zone extend on a north-south axis through the western part of the city and underlie approximately 42 percent of the city's land area. However, only 28 percent of the Barton Springs Zone is within Austin's planning area.

- Austin has a decades-long history of regulations to protect its water supply. Current regulation includes the Drinking Water Protection Zones ordinance (approved in 1997) for watersheds that drain to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, and Barton Springs. Nearly 37 percent of the city's land area is included in one of the three drinking water protection zones.

- Central Texas is often called "Flash Flood Alley" because of its intense storms and hilly topography with numerous creeks and wet-weather streams. The city has experienced significant flood events during almost every decade over the past 100 years.

Figure 2.6 **Ecosystems in Austin**



The City of Austin is located in Central Texas in an area that extends over three physical geographic regions: the Edwards Plateau, Texas Blackland Prairie, and the East Central Texas Plains. Colorado River Floodplains and Low Terraces cut through both Blackland Prairie and Central Texas Plains regions. The Balcones Escarpment, a significant geological feature, provides a physical transition zone notable for its diversity in terrain, soils, habitats, plants, and animals. The Colorado River, a major source of drinking water, bisects the City into north and south areas.

The Central Cherry Creek Wildflower Preserve was created after the City of Austin removed a subdivision prone to flooding. In addition, it will also have a community garden.

Shoal Creek floods its banks in 1981.

- Between 1997 and 2006, the amount of impervious surface cover in Austin and its extra territorial jurisdiction rose from 11 percent to 14 percent of total land area.

- Impervious surfaces are very restricted in the Drinking Water Protection Zone. Development in the Barton Springs portion of the Drinking Water Protection Zone is limited to 15-25 percent surface coverage and impervious surfaces are limited to 20 percent in the Water Supply Rural watershed. However, there are a few remaining significant tracts that are "grandfathered" from these requirements. In addition, regulations differ in Austin's Urban and Suburban watershed zone areas (i.e., impervious surface coverage is regulated by zoning districts in the urban watersheds zone and ranges from 45 percent to 90 percent in the suburban watersheds).

- Climate scientists predict that the Central Texas region could become warmer and drier.

Air Quality

- Central Texas is in compliance with all federal air quality standards. However, the region is in danger of exceeding ground-level ozone due to stricter federal standards. Air quality programs in Austin have primarily focused on the reduction of ozone levels.

- Ground-level ozone is Central Texas' primary air quality concern. Poor air quality affects our most vulnerable residents, including children and the elderly, by irritating the respiratory system, reducing lung function, and aggravating asthma.

- Vehicle engines, electric generation units, industrial facilities, and many everyday activities create man-made sources of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, which form ozone when exposed to sunlight. In 2007, most (55 percent) nitrogen oxides result from mobile sources, like cars, trucks, construction equipment, and lawn mowers. Most (78 percent) volatile organic compounds resulted from fixed area sources, such as industry, home heating, or forest fires. Central Texas is currently in compliance with federal air quality standards for ozone, though these standards may be revised in 2013.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- In 2010, the entire community within Travis County (including residents, businesses, and the governments) were responsible for emissions equivalent to 14.9 million tons of carbon dioxide (the standard measure for greenhouse gas emissions). Just more than half of these emissions resulted from energy use; another third were the result of transportation; the rest resulted from waste and wastewater treatment. Per person, this was lower than the average Texan (equivalent to 15 tons of carbon dioxide for Travis County, versus 25 tons for Texans overall) and the average U.S. citizen (19 tons).

- In 2007, the City of Austin passed the Austin Climate Protection Plan resolution. Since then, Austin has reduced electricity output by the equivalent of 26,100 homes per year, committed to powering all City municipal operations and buildings with 100 percent Greenchoice power, organized and begun implementing Climate Action plans and teams across all City departments, and continued to focus on collaboration, education, mitigation, and innovation.

- Potential impacts of climate change in Central Texas include increased drought and severe weather events, elevated temperatures, more heat waves, and worsening air pollution.

- Regional cooperation is needed to more completely implement climate change solutions.

Open Space, Green Infrastructure, and Agriculture

- While much of the planning area is urbanized, some of Central Texas' most fertile soils are located throughout the Blackland Prairie and Colorado River Terrace regions.

- In 2011, within Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, 33 small- and medium-size farms selling in the Austin region cultivated over 87 acres of land.

- Local farming enhances sustainability by increasing our local food supply, addressing the challenge of food deserts in certain areas of the city, and contributing to the local economy. Despite these benefits, the amount of farmland in Travis County decreased by 12 percent from 2002-2007, a loss that is likely attributable to both urbanization and farmland being taken out of production.

- Austin's urban forest—its tree canopy—is vital to water and air quality and helps mitigate the urban heat island effect. In 2006, Austin's tree canopy cover was estimated at 30 percent of the city's total land area. Areas with the highest coverage were found in the western part of the city near Barton Creek and Lake Austin.

- The City of Austin is engaged in several programs to preserve sensitive lands and in 1998 began purchasing land for water quality protection. Austin Water Utility manages about 47,000 acres through the Wildland Conservation Division's Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Program and Water Quality Protection Lands Programs. Management of the wildlands toward a thriving ecosystem contributes to good water quality and quantity in our creeks, streams, and underlying aquifers.

Beautiful tree canopy in the Cherrywood neighborhood.

What Does It Mean?

Environmental Resources

- Water supply and quality will be two of the most critical issues facing Austin as it adds population.

- The City of Austin controls a large portion of the land within area watersheds, which gives it some control over development within these sensitive areas.

- The increased likelihood of future drought and strong storms adds to the vulnerability of the region's arid climate and reliance on rainwater to recharge the aquifer and to refill the Highland Lakes reservoirs. Higher temperatures may result in an increase in energy use to cool homes and businesses, resulting in more air pollution. Health risks and their related costs could also be associated with these potential impacts.

Data sources: City of Austin Community Inventory, USDA Census of Agriculture.

The University of Texas at Austin Brackenridge Field Laboratory is an 82-acre natural habitat and research lab uniquely located near Austin's urban core. The lab property includes a range of Central Texas landscapes and habitats, providing a home to many different species of plants and animals, while serving as an important research facility for study of ecology, evolution, and environmental change.

Austinites enjoy a sunny spring day on the hike-and-bike trail along Lady Bird Lake.

CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

We have invested in high-quality facilities and services throughout the city; however new development and a changing population are placing pressure on service delivery.

Key Facts/Trends

Public Safety and Emergency Services

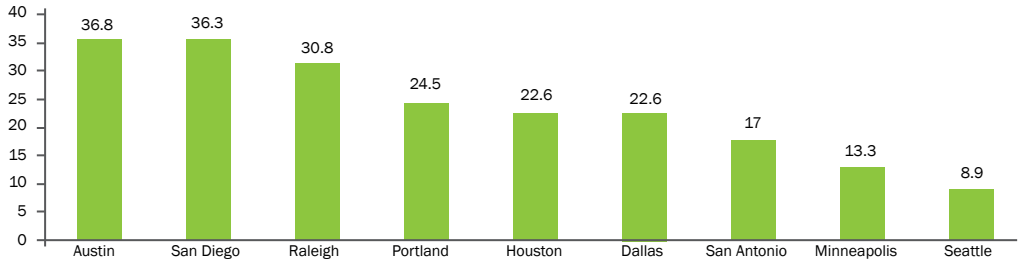
- The Austin Police Department has more than 1,669 sworn officers, 618 civilian positions, and had a Fiscal Year 2010 operating budget of $250 million. The City's full purpose jurisdiction is divided into four regions and further subdivided into nine sectors.
- The department's community-based approach to law enforcement puts the responsibility for local policing in the hands of region commanders, with centralized functions providing support for operations and investigations.
- The average response time to high-priority calls in 2010 was just under seven minutes.
- In 2010, Austin had one of the lowest violent crime rates of all U.S. cities with populations exceeding 500,000.
- The Austin Fire Department has over 1,000 firefighter and 67 civilian positions operating from 44 fire stations throughout the city and at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.
- The Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services serves the entire county and is jointly funded by the City of Austin and Travis County. It operates under a "third service" public safety model, separate from police and fire.
- Thirty paramedic stations with almost 400 state-licensed paramedics are located throughout Austin and Travis County.

Parks and Preserves

- Austin has more than 35,000 acres of water recreation areas, parks and preserves and exceeds national guidelines for acres of parkland per person.
- Austin's park area has doubled in size over the past two decades, but funding and maintenance has not kept pace with growth. The Parks and Recreation Department's operations and maintenance budget is $20 per capita, which is lower than the national average of $91 per capita.
- Austin has more than 115 miles of trails, including 74 miles of hike-and-bike trails.
- An additional 26 parks and preserves are managed by Travis County.

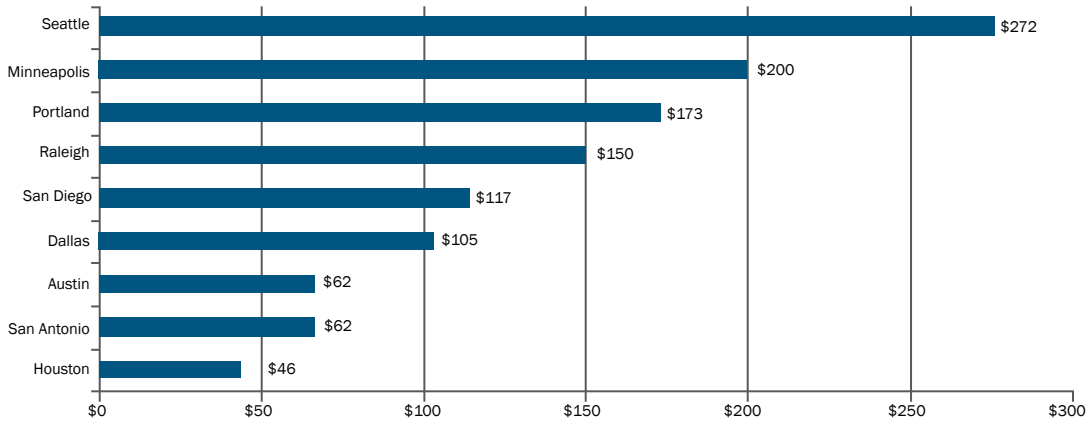
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN AUSTIN (2011)			
Type of Facility	Number	Type of Facility	Number
District park	13	Hike and bike trails	74+ miles
Neighborhood park	74	Greenway	29
Pocket park	19	Golf course	6
School park	22	Tennis center	4
Metropolitan park	12	Tennis courts	108
Nature preserve	13	Special park	28
Swimming pools	47	Athletic fields	172
Recreation centers	20	Playscapes	90
Senior activity centers	3	Nature and science center	1
Garden center	1	Art centers	2
Rental facilities	2	Amphitheaters	6
Museums	5	Beach-front facilities	2
		TOTAL FACILITIES	685

PARK ACREAGE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS, FY2010



Source: The Trust for Public Land

PARK AND RECREATION SPENDING PER CAPITA, FY 2009



Source: The Trust for Public Land, includes both operational and capital costs.

The recently constructed Twin Oaks Library in the Bouldin neighborhood incorporates many sustainable design elements including water collection, water harvesting, and solar power.

- The Balcones Canyonland Preserve is a 30,428-acre system of endangered species habitat owned and managed by Travis County, the City of Austin, The Nature Conservancy, the Lower Colorado River Authority, and the Travis Audubon Society.

- There is a need for more infill parkland within walking distance of homes in many established neighborhoods, particularly in far south, north-central, northeast, and southeast Austin, and for a variety of parkland types, including neighborhood parks and wildlife habitat in the southwestern, northern, northeastern, and northwestern parts of the city and extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Library System

- The Austin Public Library System has 20 branch libraries, the John Henry Faulk Central Library, and the Austin History Center. In 2006, voters approved bonds for a new 250,000 square foot central library that is scheduled to open in 2014.

- More than 3.6 million visitors used the library system in Fiscal Year 2009-2010, including more than 700,000 computer login users.

- The library system has more than 1.3 million books, audiobooks, LPs, DVDs, CDs, e-books, and graphic novels. In Fiscal Year 2010, the Library Department checked out more than four million items.

Potable Water and Drainage

- The Austin Water Utility directly provides treated water to approximately 850,000 people, with wholesale water sales to another 45,000, for a total service population of approximately 895,000.

- Austin Water owns and operates two water treatment plants, which draw from Lake Austin with a combined treatment capacity of 285 million gallons per day; 46 pump stations; 38 treated water storage reservoirs; 3,651 miles of water main lines; and 25,300 public fire hydrants.

- A new water treatment plant and transmission main project is under construction. This plant will draw its supply from Lake Travis.

- Austin's 2011 five-year average water use is 163 gallons per capita per day. City Council has set a goal of 140 gallons per capita per day or less by 2020 through water conservation.

- The City's top water conservation priorities, in order of 10-year estimated savings, include: water restrictions (6.16 million gallons per day), reclaimed water use (5.95 million gallons per day), utility water rates structuring (5.0 million gallons per day), and reducing water losses (4.8 million gallons per day).

- The Watershed Protection Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the municipal stormwater conveyance system for the City, which includes both natural (creeks, lakes, Colorado River) and manmade components (more than 900 miles of storm drain pipes).

Wastewater

- The Austin Water Utility manages approximately 195,000 wastewater service connections, which in 2008 represented service to about 830,000 people.

- Austin Water owns and operates two central wastewater treatment plants: the South Austin Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. These two plants have a combined treatment capacity of 150 million gallons per day.

- In a typical year, three percent of the wastewater received at the City of Austin's wastewater treatment plants is treated and reused for non-potable uses. During 2009, Austin Water Utility reclaimed and used almost 2 billion gallons of treated wastewater from its two central wastewater treatment plants and three smaller satellite treatment plants.

- The Austin Clean Water Program was completed in April 2009 and reduced sewer overflows from 13 million gallons in 2002 to less than 301,800 gallons in 2008, and removed 20 miles of sewer lines from creek beds.

Solid Waste

- Austin Resource Recovery is responsible for city-wide litter abatement and collection of discarded materials from approximately 164,000 residential customers, 235,000 anti-litter customers, and 2,600 commercial customers. Most multi-family residences, business, and institutions must contract with private haulers to collect and process discarded materials.

- Austin's residential and workforce populations discard about 1.4 million to 1.5 million tons of materials per year. These discarded materials are either disposed of at landfills (about one million tons) or are diverted from the landfills for reuse or recycling. Austin Resource Recovery's customers contribute approximately 25% of these materials each year.

- The City of Austin closed its landfill and is now part of a regional system of four municipal solid waste landfills, two construction and demolition debris landfills, and fifteen transfer and citizen collection stations.

- Austin offers curbside recycling every two weeks to its customers. Nearly 70 percent of Austin residents living in single-family dwellings participate in curbside recycling.

- The primary sources of recyclable and organic resources are curbside recycling (46 percent), collection of yard trimmings and brush (38 percent), and private users of the Austin's materials recovery facility (17 percent). Compostable organics comprise over half of the total material discarded. It is estimated that the value of the materials currently sent to the landfill and lost to the local economy is more than $40 million annually.

A transformer station in Northeast Austin.

Energy

- Austin Energy serves 388,000 customers and a population of more than 900,000, including several communities outside of Austin's city limits. Austin Energy's 200 largest commercial and industrial customers provide about 34 percent of all revenues. Austin Energy also serves four municipal street and highway programs (powering street and traffic lights, for example) as well as more than 1,500 governments and agencies (including the City of Austin, State of Texas, Travis County, and the Lower Colorado River Authority).

ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS BY CLASS

Customer Class	Number of Customers	Consumption (kWh)
Residential	345,197	3,908,318,000
Commercial	41,825	4,350,912,000
Industrial	75	1,930,289,000
Street/highway	4	47,230,000
Other government	1,519	1,088,320,000

- As of September 2008, Austin Energy had approximately 2,760 megawatts of generation capacity, including facilities owned or co-owned and power purchased under contract. Purchased power resources include an additional 300 MW of summer-only power purchases through summer 2010. Austin Energy receives base load generation from the South Texas Project (nuclear) and the Fayette Power Project (coal). Austin Energy owns two natural gas-fired generation facilities, the Decker Creek Power Station and the Sand Hill Energy Center, both located in Austin.

- Austin Energy has contracts for the annual energy produced by 439 MW of wind turbines located in West Texas. The utility also receives 12 MW of output from two landfill methane gas projects, one located near Austin and the other in San Antonio.

- From 1982 through 2003, Austin Energy's conservation, efficiency, and load-shifting programs reduced peak demand by 600 MW. Since 2004, the utility has been working on a goal to reduce peak demand by an additional 700 MW by 2020.

- Austin Energy's 2020 energy resources plan calls for maintaining its current generation resources and its current conservation and load-shifting goal of 700 MW by 2020. To meet the remaining gap of approximately 238 MW of its projected load, the utility plans to add 300 MW of natural gas generation by expanding the Sand Hill Energy Center (100 MW of that total is currently under construction) and 912 MW of renewable.

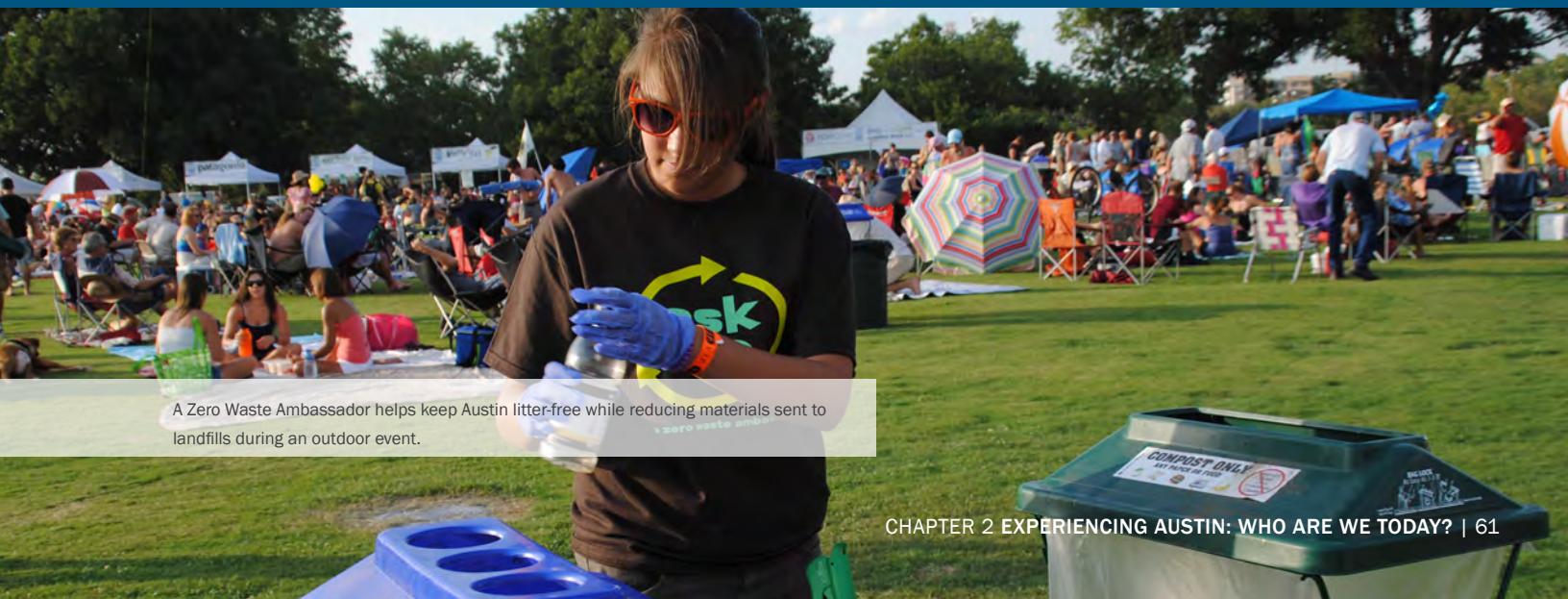
- Austin Energy maintains more than 5,000 miles of overhead primary and secondary power lines, 4,000 miles of underground primary and secondary lines, and 48 substations.

What Does It Mean?

City Facilities and Services

- Continued low-density suburban development can strain the City's public safety budget, as more development on the city's fringes will require additional police and fire stations to ensure adequate response times.
- The per unit costs associated with serving low-density, sprawling development with water and wastewater services are generally greater than those associated with denser, more compact development.
- Creek flooding poses a recurring risk to public safety and property. Localized flooding threatens property across the city due to undersized, deteriorated, clogged, or inadequate storm drain systems.
- The city has an above-average amount of parkland, but funding for maintenance and upgrades has not kept up.
- More attention needs to be paid to creating smaller parks that are in or within walking distance of neighborhoods. The absence of these smaller parks means that many areas of the city are not adequately served by the park system.
- Austin's existing parks and trail system are amenities that should be considered in planning for infill in and redevelopment of urban core areas.
- As the city becomes more compact, there is a greater need to incorporate more urban play spaces for children in parks and other public places.
- Austin is a regional leader in conservation strategies, but it must be proactive in planning for supplying water and other municipal services to its rapidly-growing population.
- More residents and businesses need to be encouraged to recycle to reduce the amount of solid waste sent to landfills.

Data source: City of Austin Community Inventory.



A Zero Waste Ambassador helps keep Austin litter-free while reducing materials sent to landfills during an outdoor event.

SOCIETY AND HEALTH

Rising housing and transportation costs, school quality, and access to healthcare, food, and social services are major considerations for families and residents living in Austin.

Families and Households

- Families make up a slim majority of Austin households (52 percent), compared with 62 percent in the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area and 67 percent in the nation.

- The number of households with children declined substantially from 1970 to 1990. Since 1990, the proportion of households with children has held steady (slightly declining from 30.2 percent in 1990 to 29.5 percent in 2009).

- Households with children make up a smaller part of the population in the urban core, compared with the edge of the city and the extraterritorial jurisdiction. A number of factors contribute to this disparity: higher housing costs, fewer quality public schools, walking and biking safety, and access to key amenities such as parks and childcare. See Figure 2.7 for change in households with children from 2000 to 2010.

- Austin's non-Hispanic White population is composed of fewer households with children (20 percent), compared with African American (36 percent), Asian American (35 percent), and Hispanic (45 percent) households. However, the total number of White and Hispanic households with children is about the same.

Education

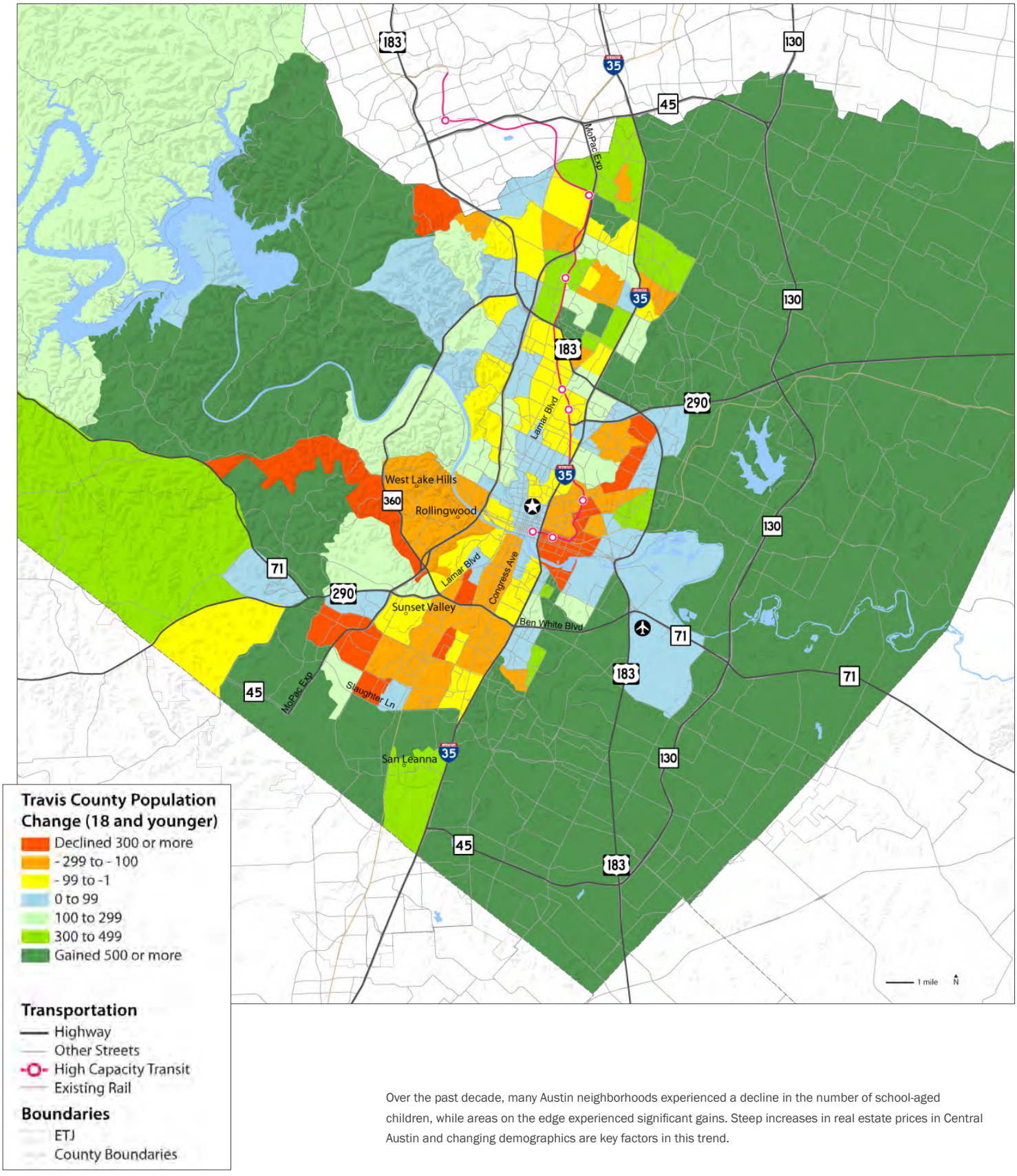
- Eleven school districts educate Austin-area students, with more than 170 schools within the planning area. Students also attend about 30 charter or alternative schools and more than 30 private schools.

- With more than 80,000 students, the Austin Independent School District is the largest educational provider for students grades K-12.

- All of the school districts in the Austin area have increased their enrollment since 2000.

- In 2009, 71 public schools in the Austin area were rated exemplary. However, four schools located in Austin's east side were rated academically unacceptable.

Figure 2.7 **Change in Population Younger than Age 18 (Travis County 2000-2010)**



Over the past decade, many Austin neighborhoods experienced a decline in the number of school-aged children, while areas on the edge experienced significant gains. Steep increases in real estate prices in Central Austin and changing demographics are key factors in this trend.

- Two area school districts, Austin and Manor, struggle with the number of students who dropout at some point during high school, with overall 4-year dropout rates slightly greater than the state average. This is particularly an issue among African American and Hispanic students:

4-YEAR DROPOUT RATE - CLASS OF 2010				
	African American	Hispanic	White	Overall (All Students)
State	**11.8%**	**9.6%**	**3.5%**	**7.3%**
Austin ISD	12.6%	11.9%	3.5%	9.0%
Manor ISD	16.7%	13.5%	11.1%	13.9%

- The high rate of teenage pregnancies in Austin and Travis County contributes to the significant dropout rate of many area high schools.

- A further challenge for many students from low-income families is the need to change schools when they change residences. A 2010 study by the Austin Independent School District, Travis County, and City of Austin found high rates of student mobility at several schools in the east and northeast part of the school district.

- Colleges and universities are essential to Austin's identity. The city is home to the University of Texas (one of the largest universities in the nation), St. Edward's University, Huston-Tillotson University, Concordia University, and Austin Community College. There are about 100,000 college or university students in Austin.

- In line with other community colleges in Texas, 15 percent of full-time Austin Community College students go on to earn a undergraduate degree after six years.

- In 2010, more than 4,800 educational programs were hosted by the Library Department. This includes free computer classes held at three public libraries.

Austin Community College's South Austin Campus (ACC) is one of eight area ACC campuses. The college serves 45,000 credit students, including some 4,000 enrolled at the South Austin Campus. ACC helps students meet a variety of goals, including workforce training for high-demand careers, university transfer, college readiness, and attainment of new skills for career advancement. Image courtesy of ACC.

	SERVICE AREA		ENROLLMENT	
School Districts	Total (Sq Mi)	In the planning area (Sq Mi)	Total	At schools within the planning area
Austin	229.8	226.2	81,763	81,686
Bastrop	427.6	3.9	8,538	0
Del Valle	171.2	138.4	9,234	8618
Dripping Springs	199	3.8	4,023	0
Eanes	33.3	28.4	7,325	3342
Hays Consolidated	225.5	20.3	13,047	0
Lago Vista	35	3	1,239	0
Lake Travis	117.6	23.2	5,871	695
Leander	198.3	51.6	26,551	4,909
Manor	89.2	57.7	5,828	2,371
Pflugerville	76.6	21.9	20,807	7,901
Round Rock	98.2	41.4	40,448	14,870

Health and Healthcare

- From 1999 to 2008, the total mortality rate in Travis County was 774 deaths per 100,000 people. African Americans experienced a significantly higher mortality rate (1,002 deaths per 100,000 people), while Hispanics experienced a lower rate (692 deaths per 100,000 people). Though these mortality rates are adjusted for the overall age of the population, the City epidemiologist believes that a generally older African American population and generally younger Hispanic population continues to contribute to these differences.

- Diabetes, heart disease, and chronic lower respiratory disease result in about 29 percent of deaths in Travis County. These diseases also reduce Austinites' quality of life. Eight percent of Travis County residents suffer from diabetes, 5 percent from cardiovascular disease, and 7 percent from asthma.

- Hispanics and African Americans experienced higher rates of obesity and diabetes than the general population. Whites and African Americans experienced higher rates of cardiovascular disease and asthma (with African Americans experiencing twice the overall asthma rate).

- In 2010, 17 percent of Travis County residents who needed to see a doctor could not, at some point, because of cost. This rate was higher among Hispanics (24 percent) and African Americans (23 percent). Similarly, while 89 percent of White residents had access to some kind of health care coverage, only 75 percent of African American residents and 61 percent of Hispanic residents did. Less than 20 percent of Austin physicians accept new Medicaid or Medicare patients.

Dell Children's Hospital in the Mueller neighborhood.

- While Texas continues to have a high rate of teenage pregnancy compared with other states, the incidence of teen pregnancy in Travis County has generally declined since the mid-1990s. Teen pregnancy has a disproportionate effect on communities of color: the birth rate for Hispanic teens is almost ten times higher than that of White non-Hispanic teens; the rate for African American teens is two times greater.

- The Austin region is served by three major hospital systems: Seton Family of Hospitals (based in Austin), St. David's Health Care (based in Austin), and the Scott and White network (northern Central Texas region).

- The Travis County Healthcare District created in 2004, doing business as Central Health, provides publicly funded healthcare services to the county's low-income residents through its Medical Access Program, a health plan with a network of healthcare providers. Benefits are available to families at or below poverty level through a limited provider network. Central Health also pays for discounted care through selected providers for individuals earning up to 200% of poverty level.

- The University Medical Center at Brackenridge also provides hospital-based services when necessary.

- Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas is the only dedicated freestanding pediatric facility in the region.

- The Integrated Care Collaborative, a nonprofit alliance of healthcare providers in Central Texas, works to improve the healthcare delivery to the poor and people without health insurance and operates and manages the region's electronic health information exchange, the ICare system.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE OF AUSTIN RESIDENTS, 2009

Group	Insured	Uninsured
Children under 18	84.7%	15.3%
Working-age adults	71.4%	28.6%
Adults 65 and older	96.8%	3.2%
Individuals with a disability	82.3%	17.7%

Public Health and Social Services

- The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department provides public health, social, and environmental health services for Austin and Travis County and serves nearly one million residents. Working in partnership with the community, Health and Human Services creates and provides services that improve quality of life, lower morbidity and mortality rates, address social inequities, and prevent both contagious and chronic diseases. The department operates six neighborhood centers that provide social services for low- and moderate-income families. Services include child care programs, homeless assistance, day labor and employment programs, mental health/substance abuse services, programs for at-risk youth, services to seniors and persons with disabilities, and basic needs services.

- In addition, it provides the following services: vital records, emergency preparedness and response, regulatory and environmental health, immunizations, women's and children's health, sexually transmitted disease services, disease surveillance, and chronic disease prevention services.

- The Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services Department work to prevent homeless, domestic abuse, and communicable diseases.

- The City of Austin's budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 allocated $14.1 million dollars for social services funding.

- Austin's Animal Services manages the largest animal shelter in Central Texas, caring for more than 23,000 animals each year. In 2011, the City moved its animal shelter to a new facility on Levander Loop and achieved "no-kill" city status.

- Austin is home to many not-for-profit organizations, but has a history of low rates of charitable giving.

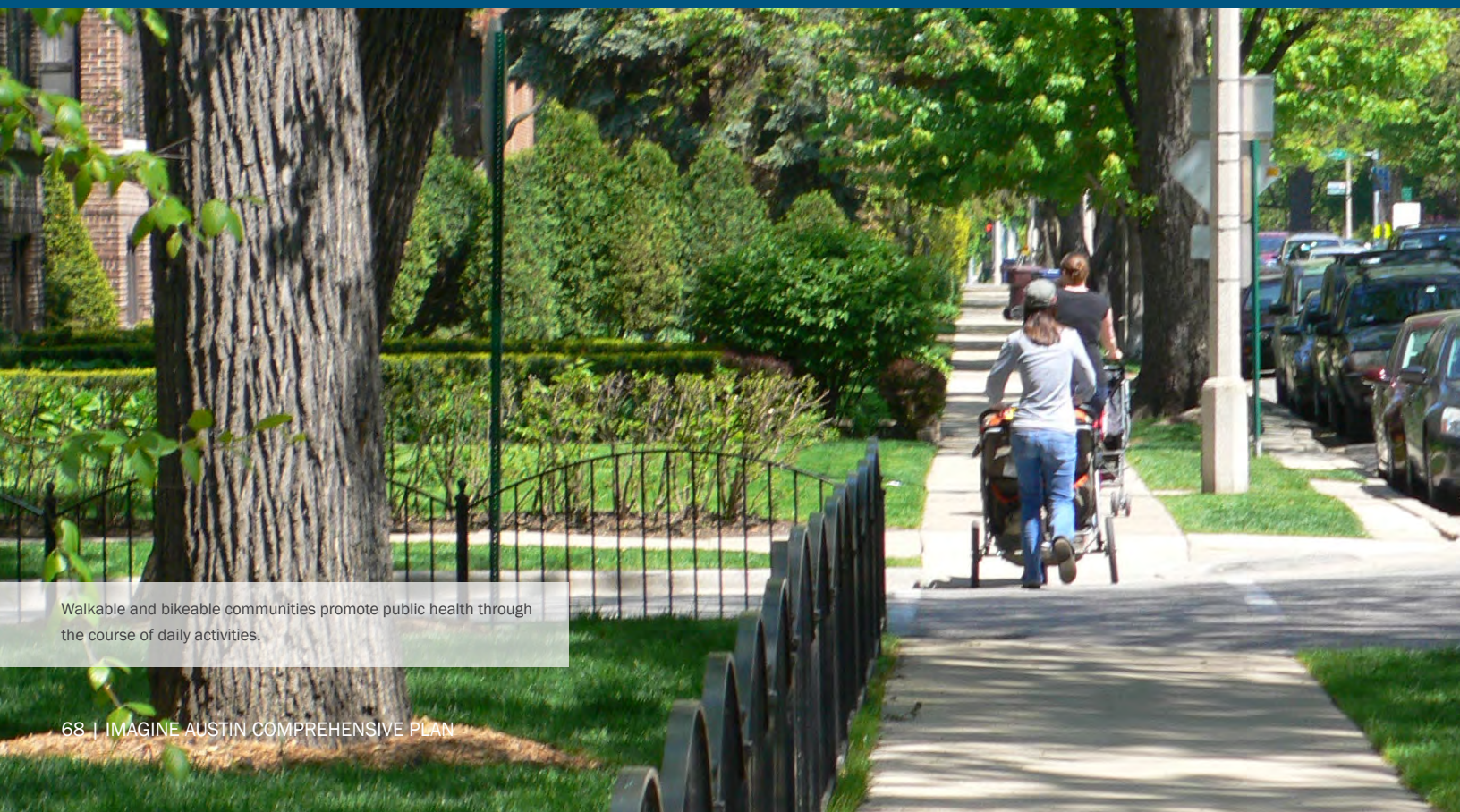
El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission is a nonprofit and outreach ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas that helps lower income Austin Latino families through affordable health care, education, and human services. Photograph courtesy of El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission.

What Does It Mean?

Society and Health

- Families with children are not necessarily staying in Austin. Rising housing costs, school quality, safety, available amenities, and educational costs are concerns for families.
- The two school districts serving the largest area in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (Austin ISD and Del Valle ISD) are facing challenges related to population growth, immigration/language needs, poverty, transient families, and sharply reduced funding from the State of Texas.
- Higher educational institutions are a major part of Austin's identity, history, and economy.
- Austin has a very active social service network. The Community Action Network is developing a set of priority indicators for children and youth to measure progress.
- Teenage pregnancies can have profound effects on the mother's future prospects, her family, child, and the broader community. Teen parents are more likely to drop out of school, not attend college, experience unemployment, and earn lower wages. Children of teenage mothers are more at risk for having low birth weight, prematurity, and infant mortality.
- Design of the physical environment affects public health. Ensuring that new development creates walkable and bikable communities with safe pedestrian facilities and recreation opportunities can promote the health and well-being of Austin's residents and reduce risk factors associated with diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

Data sources: City of Austin Community Inventory, Create Austin TXP, Inc.'s Economic Impact 2005 Study of Austin, and the Urban Institute's Cultural Vitality in Communities Study.



Walkable and bikeable communities promote public health through the course of daily activities.

ARTS AND CULTURE

We are a leader in creative and artistic fields, but rising costs of living and working in Austin may affect the long-term viability of the arts community.

Key Facts/Trends

Arts/Cultural Events

- Austin is nationally renowned for its arts scene and has earned the nickname "The Live Music Capital of the World." The city is home to more than 100 live music venues, multiple music festivals, 1,543 music-related businesses, and over 1,900 music acts.

- Austin has historically drawn large numbers of creative individuals, fueling a strong experimental drive for a city of Austin's size. It has a growing film industry, a thriving gaming and digital media industry, a new works theater community, and serves as an incubator for emerging artists and entrepreneurs. Yet there is a concern by mid-career and mature artists that there are not adequate services, facilities, or commerce to support them in their artistic endeavors; many move elsewhere as a result.

- There are more than 35 museums in the Austin Museum Partnership (a consortium of museums) which includes arts, sciences, history, nature preserves, music, and government museums. The city's numerous museums and galleries include the Mexic-Arte and the Jack S. Blanton Museum. However, Austin does not yet have the iconic museums of other cities of the same size.

"Philosophers Rock," a statue by sculptor Glenna Goodacre at Barton Springs Pool depicts three renowned Austin writers–Frank Dobie, Roy Bedichek, and Walter Prescott Webb–who used to meet at Barton Springs for what was known as "Austin's first literary salon." The statue was a project of Capital Area Statues, Inc. (CAST), a non-profit dedicated to recognizing Texas history and culture through public sculpture.

- The City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department serves more than 650,000 visitors a year with arts, culture, and nature programs at its facilities, including the Elisabet Ney Museum and the Zilker Botanical Garden.

- In 2006, Austin ranked second among major U.S. cities in terms of the number of non-profit community celebrations, festivals, fairs, and parades per 1,000 persons.

- Austin has been commissioning award-winning public art projects through the Art in Public Places program since 1985; however, many of the projects are not well-known to residents and visitors.

- Theater and dance are significant contributors to Austin's creative economy (over $330 million in 2005). The city has more than 32 theater venues, with many more theater companies and playwrights.

Economic Impact and Funding

- The creative sector (including music, film and visual media, not-for-profit performing arts, visual arts, and arts-related tourism) contributed 48,000 permanent jobs, more than $71 million in tax revenue, and more than $4.35 billion in annual economic activity in 2010.

- Austin's music festivals are important to the city's economy. The 2011 South by Southwest contributed $167 million to the local economy; the 2011 Austin City Limits Festival contributed $73 million.

- The city's film, television, sports, and animation industries generate approximately $113 million in 2010 and provided over 3,500 jobs. The city's gaming industry generated more than $900 million in 2010, providing more than 7,200 jobs.

- In 2006, residents approved a $31.5 million bond measure to support construction and renovation of seven of the City-owned arts and performance facilities. Yet there continues to be a perceived lack of affordable, accessible, and/or appropriately equipped arts spaces.

- Over the last few years, the City of Austin's Hotel Occupancy Tax portion for non-profit arts and culture groups and sponsored artists projects enabled the City to allocate approximately $5 million annually to 240 non-profit arts groups.

Arts Education Programs

- The Austin Independent School District, other school districts, and private schools operate arts education programs as an integral part of student learning and development. Nevertheless, students in all areas of the city do not have equal access to arts programming.

- In 2011- 2012, the Austin Independent School District, the City of Austin, MINDPOP (representing arts and cultural organizations), and the Kennedy Center's "Any Given Child" program partnered to inventory arts education in K-8th grade in the school district, determine gaps, and create a strategic plan.

- In 2010, City of Parks and Recreation Department's History, Art and Nature Division facilities provided 1,841 adult and children classes.

- While arts, film, and music education is strong in area universities and colleges, technology education is somewhat limited.

Austin Children's Museum, Austin Kiddie Limits exhibit (retired February 2009), 2004. Photography by Jim Lincoln.

What Does It Mean?

Arts and Creativity

- Austin's live music and arts scene is a cornerstone of the city's identity.
- Creative industries are an important element of the city's economy and can be leveraged for additional economic growth.
- The arts and creative community struggles with issues of funding, affordable and appropriately-sized performance and practice space, housing, health and healthcare, and quality of life issues.
- City and private funding for local arts facilities and programs is critical to the ongoing strength of the arts in Austin.
- Lower-income communities may not have adequate opportunities to participate in Austin's arts programs and events.
- Workforce development programs need to provide job training for technological, arts-related occupations.

Data sources: City of Austin Community Inventory, CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan.

Roy Lozano's Ballet Folklórico de Texas, La Culebra from Jalisco, dancer Jessica Rodriguez, August 25, 2007, at Zilker Hillside Theatre. Photography by Ruben Loera.

DEVELOPING A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Austin has long been the hub of the Central Texas region. Our Central Business District is the "Downtown of Central Texas." Although Austin is the principal place where jobs and necessary goods, services, entertainment, and amenities are concentrated, the city's role as the only regional center has changed as increased suburban development has pulled against this identity, reducing the city's share of employment, services, and housing.

This does not mean that we are losing our central position in the region. As the employment, educational, medical, and retail hub of Central Texas, we attract thousands of commuters, patients, shoppers, and visitors each day. Other communities may be gaining new retail, offices, and housing, but Austin's unique assets—our educational institutions, government facilities, hospitals and emerging medical districts, the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, downtown, independent businesses, arts and entertainment offerings, and natural amenities—ensure that we will remain the regional leader for the foreseeable future. In many regards, the success and growth of the surrounding suburban communities is directly tied to Austin's past and continued regional role as the arts, entertainment, and economic center.

At an even larger scale, Austin is part of the dynamic, fast-growing Dallas/Fort Worth-San Antonio-Houston Texas Triangle "mega-region" (see Figure 2.9). We are responsible for working with our neighboring governments, and larger cities like Dallas and San Antonio, to understand the complexity of regional issues, develop coordinated strategies, and ensure that as a region we have the capacity to move forward.

CENTRAL TEXAS REGION IN 2011

Regional Issues

Being a regional leader means more than having the most people or assets; we must understand that our actions affect nearby communities. By and large, Austin's problems are the region's. Because we are closely connected to our neighbors, our solutions must be mutually beneficial. There are several key issues facing the region that must be tackled in a collaborative manner across municipal boundaries.

Conversion of agricultural land and fragmented development

Much of the land on Austin's periphery and in its extraterritorial jurisdiction is agricultural or undeveloped. Development has been happening in these areas as parcels are converted to subdivisions and commercial and office centers, particularly along or near major roadways. The U.S. Census of Agriculture reports that between 2002 to 2007, nine percent of the region's agricultural land was taken out of production, with the highest rate of loss occurring in Hays and Travis counties. This coincides with an increase in land values throughout the Austin area and a decline in the profitability of small farms. Fragmented, low-density development outside the region's municipalities is more costly to serve with infrastructure and services, requires residents to depend exclusively on the automobile to travel, and encroaches on and consumes the region's open spaces.

Limited water supply and water systems

Some new development is occurring in outlying areas that have limited or no water systems to support moderate or concentrated growth. Many area communities do not have resources to extend existing infrastructure or do not have contracts for long-term water supply. Some of those that do have contracts already exceeding their yearly allocations. Limited availability of public water infrastructure reinforces scattered, sprawling development and new draws on groundwater sources will affect the region's water supply, particularly in times of extended drought.

Housing-jobs imbalance

Half the working-age populations of all the counties in the region, except Travis, commute to another county for work. Most of this travel moves toward Austin, but increasingly this travel is also between the communities surrounding Austin. Even Austin has seen its share of residents commuting out of the city grow, rising more than nine percent between 2002 and 2009. This work-related travel points to a regional mismatch between the location of residences and jobs. Some of this may be attributable to lifestyle preferences, such as personal preferences for small towns or rural living, but it is also the result of rising housing costs throughout the region. Prospective homeowners must "drive until they qualify" to find affordable housing that meets their needs, and many of these affordable units are found in distant subdivisions with limited transportation options.

Rising costs of housing and transportation

Land values and housing costs are increasing throughout the region. Some of this increase is due to funding delays for new infrastructure (i.e., new residential developments have been approved, but construction must wait until adequate infrastructure can be built to serve them; in the interim, costs rise for existing units because fewer new units are being built). Prices for infill units (new housing built in already developed areas) are increasing for different reasons, most of which relate to limited supply and growing land values in more developed areas and the complexity and regulatory difficulty associated with this type of development. Many Central Texans must live in locations they can afford, no matter how inconvenient this location is to work, shopping, or services. Affordable housing choices for single people or married couples without children, other than single-family houses and sprawling garden-styled apartments, is even more limited.

Transportation costs have been rising steadily over the past decade due to increased gas prices. This has created financial burdens for many households that moved to Austin's periphery to secure affordable housing, but now find themselves farther away from jobs and needed services and able only to travel by car. In a 2010 report, the Capital Area Council of Governments found that more than half of the region's households spent at least 45 percent of their incomes on housing and transportation costs.[1]

Few regional transportation options

As the region's population struggles with rising costs, the shortcomings of the regional transportation system become even more pronounced. The regional transportation network is built for

[1] This figure represents the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA, which includes Burnet County in addition to Travis, Williamson, Hays, Caldwell, and Bastrop counties.

cars, and the growing congestion we see is the direct result of increasingly distant growth with few transportation options. Too many people live and work in places where densities are too low to support regular transit service or are outside of a transit agency's service area. In many places served by transit, the routes and the frequency of service are so limited that people do not view it as a viable alternative to driving.

Regional job growth mostly in lower-wage positions

The Central Texas economy has continued to grow through the current national recession, although growth has slowed in high-tech, higher-skilled sectors. Much of the region's recent job creation has been directly related to its rapid population growth over the past few decades. As Central Texas has welcomed new residents from all parts of the country and the world, demand has increased for service-oriented jobs, such as leisure and hospitality services and business and professional services. These jobs typically require fewer skills, pay lower wages than professional and high-tech jobs, and offer fewer benefits. Households faced with lower-paying jobs and increasing housing and transportation costs are experiencing greater economic stresses. In a 2009 report, the Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project estimated that approximately 40 percent of the region's families live "at the edge of their means" due to the widening gap between household incomes and household expenses.[2]

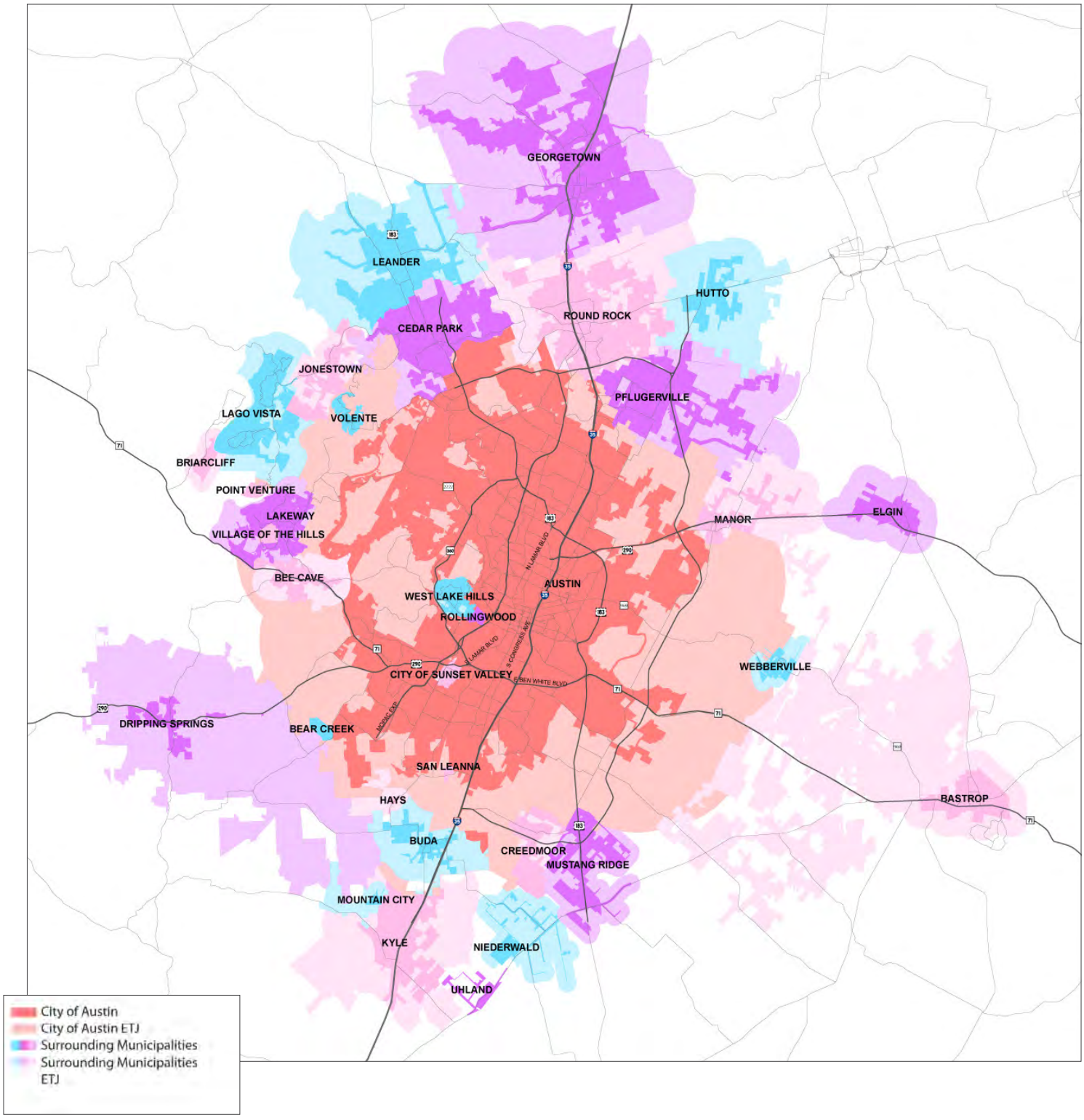
Different legal powers to regulate development

Central Texas contains two types of governments with land use authority: counties and municipalities. The State of Texas allows municipalities to regulate development comprehensively within their corporate boundaries. They can also regulate some development within their extraterritorial jurisdictions to ensure that it meets minimum standards, works in conjunction with infrastructure investments, and minimizes impacts on natural resources. Counties have fewer controls over development, mostly due to the assumption that their jurisdictions will not contain large areas of urbanized land; however, this is increasingly not the case in the counties surrounding larger urban centers. Today, Texas counties have only the ability to regulate subdivisions, on-site sewage systems, floodplain development, and water supply. A few, such as Travis County, have the power to require stormwater management, impose fire codes, and develop standards for water wells to prevent groundwater contamination. Unlike cities, counties do not have the authority to enact building codes, a zoning ordinance, or impact fees. As a large percentage of the region's growth is occurring outside municipal boundaries, the limited power of the counties provides little control over the location, quality, and impacts of development. This has resulted in low-density, piecemeal development throughout the region and makes it difficult for jurisdictions to work together to implement regional growth management strategies.

Finding and implementing solutions to these issues only can be achieved if we adopt a regional perspective. This perspective should be "Austin with our partners." We are the leader of Central Texas and through *Imagine Austin* and other regional projects, we will work with our neighbors to improve the future of the region.

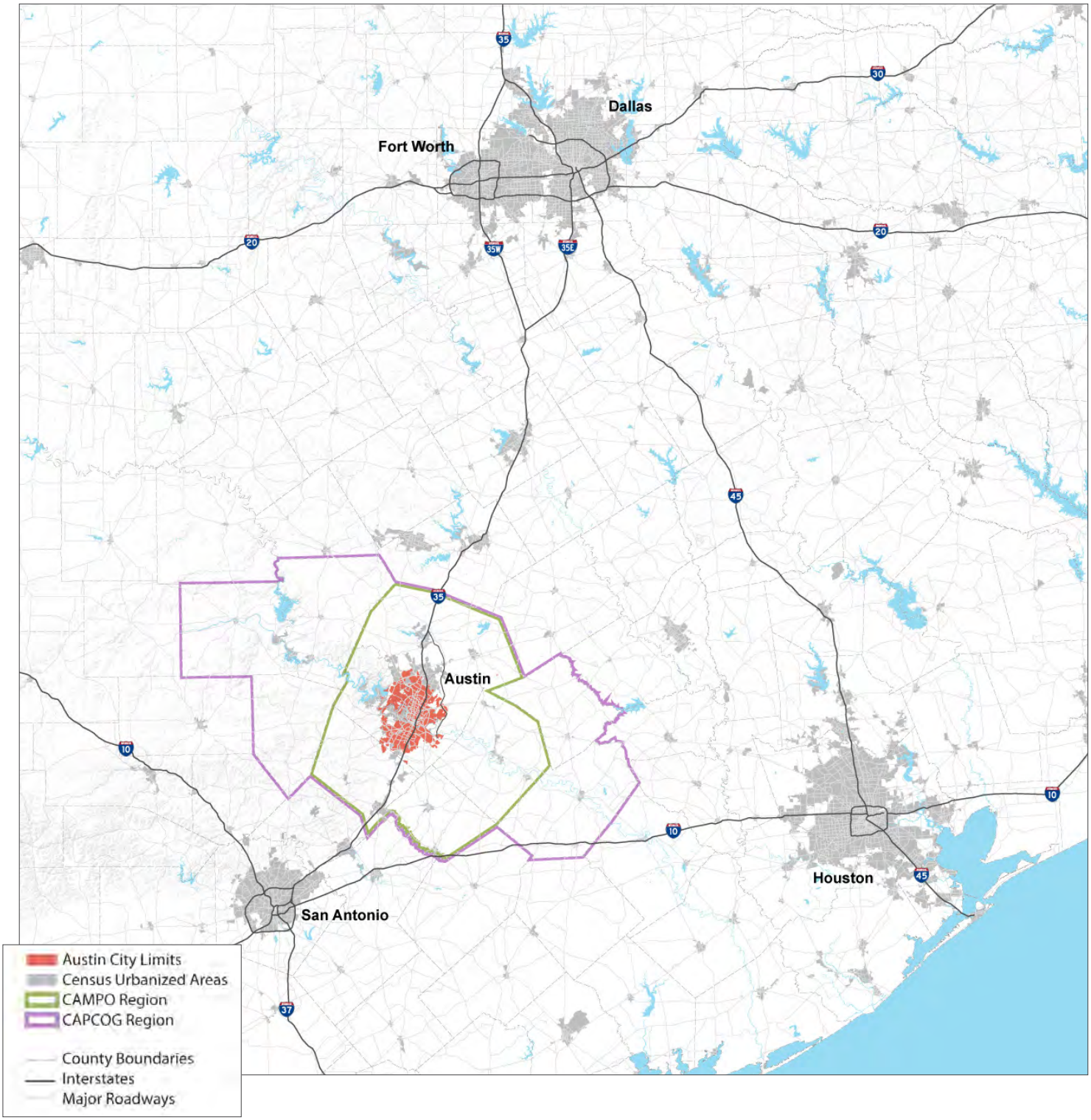
[2] The "region" referenced here includes Travis, Williamson, Hays, Caldwell, Bastrop, and Burnet counties.

Figure 2.8 **Surrounding Jurisdictions**



Austin's ability to grow much beyond the boundaries of its current extraterritorial jurisdiction will be limited by the municipal and extraterritorial jurisdiction boundaries of surrounding cities. Developing new tools and further developing partnerships with Travis County and other local governments as well as the private sector will be crucial to guiding growth in the unincorporated areas surrounding Austin.

Figure 2.9 **Austin's Location within the Region (Texas Triangle)**



The comprehensive plan includes a regional component developed through coordination with surrounding county and municipal jurisdictions, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization [CAMPO], and the Capital Area Council of Governments [CAPCOG]. For the purposes of the issues identified in this section, the "region" includes Travis, Hays, Caldwell, Williamson, Bastrop, and Burnet counties, except where noted otherwise. Many of these issues are extensions of those affecting Austin, especially at the edges of our corporate boundary and in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Dancers transform an intersection into a stage during Viva! Streets, which closed a section of Sixth Street to motor vehicles for several hours on a Sunday. People used the street to walk, bicycle, play games, and have fun.

IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Imagine Austin Vision Statement

We Will Become a City of Complete Communities

Children and parents enjoy a sunny day at a playground in the Mueller neighborhood.

CHAPTER 3

IMAGINING AUSTIN: OUR VISION OF A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

For many years, our community vision has been "to be the most livable city in the country." However, defining "livability" is difficult and a simple statement cannot sum up all that we are or could be. Austin is a big city and is growing larger and more complex. When we imagine our future, our vision must be more detailed, comprehensive, and reflect this complexity. We can begin by saying "the most livable," but it's only a first step. Our new community vision must point toward the complete city we want to become.

IMAGINE AUSTIN VISION STATEMENT

The process to develop a new vision for Austin engaged thousands of residents over a nine-month period beginning with the kickoff of the *Imagine Austin* planning process in October 2009. Through community forums, social media, surveys, focus groups, small meetings between neighbors and friends, and special events, residents described their ideas for the city's bicentennial in 2039.

The importance of Austin's people lies at the heart of the vision statement.

The Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force, appointed by City Council to help guide and champion the process, worked directly from the public input to develop a draft vision statement. The public reviewed and rated each vision component and the revised vision was further reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and endorsed by City Council. More details about these meetings and the entire planning process can be found in Appendix B and online.

The *Imagine Austin* vision statement embodies our commitment to preserving the best of Austin and changing those things that need to be changed. The vision statement answers the question, "What sort of city do we want Austin to be?" with a series of principles that address the physical and social evolution of the city and the overall well-being of its residents. The importance of Austin's people lies at the heart of the vision statement. It acknowledges that the city is a place for people and that inclusion and community leadership will be critical to realizing our long-term goals.

A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.

LIVABLE

AUSTIN IS LIVABLE

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Development occurs in connected and pedestrian-friendly patterns supporting transit and urban lifestyles and reducing sprawl, while protecting and enhancing neighborhoods.
- Downtown offers a safe, vibrant, day- and night-time urban lifestyle for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Development occurs across the city in a manner friendly to families with children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
- Austin's unique character and local businesses are recognized as a vital part of our community.
- Clear guidelines support both quality development and preservation that sustain and improve Austin's character and provide certainty for residents and the business community.
- Austin's diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods and affordable healthcare.

AUSTIN IS NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE

Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks throughout our city.
- We protect the beauty of the Colorado River watershed, Hill Country, and Blackland Prairie and value our farmland, critical to local food production.
- Our open spaces and preserves shape city planning, reduce infrastructure costs, and provide us with recreation, clean air and water, local food, cooler temperatures, and biodiversity.
- We conserve water, energy, soil, and other valuable resources.
- Austin is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- We use and inspire new technologies that create more sustainable communities, while reducing our dependence on environmentally costly practices.

AUSTIN IS CREATIVE

Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

- As a community that continues to stimulate innovation, Austin is a magnet that draws and retains talented and creative individuals.
- Our creative efforts reflect, engage with, and appeal to the ethnic, gender, and age diversity of Austin, and to all socioeconomic levels.
- Residents and visitors participate fully in arts and cultural activities because the opportunities are valued, visible, and accessible.
- Our buildings and places reflect the inspirational and creative spirit of who we are as Austinites, through design excellence, public art, and beautiful, accessible public spaces.

AUSTIN IS EDUCATED

Education is the hope for Austin's future. Austin provides everyone with an equal opportunity for the highest quality of education that allows them to fully develop their potential. Networks of community partnerships support our schools and ensure that our children receive the resources and services they need to thrive and learn.

- Our school campuses provide safe and stable environments enabling future success.
- Neighborhood schools and libraries serve as centers for community collaboration, recreational, and social events, as well as educational and learning opportunities.
- In partnership with private entities and the broader community, institutions of higher education continue to be incubators for innovation in the cultural arts, medicine, industry, business, and technology.
- Every child in Austin has the chance to engage with other cultures, communities, and languages, providing pathways for healthy development and the critical thinking skills students need as future citizens of Austin and the world.

AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

- Interconnected development patterns support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.
- Our integrated transportation system is well-maintained, minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, and remains affordable for all users.
- Austin promotes safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin area. These routes are part of our comprehensive regional transportation network.

AUSTIN IS PROSPEROUS

Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole — including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions. Development carefully balances the needs of differing land uses with improved transportation to ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable.

- Our economy is resilient and responsive to global trends, thanks to its diverse and thriving mix of local entrepreneurs, large and small businesses, educational institutions, government, and industries.
- Innovation and creativity are the engines of Austin's economy in the arts, research and development, and technology.
- Our ecology is integrated with our economy — the preservation of the environment and natural resources contribute to our prosperity.
- Equitable opportunities are accessible to all through quality education, training, and good jobs.

AUSTIN VALUES AND RESPECTS ITS PEOPLE

Austin is its people. Our city is home to engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength, and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential.

- Austin government is transparent and accountable.
- People across all parts of the city and of all ages and income levels live in safe, stable neighborhoods with a variety of affordable and accessible homes with access to healthy food, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, and transportation.
- We stand together for equal rights for all persons, especially acknowledging those who have been denied full participation in the opportunities offered by our community in the past.
- The history of the people of the Austin area is preserved and protected for future generations.

Each level of our complete communities... will be livable, safe, and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; ensure that amenities and services are easily accessible to all; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.

WE WILL BECOME A CITY OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

To successfully realize *Imagine Austin*, all of our residents must benefit from its outcomes. To help fulfill the vision statement, the comprehensive plan points us toward becoming a city of complete communities throughout Austin. Such communities are defined by amenities, transportation, services, and opportunities that fulfill all Austinites' material, social, and economic needs. They achieve these outcomes while protecting our important environmental resources and preserving our identity, culture, and sense of place. A complete community provides access to employment, shopping, learning, open space, recreation, and other amenities and services. Establishing complete communities will require monitoring different services at different scales. Some needs, like parks and healthy food, should be within or near every neighborhood. Others, like hospitals, will draw from many neighborhoods.

These communities will be for Austinites of all ages. They will provide environments that support children at every stage of their development, young adults beginning their professional lives and families, and seniors aging gracefully in the neighborhoods where they raised their families. These places will be safe and affordable; promote physical activity, community engagement, and inclusion; make amenities and services easily accessible to everybody; and contribute to Austin's unique community spirit.

LIVABLE
- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity and Affordability
- Access to Community Amenities
- Quality Design/Distinctive Character
- Preservation of Crucial Resources

MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED
- Range of Transportation Options
- Multimodal Connectivity
- Accessible Community Centers

VALUES AND RESPECTS PEOPLE
- Access to Community Services
- Employment, Food, and Housing Options
- Community/Civic Engagement
- Responsive/Accountable Government

PROSPEROUS
- Diverse Business Opportunities
- Technological Innovation
- Education/Skills Development

EDUCATED
- Learning Opportunities for All Ages
- Community Partnerships with Schools
- Relationships with Higher Learning

CREATIVE
- Vibrant Cultural Events/Programs
- Support for Arts/Cultural Activities

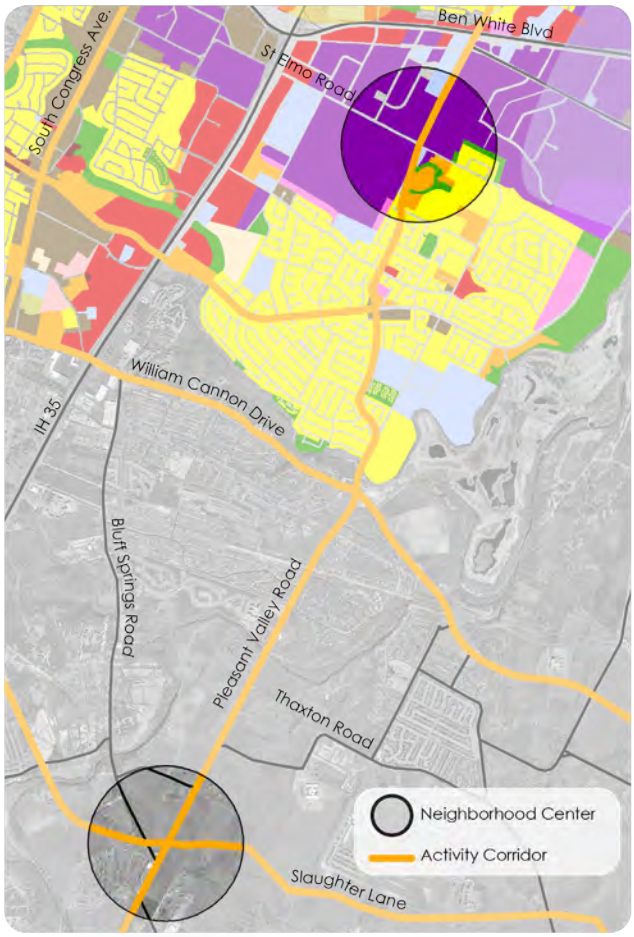
NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE
- Sustainable, Compact, and Walkable Development
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

The West Campus neighborhood is an emerging complete community which includes a mixture of residences, restaurants, and businesses, including small grocery stores. Wide sidewalks, bike lanes, street benches, and trees encourage walking and bicycling.

COMPLETING COMMUNITIES IN PRACTICE

Dove Springs

Imagine a large neighborhood of approximately 50,000 people. Once full of middle-class families, it is now troubled by poverty, school overcrowding and violence, isolation from the rest of the city, crime, lack of access to health care services, and the highest rate of childhood obesity in the city. Despite this, residents are devoted to the neighborhood where they raise their families, with its affordable homes, proximity to jobs, schools, a recreation center, and a library. Schools and community-based organizations have mobilized to support residents' expressed needs and interests. By fulfilling these identified needs, the community is moving closer to completion.



The *Imagine Austin* Growth Concept Map and Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan work together to guide how and where development should occur. New neighborhood centers are identified by *Imagine Austin* at the north and south ends of the neighborhood. Through a plan amendment or plan update, initial parcels for these centers will need to be identified on the Future Land Use Map of the neighborhood plan.

Not every new or needed service can be located at these centers. Updates to the neighborhood plan should also identify other opportunity sites, as well as infrastructure needs to support them.

A Community Speaks

On December 15, 2011, Dove Springs residents assembled to identify what their community needed to turn around and become successful. Six priorities emerged:

1) Address safety issues in the following order:

a) Violence

b) Theft

c) Gang Activity

d) Vandalism

e) Speeding

f) Code Enforcement

2) A comprehensive health facility, centrally located within the neighborhood.

3) In order of priority, build the following schools: a high school, another middle school, another elementary school, and a community college in the community.

4) Additional retail and community services

5) Another library and recreation center

6) Improved public transportation service

SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY

A Framework for the Future

Growth Concept Map

Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks

- Building Block 1: Land Use and Transportation
- Building Block 2: Housing and Neighborhoods
- Building Block 3: Economy
- Building Block 4: Conservation and Environment
- Building Block 5: City Facilities and Services
- Building Block 6: Society
- Building Block 7: Creativity

Complete communities are pedestrian-scaled and provide facilities and services to meet people's everyday needs and wants, including schools, community facilities, parks, a variety of housing, and places to work and shop.

CHAPTER 4

SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Achieving the goal of complete communities across Austin requires more than a vision statement. While the vision describes the type of place Austin should become as it approaches its bicentennial, it does not identify the steps to make it happen. The framework for realizing the vision is contained in the Growth Concept Map and building blocks.

- **Growth Concept Map.** The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5) applies the *Imagine Austin* vision statement to the city's physical development. Generated through a public scenario-building process, it defines how we plan to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years.

- **Building Blocks.** The building blocks contain broad-ranging policies to guide implementation of the vision (see Appendix A).

BUILDING BLOCK	ELEMENT
1. LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION	Land Use* Transportation* Urban Design Historic Preservation
2. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS	Housing* Neighborhoods
3. ECONOMY	Economy*
4. CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT	Conservation & Environment*
5. CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	Wastewater, Potable Water, and Drainage* Solid Waste* Energy* Public Safety* Public Building* Recreation and Open Space*
6. SOCIETY	Health and Human Services* Children, Families, and Education
7. CREATIVITY	Creativity

* Required by City Charter; in some cases, Charter elements have been reorganized

Developed with extensive public involvement, the Growth Concept Map series depicts how Austin should accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use developments, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years.

GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

The vision statement sets forth guidance for the city's growth and development for the next 30 years. The growth concept is illustrated by a series of maps. The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5) applies the vision statement to show how the city should evolve over the next several decades. It is informed by existing development patterns, planned projects, and small-area plans, as well as environmental features (Figure 4.1), and existing and planned transportation networks (Figures 4.2 through 4.4).

Developed through an extensive public involvement process, the Growth Concept Map illustrates the desired manner to accommodate new residents, jobs, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years. During a series of public meetings, more than 450 participants created more than 60 maps illustrating where Austin's growth should go over the next three decades. City staff, consultants, and the Citizen's Advisory Task Force reviewed the maps for common patterns, synthesized them into four distinct scenarios, and developed a "trend" scenario map for comparison.

The five scenarios were measured using "sustainability indicators" developed from the vision statement. These indicators included such measures as the acres of land developed, greenhouse gas emissions, the cost of public infrastructure, average travel times, and percentage of housing near transit stops for each of the scenarios. Through the next round of public meetings and surveys, the public rated each of the scenarios using the indicator results. Public input was solicited through community events, newspaper surveys, door-to-door outreach, newsletters, social media, business and organizational meetings, and one-on-one conversations.

A growth scenario was created using public input, planned developments, and existing neighborhood plans to illustrate how Austin should grow through 2039. The scenario was further tested and refined into the Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.5). More detail on the public process used to create the scenarios and Growth Concept Map is included in Appendix B.

The Growth Concept Map series embodies the *Imagine Austin* vision statement and represents where the City will focus future investments to support activity centers and corridors, and an expanded transportation system.

The Growth Concept Map:

- **Promotes a compact and connected city**
- **Promotes infill and redevelopment as opposed to typical low-density "greenfield" development**
- **Focuses new development in activity corridors and centers accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit as well as by car**
- **Provides convenient access to jobs and employment centers**

- **Protects existing open space and natural resources such as creeks, rivers, lakes, and floodplains**
- **Directs growth away from the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones and other water-supply watersheds**
- **Improves air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Expands the transit network and increases transit use**
- **Reduces vehicle miles traveled**
- **Reduces per capita water consumption**
- **Provides parks and open space close to where people live, work, and play**

Growth Concept Map Series

The Growth Concept Map series consists of five maps setting out key environmental features, transportation connections, and growth patterns (pages 99-103).

Figure 4.1 Environmental Resources

Our vision for Austin is a "green" city — a place that is environmentally aware, improves the health of our residents, and protects the region's vast environmental resources. The Environmental Resource map (Figure 4.1) illustrates the existing network of parks, preserves, and other open spaces, as well as environmentally sensitive water resources such as waterways, springs, floodplains, and the recharging/contributing zones of the Edwards Aquifer. The environmental features illustrated by Figure 4.1, in addition to species habitat, tree canopy, and agricultural resources (Figures 4.8-4.10, pages 153-155), are key environmental resources in Austin. These diverse elements provide multiple benefits, including protection of natural resources and enhanced recreation and transportation options.

Environmentally sensitive features, in addition to existing development patterns and roadways, help to shape and inform the location of the activity centers and corridors illustrated by the Growth Concept Map. By promoting a compact and connected city, Austin seeks to direct development away from sensitive environmental resources, protect existing open space and natural resources, and improve air and water quality.

GROWTH CONCEPT MAP SERIES

The Growth Concept Map series and the activity centers and corridors are conceptual and provide direction for future growth; however, they are not parcel-specific, nor do they carry the legal weight of zoning designations or other land use regulations. Per state law, a comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

Figure 4.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks

To realize Austin's vision, new development and redevelopment must occur in a connected and pedestrian-friendly pattern. Activity centers and corridors illustrated on the Growth Concept Map are pedestrian-friendly, walkable, and bikable areas. By improving bicycle and pedestrian networks, the City of Austin can address many of the challenges facing Austin, including motor vehicle congestion, commute times, air quality, transportation costs, lack of connectivity, bicycle safety, and recreational access.

Figure 4.2 illustrates major urban trails that connect activity centers. Urban trails serve recreation and transportation functions, including biking and hiking, and also provide important environmental benefits by creating open space linkages and expanding the City of Austin's green infrastructure network. While not included on Figure 4.2, the pedestrian sidewalk network is also essential to accessibility. Austin is continuing to expand the sidewalk network and eliminate gaps to improve walkability throughout Austin.

Figure 4.3 Transit Networks

To achieve our vision for Austin, the city's activity centers and corridors need to support, and be supported by, an expanded transit network that is efficient, reliable, and cost-effective. The transit network will help to reduce sprawl, decrease congestion and vehicle miles traveled, improve air quality, promote infill and redevelopment, and reduce household transportation costs. Several agencies have been working together to plan and develop rail and high-capacity bus lines that will provide greater transportation options and impact where people and businesses choose to locate. The transit network is designed to improve connectedness and better link centers and corridors. Where final locations have not been determined, transit stops are identified as "proposed." As more detailed planning occurs, these may move. When this happens, the associated activity center should move as well.

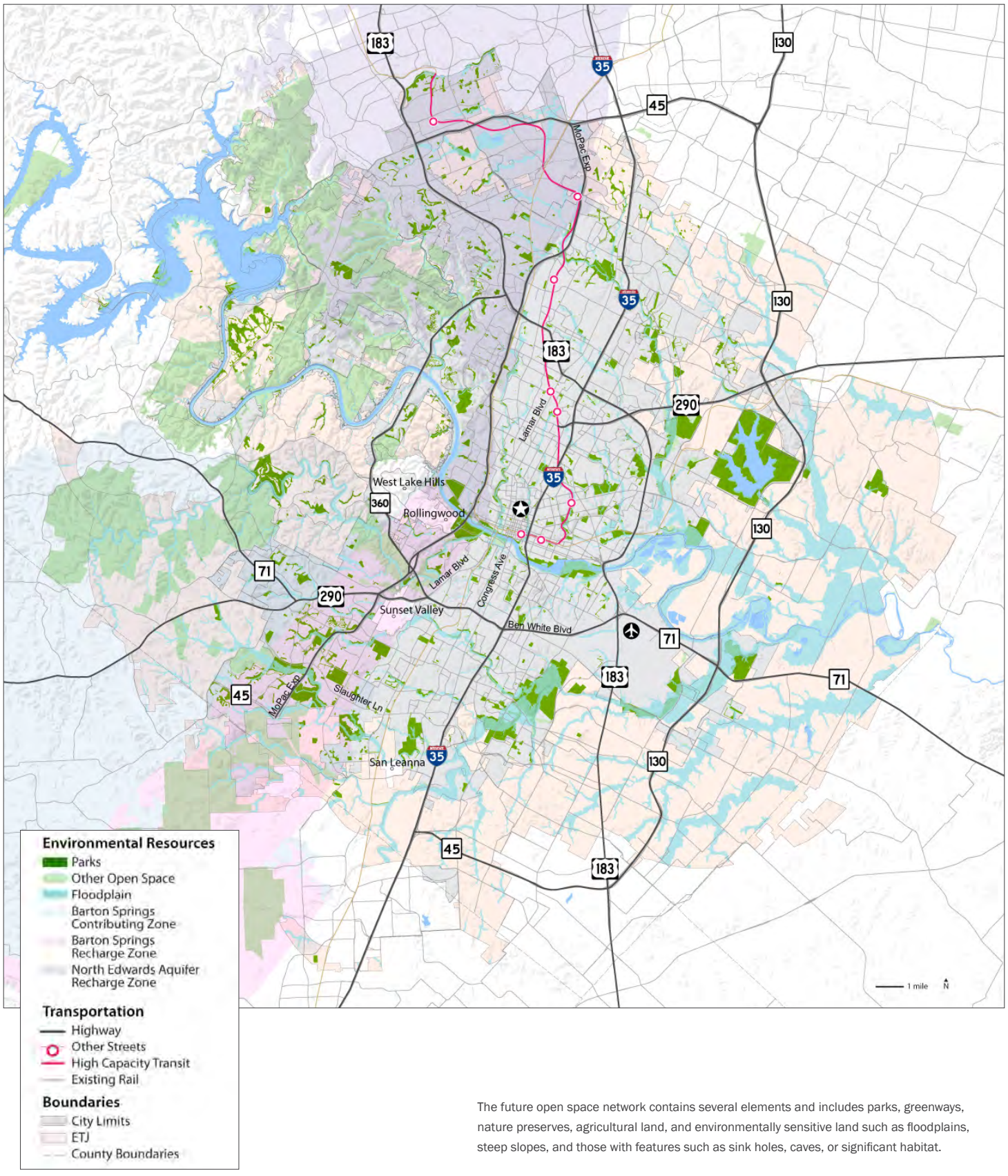
Figure 4.4 Roadway Networks

While *Imagine Austin* envisions a long-term shift toward transit, walking, and biking, an expanded and improved roadway network is also important. Figure 4.4 identifies major roadway improvements, from developing a complete arterial network to managed or express lanes on Loop 1 and Interstate 35.

Figure 4.5 Growth Concept Map

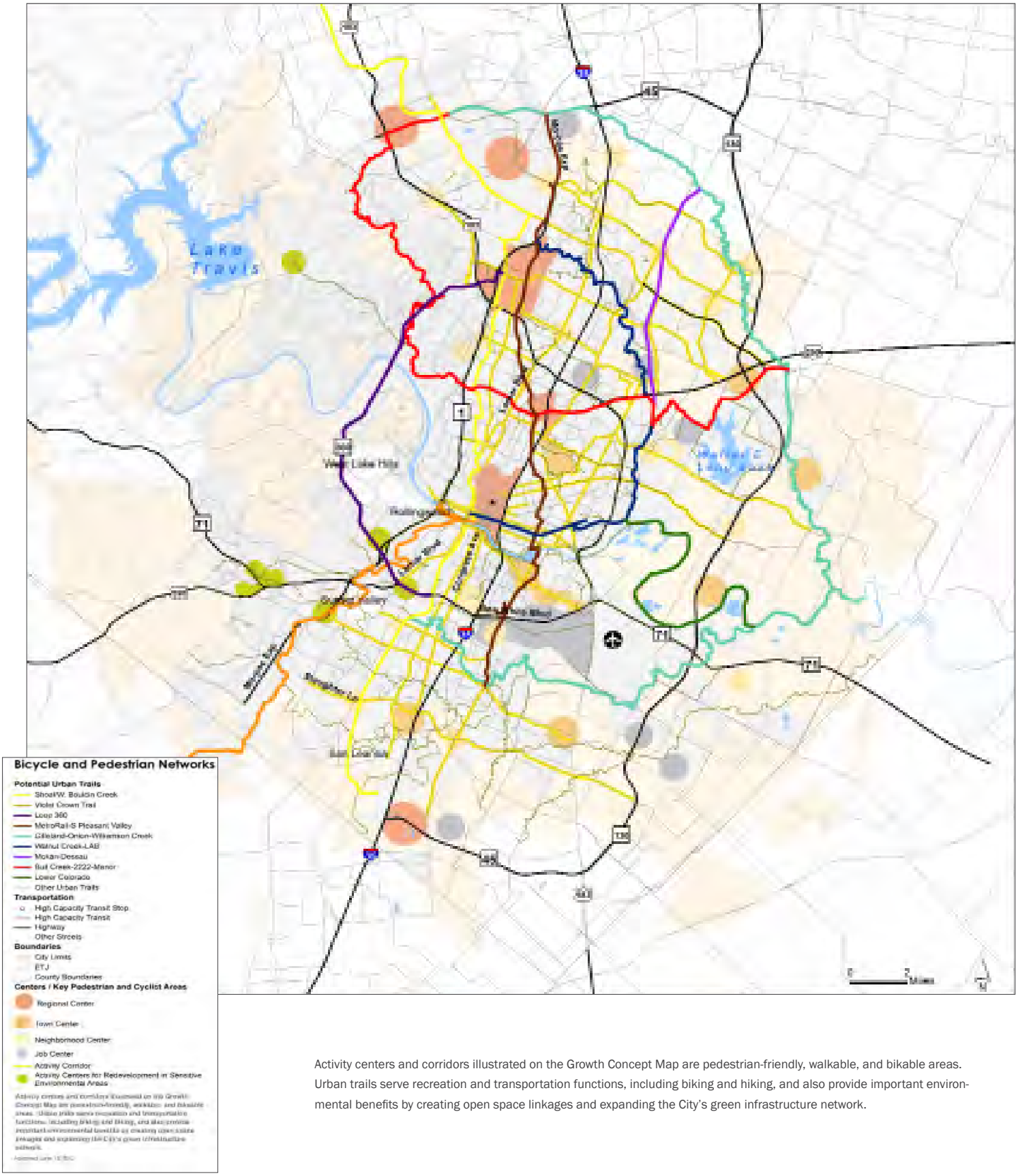
The final map in the Growth Concept Map series ties the previous four together, illustrating how Austin in the future should coordinate transportation features — roads, transit, and urban trails — with activity centers and corridors, in such a way as to reduce degradation of Austin's environmental resources. The Growth Concept Map was also compared to and adjusted for consistency with the Future Land Use Maps in the adopted neighborhood plans. This map is followed by detailed definition of its features.

Figure 4.1 **Environmental Resources**



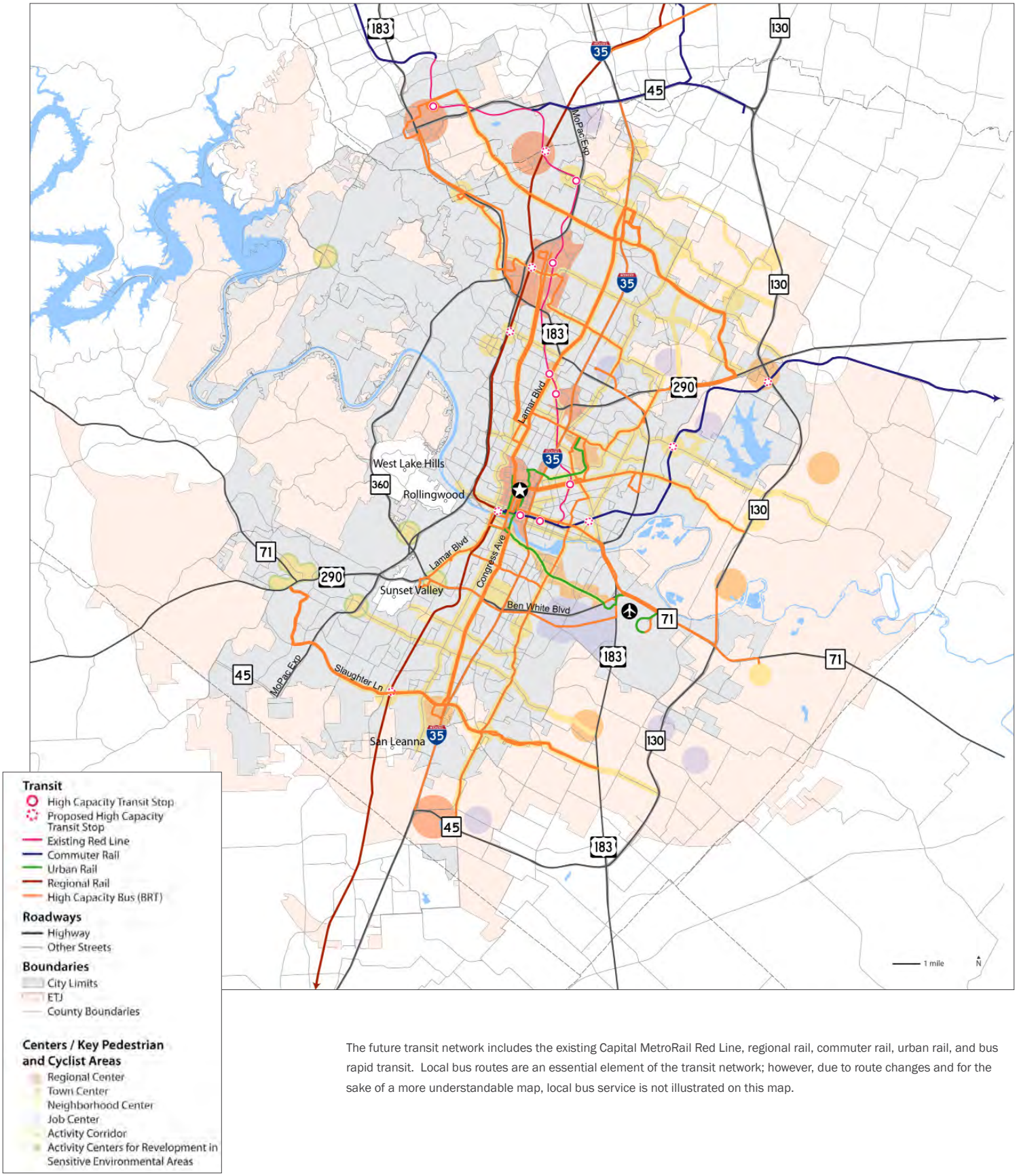
The future open space network contains several elements and includes parks, greenways, nature preserves, agricultural land, and environmentally sensitive land such as floodplains, steep slopes, and those with features such as sink holes, caves, or significant habitat.

Figure 4.2 **Bicycle and Pedestrian Networks**



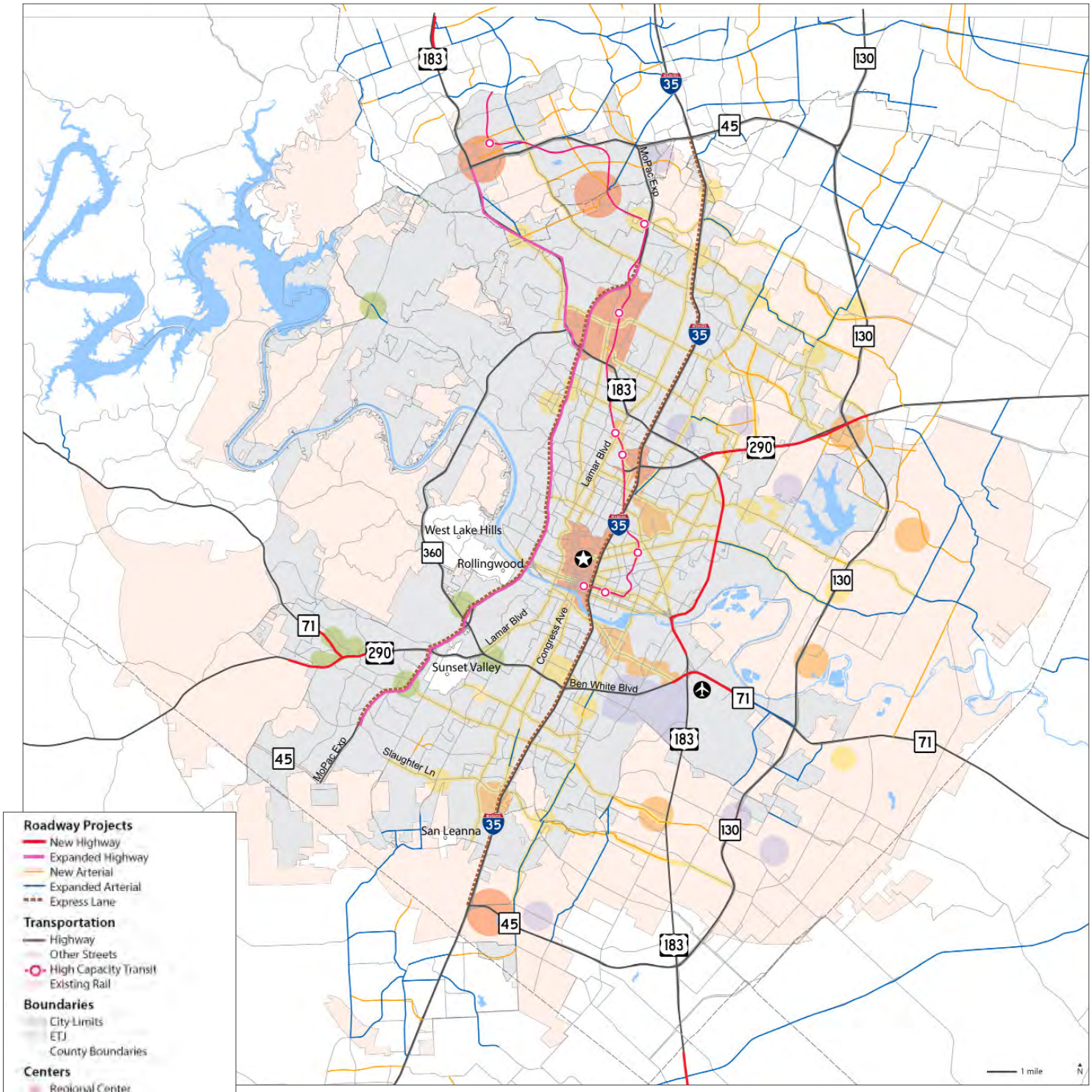
Activity centers and corridors illustrated on the Growth Concept Map are pedestrian-friendly, walkable, and bikable areas. Urban trails serve recreation and transportation functions, including biking and hiking, and also provide important environmental benefits by creating open space linkages and expanding the City's green infrastructure network.

Figure 4.3 **Transit Networks**



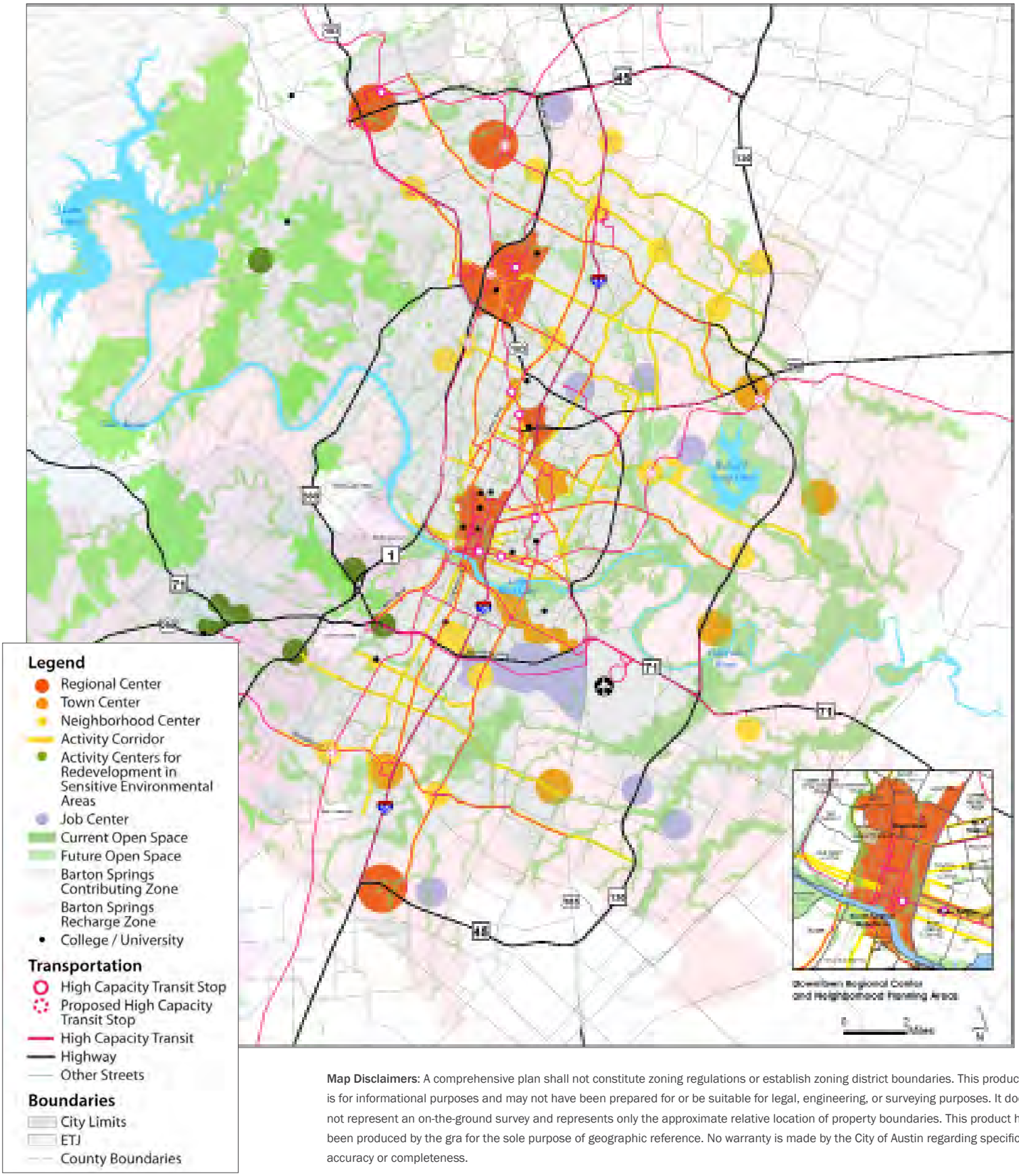
The future transit network includes the existing Capital MetroRail Red Line, regional rail, commuter rail, urban rail, and bus rapid transit. Local bus routes are an essential element of the transit network; however, due to route changes and for the sake of a more understandable map, local bus service is not illustrated on this map.

Figure 4.4 **Roadway Networks**



The future roadway networks includes existing roads, planned extensions, new arterial roads, and capacity improvements such as creating additional travel lanes.

Figure 4.5 **Growth Concept Map**



Map Disclaimers: A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries. This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. This product has been produced by the gra for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

Growth Concept Map Definitions

Activity Centers and Corridors

The Growth Concept Map assembles compact and walkable activity centers and corridors, as well as job centers, and coordinates them with future transportation improvements. These centers and corridors allow people to reside, work, shop, access services, people watch, recreate, and hang out without traveling far distances. Within them, the design and scale of buildings and the design and availability of parks and gathering spaces will welcome people of all ages and abilities. They will be walkable, bikable, and connected to one another, the rest of the city, and the region by roads, transit, bicycle routes and lanes, and trails.

The activity centers and corridors included on this map identify locations for additional people and jobs above what currently exists on the ground. Unlike more detailed small-area plan maps, the Growth Concept Map provides broad direction for future growth and is not parcel specific. Centers that are already established by existing small-area plans, such as those for East Riverside Drive or Highland Mall, are drawn to reflect those plans. Centers without small-area plans are simply shown with a circle, indicating scale and general location. Specifying boundaries for these centers may occur through small-area plans or general guidelines for implementing this plan.

Centers are generally focused on one or more major transit stops. The greatest density of people and activity will be located around these stops. Surrounding these dense hubs, centers will feature a mix of retail, offices, open space and parks, public uses and services such as libraries and government offices, and a variety of housing choices. Because of their generally compact nature, it will be a quick trip to travel from one side of a center to the other by foot, bicycle, transit, or automobile. There are three types of activity centers — regional, town, and neighborhood.

While a corridor may feature the same variety of uses as a center, its linear nature spreads uses along a roadway. Walking may be suitable for shorter trips; however, longer ones along a corridor can be made by bicycling, transit, or automobile. Just as there are different types of centers, a corridor's character will depend on factors such as road width, traffic volume, the size and configuration of lots, and existing uses. Along different segments of these corridors, there may be multi-story mixed-use buildings, apartment buildings, shops, public uses, or offices, as well as townhouses, row houses, duplexes, and single-family houses. Rules for developing within the activity centers and corridors should be carefully designed to achieve their intent. In particular, new development in these areas will need to consider two aspects of Austin's affordability problem: providing market-rate housing and preserving existing, as well as creating new affordable housing.

Regional Centers

Regional centers are the most urban places in the region. These centers are and will become the retail, cultural, recreational, and entertainment destinations for Central Texas. These are the places where the greatest density of people and jobs and the tallest buildings in the region will

be located. Housing in regional centers will mostly consist of low to high-rise apartments, mixed use buildings, row houses, and townhouses. However, other housing types, such as single-family units, may be included depending on the location and character of the center.

The densities, buildings heights, and overall character of a center will depend on its location. The central regional center encompassing Downtown, the University of Texas, the Concordia University redevelopment, and West Campus is the most urban. It includes low-to high-rise residential and office buildings; local, state, and federal government office buildings; the Texas State Capitol building; cultural offerings and several entertainment districts; shopping; and single-family neighborhoods. Other, future regional centers, like Robinson Ranch or Southside (at the intersection of toll road State Highway 45 and Interstate 35) will likely have a dense central hub surrounded by well-connected, but lower-density development.

Regional centers will range in size between approximately 25,000-45,000 people and 5,000-25,000 jobs.

Town Centers

Although less intense than regional centers, town centers are also where many people will live and work. Town centers will have large and small employers, although fewer than in regional centers. These employers will have regional customer and employee bases, and provide goods and services for the center as well as the surrounding areas. The buildings found in a town center will range in size from one-to three-story houses, duplexes, townhouses, and row houses, to low-to midrise apartments, mixed use buildings, and office buildings. These centers will also be important hubs in the transit system.

The Mueller redevelopment in Central Austin is an example of an emerging town center. Presently at Mueller, there are local and regional-serving retail establishments, the Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, and Seton Healthcare Family offices. Upon build-out, Mueller expects to include 4.2 million square feet of retail, offices, medical space, and film production, as well as 10,000 residents.

Town centers will range in size between approximately 10,000-30,000 people and 5,000-20,000 jobs.

Neighborhood Centers

The smallest and least intense of the three mixed-use centers are neighborhood centers. As with the regional and town centers, neighborhood centers are walkable, bikable, and supported by transit. The greatest density of people and activities in neighborhood centers will likely be concentrated on several blocks or around one or two intersections. However, depending on localized conditions, different neighborhood centers can be very different places. If a neighborhood center is designated on an existing commercial area, such as a shopping center or mall, it could represent redevelopment or the addition of housing. A new neighborhood center may be focused on a dense, mixed-use core surrounded by a mix of housing. In other instances, new or redevel-

opment may occur incrementally and concentrate people and activities along several blocks or around one or two intersections. Neighborhood centers will be more locally focused than either a regional or a town center. Businesses and services—grocery and department stores, doctors and dentists, shops, branch libraries, dry cleaners, hair salons, schools, restaurants, and other small and local businesses—will generally serve the center and surrounding neighborhoods.

Neighborhood centers range in size between approximately 5,000-10,000 people and 2,500-7,000 jobs.

Activity Centers for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas

Five centers are located over the recharge or contributing zones of the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer or within water-supply watersheds. These centers are located on already developed areas and, in some instances, provide opportunities to address long-standing water quality issues and provide walkable areas in and near existing neighborhoods. State-of-the-art development practices will be required of any redevelopment to improve stormwater retention and the water quality flowing into the aquifer or other drinking water sources. These centers should also be carefully evaluated to fit within their infrastructural and environmental context. One of the Land Use and Transportation policies, LUT P21 (p. 120), clarifies the intent, "Ensure that redevelopment in the Edwards Aquifer's recharge and contributing zones maintains the quantity and quality of recharge of the aquifer."

Corridors

Activity corridors have a dual nature. They are the connections that link activity centers and other key destinations to one another and allow people to travel throughout the city and region by bicycle, transit, or automobile. Corridors are also characterized by a variety of activities and types of buildings located along the roadway — shopping, restaurants and cafés, parks, schools, single-family houses, apartments, public buildings, houses of worship, mixed-use buildings, and offices. Along many corridors, there will be both large and small redevelopment sites. These redevelopment opportunities may be continuous along stretches of the corridor. There may also be a series of small neighborhood centers, connected by the roadway. Other corridors may have fewer redevelopment opportunities, but already have a mixture of uses, and could provide critical transportation connections. As a corridor evolves, sites that do not redevelop may transition from one use to another, such as a service station becoming a restaurant or a large retail space being divided into several storefronts. To improve mobility along an activity corridor, new and redevelopment should reduce per capita car use and increase walking, bicycling, and transit use. Intensity of land use should correspond to the availability of quality transit, public space, and walkable destinations. Site design should use building arrangement and open space to reduce walking distance to transit and destinations, achieve safety and comfort, and draw people outdoors.

Job Centers

Job centers accommodate those businesses not well-suited for residential or environmentally-sensitive areas. These centers take advantage of existing transportation infrastructure such as arterial roadways, freeways, or the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Job centers will mostly contain office parks, manufacturing, warehouses, logistics, and other businesses with similar demands and operating characteristics. They should nevertheless become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, in part by better accommodating services for the people who work in those centers. While many of these centers are currently best served by car, the Growth Concept Map offers transportation choices such as light rail and bus rapid transit to increase commuter options.

Other Development within City Limits

While most new development will be absorbed by centers and corridors, development will happen in other areas within the city limits to serve neighborhood needs and create complete communities. Infill development can occur as redevelopment of obsolete office, retail, or residential sites or as new development on vacant land within largely developed areas. The type of infill housing will vary with site locations, small-area plans, and development regulations, and include single-family houses, duplexes, secondary apartments, townhouses, row houses, and smaller-scaled apartments. New commercial, office, larger apartments, and institutional uses such as schools and churches, may also be located in areas outside of centers and corridors. The design of new development should be sensitive to and complement its context. It should also be connected by sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and transit to the surrounding area and the rest of the city. Not all land within the city limits will be developed. Some may remain or enter into agricultural production; continue as single-family houses, duplexes, and apartments; or become part of the planned open space network. The Growth Concept Map not only guides where Austin may accommodate new residents and jobs but also reflects the community intent to direct growth away from environmentally sensitive areas including, but not limited to, the recharge and contributing zones of the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer, and to protect the character of neighborhoods by directing growth to areas identified by small area plans. This intent can be found in the building block policies:

- “Protect Austin’s natural resources and environmental systems by limiting land use and transportation development in sensitive environmental areas and preserving areas of open space.” (LUT P22)

- “Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change and ensuring context sensitive infill in such locations as designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites.” (HN P11)

Other Development within the Austin Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's city limits that is not within the extraterritorial jurisdiction or municipal limits of another city. It is where only Austin is authorized to annex land. The City of Austin in collaboration with Travis County (and, to a lesser extent, Williamson and Hays counties) regulates land subdivision, water quality regulations, and site plans. While it is able to engage in long-range planning efforts, the county cannot zone land. Well-planned future development can minimize sprawl when the City collaborates with county governments. Targeted infrastructure investments and other incentives to manage development in an organized and thoughtful manner will be necessary to meet the contingencies of continued growth in the extraterritorial jurisdiction. Wherever possible, new development should be directed to centers and corridors designated on the Growth Concept Map, or occur in or adjacent to areas of existing development, and should serve to complete communities at Austin's edge. In addition, it should, when and where feasible, be connected by transit, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes to existing and planned development.

Open Space Network

The open space network includes existing and future open space. Elements of the open space network include parks, greenways, nature preserves, agricultural land, and environmentally sensitive land. Areas within floodplains, on steep slopes, or with significant environmental features, such as sinkholes, caves, or significant wildlife habitat, are classified as environmentally sensitive.

High-Capacity Transit and Transit Stops

High-capacity transit and transit stops include the existing Capital MetroRail Red Line and stops and planned transit routes and new stops. High-capacity transit includes regional rail, commuter rail, urban rail, and bus rapid transit. Regular bus routes are not illustrated on the Growth Concept Map. Where final locations have not been determined, transit stops are identified as "proposed." As more detailed planning occurs, these may move. When this happens, the associated activity center should move as well.

Highways and Other Streets

This feature of the Growth Concept Map illustrates existing roads, planned extensions, new arterial roads, and capacity improvements such as additional travel lanes.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN LAND USES

Harmonious + People-oriented

Creating the compact and connected city envisioned by this plan requires establishing harmonious transitions between different types of land uses, such as retail and residential areas or buildings of different heights and scales. New and redevelopment along corridors and at the edges of centers should complement existing development such as adjacent neighborhoods.

Creating these transitions requires addressing:

- Local context
- Land uses
- Accessibility and transportation needs
- Building setbacks, building heights
- Design elements such as:
  - planting
  - building massing
  - lighting
  - location of parking
- Building orientation

[3] More detail on existing trends and issues for each building block can be found in Chapter 2 and in the Austin Community Inventory http://www.imagineaustin.net/inventory.htm.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BUILDING BLOCKS

The Comprehensive Plan building blocks are the backbone of *Imagine Austin*. Each building block includes a summary of key issues and challenges for the future, policies to address those challenges, and selected best practices.[3] The building block policies were developed through public input from community forums and surveys, as well as input from the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force and City of Austin departments.

Many of *Imagine Austin's* policies cut across building blocks. This overlap creates synergistic opportunities to make a greater impact by implementing one program or project that responds to several policies. The interrelationships are highlighted in blue with a reference that directs the reader to a similar policy from one of the other building blocks.

The synergies also play out in the core principles for action (introduced in Chapter 1) and the complete communities concept (introduced in Chapter 2). At the beginning of each building block, icons represent how the policies within that building block relate to Austin's vision for a city of complete communities. A solid color icon means that the policies strongly connect with a particular complete community element. A grayscale icon means that there is a lesser, secondary connection between the policies and a particular complete community element. While not every policy links directly to every complete community element, all of the policies work together to achieve Austin's vision.

The Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams review a draft Growth Concept Map for consistency with the neighborhood plans' Future Land Use Maps at a meeting on January 6, 2011. Changes to the Growth Concept Map were made based on input from this meeting.

Regional Center

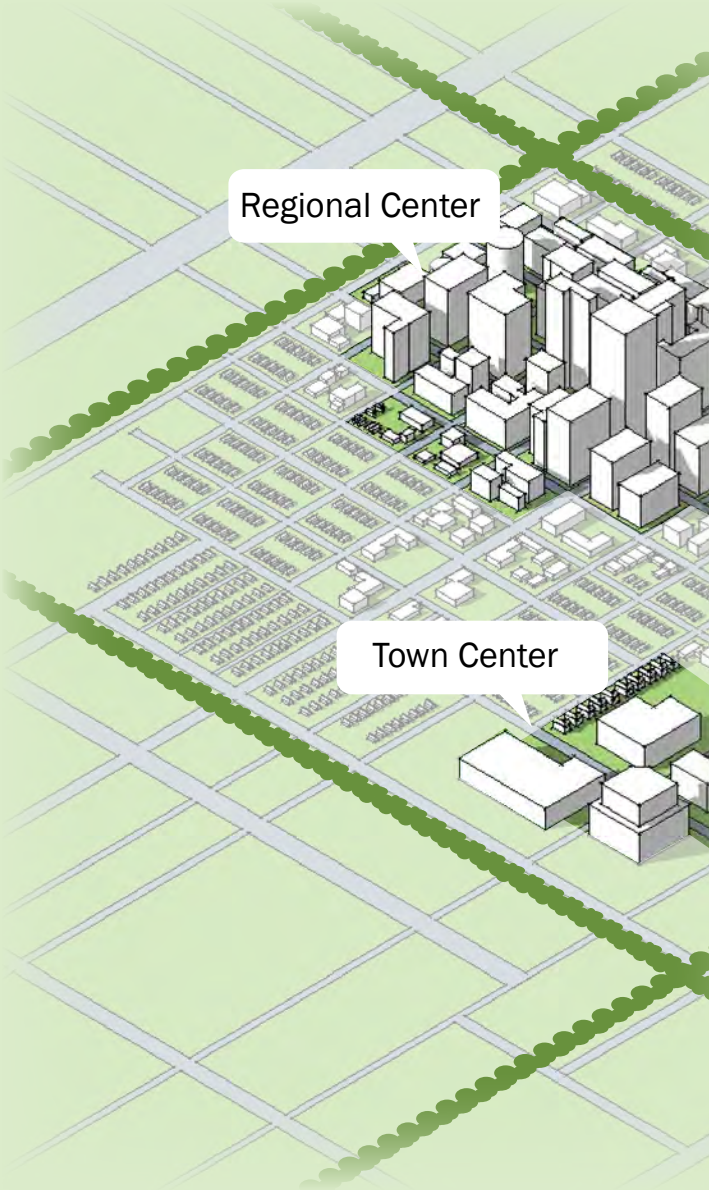
Town Center

Neighborhood Center

The Growth Concept Map illustrates how Austin plans to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure in the next 30 years. As Austin grows, the Growth Concept Map directs new and redevelopment to focused centers of varying sizes. Most centers are connected by activity corridors, which serve a dual purpose of enhancing mobility and concentrating development, maintaining neighborhood character and better accommodating walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving.

See pages 104-106 for a full description of activity centers and corridors.

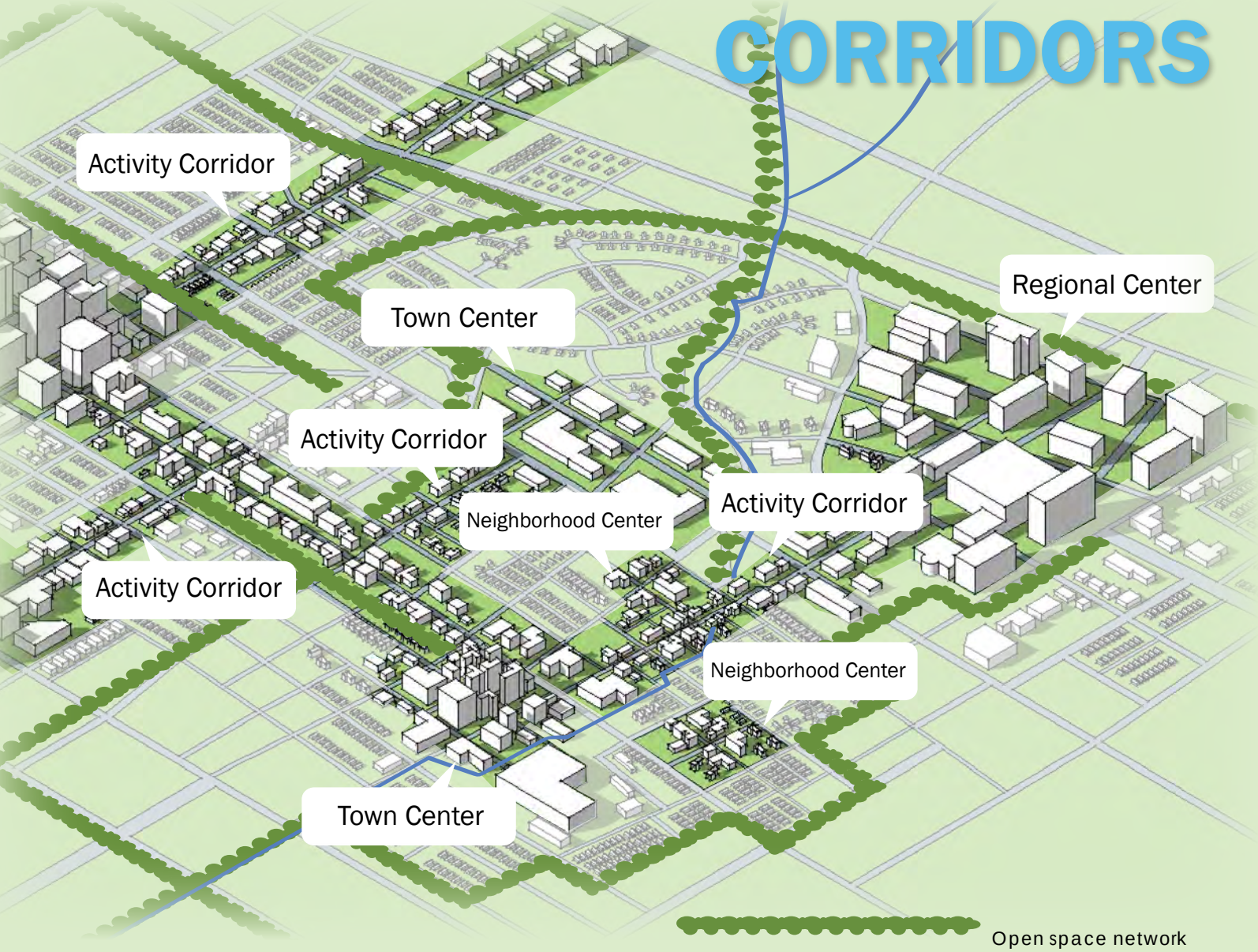
The illustration shows how the centers and activity corridors in the Growth Concept Map relate to one another, while fitting into the overall fabric of the city. The photographs are representative of some of the ways these centers and corridors may develop.



Activity Corridor

Activity Corridor

ACTIVITY CENTERS AND CORRIDORS



AUSTIN
OR
BUST!

BUILDINGBLOCK LUT

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Complete Community Matrix

Austin experienced significant growth during the last half of the 20th century. Between 1960 and 2010, the land area expanded by more than 400 percent, from almost 56 square miles to more than 300 square miles. During the last decade, our land area increased by nearly 20 percent. Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction represent an area of about 620 square miles. This is more than double the size of Chicago. Although 38 percent of Austin's land area is considered undeveloped, much of it is environmentally sensitive and less suitable for development.

The range of transportation options available can profoundly affect the development of a city. For example, a new high-speed road may spur low-density commercial and residential development, which does not support high-quality public transit. This is what happened during the last decades of the 20th century as the extension of the city's freeway and highway system allowed development to spread north and south of Austin's city limits. However, further in Austin's past we can see how transportation investments affected our city's evolution. Our first suburb, the compact and walkable Hyde Park (now an inner-city neighborhood), was designed to be served by transit which allowed residents to live removed from the bustle of the central city and commute to Downtown in the relative comfort of an electrified trolley. Recent Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority and City of Austin transit plans for rail and high-capacity bus lines seek to provide transportation options which will have a greater influence on where residents choose to live and work. Several recent planning initiatives, such as East Riverside Drive, Airport Boulevard, and North Burnet/Gateway, concentrate on creating places to provide these choices. A retooled transportation system will lead to the compact and walkable places envisioned in this plan.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

- Over the last century, Austin has experienced increasing population, urbanization, and outward expansion.
- Modest infill and redevelopment have occurred in older areas of Austin, though at a much slower pace than lower-density suburban development.
- While Austin remains the largest jurisdiction in the five-county Austin region, the city's share of population and employment is decreasing.
- Complex policies and regulations have greatly impacted land use and development in Austin.
- Areas located along a north-south axis of the city and in the North Burnet/Gateway planning area and Robinson Ranch in the northern portion of the city are identified as most likely to develop or redevelop.

Austin's historic assets include neighborhoods, buildings, and sites reflecting Austin's cultural, ethnic, social, economic, political, and architectural history, many of which lack formal historic designation. Designated historic resources include National Register properties and districts, Texas Historic Landmarks, Austin's Historic Landmark designation, and Local Historic Districts. In addition, Austin has many cultural resources lacking formal historic designation—public art, cultural centers, museums, institutions, buildings, landscapes, and iconic businesses and buildings. Austin is also home to a number of museums and research libraries.

Austin has an active historic preservation program. The City of Austin Historic Preservation Office mission is to protect and enhance historic resources. Austin's Historic Landmark Commission meets monthly to review historic zoning cases, review some demolition permits, and maintains the Austin survey of cultural resources.

Austin is consistently ranked as a desirable community in which to live and work by a number of "Best Of" lists. Managing the success of our city's increasing popularity and overcoming the results of the last half century of growth presents us with significant challenges and opportunities. We must change the way we allow our city to be built. Instead of sprawling retail centers, office parks, and subdivisions accessed by freeways, we must create an efficient transportation network to serve a city of complete communities, activity centers and corridors. In the face of this change, we also need to preserve our unique places, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Counteracting the prevailing trend of sprawling development that consumes vacant land and natural resources, reduces air and water quality, contributes to global warming, and diminishes the natural environment.

Commuters at the MLK Transit Station.

- Preserving our natural resources and systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas, floodplains, creeks, and riparian areas, and maintaining and protecting open space.
- Increasing the supply and variety of housing in and near employment centers to allow more people to live closer to their jobs.
- Meeting the housing and employment needs of a rapidly growing and demographically changing population in a sustainable manner.
- Promoting regional planning and increased coordination between local governments, especially Travis County, agencies, districts, and the State of Texas to address major land use, infrastructure, and transportation challenges.
- Coordinating land use, transportation, environmental, and economic development policies to address the inefficiency of infrastructure having to keep up with greenfield development and incentivize infill and redevelopment.
- Improving land development regulations in place for the extraterritorial jurisdiction to improve clarity, increase certainty, and produce outcomes in alignment with *Imagine Austin*.
- Increasing coordination between local governments to promote more efficient land use and transportation policies and investments. Coordinating on infrastructure is particularly important within Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Maintaining historic neighborhood character and preserving historic resources — especially in the urban core — as the city continues to grow.
- Providing more shopping opportunities, healthy food choices, and services in areas of Austin underserved by these daily necessities.
- Implementing climate change solutions through more proactive regional cooperation.

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities.

BEST PRACTICE: LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REVISION | RALEIGH, NC

Raleigh revised its development code as a priority action identified in the City's new comprehensive plan. Approximately 150 action items — including strategies for mixed use and transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and green building design — were either explicitly proscribed or hindered by existing regulations. Moreover, the development code, amended in a piecemeal fashion across different decades, had become overly complicated and difficult to understand. The process resulted in a draft unified development ordinance that consolidates all development-related regulations (zoning, subdivision, site development, planting, historic preservation, sidewalks and streets, environmental, and so on) into a single user-friendly document. The draft code includes new zoning, design, and development standards, plus graphics and charts to illustrate desired outcomes. It supports comprehensive plan implementation, responds to current market trends, and provides greater predictability for developers, public, and decision-makers. City Council approval of the draft code is anticipated in 2012. *Reference: City of Raleigh, NC.*

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

"The City operates with "efficient, clear, predictable planning goals and processes."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

LUT P1. Align land use and transportation planning and decision-making to achieve a compact and connected city in line with the Growth Concept Map. (See also CFS P1, CFS P21)

LUT P2. Promote regional planning and increased coordination between municipalities and county governments to address major land use and transportation challenges. (See also E P14, CE P5, CE P6, CE P16)

LUT P3. Promote development in compact centers, communities, or along corridors that are connected by roads and transit, are designed to encourage walking and bicycling, and reduce healthcare, housing and transportation costs. (See also HN P4, S P3, C P9)

LUT P4. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change that include designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites. Recognize that different neighborhoods have different characteristics, and infill and new development should be sensitive to the predominant character of these communities. (See also HN P11, HN P15)

LUT P5. Create healthy and family-friendly communities through development that includes a mix of land uses and housing types, affords realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel, and provides community gathering spaces, neighborhood gardens and family farms, parks, and safe outdoor play areas for children. (See also HN P1, HN P5, HN P10, CFS P37, CFS P40, S P3, S P12, S P21, S P29, C P14)

LUT P6. Ensure that neighborhoods of modest means have a mix of local-serving retail, employment opportunities, and residential uses. (See also HN P4)

LUT P7. Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities that place residential, work, and retail land uses in proximity to each other to maximize walking, bicycling, and transit opportunities. (See also HN P7, HN P11, S P11)

LUT P8. Develop land development regulations and standards that are clear and predictable and support the intent and goals of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*.

BEST PRACTICE: IMPROVED COMPATIBILITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS, MIAMI 21, MIAMI, FL

Miami's building boom resulted in high-rise condominiums, parking garages, and commercial buildings that exposed weaknesses in the City's zoning ordinance. Existing codes did not consider building context, height limits, design requirements, and access. Miami became the first major city to adopt a citywide form-based code, known as "Miami 21." The new code divides the city into different zones that focus on building form, design, and relationships between neighboring properties, rather than land use. Transitions between commercial areas and adjacent neighborhoods received special consideration through moderate-intensity uses and design standards intended to "step down" intensity. One of the most critical pieces of the code is the concept of "successional zoning." This allows rezoning only to the next most intense zone if the property abuts a more intense zone. This promotes a controlled evolution of the built environment and minimizes opportunities for developers to acquire a property and request a rezoning to a dramatically different intensity or use.

(See also E P6)

LUT P9. Develop and maintain consistent fiscal policies to direct public investments associated with growth and development to implement *Imagine Austin*.

LUT P10. Direct housing and employment growth to activity centers and corridors, preserving and integrating existing affordable housing where possible. (See also HN P2, HN P3)

LUT P11. Promote complete street[4] design that includes features such as traffic calming elements, street trees, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access throughout Austin, considering the safety needs of people of all ages and abilities. (See also C P17)

LUT P12. Achieve the goals of area transit plans through effective planning, sufficient funding, and continued partnerships between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, and other area transportation providers. (See also HN P4, S P25)

LUT P13. Coordinate with area school districts in the placement of schools and facilities. (See also E P10, E P11, S P17, S P19, S P23, S P28)

LUT P14. Promote safer routes to schools for students of all ages. (See also S P25)

LUT P15. Incorporate provisions for bicycles and pedestrians into all roads such as freeways, toll roads, arterial roadways, and to and from transit stations and stops, and major activity centers. (See also HN P13, CFS P42, S P25)

LUT P16. Educate the public on the long-range need for commitment to a community fully served by a range of transportation options and the benefits of each one.

LUT P17. Develop intermediate transit solutions that allow the City to reach the ultimate goal of a complete transit network over the long-term.

LUT P18. Continue efforts to implement future intercity rail and High Speed Rail in the Austin region. (See also E P16)

LUT P19. Reduce traffic congestion, increase transit use, and encourage alternative transportation modes through such practices as Transportation Demand Management which includes car pooling, flex time work schedules, and subsidizing transit costs for employees. (See also E P16, CE P10)

LUT P20. Locate industry, warehousing,

"Build new neighborhoods where grocery stores, shopping and dining options, and community services (such as post offices, libraries, healthcare, government offices) are easily accessed from nearby neighborhoods via bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Limit 'sprawl' and commutes all over town to access these types of services "

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

[4] Roads that are designed to safely accommodate necessary street functions for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit riders.

BEST PRACTICE: URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | ROANOKE RESIDENTIAL PATTERN BOOK, ROANOKE, VA

In 2008, Roanoke, Virginia, adopted a residential pattern book to preserve and enhance the character and quality of its residential neighborhoods. It serves as an aid for new construction and renovation of existing buildings. The pattern book provides a dictionary of architectural styles found in different types of neighborhoods (downtown, inner-city, suburban areas) and illustrates the characteristics of each housing type. Recommendations for appropriate renovations, materials, paint colors, new construction and additions, landscape, and "green building" practices that will improve and maintain the character of each neighborhood are included.

Reference: http://www.roanokeva.gov/ Photo Courtesy of Roanoke, Virginia.

"We need more 'live here, work here' multi-use development resulting in less vehicular traffic, a greater sense of community, and parks/ped-friendly facilities."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

logistics, manufacturing, and other freight-intensive uses in proximity to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure. (See also E P16)

LUT P21. Ensure that redevelopment in the Edwards Aquifer's recharge and contributing zones maintains the quantity and quality of recharge of the aquifer. (See also CE P2, CFS P12)

LUT P22. Protect Austin's natural resources and environmental systems by limiting land use and transportation development in sensitive environmental areas and preserving areas of open space. (See also CFS P45)

LUT P23. Integrate citywide and regional green infrastructure, to including such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands, and the trail system, into the urban environment and the transportation network. (See also CE P3, CE P4, CFS P47)

LUT P24. Direct hazardous materials/cargo that are being transported through Austin away from heavily populated or environmental sensitive areas.

LUT P25. Develop a comprehensive network of evacuation routes for all areas of Austin.

LUT P26. Reduce noise pollution from transportation, construction, and other sources.

LUT P27. Decrease light pollution from apartments and single-family houses, signage, commercial buildings, parking lot lights, and street lights.

LUT P28. Evaluate and make needed revisions to parking regulations to ensure they balance the needs of various transportation options with creating good urban form.

URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

LUT P29. Develop accessible community gathering places such as plazas, parks, farmers' markets, sidewalks, and streets in all parts of Austin, especially within activity centers and along activity corridors including

BEST PRACTICE: COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES

In the U.S., 28 percent of all trips are less than a mile. While many people are willing to walk or bike short distances, there are few places where it is safe and enjoyable. Complete streets seek to remedy this situation by making it safe and inviting for all users to share public roads. Complete streets should accommodate, but also encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation.

The complete street movement is growing as cities and states across the nation adopt policies and design guidelines. The National Complete Street Coalition provides resources including model state legislation. A policy must routinely "design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation." Cities and states are adopting legislation and design guidelines for streets. There is no one-size fits all design. Each street will vary based on the local context and need. In this Portland, Oregon, image, buses, cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians are safely accommodated.

Reference: National Complete Street Coalition; Complete Streets in NJ, Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University, August 2010. www.njbikeped.org; National Complete Streets Coalition; Photo Courtesy of Kimley-Horn Associates.

Downtown,
future Transit Oriented Developments, in denser, mixed use communities, and other redevelopment areas, that encourage interaction and provide places for people of all ages to visit and relax. (See also CFS P40, CFS P41, S P3, S P29)

LUT P30. Protect and enhance the unique qualities of Austin's treasured public spaces and places such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes; and, where needed, enrich those areas lacking distinctive visual character or where the character has faded. (See also HN P12)

LUT P31. Define the community's goals for new public and private developments using principles and design guidelines that capture the distinctive, diverse local character of Austin. (See also C P17)

LUT P32. Assure that new development is walkable and bikable and preserves the positive characteristics of existing pedestrian-friendly environments. (See also HN P12, CFS P40, CFS P41, S P43)

LUT P33. Apply high standards of urban design to ensure that "complete streets" are safe and accessible for all users. Encourage people to use alternative forms of transportation that are sensitive to the demands of the Central Texas climate.

LUT P34. Integrate green infrastructure elements such as the urban forest, gardens, green buildings, stormwater treatment and infiltration facilities, and green streets into the urban design of the city through "green" development practices and regulations. (See also CE P3, CE P4, CE P11, CFS P47)

Public art was incorporated into the recent Cesar Chavez sidewalk reconstruction.

LUT P35. Infuse public art into Austin's urban fabric in streetscapes along roadways and in such places as parks, plazas, and other public gathering places. (See also CFS P44, C P16)

LUT P36. Transform all major streets into vibrant, multi-functional, pedestrian-friendly corridors. (See also S P3)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES

LUT P37. Promote historic, arts, culture, and heritage-based tourism and events. (See also E P37)

LUT P38. Preserve and interpret historic resources (those objects, buildings, structures, sites, places, or districts with historic, cultural, or aesthetic significance) in Austin for residents and visitors. (See also C P12, C P13)

LUT P39. Maintain and update inventories of historic resources, including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries, archeological sites, etc.

LUT P40. Increase opportunities for historic and cultural learning at the City's public libraries.

LUT P41. Protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the City.

LUT P42. Retain the character of National Register and local Historic Districts and ensure that development and redevelopment is compatible with historic resources and character. (See also C P18)

LUT P43. Continue to protect and enhance important view corridors such as those of the Texas State Capitol District, Lady Bird Lake, and other public waterways.

LUT P44. Preserve and restore historic parks and recreational areas.

LUT P45. The City commits itself to eliminating transportation related deaths and serious injuries through a holistic Vision Zero approach. Improving safety through land use, urban design, transportation engineering, education and enforcement is foundation to Austin becoming a city of complete communities. Safety is the top priority for the transportation system and requires a collaborative, multipronged approach using the guiding principles of Vision Zero:

–Traffic deaths and injuries are a preventable public health issue. Any death is too many.

–People will make mistakes; the transportation system should be designed so those mistakes aren't fatal.

–Safety should be the primary consideration in transportation decision-making.

–Traffic safety solutions must be addressed holistically through:

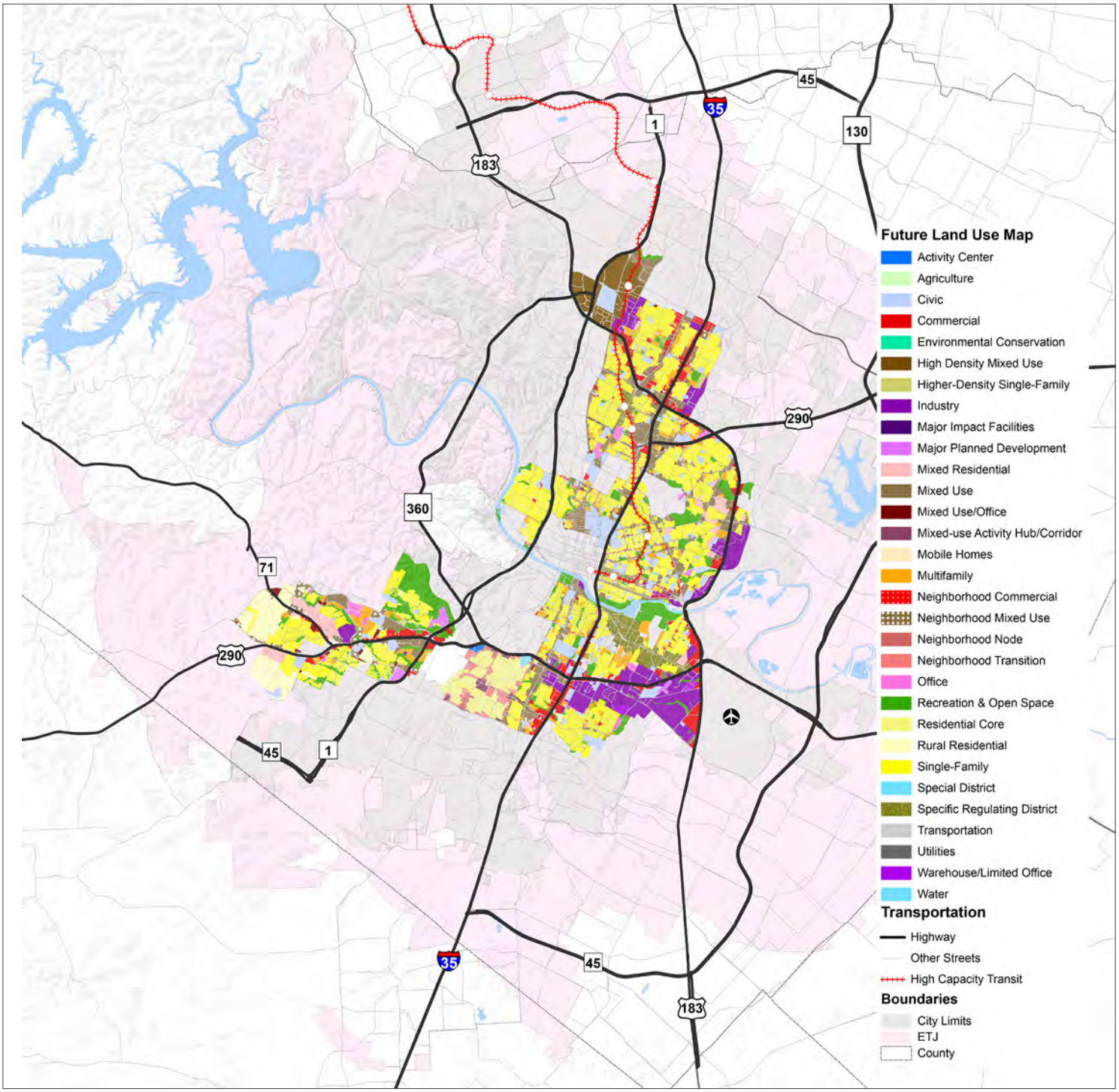
- Education and culture change,
- Enforcement and prosecution, and
- Land use and transportation engineering.

BEST PRACTICE: HISTORIC REHABILITATION BUILDING CODES: NEW JERSEY REHABILITATION SUBCODE | STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In many states, building codes are designed solely for new construction leading to expensive retrofits for existing buildings. In an effort to reduce barriers to building renovation and adaptive reuse, New Jersey adopted a "Rehab Code" in 1999. The code requires structural and safety regulations that work with an existing building's height, area, and fire resistance ratings. In the first year of implementation, the amount of money dedicated to renovation in New Jersey increased by 41 percent. The code has resulted in reduced costs for building owners and increased historic preservation efforts in many older cities across the state. *Reference: http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/offices/rehab.html; Photo Courtesy of NJ Dept. of Community Affairs.*

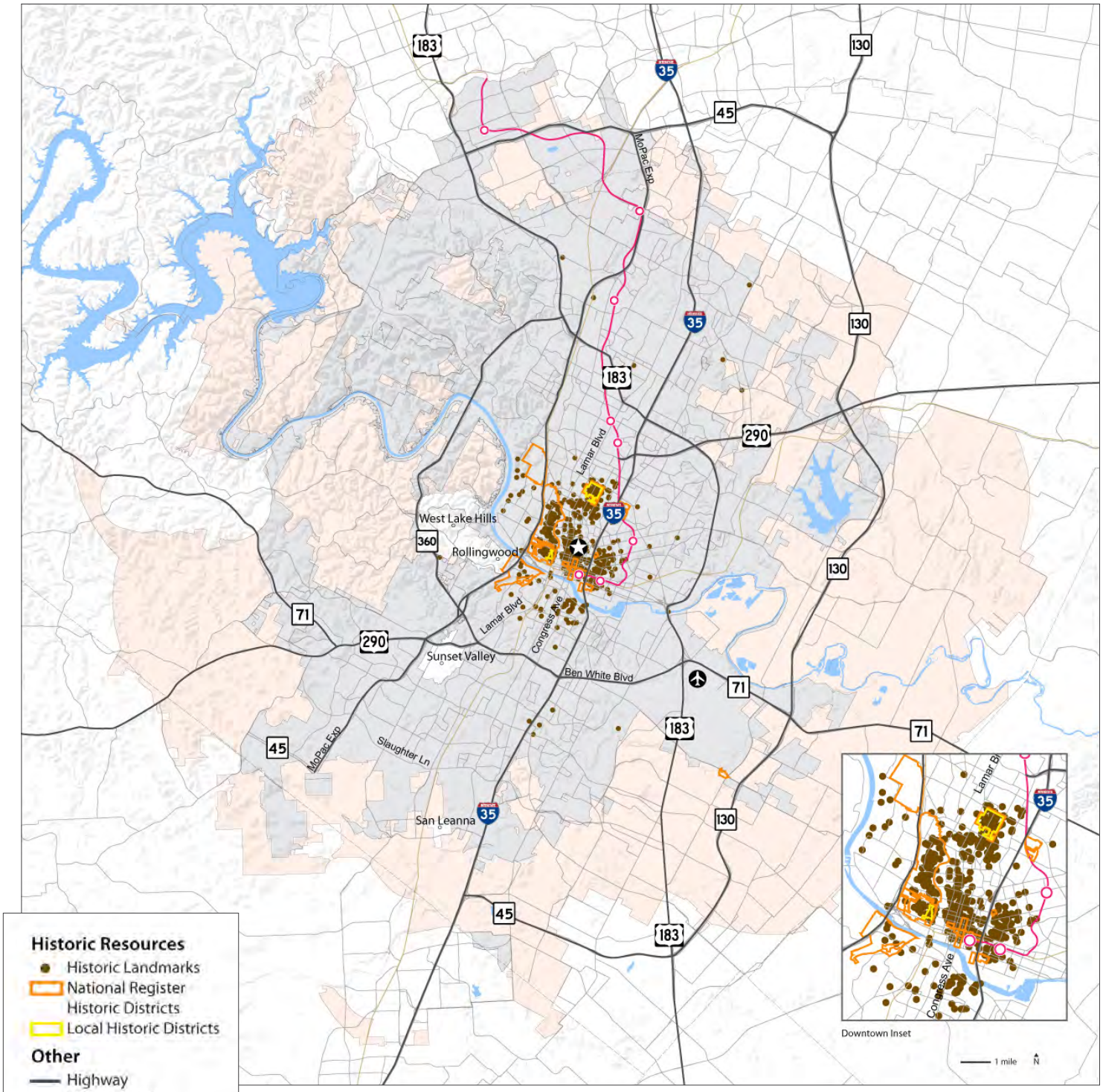
Constructed in 1893, Elizabet Ney's Formosa studio in the Hyde Park neighborhood is now known as the Elizabet Ney Museum. It is home to a collection of her sculptures and busts, including those of Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. In addition to being a local landmark, it is in the National Register of Historic Places.

Figure 4.6 **Combined Future Land Use Map**



The neighborhood planning process has created a number of future land use maps that depict an individual community's aspirations for their neighborhood on a parcel-level basis. These maps directly contributed to the development the Growth Concept Map.

Figure 4.7 **Historic and Cultural Resources**



Mostly clustered in the central city, Austin's designated historic resources include National Register properties and districts, Texas Historic Landmarks, Austin's Historic Landmark designation, and Local Historic Districts.

MIXED-USE

Live + Work + Shop + Play

In a complete community, mixed-use areas help Austinites conveniently meet a variety of needs in one appealing place.

To grow as a livable community, new development should create lively places. It's a traditional idea: People have always been drawn to town centers where they could see neighbors, shop, find work, sell their goods, worship, and visit over a meal or a drink. Historically, small Texas towns developed around a courthouse square. In bigger cities like Austin, corner mom-and-pop stores opened at streetcar or bus stops in the heart of a neighborhood. Hyde Park is a good example; the intersection of 42nd and Duval streets continues to thrive as a mixed-use area today, with cafes, shops, and services that make the neighborhood highly attractive, long after streetcar service ceased in the 1940s.

Looking toward the future, we can make more of these special places that keep Austin an interesting place to live. Well-designed mixed-use areas have attractive streetscapes, pockets of greenery and trees, and public spaces. Examples of recent walkable, mixed-use Austin developments that draw people to live, work, shop, and dine in one area include The Triangle, the 2nd Street Retail District, and the Domain. Emerging projects include the new Market Center at Mueller and the Seaholm District and the Green Water Treatment Redevelopment District downtown.

Case Study: South Congress Avenue Today

With the exception of the iconic Hills Café and the Bel Air Condominiums, the segment of South Congress Avenue south of Ben White Boulevard is largely characterized by narrow or missing sidewalks with numerous driveway entrances, vacant land, used car lots, self-storage facilities, and single-story commercial and industrial buildings separated from the street by parking lots.

Let's Mix It Up!

Well-designed and scaled mixed-use projects and districts are critical. Good urban design is needed to ensure that new mixed-use projects are:

- Inclusive people places
- Walkable and bikeable
- Transit-oriented
- Safe and lively, all day and into the evening
- Compatible with their neighborhood or district
- Inclusive of small, local businesses
- Appealing places with an Austin character
- Sustainable in all aspects

Enjoyable Features

- Sidewalk cafes and other places to meet up
- Smaller, more affordable homes
- Transit stops, sidewalks, bike lanes
- Great people watching and window shopping
- Lunch spots, coffee shops, and happy-hour choices near work

Case Study: South Congress Avenue In The Future

A reimagined South Congress Avenue could become a place where people living in new development and the adjacent neighborhoods can walk and bicycle to local-serving businesses, access high-quality transit to travel throughout the city, and find new opportunities to interact with other people.

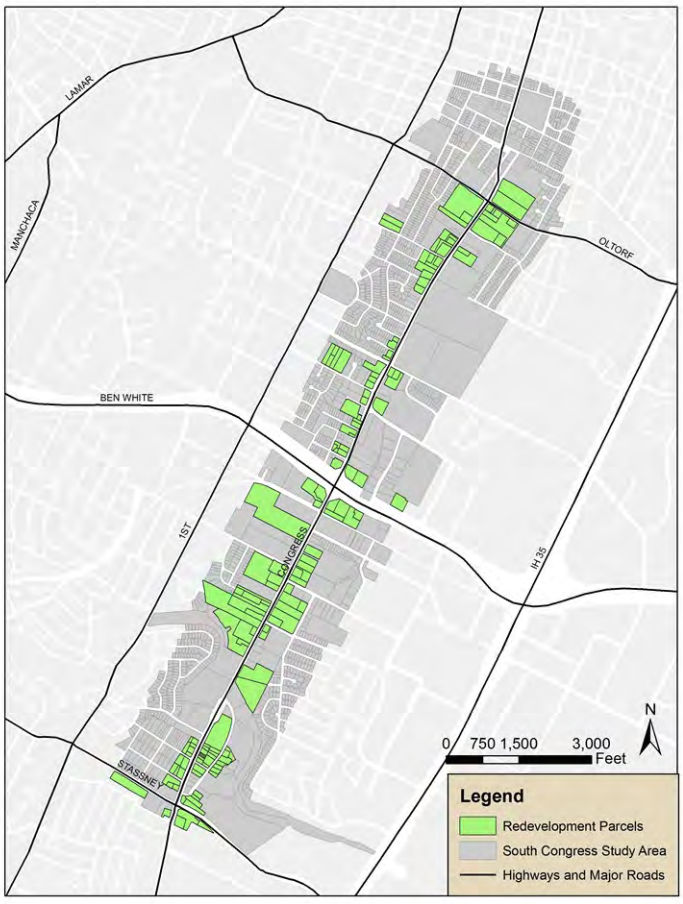
Images: Carter Design Associates.

COMPACT PLACES

Walkable + Sustainable

Gentler on the environment, compact development creates sociable "activity centers" that contribute to our quality of life. The physical form of our city can be a more sustainable, less car-dependent place in the future. That's the idea behind the compact, connected centers and corridors that organize the *Imagine Austin* Growth Concept Map. Concentrating new development in these compact places supports many diverse goals within this comprehensive plan, across all areas of sustainability—for people, prosperity, and the planet.

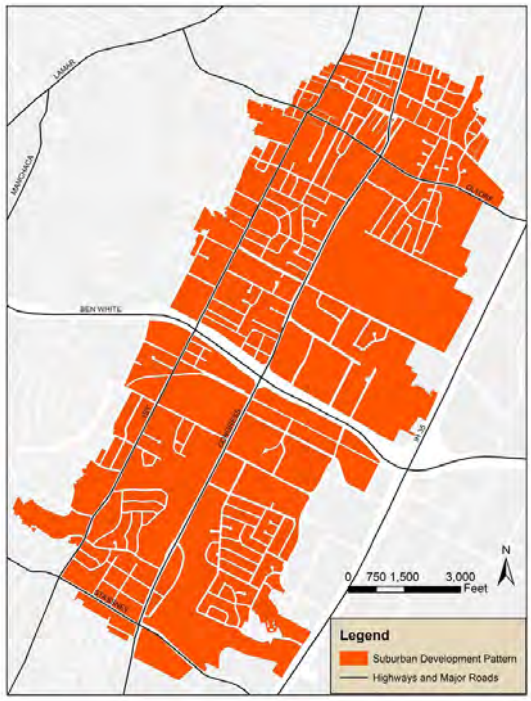
Throughout the *Imagine Austin* process, Austinites expressed a desire to create and enrich compact local places, where people of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels can come together and easily meet their everyday needs and desires.



Mixed Use Compact Scenario

Mixed-Use scenario: would allow nearly 15,000 residents on redeveloped multifamily and commercial sites along South Congress Avenue.

The same number of people would require nine times as much land under the typical suburban development pattern.



Suburban Development Pattern

Images: AngelouEconomics.

Well-designed compact areas with plenty of people, workplaces, and multifamily homes make transit work; they're needed to make frequent, convenient bus and rail service viable. When more people live close to bus and rail stops, transit can run more often and connect more destinations. Compact communities are more supportive of seniors, youths, the disabled, and people who prefer not to drive daily.

Why is compact development more sustainable and eco-friendly? It improves air and water quality and reduces driving. Per person, compact urban areas have a lower carbon footprint than suburban areas. More compact development patterns are lower taxpayer costs for public services, if fewer roads, water and sewer lines, power lines, and other infrastructure are needed to serve far-flung places. Encouraging compact infill projects also reduces development pressures on open space around Austin, helping to support land conservation and environmental protection.

The City completed a study of a section of the **South Congress Avenue Corridor** to better understand the fiscal implications of mixed use, compact development. The study looked at areas more likely to redevelop (based on several assumptions including land values, existing uses, and zoning) and found that compact, mixed-use development would result in an increase of over $9 million in annual sales and use tax revenue. Street reconstruction and water infrastructure costs to accommodate redevelopment were estimated at about $55 million over several years, or a payback period of 5-6 years. In addition, the study found that a mixed-use redevelopment scenario is highly efficient in terms of land consumption. **The same number of new jobs and residents can be accommodated in an approximately 200-acre study area compared with a typical suburban pattern that would require about 2,000 acres of land.**

Let's Go Green!

The *Imagine Austin* scenario planning study compared Austin's current development trends with a more compact, mixed use land use pattern (preferred scenario) to accommodate future population and jobs with the following results:

Land Area Consumed
Trend: 161 square miles
Preferred Scenario: -44 square miles

Mixed-use Development
Trend: 45 %
Preferred Scenario: +36%

Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled
Trend: 36.7 million miles
Preferred Scenario: -1.1 million miles

Development in Edwards Aquifer
Trend: 31 square miles
Preferred Scenario: -10 square miles

Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Trend: 5.36 million tons
Preferred Scenario: -0.17 million tons

A **compact community** is one in which housing, services, retail, jobs, entertainment, health care, schools, parks, and other daily needs are within a convenient walk or bicycle ride of one another. A compact community is supported by a complete transportation system, encourages healthier lifestyles and community interaction, and allows for more efficient delivery of public services.

COMPLETE STREETS

Drive + Walk + Ride + Bike

By designing for people, not just cars, we can make our streets and roadway corridors more safe, attractive, and welcoming for all. Our streets should work better for all Austinites. The City and its citizens own the roadways and sidewalks—so they need to work for everyone, not just drivers. Complete streets are designed to work well for cars, but also to meet the needs of children walking to school, cyclists, people in wheelchairs trying to catch a bus, rail transit commuters, grandmothers who don't drive, and parents jogging with strollers.

Complete streets support active lifestyles that are better for our health. They allow more people to live car-free and independently. They can also help our economy, spurring private investment and redevelopment.

Complete streets are also connected streets. When the street network is a fully connected grid with relatively short blocks, people have many more choices of routes for each trip. This relieves traffic congestion, as people naturally choose the route best for their trip—along a continuum of choices, from most pedestrian-oriented to most auto-oriented streets. In a complete street network, short, local trips can be taken without burdening the big arterial roadways with more cars.

Complete Street Intersection - Mixed-use

Images: WRT

The multilane boulevard with a median serves a mix of regional and local traffic as well as important transit routes. These types of streets have a strong pedestrian orientation. Curbed islands may provide transit stops and separate bicycles from vehicles near intersections. A row of street trees provide shade for pedestrians and, along with the row of parking, help insulate them from vehicle traffic.

By helping to reduce vehicle miles traveled, complete streets and street networks (linked to a complete regional transportation system) support a sustainable future and *Imagine Austin's* goals for reducing our environmental and carbon footprints.

Successful complete street guidelines, policies, and regulations should achieve and consider the following:

- **Guidelines should be context sensitive**. Guidelines should be adaptable to different areas of Austin and the different scales of neighborhoods and other districts. For example, complete street standards and elements will be different for a downtown street versus a small residential street. The environmental, historic, and cultural context of the local area should also be considered. Guidelines must also reflect plans for future development, including the connected street network described by the Growth Concept Map and small area plans.

- **Establish performance standards**. Complete streets are also about drawing a return on investments, including attracting new development or redevelopment, enhancing mobility for all users, and creating a better environment for users. Tracking data on pedestrian and bicycle counts, measuring building activity, and surveying business owners are examples of ways to measure how a street is performing.

- **Include specific implementation steps**. The implementation of complete streets can occur through regular maintenance and/or major capital improvement projects. Property owners can also contribute to construction of complete streets when redeveloping a site. Guidelines should also consider materials and maintenance issues.

- **Limit places for exclusions**. Not every street can or needs to become a complete street. Exclusions are sometimes necessary, but there should be a high standard for allowing exceptions. For example, specific reasons for not installing sidewalks should be described.

Complete Street Intersection - Residential

A narrow two-way street for local bicycle and auto traffic. The parking zone and planting zone create a pedestrian friendly street. The connecting alley is a shared space where pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and plantings are all at the same grade; also referred to as "woonerf." This shared space slows and calms traffic and thus improves pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver safety.

PEOPLE-FRIENDLY PLACES

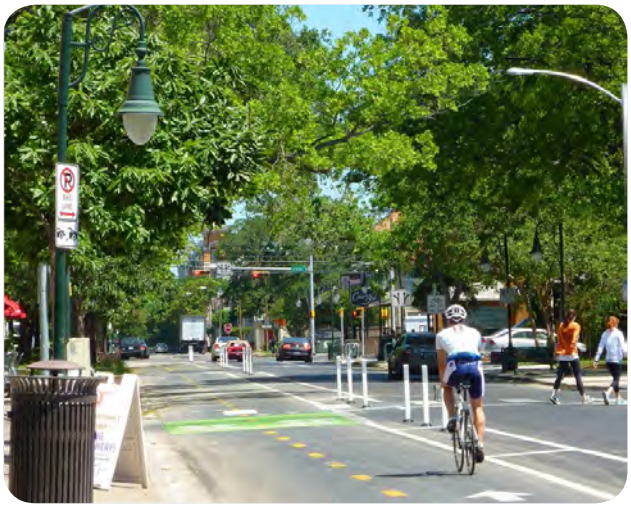
Active + Fun + Attractive

As Austin becomes more compact, creating special urban places where people love to gather can keep our city livable.

We're all drawn to people-friendly places. We have the opportunity to create more of them as Austin grows—places that are active, accessible, comfortable, and sociable. In any city, the places between the buildings need to be designed for people. Great city parks, plazas, trail systems, open-air and farmers markets, streetscapes, waterfronts, gardens, and other public places enhance a city's attractiveness. Well-designed, people-friendly places can beautify our city and its civic realm.

Investments in people-oriented places and parks promote equity; they can be enjoyed equally by city dwellers and visitors of all income levels, ethnicities, and ages. People can live more comfortably in smaller apartments or condos when they have urban parks and other greenspace nearby. We can promote civic pride by creating more great public spaces in Austin. (An example is the City's Great Streets policy for Downtown, which provides people-friendly wide sidewalks, attractive landscaping, and seating.) Placemaking is a powerful economic development tool as well.

The activity centers and corridors in Austin's future will need to be designed as people-friendly places.



Austinites can come together to define a common vision for improving or creating a human-scaled place that they care about. The *Imagine Austin* vision supports development of active, inviting places with unique Austin flavor and character — fun to visit and welcoming for all.

Benefits of People-Friendly Places

- People-friendly public spaces bring people together and help create community.
- Private mixed-use developments that are created using good urban design and "placemaking" principles are more desirable, with enhanced value.
- People feel safer in clean, well-populated places with good lighting and amenities.
- We're more likely to walk, bike, skateboard, or jog in people-friendly places.
- People-friendly places can help make Austin a healthy, sustainable, and economically viable city of the future.

The Spring Terrace apartments by Foundation Communities are an affordable community located in Northeast Austin. Photo courtesy of Foundation Communities.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

BUILDINGBLOCK HN

Complete Community Matrix

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

Austin is a city of diverse neighborhoods that contribute to our community's character and our residents' quality of life. While these neighborhoods offer a mix of housing, single-family houses are the most common. The city has lower rates of homeownership than most other Texas cities. In addition, housing affordability is a major issue in Austin. Over the last 10 years, median housing costs have risen by 85 percent, while household incomes have remained stagnant or declined. Centrally located neighborhoods in east and south Austin have experienced reinvestment that has also led to increasing housing costs and has resulted in renters and some long-time residents having to move to more affordable neighborhoods. Consistent with other goals in the plan, preserving a wide range of household affordability is essential to preserving the character of neighborhoods

National demographic trends and housing preferences could significantly impact the local housing market and affect the provision of public and health services. An increasing number of "Generation Y" or "Millennials"—born between 1980 and 1995—are entering the housing market. This group has demonstrated a demand for more urban lifestyles. In addition, the growing number of "Baby Boomers"—born between 1946 and 1964—retiring and downsizing their homes will also affect housing and social service needs.

In 1997, the City initiated the neighborhood planning program to protect, enhance, and ensure the stability of neighborhoods—mostly located in the urban core. Currently, 48 neighborhood planning areas have completed the planning process and have adopted neighborhood plans (see Appendix G). Challenges and opportunities unique to individual neighborhoods are met through the neighborhood planning process.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- Austin's population is projected to almost double over the next 30 years, requiring new and redeveloped housing to accommodate the City's growing population.
- Austin still has strong patterns of racial, ethnic, and income segregation.
- Median housing and transportation costs are higher in Austin than most Texas cities.
- As the housing market has become more expensive, the location of affordable housing units has shifted to increasingly distant suburban areas, leading to more expensive transportation costs.
- Austin is a majority renter city, due in large part to the high number of college students, recent graduates, and an overall younger population.
- Higher housing costs and slower-growing incomes may prompt more families to rent rather than purchase a home.
- High demand for rental units translates into demand for housing types other than single-family detached houses.
- Infill development may be used to meet the growing demand for higher-density, closer-in affordable housing.

Austin must provide a range of energy and resource-efficient housing options and prices in all parts of the City to sustainably meet the housing needs of all segments of our diverse population. In addition, we need to sustain distinct, stable, and attractive neighborhoods that preserve and reinforce the livability, character, and special sense of place in Austin.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Fostering mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods with a range of housing and transportation choices for our diverse population, community services, facilities, and amenities, in which Austinites can afford to live.
- Maintaining the unique and diverse character of Austin's neighborhoods, while meeting the market demands for close-in housing.
- Balancing new development and redevelopment in lower-income neighborhoods while maintaining the essential character of those neighborhoods.
- Making existing automobile-oriented neighborhoods more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly.
- Developing regulations that create better and context-specific transitions between more intense housing, commercial and office uses, mixed use development, and adjacent, established neighborhoods.
- Encouraging the preservation of affordable housing in neighborhoods across the city and in activity centers and corridors.
- Increasing the diversity of housing choices to reflect the needs of all types of households.
- Improving student stability by preserving existing affordable housing and increasing access to new affordable housing.
- Addressing the housing needs for the homeless and those who are about to become homeless.

HOUSING POLICIES

HN P1. Distribute a variety of housing types throughout the City to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of Austin's diverse population. (See also LUT P5, S P12)

HN P2. Expand the availability of affordable housing throughout Austin by preserving existing affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons. (See also LUT P10)

HN P3. Increase the availability of affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons, through new and innovative funding mechanisms, such as public/private partnerships. (See also LUT P10, S P4, S P13, C P10)

HN P4. Connect housing to jobs, child care, schools, retail, and other amenities and services needed on a daily basis, by strategies such as:

- Directing housing and employment growth to sites appropriate for Transit Oriented Development.
- Coordinating and planning for housing near public transportation networks and employment centers to reduce household transportation costs and vehicle miles traveled. (See also LUT P3, LUT P6, LUT P12, S P22, C P9, C P10)

HN P5. Promote a diversity of land uses throughout Austin to allow a variety of housing types including rental and ownership opportunities for singles, families with and without children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and multi-generational families. (See also LUT P5, S P13)

HN P6. Address accessibility issues and other housing barriers to persons with disabilities or special needs.

HN P7. Reuse former brownfields, greyfields and vacant building sites to reduce negative impacts of vacancy and provide new mixed use and/or housing options. (See also LUT P7, E P6)

HN P8. Encourage green practices in housing construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes. (See also CE P11, CFS P22)

HN P9. Renovate the existing housing stock to reduce utility and maintenance costs for owners and occupants, conserve energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (See also CFS P22)

Chestnut Commons, located in the Chestnut neighborhood, is a successful example of infill development.

BEST PRACTICE: COMMUNITY LAND TRUST | WASHINGTON, DC

A Community Land Trust is a private nonprofit corporation created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community and provide secure affordable access to land and housing for community residents. The New Columbia Community Land Trust, Inc. is a community-based land acquisition, housing development, and community education organization. The Land Trust serves as housing development coordinator/consultant to tenant groups seeking to exercise their "first-right-to-purchase" single-family or multifamily buildings when their landlords put them up for sale. In addition to a ground lease, the Land Trust provides tenant organization support, project feasibility, financial packaging and loan applications, architect and contractor selection, construction monitoring, and permanent financing and close-out.

Reference: http://www.cdsc.org/ncclt/.

In 2039, I would like Austin to be "a city with many small neighborhoods, each having a distinct, preserved character, that are affordable."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question "How has the city improved by 2039?"

I would like to see "self-sufficient neighborhood sustainability: mixed use throughout neighborhoods (walk to food/produce, daily needs, parks, everywhere)."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

NEIGHBORHOODS POLICIES

HN P10. Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to healthy food, schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options. (See also LUT P5, CFS P41, CFS P42)

HN P11. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change and ensuring context sensitive infill in such locations as designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites. (See also LUT P4, LUT P7)

HN P12. Identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability. (See also LUT P30, E P6, CFS P2)

HN P13. Strengthen Austin's neighborhoods by connecting to other neighborhoods, quality schools, parks, environmental features, and other community-serving uses that are accessible by transit, walking, and bicycling. (See also LUT P15)

HN P14. Strengthen planning processes by recognizing that the Comprehensive Plan and small-area plans, such as neighborhood plans, corridor plans, and station area plans, need to respect, inform, and draw from each other.

HN P15. Protect neighborhood character by providing opportunities for existing residents who are struggling with rising housing costs to continue living in their existing neighborhoods. (See also LUT P4)

BEST PRACTICE: PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEAR TRANSIT STATIONS | DENVER, CO

Denver is in the process of a major transit expansion that will include new light rail, bus rapid transit, and transit stations. Housing and transportation costs are high in the region and residents are willing to pay more to live close to transit stations, resulting in higher rents and home values. To specifically combat rising housing prices near transit, the City of Denver is working with public/private partners to create a Transit Oriented Development Fund with a goal of building or preserving more than 1,000 affordable units. In a recent success, the redevelopment of South Lincoln Homes (located across from an existing light rail station) will triple the number of affordable units on site and add amenities for residents. *Reference: Reconnecting America: Preserving Affordable Housing Near Transit, Enterprise, 2010; Photo Courtesy of Denver Housing Authority.*

Neighborhoods should include a mix of housing types.

BEST PRACTICE: "THE WORLD'S GREENEST NEIGHBORHOOD": SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AT DOCKSIDE GREEN | VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Built on the waterfront sites of a former paint factory and shipyard, Dockside Green is a 1.3 million square foot mixed-use development project that embodies best practices in sustainable design. At completion, Dockside Green will have approximately 2,500 residents, office and retail space, a central greenway and creek, and a waterfront park. The design promotes walkability and transit use, but its use of "green building" techniques and low impact design are its most notable features. Dockside Green is constructed of renewable, eco-friendly materials, and aims to reduce its energy footprint through an on-site sewage treatment plant and graywater reuse program, an on-site plant that uses local wood waste to generate heat and hot water, wind turbines, solar panels, green roofs, water- and energy-efficient appliances, and real-time unit energy meters that can be adjusted remotely. Other features include bioretention facilities, pervious paving, and innovative stormwater controls.

Named one of the top ten "green building" projects in 2009, the development has the distinction of achieving the world's highest LEED Platinum scores and becoming the first LEED Neighborhood Development Platinum project. *Reference: http://www.theatlantic.com; Image Credit: Jay Scratch, Flickr, Creative Commons License.*

The University of Texas at Austin, founded in 1883, is one of the largest and most respected universities in the nation. A diverse learning community, it has 51,000 students — from every state and more than 100 countries. The university provides superior and comprehensive educational opportunities at the baccalaureate through doctoral and special professional educational levels. Photo courtesy of Marsha Miller.

ECONOMY

Complete Community Matrix

Austin's economy has grown substantially over the last 20 years. Between 1990 and 2010, the city's labor force increased by more than 50 percent — more than twice the national rate. Despite strong population growth, Austin has maintained relatively low levels of unemployment due to strong business and job creation. Business formation has been particularly strong over the last decade, in part due to the city's entrepreneurial spirit and Texas' business-friendly economic environment. While Austin is home to many large, national and international employers, it is also home to a large number of small and local businesses that contribute both to our economic strength and the cultural vitality of area. In 2008, nearly 72 percent of business establishments in the Austin region had fewer than 10 employees.

Technology, medical, and institutional uses, such as higher education and government, form the base of Austin's economy. In recent years, the proportion of health care, management, arts, entertainment, and food service jobs have increased. In addition, Austin's technology sector has diversified and job growth is expected in high-tech computer and software employment, medicine and medical research, life sciences, clean energy, creative and technology industries, data centers, and professional services. The percentage of workers with college degrees continues to rise and is significantly higher than the rate for Texas.

As described in Core Principles for Action (Chapter 1), Austin must harness its strong economy to expand opportunity and social equity to all residents. The city must build a vibrant, resilient, and diverse economy that celebrates innovation and creativity, provides equitable opportunities for people, and protects the environment. Sustainability includes not only environmental stewardship and social equity, but also economic prosperity for Austin residents and businesses.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- Between 1990 and 2010, Austin's labor force increased by more than 50 percent — more than twice the national rate.
- New retail and office development in surrounding communities is reducing Austin's share of those markets.
- Austin's highly-educated workforce makes the city attractive to high-growth companies seeking to relocate or establish operations in the Austin area.
- Austin continues to create professional and skilled service jobs. However, access to these jobs is limited for many minority groups and individuals with lower educational attainment.
- Austin's creative industries are a key to continued growth.
- Austin's lower wages (relative to other major U.S. cities) creates an impediment to attracting talented workers.
- Entrepreneurship and the ability of existing businesses to adapt to new technologies will continue to drive Austin's economy.
- Austin's natural beauty and climate is critical to the city's attractiveness for business and employees as we compete as a global city.
- Adapting to climate change impacts, such as increased summer temperatures and extended drought, that impose threats to Austin's economic competitiveness.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Sustaining Austin's position as the economic hub of the Central Texas region.
- Ensuring that new employment growth can be accommodated in mixed use centers and corridors and other areas well-served by transit.
- Attracting and developing experienced, higher-level talent in high-growth industries.
- Working with educational institutions and business leaders to expand job training opportunities in areas such as business management, entrepreneurship, and health services to meet expected local industry demands and community needs.
- Creating well-paid jobs in the clean energy industry, particularly in solar manufacturing and installation, energy services provision, and green building.
- Reducing the number of obstacles facing local, small, and creative businesses, such as the availability of physical space for industry and business incubation, affordable commercial rents, education and training, health care, and housing options.
- Preserving small businesses that may be adversely affected by new development.
- Encouraging and supporting the stability and growth of local business to sustain our homegrown business community, including the creative sector.
- Expanding Austin's economic base by positioning the city as a world-class medical research and technology center by establishing a medical school and residency programs.
- Increasing the number of well-paying jobs to allow more people to live and work in Austin in the face of rising costs.
- Preserving Austin's quality of life and expanding its image to more fully embrace its diversity of people, experiences, and opportunities.

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS PROSPEROUS:

Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole — including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions. Development carefully balances the needs of differing land uses with improved transportation to ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable.

In 2039, "my grandchildren can remain in Austin with good, well-paying jobs."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question "How has the city improved by 2039?"

ECONOMIC POLICIES

E P1. Promote and measure business entrepreneurship, innovation, and a culture of creativity. (See also C P1)

E P2. Implement policies that create, nurture, and retain small and local businesses and minority- and women-owned business. (See also C P1, C P2)

E P3. Build on the Austin metropolitan area's position as a leader in global trade. (See also C P7)

E P4. Continue to strengthen partnerships among Chambers of Commerce, state and local governments, and major employers, and leverage incentives to attract and retain major employers. (See also S P19)

E P5. Enhance Austin's draw as a premier national and international tourist destination by strengthening and diversifying the arts and entertainment offerings, enhancing natural resources, and expanding the availability of family-friendly events and venues. (See also LUT P37, C P1, C P7)

E P6. Support up-to-date infrastructure, flexible policies and programs, and adaptive reuse of buildings, so local, small, and creative businesses thrive and innovate. (See also LUT P8, HN P7, HN P12, C P8, C P15)

E P7. Promote Downtown as the premier business district in the region and expand the presence of global finance and trade. (See also C P7)

BEST PRACTICE: TARGETED BUSINESS GROWTH | ASHEVILLE, NC

Greater Asheville, North Carolina established AshevilleHUB as a means to diversify its economy and introduce a new source of employment by focusing attention on the region's economic needs and assets.

Asheville capitalized on its strengths in government, business, academia, and the arts to target climate studies and the growing weather prediction industry, such as global information systems experts, meteorologists, air quality technicians, botanists, and digital media specialists. As a result of this initiative, Asheville is now home to the National Climatic Data Center, the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center, The Renaissance Computing Institute, the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Research Station, and the Air Force Combat Climatology Center.

In addition to the quality jobs emerging from the climate initiative, the industry has invested in telecommunications infrastructure necessary to process data emanating from high speed satellite feeds securely and reliably. *Reference: http://www.ashevillehub.com/.*

E P8. Invest in, construct, and expand major multicultural facilities in Austin's Downtown.

E P9. Establish a medical school and residency programs to spur medical and life science technology investments and meet the region's growing needs for healthcare. (See also S P2)

E P10. Cluster or co-locate high schools, vocational schools, and colleges or universities near employment centers, such as healthcare facilities, biotech, and green technology facilities, to better connect students to potential employment opportunities. (See also LUT P13, S P15, S P17)

E P11. Expand educational offerings and establish cooperative partnerships between Austin Community College, the University of Texas, and other institutions of higher learning to retain students and support target industries' education and training requirements. (See also LUT P13, S P15, CFE P17)

E P12. Engage major employers and institutions of higher education to provide leadership in meeting the needs of chronic unemployed and underemployed residents, such as people with disabilities and former clients of the criminal justice or foster care systems. (See also S P15, S P16, S P18)

E P13. Promote "start-up districts" where new businesses benefit from locating near transportation infrastructure, services, suppliers, mentors, and affordable support facilities. (See also C P9)

E P14. Improve regional transportation planning and financing for infrastructure, such as airports, rail, and roads, to ensure the reliable movement of goods and people. (See also LUT P2)

E P15. Invest in sustainable, affordable utility sources (communications, power, water, wastewater) to meet the needs of increasing population and employment bases. (See also CFS P2, CFS P21, CFS P24)

"By promoting local business and encouraging innovation within the city, we should strive to remain a highly desirable city."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

BEST PRACTICE: SMALL BUSINESS / START-UP INCUBATOR | SANTA FE, NM

The Santa Fe Business Incubator is a not-for-profit economic development organization and an entrepreneurial leader that provides a supportive environment for growing a business in a wide range of industries. It offers office, lab, and light manufacturing space with affordable short-term leases, plus onsite business workshops and seminars and access to the skill and support of its professional staff and experienced business advisors from the community.

Client companies receive exposure to best practices and enhanced financial networks, leading to faster growth and greater business success. Participants benefit from shared services and facilities, minimizing overhead costs and allowing valuable start-up capital to be used for expansion. Since the Santa Fe Business Incubator opened its doors in 1997, it has helped launch and grow more than 70 businesses.

Reference: http://www.sfbi.net/; Photo Courtesy of Santa Fe Business Incubator.

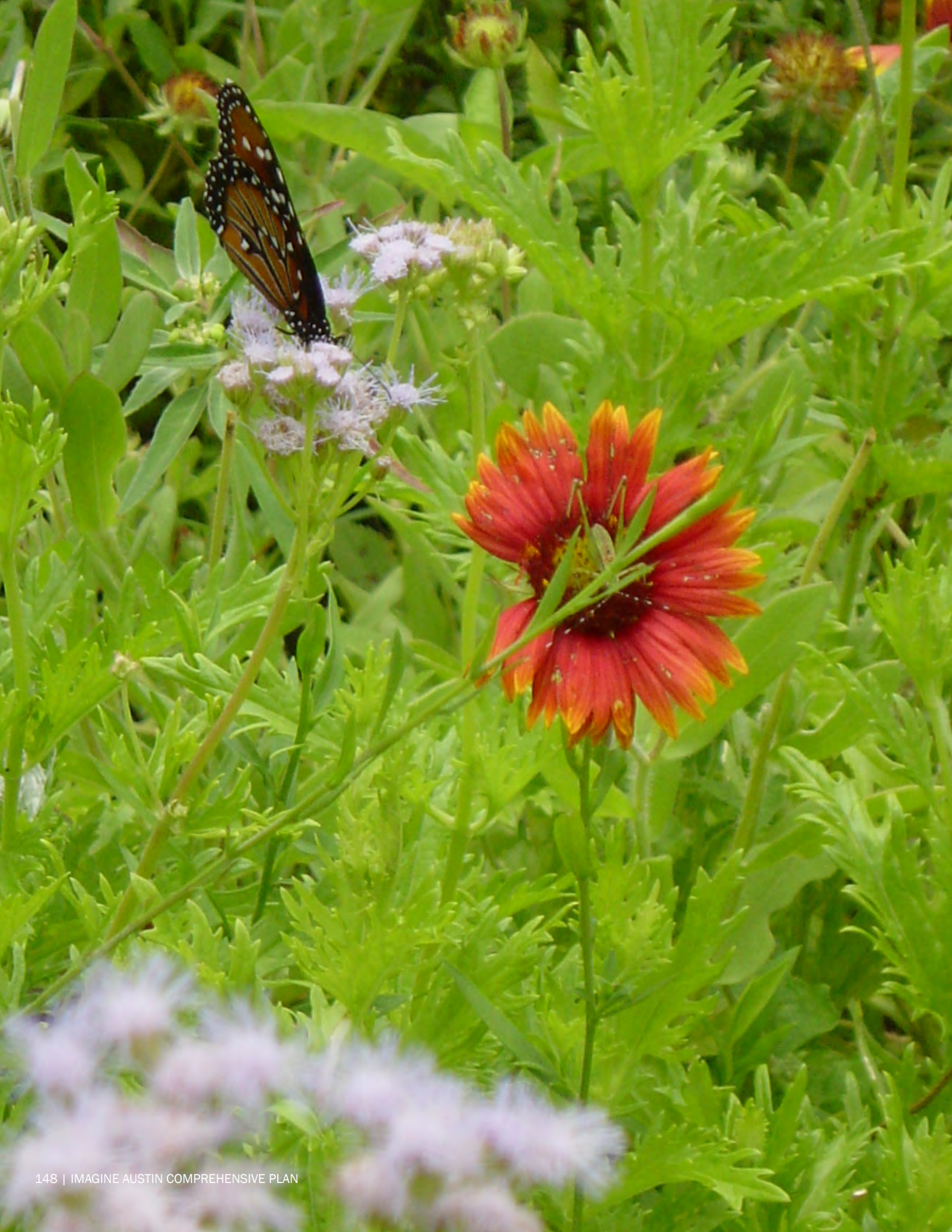
E P16. Expand connectivity within the Texas Triangle (Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston) in order to facilitate movement of ideas, goods, and people for economic prosperity.
(See also LUT P18, LUT P19, LUT P20)

E P17. Invest in the region's people through long-term job training for living wage jobs.
(See also S P15, S P16, S P18)

E P18. Develop a sustainable local food system by encouraging all sectors of the local food economy, including production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste recovery.
(See also CE P13, S P6, S P7)

E P19. Provide ongoing and coordinated digital services to meet the needs of the community by ensuring that all residents have access to internet connectivity, hardware availability, digital literacy training, and access to relevant information.

The three day Austin City Limits Festival attracts attendees from across the globe and contributed an estimated $73 million in 2011 to the local economy.



BUILDING BLOCK CE

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Complete Community Matrix

Austin is "a city that is environmentally healthy, that protects and acknowledges its land's limits."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

As one of the fastest growing regions in the U.S., a major challenge facing Austin and Central Texas is the protection of the region's environmental resources, particularly its watersheds, waterways, water supply, air quality, open space, and urban tree canopy. These resources perform essential functions and provide vital benefits to the city and its residents. As development continues in or near environmentally sensitive areas, ongoing mitigation, preservation, and conservation efforts will be required.

Austin is located along the Colorado River, where it crosses the Balcones Escarpment, an area notable for its diversity of terrain, soils, habitats, plants, and animals. Austin and the region are known for the Colorado River, the Highland Lakes system, and creeks such as Bull Creek, Barton Creek, and Onion Creek. In addition, Barton Springs, the fourth largest spring in Texas, discharges an average of 27 million gallons of water a day from the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer. The springs feed Barton Springs Pool, one of the most popular and visited natural attractions in Central Texas.

Austin must conserve, protect, and support our natural resource systems by developing and adopting better practices for long-term stewardship of Austin's environment.

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE:

Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- The Colorado River provides the majority of Austin's water supply. The City has contracts to meet demand at least through 2050.
- The Edwards Aquifer, one of the most important and sensitive aquifers in Texas, feeds a number of springs in Austin, including Barton Springs and its pool. The aquifer underlies approximately 42 percent of the city's land area.
- Austin has a Drinking Water Protection Zone regulation for watersheds that drain to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, and Barton Springs.
- Central Texas is in compliance with all federal air quality standards. However, the region is in danger of exceeding ground-level ozone due to stricter federal standards.
- Farmland in Travis County decreased by 12 percent between 2002 and 2007 due to urbanization and farmland being taken out of production.
- In 2006, Austin's tree canopy cover was estimated at 30 percent of its total land area.
- The City is engaged in several programs to preserve sensitive lands, including purchasing land for water quality protection.
- In 2007, the City passed the Austin Climate Protection Plan resolution, committing the City of Austin to national leadership in the fight against global warming.
- Regional cooperation is needed to more completely implement climate change solutions.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Protecting Austin's watersheds, waterways, and water supply within Central Texas, one of the fastest growing regions in the country.
- Reducing the impact of development in environmentally sensitive watershed areas, particularly in areas affecting Barton Springs and the Edwards Aquifer.
- Improving regional planning and coordination to provide adequate water-related infrastructure and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Reducing the impact of development on creeks and water courses, mostly east of Interstate 35, prone to erosion and characterized by large floodplains.
- Monitoring and increasing Austin's tree canopy as urbanization occurs.
- Slowing the rate of farmland loss and protecting valuable agricultural land from development.
- Balancing growth and protection of our natural resources to create a future that is sustainable.
- Preserving land with sensitive environmental features and plant and animal habitats from development.

Cracking of soil due to drought conditions.

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

CE P1. Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value. (See also CFS P45)

CE P2. Conserve Austin's natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas, including the Edwards Aquifer, its contributing and recharge zones, and endangered species habitat. (See also LUT P21, LUT P22, CFS P45)

CE P3. Expand the city's green infrastructure network to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and agricultural lands. (See also LUT P23, LUT P34, CFS P47)

CE P4. Maintain and increase Austin's urban forest as a key component of the green infrastructure network. (See also LUT P23, LUT P34)

CE P5. Expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream and water quality protection, and wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture. (See also LUT P2, CFS P45)

CE P6. Enhance the protection of creeks and floodplains to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and improve the quality of water entering the Colorado River through regional planning and improved coordination. (See also LUT P2, CFS P6, CFS P8, CFS P10, CFS P11, CFS P14)

CE P7. Protect and improve the water quality of the city's creeks, lakes, and aquifers for use and the support of aquatic life. (See also CFS P6, CFS P8, CFS P10, CFS P11, CFS P14)

"The City in 2039 has made choices that protect the water (aquifer), trees, food, natural resources, land development, and the City is living within its means (GREEN!!) in regards to nonrenewable & renewable resources and safeguards sensitive areas for infrastructure or building..."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question "How has the city improved by 2039?"

Green infrastructure, such as this drainage pond, retains rain water and reduces runoff, helping to improve groundwater quality, while reducing the need for unsightly concrete culverts and storm sewers.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINED

The Conservation Fund defines green infrastructure as "strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations."

The elements of Austin's green infrastructure network include our parks, the urban forest, urban trails, greenways, rivers, creeks, lakes, gardens, urban agriculture, open spaces, wildlife habitat, and stormwater features that mimic natural hydrology — and the relationships between them and the rest of the city.

BEST PRACTICE: URBAN FORESTRY | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Started in 2004, the far reaching City of Minneapolis Urban Forest Policy coordinates efforts between multiple city departments, other governmental bodies, and the private sector. The purpose of the policy is "to preserve, protect, and improve the health and general welfare of the public by promoting the public benefit of saving, maintaining, and planting trees." This policy is further reflected in the city's comprehensive plan, the Minneapolis Plan, which emphasizes the importance of trees "to the quality of air, water, neighborhoods, and public spaces." The policy directed changes to tree planting and care standards and directed regulatory changes relating to the care and maintenance of trees during construction and development.

Reference: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/grants/canopy/index.htm.

Located in Northeast Austin, Pioneer Farms is a living history museum and functioning farm.

CE P8. Improve the urban environment by fostering safe use of waterways for public recreation, such as swimming and boating, that maintains the natural and traditional character of waterways and floodplains. (See also CFS P46)

CE P9. Reduce the carbon footprint of the city and its residents by implementing Austin's Climate Protection Plan and developing strategies to adapt to the projected impacts of climate change. (See also CFS P5, CFS P9, CFS P22, CFS P23, CFS P34, CFS P38)

CE P10. Improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from motor vehicle use, traffic and congestion, industrial sources, and waste. (See also LUT P15 - LUT P19, CFS P42, S P3, S P25)

CE P11. Integrate development with the natural environment through green building and site planning practices such as tree preservation and reduced impervious coverage and regulations. Ensure new development provides necessary and adequate infrastructure improvements. (See also LUT P34, HN P8, CFS P22)

CE P12. Adopt innovative programs, practices, and technologies to increase environmental quality and sustainability and reduce Austin's carbon footprint through the conservation of natural resources. (See also CFS P9)

CE P13. Incent, develop, and expand the market for local and sustainable food, which includes such activities as farming, ranching, and food processing. (See also E P18, S P6, S P7)

CE P14. Establish policies that consider the benefits provided by natural ecosystems, such as ecological processes or functions in wetlands and riparian areas, that have value to individuals or society. (See also CFS P16, CFS P17, CFS P19, CFS P20)

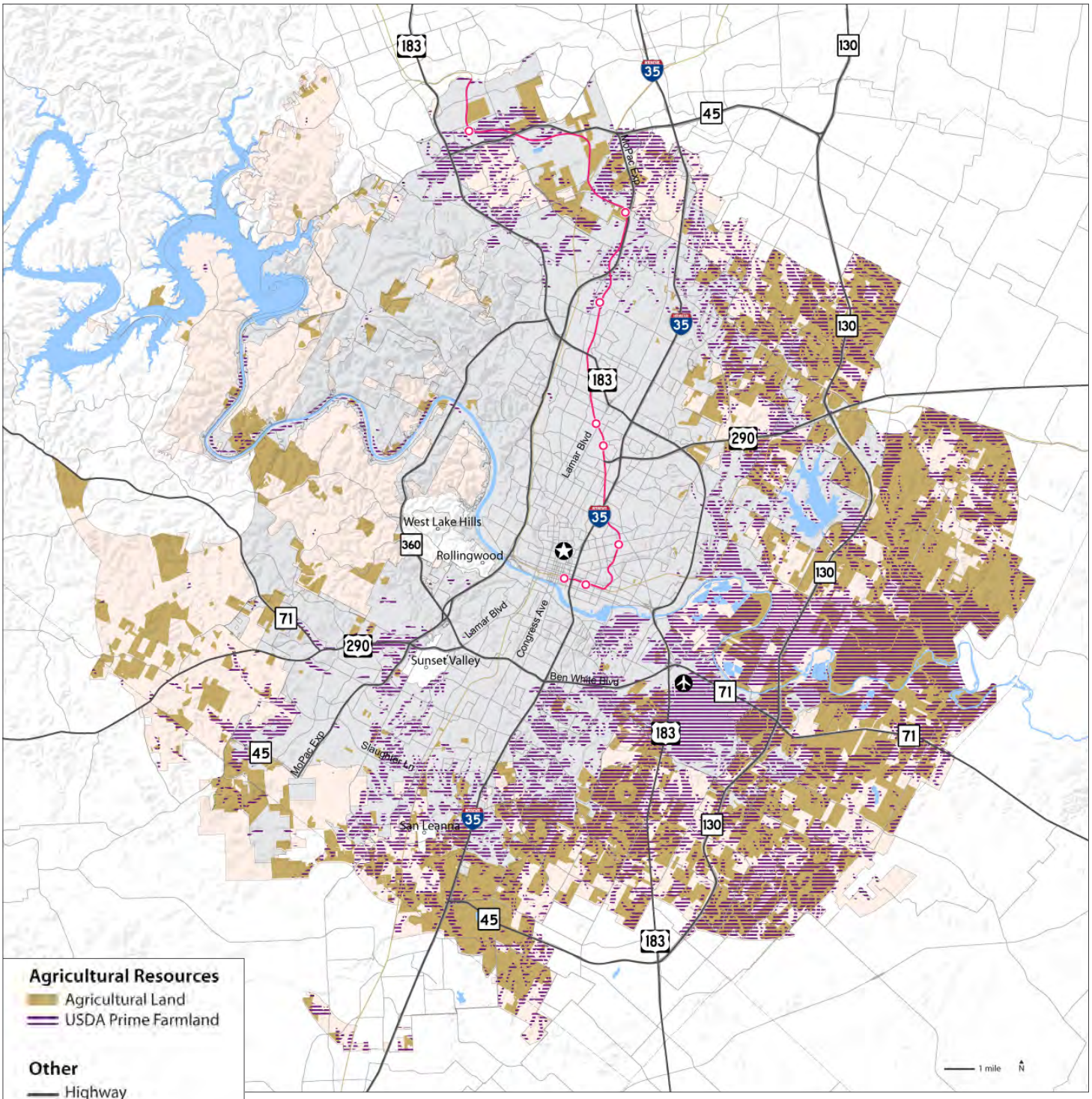
CE P15. Reduce the overall disposal of solid waste and increase reuse and recycling to conserve environmental resources. (See also CFS P15, CFS P18, CFS P20)

CE P16. Expand and improve regional collaboration and coordination in preserving Central Texas' natural environment. (See also LUT P2, LUT P23, CFS P48)

BEST PRACTICE: URBAN AGRICULTURE GREENSGROW FARMS | PHILADELPHIA, PA

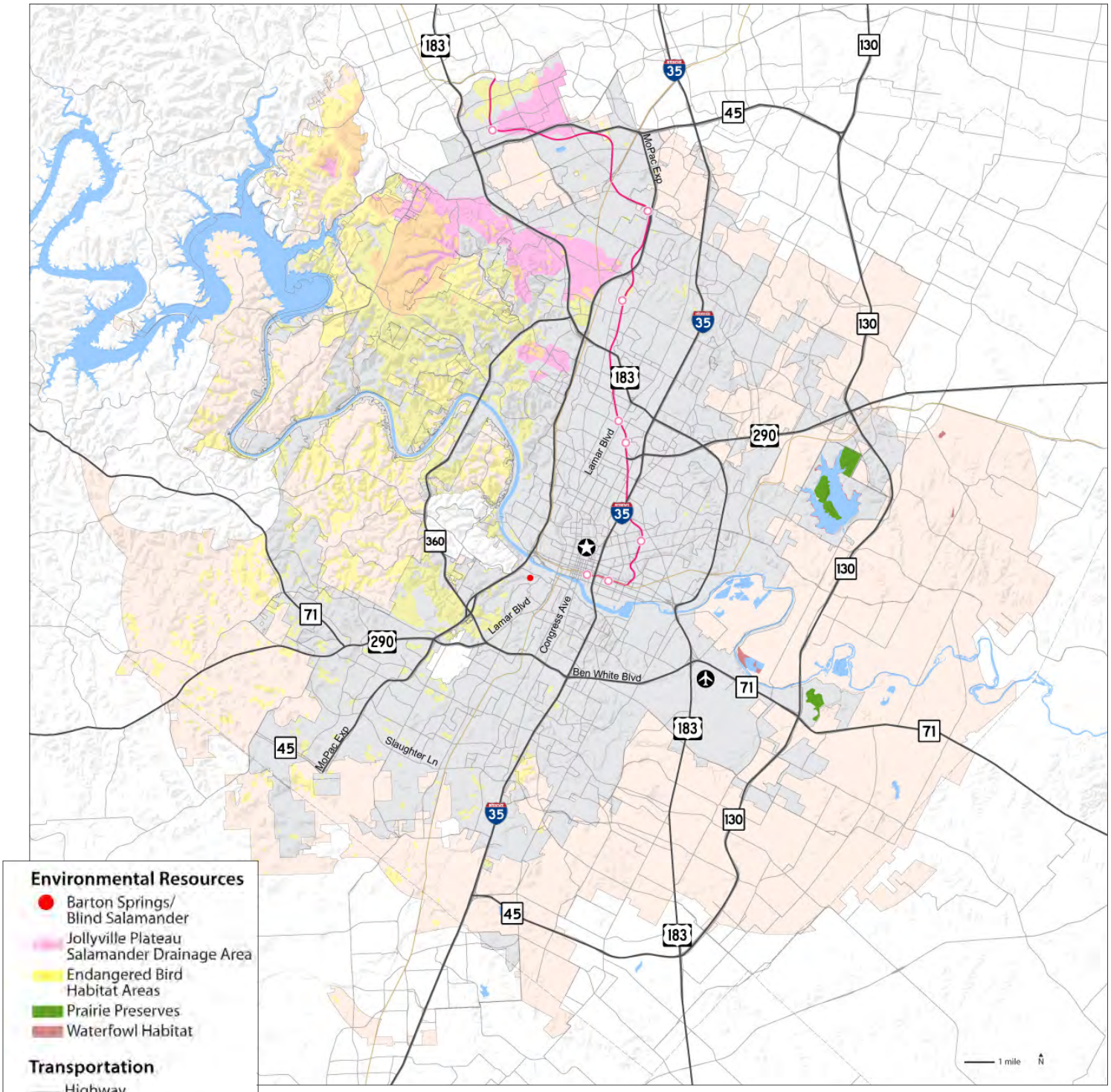
Greensgrow Farms is located in Philadelphia's New Kensington neighborhood on a previously vacant lot. In the summer of 1998, the owners transformed the former galvanized steel plant and Environmental Protection Agency clean-up site into a three-quarter-acre specialty hydroponic lettuce farm. The farm now produces a range of vegetables and flowers and supports a retail center for organic food and live plants. The business is profitable and provides employment opportunities for about six seasonal employees and five full-time employees. *Reference: www.greensgrow.org; Image courtesy of Greensgrow Farms.*

Figure 4.8 **Agricultural Resources**



Most of the agricultural lands are located within Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction. The agricultural land east of Interstate 35 is largely suited for farming, whereas the land to the west is mostly better suited for rangeland.

Figure 4.9 **Species Habitats**



The majority of species habitat is endangered species habitat located in the environmentally sensitive areas west of the Mopac expressway. The most significant waterfowl habitat is located at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Facility. The most significant prairie preserves are located near the Decker Creek Power Station and Lake Walter E. Long.

Figure 4.10 **Tree Canopy and Restoration Areas**

Austin's tree canopy in 2011 identifies areas with and without tree coverage. It also identifies sites with potential priority woodlands for preservation.

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CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Complete Community Matrix

City facilities and services include the infrastructure and services that underlie day-to-day life in Austin. They create and convey many of the necessities of modern life—electricity, transportation, solid waste collection, wastewater, drainage, and drinking water—and help define and shape our city. They also provide public safety, health and other services, and recreational opportunities for Austin's residents.

The City of Austin is comprised of approximately 30 departments and about 12,000 employees that provide direct services to residents and other departments. In addition to typical municipal services (such as police, fire, emergency, parks, libraries, solid waste, and streets), Austin also operates an electric utility (Austin Energy), a water/wastewater utility (Austin Water Utility), the Palmer Events Center, the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center, and the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

Potable Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Drainage

In 2008, Austin Water Utility managed water and wastewater service connections, serving an overall population of approximately 895,000 people. Austin Water's total operating costs for fiscal year 2009 were approximately $400 million. In addition, Austin Water Utility manages the City's wildlands conservation, water conservation, and water reclamation programs, and operates the Center for Environmental Research at Hornsby Bend.

Austin Resource Recovery is responsible for citywide litter abatement and collection of discarded materials. In addition to providing weekly garbage and yard trimmings collection services, the City offers bi-weekly curbside recycling to its customers. Austin Resource Recovery's annual operating costs are approximately $66 million. Its primary source of revenue is residential solid waste collection fees.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- Continued suburban sprawl can strain the City's public safety budget, as more development on the city's fringes will require additional police and fire stations to ensure adequate response times.
- Low-density, suburban development will require costly water and sewer infrastructure extensions.
- Despite having an above-average amount of parkland citywide, many neighborhoods are not within walking distance of a park. The absence of these smaller parks means that many areas of the city are not adequately served by the park system.
- Austin is a regional leader in conservation strategies, but must be proactive in planning for supplying water and other municipal services to its rapidly-growing population.
- More residents and businesses need to recycle to reduce the amount of solid waste deposited in regional landfills.
- The City of Austin's Municipal Climate Action Program requires all departments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations and facilities.

Austin Resource Recovery serves approximately 164,000 residential customers, 235,000 anti-litter customers, and 2,600 commercial customers, who discard approximately 25 percent of all materials collected in Austin each year.

The Watershed Protection Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the municipal storm water conveyance systems for the City. This includes the area's natural water resources, which are a source of community pride, drinking water, recreational opportunities, attractive views, and support for the region's green infrastructure. Watershed Protection maintains more than 900 miles of storm drainpipe, ranging in size from as small as six inches in diameter to the Little Shoal Creek Tunnel, which is a 10-foot concrete arch. In addition to minor channels and ditches, the system includes over 29,000 storm drain inlets, 3,200 manholes, 4,500 outfalls, 9,000 culverts, and 4,000 ditches. This system is intended to efficiently convey stormwater flows to the primary drainage system in Austin—its creeks. When the secondary drainage system is inadequate, localized flooding usually occurs.

Energy

Austin Energy serves 388,000 customers (with a population of more than 900,000), including several communities outside of Austin's city limits. In 2008, it had approximately 2,760 megawatts of generation capacity, including generation from coal, nuclear, natural gas, wind, solar, and landfill methane. From 1982 to 2003, Austin Energy's conservation, efficiency, and load-shifting programs reduced peak demand by 600 MW. Since 2004, the utility has been working on a goal to reduce peak demand by an additional 700 MW by 2020.

Austin Energy maintains more than 5,000 miles of overhead primary and secondary power lines, 4,000 miles of underground primary and secondary lines, and 48 substations.

Public Safety

Austin's public safety departments operate as three separate services: police, fire, and emergency medical services (jointly funded by the City of Austin and Travis County). The three services maintain more than 70 stations throughout Austin and Travis County and employ more than 3,700 people.

Public Buildings and Facilities

Municipal functions are distributed across the city, but the majority of the City's administrative functions operate from either City Hall or One Texas Center in downtown Austin. Austin's building inventory includes approximately 250 facilities, both owned and leased, such as offices, libraries, recreation centers, fire stations, and service/fleet operating facilities.

The Austin Public Library System has 20 branch libraries, the John Henry Faulk Central Library, and the Austin History Center. Austin Public Library received more than 3.2 million visits in 2007-08. Austin libraries provide many residents their primary access to the internet; in 2007-08, 900,000 computer users logged in at a library. In 2006, voters approved bonds for an approximately 200,000 square foot, state-of-the art central library that is scheduled to open in 2015.

Recreation and Open Space

The city has more than 35,000 acres of parks and preserves, consisting of metropolitan parks, district parks, neighborhood parks, school parks, pocket parks, greenways, waterways, golf courses, senior activity centers, tennis courts, special parks, and nature preserves. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management of parks, recreational centers, museums, arts and performance spaces, a botanical garden, a nature center, and an urban forestry program. The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments work together to create an interconnected bicycling, pedestrian, and trails network. Parks, trails, and preserves contribute to the city's green infrastructure network. This network includes the natural resource areas described in the Conservation and Environment building block, such as wetlands, woodlands, waterways, conservation lands, forests, farms and ranches, and outdoor recreational areas and trails.

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Continuing to provide high-quality public services to a city that is expanding through suburban development, annexation, and higher-density redevelopment in the urban core.
- Improving the city's resiliency to address the effects of climate change, including hotter, drier seasons and droughts.
- Expanding our commitment to reducing water use through conservation, reclamation, and drought-management programs, while identifying and addressing the effects of doing so on revenue and operating expenses.
- Reducing the volume of stormwater runoff and improving the quality of groundwater infiltration.
- Reducing energy consumption to meet the energy efficiency goals set by Austin Energy and the greenhouse gas reduction goals of the Austin Climate Protection Plan.
- Increasing recycling rates from multi-family, commercial, institutional, industrial, and manufacturing waste generators.
- Developing more local recycling and composting facilities with capacity to handle large volumes of discarded materials.
- Adapting to and taking advantage of new technologies in police, fire, and public library services.
- Ensuring public safety facilities have the space and additional land to house staff and equipment in locations that serve existing and new development and minimize response times.
- Providing services to a city with a changing demographic profile. The increase in older and younger Austinites will require additional services oriented to these age groups. The changing ethnic and racial composition of the city will also shift demand for certain services, including an increased need for multilingual communications.

In 2039, "Austin has expanded public services and is providing libraries, parks, public education, and health services to all its residents. There is plenty of affordable housing..."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question "How has the city improved by 2039?"

- Providing sufficient funding for maintaining parks and other recreation facilities as the acreage and number of facilities continue to increase.
- Strengthening partnerships between the City of Austin and private organizations, volunteers, and community groups to efficiently provide open space and recreation.
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas as open space and providing parks within walking distance of all city residents.
- Maintaining existing public infrastructure and facilities, such as streets, public buildings, parks, and water, wastewater, and drainage systems, while planning for new investments to accommodate future growth and the community's desire for new programs and infrastructure.
- Collaborating with Travis, Williamson, and Hays Counties, as well as other partners, to address the challenges identified above.

"All government levels (city, regional, state) and organizations coordinate in an efficient manner."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

WASTEWATER, POTABLE WATER, AND DRAINAGE POLICIES

CFS P1. Deliver potable water to Austin's residents as the population grows and maintain an efficient and sustainable water and drainage system in support of the Growth Concept Map. (See also LUT P1)

CFS P2. Maintain water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure regularly throughout its useful life and replace aged infrastructure as conditions warrant. Continue to ensure safe and reliable service. (See also HN P12, E P15)

CFS P3. Continue to develop and evaluate decentralized wastewater processing site options, including package plants and satellite facilities, to complement centralized facilities.

CFS P4. Expand efforts to diversify water sources, including through reuse, conservation, and efficiency measures for long-term and reliability planning.

CFS P5. Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather, and other potential impacts of climate change on the water supply. (See also CE P9)

CFS P6. Protect the public water supply and the health and safety of users. (See also CE P6, CE P7)

CFS P7. Reduce the threats flooding poses to public safety and private property.

CFS P8. Reduce pollution in all creeks from stormwater runoff, overflow, and other non-point sources.[5] (See also CE P6, CE P7)

CFS P9. Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation, and other water resource stewardship programs. (See also CE P9, CE P12)

[5] Pollutants from a source that is difficult to pinpoint, such as chemicals from lawns and fields, trash, oil, and animal and human wastes.

CFS P10. Protect and improve the health of Austin's streams, lakes, and aquifers for sustainable uses and the support of aquatic life. (See also CE P6, CE P7)

CFS P11. Protect the health of creeks and prevent public and private property damage by minimizing erosion. (See also CE P6)

CFS P12. Maintain or enhance the existing rate of recharge in the Edward's Aquifer. (See also LUT P21)

CFS P13. Meet or exceed all local, state, and federal permit and regulatory requirements for such processes and programs as Designated Use Support status and the National Flood Insurance Program. (See also CE P6, CE P7, CFS P14)

CFS P14. Integrate erosion, flood, and water quality control measures into all City of Austin capital improvement projects. (See also CE P6, CE P7)

SOLID WASTE POLICIES

CFS P15. Create a regional solid waste management plan that addresses the waste management implications of continued growth in Central Texas. (See also CE P15)

CFS P16. Expand waste diversion rates and services: (See also CE P15)

- o Require recycling at apartment complexes, retail establishments, restaurants, and manufacturers.
- o Increase the types of materials that can be added to curbside collection.
- o Develop more effective recycling practices for construction and demolition debris.
- o Increase composting at homes and businesses.
- o Improve recycling of materials and food scraps in public spaces, in trash receptacles on city streets, and at public events.

Austin Resource Recovery collects hazardous waste and diverts it from landfills.

BEST PRACTICE: RECYCLING RATES AND SERVICES | SAN JOSE, CA

San Jose has a reputation for innovation and leadership in recycling. In 2009, the Solid Waste Association of North America awarded the City its Recycling System Excellence Award for its efforts in diverting nearly 80 percent of apartment waste from landfills through a processing system that removes recyclables and composts organic materials.

San Jose is also working to reduce the amount of construction waste headed to landfills—which can account for 30 percent of total materials. Under the Construction and Demolition Diversion Deposit program, San Jose collects a mandatory deposit, based on square footage and project type, through building permitting. The deposit is fully refundable with proof that construction and demolition materials are being diverted from landfills. Materials can be taken to a certified facility for recycling, re-use, or donation.

Reference: www.recycletogether.com, http://www.sjrecycles.org/construction-demolition/cddd.asp.

Irrigating with reclaimed water reduces waste and saves water for drinking.

CFS P17. Divert hazardous waste from landfills and increase participation in recycling hazardous materials by developing programs and practices such as on-call door-to-door hazardous waste collection program. (See also CE P15)

CFS P18. Divert bulk items, such as furniture and other household items, from landfills and consider ways to recycle or reuse these materials. (See also CE P15)

CFS P19. Improve awareness and participation in the City's recycling programs through traditional and emerging methods such as large-scale media, social marketing campaigns, and presence at public events.

CFS P20. Continue to work with the Texas Product Stewardship Council and others to advocate for statewide "extended producer responsibility" initiatives that require manufacturers and retailers to stop using "hard to recycle" and/or toxic products. (See also CE P15)

ENERGY POLICIES

CFS P21. Support the Growth Concept Map and provide affordable, reliable electricity to Austin's residents and businesses. (See also LUT P1, E P15)

CFS P22. Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and improvements that make buildings more energy efficient. (See also HN P8, HN P9, CE P9, CE P11)

CFS P23. Reduce peak energy demand and total electric generation capacity that Austin Energy needs to maintain by encouraging users to use electricity during off-peak hours. (See also CE P9, CE P11)

CFS P24. Increase the share of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and biomass, used by Austin Energy to generate electricity, including infrastructure for on-site sources throughout the city. (See also HN P8, E P15, CE P9)

PUBLIC SAFETY POLICIES

CFS P25. Reduce crime rates, thereby improving the perceived and actual safety in neighborhoods across Austin.

BEST PRACTICE: FOSTERING SAFE COMMUNITIES CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ACTION HOUSTON, TX

One of the goals of the GO Neighborhoods program of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Houston is to support healthy neighborhood development through livable and safe environments. GO Neighborhood safety team members instructed more than 40 neighborhood leaders about best practices and principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The principles are part of LISC's SafeGrowth training and certification program for community leaders.

The new trainees will analyze problems areas using a safety audit form and work with police, civic organizations, community residents, and property owners to begin applying these principles (such as lighting, access control, and "eyes on the street") in their neighborhoods. *Reference: www.go-neighborhoods.org www.lisc.org.*

CFS P26. Incorporate community outreach and involvement in public safety in order to build trust between the police force and Austin's minority communities. (See also S P5)

CFS P27. Provide public safety services to newly annexed areas and areas with increased activity, such as new neighborhoods, redevelopment areas, transportation corridors, and activity centers.

CFS P28. Provide preventive safety education (fire, police, and emergency services) to Austin residents, with particular attention paid those individuals who speak little or no English.

CFS P29. Increase the use of joint or shared facilities between public safety and other city service providers, when possible, to provide residents with efficient services, reduce costs, and maintain public safety infrastructure. (See also S P28)

CFS P30. Improve collaboration between public safety providers and city planners to incorporate best development practices to reduce crime by such means as improved lighting, density, better designed neighborhood ingresses and egresses, and putting more "eyes on the street." (See also LUT P30)

CFS P31. Collaborate and coordinate with other public safety agencies at the county, state, and federal levels to share resources and address the increasingly regional nature of crime.

CFS P32. Maintain quality standards in recruiting and training new public safety officers and strive for a public safety workforce that reflects Austin's changing demographics.

CFS P33. Continue to improve education and training of public safety employees and build new skills in using technology to improve public safety.

BEST PRACTICE: JOINT USE FACILITIES

Many local governments have entered into agreements with their school districts for joint use of educational facilities. Under these agreements, a school property functions as an educational facility during the day and a community facility during non-school hours. Joint use is particularly valuable in the current economy, as many local governments have limited funds for new capital expenditures. Shared facilities reduce the costs of land acquisition, construction, maintenance, and operation, and may allow a community to better meet the infrastructure demands of new development. Joint use agreements typically allow the public to use a school's playing fields and gymnasium, but many jurisdictions have agreements that enable sharing of multipurpose rooms and classrooms, cafeterias, computer/media centers, libraries, auditoriums, pools, and stadiums (this often happens when a new school is constructed with the intent of using it for educational and community purposes). Shared parking may be included to prevent community users from parking along nearby neighborhood streets or to add parking spaces to an urban neighborhood. Joint use transforms the school into a true community center that serves a wide range of users while minimizing costs.

Joint use agreements must be authorized by state law. Section 11.165 of the Texas Education Code permits school districts to allow after hours use of school facilities for libraries, tutoring, and recreational purposes.

The Twin Oaks Library in the Bouldin neighborhood, which opened in 2010, incorporates green building principles.

PUBLIC BUILDING POLICIES

CFS P34. Improve access to neighborhood libraries to promote the establishment of complete communities throughout Austin. (See also S P3)

CFS P35. Distribute public buildings where neighborhood services are located and other accessible locations throughout the city. (See also S P14)

CFS P36. Improve multi-modal public transportation access to the City's public buildings and facilities, including the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

CFS P37. Integrate public buildings and facilities into active, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods and complete, healthy communities. (See also LUT P5, S P3)

CFS P38. Reduce energy consumption and waste generation in all public buildings to meet the City's greenhouse gas reduction and Zero Waste goals. (See also CE P9)

CFS P39. Develop public buildings and facilities that create healthy work environments and educate the public about energy-efficient, sustainable building, and greening best practices.

CFS P40. Serve Austin's diverse, growing population and provide family-friendly amenities throughout the city by developing new parks and maintaining and upgrading existing parks. (See also LUT P5, LUT P29, LUT P32, S P3)

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

CFS P41. Ensure and increase equitable access to and opportunities for arts, recreation, and leisure activities for all ages throughout the City. (See also LUT P29, LUT P32, HN P10, C P14)

CFS P42. Increase connectivity between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to parks and greenways through the use of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, and trails. (See also LUT P15, HN P10)

CFS P43. Maximize the role of parks and recreation in promoting healthy communities and lifestyles. (See also S P3)

CFS P44. Feature superior design in parks and recreational facilities and include opportunities for public art and sustainable design solutions. (See also LUT P35, C P16, C P17)

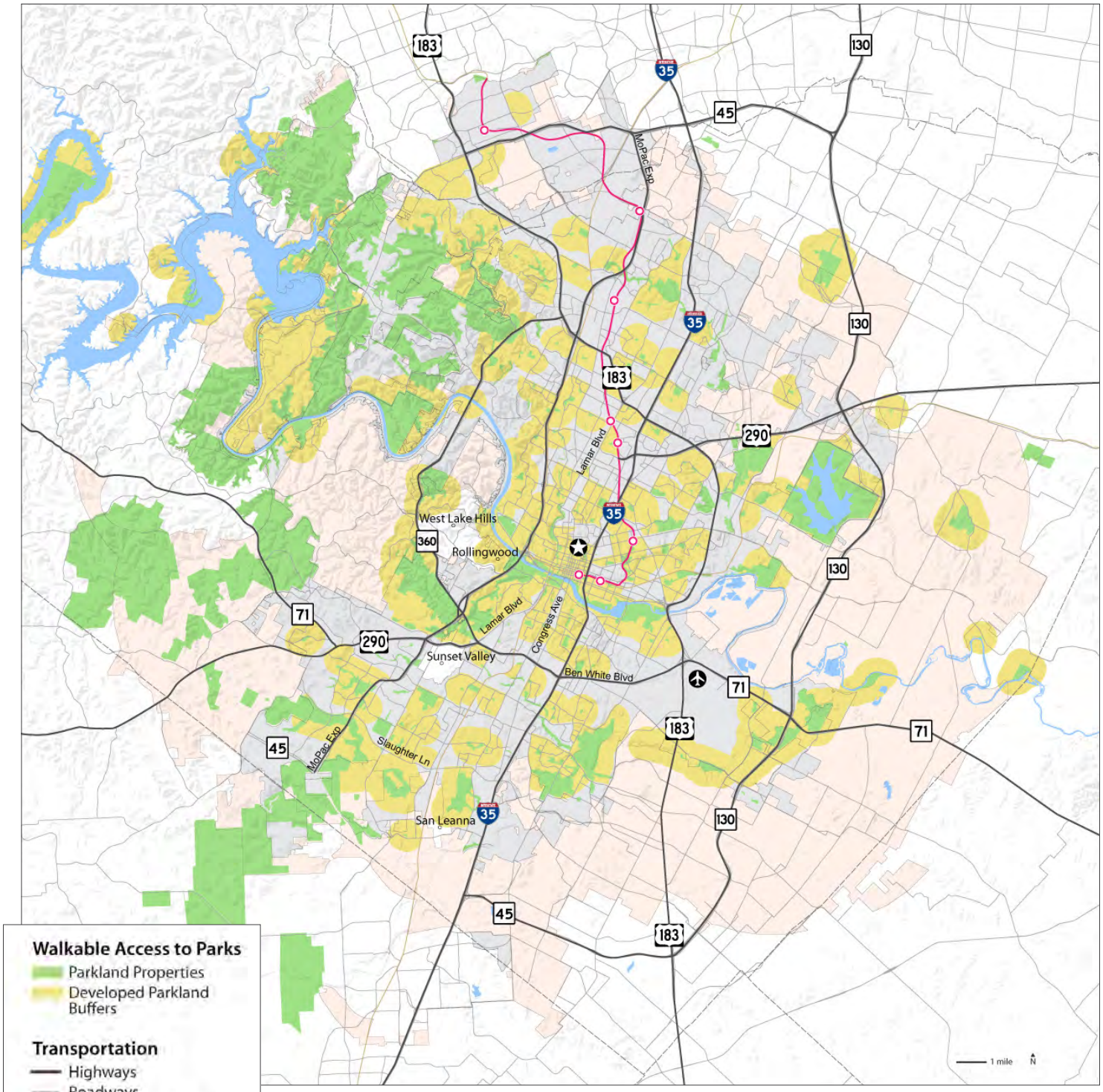
CFS P45. Expand the amount of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas for use as open space and passive recreational areas. (See also CE P1, CE P2, CE P5)

CFS P46. Foster the use of creeks and lakes for public recreation and enjoyment in a manner that maintains their natural character. (See also CE P8)

CFS P47. Extend existing trail and greenway projects to create an interconnected green infrastructure network that includes such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands linking all parts of Austin and connecting Austin to nearby cities.
(See also LUT P23, LUT P34, CE P3)

CFS P48. Maintain existing partnerships and develop new relationships among City of Austin departments, regional governments, other governments, community organizations, and volunteers to support recreational services and achieve higher levels of service.
(See also CE P16)

Figure 4.11 **Walkable Access to Parks**



Walkable access to parks reflects the City Council's 2011 policy that publicly-accessible and child-friendly parks or green space be provided within 1/4-mile walking distance of all urban core residents and within 1/2-mile walking distance of all residents outside the urban core.

This is a rendering of the new Central Library located between the Seaholm and Green Water Treatment Plan redevelopment sites. The new state-of-the-art library is expected to open in 2015 and will be about 200,000 square feet, incorporate green infrastructure, and link to the Lance Armstrong Bikeway, the Trail at Lady Bird Lake, and Shoal Creek Trail.

SILICON LABORATORIES
SILICON LABORATORIES

SOCIETY

Complete Community Matrix

A community's overall health is affected by the quality of the built and natural environment, as well as the services available. The built environment refers to the human-made surroundings: the roads, neighborhoods, parks, and buildings that define the physical form of a city. The natural environment refers to resources such as air, water, soil, flora, and fauna. Built and natural environments that promote health and well-being place fewer demands on public health services. Promoting community-wide health and wellness, safety, disease prevention, and mitigation of potential environmental hazards and disasters are all components of a healthy community. Accessible quality educational options promote a sustainable community by preparing residents for a changing world and economy.

The ongoing national discussion about childhood and adult obesity and their associated illnesses — diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease — indicates the need to address healthy communities on all fronts. Addressing the design of cities and their neighborhoods, corridors, and centers is crucial in laying the groundwork for creating healthy communities.

As Austin becomes more diverse, so do its families. There are large and small ones; there are married and non-married couples who may or may not have children; some families may have only one parent and others may have extended families living under a single roof; some heads of families are gay or lesbian and may or may not have children; as well as a range of other family types. Regardless of their composition, families need access to services, healthy food, transportation choices, healthy housing, family- and children-friendly activities, and a safe environment. Healthy children and families are essential for a strong and resilient community.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- Health care access in Austin is slightly better than the U.S. average, but below what would be considered optimal. The percentage of Travis County residents with health insurance is decreasing and lower income families are less likely to be covered.
- As of 2009, all Central Texas counties were classified as "medically underserved" by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project found that nearly all clusters of middle school students who are obese live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in northern, eastern, and southern parts of the city.
- According to the Austin Independent School District, in the 2008-2009 school year, less than 65 percent of students had healthy body mass index — a ratio of a person's height and weight often used as a health indicator.
- Long term trends showing significant increases in diabetes rates will place a strain on delivery of health services.
- Currently, Austinites 45 and older are making the largest gains in population. Services specific to an aging population will increase as this group ages.
- Access to healthy foods is limited in some neighborhoods. Proximity and cost can both be limiting factors for access, particularly in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- As housing becomes more expensive in Austin, some families are seeking homes outside of the city and farther from jobs — resulting in increased transportation costs and travel times.

Austin is a highly educated city, including a large portion of the population with advanced degrees. However, there are populations and parts of the city that lag behind in education. To ensure that all Austinites can take part in the future envisioned by *Imagine Austin*, more educational opportunities are needed. Education goes beyond basic primary, secondary, and university education; it also includes quality day care and education from birth, continuing education throughout life, and job skills training.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Ensuring that health care providers continue to meet the needs of the changing population, including seniors and the disabled.
- Providing accessible preventive and basic health care and services for all residents, including the economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured.
- Becoming a leader in health care research and technology.
- Improving access to services for those struggling with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Providing reliable access to housing and quality childcare for low- and middle-income families.
- Increasing access to programs to enhance birth to age five development, quality pre-kindergarten options to make sure children are prepared to begin primary education and providing high-quality education and services to all residents of Austin.
- Ending homelessness with supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.
- Increasing accessibility and affordability of healthy lifestyle choices for low-income families and residents.
- Raising childhood fitness levels to help stem the tide of childhood health problems, such as obesity and asthma.
- Ensuring that neighborhood streets are both safe and widely perceived to be safe to encourage children to play outside and encourage more outdoor activities by residents.
- Protecting the population from hazardous substances and pollution.
- Preparing high school, vocational school, and college graduates to enter the workforce at a competitive level.
- Improving access to job resources and training to improve ability to find jobs paying a living wage.

- Using schools as community centers and places for lifelong learning, including activities such as parenting classes, early childhood learning, tutoring, adult education, libraries, and technology education.
- Reducing high school and college drop-out rates.
- Reducing the incidence of teen pregnancy through expanded education programs and assisting those teens who do get pregnant with better access to prenatal healthcare, programs to keep them in school, and job training.

The CommUnity Care clinic in north Austin provides comprehensive public healthcare services, including to people without insurance.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE POLICIES

S P1. Provide access to primary, preventive health, trauma, specialty care, and urgent care.

S P2. Attract and retain high-quality health service providers (including doctors, dentists, specialists, medical technicians, and nurses) and promote the development and expansion of medical education opportunities. (See also E P9)

S P3. Encourage more active lifestyles through new and redevelopment that supports walking and bicycling. Locate retail, services, and public facilities such as parks, health services, and libraries in or near neighborhoods to reduce traffic congestion and contribute to an improved sense of community. (See also LUT P3, LUT P5, LUT P32, LUT P36, HN P4, CFS P34, CFS P40, CFS P43)

S P4. Reduce homelessness through long-term supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment. (See also HN P3)

S P5. Develop close relationships between public safety personnel and neighborhoods to promote cooperation and safety. (See also CFS P26)

S P6. Promote the availability of and educate the community about healthy food choices, including “slow food” (local food traditions, small-scale food processing, and organic agriculture) and nutritional education programs. (See also E P18, CE P13)

BEST PRACTICE: CENTRAL TEXAS SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER

Formed in 1975, the Sustainable Food Center supports improved access to locally grown food, community health, and sustainable farming practices. The center connects farmers with local households through farmers markets, hospitals, universities, schools, and worksites to improve access to nutritious, affordable food and support agricultural viability. The center also plays a major role in education and community health through The Happy Kitchen program and its relationships with regional school districts, school health advisory councils, PTA organizations, and foundations. *Reference: www.sustainablefoodcenter.org.*

The Alamo Community Garden in the Blackland neighborhood.

In 2039, Austin is "Community strength. Families, trust, safety, shared spaces highly valued, community centers, community gardens."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant responding to the question "How has the city improved by 2039?"

S P7. Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods. (See also E P18, CE P13)

S P8. Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations and provide better services for at-risk segments of our community.

S P9. Develop and promote tobacco cessation programs and regulations to support tobacco-free environments.

S P10. Reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and address the associated social and health concerns.

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATION POLICIES

S P11. Develop public transportation options that link all areas of the city, are affordable to economically disadvantaged groups, and provide access to job opportunities and services. (See also LUT P7)

S P12. Increase the variety of housing options (such as the types of housing and number of bedrooms) to meet the needs of family and non-traditional households, including households with children. (See also LUT P5, HN P1)

S P13. Provide opportunities for seniors and other persons to live in affordable housing that meets their specific needs and in neighborhoods that allow them to safely travel to and access their daily needs. (See also HN P3, HN P5)

S P14. Locate emergency services within close proximity to all neighborhoods and continue to improve community outreach and relationships between police and neighbors. (See also CFS P26, CFS P29)

S P15. Collaborate with educational partners to increase access to educational opportunities for higher education, technical education, and vocational training in Austin area public schools, colleges, universities, and other educational facilities. Match job training with current and expected employment needs for existing and emerging "target industries." (See also E P10, E P11, E P12, E P17)

S P16. Increase the availability of continuing education. (See also E P12, E P17)

BEST PRACTICE: TANDEM TEEN PRENATAL AND PARENTING PROGRAM | AUSTIN, TX

Begun in 1998, the Tandem Teen Prenatal and Parenting Program is an interagency collaboration, led by People's Community Clinic. It provides medical, mental health, educational and vocational services, and social support to pregnant and parenting teens. The program aims to improve the health and well-being of teen mothers and their children and to reduce the incidence of additional pregnancies for these young women. The program addresses the medical, educational, and psychosocial needs of young parents during pregnancy and through the first three years of their baby's life. By partnering with Any Baby Can, Austin Child Guidance Center, and LifeWorks, the program offers a comprehensive array of services to young parents including intensive case management, mental health services, medical and prenatal care, child development, family planning, and parenting education. Over 90 percent of participants have accessed ongoing healthcare for themselves and their children, including annual exams, well-child checks, sick care, and up-to-date immunizations. *Reference: http://www.austinpcc.org/special-programs/tandem/.*

The Green Classroom at Becker Elementary, an organic garden that provides students a hands-on opportunity to learn about ecology and healthy food.

S P17. Work with the school districts on planning for long-range student population growth from kindergarten through high school. Encourage school district support of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* in securing new educational facilities and maintaining existing facilities. (See also LUT P13, E P10)

S P18. Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations. (See also E P12, E P17)

S P19. Coordinate with educational and business partners to increase the availability of quality early education, child care, after school, and preschool programs for all residents, especially low and middle income households and families with children with disabilities. (See also LUT P13, E P4)

S P20. Enact land use and other planning policies that enhance the quality of life for families with children and promote family-friendly neighborhoods and services.

S P21. Increase dense, compact family-friendly housing in the urban core by creating standards and guidelines that encourage private interests to create more family-friendly development. (See also LUT P5)

S P22. Improve access to quality child care services near homes and workplaces. (See also HN P4)

S P23. Partner with local school districts to transform school yards into multi-use recreational and exercise facilities, with such amenities as playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, walking/running tracks, and swimming pools. (See also LUT P13)

S P24. Partner with local school districts, nonprofits, and civic groups to expand after school and summer programs for children of all ages and abilities. (See also CE P19)

"Increase community awareness to keep our neighborhoods, police, Neighborhood Associations intact; safe...educated city with opportunities for all citizens to improve their lives..."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

S P25. Increase sidewalks and bicycle lanes in neighborhoods to create safer routes to schools, parks, and transit stops. (See also LUT P14, LUT P15)

S P26. Ensure that Austin children in every part of town have access to an excellent education.

S P27. Partner with Austin-area school districts to enhance policies and practices that support neighborhood-based schools.

S P28. Collaborate with school districts, public, and private entities to create joint-use partnerships at existing and new public school campuses. (See also LUT P13, CFS P29)

S P29. Create public spaces that attract and engage children and serve as gathering places for children and families. (See also LUT P5, LUT P29)

S P30. Ensure that our youngest children are healthy, happy, and ready for school success by ensuring they have access to education, health care, and other necessary resources and services.

S P31. Austin commits itself to becoming an age-friendly city that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age.

Maplewood Elementary School in the Cherrywood Neighborhood.

BEST PRACTICE: CAPITAL IDEA | AUSTIN, TX

Capital IDEA helps low income adults wanting a career but unable to pay for the necessary training. The program works with local employers to identify expanding job sectors that pay a living wage. Once the training and education level needed for these careers are identified, they are added to the Sponsored Career List. This list includes jobs in the healthcare, high-tech, and professional trade fields. Capital IDEA awards sponsorship for educational training up to an associate degree in several career fields.

Low-income adults in Central Texas meeting certain qualifications can apply to become a sponsored participant. If accepted into the program, Capital IDEA will identify the training steps needed for each person to achieve their career goals. Capital IDEA will pay the full cost of the participant's education through graduation. This includes the cost for tuition, academic fees, and books. Additionally, the program offers placement assistance, emergency assistance, and for participants with children, the program helps with childcare expenses. *Reference: http://www.capitalidea.org/.*

Sprouting Healthy Kids, Sustainable Food Center's farm-to-school and food-systems education program, features local foods in school cafeterias, plus educational activities like this "Meet the Farmer" event with Erin Flynn of Green Gate Farms. Pattypan squashes (Cucurbita pepo) are among the abundance of crops that thrive in Austin's urban farms and community gardens. Photograph courtesy of Sustainable Food Center.

The New Pornographers perform at Stubb's during SXSW.

CREATIVITY

Complete Community Matrix

Austin's creativity is expressed through the arts, music, dance, film, food, design, gaming, architecture, cultural traditions and history, and a variety of print and electronic media. A young, diverse city with a tradition of attracting creative individuals, Austin has a national reputation for its artistic and welcoming culture. It is routinely ranked as one of the "Best Of" cities in the country based on a high percentage of its workforce in creative jobs, a relatively low cost of living (especially when compared to the East and West coasts), and healthy employment and salary growth.

The Cultural Arts Division within the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, oversees the City's cultural arts programs and the development of arts and creative industries as a part of Austin's overall economic development strategy. Programs include Art in Public Places, community-based arts development, assistance for the music, film, and creative industries, and initiatives designed to support and enhance Austin's creative identity and vitality. The History, Arts, and Nature Division of the Parks and Recreation Department provides artistic, cultural, and historical opportunities for the public at its museums, theaters, and arts centers. It provides exhibits, classes, programs, and low-cost or free use of their facilities, which supports a lifelong learning in the arts and helps incubate local arts.

Arts, culture, and creativity are highly valued in Austin. Following a two-year planning effort, the City adopted the *CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan* in 2010. In addition to refining the City's roles and responsibilities for cultural support and identifying strategies for both the City and the community to implement, the planning process sparked partnerships between community leaders and the City. Austin must support and value the city's arts and creative sectors as vital contributors to the city's identity, economy, and quality of life.

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

- Austin's arts and entertainment scene is a cornerstone of the city's identity.
- Arts and entertainment are also important elements of the city's economy and can be leveraged for additional economic growth.
- City and private funding for local arts facilities and programs is critical to the ongoing strength of the arts in Austin.
- Lower-income and minority communities may not have adequate opportunities to participate in Austin's arts programs and events.
- Access to affordable art studio and performance space needs to be maintained.
- Workforce development programs should include job training for technological, arts-related occupations.

Photo by Tony Spielberg.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Providing affordable, accessible, and functional studio, performance, rehearsal, and office spaces for small organizations and individual artists.
- Ensuring that affordable residential units and transportation options are available for artists as housing costs and land values in the urban core rise.
- Improving awareness and visibility of the City of Austin's many public art projects and its broad range of cultural resources, including museums and art centers.
- Providing ongoing funding for community arts programs.
- Maintaining a strong commitment to cultural and arts programs in schools and communities and ensuring that all residents have equal access to these programs.
- Increasing the role of arts and creativity in strengthening Austin's multicultural identity.
- Integrating arts and performance facilities and activities with downtown development in a way that is true to Austin's identity.
- Managing conflicts between live music and a growing urban population.

FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS CREATIVE

Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

CREATIVITY POLICIES

C P1. Continue to grow artists, micro-enterprises, and small arts organizations as businesses, and support iconic cultural institutions to sustain and grow Austin's economic and cultural vitality. (See also E P1, E P2, E P5)

C P2. Increase and enhance coordination, resource sharing, and partnerships among artist and creative individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses. (See also E P2)

C P3. Increase philanthropic, public, and resident support and participation in artistic and creative activities in Austin.

C P4. Continue to sustain and grow Austin's successful live music scene, festivals, theater, film and digital media, and other creative offerings.

C P5. Continue to explore and identify solutions to support live music venues, while addressing sound abatement issues.

C P6. Encourage new or existing art forms, new approaches to the creation or presentation of art, or new ways of engaging the public, including children, with art.

C P7. Grow Austin's regional and global cultural efforts in order to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community. (See also E P3, E P5, E P7)

C P8. Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance, and office space for arts organizations, artists, and creative industry businesses.

We will be "a city that retains the character of Austin of today, yesterday, years ago, and tomorrow — so that there is a thread/sense/pride of place now and for years to come. Blend of old and new, keep our neighborhoods, police, Neighborhood Associations intact…"

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

Central to Austin's identity, live music can be found outside traditional performance venues, in such places as grocery stores and food trailers.

C P9. Encourage artists and other creative individuals by promoting the creation of live/work spaces and creative industry hubs, districts, and clusters as retail, community, or neighborhood anchors and activity generators to attract and support other economic and community enterprises. (See also LUT P3, HN P4, E P3)

C P10. Improve access to affordable living to include housing, healthcare, and effective transportation in order to develop and retain Austin's creative organizations, industries, and individuals. (See also HN P3, HN P4)

C P11. Encourage creativity, imagination, and arts-based education in schools and neighborhoods throughout Austin to sustain Austin's "culture of creativity" as a fundamental facet of Austin's spirit and mindset.

C P12. Construct, sustain, and grow Austin's multicultural and artistic heritage from African American, Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnic and culturally-specific groups as the city develops and grows. (See also LUT P38)

C P13. Create avenues for cultural variety and provide the opportunity for all groups to benefit from the different cultures present in Austin. (See also LUT P38)

C P14. Encourage grassroot, neighborhood-based organizations and activities that promote art, imagination, and creativity to enhance the role the arts play in community life. (See also LUT P5)

C P15. Maximize the recognition and participation of arts and creativity as part of Austin's "Creative Economy."

C P16. Increase the availability of significant public art to designate districts and/or their entrances and to assist visitors in navigating the area. (See also LUT P35, CFS P44)

C P17. Define Austin's sense of place through high standards for architecture and urban design, public art, public spaces and parks, and arts education. (See also LUT P11, LUT P31, CFS P44)

C P18. Explore existing City policies, processes, and regulations regarding the arts to determine what changes can be made to coordinate these with other goals, such as historic preservation, affordable housing, and high-density development. (See also LUT P42)

C P19. Collaborate with area school districts, local businesses, and arts organizations in developing programs that encourage lifelong active engagement and participation in the cultural arts that are accessible to all people throughout Austin. (See also S P8)

BEST PRACTICE: ARTSPACE | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

ARTSPACE was established in 1979 to serve as an advocate for artists' space needs and over the years has pioneered ways to build better communities through the arts by leveraging transformative social change. Today, ARTSPACE is now a national leader in the field of developing affordable spaces — more than 30 to date — that not only meet artists' needs but help to create a synergy that increases collaborations, networking, sharing of equipment, resources, skills, and livelihood. Additionally, these developments anchor arts districts and expand public access to the arts. They also spur economic development in the neighborhoods and regions they reside in through attracting additional artists, arts businesses, organizations, and supporting non-arts businesses to the area. *Reference: http://www.artspace.org/*

Blue Lapis Light, Angels In Our Midst, dancers Laura Cannon and Nicole Whiteside, December 2007, at the Radisson Hotel as part of First Night Austin. Photography by Steve Hopson.

"Arachnophilla," a sculpture by Texas artist Dixie Friend Gay. The 23-foot tall sculpture straddles a walking and bike path in the Mueller development.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

Priority Programs

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Documenting Progress: Plan Monitoring and Review

Action Matrix

Citizens help plan areas of future growth in the chip exercise during the second Community Forum Series.

CHAPTER 5 IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

"As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all."

- Preamble to the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*'s Vision Statement

This vision embodies what we aspire to as a community. However, realizing this future requires directed action. The plan contains the community's vision and aspirations and is the lens through which the City of Austin will look when developing and interpreting policies and regulations, creating master and small area plans, implementing existing plans, and entering into partnerships. It will also guide spending and provide direction for capital improvement projects, budget priorities, and bond packages. Ultimately, the success of this plan will be measured by the extent to which we realize the vision and establish complete communities across Austin through effective implementation.

Transforming vision into reality through implementation will require incremental steps over time. Eight priority programs provide the structure and direction to implement the plan's policies and Growth Concept Map (Chapter 4) and actions (Action Matrix starting on page 228). They reflect the six core principles for actions introduced in Chapter One:

Core Principles for Action introduced in Chapter One

- Grow as a compact, connected city.
- Integrate nature into the city.
- Provide paths to prosperity to all.
- Develop as an affordable and healthy community.
- Sustainably manage water and other environmental resources.
- Think creatively and work together.

Imagine Austin and the City Charter set forth a comprehensive planning program, with annual monitoring and review to ensure Austin becomes the city its people want for the future. Each year, the Planning Commission and staff should develop a work plan that selects components of *Imagine Austin's* priority programs and establishes how they will be implemented that year. This process should include reviewing the Action Matrix (starting on page 228) to identify potential actions for new or expanded priority programs.

PRIORITY PROGRAMS

The priority programs organize *Imagine Austin's* key policies and actions into related groups to make it easier to implement the plan. These programs build on existing policies and initiatives, as well as the community input provided during the process to create *Imagine Austin*. Each program cuts across and implements policies and actions from multiple building blocks. The structure they provide will allow the City of Austin to more efficiently coordinate its operations, investments, and the provision of core services.

The priority programs are:

1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin
2. Sustainably manage our water resources
3. Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses
4. Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city
5. Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy
6. Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin
7. Create a Healthy Austin Program
8. Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city

The final program, to revise Austin's development regulations and processes, is an important step to promote each of the above priorities and to protect all that has been identified as valuable in the plan. The priority programs, policies, and actions in the plan all seek to achieve real functioning sustainability for Austin's future. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, a compact and connected city encapsulates household affordability, environmental protection, and complete communities, with easier, greener, healthier transportation options linking residents to jobs, arts and culture, parks, schools, health care, shopping, and other destinations. Each of these programs has important connections to the others that should be recognized throughout implementation.

The City of Austin is addressing many elements of the priority programs through current plans, initiatives, and partnerships. The priority programs will enable the City of Austin and its partners to pull together, break down silos, make connections, and leverage resources for more effective implementation. The following text provides an initial work program for each priority program, with short- and long-term steps (not necessarily indicating priority). Lead and partner departments and organizations who will be involved in each program are identified. Implementation should begin by confirming the lead partner responsible for overall coordination of the program, defining the roles of other involved partners inside and outside of city government, and determining how to engage the community in the process moving forward.

RANKING THE PRIORITY PROGRAMS

As part of the public review of the draft *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*, the community was asked to rank the priority programs. Investing in our transportation system to create a compact and connected Austin received the most votes from the almost 2,500 responses.

1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin.

Transportation congestion consistently ranks as a major concern to Austinites. Addressing this concern requires the City of Austin and its partners to look for solutions beyond how we travel — automobiles, transit (bus and rail), walking, and bicycling — and begin dealing with underlying conditions that make it difficult for Austinites to move around the city. To do so, we need to coordinate the physical form of Austin — how it's organized and how it is built with our transportation network.

Long-term strategies to reduce dependence on driving include improving rail and bus service, creating better bicycling routes, expanding our network of sidewalks and trails, and implementing travel demand management strategies.[6] Increased transportation options also allow young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities greater access to the city. In addition to designating an enhanced transit network, the Growth Concept Map (Fig. 4.5) identifies areas where roadway capacity can be enhanced. This new capacity takes the form of managed lanes to improve mobility for cars and transit along congested freeways and a complete arterial network to better serve areas on the city's edge where future growth is expected.

Imagine Austin envisions establishing complete communities across the city and accommodating most future residents and jobs in centers and corridors identified on the Growth Concept Map. Compact centers and corridors allow daily necessities (such as work, shopping, dining, and school) to be located closer together, resulting in shorter, more convenient trips and less time spent on the road. Shorter distances between people's homes, workplaces, and other daily destinations increase opportunities for walking and bicycling instead of driving. Walkable destinations can enable greater transit use. For those Austinites who choose to drive, it gives them the ability to park once and walk.

When viewed as a coordinated planning framework, the Growth Concept Map, complete communities concept, Capital Improvement Program, small area and transportation master plans, and incentives for business attraction, retention, and expansion can work together to achieve the goal of a compact, connected Austin. This coordination will ensure the City of Austin's capital expenditures work toward the goal of compact and connected communities, particularly in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction, where infrastructure spending is one of the few tools available for shaping growth. As implementation of *Imagine Austin* continues, a coordinated approach will direct investments by the City of Austin, Travis County, and its partners to improve and expand transportation options to serve and connect centers and corridors, and to create human-scaled and inviting places.

LEAD

City of Austin Transportation Department; Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office; Capitol Planning Office

PARTNERS

Capital Metro; CAMPO; State and Federal agencies; City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; Chambers of Commerce; Advocates for people with disabilities, transit users, bicyclists, and affordable housing

RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Mobile and Interconnected

Livable

Prosperous

RELATED POLICIES

LUT P1-P5, P7, P9-P12, P14-P20, P29, P32, P33, P36, P45; HN P1, P3, P4, P7, P10, P12, P13; E P14, P15, P19; CE P3, P10; CFS P34, P36, P42; S P3, P11, P25.

RELATED ACTIONS

LUT A1, A5, A13, A14, A16-A18, A21-A25, A27, A31, A47;HN A5; E A5, A22; CFS A25, A34; C A14.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Continue to implement the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan* in support of the Growth Concept Map.

[6] The application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand (particularly single-occupancy vehicles) or to redistribute this demand in space or time, thus reducing traffic congestion.

GOALS
Increase non-vehicular trips.
METRICS
- Transit ridership numbers - Number of transit stops - Percentage of trips by biking and walking - Annual trips per capita
GOALS
Improve access to transit.
METRICS
- Population density within ½ mile of transit stops - Employment density within ½ mile of transit stops and high capacity transit stops

2. Develop criteria and guidelines for coordinating business recruitment, expansion, and retention to support activity centers and corridors, transit, and urban trails plans in line with *Imagine Austin* and the Growth Concept Map.

3. Adopt a complete street policy and guidelines and include street standards in the City's new Land Development Code.

4. Continue working on demonstration corridors (Lamar Boulevard, Burnet Road, Riverside Drive, Airport Boulevard, and East MLK Boulevard/FM 969) to plan and build complete street improvements. These include separated bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and improved transit infrastructure with more user friendly bus shelters. Consider partnering with local businesses and artists to add amenities to demonstration corridors.

5. Expand the City's development and redevelopment services to support major projects across the city in support of *Imagine Austin* and the Growth Concept Map.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

6. Invest in new and reinvest in existing infrastructure to support a compact and connected city through a planning-driven capital improvements program. Track capital improvements geographically to ensure their alignment with the goals of *Imagine Austin*.

7. Use the *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan's* website to clearly communicate with and update the public about next steps, progress, ongoing efforts, timelines, and long-range plans to improve transit, walking, bicycling, and driving throughout the region.

8. Partner with local chambers of commerce, the business community, and regional, state, and federal entities to recruit and retain businesses to activity centers and corridors.

9. Continue to raise Austin's international profile and expand nearby job centers by increasing trade and securing direct international service at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

10. Build infrastructure and develop partnerships necessary to create jobs and economic vitality for the efficient and safe transport of goods through, to, and from Austin.

11. Work with federal, state, and local public and private agencies, organizations, and businesses to identify potential funding sources for partnerships to implement transportation improvements.

12. Coordinate with Travis County and local school districts to manage infrastructure investments.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Change Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. The *Strategic Mobility Plan and Complete Street* policy / guidelines will inform the revision to Austin's Land Development Code. The revised code will include incentives for compact and transit oriented development and complete streets.

- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. Green infrastructure includes attractive amenities for Austinites of all ages that improve health and quality of life. Complete street standards will include "green street" design and street tree requirements that add to the City's green infrastructure.

- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Investing in an accessible transit, pedestrian, and bicycling network will provide Austin residents with alternatives to driving. Through improved land use, transportation, and urban design, Austin's places can contribute to healthy lifestyles by encouraging walkable communities, parks, community gardens, open space, and recreation and by increasing access to local and nourishing food and reducing air pollution.

- Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs and local businesses. Coordinating the City's investments in workforce training with its business attraction, expansion, and retention policies improves Austin's prosperity and quality of life.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Project Connect

- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

- CAMPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (complete)

- Urban Rail Study / EIS

- Sidewalk Master Plan

- Bicycle Master Plan

- MoPac Improvement Project (Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority)

- My35 Project (Texas Department of Transportation)

- East Seventh Street reconstruction project

- Healthy Austin Code

- Families and Children Task Force Report

- Urban Parks Workgroup Report

- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

2. Sustainably manage our water resources.

A changing climate, weather patterns, increasing demands on water in the aquifer, and regional water management complexities pose challenges requiring increased planning and coordination. Sustainably and resiliently adapting to changes will require the region to re-examine how we think about water and how we approach the long-term management of our water resources—the Colorado River, our aquifers, rainfall, conservation, and water re-use efforts, as well as exploring other potential sources of supply. A central focus of these efforts is to reduce water use by businesses and households (gallons per capita per day) while balancing available resources, evolving technologies, growth trends, environmental impact, and cost to Austin residents and ratepayers. In addition to preparing for these general trends and carrying out current drought contingency plans, the city and region should strengthen planning for droughts worse than the current Drought of Record (which occurred in the 1950s).

Water resources are key to Austin's quality of life and viability as a city. Protecting our streams and floodplains helps maintain Austin's natural beauty while promoting public health and safety, improving water quality, and preserving habitat for native species, including threatened and endangered species.

Responding to this challenge requires extensive involvement in regional efforts and close coordination across all aspects of Austin's water resources. Bringing together existing efforts allows us to move forward with integrated strategies that address the range of water resource issues such as supply, quality, conservation, public health, and recreation.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Update Austin Water Utility's integrated water management plan, including water conservation goals, drought planning, and climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

2. Enact a new watershed protection ordinance to streamline and expand protection of headwaters, and to promote low-impact stormwater management strategies, and reduce capital expenditures required to mitigate water quality problems, erosion, and flooding.

3. Coordinate efforts with Austin Energy and other local energy utilities to assess risks and propose risk mitigation strategies related to water demands for power generation.

4. Review and analyze auxiliary water regulations governing reclaimed water, graywater use, and rainwater harvesting to ensure that they encourage the use of these sources without compromising public health.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

5. Continue to use Austin's rate structure to reduce water use while maintaining affordability for low water use households, funding further conservation and education efforts, and preserving Austin Water Utility's financial stability.

LEAD
City of Austin Watershed Protection Department; Austin Water Utility
PARTNERS
City of Austin Transportation Department; Austin Parks and Recreation Department; Planning and Development Review Department
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable Natural and Sustainable
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P21-P24, P34; E P5, P15; CE P2-P8, P10-P12, P14, P16; CFS P1-P6, P8-P14, P39, P43-P47.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A7, A10, A19, A37; HN A15, A23; CE A1-A9, A15-A18, A23, A24; CFS A8, A9, A11, A28, A29, A34-A44.

GOALS
Conserve water resources.
METRICS
- Average daily water usage - Average daily water usage (residential)
GOALS
Improve watershed health.
METRICS
- Creek health (percent of assessed watersheds in excellent, very good, or good health) - Impervious surface (total and per capita) - Tree canopy (map and percentage)

6. Work collaboratively on water supply management and planning with the Lower Colorado River Authority to protect the City's water supply access and investments and ensure equitable and legal management of the Colorado River.

7. Maintain a non-degradation policy for the Barton Springs Zone.

8. Update the current Watershed Master Plan, expand the program to include other watersheds, and implement integrated strategies to protect and enhance water quality and supply, reduce flood risk, and prevent erosion.

9. Participate in state and regional water resources planning, including regional efforts to improve water quality and quantity of the Edwards Aquifer.

10. Implement Austin Water Utility's energy efficiency and demand reduction efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the City's climate protection goals.

11. Increase coordination between Watershed Protection, Austin Water Utility, Office of Sustainability, Planning and Development Review, and other City departments.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. Innovative stormwater techniques, a healthy urban forest, additional water quality lands, and improved site design are key elements in the wise use of Austin's water resources, maintaining the region's hydrology, and adapting to Austin's future climate.

- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Updating the Land Development Code should improve the city's site and landscape design requirements.

- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure, including improvements to reduce water leaks.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

Austin Climate Protection Plan

Austin Water 140 GPCD Conservation Plan

Peak Demand Plan

Austin Water Utility Master Plan

Watershed Protection Master Plan

Austin's State of the Environment Report

3. Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.

To ensure Austin's continued economic health we must develop a widely skilled workforce, recruit new businesses, retain and grow existing businesses, and tap into our entrepreneurial spirit. Although Austin attracts talented people from across the globe, there is a growing need to develop a homegrown workforce prepared to compete in the 21st century economy. Educational opportunities must be provided to meet the workforce needs of current and emerging industries.

Expanding the number of resident workers who have the skills required by growing industries is critical to sustain Austin's economy. Business development and recruitment efforts should target those business sectors that can build upon the skills of Austin's existing workforce. A deep, local talent pool provides a ready workforce for our existing businesses and can entice new businesses to locate in Austin. Growing local and recruiting outside businesses and industries that provide job opportunities for Austinites of all skill and educational levels is essential to continued economic health. A diverse, talented, and well-educated workforce can also serve as a fertile environment for entrepreneurs to emerge and grow new, locally-based businesses.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Identify a lead department within the City of Austin to coordinate its role in workforce development and education.

2. Work with businesses, non-profits, education partners, such as local colleges, universities, and technical schools, and the Texas Workforce Commission to identify gaps between Austin's targeted industries and growing economic sectors and school, college, and university curriculum.

3. Partner with high schools, resource libraries, non-profits, technical schools, community colleges, and universities to expand curriculum related to specific job and special skills training and develop training resources related to the needs of local businesses and Austin's targeted industries.

4. Partner with school districts and non-profit organizations to increase creative education programs for students as part of regular curriculum and through after-school activities.

5. Support efforts to fund and develop a top-tier medical school and residency programs in Austin.

6. Improve awareness of the benefits of early education and expand access to early childhood education programs and parenting resources.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

7. Actively recruit and retain businesses that create well-paying job opportunities for lower skilled and blue collar jobs or that provide a path upwards from entry-level jobs.

LEAD
City of Austin/AISD Board of Trustees/Travis County Commissioners Court Joint Committee; City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office; City of Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department
PARTNERS
City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; Workforce Solutions Capital Area; school districts, colleges, and universities; Chambers of Commerce
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Prosperous Educated Livable Values and Respects its People
RELATED POLICIES
E P1-18, P19; S P8, P11, P15-P19, P26, P27; C P1, P11.
RELATED ACTIONS
HN A10; E A1-20, A22; CFS A27; S A13, A32-A41, A44-A49; C A16, A18-A19.

GOALS
Increase job opportunities for Austin residents.
METRICS
- Employment rate and average wages by age, geography, and race/ethnicity - Total number and percentage of Austin skilled workforce compared with the region - Working wage
GOALS
Increase small businesses and entrepreneurship.
METRICS
- Small business start-ups - Percentage of high school students that are college ready - Percentage of high school students graduating - Percentage of high school students entering into secondary education (college or technical schooling) - Percentage of university students retained in Austin after graduation

8. Encourage entrepreneurship and local businesses by creating programs and policies that enable local businesses to thrive.

9. Work with local business incubators in an effort to create a fertile environment for business start-ups and generate additional local venture capital investment.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Grow and Invest in Austin's creative economy. Arts and cultural education is a major focus of investing in Austin's workforce and education system. Encouraging innovation and providing support for local, small businesses and start-ups is key to growing Austin's creative economy.

- Develop and maintain household affordability. Affordable housing is necessary to grow Austin's economy and provide its workforce with places to live that are safe, convenient, and located close to job centers, good schools, retail, and services.

- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Create better rules for flex space and adaptive re-use to support small businesses, urban farms, and start-ups.

- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Develop a strong local food system in which food production, processing, distribution, and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of Austin and central Texas.

- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Businesses should be encouraged to locate in accessible locations and complete communities.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Small Business Development Programs

- Elevate Austin

- Opportunity Austin

- City of Austin Library Master and Facilities Plans

- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

4. Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

A green infrastructure program will create an interconnected system of parks, waterways, open space, trails, green streets, tree canopy, agriculture, and stormwater management features that mimic natural hydrology. It will also allow the City of Austin to expand upon existing efforts to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as waterways and riparian zones, springs, aquifer recharge features, canyonlands, and prairies. These diverse elements of Austin's green infrastructure serve multiple purposes and provide numerous benefits. The most visible of these benefits — the one most Austinites will experience firsthand — relates to how we experience the outdoors. These efforts will maintain our pleasant outdoor setting and provide safe access to green space and recreation for all Austinites, particularly in urban activity centers and corridors. The interconnected green spaces can provide recreational opportunities and transportation connections in the form of hiking and biking trails. The benefits to the environment are numerous and include enhanced stream health and improved water quality, reduced flood risk, and preserved and enhanced ecosystems and habitats. An integrated green infrastructure system can also reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by providing alternatives to automobiles, reducing water use, and shading buildings.

A primary goal of the program is to manage Austin's urban and natural ecosystems in a coordinated, sustainable manner. The City currently plans for many of these elements independently; however, gaps remain.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Create an integrated green infrastructure plan and ongoing green infrastructure program. The plan should:

    a. Define Austin's green infrastructure, its elements, and how those elements interact to benefit the city.

    b. Perform an initial inventory and evaluation of existing green infrastructure resources, such as conserved land, the urban forest, habitat, trails and bike paths, greenbelts, community gardens, urban farms, parks and recreation areas, and green streets. Identify current plans, such as the Travis and Hays County Greenprint plans, networks, and identify gaps.

    c. Develop green infrastructure targets (such as percentage of tree cover, connectivity, or current or anticipated residents within walking distance of parks, see Figure 4.11) and priorities for new areas for conservation, parks and open space, green streets, and urban trails.

    d. Include a series of interactive maps illustrating the components of the green infrastructure network, along with priority conservation and restoration areas.

LEAD
Sustainability Leadership Team
PARTNERS
Office of Sustainability; Austin Energy; Austin Water Utility; Austin Resource Recovery; Watershed Protection Department; Public Works; Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services; Austin Transportation Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Travis, Hays and Williamson Counties
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable Mobile and Interconnected Natural and Sustainable
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P21-P25, P34; HN P13; E P5; CE P1-P8, P11, P12, P14, P16; CFS P8, P10, P11, P14, P40, P42-P48; S P3.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A7, A19, A20, A32, A33, A36, A37, A39-A41; HN A15, A21, A23; CE A1-A6, A8-A11, A15-A24; CFS A1-A12, A23, A24, A34-A36, A39, A43.

GOALS
Increase protection of environmentally sensitive land.
METRICS
- Amount of permanently preserved land for protection of water quality, threatened or endangered species habitat, or other environmental resources - Inventory of land, buildings, and other assets for current and potential food production sites (size, type, location)
GOALS
Improve tree cover in every neighborhood.
METRICS
- Tree canopy (map and percentage)
GOALS
Improve health of watershed.
METRICS
- Impervious surface (total and per capita) - Creek health (percentage of assessed watersheds in excellent, very good, or good health)
GOALS
Improve access to parks.
METRICS
- Units within walking distance of parks (1/4 mile in urban core, 1/2 mile outside the urban core)

e. Include implementation strategies and approaches to promote interdepartmental, intergovernmental, and interagency coordination.

f. Calculate direct and indirect costs and savings from green infrastructure projects, when compared with traditional "gray" infrastructure, including the asset value of ecosystem services and contribution to long-term risk management.

g. Develop and implement unified, comprehensive land management of all City of Austin lands for integrated environmental sustainability, including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, and education.

h. Identify a lead to oversee ongoing implementation of the plan and program.

2. Assess options to coordinate and expand incentives for residential and commercial property owners to install green infrastructure elements, such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting, pervious pavement, and rain gardens.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

3. Provide guidance on best practices for property owners interested in green infrastructure improvements. Develop demonstration projects and share information with residents and business owners.

4. Continue funding support and acquisition of land in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves and in other environmentally significant areas to protect water quality, conserve endangered species habitat, and provide open space for passive public use.

5. Protect farmland and conduct and stimulate research to facilitate growing techniques that minimize water usage and build healthy soils accounting for regional climate change.

6. Track and monitor citywide implementation of the green infrastructure plan, including planned parks and open space, green streets, and bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects.

7. Make available dynamic, online, interactive maps of the existing and planned green infrastructure networks to allow the community to see the program's progress.

8. Identify approaches to track and monitor the costs and savings associated with green infrastructure projects. Solicit research and funding partners, such as the University of Texas' Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center and The Trust for Public Lands.

9. Solicit partners, such as conservation and bicycle advocacy groups, to help implement the recommendations of the green infrastructure plan and program.

10. Hold public and educational events to share green infrastructure benefits and pursue program partnerships with local organizations.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Create a Healthy Austin Program. Investing in accessible walking and biking networks, community gardens, family farms, parks, and open space will provide Austin residents increased opportunities for outdoor exercise as well as contribute to healthy lifestyles by increasing access to local and nourishing food and reducing air pollution.

- Sustainably manage our water resources. Expanding Austin's green infrastructure will impact the City's ability to protect and conserve water resources. By increasing the urban tree canopy and decreasing stormwater runoff, the green infrastructure program will contribute to reducing flooding, improving water quality, and lessening the need for water treatment.

- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. The green infrastructure program will include priorities for trails and greenway networks that provide alternative ways to get around the city.

- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Green infrastructure and low-impact development standards should be included in the revised Land Development Code and Criteria Manuals.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Austin Climate Protection Plan

- Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

- Bicycle Master Plan

- Central Texas Greenprint Plan

- Healthy Austin Code

- Invasive Species Management Plan

- Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Plan

- Trails Master Plan

- Travis County Colorado River Corridor Plan

- Urban Forestry Management Plan

- Urban Parks Workgroup Report

- Watershed Protection Master Plan

- Town Lake Plan

The Flaming Lips video shoot. Photo by Courtney Chavauell/Courtesy of Austin Studios.

5. Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

Austin's healthy economy stems, in large part, from its vibrant, local creative community and diverse workforce. Creative individuals (artists, musicians, film and digital media professionals, and other knowledge-based workers), cultural organizations, and creative businesses contribute to the region's economic growth and quality of life. Continued strategic investment in these industries is needed to grow existing creative sector entrepreneurs, organizations and businesses, encourage "home-grown" start-ups, and attract new organizations, businesses, residents, and visitors who will contribute to a healthy economy.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Survey creative arts and culture non-profits, organizations, and individuals to determine gaps in technical assistance and identify additional ongoing strategies to further develop the creative industries.

2. Develop and implement a cultural tourism and heritage plan to improve tourism offerings (such as technology and cultural diversity) at the regional, national, and global scales to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community.

3. Develop and implement strategies to create and sustain the live music industry while addressing noise compatibility.

4. Conduct a creative facilities survey and analysis to determine both impediments, challenges, and positive influences in promoting Austin's creative culture. Involve the creative community in its design and implementation.

5. Explore and re-imagine existing City development tools, such as incentives, regulations, and financing options, with a focus on creative industries' facility needs. Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance space, museums, libraries, music venues, and office space.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

6. Use the City's existing interdisciplinary team to better coordinate "creative enterprise" services, programs, and resources.

7. Cultivate relationships with local, national, and international businesses and organizations to expand and sustain the financial, artistic, and cultural excellence of the Austin music, film, digital industries, and nonprofit arts and culture communities.

8. Provide ongoing technical assistance, access to best practices, small business resources, and nonprofit organization resources with a focus on targeted creative industries and jobs.

9. Develop new financial resources and strategies to sustain and expand the creative industry sector.

LEAD
Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office
PARTNERS
City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department; City of Austin Transportation Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Austin Public Library; Community College and University Art and Music Departments; AISD Fine Arts Program
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Creative Prosperous Livable Educated
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P10, P35, P37; E P1, P2, P5-P8, P11-P17; CFS P44; S P11-13, P15-P19; C P1-P19.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A29; HN A1, A3-A9, A16, A24; E A1-A6, A8-A13, A15, A18; S A31-A40, A43-A48; C A1-A19, A23.

GOALS

Increase opportunities for small creative businesses and organizations.

METRICS

- Small business growth

- Creative business and organization partnership, participation, and growth

- Number of public art installations and Events

- Participants in arts, culture, and small business workshops hosted by the City

- Arts and creativity sector (count of businesses and employees)

- Number of live music venues

10. Conduct a market analysis of Austin's creative sectors to determine opportunities for growth and prosperity.

11. Work with economic development organizations to recruit businesses to Austin that will invest in Austin's creative community.

12. Work with local businesses and organizations to develop and move beyond the startup stage to further establish Austin as a magnet for arts, culture, and creativity.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin. One barrier creative businesses and individuals face is a lack of affordable housing and work space. Investing in housing that is affordable and has work space will help to sustain and attract new creative businesses.

- Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs and local businesses. Arts and cultural education is a major focus of investing in Austin's workforce and education system. Encouraging innovation and providing support for local, small businesses and start-ups is key to growing Austin's creative economy.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan

- City of Austin Library Master and Facilities Plans

- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

6. Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.

Rising housing and related costs, such as transportation and utilities, are major issues facing Austinites. Low-income, fixed-income, and, increasingly, middle-class households struggle to find housing they can afford, especially in the urban core. Often, the only housing they can afford is not close to work or schools and is far removed from daily necessities (such as services, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and dining). Better-located housing is often too expensive or does not meet the needs of many families with children. As Austin becomes more diverse—with a growing retired and senior population, an increasing number of smaller households, and others interested in alternatives to suburban living—the single-family homes typical of our central neighborhoods may not suit their needs. More significantly, high real estate prices increasingly preclude the possibility of purchasing or renting a house in Central Austin.

To meet the market demand of our growing and diversifying population, the range of available housing choices must expand throughout the city. Alternatives to the typical larger-lot single family and garden-style apartments that characterize much of Austin's housing stock are needed, including a greater variety of starter and move-up homes. The introduction and expansion into the market of housing types such as row houses, courtyard apartments, bungalow courts, small-lot single-family, garage apartments, and live/work units can meet this emerging demand. The demand for market-rate housing can and should be met by the private sector. The City of Austin can work with private developers, non-profits, the state and federal governments, Travis County, and other local governments to help those individuals and families not able to afford market-rate housing, including seniors on a fixed income, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers.

The city's housing stock contributes to unaffordability in other ways. High utility bills can often be addressed by improving how we use water, electricity and natural gas, while the location of homes in relation to different modes of transportation, work, and daily and weekly needs impacts how much households spend on transportation.

To address these issues, a comprehensive approach is needed to define and provide household affordability for Austinites. Such an approach must take into consideration transportation, utilities, and access to daily and weekly needs as essential and inter-related components of household affordability. It should recognize both market-rate affordability and the need for subsidized housing, and include collaboration with Travis County, area school districts, and regional entities (such as Capital Area Council of Governments, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority) to align objectives and achieve maximum investment to promote household affordability.

LEAD

1) Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office/ Austin Housing Finance Corporation

2) Planning and Development Review Department

PARTNERS

Housing Authority of the City of Austin; Health & Human Services Department; Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office; Travis County; Austin Independent School District; Capital Area Council of Governments; Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Community Action Network

RELATED VISION COMPONENTS

Prosperous

Livable

Values and Respects its People

RELATED POLICIES

LUT P3, P5-P8, P10; HN P1-P10, P12, P13, P15; CFS P21; S P3, P4, P11-P13, P20-P21; C P10, P18.

RELATED ACTIONS

LUT A2, A3, A5, A6; HN A1-A11, A16, A18, A23, A24; E A3; CFS A34; S A26-A30; C A13, A14.

GOALS
Maintain and increase household affordability in Austin.
METRICS
- Gaps in rental and homeownership supply and demand - Median rent by Zip code - Median wage by Zip code - Percent of residents who are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened (including transportation and utilities) - Percent of residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness - Number of affordable units built

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Identify gaps in affordability throughout the city and set numerical targets for housing that is affordable to a variety of households, including workforce, supportive, low-income, families with children, and senior housing.

2. Use the S.M.A.R.T. Housing[7] program as a framework to introduce new tools and strategies to promote affordable housing for moderate, low, and very low-income households, including new regulatory and finance mechanisms, grants, and partnerships with local non-profit intermediary organizations.

3. Promote long-term affordability by:

    a. Supporting a local community land trust and other shared equity approaches;

    b. Targeting the use of public funds for the lowest-income households, including those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or who have other special needs; and

    c. Developing new goals, targets, and strategies to promote the distribution of affordable housing in all parts of the city, including incentives for affordable housing in new developments and for the preservation of existing rental units.

4. Ensure new and revised small-area plans include an affordability component addressing preservation of existing and creation of new affordable, supportive, and workforce housing.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

5. Identify new or expand existing dedicated revenue sources for affordable housing.

6. Examine potential regulatory barriers and policies that impede the provision of household affordability, including infrastructure costs; the costs and benefits of zoning ordinances on housing development; and how the City's waste removal fees and other City fees and requirements impact the cost of living for the families of Austin.

7. Develop a community educational campaign to address the issue of affordability, such as loss of existing affordable housing, rising utility and transportation costs, and the need to maintain affordability as part of Austin's quality of life.

8. Identify opportunities for the creation of affordable housing on publicly-owned land and develop partnerships with developers to provide flexible, affordable work space and housing.

9. Support the creation of a "real-time" database of available affordable housing units, services, resources, and incentives to strengthen the process of connecting qualified buyers and renters with affordable housing to comprehensively lower monthly household expenses.

[7] Safe Mixed Income Accessible Reasonably Priced Transit Oriented Housing.

10. Replicate and adopt best practice models for affordable housing in Texas to make state lawmakers aware of the statutory barriers that impede household affordability, such as the inability of cities to provide property tax relief to low-income renters and the challenges of meeting market demand.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. Investing in housing that is affordable for all will help sustain existing and attract new creative business.

- Invest in transportation and other improvements to create a compact and connected Austin. Transportation costs can greatly impact moderate and lower-income households. Diversifying Austin's transportation network and increasing the balance of public transit, walking, and biking networks will reduce the need to drive and the associated transportation costs.

- Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. Sustainable growth of Austin's economy depends on providing affordable living options for its workforce.

- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Issues that should be addressed in the development code revision include reevaluating the goal of affordability, promoting the creation of flexible standards for the construction and preservation of affordable units, and developing standards for a City-wide approach to development bonus programs.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- City of Austin 5-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan Process (required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)

- Development Bonus Initiatives (various)

- S.M.A.R.T. Housing Initiative

- Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative

- Colony Park Sustainable Community Pilot Project

- Mueller redevelopment

- Neighborhood, corridor, and station-area plans

Courtesy of Ballet Austin.

7. Create a Healthy Austin program.

Making healthy choices should be affordable and easier than making unhealthy ones. A Healthy Austin Program will reduce chronic and diet-related diseases and risk factors by coordinating access to community and health services, local and healthy food, physical activity, and tobacco-free living. It will also support a "healthy community code" that promotes active living, access to healthy food, and prevention of chronic and diet-related diseases in all aspects of community life.

This program will look beyond nutrition to help develop a strong local food system in which food production, processing, distribution, and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of Austin and Central Texas.

The chronic diseases associated with the risk factors of tobacco use, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity (including some cancers, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and asthma) are the underlying causes of most deaths in Travis County. Though these diseases affect everyone in the region, they take a heavier toll on low-income and minority communities. These preventable diseases increase healthcare costs, lower worker productivity, contribute to family stress, and diminish quality of life. In order for the city to be healthy, environmental and lifestyle factors that contribute to serious diseases need to be addressed.

WORK PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Create a Healthy Austin Program plan to develop and document program priorities, findings, recommendations, and outcomes related to:

    a. Increasing healthy behaviors;

    b. Educating the public and providing better access to information on healthy lifestyles and community health resources;

    c. Expanding access to health care services in under served populations;

    d. Promoting healthy foods and discouraging unhealthy ones; and

    e. Improving coordination between the Health and Human Services Department, other City of Austin and Travis County departments, non-profits, and the community.

2. Enact strategies and policies to boost the impact of federal food and nutrition assistance programs.

3. Create a healthy community code, including revisions to Austin's land development ordinances that make it easier to produce and access healthy, sustainable food and to lead a more active lifestyle.

    a. Support and expand farm direct programs (such as farm-to-work and farm-to-school) that link local farmers and food vendors to consumers; and

LEAD
Health and Human Services Department
PARTNERS
Planning and Development Review Department; Parks and Recreation Department; Neighborhood Housing and Community Development; Office of Sustainability, Transportation Department; Health, Sustainable Food, and Social Service Organizations; School Districts.
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable Values and Respects its People Mobile and Interconnected
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P5, P7, P10, P13-P15, P29, P32, P33, P36, P45; HN P3, P4, P13; CE P3, P8, P13; CFS P37, P40-P48; S P1-P3, P6, P7, P9-P13, P20, P21, P23, P25, P28; C P10.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A1, A3, A5, A8, A11, A12, A14, A17-A19, A21-A23, A27, A32, A36, A40, A47; HN A23, A24; E A21; CE A10, A12-A14; CFS A2-A10, A13; A23, A35; S A1, A3-A12, A18, A33, A49-A54; C A17.

GOALS
Improve Public Health.
METRICS
- Rates of disease, obesity, tobacco use by ethnicity and income
GOALS
Improve opportunities for active lifestyles.
METRICS
- Miles of walking / biking trails
GOALS
Improve nutrition and food access.
METRICS
- Units within 1/4 and 1/2 mile of a grocery store or farm to consumer location - Enrollment numbers in, and/or dollars from, federal food and nutrition assistance programs.
GOALS
Strengthen local food system.
METRICS
- Number of farmers markets/ stands, healthy food carts Number and acreage of community gardens, plots, and local farms
GOALS
Improve access to healthcare.
METRICS
- Percent of residents with access to health care coverage - Percent of residents not able to see a doctor in the past year due to cost

b. Expand the market for local food producers by connecting them to hunger-relief organizations, community institutions, restaurants, and retail food markets.

4. Increase the number of tobacco-free environments, including outdoor areas, worksites, schools, and multi-unit housing, to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

5. Encourage use of public land for community gardens.

6. Encourage successful formation and patronage of healthy-food retail establishments, such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture, corner and neighborhood stores, and supermarkets, throughout the city—with emphasis placed on under served areas.

ONGOING AND LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)

7. Implement joint use agreements for public facilities to be used by residents for recreation and physical activity.

8. Expand urban farms and community gardens.

9. Promote community connectivity through complete streets design for new developments and integrate into redesign plans for existing developments.

10. Increase the safety and amenities of parks, trails, playgrounds, bike paths, and recreation centers.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Invest in a compact and connected Austin. Investing in accessible walking and biking networks and open space will provide residents increased opportunities for outdoor exercise as part of their daily routines.

- Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. The revised code will include standards and guidelines to make walking and biking safer and more attractive for residents. Through improved land use, transportation, and urban design, Austin's places can contribute to healthy lifestyles by encouraging walkable communities, parks and open space, and recreation.

- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas, integrate nature into the city, and include opportunities for community gardens and urban farms.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Healthy Austin Code
- African American Quality of Life Study
- Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

8. Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. Austin's City Charter requires that land development regulations be consistent with the comprehensive plan. Significant revisions to existing regulations will be necessary to fully implement the priority programs described above. For example, *Imagine Austin* calls for new development and redevelopment to be compact and connected, but many elements of the existing Land Development Code make this difficult to accomplish. Achieving these goals will require a comprehensive review and revision of the Land Development Code, associated technical and criteria manuals, and administrative procedures.

Since its adoption in 1987, the Land Development Code has been a continually modified and updated document, reflecting countless hours of community participation and input. Elements of the Land Development Code and the broader City Code incorporate carefully crafted compromises and significant community decisions that have been reached through long-lasting committees, task forces, and citizen referenda.

The existing neighborhood and area plans were crafted within context of this code and decisions were reached based upon the assumptions of the continued utilization of its provisions. This includes elements of the Land Development Code that are not specifically addressed in neighborhood and area plans but on which decisions were based (e.g., compatibility standards). The vision of the comprehensive plan can be achieved by retaining these protections and the approaches taken in the neighborhood and area plans.

Any suggested rewrite of the City Code, while striving to achieve the broad goals of the comprehensive plan, must recognize, respect, and reflect these carefully crafted compromises, balances, and the assumptions upon which the existing neighborhood and area plans were based and depend.

Continued protection and preservation of existing neighborhoods and the natural environment must be considered top priorities of comprehensive revisions to the City Code. The consequences and impact of additional density and infill in existing neighborhoods must be carefully identified and analyzed to avoid endangering the existing character of neighborhoods and exacerbating community health and safety issues, such as flooding.

Impacts on sustainability and livability by increased infill and density of units, including associated infrastructure costs and impacts on affordability, should be identified prior to adoption of a new city code. Modifications to the City code and building code should be measured with regard to their ability to preserve neighborhood character, consistency with adopted neighborhood and area plans, impact on affordability, and the ability of existing families to continue to reside in their homes.

LEAD
City of Austin Planning and Development Review
PARTNERS
Parks and Recreation Department; Watershed Protection Department; Austin Fire Department; Austin Energy; Austin Resource Recovery; Public Works Department; Austin Transportation Department; Capital Planning Office; Austin Water Utility; Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Travis County.
RELATED VISION COMPONENTS
Livable Natural and Sustainable Mobile and Interconnected
RELATED POLICIES
LUT P1, P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, P11, P15, P17, P28, P32, P33, P36; HN P1, P4, P5, P7, P10, P13; E P13, P14; CE P11; CFS P13, P20, P21, P34, P35; S P2, P3, P9, P21; C P18.
RELATED ACTIONS
LUT A2-A11, A19, A26, A28, A30, A34, A35, A38, A42; HN A1-A4, A11, A14, A15, A17, A19, A20, A24; E A3; CE A3, A5, A21, A23; CFS A18, A20, A23, A25, A34, A36, A40; S A4, A12; C A3, A14.

GOALS
Make Austin a more compact city.
METRICS
- Residential density (people per square mile) within centers and corridors - Units within ½ mile of retail and activity centers
GOALS
Make Austin a more connected city.
METRICS
- Sidewalk Density - Intersection Density - Units within ½ mile of transit and high capacity transit
GOALS
Increase the percentage of mixed-use development.
METRICS
- Development within activity centers and corridors
GOALS
Create an efficient development review process.
METRICS
- Percent of development needing discretionary approval - Time needed for decision

The revised Land Development Code should incorporate direction from the actions attached to this program (see the Action Matrix, starting on page 228). Generally, these actions:

- Promote a compact and connected city that welcomes Austin's diverse households
- Preserve the character of different neighborhoods and parts of the city
- Promote affordability for Austinites at every stage of life and income level
- Integrate nature into the city and protect environmentally sensitive areas
- Ensure the delivery of efficient services
- Provide clear guidance in a user-friendly format

The first step in revising the Land Development Code is an inclusive public process to examine the existing code and develop a shared understanding of the issues, conflicts and impediments to accomplishing the goals of *Imagine Austin*. Once a decision has been made on issues and directions to achieve these goals, the process of creating a more efficient, predictable, and understandable Land Development Code, criteria manuals, and review process will begin. When the revised code is in place, its application will need to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it results in development outcomes such as more compact and connected places.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)

1. Engage key stakeholders to create a public involvement process and timeline for revising the code and criteria manuals. This process should include significant educational components and workshops early in the process. These should be structured both from a technical perspective involving City Council, Planning Commission, and other Boards and Commissions, and the design community, as well as business owners, neighborhood groups, and residents. Examples of public input methods include surveys of regular code users, design workshops, site visits, visual tools, best practices, and technical reviews of proposed changes.

2. Initiate a comprehensive review to determine necessary revisions to the Austin Land Development Code and associated technical and criteria manuals.

    a. Perform an initial review and assessment (diagnosis) of the Land Development Code and associated criteria manuals to identify major issues and key sections that need to be revised and those sections that will remain the same. This step also includes public engagement and interviews/focus groups with business owners, landowners, neighborhood groups, designers, developers, and community leaders.

    b. Determine staffing levels, the need for consultants, and financial resources needed to complete the comprehensive review and code revision.

    c. Develop a process and timeline for updating the Land Development Code and manuals.

3. Assess the efficiency of the City of Austin's development review process and implement necessary changes.

LONG TERM (3+ YEARS, ONGOING)

4. Adopt the code and manual revisions.

    a. Create guidelines and a process to transition from current to new regulations in alignment with the Growth Concept Map and small area plans.

    b. Revise the zoning map to be consistent with the revised Land Development Code.

    c. Train staff on the new code.

5. Track new development and evaluate how well the new code and manuals encourage development that is compact and connected. Coordinate with the *Imagine Austin* annual report and complete communities indicator process described on pages 223-226.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PRIORITY PROGRAMS:

- Invest in transportation and other improvements to create a compact and connected Austin. The revised Land Development Code and technical and criteria manuals will include design standards and incentives for complete streets as well as standards to encourage public transit, walking, and bicycling as alternatives to driving.

- Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. Revising the Land Development Code, technical and criteria manuals will both incentivize and require "green" elements relating to street design, site planning and design, landscaping, as well as other aspects of the development process.

- Sustainably manage our water resources. The revised Land Development Code, technical and criteria manuals will include standards and incentives for low impact development, innovative water and graywater reuse, and preservation of environmentally sensitive land, floodplains, and water recharge areas. Changes to the Land Development Code will support development patterns that better manage water resources.

- Create a Healthy Austin Program. The revised code, technical and criteria manuals will include standards and guidelines for compact and connected development and design standards to make walking and biking safer and more attractive for residents.

- Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin. Revisions to the Land Development Code will be reviewed from the context of affordability. The City of Austin's S.M.A.R.T. Housing Program has been held up nationally as an example of best practice and is a good starting point for examining process and practice issues within the Austin code.

The new code will also promote more flexible standards for the construction and preservation of affordable units.

RELATED CITY INITIATIVES:

- Healthy Austin Code

- Neighborhood Plans

- Corridor and Station-Area Plans

- Families and Children Task Force Report

- Urban Parks Workgroup Report

Located in southwest Downtown, the decommissioned Seaholm power plant and adjacent Green water treatment plant are slated to undergo redevelopment.

TACKLING THE ETHNIC DIVIDE

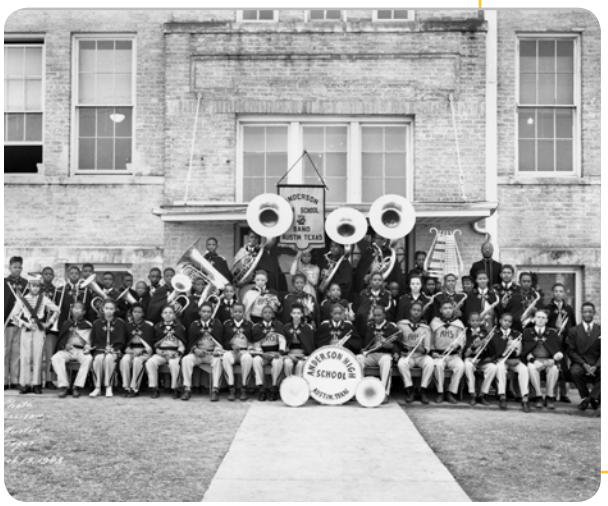
Austin is more diverse than at any time in its history. Austinites of color now make up the majority of the population. Yet we are still dealing with the legacy of segregation and racism, particularly among Americans of African descent and Hispanic ethnicity. Austinites living east of Interstate 35 do not share equally in Austin's celebrated quality of life. Overall, they are poorer, less healthy, lag academically, and lack access to housing which they can afford.

Segregation in Austin

Early in Austin's development, African Americans lived throughout Austin, usually in small communities such as Clarksville or Wheatville, as well as where Highland Mall and Brackenridge Hospital are today. Austin was segregated—its stores, schools, and buses. But it was also a place where blacks and Hispanics ran businesses, churches, and schools, and occasionally, served as aldermen. However, by 1940, most black Austinites lived in East Austin between Seventh and 12th Streets. Most of the rapidly growing Mexican American population also lived in East Austin, south of Sixth Street. This was due primarily to policies that directed African and Mexican Americans to live in East Austin.

Black and Hispanic Austinites responded in a variety of ways. One prominent example was the effort by these communities to gain access to Austin libraries, which were whites-only in the early part of the 1900s. In the early 1930s, black Austinites lobbied to get an East Austin branch of the Austin Public Library. A small library was soon created at the corner of Angelina and Hackberry streets, which became the George Washington Carver Branch. In the 1950s, using tactics designed to dispel the myth of "separate but equal," East Austinites successfully organized to integrate the whites-only downtown branch. Other campaigns followed, including successful efforts desegregating the Austin Fire Department and Barton Springs Pool. Lions Municipal Golf Course, desegregated in the early 1950s, was the first such golf course in the city and state, and possibly in the South.

Guadalupe School, part of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.



Anderson High School, the city's official African-American high school, was started in 1889 as part of the Robertson Hill School. The high school was relocated three times before being ordered closed in 1971 by a federal judge as a part of desegregation. Anderson reopened in 1973 at its present location in Northwest Austin as an integrated high school.

The ethnic divide today. How *Imagine Austin* helps.

Work to improve the quality of life for people of color continues, but significant disparities remain. The legacy of 20th century segregation lingers. Of the public schools rated academically unacceptable in 2009, all four are located on Austin's east side, where most of Austin's African American and Hispanic students still live. The drop-out rate for these students in the Austin Independent School District is more than three times that of white students. Fewer than one in five black or Hispanic Austinites over 25 have received a college degree (three in five white Austinites have one).

Austin's African American population also experiences significantly higher unemployment (more than 13 percent, compared with an overall unemployment rate between 6 percent and 7 percent). Nearly one third of blacks and Latinos live in poverty—and more than 40 percent of black and Latino children.

African Americans and Hispanics have limited access to healthcare and experience higher rates of obesity and diabetes. Black Austinites also experience substantially higher rates of asthma and infant mortality. Black and Hispanic teens are also more likely to get pregnant, which can pose health risks for the mother and child. Early parenthood can result in diminished educational and employment opportunities for the parents, leaving them at a lifelong disadvantage.

Over the past few decades, these two communities have diverged significantly. Austin's Hispanic community is growing rapidly and quickly becoming more diverse. While much attention is paid to Mexican immigrants, middle-class Hispanic households move to Austin from elsewhere in Texas and across the country. Despite this diversity, there continue to be neighborhoods, such as Dove Springs and North Lamar, whose heavy immigrant population, linguistic isolation, lower incomes, and lack of public and private services pose substantial challenges to the adults and children living there.

Austin's African American population has declined since 2000. Many younger African Americans have moved to the suburbs or outside the region entirely, suggesting they feel less welcome in Austin, compared with other Sunbelt cities with booming African American populations, such as Atlanta, Dallas, and Houston.

Opened in 1949, the Victory Grill was an important part of the Chitlin' Circuit. The Chitlin' Circuit was the name given collectively to music venues that featured black musicians, including influential performers such as W.C. Clark, Miles Davis, Etta James, and B.B. King. The Victory Grill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tackling the Divide

In the last decade, the City of Austin undertook two initiatives to address Austin's racial divide. The African American Quality of Life Initiative, begun in 2004, identified six categories of actions to improve the quality of life for the African Americans in Austin:

- Arts, Culture, and Entertainment
- Business and Economic Development
- Employment and Education
- Health
- Neighborhood Sustainability
- Police and Safety

From 2006 to 2008, the City implemented recommendations from the initiative. Following the project, the **African American Resource Advisory Commission** was formed to continue the effort to alleviate inequities facing Austin's African Americans.

Recognizing the success of the African American Quality of Life initiative, in 2008 the City began a Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative, developing new recommendations in four areas:

- Education
- Economic Development
- Cultural Arts/History Enrichment
- Health

The Community Oversight Team continues working to implement the Hispanic Quality of Life Initiative.

A statue in front of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center recognizes the contributions of the PErez and Ramos families to Austin's music scene. The statue is part of "The Trail of Tejano Legends," a project of the Austin Latino Music Association (ALMA).

Imagine Austin helps build on these efforts by connecting them to citywide policies. In particular, these two initiatives are connected to four of *Imagine Austin*'s Priority Programs:

- **Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin**
  In addition to improving market rate affordability within the city, this program also seeks to develop new programs aimed at maintaining existing and developing new affordable housing for blue-collar workers and the un- and under-employed within the city.

- **Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs and local businesses.**
  Many in Austin's African American and Hispanic populations have not enjoyed the city's recent prosperity. *Imagine Austin* addresses both sides of this dilemma: improving the skills the workforce has or needs and drawing more jobs that are available for those skills.

- **Create a Healthy Austin program.**
  Support services—from the City, non-profits, and private market—that makes healthy choices available and easy to make, such as by eliminating "food deserts."

- **Invest in a compact and connected Austin.**
  Continued investment in existing neighborhoods is important to creating complete communities throughout the city that receive an equitable share of City services and amenities, such as pedestrian-friendly areas, shopping, transit, libraries, and safe and accessible playgrounds.

Any comprehensive plan in Austin owes a special duty to Austin's black and Hispanic community, but *Imagine Austin* should go further. This plan should serve as a platform to ensure everyone in Austin is a part of one or more of the city's vibrant communities, whether they are new or long-time residents, drawn by the local universities or high-paying construction jobs, whether they emigrate from Mexico, India, Vietnam, or California.

Huston-Tillotson University, a traditionally black university located in East Austin. The University evolved from Tillotson College and Samuel Huston College, both established in the late 1800s and later merged in 1952.

AUSTIN CIT

IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Imagine Austin provides a wide-ranging policy framework to guide decision-making across all levels of City government. It sets an overall framework for internal decision making and provides direction for future planning efforts, updates and revisions for existing plans, the adoption and interpretation of regulations, setting budgets and spending priorities, and creating partnerships.

The plan's elements—vision statement (Chapter 3), polices and the Growth Concept Map (Chapter 4), priority programs (Chapter 5, pp. 186-210), and action matrix (Chapter 5, pp. 228-266) — provide different levels of guidance for implementation:

- The **Vision Statement** describes in aspirational terms what Austinites want the city to become by 2039 and establishes the broadest context for decision-making.

- **Polices and the Growth Concept Map series** guide long-term department strategies to achieve the Vision and should be incorporated into department master plans and budgeting.

- **Actions and Priority Programs** provide the more immediate steps to fulfill the vision statement. The actions are initiatives, programs, or regulatory changes needed to implement the policies and Growth Concept Map. The priority programs organize the actions into related groupings and establishes a system to manage the overall implementation of the comprehensive plan.

- **Work Plans: Step by Step Action** — Each program also includes a starting work program with short-term, long-term, and ongoing steps. Implementing each program will require elected officials, the public, staff, and City partners to develop a more detailed work plan that creates a step-by-step timeline of activities and milestones, connects community stakeholders, and allows progress in each program to be regularly monitored and evaluated to learn from experience, achieve results, and ensure effective use of community resources.

PLANNING

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* provides the policy basis for future plans. It also establishes the context for a complete planning framework that coordinates plans of different purposes, scales, and levels to implement the comprehensive plan. These "implementation plans" will apply the vision statement, policies, and Growth Concept Map to smaller areas or specific issues. If, during these planning processes new conditions or issues arise, *Imagine Austin* may be amended to address these changing circumstances and to ensure the plan's ongoing viability.

Other types of plans—master and small area—will help implement *Imagine Austin*. Master plans provide detailed guidance for city systems such as our parks, sidewalks, watersheds, and waste management. Small area plans are those for defined geographic districts such as transit station areas, corridors, and neighborhoods. These small area plans complement *Imagine Austin* by providing detailed land use, infrastructure, and service recommendations within the framework set by the comprehensive plan policies and Growth Concept Map.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS

The City of Austin adopted many operational, master, and small area plans prior to *Imagine Austin*. During the process to create the new comprehensive plan, these plans were included with public input to shape *Imagine Austin*, including the development of the Growth Concept Map. See Appendix D for the Small Area and Master Plans attached to *Imagine Austin*.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES WORKING TOGETHER

How Imagine Austin coordinates master and small area plans

Making decisions in the future

The comprehensive plan, master plans, and small area plans are all guides for future decisions: spending (including the City's annual budgets and bonds) or regulations (including decisions on rezoning requests). These plans work together by providing decision-makers (City Council, but also boards and commissions, City staff, and the public) with coordinated but different perspectives.

Construction of the Great Streets enhancements to Cesar Chavez.

Austin City Council.

Imagine Austin

The City's comprehensive plan provides guidance on city-wide, cross-departmental issues to achieve the vision the community wants for its future, through such broad questions as:

- How do we coordinate land use and transportation planning?
- How can we shape our regulations to improve household affordability?
- What are the city's goals for economic and workforce development?

Master plans

The comprehensive plan helps to clarify how different city systems work together and what stakeholders are involved in each area of city business. Working with that guidance, master plans provide detailed department planning for their system.

Small area plans

The comprehensive plan articulates what the city-wide interest is at a broad scale. Small area plans—such as neighborhood plans and station area plans—provide an alternate perspective: a detailed view based on local conditions — what intersections are difficult to cross? What parcels are appropriate for redevelopment?

Updates and amendments to neighborhood plans continue to use the plan amendment process.

The comprehensive plan guides master and small area plans, but should also be able to change in response to new information.

Zoning decisions

Zoning decisions should be guided by *Imagine Austin* and consistent with the text of the small area plans and Future Land Use Map or equivalent.

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* recognizes and embraces all previous master and small area plans. As depicted on pages 218 -219, the comprehensive plan is an "umbrella" plan that serves as a guide on city-wide, cross-department issues to achieve the vision statement. *Imagine Austin* is not a plan that supersedes previous plans, but acts as a chaperone to the future projected growth of Austin over the next 30 years. During this growth period, inconsistencies between *Imagine Austin* and other plans may be discovered. Changes to the master plans will be addressed through a public amendment process by the City Council. Changes to the small area plans (e.g., neighborhood plans) will continue to include public input from affected parties and will follow the adopted neighborhood plan amendment process. Changes to *Imagine Austin* should be addressed through the annual review.

The City should continue the small area (neighborhood, corridor, and station area) planning process for areas without adopted small area plans. *Imagine Austin* should inform, but not predetermine, decisions made in future small-area plans. Modifications to the Growth Concept Map may be necessary to respond to the input from future small-area plans and reflect the more detailed discussions that can occur with site-specific analysis. New plans will have the same status and function as existing small area plans (neighborhood plans).

As the City of Austin develops new master and small area plans, *Imagine Austin* will serve as a guide to policy direction. In areas not covered by small area plans, *Imagine Austin* will serve as an instrument for developing plans and providing planning parameters. As with the *Imagine Austin* planning process, public involvement will be included that could potentially generate ideas and themes for these plans.

REGULATIONS AND ZONING

The Austin City Charter requires all land development regulations be consistent with the comprehensive plan. To assess the level of consistency, the City of Austin will need to review and analyze these regulations for changes needed to support plan policies and actions called for by priority programs. This "code diagnosis" will identify those sections of existing regulations that need to be changed and will provide the direction for preparation of proposed code amendments or revisions. In addition, the City may consider regulatory changes as part of *Imagine Austin's* Annual Report and periodic Appraisal and Evaluation.

Zoning decisions will be guided by all of *Imagine Austin's* elements—vision statement, policies, Growth Concept Map, actions, priority programs, and attached small area plans. Where a small area plan exists, recommendations should be consistent with the text of the plan and its Future Land Use Map or equivalent map (if one exists). Where no small area plan exists, *Imagine Austin* should be used as a guide for zoning decisions. In such instances, rezoning requests should be reviewed against relevant sections of the comprehensive plan.

SPENDING

Imagine Austin will also help direct how the City spends money. This spending typically takes the form of capital improvements and the annual operating budget. The comprehensive plan will influence both types of expenditures. *Imagine Austin* builds on existing operations to better coordinate the City's many missions. However, it does not address all City operations and should not be taken as a guide to budgeting, particularly related to dedicated funding sources, funding for essential needs such as emergency medical, police, and fire services, and funding for existing infrastructure repairs and improvements.

Imagine Austin also provides context for seeking outside sources of funding, such as federal or state grants.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is an important tool to guide growth and development and is the only way to expand municipal boundaries. The City of Austin uses annexation to apply zoning and development regulations, to protect and expand the tax base, to more efficiently deliver municipal services such as public safety and utilities, and to provide these services to developing areas. To be consistent with *Imagine Austin*, provide efficient, equitable, and environmentally sensitive utility services, and coordinate the extension of municipal services, the City of Austin should continue to maintain its annexation program. This program should be based on the following policies:

- Annex areas that can be the most economically served with existing and proposed infrastructure and services.
- Annex areas that will be provided with municipal services and utilities through coordinated municipal utility and service extension plans and the capital improvements program.
- Continue to annex major industrial and commercial areas on the periphery of the city.
- Use limited purpose annexation in cooperation with landowners to expand environmental, land use, and development regulations on land currently in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Consider annexing areas served by aging or substandard septic systems where water quality degradation is probable or citizens have submitted petitions for annexation.
- Annex residential areas to broadly distribute the cost of services.
- Provide City consent to independent utility or improvement districts only where the City is the water and wastewater utility provider. The districts must promote sustainable development in accordance with the Growth Concept Map. Proposed districts must be financially viable, located entirely within Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction, and provide extraordinary public benefits.

PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Austin cannot implement *Imagine Austin* by itself. It will need to enter into partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations and develop coalitions with our regional neighbors to address mutual concerns. The City of Austin currently has relationships with a number of surrounding local governments and agencies such as Travis County, the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Central Health. To implement *Imagine Austin* these relationships may need to be strengthened and those with other organizations such as area school districts, colleges, and universities made more firm. For example, to achieve the desired land use patterns, transportation improvements, environmental protections, and service coordination within Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction, coordination with Travis County is essential.

New and existing partnerships, particularly with non-profit organizations, may require capacity building through grants or other direct assistance to develop training, leadership, programs, and revenue generation and community engagement strategies. Such assistance can leverage the resources of partner organizations to implement some actions while freeing up resources to implement others. Cooperation also increases government efficiency and reduces costs through resource sharing, increased coordination, and consolidation of duplicative services.

Central Texas is becoming an increasingly interdependent region with natural systems and urban environments crossing political boundaries. If we are to address the region's collective concerns and realize *Imagine Austin's* vision, we must collaborate with surrounding municipalities and counties. Within our city limits we can encourage sustainable growth patterns, but scattered, low-density development outside the city can undercut those efforts. The City of Austin's best efforts to protect the Edwards Aquifer will suffer without a regional commitment to similar targets. Collaboration and shared goals improve the region's quality of life and competitiveness, for example, by providing seamless transportation and open space connections.

DOCUMENTING PROGRESS: PLAN MONITORING AND REVIEW

Regular evaluation and monitoring of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* is a key component of the implementation strategy. If the plan is to remain useful and effective over time, the City must establish a method to measure the successes and challenges in achieving its vision, goals, and implementation strategies. Ongoing monitoring will inform the City Council, Planning Commission, City of Austin administration and departments, partner organizations, and the public about the plan's effectiveness; identify those aspects of implementation that are working well and those needing improvement; and keep the plan current as circumstances change and new information becomes available. The monitoring process provides a way to measure progress and get feedback from policy makers and the public to determine if the implementation program is working to achieve the *Imagine Austin* vision. Plan monitoring includes two primary components: annual program monitoring of recommended initiatives, programs, or regulatory changes; and longer term performance monitoring using indicators to measure whether the recommended actions are achieving desired results. These components will be documented using the two monitoring and review mechanisms identified in the Austin City Charter—the Annual Report (program monitoring) and the periodic (i.e., five-year) Evaluation and Appraisal Report (performance monitoring).

ANNUAL REPORT (PROGRAM MONITORING)

The Annual Report assesses the City's progress in accomplishing the priority programs identified in the *Imagine Austin* implementation plan. The report will include:

- Projects and policies (including capital improvements) implemented and the alignment of those projects and policies with the goals of the plan
- An annotated matrix indicating the implementation status and benchmarks of each priority program
- The work program for the coming year
- Suggestions for updates to the comprehensive plan needed to respond to new issues and changing conditions, for consideration by City Council.

The Annual Report will be submitted by the Planning Commission to the Mayor and City Council at the end of each fiscal year.

FIVE-YEAR EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT (PERFORMANCE MONITORING)

Performance monitoring provides an assessment of whether actions that have been implemented in previous years are achieving the desired results as measured through complete communities indicators, examples of which are provided below. Once a specific action has been implemented, as documented in the Annual Report, performance monitoring will assess whether that action is having positive results. For example, if an action item to introduce new tools and strategies to

promote affordable housing is implemented, performance monitoring will document measurable targets such as an increase in the number of affordable units built in a given timeframe.

Performance monitoring will be documented every five years in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. This means that at least once every five years, the annual report will provide an assessment of the overall progress of the plan, including a description of what significant changes have occurred since plan adoption (or previous assessment or update) and use of the performance indicators to measure whether or not the outcomes desired by the community are being met. Depending on progress made and new issues that emerged over the previous five years, the Evaluation and Appraisal Report will allow for minor amendments and modifications based on changing local, regional, state, and national dynamics and trends, as well as the completion of highlighted programs. Major updates may also be required to re-assess the plan's goals, policies, and priorities, and should occur at least every 10 years. If the Evaluation and Appraisal Report finds that a major update is warranted, a new public participation plan should be prepared to ensure the plan update takes direction from the community. If an update to the plan is needed, proposed changes will be submitted to the Planning Commission within 18 months after the evaluation is approved by City Council.

COMPLETE COMMUNITIES INDICATORS

As indicated in the description of performance monitoring above, numeric indicators are used in plan implementation and monitoring to measure whether or not the goals and vision of the plan are being met. For example, available data on transit ridership, educational attainment, and the number of affordable housing units built can be tracked to monitor progress in achieving *Imagine Austin* goals related to mobility, education, and affordable housing. Therefore, collecting consistent and thorough data on a regular basis is important to measuring the plan's progress.

The following indicators for each of the *Imagine Austin* vision principles provide metrics for the City of Austin and its partners to measure success in achieving plan goals. All indicators were calculated for the planning area at the time of adoption to ensure consistency and comparability from year to year, even when City boundaries change and the extraterritorial jurisdiction expanded. Indicators highlighted in red will also be calculated for seven geographic subareas for comparison (see Figure 5.1 on page 227). Where appropriate, indicators tracking walkability should seek to approximate real-world conditions, such as access to the edge of parks, and the centers of retail areas with large amounts of surface parking. Indicators will be presented as numeric results. Indicator mapping may be integrated into a small area planning process.

As new data and measurement techniques become available or as circumstances change, existing indicators may be revised, removed, and new ones added.

Livable

- Households with children (tracked geographically)
- Residential density (people per square mile)
- Median housing values (dollars, by Zip code)
- Median rent (dollars, by Zip code)
- Cost burdened households (housing, transportation, and utility costs)
- Residents who are overweight/obese (percent)
- Community gardens/plots/local farms (count and acreage)
- Citywide crime rates
- Perception of safety (community survey)
- Homeless count (annual point in time estimate)
- Number of farmers markets, farm stands, and mobile healthy food carts
- Households within ½ mile distance of full-service supermarkets/grocery stores (percent)

Natural and Sustainable

- Developed land (square miles)
- Mixed-use development (percent)
- Impervious cover (percent per capita and total)
- Parks and open space (acres or acres per capita)
- Water consumption (total water use and per capita residential)
- Water quality
- Air quality (nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds)
- Greenhouse gas emissions (by sector)
- Energy generation, percent of renewables
- Development within the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones (square miles)
- Development within the 100-year floodplain (square miles)
- Households within ½ mile distance of park or accessible open space (percent)

Creative

- Dedicated municipal funding for arts (dollars per capita)
- Private funding for arts (dollars per capita)
- Arts programs in schools and neighborhood recreation centers
- Attendance at arts/cultural events
- Money brought into economy from arts/cultural events
- Live music venues
- Households within ½ distance of art/cultural venue (percent)

Educated

- School attendance rates
- High-school graduation rate (percent, by geography)
- Residents with undergraduate and graduate degrees (percent)
- Standardized test scores
- Enrollment in certification, continuing education, and lifelong learning programs
- Households within ½ mile of library or community center
- Households within ½ mile distance of a school, public and/or private (percent)

Mobile and Interconnected

- Transit ridership (percentage of trips)
- Vehicle miles traveled (total and per capita)
- Average transit headways (minutes)
- Bicycle miles traveled (total and per capita)
- Sidewalks (linear miles and percent of street frontages with sidewalks)
- Bicycle lanes (linear miles)
- Households within ¼ mile of an urban trail (percent)
- Households within ¼ and ½ mile distance of transit and high capacity transit (percent)
- Employees within ¼ and ½ mile of transit and high capacity transit

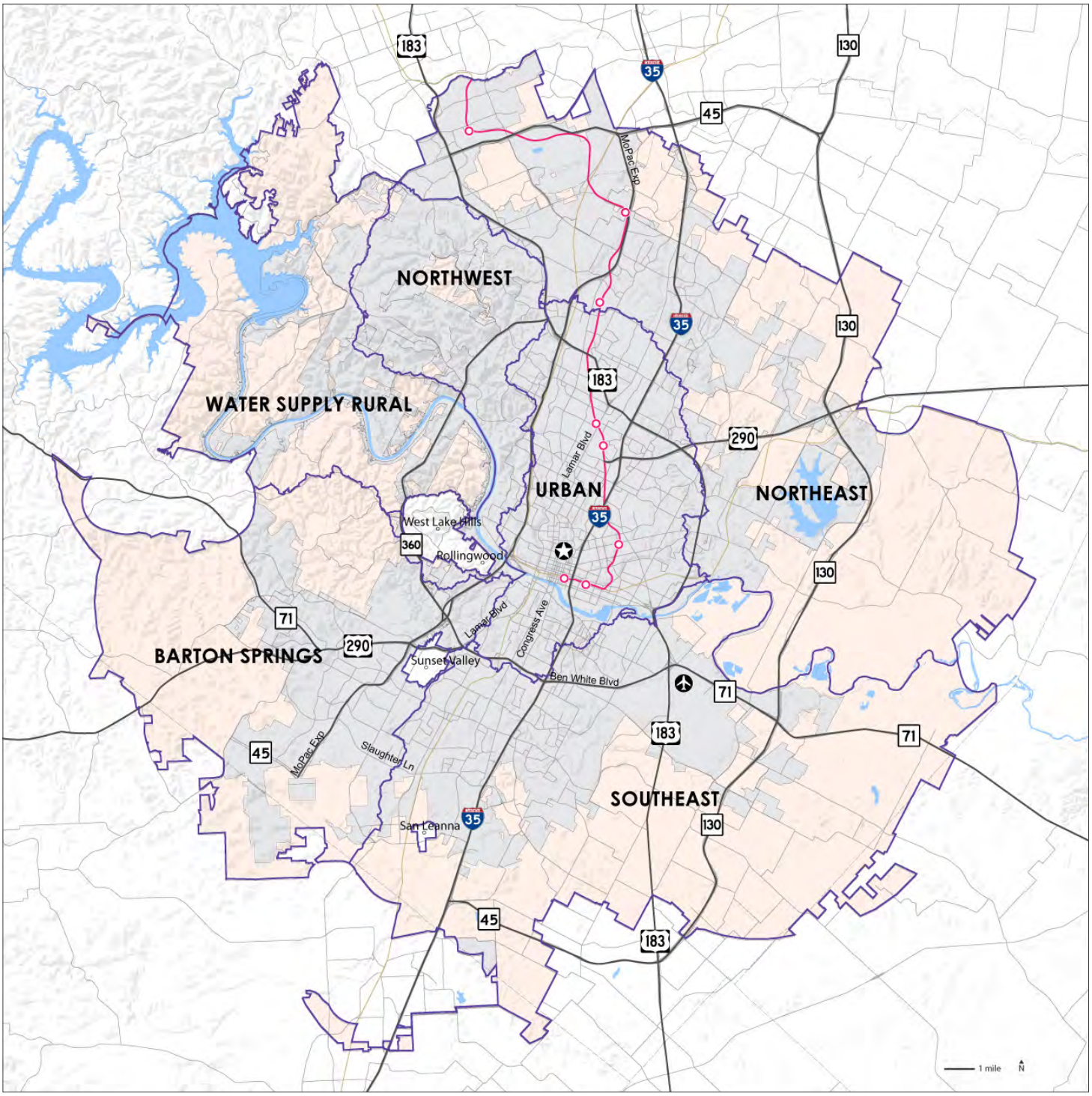
Prosperous

- Employment density (jobs per square mile)
- Economic output (dollars)
- Job/housing balance (ratio of jobs to people)
- Employment rate (percent)
- Tax revenue (dollars)
- New businesses started per capita (dbas filed per capita)
- Households within ½ mile distance of retail and mixed-use centers (percent)

A Community that Values and Respects People

- Public safety response times (minutes)
- Voting rates (tracked geographically)
- Proportionality of arrest demographics (yes/no)
- Households within ½ mile distance of medical services (percent)

Figure 5.1 **Geographic SubAreas**



ACTION MATRIX

The tables lists each building block action. The actions are initiatives, programs, capital improvements, or regulatory changes needed to implement the policies and Growth Concept Map. The actions also convey additional detail for implementing the priority programs; connections between actions and programs are identified.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
LUT A1	Give priority to City of Austin investments to support mixed use, transit, and the creation of compact walkable and bikeable places.	CIP	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A2	Promote diverse infill housing such as small-scale apartments, smaller-lot single-family houses, town and row houses, and garage apartments that complement and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
LUT A3	Establish land use and street design regulations to create sustainable neighborhoods that are child-friendly, support walking and bicycling, are in proximity to daily needs, and provide a range of housing-type options such as duplexes, townhouses, row houses, small-scale apartments, and houses on smaller lots to meet the needs of people of different means and at different stages of their lives.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A4	Use incentives and regulations to direct growth to areas consistent with the Growth Concept Map that have existing infrastructure capacity including roads, water, wastewater, drainage, and schools.	Policy	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A5	Create a regulatory environment to promote the redevelopment of brownfields and greyfields into compact, walkable places by: - Increasing development rights through changes in regulations, density bonuses, and other incentives; - Revising parking requirements that result in more permeable areas and promote walking, biking, and transit; - Providing assistance in securing funding for redevelopment; - Ensuring appropriate transitions to less intensive residential areas; - Expediting the permitting and approval process; - Utilizing Low Impact Development practices to mitigate impacts associated with increases in impervious cover or constrained stormwater infrastructure that may impede redevelopment.	Regulation, CIP	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Change Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

LUT A6	Create a regional planning initiative to encourage local governments in Central Texas to promote a mix of housing and land uses for diverse populations and income groups, located near work, shopping, and services.	Coordination	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
LUT A7	Implement a transfer of development rights program to transfer development rights from environmentally sensitive areas to areas identified on the Growth Concept Map for new development or redevelopment.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
LUT A8	Adopt policies and establish a regulatory environment that promotes the development of compact, mixed-use places that provide great public spaces accessible to people of all ages and abilities.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A9	Coordinate with local school districts in the planning and siting of schools and other educational facilities to encourage sustainable designs and promote the creation of complete communities.	Coordination	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A10	Locate new industrial development; logistics, warehousing, and distribution; and other comparable businesses in areas with adequate utility and transportation infrastructure and in areas that reduce the harmful effects on neighborhoods and the environment.	Policy, Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A11	Develop land use and transportation policies and regulations that promote the development of projects that promote more active and healthy lifestyles, such as community gardens, tree-shaded sidewalks and trails, bicycle parking, showers within office buildings, and having daily needs within proximity to home and work.	Policy, Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A12	Create an integrated transportation plan that encompasses driving, transit, bicycling, walking, and roadway and rail freight.	Policy	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A13	Create a system of high-capacity transit, including elements such as urban rail and bus rapid transit corresponding to land use mix and intensity.	CIP, Policy	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
LUT A14	Increase public transit ridership. - Expand service to compact centers and activity corridors - Increase the number of people who use transit by choice - Create inviting public spaces at stops and transfer centers - Provide real-time schedule information - Add more covered bus shelters - Make stops more convenient - Add park and ride facilities - Make routes more convenient and the system more intuitive - Create street design standards (bus turnouts, sidewalk width, benches, shelter) - Give transit priority (queue jumpers, signal priority, managed lanes, and dedicated lanes) - Launch an informative and enticing public relations campaign - Implement first and last mile solutions such as carpooling, vanpools, and bicycle and car sharing - Add more bicycle carrying capacity to buses and trains	Program, CIP, Coordination	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A15	Ensure that the construction, operation, and management of rail, bus rapid transit, local bus systems, and future public transportation are integrated and coordinated across City Departments and with our partners such as other local governments, agencies, and districts.	Coordination	
LUT A16	Enhance crosstown transit options to better connect people to the places where they live, work, play, shop, and access services.	Coordination, CIP	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
LUT A17	Create an efficient and connected transportation system that allows people with disabilities and special needs to easily access their daily needs from where they live and work.	Regulation, Coordination	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A18	Develop a program and funding source to retrofit existing, incomplete roadways into complete streets.	CIP, Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A19	Develop complete streets design guidelines for all new road construction and reconstruction: - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities - Green street techniques - Green Street Techniques/Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices - Interconnected, navigable, grid-like streets and blocks - Flexibility in design and regulations - Create pedestrian-activated crosswalks at mid block intersections on arterials to improve pedestrian safety - Traffic calming measures - Transit accommodations - Use of native landscaping	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
LUT A20	Develop roadway and rights-of-way design standards that accommodate the needs of street trees and above and below ground utilities and infrastructure.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A21	Create a network of on- and off-street physically separated bicycle and walking routes or trails linking all parts of Austin and the region.	CIP	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A22	Expand the Safe Routes to School programs.	Coordination, CIP, Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A23	Develop standards to connect all new neighborhoods to adjacent neighborhoods and commercial areas by streets, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes and/or paths.	Regulation	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A24	Encourage the relocation of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad freight line from its current alignment through the middle of Austin.	CIP, Coordination	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
LUT A25	Create a transportation and congestion management plan and program to improve the flow of traffic in and out of the Central Business District during the morning and evening rush hours through coordination with the Downtown public and private sector stakeholders.	Coordination, Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
LUT A26	Set targets for vehicle miles traveled per capita and incorporate those targets into traffic impact studies for new development.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A27	Promote increased bicycling and walking through traffic enforcement, program evaluation, and developing and integrating web-based tools, mobile applications and other educational materials.	Analysis, Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
LUT A28	Create design standards for public spaces such as parks, plazas, sidewalks and trails that respond to the unique setting in which they are located.	Regulation, Policy	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A29	Engage the local creative community to create more robust public art for Austin's public gathering places such as plazas, parks, trails, roadways, transit stops, and sidewalks.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
LUT A30	Create a regulatory environment to allow flexibility in how buildings are used in compact centers and along commercial corridors—particularly the first floor—by simplifying the process to adapt from one use to another, such as residential to commercial or vice versa.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
LUT A31	Improve streetscapes and infrastructure along activity corridors and at activity centers through the use of financing mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts and Public Improvement Districts (PID).	CIP, Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
LUT A32	Develop standards for public spaces, such as parks, plazas and streets, to create integrated, tree-covered places.	Regulation, Policy	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A33	Develop dark sky regulations and standards to reduce nighttime light pollution to: - Allow people to see the stars - Reduce the adverse health effects of light pollution on humans - Reduce the effects of unnatural lighting on the environment and nocturnal animals - Conserve natural resources due lowered energy usage.	Regulation	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
LUT A34	Incentivize new and redevelopment to be sensitive to the Central Texas climate, culture, building traditions, and constructions materials.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A35	Develop standards and expand incentives for green building and increased energy efficiency for new construction and remodels of older houses.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A36	Incentivize appropriately-scaled and located green infrastructure and public spaces, such as parks, plazas, greenways, trails, urban agriculture and/or open space in new development and redevelopment projects.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A37	Develop a regulatory framework to incentivize the use of Low Impact Development (LID) features such as rainwater harvesting, increased permeable surfaces, rain gardens, green roofs, green streets, and naturalized water quality features such as bioswales to manage stormwater.	Regulation	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
LUT A38	Review and change building and zoning codes and incorporate best practices to promote green building and sustainable development.	Analysis, Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
LUT A39	Create regulations and incentives for developers and builders to use green development techniques for buildings, streets, and open spaces with a focus on conservation, longevity, and sustainability.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A40	Expand the number of parks and amount of open spaces of different sizes and purposes throughout the city.	CIP, Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A41	Promote Austin and the surrounding area's green infrastructure by utilizing web-based tools such as maps and other resources.	Analysis, Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Land Use and Transportation / Building Block 1			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
LUT A42	Create incentives and develop funding mechanisms and regulations to promote the rehabilitation, reuse, and maintenance of historically designated properties: -Grants -Tax incentives -Flexible building requirements -Revolving loan sources -Fee waivers -Fast-track permitting	Regulation, Incentives, Program	
LUT A43	Conduct ongoing updates to the historic and cultural resource survey and inventory to include iconic heritage trees, sites, structures, and districts.	Analysis	
LUT A44	Develop and implement straightforward and transparent preservation strategies, guidelines, and regulations for historic areas, sites and structures, and cultural resources that preserves Austin's heritage, while being respectful of the local character, community values, and of the desires of property owners.	Program	
LUT A45	Develop a program that acknowledges and rewards notable contemporary and historic architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design: - create an annual award for excellence in design - sponsor a design studio - develop a mapping and wayfinding system	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
LUT A46	Ensure consistency between the Growth Concept Map Series and regional transportation plans by amending the Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan to remove SH45 SW and requesting its removal from the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.	Coordination	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
LUT A47	Create an ongoing Vision Zero Task Force to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan and subsequent updates to that Action Plan	Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
Housing and Neighborhoods / Building Block 2			
Label	Action Idea	Action Type	Priority Program(s)

I imagine Austin...
with more foot traffic than rush hour traffic!

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

HN A1	Establish regulations and programs to promote the development of a variety of market rate and affordable housing types within compact, activity centers and corridors served by transit.	Regulation, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A2	Develop incentives and policies to encourage more families with children to live in Austin's established neighborhoods by increasing the supply and variety of housing.	Regulation, Policy	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A3	Produce regulations and enhance programs to promote affordable housing throughout Austin by: - Utilizing publicly-owned land for the development of affordable housing - Preserving existing affordable housing - Allowing for diverse housing types throughout Austin - Balancing homeownership and rental opportunities - Providing assistance in securing funding for affordable housing - Examine regulations and policies that adversely affect affordable housing and consider approaches to minimize cost impacts for units attainable for families at significantly less than market values - Land banking - Encouraging the expansion of community development corporations	Regulation, Program, CIP	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Housing and Neighborhoods / Building Block 2			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
HN A4	Provide incentives, educational materials, and develop new funding sources for the rehabilitation and repair of affordable housing, including: - Tax rebates - Flexible development regulations - Fees-in-lieu of providing affordable housing - Bond elections	CIP, Regulation	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A5	Incentivize and subsidize the construction of infrastructure for projects providing affordable housing.	CIP	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A6	Provide greater consideration for the awarding of incentives to businesses, organizations, and developments that provide housing and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals.	CIP, Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A7	Advocate changes to State of Texas legislation to support the development of affordable housing (i.e., repeal of the ban on inclusionary zoning).	Policy, Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A8	Expand home-buyer assistance programs so that lower income households can purchase houses to increase homeownership levels in Austin.	CIP, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A9	Expand existing and develop new programs, and coordinate with other organizations to retain long-time residents of neighborhoods experiencing rapidly increasing property values and an influx of wealthier new residents.	Policy, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A10	Create incentives and form partnerships with large employers to develop workforce housing.	Program, Coordination	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
HN A11	Establish a regulatory framework to promote and assist housing development that involves adaptive re-use of existing buildings.	Regulation	
HN A12	Develop a program to expand opportunities for homebuyers to incorporate the cost of energy-efficient improvements into their mortgages or into the refinancing of existing mortgages.	Policy, Coordination	
HN A13	Expand informational programs that educate homeowners and builders about sustainable building practices.	Program	
~~HN A14~~	~~Create a more robust code enforcement program to improve the quality of housing~~	~~Program~~	Replaced by CFS A22 per 2013 Amendment

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Housing and Neighborhoods / Building Block 2			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
HN A15	Develop a regulatory framework to incentivize the use of sustainable and cost effective design features such as rainwater harvesting, xeriscape features, rain gardens, green roofs, graywater irrigation, solar power, and energy efficient utilities.	Regulation	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
HN A16	Engage the local architect and design community in creating a variety of housing types to meet the housing needs of all types of households (e.g., singles, empty nester, families with children, and people with disabilities).	Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
HN A17	Develop regulations and standards that promote innovative and diverse residential architecture that is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood.	Regulation	
HN A18	Work with employers to locate their place of business along activity centers and corridors in proximity to residential areas that could provide housing for their employees.	Coordination	• Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
HN A19	Ensure harmonious and compatible transitions between neighborhoods and adjacent commercial, mixed-use, and denser housing by regulating setbacks, building mass and height, and other design elements and uses.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
HN A20	Develop and implement strategies that address spillover parking from commercial districts into adjacent residential areas that include increased public transportation, better pedestrian and bicycling amenities, improved signs, and parking management.	Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
HN A21	Align future development with the Growth Concept Map through adoption of small-area plans (e.g., neighborhood, corridor, and station area plans) that contain provisions set forth in *Imagine Austin*, including: - Areas experiencing change - Infill Development - Activity centers and corridors - Increased density - Open space and open space connectivity - Historic preservation - Neighborhood preservation - Transitioning between land uses - A variety of housing types - Affordable housing - Brownfield and grayfield redevelopment - Public Transportation	Policy	

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Housing and Neighborhoods / Building Block 2			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
HN A22	Ensure outreach efforts for the ongoing comprehensive planning program as well as small-area plans are directed toward attracting a diversity of stakeholders including under-represented demographic and socio-economic groups.	Policy	
HN A23	Coordinate with public and private sector organizations in Austin, such as school districts, non-profit organizations, and other agencies to address efforts related to health and human services, housing, economic development, sustainable development, and planning.	Coordination	• Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin. • Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Sustainably manage our water resources. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
HN A24	Establish a regulatory environment that creates communities across Austin that: - support walking, bicycling, and transit - encourage live/work spaces - are in proximity to daily needs - include a variety of employment opportunities - provide a range of housing (duplexes, townhouses, row houses, small-scale apartments, etc.) integrating market-rate and affordable housing for people of all ages, abilities, and means - utilize sustainable building practices - are stable with low crime and safe buildings - provides a range of facilities and services such as schools, parks, community gardens, and other public gathering spaces	Regulation, Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.

I imagine Austin...
w/ COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS
CONNECTED BY TRANSIT, BIKE
LANES & SIDEWALKS...
EMBRACING DIVERSITY
☺

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Economy / Building Block 3			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
E A1	Maintain partnerships between local chambers of commerce, business associations, and regional and state economic agencies to develop and improve programs to recruit and retain businesses to Austin.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A2	Establish strategic incentives and investments tailored to targeted industries and business districts throughout Austin, such as downtown, industrial areas, roadway corridors, neighborhood-oriented and -scaled districts, transit-oriented districts (TOD), etc.	Policy, CIP	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A3	Create a regulatory framework to foster a business-friendly environment by: - Identifying regulatory impacts on investment, business development, and retention (zoning, permitting and licensing requirements, tax requirements, etc.) - Assigning city staff devoted to helping businesses navigate the system and troubleshoot; - Creating development incentives (including tax incentives), density and floor-to-area ratio (FAR) bonuses, reduced and alternative parking requirements, expedited review, etc. - Simplifying and clarifying the development review process, including one-stop shop review, enforced timelines, and set targets for responsiveness and accountability - Allowing more by-right development - Making development regulations more flexible, while defining the extent of flexibility and maintaining safety and code integrity - Creating a program to assist businesses that are affected by road construction or infrastructure improvements - Creating a rehabilitation building code to make adaptive reuse efficient and affordable	Regulation, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A4	Establish and continually monitor a set of measures to gauge the effectiveness of economic development initiatives.	Analysis	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A5	Improve Austin's transportation and economic connections between other major cities in Texas by supporting the construction of a high speed rail network.	Coordination	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Economy / Building Block 3			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
E A6	Increase international air service to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport to improve business and tourism opportunities.	Policy, CIP	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A7	Facilitate international trade that benefits diverse sectors of the Austin economy.	Policy, Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A8	Expand the online availability of business development resources, such as best practices, for small businesses.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A9	Establish and expand policies, programs, and partnerships to support the development of creative industries, including film, music, gaming, etc., in Austin. These could include: - Incubator programs - Business accelerators - Promotional programs - Live-work opportunities - Financial assistance - Implementation of the Create Austin Cultural Master Plan - Technical assistance and professional development opportunities - Workshops	Policy, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A10	Partner with the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau to develop a marketing strategy to promote tourism that builds upon Austin and Central Texas' unique natural environment, outdoor lifestyles, live music, performing arts, culture, diversity, and history.	Program, Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A11	Partner with business, property, and arts organizations to enhance downtown Austin's position as a nationally- and internationally-renowned business, entertainment center, and regional destination.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A12	Preserve and promote iconic and unique Austin facilities and events that attract tourists, convention business, corporate relocations, and the recruitment of skilled workers.	Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Economy / Building Block 3			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
E A13	Work with local school districts, the University of Texas, Austin Community College, other area institutions of higher learning, major employers, and elected officials to: - Identify gaps in educational programs; - Identify the skills needed for current, emerging, and targeted job sectors; - Educate students at all levels about the skills needed to compete in a 21st Century economy.	Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A14	Work with local colleges and universities to expand their medical education offerings and increase the availability of medical residency programs.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A15	Develop economic development programs and incentives to promote the employment of historically underemployed segments of the population.	Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A16	Create a regional economic development task force, led by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, that includes the City of Austin, nearby municipalities and surrounding counties; the University of Texas, Austin Community College, and other area institutions of higher learning; area transportation providers such the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Agency, Texas Department of Transportation, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority; major employers and representatives from major industries; and other regional partners to develop a strategic direction for the Austin region by: - Developing a shared direction for the region; - Sharing information between the public and private sectors; - Establishing collaborative communication links among regional planning efforts; - Analyzing the impacts of publically-owned land; - Collaborating and co-locating institutional uses; - Attracting and supporting target industries; - Coordinating transportation planning efforts; - Assisting with grant research and writing.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Economy / Building Block 3			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
E A17	Establish more formal relationships between the cities in the Texas Triangle (Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio) to address issues regarding the larger region, including intraregional trade policies, the development of an inland port, and the employment of the region's diverse population.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A18	Partner with the Austin business community to develop policies, regulations, and programs to foster the development and success of local businesses by: - Creating an inventory of locally-owned businesses, including creative industries; - Developing a mentor program for locally-owned businesses; - Promoting the formation of worker-owned and community-owned businesses (co-ops) that sell local products; - Creating an Austin Craftsmen's Guild to showcase products created by Austin residents; - Providing tax incentives for locally-owned businesses; - Creating a directory of locally-produced products; - Simplifying the process to have local businesses provide additional services (e.g. host bands for SXSW); - Supporting businesses at each stage of the business life cycle; - Enhancing and expanding small business development services to grow market share of small, local businesses; - Expanding economic opportunities and measurable results for Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE / WBE) firms.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
E A19	Create a public-private task force between the State of Texas, the City of Austin, Travis County, local universities, the Chamber of Commerce, and local industries to invest in research and development and green tech, biotech, high tech, and other emerging technologies.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A20	Improve government efficiency through technology (software and hardware) investments and by developing and retaining information technology staff.	Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
E A21	Establish strategies, incentives, or investments in healthful outdoor activities and venues that generate economic benefits to local businesses while promoting wellness.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
E A22	Initiate the development of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan	Progam	• Invest in a Compact and Connected Austin • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

I imagine Austin...
Job growth
to continue

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Conservation and Environment / Building Block 4			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CE A1	Implement the City of Austin Climate Protection Plan.	Policy, Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A2	Create a system for identifying, defining, and mapping environmentally sensitive areas for their protection.	Analysis	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A3	Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas using a variety of tools, including transferable development rights as well as policies and regulations that incentivize grayfield/redevelopment/infill.	Policy, Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A4	Improve policies and incentives for restoration of damaged natural resources areas.	Policy, Regulation	
CE A5	Collaborate regionally to align conservation and sustainable development regulations and policies to protect environmentally sensitive areas that cross political boundaries.	Coordination, Regulation, Policy	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A6	Encourage designs and building practices that reduce the environmental impact of development and that result in accessible green space.	Policy, Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A7	Establish a comprehensive, predictable, consistent, and efficient process to evaluate the environmental effects of new development.	Program, Analysis	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A8	Develop an educational and awards program to showcase best practices in sustainable and low-impact development and achievements or innovations in waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable food practices.	Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A9	Create print and online educational materials to expand public awareness of the benefits of environmental protection, simple steps to improve protection, and common threats to avoid.	Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
Conservation and Environment / Building Block 4			

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CE A10	Identify existing areas with limited access to parks, open space, and trails and create mechanisms to address these gaps.	Analysis, Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A11	Develop regulations and incentives to protect prime farmland such as transferable development rights, farmland trusts, farmland mitigation, and conservation easements.	Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A12	Support local farmers by creating incentives and removing regulatory barriers, offering tailored small business support, and creating public information campaigns to promote local food.	Analysis, Regulation, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CE A13	Expand existing and facilitate the establishment of new distribution avenues for local farm products.	Program, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CE A14	Identify and map food deserts and provide incentives for full service grocery stores and farmers markets to locate in these underserved areas.	Analysis, Regulation	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CE A15	Expand the City of Austin's acquisition of environmentally significant land, conservation easements, and/or development rights for the protection of sensitive areas, including: - floodplains - riparian areas - wetlands - prairies - land that supports recharge of the Edwards Aquifer - wildlife habitat and corridors - bottomland forests and priority woodlands - critical environmental features - agricultural land	Program, CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A16	Develop and implement unified, comprehensive land management of all City of Austin lands for integrated environmental sustainability, including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, and education.	Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Conservation and Environment / Building Block 4			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CE A17	Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with universities and local schools to integrate educational programs with conservation and sustainability policies and projects.	Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A18	Create a regional task force to address inter-jurisdictional environmental sustainability issues.	Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A19	Review tree planting regulations to ensure that invasive species are not permitted. Create incentives to remove invasive plant species and replace them with native species.	Analysis, Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A20	Create a heritage tree inventory and monitoring system to create stronger mechanisms for protecting heritage trees.	Analysis, Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A21	Strengthen tree protection regulations.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A22	Create an urban forest plan that identifies tree canopy goals, establishes a budget, and presents implementation measures.	Regulation, Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CE A23	Strengthen regulations that protect creeks and floodplains from development by increasing buffer zones and reducing the amount and type of development allowed in these areas.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CE A24	Reduce pollution hotspots and prohibit high-emission uses (e.g. scrap yards, automotive repair, etc.) in floodplains and critical water quality zones.	Policy, Regulation	• Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Sustainably manage our water resources.

I imagine Austin...
MORE
LIZARDS

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A1	Limit, buffer, or prohibit public access to certain environmentally sensitive areas to maintain their value (i.e. wildlife protection and erosion control).	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CFS A2	Expand equitable access for adults, children, and their pets to active and passive parks throughout the city by carefully targeting new parks where most needed and developing public access agreements with non-City-owned parks and open space. For guidance, see the Walkable Access to Parks map (Figure 4.11, page 166).	Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A3	Establish pocket parks, smaller undeveloped preserves, and passive recreational spaces in areas with little open space.	CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A4	Explore additional funding sources primarily for the maintenance of parks as well as for the design and construction, including: - user fees - rental fees - additional grant opportunities - additional levy - reinvestment of revenue generated in parks - through partnerships	Analysis, CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A5	Ensure adequate funding for the maintenance of parks and trees on City of Austin property through Best Maintenance Practices.	CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A6	Expand partnerships between local organizations and the City of Austin to maintain and improve local parks and open spaces.	Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A7	Revise tree planting and tree care standards to be more sustainable and reduce tree mortality.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A8	Restore trees and vegetation along degraded waterways, especially in eastern watersheds.	CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A9	Create a trails master plan to ensure connectivity and provide consistency with regional, city, and neighborhood-level trail and transportation goals to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods and destinations; incorporate trails throughout the city and region; encourage developers to connect to or complete the trail system; and use protected land along creeks and floodplains in an environmentally sustainable way.	Policy	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Invest in compact and connected city.
CFS A10	Develop, through a process engaging the general public and professionals, context-sensitive trail, park, and greenway standards to ensure high-quality, environmentally-sustainable design.	Policy	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A11	Develop multi-disciplinary, cross-jurisdictional planning teams for projects that involve major natural features, such as the Colorado River or Onion Creek Greenway.	Coordination	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CFS A12	Incorporate public art and interpretive signage into green spaces as an educational tool to demonstrate practices such as water conservation, recycling, and low-impact development.	Program	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CFS A13	Coordinate among City of Austin departments and other agencies to market recreational programs and health related awareness campaigns.	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A14	Coordinate and explore co-location opportunities for all city facilities.	Program	
CFS A15	Develop notification tools which help inform the public about active/recent safety issues, public education efforts, and natural disaster threats.	Analysis	

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A16	Develop or enhance public safety educational programs in the community regarding topics such as: - personal safety - drug use, especially among youth - fire dangers for property within or near the wildland interface - police and fire procedure awareness.	Program	
CFS A17	Conduct and maintain a comprehensive building condition report to assess the need for remodeling, expansion, replacement, or consolidation of City-owned facilities.	Analysis	
CFS A18	Ensure that land development policies, regulations, and design standards take public safety issues like roadway connectivity, ingress/egress, and street design into consideration.	Policy	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
CFS A19	Develop an integrated emergency mitigation and response plan through coordination with our public and private sector regional partners: - Surrounding municipalities and counties - School districts, colleges, and universities - Major employers - Hospitals - Regional agencies such as Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Cap Metro) - State of Texas agencies and departments, including TxDOT.	Coordination	
CFS A20	Improve communication between City of Austin departments, as well as other local governments and school districts, regarding future facility planning to ensure that opportunities for shared facilities are discussed at the earliest stage of the planning process.	Coordination	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
CFS A21	Continue to explore the potential benefits associated with various public safety partnerships across the region.	Coordination	

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A22	Create a more robust and flexible code enforcement program to improve the quality of housing.	Regulation	
CFS A23	Develop design standards for public buildings and spaces that promote high-quality community focal points in the areas where they are located. These standards should address issues such as: - re-use of existing structures - LEED certification, including water and energy efficiency - low-impact development - resource recovery, such as recycling, composting, and reuse - trees planting, preservation, and protection - green spaces - transit access - carshare/electric vehicle parking spaces - bikesharing and bicycle facilities and accommodations - safe, connected walkways - public spaces inside and outside of buildings - anchoring neighborhood niches - child-friendly play spaces - family-friendliness	Policy, Program	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
CFS A24	Ensure the City's bidding and design processes achieve superior design and promote quality construction of parks, buildings, and other City of Austin facilities.	Policy	
CFS A25	Cluster and, where appropriate, co-locate public facilities and programs to reduce costs.	Policy, CIP	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
CFS A26	Increase access to and awareness of City of Austin services and public spaces through new tools and technologies, including web-based services and self-service kiosks.	Program	
City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A27	Create a world-class library system by expanding collections and public computer access and by upgrading and expanding library facilities by completing the new Central Library, building four regional Resource Branches in the four quadrants of Austin, and retrofitting the Faulk Library as an expansion of the History Center.	CIP	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
CFS A28	Seek opportunities to align water, energy, and waste conservation/reduction funding, education, and incentives.	Program	• Sustainably manage our water resources. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
CFS A29	Provide tools, education, and assistance for utility users to better understand the environmental impacts of their water and energy use, and waste generation.	Program	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A30	Implement the Zero Waste Strategic Plan and Solid Waste Services Master Plan to divert 90 percent of waste from landfills and incinerators by 2040, with particular attention to: - expanding diversion opportunities such as recycling and composting for residents and businesses; - supporting resale, refurbishing, and reuse opportunities throughout Austin; - fostering public awareness of Zero Waste through education, recognition, and incentive programs; - assessing the current capacity of waste diversion facilities to coordinate with the Growth Concept Map.	Analysis	
CFS A31	Maintain a safe and reliable energy system and improve Austin's air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions through continued review and adoption of alternative fuel sources and energy storage technologies.	Program, CIP	
CFS A32	Maintain Austin Energy's financial stability and affordable energy rates while encouraging conservation and funding increased energy efficiency and conservation incentives.	Regulation	
CFS A33	Maintain superior energy efficiency standards and requirements for new construction.	Regulation	

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A34	Align policies, incentives, regulations, service area extensions, and infrastructure to coordinate with the Growth Concept Map, maintain Austin's livability and affordability, protect environmentally sensitive areas, and sustainably manage Austin's water resources. Include consideration of diverse water sources and conservation and efficiency measures when planning for future demand for potable water.	Analysis	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Sustainably manage our water resources. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
CFS A35	Create a green infrastructure plan for public land or in public rights-of-way to preserve Austin's ecosystem, improve the water cycle, reduce the urban heat island effect, improve air quality, enrich public space, and provide for traffic calming. Examples include open space, trails, wetlands, community gardens green streets, infiltration facilities, and the urban forest.	Policy, CIP	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
CFS A36	Incentivize and promote low-impact development designs and techniques on private land that preserve key environmental features, reduce runoff and the use of potable water for plantings, and increase stormwater infiltration. Examples include rainwater harvesting, porous pavement, rain gardens, and green roofs.	Incentives	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A37	Strengthen water conservation programs to lower water use using new tools, incentives, and regulations.	Regulation & incentives	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A38	Develop incentives and coordinate regulations to promote innovative water and graywater re-use options for building and site design, landscape maintenance, and agricultural irrigation.	Regulation & incentives	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A39	Establish regulations, programs, and funding sources to allow offsite, including regional, stormwater detention and water quality controls to be used in concert with green infrastructure and low-impact development techniques in areas identified for compact, walkable development or redevelopment and identify opportunities for recreational uses and habitat creation or restoration.	Coordination	• Sustainably manage our water resources. • Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

City Facilities and Services / Building Block 5			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
CFS A40	Study and implement, as appropriate, decentralized wastewater management tools that locate processing closer to the re-use site, such as package plants and satellite facilities, to reduce fixed infrastructure costs.	Analysis	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
CFS A41	Participate in national, state, and local efforts to identify, assess, and reduce emerging contaminants in water, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products.	Program	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A42	Strengthen flood control, erosion, and water quality programs, incentives, regulations, and enforcement to incorporate best practices and meet or exceed national standards.	Program	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A43	Expand and strengthen water quality regulations to achieve non-degradation and protect recharge zones, floodplains, creeks and their headwaters, and other environmentally sensitive areas: - Increased buffers and setbacks - Restricted land uses with significant spill risks in sensitive environmental areas - Changes in allowed impervious cover.	Regulation	• Create a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city. • Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A44	Collaborate with regional water providers to identify and reduce service overlaps and coordinate access to main water sources, including groundwater.	Coordination	• Sustainably manage our water resources.
CFS A45	Provide the appropriate service delivery to all areas of the City, including areas of new development and redevelopment.		

I imagine Austin...
PARKS

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Society / Building Block 6			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A1	Support wellness and prevention education in schools and the general public to reduce the burden on primary care.	Program, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A2	Expand programs providing discounted transit fares for economically disadvantaged citizens, disabled individuals, and seniors.	Program	• Invest in a compact and connected Austin.
S A3	Collaborate with counties, the hospital district, and school districts to dedicate funding to mental health & substance abuse programming.	CIP, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A4	Partner with healthcare providers to identify areas with limited access to adequate health services and develop regulations and policies to promote the clustering of medical facilities (i.e., clinics, and trauma and specialty care) in these areas.	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
S A5	Increase public awareness of social services programs and healthcare options through the use of such devices as dedicated healthcare information lines, non-verbal flashcards, mobile preventative care vans, etc., to increase access to social resources, specifically: - Mental Health - Substance Abuse - HIV care - Homeless/basic needs - Prenatal education - Child development - Adult basic education & literacy	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A6	Partner with healthcare providers such as hospitals and clinics in the region to develop and implement strategies to increase the affordability and access to healthcare, including: - offering incentives to increase the number of providers - building more clinics - offering a path to practice for licensed professionals from other countries - developing educational programs - affordable health coverage programs for small business	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
Society / Building Block 6			

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A7	Address the high incidence of teenage pregnancy by creating and expanding partnerships with area school districts, nonprofit organizations, and healthcare providers to develop a comprehensive education and outreach program to reduce the number of teenage mothers, to expand access to social and health care services for teenage mothers and their children, and to increase educational and vocational opportunities for the mothers.	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A8	Make healthy and local foods accessible, particularly in underserved areas, by removing barriers and providing incentives for the establishment of sustainable community gardens, urban farms, neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and farm stands and mobile vegetable sales carts.	CIP, Coordination, Regulation	• Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.
S A9	Facilitate a strong and sustainable local food system by linking farmers, distributors, and markets, and create programs and partnerships to ensure profitable local food enterprises throughout all five food sectors — production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste recovery.	Program, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A10	Develop partnerships with public and private stakeholders to promote awareness and educate residents about healthy food choices, sources, and preparation, including keeping up-to-date and accessible data on community garden plot availability, cooking classes, and city and county property for neighborhood gardens and family farms, and the sale of sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile vegetable carts, and neighborhood grocery stores.	Program, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A11	Reduce obesity and other diet-related diseases by establishing local fresh food initiatives in institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, city and county departments and facilities, and by implementing and encouraging purchasing policies that support local and sustainable foods.	Program, Coordination, Policy	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A12	Remove regulatory barriers and provide incentives to improve and rebuild local food production, processing and distribution systems appropriate to the local context.	Program, Coordination	• Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Society / Building Block 6			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A13	Increase the ethnic and racial diversity and bilingual and multilingual abilities of law enforcement, other first responders, and healthcare staff, and increase opportunities for city staff to learn languages other than English.	Program	
S A14	Continue and expand the reverse 911 to inform residents of public safety emergencies.	Program	
S A15	Monitor community gathering spaces to maximize the safety of individuals utilizing an area in pursuit of professional, educational, or recreational opportunities.	Program	
S A16	Publish and publicize a list of emergency contacts to develop closer relationships between public safety personnel and the community.	Program	
~~S A17~~	~~Extend the assignments of public safety professionals in a given geographic area in order to build stronger community relationships.~~	~~Program~~	Deleted per 2014 amendement
S A18	Support the development of a community-wide electronic health information system.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A19	Expand collaboration among law enforcement personnel and service providers of marginalized populations.	Program	
S A20	Maintain and expand city programs that promote the safety, prosperity, and integration of immigrants, refugees, and their families.	Program	
S A21	Develop the capacity of geographically-based communities of interest (i.e., neighborhood associations, community organizations, schools) to take ownership of their areas and share information and best practices with one another to achieve shared goals.	Program, Coordination	
S A22	Expand access to free wi-fi across Austin in indoor and outdoor public spaces.	Program	
S A23	Develop informational materials and programs to promote the culture and history of Austin's diverse neighborhoods.	Program	
S A24	Reduce homelessness in the City of Austin by: - Expanding the recuperative care program for the homeless - Incorporating recommendations of the current homeless and mental health task forces - Reducing regulatory barriers to the development of housing for the homeless	Program, Regulation	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

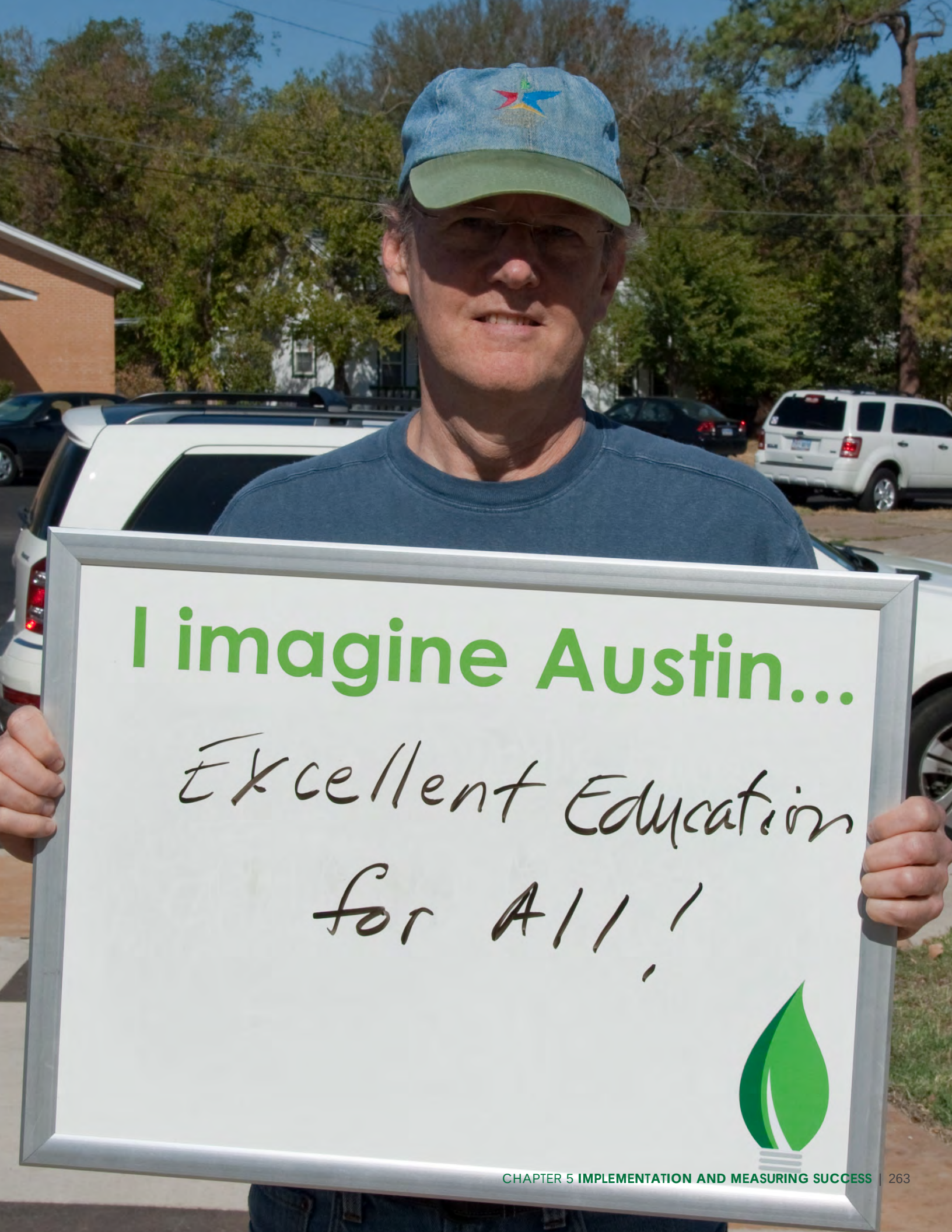
Society / Building Block 6			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A25	Coordinate between all the organizations providing services to the homeless community to maximize the efficacy of limited resources.	Coordination, Program	
S A26	Promote the development of housing opportunities that support persons transitioning from homelessness and other barriers to housing stability.	Program	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
S A27	Support social services that provide financial support to families who are losing their homes and encourage public/private partnerships that create and implement solutions to this issue.	Program	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
S A28	Locate supportive housing (i.e., housing with supportive services such as financial counseling, medical facilities, and child care) for families with children in areas of the city with under-enrolled schools.	Program	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
S A29	Investigate the feasibility of creating a program of city-owned housing, including but not limited to, cooperative, affordable and permanent supportive housing.	Analysis	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
S A30	Regulate the geographic distribution and operation of group homes for the disabled, homeless, and other individuals needing supportive housing.	Program	• Develop household affordability throughout Austin.
S A31	Expand mentoring and tutoring programs to help school-aged children improve their academic performance and develop essential life skills.	Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A32	Work with educational and business partners to expand the availability of early childhood education and childcare services and programs for all residents, especially for middle and low income households and for those with children with disabilities, and fund through a modest fee or sliding-fee structure.	Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A33	Collaborate with school districts to allow public and private sector use of underutilized schools and other public facilities for child care, educational programs, healthy living programs, and neighborhood activities.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Create a Healthy Austin Program. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A34	Work with child care providers, school districts, local businesses, government agencies and non-profits to make affordable and accessible child care, early education, preschool, afterschool, and summer programs widely available throughout Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Society / Building Block 6			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A35	Partner with businesses to offer incentives to childcare, early education and preschool programs that locate in underserved areas and near employment centers.	Incentives, Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A36	Explore funding opportunities to offer financial assistance or scholarships to low and moderate income families for early childhood education and childcare.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in its workforce and education system.
S A37	Create opportunities for public-private partnerships to increase direct involvement by city departments, such as Parks and Recreation, in childcare and afterschool programming.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A38	Partner with local school districts, colleges, universities, and vocational schools to expand the availability of evening and weekend continuing education and higher education classes.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A39	Develop a youth student leadership program that involves students in community planning and implementation.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
S A40	Collaborate with educational and business partners in developing a comprehensive education program for all ages that focuses on the range of skills (i.e., literacy, interpersonal skills, and vocational skills) needed to for gainful employment.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A41	Develop programs to aid children transitioning out of the foster care system.	Program	
S A42	Make programs available for children and adult immigrants regardless of their legal status.	Program	
S A43	Collaborate with educational and business partners in expanding educational opportunities to meet the needs of current and emerging industries, the safety needs of the public sector, as well as those of the skilled trades.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A44	Partner with the colleges and universities when designing community-based education programs.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A45	Explore leasing and cost-sharing agreements between the Austin Independent School District and the City of Austin to facilitate under-capacity schools and under-funded programs to remain open and in operation.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Society / Building Block 6			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
S A46	Create the capacity within the City of Austin to partner with school districts, community organizations, and the private sector to increase collaboration at school campuses.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A47	Develop seamless, coordinated relationships between school districts, community colleges, other higher education institutions, to integrate and minimize lack of funding for better educational community opportunities.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A48	Support better integration of education from pre-kindergarten through higher education.	Coordination	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
S A49	Develop educational and public information programs focusing on promoting nutrition, healthy food, and local food sources.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A50	Work with local school districts to use locally-grown produce and increase the quality and nutritional value of food served to school aged young people.	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A51	Work with local health providers to develop educational materials and programs for use in schools and the community about the dangers of tobacco use and promote available cessation resources.	Coordination, Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A52	Promote tobacco free multifamily housing which share common walls, such as apartments, duplexes, townhouses, row houses, and condominiums.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A53	Promote tobacco-free environments and tobacco-free living.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A54	Create more opportunities for outdoor play, recreational activities, healthy eating, and other activities and programs that address obesity.	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A55	Help children between ages 0-5 achieve success in school by implementing the School Readiness Action Plan which seeks to ensure that: –families have access to and use the necessary resources that support nuturing their children; –children and families have access to high quality early learning environments; –children receive early and developmental screenings; –children have access to health care; –and public and private sectors in Austin and Travis County work together to ensure that the community has the resources and infrastructure to deliver services to children and their families	Program	• Create a Healthy Austin Program.
S A56	Develop an age-friendly action plan for Austin to include the elements of outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and health services.		


I imagine Austin...
Excellent Education
for All!

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Creativity / Building Block 7			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
C A1	Create a City of Austin function to oversee all arts, creative, and heritage programs, such as: - identifying funding sources for the arts - promoting the economic impact of arts and creativity - publicizing best practice success stories - developing an advertising program and a website to promote local talent - creating an annual awards program for local artists - developing a branding campaign for arts and creativity in Austin - developing a mapping and wayfinding system for arts, creative, cultural, and historic resources - developing an arts exchange program to market local artists regionally, nationally, and internationally - developing impromptu and non-traditional venues for art exhibits and installations and performances - facilitating the inclusion of public art.	Program, Analysis	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A2	Incorporate the arts and cultural preservation themes and elements into small area plans, such as neighborhood and corridor plans.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A3	Create incentives, and programs to promote the inclusion of public art into new development.	Incentives, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A4	Cultivate cultural and heritage education and tourism by marketing and promoting Austin's museums, libraries, historic sites and venues, and providing education and training to frontline tourism workers.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A5	Promote the use of non-traditional venues (such as parks, schools, streets, and vacant buildings) for impromptu and small scale performances and events, such as jugglers, dancers, mimes, actors, storytellers, poets, and performance artists.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A6	Collaborate with sponsoring organizations, sponsors, and transportation companies to develop special event transportation plans to mitigate traffic congestion associated with these events.	Coordination, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A7	Promote the development and expansion of arts space, facilities and programming, including libraries, museums, parks, performing art venues and community centers by identifying existing facilities and conducting a needs assessment.	Assessment	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Creativity / Building Block 7			
Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
C A8	Develop programs to promote Austin's diverse cultural heritage: - Cultural events and venues - A city-wide multi-cultural festival - Culture-based tourism - Educational materials	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A9	Develop and invest in intergenerational art education partnerships and programming between schools, artists, and arts organizations, libraries, neighborhood associations, and senior programs to provide life-long exposure to the arts	Coordination, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A10	Develop regulations to mitigate the sound from live music venues through a collaborative process that includes the City of Austin, musicians, venue operators, property owners, and residents.	Regulation, Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A11	Create incentives and programs to preserve iconic and established music venues and performance spaces throughout Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).	Incentives, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A12	Increase funding sources (grants, private and public funding programs) and non-financial support (business recruitment, business expansion and retention, workforce development) to sustain and expand the creative industry sector.	Program, Coordination	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A13	Establish incentives and regulations to promote the creation of artists' live/work space in residential areas that allow for limited gallery space.	Regulation & Incentives	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
C A14	Develop programs and incentives to provide flexible, affordable work space and housing throughout Austin, with an emphasis placed on locations well-served by transit, Downtown, and activity centers and corridors for entrepreneurs, small and local businesses, artists, and creative professionals. Programs and incentives should address live-work space, home-based businesses, and temporary lease agreements in multi-use venues such as schools, vacant buildings, and warehouses.	Program, Regulation	• Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city. • Invest in a compact and connected Austin. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin.
Creativity / Building Block 7			

Working Group Priority Actions are highlighted

Label	Actions	Action Type	Priority Program(s)
C A15	Create programs and incentives and develop partnerships between the City of Austin, artists and members of the creative community, businesses, developers, and arts education institutions to provide more public and private exhibition space for local artists, students' exhibitions, and cultural events at such places as parks, public buildings, plazas, office and commercial buildings, as well as vacant buildings.	Program, Incentives	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A16	Support programs to engage the business development community to assist creative economy start-ups and to develop business and management skills.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.
C A17	Expand existing programs and identify funding sources to provide affordable physical and mental health care, housing and other support services for artists, musicians and others in the creative community.	Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Create a Healthy Austin Program.
C A18	Coordinate with the different creative industry job sectors and area school districts, trade and vocational schools, colleges, and universities to develop and expand educational curricula to support the creative industries.	Coordination, Program	• Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. • Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy.
C A19	Facilitate partnerships to connect artists with artist residency opportunities to provide workforce support for the creative community.	Coordination, Program	• Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. • Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.

I imagine Austin...
culturally diverse...
continue supporting
local business.
· melovesaustin ·

APPENDICES

A. Charter Requirements

B. Shaping Imagine Austin: the Community Process

C. Glossary

D. Growth Concept Map

E. Framework for Decision-Making

F. Related Regional Planning Initiatives

G. Attached Plans

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APPENDIX A. CHARTER REQUIREMENTS

APPENDIX A

CITY CHARTER REQUIREMENTS

Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks and Elements

Austin's City Charter requires that the Comprehensive Plan include the City Council's policies for growth, development, and beautification of land within the corporate limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the city, or for geographic portions thereof including neighborhood, community, or area-wide plans. According to the Charter, the comprehensive plan shall include the following elements:

1) Future Land Use;

2) Traffic Circulation and Mass Transit;

3) Wastewater, Solid Waste, Drainage, and Potable Water;

4) Conservation and Environmental Resources;

5) Recreation and Open Space;

6) Housing;

7) Public Services and Facilities, which shall include but not be limited to a capital improvement program;

8) Public Buildings and Related Facilities;

9) Economic element for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment; and

10) Health and Human Services.

The Austin City Council endorsed the inclusion of new elements not required by the Charter but established through the public input process:

- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Children, Families, and Education
- Arts, Culture, and Creativity
- Urban Design

These elements have been grouped into the “Building Blocks” of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. The plan’s seven building blocks are:

- Land Use and Transportation
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Economy
- Conservation and Environmental Resources
- City Facilities and Services
- Society
- Creativity

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B. SHAPING IMAGINE AUSTIN: THE COMMUNITY PROCESS

The Imagine Austin process was designed to engage all members of the Austin community in developing a vision for the city's future. Beginning in 2009, the City solicited public input on existing challenges and opportunities and how the City should respond to them as it prepares for a future whose only certainty will be its difference from today.

With the help of the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Task Force, whose 38 members were appointed by the Austin City Council and Travis County Commissioners Court, Imagine Austin engaged thousands of Austinites in setting direction for the future. The process was built on two fundamental ideas. First, give as many people as possible the opportunity to participate, in whatever venue, with as much time as they had to give. Second, work iteratively, so that each phase of participation took up where the last left off, building on prior work.

The public's first opportunity to shape Imagine Austin was an August 2009 public participation workshop. More than 70 Austinites identified key communities that should be involved as well as the steps necessary to engage them. Six principles were developed from that meeting and shaped *Making Austin: Public Participation in a new Comprehensive Plan:*

- Open to all
- Community engagement
- Transparency
- Enthusiastic and vibrant
- Engaging the underrepresented
- Fun

Developing the public participation plan itself set out an important step in Imagine Austin's approach to community input: monitor who was participating and find ways of connecting to communities not represented. In the case of the participation workshop, as in many other community engagement efforts, people of color and people with less than a Bachelor's degree were underrepresented. Two focus groups were held to test the principles with people in these groups.

Austinites attending the public participation workshop.

The Citizens Advisory Task Force was appointed by the City Council to provide guidance and help City of Austin staff and the consultant team engage the community. The task force met over 100 times and provided important recommendations that lead to the adoption of Imagine Austin.

Participants at the Asian American Cultural Center conduct a meeting-in-a-box exercise as part of Community Forum Series #1.

SHAPING THE PLAN

Telling people about the plan is only the beginning. Actually engaging Austinites in shaping the plan is the ultimate goal of public participation. Mindful of the many competing demands on the public's time, the Imagine Austin team sought to provide as many ways in to the process as possible, while always striving to balance input from our most engaged citizens, able to provide countless hours and detailed comments, with the briefer contacts from the rest of the community.

Public input was organized into five steps, interspersed with major plan milestones that were reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Task Force, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Four of these steps were structured as Community Forum Series, with each series consisting of multiple public meetings, surveys, and other tools. The other step consisted of a several-months-long Working Groups process. Each of these steps and milestones are recounted below.

TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

A number of tools were used at different times throughout the process. The questions asked of the public were tailored in each step to match the tool being used.

- **Public meetings** were held in different parts of the city and different times of day throughout the process. Meetings were structured to encourage or require participants to engage with one another directly by working in small groups or indirectly by posting responses during the course of the meeting.
- **Online and paper surveys** accompanied every step in the process, allowing Austinites to participate at their convenience. While most survey respondents completed surveys online, paper surveys were distributed through a number of mechanisms: at libraries and public events and, in some cases, inclusion in the Austin-American Statesman or Austin Chronicle.
- **Online forums and comments** offered a less structured way for Austinites to communicate with staff and with one another.
- **Traveling teams** visited high-traffic areas such as football games, farmers markets, and festivals to promote the process, distribute surveys, and directly engage passersby.
- **Meetings-in-a-Box** allowed community groups, businesses, and individuals to host their own meetings at their convenience.
- A **Speakers Bureau** that allowed community groups to host a presentation from City staff and provide comments.

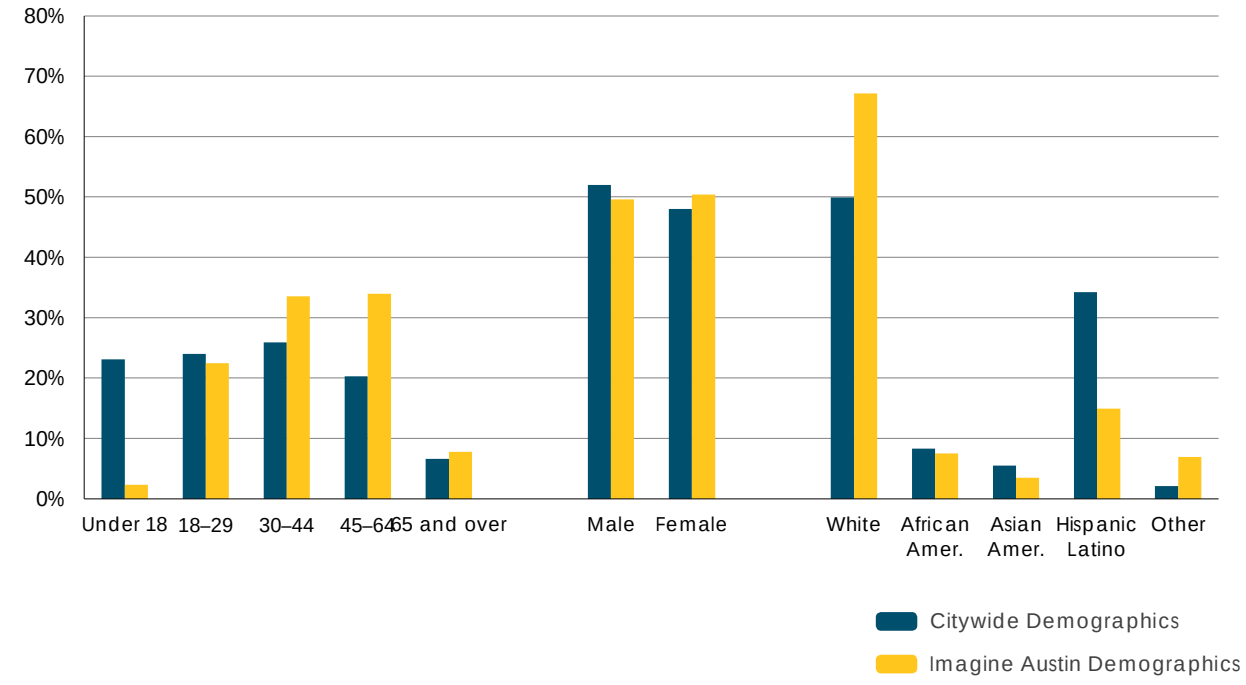
Imagine Austin was overseen monthly by a Citizens Advisory Task Force and a committee of Planning Commission, and less frequently by a committee of the City Council. As public meetings, each of these allowed for citizen communication, as well as direct public engagement with staff, Task Force members, Planning Commissioners, and Council members.

DEMOGRAPHICS

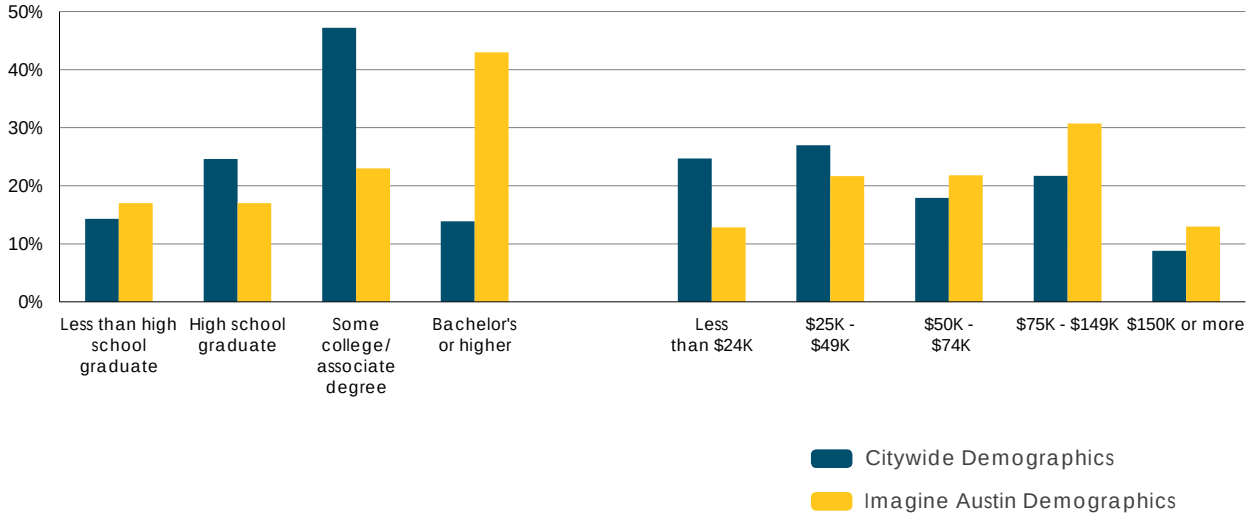
The demographics of participants were monitored throughout the process. As gaps were identified, additional outreach was developed to overcome them.

The results below show the total demographics from the first three Community Forum Series. While some gaps remain, being aware of them allowed planners and Task Force members to understand who the public input represented and to rely on other avenues to complement public input. This could take the form of formal and informal communication with community leaders or reliance on previous planning efforts, such as the Hispanic Quality of Life Study and its community oversight team.

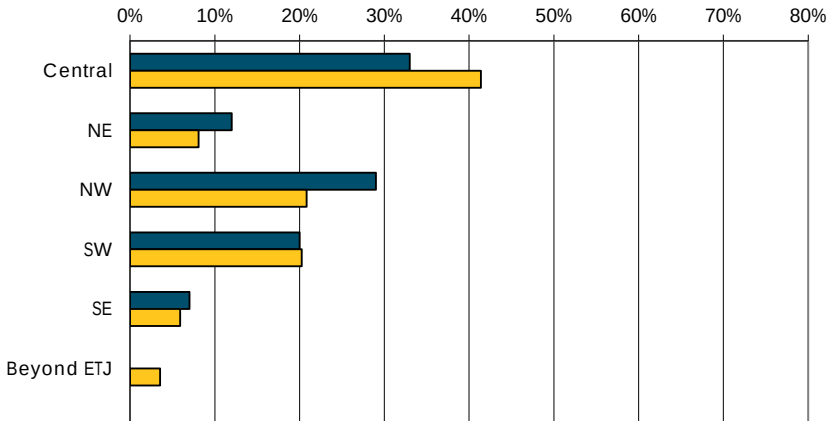
Demographics of Community Forum Participants



Education and Income Levels of Community Forum Participants



Geography of Community Forum Participants



PHASES & MILESTONES

The *Imagine Austin* process was structured around two principles: repeated public engagement, with each round building on the previous round, and repeated check-ins with Planning Commission and City Council.

Community Forum Series #1

(5,892 participants)

The first Community Forum Series was organized around three questions:

- What are Austin's strengths?
- What are our challenges?
- How can the city be improved on its 200th anniversary, 2039?

Starting with an October 2009 Open House at the Austin Convention Center, Community Forum Series #1 ran for seven months, with six public meetings and an online and paper survey. The Meeting-in-a-Box was also introduced at this time.

Community Forum Series #2

(4,211 participants)

The second Community Forum Series consisted of two parts. The first part developed and refined components of a vision statement. Creating the vision began with Community Forum Series #1, when the public was asked about Austin's strengths and weaknesses and what the city should be like in 2039. The Task Force reviewed preliminary results and incorporated key ideas into a draft vision.

During Community Forum Series #2, a second round of surveys and Meetings-in-a-Box meetings further developed components of the vision statement. Speak Week, in which traveling teams visited 42 events and 31 locations throughout the city, also generated input for the vision statement. This round of input also included a statistically valid survey of 1,100 Austinites to develop the vision components. The public reviewed components of the vision at Community Forum Series #2. Using those results, the Task Force prepared a final vision statement, included as Chapter 3 in this plan, which was endorsed by City Council in August 2010.

The second part of Community Forum Series #2 was an interactive chip exercise, where participants worked together to allocate Austin's future growth across the city and in different forms. Four public meetings featuring the chip exercises were followed by eight community-sponsored and hosted chip exercises, to produce 63 total maps.

Community Forum Series #3 (4,761 participants)

Using the chip exercise maps and current trends, five alternate future scenarios were created, each illustrating a different way that Austin could grow in the future. The future scenarios were assessed on a range of sustainability indicators. In the third Community Forum Series, the public reviewed and rated these scenarios at nine open house meetings, in community conversation kits, at traveling team booths, and by paper and online surveys.

Planning Framework & Preferred Scenario

The Plan Framework and Preferred Scenario set out key strategic directions for the City to take to achieve the vision. The Plan Framework contains policy guidance, while the Preferred Scenario shows the spatial patterns of growth that support the vision. They were developed with the Citizens Advisory Task Force and reviewed by 19 City Boards and Commissions, Planning Commission, and City Council. In March 2011, City Council forwarded the Plan Framework and Preferred Scenario to the Working Groups for more detailed work. The strategic directions are incorporated into this plan as Building Block Policies; the Preferred Growth Scenario was the basis for the Growth Concept Map.

Working Groups

Hundreds of Austin residents and leaders joined seven Building Block Working Groups to develop actions to implement the directions included in the Plan Framework. These seven Working Groups met on 22 occasions throughout spring and summer 2011 and took two surveys. The actions and priorities they developed are included in Chapter 5.

Community Forum Series #4 (2,979 participants)

The last round of public input was structured around review of the initial draft comprehensive plan. Beginning at the Release Party in October 2011, Austinites weighed in on the plan's priorities, as well as on the draft plan itself. The plan was also presented to 19 Boards and Commissions. Staff, consultants, and members of the Citizens Advisory Task Force and Planning Commission reviewed all public comments on the plan for inclusion in the adoption draft.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Throughout its two years, Imagine Austin used a number of different venues for spreading the word and engaging the public: coverage by local media, advertising, booths and tables as public events, speaking engagements, and direct outreach by email, social media, and utility bills. Businesses, community groups, churches, and neighborhood associations were also directly engaged and encouraged to spread the word to their members and employees. Through this process, Imagine Austin built a contact list of thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations. Neighborhood and community listservs amplified these messaging, spreading the word about Imagine Austin to many more stakeholders.

Stakeholder Interviews

Annual Austin Economic Forecast Event
Asian American Cultural Center
Austin Board of Realtors
Austin Chamber of Commerce
Austin City Council & Planning Commission
Austin Community College
Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Austin Independent Business Alliance
Austin Independent School District
Austin Neighborhood Council
Austin Urban Coalition
Capital Area Council of Governments
Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Capital Metro Transportation Authority (CapMetro)
Concordia University
Downtown Austin Alliance
Del Valle Independent School District
Hill Country Conservancy
Immigrant Services Network
Leadership Austin
Lower Colorado River Authority
Meals on Wheels and More
Real Estate Council of Austin
St David's Community Health Foundation
Texas Nature Conservancy
Travis County Health and Human Services
UT Sustainability Center

Public Meetings

Participation Workshop

Community Forum Series #1
- 6 meetings plus the Kick-Off Open House

Community Forum Series #2
- 4 public meetings, plus 8 follow-on meetings

Community Forum Series #3
- 9 public meetings

Working Groups
- 32 public meetings

Community Forum Series #4
- 2 public meetings

Neighborhoods engagement
- 5 meetings throughout the process related to Neighborhood Plans or Contact Teams

Business engagement
- 19 briefings for Community Forum Series #4

Live Music! 7 Meetings featured one or more Austin acts!

Boards & Commissions

Two visits at key points to 19 City Boards & Commissions

All City Boards & Commissions were also notified by email of each major round of public input.

Best Of! Imagine Austin was a featured case study or best practice by 5 organizations, and counting!

Engaging today's students for tomorrow's Austin

As opportunities arose throughout the process, staff engaged AISD teachers and students in different phases of the process, as well as students at the University of Texas and Huston-Tillotson College.

Notification

The first step in involving the public is making them aware of the process.

- City utility bills included Imagine Austin materials 3 times, touching 400,000 customers
- Speakers Bureaus presented to 136 gatherings, reaching an estimated 2,700 people
- Direct contact to 751 churches, neighborhood associations, professional organizations, and community associations, which had a reach of many thousand Austinites
- 240,000 surveys, newsletters, and flyer distributed
- Community events, where staff and volunteers engaged passersby: farmers markets, football games, public meetings and forums, school events, fairs, and festivals
- Paid advertisements:
  - Radio
  - Television
  - Print
  - Online
  - Taxicabs
  - Street banners

City Council & Planning Commission

City Council and Planning Commission oversaw key milestones throughout the process:

- Selecting a consultant
- Scope and budget
- Participation Plan, schedule, and Task Force
- Vision
- Plan Framework & Preferred Scenario
- Bond Election Advisory Task Force to be guided by Imagine Austin Vision

In addition to these major milestones, three bodies routinely oversaw the process:

- **Citizens Advisory Task Force**
- **Comprehensive Plan Committee of Planning Commission**
- **Comprehensive Planning & Transportation Subcommittee of City Council**

Lectures and Discussions

Six Imagine Austin panel discussions hosted by the Citizens Advisory Task Force. Other community also hosted planning discussions throughout the two-year process:

- University of Texas City Forums series and Center for Sustainable Development
- Livable City
- Congress for the New Urbanism
- American Institute of Architects
- HousingWorks
- Envision Central Texas
- League of Bicycling Voters
- What is Austin? Open House and Futures Fair
- Leadership Austin
- City of Austin Affordable Housing Forums
- Urban Land Institute

Repeat contact

Email: 2,535
Facebook: 2,275
Twitter: 1,198
Austinites were also able to subscribe to the *Imagine Austin* blog. The Community Registry was also used throughout the process.

Media Coverage

The following media outlets covered the Imagine Austin process:

- Austin American-Statesman
- Austin Business Journal
- Austin Chronicle
- Austin Times
- Community Impact
- ahora sí
- Fox 7
- KXAN
- Daily Texan
- KUT
- KOOP
- Austinist
- CultureMap
- Republic of Texas
- Austin Post
- KVUE
- KLBJ 590
- Oak Hill Gazette
- InFact Daily
- Metropolis Magazine
- Latina Lista
- Hispanic Today "Live"
- YNN
- La Voz
- Telefuturo
- KVET
- KEYE
- Univision
- Do512
- El Mundo de Mando
- The Austin Grid
- The Thread Austin

Public Service Announcements carried by Time Warner & Grande.

APPENDIX C. GLOSSARY

APPENDIX C

accessibility – The ability of people (including the elderly, disabled, those with young children, and those encumbered with luggage or shopping) to move around an area and reach destinations and facilities.

accessory dwelling unit – These are residential buildings located on single-family lots; are smaller than the primary house; and are generally located toward the rear of the lot. Also know as garage apartments, mother-in-law apartments, or granny flats.

action – Recommendations to implement Imagine Austin policies.

activity center – Areas identified on the Growth Concept Map where an increased concentration of people, jobs, businesses, and services will be located. There are three types of activity centers—regional, town, and neighborhood.

activity corridor – Similar to an activity center, it is an area identified on the Growth Concept Map where an increased density of people, jobs, businesses, and services will be located. However, due to its linear nature the people, jobs, and services will be located along the length of the corridor. A corridor's character will depend on factors such as road width, traffic volume, the size and configuration of lots, and existing uses. Along different segments of these corridors, there may be multi-story mixed-use buildings, apartment buildings, shops, public uses, offices, as well as townhouses, row houses, duplexes, and single-family houses. For more detailed information on activity corridors, see p. 104 and 106 of the plan.

adaptive reuse – Modifying existing structures for uses other than what they were originally intended.

affordable housing – Dwelling units for sale or rent that are deemed affordable for lower or middle income households. It is also housing that does not create an economic burden for a household and allows residents to meet other basic needs on a sustainable basis.

alternative energy – Energy derived from sources that do not use up natural resources or harm the environment.

alternative transportation – Means of travel other than private cars and includes walking, bicycling, rollerblading, carpooling and transit.

annexation (full purpose) – The process by which cities extend full municipal services, full voting privileges, and full regulatory and taxing authority to new territory.

annexation (limited purpose) – Extends the City's ordinances and regulations, including building and zoning codes, and allows residents to vote in City Council and Charter elections but not bond referenda. The City collects no property taxes in limited purpose areas and is not required to provide full municipal services. In some limited purpose areas, a

municipality will provide health and safety inspection and enforcement services. Services such as public safety, road maintenance, and parks are provided by other agencies, such as the county.

aquifer – A geologic formation that stores, transmits, and yields significant quantities of water into wells and springs.

aquifer contributing zone – The area where runoff from precipitation flows to the recharge zone of an aquifer. Streams in the contributing zone flow downstream into the recharge zone and "contribute" water to the aquifer.

aquifer recharge zone – The area or feature where water flows directly into an aquifer.

arterial – High-capacity road or thoroughfare with the primary function of delivering traffic from collector roads to freeways, and between activity centers.

Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistic Area (MSA) – Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

biodiversity – The degree of variation of life (plants and animals of different species) within a given area.

blueway – A water path or trail that contains launch points for canoes, kayaks, rafts, or tubes; provides camping locations and points of interest. They are typically developed by state, county or local municipalities to encourage family recreation, ecological education, and preservation of wildlife resources.

brownfield – Abandoned, idled, or under-utilized industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by environmental contamination.

building block – A set of policies to implement Imagine Austin covering a range of subject areas.

built environment – The urban environment consisting of buildings, roads, fixtures, parks, and all other improvements that form the physical character of a city.

bus rapid transit (BRT) – A type of bus transit that provides faster, more efficient service than an ordinary bus line. This higher level of services is achieved by making improvements to existing infrastructure, vehicles, and scheduling. The goal of these systems is to approach the service levels of rail transit at lower costs and the flexibility of bus transit.

car share – A model of car rental where people rent cars for short periods of time, often by the hour. They are attractive to customers who make only occasional use of a vehicle, as well as others who would like occasional access to a vehicle of a different type than they use day-to-day.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – A community's plan for financing large-scale improvements—such as repairing or building roads, water and sewer mains.

character – The image and perception of a community as defined by its people, history, built environment, and natural features.

child-friendly – Those policies, amenities, and practices that support children at every stage of their development.

clean energy – The provision of energy that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Clean energy sources include hydroelectricity, solar energy, wind energy, wave power, geothermal energy, and tidal power.

commercial – A land use designation characterized by activities associated with commerce.

community garden – Single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people.

commuter rail – Trains that operate on railroad tracks and carry riders to and from work in a region; typically used to travel from suburbs to central cities.

compact community – A community in which housing, services, retail, jobs, entertainment, health care, schools, parks, and other daily needs are within a convenient walk or bicycle ride of one another. A compact community is supported by a complete transportation system, encourages healthier lifestyles and community interaction, and allows for more efficient delivery of public services.

complete community – Areas that provide amenities, transportation, services, and opportunities that fulfill all residents material, social, and economic needs. For more detailed information on complete communities, see p. 88 of the plan.

complete streets – Roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities.

comprehensive plan – A document or series of documents for guiding the future development of a city or county and is based upon the stated long-term goals and objectives of that community. It provides guidance for making land use decisions, preparation for implementing ordinances, preparations for capital investments, and the location for future growth.

connected - Having the parts or elements of an area (city, county, subdivision, etc.) logically linked together by roads, transit, trails and paths, sidewalks, and bicycle routes and lanes.

conservation – The management of natural resources to prevent waste, depletion, destruction, or neglect.

core principle for action – The six underlying principles to realize the future posited by Imagine Austin. For more detailed information on core principles for action, see p. 10 of the plan.

corridor – The area that includes an arterial or major roadway, the right-of-way such as a sidewalk, and the adjacent property.

corridor plan – A small area plan that addresses the area along and adjacent to a roadway that addresses land use, urban design, infrastructure, transportation, and, on occasion, the economic development issues associated with a corridor.

cost burdened – Households whose costs of housing, transportation, and utilities reduces their ability to afford other necessities, such as food, medical care, or child care. Typically, households are considered cost burdened if their housing costs exceeds 30 percent of their income or if their combined housing and transportation costs exceeds 45 percent of their income.

creative community – People engaged in a broad range of artistic and knowledge-based pursuits and those contributing to the creative economy.

creative economy – A wide range of economic activities which focus on the generation of knowledge and innovation, including fields such as advertising, architecture, culinary arts, design, fashion, software and computer game development, electronic publishing, music, film, performing arts, visual arts, publishing, television and radio.

cultural heritage – The legacy inherited from previous generations which people want to preserve in order to maintain a sense of history, community, and personal identity.

demographics – The measurement and study over time of a population and its subgroups.

density – The number of families, persons, or housing units per unit of land.

developed parkland buffers – The pedestrian shed surrounding urban parks, defined by a ¼ mile radius within the urban core and a ½ mile radius outside the urban core.

diversity – The character of a community where people of different ethnic groups, religions, ages, political beliefs, families, sexual orientations, and socio-economic status live and work along side each other.

ethnicity/race – Of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common

racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origins or backgrounds.

extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) – The unincorporated land located within a given distance (dependant upon its population) of a city's municipal boundaries that is not within the city limits or the extraterritorial jurisdiction of another city and is the territory where a city is authorized to annex land.

family – Two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

family-friendly – Considered welcoming to all kinds of families and includes housing and neighborhoods designed to meet family needs (safe, accessible, child friendly, adequate lighting, safe crosswalks, road maintenance, sidewalks, etc.).

future land use map (FLUM) – A land use plan that serves as a blueprint for future development.

floodplain – An area that is subject to natural flooding from an adjoining waterway.

gentrification – The process of neighborhood change that results in the replacement of lower income residents with higher income ones.

green building – Refers to a structure and the process that is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient.

green infrastructure – Strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, parks, working landscapes, other open spaces that conserve ecosystems and functions, and provide associated benefits to human populations.

green streets – An area that incorporates stormwater management design features into the right of way to reduce demand for expensive stormwater infrastructure, control flooding, and reduce stormwater runoff. Green street elements include trees, permeable pavers, drought tolerant plants, rain overflow drains, and underground cisterns.

greenfield development – New development on previously undeveloped land.

greenhouse gas – Any of the atmospheric gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect by absorbing infrared radiation produced by solar warming of the Earth's surface. They include carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (NO2), and water vapor.

greenspace – Wooded and grassy areas that provide sites for recreation and enjoyment of nature, often located in the midst of urban areas that are otherwise occupied by buildings and paved areas; or any natural area, landscaped area, yard, garden or park accessible to the public.

greenway – A corridor of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environ-

mental protection.

greyfields – previously developed properties such as strip centers or malls that are not contaminated.

graywater – Wastewater generated from domestic activities such as laundry, dishwashing, and bathing, which can be recycled on-site for uses such as landscape irrigation and constructed wetlands. Graywater differs from water from the toilets which is designated as sewage or blackwater to indicate it contains human waste.

gross domestic product (GDP) – Refers to the market value of all goods and services produced within a given geography in a given period.

growth concept map – Applies the vision statement to the city's physical development pattern. Generated through a public scenario building process, defines how we plan to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure in the next 30 years. For more detailed information on the growth concept map, see p. 96 of the plan and p. 103, for the growth concept map Figure 4.5.

heritage tree – In Austin, this refers a tree that has a diameter of 24 inches or more, when measured four and one-half feet above natural grade, and is listed as one of the following species: Texas Ash, Bald Cypress, American Elm, Cedar Elm, Texas Madrone, Bigtooth Maple,all Oaks, Pecan, Arizona Walnut, and Eastern Black Walnut. All these trees listed above, and that are 24 inches or more, as measured four and one-half feet above natural grade, need a permit to be removed.

high capacity bus – See bus rapid transit.

high capacity transit – A form of transit that has a greater level service and capacity than typical local bus service. It can be rail (regional, commuter and urban rail) or bus rapid transit. High capacity transit has one or both of the following characteristics—dedicated lanes/right-of-way for at least a portion of its route and the ability to change traffic signals to facilitate faster travel times.

household – Consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit.

housing affordability – The ability of a household to afford its housing and associated costs, including rent or mortgage, transportation, and utilities.

hydrology – The movement, distribution, and quality of water.

impact fee – Charge imposed on land developers to cover the cost of infrastructure and related services that will have to be provided by the local government.

impervious cover – Surfaces or structures that prevents rainwater from soaking into the ground and includes roads, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, swimming pools, and buildings.

indicators – Established measures to track change over time.

industrial – Anything related to the business of manufacturing products; excludes utility, transportation, and financial companies.

infill development – Development of vacant or underutilized land within areas that are already largely developed.

infrastructure – Facilities and services needed to sustain industry, residential, commercial, and all other land-use activities and include water, sewer lines, and other utilities, streets and roads, communications, transmission lines, and public facilities such as fire stations, parks, schools, etc.

job centers – Areas indicated on the Growth Concept Map that can accommodate those businesses not well-suited for residential or environmentally-sensitive areas. For more detailed information on job centers, see the p. 107 of the plan.

land banking – The practice of acquiring land and holding it for future use.

land development code – Set of regulations that govern how land is developed and include zoning regulations, criteria manuals, and subdivision regulations.

land use – The type of activity or development that occupies a parcel of land. Common land uses include residential, retail, industrial, recreation, and institutional.

livability – Refers to the suitability of a place (town, city, or neighborhood) to support a high quality of life that contributes to the health and happiness of its residents.

live/work space – Buildings or spaces within buildings that are used jointly for commercial and residential purposes where the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work.

local business – Locally-owned independent business, nonprofit, or farm.

local economy – The system of production, distribution and consumption of a community.

master plan – A plan giving comprehensive guidance or instruction. In the context of local government it can relate to services such as solid waste disposal and recycling; elements of infrastructure such as the roadway and bicycle networks; or guidance for the preservation or development of a given geographic area.

metropolitan statistical area (MSA) – A geographic entity defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for use by Federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing Federal statistics.

mixed-use – The use of a building, set of buildings, or areas for more than one type of land use such as a mix of commercial, civic, office, and residential uses.

multicultural – Of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures.

multigenerational – Of or relating to several generations.

multilingual – The ability to speak more than one language.

multi-modal – Term applied to the movement of passengers and cargo by more than one method of transport.

neighborhood – A district or area with distinctive people and characteristics.

neighborhood center – The smallest and least intense of the three types of activity centers outlined in the Growth Concept Map. Of the three, these will have a more local focus. Businesses and services—doctors and dentists, shops, branch libraries, dry cleaners, hair salons, coffee shops, restaurants, and other small and local businesses—will generally serve the center and surrounding neighborhoods. For more detailed information on neighborhood centers, see p. 105 of the plan.

neighborhood planning – As a function of the City of Austin it is a process that:

- Creates a plan that represents the views of all the stakeholders that make a up a community
- Identifies neighborhood strengths and assets
- Identifies neighborhood needs and concerns
- Establishes goals and objectives for improving the neighborhood
- Proposes specific recommendations to reach those goals
- Guides future development and policy/financial decisions by elected and appointed officials.

For more detailed information on neighborhood plans, see p. 217 of the plan.

open space – A parcel of land in a predominantly open and undeveloped condition that is suitable for natural areas; wildlife and native plant habitat, wetlands or watershed lands; stream corridors; passive, low-impact activities; no land disturbance; and/or trails for non-motorized activities.

park – An area of land set aside for public use, as:

- A piece of land with few or no buildings within or adjoining a town, maintained for recreational and ornamental purposes
- A landscaped city square
- A large tract of rural land kept in its natural state and usually reserved for the enjoyment and recreation of visitors.

pedestrian friendly – A built environment that is safe and pleasant for foot traffic because of design features that increase comfort and accessibility such as visually interesting buildings, quality sidewalks, crosswalks, and landscaping.

people with disabilities – Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

placemaking – The process of creating squares, plazas, parks, streets and waterfronts that will attract people because these place are pleasurable or interesting.

plan – A detailed proposal for achieving something or solving problems.

plan framework – A set of "topical" building blocks (land use and transportation, housing and neighborhoods, economy, etc.) that identify strategic directions for action to achieve the Imagine Austin vision.

planning – The process of setting development goals and policy, gathering and evaluating information, and developing alternatives for future actions based on the evaluation of the information.

planning area – The geographic area covered by Imagine Austin includes land within the city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction combined. See Figure 2.1.

policy – A specific statement that guides decisions on a wide array of topics and is the foundation for actions, programs, goals or objectives. Imagine Austin's Polices (listed in the building blocks section in Chapter 4) work in tandem with the growth concept map to guide longterm department strategies to achieve the vision and should be incorporated into departmental master plans and budgeting.

potential woodlands – Areas that have the potential to contain priority or other significant woodlands.

preservation – Restoration or protection from deterioration of features having environmental, cultural, historic, or other resource value.

preserve – An area of land set aside and protected from development.

priority programs – A systematic organization of Imagine Austin's key Policies and actions into related groups to facilitate the plan's implementation. For more detailed information on priority programs, see p. 186 of the plan.

public health – Science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities, and individuals.

quality of life – The attributes or amenities that combine to make an area a good place to live and include the availability of political, educational, and social support systems; entertainment and cultural opportunities; good relations among constituent groups; a healthy physical environment; and economic opportunities for both individuals and businesses.

reclaimed water – The restoration of wastewater to a state that will allow its beneficial reuse.

redevelopment – Development on a previously developed sites.

region – The area surrounding Austin, including neighboring municipalities and counties. Typically refers to the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area, but may also be Central Texas or the Texas Triangle.

regional center – The most urban of the three activity centers outlined in the growth concept map. These centers are and will be the retail, cultural, recreational, and entertainment destinations for Central Texas. These are the places where the greatest density of people and jobs and the tallest buildings in the region will be located. The densities, buildings heights, and overall character of a center will vary depending on location. For more detailed information on regional centers, see the discussion on p. 104 of the plan.

regional planning – The practice of coordinated, efficient land use activities, investments, and infrastructure for the sustainable growth of a region. It is a method to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries such as those related to the environment and economy.

regional rail – Rail service that connects different cities and regions, typically using existing railroad lines; typically used to travel longer distances between large cities.

residential – An area or structure dedicated to where people live or reside. Types of residential housing may include single family houses, duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes, townhouses, condominiums, apartment buildings and mobile homes.

riparian zone – Ecosystems located along the banks of rivers, streams, creeks, or any other water networks and serves as an interface between the stream and the land.

small area plan – A plan focusing on a sub-area within a municipality in a detailed way addressing its unique needs and include neighborhood, corridor, and station area plans. For more detailed information on small area plans, see p. 219 of the plan.

small business – A business that is privately owned and operated, with a small number of employees, has a relatively low volume of sales, and is not dominant in its field on a

national basis. Small business size standards vary widely, and may be determined by revenue or number of employees, depending on industry.

SMART Housing – An initiative of the City of Austin promoting sustainable and equitable housing development for low to moderate-income households. SMART stands for:

- **S**afe
- **M**ixed-Income
- **A**ccessible
- **R**easonably-Priced
- **T**ransit-Oriented Development

social equity – The goal of all people within a specific society or group having the same status in a certain respect and includes equal rights under the law, such as security, voting rights, freedom of speech, and assembly, the extent of property rights, and equal access to social goods and services.

sprawl – A pattern of land use, transportation and economic development used to describe areas characterized by separated land uses, low-density development, car-centric road networks, and a lack of transit options.

stakeholder – A person, group, organization, or system who affects or can be affected by an organization's process and resulting actions.

station area plan – A small area plan that address areas around an existing or proposed high capacity transit station. These plans address:

- Building scale
- Public realm and open space
- Public art
- Bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and automobile movement.

streetscape – The visual elements of a street, including the road, the orientation, scale and design adjoining buildings, street furniture, trees, and open spaces that combine to form the street's character.

sustainability – Is a broad-based concept that is founded upon three overarching goals:

(1) prosperity and jobs; (2) conservation and the environment; and (3) community health, equity,and cultural vitality. In relation to urban planning it is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

sustainable development – Development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Characteristics of sustainable communities include compact mixed-use development, green building, transit-oriented development, pedestrian-friendly and bicycle friendly neighborhoods, common open space, and diversity in housing opportunities.

Texas Triangle – One of eleven mega-regions in the United States. A mega-region consists of a large network of metropolitan regions linked by environmental systems and geography, infrastructure systems, economic linkages, settlement patterns, and shared culture and history. The "triangle" describes the highway network (Interstate 45, Interstate 10, and Interstate 35) connecting the major cities of the mega-region (Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin and Fort Worth). The Texas Triangle contains 5 of the 16 largest cities in the US, and is home to more than 70% of all Texans.

town center – The middle-sized of the three activity centers outlined in the Growth Concept Map. It is less urban than a regional center, but more dense than a neighborhood center. These centers will have a variety of housing types and a range of employers with regional customer and employee bases, and provide goods and services for the center as well as the surrounding areas. These centers will also be important hubs in the transit system. For more detailed information on town centers, see the discussion on p.105 of the plan.

transit – a shared passenger transportation service which is available for use by the general public and includes buses, commuter trains, high-speed rail, subways, streetcars, urban rail, and ferries.

transit-oriented development (TOD) – A mixed-use residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, increase economic activity, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. A TOD typically has a center with a transit station or stop (train station, metro station, or bus stop), surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center.

transfer of development rights (TDR) – The exchange of zoning entitlements from areas with low population needs, such as farmland, to areas of high population needs, such as downtown areas; these transfers allow for the preservation of open spaces and historic landmarks, while allowing urban areas to expand and increase in density.

tree canopy – The layer of leaves, branches and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above.

urban design – Concerns the arrangement, appearance and functionality of towns and cities, and in particular the shaping and uses of urban public space.

urban forest – The tree canopy of a city.

urban rail – An electrified service that can operate in mixed traffic, in its own lane, or in separate rights-of-way; typically used to travel in urban locations and can be used to link transit systems.

urban trail – A multi-use public path that creates an active transportation corridor through a built environment to provide mobility for active transportation and create greenways through developed areas and provide expanded travel choices.

USDA Prime Farmland – A designation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture defined as land most suitable for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops.

vision statement – An aspirational statement in Imagine Austin describing the type of place Austin should be in 2039. The vision statement begins on p. 81 of the plan.

walkable – Areas conducive to walking.

wastewater – Liquid waste discharged by domestic residences, commercial properties, industry, and/or agriculture and can encompass a wide range of potential contaminants and concentrations. Its most common usage refers to the municipal wastewater that contains a broad spectrum of contaminants resulting from the mixing of wastewaters from different sources.

watershed – a large area of land that drains water into a river, creek or into an aquifer (an underground reservoir or lake). In Central Texas, water draining into an aquifer usually flows into recharge features such as caves or fractures in the ground.

waterway – A body of water, such as a river, channel, or canal.

weird – Strikingly odd or unusual; Austin.

workforce development – A wide range of policies and programs related to education and training for acquiring skills needed to enter, or re-enter, the labor force.

working group – Group of volunteers who convened regularly to formulate actions for each building block; groups were open to the public and drew a great deal of expertise in each topic area.

zero waste – An approach to waste management where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use and designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them.

zoning – The process by which a local government legally controls the use of property and physical configuration of development upon tracts within its jurisdiction. In Texas, only municipalities have been granted the authority to implement zoning by the Legislature. The Austin City Charter mandates that zoning regulations be in alignment with the comprehensive plan.

APPENDIX D. CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

FACTORS USED IN IDENTIFYING CENTERS

Centers are marked with circles to designate the general area for the center to be located. Where there is an adopted plan with a Future Land Use Map or equivalent, the shape for the center is drawn to approximate the features from that plan that correspond to the center.

Existing City Plans	Areas with existing small-area plans intended to promote denser, mixed use development, such as Downtown, East Riverside corridor, station-area plans, and North Burnet/Gateway.
CAMPO centers	Centers identified in the Capital-Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 plan (Map XX: Centers Concept).
High capacity transit service	High-frequency or high-capacity transit service, such as multiple local or express bus routes, bus rapid transit, or urban or commuter rail.
Access to major roads	Either limited access roads (such as Lamar Blvd and Rundberg Ln) or at the intersection of major arterials.
Land Availability	Areas with vacant land or land identified for redevelopment by neighborhood plans (generally, but not exclusively, by calling for one of the mixed use future land use categories).
Existing development agreements	Areas already in the process of being developed at the scale of an activity center.
Proximity to incompatible land uses (job centers only)	Proximity to existing land uses incompatible with residential or mixed use development, such as landfills or existing industrial development.
Other	In addition to these general factors, other factors were also occasionally considered. Examples of other factors include lack of other Growth Concept Map features (Southside regional center, Pleasant Valley corridor through Dove Springs, or 71/Ross neighborhood center in Del Valle) or discouraging future residential development near the Decker Power Station.

FACTORS USED IN IDENTIFYING CORRIDORS

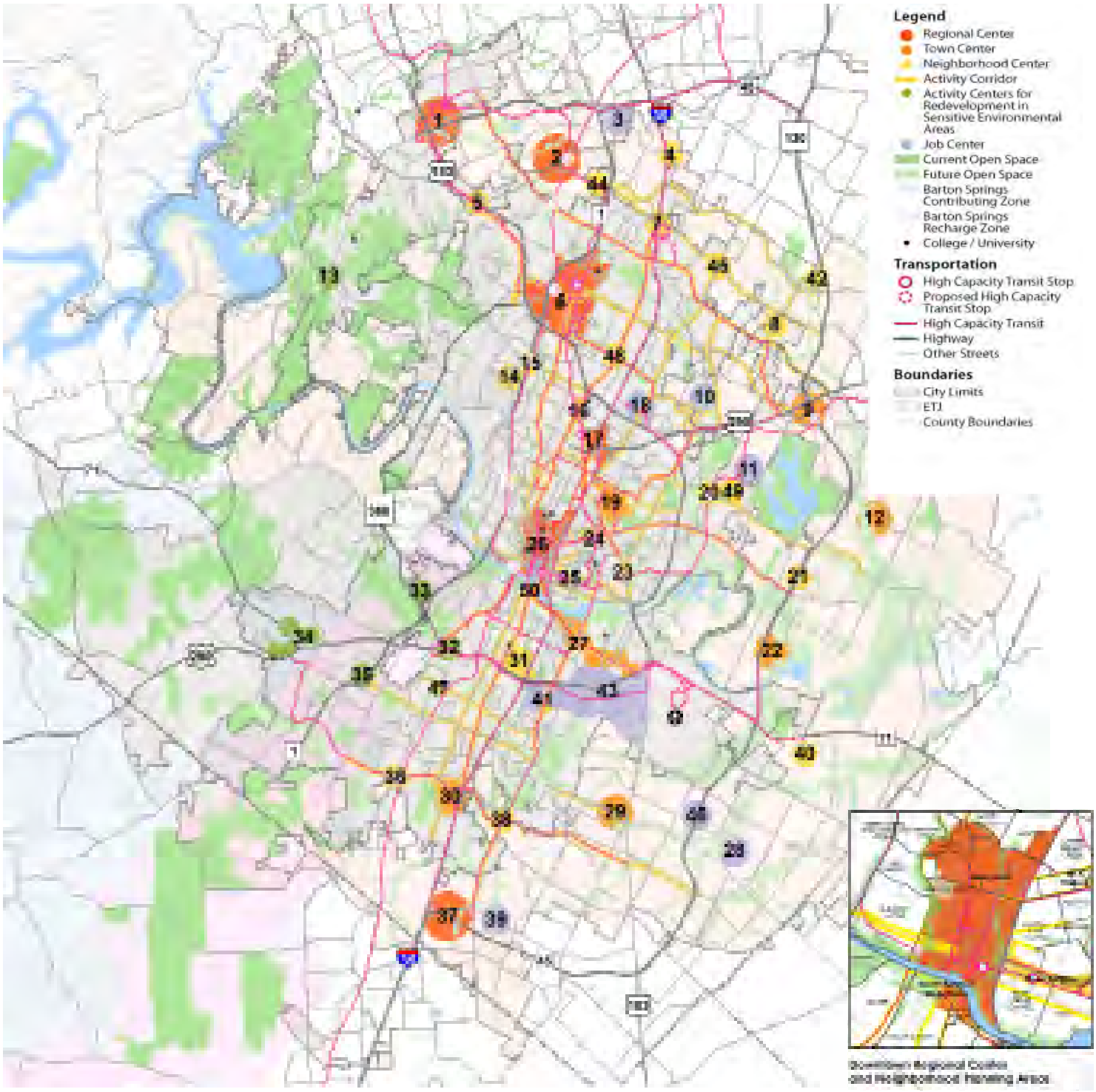
Corridors are marked with a yellow line identifying the length of the corridor.

Connecting the city	Routes that connected multiple activity or job centers or major transportation features.
Core Transit Corridors and Future Core Transit Corridors	Routes identified by the City's Commercial Design Standards, which require wider sidewalks and street trees.
Strategic Mobility Plan	Corridor studies included in the Strategic Mobility Plan.
Land availability	Areas with vacant land or land identified for redevelopment by neighborhood plans (generally, but not exclusively, by calling for one of the mixed use future land use categories).

GROWTH CONCEPT MAP CENTERS KEY

Centers are listed below and shown with the corresponding number on the growth concept map on the opposite page.

ID	Name	Center Type
1	Lakeline Station	Regional Center
2	Robinson Ranch Station	Regional Center
3	North 1325 Center	Job Center
4	1825 Strip	Neighborhood Center
5	183/McNeil	Neighborhood Center
6	North Burnet/Gateway Station	Regional Center
7	Tech Ridge	Neighborhood Center
8	Harris Branch	Neighborhood Center
9	290 & 130/Wildhorse PUD	Town Center
10	BFI Center	Job Center
11	Decker Center	Job Center
12	Whisper Valley PUD	Town Center
13	Four Points	Activity Center for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas
14	Far West	Neighborhood Center
15	Anderson Lane Station	Neighborhood Center
16	Crestview Station	Town Center
17	Highland Mall Station	Regional Center
18	Cameron/183 Center	Job Center
19	Mueller Station	Town Center
20	Colony Park Station	Neighborhood Center
21	969/130	Neighborhood Center
22	Rio di Vida	Town Center
23	Springdale Station	Neighborhood Center
24	MLK Station	Neighborhood Center
25	Plaza Saltillo	Neighborhood Center
26	Downtown	Regional Center
27	Riverside Stations	Town Center
28	F1	Job Center
29	Carma	Town Center
30	South Park Meadows	Neighborhood Center
31	St. Edwards	Neighborhood Center
32	Lamar/Ben White	Activity Center for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas
33	Barton Creek Mall	Activity Center for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas
34	Oak Hill Center	Activity Center for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas



35	William Cannon/ MoPac	Activity Center for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas
36	Slaughter Lane Station	Neighborhood Center
37	Southside Regional Center	Regional Center
38	Goodnight Ranch	Neighborhood Center
39	TDS Center	Job Center
40	71/Ross	Neighborhood Center
41	Dove Springs	Neighborhood Center

42	Cameron/Wells Branch	Neighborhood Center
43	McKinney Center	Job Center
44	Howard Station	Neighborhood Center
45	Dessau/Parmer	Neighborhood Center
46	FM812/130 Center	Job Center
47	South Austin Combined	Neighborhood Center
48	Lamar and Rundberg	Neighborhood Center
49	Colony Park	Neighborhood Center
50	South Central Waterfront	Regional Center

SUPPLEMENTAL ANALYSIS OF THE PREFERRED SCENARIO AND GROWTH CONCEPT

Background

The purpose of Imagine Austin Community Forum Series (CFS) 2 was to have the public create "broad-brush" planning scenarios through the use of a map chip exercise. These types of exercises have been used throughout the Country, including Austin during the 2003 Envision Central Texas effort. The public created 64 chip exercise maps, which were digitally processed by Staff in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for further analysis. The scenarios were refined into five scenarios, from which the public chose a Preferred Scenario during CFS 3. Eventually, the Preferred Scenario informed the creation of the Growth Concept through additional meetings.

Staff created a Supplemental Analysis of the Preferred Scenario and a previous version of the Growth Concept by using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to highlight any Centers or Corridors that might be severely restricted by environmental features, and to make sure the conceptual distribution of population and jobs were in line with community interests.

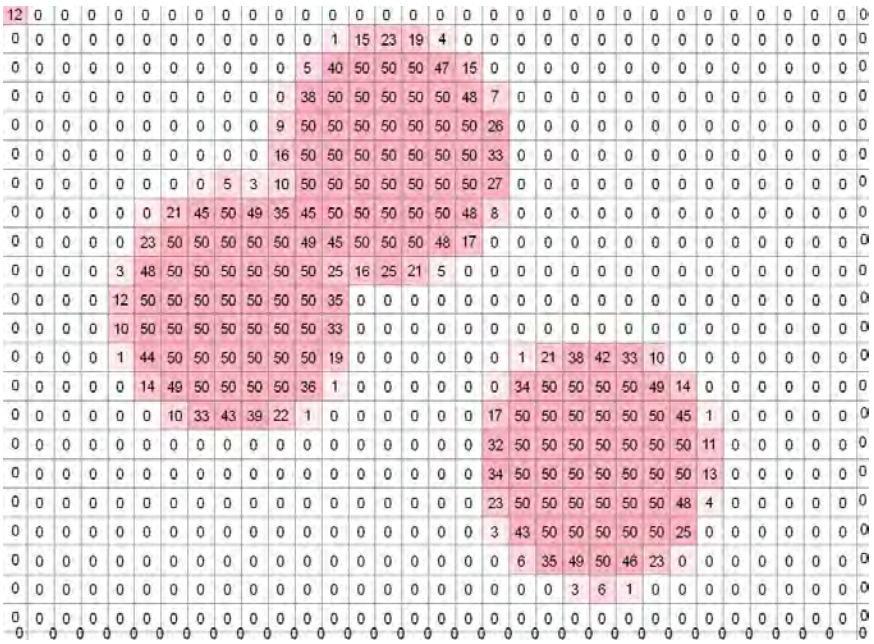
The results of this analysis informed the planning effort and should not be referred to for specific policy decisions. This is partly due to significant changes that were made to later versions of the Growth Concept map after this analysis. An older version of the Growth Concept is used for mapping comparisons in order to recognize conflicts with environmental features. The Preferred Scenario is used for GIS analysis of population and jobs, as it was during the planning effort.

During the mapping exercises, the chips represented additional population and jobs, not existing. For the purposes of clarity and simplicity, most of the analysis corresponds to that distinction. What follows is a brief explanation of how the chip maps were converted to GIS, and then the various feature comparisons to the Preferred Scenario and older Growth Concept.

Converting Chip Exercise Maps into GIS

Sixty-four chip exercise maps were collected as part of Community Forum Series 2. The image below represents a sample area of a chip exercise map.

These maps were converted into GIS by placing a point at each chip location, and buffering the point to the approximate area where the chip was located. The grids then are overlaid with the various feature layers that are represented in the maps that follow. The result of these overlays is a GIS layer that contains population, jobs, and the features we are interested in.

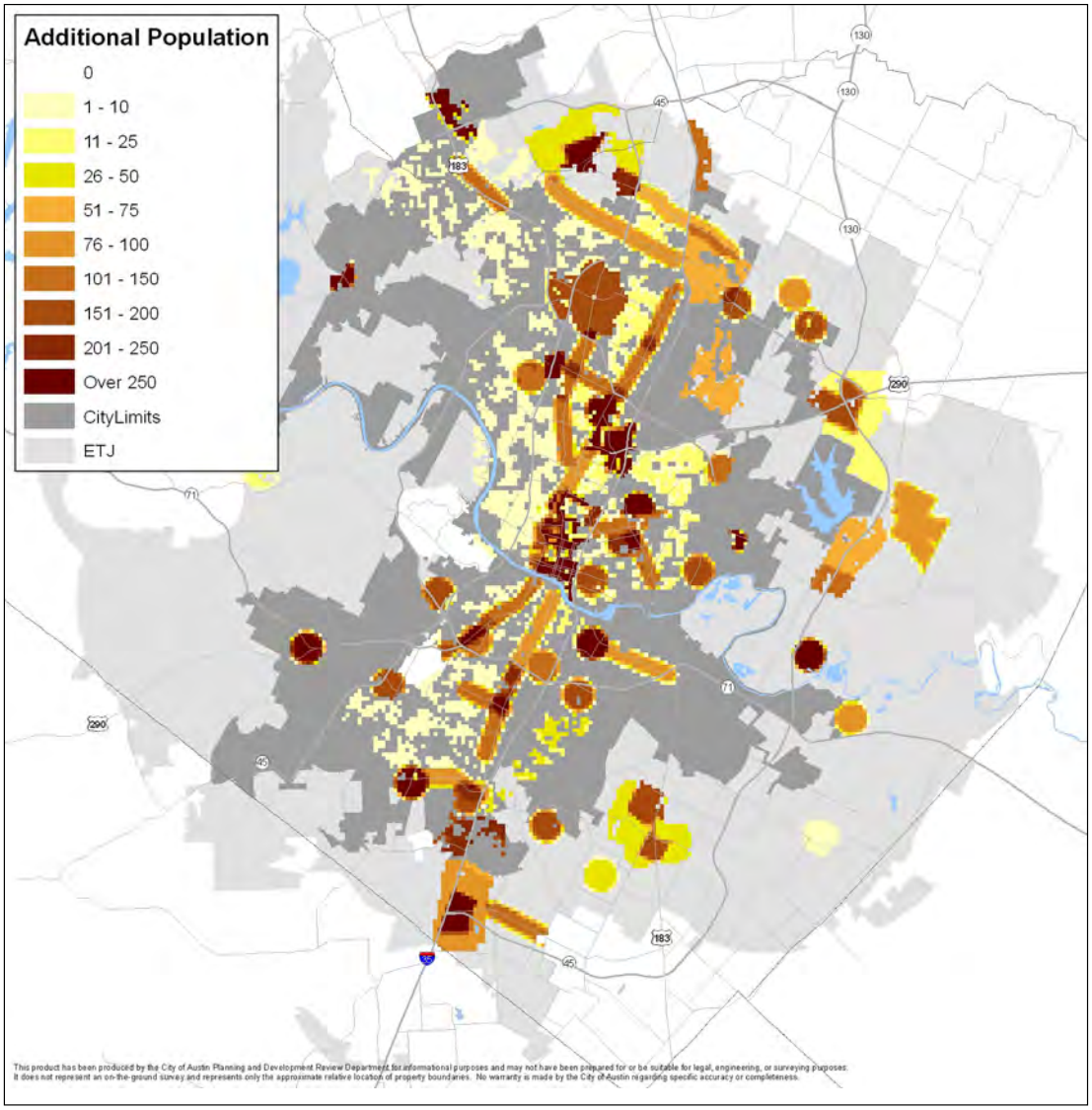


Resulting Preferred Scenario Maps

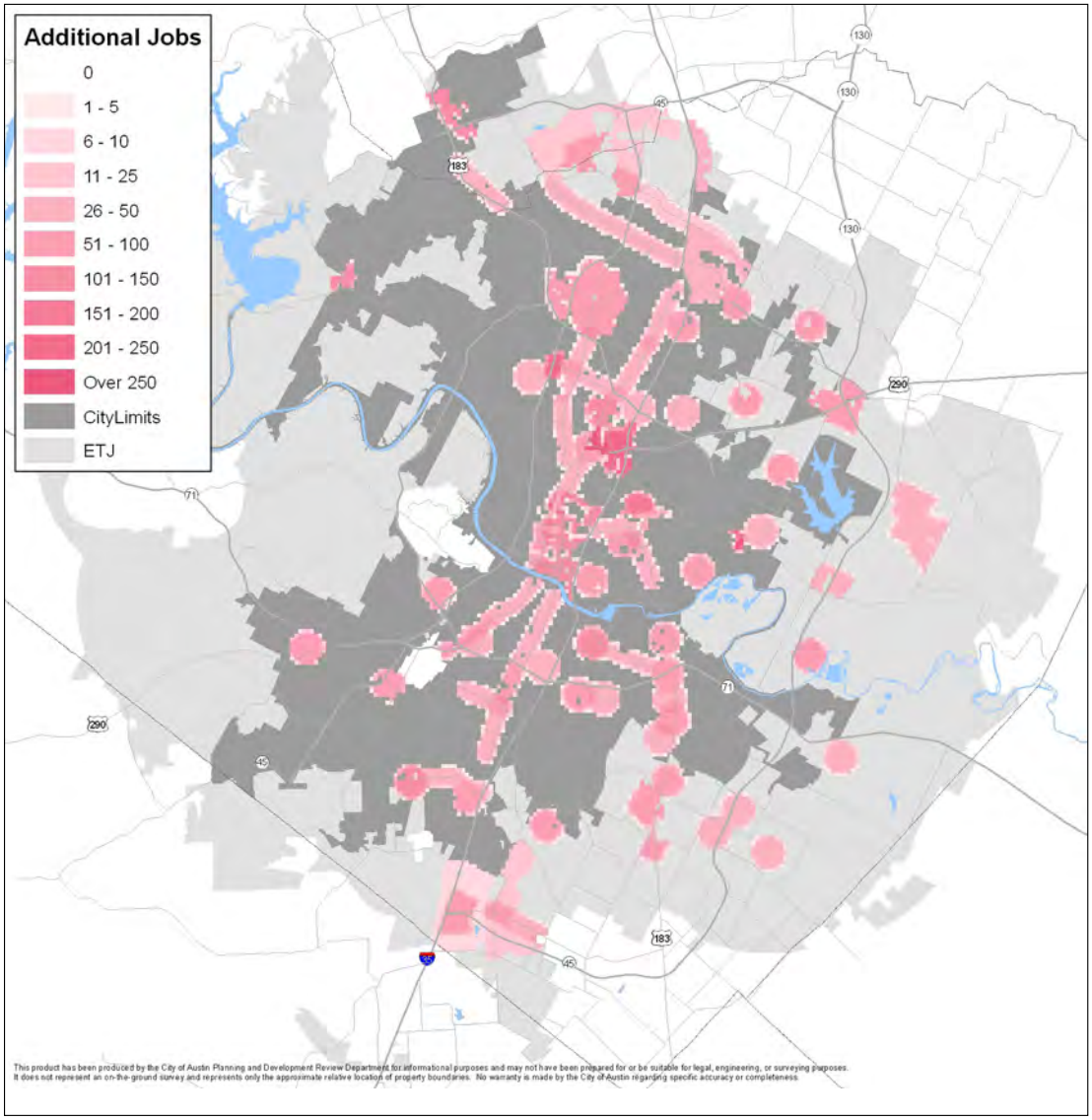
Once the population and jobs are allocated by grid cells, a map of the entire area showing the intensity of population or jobs is created, as seen below. The colors indicate the added population or jobs for each 10 acre cell. The grids then are overlaid with the various feature layers that are represented in the maps that follow. The result of these overlays is a GIS layer that contains population, jobs, and the features we are interested in.

Comparison of Preferred Scenario by City Jurisdictions

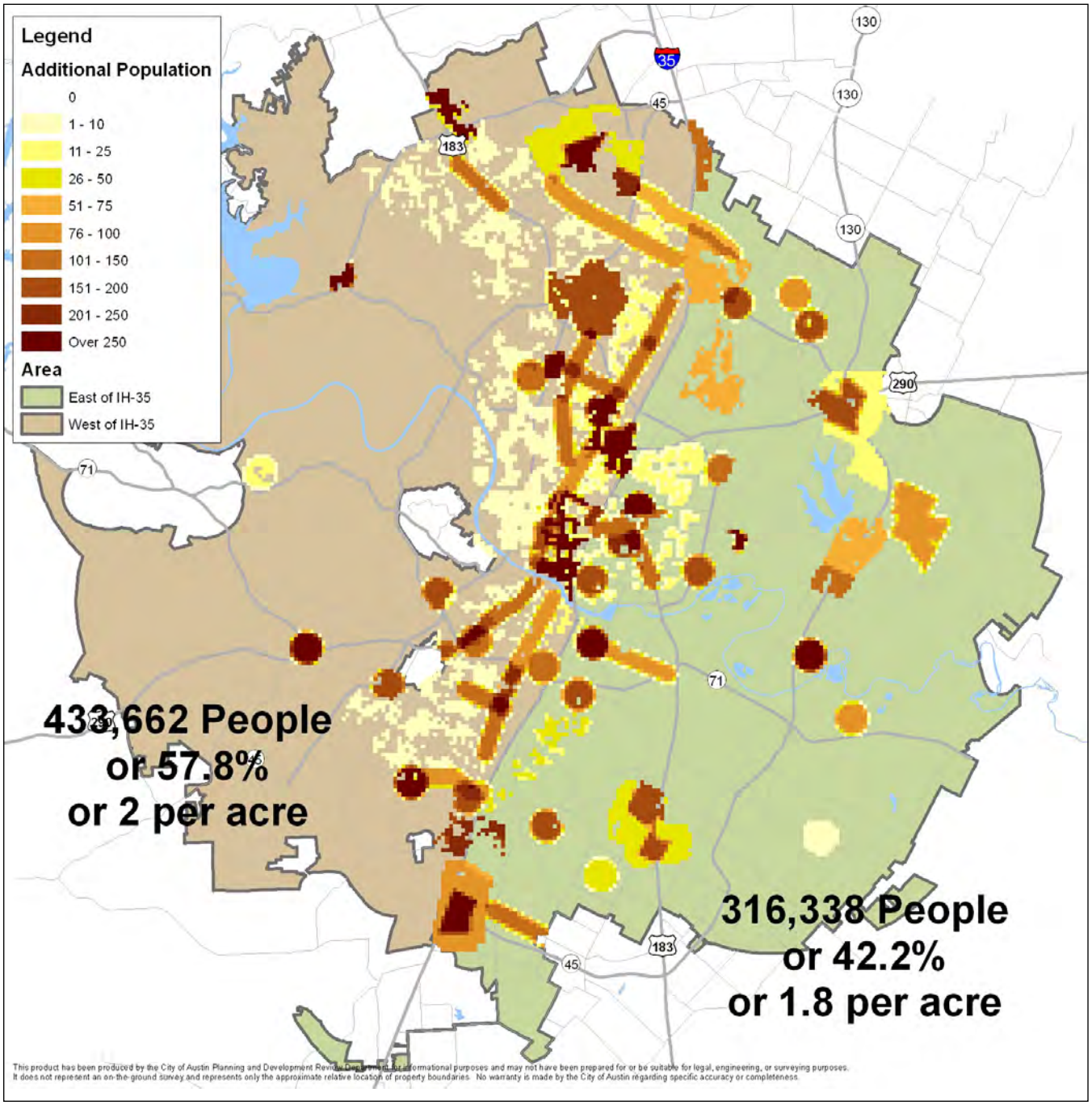
Preferred Scenario Population Concept



Preferred Scenario Jobs Concept



Preferred Scenario Population Concept East and West of I-35



The table below shows the existing and additional amount of population by City jurisdictions, while the second table shows additional jobs. Both correspond to the GIS layer that was used in the above maps.

Preferred Scenario Population Concept by City Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Existing			Concept Added 2009-2039		Concept Total by 2039	
	People	Acres	Gross Density: Persons/Ac.	People	%	People	Gross Density: Persons/Ac.
Extraterritorial Juris. (ETJ)	208,225	198,906	1.0	139,880	19%	348,105	1.8
City Limits	812,025	196,998	4.1	610,120	81%	1,422,145	7.2
Grand Total	1,020,250	395,904	2.6	750,000	100%	1,770,250	4.5

Preferred Scenario Jobs Concept by City Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Concept Added 2009-2039	
	Jobs	% Distribution
Extraterritorial Juris. (ETJ)	53,990	18%
Full and Limited Purpose	246,199	82%
Grand Total	300,189	100%

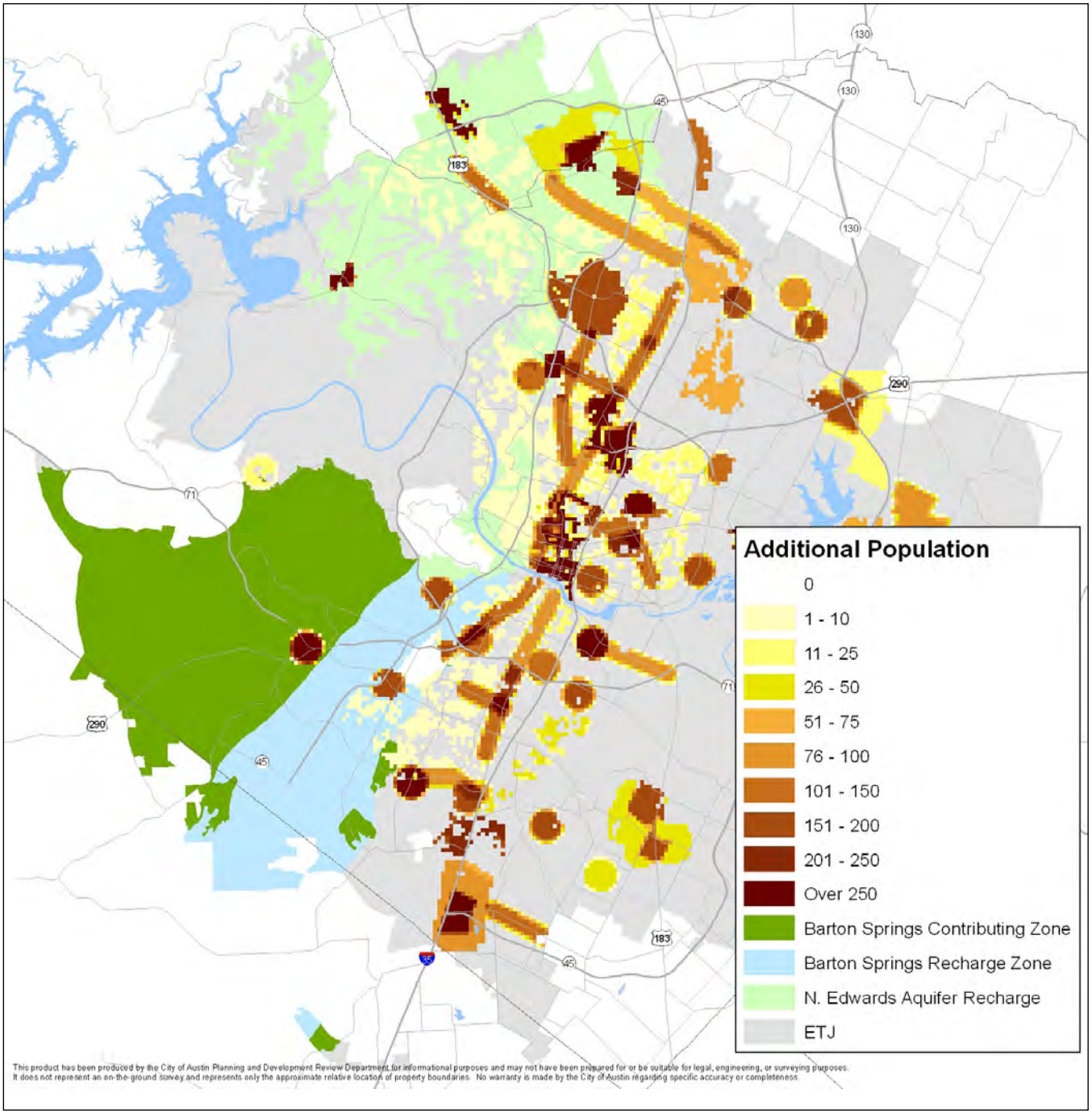
For comparison, the table at right shows the population and density of other cities. Austin has a lower gross density than Dallas and Houston. This may owe to the amount of open space in the City of Austin extraterritorial jurisdiction. Nonetheless, it shows Austin's density is similar to other auto-oriented cities across the nation.

Population and Density of Other City Limits

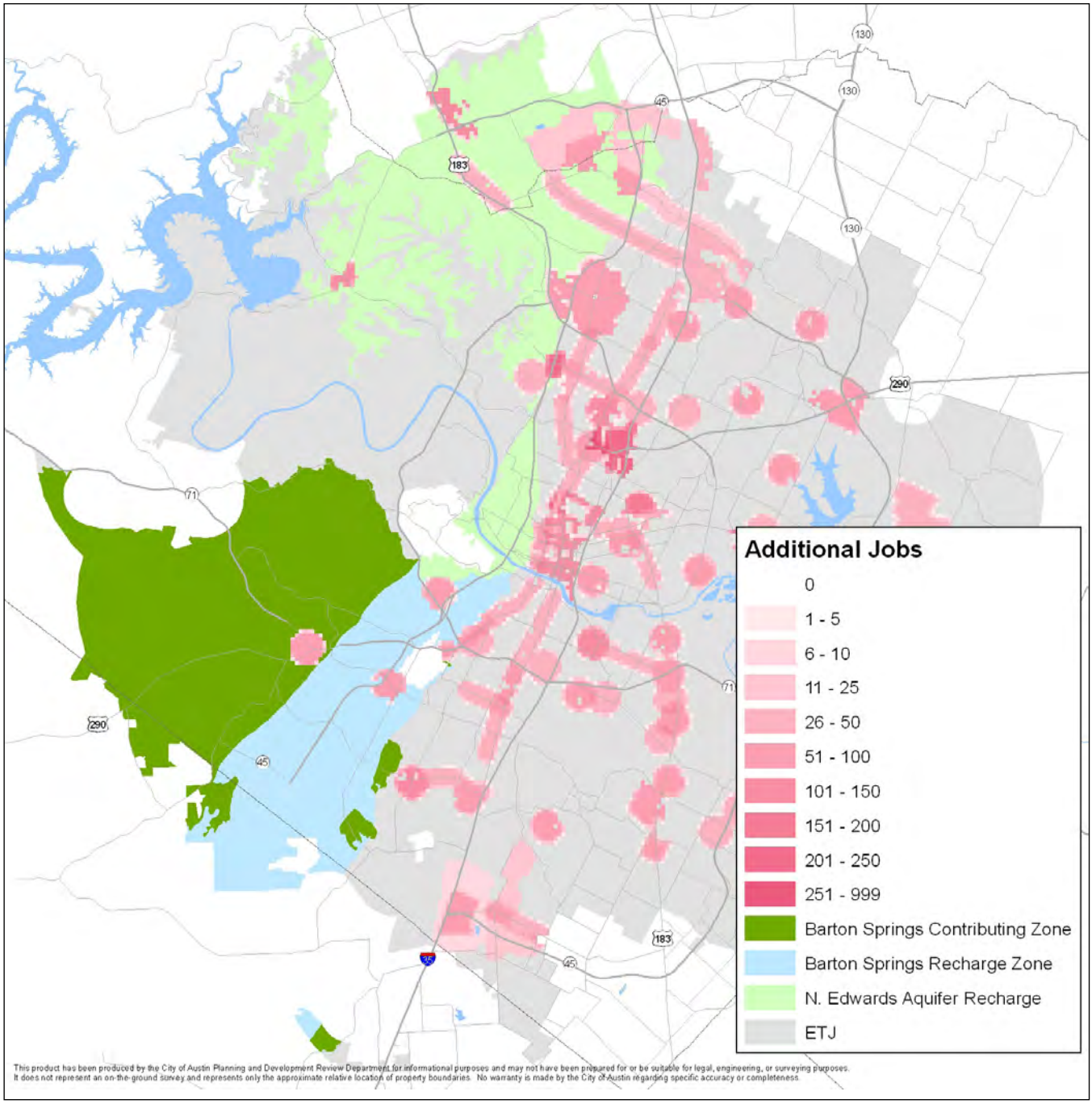
City	People	Acres	Gross Density: Persons/Ac.
Houston	2,099,451	384,832	5.5
Dallas	1,197,816	246,912	4.9
New York City	8,175,133	300,096	27.2
Portland, OR	583,776	93,056	6.3
Columbus	787,033	136,064	5.8
Fort Worth	741,206	217,472	3.4

Preferred Scenario Concept by Edwards Aquifer Zones

Population



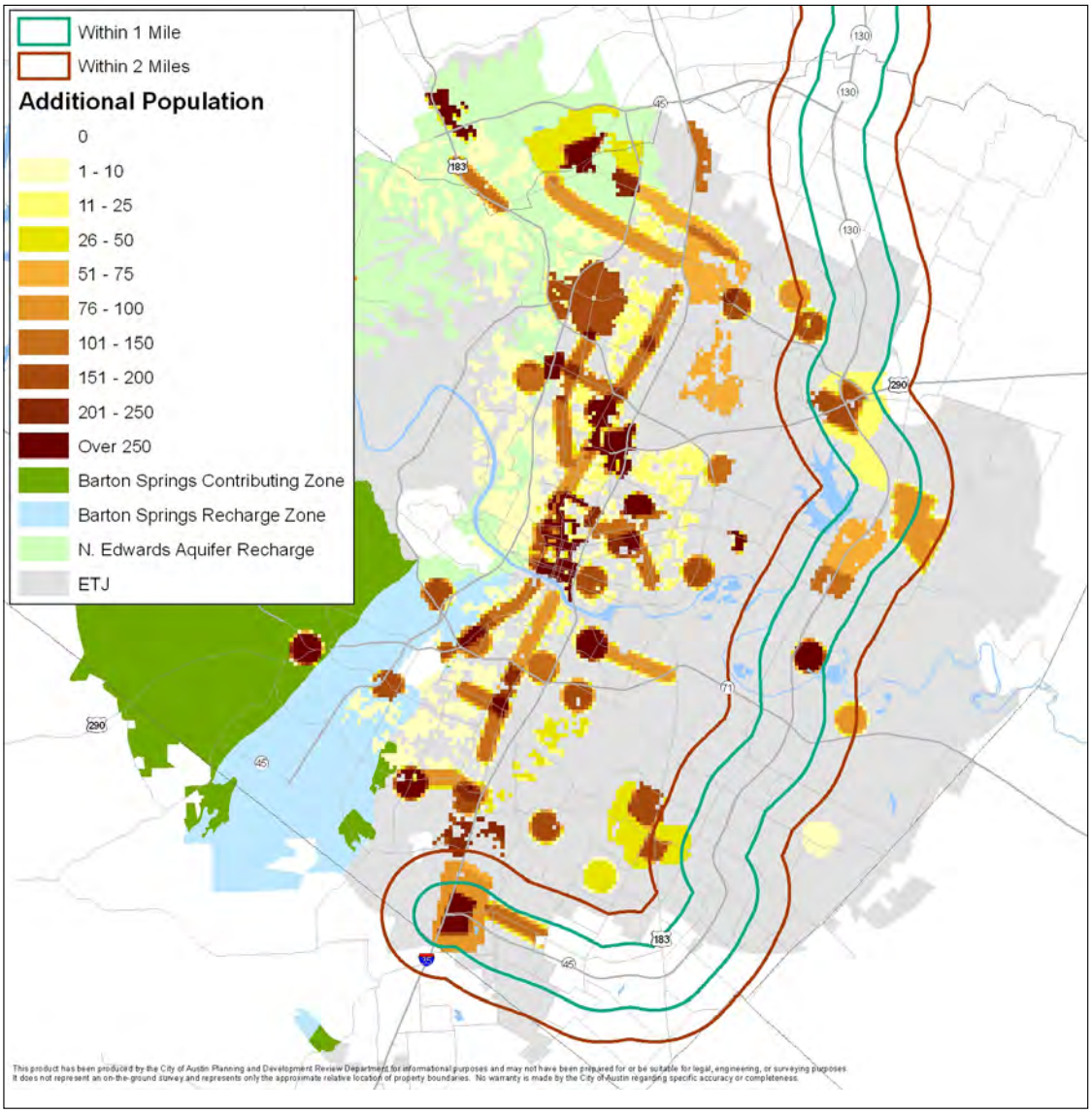
Jobs

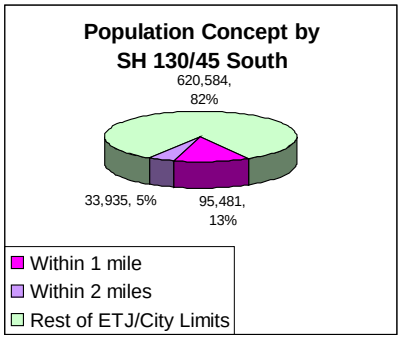

Additional Jobs
0
1 - 5
6 - 10
11 - 25
26 - 50
51 - 100
101 - 150
151 - 200
201 - 250
251 - 999
Barton Springs Contributing Zone
Barton Springs Recharge Zone
N. Edwards Aquifer Recharge
ETJ
This product has been produced by the City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.
It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

Preferred Scenario Population and Jobs Concept by Edwards Aquifer Zones				
Recharge Zone	**Concept Added 2009-2039**		**Percentage of Grand Total**	
	Population	**Jobs**	**Population**	**Jobs**
Barton Springs Contributing Zone	15,981	5,263	2.1%	1.8%
Barton Springs Recharge Zone	20,533	6,632	2.7%	2.2%
Total in Barton Edwards Aquifer Zone	36,514	11,895	4.9%	4.0%
N. Edwards Recharge Zone	107,851	41,219	14.4%	13.7%
Total in Edwards Aquifer Zones	144,365	53,114	19.2%	17.7%
Rest of ETJ/City Limits	605,635	246,885	80.8%	82.3%
Grand Total	750,000	300,000	100%	100%

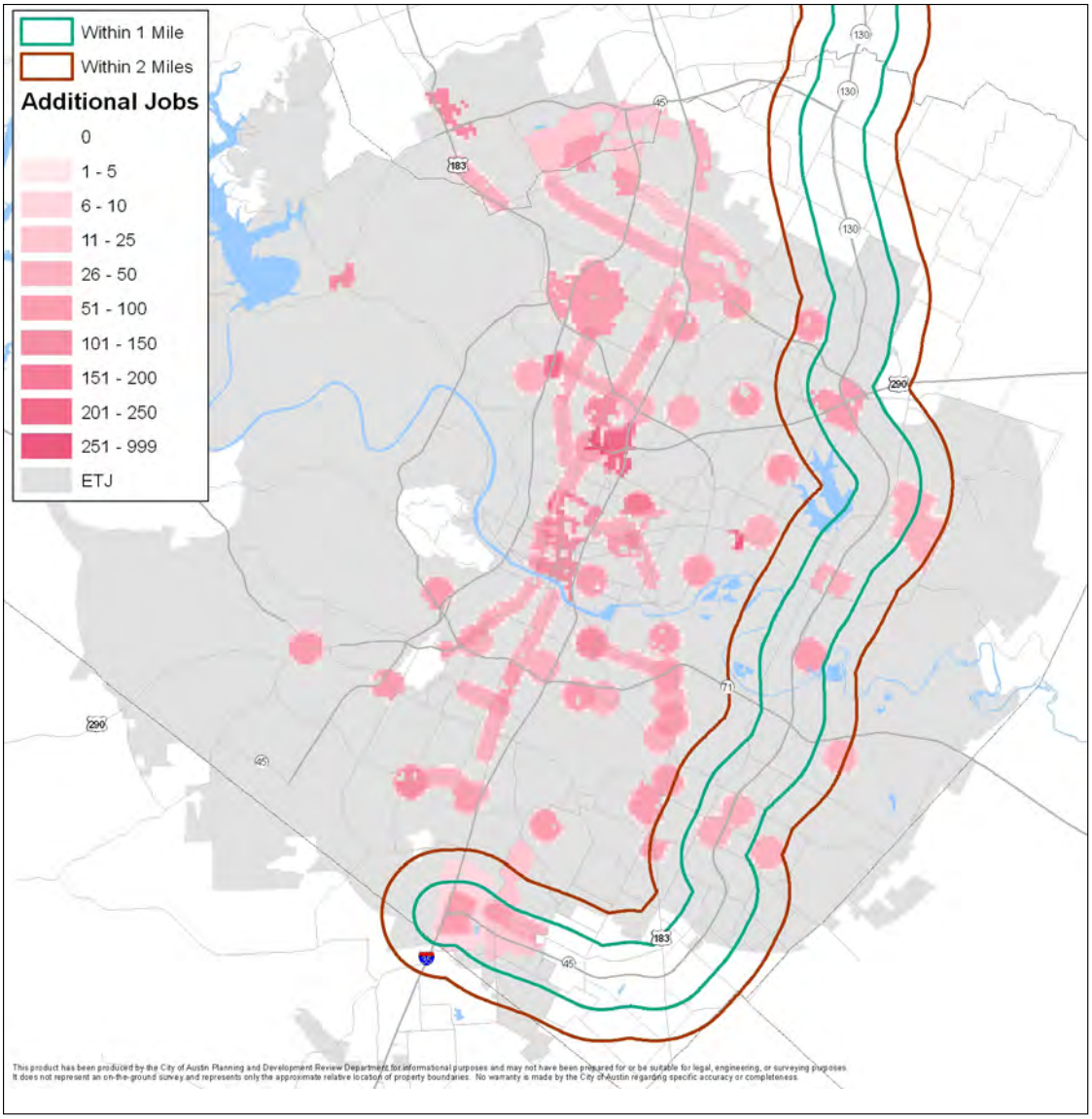
Preferred Scenario Concept by SH130/45 Areas

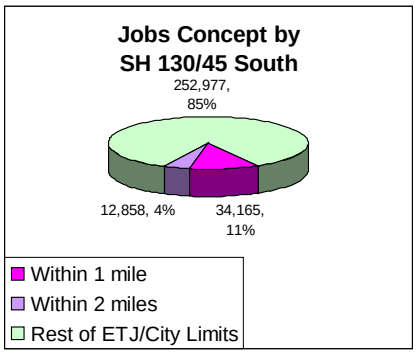
Population





Jobs

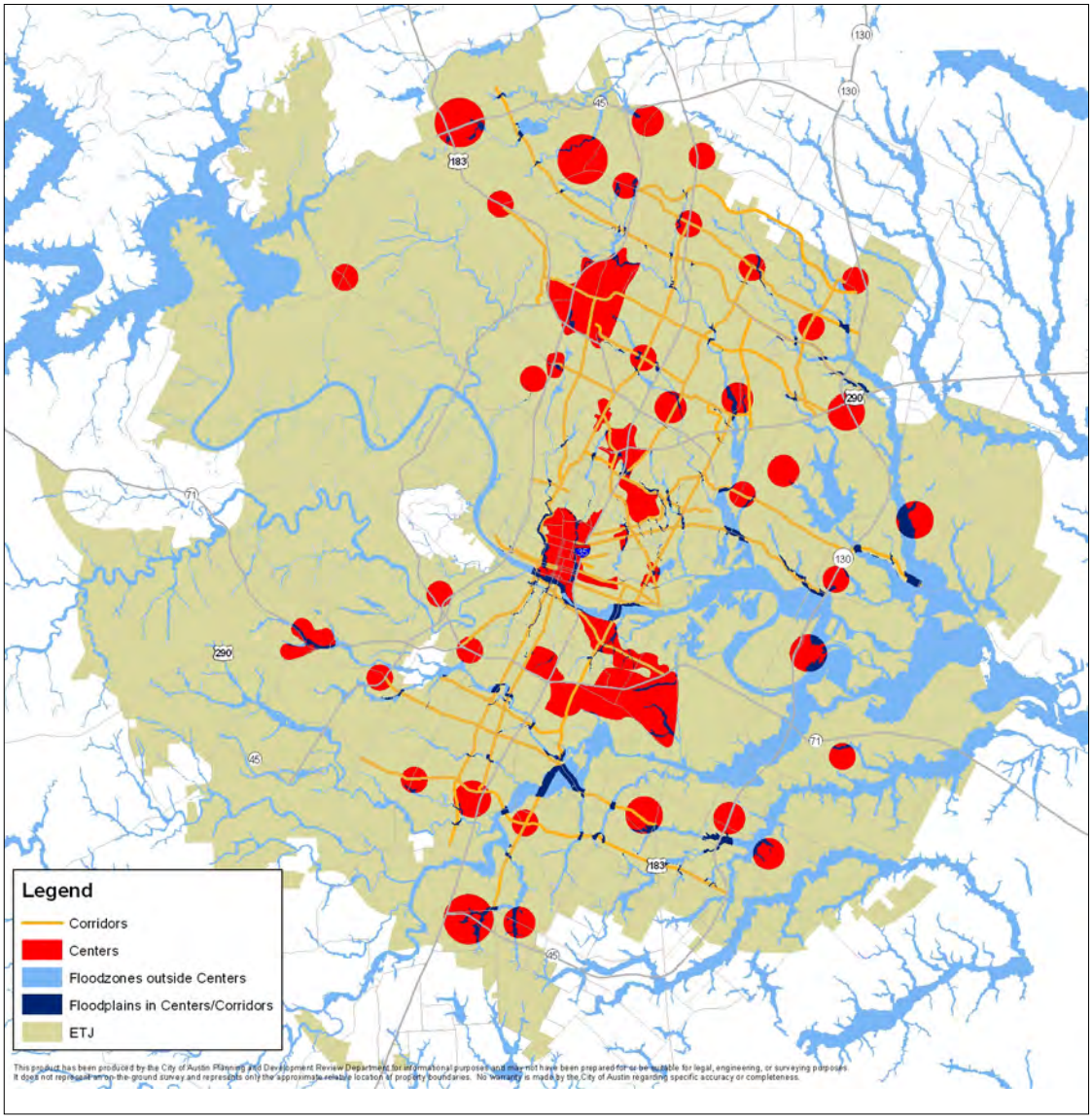


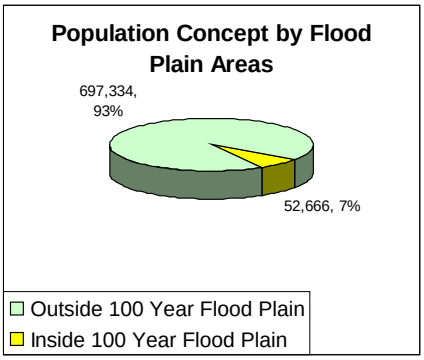


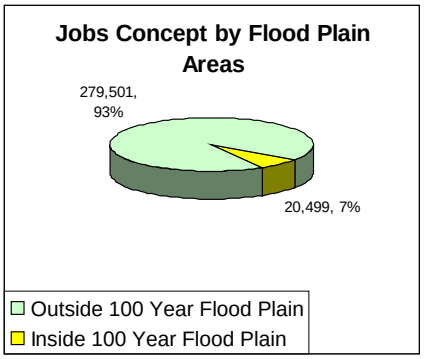
Preferred Scenario Population and Jobs Concept by SH 130/45 Areas

Area	Concept Added 2009-2039		Percentage of Grand Total	
	Population	Jobs	Population	Jobs
Within 1 mile	95,481	34,165	12.7%	4.6%
Within 2 miles	33,935	12,858	4.5%	1.7%
Total within 2 miles	129,416	47,023	17.3%	15.7%
Rest of ETJ/City Limits	620,584	252,977	82.7%	84.3%
Grand Total	750,000	300,000	100%	100%

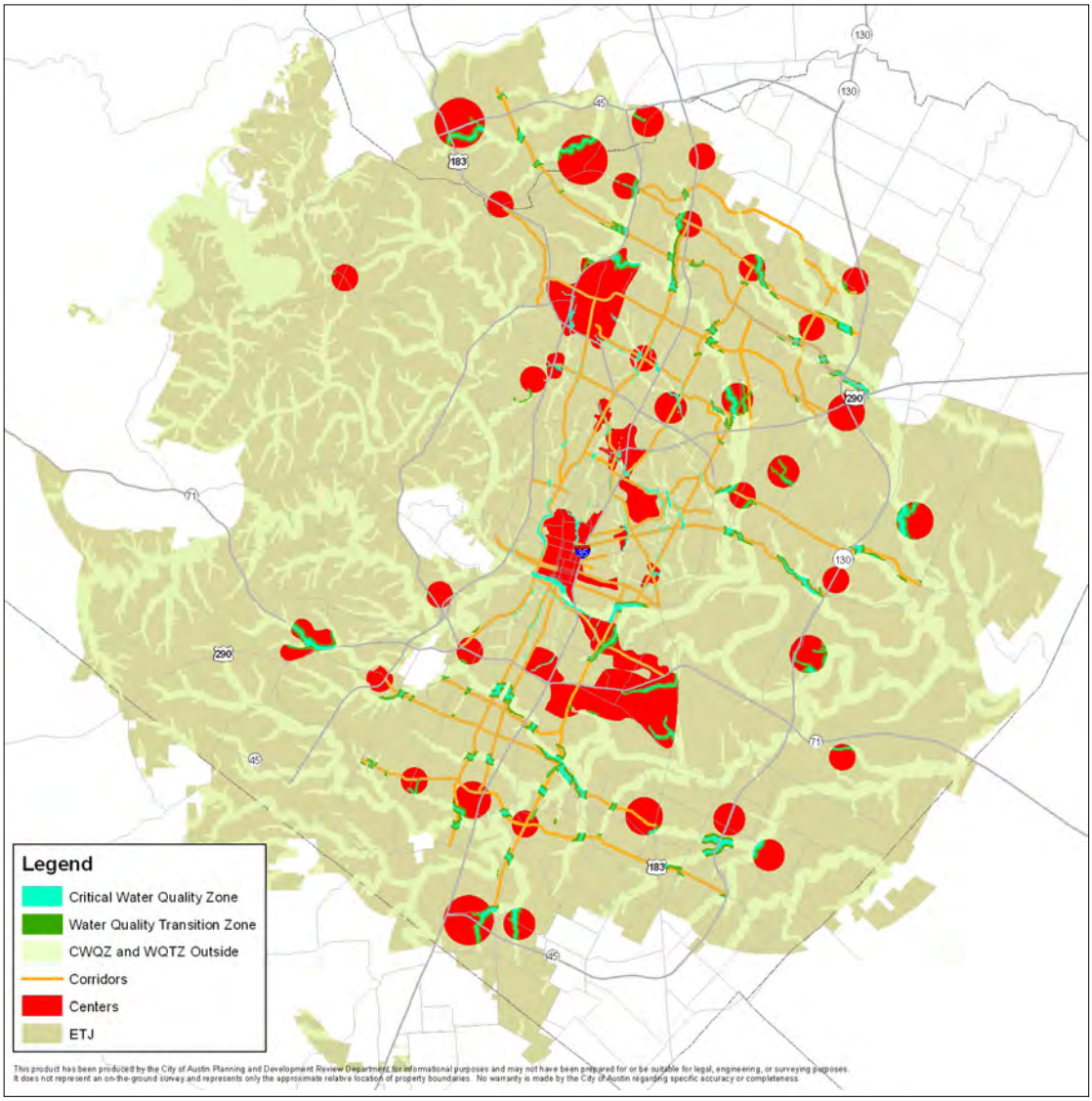
Growth Concept by Floodplains

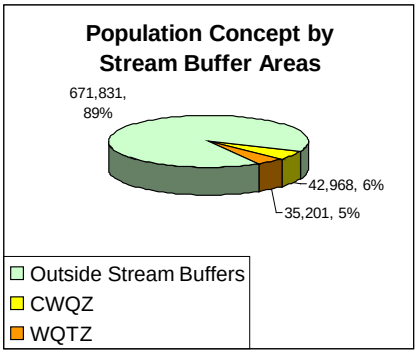


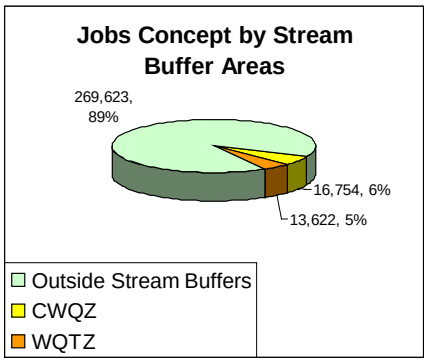




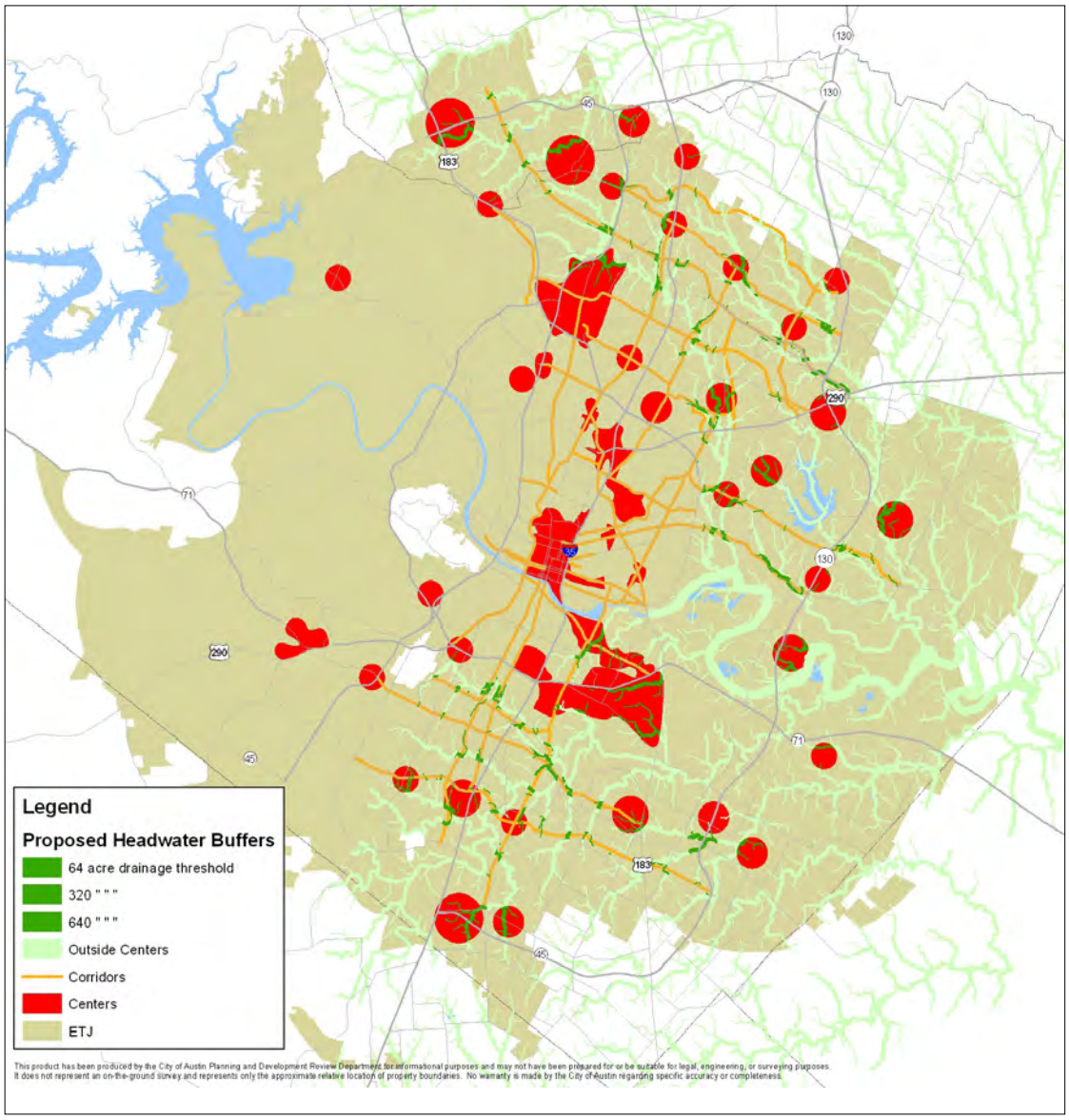
Growth Concept by Stream Buffers

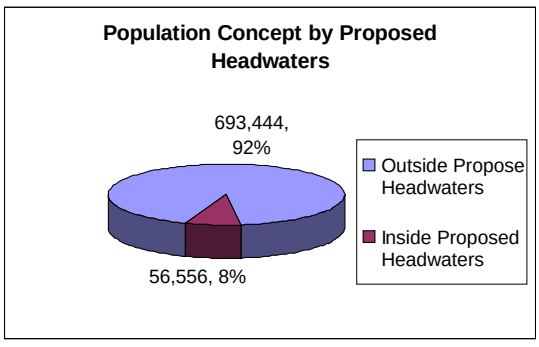


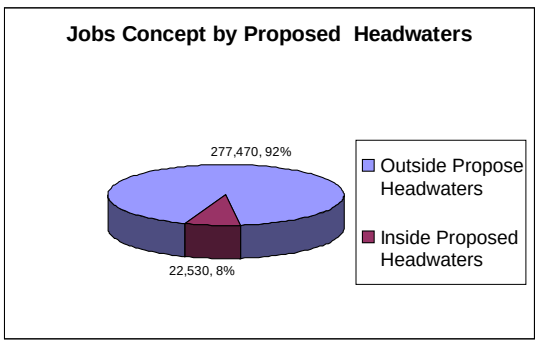




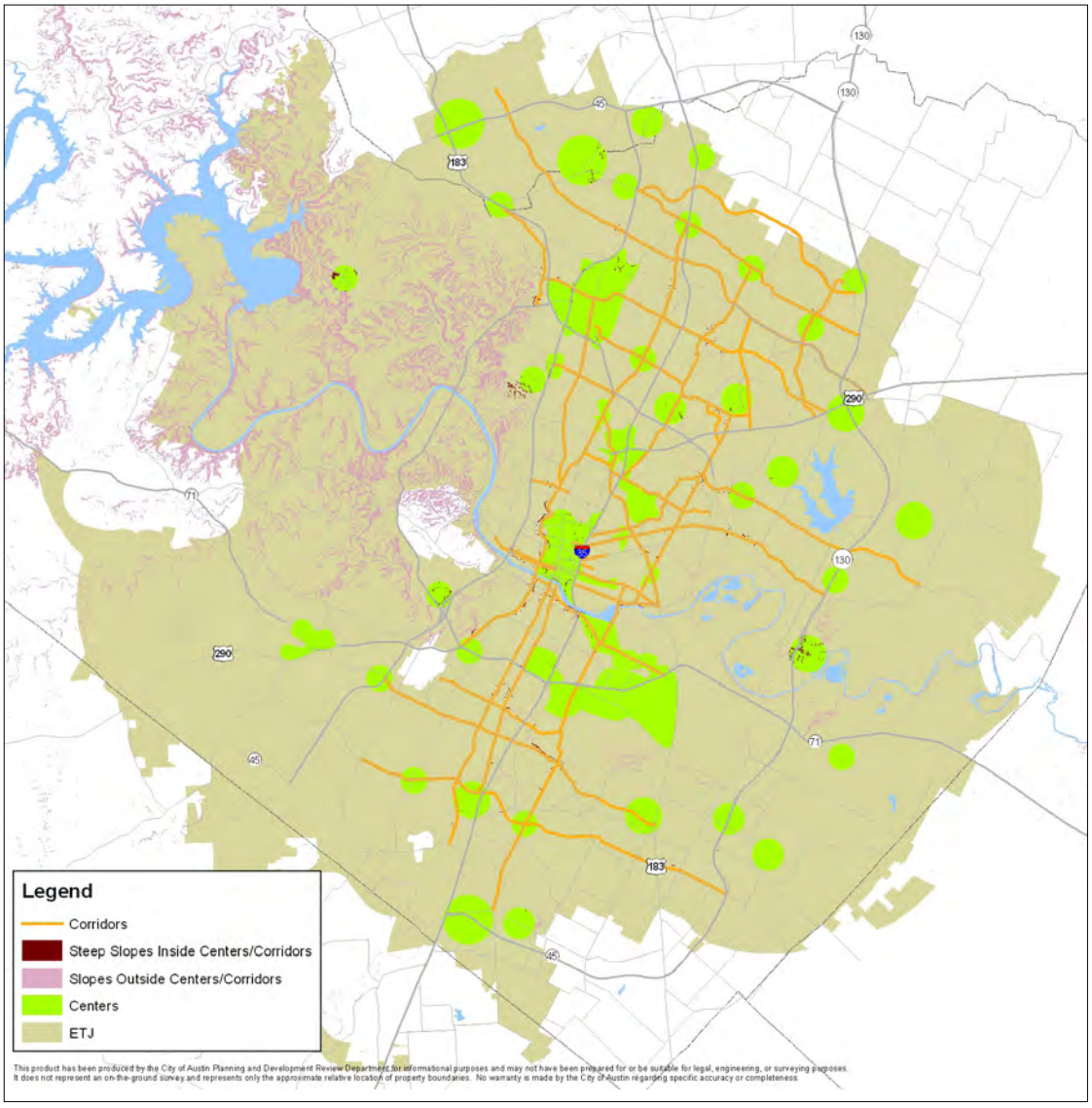
Growth Concept by Proposed Headwaters

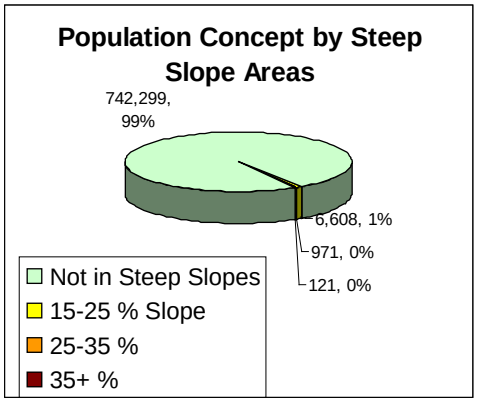


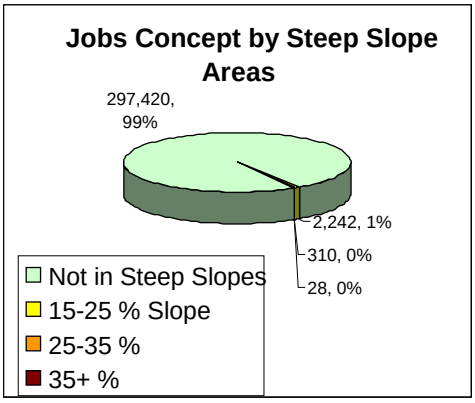




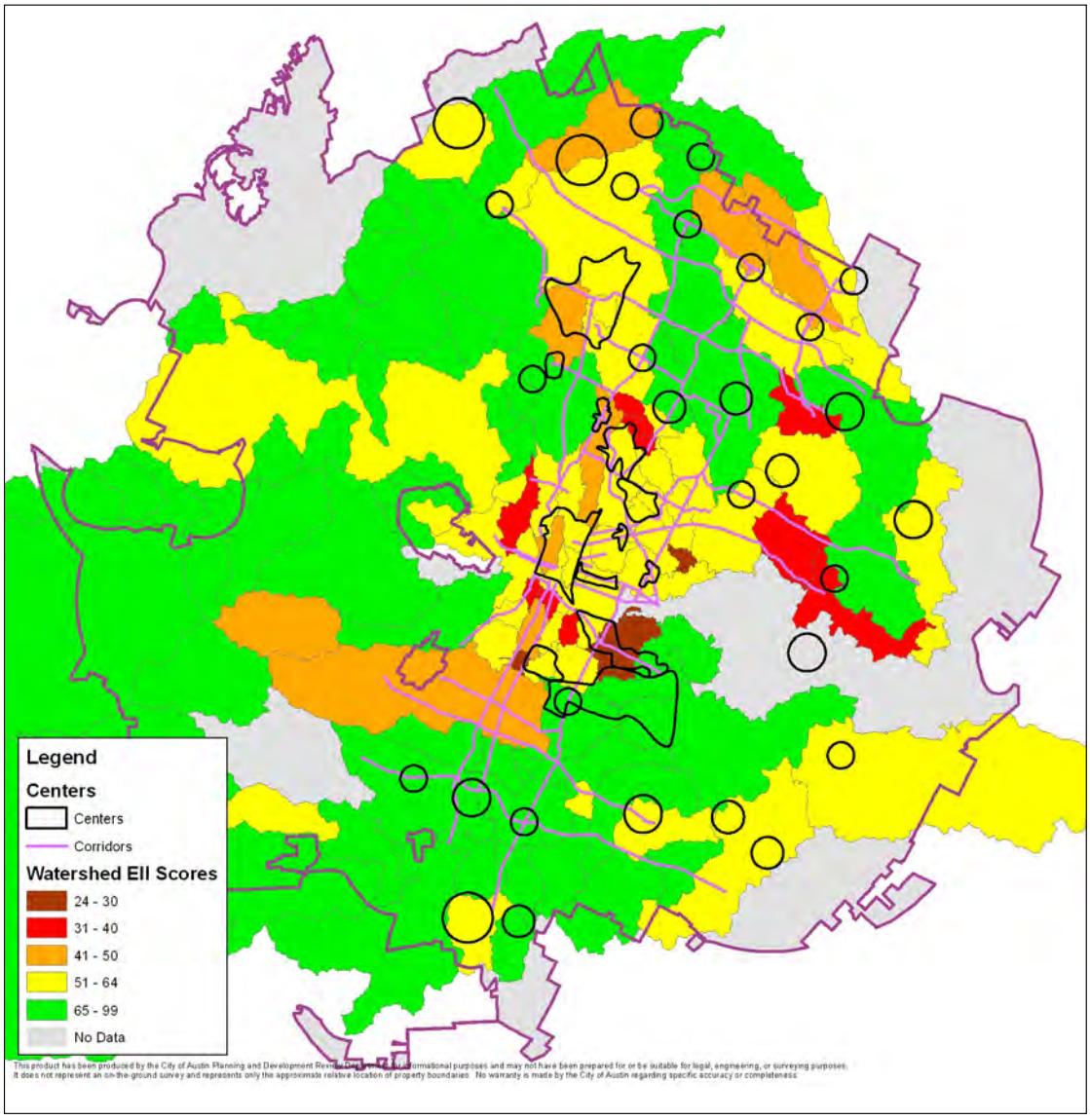
Growth Concept by Steep Slopes



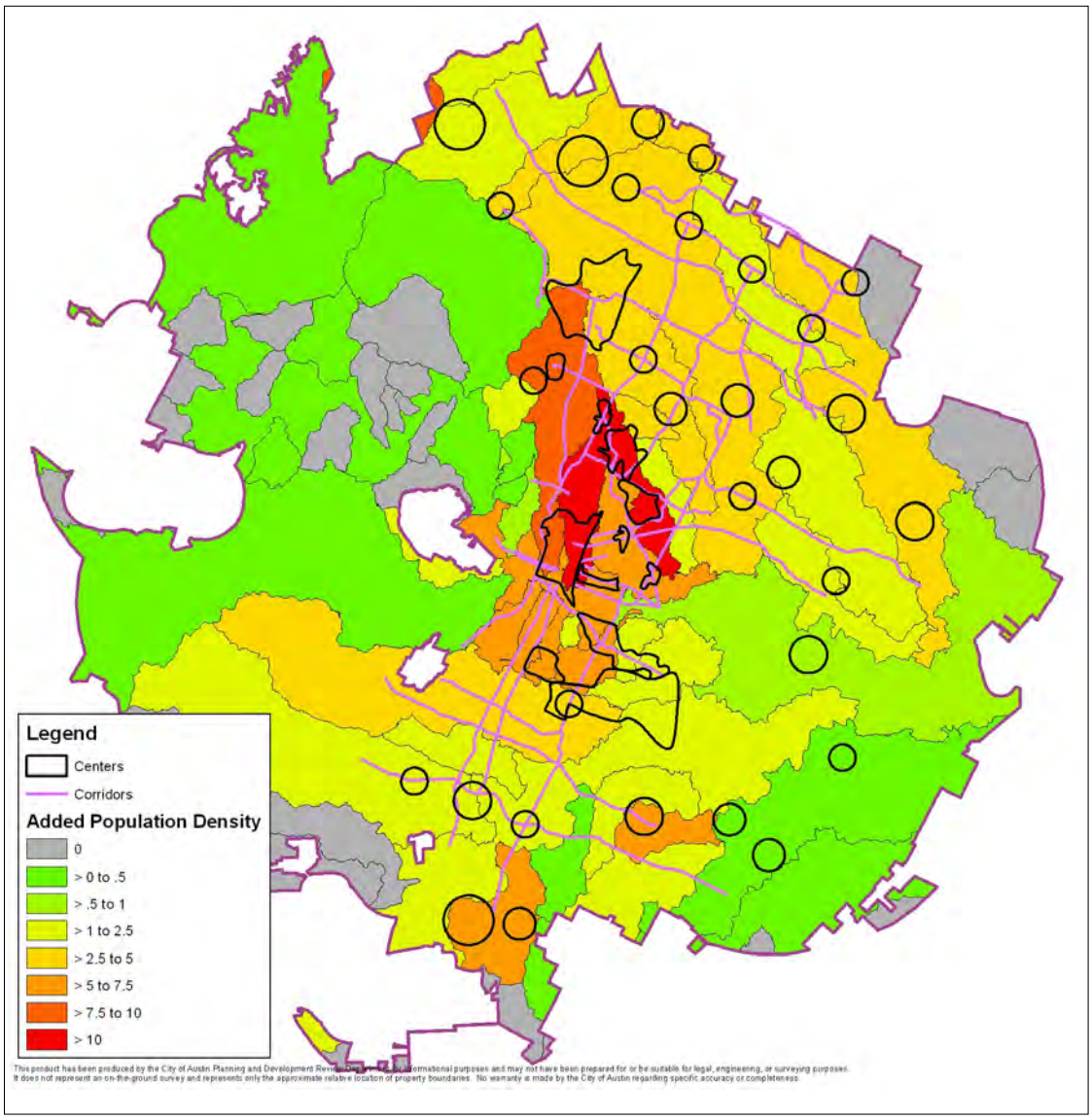




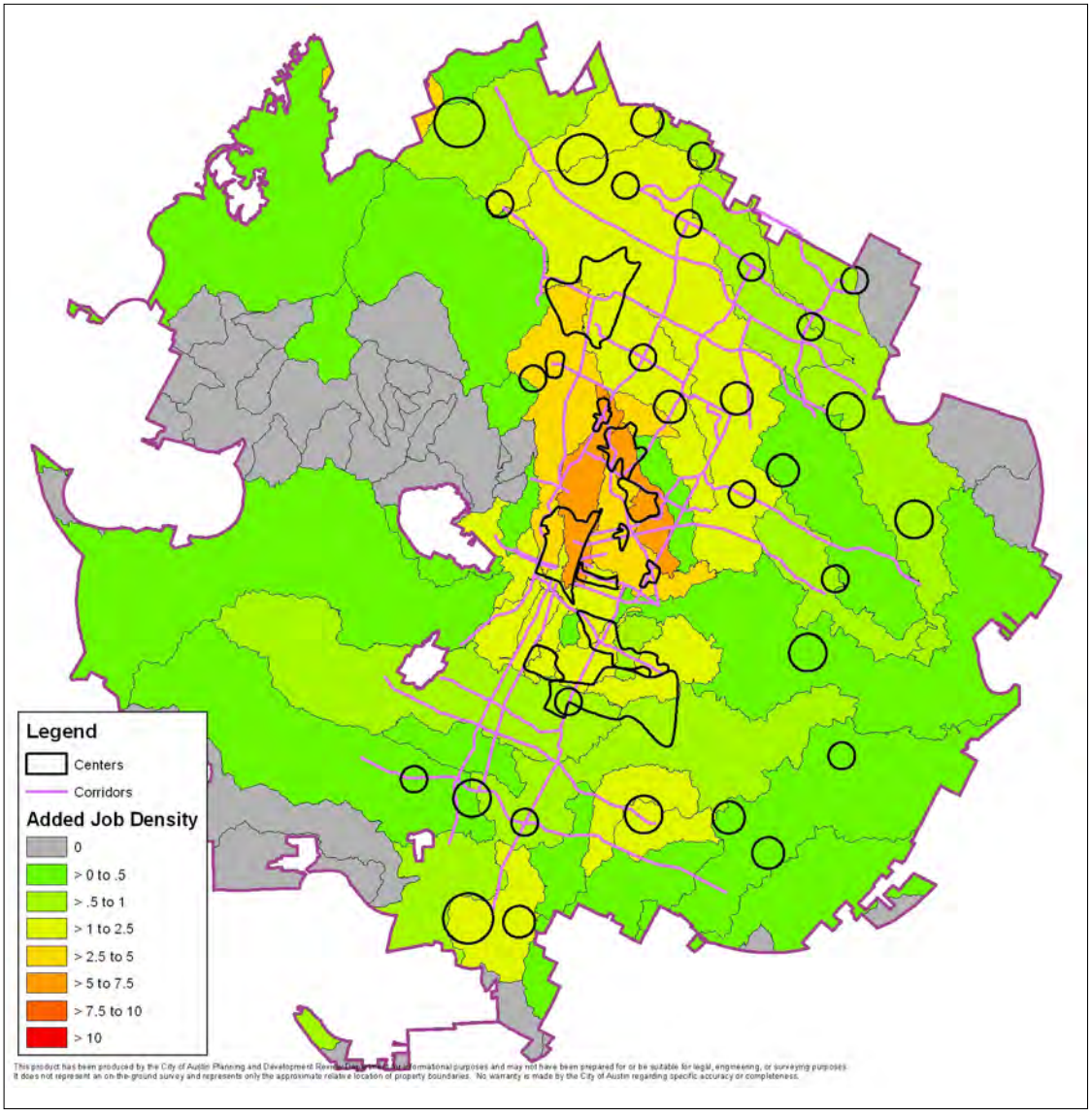
Watershed Environmental Integrity Index Scores And Growth Concept



Preferred Scenario Population Concept per Acre by Watershed Zones



Preferred Scenario Jobs Concept per Acre by Watershed Zones



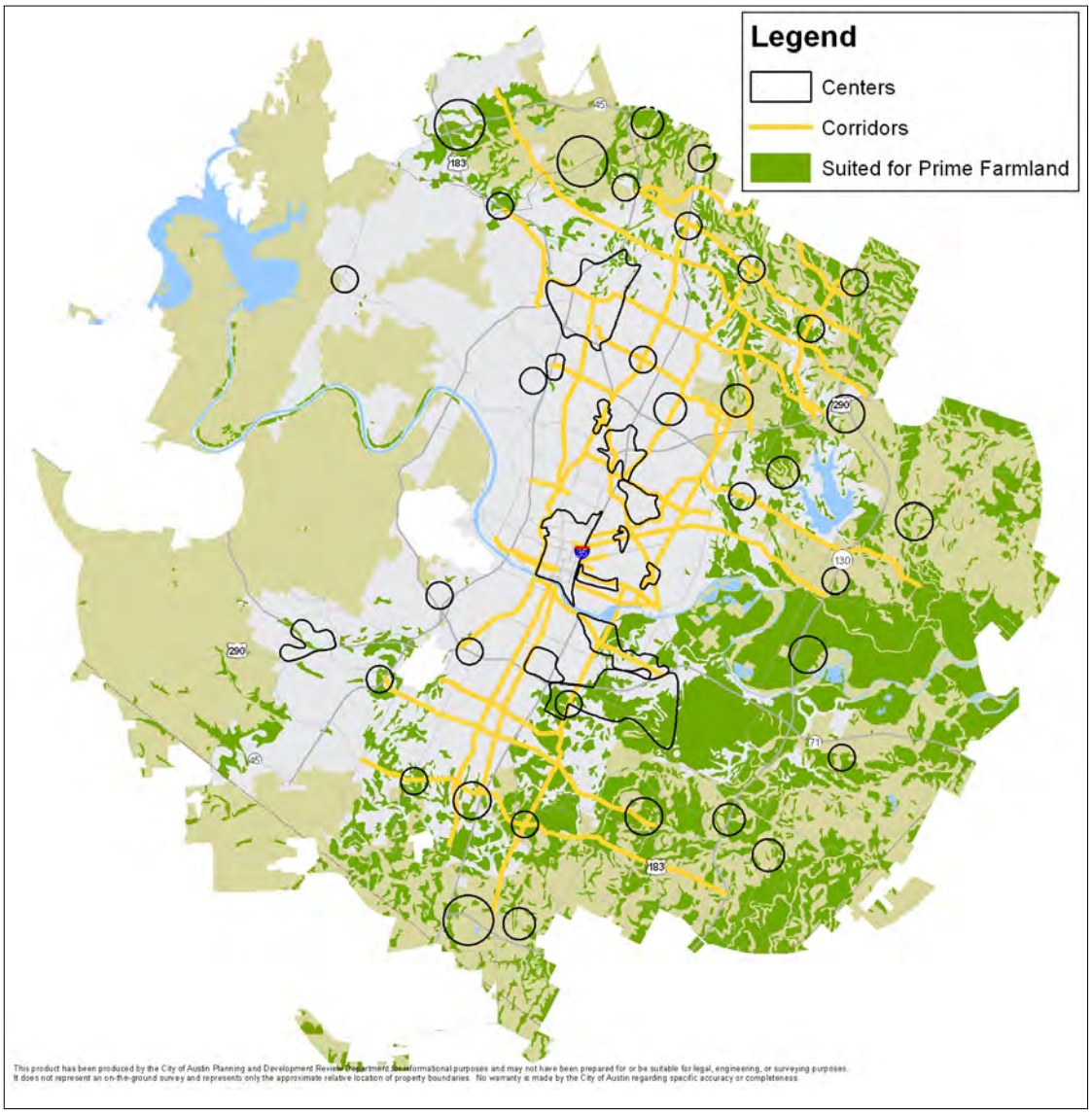
What are Watershed Environmental Integrity Index Scores ?

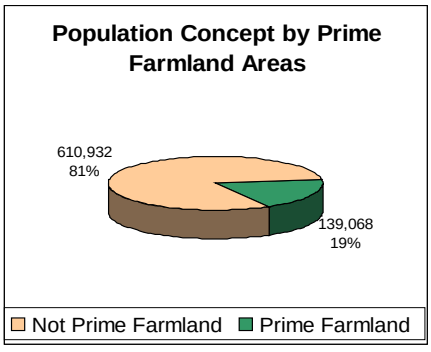
The Environmental Integrity Index (EII) is a water quality monitoring tool used to assess the ecological integrity and the degree of impairment of Austin's watersheds. The EII combines biological and physical criteria with chemical and toxicity data to provide a comprehensive assessment of the structure and integrity of the aquatic ecosystem.

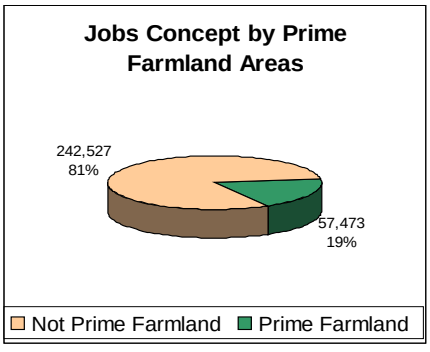
As part of the City's master plan process, the EII scores are integrated with flood and erosion assessments in order to evaluate the current water quality conditions of Austin's watersheds. The integrated scores have been used to develop a prioritized list of problem areas and will be used in the future to assess the effectiveness of solutions. In this manner, the EII contributes to the Department's mission to serve the citizens of Austin by using environmentally responsible and cost-effective water resource management to protect lives, property, and the quality of life. Because the EII is cost-effective, comprehensive and direct means of monitoring the health of Austin's receiving waters, it was also incorporated into the City of Austin's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program as a Reasonable and Prudent Measure (RPM) for Barton Springs Salamander protection.

Index scores are an integer between 0 and 100 with the scores classified as such: Excellent 88-100, Very Good 76-87, Good 63-75, Fair 51-62, Marginal 38-50, Poor 26-37, Bad 13-25, Very Bad 0-12. Problem Scores are an integer between 1 and 100 with 1 being "No Problem" and 100 being a highest priority.

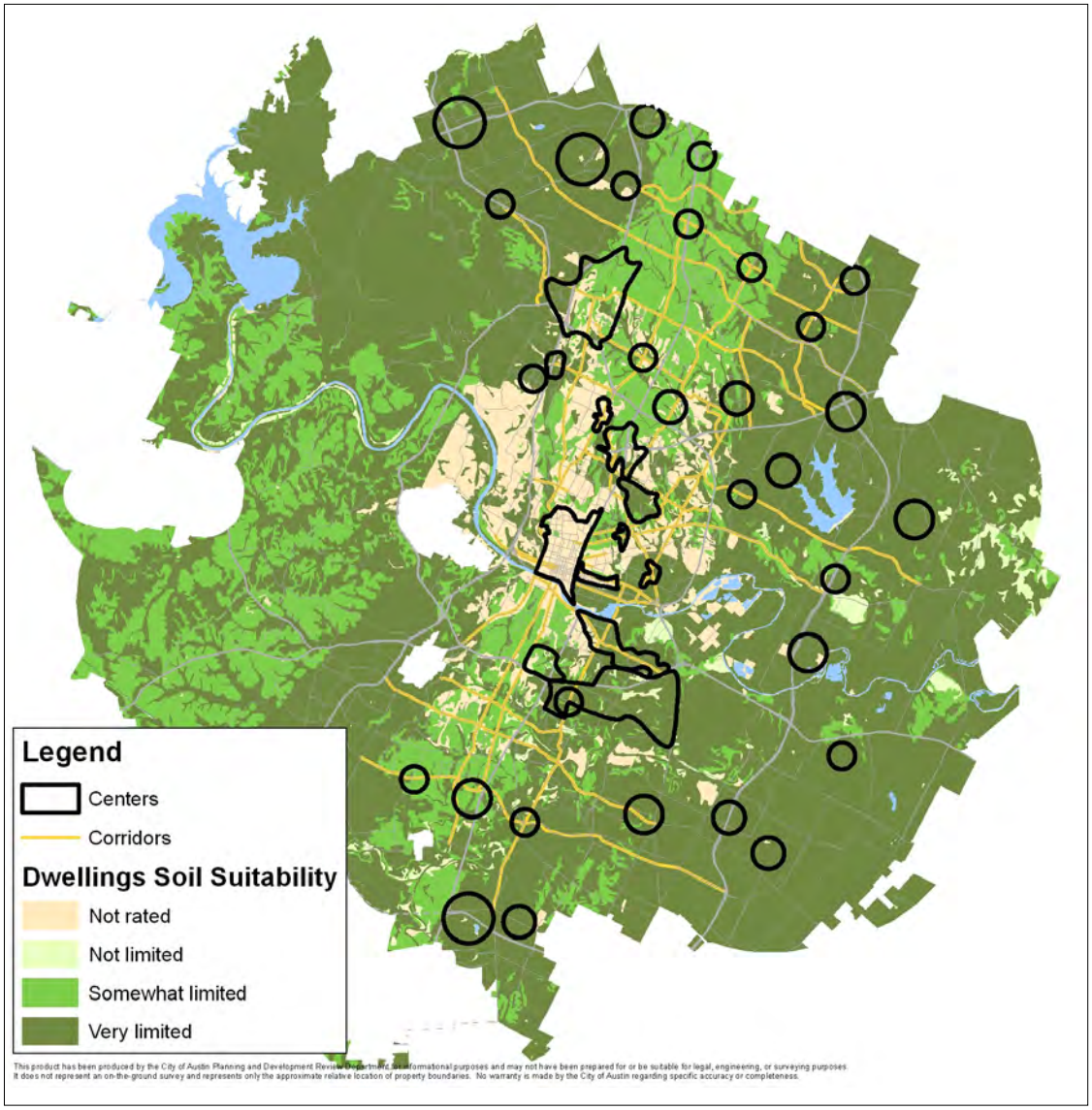
USDA Data: Areas Suitable for Prime Farmland

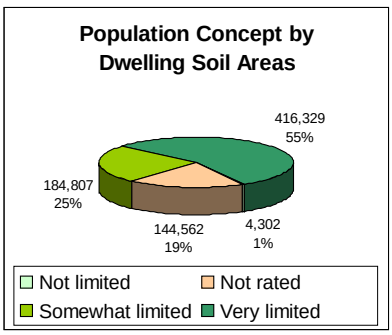


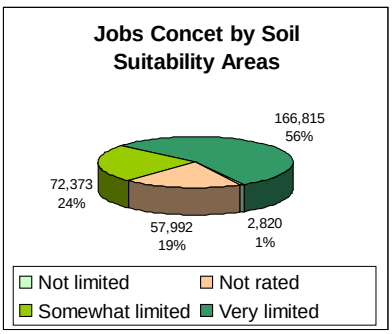




USDA Data: Soils Suitable for Dwellings







Additional Soil Data Acreage Analysis		
Dwellings Soil Suitability	**Acres**	
	Centers	**Corridors**
Not limited	288	303
Not rated	4,328	5,413
Somewhat limited	5,367	9,419
Very limited	20,233	15,157
Grand Total	30,216	30,292

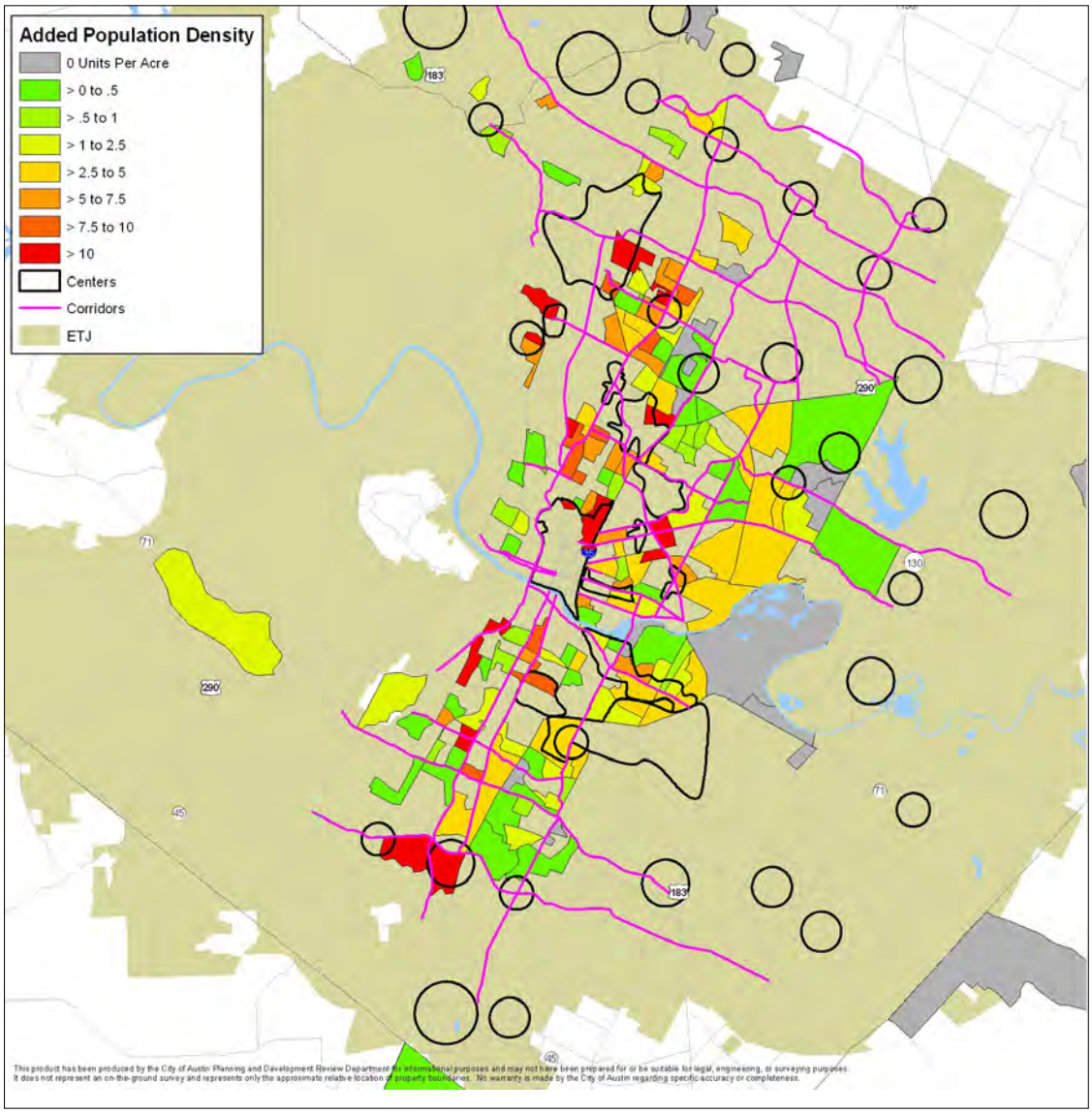
Prime Farmland	**Acres**	
	Centers	**Corridors**
All areas prime farmland	7,807	22,409
Not in prime farmland	5,241	25,051
Grand Total	30,216	30,292

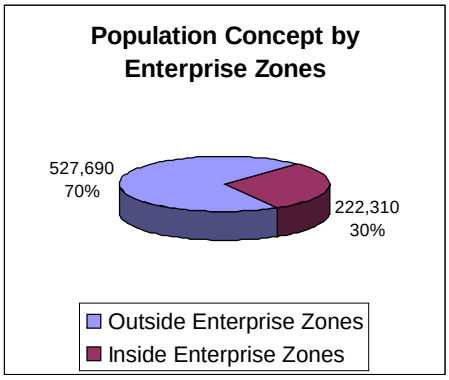
About the USDA Soil Data

This data consists of general soil association units. It was developed by the National Cooperative Soil Survey and supersedes the State Soil Geographic (STATSGO) data set published in 1994. It consists of a broad based inventory of soils and non-soil areas that occur in a repeatable pattern on the landscape and that can be cartographically shown at the scale mapped. The data set was created by generalizing more detailed soil survey maps. Where more detailed soil survey maps were not available, data on geology, topography, vegetation, and climate were assembled, together with Land Remote Sensing Satellite (LANDSAT) images. Soils of like areas were studied, and the probable classification and extent of the soils were determined.

This data is not designed for use as a primary regulatory tool in permitting or citing decisions, but may be used as a reference source. When data from the Digital General Soil Map of U.S. are overlaid with other data layers, caution must be used in generating statistics on the co-occurence of the land use data with the soil data. The composition of the soil map unit can be characterized independently for the land use and for the soil component, but there are no data on their joint occurrence at a more detailed level. Analysis of the overlaid data should be on a map polygon basis. Source: USDA.

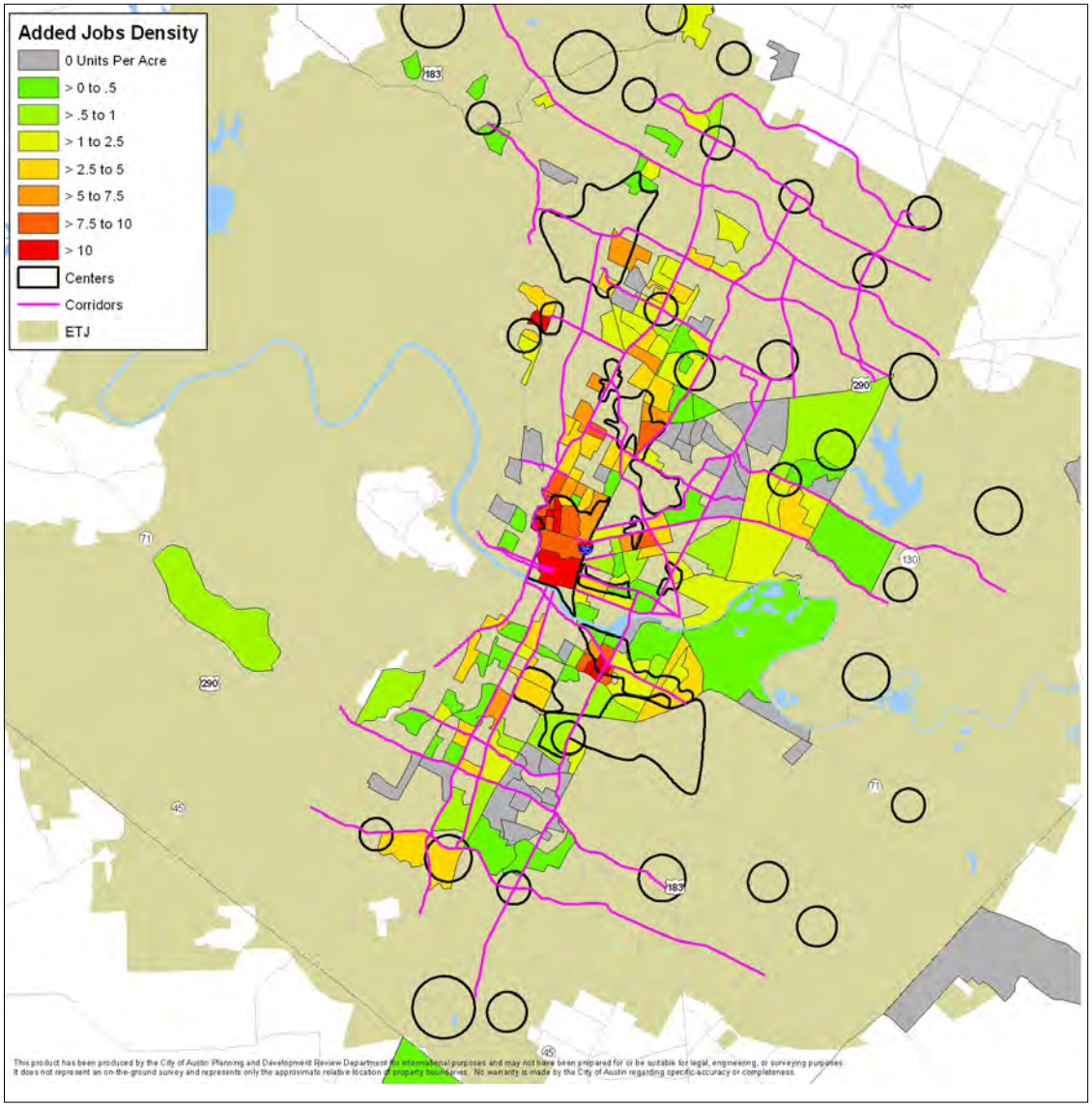
Preferred Scenario Population Concept per Acre by Enterprise Zones

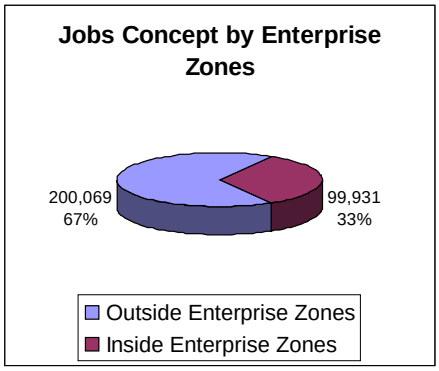




Note: The current configuration of corridors are shown. Some zones along corridors may not show population or jobs because they were added after the preferred scenario was created.

Preferred Scenario Jobs Concept per Acre by Enterprise Zones





What are Enterprise Zones?

- Any block group within the State of Texas that has a poverty rate of 20% or more, as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau during each decennial census is a state enterprise zone. The block group will remain an enterprise zone until it no longer qualifies, as a result of a subsequent decennial census.

- Any distressed county in Texas is an enterprise zone. A county is considered to be a distressed county if it has a poverty rate above 15.4 percent based on the most recent decennial census; in which at least 25.4 percent of the adult population does not hold a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate based on the most recent decennial census; and that has an unemployment rate that has remained above 4.9 percent during the preceding five years, based on Texas Workforce Commission data.

- Any federally designated empowerment zone, enterprise community or renewal community is also a State enterprise zone, for the duration of the federal designation.

APPENDIX E. FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION-MAKING

As potential capital improvement projects, budget priorities, bond packages, programs, regulatory changes, initiatives, plans, and even zoning cases are considered, it is important for the City of Austin to have a clear and objective framework for decision-making. The following checklist is intended to be used to extend and refine the Imagine Austin vision, making it easier to use for departmental decision-making.

The checklist can also be used by other organizations seeking funding to guide the development of their projects and programs to increase the likelihood of funding. As part of the comprehensive plan's annual review, changes may be made to the checklist as conditions and priorities change.

Natural and Sustainable

- The proposal adds to or enhances the City of Austin's green infrastructure system.
- The proposal reduces water or energy demands, uses or generates alternative energy, or provides alternative transportation options.
- The proposal results in compact and walkable places, use of public transit, infill development, or reuse of previously developed sites.

Prosperous

- The proposal creates jobs or serves a need in an industry that is not currently represented in its neighborhood or in the city at large.
- The proposal develops new technologies or makes technology more widely available.
- The proposal provides job training or skills development.

Livable

- The proposal is designed to increase the perception of safety.
- The proposal includes affordable housing.
- The proposal is within a half mile of a neighborhood anchor, such as a school, library, train station, community center, park, or recreation center.
- The proposal is within a half mile of retail or services and connected by sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes.
- The proposal achieves the highest standard of design.
- The proposal preserves cultural resources.

Mobile and Interconnected

- The proposal increases transportation options.
- The proposal provides connections to multiple modes of transportation.
- The proposal provides connections to community/recreation centers.

Educated

- The proposal provides educational opportunities.
- The proposal is supported by a partnership with a neighborhood school.
- The proposal is supported by a partnership with a college or university.

Creative

- The proposal involves events or creates areas that cater to residents and visitors.
- The proposal provides arts or cultural activities supported by the community.

A Community that Values and Respects People

- The proposal increases access to park, library, public safety, or health and human services facilities.
- The proposal increases the variety of housing types available in its neighborhood.
- The proposal provides an opportunity to engage grassroots stakeholders and community members.
- The proposal has a champion and is sponsored by a City agency.

Additional Criteria

- The proposal coincides with or enhances already funded proposals.
- The proposal reduces life cycle costs or facility maintenance and management.
- The applicant has site control, or commitments for control have been made.
- The proposal is attractive to other funders or has a credible, long-term funding plan to finance improvements.
- A realistic timeframe has been identified, and all significant obstacles to achieving that timeframe have been addressed.
- The proposal is highly visible or presents a unique set of opportunities.
- The proposal is planned to stimulate increased tourism or to enhance the tourist experience.

APPENDIX F. RELATED REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

There are multiple regional planning efforts that informed development of Imagine Austin and will be implemented in parallel. These efforts require coordination between the City of Austin, neighboring municipalities, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), businesses, and organizations going forward.

Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

This plan seeks to develop a regional transportation system that improves economic opportunity, quality of life, and environmental stewardship. The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan builds on the vision set by Envision Central Texas to direct new growth to compact activity centers for jobs, housing, and services, connected by both roads and transit. This integrated land-use/transportation approach represents a significant shift for the 5-County Central Texas region. This plan is a critical tool as the region works to ensure transportation investments are effectively coordinated and efficiently implemented.

Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

This planning effort focuses on short and long-term transportation needs and new and improved alternatives to driving alone. The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan includes mobility corridor studies to identify ways to improve safety, increase mobility and accessibly for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, and create better regional connections. The corridor planning studies include selected mixed-use corridors illustrated on the Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.4). The Strategic Mobility Plan also established a new prioritization project for Austin's mobility investments that scores how well projects meet community objectives, such as mobility choices and environmental stewardship, to evaluate all transportation spending.

Sustainable Places Project.

The Capital Area Council of Governments, working with a consortium of regional and local stakeholders, was awarded a federal Sustainable Communities Planning Grant to plan future development at activity centers (identified in the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan) throughout the region. The project uses an innovative model for planning future development that integrates economic development opportunities and housing choices with mobility. The Sustainable Places project provides technical assistance at selected activity centers to support communities in understanding the fiscal and economic impact of different development approaches. Results of the demonstration site projects help to inform Imagine Austin's implementation.

Capital Area Council of Governments Greenprint for Growth.

The Texas Greenprint for Growth is a tool that combines community stakeholder input about conservation goals and priorities with Geographic Information Systems mapping and modeling technology to produce graphic illustrations highlighting opportunity areas for conservation that meet multiple goals. Working with individual counties, the Capital Area Council of Governments has completed conservation priority reports for Central Texas, Travis County, Bastrop County, and Hays County.

Community Action Network Community Dashboard.

The Community Action Network is a public-private partnership to track and monitor key indicators measuring socioeconomic well-being in Austin and Travis County. Yearly reports summarize how the region is performing, or where we stand on each indicator, and describe ongoing initiatives to improve each of the indicators.

APPENDIX G. ATTACHED PLANS

APPENDIX G

In Austin, neighborhood planning provides an opportunity for residents to get involved in the local planning process. Since 1996, community members have used this planning process to address local issues and concerns. The neighborhood planning process addresses land use, zoning, transportation, and urban design issues. The goal is to bring diverse interests together to develop a shared neighborhood vision. The following adopted small area, neighborhood plans, and station area plans are attached to and included in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

Neighborhood Plans

- Bouldin
- Brentwood/Highland Combined
- Central Austin Combined
- Central East Austin
- Central West Austin Combined
- Chestnut
- Crestview/Wooten Combined
- Dawson
- Downtown Plan
- East Cesar Chavez
- East MLK Combined
- East Riverside/Oltorf Combined
- Govalle/Johnston Terrace Combined
- Greater South River City Combined
- Heritage Hills/Windsor Hills Combined
- Holly
- Hyde Park
- Montopolis
- North Austin Civic Association
- North Burnet/Gateway
- North Lamar/Georgian Acres Combined
- North Loop
- Oak Hill Combined
- Old West Austin
- Rosewood
- St. John/Coronado Hills
- South Austin Combined
- South Congress Combined
- Southeast Combined
- Upper Boggy Creek
- University Hills/Windsor Park Combined

Specific Area Plans

- Lamar/Justin Ln. TOD
- Waller Creek
- MLK JR. Blvd. TOD
- Plaza Saltillo TOD
- East Riverside Corridor Master Plan
- Colony Park
- South Central Waterfront Vision Framework

Citywide Plans

- Age-Friendly Austin Plan
- Austin Area Master Community Workforce Plan
- Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan
- Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint
- Bicycle Master Plan
- Vision Zero Action Plan

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