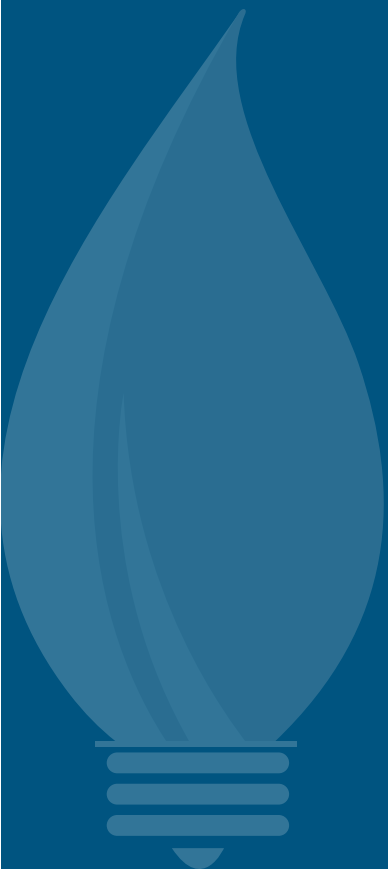


# SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY

A Framework for the Future

Growth Concept Map

Comprehensive Plan Building Blocks





# SHAPING AUSTIN: BUILDING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY

## A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

This chapter presents a two-part planning framework for realizing our vision of becoming a complete community (Chapter 3) through action (Chapter 5):

- **Growth Concept Map.** The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.4) 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 set the policies to implement Imagine Austin. They cover a range of subject areas, including the Austin City Charter-required comprehensive plan elements and several others based on public input.

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

## GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

The vision statement describes our values and what we want to achieve and sets forth guiding directions for growth and development for the next 30 years. The Growth Concept Map (Figure 4.4) applies the Vision Statement to show how the city should evolve over the next several decades. It is informed by environmental features (Figure 4.1), the existing development pattern (Figure 4.2), and existing and planned transportation network (Figure 4.3).

Developed through an extensive public involvement, the Growth Concept Map illustrates the desired manner to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed-use developments, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years. During a series of public meetings, more than 450 participants created over 60 maps illustrating where Austin's growth should go over the next 30 years. 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.

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

The five scenarios were measured using “sustainability indicators” developed from the vision statement. These indicators included such measures as the acres of land were developed, the amount of 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. The effort reached out to over 200,000 residents 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 4.4). More detail on the public process used to create the scenarios and Growth Concept Map is included in Appendix B.

The Growth Concept Map embodies the Imagine Austin vision statement and represents where the city will focus future investments to support mixed-use centers, mixed-use corridors, and an expanded transportation system. The Growth Concept Map:

- Protects existing open space and natural resources such as creeks, rivers, lakes, and floodplains.
- Directs development away from the Southern Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones.
- Improves air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expands the transit network.
- Increases transit use and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Reduces per capita water consumption.
- Promotes infill and redevelopment as opposed to typical low-density “greenfield” development.
- Focuses new development in mixed-use corridors and centers accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit as well as by car.
- Provides convenient access to jobs and employment centers.
- Provides parks and open space close to where people live, work, and play.

## Growth Concept Map Definitions

The Growth Concept Map illustrates in general terms the location and type of new development for the next 30 years should be located. New development categories include several types of centers, mixed-use corridors, and job centers, all connected by transportation and open space networks. The new Growth Concept Map development categories are conceptual and not as specific as typical future land use classifications, nor do they carry the legal weight of zoning designations.

### Regional Centers

Regional centers are the major urban hubs of the region. They have the highest employment and residential densities, are highly walkable and bikable, support high-capacity transit, and provide a full range of employment, shopping, cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities. These centers will also have a variety of parks and open space. Some regional centers are entirely urban, like Downtown, while others, like Robinson Ranch or the southern center at the intersection of IH-35 and SH-45 will likely have urban cores surrounded by well-connected but lower density development. Regional centers range in size between approximately 25,000-45,000 new people and 5,000-25,000 new jobs.

### Town Centers

Town centers are less dense than regional centers and include a mix of commercial and residential uses that support high-capacity transit. Residential uses include townhouses, rowhouses, and apartments (some of which may be midrise), as well as single-family houses on smaller lots. First-floor commercial uses, offices, and community serving retail under apartments or condominiums make up the core of the town center. The Mueller redevelopment and the Triangle and surrounding state offices are local examples of town centers. Town centers are accessible by transit, walking, and biking, and include public plazas or open space. Town centers range in size between approximately 10,000-30,000 new people and 5,000-20,000 new jobs.

### Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers are highly walkable, bikable, and support transit, but are less dense and have more local focus than town centers. They have community-serving retail and services that include a variety of mostly small businesses such as dry cleaners, hair salons, coffee shops, and restaurants, along with moderately dense housing types, such as small-lot single-family, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, and mixed-use buildings. Neighborhood centers are concentrated on several blocks or around one or two intersections. Neighborhood centers range in size between approximately 5,000-10,000 new people and 2,500-7,500 new jobs.

### Mixed-Use Corridors

Mixed-use corridors are a reflection of the both land uses along a roadway as well as the available transportation options. They extend along a linear corridor and link differ-

## TRANSITIONS BETWEEN LAND USES

Creating the compact and connected city envisioned by this plan and illustrated by the Growth Concept Map 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 a broad regulatory approach to address the local context, land uses, building setbacks, building heights, and design elements such as landscaping, building massing, lighting, the location of parking, and building orientation. Areas with shallow lots have fewer options for good transitions.

## SH-45 SOUTHWEST: A SOURCE OF CONTINUING DISCUSSION

SH-45 Southwest (a.k.a., Manchaca Expressway) has been and continues to be a subject of great interest and dialogue in Austin, both with respect to mobility issues and concerns about potential impacts to sensitive environmental resources. The segment of the project from South Loop 1 to FM1626 will soon be evaluated through National Environmental Policy Act, which by federal law requires an examination of all alternatives, including not constructing the project ("no-build"). Including SH-45 Southwest on this map is not intended to represent a position on which alternative is selected. If an alternative other than no-build is selected, this plan recommends designing the roadway to be attractive and to meet the City's objectives of non-degradation of water quality in the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer. In particular, if the project is built, it should be a roadway design identified as the locally preferred alternative in the results of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement, should avoid impacts to critical environmental features, and should incorporate advanced stormwater quality and spill containment controls to achieve a non-degradation level of environmental protection.

ent parts of Austin. Their land uses are varied, and can include a wide mix such as retail, parks, schools, houses, apartments, and offices. In existing neighborhoods, mixed-use corridors include areas for redevelopment, which may either be continuous or link together a series of smaller redevelopment opportunities. Mixed-use corridors should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and provide a framework for future transit service or improvements. Mixed-use corridors such as South Congress Avenue or North Lamar Boulevard will extend along a linear corridor either continuously or linking smaller pockets of denser development or redevelopment. The number of employees working and people living along a Mixed-Use Corridors will vary depending upon the character of the corridor as well as the surrounding area.

### Job Centers

Job centers contain mostly of office and industrial uses. Development can occur at a range of scales, depending on zoning and small area studies such as neighborhood or corridor plans. Job centers include major employers such as IBM in north Austin, industrial uses such as warehouses, large office parks, manufacturing, and other uses not compatible with residential areas. While these centers are currently best served by car, the Growth Concept Map increases public transit options such as light rail, and bus rapid transit) to shift the reliance away from the automobile.

### Open Space Network

The open space network consists of existing and proposed open space that includes parks, greenways, nature preserves, as well as environmentally sensitive land such as floodplains, steep slopes, and those areas with significant environmental features such as sinkholes or significant wildlife habitat.

### 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.

### Highways and Other Streets

Highways and other streets consist of existing roads, planned extensions, capacity improvements such as creating additional travel lane, and complete streets improvements that include wider sidewalks and bike lanes.

### Redevelopment over the Edwards Aquifer

Five centers are located over the recharge or contributing zones of the South Edwards Aquifer or within water-supply watersheds and are designated on the Growth Concept Map with a solid green outline. Redevelopment on these centers should improve stormwater retention and the water quality flowing into the aquifer or drinking water sources. These centers should also be carefully evaluated to fit within their infrastructure and environmental context. One of the Land Use and Transportation policies, LUT 20, clarifies the intent, "Ensure that redevelopment in the Edwards Aquifer's recharge and contributing zones maintains the recharge of the aquifer."

### Other Development within City Limits

While most new development will be directed to centers and corridors, development will happen in other areas within the city limits. 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 and development regulations and include a broad range of 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. New development should be designed to be sensitive to and complement the context of where it is to be built. In addition, it should be connected by sidewalks and bicycle lanes to existing and planned developments, and be served by transit. Land within city limits may also remain in agricultural production or as large-lot single-family houses, become part of the planned open space network, or remain vacant for future development.

### Other Development within the Austin Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's present city boundary that is not within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of another city. It is where only Austin is authorized to annex land. In addition, City of Austin regulates land subdivision and can plan for areas outside of city limits, but it does not control zoning. Wherever possible, new development in the extraterritorial jurisdiction should be directed to centers and corridors designated on the Growth Concept Map, or occur in or adjacent to areas of existing development. In addition, it should, when and where feasible, be connected by transit, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes to existing and planned development.



Image Caption



Image Caption



Image Caption

Fig. 4.1 - ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

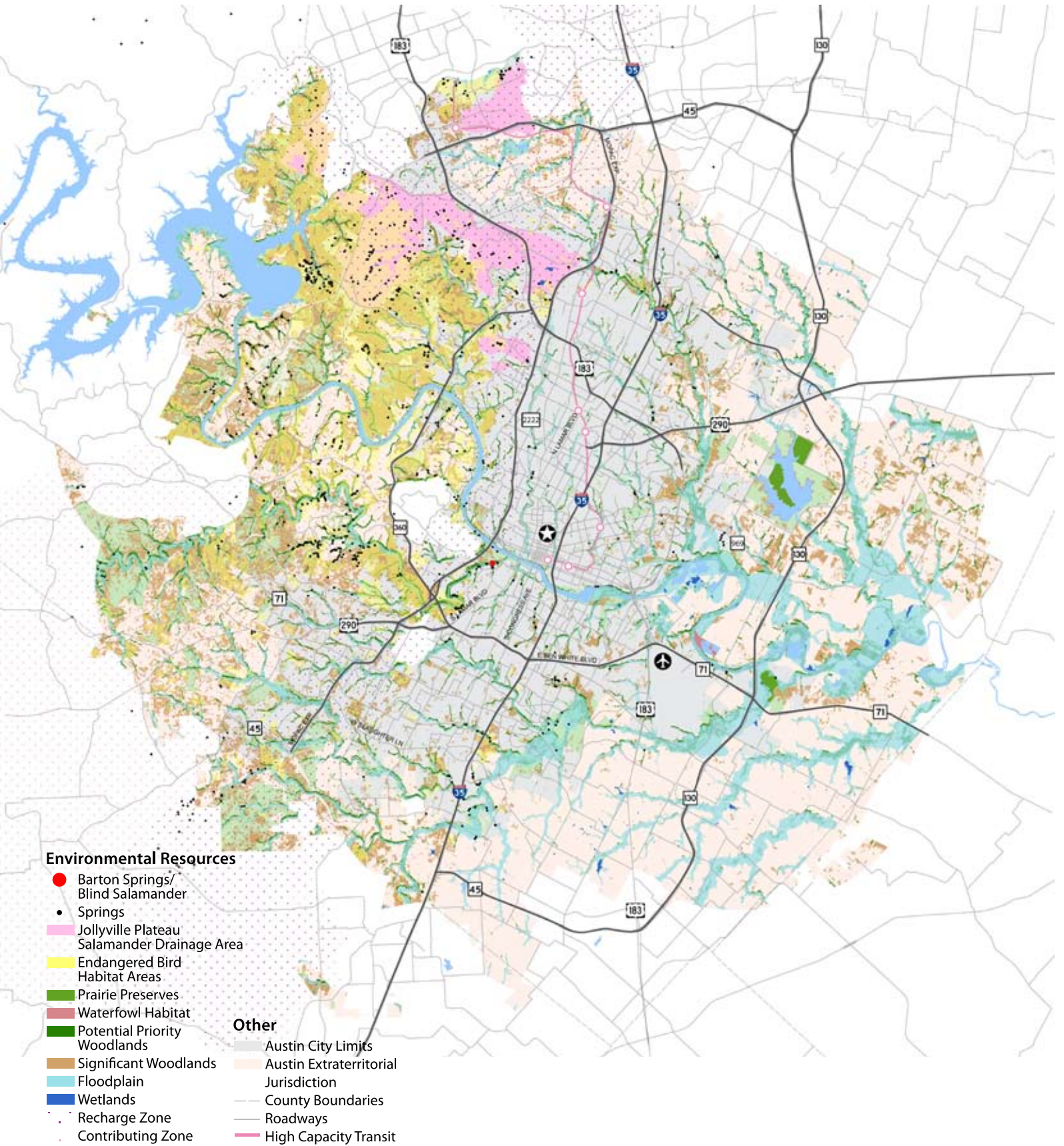


Fig. 4.2 - BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN/TRANSIT PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

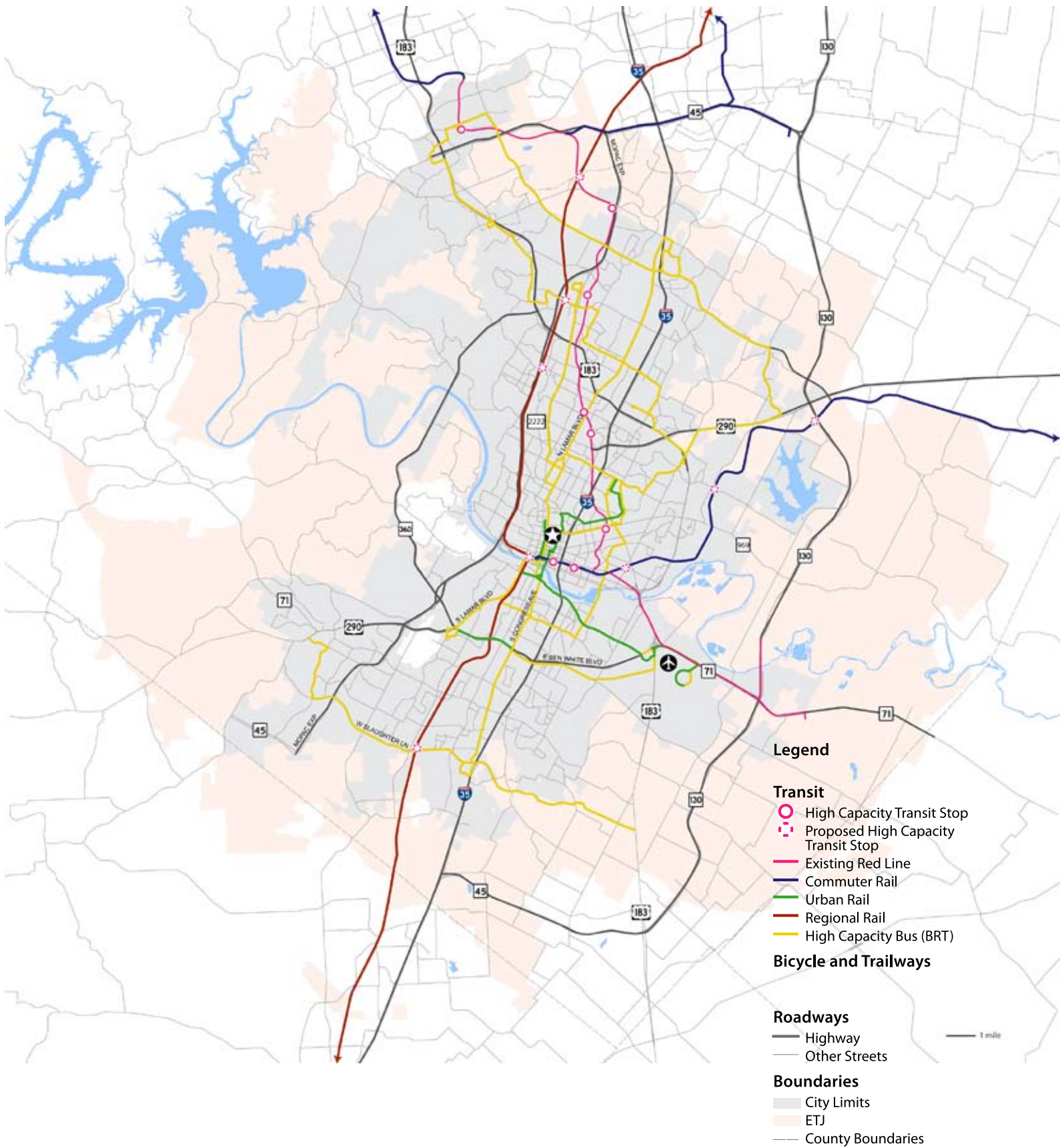
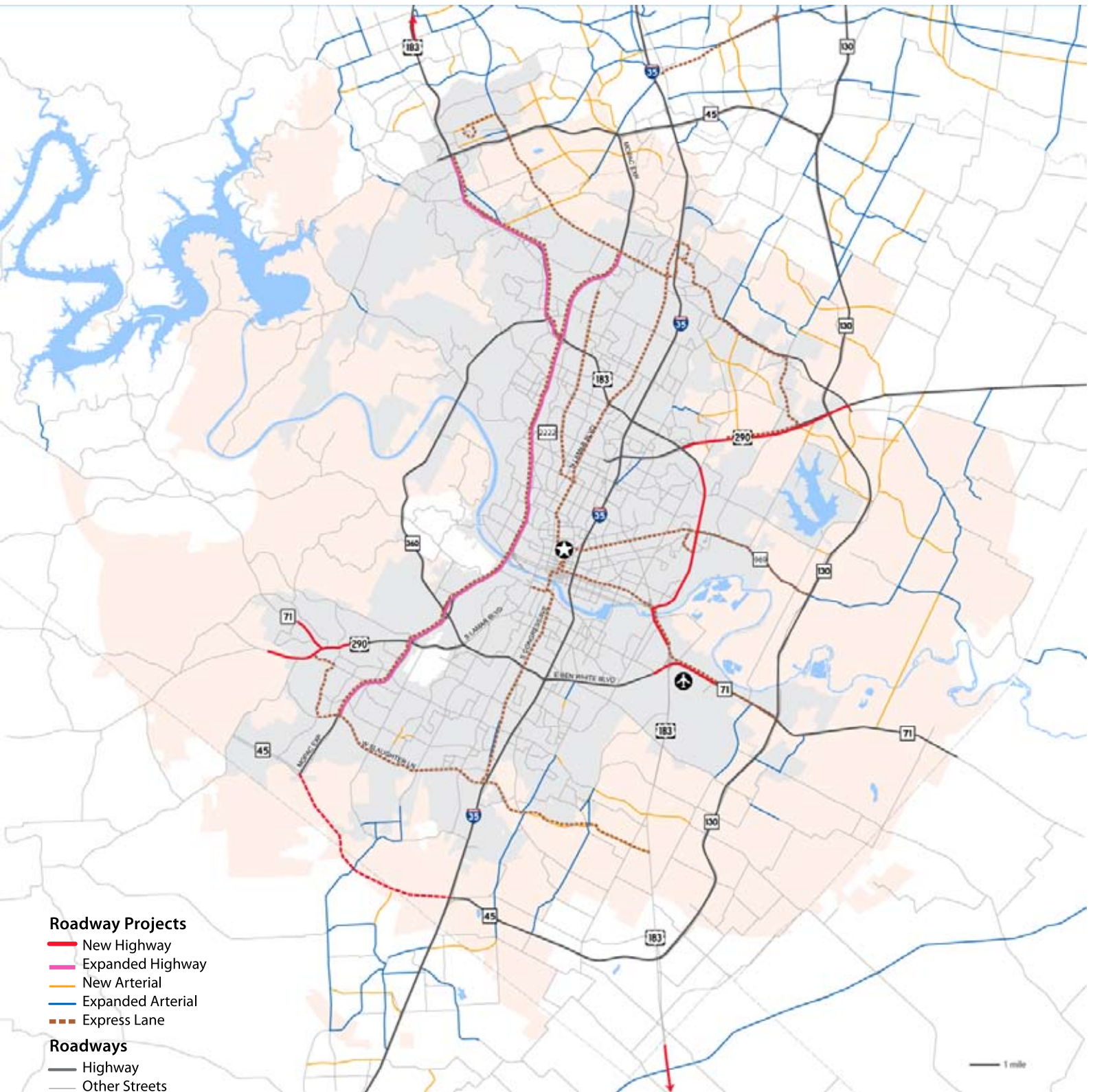


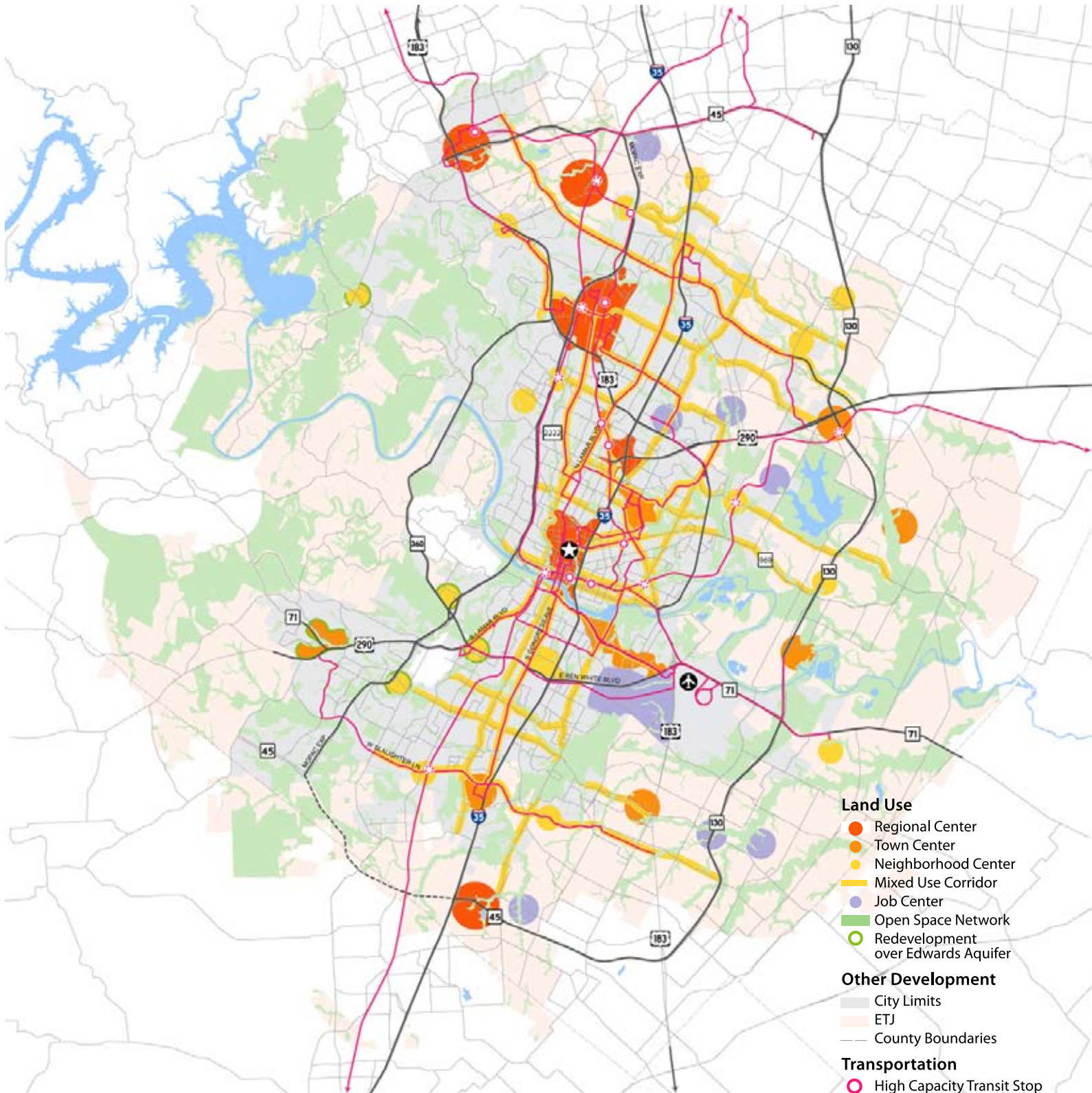
Fig. 4.3 - ROADWAY PROJECTS AND NETWORKS



- Roadway Projects**
- New Highway
  - Expanded Highway
  - New Arterial
  - Expanded Arterial
  - Express Lane
- Roadways**
- Highway
  - Other Streets
- Boundaries**
- City Limits
  - ETJ
  - County Boundaries

SH-45 Southwest: A source of continuing discussion (see Text Box on Page 79)  
 The segment of the project from South Loop 1 to FM1626 will soon be evaluated through National Environmental Policy Act, which by federal law requires an examination of all alternatives, including not constructing the project ("no-build").

Fig. 4.4 - GROWTH CONCEPT MAP



- Land Use**
- Regional Center
  - Town Center
  - Neighborhood Center
  - Mixed Use Corridor
  - Job Center
  - Open Space Network
  - Redevelopment over Edwards Aquifer
- Other Development**
- City Limits
  - ETJ
  - - - County Boundaries
- Transportation**
- High Capacity Transit Stop
  - ⊙ Proposed High Capacity Transit Stop
  - High Capacity Transit
  - Highway
  - Other Streets

SH-45 Southwest: A source of continuing discussion (see Text Box on Page 79)  
 The segment of the project from South Loop 1 to FM1626 will soon be evaluated through National Environmental Policy Act, which by federal law requires an examination of all alternatives, including not constructing the project ("no-build").

## 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 from other communities.<sup>1</sup> 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. They provide the basis for implementation through a series of priority programs and actions presented in Chapter 5. As Imagine Austin is implemented, policies and actions will be monitored on an annual basis to measure progress toward meeting our vision for Austin over the next several decades. An update to the plan may also be considered every five years.

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, a summary matrix illustrates how the policies within that Building Block relate to Austin's Vision for a Complete Community. A "solid" circle means that the policies directly implement a particular complete community element. While not every policy links to every complete community element, all of the policies work together to achieve Austin's vision.

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity & 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 & 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 Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

During the last half of the twentieth century Austin experienced significant growth. Between 1960 and 2010, the land area expanded by more than 400 percent, from almost 56 square miles to over 300 square miles. During the last decade, our land area increased by nearly 20 percent. Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction<sup>2</sup> represent an area of about 620 square miles. This is more than double the size of Chicago. Although a large percentage of Austin's land area is considered undeveloped (38 percent), much of this land is environmentally sensitive and less suitable for development.

The range of transportation options provided 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 twentieth 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 Agency and City of Austin transit plans<sup>3</sup> for rail and high-capacity bus lines seek to pro-

<sup>2</sup> As defined earlier in the plan and by the Texas Local Government Code, Austin's extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated area that is contiguous to and located within five miles of its corporate boundaries (city limits) and not within another city or another city's ETJ. The combined area within the city limits and the ETJ constitute the study area for the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

<sup>3</sup> See the All Systems Go Long-Range Transit Plan: <http://allsystemsgo.capmetro.org/all-systems-go.shtml> and the Strategic Mobility Plan: <http://www.austinstrategicmobility.com/>

## 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 slower pace than lower-density suburban development.
- While Austin remains the largest jurisdiction in the five-county Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA, 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.
- Regional cooperation is needed to more completely implement climate change solutions.

vide transportation options which will have a greater influence on where residents choose to live and work. A retooled transportation system could lead to the compact and walkable places envisioned in this plan.

Austin's historic assets include neighborhoods, buildings, and sites reflecting Austin's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. 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 City in the Country" 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, mixed-use centers and corridors. In the face of this change we also need to preserve our unique places, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas.



Image

Image Caption

## Key Challenges for the Future

- Counteracting the prevailing trend of sprawling development that consumes vacant land and natural resources, reduces air and water quality, and diminishes the natural environment.
- Preserving our natural resources and systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas, flood plains, creeks, and riparian areas, and maintaining and protecting open space.
- Meeting the housing and employment needs of a rapidly growing and demographically changing population in a sustainable manner.
- Coordinating land use, transportation, and economic development policies to address the inefficiency of infrastructure having to keep up with “green field” 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.
- Maintaining historic neighborhood character and preserving historic resources — especially in the urban core — as the city continues to grow.

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

**LUT 1.** Align land use and transportation planning and decision-making to achieve the Growth Concept Map. (See also WPD 1; EN 1)

**LUT 2.** Promote regional planning and increased coordination between municipalities to address major land use and transportation challenges. (See also CER 16; ECO 4)

**LUT 3.** 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 housing and transportation costs. (See also H 4; HHS 3; ACC 9)

**LUT 4.** 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 N 2)

### 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: IMPROVED COMPATIBILITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITIONS

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.

## 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.

### 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, landscaping, 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, citizens, and decision-makers. City Council approval of the draft code is anticipated in 2012. Reference: *City of Raleigh, NC*

**LUT 5.** Create healthy and family-friendly communities through development that includes a mix of land uses and housing types and affords realistic opportunities for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel and provides both community gathering spaces and safe outdoor play areas for children. (See also H1; H 5; PB 4; HHS 3; CFE 11, CFE 2, H1)

**LUT 6.** Ensure that lower income neighborhoods have a mix of local-serving retail, employment opportunities, and residential uses. (See also CER 13; H 4)

**LUT 7.** 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 H 7; CFE 1)

**LUT 8.** Develop land development regulations and standards that are clear and predictable and support the intent and goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. (See also ECO 14)

**LUT 9.** Direct housing and employment growth to sites appropriate for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)<sup>4</sup> and at intersections of major roadways and preserve and integrate existing affordable housing where possible. (See also H 6)

**LUT 10.** Promote complete street design that includes features such as traffic calming elements, street trees, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access<sup>5</sup> throughout Austin, considering the safety needs of people of all ages and abilities.

**LUT 11.** 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.

**LUT 12.** Coordinate with area school districts in the placement of schools and facilities. (See also ECO 10; ECO 11; CFE 7)

**LUT 13.** Promote safer routes to schools for students of all ages. (See also CFE 15)

**LUT 14.** 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 CER 10; N 5)

**LUT 15.** 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. (See also CER 10)

**LUT 16.** Develop intermediate transit solutions that allow the City to reach the ultimate goal of a complete transit network over the long-term. (See also CER 10)

<sup>4</sup> Transit-Oriented Development is defined by the Federal Transit Administration as compact, mixed-use development within walking distance of public transportation.

<sup>5</sup> Roads that are designed to safely accommodate necessary street functions for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit riders.

**LUT 17.** Continue efforts to implement future intercity rail and High Speed Rail in the Austin region. (See also ECO 17)

**LUT 18.** Reduce traffic congestion and encourage alternative transportation modes through such practices as Transportation Demand Management. (See also ECO 17)

**LUT 19.** Locate industry, warehousing, logistics, manufacturing, and other freight-intensive uses in proximity to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure. (See also ECO 17)

**LUT 20.** Ensure that redevelopment in the Edwards Aquifer's recharge and contributing zones maintains the recharge of the aquifer. (See also CER 2)

**LUT 21.** 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 RO 6)

**LUT 22.** Integrate citywide/regional green infrastructure to include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, and agricultural lands and the trail system into the urban environment and the transportation network. (See also RO 8)

**LUT 23.** Direct hazardous materials/cargo that are being transported through Austin away from heavily populated or environmental sensitive areas. (See also CER 10; ECO 17)

**LUT 24.** Develop a comprehensive network of evacuation routes for all areas of Austin.

**LUT 25.** Reduce noise pollution from transportation, construction, and other sources.

**LUT 26.** Decrease light pollution from apartments and single-family houses, signage, commercial buildings, parking lot lights, and street lights.

### BEST PRACTICE: COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES

In the US, 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](http://www.njbikeped.org); National Complete Streets Coalition; Image: Kimley-Horn Associates.

"The city should continue to develop more pedestrian and biker, and public transportation-reliant infrastructure systems. Our over-reliance on highways and interstates makes entire swathes of the city inaccessible to those who don't have cars."

Community Forum #1 Participant



**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 buildings" practices that will improve and maintain the character of each neighborhood are included.

Reference: <http://www.roanokeva.gov/>

**Maintaining Character  
Defining Features**



**URBAN DESIGN POLICIES**

**UD 1.** Develop accessible community gathering places that include such spaces (plazas, parks, farmers' markets, sidewalks, and streets) in all parts of Austin, especially in the Downtown, future TODs, in denser, mixed-use communities, and other redevelopment areas, that encourage interaction and provide places for people to visit and relax. (See also RO 1)

**UD 2.** 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 N 4, HP 2)

**UD 3.** 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 ACC 17)

**UD 4.** Assure that new development is walkable and bikable and preserves the positive characteristics of existing pedestrian-friendly environments. (See also N 1, RO 3)

**UD 5.** 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.

**UD 6.** Integrate green infrastructure elements such as the urban forest, green buildings, and green streets into the urban design of the City through "green" development practices and regulations. (See also CER 3; CER 4, CER 11)

**UD 7.** 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 RO 5; ACC 16)

**UD 8.** Transform all major streets into vibrant, multi-functional, pedestrian-friendly corridors.

**"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 #1 Participant

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES

**HP 1.** Promote historic and heritage-based tourism and cultural events.

**HP 2.** 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.

**HP 3.** Maintain and update inventories of historic resources, including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries, archeological sites, etc.

**HP 4.** Increase opportunities for historic and cultural learning at the City's public libraries.

**HP 5.** Protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the City. (See also UD 2; HP 2; HP 3; HP 5)

**HP 6.** Retain the character of National Register and local Historic Districts and ensure that development and redevelopment is compatible with historic resources and character.

**HP 7.** Continue to protect and enhance important view corridors such as those of the Texas State Capitol District, Lady Bird Lake, and other public waterways.

**HP 8.** Preserve and restore historic parks and recreational areas.

### 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 and Image: <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/offices/rehab.html>*



Image

Image Caption

Fig. 4.5 - COMBINED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

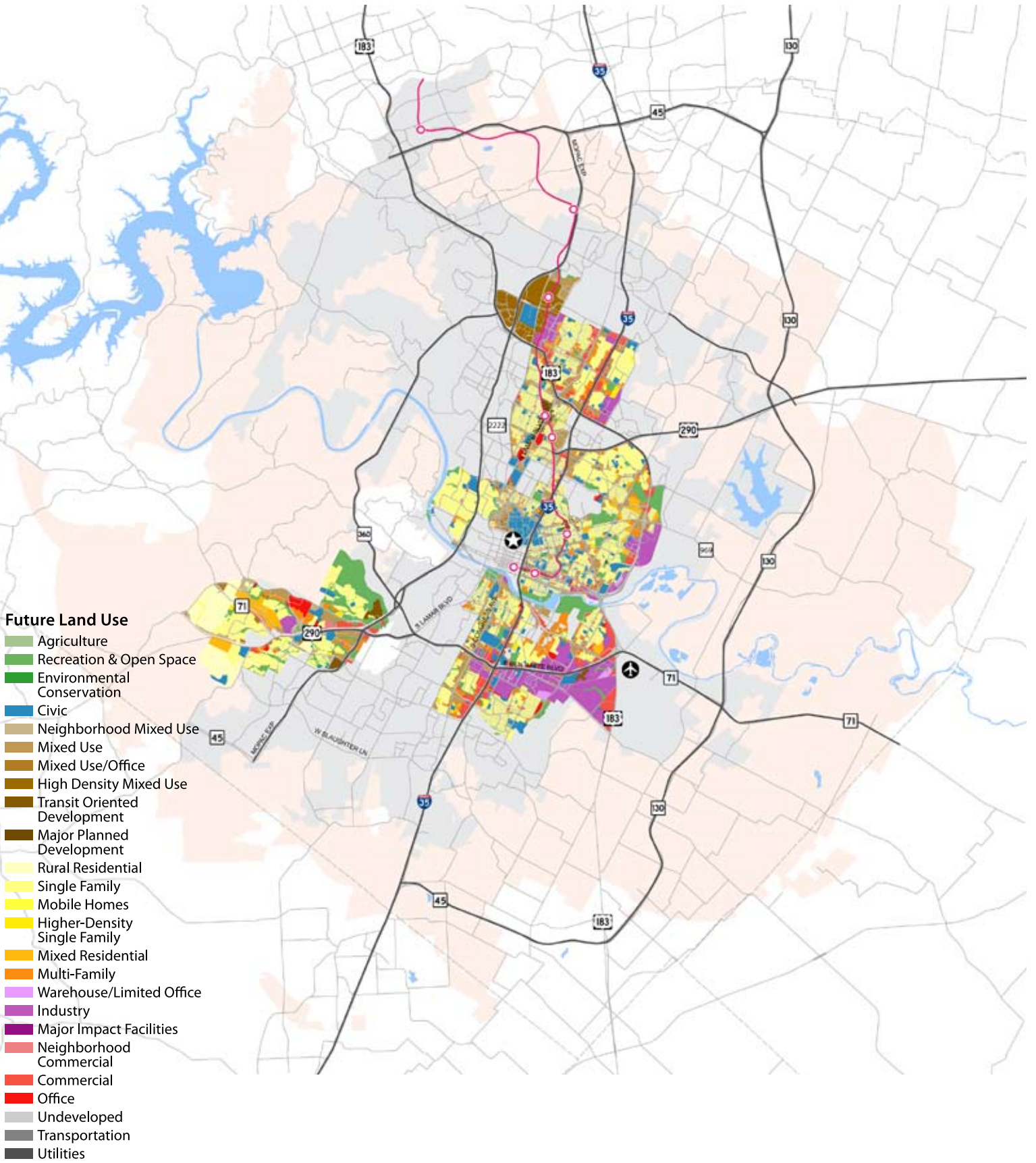
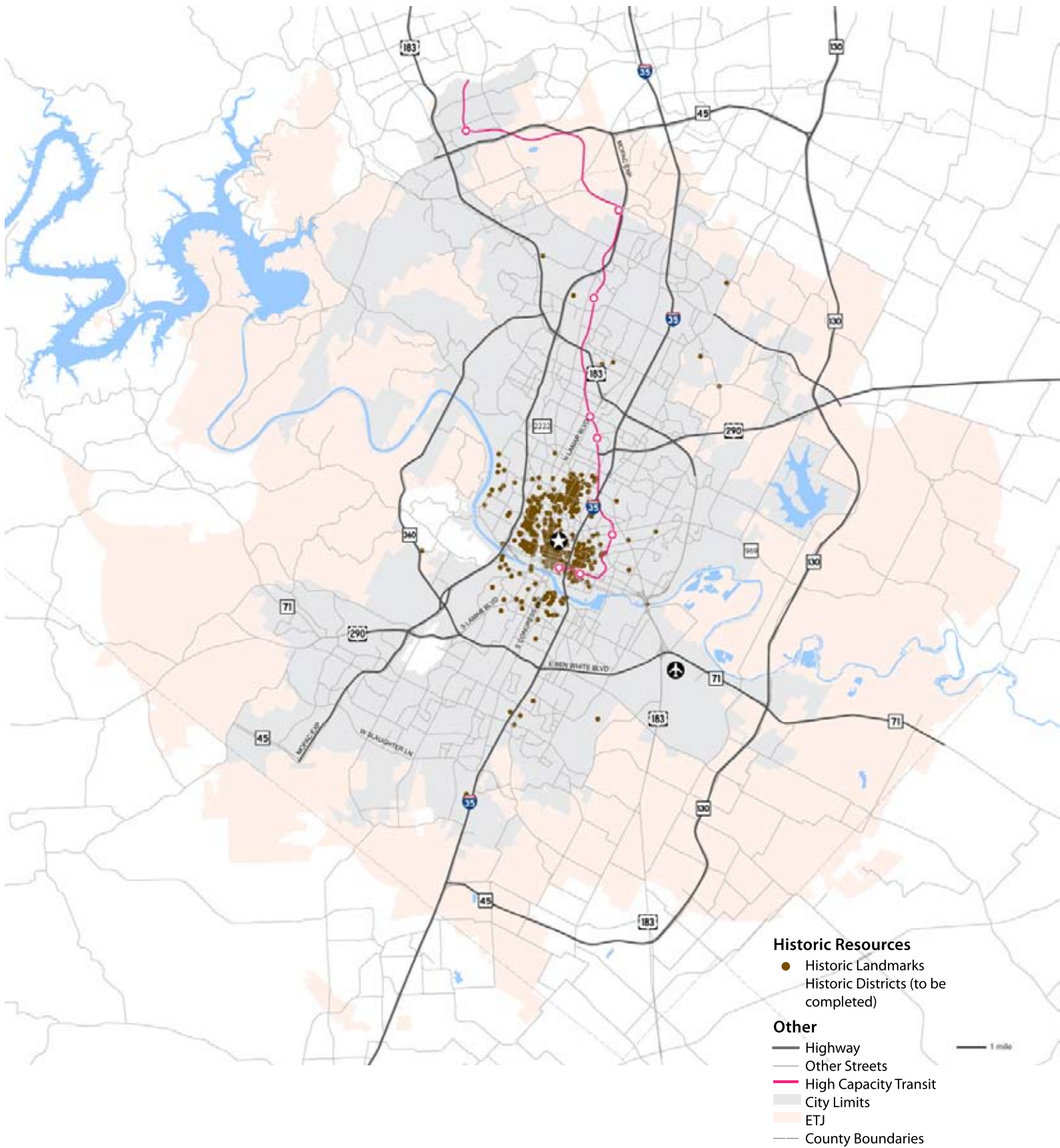


Fig. 4.6 - HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES





## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity & 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 & 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 Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

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 ten 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.

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" (those born between 1980 and 1995) will soon be entering the housing market. This demographic 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 D). Challenges and opportunities unique to individual neighborhoods are met through the neighborhood planning process.

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.

### FROM THE VISION STATEMENT - AUSTIN IS LIVABLE:

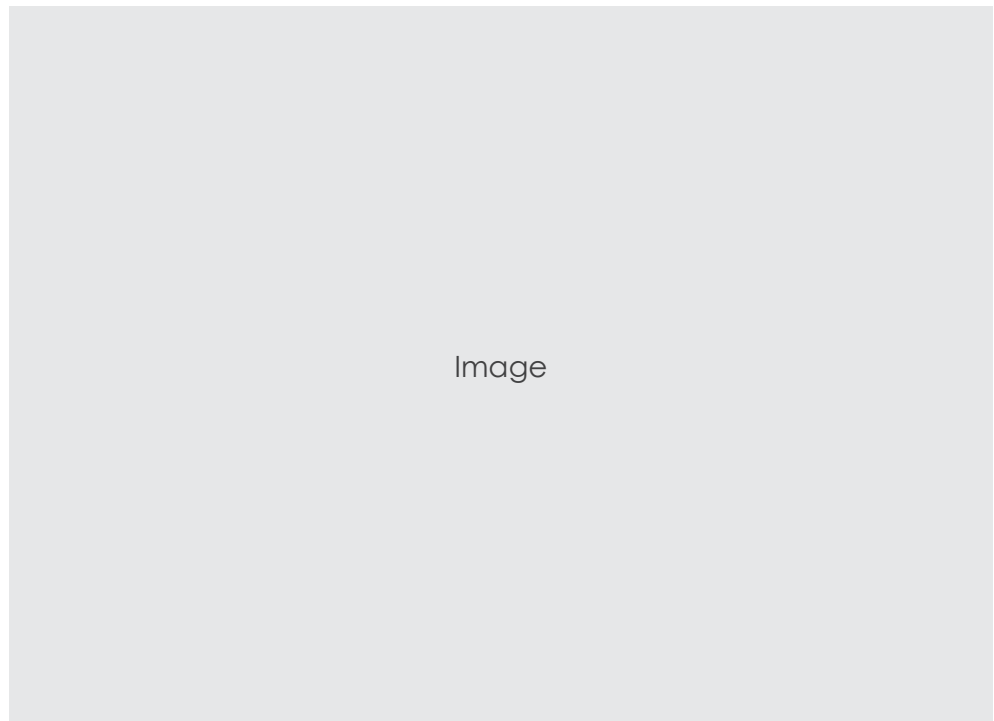
One of Austin's foundations is its safe, well-maintained, stable, and attractive neighborhoods and places whose character and history are preserved. Economically mixed and diverse neighborhoods across all parts of the city have a range of affordable housing options. All residents have a variety of urban, 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 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 that has a need for affordable rental units.
- 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.
- Infill development may be used to meet the growing demand for higher-density, closer-in affordable housing.

## Key Challenges for the Future

- Fostering mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods with a range of housing choices, community services, facilities, and amenities, in which Austinites can afford to live.
- Maintaining the unique and diverse personality of Austin's neighborhoods, while meeting the market demands for close-in housing.
- 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, and mixed-use development and adjacent, established neighborhoods.
- Discouraging the loss of affordable housing in neighborhoods across the city.
- Increasing the diversity of housing choices to reflect the needs of traditional and non-traditional households.



Image

Image Caption

## HOUSING POLICIES

**H 1.** 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 5; CFE 2)

**H 2.** Expand the availability of affordable housing throughout Austin by preserving existing affordable housing, including housing for very low-income persons.

**H 3.** 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 HHS 5; CFE 3; ACC 10)

**H 4.** 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 and
- coordinating and planning for housing near public transportation networks and employment centers to reduce household transportation costs and vehicle miles traveled. (See also LUT 3; LUT 6)

**H 5.** Promote a diversity of land uses throughout Austin to allow a variety of housing types ranging from permanent supportive housing to rental and ownership opportunities for singles, families with and without children, seniors, and person with disabilities.

(See also LUT 5)

**H 6.** Address accessibility issues and other housing barriers to persons with disabilities or special needs. (See also LUT 9)

**H 7.** Reuse former brownfields, greyfields (previously developed properties such as strip centers or malls that are not contaminated) and vacant building sites to reduce negative impacts of vacancy and provide new mixed-use and/or housing options.

(See also LUT 7)

**H 8.** Encourage green practices in housing construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes.

(See also CER 9; WPD 9; EN 2)

**H 9.** Renovate the existing housing stock to reduce utility and maintenance costs for owners and occupants.

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

Denver is in the process of a major transit expansion that will usher in 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 home prices near transit, the City of Denver is working with public/private partners to create a TOD 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; Image: Denver Housing Authority).



**BEST PRACTICE: COMMUNITY LAND TRUST | WASHINGTON D.C.**

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 multi-family 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/>

**NEIGHBORHOODS POLICIES**

**N 1.** Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options. (See also UD 4; RO 3)

**N 2.** 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.

**N 3.** Identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability.

**N 4.** Strengthen Austin's neighborhoods by connecting to other neighborhoods, quality schools, parks, and other community-serving uses that are accessible by transit, walking, and bicycling. (See also LUT 14)

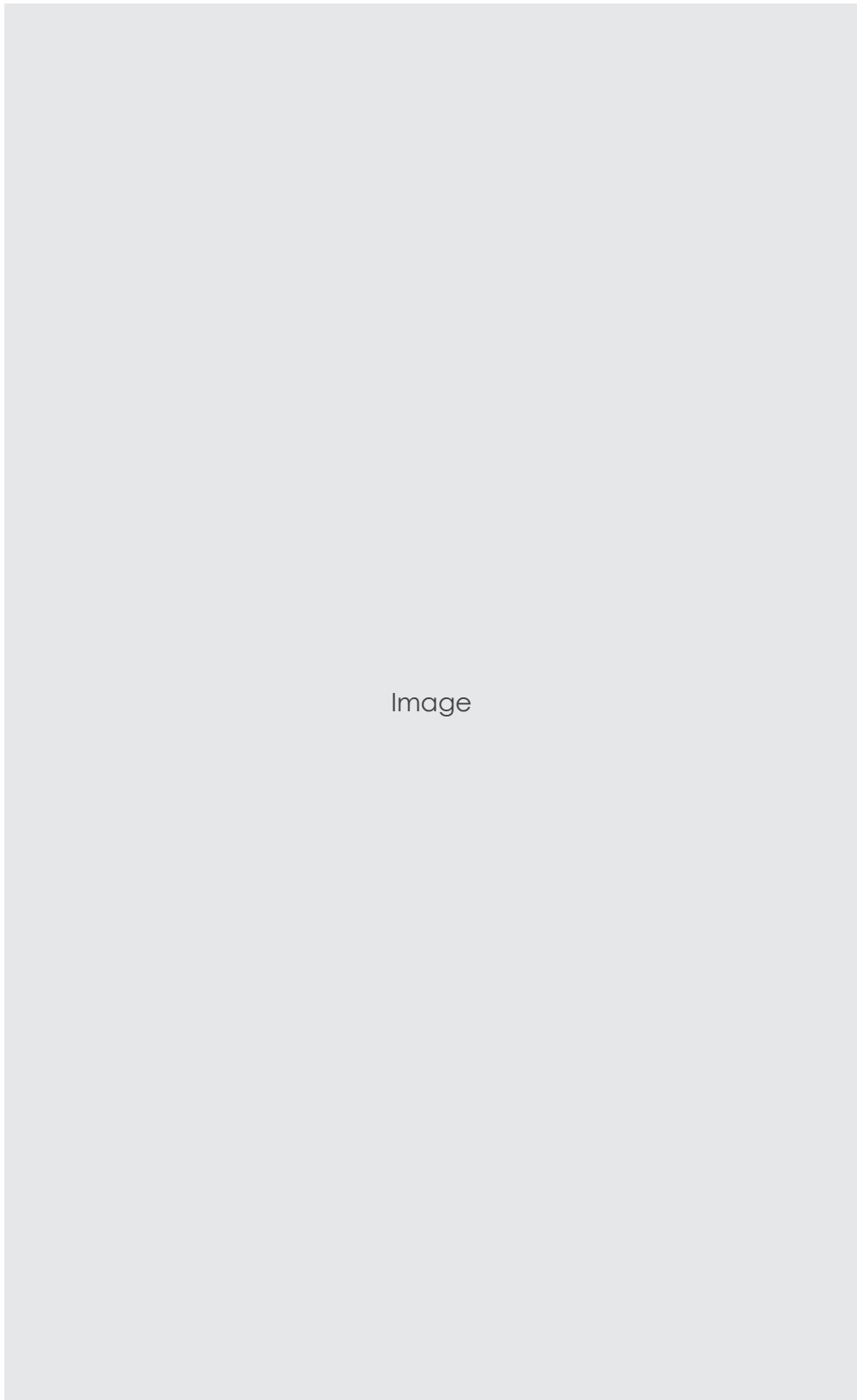
**N 5.** Strengthen planning processes by recognizing that the Comprehensive Plan and small-area plans, such as neighborhood plans, corridor plans, and station area plans, need to respect, inform, and draw from each other.

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 #1 Participant

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

Community Forum #1 Participant



Image

**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 26 buildings, approximately 2,500 residents, office and retail space, a central greenway and creek, and a waterfront park. The project’s 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 greywater 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. Dockside Green also includes bioretention facilities, pervious paving, and other innovative stormwater controls.

The American Institute of Architects named Dockside Green one of its top ten “green building” projects in 2009, and the development has the distinction of achieving the world’s highest LEED Platinum scores and becoming the first LEED ND Platinum project. (Reference: <http://www.theatlantic.com/life/archive/2011/08/is-this-the-worlds-greenest-neighborhood/244121/>).



## ECONOMY

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
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### EDUCATED

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- Relationships with Higher Learning

### CREATIVE

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

### NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE

- Sustainable Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

Austin's economy has grown substantially over the last twenty years. Between 1990 and 2010 the city's labor force increased by over 50 percent – more than twice the national rate during the same time period. Despite strong growth in population, Austin has maintained relatively low levels of unemployment as a result of 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.

Government, 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, medical and 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 a whole.

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 over 50 percent – more than twice the national rate during the same time period.
- 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 greater 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 class workers 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.

## 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.
- Creating well-paid jobs in the clean energy industry particularly in solar manufacturing and installation, energy services companies, and green building.
- Reducing the number of obstacles facing creative industries and small creative businesses, such as physical space for industry and business incubation, education and training, health care and housing options, and affordable commercial rents.
- Preserving small businesses that may be negatively impacted by new development.



Image

Image Caption



Image

Image Caption

**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 #1 Participant

**BEST PRACTICE: TARGETED  
BUSINESS GROWTH | ASHEVILLE, NORTH  
CAROLINA**

Greater Asheville, NC 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 and 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/>

## ECONOMIC POLICIES

**ECO 1.** Promote and measure business entrepreneurship, innovation and a culture of creativity.

**ECO 2.** Implement policies that create, nurture, and retain small businesses.

**ECO 3.** Build on the Austin metropolitan area's position as a leader in global trade.

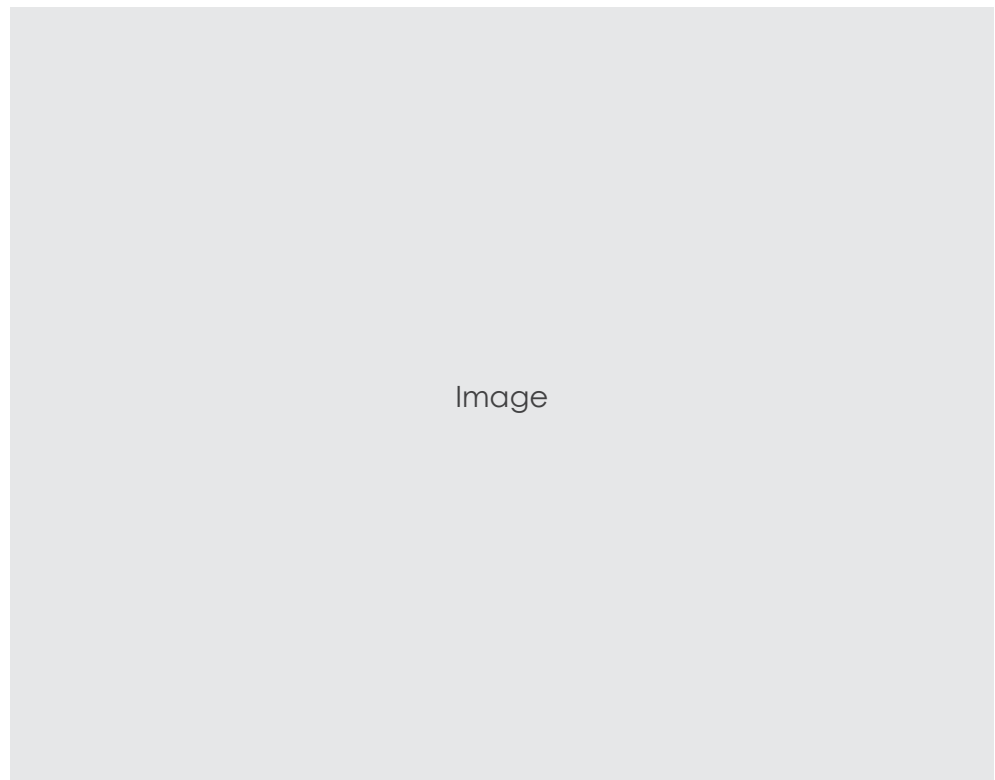
**ECO 4.** Continue to strengthen partnerships among Chambers of Commerce, state and local governments, and major employers and leverage incentives to attract and retain major employers.

(See also ECO 4; CER 18)

**ECO 5.** Enhance Austin's draw as a premier national and international tourist destination by strengthening cultural (arts, music, film) and entertainment offerings, enhancing natural resources, and expanding the availability of family-friendly events and venues. (See also ACC 1; ACC 7; HP 1)

**ECO 6.** Encourage Austin's creative economy and culture through flexible, place-based policies (those directed at specific geographic areas) as well as policies directed toward virtual reality

and digital media. (See also ACC 15)



Image

Image Caption

**ECO 7.** Promote Downtown as the premier business district in the region and expand the presence of global finance and trade.

**ECO 8.** Invest in and expand major cultural facilities in Austin's Downtown.

**ECO 9.** Spur medical and life science technology investments by establishing a medical school and residency programs.

**ECO 10.** Cluster or co-locate high schools, vocational schools, 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 12; CFE 5; CFE 7)

**ECO 11.** Expand the educational offerings and establish cooperative partnerships between Austin Community College, the University of Texas, and other institutions of higher learning to support target industries' education and training requirements. (See also LUT 12; CFE 5; CFE 7)

**ECO 12.** 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.

**ECO 13.** Promote "start-up districts" where new businesses benefit from locating near transportation infrastructure, services, suppliers, mentors, and affordable support facilities.

**ECO 14.** Encourage and support innovation through flexible city rules, adaptive reuse of buildings, and up-to-date infrastructure so that creativity thrives in actual as well as virtual reality and digital media. (See also LUT 8)

**ECO 15.** Improve regional transportation planning and financing for infrastructure, such as air, rail, and roads, to ensure the reliable movement of goods and people.

**ECO 16.** Invest in sustainable, affordable utility sources (communications, power, water, wastewater) to meet the needs of increasing population and employment bases. (See also EN 1; EN 4)

**ECO 17.** 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 17; LUT 18; LUT 19; LUT 23)

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

Community Forum #1 Participant

#### **BEST PRACTICE: SMALL BUSINESS / START-UP INCUBATOR | SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**

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 over 70 businesses.

Reference and image: <http://www.sfbi.net/>





## CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

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

### MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

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- Relationships with Higher Learning

### CREATIVE

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

### NATURAL AND SUSTAINABLE

- Sustainable Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

Austin is “a city that is environmentally healthy, that protects and acknowledges its land’s limits.”

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

Austin’s abundant environmental resources, including land, water, flora and fauna, and air quality, perform essential functions and provide vital benefits to the City and its residents. 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, Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, Waller Creek, Williamson 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.

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 watersheds, waterways, water supply, air quality, open space, and urban tree canopy. As development continues in or near environmentally sensitive areas, ongoing mitigation, preservation, and conservation efforts will be required.

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 Zones ordinance for watersheds that drain to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, 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 from 2002-2007 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, and has completed a greenhouse gas inventory and update.
- 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 U.S.
- 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 located east of IH 35, that are prone to erosion and that are often characterized with large flood plains.
- Monitoring and increase Austin's tree canopy as urbanization occurs.
- Slowing the rate of farmland loss and protecting valuable agricultural soils from development.
- Balancing growth and protection of our natural resources, such as natural areas, air, water, soil, and mature trees to create a future that is sustainable.
- Preserving land with sensitive environmental features and plant and animal habitat from development.

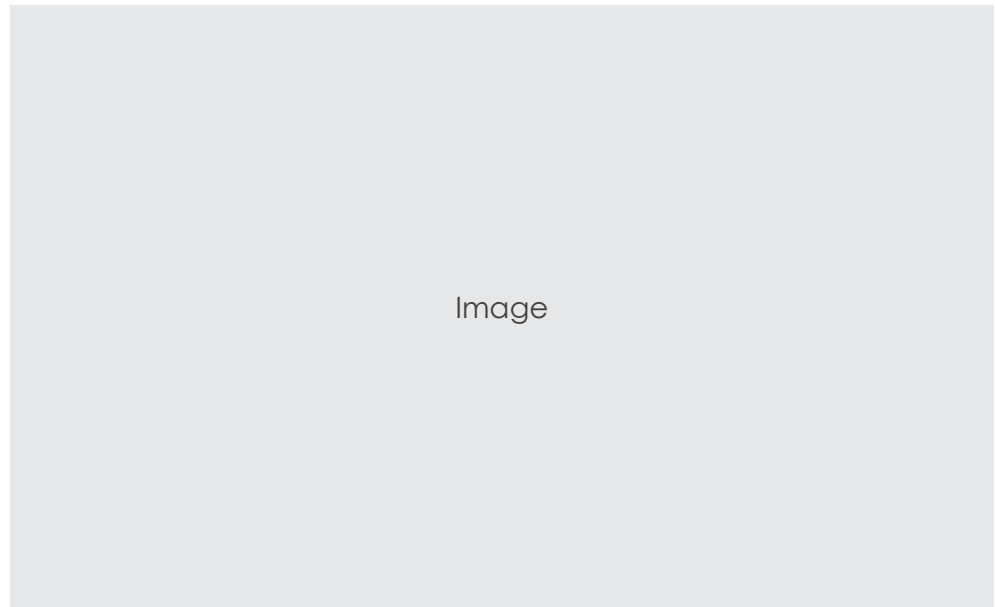


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## CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

**CER 1.** Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.

**CER 2.** Conserve Austin's natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas that include Edwards Aquifer and its contributing and recharge zones and endangered species habitat). (See also H6; RO 6; HP 7; HP 8)

**CER 3.** 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 UD 6; RO 8)

**CER 4.** Maintain and increase Austin's urban forest as a key component of the green infrastructure network. (See also UD 6)

**CER 5.** Expand regional programs and planning for the purchase of conservation easements and open space for aquifer protection, stream and water quality protection, wildlife habitat conservation, as well as sustainable agriculture.

**CER 6.** Enhance the protection of creeks and flood plains to preserve environmentally and other sensitive areas and improve the quality of water entering the Colorado River through regional planning and improved coordination. (See also WPD 6; WPD 7; WPD 8; WPD 10; WPD 11; WPD 13)

**CER 7.** Protect and improve the water quality of the City's creeks, lakes, and aquifers for use and the support of aquatic life. (See also WPD 8; WPD 10; WPD 11; WPD 13; WPD 14)

### BEST PRACTICE: URBAN FORESTRY | ITHACA, NEW YORK

Ithaca adopted a master plan that envisions an improved urban forest by 2015 through the use of best practice forestry techniques, research in bare-roots tree planting to lower costs, and volunteers to help maintain and improve the urban forest.

Ithaca Tree Works is a volunteer-based bare root tree planting initiative involving a cooperative effort between Cornell University's Urban Horticulture Institute and the City of Ithaca Parks and Forestry department. Ithaca's volunteer Citizen Pruner program is a unique partnership between the City, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell University. Volunteers assist the City Forester with maintaining public trees, shrubs, and other landscape beautification projects.

Reference and image: <http://ithaca.govoffice.com/>

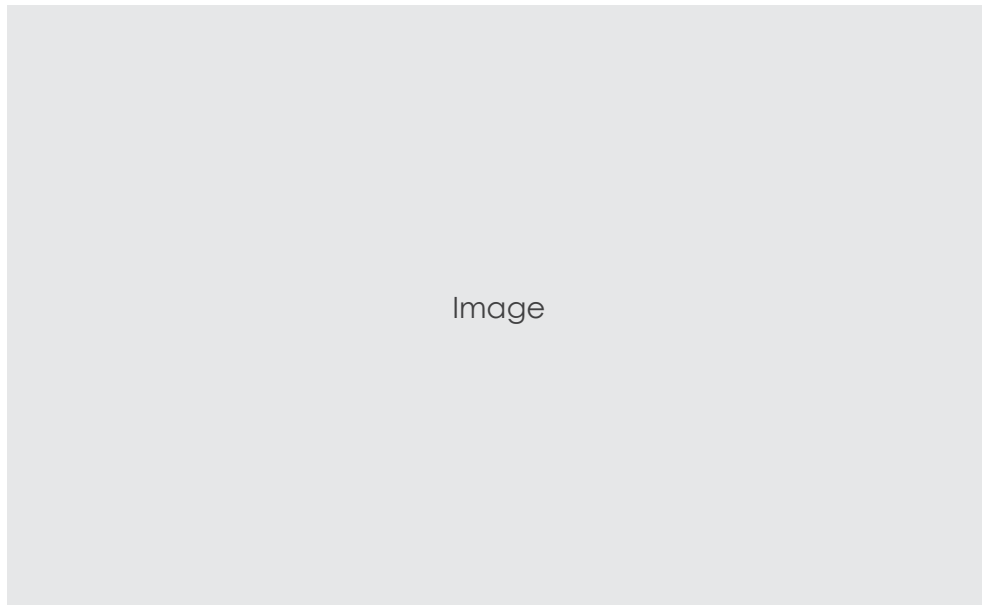


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**BEST PRACTICE: URBAN  
AGRICULTURE GREENSGROW  
FARMS | PHILADELPHIA,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

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 business 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 six seasonal employees and five full-time employees.

Reference and image: [www.greengrow.org](http://www.greengrow.org)



**CER 8.** Improve the urban environment by fostering safe public uses of waterways for public recreation activities such as swimming and boating that maintains the natural and traditional character of the waterway and floodplain). (See also RO 7)

**CER 9.** Reduce the carbon footprint of the City and its residents by implementing Austin's Climate Protection Plan and develop strategies to adapt to the projected impacts of climate change. (See also H 6; EN 2; EN 3; EN 4; PB 5)

**CER 10.** Improve the air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from vehicle use, traffic and congestion, industrial sources, and waste. (See also LUT 14; LUT 15; LUT 16; LUT 23; ECO 15; RO 3; HHS 3; CFE 15)

**CER 11.** 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 UD 6; EN 2; EN 3; EN 4)

**CER 12.** Adopt innovative programs, practices, and technologies to increase environmental quality and sustainability through the conservation of natural resources. (See also WPD 9)

**CER 13.** Incentivize, develop, and expand the market for local and sustainable food production, which includes such activities as farming, ranching, and food processing. (See also HHS 6; HHS 7)

**CER 14.** Establish policies that consider the benefits provided by natural ecosystems, such as ecological processes or functions in places such as wetlands and riparian areas that have value to individuals or society.

**CER 15.** Reduce the overall disposal of solid waste and increase reuse and recycling to conserve environmental resources. (See also SW 1; SW 2; SW 3; SW 5; SW 6)

**CER 16.** Expand and improve regional collaboration and coordination in preserving Central Texas' natural environment. (See also LUT 2)

“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...”

CFS #1 Participant

Image



## CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity & 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 & 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 Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

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

Austin is comprised of 30 departments and about 12,000 employees, providing 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 and the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center, and the Austin Bergstrom International Airport.

### Wastewater, Solid Waste, Drainage, and Potable Water

Austin Water Utility manages water and wastewater service connections, which in 2008, represented service to an overall population of approximately 895,000 people. Austin Water's total operating costs for fiscal year 2009 was 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.

## 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-styled development will require costly water and sewer infrastructure extensions.
- Despite the fact that the city has an above-average amount of parkland, more attention needs to be paid to creating smaller parks that are within walking distance of residential neighborhoods. 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 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 deposited in regional landfills.

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.

Known for its waterways, including Barton Creek and the Colorado River, water resources are a source of community pride, drinking water, recreational opportunities, attractive vistas, and support for the region's green infrastructure. The Watershed Protection Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the municipal storm water conveyance systems for the City, which includes the area's natural water resources.

## Public Services, Buildings, and Facilities

Austin's public services and facilities include libraries, police, fire, and emergency medical services. 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. 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. With some exceptions, offices which require a high level of public accessibility are located downtown. Several City of Austin departments such as Austin Resource Recovery, Austin Energy, and Austin Water require separate offices and facilities to accommodate their operations.

## Recreation and Open Space

Austin has over 18,000 acres of parks and preserves consisting of district parks, metropolitan parks, neighborhood parks, school parks, pocket parks, greenways, 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, cultural centers, a botanical garden, a nature center, and an urban forestry program. Parks and preserves contribute to the city's green infrastructure network (i.e., the city's natural life support system that includes wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, tree canopy, and working lands with conservation value). The network includes the natural resource areas described in the Conservation and Environment Building Block that includes such areas as wetlands, woodlands, waterways, conservation lands, forests, farms and ranches, and outdoor recreational areas and trails. Integrating nature into the city by strengthening our green infrastructure network is one of the core principles for action introduced in Chapter 1.

## 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.
- Adapting to and improving the city's resiliency to deal with potential impacts of climate change, including hotter, drier seasons and droughts.
- Continuing our commitment to implementing successful water conservation (including meeting goals for reductions in peak day demand and per capita water use), reclamation, and drought-management programs and exploring effective ways to address revenue and cost impacts.
- Reducing stormwater runoff and improving groundwater infiltration.
- Reducing energy consumption in public buildings and facilities and general energy consumption to meet the energy efficiency goals set by Austin Energy.
- Increasing recycling participation rates from multi-family, commercial, institutional, industrial, and manufacturing waste generators.
- Adapting to and taking advantage of new technologies in police, fire, and public library services.
- Ensuring that 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 that is changing in demographics. The rapid increases in Austin's older population and youth population will require additional services oriented to these age groups.
- Developing local recycling and composting facilities with capacity to handle large volumes of discarded materials.
- Providing sufficient funding for maintaining parks and other recreation facilities as the acreage and number of facilities continue to increase, as the city continues to grow and budgets for police, fire, emergency services, and other city services increase.
- Strengthening partnerships between the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and private organizations, volunteers, and community groups to efficiently provide open space and recreation.
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas as open space and expanding the city's green infrastructure network.

### 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.

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

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant

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

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

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant

## WASTEWATER, POTABLE WATER, AND DRAINAGE POLICIES

**WPD 1.** Deliver potable water to Austin’s residents as the population grows and maintain an efficient and sustainable water system in support of the Growth Concept Map.

(See also LUT 1)

**WPD 2.** Maintain water and wastewater infrastructure through its useful life and replace aged infrastructure as conditions warrant. Continue to ensure safe and reliable service.

**WPD 3.** Continue to develop and evaluate decentralized wastewater processing site options, including package plants and satellite facilities, to complement centralized facilities.

**WPD 4.** Continue efforts to develop diversification of water sources including reuse, conservation, and efficiency measures for long-term and reliability planning.

**WPD 5.** Plan for and adapt to increased drought, severe weather, and other potential impacts of climate change on the water supply.

**WPD 6.** Protect the public water supply and the health and safety of users.

(See also LUT 12; CER 6)

**WPD 7.** Reduce the threats to public safety and private property of flooding in the 100-year floodplain. (See also CER 6)

**WPD 8.** Reduce pollution in all creeks from stormwater runoff, overflow, and other non-point sources.<sup>6</sup> (See also CER 6; CER 7)

**WPD 9.** Reduce per capita potable water use through conservation, water reclamation, and other water resource stewardship programs. (See also CER 12)

**WPD 10.** Protect and improve the health of Austin’s streams, lakes, and aquifers for sustainable uses and the support of aquatic life. (See also CER 6; CER 7)

**WPD 11.** Protect the health of creeks by minimizing their expansion and preventing public and private property damage resulting from erosion. (See also CER 6; CER 7)

**WPD 12.** Maintain or enhance the existing rate of recharge in the Edward’s Aquifer.

**WPD 13.** 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 CER 6; CER 7)

**WPD 14.** Integrate erosion, flood, and water quality control measures into all City of Austin capital improvement projects. (See also CER 7)

## SOLID WASTE POLICIES

**SW 1.** Address the waste management implications of continued growth in Central Texas through a regional solid waste management plan. (See also CER 15)

**SW 2.** Expand waste diversion rates and services:

- 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 material and food scraps in public spaces, in trash receptacles on city streets, and at public events (See also CER 15)

**SW 3.** 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 CER 15)

**SW 4.** Divert bulk items such as furniture and other household items from landfills and consider ways to recycle or reuse these materials.

**SW 5.** 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. (See also CER 15)

**SW 6.** 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 CER 15)

## ENERGY POLICIES

**EN 1.** Support the Preferred Growth Scenario and provide affordable, reliable electricity to Austin's residents and businesses. (See also ECO 16)

**EN 2.** Reduce per capita energy use through conservation and improvements that make buildings more energy efficient. (See also CER 9; CER 11)

**EN 3.** 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 CER 9; CER 11)

**EN 4.** Increase the share of renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and biomass, used by Austin Energy to generate electricity, including on-site sources throughout the city. (See also ECO 16; CER 9; CER 11)

## PUBLIC SAFETY POLICIES

**PS 1.** Reduce crime rates, thereby improving the perceived and actual safety in neighborhoods across Austin.

**PS 2.** Continue to improve community outreach and build trust between the police force and Austin's minority communities. (See also HHS 5; CFE 4)

### BEST PRACTICE: RECYCLING RATES AND SERVICES | SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

San Jose has a reputation for innovation and leadership in recycling. In 2009, the Solid Waste Association of North America awarded the City its 2009 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 the project site. Materials can be taken to a certified facility for recycling or re-use/donated.

Reference: [www.recycletogether.com](http://www.recycletogether.com), <http://www.sjrecycles.org/construction-demolition/cddd.asp> and image: [CityData.com](http://CityData.com)



**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 LISC Houston is to support healthy neighborhood development through livable and safe environments. GO Neighborhood safety team members instructed over forty 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 problem areas using a safety audit form and work with police, civic organizations, community residents, and property owners to begin applying these principles (e.g., lighting, access control, "eyes on the street") in their neighborhoods.

Reference: [www.go-neighborhoods.org](http://www.go-neighborhoods.org)  
[www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org)

**PS 3.** Provide public safety services to newly annexed areas and areas with increased activity, such as new neighborhoods, redevelopment areas, transportation corridors, and mixed-use centers.

**PS 4.** Provide preventive safety education (fire, police, and emergency services) to Austin residents.

**PS 5.** 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 CER 9; CFE 4)

**PS 6.** 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."

**PS 7.** 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.

**PS 8.** Maintain quality standards in recruiting and training new public safety officers, and strive for a public safety workforce that reflects Austin's changing demographics.

**PS 9.** Continue to improve education and training of public safety employees and build new skills in using technology to improve public safety.

## PUBLIC BUILDING POLICIES

**PB 1.** Improve access to neighborhood libraries to promote the establishment of Complete Communities throughout Austin.

**PB 2.** Distribute public buildings where neighborhood services are located and other accessible locations throughout the city. (See also CFE 7)

**PB 3.** Improve multi-modal public transportation access to the City's public buildings and facilities, including the Austin Bergstrom International Airport.

**PB 4.** Integrate public buildings and facilities into active, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and complete, healthy communities. (See also LUT 5; H1; HHS 3; CFE 11)

**PB 5.** Reduce energy consumption and waste generation in all public buildings to meet the City's climate and Zero Waste goals.

**PB 6.** Develop public buildings and facilities that create healthy work environments and educate the public about energy-efficient, sustainable building and landscape best practices.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

**RO 1.** Operate, maintain, and upgrade new and existing parks and preserved open space and develop new parks to serve Austin’s diverse, growing population. (See also UD 1)

**RO 2.** Ensure and increase equitable access to and opportunities for cultural arts, recreation and leisure activities for all ages throughout the City.

**RO 3.** 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 UD 4; N1; CER 10)

**RO 4.** Maximize the role of parks and recreation in promoting healthy communities and lifestyles.

**RO 5.** Feature superior design in parks and recreational facilities and include opportunities for public art and green and sustainable design solutions. (See also UD 7)

**RO 6.** Expand the amount of permanently protected natural and environmentally sensitive areas for use as open space and passive recreational areas. (See also LUT 21; CER 2)

**RO 7.** Foster the use of creeks and lakes for public recreation and enjoyment in a manner that maintains their natural character. (See also CER 8)

**RO 8.** Extend existing trail and greenway projects to create an interconnected green infrastructure network that include such elements as preserves and parks, trails, stream corridors, green streets, greenways, agricultural lands that link all parts of Austin and connect Austin to nearby cities. (See also LUT 22; CER 3)

**RO 9.** Maintain existing partnerships and develop new relationships among City of Austin departments, community organizations, and volunteers to support recreational services and maintain high levels of service.

### 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.

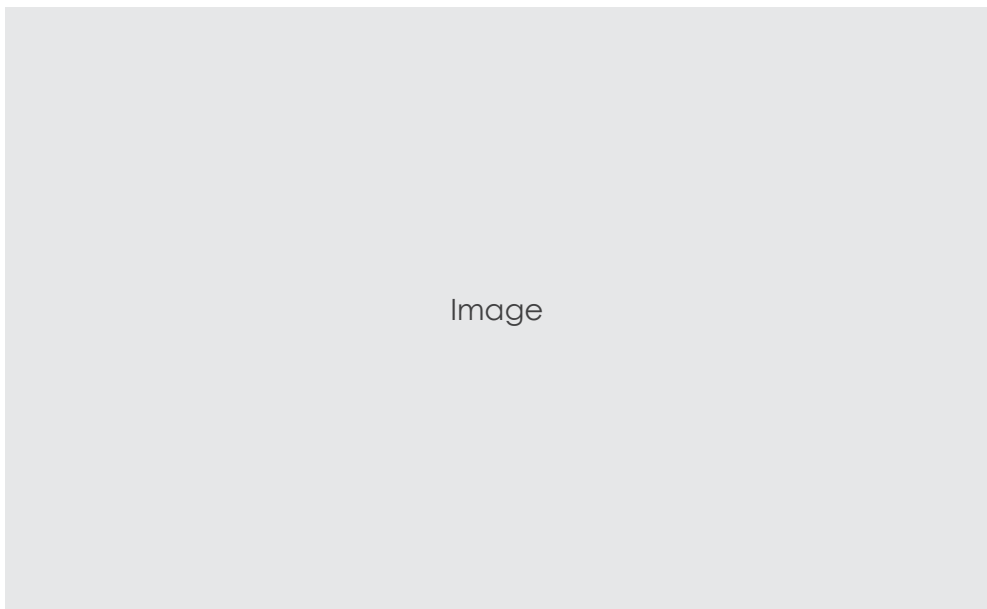


Image Caption

Fig. 4.8 - Agricultural Resources

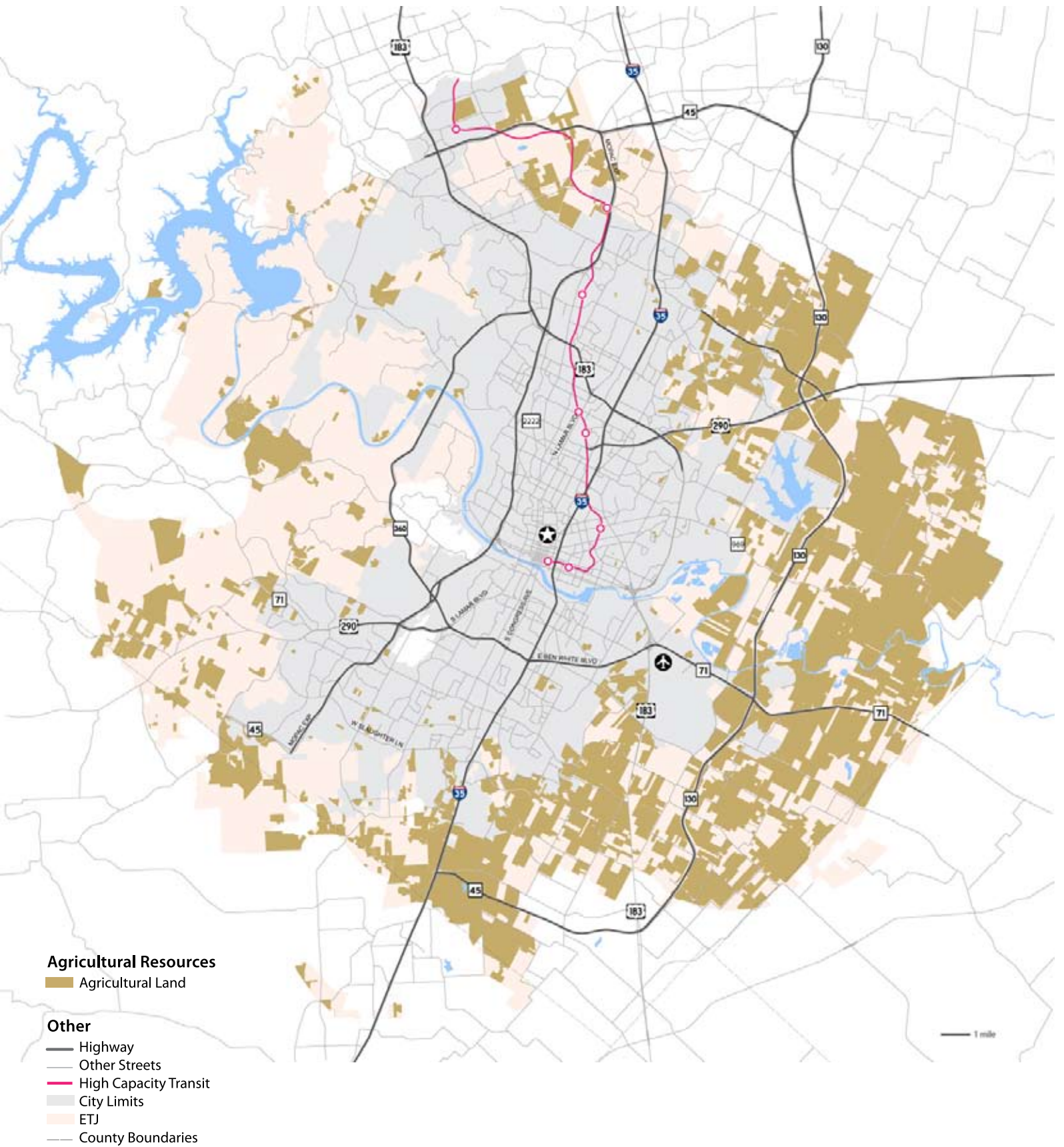
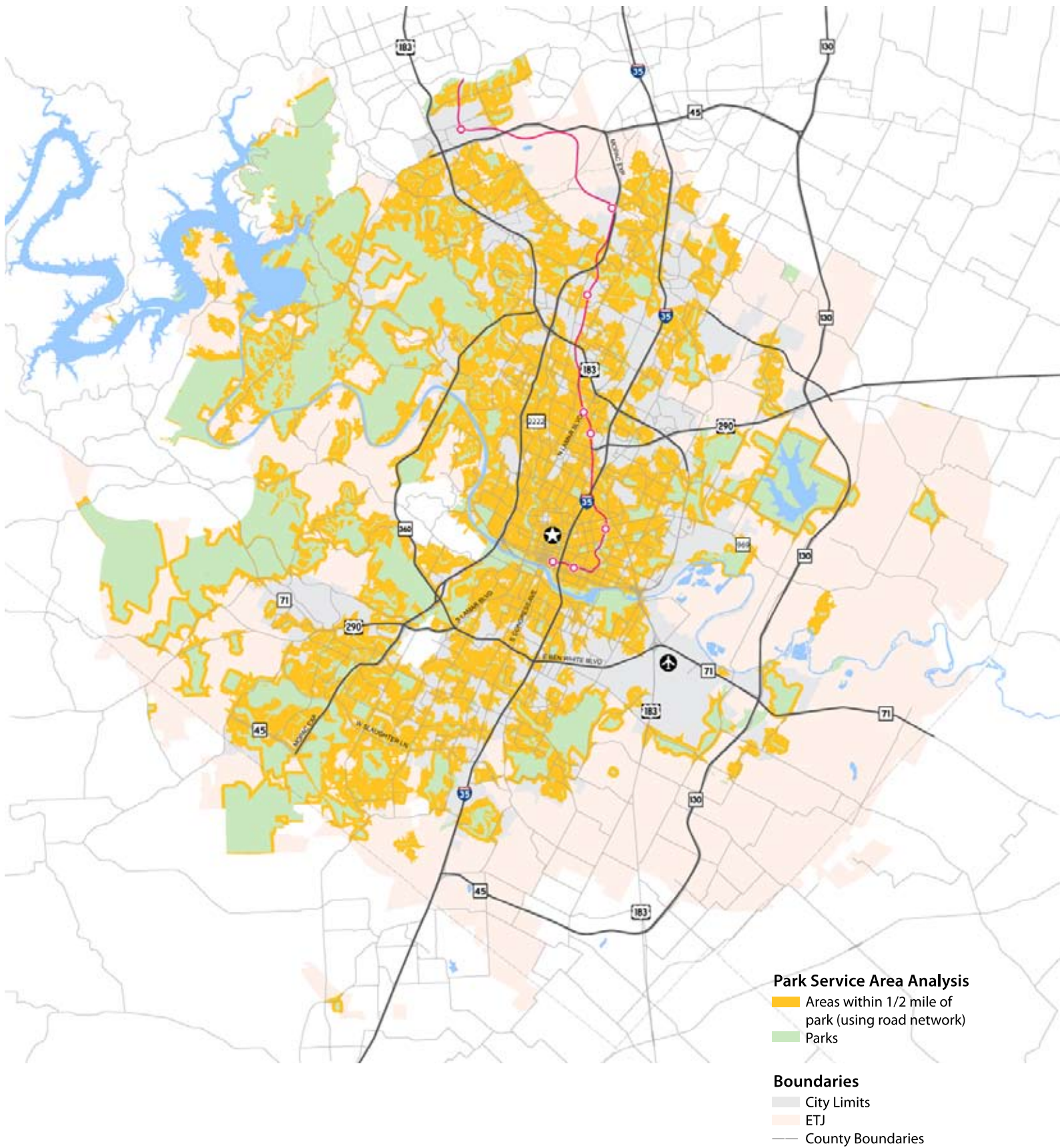


Fig. 4.9 - PARKS SERVICE AREA ANALYSIS





SOCIETY

Complete Community Matrix

**LIVABLE**

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity & 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 & 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 Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

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 - cities, roads, neighborhoods, and buildings that define the physical form of a city. The natural environment refers to resources such as air, water, soil, and flora and fauna. Built and natural environments that promote health and well-being place fewer demands on health and human 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. Accessibility to quality educational options promotes a sustainable community with its residents prepared 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 host of other non-traditional families. Regardless of the household 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 US Department of Health and Human Services.
- The Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project found that nearly all clusters of middle school students who are obese are located in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in northern, eastern, and southern parts of the city.
- According to Austin Independent School District records from 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 aged 45 and over are making the largest gains in population. Services specific to an aging population will increase as this group increases.
- 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 with a large portion of the population having advanced degrees. However, there are populations and parts of the city that lag behind in education. To ensure that these 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 continuing education as well as 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 care and services for all residents, including the economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured.
- Improving access to services for those struggling with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Providing reliable access to housing and childcare for low- and middle-income families.
- Increasing access to 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.
- Improving the actual and perceived safety of neighborhood streets 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 for activities such as tutoring, adult education, libraries, and technology education.
- Reducing high-school and college drop-out rates.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE POLICIES

**HHS 1.** Provide access to primary, preventive health, trauma, specialty care, and urgent care.

**HHS 2.** 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.

**HHS 3.** 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 3; LUT 5; H1; H4; H5; CER 10)

**HHS 4.** Reduce homelessness through long-term supportive housing, mental health services, counseling, and alcohol and drug treatment.

**HHS 5.** Develop close relationships between public safety personnel and neighborhoods to promote cooperation and safety.  
(See also PS 2)

**HHS 6.** 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 CER 13)

**HHS 7.** Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods. (See also CER 13)

**HHS 8.** Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations and provide better services for at-risk segments of our community.

**HHS 9.** Develop and promote tobacco cessation programs and regulations to support tobacco-free environments.

### 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](http://www.sustainablefoodcenter.org)

Image

Image Caption



**BEST PRACTICE: CHILD CARE DOWNTOWN  
| DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

In 2009, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Durham, Inc. and Durham's Partnership for Children collaborated on an initiative to expand affordable, high quality child care options in downtown Durham. The group analyzed existing child care conditions in terms of availability, cost, and programming and compared them against stakeholder preferences and national standards for quality child care service. The research determined from supply/demand analysis, focus groups, and policy/best practices research, that downtown Durham lacks sufficient high-quality child care – a critical resource for working families and their employers. The initiative makes recommendations for expanding downtown child care by identifying properties for new facilities, promoting employer supported new child care facilities, and updating land use regulations and policies to accommodate new child care facilities.

"Child care is also good for business: the research and experience of many Fortune 500 companies shows that helping employees to balance their family and work roles by making child care available improves productivity, reduces absenteeism, cuts turnover, and increases company value."

Reference: *Child Care at the Core*  
<http://www.dpfc.net/Admin/uploads/photos/Documents/DowntownWhitePaperFINALWEB.pdf>

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND  
EDUCATION POLICIES**

**CFE 1.** 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 7)

**CFE 2.** 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 5; H1)

**CFE 3.** Provide opportunities for seniors and persons to live in affordable housing that meets their specific needs and in neighborhoods that allow them to safely travel to and from accessing their daily needs.

**CFE 4.** Locate emergency services within close proximity to all neighborhoods and continue to improve community outreach and relationships between police and neighbors. (See also PS 2; PS 5)

**CFE 5.** 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 ECO 10; ECO 11)

**CFE 6.** Increase the availability of continuing education.

**CFE 7.** Work with the school districts on planning for long-range student population growth from kindergarten through high school. Maintain and/or secure new educational facilities to support the direction set by the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. (See also LUT 12; ECO 10; ECO 11; PB 2)

**CFE 8.** Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations.

**CFE 9.** 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.

**CFE 10.** Enact land use and other planning policies that enhance the quality of life for families with children and promote family-friendly neighborhoods and services.

**CFE 11.** 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 5)

In 2039, Austin is "Community strength. Families, trust, safety, shared spaces highly valued, community centers, community gardens."

Community Forum Series #1 Participant

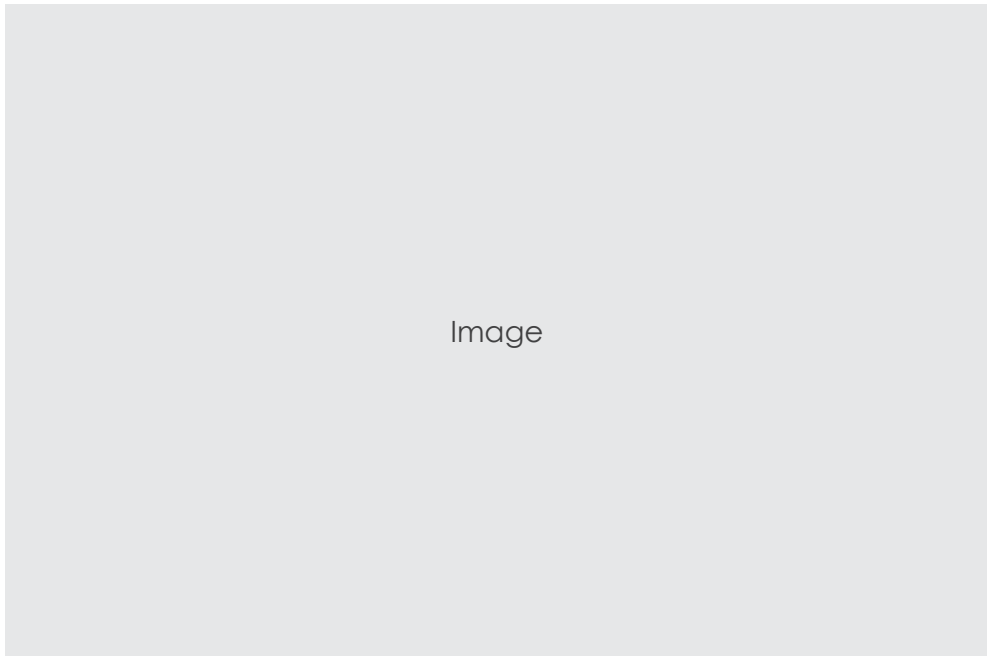


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“Increase community awareness to keep our neighborhoods, police, Neighborhood Associations intact; safe, clean, green educated city with opportunities for all citizens to improve their lives; frequent community forums to inform and engage people; community where everyone participates.”

Community Forum Series #1  
Participant

**CFE 12.** Improve access to quality child care services near homes and workplaces.

**CFE 13.** 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.

**CFE 14.** Partner with local school districts, non-profits, and civic groups to expand after school and summer programs for children of all ages and abilities.

**CFE 15.** Increase sidewalks and bike lanes in neighborhoods to create safer routes to schools, parks, and transit stops.

[\(See also LUT 13; CER 10\)](#)

**CFE 16.** Ensure that Austin children in every part of town have access to excellent public schools.

**CFE 17.** Partner with Austin-area schools districts to enhance policies and practices that support neighborhood-based schools.

**CFE 18.** Collaborate with school districts and with public and private entities to create joint-use partnerships at existing and new public school campuses.

**CFE 19.** Create public spaces that attract and engage children and serve as gathering places for children and families.



## CREATIVITY

Complete Community Matrix

### LIVABLE

- Healthy & Safe Communities
- Housing Diversity & 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 & 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 Development Patterns
- Resource Conservation/Efficiency
- Extensive Green Infrastructure

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" or "most livable" 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. According to his ranking of creative and innovative cities, economist Richard Florida ranks Austin second behind San Francisco.

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 cultural 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 in Austin, and initiatives designed to support and encourage Austin's cultural identity and vitality.

Arts, culture, and creativity are highly valued in Austin. Following a two-year planning effort, the City of Austin completed the CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan in 2010. In addition to refining the City's roles and responsibilities for cultural support, the planning process helped spark partnerships between community leaders and the City. Austin must support and value the City's arts, culture, and creativity as vital contributors to the city's identity, economy, and quality of life.

### KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS:

- Austin's arts scene is a cornerstone of the city's identity in 2011.
- The arts scene is also an important element 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 communities may not have adequate opportunities to participate in Austin's arts programs and events.
- Workforce development programs should include job training for technological, arts-related occupations.



Image

Image Caption

### 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.

### 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 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.
- 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 culture in strengthening Austin's multicultural identity.
- Integrating arts and cultural facilities and activities with downtown development in a way that is true to Austin's identity.

## ARTS, CULTURE, AND CREATIVITY POLICIES

**ACC 1.** Continue to grow artists, micro-enterprises, and small cultural organizations as businesses, and support iconic cultural institutions to sustain and grow Austin's economic and cultural vitality. [\(See also ECO 5\)](#)

**ACC 2.** Increase and enhance coordination and resource sharing, and expand partnerships among artist and creative individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses.

**ACC 3.** Increase philanthropic, public, and resident support and participation in arts, culture, and creative activities in Austin.

**ACC 4.** Continue to sustain and grow Austin's successful live music scene, festivals, theater, film and digital media, other cultural offerings.

**ACC 5.** Continue to explore and identify solutions to support live music venues and while addressing sound abatement issues.

**ACC 6.** Encourage new or existing art forms, new approaches to the creation or presentation of art, or new ways of engaging the public with art.

**ACC 7.** Grow Austin's regional and global cultural efforts in order to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community. [\(See also ECO 5\)](#)

**ACC 8.** Expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance, and office space for arts and culture 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 Participant



Image Caption

**BEST PRACTICE: ARTIST SUPPORT PROGRAM: PADUCAH ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM | PADUCAH, KENTUCKY**

A national model for using the arts to foster economic and neighborhood investment, the Paducah, KY program offers financial incentives to artists interested in relocating. The program is managed by the Paducah Renaissance Alliance and offers incentives such as free or low-cost properties, moving assistance, start-up business assistance, and restaurant grants to qualified artists and businesses. Since it began in 2000, the program has relocated more than 50 artists to the LowerTown Arts Districts. Over \$30 million has been invested in the neighborhood since 2000.

Reference:[http://www.paducahalliance.org/artist\\_relocation\\_program.php#about](http://www.paducahalliance.org/artist_relocation_program.php#about) and Image: *Circulating, Flickr.com*



**ACC 9.** Encourage and support artists, promote 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 3; H4; HHS 3)

**ACC 10.** 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 H3; HHS 5; CFE 3)

**ACC 11.** Encourage cultural, creative 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.

**ACC 12.** 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.

**ACC 13.** Create avenues for cultural variety and provide the opportunity for all groups to benefit from the different cultures present in Austin.

**ACC 14.** Encourage grassroots, neighborhood-based cultural development and activity and recognize and enhance the role the arts play at the center of community life.

**ACC 15.** Maximize the recognition and participation of arts and creativity as part of Austin's "Creative Economy."

**ACC 16.** Increase the availability of significant public art to designate districts and/or their entrances and to assist visitors in navigating the area.

**ACC 17.** Define Austin's sense of place through high standards for architecture and urban design, public art, public spaces and public parks, and arts education.

**ACC 18.** 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.

**ACC 19.** Collaborate with area school districts, local businesses, and cultural organizations in developing programs that encourage lifelong active engagement and participation in the cultural arts.

Image