

Part 1: Town Lake



INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS— TOWN LAKE

A resource inventory and analysis was conducted during the summer of 1985 by staff and the Town Lake Task Force to examine existing conditions of the Town Lake Corridor. The purpose of this effort was to gather as much information as possible within a short period of time, draw conclusions and identify issues, and provide a basis for developing goals and policy recommendations for future public and private decisions. It is important to recognize that such an overall assessment has not been made since the *Town Lake Comprehensive Plan* was developed in 1968.

This assessment does not represent a comprehensive evaluation of the Corridor. In fact, a major objective was to identify gaps in the information base, thereby concentrating on major issues and problems as a framework for immediate strengthening of land use policy. In addition, this effort represents an initiative for future comprehensive planning.

Criteria for conducting the assessment were focused on waterfront compatibility standards and existing resource values in the Corridor.

Physical Context

Town Lake is one of the most dramatic natural resources in the City of Austin, centrally located south of the Central Business District

and stretching six miles from dam to dam on the Colorado River.

The Town Lake waterfront is unique, created by impoundment only 25 years ago, ringed by parkland along its banks, and yet without the encumbrances of a working waterfront and associated land use problems of warehouses, railroads and factories that impact older cities. Sewage treatment facilities are located below the reservoir.

For the most part it is a constant level lake and therefore presents no major constraints to shoreline use and development, although awareness of flood plain elevations is required because of the potential for flood control release.

Its central location and proximity to inner city neighborhoods, to parks and greenbelts, downtown, and the State Capitol, provide a magnificent opportunity to create a Great Central Park as the centerpiece for innovative urban design in a rapidly growing and changing metropolitan area.

To accomplish such a goal, however, requires an understanding of the complexity of the Corridor: linear shape of the lake in the heart of the city, intensification of a vibrant downtown, protection of adjacent neighborhoods, need for adequate transportation, preservation of open space values, maintaining water quality, and the demand for appropriate, di-

verse recreation experiences. Special expertise of a multi-disciplinary nature will be required to appropriately address these dynamics.

Land Use/Zoning/ Circulation

Land use and zoning patterns in the Town Lake Corridor generally do not reflect sensitivity to the scenic, recreational and economic values of the waterfront. A grid street design creates the predominant fabric for development. The lake itself does little to influence and guide land use resulting in defensive attempts to protect the lake, its vast parklands and neighborhoods. A vague and weak lake overlay zone covers only lower downtown on the north bank. Existing zoning generally favors densities that are too high and land uses that are not appropriate for a waterfront environment. Clearly, land use is influenced by the market place without the benefit of comprehensive urban design and an attendant guidance system.

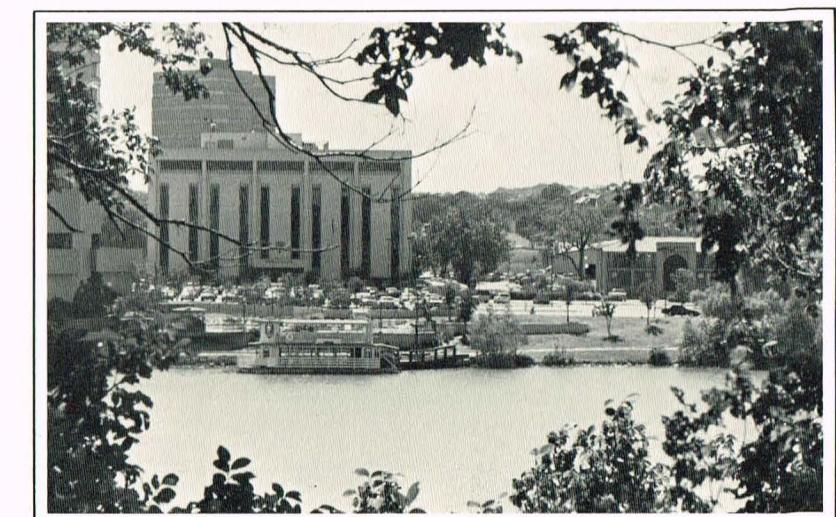
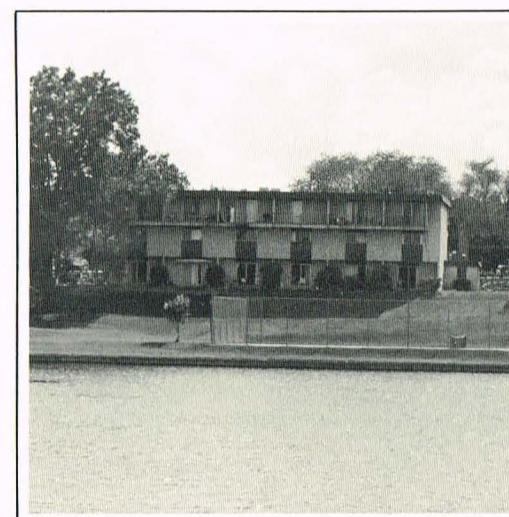
Land Use Patterns—The Town Lake Corridor has a pattern of both public and private land uses. The Corridor contains a total of ap-

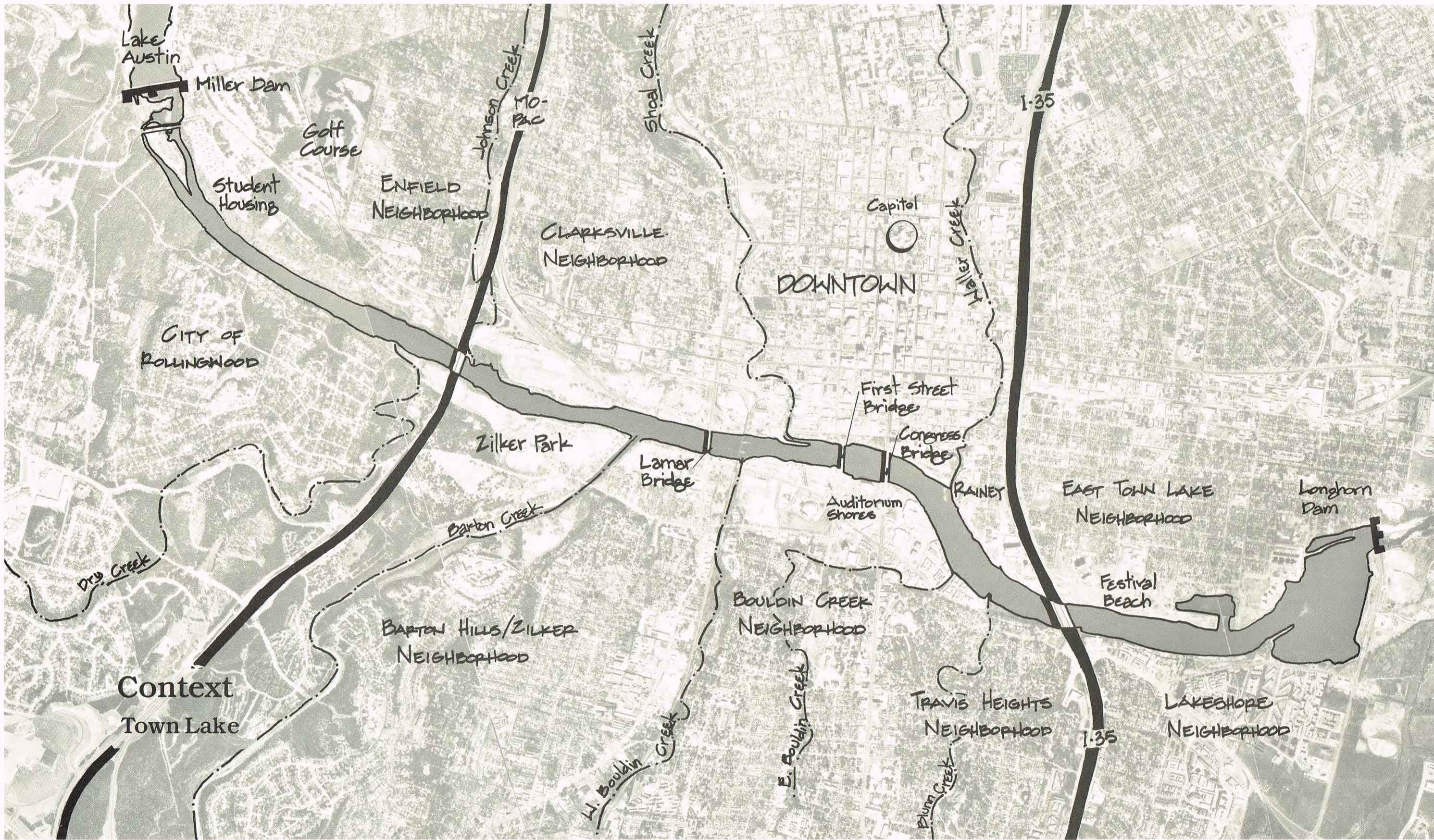
proximately 1997 acres. Of this, 1125 acres or 56 percent is in public ownership. Approximately 754 acres or 38 percent of the Corridor is in the form of parkland.

Major public uses located on the north shore include the University of Texas property which consists of a research laboratory and student housing. Three power plants are also located on the north shore. Zilker Park represents a significant public use area on the south shore.

The private/commercial uses along the waters edge are predominantly residential, restaurant, hotel and office. Large hotels and office complexes are concentrated downtown and just south of downtown across Town Lake.

The urban edge—where privately-owned land meets parkland or lakeshore streets is undergoing rapid change and development. The lower downtown area has begun a redevelopment embroidery that includes high rise office towers and hotels, condominiums, and the proposed City Hall public/private complex. Development pressures are also evident in the Rainey Neighborhood, on the Balcones rock cliffs, and along the south shore including Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive areas adjacent to South Austin neighborhoods. Siting of a recently proposed civic and





convention center has become a polarizing issue between park preservationists and the development community based on concerns for compatibility, traffic and development spinoff that might impact neighborhoods.

Land Use Suitability—Suitability analysis of an urban waterfront requires application of land use principles to determine if development is in harmony and sympathy with the lake environment. Criteria used for this study focused on waterfront-dependent, waterfront-related and pedestrian oriented land use objectives.

Much of the land use in the Town Lake Corridor can be described as singular, monotonous and unexciting. Little encouragement or direction has been given to achieve a design framework for appropriate waterfront animation (active edge), contextual architectural style, and pedestrian orientation of buildings. Given the present trend, office buildings and surface parking could ultimately dominate the landscape, creating an even more harsh environment for the pedestrian. Conspicuously absent are civic and cultural facilities that are found in great waterfront cities.

Misfits include parking garages, surface parking and service docks along the shoreline; apartments, hotels and associated amenities only a few feet from the waters edge; land uses which are not waterfront dependent (offices); homes perched on the edge of the Balcones rock cliffs, and building design that is not sympathetic with the lake context.

Other land uses are strikingly out of place: the Street and Bridge Yard, single-purpose ballfields, a major newspaper complex, mobile homes, warehousing and manufacturing, outdoor storage at the Holly Power Plant and other locations, a mix of unrelated uses between Barton Creek and South Lamar Boulevard, strip commercial development on South

Lamar, a high school complex and an animal shelter.

The largest undeveloped waterfront and natural area, the University of Texas Biological Research Lab, is off-limits to the public. There is also speculation that the valuable property is being eyed by University officials as a means of generating revenue.

Land occupied by the auditorium and coliseum does not reflect high standards for a public waterfront. Extensive surface parking, lack of landscaping, and the haphazard use of a portion of the land is apparent.

Opportunities to correct many of these deficiencies will arise as both redevelopment and new development respond to a highly valued and dynamic lake environment. For example, landowners in the Rainey neighborhood appeared to be less interested in neighborhood preservation and more inclined to participate in downtown development.

Circulation—An increase in traffic generated by new development both inside and outside the Corridor is creating the potential for major circulation problems and conflicts. While north-south traffic flows along four arterials and two freeways, east-west traffic is constrained by lack of a major thoroughfare in the central city connecting those freeways. Of particular concern is the likelihood of proposals that will recommend multi-lane roadways on one or both sides of the lake that could severely impact the Town Lake waterfront and other public open spaces in the Corridor. A need is apparent for comprehensive planning that would address a number of complex issues including preservation of public access to the waterfront, pedestrian access throughout the Corridor, neighborhood impact, parking and impact on parks and creeks. A number of transportation studies and capital improvement projects are addressing roadway problems and bridge cross-

ings, but these appear to be taking place without the benefit of comprehensive land use planning for both downtown and the Town Lake Corridor.

In 1968, prior to construction of MoPac, the Parks Board expressed concern that an east-west thoroughfare might seal off the waterfront from downtown. Today, those fears are well-founded because West First Street is a major barrier and poses design constraints for the new City Hall mixed use project and other developments to develop suitable connections with the waterfront.

Approved Town Lake Transportation Improvements

E. Riverside Drive—realignment East of I-35
Congress Avenue—completion of beautification plan

Grove Boulevard—new roadway to U.S. 183
S. First Street—reconstruction of Drake Bridge to six lanes

Downtown E/W Arterial—study siting for major downtown aerial and traffic issues

First Street—Third Street—new arterial E/W pair; defeated in 1985 referendum

Barton Springs Road—reconstruction of intersection to Robert E. Lee; improvements to Barton Springs Road

Lamar Boulevard/Bridge—reconstruction to six lanes

Robert E. Lee Road—reconstruction to four lanes

CBD Street Improvements—street reconstruction

W. First Bridge at Shoal Creek—bank stabilization and channel work

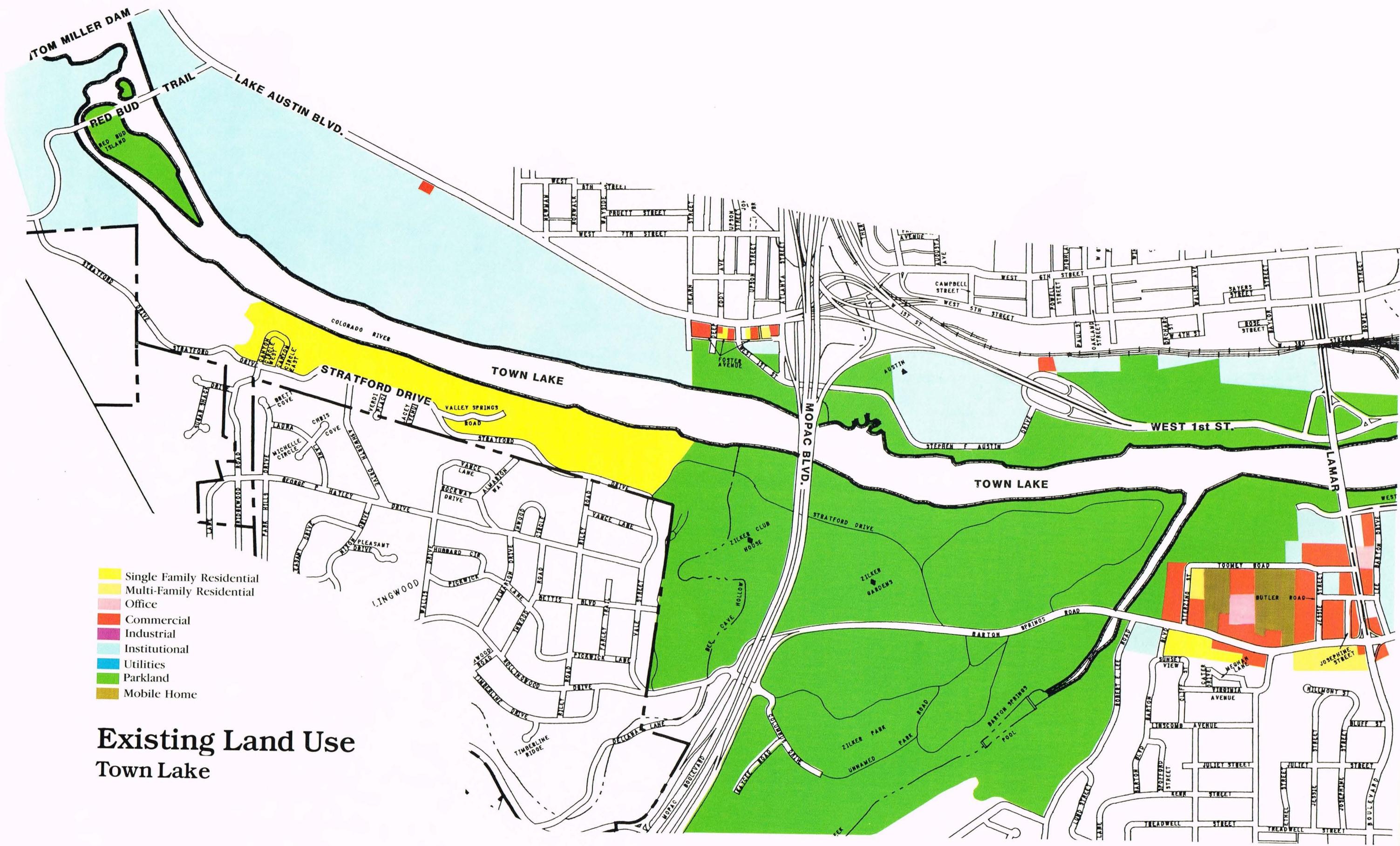
Source: *Urban Transportation Department*

Four principal roadways were recently designated scenic arterials in recognition of their relationship to the lake and adjacent parkland. These include Barton Springs Road, Riverside Drive, West First Street and Lake Austin Boulevard.

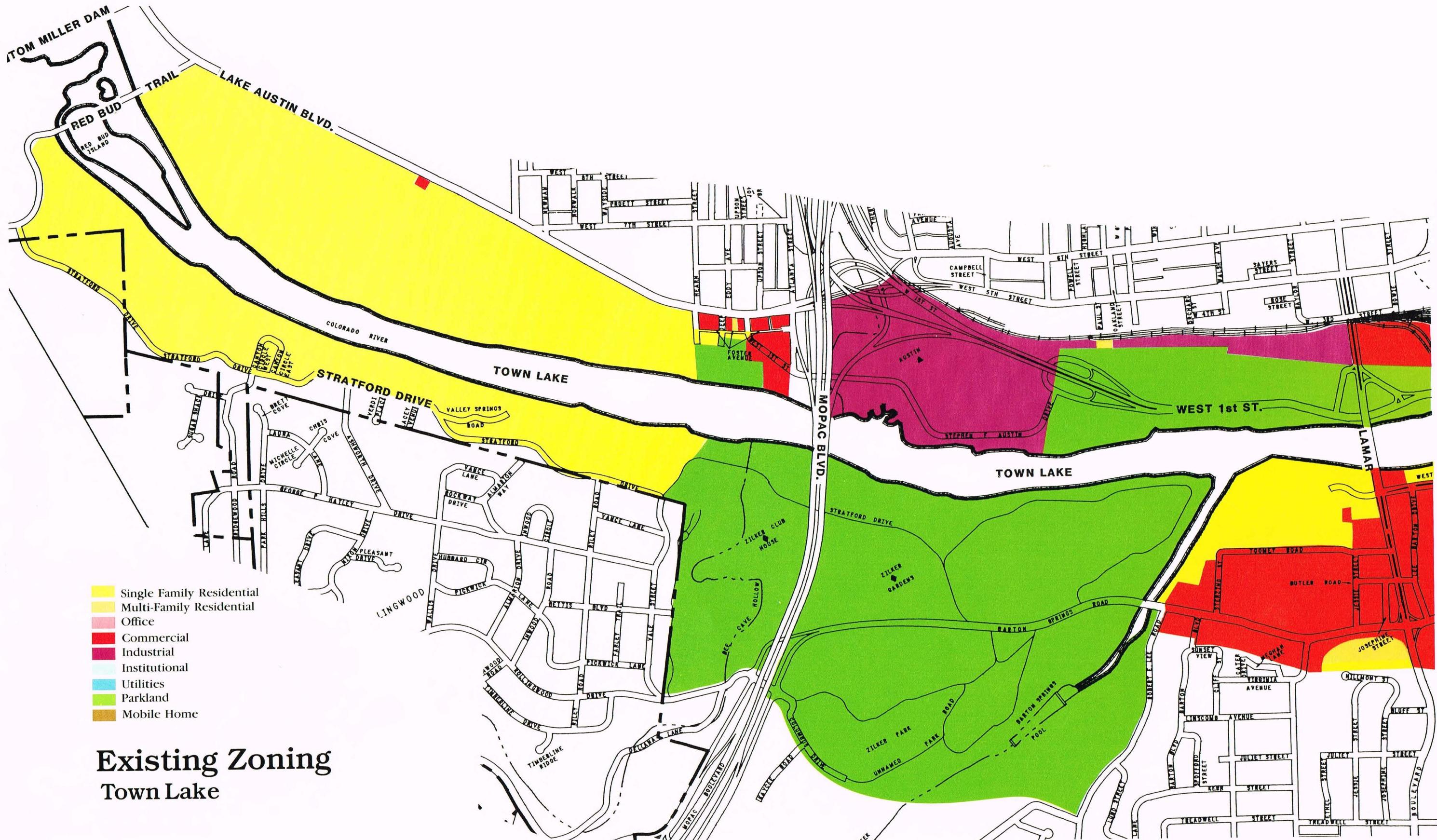
Presently vehicular access is predominantly linear along Town Lake. The lateral access, however, is not as well defined and legible even though there are 25 public parking lots, including areas underneath the MoPac and IH-35 bridges.

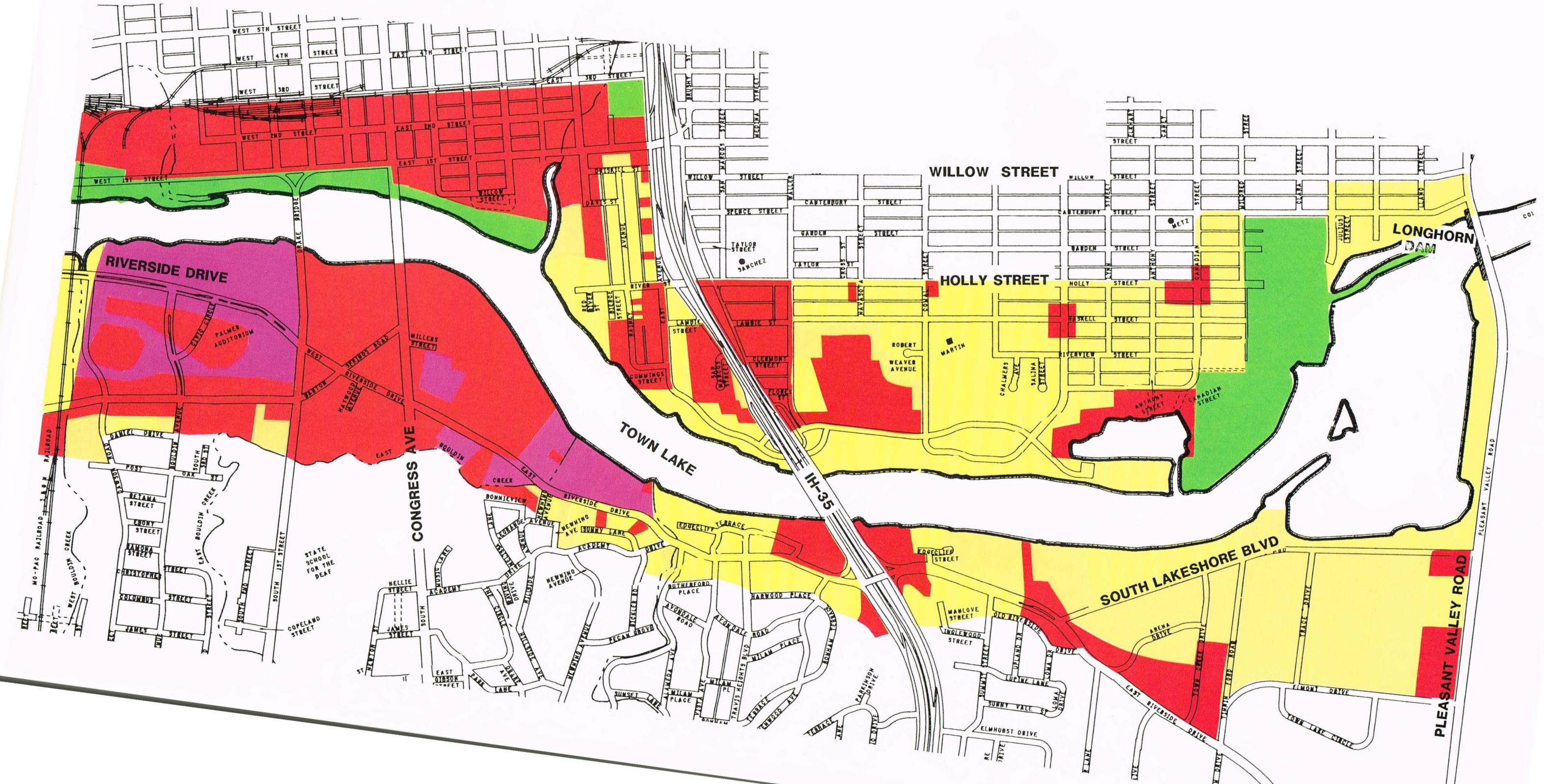
Inaccessible areas of Town Lake include the Balcones rock cliffs and the opposite shoreline, approximately one mile of shoreline on the south shore east of Congress Avenue, and the Holly Power Plant shoreline. Otherwise the 8.2 mile trail system provides excellent pedestrian and bicycle access; it was designated part of the National Trail System in 1975.

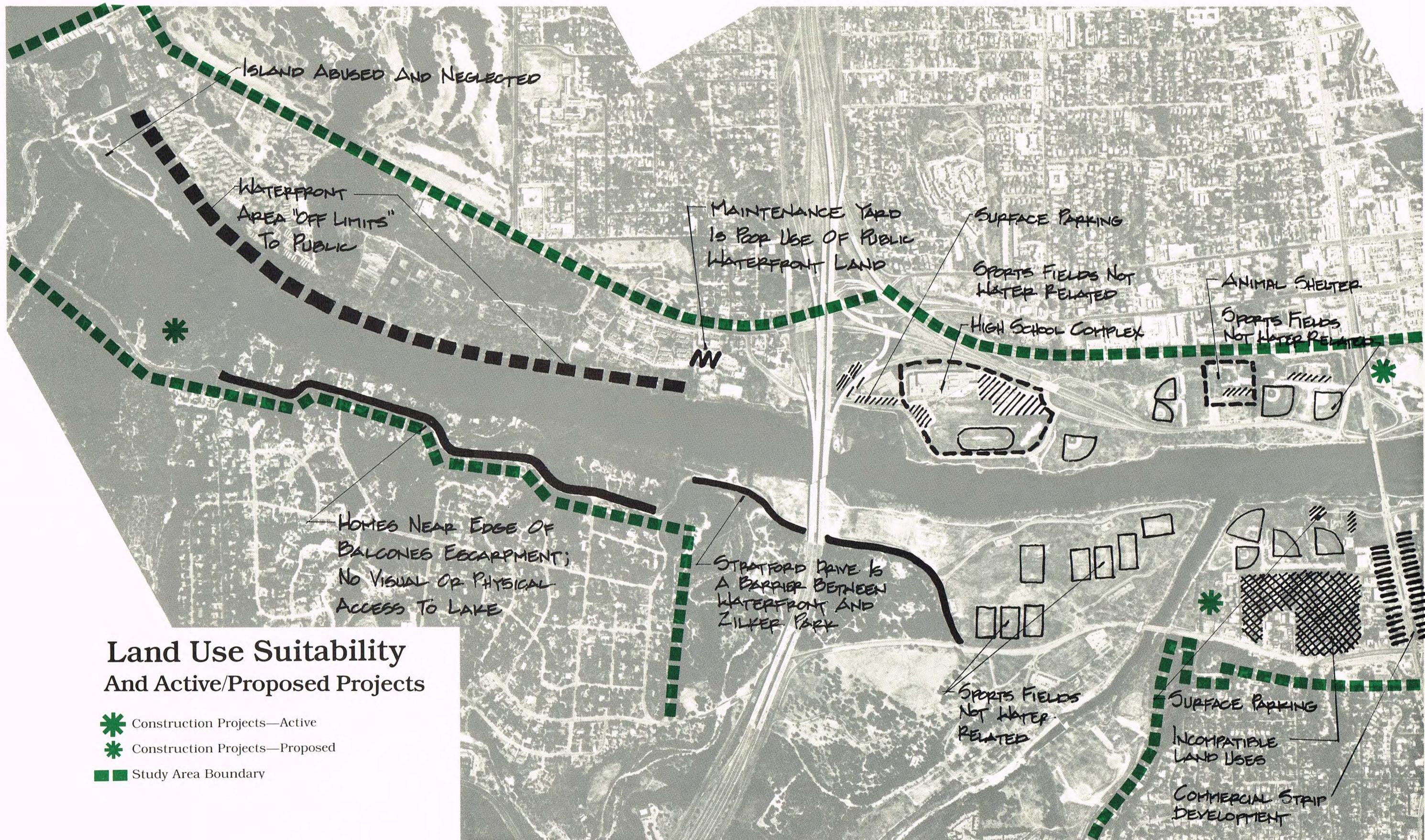
Pedestrian access and ramp connections are excellent at MoPac, fair at Congress Avenue and IH-35, unsafe and poor at the Lamar and First Street Bridges. No use is made of the water surface as a people mover and only one paddleboat provides regularly scheduled sightseeing tours. Bus service and a motorized trolley service for downtown provides a generally good transit system in the corridor.

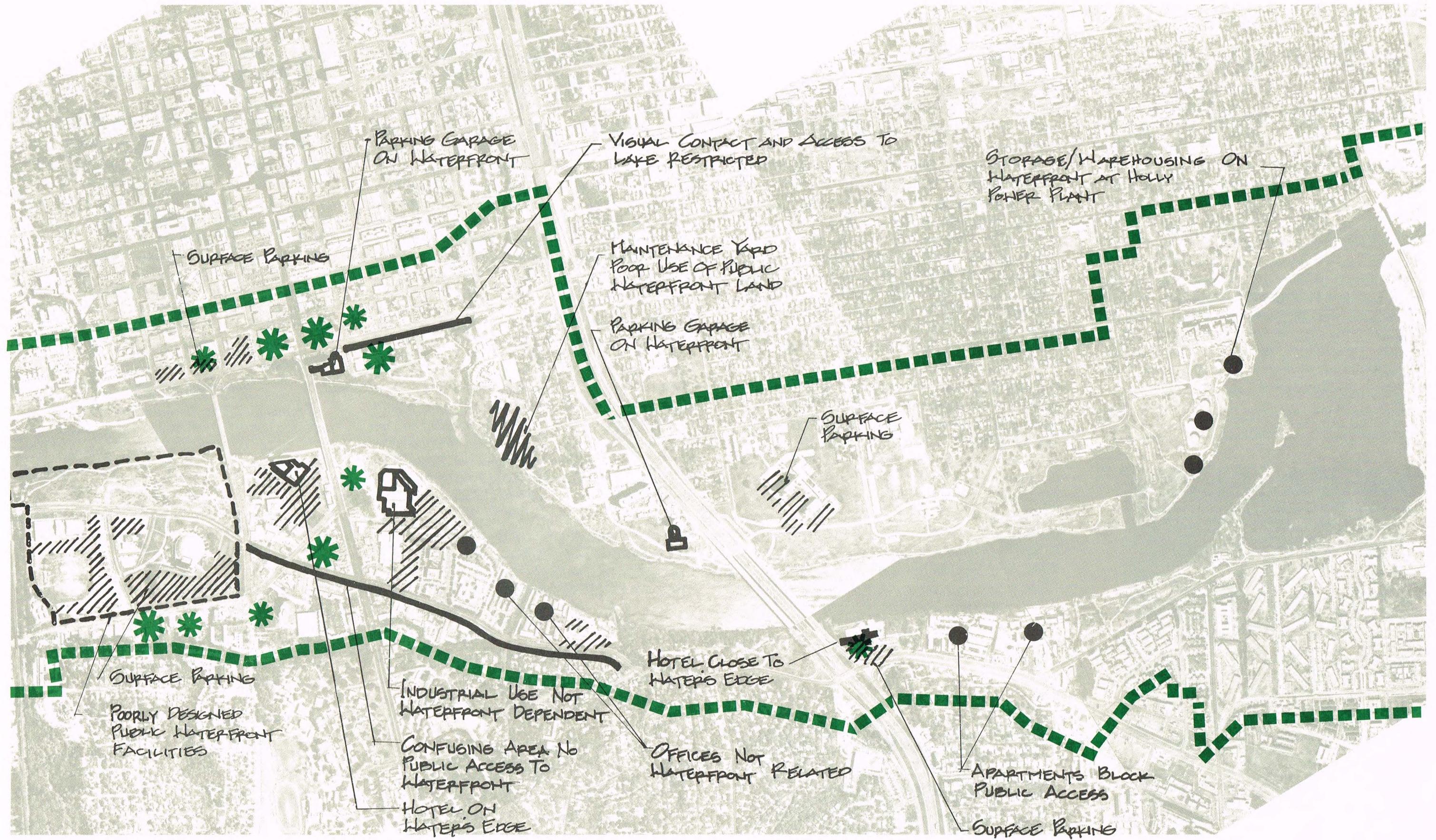












Parklands and Creeks

Parkland along Town Lake and its interconnecting greenbelts on six of the eight creeks represent a strategic open space framework for guiding and shaping the form of urban development, and for creating an integrated mix of recreation, business, entertainment and housing.

The full significance of growth shaping and waterfront recreation values is yet to be realized, but a window of opportunity exists to capitalize on rapid and dramatic change now occurring in the Corridor. Timing is critical, for some major decisions may be irreversible. Two recent purchases of parkland and support for renewal of public waterfront facilities demonstrate a strong commitment to a Central Park system legacy.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities on Town Lake

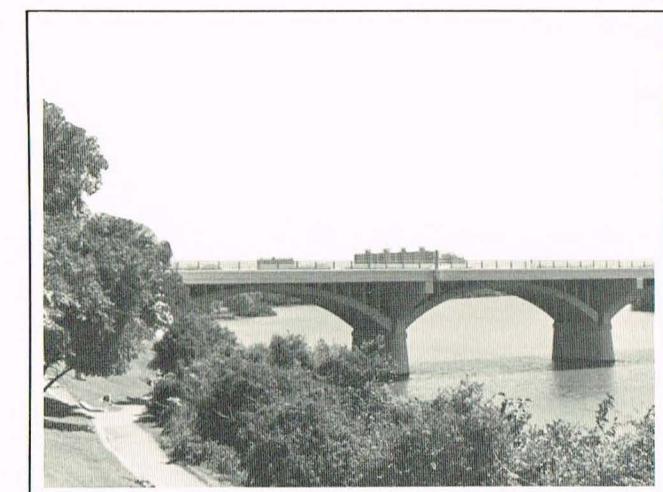
- Auditorium Shores Amphitheater
- Austin Area Garden Center
- Austin High Tennis Center
- Austin Nature Center
- Boat Ramps (4)
- Canoe and Sailboat Rental
- Coliseum
- Eilers Park-Deep Eddy Pool
- Fiesta Gardens
- Martin Pool/School Park
- Metz Park-Pool-Recreation Center
- Palmer Auditorium
- Pitch and Putt Golf Course
- Sports Fields (13)
- Zachary Scott Theater
- Zilker Park-Barton Springs Pool
- Zilker Clubhouse/Overlook
- Zilker Hillside Theater

Source: Parks and Recreation Department

Parklands—The design theme established in the original 1968 *Town Lake Comprehensive Plan* called for development of a place of “quiet beauty, dignity and pleasure”. Activity nodes were designated for six beaches on the north bank and five shores on the south bank, connected by a system of linear open spaces and the major creeks.

Quantitatively, the inventory of parklands and facilities is substantial; dedicated parkland adjacent to the lake comprises 754 acres. The extensive trail system, large and small park nodes, passive open space areas, swimming facilities, observation points, landings, and other facilities constitute an impressive public investment in the Corridor. Concessions provide opportunities for renting canoes, sailboats, and electric-powered boats.

Qualitatively, deficiencies are apparent. A lack of waterfront facilities is most obvious: no fishing piers, few boat launching and picnic areas, no lighting, and no well-facilitated outdoor performing area. Basic facilities are at a premium—shade, drinking fountains, restrooms and pavilions. Infra-structure repair is required due to wear and age, which is currently being addressed through a restoration plan and a recent appropriation of \$2,000,000 from the City's general fund.



Paid concerts and special events have created ill-will in the community because of exclusionary use (fences) and high environmental impact, suggesting a need for clearly stated goals and policies for appropriate public uses of the water and shoreline.

The present irrigation system is inadequate, not fully automated nor water conserving and uses potable water. Turf is not healthy due to poor soils and high compaction. Much of the landscape material is water dependent and not indigenous to the area, although a limited attempt has been made to introduce wildflowers to the north shore.

No integrated management program for both natural and intensive use areas is employed to achieve multiple objectives of ecological maintenance and park attractiveness. The result is either over-grooming of shoreline vegetation which frequently results in noxious weeds and undesirables introduced into the park landscape, or ignored areas that become overgrown, block views and collect litter. High impact maintenance and park police vehicles contribute substantially to soil compaction.

The design context of Town Lake parkland is not well defined and understood; therefore some plantings, use of building materials, architecture and signage lack continuity and “sense of place”. Waterfront design emphasis is on the trail system which perpetuates domination by joggers.

Multiple use waterfront objectives are not met at Fiesta Gardens (fencing); sports fields are singular in use along West First Street, at Butler Shores east of Barton Creek and in Zilker Park.

Problems of legibility, continuity and organization of the vast parklands and public facilities have resulted from a lack of comprehensive planning and design to keep pace with increasing use and diverse recreation interests. Management response may be described

more as reactive to external pressures and impacts than proactive to community needs.

Approved Town Lake Parks Improvements

Austin Nature Center	complete Phase II including exhibit pavilion, pond improvements, nature trails
Bouldin Creeks	land acquisition of Greenbelt
Colorado River	land acquisition below Longhorn Dam
Festival Beach	expand parking; new restrooms
Fiesta Gardens	basic upgrading based on neighborhood site plan to improve use
RBJ Park	new recreational and waterfront facilities for seniors and disabled
Shoal Creek	complete flood repairs
Town Lake	basic restoration of park facilities; comprehensive planning
Waller Creek	complete landscape beautification; lighting; irrigation
Zilker Park	major park renovation to upgrade park

Source: Parks and Recreation Department

Creeks—A hallmark of the Austin park system has been recognition of the abundant scenic, recreational and growth-shaping values of the creeks connecting with Town Lake. Six of the eight creeks carry greenbelt status, are accessible by trail and vary widely in character—from dramatic and pristine Barton Creek to the linear park on Blunn Creek and the more urbanized Waller Creek Walkway. Significant resource values of the creek landscapes include springs, pools, shelter caves, bluffs and typically the most interesting urban vegetation. A total of 23 miles of greenbelt

trail is available to the public from Town Lake providing a basis for excellent linkage to neighborhoods and downtown. An acquisition program is designed to acquire greenbelts on both East and West Bouldin Creeks but progress is slow due to land costs and urban development impacts.

Despite considerable public investment on these urban creeks, they are subject to a lax land use guidance system and therefore do not capitalize on their full potential as open space connectors to Town Lake and as form-shapers of urban development. Exemplary is the Waller Creek Walkway, a splendid concept of public creek beautification as a catalyst for mixed use redevelopment, but resulting in a disjointed arrangement of hotels, offices, con-

Town Lake Creeks and Functions

Barton Creek	an ecologically significant canyon accessed by a nine mile nature trail and greenbelt
Blunn Creek	the most ecologically intact urban creek; linear park, recreation facilities and trail
Bouldin Creeks	highly urbanized creeks, primarily drainage functions
Dry Creek	unique creek traversing Austin Nature Center site; interesting escarpment
Johnson Creek	urbanized greenbelt with hike and bike trail; marsh at mouth
Shoal Creek	1948 citizen-generated trail provided model for city's greenbelt system; extends from Town Lake to 38th Street
Waller Creek	lower creek beautified as a walkway to stimulate downtown mixed use development; Waterloo Park and Symphony Square are anchors; traverses University campus

Source: Parks and Recreation Department

dominiums and restaurants. A weak creek overlay zone does not require urban design regulations for set-back, height limitations and architectural control.

Of even more critical nature, storm water flows create severe bank erosion problems, carry litter and debris to the lake, and contribute to extensive deposits of sediment in the floodways and at the mouths of the creeks. Conflicts in the design of flood control and bank stabilization efforts are evident, as city agencies independently address multiple objectives of recreation and drainage. Other utilitarian functions of urban government impact the creek and lake environment. For example, large sewer vents on West Bouldin Creek and Pleasant Valley Road create noxious odors along the lake.

The mouths of the creeks, where water meets water, have strategic gateway/anchor potential for neighborhoods and the downtown area. Only Shoal Creek and Barton Creek make positive statements in this regard. Roadway improvements for East Riverside Drive do not include design for connecting the Blunn Creek hike and bike trail to Town Lake.

The complexity of issues related to the Town Lake creeks suggests a need for a more comprehensive information base for intelligent public and private decisions in the Corridor.

Visual Context

The visual image of the ten mile Town Lake waterfront varies considerably. However, there is a consistent theme of "open" and "built" space, of "hard" and "soft" edges.

The most scenic portion of the lake is on the west end, offering the most enticing views of the Balcones rock cliffs, the natural opposite shoreline and the Hill Country. However, viewpoints of this area are limited because of a lack of public access.

Seven viewpoints of the State Capitol in or along the waterfront are protected by ordinance; five others have been identified but are not protected by legislation. The strongest visual axis is tree-lined Congress Avenue, connecting the Capitol with Town Lake.

Views of the lake are offered along Festival Beach, Waller Beach, South Lakeshore Boulevard and West First Street. Linear views of the lake are best from the six bridges and Longhorn Dam, with the most spectacular views offered from the pedestrian bridge suspended beneath MoPac. The widest part of the reservoir near Longhorn Dam creates panoramas of water shoreline and urban landscape. A dramatic view of the Colorado River is possible at Longhorn Dam but access is limited and the views are constricted.

Excellent views of the downtown skyline are possible from West Riverside Drive, Lakeshore Boulevard, the rock cliffs in the Stratford neighborhood, and the Zilker Park Clubhouse.

Views of the lake are blocked in several locations by buildings, notably Austin High School, high rise condominiums and hotels, the Holly Power Plant, office buildings and apartments. Visual contact with the lake is also severely restricted in four areas: an illegible and confusing area on the south shore from the First Street Bridge to South Lakeshore Boulevard, along East First Street including the Rainey Neighborhood, along the Balcones rock cliffs, and the shoreline owned by the University of Texas.

The creek corridors offer lateral, soft edge corridors, but only Barton Creek rates high as visually accessible and of a scenic quality to generate positive image and identification. The views from both the Barton Springs Road bridge and the pedestrian bridge are outstanding.

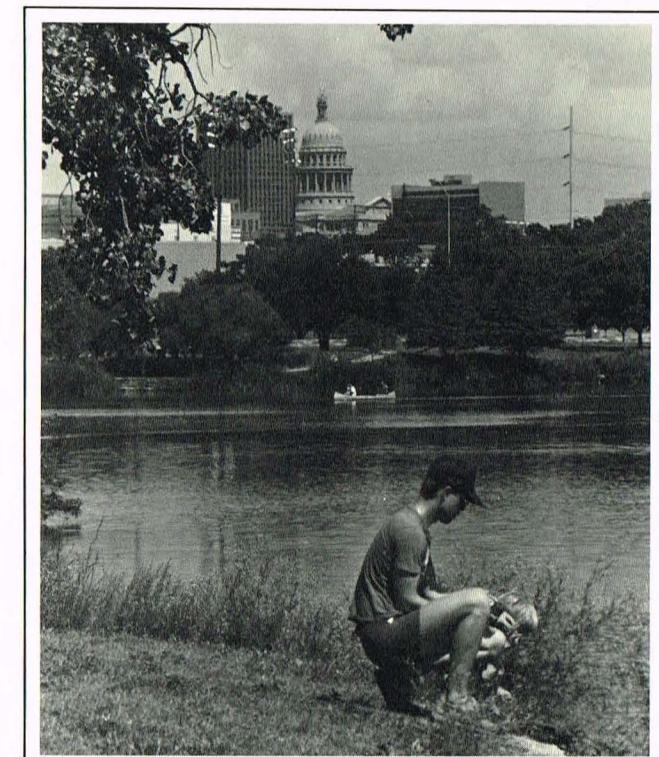
Gateways to the lake along the major north-

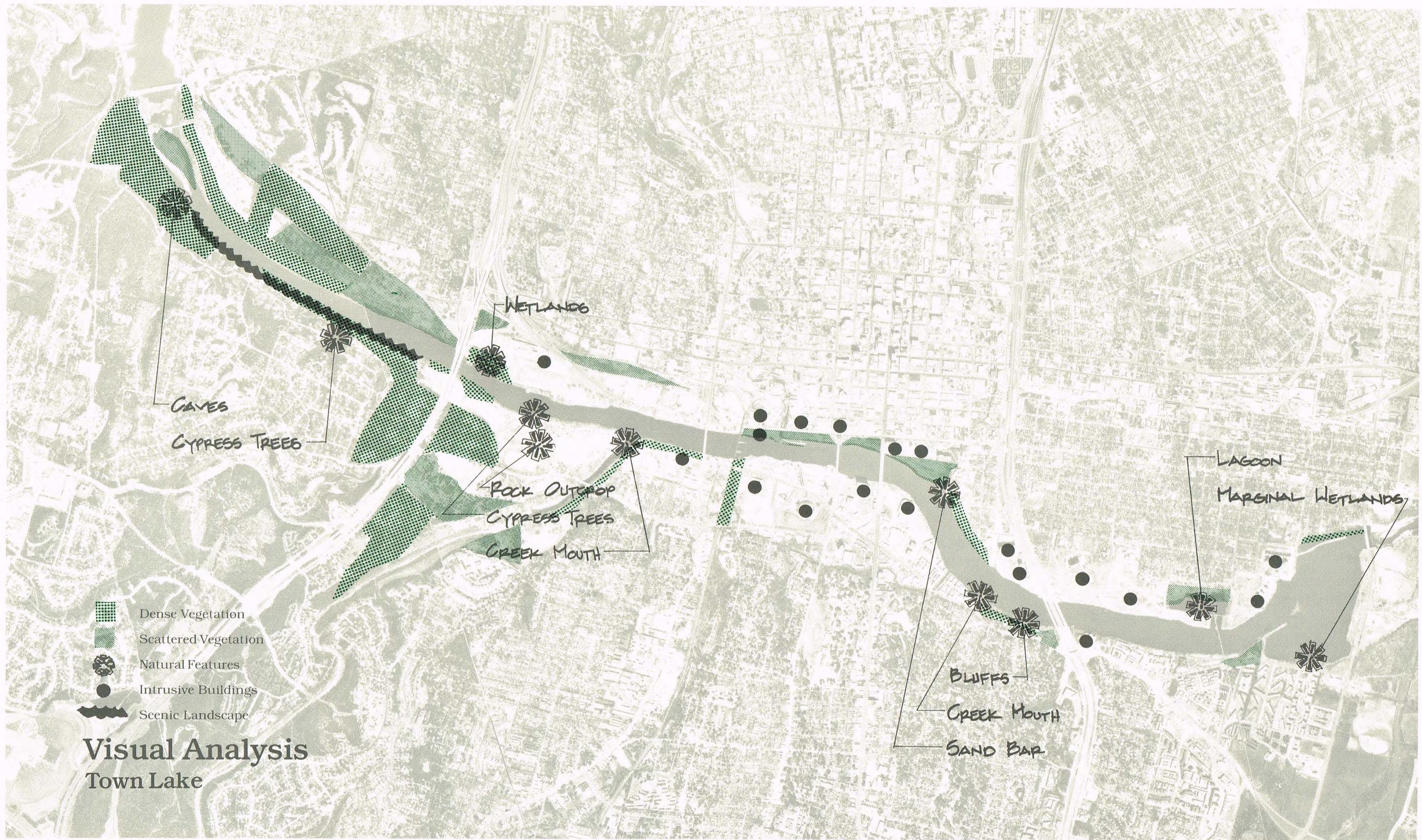
south roadways do not represent high quality visual characteristics, although the Parks and Recreation Department has recently developed several colorful horticulture displays in traffic islands and medians, and along the waterfront.

A proliferation of traffic signs, exposed utility and traffic control apparatus and overhead transmission cables clutter and detract from the visual quality of the Corridor. The unpainted MoPac railroad bridge is also a visual distraction.

Robert E. Lee Road is an especially scenic drive along Barton Creek, but roadway misfits (barriers) and advertising signs from a nearby sports field do little to enhance the visual image. Few parkways, boulevards or specially landscaped roadways exist in the Corridor.

Unlike older waterfronts, few landmarks of architectural significance add legibility and visual structure to the waterfront. Exceptions





Visual Analysis
Town Lake

Capitol View Corridors

Protected Views

Pleasant Valley at Lakeshore Boulevard
Lakeshore Boulevard—Longhorn Shores
Lamar Bridge
Lou Neff Point/Barton Creek Pedestrian
Bridge
MoPac Bridge
Zilker Clubhouse
Red Bud Trail

Views Not Protected

Montopolis Drive/Bridge
Northcliffe/Norwood Park
W. Side Lamar Bridge (trail)
Barton Creek Pedestrian Bridge East
Stratford Drive in Zilker Park
Grove Park (Colorado River Park)
Krieg Complex

Source: *Office of Land Development Services*

are the graceful arches of the Lamar and Congress Avenue bridges, and the restored Buford Fire Tower. The auditorium, coliseum, and utility plants are reference points but have little visual quality as civic buildings.

This brief summary analysis of visual characteristics of the Corridor leads to the conclusion that a more complete understanding of visual elements is required to provide a basis for urban design guidelines and policies. It is also apparent that the City itself could provide leadership in upgrading and enhancing the visual quality by adopting more sensitive design standards.

Water Quality

Because Town Lake is the lower reservoir in a chain of seven Highland Lakes, an awareness of its relationship to the overall lake system is essential. Most of the water in Town Lake comes from Lake Austin, which in turn origi-

nates from Lake Travis. Therefore, maintenance of water quality in both Lake Travis and Lake Austin is crucial to the health of Town Lake. Water quality in Town Lake in future years will depend in large part on the effectiveness of water quality management programs for the upper lakes developed by State water officials, the Lower Colorado River Authority and the City of Austin.

As a recipient of water from upper reservoirs, water quality in Town Lake is of good quality and is relatively unpolluted. As a recipient of the creeks which drain much of Austin, Rollingwood and West Lake Hills, however, water quality is poor after storm runoff and therefore becomes the greatest detriment to the lakes as potential risks to human health and aquatic life. Typically debris, floats and styrofoam cups provide visual evidence of the problem, negative public response, and high maintenance costs. Urban storm water components include a long list of pollutants, which if left unchecked could reduce substantially the recreation and aesthetic value of the lake, and could increase sedimentation and nutrient loading.

Common Run-Off Pollutants

- Dust and dirt
- Street refuse and sidewalk sweepings
- Discarded debris, litter, oil, anti-freeze
- Building and demolition wastes
- Industrial and vehicular emissions
- Petroleum leakage from automobiles
- Asbestos from brake linings
- Particulates from tire treads
- Household and lawn refuse
- Fecal droppings from pets
- Sanitary sewer leakage
- Septic system overflows and failures
- Fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides
- Fumigants

Source: *Lake Austin Growth Management Plan*

Watershed protection strategies are in place for Lake Austin and Lake Travis. However, watershed and waterway development regulations for the Town Lake drainage have inadequate development standards and runoff control measures. There are no comprehensive measures for water treatment and filtering to reduce pollutant concentrations in Town Lake. New development projects connect to existing storm sewers which either empty into area creeks or directly into Town Lake.

Town Lake Drainage Projects

Approved:

Johnson Creek Improvements and Bypass
Lower Shoal Creek Flood Control
East Bouldin Creek Improvements
Waller Creek Flood Improvements and Bypass

Proposed:

Shoal Creek Bypass

Source: *Public Works Department*

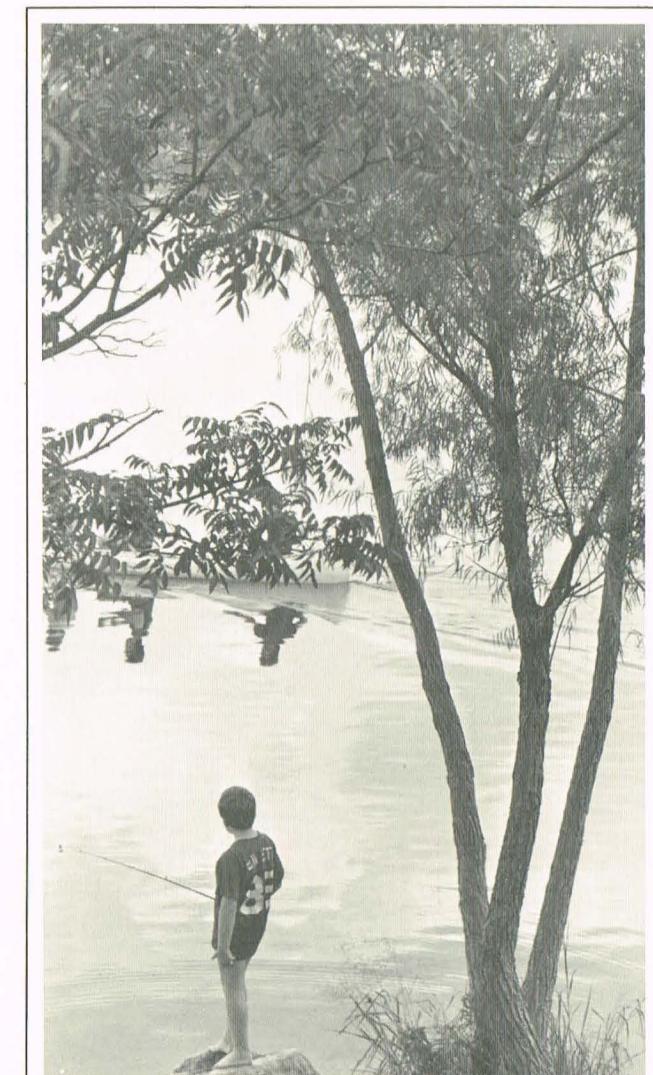
According to a recent federal study of urban runoff, limited data on toxic materials such as pesticides and heavy metals indicate that few of these materials are detectable in the waters of Lake Austin and Town Lake. However, it is noted that these pollutants may well have accumulated in the sediments and may have gone undetected. Further, water samples may not have coincided with runoff events.

A study conducted recently by the Austin-Travis County Health Department showed common game fish in Town Lake have not been significantly tainted by pesticide residues and are safe to eat. However, the public is cautioned not to consume carp and shad, which contain unsafe levels of DDT and Chlordane. The use of DDT was banned in 1972, but the chemical remains for many years; Chlordane is commonly used for termite control. These chemicals and other

household products including discarded oil and antifreeze are carried to Town Lake through storm drains.

It can be concluded that the City should pursue practical methods of retrofitting existing development and requiring more stringent development and disposal standards if the quality of water in Town Lake is to be maintained for recreational purposes.

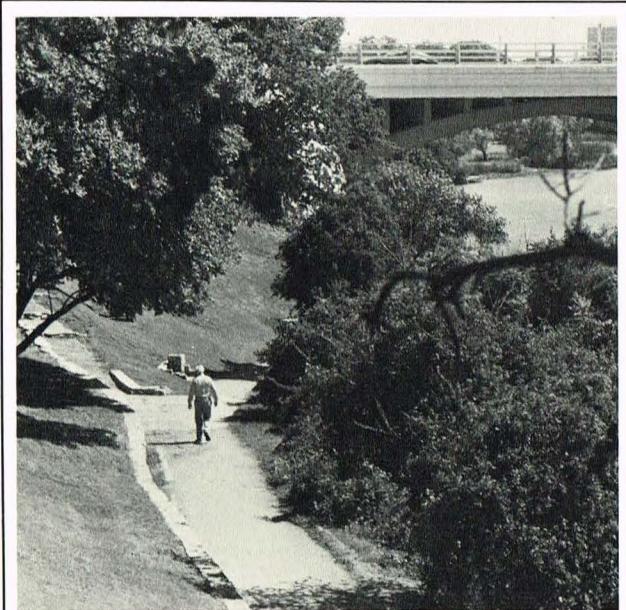
Furthermore, because of the complex urban hydrology of the lake and its creeks, a more comprehensive study is required to develop a sound strategy for protecting water quality.



Natural and Cultural Resources

Rivers and streams and their flood plains have generally been found to contain the better representations of a community's natural and cultural values. Many of these values were inundated by impoundment of the Colorado River which created Town Lake, and by removal or alteration as a part of development in the flood plain. Nevertheless, the Town Lake area can be described as a rich environmental corridor having abundant resource values.

Natural Resources—The most dramatic feature of Town Lake is its location within the transition zone of two geographic provinces, the Edwards Plateau (Hill Country) and the Gulf Coastal Plain (Blackland Prairie). These two distinct regions are responsible for a wide diversity of resource values in the Corridor. It has also been stated that the greatest diversity of native vegetation in Travis County occurs



curred along the flood plains of the Colorado River and the major creeks, and that cultural values (both prehistoric and historic) are likely more plentiful in the river valley and along its tributaries.

Lamar Boulevard is the dividing line between the two major provinces: landscape features to the west are characteristic of the Hill Country, and those to the east represent prairie qualities. Several shore landforms provide significant variety and contrast: the Balcones rock cliffs, alluvial bluffs, park slope edges, swampy edges, a lagoon, eight creek confluences, three islands and three peninsulas. The Balcones rock cliffs are listed on an inventory of "Significant Natural Areas of Texas", developed by the Texas Parks and

Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Town Lake Area

Bluff above Barton Creek at Robert E. Lee Road
Limestone bluffs, south shore of Town Lake below Tom Miller Dam

Both sides of Red Bud Trail

Red Bud Island

North shore Town Lake below Red Bud Trail (Brackenridge Tract)

Lower Blunn Creek from Town Lake to Live Oak Avenue

Entire Shoal Creek area and floodplain

Area southwest of intersection of Barton Springs Road and Dawson Road

Mouth of Johnson Creek

South bank of Town Lake from Dry Creek to Bouldin Creek

Barton Creek, east bank from Town Lake to Barton Springs Pool

Small roadside area at W. First and Lake Austin Boulevard

Source: Travis County Audubon Society

Wildlife Department. These cliffs extend from Tom Miller Dam to Zilker Park; a lower bluff extends from Barton Creek to IH-35. Twelve areas in the corridor are on the list of environmentally sensitive areas, as reported by the Travis County Audobon Society.

The best concentration of vegetation is found in the western zone. The only true forest, a pecan-elm association occurs in the Brackenridge tract and is well preserved. Very large cypress trees are found along the shoreline, and Zilker Park preserves mature live oak and juniper trees. A large stand of mature hardwoods (primarily pecans) is found in an area along Barton Springs Road extending east of Barton Creek and west of Lamar Boulevard. No comparable stands of flood plain hardwoods still exist along the Colorado River within the city limits of Austin.

The western area along Town Lake also contains a number of uncommon plant species. Mormon Tea, on the cliffs below Stratford Drive, is at the eastern edge of its range. The Anaqua tree on the north bank of Town Lake is at the northern extremity of its range.

Vegetation in the central portion of the lake has been largely introduced and includes flowering trees, Cypress and Golden Raintree. The significant concentration of hardwood trees in the Rainey Neighborhood is an important natural resource for the downtown area. Throughout the remainder of the lake environment, a mixture of hardwoods and oaks can be found, with concentrations along the bluffs near Riverside Drive and IH-35 and in the peninsula areas to the east.

Since the time the artificial lake was created, both introduced and natural vegetation has emerged along the shoreline. Aquatic vegetation including rushes, elephant ears, water lilies, and cattails provides a healthy diversity and balance of plant species.

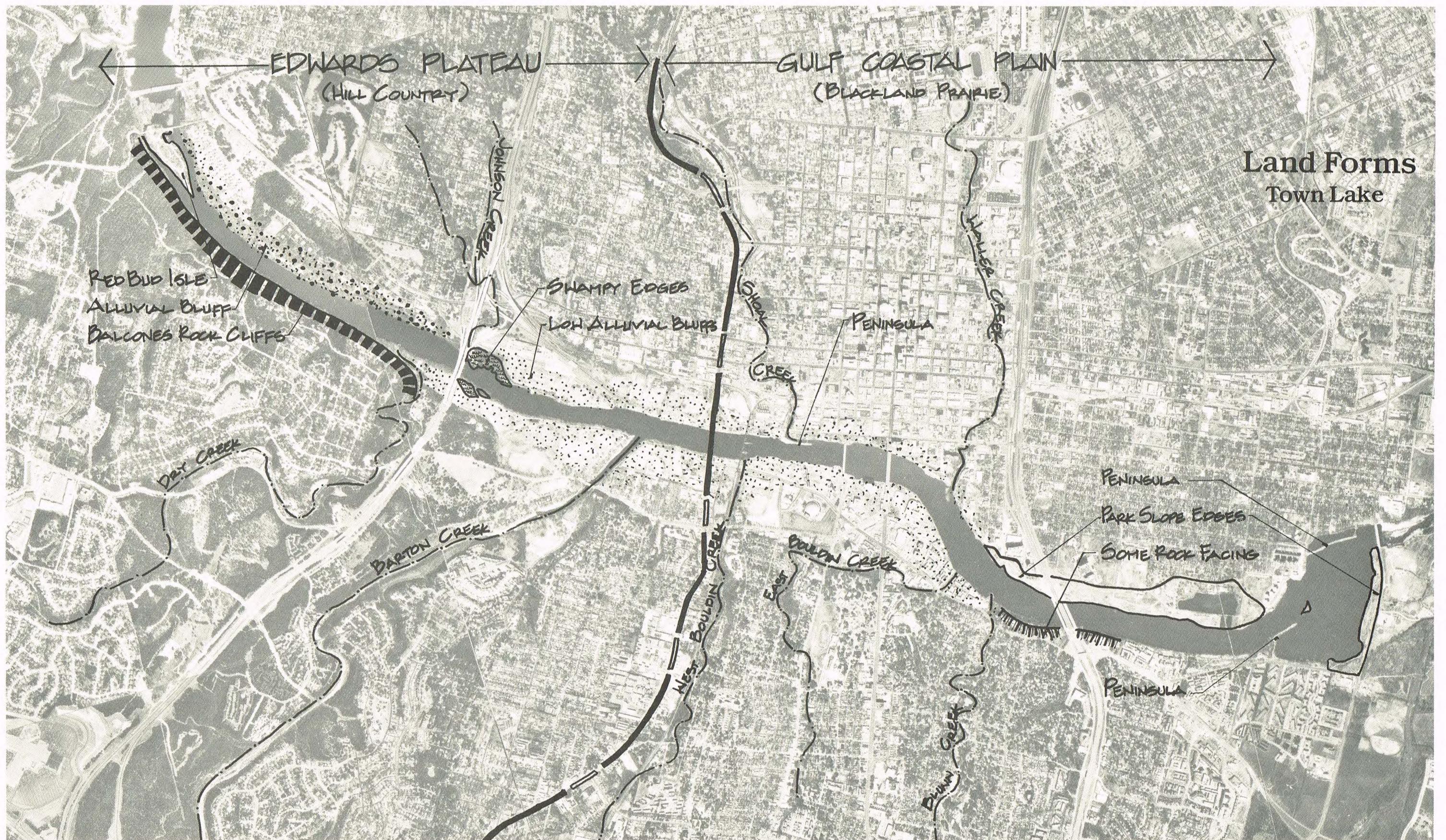
Vegetation along the creeks has been largely disturbed by urban development, although the mouths of the creeks are the most well preserved since they are the least accessible. Creek vegetation at the mouths has also become more lush since they serve as back-water extensions of the lake.

The woodlands along the creeks and the lakeshore provide excellent cover for migrant and wintering birds and a small population of nesting species. Wood ducks nest on Red Bud Isle. The most unusual feature of the Colorado River Basin is the migration of some coastal waterfowl such as the Yellow-Crowned Night Heron and Cormorant. The aquatic environment also provides an excellent habitat for turtles of all sizes.

A marsh-like water zone at the mouth of Johnson Creek is an important nesting area for ducks and the Green Heron. The lake provides a natural ecological corridor for many native bird species, including songbirds, owls, kingfishers, hummingbirds, and cliff swallows. A colony of naturalized Monk Parakeets has been observed near Zilker Park.

Many smaller mammals tolerant of man are still found along the lake. The Congress Avenue bridge structure is the seasonal home to a sizeable colony of Mexican Free-Tail Bats. Nutria, naturalized transplants from South America, live along the upper wooded stretch of the shoreline. Open fields on the southern bank are marked by the numerous burrow openings of Mexican Ground Squirrel.

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Town Lake supports an excellent fishery. The most common game fish are sunfish and channel catfish; other common fish include bass, crappie and perch. A 1972 report indicated that Town Lake supports a relatively wide diversity of species with no apparent changes in species composition.



Cultural Resources—The Colorado River and its vast drainage system was the focal point for cultural activity during both the historic and prehistoric period. The presence of water, food, and vegetation were attractions for ancient animals, prehistoric man, Indian cultures and the first settlers.

Fifteen archaeological sites have been recorded in the Town Lake Corridor. According to the Texas Historical Commission, the Town Lake area never has been systematically surveyed. It is highly probable that numerous additional sites would be discovered through such a survey. Of the sites recorded, thirteen are prehistoric including human burials, rock shelters, middens, a kiln and stone quarry. They are distributed equally along the lakeshore. Site conditions are unknown, except for one site that has been destroyed. Because of the frequency of flooding and the overflow of alluvial material, it is likely that many archaeological resources have been preserved over time.

Recent construction has unearthed a number of prehistoric mammals. According to paleontologists, there is a high probability that more and better preserved fossils may be encountered during excavation in the future, especially in the river valley.

The architectural history of Austin is unique, reflecting the various periods of economic development and growth throughout the city as well as the state of Texas. The paramount event in the growth of the city was the placement of the Capitol building due north of the Colorado River. Using the river as a base to Congress Avenue, the remainder of the central city was laid out on a classical grid pattern. Much of the land along the Town Lake Corridor was never originally platted; it was reserved for the flood plain areas of the Colorado River. As a result, many of the structures within the boundaries of the study are relatively

young in age compared with the remainder of the city.

Within the boundaries of the Corridor, approximately 500 structures have been identified as built prior to 1935. Approximately 30% of those structures were given a number one research priority, with their ages ranging from the late 1800's to 1915. Within the Town Lake Study Area, several National Register Districts have been promulgated by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The one district which is adopted by THC, the Congress Avenue District, covers an area from the State Capitol building to Town Lake from alleyway to alleyway. Several other areas within the study boundaries have been designated for potential district status but have not yet been finalized by the Secretary of Interior. These areas are: the Rainey Neighborhood which comprises structures along Rainey Street in the southeastern area of the downtown area, and the East Austin Area Multiple Resources District which includes an area south of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to Town Lake. The Multiple Resource District includes two National Register Districts which are not within the boundaries of the Town Lake Study Area. Issuance of any permit within the National Register Districts requires review and comment from the Historic Landmark Commission as to the appropriateness of the proposed projects.

Other notable structures within the study area are located west of the downtown area and to a limited extent south of the lake. Within this area is perhaps the oldest structure in Austin, the Paggi House, located in the 200 block of Lee Barton Drive. This structure was built prior to the Civil War and is significant to Austin as one of the earliest remaining Greek Revival Homes in the city. The house was built outside the old town site of Austin, along the road that crossed Barton Creek and approached the Colorado River. As

a result, the structure was important to travelers in the area. Other structures in the area of note are many of the City of Austin structures located along the northern shore of Town Lake, namely the Schnieder Store Building along West Second, the Seholm Power Plant along West First, and the Kitchen Memorial Chimes (Buford Firetower) in the 200 block of West First Street.

No survey has been made of historical sites or structures located on Town Lake parkland, and little or no interpretation is provided by the Parks Department. The Zilker moonlight tower, historic structures in Zilker Park, Deep Eddy Pool, the urban creeks, and the remnant brick factory tower are a few of the more well known historic sites and structures on the lake. Barton Springs Pool has been nominated for national historic designation.

Infrastructure

Three water treatment plants, the Goville Wastewater Treatment Plant, and seven lift stations constitute the major utility service to

Approved Town Lake Water and Wastewater Projects

Water

- Green Water Treatment Plant Improvements
- Green Water Treatment Plant Transmission Main (South and North)
- Ullrich Water Treatment Plant Expansion
- Riverside Transmission Main

Wastewater

- West Bouldin Creek Relief Interceptor
- South Austin Outfall
- Canterbury Lift Station Improvements

Source: Water and Wastewater Department

the Town Lake Corridor. The wastewater collection system in the Town Lake Corridor collects wastewater from twenty-four drainage basins.

According to the Water and Wastewater Department, with completion of current improvements, the water system should adequately serve the Town Lake Corridor for its future development. Wastewater capacity is also believed to be sufficient for existing and future development, although re-evaluation of lift stations and equipment on both sides of Town Lake is necessary.

The communities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills are primarily using septic systems, and therefore have the potential for impacting water quality of Lake Austin and Town Lake.

GOALS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS—values, mission statements, desired results

POLICIES—guidelines for action to achieve goals

Two research methods and a public hearing provided a basis for developing goals and policy recommendations for the Town Lake Corridor. A scientific sampling of Austin residents generated statistically representative information concerning citizen values, perceptions and opinions related to Town Lake. Inventory and analysis of existing conditions in the Corridor provided a framework for identifying issues and concerns. A public hearing attracted 100 citizens, 19 of which provided testimony. Taken together, this information is believed to be adequate for goal formulation and policy development.

It is recognized that this benchmark study is only the initial phase of comprehensive planning for the Corridor. It becomes readily apparent that there are large gaps in the information base to provide specific planning recommendations. Moreover, because of the scale of the study area including both critical and contributing zones, and because problems and issues are complex and multi-dimensional, more systematic and in-depth planning is required. Nonetheless, this effort is important as an overall framework for short range decision-making and future planning.

Town Lake Survey

By telephone, 1,226 Austin residents were surveyed in August 1985 to obtain opinions regarding awareness, use and future development of the Town Lake area. More intensive interviews were conducted with 225 park users and 101 non-users.

Summarizing the results of the study, these conclusions can be drawn:

1. Austinites have a narrow definition of the geographic definition of Town Lake; the majority consider it to be smaller than it is.
2. Austinites are very much aware of the facilities and activities available on Town Lake.
3. Users and non-users have positive images of Town Lake.
4. Most popular activities include (in rank order):
 - (1) relaxing at the waterfront or nearby restaurant and bar
 - (2) fitness/exercise
 - (3) group activities (soccer, frisbee, picnics)
 - (4) water activities
5. Majority of both users and non-users give "good" ratings for Town Lake features.
6. Worst ratings are given for water cleanliness and availability of restrooms.
7. Non-users rank low the following:
 - (1) shore access
 - (2) security and safety
 - (3) sports and fitness activities

8. Users and non-users overwhelmingly support:

- (1) more parks and open space
- (2) completion of the hike and bike trail

9. Users and non-users oppose more tall buildings on the shoreline.

10. Austinites endorse:
(1) more boat rentals
(2) children's museum
(3) performing arts center
(4) science museum

Town Lake Survey—Highlights

Awareness and Use

- Austinites have a geographically narrow definition of the Town Lake area. One-third do not know where it begins or ends. Of those that reported boundaries for Town Lake, only 28% defined Town Lake from Miller to Longhorn dams (the actual geographic parameters).
- Austinites in all parts of the city and of all ages are very much aware of facilities and activities available in the Town Lake area.
- The most popular Town Lake activities are just relaxing at the waterfront or nearby restaurant or bar (55%), followed by fitness/exercise (45%), group activities like soccer, frisbee and picnics (45%), and water activities (28%).

Image of Town Lake

- User and non-users alike have generally positive images of Town Lake. Key differences are: non-users are much more likely to perceive Town Lake as "overcrowded," "bustling," "dirty," "dangerous" or "not safe."

Ratings of Town Lake Features

- The majority of both users and non-users give "good" ratings to the following Town Lake features: scenic beauty, tourist attractions, sports and fitness activities, entertainment activities and access to the shore. The worst feature ratings are given to cleanliness of water and availability of restrooms.
- Non-users are more negative than users regarding shore access, security and safety, and sports and fitness activities.

Changes For the Future of Town Lake

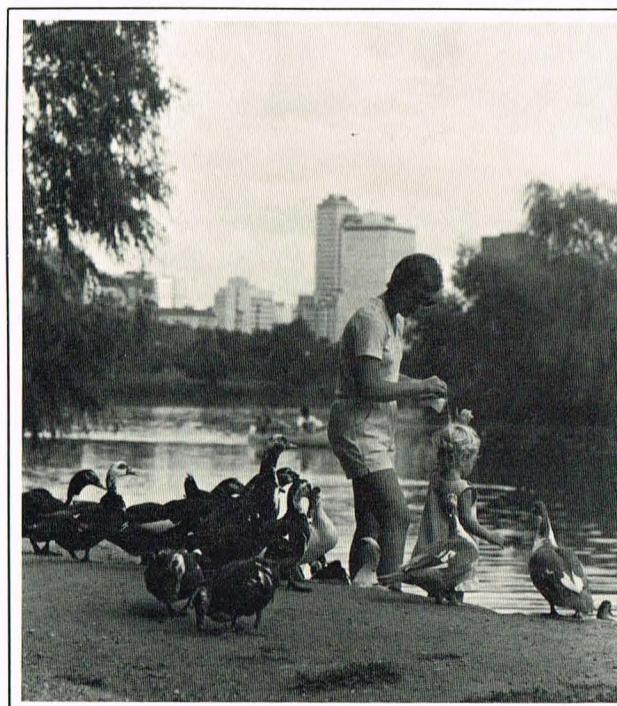
- Half of the 326 persons interviewed indicated support for additional public facilities. The most strongly endorsed were more boat rentals, a children's museum, a performing arts center and a science museum.
- Town Lake users and non-users alike overwhelmingly support more parks and open space (97%), and completion of the hike & bike trail (98%). They oppose more tall buildings on the shoreline (92%).
- Considerable disagreement exists on the addition of waterfront cafes and restaurants.
- Similar disagreement exists with regard to the building of a civic and convention center in the Town Lake area. Two-thirds of the on-site users are opposed. In the representative sample of city residents, however, Town Lake users favor the civic/convention center by (53.6% to 46.7%), while non-users are slightly against it (51% to 49%). Among both groups of users, opponents feel more strongly than proponents.
- Extrapolating from the sample statistics to the whole city, the civic/convention center in the Town Lake area is supported by 50.4% and opposed by 49.6%. When intensity of opinion is considered, 29% strongly oppose and 24% strongly support this development on Town Lake.

Source: NuStats, Inc "Austin's Town Lake: A Study of Public Opinion Regarding Awareness, Use and Future Development." 1985.

Disagreement exists with regard to the building of a civic and convention center, dividing Austinites "dead even". When intensity of opinion is examined, 29% strongly oppose and 24% support this controversial development in the Town Lake area.

From the survey it can also be concluded that the Town Lake area is perceived as a valuable Austin resource, for which change necessitates careful consideration. However, the most disputed issue appears to be access to the lake, not development:

"This is easily demonstrated by the overwhelming support for a children's museum, a performing arts center, cultural facilities and a science museum in the Town Lake area—all of which necessitates 'development'. Conversely, obscuring the view of the lake by having tall buildings on the shoreline may be perceived as making the lake less accessible to Austin residents, and therefore overwhelming opposed" (NuStats, Inc., 1985).



This survey suggests the most significant aspect of the controversy over development may be more the images that individuals attribute to private developers rather than actual buildings taking place in the Town Lake area. In this regard, the central core of Town Lake is especially treasured, and future decisions—public and private—should be especially sensitive to perception of public access as related to future development.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies which follow represent an effort to describe a "personality" for Town Lake. In this context the goals represent values, mission statements, or desired results. The policies should be viewed as guidelines for action to achieve the goals.

WATER QUALITY

GOAL 1.00 Protect and improve the water quality of Town Lake to achieve the highest possible standards.

Policy 1.01 Establish a City commitment to develop more sophisticated, innovative and effective programs for filtering and treating urban run-off, particularly the "first flush" in new development. Encourage regional detention and filtration for flood and pollution control.

Policy 1.02 Acquire more complete information on pollutants and pollutant loading in both Lake Austin and Town Lake.

Policy 1.03 Establish water quality imperatives and time frames for achieving improved water quality standards.

Policy 1.04 Encourage a greenbelt area along the waters edge to allow for overland flow and filtration of runoff.

Policy 1.05 For polluting land uses (e.g. automotive), require filters and traps to avoid further contamination of Town Lake; prohibit uses in the future which can potentially generate pollutants.

Policy 1.06 Strengthen development standards and construction methods by improving erosion control, sedimentation and re-vegetation regulations; require regular inspection.

Policy 1.07 Require higher standards for City erosion control projects to serve as a model for the development industry.

Policy 1.08 Improve water's edge maintenance of the public greenbelt; avoid use of herbicides and pesticides; initiate a specific maintenance program for natural areas.

Policy 1.09 Develop specific standards for maintenance of shoreline vegetation and erosion control geared to intensity of use and physical characteristics.

Policy 1.10 Recognize in all shoreline development decisions the potential hazards associated with flood release; coordinate policy development with assistance from the Lower Colorado River Authority.

Policy 1.11 Develop an innovative litter control program for the waterfront including a comprehensive public education campaign, examination of maintenance practices, and applying technology for filtering and/or screening debris on the creeks.

LAND USE

GOAL 2.00 Create superior planning, design and mixing of land uses that are waterfront dependent or waterfront-related, and sympathetic to the water's edge of the Town Lake Corridor and the urban creeks.

Policy 2.01 Establish Town Lake and the urban creeks as the catalyst for developing and adopting an innovative, comprehensive land use plan and urban design framework for central city.

Policy 2.02 Require people-oriented activities on the ground and second levels of buildings; encourage development to focus on the festive retail market to promote entertainment, recreational, retail, cultural and food service activities.

Policy 2.03 Encourage development that is diverse, intimate, full of surprises, and creates maximum opportunity to walk and linger.

Policy 2.04 Designate critical areas of the Corridor as Comprehensive Planning Districts to be planned, designed and developed based on specially formulated criteria to capitalize on unique opportunities.

Policy 2.05 Focus land use guidance on the quality of urban design rather than floor area ratios and height controls.

Policy 2.06 Immediately develop a program for development incentives such as waiving capital recovery fees and density bonuses based on capital expenditures for projects which provide public amenities (pedestrian facilities, hike and bike trails, shelters, rest

stops, etc.) or excell in some other manner; do not include uses such as cinemas and restaurants in FAR calculations.

Policy 2.07 Recapture waterfront values as redevelopment of existing projects takes place.

Policy 2.08 Develop a municipal purchase and lease-back program to encourage housing, cultural, educational and other appropriate land uses in the Corridor.

Policy 2.09 Encourage and provide incentives for a variety of housing opportunities in the Corridor, accessible to all income groups.

GOAL 3.00 Require all city land uses, construction projects, programs and operations to achieve the highest degree of compatibility with Town Lake.

Policy 3.01 Place a moratorium on all major roadway and public works improvements until a comprehensive plan is developed for the corridor.

Policy 3.02 Require participation of the Parks and Recreation Department in the design of all Public Works projects affecting Town Lake and the urban creeks.

Policy 3.03 Require non-park public land to meet specific landscaping and compatibility standards for Town Lake.

Policy 3.04 Eliminate uses from public waterfront lands that are not compatible or waterfront dependent (Humane Society facility, Street and Bridge yard, Fire Marshall's Office, and youth sports fields).

Policy 3.05 Place all existing and future electric transmission lines underground when feasible.

Policy 3.06 Assure that all bridge improvements maximize opportunities to enhance pedestrian connections to the trail system; maintain aesthetic values of bridge arches.

Policy 3.07 Remove or minimize noxious odors from sewer vents at West Bouldin Creek and Pleasant Valley Road on Town Lake.

GOAL 4.00 Foster a cooperative atmosphere in the corridor for the City, neighborhoods, and private landowners to work jointly to realize potential of the waterfront.

Policy 4.01 Form a lakefront Waterfront Advisory Commission composed of property owners, public agencies, non-profit institutions and citizen groups to coordinate development interests and exchange information and participate in comprehensive planning. Create a Town Lake Waterfront Office for a clearinghouse of information.

Policy 4.02 Assure waterfront design is sensitive to existing neighborhoods and allows for extensive citizen review.

Policy 4.03 Consider forming a Waterfront Design Review Board to provide advisory and technical assistance to the City Council and development community to achieve design integrity of all major projects.

Policy 4.04 Encourage the development of public/private and non-profit partnerships to achieve mutual goals and objectives, sensitive to optimizing the public interest.

Policy 4.05 Assure a major public funding commitment to the waterfront as a catalyst for appropriate private development response.

Policy 4.06 Consider a revolving area improvement fund for private developments above a specified size; use fund for public improvements such as walkways, bikeways and park amenities.

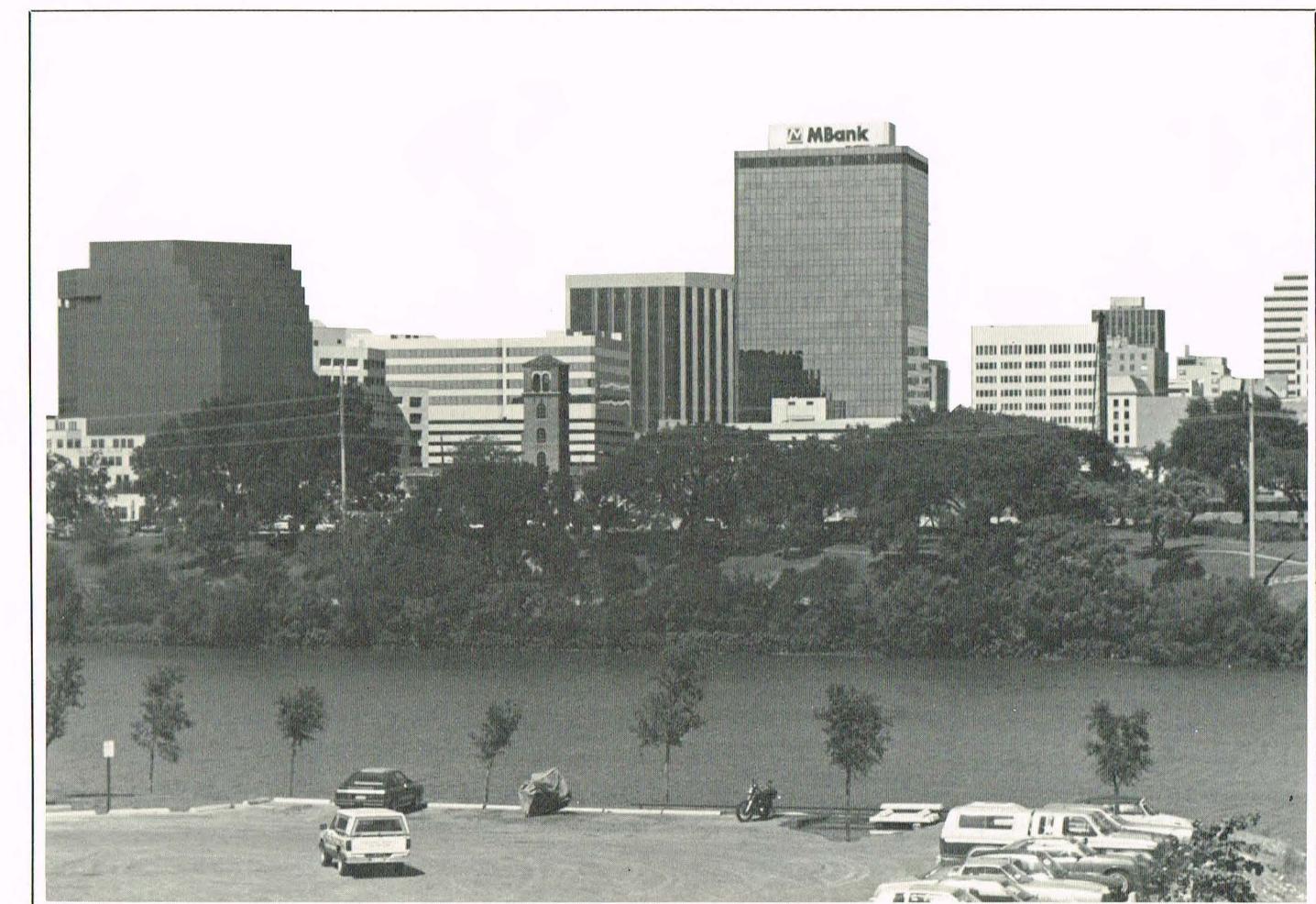
Policy 4.07 Require large developments to provide infrastructure capability information; deny permits, lower density or share in upgrading infrastructure when appropriate.

Policy 4.08 Explore innovative revenue generating programs that can assist in financing public commitment to corridor amenities; assure public interest is maximized.

Zoning

GOAL 5.00 Improve zoning in the Town Lake Corridor and along the urban creeks to achieve maximum pedestrian scale, highest degree of land use compatibility, and extraordinary urban design.

Policy 5.01 Develop a model zoning framework for the Corridor to achieve maximum social, cultural, economic and environmental compatibility within the urban design context.



Policy 5.02 Immediately amend the existing zoning ordinance to develop waterfront-dependent and waterfront-related land use standards, design requirements and performance standards for the water's edge and urban edge.

Policy 5.03 Eliminate all industrial zoning from the Corridor with appropriate down-zoning; remove all other permitted uses that are not compatible with the waterfront.

Policy 5.04 Designate "P" (Public) zoning for all parkland and public land in the Corridor.

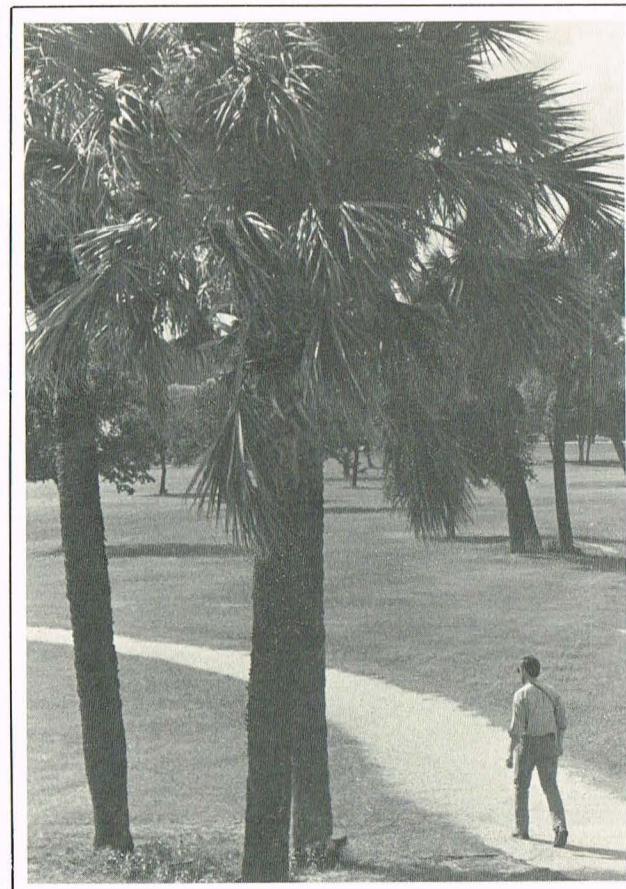
Policy 5.05 With assistance of the urban design community, develop design guidelines for private projects along the water's edge,

adjacent to the public edge and in the urban edge as a framework for sensitive development.

Policy 5.06 Insure that all water's edge development treats the waterfront as the front edge for purposes of building orientation.

Policy 5.07 Provide incentives for increasing residential uses in the Corridor such as additional floor area allowance or transfer of development rights, sensitive to goals of reasonable height, density, view corridors, natural values and need for mixed use.

Policy 5.08 Assure that the largest undeveloped tract of land owned by the University of Texas remains compatible with the Town Lake waterfront; zone "P" (Public); immediately negotiate a long term joint use agreement for public access along the shoreline.



Access

GOAL 6.00 Provide maximum visual and physical access to the waterfront; encourage pedestrian access to and use of the corridor.

Policy 6.01 Identify appropriate view corridors and develop and implement a plan for protection and enhancement; add Capitol View Corridors not now protected by ordinance.

Policy 6.02 Develop and implement a City initiated plan for streetscape development and amenities to encourage pedestrianism along the scenic arterials and appropriate streets. Consider information stops, drinking fountains, shelters, public restrooms, bicycle

racks, jogging lockers and upgraded traffic controls/signs.

Policy 6.03 Establish design guidelines for all major roadways in the corridor to become parkways with landscaped medians or tree-lined streets.

Policy 6.04 Protect open panoramic views of the waterfront by limiting building heights and prohibiting buildings from blocking views.

Policy 6.05 Design street ends to relate to the waterfront.

Policy 6.06 Encourage land uses which reduce dependency on the automobile.

Policy 6.07 Encourage land uses which are of a pedestrian scale and which are pedestrian oriented.

Policy 6.08 Prohibit surface automobile parking on the banks of Town Lake, discourage surface parking in the Corridor; locate parking structures underground whenever possible; require pedestrian uses for ground level of all parking structures.

Policy 6.09 Study feasibility of City-owned revenue-producing parking structures.

Policy 6.10 Improve public transit in the corridor; study the feasibility of developing a trolley system monorail or similar fixed rail system for recreational pleasure and people-moving.

Policy 6.11 Develop a plan for water taxis for sightseeing and people-moving throughout the corridor; consider measures to preserve serenity and dignity of the lake environment.

Policy 6.12 Develop a transportation plan

with Town Lake, its waterfront and neighborhoods serving as the focal point and basic fabric; assure maximum public access to the water's edge in all roadway design.

Policy 6.13 Award density bonuses for projects which underwrite capital/operating expenses to expand transit routes, or provide pedestrian/bicycle amenities.

Policy 6.14 Provide adequate boat ramps for emergency access to water.

Policy 6.15 Re-evaluate fire access policies for large structures on the lake.

Parklands

GOAL 7.00 Establish Town Lake as a Great Central Park, serving as a centerpiece for the Austin Park System.

Policy 7.01 Develop a long range comprehensive plan and funding program to rejuvenate the waterfront and develop a stronger waterfront image.

Policy 7.02 Reaffirm the original design theme of Town Lake ("a place for beauty, dignity and pleasure") as a framework for policy development, waterfront design, management and use.

Policy 7.03 Develop appropriate public use and management policies for the water surface and water's edge; discontinue inappropriate uses such as ski tournaments and single purpose ballfields.

Policy 7.04 Expand opportunities for public waterfront uses such as fishing, quiet boating, picnicking, sitting, and walking;

consider funding a community boat house to promote rowing, canoeing and sailing.

Policy 7.05 Expand the hike and bike trail system around the lake; secure public access easements where required.

Policy 7.06 Improve the legibility, image and understanding of the Town Lake Corridor by initiating a unique sign system, logo and public awareness program.

Policy 7.07 Develop an appropriate and well-formulated concession program for the waterfront including services for food, boat rentals, and sightseeing tours.

Policy 7.08 Initiate a lighting program both for illumination and aesthetic purposes.

Policy 7.09 Exercise sensitivity in the siting and design of a civic-convention center, with special attention to relationship with the waterfront, massing and intensity, traffic, and neighborhood impact.

GOAL 8.00 Demonstrate a commitment to pursuit of excellence in waterfront design and development, using superior materials and sophisticated management to create a quality water's edge for all citizens.

Policy 8.01 Provide for a variety of suitable opportunities in keeping with the design theme of Town Lake, especially for users with disabling conditions.

Policy 8.02 Manage the Town Lake waterfront as a showcase of the park system by developing an integrated, innovative manage-

ment plan that moves the Parks Department from routine grounds maintenance to sophisticated resource management.

Policy 8.03 Encourage maximum pedestrian use of the Corridor; encourage 24-hour use where appropriate, and where security can be provided.

Policy 8.04 Upgrade the basic public facilities and infrastructure of the waterfront, especially the irrigation system and turf management program; provide more restrooms and drinking fountains.

Policy 8.05 Demonstrate in all public actions the principles of water and energy conservation, serving as a model for the community through such practices as use of native plant materials and innovative irrigation.

Policy 8.06 Develop design guidelines for all future public waterfront facilities to maintain high standards and contribute to the image and personality of the corridor.

GOAL 9.00 Establish a spiritual as well as a physical relationship between the community and the waterfront; enable citizens to develop a stronger waterfront ethic.

Policy 9.01 Organize and promote innovative participant programs for the water surface and water's edge such as water instruction, appropriate special events and waterfront celebrations.

Policy 9.02 Determine constraints to use of the water surface for appropriate recreation activities including study of currents, water quality, weed growth and other hazards.

GOAL 10.00 Create a rich and varied cultural environment in the Corridor, geared to all age groups, cultural/educational expressions and interests.

Policy 10.01 Create a cultural arts district to encourage a superlative blend of cultural facilities with special taxing authority; for a mixed public/private development; facilities might include a planetarium, children's museum, music museum, and science museum.

Policy 10.02 Encourage development of cultural facilities and institutions in the Corridor that are well designed and have correct location, massing and intensity scaled to the dimensions and character of the waterfront.

Policy 10.03 Encourage loan and placement of public-owned sculpture or other artwork within the Corridor; also encourage the City to acquire art and use parkland as sites for performing arts.

Policy 10.04 Develop a plan for an all-purpose outdoor performing arts center oriented to the waterfront.

Policy 10.05 Reconsider current policies of the bed tax and broaden application to include more diverse cultural and educational programs.

GOAL 11.00 Acquire additional parkland and open space along Town Lake and the urban creeks.

Policy 11.01 Acquire public access easements where private land blocks lateral pedestrian access to the waterfront.

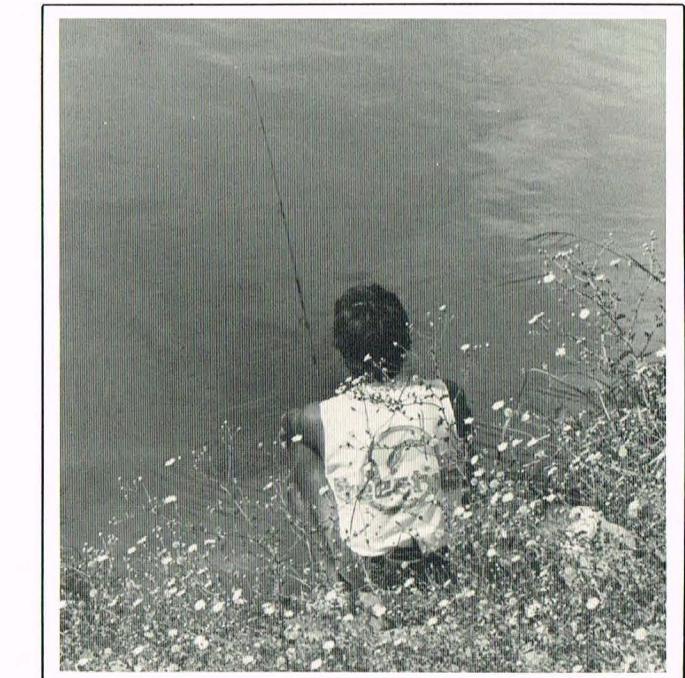
Policy 11.02 Develop a strategic plan for acquiring and preserving unique resource features and open space areas in the corridor, emphasizing innovative acquisition methods such as transfer of development rights, life estates and bargain sales.

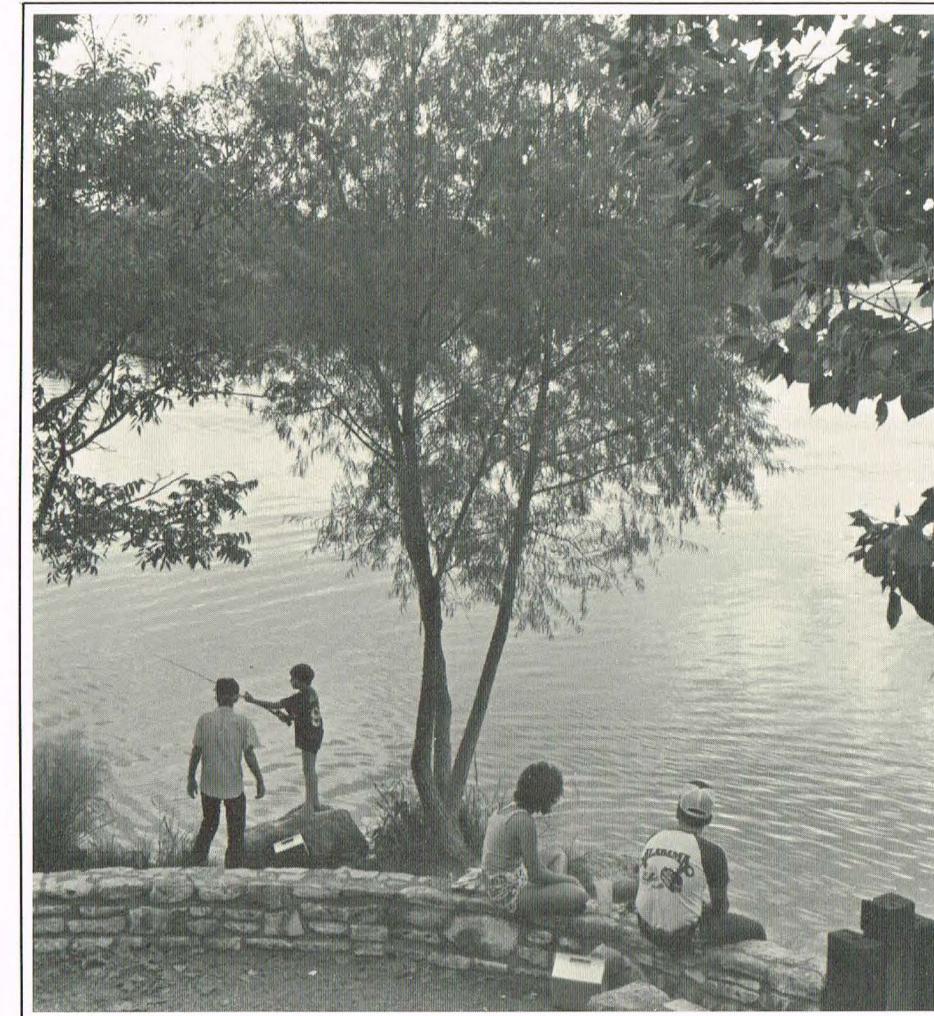
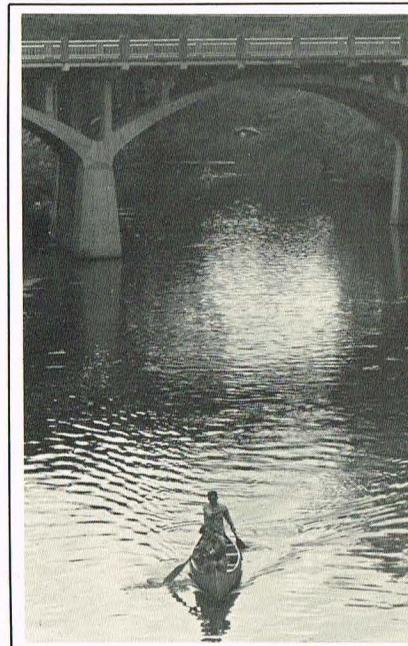
Policy 11.03 Review and assess all current lease agreements which allow private/private nonprofit use of public lands on Town Lake.

Policy 11.04 Prohibit sale of public land in the Town Lake Corridor, except where land trades or cash sales advance park and recreational goals.

Policy 11.05 Pursue more aggressively the acquisition of greenbelts on East and West Bouldin Creeks.

Policy 11.06 In appropriate situations, use City purchase and leaseback to regain public control of the waters edge and ultimately convert to open space.





Creeks

GOAL 12.00 Recognize full potential of the Town Lake creeks as open space connectors, form-shapers of urban development, and focal points for lively pedestrian-oriented mixed use.

Policy 12.01 Develop updated comprehensive plans for Shoal and Waller Creek corridors, including improvements to the existing overlay zone to include design regulations.

Policy 12.02 Improve the connections, image, pedestrian-orientation and gateway potential of the mouths of all creeks, especially Blunn, Shoal, Waller, Dry and the Bouldin creeks.

Policy 12.03 Develop a comprehensive information base concerning urban hydrology, and develop a strategic plan for addressing multiple objectives of recreation, drainage, erosion control and bank stabilization.

Policy 12.04 Require multi-disciplinary involvement of the Public Works and Parks Departments in creek maintenance, planning and design.

Policy 12.05 Fund and implement Phase II of the City's plan for beautifying and improving pedestrian access to Lower Waller Creek.

Policy 12.06 Encourage mixed use development focused on recreational, cultural, residential, entertainment and festive retail uses.

Policy 12.07 Develop and implement a plan for reducing runoff pollution including incentives for property owners to install grease traps, filters and screens; use proven design strategies for retrofitting existing development and review the waterway development guidelines which currently do not require stormwater treatment.

Policy 12.08 Develop a comprehensive public awareness program to educate homeowners on how their actions and their use of household products relate to Town Lake water quality; consider a central collection program for disposing of household toxic wastes.

Natural and Cultural Resources

GOAL 13.00 Protect, enhance and interpret the landforms and natural and cultural values of the Town Lake Corridor.

Policy 13.01 Conduct a more complete survey of all cultural and natural values of the Corridor: record location, significance, condition and recommend protection requirements.

Policy 13.02 Require environmental impact studies and mitigation measures for all new development in the Corridor where natural values and landforms have been identified.

Policy 13.03 Develop a city program for creative interpretation and management of natural and cultural values on public property to create public interest, awareness and protection strategies.

Policy 13.04 Maintain the natural shoreline and bluffs along the waterfront, except for necessary stabilization or appropriate waterfront uses as identified in specified development zones.

Policy 13.05 Develop an urban forest management plan for protective maintenance of trees in the Corridor.

Policy 13.06 Require professional archaeologists to monitor major construction projects when excavation is conducted.

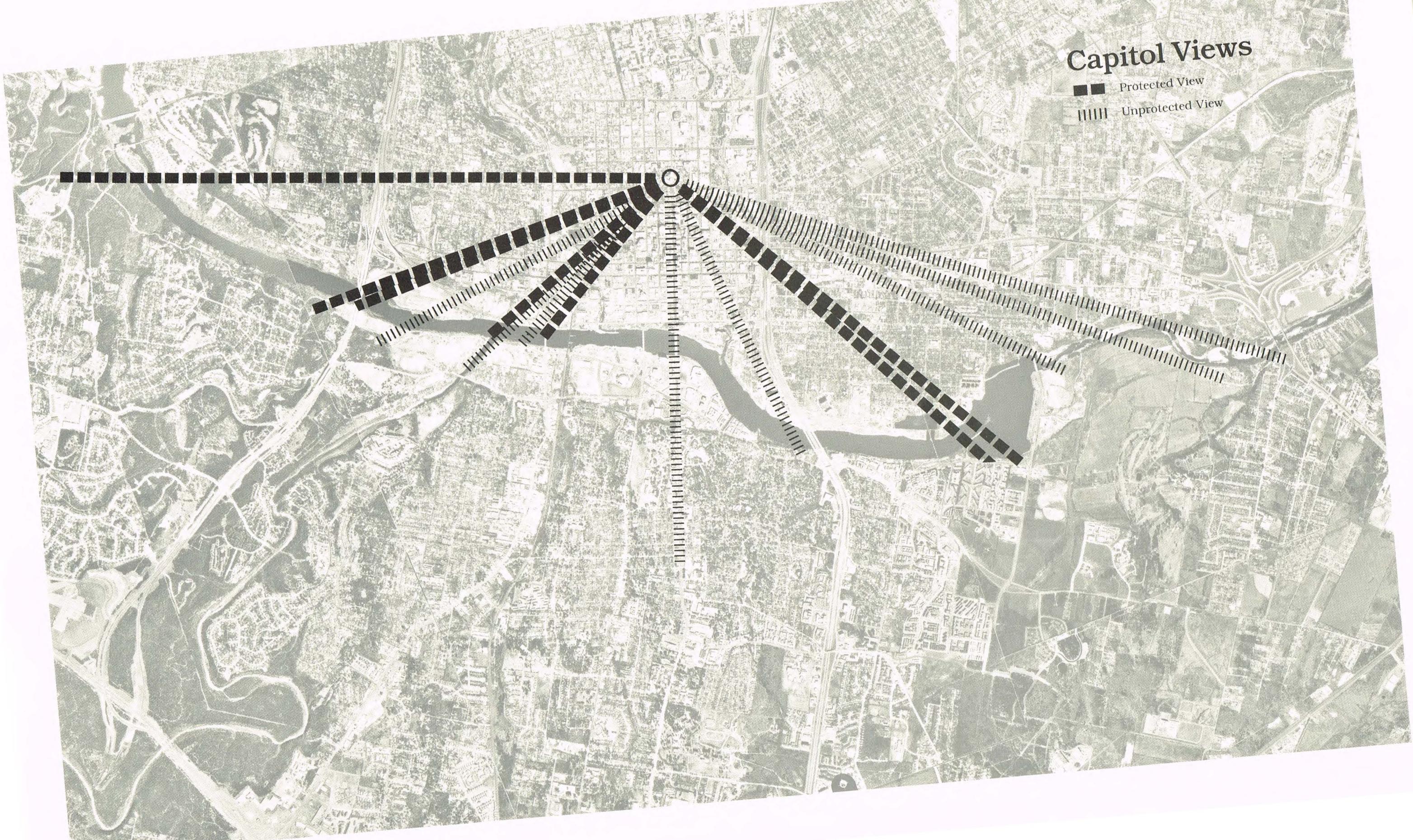
Policy 13.07 Encourage the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.

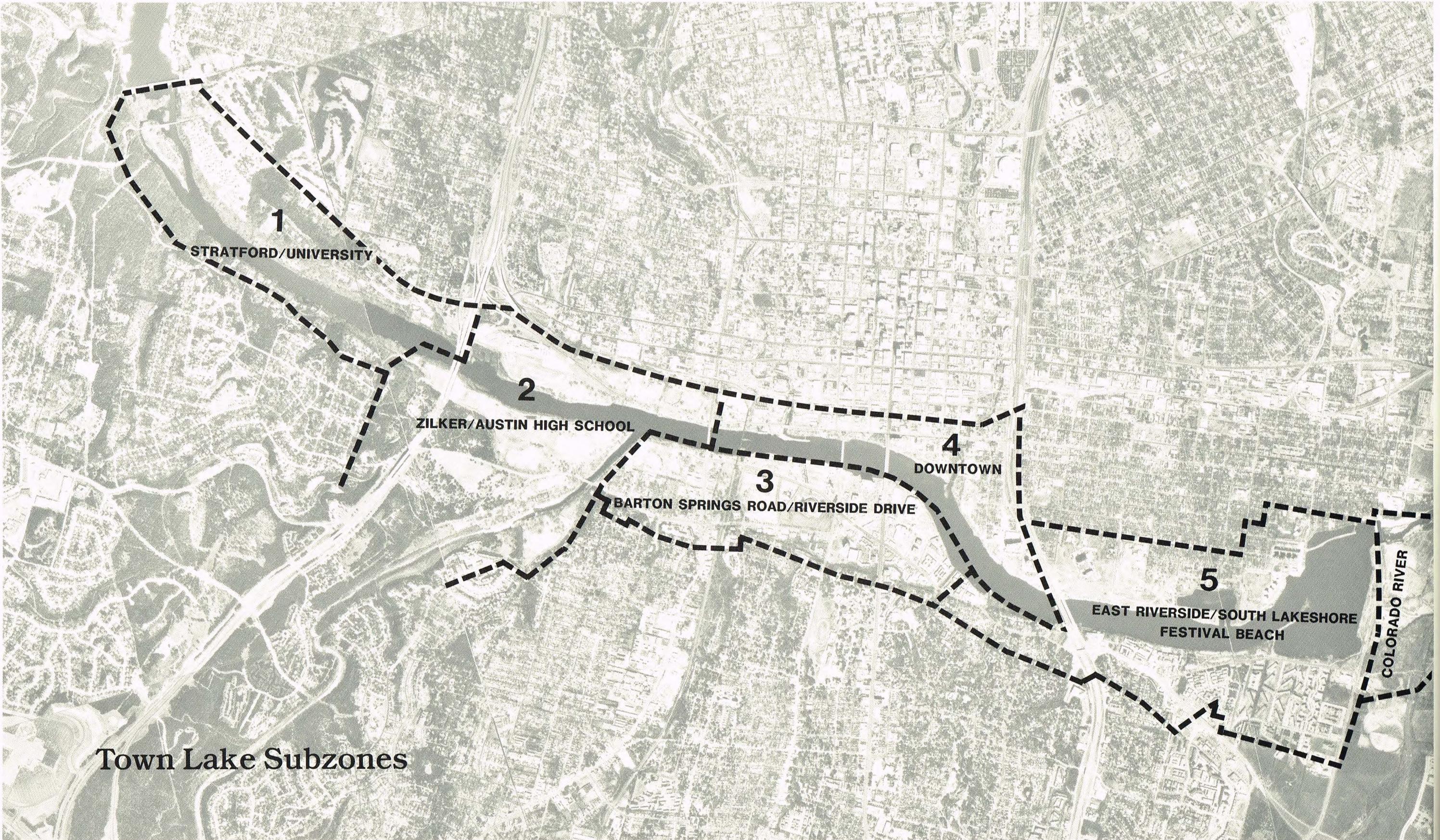
Policy 13.08 Encourage new development to maintain Austin's architectural heritage and to assure compatibility.

Policy 13.09 Assemble a complete history of the beautification of Town Lake, including oral histories and files; locate in the Austin History Center; require routine updating.

Capitol Views

■ ■ ■ Protected View
||||| Unprotected View





TOWN LAKE SUBZONES: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report includes a more detailed analysis of five subzones of the lake corridor. General goals developed for the Corridor have been cross-referenced, and specific recommended actions developed for each subzone. The boundaries of each subzone were drawn to reflect both the critical 1000 foot zone identified by the moratorium ordinance, and a larger zone which contributes in some way to activity in the Town Lake Corridor.

Subzone 1 Stratford/ University

Existing Conditions

Land Use—This area is bounded by Tom Miller Dam on the west, Lake Austin Boulevard on the north, MoPac on the east and Stratford Drive on the south. Generally, this area is heavily vegetated, consists of steep slopes and is developed at a relatively low intensity considering its proximity to downtown Austin. The high bluffs along the south shore provide a particularly scenic visual amenity from Town Lake. Several houses are located near the edge of the bluffs, but for the most part the south shore is vacant land.

The north shore of this area is owned primarily by the University of Texas, and is used as a biological research center and for mar-

ried student housing. The housing is not oriented towards the lake and is isolated in terms of visual and physical access. The north shore near the MoPac/Lake Austin Boulevard interchange consists of convenience commercial and restaurants which service the neighborhood to the north. Eilers Park and Deep Eddy Pool are located south of this commercial area and represents the only public access to the lake on the north shore of the Stratford/University area. A city owned storage and maintenance compound is located west of and adjacent to Eilers Park.

The Stratford/University area consists of approximately 350 acres.

Stratford/University Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	60.7	17.3
Multi-family	.2	.1
Office	.2	.1
Commercial	.9	.3
Institutional	229.0	65.3
Parkland	21.5	6.1
Vacant	26.1	7.4
Roads/ROW	11.9	3.4
Total	350.5	100.0

Source: Office of Land Development Services

Zoning—The majority of the area is zoned SF-3 which allows single family dwellings. The small commercial area near the MoPac/Lake Austin Blvd. interchange includes GR (General Retail) and CS (Commercial Service) zoning. These are intense zone districts that are roadway oriented rather than neighborhood-related.

Access—Public access to the waterfront is limited to Eilers Park and Red Bud Isle. Visual access to the lake is limited due to the heavy vegetation and privately owned steep slopes. However, views from the lake to surrounding properties afford excellent views to what appears as an undeveloped and pristine area.

Parkland—Eilers Park and popular Deep Eddy Pool function as an important gateway park, within close proximity to MoPac. However, an illegible entrance from Lake Austin Boulevard and an overcrowded parking lot make access difficult. Visual and physical access to the waterfront is poor. The existing park maintenance compound and storage area are not compatible with this prime waterfront area; if removed, this area could provide room to expand this small park. Red Bud Isle has excellent recreation potential but is neglected and unimproved.

Special Opportunities—The small commercial area west of the MoPac/Lake Austin Boulevard interchange provides retail conve-

nience goods and services, and food service opportunities to both the surrounding neighborhood and users of Eilers Park. Thus, there is a focus of activity in and identity for the area. Most existing businesses utilize retrofitted homes and are of a scale compatible with the pedestrian.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goals 2.00; 3.00; 5.00; 6:00; 13.00)

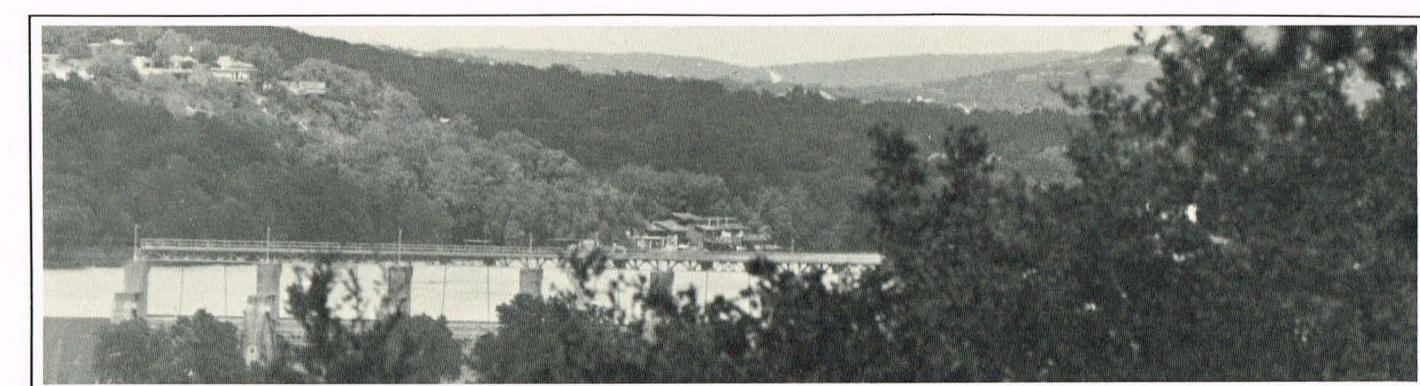
Action 1.01 Preserve the low density single family residential neighborhood in the Stratford Drive area.

Action 1.02 Establish a Neighborhood Conservation Combining District to help define appropriate land uses and densities for the neighborhood adjacent to Eilers Park.

Action 1.03 Upgrade and improve Red Bud Isle as a fishing and picnic area; protect natural values: reduce automobile impact.

Action 1.04 Require building controls to protect uniqueness of the Balcones Rock Cliffs, including no alteration to the face and crest of the bluff, and protection of lines of sight from Town Lake (no visible structures from Town Lake).

Action 1.05 Encourage consolidation of properties to reduce number of curb cuts.



Action 1.06 Relocate the City of Austin storage yard to allow for more compatible, park-oriented waterfront use.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 1.07 Encourage low intensity neighborhood retail and entertainment oriented commercial zoning in the area west of the MoPac-Lake Austin Boulevard area. Downzoning to LR (Local Retail) and NO (Neighborhood Office) is recommended.

Action 1.08 Rezone University of Texas property from SF-3 to P (Public).

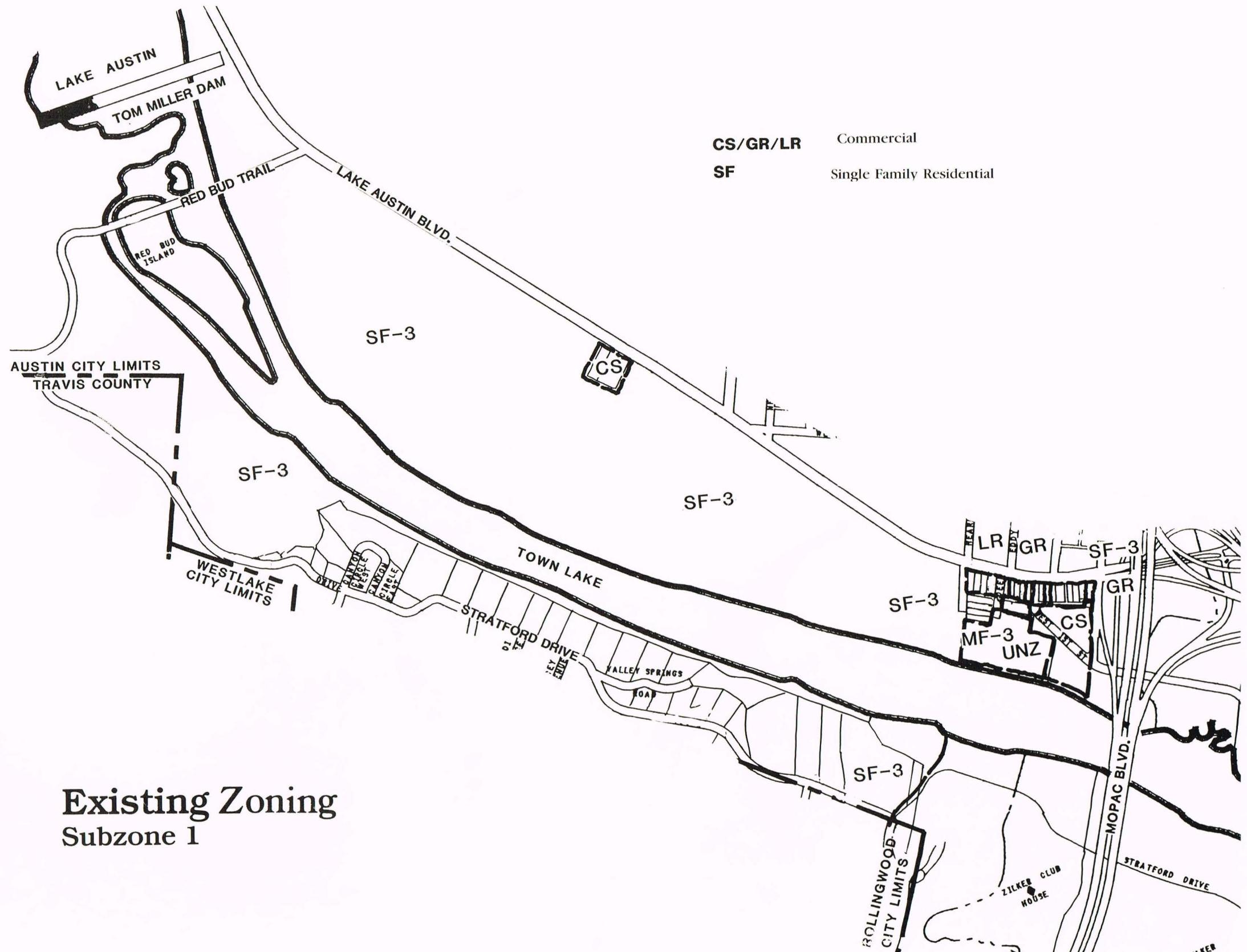
Action 1.09 Create a new Waterfront Overlay Zone with design criteria geared to the special characteristics of this development zone.

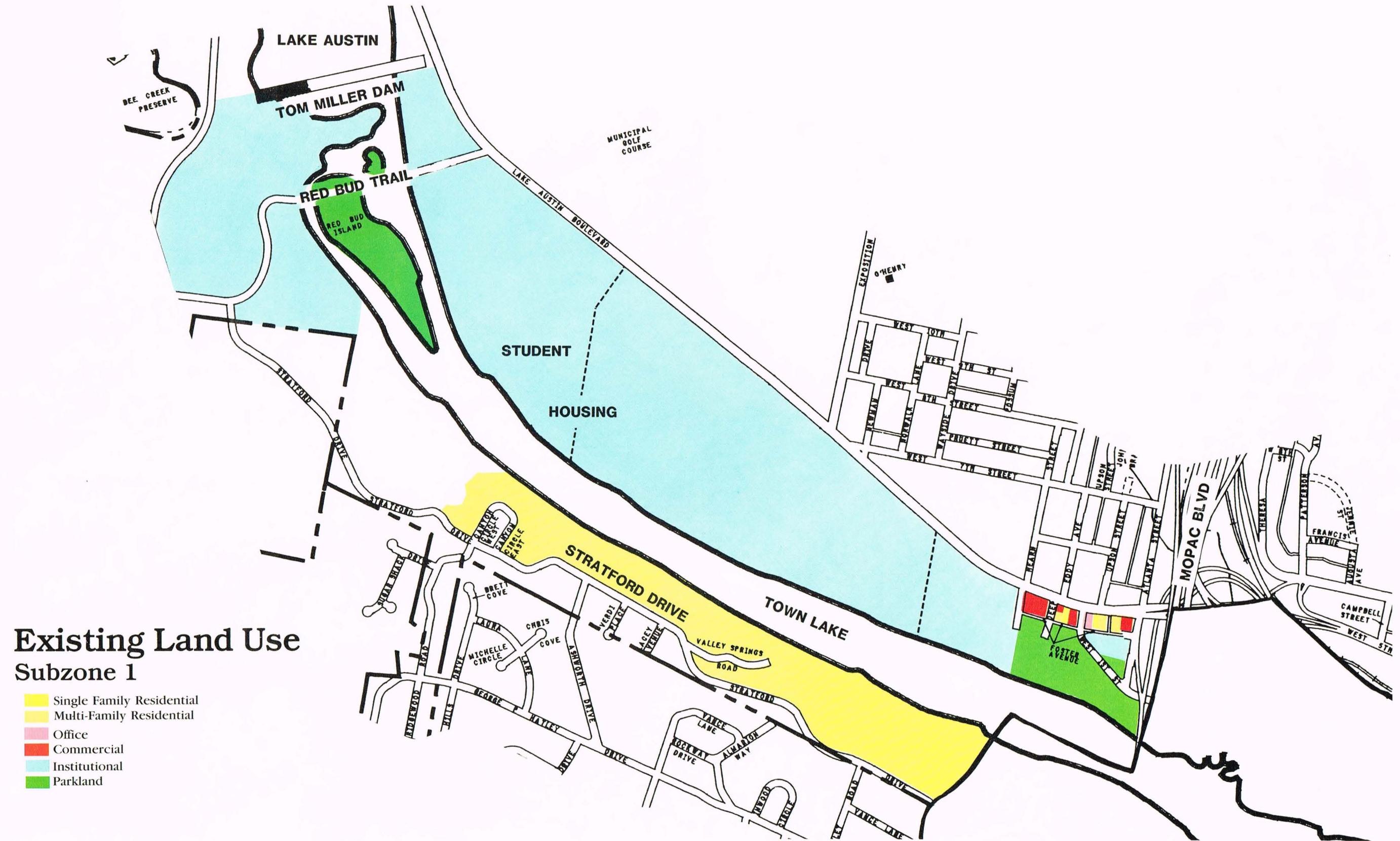
Access (Goal 6.00)

Action 1.10 Improve entry and pedestrian access to Eilers Park by means of signage and sidewalks for safety and legibility.

Action 1.11 Re-orient Eilers Park to the waterfront by improving visual and pedestrian access; improve pedestrian connections to the adjacent commercial area by providing incentives to encourage improvements such as landscaping, sidewalks and safer pedestrian crossings.

Action 1.12 Increase access to the waterfront by extending the trail westward from Eilers Park, and provide a trail on the south shore from Zilker Park to Tom Miller Dam.





Subzone 2 Zilker/Austin High School

Existing Conditions

Land Use—The north shore of this area is bounded by MoPac on the west, the Missouri Pacific railroad lines on the north, and Lamar Boulevard on the east. The southern shore includes Zilker Park. This subzone consists primarily of public uses, including Austin High School, athletic fields, the animal shelter, the Y.M.C.A. and the Amtrak station.

The Zilker/Austin High School area contains approximately 574 acres.

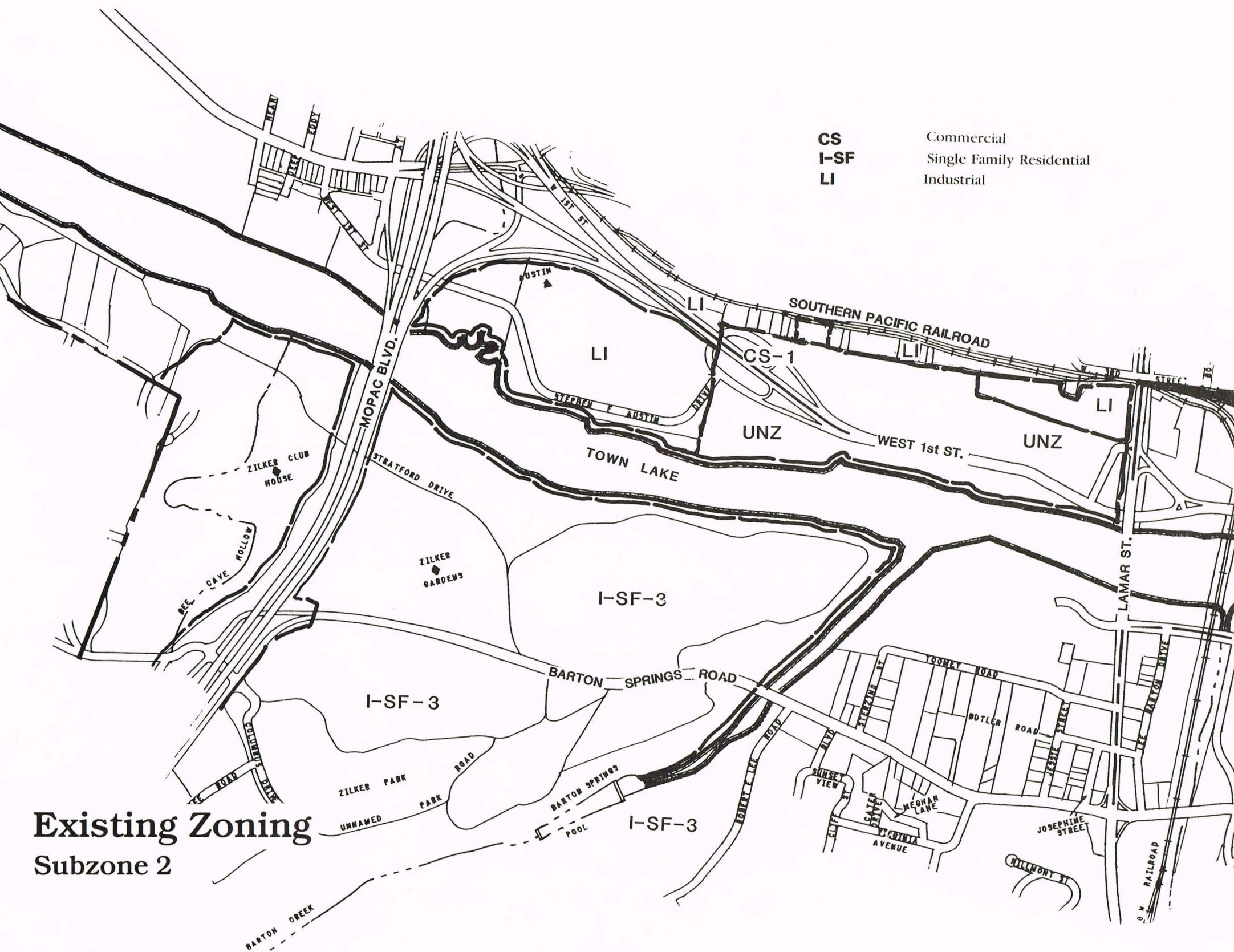
Zilker/Austin High School Land Use Summary

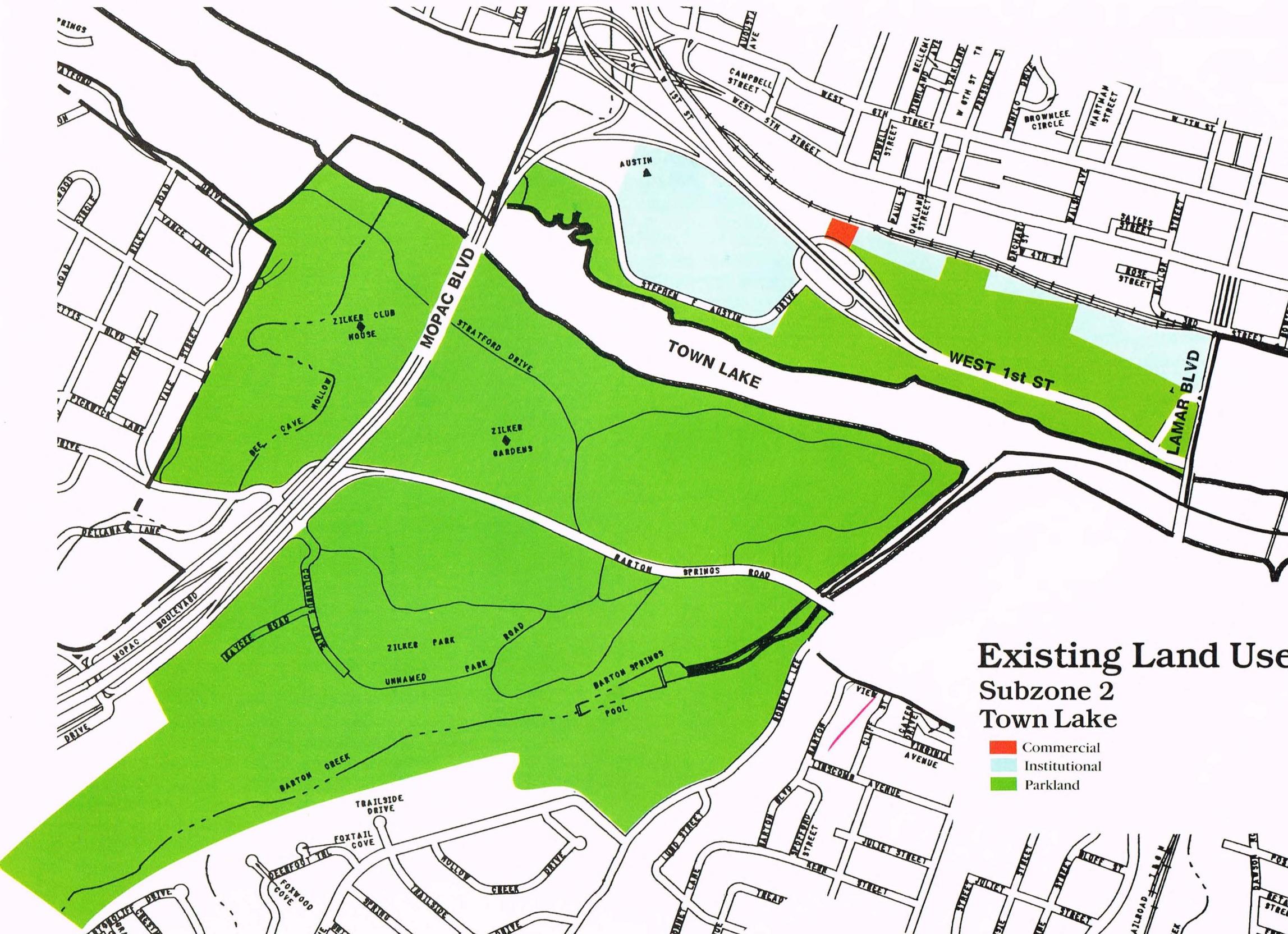
Use	Acres	%
Commercial	1.9	.3
Institutional	38.0	6.6
Parkland	493.1	85.9
Roads/ROW	41.1	7.2
Total	574.1	100.0

Source: Office of Land Development Services

Zoning—The majority of this area is zoned P (Public) and is owned by the City. However, there are some commercial and industrial zoned parcels south of the Missouri Pacific railroad lines. Of particular concern is a parcel adjacent to and west of Lamar Boulevard which is zoned LI (Light Industrial). Uses which are more compatible with Town Lake and the parkland should be considered.

Access—Physical and visual access to the shoreline is excellent in this area, although West First Street acts as a barrier in this part of the waterfront. Two creeks in the area, Bar-





ton and Johnson, connect well with the lake; access is difficult across Barton Springs Road and is a barrier to the south shore of Zilker Park. There is also poor pedestrian access to the waterfront from old West Austin.

Parkland —The bulk of Town Lake parkland is located in this area, not only because of Zilker Park but also because this subzone includes the largest tract of parkland on the south shore of the lake. Zilker Park does not orient well to the waterfront nor does the north shore, especially the single purpose ballfields and the animal shelter. Dry Creek does not currently provide good connection with the Austin Nature Center and Town Lake, nor does the Garden Center. Proposed expansion of the latter facilities and a renovation program for Zilker Park provide excellent opportunities to recapture public waterfront and recreation amenities.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goal 3.00)

Action 2.01 Relocate the animal shelter with full assistance of the city to allow for more waterfront related public use of the area; disallow additional construction or alteration of the shelter prior to removal.

Action 2.02 Re-evaluate use of the sports field complex on West First Street applying criteria of design integrity, multiple use and waterfront relationship.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 2.03 Consider downzoning of properties along the Southern Pacific railroad from LI (Light Industrial) to a more compatible zone district, such as multi-family, office or retail.

Action 2.04 Create a new Waterfront Overlay Zone geared to the special characteristics of this development zone.

Access (Goals 6.00, 7.00)

Action 2.05 Provide pedestrian connection and safety across Barton Springs Road in Zilker Park; investigate a full range of alternatives including access under the Barton Creek bridge, reducing speed limits, and lowering the road to allow for at surface pedestrian access.

Action 2.06 Improve waterfront orientation and physical access to Town Lake from Zilker Park and the Nature Center at Dry Creek; support plans for public access improvements including realignment of Stratford Drive to enhance the park environment.

Action 2.07 Develop a gateway and parkway concept including signage, landscaping and amenities along Barton Springs Road entering and traversing Zilker Park to emphasize the park environment and subdue the automobile impact.

Subzone 3 Barton Springs Road/Riverside Drive

Existing Conditions

Land Use—This area is located on the south shore of Town Lake and is bounded by Barton Creek on the west, Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive east of their intersection on the south, and East Bouldin Creek on the east. This boundary includes all properties adjacent to Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive.

Various public and commercial uses occur in this area, the majority of which are entertain-

ment related. Several restaurants and public cultural and entertainment facilities are located in this area. Public and cultural uses include Dougherty Arts Center, Auditorium Shores Amphitheater and Zachary Scott Theatre. Recreational oriented businesses such as Butler Park Pitch and Putt and a miniature golf facility also exist in the area. A mobile home park is located south of Barton Springs Road near Town Lake.

The area east of South First Street is a confusing mix of office, commercial and hotel development which does not relate well to the waterfront.

The City's Transportation facility on Toomey Road and a number of businesses with storage yards are non-compatible land uses in the subzone.

Hotels in the area include the Hyatt, Embassy Suites, and Two Texas Center which provide a combined capacity of 1066 rooms. The Campanile del Mar, a dense mixed use project is proposed at the northeast corner of Congress Avenue and Riverside Drive and is projected to have a capacity of 450 rooms, making a total of 1,516 rooms in this area. This figure is high when compared to the 741 rooms built or under construction in the downtown area.

Residential development is primarily limited to multi-family development along the south side of Barton Springs Road near its intersections with South First Street and Lamar Boulevard. A 13 acre mobile home park, known as the Pecan Grove, is located south of Barton Springs Road between Barton Creek and Lamar Boulevard. An impressive stand of mature pecan trees exists in this area.

The Barton Springs Road area serves as the “gateway” to Zilker Park, and special consideration should be given to the scenic qualities of this area.

The Barton Springs/Riverside Drive area contains approximately 325 acres; 63 acres or 19.3% of this subzone is in surface parking lots, a very high percentage considering the relatively high property values in area. The large surface parking lots associated with Palmer Auditorium, the Austin American-Statesman building, and the Hyatt Hotel account for a significant portion of the impervious surface in this area.

These uses are not conducive to enhancing the surrounding parkland along Town Lake and Zilker Park and create a barrier to the pedestrian and surrounding neighborhoods of Town Lake. They also provide little or no services or conveniences to surrounding neighborhoods.

Access—Parkland and a lateral trail system from Barton Creek to South First Street make access to the shoreline excellent. However, accessibility to the shoreline is inadequate between South 1st Street to East Bouldin Creek due to private ownership and no pedestrian orientation of existing buildings.

Parkland—Parkland and public land in this area is very strategic because of its location in the central lake zone, near the downtown area, and adjacent to neighborhoods. It also has historically provided an important civic function due to Auditorium Shores and cultural facilities in the area. Some uses are not compatible with the waterfront (sports fields), and special events have highly impacted the outdoor amphitheater site. The entire area is in need of re-evaluation and re-design to become more functional, attractive and waterfront related. Any change in use of this area must be carefully considered and based on superior urban design.

Special Opportunities

Zoning—This area consists almost entirely of CS (Commercial Service), and LI (Light Industrial) zoning, which is not appropriate for the area. Uses allowed in these zone districts include automotive rentals, automotive sales, automotive washing, construction sales and service, equipment sales, funeral services, manufacturing, vehicle storage and warehousing.

Barton Springs—The Barton Springs area represents one of the few locations in Austin where an opportunity exists to create a mixed use, pedestrian oriented community in a parklike setting. As the gateway to Zilker Park, special efforts could improve the visual environment with landscaped medians, sidewalks, and underground utilities. Safer pedestrian crossings and consolidation of curb cuts would improve the area.

The pedestrian character of this area could be improved by providing compatible but relatively high density residential development in close proximity to commercial services and entertainment facilities. Mixed use would discourage automobile use and lessen the need for street widening and increased parking areas. Large office complexes, industrial uses and highway oriented commercial uses are not appropriate for this area.

Palmer Auditorium/Coliseum—The public area occupied by the Coliseum and Auditorium consists of approximately 54 acres bounded by Lamar Boulevard, Barton Springs Road, and South First Street. A large portion of this tract is used for surface parking, making it unattractive and unsuitable as waterfront land. The area has excellent potential for waterfront-related uses although Riverside Drive creates a barrier. Proximity to the Central Business District, Auditorium Shores and nearby hotels and restaurants represents an excellent opportunity for creating a pedestrian-oriented multiple use zone as the centerpiece of Town Lake. It is also apparent that Austinites identify more readily with this core area of Town Lake, and additional public facilities (museums, planetarium, etc.) might be considered. The central location near Town Lake combined with excellent views to downtown, require that this area be used to provide the maximum benefit to the people of Austin.

South First Street/Congress Avenue—The area bounded by South First Street and Congress Avenue has undergone rapid changes in recent years to uses dominated by office and hotels at intensities comparable to those occurring in the Central Business District. It is quite common for development intensities to occur in the range of Floor-to-Area Ratio's of 1.0 to 1.0 up to 3.0 to 1.0. Listed below are representative intensities for development in this area:

Examples of Intensities in Subzone 3

Building	Location	Site Area	Floor Area	Ratio
One & (Two*)Tx Centers	505 Barton Springs	329,884	465,000	1.40
Hyatt Inn	208 Barton Springs	322,344	332,455	1.03
721 Barton Springs*		103,063	123,382	1.20
801 Barton Springs		78,408	172,250	2.20
American-Statesman	116 E. Riverside	563,536	316,875	.56
Riverside Square	150 E. Riverside	156,811	212,000	1.35
Campanile del Mar*	101 S. Congress	257,875	878,427	3.42
Embassy Suites	301 S. Congress	100,623	205,415	2.04
<i>*Proposed</i>				

Potential compatibility problems related to both visual and traffic problems should be addressed before this intensity of development continues. Design standards for buildings and parking areas, and improved mass transit to the area should be investigated.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goals 2.00, 3.00, 4.00)

Action 3.01 Zone P (Public) and establish a Comprehensive Planning District for the 54 acre auditorium/coliseum site; develop a plan for this tract to become the centerpiece of the Town Lake park system and a model of superior design for pedestrian scale, festive waterfront recreation and cultural, entertainment and open space uses, with the following guidelines:

1. The design for the 54 acre tract shall have as a goal at least 60% open space to be dedicated parkland; the justification is to preserve views, achieve pedestrian scale, establish a rich park landscape, and create dignity and tranquility.
2. The 54 acre site should be more appropriately connected with Auditorium Shores and the Town Lake waterfront; consider evaluating closure of Riverside Drive, Dawson Road and Bouldin Avenue to improve connections and expansion of open space.
3. Buffer and landscape the site to achieve highest aesthetic and noise attenuation standards.
4. No funds from any source should be expended for enlarging the surface parking area.

5. Explore joint City-Capital Metro funding for a shared underground parking facility incorporating goals and policies recommended in this report.

6. Encourage public-private partnerships or other innovative mechanisms to insure that surrounding properties are developed or re-developed in a manner that is public and pedestrian-oriented, of a density and scale that relates well to the plan for this site, buffers the surrounding neighborhoods, preserves views, and encourages residential and neighborhood retail uses.

Action 3.02 Encourage the most creative combination of mixed use in this zone, focused on pedestrian-oriented mixed use including residential, commercial, and cultural uses achieving maximum integration with the park and lakeshore environment.

Action 3.03 Establish synergistic residential/commercial uses that relate to the lake, surrounding parkland and resource values of this zone by encouraging creative public-private partnerships.

Action 3.04 Establish a comprehensive planning district for the extraordinary amenity values of the Barton Springs Road/Toomey Road area; create a synergistic public/private partnership to achieve a park-dominated mixed use pattern of cultural, residential and commercial/office development.

Action 3.05 Explore a full range of alternatives for public preservation of the pecan grove on Barton Springs Road, including land trades, development transfers, purchase or combinations thereof.

Action 3.06 Relocate the Transportation Department maintenance facility on Toomey Road.

Action 3.07 Re-evaluate use of the sports fields at Butler Shores and Disch Field, applying criteria of design integrity, multiple use and waterfront relationship.

Action 3.08 Incorporate recommendations of the Fairview Neighborhood Conservation Combining district along East Riverside Drive to help define appropriate land uses and densities and preserve natural attributes of the bluffs; eliminate curb cuts to provide maximum safety.

Action 3.09 Discourage surface parking to: (1) decrease impervious cover, (2) provide more land for park or public use; and (3) improve the visual environment.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 3.10 Expand boundaries of the Town Lake Overlay Zone to the south shoreline and establish new criteria for land use to be compatible with Town Lake.

Action 3.11 Amend and expand the Lake Commercial zone district to reflect more appropriate intensities.

Action 3.12 Remove currently permitted land uses from the zoning district that are not compatible in the Corridor.

Action 3.13 Establish a consistent alignment of building setbacks and height; develop a coherent building pattern.

Action 3.14 Discourage roadway oriented uses such as service stations, car lots, drive-thru restaurants, and banks.

Action 3.15 Encourage residential and retail/commercial uses along Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive east of South First Street that serve the adjoining neighborhood, or are related to the recreational opportunities of Zilker Park and Town Lake.

Action 3.16 Adopt guidelines from the Downtown Mixed Use Study for parking; re-

quire structured parking, preferably underground; include guidelines for landscaping and first floor retail uses to preserve the street scene.

Action 3.17 Require transparent display windows along the sidewalk, and retail and restaurant use on ground levels.

Action 3.18 Encourage structures that are of a compatible scale with the pedestrian.

Action 3.19 Prohibit outside storage.

Access (Goal 6.00)

Action 3.20 Improve the pedestrian environment of this zone, particularly along Barton Springs Road and east of Congress Avenue on Riverside Drive.

Action 3.21 Provide detached sidewalks with landscaping between the curb and sidewalk along Barton Springs Road, Lamar Boulevard and Riverside Drive.

Action 3.22 Provide a median, landscaped with native vegetation, along Barton Springs Road and East Riverside Drive.

Action 3.23 Locate parking areas away from sidewalks and behind structures so they are not visible to pedestrians.

Action 3.24 Provide safe pedestrian access across Lamar Boulevard to connect the parkland located on either side of Lamar; improve pedestrian access across the Lamar Boulevard, South First Street and Congress Avenue Bridges.

Action 3.25 Improve lateral access to the waterfront between S. First Street and S. Bouldin Creek by obtaining public land or access easements.

Subzone 4 Downtown

Existing Conditions

Land Use—The Downtown area is located north of Town Lake and bounded by Lamar Boulevard on the west, the Southern Pacific railroad tracks on the north, and IH-35 on the east.

This area consists primarily of office, hotels and warehousing, with an occasional restaurant or retail store. Presently, two hotels, the Sheraton Crest and the Holiday Inn exist downtown and provide a capacity of 443 rooms. The Four Seasons hotel is proposed on East First Street and will have 308 rooms.

Residential development consists of the Rainey Street neighborhood and some multi-family developments. The Rainey Street neighborhood includes two blocks of old single family structures located on Rainey Street between Driskill Street and River Street. This neighborhood has been nominated as a candidate for the National Register of Historic Places; the hardwood trees are a significant greenspace in the downtown area.

Three major multi-family developments, the Towers of Town Lake, the Villas of Town Lake, and the Railyard Apartments are located in the eastern portion of downtown. Lakeview Apartments, located on Town Lake at Waller Creek, is a high rise residential facility for senior citizens. These developments provide an opportunity for people to walk to work, thereby reducing traffic.

The Downtown area consists of approximately 232 acres; 19.3 acres or 8.3% is in use as surface parking.

Zoning—The downtown area is zoned CBD (Central Business District) and DMU (Downtown Mixed Use) with the exception of the Rainey Street neighborhood near IH-35 and

Town Lake, which consists of various commercial, office, and residential zoning districts. The rezoning of property near the Rainey Street neighborhood to commercial and office has lessened the viability of this area remaining a single family neighborhood.

Downtown Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	10.0	4.3
Multi-family	11.2	4.8
Office	10.9	4.7
Commercial	34.7	15.1
Industrial	2.8	1.2
Institutional	12.6	5.4
Parkland	46.3	20.0
Vacant	20.8	9.0
Roads/ROW	60.7	26.2
Utilities	18.0	7.8
Total	231.80	100.00

Source: Office of Land Development Services

Access—West 1st Street provides a major barrier to the parkland along Town Lake due to high traffic volumes. West 1st Street is located on the crest of a fairly steep bluff, and thus provides excellent views to Town Lake. Parkland east of Congress becomes impacted by adjacent land uses and is not visually accessible.

Parkland—Parkland in this area comprises a relatively thin strip on the north shore sandwiched between North Lamar Boulevard and South First Street, and below the Rainey Neighborhood. Shoal and Waller Creeks provide outstanding opportunities as gateway anchors into the Central Business District but are impacted by adjacent development and have no design controls to accomplish these functions. The Waller Creek Walkway project has been a catalyst for a strong redevelopment program, but delayed public

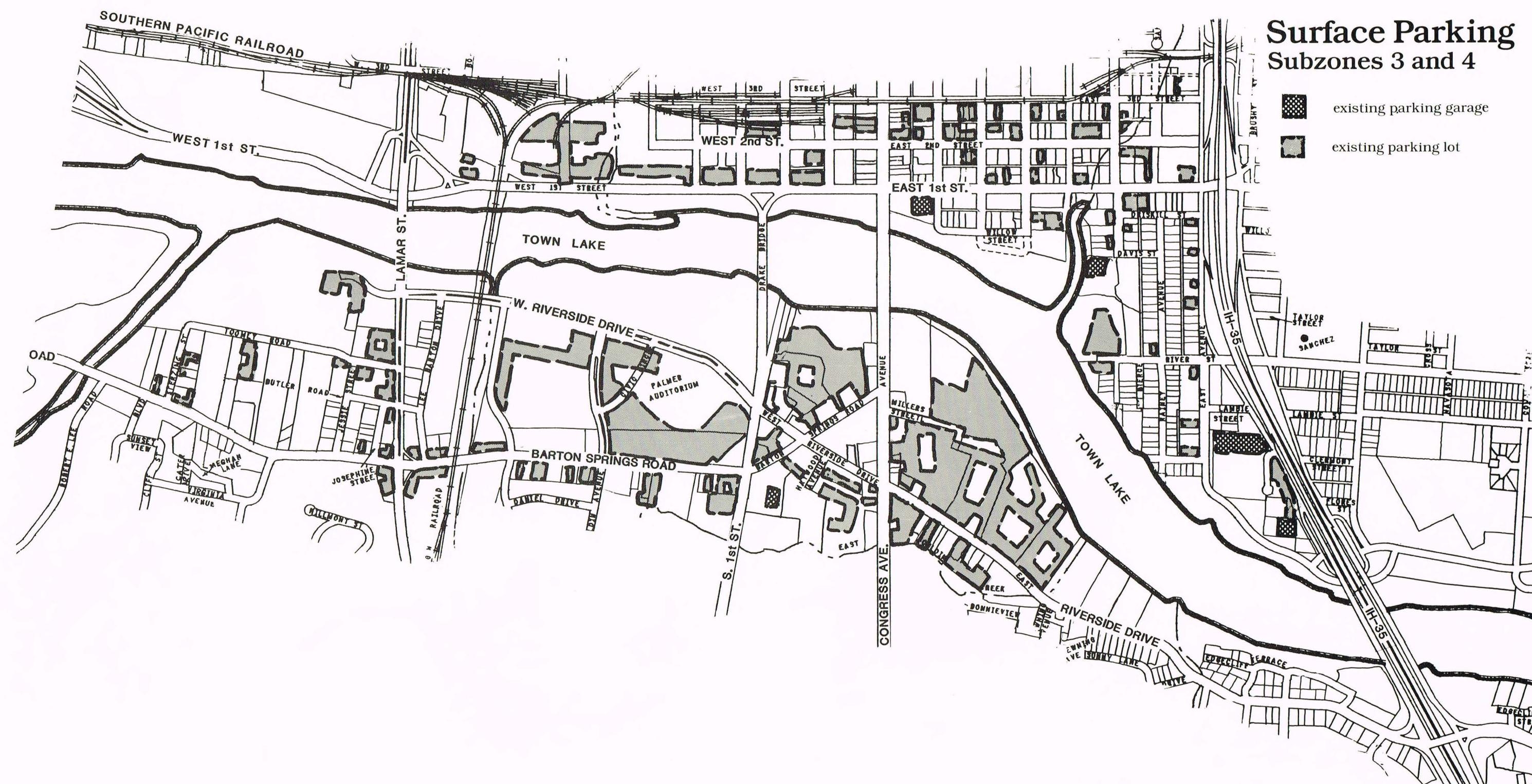
efforts to control floodwater and complete beautification objectives are hindering full realization of the potential. The Shoal Creek peninsula offers excellent waterfront contact and lake viewing.

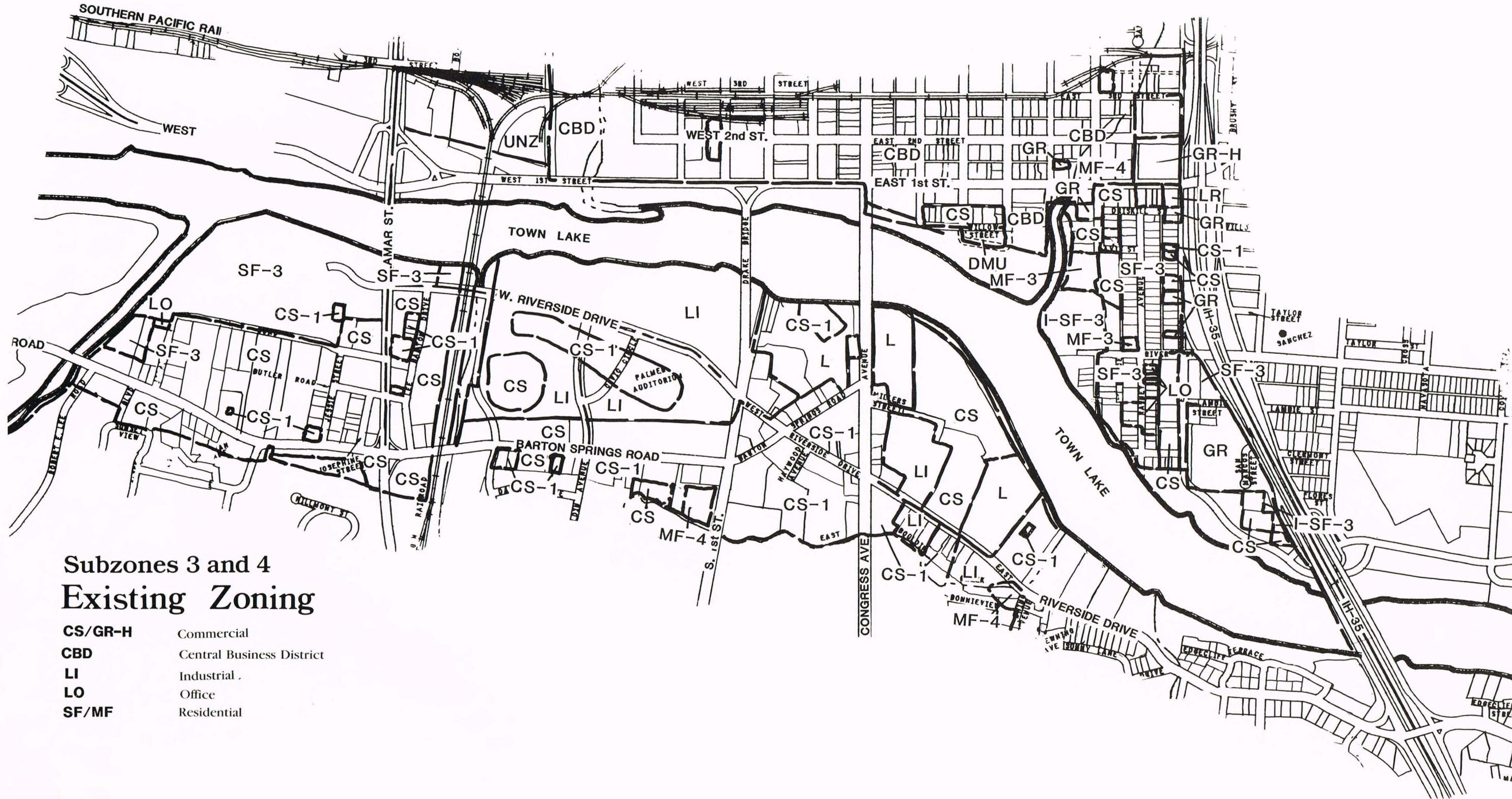
Special Opportunities

Shoal and Waller Creeks—Historically, Shoal and Waller Creeks have formed the western and eastern boundaries of downtown Austin. Presently, these creeks are underutilized as focal points for pedestrian activity and as primary linkages from downtown to Town Lake. These creeks have excellent potential as open space connectors, form-shapers and focal points for lively pedestrian-oriented mixed use.

Rainey Street—The Rainey Street Neighborhood has special potential because of its personality, historic structures, shade trees and ambience, and location near downtown, Town Lake and IH-35. A public owned storage yard is not currently compatible, but could become the catalyst for joint public/private development to create mixed use development.

West 1st Street—West 1st Street functions as a physical and visual barrier to Town Lake. Reducing the importance of West 1st Street as an east-west connection through downtown should be considered to improve the connections of the Municipal Office Complex and the rest of Downtown to Town Lake. There is a need for development along West 1st Street to be designed to define a coherent and consistent building pattern and pedestrian oriented street. Panoramic views to the lake can best be achieved by focusing pedestrian activity at the street level. If development along West 1st Street focused outward to surrounding blocks, pedestrians could be invited and interblock connections accomplished.





Existing Land Use Subzone 3 and 4

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Parkland
- Mobile Home



Recommended Action

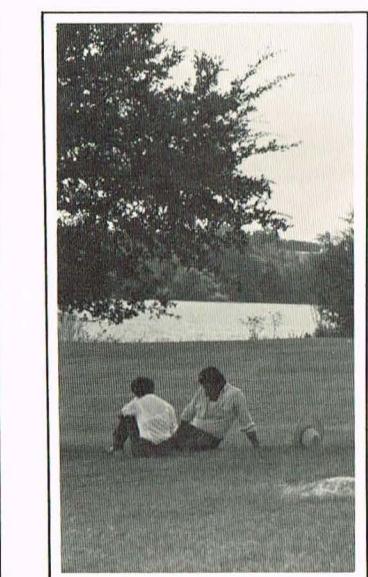
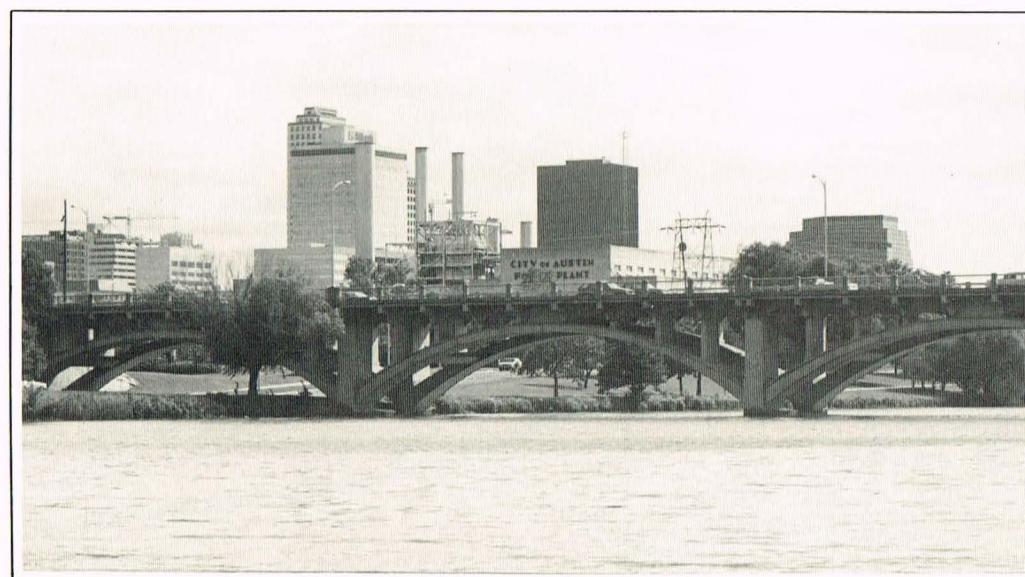
Land Use (Goals 2.00, 3.00, 4.00)

Action 4.01 Immediately designate the Rainey Street zone as a Comprehensive Planning District creating a joint public/private venture to establish a primarily residential mixed use development including recreational, cultural and retail/commercial uses that are oriented to and compatible with the Town Lake waterfront.

Action 4.02 Relocate the Street and Bridge Yard, insuring this significant public tract is available for public use in the Rainey project; encourage land trade to achieve optimum balance of lakefront-greenbelt space.

Action 4.03 Immediately take measures for the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.

Action 4.04 Encourage residential development downtown by providing incentives such as floor area bonuses, transfer of development rights, and waiving capital recovery fees.



Action 4.05 Establish First Street as a special pedestrian dominated zone, with landscaping, medians, and retail use at street level, and connections provided to the waterfront whenever possible.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 4.06 Develop design guidelines to establish a coherent urban form, compatible with the pedestrian.

Action 4.07 Expand boundaries of the Town Lake Overlay Zone and establish new criteria for land use to be compatible with Town Lake.

Action 4.08 Amend the Lake Commercial zone district to reflect more reasonable building intensities.

Action 4.09 Remove currently permitted land uses from the zoning district that are not compatible with the Corridor.

Action 4.10 Strengthen the creek overlay zone with new criteria to reflect requirements

of setback, pedestrian orientation, and architectural guidelines.

Access (Goal 6.00)

Action 4.11 Pedestrian tunnels and skybridges should be allowed only when:

1. Significant views are not blocked.
2. Topographic or other functional conditions require pedestrian circulation above or below the street when an unsafe or congested condition exists at street level.
3. Direct physical and visual access to tunnel and skybridge can be provided to adjacent sidewalks, open spaces, or public places.
4. Grade separation will not reduce or detract from a reasonable level of pedestrian activity along the street.

Action 4.12 Develop a parking plan for downtown and the waterfront which fosters short term parking for retail and recreation purposes, and long term parking confined to appropriate structures away from pedestrian zones and the lake.

Subzone 5 East Riverside/South Lakeshore/Festival Beach

Existing Conditions

Land Use—The north shore, (Festival Beach), is bounded by IH-35 on the west, Pleasant Valley Road on the east, and on the north by Holly Street from IH-35 to Canadian Street, north on Canadian Street to Canterbury, east on Canterbury to Mildred, north on Mildred to Willow, then east on Willow to Pleasant Valley Road.

The south shore is bounded by Bouldin Creek on the west, Pleasant Valley Road on the east, and on the south along and including all adja-

cent properties of East Riverside and South Lakeshore.

East Riverside/South Lakeshore/Festival Beach Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	131.2	25.5
Multi-family	101.5	19.7
Office	9.8	1.9
Commercial	16.0	3.1
Utility	23.1	4.5
Institutional	39.4	7.6
Parkland	117.2	22.7
Vacant	12.2	2.4
Roads/ROW	64.9	12.6
Total	515.3	100.0

Source: Office of Land Development Services

The Festival Beach area consists of single family uses and large amount of public use along the shoreline. Public uses consist of the Rebekah Baines Johnson Residential Center, Sam L. Martin Jr. High School, Fiesta Gardens, Metz Park, the Holly Power Plant, and the Fire Marshall's Office.

The homes in this area were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The neighborhood consists of low to moderate income residences.

The south shore along East Riverside Drive contains some parkland, but for the most part is in residential use. This neighborhood, Travis Heights, also contains old single family structures and a moderate income area. A portion of Travis Heights, located between Riverside Drive and Town Lake, is likely to undergo development pressures for more intense land uses similar to those occurring to the west along Riverside Drive.

The south shore along South Lakeshore Boulevard contains some service and convenience oriented commercial development and several multi-family developments located extremely close to the shoreline, making public access difficult. Redevelopment of many of these projects is likely due to the number of projects currently for sale. Parking lots are also located close to the shoreline, causing high amounts of runoff to flow into Town Lake.

Zoning—This area is zoned for single family (SF-3), multi-family (MF-3), and various commercial (GR and CS) and office (NO and LO) districts. Uses are primarily residential in character; office or commercial uses should therefore be oriented to serve the local community. The area north of Riverside Drive between Bouldin and Blunn Creeks is zoned LI (Light Industrial) and is not compatible with the surrounding area. Down-zoning to districts more compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods should be considered. Neighborhood (NO) and local retail (LR) are more appropriate for these areas.

Access—Generally, visual and physical access to the waterfront is good in this area due to the relatively large amount of parkland. Fiesta Gardens may provide excellent access to the waterfront in the future but is presently not utilized fully because it is closed and fenced off from public use.

Access could be improved along the south shore near Travis Heights between Bouldin Creek and the Norwood property, which is located just east of IH-35. Connection to the Blunn Creek linear park and greenbelt could be provided when Riverside Drive is realigned. Public access easements are needed where apartments prevent access along South Lakeshore Boulevard. Although public access at IH-35 exists, it is not visible and legible to the public.

Parkland—This portion of the Town Lake park system offers variety and substantial opportunities for waterfront recreation. Expansive open space along Festival Beach, two peninsulas, a lagoon and plaza at Fiesta Gardens, scenic Blunn Creek greenbelt, and East Bouldin Creek constitute excellent resource values and amenities.

The East Town Lake neighborhood has developed with parks and recreation staff a plan for improved and more compatible use of the Fiesta Gardens-Festival Beach area; the Council has also approved a proposal for renovating the Fiesta Gardens complex as a Mexican American Cultural Center to reflect the heritage of the community. This neighborhood strongly desires input to planning decisions in this area of Town Lake.

The Fire Marshall's Office is an encroachment on parkland and the Holly Power Plant also violates waterfront standards with storage materials and parking.

The Blunn Creek greenbelt does not currently connect with Town Lake; East Bouldin Creek is privately owned and could also provide excellent connection to the neighborhood. The Travis Heights neighborhood actively seeks input to park planning decisions.

Recent acquisition of the Norwood Tract at IH-35 and East Riverside Drive represents a significant addition to the public shoreline, as does the acquisition of land adjacent to the south peninsula. These additions can assist in completing the trail system and can provide waterfront amenities.

The south shoreline between West Bouldin Creek and the sailboat rental facility on South Lakeshore Boulevard represents a major gap in the trail system.

Special Opportunities—Fiesta Gardens and the lagoon represent excellent potential

for recreational and cultural benefits. Working with the neighborhood, the considerable public investment in the area could be re-oriented to multiple use for the neighborhood and community at large.

Multi-family housing on the south shore is offered for sale, providing an opportunity for the city to intervene and recapture the waterfront, and perhaps retaining housing stock in the Corridor.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goals 2.00, 3.00, 4.00)

Action 5.01 Incorporate recommendations of the Fairview Park Neighborhood Conservation Combining District, encourage residential use and historic preservation.

Action 5.02 Implement the East Town Lake Citizens'/Fiesta Gardens Plan to become a cultural arts center/museum and improved recreational resource. Reorient activities to benefit the neighborhood and community; involve East Austin neighborhood association in decisions; remove fences.

Action 5.03 The Holly Power Plant should be better maintained to reduce visual impacts. Painting the facility a color that blends with the surrounding environment, cleaning up of storage areas, landscaping and removing parking along the waterfront should be considered.

Action 5.04 Preserve the low density, residential land use of the Travis Heights neighborhood, particularly that portion north of Riverside Drive.

Action 5.05 Consider acquisition of multi-family apartments on the south shore for interim low income housing and public access,

and for eventual conversion to public open space.

Action 5.06 Consider conversion of Fire Marshall's Office to a more appropriate use such as a group pavilion; open public restrooms at ground level.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 5.07 Downzone areas now zoned Light Industrial to a more compatible zone district such as NO (Neighborhood Office) or LR (Local Retail).

Action 5.08 Create a new Waterfront Overlay Zone with design criteria geared to special characteristics of this development zone.

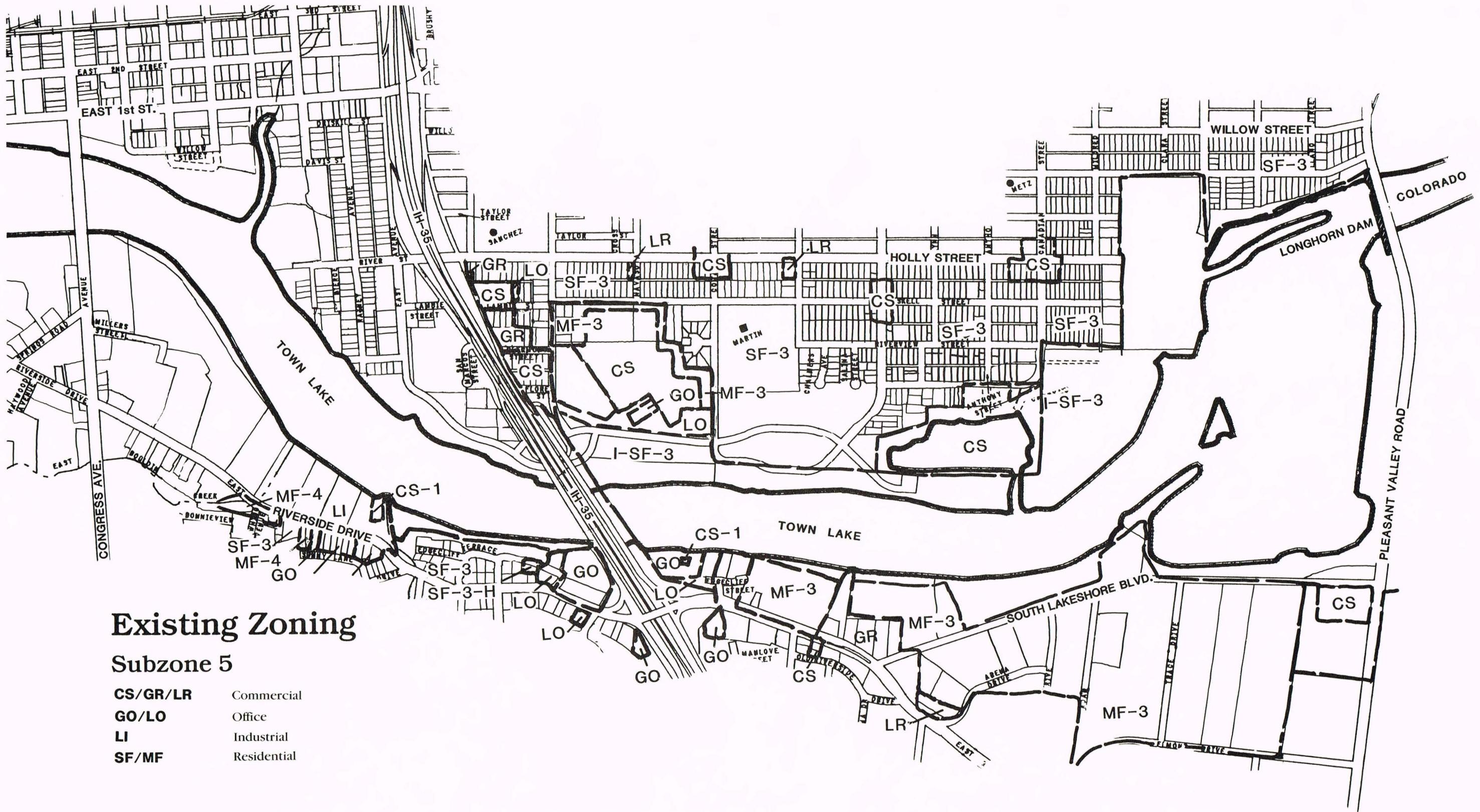
Access (Goal 6.00)

Action 5.09 Extend the hike and bike trail along the south shore from Bouldin Creek easterly past IH-35.

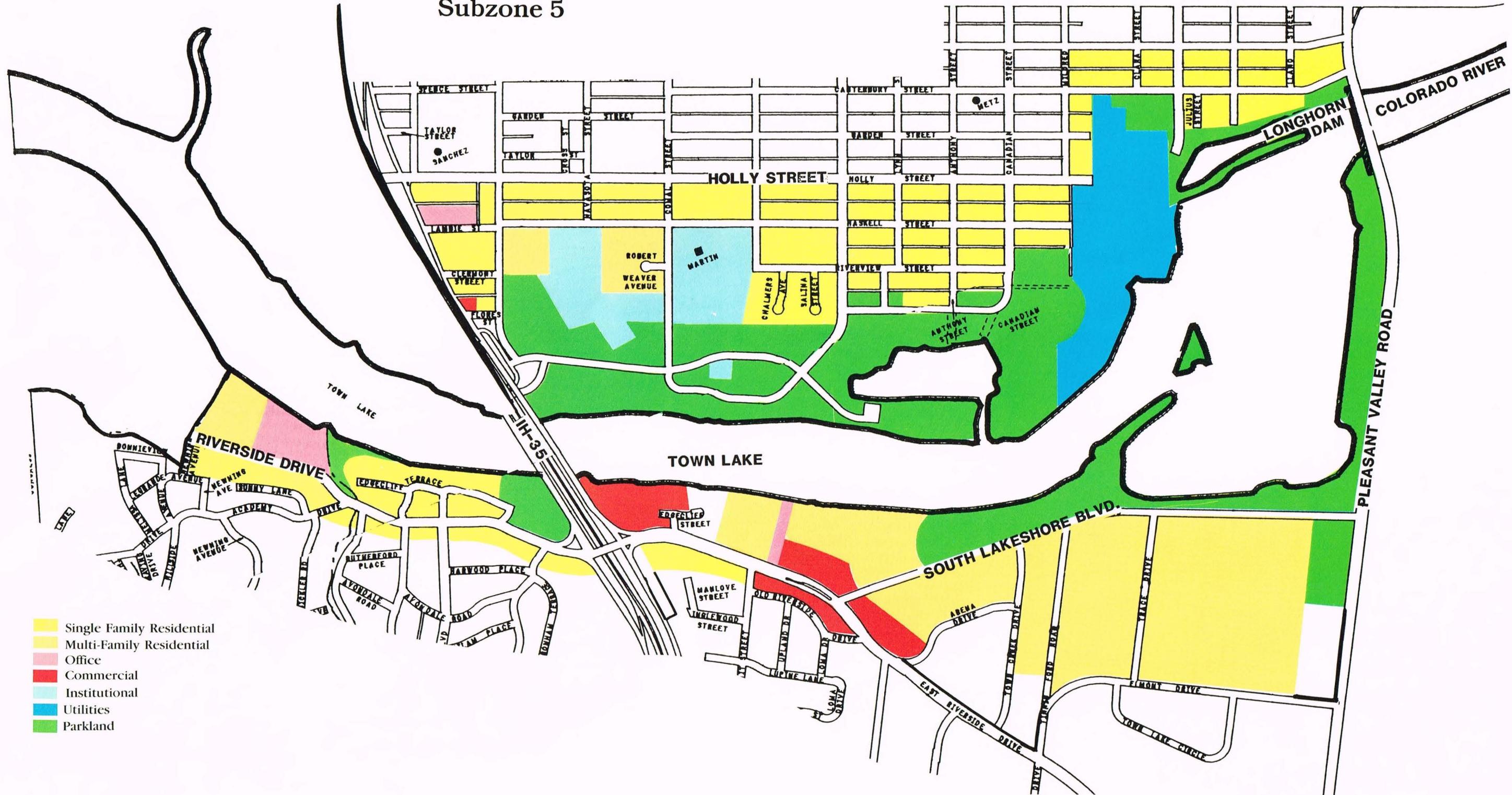
Action 5.10 Revise current plans for East Riverside Drive realignment to extend the Blunn Creek Greenbelt to Town Lake. Involve neighborhood in decisions.

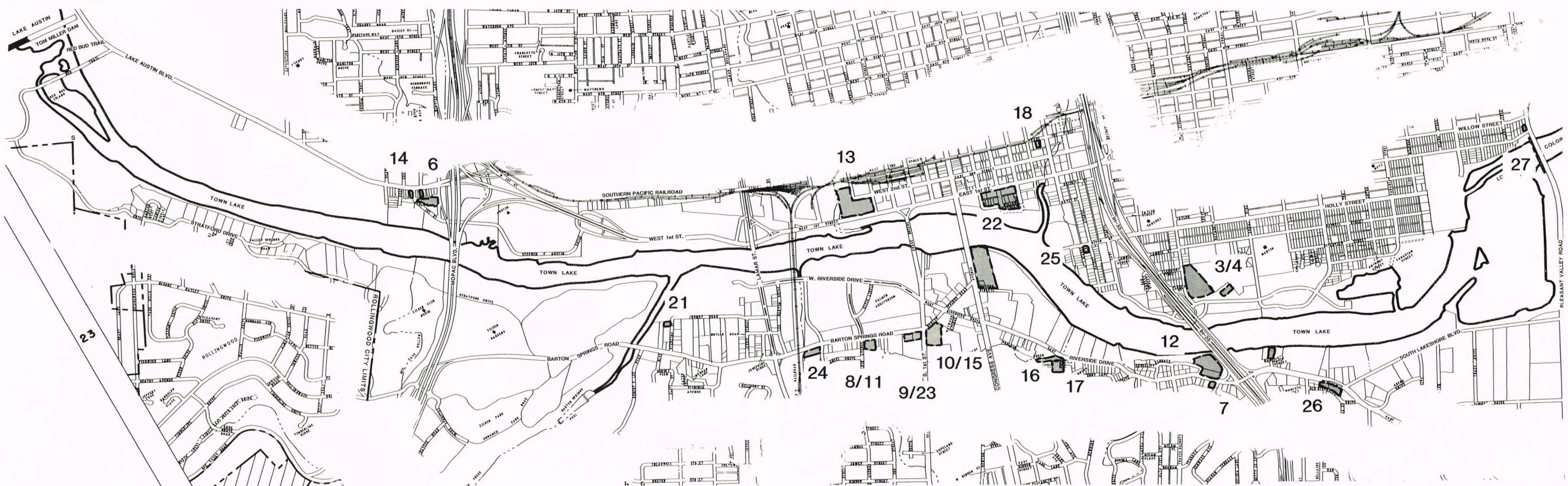
Action 5.11 Pursue acquisition of greenbelt along East Bouldin Creek to connect with Town Lake.

Action 5.12 Develop a plan for Norwood Tract and RBJ site as gateway parks to provide public access and orientation to the waterfront; involve neighborhoods.



Existing Land Use Subzone 5





Zoning History

Town Lake

ZONING HISTORY
Sub Areas A-E

Case No.	Acreage	Sub Area	PC	Action CC	Ord.	Requested Zoning	Granted Zoning or Other Action
1 C14p-81-013	1.9	C	-	-	-	Special Permit	Withdrawn (42 unit apt.)
2 C14-81-052	1.9	C	-	-	-	L, 3rd	Administrative dismissal
3 C14p-81-085	9.1	E	x	-	-	Special Permit	EMS station and offices; dental clinic
4 C14-81-135	9.1	D	x	x	x	O-1 & O, 3rd; A, 1st	O, 1st & O, 3rd; AA, 1st
5 C14-81-219	97.0	C	x	x	x	A, A-H, B, BB & C-1, 1st	A, A-H, B, BB & C-1, 1st
6 C14p-82-021	1.8	B	-	-	-	Special Permit	Withdrawn
7 C14-82-034	5.0	C	-	-	-	B, 3rd	Withdrawn
8 C14-82-054	0.7	C	-	-	-	GR, 2nd	Withdrawn
9 C14-82-055	2.4	C	-	-	-	C-2, 3rd & GR, 2nd	Withdrawn
10 C14-83-005	7.6	C	x	-	-	C-2, 4th	withdrawn
11 C14-83-016	0.7	C	x	x	x	C-2, 2nd & O, 2nd	C-2, 2nd & O, 2nd with restrictive covenant
12 C14p-83-017	3.1	C	x	-	-	Special Permit	Apartments (80 units)
13 C14p-83-070	6.9	D	x	-	-	Special Permit	CIP improvements to Green Water Treatment Plant
14 C14-83-143	0.1	B	x	x	x	O-1, 1st	O-1, 1st
15 C14-83-144	7.6	C	x	x	x	C-2, 2nd	C-2, 2nd
16 C14n-84-006	0.8	C	x	-	-	Inter-City App.	Apartments (11 units)
17 C14n-84-007	0.6	C	x	-	-	Inner-City App.	Condominium (14 units)
18 C14p-84-062	0.1	D	x	-	-	Special Permit	Mixed-beverage bar with 10 seats
19 C14p-84-106	1.0	C	x	x	-	Special Permit	152-seat Restaurant/Bar dedication
20 C14-84-235	0.5	C	x	x	-	O, 1st	postponed indef.
22 C14-84-354	1.6	D	x	x	-	C, 4th	C, 4th subj. to meeting conditions
23 C14-84-428	1.0	C	x	x	x	C-2, 2nd	C-2, 2nd
25 C14-84-473	0.2	C	x	x	-	O, 2nd	O, 1st pending site plan approval and ROW dedication
26 C14-85-003	0.4	E	x	x	-	GR	GR, pending restrictive covenant
27 C14-85-112	0.2	E	-	-	-	LR	Withdrawn

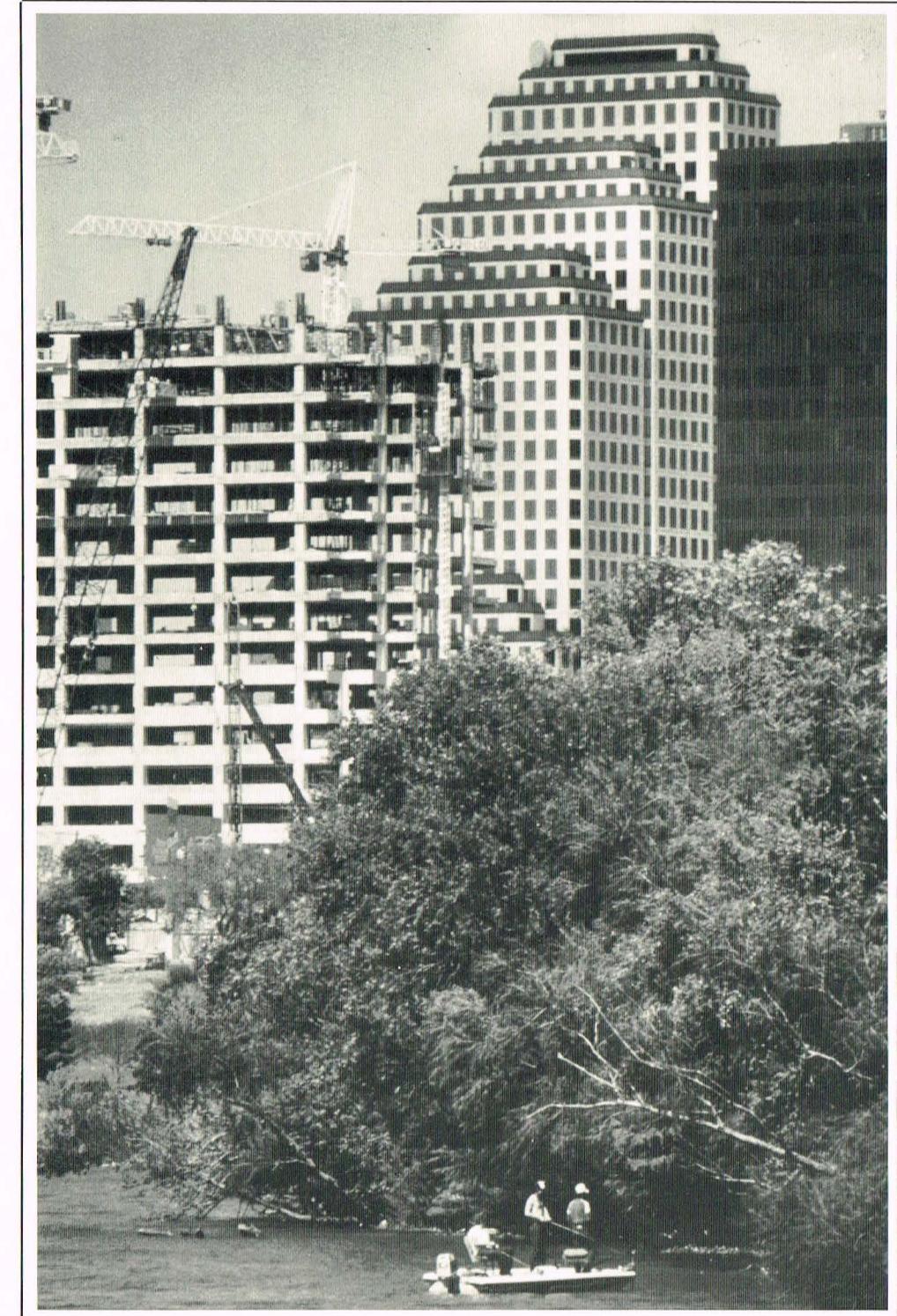


Photo by Larry Kolvord