

**Appendix E**  
**South Shore Study**

*A full copy of the South Shore Study is available at*  
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/wotf.htm>



# Austin Town Lake Corridor

SOUTH SHORE CENTRAL/TRAVIS HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

FINAL DRAFT • MAY 2000

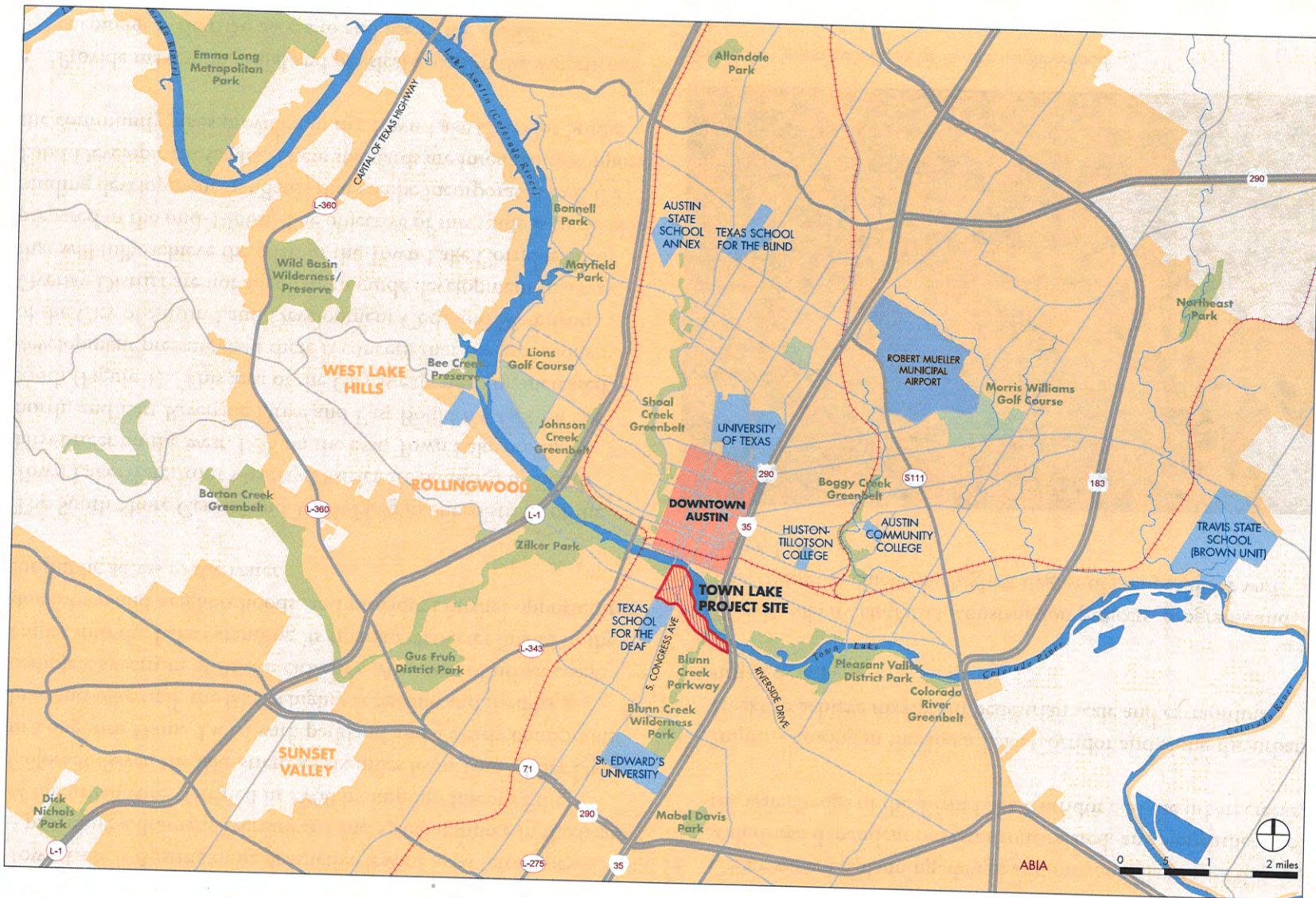
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**FIGURE 1**  
Regional Context

# 1. BACKGROUND

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Town Lake is Austin’s most distinctive feature – its “crown jewel” – providing a dramatic recreational and visual resource in the heart of the urban core. Created in 1960 by impoundment of the Colorado River, the lake stretches six miles from Tom Miller Dam to Longhorn Dam. Lined with parkland and a nearly continuous hike and bike trail, the lake is highly accessible and used by a complete spectrum of Austin citizenry. A system of urban creeks empty into the Lake extending its riparian character inland to the downtown and neighborhoods, and providing further opportunities for public access to the water.

The South Shore Central and Travis Heights sub-districts of the Town Lake Waterfront Overlay District are bounded by South First Street on the west, I-35 on the east, Town Lake on the north, and East Riverside Drive and East Bouldin Creek on the south (Figure 1). This area of the City is experiencing increased development pressure, and there is concern that the provisions of the City of Austin Land Development Code and Waterfront Overlay District are not adequate to guide development in a way that will fully achieve the goals of the Town Lake Corridor Study prepared in the mid-1980s. The objective of this study is to develop binding development standards that can be incorporated into the Land Development Code. These standards are intended to support the community goals provided in the Town Lake Corridor Study:

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

- 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.
- Improve zoning in the Town Lake Corridor and along the urban creeks to achieve maximum pedestrian scale and extraordinary urban design.
- Require all city land uses, construction projects, programs and operations to achieve the highest degree of compatibility with Town Lake.



*Town Lake viewed from Edgecliff Terrace neighborhood.*

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

### **Study Process**

The City of Austin commissioned ROMA Design Group to work with the 16-member Town Lake Waterfront Advisory Board over a period of three months to develop a regulatory strategy for this key area of the City. The Advisory Board, appointed by the City Council, is made up of a diverse cross section of interests, including several property owners, representatives from the adjoining Travis Heights and South Congress neighborhoods, developers, parks advocates, and design professionals.

An initial workshop was conducted in March 2000 with the Advisory Board to discuss existing conditions and characteristics of the study area as well as issues and opportunities associated with future development. A second workshop was held in early April to present initial concepts and strategies. In addition to meeting with the Advisory Board, the consultants interviewed numerous key stakeholders and professionals to gain a better understanding of the area's dynamics. This report describes the findings and recommendations to date, incorporating input received from the Advisory Board.

## 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

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### Land Uses and Urban Design Characteristics

The South Central Shore and Travis Heights sub-districts of the Town Lake Corridor are characterized by a highly incoherent and fragmented pattern of land uses and development (Figure 2). By virtue of its historic location in the Colorado River's flood plain, this portion of the City did not develop the same levels of public infrastructure as the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. With the improvement of Town Lake and the reduction of flooding, the area was perceived, in the 1970s, as a natural extension of the downtown. Major projects including several State office buildings and hotels were developed. Unlike the downtown, however, the area lacked a strong public framework of streets and public spaces that could organize and structure development.

The resulting pattern is one of large superblocks with an almost random assembly of land uses, building types and parking lots (Figure 3). Much of the area is underutilized with one to two story buildings set in large parking areas, with little relationship to the surrounding streets. Other parcels contain significant buildings (e.g., the TexDot office buildings and One Texas Center along Riverside Drive, and the Hyatt along Barton Springs Road) but are separated from the street by fronting single story commercial buildings. Multi-family residential buildings are located in the area – concentrated primarily along the shoreline in the vicinity of Blunn and East Bouldin Creeks – but there is no sense of neighborhood cohesion or identity. The Edgecliff Terrace

neighborhood east of Blunn Creek, on the other hand, sits high atop a bluff overlooking the lake, and is a strong and established enclave of single family homes.

### Shoreline Public Access and Open Space

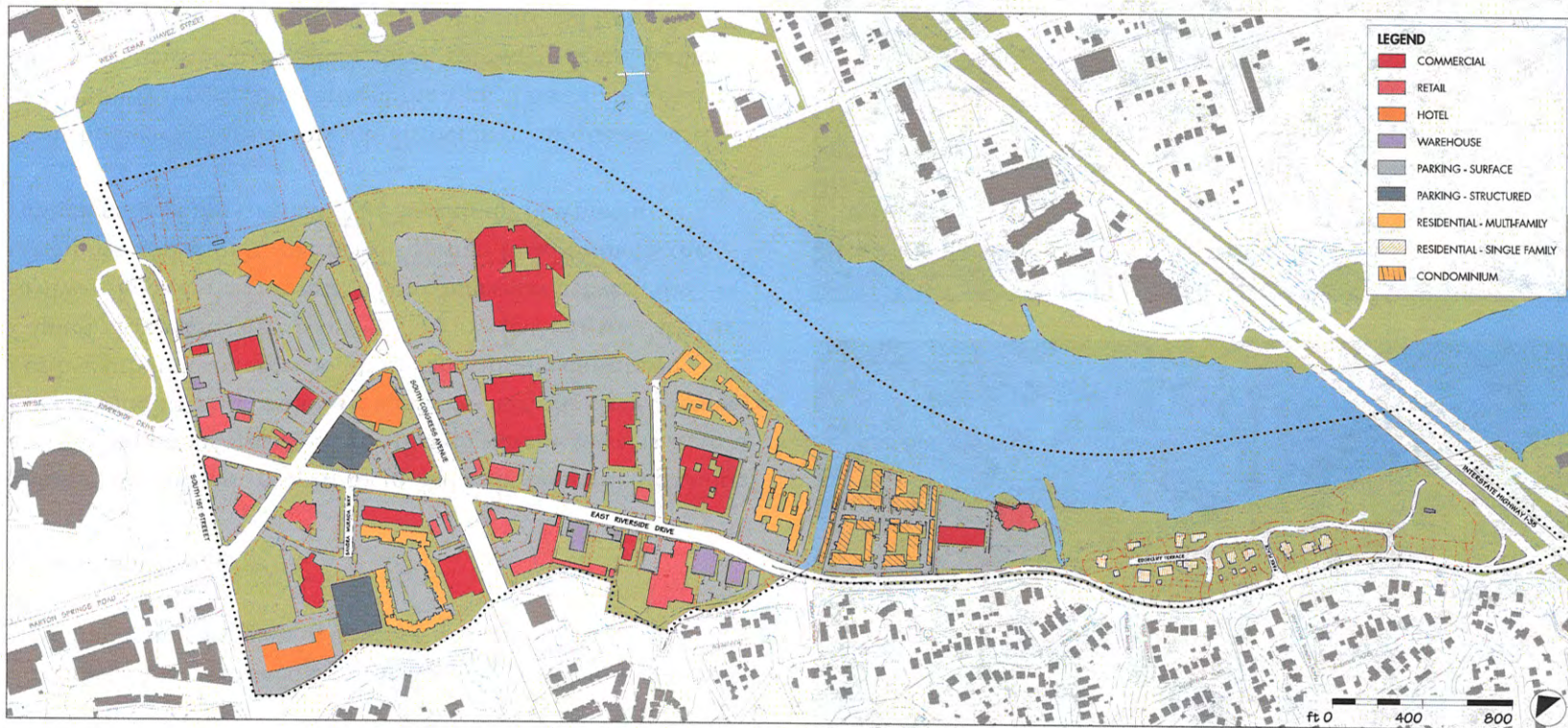
Since much of the development in this sub-area pre-dated the Town Lake Waterfront Overlay District implemented in the late 1980s, there is a significant length of shoreline that is inaccessible to the public. Apartment and condominium projects abut the waterfront along East Riverside Drive, interrupting the ten mile-long hike



*The sub-district's development pattern is one of large blocks and an almost random assembly of land uses, building types and parking lots.*

and bike trail that runs along the shore of the lake. This interruption is compounded by the natural topography of the Edgecliff Terrace neighborhood, which has precluded public access along the shoreline in spite of the fact that the City maintains significant ownership of the bluff and Norwood Park immediately west of I-35.

The remainder of the shoreline within this sub-area is held in private ownership. Easements established adjacent to the American Statesman and Hyatt Hotel complexes have assured public access along these portions of the shoreline. The waterfront in front of the American Statesman building has also become a popular open space and gathering area to view the bats beneath the Congress



**FIGURE 2**  
Land Use and Development Pattern



Avenue bridge. This open space is owned and maintained by the Statesman. Apart from Norwood Park, there is no public open space within this reach of the Town Lake Corridor. However, the 72-acre Town Lake Park is located immediately west of the area, and serves as an important city-wide open space resource.

### Circulation Pattern

Because of its historic propensity to flood, the South Shore Central area has few public streets. Those that do traverse the area serve as key citywide arterials. South Congress Avenue, the city's ceremonial north-south link connects South Austin with the downtown and Capitol. Riverside Drive is one of the city's few east-west arterial roadway linkages that provides a key connection between the downtown and airport, and Barton Springs Road connects the western parts of the City and MoPac with the downtown.

As such, the roadways of this sub-district have historically served to expeditiously move traffic through the area. There is no distinctive identity or sense of arrival along these "gateway" streets. Rather, "strip" commercial uses with frequent curb cuts and fronting parking lots create a cluttered and confused visual environment. Furthermore the convergence of the arterials in an "X" pattern between South Congress and South First Streets compounds this confusion and disorientation.

This roadway pattern and the lack of a parallel system of streets to carry local traffic contributes to peak hour traffic congestion within the sub-district. During the morning commute, northbound traffic

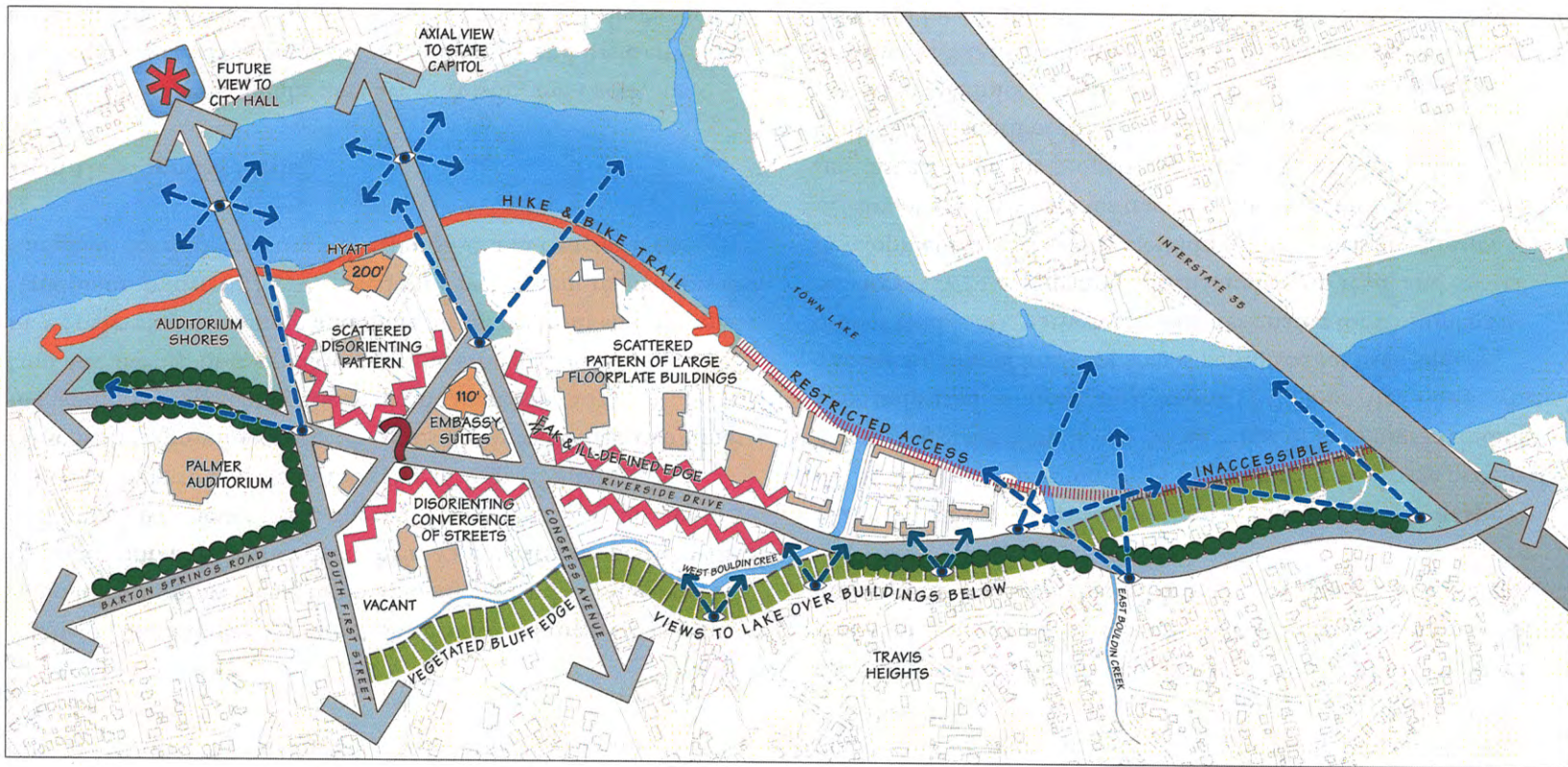


*Upper: Existing residential development interrupts the ten-miles of hike and bike trail along Town Lake. Lower: The waterfront open space adjacent to the American Statesman has become a popular gathering place to view the bats beneath the Congress Avenue bridge.*

backs up along South First Street and eastbound traffic is delayed along Barton Springs Road within the “X”. During the afternoon commute, there is significant congestion (i.e., unacceptable levels of service “E” and F”) at the Congress Avenue/Riverside Drive intersection, and unacceptable levels of congestion along segments of Barton Springs Road and South First Street.

### Land Ownership and Susceptibility to Change

The South Shore Central area includes a seemingly random pattern of parcelization, with numerous large properties interspersed with much smaller ones, further contributing to the lack of cohesion within the area. Smaller parcels – many less than an acre in



**FIGURE 3**  
Urban Design Characteristics and Visual Structure

size – are typically concentrated along the major arterials (e.g., South Congress Avenue) while some of the largest parcels (e.g., Hyatt, American Statesman) have little frontage or exposure to adjacent streets.

Figure 4 describes the pattern of ownership and the relative value of building improvements to the underlying land. Using Travis Central Appraisal District data, the map indicates properties where buildings have a lesser value than the land (0 to .99 ratio), those which have up to two times the value (1.0 to 1.99 ratio), and those with improvements that have a value greater than two times the land. As suggested by the map, the increasing value of land and the age of the buildings in the area are combining to make redevelopment more and more attractive from an economic standpoint, underscoring the need for development regulations that can guide development toward responsible and beneficial change.

### Land Development Code

As with all property within the City of Austin, the Land Development Code governs the uses, intensity and basic envelope of development within the area. Overlaying this development code is the Waterfront Overlay Zone, which specifically addresses the relationship of development to Town Lake and the urban creeks leading to it. The Land Development Code sets forth land use designations, intensities, heights and coverage, while the Waterfront Overlay Zone describes specific use, setback, and stepback provisions related to the shoreline.

As shown in Figure 5, many of the land use designations pertaining to the area are not consistent with the actual uses that exist on the land, or with the mixture of waterfront compatible uses that the 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study promoted. The land use designations represent individual zoning decisions over a long period of time, and a “patchwork” of conflicting intentions, that only contribute to the chaotic development pattern of the area.

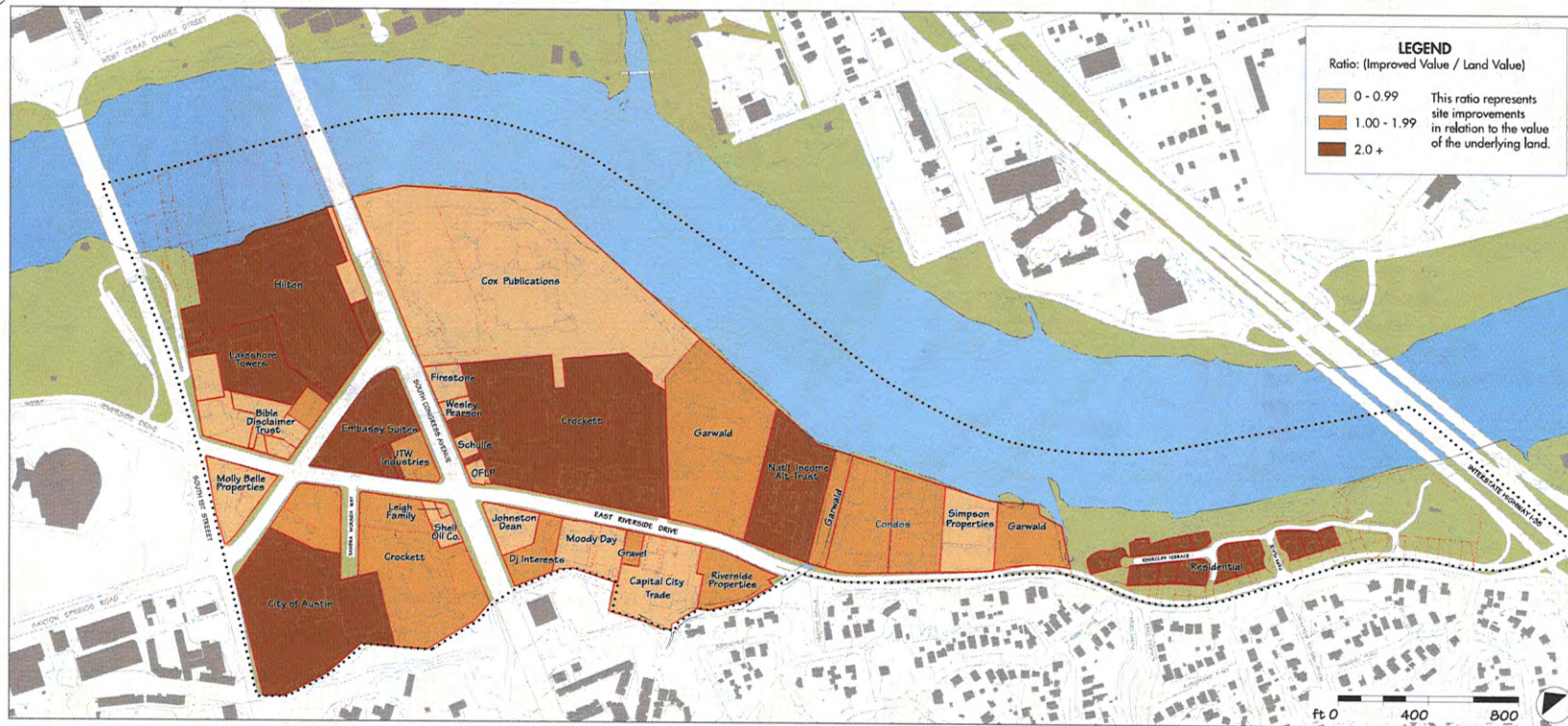
Major properties are still zoned Limited Industrial (LI) in spite of the residential or commercial developments that have occurred. These properties allow a very broad range of land uses including light industrial, at moderate densities (1.0 Floor Area Ratio, where one square foot of building area is permitted for each square foot of land area). Other tracts are designated for Commercial Services (CS), a designation which allows strip retail and service development as well as office buildings and hotels at a greater density of 2.0 FAR. Other tracts within the South Shore Central sub-district (e.g., the properties around the Hyatt Hotel and the Garwald site south of the Statesman) are designated as “Lake” (L), which permits a mixture of urban uses with very high densities of 8.0 FAR. The American Statesman property is governed by a Planned Unit Development (PUD) which provides a maximum intensity of 0.73 FAR and specific provisions related to the expansion of the newspaper’s production and administrative facilities. The Edgecliff Terrace neighborhood is designated as Single Family residential (SF).

Figure 6 describes the heights permitted by these land use designations, as well as the setback provisions of the Waterfront Overlay Zone

(WOZ). As shown, heights are limited to 35 feet in the Edgecliff neighborhood, and range from 60 feet (for the CS and LI land use designations) to as much as 200 feet for the Lake (L) designation. Development on the Statesman property is permitted to a height of 96 feet, as per the provisions of the Planned Unit Development.

### The Waterfront Overlay Zone

The intent of the Waterfront Overlay Zone is to ensure that new development along Town Lake and the urban creek system preserves the natural and riparian qualities, extends the sense of greenery and open space, establishes a continuous system of public access, and results in a pedestrian-friendly and public-spirited environment.

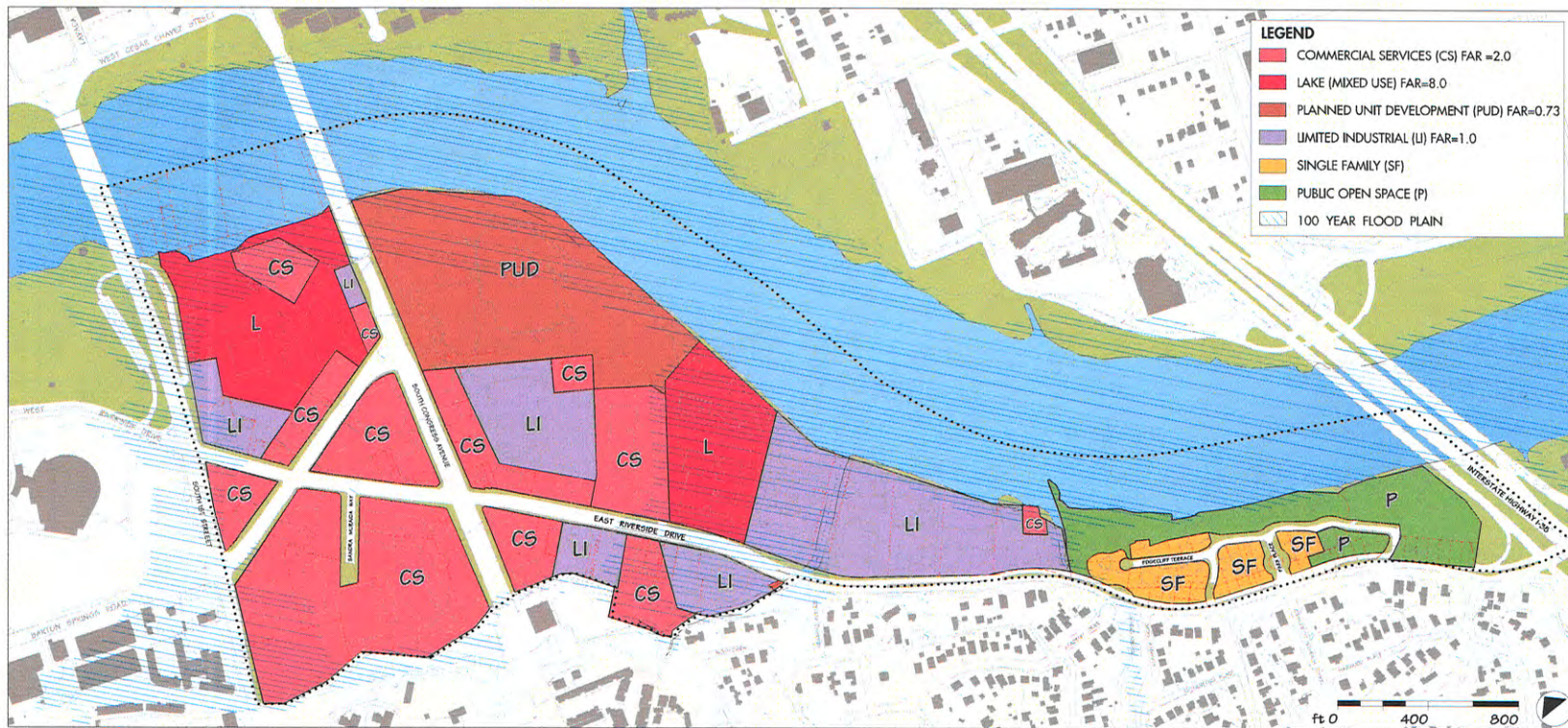


**FIGURE 4**  
Ownership

The WOZ establishes a primary and secondary setback for much of the Town Lake and East Bouldin Creek shorelines.

**Setbacks:** Primary setbacks are intended to establish open space and public access immediately adjacent to Town Lake or one of the urban creeks. No parking is permitted in these areas, and

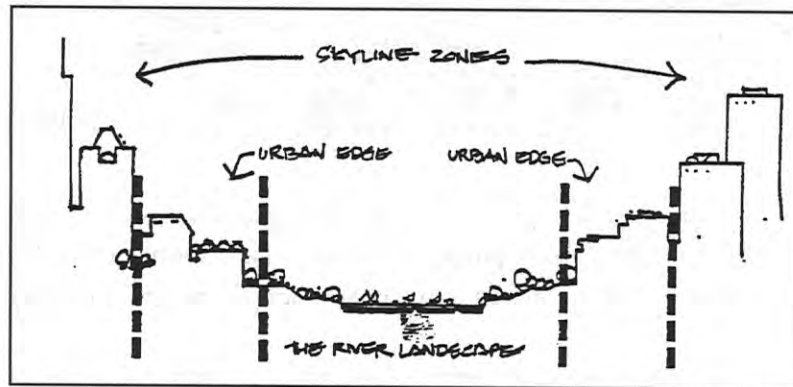
only minor park-related structures are allowed. Impervious cover is limited to a maximum of 15%. Secondary setbacks create a transition zone that promote waterfront-oriented outdoor activities including fountains, patios, terraces and outdoor restaurants. Maximum impervious cover within the secondary setback area is permitted to 30%.



**FIGURE 5**  
Existing Land Use Regulations

Along the majority of the South Shore Central sub-district, a total setback of 200 feet is required from the Town Lake shoreline: 150 feet as a primary setback and an additional 50 feet as a secondary setback (Figure 7). East of East Bouldin Creek, the setback from the shoreline edge is reduced to a 100 foot primary setback; no secondary setback is imposed. The intention of these setbacks is to require private property owners in any redevelopment of their properties to extend the sense of greenery and public open space that exists on other reaches of the Town Lake Corridor through the district.

The WOZ also dictates setbacks from East Bouldin and Blunn Creeks, to promote the protection of these urban watersheds, and to make possible public access in the future. Along both Blunn and East Bouldin Creeks, north of East Riverside Drive, the setback requirement is 80 feet from the centerline of the creek. South of



The Town Lake Corridor Study calls for buildings to step down in scale to the waterfront.

Riverside Drive, the WOZ requires a total of 210 feet of setback from the centerline of East Bouldin Creek: 80 feet as a primary setback and 130 feet as a secondary setback.

**Uses:** The WOZ imposes use requirements in some subdistricts to promote an active public environment. Within the South Shore Central subdistrict, the ordinance requires that a minimum of 50% of the net usable floor area of the ground level of a structure fronting and adjacent to Town Lake be used for pedestrian-oriented uses (i.e., any use which serves the public by providing goods or services including arts and craft studios, restaurants, consumer convenience services, food sales, and any residential use.) Within the Travis Heights subdistrict, non-compatible uses (e.g., automotive repair and sales, industrial, warehousing, etc.) are specifically prohibited.

**Stepbacks:** The Town Lake Corridor Study calls for buildings to step down in scale toward the waterfront to create a natural "bowl" effect. This intent manifests itself within the WOZ, which stipulates a maximum height of 35 feet within secondary setback areas, but there are no other height restrictions within the South Shore Central subdistrict that would require a stepping down; for instance properties with a Lake (L) land use designation could construct a 200 foot tall building against the secondary setback line (Figure 7). The WOZ does require a stepback of 70 degrees from the right of way of East Riverside Drive above a "base wall" height of 45 feet on the north side and 35 feet on the south side of the street.

In addition to the setback, use and stepback provisions, the WOZ provides key urban design standards that affect the public environment along the waterfront including:

**Parking:** Surface parking is required to be out of predominant public view from Town Lake, the parkland associated with it, or any creek referenced in the ordinance; rather the ordinance

requires surface parking to be oriented along the roadways and the views screened with landscaping. Structured parking is required to be integrated architecturally within buildings, screened from predominant public view, designed to promote a pedestrian scale, and include active ground level uses if oriented to Town Lake or an urban creek.

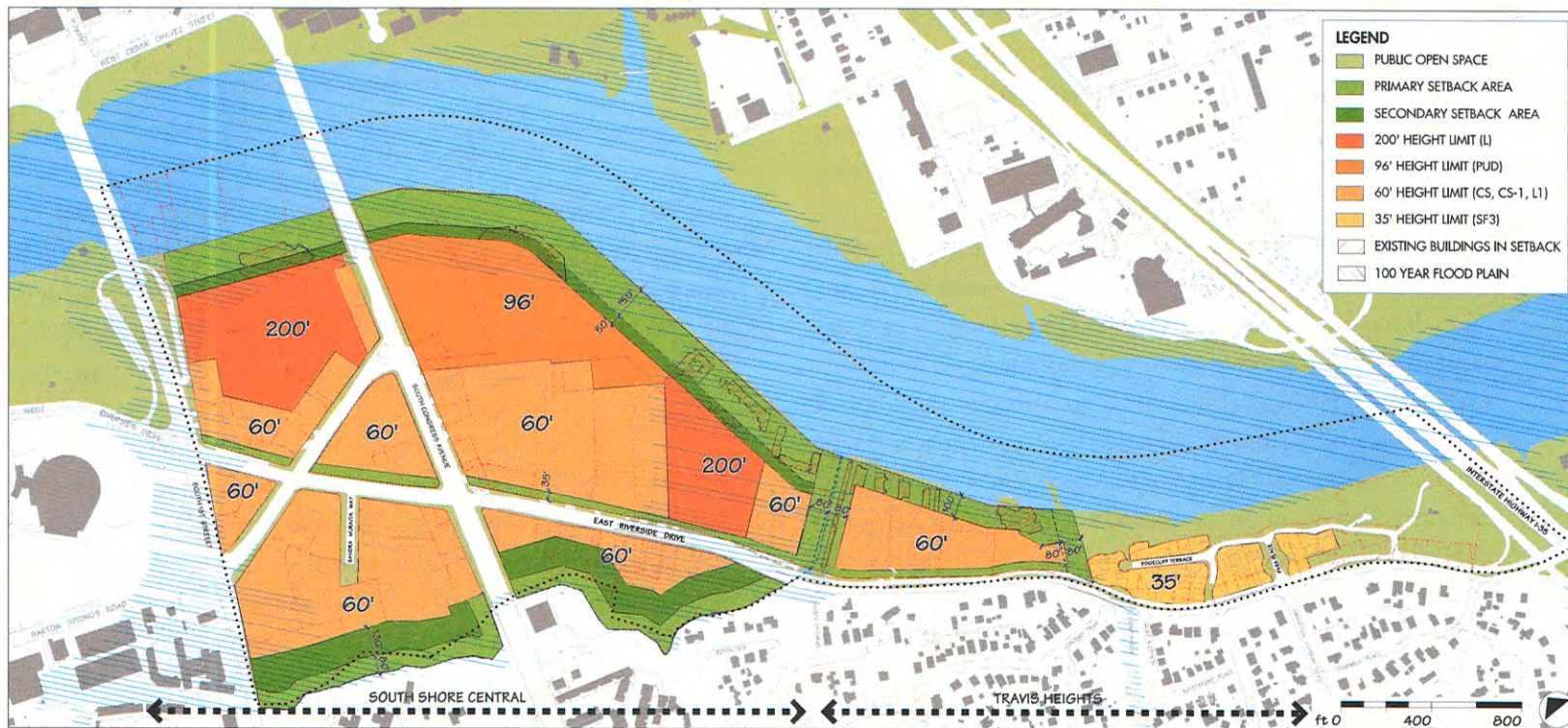
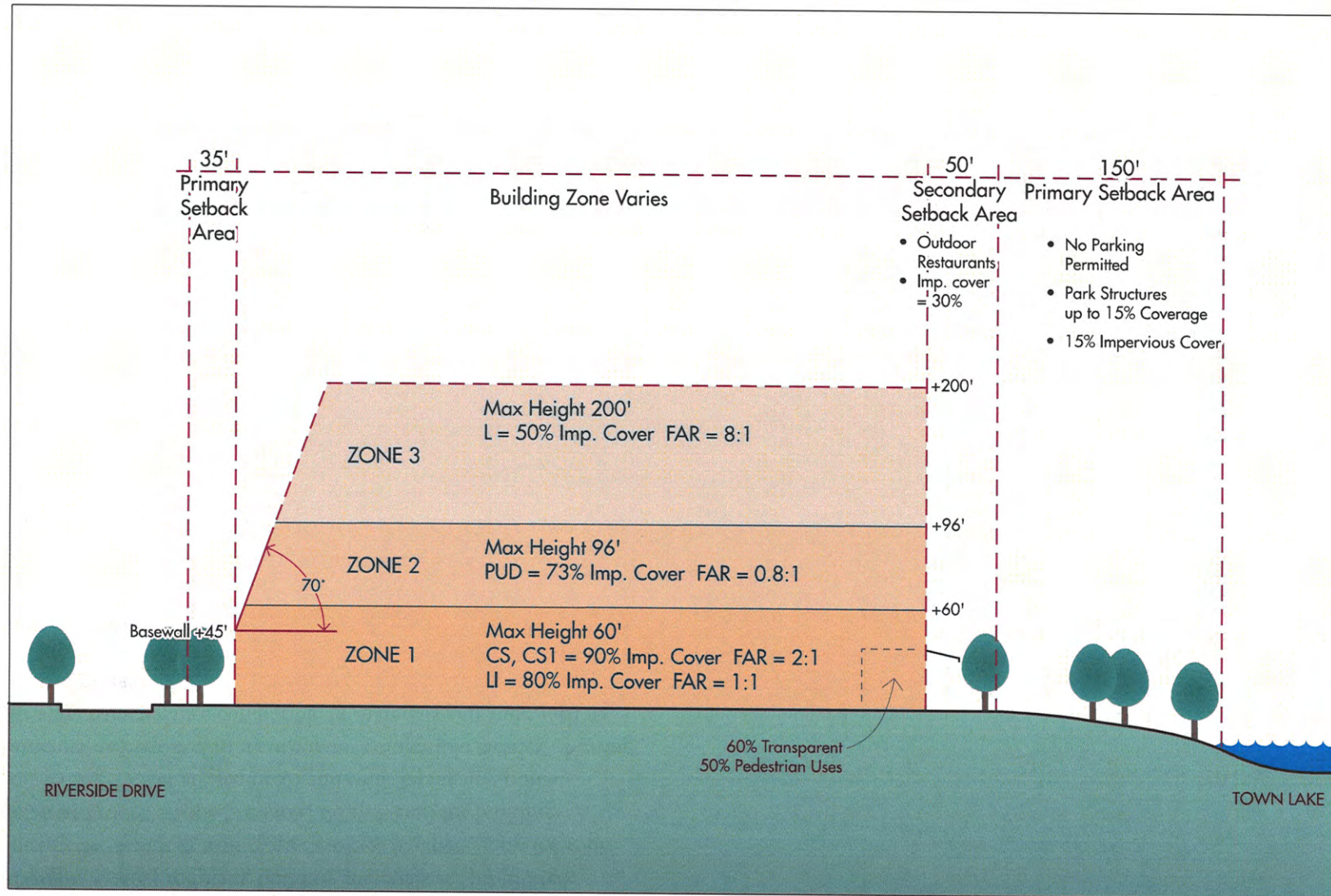


FIGURE 6  
Maximum Height and Required Setbacks



**FIGURE 7**  
Waterfront Overlay Zone/South Shore Central Height, Setbacks and Intensity



*Utilities:* are required to be undergrounded.

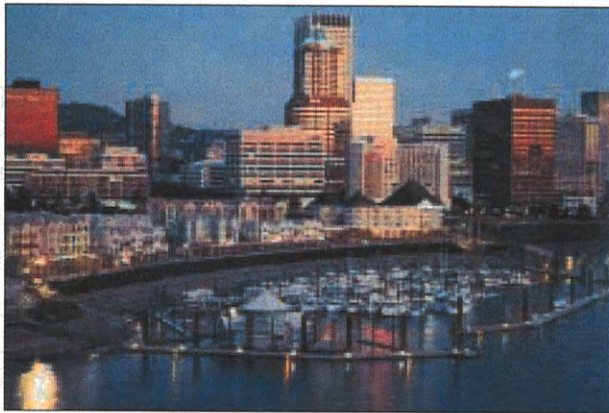
*Design:* Glare producing building materials are prohibited; distinctive building tops (e.g., cornices, parapets, hippped roofs, mansard roofs, stepped terraces, domes, etc.) for buildings exceeding 45 feet are required; and walls facing any public amenity are required to incorporate “compatible facades” bearing design characteristics compatible in materials and scale with its surroundings.



*Continuous public access and open space along the shoreline.*



*A mixture of uses that activate the waterfront.*



*Development that steps down in scale to the waterfront.*



*Streets that contribute to a sense of place.*

*The opportunity is to promote new development that reinforces and enhances the amenity of Town Lake, and that creates a mixed-use waterfront district complementary and compatible with both the downtown on the north and the neighborhoods to the south.*

### 3. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The South Shore Central sub-district of the Town Lake Corridor provides a great opportunity for the City of Austin. The underutilized and aging nature of the area makes it prime for redevelopment and revitalization; the opportunity is to promote new development that reinforces and enhances the amenity of Town Lake, and that creates a mixed-use waterfront district complementary and compatible with both the downtown on the north and the neighborhoods to the south. The community has clearly stated that this sub-district should be viewed as a transitional area rather than an extension of the downtown. Such redevelopment and intensification is consistent with the Town Lake Corridor Study, as well as the City's current policies for "Smart Growth". However, there are two principal impediments to the realization of this vision:

- Existing development regulations are inadequate to encourage the orderly redevelopment of this reach of the Town Lake Corridor; and
- There is a lack of public infrastructure to serve as a strong framework within which development intensification can occur.

More specifically:

- The land use designations of the Land Development Code need to be updated to reflect existing land uses and the mixture of waterfront-compatible uses envisioned by the Town Lake Corridor Study.

- Regulations related to density and height need to be re-evaluated and additional urban design provisions related to building orientation developed to ensure that new development creates a more cohesive urban district.
- The use and setback provisions of the Waterfront Overlay Zone need to be revised to provide more flexibility and to encourage the redevelopment of aging properties that are impeding public access along the shoreline and creekfronts.
- The building setback requirements of the WOZ need to be reconsidered so that they more accurately reflect the intent of the Town Lake Corridor Study for a stepping down of development toward the waterfront.
- Incentives should be established to promote intensification, subject to the cooperation of adjoining property owners to contribute to the area's "public framework" of shoreline access, open space, shared parking facilities, and additional public and private streets.
- Streetscape standards should be developed for the major arterials within the area to promote a more cohesive and legible urban district.

It is recommended that two-tiers of development standards be established for the South Shore Central subdistrict and the portion of the Travis Heights subdistrict west of Blunn Creek. No changes are recommended for the Edgecliff Terrace neighborhood east of Blunn Creek. These two tiers include:

*Base Zoning* that clearly sets forth the allowable uses, intensity, height, setbacks, stepbacks, coverage and urban design requirements for all properties; and

*Redevelopment Area Zoning* that allows for intensification (i.e., height and density) subject to specific conditions aimed at achieving clear public objectives related to shoreline access, open space, circulation, parking, etc.

In addition to the development standards, it is recommended that Streetscape Standards be established for each of the major arterials that traverse the area. The remainder of this report provides recommended base and redevelopment area zoning standards, as well as conceptual streetscape standards.

## 4. BASE ZONING DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

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The base zoning development standards are intended to update the land use designations of the Land Development Code, as well as the use, setback, stepback and design provisions of the Waterfront Overlay Zone. The intent is to simplify the regulations to provide property owners and developers with a clearer idea of the preconditions to development, and, as appropriate to offer more flexibility to achieve the basic public objectives for the area.

**Land Use:** The existing underlying land use designations should be replaced with a single Mixed Use (MU) designation, allowing for commercial office, retail, hotel, and residential uses. The final ordinance should establish a comprehensive list of permitted and conditional uses. The PUD designation on the American Statesman property should remain unchanged (Figure 8).

**Intensity:** Whereas current standards permit a range of intensities from a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 to 8.0, it is recommended that the base development standards impose a single intensity not to exceed 1.0 FAR for the entire area. This intensity is appropriate, absent the introduction of additional infrastructure and coordination of adjacent properties. Additional density should be provided subject to area-specific conditions for intensification provided below.

**Waterfront Setbacks:** The primary and secondary setback provisions for this portion of the Town Lake Corridor should be replaced with minimum and average setbacks, to allow more flexibility in achieving the intent of continuous public access and open space

along the waterfront. Average setbacks would be calculated by the setback along the entire frontage of the property. More specifically:

- Along Town Lake between South First Street and the easternmost edge of the American Statesman property, an overall average setback of 200 feet should be established, with a minimum setback of 100 feet. A public access easement of 80 feet along the shoreline should be imposed (Figure 9).
- East of the American Statesman to Blunn Creek, development should adhere to an overall average setback of 120 feet with a



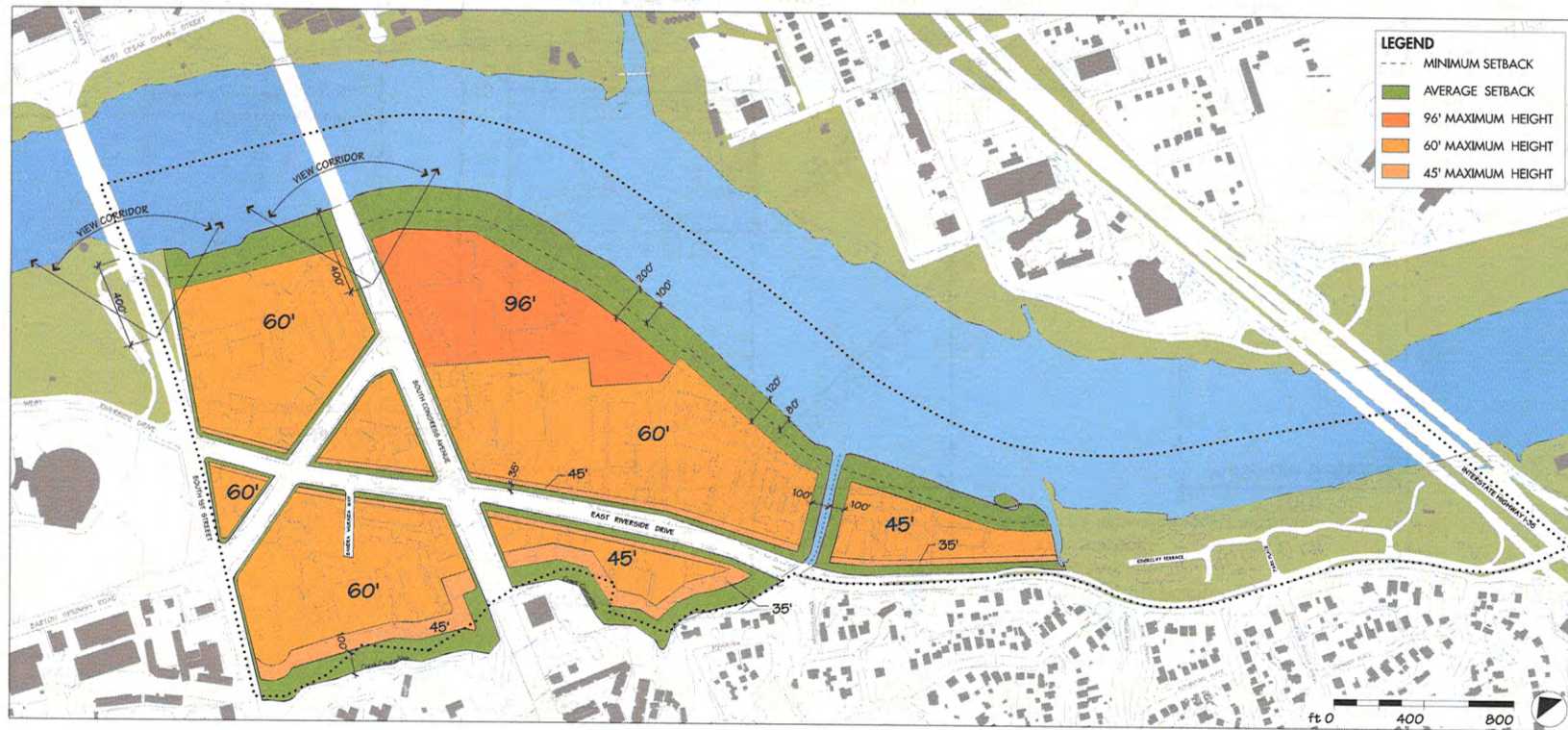
*Setback provisions will ensure continuous public access and open space along Town Lake.*

minimum setback of 80 feet. A public access easement of 50 feet along the shoreline is recommended (Figure 10).

- Along East Bouldin and Blunn Creeks, development should set back from the centerline of the creek by 100 feet, notwithstanding provisions of the Critical Water Quality Zone which shall prevail. A 50 foot wide public access easement should be established within this setback area (Figure 11).

- Within waterfront setback areas, no parking or structures (other than park-related facilities) will be permitted.

**Streetfront Setbacks:** Setbacks should also be established along key streetfronts to achieve the streetscape development standards discussed below. More specifically:



**FIGURE 8**  
Base Zoning: Setbacks and Height

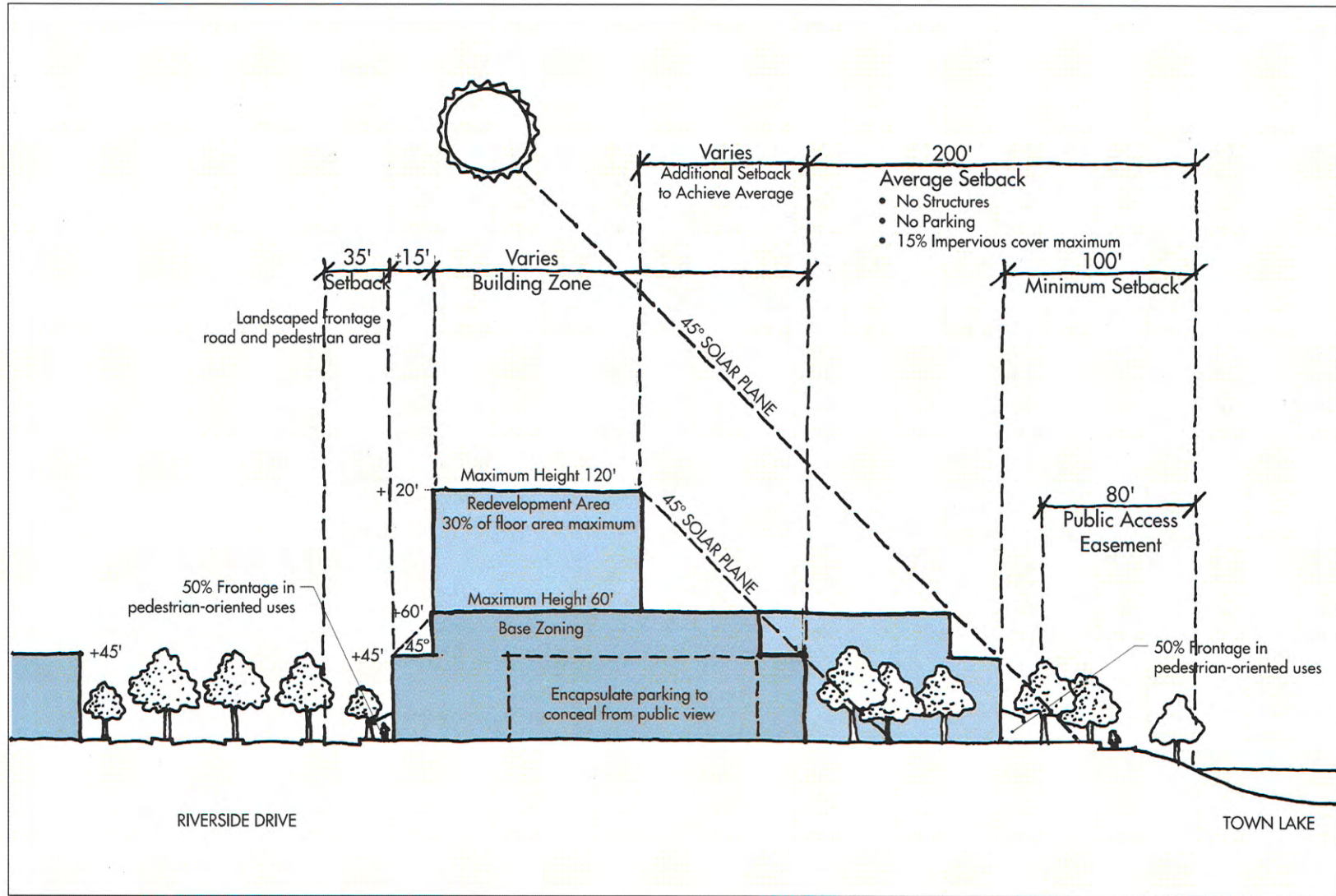
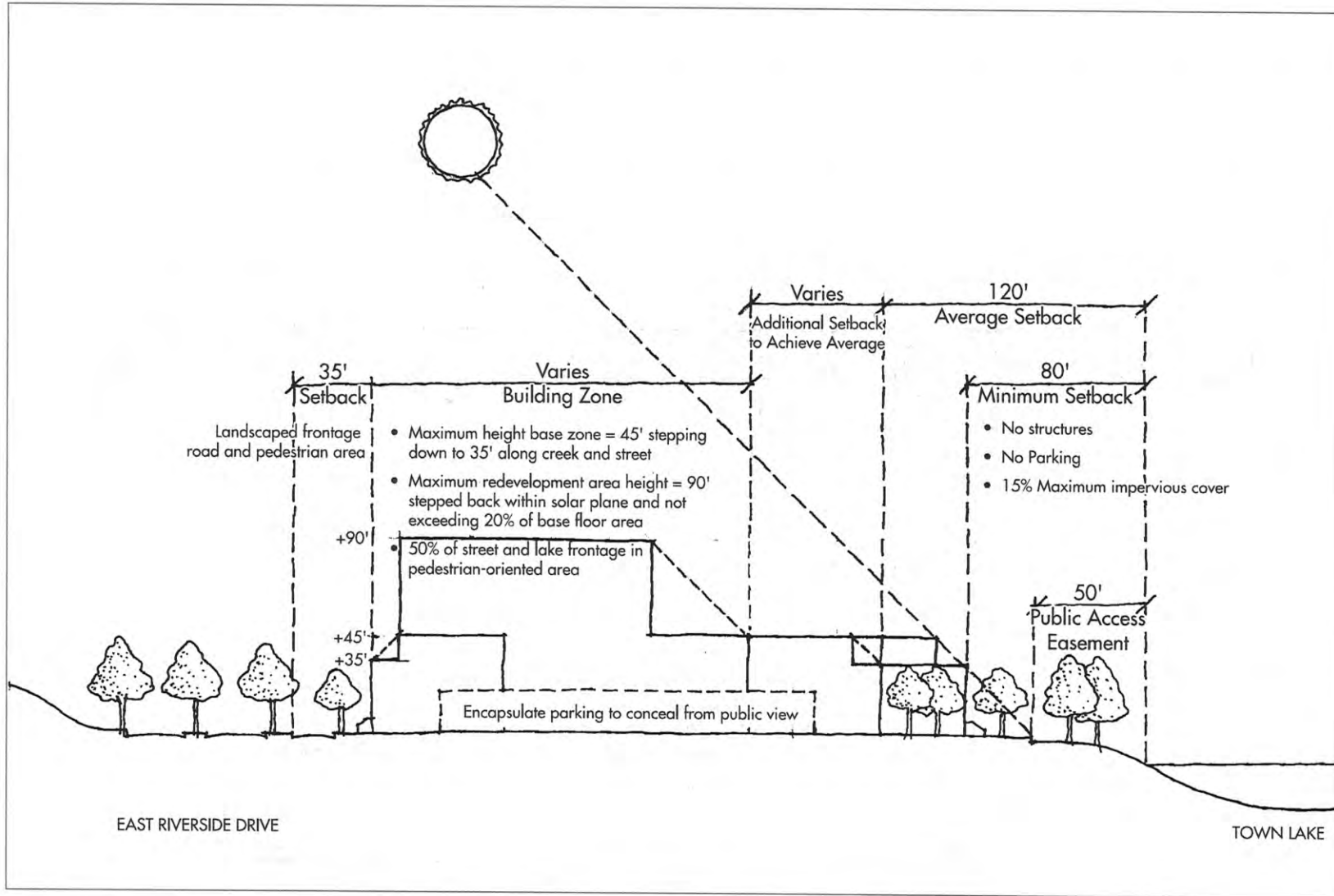
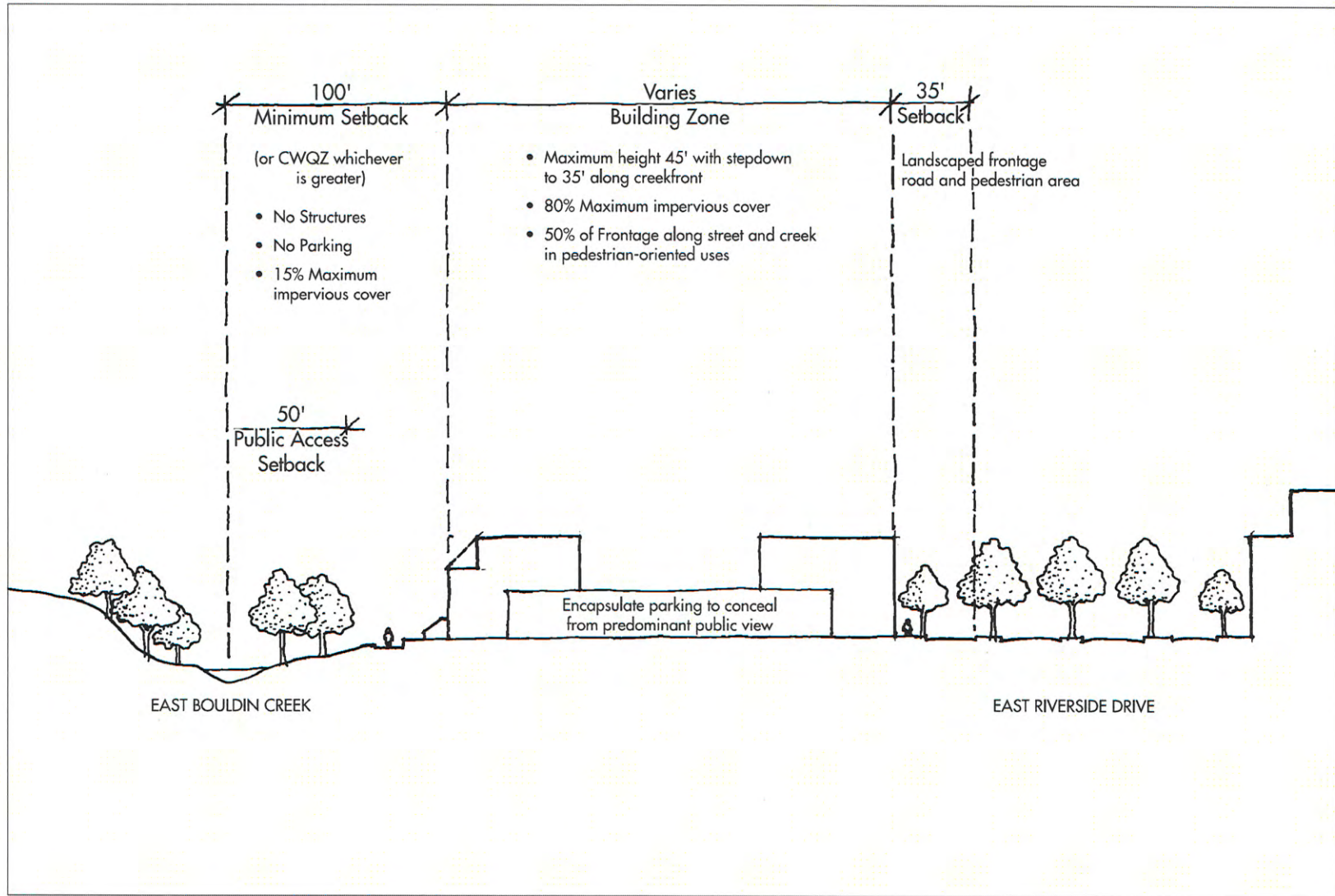


FIGURE 9  
Height, Massing and Setbacks: Base Zoning/Redevelopment Area 2



**FIGURE 10**  
 Height, Massing and Setbacks: Base Zoning/Between East Bouldin and Blunn Creeks

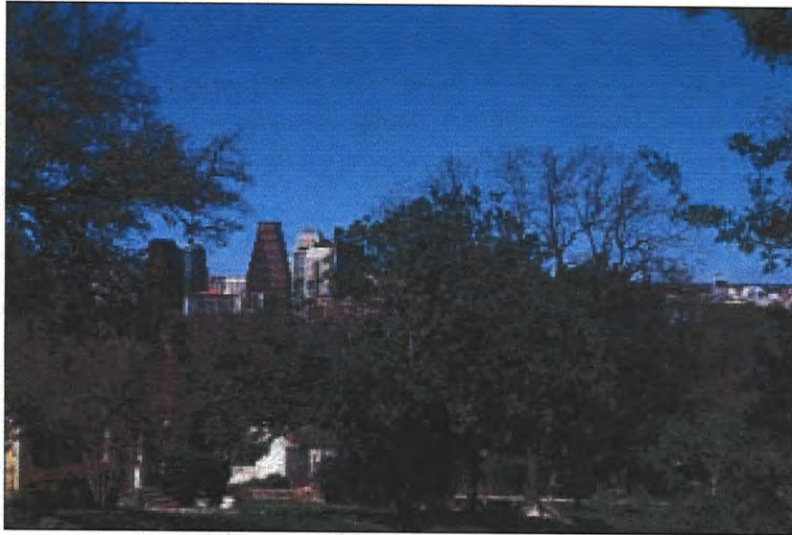




**FIGURE 11**  
Height Massing and Setbacks: East Bouldin Creek Along South of Riverside Drive

- Along East Riverside Drive (east of Congress Avenue) development should be set back from the property line by 35 feet to facilitate the creation of a frontage boulevard that provides vehicular and pedestrian access as well as generous landscaping.
- Along Riverside Drive (west of Congress Avenue), Barton Springs Road, South Congress Avenue and South First Street development should be set back from the property line by 10 feet to create a generous sidewalk width suitable for promenading, outdoor retail and café extensions.

*View Corridors:* As shown in Figure 8, development along South Congress Avenue and South First Street shall be set back at a 45



*Height limits are designed to preserve key neighborhood views to downtown.*

degree angle from the street to create a panoramic view to Town Lake from the respective bridge approaches (400 feet back from the shoreline).

*Impervious Cover:* Within waterfront setbacks, maximum impervious cover should be limited to 15%. Within the remainder of the property, a maximum impervious cover of 80% is recommended.

*Maximum Height:* As shown in Figure 8, development under the provisions of the base zoning should not exceed:

- 45 feet east of East Bouldin Creek, and south of East Riverside Drive east of South Congress Avenue.
- 60 feet for the remainder of the area, with the exception of the American Statesman PUD which is permitted to a maximum height of 96 feet, as per the existing PUD.

Height shall be measured from the street-front sidewalk elevation. Additional height should be permitted subject to area-specific conditions for intensification provided below.

*Stepbacks:* Stepbacks are aimed at creating appropriate scale relationships along key public spaces and streets. To this end:

- All development facing Town Lake should be limited to a maximum height of 45 feet west of Bouldin Creek and 35 feet east of Bouldin Creek, with development above this height stepping back within a 45 degree angle that preserves solar access to the shoreline, and creates a scale transition to the waterfront.

- All development facing Blunn or East Bouldin Creeks should be limited to a maximum height of 35 feet with development above this height stepped back at an angle of 45 degrees.
- Development facing public streets should be limited to a maximum height of 45 feet with development above this height stepped back within a 45 degree angle to the maximum base zoning height. An exception to this stepback up to 30% of the frontage should be allowed at corners, street termini, entries, etc. to promote architectural variation.

*Treatment of Parking and Service Areas:* Parking and service/loading facilities should be designed to limit visual or physical impacts on the waterfront environment or the pedestrian realm. More specifically:

- Surface parking lots should be screened from predominant public view with buildings and landscaping and should be located away from waterfront setback areas and from public street fronts, in order to promote an active pedestrian environment. Parking lots should include perimeter landscaping as well as a generous canopy of trees within it; one tree for each four cars is recommended.
- Structured parking garages should be encapsulated and/or architecturally integrated within buildings to reduce their effect on the public environment.

- Loading and service areas should be located away from waterfront setbacks and public streets, and screened from predominant public view.

*Active Ground Level Uses and Treatment:* It is recommended that active ground level uses be required along the waterfront and street edges of the district. Rather than dictating minimum floor area (as in the existing WOZ), a percentage of frontage is recommended as a more appropriate measure. More specifically:

- At least 50% of buildings fronting Town Lake and the creekfronts within the area should be developed with viable pedestrian-oriented uses as defined in the existing Waterfront Overlay Zone.



*At least 50% of buildings fronting Town Lake should be developed with viable pedestrian-oriented uses.*

- Along East Riverside Drive (east of Congress Avenue), 50% of the streetfront should be devoted to pedestrian-oriented uses.
- West of South Congress Avenue, 75% of the streetfront should be developed in pedestrian-oriented uses.

The treatment of active ground level frontages should be public in nature to promote pedestrian activity, and be characterized by the following:

- Primary access provided along public streets and waterfront frontages.



*Residential entries at the frequent intervals can contribute to active and public-oriented streetfronts.*

- Residential entries, stoops and/or porches at frequent intervals not to exceed 50 feet, and with the ground floor of residential use not to exceed 60 inches above grade;
- Storefront glazing that provides transparency and visibility between building interiors and the pedestrian realm; and/or
- Outdoor terraces, cafes, and public-oriented seating areas no more than 36 inches above grade, and with minimal enclosure.

Non-active frontages should be broken up with building entries, changes in building plane, and with architectural detailing that promotes visual interest and variety.



*Buildings should be articulated both in the horizontal and vertical planes to promote architectural interest and a pedestrian scale.*

*Architectural Treatments:* Buildings should be articulated both in the horizontal and vertical planes to promote architectural interest and an appropriate pedestrian scale along waterfront and streetfront setbacks. More specifically:

- Fenestration on upper levels should be inset from the building wall and varied. The use of projecting balconies, loggias, bay windows, and other scale-giving devices (e.g., beltcourses, moldings, etc.) is encouraged.
- Roofs should be articulated with decorative parapets, cornices, sloping roofs, and at appropriate points (e.g., corners, visual termini, entryways, etc.) with special marking devices, such as gables, cupolas, towers, etc.

## 5. REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING

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Further intensification beyond that described in the Base Zoning Development Standards is appropriate and desirable if such intensification results in improved area infrastructure, shoreline access, open space, pedestrian amenities, improved vehicular circulation, and/or shared parking. To this end, it is recommended that a series of four Redevelopment Areas be established within the project area (Figure 12) to achieve specific objectives and to overcome existing deficiencies. To facilitate redevelopment and intensification within these areas, higher levels of cooperation between adjacent property owners and the City of Austin will be required. It is recommended that the City establish streamlined procedures to assist property owners to realize redevelopment objectives.

The following provides a description of the four redevelopment areas and the specific conditions for intensification. Portions of the study area not included as redevelopment areas (i.e., the Embassy Suites block which is largely built out, and the block south of East Riverside Drive and east of South Congress Avenue, which is not recommended for further intensification) would be governed solely by the Base Zoning Development Standards described above.

### **Redevelopment Area One: Residential Lakefront**

**Boundaries:** Town Lake on the north, East Riverside Drive on the south, the American Statesman property on the west and Blunn Creek on the east.

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the revitalization and redevelopment of existing housing to create a mixed-use neighborhood with continuous public access along Town Lake.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 90 feet (base zoning height: 45 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0 or 80 dwelling units per acre (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

**Conditions for Intensification:** The above intensification will be permitted within this redevelopment area subject to the following conditions:

- A coordinated plan, schedule and implementation program including financing provisions shall be developed and executed in conjunction with all waterfront property owners within this redevelopment area to assure realization of continuous shoreline access, open space and waterfront setbacks as provided in the Base Zoning Development Standards described above.
- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height of 45 feet shall be stepped back from the water's edge and maintained within a 45 degree solar plane to avoid shading of setback areas (Figure

10). Buildings above 45 feet shall be dispersed to avoid the creation of monolithic walls and to promote an interesting and varied silhouette. No more than 20% of the total building footprint should be above the base height; individual building floorplates above the base height should not exceed 15,000 gross square feet (Figure 10).

- An internal street should be created west of East Bouldin Creek to limit curb cut access to East Riverside Drive, and to provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the new neighborhood. As shown in Figure 12, this street could be aligned along existing driveways and/or property lines, and configured in a manner to promote views and access to Town Lake.
- Streetscape improvements shall be implemented adjacent to any new development along East Riverside Drive.
- A traffic impact analysis shall be undertaken to determine the effects and mitigations for any intensification of development.

#### **Redevelopment Area Two: Statesman/Crockett Parcels**

**Boundaries:** Town Lake on the north, East Riverside Drive on the south, the American Statesman property on the east and South Congress Avenue on the west.

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the coordinated intensification and redevelopment of these properties to create a cohesive mixed-use waterfront-oriented district.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 120 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0. (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

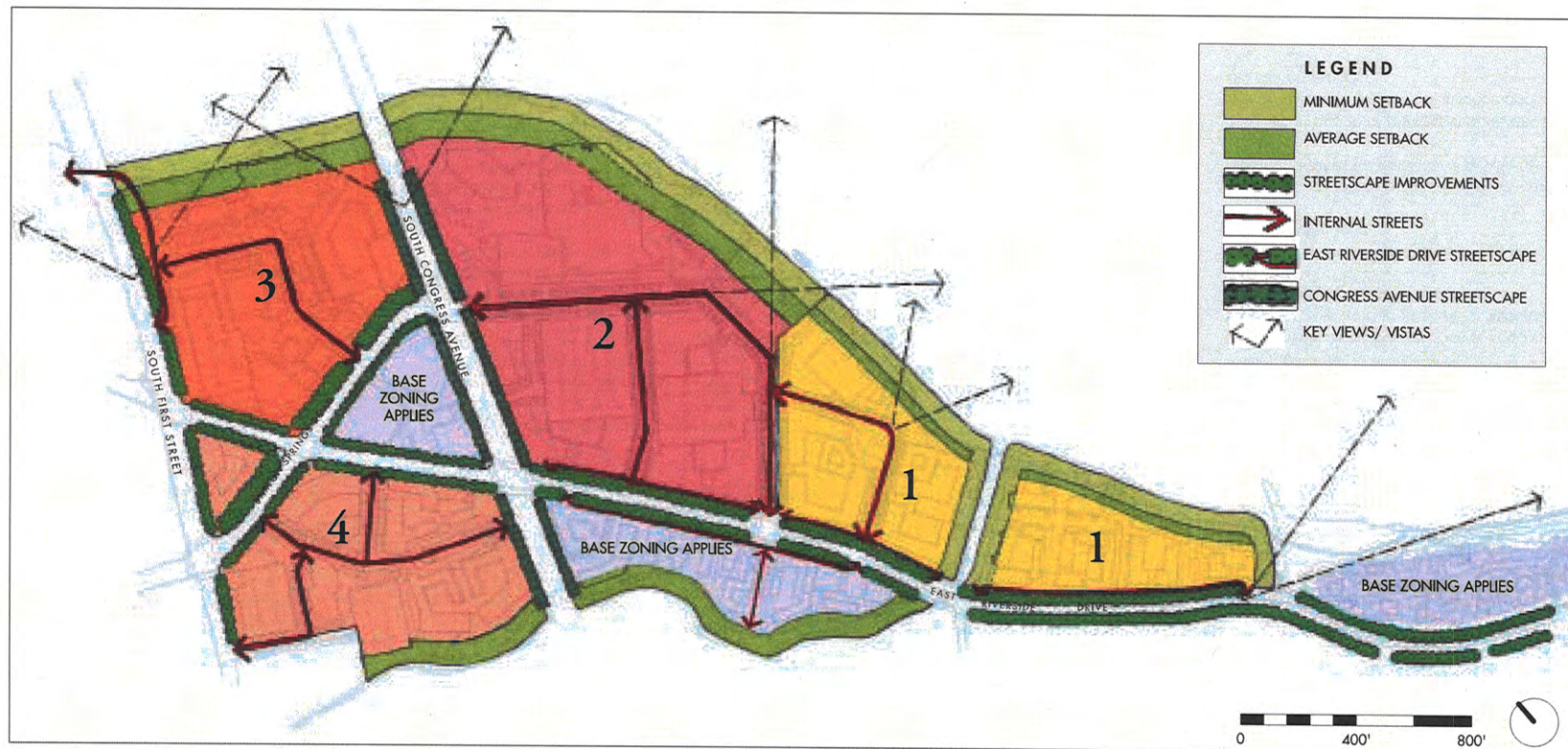
**Conditions for Intensification:** The above intensification will be permitted within this redevelopment area subject to the following conditions:

- A plan and implementation program that reduces the effects of American Statesman parking facilities on the Town Lake waterfront, as described in the approved Planned Unit Development. Strategies to be employed could include shared parking with adjacent property owners and/or encapsulated structures as per the provisions of the Base Zoning Development Standards. The plan shall achieve the design and setback provisions described in the Base Zoning Development Standards, and result in significant open space and access improvements along the shoreline.
- Internal streets should be created along existing driveways to provide vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the area, and to reduce the traffic and access burdens on South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive. As shown in Figure 12, it is recommended that an east-west street be created along the

American Statesman/Crockett property lines, and between the existing TexDOT office buildings, to facilitate internal access to new parking facilities and to create views and pedestrian access to Town Lake.

- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height shall be stepped back from the water's edge and maintained within a

45 degree solar plane to avoid shading of setback areas (Figure 9). Buildings above 60 feet shall be dispersed to avoid the creation of monolithic walls and to promote an interesting and varied silhouette. No more than 30% of the total building footprint shall be above a 60 foot base height; individual building floorplates above the base height shall not exceed 30,000 gross square feet.



**FIGURE 12**  
Proposed Redevelopment Area Development Standards and Conditions



**REDEVELOPMENT AREA 1:  
RESIDENTIAL LAKEFRONT**

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the revitalization and redevelopment of existing housing to create a mixed-use neighborhood with continuous public access along Town Lake.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 90 feet (base zoning height: 45 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0 or 80 dwelling units per acre (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

**Conditions for Intensification:**

- A coordinated plan, schedule and implementation program including financing provisions to assure continuous shoreline access, open space and waterfront setbacks as provided in the Base Zoning Development Standards.
- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height of 45 feet stepped back from the water's edge and maintained within a 45 degree solar plane. No more than 20% of the total building footprint permitted above base height; individual building floorplates above the base height not to exceed 15,000 gross square feet.
- Internal street east of East Bouldin Creek to limit curb cut access to East Riverside Drive, and to provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the new neighborhood.
- Streetscape improvements implemented adjacent to any new development along East Riverside Drive.
- Traffic Impact Analysis.

**REDEVELOPMENT AREA 2:  
STATESMAN/CROCKETT PARCELS**

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the coordinated intensification and redevelopment of these properties to create a cohesive mixed-use waterfront-oriented district.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 120 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0. (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

**Conditions for Intensification:**

- Plan and implementation program that reduces the effects of American Statesman parking facilities on the Town Lake waterfront (e.g shared parking with adjacent property owners and/or encapsulated structures as per the provisions of the Base Zoning Development Standards).
- Internal streets along existing driveways to provide vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the area, and to create public views and pedestrian access to Town Lake.
- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height stepped back from the water's edge and maintained within a 45 degree solar plane. No more than 30% of the total building footprint above base height; individual building floorplates above the base height not to exceed 30,000 gross square feet.
- Buildings above 45 feet stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet (in addition to the 10 foot setback) to create street wall and "frame" for the Capitol view.
- Streetscape improvements implemented adjacent to any new development along East Riverside Drive or South Congress Avenue.
- Traffic Impact Analysis.

**REDEVELOPMENT AREA 3:  
HYATT/LAKESHORE TOWER BLOCK**

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the coordinated intensification, infill and redevelopment of these properties to create a more cohesive mixed-use district that creates a complementary edge to Town Lake Park.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 120 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0. (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

**Conditions for Intensification:**

- Internal street within Hyatt property connecting to Barton Springs Road at the approximate mid-point between South First Street and South Congress Avenue (i.e., the existing driveway entrance to the hotel). Other curb cuts along Riverside Drive and Barton Springs Road will be closed.
- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height stepped back from the water's edge and maintained within a 45 degree solar plane. No more than 30% of the total building footprint permitted above base height; individual building floorplates above the base height not to exceed 30,000 gross square feet.
- Buildings above 45 feet stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet (in addition to the 10 foot setback) to create a street wall and "frame" for the Capitol view.
- South First Street frontage as strong civic edge to Town Lake Park.
- Streetscape improvements implemented adjacent to any new development along South Congress Avenue, Barton Springs Road, South First Street, and Riverside Drive.
- Traffic Impact Analysis.

**REDEVELOPMENT AREA 4:  
ONE TEXAS CENTER BLOCK**

**Redevelopment Goal:** Provide for the coordinated intensification and redevelopment of these properties to create a strong civic edge to Town Lake Park and a more cohesive mixed-use fabric of development.

**Allowed Intensification:** Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 90 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0. (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

**Conditions for Intensification:**

- Internal streets to reduce traffic access requirements along Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive, and to provide for internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- South First Street frontage as strong civic edge to Town Lake.
- Shared parking approach that optimizes parking facilities for public and private use.
- Minimization of parking impacts on Triangle Block through encapsulation and off-site shared parking.
- Buildings above 45 feet stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet to create a street wall and "frame" for the Capitol view.
- Streetscape improvements implemented adjacent to any new development along East Riverside Drive or South Congress Avenue.
- Public access and open space improvements implemented adjacent to any new development fronting East Bouldin Creek.
- Traffic Impact Analysis.

- Buildings above 45 feet shall be stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet (in addition to the 10 foot setback) to create a distinct street wall along this important ceremonial axis and to provide an appropriate “frame” for the Capitol view (Figure 12).
- Streetscape improvements shall be implemented adjacent to any new development along Riverside Drive or South Congress Avenue.
- A traffic impact analysis shall be undertaken to determine the effects and mitigations for any intensification of development.

#### **Redevelopment Area Three: Hyatt/Lakeshore Tower Block**

*Boundaries:* Town Lake on the north, Riverside Drive and Barton Springs Road on the south, South Congress Avenue on the east and South First Street on the west.

*Redevelopment Goal:* Provide for the coordinated intensification, infill and redevelopment of these properties to create a more cohesive mixed-use district that creates a complementary edge to Town Lake Park.

*Allowed Intensification:* Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 120 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);

- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0. (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR).

*Conditions for Intensification:* The above intensification will be permitted within this redevelopment area subject to the following conditions:

- Intensified development will be accessed from an internal street within the Hyatt property connecting to Barton Springs Road at the approximate mid-point between South First Street and South Congress Avenue (i.e., the existing driveway entrance to the hotel). Other curb cuts along Riverside Drive and Barton Springs Road will be closed. As shown in Figure 12, it is recommended that this street be aligned along existing driveways within the Hyatt site, and that it connect to the South First Street frontage road leading to Town Lake Park beneath the bridge structure.
- Buildings above the allowed base zoning height shall be stepped back from the water’s edge and maintained within a 45 degree solar plane to avoid shading of setback areas. Buildings above 60 feet shall be dispersed to avoid the creation of monolithic walls and to promote an interesting and varied silhouette. No more than 30% of the total building footprint shall be above a 60 foot base height; individual building floorplates above the base height should not exceed 30,000 gross square feet.
- Buildings above 45 feet should be stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet (in addition to the 10 foot setback)



*Congress Avenue from East Bouldin Creek looking to Capitol.*



*Congress Avenue looking north to Capitol from the intersection of Riverside Drive.*

**FIGURE 13**  
Congress Avenue Proposed Maximum Building Envelope (120 ft) Under Redevelopment Area Zoning

to create a distinct street wall along this important ceremonial axis and to provide an appropriate “frame” for the Capitol view (Figure 13).

- The South First Street frontage is designed as a strong civic edge to Town Lake Park with a clearly articulated building base of approximately 45 feet in height, an upper building mass of up to 120 feet, with distinctive roof treatments.
- Streetscape improvements shall be implemented adjacent to any new development along South Congress Avenue, Barton Springs Road, South First Street, and Riverside Drive.
- A traffic impact analysis shall be undertaken to determine the effects and mitigations for any intensification of development.

#### **Redevelopment Area Four:**

##### **One Texas Center Block/Triangle Block**

*Boundaries:* The triangular block defined by South First Street, Riverside Drive and Barton Springs Road; and the One Texas Center block defined by South First Street on the west, Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive on the north, South Congress Avenue on the east, and East Bouldin Creek on the south.

*Redevelopment Goal:* Provide for the coordinated intensification and redevelopment of these properties to create a strong civic edge to Town Lake Park and a more cohesive mixed-use fabric of development.

*Allowed Intensification:* Subject to the conditions described below, intensification will be permitted as follows:

- Building heights to a maximum of 90 feet (base zoning height: 60 feet);
- Intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0, or 80 dwelling units/acre (base zoning intensity: 1.0 FAR). Note: the 2.0 FAR can be applied to the vacant portion of the City of Austin’s land-holdings within this area.

*Conditions for Intensification:* The above intensification will be permitted within this redevelopment area subject to the following conditions:

- For development south of Riverside Drive and Barton Springs Road, internal roadway linkages are made along public and/or private streets. As shown on Figure 12, the western portion of the block currently owned by the City of Austin should provide internal streets connecting Riverside Drive with South First Street and Barton Springs Road. Development on the eastern portion of the block should provide an internal roadway linkage parallel with Riverside Drive, connecting to Barton Springs Road.
- For development of the Triangle Block, no internal streets are required; however the visual impact of any parking on this block should be minimized through encapsulation and through shared parking arrangements with other redevelopment area properties.

- The South First Street frontage on the triangular block is designed as a strong civic edge to Town Lake Park with a clearly articulated building base of approximately 45 feet in height, an upper building mass of up to 90 feet, and distinctive architectural treatments that contribute to more legible urban fabric.
- A shared parking approach that to the maximum extent practicable optimizes the use of parking facilities for public and private uses, within the design provisions of the Base Zoning Development Standards. Parking structures should be accessible and convenient for public use by Town Lake Park users and patrons of the performing arts center.
- Buildings above 45 feet should be stepped back from Congress Avenue by at least 15 feet to create a distinct street wall along this important ceremonial axis and to provide an appropriate “frame” for the Capitol view.
- Streetscape improvements should be implemented adjacent to any new development along East Riverside Drive or South Congress Avenue.
- Public access and open space improvements are implemented adjacent to any new development fronting East Bouldin Creek.
- A traffic impact analysis should be undertaken to determine the effects and mitigations for any intensification of development.

## 6. PRELIMINARY STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

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The streets which traverse the study area significantly affect the visual structure of the district, and the pedestrian and motorist experience. Their current configuration renders a barren and inhospitable visual environment dominated by the automobile. Key objectives for their improvement include:

- The enhancement of the area's overall identity and legibility as an important gateway to the city;
- The addition of street trees and landscaping that will provide greenery and shade and an appropriate pedestrian scale for residents, employees and visitors to the district; and
- The promotion of multi-modal streets that serve transit and that comfortably accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as vehicles.

The following describes preliminary design concepts for each of the streets within the area:

### Riverside Drive East of South Congress Avenue

This segment of Riverside Drive is envisioned as a grand urban boulevard providing an important gateway to the center city and a key linkage to Austin Bergstrom International Airport. The right-of-way is approximately 90 feet in width, and is characterized by frequent curb cuts, fronting parking lots, marginal sidewalks,

and little landscaping. As shown in Figure 14, preliminary recommendations include:

- Reduction of travel lane widths within the roadway to accommodate landscaping and other travel modes within the right-of-way, and in so doing to "calm" traffic as it moves through the area.
- Class II bike lanes be provided along the curbside edges of the street;



*Riverside Drive frontage roads and continuous landscaping will create a more hospitable pedestrian environment and a suitable setting for intensification.*

- A 12.5 foot wide landscaped parkway and sidewalk be established along the sides of the street to establish a more hospitable and safe pedestrian zone;
- Medians to define left turn pockets at designated intersections along the street to reduce free-turning traffic, and to provide additional landscaping opportunities along the center of the street.

Within the 35 foot setback areas described in the Base Zoning Development Standards, a 20 foot wide frontage road and 15 foot sidewalk is recommended to provide convenient access to individual fronting properties, and to offer a transition in scale and buffer from the automobile intensive roadway. This frontage road would support either residential or commercial fronting uses, and create an attractive pedestrian scaled zone.

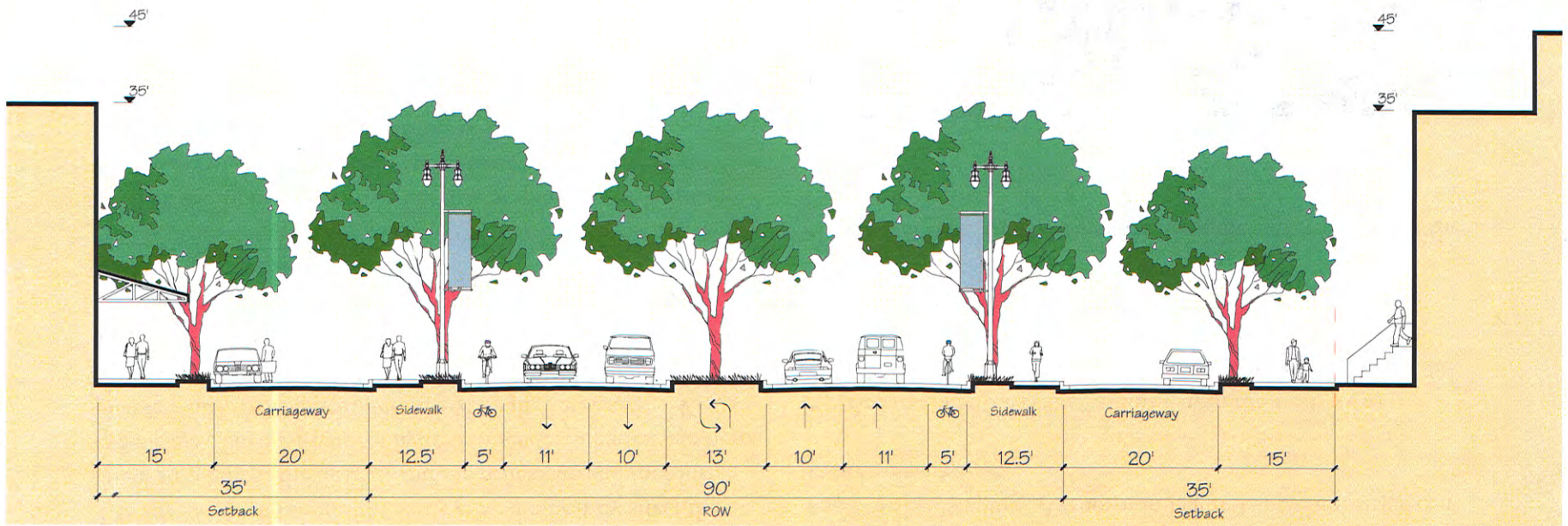


FIGURE 14  
Riverside Drive East of Congress Avenue

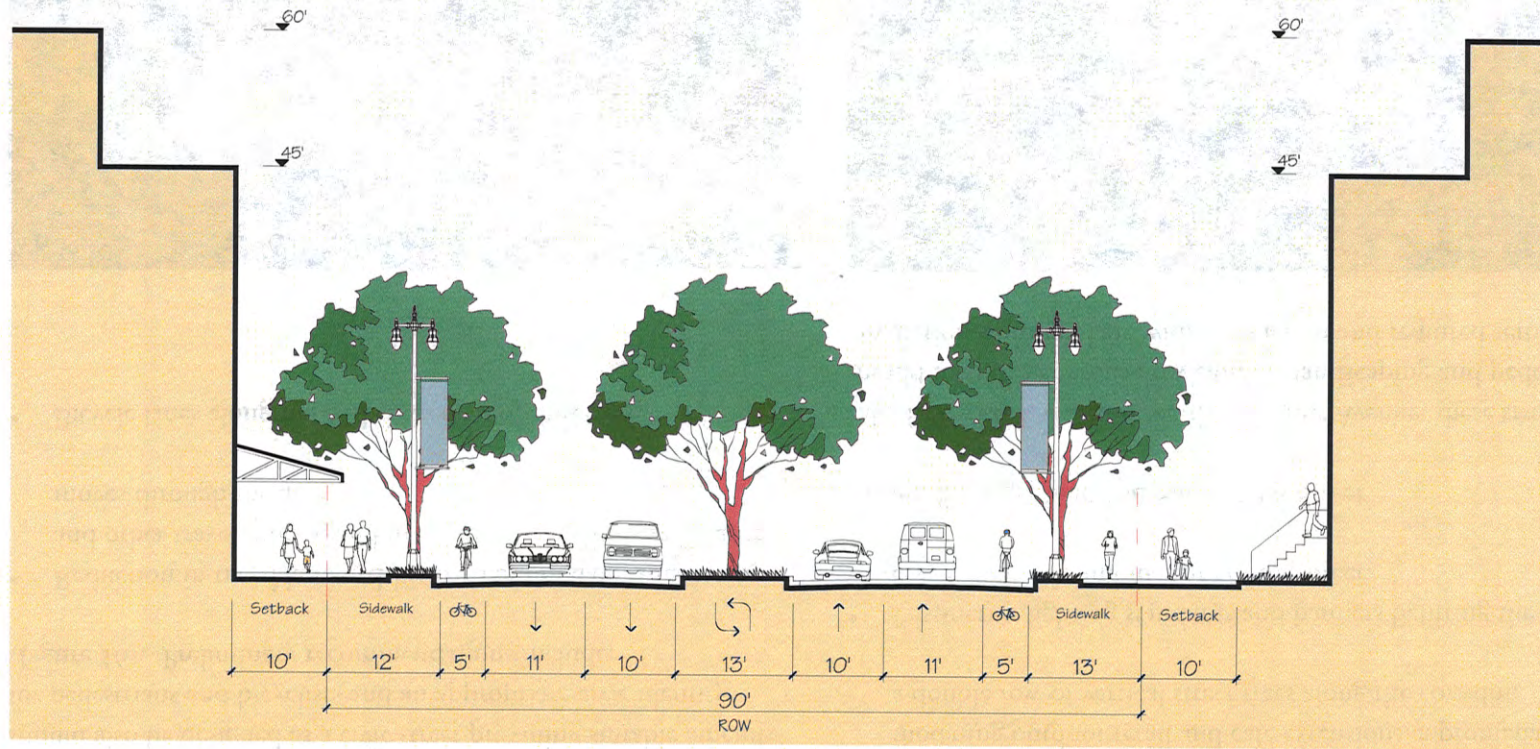
### Riverside Drive West of South Congress Avenue

West of Congress Avenue, Riverside Drive is envisioned as a more urban street, with development fronting the street and contributing to an active pedestrian environment (Figure 15). As such, the street would be the same configuration as the eastern portion, but instead of the frontage roads, a broad sidewalk and parkway strip of approxi-

mately 25 feet is proposed. This is achieved through the required 10 foot setback described in the Base Zoning Development Standards.

### South Congress Avenue

South Congress Avenue is envisioned as an extension of the City's principal ceremonial street leading to the Capitol. While it must

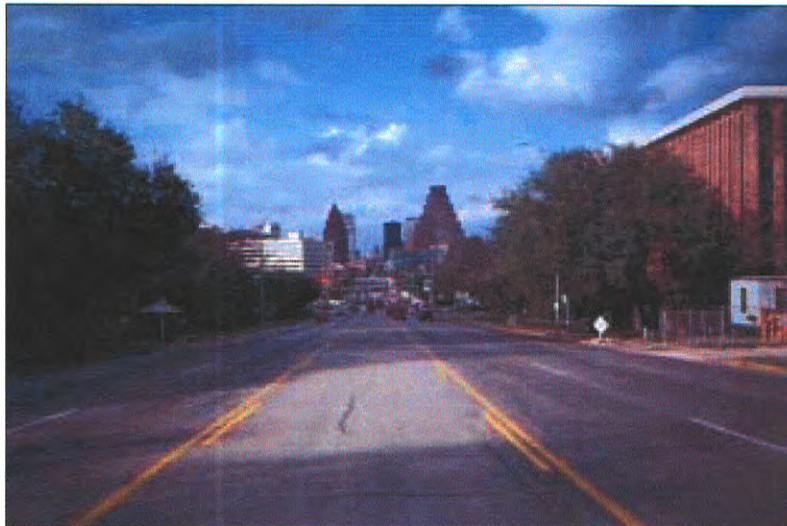


**FIGURE 15**  
Riverside Drive West of Congress Avenue



carry a significant amount of traffic (i.e., three lanes in each direction, with turning lanes at intersections), the 110 foot right-of-way should also be designed as a civic street providing suitable amenity for pedestrians and bicyclists and an appropriate civic identity (Figure 16). Preliminary recommendations include:

- Reduction in travel lane widths to accommodate landscaping and other travel modes, and in so doing to “calm” traffic as it moves through the area.
- Bicycle lanes along the curbside edges of the street.



*South Congress Avenue Should be reinforced as the City's principal civic and ceremonial street.*

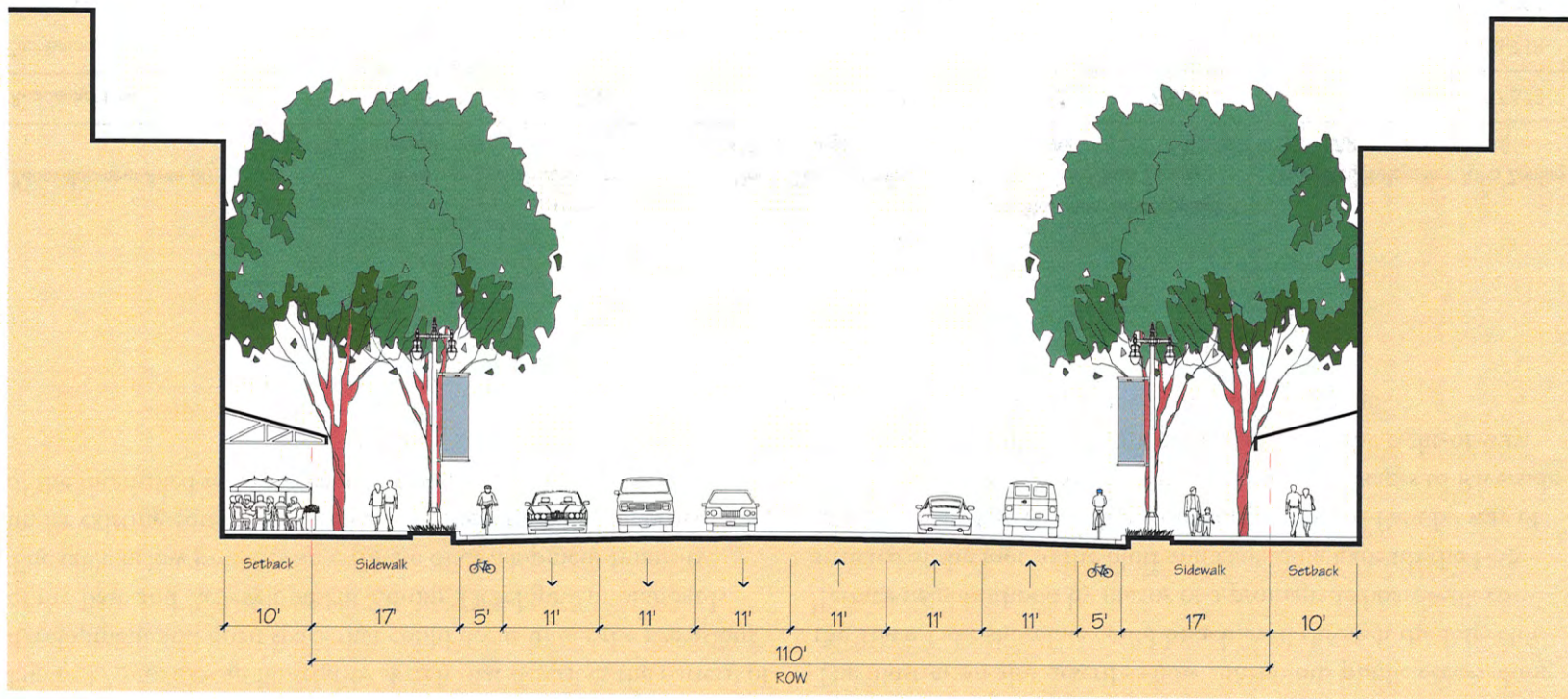
- Creation of a broad sidewalk and parkway of approximately 27 feet (including the 10 foot required setback) capable of accommodating outdoor retail and café extensions, a promenade, and a double row of vertical street trees along the corridor.
- Distinctive lighting standards and banners befitting the ceremonial role and identity of the street.

### **Barton Springs Road and South First Street**

Like Riverside Drive and South Congress Avenue, these streets should include generous provision for landscaping and pedestrian circulation, through lane width reduction and required setbacks.



*The landscaped character of Barton Springs Road as it passes through Zilker and Town Lake Parks should be extended eastward to South Congress Avenue.*



**FIGURE 16**  
 South Congress Avenue (Mid-Block Condition)

## 7. ILLUSTRATIVE SKETCH CONCEPT

Figure 17 provides an illustrative sketch that describes the pattern of development and open space that could occur under the provisions of the Base and Redevelopment Zoning Development Standards. The table below provides an estimate of development intensity under existing conditions, the base zoning, and with the provisions of the intensified redevelopment areas.

The illustration also describes how continuous public access along the Town Lake shoreline could be achieved through the Edgecliff Terrace neighborhood by means of a promenade boardwalk constructed at the foot of the bluff and extending beneath the I-35 freeway. A pedestrian connection from Norwood Park by way of ramped trails could also be created to provide linkages to Riverside Drive. Since these improvements are in the public right-of-way, they would need to be achieved by public funding.

Redevelopment Area (#)	Area (acres)	Existing Development (sf)	Under Current Zoning		Maximum Development Under Base Zoning		Under Redevelopment Area Zoning	
			Allowable FAR (avg)	(sf)	FAR	(sf)	FAR	(sf)
Residential Lakefront (1)	22.47	454,068	0.9	880,933	1.0	978,814	2.0	1,957,628
Statesman/Crockett Parcels (2)	12.68	302,614	1.5	828,539	1.0	552,359	2.0	1,104,718
In PUD	18.86	241,485	0.73	599,661	1.0	821,453	2.0	1,642,906
Hyatt/Lakeshore Tower Block (3)	15.75	442,877	2.86	1,962,009	1.0	686,017	2.0	1,372,034
One Texas Center/Triangle Block (4)	14.97	489,599	2.0	1,304,308	1.0	652,154	2.0	1,304,308
Embassy Suites Block	3.65	238,374	2.0	317,760	1.0	158,880	1.0	158,880
South of Riverside, East of Congress	7.11	54,790	1.7	523,780	1.0	309,929	1.0	309,929
<b>Totals</b>	<b>95.48</b>	<b>2,223,807</b>		<b>6,416,988</b>		<b>4,159,606</b>		<b>7,850,403</b>



**FIGURE 17**  
**Illustrative Sketch Concept**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### **City Council**

Mayor Kirk Watson  
Mayor Pro Tem Jackie Goodman  
Council Member Gus Garcia  
Council Member Beverly Griffith  
Council Member Willie Lewis  
Council Member Daryl Slusher  
Council Member Bill Spelman

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