

# ZILKER METROPOLITAN PARK VISION PLAN

## Environmental Commission

APRIL 5, 2023



DESIGNWORKSHOP

# ZILKER PARK

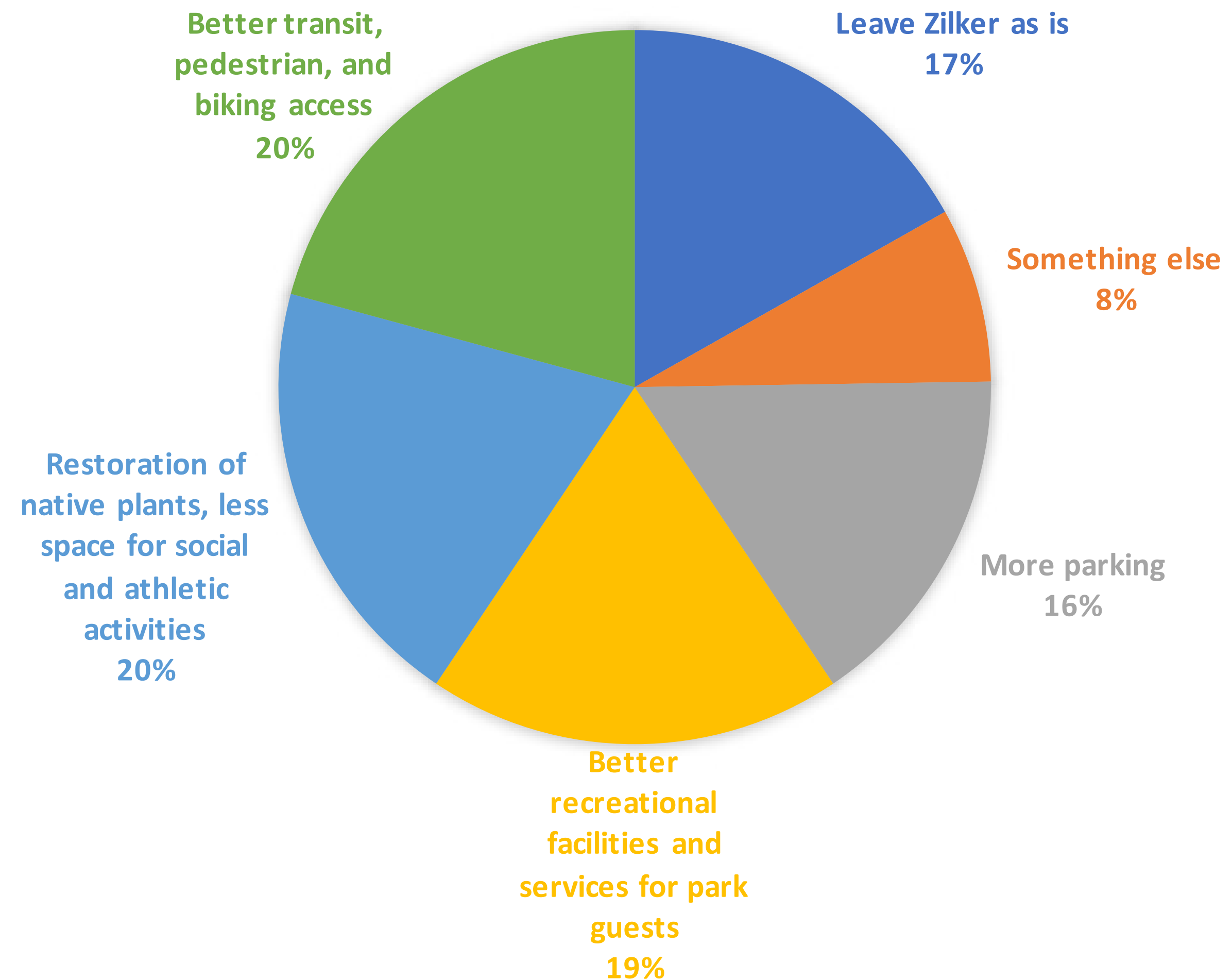
## Notley/Monitor Poll: Austinites can't agree on greatest park challenges or solutions

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023 BY  
NINA HERNANDEZ

Austin residents regularly use city parks but are divided over how they should be maintained, according to a January/February poll of 429 voters commissioned by Notley and conducted by national pollster Change Research for the Austin Monitor.

The poll comes as Austin leaders continue to focus on parks and open space and projects like the Texas Capitol Complex and the Waterloo Greenway, and as the city considers its role in the Interstate 35 Capital Express project. The city is working with the Texas Department of Transportation to incorporate open and park space into the designs for the section that will run through Austin.

Zilker Park is undergoing a planning process called the Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan. What do you think is the most critical improvement that can be made to Zilker Park?



# ZILKER PARK: AN AUSTIN TREASURE



Barton Springs



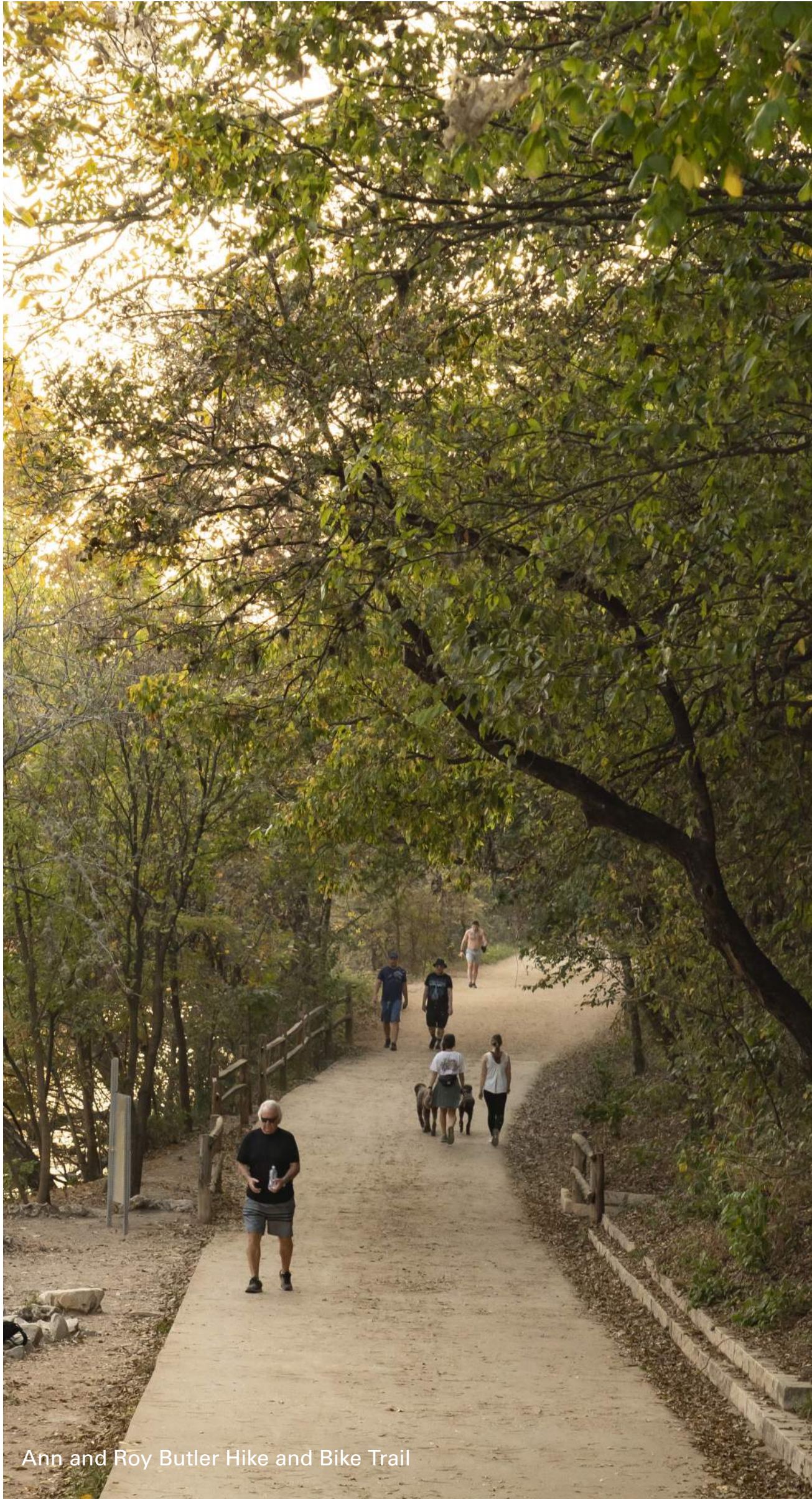
Great Lawn and Rock Island



Zilker Botanical Garden



Pedestrian and Bike Bridge over Barton Creek



Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail

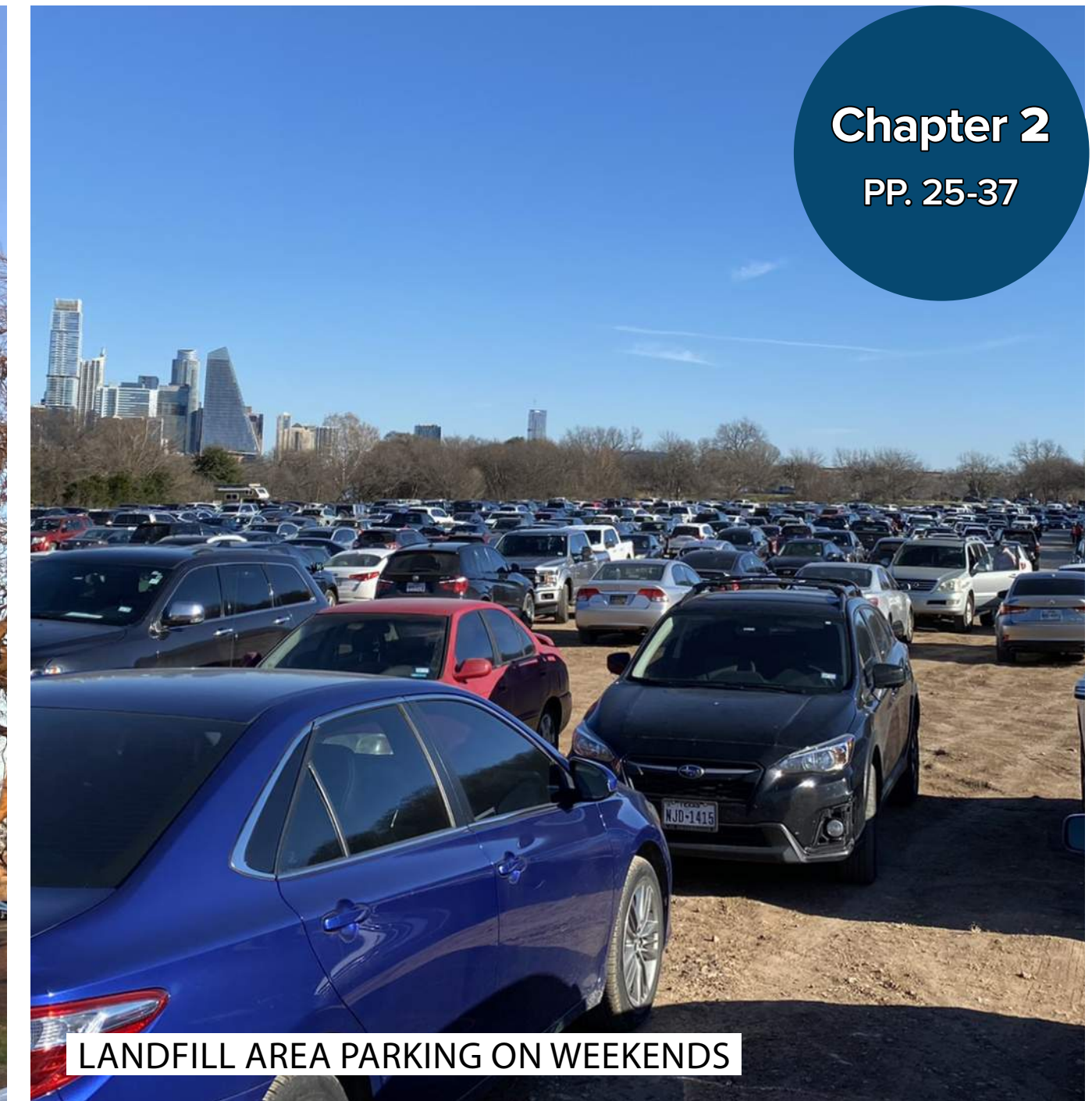
# CALL TO ACTION

How well are the following facilities or amenities meeting your and your family's needs?

NATURAL AREAS	80% MEET NEEDS	12% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	8% NO OPINION
PARKING AREAS	45% MEET NEEDS	46% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	9% NO OPINION
PICNIC AREAS	59% MEET NEEDS	17% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	24% NO OPINION
SPORT COURTS OR FIELDS	45% MEET NEEDS	15% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	40% NO OPINION
TRAILS	79% MEET NEEDS	13% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	7% NO OPINION
WATER ACCESS POINTS FOR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT	34% MEET NEEDS	22% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	44% NO OPINION
WATERFRONT VIEWING AREAS	60% MEET NEEDS	22% DOES NOT MEET NEEDS	18% NO OPINION



PARKING ON THE LAWN AREA

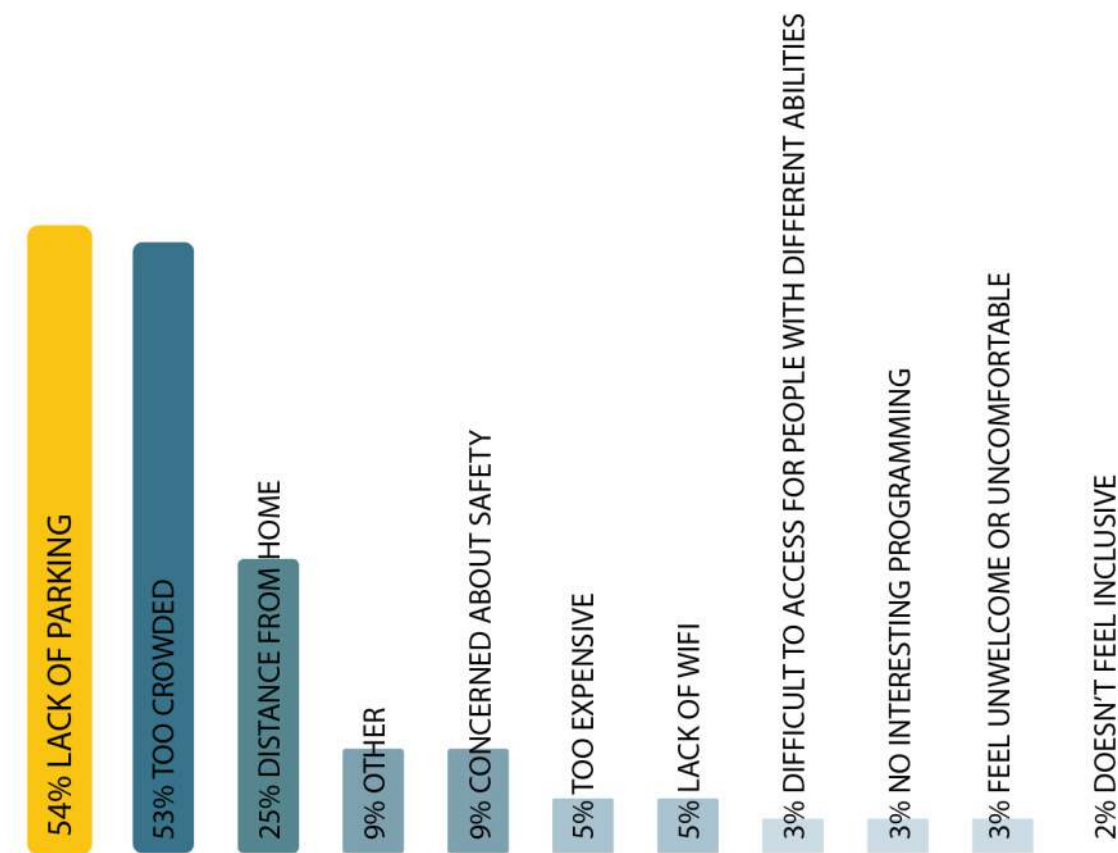


LANDFILL AREA PARKING ON WEEKENDS

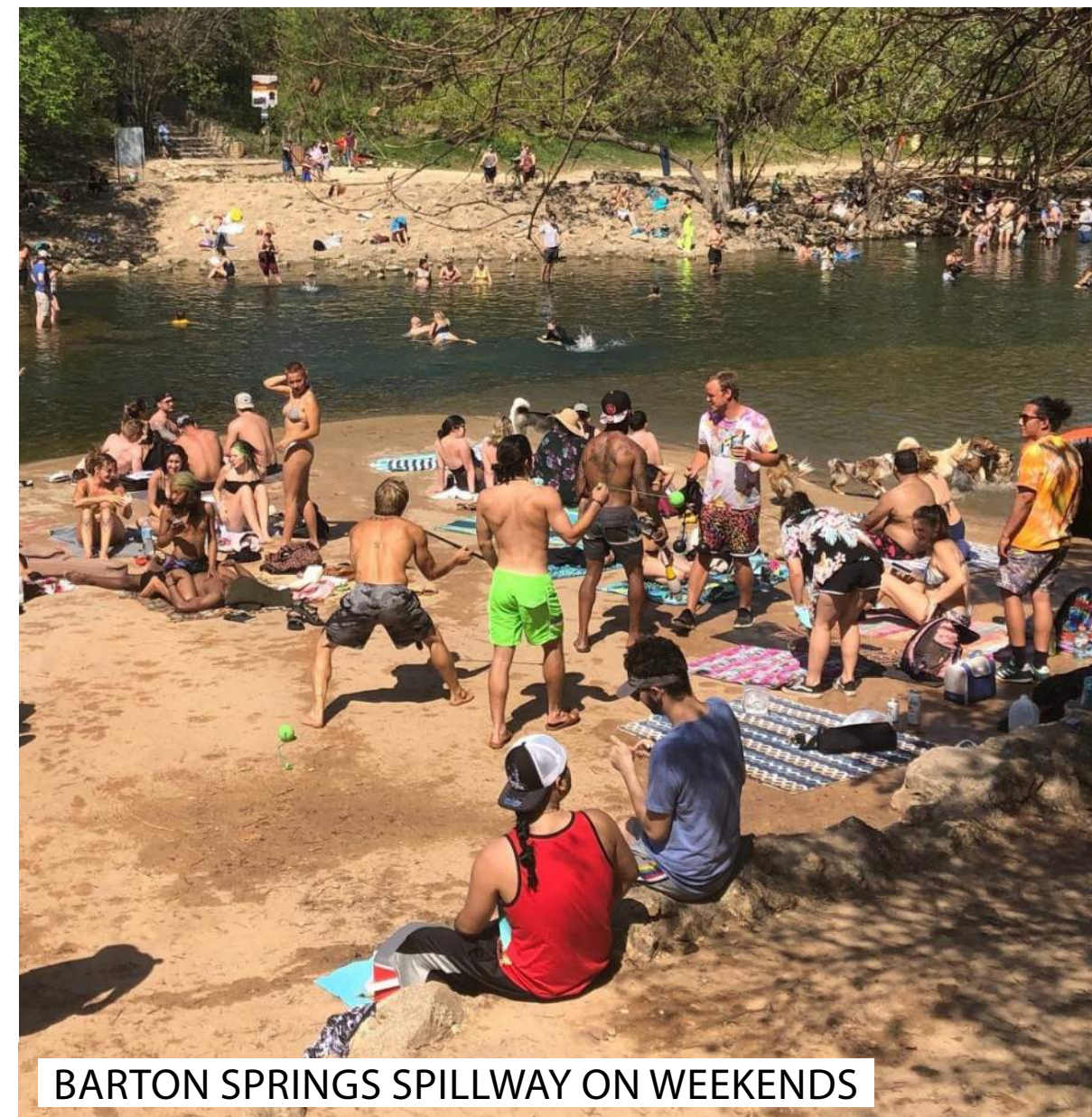
Chapter 2

PP. 25-37

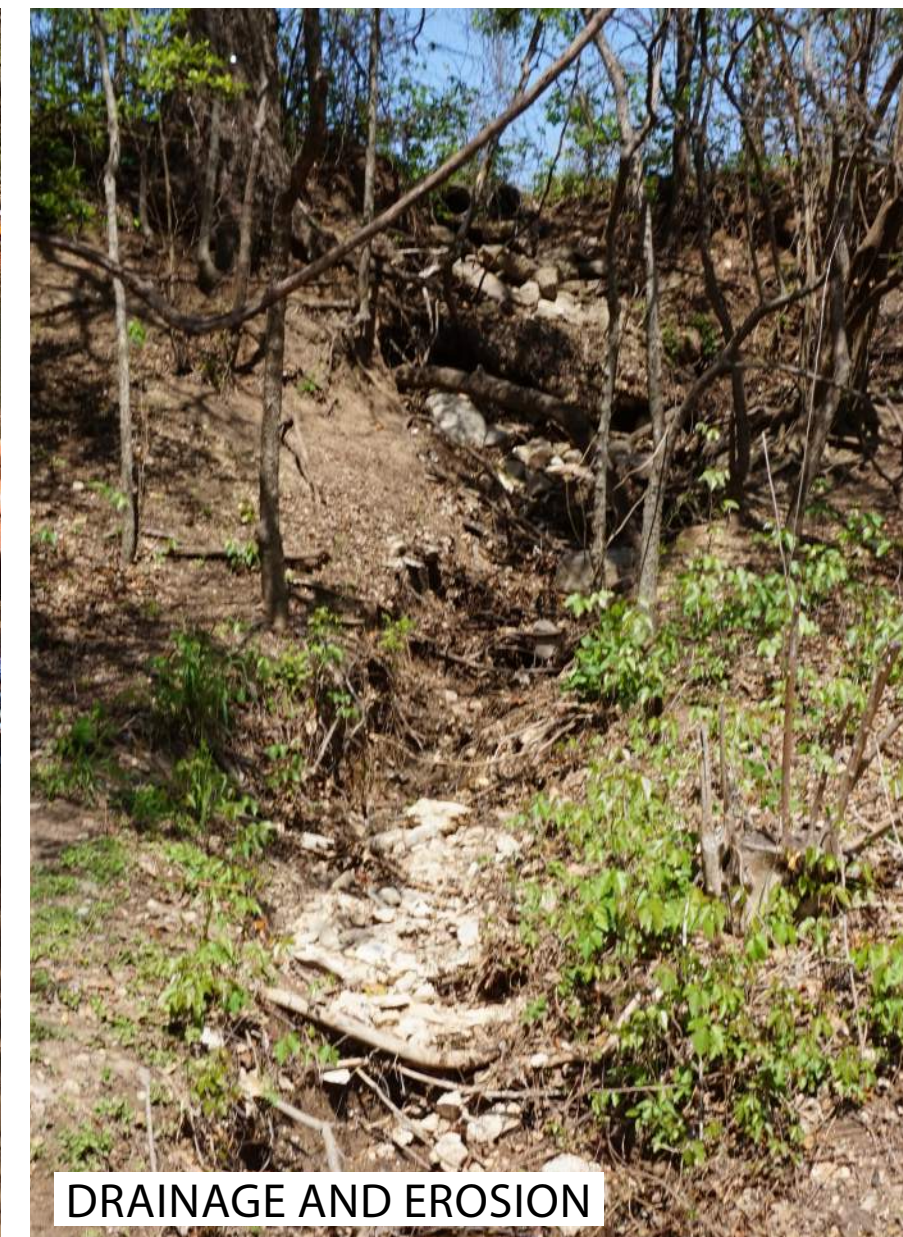
If you DO NOT visit or avoid visiting Zilker Park, why?



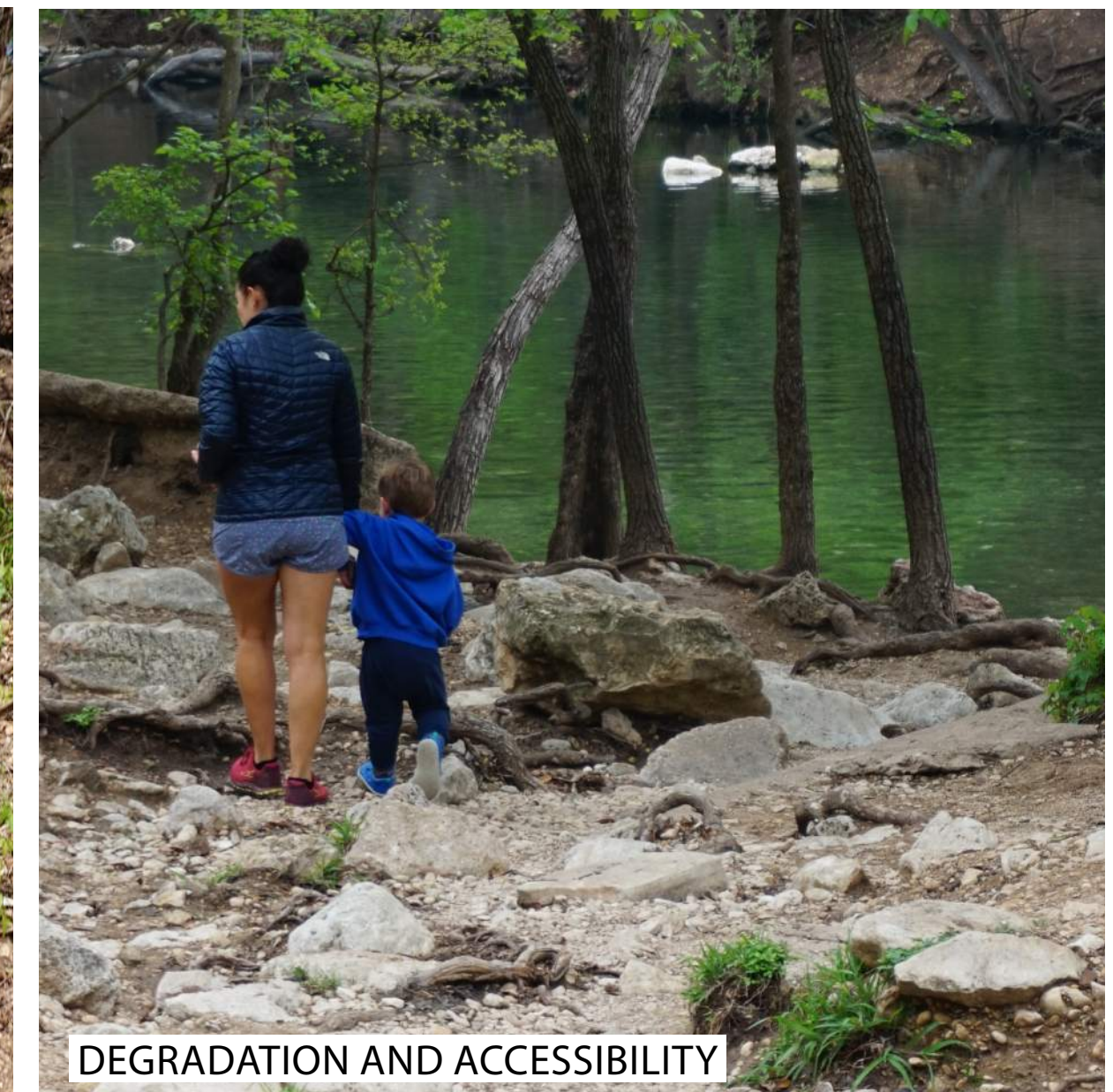
54% Lack of Parking



BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY ON WEEKENDS



DRAINAGE AND EROSION



DEGRADATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

# CALL TO ACTION



What We Heard The Zilker Park Vision Plan Should Address

# WHAT IS A VISION PLAN?

## What it is

Outlines the long-term vision, principles, goals, and strategies for the enhancement, management, and operation of Zilker Park

## What it is *not*

Detailed design or construction plans

Detailed plans for day to day park management and maintenance

Detailed budgeting for park enhancements

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS



**Sustainability**



**Accessibility**



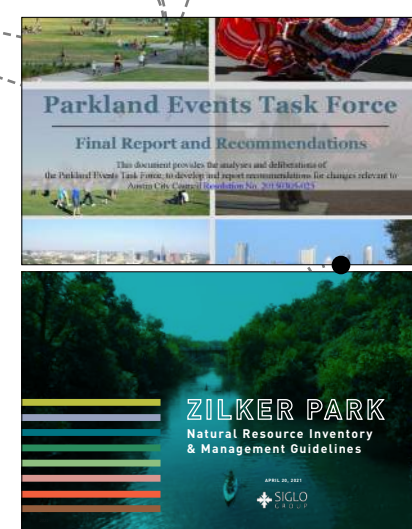
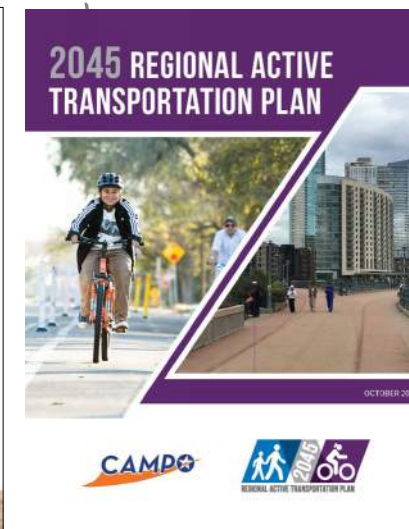
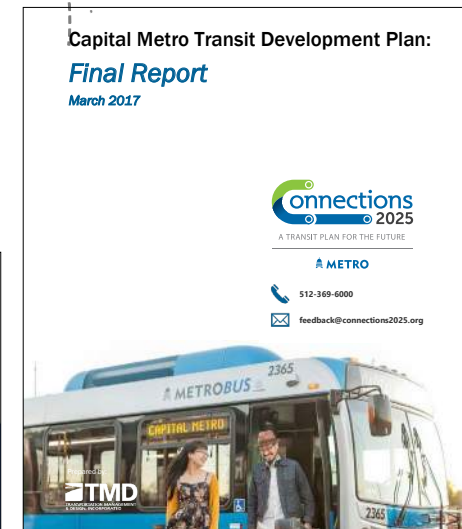
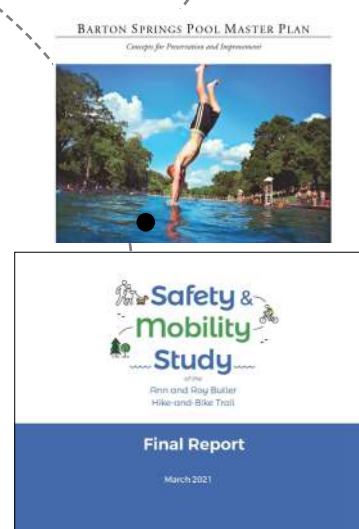
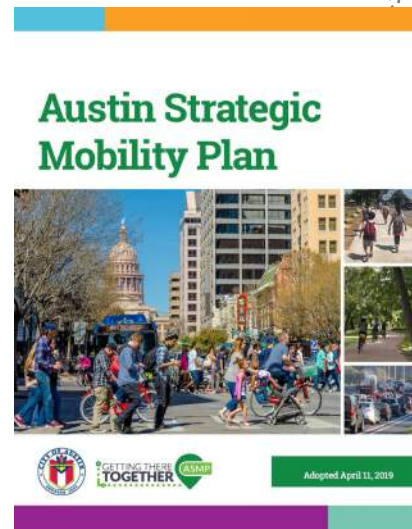
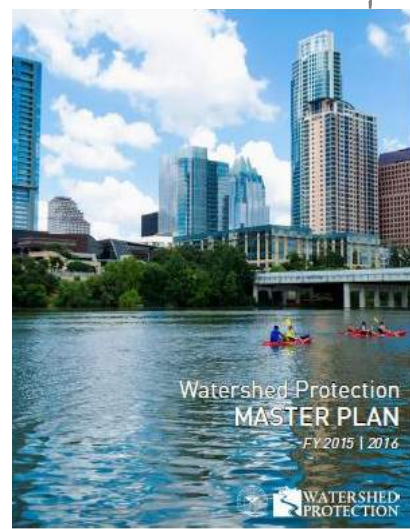
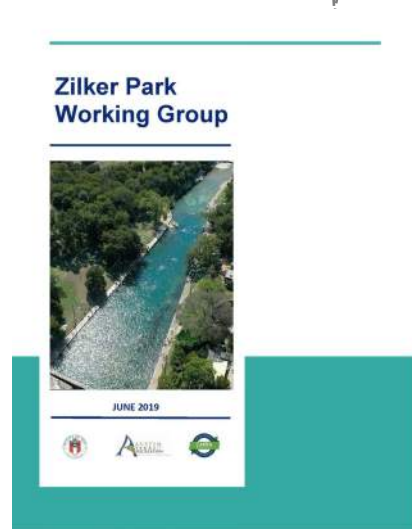
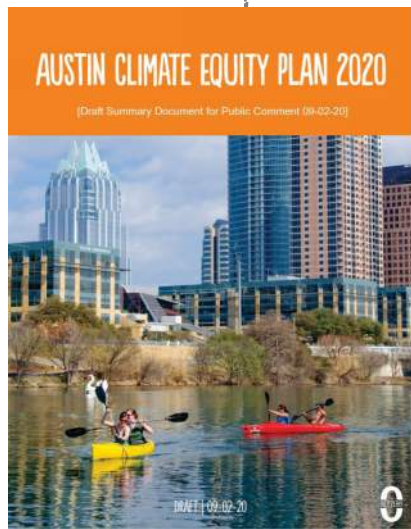
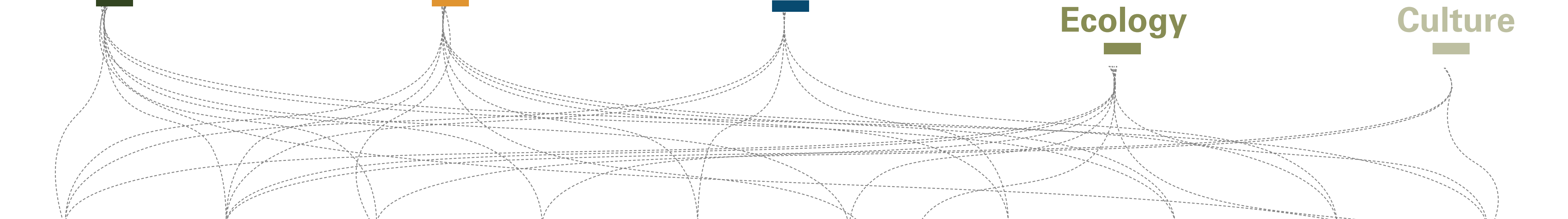
**Equity**



**Nature and Ecology**



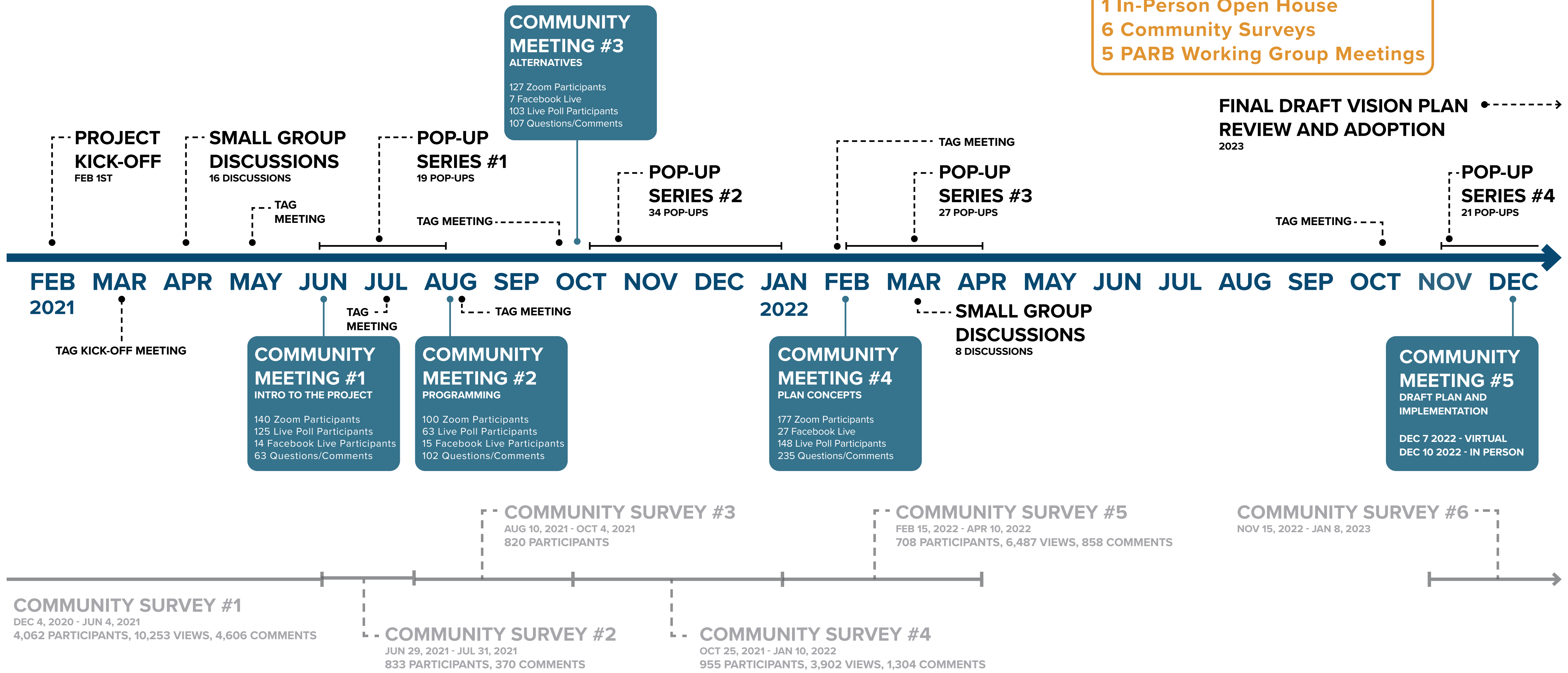
**History and Culture**



# ZILKER PARK VISION PLAN

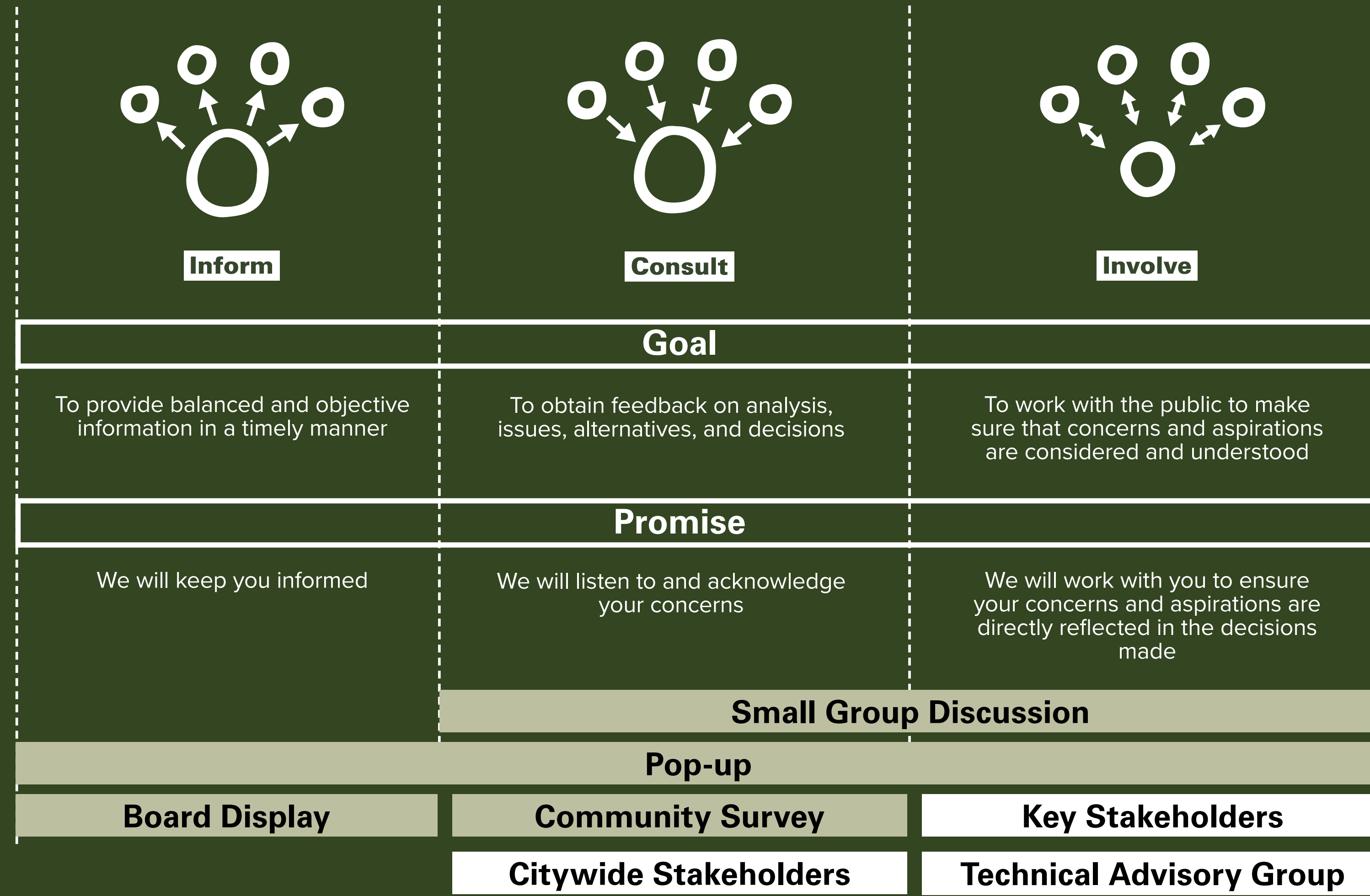
## Project Schedule

- 101 Pop-Ups
- 24 Small Group Discussions
- 7 TAG Meetings
- 5 Virtual Meetings
- 1 In-Person Open House
- 6 Community Surveys
- 5 PARB Working Group Meetings





IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



- Internal City of Austin Stakeholders
- PARD Parkners at Zilker
- Concessionaires
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Citywide Organizations
- Local Businesses
- Event/Festival Organizers
- Organized Sports
- Neighborhood Associations
- Cities Connecting Children to Nature Partners
- Academic Institutions
- City-level Governmental Agencies

- Parks & Recreation Department
- Austin Transportation Department
- CapMetro
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Public Works Department
- Watershed Protection Department
- Office of Real Estate Services
- Communications and Public Information
- Austin Water
- Austin Energy
- Housing and Planning
- Office of Sustainability
- Austin Resource Recovery
- Austin Fire Department



Sustainability



Accessibility



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



Nature and Ecology



History and Culture

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Meeting #5 and Survey #6

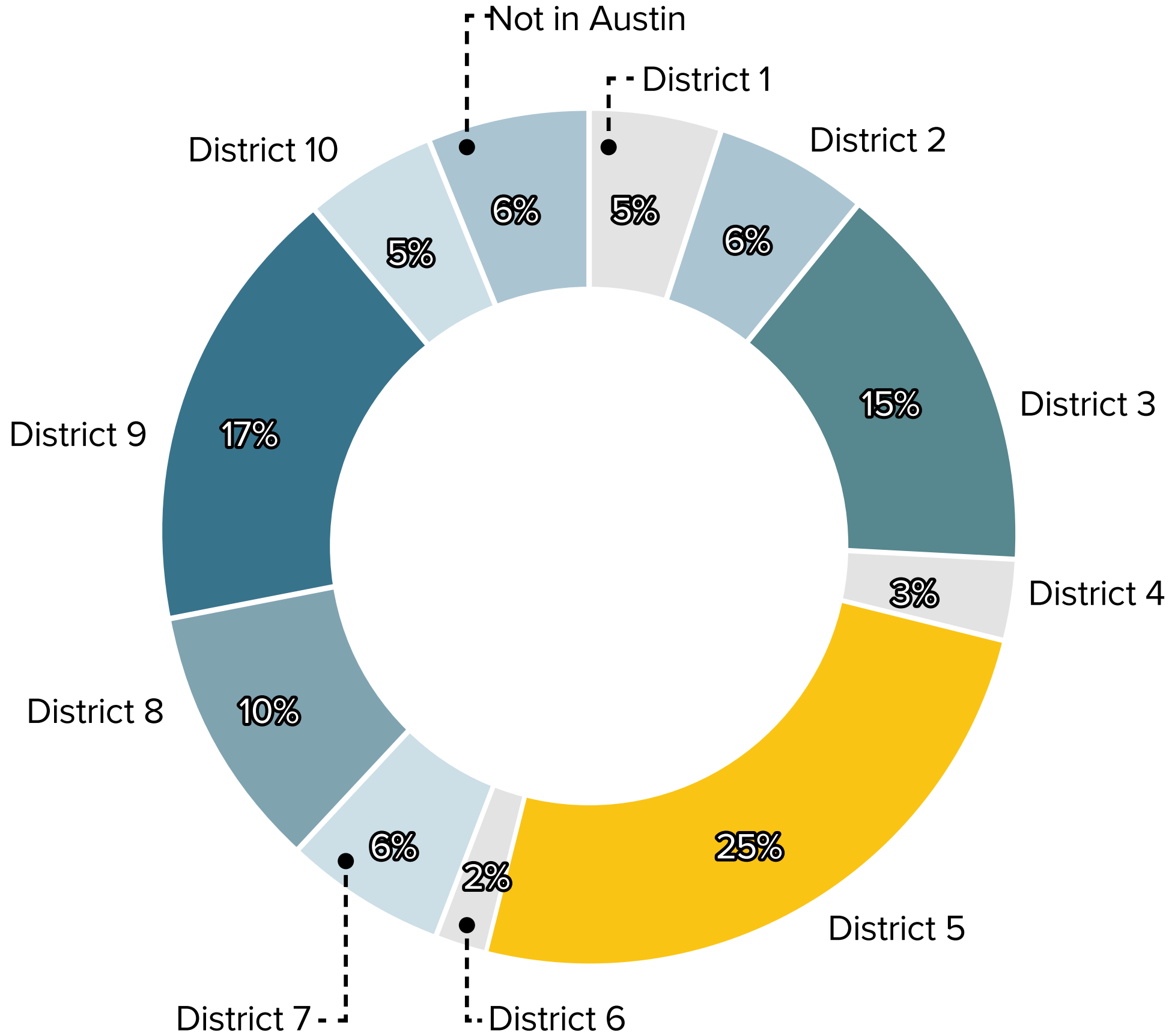
**MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

**148**  
Zoom Participants

**77**  
Live Poll Participation

**130**  
Open House Attendees

**298**  
Questions/Comments from Open House



OPEN HOUSE PARTICIPANTS

**COMMUNITY SURVEY #6**

**2,898 Participants, 3,430 Comments, More than 2,300 Commenters, 26,904 Views**

**About 30% of commenters reside around Zilker Park (Zip Code: 78704, 78745)**

**There are more than 6,000 views on the draft walk through video.**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Changes after Community Meeting #5 and Survey #6



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Kept Rowing Dock in existing location

Kept Disc Golf Course layout and added Warm-Up Area

Relocated and reduced Sports Area

Reduced the size of playscapes

# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

## THE UPLIFT DEFINITION

- INCREASE BIODIVERSITY
- IMPROVE ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION
- EXPAND CRITTER HABITATS
- ENHANCE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE
- INCREASE LANDSCAPE RESILIENCY TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS



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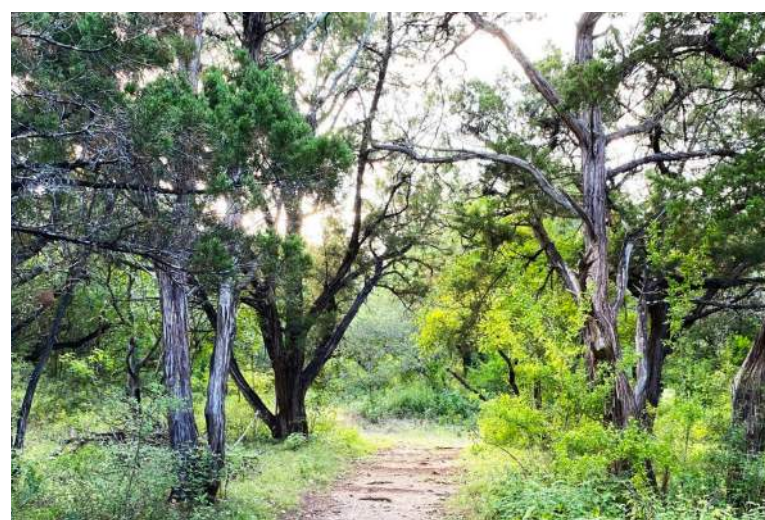
History and Culture



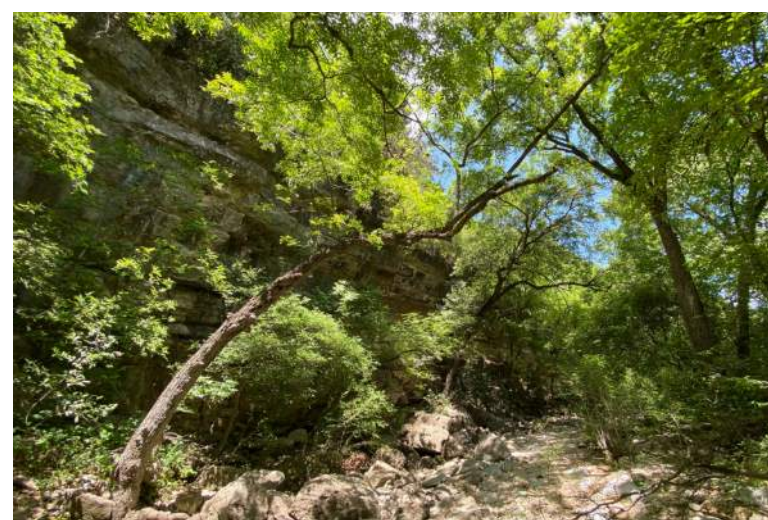
SAVANNA



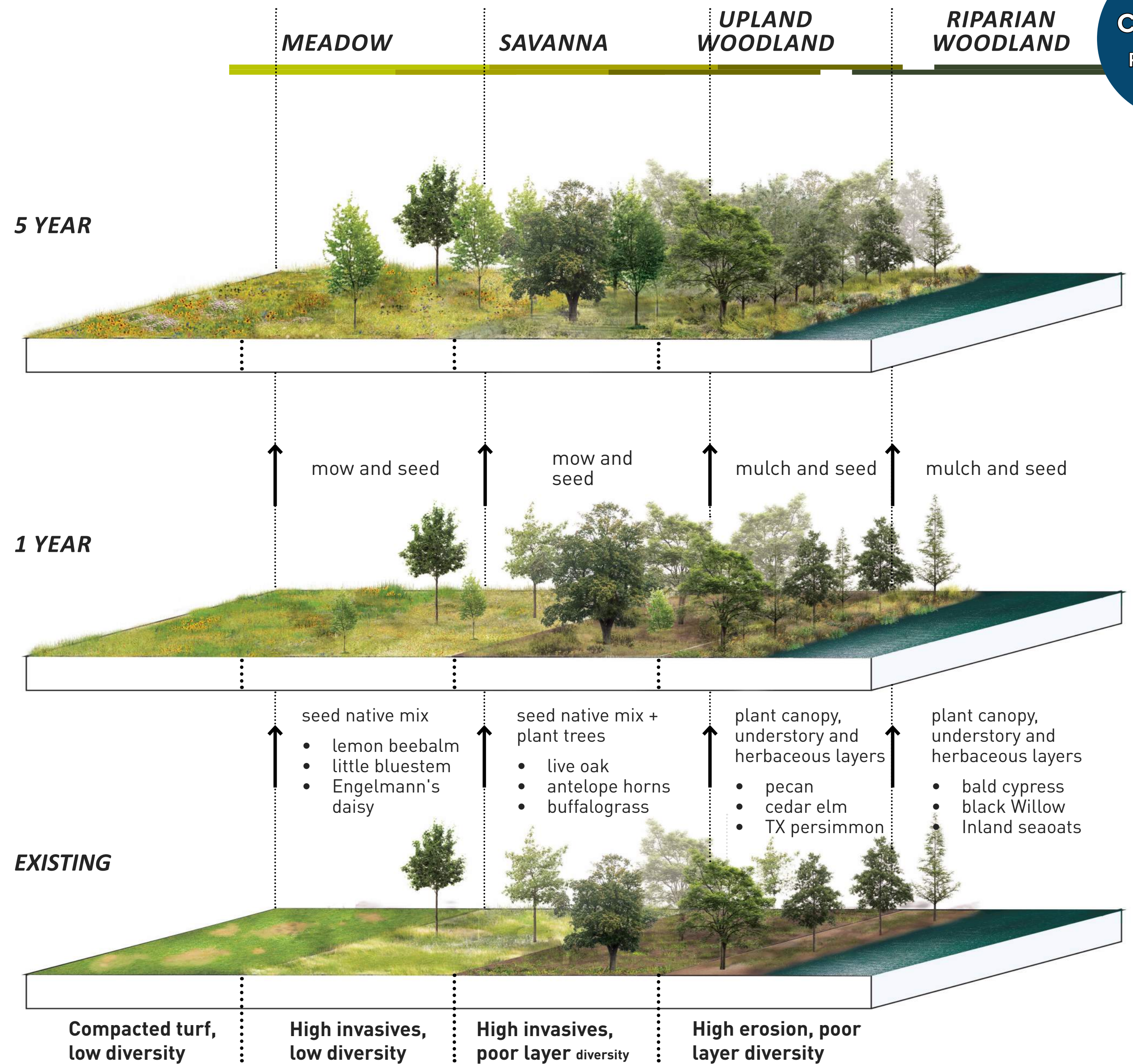
MEADOW



UPLAND WOODLAND



RIPARIAN WOODLAND



# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

## THE UPLIFT IN ZILKER PARK



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	EXISTING	PROPOSED	
<b>Total Natural Area</b>	<b>166</b> Acres	<b>256</b> Acres	<b>+92</b> Acres
<b>Upland Woodland</b>	<b>96</b> Acres	<b>114</b> Acres	<b>+18</b> Acres
<b>Riparian Woodland</b>	<b>69.6</b> Acres	<b>82.6</b> Acres	<b>+13</b> Acres
<b>Meadow/Savanna</b>	<b>0.4</b> Acres	<b>49.3</b> Acres	<b>+49</b> Acres
<b>Canopy Enhancement</b>	-	<b>10</b> Acres	<b>+10</b> Acres
<b>Green Stormwater</b>	-	<b>2</b> Acres	<b>+2</b> Acres
<b>Impervious Cover</b>	<b>36</b> Acres	<b>27</b> Acres	<b>-9</b> Acres

- Upland Woodland
- Riparian Woodland
- Meadow/Savanna
- Canopy Enhancement
- Green Stormwater
- Area with Regular Maintenance

# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

## THE UPLIFT ALONG BARTON CREEK



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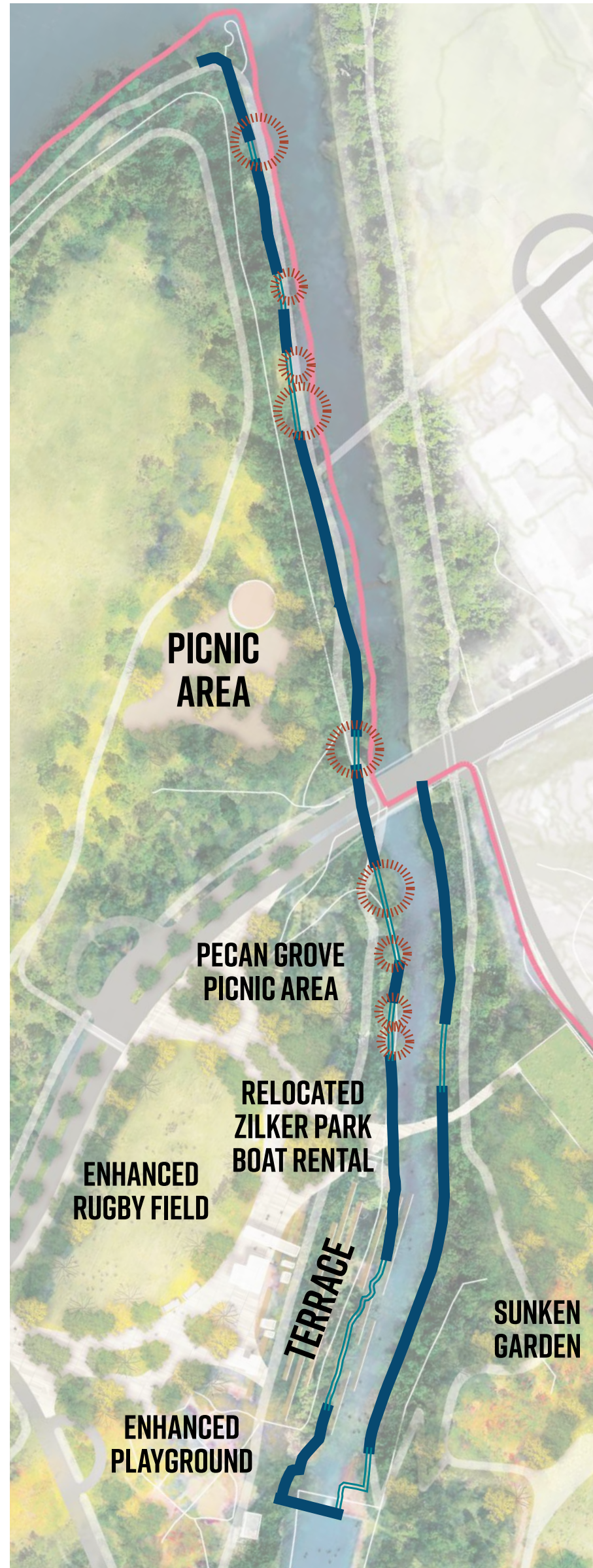
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-  Restored Edges
-  Potential Access Points
-  Small Access Points (15')
-  Large Access Points (30')

EXISTING CONDITIONS  
LOWER BARTON CREEK



**Stormwater Flow**  
Stormwater flows quickly off of the hillside, along the trail, and eventually to Barton Creek.

**Erosion**  
Severe erosion is occurring, exposing tree roots and making it difficult for plants to propagate on the shoreline.

**Unregulated Water Access**  
Heavy human use accessing the water's edge has caused severe erosion as well as compaction.

Chapter 5

PP. 173-174

**Enhanced Woodland**  
Enhanced canopy and understory species will slow down water flow off of the slope and increase habitat for native species.

**Trail Edge**  
Cable fences and large rock edges can deter people from exploring off trail.

**Drainage Improvements**  
Established vegetation can slow down water on its way to Barton Creek as well as deter people from short cutting.

**Formalized Water Access**  
By formalizing a trail and space near the water, ecological degradation will be minimized, allowing riparian communities to thrive.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS  
LOWER BARTON CREEK



# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

## HOW ARE WE DOING THIS AT ZILKER?

### ADAPTATION

#### HUMANS ADAPTING TO LIFE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

*This will reduce urban heat island impacts and create comfort.*

### MITIGATION

#### EFFORTS TO REDUCE OR PREVENT CLIMATE CHANGE

*This will increase below and above ground carbon storage, encourage less personal vehicle use, encourage the use of sustainable materials, thereby reducing carbon footprint.*

### RESILIENCY

#### A LANDSCAPE'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

*This will support a sustainable ecology by increasing soil, plant, and wildlife native biodiversity.*

- **68 acres** of canopy enhancement and woodland restoration
- **2 to 13 acres** of Green Stormwater Infrastructure
- **Minus 8 acres** of Impervious Cover
- **256 acres** of park focussed on ecological health
- Structures must achieve **green building rating.**
- **SITES certification** at Site Plan level
- **78 acres** of restored native plant communities
- **10 additional acres** of canopy enhancement
- Reduced impacts through **reduced impervious cover.**
- Reduced impacts by **reducing car use throughout park.**
- Increase native soil and plant biodiversity. There are currently **370 plant species** found on site.
- Utilize stormwater as a resource to **increase water availability.**
- Increase soil health to reduce water needs and **increase environmental health.**
- Use diversity of native plants to allow for **genetic diversity** to increase likelihood of withstanding changing climate.

### RESULTS:

- ✓ **REDUCED CARBON DIOXIDE IN ATMOSPHERE**
- ✓ **INCREASED PHOTOSYNTHESIS**
- ✓ **INCREASED CARBON STORAGE IN BIOMASS**
- ✓ **BETTER PLACES FOR HUMANS TO ENJOY**
- ✓ **MORE RESILIENT HABITATS FOR NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS**

**INCREASE CARBON STORAGE**

**+28%**

*Climate change is integrated into the vision plan through adaptation, mitigation, and resiliency. The plan is aligned with the Austin Climate Equity Plan as well as the Climate Resilience Action Plan.*



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# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT

## THE UPLIFT AND SUSTAINABILITY



### SUSTAINABLE GUIDELINES FOR LANDSCAPES

- Like LEED (sustainable building guidelines)

### GOALS

- Create Regenerative Systems and Foster Resiliency
- Ensure Future Resource Supply and Mitigate Climate Change
- Enhance Human Well-Being and Strengthen Community
- Transform the Market Through the Design, Development and Maintenance Practices

### EVALUATED ON:

- ✓ SITE CONTEXT
- ✓ ASSESSMENT + PLANNING
- ✓ SITE DESIGN – WATER, SOIL + VEGETATION, MATERIALS SELECTION
- ✓ HUMAN HEALTH + WELL-BEING
- ✓ CONSTRUCTION
- ✓ OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE
- ✓ EDUCATION + PERFORMANCE MONITORING
- ✓ INNOVATION OR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE



Dell Medical, UT Campus, Austin, TX



Kingsbury Commons, Pease Park, Austin, TX

IN THE CITY OF AUSTIN, NEW FACILITIES SHOULD ACHIEVE MINIMUM GREEN BUILDING RATING PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS



# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT ON LANDFILL AREA



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# BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY



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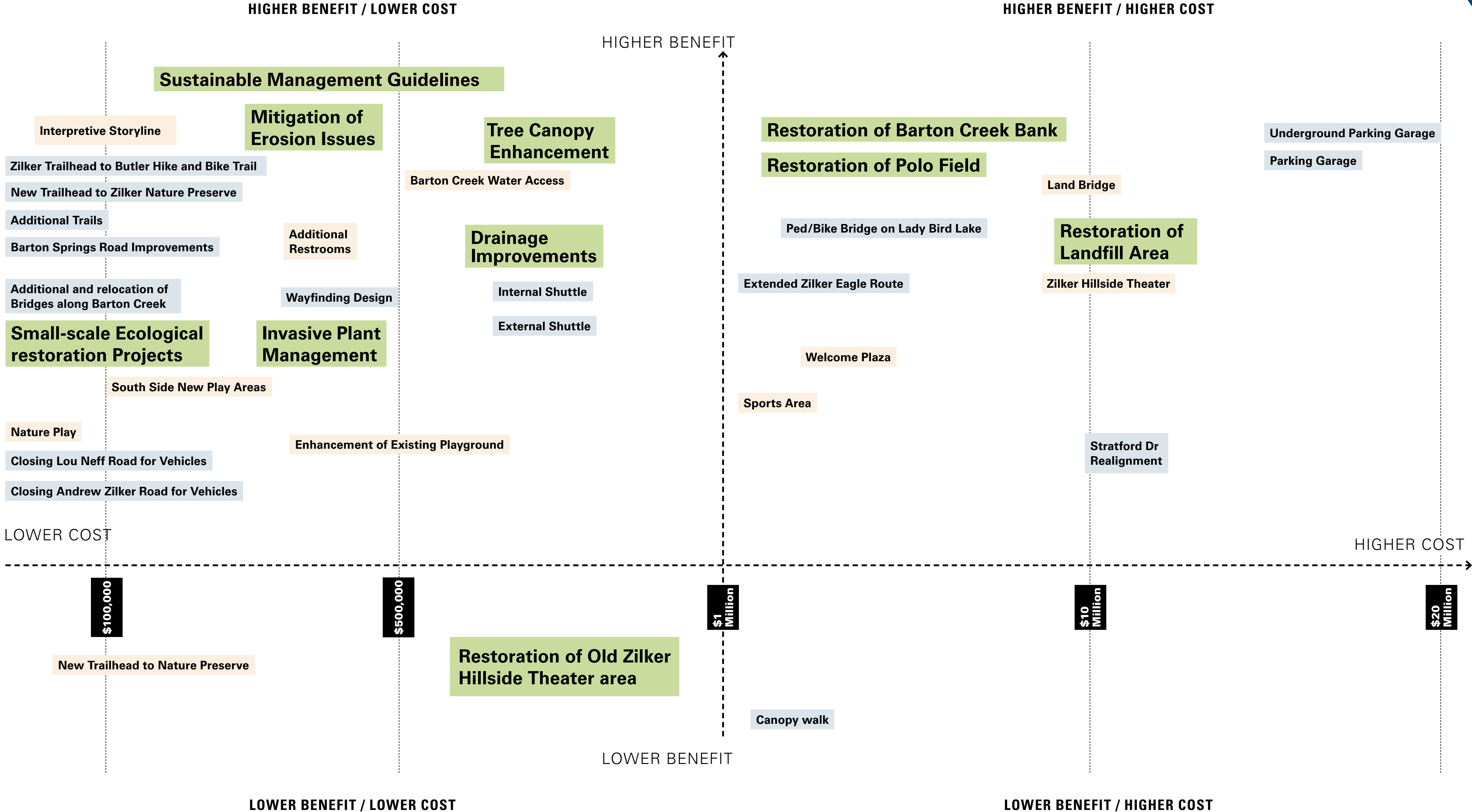


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# IMPLEMENTATION

## COST AND BENEFIT RELATION



# CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

## IMPACT OF THE VISION PLAN

- 1 Balancing Competing Interests
- 2 Urbanizing Recreation Within a Historic Context
- 3 Ensuring Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity
- 4 Linking Programming, Funding and Maintenance
- 5 Improving Mobility to and Inside the Park
- 6 Protecting the Ecological Heritage of Zilker

### REVIEW AND ADOPTION

- DESIGN COMMISSION
- URBAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
- ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
- PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
- PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
- CITY COUNCIL



# THANK YOU

• **Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan Website**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/ZilkerVision>

• **Contact Information**

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[ZilkerVision@austintexas.gov](mailto:ZilkerVision@austintexas.gov)



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# ECOLOGICAL UPLIFT ON LANDFILL AREA



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# ZILKER LAND BRIDGE



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# ZILKER HILLSIDE THEATER



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POLO FIELD

GREAT LAWN

DISC GOLF AREA

PLAYGROUND

ENTRANCE TO PARKING GARAGE

MOON TOWER

BARTON SPRINGS RD

PICNIC AREA

ANDREW ZILKER RD

NEW ENTRY ROAD TO SUNSHINE CAMP

ENHANCED RUGBY FIELD

ROCK GARDEN

PECAN GROVE PICNIC AREA

COLUMBUS DR

ENHANCED PLAYGROUND

WELCOME PLAZA

MAINTENANCE AREA OR DEPOT FOR ZILKER EAGLE

VIOLET CROWN TRAILHEAD

RELOCATED ZILKER PARK

TERRACE

NEW PED/BIKE BRIDGE

NEW PED/BIKE BRIDGE

BARTON SPRINGS POOL

BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY

PARKING GARAGE

SUNKEN GARDEN

SOUTH PICNIC AREA

MONKEY TREE LAWN

TODDLER PLAYGROUND

PLAYGROUND



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# BARTON SPRINGS SPILLWAY



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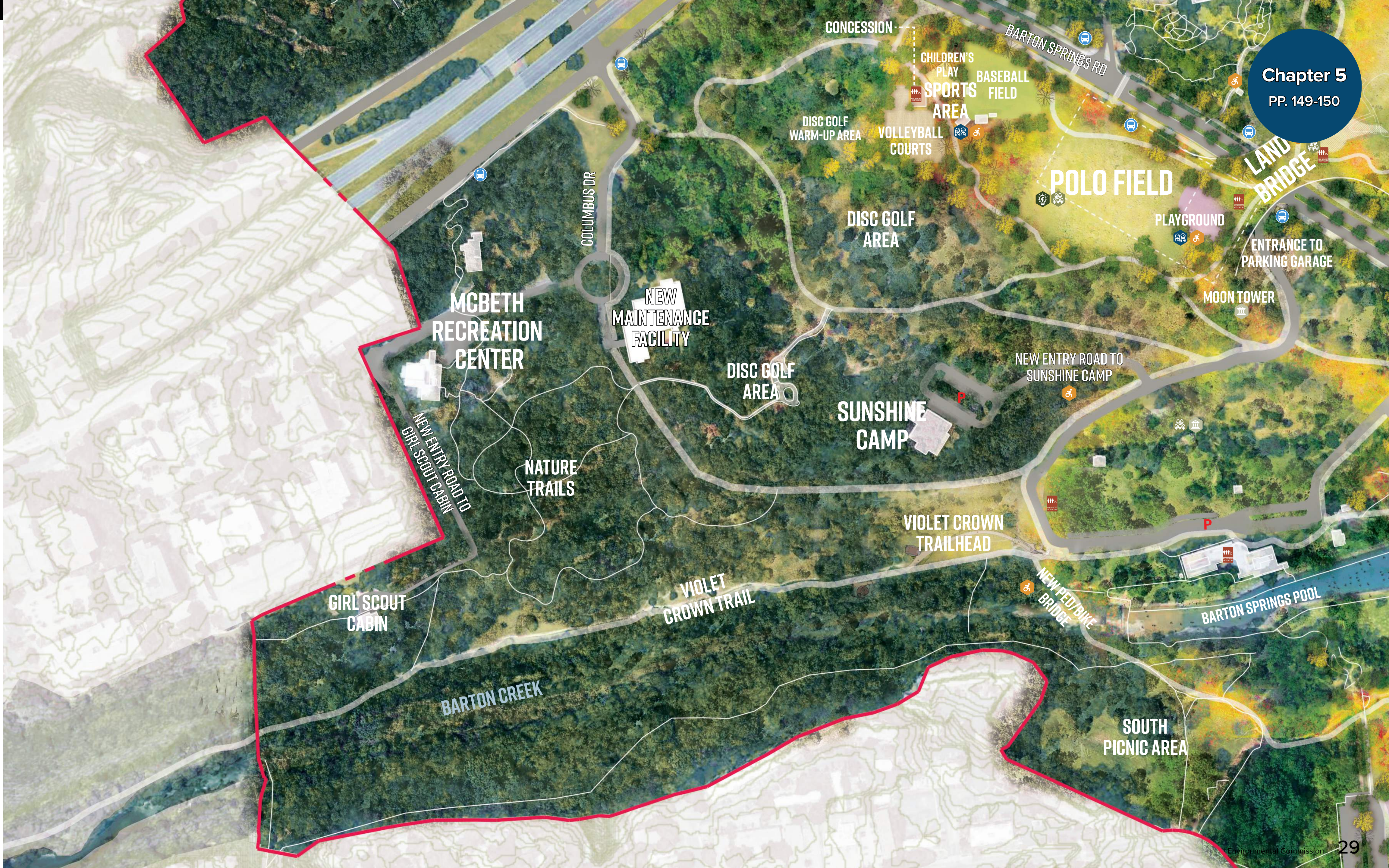
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# CHILDREN'S PLAY AT SPORTS AREA



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