

NORTH BURNET : MASTER PLAN G A T E W A Y



2

EXISTING CONDITIONS

DRAFT

ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the environmental characteristics and environmental constraints in the North Burnet/Gateway planning area (see Figure 2.1)

WATERSHEDS

A unique characteristic of the planning area is its location with respect to creeks and watersheds. The area traverses three watersheds – Shoal Creek, Walnut Creek, and Little Walnut Creek. The three watersheds meet at a high point near the center of the study area. All three watersheds are in the City's Desired Development Zone. Most of the creek drainages in the plan area have been urbanized and modified from their natural drainage patterns, with the exception of three tributaries leading to the main channel of Walnut Creek in the northeast section of the planning area, and one tributary in the Shoal Creek watershed on the vacant "Western Tract" near the MCC building.

FLOOD PLAIN

Due to the creeks, there are also a few areas that are in the 100 year or the 500 year flood plain. The first one is at the northern end of the study area along Walnut Creek. The

second flood plain is along Shoal Creek at the intersection of US 183 and MoPac. A third minor flood plain is along Little Walnut Creek near Metric Boulevard. (See Figure 2.1)

EDWARDS AQUIFER

The Edwards Aquifer is a significant environmental feature in Central Texas. A portion of the study area west of MoPac is within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, where rain falling in this area flows below the surface and directly into the aquifer. This zone is subject to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) water quality regulations. Standard City of Austin water quality design typically meets TCEQ Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP) requirements. However, a geologic assessment would also be required as part of the City's development review process.

OTHER CONSTRAINTS

The planning area has three known environmentally impacted sites. Two were cited in the UT Pickle Research Campus Master Plan that was prepared in 2002. These include the Magnesium Pits and a

low-level radioactive waste compound (see Figure 2.1). The third site is a property owned by the Austin Water Utility (AWU), south of Braker Lane between Burnet Road and the Capital Metro rail line. Austin Water Utility purchased the site in 1995 for the development of a water and wastewater line maintenance service center. As site work was taking place, previously unidentified hazardous materials were discovered when they exploded. The materials were buried on the site by the previous owner who failed to remove them upon site closure. Following the explosion, construction on the service center halted and the entire site was remediated by the Austin Water Utility. Certification has been received from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) that all remedies have been completed. A small portion of the site (8,400 sq. ft. [appx.1/5 acre]) is currently limited to commercial/industrial use via deed restriction. Additional testing would need to be conducted prior to use of this portion of the site for residential purposes.

HISTORY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The planning area contains a recognized historic site in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of MoPac and Braker Lane (at Braker Pointe). This site was obtained by James Rogers in 1831. He was one of the first settlers in Austin and one of five men under the command of Stephen F. Austin, sent to the Capital City for the Republic of Texas. James Rogers was one of the founding fathers of the Texas Rangers.

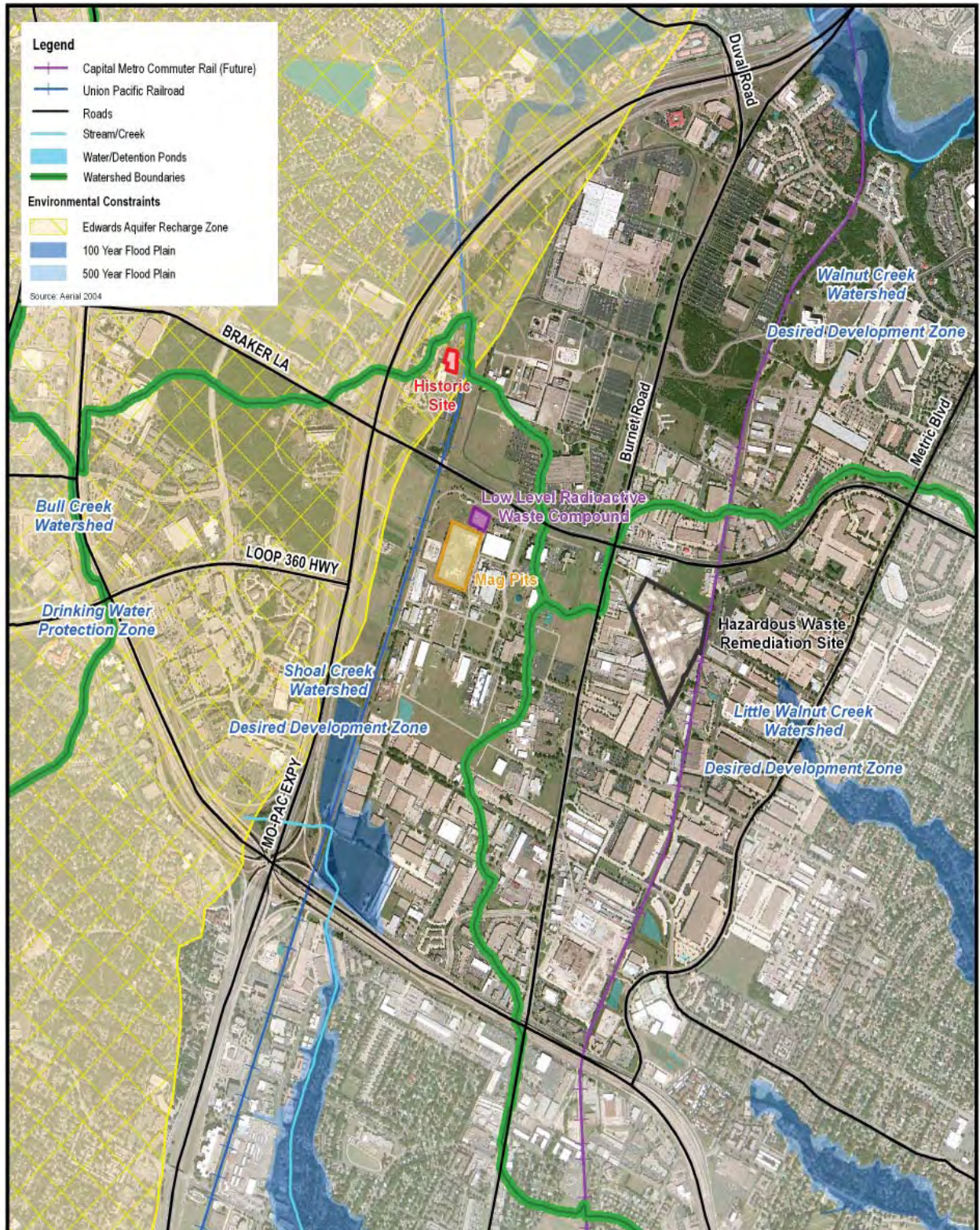
Edward Rogers, a son of James Rogers, constructed the house and barn (which remains on the Braker Pointe property) in 1861. His son lived there until his death in 1937. The house and barn are some of the few remnants of pre-civil war architecture left in Austin. The site served as a watering hole for wagons traveling on Bagdad Road which linked Travis and Williamson counties. These buildings are registered with the Austin Historic Society.



MASTER PLAN :: Existing Conditions

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES & CONSTRAINTS

Figure 2.1



DEMOGRAPHICS AND MARKET CONDITIONS

The North Burnet/Gateway Area has a population of 4,803 based on the year 2000 U.S. Census. This is a 1,157% increase from the population of 382 in the year 1990. The City of Austin had a population increase during this same time period of about 40% from the 1990 population of 465,000 to the 2000 population of 650,000. The majority of the growth in the study area can be attributed to the development of the multi-family residential apartments in the northern part of the planning area near Gracy Farms Blvd.

The planning area also has a very young population with more than 68% of the population in the age group of 20 to 34 years as compared to 34% in the City of Austin (Figure 2.2).

The education attainment of people living in the planning area is also higher as compared to the City of Austin, Austin MSA, Texas, or the U.S. average. About 45% of the population within the planning area has a bachelor's degree or higher and only 12% of the population has less than a high school education. The median household income and per capita income for the study area were \$48,178 and \$29,611 respectively in 1999 (U.S. census, 1999). These are also significantly higher than the areas of comparison mentioned previously.

There is also a higher ethnic distribution with a higher percentage of minority population than Austin at large (Figure 2.3).

The average travel time to work for the population living in the planning area is 21 minutes as compared to 24 minutes for the City of Austin and 27 minutes for the State of Texas.

MARKET CONDITIONS

Understanding the basic market conditions of the North Burnet/Gateway area, as well as of the surrounding region, is critical to making sound planning decisions for the future of the area. Accordingly, it is important to ascertain not only the

Figure 2.2 : Population Distribution By Age

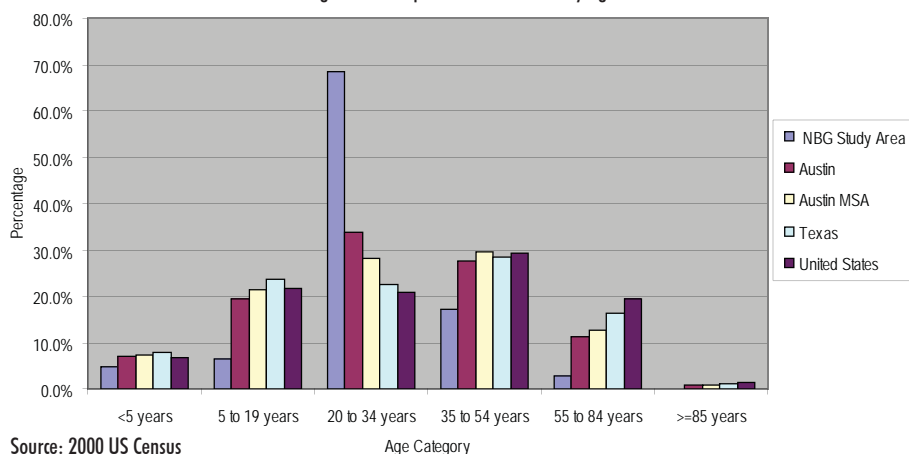


Figure 2.3 : Population Distribution By Ethnicity

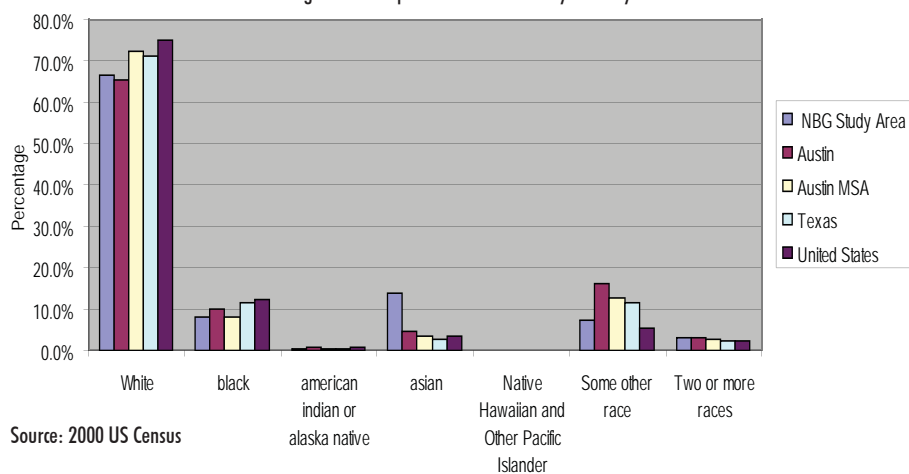
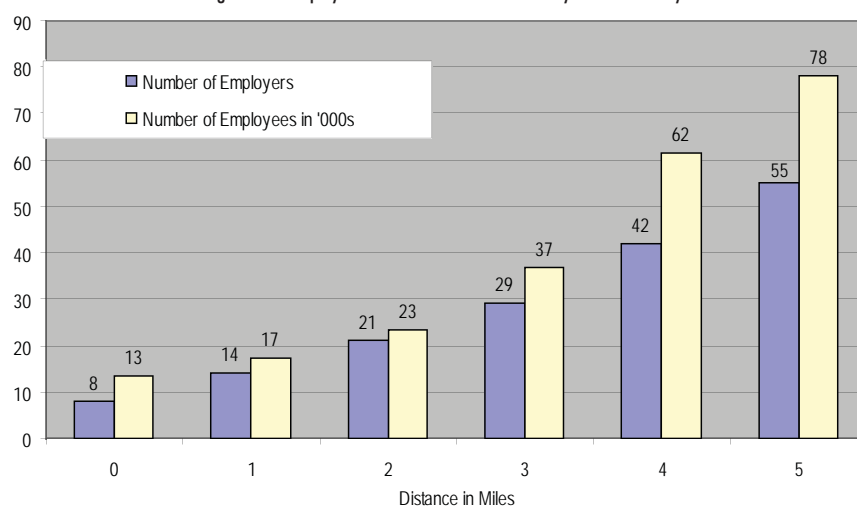


Figure 2.4 : Employment Within 5 Miles of the Study Area Boundary



Based on Employers with 500 plus employees
Source: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growth/gis_employment.htm

current conditions of the Austin market, but also make reasonable projections as to the viability of the proposed redevelopment scenarios described in this Master Plan.

To that end, a market assessment was assembled utilizing regional market data regularly reported on a quarterly basis coupled with a specific look at a portion of the study area. The specific focused assessment was conducted by Capitol Market Research of Austin, Texas and commissioned by the Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District (ASAICRD) for the area near the potential Austin-San Antonio commuter rail station (near the intersection of Braker Lane and MoPac).

The Capital Market Research market assessment defined its study area in terms of seven adjacent census tracts. The census data confirm the strong population growth trend in North Austin, rising

from about 15,000 in 1990 to over 23,000 in 2000, an increase of 56%. Projections forecast a population growth of about 3.6% annually, to reach about 52,000 by 2030. Average household income in 2004 was about \$73,000.

Since the North Burnet/Gateway planning area covers almost 2,300 acres, the regional market forecast was also considered. This plan attempts to look at growth and development over a 30-year period, which would span the length of several business cycles. At a macro level the possibility exists that the study area could accommodate a significant amount of the region's new growth. Therefore the following table summarizes the general demand for real estate products.

For regional real estate market segments, the area wide market studies found:

“Townhome and condominium units have typically not been widely available in the

Austin area, however, rent sales actively suggest that attached for-sale housing will continue to grow as a percentage of the overall housing market. Demand should be fairly strong for well located and well designed units.”

The North Burnet/Gateway area could potentially capture 5% to 10% of the regional market area growth by allowing higher density, mixed-use development.

One of the goals of this Master Plan is to help the North Burnet/Gateway not only reach this potential, but to emerge as a location of choice by creating a unique and compelling atmosphere.

Figure 2.5: Austin Share of Regional Market Demand

	2006		2030		Total Demand		Annual Demand
Population	1,455,000		2,800,000				
Housing Units, All types	731,156 du		1,407,035 du		675,879 du		28,162 du
Single Family, For Sale	475,251 du		844,221 du		368,970 du		15,374 du
Multi Family, Rental	255,905 du		562,814 du		306,910 du		12,788 du
Retail	30,874,000 sf		59,413,883 sf		28,539,883 sf		1,189,162 sf
Office	34,608,000 sf		66,599,588 sf		31,991,588 sf		1,332,983 sf
Industrial	33,796,000 sf		65,036,976 sf		31,240,976 sf		1,301,707 sf

Source: Live Oak Capital Ltd.

EMPLOYMENT DATA

The North Burnet/Gateway planning area is currently a major destination for employment. Based on 2002 data, there are more than 13,000 jobs with major employers (defined as having 500 or more employees) within or in close proximity of the planning area. As discussed earlier, the population within this area is just 4,803 – with even less population in the labor force. Thus, the jobs to housing ratio in the planning area is high. Figure 2.4 shows the number of major employers and corresponding number of employees that work within zero (within the plan-

ning area) to five miles of the planning area boundary. The table to the right identifies the major employers within the North Burnet/Gateway planning area boundary and the corresponding number of employees working in the area.

EMPLOYER:	EMPLOYEES:
IBM Corp	6,300
National Instruments, Inc.	2,000
Tivoli Systems, Inc.	1,600
Time Warner, Inc.	900
Holt, Rinehard & Winston, Inc.	750
Omnifax	725
Teamsource Inc.	600
DII Interconnect, Inc.	500

source: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growth/gis_employment.htm

EXISTING LAND USE

The North Burnet/Gateway area currently includes a variety of land uses, consisting of commercial, office, multi-family residential and industrial. Figure 2.6 illustrates the existing land uses within the plan area. Typical of development patterns found in much of Austin, these land uses are separated into clusters of development: the Gateway area is primarily commercial retail, the North Burnet area is primarily light industrial and office, with a cluster of multifamily apartment complexes around Gracy Farms Blvd. The University of Texas Pickle Research Campus and Austin Community College campus are publicly-owned properties in the area.

There are currently six parcels within the North Burnet/Gateway area which are owned by the City of Austin: a fire station, three electrical substations (Summit, Magnesium Plant, and Balcones), a regional water detention pond, and two maintenance/service centers. The Kramer Lane Service Center site is approximately 40 acres and is currently used by Austin Energy, Fleet Services, Watershed Protection and Development Review Department (WPDR) and Public Works. The 24-acre Austin Water Utility (AWU) service center site is currently vacant but was originally planned to include AWU, Solid Waste Services, and Fleet Services operations, but construction was put on hold due to remediation of the site.

There is a 300-acre former industrial property within the plan area between Braker Lane, Burnet Road and MoPac that is being redeveloped as commercial mixed-use known as the Domain. The first phase of the Domain has been constructed, including 390 residential units and 93,000 sq. feet of retail and office space. Subsequent phases will be built over the next 10 years or more. Plans for the Domain anticipate 3,400 residential units, 750,000 sq. ft. of retail, and 3 million sq. ft. of office built in an urban mixed use development pattern.

There are a few remaining vacant tracts in the area – approximately 70 acres, which are currently zoned industrial, and 240 acres which are zoned public, including the AWU service center site and a property owned by the University of Texas. The University of Texas owns three properties in the North Burnet/Gateway area: the J.J. Pickle Research Campus, the Arbor Walk, which has been leased to a private developer for 49 years, and the mostly undeveloped “Western Tract” located to the west of MoPac, to the east and north of Stonelake Blvd. and to the south of Braker Lane.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

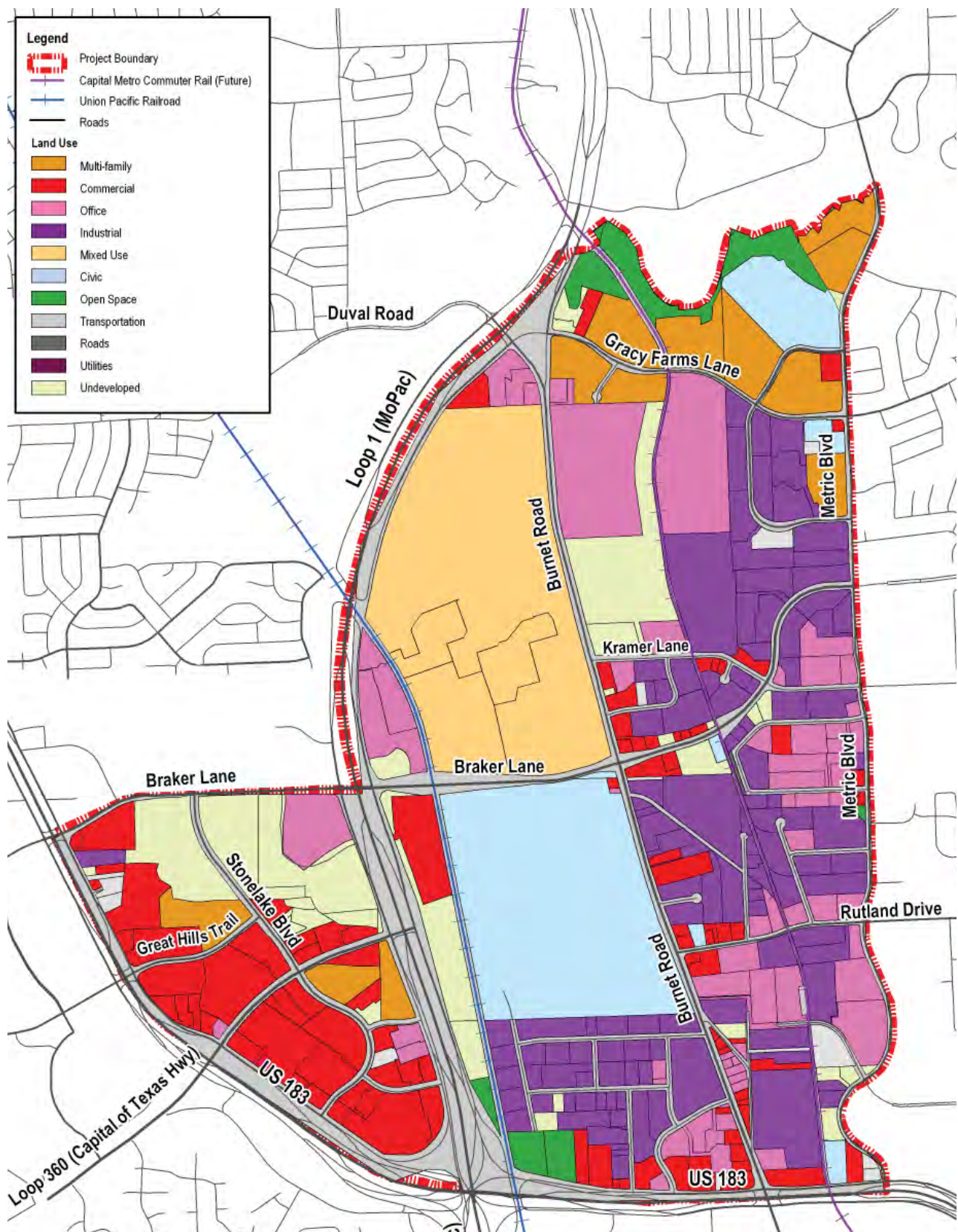
The North Burnet/Gateway planning area is contiguous to residential neighborhoods located northwest, southwest and east of the study area boundary, including the Balcones

Woods, Balcones West, Gracy Woods, Millwood, North Austin Civic Association (NACA), North Shoal Creek, and Wooten neighborhoods. Primary access points into the adjacent neighborhoods is provided by Duval Road, Gracy Farms Blvd., Capitol of Texas Highway, Braker Lane, Rutland Drive, Rundberg Lane, Burnet Road and Metric Boulevard (which serves as the eastern boundary of the study area).

Neighborhoods abutting the study area are mostly detached single-family residential neighborhoods. The Balcones Woods, Millwood, North Shoal Creek, Wooten and Angus Valley residential neighborhoods are generally separated from the North Burnet/Gateway area by US 183, MoPac, or the Walnut Creek greenbelt. Existing commercial land uses form a buffer across Braker Lane west of MoPac between the residential uses in the Balcones Woods neighborhood and any changes that would occur in the North Burnet/Gateway area. Similarly, existing industrial uses in the NACA neighborhood form a buffer east of Metric Blvd. The northeast portion of the planning area is the only place where existing single-family residences border the North Burnet/Gateway area.

EXISTING LAND USE

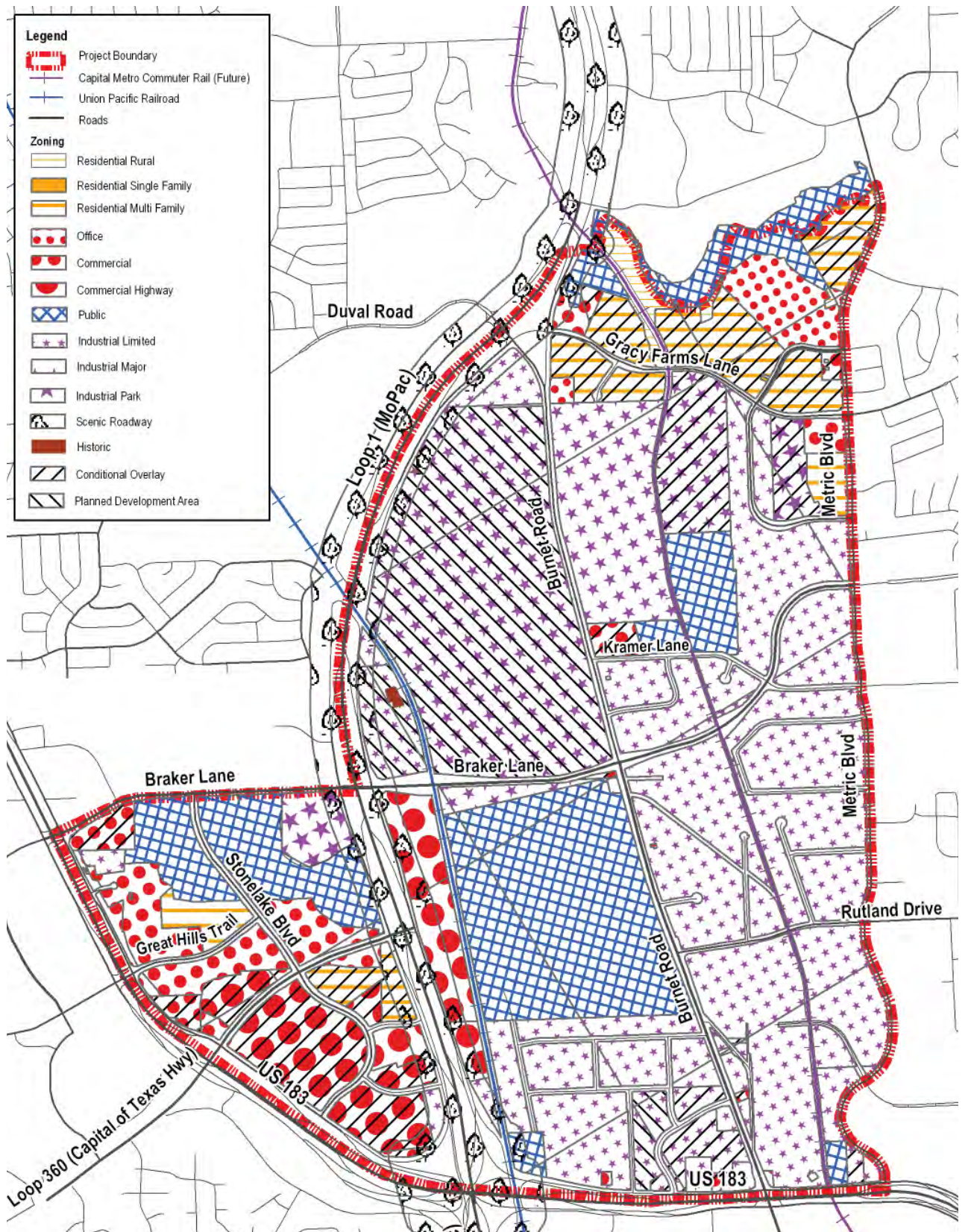
Figure 2.6



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EXISTING ZONING

Figure 2.7



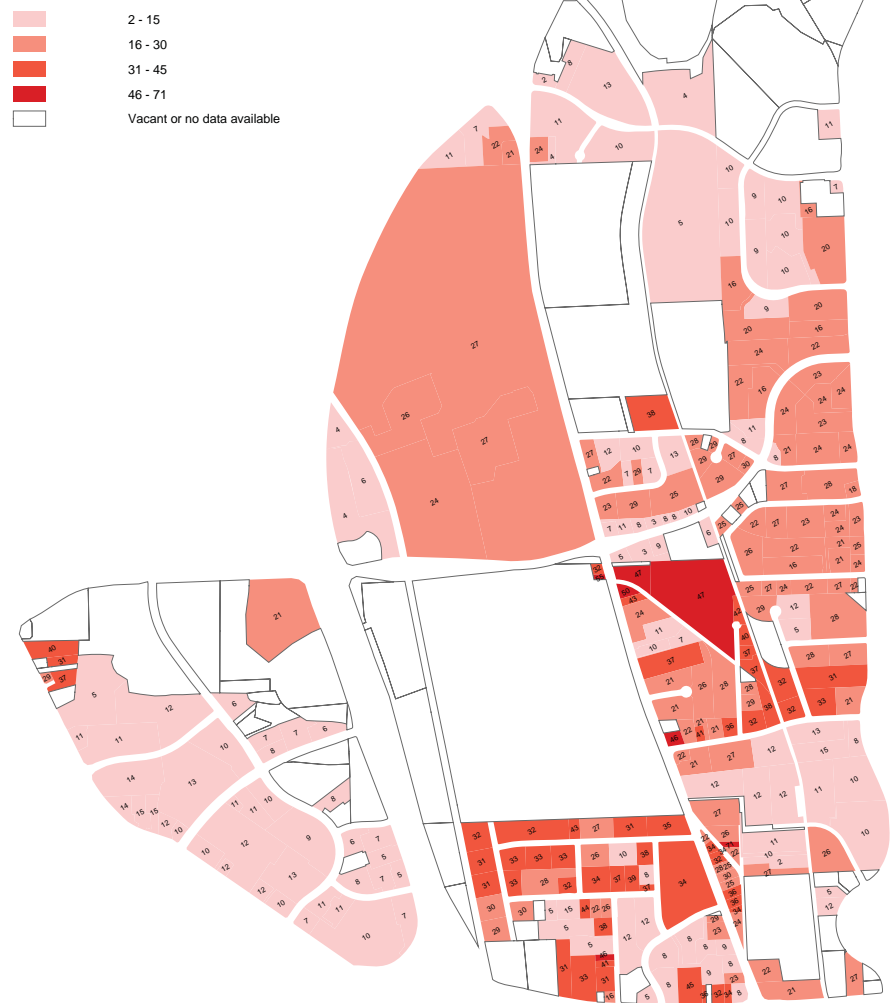
RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOLS, PARKS AND CIVIC FACILITIES

With primarily commercial retail and light industrial land uses, and comparatively few residences, the North Burnet/Gateway area is lacking in neighborhood-serving community facilities. There are no public or private primary or secondary schools, libraries, or community centers located in the planning area. There are two childcare centers; the Bright Horizons childcare center is located on Braker Lane just west of the railroad tracks and Children's Courtyard on Metric Blvd. south of Gracy Farms Blvd.

The Walnut Creek greenbelt at the northern boundary is currently the only public parkland in the planning area. The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is planning a major trail project for Walnut Creek. The Northern Walnut Creek Trail will be a 5-mile long concrete trail that will follow the creek from just west of MoPac to IH-35. The first phase, scheduled to begin construction in 2008, will run from Balcones District Park to Walnut Creek Metro Park. Phase Two will continue the trail to the Central Texas Girl Scout headquarters east of IH-35. The Domain mixed-use development is also planning on constructing a 9-acre park that will be accessible to the public.

Two satellite college campuses are located in the planning area: the University of Texas J.J. Pickle Research Campus and the Austin Community College Northridge Campus. The UT Pickle Research Campus is over 200 acres located to the southwest of the Burnet Road/Braker Lane intersection. The ACC Northridge Campus is located in the northeast corner of the planning area, accessible from Stonehollow Blvd.

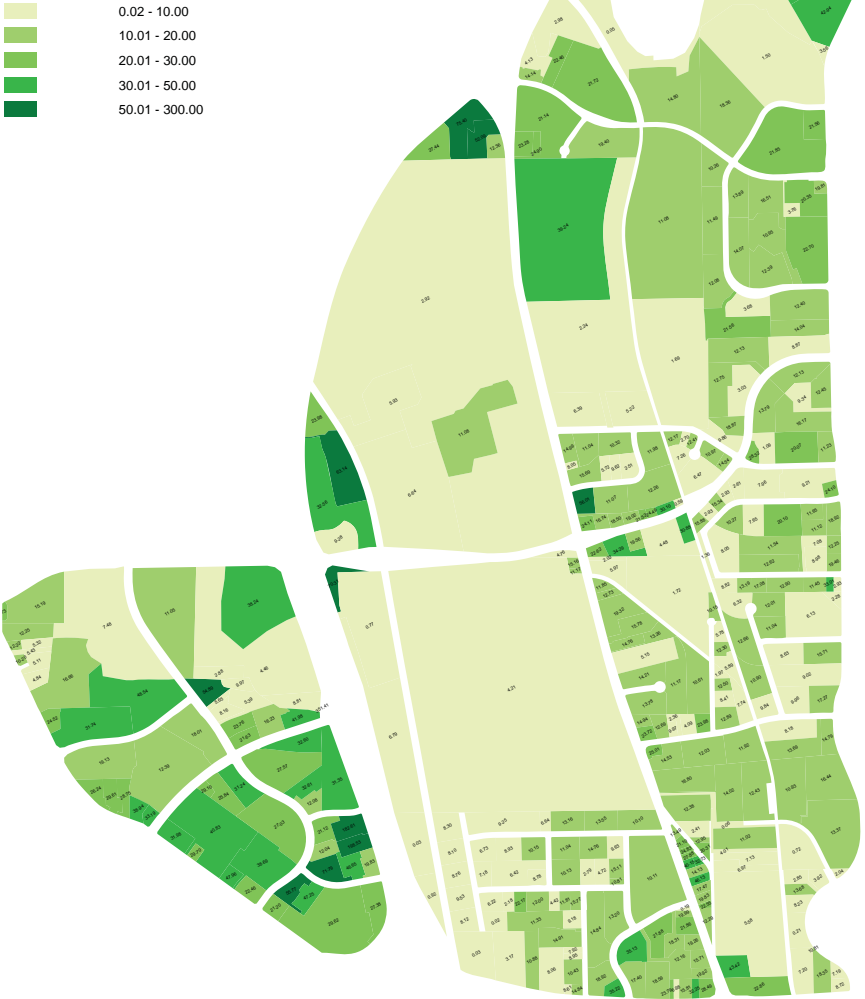
Figure 2.8 : Age of Improvements (years)



REDEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The existing vacant properties in the area present the most likely opportunity for new development in the planning area. That is why this Plan identifies many of the vacant sites as catalyst sites for redevelopment in the area. The likelihood of other properties with existing land uses and operating businesses in the area to redevelop is influenced by two major factors: the age of existing improvements on the property and the land value per square foot. The Age of Improvements (Figure 2.8) is important because older buildings become more expensive to maintain and often no longer carry a mortgage. The Land Value per Square Foot (SF) (Figure 2.9) is a crucial number for potential developers. The price of land is relatively high in this area. This is, in part, because most of the land is already developed and holds existing buildings with existing revenue streams. This makes it difficult to develop in a conventional manner. It is therefore important to allow enough entitlements that a developer can recoup the price of the land and the cost of removing existing building stock in order to encourage redevelopment.

Figure 2.9 :Land Value Per Square Foot (\$)



The number of planned developments in the North Burnet/Gateway Plan area, along with the associated traffic congestion concerns, suggested the need for a more extensive traffic analysis to be conducted through this planning process. Traffic conditions are typically monitored and measured by their Level of Service (LOS). The LOS defines the operating conditions of a facility in terms of traffic performance as related to speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, and convenience. LOS values range from A, which is free flowing (least congested) to LOS F, which is a breakdown in flow (most congested). Typically, an LOS D level or better is desired. See Figure 2.10 for the existing condition LOS for the signalized intersections in the peak afternoon (PM) period.

Because the planning area is large, it includes many street hierarchies. A major freeway corridor, MoPac Expressway, bisects the study area, and another major freeway corridor, US-183, bounds the study area on the south. According to 2004 TxDOT traffic maps, Mo-Pac Expressway carries approximately 122,330 vehicles per day, while US-183 carries approximately 175,220 vehicles per day.

Burnet Road (also designated as FM 1325), the major north-south arterial running through the planning area, is owned and operated by TxDOT, therefore, any future changes to the street design would require TxDOT approval.

There are a number of major and minor arterials, collectors, and local streets within the study area (see Figure 2.11 to identify the number of travel lanes on these streets). Both Burnet Road and Metric Boulevard are currently four lane arterial roadways. According to the both the CAMPO Mobility 2030 Plan and the 2025 Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP), these two roadways would be upgraded to a six lane, divided major arterial in the future. The CAMPO Plan would need to be modified before any

design changes could occur that assume these roadways remain four lanes.

The North Burnet/Gateway area is identified as a “medium activity center” in the Draft CAMPO 2035 Regional Growth Concept. The CAMPO Growth Concept recognizes that if past land use trends continue with most of new population to the region accommodated in low density single family development on the fringe of existing urban areas, congestion in the region will continue to get worse. The CAMPO Growth Concept explores alternative future growth patterns in 2035 that would improve transportation and regional quality of life. The goals are to 1) increase the percentage of regional population and employment located within activity centers and 2) to increase the percentage of travel accomplished by walking, biking, and transit, within activity centers.

TRANSIT

Capital Metro provides public transit in the area as shown in Figure 2.12. The bus routes that currently serve the area include the following:

Route 1M - North Lamar South Congress: One of the busiest, daily north-south routes traveling between the South Transfer Center near William Cannon and I-35 and the Tech Ridge Park & Ride east of I-35 and south of Howard Lane. It provides service along Metric Blvd in the planning area.

Route 3 - Burnet & Manchaca: Local north-south route providing daily service from Manchaca Road / Slaughter Lane to the Arboretum area.

Route 142 - Metric Flyer: Limited service route between Downtown Austin to just north of the planning area along Metric Blvd. The commuter service is available southbound on weekday mornings and northbound on weekday evenings.

Route 174 - North Burnet Limited: Weekday only limited route service

between Downtown Austin and just north of the planning area.

Route 240 - Parkfield: Feeder route service between neighborhoods and transit centers or Park & Ride locations. This weekday only route provides service from the North Lamar Transit Center to Parmer Lane, serving the Austin Community College campus in the planning area.

Route 383 - Research: Cross-town daily route to the Arboretum area, with multiple-stop service from the North Lamar Transit Center to Lakeline Mall.

Route 392 - Braker: Cross-town daily service between the Tech Ridge Park & Ride and Pavilion Park & Ride serving the Arboretum area.

UT Shuttle Route 652 - Pickle Research Campus: UT shuttle service weekdays between the UT Pickle Research Campus, MCC and the main UT campus.

FUTURE RAPID BUS ROUTES

There are two planned future rapid bus routes that would connect through the planning area. One would travel north-south and connect from Burnet Road to Downtown Austin. The other would travel east-west in North Austin and travel along Great Hills, Braker, Burnet, and Rundberg through the planning area. These routes are part of Capital Metro's All Systems Go Long Range Transit Plan. The new Rapid Bus Service will offer new high-tech buses that are projected to shorten travel times by as much as 20 percent.

FUTURE COMMUTER RAIL

The Capital Metro All Systems Go Long Range Transit Plan identifies two potential future commuter rail routes through the North Burnet/Gateway area. The Capital MetroRail urban commuter rail will provide service between Leander and Downtown Austin, a 32-mile route, beginning service in late 2008. The rail line

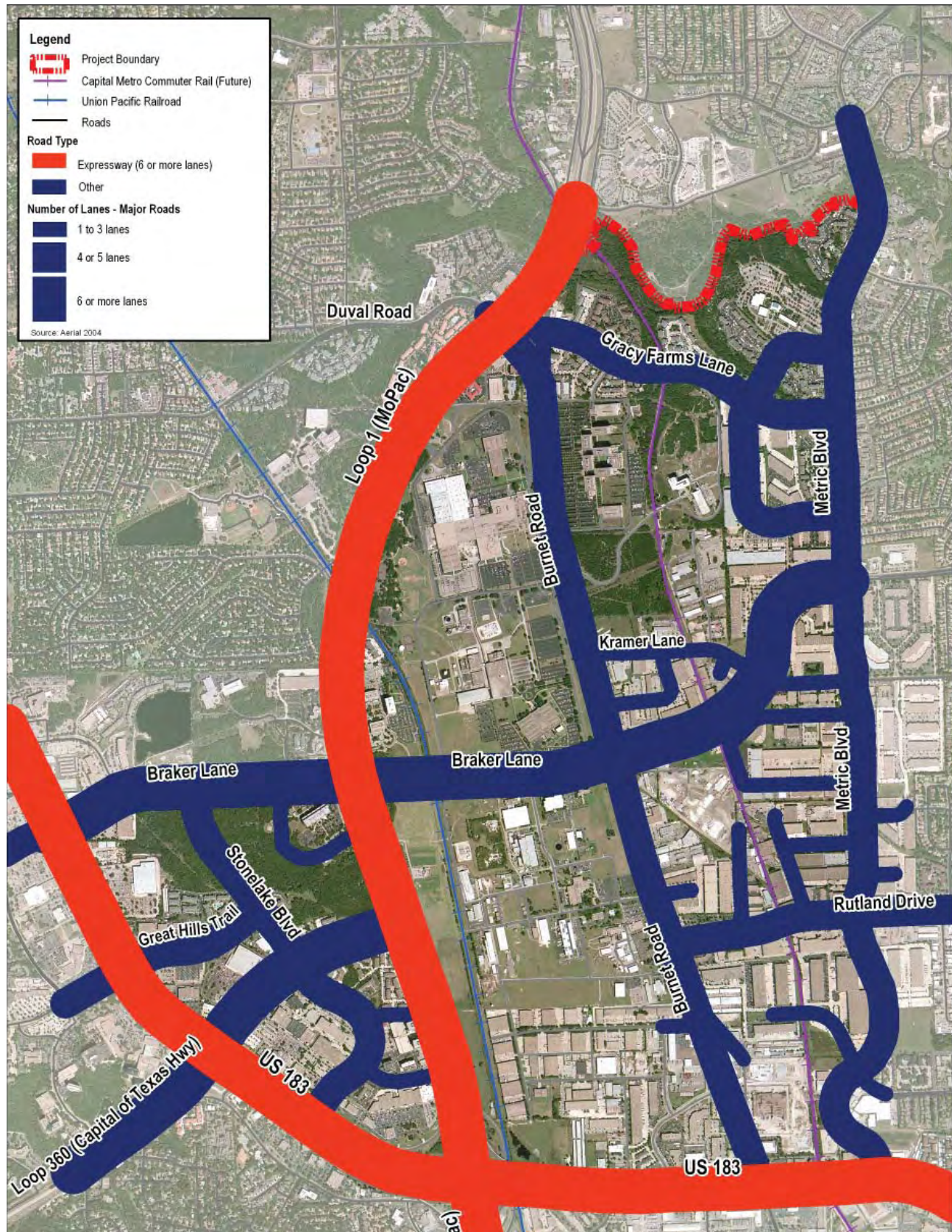
EXISTING INTERSECTION LEVEL OF SERVICE

Figure 2.10



EXISTING STREET TYPES

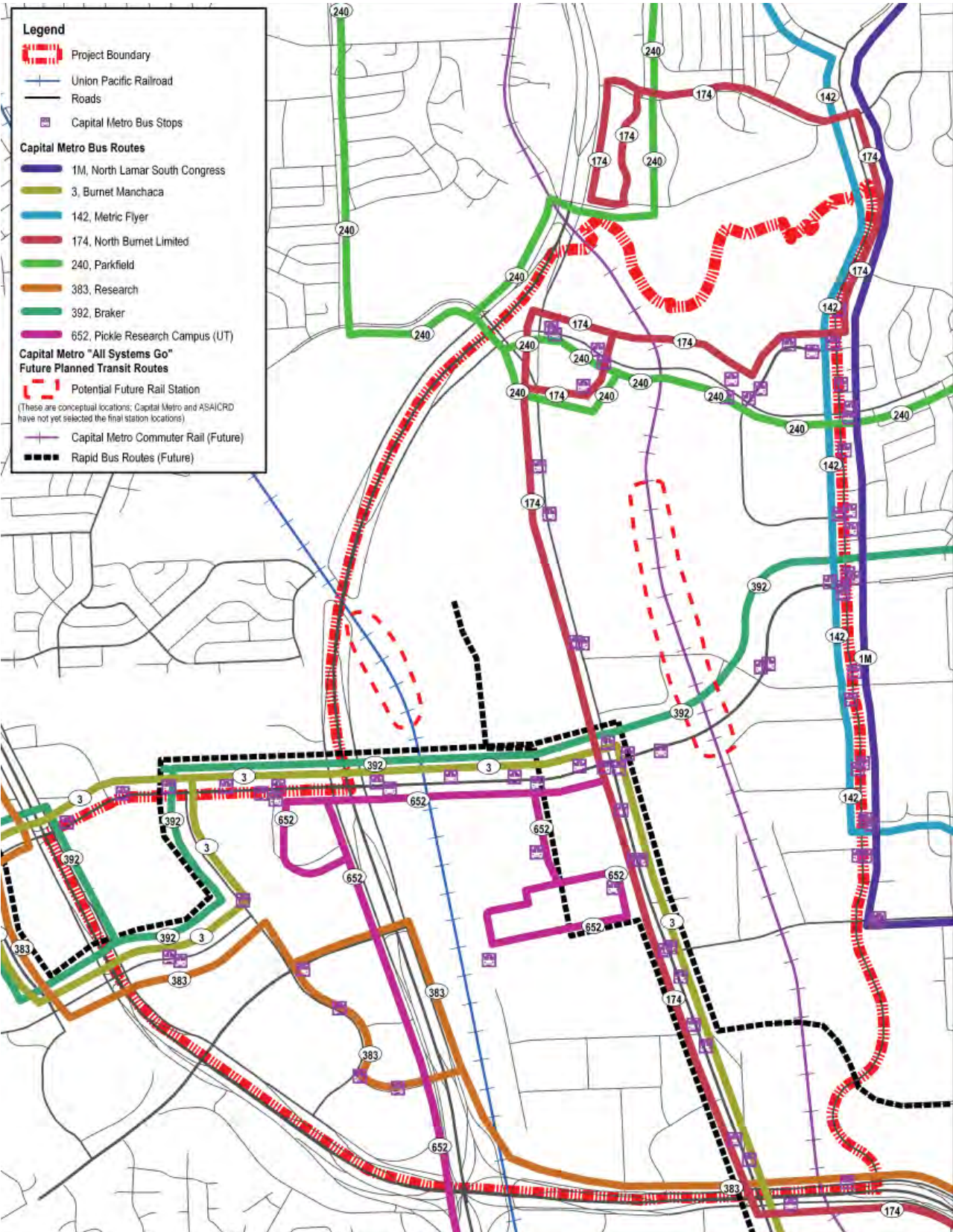
Figure 2.11



Source: Aerial, 2004

EXISTING TRANSIT ROUTES

Figure 2.12



Source: Aerial,



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runs north-south through the planning area, roughly parallel and to the east of Burnet Road. Regional Commuter Rail is being planned by the Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District (ASAICRD) along the existing Union Pacific Railroad near MoPac. Initial service is projected to begin as early as 2012.

RAIL FREIGHT OPERATIONS

The two existing rail lines that traverse the study area the Capital Metro rail line, and the Union Pacific line both carry rail freight service. The eastern rail alignment, owned and operated by Capital Metro, is located east of Burnet Road and West of Metric Boulevard, and carries only approximately three freight trains per day. Although there are several sidings within the study area on this rail line, there are relatively few delivery stops within the study area. The two principal destinations include the 1) Kramer Lane service center for Austin Energy with a very infrequent delivery schedule of two to three times per year, and 2) the Capital Beverage distribution center (between Braker Lane and Rutland Drive), with a delivery schedule of two to three times per week. Hence, most of the freight activity traveling through the study area is delivered to other parts of the city, or to other cities and towns. The Capital Metro rail line uses at grade crossings within the planning area, which, at times of local service delivery, can cause traffic delays, and may pose greater safety concerns as compared to grade-separated crossings.

The second rail line is located west of Burnet Road, and slightly east of MoPac (within the Plan area) and is owned and operated by Union Pacific. This line operates with more frequency (20-40 trains/day), but does not stop within the study area for deliveries. This line is also heavily utilized by Amtrak passenger rail service. All intersections are grade separated, therefore, there are no conflicts with vehicular traffic.

TRUCKING

Trucking is the most utilized mode for freight transportation in the North Burnet/Gateway area. As evident from the current land use and zoning maps (Figures 2.6 and 2.7), a majority of parcels in the southeast side of the study area are zoned industrial and include warehousing or distribution uses. Most of the loading/unloading occurs in this area, and this area is one of the largest distribution centers within the city. Trucking activity occurs mostly on Metric Boulevard and Burnet Road, and the east-west streets connecting them.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Figure 2.13, shows the location of existing sidewalks in the area. The major issue with the current sidewalks is lack of connectivity. As shown on the map, most sidewalks are internal to commercial properties. Very few streets have consistent sidewalks, which creates a significant barrier to encouraging pedestrian activity, and mobility in general, throughout the planning area.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

There are limited bicycle facilities in the study area and lack of connectivity among existing routes makes mobility through the area via bicycle difficult and dangerous. Some of this can be attributed to barriers like major highways and railroads, but many of the connecting roadways are not designed to accommodate cyclists safely.

Bike Route 10: This is an east-west shared-lane route going through the middle of the planning area along Braker Lane. The segment between the Union Pacific Railroad and Kramer Lane is considered a Priority 2 Route in the City Bicycle Plan, because bicycle facility improvements to

this area would be more expensive and difficult to implement, requiring major reconstruction of the roadway.

Bike Route 214: This route runs north-south along Burnet Road terminating at Gracy Farms Blvd. on the north end.

Bike Route 9: This bike route runs along Capital of Texas Highway and ends at MoPac in the study area.

Bike Route 6: This shared lane route runs east-west in the northern portion of the planning area, along Gracy Farms Blvd. A recently constructed concrete bike path between Burnet Rd. and MoPac provides a connection to the Duval bridge, creating a route in and out of the study area to the Millwood neighborhood west of MoPac.

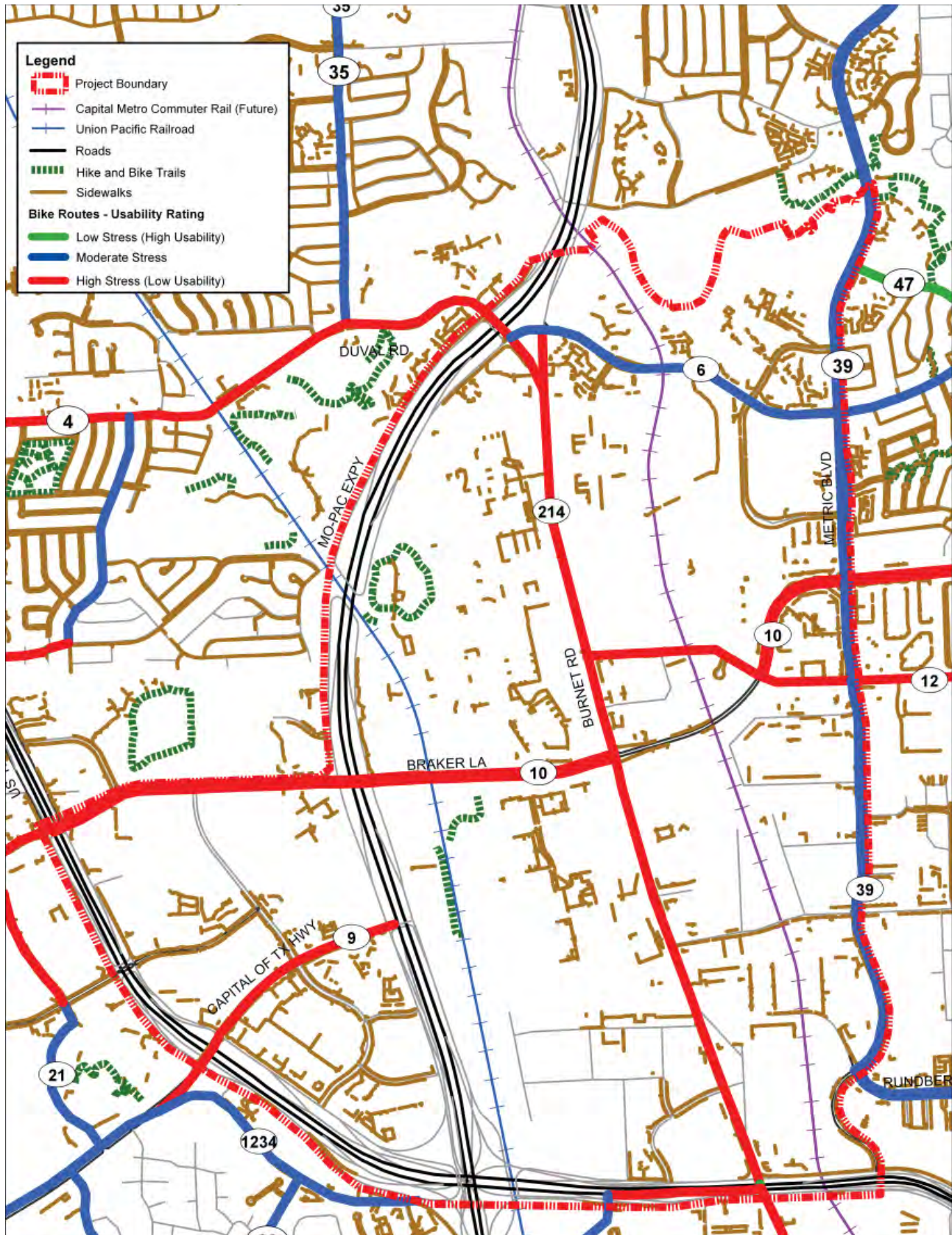
Bike Route 12: This bike route runs east-west along Kramer Lane, connecting the neighborhood east of the planning area to Burnet Road.

Bike Route 39: This wide-curb bike route runs north-south along Metric Blvd.

The City of Austin Bicycle Plan has classified all the bike routes in the city according to a stress rating that reflects usability of that route for all bicyclists (Figure 2.13). Almost all the routes in the study area have been rated as high stress, reflecting low usability for most bicyclists. Most bike routes in the area consist of a wider outer lane in which a bicyclist may ride in the same lane with auto traffic. There are no striped bike lanes currently in the planning area, except along a portion of Metric Boulevard between Rundberg Lane and Rutland Drive. US 183 also presents a significant barrier to bicyclists. The Shoal Creek trail south of US 183 is a major north-south bike route that provides access to Downtown Austin, but access to it from north of US 183 is difficult and dangerous.

EXISTING SIDEWALKS AND BIKE ROUTES

Figure 2.13



Existing utility systems were analyzed by examining City of Austin data, including infrastructure dimensions and location in the street right-of-way (ROW). Most of the data was gathered as paper records and then manually transferred over to the consultant's North Burnet/Gateway project electronic base map (GIS). The horizontal location of the given utility was transferred with the intent of showing the existence of the utility and a general location. This data is for general use and focuses upon the major lines and systems. There are many smaller diameter lines, valves and appurtenances that are not presented herein. Should certain infrastructure improvement projects come out of these evaluations, more detailed subsurface utility engineering (SUE) mapping and data collection should be performed to further refine the horizontal location and provide vertical elevation information.

WATER

The existing Austin Water Utility (AWU) waterline infrastructure is presented on Figure 2.14. The planning area is served with potable water by the AWU via the Davis Water Treatment Plant and the Martin Hill Reservoir, which in turn are fed primarily by the Howard Lane pump station and the Spicewood Springs pump station. The average hydraulic grade line (HGL) for Northwest "A" is elevated 1,000 feet above sea level, with a maximum HGL of 1,015 ft. and a minimum of 970 ft.

The very northeast portion of the study area is part of the North Pressure Zone. This area is served by the Howard Lane Reservoir, which in turn is fed primarily by the North Austin pump station. The average HGL for the North Pressure Zone is elevation 860 ft., with a maximum HGL of 860 ft. and a minimum of 835 ft.

The North Burnet/Gateway area is currently fed by a large diameter water pipe system (48") on the west side of MoPac. There are two main waterlines under MoPac (24" diameter) which extend to the east and

connect to the Burnet Road system. The Burnet Road water infrastructure is made up of the more traditional 10" and 12" waterlines. Connections continue to the eastern boundary of the study area with 8" and 6" lines.

The existing water system is adequate for current land uses and no problems have been identified. "Problems" occur when pipe velocity is over five feet per second (fps) or low pressure is present. Problems could be related to either the capacity of the overall system (water contracts or water treatment), or to the distribution of the treated water to the users. Both aspects of the water system work well under existing conditions. The existing water infrastructure in the planning area serves the existing uses well and is capable of some additional development density. Due to the numerous water lines feeding the area, water capacity and fire flow requirements are not expected to be limiting factors. An analysis of the water system's ability to serve the additional density anticipated with implementation of the North Burnet/Gateway Plan is provided in the Utilities section of Chapter 4.

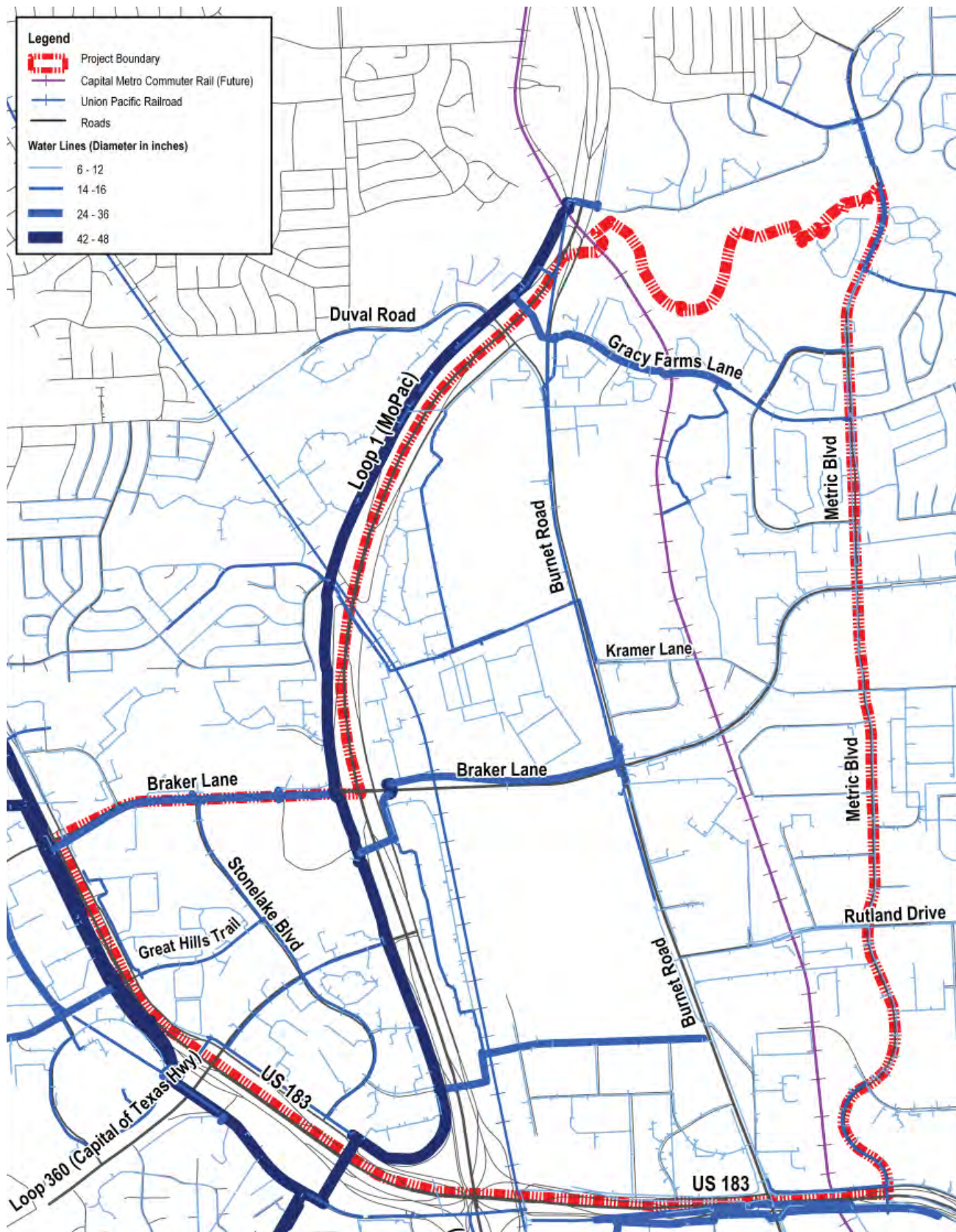
WASTEWATER

The existing AWU wastewater infrastructure is presented on Figure 2.15. The planning area is located at a high point and is served by three wastewater service systems. The northern portions of the study area are served by the Walnut Creek collection system; the southeastern portions are part of the Little Walnut Creek collection system; and the southwestern portion is served by the Upper Shoal Creek collection system.

It should be noted that the Austin Clean Water Program (ACWP) has been underway for over four years to study, design and construct wastewater improvements throughout Austin. Each of the three service areas mentioned above has received (or are in the process of constructing) new wastewater lines in the

EXISTING WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE

Figure 2.14



4000' 2000' 0

area. These ACWP wastewater improvements will have a significant positive impact for both existing and future wastewater demands.

The Walnut Creek system has a major line (42" and 48" diameter) running in, or parallel with, the creek. The southern laterals off that main line feeding the study area are of medium dimension (12", 15" or 18").

The Little Walnut Creek system has a medium sized line (21" and 24"), which serves as the base of the system. It should be noted that this 21" system extends all the way back to Burnet Road (at a point about halfway between Gracy Farms Blvd. and Kramer Lane.)

Although the natural watershed drainage boundaries in the planning area place the area to the west of Burnet in the Walnut Creek drainage basin, for wastewater system purposes, this area west of Burnet is actually part of the Little Walnut Creek wastewater basin.

The Shoal Creek system is served with a medium sized line (21", 18", 15" and 12") on the east side of MoPac. As with the other systems, there are a myriad of smaller diameter lines filling in the collection system.

Considering existing land uses, the existing wastewater system is "strong" in capacity. It can serve existing development for many years before improvement is needed. An analysis of the wastewater system's ability to serve the additional density anticipated with implementation of the North Burnet/Gateway Plan is provided in the Utilities section of Chapter 4.

DRAINAGE, STORMWATER & WATER QUALITY

The study area traverses three watershed basins; Walnut Creek, Shoal Creek, and Little Walnut Creek. Shoal Creek and Little Walnut Creek watersheds are

considered urban watersheds; Walnut Creek watershed is considered a suburban watershed. These zones determine applicable City of Austin watershed regulations with respect to impervious cover, waterway setbacks and water quality controls.

Southeastern portions of the planning area in the Little Walnut Creek watershed have experienced flooding problems in the past partly due to development occurring before regulations were in place to monitor the water quality and stormwater of the watersheds. There have also been flooding problems downstream in the Shoal Creek and Little Walnut Creek watersheds. Today, any development that requires a site plan approval would need to meet the City's Comprehensive Watershed Ordinance (CWO). This requires any development that increases impervious cover or changes drainage patterns on site to provide stormwater management controls so that stormwater flows off the site post-development are no greater than pre-development. This ensures that new development or redevelopment does not exacerbate existing flooding problems. The study area contains some 'private' stormwater detention and water quality controls that have been installed since the 1986 CWO.

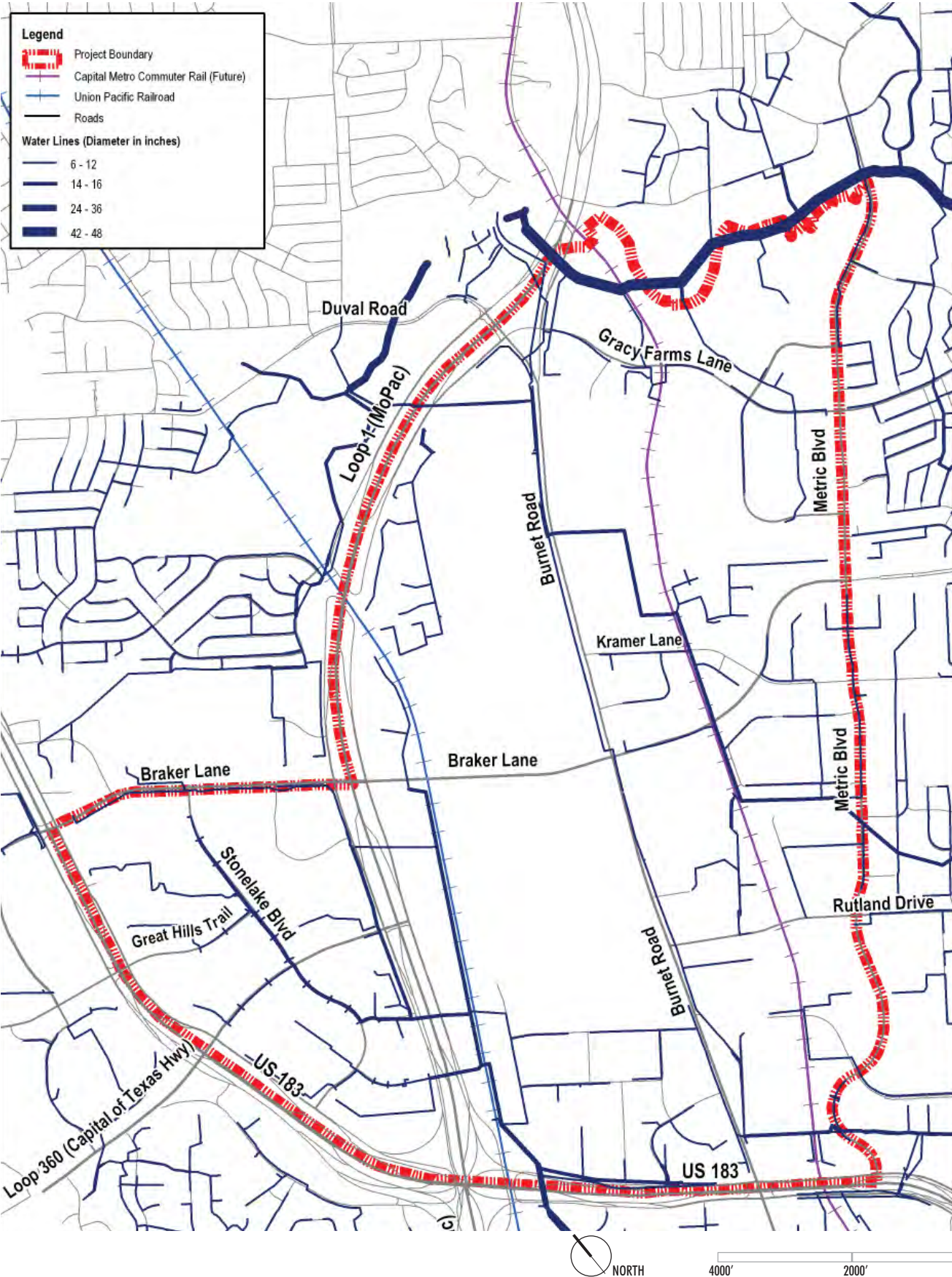
ELECTRICITY & GAS

The North Burnet/Gateway planning area is served with electricity by Austin Energy and Texas Gas Service for its gas needs. The electrical system infrastructure includes both major transmission lines as well as the local distribution system as shown on Figure 2.16. A major transmission line for the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) also cuts east-west through the planning area, north of Kramer Lane. The easement for this transmission line is approximately 200-feet wide. Building development is restricted in this transmission line easement. Large transmission lines run down the west side of Burnet

Road from north of Kramer Lane to south of Rutland Drive, and primary power lines and associated poles also line both sides of Burnet Road and one side of Kramer Lane. These existing overhead power lines create an obstacle for future development to be built in a more urban form with buildings, sidewalks and street trees lining the street.

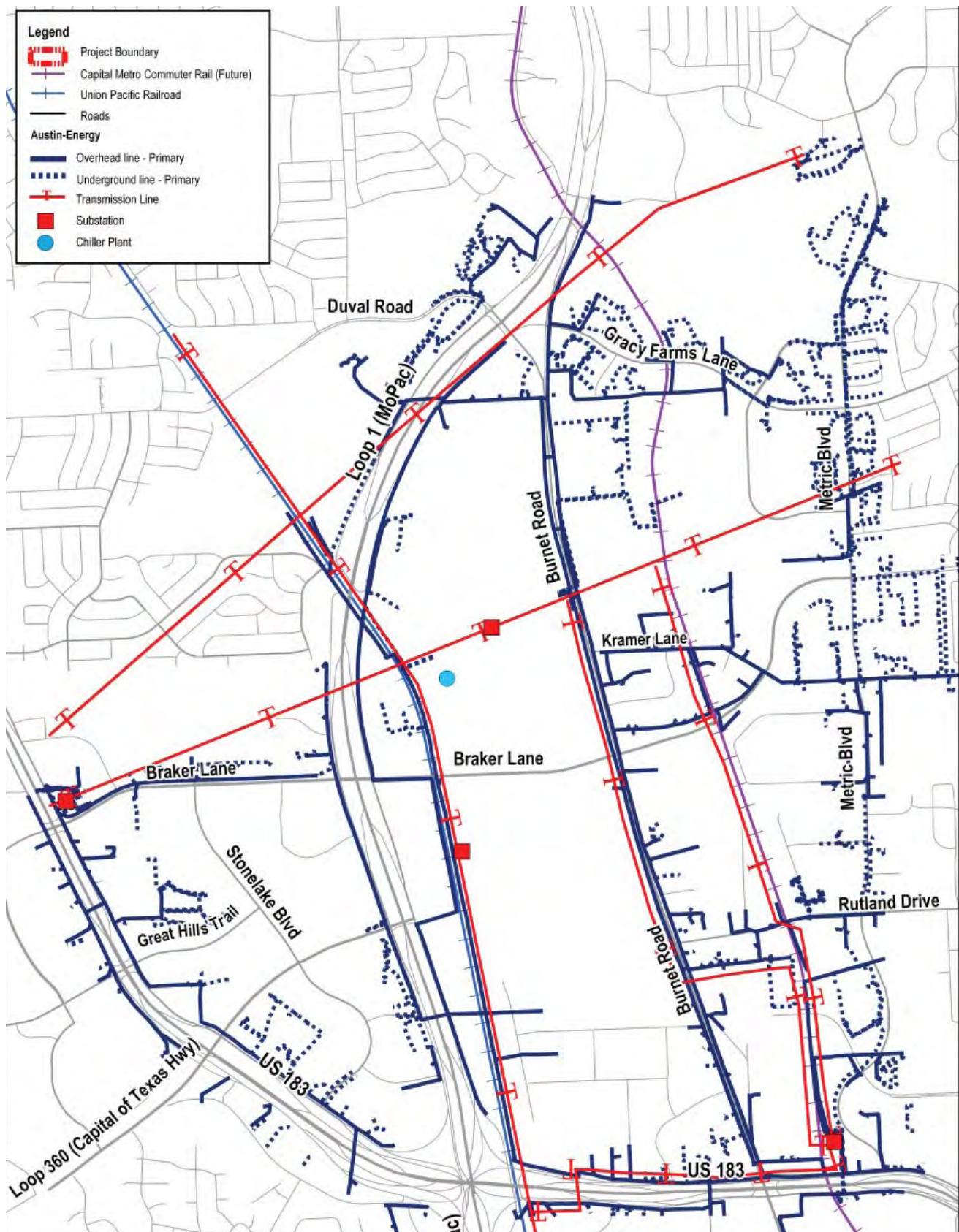
EXISTING WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Figure 2.15



EXISTING ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Figure 2.16



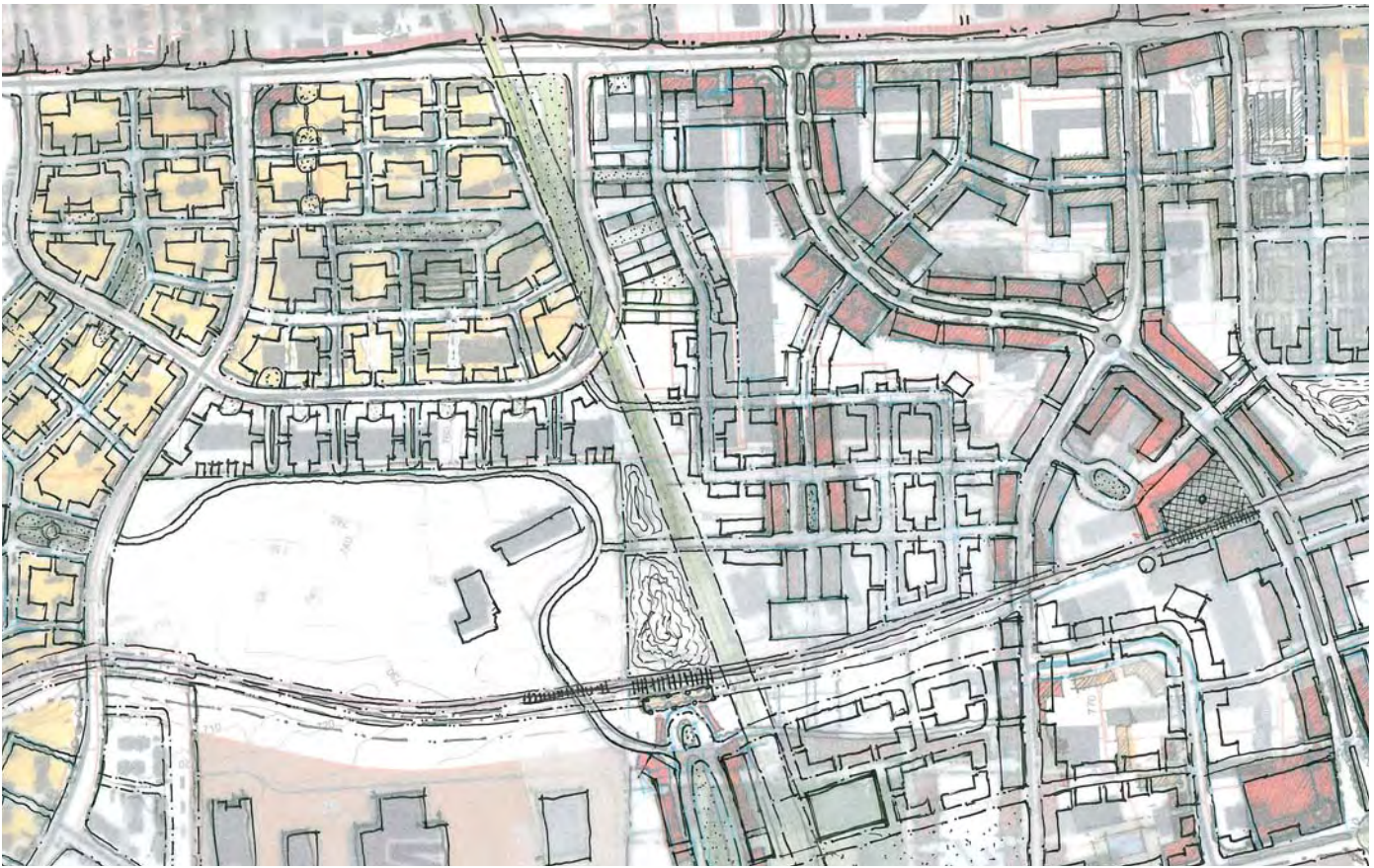
NORTH BURNET : MASTER PLAN G A T E W A Y



3

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

DRAFT



OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Draft North Burnet/Gateway Master Plan is the result of a focused planning process that unfolded over the course of a year. One key aspect of the process is an emphasis on involvement by area stakeholders and the public at large. This includes, in short, virtually anyone who could be affected by potential redevelopment. City and agency staff and representative stakeholders were targeted for additional involvement through participation in the Public Advisory Group and/or stakeholder interviews early in the planning process.

This chapter will describe the public involvement opportunities throughout the planning process, as well as the results of the public input.

THE PUBLIC ADVISORY GROUP

The City formed a Public Advisory Group (P.A.G.) as a small working group with representatives of the key stakeholders to

provide input and direction for the plan. They met at intervals during the course of the planning process to be briefed on the progress of the plan, and to provide feedback and suggestions. The P.A.G. members include representation from the public jurisdictions and policy makers affecting the area, as well as key city staff who will be responsible for carrying out the policies. Additionally, the P.A.G. included property owners, neighborhood association representatives from surrounding neighborhoods and other constituent and advocacy groups who will benefit from or guide the implementation of the plan. A listing of P.A.G. members can be found in the Acknowledgements section.

The P.A.G. met at key stages of the project, including:

- Kick-off Meeting, held on Wednesday, June 28, 2006

- Mid-Charrette briefing, held on Tuesday, July 11, 2006

- Preliminary Concept Plan presentation, held on Friday, September 15, 2006

- Preliminary Concept Plan discussion, held on Friday, September 22, 2006

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Involvement and input from members of the community with knowledge of the study area are critical to understanding the dynamics of the area. Most of the public input was gathered during the charrette process. However, stakeholders having a particular expertise (whether by professional focus, or by virtue of being investors, business owners, etc.) were identified early in the interview process. A series of small group meetings was conducted to hear from these segments of the community. These meetings lasted about 1 to 1 1/2 hours and offered the consultants a chance to further explore various aspects of the planning area, as well as highlight issues of particular concern. Stakeholder

sessions were conducted in June 2006 with the following groups:

- Business Owners and Residents
- Regional Transportation Advocacy Groups
- Developers, Real Estate Council of Austin and Urban Land Institute
- City Staff and Department Representatives
- University of Texas facilities planning staff
- Neighborhood Associations
- TxDOT District Engineering Staff
- Capital Metro
- AISD and ACC

Individual meetings with Mayor Wynn, Mayor ProTem Dunkerley, Council member McCracken, and Council member Leffingwell were also held. Council members Dunkerley and McCracken currently serve on the Land Use and Transportation subcommittee (LUTS) of the Austin City Council. Council member Leffingwell served on LUTS at the time the North Burnet/Gateway planning was initiated.

Although the groups represented different interests, a number of points emerged as common perceptions. Traffic and access difficulties were cited by almost all groups as being a major impediment to the success of the area. All agreed that the location held enormous potential, contingent upon resolution of issues related to access.

Both the City staff and elected officials agreed that the redevelopment of the area was a key opportunity, and willingness was expressed to adopt policies and strategies to facilitate such redevelopment. The real estate community confirmed that many of the properties in the area were actively on the market and that interest in redevelopment is keen. Despite the central

location, the access issues as well as the mixed quality of the existing uses were cited as being impediments to redevelopment. Stakeholders indicated the area is in need of a vision, and the City should be an active champion for that vision.

The following stakeholder comments indicate the range of the discussion:

“It would be nice to see a development based on an area like the Arboretum, where you have a great destination, good food, great walking space, art, office space, etc.”

“The worst thing that could happen would be the same old type of development. It needs to be “out of the box.”

“Enhancing density is important.”

“It could be a diverse, connected area with multiple developers building similar smaller scale projects that combine to achieve the vision within a pedestrian oriented atmosphere.”

“Access for biking is really bad. We need pedestrian access, and connectivity between urban city and residential neighborhoods.”

“A key component would be to have affordable housing close the transit and also have a mixed-use/mixed income component.”

“We see wide pedestrian spaces and mature landscaping as a desirable atmosphere to draw people out of their cars.”

“For this to be successful, there needs to be a partnership in the area between the City and the large landholders such as Endeavor, IBM, Domain, UT and Hill Partners.”

“Must make sure the plan has realistic implementation actions.”

“UT owns a lot of land in the area and can do whatever they want; is there a way to work with them?”

“People do not see the auto-dominated society changing.”

“There could be a connection between Capital Metro and ASACRD rail systems.”

“Need to look at realistic traffic and parking demand. People will still own cars even if they are located near a station.”

While discussions were wide ranging, the same themes were often revisited. North Burnet/Gateway is a great opportunity to accommodate some of the region's expected population growth in a different type of development pattern. It needs more diversity in uses, housing, open spaces, and community activities. The Domain redevelopment indicates a market acceptance for high density mixed use, so development that departs from conventional suburban models seems achievable. The North Burnet/Gateway plan area is ideally located to offer a new, denser, mixed-use development model. The area is in need of a boost, but a piecemeal approach is not likely to result in a significant change in existing uses and densities, nor produce the type of urban fabric expressly desired. It clearly has larger scale issues that need to be addressed in order to make significant redevelopment realistic; issues that must be tackled by the City working in coordination with other jurisdictions and the private sector.

THE CHARRETTE

The public outreach process peaked with a week-long planning charrette. Charrette, the French word for cart, traces its use in this context to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, after the cart that was wheeled through the design studios when the projects were due. It has come to mean an intensive design effort conducted in a relatively short time. The consultants have found it to be an effective technique that combines a full

immersion into the project with a high level of public visibility and opportunity for involvement.

The charrette scheduled for the North Burnet/Gateway Plan included three public meetings to provide opportunities for members of the community to learn about the process and planning background, provide input and design ideas, and react to the initial design concepts. The public was notified of the charrette via postcards sent to all property owners and utility customers in the planning area, announcement on the project website: www.northburnetgateway.com, e-mail notification of people identified through the stakeholder interview process and others who joined the e-mail list through the website, and through a series of press releases. Public meetings occurred at the beginning and the end of the process, with a design workshop in between. During the charrette week, the consultants were on site more-or-less continuously. A design studio was set up at a vacant storefront in the Arboretum just outside of the planning area, which served as the consultant team's headquarters during the week. The public meetings were also held near the study area, in this case, at the Holiday Inn near MoPac and US 183. Finding appropriate public meeting space within the planning area was difficult, as there are few existing community spaces (libraries, schools, etc.) as are typically used by the City for public meetings. The few spaces that do exist (UT Pickle Research Campus and ACC facilities) were not available or did not have appropriate space to accommodate the logistical needs for a charrette.

The first public meeting was held on the evening of Thursday, July 6, 2006. Approximately 34 people attended this session. The first meeting served as an orientation to the planning area and included a presentation on the dynamics of the development process as well as an outline of general design principles. Participants were also asked to complete a "commu-

Below:

Community members participate in the North Burnet Gateway workshop in July 2006.



nity image survey” if they had not already completed the survey online.

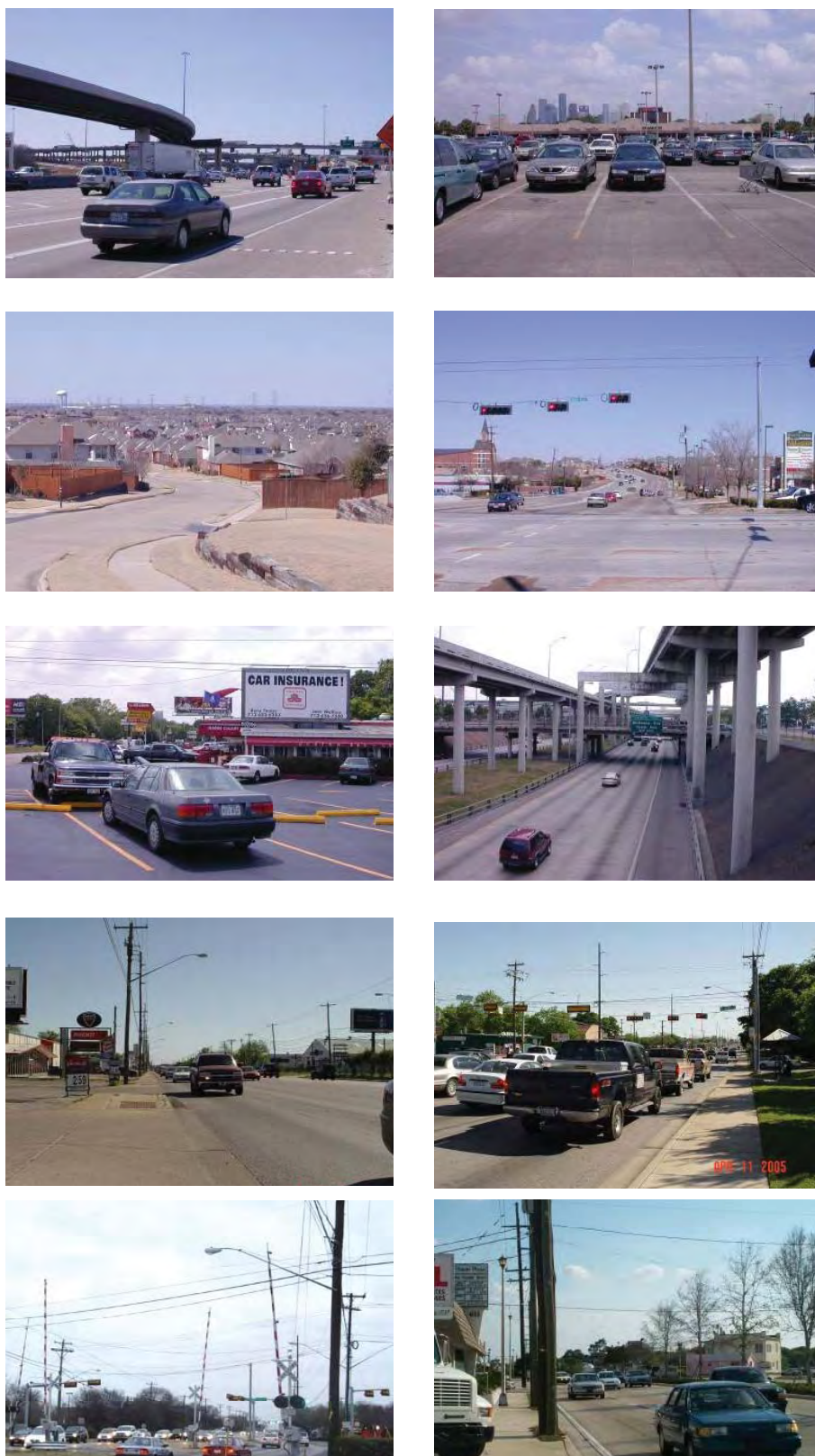
COMMUNITY IMAGE SURVEY

The consultants created a “community image survey,” designed to gauge the public’s reaction to various types of urban development. The survey was originally posted on-line a few weeks before the charrette and advertised through email distribution, press releases, and via the project’s charrette website: www.northburnetgateway.com.

A total of 423 people took the survey, which was essentially a visual preference survey conducted by presenting to the viewer 73 photos of a variety of urban conditions. Survey takers evaluated each image according to the extent to which he or she liked or disliked the image. The photos included pictures of various housing types, streets, sidewalks, retail stores, office buildings, architectural styles, parking lots, park spaces, and other subjects. The participants were asked to grade each image on a scale of minus five (-5, indicating a strong dislike) to plus five (+5, indicating a strong affinity) based on their opinion or preference for each condition. The results were compiled and presented at the beginning of the Saturday workshop session of the charrette.

The image survey was designed to elicit reactions to various types of development, but also to place a variety of images in the public’s mind as they proceed to identify what they like and don’t like about the planning area, and how they would like to change it. Invariably, images that showed active, pedestrian oriented spaces scored well, while single use, and auto-centric images did not. The result was not especially surprising, except when it is noted that much of contemporary development models yield the latter development pattern rather than the former. The central objective of the charrette process is understanding this phenomenon, while

Figure 3.1: Least Favored Images from the community vision survey



explaining how the public must work in partnership with local officials and the development community to achieve results. Strong public support for a particular vision will generate political support, and thus affect the outcomes of private development decisions in a positive manner.

Figure 3.2 : Most Favored Images from the community vision survey





PUBLIC WORKSHOP RESULTS

The second public meeting of the charrette occurred on Saturday, July 8, 2006 with approximately 50 people in attendance. The participants were organized into design teams of 8 to 10 persons, and each team was given maps and drawing tools. Each team had a facilitator with the responsibility of keeping the group on task. Six teams were formed, and at the end of the day, each team presented their scenario for a redevelopment vision for the study area (in both written and drawn form) to the entire group.

As each group presented their comments, the consultant team kept a running list of concepts by category. The results of that tally were as follows:

BIKE/PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED

- All new connections should be bike and pedestrian friendly
- No new roads, less dependant on auto
- Pedestrians should come first

- Create preferred routes for bikes, pedestrian and transit
- Provide US 183 at MoPac crossing for ped/bike routes especially at Shoal Creek

DENSITY

- Increase height of buildings and density to accommodate greater population
- Add density along Burnet with 8-10 story buildings. Transition down to 2-4 story towards Metric
- Transition densities from highrise at station out to 2-5 stories near edges of district
- Incorporate 8-20 story building height near rail station

CONNECTIVITY

- Improve connectivity from the district to the larger community
- Increase connectivity within district with a more complete street grid

- Add flyovers to connect east and west MoPac frontage roads

- Improve Braker as an east-west corridor

- Continue Capitol of Texas Highway eastward through district to Burnet (not signalized)

DIVERSITY

- Provide incentives for affordable housing and move away from an autocentric environment
- Include workforce housing in district
- Include housing to serve seniors and mobility challenged people
- More diversity of business types, especially neighborhood services

LAND USE

- Add more residential uses and schools in southern area
- Buffer west edge of NACA neighborhood with dense residential

- Add civic/ mixed use development at Braker/ Capital MetroRail Red line
- Add more residential near transit
- Exploit rail station locations for mixed use
- Establish a new skyline with added residential in southern portion of the district

CULTURE/ARTS

- Add industrial and technical museum near Braker and Burnet
- Create museum district in south end of Burnet area
- Include artists lofts in industrial area

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Put utilities underground
- Promote “green” industrial parks
- Create water amenity and detention ponds (existing and new) for added economic value to adjacent land
- Establish TOD with transit in addition to rail
- Prevent “heat island” effect
- Improve functions of MoPac/Braker interchange
- Consider a circulator level of transit in district
- Accommodate emergency medical and other healthcare needs in district
- Add civic site (library etc.) near Braker and Metric
- Consolidate parking connected to transit
- Consider rail station towards the north end of the Capital Metro Red line

CHARACTER

- Convert Braker and Burnet to landscaped boulevards

- Improve intersection of Kramer at Braker Road

REGULATION

- Utilize a form based code to guide and regulate new development
- Establish a pattern of redevelopment to guide future development

ECONOMIC

- Add employment centers along Metric
- Include a major destination/urban park adjacent to transit centers
- Create a town center at Braker at Capital MetroRail Red line plus southeast corner of district
- Connect employment and housing with local transit

OPEN SPACE/GREEN

- Create a green rail/trail connector through the district with nodes of public open spaces along that corridor
- Create shaded walkways
- Include distributed green/open space

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

- Work with UT to develop their land
- Encourage UT to consider a north campus (not just research)

Many of the comments concerned the circulation and access issues facing the district. There were a range of ideas expressed, but clearly, there was a consensus for creating better connections within the area as well as to adjacent areas.

The consultants took the concepts and ideas from the various community design teams at the public workshop and developed a charrette concept plan. This



concept plan was presented at the final public meeting of the charrette on July 13, 2006. Approximately 50 people attended this presentation and gave their feedback on the various elements of the plan.

There was general agreement that the area should accommodate a broad range of uses, from residential to various kinds of commercial, including local retail and employment. Several groups felt that school and other civic services should be part of the plan to encourage the addition of families to the area. In general, it was felt that the North Burnet/Gateway area could be transformed into a unique destination in the Austin area - a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use district served by transit.

CONCEPT REFINEMENT & PRESENTATION OF DRAFT PLAN

Following the charrette, the consultants and City staff met with various City departments and regional agencies to refine the concepts derived from public input received. This included evaluation of how the plan fit with existing policies, standards, and procedures and what steps would be necessary to implement various aspects of the plan. The planning team also discussed the concepts with TxDOT, UT, Capital Metro, and other agencies who would be responsible for implementation, or whose operations could be affected by changes that would occur through implementation of the plan. Adjustments were made to the plan based on these meetings and a preliminary concept plan was then presented to the P.A.G. on September 15, with discussion and feedback on September 22, 2006. A traffic analysis was also conducted to evaluate the need for transportation infrastructure improvements with anticipated build-out of the Plan vision over 30 years (2035). The Draft Plan concepts were refined again with this information and based on the P.A.G. feedback.

A public meeting was held March 24, 2006 at the ACC Northridge campus to present the Draft Plan concepts, answer questions, and receive comments on the Plan. Notice of the meeting was sent to all property owners in the planning area and an email announcement was sent to the North Burnet/Gateway interest list and all P.A.G. members. The meeting was covered by several newspapers and television news programs.

This Draft Plan will be posted on the City's North Burnet/Gateway Plan website: www.ci.austin.tx.us/zoning/north_burnet.htm as a pdf file for public review. This document elaborates on the concepts presented at the public meeting. The Draft Plan will be presented at a Planning Commission public hearing followed by a City Council public hearing where there will be another opportunity to comment on the North Burnet/Gateway Plan. Standard City public hearing notification will be given for the Planning Commission and City Council hearings.