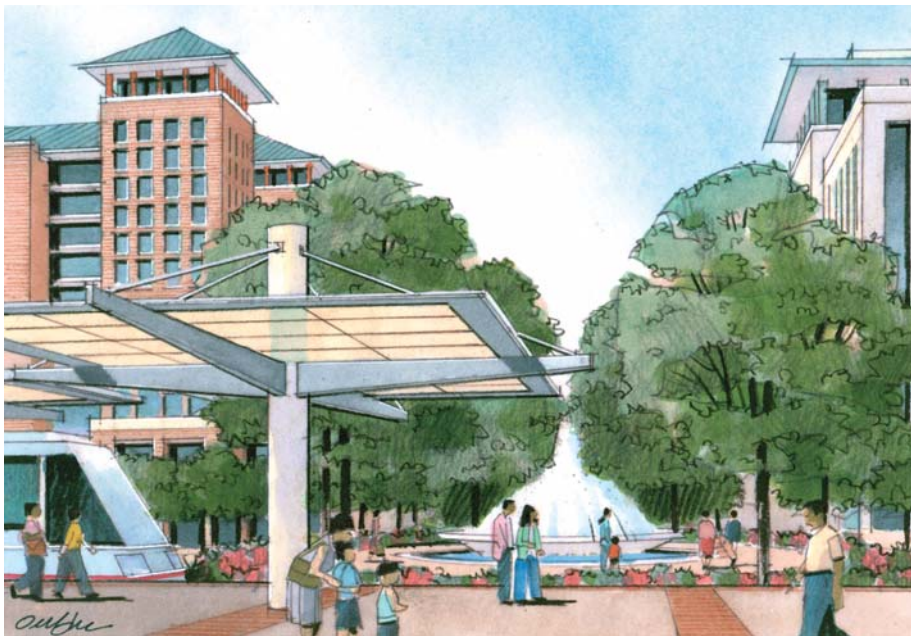

A broad urban boulevard, lined with a range of building types and uses could direct patrons to a rail station.

Figure 4.6 :Illustrative view of a public plaza at a rail station

THE MASTER PLAN

VISION

This Master Plan attempts to synthesize the major themes and desires expressed during the public involvement process with the realities of the planning area. It presents a specific redevelopment vision, not with the intent of prescribing a literal solution, but to act as a guideline for future decision-making. Using the Master Plan as a reference will allow future development proposals to be evaluated in light of how they help to advance the overall vision. It also provides guidance as to the public policies and actions that will be necessary to implement the plan.

At the heart of the vision for the North Burnet/Gateway neighborhood is the addition of new transit stations along the Capitol Metro-Rail Red Line and the ASAICRD (UP) line. Although Capital Metro and ASAICRD have not determined the exact location for the commuter rail stations, conceptual locations are shown in this plan. These stations would be catalysts for the transit-oriented development envisioned for the district. A significant open space near the stations is recommended to open up a vista into the heart of the redevelopment area, while also creating valuable frontage on all sides for more significant, anchor uses. Figure 4.8 depicts an illustrative view of this recommendation.

A broad urban boulevard should lead to the stations, lined with a range of different buildings and uses. Near the station, the density should peak with a mixture of residential, employment, retail and entertainment uses. City-owned land and other currently developable land near the potential station locations presents the opportunity to establish the character of the North Burnet/Gateway district early on. It is recommended that significant new development occur on both sides of the station platform. The buildings on either side should be mixed-use buildings, placed right at the edge of the railroad, with retail uses at the ground level, and a combination of office and residential uses above. These buildings could be in the 15 to 30 story range, with the structured parking placed behind the principal building face, usually facing toward the interior of the block. Figure 4.6 depicts a hypothetical view from the station, showing all of the elements of a successful, pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Great urban neighborhoods have a tendency to develop into specific "subdistricts" that have a uniqueness unto themselves. While in many cases this happens organically, the Master Plan recommends facilitating that differentiation through the creation of specific sub-district development standards (see Figure 4.9). Subdistricts would vary in the physical form and density of development allowed. They would cater to specific uses, and potentially prohibit other uses. The most dense and flexible subdistrict would be Commercial Mixed Use. Around any potential transit stations, even greater density would be allowed within this subdistrict. The vision for the subdistrict boundaries is to create a dynamic cross-section of urban densities such that one transitions to the next, downsizing scale and density gradually along specific corridors. The Neighborhood Residential

2035 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

Figure 4.7

This map presents a potential redevelopment vision and does not constitute regulatory standards

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subdistrict is the least dense subdistrict and only allows for 2-5 story buildings. This would eventually transition into the existing neighborhoods east of Metric Blvd. and north to Walnut Creek. Details on the arrangement and characteristics of subdistricts is discussed further in the Land Use and Zoning section of this chapter.

Defining these subdistricts lays the groundwork for calculated redevelopment throughout the district. The Master Plan sets forth a vision for shopping streets and large-scale entertainment venues; row house villages with modest retail at high-traffic intersections; mid-rise villages of apartments and artist lofts interspersed with galleries and pocket parks; existing businesses alongside new restaurants, new homes, and a new transportation network. Each of these components combine to form a more sustainable, human-friendly development pattern.

Another key element of the vision for the neighborhood is the redesign of existing roadways to better accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and transit. Burnet Road and Braker Lane are undeniably the backbones of the transportation and infrastructure networks in this area. The Master Plan recommends a wholesale upgrade of Burnet Road into a vibrant transit boulevard with wide sidewalks, larger street trees, a landscaped median, and buried power lines. It is recommended that Braker be improved to include large landscaped medians and street trees, maintaining three lanes in each direction from Metric to US 183. The permanence of these investments in Burnet and Braker would solidify the city's commitment to change and serve as a major economic incentive for the private sector.

GOALS

The results of the public input into the planning process, as summarized in the previous chapter, tended to focus around three broad themes. These themes are outlined, along with specific goals for accomplishing the broader vision. Specific recommendations for development patterns, regulatory changes and infrastructure improvements are provided in each of the topical sections of this chapter.

ONE: Transform the aging, auto-oriented commercial and industrial uses into a livelier mixed-use neighborhood that is more pedestrian- and transit-friendly and can accommodate a significant number of new residents.

a. Create a dense and vibrant "town center" with an urban form and uses less reliant on the automobile. This means creating a concentration of interrelated uses that provide for a range of activities to occur in close proximity to transit.

b. Achieve a balance of jobs, houses, retail, open space and community facilities. The essence of a mixed-use area is that it allows for opportunities to live, work, and play within the same area.

c. Enable opportunities for transit-oriented development based on the presence of both the Capital Metro and the potential Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Rail District (currently Union Pacific) commuter rail lines.

d Enable redevelopment and adaptive reuse while accommodating existing uses. Recognize that the auto-oriented uses will be less appropriate, and could be reformatted to more local neighborhood oriented uses.

e. Include significant higher density residential uses in the mix to accommodate

Figure 4.8 : Illustration of a public green fronted by high density development

PROPOSED SUBDISTRICT PLAN

Figure 4.9

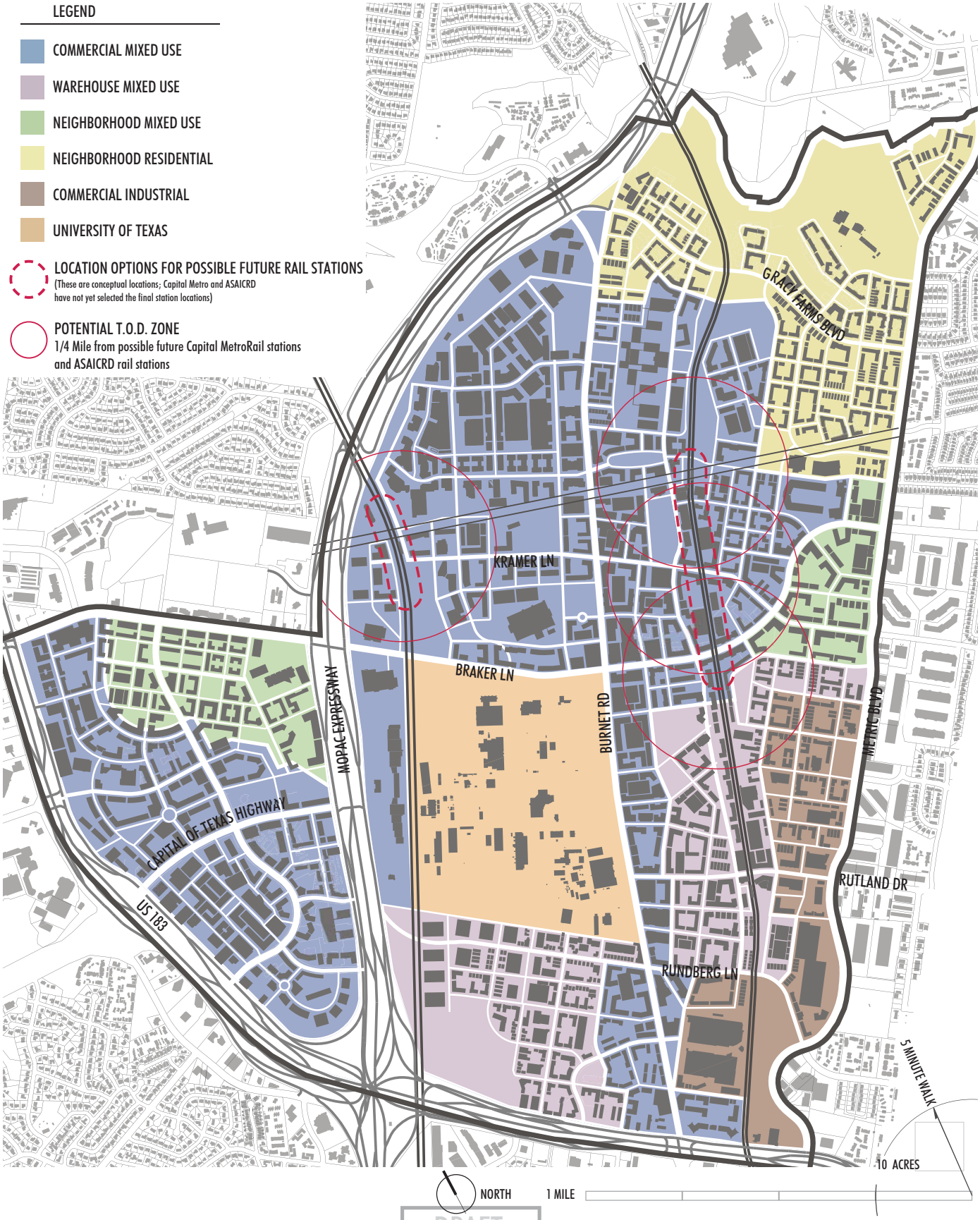

Figure 4.10 : Conceptual view of Braker Ln and Burnet Rd as part of the 2035 Master Plan

Figure 4.11 : Illustration of a residential street within the Neighborhood Residential district, illustrating architectural character and a strong street presence

some of the region's expected population growth.

f. Provide for a variety of housing options and affordability, so that people of all income levels can live and work in the area. Encourage housing to be developed in close proximity to potential jobsites as well as public transit so that residents may reduce their dependency on personal vehicles and save on transportation costs.

g. Provide the associated community and neighborhood services, parks, and public spaces important to making a great neighborhood.

h. Create a framework for zoning changes and urban design standards that will guide future private development.

i. Locate transit stations strategically. The location of train stations in the study area is an opportunity to introduce uses that could derive value from the proximity to transit such as higher density residential, employment and entertainment.

TWO: Increase mobility both within the North Burnet/Gateway area and to surrounding areas by improving connectivity and creating the type of environment that is conducive to more sustainable methods of transportation, including accommodations for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit.

a. Create more compact, denser development clustered in activity centers to encourage a greater percentage of travel accomplished by walking, biking, and transit.

b. Provide a built environment, streetscape and street design that are safe and enjoyable for pedestrians and cyclists.

c. Change the configuration of Burnet Road to create a multi-use transit boulevard carrying auto, bicycle and future transit service throughout the area (see Figure 4.10).

d. Work with TxDOT to construct highway improvements to improve the flow of traffic on MoPac, US 183 and the frontage roads in the planning area.

e. Create a more efficient network of streets resulting in greater connectivity and dispersed traffic as properties redevelop. Add new streets and redesign existing streets throughout the North Burnet/Gateway area to accommodate local traffic, bicyclists, and transit.

f. Encourage interconnected transit services that provide quick and convenient connections.

g. Increase efficiency of transit systems by concentrating people and destinations in nodes or activity centers with greater density.

THREE: Be sensitive to the surrounding context and the natural environment.

a. Provide appropriate transitions and buffers for residential uses in adjacent neighborhoods.

b. Look for opportunities to integrate new and innovative ways to handle stormwater detention and provide water quality benefits.

c. Provide public open space in close proximity to new residential development in the study area. These areas should also link to the existing park and planned trail system along Walnut Creek.

d. Introduce a model for a more sustainable, compact form of development in a region that is challenged by significant population growth. Redevelopment should integrate green building practices and meet the goals of the Austin Climate Protection Plan.

e. Plant more trees in the neighborhood as properties redevelop to provide shade and help reduce the urban heat island effect. All streets should be well landscaped and shaded with regular street tree plantings.

f. Ensure adequate infrastructure capacity for development that will arise as the vision develops over time.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The 2035 Master Plan build-out scenario depicted in Figure 4.7 represents a mixed-use urban village concept. The over-all layout demonstrates several broad principles characteristic of such types of development:

- Create a network of interconnected streets defining relatively small blocks. This establishes a pedestrian-friendly scale to the overall area and breaks it down into more manageable units.

- Plan a clear hierarchy of streets. These should range from the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented Transit Boulevard, to quieter, more residential streets, to auto-oriented high capacity roadways, to narrower vehicular access lanes (alleys).

- Place the primary building elements close to the street, particularly along the Transit Boulevard, which relies on direct interaction between the sidewalk and the ground floor uses to create pedestrian interest.

- Place the primary parking areas towards the interior of the blocks, typically behind the buildings accessed by rear lanes and alleys. Some of the parking, primarily short-term convenience parking is located as parallel parking on the mixed-use streets.

- Emphasize the quality of the pedestrian environment with tree-lined streets, wide sidewalks, clearly delineated crosswalks, and on-street parking to buffer pedestrian activity from moving traffic.

- Create a mix of uses, with taller, mixed-use buildings along the principal roads, transitioning to less dense, more residential uses as development approaches the existing residential neighborhoods.

- Acknowledge the market for multi-generational living; provide high quality housing for a full range of incomes and ages.

- De-emphasize the arterial roads as local streets and internalize most of the activity to slower, more pedestrian-friendly streets.

- Create a network of public open spaces designed to provide relief from the denser development form and to provide organizational and visual focal points for pedestrian activity. Ensure an appropriate balance of open space to residential and non-residential uses.

- Engage the public with civic building and public resources, like libraries, theaters, museums, and schools. Use the redevelopment of the area as a catalyst for these places, and vice-versa.

- Invest in permanent infrastructure like roads, fixed-route transit, sustainable localized power, and parks and open space. These investments can provide immediate economic incentives for private development and demonstrate a public commitment to creating a great place.

Figure 4.12 : Revitalized Longhorn Boulevard leading to a new MoPac Fly-over.

Figures 4.13 & 4.14 : Illustrations of the Transit Blvd. concept along Burnet Road