

MARTIN LUTHER KING (MLK) BOULEVARD TOD STATION AREA PLAN



Transit - Oriented
Development

DRAFT REPORT FEBRUARY 2008



PREPARED BY: PB PLACEMAKING FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT



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All participants in the planning process who live, work, and own or rent property in and around the MLK TOD District.

Other interested individuals who came to learn about transit-oriented development and give feedback on this citywide initiative.

Individuals and groups who are dedicated to promoting affordable housing throughout Austin.

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- D. Water and Wastewater Report
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- F. Financial Analysis
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MLK JR. BOULEVARD TOD STATION AREA PLAN



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The first Capital MetroRail line is under construction with passenger service to begin at the end of 2008. The 32-mile Red Line will connect downtown Austin to Leander on existing rail tracks with nine initial stations planned. The City, in support of the Capital Metro "All Systems Go!" Long Range Transit Plan, initiated a broad public engagement effort to develop station area plans around several of these future MetroRail stops. The first station areas to undergo the station area planning process were Plaza Saltillo, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK), and N. Lamar Boulevard/Justin Lane (a.k.a. Crestview Station).

New development that takes advantage of its location near transit is often referred to as "Transit-Oriented Development" (or TOD), and it is an important part of the City's goal to manage growth in ways that reduce reliance on automobile use, promote transit use, walking and biking, and create lively and safe areas around transit stations. The City of Austin developed the TOD station area plans to leverage this significant public transit investment to achieve these broad community goals.

To realize these benefits, the City first adopted a TOD Ordinance, which identified specific station area boundaries, interim land use and design requirements, and a commitment to develop station area plans. Planning for the MLK TOD was begun in February 2007 by a team of consultants led by PB Americas. Public education and involvement meetings were held over the course of the next ten months to draft a plan that incorporated TOD principles and best practices and was shaped by the community input gathered throughout the planning process. The planning work was integrated with a professional assessment of market conditions and finance, affordable housing, and basic public infrastructure and facility needs. The plan includes recommendations for open space, street and other infrastructure improvements, and affordable housing and is intended to guide future development and the provision of public improvements.

The implementation strategy describes a variety of key actions that will contribute to the successful redevelopment of the station area. The responsibilities for implementation not only rest with the City, but its agency partners, development community, and citizens. A primary element of the implementation program is the MLK TOD Station Area Regulating Plan. It is based on *Subchapter E: Design Standards and Mixed Use* of the Austin Code, which applies citywide. The Regulating Plan provides development standards with a specific focus on the context of the MLK Station Area and the vision articulated in this plan.

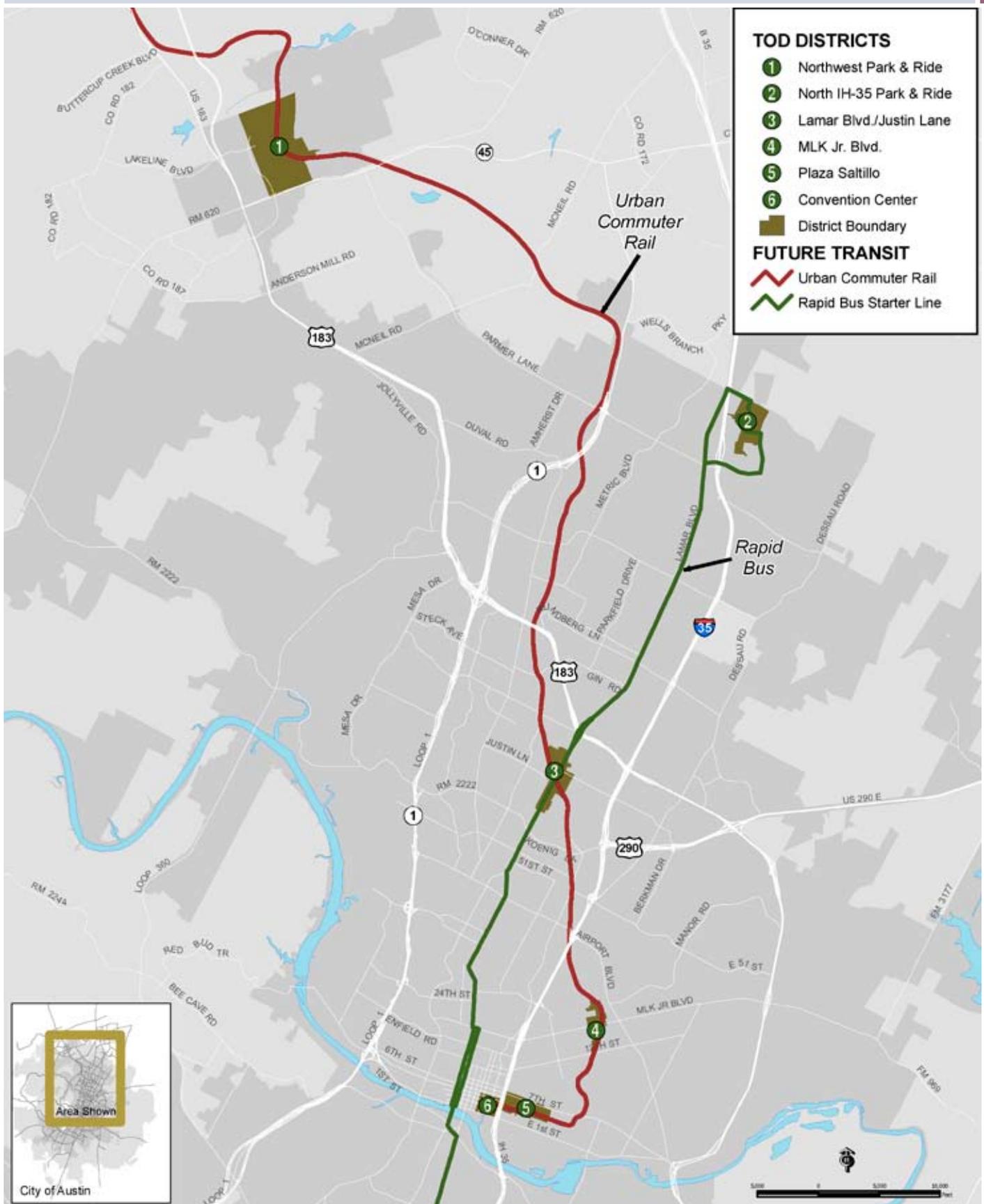


FIGURE ES.1: TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) DISTRICTS

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) station planning area was identified in the TOD Ordinance to include the Boggy Creek flood plain and the area to the west along Manor Road and MLK Jr. Boulevard. During the development of this plan, the planning area was expanded to include land around the Airport Boulevard intersections with Manor Road and MLK Jr. Boulevard. It includes portions of four neighborhood planning areas - Chestnut, MLK, Rosewood, and Upper Boggy Creek, and several neighborhoods within these.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The consultant team, informed by community input throughout the planning process, developed the MLK TOD Station Area Plan, which

- Followed transit-oriented design principles and Austin planning policy as described in Chapter 1;
- Is summarized below and described in more detail in Chapter 2;
- Includes an implementation strategy described in Chapter 3;
- Featured an inclusive public involvement process as described in the Appendix; and
- Utilized background information and studies presented in a series of appendices.

PLAN SUMMARY

The MLK TOD Station Area Plan includes three primary elements:

- **Land Use and Design Concept Plan**, which describes the desired land uses and development characteristics in the TOD.
- **Circulation Concept Plan**, which identifies the functional and design elements for streets and walkways.
- **Open Space and Trails Concept Plan**, which describes the important open space components of the TOD.

The concept plan maps and summary of the key elements are presented on the following pages.

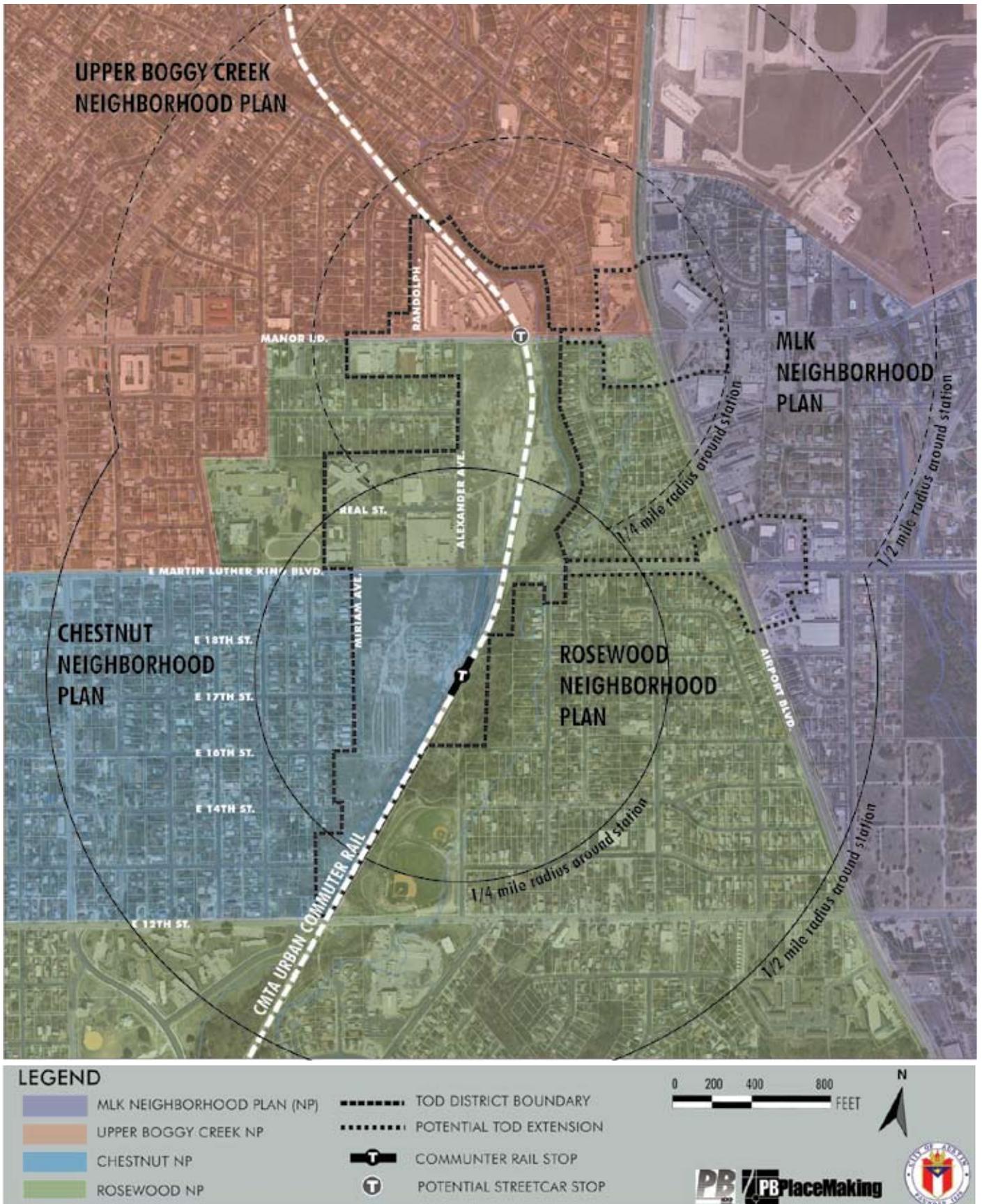


FIGURE ES.2: LOCATION MAP OF MLK TOD WITH NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREAS

LAND USE AND DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

The Land Use and Design Concept for the MLK TOD Station Area Plan includes five land use designations:

- **TOD Mixed-Use.** This is the highest density designation, which encourages urban-style development including active ground floor uses with commercial, office, or residential uses on the upper floors. Residential densities may exceed 45 units per acre if a specific level of affordable housing is provided. Moderate height bonuses up to 60 feet may also be granted with additional affordable housing. These areas are located in the closest proximity to transit and are intended to become neighborhood centers.



- **Corridor Mixed-Use.** This allows a slightly more liberal mix of uses compared to TOD Mixed-Use. These properties are farther from the transit station and have less of an urban character compared to TOD Mixed-Use. Normal residential densities may reach 45 units per acre, and additional density may be permitted when affordable housing is provided.



- **Live/Work Flex.** This encourages ground floor business activity with residential units on the upper floors. Residential uses are required and a ground floor business is optional. Residential densities range from 17 to 45 units per acre, and additional density may be permitted when affordable housing is provided.



- **Medium Density Residential.** This designation is found outside of the mixed-use areas and is intended to provide a transition into the surrounding neighborhoods. Residential densities range from 17 to 45 units per acre.



- **Low Density Residential.** This designation also provides a transition between the higher density center of the station area and surrounding neighborhoods. Residential densities range from 9 to 16 units per acre.

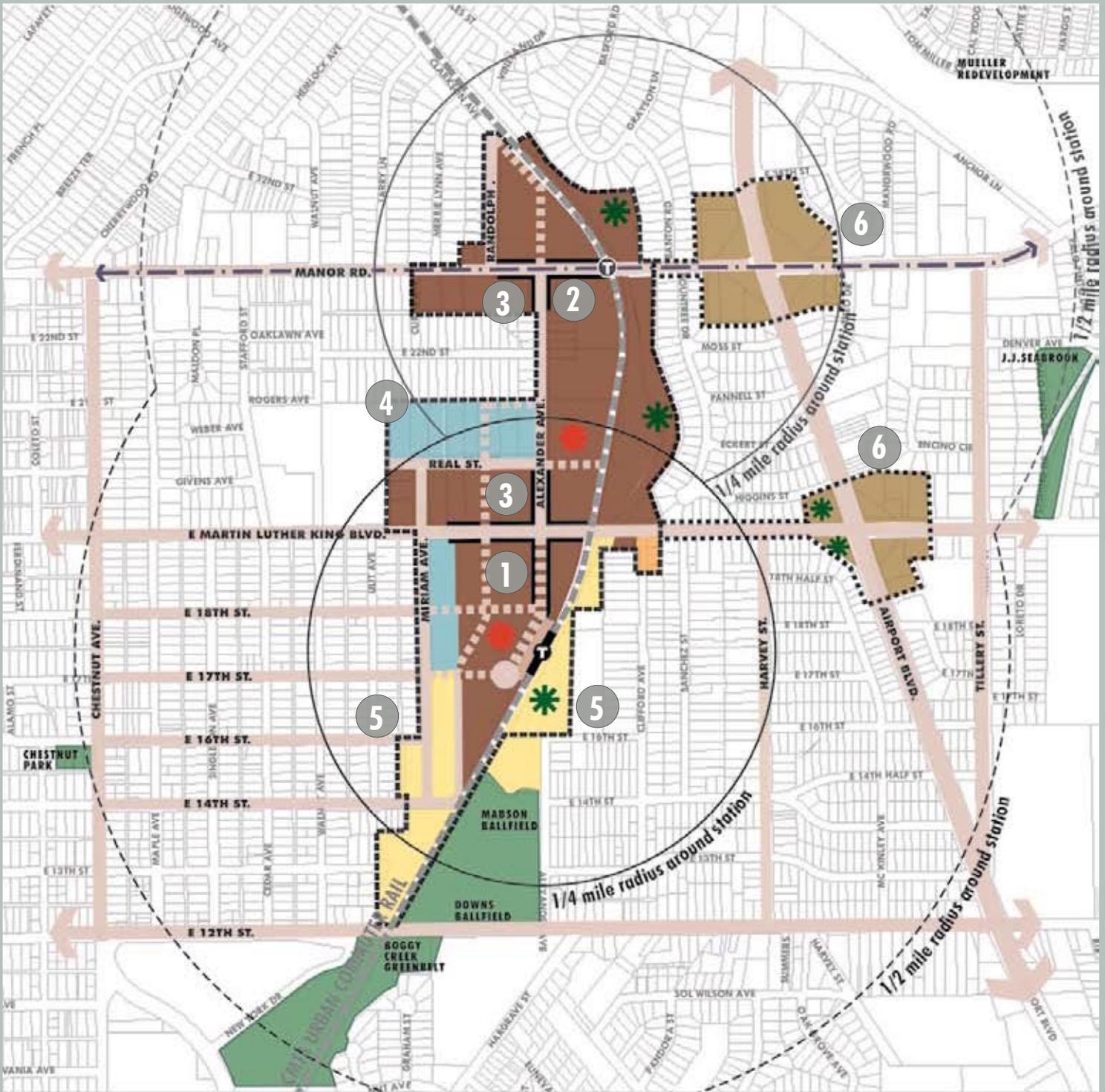


LAND USE AND DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

The Land Use and Design Concept Plan includes the following primary elements:

1. High density mixed-use development concentrated near the Capitol Metro station on Alexander Avenue, south of MLK Jr. Boulevard. This would be the primary activity area in the station area.
2. A secondary concentration of high density mixed-use development is located along Manor Road and Alexander Avenue to take advantage of the planned streetcar line on Manor Road, and the potential additional Capitol Metro stop on Manor.
3. Active edges, which create a more lively and pleasant pedestrian environment by requiring buildings along specific street frontages to be built up to the sidewalk with the ground floor designed to accommodate active business uses. The active edge designation is only used with the TOD Mixed-Use designation.
4. Live/work uses where small businesses would be allowed with residential units above. This is in response to neighborhood support for this type of use and for creating a transition between the higher density core and the lower density neighborhoods surrounding it.
5. Low and Medium Density Residential uses in selected transition areas adjacent to existing neighborhoods.
6. Gateways at the intersections of Airport Boulevard with Manor Road and MLK Jr. Boulevard, which feature improved pedestrian facilities and amenities as well as a more urban character to signify entry into the MLK station area.

LAND USE AND DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL |  | EXISTING STREETS |
|  | MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL |  | POTENTIAL NEW STREETS |
|  | TOD MIXED USE
(showing active edges) |  | TOD DISTRICT BOUNDARY |
|  | CORRIDOR MIXED USE |  | POTENTIAL TOD EXTENSION |
|  | LIVE/WORK FLEX |  | POTENTIAL STREETCAR ROUTE |
|  | EXISTING CITY PARKLAND |  | COMMUTER RAIL STOP |
|  | POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE |  | POTENTIAL STREETCAR STOP |
|  | POTENTIAL POCKET PARK |  | TRANSIT PLAZA |

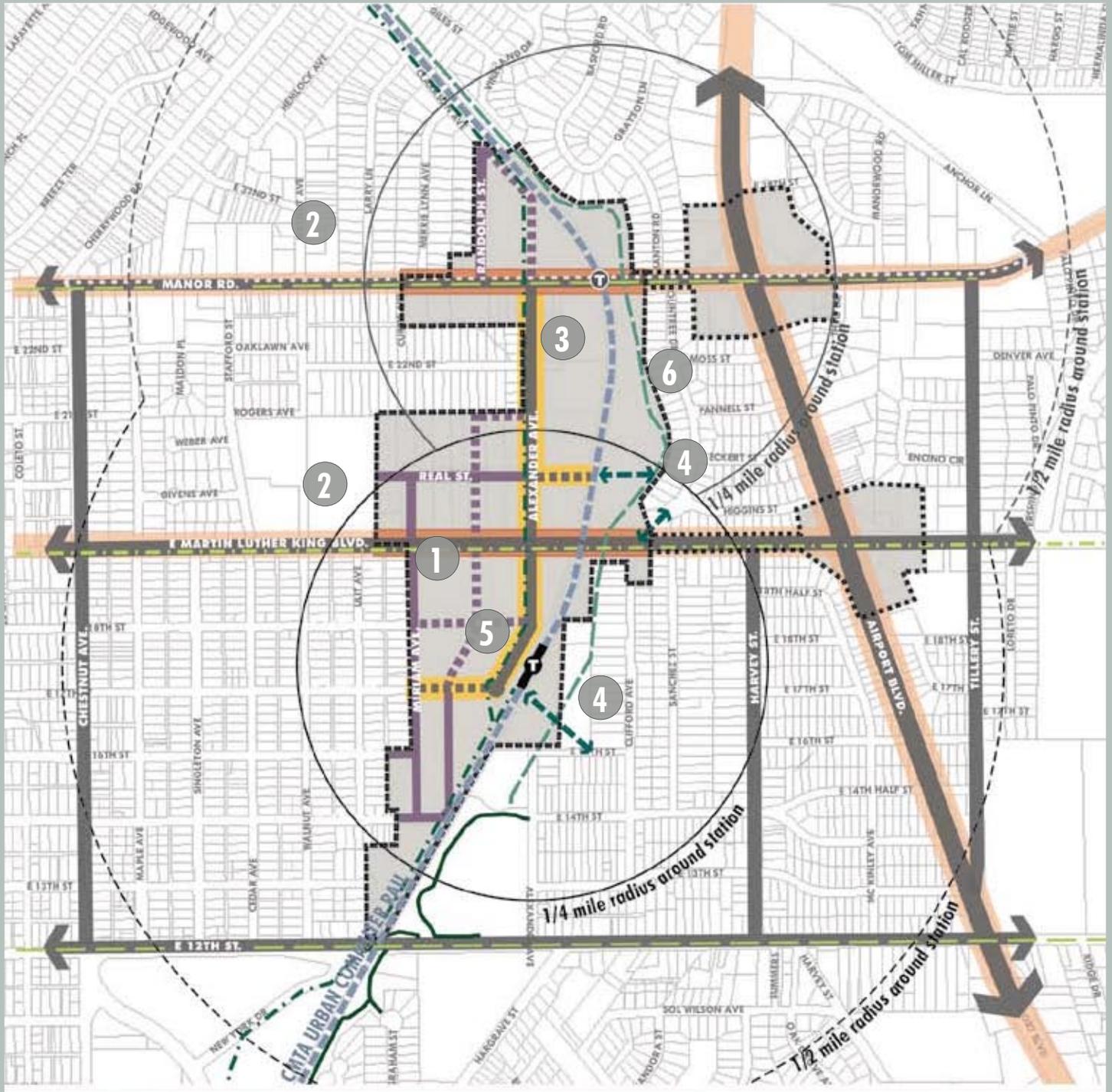


CIRCULATION CONCEPT PLAN

The Circulation Concept for the MLK TOD Station Area Plan includes the following primary elements:

1. An integrated street and pathway network to provide safe and convenient travel for all modes of transportation.
2. TOD Core Transit Corridor design standards for Manor Road and MLK Jr. Boulevard, which require wider sidewalks and enhanced pedestrian facilities to support the existing and planned transit service.
3. TOD Pedestrian Priority Streets, which are also required to have enhanced pedestrian facilities because they will serve as the primary pedestrian routes in the station area. Alexander Avenue and portions of E. 17th Street and Real Street are so designated.
4. New pedestrian connections from Pannell Place and E. 16th Street to provide easier access between the station and these neighborhoods.
5. New local streets as properties redevelop to provide smaller, more walkable blocks.
6. A trail system along Boggy Creek and/or the rail line with possible on-street connections to provide enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and recreational opportunities through the station area. There are different trail proposals that could be realized and they are not mutually exclusive of each other. The community expressed a desire for both a natural trail system along the creek for mainly recreational purposes and also a multi-use "Rails with Trails" pathway generally along the rail line that could serve both recreational and functional transportation needs.
7. On-street bicycle facilities to encourage bike riding and make it safe and efficient to ride around and through the TOD.

CIRCULATION CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- EXISTING PRIMARY STREETS
- TOD CORE TRANSIT STREETS
- TOD PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY STREETS
- TOD LOCAL STREETS
- POTENTIAL TOD PRIMARY STREETS
- POTENTIAL TOD LOCAL STREETS
- DESIGN STANDARDS CORE TRANSIT/FUTURE CORE TRANSIT CORRIDORS
- BOGGY CREEK TRAIL
- POTENTIAL TRAIL EXTENSION
- EXISTING BIKE LANES
- RECOMMENDED BIKE FACILITY IN AUSTIN BIKE PLAN
- POTENTIAL 'RAILS WITH TRAILS' ROUTE
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
- POTENTIAL STREETCAR ROUTE
- TOD DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- POTENTIAL TOD EXTENSION
- COMMUTER RAIL STOP
- POTENTIAL STREETCAR STOP



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OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS CONCEPT PLAN

The Open Space and Trails Concept Plan for the MLK TOD Station Area Plan includes the following primary elements:

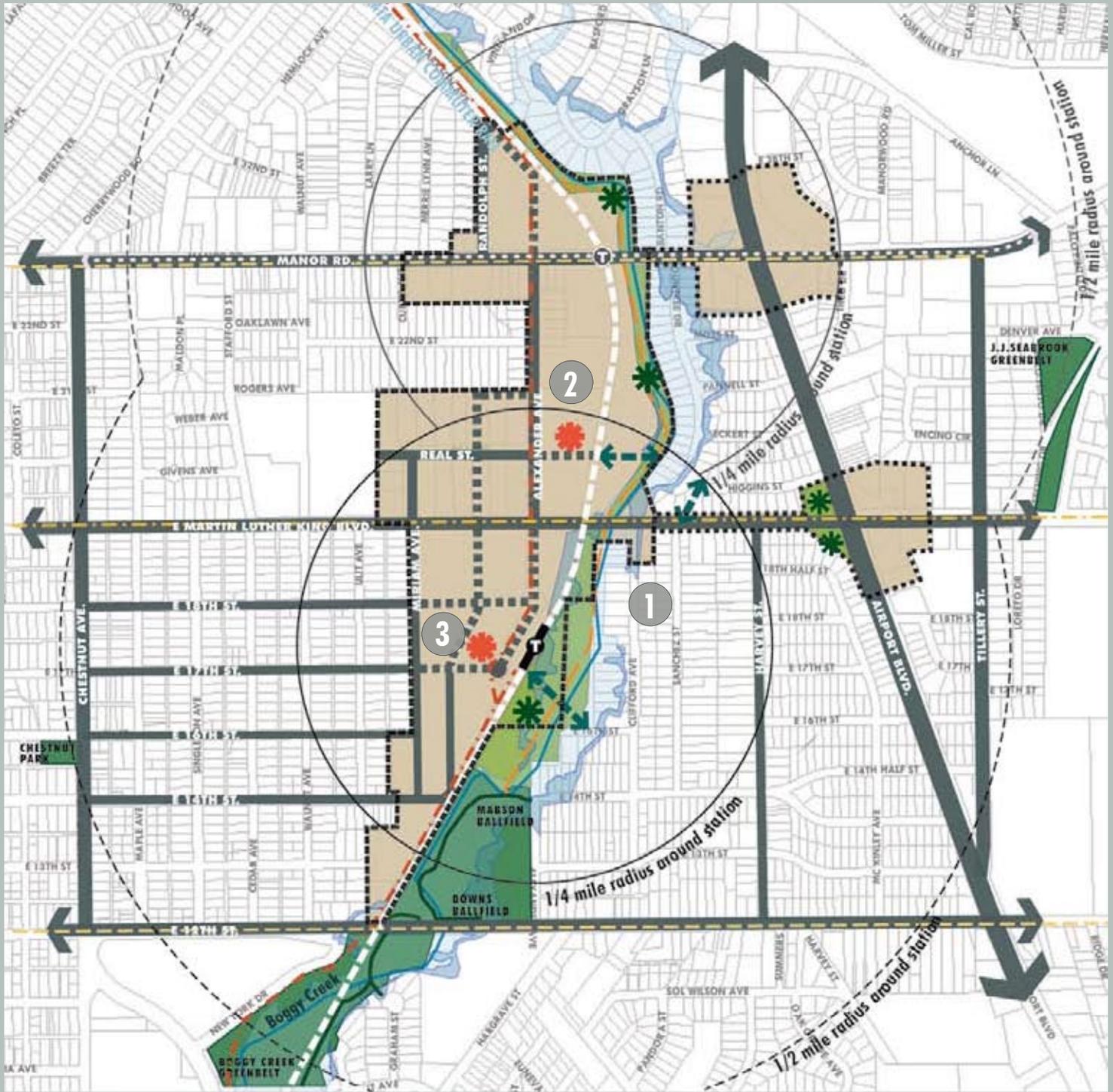
1. Boggy Creek and the area along its course are restored providing a natural open space area for local residents that could include space for community gardens. The pedestrian connections and potential trail extension in the Circulation Concept Plan will improve access to this area.
2. Pocket park between Manor Road and MLK Jr. Boulevard to provide convenient recreation opportunities for local residents. The park is recommended to be a minimum of one-half acre.
3. Pocket park south of MLK Jr. Boulevard to provide convenient recreation opportunities for local residents. The park is recommended to be a minimum of one-half acre.
4. A trail system along Boggy Creek and/or the rail line with possible on-street connections to provide enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and recreational opportunities through the station area. There are different trail proposals that could be realized, and they are not mutually exclusive of each other. The community expressed a desire for both a natural trail system along the creek for mainly recreational purposes and also a multi-use “Rails with Trails” pathway generally along the rail line that could serve both recreational and functional transportation needs.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 3 Implementation describes a variety of important steps the City, its agency partners, and development community should take to realize the full potential of the station area:

- **Planning and Administration.** The critical element is the formation of an inter-agency working group and designated staff to oversee all implementation activities.
- **Transit-Oriented Development Catalyst Projects.** Catalyst projects, both public infrastructure and private development, will be necessary to stimulate market and development interest in the station area.
- **Circulation and Streets.** Street improvements, including pedestrian facilities and amenities, can have a dramatic positive impact upon a place’s identity and can create the framework for creating a truly transit-oriented development that is less auto-dependent.
- **Open Space and Trails.** Building upon the natural resources in the area, integration of the Parks and Recreation Department in planning and development review decisions, and creation of usable open spaces are essential.
- **Supporting Infrastructure.** Key public-private investments will need to be made to support the development proposed.

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS CONCEPT PLAN



LEGEND

- EXISTING STREETS
- POTENTIAL STREETS
- EXISTING CITY PARKLAND
- POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE
- POCKET PARKS (MIN 0.5 ACRES)
- 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN
- 500 YEAR FLOODPLAIN
- BOGGY CREEK TRAIL
- POTENTIAL BOGGY CREEK TRAIL EXTENSION
- EXISTING BIKE LANES
- RECOMMENDED BIKE FACILITY IN AUSTIN BIKE PLAN
- POTENTIAL 'RAILS WITH TRAILS' ROUTE
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
- TOD DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- POTENTIAL TOD EXTENSION
- COMMUTER RAIL STOP
- POTENTIAL STREETCAR STOP
- POTENTIAL STREETCAR ROUTE



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