

## Chapter 2: Goals, Objectives and Policies

### *Introduction*

The goals, objectives and policies presented in Chapter 2 are the results of a collaboration between the citizens of Austin and the City staff, between lay people and professional planners. From 1974-1977 citizens from all over Austin participated in determining goals for the city during the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program. Although the City staff provided research and background material, the findings and recommendations are entirely the citizens'. The results were published in 1975 in the Austin Tomorrow Goals report and adopted by the City Council as the basis for the Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 2 presents the citizens' views in detail.

Discussions among the participants in the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program focused on nine designated topics which were later condensed into eight topics, or sections, of Chapter 2: Urban Design, Economic Development, Environmental Management, Government and Utility Services, Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation Systems, and Health and Human Services. An introduction precedes each section and summarizes its primary goals. The goals, objectives and policies which follow contain the essence of the citizens' concerns. In this context, goals represent values, or desired results; objectives refer to intermediate stages in the attainment of the goals; and policies are guidelines for action leading to objectives and, ultimately, to goals. Goals, objectives and policies are often followed by brief commentaries for clarification and elaboration.

This chapter is significant because it represents a vision of Austin shared by many citizens. This vision is the foundation for the entire Comprehensive Plan, for the discussion of environmental development suitability in Chapter 3, and for the growth management policies that conclude the plan in Chapter 4. As such, it should be the basis for all Planning Commission and City Council decisions concerning the future of Austin.

## *Urban Design Introduction*

Urban design is concerned both with the development and management of the physical environment of Austin. This section represents a concerted effort to recognize the positive qualities of Austin, encourage the enhancement of those qualities and improve the living environment, where necessary. The overall objective is to provide general policy guidelines for development and redevelopment responding to issues related to the "design", "image", "character" and "form" of Austin. These are measurable in terms of quantity and quality and provide a means of cataloguing the current state of the environment, and guiding its future course.

The process which identifies "what Austin is" in terms of the above classifications should enable the public and private sectors of the city to determine what environmental and social qualities need to be retained, enhanced or included in development proposals. The process of urban design should synthesize various interests in the community.

The Urban Design section arises from the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program, and includes major concerns arrived at by community consensus. These represent a starting point which will eventually be expanded to include other concerns of the city as they arise. The four goals are 1) to encourage development of Austin's urban environment in the manner most compatible with the natural environment; 2) to provide transportation facilities throughout the city which enhance neighborhoods and districts while facilitating safe, efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians; 3) to encourage quality development of pedestrian facilities by giving greater emphasis to pedestrian environments in development proposals; and 4) to preserve the historical past of Austin by assuring that development and redevelopment proposals consider structures and areas of cultural, historical or architectural value.

### **GOAL 110.0 ASSURE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE UNIQUE NATURAL AND CONSTRUCTED FEATURES OF THE AUSTIN AREA.**

The elements of Austin's physical form are generated by individual development actions. The resulting form is a product not necessarily compatible with the environment or reflective of the constructed elements of the community or its values. The concern of this goal is that isolated development proposals be compatible with the development of Austin in terms of form and size.

#### **Objective 111.0 Ensure the compatibility between potential development and the existing natural environment.**

Austin's natural environment includes such features as diverse topography; natural vegetation; natural habitats supporting a variety of wildlife; complex natural drainage systems; and stable climatic conditions supportive of the existing natural environment.

It is necessary to determine the type and location of these natural elements that make up the city. These elements are in some instances limited and not replaceable once they are destroyed. The identification and classification of these elements would enable designers or developers to modify their plans in a way that would be more compatible with the natural landscape of the city.

Policy 111.1 *Establish special districts based on unique environmental features and apply development standards appropriate to each area.*

The City should determine special development districts based on common environmental properties or development constraints. The identification and classification of unique and important features or districts should ensure compatible development based on these properties. Examples of the natural elements within the city that would affect development or establish special district limits are: (1) landscape and open space—wooded areas and other types of open space; (2) views and vistas— vantage points that provide identity and a means of orientation to the community; (3) water areas—natural open spaces such as creeks, streams, and rivers; (4) topography—change in the elevation of the natural landscape; and (5) climatic conditions—temperature, light, precipitation, sun and wind.

Policy 111.2 *Protect visually prominent areas and corridors from inappropriate development activities.*

Identification, analysis and mapping of the unique visual features and landmarks in the community should be conducted. Visually prominent areas, features and corridors should be delineated and all development and redevelopment proposals should be reviewed to ensure that they preserve and enhance these valuable community assets.

Policy 111.3 *Encourage site planning techniques and building form arrangements that are tolerant of natural topographic conditions.*

The review process for development proposals should include standards that encourage structural designs which do not require extensive manipulation of the site. Cut and fill operations which influence surface water runoff should be reduced in order to retain vital topsoil.

Policy 111.4 *Encourage development to maximize the use of existing natural vegetation and regulate the removal of significant trees and valuable vegetation.*

The City should regulate the removal of trees and vegetation on all City-owned property and reviews all proposed municipal projects to ensure against the loss of existing natural vegetation.

In the case of day-to-day projects, this is accomplished by standard operating procedures. In instances where larger projects are proposed, the development review process ensures that all environmental requirements are fulfilled. All development is required to adhere to Austin's Land Development Code Chapter 25-2 and 25-8. The landscaping and environmental portions of this code addresses care of existing vegetation, including trees, to capture the multiple benefits of the existing natural character. Additionally, the City of Austin's Environmental Criteria Manual Section 2 and 3, Landscape and Tree and Natural Area Protection respectively, describes specific details of accomplishing these requirements.

Policy 111.5 *Encourage public and private development to replace significant trees and vegetation removed during construction.*

This policy should result in greater care to existing vegetation during a project's physical development in order to maintain as much of the existing natural character of a site as possible.

All development is required to adhere to Austin's Land Development Code Chapter 25-2 and 25-8. The landscaping and environmental portions of this code addresses care of existing vegetation, including trees, to capture the multiple benefits of the existing natural character. Additionally, the City of Austin's Environmental Criteria Manual Section 2 and 3, Landscape and Tree and Natural Area Protection respectively, describes specific details of accomplishing these requirements.

Policy 111.6 *Formulate and continue support of design techniques and construction guidelines for development in proximity to water resources and floodplains.*

This policy should incorporate, combine and clarify existing standards, ordinances and agencies. This will provide optimum development standards suitable to water resource areas and protection of water quality and natural resources during the construction process.

Multiple regulations that support water quality and floodplain protection have been adopted, including Land Development Code 25-7-92, which limits development in the floodplain, and 25-8-92, 25-8-93, 25-8-261 and 262 of the Land Development Code which establish the Critical Water Quality and Water Quality Transition Zone, and allowed development within these zones, as well as Section 1.7.0 of the Environmental Criteria Manual which regulated Floodplain Modification.

**Objective 112.0 Monitor development to ensure a quality environment.**

Policy 112.1 *Develop urban design capabilities within City planning agencies to actively develop urban design codes, ordinances and policies, and review development proposals to encourage design quality based on public desires.*

The Urban Design section of the Comprehensive Plan needs to be reinforced with policies and strategies based on a process involving input from the community and organization from the City. Urban designing occurs throughout the community, however inadvertently, and it is an integral part of the planning process. The process needs to be presented, and citizens need to be made aware of urban development and how it affects their lives.

Policy 112.2 *Evaluate the effects of development on the image, character and physical characteristics of Austin.*

The criteria for review, as they affect Austin's natural and constructed environment, could be based on the following activities: (1) formulating city-wide design objectives resulting from participation of all sectors of the community, private and public; (2) developing distinct or specific project design objectives and controls in the city-wide context; (3) providing staff for consultation with developers to negotiate potential alternatives; (4) providing staff to coordinate with other affected agencies on special issues; and (5) using special consultants to resolve conflicts.

This process should help determine the impact of development proposals and completed projects by answering these questions: Will there be a gain or loss of environmental characteristics? Does a real need exist and is the priority valid according to systematic growth policies? What are the costs to the community and who pays?

Policy 112.3 *Develop a public information program which promotes recognition and appreciation of those natural, unique and constructed elements considered valuable to the community.*

The natural elements and constructed features of the community that promote a feeling of pride and unity should be given special recognition. The attention given to these features would discourage their destruction by insensitive development.

## **GOAL 120.0 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE DESIRABLE IMAGE AND CHARACTER OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS.**

**Objective 121.0 Assure that development is responsive to the established identity of areas and districts.**

Policy 121.1 *Establish special design districts within the city.*

The requirement for special districts would be based on the existence of some unifying feature of unique interest to the community. Some special design districts could be: areas along major thoroughfares, areas abutting major institutions and open space, major parks and parkways, areas fronting major waterways and tributaries, the Central Business District, areas abutting transportation terminals and major commercial districts.

Policy 121.2 *Encourage the use of building materials that respect and improve the integrity of neighborhoods and districts.*

New development can enhance and preserve Austin's distinctive qualities if it is designed with consideration for the prevailing design character and effect on the surrounding environment.

Policy 121.3 *Encourage a continuing awareness of the long term effects of growth upon the physical form of the city.*

The process of urban development results from a complex relationship between public and private decisions over a period of time. Maintaining citizen-government interaction on growth policies should make it possible to choose the physical form of the city based on current needs and trends.

Policy 121.4 *Recognize the natural boundaries of separate or distinct districts and promote their harmonious connection.*

Visually prominent features such as extremes in topography, water areas, trees and roadways are natural boundaries between districts and neighborhoods. The positive effects of district boundaries should be emphasized in design decisions affecting visually prominent features such as new roadways and large scale landscaping. Connection between districts and facilities should be improved, with special attention given to the possibilities for landscaped pathways that would provide alternative visual experiences as one moves about the city.

**Objective 122.0 Ensure that potential development or redevelopment of a specific area is compatible with the image and character of the area or its surroundings.**

The objective is to determine which visual characteristics provide a sense of identity and structure to both the city as a whole and its distinct parts. Image and character elements would be classified by a process that would: (1) determine the existing shape of the city; (2) identify and analyze the size of the existing natural and urban physical elements; (3) analyze the mixture of sizes to determine homogeneity or heterogeneity; (4) determine the density of areas; and (5) determine the shape of the city's sub-areas.

Policy 122.1 *Adopt design criteria for proposed development to assess its impact on the image, form and character of the city.*

Quality development that enhances the established character of Austin's unique natural and constructed features should be encouraged on a community-wide level. Design criteria would result from a consensus of the community based on a visual survey of the city.

A visual survey would provide the means of identifying the basic components of the city that produce its form, appearance, composition, problems and potential environments. The analysis of the survey would provide insight into possible ways Austin could maximize its resources through the process of urban design.

Application of the analysis should determine which areas of the city need reinforcement in terms of number, quality and type of image elements. Classification of the elements that produce an image for Austin are: (1) paths—circulation routes; (2) nodes—centers of activities; (3) edges—termination of districts; (4) landmarks—prominent visual features; (5) districts—distinct areas of the city; (6) generators—people attractors; and (7) linkage elements—connections between areas and people.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan. Bicycling is a component of Austin’s Image and helps shape the character of the City.

Policy 122.2 *Promote building forms that relate to the size, shape and character of the surrounding development.*

Buildings and structures that stand out in excess of their public importance detract from the character of surrounding development. Height and bulk limitations in special districts have been established and successfully incorporated into comprehensive plans in other municipalities.

Compatibility standards and McMansion Ordinance are both examples of how Austin supports this policy.

Policy 122.3 *Provide greater flexibility in the zoning process to facilitate design innovation.*

Revision of the elements of the Zoning Ordinance which inhibit design potential is essential in achieving high quality design of buildings and subdivisions.

**Objective 123.0 Reduce the negative effects of automobile traffic in neighborhood environments.**

Policy 123.1 *Protect residential areas from excessive levels of noise pollution and physical danger from traffic.*

A plan to protect residential areas should be developed that would prevent or discourage heavy, fast and through traffic on residential streets and place such traffic on arterial streets where the impact on residential areas would be less disruptive. The speed and volume of traffic should be limited through various methods: narrowing intersections and streets in special districts, creating the appearance of narrowing through landscaping techniques, and prohibiting visual access from arterial streets by signs and barriers. These changes should result in residential streets with a predominantly pedestrian, rather than automobile, character. Bicycle lanes and facilities can also contribute to protecting neighborhood environments from traffic.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan. A portion of this policy previously promoted the discontinuation of streets to divert traffic which contradicts Land Use Code Section 24-4-151, "Street Alignment and Connectivity."

Policy 123.2 *Provide adequate buffering for residential neighborhoods against the effects of high traffic volumes.*

When heavy traffic volumes must go through residential areas, adequate care should be taken to ensure against disrupting existing environments as much as possible. Incorporation of landscaping techniques, screening walls, changes in topography and building setbacks all provide substantial buffering against undesirable effects.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

### **GOAL 130.0 IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS AND THEIR ADJACENT ENVIRONMENTS.**

Transportation facilities should be used to unify urban development patterns, be compatible with the hills and valleys and provide access to visually prominent areas and open space. Transportation systems should accommodate the movement of people and join the diverse districts of the city in the most desirable manner.

This Goal is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 131.0 Ensure that transportation networks emphasize desirable urban development patterns.**

Transportation systems establish urban patterns and provide organization and a sense of place to the community. These systems should also provide travelers with an awareness of the physical organization of the community.

**Policy 131.1 *Encourage transportation patterns that reinforce the image and identity of distinct areas and districts.***

There are existing Bicycle routes signed throughout the City which designate them as a bicycle corridor, giving identity to these distinct areas.

**Policy 131.2 *Develop and continue support of a city-wide plan for street landscaping to indicate the relative importance of streets.***

Once the purposes of transportation facilities have been established, street features should be designed to express those purposes and make the entire system understandable to the traveler. A relatively easy element that can be adjusted to the street system is landscaping. A landscaping plan should be developed that indicates the relative importance of streets by the degree of formality of tree planting and the species and size of the trees.

In addition to recognizing differences in transportation functions, the plan would also recognize the width and visual importance of certain streets, the special nature of distinct activities, and the need for screening or buffering of residential uses along streets carrying heavy traffic. Special consideration should be given to certain features such as major intersections, open space and important views in the design of transportation facilities.

Streetscape landscaping requirements are an integral part of adopted Subchapter E, Design Standards and Mixed Use that was adopted August 31, 2006 and effective January 13, 2007, and the Environmental Criteria Manual Appendix A was modified to include a list of suitable street trees.

**Policy 131.3 *Develop a city-wide plan for street lighting to facilitate clear, safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian movement, and aid crime control.***

The design and placement of street lighting should reflect the intended use of the facility. Intensity, hue, source, location and placement system should be coordinated with street design and adjacent usages to optimize clarity of function.

*Policy 131.4 Improve the ease of movement along transportation systems and support facilities.*

Many improvements can be made in street areas and their surroundings to increase the ease and safety of travel. Once such improvements have been made, adequate maintenance is of equal importance. Among the least difficult improvements would be development of a better system of directional signs, instructions, messages, symbols, graphic design and sign placement.

Although trafficway signs should be improved, the purpose and direction of traffic networks should also be made as clear as possible through design of the networks themselves. The roadway should be consistent in width and materials, with channels separated by islands and dividers, where possible, and changes of direction made distinct. At intersections, the differences in importance and function of the intersecting streets should be made visually clear by differences in roadway width, landscaping and lighting.

The number of streets intersecting at any one point should be minimized, and signs and traffic control devices should be adequate to indicate the movements permitted in all traffic lanes. The roadway environment should be simplified and made attractive through screening of distracting and unsightly elements by landscaping, walls and buildings. The clutter of wires, signs and disordered development should be reduced.

Conflict between unnecessary private signs and street directional signs should be avoided.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 132.0 Ensure the visual quality of transportation networks and their support facilities.**

The scope of transportation planning, design and implementation should be expanded to include consideration of types of material used, amount of detail desired and appropriate form needed to convey harmony between the system and its environment.

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policy 132.1 *Preserve the visibility of unique areas and other points for orientation.*

The ability to see one's destination and other points of orientation while traveling through the city is an important product of the urban pattern. Design and determination of street placement, the control of land uses and building types along streets should take these special features into account. Views from streets and other public areas should be preserved, created and improved where they include water, open spaces, large buildings or other major features of the city. Entrance views to the city and to districts are of special concern in this respect, as are lateral downhill views that show a panorama or corridor with prominent features.

Policy 132.2 *Remove unsightly and cluttering elements from street right-of-way.*

Clutter is produced by unplanned elements in street right-of-way. The placement of overhead wires underground should continue at the most rapid pace possible. Every other element in street areas, including public signs, should be examined with a view toward improvement of design and elimination of these unnecessary elements to improve visual clarity.

Section 2.2.2.B.3 of the Design Standards and Mixed Use Ordinance recommends burial of overhead utility lines along core transit corridors.

**GOAL 140.0 IMPROVE EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENTS AND ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FOR PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES IN PROPOSED URBAN DEVELOPMENT.**

Pedestrian environments are classified into two systems, movement and non-movement. Movement systems should provide the linking elements between the pedestrian nodes or non-movement systems. Incomplete access to either system causes a feeling of incohesiveness, unsafe pedestrian movement and unclear priority between transportation systems. Policies should be adopted that stabilize and improve the appearance and safety of pedestrian facilities and increase the opportunity for recreation.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan and current Sidewalk Master Plan project support this item by providing tools to prioritize pedestrian needs. Generally, the emphasis on Pedestrian amenities should be removed from the Comprehensive Plan unless bicycles and transit are also singled out for specific recommendation.

**Objective 141.0 Assure that new development is responsive to pedestrian needs.**

The concern of this objective is to assure that added consideration is given to the pedestrian environment in development or redevelopment proposals.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan includes a sidewalk prioritization tool which is used to help transportation reviewers within the Watershed Protection and Development Review department assess sidewalk variance. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution supports this Policy. Sections 2.2.2, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4 of the Design Standards and Mixed Use ordinance specify enhanced sidewalk standards for core transit corridors and urban/suburban roadways.

**Policy 141.1 *Encourage or require the provision of recreational or open space in private development.***

Open space should be provided in large developments, especially in areas of high population and building density. In the downtown area, well designed plazas with public access and good exposure to sunlight serve this function. Some of the recreation needs of occupants in apartment developments should be satisfied on the site itself, or through joint use of space by several properties in the block.

Section 2.7.3 of the Design and Mixed Use Ordinance requires that a minimum of 2% of the net site area be established as a private common open space.

Policy 141.2 *Encourage development that provides human scale and interest to pedestrian areas while maintaining an optimum level of safety, security, convenience and comfort.*

The design and development of pedestrian environments should be scaled to their surrounding environments. The quantity and quality of pedestrian facilities should also be determined by their location. As the physical, psychological, and visual experience changes from one area to another, so must the pedestrian atmosphere change. Accommodating changes in the environment should not preclude basic concerns such as the reduction of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Security can be increased through observation by pedestrians and police. Convenience may be improved by relocating and reallocating pedestrian facilities.

Section 2.2 of the Design Standards and Mix Use Ordinance identifies standard roadway types and assigns building placement standards based on roadway types.

**Objective 142.0 Assure the retention of the positive characteristics of pedestrian environments.**

Many of the neighborhoods of the city offer pleasant and exciting environments to residents, while others have experienced physical decline and less than full utilization. Ensuring the desired quality and well-being of the community should begin by retaining those characteristics which enhance pedestrian environments. No other single element contributes to the pedestrian environment more than trees.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan provides for the prioritization of new sidewalk needs. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution also supports this objective.

Policy 142.1 *Recognize, protect and reinforce existing pedestrian environments.*

Existing pedestrian features should be preserved and integrated with other elements of the urban environment. The identification of pedestrian elements in neighborhoods makes it possible to utilize them in the design of urban systems. Protecting these environments assures their quality and prevents intrusion upon their space by other systems. Increasing the sense of place in pedestrian environments may be accomplished by using design elements such as different materials, textures and form to enhance the identity and character of the surrounding environments.

The 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan provides for the prioritization of new sidewalk needs. New sidewalks recognize, protect, and reinforce the pedestrian environment. The 2002 Complete Street Resolution also supports this objective.

Policy 142.2 *Develop a community-wide plan that would ensure safe and convenient access to recreational space.*

The basic concern of the plan would be to ensure accessibility to recreational space for all citizens. Some space should be within walking distance of every dwelling, and in more densely developed areas some sitting and play space should be available in nearly every area. Larger facilities which accommodate more people should be easily accessible by marked transportation routes, separated walkways and bicycle paths.

Policy 142.3 *Provide adequate maintenance for pedestrian areas to encourage their use.*

Unsanitary facilities caused by lack of maintenance can detract from the enjoyment or prevent utilization of designated areas. A maintenance program should include equal commitment from the public and private sectors of the community to provide or upgrade designated areas.

The update to the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan includes a sidewalk maintenance prioritization tool. Public Works Bicycle and Pedestrian Program expects the update to be completed in 2008, which needs to be adopted by Council.

**GOAL 150.0 PRESERVE THOSE ELEMENTS, BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, OBJECTS, AND DISTRICTS WHICH REFLECT THE DIVERSE HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF AUSTIN.**

The preservation of a considerable portion of such landmarks and districts as evidence of the rich inheritance of the city is desirable for public education, enjoyment and general welfare of Austin citizens and the attraction of tourists, with attendant economic benefits.

The National Historic Preservation Act protects buildings, structures, objects, and districts but the City of Austin chooses to retain 'elements' to not limit preservation efforts. Policy changed to conform to standard historic preservation language.

**Objective 151.0 Assure the protection of notable and/or historic landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, cultural, or aesthetic value.**

There is no provision in the Code so far to protect iconic landmarks, although, a provision was inserted into the Code that specifies that a landmark could be less than 50 years old if it possesses significance as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Policy 151.1 *Expand the City's effort to identify and recognize important structures, sites and districts that represent Austin's heritage and character.***

The program of official historic designation for individual landmarks and historic districts should continue to be developed and implemented to encourage community awareness, expansion of preservation efforts in the future, and recognition of sites of historical, architectural, and cultural significance.

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts.

**Policy 151.2 *Review and revise codes which inhibit and apply to the preservation, restoration, and use of designated historic landmarks and historic districts.***

Analyze federal, state, county and City codes, policies or laws which affect the protection, use and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts, and introduce proposals to increase their effectiveness.

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts. Ordinance 740307-A serves to 'safeguard the city's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such historic landmarks by appropriate regulations.'

**Policy 151.3 *Provide incentives for property owners that encourage use and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts.***

A program for financial, professional or skilled assistance should be adopted and implemented to encourage greater use of landmark properties. Implement and review policies for economic incentives for the rehabilitation, adaptive re-use, and preservation of historic landmarks and historic districts. Implement and review policies for the recognition of historic landmarks and historic districts.

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts.

**Objective 152.0 Assure the retention of the character of designated historic areas, landmarks and districts.**

The guidelines and recommended procedures applied to the restoration of designated landmarks and areas should also apply to development and redevelopment proposals in these areas. The result should be a more compatible development between the existing character of deemed historical areas and new development proposals.

Revisions reflect code change to Chapter 25-11 via ordinance 20060622-128 which deals with establishing historic districts.

**Policy 152.1 *Formulate design guidelines that enhance restoration efforts.***

Policies which affect access to the property, approach views, signs traffic patterns and other urban elements should be investigated, reviewed and implemented to enhance significant historic features.

**Policy 152.2 *Promote harmony in the visual relationship and physical transition between new and old structures.***

The design of new buildings that are located near historically designated structures or areas should be modified to prevent distraction from the importance of these community elements.

NOTE: While the goals and policies contained in this section generally remain valid, the definition, general principles, and importance of urban design have all changed and evolved since the plan was adopted.

A new comprehensive plan for Austin should clearly define the community's desired Urban Design goals and policies for both public and private projects. The new plan should articulate the importance of Urban Design and its critical relationship to the community's continued high quality of life and economic vitality. It should also define necessary procedures and steps to implement urban design policies and best practices.

### *Economic Development Introduction*

Economic development in Austin should involve the participation of a broad section of citizens, both from the standpoint of determining economic directions, and of enjoying economic benefits and focus on the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the country. To achieve these ends, four primary issues were developed in the Goals Program: management of urban and economic growth; employment; preservation and improvement of the natural and cultural environment; and municipal fiscal stability. Performance standards for the above goals should be defined. Methods of monitoring, quantifying and reporting the effects of the City's efforts should be developed to assure that these issues are correctly addressed.

The City's vision states that "we want Austin to be the most livable community in the country."

### **GOAL 210.0 AUSTIN'S ECONOMY SHOULD PROVIDE A STABLE, HIGH LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT AND FULLY UTILIZE HUMAN RESOURCES WHILE MAINTAINING NATURAL AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION.**

The objectives and policies presented here conclude that an economic development process is often necessarily one of balancing or trading off goals which are traditionally exclusive. It is necessary, therefore, that the process be conducted in the public sphere with community participation. Municipal governments have traditionally had limited ability to control local economic events. If an urban growth management program is to be used to reach goals of stability, low unemployment and environmental quality, it must have jointly acceptable performances and tests for local economic development and be aligned with environmental protection and land development policies.

The following objectives and policies are intended to provide the mechanisms and directions necessary to assure that future economic development is consistent with community values.

Council Resolution 050113-52 amended 030612-15 to strengthen the connection between Economic Development Policy and Environmental Protection Policy.

### **Objective 211.0 Develop a municipal economic policy that is consistent with the community's desire to manage growth and its effects.**

The City should provide an appropriate forum with adequate information for public examination and continuous review of the issues surrounding the formulation of municipal economic policy. This forum should be broadly representative of the city's population.

The City of Austin is committed to serving the public by implementing programs and policies benefiting all citizens and geographic areas. The City of Austin enjoys high levels of quality amenities benefiting new and existing businesses and strives to influence economic development resulting in quality of life for its citizens.

Policy 211.1 *Evaluate and report on the status and trend of the local economy with particular emphasis given to the impact of existing and proposed municipal policies upon economic growth and stability.*

Several private and public organizations are engaged in monitoring relevant local economic variables. Information from these sources should be supplemented where necessary and implications for the local economy determined. City staff should use the best fiscal and economic analysis techniques. National economic events should not be ignored, since they will eventually affect Austin through variations in national demand for locally produced goods and services and through fluctuations in the local money markets. This information should be presented in the public forum. The City should also promote the continued existence of the eclectic small businesses found city-wide that have helped capture the image of Austin.

The policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 that is authorized by Council Resolution 20030612-015. The resolution creates a business Development Division in the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office to assist small businesses, artists, arts groups, and organizations on business development and other topics resulting in the creation of a "single point of contact" for economic development. The resolution also seeks to improve the coordination of city departments providing services to small businesses through regular interdepartmental meetings on issues that could impact small business owners.

Policy 211.2 *Evaluate the potential impacts of migration, employment and per capita income arising from specific cases of proposed industrial, or more generally, economic growth.*

It is very important to examine the characteristics of a potential new firm. The effects on employment, the long run stability of employment, per capita income and interindustry relationships may vary greatly between industries. The

short and long run results of acquiring a new industry must be carefully examined if economic health is to be maintained. Consideration should be given to the wage and skill levels of a proposed industry's employees for compatibility with Austin and regional needs.

Policy 211.3 *Estimate the fiscal impact on City of Austin facilities and services.*

In the case of a large or significant development, at least, an examination of the fiscal impact on the City should be undertaken. Fiscal impact, while important, must be considered in the overall context of economic and environmental effects.

**Objective 212.0 Anticipate and control the environmental impact of economic growth.**

Recent industrial growth has been characterized by very low levels of direct environmental pollution. Indirectly, however, any increase in economic activity, employment and population leads to pressures affecting the environment, if it is not wisely managed.

City of Austin shared investments should be limited to developments located in the Desired Development Zone, and firms must agree to comply with current and future water quality regulations for all current and future projects during the term of any economic development agreement.

Urban growth fueled by economic expansion is expending more and more of the natural features which contribute so greatly to the quality of life in Austin. Air and water pollution are becoming more frequently visible. Residential developments are encroaching upon the most valuable and precarious watersheds and natural areas. Economic growth and prosperity should not be enjoyed at the cost of environmental degradation.

A moderate, healthy rate of economic expansion should be attained without destruction of the many natural features which are so greatly valued. Careful attention should be paid to primary and secondary economic factors through the application of rigorous environmental, economic and fiscal performance criteria. These should permit adequate growth in job opportunities while protecting those community features which make Austin a desirable place to live.

Policy revisions are supported by Council Resolution 030612-15 amended by Resolution 050113-52. The Mayor's 2007 Street Smarts Task Force looked at the Economic benefits to being a Bicycle Friendly City and will be proposing recommendations to Council in 2008 in this area.

Policy 212.1 *Undertake careful assessment of the possible direct and indirect environmental impact of economic development.*

A relatively complete understanding of the direct and indirect environmental impacts of economic development is required before the community can intelligently participate in an evaluation of proposed development. It is important, therefore, that the results of such analysis be presented to the public in a straight-forward, understandable manner. Economic development policies should include controls to ensure that proposed development maximizes positive environmental impacts while minimizing negative environmental impacts.

Policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 that is authorized by City Council Resolution 20030612-015.

Policy 212.2 *Design, adopt and enforce standards which would require new industries or businesses to meet specific environmental impact criteria.*

Such standards should be quantified to the greatest extent possible and effectively enforced. These standards should be codified in subdivision, zoning and various environmental impact ordinances. It is important that these controls be extended as far as possible outside Austin's city limits to ensure their effectiveness. In addition to meeting minimum requirements relating to water quality protections, new developments should be encouraged to achieve high levels of green building standards.

Policy revisions are supported by the City of Austin Economic Development Policy 2005 and the Austin Climate Protection Plan and Zero Waste Plan.

Policy 212.3 *Environmental impact analysis of economic development should include the effects of the construction required to provide utility and transportation facilities.*

Environmental impacts resulting from public facility construction have not in the past been given enough attention. In the future such attention should include an examination of (a) population carrying capacity, (b) location and patterning of service nodes, and the time-distance relationships within the immediate locality and throughout the total urban environment, and (c) the direct destructive or reconstructive impact on the natural and cultural environment.

Austin Bicycle Plan adopted 1998 recommends bicycle facilities on most major roadways which should be considered as viable methods to move people to and from targeted locations.

**Objective 213.0 Encourage full employment of all segments of Austin's population.**

The frequency and magnitude of periodic increases in unemployment should be kept as low as possible. The historical immunity of the Austin economy from the employment fluctuations associated with the national business cycle should be maintained.

Policy revisions reflect the findings of the Mayor's Task Force on the Economy (2002) which states "government, civic, and business leaders need to challenge all economic sectors and institutions, including their own institutions of government, to become cultures of innovation. The consequences for any metro area that does not respond to this challenge are low productivity, stagnant living standards, and reduced opportunity for its citizens" and led to Council Resolution 0306012-15, establishing a Comprehensive Economic Policy for the City of Austin.

**Policy 213.1 *Evaluate proposed developments in terms of their potential impact on local economic stability.***

Industries should be favored that match the region's competitive advantages, support the cultural sector, result in viable opportunities for the local workforce, and are among the targeted industries for future economic growth.

Policy revisions reflect the findings of the Mayor's Task Force on the Economy (2002) which states "the national economy is the key to the short-term outlook for Austin" and led to Council Resolution 0306012-15, establishing a Comprehensive Economic Policy for the City of Austin.

Policy 213.2 *Attention should also be given to interindustry relationships in assessing the long-term desirability of proposed industries.*

Those industries which would create strong interindustry ties in the local economy and which would be very sensitive to the national business cycle would tend to increase cyclical unemployment in the local economy. On the other hand, these industries would also exert strong job-creating forces during periods of national economic resurgence.

Policy 213.3 *Occupational requirements of proposed industries should correspond to the occupational characteristics of the local unemployed labor force.*

This policy reflects a strong preference to provide jobs for unemployed and underemployed Austin residents rather than to stimulate in-migration. Industries with corresponding requirements should be viewed more favorably than industries which would depend upon in-migration to satisfy their labor requirements.

Policy 213.4 *Growth of employment in state agencies should be projected and evaluated in order that the community impact of this growth may be known and incorporated into the formulation of economic development policy.*

The lack of a centralized personnel management system for State agencies makes evaluation of this growth difficult, but an attempt should be made to continually monitor the source of growth as well as assess its impacts.

Policy revisions reflect the Texas Workforce Commission findings on employment trends for the Texas State Government.

**Objective 214.0 Reduce the number of economically disadvantaged persons through greater utilization of human resources.**

The relative affluence of most Austin citizens often overshadows the persistent problem of inadequate incomes for some. Low incomes are often attributable to insufficient or inappropriate education and skill attainment. Readily accessible educational and job training services should be provided to those in need.

This is a more difficult task than is usually assumed. A very substantial undertaking in this area will be required to make a significant impact on unemployment and underemployment resulting from insufficient skill and educational levels.

Policy 214.1 *Existing employment training programs should be continued, expanded and their effectiveness measured.*

The federal manpower training program no longer exists. The City of Austin provides funding to Skillpoint Alliance: a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that builds partnerships among industry, education and the community to foster college and career success for Central Texans, while meeting employers' needs for a qualified workforce. The contract is currently managed by the City of Austin's Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Offices. The goal of Skillpoint Alliance is to encourage life-long learning, improve career opportunities and build self-sufficiency while strengthening Central Texas as a region that attracts and retains good jobs.

Policy 214.2 *Encourage proposed new industries to participate in job training programs and seek greater participation from State agencies.*

Participation in job training programs should be considered in evaluating the desirability of proposed developments. Firms which have low skill level entrance requirements should employ and train underskilled, unemployed Austin residents to the greatest extent possible. These programs should be designed to allow employees to increase their job skills.

Policy 214.3 *Seek federal and private resources to establish a fund for minority economic development loans. These loans should be supplemented by a business management assistance program.*

Potential minority entrepreneurship should be encouraged by facilitating small business loans. Business administration assistance could be provided by student volunteers and retired businessmen.

Policy 214.4 *Employment services should be made more effective and located in or near low income neighborhoods.*

Decentralization of all appropriate services should continue. Transportation for the physically and financially disadvantaged should be improved.

**Objective 215.0 Provide relief from the constraints of low incomes through innovative utilization of existing public resources and services.**

Often many persons cannot hope to escape the burden of poverty through skill development, especially the elderly and large families without multiple wage earners. Federal welfare assistance may not prove adequate to provide a standard of living which facilitates wholesome human development. For these reasons, the City should make every attempt to find underutilized municipal facilities which may be made available in constructive ways to Austin's disadvantaged citizens.

*Policy 215.1 Job opportunities for low skill, low income persons should be made easily accessible through inexpensive public and/or private transportation.*

Underskilled persons face many barriers to employment but accessibility is one that can be resolved with relative ease through the provision of an adequate, inexpensive transportation system.

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus.

*Policy 215.2 Appropriate municipal facilities and properties should be made available for various community purposes.*

Undeveloped municipal property in low income neighborhoods could be made available for such purposes as community gardens. A community food marketing cooperative could be established to augment community gardens.

*Policy 215.3 The utility rate structure should be made less regressive to cushion the impact of rising fuel costs on disadvantaged persons and to encourage conservation.*

For a discussion of the utility rate structure see "Government and Utilities", Chapter 2, Section 4.

Policy 215.4 *Utility services should not be terminated for nonpayment in the case of very disadvantaged households.*

The City should refer such cases to appropriate public and private social organizations and mutually develop a schedule of extended repayment.

**Objective 216.0 Continue expansion of economic opportunity through the elimination of racial, ethnic, and sexual discrimination.**

Policy 216.1 Continue implementation of the five-year Affirmative Action Plan of the City of Austin.

The City's commitment to equal employment opportunity has been reaffirmed through the adoption of policies designed to assure that the municipal government sets a proper example for the community to follow. The municipal administration should persist in efforts to achieve the goals set forth in the Affirmative Action Plan. The effect of this effort should be monitored.

Policy 216.2 *Continue enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance by the City of Austin.*

The City has adopted an Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance designed to further Austin residents' efforts to obtain employment without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin or physical handicap. This ordinance parallels the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. It recognizes the responsibility of municipal government to prevent illegal discrimination.

Policy 216.3 *Assure that appointments to all boards and commissions are representative of the entire community.*

The general public interest should be adequately represented on boards and commissions.

### *Environmental Management Introduction*

Within the context of this plan, environmental management refers to the monitoring and regulation of society's impacts on natural physical elements. The environmental features of the Austin area which are deemed to be of public value by the community should be protected by the City.

The application of adequate and proper land use regulations remains the most important single instrument of locally administered environmental protection. The fundamental premise to be incorporated into these regulations is that the urban and suburban development of land should be restricted in areas with limited ability to absorb urbanization without severe environmental degradation, and in instances where plans for development disregard environmental constraints.

#### **GOAL 310.0 PRESERVE LARGE AMOUNTS OF OPEN SPACE AND ASSURE THAT THE MOST SUITABLE NATURAL AREAS ARE SO-RESERVED.**

Open space is defined as land which is neither occupied by private lots nor dedicated as public streets. Open space must be defined differently according to its proximity to urbanization. The concept of open space outside the urbanized area includes private lands. Its preservation is aided by a compact urban form and the retardation of urban sprawl. Open space within the city proper must be designated as common land, unless the open space is purchased as part of the Water Quality Protection Lands, Balcones Canyonland Preserve, or other managed mitigation lands; the term should not refer to undeveloped pockets of private land unless the land is restricted through a conservation easement. The reservation of ample amounts of open space does check, to some extent, gross population densities within the city. This coincidental effect, however, is not considered adequate to place the goal in direct conflict with the density considerations of "Government and Utilities", Chapter 2, Section 4.

1992 Bonds provided for \$22 million for acquisition of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. 1998 Bonds provided for \$65 million for Water Quality Protection Lands. 2006 Bonds provided for an additional \$50 million for open space acquisition. Ordinance 20071108-121 (Land Development Code, 25-8-27) established the Barton Springs Zone Mitigation Fund for the purchase of open space in the Barton Springs Zone. Open space has been preserved through numerous Development Agreements and PUD's (such as the Steiner Ranch, Forum PUD, Lowe's Sunset Valley Development Agreement (20050324-048)).

#### **Objective 311.0 Discourage development in the areas of greatest environmental or agricultural value.**

The determination of high environmental value is dependent on public goals and public opinions. Environmental value may incorporate such features as lush or mature vegetation; particularly mature trees; habitats capable of supporting varied wildlife; interesting geologic features; interesting topographic relief; natural drainage waterways and their environs; water quality; water recharge to aquifers; and the potential for erosion, as in areas of steep slope. Agricultural value refers to the capabilities of the land for field crop use.

The Smart Growth Initiative (970905-A) established the Desired Development Zone (DDZ) and the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ) as a growth management strategy. Targeted open space acquisition has been implemented thorough the Water Quality Protection Lands and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. 100- and 25-year floodplain development is limited through Section 25-7-92 of the Land Development Code (LDC); water quality setbacks are established through the Critical Water Quality and Water Quality Transition Zones (LDC 25-8-92 and 93); Critical Environmental Features and Wetlands are regulated (LDC 25-8-281 and 28); steep slopes are protected by the Net Site Area calculation (LDC, 25-8-62) and through limitations on allowed construction on slopes (LDC, 25-8-301 and 302). Removal of trees and natural area preservation are regulated (LDC, 25-8-601 and 627).

Policy 311.1 *City policies concerning utility extension and annexation should include the consideration of environmental value.*

Consequently, these policies should continue to be used to discourage development in areas of high value while encouraging development in more appropriate locations. Large scale decisions involving creek watersheds or other large areas should, therefore, be influenced.

Chapter 25-9, Division 2 (Extension of Service), of the Land Development Code establishes standards for approval of service extensions and allows for an Environmental Assessment to be required to evaluate the impact of the request for service extension. A number of annexation and development agreements also address these concerns, including the Stratus (Circle C) agreement (August 15, 2002), Robinson Ranch Annexation and Development Agreement (040617Z-12), Bradley Parties Agreement (August 2000), Steiner Ranch Agreement, the Lowes Sunset Valley Agreement (20050324-048) and the Webb Troup Agreement (1997).

Policy 311.2 Require impact assessments for all major extensions of utilities and roads.

All extensions of utilities and roads should be analyzed according to their direct and indirect effects on the environment and land use. Public and social benefits must be weighed against public and social costs. This should particularly apply to all Capital Improvements Program projects.

Chapter 25-9, Division 2, of the Land Development Code allows for the requirement of an environmental assessment for the extension of utility service. The 2025 Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP) includes an Environmental Suitability Matrix for roadway projects in the Groundwater Recharge Zone (approved by Planning Commission October 9, 2002), and the River Place Development Agreement, approved May 22, 1984.

Policy 311.3 Direct utility expansion away from areas of high resource value.

A growth management policy should continue to determine areas in which growth will be facilitated, and areas where growth will be discouraged. This policy should be based, to a large degree, on the preservation of natural resources with high public value.

The Drinking Water Protection Zone should typically be excluded but include evaluation of the environmental benefit that the extension of service might enhance, especially where it eliminates septic systems over areas with unsuitable soils. Where the City has obtained a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCNs) from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the City has the legal obligation to provide water and/or wastewater service in accordance with the City's service extension request ordinances depending upon the type of certificate. The Water and Wastewater CCNs (Certificates of Convenience and Necessity) excludes the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ). The Land Development Code (13-9-34) requires City Council approval for extension of service when it is located outside of the approved CCN and within the DWPZ but outside the City's full purposed corporate limits.

Policy 311.4 *Investigate the use of tax policies to encourage land use of low intensities on certain lands with high environmental value.*

In order to delay development of certain important natural areas, the City should consider utilizing some form of tax assessment based more on use value than speculative market value. Tax relief is important because increased taxes due to surrounding, rising market values are a deterrent to the retention of undeveloped land.

Policy 311.5 *Create special districts, based on environmental characteristics, and apply appropriate development requirements.*

Continue support of regulations that divide Austin's jurisdictional areas into several large districts according to common environmental characteristics or constraints, engineering properties or water resources. Continue support of subdivision requirements which vary accordingly from district to district. Special overlay districts have been successfully coupled with subdivision controls in other municipalities. The use of overlay districts for each regulated special constraint provides alternatives, and the concept should be continued in subdivision regulations. Encourage and support the development and continuation of similar special districts and implementation measures, in areas beyond Austin's ETJ, by other planning and regulatory jurisdictions in Travis, Hays, and Williamson Counties.

The Smart Growth Initiative (970905-A) established the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ) and the Desired Development Zone (DDZ) as a growth management tool. Watershed classifications were established in section 25-8 of the Land Development Code that created different development restrictions in the form of varying impervious cover limitations, limits for development on slopes, waterway setback requirements, and water quality control requirements for the treatment of stormwater runoff which are based on the sensitivity of each watershed, and its role in water supply.

**Objective 312.0 Place important natural areas in the public domain.**

Regulation through use of the City's police power cannot always achieve the public interest and may create too great a burden on private landowners.

Continue the acquisition of property in fee simple, or the purchase of certain property rights, such as easements.

1992 bonds provided for \$22 million for acquisition of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, 1998 bonds provided for \$65 million for acquisition of Water Quality Protection Lands, and 2006 bonds approved an additional \$50 million for open space acquisition. The establishment of the Barton Springs Zone Mitigation Fund (Land Development Code, 25-8-27) is for the purchase of open space in the Barton Springs Zone to offset the impacts of redevelopment in that zone. The Town Lake corridor study (October 1985), the 2000 Roma "Austin Town Lake Corridor Study," and the Waterfront Overlay Districts established in the Land Development Code also support this policy.

Policy 312.1 *Purchase unique areas in advance of development.*

A list of unique areas in Travis County should be developed immediately and maintained. Priorities for acquisition should be established. Plans and programs should be developed. Whenever possible, acquisition of open space, particularly of unique areas, should take place in advance of urban pressure.

See previous reference to purchase of Water Quality Protection Lands and open space provided for by recent Bond elections and statement regarding Balcones Canyonlands Preserve systems.

Policy 312.2 *Preserve unique natural areas through the acquisition of easements.*

Easements may be purchased and under certain conditions their dedication may be required. Scenic and conservation easements should be pursued, perhaps concurrently with drainage and utility easements, during the development of subdivision plans. In some cases the City may purchase the development rights attached to property.

Ideally, all such easements acquired should be shown on the recorded subdivision plats. Acquisition after the subdivision is recorded increases the likelihood of error regarding the existence of such easements.

A major amendment to the 1998 Austin Bicycle Plan is currently underway; there are ideas presented for the update which include merging off road trails into the plan as transportation corridors, which would include securing easements and possibly utilizing existing drainage easements. Coordination between Departments will be essential to realizing this Policy to its full potential.

Purchasing of conservation easements is included in the strategies for land purchases made through the Water Quality Protection Land and Open Space property acquisitions referenced above.

Policy 312.3 *Create and maintain subdivision controls to lessen the impact of new development on important natural areas.*

The subdivision ordinance is the major land use control for new development. Major environmental objectives include: alleviation of flood damage, erosion and poor drainage practices; protection of water quality; protection of natural resources; and the provision of adequate open space.

The control of three important parameters of land use intensity will allow for the application of subdivision controls on a performance standard basis. First, density - the number of dwelling units per acre of land - provides a fairly direct measure of the impact a development will have on utilities, roads, services and social and educational institutions. Less directly, it effects the impact of the development of the natural landscape and hydrological systems. Density standards should be used instead of lot size, thereby encouraging open space and more efficient land planning. Second, open space ratio is that proportion of a site neither occupied by private lots nor dedicated to public right-of-way. A ratio should be established for each new development though the ratio may vary according to the capacities of the natural resources on the site. Flexible development controls with high priority on open space can facilitate the construction of needed housing, while concurrently discouraging development of floodplains, steep slopes and other areas of high public concern. Third, the impervious surface ratio is that portion of a site occupied by all constructions that water does not readily penetrate. This is perhaps the most important measure of land use intensity. It will have direct influence on runoff and flooding, water quality, vegetation, inner-city climate and the natural resources of the site. The subdivision ordinance should encourage the lowest possible ratios of impervious coverage, regardless of density, through comprehensive site planning and innovative design.

Since adoption of this plan, Chapters 25-7 and 25-8 of the Land Development Code now include impervious cover limitations, based on watershed, that are enforced with subdivision plans, as well as requirements for construction on slopes, critical environmental feature protection, tree and natural area protection, and requirements for the provisions of water quality, flood and erosion control ponds to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff.

### **Objective 313.0 Minimize the environmental impact of activities which are indirectly related to new development.**

#### **Policy 313.1 *Establish regulations for the cutting of trees and vegetation.***

The City should continue to regulate the removal or trimming of trees and vegetation on City property, right-of-way and easements. The City should also consider regulating the removal of trees on privately owned parcels. Any policies or regulations should recognize that redevelopment poses perhaps the greatest threat to urban vegetation. A

policy encouraging new planting and replanting would be supportive of this strategy. The City should encourage the philosophy of planting “The Right Tree in the Right Place.” The City Code Section 6-3-62 sets out the distances from electric facilities for tree plantings and the Commercial Design Standards Section 2.2.2.3 speaks to the distance from facilities for location of trees.

Sections 25-8-601 and 627 of the Land Development Code establish tree protection requirements. This addition is necessary to address the City Code Section 6-32-62, which regulates plantings near utility infrastructure, and the Commercial Design Standards, Section 2.2.2.3.

Policy 313.1 *Establish regulations for the cutting of trees and vegetation.*

The City should continue to regulate the removal or trimming of trees and vegetation on City property, right-of-way and easements. The City should also consider regulating the removal of trees on privately owned parcels. Any policies or regulations should recognize that redevelopment poses perhaps the greatest threat to urban vegetation. A policy encouraging new planting and replanting would be supportive of this strategy.

Sections 25-8-601 and 627 of the Land Development Code establish tree protection requirements. This addition is necessary to address the City Code Section 6-32-62, which regulates plantings near utility infrastructure. The Commercial Design Standards, Section 2.2.2.3 speaks to the distance from facilities for location of trees. The City should encourage the philosophy of planting “The Right Tree in the Right Place.”

Policy 313.2 *Improve regulations for all alterations to drainageways.*

Creek environments and floodplains should be retained in their natural condition. Specifically, the following controls should continue to be enforced on waterways: new structures should meet ordinance requirements in one hundred-year floodplains; only limited modifications should be made for drainage improvements; vegetation should be allowed to flourish within floodplains, except where health or safety are threatened; structures which must span waterways should not impede flood flows; and cutting and filling within the floodplain should be allowed only in extreme circumstances.

This policy is controlled by the 100- and 25-year flood plain development limitations (Land Development Code, 25-7-92), protection goals to maintain the natural and traditional character of waterways to the greatest extent feasible (LDC, 25-7-61), and cut/fill limitations (LDC, 25-8-341 and 342).

Policy 313.3 *Continue to support regulations for grading, cutting and filling.*

The primary purpose of regulating these activities is to ensure that subdivision utilities and streets, drainage features and landscaping are not placed on the ground prior to subdivision approval. Regulations, especially near waterways, should be strictly enforced.

Cut/fill limitations are in the Land Development Code (25-8-341-342). Development near waterways is regulated by the establishment of the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ), both regulated by waterway classification, which include limitations of allowed development within these zones (Land Development Code, sections 25-8-261, 262, 25-8-392 and 393, 25-8-422 and 423, 25-8-452 and 453, and 25-8-482 and 483).

Policy 313.4 *Control off-road vehicle use on land designated as open space.*

Lake Travis and Lake Austin offer good examples of degraded open space: nearly all public beaches are rutted by motor vehicle tracks and littered with trash.

Access should be provided to, but not through, parks and common open space. Appropriate control devices should be used.

## **GOAL 320.0 ASSURE THE SENSITIVITY OF DEVELOPMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES.**

The need for municipal control of development stems from the public character of certain land resources. Environmental regulations are primarily concerned with preventing hazards to safety or health, or adverse impacts on important natural resources.

**Objective 321.0 Provide sufficient environmental data to enable adequate evaluation of proposed developments.**

Information regarding natural features is necessary for the proper evaluation of any construction project. The City should continue to require information for subdivision development, public projects and private activities that are defined by the Land Development Code as development and should continue to enforce these requirements, including erosion controls for all development including construction of single family homes regulated through the building permit process and subdivision construction.

Regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code.

**Policy 321.1 *Provide more efficient procedures for subdivision applications to assure adequate review of environmental factors.***

All pre-applications, preliminary applications, final plats and accompanying materials should be channeled through one City office. A coordinator should assure that all elements of the subdivision application are reviewed by the appropriate City departments in proper sequence.

Subdivision development is regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code and includes requirements for Environmental Assessments (section 25-8-121) which include a Hydrogeologic Report, Vegetation Report, Wastewater Report, and Pollutant Attenuation Plan for industrial uses.

**Policy 321.2 *Continue to prohibit any alterations to development sites prior to the approval of the final subdivision plat and subdivision construction plan.***

The Subdivision Ordinance should provide for a thorough review of the design and engineering aspects of development prior to any ground preparation or clearance. This assures that review decisions regarding basic design, transportation, drainage and utilities are neither precluded by premature development activities nor result in costly alterations. Penalties are enforced in cases where grading has occurred prior to submission of the subdivision applications.

Regulated through section 25-8 of the Land Development Code.

**Objective 322.0 Create and continue to support strong environmental standards for new development within the City limits and in the City's ETJ.**

This objective will involve investigating new ways of exercising development control. Subdivision regulation is most crucial outside the city limits and within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) where zoning and other City ordinances are not applicable. Existing enabling legislation should be used to extend the application of the City's current Subdivision Ordinance.

Environmental Standards established in Chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, affected by Title 30, SB 245, HB 1704.

**Policy 322.1 *Protect floodplains and waterways from development.***

Not only does flooding present a hazard to life and property, but floodplains usually support the richest and most varied plant and animal life in the county. City codes and policies should continue to closely regulate residential and commercial development within one hundred-year floodplains considering the unique features of each waterway. Protection afforded by the Land Development Code, Chapters 25-7 and 25-8 should be continued to be enforced through the Subdivision Ordinance, or by the designation of a parkway system. Stream buffer zones should be enforced which do not necessarily coincide with the designated one hundred-year floodplains.

These regulations are currently supported by the subdivision requirements, pursuant to the Land Development Code, chapters 25-7 and 25-8. Refer to previous reference for development restrictions in the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ) of Chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code.

**Policy 322.2 *Establish and support development guidelines based on the physical and engineering constraints of the land.***

A determination of erosion potential, slope stability, shrink-swell capacity, excavation potential, bearing capacity and septic tank suitability can be derived by analyzing the combined characteristics of soil, geology and slope. The

purpose of the guidelines should be to reduce the risk to public safety and the risk of property damage; to prevent uses of land which threaten to increase erosion and water pollution or require unsightly scarring of hillsides; and to check the high government costs of extending services and utilities and of controlling drainage, erosion and water pollution in special areas. Poorly regulated development in areas of high development constraint results in increased remedial expenditures. Some of this cost, particularly that related to drainage, streets and utilities, must be borne by the public. These improvements require specialized engineering and construction practices in areas of high constraint.

The Land Development Code regulations include requirements for net site area (section 25-8-262), construction on slopes (sections 25-8-301 through 304), clearing (sections 25-8-321 through 323), cut/fill and spoil (sections 25-8-341 through 343), environmental assessments (section 25-8-121) including a hydrologic report (section 25-8-122), requirement for a drainage study (section 25-7-31), and criteria for approval of site plans relative to erosion (section 25-7-61).

*Policy 322.3 Provide and support guidelines for drainage and runoff control that reduce erosion, peak flows and poor water quality.*

Flooding, erosion and water pollution are directly related to urbanization and the development process. Adequate regulation is needed to mitigate water pollution caused by urban runoff, to alleviate the excessive runoff volumes and peak flow characteristics of developed areas which cause flooding downstream, and to prevent future remedial public projects which create unsightly and costly alterations to the natural character of waterways. Drainage and runoff regulations should allocate more of the real costs of urbanization to the private sector. In the past, some of these costs have been publicly subsidized in the form of expenditures for expensive remedial drainage projects. Other costs, such as those which pertain to water pollution, have been assumed by no one.

Water Quality Controls are required based on watershed classification (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). Two-year detention for erosion control is required (LDC, 25-7-61). Flood controls are required by the Land Development Code (section 25-7-61) and the Drainage Criteria Manual to regulate peak flow rates for the two-, ten-, twenty-five- and one-hundred-year frequency storms to prevent increased inundation of any building or roadway surface. The Watershed Protection and Development Review Department also has programs that are approved by Council through the annual budget process which address water quality education (Grow Green, Pet Waste Reduction) that are successfully targeted at key areas where bacteria and nutrients are high and has implemented a program and regulatory response to eliminate coal tar as a source of water pollution (ordinance 20051117-070).

Policy 322.4 *Create ample minimum open space requirements for new residential development.*

Open space should be provided within a short walk of most dwellings in new developments. Subdivision controls should incorporate such a requirement. Open space may be either dedicated to the public, acquired or remain as common private land. Likewise, it may be either improved for recreational use or left as a natural resource protection area. This policy would also aid in the regulation of density and impervious surfaces.

Currently, the parkland dedication ordinance (Land Development Code, 25-1, Article 14) supports this goal, as does the 40% natural area requirement for development in water supply rural watersheds (Land Development Code, 25-8-454).

Policy 322.5 *Continue to preserve unique areas and protect certain sensitive areas from the effects of development.*

Controls on development should assure that natural assets of highest public value whether geological, hydrological, archaeological or vegetative, remain as open space. These controls should be integrated with open space requirements, coupled perhaps with development incentives. Outright purchase, or purchase of easements in advance of development may be preferable to subsequent dependence on open space requirements in subdivision regulations.

This policy is supported by targeted open space acquisition (Water Quality Protection Lands and Balcones Canyonlands Preserves), net site area requirements (Land Development Code, 25-8-62), Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) and Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ) limitations (LDC, 25-8-92-93), CEF setbacks (LDC, 25-8-281 and 282), and Tree and Natural Area preservation requirements (LDC, 25-8-601-627).

Policy 322.6 *Continue to protect vegetation during the development process.*

Subdivision controls should incorporate site guidelines designed to preserve wooded vegetation. Street design, the siting of structures and the allocation of open space should accommodate this policy. A minimum of vegetation should be removed in order to control erosion and sedimentation.

This policy is supported by 40% Natural Area requirements for Hill Country Roadways (Land Development Code, 25-2, Article 9, Division 3), Tree and Natural Area Preservation Ordinance (LDC, 25-8-601 through 267), clearing of vegetation controls (LDC, 25-8-321), Environmental Assessment Requirements including a vegetative report (LDC, 25-8-121-123), and Save Our Springs turf limitations (Environmental Criteria Manual 1.6.9.2.E).

*Policy 322.7 Strengthen the septic tank ordinance.*

The soils in most of Travis County offer severe limitations to the proper functioning of septic tank systems. The use of septic tanks in these areas has long been recognized as a threat to the quality of both surface and ground water. Austin has an obligation to abate water pollution within its regulatory control area.

The City of Austin is an Authorized Agent of The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Water Utility is a Designated Representative to administer the On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) Program. The TCEQ was previously named the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). The program falls primarily under the authority of TCEQ rules contained within 30 TAC Ch.285 On-Site Sewage Facilities. Additional regulatory authority is derived from Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 5, Section C, Ch. 341 and Section D, Ch. 366 of Sanitation and Environmental Quality. The City Ordinance No. 990211-E and the City Code, Ch.15-5, adopt the current Ch. 285 as its local rule.

*Policy 322.8 Create development standards based on noise impact and air quality.*

This policy primarily involves establishing guidelines for the construction of housing near major traffic arterials, the municipal airport, Bergstrom Air Force Base, and commercial or industrial areas.

**Objective 323.0 Establish and maintain environmental standards for extending streets and utilities into environmentally sensitive areas.**

The extension of all streets and utilities should be coordinated with a growth management policy. Environmental sensitivity should be foremost for all location decisions. Specific location and construction guidelines are necessary to minimize environmental damage.

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) and other school district agreements established standards for development in environmentally sensitive areas. The Land Development Code (section 25-8-301) established standards for construction of roadways on steep slopes. Environmental assessments are required for development in environmentally sensitive areas and include a requirement for justification of roadway and utility alignments (LDC, 25-8-121). Standards are established for the approval of utility service extensions (LDC, 25-9-34), and the City may request environmental assessments for the evaluation of service extension requests.

Policy 323.1 *Require the public evaluation of environmental impacts for all utility construction.*

The purpose of the environmental impact assessment is to ensure that the direct and indirect impacts of utility extension are considered. These assessments need not follow National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines nor be extensive and costly. The assessments should consider the relative merits and drawbacks of projects and alternatives. City departments, boards and commissions should have the opportunity to review and comment. These assessments should be required of all major Capital Improvements Program projects.

Environmental assessments are required for construction over the Edward's Aquifer recharge and contributing zone, for areas within the Critical Water Quality or Water Quality transition zone, in a floodplain, or where slopes are greater than 15%. Policy 323.1 would significantly increase the cost of construction for water, wastewater, electric, and stormwater. Austin Energy responds to demand and reliability of the service area. It is required by the Public Utility Commission to provide safe and reliable service to our customers and is reviewed by Watershed Protection for substations. Austin Energy's line extensions are reviewed by the General Permit inspector and utility coordination staff.

Policy 323.2 *Reduce cutting and filling for highway construction.*

Loop 360, west of Austin, serves as an example of extensive hillside scarring which must be avoided in the future. Public improvements of this sort greatly detract from the natural beauty of the hill country.

Construction on slopes is regulated (Land Development Code, 25-8-301) and impervious cover limits on slopes are enforced through both subdivision and site plan permits. Cut and fill is restricted to four feet for roadway construction outside of the right of way (LDC, 25-8-341 and 342). Deletion of “newly constructed” by consensus.

Policy 323.3 *Keep the impervious coverage of land at a minimum.*

Impervious surfaces are those portions of a site occupied by all constructions that water does not readily penetrate.

Guidelines should be maintained in the Subdivision Ordinance which regulate the allowable coverage by impervious surfaces. The subdivision controls should encourage the lowest possible ratios of impervious coverage, regardless of density, through use of comprehensive site planning and innovative design. Holding ponds and other water retention facilities are also required to reduce runoff to a volume and quality more closely resembling that which would exist under natural conditions.

Impervious cover limitations are included in the Land Development Code and are enforced through the subdivision process. The Land Development Code, section 25-7-61, requires flood detention and erosion detention ponds, and sections 25-8-211 and 523 establish requirements for water quality ponds for the treatment of stormwater runoff, for both subdivision and site plan construction.

### **GOAL 330.0 PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY OF TRAVIS COUNTY'S CREEKS, LAKES AND AQUIFERS.**

The quality of numerous water resources in and near Austin has already been seriously endangered by the process of urbanization. The city should strive to protect its nearby water resources in order to maintain a healthy water supply and prevent expensive treatment prior to public use, to maintain the excellent recreational utility of the nearby lakes and springs and to maintain the quality of water resources.

The City should actively pursue these goals through comprehensive utilization of pertinent state-enabling legislation. Included is Section 21.357 of the Texas Water Code, which enables the development of plans for controlling and decreasing pollution or potential pollution from generalized discharges of waste which are not traceable to a specific source, such as storm sewer discharges and urban runoff from rainwater.

Current environmental standards are governed by chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, and the Smart Growth Initiative establishment of the Drinking Water Protection Zone (DWPZ).

**Objective 331.0 Improve the quality of water runoff and lessen peak discharge.**

Most of Austin's water pollution is due to rain runoff from urban areas. Control of runoff includes the reduction of peak surface discharges, and will help to alleviate water quality problems and diminish erosion and flooding. Controls should also reduce the need for channel improvements and improve the appearance of waterways.

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are based on watershed classification (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). Flood Controls are required by the Land Development Code (section 25-7-61) and the Drainage Criteria Manual, such that stormwater runoff peak flow rates for the two-, ten-, twenty-five-, and one-hundred-year frequency storms shall not cause increased inundation of any building or roadway surface.

**Policy 331.1 *Minimize the impervious coverage of land by construction.***

Watershed classifications were established in chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code that provides different impervious cover limits based on the sensitivity of the watershed and its role in water supply.

**Policy 331.2 *Develop alternatives for the treatment of drainage from extensive pavement.***

Pavement collects residues which normally wash into streams during rainstorms. Some treatment facilities should be included in the installation of all large areas of pavement. In some areas this procedure may also be extended to public streets. Grease traps will not cleanse runoff water, but may remove a large portion of organic and inorganic oils. The addition of settlement basins would further remove sediment.

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are required, based on classification of watersheds (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). The Urban Watersheds Structural Control Fund was established for use in retrofitting water quality controls in urban watersheds (LDC, 25-8-214). The redevelopment exception (LDC, 25-8-

26) allows for the redevelopment of highly impervious sites in exchange for adding current water quality controls or, in the BSZ, in exchange for adding water quality controls and purchasing off-site mitigation lands (LDC, 25-8-27). Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (LDC, 6-5-52), and a stormwater discharge permitting program has been established to regulate businesses that discharge into storm drain systems (LDC, 6-5-57).

Policy 331.3 Encourage ponding and other forms of runoff retention in drainage plans for new development.

Various methods of runoff retention allow sediment to settle, thereby improving creek water quality; reduce surface flow speed, thereby reducing erosion; and allow runoff to reach drainageways gradually thereby reducing flood potential. All development plans should consider the need for runoff retention.

Water Quality Controls for the treatment of stormwater runoff are required, based on classification of watersheds (Land Development Code, 25-8-213). The Urban Watersheds Structural Control Fund was established for use in retrofitting water quality controls in urban watersheds (LDC, 25-8-214). The redevelopment exception (LDC, 25-8-26) allows for the redevelopment of highly impervious sites in exchange for adding current water quality controls or, in the BSZ, in exchange for adding water quality controls and purchasing off-site mitigation lands (LDC, 25-8-27). Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (LDC, 6-5-52), and a stormwater discharge permitting program has been established to regulate businesses that discharge into storm drain systems (LDC, 6-5-57).

Policy 331.4 *Assure that development in the more environmentally sensitive watersheds meets water quality and drainage standards.*

Development will result in permanent alteration of the water quality and drainage characteristics of a waterway. This should be minimized and confined to as few drainage areas as possible. Ideally, urban development should be considered in new watersheds only after those closer to the city are fully developed. In addition, certain waterways may be deemed more valuable than others. Barton Creek and certain tributaries of Onion Creek, for example, supply most of the recharge water to the Edwards aquifer in Travis County.

Watershed classifications were established in chapter 25-8 of the Land Development Code, which establishes development restrictions in the form of varying impervious cover limits, restrictions on development on slopes,

waterway setback requirements, and water quality control requirements to treat stormwater runoff that are based on the sensitivity of the watershed and its role in water supply, including the non-degradation standard for water quality in the Barton Springs Zone (LDC, 25-8-514).

Policy 331.5 *Require erosion and sediment control during construction.*

Soil loss and stream siltation are often severe during construction activities. Numerous inexpensive procedures can minimize this damage. Each construction project should have an effective erosion and sediment control plan, and inspections of the site should ensure that it is followed.

Temporary erosion and sedimentation controls are required for all development until permanent revegetation has been established (Land Development Code, 25-8 Article 5).

**Objective 332.0 Improve the collection and disposal of wastewater.**

Wastewater has always been a threat to water quality. The best possible methods for collection and treatment should be utilized.

Policy 332.1 *Prohibit the use of septic tank systems in areas where soil, topography or kindred factors are not favorable.*

Travis County has the regulatory authority over septic and alternative waste systems outside the City's full purpose jurisdiction.

Policy 332.2 *Consider the use of new alternative methods of sewage disposal for individual residential units in unsewered areas.*

Policy 332.3 *Discourage the discharge of sewage effluent into waterways.*

The effects of a proliferation of package treatment plants on the environments of Travis County's creeks could be profound unless effluent is retained for irrigation of open space or regional wastewater facilities are used. The City should oppose all applications for package treatment plant permits which allow discharge into creeks and waterways, and the City should ensure that all new developments which will depend on package plants reserve adequate open space for irrigation.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality January 2003 RG-357 Policy Statement encourages the regionalization of wastewater facilities to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Texans.

Policy 332.4 *Provide improved treatment for Austin's municipal sewage.*

Tertiary treatment will improve the quality of effluent from Austin's secondary treatment facilities.

Policy 332.5 *Avoid placing sewer lines in creekbeds.*

Creekbeds and their environs have traditionally been considered the most cost-effective routes for wastewater collection lines due to gravity flow. Some infiltration and exfiltration is to be expected of all sewage pipes, though the amount is highly dependent on the care exercised during construction. Sewage lines in creekbeds greatly aggravate the problems of infiltration and exfiltration. The proximity of sewage flow to creek flow, with the accompanying potential for exchange, should be avoided whenever possible. Alternate routes should be sought.

Where creeks are used for recreation, or feed into a water supply, the costs of alternative location should be compared with the costs of replacing the recreational facility and the costs of additional water treatment.

Wastewater lines are prohibited in the Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ), except for necessary crossings (Land Development Code, 25-8-361), and the Austin Clean Water Program has removed numerous wastewater lines from the creek beds during the implementation of this program.

**Objective 333.0 Investigate alternative methods of sewage collection and treatment and employ the best combination of sewage systems obtainable for all areas of Travis County.**

Travis County offers a diverse assortment of terrain, geology and soils. The characteristics individual residential treatment systems, small private sewage collection and treatment systems, including the alternatives to septic tank systems, and the extension of large municipal systems should be thoroughly analyzed. The physical conditions of each newly developing area should then be evaluated to determine the appropriate system.

Policy 333.1 *Assure that wastewater house service lines are well constructed and that installation is strictly inspected.*

Surveys have indicated that faulty residential service lines are responsible for the majority of sewer infiltration problems. High quality materials and careful construction should be required and installation of the lines should be monitored.

Policy 333.2 *Maintain the enforcement of the Industrial Waste Ordinance.*

The Industrial Waste Ordinance establishes essential, but rather ambitious controls on the discharge of abnormal or toxic wastes to either the sanitary sewer system or the storm sewer system. Adequate staff is needed to ensure that all appropriate establishments apply for permits, that monitoring is accomplished and that surcharges are judiciously applied.

Traps, catch basins, and interceptors to remove waste contaminating oil, grease, sand or other harmful materials are required (Land Development Code, 6-5-52). A stormwater discharge permitting program has been established (LDC, 6-5-57) and pretreatment and monitoring is required (LDC, 6-5-58).

#### **GOAL 340.0 IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE.**

The City should seek the most environmentally sound and feasible methods of waste disposal.

**Objective 341.0 Begin planning for the resource recovery of waste.**

The City should seek a cost-efficient program of solid waste recovery. Waste recovery programs need not be financially self-sufficient. The costs should be weighed against the alternate economic costs of land disposal plus the environmental and social costs of additional landfills.

An alternative target could be seeking the most efficient and modern technologies for solid waste recovery. The City should be aggressive in its pursuit of innovative recycling efforts that assist with Solid Waste recovery. The Zero Waste plan, which will increase landfill life and reduce the need for an infinite number of landfills, is an example of a creative effort to plan for the recovery of waste. Another way to plan for waste recovery is to help to create new markets for recycling.

Policy 341.1 *Create programs to salvage and recycle waste collected by the City.*

The City should determine which types of waste can be marketed or reused and which methods are most appropriate for extracting these items.

The City has several programs already in existence in which items picked up are also recycled. Austin has a very successful green waste program, where 100 percent of all its green waste is collected and composted. Items such as aluminum cans are sold and recycled. A pilot for glass is underway downtown and a pilot for plastic bags is planned. The City is constantly looking to create markets to use recycled materials.

Policy 341.2 *Consider the conversion of wastes to useable by-products such as compost, or utilize waste for fuel.*

Processes to convert waste into useable by-products need investigation as alternative means of disposal. When considering financial viability, the cost of production minus the revenue from the products should be compared with the alternative cost of complete land disposal plus environmental costs.

Some alternative waste disposal systems seek to recover the heat potential of waste for fuel. These merit investigation and should be attempted with the prior removal of as many non-combustibles as possible.

Policy 341.3 *Discourage the sale of non-returnable containers.*

A similar strategy has been undertaken in the state of Oregon. It is usually accomplished by requiring deposits on all glass and metal containers of certain types.

**Objective 342.0 Locate landfills properly and employ only the most environmentally sound designs and disposal methods.**

The city will always need landfills; regardless of the success of waste resource programs, there will always be elements of residue which cannot be utilized. The City must strive to maintain the best possible operating procedures and utilize the best fill and site designs which should, as a consequence, improve the public image of landfills.

Policy 342.1 *Landfill sites should be selected with full consideration of geologic characteristics and the preservation of surface and ground water quality.*

Policy 342.2 *Landfill sites should be managed and closed according to long range plans which determine the ultimate use of the land.*

Deletion of 'finished' and addition of 'closed' based on Consensus.

**GOAL 350.0 ABATE NOISE DISTURBANCES.**

Noise is a growing concern to Austin residents.

**Objective 351.0 Reduce transportation related noise.**

Practically all noise problems in Austin are related to transportation, and the major proportion of the city's total environmental noise is generated by road traffic.

Implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrians Master Plan could reduce automobile miles traveled, which could affect transportation related noise.

Policy 351.1 *Minimize road vehicle noise.*

Many of the motorcycles, automobiles and trucks operating in Austin emit excessive noise. In all cases, proper muffling installed by individual operators can remedy the problem. Vehicle owners should be re-quired to make this investment in muffling equipment, and monitoring should be more frequent than the yearly safety inspection. Specific noise standards for each class of vehicle should be established and enforced.

Policy 351.2 *Improve the design of residential areas relative to major arterials, and promote the use of buffers along major traffic routes.*

Major arterials should be planned and designed in advance of development. Buffer strips of open space and vegetation should be encouraged along these major roads. The width of the buffer strip should be related to the anticipated traffic noise and to the adjacent land use.

Policy 351.3 *Restrict non-compatible land uses near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.*

Prevent the creation of hazards that obstruct the airspace in and around the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA), or interfere with visual, radar, or other systems controlling aircraft, creates a wildlife hazard, and establishes Land Use Regulations that protects the airport from encroachment of noise-sensitive land uses.

A Compatibility Land Use Zone should extend one-half mile from the established Day-Night Level noise contour line. The Airport Overlay Zones are intended to prevent the introduction of non-compatible land uses, such as residential uses, place of worship or schools in the vicinity of the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Compatible uses, such as agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses will be permitted.

Change necessary to address the Airport Zoning Act (Chapter 241, Texas Local Government Code) and City ordinance 010809-78, which passed by Council on August 9, 2001, and amended City Code to add a new Chapter 25-13.

**Objective 352.0 Regulate noise from stationary sources.**

Though not as pervasive as traffic generated noise, sound from stationary sites can create a persistent annoyance to those who reside or work nearby. Generally, however, noise from stationary sources is much easier to monitor and regulate.

**Policy 352.1 *Limit construction and repair work to particular daylight hours.***

Prohibition of nighttime construction and repair activities is especially important when applied to public works projects and other activities which are located in residential areas. Emergencies, of course, create exceptions. Time limitations on noisy activity is perhaps the easiest and simplest way of reducing noise annoyance.

**Policy 352.2 *Set specific noise performance standards for industry.***

Noise is perhaps the easiest industrial performance standard to understand and monitor. Stringent noise standards should ensure that new industry provides adequate planning for, and investment in, noise reduction features.

**Policy 352.3 *Control the location of noisy commercial establishments relative to residential areas.***

Certain commercial enterprises, such as discotheques, nightclubs, gas stations, car washes and establishments which utilize loud speakers, have very significant local noise impact. Consider expanding existing ordinances and developing a new noise ordinance.

**Objective 353.0 Encourage acoustic considerations in residential construction.**

As opposed to control of outside sources of noise, residential acoustical features attempt to lessen noise disturbances as they impact the home environment. These features work well to absorb noises from air conditioning and

appliances inside the home. Acoustical controls are especially needed for houses that are adjacent to streets with high traffic volumes.

*Policy 353.1 Improve noise insulation and noise reduction features in the building codes.*

The presence of pervasive urban noise and the prevalence of noisy home appliances justifies public concern for reasonable acoustical features in new housing. Many related aspects such as air conditioning, plumbing and wall construction are already regulated.

*Policy 353.2 Improve noise control features in multi-unit housing.*

Due to the proximity of residences and common walls, noise problems are most crucial in multi-unit structures. Consequently, requirements for noise reduction features should be more stringent for these than for detached housing.

**GOAL 360.0 ABATE AIR POLLUTION.**

Air pollution is a concern to many Austin citizens. The automobile is recognized as the major source of air pollution in the city.

Population growth has increased air pollution worries among Austin citizens. The Austin-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is currently in violation of the Federal health-based standard for ground-level ozone concentrations. Reducing regional ozone depends on lowering emissions of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, the two primary precursors of ozone. Pollution from cars and trucks is the leading contributor to zone formation in Central Texas. In 2002 the Austin-Round Rock MSA entered into the Early Action Compact (EAC) in order to prepare and implement the Clean Air Action Plan. The EAC sets measurable, enforceable milestones for developing and implementing the Clean Air Action Plan which produces earlier achievement than the traditional nonattainment process. This policy is also supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

### **Objective 361.0 Reduce the use of automobiles.**

Since automobiles are the major source of air pollution in Austin, the reduction of total vehicle miles traveled per day would be the most effective way to mitigate the problem. It is necessary to create acceptable alternatives to the use of automobiles.

#### *Policy 361.1 Upgrade the service and convenience of public transportation.*

In order to substantially effect automobile usage, the transit system must attract many "choice" riders, those who have automobiles available as an alternate transportation mode. "Choice" riders use the transit system only if the services of the system are attractive relative to automobile use, or if they are motivated by social or environmental concerns. The services of the public transit system must be improved to allow riders to arrive approximately at their destination quickly and directly. The probability of improving public transit enough to make it attractive relative to the automobile is slight, however, regardless of public expenditure.

#### *Policy 361.2 Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement.*

Many Austinites are discouraged from walking and bicycling due to the lack of safe, convenient routes. Safety and access for bicyclists and pedestrians are usually secured at the cost of a certain amount of motor vehicle convenience. Continuous routes with protected crossings at busy streets are needed throughout the city.

Approximately 35% of the 1998 Bicycle Master Plan is complete. The plan is currently undergoing its first major amendment. New cost estimates and facility recommendations are being prepared, and policy will be presented in December 2008 for Council consideration.

#### *Policy 361.3 Provide incentives for car pooling and vanpooling.*

Car pooling for work-related trips has been endorsed nationally as an energy conservation measure. Reduced automobile use, particularly during peak traffic hours, should result. Parking incentives, especially at places of employment, may prove to be most effective.

“Vanpooling” addition by consensus.

Policy 361.4 *Reduce emissions generated by congested traffic through encouraging alternative work schedules.*

Teleworking allows eligible employees to work from home and can reduce participants vehicle miles traveled. Compressed work week programs allows eligible employees to work four 10-hour days and take the fifth day off or nine-hour days and take the tenth day off. Working a compressed schedule typically reduces participants’ VMT by one round trip per week and has a positive impact on air quality.

This policy addition is supported by the Austin Climate Protection Plan.

#### **Objective 362.0 Reduce Air Emissions from Fleet Vehicles.**

This objective includes fleet emission reduction policy designed to ensure that the City of Austin fleet emission obtains the cleanest operating vehicles possible and that operators drive these vehicles at maximum efficiency.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

Policy 362.1 *Purchase low-emission, alternative fuel, or best available vehicles for the City fleet.*

The greener a vehicle is the less fuel it uses. Less fuel burned means fewer natural resources consumed. Reducing fuel use means that less nitrogen oxide and particulate matter are emitted into the air.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy. In 1998, the City Council approved a grant for the City to receive funding to purchase a Hybrid Ford 250 for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program fleet vehicle; it is still currently this Section’s vehicle.

Policy 362.2 *Expand the use of low-sulfur fuels, compressed natural gas, Propane and other alternative fuels available to fleet vehicles.*

Propane, natural gas, electricity, Hydrogen, Biodiesel and Ethanol are all alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel. Increasing our use of alternative fuels reduces our dependence on foreign imports, promotes energy security, and provides cleaner emissions.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

Policy 362.3 *Practice exceptional maintenance on all existing City vehicles.*

According the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, proper maintenance can reduce fuel demand by up to 15 percent and reduce air pollution.

This new objective and subsequent policies address City policy (Austin Climate Protection Plan) that addresses City fleet policy.

### **Objective 363.0 Reduce point-source and off-road mobile source air emissions.**

Industrial sources of air pollution are relatively minor in Austin. Electric power production is a significant source of air emissions which will have a greater impact if, and when, fuels other than natural gas are used.

Policy 363.1 *Create air emission performance standards for point-sources.*

Air performance standards may perhaps be implemented most effectively through ordinances or contractual agreements between the City and private industries.

Policy 363.2 *Control dust emissions related to construction activities.*

Construction practices which minimize dust emissions should be required of all projects. These procedures coincide with those used for erosion control and include the incremental removal of minimum amounts of vegetation and existing cover, temporary planting for ground cover and sprinkling. The utilization of these practices should be checked at the times of other regular inspections.

Policy 363.3 *Discourage the incineration of waste.*

Until waste recovery is perfected, landfilling remains the most appropriate method of residential and commercial waste disposal. The use of incinerators for volumetric reduction of wastes results in a poor tradeoff for air pollutants. Small incinerators tend to be the most inefficient.

Policy 363.4 *Place new power plants outside the urbanized area.*

Power plants are a significant source of air emissions in Austin. New plants designed to burn fuel other than the relatively clean natural gas will have a much greater negative impact on air quality.

Policy 363.5 *Reduce emission from off-road mobile sources.*

The City funds an incentive program through Austin Energy to encourage citizens to trade high-polluting, gas-powered lawnmowers for new electric models. Rebates are offered periodically. Lawnmower engines are not subject to on-road regulations for efficiency; they are often surprisingly bad polluters. Electric and propane lawn equipment are better alternatives. Policy addition also addresses the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023.

**Objective 364.0 Reduce emissions from mobile sources by educating local businesses and the public to promote behavior change.**

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

Policy 364.1 *Conduct outreach to residents and local businesses to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportations and other ozone-reducing activities.*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

Policy 364.2 *Contact private and public entities with the objective of coordinating voluntary air quality strategies for constructing equipment operating within the Austin Area.*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

Policy 364.3 *Promote voluntary idling restrictions.*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

Policy 364.4 *Coordinate an ozone action day notification and response system.*

Objective added to address the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023. The objective promotes ozone reduction by educating the public about the role their actions play in improving area air quality.

**GOAL 370.0 ABATE LIGHT POLLUTION.**

**Objective 371.0 Restrict the use of high intensity lighting and obtrusive flashing lights except where essential for public safety or emergency situations.**

Policy 371.1 *Devise standards for the use of display lighting.*

Policy 371.2 *Devise standards for glare and reflection near major traffic arterials.*

### *Government and Utility Services Introduction*

This section of the Comprehensive Plan coordinates government and utility service policies with the overall goals of environmental preservation and growth management. Government services and utility service policies effect the quality of the environment and land use planning. The basic municipal utilities of wastewater and solid waste collection, electricity and water service can be provided within a framework of preserving Austin's natural environment, managing urban growth and reducing urban sprawl.

A long range water and wastewater plan is seen as a major tool for pursuing these goals. Annexation and taxation are also viewed within the context of growth management, land use planning and the equitable distribution of municipal costs. Other services such as libraries, fire protection, auditorium and coliseum facilities should continue to be provided at high levels and periodically updated.

#### **GOAL 410.0 PROVIDE UTILITY SERVICES IN THE MOST EFFICIENT AND EQUITABLE MANNER CONSISTENT WITH SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES.**

Three major concerns relate to the direct environmental effects of utility construction and operations: energy and resource conservation, growth management and reduced sprawl.

#### **Objective 411.0 Minimize environmental damage in the construction and operation of utility facilities.**

Policy 411.1 *Minimize the odor at wastewater treatment facilities and minimize the damage to water quality from wastewater treatment plant effluent.*

Municipal wastewater treatment facilities should incorporate new methods beyond secondary treatment as downstream uses change, such as the change from non-contract recreation to swimming,

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has designated the river quality downstream of Austin as excellent.

Policy 411.2 *Reduce the overflow of sewage from wastewater mains during periods of peak flow through replacement or relief of overloaded lines and lift stations.*

Policy 411.3 *Implement programs to eliminate storm water infiltration into older, existing wastewater systems.*

Policy 411.4 *Minimize damage to creek beds from sewer line placement through improved procedures, including restoration and placement of lines away from the creek.*

Policy 411.5 *Locate and construct power plants, electric substations, utility lines, water and wastewater treatment plants and other utility facilities in a manner compatible with surrounding land uses, presenting as little visual confusion as possible.*

One method of lessening the visual impact of utility facilities would be to encourage the underground placement of utility lines within subdivisions, taking into consideration vegetation and terrain.

Policy 411.6 *Ensure that regulations on privately owned sewage disposal systems and septic tanks provide for their effective, non-polluting operation.*

Most of Travis County is either not suitable or only moderately suitable for septic tanks. Septic tanks should be prohibited in areas which have unsuitable geology or topography.

Policy 411.7 *Oppose the proliferation of independent water and wastewater utility districts.*

The Texas Water Quality Board recognizes the benefit of a single, regionalized wastewater collection and treatment system. The City should oppose independent utility district formation where municipal wastewater service can be made available in the future. If there is a demonstrated need for earlier development, interim use of package plants could be permitted with specifications approved by the City. Collection systems should be built to specifications which would permit connection to the City's wastewater collection system.

Policy 411.8 *Limit the use of the pumping and hauling operations of raw wastewater from developments planning to connect to the City's wastewater system.*

Policy supported by City Council Resolution 20080214-055.

**Objective 412.0 Pursue opportunities to support the Zero Waste plan for the City of Austin to include education outreach, community participation, and other programs that promote energy conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, renewable energy resources, and resource conservation.**

Austin's Zero Waste Plan will take into consideration Austin's current and planned public and private solid waste infrastructure, as well as our city's Climate Protection Program. Recommendations developed through this process are integral to achieve the U.N. Urban Environmental Accord's goal to reduce by 20% the per capita solid waste disposal to landfills by 2012 and zero waste by 2040. Energy and greenhouse gas language is drawn from the Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023.

Policy 412.1 *Evaluate electric rate structure changes as a means of promoting energy conservation.*

Electric rate making includes the allocation of production costs to customers and the stabilization of electric loads to maintain low average per kilowatt hour cost. Further reference can be made to Policy 412.5. Under the current rate structure, the per unit charge for electricity decreases as the amount of electricity consumed increases. Economies-of-scale and higher charges for peak use also effect per unit charges. Consideration should be given to lowering per kilowatt hour charges for low volume users within particular user groups to encourage energy conservation.

Policy 412.2 *Discourage the use of lighted outdoor displays and signs which consume an excessive amount of electricity.*

Some lessening of electricity demand, and thereby electric generating fuel, could be realized through minimizing lighted outdoor signs. Restrict the total electric demand of new signs.

Policy 412.3 *Evaluate building codes and technology on a continual basis to improve heating and cooling efficiency.*

Implement the most energy efficient building codes in the nation and aggressively pursue energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades to existing building stock.

Addition drawn from the Austin Climate Protection Plan.

Policy 412.4 *Undertake public education programs to encourage more efficient use of heating, lighting, air-conditioning systems and household appliances.*

Policy 412.5 *Encourage more even electric use between peak and off-peak times.*

Previous policies relating to electric consumption were aimed at reducing energy and fuel consumption through reduction in total kilowatt hour electric usage. A major portion of the cost of providing electricity is the cost of the generating facilities. These must be constructed to meet peak demand. A reduction of off-peak usage without a reduction in peak usage would thus require large per kilowatt hour expenditures for the provision of electricity.

In order to reduce the capital expenditure required for the operation of the electric utility it is necessary to reduce the peak demand for electricity.

Policy 412.6 *Continue to investigate the cost, resource conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, and renewable energy resources potential and environmental hazard of alternative electric generation fuel sources.*

Policy language drawn from Austin Climate Protection Plan which is supported by Resolution 20070215-023.

Policy 412.7 *Continue to investigate and promote alternatives to land filling solid waste..*

Currently the majority of Austin's solid waste is disposed of in sanitary landfills. It is recommended to continue enhancement of the current diversion programs, as well as implement other programs focused on source reduction, resource re-use, recycling, and composting. Help to educate the City of Austin on Zero Waste Policy initiative, continue use of green waste, and look for ways to enhance this market within the City and the Central Texas Region.

Change to explanation necessary to include all of Solid Waste Services recycling activities (recycling collection, yard trimming collection, large brush collection, bulk collection, etc). These materials are taken to different disposal sites and not landfills. Austin's Zero Waste Plan will take into consideration Austin's current and planned public and private solid waste infrastructure, as well as our city's Climate Protection Program. Recommendations developed through this process are integral to achieve the U.N. Urban Environmental Accord's goal to reduce by 20% the per capita solid waste disposal to landfills by 2012 and zero waste by 2040.

**Objective 413.0 Promote a compact, contiguous and planned urban form using utility service to guide growth.**

The patterns of growth can significantly affect the quality of the natural landscape and the cost of providing the many municipal services needed for the maintenance of the community. The sequence of development and its resulting pattern have direct bearing on the cost of providing utility services.

The most efficient pattern of development for the provision of municipal services is one that is compact, with minimum distances required to provide services from central locations. This applies to the distribution of water, collection of wastewater, transmission of electricity, garbage collection, police and fire service. Requirements for transportation rights-of-way are minimized in a compact urban configuration through reduced travel distances. The compact and contiguous form would also minimize the encroachment of new development into environmentally sensitive areas. Development location can be directed by planning the extension of municipal facilities and encouraging full development in areas which are already served by newly extended facilities before additional extensions are made.

**Policy 413.1 *Develop a phased, long range program of water and wastewater services to promote compact, contiguous and planned growth, particularly in the City's Desired Development Zone.***

Since development decisions are often made well in advance of actual construction, a long range utility extension program addressing the location of major water and wastewater facilities should be prepared and adopted by the City Council. This would be used as a guide for the Capital Improvements Program, funding for which is approved by City Council annually through the budget process. It would coordinate, at the policy level, water, wastewater and other facility expansion plans.

Austin City Code Chapters 2-14, 25-1, and 25-9 and the City's annual budget ordinance support the policy revisions.

Policy 413.2 *Coordinate government service facility plans to assure uniform and concurrent extension of all services.*

Policy 413.3 *Discourage the use of septic tanks in favor of the centralized municipal wastewater system, particularly in the Desired Development Zone.*

Septic tank regulations should be used to reduce environmental health hazards, minimize damage to water sources and promote development within the Desired Development Zone of the City of Austin.

Austin Land Development Code Chapters 25-9 and City Council Resolution 980204-8 support the policy revisions.

Policy 413.4 *Discourage additional urban development in City-owned water districts or districts supplied with City water unless the areas will also be provided with municipal wastewater service.*

Areas which are outside the city and are served with municipal water should be limited by the carrying capacity of their existing water system unless they are part of an overall, combined water and wastewater plan. This would help to redirect development to appropriate areas within Austin.

Policy 413.5 *Continue higher rates for out-of-city water service.*

In addition to reflecting the cost of water service outside the city, policies for out-of-city services should discourage non-contiguous growth and development beyond areas of combined City utility service availability, including wastewater.

Policy 413.6 *Institute higher water and wastewater service tap fees for out-of-city service than for service within the city.*

Tap fees should be used to divert growth to areas of complete municipal utility service.

Policy 413.7 *Annex those areas which can most economically be served from existing and proposed wastewater service.*

This will encourage the development of areas proposed for water and wastewater service extension as other City services are provided upon annexation. It will also reduce the speculative benefit of holding land off the market.

Policy 413.8 *Require all water and wastewater systems located within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction be designed and constructed in accordance with City standards and specifications.*

This requirement would ensure future City annexation efforts are not impeded by substandard utility infrastructure and would discourage premature development before City facilities become available.

Policy revisions are supported by Austin City Code Chapter 25-9.

Policy 413.9 *Consider extending the present one hundred foot distance within which connection to the City of Austin wastewater system is mandatory for new development.*

This would reduce septic tank development on the edge of the city where municipal wastewater service will become available within a reasonable time. This requirement would be waived where the local collection system cannot accommodate the added service.

Policy 413.10 *Minimize the cost to the City of connection to water and wastewater service if service is needed prior to the Capital Improvements Program schedule.*

Policy 413.11 *Limit the use of lift stations which transport sewage from a drainage area which is not served by municipal wastewater service unless such use is determined to be consistent with growth management objectives.*

Policy 413.12 *Encourage the development of currently undeveloped portions of the city where utility service is already available, taking into consideration local environmental and neighborhood constraints.*

**Objective 414.0 Promote water conservation and adopt practices that will reduce peak day water system requirements and per capita water usage.**

Objective addition supported by Austin City Code Chapter 6-4.

**GOAL 420.0 PROVIDE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT SERVICES TO ALL CITIZENS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

**Objective 421.0 Continue to provide a high level of emergency service to the citizens of Austin.**

Change by consensus.

Policy 421.1 *Continue to respond to innovations in police, emergency medical, and fire service.*

Policy 421.2 *Continue to provide equitable emergency service to all areas of the city.*

Change by consensus.

Policy 421.3 *Periodically update the police, fire, and emergency medical Strategic and/or Business Plan.*

Change by consensus.

Policy 421.4 *Continue to coordinate and work with surrounding municipal and county emergency service agencies to ensure the highest level of service is provided to all citizens.*

The Austin-Travis County EMS (A/TCEMS) Department is the primary provider for medical rescue within the City of Austin and Travis County. A/TCEMS is supported in its operation by 18 first response agencies and 16 corporate first response teams. Outside the city limits, within Travis County, responsibilities for first response are shared among EMS/Fire agencies (both volunteer and paid). The City of Austin EMS Department expanded its services to include all of Travis County under an Interlocal Governmental Agreement beginning May of 1977. After an exhaustive assessment by A/TCEMS System stakeholders (1998-2001) regarding which government should host the A/TCEMS Department, it was recommended that the City of Austin continue in its current role as the managing entity for A/TCEMS. Under an expanded interlocal governmental agreement, Travis County formally transferred all of its EMS related administrative duties to the City of Austin EMS Department to streamline operations and minimize duplications in administrative process. The EMS Communication Center is located within the Combined Transportation Emergency & Communications Center (CTECC); all City/County 911 calls for EMS assistance are processed through this center.

**Objective 422.0 Continue to provide a high level of library service to citizens in all areas of Austin.**

Policy 422.1 *Periodically update the Library Facilities Master Plan to provide adequate central, resource and branch library facilities.*

Council Resolution 010301-20 supported the funding and creation of the Austin Public Library Facilities Master Plan which is currently utilized.

Policy 422.2 *Consider a joint City/County library system.*

In order to provide superior library service to the entire region, a metropolitan library system should be considered, provided that Travis County pays its proportional share of the costs.

**Objective 423.0 Continue to provide municipal facilities for major cultural events.**

Policy 423.1 *Maintain auditorium and coliseum facilities for municipal activities.*

Policy 423.2 *Investigate the need for new or improved facilities for major cultural events.*

**Objective 424.0 Locate municipal offices and service yards to provide maximum service to the public.**

Policy 424.1 *Continue to consolidate the location of the main offices of municipal departments.*

The central offices of municipal departments should continue to be consolidated to promote efficient interdepartmental operations and to provide a single central location where all municipal staff services are available and other city government and public business can be conducted.

Policy 424.2 *Provide regional or neighborhood municipal office centers for selected government business.*

Policy 424.3 *Develop a public facility plan to coordinate municipal service yard operations and designate municipal office locations.*

**Objective 425.0 Correct existing deficiencies in utility service to neighborhoods.**

Existing neighborhoods should receive highest priority in the long range program of utility improvements and in the preparations of the Capital Improvements Program.

**GOAL 430.0 COORDINATE THE EXTENSION OF MUNICIPAL SERVICE, LAND USE CONTROL AND MUNICIPAL TAXING AUTHORITY THROUGH A LONG RANGE PLAN WHICH SETS PRIORITIES FOR ANNEXATION.**

**Objective 431.0 Establish a plan for annual annexations which promotes sound development and fairly distributes the cost of municipal services.**

An annexation plan which is coordinated with a utility extension and facility plan should link the provision of municipal services with the *ad valorem* tax revenues needed to pay for those services, and extend land use and development controls. Three main categories of land surrounding the city may be annexed: residential land or undeveloped land with the potential for residential development; industrial and large scale commercial areas; and areas of environmental concern.

**Policy 431.1 *Annex areas which will be provided with government services and utilities through coordinated municipal utility and service extension plans and the Capital Improvements Program.***

Residents outside Austin receive the benefit of many City services, such as major park and library facilities, the airport, auditorium facilities and cultural and recreational programs. The additional benefits of police and fire protection and City sanitation service would become available upon annexation.

In most instances, the annexation and development of land depends on the extension of water and wastewater service. The general areas to be served by overall facility plans would be considered prior to annexation. Annexation and extension of water and wastewater mains would be coordinated through the Capital Improvements Program.

Annexation of desired development locations would encourage more rapid subdivision within those areas, provide for utility main extensions, more rapidly return *ad valorem* fiscal benefits and utility revenues, and extend land use and building quality regulations.

**Policy 431.2 *Continue to annex major industrial and commercial areas on the periphery of the city.***

Based on the municipal services provided, there is little difference between industry and commerce located within or on the periphery of the city. Both benefit from a stable, sound community from which to attract labor and customers. In order for both industry and commerce to share equally in the cost of maintaining the city, they should be included in the *ad valorem* tax base.

Policy 431.3 *Consider annexation of those areas of natural environmental sensitivity.*

Areas of particular natural environmental sensitivity should be annexed and designated for environmental conservation. Detailed performance standards for development should be applied to prevent their degradation. Large developments would be required to meet currently available municipal services, including water and sewer facilities.

## **GOAL 440.0 ASSURE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EQUITABLE TAX POLICIES.**

### **Objective 441.0 Promote quality development through tax policies.**

Policy 441.1 *Support the enactment of state-enabling legislation to permit property tax incentives for historic structures.*

One method to preserve historic structures and prevent the property's conversion to more intensive use is to reduce the cost to the owner of the historic structure through lower property taxes.

Policy 441.2 *Investigate the feasibility of legislation which would permit tax incentives to promote renovation of deteriorated structures.*

Increased property value and resulting higher taxes often deter the owners of deteriorating structures from renovating their homes, even when financing is available through public programs. Special legislation should be investigated that might permit a delay in tax reappraisal where increased taxes deter housing rehabilitation.

Policy 441.3 *Stabilize taxes on residential property in older neighborhoods through improved zoning controls.*

In many older neighborhoods undergoing some transition in land use, the potential for residential land for higher intensity use increases land value. This, in turn, increases property taxes. Speculative increases can be minimized by protecting neighborhoods through improved zoning controls, as discussed in Policy 511.2.

Policy number changed since Austin Tomorrow referenced the incorrect policy number.

**Objective 442.0 Support fiscal policies which aid the poor.**

Policy 442.1 *Continue to provide property tax exemptions for the elderly.*

There is currently a five thousand property tax exemption for homesteaded residential property of persons age sixty-five and over, as permitted by state law.

Policy 442.2 *Encourage state legislation which would give property tax relief to low income persons.*

The Goals Program suggests tax relief for low income persons. The burden of property taxes falls heaviest on low income and fixed income persons. Current legislation does not allow for any relief to particular groups of persons other than the elderly. Other states have adopted procedures whereby property taxes which exceed a given percentage of a person's income, either in total or according to a graduated scale, are refunded. The City should support State adoption of such a circuit breaker property tax approach.

**Objective 443.0 Continue to investigate alternate sources of revenue to augment municipal funds.**

Federal, state and other funding sources should be actively pursued to aid the City in providing services and facilities. General revenue sharing, Housing and Community Development funds and other sources can supplement standard municipal funds from sales and ad valorem taxes, utility revenues and user charges for municipal services.

### *Housing, Neighborhoods, and Community Development Introduction*

This section is designed to provide a coordinated strategy to assure a quality residential environment for all of the residents of Austin. The overall objective of this topic area coincides with a long-standing national community development goal enacted by Congress to provide a decent, safe, and affordable housing and a suitable living environment for low- to moderate-income households. The strategy used consists of two interrelated parts, and each part is aimed at the achievement of a basic housing goal.

The first of these goals concentrates on the assurance of the quality of neighborhoods within the city, while the second goal is directed at the provision of housing stock of sufficient quality and at such a cost that adequate housing is available to each resident of the city. These two interrelated goals, if not approached with a series of very carefully articulated and coordinated policies and programs, may become mutually exclusive. A balance between neighborhood environment and the quality and affordability of available housing primarily for low- to moderate-income residents of the city is critical for the effective implementation of the following policy guidelines.

Policy revisions reflect language found in the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan and Action Plans.

### **GOAL 510.0 IMPROVE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY**

The quality of the city's housing and neighborhoods, including older, centrally located neighborhoods, is important to the well-being of every resident in the community. The city has a considerable number of policies, programs, and controls that have impact on various aspects of the quality of residential areas. The coordination of these diverse efforts, as well as the maximization of their effectiveness, is imperative to the achievement of quality housing and neighborhoods. It is also essential that programs directed at the improvement of neighborhood quality be tailored to the specific needs of the residents in the neighborhood.

#### **Objective 511.0 Assure the continued identity and improve the quality of Austin's existing residential neighborhoods.**

*Policy 511.1 Develop and implement specific, detailed plans tailored to the needs of each neighborhood.*

The boundaries of the individual neighborhood units that compose the city should be defined, and City policy relating to the location of arterial streets and all other public facilities and services should recognize these boundaries.

Policy 511.2 *Protect existing neighborhood from the intrusion of higher intensity land uses.*

The Zoning Ordinance should provide protection for single-family neighborhoods, especially those experiencing redevelopment pressure. The Ordinance should effectively deal with the negative results of traffic and parking problems, privacy intrusions, bright lighting, signs and other detrimental products of high intensity land uses. Higher intensity land uses in older centrally located neighborhoods have had a deteriorating effect upon neighborhood cohesion, character, security and safety. Neighborhood preservation should be the ultimate goal in the concept and administration of the Zoning Ordinance.

Policy 511.3 *Increase of the power of neighborhood residents in decisions affecting the neighborhood.*

Citizen participation in the planning process is essential. Associations representing each neighborhood in the city should be encouraged and citizen input on zoning changes and other public policy should be sought and used.

Policy 511.4 *Expand notification for proposed zoning changes.*

The number of area residents who are notified of a proposed zoning change should be increased. Renters should also be notified by the most practical means available. The procedures that notify neighborhood residents of proposed zoning changes should strive to be timely and accurate. Area residents notified of a proposed zoning change should also include neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, businesses, and other neighborhood stakeholders.

Policy addition based on zoning process adopted in S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed Income, Accessible, Reasonably Priced, Transit Oriented) Housing Policy Resource Guide. The S.M.A.R.T. Housing policy initiative is designed to stimulate the production of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents of Austin. Through the S.M.A.R.T. Housing policy, the City of Austin provides fee waivers and S.M.A.R.T. Housing development review, typically faster than conventional review. This initiative applies to new single-family, multi-family and infill development.

Policy 511.5 *Develop and review regulations and incentives tailored to affordable housing goals and construction costs associated with different neighborhoods.*

Require regular review of regulations and incentives designed to promote geographic dispersion of affordable housing to determine whether these are proving successful and adjust to match and anticipate changing market conditions.

Policy addition based upon Council-approved S.M.A.R.T. Housing Policy.

**Objective 512.0 Continue controls over the condition of existing housing.**

The Housing Code and technical provisions of the Land Development Code are the most important control available to the City to maintain housing quality and to prevent the deterioration of the existing housing stock.

Extensive code enforcement could help the city promote property maintenance and the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

Policy Revisions based on Chapter 25-12 of the Austin City Code.

Policy 512.1 *Increase the effectiveness of the Housing Code and the Code Enforcement Program.*

Balance the efforts of the Uniform Housing Code enforcement with the goal of preserving and expanding housing affordability. A narrow focus on code enforcement alone could result in increased displacement of low-income renters and homeowners.

Policy revisions based on Part 4 of the S.M.A.R.T. Housing Ordinance requiring Affordability Impact Statements. The Uniform Housing Code, not the Uniform Building Code is the adopted Housing Code. Policy language revisions reflect that code enforcement is not part of Building Inspection.

Policy 512.2 *Require strict compliance with the Code Enforcement Program, especially in the case of substandard rental property.*

The use of Certificates of Occupancy, through a program such as Rental Licensing, can provide a realistic mechanism for periodic evaluation of the effects of deterioration upon the stock of rental housing in the city, as well as a useful tool for arresting deterioration. The City would thus be given control over the condition of rental property in the community.

Policy 512.3 *Monitor housing conditions, supply and deterioration trends, and evaluate the effectiveness of housing programs and the preservation of affordable housing.*

A continuing source of up-to-date information regarding housing condition is essential for meeting city-wide housing needs. Adequate funds should be provided to maintain a continuous survey and review of housing characteristics and their effect on residents. Such surveys would provide a basis for determining program target areas and for assessing the impact of programs on the city's housing supply. A continuing source of up-to-date information regarding expiring state- and federally-assisted affordable rental properties is highly recommended and would impede the future loss of affordable housing to market conditions.

Charts are updated as part of the Annual Plan.

**Objective 513.0 Provide incentives for the maintenance of the existing housing stock.**

The City can encourage housing maintenance through tax reforms: alleviating the burden of property taxation would encourage the preservation of older neighborhoods.

Local effort should be directed toward modifying state and federal legislation to relieve some of the negative impacts of the property tax.

Policy 513.1 *Investigate the possibility of enacting legislation to permit a delay in the re-evaluation of improvements for property tax purposes in cases of rehabilitation or code compliance.*

Action should be taken to keep taxes from discouraging home improvements, for example, delayed reassessment after rehabilitation for code compliance could be allowed.

Policy 513.2 *Research the possibility of taxing property on the basis of its actual use rather than its potential market value.*

Older, centrally located single-family neighborhoods often experience redevelopment pressures as higher intensity land uses enter the neighborhood, and property market values rise. Tax assessments now increase according to market value, burdening the single-family, owner-occupant in the neighborhood. This process often contributes to housing deterioration.

Policy 513.3 *Continue rental assistance for low income families to encourage the rehabilitation of substandard units.*

Funding priorities for affordable housing extend beyond the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Assistance Payments Program and are part of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan process.

**Objective 514.0** *Assure the availability of funding to low income families for housing maintenance and rehabilitation.*

Presently, in many areas of the city, residential structures are being rehabilitated through the normal workings of the private market. In other areas, lending institutions will extend loans only for short terms and at high interest rates, making it financially difficult to undertake rehabilitation. This problem is complicated by the inability of low-income homeowners to assume the financial burden of extensive rehabilitation costs.

Policy 514.1 *Increase the scope of the Housing Rehabilitation Program which provides for low-income households residing in substandard housing.*

The Housing Rehabilitation Program, funded through the Housing and Community Development Block Grant, and various other funding programs provide loans or grants to rehabilitate substandard units for low-income households.

The criteria that should be used in the selection of rehabilitation target areas include: concentrations of owner-occupied units with serious housing deficiencies; areas where rehabilitation will complement recent public improvements; and areas which afford convenient temporary relocation.

Rehabilitation funding should be a combination of loans and grants, with the proportion of funding that a grant based upon the income of the household.

Many other programs are available beyond the Housing and Community Development Block Grant to provide for low-income households.

*Policy 514.2 Establish a self-help program for housing maintenance in low-income neighborhoods.*

A self-help program of housing repair should be directed at preventive maintenance in lower income neighborhoods which are in early stages of decline or deterioration. Such a program, through the provision of building materials, tools, technical guidance and inspection services, could effectively increase the concern of the residents for the preservation and quality of their neighborhood.

*Policy 514.3 Establish a revolving fund to guarantee high risk rehabilitation loans below market interest rates to encourage the availability of rehabilitation funding from private financial institutions.*

Private capital for home improvement loans can be made more available to lower income homeowners if the loans can be insured against default. A revolving fund should insure local financial institutions against capital losses on loans to low-income homeowners. The revolving fund to guarantee rehabilitation loans should produce available funds from private institutions of up to ten times the amount committed to the revolving fund.

To assure the quality of the rehabilitation funded under this program these loans should be accompanied by an inspection requirement.

**Objective 515.0 Assure that all new residential development maintains a high level of housing and neighborhood quality.**

The most important tools available to the City to maintain high quality in new residential construction are the Subdivision Ordinance and the Residential Code and Building Code. The following policies are directed at assuring the effectiveness of these controls.

The Housing Code has been replaced by the Residential Code and Building Code.

Policy 515.1 *Strengthen the controls over the design and construction of new subdivisions.*

Strong, flexible controls over new development are indispensable to the quality of new residential areas. Subdivision controls should encourage street designs that minimize through traffic, permanently protecting the character of the neighborhood, while providing for safe, efficient traffic circulation. Controls should properly locate neighborhood facilities, public parks and open spaces, and give adequate protection to important natural vegetation and environmentally unique areas. The performance of the subdivision design should be paramount, and flexibility should be incorporated into controls regarding street widths, lot arrangements and sizes. Flexible, effectively administered controls should permit designs for new subdivisions to respond to unique environmental conditions and engineering constraints.

Policy 515.2 *Continue to provide strict controls over the quality of new housing through revision of the Building Code.*

This policy should be continued, with particular attention given to the durability and privacy of new multi-family structures. Revisions to the Residential and Building Code to improve the quality of new construction must be carefully balanced against the need to reduce housing construction costs. It is imperative that the performance of an improved material, design, or building technique be considered in light of the cost of utilization.

The Uniform Housing Code, not the Uniform Building Code, is the adopted Housing Code. Both the Uniform Building Code and Federal Housing Administration building standards are no longer accurate.

Policy 515.3 *Provide incentives and research toward improved design, construction and financing of new housing.*

The City administration should develop housing programs and continue research of housing and subdivision design. The Building Code and Subdivision Ordinance should be readily modified to incorporate new design, layout and construction techniques.

**GOAL 520.0 INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING FOR LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS IN AN INTEGRATED SETTING.**

Housing availability pertains to the number of vacant housing units on the market for rent or sale, as well as to the cost and condition of these units. Although the level of housing availability depends on a number of complex market forces, fair municipal policies and assistance are required to assure sufficient, standard quality housing for lower income families. The goal is to provide decent housing for all residents of Austin.

Various initiatives encourage mixed-use developments and affordable housing options throughout Austin. The Affordable Housing Incentives Taskforce consists of stakeholders to review, develop, and recommend to City Council enhancements to the City's policies and procedures for providing incentives to builders to include on-site affordable housing in their developments or, secondarily, to dedicate resources for the development of off-site affordable housing in the downtown area. The Density Bonus Program gives incentives for creating affordable and workforce housing in downtown through the use of density. Ordinance 20060831-068 amends the City Code relating to zoning and allows for Vertical Mixed Use along Core Transit Corridors in an effort to increase the amount of affordable housing.

**Objective 521.0 Reduce neighborhood segregation.**

The negative impact of racial and economic segregation upon the availability of housing to minority and low-income households cannot be over-emphasized. The following policies are directed at the reduction of housing segregation to increase the accessibility of standard quality housing at the lowest possible cost to lower income and minority households.

Policy 521.1 *Adopt and enforce a Fair Housing Program.*

Continue support of the Fair Housing Ordinance. Effective enforcement of this ordinance by the Human Rights Commission will be the decisive factor in assuring housing availability at fair prices to minority households.

Policy revisions reflect adoption and enforcement of the Fair Housing Ordinance.

Policy 521.2 *Continue to require strict compliance with federal and local fair housing laws.*

The City should encourage housing providers to construct affordable housing in diverse areas of the city in an effort to promote housing integration.

Effective enforcement of federal and local fair housing laws and ordinances by the Human Rights Commission will be the decisive factor in assuring housing availability at fair prices to minority households. Strict compliance should be the requirement for all housing.

Policy revisions reflect the goals of S.M.A.R.T. Housing Policies and the Affordable Housing Incentives Task Force in addition to the Fair Housing regulations and enforcement practices.

Policy 521.3 *Improve the financial mobility of low-income households.*

The stabilization of employment, increased manpower, job training and the elimination of job discrimination are important elements of this policy.

**Objective 522.0 Provide assistance to increase the availability of standard quality housing to low-income families.**

The federal government is the source of funding for the most important housing assistance programs in Austin. The amount of funding, as well as the implementation policies for many federally designed programs, are determined on a national level. Federal legislation has, however, given cities more control over the direction and intensity of local housing assistance, most notably through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. Continuing categorical federal assistance programs often require City initiative for the procurement of funding. The following policies relate to the efforts required of the City to establish an effective housing assistance strategy.

Policy revision on consensus.

Policy 522.1 *Encourage federal rental assistance payments to low-income families.*

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Rental Assistance Payments Program in addition to multiple other rental programs provide opportunities for rental subsidized to low income households. The Public Housing Authority of Austin, as the operating agency for the Program, should make every effort to seek increased funding in subsequent program years.

Multiple programs beyond the Rental Assistance Program exist that provide rental opportunities for low income households.

Policy 522.2 *Expedite the construction of new affordable housing.*

The City should encourage funding for new public housing. Current priorities should consider the availability of vouchers, waiting lists, and the expiration of affordable housing properties.

Policy revisions reflect the Council-adopted S.M.A.R.T. Housing policy.

Policy 522.3 *Encourage federal home ownership assistance to lower income families.*

The number of categorical federal programs assisting lower income families to own their homes or provide opportunities for homeownership through homebuyer assistance was reduced by the initiation of the Housing and Community Development Block Grant and various other programs. Homeownership subsidies initiated by the City for lower income households could include interest rate reduction subsidies, extended loan terms, mortgage indemnification, or interest deductibility subsidies funded through federal block grants.

The policy is expanded to include other programs that assist lower income families. Language revisions reflect the goals of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.

Policy 522.4 *Direct rehabilitation efforts toward preserving the supply of standard housing available to low income families.*

A significant number of substandard, but salvageable, houses are demolished each year. For some of these, rehabilitation through private financing to meet Housing Code specifications would result in higher-than-competitive rents. For others, demolition is the result of public property acquisition for rights-of-way. If such houses could be publicly acquired, relocated and repaired, they could then be sold to lower income families. Through a more comprehensive preservation policy, the City can avoid the potential loss of affordable housing. A significant number of older multifamily and single-family homes are demolished, redeveloped, or rehabilitated each year. For the majority, higher market rents replace affordable rents because of the costs associated with construction and land values.

The policy revisions reflect the goals of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.

**Objective 523.0 Reduce the cost and increase the production of new housing for lower and moderate income families.**

The tools available to the City for increasing the production of low cost housing are limited, but a coordinated, comprehensive use of the policies and programs that are available could help alleviate the problem. Increased production of marketable new housing for moderate income households also increases the effectiveness of the filtering process which allows older units to become available to low income families.

Policy 523.1 *Research and encourage construction methods, materials and housing design which reduce housing costs.*

The City should research construction design techniques and building materials which reduce housing costs. The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and building codes should be readily modified in response to innovations.

Policy 523.2 *Expand research into the federal assistance available for the financing of low and moderate income housing construction.*

Many federal programs are underused because the City or program sponsor must actively pursue the federal funding source. The City should assume the responsibility of publicizing program availability as well as counseling and coordinating the efforts of program sponsors and operating agencies.

Policy 523.3 *Lower the cost of land for residential construction.*

Numerous City policies, most notably those relating to subdivision, annexation and utility extension, have a direct and marked impact upon the cost of developable land. Encouraging the use of planned unit developments or cluster housing techniques densities can effectively reduce land costs per unit. The application of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should be sensitive to their impacts on residential land costs and the feasibility of lower income housing construction. Municipal land use controls must be designed with consideration for the over-all housing needs of the community.

### *Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Facilities Introduction*

The citizens of Austin are aware of the need for parks and open space in which to pursue their recreational interests. It should be the responsibility of the City of Austin through the Parks and Recreation Department to provide for park land acquisition, facilities and programs to meet these needs. It should also be the responsibility of the City to maintain and manage recreational land in an economical and adequate manner.

It will be necessary to define future, as well as current, recreational interests and needs, and derive standards on which to base long range programs. Communication and cooperation among various agencies, boards, commissions and groups will be needed in order to assure a balanced program for open space, parks and recreational facilities.

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

### **GOAL 610.0 PROVIDE ADEQUATE PARK LAND AND OPEN SPACE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AUSTIN'S CITIZENS.**

Areas should be provided for the development of recreation-oriented facilities as well as the preservation of Austin's unique character.

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

### **Objective 611.0 Prepare a parks and recreation master plan for the city.**

Policy 611.1 *Develop a set of size and service area standards to guide the City in securing park and open space areas.*

Standards for park land and open space should meet or surpass those set by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Policy 611.2 *Discourage the building of non-recreational facilities in park land.*

Park land, because of its visibility, accessibility and availability, is a prime target for the construction of facilities which could more appropriately be placed elsewhere.

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

**Objective 612.0 Expand programs to secure adequate park land and open space to meet a plan adopted by the City of Austin.**

Policy 612.1 *Encourage private donations of funds or lands.*

The City of Austin should establish a foundation to facilitate donations of land to the City for park and/or open space needs. The benefits of land donation as a tax incentive should be publicized and the creation of land trusts for park purposes should be encouraged.

Policy 612.2 *Establish new agreements, as needed, and reevaluate existing agreements between all independent school districts and the City of Austin with reference to the purchase and use of school grounds as possible park sites.*

Policy 612.3 *Continue to develop a program of advance land acquisition by the City prior to development and before the escalation of land costs.*

Policy 612.4 *Consider revision of the Subdivision Ordinance to require developers to dedicate park land, or monies in lieu of land, for all new subdivisions.*

The Parkland Dedication Ordinance requires residential developers of subdivisions or site plans with three or more dwelling units to contribute either land or money towards the Austin Park System. Fees are collected based on the number of houses that are proposed for the development.

Policy 612.5 *Define and acquire easements for open space and/or recreational use prior to land development as an alternative to fee simple purchase or dedication.*

This policy would assist in implementing the adopted Bicycle Master Plan, where easements for linear parks/trails implement a bicycle facility in an adopted bicycle corridor.

Policy 612.6 *Maintain the Zoning Ordinance to include an agricultural zoning classification.*

The purpose of this policy is to permit the annexation of agriculturally used land and to retard the escalation of the price of land so that tax values will still permit agricultural use.

The City currently has an agricultural zoning classification (AG) that allows stables, animal and crop production, and support housing, on sites of 10 acres or more which preserve open space and valuable farming lands..

Policy 612.7 *Zone all creek floodplains in conformance with a master drainage plan.*

Policy 612.8 *Evaluate all publicly owned lands that are not in current use or identified for future use for their potential as public open space.*

Policy 612.9 *Examine all lands currently used as municipal open space, but not currently owned by the City, for feasibility of purchase.*

Policy 612.10 *Determine the potential use of land through leasing and the potential that might be available under a leasing option.*

The use of purchase options for land acquisition should also be determined.

Policy 612.11 *Seek the procurement of land and facilities through life estates.*

Policy 612.12 *Classify all future park land acquisitions as dedicated park land in order to ensure permanent classification.*

Policy 612.13 *Extend "Lake" zoning uses to Lake Austin and areas along Lady Bird Lake that are not currently covered by such a zoning classification.*

Height limits were not associated with the Lake zoning category that was in place during the adoption of Austin Tomorrow in 1979. The current Lake zoning classification takes height into consideration and currently limits maximum height to 200 feet.

Policy 612.14 *Provide more public park space along Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, and Colorado River below Longhorn dam.*

Addition of Lady Bird Lake and Colorado River by consensus.

Policy 612.15 *Develop agreements with other public agencies for the joint acquisition, development and staffing of park sites throughout Travis County.*

Policy 612.16 *Actively encourage private park and open space development.*

This encouragement could also implement the adopted Bicycle Master Plan when private parks and open space are developed in the form of linear parks/trails in adopted bicycle corridors.

Policy 612.17 *Where feasible, use drainage easements as public open space with appropriate access.*

**Objective 613.0 Identify and preserve areas of unique natural beauty, significant habitats of flora and fauna, and areas of historical, geological and archaeological significance.**

Policy 613.1 *Identify and preserve natural areas, especially along creeks, for minimal development and use.*

The purpose of this policy is to prevent the destruction of the natural character of an area through overuse by the public. The City will work with various public and private environmental and conservation groups in identifying those areas that need protection, including those already identified by the Audubon Society.

Policy 613.2 *Educate citizens concerning the need for protection and preservation of the natural environment by providing opportunities for participation in activities which enhance appreciation of Austin's environment and natural resources.*

Maintain and improve satellite programs through provision of group transportation and operation of outdoor recreation programming.

Policy 613.3 *Preserve historically, geologically and archaeologically significant trails and buildings in park-like settings.*

Encourage the use of historical buildings for public purposes.

Policy 613.4 *Establish a program for re-naturalizing areas within parks and open space where desirable and feasible.*

Policy 613.5 *Protect and retain existing plant material as part of overall landscape designs.*

## **GOAL 620.0 IMPROVE DESIGN CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES TO ACCOMPLISH A HIGH QUALITY PARK SYSTEM.**

**Objective 621.0 Establish design criteria for park facilities, programming, and operations.**

The design criteria should reflect bicycle facilities where appropriate to efficiently implement a Parks Master Plan and the Bicycle Master Plan. Addition of “operations” by consensus.

Policy 621.1 *Develop a design review process with all pertinent City departments for parking, roads and other facilities related to parks.*

Policy 621.2 *Continue to observe established guidelines concerning the use of porous and non-porous surfaces and resulting drainage runoff.*

Policy 621.3 *Designate appropriate buffer areas between park development and surrounding land uses.*

Park land and open space should function as buffers between such installations as athletic fields and picnic areas, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 621.4 *Coordinate planning activities to provide a hike and bike trail system throughout the city within open space, parks and street corridors.*

Policy 621.5 *Acquire and develop park land adjacent to new thoroughfares, where feasible.*

When street development is expanded to include provisions of adjacent park-like corridors the right-of-way of unused streets can be utilized as park land.

Linear Parks or trails adjacent to thorough fares also implement the Bicycle Master Plan.

Policy 621.6 *Continue to use natural materials in parks and open space designs.*

All planning for new park facilities should include strong energy saving design in order to minimize the use of energy and protect the environment.

Policy 621.7 *Establish guidelines on the general use and maintenance of landscaping within the Central Business District.*

Policy 621.8 *Design all future recreation facilities for multi purpose use, where appropriate.*

In particular, all new golf courses and recreation centers should be designed as multi-use facilities. For example, the design of golf courses could incorporate a trail system along the perimeter, or areas within the course might be preserved for their natural beauty or for their environmental importance.

Especially where doing so would provide alternative transportation use of the City's linear parks and trails. For example, design facilities for multi purpose use in a corridor adopted in the Bicycle Master Plan

Policy 621.9 *Provide necessary public restroom facilities at all public parks and open spaces.*

**Objective 622.0 Consider the mobility-impaired population of Austin in all planning and construction phases.**

Policy 622.1 *Determine and identify the needs of the mobility-impaired population of Austin with respect to facilities and transportation related to recreation.*

Deleted "leisure" and replaced with "recreation" by consensus.

Policy 622.2 *Upgrade, where feasible, existing recreational facilities to be accessible.*

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards require accessibility for people with varying disabilities.

Texas Senate Bill #111 no longer pertains to this matter. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards require accessibility for people with varying disabilities.

**Objective 623.0 Consider the aesthetic setting of Austin in the planning and development of parks, open space and municipal projects.**

Policy 623.1 *Provide for review by the Parks and Recreation Department of City projects that affect open space and the appearance of the city.*

The relative operational capacity of various City departments is the responsibility of the City Manager.

Policy 623.2 *Develop a municipal street tree planting and landscaping program.*

Traffic median and street landscaping should be provided. The City should encourage native plantings and landscaping by both public and private concerns.

**Objective 624.0 Utilize citizen participation to evaluate programs and facilities related to parks, open space and recreational activities.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

Policy 624.1 *Continue to consult advisory boards and neighborhood associations for their input into the operation and development of park land and facilities.*

Policy 624.2 *Develop a public awareness program to educate the public and keep them informed of services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.*

The City should develop slide presentations, brochures and other media presentations to assist in the public awareness program of the Parks and Recreation Department.

**GOAL 630.0 PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS TO BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF AUSTIN CITIZENS.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

**Objective 631.0 Provide athletic facilities to fulfill the recreational needs of Austin citizens.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

Policy 631.1 *Continue to provide equal athletic facilities throughout the city, in keeping with a parks and recreation master plan.*

Athletic facilities should be designed for multiple uses.

**Objective 632.0 Provide facilities and programs for senior adults so that their increased recreation time can be used to maintain mental and physical health.**

Deleted “leisure” and “citizens” and replaced with “recreational” and “adults,” respectively, by consensus.

Policy 632.1 *Adapt existing facilities to accommodate physical activities for senior adults.*

Construct park facilities for seniors such as covered areas for passive activities, and adjust fee structures, where applicable.

Deleted “citizens” and replaced with “adults” by consensus.

Policy 632.2 *Develop multi-purpose senior activity centers which meet the needs and interests of participants.*

Help improve the economic position of the elderly through such agencies as the Community Workshop Market, the Community Workshop Senior Guild and the Texas Employment Commission.

A center should be provided primarily for the use of elderly people in a centralized location. Branch centers can coordinate with the main center in various neighborhood recreation facilities throughout the city.

Policy 632.3 *Cooperate with private organizations whose facilities can be used by seniors in neighborhoods where no other public facilities are provided.*

Policy 632.4 *Improve transportation systems for the elderly to and from recreation-oriented facilities.*

This would be implemented in conjunction with the Urban Transportation Department.

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

**Objective 633.0 Ensure the accessibility of recreational facilities.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

Policy 633.1 *Advocate the amendment of state statutes to permit the use of school buses for youth recreation during after-school hours.*

Policy 633.2 *Develop a mobile recreational system to meet the needs of homebound individuals in areas where recreational services are currently inaccessible.*

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

**Objective 634.0 Develop facilities so that citizens in all sections of the city have the opportunity to participate in cultural and fine arts activities.**

Policy 634.1 *Promote the arts by maintaining interrelationships among independent art groups in the city.*

Policy 634.2 *Provide a centrally located, City-owned cultural arts center.*

Policy 634.3 *Provide areas designed and programmed for the cultural arts in neighborhood community facilities.*

Policy 634.4 *Expand and improve outdoor performing and exhibit facilities.*

These should include both permanent and mobile facilities.

Policy 634.5 *Plan, design and construct additional performance areas in district parks or in conjunction with recreation centers.*

Policy 634.6 *Construct or expand facilities for community-wide special events to be held outdoors.*

Such facilities would provide for community festivals and ethnic celebrations.

Deleted “Aqua Festival, Yule Fest” and replaced with “community festivals” by consensus.

**Objective 635.0 Maintain and develop facilities to allow interpretations of the culture, heritage and natural phenomena of the community.**

Policy 635.1 *Continue to evaluate, develop, maintain and improve museums within the community.*

Potential projects include: construction of educational buildings for class use in conjunction with museums; museum programs in neighborhoods; acquisition of mobile vehicles; and permanent satellite museum facilities, and services.

**GOAL 640.0 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS TO PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AREAS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

**Objective 641.0 Provide effective maintenance of parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation facilities.**

Expanded objective by consensus.

Policy 641.1 *Establish varying levels of maintenance in parks, open spaces and creeks to meet the planned use of an area.*

A strong recognition and re-evaluation of maintenance levels within parks and open spaces should be undertaken in light of present energy needs, budgetary cutbacks and increases in publicly-owned lands.

Policy 641.2 *Provide maintenance to repair and replace recreational equipment and facilities within parks.*

Policy 641.3 *Establish forestry programs for maintenance and care of existing and newly planted trees in public areas.*

Design all facilities to meet federal safety standards to protect both the public and staff.

Policy 641.4 *Develop guidelines concerning the maintenance, access and development of easements, or other non-City public areas.*

This could include the construction and maintenance of public trails or similar facilities on private land.

Policy 641.5 *Enact an ordinance which authorizes City monitoring of easements and right-of-way maintenance by private property owners.*

**Objective 642.0 Ensure adequate revenue for the operation of parks, open space and recreational facilities.**

Deleted “leisure” and replaced with “recreational” by consensus.

Policy 642.1 *Evaluate fees so that no segment of the community is deprived of basic recreational services due to inability to pay.*

Policy 642.2 *Actively seek non-City funding to supplement current and future service.*

Policy 642.3 *Continue to investigate revenue sources such as concessions at City facilities on City land.*

**Objective 643.0 Provide for the security and safe use of all park facilities by the general public.**

Design all facilities to meet federal safety standards to protect both the public and staff.

### *Transportation Systems Introduction*

This section coordinates transportation system policy with the overall goals of urban design improvement, neighborhood protection, environmental protection and urban growth management. It reflects increased concern for safe and efficient public transit systems and non-motorized travel modes, rather than continued dependency on the automobile as the primary means of travel. Inherent in this shift of emphasis is the need for basic transportation for all citizens, including mobility-impaired individuals, and for compatibility between the transportation system and adjacent land uses. A change in priorities should also help to reduce transportation related noises and have a positive effect on air quality.

Policies have been developed to complement each other; no policy, objective or goal should compete against another. The intent of each is to provide a framework from which to build a transportation system that is responsive to the present needs of the Austin community and that will remain responsive to future needs. A Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the location, size and development of physical transportation elements will be produced by the Austin Transportation Study Office. Upon completion, this plan will be adopted as an integral part of the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

Adequate air transportation facilities and the efficient movement of goods and services within the urban area are also discussed in this section. Standards, criteria and guidelines are suggested by many objectives and policies, and these should be based on definitive research and realistically attainable values.

SAFETEA-LU (Pub. L. 109-59, August 10, 2005) and ADA (Pub. L. 101-336, July 26, 1990) requirements.

### **GOAL 710.0 DEVELOP A BALANCED, SAFE AND EFFICIENT SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

This goal is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

#### **Objective 711.0 Encourage the development and use of public transportation systems.**

Policy 711.1 *Establish an effective, public transportation circulation system within the core area and other major activity centers which integrates with the city-wide transportation system.*

This policy is supported by the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan and 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policy 711.2 *Promote services and increase passenger amenities to encourage transit use, especially for commuter trips during peak hours.*

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus.

Policy 711.3 *Establish a low or pre-paid fare structure for transit in order to increase ridership.*

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus.

Policy 711.4 *Develop an intra-city transit system serving all parts of the metropolitan area.*

The system should consist of high intensity service which connects major activity centers with less intense feeder and line-haul service which, in turn, joins residential areas with the high intensity services. It should also reflect due regard for the system's development potential.

Policy 711.5 *Develop transit service programs tailored to the needs of existing and potential users, including, but not limited to, the use of Braille, bilingual and culturally-oriented transit information and special shopping and recreation service programs.*

Policy 711.6 *Develop high intensity travel corridors by integrating various infrastructure elements and restricting high density development to these corridors.*

Policy 711.7 *Develop core area transit terminal facilities joining inter-city bus and rail passenger service with transit system routes, feeder services, taxi services, bikeways and pedestrianways.*

Deleted ‘mass’ based on consensus.

Policy 711.8 *Develop terminal and transfer facilities at strategic locations throughout the City for intra-city transit, taxi, bicycle, pedestrian and parking facilities.*

Policy 711.9 *Establish streets, lanes or access ramps where low occupancy vehicles are restricted during specified periods of particular days*

Encourage the use of High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes and managed lanes, where appropriate.

Ordinance No. 010607-48, amends the Comprehensive Plan by adopting amendments to the Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan. City of Austin, 2025 Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan includes recommendations for HOV lanes on roadways such as US 183 and IH35.

Policy 711.10 *Improve city-wide taxi service by ensuring twenty-four-hour service, minimizing response time and encouraging multiple passenger fare structures.*

Policy 711.11 *Establish taxi fares that will provide sufficient revenues for the operators yet not be burdensome to the user.*

Policy 711.12 *Improve the quality and accessibility of all streets, streetscapes, and sidewalks.*

Streetscapes should be accessible, comfortable and have an aesthetic sidewalk network throughout the city. Public right of ways should be used as a catalyst for creating great public spaces in order to improve the quality of the city.

Policy addition to address Downtown Austin Alliance’s adopted Great Streets concept via City Council Resolution 19961121-030 November 21, 1996. In 1996, voters approved \$5 million in bonds for the Great Streets Program. Commercial Design Standards extend the scope of the concept to include areas of the city beyond downtown.

Policy 711.13 *Create districts which promote transit-oriented development near light rail infrastructure.*

The districts should establish denser development surrounding commuter rail stations, improve connectivity between the surrounding community and district, and establish housing affordability goals for new development.

Policy added. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance adopted by City Council, Ordinance 20060309-057 March 9, 2006.

**Objective 712.0 Establish and expand the planning, funding, implementation and operation of a multi-modal transportation system, including transitways, roadways, bikeways and pedestrianways.**

Provide funding to monitor all elements of the transportation system on a regular basis.

Policy 712.1 *Develop and implement management programs that promote operationally compatible multi-modal transportation corridors.*

Policy 712.2 *Establish partial or total auto-free zones in conjunction with other efforts to maintain or increase the level of accessibility to the zones.*

Policy 712.3 *Improve the safety and security of all transportation facilities and users through educational programs and appropriate facility design.*

Policy 712.4 *Modify the design of hazardous drain inlets and remove obstacles to ensure both pedestrians, including mobility-impaired persons, and cyclists of safe passage.*

The 1996 Austin Bicycle Plan details the issue.

Policy 712.5 *Annually evaluate the implementation and operation of the multi-modal transportation system with one- and five-year programs.*

Policy 712.6 *Develop and refine the entire transportation system so that it anticipates, and is consistent with, long range plans, including land use, housing, environmental and social service objectives. Short term strategies should be utilized to accommodate variations in life style and preference.*

Policy 712.7 *Collaborate with local citizens to balance transit needs while preserving and enhancing the character of our unique neighborhoods.*

The process should bring together members of the community to address the local issues and concerns that affect the neighborhood as a whole. The representation of diverse interests within the planning process should foster a shared vision for their community.

Policy addition to address the Neighborhood Planning Process program initiated in 1997 that gives emphasis to citizen involvement as defined by City of Austin Resolution 19970521-018, March 21, 1997. The Bicycle Plan Update currently underway will have opportunity for extensive public involvement.

Policy 712.8 *Develop travel corridors which feature long and short term coordination of transportation and land use improvements and which are consistent with community transportation objectives, modal choices and movement patterns.*

Provide economic and/or other incentives to concentrate high and medium density development along designated transportation service corridors. The corridors should be designed to accommodate and anticipate the changing mix of transportation modes.

Policy 712.9 *Develop mechanisms to plan, implement and operate multiple use right-of-way.*

Policy 712.10 *Identify a system of transportation corridors based on movement characteristics.*

Policy 712.11 *Implement an effective and efficient management program to guide existing transportation elements into a multi-modal system.*

Policy 712.12 *Construct or modify bridges to provide for the safe movement of all transportation modes.*

Complete Street Council Resolution 2002 mandates that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be considered in all street construction projects and implemented if the cost does not exceed 20% of total project cost.

Policy 712.13 *Protect or eliminate all roadway and railway at-grade crossings at major streets and protect crossings at other streets. Discourage at-grade crossing in new developments.*

**Objective 713.0 Develop a safe, effective network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

This Policy is supported by the 2002 Complete Streets Resolution, the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan, and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policy 713.1 *Develop a comprehensive, all-weather pedestrian network alongside vehicular routes and in space reserved exclusively for pedestrian movements including, but not limited to, alleys.*

Policy 713.2 *Establish a comprehensive set of standards which will govern the degree of separation between pedestrian and vehicular movement.*

Provide concourses, skyways or pedestrian bridges, where warranted, at intersections, mid-block and building locations.

Policy 713.3 *Provide pedestrianways in all new areas by means of public use easements, where appropriate.*

Require public use easements by combining pedestrian, utility and drainage facilities between lots in subdivisions. This would provide public passageways through subdivisions, where children might otherwise be required to go around unusually long blocks or move along heavily traveled streets to reach parks, greenbelts or other areas of interest.

Policy 713.4 *Improve pedestrian safety and access along major streets and intersections. This could be accomplished through the use of specially phased, pedestrian-activated traffic control signals and other traffic control devices. There should be a maximum separation between the pedestrianway and roadway, while avoiding major obstacles, such as trees.*

Policy 713.5 *Provide pedestrian amenities and increase the comfort and convenience of pedestrianways, especially in centers of activity.*

Policy 713.6 *Develop a community-wide bikeway network based on a comprehensive plan which includes, where appropriate, hard surface bike trails along linear parks and creeks.*

Supported by the existence of Austin Bicycle Plan supported by City Council Ordinance 960411-E and 980507-D. The Parks Master Plan should be cross-referenced here, to the extent their trail/linear park system also serves as a transportation corridor. For example, Shoal Creek Trail, Walnut Creek Trail, Johnson Creek Trail, Waller Creek Trail. The City of Austin Bicycle Plan identifies all existing and planned bicycle facilities.

Policy 713.7 *Improve the channelization of bicycle and motor vehicular movement along streets and at major intersections.*

Policy 713.8 *Establish very strict standards governing the parking of vehicles in on-street bicycle facilities.*

Policy 713.9 *Develop a community-wide bikeway network based on a comprehensive plan which includes hard surface bike trails along linear parks and creeks, bikeway facilities in high traffic volume areas and in all new developments.*

Supported by the existence of Austin Bicycle Plan supported by City Council Ordinance 960411-E and 980507-D. The City of Austin Bicycle Plan identifies all existing and planned bicycle facilities.

Policy 713.10 *Expand safety and educational programs dealing with non-motorized transportation.*

Austin Bicycle Plan 1996 expands this policy.

Policy 713.11 *Establish a comprehensive set of standards which will govern the degree of separation between pedestrian and vehicle movement.*

Supported by the existence of Austin Bicycle Plan and Transportation Criteria Manual Street Design Criteria, Section 7, Bikeways. The Austin Bicycle Plan and the City of Austin Transportation Criteria Manual contain design standards.

**Objective 714.0 Encourage the efficient use of roadways and other existing transportation elements.**

Policy 714.1 *Develop an active program designed to encourage and assist businesses and institutions in developing and implementing incentives for the use of transit, car pooling, or other ride-sharing vehicles and non-motorized transportation.*

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus.

Policy 714.2 *Encourage staggered working hours within the core area and other major activity centers.*

Policy 714.3 *Improve traffic flow through the use of synchronized traffic signals, land controls, surveillance systems, one-way streets and left turn lanes.*

Policy 714.4 *Regulate on-street parking after taking into consideration traffic flow, adjacent land uses, available traffic routes and alternative transportation.*

Word change as on-street parking is both permitted and restricted in various sections of the city as supported by City Council Ordinance 960411-E and 980507-D. This policy repeated and expanded in adopted Bicycle Plan.

Policy 714.5 *Uniformly enforce all laws and regulations pertaining to traffic operations.*

Policy 714.6 *Minimize utility interference with the use of transportation ways.*

Minimize the use of streets in construction related activities.

Policy 714.7 *Design and develop circulation patterns in the core area to de-emphasize through traffic.*

Policy 714.8 *Develop a comprehensive parking plan and policy based on desired land use and transportation relationships.*

This would include special consideration of the parking requirements of historical areas and reservation of the most accessible parking spaces for vehicles with high occupancy.

Policy 714.9 *Establish parking allocations as one of several means of supporting the multi-modal use of the transportation system.*

Provide fringe parking areas for activity centers, as appropriate.

Policy 714.10 *Establish a workable set of guidelines for exemptions from parking regulations.*

Policy 714.11 *Regulate access along roadways.*

Driveways and medians should be designed to maintain the operational characteristics of a roadway.  
Minimize the number of intersections and curb cuts.  
Coordinate driveway design with on-site traffic operations.

Policy 714.12 *Provide emergency service vehicles with improved routing and better control systems to minimize response time and ensure safe operation.*

Policy 714.13 *Establish a maintenance program for bike, pedestrian, transit and road facilities.*

The maintenance program should include, but not be limited to, paving curbing, drainage systems, signing, marking and signalization.

Policy 714.14 *Pave all unpaved streets.*

Policy 714.15 *Develop user-oriented marketing programs that encourage the efficient use of various transportation modes.*

**Objective 715.0 Improve basic transportation for all mobility-impaired individuals and adhere to Americans with Disabilities Act principles to ensure the transportation network is accessible by all residents.**

Revisions based upon American with Disabilities Act language, Pub. L. 101-336, July 26, 1990.

Policy 715.1 *Coordinate special transportation service programs and funding for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.*

Policy 715.2 *Develop barrier-free pedestrianways with specific provisions for ramps and crosswalks.*

Policy 715.3 *Provide adequate pedestrian signal time to allow mobility-impaired persons to safely negotiate selected street intersections.*

Policy 715.4 *Provide for transit or alternative services for mobility-impaired individuals.*

Remove operational and physical barriers to mass transit services. The special requirements of privately operated transportation services will require legal arrangements.

Provide Special demand-responsive taxi services.

Deleted 'mass' based on consensus.

Policy 715.5 *Reserve appropriate parking space for the mobility-impaired in public parking facilities.*

Policy 715.6 *Require all public use buildings to be made physically accessible to mobility-impaired persons.*

**GOAL 720.0 ENSURE THAT THE DESIGN AND USE OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ENHANCES AND MAINTAINS THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA.**

Support the passage and enforcement of stricter state motor vehicle, air and noise pollution inspection laws.

This Policy is supported by the 1996 and 1998 Bicycle Plan and the 2000 Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Objective 721.0 Maintain acceptable noise standards.**

Policy 721.1 *Develop appropriate noise standards for each classification of transportation and include noise considerations in the design, operation and maintenance of transportation facilities.*

Policy 721.2 *Within the city, limit the operation of motor freight vehicles to designated truck routes.*

Policy 721.3 *Use various means of buffering sound to reduce noise impacts on areas adjacent to transportation facilities.*

These might include building setbacks, added building insulation, berms and foliage.

Policy 721.4 *Control the location and design of land uses so that noise-producing transportation facilities are not located near land uses which require a quiet setting.*

For example, hospitals, schools or neighborhoods should not be located adjacent to airport runway approach zones, rail yards or interstate highways.

Policy 721.5 *Vigorously enforce noise regulations.*

Allow the operation of only those vehicles which conform to established noise guidelines.

**Objective 722.0 Maintain and enforce acceptable air quality standards.**

Continue to reduce the amount of ozone created and improve air quality in Central Texas by creating various programs and initiatives to address environmental concerns and by monitoring the area's air quality according to federal standards.

Addition based on Austin-Round Rock MSA Early Action Compact (12-18-02), Central Texas Clean Air Coalition (11-13-02), Central Texas 03 Flex Agreement and supported by City of Austin Resolution 20031204-056, December 4, 2003.

Policy 722.1 *Develop appropriate air standards for each classification of transportation route and include air considerations in the design, operation and maintenance of these facilities.*

Policy 722.2 *Allow the operation of only those vehicles which conform to established emissions guidelines.*

Make all City fleets totally carbon-neutral by 2020 through the use of electric power, non-petroleum fuels, new technologies, mitigation, and other measures as necessary; and provide residents mechanisms for reducing their carbon footprint.

Addition based on Austin Climate Protection Plan and supported by City of Austin Resolution 20070215 023 February 15, 2007.

Policy 722.3 *Control emissions from indirect, transportation related sources.*

Policy 722.4 *Regulate the number of vehicle miles traveled within the urban area by encouraging more efficient location of services and open space.*

**Objective 723.0 Improve the control of transportation related storm water runoff.**

Policy 723.1 *Use special pavement materials, street curb design and other methods to reduce water runoff and creek pollution.*

**Objective 724.0 Preserve the scenic views and ecological diversity along designated transportation corridors**

Policy 724.1 *Encourage lower density and high quality development in environmentally sensitive areas within the region to maintain aesthetic views and ecological health.*

Objective and policy added to address Hill Country Roadway Ordinance passed in 1986 and supported by Ordinance 19860116-J, January 16, 1986.

**GOAL 730.0 ENHANCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND ADJACENT LAND USES.**

**Objective 731.0 Ensure the functional compatibility of the transportation system and adjacent land uses.**

Develop and apply urban street design criteria which are consistent with the land uses they serve.  
Delineation of roadway edges should be compatible with the roadway's functional requirements and the character of adjacent land uses.

Access between the transportation facility and the adjacent land use should not destroy the character of either.  
Additional right-of-way or setbacks may be desirable along transportation routes.  
Acquire right-of-way, as appropriate, through dedication or purchase based on the requirements of the route.  
Require dedication of additional right-of-way, if needed, concurrent with land use changes.

Policy 731.1 *Require a study of the impact of significant changes in land use or transportation in order to ensure compatibility.*

Policy 731.2 *Prevent interference with sight distances along transportation routes.*

Policy 731.3 *The location and appearance of traffic control devices should be coordinated, wherever possible.*

Policy 731.4 *Install efficient and economical street lighting to promote the safety of traveled ways while not detracting from adjacent areas.*

Policy 731.5 *Use buffer zones, where appropriate, to ensure the compatibility of transportation and adjacent areas.*

Policy 731.6 *Through proper location and design, ensure that the development of major transportation routes produces minimum negative impact on neighborhoods.*

Policy 731.7 *Develop physically identifiable areas for separate transportation functions to minimize conflicts with activities on adjacent land.*

**Objective 732.0 Ensure aesthetic compatibility among transportation facilities and adjacent land uses.**

Policy 732.1 *Design bridges and overpasses to enhance surrounding environmental features.*

Develop designs based on anticipated short term needs which are also adaptable to long term requirements.

Policy 732.2 *Develop landscaping and tree planting programs to enhance efficient vehicular and pedestrian movement.*

Policy 732.3 *Encourage the enhancement of the overall appearance of transportation routes.*

Policy 732.4 *Develop beautification and buffering performance standards for all parking facilities.*

Policy 732.5 *Design and locate street lighting and other transportation support devices so that transportation safety and nearby aesthetic features are mutually enhanced.*

**GOAL 740.0 PROVIDE ADEQUATE AIR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.**

**Objective 741.0 Provide safe, efficient and convenient movement of people and freight via air carriers and general aviation.**

Policy 741.1 *Coordinate all metropolitan surface and air transportation operations.*

Policy 741.2 *Develop an airport master plan for short, medium and long range periods, and update it at regular intervals.*

Explore ways to obtain origin and destination information about trips to and from the airport.

Policy 741.3 *Provide for adequate airline terminal facilities, aircraft sales and service facilities, as well as runway, taxiway and navigational aids.*

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport was built, Mueller Airport closed.

Policy 741.4 *Continue to monitor development within the Controlled Compatible Land Use Area and the Airport Overlay Zones to provide for environmental and land use compatibility.*

Airport Overlay and Compatible Land Use policy have been adopted by City Council as City Code 25-13 in addition to adherence to Federal Aviation Regulations.

Policy 741.5 *Set user charges to offset the operating and capital costs of the airport.*

Policy 741.6 *Provide adequate vehicular parking for airport facilities.*

Policy 741.7 *Improve airport freight and loading facilities.*

**GOAL 750.0 ENCOURAGE THE EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES BY SURFACE TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE URBAN AREA.**

**Objective 751.0 Encourage coordination between all public and private agencies involved in the movement of goods and services.**

Policy 751.1 *Develop a goods and services movement plan.*

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has adopted a freight element, as part of Mobility 2030 Plan.

Addition supported by Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Mobility 2030 Plan, June 6, 2005; Section 4.4 – freight.

Policy 751.2 *Encourage a single rail and trucking terminal.*

This terminal should be accessible to both railway and roadway systems to reduce freight and rail movement within the city.

Encourage the development of a piggyback operation ramp and terminal to facilitate the exchange of goods between transportation modes.

Policy 751.3 *Encourage a single, package express facility for bus companies.*

Policy 751.4 *Encourage joint delivery services where there is a concentration of retail stores, such as service oriented businesses.*

**Objective 752.0 Encourage efficiency in the use of roads for goods movement and the transportation system, as a whole.**

Policy 752.1 *Prohibit parking for pick-up or delivery except in specified loading zones, and prohibit parking in areas reserved for deliveries.*

Policy 752.2 *Establish districts where deliveries can be made only during specific hours.*

Policy 752.3 *Where alleys are available in commercial areas, restrict their use to deliveries, only.*

Policy 752.4 *Require off street loading docks.*

**Objective 753.0 Encourage efficiency in the use of railroads for goods movement and in the transportation system, as a whole.**

Policy 753.1 *Encourage the establishment of a single rail yard.*

Policy 753.2 *Create special rail freight zones, as appropriate.*

Policy 753.3 *Eliminate or regulate the spotting of rail cars within street right-of-way.*

## *Health and Human Services Introduction*

In the course of the Austin Tomorrow Goals Program it became clear that the citizens of Austin perceived the provision of health and human services as a responsibility of the City equal to the provision of the more traditional services such as physical planning, transportation and parks. In order to guide the City's efforts, the Goals Assembly offered specific suggestions concerning the City's future commitment to the provision of social services. On the basis of these recommendations, the City has accelerated its efforts to provide health and human services for Austin's citizens.

The mission of the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) is to work in partnership with the community to promote health, safety, and well being. The department has adopted the following goals in order to help achieve this mission.

*The role of public health is to:*

- PROMOTE community-wide wellness,
- PREVENT disease, and
- PROTECT the community from infectious diseases, epidemics, and environmental hazards.

The over-all goal of HHSD is to promote a healthy community, which reflects social equity. This will be achieved through prevention, protection, provision, and promotion:

- **Animal Services** - Promote responsible pet ownership in order to reduce animal homelessness.
- **Social Services** - Promote and foster increased self-sufficiency, healthy behaviors and lifestyle among targeted populations.
- **Health Services** - Promote a healthy community by preventing chronic and communicable diseases and promoting improvements in social/economic/environmental factors that will result in an improved overall health status and a reduction of health disparities.
- **Public Health and Human Services Emergency Preparedness** - Maintain a public health and human services emergency preparedness capacity in coordination with other City Departments and community partners that allocates existing and emergency resources in a flexible and responsive manner to address public health risks and human services needs in an emergency.
- **Health Services** - Minimize the public's exposure to health and environmental hazards.

In 2004 City of Austin HHSD implemented a Social Services Investment Plan to identify long term partners, collaborate with the County and United Way on accountability standards for contract agencies, and encourage the development of integrated service delivery systems. A Social Services Investment Strategy was presented to the City Council Health and Human Services Subcommittee in December 2008.

The intent is to sustain, through delivery systems, general support services as well as individualized services to persons with special or emergency needs. These principles should be expressed in terms of goals such as:

- (1) Safety net / infrastructure services - Ensure that no person is without such basic necessities as food, clothing, health, shelter, and mental health care, or constitutionally-guaranteed legal rights.
- (2) Transition out of poverty - Ensure educational, employment and other special opportunities for disadvantaged persons to further self-reliance.
- (3) Problem prevention - Deter the growth of problem conditions at the individual and community level through education, preventive physical and mental health programs, recreation, safety programs, rodent control, crime prevention and other preventive programs.
- (4) Universal support services - Provide family and societal support services in response to new problems created by urbanization and technological advances. These include health, education, child care, counseling and assistance for the aging, youth, homeless, and unemployed, rehabilitation services and other support rehabilitation services.
- (5) Enrichment - Encourage personal development and community enrichment through cultural, educational and recreational programs.

In support of the five goals listed, health and human services policy should include the following processes:

- (1) Planning - Integrate existing and future City of Austin health and human service activities into a purposeful, systematic and timely scheme to meet expressed community needs in a sympathetic and efficient manner. Continue to investigate workable, innovative health and human services for Austin.
- (2) Coordination - Coordinate City of Austin health and human service activities with those of other service organizations.
- (3) Collaboration – Expand existing collaboration with the Community Action Network, United Way, Travis County and other entities on funding processes and decisions.
- (4) Technical assistance - Offer educational and other support services to City of Austin departments and contract agencies, as well as other public agencies, where appropriate.

- (5) Monitoring and evaluation - Develop and improve existing monitoring and evaluation system to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and contract compliance of projects.

Health and human services goals will be achieved through a comprehensive health and human service delivery system. The thirteen following services are components of the present City system. This is not, however, a complete inventory of the services which could be provided.

- (1) Consumer protection and education
- (2) Cultural Enrichment and development
- (3) Employment and economic development
- (4) Equal opportunity
- (5) Financial and emergency assistance
- (6) Food and nutrition
- (7) Physical health maintenance and care
- (8) Informal and supplementary education
- (9) Individual and Family life counseling
- (10) Recreation and social development
- (11) Mental health maintenance and care
- (12) Public health protection
- (13) Justice and safety

Funding for Health and Human Services through community based agencies includes the following priorities:

1. Basic Needs – Food, meals, rent and utility assistance, and legal and consumer spending
2. Early Childhood – Direct child care, child care quality improvement, and early childhood development for at-risk children
3. Disease Prevention – Public health awareness (Sickle Cell Program)
4. Homeless Services – Emergency shelter and transitional housing for single men, single women, women with children and families. The End Community Homeless Committee (ECHO) focuses on homeless prevention, exiting from homelessness, and homeless planning and evaluation.
5. HIV Services – HIV awareness, education, and support services that are not included in HIV grant funding

6. Mental Health – Community counseling for children and adults with emphasis on at-risk populations. Funding also supports the prevention and community planning activities of the Austin/Travis County MHMR Center.
7. Substance Abuse – Substance abuse prevention and counseling, targeting at-risk women and homeless individuals. Community Court also funds counseling/treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Travis County also funds services for at-risk youth.
8. Violence and Victimization – Shelters for children and adult victims, forensic interviews, and other activities to prevent victimization
9. Workforce Development - Long-term employment, short-term employment, adult basic education including literacy and English as a Second Language
10. Youth Services – After-school programs, tutoring, mentoring, and other youth developmental activities

City of Austin Health and Human Services Department will strive to ensure success of the new Interlocal agreement with Travis County government. The agreements is a model for multi-jurisdictional public health programs and represents a good government approach to the provision of services, including assuring service capacity, clarity of expectations, simple and efficient administration, and fair and equitable cost sharing between the City and County.

As the latest development, the Travis County Hospital District was created in 2004. The District arranges for healthcare services for Travis County residents, including City of Austin residents, who are not eligible for other private or public insurance programs. District sponsored services include those provided at Brackenridge/Children's Hospital, Austin Women's Hospital and 14 Community Health Centers. To qualify for full benefits, residents must be at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline (FPIG) unless elderly or disabled, who must be at or below 200% FPIG.

Citizens demand, as the Austin Tomorrow Program demonstrates, that health and human services effectively and adequately meet community needs. Austin citizens feel that planning is necessary in order to assure that these needs are met.

Planning is ongoing and includes collaborations cited earlier. A general plan was developed in 2004 categorizing services based on infrastructure/safety net services and integrated systems of care. An overall Social Services Investment Strategy was developed in 2007 and a process for prioritizing is underway in 2008.

**GOAL 810.0 IMPROVE THE PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, FUNDING AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WITHIN THE CITY OF AUSTIN.**

**Objective 811.0 Develop a comprehensive social policy to guide the development of a comprehensive local health and human services delivery system.**

A comprehensive social policy which defines areas of responsibility between the various governmental entities and which develops interagency mechanisms for implementation is essential. The Community Action Network (CAN) was created in 1997.

*Policy 811.1 Continue to develop a system for integrated, comprehensive health and human service planning.*

The planning process will (1) define and establish priorities of need, (2) define the level of provision of specific health services, (3) provide an in-depth, comprehensive needs assessment, and (4) develop integrated and comprehensive services. These services should be designed to reinforce each other with minimal duplication of effort.

As a part of this effort, the Social Services Investment Strategy was developed in 2004 and updated in 2007.

*Policy 811.2 Continue to develop a system for effective, uniform monitoring and evaluation of health and human services programs.*

Specific goals and objectives can be established for each service program. Regular and periodic monitoring may then indicate what progress is being made toward achieving the stated goals and objectives. Continuous evaluation must ultimately assess whether the program achieves the established goals in an effective manner.

Social Services agencies are monitored regularly on a 3 year basis focused on efficient/effective services, accurate payments and financial systems, and agency viability and stability (including board management).

*Policy 811.3 Enhance a system for developing financial arrangements among local funding agencies for the provision of services.*

Considerations must be given to the development of new and innovative funding arrangements which will expand the abilities of funding agencies and which will also aid in identifying equitable levels of responsibility.

Policy 811.4 *Enhance existing information and referral procedure.*

Effective information and referral services are essential for achieving the maximum use of the health and human services delivery system. Community awareness of these services is essential in meeting the needs of potential service recipients.

This need is currently met by the United Way 211 and the City 311 calling systems.

Policy 811.5 *Enhance an information system designed to provide comprehensive, updated information on community needs and on the health and human services currently being provided.*

Effective planning efforts must be based upon accurate information regarding the groups toward which planning efforts are directed. The information which is incorporated into, and interpreted by, the system must be valid, reliable and regularly collected so that trends and changes may be observed.

Policy 811.6 *Improve a mechanism for obtaining citizen participation in planning both the long range and project level of health and human services.*

All planning efforts must incorporate those priorities, needs or preferences which are expressed by the citizens for whom the services are to be provided. Citizens must be involved in formulating the overall goals and objectives of the human service delivery system, as well as in decisions concerning specific project plans designed to implement these goals.

The examples of the current citizen input mechanisms are Day Labor Community Advisory Committee, Solicitation Survey, and Community Action Network (CAN) Community Council.

**Objective 812.0 Expand the City's effort to deliver health and human services.**

Attention must be given to ensuring that all current and future efforts in the delivery of health and human services seek to eliminate problems and impediments which have been identified.

Policy 812.1 *Eliminate duplication of effort in the provision of City-funded health and human services.*

The health and human service delivery system should assure that each service is planned for and implemented so that all needs are met and no services are duplicated.

Policy 812.2 *Coordinate activities of all public and private agencies and departments involved in the delivery of health and human services.*

The planning and provision of health and human services among various health agencies should be coordinated with the planning and provision of physical facilities which directly influence their effectiveness. Such physical facilities are provided through capital improvement programming, economic and housing programs, transportation planning and annual budgeting. While coordination between public agencies and private organizations is imperative in the delivery of social services, the City must not neglect its responsibility for the provision of physical facilities.

Policy 812.3 *Reduce barriers to the maximum use of health and human services.*

Examples of barriers include extreme costs, language problems, hours of operation, location of services and transportation access. A coordinated and simplified procedure to determine eligibility for public and private service should be implemented where appropriate.

**Objective 813.0 Begin immediately to address the specific problems and to consider the specific recommendations which were identified by the Goals Assembly concerning current health and human service programs.**

Policy 813.1 *Improve mental health services.*

Provide for community education programs which will increase public awareness and understanding of the causes and opportunities for the treatment of mental illness and mental retardation.

Implement emergency mental health care services at Brackenridge Hospital and at other locations throughout Austin, as needed.

Incorporate halfway houses, employment training programs and individualized care into mental health treatment. Emphasize integration of the mentally ill and retarded into the community.

Policy 813.2 *Expand services to dependent groups.*

Ensure that the elderly, young, homeless, indigent and handicapped have access to such essential services as food, clothing, safety, health, housing, transportation, recreation and companionship.

Provide outreach workers for home-bound individuals requiring assistance.

Policy 813.3 *Expand education-related programs.*

Provide full-time medical personnel at each school.

Encourage the improvement of drug abuse and sex education programs by cooperating with the school district, City, County and private agencies.

Encourage the multiple use of school facilities as community centers by making them available at night and on weekends.

Policy 813.4 *Expand family planning, prenatal programs and sexually transmitted diseases control programs for at risk populations and communities.*

Provide family planning, prenatal education and medical services through the neighborhood clinics to anyone needing these services.

Increase the accessibility of abortion services at Brackenridge Hospital.

Policy 813.5 *Expand and enforce animal control and environmental and consumer health laws. .*

Enforce environmental regulations through routine inspections and complaint investigation of food establishments, general environmental complaint investigations and enforcement of the Smoking in Public Places and Minors Access to Tobacco Ordinances.

Policy 813.6 *Expand child care services.*

The comprehensive health and human services delivery system should include city-wide, twenty-four-hour child and infant care programs.

Policy 813.7 *Address health disparities in the community.*

The comprehensive health and human services delivery system should ensure that health disparities that exist in the city are addressed with culturally appropriate strategies.

Changes made to the Health and Human Services section reflect the actual scope of the Health and Human Services Department, which was not in existence during the creation of the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. Previously, this section was a narrative on how a human services master plan could be constructed and what it possibly may entail. The role of public health is to promote community-wide wellness, prevent disease, and to protect the community from infectious diseases, environmental hazards, and epidemics. The revisions reflect the department's current purpose: to work in partnership with the community to promote health, safety, and well being.