

Late Backup



Draft Waller Creek District Master Plan

CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING - OCTOBER 22, 2009

WALLER CREEK PROGRAM

- **Tunnel**
 - In design and permitting
 - On schedule and budget
- **Tax Increment Finance District**
 - Tunnel project funded by TIF
 - Financial update underway
- **Parks**
 - Waterloo, Palm, Trail, Waller Beach
 - Waterloo Park Plan
- **District Master Plan**
 - Draft creek and district plans
- **Public Outreach**
 - Advisory committee, town hall meeting

Tunnel Schedule

Legend: % Design (% complete)
 Bid & Award
 Construction



Illustrative Plan



Open Space and Pedestrian Activity Concept



late project

Illustrative Plan



Bike / Pedestrian Circulation Concept



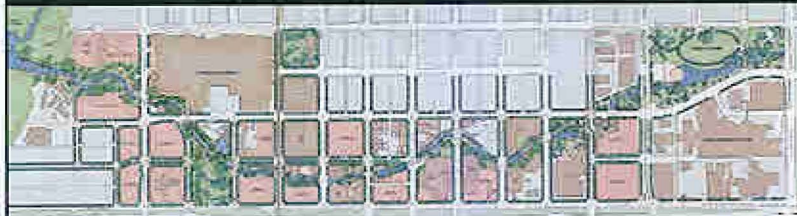
Illustrative Plan



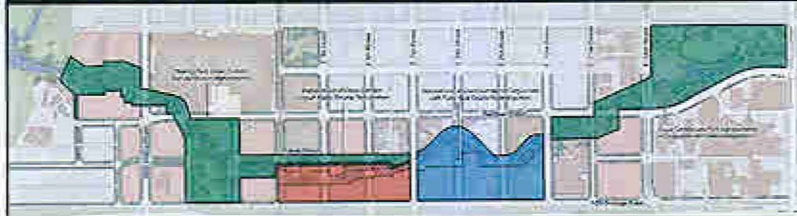
Land Use and Development Concept



Illustrative Plan



Implementation Strategy



**Waller Creek Draft Master Plan
City Council Presentation – ROMA Design Group
October 22, 2009**

Introduction

- The City Council and people of Austin recognized that Waller Creek is not living up to its potential and made the decision in 1998 to invest in significant flood control improvements along Waller Creek.
- Although the flood control project will remove 28 acres of downtown real estate from the 100-year floodplain, it is important to recognize that in itself it will not change Waller Creek's negative image and identity and make it a people-oriented place.
- In order to realize the full potential of the investment that is being made, additional improvements are required. The creek corridor must be cleaned up, upgraded, and physically improved so that it becomes safe and secure and a positive feature within the community.
- We have been working since March with the Advisory Committee. We have held one Town Hall meeting and we are going to have another one on Saturday; we have met with a variety of stakeholders. We have worked with City staff and members of the Tunnel project. During the process, an action plan and a vision are beginning to take shape and have been documented in the Draft Master Plan which will now undergo further review and comment. The highlights of the Plan are as follows:

Open Space Concept

(Diagram of Open Space Concept, page 3 Master Plan)

- The Plan calls for the natural qualities of the creek corridor to be reinstated. Eroded banks need to be repaired and the riparian landscape needs to be re-established. The image of the creek as a storm water channel needs to be replaced with a more ecologically diverse, authentic and sustainable environment, capable of serving multiple roles simultaneously. The Plan calls for the creek corridor to be augmented by the parkland associated with it.
- Palm Park needs to be improved so that it reinforces the ecological identity of the creek corridor and becomes a more attractive place for family-oriented activities that it was originally intended to serve.

- At the northern end, Waterloo Park which is intended to be improved with the Tunnel project, along with Symphony Square and Symphony Plaza, will become the northern terminus of the creek corridor. In this area, the Plan recommends the removal of bridge connections under the 11th Street and under Red River Street bridges which detract from the potential of the adjacent parkland and the activities within it.
- The Plan also recommends that the parkland on either side of Symphony Square be somewhat reconfigured to create a more positive relationship to the creek corridor and the relocation of some of the surface parking when alternative shared parking opportunities are created as redevelopment of adjacent areas occurs.
- Ultimately, additional parkland and open space improvements can be added if the City decides in the future to pursue redevelopment of the Austin Police Department property.
- In summary, the open space vision that has emerged for the creek corridor is that of a linear greenway that winds its way in an integrated manner through the community extending and connecting the landscape qualities of Lady Bird Lake to Waterloo Park.

Bike/Pedestrian Linkage Concept

(Diagram of Bike/Pedestrian Circulation Concept, page 7 Master Plan)

- The Plan also calls for the improvement of pedestrian and bicycle linkages to, across and along the creek corridor to connect Lady Bird Lake with UT and East Austin and Rainey Street with Downtown.
- In undertaking the improvements, the Plan recognizes that the movement systems within the creek corridor need to be scaled and appropriately integrated with the desire to enhance the landscape and amenity value of the corridor and to avoid some of the attempts in the past to build pathways along the creek that today are not successful.
- The paths that have been built, particularly in some of the most constrained reaches of the corridor, have just added concrete and encroached further on what already is a tight area. In many cases, they take away the opportunity of the landscape, obstruct the flow of water, and become an attractive nuisance, leading people down to a place that is unattractive, unsafe and unsanitary.

- Therefore, the Plan seeks a broader approach to achieving the pedestrian, bicycle and movement system objectives. The Plan promotes a more sensitive and light touch for the pathways within the creek corridor. It also recognizes the importance of considering multiple routes that allow for integration of some adjacent streets as part of the open space system and as key elements in the pedestrian/bicycle movement. In this manner, a more integrated, interesting, diverse and multi-faceted environment will be created. Thus, each component of the movement system will reinforce each other in an orchestrated manner.
- Two examples of the approach that the Plan advances are as follows:
 1. The Plan identifies that to achieve the pedestrian/bicycle movement system objectives, one of the most critical components is the connection to the trail system of Lady Bird Lake. From this standpoint, it recommends the enhancement of several routes of the trail system be pursued, including a new west side connection to the Convention Center entrance and through the creek corridor on a light boardwalk like structure under the Cesar Chavez and Red River Bridges to 3rd Street. It also calls for two new east side connections – one to Davis Street and one to Driskill Street.
 2. In the most constrained reaches of the corridor, the Plan recommends that Sabine Street be redesigned as a bicycle/pedestrian promenade. Between 4th and 7th Streets, Sabine would be interconnected with the creek corridor by a series of pathways, courtyards and recreational or dining terraces overlooking the creek and creating a sociable and convivial setting centrally within the district. The Plan also recommends that Sabine Street be extended from 4th Street where it intersects with the Lance Armstrong bikeway to not only 3rd Street and Palm Park but beyond across a new signalized intersection on Cesar Chavez to Rainey Street. Rainey Street will in turn then connect to both the Davis and Driskill Street trails on the east side of the creek to Lady Bird Lake and to the Mexican American Cultural Center and further extensions of the Lady Bird Lake trails.
- **Land Use and Development**
(Diagram of Land Use and Development Concept, page 9 Master Plan)
- The Tunnel project along with the improvements of the creek corridor will create enhanced opportunities for redevelopment. The redevelopment of the private and public lands adjacent to the corridor are not only an important step in providing the economic basis for the tax-increment financing district, but they

are also important because they create an intensity of activities and uses that will help make the creek corridor a successful people-oriented place.

- From a development standpoint, the district offers a wide variety of opportunities for residential, commercial and hospitality-oriented uses. Of these, residential uses would be of the greatest benefit to the district in bringing a larger population to the area and establishing a sense of neighborhood. Residential uses can take advantage of the proximity to the open spaces within the corridor and the activities planned within the parks and open air dining along the creek. There are also a wide range of types and scales of housing that could be accommodated within the district, including family oriented, live/work lofts, and of a wide variety of sizes, price points and affordability.
- From a regulatory perspective, the size and scale of future projects are most significantly affected by the Capitol View Corridor height limitations. These restrictions, however, are not only limitations on development but also create opportunities for a diversity of building types and scales, which will add to the interest and attractiveness of the area for smaller scale creative businesses and more unique life style opportunities for residential and workplace development. It will also create a greater diversity of the scale and types of financial requirements for redevelopment that will allow for a broader range of investment opportunities.
- In the preparation of the Master Plan, the maximum development capacity of the Waller Creek Tax Increment Financing District was projected by analyzing and modeling each of the opportunity sites greater than one quarter block in area. This projection indicates that the opportunity sites could yield up to 11.4 million square feet of gross floor area or an average Floor Area Ratio of 9:1. This projection takes into consideration both the limitations of the Capitol View Corridors and the utilization of the proposed Downtown Density Bonus program. It is important to note that these projections only describe the estimated development capacity of the site and do not necessarily represent what the real estate market may actually produce or what an individual property owner may decide to do with the property.
- **Implementation Strategy**
(Diagram of Implementation Strategy, page 12 Master Plan)
- The implementation of the planned improvements needs to be undertaken in a comprehensive manner that allows for the transformation of the entire corridor. For this to be a successful endeavor, the improvements cannot be undertaken

incrementally or in a piecemeal fashion. We cannot expect the private sector alone to implement this vision.

- Within the corridor, there are a variety of strategies for realizing the improvements. The Plan recommends the focus of public improvements on those elements and sites where the improvements will be most effective in helping the transformation and connection that is desired. It places the highest priority on the public improvements that link Lady Bird Lake, extend and improve Sabine Street and improve Palm Park for family-oriented recreational and open space activities.
- It focuses a public/private effort on the central blocks between 4th and 7th Streets, where the improvements cannot be undertaken unless a cooperative approach is utilized.
- It focuses on a public real estate redevelopment strategy on the blocks between 7th and 10th Streets where public improvements can most readily be undertaken as part of any future disposition of public lands for new uses. The lands can also be leveraged to create more affordable housing opportunities.
- Finally, it focuses on a park improvement strategy for Waterloo Park, Symphony Park and Symphony Square, where improvements are already proposed in conjunction with Tunnel mitigations and can be implemented as part of a park improvement program.

In Conclusion

- With the realization of the planned improvements, the value of Waller Creek will be extended into the surrounding community and throughout Downtown. Waller Creek will become a linear park and a positive public space that enhances the image and identity of the City, gives additional structure and orientation to the urban experience, connects and reinforces activity centers, and serves as an attractive destination. It will also be a catalyst for redevelopment and revitalization, a centerpiece of a revitalized east side of downtown and an attractive amenity that helps to overcome the barriers that exist between Downtown and East Austin.