



THE PLAN

EAST RIVERSIDE CORRIDOR

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW
ABOUT THE EAST RIVERSIDE CORRIDOR
PLANNING PROCESS AND OVERVIEW
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

East Riverside Drive is important as a commercial center to an economically and socially diverse group of residents living in proximity to the roadway, in addition to serving as a gateway to downtown. The strip shopping malls along E. Riverside Drive epitomize the car-dominated environment that is, unfortunately, typical of much of the modern American landscape. The first impression many visitors have of the area is of an expanse of low rise buildings or under-utilized and/or vacant retail space, and the associated surface parking lots. The current appearance of the built features in the area is dominated by a cacophony of commercial signs, blistering parking lot asphalt, and a distinct lack of both quality architecture and landscaping. The Corridor currently contains a high percentage of market-rate affordable housing, which unfortunately is affordable in part due to aging multi-family housing stock and a history of economic disinvestment and crime in the area. Private investment and redevelopment is beginning to occur on the edge of the East Riverside area close to downtown. The challenge for planning in the East Riverside Corridor area is to offer a framework by which public investment and private redevelopment can occur to reinvigorate the area, making it attractive for further investment as a local employment center and transit-supportive neighborhood, while managing to address the needs of all citizens living in the area, now and in the future.

About the East Riverside Corridor Planning Area

The boundaries of the East Riverside Corridor Study Area are located along roughly 3.5 miles of East Riverside Drive from IH-35 to State Highway 71/Ben White Boulevard. (See Exhibit 1.2) The Planning Area is roughly 1,000 acres and contains more than 850 parcels and approximately

1,200 buildings. The Study Area boundaries were originally suggested by City of Austin staff to comprise 1) all parcels touching East Riverside Drive between IH-35 and Ben White Boulevard, and 2) non-single family parcels located within 1,000 feet of East Riverside. These boundaries were intended from the project inception to be flexible and to reflect the results of the public visioning process.

The demographic makeup of residents in the East Riverside Corridor area has been changing over the last few years. The City of Austin demographer, Ryan Robinson, has noted changes in the area related to market pressure and the area's proximity to downtown. In the city as a whole, concentrations of minority populations in East Austin have decreased, while the overall Hispanic population has increased. Median property appraisal values have increased in the 78741 zip code by 82 to 149% percent between 2000 and 2009, largely due to the city's population growth and this area's proximity to the central city. Due to these pressures, redevelopment of aging properties has already begun to occur. As population growth and demand for housing in the central core continues, market forces will continue to spur development and redevelopment in the East Riverside Corridor area.

At approximately the same time redevelopment began to occur in the East Riverside Corridor area, City Council asked a consultant team to examine options for future rail connections in central Austin as part of the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP). Their preliminary recommendation included a rail route along East Riverside Drive from Downtown to the Austin Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA).

Due to the redevelopment that is beginning to occur, the discussions about a rail line along East Riverside



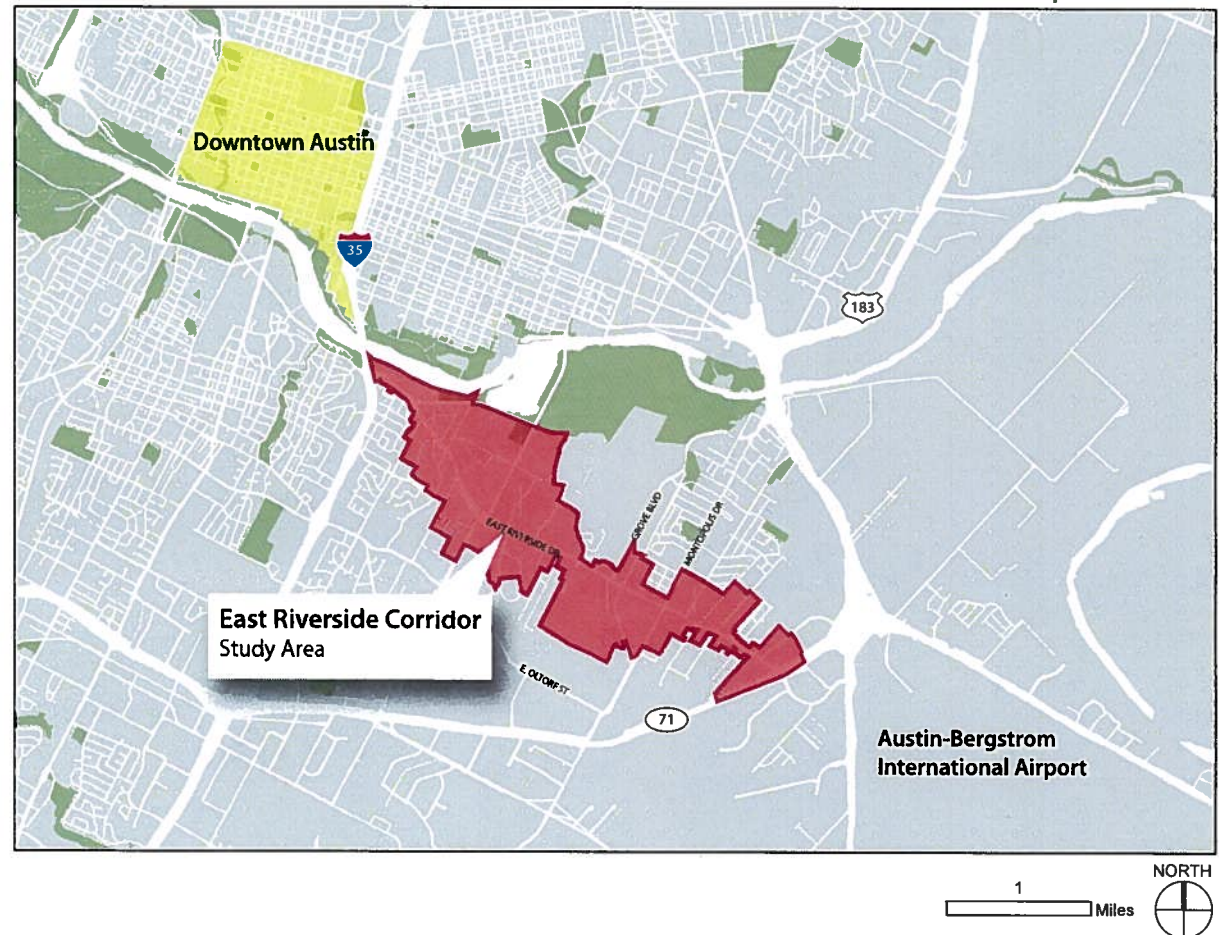
Exhibit 1.1:
East Riverside Corridor
Context Map

Drive, and in response to requests made during the East Riverside Oltorf Combined (EROC) neighborhood planning process for a corridor study, City Council decided to initiate a master planning process for the East Riverside Corridor. This will provide an opportunity to transform an underutilized commercial corridor into a more sustainable, mixed use, transit-oriented neighborhood. The master plan resulting from a focused and comprehensive planning effort will help to guide private redevelopment, public infrastructure investments, and recommend policy objectives to maintain an economically diverse community as redevelopment and investments for revitalization occurs.

Throughout the process, the Planning Area boundaries were modified based on public input. Adjusted boundaries are reflected in this introduction section of the Master Plan, as well as in other sections of the Plan, but the original boundaries are shown in the existing conditions maps in Appendix A.

While the visioning process focused specifically on the East Riverside Corridor Planning Area, a truly comprehensive approach to planning necessitated some consideration of conditions and future planning decisions beyond the Planning Area boundary into the Montopolis and East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan Areas, including street connections, bicycle connections and open space. Where appropriate, recommendations regarding areas outside the Planning Area are presented in this report.

Adoption of the Master Plan will signal to property owners, business owners, the development community, City staff, and other stakeholders that the City Council embraces the vision outlined in the plan to encourage redevelopment of the existing low density, auto-oriented commercial uses into a safe, attractive, revitalized corridor



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that is more pedestrian-friendly and supportive of rail transit that has been proposed as part of the Urban Rail Study. The goal is to leverage private redevelopment that is already starting to occur to improve the area and create economic and societal opportunities for current and near-by residents, while simultaneously welcoming new residents and businesses to the area. Once adopted, various City departments can move forward with integrating the Plans' recommendations into their departmental work plans.

Planning Process and Overview of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan

This Master Plan identifies a series of basic land use, design characteristics, and mobility objectives for the East Riverside Corridor, in conjunction with information about how the City of Austin strives to provide affordable housing options throughout the city to create diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods. The goals and objectives of the Master Plan, as well as the strategies recommended to achieve them, resulted from the efforts of the consultants led by A. Nelessen Associates, the City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department (formerly named the Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department), the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department, a Technical Advisory Group, and the people who live, work and visit the East Riverside Corridor. A meeting with community leaders and stakeholders, a developer's meeting, a preliminary visioning workshop, a Public visioning workshop, and a 'Did We Get It Right?' public meeting were the basis of the planning process, with additional input from a variety of different constituencies, including affordable

housing advocates and current low-income residents in the area. A variety of tools and planning techniques were used throughout the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan planning process to evaluate current and potential visual, spatial and economic characteristics of the Study Area. Results from several of these techniques, such as the Visual Preference Survey™, Demographic, Market and Policy Questionnaire, and Vision Translation Workshop, are provided in Appendix B.

As a result of the visioning processes, a plan has been developed which emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices, transit-oriented and walkable development throughout the Corridor. These goals are consistent with the needs of current low-income residents in the area, who depend on transit service and rely upon local services to meet their health, education, and retail needs. A proposed transit line, stops and accompanying transit-oriented development along East Riverside Drive create concentrated areas of development, or 'hubs,' to define the Corridor area. By concentrating the bulk of denser development around the transit stops, a series of walkable "main street" areas are formed, generating gathering places for the surrounding community, and in some cases, the surrounding region. The purpose for this kind of development is to accommodate and encourage new development and redevelopment around transit stations in a way that promotes the use of public transit and other forms of alternative transportation, creation of public gathering spaces, while also preserving lower-density housing further from the transit stops. The existing multi-family properties in the East Riverside Corridor Planning Area were built at different times over the past few decades, so they will likely redevelop at different times, providing a mix of ages

and types of housing, as well as a range of housing prices. For the aging low-density commercial spaces and undeveloped land that can accommodate many new residents without displacing current residents, this Master Plan recommends development bonuses as incentives to encourage their redevelopment around primary transit stations. The Master Plan serves to provide a framework for public improvements such as better sidewalk connections, bike facilities, pocket parks and stronger urban design standards for any future development or redevelopment that may occur. Through the visioning process it became clear that current residents and planning participants already rely heavily on alternative modes of transportation and this sort of development would continue to encourage and support the use of multiple forms of transportation.

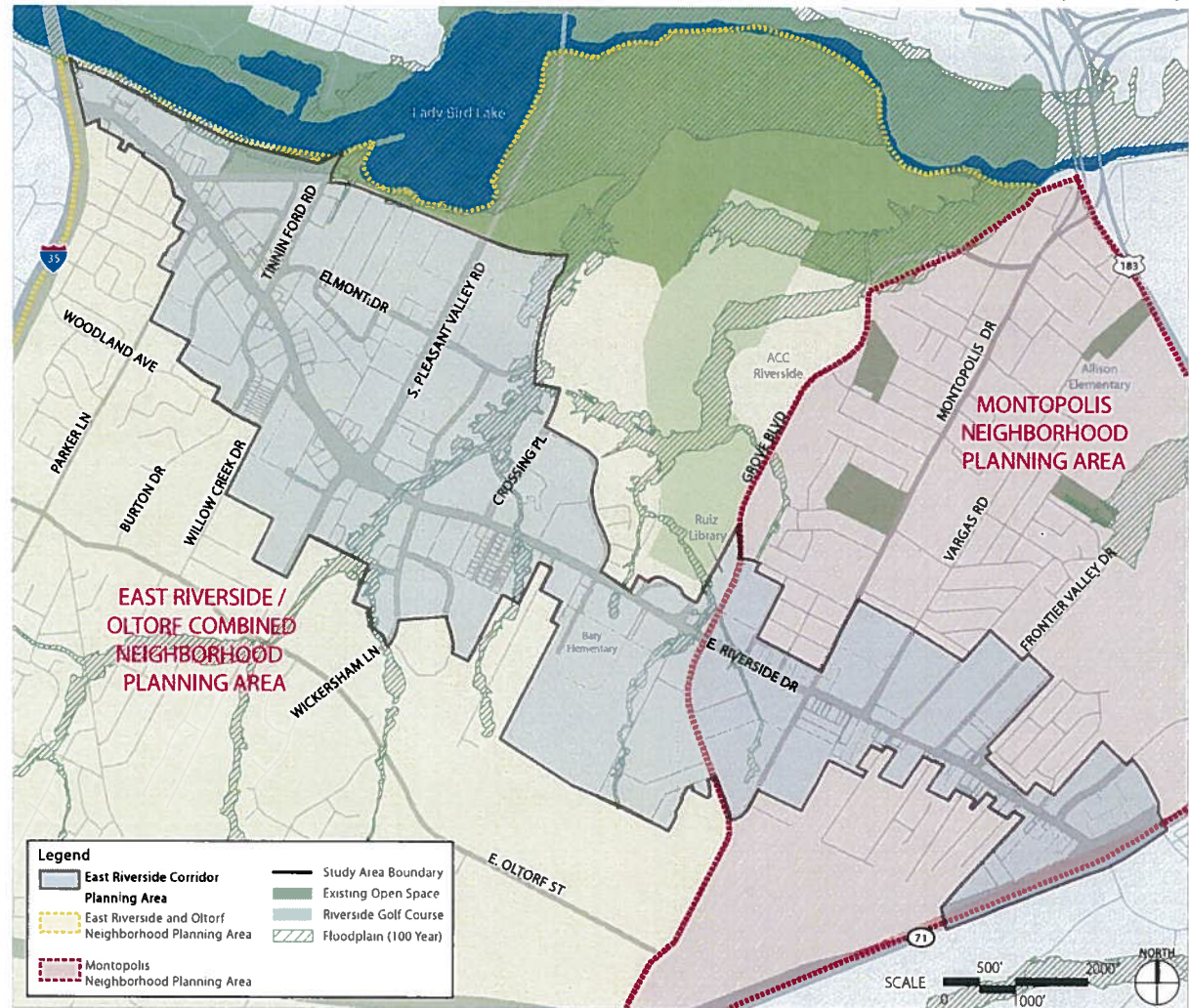
Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan is to articulate a vision in such a way that it can guide the form, shape, and character of the area for years to come, which calls for housing to accommodate a range of incomes. Major elements of the Master Plan were identified through a public visioning process designed to create a shared vision for the East Riverside Corridor. The Master Plan will be used as the basis for changes to zoning, land use regulations, site development standards, streetscape design standards, and building design standards that will be incorporated into a regulating plan for the area, the process for which will begin following the adoption of the Master Plan. The Master Plan will also guide City decisions regarding infrastructure improvements and policy-making as appropriate to achieve the vision.

Exhibit 1.2:
Study Area Map

This Master Plan is a policy document, not a development proposal. It addresses the related issues of land use, building design, transportation, open space, and the design of the public realm, or the space that is accessible to the public, including sidewalks, streets, parks, etc. It also describes the policies currently in place in the City of Austin to provide affordable housing both in the East Riverside Corridor area and in the city as a whole. It does not assume that the recommendations of this Plan will become reality at once, or that adequate funding, or the market for private-sector development investment is in place to implement them all. Rather, the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan will guide many actions taken over a number of years, changing the controls that regulate new development, and creating standards that affect the character and quality of the streets and public spaces. Much of the vision of this Master Plan will be implemented through private sector development, with the City setting standards to guide that development to achieve public goals, and with strategic public infrastructure investment to address gaps not provided by the private sector. The recommended first step of implementation is for the Austin City Council to adopt the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan, including the proposed implementation strategy.

The sections of the plan that articulate the shared vision for the area are: Mobility, Open Space, Land Use and Density, Urban Design Guidelines, Infrastructure, Affordable Housing, and Implementation.



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SECTION 2

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THE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

Successful urban areas allow people to move conveniently among many destinations using a variety of modes of transportation. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan takes a holistic approach to mobility planning in the Corridor. This section of the Plan makes recommendations on a broad range of transportation related issues including the street network, transit, bicycle travel, intersection improvements, and the pedestrian environment. The creation of a multimodal mobility network is a critical objective of the Master Plan.

One of the greatest challenges for the East Riverside Corridor will be the transformation of the area from one that is auto-oriented to a multimodal, people-friendly environment. To make this possible, there will need to be multiple changes to the mobility system, including an improved street network, new transit options, and improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities.

Transit

High quality transit service is essential to realizing the vision for East Riverside, and for making the area more affordable for current and future residents by lowering the portion of a family's budget that has to be spent on transportation. Convenient, reliable transit plays an important role in the creation of a pedestrian-oriented environment because it enables people to travel to business and leisure destinations without the need to use a car. Transit also helps to activate streets through greater pedestrian activity, reduces traffic congestion, and results in a cleaner environment. As the Austin area is at the cusp of receiving an EPA non-attainment designation for ozone emissions, it is imperative that the City plan for integrated transit systems that provide a greater range of transportation choices. The East Riverside Corridor Plan describes such a system.

The City of Austin is currently investigating the potential for a streetcar or light rail system to connect the Mueller redevelopment area, the University of Texas, the Capitol complex, downtown, and the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. There are two possible routes to connect downtown to the airport, but the recommended route is along East Riverside Drive because the transit line would serve existing neighborhoods, the area already has high transit ridership and the potential for transit-supportive development and redevelopment, and because there is sufficient Right-of-Way for a dedicated median-running transit line without the need for the City to acquire land. Although final route recommendations and system designs are not complete, and funding has not been identified for the rail system, this Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide for future land use regulations and design standards that will be supportive of transit. Since the East Riverside area already contains some of the most well-used bus lines in the city, Riverside Drive is identified as a future rapid bus line on Capital

Metro's "All Systems Go" Long Range Transit Plan, so high frequency transit service is planned for the area in the future whether it is urban rail or rapid bus.

Transit and mixed use activity nodes are mutually supportive. Both are necessary for a transit system to be successful because dense, mixed use development supports transit by enabling a greater number of people to live within walking distance of transit stops, in addition to providing commercial services and jobs in a neighborhood.

The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan integrates land use and transit through the creation of compact, walkable, mixed use areas, or 'Hubs,' within approximately ¼ mile of primary transit stops. These Hubs bring together people, jobs, and services and are designed in a way that makes it efficient, safe, and convenient to travel on foot or by bicycle, transit, or car. This type of compact development along transit corridors can provide a variety of housing and mobility options and create active places where people can live, work, shop, interact and recreate. Benefits of dense, transit-supportive development include:

- Create greater mobility choice through improved travel options (walking, bicycling, transit, etc.)
- Decrease auto use and lessen the negative impacts of the automobile: contribution to traffic congestion and air pollution, high household spending on transportation, consumption of fossil fuels, and excessive parking needs.
- Create interesting and active places to live, work and play
- Achieve healthier lifestyles due to increased walking and bicycling
- Create active places and livable communities that serve daily needs and where people feel a sense of

belonging and ownership

- Improve the design quality of the built environment
- Include engaging, high quality public spaces (e.g. small parks or plazas) as organizing features and gathering places for the neighborhood
- Encourage a variety of housing types near transit facilities available to a wide range of ages and incomes
- Enables community benefits such as affordable housing, open space and bicycle facilities to be funded or created through development bonuses allowing building entitlements greater than what is allowed by base zoning in exchange for the provision of specified community benefits.
- Introduce creative parking strategies that integrate, rather than divide properties and reduce the sense of auto domination

Transit Recommendations:

Introduce streetcar/light rail service on East Riverside Drive

The public's desire for rail transit in the Corridor was clear in the planning process, as the construction of a rail line was rated as one of the highest priorities for desired change in the planning area. The East Riverside Corridor Master Plan recommends the implementation of a light rail or streetcar line, consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Austin Plan Urban Rail Connections Study. The rail line would serve the East Riverside Corridor area by connecting it to downtown, the Capitol complex, the University of Texas, the Capital Metro commuter rail line, and the airport. The East Riverside Corridor area already has high bus ridership some of which could support a light rail or streetcar line by providing ridership on opening day. The rail line would

enable existing and future employers and residents of the East Riverside Corridor area to travel conveniently to locations and services both within and outside the Corridor without the need for a car. Rail can be part of a comprehensive transportation network that is being discussed as part of the City's Strategic Mobility Plan. As traffic congestion is one of the greatest challenges to the City's quality of life and economic vitality, alternative mobility options need to be supported where viable.

Exhibit 2.1 Rail Transit Route Map illustrates the rail transit recommendations made in this Plan. The blue line represents the potential alignment of a rail transit system along East Riverside Drive. For most of the Corridor, rail is located in the center median that divides east and west bound traffic. The exception to this alignment occurs between Wickersham Lane and Willow Creek Drive, where it is proposed that the transit line would separate from the vehicular lanes to create a transit plaza on the north side of the current median at the E. Riverside Drive and Pleasant Valley Road intersection. Arrows are shown at each end of the Corridor to indicate rail service connections to downtown and the airport.

Four primary rail stops are recommended along the portion of the proposed rail line within the planning area. The placement of these stops was carefully considered in conjunction with the potential for development of Hubs along East Riverside Drive and studies conducted as part of the Urban Rail Connections Study. Within the planning area, major transit stops are envisioned near the following cross streets: South Lakeshore Boulevard/Tinnin Ford Road, South Pleasant Valley Drive, and Airport Commerce Drive. A stop somewhere between Grove Boulevard and Montopolis Drive will also be a critical link in the transit service. Approximate five and ten minute walking distances are shown around each of the primary

transit stops to demonstrate the principal service areas of each station.

Secondary rail stops are depicted in grey and intended to represent the desire for frequent stops along East Riverside Drive. This dual set of stations allows for a greater level of flexibility in transit scheduling and service, as trains could potentially be scheduled to stop at the secondary stops less frequently than at the primary stops. Final determination of rail stop locations will be identified through future engineering and environmental studies for the rail line. This Master Plan will serve as a guide in evaluating where stops should be located.

Create identifiable places, or "Hubs," along East Riverside Drive around the primary transit stops

To create a symbiosis between the neighborhood and rail, identifiable centers, or "Hubs," should be created around the proposed primary transit stops. The Hubs should have higher density, concentrated, mixed use development to support transit and retail, and to provide amenities for transit riders and the community. The Hubs would provide distinct destinations along the rail line,



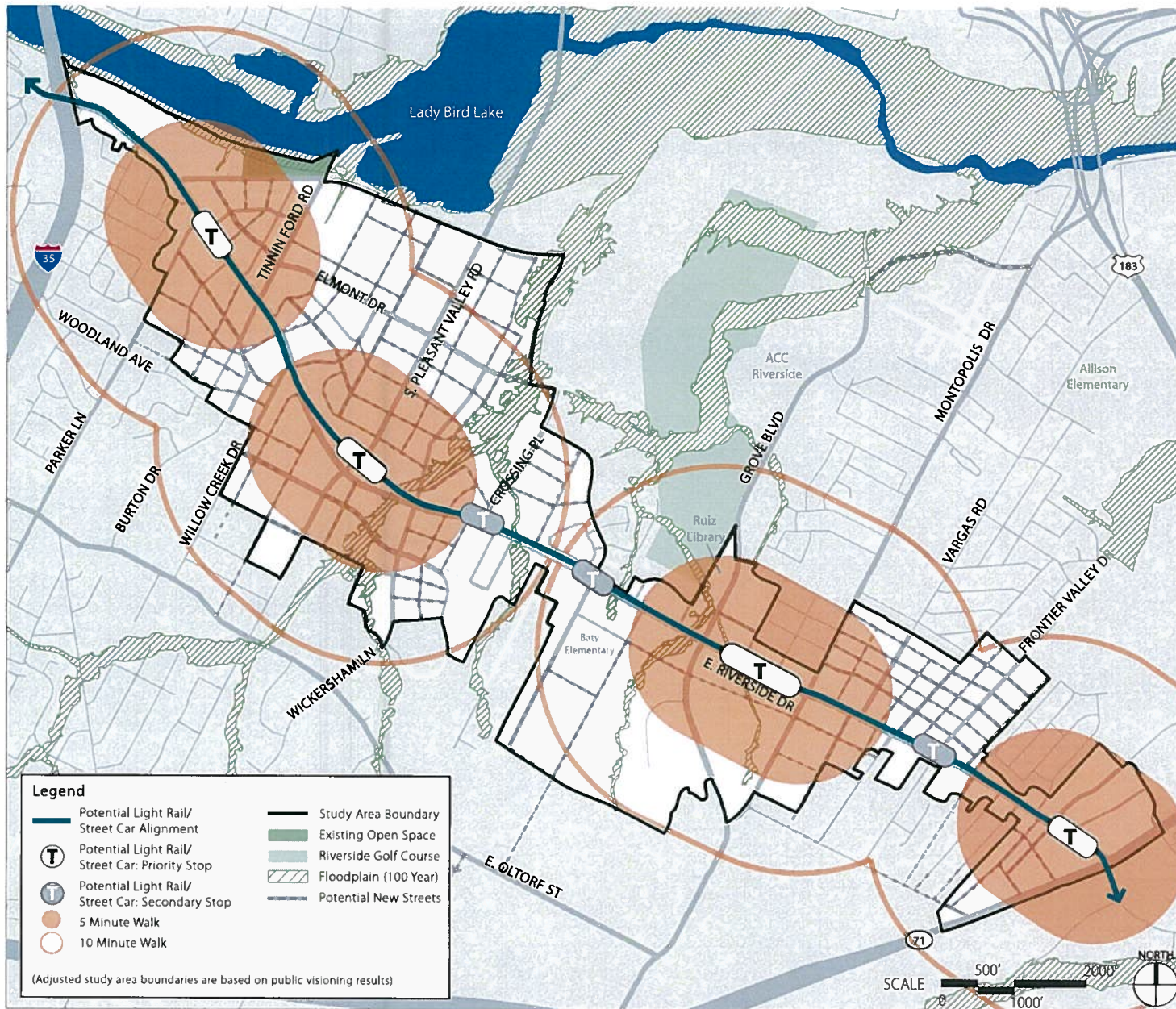


Exhibit 2.1:
Rail Transit Route Map

where housing, shops, and offices would be accessible within a 5 minute walk of the stop. See Section 4 Land Use and Density for a more detailed description and recommendations regarding Hubs around the primary transit stops.

Coordinate bus service with rail service to create a unified transit network

In addition to rail, there will still be a continued need for bus service in the area to complement the rail line and serve areas not directly adjacent to the rail line. There are numerous existing bus routes that serve the East Riverside Corridor area, creating many connections between the planning area and the rest of the city. Information about existing bus routes can be found in the existing conditions section of Appendix A. Additional or modified bus routes will be needed to fully integrate rail and bus transit.

Bus Rapid Transit, a form of bus service with fewer stops and predictable, on time schedules, was recommended for East Riverside Drive as part of Capital Metro's "All Systems Go" Long Range Transit Plan. This will be an alternate transit option if rail is not implemented along the Corridor.

East Riverside Drive

East Riverside Drive is the most significant street in the planning area; however, the current condition of the roadway and adjacent development makes it inhospitable to anyone traveling outside of a vehicle. Planning participants expressed a strong desire to see portions of the roadway function more like a "Main Street", with continued vehicular access but with a greatly improved pedestrian experience. A transformed Riverside Drive would have wide sidewalks with

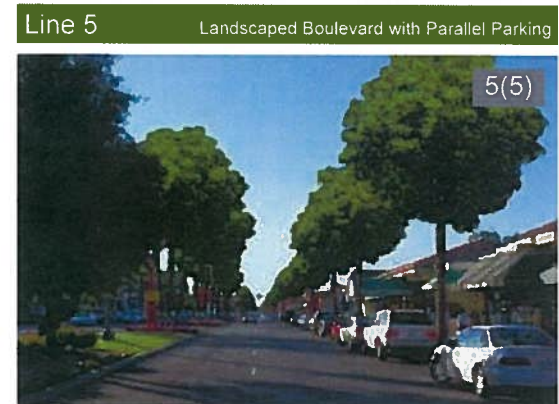
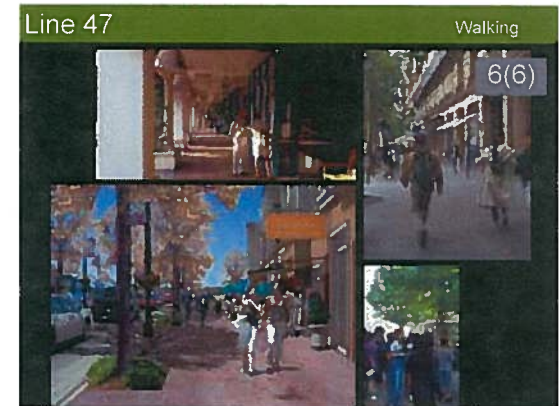
landscaping and street trees buffering pedestrians from traffic, convenient access to transit, and safe bicycle facilities. Riverside Drive should have safe and comfortable ways for pedestrians to cross the road, and simply become an enjoyable place to be.

Recommendations for East Riverside Drive:

Redesign East Riverside Drive as a multi-modal corridor that allows for safe and efficient travel for all transportation modes

In order to accommodate the proposed light rail or streetcar line along East Riverside Drive, the street will have to be redesigned and rebuilt, providing an opportunity to improve the street design to better accommodate all forms of transportation, not just automobiles. In the public planning process, participants stressed the need for East Riverside Drive to be a place for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and a streetcar or light rail line.

To illustrate how to accommodate all of those uses, typical street sections for East Riverside Drive and other street types in the planning area are provided in this section (See Exhibit 2.2) and in Appendix C. These street sections include representations of travel lanes and direction, transit alignment, potential building locations, street tree and lighting placement, and sidewalk configuration. The most significant potential change for East Riverside Drive is the transformation of this road from an auto-oriented road to a multimodal corridor that accommodates vehicles, a new light rail or streetcar line, bicycles, and pedestrians. This includes, from the outside edge of the streetscape area to the middle of the roadway, buildings built up to the sidewalk edge, wide sidewalks with street trees, an on-street bicycle lane, three lanes of traffic for each direction of traffic, and



a transit line in the center of the roadway. The vehicular traffic lanes are needed for efficient traffic flow. Exhibit 2.2 shows a typical street section but the East Riverside Drive design may vary at different locations along the corridor due to available Right-of-Way and other factors.

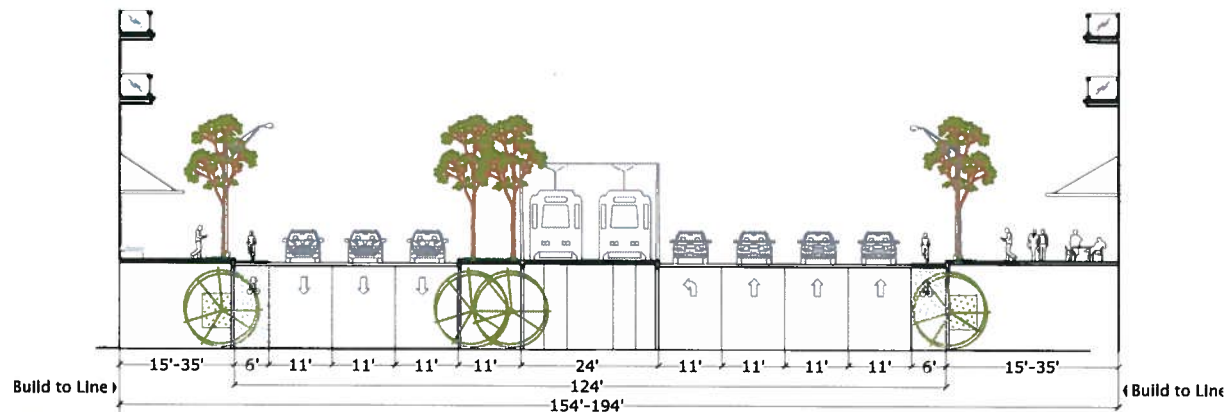
Provide a designated bicycle lane along East Riverside Drive with special pavement treatment to emphasize the cycling environment

The street section depicts dedicated one way bicycle lanes on each side of East Riverside Drive. An integral curb design and colored materials should be used for the bicycle lanes to clearly distinguish it from the vehicular roadway. On-street bicycle lanes are recommended along both sides of East Riverside Drive to ensure cyclists are visible to drivers on this relatively high-speed road. The on-street bicycle lane also separates cyclists from pedestrians on the sidewalks, ensuring that cyclists and pedestrians don't conflict. The on-street bicycle lanes on East Riverside Drive are designed for experienced cyclists. Other proposed streets and bike routes in the area will accommodate less experienced cyclists.

Along East Riverside Drive provide wide sidewalks with an ample landscaped street tree/furniture zone to provide a buffer between pedestrian and automobile traffic

A central feature of the vision for the corridor is a more pedestrian friendly East Riverside Drive. Wide sidewalks, landscape and street tree buffers to separate the pedestrian from the busy roadway, shade and weather protection, and buildings built to the edge of the sidewalk all contribute to a high quality pedestrian environment. Because Riverside Drive is an arterial that provides for regional traffic movement, no reduction in the number of automobile lanes is proposed, but in the future the City could consider converting the outside

Exhibit 2.2:
East Riverside Drive Typical Street Section*



**Note: This cross section is conceptual and could be refined as part of rail planning and design. Necessary Right-of-Way will be determined based on final design.*

lanes to on-street parking during off-peak hours to support local business and new residential activity and to provide further buffer between pedestrian/bicyclist activity and automobile traffic.

Provide safety improvements at intersections to facilitate pedestrian flow across Riverside Drive

Exhibit 2.7 Intersection Improvements Map identifies existing intersections with traffic signals and potential improvements that can be made at intersections along the Corridor. While many prominent intersections already have traffic signals, additional signalization may be necessary at specific locations such as Crossing Place and Frontier Valley Drive. Specially designed intersection improvements will also increase pedestrian safety,

with the goal of creating an environment where even children are comfortable crossing the street. Enhanced intersections that incorporate a system of crosswalks and pedestrian signals can enhance pedestrian access to transit while safely facilitating the movement of vehicles throughout the planning area. Enhanced intersections could incorporate a number of these elements: special crosswalk paving, signage, lighting, signalization, landscaping and pedestrian refuge islands. Many of the intersections designated for potential pedestrian improvements were identified during the public visioning process as problematic intersections. At present, warrants would have to be met to add additional traffic signals. If rail is approved, there may be other opportunities to add additional traffic signals.

Street Network Improvements

The Master Plan recommends a series of new streets and street improvements designed to promote the more efficient flow of pedestrians, bike and vehicular traffic, and to create a series of developable blocks. Because a city's streets are the most prevalent of all public spaces, special attention should be paid to both the function and form of existing and potential new streets. Properly designing a city's streets represents an opportunity to create unique and memorable places for the community. The best streets in a community become known as places to gather, shop, recreate, and to simply be. Research has also shown that areas with a highly connected street grid with many intersections results in fewer vehicle/pedestrian fatalities, making the area safer for pedestrians.

Street Network Recommendations:

As redevelopment occurs, create an interconnected network of streets and walkable blocks. The street network should provide a clear hierarchy of arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets.

The current street system in the Area suffers from gaps in the roadway network, includes many large blocks that discourage pedestrian and bicycle travel and produce an over-reliance on East Riverside Drive as the major transportation artery in the area. The Plan calls for the creation of a more complete network of roadways comprised of three types of streets: arterials, collectors, and local streets to improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular mobility in the area. Exhibit 2.3 Street Network Map identifies classification of existing and potential new streets within the planning area.

Potential new streets are indicated as dashed lines on the Street Network Map. Potential new collector streets are shown as dashed orange lines while dashed brown

lines are used to indicate the potential placement of new smaller local streets. The vast majority of recommended new streets are smaller local streets. Potential cross-sections for each street type are provided in Appendix C, to be used as a guide for the design of new streets as properties redevelop.

These streets are designed to work together to accommodate a mix of vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, and to create a series of "Main Street" areas in the Corridor, a feature that has been identified as desirable by the public through the planning process. New streets are recommended to be added to the network of existing streets at strategic locations in order to create pedestrian friendly "walkable blocks" and improve traffic circulation by providing alternative routes for vehicles so that all traffic is not forced onto East Riverside Drive and into already overcrowded intersections for every trip.

The placement of potential new streets within the Corridor shown in Exhibit 2.3 was based on environmental considerations, existing development and property line locations, and minimizing traffic impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. The number of potential new streets that cross the flood plain was kept to a minimum to protect environmentally sensitive land and to reduce the number of costly bridges that would be necessary. Final alignment and design may vary based upon specific site characteristics, available Right-Of-Way and development projects and proposals.

The Master Plan also recommends that a portion of East Riverside Drive from Willow Creek Drive to Wickersham Lane be studied for possible realignment and improvements that would permit the addition of a transit plaza at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road

to coordinate with the light rail or streetcar line. This concept is discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Hierarchy of Streets

Arterials

East Riverside Drive is an important arterial street in the City's arterial street system. In general, arterial streets represent primary thoroughfares designed to move relatively high volumes of traffic. East Riverside Drive is the spine of the Corridor and the principal east-west connection that links IH-35 to Ben White Boulevard/SH 71. East Riverside Drive will continue to function as an arterial street in the future even though certain aspects of its form may be altered to reduce speed levels thereby becoming more pedestrian-friendly in nature, and incorporate transit travel, landscaping elements, and other design elements. Other existing arterials in the area are: Lakeshore Boulevard, Pleasant Valley Road, and Grove Boulevard. These existing arterials should be repurposed to accommodate multiple modes of transportation, not only automobiles. Bicycle facilities and continuous shaded sidewalks should be provided along the arterials to provide direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Collector Streets

Collector streets are indicated in orange on the Street Network Map. These streets serve to collect traffic from other streets, functioning as direct routes to arterials or other collector streets. New collector streets proposed in the plan are designed to accommodate vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians.

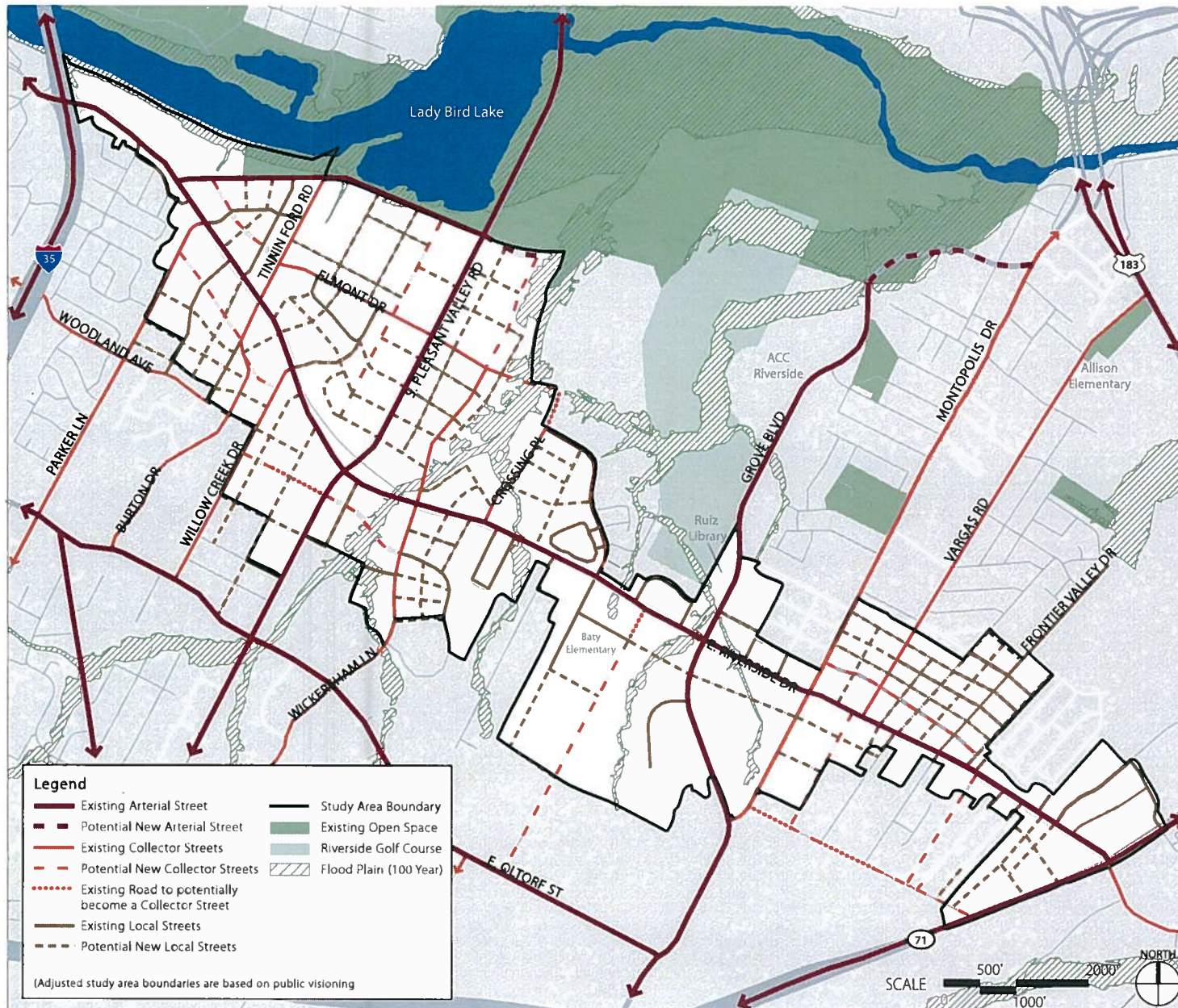
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Streets designated as potential new collectors for the area should be built in the locations specified on the map by private developers as land development occurs. These collectors will provide a continuous route connecting neighborhoods and destinations. To the extent possible, potential collector streets were placed along existing parcel lines to minimize the impact on adjacent properties. Because of the importance of the collector street connections on the street network and flow of traffic, the City should consider developing a Collector Plan requiring the collectors be built as properties redevelop.

Local Streets

Potential new local streets are shown in dashed brown lines on the Street Network Map. Local streets will be built by private developers as redevelopment occurs, but their final locations will be influenced by development project plans and other site considerations. These streets are primarily intended to serve traffic within a neighborhood or within a limited district. Local streets can be designed to slow traffic by using narrower lanes and encouraging on-street parking. The majority of new streets recommended for the area fall into this category. These potential new local streets represent an opportunity to make walking easier, more convenient, and attractive thereby enhancing pedestrian access to transit.

Exhibit 2.3:
Street Network Map



Intersection/Transit Plaza at East Riverside and South Pleasant Valley

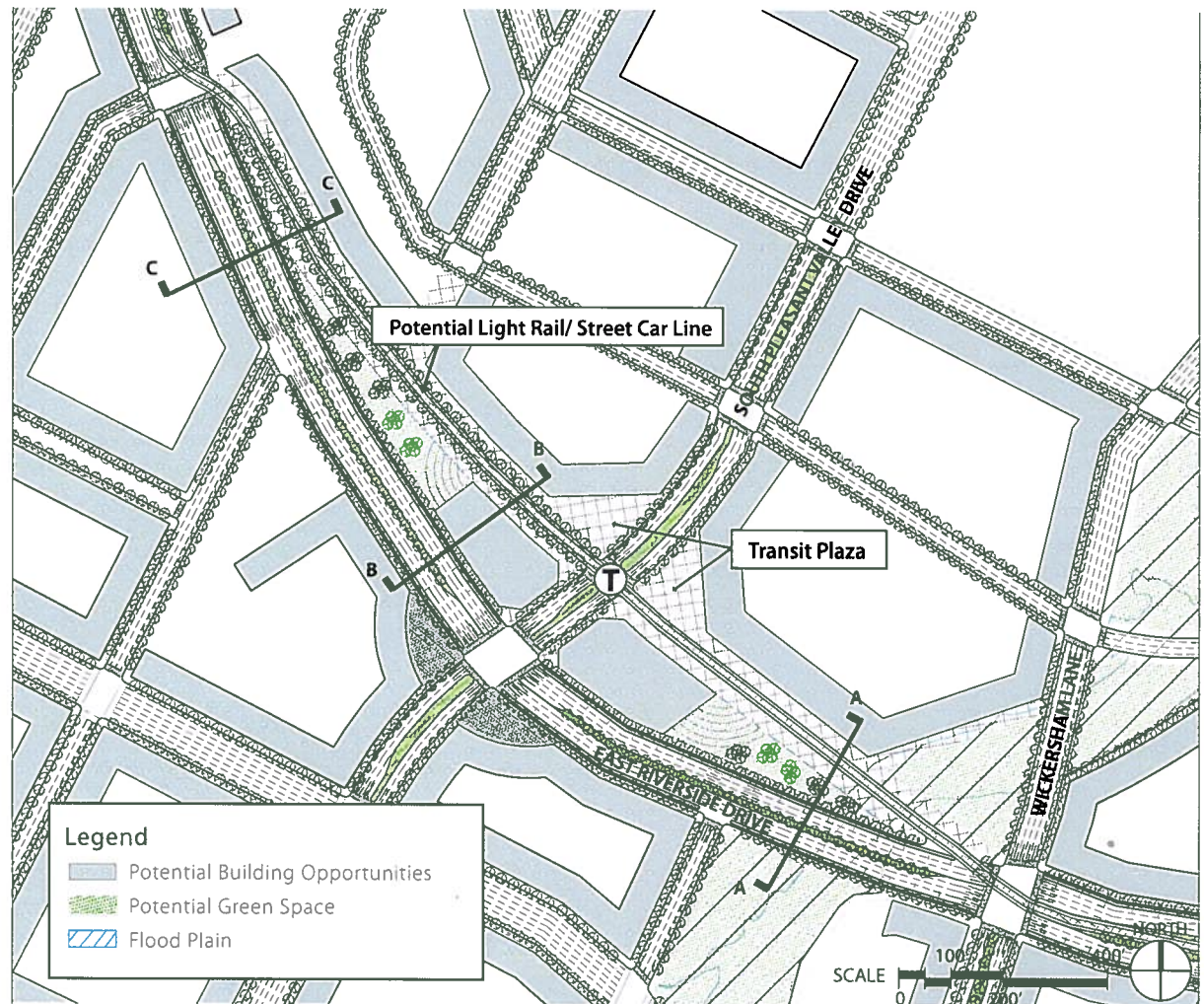
The intersection of East Riverside Drive and South Pleasant Valley Road received special attention during the planning process due to its importance to the Corridor and because of the potential addition of a light rail or streetcar line along East Riverside Drive. Today, east and west bound traffic on East Riverside Drive is separated from Willow Creek Drive to Wickersham Lane by a large and sloping median. West bound traffic is carried on the northern lanes of East Riverside Drive while east bound traffic runs on the southern side. By transforming this intersection from one that is dominated by automobiles to one that functions as a commercial and transit center, the re-design of the intersection could reinvigorate the East Riverside Corridor and become a true neighborhood center for the area.

Transit Plaza Recommendations:

Evaluate the opportunity to realign East Riverside Drive to create a prominent transit plaza and new developable parcels at the Pleasant Valley intersection

Exhibit 2.4: East Riverside and South Pleasant Valley Intersection Diagram illustrates a vision for realignment of this intersection. The Master Plan proposes widening the southern portion of East Riverside Drive between Wickersham Lane and Willow Creek Drive in order to accommodate both east and west bound traffic on this stretch of the road. Placing all vehicular traffic on the southern portion of East Riverside Drive permits the alignment of a potential light rail or streetcar line along the northern portion of the existing roadway. This would require significant changes to the existing grade, assessment and potential relocation of existing utilities, and resolution of drainage issues.

Exhibit 2.4:
*East Riverside and South Pleasant Valley Intersection Diagram**



**Note: This plan is conceptual and assumes utility pole, grade, soil stability, and flood plain issues can be resolved.*

The potential location for a transit stop serving this area is shown on the Exhibit 2.4 near the northern intersection of East Riverside Drive and South Pleasant Valley Road. This realignment of East Riverside Drive combined with the creation of significant public plaza and green space, as well as development opportunities along the Corridor could serve as a catalyst project for the East Riverside area and could transform the existing automobile-dominated intersection into a family-friendly vibrant commercial center serving adjacent neighborhoods. A market in the plaza could provide opportunities for small businesses to have access to a large number of pedestrians. The development of the current median space could be a catalyst project for the area. Development of this City-owned vacant land could incorporate several elements of the Master Plan vision including the provision of affordable housing, employment/office space, and public gathering spaces.

Recommended street sections of East Riverside Drive and the proposed transit plaza area are shown in Exhibit 2.5 to illustrate the potential re-configuration of sidewalks, vehicular lanes, and transit in the transit plaza area. Sections were prepared for three locations which are indicated with a letter on Exhibit 2.4.

Sections are taken just west of Wickersham Lane (A-A), just west of South Pleasant Valley Drive (B-B), and between two new potential streets to the east of Willow Creek Drive (C-C). These sections illustrate how vehicular lanes are located on the southern portion of the roadway while a potential transit line is accommodated on the existing west bound lanes of East Riverside Drive. As the median widens, Section B-B illustrates how a building that fronts on both the newly reconfigured East Riverside Drive and the transit line could be constructed.

Sections B-B and C-C demonstrate one approach to dealing with the significant grade change that occurs on this section of East Riverside Drive. Much of the grade change could be built into the structure of a building and accommodated on landscaped areas along the roadway and between the east and west bound lanes. Level land is maintained for sidewalks and semi-public edges, travel lanes, the transit line, and bicycle lanes.

Potential obstacles to this proposal include the potential need to relocate or accommodate existing utility transmission lines in the median, addressing drainage issues, and expansive soil conditions. The transit plaza concept could be modified to address or work around some of these issues. The conceptual design will need to be evaluated for feasibility and cost as part of future rail feasibility analyses.



Example of Desired Transit Plaza

SECTION 2: MOBILITY

EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE TRANSIT PLAZA Section A-A

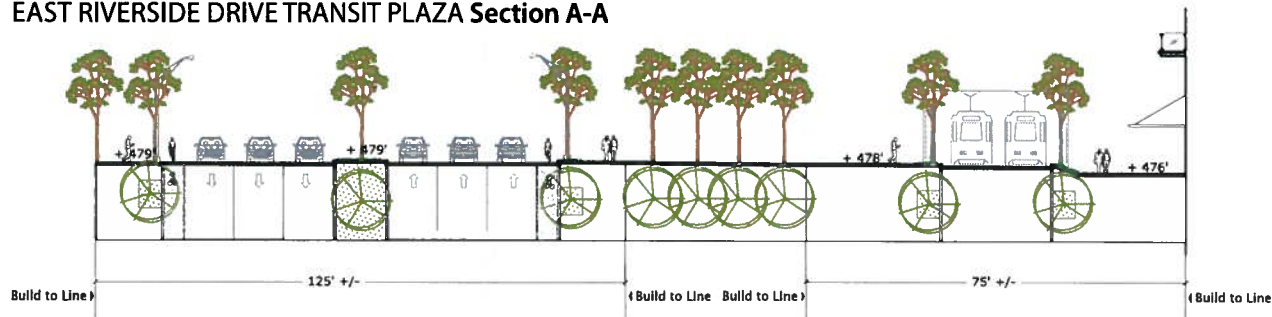
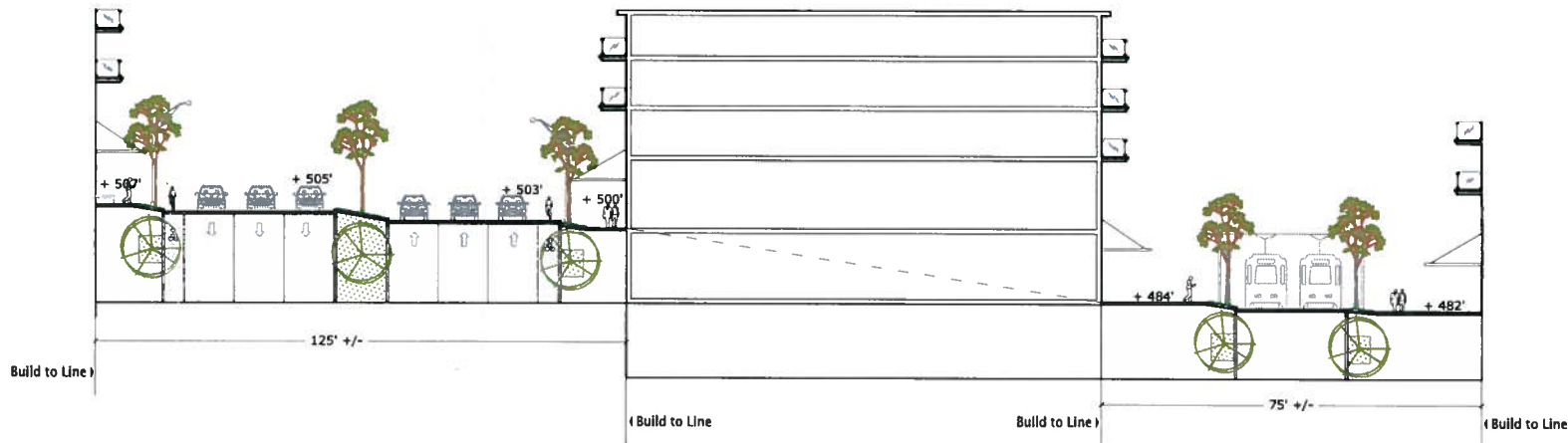
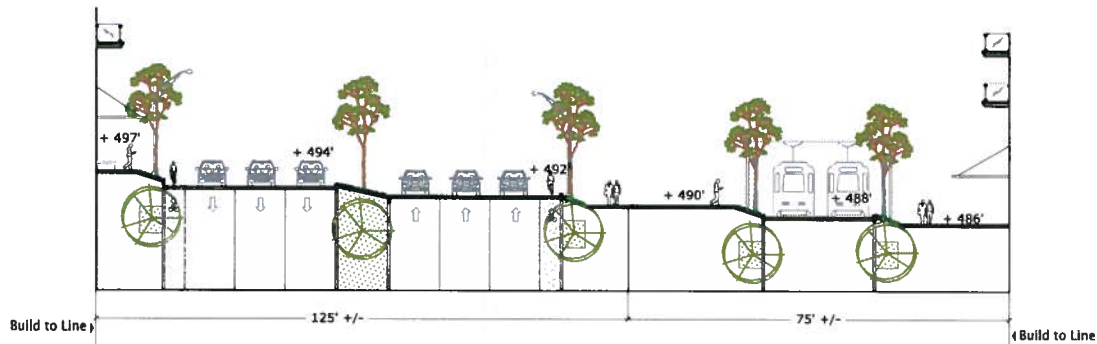


Exhibit 2.5:
*East Riverside Drive
Street Section @ Intersection
with South Pleasant Valley**

EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE TRANSIT PLAZA Section B-B



EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE TRANSIT PLAZA Section C-C



**Note: These cross sections are conceptual and could be refined as part of rail planning and design. Necessary Right-of-Way will be determined based on final design.*

Bicycle Circulation

Bicycling is an important mode of transportation that is often overlooked between provisions for cars and pedestrians. Cycling should be a safe and fast journey to and from retail shops, offices, transit stations, institutional and civic places, parks, and adjacent neighborhoods. While cyclists are often a part of vehicular traffic, certain requirements should be met in order to ensure their safety and encourage proper cyclist behavior. Many existing residential streets within the planning area are already conducive to bicycle travel because they are sufficiently wide to accommodate both bicycles and vehicles and because traffic moving on them is sufficiently slow. New streets proposed for the Corridor should be designed to be bicycle friendly. The Master Plan recommends several specific measures designed to facilitate cycling.

Several bike routes exist within the planning area providing a basic network for bicycles. Most of the facilities in this area are bike lanes or routes on roadways; however, there is also a trail through Roy G. Guerro Colorado River Park. The main existing bicycle routes are on the following roads: East Riverside Drive, Arena Dr/Parker Lane, Pleasant Valley Road, Wickersham Lane, Grove Boulevard, Montopolis Boulevard, and Vargas Road.

Bicycle Circulation Recommendations:

Include a mix of striped bicycle lanes and off-street bicycle paths to serve multiple needs and levels of cycling experience

Exhibit 2.6 Bicycle Circulation Map illustrates recommended bicycle lanes and paths through the Corridor and surrounding area. In agreement with the City of Austin Bicycle Plan, East Riverside Corridor Master Plan recommends that on-street designated integrated curb bicycle lanes, be added to East Riverside Drive

along the length of the entire Corridor. Integrated curb bicycle lanes are an extension of the gutter and are built of concrete, thereby creating a visually distinct zone for bicyclists. The concrete could be colored to make them even more distinct from the roadway. These lanes are envisioned on each side of East Riverside as illustrated in Exhibit 2.2 East Riverside Drive Street Section.

More traditional on-street bicycle lanes are recommended on several other streets throughout the planning area. On-street lanes are striped bicycle travel lanes that are typically a minimum of five feet in width when located on streets without parking and at least six feet in width when located adjacent to on-street parking. Major new north-south bicycle lanes are envisioned on Parker Lane, South Pleasant Valley Road, Grove Boulevard, Montopolis Drive, Vargas Road, and a potential future extension of Lawrence Street.

The Master Plan also recommends a system of off-street bicycle paths to complete the local bicycle network and provide links to regional bicycle connections, as described below.

Bike paths should complement and link to existing and proposed trails and parks

In most cases, proposed bicycle paths shown on Exhibit 2.6 complement and complete existing trails through the area. Off-street bicycle paths provide a safe cycling option for recreational and novice cyclists and children that may not be as comfortable riding with traffic on streets. A critical component to the bicycle network is the completion of the partially constructed Country Club Creek Trail with an underpass at East Riverside Drive, which follows the floodplain through the planning area between South Pleasant Valley Drive and Crossing Lane. The Country Club Creek Trail will provide north-south

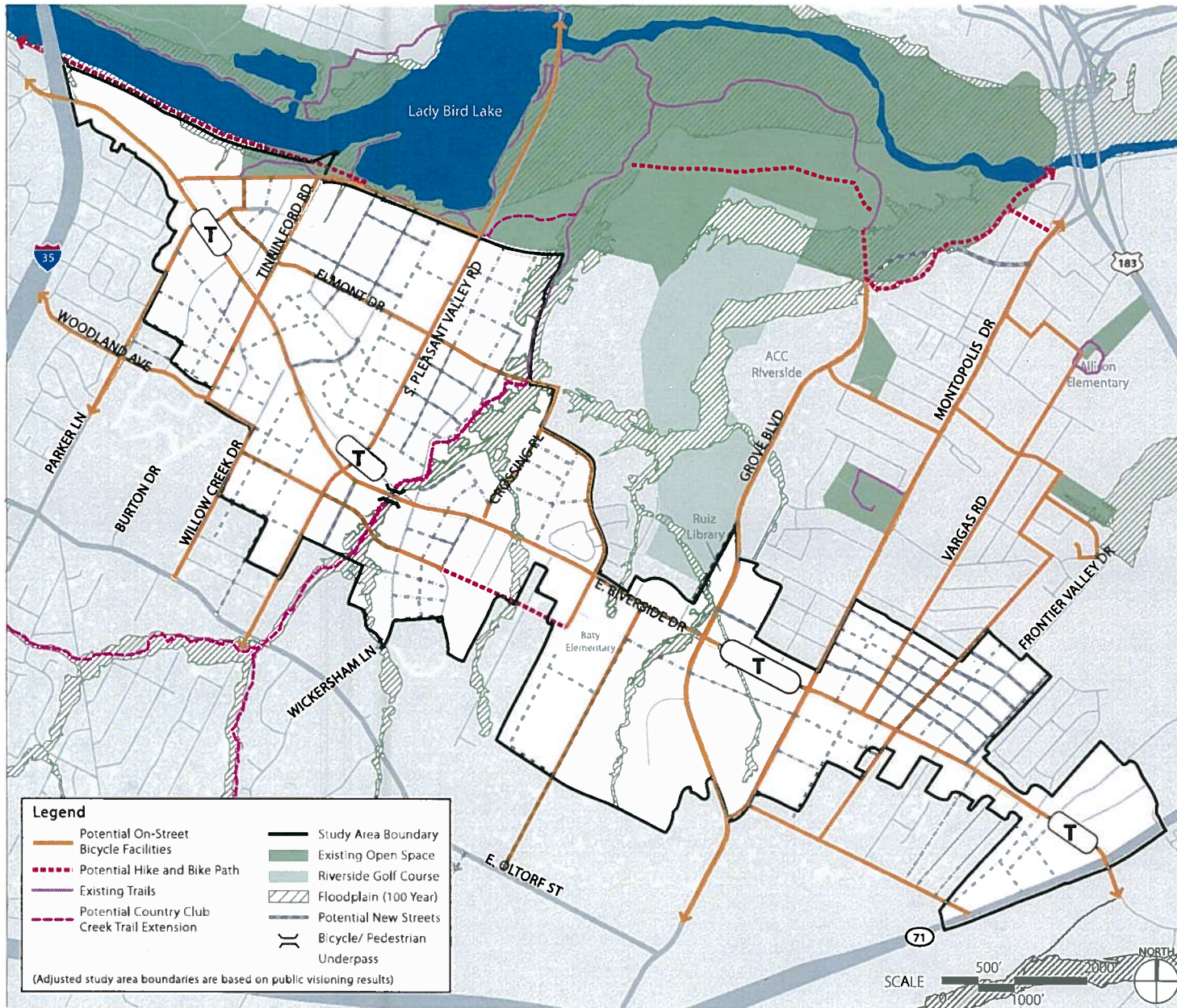
access connecting many residential neighborhoods to East Riverside Drive, regional parks and the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail.

Although partially outside of the boundaries of the Master Plan area, the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike trail provides a major open space resource in the region. At present, gaps in the trail system, from approximately Congress Avenue to Lakeshore Drive, limit the potential use of the trail because trail users are forced onto a narrow sidewalk directly adjacent to East Riverside Drive, an experience many people find unpleasant. The Trail Foundation has proposed closing the gaps in the trail system and the City has begun preliminary engineering studies for the project. Completion of the trail would enhance recreational opportunities in the area and for the entire region and connect the eastern and western sections of the Lady Bird Lake trail. The City should make completion of the trail a high priority over the next few years.

Provide adequate bicycle parking and shower facilities

Providing appropriate facilities for the end of the bicycle trip is an important component for encouraging people to switch from driving to biking for various trips. In order to promote a bicycle-friendly environment, convenient bicycle racks and bike lockers should be provided throughout the Corridor for employees, residents, and customers. The Land Development Code section 25-6-477 defines minimum bicycle parking requirements for development; but additional bicycle parking, and especially covered parking, should be provided, where possible. In the heat of the summer, showers are a necessity for commuter cyclists and thus offices and other employment centers should be encouraged to provide shower facilities for their employees.

Exhibit 2.6:
Bicycle Circulation Map



The Pedestrian Environment

Creating a safe, comfortable, interesting and active pedestrian environment is one of the key goals of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan. A high quality pedestrian environment is not just an aesthetic improvement but provides significant mobility, economic, and health benefits for the community.

The Master Plan envisions a transformation of the East Riverside Corridor from one dominated by the auto and surface parking to an area with mixed use development concentrated near rail transit stops. The quality of the pedestrian environment is essential to this transformation, maximizing the use of alternate modes of transportation such as walking, biking and transit, and mitigating the negative impacts of a transportation system that relies too heavily on the automobile.

The pedestrian realm is made up of the spaces used by the people walking in the city, and consists of sidewalks, crosswalks, and paths and trails. The current conditions in the Corridor pose a barrier to pedestrian mobility, which this plan attempts to rectify by improving connectivity in the area, improving sidewalk and streetscape standards, and by adding boulevards to improve the pedestrian experience.



Examples of Textured Crosswalks & Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian Environment Recommendations:

Improve the Streetscape to Make Walking Safe, Comfortable and Interesting

In all parts of the planning area, the pedestrian experience should be safe, accessible, and interesting in order to encourage walking as a transportation choice. In addition to providing adequate sidewalk infrastructure in the form of continuous wide sidewalks connecting destinations, special efforts to ensure that the pedestrian realm is pleasant and inviting can have a tremendous impact on the number of people walking to destinations and transit, the number of families just going out for a stroll and how the planning area is identified and perceived. Initial streetscape improvements should be focused in and leading to the areas around future rail transit stops.

One of the best ways to encourage walking is to make walking interesting and comfortable by providing visual stimulus and weather protection in the form of buildings with ground floor active uses, streetscape elements, shading, and landscaping. Commercial buildings that are built near the edge of the sidewalk prioritizes pedestrians over vehicles by limiting parking to the interior, sides, and rear of buildings. See Section 5 Urban Design Guidelines for more detailed recommendations on improving the streetscape.

One consideration to keep in mind, however, is that wider sidewalks, tree planting areas, and boulevards within the same fixed rights-of-way of the existing streets can compromise the capacity of the street for motorists. The East Riverside Corridor Planning Area has an advantage in that many of the street right-of-ways are wide and the streets are functioning under capacity for most of the day. In most cases the space exists to design for wider sidewalks without reducing vehicular capacity.

Enhance Key Transit Stops

The increased use of public transportation is central to the creation of viable and sustainable mixed use development. However, the lack of amenities and proper signage at many transit stops can reduce the attraction of public transit to potential riders. The City, area developers and Capital Metro should focus on the design and maintenance of current and future transit stops in the East Riverside Corridor to maximize transit use now and in the future as rail becomes a reality. Potential steps include:

- Improve current and future stops which are located near important pedestrian crossings, at bus route transfer stations and at culturally or historically important places;
- Adjacent developments should embrace transit stops as public places and incorporate enhanced transit stops and shelters into their design;
- Consider pedestrian comfort and safety and provide adequate space, shade, and trees at transit stops in the development of site plans. Protection from the elements, and especially the sun, is essential in the planning area. Various shade-producing elements are encouraged for the Corridor, including pergolas, awnings, and arcades. These should be considered for use at transit stops;
- Incorporate civic art into key transit stops.

Provide Protection from Cars

Pedestrians should also be able to move easily and safely along and across East Riverside Drive, as well as along and across other existing and proposed streets in the area. On-street parallel parking should be present when possible to buffer the pedestrian from traffic. Where parallel parking cannot be provided, the curb edge, bollards, street trees, or other decorative features can be used to separate pedestrians from the street.

Minimize Driveway Curb Cuts

Driveway curb cuts can create hazards for pedestrians walking on sidewalks along the roadway and for auto traffic on major roadways. Drivers turning into a driveway from the road may not be looking for pedestrians on the sidewalk. Multiple curb-cuts on a roadway can also break up the visual continuity of the buildings and having to cross multiple driveways diminishes the pedestrian experience. In addition, auto traffic turning into driveways can create a conflict with traffic on the roadway. As properties develop or redevelop, to the extent possible, driveways should be located off major streets and be shared to minimize curb cuts, especially fronting arterial roadways.

Pedestrian Crossings of Roadways

To create a pleasant and safe pedestrian environment, there must be adequate pedestrian crossings of roadways. These pedestrian crossings should be safe, comfortable, frequent and conveniently located. Where possible, pedestrian crossings should utilize alternative materials to accentuate the pedestrian crossing areas, signal to on-coming traffic that pedestrians are in the area and help to calm traffic. The construction of a pedestrian underpass where Country Club Creek Tail crosses East Riverside Drive should be a priority to improve pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the roadway. If rail is built along E. Riverside Drive, new pedestrian crossings will be necessary to facilitate pedestrian movement across the rail line.

Exhibit 2.7:
Intersection Improvements
Map

