

A RESOLUTION OF THE WALLER CREEK CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WHEREAS the City Council created the Waller Creek Citizen Advisory Committee (WCCAC) in 2007 for the purpose of serving “in an advisory and oversight capacity for the construction and development of the Waller Creek bypass tunnel and Waller Creek Tunnel Redevelopment Project.”

WHEREAS the City Council initiated the Waller Creek District Master Plan project in 2008.

WHEREAS the Waller Creek Citizen Advisory Committee has worked continuously with the project team (City staff and consultants) that has developed the proposed “Waller Creek District Master Plan” (“the Master Plan”).

WHEREAS a draft version of the Master Plan was presented to the WCCAC in September 2009 and a final form in April 2010. In addition, the WCCAC has hosted the three Town Hall meetings over the course of the project.

WHEREAS the Master Plan has evolved in response to valuable input provided by stakeholders including property owners and businesses, downtown representatives, and bicycle, open space and environmental advocates.

WHEREAS it is the belief of the WCCAC that notwithstanding the significant investment that the City and Travis County have made in the lower Waller Creek flood control tunnel, the realization of the community’s vision for Waller Creek requires a commensurate investment in above-ground improvements such as streambank stabilization, pathway improvements, parkland rehabilitation, and streetscape improvements.

WHEREAS it is further the belief of the WCCAC that the tangible, prominent, and visible investments recommended by the Master Plan are necessary to transform the negative public image that surrounds Waller Creek today into a positive image for the Waller Creek of tomorrow.

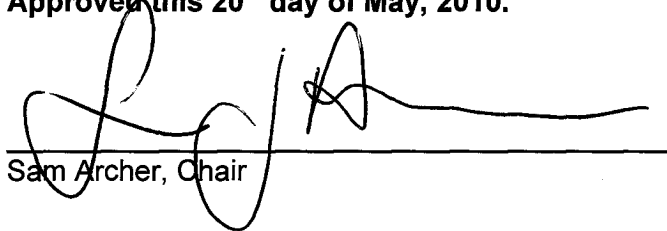
WHEREAS the WCCAC has carefully considered the proposed Waller Creek District Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WALLER CREEK CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE THAT:

- (A) The WCCAC recommends that the “Waller Creek District Master Plan” be adopted by the City Council as an amendment to the Austin Tomorrow Plan with the recommended included in Attachment 1.
- (B) The WCCAC acknowledges, honors and passes along the Summary of Public and Board and Commission Comments on Waller Creek Master Plan.
- (C) The WCCAC further recommends that the City Council direct the City Manager to immediately begin implementation of the “Waller Creek District Master Plan.” The WCCAC recommends that implementation include the following actions:

1. Develop and execute an overall finance plan for the project.
2. Procure a design consultant and move forward directly with the full design and engineering of the physical improvements recommended by the Master Plan.
3. Implement the code amendments and criteria as recommended by the proposed Development Standards.
4. Incorporate into the work plans of the appropriate City departments the near-term improvements recommended by the Master Plan, including:
 - a. Increased programming of events along Waller Creek.
 - b. Enhanced and improved maintenance and policing along Waller Creek.
 - c. Efforts to improve the quality of stormwater run-off.

Approved this 20th day of May, 2010.



Sam Archer, Chair

Attachment A

Master Plan Recommendations from the Waller Creek Citizen Advisory Committee

1. p. 8. The discussion of Riparian Restoration Strategies does not include a bullet for streambank stabilization. The need is quite apparent, and streambank stabilization is described as a significant portion of the Implementation Strategy (p. 19-20). Plus, the plan includes a number of good ideas for stabilizing the streambank while restoring and enhancing the natural values of the creek. It would be good to have a bullet-point to highlight these issues and ideas.
2. Amend the language regarding the Symphony Square area to reflect staff's proposed language.

Page 3, revise 2nd paragraph to reflect the following changes:

Waterloo Park will be improved as part of the Tunnel Project, and become the northern terminus of the creek corridor. The City-owned land to the west and south of Symphony Square, which is leased to the Austin Symphony, could over the long term (and subject to the lease terms and the needs of the Symphony) be reconfigured as parkland to create a more positive relationship to the creek corridor. This could be achieved if redevelopment on surrounding sites were to create convenient shared parking for the Symphony, thereby freeing up the existing surface parking lots to be re-purposed as parkland. Along the creek, the Master Plan calls for the trail to cross at the Eleventh and Red River Street intersections at grade. In addition, due to the low clearances and highly constrained conditions of the pathways under these bridges, it is proposed that the pathways beneath these two bridges either be closed to public pedestrian and bike circulation, or be significantly upgraded with improved lighting, maintenance, and heightened security patrols. If closed to the public, the undercrossing beneath the Eleventh Street Bridge could still be retained for use by Symphony Square and its amphitheater, which will continue to function as a performance space and destination.

Page 10, revise 1st paragraph to reflect the following changes:

The Austin Symphony Orchestra holds a fifty-year lease at Symphony Square and has contributed greatly to improving this segment of the Waller Creek corridor. Not much is needed to improve Symphony Square beyond the elimination and/or enhanced maintenance and management of the below grade connections. However, the surface parking lots currently used by the Austin Symphony Orchestra – across Red River Street to the west of Symphony Square and across 11th Street to the south of Symphony Square – do offer the promise of improvement. Located right next to the creek, these surface parking lots are not the best long-term use of creekside space. . Subject to the needs of and the lease with the Symphony, the transformation of these parking lots could be achieved over the long-term if redevelopment on surrounding sites were to create convenient shared parking for the Symphony, thereby freeing up the existing surface parking lots to be re-purposed as parkland, which could be re-graded to create a series of stepped green terraces. These improvements would not only relate the parkland more directly to the creekside environment but would also enhance the potential for passive recreational opportunities, such as picnicking, sitting, or just enjoying the riparian setting.

Page 62, revise 2nd paragraph to reflect the following changes:

The surface parking lot and the historic Orsey-Doyle House located at the southwest corner of 11th and Red River Streets are currently used by the Symphony League. With regard to the surface parking lot, the Master Plan identifies a long-range goal for this area to be re-purposed as more useable parkland with a terraced lawn stepping down to the creek beneath the existing

tree canopy. This revitalized parkland could be used for all kinds of small events, both in conjunction with the Austin Symphony and other organizations. This transformation would need to be accomplished with the cooperation of the Symphony League and subject to the availability of suitable off-site shared parking.

3. Staff should provide to Council as an appendix, an additional breakdown of costs for the Implementation Strategy.
4. Encourage having an overall tenant manager along Sabine Street which could contribute to attracting and maintaining tenants and the overall success of Sabine Street.
5. Staff should work with the Consultant to re-evaluate the Pedestrian-Oriented Streetfront Uses.
6. Add the following language to the discussion of affordable housing in the Master Plan:

“To achieve the City of Austin goal of achieving geographical dispersal of affordable housing, the Master Plan should preserve the existing affordable housing within the Waller Creek District at the same levels of affordability and should aim to create additional housing opportunities within the Waller Creek Corridor for families with children at all income levels.”

To the Lakeside Apartments discussion add: “with the objective that redevelopment of this site would result in at least a 1:1 onsite replacement of public housing units, including the same level of tenant protections, family income targets, and affordable rent levels.”

7. The City of Austin has committed to becoming the most family friendly city in the country and to ensuring that all policies and decisions support and enhance the quality of life for Austin’s families with children. Amend the Master Plan to add the following statements:

Page 9 add sentence: “Parks and public space within the Waller Creek Corridor should be redeveloped and designed to meet the needs and interests of families with children and users of all ages.”

Page 15 add sentence: “In recognition of the City’s commitment to becoming the most family friendly city in the country, opportunities for creating housing designed for families with children should be pursued.

8. Encourage the City to negotiate and/or renegotiate easements with adjoining land owners to provide trail and creek access is critical where private ownership encroachments negate the greenbelt vision.