

AGENDA



Thursday, June 24, 2010

Public Hearings and Possible Actions
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 151

Subject: Conduct a public hearing and consider an ordinance amending the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Waller Creek District Master Plan. The planning area includes properties bounded approximately by Interstate 35 to the east, Red River St. to the west, Lady Bird Lake to the south and 12th St. to the north.

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Boards and Commission Action: Reviewed by, Urban Transportation Commission, Environmental Board, Waller Creek Citizen Advisory Committee, Design Commission, and Parks Board. Recommended by the Downtown Commission, Waterfront Planning and Advisory Board, and Planning Commission.

Prior Council Action: May 8, 2008 – Council approved a motion authorizing the negotiation and execution of a professional services agreement with ROMA Design Group for the Waller Creek District Master Plan.

The Waller Creek District Master Plan is related to the Waller Creek Tunnel flood control project. At completion the Waller Creek Tunnel will remove approximately 28 acres of land from the 100-year floodplain and open the southeast portion of downtown Austin for potential redevelopment. The Tunnel project is funded by a Tax Increment Finance district created by the city and Travis County. The prospect of significant redevelopment and the desire to revitalize Waller Creek and the surrounding district were the key motivations for initiating the Waller Creek District Master Plan (WCDMP).

The purpose of the Waller Creek District Master Plan is to guide future public and private investment and redevelopment so that they achieve the community's vision for the area.

The WCDMP has three components: the Master Plan, which articulates the community's vision and recommends its physical form; the Framework for Development Standards, which is intended to identify potential regulations to shape the form and treatment of private and public development; and the Implementation Program which recommends a variety of implementation actions, proposes priorities among them, and provides budget estimates for the recommended surface improvement projects.

The Master Plan identifies numerous areas for streambank stabilization and restoration of the natural character of the creek, especially in the area south of Cesar Chavez Blvd. The Plan recommends a network of interconnected pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails at both creekside and at the street level. To the greatest extent possible these are proposed to be outside the 100-year floodplain of Waller Creek after the Tunnel is complete. The Plan defines significant new street extensions and streetscape improvements, including the extension of the Sabine Street Promenade, and the Plan identifies opportunities to significantly improve public park land within the Waller Creek District, including Waterloo Park, Symphony Square, Palm Park and areas near Lady Bird Lake.

The consultant team and staff have met with stakeholders, including property owners, business owners, developers, residents, city staff, and local, regional, and state agency staff with jurisdiction in the area since February 2009 to develop the Master Plan. Public involvement was achieved through many stakeholder meetings and three public "Town Hall" meetings. The first Town Hall meeting was held May

13, 2009 to discuss the community's vision for the district and present the Draft Plan concepts. The second Town Hall meeting held October 24, 2009 to present the draft Master Plan, and a third Town Hall public meeting held April 7, 2010 to present a revised Master Plan and Development Standards. The current draft of the Master Plan has been presented to multiple boards and commissions during April and May 2010 (see attached backup for Board and Commission recommendations.)