Natural and Cultural Resources

Rivers and streams and their flood plains have generally been found to contain the better representations of a community's natural and cultural values. Many of these values were inundated by impoundment of the Colorado River which created Town Lake, and by removal or alteration as a part of development in the flood plain. Nevertheless, the Town Lake area can be described as a rich environmental corridor having abundant resource values.

Natural Resources—The most dramatic feature of Town Lake is its location within the transition zone of two geographic provinces, the Edwards Plateau (Hill Country) and the Gulf Coastal Plain (Blackland Prairie). These two distinct regions are responsible for a wide diversity of resource values in the Corridor. It has also been stated that the greatest diversity of native vegetation in Travis County occurred along the flood plains of the Colorado River and the major creeks, and that cultural values (both prehistoric and historic) are likely more plentiful in the river valley and along its tributaries.

Lamar Boulevard is the dividing line between the two major provinces: landscape features to the west are characteristic of the Hill Country, and those to the east represent prairie qualities. Several shore landforms provide significant variety and contrast: the Balcones rock cliffs, alluvial bluffs, park slope edges, swampy edges, a lagoon, eight creek confluences, three islands and three peninsulas. The Balcones rock cliffs are listed on an inventory of "Significant Natural Areas of Texas", developed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. These cliffs extend from Tom Miller Dam to Zilker Park; a lower bluff extends from Barton Creek to IH-35. Twelve areas in the corridor are on the list of environmentally sensitive areas, as reported by the Travis County Audobon Society.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Town Lake Area

- Bluff above Barton Creek at Robert E. Lee Road
- Limestone bluffs, south shore of Town Lake below Tom Miller Dam
- Both sides of Red Bud Trail
- Red Bud Island
- North shore Town Lake below Red Bud Trail (Brackenridge Tract)
- Lower Blunn Creek from Town Lake to Live Oak Avenue
- Entire Shoal Creek area and floodplain
- Area southwest of intersection of Barton Springs Road and Dawson Road
- Mouth of Johnson Creek
- South bank of Town Lake from Dry Creek to Bouldin Creek
- Barton Creek, east bank from Town Lake to Barton Springs Pool
- Small roadside area at W. First and Lake Austin Boulevard

Source: *Travis County Audubon Society*

The best concentration of vegetation is found in the western zone. The only true forest, a pecan-elm association occurs in the Brackenridge tract and is well preserved. Very large cypress trees are found along the shoreline, and Zilker Park preserves mature live oak and juniper trees. A large stand of mature hardwoods (primarily pecans) is found in an area along Barton Springs Road extending east of Barton Creek and west of Lamar Boulevard. No comparable stands of flood plain hardwoods still exist along the Colorado River within the city limits of Austin.

The western area along Town Lake also contains a number of uncommon plant species. Mormon Tea, on the cliffs below Stratford Drive, is at the eastern edge of its range. The Anaqua tree on the north bank of Town Lake is at the northern extremity of its range.

Vegetation in the central portion of the lake has been largely introduced and includes flowering trees, Cypress and Golden Raintree. The significant concentration of hardwood trees in the Rainey Neighborhood is an important natural resource for the downtown area. Throughout the remainder of the lake environment, a mixture of hardwoods and oaks can be found, with concentrations along the bluffs near Riverside Drive and IH-35 and in the peninsula areas to the east.

Since the time the artificial lake was created, both introduced and natural vegetation has emerged along the shoreline. Aquatic vegetation including rushes, elephant ears, water lilies, and cattails provides a healthy diversity and balance of plant species.

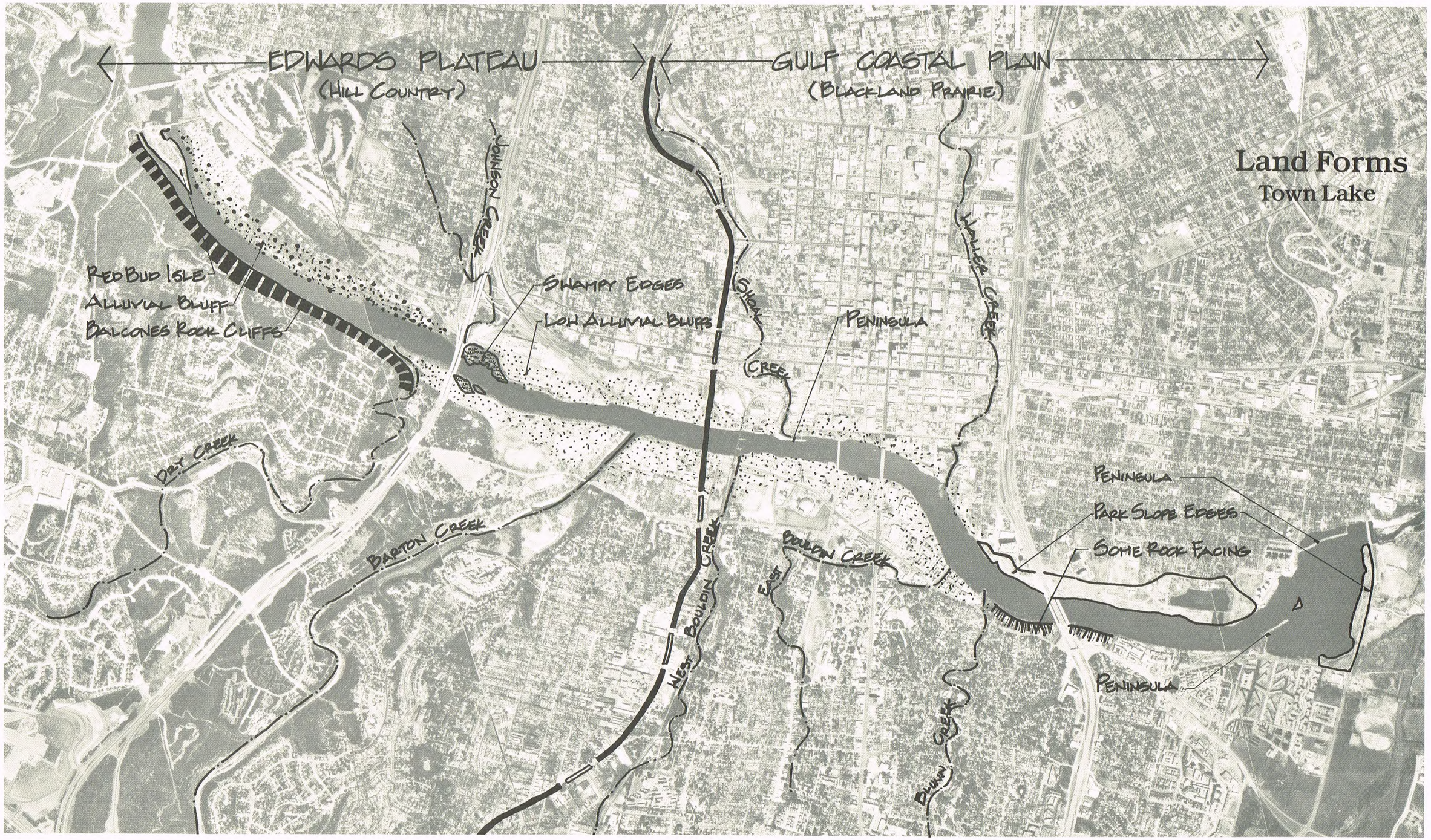
Vegetation along the creeks has been largely disturbed by urban development, although the mouths of the creeks are the most well preserved since they are the least accessible. Creek vegetation at the mouths has also become more lush since they serve as backwater extensions of the lake.

The woodlands along the creeks and the lakeshore provide excellent cover for migrant and wintering birds and a small population of nesting species. Wood ducks nest on Red Bud Isle. The most unusual feature of the Colorado River Basin is the migration of some coastal waterfowl such as the Yellow-Crowned Night Heron and Cormorant. The aquatic environment also provides an excellent habitat for turtles of all sizes.

A marsh-like water zone at the mouth of Johnson Creek is an important nesting area for ducks and the Green Heron. The lake provides a natural ecological corridor for many native bird species, including songbirds, owls, kingfishers, hummingbirds, and cliff swallows. A colony of naturalized Monk Parakeets has been observed near Zilker Park.

Many smaller mammals tolerant of man are still found along the lake. The Congress Avenue bridge structure is the seasonal home to a sizeable colony of Mexican Free-Tail Bats. Nutria, naturalized transplants from South America, live along the upper wooded stretch of the shoreline. Open fields on the southern bank are marked by the numerous burrow openings of Mexican Ground Squirrel.

According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Town Lake supports an excellent fishery. The most common game fish are sunfish and channel catfish; other common fish include bass, crappie and perch. A 1972 report indicated that Town Lake supports a relatively wide diversity of species with no apparent changes in species composition.


EDWARDS PLATEAU
(HILL COUNTRY)
GULF COASTAL PLAIN
(BLACKLAND PRAIRIE)
Land Forms
Town Lake
JOHNSON CREEK
WALLER CREEK
SHOAL CREEK
REDBUD ISLE
ALLUVIAL BLUFF
BALCONES ROCK CLIFFS
SHAMPY EDGES
LOW ALLUVIAL BLUFFS
PENINSULA
DRY CREEK
BARTON CREEK
WEST BOULDIN CREEK
EAST BOULDIN CREEK
BLUNN CREEK
PENINSULA
PARK SLOPE EDGES
SOME ROCK FACING
PENINSULA

Cultural Resources—The Colorado River and its vast drainage system was the focal point for cultural activity during both the historic and prehistoric period. The presence of water, food, and vegetation were attractions for ancient animals, prehistoric man, Indian cultures and the first settlers.

Fifteen archaeological sites have been recorded in the Town Lake Corridor. According to the Texas Historical Commission, the Town Lake area never has been systematically surveyed. It is highly probable that numerous additional sites would be discovered through such a survey. Of the sites recorded, thirteen are prehistoric including human burials, rock shelters, middens, a kiln and stone quarry. They are distributed equally along the lakeshore. Site conditions are unknown, except for one site that has been destroyed. Because of the frequency of flooding and the overflow of alluvial material, it is likely that many archaeological resources have been preserved over time.

Recent construction has unearthed a number of prehistoric mammals. According to paleontologists, there is a high probability that more and better preserved fossils may be encountered during excavation in the future, especially in the river valley.

The architectural history of Austin is unique, reflecting the various periods of economic development and growth throughout the city as well as the state of Texas. The paramount event in the growth of the city was the placement of the Capitol building due north of the Colorado River. Using the river as a base to Congress Avenue, the remainder of the central city was laid out on a classical grid pattern. Much of the land along the Town Lake Corridor was never originally platted; it was reserved for the flood plain areas of the Colorado River. As a result, many of the structures within the boundaries of the study are relatively young in age compared with the remainder of the city.

Within the boundaries of the Corridor, approximately 500 structures have been identified as built prior to 1935. Approximately 30% of those structures were given a number one research priority, with their ages ranging from the late 1800's to 1915. Within the Town Lake Study Area, several National Register Districts have been promulgated by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The one district which is adopted by THC, the Congress Avenue District, covers an area from the State Capitol building to Town Lake from alleyway to alleyway. Several other areas within the study boundaries have been designated for potential district status but have not yet been finalized by the Secretary of Interior. These areas are: the Rainey Neighborhood which comprises structures along Rainey Street in the southeastern area of the downtown area, and the East Austin Area Multiple Resources District which includes an area south of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to Town Lake. The Multiple Resource District includes two National Register Districts which are not within the boundaries of the Town Lake Study Area. Issuance of any permit within the National Register Districts requires review and comment from the Historic Landmark Commission as to the appropriateness of the proposed projects.

Other notable structures within the study area are located west of the downtown area and to a limited extent south of the lake. Within this area is perhaps the oldest structure in Austin, the Paggi House, located in the 200 block of Lee Barton Drive. This structure was built prior to the Civil War and is significant to Austin as one of the earliest remaining Greek Revival Homes in the city. The house was built outside the old town site of Austin, along the road that crossed Barton Creek and approached the Colorado River. As a result, the structure was important to travelers in the area. Other structures in the area of note are many of the City of Austin structures located along the northern shore of Town Lake, namely the Schnieder Store Building along West Second, the Seaholm Power Plant along West First, and the Kitchen Memorial Chimes (Buford Firetower) in the 200 block of West First Street.

No survey has been made of historical sites or structures located on Town Lake parkland, and little or no interpretation is provided by the Parks Department. The Zilker moonlight tower, historic structures in Zilker Park, Deep Eddy Pool, the urban creeks, and the remnant brick factory tower are a few of the more well known historic sites and structures on the lake. Barton Springs Pool has been nominated for national historic designation.

Infrastructure

Three water treatment plants, the Govalle Wastewater Treatment Plant, and seven lift stations constitute the major utility service to the Town Lake Corridor. The wastewater collection system in the Town Lake Corridor collects wastewater from twenty-four drainage basins.

According to the Water and Wastewater Department, with completion of current improvements, the water system should adequately serve the Town Lake Corridor for its future development. Wastewater capacity is also believed to be sufficient for existing and future development, although re-evaluation of lift stations and equipment on both sides of Town Lake is neecessary.

The communities of Rollingwood and West Lake Hills are primarily using septic systems, and therefore have the potential for impacting water quality of Lake Austin and Town Lake.

Approved Town Lake Water and Wastewater Projects

Water
- Green Water Treatment Plant Improvements
- Green Water Treatment Plant Transmission Main (South and North)
- Ullrich Water Treatment Plant Expansion
- Riverside Transmission Main

Wastewater
- West Bouldin Creek Relief Interceptor
- South Austin Outfall
- Canterbury Lift Station Improvements

Source: *Water and Wastewater Department*

GOALS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS—values, mission statements, desired results
POLICIES—guidelines for action to achieve goals

Two research methods and a public hearing provided a basis for developing goals and policy recommendations for the Town Lake Corridor. A scientific sampling of Austin residents generated statistically representative information concerning citizen values, perceptions and opinions related to Town Lake. Inventory and analysis of existing conditions in the Corridor provided a framework for identifying issues and concerns. A public hearing attracted 100 citizens, 19 of which provided testimony. Taken together, this information is believed to be adequate for goal formulation and policy development.

It is recognized that this benchmark study is only the initial phase of comprehensive planning for the Corridor. It becomes readily apparent that there are large gaps in the information base to provide specific planning recommendations. Moreover, because of the scale of the study area including both critical and contributing zones, and because problems and issues are complex and multidimensional, more systematic and in-depth planning is required. Nonetheless, this effort is important as an overall framework for short range decision-making and future planning.

Town Lake Survey

By telephone, 1,226 Austin residents were surveyed in August 1985 to obtain opinions regarding awareness, use and future development of the Town Lake area. More intensive interviews were conducted with 225 park users and 101 non-users.

Summarizing the results of the study, these conclusions can be drawn:

1. Austinites have a narrow definition of the geographic definition of Town Lake; the majority consider it to be smaller than it is.

2. Austinites are very much aware of the facilities and activities available on Town Lake.

3. Users and non-users have positive images of Town Lake.

4. Most popular activities include (in rank order):
   (1) relaxing at the waterfront or nearby restaurant and bar
   (2) fitness/exercise
   (3) group activites (soccer, frisbee, picnics)
   (4) water activities

5. Majority of both users and non-users give "good" ratings for Town Lake features.

6. Worst ratings are given for water cleanliness and availability of restrooms.

7. Non-users rank low the following:
   (1) shore access
   (2) security and safety
   (3) sports and fitness activities

8. Users and non-users overwhelmingly support:
   (1) more parks and open space
   (2) completion of the hike and bike trail

9. Users and non-users oppose more tall buildings on the shoreline.

10. Austinites endorse:
   (1) more boat rentals
   (2) children's museum
   (3) performing arts center
   (4) science museum

Town Lake Survey—Highlights

Awareness and Use

- Austinites have a geographically narrow definition of the Town Lake area. One-third do not know where it begins or ends. Of those that reported boundaries for Town Lake, only 28% defined Town Lake from Miller to Longhorn dams (the actual geographic parameters).
- Austinites in all parts of the city and of all ages are very much aware of facilities and activities available in the Town Lake area.
- The most popular Town Lake activities are just relaxing at the waterfront or nearby restaurant or bar (55%), followed by fitness/exercise (45%), group activities like soccer, frisbee and picnics (45%), and water activities (28%).

Image of Town Lake

- User and non-users alike have generally positive images of Town Lake. Key differences are: non-users are much more likely to perceive Town Lake as "overcrowded," "bustling," "dirty," "dangerous" or "not safe."

Ratings of Town Lake Features

- The majority of both users and non-users give "good" ratings to the following Town Lake features: scenic beauty, tourist attractions, sports and fitness activi ties, entertainment activities and access to the shore. The worst feature ratings are given to cleanliness of water and availability of restrooms.
- Non-users are more negative than users regarding shore access, security and safety, and sports and fitness activities.

Changes For the Future of Town Lake

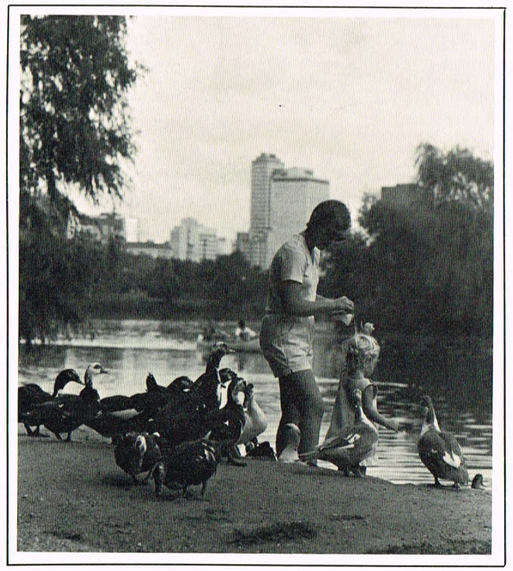
- Half of the 326 persons interviewed indicated support for additional public facilities. The most strongly endorsed were more boat rentals, a children's museum, a performing arts center and a science museum.
- Town Lake users and non-users alike overwhelmingly support more parks and open space (97%), and completion of the hike & bike trail (98%). They oppose more tall buildings on the shoreline (92%).
- Considerable disagreement exists on the addition of waterfront cafes and restaurants.
- Similar disagreement exists with regard to the building of a civic and convention center in the Town Lake area. Two-thirds of the on-site users are opposed. In the representative sample of city residents, however, Town Lake users favor the civic/convention center by (53.6% to 46.7%), while non-users are slightly against it (51% to 49%). Among both groups of users, opponents feel more strongly than proponents.
- Extrapolating from the sample statistics to the whole city, the civic/convention center in the Town Lake area is supported by 50.4% and opposed by 49.6%. When intensity of opinion is considered, 29% strongly oppose and 24% strongly support this development on Town Lake.

Source: *NuStats, Inc "Austin's Town Lake: A Study of Public Opinion Regarding Awareness, Use and Future Development." 1985.*

Disagreement exists with regard to the building of a civic and convention center, dividing Austinites "dead even". When intensity of opinion is examined, 29% strongly oppose and 24% support this controversial development in the Town Lake area.

From the survey it can also be concluded that the Town Lake area is perceived as a valuable Austin resource, for which change necessitates careful consideration. However, the most disputed issue appears to be access to the lake, not development:

"This is easily demonstrated by the overwhelming support for a children's museum, a performing arts center, cultural facilities and a science museum in the Town Lake area—all of which necessitates 'development'. Conversely, obscuring the view of the lake by having tall buildings on the shoreline may be perceived as making the lake less accessible to Austin residents, and therefore overwhelming opposed" (NuStats, Inc.,1985).



This survey suggests the most significant aspect of the controversy over development may be more the images that individuals attribute to private developers rather than actual buildings taking place in the Town Lake area. In this regard, the central core of Town Lake is especially treasured, and future decisions—public and private—should be especially sensitive to perception of public access as related to future development.

Goals and Policies

The goals and policies which follow represent an effort to describe a "personality" for Town Lake. In this context the goals represent values, mission statements, or desired results. The policies should be viewed as guidelines for action to achieve the goals.

WATER QUALITY

GOAL 1.00 Protect and improve the water quality of Town Lake to achieve the highest possible standards.

Policy 1.01 Establish a City commitment to develop more sophisticated, innovative and effective programs for filtering and treating urban run-off, particularly the "first flush" in new develop ment. Encourage regional detention and filtration for flood and pollution control.

Policy 1.02 Acquire more complete information on pollutants and pollutant loading in both Lake Austin and Town Lake.

Policy 1.03 Establish water quality imperatives and time frames for achieving improved water quality standards.

Policy 1.04 Encourage a greenbelt area along the waters edge to allow for overland flow and filtration of runoff.

Policy 1.05 For polluting land uses (e.g. automotive), require filters and traps to avoid further contamination of Town Lake; prohibit uses in the future which can potentially generate pollutants.

Policy 1.06 Strengthen development standards and construction methods by improving erosion control, sedimentation and revegetation regulations; require regular inspection.

Policy 1.07 Require higher standards for City erosion control projects to serve as a model for the development industry.

Policy 1.08 Improve water's edge maintenance of the public greenbelt; avoid use of herbicides and pesticides; initiate a specific maintenance program for natural areas.

Policy 1.09 Develop specific standards for maintenance of shoreline vegetation and erosion control geared to intensity of use and physical characteristics.

Policy 1.10 Recognize in all shoreline development decisions the potential hazards associated with flood release; coordinate policy development with assistance from the Lower Colorado River Authority.

Policy 1.11 Develop an innovative` litter control program for the waterfront including a comprehensive public education campaign, examination of maintenance practices, and applying technology for filtering and/or screening debris on the creeks.

LAND USE

GOAL 2.00 Create superior planning, design and mixing of land uses that are waterfront dependent or waterfront-related, and sympathetic to the water's edge of the Town Lake Corridor and the urban creeks.

Policy 2.01 Establish Town Lake and the urban creeks as the catalyst for developing and adopting an innovative, comprehensive land use plan and urban design framework for central city.

Policy 2.02 Require people-oriented activities on the ground and second levels of buildings; encourage development to focus on the festive retail market to promote entertainment, recreational, retail, cultural and food service activities.

Policy 2.03 Encourage development that is diverse, intimate, full of surprises, and creates maximum opportunity to walk and linger.

Policy 2.04 Designate critical areas of the Corridor as Comprehenisve Planning Districts to be planned, designed and developed based on specially formulated criteria to capitalize on unique opportunities.

Policy 2.05 Focus land use guidance on the quality of urban design rather than floor area ratios and height controls.

Policy 2.06 Immediately develop a program for development incentives such as waiving capital recovery feees and density bonuses based on capital expenditures for projects which provide public amenities (pedestrian facilities, hike and bike trails, shelters, rest

stops, etc.) or excell in some other manner; do not include uses such as cinemas and restaurants in FAR calculations.

Policy 2.07 Recapture waterfront values as redevelopment of existing projects takes place.

Policy 2.08 Develop a municipal purchase and lease-back program to encourage housing, cultural, educational and other appropriate land uses in the Corridor.

Policy 2.09 Encourage and provide incentives for a variety of housing opportunities in the Corridor, accessible to all income groups.

GOAL 3.00 Require all city land uses, construction projects, programs and operations to achieve the highest degree of compatibility with Town Lake.

Policy 3.01 Place a moratorium on all major roadway and public works improvements until a comprehensive plan is developed for the corridor.

Policy 3.02 Require participation of the Parks and Recreation Department in the design of all Public Works projects affecting Town Lake and the urban creeks.

Policy 3.03 Require non-park public land to meet specific landscaping and compatibility standards for Town Lake.

Policy 3.04 Eliminate uses from public waterfront lands that are not compatible or waterfront dependent (Humane Society facility, Street and Bridge yard, Fire Marshall's Office, and youth sports fields).

Policy 3.05 Place all existing and future electric transmission lines underground when feasible.

Policy 3.06 Assure that all bridge improvements maximize opportunities to enhance pedestrian connections to the trail system; maintain aesthetic values of bridge arches.

Policy 3.07 Remove or minimize noxious odors from sewer vents at West Bouldin Creek and Pleasant Valley Road on Town Lake.

GOAL 4.00 Foster a cooperative atmosphere in the corridor for the City, neighborhoods, and private landowners to work jointly to realize potential of the waterfront.

Policy 4.01 Form a lakefront Waterfront Advisory Commission composed of property owners, public agencies, non-profit institutions and citizen groups to coordinate development interests and exchange information and participate in comprehensive planning. Create a Town Lake Waterfront Office for a clearinghouse of information.

Policy 4.02 Assure waterfront design is sensitive to existing neighborhoods and allows for extensive citizen review.

Policy 4.03 Consider forming a Waterfront Design Review Board to provide advisory and technical assistance to the City Council and development community to achieve design integrity of all major projects.

Policy 4.04 Encourage the development of public/private and non-profit partnerships to achieve mutual goals and objectives, sensitive to optimizing the public interest.

Policy 4.05 Assure a major public funding commitment to the waterfront as a catalyst for appropriate private development response.

Policy 4.06 Consider a revolving area improvement fund for private developments above a specified size; use fund for public improvements such as walkways, bikeways and park amenities.

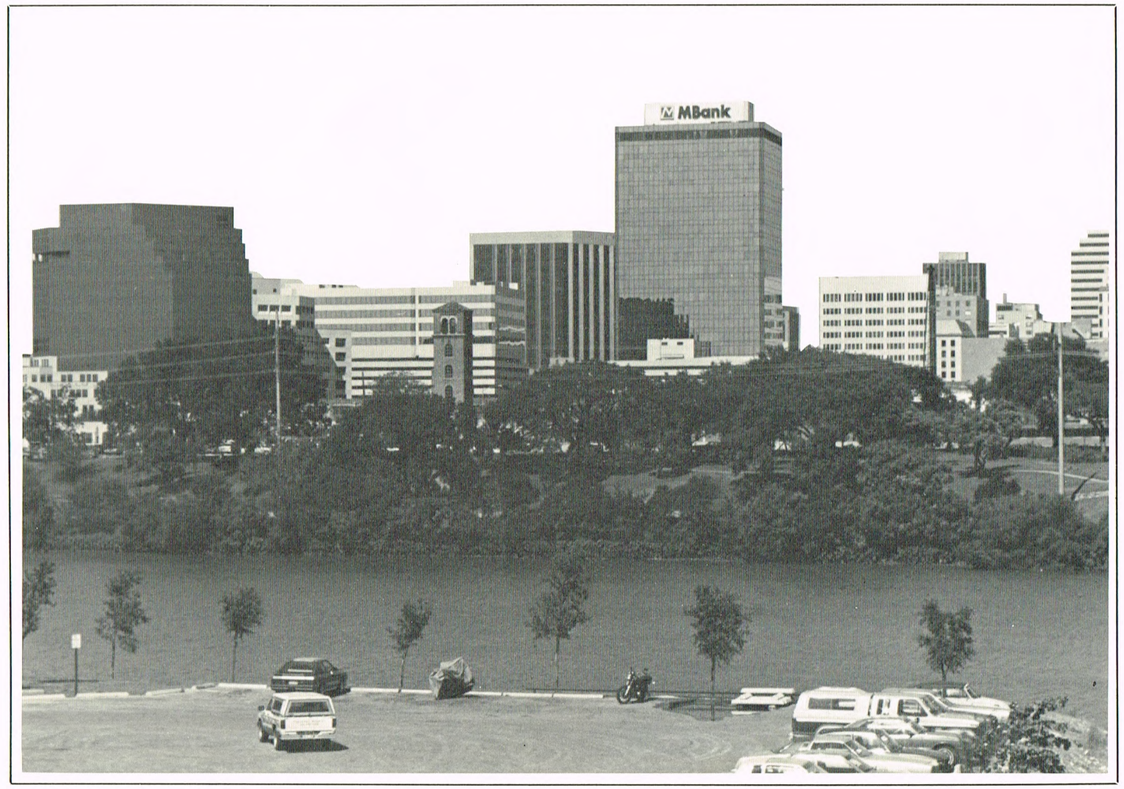
Policy 4.07 Require large developments to provide infrastructure capability information; deny permits, lower density or share in upgrading infrastructure when appropriate.

Policy 4.08 Explore innovative revenue generating programs that can assist in financing public commitment to corridor amenities; assure public interest is maximized.

Zoning

GOAL 5.00 Improve zoning in the Town Lake Corridor and along the urban creeks to achieve maximum pedestrian scale, highest degree of land use compatibility, and extraordinary urban design.

Policy 5.01 Develop a model zoning framework for the Corridor to achieve maximum social, cultural, economic and environmental compatibility within the urban design context.

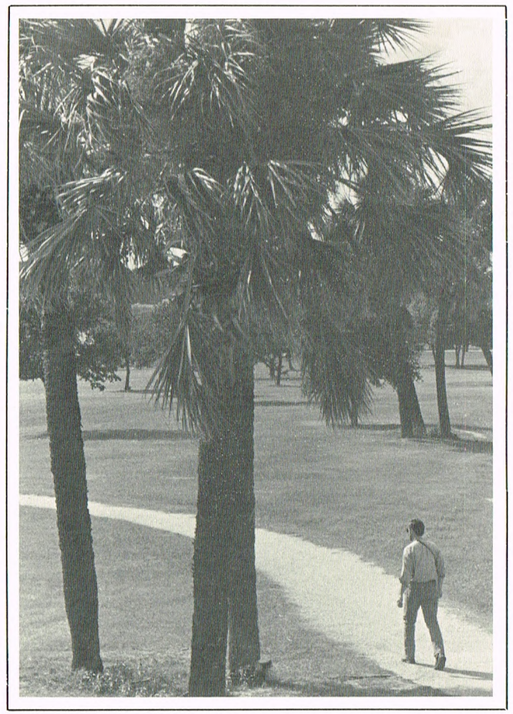


Policy 5.02 Immediately amend the existing zoning ordinance to develop waterfront-dependent and waterfront-related land use standards, design requirements and performance standards for the water's edge and urban edge.

Policy 5.03 Eliminate all industrial zoning from the Corridor with appropriate downzoning; remove all other permitted uses that are not compatible with the waterfront.

Policy 5.04 Designate "P" (Public) zoning for all parkland and public land in the Corridor.

Policy 5.05 With assistance of the urban design community, develop design guidelines for private projects along the water's edge, adjacent to the public edge and in the urban edge as a framework for sensitive development.



Policy 5.06 Insure that all water's edge development treats the waterfront as the front edge for purposes of building orientation.

Policy 5.07 Provide incentives for increasing residential uses in the Corridor such as additional floor area allowance or transfer of development rights, sensitive to goals of reasonable height, density, view corridors, natural values and need for mixed use.

Policy 5.08 Assure that the largest undeveloped tract of land owned by the University of Texas remains compatible with the Town Lake waterfront; zone "P" (Public); immediately negotiate a long term joint use agreement for public access along the shoreline.

Access

GOAL 6.00 Provide maximum visual and physical access to the waterfront; encourage pedestrian access to and use of the corridor.

Policy 6.01 Identify appropriate view corridors and develop and implement a plan for protection and enhancement; add Capitol View Corridors not now protected by ordinance.

Policy 6.02 Develop and implement a City initiated plan for streetscape development and amenities to encourage pedestrianism along the scenic arterials and appropriate streets. Consider information stops, drinking fountains, shelters, public restrooms, bicycle racks, jogging lockers and upgraded traffic controls/signs.

Policy 6.03 Establish design guidelines for all major roadways in the corridor to become parkways with landscaped medians or tree-lined streets.

Policy 6.04 Protect open panoramic views of the waterfront by limiting building heights and prohibiting buildings from blocking views.

Policy 6.05 Design street ends to relate to the waterfront.

Policy 6.06 Encourage land uses which reduce dependency on the automobile.

Policy 6.07 Encourage land uses which are of a pedestrian scale and which are pedestrian oriented.

Policy 6.08 Prohibit surface automobile parking on the banks of Town Lake, discourage surface parking in the Corridor; locate parking structures underground whenever possible; require pedestrian uses for ground level of all parking structures.

Policy 6.09 Study feasibility of City-owned revenue-producing parking structures.

Policy 6.10 Improve public transit in the corridor; study the feasibility of developing a trolley system monorail or similar fixed rail system for recreational pleasure and people-moving.

Policy 6.11 Develop a plan for water taxis for sightseeing and people-moving throughout the corridor; consider measures to preserve serenity and dignity of the lake environment.

Policy 6.12 Develop a transportation plan with Town Lake, its waterfront and neighborhoods serving as the focal point and basic fabric; assure maximum public access to the water's edge in all roadway design.

Policy 6.13 Award density bonuses for projects which underwrite capital/operating expenses to expand transit routes, or provide pedestrian/bicycle amenities.

Policy 6.14 Provide adequate boat ramps for emergency access to water.

Policy 6.15 Re-evaluate fire access policies for large structures on the lake.

Parklands

GOAL 7.00 Establish Town Lake as a Great Central Park, serving as a centerpiece for the Austin Park System.

Policy 7.01 Develop a long range comprehensive plan and funding program to rejuvenate the waterfront and develop a stronger waterfront image.

Policy 7.02 Reaffirm the original design theme of Town Lake ("a place for beauty, dignity and pleasure") as a framework for policy development, waterfront design, management and use.

Policy 7.03 Develop appropriate public use and management policies for the water surface and water's edge; discontinue inappropriate uses such as ski tournaments and single purpose ballfields.

Policy 7.04 Expand opportunities for public waterfront uses such as fishing, quiet boating, picnicking, sitting, and walking;

consider funding a community boat house to promote rowing, canoeing and sailing.

Policy 7.05 Expand the hike and bike trail system around the lake; secure public access easements where required.

Policy 7.06 Improve the legibility, image and understanding of the Town Lake Corridor by initiating a unique sign system, logo and public awareness program.

Policy 7.07 Develop an appropriate and well-formulated concession program for the waterfront including services for food, boat rentals, and sightseeing tours.

Policy 7.08 Initiate a lighting program both for illumination and aesthetic purposes.

Policy 7.09 Exercise sensitivity in the siting and design of a civic-convention center, with special attention to relationship with the waterfront, massing and intensity, traffic, and neighborhood impact.

GOAL 8.00 Demonstrate a commitment to pursuit of excellence in waterfront design and development, using superior materials and sophisticated management to create a quality water's edge for all citizens.

Policy 8.01 Provide for a variety of suitable opportunities in keeping with the design theme of Town Lake, especially for users with disabling conditions.

Policy 8.02 Manage the Town Lake waterfront as a showcase of the park system by developing an integrated, innovative management plan that moves the Parks Department from routine grounds maintenance to sophisticated resource management.

Policy 8.03 Encourage maximum pedestrian use of the Corridor; encourage 24-hour use where appropriate, and where security can be provided.

Policy 8.04 Upgrade the basic public facilities and infrastructure of the waterfront, especially the irrigation system and turf management program; provide more restrooms and drinking fountains.

Policy 8.05 Demonstrate in all public actions the principles of water and energy conservation, serving as a model for the community through such practices as use of native plant materials and innovative irrigation.

Policy 8.06 Develop design guidelines for all future public waterfront facilities to maintain high standards and contribute to the image and personality of the corridor.

GOAL 9.00 Establish a spiritual as well as a physical relationship between the community and the waterfront; enable citizens to develop a stronger waterfront ethic.

Policy 9.01 Organize and promote innovative participant programs for the water surface and water's edge such as water instruction, appropriate special events and waterfront celebrations.

Policy 9.02 Determine constraints to use of the water surface for appropriate recreation activities including study of currents, water quality, weed growth and other hazards.

GOAL 10.00 Create a rich and varied cultural environment in the Corridor, geared to all age groups, cultural/educational expressions and interests.

Policy 10.01 Create a cultural arts district to encourage a superlative blend of cultural facilities with special taxing authority; for a mixed public/private development; facilities might include a planetarium, children's museum, music museum, and science museum.

Policy 10.02 Encourage development of cultural facilities and institutions in the Corridor that are well designed and have correct location, massing and intensity scaled to the dimensions and character of the waterfront.

Policy 10.03 Encourage loan and placement of public-owned sculpture or other artwork within the Corridor; also encourage the City to acquire art and use parkland as sites for performing arts.

Policy 10.04 Develop a plan for an all-purpose outdoor performing arts center oriented to the waterfront.

Policy 10.05 Reconsider current policies of the bed tax and broaden application to include more diverse cultural and educational programs.

GOAL 11.00 Acquire additional parkland and open space along Town Lake and the urban creeks.

Policy 11.01 Acquire public access easements where private land blocks lateral pedestrian access to the waterfront.

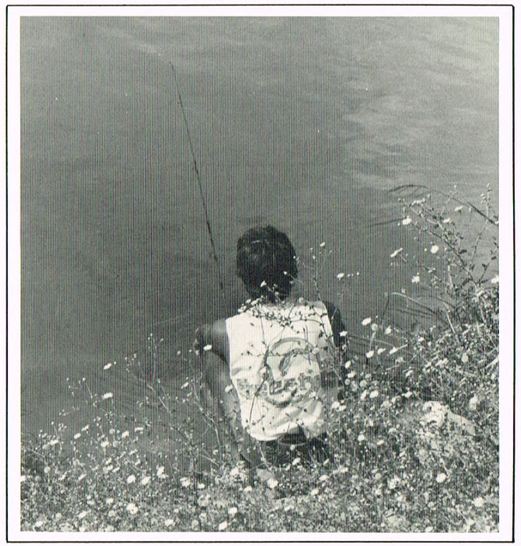
Policy 11.02 Develop a strategic plan for acquiring and preserving unique resource features and open space areas in the corridor, emphasizing innovative acquisition methods such as transfer of development rights, life estates and bargain sales.

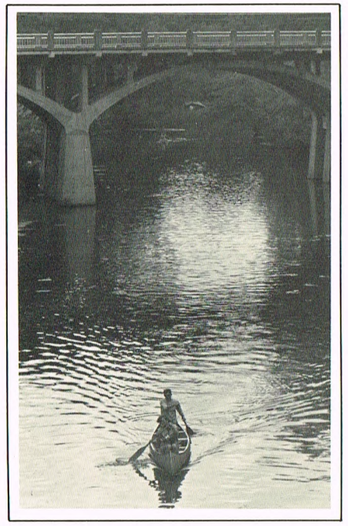
Policy 11.03 Review and assess all current lease agreements which allow private/private nonprofit use of public lands on Town Lake.

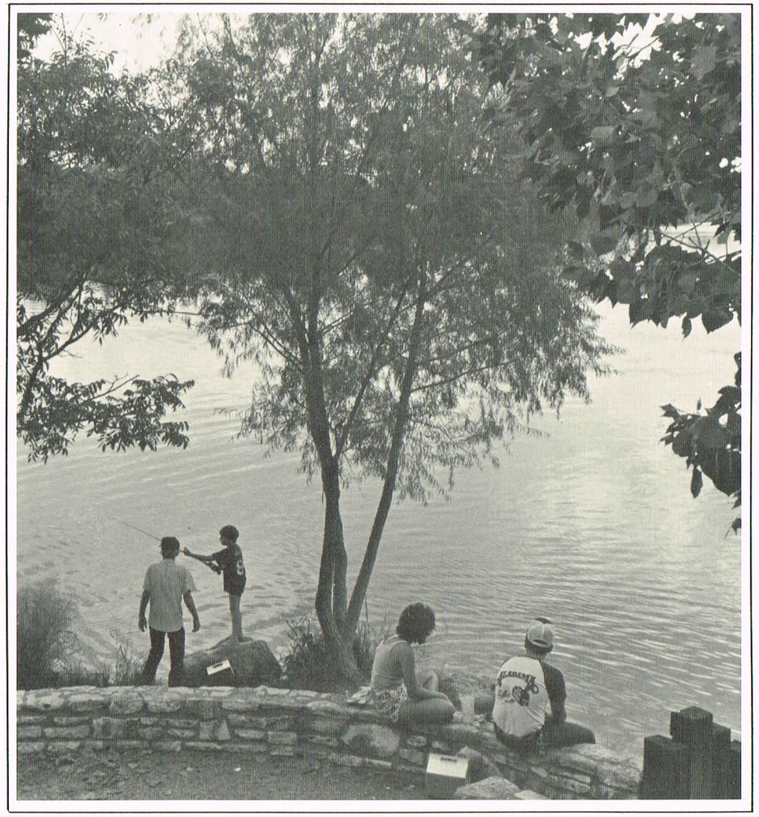
Policy 11.04 Prohibit sale of public land in the Town Lake Corridor, except where land trades or cash sales advance park and recreational goals.

Policy 11.05 Pursue more aggressively the acquisition of greenbelts on East and West Bouldin Creeks.

Policy 11.06 In appropriate situations, use City purchase and leaseback to regain public control of the waters edge and ultimately convert to open space.







Creeks

GOAL 12.00 Recognize full potential of the Town Lake creeks as open space connectors, form-shapers of urban development, and focal points for lively pedestrian-oriented mixed use.

Policy 12.01 Develop updated comprehensive plans for Shoal and Waller Creek corridors, including improvements to the existing overlay zone to include design regulations.

Policy 12.02 Improve the connections, image, pedestrian-orientation and gateway potential of the mouths of all creeks, especially Blunn, Shoal, Waller, Dry and the Bouldin creeks.

Policy 12.03 Develop a comprehensive information base concerning urban hydrology, and develop a strategic plan for addressing multiple objectives of recreation, drainage, erosion control and bank stabilization.

Policy 12.04 Require multi-disciplinary involvement of the Public Works and Parks Departments in creek maintenance, planning and design.

Policy 12.05 Fund and implement Phase II of the City's plan for beautifying and improving pedestrian access to Lower Waller Creek.

Policy 12.06 Encourage mixed use development focused on recreational, cultural, residential, entertainment and festive retail uses.

Policy 12.07 Develop and implement a plan for reducing runoff pollution including incentives for property owners to install grease traps, filters and screens; use proven design strategies for retrofitting existing development and review the waterway development guidelines which currently do not require stormwater treatment.

Policy 12.08 Develop a comprehensive public awareness program to educate homeowners on how their actions and their use of household products relate to Town Lake water quality; consider a central collection program for disposing of household toxic wastes.

Natural and Cultural Resources

GOAL 13.00 Protect, enhance and interpret the landforms and natural and cultural values of the Town Lake Corridor.

Policy 13.01 Conduct a more complete survey of all cultural and natural values of the Corridor: record location, significance, condition and recommend protection requirements.

Policy 13.02 Require environmental impact studies and mitigation measures for all new development in the Corridor where natural values and landforms have been identified.

Policy 13.03 Develop a city program for creative interpretation and management of natural and cultural values on public property to create public interest, awareness and protection strategies.

Policy 13.04 Maintain the natural shoreline and bluffs along the waterfront, except for necessary stabilization or appropriate waterfront uses as identified in specified development zones.

Policy 13.05 Develop an urban forest management plan for protective maintenance of trees in the Corridor.

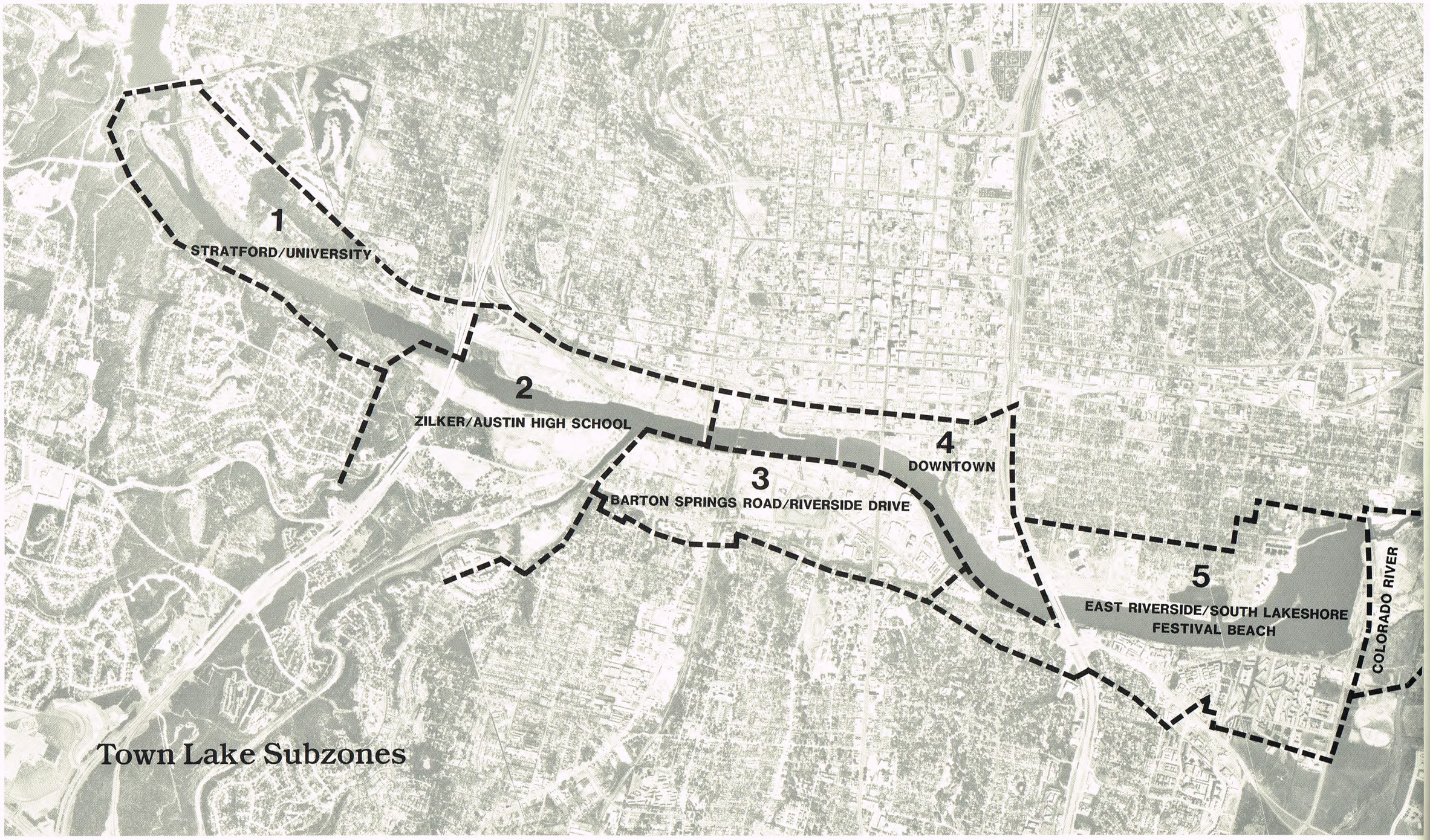
Policy 13.06 Require professional archaeologists to monitor major construction projects when excavation is conducted.

Policy 13.07 Encouarge the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.

Policy 13.08 Encourage new development to maintain Austin's architectural heritage and to assure compatibility.

Policy 13.09 Assemble a complete history of the beautification of Town Lake, including oral histories and files; locate in the Austin History Center; require routine updating.

Capitol Views
Protected View
Unprotected View



Town Lake Subzones