TOWN LAKE SUBZONES: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report includes a more detailed analysis of five subzones of the lake corridor. General goals developed for the Corridor have been cross-referenced, and specific recommended actions developed for each subzone. The boundaries of each subzone were drawn to reflect both the critical 1000 foot zone identified by the moratorium ordinance, and a larger zone which contributes in some way to activity in the Town Lake Corridor.

Subzone 1 Stratford/ University

Existing Conditions

Land Use—This area is bounded by Tom Miller Dam on the west, Lake Austin Boulevard on the north, MoPac on the east and Stratford Drive on the south. Generally, this area is heavily vegetated, consists of steep slopes and is developed at a relatively low intensity considering its proximity to downtown Austin. The high bluffs along the south shore provide a particularly scenic visual amenity from Town Lake. Several houses are located near the edge of the bluffs, but for the most part the south shore is vacant land.

The north shore of this area is owned primarily by the University of Texas, and is used as a biological research center and for married student housing. The housing is not oriented towards the lake and is isolated in terms of visual and physical access. The north shore near the MoPac/Lake Austin Boulevard interchange consists of convenience commercial and restaurants which service the neighborhood to the north. Eilers Park and Deep Eddy Pool are located south of this commercial area and represents the only public access to the lake on the north shore of the Stratford/University area. A city owned storage and maintenance compound is located west of and adjacent to Eilers Park.

The Stratford/University area consists of approximately 350 acres.

Stratford/University Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	60.7	17.3
Multi-family	.2	.1
Office	.2	.1
Commercial	.9	.3
Institutional	229.0	65.3
Parkland	21.5	6.1
Vacant	26.1	7.4
Roads/ROW	11.9	3.4
Total	350.5	100.0

Source: *Office of Land Development Services*

Zoning—The majority of the area is zoned SF-3 which allows single family dwellings. The small commercial area near the MoPac/ Lake Austin Blvd. interchange includes GR (General Retail) and CS (Commercial Service) zoning. These are intense zone districts that are roadway oriented rather than neighorhood-related.

Access—Public access to the waterfront is limited to Eilers Park and Red Bud Isle. Visual access to the lake is limited due to the heavy vegetation and privately owned steep slopes. However, views from the lake to surrounding properties afford excellent views to what appears as an undeveloped and pristine area.

Parkland—Eilers Park and popular Deep Eddy Pool function as an important gateway park, within close proximity to MoPac. However, an illegible entrance from Lake Austin Boulevard and an overcrowded parking lot make access difficult. Visual and physical access to the waterfront is poor. The existing park maintenance compound and storage area are not compatible with this prime waterfront area; if removed, this area could provide room to expand this small park. Red Bud Isle has excellent recreation potential but is neglected and unimproved.

Special Opportunities—The small commercial area west of the MoPac/Lake Austin Boulevard interchange provides retail convenience goods and services, and food service opportunities to both the surrounding neighborhood and users of Eilers Park. Thus, there is a focus of activity in and identity for the area. Most existing businesses utilize retrofitted homes and are of a scale compatible with the pedestrian.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goals 2.00; 3.00; 5.00; 6:00; 13.00)

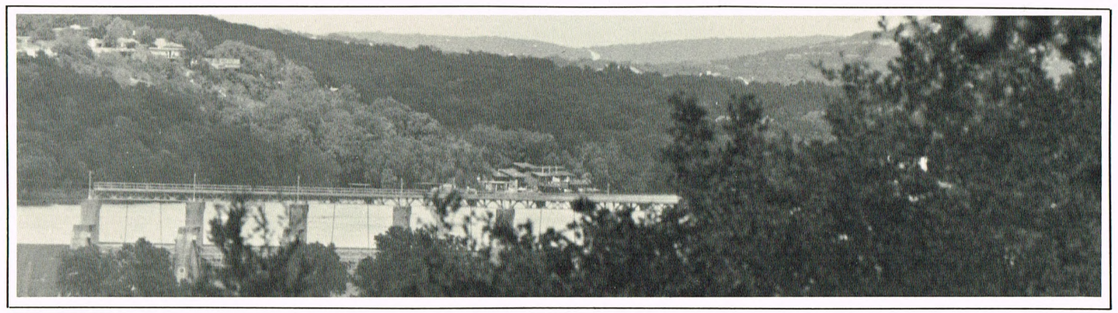
Action 1.01 Preserve the low density single family residential neighborhood in the Stratford Drive area.

Action 1.02 Establish a Neighborhood Conservation Combining District to help define appropriate land uses and densities for the neighborhood adjacent to Eilers Park.

Action 1.03 Upgrade and improve Red Bud Isle as a fishing and picnic area; protect natural values: reduce automobile impact.

Action 1.04 Require building controls to protect uniqueness of the Balcones Rock Cliffs, including no alteration to the face and crest of the bluff, and protection of lines of sight from Town Lake (no visible structures from Town Lake).

Action 1.05 Encourage consolidation of properties to reduce number of curb cuts.



Action 1.06 Relocate the City of Austin storage yard to allow for more compatible, park-oriented waterfront use.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 1.07 Encourage low intensity neighborhood retail and entertainment oriented commercial zoning in the area west of the MoPac-Lake Austin Boulevard area. Downzoning to LR (Local Retail) and NO (Neighborhood Office) is recommended.

Action 1.08 Rezone University of Texas property from SF-3 to P (Public).

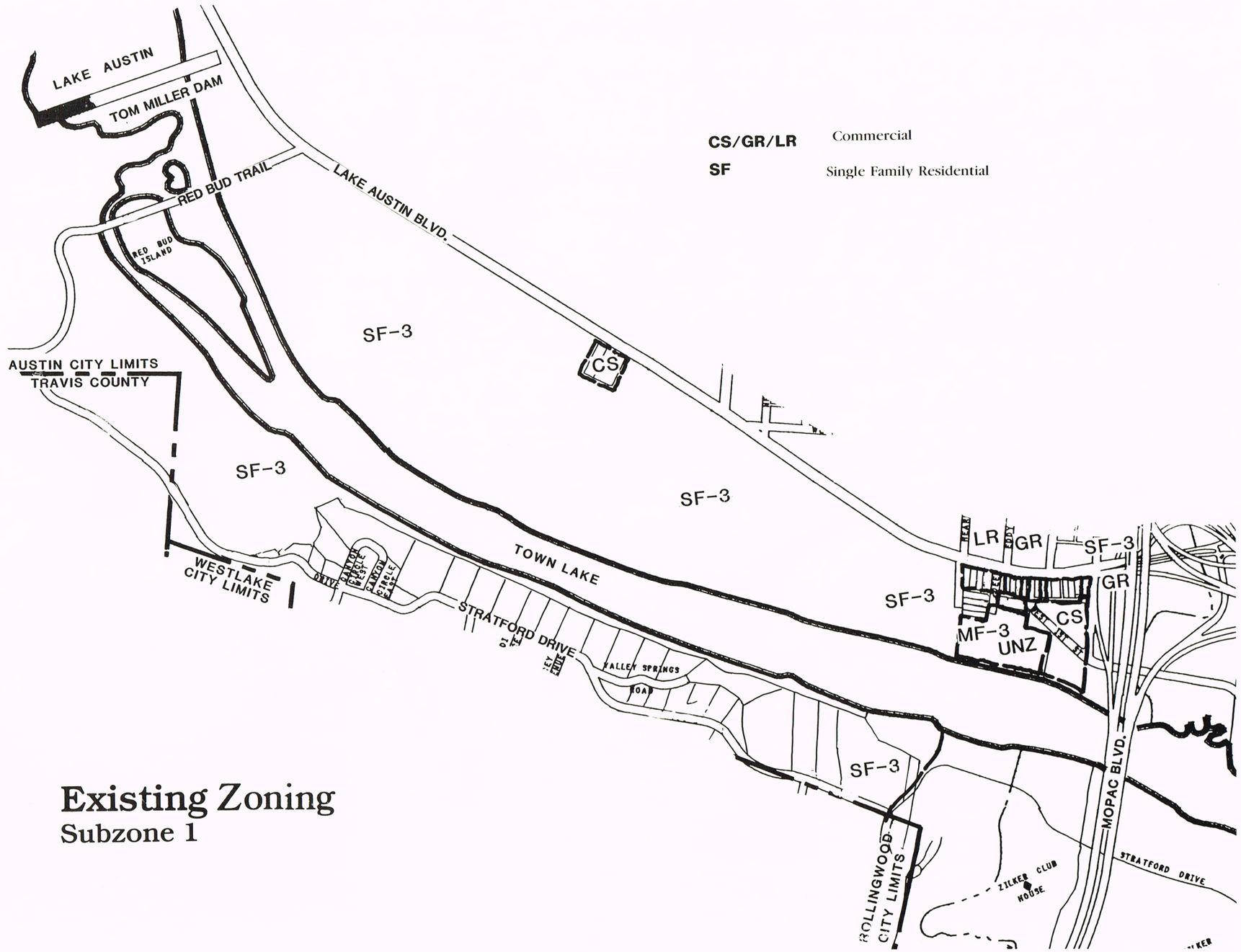
Action 1.09 Create a new Waterfront Overlay Zone with design criteria geared to the special characteristics of this development zone.

Access (Goal 6.00)

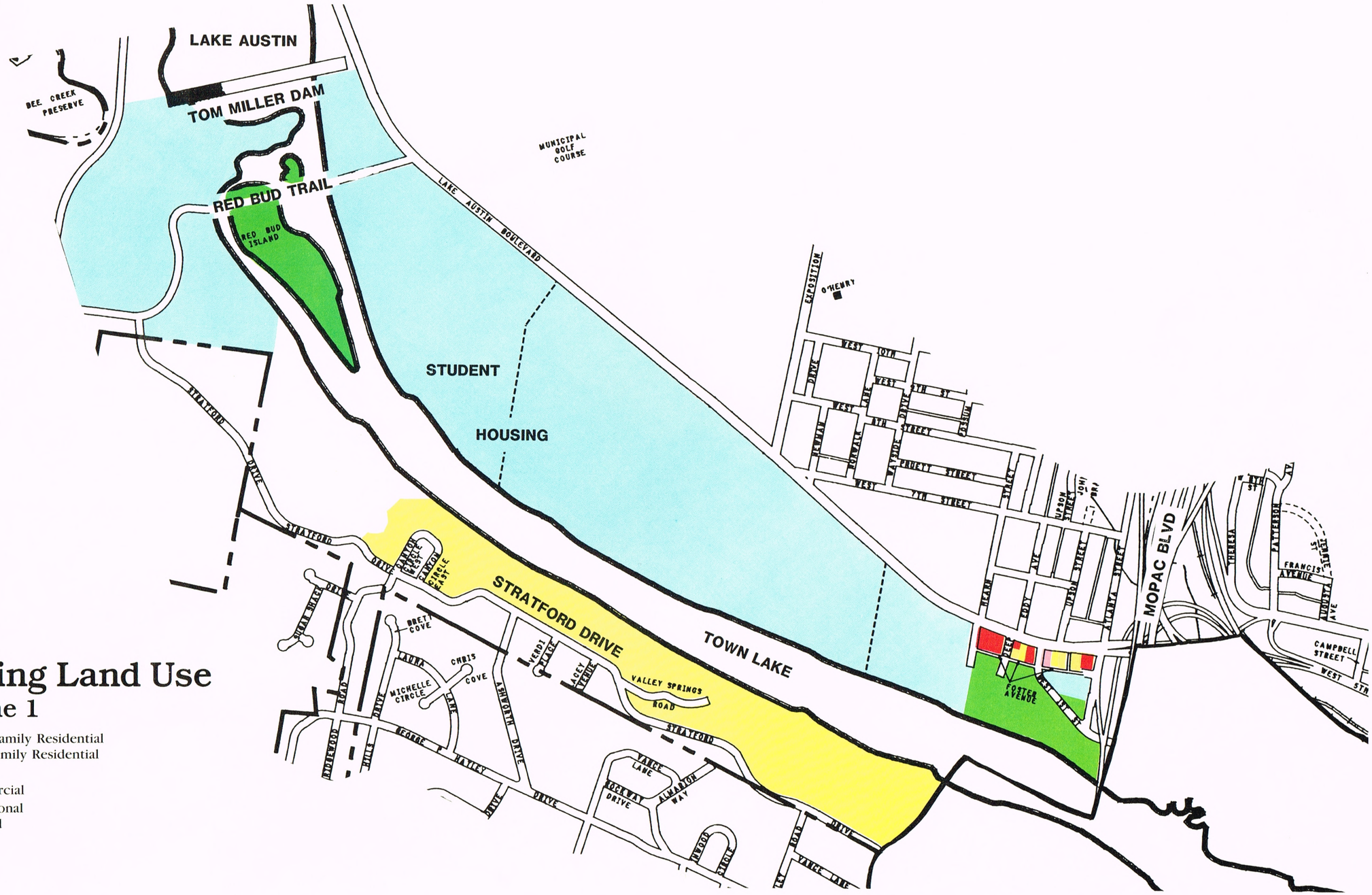
Action 1.10 Improve entry and pedestrian access to Eilers Park by means of signage and sidewalks for safety and legibility.

Action 1.11 Re-orient Eilers Park to the waterfront by improving visual and pedestrian access; improve pedestrian connections to the adjacent commercial area by providing incentives to encourage improvements such as landscaping, sidewalks and safer pedestrian crossings.

Action 1.12 Increase access to the waterfront by extending the trail westward from Eilers Park, and provide a trail on the south shore from Zilker Park to Tom Miller Dam.



Existing Zoning
Subzone 1



Existing Land Use

Subzone 1

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Parkland

Subzone 2 Zilker/Austin High School

Existing Conditions

Land Use—The north shore of this area is bounded by MoPac on the west, the Missouri Pacific railroad lines on the north, and Lamar Boulevard on the east. The southern shore includes Zilker Park. This subzone consists primarily of public uses, including Austin High School, athletic fields, the animal shelter, the Y.M.C.A. and the Amtrak station.

The Zilker/Austin High School area contains approximately 574 acres.

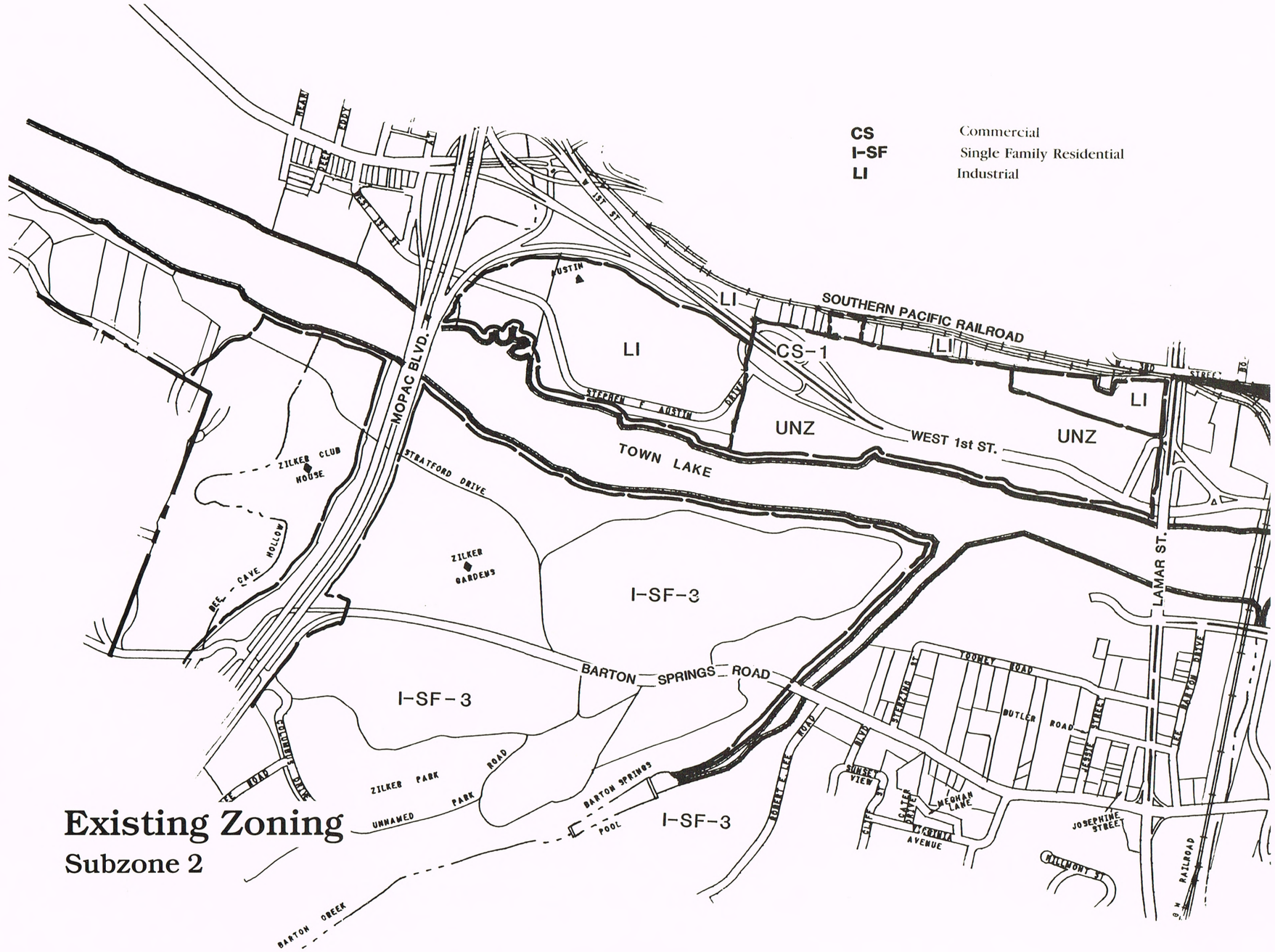
Zilker/Austin High School Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Commercial	1.9	.3
Institutional	38.0	6.6
Parkland	493.1	85.9
Roads/ROW	41.1	7.2
Total	574.1	100.0

Source: *Office of Land Development Services*

Zoning—The majority of this area is zoned P (Public) and is owned by the City. However, there are some commercial and industrial zoned parcels south of the Missouri Pacific railroad lines. Of particular concern is a parcel adjacent to and west of Lamar Boulevard which is zoned LI (Light Industrial). Uses which are more compatible with Town Lake and the parkland should be considered.

Access—Physical and visual access to the shoreline is excellent in this area, although West First Street acts as a barrier in this part of the waterfront. Two creeks in the area, Bar-



Existing Zoning
Subzone 2

ton and Johnson, connect well with the lake; access is difficult across Barton Springs Road and is a barrier to the south shore of Zilker Park. There is also poor pedestrian access to the waterfront from old West Austin.

Parkland —The bulk of Town Lake parkland is located in this area, not only because of Zilker Park but also because this subzone includes the largest tract of parkland on the south shore of the lake. Zilker Park does not orient well to the waterfront nor does the north shore, especially the single purpose ballfields and the animal shelter. Dry Creek does not currently provide good connection with the Austin Nature Center and Town Lake, nor does the Garden Center. Proposed expansion of the latter facilities and a renovation program for Zilker Park provide excellent opportunities to recapture public waterfront and recreation amenities.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goal 3.00)

Action 2.01 Relocate the animal shelter with full assistance of the city to allow for more waterfront related public use of the area; disallow additional construction or alteration of the shelter prior to removal.

Action 2.02 Re-evaluate use of the sports field complex on West First Street applying criteria of design integrity, multiple use and waterfront relationship.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 2.03 Consider downzoning of properties along the Southern Pacific railroad from LI (Light Industrial) to a more compatible zone district, such as multi-family, office or retail.

Action 2.04 Create a new Waterfront Overlay Zone geared to the special characteristics of this development zone.

Access (Goals 6.00, 7.00)

Action 2.05 Provide pedestrian connection and safety across Barton Springs Road in Zilker Park; investigate a full range of alternatives including access under the Barton Creek bridge, reducing speed limits, and lowering the road to allow for at surface pedestrian access.

Action 2.06 Improve waterfront orientation and physical access to Town Lake from Zilker Park and the Nature Center at Dry Creek; support plans for public access improvements including realignment of Stratford Drive to enhance the park environment.

Action 2.07 Develop a gateway and parkway concept including signage, landscaping and amenities along Barton Springs Road entering and traversing Zilker Park to emphasize the park environment and subdue the automobile impact.

Subzone 3 Barton Springs Road/Riverside Drive

Existing Conditions

Land Use—This area is located on the south shore of Town Lake and is bounded by Barton Creek on the west, Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive east of their intersection on the south, and East Bouldin Creek on the east. This boundary includes all properties adjacent to Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive.

Various public and commercial uses occur in this area, the majority of which are entertainment related. Several restaurants and public cultural and entertainment facilities are located in this area. Public and cultural uses include Dougherty Arts Center, Auditorium Shores Amphitheater and Zachary Scott Theatre. Recreational oriented businesses such as Butler Park Pitch and Putt and a miniature golf facility also exist in the area. A mobile home park is located south of Barton Springs Road near Town Lake.

The area east of South First Street is a confusing mix of office, commercial and hotel development which does not relate well to the waterfront.

The City's Transportation facility on Toomey Road and a number of businesses with storage yards are non-compatible land uses in the subzone.

Hotels in the area include the Hyatt, Embassy Suites, and Two Texas Center which provide a combined capacity of 1066 rooms. The Campanile del Mar, a dense mixed use project is proposed at the northeast corner of Congress Avenue and Riverside Drive and is projected to have a capacity of 450 rooms, making a total of 1,516 rooms in this area. This figure is high when compared to the 741 rooms built or under construction in the downtown area.

Residential development is primarily limited to multi-family development along the south side of Barton Springs Road near its intersections with South First Street and Lamar Boulevard. A 13 acre mobile home park, known as the Pecan Grove, is located south of Barton Springs Road between Barton Creek and Lamar Boulevard. An impressive stand of mature pecan trees exists in this area.

The Barton Springs Road area serves as the "gateway" to Zilker Park, and special consideration should be given to the scenic qualities of this area.

The Barton Springs/Riverside Drive area contains approximately 325 acres; 63 acres or 19.3% of this subzone is in surface parking lots, a very high percentage considering the relatively high property values in area. The large surface parking lots associated with Palmer Auditorium, the Austin American-Statesman building, and the Hyatt Hotel account for a significant portion of the impervious surface in this area.

Barton Springs Road/Riverside Drive Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	4.7	1.4
Multi-family	19.8	6.1
Mobile Home	13.4	4.1
Office	16.0	4.9
Commercial	78.7	24.2
Institutional	51.8	15.9
Parkland	76.3	23.5
Vacant	10.6	3.3
Road/ROW	53.9	16.6
Total	325.2	100.0

Source: *Office of Land Development Services*

Zoning—This area consists almost entirely of CS (Commercial Service), and LI (Light Industrial) zoning, which is not appropriate for the area. Uses allowed in these zone districts include automotive rentals, automotive sales, automotive washing, construction sales and service, equipment sales, funeral services, manufacturing, vehicle storage and warehousing.

These uses are not conducive to enhancing the surrounding parkland along Town Lake and Zilker Park and create a barrier to the pedestrian and surrounding neighborhoods of Town Lake. They also provide little or no services or conveniences to surrounding neighborhoods.

Access—Parkland and a lateral trail system from Barton Creek to South First Street make access to the shoreline excellent. However, accessibility to the shoreline is inadequate between South 1st Street to East Bouldin Creek due to private ownership and no pedestrian orientation of existing buildings.

Parkland—Parkland and public land in this area is very strategic because of its location in the central lake zone, near the downtown area, and adjacent to neighborhoods. It also has historically provided an important civic function due to Auditorium Shores and cultural facilities in the area. Some uses are not compatible with the waterfront (sports fields), and special events have highly impacted the outdoor amphitheater site. The entire area is in need of re-evaluation and re-design to become more functional, attractive and waterfront related. Any change in use of this area must be carefully considered and based on superior urban design.

Special Opportunities

Barton Springs—The Barton Springs area represents one of the few locations in Austin where an opportunity exists to create a mixed use, pedestrian oriented community in a parklike setting. As the gateway to Zilker Park, special efforts could improve the visual environment with landscaped medians, sidewalks, and underground utilities. Safer pedestrian crossings and consolidation of curb cuts would improve the area.

The pedestrian character of this area could be improved by providing compatible but relatively high density residential development in close proximity to commercial services and entertainment facilities. Mixed use would discourage automobile use and lessen the need for street widening and increased parking areas. Large office complexes, industrial uses and highway oriented commercial uses are not appropriate for this area.

Palmer Auditorium/Coliseum—The public area occupied by the Coliseum and Auditorium consists of approximately 54 acres bounded by Lamar Boulevard, Barton Springs Road, and South First Street. A large portion of this tract is used for surface parking, making it unattractive and unsuitable as waterfront land. The area has excellent potential for waterfront-related uses although Riverside Drive creates a barrier. Proximity to the Central Business District, Auditorium Shores and nearby hotels and restaurants represents an excellent opportunity for creating a pedestrian-oriented multiple use zone as the centerpiece of Town Lake. It is also apparent that Austinites identify more readily with this core area of Town Lake, and additional public facilities (museums, planetarium, etc.) might be considered. The central location near Town Lake combined with excellent views to downtown, require that this area be used to provide the maximum benefit to the people of Austin.

South First Street/Congress Avenue—The area bounded by South First Street and Congress Avenue has undergone rapid changes in recent years to uses dominated by office and hotels at intensities comparable to those occurring in the Central Business District. It is quite common for development intensities to occur in the range of Floor-to-Area Ratio's of 1.0 to 1.0 up to 3.0 to 1.0. Listed below are representative intensities for development in this area:

Examples of Intensities in Subzone 3

Building	Location	Site Area	Floor Area	Ratio
One & (*Two*Tx Centers)*	505 Barton Springs	329,884	465,000	1.40
Hyatt Inn	208 Barton Springs	322,344	332,455	1.03
*721 Barton Springs**		103,063	123,382	1.20
801 Barton Springs		78,408	172,250	2.20
American-Statesman	116 E. Riverside	563,536	316,875	.56
Riverside Square	150 E. Riverside	156,811	212,000	1.35
*Campanile del Mar**	101 S. Congress	257,875	878,427	3.42
Embassy Suites	301 S. Congress	100,623	205,415	2.04

**Proposed*

Potential compatibility problems related to both visual and traffic problems should be addressed before this intensity of development continues. Design standards for buildings and parking areas, and improved mass transit to the area should be investigated.

Recommended Action

Land Use (Goals 2.00, 3.00, 4.00)

Action 3.01 Zone P (Public) and establish a Comprehensive Planning District for the 54 acre auditorium/coliseum site; develop a plan for this tract to become the centerpiece of the Town Lake park system and a model of superior design for pedestrian scale, festive waterfront recreation and cultural, entertainment and open space uses, with the following guidelines:

1. The design for the 54 acre tract shall have as a goal at least 60% open space to be dedicated parkland; the justification is to preserve views, achieve pedestrian scale, establish a rich park landscape, and create dignity and tranquility.

2. The 54 acre site should be more appropriately connected with Auditorium Shores and the Town Lake waterfront; consider evaluating closure of Riverside Drive, Dawson Road and Bouldin Avenue to improve connections and expansion of open space.

3. Buffer and landscape the site to achieve highest aesthetic and noise attenuation standards.

4. No funds from any source should be expended for enlarging the surface parking area.

5. Explore joint City-Capital Metro funding for a shared underground parking facility incorporating goals and policies recommended in this report.

6. Encourage public-private partnerships or other innovative mechanisms to insure that surrounding properties are developed or re-developed in a manner that is public and pedestrian-oriented, of a density and scale that relates well to the plan for this site, buffers the surrounding neighborhoods, preserves views, and encourages residential and neighborhood retail uses.

Action 3.02 Encourage the most creative combination of mixed use in this zone, focused on pedestrian-oriented mixed use including residential, commercial, and cultural uses achieving maximum integration with the park and lakeshore environment.

Action 3.03 Establish synergistic residential/commercial uses that relate to the lake, surrounding parkland and resource values of this zone by encouraging creative public-private partnerships.

Action 3.04 Establish a comprehensive planning district for the extraordinary amenity values of the Barton Springs Road/Toomey Road area; create a synergistic public/private partnership to achieve a park-dominated mixed use pattern of cultural, residential and commercial/office development.

Action 3.05 Explore a full range of alternatives for public preservation of the pecan grove on Barton Springs Road, including land trades, development transfers, purchase or combinations thereof.

Action 3.06 Relocate the Transportation Department maintenance facility on Toomey Road.

Action 3.07 Re-evaluate use of the sports fields at Butler Shores and Disch Field, applying criteria of design integrity, multiple use and waterfront relationship.

Action 3.08 Incorporate recommendations of the Fairview Neighborhood Conservation Combining district along East Riverside Drive to help define appropriate land uses and densities and preserve natural attributes of the bluffs; eliminate curb cuts to provide maximum safety.

Action 3.09 Discourage surface parking to: (1) decrease impervious cover, (2) provide more land for park or public use; and (3) improve the visual environment.

Zoning (Goal 5.00)

Action 3.10 Expand boundaries of the Town Lake Overlay Zone to the south shoreline and establish new criteria for land use to be compatible with Town Lake.

Action 3.11 Amend and expand the Lake Commercial zone district to reflect more appropriate intensities.

Action 3.12 Remove currently permitted land uses from the zoning district that are not compatible in the Corridor.

Action 3.13 Establish a consistent alignment of building setbacks and height; develop a coherent building pattern.

Action 3.14 Discourage roadway oriented uses such as service stations, car lots, drive-thru restaurants, and banks.

Action 3.15 Encourage residential and retail/commercial uses along Barton Springs Road and Riverside Drive east of South First Street that serve the adjoining neighborhood, or are related to the recreational opportunities of Zilker Park and Town Lake.

Action 3.16 Adopt guidelines from the Downtown Mixed Use Study for parking; re-

quire structured parking, preferably underground; include guidelines for landscaping and first floor retail uses to preserve the street scene.

Action 3.17 Require transparent display windows along the sidewalk, and retail and restaurant use on ground levels.

Action 3.18 Encourage structures that are of a compatible scale with the pedestrian.

Action 3.19 Prohibit outside storage.

Access (Goal 6.00)

Action 3.20 Improve the pedestrian environment of this zone, particularly along Barton Springs Road and east of Congress Avenue on Riverside Drive.

Action 3.21 Provide detached sidewalks with landscaping between the curb and sidewalk along Barton Springs Road, Lamar Boulevard and Riverside Drive.

Action 3.22 Provide a median, landscaped with native vegetation, along Barton Springs Road and East Riverside Drive.

Action 3.23 Locate parking areas away from sidewalks and behind structures so they are not visible to pedestrians.

Action 3.24 Provide safe pedestrian access across Lamar Boulevard to connect the parkland located on either side of Lamar; improve pedestrian access across the Lamar Boulevard, South First Street and Congress Avenue Bridges.

Action 3.25 Improve lateral access to the waterfront between S. First Street and S. Bouldin Creek by obtaining public land or access easements.

Subzone 4 Downtown

Existing Conditions

Land Use—The Downtown area is located north of Town Lake and bounded by Lamar Boulevard on the west, the Southern Pacific railroad tracks on the north, and IH-35 on the east.

This area consists primarily of office, hotels and warehousing, with an occasional restaurant or retail store. Presently, two hotels, the Sheraton Crest and the Holiday Inn exist downtown and provide a capacity of 443 rooms. The Four Seasons hotel is proposed on East First Street and will have 308 rooms.

Residential development consists of the Rainey Street neighborhood and some multi-family developments. The Rainey Street neighborhood includes two blocks of old single family structures located on Rainey Street between Driskill Street and River Street. This neighborhood has been nominated as a candidate for the National Register of Historic Places; the hardwood trees are a significant greenspace in the downtown area.

Three major multi-family developments, the Towers of Town Lake, the Villas of Town Lake, and the Railyard Apartments are located in the eastern portion of downtown. Lakeview Apartments, located on Town Lake at Waller Creek, is a high rise residential facility for senior citizens. These developments provide an opportunity for people to walk to work, thereby reducing traffic.

The Downtown area consists of approximately 232 acres; 19.3 acres or 8.3% is in use as surface parking.

Zoning—The downtown area is zoned CBD (Central Business District) and DMU (Downtown Mixed Use) with the exception of the Rainey Street neighborhood near IH-35 and Town Lake, which consists of various commercial, office, and residential zoning districts. The rezoning of property near the Rainey Street neighborhood to commercial and office has lessened the viability of this area remaining a single family neighborhood.

Downtown Land Use Summary

Use	Acres	%
Single Family	10.0	4.3
Multi-family	11.2	4.8
Office	10.9	4.7
Commercial	34.7	15.1
Industrial	2.8	1.2
Institutional	12.6	5.4
Parkland	46.3	20.0
Vacant	20.8	9.0
Roads/ROW	60.7	26.2
Utilities	18.0	7.8
Total	231.80	100.00

Source: *Office of Land Development Services*

Access—West 1st Street provides a major barrier to the parkland along Town Lake due to high traffic volumes. West 1st Street is located on the crest of a fairly steep bluff, and thus provides excellent views to Town Lake. Parkland east of Congress becomes impacted by adjacent land uses and is not visually accessible.

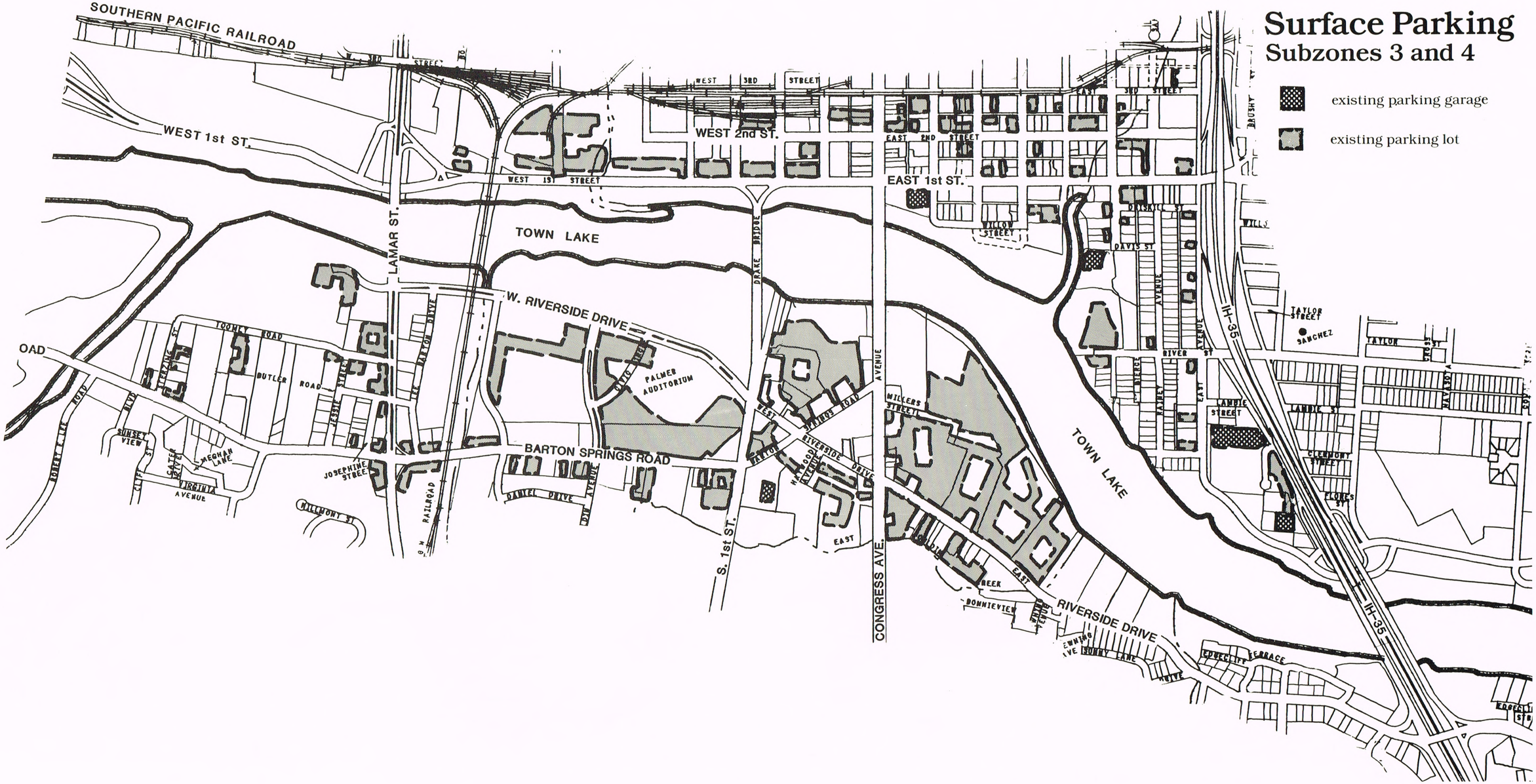
Parkland—Parkland in this area comprises a relatively thin strip on the north shore sandwiched between North Lamar Boulevard and South First Street, and below the Rainey Neighborhood. Shoal and Waller Creeks provide outstanding opportunities as gateway anchors into the Central Business District but are impacted by adjacent development and have no design controls to accomplish these functions. The Waller Creek Walkway project has been a catalyst for a strong redevelopment program, but delayed public efforts to control floodwater and complete beautification objectives are hindering full realization of the potential. The Shoal Creek peninsula offers excellent waterfront contact and lake viewing.

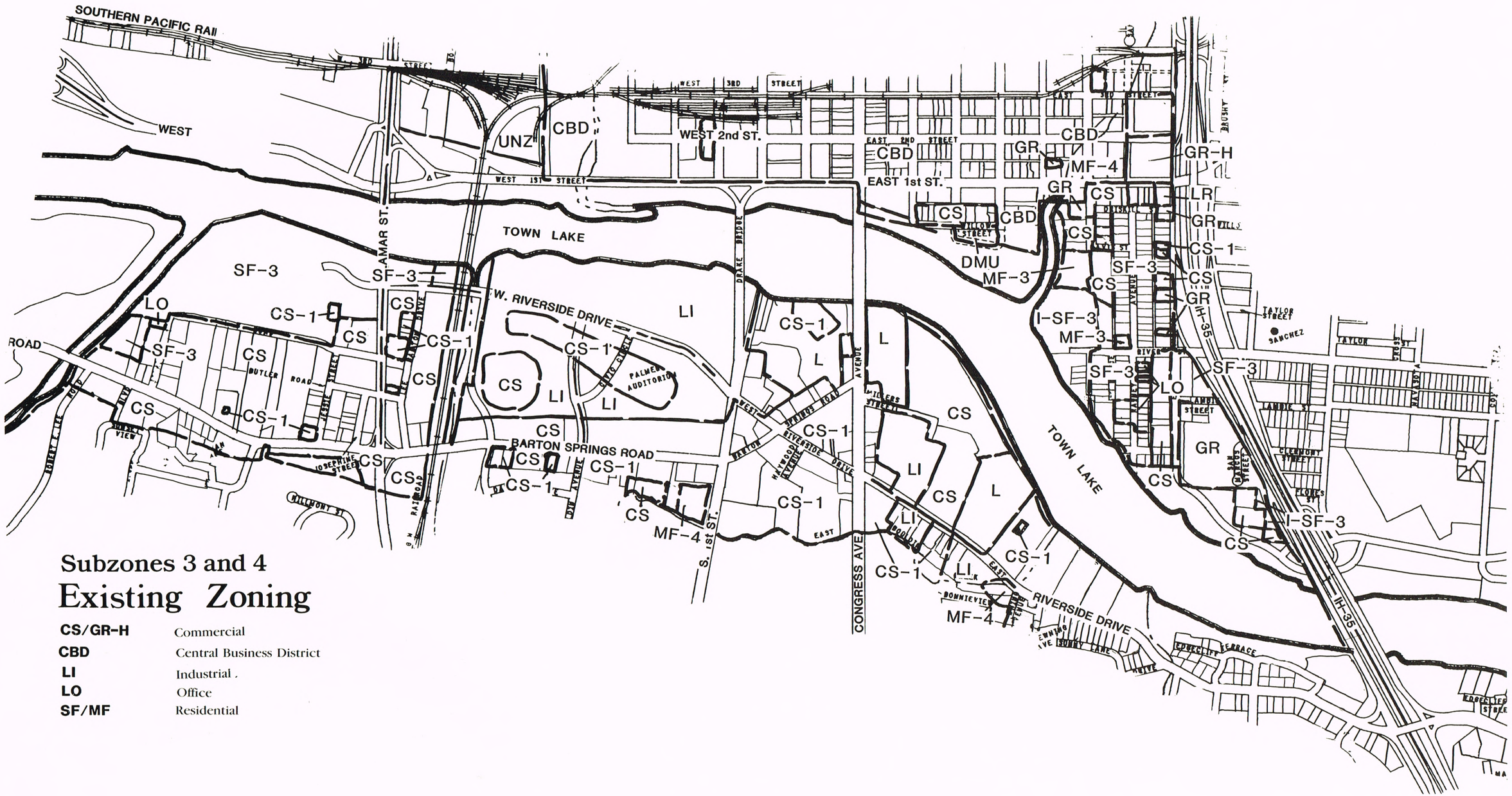
Special Opportunities

Shoal and Waller Creeks—Historically, Shoal and Waller Creeks have formed the western and eastern boudaries of downtown Austin. Presently, these creeks are underutilized as focal points for pedestrian activity and as primary linkages from downtown to Town Lake. These creeks have excellent potential as open space connectors, form-shapers and focal points for lively pedestrian-oriented mixed use.

Rainey Street—The Rainey Street Neighborhood has special potential because of its personality, historic structures, shade trees and ambience, and location near downtown, Town Lake and IH-35. A public owned storage yard is not currently compatible, but could become the catalyst for joint public/private development to create mixed use development.

West 1st Street—West 1st Street functions as a physical and visual barrier to Town Lake. Reducing the importance of West 1st Street as an east-west con nection through downtown should be considered to improve the connections of the Municipal Office Complex and the rest of Downtown to Town Lake. There is a need for development along West 1st Street to be designed to define a coherent and consistent building pattern and pedestrian oriented street. Panoramic views to the lake can best be achieved by focusing pedestrian activity at the street level. If development along West 1st Street focused outward to surrounding blocks, pedestrians could be invited and interblock connections accomplished.


Surface Parking
Subzones 3 and 4
existing parking garage
existing parking lot
SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
WEST 1st ST.
WEST 2nd ST.
EAST 1st ST.
TOWN LAKE
LAMAR ST.
W. RIVERSIDE DRIVE
BARTON SPRINGS ROAD
S. 1st ST.
CONGRESS AVE.
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
IH-35
PALMER AUDITORIUM
DRAKE BRIDGE
WEST 3RD STREET
EAST 2ND STREET
WEST 1ST STREET
WILLOW STREET
DAVIS ST
RIVER ST
LAMBIE STREET
TAYLOR STREET
SANCHEZ
CLERMONT STREET
FLORES ST
MILLERS STREET
DANIEL DRIVE
JOSEPHINE STREET
BUTLER ROAD
TOOMEY ROAD
MEGHAN LANE
VIRGINIA AVENUE
SUNSET VIEW
WILLMONT ST
RAILROAD
BONNIEVIEW
SUNNY LANE
EDGECLIFF TERRACE
OAD



Subzones 3 and 4

Existing Zoning

CS/GR-H	Commercial
CBD	Central Business District
LI	Industrial
LO	Office
SF/MF	Residential

Existing Land Use

Subzone 3 and 4

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Utilities
- Parkland
- Mobile Home