Green Infrastructure Priority Program Implementation Team

Presentation to the City of Austin Environmental Board

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Watershed Protection Department
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Priority Program No. 4 Green Infrastructure

Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.

Green infrastructure is strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, parks, working landscapes, other open spaces, and green stormwater controls that conserve and enhance ecosystems and provide associated benefits to human populations. *Imagine Austin, Appendix A, p 19*

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Benefits of Green Infrastructure

Ecosystem Services – the benefits of nature to households, communities, and economies:

- ❖ Hazard mitigation (e.g., flooding, wildfire)

- ❖ Water supply (e.g., improving aquifer recharge) and water quality protection

- ❖ Erosion and sediment control

- ❖ Air pollution prevention and control

- ❖ Local and global climate regulation

- ❖ Wildlife habitat

- ❖ Food and renewable non-food products

- ❖ Social and cultural benefits (e.g., passive/active recreation)

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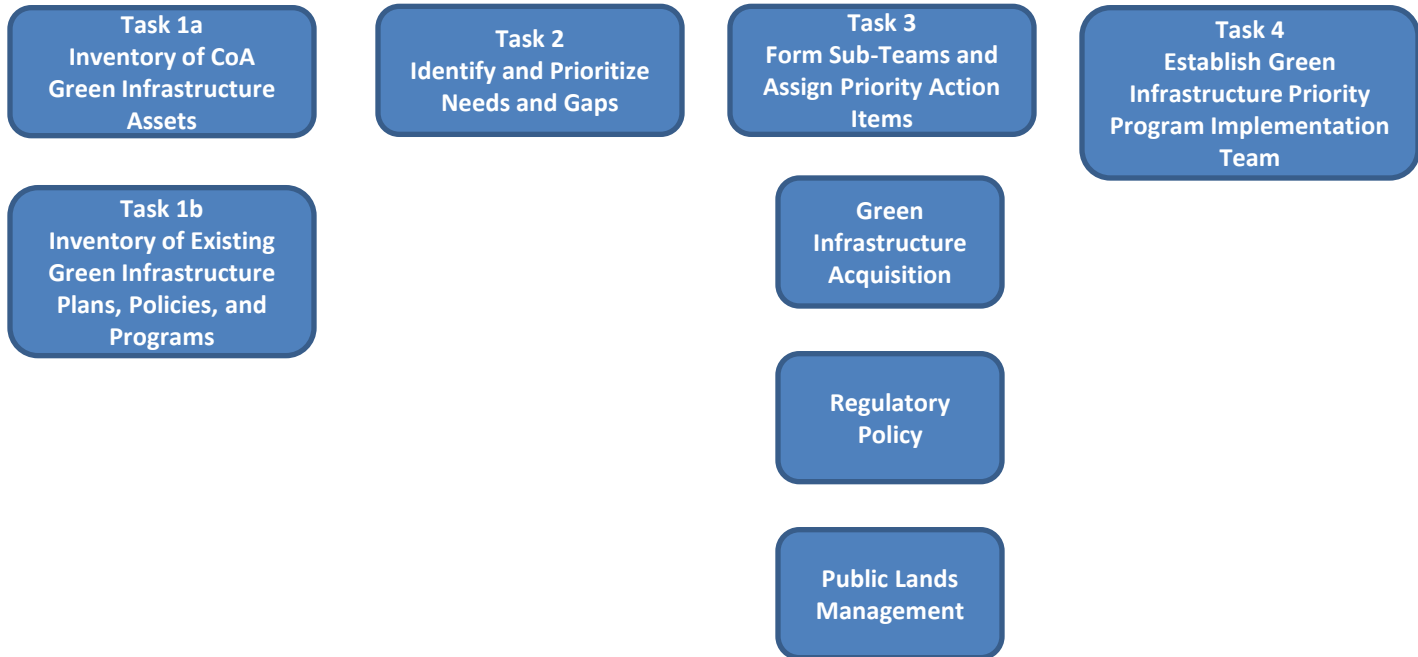*Vibrant. Livable. Connected.*

Goal

**Manage Austin's urban and natural ecosystems
in a coordinated and sustainable manner**

Key Objectives

- Continue public investment in green infrastructure
- Incentivize and/or require private investment in green infrastructure
- Maximize ecosystem function and services provided by green infrastructure on city-owned lands
- Improve inter-departmental collaboration and coordination in the management of city-owned lands

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Process for the Formation of the GIPPIT

Task 1a
Inventory of CoA Green Infrastructure Assets

Task 2
Identify and Prioritize Needs and Gaps

Task 3
Form Sub-Teams and Assign Priority Action Items

Task 4
Establish Green Infrastructure Priority Program Implementation Team

Task 1b
Inventory of Existing Green Infrastructure Plans, Policies, and Programs

Green Infrastructure Acquisition

Regulatory Policy

Public Lands Management

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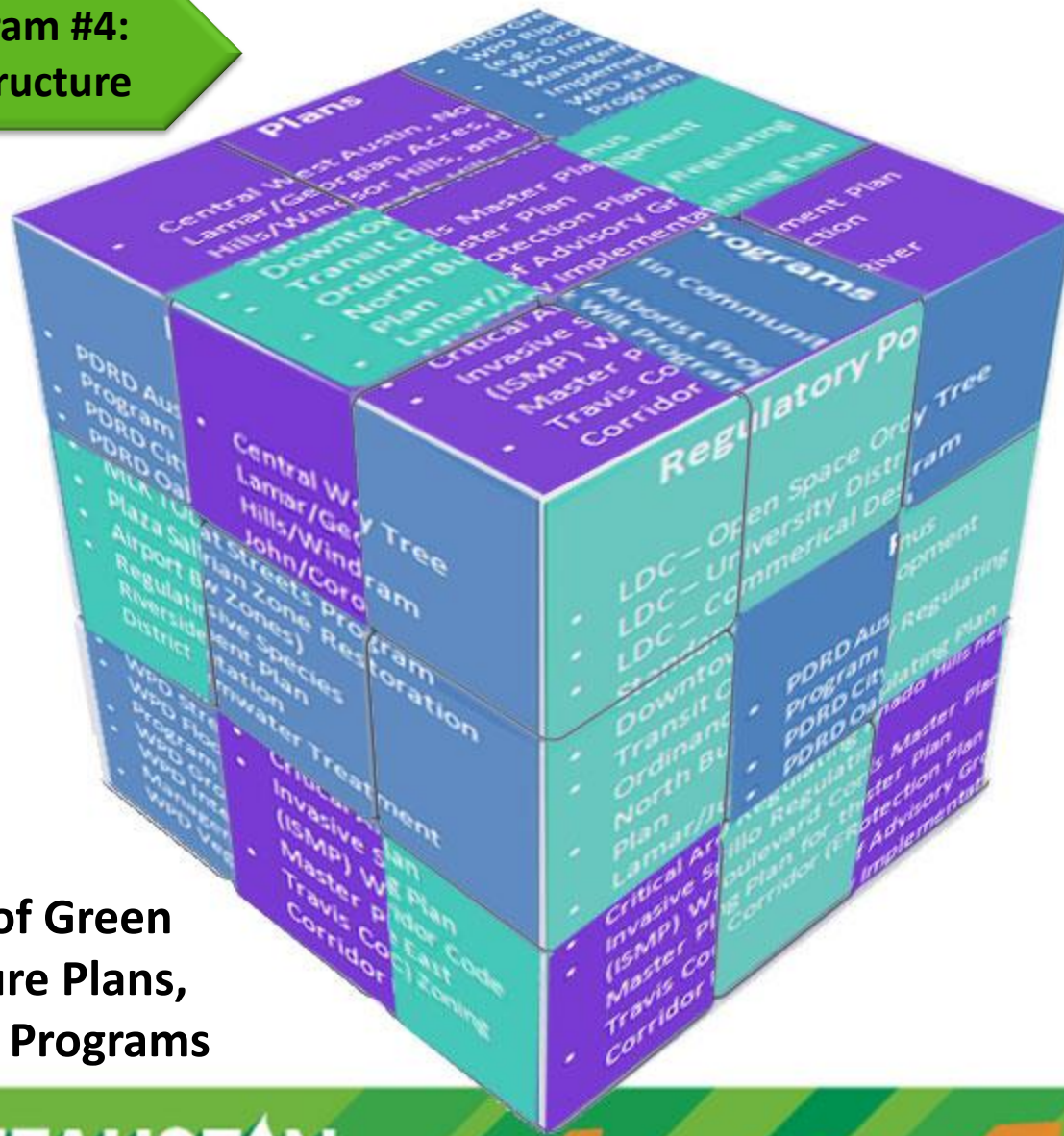# Identify and Prioritize Needs and Gaps

Process:

- Review IACP policies, actions, and work program tasks
- Compile preliminary inventory of existing City plans, policies, and programs
- Inventory available GIS data coverages for City-owned/managed property
- Analyze to identify needs, gaps, and priorities
- Form sub-teams and develop work plans

Conclusions:

- The City is already doing much of what is called for in IACP
- Implementation of IACP requires much closer "alignment" of existing plans, policies, and programs; as well as new initiatives
- Highest priorities are:
  - Improve inter-departmental collaboration on land acquisition and disposition
  - Support Priority Program No. 8 – Land Development Code revisions
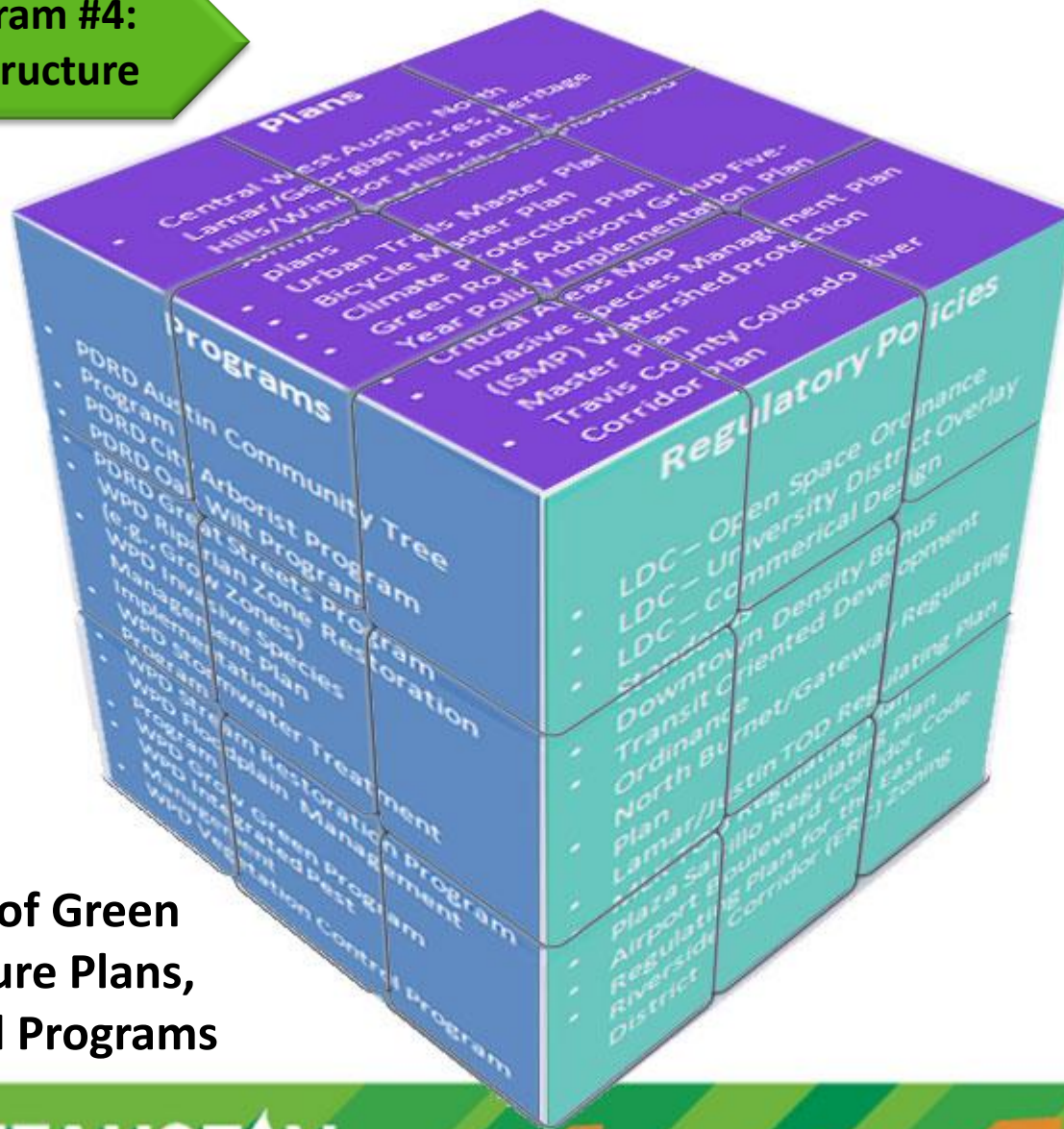 - Improve inter-departmental collaboration to improve management public lands

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Inventory of Green Infrastructure Plans, Policies, and Programs

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Inventory of Green
Infrastructure Plans,
Policies, and Programs

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J.J. Seabrook Stream Restoration, Rain Garden, and Urban Trail Project

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**Green Infrastructure
Priority Program
Implementation Team**

- **Sustainability Office**
- **Austin Fire Department**
- **Austin Energy**
- **Austin Resource Recovery**
- **Austin Water Utility**
- **PARD**
- **PDRD**
- **Public Works**
- **Real Estate Services**
- **Watershed Protection**
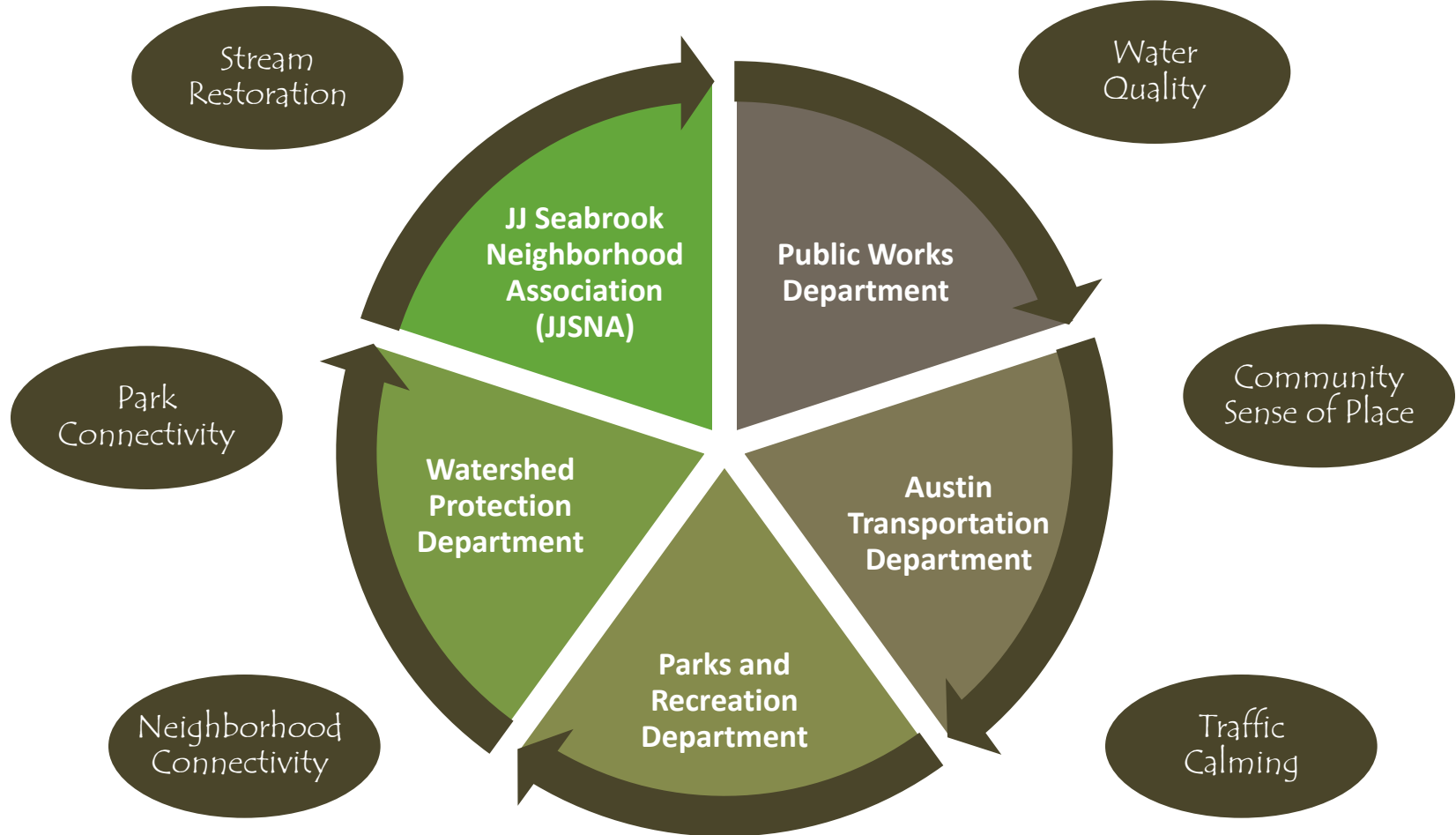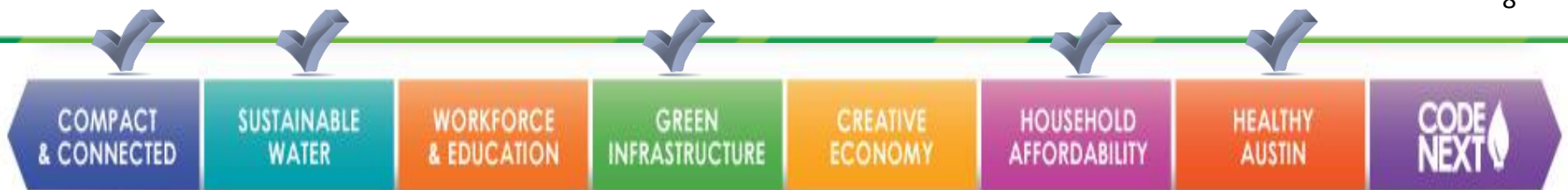
Implementation Team Organization

**Green Infrastructure
Acquisition**

- **Strategic vision/plan**
- **Support Strategic Facilities Governance Team**

Regulatory Policy Sub-Team

- **LDC revisions**
- **Watershed Protection Ordinance**
- **Criteria manual revisions:**
  - **DCM**
  - **ECM**
  - **TCM**

**Public Lands
Management Sub-Team**

- **Urban Forestry Management Plan**
- **Standards of care for vegetation management:**
  - **Local amendments**
  - **Implementation**
- **Riparian Zone Restoration Program**
- **Invasive Species Management Plan Implementation**
- **Wildfire fuel mitigation**
- **Integrated Pest Management**
- **Climate protection**

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**Implementation and Sub-Team Team Roles
& Responsibilities**

Implementation Team = Sustainability Leadership Team

- Executive/senior management level membership
- Provide general oversight of and direction to sub-teams
- Provide support for implementation of sub-team recommendations

Sub-Teams:

- Subject matter experts
- "Heavy lifters"

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What Do We Need from CMO?

- **Support for implementation of GIPPIT recommendations**

- **Recognition – celebrate successes that demonstrate inter-departmental collaboration to achieve multiple objectives**

- **Reinforce the role of the Sustainability Leadership Team re: oversight of IACP priority program teams**

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QUESTIONS

RESERVE SLIDES

Green Infrastructure Acquisition Sub-Team

Mission:

- In collaboration with the Strategic Facilities Governance Team (SFGT) develop a strategic vision for green infrastructure (i.e., land, open space) acquisition and disposition by City departments. The strategic vision will in criteria that will serve as policy direction to establish green infrastructure goals for land acquisition and management for various public purposes including recreation, watershed protection, connectivity, and equitable distribution of services to the citizens of Austin.

Guidelines:

- In developing a strategic vision for green infrastructure acquisition, the sub-team will consider:
    - Public purpose of existing and potential new assets
    - Critical gaps in the green infrastructure network;
    - High-growth areas;
    - Plans, priorities, needed easements and city facilities of various departments;
    - Plans and priorities of other entities (e.g., governmental, private and not-for-profit) that are investing in green infrastructure throughout the Central Texas region;
    - Leveraging inter-departmental resources opportunities to make land acquisition more financially feasible; and
    - Enhancement of property values, community culture, and public health.
- The sub-team will serve as an advisory body to the SFGT and will provide support and assistance with considerations of land purchases at the request of the SFGT or at the request of a department.
- Every effort will be made to protect sensitive information relating to potential real property acquisition to the extent allowed by State law and City policy.

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Green Infrastructure Acquisition Sub-Team FY14 Work Plan

Task	Deliverable	Assignment	Schedule
1. Develop a Strategic Vision for Future Investments in the City's Green Infrastructure Network			
1.1 Assess current departmental green infrastructure acquisition plans and priorities (e.g., PARD Long Range Plan, Trails Master Plan, etc.) and existing GIS resources to identify areas of common interest or where multiple mission objectives may be achieved through collaboration and partnering.		Green Infrastructure Acquisition Sub Team (GIAST)	
1.2. Collaborate with key City departments that do not acquire land but whose operations may be affected by land acquisition decisions (i.e. ERGSO, HHSD).		GIAST	
1.3 Collaborate with other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the region that own and are investing in green infrastructure (e.g., Travis County, TXDOT, LCRA, TPW, ISDs)	GIS coverages that integrate all existing green infrastructure assets within the region (e.g., maintain "Travis County Greenprint" data.	GIAST	
1.4 Develop criteria and guidance for acquisition of green infrastructure (e.g., checklist of issues to address).	Guidance document and check-lists for use in evaluating lands for potential acquisition by the City. To be provided to the GIPPIT Open Space Acquisition Sub-Team.	GIAST	
1.5 Report to SFGT re: Sub-tasks 1.1-1.4 and with recommendations regarding strategic priorities for green infrastructure acquisition.		GIAST	

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Green Infrastructure Acquisition Sub-Team
FY14 Work Plan

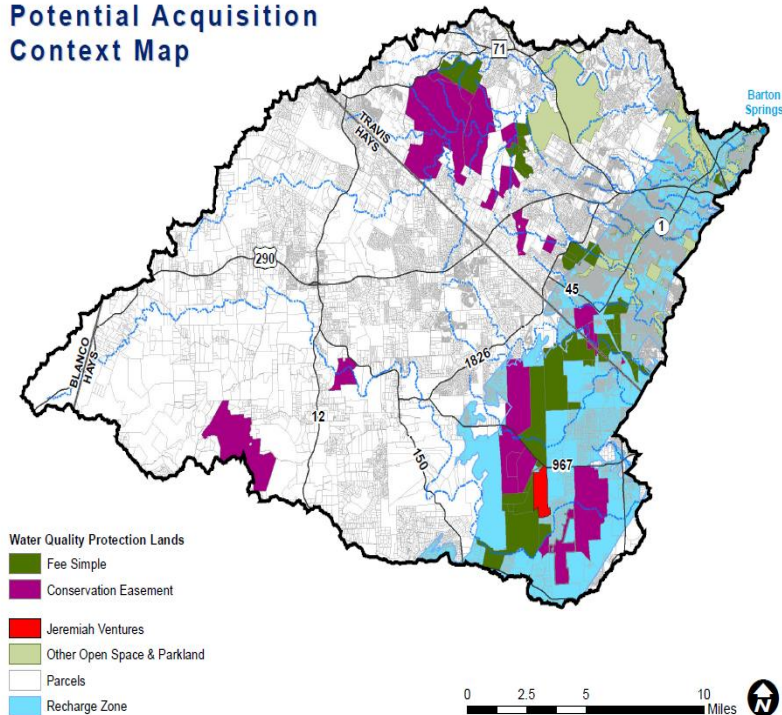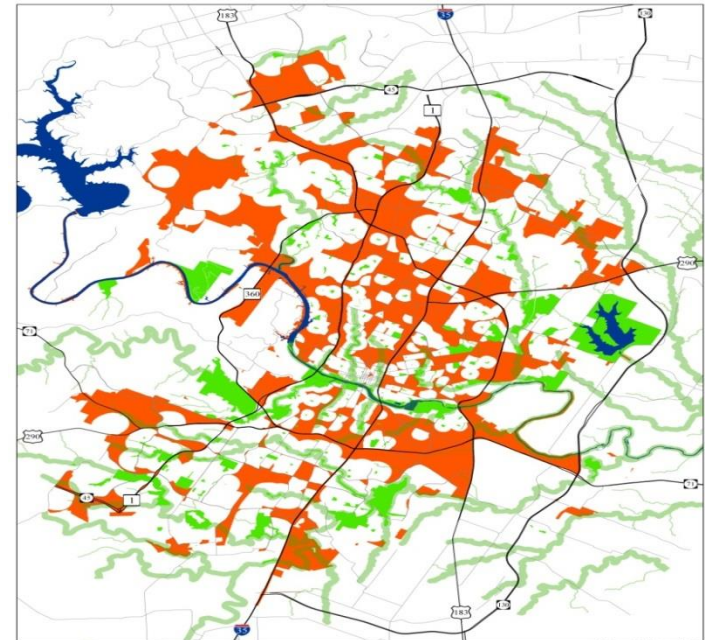| Task	Deliverable	Assignment	Schedule
2. Provide Advice and Assistance to the Strategic Facilities Governance Team			
2.1 At the request of the SFGT or at the request of a department provide advice and assistance on the acquisition and disposition of green infrastructure.	To be determined by the SFGT or the requesting department.	GIAST	
3. Identify and Evaluate Potential Improvements in Green Infrastructure Acquisition Processes			
Review and provide advice/recommendations on City policies that affect acquisition of green infrastructure assets. For example: • Establishment of easements on private property for trails and improved connectivity • Establishment of multiple public purposes during the acquisition of parkland (e.g., to allow stormwater management facilities to be constructed within a park) • Potential modifications of the City's parkland dedication policies and implementation processes	Recommendations to the SFGT or a requesting department.	GIAST	
4. Water Quality Protection Lands Acquisition Program			
Invest $30 million provided in the 2012 Bond Program (Proposition 13) in fee simple acquisition of real property and/or purchase of conservation easements for watershed protection and restoration in the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer.	Real property acquisition transactions or conservation easements for City Council approval.	WQPL Acquistion Team (Plummer, Conrad, Wood, Johns, Personett)	In progress

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Green Infrastructure Acquisition

Water Quality Protection Lands

Potential Acquisition Context Map

Water Quality Protection Lands
- Fee Simple
- Conservation Easement
- Jeremiah Ventures
- Other Open Space & Parkland
- Parcels
- Recharge Zone

Areas Deficient in Parkland

Legend
- City of Austin Parks
- Potential Creek Greenways
- Deficient Areas

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Green Infrastructure Regulatory Team (GIRT)

Mission:

Establish a collaborative inter-departmental process to ensure that City of Austin ordinances, regulations, policies and procedures embody the vision, goals, and objectives of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan Green Infrastructure Priority Program.

Goals:

- Evaluate the effectiveness, costs, benefits, and limitations of current regulatory policies relating to green infrastructure

- Identify and evaluate new or alternative approaches to require and/or incentivize green infrastructure in public and private development

- Provide expert input into the Land Development Code revision process with respect to those elements of current policy to retain, modify, eliminate, or supplement with new approaches

- expert input into the revision of the green infrastructure elements of various Criteria Manuals (e.g., Drainage, Environmental, Transportation)

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Green Infrastructure Topics

- **Agriculture**
- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**
- **Green Streets**
- **Landscape**
- **Parks**
- **Stormwater**
- **Trails**
- **Urban Forest**
- **Waterways**
- **Air Quality**

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GIRT Work Plan

Task	Deliverable	Assignment	Schedule
Categorize Code and Criteria into green infrastructure topics for further evaluation (e.g., agriculture, urban forest, stormwater)	List of topics with an assigned committee of key department stakeholders	GIRT	Completed
Evaluate the effectiveness of existing and proposed Code and Criteria in protecting and enhancing the City's green infrastructure network, including: • What should be left alone? • What should be revised? • What should be explored further?	Spreadsheet for each topic – Diagnosis	GIRT + Topic Leads	Completed
Explore alternatives and research best practices to address gaps and challenges. Incorporate actions from the Imagine Austin plan and input from LDC revision Listening Sessions.	Report by topic – Benchmarking	GIRT + Topic Leads	FY14
Make recommendations for Code and Criteria in coordination with the revision process outlined for the Land Development Code (Priority Program #8), including: • Diagnosis and Outline • Preliminary Draft Code • Code Adoption	Report by topic - Recommendations Comments on Draft Code	GIRT + Topic Leads	FY15

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Public Lands Management Sub-Team

Mission:

Develop and implement unified, comprehensive management of all City of Austin lands for public access and recreation, connectivity, and integrated environmental sustainability, including carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, and education.

Goals:

- Maximize ecosystem services on lands managed by the City of Austin:
  - Align COA land management policies, plans, procedures, and standards
  - Share resources and expertise to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public lands management
  - Target limited COA resources to achieve multiple objectives (e.g., wildfire fuel mitigation, ecosystem restoration)
  - Improve land management with more consistent and meaningful performance metrics, better data, and application of sound science to support decision-making
  - Discontinue non-sustainable land management practices that damage or diminish ecosystem services

- Reduce risk associated with natural hazards (e.g., wildfire, erosion, flooding) through broad application of various prevention and ecosystem restoration strategies and techniques

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Public Lands Management FY 13 Work Plan

Task	Deliverable	Assignment	Schedule
Assist the Urban Forestry Board and the Urban Forester with the completion of the Comprehensive Urban Forestry Plan.	CUFP as required by City code, which will serve as a strategic policy guide for management of the City's urban forest and associated ecosystems.	Hanson (PARD) + PLMST + ITWIG	FY13 Q4
Create a common Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan template for use by all City departments with land management functions.	IPM template.	Delaney (WPD) + PLMST	FY14 Q1
Develop and implement the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.	Community Wildfire Protection Plan, including recommendations for wildfire fuel modification in the Wildland Urban Interface.	Linardos (AFD) + Conrad (AWU-Wildlands)	FY14 Q1
Compile an overview of City land management functions and activities. Establish a common classification system for lands managed by the City.	1)) Report summarizing land management activities by department as well as resources committed to those activities (e.g., funding and sources, FTEs, contracts, performance measures. 2) Lands classification system to be employed by all City departments with land management functions.	Meyer (WPD) + Real Estate + PARD	1. FY13 Q3 2. FY13 Q4
Develop and implement local amendments to standards of care for trees and vegetation on public lands and assist with inter-departmental implementation of the standards, including an inter-departmental training program.	1. Standards of care as required by City code. ANSI guidelines have been adopted. Local amendments are needed to address Austin-specific issues. 2. Training materials	Hanson (PARD) + PLMST + ITWIG	FY14 Q4
Implement the Invasive Species Management Plan.	1. Implement training program for City personnel and volunteers to conduct assessments and data collection on priority City lands. 2. Develop a database for assessment and other program data. 3. Develop initial prioritization of City lands for treatment of invasive plant species.	Scoggins (WPD) + ISMP Working Group	1. FY13 Q4 2. FY 13 Q4 3. FY 14 Q2
Develop criteria and guidance for land acquisition by the City (e.g., checklist of issues to address).	Guidance document and check-lists for use in evaluating lands for potential acquisition by the City. To be provided to the GIPPIT Open Space Acquisition Sub-Team.	Meyer (WPD) + Real Estate + PARD	FY13 Q4

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