



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director  
Austin Parks and Recreation Department *S. Hensley*

**DATE:** March 10, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Town Lake Metropolitan Park Long-Term Redevelopment Study – Final Report  
with Exhibits

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This memorandum is a follow-up to the March 2, 2015 memorandum to Mayor and City Council regarding the Town Lake Metropolitan Park Long-Term Redevelopment Study conducted by Tur Partners for the Austin Parks Foundation. Tur Partners has since provided the Parks and Recreation Department with the attached final version of the report, including exhibits.

Should you have any questions, please let me know.

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# Austin Parks Foundation

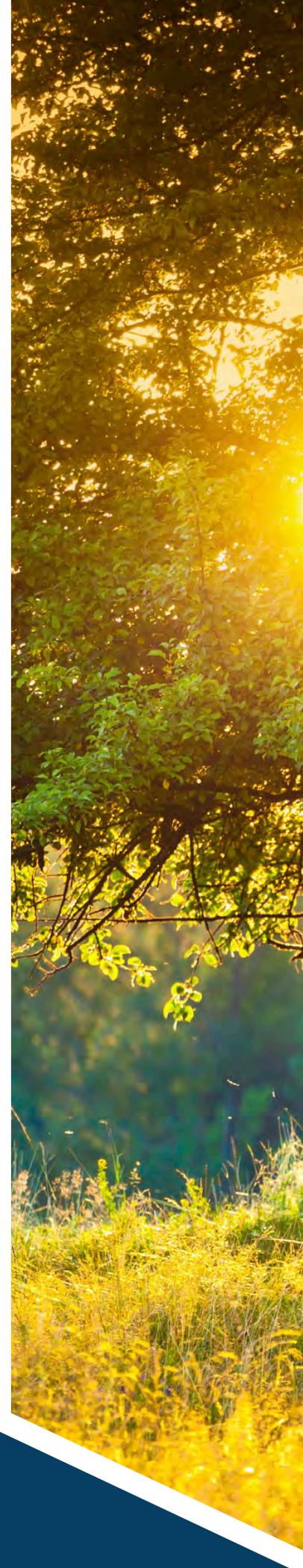
Town Lake Metropolitan Park  
Long-Term Redevelopment Project

FINAL REPORT  
January 2015



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# 1. Project Overview

Over the past 22 months, the Austin Parks Foundation ("APF") and Tur Partners LLC ("Tur"), a global advisory firm, in close connection with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department ("PARD") and the City of Austin, completed a comprehensive analysis of city plans, policies, and initiatives relating to Austin's Public Park System, with a particular focus on long-term redevelopment plans for Town Lake Metropolitan Park (the "Long-Term Project"). The Long-Term Project aimed primarily to create a long-term vision and execution plan for developing Town Lake Metropolitan Park by coordinating among various key constituents and stakeholders. Additionally, the Long-Term Project gathered best practices from leading parks nationwide and incorporated insights from local experts, including architects and engineers, in order to create a suggested road map for the City of Austin in developing Town Lake Metropolitan Park into a best-in-class facility that serves as a parks centerpiece for the city as a whole. This final report serves as a written summary of results of the Long-Term Project, including specific recommendations around design and infrastructure, park finance and management, as well as event policies.



The full scope of work for the Long-Term Project is attached to this report as [Exhibit A](#). The key areas of focus of the Long-Term Project include (i) reviewing, evaluating and, where necessary, updating current plans for Town Lake Metropolitan Park, (ii) identifying key issues and potential solutions for dealing with parking and traffic in the area, (iii) evaluating current event policies and procedures with consideration for the overall impact on Austin, including quality of the parks, experience for Austin's residents, and support for the Austin economy, and (iv) engaging the public, civic organizations, business leaders, and other key stakeholders to ensure project success and the long-term viability of Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

## 2. Project Background

### 2.1. Overview of Town Lake Metropolitan Park and Austin Parks

PARC manages approximately 19,581 acres of parkland, equal to approximately 23.9 acres per thousand persons in the City of Austin. With 18.2 percent of the city's overall land area covered by parkland, Austin ranks substantially above the national average of 9.6 percent.<sup>1</sup> PARC employs 597 full-time employees and approximately 1,000 seasonal employees.

Town Lake Metropolitan Park consists of 54 acres of parkland anchored by the Long Center for the Performing Arts and the Palmer Events Center, including the parks often referred to as Auditorium Shores and Butler Park. In the heart of downtown Austin and overlooking Austin's Lady Bird Lake, Town Lake Metropolitan Park is the city's flagship park and has been the focus of a number of redevelopment efforts since completion of the original master plan in 1999. Various improvements

were made to Town Lake Metropolitan Park during Phases I and II of the 1999 master plan, which included developing the great lawn, Doug Sahm Hill, and the Liz Carpenter Fountain. Construction of the Alliance Children's Garden, which was also planned as part of Phase II, is expected to begin in 2015.

Earlier this year, construction began on the Auditorium Shores Improvements Plan. This initiative, separate from the Long-Term Project, focused on physical improvements to Auditorium Shores that will create a renovated event space and enhanced recreational opportunities, including a new off-leash dog area, realignment of the trail, and irrigation and new turfgrass for the event lawn and remaining landscape and shoreline. Construction is currently under way, with the park expected to reopen in its entirety in 2015.

### A timeline of key events for development of Town Lake Metropolitan Park

#### 1987

Beginning in the 1980s, the Town Lake Alliance began accumulating park dedications throughout the City of Austin. The process culminated in 1987, when the alliance achieved the dedication of 54 acres of public lands south of Riverside Drive adjacent to Auditorium Shores (now Town Lake Metropolitan Park) as well as more than 300 acres of riverfront land.

#### 1998

The Parks and Recreation Board adopted a special-events policy limiting Auditorium Shores to 25 event days per year.

City of Austin voters approved a bond that included funding to construct the current Palmer Events Center and Long Center parking garage and to redevelop the surrounding parkland.

#### 1999

City Council adopted the master plan by EDAW for redevelopment of Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

<sup>1</sup> The Trust for Public Land, 2011 data.



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**2007**

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Phase II construction was completed and the park opened to the public. Riverside Drive, adjacent to Town Lake Park, was re-aligned and reduced to two lanes.

TBG Partners presented a proposal to complete the unfinished Phases III and IV of the 1999 EDAW master plan.

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**2012**

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City Council approved design services provided by TBG Partners for the Auditorium Shores trailhead.

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**2014**

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Construction began on the Auditorium Shores Improvements Plan.

## 2.2. Scope of Project

The Long-Term Project, which is being led by APF and Tur in close connection with PARD and the City of Austin, is a comprehensive analysis of city plans, policies, and initiatives relating to downtown parks, with a particular focus on long-term redevelopment plans for Town Lake Metropolitan Park. The central goal of the project is to create a long-term vision and execution plan for a redeveloped, world-class park. The full scope of the project can be found attached to this report as [Exhibit A](#). The key areas of focus include (i) reviewing, evaluating and, where necessary, updating current plans for Town Lake Metropolitan Park, (ii) identifying key issues and potential solutions for dealing with parking and traffic in the area, (iii) evaluating current event policies and procedures with consideration for the overall impact on Austin, including quality of the parks, experience for Austin's residents, and support for the Austin economy, and (iv) engaging the public, civic organizations, business leaders and other key stakeholders to ensure project success and the long-term viability of Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

The genesis of the Long-Term Project is found in the commitment of a number of key stakeholders, including PARD, APF, and C3 Presents, to achieve a broader vision for development of the parkland into a world-class facility. The Austin City Council has also given direction on the implementation of this project through a series of resolutions, including the following:

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**Res. 20120823-072**

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*August 23, 2012.* City Manager to work with stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impacts from events at Auditorium Shores and Zilker Park and provide comprehensive analysis by March 31, 2013.

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**Res. 20121011-081**

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*October 11, 2012.* City Manager to fully integrate efforts under resolution 20120823-072 to ensure they are addressed in the planning process being led by the Austin Parks Foundation.



### 2.3. Project Team

**Austin Parks Foundation.** APF is a non-profit organization devoted to building public/private partnerships to develop and maintain parks, trails, and open space in City of Austin and Travis County. Since 1992, Austin Parks Foundation has initiated, promoted, and facilitated physical improvements, new programming, and greater community involvement for Austin's 19,000+ acres of parkland. Each year, APF generates millions of dollars in volunteer time, in-kind donations, and financial support for city parks. APF currently has a team of five and is led by Executive Director Colin Wallis, who, prior to joining APF, served as Director of Advancement at the Livestrong Foundation and the 2011–12 Board Chair of the Trail Foundation. APF will soon add an additional dedicated resource to support the Long-Term Project.

**Tur Partners.** Tur Partners LLC collaborates with leaders and innovators to drive growth within global urban markets. Tur, led by its Executive Chairman, Richard M. Daley, former Mayor of Chicago for 22 years, is built upon a strong belief in the importance of cities in the global economy. Tur has brought together a team of professionals with extensive private and public experience in order to help business, municipalities, and government agencies throughout North America develop and grow effectively, efficiently, and sustainably. Tur's lead on the Long-Term Project is its Chief Executive Officer, Lori Healey, who has decades of experience across the public and private sectors, including serving as Principal in Charge of the Development Group at the John Buck Company, Director of the 2012 NATO Host Committee, President of Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid, Chief of Staff for Chicago's mayor, and Commissioner of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development.

**Other Outside Advisors.** In addition to APF and Tur, a number of outside experts and advisors were engaged and/or consulted on a limited basis. Key outside advisors to the Long-Term Project include:

**URS.** URS is a leading provider of engineering, construction, and technical services for public agencies and private-sector companies around the world. URS, out of its Austin office, conducted the Riverside Drive traffic analysis, which is attached in its entirety as [Exhibit B](#).

**TBG.** TBG is a landscape architecture firm specializing in community development, corporate campuses, civic spaces, hotels, hospitals, and educational facilities. TBG's Austin office has been deeply involved in various stages of Town Lake Metropolitan Park's development and provided APF and Tur with institutional background. TBG also assisted with the recommendations around design and infrastructure, including the illustration attached as [Exhibit C](#).

**bKL.** bKL is an internationally recognized design firm located in Chicago that brings an identifiable aesthetic to diverse building projects across a global market. bKL assisted with the recommendations around design and infrastructure, including the diagrams attached as [Exhibit D](#).

### 2.4. Prior Studies

Both the City of Austin and supporting organizations have generated a number of comprehensive studies that have useful recommendations and important implications for the Long-Term Project. APF and Tur have reviewed and analyzed those studies. Key studies include:

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#### **Austin Town Lake Metropolitan Park Master Plan (EDAW July 1999)**

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The 1999 EDAW Master Plan is the original Town Lake Metropolitan Park master plan adopted by the city council in 1999. Key focuses of the plan were (i) the ability to support cultural events in the park and

adjacent event centers, (ii) aesthetics of park space that highlight Austin and integrate with neighborhoods, (iii) ergonomics of the park that allow many uses for Austin residents, (iv) environmental sensitivity, and (v) security. Phases I and II of the project, completed between 1999 and 2007 (other than the Alliance Children's Garden), focused on the parkland south of Riverside Drive, generally referred to as Butler Park. A number of improvements the plan outlined for north of Riverside Drive were expected to be completed in connection with the Auditorium Shores Improvements Plan.

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#### **Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan (ROMA Austin January 2010)**

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The Downtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan was never formally adopted by City Council but was endorsed by the PARD Board. The plan articulated a community-supported vision for Austin's downtown parks and open-space system that guides public and private investment and management of individual parks and the system as a whole. The plan encouraged a number of policy and procedural changes, including allowing long-term concessions, increasing PARD's budget, making capital improvements, revising the parkland-dedication ordinance, expanding revenue sources, and enhancing partnerships with businesses and local organizations.

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#### **2011–2016 Long Range Plan for Land, Facilities and Programs (PARD November 2010)**

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2011-2016 Long Range Plan was developed by PARD as a guide for future growth and development of Austin's parks and recreation system and updated the prior 1998 long range plan. The plan includes various park standards, best management practices, national standards, and PARD standards.

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#### **Urban Parks Workgroup (Volunteer Workgroup October 2011)**

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A specially assembled workgroup of volunteers from the Austin community presented a report in 2011 to City Council with recommendations for acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks within the Austin neighborhood. The report focused on identifying where neighborhood parks are most needed and demonstrating how to integrate best practices from other cities to achieve those development goals.

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#### **Downtown Austin Plan (City of Austin/McCann-Adams Studio December 2011)**

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The Downtown Austin Plan, which was adopted by City Council, is a development plan to guide a shared vision for downtown Austin that reinforces the city's fundamental goals of economic and environmental sustainability, affordability, livability, and diversity. The DAP was the product of a three-year dialogue with the general public and downtown community and stakeholders. The plan addressed the importance of parks, including the importance of initiating a new generation of signature downtown parks. The study also emphasized the importance of investing in downtown infrastructure and revising the land-development ordinances to encourage vibrant development.

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#### **Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (City of Austin/Wallace Roberts & Todd June 2012)**

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The Imagine Austin Plan, which was adopted by City Council, is a comprehensive umbrella plan to guide other master plans and small area plans. Completion of the plan involved an in-depth survey of the public with a large number of stakeholder meetings and interviews. The study provided a number of best practices relating to development of land and park spaces, including promoting coordinated planning efforts and developing community plans and regulations that create strong neighborhoods, integrate sustainable infrastructure, communicate with key constituents, and preserve historic landmarks and character. The plan also highlighted the need to increase park spaces and the opportunity for community activities within park spaces and to protect natural resources and habitats.



## 3. Study/Analysis Completed to Date

### 3.1. Review of Existing Plans and Policies

To inform the analysis and recommendations involved in the Long-Term Project, Tur and ARF spent considerable time reviewing existing plans and policies relating to Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Some of the relevant plans and policies that were reviewed in connection with the Long-Term Project were: (i) prior master plans and Austin studies, including those described in Section 2.4 above, (ii) prior budget and financial data relating to the parks, (iii) existing City of Austin policies and regulations relating to the parks and events within the parks, including the proposed special-events ordinance, and (iv) plans related to new developments and park improvements in the greater downtown area.

### 3.2. Planning and Feedback Meetings with Key City Department Leaders

Over the course of the Long-Term Project, Tur and APF held a number of planning and feedback meetings with key city department leaders, including the departments of Transportation, Planning & Development, and Sustainability and the Austin Police Department. The focus of these planning meetings was to (i) develop a background of existing plans and policies around Austin's downtown park spaces and events, (ii) identify key issues and challenges facing development and operation of park spaces, (iii) generate ideas and recommendations for achieving the Long-Term Project's goals, and (iv) review the recommendations of the Long-Term Project and discuss potential implementation. These meetings also included a visit by a delegation from Austin on January 14 and 15, 2013, to downtown Chicago parks and discussions with Chicago government and business leaders who were instrumental in the development of Chicago's flagship parks.

### 3.3. Discussions with Neighborhood Leaders and Other Key Stakeholders

Tur and APF led numerous discussions with stakeholders throughout Austin, including neighborhood leaders, community organizations, business leaders, and other key representatives of Austin's communities. The focus of these meetings was (i) identifying key issues and concerns affecting stakeholders and their constituents, (ii) discussing potential recommendations on park design and city policies reflecting these issues and concerns, and (iii) moving toward a unified long-term vision for Town Lake Metropolitan Park that has support throughout Austin and a strong base for moving recommendations forward. Tur and APF also held a number of "visioning sessions" whereby members and stakeholders throughout the community were invited to discuss the Long-Term Project. Among them:

1. A session on September 12, 2013, at the Long Center featuring a panel discussion by former mayors Richard M. Daley (Chicago), Manny Diaz (Miami), and Will Wynn (Austin) on a model for designing parks for the future
2. A session on November 9, 2013, at the Boyd Vance Theater at the Carver Museum and Cultural Center
3. A session on January 8, 2014, at the Elks Lodge discussing, among other items, the traffic study on Riverside Drive
4. A session on May 6, 2014, at Fiesta Gardens discussing several immediately actionable recommendations provided to Austin City Council by Tur and ARF earlier this year
5. A session on July 28, 2014, at the Palmer Events Center discussing preliminary recommendations around long-term infrastructure and design
6. A session on August 20, 2014, at the Palmer Events Center discussing park management and finances
7. A discussion on October 27, 2014, at Fiesta Gardens discussing the final recommendations



### 3.4. Review of National Best Practices

Tur explored and reviewed national best practices on park development, maintenance, finance, and operations to inform the recommendations made as part of the Long-Term Project. Various parks are referenced within this final report, reflecting the importance of pulling experiences and innovation from leading parks around the country to determine an effective road map for Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

### 3.5. Engagement of Subcontractors and Other Experts

Tur engaged a number of subject-matter experts to support the Long-Term Project and provide insight on several of the specific recommendations therein. Subcontractors included URS (focused on the traffic study), TBG (focused on the prior history of Town Lake Metropolitan Park and design), and bKL (focused on design and infrastructure). In addition to subcontractors, Tur consulted on an informal basis with numerous professionals across the country who have expertise in design, finance, and management of leading park spaces.

### 3.6. Prior Reports Submitted to Council

1. The Preliminary Findings Report and Status Update (May 8, 2013): This document introduced the scope and background of the Long-Term Project and introduced key issues to be addressed in this final report.
2. The Immediately Actionable Recommendations (July 28, 2014): This document provided a number of policies that Tur recommended the City of Austin implement on a near-term horizon to improve visitors' experience in and around the park. This included recommendations for a dedicated traffic management division, special event-day parking permit zones, and holding the number of major event days at 25 days, among others. A full list of these recommendations is attached as [Exhibit E](#).



## 4. Recommendations

In the world of downtown parks, Town Lake Metropolitan Park boasts a number of clear advantages: an unbeatable, cinematic location, enviable trail and greenway connectivity, landmark venues, and an enthusiastic user base. Rather than alter that character, these recommendations seek to capitalize on the park's strengths, unify them, and coordinate them with plans for surrounding areas to create an improved public amenity that is sustainable for years to come.

Austin's growth and popularity present particular challenges that a long-range plan must address. Traffic, parking, noise, competing uses, demand for new types of facilities and programming, and appropriate financing and management structures all must be considered. At the same time, growth and popularity generate tremendous energy and open the door to new possibilities for Town Lake Metropolitan Park and the people who visit. The Long-Term Project responds to those challenges and explores opportunities to fashion a new and expanded green space that is uniquely Austin.

### 4.1. Design and Infrastructure

An effective long-term vision for Town Lake Metropolitan Park should reinforce local character, enhance operational flexibility of the park, and moderate the impact that some park activities have on surrounding neighborhoods.

#### 4.1.1. Transportation and Parking: Existing Conditions

##### 4.1.1.1. Traffic Flow and Riverside Drive

**The Long-Term Project analyzed traffic conditions in and around Town Lake Metropolitan Park and the effect of closing Riverside Drive. Day-to-day traffic congestion is frequently unacceptable and getting worse.**

As part of the Long-Term Project, APF and Tur contracted the global engineering firm URS to complete a new traffic study (attached here as [Exhibit B](#)). The purpose of the new study was to examine the potential impact of closing Riverside Drive between Lamar Boulevard and South 1st Street and to reconcile differing results from three previous traffic studies of the area dating to the 1999 master plan, and ultimately, to determine whether the permanent closure of Riverside Drive is both feasible and desirable in light of its current role in the broader traffic network of day-to-day commuting patterns.

It should further be noted that updated traffic counts were taken during a one-week period during which there were no major events in Town Lake Metropolitan Park. This was by design. Based

on ongoing feedback from community members regarding major events in Town Lake Metropolitan Park (during most of which Riverside Drive is completely closed), it is clear that traffic in the region is a major concern and needs to be mitigated. This is a central assumption of the Long-Term Project. The traffic study, however, is focused on the issue of the current closure of Riverside Drive.

Under existing, normal conditions, URS found that several corridors and intersections perform unacceptably during peak periods, at an "E" or "F" level of service on an A-F scale:

- During the morning peak, two of five corridors studied rated an "E" or "F" in both directions of travel. The remaining three rated an "E" or "F" in one direction.
- During the afternoon peak, four of five corridors rated an "E" or "F" in both directions. The fifth rated an "E" in one direction.
- During the morning peak, two of eleven intersections rated an "E." The remainder performed acceptably, though four rated a "D."
- During the afternoon peak, two of eleven intersections rated an "F." The remainder performed acceptably, though three rated a "D."

Because these corridors and intersections are already over capacity and are growing more congested, major improvements would be necessary to reduce traffic congestion to an acceptable level.

#### 4.1.1.2. Parking

**Typically there is not a parking shortage in the park, but design flaws do contribute to congestion during peak periods. Nearby parking facilities can help alleviate that congestion in some cases.**

Parking is the foremost challenge of many downtown parks. This is a special concern in Town Lake Metropolitan Park with its hosting of major events and the corresponding impact for nearby residents and neighborhood streets. As with other park infrastructure, parking solutions should be flexible enough to accommodate the largest expected crowds while minimizing unused capacity. Wherever possible, new garage and lot spaces should pay their own way through parking fees or associated concessions.

On non-event days, there is little evidence of a genuine parking shortage. Existing parking within the park provides about 1,500 spaces:

- Long Center parking garage: 1,197 spaces (\$7 events; usually \$10 special events; otherwise free)
- Riverside Drive street parking: 80 spaces
- Dougherty Arts Center: 63 spaces (plus 25 staff)
- Auditorium Shores trailhead: 96 spaces
- Riverside Drive parking lots: 42 spaces

For certain major events outside of business hours, drivers have outside options nearby:

- 1 Texas Center: 915 spaces (weekends and after 6 p.m. weekdays; \$7 events; usually \$10 special events)
- Austin American-Statesman north/west parking lot (305 S. Congress): 167 spaces
- Austin Energy: 360 spaces (these are not generally publicly available, but staff and performers use them, freeing up on-site spaces)

Event operators could explore parking options at several other nearby garages:

- Hyatt Regency garage: 600 private spaces (up to 4 hours \$6; 4–7 hours \$13; more than 7 hours \$19)
- Embassy Suites: 450 spaces (\$20 overnight; guests only)

- Green Water Treatment Plant: 1,200 event spaces (not yet open)
- Seaholm Plaza: 550 spaces (not yet open)
- New Central Library: 200 spaces (not yet open)

#### 4.1.2. Transportation and Parking: Recommendations

##### 4.1.2.1. Traffic Flow and Riverside Drive

**Move Riverside Drive below grade, at a cost of \$31 million in 2014 dollars, to keep the road open through the park, connect to underground parking, and improve traffic safety and flow.**

The URS study found that, across the area, closing Riverside Drive between Lamar Boulevard and South 1st Street would have the following impacts:

- The closing would degrade traffic flow from acceptable to unacceptable levels at three additional intersections over existing conditions.
- Corridors would experience a slight downgrade in conditions. One corridor in one direction would shift from "D" to "E" at morning peak, and one corridor in one direction would shift from "E" to "F" at afternoon peak. Others would remain the same.
- The traffic report also concludes that anticipated increases to traffic due to projected population growth will exacerbate traffic problems and potential network failures.

One strategy could reduce congestion in the short term: converting Riverside Drive's left-turn lanes onto Barton Springs Road into an additional northbound through lane, at a cost of approximately \$3 million.<sup>2</sup> But with traffic volumes projected to rise 1 percent per year over the next 25 years, increased congestion would quickly erode gains made by reconfiguring the Riverside Drive/Barton Springs intersection.<sup>3</sup> These streets would eventually require more costly or sophisticated

<sup>2</sup> URS traffic study, page 17 ("Option B").

<sup>3</sup> URS traffic study, page 21.



measures to manage the higher traffic flows. The URS traffic study did not consider the impact of pedestrian or bicycle traffic, future development around the park, or future transit projects on road congestion.

Based on URS's traffic study, closing Riverside Drive would be undesirable in light of the cumulative impact.

In the long term, one innovative and effective option is to move Riverside Drive below grade and add three broad pedestrian bridges above it for seamless connectivity between the Venue Zone (the area south of Riverside Drive) and Auditorium Shores at a cost of approximately \$31 million (in 2014 dollars). The project would not affect Riverside Drive's existing traffic volume but, paired with a new underground garage with access via Riverside Drive, it would improve ingress and egress and separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic, benefiting both traffic flow and safety, particularly during events and other high-traffic periods.

#### 4.1.2.2. Parking

##### **Construct a 1,200-space underground parking garage serving the Long Center and Palmer Events Center, and rely on coordinated off-site parking capacity for special events.**

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#### Underground Garage

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Underground parking has become increasingly popular for urban parks because it preserves parkland, increases usable space (especially important in small-footprint downtown parks), and improves optics for visitors, nearby residents, and workers. Other successful downtown parks with underground parking include Post Office Square in Boston, Massachusetts, Millennium Park in Chicago, Illinois, Washington Park in Cincinnati, Ohio, Columbus Commons in Columbus, Ohio, Simon and Helen Director Park in Portland, Oregon, and Ellis Square in Savannah, Georgia. In August 2014, Dallas asked for proposals to turn a downtown surface lot into a 3½-acre park, Pacific Plaza, with an underground garage.

Based on the above and on other considerations, it is recommended that a garage be constructed north of the Palmer Events Center and south of Riverside Drive. Doing so would separate pedestrians from drivers entering and exiting the park and eliminate the awkward ingress and egress that the existing garage's ramps entail. A new garage would have the additional benefit of allowing for the design of a reconfigured underground entry directly into the Long Center and Palmer Center, reducing the time patrons spend walking between their cars and the performance spaces. A 1,200-space underground garage would cost approximately \$45 million in 2014 dollars. (Please see [Exhibits C and D](#) for an illustration and diagrams of this proposed design.)

Once maturity of bonds on the existing Long Center parking garage allow for it, it is recommended that the garage be demolished. The Long Center would be able to reconfigure and screen its existing service facilities and return the southeast corner of the park to green space, adding approximately 3.5 acres.<sup>4</sup> This parcel could also eventually be used for a new building that better complements the park's aesthetics and design. Any new building in this space should emphasize public use and be consistent with the overall cultural vision for the park. One ideal use might be for a "jewel box" performance space, provided that programming needs at the time justify it. Additional uses could be many: for example, a museum or even an incubator or exhibition for music/art technology. Additionally, if traffic demand at the time of construction supports it, this lot could accommodate more underground parking. Prior to designing any new facility on this land, the City of Austin should re-engage stakeholders for input on optimal use.

Note that preliminary examination of this section of the park for future underground parking is subject to the city's review of the existing flood plain and future mitigation possibilities. A new underground garage should also include state-of-the-art rain-collection and flood-mitigation technologies.

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<sup>4</sup> Satellite data.



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## Dougherty Arts Center Parking

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The Dougherty Arts Center sits on landfill, and PARD has consultants studying the site's suitability for future development. If a new building or parking structure on the DAC site is not possible, the site could function as a surface lot for overflow parking in the mid-term and eventually be returned to green space if the land supports such use.

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## Off-Site Coordination

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Major events in Town Lake Metropolitan Park rely on outside parking secured by event operators. There are at least 4,400 off-street spaces within a half-mile of Town Lake Metropolitan Park that are potentially available depending on an event's schedule. In the past, event producers have arranged for shuttles and off-site spaces ad hoc, sometimes resulting in unreliable service and confusion for regular patrons about where they should park. After-hours parkers already have the option of the One Texas Center garage's 915 spaces and, in the case of staff and performers, Austin Energy's 360 spaces.

After assessing maximum demand for major events beyond these parking resources, the city should establish a set of best practices, including guidelines to help event organizers coordinate additional parking with nearby private operators, including hotels, garages, and surface lot owners. Having the city, rather than individual event producers do this would allow it to uniformly guide and monitor the quality of the parking and shuttle services provided, while vendors would benefit from a more organized and open flow of information.

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### 4.1.3. Additional Traffic and Parking Strategies

#### 4.1.3.1. Public Transit

**Great downtown parks usually feature great transit connectivity: prominently consider accessibility to Town Lake Metropolitan Park in planning future rail development.**

The best alternative to expanded parking is excellent transit connectivity. Although voters did not approve bonds to extend Austin's urban rail network in 2014, a proximate and well-designed rail link would substantially support visitation at Town Lake Metropolitan Park, relieve nearby road congestion, and mitigate future parking needs in and around the park. Future rail proposals should integrate the park in those plans. Even without a station adjacent to the park, rail transit in the area would at a minimum enable greater density along the South Central Waterfront and indirectly benefit park visitation.

At present, several bus routes serve Town Lake Metropolitan Park, including the MetroRapid 801, which began service in early 2014, and the MetroRapid 803, which began service in summer 2014. The park has the added advantage of the Butler Hike & Bike Trail connecting on its north and east sides. The launch of Austin's B-cycle bike share program, with four stations in or near Town Lake Metropolitan Park, represents significant progress and further enhances the trail's utility.

Austin has found itself addressing the park-transit question in the reverse order of many other cities, which already had transit infrastructure and reclaimed underused or unused land nearby as parks: for example, Citygarden in St. Louis, Civic Space Park in Phoenix, Hinge Park in Vancouver (part of the Olympic Village site), and the Yards Park in Washington DC. Investing in more urban rail in Austin would introduce the opportunity to better serve the growing neighborhoods around Town Lake Metropolitan Park, especially important because rail has the greatest capacity to serve the crowds that attend major park events. PARD should continue to coordinate the Long-Term Project for Town Lake Metropolitan Park with Project Connect's rail initiatives.

Other cities have connected public transit, or are working to develop or expand public transit to existing parks:

- Denver's ambitious transit-expansion program, called FasTracks, has 122 miles of new rail lines and 18 miles of bus rapid transit completed, under way, or planned.<sup>5</sup> Three new rail lines totaling 51 miles and an 18-mile BRT line will open in 2016.<sup>6</sup> Its West Rail Line opened in 2013 and capitalized on Denver's rejuvenated riverfront parks corridor along the South Platte River, where outdoor enthusiasts use the designated kayak run. The corridor is less than

<sup>5</sup> RTD FasTracks 2014 Fact Sheet, [www.rtd-fastracks.com/main\\_26](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_26).

<sup>6</sup> [www.rtd-denver.com/iamfastracks.shtml](http://www.rtd-denver.com/iamfastracks.shtml).



a quarter mile from the renovated Union Station and a few blocks from Central Line and West Line stations. Primary funding comes from a .4-cent sales tax in the eight-county metro area, approved by voters in 2004.<sup>7</sup>

- Cincinnati is developing a streetcar line, expected to open in 2016, that will cost \$148 million in its initial phase and run between downtown and the University of Cincinnati in a 3.6-mile loop.<sup>8</sup> Upon leaving downtown, the line cuts four blocks west to flank the east and west sides of newly redeveloped Washington Park. The City of Cincinnati is contributing about \$100 million to the project, one-third paid for through a property-tax increase, 10 percent through TIF, and 25 percent through sale of a city-owned regional airport.<sup>9</sup>
- The City of Santa Monica opened award-winning Tongva Park and Ken Geyser Square, former downtown parking lots, in 2013. California's Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority ("Expo"), a state entity, is constructing a light rail line from Los Angeles to downtown Santa Monica that will end one block from the park. Phase 1, between LA and Culver City, opened in 2012. Phase 2 will cost \$1.5 billion and extend the line 7 miles from Culver City to Santa Monica.<sup>10</sup> Most Phase 2 funding comes from a half-cent Los Angeles County sales tax approved in 2008.<sup>11</sup> It is set to open in 2015.

Rail affords greater passenger capacity to better accommodate spikes in visitation, is not subject to deteriorating traffic conditions around Town Lake Metropolitan Park, and likewise will not contribute to that deterioration. Rail also opens the possibility of offering dog-friendly cars on trains. (Dogs are not allowed on MetroRapid.) In the meantime, MetroRapid and bus service provide vital connections. Bus service between Town Lake Metropolitan Park and the planned Central Corridor line along Riverside Drive will make transit between the park and rail easy, and this service should be ramped up during major events. Other major cities routinely add extra buses along such routes for events.

#### 4.1.3.2. Event-Day Traffic Control

##### **Create a dedicated, non-sworn traffic-management division on event days (see Section 4.4.2.).**

Through observations of major events and discussion with stakeholders, it is clear that traffic problems during events are greatly exacerbated by ingress to and egress from the Long Center garage and by crowd control in and around the park. Additional traffic and parking improvements can be achieved through more robust traffic management and a dedicated traffic-management division, detailed in Section 4.4.2., Traffic Control.

#### 4.1.3.3. Residential Permits

##### **Implement event-day resident-only permitted parking zones to buffer neighborhoods from park-related traffic congestion.**

A variety of stakeholders, in particular neighborhood organizations, cite parking as a major issue with events at Town Lake Metropolitan Park. During events, specifically those events that fall within the 25-day event limit, neighborhood residents have experienced a severe problem with event attendees parking in the surrounding neighborhoods. The result is (i) residents have difficulty parking in their own neighborhoods, (ii) there is increased traffic on residential streets, and (iii) in some instances there is property damage resulting from event attendees within the neighborhoods. Many of the neighborhoods have implemented road blocks during events that allow only residents to pass, the cost of which is typically passed along to event organizers. Many neighborhood residents, however, have found this approach very inconvenient and at times still ineffective.

We recommend instituting a resident-only permit-parking zone in the areas immediately to the south and west of Town Lake Metropolitan Park that applies only to the 25 days scheduled for major events at Auditorium Shores. On those days, which will be publicly posted on the City of Austin's website, only residents possessing permits issued by the city for that zone will be permitted to park on the streets. Organizers of these events should also be required to post notices on their event websites that the no-parking zones are in effect. A policy for a limited number of guest permits can also be

<sup>7</sup> "Downtown Denver Circulator History and Funding," RTD FasTracks, Jan. 2013, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cost: [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/streetcar-funding/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/streetcar-funding/); route length: [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/designroute/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/designroute/).

<sup>9</sup> [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/streetcar-funding/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/streetcar-funding/).

<sup>10</sup> [www.buildexpo.org/about-expo/project-facts/](http://www.buildexpo.org/about-expo/project-facts/).

<sup>11</sup> [www.metro.net/news/media-kits/expo-media](http://www.metro.net/news/media-kits/expo-media).

instituted. All violators will be ticketed. We also recommend substantially increasing the magnitude of the associated fine. The current fine for parking in a residential zone is \$40, or \$25 if paid early, which is not much of a deterrent when compared with prevailing parking rates. We recommend a fine of \$100 or greater, significant enough to alter behavior. These event-specific permitted parking zones will be distinct from the city's current Residential Permitted Parking zones, but implementation of the policy should be reflective of and coordinate with the existing zones. These zones could also be extended and applied to other areas that incur large traffic related to major events, if applicable.

#### 4.1.3.4. Wayfinding

**Review current communications around parking availability and develop a multi-pronged strategy for alerting visitors to nearby parking options.**

Beyond capacity, the challenge remains to alert drivers to the location and price of particular spaces. Often the issue is not so much the availability of parking but perception of availability. Effective wayfinding has the peripheral benefit of reducing traffic congestion because, at any given time, 10 to 30 percent of drivers in congested downtowns are looking for parking (depending on the difference between on-street and off-street parking costs). Wayfinding could include on-street signage, online parking information and guidance, printed maps, and mobile applications.

- *On-street signage:* Review frequency and clarity of on-street signage on roads approaching partner lots and garages with an emphasis on giving drivers time to read them and react. Where appropriate, temporary signs and banners could call attention to new or recently changed parking options.
- *Online information:* Aside from listing location and cost, the Town Lake Metropolitan Park/Auditorium Shores website can provide value by allowing users to purchase parking in advance and to check day-of space availability at specific garages. The City of Austin has used the parking-information aggregator and mobile app provider ParkMe since 2012 to give users real-time pricing and occupancy data about downtown street parking and garages, but the service does not extend south of the river. Parkers can buy garage spots in Town Lake Metropolitan Park for certain event dates.

- *Printed maps:* The most effective parking-awareness campaigns reach drivers through multiple channels. Offering printed maps at the Long Center, Palmer Events Center, and elsewhere in Town Lake Metropolitan Park with locations, prices, and capacities for other nearby garages and lots would spread the word on the variety of options available.

#### 4.1.3.5. On-Site Garage Space

**Consider reserving some portion of the Long Center parking garage for carpool drivers during high-attendance events.**

Depending on the effectiveness of the city's off-site parking guidelines, Town Lake Metropolitan Park could take a broader look at its overall policy. For example, the park could stretch on-site capacity by restricting garage parking (or some percentage of garage parking) to multiple-occupant vehicles on event days, thereby reducing the overall number of vehicles. Some San Francisco garages offer a carpool rate to monthly parkers, and Seattle uses on-street carpool-only zones managed by permit. These privileges are enforced variously by the application process, random checks, and citizen reporting. Numerous universities also use carpool-permit systems for garage spaces, including the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Florida. Due to the one-time nature of special-events parking in Town Lake Metropolitan Park, carpool restrictions likely would necessitate an attendant on site to verify vehicles' carpool status upon entry.

#### 4.1.3.6. Better Bike and Non-Motorized Transportation Facilities

**Develop a one-stop-shop facility for active visitors and non-motorists with restrooms, showers, storage, and bicycle rentals and lockers. Improve routing, design, and lighting of bicycle paths.**

Parks can induce more visitors to take alternative transit by offering facilities and conveniences that non-motorists need. Storage, showers, and restrooms are three key amenities. Chicago's Millennium Park has a major bicycle center, the McDonald's Cycle Center, that offers showers and storage lockers, bicycle lockers, rentals, and repairs, cyclist-education programs, and retail items. The center is also a hub for bicycle and Segway tours as well as bicycle- and Segway-sharing programs.



Facilities need not be so expansive to start. Even a basic gear check could be self-funding and require little up-front investment. New York City's 14th Street Park, for example, offers a bag-check service during dance classes for a small fee.

Adding general-use restrooms either here or in a new Dougherty Arts Center facility would add substantial utility for all visitors. Improving the design of bike lanes would also make cycling more attractive. Renovated lanes would be wider, minimize conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians, and add new and better lighting. A revamped bike route could parallel Riverside Drive at park grade and allow emergency vehicles access to portions of the park otherwise unreachable by road.

#### 4.1.4. Design Priorities

**An updated design should unify the park's existing assets and consider several priorities: the question of a new Dougherty Arts Center, what to do with existing DAC land, how to integrate the Butler Park Pitch & Putt into future design plans, creating a natural amphitheater at Auditorium Shores, and attenuating sound outside the park.**

The vision for Town Lake Metropolitan Park is primarily that of a unified cultural campus. It is important to design a park that complements existing anchors, such as the Long Center, Palmer Events Center, Dougherty Arts Center, and the new dog park. Ultimately, the design priority should be open space with best-in-class public amenities. Additionally, the overall design and vision should emphasize human interaction and activation of the entire park.

##### 4.1.4.1. Dougherty Arts Center

**Design and build a new, state-of-the-art DAC between the Long Center and the Palmer Events Center with expanded, shared programming space, back-of-house facilities for the Long Center and Palmer Center, and revenue-generating event space.**

The Dougherty Arts Center ("DAC") is currently an important component of Town Lake Metropolitan Park. It houses many important arts and other activities for both children and adults, and community feedback indicates they hold great value for the public and ought to be preserved. The building that currently houses the DAC is aging,

however, and in the near to mid-term will need to be replaced. The DAC's current site was formerly a landfill, raising questions of remediation and stability. Discussions with frequenters of the DAC as well as residents of the neighborhood reveal unified support for keeping the DAC within the Town Lake Metropolitan Park footprint.

One innovative approach to keeping the DAC within Town Lake Metropolitan Park is to design and build a new, state-of-the-art DAC facility in the open space located between the Long Center and Palmer Events Center. This site was originally designated for an additional building, and from a planning perspective is well situated for a new arts facility. There are many advantages to this approach. Foremost, the building can be better utilized by users of the Long Center during low-utilization hours of the day. The Long Center has expressed a need for additional practice space. There is also an opportunity to include a flagship exhibit space that can be used by either the DAC or coordinated with the Long Center and/or Palmer Center to host banquets, weddings, receptions, and other special events.

In addition, the basement level for this proposed DAC could house a kitchen and back-of-house facility for streamlined catering at the Palmer Center and expanded menu options at the Long Center, which would also improve revenues. (The Long Center currently directs patrons to El Alma, El Arroyo, Chez Zee, and Zax for dining.) Town Lake Metropolitan Park has long lacked sufficient food concessions, unusual for a park of its size and attendance, though the park does feature occasional service from several local food trucks, notably on "Trailer Food Tuesdays," the last Tuesday of each month April to October.

It is understood that discussions between the Long Center, the Palmer Center, and PARD are currently in early stages around such a facility. There are many important considerations that must be weighed in ultimately determining whether or not such a facility would be both feasible and optimal. One such consideration is current restrictions on the \$6 million earmarked for the new DAC building as part of the City's prior bond issue. Terms of the bonds restrict use of those funds outside of the Town Lake Metropolitan Park Venue Zone, which is south of Riverside Drive. From a design and functionality perspective, however, this approach is desirable, and constituents should be urged to further examine its practicality.



#### 4.1.4.2. Use of Current DAC Land

**Pending conclusion of the DAC site analysis, replace the current DAC building with a signature park restaurant, expanded, complementary concessions, and supplemental parking. Explore use as a surface parking lot in the near term.**

In the event the DAC is relocated, there is a question of what to do with the current facility's land. PARD is working with consultants to conduct a study of this land and determine what types of uses it will permit. There are complex questions surrounding suitable use for the land in light of the flood plain and the fact that the DAC currently sits on landfill. Any final plans or designs will need to take the results of that study into consideration.

There could, however, be an opportunity to develop a new building on that land, which could provide both exciting concessions for visitors to Town Lake Metropolitan Park and additional above-ground parking. The exact design of such a building would ultimately be led by a separate design process. The recommended design would accommodate limited concessions on the ground floor (e.g., bike rental, food stands), a few floors of above-ground parking, and potentially a restaurant/bar on the top level overlooking the park.

[Exhibit D](#) contains detailed diagrams depicting this proposed concept. Preliminary estimates suggest it would cost \$22 million (in 2014 dollars) to develop such a building, assuming the current condition of the land is suitable.

#### 4.1.4.3. Butler Park Pitch and Putt

**Include the Butler Park Pitch and Putt in future discussions of park assets and solicit broad community input for its highest and best use.**

As of October 2014, the city has a renegotiated contract with the operators of the Pitch and Putt that mandates landscaping improvements and ADA accessibility. The five-year contract will also return more operating revenues to the city. The Pitch and Putt spans a very large portion of the broader footprint of Town Lake Metropolitan Park, and long-term investment in the land and maintenance of the land should remain a high priority.

It remains to be seen, however, what use would best serve the park and Austin residents in the long term. As part of the Long-Term Project, numerous

discussions were held with stakeholders regarding current perceptions on the Pitch and Putt and views on long-term uses for the space. Feedback on this issue was mixed. There is a notable contingent that emphasizes the historical importance of the facility. Some also emphasize the importance of preserving public golf facilities within city limits. Others, however, look at the amenity as underutilized and a potentially valuable space upon which to provide additional public amenities.

It is recommended that PARD continue to monitor use of the Pitch and Putt and investment into its facilities by the operators. Over the long-term, it will be critical to view use of the space in relation to overall community priorities. If the city ever determines that it wants to explore additional uses for that land, it is encouraged to seek broad community and stakeholder feedback to assess best use. Ultimately, any designs for that space should recognize that the land is an important part of Town Lake Metropolitan Park and should be preserved as a public amenity. If other operators are considered for any proposed use of the land, selection of such operators should be done by a competitive process.

In addition, Bouldin Creek, a natural divider between the Pitch and Putt and the main portion of Town Lake Metropolitan Park, is a key riparian corridor, and improvements to the creek should be included in final designs.

#### 4.1.4.4. Auditorium Shores

**Construct an unobtrusive, natural amphitheater to accommodate smaller, community-oriented gatherings and performances.**

Austin has developed an international reputation as a destination for music, festivals, and world-class events, and Auditorium Shores, home to the venue stage at Town Lake Metropolitan Park, is one of the city's most sought-after venues. It should be capable of handling not only large crowds and renowned headliners but also smaller, community-focused events. Town Lake Metropolitan Park's overall design and infrastructure should reflect both its current and anticipated event use and include design considerations that allow events to operate safely and efficiently.

One attractive way to do this is to design a natural amphitheater that blends into the landscape. Such a setup would enhance operational flexibility; when there were no events scheduled—the far majority



of days—the amphitheater would be unobtrusive open space available for a variety of recreation. The elevation change from north to south over a depressed Riverside Drive would expand the audience area across the drive, taking advantage of the broad pedestrian bridges, and allow the integration of such a natural setting. The venue could incorporate a small, fixed stage if needed, but if so, it should be inconspicuous for both day-to-day activities and larger event setups.

Residents have stressed the importance of community-oriented, family-friendly programming, and the amphitheater could offer great value in this area. Any new performance infrastructure should emphasize public use for parkgoers rather than convenience for event organizers. Flexible venues and amphitheaters have become common in a number of urban parks. Duluth's Bayfront Festival Park features an outstanding natural amphitheater overlooking Lake Superior. In Nashville, the Woods at Fontanel amphitheater hosts a range of events without fixed seating.

As the park develops and grows a predictable audience base and schedule of events, the city could consider incorporating additional landscaped terraces to improve visibility and better accommodate lawn chairs and other portable seating options used by patrons of the park. If there were a need, a park concession could rent these seats.

#### 4.1.4.5. Sound Attenuation

##### **Proactively manage sound dynamics within the park to curb noise bleed into surrounding neighborhoods.**

For the neighborhoods surrounding Town Lake Metropolitan Park, noise bleed from the park is a key concern, particularly within areas directly south of Auditorium Shores and downtown directly across Lady Bird Lake. Although there are certain influences on sound propagation that cannot fully be controlled, such as wind direction, a number of best practices incorporated into Town Lake Metropolitan Park's design could help mitigate disruption of its neighbors. Namely:

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#### **Direction of the stage**

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Orienting the stage in the park's northeast corner toward the southwest would provide the longest distance for sound to travel before leaving the park, as well as the most opportunities to mitigate it physically.

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#### **Underground parking garage**

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A new underground parking garage should be designed in a manner that minimizes sound bleed and controls vibration.

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#### **Placement of hills**

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Strategically placed hills and berms at the perimeter of the amphitheater would limit the amount of sound that escapes in the rest of the park and beyond. Shaggy and irregular grasses and shrubs on those hills would cut sound more effectively.

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#### **Placement of trees**

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Hills can be graded only so high without detracting from the overall park landscape and functionality on non-event days. Dense, attractive tree lines near the perimeter of the amphitheater would serve as a backstop to hills and berms to further reduce sound leakage. Shaggy and irregular grasses and shrubs on those hills would cut sound more effectively.

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#### **Sound engineering and sound-system technologies**

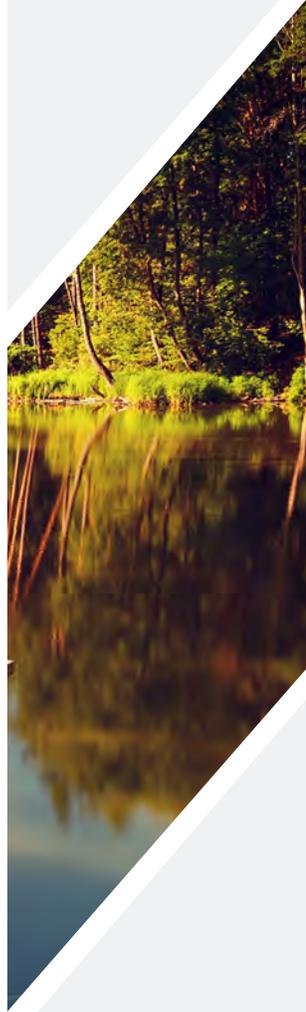
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Much of how sound behaves depends on conditions at the time and sound engineer's response to them. The City of Austin's music division should work with engineers to establish appropriate standards for given conditions that reward audiences and limit outside disruption.

Another asset would be a permanent yet flexible, high-tech sound system that community groups could use for events and performances. The system would direct sound inward, minimizing noise bleed, and be designed to blend with the surrounding landscape. Millennium Park in Chicago has a formal, concert-style version of this in its Pritzker Pavilion.



Conceptual Long-Term Design



## 4.2. Features and Programming

In a broad review of best practices, we have found a number of commonalities among exemplary parks in features and programming, including Town Lake Metropolitan Park and Austin at large.

### 4.2.1. Transportation and Parking: Existing Conditions

**A new park design should place a premium on several key features: water, interactivity, trail connectivity, public art, and technology.**

The best park features are entertaining, interactive and independent—reflective of local identities, attitudes, or assets. Ideally, they also appeal to visitors of many ages and backgrounds, are welcoming for families, and are economical to install and maintain. Many of the same features appear repeatedly in newer, well-designed downtown parks:

- Water features (especially interactive features)
- Performance venues
- Public art and sculpture
- Well-tended landscaping and gardens
- Food/concessions
- Technology (e.g., broadcasts, Wi-Fi, power outlets, recorded music, laser shows)
- Fitness paths
- Non-anchored tables and chairs
- Formal entrances
- Defined spaces
- Markets/bazaars
- Game areas (e.g., croquet, bocce)
- Dramatic, safety-promoting lighting
- Bold colors
- Shade

There is no one right way to incorporate preferred features into a park. Those choices and their relationship to design, programming, and visitors themselves are what make each park unique. The South Central Waterfront Initiative's interim draft vision framework report, completed in August 2014, articulates many of the ideals community members have for the district, and they apply to Town Lake Metropolitan Park as well. Among them:

- Green space connectivity, including waterfront access
- Walkability and transit connectivity
- Integration of public art

Town Lake Metropolitan Park already rates highly for walkability and connectivity, aside from the challenges posed by the current design of Riverside Drive. It is both an extension of the urban core and a green conduit to the city's expansive web of corridor parks: Butler Shores, Zilker Park, Barton Creek Greenbelt, Lamar Beach, Sand Beach, and Waller Creek. Two of its great assets in that regard are the Ann and Roy Butler Hike & Bike Trail and the new off-leash dog park. Both factor prominently in the Long-Term Project.

#### 4.2.1.1. Ann and Roy Butler Hike & Bike Trail

**Look for opportunities to improve trail connectivity and integrate it into park design. As outlined in Section 4.1.3.5., improve routing, design, and lighting of bicycle paths.**

The Butler Hike & Bike Trail along Lady Bird Lake is a leading Austin attraction. Considerable effort has been made by the city, the Trail Foundation, and other organizations to create a first-rate trail. Long-term development of Town Lake Metropolitan Park should consider effects on the trail. The City of Austin and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department have already invested \$2 million in the Trailhead area at Auditorium Shores. Improvements included rerouting the trail to accommodate the new off-leash dog area, an expanded parking lot, new restrooms, a stretching and warm-up area, signage, landscaping, and trail connectivity.

#### 4.2.1.2. Dog Park

**Continue to implement best practices to create dog-friendly spaces.**

Until 2014, all Auditorium Shores parkland north of Riverside Drive was an off-leash area and especially popular for its water access, yet that heavy use took its toll on the turf and presented conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists. A four-month redevelopment process, from October 2013 to February 2014, created the design for a new, fenced 4.7-acre dog park on the northwest side of Auditorium Shores with new signage, landscaping, turf, mulch or synthetic material in high-use areas,



and extensive water access with improved drainage. The area was developed with input from the off-leash community through the Off-Leash Area Advisory Committee (OLAAC). As identified in the interim improvements plan, the Central Lawn is open to leashed dogs. [Exhibit H](#) shows the new dog park in an illustration of interim improvements.

Access and amenities for dogs will continue to be a long-term priority in Town Lake Metropolitan Park, and the park will continue to implement best practices where possible to create dog-friendly spaces.

#### 4.2.1.3. Public Art

**Through a competitive process, commission art installations that interact with visitors, enhance their experience, and reflect Austin's unique culture and assets.**

Both community feedback and best practices indicate the importance of public art, especially interactive public art, in Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Local interpretation is key and offers a chance to fashion something unique. Public art can be sculpture, memorials, landscaping, digital new media, murals, and much else. It also can include temporary art: exhibits, community art, performances, and festivals. Some examples:

1. In the Walled Garden of Pittsburgh's Mellon Park, 150 stone markers flicker from ground level at night to memorialize the late Wesleyan University sophomore Ann Katharine Seamans. The work is called 7:11AM 11.20.1979 79°55'W 40°27'N, and the markers map the position of stars and planets on the day Seamans was born. An inscription on each marker identifies the star, and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy invites the public to sponsor individual stars.
2. Seattle's Magnuson Park, site of a former naval station, features The Fin Project, 22 diving-plane fins from decommissioned submarines arrayed over 500 feet to resemble a pod of Orca whales. With support from the Navy, community organizations, and private donors, the installation cost the city nothing and is maintenance-free.
3. In Phoenix's Civic Space Park, sculptor Janet Echelman took inspiration from the city's monsoon-influenced cloud formations to create Her Secret Is Patience, using two 145-foot-high poles to mount funnel-shaped netting that casts similar shadows. LED lights turn on at night and react to visitors' movements.
4. The fanciful Grotto Wall at Sparky Park in Austin used locally quarried stone, petrified wood, and objects donated by residents to make over a cinderblock wall on the site of a former electrical substation. Supplemental arches and columns redefine the award-winning space, designed by Bertold Haas, who worked closely with neighborhood residents.
5. Firefly has quickly become one of San Francisco's most iconic public art installations. A latticework of hinged polycarbonate panels 22 feet wide and 12 stories high ripples in response to prevailing winds and at night uses LEDs mounted behind each panel to imitate fireflies. Firefly incorporates several power-generating wind turbines that return electricity to the building (the city's Public Utilities Commission) and power the lights, which in total use less energy than a 75-watt bulb.
6. Millennium Park's Crown Fountain combines three reliably popular elements into one park feature: fountains, interactivity (a splash pad), and art, in this case a rotating series of digital faces whose mouths seem to be generating the fountains' jets of water. Nearby, Anish Kapoor's Cloudgate sculpture reflects the Chicago skyline and endlessly distorts bystanders' perspectives and reflections.
7. Nashville has commissioned a 45-foot-tall ribbon-shaped sculpture of polished steel, to be completed in 2015, for its new West Riverfront Park. River Concept, designed by Laura Haddad and Tom Drugan, will take its shape from the path of the Cumberland River and include steel guitar picks in sections that act like wind chimes. LEDs that change color will light the sculpture at night.
8. In November and December 2013, the Yards on Washington DC's waterfront converted the façade of the former National-Geospatial Intelligence Agency building into Art Yards, a temporary public-art project. The park poured 200 gallons of paint down the side of the building at rush hour and commissioned five visual artists to use the surface consecutively over a few weeks. It launched a website and promoted a Twitter hashtag to chronicle the projects' transformations.



#### 4.2.1.4. Technology

**Equip the park with user-friendly technology that variously enhances visitors' experiences, expands programming opportunities, and/or showcases Austin's tech assets.**

Technology has become a fixture of downtown parks. Visitors want support for their mobile devices—Wi-Fi and power outlets or charging stations—and many of the interactive park features they have come to enjoy incorporate technology: LED displays and laser shows, recorded music, video screens for sports broadcasts or streaming of nearby arts performances, choreographed lighting, and children's play experiences. This area offers Austin and Town Lake Metropolitan Park a major opportunity to distinguish itself among downtown parks and reinforce its reputation as a cutting-edge tech center. Tech features at Town Lake Metropolitan Park could be used to make operations more efficient, incorporated into signage or public art (such as the fiber optic installation going in at Seaholm that depicts plants native to Austin), or showcased in kiosks around the park as interpretive centers, games, or demonstration stations.

#### 4.2.2. Park Programming

**Programming is the lifeblood of successful downtown parks. It should be regular, reach people and families of all ages, and provide structure for the daily flow of visitors.**

Programming separates modern downtown parks from maintained natural spaces. As a metropolitan park, Town Lake Metropolitan Park is intended to serve a citywide population and accommodate a wide variety of uses, including special events that draw from far outside the region. Culture, too, is an important element of metroparks.

Park programming in general is distinct from park features in that it requires staff or some outside resource to direct and occurs for a defined period of time, often on a weekly or monthly schedule. Programming reinforces the character of the park, can establish themes, boosts visitation, and improves visitors' experiences.

As with park features, the best programming reaches people across ages and backgrounds, including children and families. It should give structure and routine to the park's daily life and preferably occur year-round. (Even cold-weather cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York schedule winter programming like ice skating, winter markets, and Christmas-tree lighting.) Some popular examples of programming in downtown parks include:

- Live concerts and theater
- Fitness classes
- Food trucks
- Art shows and exhibits
- Fairs and festivals
- Storytelling/puppet shows
- Park or downtown tours
- Recreational and competitive games
- Market days
- Structured playtime

The right programs complement each other's schedules and fit naturally into the flow of a day. For example, fitness classes often take place first thing in the morning or after work. Food trucks arrive for the lunch hour, and storytelling and tours might take place in the afternoon or on weekends. Concerts and festivals commonly fill parks on nights and weekends.

While programming should give visitors the opportunity to engage, it need not—and in most cases should not—take over a park (except possibly concerts, festivals, and other occasional parkwide events). Typically there is plenty of room for visitors to enjoy the space in their own way during programmed events. Three parks with excellent program slates are Columbus Commons in Columbus, Ohio, Discovery Green in Houston, and Klyde Warren Park in Dallas. Sample schedules for a single week:

Samples of Exemplary Park Programming

	Columbus Commons	Discovery Green	Klyde Warren
<b>MON</b>	Morn		
	Mid		11-3: Food trucks 12:30-1: Skyline 360 Tour
	Aft		Food trucks, cont'd
	Eve	5:30-6:30: Boot camp class	6:30-7:30: Bum-ba toning class
<b>TUES</b>	Morn	6:30-7:30: Crossfit class	10:30-12: Toddler Tuesdays (presented by Amerigroup RealSolutions) 10-11: "Strollfit with Baby" boot camp class 11-3: Food trucks
	Mid	12-1: Runners ed class	Imagination playground, cont'd
	Aft		Food trucks, cont'd
	Eve		5:30-7: Circus arts class 6:30-7:30: Core yoga
<b>WED</b>	Morn		
	Mid		12-1: Lunchtime music
	Aft		
	Eve	5:30-6:30: Kickboxing class 5:45-8:45: Kickball league 6:30-7:30: Hip hop class	6:30-7:30 Kayak class Zumba class
<b>THURS</b>	Morn		10-12: Imagination playground
	Mid	11-2: Food truck "food court" (8 food trucks)	11-10: Food trucks
	Aft		Food trucks, cont'd
	Eve	5:45-8:45: Kickball league	6:30-10: Sounds Like Houston! Thurs Concert (spons by Green Mountain Energy)
<b>FRI</b>	Morn	9-1: Commons for Kids (Stories, bounce play, carousel rides; spons by Highlights for Children)	All weekend: Dog Days (DockDogs jump competition, costume contest, talent show)
	Mid	Commons for Kids, cont'd	
	Aft		11-3: Food trucks Food trucks, cont'd
	Eve	7-10:30: Free country-rock concert: McGuffey Lane	7-9: Chipotle Green Film Series
<b>SAT</b>	Morn	9-10: Yoga class 10-11: Zumba class	All weekend: Dog Days 9-10: Blissful warrior yoga 10:30-11:30: Young writers wkshp
	Mid	11-4: Ohio State-Navy football viewing party	11-2: Recycling Saturdays 11-5: Stand-up paddleboarding 12-4: Friends for Life pet adoption
	Aft	OSU-Navy, cont'd	Stand-up paddleboarding, cont'd Friends for Life pet adoption, cont'd 3-8: Untapped Beer Festival
	Eve		Untapped Beer Festival, cont'd 6-10: Flea by Night flea market (spons by Green Mountain Energy)
<b>SUN</b>	Morn		All weekend: Dog Days 10:30-11:30: Discovery Hoop Dance (hula fitness class)
	Mid		10-11: Yoga class
	Aft		11-3: Food trucks 12-1: Bassoon quartet concert
	Eve		Food trucks, cont'd



### 4.3. Park Finance and Management

The Long-Term Project included a comprehensive analysis of revenue opportunities to determine potential sources of funding for redevelopment and to help PARD address ongoing maintenance. PARD has an operating budget of \$54 million, \$36 million of which comes from the City of Austin's General Fund, \$8 million from grants, and \$10 million in enterprise funds collected from sports activities designed to make the activities cost-neutral to city. Key revenue opportunities analyzed and discussed by the Long-Term Project are discussed below.

#### 4.3.1. Maintenance Resources

**Chronic maintenance shortfalls in the park and systemwide call for increasing PARD funding to \$10,000–\$20,000 per acre and for revenues generated by PARD to remain with PARD.**

Beyond its efforts to renovate Town Lake Metropolitan Park, PARD faces the challenge of nearly \$1 billion in deferred maintenance systemwide, according to the Urban Parks Workgroup—one of the highest totals in the country. With an annual operating budget of \$54 million, PARD spends less than \$6,700 per acre on upkeep of downtown parks, and \$3,000 per acre on its parks citywide. Without the ability to keep the revenues it generates (which instead go to the city's General Fund), PARD is unlikely to get the resources needed to overcome maintenance backlogs and cultivate a world-class parks system. This applies doubly to downtown parks, which typically have more expensive infrastructure, receive more visitors, and require more upkeep acre for acre than outlying parks.

To overcome this, the City of Austin should consider making two key changes:

1. Over time, increase funding of PARD to a level consistent with other top parks systems: \$10,000–\$20,000 per acre
2. Direct PARD-generated revenues (e.g., event fees, concessions, and user fees) to a PARD enterprise fund to support Town Lake Metropolitan Park renovation costs and, later, operations and programming.

#### 4.3.2. Park Finance

**Achieving the long term vision is estimated to cost \$124 million. The City of Austin should pursue a suite of funding options, including event fees, park concessions, grants and donations, PID or BID formation, bonds, and parkland dedication fees.**

Preliminary costs for a renovation of Town Lake Metropolitan Park are provided below (in 2014 dollars). Total cost could increase subject to the final infrastructure and landscape design.

#### Estimated Park Redevelopment Costs

Capital Improvement	Cost
Underground parking garage	\$45 mil
Below-grade Riverside Drive	\$31 mil
Pedestrian land bridges (3)	\$8 mil
Dougherty Arts Center replacement (including concessions and 550-space parking garage)	\$22 mil
Landscaping south of Riverside Drive	\$16.5 mil
Rainwater-collection system	\$1.5 mil
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>\$124 mil</b>

\*All estimates in 2014 dollars.

The City of Austin has several financing options at its disposal and most likely will want to pursue a bundled approach.



#### 4.3.2.1. Event Fees

##### **Assess and where possible increase fees charged to event organizers, particularly larger, higher-impact events.**

With robust attendance for its events, Austin has a great deal of leeway to increase event fees and should do so. The fees PARD assesses generally fall below many comparable cities. While these fees should not be punitive, they should reflect market rates and the substantial time that city staff invests in coordinating with organizers of major events. As events have grown in size and complexity, the city should review the hours required of city staff to ensure event fees adequately cover those costs. Looking to event fees to cover increased costs also ensures that a greater proportion of funding comes from visitors with the heaviest footprint on Town Lake Metropolitan Park. (New York City's Bryant Park, for example, which is privately operated, receives a quarter to a third of its annual revenue from event fees.)

Permit fees would not necessarily need to increase for all park events (e.g., not-for-profit events, small community-focused events), but fees should take into account overall size and input of respective events. New fees or fee increases would apply to event permits themselves, ticket fees, and maintenance fees. Ticket fees perhaps have the greatest potential to increase revenues; they should be labeled with the specific park enhancements consumers will benefit from, such as new parking facilities or the proposed pedestrian bridges. It is recommended that PARD continue to evaluate its maintenance fees to more accurately reflect the actual maintenance burden generated by events on park spaces and to protect the new turf improvements made at Auditorium Shores. The structure of the maintenance fee should reflect the size of events and the actual impact of those events on the park space.

#### 4.3.2.2. Park Concessions

##### **Judiciously expand park concessions, including a signature restaurant, and direct revenues from such concessions to Town Lake Metropolitan Park.**

Park concessions currently generate approximately \$3 million in on-site earned income toward the General Fund. Town Lake Metropolitan Park has long lacked sufficient concessions and does not directly benefit from the revenues derived from them. Additionally, many users of the park and residents of the neighborhood have identified a need for limited concessions within the park—a place that provides convenient food options during park visits. In addition to a casual and convenient food option, many other cities around the country have established a flagship restaurant that takes advantage of park vistas. Such a restaurant could prove both a great public amenity and an attractive source of revenue for the park. For example, Bryant Park in New York City generates about one-third of its annual revenues from restaurant rent and concessions. Within three years of opening its restaurant, the park was able to operate without any government support. If done thoughtfully, a restaurant would not encroach on existing green space or negatively affect the park or surrounding neighborhoods.

Residents are understandably cautious about increasing the commercial presence in Town Lake Metropolitan Park. The city and PARD should reach out to the public for feedback on the preferred nature, scale, and location of park concessions. Above all, any additional commerce in the park should be judicious, in the best interests of visitors, and relatively unobtrusive to surrounding neighborhoods. New or expanded commercial uses might be more acceptable under certain circumstances:

- Revenues generated by the concessions directly benefit PARD, and preferably Town Lake Metropolitan Park specifically.
- Any plan to expand concessions is coupled with a plan that defines which areas will allow it and protect key portions of the Town Lake Metropolitan Park from commercial encroachment.
- Taxpayers receive accurate communication about what expanded concessions would pay for and what alternative costs would be through bonds or tax levies.



- Some concessions are temporary and active only on major event days, when need is highest and the park already has a large commercial presence.

Other parks have enjoyed success with restaurants, game/equipment rentals, drink stands, candy and ice cream carts, market stalls, and classes (such as fitness classes, writing workshops, dance classes, juggling lessons). Not all such activities need take place in Town Lake Metropolitan Park, but each is worth consideration and would help offset the substantial cost of intensive park operations.

#### 4.3.2.3. Grants and Private Donations

##### **Finance 50 percent or more of redevelopment costs with grants and private donations.**

Currently \$8 million of PARD's budget, about 15 percent, comes from grants. Regardless of the eventual level of private-sector involvement in operating or programming the park, PARD or a partner should vigorously pursue grants and donations to fund Town Lake Metropolitan Park's renovation. It's entirely possible to fund more than half of the renovation with private money or grants—a review of best practices shows that 9 of 11 model parks financed renovation or development with at least 50 percent private funding. Typically, this has stemmed primarily from local foundations and a handful of visionary leaders in the business community who have marshaled their network of resources to bring money into the project.

Among the parks constructed or redeveloped entirely or in large part from grants and private donations are Klyde Warren Park in Dallas (through the Woodall Rogers Park Foundation), Campus Martius Park in Detroit (through the Detroit 300 Conservancy), LeBauer City Park in Greensboro (through a bequest from Carolyn and Maurice LeBauer), and A Gathering Place for Tulsa (through the George Kaiser Family Foundation). In Austin, the Waller Creek Conservancy has a Joint Development Agreement with the City of Austin and is raising funds to improve the Waller Creek corridor as the city completes its work on a mile-long flood-control tunnel.

Other parks' grants and non-local private funding have come from state economic-development agencies, HUD, DOT, EPA, Kresge Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, and

Humana Foundation. Cities have received technical assistance and support from the Project for Public Spaces, the Trust for Public Land, Global Green, USA, and Smart Growth America.

#### 4.3.2.4. Public Improvement District/Business Improvement District

##### **Include Town Lake Metropolitan Park in a PID/BID to offset operating costs. The park could join the Downtown Austin PID or a potential PID for the South Central Waterfront.**

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are innovative strategies that allow cities to collect special tax assessments on properties within a PID/BID area to help fund infrastructure and other improvements. Austin has two PIDs, the Downtown Austin PID and the smaller East 6th Street PID, which runs between Congress and I-35. The Downtown Austin PID helps fund the Downtown Austin Alliance and is authorized through 2023. It assesses properties at 10 cents per \$100 in assessed value after the first \$500,000. The East 6th Street PID assesses properties at 15 cents per \$100 in assessed value up to \$500,000 and is authorized through 2019.<sup>12</sup>

Before a PID can be created, at least 50 percent of property owners in a proposed district or the owners of at least 50 percent of the land area must approve, and the community must hold a public hearing. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are similar to PIDs and allow business owners in a defined area to vote on a special tax assessment that funds improvements within the district.

The August 2014 interim draft report of the South Central Waterfront Initiative raised the possibility of forming a PID just east of Town Lake Metropolitan Park to achieve its infrastructure goals. The park supports many of the values community members have identified as important to the South Central Waterfront: green space connectivity, waterfront access, walkability, transit connectivity, and integration of public art. Because of Town Lake Metropolitan Park's appeal and role in attracting development, it is important to include the park in any PID on the South Central Waterfront and in other future PIDs on the park's perimeter. Properties can belong to more than one PID or BID.

<sup>12</sup> [austintexas.gov/department/downtown-public-improvement-districts](http://austintexas.gov/department/downtown-public-improvement-districts).

Some examples:

- Dallas created a PID for Klyde Warren Park, effective this year, to provide ongoing support for park operations and intensive programming. The city received more than 70 percent approval from property owners in the PID for a 2.5-cent assessment per \$100 in assessed value. The PID is estimated to generate \$600,000 in its first year and cover 20 percent of operating expenses.<sup>13</sup>
- The Houston Downtown Management District, formerly the Houston Downtown Public Improvement District, takes in \$8 million annually from a 13.5-cent assessment per \$100 in assessed value. The organization spearheads all types of downtown investment, but based on the Discovery Green Conservancy's success in managing Houston's Discovery Green, the HDMD took up management of 1.6-acre Market Square Park in the Historic District and reopened it in fall 2010. HDMD uses \$130,000 of PID funds annually to manage the park.<sup>14</sup>
- Formed in 1999, the Union Square BID, San Francisco's largest, operates a \$3.45 million annual budget and covers 3,000 parcels across 27 blocks.<sup>15</sup> Its primary focus is the Clean & Safe program, 65 percent of its budget, which provides Community Service Ambassadors, a dedicated police officer, and litter removal 7 days a week.<sup>16</sup> It also performs marketing and advocacy. The BID does not solely operate the park but does sponsor key events.

#### 4.3.2.5. Bond Financing

**Augment the park's array of funding sources with either general obligation or revenue bonds, if necessary. Bonds should not be a primary funding source.**

Austin voters have approved \$252 million in bonds for PARD projects since 1998. \$179 million of which has been spent or encumbered.<sup>17</sup> More important, the city currently has no excess bonding capacity. Without tax increases, there is no additional borrowing capacity until Fiscal Year 2020, meaning voters could cast ballots on new bond issues as early as November 2018 for up to \$425 million.<sup>18</sup> That total, however, would likely include funding for housing, roads, and other public infrastructure as well as parks.

#### PARD Bond Spending History

Year Approved	Amount Approved	Amount Spent	Description
2012	\$77.7 mil	\$8.2 mil	Improvements for nearly a dozen neighborhood, metropolitan, and district parks (not including Town Lake Metropolitan Park), as well as Dougherty Arts Center and other community buildings.
2006	\$84.7 mil	\$81.4 mil	Construction, renovation, and improvement of public parks, rec centers, natural areas, and related facilities, such as playgrounds and swimming pools. \$20 million for land acquisition.
2000	\$13.4 mil	\$13.4 mil	Purchase of additional parkland.
1998	\$75.9 mil	\$75.8 mil	Construction of Palmer Events Center and parking garage.

\*Spent or encumbered as of October 31, 2014

<sup>13</sup> Klyde Warren Park PID Creation Resolution (PDF), [www.dallas-ecodev.org/incentives/tifs-pids/klyde-warren-park-pid/](http://www.dallas-ecodev.org/incentives/tifs-pids/klyde-warren-park-pid/).

<sup>14</sup> [www.downtowndistrict.org/Home/AboutUs/Overview/](http://www.downtowndistrict.org/Home/AboutUs/Overview/).

<sup>15</sup> [www.oewd.org/Union-Square.aspx](http://www.oewd.org/Union-Square.aspx).

<sup>16</sup> Union Square BID 2013-2014 Annual Report, p. 6, [www.visitunionsquaresf.com/the\\_bid/background\\_reports/annual\\_reports/](http://www.visitunionsquaresf.com/the_bid/background_reports/annual_reports/).

<sup>17</sup> City of Austin, Nov. 6, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> "General Obligation Bond Capacity Analysis," City Council Work Session, Apr. 29, 2014, p. 13.



An ambitious redevelopment of Town Lake Metropolitan Park might require some general obligation bonds, but they should serve as a backstop for other funding mechanisms. The city could also look to revenue bonds, which are not backed by property taxes and do not require voter approval for funding: about \$67 million of the projected \$124 million required to renovate Town Lake Metropolitan Park comes from the below-grade parking garage and DAC/restaurant concession/parking platform. Revenue bonds would be an efficient way to fund some improvements, but they will require an adequate, reliable revenue stream from parking and essential concessions. Additional financial analysis that takes into account prevailing market conditions will be required to determine expected availability for parking revenue bonds in any new garage or lot prior to design and construction. Credit enhancement and/or insurance are likely to be required as well.

Cities commonly use a variety of bonds to fund park capital improvements and land acquisitions. Two recent examples:

- For Atlanta's massive BeltLine project, the city created a 25-year Tax Allocation District (a TAD, similar to a TIF) covering 8 percent of the city, primarily in industrial areas and avoiding single-family homes to limit revenue losses to Atlanta Public Schools. Bonds sold on the TAD are estimated to generate \$1.7 billion, or 40 percent of the project's total cost. To date the BeltLine has used \$120 million in TAD bonds.<sup>19</sup>
- The City of St. Louis developed an innovative bond system for Forest Park with its partner 501(c)3, Forest Park Forever. To cover \$30 million in capital improvements, the city sold bonds directly to Forest Park Forever, which must sign off on the city's bond expenditures in advance. Money from each bond sale goes into a third-party trust account. Interest the city pays on the bonds ultimately helps fund the park through Forest Park Forever.

#### 4.3.2.6. Parkland Dedication Fees

**Increase parkland dedication fees and allocate more dedication fees from planning area 17 to Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Dedication fees could fund a small but significant piece of park development.**

City of Austin ordinances require that developers must dedicate five acres of parkland per 1,000 new residents or pay \$650 per new residential unit in lieu of parkland for new developments. The ordinance further stipulates that the funds must be spent on capital projects within two miles of the project and cannot be used for operations or maintenance. Current dedication fees are not sufficient to expand park space at the current rate of development growth and are low relative to other cities' fees.

Funds from parkland dedication fees are apportioned according to the priorities laid out for recognized planning areas as defined by PARD's 2010 "Long-Range Plan for Land, Facilities, and Programs." Town Lake Metropolitan Park falls in planning area 17, which has more contributing projects, 21, than any other planning area in Austin and the third-most funds available, after downtown and the Lakeline area: \$774,351 as of September 2014.<sup>20</sup> Yet PARD's priority for those funds are continued development of Del Curto Neighborhood Park, improvements to Barton Hills Park, acquiring land along the West Bouldin Creek Greenway, Gillis and Little Stacy sports court improvements, Little Stacy tennis court lighting, and Norwood tract development.

Given the priority established for projects in the area and the opportunity for PARD to acquire land in the Bouldin Creek corridor, park dedication fees would probably play a small role in Town Lake Metropolitan Park improvements in the near term. Given the shortfall brought about by the level of current fees, PARD should evaluate the allocation of new dedication fees as development continues around and adjacent to Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

<sup>19</sup> [beltline.org/about/the-atlanta-beltline-project/funding/](http://beltline.org/about/the-atlanta-beltline-project/funding/).

<sup>20</sup> "Parkland Dedication Fund Update," Sept. 30, 2014, [austintexas.gov/department/parkland-dedication](http://austintexas.gov/department/parkland-dedication).



#### 4.3.2.7. Voter-Approved Tax Levies

**As a final option, consider supplementing PARD's budget with a tax levy to stabilize funding.**

Voter-approved tax levies have been approved in other regions to support park spaces. Cities such as Minneapolis and Seattle have successfully gone to voters to approve taxes directly earmarked for parks. The tax can be assessed to property, individuals, or as a sales tax. In some municipalities, such as Chicago, the park district is authorized as a separate taxing authority with its own budget.

#### 4.3.3. Park Management

**Downtown parks require much more intensive programming, security, and sanitation than most parks. Common management models include public management, public management with a contributing non-profit, hybrid operation, and private operation. There is no one right model, but more downtown parks are moving to private operation.**

There is no single best solution for managing a park or park system. Most city parks have long been managed by their respective parks departments or city staff in some form, and that remains the most common model. Thirty or forty years ago, however, many cities found themselves overwhelmed by constrained budgets, large systems, deteriorating facilities, crime, visitor dissatisfaction, or some combination of these. For example, in 1980 volunteers concerned about New York City's Central Park formed a public-private partnership with the city as the Central Park Conservancy to direct private support to the park. Today the non-profit Conservancy provides 75 percent of Central Park's operating funding and handles park maintenance, capital improvements, and restorations.<sup>21</sup>

Whether a downtown park is one acre or 800, it differs from a traditional, recreational park in the density of population it serves, level of infrastructure, number of out-of-town visitors, security requirements, surrounding property values, and relative scarcity of alternatives. Downtown parks have become a combination of cultural amenities and green space. Those demands can easily

overwhelm even the best-run parks departments and healthiest budgets. Because of that, many cities with successful downtown parks have modified their approaches to management. General categories and benefits follow below. All the parks cited here are publicly owned and controlled by their respective cities, whether they are managed by city staff or outside organizations on contract.

#### 4.3.3.1. Public Management Only

**Traditional public management of parks entails a city entity managing all aspects of park maintenance, security, operations, and programming, usually through taxes and user fees.**

Public management is the standard model for city parks everywhere. A city, usually through a parks department or similar entity, maintains and manages the park using park revenues or budget allocations derived from tax revenues. Parks departments can avoid many of the pitfalls of understaffing and maintenance lags by forming a separate, dedicated staff for its flagship parks. In the same vein, flagship parks may have a dedicated security force, which could be part of the police department, the parks department, or another department with non-sworn officers.

In terms of on-site presence, Austin has a built-in advantage with its Town Lake Metropolitan Park office. Having staff on site allows for more formal, active management, gives visitors a chance to ask questions, and aids programming coordination, event promotion, and photography for future marketing. Some publicly managed city parks systems are outstanding. Minneapolis has its own nine-member park and recreation board, individually elected every four years from park districts across the city. In 2013, Minneapolis won the Trust for Public Land's first "five park bench" rating ever, ranking first among U.S. cities, and did so again in 2014. The small city of Wheeling, West Virginia, is known for its high-quality parks, but it uniquely draws less than 1 percent of its annual budget from tax revenues, instead relying on use fees and concessions.<sup>22</sup> Its Festival of Lights in Oglebay Park attracts more than 1 million visitors each year.

<sup>21</sup> [www.centralparknyc.org/about/about-cpc](http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/about-cpc).

<sup>22</sup> *Local Parks, Local Financing, Vol. II: Paying for Parks without Raising Taxes*, Peter Harnik, The Trust for Public Land.



#### 4.3.3.2. Contributing Non-Profit

**Contributing non-profits assist public management agencies in park operations and might fulfill major responsibilities, but they are not themselves operators.**

The contributing non-profit model differs from public management only in that there is an outside group supporting the park. This can be in the form of regular financial support or labor, such as maintaining gardens or staffing events. Contributing non-profits are not operators; they do not make management decisions, and they take direction from city staff in carrying out their assigned duties.

The Esplanade Association is a contributing non-profit for the Charles River Esplanade in Boston. The association provides financial support, assistance, and advocacy at the direction of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. In Santa Fe, the Railyard Stewards care for Railyard Park + Plaza's ornamental gardens, oversee its gardening programs, and perform community outreach.

In Austin, the Waller Creek Conservancy partners with the City of Austin as the steward of Waller Creek and will maintain the corridor going forward. Austin Parks Foundation would be a natural contributing non-profit with the expertise and constituency to assist Town Lake Metropolitan Park. A first step would be further defining its role and setting funding goals.

#### 4.3.3.3. Hybrid Operation

**An arrangement whereby one or more outside organizations collaborate under contract with a public entity to manage and operate the park. Such arrangements are ongoing and explicitly define responsibilities.**

Hybrid operation can describe a broad range of relationships where an outside organization works under contract to manage some portion of park operations. It might specialize, caring for a defined portion of the park or handling specific services, such as security, sanitation, or restaurant operation. In cases where it manages a revenue-generating entity, the organization ideally retains some revenues to fund its efforts and limit costs to the public.

Public and private entities might also operate jointly, with equal or nearly equal responsibilities throughout the park. This especially makes sense when parks are large or operations complex. Responsibilities should reflect the nature and capability of the organization. The City of St. Louis signed a Maintenance Cooperation Agreement in 2007 with its partner 501(c)3, Forest Park Forever, to manage 1,300-acre Forest Park. Forest Park Forever manages all unleased park land, and maintenance responsibilities and staff are split roughly 50-50. City staff work only in Forest Park.

The Atlanta BeltLine is an emerging 22-mile-long greenway encircling Atlanta and uniting 45 disparate neighborhoods. The project connects more than a dozen parks and will take decades to complete. The City of Atlanta continues to manage the existing parks that the BeltLine connects. In 2013 the Atlanta Police Department established a dedicated Path Force of 15 officers and 3 supervisors to patrol trails, access points, and adjacent parks. Atlanta BeltLine Inc. manages construction of the corridor, including defining the plan, securing funding, and engaging the community.



#### 4.3.3.4. Private Operation

**One or more private organizations, for-profit or non-profit, operate the park under contract at the discretion of a public body.**

Fully private operators manage all aspects of a park after construction or renovation: sanitation, security, maintenance, capital planning and improvements, concessions, and programming. They rely on park revenue, grants, and private donations to operate and usually need additional revenue streams, such as sponsorships and PID/BID funds, to cover expenses. New York City's Bryant Park and San Francisco's Union Square, two well-regarded and privately operated parks, receive money from BIDs. Klyde Warren Park in Dallas initially planned to operate entirely with private money but created a PID less than two years after opening to fund about 20 percent of operating costs. Uncertainty over revenues year to year is the biggest liability of private operation. Some parks also receive support directly from the city's general fund.

Flagship downtown parks have been trending toward private operation for several years. Privately operated parks are unified in their budget priorities and service levels and have incentives to run efficiently. In addition, operators incorporated as 501(c)3 non-profits can accept contributions tax-free. Operating agreements that give the operator control of all revenue should require that revenue be reinvested in the park.

Fully private operators are most popular in downtown parks surrounded by dense populations (office or residential), that are relatively small (producing a higher proportion of revenue-generating space and parkland adjacent to developed properties), and that are heavily programmed (requiring more intensive management). Examples include Chicago's Millennium Park, managed by the non-profit Millennium Park Inc., Houston's Discovery Green, managed by the non-profit Discovery Green Conservancy, and Cincinnati's Washington Park, managed by the non-profit 3CDC.

### Park-Management Approaches

Type	How it Works	Pros	Cons
Parks agency or city department	City owns, operates, manages	Agency expertise	Limited funding and staffing
Contributing non-profit	Non-profit offers some financial support, may help in park (as with gardening) with city's direction	Relieves city of some budget, maintenance pressures	Unpredictable support levels for city, lack of control for non-profit. Funds can't be counted on for programming.
Joint operation	City and non-profit split duties (programming, security, maintenance). Funded by city, donations, endowments.	Predictability, mutual support	Potential control issues, public-side risk of overpaying and underpricing remains
Private operation	City owns, non-profit operates on contract. Funds might come from park revenue, city, donations, or a BID.	No public restrictions, competitive entity. City might share in revenue. Greatest potential for first-class parks.	Uncertain year-to-year revenue generation



#### **4.3.3.5. A Model for Town Lake Metropolitan Park Deploy a private or non-profit partner to coordinate private-sector support and assist in park operations under a hybrid model.**

A good first step for determining the optimal park-management model is to inventory what the community supports, what internal and external resources exist to help care for the park, what internal and external financial resources exist to run the park, and what level of infrastructure, investment, and programming civic leaders and the community expect for the park. Publicly run parks generally require more public money; privately run parks generally require less.

PARD and other stakeholders have expressed some willingness to consider a cooperative arrangement with a private or non-profit partner. Given city budget constraints, the considerable maintenance backlog within PARD, the expansive vision for a world-class park that serves the entire community, and the broad civic interest in seeing the park succeed, Town Lake Metropolitan Park could benefit from a hybrid model that recruits a private or non-profit partner to run aspects of the park and to coordinate private-sector support. Under this model, it is important that each entity have clearly defined roles and powers. Partnering with a community organization or operator can foster outstanding operations, but even under the most privatized scenario, PARD and the City of Austin should retain at least some limited authority and/or protections that ensure the park remains for the benefit of the public. These protections can be implemented a number of ways: for example, via contractual protections and/or city representation on any governing board.

It is recommended minimally that active measures are taken going forward to increase the extent to which funds intended for Town Lake Metropolitan Park or generated within the park stay within the park. This could be accomplished through a special revenue fund. Once a final redevelopment approach is agreed to, it is further recommended that more extensive changes to the management structure are explored, including management by a non-profit, conservancy, or other entity. Ultimately, the financing structure will largely determine the precise structure. But in the event that the final plans rely heavily on grants, private donations, and other outside sources of funds, the structure will need to be one that protects the outside investment.

Any such structure will also want to incorporate oversight of a board that includes representatives from major constituents, including any major donors or foundations, the neighborhood, and the business community.

The plan should be one that is not only suitable for accommodating today's Austin, but is also capable of withstanding and complementing the city's constant and dynamic growth.

Around Austin, several non-profits have emerged in recent years to support development and restoration of key city parks and corridors. Various positions as supporting non-profits and/or city partners, they demonstrate the types of models succeeding elsewhere in the city, tailored as they are to the scope and specifics of each mission:

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#### **Friends of Barton Springs Pool**

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The non-profit organized in 2006 to help restore and maintain Barton Springs Pool. It advocates for the pool, organizes cleanups, and educates citizens. Friends of Barton Springs Pool created the annual Council Cleans the Pool Day, in which City Council members and their staffs join other volunteers in removing algae in the pool. Importantly, the group worked with the city to fund and develop a new master plan and to reserve \$2.6 million in city funds for a complete renovation, including new entrances and walkways, erosion prevention, protection of mature trees, and new fencing and lighting.<sup>23</sup> The work was completed in spring 2014.

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#### **Pease Park Conservancy**

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Pease Park's trampled grounds and damaged trees inspired local residents to create the Pease Park Conservancy in 2008. Knowing there would be limited city funds to restore the park, the conservancy recruited neighbors, school groups, and local businesses to volunteer for conservation and improvement projects: planting 500 trees and restoring the historic Memorial Entry Gates and Tudor Cottage, among others. It has raised money for both an operations fund and an endowment, now containing \$200,000. The Pease Park Conservancy funded more than 70 percent of the development of a master plan that preserves and enhances the conservancy's gains to date, improves recreation, and emphasizes accessibility.<sup>24</sup> In October 2014, the Austin City Council approved the master plan.

<sup>23</sup> [friendsofbartonspringspool.org/?page\\_id=14](http://friendsofbartonspringspool.org/?page_id=14).

<sup>24</sup> [peasepark.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=156](http://peasepark.com/wordpress/?page_id=156).



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### Shoal Creek Conservancy

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After more than a year of study and stakeholder meetings, the founders of Shoal Creek Conservancy raised \$150,000 to cover the first-year budget and formally launched the non-profit in fall 2013.<sup>25</sup>

The 200-member conservancy serves as a public voice for the corridor and works with the city, local businesses, and citizens to prioritize improvement projects, marshal volunteers, and raise funds. It has focused on erosion repair, trash and graffiti removal, restoring native habitat, and advocating for trail improvements, such as lighting. The group has nominated the historic West 6th Street Bridge for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and plans to help restore and improve the bridge in coming years.

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### Waller Creek Conservancy

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The City of Austin established the Waller Creek corridor as a TIF District in 2007. In 2011 it partnered with the newly formed Waller Creek Conservancy, each contributing \$400,000 to fund a new master plan.<sup>26</sup> The resulting design from Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, selected through an international competition, will protect 28 acres from flooding and create an amenities-rich greenway between downtown Austin and Lady Bird Lake, connecting four green spaces en route: Waterloo Park, the Refuge, Palm Park, and the Lattice. The conservancy signed a Joint Development Agreement with the city in spring 2014. Plans call for the \$149 million flood-control tunnel to be completed in December 2014. Waterloo Park, one of the city's key parks and events venues, is under construction as part of this process and is expected to reopen in 2015.

#### 4.3.3.6. Committee Formation

**Establish a committee of elected officials and community leaders to explore park-management structures, weigh funding, and direct re-development. A separate executive committee should commence a capital campaign to support redevelopment.**

Should the city commit to making major capital improvements in the park and to exploring alternative management structures, it is recommended that a committee be formed to lead this process and to further direct the timeline, design elements, and capital campaign necessary for redevelopment of the park. This committee should assemble an executive committee, including naming a chairperson who will commit to donating or raising a significant amount of private funds for the park and will encourage others to do so.

The regular committee could meet on a quarterly basis, while the executive committee should meet more often. Both should work in conjunction with city officials to move the plan forward.

The regular committee could include:

- Elected officials
- Civic and philanthropic leaders
- Foundation leaders
- Business leaders
- Neighborhood organization leaders
- Representatives for new development in the area

#### Example Neighborhood Organizations

Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association  
Downtown Austin Alliance  
South River City Citizens

#### Example Institutions in or near the Park

Austin Ballet  
Dougherty Arts Center  
Long Center for the Performing Arts  
Palmer Events Center  
ZACH Theatre

<sup>25</sup> Shoal Creek Conservancy Accomplishments Report, January 1–March 31, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> [www.wallercreek.org/about/timeline](http://www.wallercreek.org/about/timeline).



#### 4.4. Event Policies

World-class events and festivals have become a large part of the Austin culture and have demonstrated themselves to be a huge driver of the Austin economy. Among the largest such festivals is South by Southwest ("SXSW"), which is an annual interactive, film, and music conference operated by SXSW Inc. In 2014 SXSW featured more than 2,300 performers playing across 111 venues and had an economic impact of \$315 million in the city.<sup>27</sup>

The City of Austin has made great strides in managing the crowd, noise, and parking issues that arise during major festivals, including introducing a streamlined, unified permitting process. Even so, concerns and complaints are sufficient to warrant limiting further expansion of event days in Town Lake Metropolitan Park. A number of neighborhood residents and park goers have expressed concern with the number of large events that take place in Town Lake Metropolitan Park. These large events, they believe, impose a large burden on the surrounding neighborhoods and also hinder use of the park for recreational use. As such, there is no recommendation at this time to alter or amend PARD's current policy limiting the number of event days to 25 on Auditorium Shores. As crowd control and compliance from event producers improves, the city might wish to continue growing the attendance of existing festivals and neighborhood cultural events.

Essentially all major stakeholders point out that the current scheduling and management of events needs to be better coordinated across the venues. In those circumstances where all of the venues are simultaneously programmed, the infrastructure of the park and the surrounding neighborhoods bears a heavy burden, which affects attendees of those events as well as residents.

The city should create a standing committee composed of the chief executives of PARD, the Palmer Events Center, and the Long Center to coordinate schedules of events within Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Assuming the Dougherty Arts Center remains within the footprint of the park, it should also have representation on the committee. Major events should be scheduled and contracted at least two years in advance. Moreover, the chief executives of each of the major venues (PARD, Convention Center Department, and Long Center) need to communicate continually to ensure that scheduling of major events considers full programming for Town Lake Metropolitan Park. The operators need to make sure that the traffic, crowds, sound, and other residual impacts are managed comprehensively. We recommend that a standing committee meet, at minimum, quarterly to discuss and agree upon scheduling. We also recommend that this committee create a shared calendar and implement a standard set of procedures for dealing with any alterations to that schedule.

##### 4.4.1. Long Center/Palmer Center

**Create a committee including the chief executives of PARD, the Palmer Events Center, the Long Center, and the Dougherty Arts Center to meet quarterly and coordinate event schedules.**

The Long Center for the Performing Arts and the Palmer Events Center are both important Austin establishments and pillars of Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Historically, they have had challenges fully coordinating the priorities of each center's patrons with each other and with surrounding parkland, and considerable effort should be made to help all parties maintain a collaborative relationship in order to ensure successful and sustainable operation of Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

##### 4.4.2. Traffic Control

**Create a non-sworn staff of traffic-management professionals under the Austin Police Department to ease traffic congestion at events citywide.**

It is recommended that the City of Austin create and maintain a force of non-sworn, professionally trained city staff dedicated to managing traffic and crowds during events. This division should be established under and managed by the Austin Police Department. It is also recommended that the division be closely coordinated with and responsive to the Austin Transportation Department, in particular with respect to training guidelines as well as policies and procedures around traffic management. Cost of this division can largely be offset by revenues from cultural institutions and

<sup>27</sup> Performer and venue numbers: "2014 SXSW Post-Event Evaluation" Aug. 29, 2014, p. 1. Economic impact: "SXSW 2014 Economic Benefit to City of Austin Totals \$315 Million" Sept. 11, 2014, press release.

event organizers who are currently required to incur the costs to APD for staffing Austin police at these events. The division can be staffed with a mix of full-time and seasonal employees. We believe that the specialized nature of this unit will create a more effective mechanism for traffic management and will yield positive impacts on the level of service during large events. This proposed structure should also prove economically preferable given the lower cost point of traffic management staff compared to sworn officers. This approach will also free up police officers from event management, allowing them to remain assigned to their neighborhoods focused on policing throughout the city.

#### 4.4.3. Special-Events Ordinance

##### Approve a special-events ordinance that increases impact fees for large events.

Since 2012, the City of Austin has endeavored to streamline the planning and permitting of special events and manage competing uses of public space by issuing an updated, comprehensive ordinance for event planners to follow. Refining and passing the ordinance remains a work in progress. The draft proposal defines the role of the Austin Center for Events (ACE) and sets down integrated rules for amplified sound, security, street closures, waste disposal, temporary structures, and other impacts. Because of the remarkable range of events held in Austin, the draft raises questions about differences in management for smaller, less formal events and larger, highly complex events and how to distinguish them. Smaller events could see their fees reduced, while the largest events should contribute more in light of their outsized impact and related demands on city staff and facilities. (The proposed ordinance defines events in Tier 4, the highest tier, as those requiring more than \$100,000 in city services, staff time, and equipment.)

Approving the ordinance represents an important first step in shoring up both park funding and the operation of events. Revenues related to special-event fees and ticket sales, like other fees generated by the parks, should be structured in such a way that the revenues stay within the park rather than flow back to the General Fund.

#### 4.5. Coordination with Other Austin Projects

The same proximity to downtown and excellent location on Lady Bird Lake that Town Lake Metropolitan Park enjoys has catalyzed new development in surrounding neighborhoods and along the southern edge of downtown. Projects are moving quickly, and future plans should be mindful of these developments. For example, the historical density and level of commercial presence probably would not have supported a BID or PID around Town Lake Metropolitan Park. It represents an emerging possibility to help fund operations and services in and around the park, but any proposal to do so should explain why it's important, what it could do, and how it might work. Property owners within any proposed BID or PID would have to approve such a measure; BIDs and PIDs cannot be imposed externally.

Select projects recently completed or under way near Town Lake Metropolitan Park:

##### *South of Lady Bird Lake*

- **422 at the Lake:** 207 apartments. Completion spring 2015. 422 W Riverside Dr
- **Gibson Flats:** 200 apartments, 3,000 square feet of retail. Completed winter 2013. 1219 S Lamar Blvd
- **Hanover South Lamar:** 340 apartments and 6,000 square feet of retail. Completion late 2014/early 2015. 809 S Lamar Blvd
- **Hyatt parking garage and Zilker Ballroom:** 14,000 square foot ballroom, meeting rooms, and 600-space parking garage. Completed August 2014. 208 Barton Springs Rd
- **Lamar Union:** 443 apartments, new Alamo Drafthouse, 86,000 square feet of retail. Open late 2014. 1100 S Lamar Blvd
- **The Catherine:** 300 apartments adjacent to Hyatt Regency Austin. Leasing begins fall 2014. 214 Barton Springs Rd



### Downtown

- **Seaholm Plaza/Residences:** Mixed-use development with 280 condos, retail, office, and special-event space opposite Town Lake Metropolitan Park. 550 parking spaces. Ongoing. 800 W Cesar Chavez St
- **Green Water Treatment Plant:** 200-room hotel, 836 apartments, and 456,000 square feet of office space. 2,700 parking spaces. Ongoing. W Cesar Chavez St/San Antonio St
- **Gables Park Plaza/Tower:** 185 units, office, and 10,000 square feet of ground-floor retail. Completed late 2013. 111/115 Sandra Muraida Way
- **New Central Library:** 250,000 square feet and 200 parking spaces adjacent to Seaholm. Completion late 2015. 710 W Cesar Chavez St

These projects testify to the innate appeal, convenience, and dynamism of the area, but a formalized structure and long-term vision will be needed to knit together what is effectively becoming an extension of downtown. Uniting Town Lake Metropolitan Park with downtown and the South Central Waterfront (which runs from South 1st Street on the west to Blunn Creek on the east and from Lady Bird Lake on the north to East Bouldin Creek and East Riverside Drive on the south) should be a central goal, particularly with respect to the Seaholm Development District downtown and the *Austin American-Statesman* property on the South Central Waterfront.

The old Seaholm Power Plant's transformation into an office-residential-retail EcoDistrict directly across Lady Bird Lake from Town Lake Metropolitan Park could invigorate and complement redevelopment plans within the park. Seaholm is emerging as an advanced green development on eight acres with 280 residential units, 140,000 square feet of office space, and nearly 50,000 square feet of retail. Town Lake Metropolitan Park could become a natural "front porch" for Seaholm residents in search of recreation, and Seaholm will provide a convenient retail core for park visitors. Seaholm's sustainability theme should resonate in the park's design, programming, and art as well. Art or park displays

in Town Lake Metropolitan Park, for example, could highlight Seaholm's energy and water savings in real time as context for Austin's broader sustainability initiatives.

Efforts to connect the two places should focus on the physical separation that Lady Bird Lake creates. Trail connectivity mitigates that, but in the long term, PARD should explore ways to creatively overcome this barrier. Strategies could include an additional pedestrian bridge or something more iconic, such as a water-taxi system, but whatever the solution, the approach Austin takes could influence the character of the park as much as the fact that it solved the problem.

The *Statesman* site has received attention for years as an attractive place for new construction, although there is no formal buyer and no timeline for redevelopment. Its 19 acres represent the largest single tract on the South Central Waterfront and include one-third of a mile of frontage on Lady Bird Lake. The South Central Waterfront Initiative has prioritized, among other things, more public open space, pedestrian-oriented environments, and connections to the waterfront, and harmonious redevelopment at Town Lake Metropolitan Park could assist with each of those aims. The *Statesman* site holds great potential to expand open space on the South Central Waterfront, and the Butler Hike & Bike Trail's route along the parcel's northern edge is a major opportunity to redesign the corridor as a 21st-century waterfront greenway. Developing it appropriately will be essential to enhancing Town Lake Metropolitan Park's waterfront connectivity.

Above all, as development continues, increasing population density both during the day and at night will increase day-to-day use of the park and inject a new vitality. In its programming choices, PARD should consider what will appeal to these incoming residents and workers, as they represent a new base for an ever more active and social Town Lake Metropolitan Park.



Austin has several other developments and park projects under way that warrant consideration under Town Lake Metropolitan Park's long-term strategy:

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### **Alliance Children's Garden**

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Construction of the garden, which will be sited in the Venue Zone northeast of the Dougherty Arts Center, is projected to begin late 2015. Construction will take approximately seven months, during which this portion of the park will be closed. The design is being led by TBG Partners.

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### **Holly Shores**

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The Holly Power Plant's closing in 2007 paved the way for an expanded parks corridor along Town Lake's north shore east of I-35. Michael Van Valkenburgh & Associates completed a draft master plan for Holly Shores in July 2014 that the Austin City Council approved in August. A timeline for construction is pending. The park could cost \$100 million to build, and currently the city has only \$2 million available.

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### **Republic Square**

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The master plan for Republic Square was completed in summer 2013. The \$4 million renovation plan includes a new small event venue, a promenade, concessions, and other amenities. Phase II construction is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2015. Once fully redeveloped, the park will be able to accommodate larger events.

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### **Waller Creek**

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The City of Austin established the Waller Creek corridor as a TIF District in 2007. The project will protect 28 acres from flooding and create an amenities-rich greenway between downtown Austin and Lady Bird Lake, connecting four green spaces en route: Waterloo Park, the Refuge, Palm Park, and the Lattice. Plans call for the \$149 million flood-control tunnel to be completed in December 2014. Waterloo Park, one of the city's key parks and events venues, is under construction as part of this process and is expected to reopen in 2015.



## 5. Suggested Long-Term Project Timeline

The recommendations set forth in this report will ensure that Town Lake Metropolitan Park continues to improve and becomes the city's flagship downtown cultural green space. The interim improvements, once completed in 2015, will establish Auditorium Shores as a healthy park asset for the next 10–15 years. An illustration of the interim improvements at Auditorium Shores is attached here as [Exhibit H](#).

Recommendations should be addressed in the following order:

1. Austin City Council to consider immediately actionable recommendations submitted in July 2014. These include (i) creating a dedicated traffic-management division within the Austin Police Department for better event coordination citywide, not just in Town Lake Metropolitan Park, (ii) creating event-day resident-only permitted parking zones near Town Lake Metropolitan Park, (iii) formalizing an event-planning committee made up of the chief executives of PARD, the Austin Convention Center, the Long Center, and, if applicable, the Dougherty Arts Center, to coordinate schedules two years in advance, and (iv) approving the proposed increase in maintenance fees assessed to event organizers across the parks system.
2. Finalize the DAC study and, if approved, proceed with planning for a new building between the Long Center and the Palmer Events Center to incorporate replacement DAC programming space. As suggested, this building could include back-of-house facilities for the Palmer Center and the Long Center, additional Long Center practice facilities, and event space to generate revenue and complement ongoing activities within Town Lake Metropolitan Park and the venues. The Long Center should address future service needs, which should be visually screened from Barton Springs Road if the existing parking garage is demolished.
3. Upon the decision to relocate the DAC, and dependent on the condition of and suggested uses for the land underneath the DAC, begin planning for a replacement facility on the site consistent with this report's recommendations. PARD should convene a community process to determine uses, including but not limited to ground-level bicycle facilities, limited above-grade parking, and food and beverage concessions. Additionally, PARD and the City of Austin should examine alternative methods to complete and finance the facility, including a public-private partnership or "fee" developer. Several models exist, and such alternatives might be feasible for financing if the facilities can generate sufficient revenues.
4. Once the City of Austin has clarity on the DAC's existing site, PARD and the Austin Transportation Department can begin evaluating the proposed underground parking facility. Parking, engineering, and financing alternatives should be updated to identify current parking needs and rates, construction costs, and siting alternatives. Commensurate with this exercise, the Transportation Department should begin estimating engineering, planning, and construction costs for depressing Riverside Drive. Ideally, these capital investments proceed along the same development path to conserve costs and ensure operational compatibility. Additionally, in planning for the underground parking garage, the Palmer Center and the Long Center should agree on a unified underground entrance to their facilities from the garage.

5. As decisions are made to move forward with the proposed capital investments in parking and the depression of Riverside Drive, PARD should consider initiating a master landscape and architectural design process for the new park (the new "green roof") over the parking garage and the proposed land bridges to connect the north lawns with the venue lawn south of Riverside Drive. As identified in the report, the RFP for the master design team should encourage elements in the park suggested herein: pedestrian and bike paths, public art, water features, concessions, and cultural performance areas, among others. As designs are completed and cost estimates refined, PARD, the City of Austin, and its private-sector partners can move forward on the financial plan to complete the design and construction.
6. On completion of the "new" Town Lake Metropolitan Park, with its improved infrastructure and world-class design, the existing Long Center parking garage could be demolished (assuming repayment of outstanding bonds). Such demolition would create acres of green space and provide a site for future development of a world-class performance space adjacent to the Long Center, if needed.



# Exhibits

# Exhibit A



**PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN  
THE AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION AND  
TUR PARTNERS LLC**

January 1, 2013

**Scope of Work**

Tur Partners LLC (“Advisor”) will act as a special advisor to the Austin Parks Foundation (“APF”) responsible for leading a comprehensive analysis of city plans, policies and initiatives relating to Austin’s downtown parks, with a focus on redevelopment plans for the parkland anchored by the Palmer Events Center and Long Center generally referred to as Butler Park/Auditorium Shores, including a portion of Town Lake Metro Park (the “Project”). The Project shall be subject to the direction set forth by City of Austin Council 20120823-072 and 20121011-081.

Advisor will be responsible for engaging designers, consultants and other required third parties in order to develop the final plan and other Project deliverables and will also work to involve and unify key constituents in the process, including APF, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (“PARD”) and other City of Austin departments, neighborhood organizations, business leaders and other stakeholders as identified by APF and/or PARD.

The final plan will be presented to the City Council in April of 2014 and will include a funding analysis and detailed project implementation schedule, complete with final cost estimates and project milestone dates. Advisor will also identify potential contractors and financing sources for redevelopment activities relating to the Project.

Although advisor will communicate with the various constituents to ensure the Project objectives fully incorporate diverse views and priorities, Advisor will focus on addressing the following objectives:

1. Review, evaluate and, if necessary, update current plans for park space surrounding Palmer Events Center and Long Center with a focused attention on parkland north of Riverside Drive, including the Auditorium Shores main trailhead, Alliance Children’s Garden, event lawn, off-leash area, Dougherty Art Center redevelopment/relocation, and trail and the shoreline of Lady Bird Lake. The following city approved plans will be consulted in connection with the analysis:
  - a. Auditorium Shores Master Plan;
  - b. Holly Master Plan;
  - c. Town Lake Master Plan;



- d. SDAT South Shore;
  - e. Downtown Austin Plan;
  - f. Downtown Parks Master Plan;
  - g. Waller Creek Master Plan;
  - h. Waterfront Overlay Board Ordinance;
  - i. Capitol Metro Strategic Plan; and
  - j. Imagine Austin
2. Identify solutions for increasing the ease and availability of parking in the vicinity of the Auditorium Shores, the Long Center and Palmer Events Center and potential revenue opportunities associated therewith.
  3. Explore traffic considerations in and around the Auditorium Shores/Butler Park parklands and explore associated city policies regarding use of intruding/adjacent streets (including Riverside Drive).
  4. Evaluate existing agreement with event organizers and address current policy/procedures for multi-year agreements.
  5. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of combined impacts from events at Auditorium Shores, Zilker Park, Long Center, Palmer Events Center and surrounding area and provide a recommendation for PARD special events policies and Austin street ordinances (including number and schedule of events) with consideration to (i) maximizing public enjoyment of parks spaces; (ii) preserving and maintaining quality of parkland; (iii) revitalizing Austin and improving its economy and revenues; and (iv) protecting neighborhood concerns and public safety.
  6. Present options for funding and maintenance of parkland based on existing and new revenue streams, including revenue derived from existing motor vehicle rental tax and donation from C3 Presents. Consider policies regarding post-event costs for maintenance and repairs. Additionally, prepare a financial assessment of the staffing and maintenance requirements for upkeep of each of the key event facilities.
  7. Propose ongoing strategies, policies and organizational frameworks for park promotion and activity organization, which include a high level of civic engagement, including neighborhood associations, business leaders and other key stakeholders.
  8. Provide additional economic development and revitalization recommendations within the City of Austin relating to the Project, including recommendations for potential partnerships with the private sector, with consideration to City of Austin's existing procurement and project delivery process.



**Key Dates**

The current proposed major milestones for the Project are as follows:

December 20, 2012 – Preliminary Progress Report submitted to City Council

January 2013 – Chicago Visit by City of Austin delegation

April 2013 – Preliminary Report on Planning Process submitted to City Council

April 2014 – Final Report on Planning Process submitted to City Council

# Exhibit B





**TECHNICAL  
MEMORANDUM**

**Client:** Austin Park Foundation  
**Project Name:** Town Lake Metropolitan Park Improvements  
**Location:** Austin, TX  
**Project Number:**  
**Issue Date:** June 10, 2014

**TO:** Austin Park Foundation  
**FROM:** URS Project Team  
**SUBJECT:** Town Lake Metropolitan Park Improvements – Traffic Study

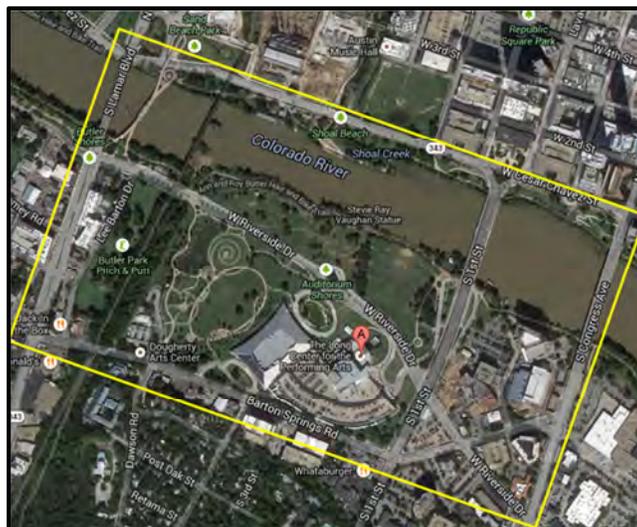
This technical memorandum summarizes the analysis of Riverside Drive closure impacts at intersection, arterial and network levels. Four mitigation methods were evaluated with the goal of improving the overall network performance. The results of analysis show that, it is feasible but not desirable to close the Riverside Drive, and that the existing network will fail to serve demand in 20 to 25 years, with or without closing Riverside Drive.

**Purpose of Study**

URS was retained by Austin Park Foundation (APF) to conduct a high level traffic study for the Town Lake Metropolitan Park Improvements Project. The purpose of this technical memorandum is to summarize the methodology and results of this study, including the potential impact of closing Riverside Dr. between South (S.) 1<sup>st</sup> St. and Lamar Boulevard (Blvd.) to through traffic and associated mitigation measures.

**Study Area**

The study area, shown in **Figure 1**, is bounded by Cesar Chavez/Town Lake to the north, Barton Springs to the south, S. Congress to the east, and Lamar Blvd. to the west. The study includes major roadways and signalized intersections in this area.



**Figure 1 – Study Area**

## Study Methodology

The study consisted of collecting current traffic data, developing a traffic model in SYNCHRO/SimTraffic software, analyzing model results, and drawing conclusions from the study. Traffic conditions were analyzed using the model based on measurement of effectiveness (MOE) at three levels:

1. Total vehicle delay and average vehicle delay at network level for the whole study area;
2. Average speed and level of service (LOS) at corridor level for major roadways;
3. Average vehicle delay and LOS at intersection level for each approach/movement.

LOS is introduced by the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) to describe the operational quality level of a roadway facility. The six levels of service are defined as letters A through F, where A indicates the best operational condition and F represents the worst. HCM also defines the methodology to calculate LOS using factors such as speed, travel time, density, delay, and various other quality measures. **It is standard industry practice to consider LOS A through D as acceptable in urban areas, and LOS E and F as unacceptable.**

The following provides a description of LOS:

- LOS A: at this level, the traffic is under free flow condition, in which volume is low and speed is high. Users have freedom to maneuver and choose their desired speed. There is little or no impact to individuals by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
- LOS B: traffic is allowed to travel at or near free flow speed, but the speed is slightly affected by traffic conditions. Users have reasonable freedom to select their speed and lane of operation.
- LOS C: this level allows for stable flow with speeds at or near free flow speed. Freedom of maneuver and choice of speed are closely controlled by the traffic condition. Disruptions in traffic, such as crashes, can generate significant queue and delay.
- LOS D: at this level, speed declines rapidly with increasing flow. Freedom of choice of speed and lane of operation is more restricted. Any incident can result in lengthy queues and users may experience reductions of physical and psychological comfort.
- LOS E: at this level, the traffic volume is near or at capacity, and traffic is operating at low speed. There is little freedom to maneuver and any changes in lane movement can result in delay. Drivers may experience significant discomfort both physically and psychologically.
- LOS F: at this level, demand exceeds capacity. Vehicles are operated at low speeds and often forced to stop completely. This level usually results in a queue with restricted downstream movement.

The following scenarios were evaluated and compared:

1. Existing condition – Riverside as-is (2013);
2. Riverside closed (2013);
3. Riverside closed with mitigation (2013);
4. Riverside closed with mitigation (future year)

The Riverside closed scenario was modeled under the assumption that a portion of the eastbound (EB) lane east of the intersection of Lamar and a portion of the westbound (WB) lane west of the intersection of S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. remain. The actual segment of Riverside Dr. to be closed was approximated. Access to/from the Long Center and Lee Barton Dr. was maintained using Riverside Dr. under this scenario. Through traffic on Riverside Dr. was evenly distributed between Cesar Chavez and Barton Springs. ADT counts on Riverside Dr. show a 20-30% difference between the location east of Lee Barton Dr. and the location east of the Long Center. This difference is caused by trips to/from the Long Center. Therefore, it was assumed that 80% of the existing peak hour traffic entering/leaving Riverside Dr. at the S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. and Lamar Blvd. intersections is through traffic, while the remaining 20% was assumed to include Butler Park as a trip origin or destination.

AM and PM peak periods and Mid-day (MD) Weekend traffic conditions were evaluated for each scenario. A field observation visit was performed in order to verify traffic conditions generated by the model, and the model was adjusted to more accurately depict existing traffic conditions for each scenario and time period. In some cases, the model could not accurately reproduce the observed traffic conditions due to limitations (see 'Limitations' section). For example, vehicles stopped at the mid-block of a roadway, waiting for gaps to access driveways, were not modeled.

### Data Collection and Summary

The following data was collected for traffic modeling and analysis:

- Existing traffic studies conducted for the Town Lake Park area (a review was conducted and summarized in a separate technical memo, see Appendix A)
- 7-day average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on major roadways, taken at 15-minute intervals, between December 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>;
- Turning movement counts (TMC) during AM (6-9) and PM (4-7) peak periods at study intersections, on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>; No MD Weekend TMC were collected, but were estimated based on MD Weekday TMC and the ADT difference between Weekend and Weekday.
- Signal timing data at intersections from the City of Austin;
- Field observation of traffic conditions, including queue length.

The ADT and TMC data are summarized in **Appendix B. Table 1** includes both weekday and weekly ADT volumes on major roadways, and **Figure 2** shows the peak hour TMC for study intersections. Several observations were made through data summary and field observation:

1. AM peak hour was generally from 7:45 AM to 8:45 AM, and PM peak hour was generally from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM.
2. Weekend traffic volumes were 27% lower than weekday traffic volumes on average. MD hourly volumes were 37% lower than peak hour traffic volumes on average; however, Riverside Dr. experienced a higher MD volume near S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on Saturday, most likely due to the "Nutcracker" Event held at the Long Center during this time.

3. Long queues were observed during PM peak hours on northbound (NB) Lamar approaching Lamar Bridge, southbound (SB) Lamar approaching Barton Springs Rd., SB S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. approaching Riverside Dr., and WB Barton Springs Rd. approaching Lamar Blvd.
4. An on-site state trooper stopped traffic on Barton Springs Rd. to facilitate the ingress and egress of Austin Energy employee parking lots located at the EB approach of the intersection of Barton Springs and S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, from 11 PM to 2 PM and 3 PM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. This caused significant delay and long traffic queues on Barton Springs Rd.
5. During peak hours, especially PM peak, noticeable pedestrian traffic was observed entering and exiting the park area at the intersections of Riverside Dr. at Lamar Blvd., Barton Springs Rd. at Lamar Blvd., Riverside Dr. at S. 1st St., Barton Springs Rd. at S. 1st St., Barton Springs Rd. at Riverside Dr., Barton Springs Rd. at Congress Ave., and Riverside Dr. at Congress Ave. Additionally, six pedestrian recall phases for the signals at these intersections were incorporated into the simulation in order to account for existing pedestrian traffic.

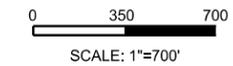
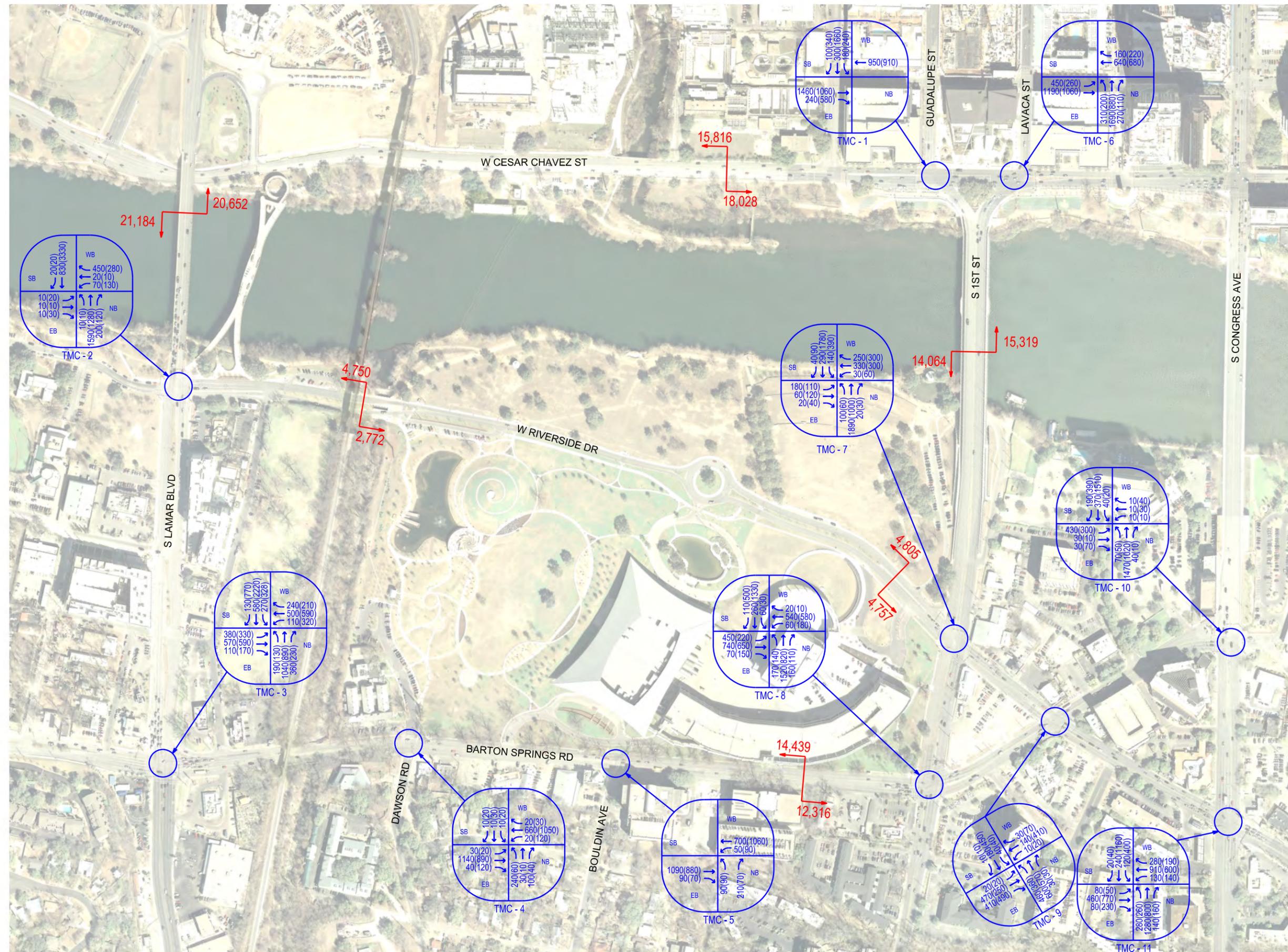
**Table 1 – ADT Volumes on Major Roadways**

Roadway	Weekday ADT	Weekly ADT	Weekend ADT
W. Riverside Dr. (west of S. 1 <sup>st</sup> St.)	9,600	8,300	7,500
W. Riverside Dr.: (east of Lee Barton Dr.)	7,500	6,800	4,900
Barton Springs Rd.: (west of S. 1 <sup>st</sup> St.)	26,800	24,800	20,000
Cesar Chavez St.: (west of San Antonio St.)	33,300	31,300	26,500
Lamar Blvd. Bridge (on Town Lake)	41,800	39,000	34,400
S. 1 <sup>st</sup> Bridge (on Town Lake)	29,400	26,100	17,800

Note: 1. Weekday ADT is the 5-day average Monday through Friday, weekly ADT is the 7-day average Sunday through Saturday.

2. Volumes are rounded to the nearest hundred.

For the Riverside Closed scenario, through traffic volumes on Riverside Dr. between S. 1<sup>st</sup> and Lamar were evenly distributed between Cesar Chavez and Barton Springs, and were further assigned to each intersection/movement based on their proportional turning percentage. **Figure 3** shows the redistributed traffic volumes for the Riverside Dr. closed scenarios.



**LEGEND**

XX(XX) AM(PM) Peak Hour Volume

**NOTES**

1. TRAFFIC COUNT DATA WAS COLLECTED BETWEEN DECEMBER 5TH TO DECEMBER 12TH, 2013.
2. ADT IS THE WEEKDAY AVERAGE.
3. TMC IS THE AM (PM) PEAK-HOUR VOLUMES.
4. TMC HAS BEEN ROUNDED UP TO THE NEAREST 10 VEHICLES.
5. TRAFFIC VOLUMES ALONG SOUTHBOUND LAMAR (PM), HAS BEEN ADJUSTED TO REFLECT HIGHEST DAILY VOLUME.

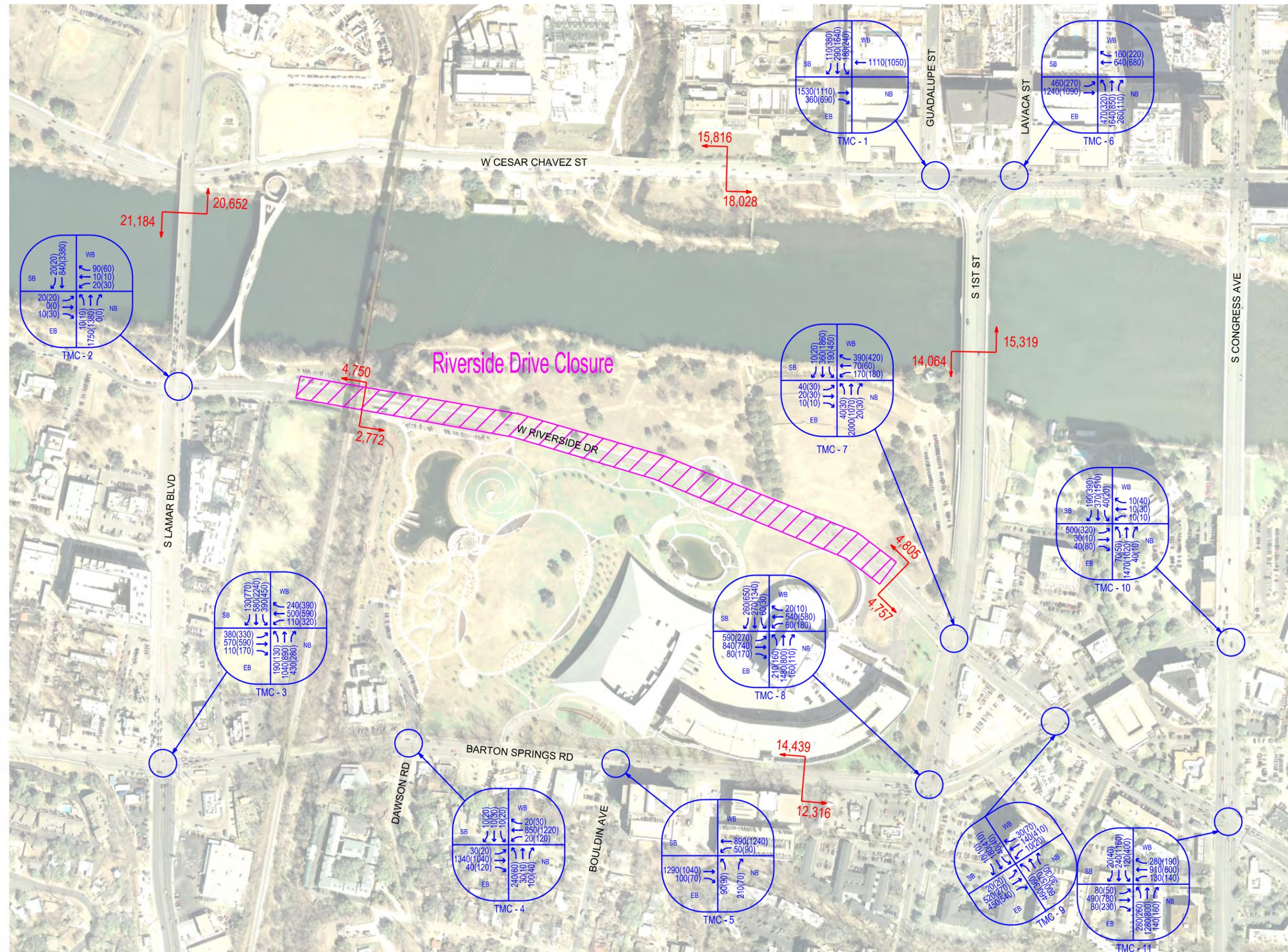


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TBPE REGISTRATION NO. F-3162

TOWN LAKE METROPOLITAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS

**FIGURE 2: TRAFFIC COUNTS - RIVERSIDE DRIVE AS IS**



0 350 700  
SCALE: 1"=700'

**LEGEND**

- CLOSED ROADWAY
- XX(X) AM(PM) PEAK HOUR VOLUME

**NOTES**

1. TRAFFIC COUNT DATA WAS COLLECTED BETWEEN DECEMBER 5TH TO DECEMBER 12TH, 2013.
2. ADT IS THE WEEKDAY AVERAGE.
3. TMC IS THE AM (PM) PEAK-HOUR VOLUMES.
4. HATCH AREA IS FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSE ONLY. THE ACTUAL ROAD ENDS ARE TO BE DETERMINED.
5. TMC HAS BEEN ROUNDED UP TO THE NEAREST 10 VEHICLES.
6. TRAFFIC VOLUMES ALONG SOUTHBOUND LAMAR (PM), HAS BEEN ADJUSTED TO REFLECT HIGHEST DAILY VOLUME.

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TBPE REGISTRATION NO. F-3162

TOWN LAKE METROPOLITAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS

**FIGURE 3: TRAFFIC COUNTS - RIVERSIDE DRIVE CLOSURE**

## Analysis Results

Traffic models were built in SYNCHRO based on the existing roadway/intersection geometry, speed, traffic volumes, and signal timing data. SYNCHRO is a macroscopic analysis and optimization software application, which implements the Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) method for determining intersection capacity and supports the HCM methodology. Traffic analysis results from the SYNCHRO model are summarized at the network level in **Table 2**.

**Table 2 – Network MOE Comparison**

Scenario	Total delay (hr.)		Total number of vehicles		Average delay per vehicle (second)	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
Existing condition	420	686	36,900	44,900	41	55
Riverside closed	498	812	39,000	46,400	46	63

The results are also summarized in **Tables 3 through 5** for AM, PM, and MD peak hours at corridor level, respectively. During AM peak, the arterial LOS was downgraded on EB Cesar Chavez St. from D to E. During PM peak, the arterial LOS was downgraded from E to F on EB Barton Springs Rd. During MD Weekend, the arterial LOS remained the same for all studied corridors.

**Table 3 – Corridor MOE Comparison (AM Peak)**

Corridor Name	Average Speed (mile/hour)		LOS	
	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario
Riverside (EB/WB)	9.4/ 11.1	N/A <sup>1</sup>	F/E	N/A <sup>1</sup>
Barton Springs (EB/WB)	10.6/8.4	10.1/8.5	E/F	E/F
Cesar Chavez (EB/WB)	14.3/6.1	13.7/5.0	D/F	E/F
Lamar (NB/SB)	10.5/20.6	12.2/23.4 <sup>2</sup>	E/C	E/C
S. 1 <sup>st</sup> (NB/SB)	6.1/16.2	6.1/16.9	F/D	F/D

**Table 4 – Corridor MOE Comparison (PM Peak)**

Corridor Name	Average Speed (mile/hour)		LOS	
	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario
Riverside (EB/WB)	9.5/12.8	N/A <sup>1</sup>	F/E	N/A <sup>1</sup>
Barton Springs (EB/WB)	10.6/8.9	9.6/8.9	E/F	F/F
Cesar Chavez (EB/WB)	17.1/8.3	17.1/7.8	D/E	D/E
Lamar (NB/SB)	7.3/2.6	8.8/3.5 <sup>2</sup>	F/F	F/F
S. 1 <sup>st</sup> (NB/SB)	5.6/13.5	5.4/13.2	F/E	F/E

The cells with shading indicate a downgrade in LOS. All intersections or arterials are marked in red and bold if they have a LOS of E or F.

**Table 5 – Corridor MOE Comparison (MD Weekend)**

Corridor Name	Average Speed (mile/hour)		LOS	
	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario	Existing Condition	Riverside Closed Scenario
Riverside (EB/WB)	11.4/13.7	N/A <sup>1</sup>	<b>E/E</b>	N/A <sup>1</sup>
Barton Springs (EB/WB)	14.2/11.5	14.1/11.5	<b>D/E</b>	<b>D/E</b>
Cesar Chavez (EB/WB)	17.6/9.3	17.7/9.1	D/D	D/D
Lamar (NB/SB)	14.3/19.4	16.9/23.0 <sup>2</sup>	D/C	D/C
S. 1 <sup>st</sup> (NB/SB)	6.2/14.6	6.4/14.5	<b>F/D</b>	<b>F/D</b>

- Note:
1. Riverside was not evaluated for corridor performance when closed to through traffic.
  2. Lamar’s average speed improved after changing the intersection of Lamar and Riverside Dr. from signalized to free flow for NB and SB traffic.

The impact of closing Riverside Dr. was also evaluated in detail at the intersection and approach levels. **Tables 6 to 8** compare the intersection MOE for the two scenarios at AM, PM, and MD levels, respectively. The cells with vertical shading indicate an increase in delay, an increase in volume to capacity ratio (V/C), or a downgrade in LOS, while cells with horizontal shading indicate a decrease in delay, a decrease in V/C, or an upgrade in LOS upon the closure of Riverside Dr. Since most (around 90%) of the WB traffic using Riverside Dr. is through traffic, the closure of Riverside Dr. will lead to a significant decline in WB approach traffic at the intersection of S. Lamar Blvd. and Riverside Dr. The EB and WB traffic at S. Lamar Blvd and Riverside Drive may not warrant a signalized intersection and the intersection was therefore changed to an un-signalized intersection with two-way stop signs on the EB and WB approaches.

Average vehicle delay is a critical component in calculating LOS – its absolute value, not the relative value, shall be the focus. For instance, if average delay increases from 10 seconds to 20 seconds, the intersection may still function very well. However, if the delay increases from 45 seconds to 55 seconds, the intersection is more likely to fail with LOS E.

**Table 6 – Intersection MOE Comparison (AM Peak)**

ID	Intersection Location	Existing Condition			Riverside Closed Scenario		
		LOS	Delay (s)	V/C	LOS	Delay (s)	V/C
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	B	18.60	0.51	C	24.90	0.57
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	C	24.20	0.73	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	48.00	0.79	<b>E</b>	<b>59.60</b>	<b>1.00</b>
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	38.30	0.68	C	32.70	0.74
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	11.80	0.48	B	11.40	0.57
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	D	36.90	1.00	D	40.30	1.03
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	C	33.90	0.86	D	36.50	0.79
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	<b>E</b>	<b>55.40</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>74.80</b>	<b>0.96</b>
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	17.50	0.58	B	18.50	0.60
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	44.80	0.56	D	46.90	0.59
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	<b>E</b>	<b>65.40</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>65.40</b>	<b>0.85</b>

**Table 7 – Intersection MOE Comparison (PM Peak)**

ID	Intersection Location	Existing Condition			Riverside Closed Scenario		
		LOS	Delay (s)	V/C	LOS	Delay (s)	V/C
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	C	20.80	0.98	C	26.70	1.07
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	<b>F</b>	<b>156.50</b>	<b>1.30</b>	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	<b>F</b>	<b>111.30</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>110.40</b>	<b>1.18</b>
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	10.30	0.43	A	9.60	0.50
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	10.90	0.41	B	10.50	0.47
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	C	21.90	0.74	C	22.10	0.77
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	D	46.90	0.79	<b>E</b>	<b>63.60</b>	<b>0.81</b>
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	43.70	0.96	<b>E</b>	<b>55.10</b>	<b>1.01</b>
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	21.80	0.57	C	21.90	0.58
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	29.60	0.67	C	32.40	0.68
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	D	40.70	0.79	D	41.50	0.79

Note: Intersection 1 has V/C >1 because its EBR has more volume than capacity, which affects the overall intersection. However, the LOS for other turning movements and approaches are acceptable.

**Table 8 – Intersection MOE Comparison (MD Weekend)**

ID	Intersection Location	Existing Condition			Riverside Closed Scenario		
		LOS	Delay (s)	V/C	LOS	Delay (s)	V/C
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	B	13.80	0.43	B	14.50	0.48
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	B	14.50	0.58	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	37.10	0.61	D	38.80	0.65
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	A	7.80	0.35	A	7.40	0.37
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	A	9.00	0.29	A	8.60	0.32
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	B	15.50	0.43	B	15.50	0.44
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	C	30.90	0.45	C	31.00	0.44
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	43.50	0.55	D	46.60	0.58
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	17.10	0.47	B	16.90	0.48
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	36.60	0.32	D	36.60	0.32
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	D	40.00	0.58	D	40.20	0.58

Tables 9 to 11 compare the average delay by approach for scenarios AM, PM, and MD weekend, respectively. Approaches with LOS worse than D are underlined and bolded; the cells with shades indicate a downgrade in LOS. Approaches with LOS E or LOS F are marked in red text.

**Table 9 – Intersection Approach MOE Comparison (AM Peak)**

ID	Intersection Location	Delay - Existing Condition (s)				Delay - Riverside Closed Scenario (s)			
		EB	WB	NB	SB	EB	WB	NB	SB
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	25.4	11.6	-	9.6	26.4	30.2	-	9.6
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	42.8	53.0	23.1	7.7	-	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	52.7	<b><u>85.8</u></b>	33.1	34.2	52.7	<b><u>79.5</u></b>	33.8	<b><u>86.7</u></b>
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	3.1	8.8	<b><u>208.5</u></b>	42.6	3.0	7.8	<b><u>205.0</u></b>	<b><u>42.4</u></b>
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	6.4	6.0	47.8	-	5.9	7.4	49.7	-
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	42.7	<b><u>55.5</u></b>	26.1	-	45.9	<b><u>55.3</u></b>	31.2	-
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	<b><u>76.5</u></b>	<b><u>59.0</u></b>	20.2	36.1	40.1	<b><u>60.3</u></b>	23.2	<b><u>58.5</u></b>
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	<b><u>55.9</u></b>	44.9	<b><u>65.5</u></b>	25.2	<b><u>99.3</u></b>	44.9	<b><u>82.1</u></b>	20.1
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	14.9	<b><u>56.6</u></b>	9.6	35.3	17.0	<b><u>56.7</u></b>	9.6	37.7
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	<b><u>56.7</u></b>	54.5	49.6	21.6	<b><u>65.7</u></b>	54.5	49.7	21.9
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	45.8	49.2	<b><u>85.6</u></b>	<b><u>63.7</u></b>	46.7	49.0	<b><u>85.6</u></b>	<b><u>63.5</u></b>

**Table 10 – Intersection Approach MOE Comparison (PM Peak)**

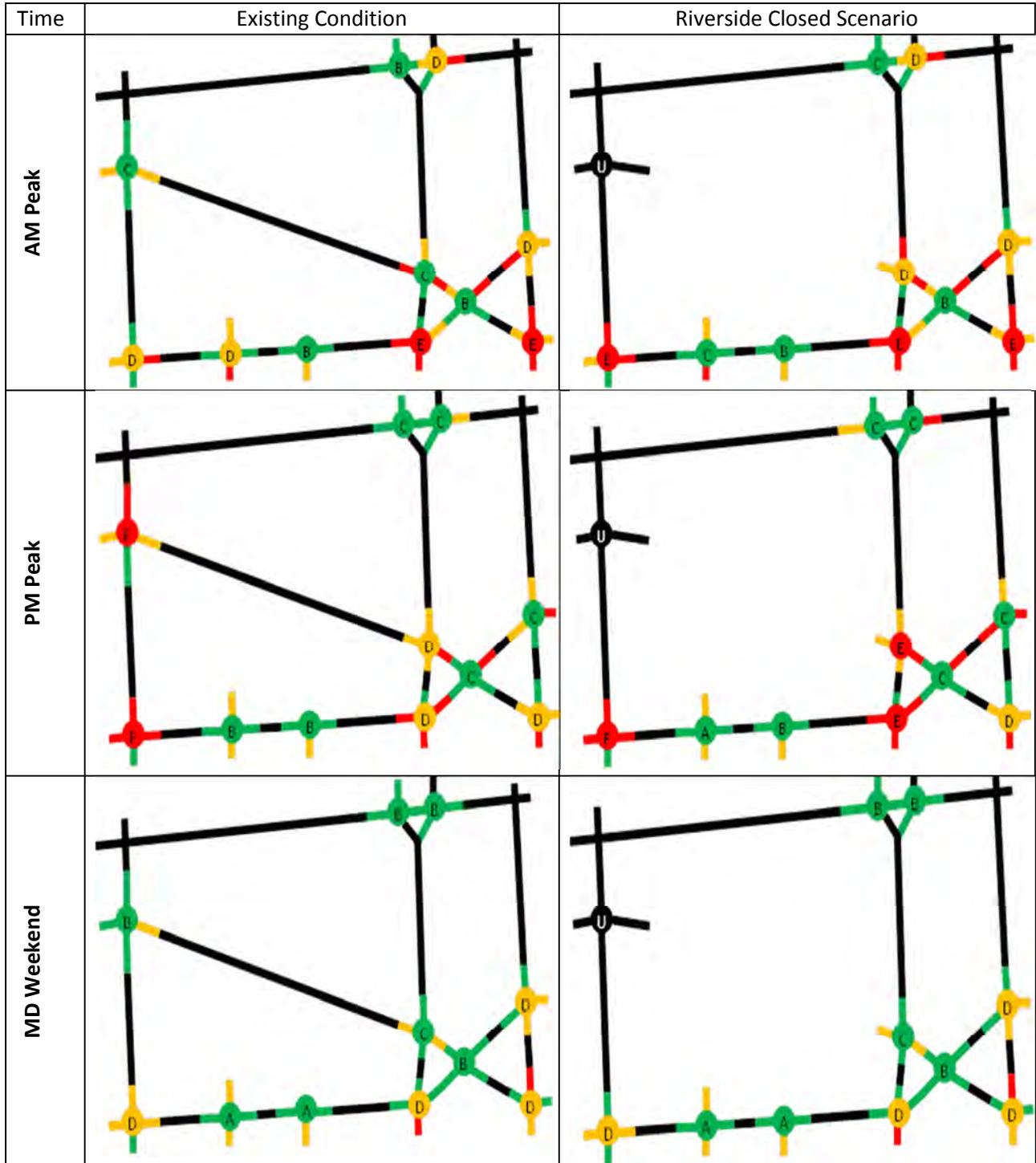
ID	Intersection Location	Delay - Existing Condition (s)				Delay - Riverside Closed Scenario (s)			
		EB	WB	NB	SB	EB	WB	NB	SB
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	24.8	7.5	-	23.3	40.0	11.9	-	23.0
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	41.7	50.1	20.9	<u>228.9</u>	-	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>81.6</u>	<u>89.1</u>	32.5	<u>158.0</u>	<u>81.6</u>	<u>80.2</u>	32.7	<u>160.1</u>
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	6.1	8.5	48.0	44.6	5.6	8.2	48.0	44.6
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	10.9	6.3	44.3	-	9.8	7.2	44.3	-
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	12.0	36.2	22.2	-	12.1	36.1	23.0	-
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	44.9	<u>64.8</u>	46.0	42.3	39.0	<u>139.2</u>	50.0	49.5
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>57.3</u>	<u>61.0</u>	<u>55.6</u>	22.2	<u>92.7</u>	<u>61.8</u>	<u>71.0</u>	25.5
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	12.7	<u>56.9</u>	14.5	14.6	15.8	<u>56.9</u>	13.8	11.6
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	43.3	<u>55.4</u>	8.5	37.7	<u>66.0</u>	<u>55.4</u>	8.5	37.7
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	40.4	38.0	<u>62.4</u>	25.7	44.5	38.0	<u>62.4</u>	25.7

**Table 11 – Intersection Approach MOE Comparison (MD Weekend)**

ID	Intersection Location	Delay - Existing Condition (s)				Delay - Riverside Closed Scenario (s)			
		EB	WB	NB	SB	EB	WB	NB	SB
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	16.8	10.5	-	12.1	17.8	11.8	-	12.1
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	32.8	38.5	11.4	10.0	-	-	-	-
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	40.7	47.5	32.1	35.1	40.7	51.1	32.1	31.5
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	4.7	5.0	39.0	35.5	4.3	4.9	39.0	35.5
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	9.8	6.6	35.5	-	9.2	6.7	35.5	-
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	10.6	27.3	14.2	-	10.4	27.3	14.3	-
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	39.0	46.3	23.7	24.9	38.3	49.4	22.4	25.3
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	26.7	32.3	<b>78.5</b>	31.0	30.7	32.4	<b>87.3</b>	32.3
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	11.8	32.0	12.3	27.3	11.5	32.0	12.2	27.5
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	27.1	46.9	50.9	22.5	27.3	46.9	50.9	22.5
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	28.1	33.0	41.2	57.6	29.0	33.1	41.2	57.6

Stick diagrams were created to depict the changes in LOS at each intersection and approach before and after closure of Riverside Dr. for AM peak, PM peak, and MD Weekend, respectively, and are presented as **Figure 4**.

Figure 4--Intersection LOS and Approach stick diagram



The analysis results show that **traffic on several major roadways and intersections suffers from unacceptable LOS even in the existing condition**. Both the Barton Springs and Cesar Chavez corridors are operating under an unacceptable LOS. Closure of Riverside Dr. without mitigation (no-build) will result in the following:

During AM Peak:

- Lamar Blvd. at Barton Springs Rd.: The intersection LOS is impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS;
- S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. at W. Riverside Dr.: The intersection LOS is impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and functions at an acceptable LOS ;
- Barton Springs Rd. at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.: The intersection LOS is not impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS.
- S. Congress Avenue at Riverside Dr.: The intersection LOS is not impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS.

During PM peak:

- S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. at W. Riverside Dr.: The intersection LOS is impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS.
- Barton Springs Rd. at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.: The intersection LOS is impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS.
- S. Lamar Blvd at Barton Springs Rd: The intersection LOS is not impaired due to the closure of Riverside Dr. and does NOT function at an acceptable LOS.

During MD Weekend:

- Barton Springs Rd. at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.: The intersection functions overall at an acceptable LOS with Riverside closed, but will experience unacceptable LOS for NB traffic.

Additionally, the actual LOS and delay for the Barton Springs Rd.-S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. intersection and EB approach could be worse than the simulation results, due to the disruption of traffic by state troopers at the Austin Energy parking lot , as previously described.

## **Mitigation**

Mitigation measures were also included to identify the solutions required to improve traffic conditions under the Riverside Closed scenario to at least the existing LOS. Local stakeholders have discussed several options with the City to improve congestion at Barton Springs and Riverside. The following mitigation options were explored based on these discussions and our further study:

- A. Riverside limited to one-way, WB traffic between Barton Springs and S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. Barton Springs limited to one-way, EB traffic, between S. 1st and Riverside.

- B. Riverside Dr. closed to through traffic from S. 1st to Lamar. Both left turn movements from Riverside to Barton Springs disabled. Dual left turns provided on WB Riverside Dr. to SB S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.
- C. Conventional mitigation by additional lanes at each approach to the intersection of Barton Springs Rd. and Lamar Blvd.; additional lanes at EB and WB approach to the intersection of Barton Springs Rd. and S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.; additional lane added at north-westbound (NWB) approach and lane re-designations for the intersection of Riverside Dr. and S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.; lane re-designation of EB approach for the intersection of Cesar Chavez St. and Guadalupe St.

The mitigation concepts and their respective intersection performance results are presented in **Tables 12 to 15**. Intersection signal timing and coordination were optimized for all four mitigation methods. As indicated in the tables, Options A and C are not desirable mitigation methods primarily due to their negative impacts on LOS for the intersections of S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. at Barton Springs Rd. (#8) and Congress Ave. at Barton Springs Rd. (#10) during the PM peak. In the meantime, both Options B and C provide viable solutions, as none of the intersections experience a significant downgrade in LOS relative to the current existing LOS with Riverside Dr. In addition, only Options B and C result in decreased total delay and average delay per vehicle at the network level for both AM and PM peak hours.

Option B eliminates the left turn movement from Riverside Dr. to Barton Springs Rd., allowing more vehicles through the intersection. Option B is preferred because it is low-cost and improves upon the existing condition and the Riverside Dr. closed scenario. However, similar to other alternatives, this option does not address the congestion problem on S. Lamar Blvd.

Option C uses additional lanes to meet demand, primarily at the intersection of Barton Springs Rd. and Lamar Blvd. By adding lanes on each approach, the delay can be cut in half. Option C is most effective for alleviating poor traffic conditions network-wide; however, this option incurs high construction costs, including relocation of several bus stops and significant right-of-way acquisition.

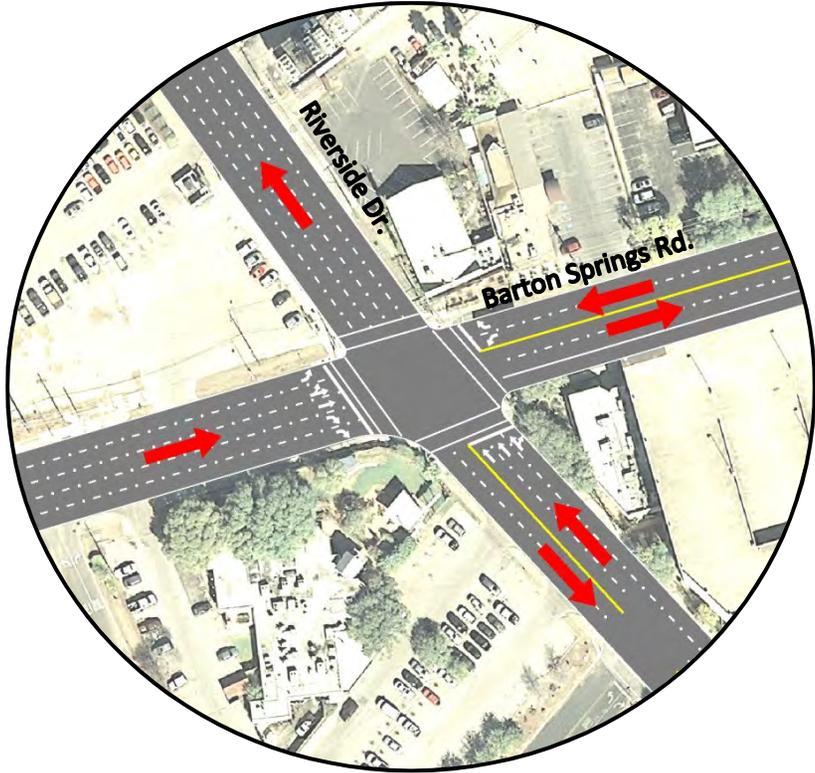
The following provides an estimated cost for each option. These costs are only for projects related to each improvement scenario, not including the cost to close Riverside Drive itself and associated cost to convert the pavement to landscaping/park.

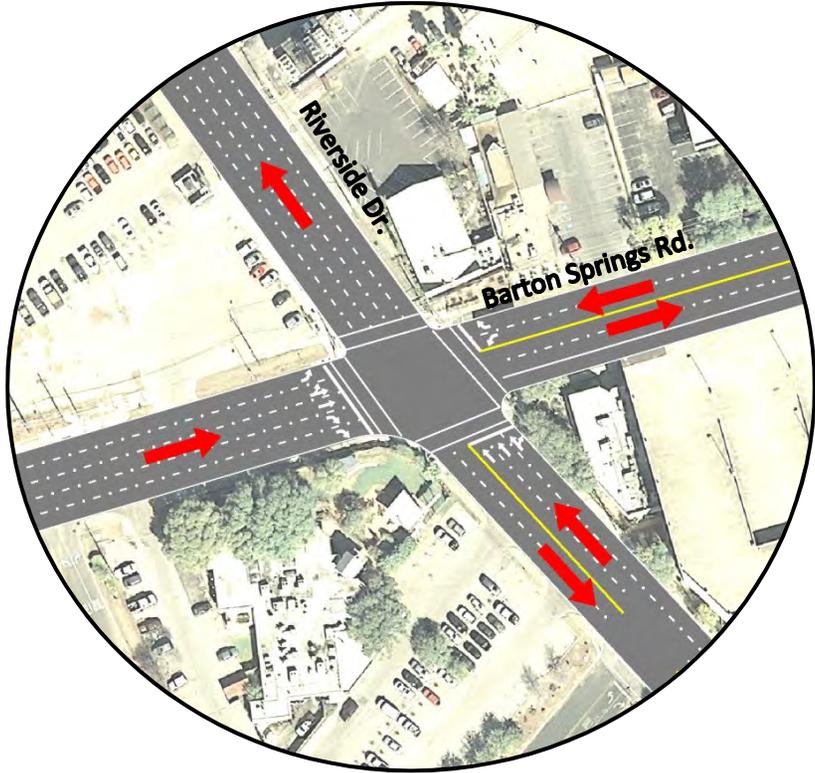
Option A: \$1.6 Million - \$2.0 Million

Option B: \$2.0 Million - \$3.0 Million

Option C: \$18 Million - \$23 Million

**Table 12—Evaluation of Mitigation Option A**

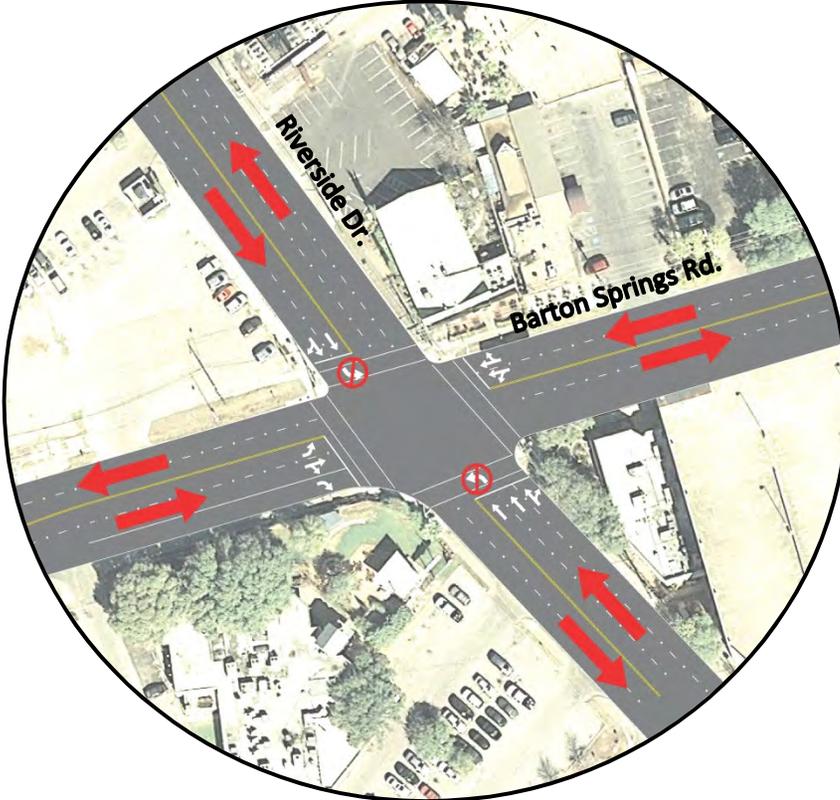
Time	ID	Riverside Closed			Mitigation Option A			Mitigation Option A: Riverside changed to one-way WB between Barton Springs and S. 1st; Barton Springs changed to one-way EB between S. 1st and Riverside.
		LOS	Delay (s)	V/C	LOS	Delay (s)	V/C	
AM Peak	1	C	24.90	0.57	B	14.80	0.56	
	2	Un-signalized			Un-signalized			
	3	E	59.60	1.00	D	51.20	0.80	
	4	C	32.70	0.74	C	23.90	0.75	
	5	B	11.40	0.57	B	11.90	0.58	
	6	D	40.30	1.03	D	41.70	1.02	
	7	D	36.50	0.79	C	34.10	0.80	
	8	E	74.80	0.96	E	58.50	0.92	
	9	B	18.50	0.60	B	13.70	0.56	
	10	D	46.90	0.59	C	27.00	0.58	
	11	E	65.40	0.85	D	47.40	0.84	
PM Peak	1	C	26.70	1.07	C	28.40	1.11	<p>Note: Intersection signal has been optimized to obtain the best intersection performance, given the original cycle length to remain unchanged.</p>
	2	Un-signalized			Un-signalized			
	3	F	110.40	1.18	F	94.00	1.16	
	4	A	9.60	0.50	A	9.60	0.49	
	5	B	10.50	0.47	B	10.10	0.47	
	6	C	22.10	0.77	C	22.70	0.75	
	7	E	63.60	0.81	E	65.30	0.97	
	8	E	55.10	1.01	F	88.30	1.14	
	9	C	21.90	0.58	D	39.30	0.68	
	10	C	32.40	0.68	E	60.10	0.64	
	11	D	41.50	0.79	D	36.50	0.76	



Note: Intersection signal has been optimized to obtain the best intersection performance, given the original cycle length to remain unchanged.

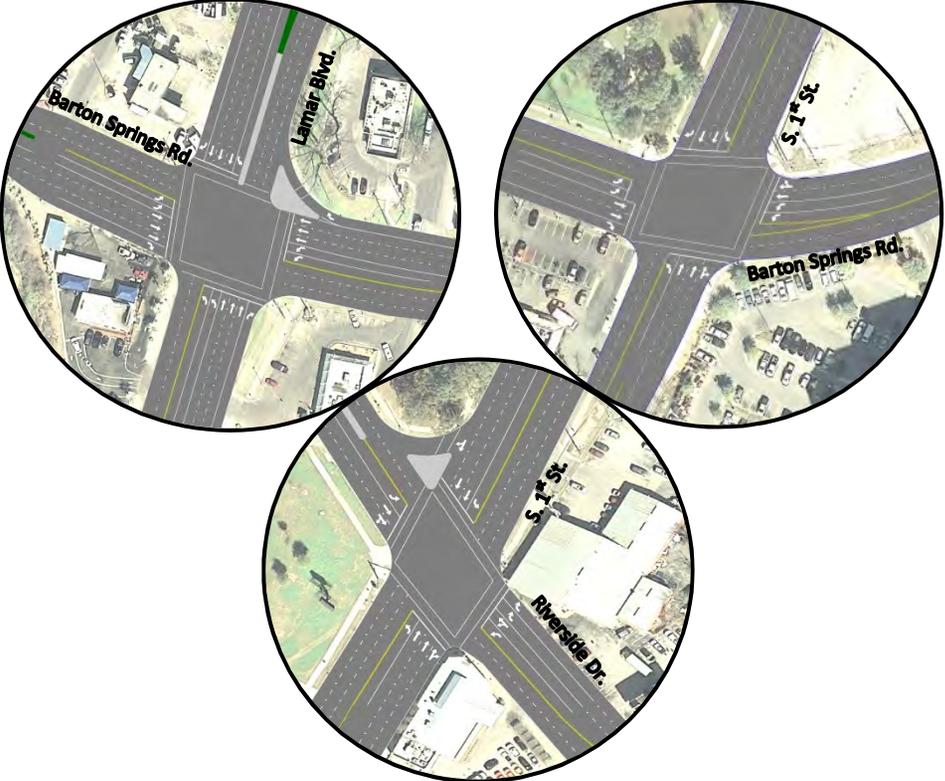
**Table 13—Evaluation of Mitigation Option B**

Time	ID	Riverside Closed			Mitigation Option B			Mitigation Option B: Disable both left turn movements from Riverside to Barton Springs. Convert the LT lane to NB through lane.
		LOS	Delay	V/C	LOS	Delay	V/C	
AM Peak	1	C	24.90	0.57	B	14.80	0.56	
	2	Un-signalized			Un-signalized			
	3	E	59.60	1.00	D	52.40	0.80	
	4	C	32.70	0.74	C	26.70	0.75	
	5	B	11.40	0.57	A	8.50	0.58	
	6	D	40.30	1.03	D	41.70	1.02	
	7	D	36.50	0.79	D	48.40	0.86	
	8	E	74.80	0.96	D	44.40	0.89	
	9	B	18.50	0.60	C	27.50	0.61	
	10	D	46.90	0.59	B	17.20	0.56	
	11	E	65.40	0.85	D	44.10	0.86	
PM Peak	1	C	26.70	1.07	C	28.40	1.11	
	2	Un-signalized			Un-signalized			
	3	F	110.40	1.18	F	95.50	1.16	
	4	A	9.60	0.50	B	10.70	0.49	
	5	B	10.50	0.47	A	8.80	0.47	
	6	C	22.10	0.77	C	22.70	0.75	
	7	E	63.60	0.81	D	49.10	0.83	
	8	E	55.10	1.01	D	46.90	1.04	
	9	C	21.90	0.58	C	20.70	0.57	
	10	C	32.40	0.68	C	24.10	0.63	
	11	D	41.50	0.79	D	36.40	0.77	



Note: Intersection signal has been optimized to obtain the best intersection performance, given the original cycle length to remain unchanged.

**Table 15—Evaluation of Mitigation Option C**

Time	ID	Riverside Closed			Mitigation Option C			Mitigation Option C: Add additional lanes to intersections requiring greater capacity. Lanes added to intersections of Lamar & Barton Springs (EB through, WB through, NB left turn, & SB through), Barton Springs & S. 1st (EB right turn & WB left turn), and Riverside & S. 1st (NWB turn lane).
		LOS	Delay	V/C	LOS	Delay	V/C	
AM Peak	1	C	24.90	0.5	B	16.30	0.56	
	2	Un-signalized			Un-signalized			
	3	E	59.60	1	D	46.40	0.76	
	4	C	32.70	0.7	D	35.40	0.75	
	5	B	11.40	0.5	B	11.30	0.57	
	6	D	40.30	1.0	D	40.10	1.02	
	7	D	36.50	0.7	D	50.40	0.76	
	8	E	74.80	0.9	D	50.10	0.84	
	9	B	18.50	0.6	C	20.60	0.58	
	10	D	46.90	0.5	C	20.50	0.58	
	11	E	65.40	0.8	D	41.50	0.84	
PM Peak	ID	LOS	Delay	V/C	LOS	Delay	V/C	<p>Note: Intersection signal has been optimized to obtain the best intersection performance, given the original cycle length to remain unchanged.</p>
	1	C	26.70	1.0	C	20.60	0.96	
	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3	F	110.40	1.1	E	56.30	0.87	
	4	A	9.60	0.5	B	11.40	0.50	
	5	B	10.50	0.4	A	5.50	0.52	
	6	C	22.10	0.7	B	19.70	0.77	
	7	E	63.60	0.8	D	49.10	0.82	
	8	E	55.10	1.0	D	38.50	0.93	
	9	C	21.90	0.5	C	24.50	0.59	
	10	C	32.40	0.6	B	17.50	0.64	
11	D	41.50	0.7	D	37.50	0.75		

## Future/Additional Traffic

Given that Mitigation Option B is the preferred short term solution, the capacity of the network to absorb additional traffic was also explored. According to the CAMPO planning model, traffic in this area will grow by 1% annually, which amounts to a 28.2% total increase in traffic over 25 years. There will be failure at intersection level during peak hours on each of the major corridors studied, including key intersections at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. / Barton Springs Rd., S. Lamar Blvd. / Barton Springs Rd., and S. Congress Ave. / Riverside Dr.

Detailed future traffic data is provided in **Table 16**.

The MD weekend scenario, in which an additional 3,000 vehicles/hour assumed and generated by special events at the Town Lake Metropolitan Park, was also evaluated. As shown in **Table 17**, the intersection of S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. and Riverside Dr. will operate with unacceptable delay.

**Table 16—Riverside Dr. Closed with Mitigation Option B in 25 years**

Time	ID	Location	LOS	Delay (s)	V/C
AM Peak	1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	B	14.50	0.73
	2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	Un-signalized		
	3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>E</u>	<u>71.60</u>	<u>1.05</u>
	4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	32.30	0.96
	5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	A	9.80	0.78
	6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	<u>F</u>	<u>128.10</u>	<u>1.32</u>
	7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	<u>F</u>	<u>107.40</u>	<u>1.13</u>
	8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>F</u>	<u>103.90</u>	<u>1.27</u>
	9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	26.80	0.77
	10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	19.20	0.72
	11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	<u>F</u>	<u>82.20</u>	<u>1.11</u>
PM peak	1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	<u>E</u>	<u>77.60</u>	<u>1.39</u>
	2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	Un-signalized		
	3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>F</u>	<u>182.90</u>	<u>1.52</u>
	4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	24.50	1.25
	5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	A	8.10	0.6
	6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	C	31.10	0.98
	7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	<u>F</u>	<u>85.70</u>	<u>1.09</u>
	8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	<u>F</u>	<u>122.10</u>	<u>1.39</u>
	9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	25.10	0.75
	10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	C	23.40	0.81
	11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	D	47.50	0.95

**Table 17—Riverside Dr. Closed with Mitigation Option B for MD Weekend**

ID	Location	Mitigation Option B added 3000 vph		
		LOS	Delay (s)	V/C
1	Guadalupe/S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	C	24.80	1.07
2	S. Lamar Blvd. & W. Riverside Dr.	Un-signalized		
3	S. Lamar Blvd. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	43.70	0.89
4	Dawson Rd. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	15.50	0.60
5	Bouldin Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	A	3.50	0.55
6	Lavaca St./S. 1st St. & Cesar Chavez St.	B	17.90	0.44
7	S. 1st St. & W. Riverside Dr.	<b><u>F</u></b>	<b><u>410.20</u></b>	<b><u>2.16</u></b>
8	S. 1st St. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	46.50	0.84
9	Riverside Dr. & Barton Springs Rd.	B	19.40	0.66
10	S. Congress Ave. & Barton Springs Rd.	D	35.30	0.32
11	S. Congress Ave. & Riverside Dr.	D	38.30	0.71

It is assumed that the intersection of S. Lamar Blvd and W. Riverside Drive will be unsignalized, note this assumption may not hold because of the pedestrian crossings at this intersection. Additional pedestrian study need to be conducted to evaluate whether this is feasible to make it unsignalized.

Time	Riverside Closed with Mitigation Option B	Riverside Closed with Mitigation Option B in 25 years (AM, PM peak) or Special Event (Additional 3000 vph) (MD Weekend)
AM Peak		
PM Peak		
MD Weekend		

Figure 5--Riverside Dr. Closed With Mitigation Option B for MD Weekend

## Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the study:

- Several major roadways and intersections in the study area are operating at unacceptable LOS under existing conditions. Because several corridors/intersections are already over capacity, even under existing conditions, major improvements will be needed to mitigate the traffic conditions to an acceptable level.
- The closure of Riverside Dr. will have negative impacts on three major intersections: Barton Springs Rd. at Lamar Blvd., Barton Springs Rd. at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St., and W. Riverside Dr. at S. 1<sup>st</sup> St.
- For all three intersections, LOS downgraded from D to E with an increase in delay of at least 10 seconds. At the corridor level, EB Cesar Chavez St. and EB Barton Springs Rd. experienced downgraded LOS for AM and PM peaks, respectively. At the network level, the delay increased by 5 and 11 seconds per vehicle for AM and PM peaks, respectively.
- With certain mitigation methods, such as Mitigation Option B, it is feasible but not desirable to close Riverside Dr. and improve existing traffic volumes in the short term.
- Traffic operations at major corridors/intersections will still fall to unacceptable levels in the long term (20-25 years) or as major activities are added to the Town Lake Park Area for both Riverside Dr. as is and Riverside Dr. Closed with mitigation option B scenarios. In these occasions, more dramatic measures or active Travel Demand Management will be needed to improve the traffic conditions.

## Limitations

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. This is a high level traffic analysis. No microscopic traffic simulation modeling such as VISSIM or CORSIM was included in this study.
2. No pedestrian, bike, or transit movements were modeled or analyzed in this study, which may have an impact on traffic operation.
3. When Riverside is closed, the Lamar-Riverside intersection was assumed to be stop-controlled because the traffic volume may not warrant a signal, however, a pedestrian signal may still be needed.
4. Future development, such as the development at the corner of Barton Springs and Riverside, may add traffic in this area and is not included in this analysis.
5. Future transportation projects, such as the proposed urban rail connecting Downtown Austin to Riverside Dr., may have a significant impact on traffic distribution and travel mode in this area, and were not included in this study.

# Exhibit C



# Exhibit D



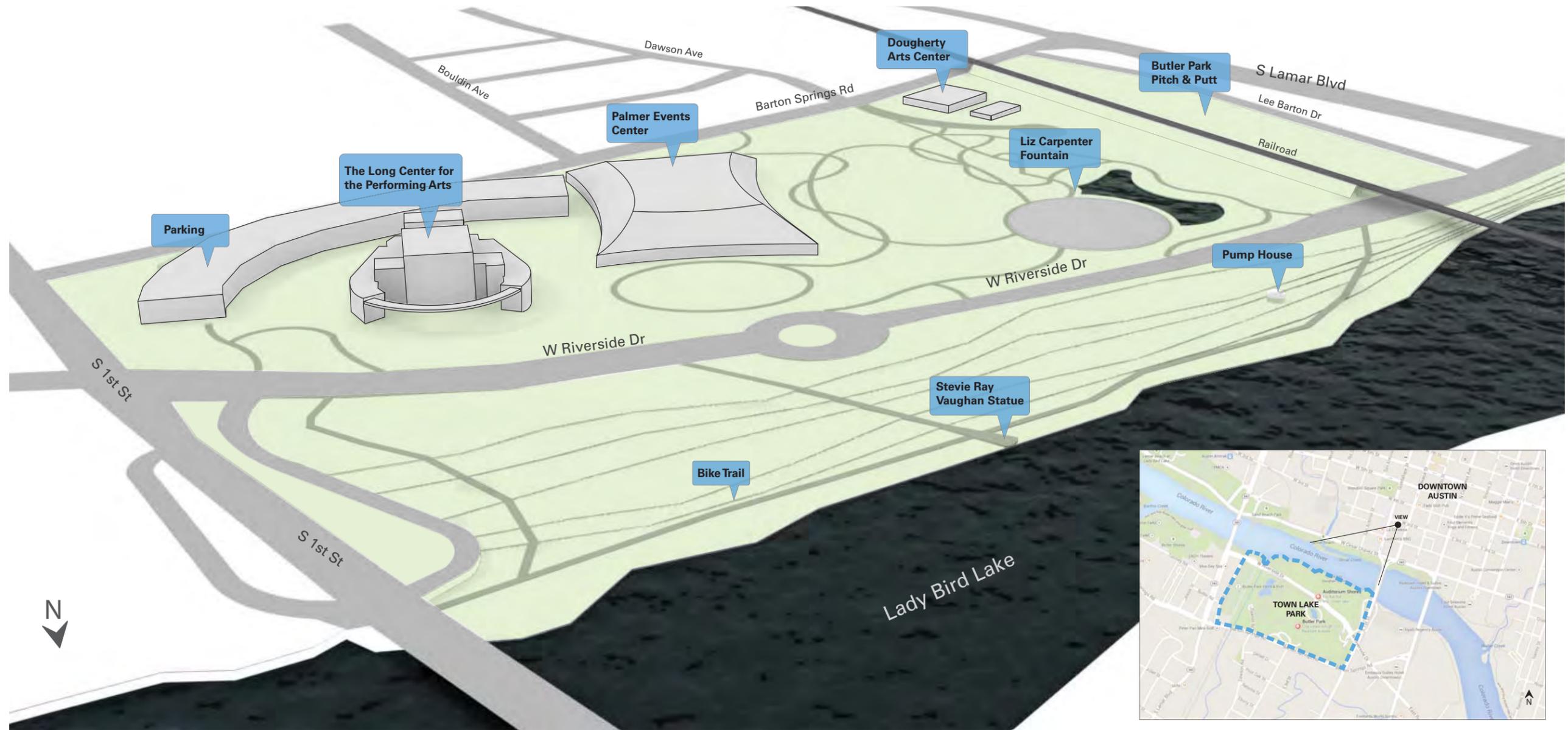
# TOWN LAKE PARK

AUSTIN, TX

07 JULY 2014

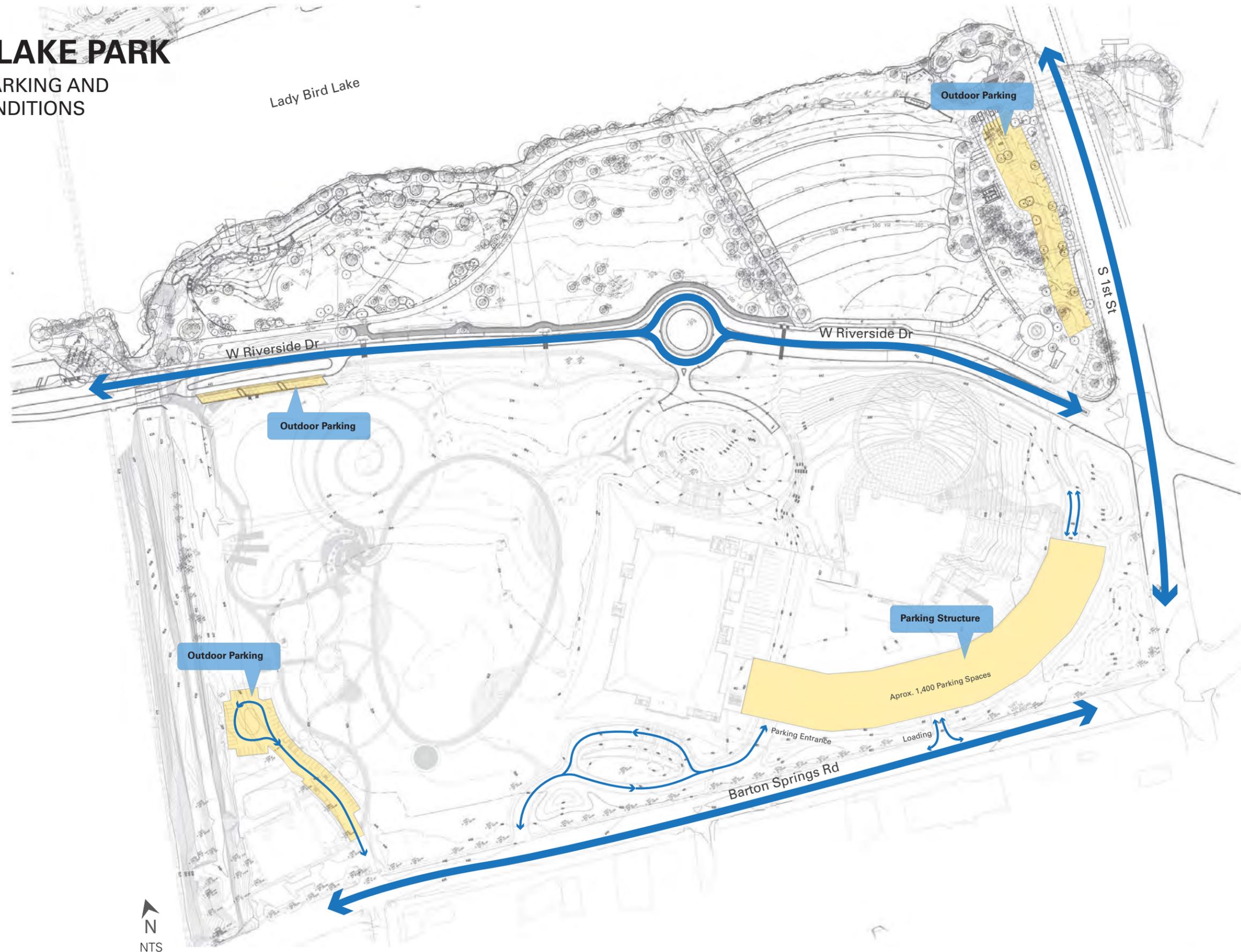
# TOWN LAKE PARK

EXISTING CONDITIONS



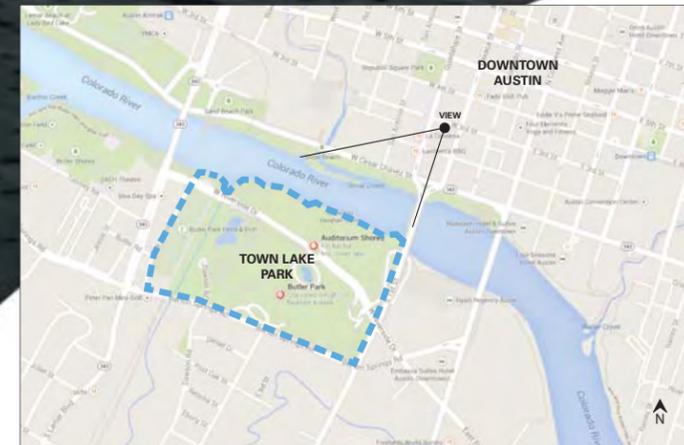
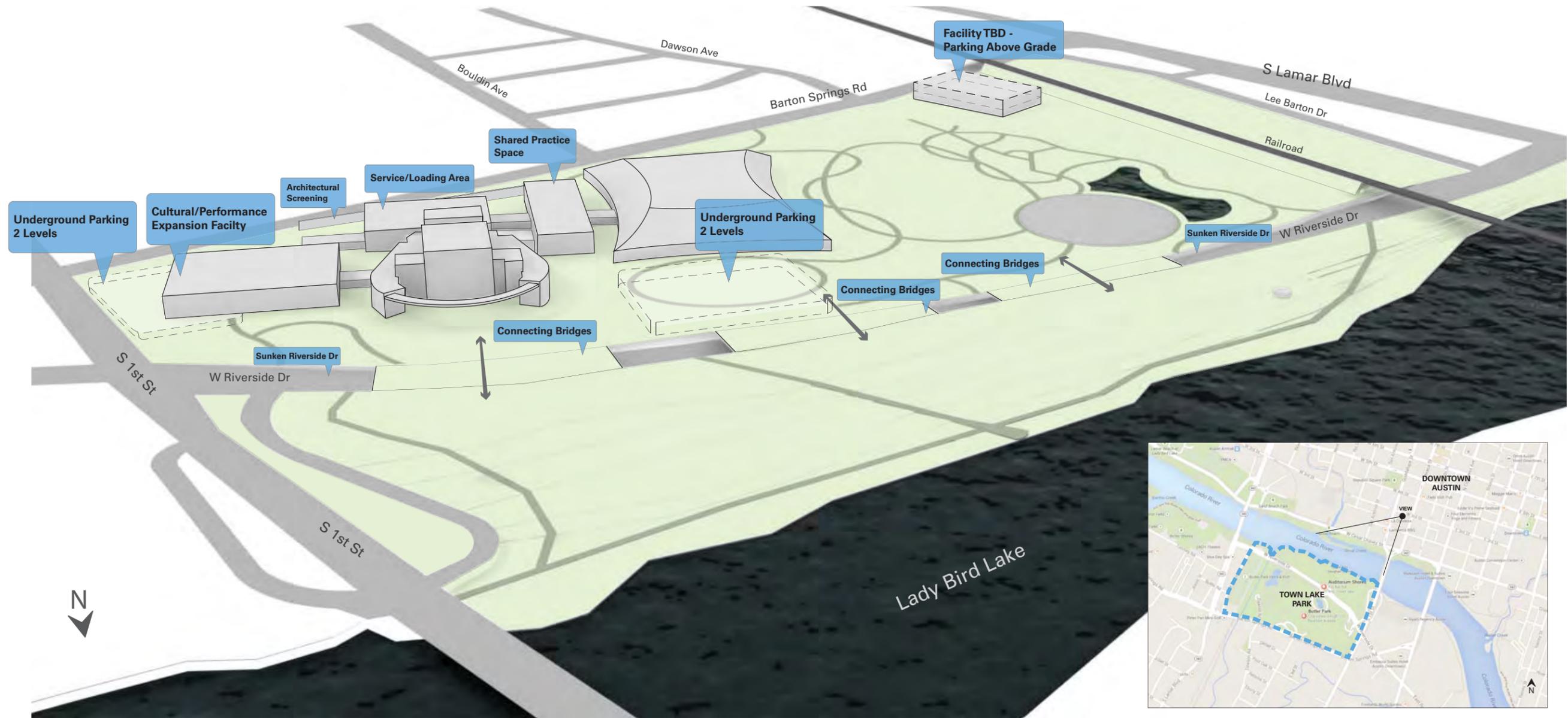
# TOWN LAKE PARK

EXISTING PARKING AND ACCESS CONDITIONS



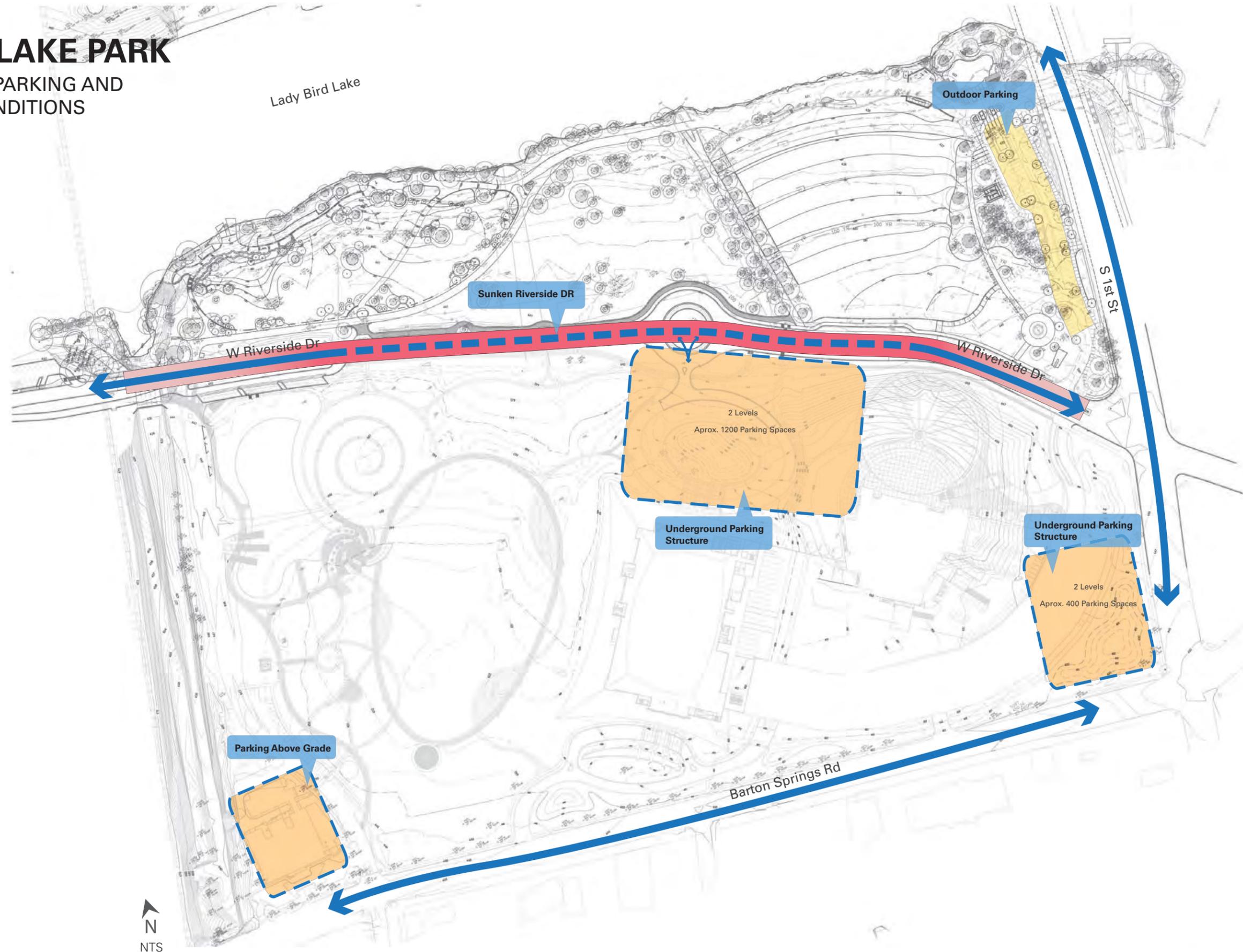
# TOWN LAKE PARK

## PROPOSED CONDITIONS



# TOWN LAKE PARK

## PROPOSED PARKING AND ACCESS CONDITIONS



# TOWN LAKE PARK

PROPOSED GREEN SPACE AND  
NEW FACILITIES



# Exhibit E



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director  
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

**DATE:** July 28, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Town Lake Metropolitan Park Long-Term Redevelopment Study

Through Council Resolutions No. 20120823-082 and No. 20121011-081, the City Manager was directed to work with stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive analysis of impacts from events at Auditorium Shores and to provide a recommendation on a balanced solution that enhances public access and enjoyment of Austin's public park system. In coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department, the Austin Parks Foundation contracted with Tur Partners, a global advisory firm, to conduct this comprehensive analysis, with a focus on Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

Between September 2013 and May 2014, Tur Partners and the Austin Parks Foundation hosted a total of 4 public visioning sessions for Town Lake Metropolitan Park, which includes Auditorium Shores and Butler Park along Lady Bird Lake. An additional visioning session is scheduled for July 28, 2014. Tur Partners also conducted numerous smaller format meetings with stakeholders including neighborhood organizations, city officials, event organizers, cultural institutions, business leaders and many others. Tur Partners' final recommendations, which will aim to set a long-term vision for the park, are expected to be delivered in Fall of 2014. In consideration of extensive research, analysis, and discussions with stakeholders, Tur Partners presents to the City Council, prior to the 2015 budgeting process, the following immediately actionable recommendations under the Town Lake Metropolitan Park Long-Term Redevelopment Study:

1. Create a dedicated traffic management division under the Austin Police Department comprised of non-sworn staff trained specifically for managing and directing traffic.

**Challenge:** A variety of stakeholders cite major problems with traffic in and around Town Lake Metropolitan Park during major events. This has been a central point of feedback from neighborhood residents, patrons of the Long Center, the Palmer Events Center and many others. The final traffic study conducted by URS will suggest that some of the difficulties around traffic management are structural and will need to be addressed on a system-wide basis. However, through discussion with stakeholders and as a result of our observations of a variety of major events, it is clear that traffic problems during events are greatly exacerbated by (i) ingress and egress into the Palmer Center Garage and (ii) large crowds of pedestrians in and around the park. Although Austin Police Department ("APD") officers have traditionally supported cultural institutions and event organizers to manage this process, our analysis of existing policies and national best practices suggests that a dedicated traffic management division of non-sworn staff, managed by APD, can both provide top-of-

line crowd and traffic control while also minimizing the overall cost of service.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that, subject to a feasibility assessment by APD and the Austin Transportation Department (ATD), the City of Austin create and maintain a force of non-sworn, professionally trained city staff dedicated to managing traffic and crowds during events. We would recommend establishing this division under and managed by APD. But we also recommend that the division is closely coordinated with and responsive to ATD, in particular with respect to training guidelines as well as policies and procedures around traffic management. Cost of this division can largely be offset by revenues from cultural institutions and event organizers who are currently required to incur the costs to ATD for staffing Austin police at these events. The division can be staffed using a mix of full time and seasonal employees. We believe that the specialized nature of this unit will create a more effective mechanism for traffic management and will yield positive impacts on the level of service during large events. This proposed structure should also prove economically preferable given the lower cost point of traffic management staff compared to sworn officers. This approach will also free up police officers from event management, allowing them to remain assigned to neighborhoods focused on policing throughout the city. We further acknowledge that the implementation of this recommendation will require careful adherence to existing Texas state laws and/or revisions to existing legislation. And further that additional analysis must be completed by APD and ATD to confirm feasibility of the recommendation. In the event the recommendation moves forward, APD and ATD should work together to determine the best course of action for implementation, and should coordinate amongst each other and other stakeholders within the City of Austin to determine the nuances of the program required to position the program for success.

2. Establish residential parking permit zones applicable to major events on the shores.

**Challenge:** A variety of stakeholders, in particular neighborhood organizations, cite parking as a major issue with events at Town Lake Metropolitan Park. During major events, neighborhood residents have experienced a severe problem with event goers parking in the surrounding neighborhoods. The result of this behavior is (i) residents have difficulty parking in their own neighborhoods, (ii) there is increased traffic on residential streets and (iii) in some instances there is property damage resulting from the abundance of event goers within the neighborhoods. Currently many of the neighborhoods have implemented checkpoints during events that only allow residents to pass, the cost of which is typically passed along to event organizers. Many neighborhood residents, however, have found this approach very inconvenient and at times still ineffective.

**Recommendation:** We recommend instituting a resident-only permitted parking zone in the residential areas immediately surrounding Town Lake Metropolitan Park to the south and west that applies only to the major events at Auditorium Shores. During these event days, which will be determined by the City and publicly posted on the City of Austin's website, only residents possessing permits issued by the city for that zone will be permitted to park on the streets. Event organizers of these events should also be required to post notice on their event websites that the no parking zones are in effect. A policy for a limited number of guest permits can also be instituted. All violators will be ticketed and subject to towing. We also recommend substantially increasing the magnitude of the associated fine. The current fine for parking in a residential zone is \$40, or only \$25 if paid early, which is not much of a deterrent when compared to prevailing parking rates. We recommend a fine of \$100 or greater, which we believe is significant enough to alter behavior. These event-specific permitted parking zones will be distinct from the city's current Residential Permitted Parking zones, but implementation of the policy should be reflective of and coordinate with the existing zones. These zones could potentially also be extended and applied to other areas that incur large traffic related to major events if applicable.

3. Create a standing committee comprised of the chief executives of PARD, the Palmer Events Center and the Long Center to coordinate schedules of events within Town Lake Metropolitan Park. Increase lead time with which events are scheduled and contracted.

**Challenge:** Essentially all major stakeholders point out that the current scheduling and management of events needs to be better coordinated across the venues (Long Center, Palmer Center, Auditorium Shores). In those circumstances where all of the venues are simultaneously programmed, the infrastructure of the park and the surrounding neighborhoods bears a heavy burden, which weighs heavily both on attendees of those events as well as the neighborhoods.

**Recommendation:** Major events should be scheduled and contracted at least 2 years in advance. Moreover, the chief executives of each of the major venues (PARD, Convention Center Department and Long Center) need to have ongoing communication to ensure that the scheduling of major events takes into consideration full programming for Town Lake Metropolitan Park. The operators need to make sure that the traffic, crowds, sound and other residual impacts are managed comprehensively. In order to improve this communication, we recommend that a standing committee be established that meets, at minimum, quarterly to discuss and agree upon scheduling. We also recommend that this committee create a shared calendar and implement a standard set of procedures for dealing with any alterations to that schedule.

4. Increase maintenance fees assessed to organizers of events in the parks.

**Challenge:** The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department perennially finds itself in a maintenance budget shortfall. Auditorium Shores is currently undergoing a major renovation focused on improving the quality of its turf. But in order to ensure that Auditorium Shores retains the benefits of those improvements, PARD will need the resources to properly maintain the space. This situation is common across a number of parks within Austin that are currently undergoing major renovations.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that, during this budgeting process, PARD increase the maintenance fees paid by event organizers to more accurately reflect the actual maintenance burden generated by events on park spaces. The structure of this maintenance fee should reflect the size of events and the actual impact of those events on the park space. This fee should also be revisited annually and further increased as necessary. We also recognize that those events which are operated on a not-for-profit basis have different cost structures and may require a lower fee schedule. We also acknowledge that the fees assessed by PARD generally fall below many comparable cities. As part of the long term recommendations, we will further explore the fee structure and identify ways to further increase revenue from the parks, which may also include adjustments to or the allocation of the rental fee, per-ticket fee and/or other sources of revenue from events. We strongly believe that it is important these revenues stay within the parks system to further improve quality of the parks.

5. Make no changes to the current PARD policy limiting Auditorium Shores to 25 days per year for major events.

**Challenge:** A number of neighborhood residents and park goers have expressed concern with the number of large events that take place at the park. These large events, they believe, impose a large burden on the surrounding neighborhoods (e.g. challenges with traffic, parking and noise) and also hinder use of the park for recreational use. On the other hand, Austin is growing into a worldwide destination for festivals around music, the arts, technology, food, etc. These international festivals generate a great deal of revenue for the city and also help to make Austin the dynamic city that it has

become.

**Recommendation:** We make no recommendations here nor will we make any recommendations in our final report to alter or amend PARD's current policy limiting the number of event days to 25 on Auditorium Shores. We recognize that these events are an important part of Austin but at the same time can pose challenges for the surrounding neighborhoods. The project will instead focus on proposing recommendations that make the operation of events more effective and minimize the resulting impact on the neighborhoods, together with setting a long-term vision for a world-class park to be enjoyed by all of Austin. We will not make any recommendations to either increase or decrease the permitted number of event days.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager  
Marty Stump, Division Manager, Parks and Recreation Department

# Exhibit F



**RESOLUTION NO. 20120823-072**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes the value and contribution our City's Park System makes to our shared quality of life by providing healthy outdoor recreation and entertainment; and

**WHEREAS**, our Park System provides a connection to our natural environment, promotes public health and significantly contributes to the visual character of our City; and

**WHEREAS**, the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of our Park System is an important aspect that contributes toward meeting our goal to be the most livable City in the country; and

**WHEREAS**, increasing demands on our Park System by growing populations and the parks' popularity as venues for events, particularly at Auditorium Shores and Zilker Park, are creating conflicts with scheduling and are stressing the parks' vitality and surrounding infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1989 the Austin City Council created a Park Land Policy Committee to discuss the need for a City events policy for City Parks; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 1998 the Parks and Recreation Board adopted a Parks and Recreation Department Special Events Policy establishing an annual event limit for City of Austin Parks, which policy was administratively updated in 2007; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

That the City Manager is directed to work with stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive analysis of impacts from events at Auditorium Shores and Zilker Park, and provide recommendations on a balanced solution that enhances public access and enjoyment of Austin's Public Park System; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the stakeholders shall consist of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Board, the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board, the Urban Transportation Commission, the Long Center, the Palmer Event Center, park advocates, adjacent neighborhoods, impacted venue operators, venue users and businesses, and representative(s) from the original Town Lake Park Stakeholders group; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the analysis should include incorporation of the Parks and Recreation Department's Special Events Policy and the Street Event Ordinance; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the analysis shall also include an assessment of impacts that limitations on the use of Auditorium Shores and Zilker Park may have on other parks, such as Fiesta Gardens and Festival Beach; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the comprehensive analysis will address:

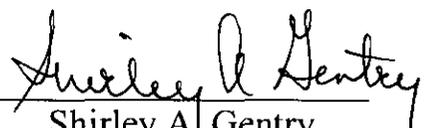
- impacts of increasing the number and size of events on the parklands and a determination on whether any adjustment to the number of events is appropriate;
- park event scheduling, coordination, and assessment of capacities, event related fees and policies, and impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure;
- identification of opportunities for new venues to accommodate events, including an assessment of their carrying capacities and impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure;
- comprehensive traffic and parking studies;
- identification of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that fees by all rental groups of our city parks are collected and used for the maintenance and repairs for any post-event issues;
- a review of the existing Park Rental policies.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That the City Manager is directed to bring the recommendations back to City Council for approval by March 1, 2013.

**ADOPTED:** August 23, 2012

**ATTEST:**

  
Shirley A. Gentry  
City Clerk

# Exhibit G

**RESOLUTION NO. 20121011-081**

**WHEREAS**, Resolution No. 20120823-072 directed the City Manager to work with stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive analysis of impacts from events at Auditorium Shores and Zilker Park to and provide recommendations on a balanced solution that enhances public access and enjoyment of Austin's Public Park System; and

**WHEREAS**, specific direction was given as to the type of analysis that the City Manager should provide, as well as particular deliverables and appropriate stakeholders that should be included; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Parks Foundation is contemplating a planning process that incorporates elements similar to the elements outlined in Resolution No. 20120823-072; and

**WHEREAS**, Austin Parks Foundation is willing to fully integrate the elements of Resolution No. 20120823-072 into its planning processes so that a fully coordinated and comprehensive plan can be accomplished for central city parks hosting special events; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is hereby directed to fully integrate the efforts under Resolution No. 20120823-072 with the Austin Parks Foundation so that the elements of Resolution No. 20120823-072 are addressed in the Foundation's planning process.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to help facilitate and oversee the planning process and to present a preliminary report to Council no later than April 30, 2013, to ensure a comprehensive approach to capital improvements within the study area.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to provide written reports to Council on progress in December 2012 and February 2013 leading up to the April 2013 presentation to Council, and to present the preliminary report to the Parks and Recreation Board before presenting to Council.

**ADOPTED:** October 11, 2012

**ATTEST:**

  
Shirley A. Gentry  
City Clerk

# Exhibit H



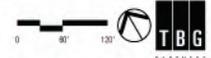


OVERALL SITE PLAN

AUDITORIUM SHORES IMPROVEMENTS - Off-Leash Area

MARCH 10, 2014

The information shown is based on the best information available and is subject to change without notice.



# Austin Parks Foundation

Town Lake Metropolitan Park  
Long-Term Redevelopment Project

## ONLINE

[www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org)

## TELEPHONE

512.477.1566

## ADDRESS

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