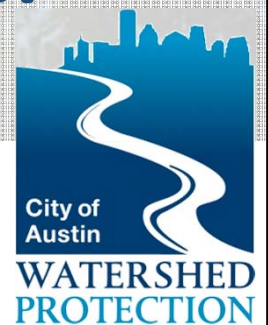




# **2018 Bond Election Advisory Task Force: Open Space Working Group**

Watershed Open Space Bond Overview  
September 13, 2017



# Presentation Overview

- Overview of Watershed Open Space
- Key Talking Points
- 2018 Bond Needs Assessment & Leveraging Opportunities
- Next Steps





# Overview of Watershed Open Space



# Watershed Open Space

- Purchase of undeveloped lands managed specifically for water quality and quantity
  - Lands managed by existing Water Quality Protection Lands Program
- WPD can only purchase and/or leverage purchase of open space lands with bond funding



# Water Quality Protection Lands Program

- Focus in the Barton Springs Zone or one of Austin's Source Water Protection Zones
- Lands managed by Austin Water
- Interdepartmental team for acquisitions:
  - Austin Water
  - Office of Real Estate Services
  - Watershed Protection



# Water Quality Protection Lands Program

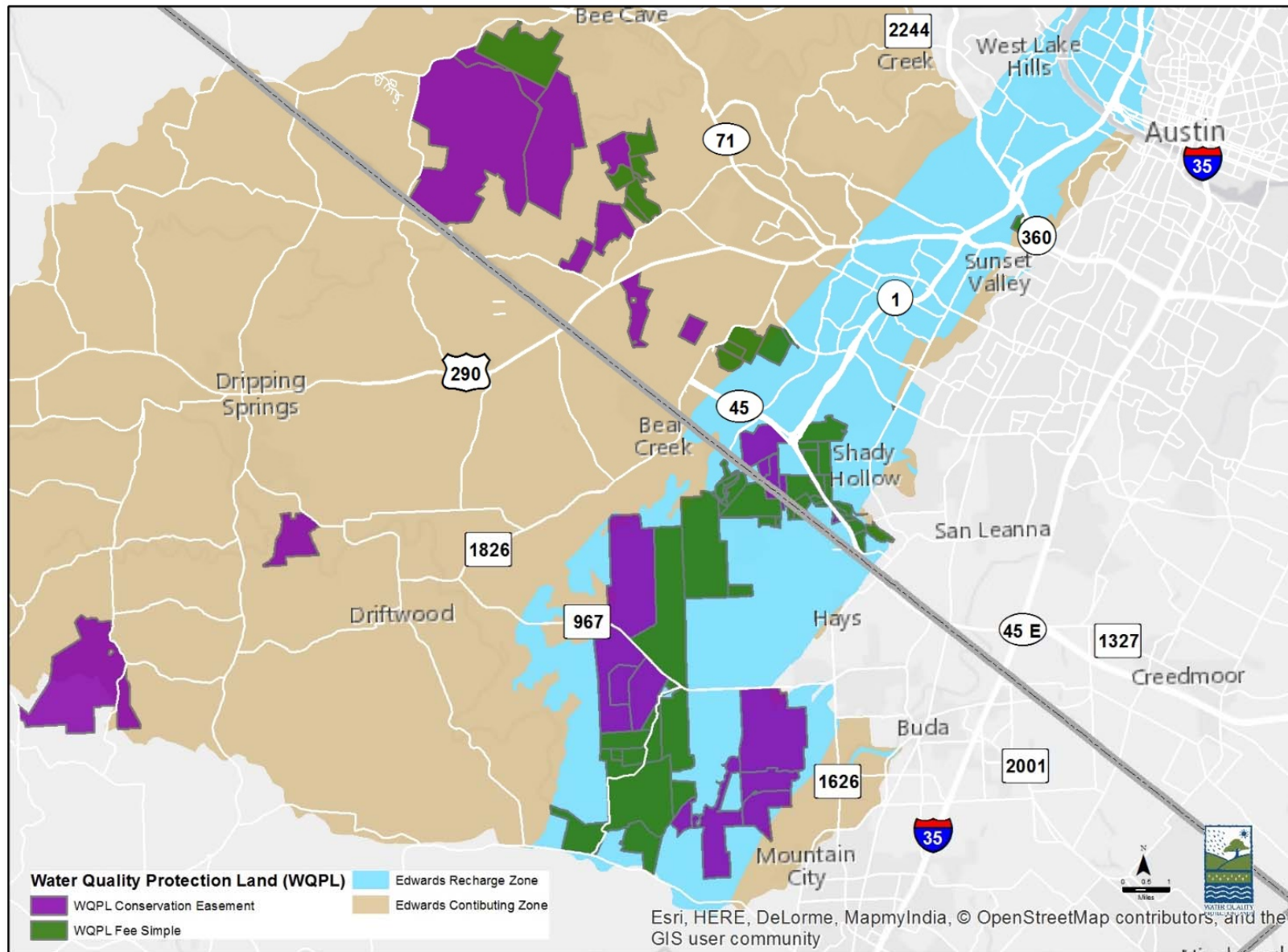
## Four voter-approved bonds:

May 1998	\$65M	15,047 ac.	<i>56% vote</i>
Nov. 2000	\$13.4M	5,000 ac.	<i>66% vote</i>
Nov. 2006	\$50M	6,530 ac.	<i>68% vote</i>
<u>Nov. 2012</u>	<u>\$29.2M</u>	<u>1,777 ac.</u>	<i>56% vote</i>
<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>\$157.6M</b>	<b>28,354 ac.</b>	

Partnership  
Contributions      \$24M

Conservation Easements	(17,513 ac.)	62% land area
Fee Simple Purchase	(10,841 ac.)	38% land area

# Water Quality Protection Lands Program



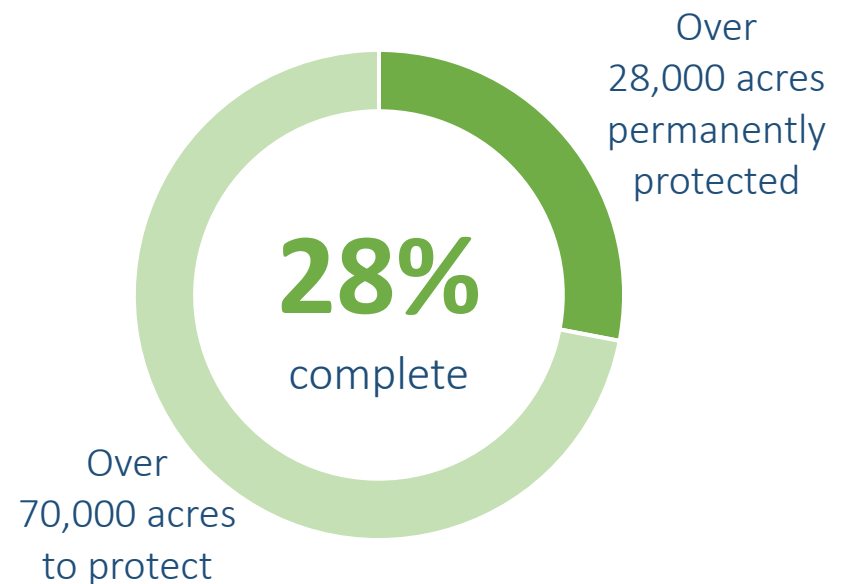
# Watershed Open Space Goal

Protection of critical areas in Source Water Protection Area to preserve or mitigate water quality and quantity through the strategic acquisition of land along main channels, tributaries, and significantly large upland tracts.

## Long-Term Protection Goal:

Maintain overall impervious cover percentage **at under 10%\***

- Permanently protect up to 100,000 acres of land in the Source Water Protection Area



*\*Irreversible water quality impacts observed when total impervious cover exceeds 10%*





# Watershed Open Space Key Talking Points



# Watershed Open Space Key Talking Points

- Provides clean water for drinking and recreation
- Mitigates flood impacts (volume & duration)
- Implements Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, the City's blueprint for directing long-term growth
- Supports Parks & Recreation's priorities to protect current and future green infrastructure assets spanning south, central, and southeast Austin
- High urgency to acquire lands due to rising land costs and rapid loss of undeveloped lands
- Opportunities to leverage funding



# Imagine Austin Directives



- Direct growth away from the Barton Springs Zone of the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones and other water-supply watersheds *(p97)*
- Expand the City of Austin's acquisition of environmentally significant land, conservation easements, and/or development rights for the protection of sensitive areas *(Conservation & Environment Priority Action CE A15, p246)*
- Supports City Council's Health & Safety Strategic Outcomes



## **Health**

Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.



## **Safety**

Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.



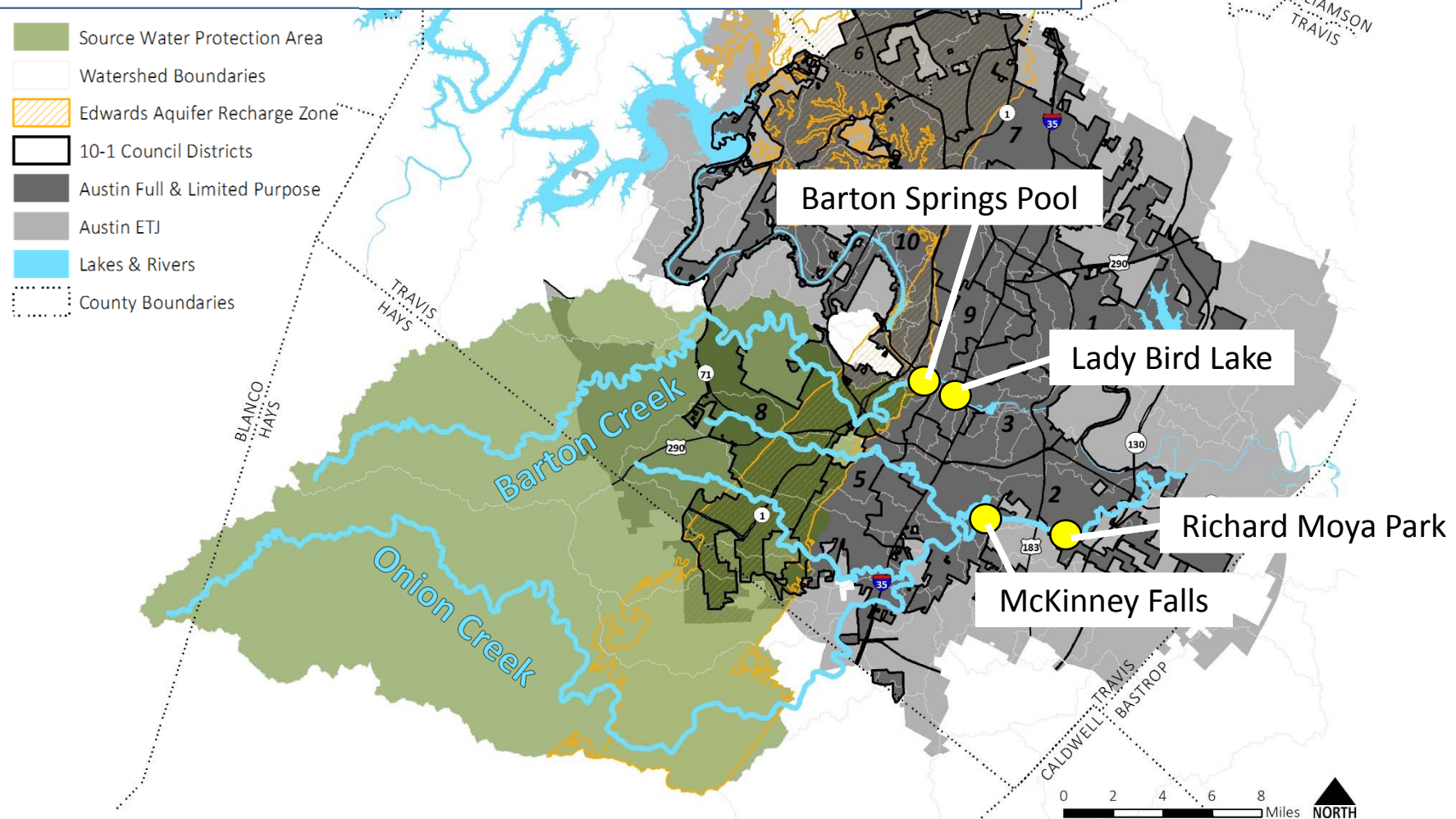
# Equity & Downstream Benefits

- Watershed Open Space acquisition provides direct benefits to south, central, and southeast Austin citizens while protecting regional green infrastructure assets.
- Protects existing and proposed parklands in Lower Onion Flood Buyout Area.



# Equity & Downstream Benefits: Local and Regional Green Infrastructure Assets

Broad area of southern Travis and northern Hays Counties provide water for drinking, swimming, fishing, and boating



# Equity & Downstream Benefits:

## Local and Regional Green Infrastructure Assets

- Portion of COA future drinking water supplies
- Groundwater resources in Hays and Travis Counties
- Barton Creek Greenbelt
- Barton Springs Pool
- Lady Bird Lake – 20% of flows come from Barton Springs
- Lower Onion Creek
  - Onion Creek Metropolitan Park
  - McKinney Falls State Park
  - Richard Moya County
  - Lower Onion Flood Buyout Area
- Lower Colorado River
  - Roy G. Guerrero Park



# Barton Creek Greenbelt



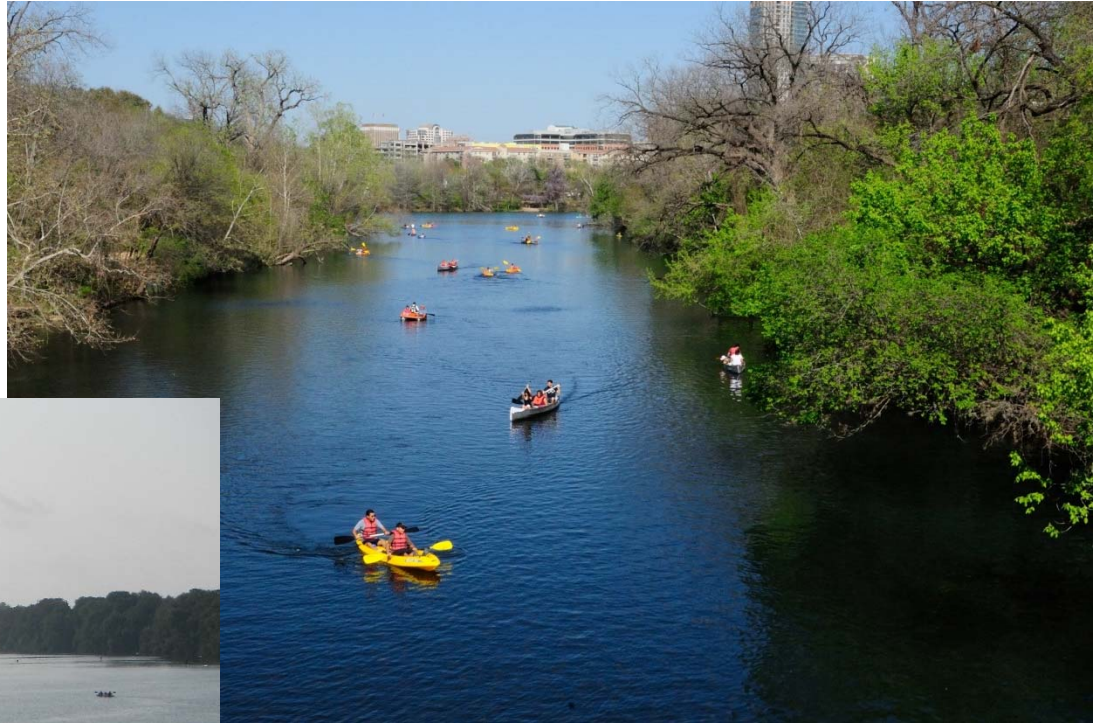


# Barton Springs Pool





# Lady Bird Lake



# Lower Colorado River

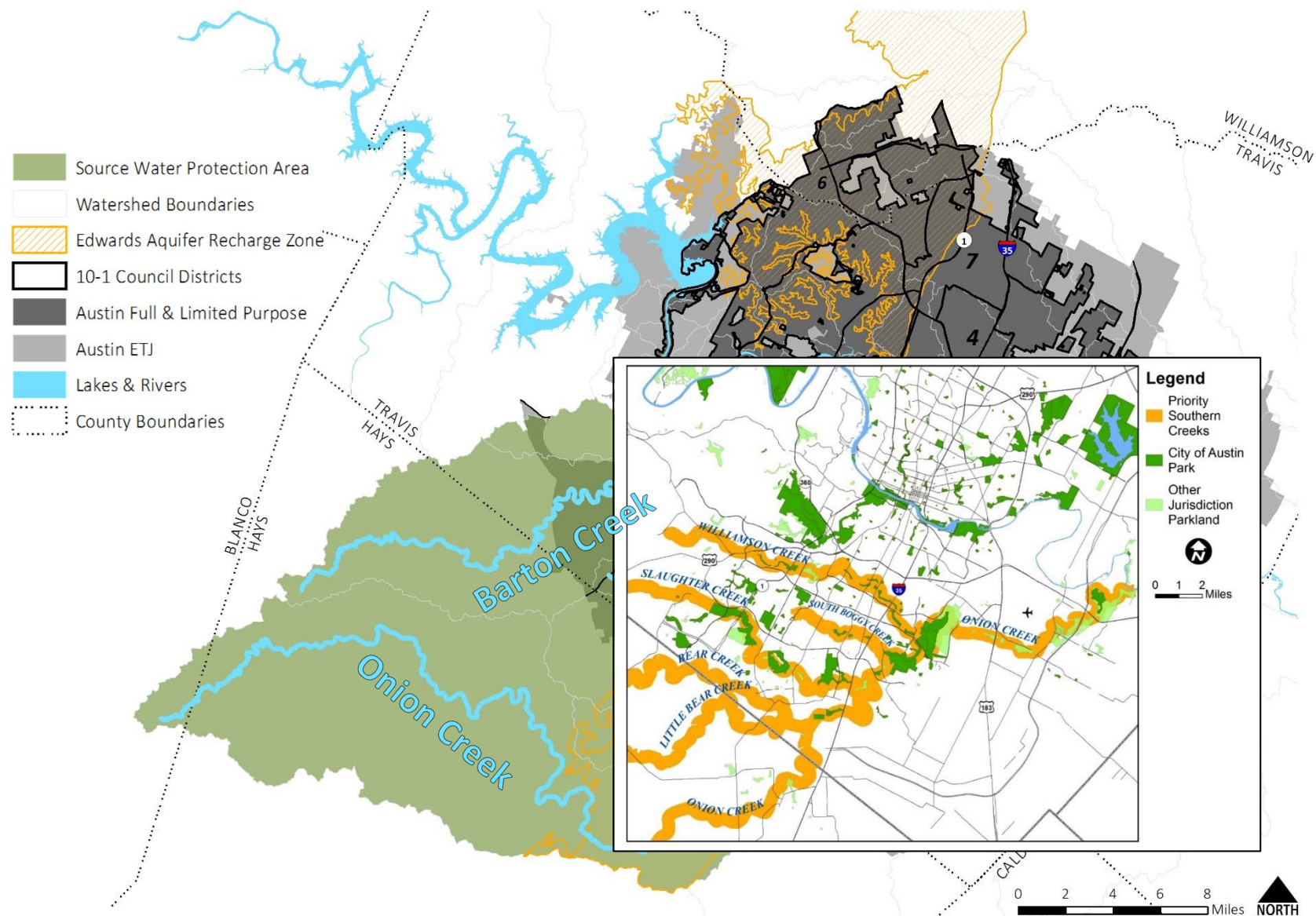




# Lower Onion Creek at McKinney Falls

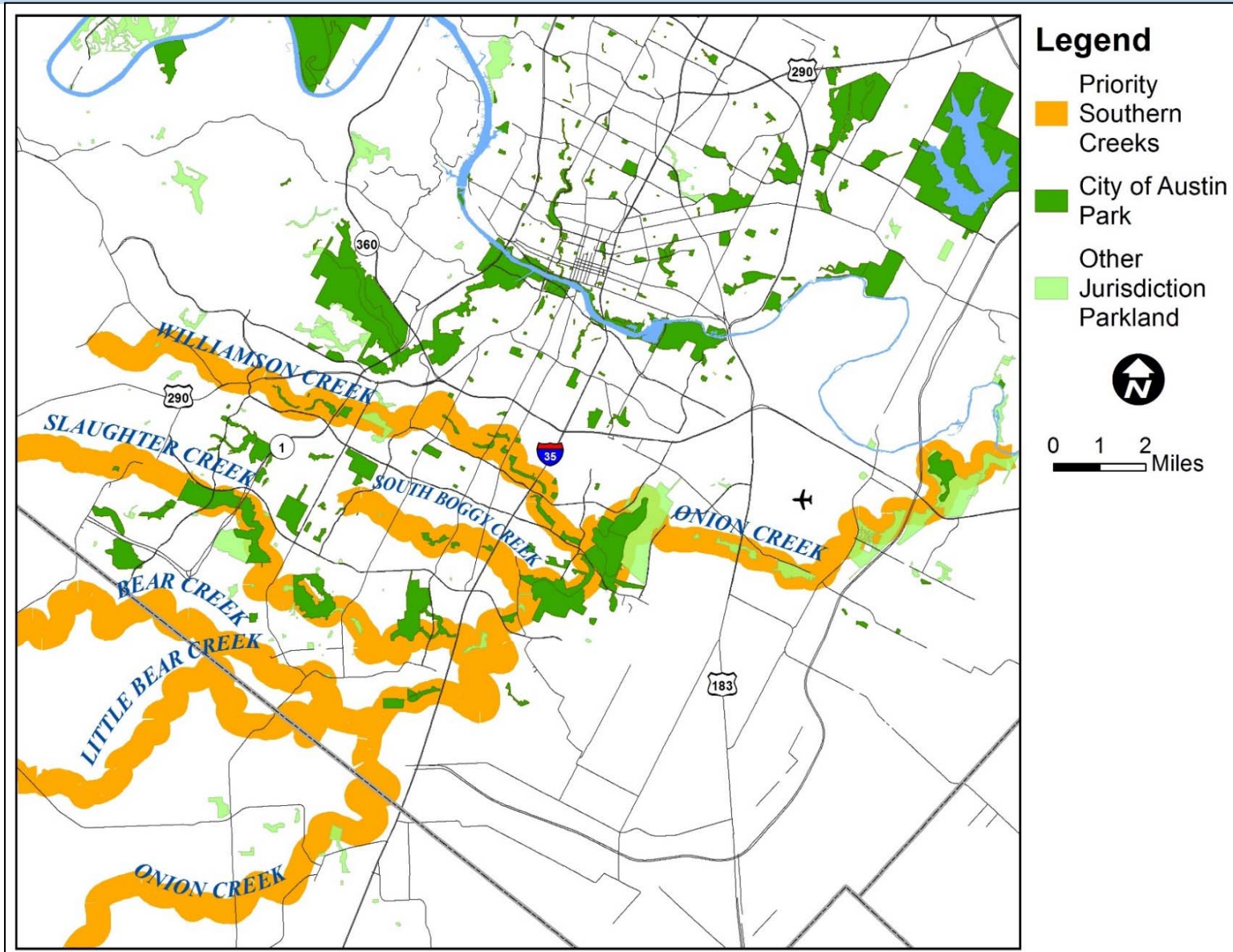


# Equity & Downstream Benefits: PARD Infrastructure Priorities





# Equity & Downstream Benefits: PARD Infrastructure Priorities



# Development and Downstream Impacts

## *Reduced Impervious Cover Benefits*

Acquisition of Open Space and the consequent avoidance of additional increased impervious cover will help mitigate flood impacts as the upstream basin develops (e.g. Dripping Springs, Kyle, Buda, etc.)





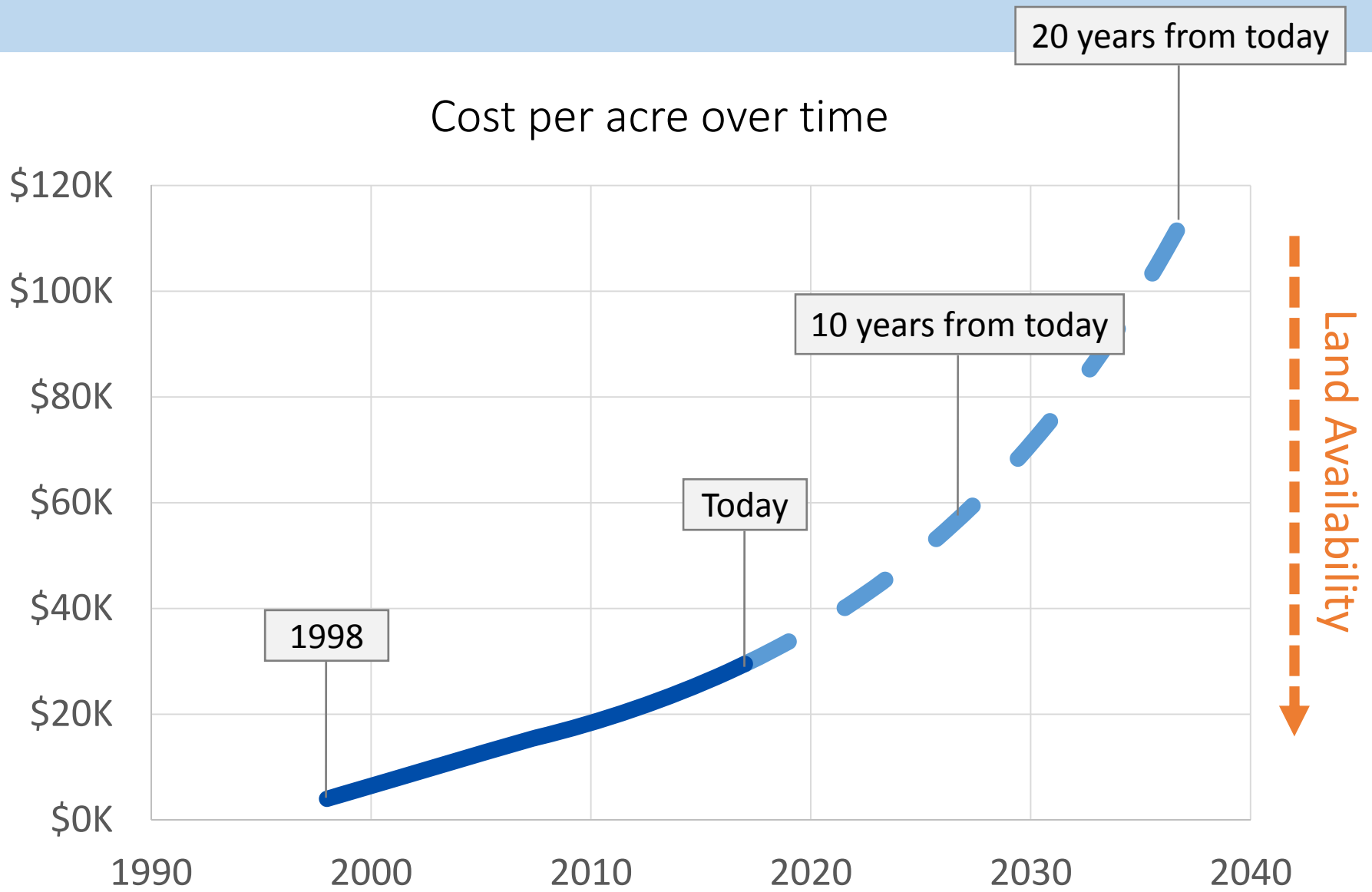
# Development and Downstream Impacts

## *Reduced Impervious Cover Benefits*

- Reduced volume & duration of flood waters
- Reduced flooding of small tributaries (localized flood)
- Reduced erosion of the stream from floods
- Reduced pollution to all segments of the creek, particularly southeast Austin



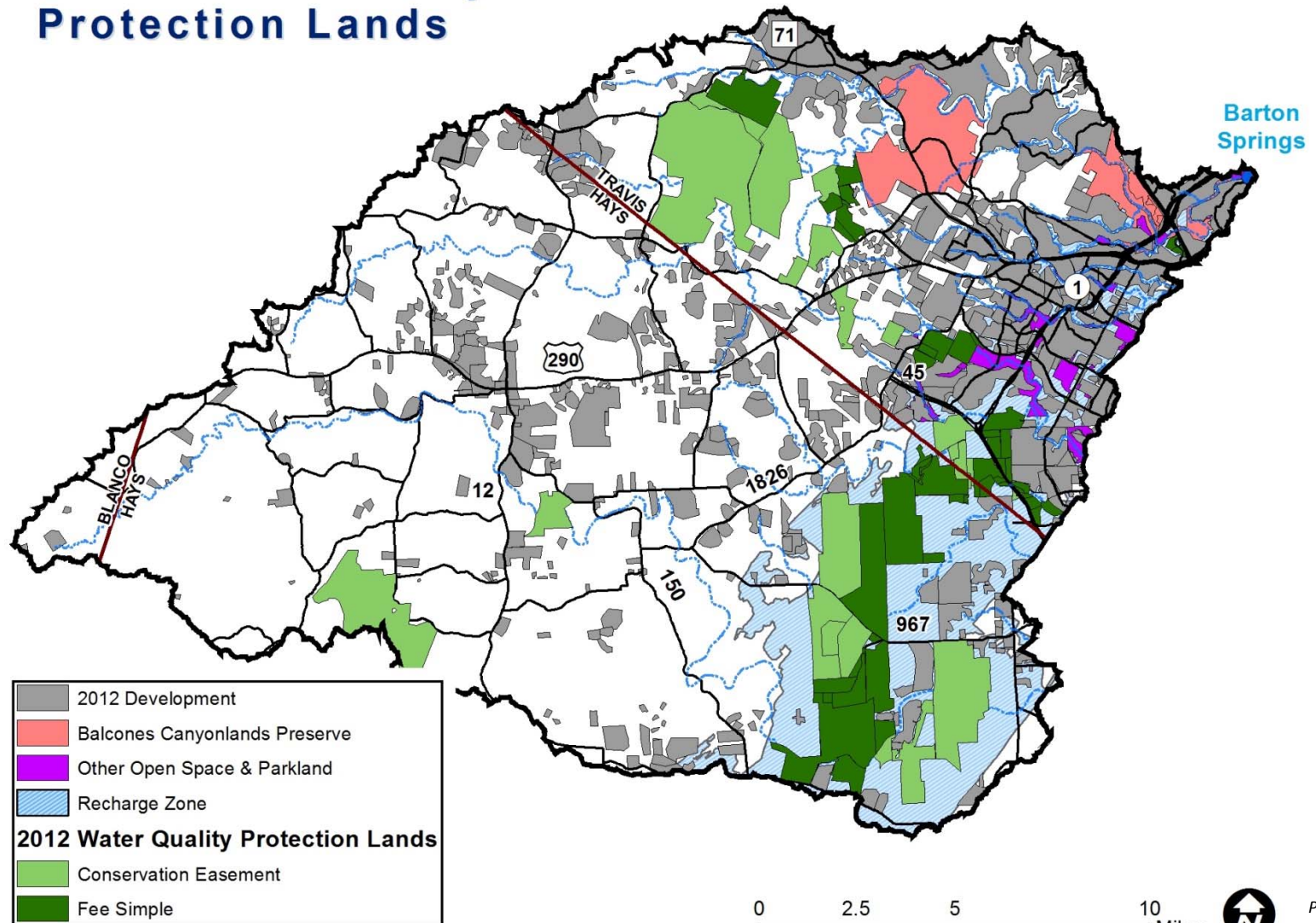
# Urgency: Rising Land Costs





# Urgency: Diminishing Open Space Availability

## 2012 Water Quality Protection Lands







# 2018 Bond Needs Assessment: Watershed Open Space



# 2018 Bond Needs Assessment: Watershed Open Space

## **\$150M WPD near-term unfunded need**

- Identified in the FY17 Rolling Needs Assessment in the Long-Range CIP Strategic Plan (10-year timeframe)
- 3,000 ac fee simple and 6,000 ac conservation easement  
**= 9,000 acres permanent protection**

## **\$50M WPD recommendation for 2018 Bonds**

- based on immediate opportunities, urgency, and previous allocations
- 1,000 ac fee simple and 2,000 ac conservation easement  
**= 3,000 acres permanent protection**

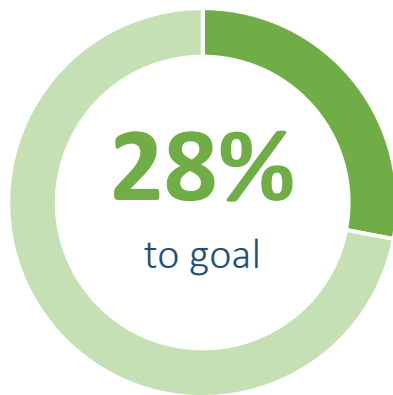
## **\$20M “Starting Point” for 2018 Bonds**

- Presented to BEATF & Council in June
- Represents a single 800 ac fee simple transaction  
**= 800 acres permanent protection**

# 2018 Bond Needs Assessment: Funding Scenarios

More funding = more leveraging opportunities and  
more permanent land protection

**Current Status**

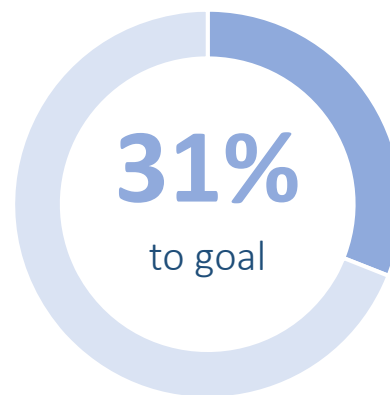


**\$20M Scenario**



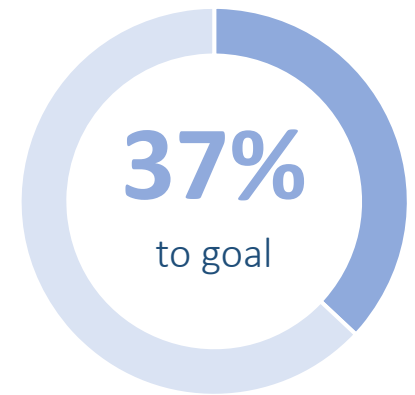
+800 acres

**\$50M Scenario**



+3,000 acres

**\$150M Scenario**



+9,000 acres



# Leveraging Funds

- 15% based on past bonds
- Most commonly with Conservation Easements
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service
  - Landowner donations
  - Other partners, including:
    - Hill Country Conservancy
    - Texas Nature Conservancy
    - Hays County
- Fee Simple partnerships with other groups
  - Texas Nature Conservancy
  - Potential future partner: PARD

# Leveraging Funds

Based on historic leveraging:

## **\$20M Scenario:**

- Leveraging in range of **\$3 million**
- No known leveraging opportunities based on current fee simple opportunity

## **\$50M Scenario:**

- Leveraging in range of **\$7 million**

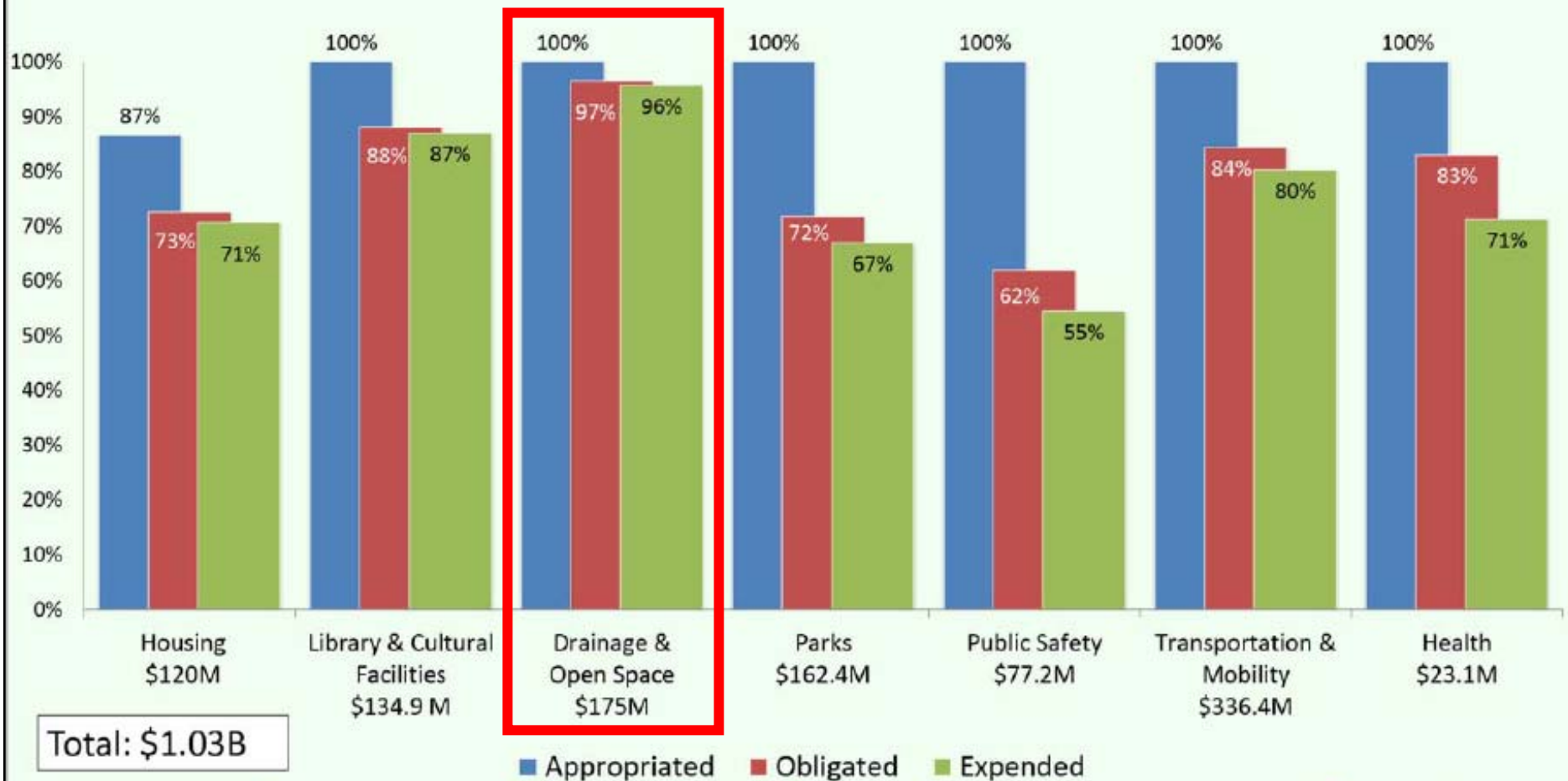
## **\$150M Scenario:**

- Leveraging in range of **\$22 million**



# Previous City of Austin Bond Expenditures

## Active Bond Program Expenditure: 2006-2013



# Next Steps? Questions?

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