CORE/WATERFRONT DISTRICT PLAN

Downtown Austin Plan

DRAFT

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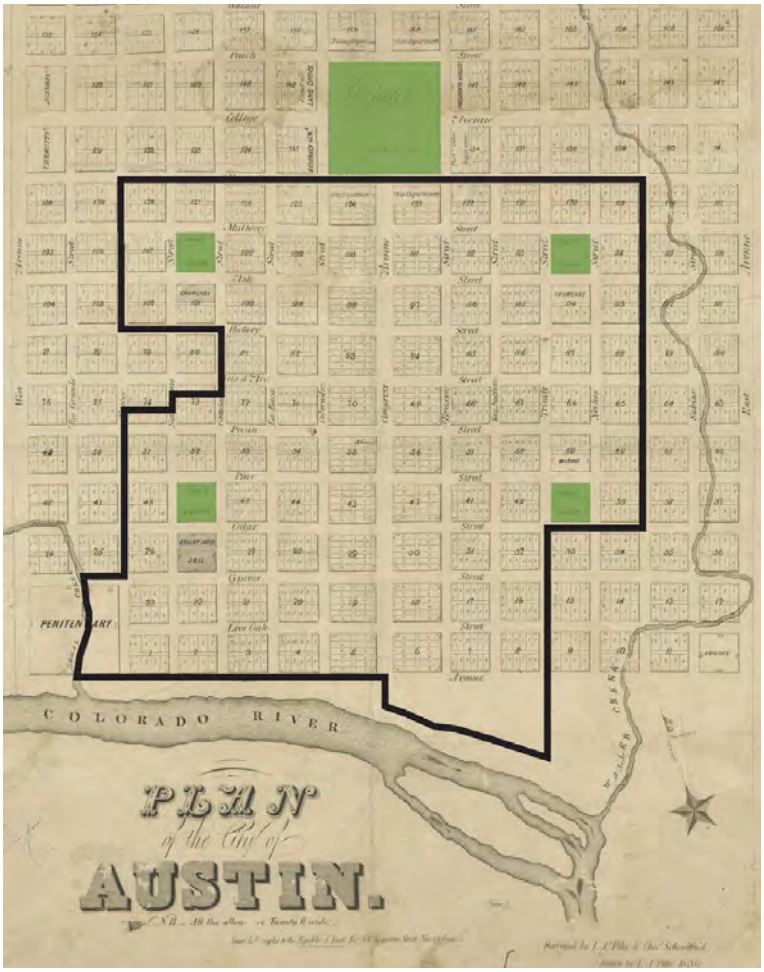
Birdseye vision of Downtown Austin at its Bicentennial 2039.

INTRODUCTION

The Core/Waterfront District of Downtown Austin represents the heart of the original town site laid out by Judge Edwin Waller in 1839, generally stretching from Lady Bird Lake on the south to 11th Street at the foot of the Capitol Square on the north, and from Shoal Creek and Nueces Street on the west to Red River Street and the Convention Center on the east. The 97-block District includes the most intensively developed part of Downtown. With its axial pattern organized by Congress Avenue and the grand backdrop of the Capitol Building and grounds, it is highly memorable and represents what most people associate as Downtown. However, the Core/Waterfront District is just one of nine established during the first phase of the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP) process, intended to delineate areas of Downtown that have a distinct form and character, and where there are specific goals and priorities for each area's evolution and enhancement. (See DAP Form and Character District Map, *Figure 1*). The Core/Waterfront District is bordered by four other Downtown districts: Lower Shoal Creek, Northwest, Uptown/ Capitol and Waller Creek.

1839 Waller Plan of Austin with Core/Waterfront District highlighted



As part of the DAP process, this chapter of the Plan describes specific priorities for the Core/Waterfront District related to historic preservation, activities and uses, building form, parks and open spaces, transportation and streetscape, infrastructure and implementation priorities. The policy recommendations and implementation strategies established in this District Plan will be made an integral part of the overall DAP.

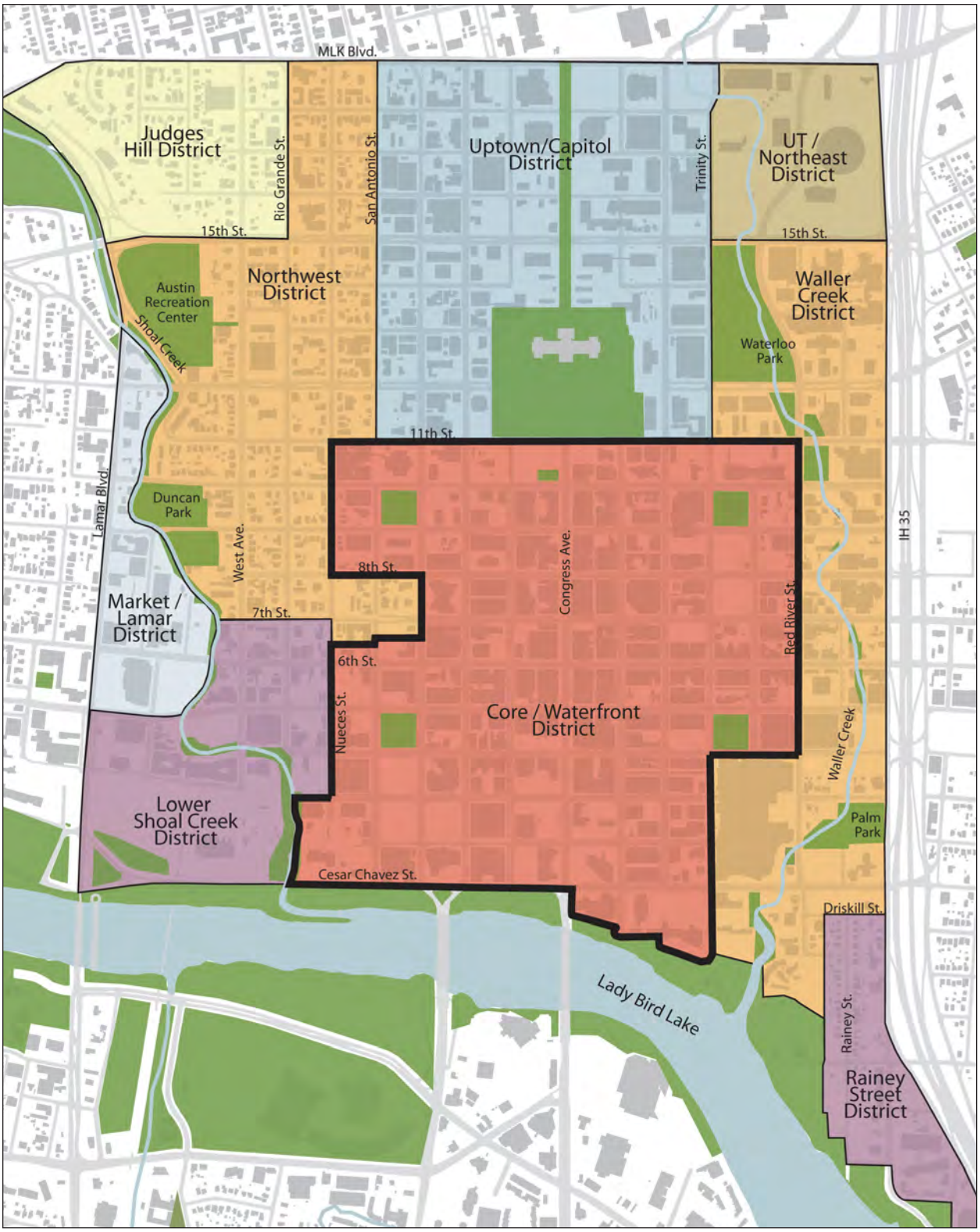
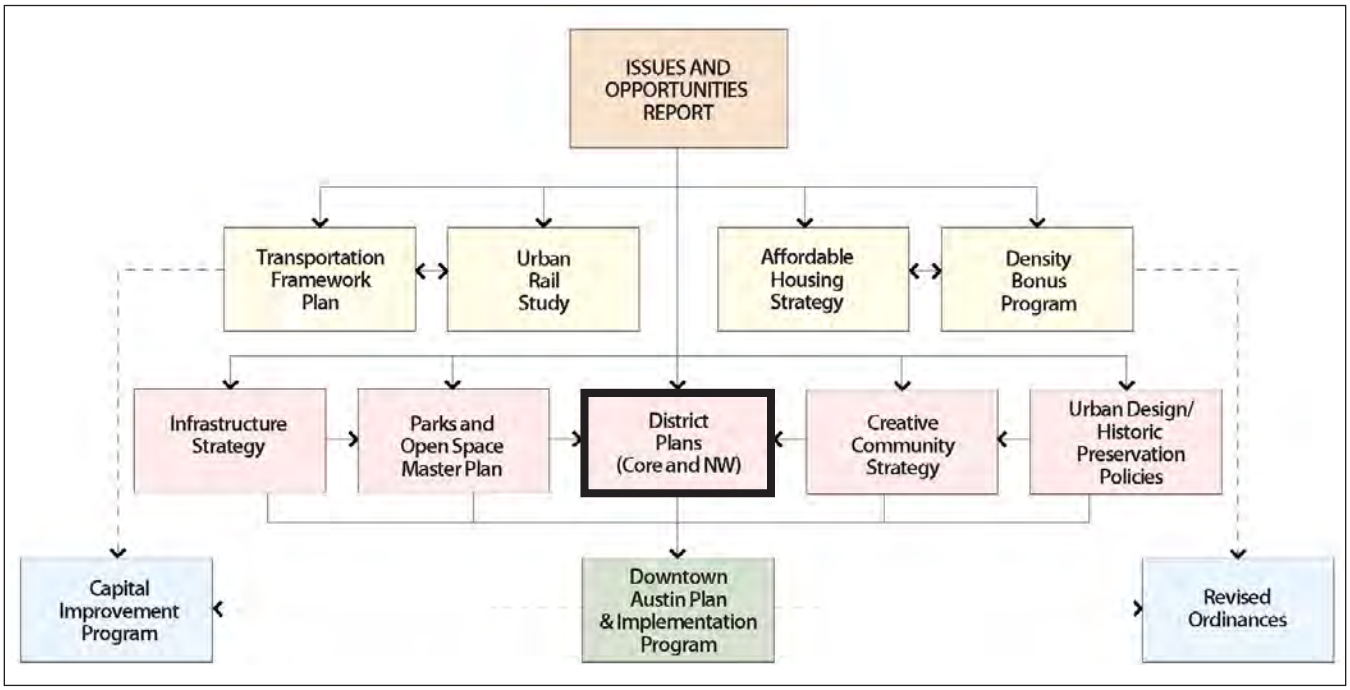


Figure 1:
Downtown Form and Character Districts

PLANNING PROCESS

Since January 2009, various stakeholder and focus group meetings have been held with District property owners and businesses, as well as representative from the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association (DANA), to discuss specific issues and opportunities and to confirm goals and priorities. In addition, a Town Hall meeting took place in October 2009 to receive input on the draft policy recommendations for each district of the Downtown, and a subsequent focus group session specifically for Core/Waterfront stakeholders was held in April 2010. This draft of the Plan builds on input received at these work sessions and from a web survey conducted in January 2009 by the City of Austin.

Numerous stakeholder and focus group discussions, as well as a Town Hall meeting, have occurred since 2009.



This District Plan is one of many elements to be integrated into the overall Downtown Austin Plan.

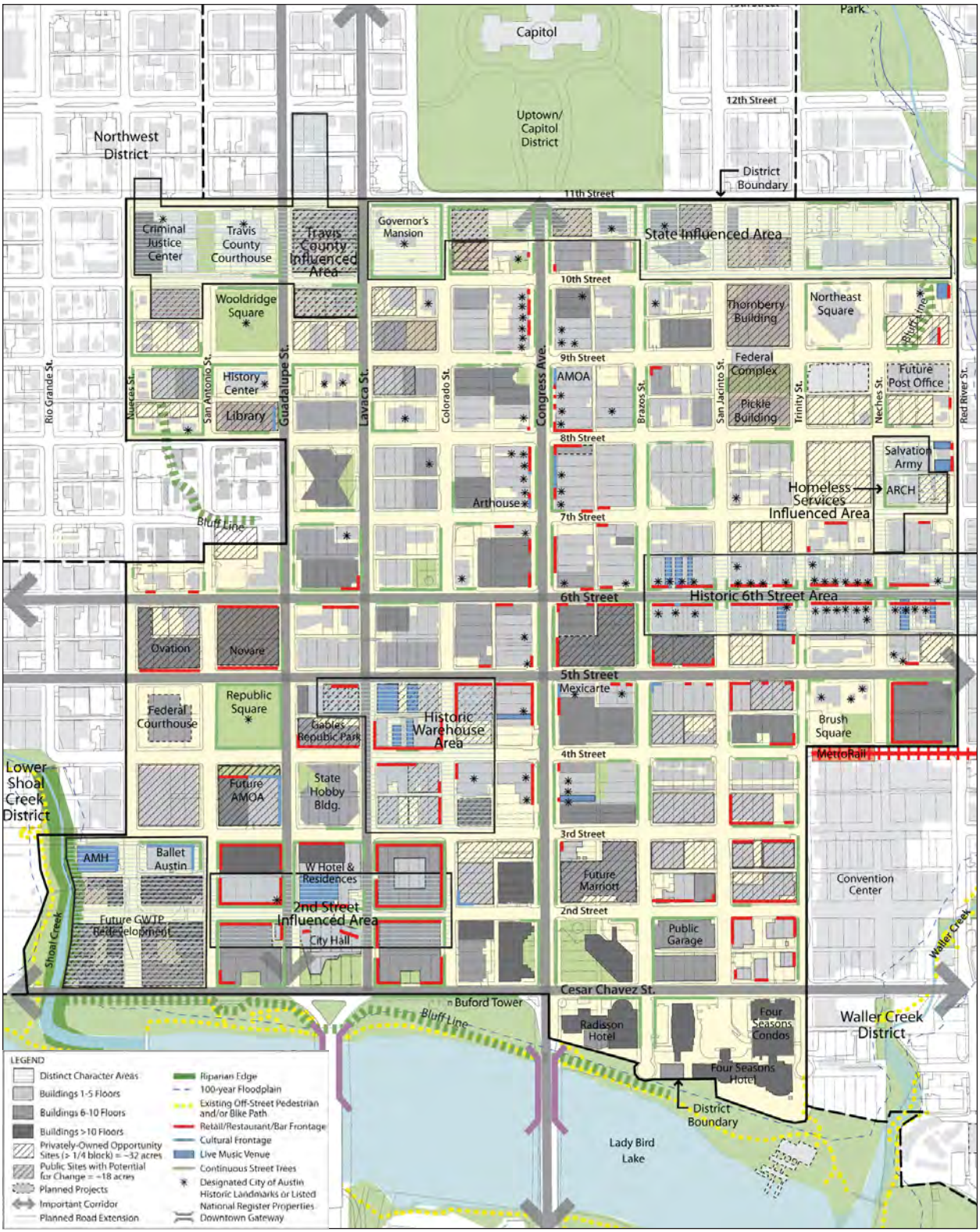


Figure 2:
Core/Waterfront District Form and Character Analysis

EXISTING FORM AND CHARACTER

The Core/Waterfront District is the most intensely developed and urbanized part of Austin. Focused along Congress Avenue between Lady Bird Lake and the Capitol, and around the three remaining historic squares of the original Waller Plan, it has a strong and memorable identity that is recognizable throughout the region. The District itself consists of numerous sub-districts, each with its own unique identity, including:

- the ceremonial and processional character of Congress Avenue;
- East Sixth Street, a seven-block stretch of 19th century mercantile buildings that has evolved into a nationally-recognized entertainment district;
- the Warehouse District, with its restaurant, cafes and bars opening onto loading docks that now function as elevated sidewalks;
- the Second Street Retail District, a 10-block promenade of shops and restaurants that will soon stretch from the Convention Center to the Seaholm Power Plant; and
- the remaining three historic squares of the Waller Plan (Wooldridge, Republic and Brush).

The District faces and embraces Lady Bird Lake, the region's pre-eminent open space and one of the community's most beloved gathering places.

The Core is the principal address for major office users, including public and private sector entities that have concentrated in close proximity to the Capitol. Both Travis County's governmental and justice complex and Austin's City Hall are located in the District. Most national hotel chains are also represented, including the Four Seasons, Omni, Intercontinental, Marriott and the recently-constructed W Hotel. Downtown's waterfront has also emerged as a high-density residential and mixed-use area. Over the past 10 years, apartment and condominium towers have sprung up along the shoreline taking advantage of expansive views and the amenity of Lady Bird Lake - dramatically changing the form and identity of the Austin's skyline.

2nd Street (left) is at the heart of an emerging retail district, while historic 6th Street (right) remains a nationally-recognized entertainment destination.

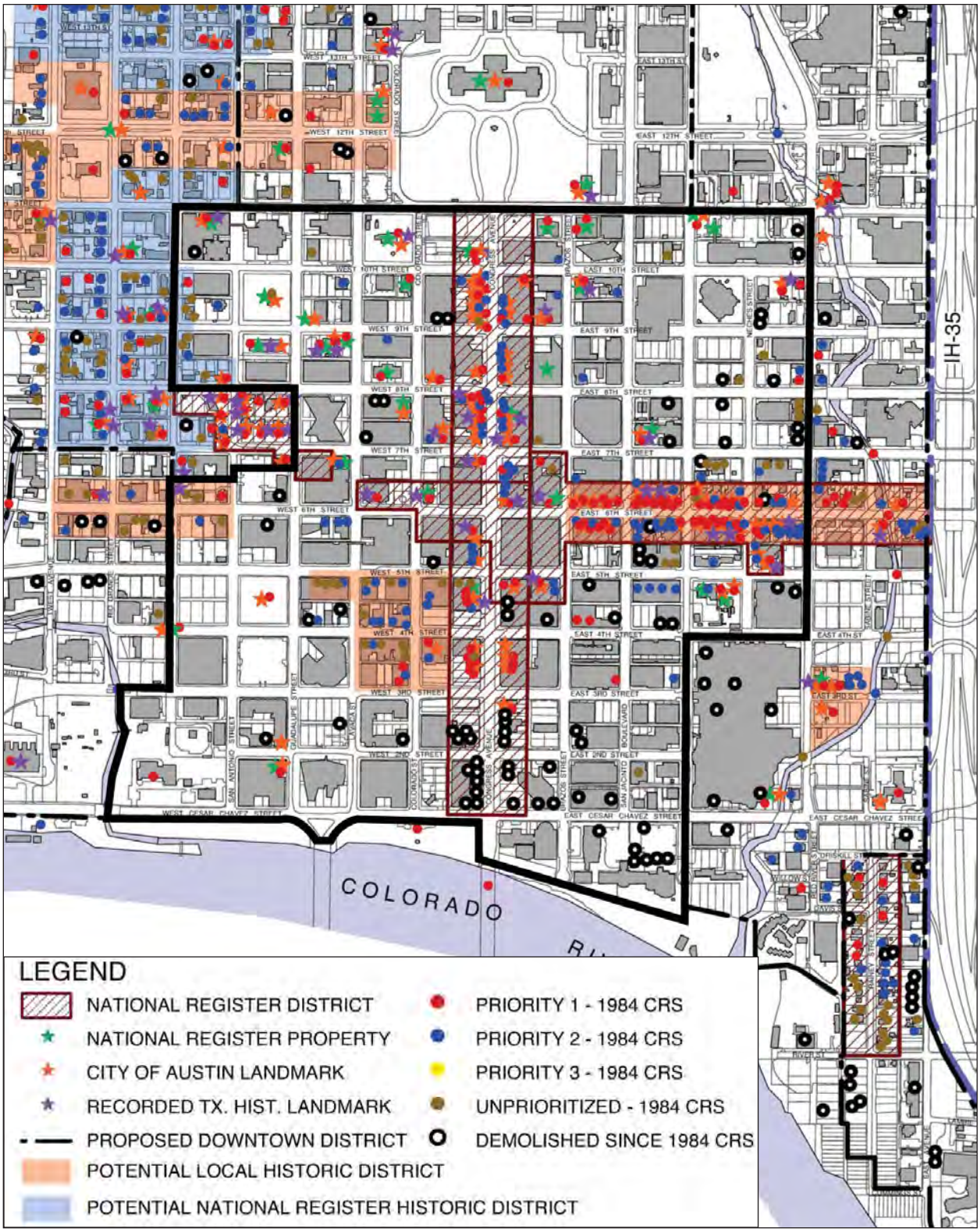


Figure 3:
Historic Resources Map Excerpt

The portion of the Core/Waterfront east of Brazos Street is least developed, characterized by underutilized parcels and parking lots. This has been due in part to the perennial flooding of Waller Creek, and to a concentration of social service facilities in the vicinity of 7th and Neches streets. With the planned 2014 completion of the Waller Creek Tunnel Project that will divert floodwaters, and with the ultimate improvement of the creek as a greenway from The University of Texas to Lady Bird Lake, the area is well positioned for redevelopment and revitalization. The Waller Creek District Master Plan provides a vision for the transformation of this area. (See www.wallercreekplan.org)

Significant new development is occurring west of the Core/Waterfront District in the Lower Shoal Creek and Market/Lamar districts, both of which benefit from close proximity to Lady Bird Lake and to the retail offerings that have emerged around the Whole Foods headquarters office building and market. The nearby Bremond Block of historic 19th century mansions and the Northwest District with its tree-lined streets of more modestly-scaled Victorian and early 20th century homes provides a clear edge to the District above 7th Street. North of 11th Street, the Capitol/ Uptown District includes many State and governmental office buildings surrounding the Capitol Square parkland.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Core/Waterfront has a rich fabric of historic buildings, including 29 Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, 70 City Historic Landmarks, and 25 National Register properties.

Many other properties were identified in Austin's 1984 Cultural Resources Survey (CRS) as priorities for further research, as they appeared to be of historic significance, i.e., they were 50 years old or more and were still intact. Unfortunately, the City's Historic Preservation Office (CHPO) has not been able to conduct the follow-up research and preservation planning outlined in the 1984 CRS, so there is a basic gap in knowledge about what historically-significant resources may still exist, as the 1984 CRS only evaluated buildings built before 1935. In addition, there are over 100 properties identified by the 1984 CRS that were never designated, either individually or as a "contributing" property within a historic district, and therefore have no form of protection whatsoever. Since the 1984 CRS, it appears that 73 buildings have been demolished in the District, underscoring the need to update the survey and follow-through with preservation planning.

Norwood Tower, built in 1929, is an example of Gothic Revival style and is a City Historic Landmark.

Also identified in the DAP Historic Resources Map (*Figure 3*), are the two National Register Historic Districts (NRHDs) entirely within the Core/Waterfront: the East 6th Street NRHD and the Congress Avenue NRHD, both certified in the 1970s.

East 6th Street National Register District: The East 6th Street NRHD is also subject to the City's East Sixth/Pecan Street Overlay intended to "protect (its) historic character and enhance the pedestrian environment of the area." The overlay imposes a 45-foot height limit to protect the character of what is Texas' most extensive, intact collection of Victorian mercantile buildings. The East 6th Street Architectural Design Guidelines (available at www.cityofaustin.org/historic) provide guidance for new buildings and modifications, as well as signage, and are used by the CHPO's and Historic Landmark Commission's review of "Certificate of Appropriateness" applications – awarded to an applicant whose project is judged by the Commission to meet the Design Guidelines. (This review, however, is advisory only: for this to be binding, the guidelines would need to be adopted as code amendments.)

East Sixth Street is Texas' most extensive, intact collection of Victorian mercantile buildings.

Congress Avenue National Register District: The Congress Avenue NRHD has a "period of significance" much broader than that of East 6th Street, with many different styles of buildings emerging from 19th century Victorian to the Mid-Century Modern era. Congress Avenue today is still recognized as the "Main Street of Texas", and has functioned as it was intended in the Waller Plan: as the ceremonial and civic axis of Austin, culminating with the State Capitol Building. Office buildings, including Austin's first high-rises, are concentrated along the prestigious Avenue address, and more recently cultural uses, such as Austin Museum of Art, Mexicarte and Arthouse have located there, along with a variety of restaurants, retail shops and bars occupying the ground floor space.

The NRHD is only somewhat protected by the City's Congress Avenue Conditional Overlay which requires new buildings fronting Congress Avenue to step back from Congress Avenue by 60 feet, at a height of 90 feet. This regulation is focused only on preserving views to the Capitol, but does not address how new buildings respond to the scale and character of existing, adjacent buildings. As there are no architectural design guidelines for Congress Avenue, the East 6th Street Design Guidelines are often used by the Historic Landmark Commission to evaluate building and signage proposals. These guidelines are not always relevant to the Congress Avenue context, with its many large and contemporary buildings.

Congress Avenue has a strong statewide identity and is the main axis in the Core / Waterfront District.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

As part of the DAP process, underutilized or vacant parcels that do not appear to have historic significance and are one-quarter block or greater in size, are identified as "opportunity sites", indicating that they have potential to redevelop over the next five to 15 years. (Note: This is not to say that these properties will develop, or that other properties not identified as opportunity sites will not develop; it is simply a measure of sites most susceptible to change.) There are 63 such properties, totaling about 50 acres within the Core/Waterfront District that fall into this category. (See Form and Character Analysis map, *figure 3*.) These "opportunity sites" are relatively unconstrained and could likely develop over the next five to 15 years.

The Core / Waterfront District has significant redevelopment infill potential estimated at over 14 million square feet.

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EXISTING REGULATIONS

Zoning: The predominant zoning in the Core/Waterfront District is Central Business District (CBD), which provides for a wide range of high-density commercial and residential uses, with Floor Area Ratios (FAR) of 8:1 and no limits on height. (See Core/Waterfront District Existing Zoning Map.) A number of properties clustered around Wooldridge Square and the original northeast square of the Waller Plan are designated as Downtown Mixed Use (DMU), which allows buildings up to 120 feet in height and densities up to 5:1 FAR. Several Commercial Services-zoned properties (CS), with a 60-foot height limit and density limit of 2:1 FAR, are located in the northeastern and northwestern areas of the District. This zoning designation does not permit multi-unit residential buildings, yet allows for a range of intense commercial and auto-oriented service uses. In addition, several properties in the northern areas of the District have a Multi-Family 4 (MF-4) zoning designation, limiting the primary use of a property to residential, with a 60-foot height limit and a 0.75:1 FAR limit.

Overlay Districts: In addition to the base zoning districts described above, there are several overlays and special districts that regulate the Core/Waterfront District. (See Special Districts map, *Figure 4*.) These include the Capitol View Corridors (CVCs), the Waterfront Overlay District, the Downtown Parks Overlay District, the East Sixth/Pecan Street Overlay and National Register Historic District, and the Congress Avenue National Register Historic District.

More specifically:

- The Capitol View Corridor Overlay District includes 13 view corridors

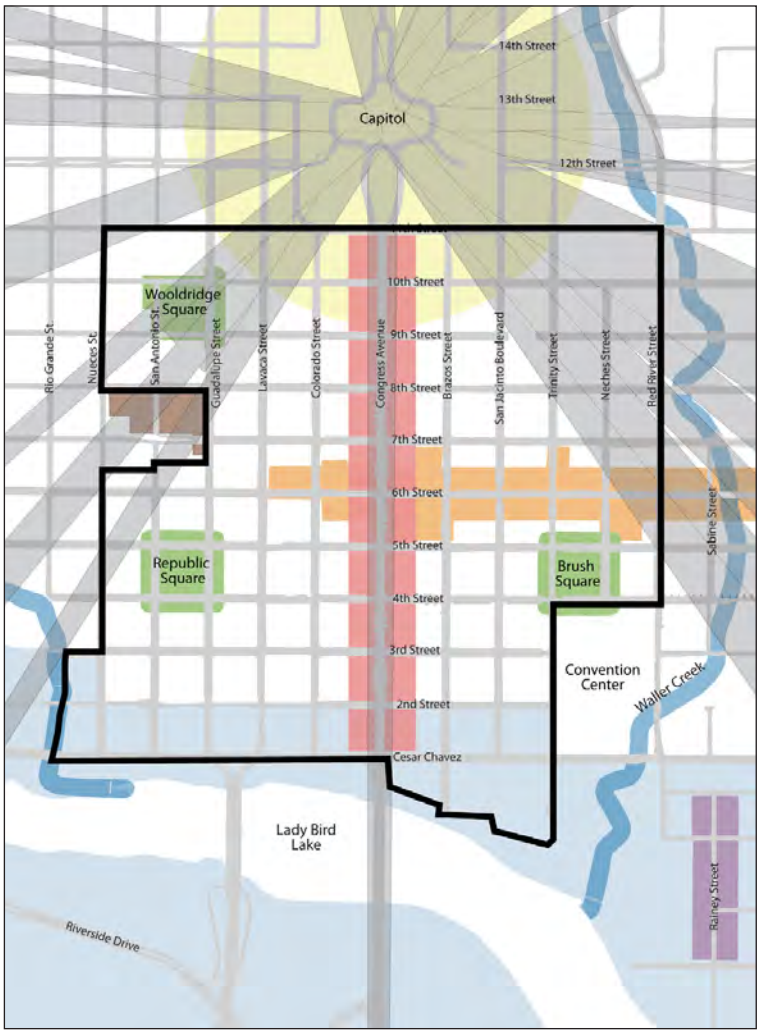

Figure 4:
Special Districts Excerpt

traversing the District. Height limits beneath these viewpoint planes range from as little as 25 feet in the vicinity of Wooldridge Square and the Governor's Mansion, to 50 to 75 feet along parts of Red River Street, to as much as 225 feet. The DAP proposes no changes to these corridors or height limits.

- The Waterfront Overlay District (North Shore Central and City Hall Sub-Districts) provides specific standards related to ground level uses, building massing and density bonuses. The Council-appointed Waterfront Overlay Board is currently reviewing the density bonus provisions of the Waterfront Overlay District, and will also evaluate development proposals within the Overlay. As part of the ordinance preparation process, DAP recommendations will be reconciled with the provisions of the Waterfront Overlay District.
- The East Sixth/Pecan Street Overlay District is intended to protect the historic fabric of mercantile buildings fronting 6th Street by imposing a maximum height limit of 45 feet within the Overlay area, which corresponds to the limits of the National Register Historic District.
- The Congress Avenue National Register Historic District imposes a 60-foot setback above an allowed Congress Avenue-fronting street-wall of 90 feet, in order to preserve views to the Capitol. The extent of the Overlay corresponds to that of the Congress Avenue National Register District.
- The Downtown Parks Overlay District establishes a maximum height limit of 120 feet within 60 feet of the rights-of-way surrounding the three remaining historic squares: Wooldridge, Republic and Brush.
- The Convention Center Overlay District was established to limit the construction of surface parking lots in the area surrounding the Convention Center: between Congress Avenue, Waller Street, East 6th Street and Lady Bird Lake.

CURE (Central Urban Redevelopment District): The Core/Waterfront District is entirely within what is called the CURE zone. The CURE ordinance contains special provisions available to most of Downtown, as well as to key commercial corridors of near-in East Austin. The intention of this ordinance is to encourage the positive, urban-scaled redevelopment of properties within the central core. The ordinance allows projects to enter into a discretionary re-zoning process whereby greater entitlements and/or relief from site development regulations under a property's base zoning may be approved by the City Council. In the last decade, the Council has consistently approved such requests for greater density and height.

The DAP's Downtown Density Bonus Program proposes that the CURE ordinance be amended to disallow consideration of greater height and density (FAR). Instead, projects would be required to submit such requests through an administrative (non-discretionary) process whereby higher entitlements may be allowed in exchange for established levels of higher project performance (e.g., provision of affordable housing, on-site open space, increased levels of Green Building, etc.) (See Downtown Density Bonus Program at www.cityofaustin.org - downtown portal.)

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DISTRICT GOALS AND SUMMARY OF PROPOSED POLICIES

On the basis of stakeholder input since early 2009, and the form and character analysis and visual reconnaissance of the District, six goals have been identified for the Core/Waterfront District:

1. ***Enhance the Core/Waterfront as the premier employment, cultural and visitor center of the region.***
2. ***Improve the quality of the pedestrian experience.***
3. ***Make it easier to move around without a car.***
4. ***Restore and activate the historic squares.***
5. ***Ensure that the District is a welcoming and affordable place for all.***
6. ***Preserve the historic building fabric.***

The Core/Waterfront District is the heart of Downtown and the region.

EXISTING REGULATIONS

The proposed plan policies outlined in the remainder of this Plan are aimed at achieving the six District goals described above. They are summarized as follows:

Historic Preservation

CW-1: Update Austin's Cultural Resources Survey and Preservation Plan.

CW-2: Develop form-based design standards that require new development to be compatible with the historic fabric of individual buildings and districts.

CW-3: Provide design standards and incentives for the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings in the Congress Avenue and East 6th districts, and in the potential Warehouse and West 6th Street districts.

Activities and Uses

CW-4: Amend the exisitng zoning designations to allow a more complete mix of desired uses, and to limit or prohibit certain auto-oriented and intensive commercial uses.

CW-5: Make changes to the list of permitted and conditional uses within the Core/Waterfront District.

CW-6: Promote active ground-level uses throughout the Core/Waterfront District.

Building Form and Setbacks

CW-7: Amend the zoning ordinance so that front yard setbacks are regulated by street, rather than zoning district.

CW-8: Establish standards for the treatment of ground-level street frontages to promote an engaging pedestrian environment.

CW-9: Establish form-based building design standards that promote a high quality urban environment, increased density and a compatible relationship between new and existing buildings.

Parks and Open Spaces

CW 10: Enhance north shore Lady Bird Lake-side amenities.

CW-11: Enhance the three historic squares of the Waller Plan.

CW-12: Pursue opportunities for the restoring the northeast square as a public open space.

CW-13: Activate the parkland surrounding the City's Old Bakery and Emporium on Congress Avenue.

Streetscape

CW-14: Continue to improve downtown streets through the Great Streets Program.

CW-15: Improve the pedestrian environment and visual identity of East 6th Street.

CW-16: Improve Congress Avenue.

CW-17: Improve Downtown streetscapes in tandem with urban rail and enhanced bus transit service.

CW-18: Initiate a public restroom program.

CW-19: Initiate a comprehensive and integrated way-finding system within the Downtown.

Transportation and Parking

CW-20: Continue to upgrade the bicycle network.
CW-21: Initiate the conversion of one-way streets to two-way operation.
CW-22: Upgrade transit in the Core/Waterfront, including enhanced bus service and the expansion of urban rail.
CW-23: Provide supply management and coordination of Downtown parking.
CW-24: Preserve and enhance Downtown's system of alleys.

Utility Infrastructure

CW-25: Improve coordination and interaction among City departments that affect Downtown infrastructure.
CW-26: Improve aging water and wastewater systems.
CW-27: Improve downtown drainage, water quality and flood control.
CW-28: Provide higher levels of solid waste collection, recycling and composting throughout Downtown.

Public Services and Affordable Housing

CW-29: Provide supportive housing and related services that complement and extend existing services for populations in need.
CW-30: Improve the public space environment around the existing ARCH facility.
CW-31: Implement the Downtown Affordable Housing Strategy.
CW-32: Promote improved child care and educational facilities that make Downtown more family-friendly.
CW-33: Provide for improved fire and police facilities within the Downtown.

Implementation

(Policies and priorities will be developed within the overall Downtown Austin Plan.)

Downtown is envisioned as a welcoming, affordable, and authentic place.

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Without careful preservation planning and subsequent appropriate actions in the form of code amendments, policy changes and funding, the Downtown is at risk of losing its special character and unique identity, therefore its competitive edge as a creative class city. In addition, historic preservation is a cornerstone of sustainable development, in terms of providing affordability, green building and economics. Maintaining and reusing existing buildings can not only reduce our carbon footprint, but also provide more affordable places for businesses and residents to occupy. Maintaining and enhancing the city's identity as a unique and interesting place to work, live, play and visit is central to Austin's economic vitality in the future.

CW-1: Update Austin's Cultural Resources Survey and Preservation Plan.
Committing resources to update and maintain the City's Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) and Preservation Plan is of paramount importance. A current Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan will provide the public and the City with a clear roadmap of what is important to preserve and how, so that Downtown can develop in a way that is authentically and uniquely Austin—where the history of place is evident and celebrated. This goal of enhancing and maintaining the unique character of districts is central in achieving the kind of Downtown stakeholders desire, and is one of the key overall goals of the DAP. In addition, a city-wide preservation plan is also a required element of the City's Comprehensive Plan (itself currently being updated), and required if the City is to maintain its ability to attract funding and grants through its Certified Local Government status.

The Starr Building, built in 1954 as the American National Bank, is an example of the Mid-Century Modern style – and an example of a historically-significant building not identified by the City's outdated Cultural Resources Survey.

CW-2: Develop form-based design standards that require new development to be compatible with the historic fabric of individual buildings and districts.
Today, there are no design standards in place that require new, infill construction to be compatible with adjacent historic buildings. Putting in place such "form-based code", as is recommended below in the Building Form and Setback section, is a key part of the DAP's strategy for preserving and complementing the character of individual historic buildings, as well as districts.

CW-3: Provide design standards and incentives for the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings in the Congress Avenue and East 6th districts and in the potential Warehouse and West 6th Street districts.

In the absence of an updated Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan, and on the basis of windshield surveys and the City's 1984 Cultural Resources Survey, several sub-areas of the Core/Waterfront District have been identified as potential historic districts, subject to further study. (See DAP Historic Resources Map, *Figure 3.*) These include:

- A portion of the railroad-oriented warehousing district which began to develop in the 1870s. The focus of this district is Colorado Street, between 3rd and 5th streets, and 4th Street, between Lavaca Street and the north-south alley immediately west of Congress Avenue. This area had a relationship to the railroad from the early 1870s when passenger rail service first arrived in Austin, stimulating a population and building boom. A thematic historic context of the industrial development through the 19th and 20th centuries would be the basis for this district designation.
- The existing East 6th Street NRHD, where a thematic historic context of the commercial development through the 19th century would be the basis for a Local Historic District designation;
- A segment of West 6th Street between San Antonio Street and West Avenue, where a thematic historic context of the commercial development through the 19th and 20th centuries would be the basis for this district designation;
- A portion of the existing Congress Avenue NRHD; and
- The entirety of the existing Bremond Block NRHD.

Possible Local Historic Districts include the Warehouse Distric (top), East 6th Street (middle), West 6th Street (bottom), as well as a portion of the Congress Avenue NRHD, and all of the existing Bremond Block NRHD.

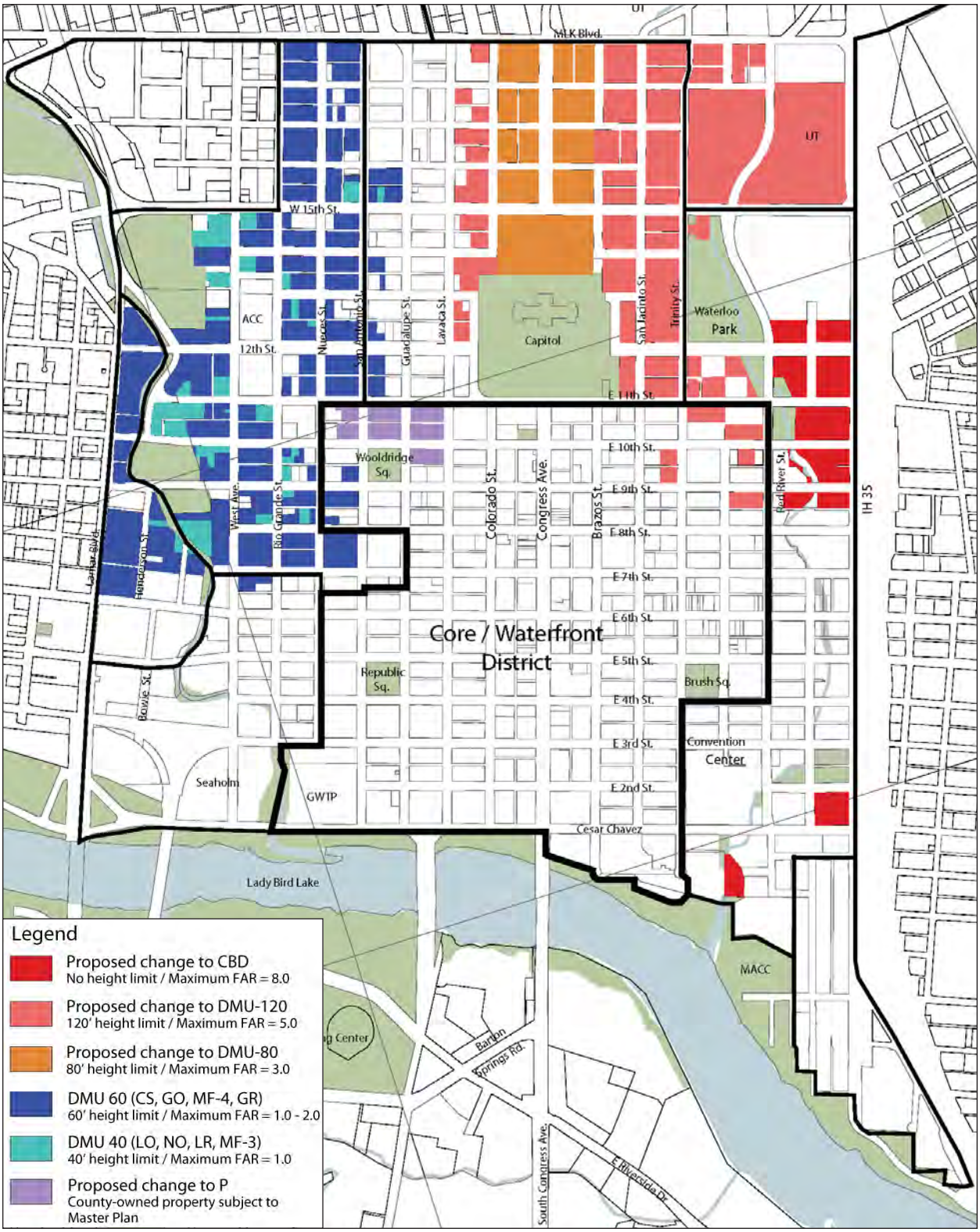

Figure 5:
Proposed Zoning Changes

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ACTIVITIES AND USES

A key goal of the Core/Waterfront District is to enhance its role as a high quality mixed-use district and visitor destination, with an improved pedestrian environment. The Plan recommends that current land use provisions of the zoning ordinance be amended or expanded to better promote the community's vision of a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use district.

CW-4: Amend existing zoning designations to allow a more complete mix of desired uses, and to limit or prohibit certain auto-oriented and intensive commercial uses. Most properties within the Core/Waterfront District are zoned Central Business District (CBD) or Downtown Mixed Use (DMU), which promote an appropriate range of uses and levels of density consistent with the vision of a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use downtown district. However, there are several properties with zoning designations that are not consistent with this vision, and that the Plan proposes to change (See Proposed Zoning Changes map, *Figure 5*). More specifically:

1. The properties currently zoned Multi-Family 4 (MF-4) and Commercial Services (CS) along Trinity, 11th and Red River streets should be rezoned to DMU, in keeping with the zoning of the surrounding properties and the desire for this area to redevelop with a mix of higher density urban uses, including residential and office.

2. Properties west of Wooldridge Square designated General Office (GO),Multi-Famlily-4 (MF-4) or Commercial Services (CS) should be re-zoned to a new zoning district entitled Downtown Mixed Use-60 (DMU-60) to allow for both residential and commercial uses within a 60-foot height limit. Within the Core/Waterfront District, the maximum density for DMU-60 should be 2.0 FAR. Implementation of this recommendation would involve a two-step process after property owner consent is achieved: first establishing the new zoning district, then initiating a group of re-zoning cases for each individual property.

3. The existing Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning should be amended to DMU-120 to reflect the existing maximum height under this designation

4. Properties owned by Travis County surrounding Wooldridge Square should be rezoned to "P" (Public), reflecting their public ownership and their need for specific standards to the civic use and program. (See Proposed Zoning Changes, *Figure 6*.)

CW-5: Make changes to the list of permitted and conditional uses within the Core/Waterfront District. The CBD and DMU zoning designations generally allow for an appropriate mix of uses. However, the following changes are recommended within the CBD and DMU districts to improve the diversity of, and compatibility between, activities.

- ***Change Cocktail Lounge from a Permitted use to a Conditional use (C)***, rather than allowed by right, as is currently the case for CBD-zoned property, in order to avoid the over-concentration of bars within the Core/Waterfront. All other zoning districts should continue to have Cocktail Lounge as a Conditional use. Criteria for permitting Cocktail Lounge use, should be developed in conjunction with stakeholders, but could include: limiting the number of establishments and/or the percentage of street frontage taken up by such uses; business operational compliance with civil and criminal codes; and conformance with streetfront design standards as described below.
- ***Permit Retirement Housing (Small Site) and Retirement Housing*** (Large Site) uses, in order to allow senior housing and support facilities in the Downtown.
- ***Continue to offer Commercial Off-Street Parking and Off-Site Accessory Parking as Conditional uses,*** but specify the conditions. Surface parking lots should be prohibited altogether, and parking garage facades should comply with the existing City code for DMU and CBD properties, which requires a pedestrian-oriented use on street-fronting, ground floor facades and architectural integration of garages.
- ***Prohibit Exterminating Services as an allowed use*** from any zoning district within the Downtown, as it is not a compatible use within a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use setting. (It is currently permitted in both CBD and DMU districts.)
- ***Include Pet Services as a permitted use*** for CBD-zoned property, in order to serve the many new residents of Downtown. (It is already permitted for properties zoned DMU.)

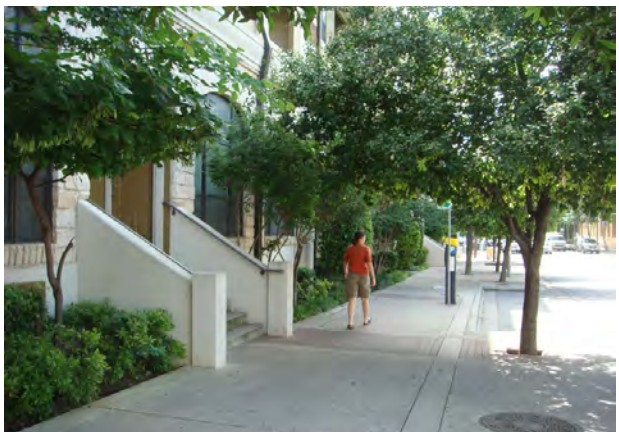
*Proposed and existing CBD and DMU designations. *Applies only to Core / Waterfront District*

	Proposed **DMU-60***	Existing GO	Existing MF-4	Existing CS
Max. Height	***60 feet***	*60 feet*	*60 feet*	*60 feet*
Max. FAR	***2:1***	*1:1*	*0.75:1*	*2:1*
Max. Impervious Cover	***95%***	*80%*	*70%*	*95%*
Max. Building Coverage	***95%***	*60%*	*60%*	*95%*

CW-6: Promote active, ground-level uses throughout the Core/Waterfront District. The vitality of Downtown, and its success as a pedestrian-oriented place, is dependent to a great extent on the activities of individual buildings that front onto streets. Apart from two exceptions, the Land Development Code is largely silent on the kinds of ground-level uses that are appropriate or inappropriate along Downtown streets. The Waterfront Overlay Zone's North Central Subdistrict, stipulates "pedestrian-oriented" uses on the ground level of buildings, and the Land Development Code specifies that the ground floor of parking structures must be "lined" with pedestrian oriented uses. In order to realize the community's goal of a vibrant and pedestrian-oriented downtown, and to avoid inappropriate use and treatment of ground-level street fronts, the Code should be more specific about streetfront uses along certain Downtown streets. As shown on the Streetfront Activity Requirements Map, *Figure 6*, two types of streets are designated in the Core/Waterfront District:

- "Downtown Mixed Use Streets", for the majority of the District, allowing for a wide range of pedestrian-oriented uses including office, retail and residential uses; and
- "Pedestrian Activity Streets", for key streets that function as public destinations and where a more specific mix of pedestrian-oriented activities - like retail, restaurant and cultural uses - is desired.

Examples of Downtown Mixed Use Streets along Third and Fifth Streets.



Downtown Mixed Use Streets: The Core/Waterfront District Plan recommends the following base uses for the ground-level of "Downtown Mixed Use Streets". One or more of the following ground level uses should occupy at least 60% of a parcel's street frontage(s). These uses should have a minimum average depth from the building front of at least 30 feet:

- All "Residential Uses" permitted in DMU and CBD zoned properties should be allowed;
- Certain Commercial Uses, including: Art Gallery, Art Workshop, Cocktail Lounge, Consumer Convenience Services, Consumer Repair Services, Financial Services, Food Preparation, Food Sales, General Retail Sales (Convenience and General), Hotel-Motel, Indoor Entertainment, Indoor Sports and Recreation, Laundry Services, Liquor Sales, Personal Improvement Services, Personal Services, Pet Services, Restaurant (General and Limited, without Drive-Through Service) and Theater.
- Certain Civic Uses, including: Club or Lodge, College and University Facilities, Cultural Services, Day Care Services (Commercial, General and Limited),

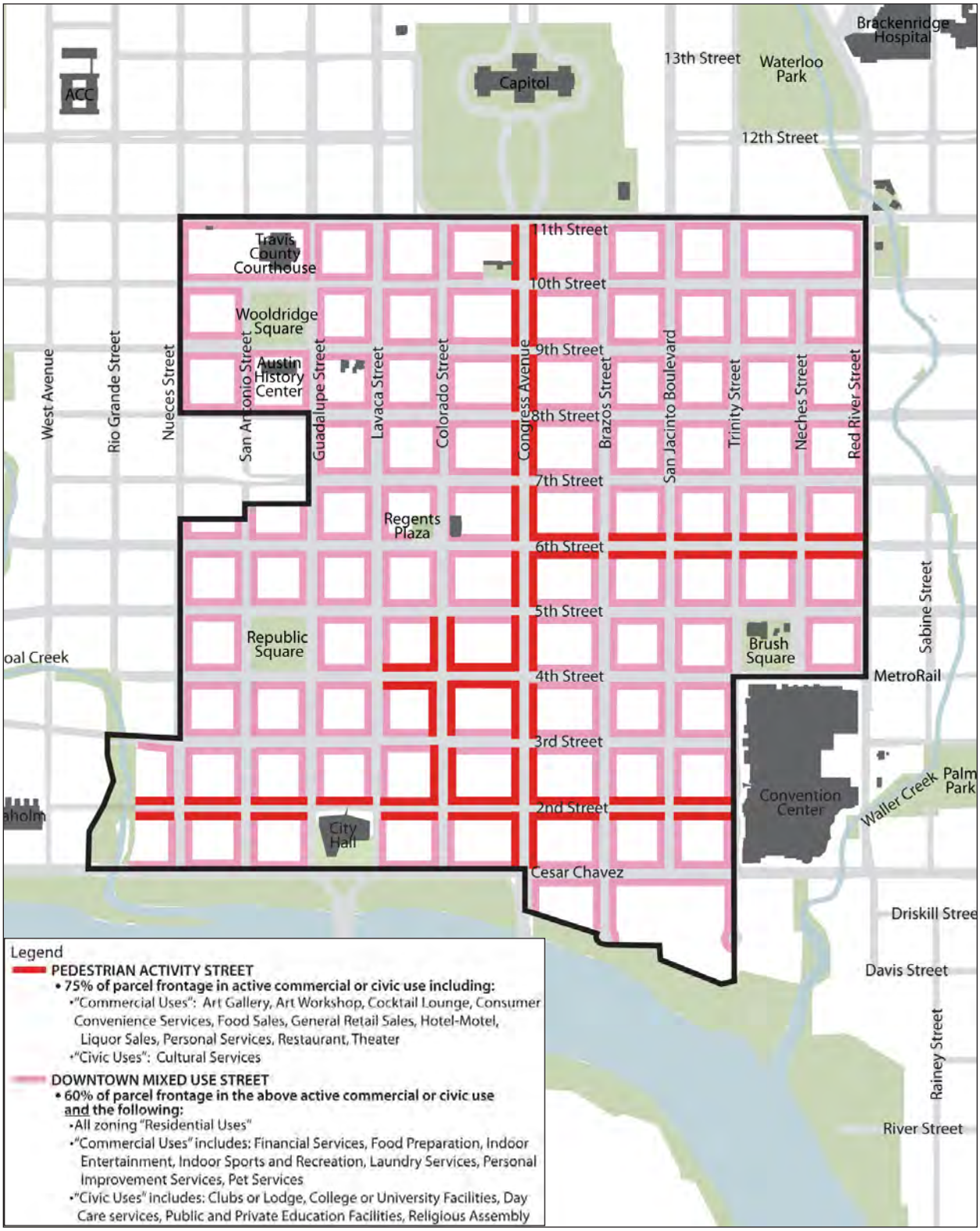


Figure 6:
Streetfront Activity Requirements Map

Public and Private Education Facilities (Primary and Secondary) and Religious Assembly.

Exceptions to the 60% ground-floor frontage use requirement should be made to accommodate preservation of existing buildings and protected trees, required utilities, as well as publicly-accessible open space that meets the standards described below.

Pedestrian Activity Streets: Certain street frontages within the Core/Waterfront District are particularly important in reinforcing the Downtown as a viable and attractive retail and entertainment destination. These include: Congress Avenue, East 6th Street, 2nd Street, and the block frontages of the Warehouse District. These streets, designated as "Pedestrian Activity Streets," promote a strong sense of place within the Core/Waterfront, and important pedestrian and activity linkages within the Downtown, warranting special attention to ensure that private development contributes to their activation and to the City's public investment in their physical improvement. (More specific retail and business recruitment strategies should be pursued by the City, the DAA, and/or others to strengthen the commercial viability and unique character along these key corridors.) In order to promote an active day and nighttime environment, at least 75% of a building's parcel frontage along a designated Pedestrian Activity Street should include the following uses:

- Commercial Uses limited to: Art Gallery, Art Workshop, Cocktail Lounge, Consumer Convenience Services, Food Sales, General Retail Sales (Convenience and general), Hotel-Motel, Liquor Sales, Personal Services, Restaurant (General and Limited, without Drive-Through Service), and Theater.
- Cultural Services.
- Residential Uses will not be allowed on these frontages, with the exception of ground floor lobbies and common areas, which should not be considered part of the 75% active frontage.

Note: Curb cuts and driveways should not be permitted along any Pedestrian Activity Street frontage, unless the responsible City director finds that such a curb cut is the only reasonable way of achieving access to the property.

Restaurant and retail uses that generate activity throughout the day and evening are especially important along Pedestrian Activity Streets, and as such the Plan recommends that these uses in particular be incentivized with a Floor Area Ratio exemption. New developments along Pedestrian Activity Streets that provide retail or restaurant space in compliance with the development standards set forth in the DAP should be permitted to exempt the floor area of such uses from the FAR density calculation.

2nd Street is an example of a designated "Pedestrian Activity Street" in the Downtown core.

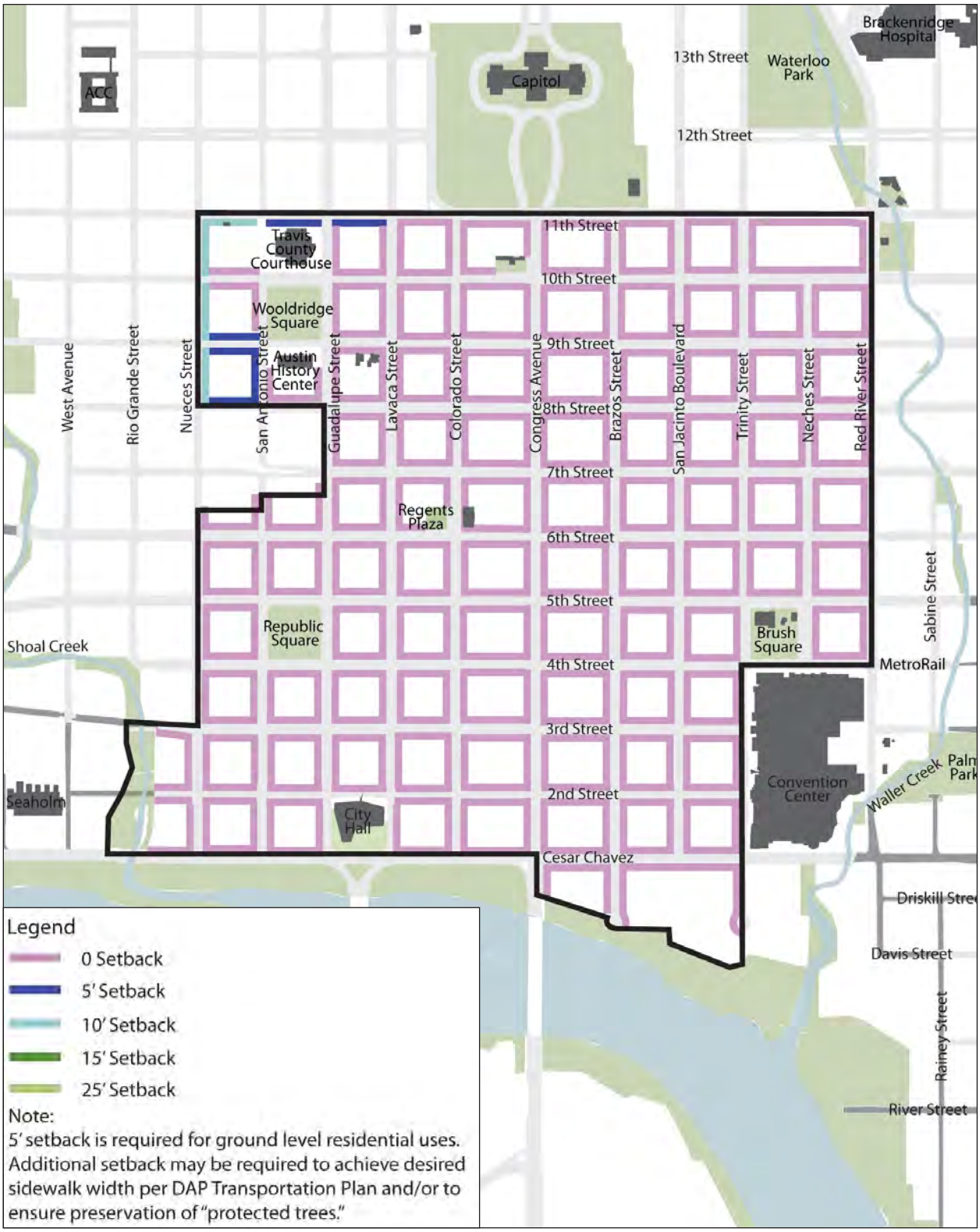


Figure 7:
Streetyard Setbacks

Draft - May 21, 2010

BUILDING FORM AND SETBACKS

For the Downtown to achieve its full potential, it is important that individual buildings contribute to the creation of a positive and livable urban environment, reinforcing the Downtown as a desirable place to live and work and a place that is attractive for private investment. The architectural treatment of buildings and storefronts can contribute significantly to a pedestrian-friendly environment that provides a positive, socially-interactive experience. It is also important that individual buildings contribute to a coherent, pleasing urban form, and that they be designed in a way that does not preclude adjacent properties from developing to their full potential.

CW-7: Amend the zoning ordinance so that frontyard setbacks are regulated according to street, rather than by zoning district. The Land Development Code currently legislates building setbacks according to a property's zoning designation. For example, a property with a zoning designation of CBD or DMU requires no building setback, whereas a General Office (GO) designation requires a 15-foot setback. This produces incongruities in the street character when one street has multiple zoning designations. The DAP proposes that setbacks be established by street, so that the character of that street can be more consistent, regardless of the zoning designation or building type along it. Within the Core/Waterfront, most properties are currently zoned either CBD or DMU, with no setback requirement. This is appropriate to the high-density urban environment of the district. However, it is recommended that frontyard setbacks be established on the following street frontages, in order to ensure a compatible relationship between new and existing development:

1. Along the east side of Nueces Street between 8th and 11th streets, new development should be set back by at least 10 feet, to maintain the dominant residential and neighborhood scale of that street.
2. Along the north side of 8th Street and along both sides of 9th Street between Nueces and San Antonio streets, new development should be set back by at least five feet, in keeping with the existing character of these street frontages.

3. Along the south side of 11th Street, new development should be set back by at least 10 feet between Nueces and San Antonio streets, and five feet between San Antonio and Lavaca streets, to maintain an appropriate relationship with the Travis County Courthouse and the residential character of the district to the north.

4. In addition, and as discussed below, ground-level residential living space, permitted on "Downtown Mixed Use" streets should be set back from the street front property line by five feet.

CW-8: Establish standards for the treatment of ground-level street frontages to promote an engaging pedestrian environment. The existing Code does not regulate ground-level treatments in the Downtown. The City's Commercial Design Standards provide city-wide regulations for commercial and mixed-use buildings along designated street types, but these are not oriented to the particular conditions of Downtown. The City's Urban Design Guidelines and the design guidelines for storefronts within the 6th Street National Register Historic District provide good direction for streetfront treatments, but these are not binding. Consistent with the recommendations of the Commercial Design Standards, that the DAP provide more specific direction for commercial frontages, it is recommended that the following standards be considered for streets within the Core/Waterfront District. As part of any ordinance preparation process, additional stakeholder input should be sought, and additional site testing undertaken.

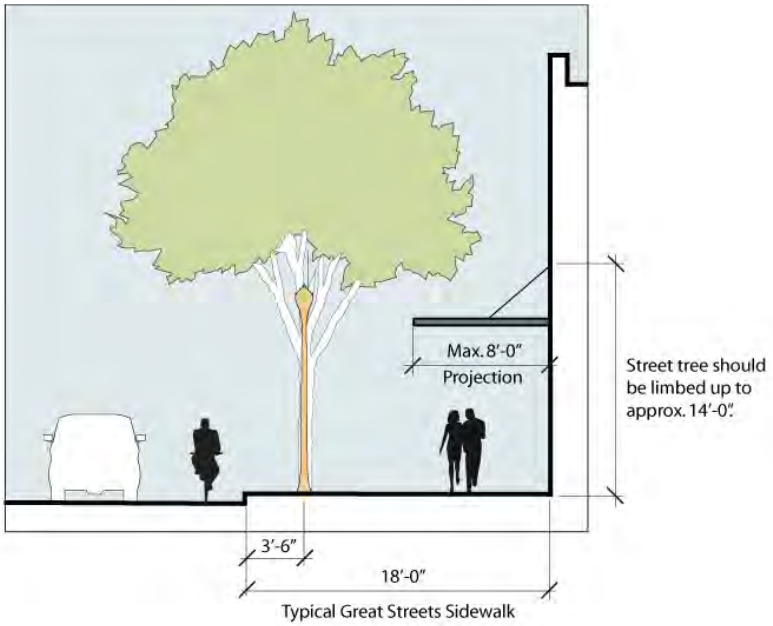
Ground Level Non-Residential Treatment: All non-residential, pedestrian-oriented uses facing public streets should achieve the following:

1. Storefront glazing should be provided on at least 40% of the wall area of the ground level between two and 10 feet above grade on all designated Downtown Mixed Use Streets, and 60% along designated Pedestrian Activity Streets, similar to requirements within the existing Commercial Design Standards of the City Code.

2. All glazing on ground-floor, street or public open space-facing facades should have a Visible Transmittance (VT) of 0.6 or higher, consistent with the Commercial Design Standards.

La Traviata Restaurant, an example of a building which has more than 60% of its wall area in transparent storefront.

3. Shelter and shading devices including awnings, canopies, or other projecting devices should be provided along at least 75% of the street frontage on a Pedestrian Activity Street and along at least 50% on a Downtown Mixed Use Street, covering all building entries. On a typical "Great Streets" sidewalk, canopies should project no more than eight feet into the public ROW.



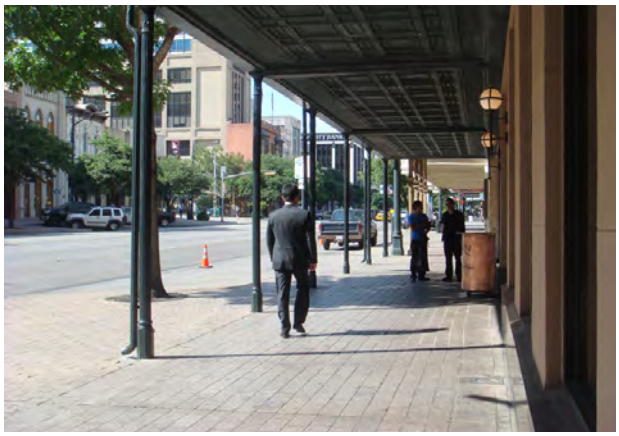
Awnings and canopies should be provided along street frontages.

4. Arcades or colonnades that set the ground-level wall back from the property line should be allowed, subject to approval by the responsible City director, under the following conditions:

    - the arcade or colonnade is currently part of a continuous system of covered walkways within a block, or an adopted plan for the future;
    - the structure provides clear vertical openings to the street, no less than 14 feet in height; and
    - the solid portions of the structure between the sidewalk grade and a height of 14 feet, represent no more than 10% of the building facade facing the street.

5. Public building entries should be oriented to the street, and (with the exception of the Warehouse District blocks) should be generally flush with the elevation of the sidewalk and with the ground-level finished floor. No ramps or stairs are permitted to project within the public right-of-way or front setback area.

Arcades or colonades that remove activity from the street (below left) should be avoided. Projecting canopies or arcades (below right) are encouraged as part of the Downtown vernacular.



6. Building entries along these streets should be positioned at intervals not exceeding 50 feet, except along Congress Avenue, where entries should not exceed intervals of 75 feet.

7. The minimum clear height (measured to the bottom of lowest portion of the structure, per Commercial Design Standards) of non-residential ground-floor space should be 14 feet on Downtown Mixed Use Streets, and 16 feet on Pedestrian Activity Streets.

8. The minimum average depth of the ground-floor, pedestrian-oriented use should be 30 feet.

9. On the Warehouse Block frontages, development should preserve the remaining elevated sidewalks that originally served as loading docks.

Ground level residential spaces are encouraged along Downtown Mixed Use Streets, provided that they are set back and elevated above the sidewalk.

Ground Level Residential Treatment: Where ground-level residential uses are permitted as a pedestrian-oriented use (e.g., on streets designated as Downtown Mixed Use Streets), all living spaces (not including ground-level, common areas or lobbies) should be separated from public sidewalks or trails by a building setback of at least five feet, or the required street front setback, whichever is greater. Ground level living space should also be at least 18 inches above the grade of the sidewalk, but no more than 60 inches, to promote residential privacy and livability.

CW-9: Establish "form-based" building design standards that promote a high quality urban environment, increased density and a compatible relationship between new and existing buildings.

Individual buildings help to define the spatial experience of the Downtown, so it is important that they be designed to contribute to a harmonious urban form – one that is enjoyable for people to move through and gather within. As the Downtown continues to mature, and as larger half and full-block sites become more and more scarce, it is critical that buildings be designed in a way that does not undermine the value of adjacent sites or preclude them from developing to their full potential. It is also important that development regulations allow for smaller sites to be developed efficiently. To this end, it is recommended that specific form-based development standards be adopted for specific building types within the Core/Waterfront District, including low, mid and high-rise buildings, with special provision for buildings within the Warehouse District.

Standards should be formulated in a way that provides property owners and developers with a clear and predictable path for approval. At the same time, they should be designed to allow for flexibility and creativity, with a method of alternative compliance established for those who may wish to propose other architectural means to achieve the intent of the form-based regulations. Appendix A provides a preliminary draft of development standards that could be considered for each of these building types. As part of the ordinance preparation process, further outreach should be pursued with District stakeholders and additional testing undertaken to apply the standards to a greater variety of downtown sites and conditions. The following provides some general direction on the types of regulations that should be considered in the preparation of the form-based standards:

Great Streets: A key goal for the Downtown and the Core/Waterfront District is to implement "Great Streets", both through capital improvement projects and through the individual contributions of property owners and developers. As the City continues to implement Great Streets, new development within the Core/Waterfront District should be required to contribute to their implementation, either by constructing the improvements, or - if deemed not practical - by contributing to the already-established Great Streets Program fund, the proceeds of which are designated solely for Great Streets construction.

Curb Cuts and Driveways: A key goal of the Core/Waterfront District is to enhance the pedestrian environment. To this end, specific criteria should be established for the location and treatment of driveways or curb cuts that interrupt the continuity of sidewalks and that can undermine a successful pedestrian experience. For example:

- Driveways and curb cuts should generally be prohibited on Pedestrian Activity Streets, where pedestrian continuity and active street frontage is critical.
- Off-street drop-offs and porte-cocheres should be allowed only for hotel developments on Downtown Mixed Use Streets, and only where curbside drop-off areas are not practical or feasible.
- The number of driveway curb cuts along a block should be limited to a maximum of two, with no driveway spaced closer than 50 feet from another, and none located closer than 50 feet from an intersection.
- The width of driveways should be no greater than 25 feet.

Downtown developments should contribute to the implementation of Great Streets improvements.

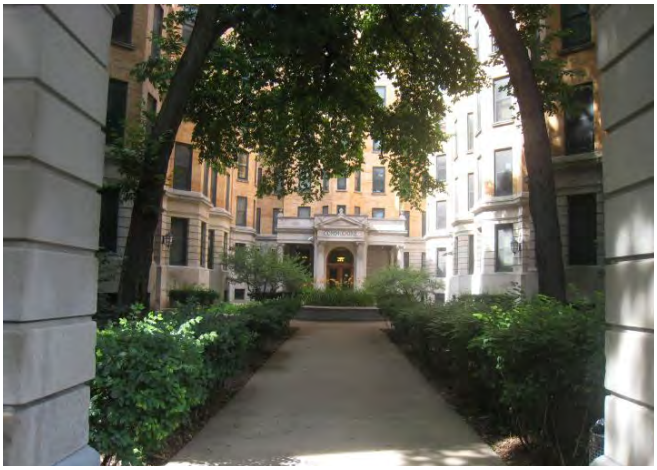
Publicly-Accessible Open Space: New development should be encouraged to provide useable and accessible open space within the site. Increases in setbacks should be permitted, and the density bonus program should incentivize, on-site open space that meets certain criteria. In order to qualify as a publicly-accessible open space, the space should:

- Be accessible and visible from the public sidewalk;
- Be useable throughout daylight hours;
- Include public seating and/or a through-block pedestrian passage;
- Have ground level space accessible to it and overlooking it;
- Be no less than 600 square feet in area, with no dimension less than 15 feet;
- Have at least 30% of its area in landscaped beds; and
- 75% of its surface area open to the sky.

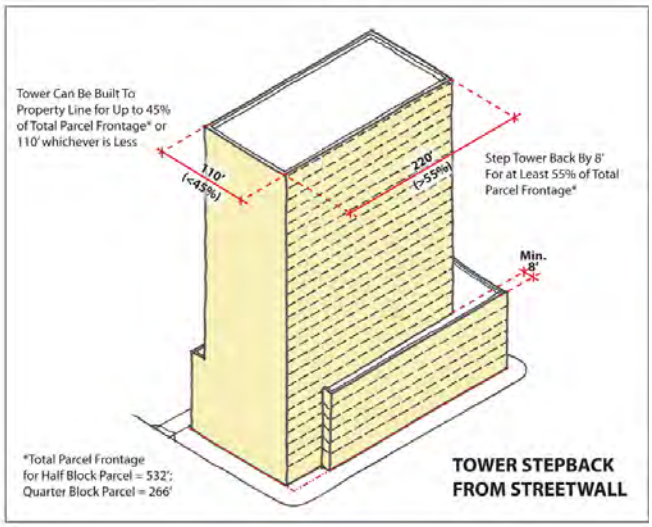
Street Walls: A building's front facade along the street is known as the "street wall", which defines the space of the public realm, creating a sense of interest, comfort and enclosure. It is important that the street wall of adjacent buildings be coordinated with one another, so that a consistent street, block or neighborhood form can be created. Street walls should be:

- Built within five feet of the property line;
- Be no less than 25 feet in height, and be clearly delineated with a stepback and/or a change of material above 90 feet in height (see Tower Stepbacks below); and be
- Scaled to correspond with any adjacent historic building (e.g., having a maximum height difference of 10 feet, for a horizontal distance of at least 25 feet).

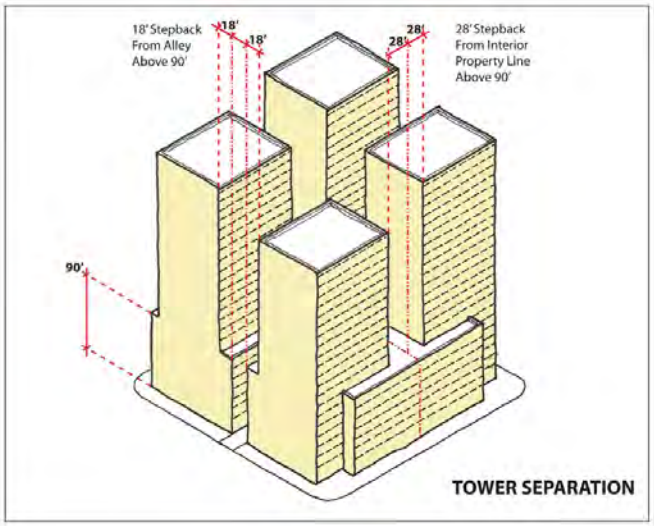
Increased building setbacks should be allowed for publicly-accessible open spaces that contribute to the Downtown pedestrian envrionment. At left is Paley Park in New York City, and at right, a residential courtyard.



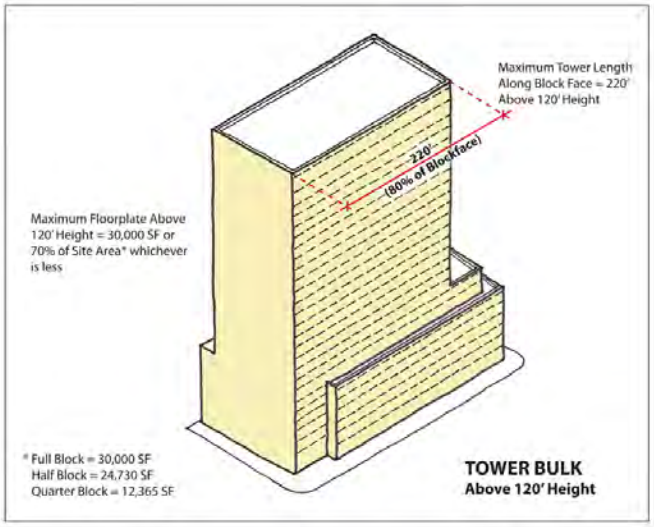
Tower Stepbacks: Towers (i.e., any portion of a building greater than 90 feet in height) should "interlock" with the street wall to allow for both a horizontal and vertical building expression. At least 55% of the tower should be stepped back from the street wall by at least eight feet, with the remaining 45% built to the property line. Properties that are impacted by Capitol View Corridors (CVCs), whereby the height limit is less than 200 feet, should be excepted from this provision.



Tower Spacing and Separation: Towers (i.e., the portion of the building above 90 feet) should be stepped back from alleys and interior property lines, so that the livability and development potential of adjacent sites is not compromised. An 18-foot setback from an alley property line, and a 28-foot setback from an interior property line is recommended, however, additional testing of these standards should be undertaken in conjunction with District stakeholders.



Tower Mass and Bulk: Tall slender towers should be encouraged in the Downtown to allow light to the street, and to create an appealing skyline. To this end, it is recommended that the portion of the tower above 120 feet in height be no greater than 30,000 square feet, or 70% of the site area, whichever is less. This would result in tower floorplate maximum areas of 30,000 square feet on full-block sites; 25,000 square feet on half-block sites; and 12,500 square feet on quarter-block sites. It is also recommended that the length of the tower above 120 feet in height be limited to 80% of the blockface or a maximum of 220 feet, whichever is less. Properties impacted by CVCs, whereby the height limit is less than 200 feet, should be excepted from this provision.



Building Materials: Large expanses of highly-reflective glass on Downtown buildings can create an alienating and unfriendly environment. The existing Commercial Design Standards prohibit the use of reflective glass along the ground floor of buildings, requiring a Visible Transmittance Rating (VTR) of 0.6 or greater to allow views and daylight into buildings. It is recommended that the same requirement be applied to all surfaces of Downtown buildings.

Warehouse District Buildings: Within the Warehouse District blocks, the Plan recommends that special form and massing standards be applied to new construction to preserve the scale and character of this unique district. In addition, it is recommended that protections and incentives be established through a "Transfer of Development Rights" (TDR) program to allow for the preservation and adaptive reuse of warehouse buildings within the "Core Preservation Zone" of the Warehouse District. (See Proposed Warehouse District Map, *Figure 8.*) The proposed TDR program is fully outlined in the Draft Downtown Density Bonus Program report (July 2009, www.cityofaustin.org/development - downtown portal), but the following summarizes how the TDR incentive works and outlines the proposed development standards for the different zones of the district:

1. *Transfer of Development Rights:* Within the Core Preservation Zone, (i.e., properties fronting Fourth Street between Lavaca and Colorado streets) it is recommended that buildings be limited to a height of 45 feet, but that property owners be permitted to sell unused floor area to property owners seeking increased density. The maximum FAR for the purposes of the TDR should be 25:1 within this zone. For other properties within the Warehouse District blocks, but outside of the Core Preservation Zone, no height limit is proposed, but it is recommended that property owners be allowed to transfer unused floor area through the Density Bonus Program up to a maximum FAR of 8:1.

Figure 8:
Proposed Warehouse District

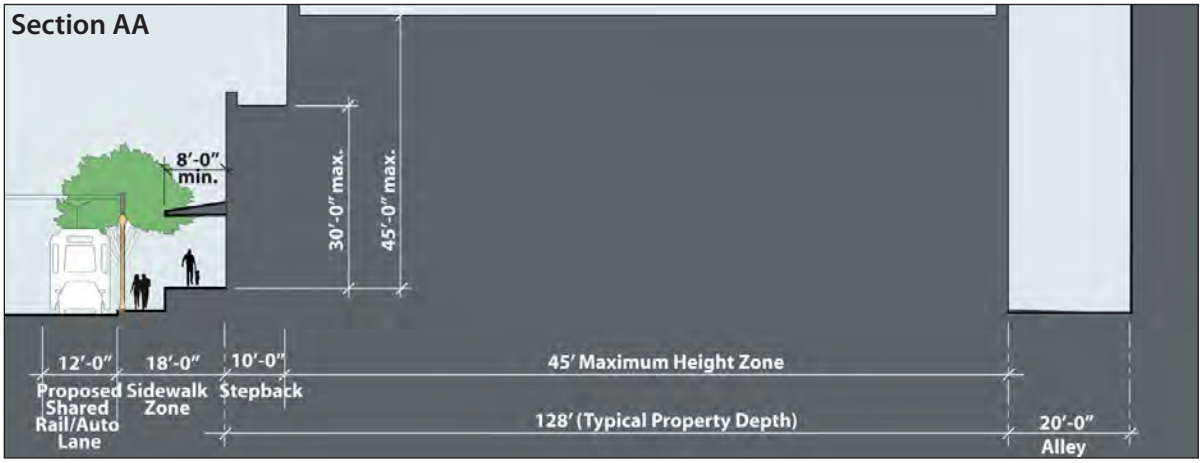
Draft - May 21, 2010

2. *Building Stepback and Streetwall Height:* A 10-foot building stepback should be provided at a maximum building height of 30 feet, for at least 60% of the property frontage in order to maintain a streetwall height that is compatible with the historic fabric of the district. Hotel developments are eligible to exceed the maximum streetwall height by up to 20 feet (or a maximum height of 50 feet), if such hotel is providing ballroom and meeting room facilities within the streetwall volume, and if the architectural treatment of the building is found by the responsible City Director to be compatible with the character of the Warehouse District. (See Sections applicable to general Warehouse District area and for Core Preservation Zone.)

3. *Awnings and Canopies:* A minimum of 75% of the building frontage is required to be protected by awnings or canopies that have a minimum eight-foot horizontal projection from the face of the building at the property line.

4. *Existing Elevated Sidewalks:* All development must preserve the remaining elevated sidewalks that originally served as loading docks.

5. *Curb Cuts:* Access to service and parking areas shall be from alleys. Curb cuts along street frontages will be permitted if no other access is possible, and/or if responsible City director finds that such curb cuts are compatible with the character of the Warehouse District.



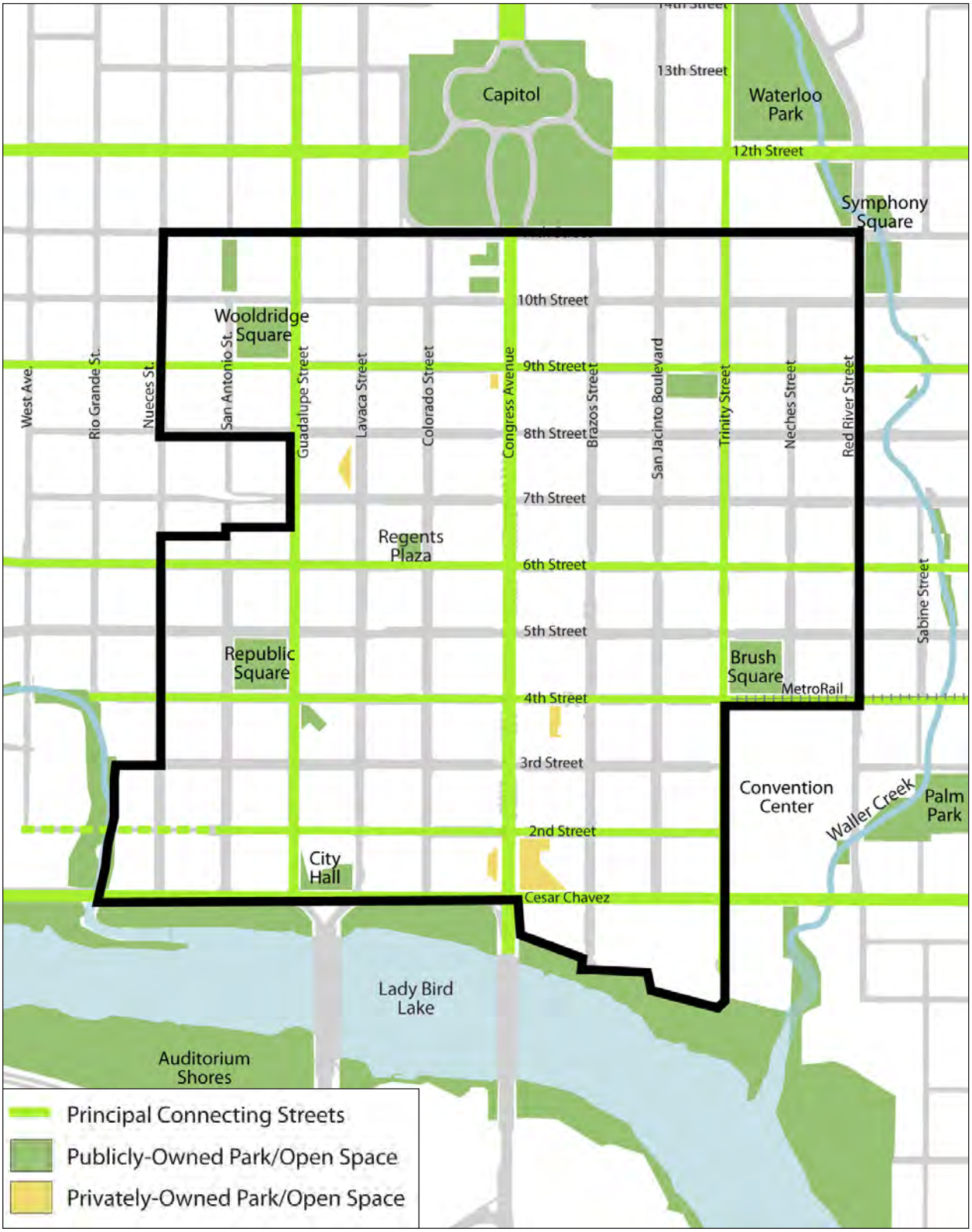


Figure 9:
Parks and Open Spaces with Connecting Streets

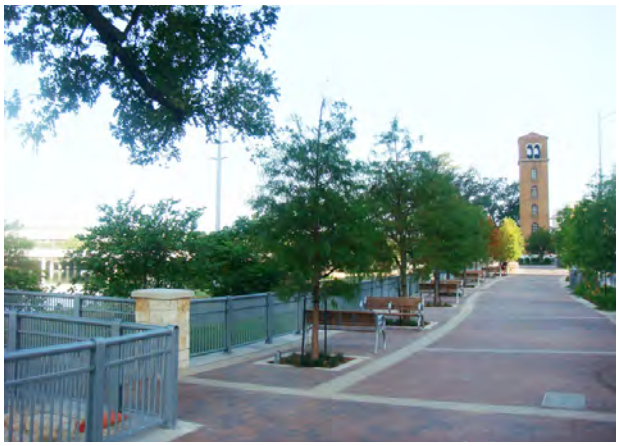
Draft - May 21, 2010

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

As described in the Downtown Austin Plan's Parks and Open Space Master Plan (January 2010: see www.cityofaustin.org - downtown portal), leading cities across the country have placed parks at the center of their downtown revitalization efforts, fueling substantial residential, commercial and retail development, and contributing to a stronger sense of place and community. The introduction of signature parks in Chicago, New York, Boston and Cincinnati has demonstrated that downtown urban parks can not only raise the quality of life and stature of a city, but also substantially raise the value of adjacent properties. A key recommendation of the Downtown Austin Plan is to re-invest in our downtown open space system of greenways, parks and urban squares, including Waller, Shoal Creek and Lacy Bird Lake greenways, Palm and Waterloo parks, and the historic squares of the Waller Plan. (See Parks & Open Space with Connecting Streets map, *Figure 9*.)

Austin's most outstanding and cherished open space and trail system is Lady Bird Lake, the north shore of which directly serves. Much of the recent Downtown development has been planned to take advantage of proximity and views to the Lake. If the direly-needed improvements to Downtown's existing public parks were made, these open spaces could form the focal points and amenities to new development in areas beyond the lakefront, where few development sites remain. Several of these City-controlled parks are located in the Core/Waterfront District, and their improvement is vital to the continued success of Downtown and Austin.

CW-10: Enhance north shore Lady Bird Lake-side amenities. The recent two-way conversion of Cesar Chavez Street and the construction of its "boardwalk" promenade on the north shore between Congress Avenue and Guadalupe Street has recently been completed. However, the heavy traffic of Cesar Chavez and the lack of amenities and public spaces accessible from the promenade deter public use of the promenade. There is a key opportunity to create a more generous activity plaza off the promenade, between the historic Buford Tower at the foot of Colorado Street and the overlook on the west side of the Ann W. Richards



Opportunities for additional activities are encouraged on the promenade between Congress Avenue and the Buford Tower.

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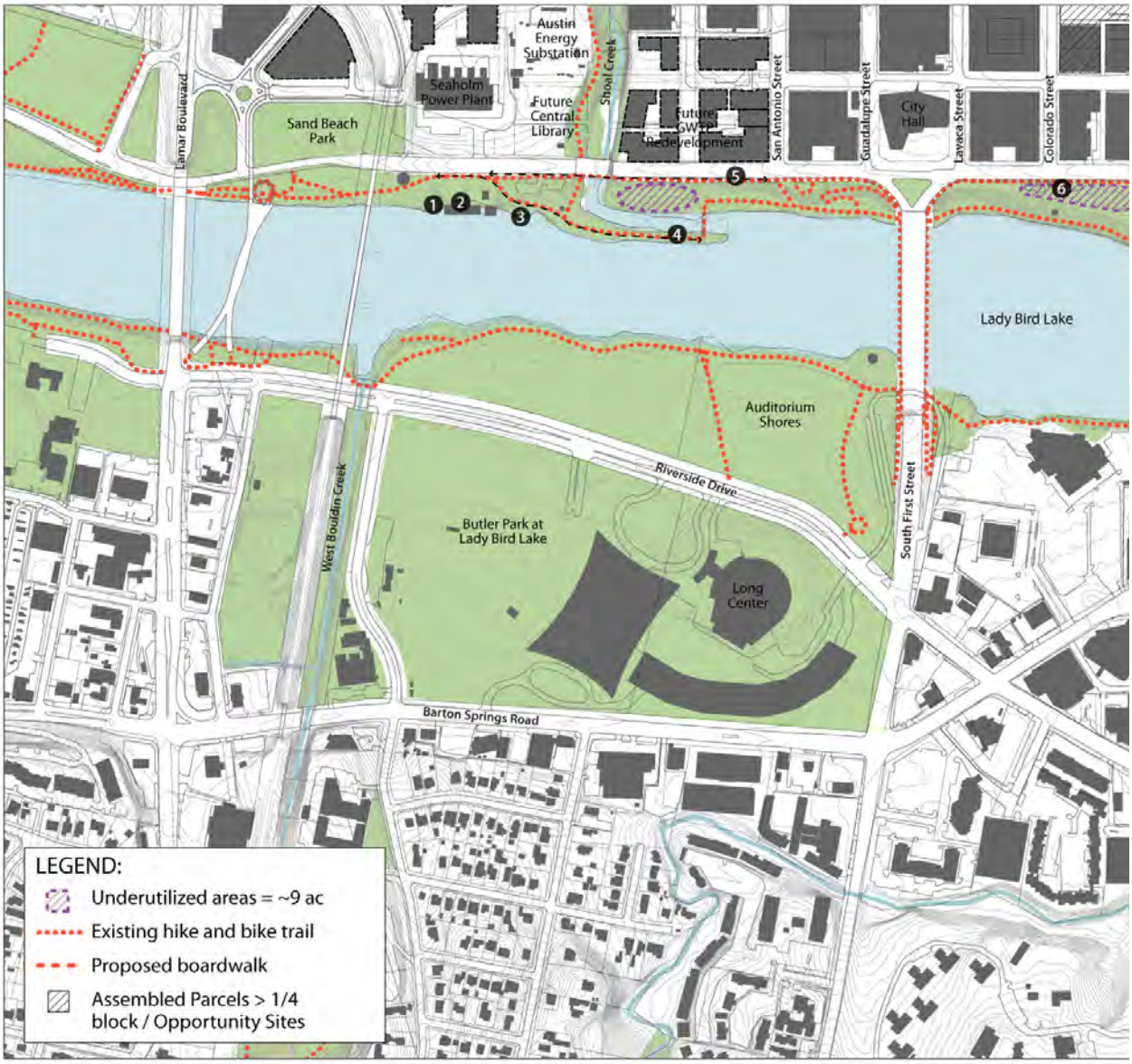
KEY GOALS

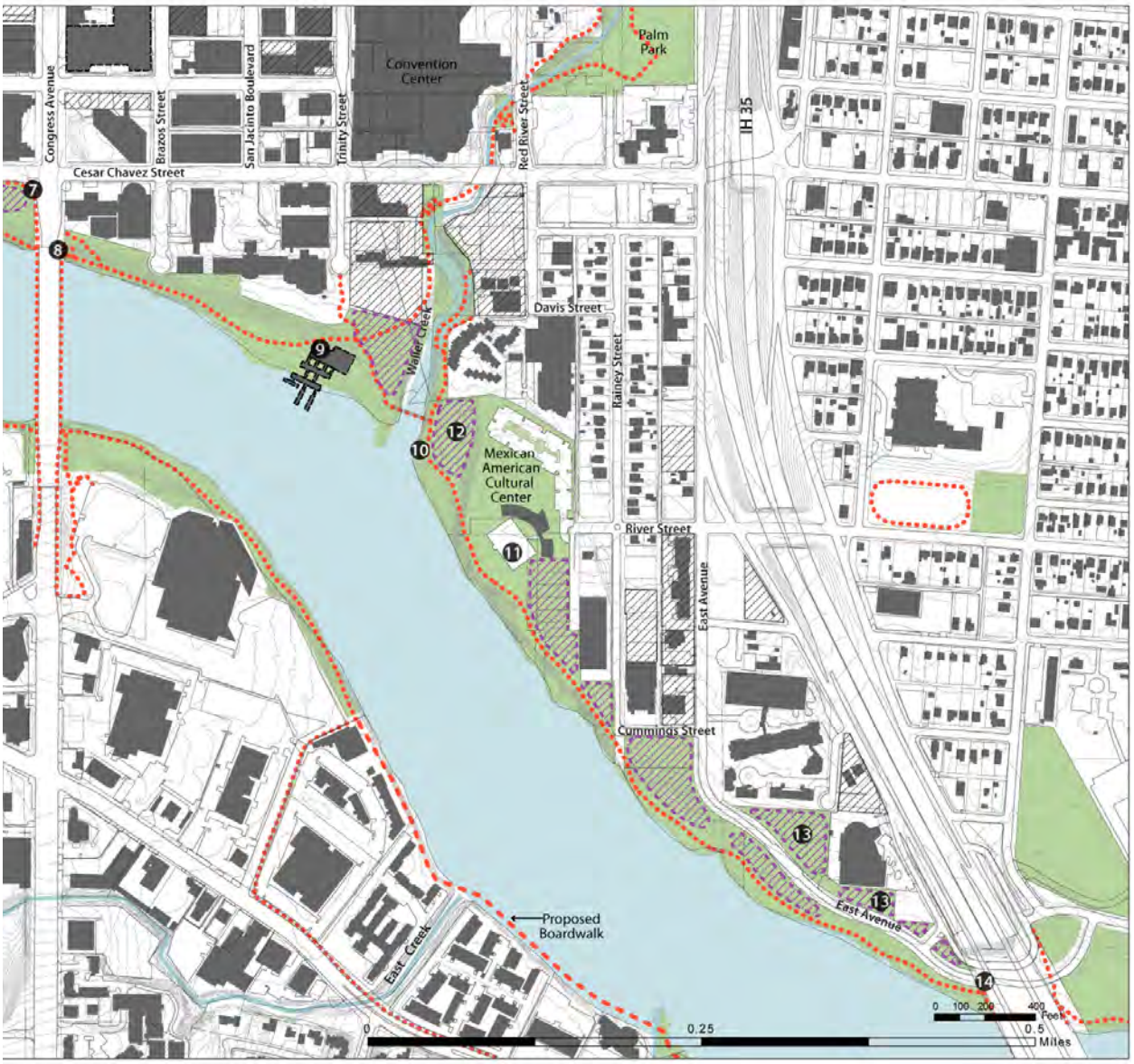
- Introduce additional activities and spaces to attract a greater diversity of users.
- Program and improve underutilized parkland along trail.
- Manage understory vegetation along the lake to improve views and access to the water.
- Continue to make trail improvements to accommodate growing bike and pedestrian use.
- Develop a cohesive trail signage system.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance boat landing.
2. Reuse Seaholm Intake Structure as restaurant.
3. Open view from sloped meadow to lake.
4. Widen trail and remove concrete.
5. Extend sidewalk/promenade to Seaholm.
6. Improve as lawn/plaza and remove promenade railing. Add concessions kiosk near Buford Tower.
7. Provide accessible route from Congress Avenue to trail.
8. Improve trail under Congress Avenue.
9. Ensure that future boathouse provides a multi-use attraction.

Figure 10:
Lady Bird Lake Greenway Improvement Concept



⑩ Create bird viewing area.
⑪ Activate MACC plaza with restaurant, gardens, shade, etc.
⑫ Create children's play area.
⑬ Provide formal and/or community gardens.
⑭ Enhance area under IH 35.

Congress Avenue Bridge. Such a plaza could be the site of mobile food vending, both for Downtown employees and visitors, as well as for trail and park users, and it could improve the accessibility and quality of city-wide events, such as First Night and Art City. In addition, the promenade should be extended to connect to the Pfluger Bridge helix area, just east of Lamar Boulevard, thus linking to the new Pfluger Bridge extension flying over Cesar Chavez Street. (See Lady Bird Lake Greenway Improvement Concept, *Figure 10*.)

CW-11: Enhance the three historic squares of the Waller Plan. Two of the three remaining downtown squares within the Core/Waterfront District, are in deteriorating condition. (See Waller's 1839 Plan for the City of Austin on page 1.) Apart from the recent revitalization of Republic Square, there have been no significant capital improvements to these historic open spaces in the past decades. The following provides a summary of the specific recommendations for each of these urban spaces from the DAP Parks and Open Space Master Plan:

Brush Square: Although Brush Square is dedicated parkland, much of the space is occupied by a three existing historic structures, the most dominating one being Fire Station One and and its relatively large parking lot, which significantly detract from the sense of open space. The long-term goal for Brush Square is to create a visitor-oriented park (consistent with its location adjacent to the Convention Center and the Convention Center Hilton Hotel) with a cultural emphasis, that also provides a landscaped refuge from city life for the daily use of nearby residents and employees. (See Brush Square Improvement Concept Plan, *Figure 11*.)

1. The City should ultimately find a new location for Fire Station One, so that the full potential of Brush Square as a public open space can be realized. Ultimately the fire station building (which is a designated City of Austin Historic Landmark) should be repurposed as a community-oriented building (e.g., Firehouse Café and Museum) with a strong orientation to the park. In the meantime, the City should work with Austin Fire Department to reduce the footprint of its surface parking lot (or entirely remove the parking lot) in order to provide a larger and more useable open lawn area.

2. In addition to contracting the parking lot and expanding the lawn area, near-term recommendations include: construction of accessible pathways to the park and museum buildings from East 5th Street, introduction of a small-scale social activities (e.g., bocce ball), food kiosks that bring new users to the open space and a bike rental station.

3. Longer-term recommendations, include: the creation of a multi-use open lawn on the southern half of the block, creation of vendor kiosk areas along Trinity Street, introduction of accessible paths through the park and to/through the museum complex, protection of the large and exceptional Live oak tree with a raised deck, and implementation of Great Streets along all blockfaces of the park.

The City's Arts in Public Places Program recently completed this courtyard project, adjacent to the historic Susanna Dickinson and O. Henry houses in Brush Square.

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KEY GOALS FOR THE LONG TERM

- Create a visitor-oriented park with a cultural emphasis, that also supports daily use by nearby residents and employees.
- Maintain and enhance the park as a landscaped green refuge in the city.
- Ensure that the park can support a variety of types and sizes of events and gatherings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Re-purpose fire station building and consider decreasing footprint.
2. Create cafe terrace around building.
3. Create multi-use open lawn.
4. Extend kiosk terrace and add additional vendor.
5. Create landscaped area and/or terrace.
6. Construct raised deck to protect live oak tree.
7. Create accessible path that connects Trinity St and Neches St. Create connection to O. Henry Museum entrance.
8. Extend the courtyard to the south.
9. Implement Great Streets sidewalks and street trees.

Figure 11:
Brush Square Long-Term Improvement Concept

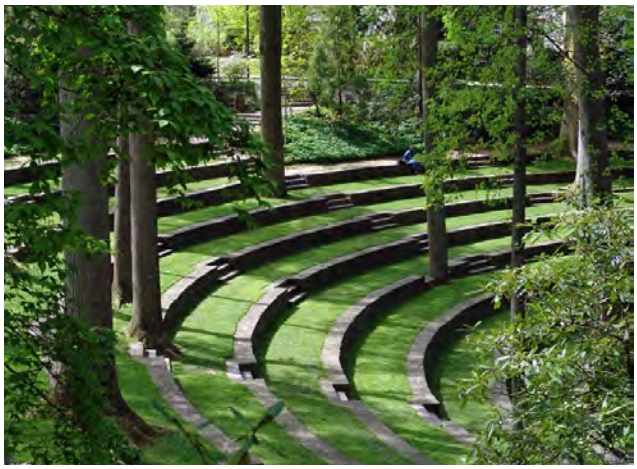
Wooldridge Square: Wooldridge Square is characterized by its depressed bowl-shaped topography, mature trees and historic wooden bandshell/pavilion. A random mix of furnishings in poor condition are scattered through the park. Although, the park is a venue for some regularly-programmed activities, (e.g., Saturday giant chess, summer concerts, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, etc.), its main users are the homeless, who congregate to meet the Mobile Loaves and Fishes van which serves lunch and dinner there every day. A key goal for the park is to preserve the landscape character and the historic role of the square as a civic gathering place, while improving its accessibility, usability and safety. (See Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept Plan, *Figure 12*.)

1. In the near-term, efforts should be made to establish a stronger pattern of daily use in the park with activities that serve the significant employee population in the area. Mobile food carts and/or curbside food vans and moveable chairs and tables are recommended in the northwest corner of the square where there is relatively flat terrain, and in proximity to the Travis County employee base. In addition, interpretive exhibits that celebrate the rich history of Wooldridge Square should be introduced.

2. Great Streets improvements should be made at the perimeter of the park, and if the Guadalupe edge will serve transit users, then high-quality shelters and other amenities should be located along Guadalupe Street in the public ROW, to ensure that transit users do not overflow into the park or block the sidewalk.

3. In the longer-term, it is recommended that the park be carefully re-graded to improve drainage and accessibility and to better provide for programmed events as well as informal gathering, while preserving the existing trees and bandstand structure.

The Travis County Courthouse (left) faces creates an opportunity for an exchange of activity between the park and building. Informal amphitheater seating would enhance Wooldridge Square as a gathering place for events and performances (right).



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KEY GOALS

- Preserve the historic role and landscape character of the square.
- Improve the accessibility, usability and safety.
- Promote redevelopment and active uses around the square.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement Great Streets sidewalks and street trees.
2. Provide bus shelters along Guadalupe Street (CMTA).
3. Introduce food kiosk with seating.
4. Create shady informal gathering area.
5. Leave area as unprogrammed open green space.
6. Fill and re-grade area to create more usable meadow.
7. Re-grade and shape to enhance amphitheater-like setting.
8. Create ample and accessible stage area.
9. Preserve historic bandstand and integrate into stage design.
10. Create an accessible path through the park.
11. Require pedestrian-oriented uses facing park.
12. Keep West 10th Street open to traffic.
13. Consider constructing public restrooms within existing garage.

Figure 12:
Wooldridge Square Improvement Concept

Republic Square: A significant first phase of improvements has recently been completed for Republic Square, resulting in the removal of the landscaped berms introduced in the 1970s, and the construction of a walled and decked area that also serves to protect the historic Auction Oaks. A comprehensive planning process had been conducted to establish a new organizational framework that has "reset" the park, allowing it to evolve over time. (See Republic Square Improvement Concept Plan, *Figure 13*.) Additional recommendations arising out of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan include:

1. Construction of Great Streets improvements around the perimeter of the Square, including adequate provision for future stops along Guadalupe Street or urban rail stops along 4th Street.
2. Introduction of a food vending kiosk and dining terrace in the northwest corner of the square, with storage for moveable chairs and tables, which could incorporate a public restroom.

Since the opening of the Farmers Market in 2003 (left), thousands of shopppers visit Republic Square every Saturday. A deck around the historic Auction Oaks (right) was built to protect the roots and provide an attractive gathering space.

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KEY GOALS

- Ensure that the current design to "reset" the park is fully funded and executed.
- Create a new focal point around sustainable food concession(s) and dining.
- Promote redevelopment and active uses around the square.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide moveable chairs at Auction Oaks deck. Plant with native and possibly edible vegetation.
2. Create accessible path.
3. Implement Great Streets sidewalks and street trees.
4. Provide bus shelters along Guadalupe Street.
5. Create open lawn for movies, events and temporary art installations.
6. Create grove of deciduous trees that allows views and access into park.
7. Create shady plaza/dining terrace with water feature and possible sustainable food demonstration.
8. Introduce food kiosk with restroom and storage. Pursue farmers market food vendor.
9. Design San Antonio Street plaza to support Farmers Market.
10. Require pedestrian-oriented uses facing park.
11. Consider constructing public restrooms.

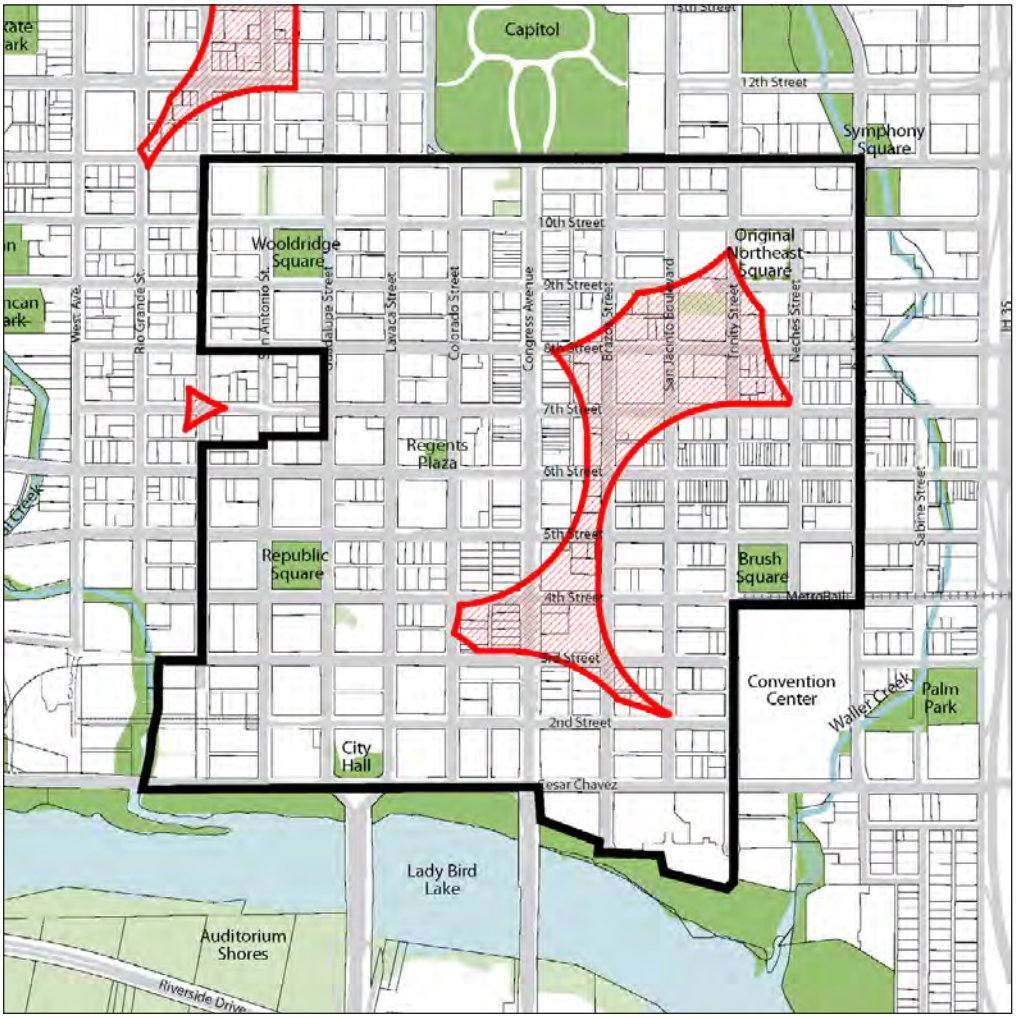
Figure 13:
Republic Square Improvement Concept

CW-12: Pursue opportunities for restoring the Northeast Square as a public open space. The fourth square in Edwin Waller's 1839 City Plan was located in the northeast quadrant of the Downtown, but was never developed as an open space. It was the site of the original Austin High School and was sold in the 1960s to the First Baptist Church, which continues to occupy the site with its main sanctuary building. The Parks and Open Space Master Plan identifies the need for additional open space in this northeast quadrant of the Downtown to provide for a more even distribution of park space. In the very long-term, it would be ideal to reclaim this historic block to realize the 1839 Waller Plan, but the Church has expressed no interest in selling their property or in relocating in the foreseeable future.

1. As redevelopment of State and Federal properties in this area proceeds, opportunities for land swaps with the church should be pursued and discussed in an effort to reclaim the Northeast Square.

2. Failing this, or in advance of it, other open space opportunities should be pursued in the northeast quadrant of the Downtown, e.g., on any land that may be surplussed by the federal government or with the redevelopment of the large plaza accessible form 9th Street, between Trinity and San Jacinto.

Areas of the Core / Waterfront District that are greater than 800 feet from a public open space.



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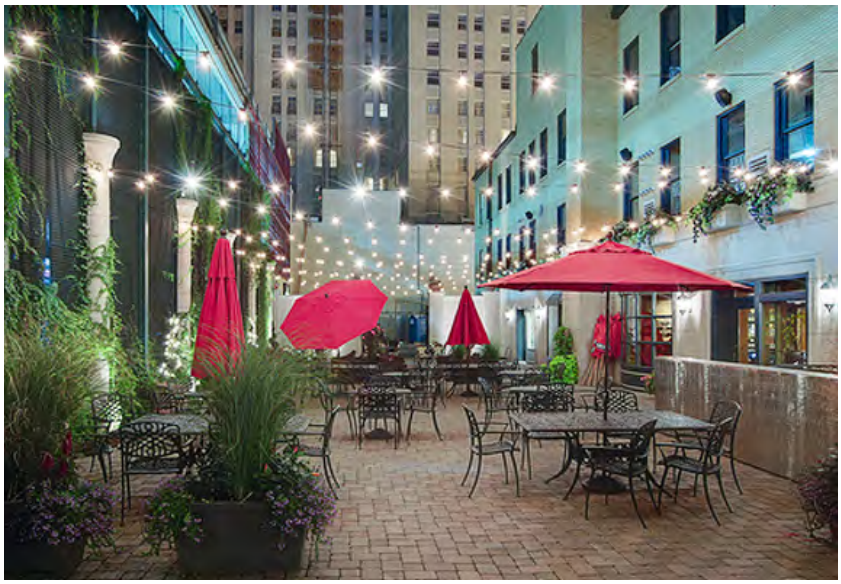
CW-13: Activate the parkland surrounding the City's Old Bakery and Emporium on Congress Avenue. The National Register property at the northwest corner of Congress Avenue and 10th Street is a beautiful Victorian mercantile structure built by Swedish immigrant, Charles Lund, for a bakery. Today it is run by volunteers and used to house the PARD-operated seniors arts and craft program and a modest food sales operation. The building and its modern addition to the south enclose a small open space, with a few picnic tables, that does not support or receive much activity, partly due to the limited hours of retail and food operations, and partly because it is isolated, being the only real use of this blockface of the Avenue, being surrounded by State-controlled parking lots and the forgotten State-owned parkland immediately to its north. Participants at the recent Congress Avenue Wow Charrette (March 2010) vowed to work with City and the State to revitalize this key 1000 block of Congress Avenue, as it is the key connecting block to the Capitol and one that, with the right mix of uses, could draw Capitol visitors and employees to the Avenue's emerging great mix of food, retail and cultural offerings. Introducing a commercial café operator with extended and weekend hours into the Old Bakery could support this idea, and boost the arts and craft sales.

The State-owned parkland surrounding the historic Old Bakery and Emporium should be activated with a small cafe.



- Planned CIPs
- Planned GSDPs
- Under Construction CIPs
- Under Construction GSDPs /GSMP
- Completed
- Great Streets Development Program (GSDP) Boundary
- Great Streets Master Plan Boundary

Figure 14:
Great Streets Implementation Plan

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STREETSCAPE

Even more than parks, streets form the principal public open space of Downtown, making up more than 30% of the total Downtown land area. However, most Downtown streets have little space devoted to the pedestrian. The typical Core/Waterfront District street has only 25% of its right-of-way devoted to the pedestrian, with 10-foot sidewalks along both sides of a 60-foot wide street. In recognition of this problem, the City's Great Streets Program was initiated in the early 2000s to rebalance the role of streets as multi-modal corridors, not only as conduits for the movement of automobiles and other vehicles, but also as places for people-oriented activity that stimulates and supports economic development. Over the past ten years, the program has resulted in wider sidewalks and enhanced streetscapes through City-financed CIP projects, such as 2nd Street and Brazos Street, and through the "Great Streets Development Program", with reimbursements to the many private developers who have constructed Great Streets improvements. (See Great Streets Implementation Map, *Figure 14*.)

Streets establish the way we see and experience Downtown, and the way its different spaces and activities are linked together.

CW-14: Continue to improve Downtown streets through the Great Streets Program. The City of Austin should continue to construct Great Streets on an incremental basis as funding becomes available, using the recommended priorities of the DAP. The DAP recommends that new development within the Downtown be required to contribute to the implementation of the program, either by constructing the improvements, or, if that is not practical or feasible, by contributing to the City's existing Great Streets Program fund. In the future, when the City is funding a Great Streets project, those properties fronting on and therefore benefitting from the project should also be required to contribute to the fund.

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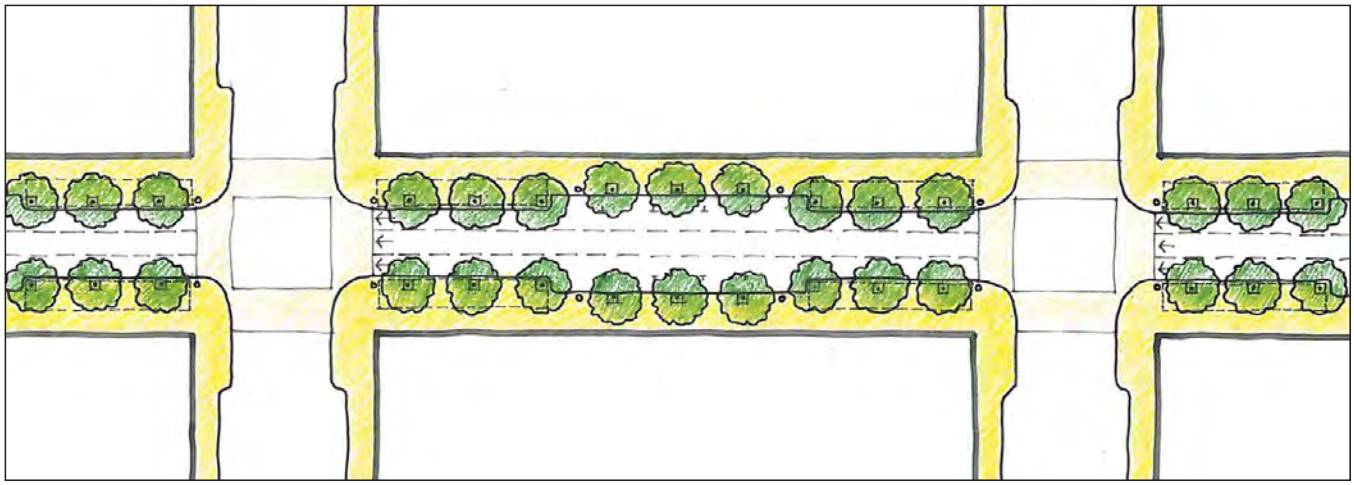

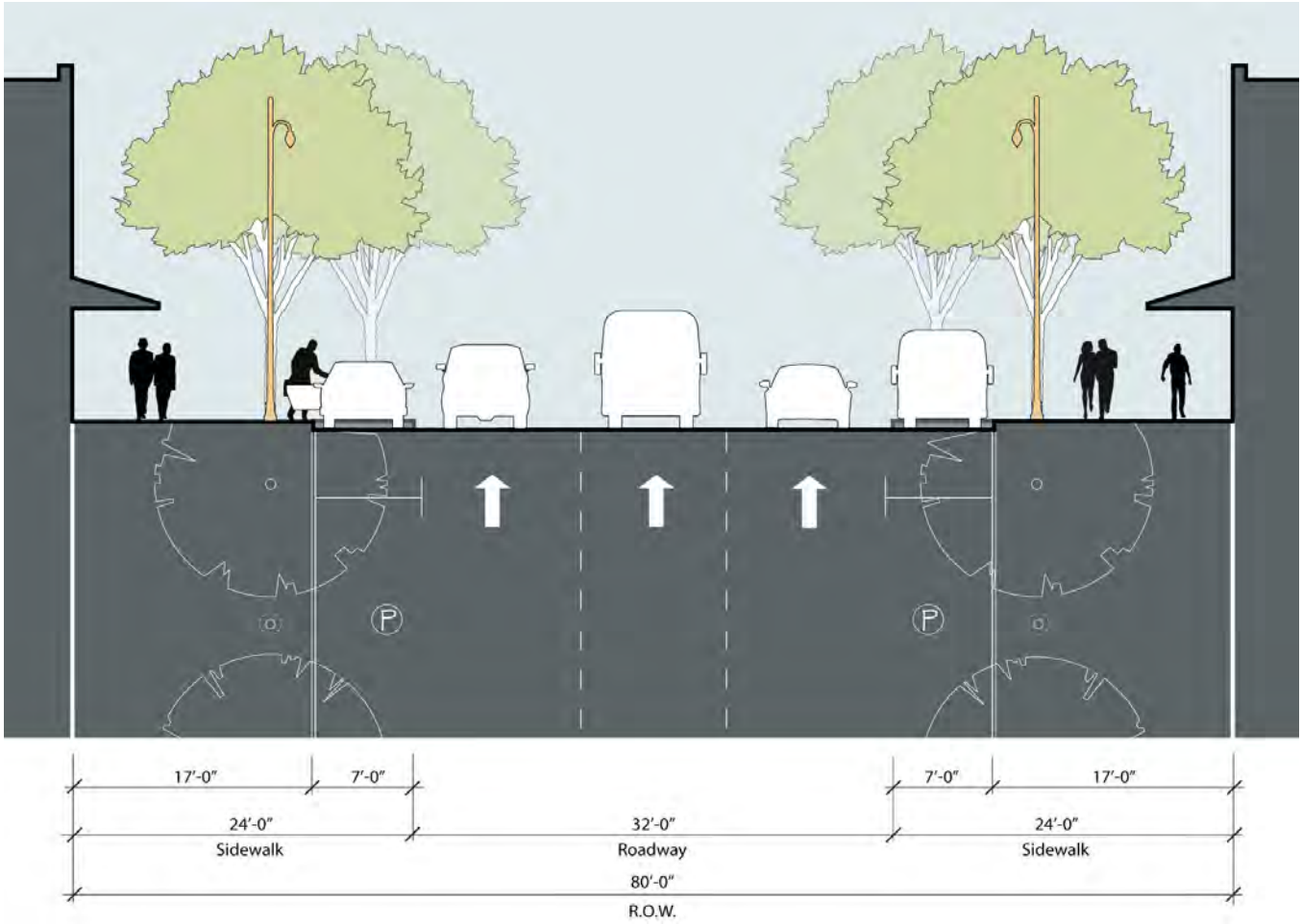

Figure 15:
East 6th Street Conceptual Block Plan and Cross Section

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CW-15: Improve the pedestrian environment and visual identity of East Sixth Street. The improvement of East Sixth Street between IH-35 and Brazos Street is essential to address the deteriorating condition of this important historic street and the significant role that it plays as the central spine of Austin's iconic entertainment district. The City should collaborate with the 6th Street Business Improvement District (6ixth Austin) to develop a streetscape design that balances the need for vehicular circulation with the high pedestrian volumes, and that takes into account the historic character and scale of the street. The streetscape design should create sufficient pedestrian capacity on the street to support its role as a regional destination, and to reduce the need for weekend night street closures that negatively impact businesses and promote unruly behavior. An initial planning effort has been undertaken (2010) by 6ixth Austin to solicit input from area property owners, businesses and other stakeholders, as part of the DAP process. Among these stakeholders consensus is building around a design concept that narrows the street to three lanes and widens the sidewalk to approximately 24 feet in width.

In addition to the streetscape, the DAP recommends other actions to improve the viability of the street, including recommendations about loading and servicing, historic preservation, the creative community and bolstering the BID and/or other management structure.

The design for East 6th Street should balance the need for vehicular circulation with the high pedestrian volumes.

CW-16: Improve Congress Avenue. The City should collaborate with key stakeholders including the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) to develop an enhancement plan for Congress Avenue. The DAA's Congress Avenue WOW initiative, has already established an outreach program to solicit input and to develop an over-arching vision for the Avenue, which was last improved in the mid-1980s, with the angled parking configuration and wider granite sidewalks. Today, however, the street no longer lives up to its reputation as the City and State's principal ceremonial boulevard. It lacks a strong visual identity at the pedestrian level, and the diagonally-parked cars along the street compromise the pedestrian and visual experience, and limit opportunities for cafés and storefront activities.

The design of the street is also inadequate to support its role as an important transit corridor. Capital Metro plans to relocate MANY of the local bus routes from Congress Avenue to the Lavaca/Guadalupe corridor where "MetroRapid" service could begin as early as 2012. This would de-congest Congress Avenue and allow for the high-priority implementation of urban rail on the Avenue, restoring its historic role as the central hub of the transit network.

Improvements should be aimed at enhancing the overall image and identity of the street, and creating a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly environment. Specific recommendations include:

- A short-term enhancement plan that provides specific standards for improvement of the street environment by individual property owners, while maintaining a cohesive image and identity for the overall street. Standards

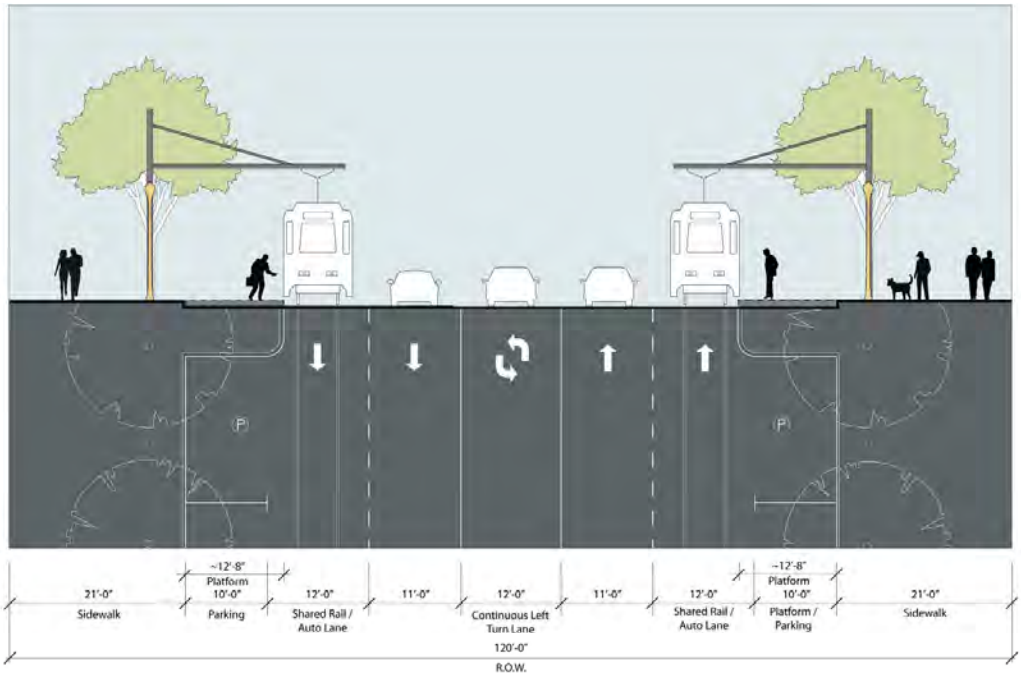

Figure 16:
Section through Congress Avenue with Proposed Shared Side-Running Rail and Parallel Parking

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should provide guidance on: replacement of diagonal parking, signage, paving and landscape materials, street furnishings, public art, activity nodes, etc.

- A long-term improvement plan should be undertaken and implemented as an integral part of the urban rail project, befitting the meaning and significance that the Avenue plays in both the City and the State.

CW-17: Improve Downtown streetscapes in tandem with urban rail and enhanced bus transit service. As urban rail is introduced into the Downtown, and as Capital Metro implements MetroRapid service in the Lavaca/Guadalupe corridors, corresponding streetscape improvements need to be designed and constructed. Streetscape design should be an integral part of these important transit projects to ensure that these new modes are seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the Downtown and constructed in a manner that minimizes disruption to businesses. Further discussions with the community regarding the treatment of the street should be undertaken, and adequate funding should be set aside for the design and construction of high-quality streetscapes.

Streetscape design and a comprehensive wayfinding system should be an integral part of Downtown transportation projects.

CW-18: Initiate a public restroom program. Currently there are no public restrooms in Downtown, apart from those within public buildings, like City Hall and the Central Library. This is a need that stakeholders throughout the Downtown have given a high priority. There are a variety of options that could be pursued by the City (e.g., lease purchase of Automatic Pay Toilets, construction of stand-alone facilities, integration of restrooms within parking garages, agreements with private property owners, etc.), but these need to be carefully evaluated with the community and an operating plan established. It is recommended that the City initiate a planning process aimed at producing a Master Plan and Implementation Program for Downtown Restrooms.

CW-19: Initiate a comprehensive and integrated way-finding system within the Downtown. The Downtown lacks a way-finding system that guides visitors and residents to important destinations, attractions and landmarks, or to public services and public parking facilities. A unified signage system indicating clear paths of travel to key destinations and major public parking facilities should be developed. This system should be coordinated with that provided at Capital Metro transit stops, and should include district maps that can help to promote the identity and patronage of the various Downtown districts. As part of the way-finding system, "real-time" parking availability signs should be incorporated as an integral part of the way-finding system and located along major entries into the Core/Waterfront.

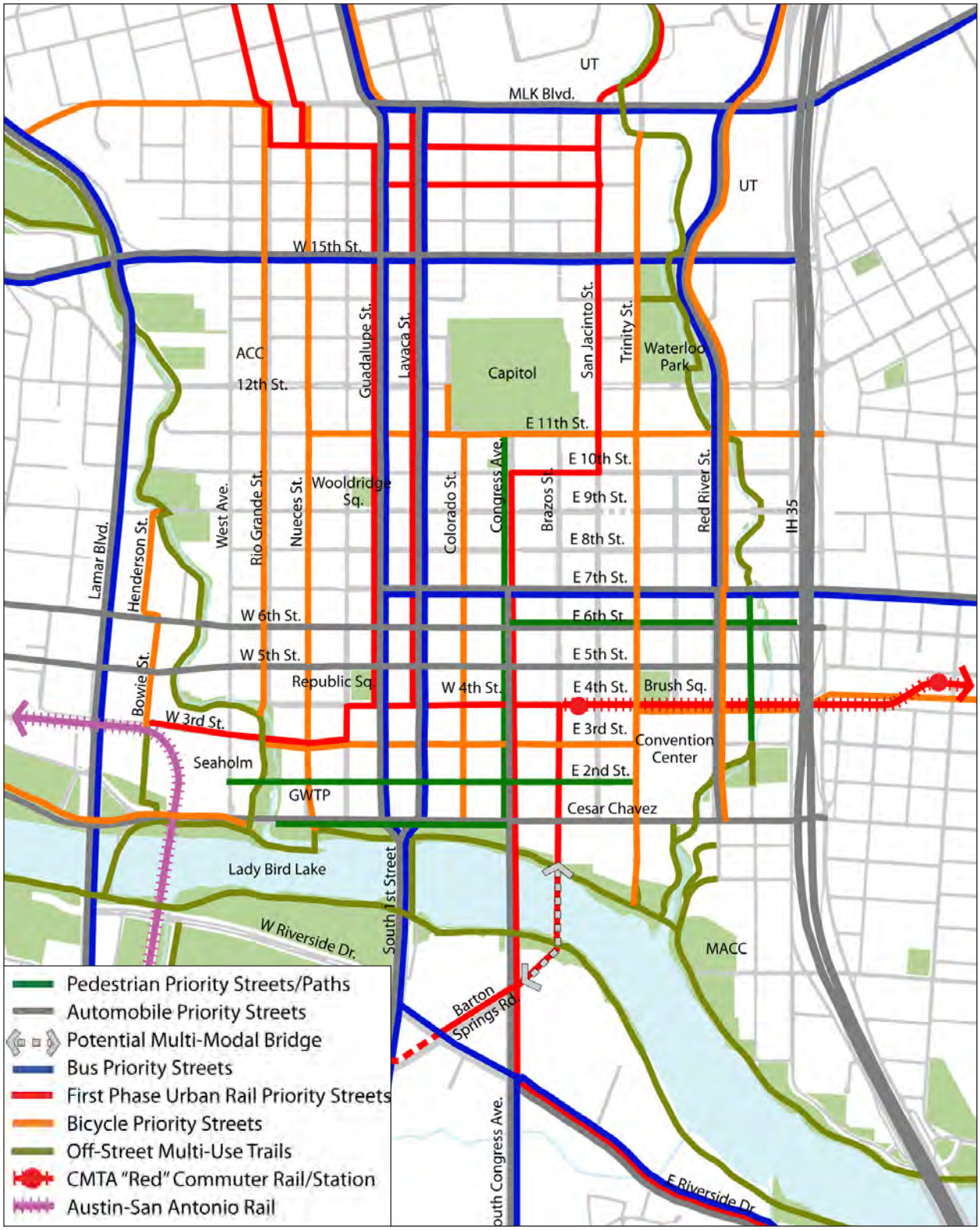

Figure 17:
Transportation Framework Plan

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TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

A key goal of the Downtown Austin Plan is to improve access to, and mobility within, the Downtown core, creating a more balanced multi-modal transportation system that supports high-density, compact growth and a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented environment. As part of the DAP, a Transportation Framework Plan has been established to guide transportation planning and project development. The Plan calls for a system of primarily two-way streets, with all streets to be improved as multi-modal corridors with enhanced pedestrian space. It also establishes a classification system defining priority modes or roles for each street: pedestrian, bicycle, transit and/or vehicular, and recommends street cross sections for each different street type. The Transportation Framework Plan (*Figure 17*) will continue to be updated as specific projects are funded for design and engineering and further community input is considered as their plans become more detailed. The following provides a summary of the transportation policies that most affect the Core/Waterfront District:

A dedicated bike lane.

CW-20: Continue to upgrade the Downtown bicycle network. A series of bicycle priority streets has been identified as part of the 2009 Austin Bicycle Plan Update and the DAP Transportation Framework Plan, providing a clear and safe network for bicyclists of all experience levels. Within the Core/Waterfront, high priority should be given to the following projects:

- Striping dedicated bike lanes on Red River Street to better connect the Lady Bird Lake and Waller Creek trail systems with The University of Texas;
- Striping dedicated lanes on Colorado Street, once bicycle ridership warrants it and once it is converted to two-way; in the meantime, a “sharrows” (designated shared vehicular/bicycle lanes), are recommended on both Brazos and Colorado in their current one-way configuration.

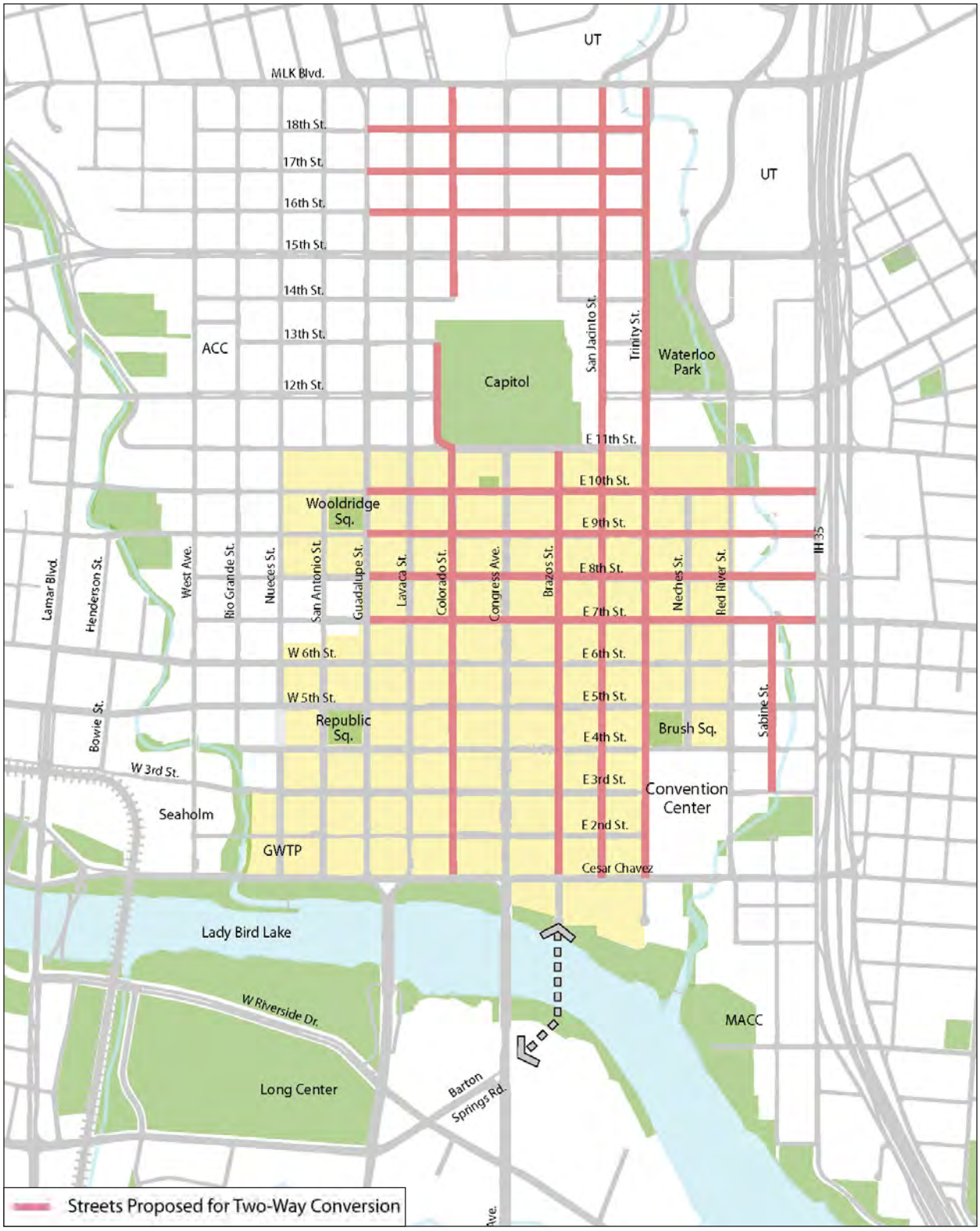

Figure 18:
Proposed Two-Way Street Conversions

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- Introducing sharrows to increase motorist awareness of bicyclists along: Congress Avenue, Brazos, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th and 12th streets.

In addition, the City's Bicycle Plan calls for Nueces and Rio Grande streets to be designed as a "downtown bicycle boulevard" between Martin Luther King Boulevard and Cesar Chavez Street, giving greater priority to the bicyclist. This project is funded and due to commence construction in late 2010.

CW-21: Initiate the conversion of one-way streets to two-way operation.

In 2009, Cesar Chavez Street was successfully converted from a confusing, part one-way/two-way operation to completely two-way throughout the Downtown. Following this success and the recommendations of the various R/UDAT (Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team) reports, the Plan recommends that several downtown streets be converted from one-way to two-way operation, in order to provide more understandable and convenient circulation patterns, calmer traffic flows and enhanced retail frontages (*Figure 18*). The north-south Lavaca/Guadalupe corridor and the east-west 5th/6th Street corridors would be retained as one-way couplets to handle the high volumes of through-traffic. The segment of Trinity Street between Cesar Chavez and East 7th streets would also be retained as one-way to provide bus access and drop-off to the Convention Center. Generally, all other streets within the Core/Waterfront should be converted to two-way. These include 3rd, 4th, 7th (except between San Antonio and Guadalupe) 8th, 9th, and 10th (except between Nueces and San Antonio) streets in the east-west direction, and San Antonio (except between 7th and 8th Streets), Colorado, Brazos, San Jacinto, Trinity (north of 7th Street), and Neches Street in the north-south direction.

- 7th Street: Highest priority should be given to converting 7th Street to two-way operation, in conjunction with the planned improvement of this key gateway corridor east of IH 35, and with proposed streetscape enhancement of East 6th Street. The City conduct detailed design of the 7th Street, determining whether a four or five-lane configuration will be required. As part of the Seventh Street conversion project, the conversion of Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Streets should also be considered. (See cross sections alternatives prepared in the DAP Transportation Framework Plan.)

- Other conversions should occur according to the Austin Transportation Department's implementation strategy and funding availability.

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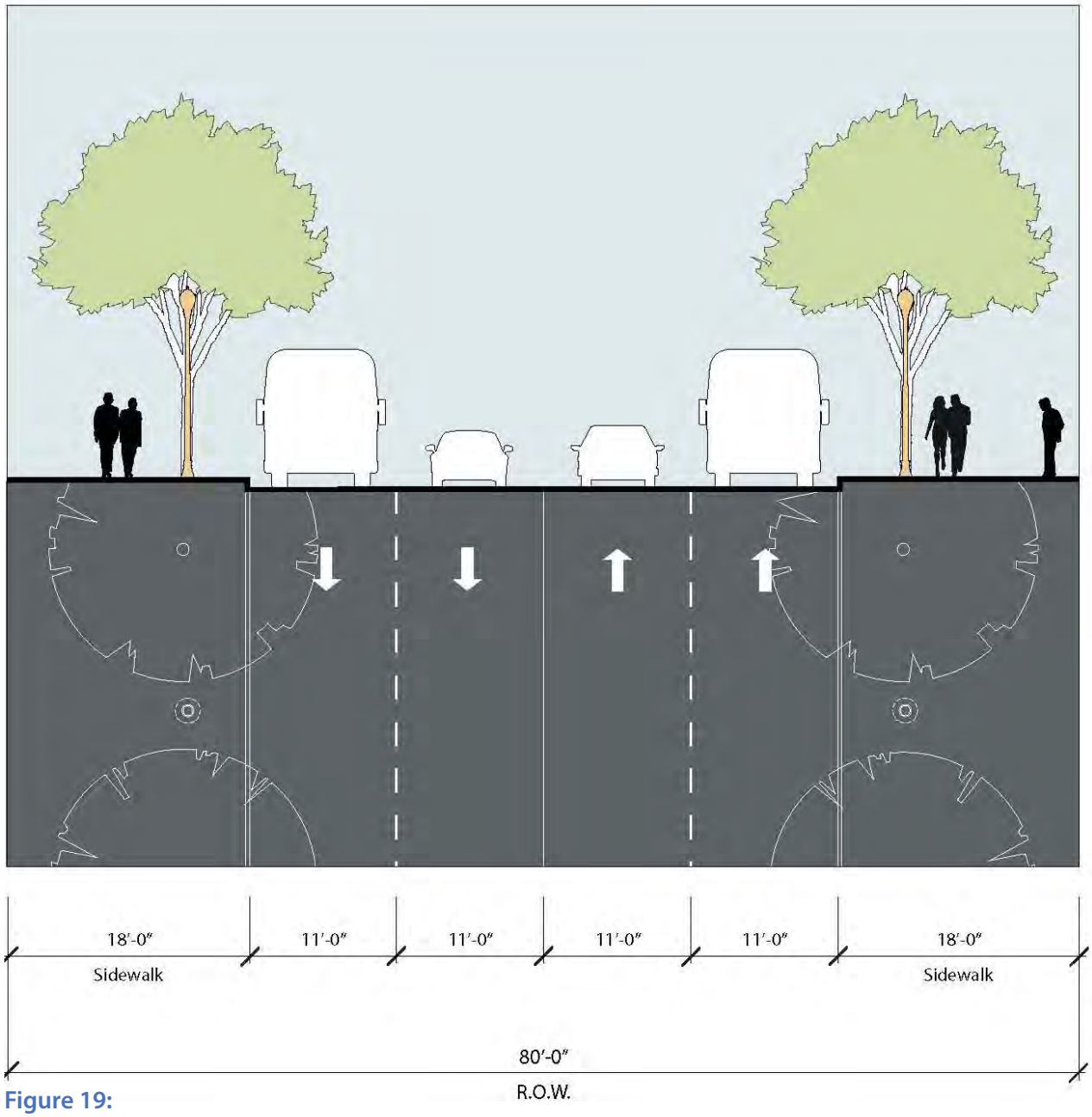

Figure 19:
Seventh Street Conceptual Cross Section

CW-22: Upgrade transit in the Core/Waterfront including enhanced bus service and the expansion of urban rail. If Downtown is to continue to grow and thrive, viable alternatives to automobile mobility must be developed, since existing roadways are incapable of supporting significant additional vehicular capacity. Public transit, both bus and rail, needs to become the high-quality mode of choice, rather than one of last resort. The expansion of urban rail within the central city should be given the highest priority, to provide connectivity between Downtown destinations and Capital Metro's emerging commuter rail system on East 4th Street, MetroRail, which is planned to be double-tracked and extended to Brazos

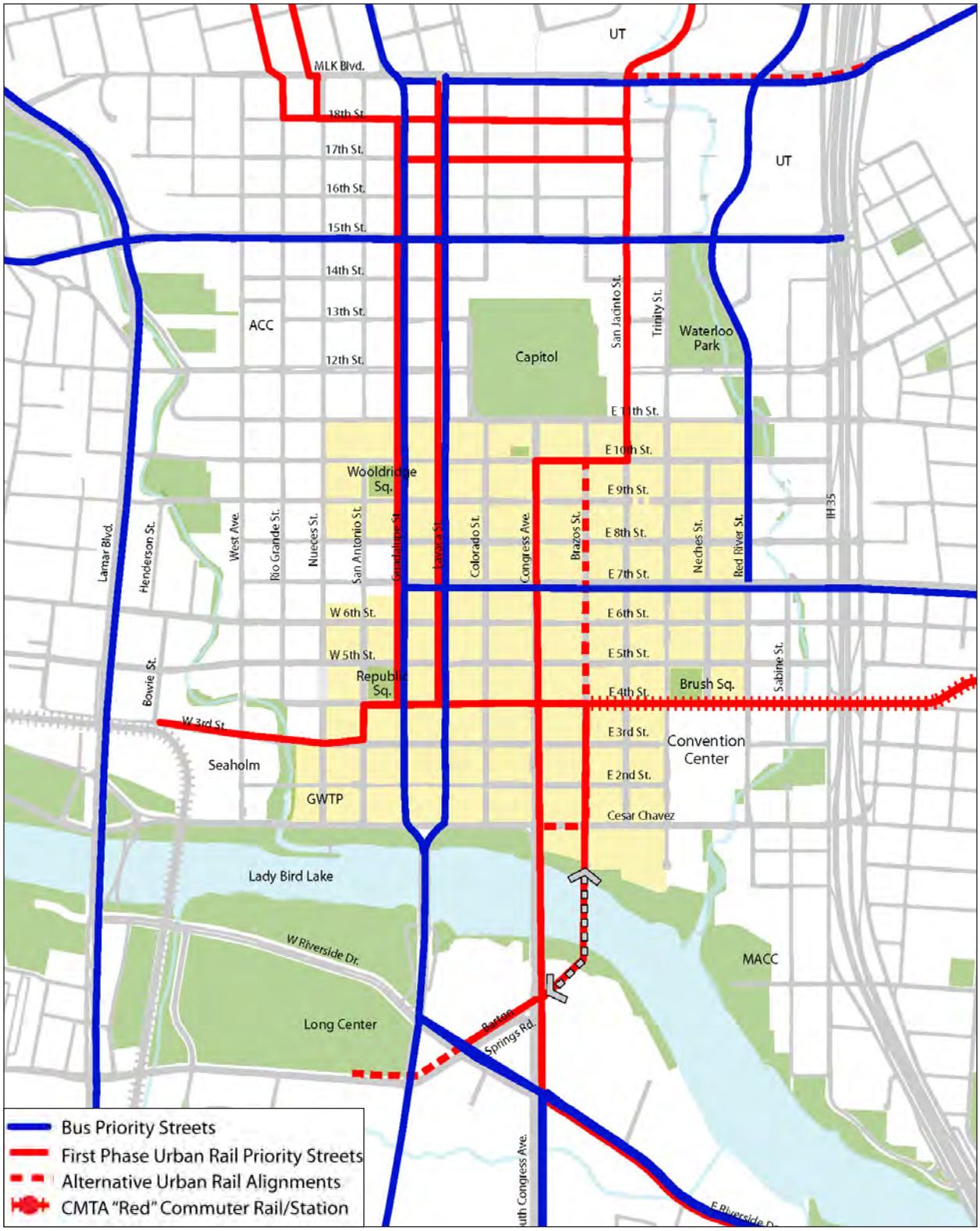

Figure 20:
Transit Mode Map

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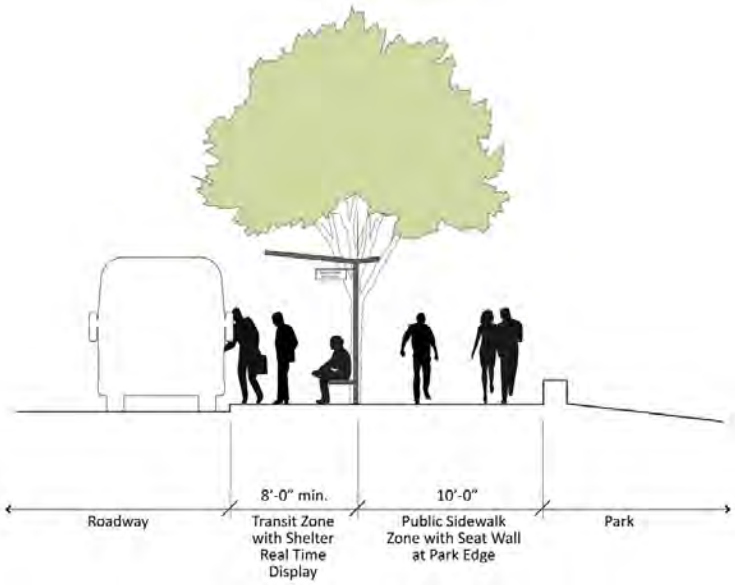
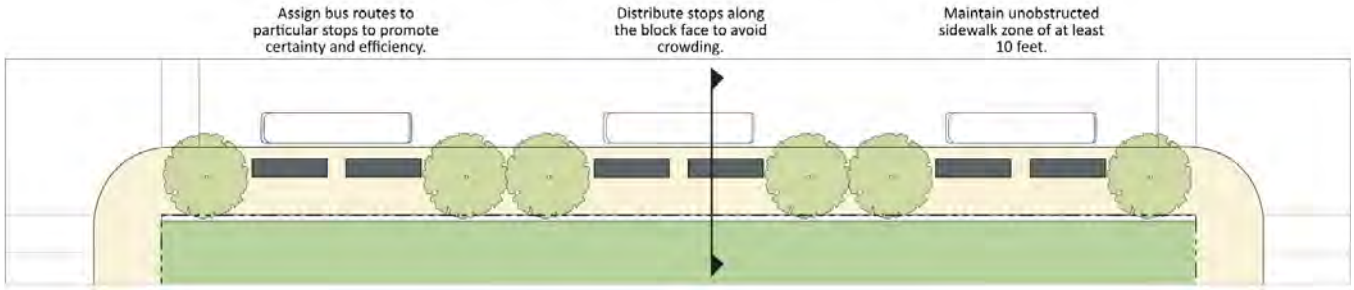
A typical section and plan of a proposed transfer station along a blockface.





Street. This extension should also be a high-priority, as well as its providing more frequent service. The City's Austin Transportation Department is taking the lead on defining a first phase urban (light) rail project and is developing a financing and implementation strategy that could be taken to voters as early as next year.

It is also critical that more deliberate provision be made for comfortable and convenient bus transfers and transit stops within the Downtown. Per Capital Metro's 2020 Service Plan, the majority of bus routes in Downtown are "through" routes: they do not terminate in Downtown. Therefore, most transit boardings and transfers will still occur on the street at curbside bus stops (rather than in an off-street bus terminal), where they can be done most efficiently, both in terms of passenger convenience and bus operations. As such, designated on-street transfer stations should be constructed at key intersection points in the Downtown transit system (e.g., near the intersection of 7th Street with Lavaca and Guadalupe streets; around Brush Square, where MetroRail terminates today and connects to main bus routes; and where the potential urban rail system will intersect with major bus routes). The following provides recommended policies for the design of on-street transit facilities:

- On-street transfer areas should be designed with high-quality shelters that include benches, lighting, trash receptacles, way-finding, etc., and a "real-time" bus arrival information system that lets passengers know exactly when their bus will arrive;
- Each bus stop should post the routes assigned to it, so that passengers understand where to wait;
- Where multiple routes converge, sufficient curbside space must be defined for such bus transfer stations, to prevent overcrowding of passengers and buses and blocked sidewalks;
- Bus stops and transfer areas need to be separated from the main, "through zone" of the public sidewalk, so that transit users are not overly concentrated at one stop, do not impede the flow of other pedestrians along a street, and do not interfere with activities taking place on the properties they front.

There is also interest in developing an off-street transit terminal, where the six or seven bus routes which terminate in the Downtown would stops within a covered facility, where transit riders could comfortably wait and transfer, and where small concessions and restrooms could be provided. Capital Metro is exploring the feasibility of such an off-street bus transfer facility, where other uses could be developed above the station.

CW-23: Provide supply management and coordination of Downtown parking. The 2009 Downtown Parking Study by Walker Parking Consultants concludes that there is an adequate supply of parking in the CBD to meet demand on most occasions. However, since many parking garages are not made available to the public, some nighttime and weekend parking is not conveniently located near the main activity centers, like East 6th Street and the Warehouse District. The DAP recommends that the City's newly-created Parking Enterprise, or a future economic development corporation, take a more proactive role in coordinating the management and availability of public parking, through shared management and operation responsibilities, joint public-private construction of parking facilities, coordinated pricing and consolidation of valet services within particular areas, such as the East 6th Street Entertainment District and the Warehouse District.

In addition, it is recommended that the City establish an "in-lieu" fee for to allow developers to pay into a parking fund rather than providing on-site parking. In this way, the burden of providing on-site parking on small sites could be relieved, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective infill development to occur throughout the area. This in-lieu fund could be used by the Parking Enterprise to construct joint-use parking garages.

CW-24: Preserve and enhance Downtown's system of alleys. Downtown is fortunate to have a comprehensive system of mid-block alleys that provide rear service access to most properties. These alleys relieve pressure on the streets, allowing them to function for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation. However, alleys are often congested with dumpsters, power poles and even above-grade grease traps that prevent them from functioning properly. The following policies are aimed at preserving and enhancing alleys, and improving their efficiency as service corridors:

- Vacation or abandonment of alleys should be avoided, and occur only in special circumstances where equivalent off-street service facilities are provided (e.g., within a full-block development), and where such vacation does not result in a need for on-street servicing/loading.
- All development abutting an alley should be required to use it for loading, servicing and trash collection.
- The City should work with Downtown property owners to eliminate dumpsters and above-grade grease traps from alleys. In older areas, such as 6th Street and Congress Avenue, this will require re-organizing how trash and recycling is collected (see discussion of solid waste services below).

Downtown's system of mid-block alleys (left) provides an important service function that should be preserved and enhanced. On-street servicing and loading (right) impedes pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

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UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure planning and implementation is undertaken by a number of City departments, including:

- Austin Water Utility, responsible for water and wastewater infrastructure, and for "Service Extension Requests" as part of the site plan process;
- Watershed Protection, responsible for storm sewer infrastructure, drainage flood control, floodplain management (litter control in creeks and inlets), and water quality issues through their Watershed Engineering and the Field Operations Divisions;
- Austin Energy, the City's municipal energy provider, responsible forelectric distribution and service, substations, and site plan review for location of underground vaults;
- Solid Waste Management, responsible for street sweeping, trash pickup and recycling.
- Street and Bridge Division of Public Works, responsible for roadway, bridge and alley maintenance, and roadway striping; and
- Public Works, charged with coordination of these departments during project management and the CIP process, and responsible for traffic control plan approvals, and public improvement construction schedules.

CW-25: Continue to improve coordination and interaction among City departments that build Downtown infrastructure. In order to accomplish infrastructure upgrades in an orderly and cost-effective manner, it is important for City departments to work closely together throughout the planning and implementation phases. The new Public Works process is to integrate and coordinate all capital improvement program (CIP) projects with the project integration program called Envista. This should be continued and developed into an on-going project monitoring/ coordination system. A Downtown coordination team with executive-level representatives from all relevant departments should be created to manage and coordinate infrastructure projects. With the adoption of the DAP, City Council should be asked to include policy directives for each

department that controls development review and/or infrastructure planning and construction. Each department should incorporate the near-term and long-term development projections of the DAP into their programming, planning and design processes to inform decisions on maintenance, CIP and private sector development service requirements. In addition, a methodology to allocate City-wide budgets to Downtown infrastructure upgrades should be established and adopted.

CW-26: Improve aging and undersized water and wastewater systems. Because of the age and condition of the water and wastewater system, considerable upgrades and replacements will be required over time. Although the "basic bones" of the system are functioning, upgrades are often required to support new development, often at costs that are unsupportable by an individual developer. The DAP recommends the creation of an annual reoccurring Flex Fund and Reimbursement Program within the Austin Water Utility (AWU) that can fund City infrastructure upgrades needed for new development projects on a case-by-case, as-needed basis.

For example, if it is determined that at least a block's length of water or wastewater upgrade is required to serve a project, the developer could fund the construction of the improvement with a five-year payback from the AWU. The developer's contribution to the cost could be the five-year carrying cost for the financing which would be effectively 30%. This would allow for construction of multiple projects with an expanded payout. Approximately 50% of the Flex Fund could be used to fund smaller system upgrades required to serve infill projects, while the other half could be used to fund the Reimbursement Program.

The Alamo Drafthouse was faced with extending a City water line when it rehabilitated the Ritz Theater on East 6th Street.

CW-27: Improve downtown drainage, water quality and flood control. The majority of the Downtown stormwater conveyance system is outdated and much of it is undersized. There is incomplete data related to the condition and capacity of the system, which requires individual developers to attempt to analyze and mitigate on-site drainage issues on a case-by-case basis. The Watershed Engineering Division should complete the GIS data entry of the current system Downtown and prepare a Downtown Drainage Master Plan that defines systems requirements. This will allow for a systematic approach to stormwater improvements in response to development and preparation of clear CIP priorities. In addition, a water quality program or master plan should be created to provide policies for the maintenance of Downtown streets, creeks and Lady Bird Lake, including sediment control systems, green roofs and other forms of on-site interception.

CW-28: Provide higher levels of solid waste collection, recycling and composting throughout Downtown. Trash pick-up and recycling are the responsibility of the City's Solid Waste Services Department. Within the most intensive parts of the Core/Waterfront, (e.g., in the alleys of Congress Avenue 6th Street and the Warehouse District), the Department has contracted with a private company to provide higher levels of trash pick-up and recycling. This has been successful and includes daily trash and recycling pick-ups from shared dumpsters in alleys. The Plan recommends that this level of service be expanded to other parts of Downtown as they intensify, and that the following policies be put in place:

- The Watershed Department, in coordination with the Health Department, should inspect grease traps and require property owners to upgrade these to below-grade vault-type traps that provide higher levels of environmental safety, remove physical obstructions in the alley and remove/reduce odors. A program for recycling grease waste into bio-fuels should also be explored.
- A composting program should be initiated throughout Downtown, that could include sidewalk-located receptacles.
- Improved trash, recycling and composting bins should be installed on Downtown sidewalks.
- Consolidated dumpsters or smaller, rolling bins should be housed within property boundaries or in parking garages in order to eliminate these physical obstacles from the alleyways.

A water quality program to intercept run-off (left) and enhanced streetside composting and recycling (right) are recommended.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The livability of Downtown and the realization of the community's vision of an inclusive and welcoming place depends to a great extent on the availability of high-quality public facilities and services and affordable housing, including social and supportive services, day care and educational institutions, and the provision for police and fire emergency facilities. This chapter of the Core/Waterfront District Plan focuses on these services. Specific recommendations related to arts and culture can be found in the Downtown Austin Plan report entitled Strategies and Policies to Sustain and Enhance Austin's Creative Culture, September 2009. The full report and recommendations related to affordable housing are described in the Downtown Affordable Housing Strategy prepared as part of the first phase of DAP in July 2009.

CW-29: Provide supportive housing and related services that complement and extend existing services for populations in need. The Core/Waterfront District is the district with the greatest concentration of human service facilities, providing shelter and meals for the homeless. A cluster of social service facilities are concentrated along Neches Street between 7th and 8th streets, including Caritas, Salvation Army and the City's shelter known as the ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless). This concentration has occurred because of the proximity to the targeted populations, good transit availability and the minimal community resistance relative to other parts of the city. In the downtown, this concentration has had adverse impacts on the surrounding area, particularly in the eastern part of the Core/Waterfront District, due to camping, loitering, public inebriation, panhandling and criminal behavior. Many of these problems are exacerbated by a lack of comprehensive care and support facilities that could augment and extend the role of the existing shelters.

The DAP has recommended that the City increase the supply of permanent, supportive housing opportunities Downtown to accommodate hard-to-serve populations, particularly the chronically homeless. Permanent supportive and transitional housing are cost-effective means of providing housing for various hard-to-house populations. Average daily public costs to provide supportive housing

are far below those of the most common alternatives for these individuals, including emergency shelters, hospitals, mental health facilities and prisons. And, although community objections can present obstacles to developing new supportive housing, research demonstrates that property surrounding new developments of quality can experience strong and consistent price appreciation compared to similar properties in other parts of a neighborhood. Supportive housing can be a win-win situation for individuals in need and for the stability of the community. As described in the DAP Affordable Housing Strategy, 170 single-room occupancy units should be created within the Downtown over the next decade, with related support facilities, including medical support and counseling. The location of these units should be dispersed throughout the Core/Waterfront District and other parts of Downtown, rather than 7th and Neches Street area.

The courtyard of Dallas's new homeless shelter, The Bridge, provides clients with an attractive respite from the streets.

CW-30: Improve the public space environment around the existing ARCH facility. Clients of the City's ARCH homeless shelter are currently forced to queue and/or wait for extended periods for services and meals on the sidewalks surrounding the facility. Although the entry area provides some shelter, it is insufficient to accommodate the volumes of people needing services. The lack of a secure and hospitable waiting area has undermined the dignity of people in need and has created problems of sidewalk obstruction and loitering, contributing to the negative perception of the area. It is recommended that improvements be made within and/or around the ARCH to better provide for the comfort and needs of clients. Provision of a sheltered and supervised courtyard area within the boundaries of the property (e.g., within the building, or on a portion of the facility's parking lot to the east) should be considered to accommodate queuing and waiting away from the sidewalk area, protected from the elements and noise of the street. Public restrooms and adequate places for people to sit and rest should be provided within this area.

CW-31: Implement the Downtown Affordable Housing Strategy. Ensuring that the supply of housing provides opportunities for a diverse mix of Austinites to live Downtown is crucial to supporting the vision of an inclusive, sustainable and vibrant district. Affordable housing should be available both within and in close proximity to Downtown, in order to support use of public transit, to provide housing within easy reach of employment centers and to provide an adequate market base for retail, arts, culture and entertainment uses. The Downtown Affordable Housing Strategy, prepared as part of the DAP, recommends that housing in the Downtown be available to:

- A range of income groups, including those able to pay market rent or sales prices, "workforce" income groups (80% MFI), very low- and low-income groups (less than 50% MFI), as well as special needs residents;
- A range of family types, including singles and families; and
- A range of lifestyles, including Downtown workers and those active in the creative industries.

In the short-term, there are a number of policy and funding options that the City should pursue to create affordable housing. The City should leverage additional public land, where feasible; explore opportunities to buy down existing market-rate units for long-term affordability; acquire and reposition foreclosed properties; and continue to subsidize housing for very low to moderate-income households. The City should also adopt a permanent Downtown density bonus program, which will contribute to meeting, but not fully addressing, Austin's goals for affordable housing. In the long-term, the City should create a comprehensive policy framework to:

- Use *public funding* to leverage institutional and private financial resources;
- Create a *comprehensive financing* system enabling developers to layer incentives and resources from a variety of public, private and non-profit entities to make deals with affordable housing successful; and
- Redirect a portion of the value produced by future growth into affordable housing.

CW-32: Promote improved child care and educational facilities that make Downtown more family-friendly. Downtown Austin has a wealth of higher education facilities within and surrounding its boundaries, including The University of Texas campus immediately to the north, and Austin Community College within the Northwest District. In order to realize the community's vision of a family-friendly Downtown, consideration should be given to the ability of existing public and private schools to accommodate the educational needs of the current and future resident population. The City should work proactively with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) and other private institutions to ensure that short and long-term needs of Downtown residents are being met. Charter schools with special curricula in the areas of art, music, science and the performing arts should be encouraged, and the potential for Downtown partners or sponsors explored. Locating such facilities in close proximity to public open spaces should be given a high priority, both to serve the needs of the school, and to provide activity in the parks. As proposed in the DAP Downtown Density Bonus Program, incentives should also be given to developments that incorporate child care facilities within private residential or commercial development.

Child care facilities will make Downtown a more family-friendly place.

CW-33: Provide for improved fire and police facilities within the Downtown.

Appropriately located and modern fire and police emergency facilities are important to serve the growing resident, visitor and employee populations of Downtown. The existing Downtown police and fire facilities are well over thirty years old, and will need to be upgraded and expanded over the next decade. In addition, the central facilities of both the Austin Fire Department (AFD) and the Austin Police Department (APD) are located on sites that compromise the open space and livability goals of the Downtown. The APD headquarter building and fleet garage overhang Waller Creek, impeding public access and creating an inactive and hostile edge along this greenway. Fire Station # 1, with its employee parking lot, occupies nearly half of Brush Square, limiting the park's potential to function as an attractive community-gathering place for Convention Center area visitors and residents. As facility improvements are evaluated for both the Fire and Police departments, high priority should be given to the relocation and/or redevelopment of both facilities to create a more engaging public environment. More specifically:

1. The APD headquarter building occupies a site of nearly four acres between 7th and 8th streets along Waller Creek. Opportunities for consolidating this facility and its parking on a more compact footprint, either on this site or in another location within the Core/Waterfront District, should be considered. The redevelopment potential of the APD site is estimated at over 600,000 square feet, which would still provide significant opportunities for enhanced open space along the eastern banks of Waller Creek. Redevelopment of this publicly-owned property also offers an opportunity to introduce affordable housing into Downtown.

2. Fire Station #1 and its parking lot occupy most of the western half of Brush Square. The Art Deco building constructed in 1939 no longer functions as a state-of-the-art fire facility. A new location for the Fire Station should be found so that the full potential of Brush Square can be realized. Ultimately, the building should be repurposed as a community-oriented facility, such as a museum and café with an outdoor dining terrace overlooking the open space. In the short term, the City should work with AFD to reduce the footprint of the fenced parking lot, in order to provide for a larger lawn area within the park.

The Art Deco Fire Station in Brush Square should be re-pruposed as a community-oriented facility in the park.

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APPENDIX A

PROPOSED CHANGES TO LIST OF PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES FROM CURRENT CITY CODE DMU ZONING DISTRICT

For the proposed DMU districts (DMU-120, DMU-60, DMU-40), modify the existing DMU list of uses to:

- Permit Retirement Housing (both large and small site).
- Allow Cocktail Lounge as a Conditional Use (except in the Northwest District as described below).
- Allow Exterminating Services as a Conditional Use.
- Allow Pawn Shop as a Conditional Use (except in the Northwest District as described below).
- Allow Limited Warehousing and Distribution as a Conditional Use (except in the Northwest District as described below).
- Permit Urban Farming as a Conditional Use.
- Permit Administrative Services (Civic Use).

For the proposed DMU-40 and DMU-60 districts within the Northwest District, further restrict DMU uses as follows:

- Prohibit Automotive Rentals, Automotive Repair Services, Automotive Sales, Automotive Washing, Bail Bond Services, Pawn Shop Services, Service Station, Vehicle Storage, Limited Warehousing and Distribution and Maintenance and Service Facilities.
- Prohibit Cocktail Lounge use, except along 12th Street (west of West Avenue), 15th Street and MLK Boulevard, where it shall be a Conditional Use.
- Allow Liquor Sales (limited to a 2,500 gross square foot sales area) as a Conditional Use along the above-mentioned street frontages only.

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APPENDIX B

PROPOSED BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

The following development standards are intended to guide the form of new construction within the Downtown. The intent is to promote a compact, engaging and livable urban environment, while allowing for further growth and intensification. Upon adoption of the Downtown Austin Plan, these standards should be given further consideration as part of the ordinance preparation process; additional stakeholder review and testing should be pursued.

I. MID AND HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS GREATER THAN 60 FEET IN HEIGHT

Purpose: The following standards govern the form and treatment of mid-rise and high-rise buildings on properties with DMU-120 (Downtown Mixed Use 120 feet) or CBD (Central Business District) zoning designations or on any properties where buildings are allowed to exceed 60 feet in height. They are intended to promote buildings that:

- Contribute to an active and engaging streetfront environment;
- Minimize disruption to public sidewalks;
- Provide spatial definition along public streets and rights-of-way;
- Respect historic buildings;
- Allow light to the street;
- Create attractive skyline expression; and
- Promote livability and intensification by ensuring appropriate spacing between buildings.

a. Streetwalls and Setbacks: Like walls in a room, private buildings provide critical spatial definition to a city's public streets and open spaces, giving them a sense of enclosure, and in many cases a distinctive scale and character. As such, it is important that there be a level of coordination between buildings, so that strong spatial expression of the public realm can be achieved. Exceptions and variations can also be encouraged to create diversity and to give meaning to particular places and buildings, but these exceptions should be dealt with in specific cases where such variation is deemed to be warranted.

- For mid and high-rise buildings, a streetwall is defined as that portion of the building up to 90 feet in height and constructed within 5 feet of the street front property line.

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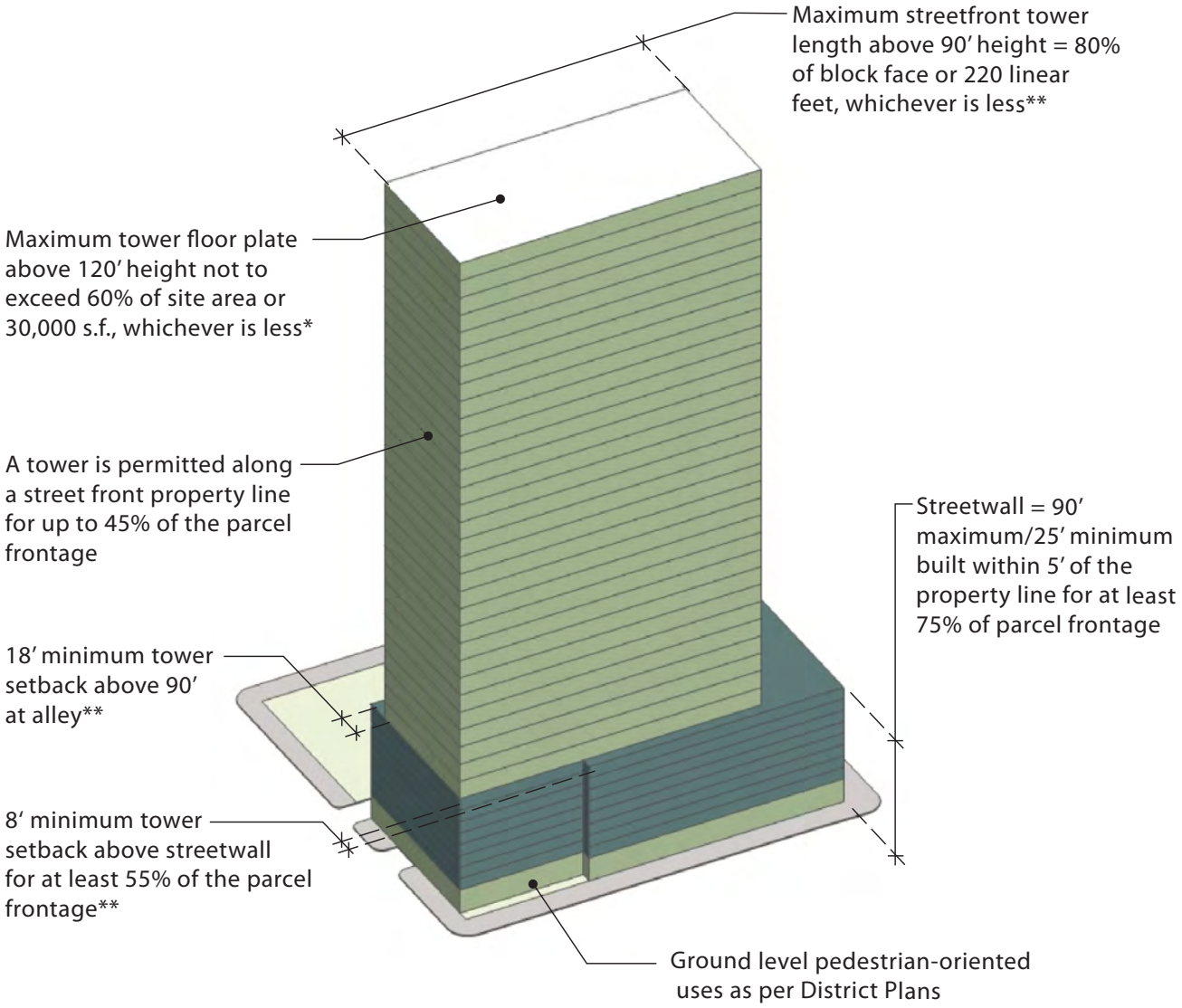
High-Rise Building
Half-Block and Greater

PARKING AND SERVICING

- Parking and service access from alley
- Driveways along "Pedestrian Activity Streets" not permitted, unless approved by the responsible Director
- Two driveway curb-cuts permitted from street, up to 25' wide each
- Above-grade parking may not be visible from the street



* Buildings above 600' may exceed maximum floor plate by 500 s.f. for each 10' of additional height above 600'.
** May be modified by the responsible Director for properties beneath Capitol View Corridor, or where special conditions create hardship.

Figure A:
High-Rise Building Proposed Regulations

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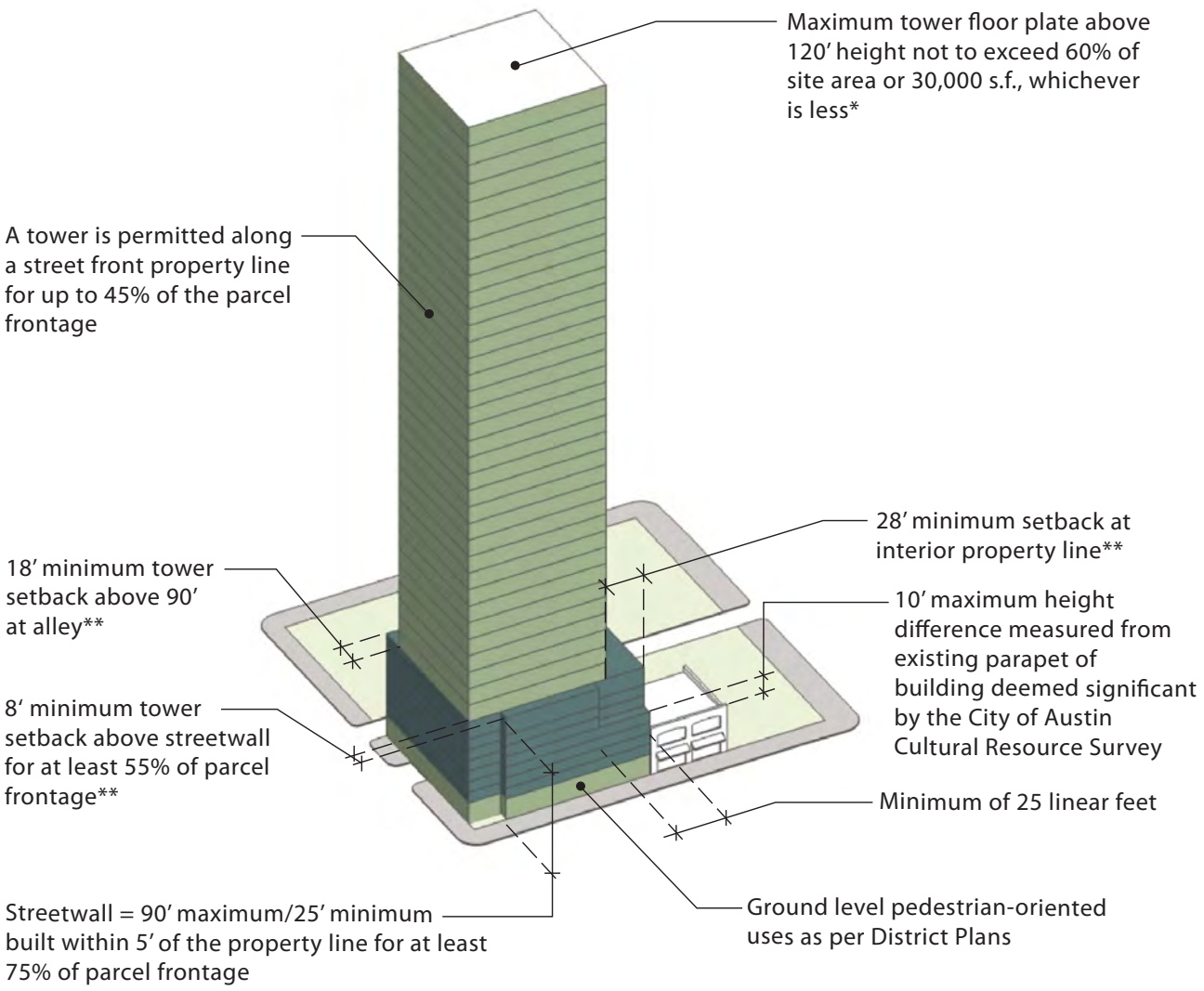
High-Rise Building
Quarter-Block and Greater

PARKING AND SERVICING

- Parking and service access from alley
- Driveway curb-cuts along "Pedestrian Activity Streets" not permitted, unless approved by the responible Director
- One driveway curb-cut permitted from street up to 25 feet wide
- Above grade parking may not be visible from the street



* Buildings above 600' may exceed maximum floor plate by 500 s.f. for each 10' of additional height above 600'.
** May be modified by the responsible Director for properties beneath Capitol View Corridor, or where special conditions create hardship.

Figure B:
High-Rise Building Proposed Regulations

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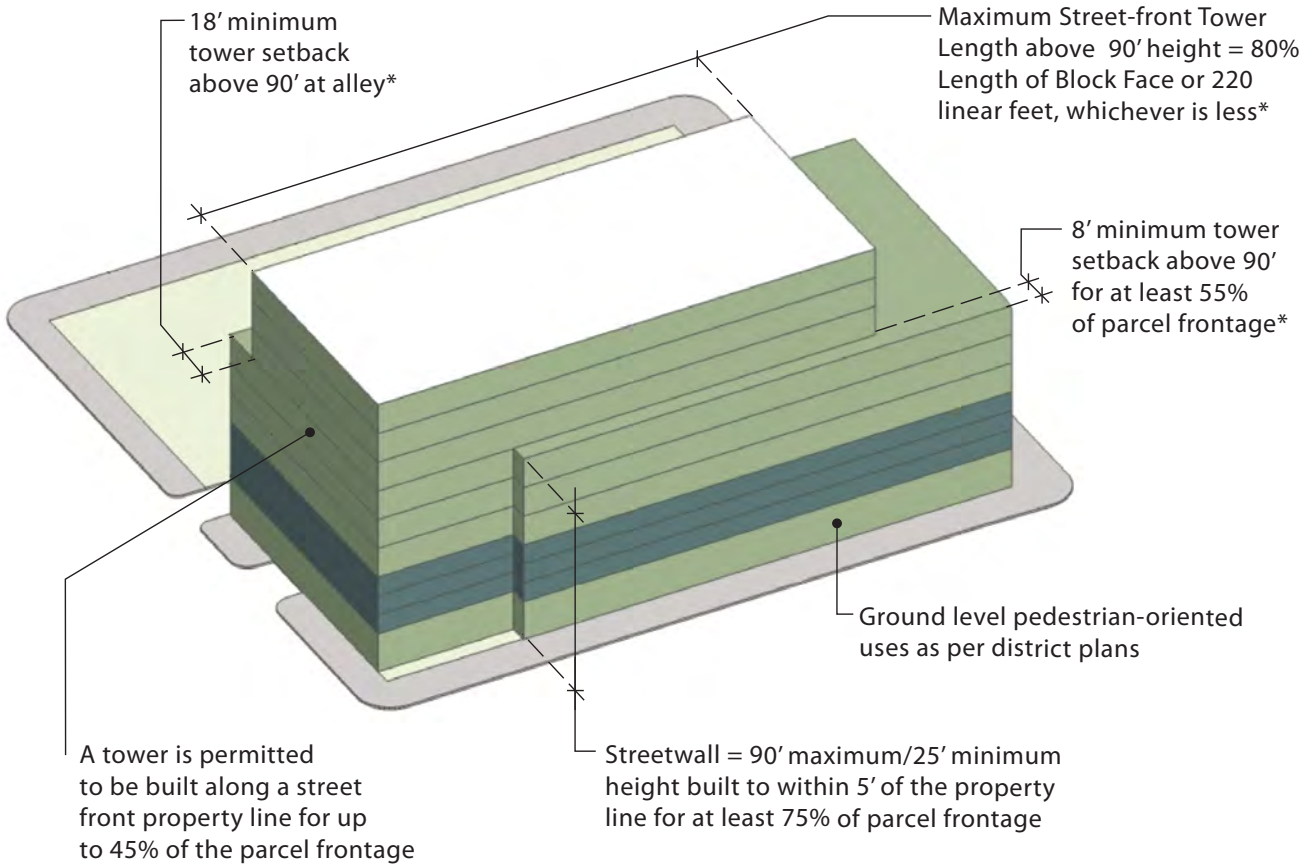
Mid-Rise Building
Half-Block and Greater

PARKING AND SERVICING

- Parking and service access from alley
- Driveways along a "Pedestrian Activity Street" are not permitted, unless approved by the responsible Director
- Two driveway curb-cuts permitted from street, up to 25' wide each
- Above grade parking may not be visible from the street



* May be modified by the responsible Director for properties beneath Capitol View Corridor, or where special conditions create hardship.

Figure C:
Mid-Rise Building Proposed Regulations

- A streetwall up to a maximum height of 90 feet but no less than 25 feet must be built along 75% of the parcel frontage within five feet of the street front property line. If the building is adjacent to a structure more than 50 years old, the height of the streetwall must be within 10 feet of the height of the parapet of that building for a horizontal dimension of at least 25 feet.
- Building setbacks of up to 10 feet from the property line are allowed on the remainder of the streetfront perimeter.
- Greater setbacks are permitted only if such setbacks comply with the following publicly accessible open space criteria:
- The setback has a minimum area of 600 square feet, and a minimum dimension of 15 feet;
- The area is accessible to the public, visible from the public sidewalk, and does not require an admission fee or the purchase of goods or services;
- The area is useable by the general public throughout daylight hours.
- The area provides public seating and/or serves as a public pedestrian passageway connecting one public sidewalk with another.
- The open space has at least 75% of its area is open to the sky.
- The area has interior ground level space adjoining, overlooking and accessible to it.

b. Ground Level Pedestrian-Oriented Uses and Treatments: In addition to spatial definition, private buildings provide life and activity along a street. This can include restaurants with outdoor cafes, shops with generous storefront displays, office uses with activities that are visible from the street, or residential buildings that provide entry stoops and common spaces along the sidewalk. Such uses not only provide interest and activity, but also a sense of security and safety with “eyes on the street”. Conversely, buildings with long expanses of blank or inactive walls can create “dead” spots in an urban district and discourage pedestrian activity; they can also result in areas that are unsafe or that engender anti-social and even criminal behavior. Within the Downtown’s various districts there are many different conditions that demand a particular approach. Certain streets (e.g., Congress Avenue, East Sixth Street, Second Street) warrant a high proportion of intensive retail and restaurant uses, critical to their success as regional destinations, while other streets can be successful with a more eclectic range of ground level uses.

- Active ground level pedestrian-oriented uses are required along street-facing frontages, in compliance with specific requirements for street frontages established in the Downtown District Plans.
- Such space must meet the specific ground level treatment requirements set forth in the Downtown District Plans.

c. Tower Massing and Bulk: As multiple high-rise buildings begin to be constructed within a single block, consideration needs to be given to the spacing and massing of towers. This is particularly important in achieving both the density potential of the Downtown, preserving the value of adjacent sites, and in promoting a livable environment, where sunlight can reach the street. To the extent practicable, tall slender towers are preferred over short and massive ones.

- For the purposes of these standards, a tower is defined as any portion of a building above 90 feet in height.
- Towers should be set back from an alley property line by a minimum of 18 feet, and from an interior property line by at least 28 feet. These setbacks are intended to ensure a spacing of 56 feet between towers within a block, to provide optimal separation and privacy, while allowing for a reasonable floorplate within the standard Downtown block. Subject to the responsible Director's approval, setbacks may be reduced where hardship is demonstrated (e.g., for properties beneath a Capital View Corridor where the height limit is less than 200 feet), or if the proposed development secures an air-rights easement over the adjacent property that assures a 56-foot spacing between towers or if conditions (e.g., natural features, historic zoning, or Capitol View Corridors) on the adjacent property ensure that the 56-foot spacing will be permanently achieved.
- The maximum floorplate of a tower above a height of 120 feet should not exceed 60% of the site area or 30,000 square feet, whichever is less. Buildings taller than 600 feet may exceed the 30,000 square foot maximum tower plate by 500 square feet for every 20 feet of vertical height above 600 feet. This standard is intended to avoid bulky buildings and to promote a visually attractive skyline with slender vertical towers.

Slender towers are encouraged to create a pleasing skyline and provide light and air to the street. Below are typical floor-plate areas for four Downtown towers.

The Austonian
12,700sf

The Spring
8,000sf

Carr America
29,500sf

Frost Tower
33,000sf

- Along a public street, towers (i.e., the portion of a building above 90' high) should be set back from the property line by a minimum of 8 feet for at least 55% of the parcel frontage. This standard is intended to allow for a clear streetwall definition. In order to promote vertical expression, a tower may be built along a streetfront property line for up to 45% of the parcel frontage, or a total of 110 linear feet, whichever is less.

- The minimum spacing between two towers on one property should be 56 feet.

- In order to achieve light to the street and to avoid a continuous "canyon" effect, towers above 120 feet in height should occupy no more than 80% of the length of a block or 220 feet whichever is less.

The new W Hotel (right) is an example of a tower that occupies approximately 80% of the block. The AMLI building (left) is built along the entire block length.

d. Parking Access and Driveways

- Driveways and curb cuts should be restricted on "Pedestrian Activity Streets" as described in the District Plans (e.g., Congress Avenue, East Sixth Street, Second Street, and the Warehouse District frontages in the Core and Waterfront District) unless the responsible Director finds that such a curb cut is the only reasonable way of achieving access to the property.

- The maximum width of a driveway curb cut should not exceed 25 feet.

- Properties that are one-half block in size or greater will be permitted two driveway curb cuts from perimeter public streets, provided that the curb cuts are not located within 50 feet of one another, and no closer than 50 feet from an intersection.

- Properties less than one-half block in size will be permitted one driveway curb cut; any additional driveways should be provided from the alley. Subject to approval from the responsible Director, up to two driveway curb-cuts from a public street may be allowed on a parcel less than one-half block in size, only if it is found that access from the alley is not feasible or desirable from a public safety standpoint.

e. Service and Loading

- Service and loading and maneuvering should be from the alley; service and loading maneuvering on public streets will be permitted only where the responsible Director determines that there is no practicable alternative".

f. Porte-Cocheres and On-Site Drop-Off Areas

- Porte-cocheres and on-site drop-off areas are permitted on a case by case basis (as determined by the responsible Director), subject to the following findings:
  - Because of the volume of drop-offs, the operation of the particular use requires a porte-cochere or drop-off area on site. (Note: Special priority is given to hotel uses; office and residential uses should use designated curbside drop-off lanes within the public right-of-way.)
  - The design and configuration of the drop-off area minimizes disruption to the continuity of the sidewalk along the street.
  - The design and configuration of the drop-off area minimizes disruption to the continuity of ground level pedestrian-oriented uses. The maximum curb cut across a public sidewalk should not exceed 25 feet.

g. On-Site Parking

- All above-grade parking must be architecturally integrated within the building. The façade treatment of the garage should be an integral extension of the primary façade, with the same materials and treatments as the remainder of the building. There should be no views from public streets to cars and garage lighting should be screened to the maximum extent practicable.
- If parking is the predominant use, the façade should employ high quality materials and treatments that reduce the visual impression of the building as a parking garage. Review of the design should be part of the Conditional Use Permit process, required for commercial parking garages.

h. Floor Area Ratio

- In addition to the proposed Downtown Density Bonus Program, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) incentives may be applied on a district-by-district basis within the Downtown to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., below-grade parking, ground level uses, etc.). These are outlined in the District plans

II. LOW-RISE MIXED-USE BUILDINGS 0F 60 FEET OR LESS

Purpose: The following standards govern the form and treatment of low-rise buildings up to 60 feet in height except for the portions of the Northwest District, where the regulations for low-rise neighborhood infill buildings will apply. Within the Northwest District these regulations apply to properties along: Martin Luther King Boulevard; San Antonio, Nueces and Rio Grande Streets, north of 18th Street; 15th Street, east of Rio Grande Street; and 12th Street, west of West Avenue (see Northwest District Plan, *Figure 10*). The regulations are intended to promote buildings that:

Low-Rise Mixed Use Building
Quarter Block and Greater

PARKING AND SERVICING

- Parking and service access from alley
- One driveway curb-cut permitted on street if access cannot be achieved from alley
- Driveway width 25' maximum
- Above-grade parking shall be architecturally integrated and/or encapsulated

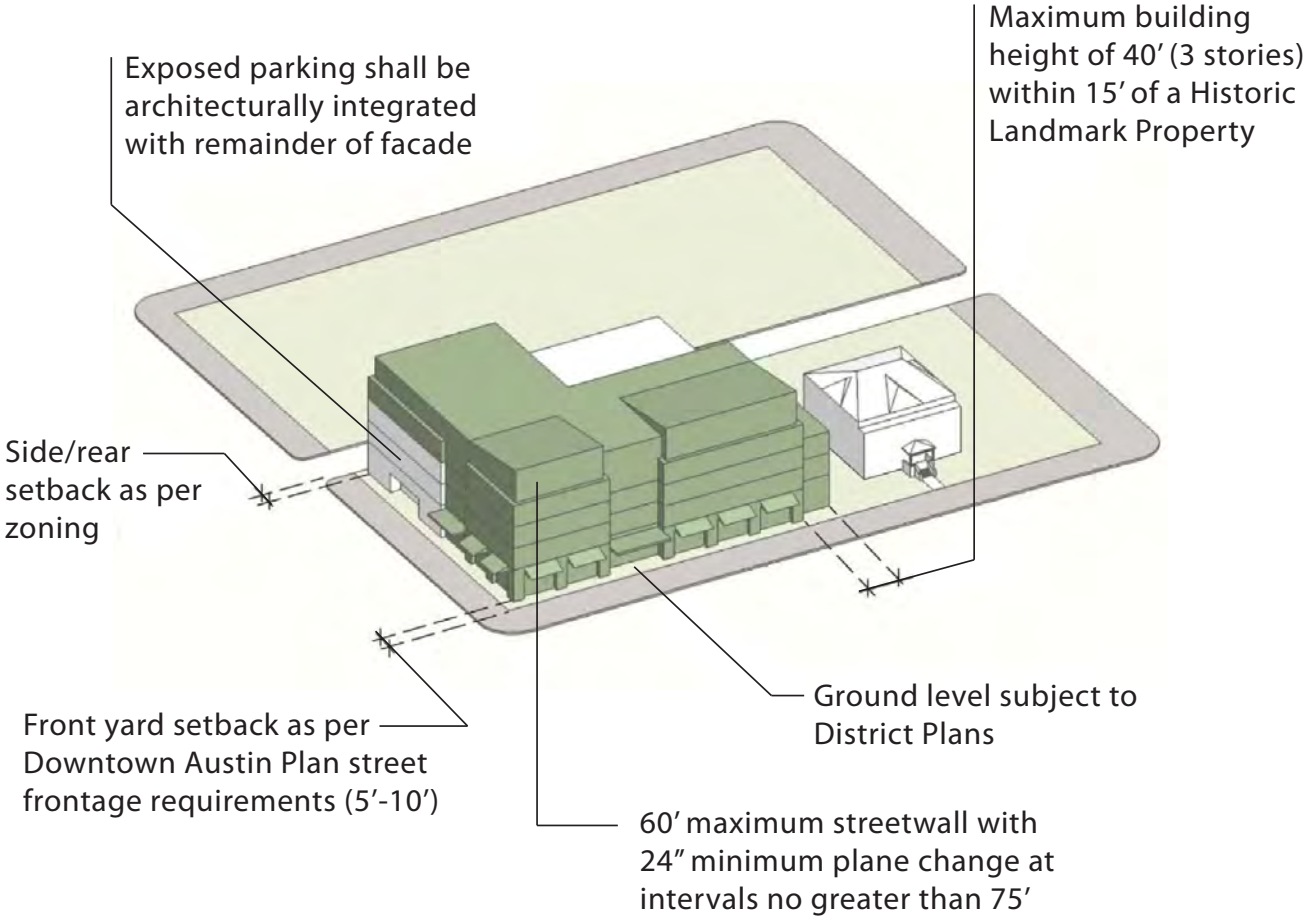


Figure D:
Low-Rise Mixed-Use Building Proposed Regulations

- Contribute to an engaging streetfront environment;
- Minimize disruption to public sidewalks; and
- Provide spatial definition along public streets and rights-of-way;

a. Streetwalls and Setbacks: Like walls in a room, private buildings provide critical spatial definition to a city's public streets and open spaces, giving them a sense of enclosure, and in many cases a distinctive scale and character. As such, it is important that there be a level of coordination between buildings, so that strong spatial expression of the public realm can be achieved. Exceptions and variations should also be permitted to create diversity and to give meaning to particular places and buildings, but these exceptions should be dealt with in specific cases where such variation is deemed by the responsible Director to be warranted.

- For this building type, a streetwall is defined as that portion of the building up to 60 feet in height and constructed along the required front yard setback line of the property. While no stepbacks are required for this building type, variation of the building roof line or parapet is encouraged.
- On sites adjacent to a property with a designated historic landmark, buildings should be stepped back so that no portion of the building within 15 feet of the adjoining property line is greater than 40 feet or three floors in height. If the historic property is greater than 40 feet in height, this stepback is not required.
- The streetwall should be designed and articulated with changes in plane and materials to reduce its scale and to promote a compatible relationship with existing adjacent structures. A change in plane of at least 24 inches should occur at intervals no greater than 60 feet.
- Building setbacks should comply with the Street Frontage Requirements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan.
- Side and rear yard setbacks should be consistent with the underlying zoning designation.

b. Ground Level Uses and Treatments: Ground level uses should comply with the regulations set forth in the District Plans of the Downtown Austin Plan.

c. Parking Access and Driveways: Efforts should be made to limit the frequency and width of driveways which interrupt the continuity of sidewalks. More specifically:

- On properties less than one-half block in area, one driveway curb cut should be permitted by the responsible Director only if it is found that access to on-site parking can not be achieved from a rear alley.

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- Subject to approval of the responsible Director, up to two driveway curb-cuts from a public street may be allowed on a parcel less than one-half block in size, only if it is found that one driveway is not feasible or desirable from a public safety standpoint.
- The maximum width of a driveway curb cut should not exceed 25 feet.

d. Service and Loading

- Service and loading and maneuvering should be from the alley; where the responsible Director finds that this is not practicable, service and loading maneuvering on public streets may be permitted.

e. Porte-Cocheres and On-Site Drop-Off Areas: Porte-cocheres and on-site drop off areas are permitted on a case by case basis (as determined by the responsible Director), subject to the following findings:

- Because of the volume of drop-offs, the operation of the particular use requires a porte-cochere or drop-off area on site. (Note: Special priority is given to hotel uses; office and residential uses should use designated curbside drop-off lanes within the public right-of-way.)
- The design and configuration of the drop-off area minimizes disruption to the continuity of the sidewalk along the street and to existing trees.

f. On-Site Parking

- All above-grade parking must be architecturally integrated and/or encapsulated within the building. No stand-alone parking garages are permitted. The façade treatment of the garage should be an integral extension of the primary façade, with the same materials and treatments as the remainder of the building. There should be no views from public streets to cars and garage lighting should be screened to the maximum extent practicable.

g. Floor Area Ratio

- In addition to the proposed Downtown Density Bonus Program, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) incentives may be applied on a district-by-district basis within the Downtown to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., below-grade parking, ground level uses, etc.). These are outlined in the District plans.

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III. LOW-RISE NEIGHBORHOOD INFILL BUILDINGS 0F 60 FEET OR LESS

Purpose: The following standards govern the form and treatment of low-rise buildings up to 60 feet in height, located in the Northwest District. They are intended to promote buildings that:

- Compliment the residential character and scale of the area;
- Contribute to an engaging streetfront environment;
- Minimize disruption to public sidewalks and to the existing tree canopy; and
- Promote infill residential development with a high degree of livability.

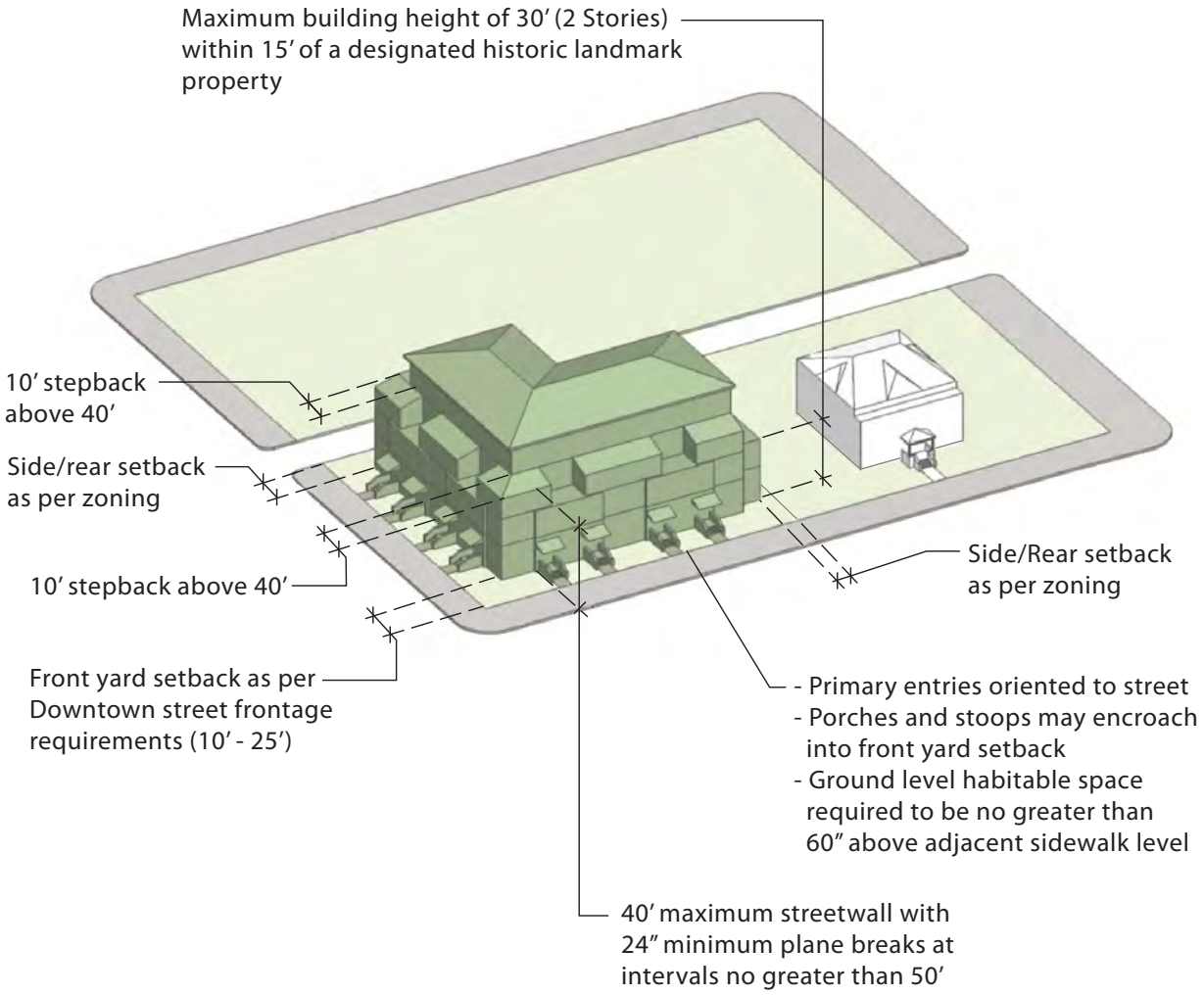
a. Streetwalls and Setbacks: Within the Northwest District, street walls in conjunction with the mature street tree canopies, provide a more relaxed and informal street definition than the taller and denser buildings within other districts of the Downtown.

- For this building type, a streetwall is defined as that portion of the building up to 40 feet in height and constructed along the required front yard setback line of the property.
- Any portion of the building that is more than 40 feet in height above the street wall, or side yard walls should be stepped back by at least 10 feet in order to promote a compatible relationship with existing structures. Alley and rear yard edges are not required to step back.
- On sites adjacent to a property with a designated historic landmark, buildings shall be stepped back so that no portion of the building within 15 feet of the adjoining property line is greater than 30 feet or two floors in height. If the historic property is greater than 30 feet in height, this stepback is not required.
- The streetwall shall be designed and articulated with changes in plane and materials to reduce its scale and to promote a compatible relationship with existing adjacent structures. A change in plane of at least 24 inches shall occur at intervals no greater than 50 feet.
- Building setbacks shall comply with the Street Frontage Requirements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan.
- Side and rear yard setbacks shall be consistent with the underlying zoning designation.

b. Ground Level Uses and Treatments: Within the heart of the Northwest District, ground level uses could be a mixture of residential, commercial or cultural uses. It is the intent to preserve and extend the predominant development pattern of buildings set back with landscaped front yards. More specifically:

Low-Rise Neighborhood Infill Buildings within Northwest District*

PARKING AND SERVICING
- Parking and Service Access From Alley
- One Driveway Curb-Cut Permitted if Alley Access not Possbile
- Above-Grade Parking May Not be Visible from the Street



* Except for frontages in the Northwest District along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, San Antonio, Nueces, and Rio Grande Streets north of 18th Street, 12th Street west of West Avenue, and 15th Street east of Rio Grande Street

Figure E:
Low-Rise Infill Building Proposed Regulations

Low-Rise Courtyard/Walk-up Building
Quarter Block and Greater

PARKING AND SERVICING

- Parking and Service Access From Alley
- One Driveway Curb-Cut Permitted if Alley Access not Possbile
- Above-Grade Parking May Not be Visible from the Street

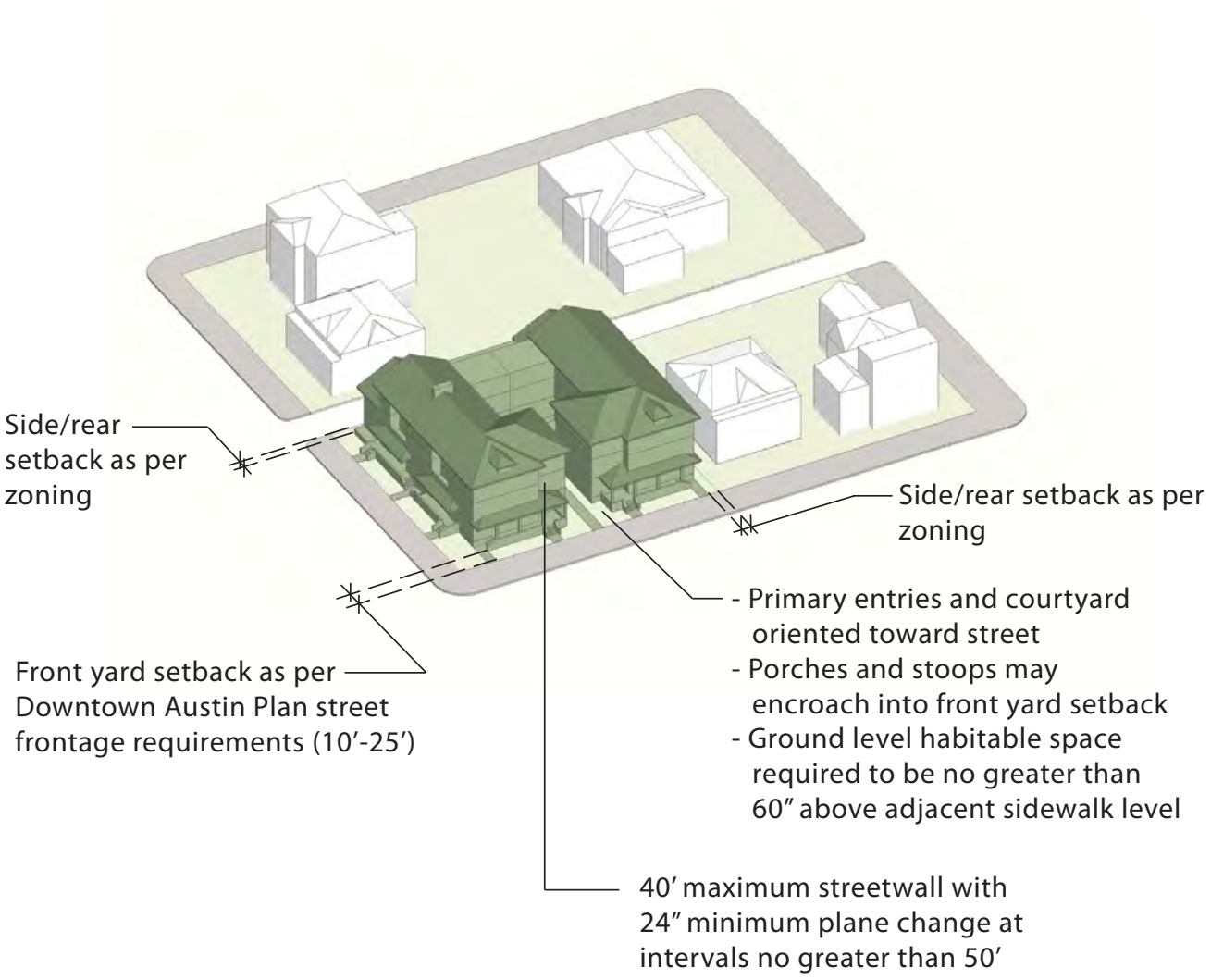


Figure F:
Low-Rise Courtyard/Walk-up Building Proposed Regulations

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- All buildings shall have their principal entries oriented to the street front.
- Ground level floor area adjacent to public streets shall be habitable and located no more than 60 inches above the elevation of the sidewalk; service areas and parking garages above a height of 60 inches are not permitted within 20 feet of the street front property line.

c. Parking Access and Driveways

- On properties less than one-half block in area, one driveway curb cut will be permitted by the responsible Director only if it is found that access to on-site parking can not be achieved from a rear alley.
- Subject to approval of the responsible Director, up to two driveway curb-cuts from a public street may be allowed on a parcel less than one-half block in size, only if it is found that one driveway is not feasible or desirable from a public safety standpoint.
- The maximum width of a driveway curb cut shall not exceed 25 feet.

d. Service and Loading

- Service and loading and maneuvering should be from the alley; where the responsible Director finds that this is not practicable, service and loading maneuvering on public streets may be permitted.

e. Porte-Cocheres and On-Site Drop-Off Areas

- Porte-cocheres and on-site drop-off areas are permitted on a case by case basis (as determined by the responsible Director), subject to the following findings:
    - Because of the volume of drop-offs, the operation of the particular use requires a porte-cochere or drop-off area on site. (Note: Special priority is given to hotel uses; office and residential uses should use designated curbside drop-off lanes within the public right-of-way.)
    - The design and configuration of the drop-off area minimizes disruption to the continuity of the sidewalk along the street and to existing trees.

f. On-Site Parking

- All above-grade parking must be architecturally integrated within the building. No stand-alone parking garages are permitted. The façade treatment of the garage shall be an integral extension of the primary façade, with the same materials and treatments as the remainder of the building. There should be no views from public streets to cars and garage lighting should be screened to the maximum extent practicable.

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g. Floor Area Ratio

- In addition to the proposed Downtown Density Bonus Program, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) incentives may be applied on a district-by-district basis within the Downtown to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., below-grade parking, ground level uses, etc.). These are outlined in the District plans.
- Within the Northwest District, residential projects with an underlying zoning of DMU-60 (formerly GO, CS or MF-4) may be constructed to a maximum FAR of 2:1, provided that they meet the form standards described above.Residential projects with an underlying zoning of DMU-40 (formerly LO) may be constructed to a maximum FAR of 1.5:1, provided that they meet the form standards described above.