

LAND USE

Create a well-balanced land use pattern in the North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area by assigning appropriate land uses to particular properties.

The term “land use” refers to how land is broadly used, and these uses fall into several descriptive categories such as residential, commercial, and industrial. During the course of land use planning, a future land use map (FLUM) is created to depict what types of development stakeholders would like to see in the future of their neighborhood. When creating a FLUM, land use categories are arranged to create a framework accommodating future changes—including potential development pressures and population changes--throughout the neighborhood. The FLUM also sets criteria for those areas that stakeholders wish to preserve. Through proper land use planning, the future land use map should:

- Limit the encroachment of intense uses into the residential portion(s) of a neighborhood
- Place complementary uses next to one another
- Establish a logical pattern of uses
- Place more intense uses (e.g., industry, commercial) along large, arterial roadways and away from residential neighborhoods to limit adjacent incompatible uses.



Commercial uses encroach upon a residence on Elliot Street.

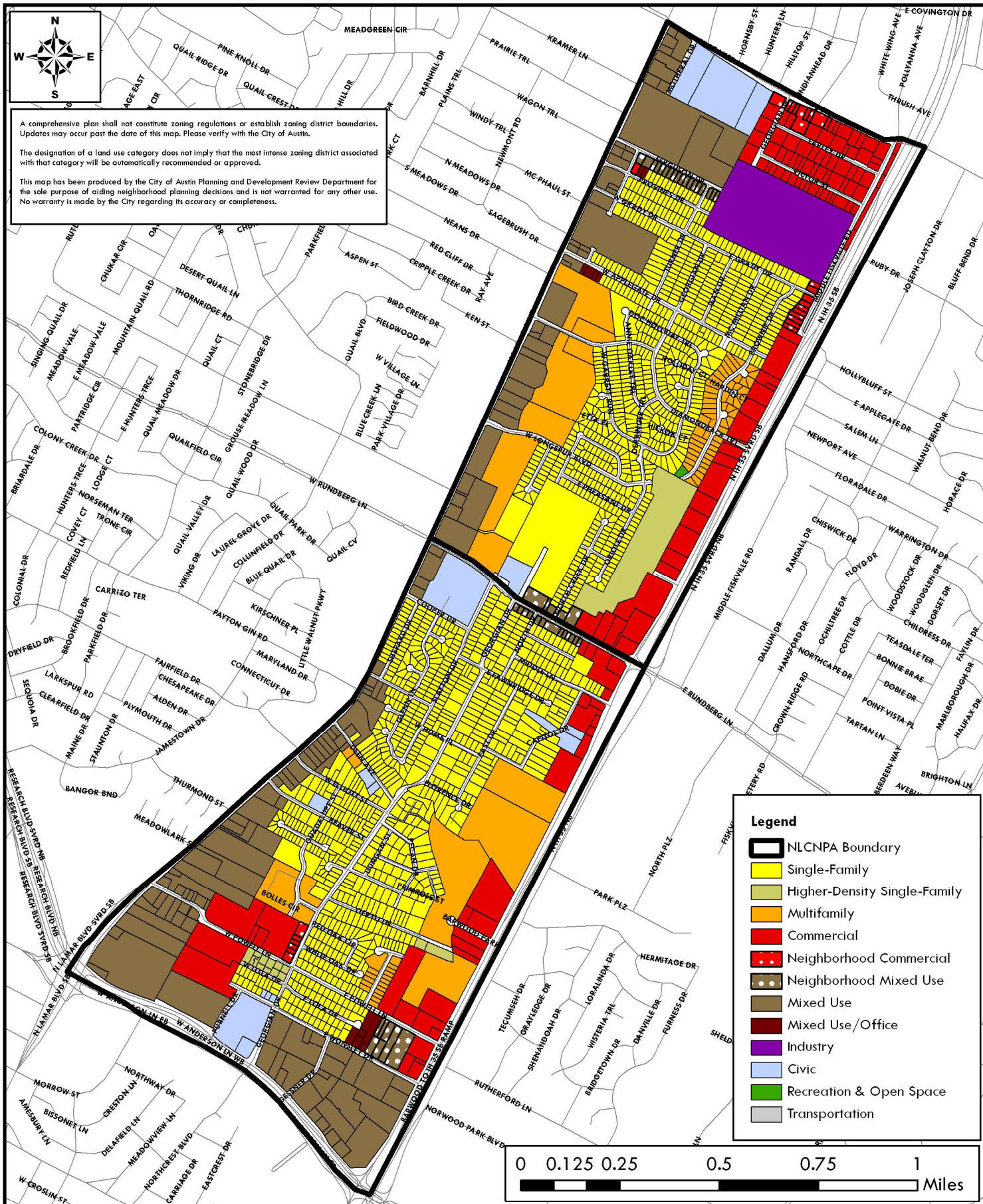
While land use planning cannot foresee all eventualities, it can provide the blueprint for a more balanced and livable community for area residents, businesses, and visitors.

During the planning process in the North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area (NLCNPA), neighborhood stakeholders worked with planning staff to determine a logical, complementary land use pattern to address future growth and development. The resulting future land use map determined the desired types and specific locations of potential developments throughout the NLCNPA, setting forth a vision for the neighborhood's future. The future land use map can be found on page 73.

❖ The residential character of the NLCNPA should be preserved.

A neighborhood's character or identity is determined by the variety of residential units that house those living there. This is especially true of the housing within the NLCNPA, where nearly 80 percent of the properties are residential.²¹ The neighborhood's housing

²¹ This figure is based on 2008 current land use records. A full breakdown of current land use figures (as of 2008) is available in Appendix G.



North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Planning Area Future Land Use Map

stock represents both its rural roots and suburban-like development: rural, farm-style homes, suburban-style tract homes, and large apartment complexes are all components of the housing typology found throughout the NLCNPA. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders identified the sense of place created by the variety of house designs and lot configurations as valued characteristics of their neighborhoods. By preserving the large residential core of the NLCNPA, both the character and identity of these neighborhoods will be maintained.



The housing stock of the NLCNPA represents its rural roots and suburban development with (from left) farm-style homes, suburban-style tract homes, and apartment complexes.

The single-family character of the NLCNPA is influenced by an interesting patchwork of architectural styles. In Mockingbird Hill, a neighborhood in the northern part of the NLCNPA, houses built in the 1930s share the streets with those built between the 1950s and the 2000s. This area is noticeably different from the residential subdivisions immediately to the south. The houses here were built during the 1970s and 1980s and have characteristics reminiscent of those decades. Similar patterns continue south of Rundberg Lane. The area bounded by Rundberg Lane, I-35, Little Walnut Creek, and Georgian Drive has a more markedly rural feel than the rest of the Georgian Acres neighborhood and is characterized by larger lot sizes. To the west, 1960s suburban-style development is prevalent in the residential area between North Lamar Boulevard and Georgian Drive. Many of the houses in the area between Little Walnut Creek and Oertli Lane were built in the 1950s or before. South of Oertli Lane, the housing reflects 1950s and 1960s suburban house design; houses along Red Oak Circle and White Oak Drive reflect popular styles of those decades. Regardless of the decade in which they were built, the majority of the houses throughout the NLCNPA are modest in size and ornamentation.



Turner Drive, in Mockingbird Hill, contains a good mixture of single-family houses.



Houses on Red Oak Circle reflect popular architectural styles of the 1950s and 1960s with their front gables and ornamental, wooden tile siding.

In the planning process, stakeholders noted the need to provide housing options for current and future residents of the NLCNPA. To maintain a balanced residential character, housing options (both owner-occupied and rental units) must be readily available. However, when compared to other planning areas, the NLCNPA contains a disproportionate amount of rental units and large apartment complexes. Of the total number of residential units in the planning area, 80 percent are rental and nearly 69 percent of all housing units within the NLCNPA are in multifamily developments (Table L)²². Stakeholders thought further development of such complexes should be restricted throughout the neighborhood: they believed a more balanced mix of housing options and homeownership opportunities will stabilize the area.

Table L. Units in Structure, 2000

	Georgian Acres	North Lamar	NLCNPA	Percentage of Housing Units by Structure Type
Single Family	766	770	1,536	25.8%
Duplex	123	112	235	4.0%
Triplex or Fourplex	198	328	526	8.8%
Multifamily	2,673	891	3,564	59.9%
Other	43	41	84	1.4%
Total Units	3,803	2,142	5,945	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau

For decades, reasonably-priced houses have attracted many residents to this historically affordable part of Austin. According to neighborhood stakeholders, it is important to maintain the area's affordability as the remainder of the City experiences housing cost increases. Maintaining affordability throughout the NLCNPA will preserve its attractive nature to prospective homebuyers and homeowners. See the "Affordable Housing" section of the Quality of Life Chapter for more information.

Objective L.1: Preserve the residential character of the neighborhoods in the NLCNPA.

Recommendation 119 Non-residential uses should not encroach into the established neighborhoods of the NLCNPA.

²² This figure includes the Triplex and Fourplex numbers as these units are typically categorized as "multifamily."

Recommendation 120 In order to preserve the large-lot rural character of the northeastern corner of the Georgian Acres NPA, zoning requests for intense residential development should be denied.

Objective L.2: Maintain a balanced residential character throughout the NLCNPA.

Recommendation 121 Limit the construction of new, large multi-family residential complexes throughout the NLCNPA.

Recommendation 122 New, more intense residential development should contain a mixed use element and be located along major roadways.

❖ **North Lamar Boulevard should become a mixed use corridor.**

As one of the most important roadways in Austin (and the westernmost boundary for the NLCNPA), North Lamar Boulevard lacks a unique or unifying identity. North Lamar Boulevard is a major commercial thoroughfare lined with various commercial and light industrial uses including an array of storefronts, strip malls, restaurants, car lots, automobile repair shops, and storage facilities among others. According to the “North Lamar Boulevard Corridor Community Survey” conducted during the planning process, over 90 percent of respondents felt North Lamar Boulevard had a negative identity while 60 percent expressed displeasure with the corridor’s physical appearance.

To enhance this segment of North Lamar Boulevard, neighborhood stakeholders determined that it should become a mixed use corridor providing a variety of residential *and* non-residential uses. The term “mixed use” means a mixture of both residential and commercial uses within a particular area or site. This mix usually occurs within the same structure but is not always required.



The Triangle, located at the intersection of North Lamar Boulevard and Guadalupe Street, was cited by stakeholders as the example of mixed use development to be used for the redevelopment of the portion of North Lamar Boulevard that runs along the NLCNPA. A good mixture of local-serving restaurants and stores (right) are built beneath residential units in the Triangle development.

In response to the largely commercial nature along North Lamar Boulevard, neighborhood stakeholders wanted to change its current character by making it a

pedestrian-friendly place with both neighborhood-serving establishments and residences. New mixed use development along the corridor should contain, in addition to residential units, small-scale and locally-owned commercial or retail establishments: cafés, book stores, coffee shops, and other boutique-style businesses rather than big-box-styled commercial developments. They were concerned that big-boxed building designs would not promote the human-scaled places they wanted, and are not desirable for the North Lamar Boulevard corridor. The smaller, local-serving businesses would also provide more amenities within convenient walking or biking distance from the adjacent residential areas and reduce reliance on the automobile for most trips.

Envisioning a new North Lamar Boulevard



A roadway does not have to remain in its current state. Strategic changes can revitalize a corridor and make it a place where people want to be. The images at left represent some of the design elements recommended by stakeholders during the planning process.



The North Lamar Boulevard corridor currently lacks any of those elements that provide a pleasant experience for both motorists and pedestrians (top). The corridor is characterized by a wide roadway, large building setbacks, little or no sidewalks, overhead power lines, and several large commercial signs or billboards.

Building a continuous sidewalk, reducing the number of driveways, and planting trees and other landscaping are the first steps in creating a place for pedestrians along North Lamar Boulevard (middle). The removal of the overhead power lines and signs eliminates significant amounts of visual clutter.



Streetlights and mixed use buildings foster a more pedestrian-friendly and visually-stimulating environment (bottom). The redevelopment of existing sites by moving buildings closer to the street provides an inviting atmosphere for those traveling along the thoroughfare.

Physical improvements such as those presented in this series of photographs can lay the groundwork for additional changes to the corridor. These improvements will create a North Lamar Boulevard in which area residents can take pride.

Certain design elements should be incorporated into future development (mixed use, commercial, or residential) along the North Lamar Boulevard corridor.²³ Neighborhood stakeholders indicated that new buildings should be sited at the front of their lots nearest the roadway with parking located to the rear or side of the buildings. The buildings' commercial entrances should front the street to create a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. Trees or other shading mechanisms also need to be included in future developments to provide pedestrians shelter from intense sunlight and heat experienced throughout the year, especially during the summer months.



The mixed use developments in San Francisco (left) and along 2nd Street in downtown Austin (right) have commercial entrances fronting the street and pedestrian pathways protected by trees and planters, respectively.

Although neighborhood stakeholders recommended that North Lamar Boulevard become a mixed use corridor, there was a recognition and concern about the affordability of these future developments. Concerned about affordability in similar developments throughout the City, neighborhood stakeholders wanted a portion of the new residential units of mixed use developments to be as affordable as possible. They felt it important to ensure affordability in these new developments to maintain the NLCNPA's position as a relatively affordable neighborhood within the City of Austin.

Objective L.3: *Establish North Lamar Boulevard as a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly corridor.*

Recommendation 123 Apply the mixed use future land use designation to all properties fronting North Lamar Boulevard.

²³ The design elements mentioned in this section should comply with the standards for future (re)development occurring on a Core Transit Corridor as set forth by "Subchapter E: Design Standards and Mixed Use" of the Austin City Code. During the planning process, stakeholders expressed the desire to re-designate North Lamar Boulevard, north of US Highway 183, as a Core Transit Corridor as stricter design guidelines are applied to developments along such roadways.