



Historic buildings offer new opportunities.



Build on the character of unique businesses.



Businesses that cater to daytime activities.



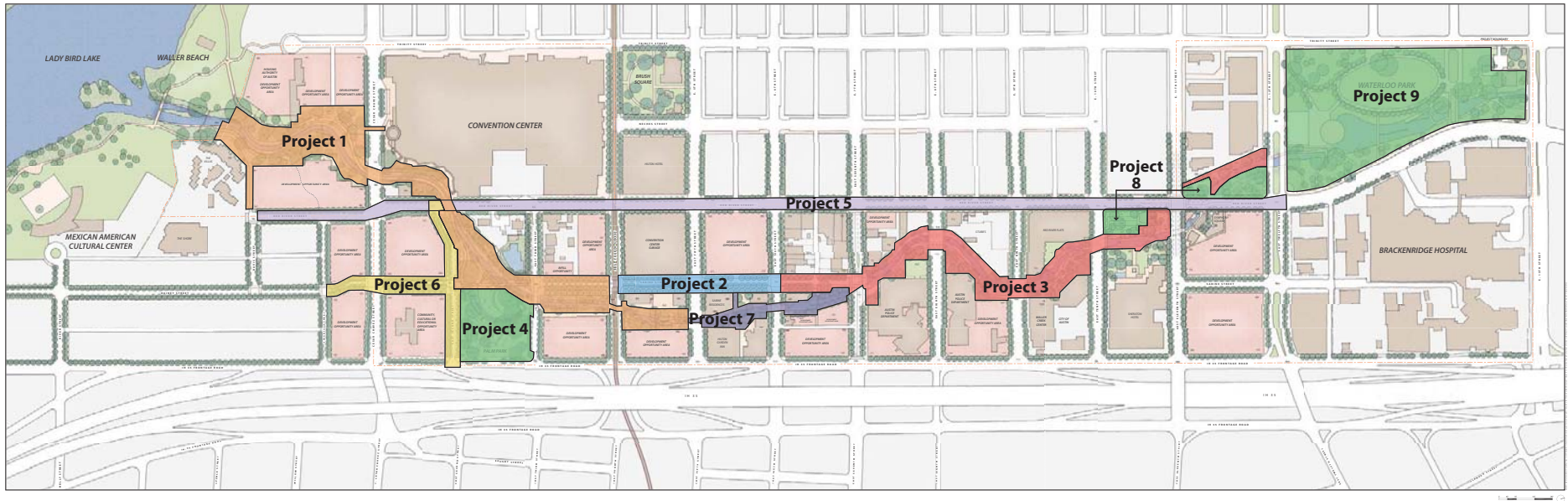
Creative businesses and small enterprises.



Restaurants add to the vitality of public life.



Small scale hospitality or residential buildings.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

KEY CREEK AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Project 1: Lady Bird Lake to 5th Street = ~\$21.7 M (Phase 1)**
Streambank Stabilization, Riparian Landscape Preservation/Revegetation; Trail Prep/ Re-grading; Pathway & Trail Lighting; Ped X-ing of Cesar Chavez; New 3rd St Bridge; Sabine St from 3rd to 4th St; Easement Acquisition.
- **Project 2: Sabine Street Promenade 4th to 6th Streets = ~\$4.2 M (Phase 2)**
Sabine St from 4th to 6th St.
- **Project 3: North of Sixth Street = ~\$8.2 M (Phase 3)**
Streambank Stabilization, Riparian Landscape Preservation/Revegetation, Trail Prep/ Re-grading; Pathway & Trail Lighting; Sabine St from 6th to 7th; Great Streets on Parkland Street Frontages; Easement Acquisition.

TOTAL PROJECTS 1 - 3 = ~\$34.1 M (2010 Dollars)

RELATED PUBLIC AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE PROJECTS

- **Project 4: Palm Park = TBD**
Palm Park Improvements to be Determined by PARD; Great Streets on All Street Frontages.
- **Project 5: Red River Street Bike Lanes, Restriping of Street = TBD**
- **Project 6: Rainey, Sabine, Second Street Extensions = ~\$11.3 M**
2nd St from Red River to IH 35; Sabine St from Cesar Chavez to 2nd; Rainey St from Driskill to Cesar Chavez; and ROW Acquisition.
- **Project 7: Channel Improvements 3rd to 7th Streets = ~\$1.9 M**
Miscellaneous Demolition and Repair of Channel; Riparian Landscape Revegetation; Four East-West, Midblock Ped Bridges between 4th and 7th St; Removal of Existing Ped Bridge; and Utility Relocations; Easement Acquisition.
- **Project 8: Symphony Square and Plaza Park Improvements = ~\$0.7 M**
Demolition of Two Surface Parking Lots on Parkland; Riparian Landscape Preservation/ Revegetation to Create Two New Terraced Parks, Great Streets on Red River Frontage.
- **Project 9: Waterloo Park = TBD**
Waterloo Park Improvements to be Determined by PARD; Great Streets on All Street Frontages.

Note: The budget estimates provided above are inherently approximate because they are the product of a "master planning" effort, which has not included detailed design and engineering. Even though these estimates include a healthy contingency, they should be considered subject to change as the individual projects move into design and engineering.

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Waller Creek Master Plan is a significant capital improvement project that will need to be implemented in phases, corresponding with available funding and with the construction of the Tunnel Project improvements, which are currently scheduled to be completed by 2014. A key goal of the Master Plan is to implement those surface improvements essential in transforming the creek environment, in tandem with the Tunnel Project, so that when that project is complete there is a sufficient level of trail continuity and streambank stabilization. As indicated in the attached diagram (see figure Phased Projects and Construction Budget Estimate), a series of eight distinct project has been identified along Waller Creek, each of which could have its own funding source(s) and each of which could be phased as funds become available. Over the next months, the City will identify specific funding sources for these eight projects. Two types of projects are identified:

Key Creek and Trail Improvements

A series of three projects is required to construct a high-quality, accessible trail between Lady Bird Lake and Waterloo Park. These improvements would establish the trail at an elevation above the 100-year flood where possible, address critical problems of eroding streambanks, preserve and/or re-establish the riparian ecosystem, and complete the Sabine Street Promenade. These projects could be phased, or, if there are sufficient funds, constructed as a single project. The total cost of all three projects is budgeted at approximately \$34.1 million, which includes an allowance for easement acquisition. (Note: all construction budgets are provided in current 2010 dollars and include a 25% contingency.) More specifically:

Project 1: Lady Bird Lake to Fifth Street and Sabine Street Extension (\$21.7 million): This segment of Waller Creek between Lady Bird Lake and Fifth Street is most in need of improvement: the area is characterized by eroding streambanks, discontinuous trails, and overgrown and invasive vegetation. At the same time, the area has the most potential for redevelopment, with numerous block-sized vacant properties, unconstrained by Capitol View Corridors. The first improvement project is confined to the “transformative” actions necessary to support new development and to dramatically change the negative perception of the area. These actions include:

- Extension of the existing trail on the east side of the creek to the intersection of Davis and Red River streets;
- Construction of a continuous and accessible trail and boardwalk structure, suitable for bike and pedestrian circulation, between Lady Bird Lake and Palm Park, beneath the Cesar Chavez and Red River bridges;
- A pedestrian and bike bridge in Palm Park across Waller Creek to the foot of Sabine Street;
- The southerly extension of Sabine Street from Fourth Street to Third Street, including the construction of a new Third Street Bridge; and
- Streambank stabilization, revegetation and other creek improvements south of Fifth Street.

At the completion of these improvements, one would be able to walk or bike the length of the creek, with the most significant erosion and trail issues addressed.

Project 2: Sabine Street Promenade from Fourth to Sixth Street (\$4.2 million): The construction of the Sabine Street Promenade between Fourth and Sixth Street could be phased in conjunction with streetscape improvements planned for East Sixth Street, to provide connectivity between the creek and Congress Avenue by way of this important downtown entertainment district.

Project 3: Trail and Creek Improvements north of Sixth Street (\$8.2 million): The final creek and trail project involves improvements between Sixth Street and Waterloo Park, a segment of the creek which has a level of trail continuity today, but which includes areas where the trail is below even the future 100-year flood (e.g. beneath the Seventh Street bridge), and where the constrained environment may create issues of public safety (e.g., beneath the Eleventh and Red River bridges). This project includes:

- The Sabine Street Promenade between Sixth and Seventh streets, including a creekside plaza at the Seventh Street bridge and the replacement of the current ramp which does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- An improved and signalized grade crossing at Seventh Street, which would provide an alternative to the existing trail beneath the bridge;
- An accessible creekside trail between Seventh and Eleventh streets;
- Removal of the existing bridges and dams within the creek channel;
- Stabilization and re-vegetation of eroding streambanks;
- An improved grade crossing at Eleventh Street; and
- Construction of an accessible path and ramp leading to the trail beneath the Twelfth Street bridge and Waterloo Park.

Related Public and Public/Private Projects

In addition to the trail and creek improvements described above, there are a series of related projects that will be important in transforming the environment of Waller Creek and the surrounding district. These projects could occur simultaneous to the creek and trail projects - or subsequent to them - depending on the availability of funding:

Project 4: Palm Park (Cost TBD): The improvement of Palm Park is seen as an important action that would ideally be phased simultaneous with the adjacent creek and trail improvements. PARD intends to initiate a community planning and design process for this key open space within the coming months.

Project 5: Red River Street Bike Lanes (Cost TBD): The striping of bike lanes along the length of Red River Street between Davis Street and Twelfth Street will provide an important connection between Lady Bird Lake and Waterloo Park, and can link to existing bike lanes to the north on Trinity and San Jacinto streets. Adding bike lanes would require the removal of

curbside parallel parking on one side of the street. The ultimate Great Streets improvement of Red River Street could follow the restriping of the roadway, as funds become available.

Project 6: Second, Rainey and Sabine Street Extensions (\$11.3 million):

As development occurs in the southern portion of the project area and as Palm Park is improved, key street improvements will be necessary to provide access to the new developments, and to establish bike, pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between the Waller and Rainey Street districts. These projects include:

- The extension of Rainey Street from Driskill Street to a new signalized intersection at Cesar Chavez Street;
- the construction of Sabine Street from Cesar Chavez to Second Street and Second Street from IH 35 to Red River Street.

These street improvements will require acquisition of property from Travis County and private property owners for use as public right-of-way.

Project 7: Channel Improvements between Third and Seventh Streets (\$1.9 million):

A series of improvements need to be made in collaboration with private property owners to enhance access to the creek and channel between Third and Seventh streets. These include the construction of four, mid-block pedestrian bridges within each of the blocks to provide access from Sabine Street to development sites east of the creek.

Project 8: Symphony Plaza Park Improvements (\$0.7 million): The conversion of two small surface parking lots to parkland and creekbank restoration between Tenth and Twelfth streets could occur when replacement parking is available within adjacent redevelopment sites.

Project 9: Waterloo Park Improvements (Cost TBD): As part of the Tunnel project, improvements will be made within Waterloo Park to mitigate the loss of parkland and the impact of the Tunnel Project's inlet structure and lagoon. In addition, PARD has initiated a master planning process that will identify future improvements to the park.

The Great Streets Improvement Program

The City of Austin has already committed to the upgrade of Downtown streets as part of its Great Streets Program. Through the use of parking meter revenues, the City assists private developers in making such improvements, which have resulted in incremental streetscape enhancements. In order to make a more comprehensive impact, the City has also initiated larger Great Streets projects as part of its Capital Improvement Program (e.g., Second Street, Brazos Street), and will continue to do so as funds are made available. Since such improvements are important to achieve the Master Plan's vision of an accessible, bicycle and pedestrian-oriented area, it is recommended that highest priority be given to improvements on the east-west streets connecting Waller Creek with Downtown and East Austin (Cesar Chavez, Sixth, Seventh, and Eleventh streets) and to Red River Street, as a major bike corridor. The improvements include sidewalk-widening, landscaping, lighting and way-finding.

In addition, widening of sidewalks and improving the path of travel beneath or above IH 35 should be undertaken to establish safer connections between the Waller Creek District and East Austin. These improvements should occur along Cesar Chavez and Eleventh streets, and Sixth and Seventh streets, in conjunction with the planned IH 35 "Make-Over" project.

Utility Improvements

The City of Austin (Austin Water Utility, Watershed Protection, Austin Energy) is currently assessing the level of "backbone" utility improvements (electrical, water, wastewater and storm drainage, etc.) required to serve projected future development in the Waller Creek District. As part of this process, efforts should be made to relocate or abandon exposed water and wastewater lines that cross the creek corridor and/or that are visible beneath bridges.

Immediate Actions Prior to Capital Improvements

In advance of the implementation of the proposed capital improvements, however, some shorter-term measures are recommended to provide for the transition of the creek corridor from its current condition:

- **Raise the community's consciousness of the creek corridor through special events and programs.** Waller Creek is a forgotten element of the Downtown environment. Special events in around the creek would help raise the community's consciousness of its potential, and promote the overall vision for the area and the specific improvements proposed by the Master Plan. Such events could include: street fairs or markets along Sabine Street; festivals, performances or community-sponsored celebrations in Palm Park; bicycle and walking tours of the corridor to highlight its potential; and other events that increase its exposure. A grassroots group known as the "Waller Creek is for Lovers Action and Adventure Society" has already emerged and has organized several brainstorming events, blogs and social-networking sites, aimed at engaging the community in a creative dialogue about Waller Creek.
- **Provide outreach to the homeless population, and enforce anti-camping and vagrancy policies.** The City should take a proactive role in providing outreach and assistance to individuals who have established campsites within Waller Creek, providing them with information and available services. At the same time, the Austin Police Department in conjunction with the Downtown Rangers, should also provide more consistent enforcement of existing anti-camping and vagrancy laws that prohibit overnight camps within the corridor.
- **Introduce higher levels of maintenance along the creek.** It is recommended that the City and the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) coordinate to provide increased levels of maintenance along the creek, including more regular trash clean-up, landscape management, and trail clearance. Volunteer efforts by groups like American Youthworks and others could also be included in this program.

- *Establish interim measures to intercept and improve the quality of stormwater run-off.* It is recommended that the Public Works and Watershed Protection departments develop a program of interim measures to improve the quality of urban run-off into the creek. Such measures could include selective interception and re-routing of storm-water lines as appropriate, introduction of filters and interceptors in on-street catch basins.
- *Undertake selective trail, erosion control and streambank stabilization improvements.* Even before the phased program of Master Plan improvements can be commenced, it will be possible to initiate selective streambank stabilization and trail improvement efforts that contribute to the ultimate planned improvements, and/or that are outside of the areas planned for intensive change in the Master Plan. These could include interim stabilization of eroding banks south of Cesar Chavez Street, between Palm Park and East Fifth Street and the western bank between Seventh and Eighth streets. As part of this effort, trail continuity could also be restored beneath the Cesar Chavez Bridge and between East Third and Fifth streets.

Maintenance and Management Program

In order to sustain and support public investment in creek improvements, it is critical that they be accompanied by programmatic measures aimed at promoting a safe and successful environment. These should include management policies and funding programs that provide for the highest levels of maintenance, police enforcement, events programming and the coordinated recruitment of retail, restaurant and other positive activities. Design improvements, no matter how bold or dramatic, cannot change the environment on their own. They can, however, demonstrate the value that a place has for the community, and public improvements can set the stage for private investment and development projects that increase the population of the district, add “eyes on the street” and engender a “pride of place” that fosters on-going commitment to maintenance and management of resources. Specifically, the Downtown Austin Plan’s Parks and Open Space Master Plan should be consulted for further recommendations regarding park management and maintenance.



Clean-ups are held twice a year and are sponsored by UT Environmental Health and Safety and the Texas Natural Science Center



ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN



Looking East to Red River Bridge



Looking South to 11th Street Bridge

