Parkland Acquisition Program

Austin Parks and Recreation | **November 12, 2025**

Agenda

- Parkland Acquisition Accomplishments
- Challenges to Parkland Acquisition
- Land Banking Benefits and Maintenance
- Goals for the 2026 Bond

Land Acquisitions since 1998

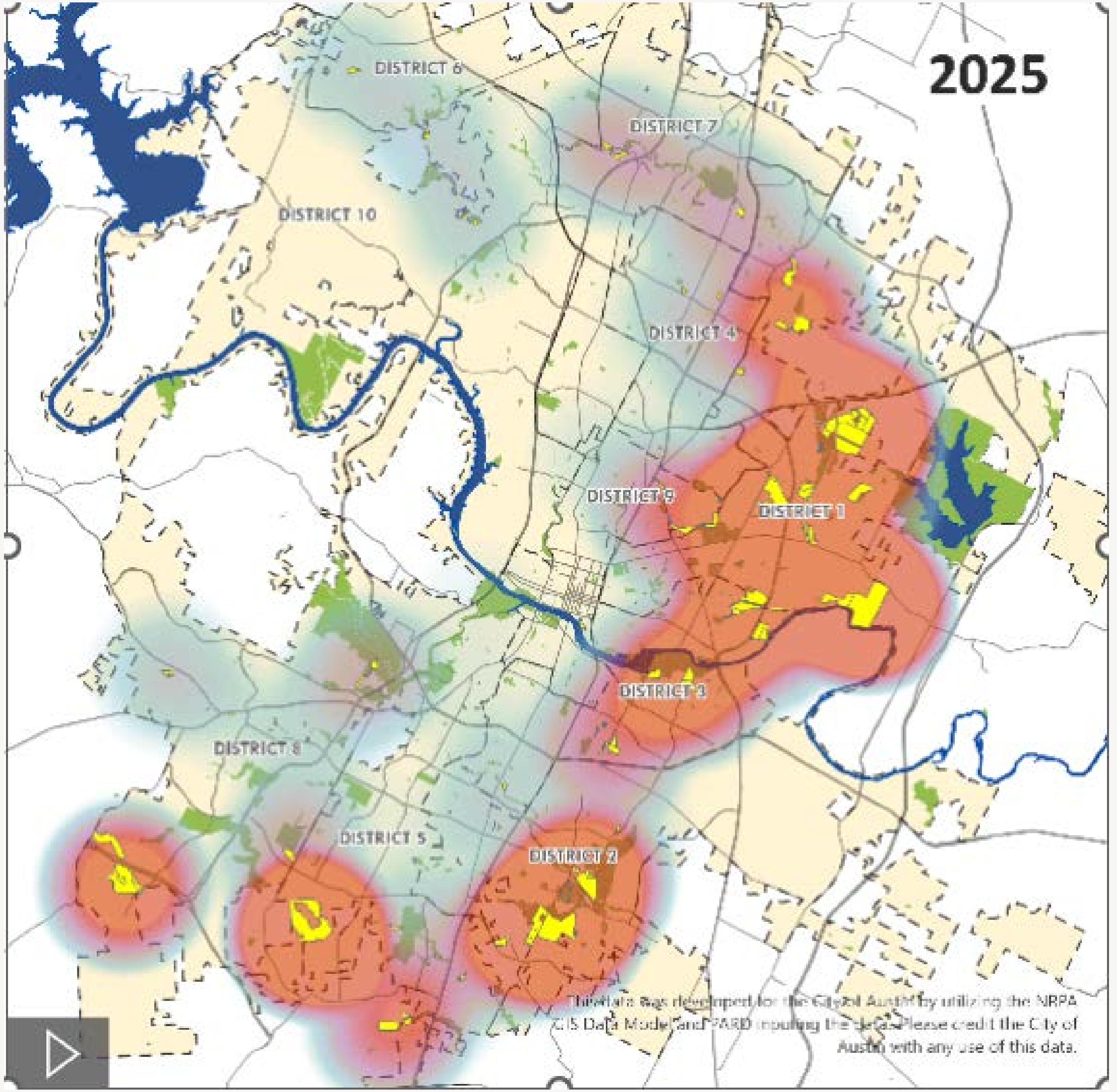
- Over **3,300 acres** acquired through bond or PLD
- **197 new parks** or park expansions
- $20 million in PLD fees expended on land acquisition
- $96 million in bond funds expended on land acquisition

Parkland Acquisition Heat Map

Completed Land Acquisitions since 1998

Concentration of acres purchased — High / Low

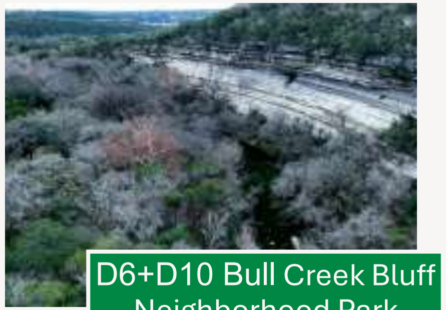
New or Expanded Park

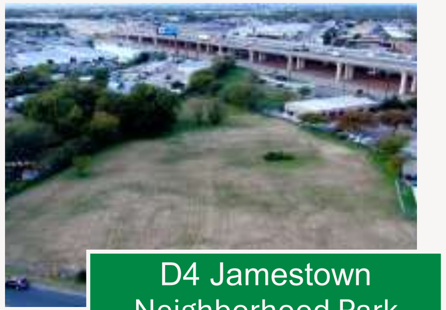


2018 Bond Accomplishments

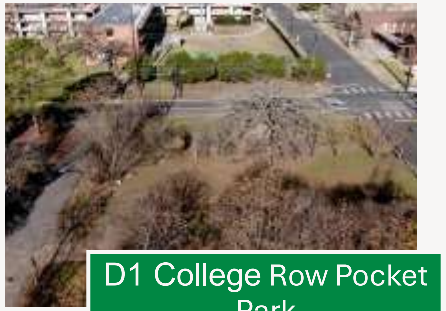
- Over **100 acres** acquired
- **30 new parks** or park expansions
- **7%** increase in park service to residents within walking distance of a park since 2018
- Each land acquisition bond dollar matched with **33 cents** of Parkland Dedication Fees


D5+D2-Cooper Neighborhood Park


D6+D10 Bull Creek Bluff Neighborhood Park

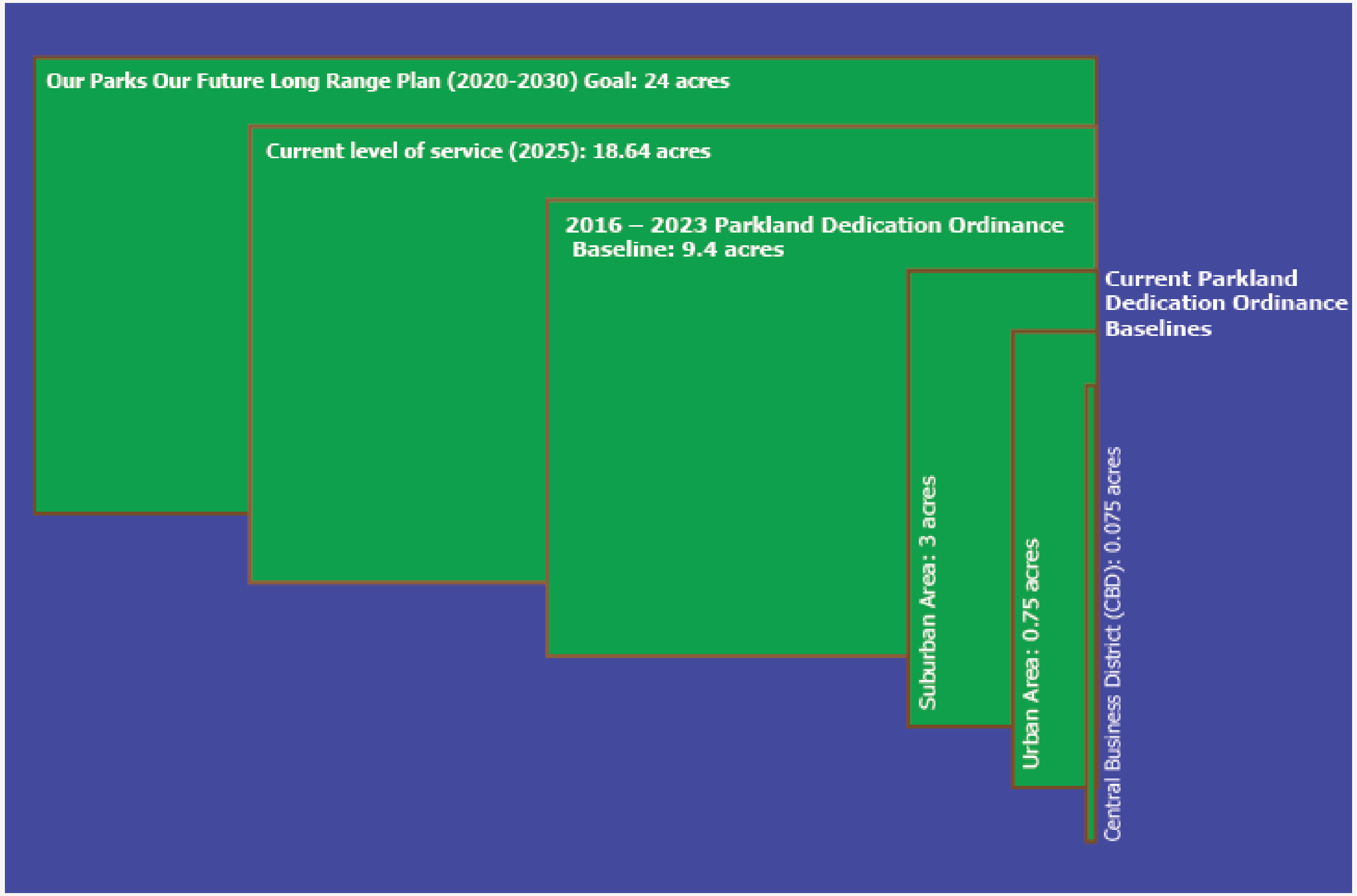

D4 Jamestown Neighborhood Park


D2 Shadywood Neighborhood Park


D1 College Row Pocket Park

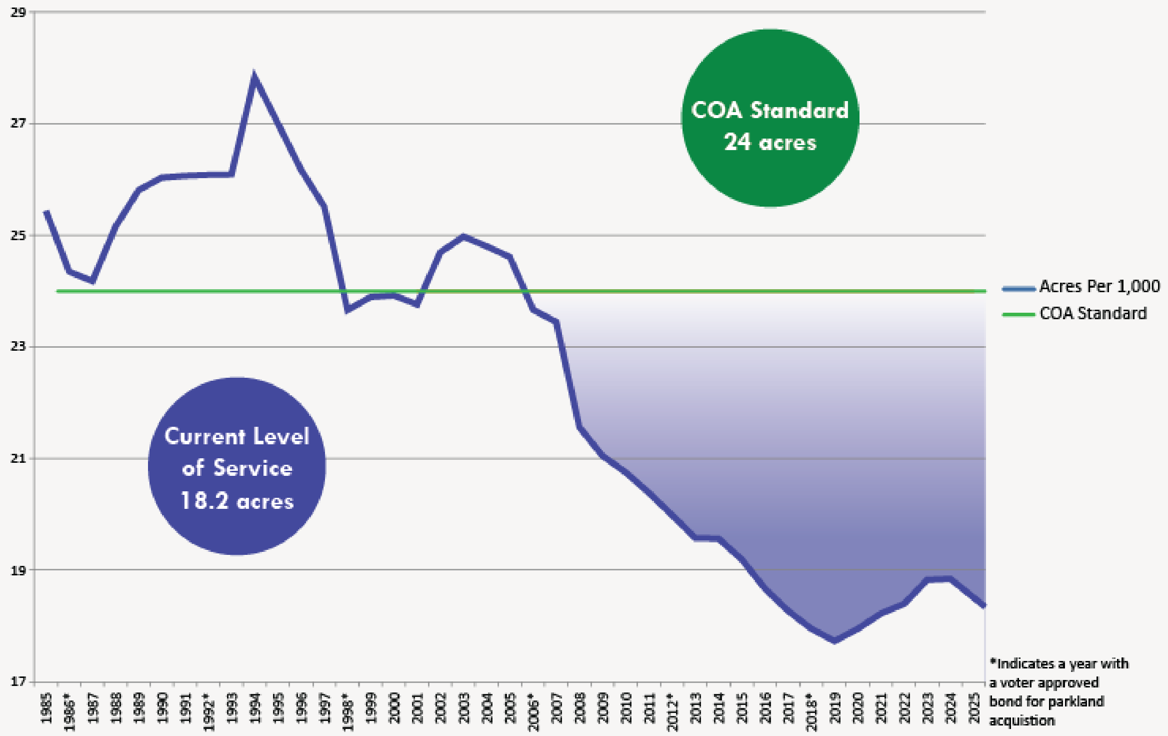
Challenges to Parkland Acquisition – HB 1526

- City-wide park service **goal of 24 acres** set in APR Long-Range Plan, current level of service is 18.47 acres per 1,000 residents
- 2016 Parkland Dedication Ordinance supported 40% of meeting that park service goal with a 9.4 Acres/1,000 residents level of service
- New ordinance supports less than 12% of that park service goal with 0.075 - 3 acres / 1,000 residents level of service
- Remaining park service gap will fall on existing residents through Bonds and other funding



Longterm Goal Progress

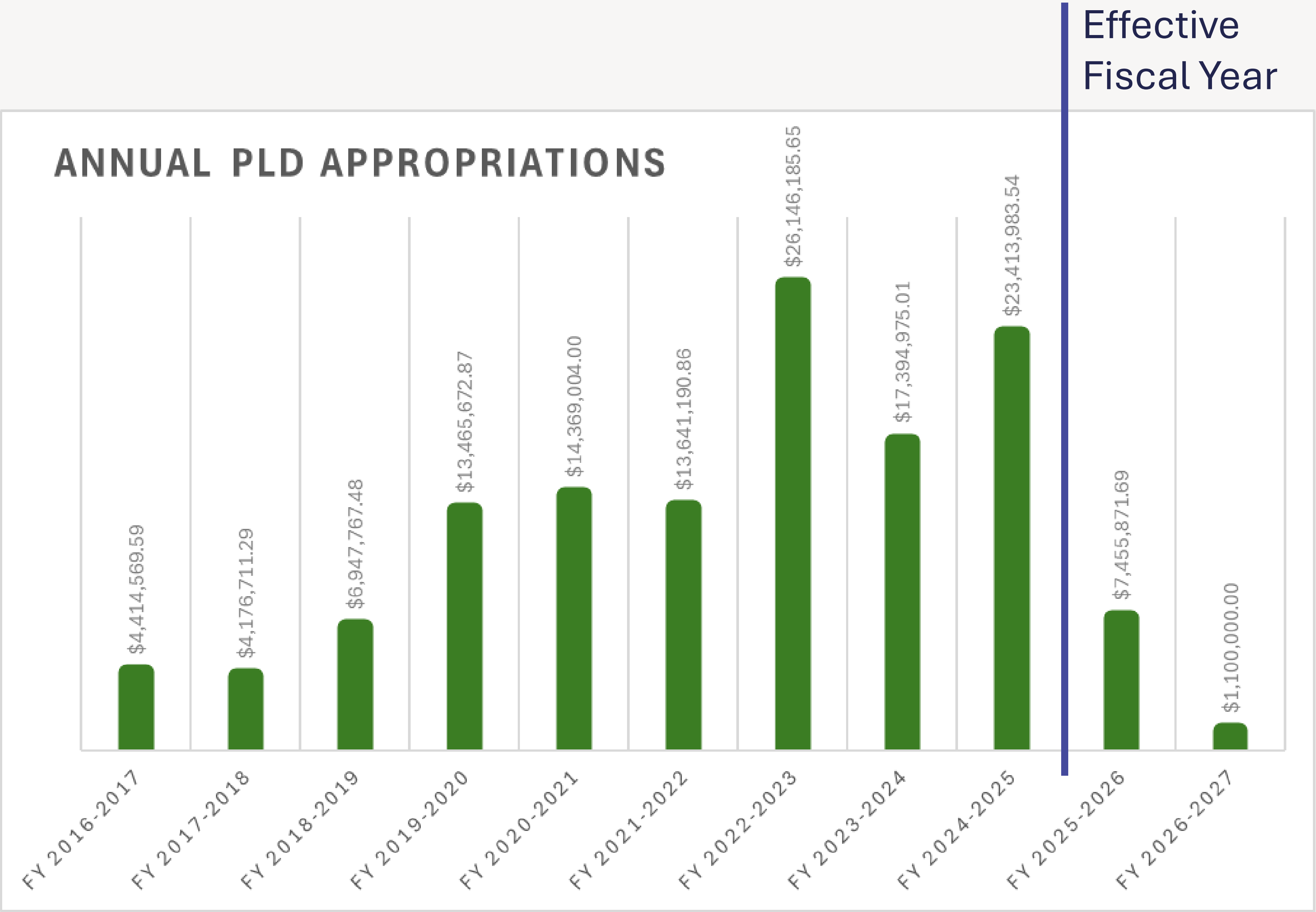
18.20 Acres of Parkland per 1,000 People



70% of Austinites within a Five to Ten-Minute Walk of a Park

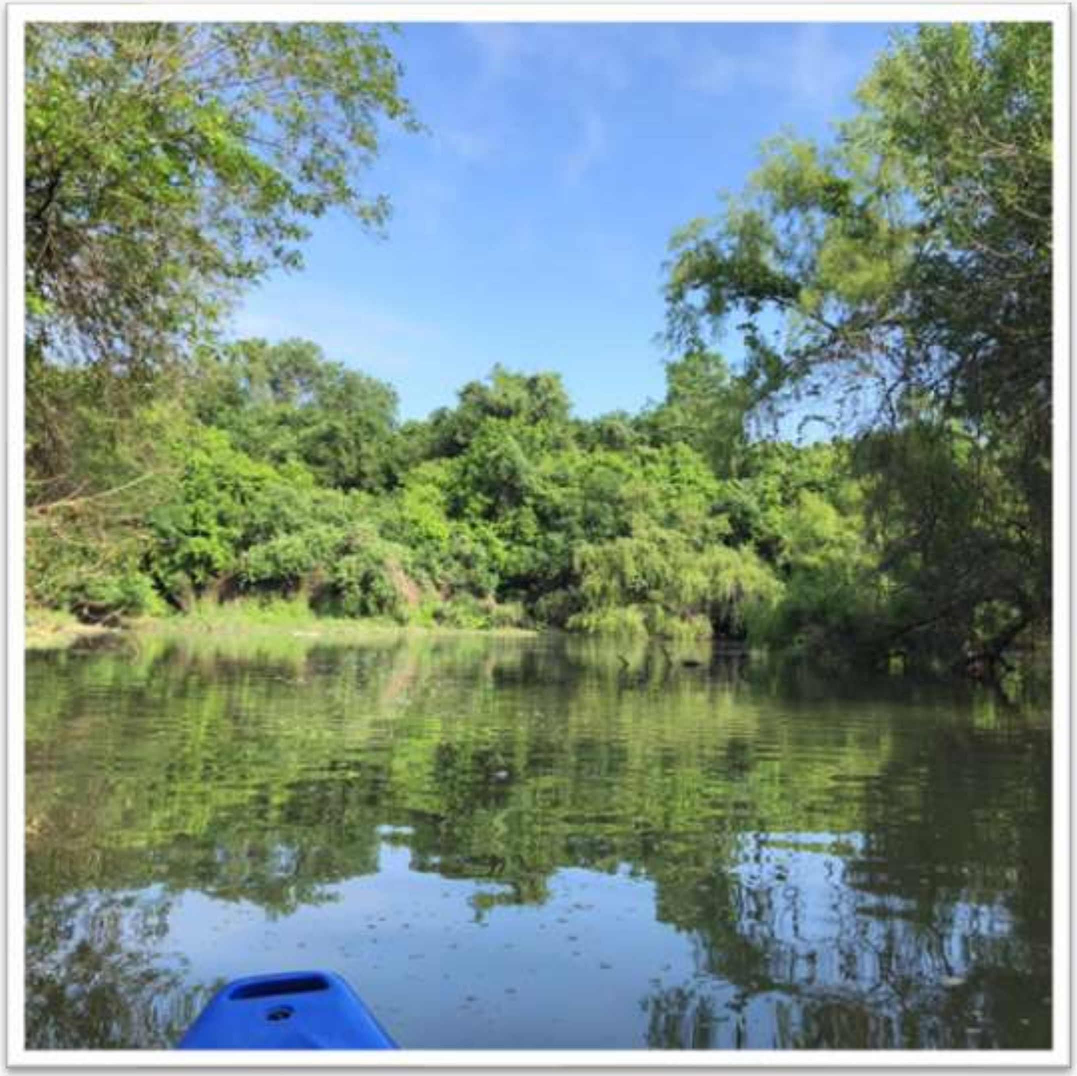
Challenges to Parkland Acquisition – HB 1526

- Under the previous ordinance every dollar of bond funding spent on acquisition was **matched by 33 cents from PLD**
- Previous ordinance appropriated up to **$26 million annually** for park land and development investment
- HB 1526 **delays payment an average of 5 years** after a permit issued
- Resulting short-term **funding gap of roughly $15-20 million/year** for up to 5 years
- **Delayed delivery of parkland to new residents**



Alternative Funding

- $50 million approved by Council Resolution 20240814-024 – All $50 million is encumbered by active negotiations and target acquisitions across 3 departments: Austin Parks and Recreation, Austin Water Utility, Austin Water Protection
- Target acquisitions focus on cross-departmental goals such as water protection and water quality, recreation and public access, environmental protection
- Total Colorado River Acquisitions to realize Colorado River Corridor Plan from Longhorn Dam to SH130 is estimated at between $65-115 million



Land Banking Benefits

- **Land banking** allows APR to purchase land today with available funding from willing sellers and **ensures critical park connections are not lost to development pressure.**
- **Land banking saves money** by acquiring land today at a lower cost than in the future. Land banking serves as an investment and as land prices increase in Austin, **that investment pays dividends** of $1.4 to 20+ million per park over 10 years in the form of savings to the community.
- During the time between acquisition and development, the new parkland may be maintained as a natural area that **contributes to the health of the environment** through carbon sequestration, habitat protection, water quality and flood mitigation.
- If the parcel is in a residential area, it is **maintained for public passive recreation from day one**- kicking a ball around, picnicking, hiking, bird watching, water access, etc.

Land Banking Benefits

Austin

Carbon Sequestration

- Parks sequester **1.01 – 1.85 tons of carbon per acre per year**

Urban Cooling

- Parkland is an average **5 degrees cooler** than the rest of the city

Wildfire Fuel Reduction

- Opportunity for **enhanced land management** practices to mitigate wildfire risk

Ecological Restoration

- **Over 200 acres** of Grow Zones on Parkland

Erosion and Water Quality

- Over **10,000 acres** of critical water quality and erosion hazard zones on parkland

Passive Recreation

- Trails are the **most requested amenity** on parkland

Land Banking Maintenance Costs

Buying parkland today offers the public significant savings over buying parkland in the future. After factoring in annual maintenance costs and land value appreciation*, these savings are in the millions per park over a 10-year period.

Undeveloped Infill Parks

Mowing and litter control to match the level of maintenance of private lawns.

Savings: $1.4 million/ 10 years

Undeveloped Greenbelts

Mowing only along the street. Remaining area is kept in its natural state and managed on a response basis.

Savings: $4.5 million/ 10 years

Undeveloped Destination Parks

Regular mowing limited to areas along the street and annual mowing of upland areas. Candidate for land management plan which includes wildfire management and ecological restoration.

Savings: $20+ million/ 10 years

***Based on Appraised Value appreciation from the Travis County Appraisal District**

Parkland Acquisition Goals for 2026 Bond

Infill Parks in Deficient Areas
Acquire parkland in park deficient areas throughout the city.

Greenbelts and Greenway Critical Gaps
Gaps identified in trails, greenbelts and greenways that are missing key parcels; examples include Onion Creek, Williamson Creek, South Boggy Creek, Rinard Creek, Little Walnut Creek, Northern Walnut Creek and others.

Recreation Center in Southeast Austin
Identify property for a district park and recreation center to serve a deficient area in Southeast Austin.

Colorado River
Acquisition of land, including publicly owned land, to dedicate as parkland to fulfill the Colorado River Corridor Vision Plan with a shared use trail.

One City Approach
Partner with other City departments with shared goals such as Austin Transportation and Public Works, Austin Public Library, Austin Housing, Austin Watershed Protection, Austin Water and others to remedy deficiencies and achieve multiple City goals when feasible.

Contribute to Climate Equity Plan Goals
Acquire parkland in high priority areas identified for environmental value and areas of historically low park service

Infill Parks

- Deficiency: Areas outside of a 5–10-minute walk from a park
- Prioritize Equity: Demographic and environmental factors

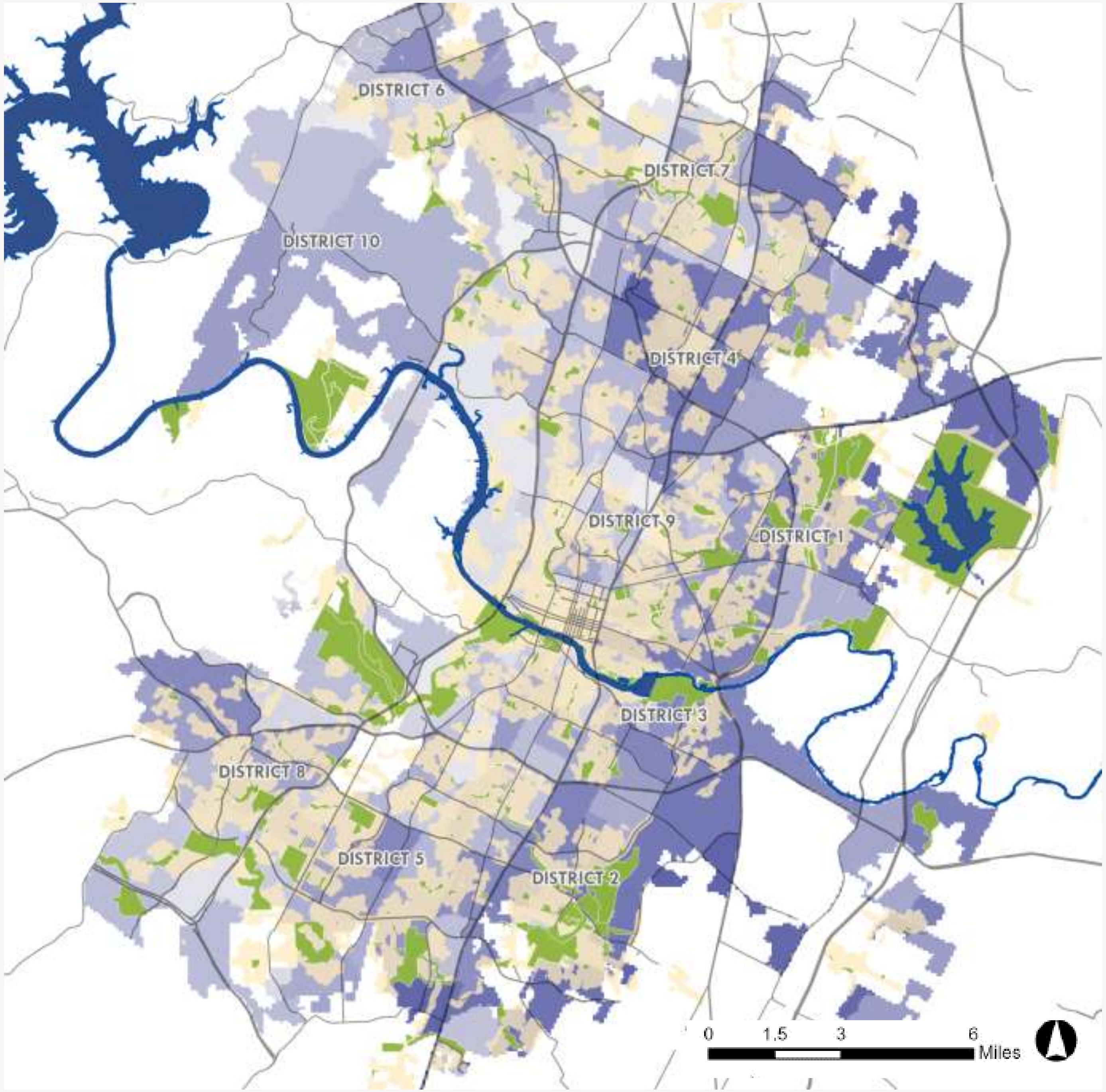
Technical Criteria	Percentage
Population of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)	24%
Prevalence of negative health outcomes such as asthma, obesity, physical inactivity, and diabetes	24%
Population ages 18 or below	20%
Forecasted population growth	16%
Population below 40% median household income	16%

Park Service Area

Equity Priority Area

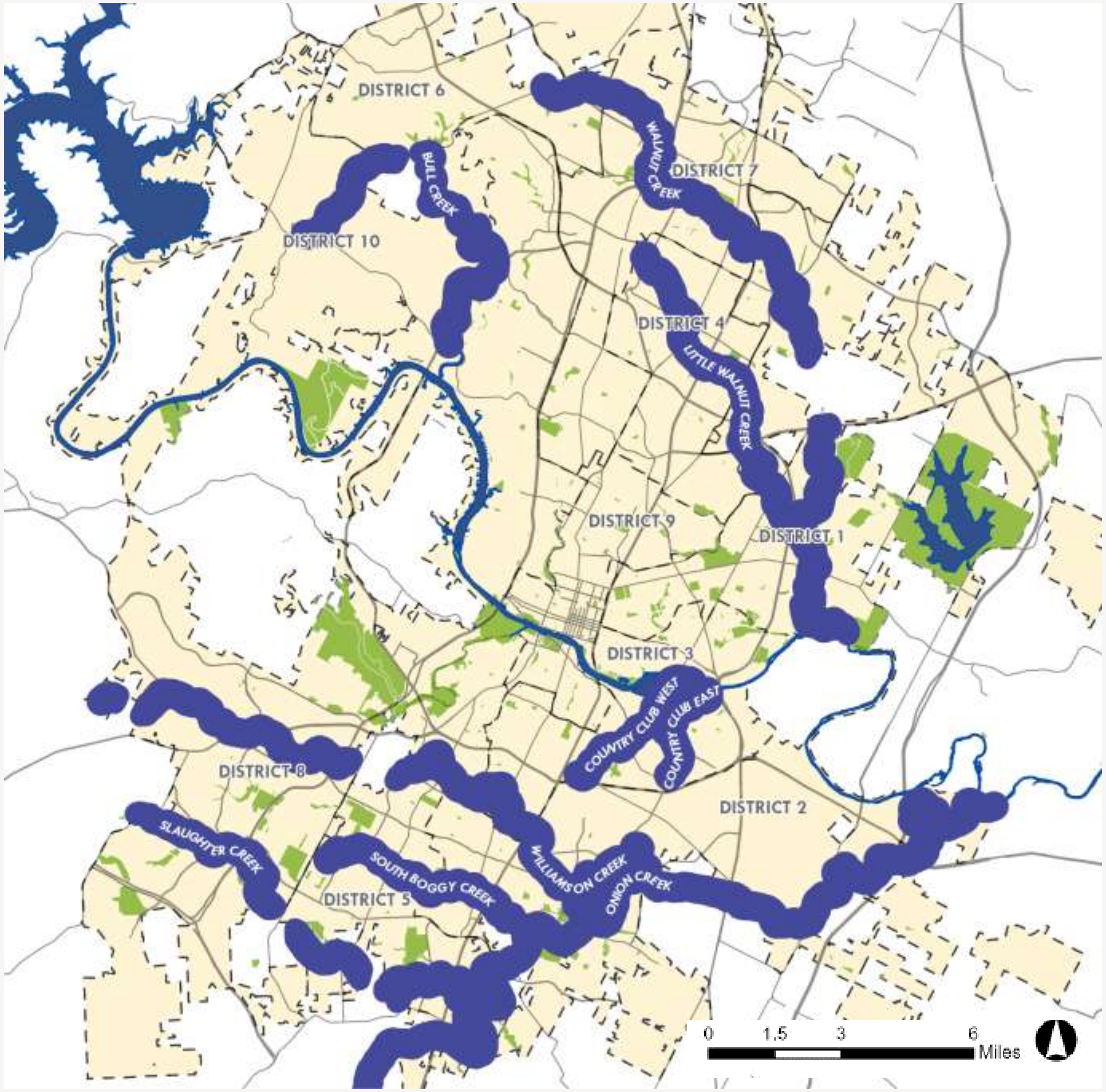
High

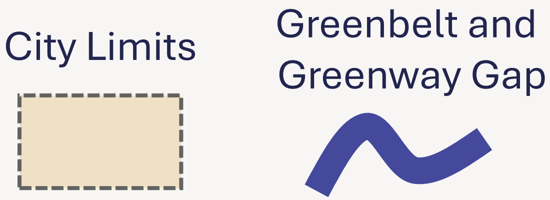
Low



Greenbelt Gaps

- Greenbelt and trail corridors are a linear open space with multiple functions including water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and micromobility routes
- Greenbelt corridors link together parks, neighborhoods, and community spaces
- Park trail-related activities such as walking, biking, and running remain the most popular activities





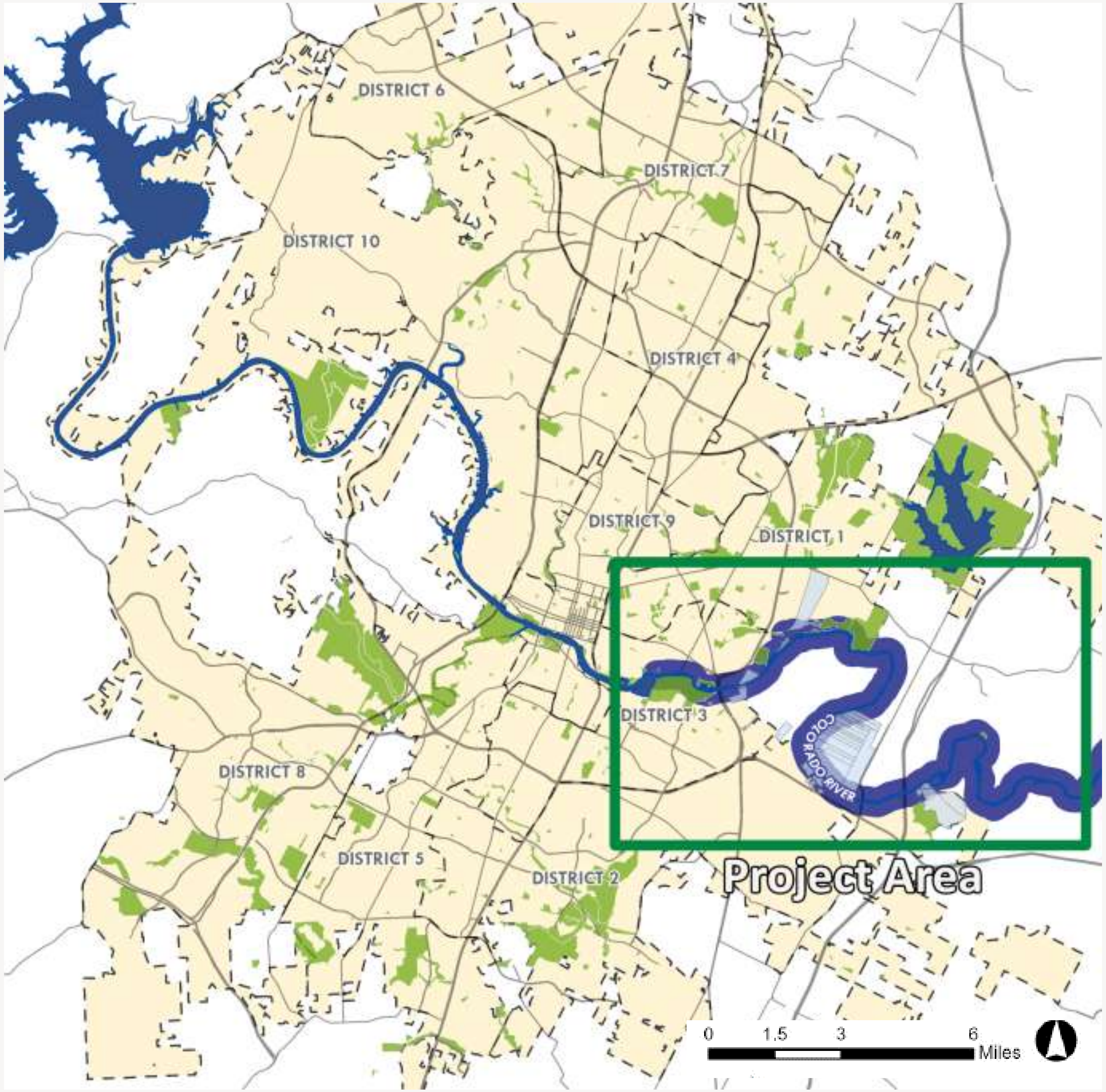
Colorado River Trail

- Acquisition of land, including publicly owned land, to dedicate as parkland to fulfill the Colorado River Corridor Vision Plan with a shared use trail
- [Colorado River Corridor Vision Plan](#) is a collaboration between Travis County and the City of Austin to coordinate regional and local planning efforts

City Limits

Publicly Owned Land

Colorado River Trail



Recreation Center

- Identify land for development of a Recreation Center in Southeast Austin
- Gap Analysis and Facility Assessment
  - 2024 assessment found that expanding recreation facilities into Southeast Austin would help fill a key gap in service and better meet the community's recreational and programmatic needs

Recreation Center Service Area

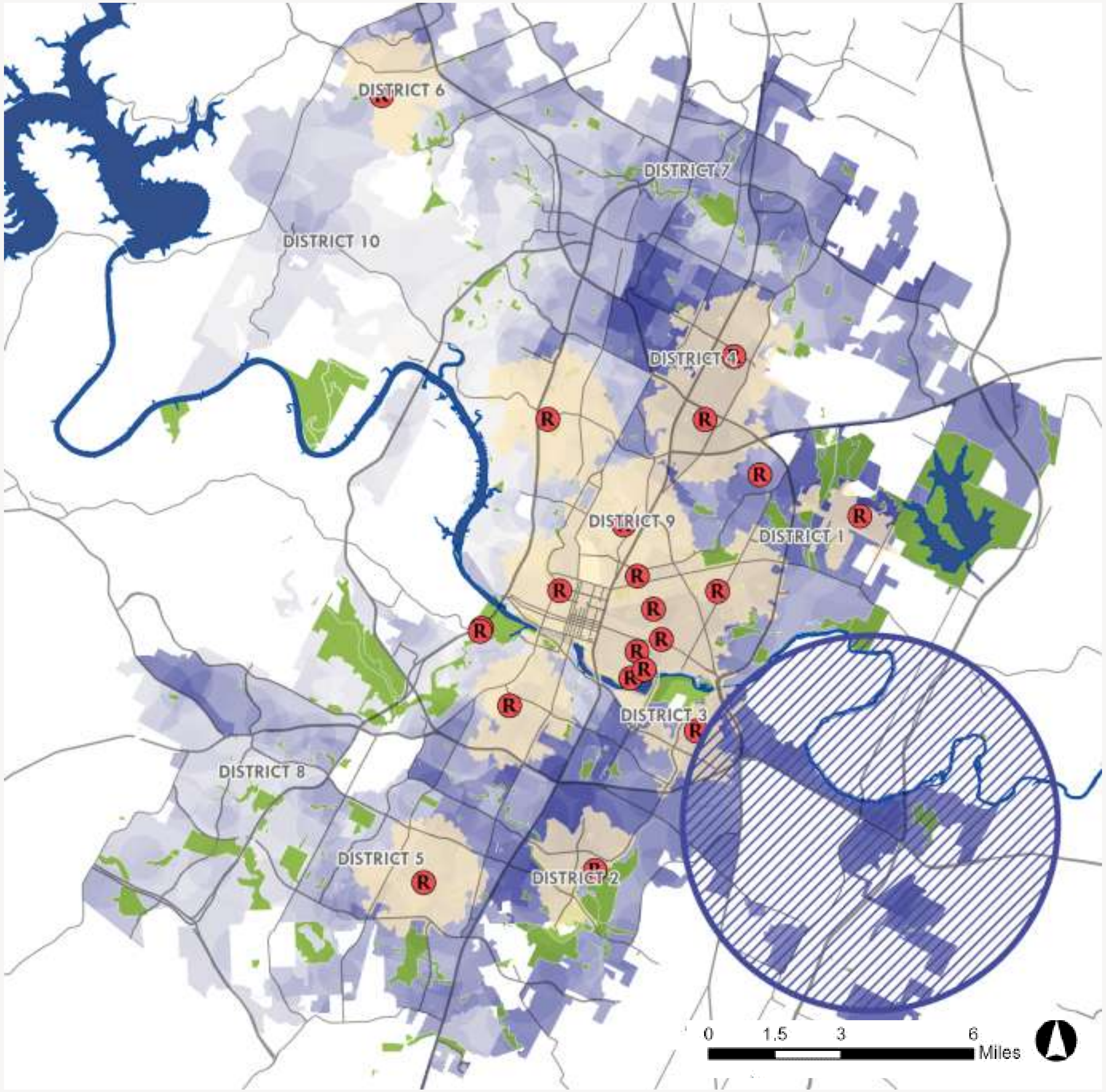
Existing Rec Center

Equity Priority Area

High

Low

Potential Rec Center Location



Anticipated 2026 Bond Impact

For every $100 million in acquisition funding, APR estimates:

+

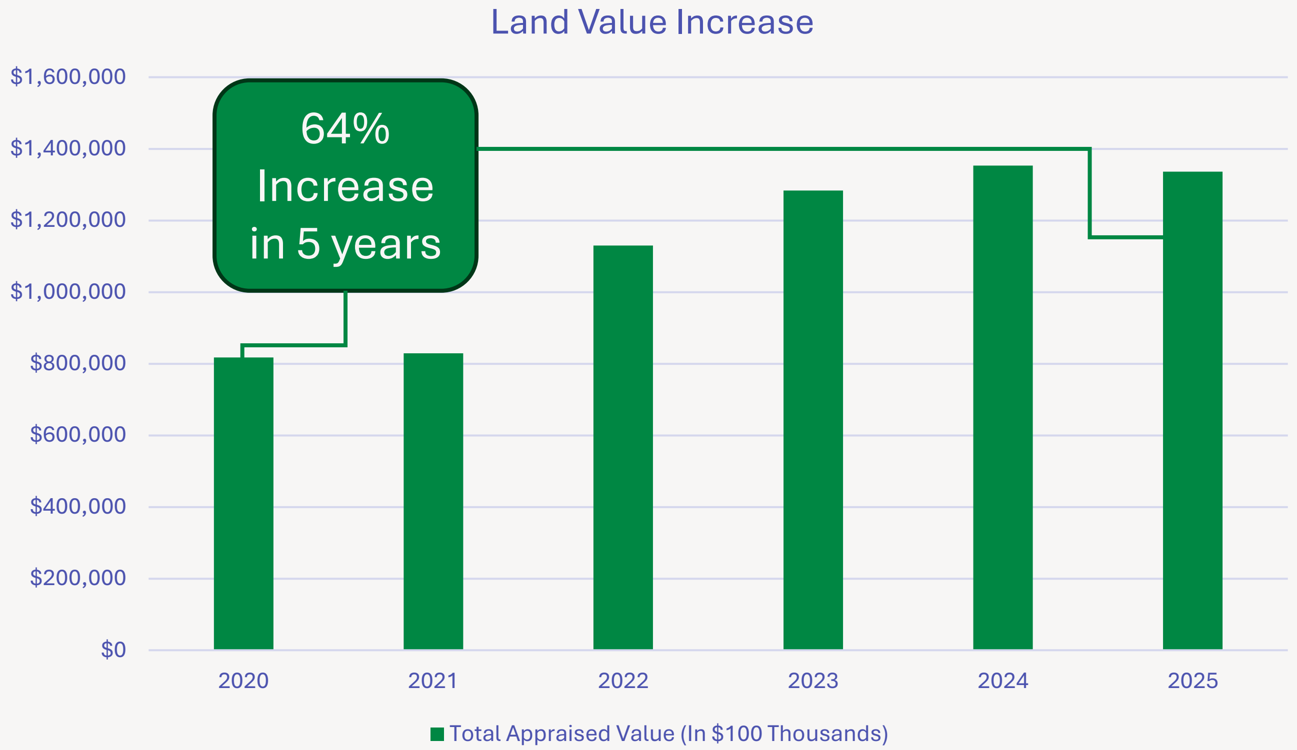
+

Additional **5-10%** of Austin served with parkland

Every $100 million invested in park acquisitions today, instead of in the future, **saves the public $150 million** over the next 10 years due to land value appreciation

Anticipated 2026 Bond Impact

Chart shows land value increase year over year based on total TCAD role for the City of Austin



Land value has increased an average of 10.34% each year over the last 5 years according to the Travis County Appraisal District (TCAD) Considering this increase, the $45 million 2018 bond for parkland acquisition is equivalent to approximately **$100 million** in 2026 dollars

Thank You