

# Austin Alive:

Mapping Place through Art and Culture



A Downtown Arts Development Study for Austin, Texas

2005 / 2007



## **Downtown Arts Development Study**

Planning occurred in 2005/2006

Study Report completed in 2007

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*The beauty of Austin today can be directly attributed to the foresight of earlier Austinites... the people who planted trees, built fine buildings, dedicated parkland, and insisted on a quality environment, had a vision of a better Austin. Without their collective images, the natural qualities of our city that we admire so much would have become quickly and easily lost forever. There is no way and no need for us to repay our predecessors here. Our obligation is to the future Austinites. We must create more images of a more beautiful Austin and dedicate ourselves to the fulfillment of that potential.*

The Austin Bicentennial Commission  
*Austin Creeks*



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## I. FOREWORD

*There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, (a work of art) or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named. The search which we make for this quality, in our own lives, is the central search of any person, and the crux of any individual person's story. It is the search for those moments and situations when we are most "Alive."*

Christopher Alexander  
*The Timeless Way of Building*

It was in 1838, when Mirabeau Lamar visited the small settlement of Waterloo to buffalo hunt that he saw the potential for the site of a vibrant city, the capital of the great Republic of Texas. Lamar was taken by the fresh water, ample building supplies and a natural topography whereby a Capitol Building could command an impressive presence atop a hill overlooking a beautiful view of the Colorado River and its surroundings. Edwin Waller was assigned the task of laying out the City and the first plots of land were auctioned off under the Live Oak trees in Republic Square to build the first public buildings. Austin was born. Since that time, leaders and community members have worked to create a vibrant City, a home for all its citizens and a distinctive destination for visitors. The Downtown is the heart of Austin and has often been touted as "the Living Room of the City." There have been numerous initiatives, plans and actions taken to develop Austin over time. It is hard to exactly pinpoint what kicked off the most recent magnitude of development and redevelopment initiatives and projects. Certainly one can go back even before 1990 when City and community leaders submitted a proposal to the AIA for a R/UDAT (Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team), a team of architects to study Austin and recommend strategies for developing a vibrant downtown. They returned in 1997 and 2000 to evaluate progress. This helped mobilize local support and foster new levels of cooperation. Other actions, plans and guidelines, such as the *Downtown Design Guidelines* and *The Great Streets Master Plan*, continued to come forward. The City put into motion major redevelopment in the southwestern quadrant of downtown, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Retail District, the public/private partnership with Computer Sciences Corporation and AMLI residential that helped to create a new City Hall, and the implementation of the *Great Streets Master Plan* prototype along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Other developers and entities have followed to create projects, buildings, and events that contribute to Austin's vibrant identity. The ***Downtown Arts Development Study***, continuing in this long line of work, is another piece of the puzzle in creating a vibrant downtown.

This *Downtown Arts Development Study* sets up a new way of thinking and talking about how the arts and culture of a community can be used as both urban building blocks and as major factors in the ongoing creation and sustainability of a culturally vital and economically prosperous city. This new thinking is drawn from current urban design and revitalization “place making” strategies and thinking, as well as art and culture “creative economy” strategies and thinking. In addition, the cultural development strategies that include the formalized art of cultural institutions and art history, the more informal community-based arts, and the popular culture of the commercial entertainment area are considered.

Both city and art agencies have become aware that cities can no longer rely on old thinking patterns as economic development strategies. What were once regarded as nice extras, the arts and city attractiveness are now considered prerequisites for placement in the international successful cities club. Talent above cash is now considered a city’s most valuable resource making a city’s arts and cultural offerings investments in its future economic viability. The most cutting edge cities not only foster, but seek out, the arts. They purposefully seek to develop a creative milieu in their urban centers by encouraging street life; adding a broad range of cultural facilities and urban events; attracting bohemians, tech geeks, and internationally diverse people; ensuring social equality and connection; blurring the boundaries between shopping, recreation, dining, learning and cultural experience; and buzzing such words and phrases as world-class, civic identity, rich community fabric, and cultural investment. But what exactly do they mean by “cultural?”

This *Downtown Arts Development Study* defines culture as any of the following:

- **Heritage, tradition and lifestyle.** This includes the historical, artistic, archaeological, anthropological, and social aspects of place.
- **“Language of place”.** This includes the city’s vernacular – the look of its built environment, its geography and landscape, and the ways it describes and sees itself.
- **Talent, innovation and creative pursuit.** This includes the city’s respect and support of creativity and innovation, and the talented change agents that continually push the city forward.
- **Entertainment and leisure.** This includes the city’s recreational and cultural offerings such as entertainment and food venues; libraries, literary, writing, publishing and artistic endeavors; media, film, television pursuits; museums,

theaters and performance facilities; parks, open spaces, wildlife and water environments; and sporting events, festivals, and parades, among others.

- **Diversity and social equality.** This includes the city’s tolerance and acceptance of people’s differences including ethnic, economic, political, and religious.

In order for cities to become alive and to remain vital, they must enter into a dialogue that includes all definitions of culture; and they must make a concerted and bold effort to market themselves through such activities as branding; seducing talent and innovation; and purposely developing a sense of place that is unique and above the mundane, yet true to itself.

Participants in the process of creating the *Downtown Arts Development Study* looked at the built environment to understand the multi-faceted ways the arts help “set the stage” for the dynamic cultural activities of the city – the everyday, special events, and public ritual – to occur. Participants also turned this notion around in an attempt to try to understand Austin’s cultural vitality in order to identify community strategies for the continual unfolding or “coming forth” of an authentic Austin that relies on its particular strengths and opportunities.

Through the process of working on the *Downtown Arts Development Study* participants continually pushed and questioned thinking about art and the urban environment. They recognized that a competitive city in today’s world must have a mix or diversity of cultural offerings. This includes the right mix of public art that creates Austin’s setting and supports both the urban design of a city, and the need of residents and visitors to find “meaning” in the city. It also includes cultural facilities, a vibrant street life, popular-culture participation, and community-based activities. This all adds up to a creative milieu that is a reflection of the Austin identity, supports the values held by its community, and creates an environment of creativity.

Grappling with these dynamic ideas the authors of the *Downtown Arts Development Study* sought a language that could be as alive and dynamic as this thinking and Austin itself. Some of the ideas are quite abstract. Like real life itself, the *Downtown Arts Development Study* attempts to describe the culturally vital experience one has of Austin as being a place that is “alive” in order to tease forth strategies for the continual unfolding of Austin. We have recognized that a city is always in the “state of becoming,” that a master plan should never be prescriptive, but that it should be dynamic. In order to fully embrace this notion, we recommend the reader have an image of this dynamic quality as though we have set Austin and these ideas in motion like a whirling world.

We invite the reader to take a journey through this particular city – to experience Austin as a participant, as an observer, and as a catalyst of place, and discover together what strategies Austin should implement in order to preserve and encourage its cultural vitality.

## II. INTRODUCTION

*As long as humans have dwelled on earth, we have found ways to make our places meaningful. The making of places – our homes, our neighborhoods, our places of work and play – not only changes and maintains the physical world of living; it also is a way we make our communities and connect with other people. In other words, placemaking is not just about the relationship of people to their places; it also creates relationships among people in places.*

Lynda H. Schneekloth and Robert G. Shibley  
*Placemaking, The Art and Practice of Building Communities*

### Overview

The City of Austin’s Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO) commissioned *Citi Arts* to develop a ***Downtown Arts Development Study*** that would examine and assess the arts as a vital contributor to the city’s downtown future growth and economic success. The overriding goal of the planning process was to identify a “framework, guidelines, and action plan for the arts that will contribute to creating a culturally dynamic downtown.” While this included public art as organizing urban design components and as aesthetic moments in the cityscape, and although previous Austin planning efforts recommended that the arts be an integral component of future city planning, they didn’t necessarily investigate the vital role the arts could play in bringing life, vibrancy and economic sustainability to Austin. In addition, EGRSO was seeking to review the histories and future planning of its *Civic Arts* and *Art in Public Places* Programs as a way to integrate the strengths of these two programs in the Cultural Arts Division newly formed in the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office.

### History

A number of events and activities converged over the course of a few years to cause the City leadership to call for a ***Downtown Arts Development Study***. The City of Austin was the first municipality in Texas to make a commitment to include works of art in construction projects when it established the *Art in Public Places* (AIPP) program in 1985. It is the stated intent of the Art in Public Places Ordinance to direct the inclusion of works of art in City construction projects

in order to expand the citizens' of Austin experience with visual art and enable them to better understand their communities and their individual lives. By encouraging artists capable of creating works of art in public places, the Art in Public Places Program strives to stimulate the vitality and economy of the City and enhance Austin's standing as a regional leader in the arts. Thus, it is the goal of the Art in Public Places Program to expend the percent funds on works of art and art projects of redeeming quality which advance public understanding of visual art and enhance the aesthetic quality of public places.

To commission of a broad range of works of art, reflective of the overall diversity of current works in the field of visual art – AIPP looks to the national model developed by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) to determine various categories of public art.

- **Discrete Object.** The traditional approach of placing stand-alone sculptures, murals or other artworks in public buildings, plazas, parks etc., as a means to beautify and humanize the environment.

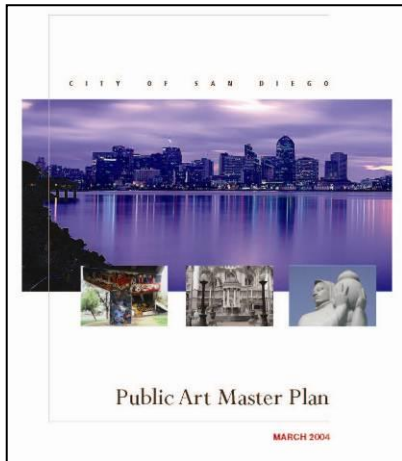


Roberto Behar & Rosario Marquard, Miami, Florida



Ned Kahn, Winterthur, Switzerland

- **Integration of Public Art and Architecture.** Artists work on design teams with architects, engineers, landscape architects and other professionals to create public projects that achieve the highest aesthetic innovation. This approach may result in artist-designed functional elements such as flooring, furniture, lighting etc. which are integrated into the project.



San Diego Public Art Master Plan by Jerry Allen

- **Master Planning.** Artists work with design professionals, policy makers and community groups to identify opportunities for the integration of public art into urban projects such as neighborhood redevelopment districts, parks, and civic plazas.

- **Urban Design/Placemaking.** Artwork projects that enhance a cityscape, creating a sense of place, or improving the design qualities of public infrastructure. Examples of such projects include artist designed freeway enhancements, bridges or parks.



Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois



Kurt Perschke, St. Louis, Missouri

- **Temporary Installations.** Non-permanent artworks that respond to a specific physical or social environment. Temporary projects can involve either a single artist or multiple artists responding to the same subject matter.



- **Arts and Community Development Program.** Artists working in communities to create public art projects that respond to the reality and integrity of those communities. (Artists working in social institutions, prisons, homeless shelter, with the elderly or youths.



Tre Arenz, St. Elmo Service Center, Austin, Texas

For over two decades, the AIPP Program has made it possible for talented artists of local and national renown to enhance public spaces throughout the city with works of art ranging from outdoor sculptures and murals to functional works integrated into architecture. Artists have successfully incorporated traditions, objects, and physical marks of community members to create cultural landmarks that have become cornerstones of community identity. In October 2002, after a six-month process of building support for these changes, the Austin City Council revised the AIPP Ordinance. They increased public art allocations from 1% to 2% of the construction costs for new and remodeled facilities (including the airport, convention center, libraries, parks, police stations, and recreation centers); they removed the \$200,000 cap (except for Water/Wastewater Facilities which maintains a \$300,000 cap); and they included street and streetscape improvement projects. All these changes positively impacted the program. Responding to the guidelines set forth in the *Great Streets Master Plan*, Art in Public Places has engaged in public art projects, which are integral components of the Great Streets Program, and which foster its values. To see the complete *Great Streets Master Plan*, please visit <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/greatstreets>.

In 2001, another program activity came into being in EGRSO. For several years there was growing community-wide and Council concern that with the major revitalization efforts occurring downtown, Austin might be losing aspects of the city that made it so unique, full of character and vitality, and a draw for people. EGRSO, at the time primarily an agency concerned with redevelopment of the downtown and the “Desired Development Zone,” responded to this



concern by implementing the *Austin Sense of Place and Cultural Identity* (ASPCI) program activity as part of their business plan. Its charge was to:

- Perform as a resource regarding Austin’s sense of place and cultural identity;
- Educate private and public entities on the value of the arts in economic development;
- Identify and implement strategies on how Austin’s sense of place and cultural identity can be used as a tool for economic development;
- Encourage and build partnerships between the arts and private and public entities;
- Identify and nurture Austin’s cultural traditions and artists;
- Participate in models of creation of vibrant public spaces to showcase urban amenities;
- Perform as liaison to developers and architects on civic art and design matters; and
- Identify and seek additional funds for art.

Staff began by building a foundation of downtown relationships and working on special projects. As part of its work, in June of 2002, ASPCI partnered with the Texas Commission on the Arts to lead a forum entitled “*Civic Art in Downtown Austin/Exploring Placemaking Possibilities.*” Over 100 downtown stakeholders convened for a day-and-a-half to discuss common purpose, tools and strategies for:

- Sustaining and enriching the Austin sense of place and identity;
- Identifying how art and artists can contribute to Austin’s distinct cultural expression in the meanings, uses, and forms of the City; and
- Identifying ways to support creative partnerships and collaborations working to create a dynamic Austin.

These were deemed important policy and economic development issues because Austin realized early on that a community’s distinctive nature and character, whether it is expressed in the built environment or as cultural activities, is an important identifying quality that adds a competitive advantage when people are looking to live, work, and visit a particular city. The decision to create a ***Downtown Arts Development Study*** was a direct product of this civic dialogue.

In 2002 two other evaluation and planning activities, *The Mayor’s Task Force on the Economy / Cultural Vitality and Creative Economy Subcommittee* and evaluation of the Cultural Funding Program in the Cultural Affairs Division of the Parks and Recreation Department,

created the political will to consolidate all the arts (except cultural facilities & arts education activities) and creative industries in EGRSO in spring 2003. *The Mayor's Task Force on the Economy / Cultural Vitality and Creative Economy Subcommittee* recognized the value of three T's principle – talent, technology and tolerance – in creating a dynamic city, proposed by Richard Florida, professor of regional economic development noted for his theories on creative economy. This brand new division in EGRSO brought together the Cultural Funding Programs; the Art in Public Places Program; Music, Film and Technology economic development; the newly renamed *Civic Arts Program* (formerly ASPCI), and the International Program. Its charge: “To nurture, preserve, and promote Austin’s arts and creative industries in order to strengthen & sustain Austin’s dynamic cultural vitality.”

Upon the consolidation of all programs and related staff in one location in September 2003, the Civic Arts Program and the Art in Public Places program were charged by department leadership to collaborate on the development of a ***Downtown Arts Development Study***. A national search for a consulting team to lead the planning process occurred and, in the fall of 2004, *Citi Arts*, a North Carolina-based public art and urban planning firm was awarded the contract.

## Goals

The planning process adhered to the following goals:

1. *Provide a framework, guidelines and action plan for the arts that will contribute to creating a culturally dynamic downtown.*

The consultant team performed the following tasks.

- i. Researched and reviewed writings by respected urban and arts professionals
- ii. Interviewed Austin citizens, artists, advisory committee members, arts patrons, civic and business leaders, and city staff and officials
- iii. Facilitated Advisory Group meetings
- iv. Facilitated an Artist Roundtable
- v. Held a community-wide Charrette

*2. Ground these recommendations in past and current downtown Austin planning initiatives and dreams for the future, to create and sustain a distinct and authentic Downtown Austin sense of place.*

The consultant team reviewed downtown reports, past and current planning documents and initiatives. The consultants listened carefully to the thoughts of participants at the charrette, in the artists' roundtable, and in interviews that collectively recommended a wide diversity of ideas and goals for art they hoped could be implemented now and in the future. A comprehensive list of plans and documents reviewed by the consultants is included in the bibliography and identified with an asterisk (\*).

The consultant team found several common threads in existing Austin plans:

- Identify **downtown** as a **focal point** for the community
- Create a **vibrant** and **culturally active** downtown experience
- Focus on a **pedestrian friendly** experience
- Ensure a **safe** downtown environment
- Foster **qualitative** versus quantitative architecture, **design** and urban development
- Use downtown as a community **gathering place**
- Seek public/private **partnerships**
- Ensure **economic vitality**
- Use civic art and public art to create “**place**” **distinction**
- Promote community **events** downtown
- Continue to develop downtown **cultural amenities**
- Foster **diversity** and **interaction** downtown
- Develop **useful** and **inviting** public spaces
- Reflect Austin's **unique character** and distinct “**sense of place**”
- Instill **community pride**
- Remember Austin's **historic roots**
- Promote **neighborhood** and mixed use development within Austin's downtown core
- Maintain and enhance downtown **recreation** amenities and activities
- **Enliven** public parks and squares
- Develop **great streets** and **sidewalks**
- Emphasize downtown **gateways**
- Ensure multimodal **connectivity** (pedestrian, bicycles, mass transit and automobiles)

## Process

The planning process included the following:

- Formation and coordination of an Advisory Group
- Research and database development
- Review and documentation of the study area
- Key person interviews
- Evaluation of the Civic Arts and Art in Public Places Programs
- Development of an Austin “Truth Exercise”
- Establishment of “Experience Layers”
- Facilitation of an Artist Roundtable
- Facilitation of a Community-wide Charrette
- Ongoing community activities
- Document research and writing
- An initial draft of the development study document
- The final development study document

## Downtown Austin Development Study

This *Downtown Arts Development Study* responds to the goals set forth for the planning process. It seeks to create a “vision” and thinking that will serve as a broader framework; it roots it in an “authentic” Austin; and it both unifies and guides the efforts of the Civic Arts and Art in Public Places programs. Every city has its own unique characteristics. The planning process and this document were specifically created for the “place” that is Austin, Texas. There is a romance to Austin that permeates all the senses. Capturing and maintaining this romance of “place” was a priority to the consultant team. Austin balances on the edge of a cultural revolution.

### III. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcome of the planning process revealed 42 recommendations for public art and cultural vitality. This section summarizes the recommendations for each downtown district (refer to *Section V: Mapping Place*), and is organized by categories or “systems.” The systems of **Natural Environment**, **Built Environment**, **Connectivity**, and **Cultural systems** are explored in *Section VI: Final Recommendations*. Each recommendation comes with a rationale, or reasoning behind the recommendation, and one or more strategies developed to implement the recommendation and strategy is also provided in *Section VI*.

DOWNTOWN ARTS DEVELOPMENT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY				
System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
<b>I. Natural Environment System</b>	<b>A. Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>	<i>1. It is recommended that an Art Park be developed at Town Lake Park and/or Downtown to include both permanent artworks and rotating temporary artworks and exhibits.</i>	Town Lake Park	96
		<i>2. It is recommended that, as the Southwest quadrant of Downtown continues to be developed, Republic Square be given special attention to continue to develop it into an active vibrant civic site.</i>	Warehouse District	97
		<i>3. It is recommended that the Cultural Arts Division become active in the revitalization of the Brush Square with an eye toward art in order to maximize the potential for cultural activities and public art as funds become available.</i>	Convention Center District	98
		<i>4. Wooldridge Park is the third and last square of the original four squares. The Cultural Arts Division shall be watchful of potential revitalization and cultural activity in order to maximize the potential for cultural vitality activity and public art.</i>	Civic District	99
		<i>5. It is recommended that Partner Stakeholders gather together and create a plan for cultural programming and integrated and discrete works of public art in Waterloo Park.</i>	Hospital District	99

System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
<b>I. Natural Environment System</b>	<b>A. Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>	<i>6. It is recommended that the Civic Arts work with Downtown Austin Alliance and be watchful of potential cultural activity that can occur in the smaller parks and open space (e.g. outdoor lunch plazas, etc.) in order to maximize the potential for cultural vitality activity and public art.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	100
	<b>B. Urban Water System &amp; Trails</b>	<i>7. It is recommended that Town Lake Park and Austin's creeks be recognized and highlighted as major and important features of the Austin landscape through the addition of temporary works of art and cultural programming that respect and honor their nature.</i>	Town Lake Park, downtown parks & Austin creeks	102
		<i>8. It is recommended that permanent works of public art be added to mark pedestrian entrances along the length of the Waller Creek hike and bike trail to aid with connectivity and tie the entire length of the Creek together.</i>	Hospital, Red River, E. 6th St., Convention Center, & Rainey Districts	103
		<i>9. It is recommended that the Shoal Creek trail be revitalized, and that entrances to the trail be created along Shoal Creek.</i>	Northwest, Market, West End, & Seaholm Districts	104
<b>II. Built Environment System</b>	<b>A. Civic Facilities</b>	<i>10. It is recommended that the City analyze the number, type, variety, location, and condition of cultural facilities available Downtown to determine a necessary course of action to address the health of facilities, to recommend any needed facilities, to understand location clusters for marketing, and to spark and inspire dialogue about Austin facilities.</i>	All Downtown Districts where cultural facilities are sited	106
	<b>B. Private Development</b>	<i>11. It is recommended that art and design be integrated throughout the downtown infrastructure including building and landscape design and that the City encourage private development partnerships to help make this happen.</i>	All Downtown Districts where private development occurs	108
	<b>C. Buildings &amp; Structures</b>	<i>12. It is recommended that wall treatments such as projections, lighting, digital artwork and murals, either temporary or permanent, be considered for prominent blank walls in downtown.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	109

System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
<b>II. Built Environment System</b>	<b>C. Buildings &amp; Structures</b>	<i>13. It is recommended that art treatments be added as part of fencing surrounding construction sites in order to mitigate the visual eyesore of the construction process.</i>	All Downtown Districts where major construction sites exist	111
		<i>14. It is recommended that the City, developers, and contractors utilize the resource of Austin architectural artisans and artists for the creation of architectural detailing and functional works.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	112
		<i>15. It is recommended that temporary or permanent artist designed shading devices be added to downtown buildings to guard against the summer heat and sun and encourage more pedestrian activity.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	112
	<b>D. Parking Lots &amp; Garages</b>	<i>16. It is recommended that artistically designed landscaping or other artist designed architectural features be integrated into expansive parking lots and garages throughout downtown to increase their attractiveness, orient users and provide a sense of safety.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts with parking lots & garages	114
		<i>17. It is recommended that permanent and temporary artworks or event programming take place in parking garages throughout downtown to increase their attractiveness, orient users and provide a sense of safety.</i>	All Downtown Districts where large parking garages occur	114
	<b>E. Vacant Lots &amp; Spaces</b>	<i>18. It is recommended that temporary artworks and temporary art programming occur in any open lots, spaces waiting for construction, and vacant retail windows in the downtown landscape.</i>	All Downtown Districts with open lots, spaces waiting for construction, & vacant retail windows	116
<b>III. Connectivity System</b>	<b>A. Streetscapes &amp; Corridors</b>	<i>19. It is recommended that artist designed signage, banners, or artworks that act as markers, be integrated into pedestrian corridors to help orient pedestrians and act as navigational landmarks.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	117

System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
<b>III. Connectivity System</b>	<b>A. Streetscapes &amp; Corridors</b>	<i>20. It is recommended that artists or artisans be involved in the integrated design of standard streetscape features along key downtown streets such as light poles, signage or markers, benches, trashcans, newspaper stands, pavers, and other streetscape infrastructure to enhance the pedestrian experience as outlined in the City's Great Streets Program.</i>	All Downtown Districts with Great Streets Program implementation	118
		<i>21. It is recommended that works of art be integrated into crosswalks, streets, and sidewalk paving throughout downtown with the intention of orienting and enhancing both the pedestrian and vehicular street crossing experience.</i>	All Downtown Districts with Great Streets Program implementation	119
		<i>22. It is recommended that the islands or medians in pedestrian crosswalks be artistically enhanced either through artist designed planting schemes or artworks to improve the downtown pedestrian and vehicular experience.</i>	All Downtown Districts with Great Streets Program implementation	120
		<i>23. It is recommended that interactive artworks such as sound works, digital works or other works be placed or integrated into major intersections and bus stops to engage both the pedestrian and vehicular experience.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	121
		<i>24. It is recommended that art be part of any City initiative to extend Red River to the Mexican American Cultural Center, connect Rainey to Sabine, and connect Red River to Holly Street.</i>	Rainey District	122
		<i>25. It is recommended that the whole downtown length of IH-35 between Downtown and East Austin should be investigated for opportunities to emphasize connections between the two areas. To that end it is recommended that the project for the underpass at 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets be supported and that the Rainey Street area capture the flavor of East Austin via Holly Street through both temporary and permanent public artworks.</i>	Gateways District	122



System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
<b>III. Connectivity System</b>	<b>B. Gateways</b>	26. <i>It is recommended that large or grand scale discrete artworks be sited at important gateways to mark entry/exit to downtown. These include: on the south are the bridges into downtown, on the east are the gateways through IH-35, on the west are 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and 12<sup>th</sup> and Enfield/15<sup>th</sup> Streets and on the north is Guadalupe and Congress Avenue/Speedway.</i>	Gateways District	124
		27. <i>It is recommended that artworks that function as streetscape elements, signage, or discrete works be placed at key areas throughout downtown to provide district or neighborhood distinction, define areas, or act as gateways between areas.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	125
	<b>C. Transit Systems</b>	28. <i>It is recommended that integrated and functional artworks be included at bus and Dillo stops, in or surrounding any new transit stations, the new commuter rail stations, and major Downtown transfer locations.</i>	All Downtown Districts where Capital Metro operates	126
<b>IV. Cultural System</b>	<b>A. History, Stories, &amp; Individual Expressions</b>	29. <i>It is recommended that an artistically designed heritage and history walk or trail be located in the downtown, which captures the rich history of Austin, invites tourism, and educates the public.</i>	All Downtown Districts	128
		30. <i>It is recommended that through the revitalization plans for Republic Square, a significant history component be facilitated.</i>	Warehouse District	130
		31. <i>It is recommended that artwork placed within the Rainey Street District reference the history of the area.</i>	Rainey District	130
		32. <i>It is recommended that the City, through its various programs including Art in Public Places and Civic Arts, make it possible for various stories to be showcased in a variety of ways.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	131
		33. <i>It is recommended that history and other stories use a variety of communication methods.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	132

System	Sub System	Recommendation	District	Page No.
IV. Cultural System	B. Everyday & Special Event Place Systems	34. <i>It is recommended that the City, and its various partners, shall continue to develop the downtown area as a focal point for the City and Region as a center of cultural vitality and promotion of “Downtown Austin is the community’s living room.”</i>	All Downtown Districts	133
		35. <i>It is recommended that the City nurture and strengthen those cultural places, institutions, businesses and initiatives with the power to attract people and businesses, define local or regional cultural heritage, draw tourists, and catalyze economic growth.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	134
		36. <i>It is recommended that Republic Square continue to be developed as a place for cultural activity including performance as the park is being revitalized; the Butler Ballet Austin Educational Center becomes active; and Austin Museum of Art opens in order to showcase the cultural richness of Austin.</i>	Warehouse District	135
		37. <i>It is recommended that the Rainey Street District become a cultural arts district through the development of arts programming, the attraction of arts facilities, and the development of a density of retail, galleries, restaurants, artist housing, and other arts services.</i>	Rainey District	135
	C. Community Systems	38. <i>It is recommended that additional locales downtown be identified for event activities.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	136
		39. <i>It is recommended that the City use its various programs and opportunities to grow artist entrepreneurs, for-profit creative industries, nonprofit arts and culture organizations, and ethnic cultural expressions in the Downtown.</i>	All appropriate Downtown Districts	137
		40. <i>It is recommended that the City identify and implement strategies to strengthen Austin’s cultural economic development.</i>	All Downtown	138
		41. <i>It is recommended that an artist live/work space be developed in Austin to raise the consciousness and awareness of the visual arts and to provide an obvious commitment on the part of decision makers to support visual artists.</i>	All Downtown Districts where opportunity occurs	139
		42. <i>It is recommended that the downtown aggressively market its cultural and arts facilities and events to strengthen the image of the arts and culture in Austin.</i>	All Downtown Districts where Cultural Facilities are sited	140

## IV. SETTING THE AUSTIN CONTEXT

*People are a city's most precious resource. Every structure built, every park cultivated, every landmark preserved is a reflection of a desire to improve our quality of life.*

R/UDAT Austin, "A Call to Action"

### In Search of a Living City

What makes certain places "live" while others don't? First, let's take a look at those that don't by imagining the following scenario.

*You anticipate your arrival to the city that is not yet known. You have brought along a map. You unfold the map. It contains a series of lines and dots – some lines thicker, some dots darker. You search among the lines and dots for your destination... you sit back and close your eyes. You try to imagine what is "inside" the lines and dots...*

*But you can't. This city is yet to be known to you.*

*So, you clear your mind. You decide to create a fresh palette, a utopia, a perfect place...*

*You imagine a city devoid of inhabitants. You walk down the middle of Main Street. You hear no sounds, no hustling and bustling of crowds, no auto horns. You see no activity. The streetlights change from red to green, but no one goes. Benches beckon, but no one sits. Sidewalks wait, but no one walks. Buildings tower, but no one looks up. Sculpture invites, but no one stops. You imagine this city is beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful city you've ever seen. You imagine it is clean and its design is pure. You imagine this city appears to offer you anything you desire, but yet it doesn't. You don't desire. You don't want.*

*You don't anticipate.*

*Although intangible, the qualities of the sterile and dead city leave you parched and uneasy...*

*And so you open your map again. You revisit the lines and dots, as well as your expectations and view of utopia. And you move on. You search for another city...*

In recent years, the most respected urban theorists have created criteria and charted examples for why certain cities are considered more desirable places to live and visit. But all seem to agree on two fundamental principles. *People are attracted to cities that are "alive" and culturally vibrant, and in turn, people are what make cities alive and culturally vibrant.* In his book, *The Creative City, A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, author and urban theorist Charles

Landry writes, “Cities have one crucial resource – their people. Human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources.” Landry and others believe that the new urban design views people and cities as interdependent, and the meaningful exchange between the two is the recipe for city vitality.

Chris Murray in his book, *Making Sense of Place: New Approaches to Place Marketing*, says “city distinctiveness only occurs when the special features and character of ‘place’ have been nurtured and used creatively to develop and promote it.” Murray believes that “the key to a different kind of place marketing lies in seeing places as living and lived entities, rather than as a set of facilities, landscapes or cityscapes.” He adds. “What makes a city truly interesting and worthy of a visit is its individuality and cultural richness, the things that make it a complete contrast to anywhere else.” Although he strongly believes in place distinction, he warns that cities should not try to duplicate the success of another, when that city’s distinction has nothing to do with their own. He calls for cities to plan culturally. “It is a process that comprehends the symbolic relationship between people and ‘place,’ people’s cultures shape places, develop industries and transform environments. Conversely, these factors can shape a culture.” As the artist Paul Klee said “art does not reproduce the visible, it makes visible.”

In their report, *The Richness of Cities, urban policy in a new landscape, Final Report, Comedia/DEMOS, London*, Worpole and Greenhalgh state, “Any form of urban planning is today, by definition, a form of cultural planning in its broadest sense, as it cannot but take into account people’s religious and linguistic identities, their cultural institutions and lifestyles, their modes of behaviour and aspirations, and the contribution they make towards the urban tapestry.” Murray summarizes.

Places are cultural entities. People gather to live, build cities, to play. Their activity generates a way of life, a culture, which it would be wrong to see as an incidental by-product of human activity. On the contrary, it is the central feature and reason for gathering in the first instance. Local identity, distinctiveness, sense of place and creativity are as essential to local economic renewal and vitality now as an available workforce and some natural mineral resources were one hundred years ago. At the threshold of the information age, creativity is what makes that information useful; without it, the information is a worthless mass. Regarding places as living cultural entities rather than inanimate machines, the localized culture and the creativity they contain become a fantastic resource.

In his *Center for Environmental Structure Series*, which includes *The Timeless Way of Building*, *A Pattern Language*, and *The Oregon Experiment*, Christopher Alexander presents a new theory of architecture, building and city planning that puts people at the core of design. He

summarizes, “There is one timeless way of building. It is thousands of years old, and the same today as it has always been. The great traditional buildings of the past, the villages and tents and temples in which man feels at home, have always been made by people who were very close to the center of this way.” Alexander’s theory is based on an exchange between people and place, but he adds another layer to this mix. He brings into the discussion something intangible, which he calls “the quality without a name.” He describes this quality as that moment of magic when a building, an artwork, a cultural event, a place causes a person to fully know themselves and feel fully alive. Thus “the quality without a name,” once experienced, becomes mysterious and seductive, something we want to experience over and over again, something for which we will continually search. In effect, once we have felt this magic we are spoiled. Any building, artwork, cultural event, place or city that doesn’t elicit that moment of self-knowledge leaves us empty.

We don’t desire. We don’t want. We don’t anticipate.

So we choose to be a part of the situations or live in the places that cause us to seek, to learn, to discover, to solve, to be seduced... to be fulfilled... to feel alive.

But once fulfilled, what else is there? What sustains the quality without a name?

According to Alexander, “every place is given its character by certain patterns of events that keep on happening there.” He elaborates.

The quality without a name is circular: it exists in us, when it exists in our buildings; and it only exists in our buildings, when we have it in ourselves. I mean this in the most general sense. Activities; events; forces; situations; lightning strikes; fish die; water flows; lovers quarrel; a cake burns; cats chase each other; a hummingbird sits outside my window; friends come by; my car breaks down; lovers reunion; children born; grandparents go broke... My life is made of episodes like this. The life of every person, animal, plant, creature, is made of similar episodes. The character of a place, then, is given to it by the episodes which happen there. Those of us who are concerned with buildings tend to forget too easily that all the life and soul of a place, all of our experiences there, depend not simply on the physical environment, but on the patterns of events which we experience there.

Alexander refers to patterns of events as languages. Just as each person is a product of their own set of circumstances, so are buildings and places made up of the various vernacular, or language of materials and people that created them. Patterns exist in layers beginning broadly with regions, towns, communities, neighborhoods, buildings and narrowing to rooms within buildings, gardens and paths, closets, the configuration of construction materials and finally finishing with details, color and ornament. The combination of these patterns forms a complex language that is specific to the place in which it exists. But just as that city you imagined earlier, a combination of patterns, even if beautiful and pure, does not necessarily create a *living*

*language. Alexander says, “A language is a living language only when each person in society, or in the town, has his own version of this language.”*

Let us revisit Alexander’s idea of the “quality without a name.” The quality without a name is that moment of magic, of feeling totally “alive,” that overcomes us on visits to certain cities or places, or in certain situations – a festival, an event, a work of public art, the sounds of the symphony in a park. These moments create a pattern of events, or a language of place. It is a place we recognize because of its patterns and its particular language. It is a place that might even be beautiful – its architecture striking, its sculpture grandiose, its parks lush and well manicured – and we may have even had moments of magic there, but what if these moments were fleeting? What if the original spark has become elusive? At first we hope it is just missing for the moment and that it will return, but then we realize we may never get it back. It may simply become a memory.

*And so we move on. We search for another city...*

### Characteristics of City that is “Alive”

*A city that is “Alive” contains a certain quality of presence that cannot be named:*

*a sense of freedom*

*a comfort and peace within itself*

*a breath of passion*

*a lack of fear*

*a total knowledge of its “truths”*

*A city that is alive invites this quality to come to life in its people at the same time that its people invite this quality to come to life in it.*

Christopher Alexander  
*The Timeless Way of Building*

Now let’s take a look at a city that is alive, or at least the qualities that contribute to its being alive. Throughout the planning process, the consultants interviewed individuals, held focus groups and worked closely with stakeholders. The following questions were posed:

- What are the qualities of a culturally vital and “alive” city?
- What makes Austin a culturally vital and “alive” city?
- How can Austin continue to recreate itself as a culturally vital and “alive” city?

The answers to these questions were as diverse and unique as Austin itself, but gradually a rhythm as rich as Austin’s music tradition began to emerge and a series of tangible characteristics became clear. These characteristics both informed the master planning process and answered that

all-important question. Why are certain cities considered to be more desirable places to live and visit? And although we fondly refer to them as the “*The Austin “Alive” Characteristics*” they can be applied to any city.

1. People, especially **creative people**, are the heart and soul of cities.
2. Cities that attract creative people are more likely to attract **new business** and foster **economic development**.
3. People want to move to or visit cities that are **open** and **accepting** of **differences** and **change**.
4. People are attracted to cities that contain a **mosaic of cultures**, cities that include people of every color and all ages.
5. People want to move to or visit cities that contain a “**sense of freedom**,” one that values and promotes their talent and creativity, and allows them to be who they are.
6. People want to move to or visit cities that are **comfortable** and at **peace** with themselves, that don’t try to be like other cities.
7. People want to move to or visit cities that contain a **breath of passion**; cities that offer experiences and moments of **pure magic**.
8. People want to move to or visit cities that have **no fear**, that allow daring, bold and unabashed creativity.
9. People want to move to or visit cities that have a total knowledge of and pride in their **truths**.
10. People want to live in cities that allow for an **even exchange between people and place**; cities that invite all the qualities within people to emerge at the same time that people invite all the qualities within the city to emerge.

## The Magic of Austin

*I want a city where the community values and rewards those who are different; where a community becomes more developed as it becomes more diverse; where “community” is a caring and sharing responsibility for the physical and spiritual condition of the living space. I want a city where people can cartwheel across pedestrian crossings without being arrested for playfulness; where everyone can paint the sidewalks...where there are places of stimulus and places of meditation; where there is music in public squares, street entertainers don’t have to have a portfolio and a permit, and street vendors coexist with shopkeepers...*

Leonie Sandercock  
Story and Sustainability  
*Dreaming the Sustainable City*

In order to define the characteristics that make a city alive, the tangible and the intangible qualities of place must be considered. When you are in the city, its tangible qualities surround and nurture you, but when you leave, its intangible qualities “live” in your memory.

Remember the uninhabited city that you left behind?

*...Imagine you enter another city. This one is filled with people of every color and all ages. You hear music when you walk down the street. A green light changes to red and some people stop their stroll while others continue their stroll against the light. A man dressed in a bikini pedals a shopping cart filled with assorted gadgets and unusual fare. He doesn’t mind that you stare at him. To the contrary, he engages you in conversation. A group of actors perform follies in a store window. A man in a business suit walks briskly by you while another with red spiked hair and tattered jeans runs toward the bus stop. A taxi sounds his horn as the man with tattered jeans crosses in front of him. You see an artist installing a sculpture and ask him what it’s about. He tells you it has nothing to do with this city’s past; it is about making its future. In the distance you see a mix of retail stores – a country music bar, a Mexican restaurant, a used clothing store, an art museum – and a collection of disparate situations – a street performer, a sculpture of a woman shooting a canon, a building that appears carved from earth’s rocks, a park that surrounds a large lake. All about you are runners, bikers, computer geeks, artists, writers, musicians, university students, educators and people in suits. You feel “alive” and part of something. You feel accepted. You didn’t know what this city would look like. But you know you are there...*

Austin, Texas inhabits a particular “place” in the earth and sky, which has shaped its collective intangible and tangible identity. Inside this physicality is a distinct interplay of local landscapes that includes diversity of people, cultures and local traditions. It is a landscape that has



been nourished, and one of which Austinites are proud. Austin honors its natural places like Lady Bird Lake and Barton Springs, and celebrates its local vernacular as told through its building types, styles, architectural details, and town form. Austin proudly engages in the everyday activities of her downtown commerce, and the special events of her civic spirit.

Though people recognized the unique character of what was to become Austin long before, it wasn't until President Mirabeau Lamar instructed Edwin Waller to create a new city out of the wilderness in 1839 that Austin, the State Capital of Texas, was born. People can no longer see the once rich prairie, nor refresh themselves with water from the springs that once emanated from areas around Congress Avenue, yet still visible is the setting that receives downtown Austin and the grid that Waller laid out. From the northern point one can stand on the hill with the State Capitol building and almost see the downtown held in an embrace by her two creeks, Shoal Creek and Waller Creek. From there one can also see the Colorado River, recently renamed Lady Bird Lake (formerly called Town Lake), as it flows through the city, rich with her green banks that are enjoyed by many. Still visible today, this setting expresses what Austinites hold valuable. In the continuum of seasonal change, redbuds bloom and torrents of rain can fall in the spring. Summer heat scorches everything to the bone while bats take flight in the warm evenings. Red Oaks change coats in the fall as Blue Northerns turn the sky a clear blue and temperatures drop twenty-five degrees in a half hour. And fickle winter either whistles her cold winds down Congress Avenue or provides a warm balmy blanket.

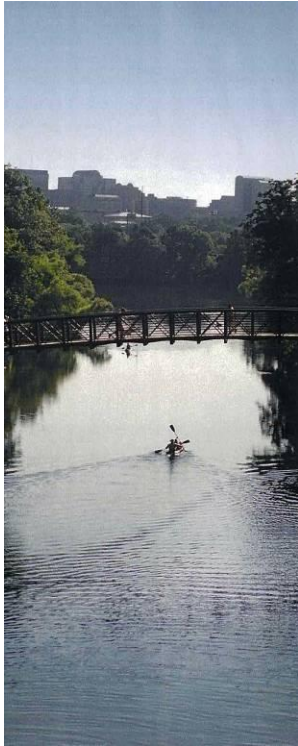


Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

Whatever the season, the downtown language expresses the values of the people who choose to inhabit the place that is Austin. It is a marketplace where ideas and commodities are exchanged. The influx of high technology in the 1980s provides interesting contrast against the natural environment. The unique character of Austin strengthens its economic development and competitive edge in the marketplace. Buildings are made of many of the natural resources available in the Central Texas region – limestone and granite – and their architectural ornamentation tell stories of other times, and provide clues to the first of the three pillars of Austin's economy – government and state policy making. Great streets such as Congress Avenue provide long wide views looking both north and south. Benches invite travelers to rest or wait, and cultural institutions invite them to pause.

Austinites themselves are a diverse people – Hispanic, Black, Asian, White, Native American, and all in-between. They are defined by both what they have in common and what they don't. They are eager to contest one another's beliefs because they understand that no single set of ideas is privileged over others and no one method can satisfy the needs of a diverse people. It is this quality that gives Austin its particular democracy and its dynamic, healthy character. It is this quality that teaches tolerance, a lesson all Austinites know well.

Engagement in both everyday activities and special events keep Austin's distinct character alive. There are such everyday activities as walking from the State Capitol Building down Congress Avenue and along E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, or enjoying a business meeting at a restaurant with outside seating. Special events such as Dia de los Muertos parade down E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Rodeo Parade down Congress Avenue, Rock Concerts at 6<sup>th</sup> and Brazos Streets, Hoop-it-up Contests along 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Pecan Street Festival, and Fourth of July Festivities with the Symphony in Zilker Park abound.

Just outside Downtown, The University of Texas at Austin (UT) looms proudly on approximately 350 acres in the heart of Central Austin, exemplifying the second pillar of Austin's economy – education. Considered “one of the coolest places to live, work, study and play,” UT provides Austin with much of its youthful energy, while bolstering its reputation as one of the country's hippest smaller cities. With over 50,000 students, UT is a hotbed for intellectuals, it has a renowned research center, and it offers a rich variety of artistic, educational and sporting events to both students and Austin citizens alike. In keeping with Austin's love of all that is green and beautiful, UT is nestled among shade trees, sculptures, and fountains by world-class artists, architectural wonders and the 27-story UT Tower, a landmark for the entire city. As a nationally significant institute of higher learning, UT is also a strong contributor to Austin and Central Texas' economic development.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

Texas's “spirit of adventure” emerged in the technology field and venture capital has played a big role. The home-grown and entrepreneurial spirit that Austin has exhibited since its founding in the 1800's continues today in the form of high-tech gurus such as Michael Dell who founded Dell Computers out of his UT dorm room. Just as the oil wildcatters of earlier decades enhanced the Texas and Austin mystique as a “hotbed of fiercely independent risk-takers,” the

high-tech industry and software development has become Austin's current new breed of prospectors, and makes up the third pillar of Austin's economy.

The spirit of entrepreneurialism is apparent in Austin in others ways as well. The amount of small business is shown everywhere in galleries, restaurants, independent bookstores and eclectic establishments. "Keep Austin Weird," the small business established motto, has a subtitle beneath it that says, "Support Small Businesses." Some of the most notable of Austin's entrepreneurial establishments include Amy's Ice Cream, Jo's, Book People, Antone's "Home of the Blues", Red-Eyed Fly, Whole Foods, and Stubb's Bar-B-Que, among others.

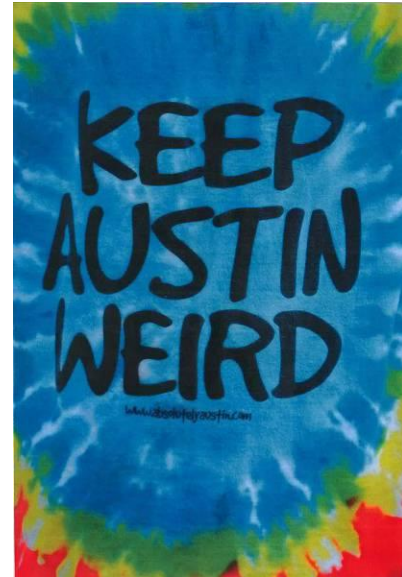


Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

But most of all, Austin is known for its music scene. It boasts itself as having the "hottest live music scene in the country." Austin rocks day and night and offers such diverse music styles as blues, country, jazz, folk, punk, bluegrass, alternative, Tejano, rock and roll and Texas hybrids.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

Called the "Mecca for musical mavericks" in 1998 by *Billboard* magazine, Austin is renowned for its unique brand of original music and attracting top notch performers who would rather live and play in Austin that "bend to the prevailing winds of musical fashion elsewhere."

Austinites also have a love for all that is "green." Austin is a city of trees and plants. From its live oaks, pecans and cedar elms to its rosebuds, Austin loves its natural landscape. City ordinance precludes cutting down trees of a certain diameter, and wildflowers, native plants and grasses are an integral part of the landscape. With the spring comes a color palette that resembles a Monet painting. Bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and wild grasses spurt up along the roads and freeways, and continue to bloom through summer and into fall. In keeping with the state of Texas, Austinites love

their wildflowers. As testament to this love, Lady Bird Johnson created a Wildflower Center in Southwest Austin and went on a personal crusade to save American wildflowers.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

Austin also is home to creeks, rivers and natural springs. Barton Springs is a spring-fed natural swimming pool that sits in the heart of the city's large downtown greenbelt, Zilker Park.

The largest urban colony of Mexican Freetail Bats lives under the Congress Avenue Bridge spring through fall. Their nightly flight in search of bug dinners draws crowds to the shores of Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin. Highland Lakes to the west of the city is a chain of artificial lakes that stretch more than 150 miles, encompass 56,000 acres of water, and offer 700 miles of shoreline, making up the greatest concentration of fresh water in Texas. The network of lake and state parks, county and city parks, plus nature preserves and green belts surround Austin and provide green havens within the city limits.

*And yes, when you are in Austin, you know you are there...*

### Austin's Truths

You know you're in Austin if...

1. You mourn "the old Austin" even if you weren't there to experience it.
2. Your music collection contains CDs from bands no one outside South Austin has ever heard of.
3. You've eaten a hamburger at the original Hut's.
4. You're registered to vote, have firm opinions about candidates, but have never actually cast a vote on election day.
5. You have bared buns at Hippie Hollow before they charged an entrance fee.
6. You say you're from Austin rather than Texas.
7. You have lost sleep over the fate of the endangered Barton Springs Salamander.
8. You think Willie Nelson should be president.

Kinky Friedman  
*The Great Psychedelic Armadillo Picnic*

Every city has its own particular truths – the people, places, events and stories that distinguish it from other cities, and which contribute to its character and sense of place. Unless the city's residents are totally aware of its truths, the city itself may lack the even exchange between people and place that fuels its "life" – that makes tourists visit it, and holds it as a legend in the minds of people who haven't even been to it. In many respects, the idea of city as icon, as

legendary or known beyond itself, or even as caricature of itself, is one of the most commonly shared characteristics of a living city. New York, Paris, San Francisco, Las Angeles, London, Venice, Rome, Austin – all cities whose truths precede them.

A conversation between an Austinite and a Never Been to Austinite generally goes something like this:

Never Been to Austinite: *Where are you from?*

Austinite: *Austin, Texas.*

Never Been to Austinite: *Austin, Texas? I've never been there, but I hear it's really cool and has a really hot live music scent.*

Austinite: Nods politely.

What else are they going to do? They are part of this or a similar conversation so often that if they don't turn off all facial expression and give the polite nod, they might say exactly what's on their mind, which is most likely something contrary. Austinites pride themselves on being contrary. But they also know that some people don't necessarily understand the benefits of being contrary, so when talking to Never Been to Austinites, they generally turn on the other qualities they pride themselves on – sophistication and friendliness. After all, at least the Never Been to Austinite was smart enough to know that Austin was a cool city with a hot live music scene, even if they didn't know that Austin is not just a cool city, it is the *only* city to live and work in. Austinites are also accepting and forgiving, and just a bit snooty, at least where pride in their city is concerned.

Author and urbanist, Richard Florida, postulates that those cities that are alive and vital have three qualities, which he refers to as the three T's principle – Technology, Talent and Tolerance. By Florida's standards, Austin is a thriving city. It is a technology center, it is filled with talented people, and it is the epitome of tolerant, so tolerant in fact that it has been coined, "terminally democratic," and proudly wears the mantra, "Keep Austin Weird." Weird meaning supportive of the unique, the entrepreneurial, and the diverse. But the consultant team would humbly add another T to the three T's principle – Truths. Because truths, which are not only realized by residents, but which are bigger than the city itself, are not easily created or marketed. They just are. And that is Austin. It just is.

So what are Austin's truths? Well, entrepreneurialism for one thing. Small business thrives in Austin, even a small business of one. Entertainers, musicians and writers find space



to create and venues to share their gifts in Austin. Chain stores and restaurants take a second seat to entrepreneurial businesses in Austin. The search for establishments, situations and events that are uniquely “Austin” is a mainstay, not a pastime. It is as much a part of Austin’s culture as are cowboy boots, environmentalists, and music. But contrary (there’s that word again) to other cities who speak of supporting environmentalism or the arts, Austin doesn’t speak about support of these qualities, it simply lives and breathes them, kind of like when you get your mail everyday.

Austin gets good press and has been touted by numerous magazines as the “top place to live.” Often called laid back, some unknown person referred to Austin as the “city where you can get by with one or two pair of pantyhose a year or keep your tie rack in the back of the closet.” Former Mayor Kirk Watson described Austin this way. “Austin is a city of boots and suits, hippies and nerds, all in the boardroom...a city that allows almost ironic contradictions – at the same time we boast that we are the Live Music Capital of the World, we also boast that we are Silicon Hills.”

Getting back to that word, contradiction, Austin has several. It is laid back, but on the high-tech cutting edge. It cherishes the past, but charts the future. It embraces the future, yet looks longingly at the past. It enjoys the cosmopolitan, yet continuously seeks the authentic. According to one former mayor, “each new Austinite thinks they got here just in time to enjoy the real Austin.”

Austin is a mecca for musicians, moviemakers, software engineers, hardware wizards, entrepreneurs, investors, artists, artisans, intellectuals, teachers, political activists, environmentalists, and lots of hardworking everyday Texans who labor to make the city flourish. Although more than a million people call themselves Austinites, there is still a neighborly feel about Austin and notion that much that goes on is authentic. Austinites like to use the term “home-grown,” whether a home-grown business such as Dell Computer, Whole Foods Market, Book People and Armadillo



Photos courtesy of DADS Advisor

Christmas Bazaar; homegrown restaurants such as Threadgill's, Jeffrey's, the Broken Spoke, Amy's Ice Cream, Jo's Coffee House and the Continental Club; entertainment venues such as Esther's Follies. Austin prides itself on its small business savvy, entrepreneurial spirit and unique atmosphere. Although there are chain restaurants and businesses in Austin, they often lose their place among street fronts filled with authentic Austin establishments.

Austin is truly a great place to live and work. It is accepting of everyone and everything. And amazingly enough, despite all of its great attributes and unique establishments, Austin has avoided being labeled as a tourist town. Relatively free of the usual tourist attractions, visitors to Austin generally find themselves blending in with the locals, probably because it doesn't take long to know the city's larger truths. In summary,

- Austin is “weird,” but in a good way, weird meaning unique, diverse, unusual, authentic, true to itself, supportive of its entrepreneurial business, and proud of its contradictions.
- Austin does have a history, as all cities do, but there is disagreement as to whether Austin's history is important or has any bearing on its future.
- Austin has a diverse population, and this diversity contributes to the city's economic success.
- Austin's geography is lush and rich and its citizens value its green space, plants, trees, lakes, rivers, creeks and natural springs.
- Austin's weather is generally mild, making it a desirable climate in which to live and work.
- Austin has the hottest live music scene in the country.
- The arts, although they haven't earned equal billing with the music scene, are considered important to the city's economic viability, lend cultural dimension and make the city an inviting place to live.
- Education, government and technology are the three primary economic engines in Austin.
- Austin, like other fast growing cities, both recognizes the benefits and pitfalls of growth and is therefore conscientious regarding future planning efforts.
- Austin is well known for being a liberal city that invites its citizens to speak their mind.
- Austin's “terminally democratic” nature makes for a city that is highly inclusive, which can at times lead to lengthy but involved decision-making.





## V. MAPPING PLACE

*In order to provide an absolutely firm foundation to our discussion of cities, and of urban sociology, we must have a full and complete appreciation of the notion of place. Here we do not simply refer to physical places that present themselves to us, as viewers and listeners, as buildings and monuments and streets, for example. We mean the very idea of place, of something so fundamental that it furnishes not only the bases for our sense of cities but also for our very perceptions of other things in general.*

Anthony M. Orum and Xiangming Chen  
*The World of Cities*

### The Charrette



From left to right: charrette participants John Patterson, Kathie Tovo, & Robyn Turner

The consultant team led a daylong charrette. The goals of the charrette were as follows:

- Define the **unique character** of downtown Austin by identifying existing district contexts, uses and happenings
- Consider whether particular downtown districts or areas within those districts should have a **distinct “theme”** or use
- Identify types of **cultural events, festivals** and **“scenes”** that can happen in downtown Austin and the places they might occur
- Identify potential areas and places for **permanent artworks**
- Identify potential areas and places for **temporary artworks**

Because this plan is considered a framework rather than a roadmap, charrette participants were asked to think broadly and thematically about their district rather than prescriptively. For purposes of the charrette, the participants were asked to distinguish between civic arts and public art. **Civic Arts** was defined as the broader canvas of the arts including festivals, events, cultural facilities, theater, dance, performance, and scenes, among others. **Public Art** was defined as the physical and social site specific works of art added or integrated into public places and spaces that involve a dialogue between the artist and community during their creation. On conclusion of the breakout sessions, each group presented their thoughts to the entire group.

Maps identifying downtown districts were produced specifically for the ***Downtown Arts Development Study***. Although, these districts are somewhat true, they are nonetheless not officially sanctioned by the City of Austin at this time.

It is important to note, however, that the selection and determination of these boundaries was done through careful and conscientious thinking and study on the part of the consultant team. The consultant team identified fourteen districts, in which some were combined for planning purposes. Eight summary areas, or “districts,” resulted. These include Congress Avenue, East 6<sup>th</sup>/Red River, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse, Convention Center, Market/West End/Seaholm, Civic/Uptown, Northeast/Hospital, and Rainey. In addition, the major gateways into downtown are represented as a summary area; South Austin and East Austin were considered, but not studied. The maps referenced various landmarks, cultural facilities and public art within the districts. Participants were asked to write and draw their thoughts all over the maps with bright markers.



Charrette participant James Amos

Participants were led through an exercise to explore **Experience Layers** – the way people move, travel through and experience the city – as a means to focus people toward thinking of the relationship between the experiential point of view and the success of artworks in the city environment.

## Experience Layers

*Life is a continuous flow of experience; each act or moment of time is preceded by a previous experience and becomes the threshold for the experience to come.*

Edmund N. Bacon  
*Design of Cities*

The charrette process considered seven different ways the city is experienced by people. These include walking, riding, waiting, gathering, living, working and playing. Participants were urged to consider these experiences as “layers” that happen individually and simultaneously in the city. By considering these layers of experience, participants could recognize that the arts must work on various levels to ensure success.

- **Walking Experience.** The walking experience includes all types of movement from place to place that takes place on foot. This would include walking or hiking on paths, walkways, sidewalks, trails, crosswalks and pedestrian bridges or other forms of connectivity. In addition, this would also encompass wheelchair users. The walking experience, like the riding journey is about transit from place to place. Both involve all issues related to a positive and user friendly transit experience including orientation, wayfinding, “place” marking, transition marking, safety and comfort as special considerations. However, the experience has different visual and time orientations and scales than the riding journey.
- **Riding Experience.** The riding experience includes all type of movement that includes “not” foot to pavement motion (other than wheelchairs) including automobiles, bicycles, autos, buses, and trains. In the case of a bicycle, the riding journey could occur on trails, paths and walkways, but in general the riding journey being addressed here would occur on roadways, bridges, tunnels and tracks. Similar to the pedestrian experience, the riding journey is about movement, but in the case of the riding experience, visual reality occurs at a broader scale and faster pace. With the exception of bicycles, the auditory and sensory experiences of this experience are either limited or entirely removed. The speed of transit and the preoccupation of the auto, bus or train driver to concentrate on driving safely and hastily to their destination limit their visual focus. Visual focus is somewhat broader for the vehicular passengers, but is still limited by the speed of the machine. In

addition, heat, air conditioning, music, and in some cases movies, place even riders in their own world of encapsulation.

- **Waiting Experience.** The waiting experience includes all types of pedestrian “brief pause” experiences such as waiting for a bus or train at a transit stop, waiting at an intersection to cross or waiting in line to get lunch from a street vendor. Depending on what or who someone is waiting for, the waiting experience can be accompanied by many and diverse emotions – anticipation, hope, worry, fear, boredom and impatience. Because the waiting experience is generally time specific and beyond individual control, activities such as reading a book, playing a game, participating in an activity or catching up on work are usually difficult to undertake. The waiting experience provides an opportunity for experiences that, although brief, are viewed or engaged by a captive audience.
- **Gathering Experience.** The gathering experience includes all types of pedestrian “long pause” experiences such as meeting in a seating area for lunch, meeting someone at a specified location, stopping to listen to or watch a street performer, or sitting on a park bench to read a book. While the waiting journey is characterized by brief or more benign experiences, the gathering experience allows for open-ended experiences. Because people generally choose to spend time in city parks, urban parks, and other social areas, they are not as restricted by time or mental state. Several forms of activity occur in gathering areas from engaging in social activities to finding a space to enjoy respite and pause from daily routine.
- **Living Experience.** The living experience includes the daily routine movement from place to place of a downtown resident such as walking to work, walking to the market or walking back home. Although it could include other forms of transportation such as the bicycle or automobile, the focus of this particular experience has more to do with the duo use of the city – city user and city resident. It also considers the different types of neighborhood environments that the user resides in such as a downtown apartment or condo, a defined neighborhood located either adjacent to or inside the city, or a mixed-use development.

- **Working Experience.** The working experience includes the daily routine movement from home to work and work to home of someone who lives outside the city, yet works downtown. It also includes movement from workplace to lunch and back. Transit from place to place could occur in a number of ways such as walking (in the case of lunch) bicycle, automobile, bus or train, but this particular experience has more to do with the repetition and monotony of repeating a pattern of movement at least five days a week. Because routine and repetition is inherent in the working travel experience, drivers or riders are generally either on auto pilot or so familiar with their particular landscape that the surroundings become lost amongst the visual landscape clutter.
- **Playing Experience.** The playing journey includes all those movements from place to place that are done with a specific enjoyment purpose in mind. These include purposely going to the city to listen to music, enjoy nightlife, experience various entertainment venues or cultural facilities, attend sporting events, and enjoy festivals, shop, exercise or any other impromptu or serendipitous experiences that are considered play.



## District Characteristics

*Landscape is loud with dialogue, with story lines that connect a place and its dwellers.*

Anne Whiston Spira  
*The Language of Landscape*

The study area includes the Austin City Core, Central Business District, and Public Improvement District managed by Downtown Austin Alliance. The Central Downtown area encompasses the original City of Austin plat laid out in 1838 plus rings of differing land uses radiating outward in all directions. For purposes of this plan, the downtown boundaries include Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard (MLK) to the north, Lamar Boulevard to the west, Riverside Drive/Barton Springs Road to the south, and both sides of IH-35 to the east. Additional working zones, or “fingers,” include East Austin and South Austin. As previously indicated, these areas were considered rather than studied for the plan.

Each district is described in terms of the following categories:

- **Boundaries** - The parameters of the district as created by the consultant team.
- **Physical character** - The buildings, landscape and other features contained within the district.
- **Experience Layers** - The way the district is currently experienced by people.
- **Historic landmarks and “ghosts”** - Historic places and buildings that are still within the district, even if they have a different use, and the places that are no longer there, but still exist in peoples’ memories.
- **Cultural Facilities** - The buildings and places that sponsor or hold cultural happenings.
- **Cultural Events** - The cultural event places within the districts.
- **Public Art** - Public art commissioned by the City of Austin and outside sources.
- **Emerging Projects** - Projects, which are planned for the future, including private and city development, and that contribute to the cultural vitality of the district. These have been drawn from the City of Austin Downtown website and are subject to changing frequently. Please access <http://www.cityofaustin.org/downtown> for updates.





## *Congress Avenue District*

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the Congress Avenue District are 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Cesar Chavez (Lady Bird Lake) to the south, Colorado Street to the east and Brazos Street to the west. While not within these boundaries, the Capitol Complex just to the north is a focal point for Congress Avenue and the entire downtown.

### **Physical Character**

The overall character of the Congress Avenue District is civic. Much of the historic buildings have been preserved, and these coupled with new architecture create a feeling of old world solidity and strength combined with new world commerce and business. Congress Avenue is the main street of Austin *and* the State of Texas. It is the grand, wide avenue following the downtown terrain's gentle rise from the Colorado River/Lady Bird Lake up to the hill that proudly supports the Texas State Capital Building. The Capitol building commands a presence and dominance as the key focal point for all of Downtown. Copying the United States Capitol building in Washington D.C. (but building it a bit taller and making it out of local granite from Marble Falls), the Texas State Capitol building and complex, along with its star-studded wrought iron fencing and numerous figurative memorial bronze sculptures, gives Congress Avenue a formal "federal feel." This architectural style was reinforced all along Congress Avenue in the 1980s when the streetscape was given a face lift that included wider sidewalks, angled parking, trees, granite pavers, benches and planters.

Several streets cross Congress Avenue. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the major intersection, was historically the east and south entrance into the City from Houston in the early days of Austin. Today it marks the entrance to East 6<sup>th</sup> Street and one of the downtown entertainment districts. Cesar Chavez, originally called Water Street, sits at the foot of Congress Avenue along the north shore of Lady Bird Lake. Second and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets round out Congress Avenue's major intersections.

### **Experience Layers**

The grand boulevard and wide sweeping street that leads to the state capital is quite dramatic and pleasing when viewed from an automobile or other riding mode of transit. During the heat of the summer the walking experience is difficult. In the past,

awnings served to invite walking. Although sidewalks are wide and inviting to pedestrians, at night there is a lack of activity and density, making walking somewhat uncomfortable. Because Congress Avenue is often the site for temporary events and festivals, walking becomes a much more desirable experience mode during these times. Waiting occurs at streetlights, intersections and bus stops. Gathering experiences are currently not available on Congress Avenue. Little City, a coffee shop, has a few tables and chairs affording a place to gather between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. Offices and government buildings exist creating walking, riding and waiting experiences regardless of choice or comfort. The playing experience is most successful during festivals and events, although there are restaurants and limited retail on Congress Avenue. Likewise, cultural facilities located within walking distance of each other, contribute to the walking experience.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

Congress Avenue itself and the State Capital Building are the most important historical features in the City of Austin. There are also many 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings and historic architectural features along the avenue.

### **Cultural Facilities**

Congress Avenue is home to some of Austin’s most prestigious cultural facilities and venues – The Austin Museum of Art, Arthouse at Jones Center for Contemporary Art, State Theater, Paramount Theater, Mexic-Arte Museum, La Pena Gallery, The Hideout Theater, numerous fine art galleries and numerous restaurants.



Photos courtesy of DADS Advisor

Lining Congress Ave are many historical buildings including the Paramount Theater, the Littlefield Building, the recently historically renovated Stephen F. Austin Hotel, and other 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. Modern skyscrapers contribute to Downtown's character as a contemporary, traditional place of commerce and business.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

### **Cultural Events**

Congress Avenue is the site for Austin's (and Texas at times) major parades – Thanksgiving Parade, political parades, Boy Scouts of America parade and the infamous Art Car Parade, to name a few. It has also been the backdrop for temporary stages. To mark the Millennium, a major stage was erected at the intersection of Congress Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and a stage was erected at Congress Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street for Texas Governor George W. Bush's Presidential celebration. A banner program, which is facilitated by the Austin Convention and Visitor's Bureau (ACVB) and other community organizations, utilizes the light poles to celebrate various events such as Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo and the Austin City Limits Festival. The Downtown Austin Alliance sponsors a traditional Congress Avenue Holiday Stroll following KUT's Christmas Carol Sing-Along at the Capital Building. On occasion all museums had consecutive exhibition openings, participated in First Thursday, or have been part of the Fine Arts Festival fundraiser. The windows of the Scarborough building display art exhibitions and information about cultural amenities. Every Thanksgiving through the New Year, art installations are displayed with the theme of Giving Thanks.

On December 31, 2005, a new cultural tradition was launched. First Night Austin provides a day into night celebration, which caters to families. Attractions included the making of art projects; a distinctive parade that was all Austin including extravaganza, hoopla and weirdness; street performances; and building performances. And just outside the district, one of Austin's most celebrated and infamous events takes place nightly as people line the Congress Avenue Bridge at dusk to watch the largest urban colony of Mexican Free-Tail Bats in the country emerge in mass from their home under the bridge in search of bug dinners.



*Angelina Eberly, Pat Oliphant*

## **Public Art**

Sited at the northwestern corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Congress Avenue is the Angelina Eberly Memorial. Commissioned by the Capital Area Statuary (CAST), it is a depiction of a historical moment in Austin when, December 29, 1842, General Houston and his allies from Houston on Brazos, were trying to make off with the official papers giving Austin rights to the state capital.

## **Emerging Projects**

The Downtown Austin Retail Market Strategy, released in April 2005, provides a framework for the development of a strong retail component in downtown Austin, strengthening the existing retail base and adding new complementary development. In February 2007 the Austin City Council authorized the Business Retention and Enhancement (BRE) Program. An economic development program in accordance with Chapter 380 of the Local Government Code, its purpose is to support re-establishing Congress Avenue and E. 6th Street as retail and urban entertainment district destinations.

Since the 1980s new high-rise buildings have been constructed, including most recently the highest building in Austin, the 33-story Frost Bank Building. Tom Stacy, a longtime Austin developer, is planning a 47-story, 925,000-square-foot tower, with offices, condominiums, stores, and a private club at Congress Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The 675 foot tall project will be the city's tallest building and the most ambitious downtown mixed-use project. Construction is due to start the second quarter of 2007.

Austin architect Sinclair Black is renovating an existing one-story building at Eighth Street and Congress Avenue, formerly the home of "Wild About Music," into a six-story mixed-use building. The project will have 16 condos on the top four floors, restaurant on the street level, and office space on the second floor. Construction is due to start mid-2007.

Benchmark land Development is planning a \$100 million mixed-use tower at the northwest corner of Second Street and Congress Avenue. The 700 foot tall tower will have luxury condominium units, a spa, fitness center, pool, office, and retail space at the key Congress Avenue / Second Street corner. Construction is due to begin mid 2007.

## *East 6<sup>th</sup> Street / Red River Districts*

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the East 6<sup>th</sup> Street District are East 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, East 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, IH-35 to the east and Brazos Street to the west. The boundaries of the Red River District are East 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, IH-35 to the east and ½ block past Red River to the west.

### **Physical Character**

The overall character of the East 6<sup>th</sup>/Red River District is entertainment. Sixth Street was the east and south entrance into Austin in the early days and was the second major commercial district after Congress Avenue. With an abundance of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, it has been designated a National Register Historic District as has Congress Avenue. In the mid twentieth century, there was a collection of live music venues that branded the street as the focal point of Austin's Live Music Scene. As the area became more known for its nightlife, the live music venues could not keep up economically and in the turnover many turned into "shot bars" attracting college-aged students looking to party and drink. While some of them still exist, Red River has now become known for its live music venues.



*Sixth Street Night, Photo courtesy of Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau*

### **Experience Layers**

The East 6<sup>th</sup>/Red River District is known as a tourist destination so there is a lot of foot traffic. Also considered an entertainment district, numerous bars invite walking (and partying) on Friday and Saturday nights. 6<sup>th</sup> Street is a one-way street going west and can be slow going with the narrow lanes and during certain times the load-in of music equipment can cause congestion. The bus stop on Brazos near 6<sup>th</sup> Street is a major

bus waiting area. With the presence of the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) and a sleeping center for the homeless, the area can sometimes feel unsafe for walking. Few residences offer opportunities for living. The numerous bars offer opportunities for play especially during celebrations such as Mardi Gras and the Pecan Street Festival when the street is closed off.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

As a National Historic District there are many examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture. The preeminent example is the Driskill Hotel, circa 1880’s, located at E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Brazos. It is said to be the proud showcase of the cattle baron that built it and an example of opulence and comfort.

### **Cultural Facilities**

Long an Entertainment District, the Austin Convention and Visitor’s Bureau has recently moved their Visitor’s Center to East 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Esther’s Follies, a comedy troupe, has a performance space (window) here. Red River has many live music venues including Red-Eyed Fly and Stubbs, among others. Wild About Music, a shop that sells all kinds of goods related to music, is on the western edge of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street about a block east of Congress Avenue across from the Driskill Hotel. The previously mentioned Banner Program carries into this area.

### **Cultural Events**

There are times throughout the year that 6<sup>th</sup> Street is closed down to traffic and it becomes a long plaza holding such events as Halloween, Mardi Gras, Pecan Street Arts and Crafts Fair, Dicken’s Christmas Arts and Crafts, and New Year’s Eve. Inside, but viewable through their performance window, Esther’s Follies puts on numerous performances, adding an exciting element for passersby and keeping the street alive. A result of its good time reputation, college kids make their way from UT, other local colleges and national colleges to enjoy downtown.

### **Public Art**

Two guerilla public art efforts found their stage here. They include the “Cracks in the Pavement” project inviting people to discover artworks in various secluded areas, and the “Art on the Streets” project, ongoing art classes for the homeless that culminates



in a show open to the public. At the Waller Creek Center John Christensen's, *The Source*, creates both sculptural and seating elements near the creek; and Malou Flato's ceramic mural graces an outside wall at the entrance.



*The Source*, John Christensen

### **Emerging Projects**

In 2004 the Austin City council authorized the creation of the East 6th Street Public Improvement District. 6<sup>th</sup> Street is a National Register Historic District. The project includes preservation and enhancement of the district's unique historic character while creating a vibrant mixed-use area, which becomes an economic and cultural asset.

Sixth Street is also coupled with Congress Avenue on the Downtown Retail Market Strategy and the BRE Program. Please see descriptions of these under *Congress Avenue District/Emerging Projects*.

Development activity in this area includes:

At Fifth and Brazos Streets a twelve story, 1,200 space parking garage with street level retail and an existing drive-through bank, is being built. Construction is expected to begin sometime in 2007.

Stubb's Bar-B-Que, at Red River and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, will be expanded with a new 1,400-capacity indoor nightclub, and the outdoor amphitheater will be reconfigured, enlarged and reoriented. Construction is expected to begin fall 2007.

Greystar Real Estate Partners, LLC of Irving is building Red River Flats, a four-story, 124-unit multifamily project, on the site of the former Reddy Ice plant on Waller Creek, in the Red River Street entertainment district.





## *2nd Street / Warehouse Districts*



Photo courtesy of AMLI Residential

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse District are ½ block north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Cesar Chavez (Lady Bird Lake) to the south, ½ block east of Colorado Street to the east, and Green Water Treatment Plant and Nueces to the west. Beyond these boundaries, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street should also be thought of in its entire length from Red River Street and the Convention Center on the east and San Antonio Street and Shoal Creek on the west.

### **Physical Character**

The overall character of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse District is one of transition. This area has been going through a transformation in the past six to ten years and will continue to grow and change tremendously for the next several years with the design and construction of numerous projects. One of the focal points for this district is the six-block City-owned area that is being developed into a retail corridor.



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

### **Experience Layers**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse District is being developed into one of the major retail areas for tourists and residents in keeping with the city's Great Streets Master Plan. The narrow two-way street with single lanes slows traffic in the area. Restaurants with outside cafes provide

opportunities for gathering on the streets. Major residences create opportunities for living with dog walking seeming to be a staple. As the location for City Hall, the working experience attracts many people. Numerous restaurants and bars, along with Republic Square, provide many opportunities for play.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

Republic Square is one of the last three out of four remaining original squares that were part of the 1839 Austin plat. The area to the east and south of Republic Square was the site of a Mexican-American community in the late 1800s through 1928 (when all people of color were moved to the east side of Austin.) Guadalupe Catholic Church and school were situated to the north of Republic Square. The Mexican-American community used the park for approximately fifty years. Fandangos, festivals and other celebrations occurred at Republic Square. When that community moved to East Austin, Guadalupe Catholic moved to its current site in East Austin. Also prominent in this district, to the west and southwest of Republic Square was “Guy Town” where many prostitutes lived.



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

In the 70's and 80's Liberty Lunch, an outdoors live music venue, which was replaced in 2000 by the western CSC building, was a popular place to go. For about six years a large warehouse housed The Arts Warehouse and a collection of artist studios, Discovery Hall science museum and a large gallery. While in existence the Arts Warehouse also presented the Dickens' Arts Festival.

### **Cultural Facilities**

Numerous cultural facilities exist in this area. The most prominent facility is City Hall, an architectural gem designed by Antoine Predock, which opened in December 2004. Other landmarks include the Computer



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

Sciences Corporation buildings and one of the two AMLI Residential blocks with first floor retail. New retail stores along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Lavaca and San Antonio Streets have opened, as part of the city's plan to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse District a retail and commercial district. A number of live music venues reside here including Antone's "Home of the Blues", The Austin Music Hall and La Zona Rosa. The Austin Children's Museum is currently located here, but plans to move to another location in the district.

### **Cultural Events**

Republic Square, one of the main original squares is actively used. Every Saturday morning, the street directly south of Republic Square is closed for a Farmer's Market. Austin Parks Foundation creates programming for the park – movies in the park, yoga and other events. The City of Austin sponsors the yearly Diez y Seis celebration. In addition, the park has been the site of temporary public art installations, some authorized, and some that just happen. Every spring the Austin Fine Arts Festival closes multiple streets around of Republic Square to hold their annual juried arts and crafts fair. In the fall of 2005, the streets just north of City Hall were closed for a bicycle race. The City of Austin hosts a Friday lunchtime music series "Live from the Plaza" from April through October, an annual visual arts exhibition throughout the interior public spaces, and a showcase of documentary films done by local filmmakers on the lobby video screens.



*Seeding Time, Nabuho Nagasawa*

### **Public Art**

Located at Austin City Hall & Public Plaza, Nabuho Nagasawa's "Seeding Time," is an Art in Public Places project utilizing a sapling from Treaty Oak combined with light, misting water, boulders of various rocks and limestone seating.

In 2004, a Public Art Master Plan was developed as part of the design phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Streetscape Improvement project, led by artist Barbara Grygutis from Tucson, Arizona. The artist worked closely with the project’s design team to integrate artworks into the fabric of the streetscape enhancement.



Image courtesy of the City of Austin as designed by Copley Wolff Design Group

### Emerging Projects

This southwest quadrant of the city is a high-growth area. The City’s Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) is currently facilitating art for the Second Street District Streetscape Improvement Project, which is a makeover of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as outlined in the Great Streets Master Plan. Prototypes of the plan as applied to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street include a narrower street, wider sidewalks, a row of trees on the southern sidewalk, and a double row of trees on the north sidewalk. The theme of the AIPP project is “springs,” in recognition of Austin’s connection to water and the north/south streets that are named for Texas Rivers. Various public artworks will be commissioned by the City through its Art in Public Places Program as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Retail District, the prototype Great Streets implementation. Following the theme of “water” and “springs,” they will consist of sidewalk enhancements on the northwest corners of the street intersections and sculptural environments that will serve as respites with seating, drinking fountain and artworks. Four artists were chosen to create street level artworks on four corners and two artists have been chosen to create a sculptural environment with a functional drinking fountain.

AIPP is also participating in the City’s plans to convert Cesar Chavez from IH-35 to Lamar Boulevard into a two-way thoroughfare. Although primarily a traffic engineering project, the City has decided that the project will encompass the Great Streets objective to beautify the street. The project will focus on creating lanes for two-way

traffic, additional turn lanes, and urban design enhancements, including the installation of a 22-foot wide sidewalk on the south side of Cesar Chavez between Congress and San Antonio that has a double row of street trees and benches; the replacement of parking at Buford Fire Tower with a multi-level plaza that has benches, enhanced crosswalks, and a new connection to the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail; and installation of new signal poles and lighting similar to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Several possibilities for public art exist along the conversion route. AIPP has commissioned artist Deborah Mersky to design and install pedestrian railing enhancements for the promenade.

When completed in May 2007, Ballet Austin Company, Academy, and Administrative offices will be under one roof. The 32,000 square foot center will have: seven rehearsal studios; 15 restrooms plus locker rooms with showers; an in-house performance space, Austin Ventures Studio Theater, with capacity to seat 287 people, which will increase weekly performance capabilities, such as lunch hour performances for downtown participants; and capacity for growth with added classrooms and classes and more room for more students and expanded curriculum. The Austin Ventures Studio Theater will have a large viewing window for passersby. Ballet Austin is also working with the City of Austin to implement the Great Streets plan on their sidewalk along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is developing a new 230,000 square foot plus Federal Courthouse in downtown Austin, on the former Intel site, just west of Republic Square. The Courthouse has been designed. Construction is dependent upon the Federal Government budget allocation determined by Congress and could begin in late 2008 or early 2009.

The City of Austin is working in collaboration with the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Parks Foundation, the GSA, and a variety of downtown stakeholders to transform Republic Square into a beautiful green space that attracts people and activity. This initiative brings together private and public resources to create physical improvements and programs that attract, engage, and reflect Austin's diverse community. The Austin City Council has agreed to close the one-block section of San Antonio Street between the Square and the Federal Courthouse site, and efforts are underway to coordinate the designs of the two sites and the current street right-of-way that will be vacated. In December 2006 the GSA hired Project for Public Spaces to conduct a planning workshop. Stakeholders are now identifying next steps for the creation of

Republic Square into a sustainable urban park. The project is in schematic design. There are no dates set for construction.

To the south of Republic Square, the Austin Museum of Art is slated to develop a permanent museum.

In 2005 the Austin City Council selected Stratus Properties to develop Block 21, which sits directly north of City Hall. This block is a key component of the emerging 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Retail District. Project goals include providing positive economic and financial impact to the City; enhancing and contributing to Downtown and the 2nd Street Retail District, with sufficient retail use, but also different uses and cultural or entertainment attractions; and complementing existing neighborhood uses and design including the new City Hall, and adjacent retail and housing. The plan consists of a 36-floor high-rise featuring a 250-room luxury W Hotel, 250 condominiums, a 1,000-seat “Austin City Limits” venue and an expanded Austin Children’s Museum. Construction is planned to begin early 2007.

AMLI has a second residential unit on Block 22. This mixed-use 18-story high-rise residential project includes living units, street level retail and restaurants, and aboveground parking. It is due to be completed in March 2008 (first units completed in October of 2007).

Should the Green Water Treatment Plant be relocated, it would allow for the continuation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street over Shoal Creek and into the next district to the west. The new Central Library, planned for somewhere on this site, could be a “destination,” iconic work of architecture. The passage of the fall 2006 Bond Proposition 6 is providing for \$90 million in General Obligation Bonds and Notes for constructing and equipping the new Central Library plus acquiring some land. Two million dollars has been identified for the Central Library Art in Public Places projects.

Built by Taylor Andrews’ Andrews Urban LLC and Atlanta-based Novarre Group Holdings LLC, a 44-story, high-rise residential tower named “360” has been combined with 15,000 square foot of ground floor restaurant and retail space. The development sits directly across the street from the Austin Music Hall on a site overlooking Shoal Creek. The developer volunteered to work with the City of Austin’s Art in Public Places Program to identify artists who will create architectural enhancements for the building.

With help from Andrews Urban LLC and the Novarre Group, the Austin Music Hall will be renovated and soundproofed. Planned renovations include a modernist



exterior, a late-night restaurant, and an increase in overall admission capacity from 3,000 to 4,000, and a new sound and light system, with LED screens throughout the venue. The overall square footage will increase from 22,000 to 42,000. The Hall's seating capacity will increase from 1,800 to 2,800 and a new mezzanine will overlook the stage.

Also being built by Andrews Urban LLC and the Novarre Group is a 35-story condo tower for a portion of Block 51, bordered by Sixth, Nueces, Fifth and San Antonio streets. The project will include about 400 condos and an undetermined amount of ground-level retail and restaurant space. There will also be space on the ground floor for a new state-of-the-art post office at Fifth and San Antonio streets. By summer 2008 the partners hope to break ground on the approximately 40-story tower that will include more than 500 condominiums, at least 100 hotel rooms, and ground-floor retail. Following the construction of the Post Office the same developers will develop the block where the current Post Office now resides.

101 Colorado MetLife Inc.'s Dallas office is constructing a 28-story tower on the half block lot just west of 100 Congress Avenue with six, three-story town homes, 258 rental units with a ground floor lobby, visitor parking and retail space. Five levels of below-grade parking will connect this development to the existing 100 Congress Avenue garage. The first units will be completed in fall 2008.





## *Convention Center District*

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the Convention Center District are East 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Cesar Chavez (Lady Bird Lake) to the south, IH-35 to the east, and Brazos Street to the west.

### **Physical Character**

Once primarily a warehouse area and “parking lot” for the adjacent more active districts, this area’s primary focus is now the Austin Convention Center. Covering six city blocks, it opened in 1990 and was greatly expanded in 2002. The adjacent Hilton Hotel acts as a convention hotel providing additional meeting space for smaller conventions. Adjacent to these two facilities is Brush Square, one of the original four city squares. The Convention Center sits with its back to Waller Creek, which is walkable for a short stretch, but then exhibits a wilder side from 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Streets and south of East Cesar Chavez. Also behind the Convention Center are Palm Park, an underutilized park, and a string of older small homes along East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Parking for the Convention Center is a couple of blocks away on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. From the Convention Center, one can see the entire distance down 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the Green Water Treatment Plant.

### **Experience Layers**

Walking occurs to and from hotels or parking areas to the Convention Center. Currently, there is not a lot of visual interest in this district, although 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is undergoing a transition that follows the guidelines of the city’s *Great Streets Master Plan* including narrowing of the street and wider tree-lined sidewalks. Public art projects are planned along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street at San Antonio, Colorado, Congress Avenue, San Jacinto, and Trinity. The new Lance Armstrong Bikeway will attract pedestrians and bikers. 5<sup>th</sup> Street is a major thoroughfare for commuter traffic. In many ways this is a parking area for the Convention Center or destinations along East 6<sup>th</sup> Street. A few but growth number of restaurants afford opportunity for gathering. Residential developments in the area include the Railyard Condominiums and 5 Fifty Five Condos at the Hilton Hotel building.

## Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”

This area was as far west and north as the railroad came in the 1880s. The switching station was located where the Rail Yard Condominiums now reside. The stagecoach station, the place travelers transferred from train to stagecoach to continue west, is on East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and is now a restaurant. At one time in Austin’s history, a grand Farmer’s Market resided around Brush Square as a big open field. Many of the buildings along the south side of 6<sup>th</sup> Street actually have a second front, facing south now obscured by the alley. At the Southeastern corner of the Convention Center is Weigl Ironworks Barbeque. Once a business that created wrought iron fencing and other blacksmithing products, it is now a restaurant.

## Cultural Facilities

The most prominent facility in this area is the Convention Center. The Convention Center Parking Garage and Downtown Chiller include a 685-space parking garage, Austin Energy district chilling plant, and 18,000 square feet of street-level retail/office. On a path leading from the Convention Center to the East 6<sup>th</sup> Street Entertainment District, “Stars in the Pavement” celebrates some of Austin’s noted musicians. A few galleries and clubs are located in this district. American Youthworks, an alternative high school learning situation utilizes the visual arts to develop social, academic, interpersonal and professional skills. Brush Square houses the O. Henry Museum and the newly moved Susanna Dickinson House (Susanna Dickinson was one of the few survivors of the battle at the Alamo,) as well as the Downtown Fire Station.

## Cultural Events

The O. Henry Museum in Brush Square holds an annual “O. Henry Punoff.”

## Public Art



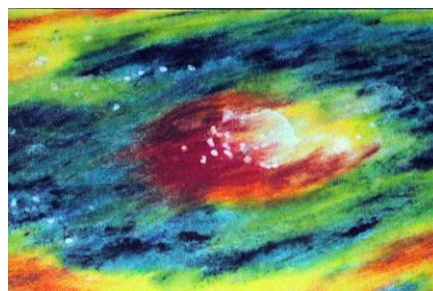
The Convention Center houses several public art projects including twenty oil paintings entitled “Texas Botanicals” by Jill Bedgood located on the Level 3 west

From left to right: *Confabulating Orbits*, Ben Livingston / *Texas Botanicals*, Jill Bedgood / *Waller Creek Shelves*, Damian Priour / *Riffs & Rhythms*, John Yancey

corridor, neon and metal wall sculptures entitled “Confabulating Orbits” by Ben Livingston located in the Level 1 palazzo, brown glass vessels that hold found objects entitled “Waller Creek Shelves” by Damian Priour located in the rotunda, a tile mosaic entitled “Riffs and Rhythms” by John Yancey located on the Level 1 west corridor, a series of twelve triptychs entitled “Macro/Micro Culture” by Rolando Briseno located along the soffit wall of the Trinity and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance, and colorful metal box components entitled “Index for Contemplation” by Margo Sawyer also located at the Trinity and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance. The Convention Center Parking Garage and Downtown Chiller unveiled an integrated glass tile mosaic along the north and east building façade design by Ann Adams in 2005. A painting by John Patrick Cobb’s entitled *O. Henry at Cards* is located at the O. Henry Museum.



*Index for Contemplation*, Margo Sawyer

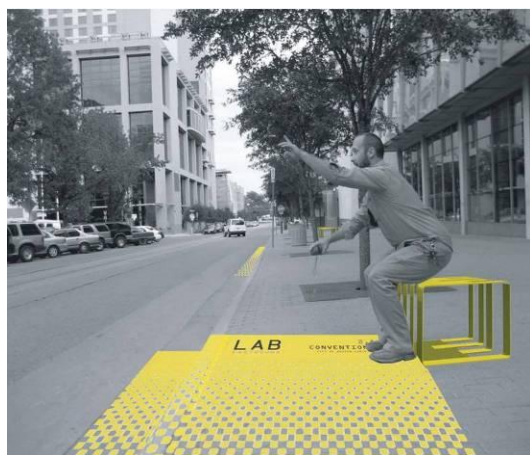


*Micro/Macro Culture*, Rolando Briseño

## Emerging Projects

This district also includes implementation of the City’s Great Streets Master Plan prototype along East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from the Convention Center at Trinity and moving west through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Retail District to the Green Water Treatment Plant, which is seven blocks to the west. When completed, the reconfigured roadways and streetscape improvements will provide a public-friendly setting, linking two important civic destinations – the new City Hall and the Convention Center Complex – along with what will become Downtown’s key shopping or “pedestrian-dominant” spine. Street and sidewalk widths in the Phase II area will be the same as in the completed Phase I area. However, Phase II will provide a full build out of the Great Streets pedestrian-oriented streetscape typology. On the north side of the street, a 32-foot wide sidewalk with a double row of trees will provide ample, shaded space for sidewalk cafés next to storefronts. Between the double-row of trees, a path of large pavers will be used to enhance the experience for pedestrians and wheelchair users.

At Trinity are the Residence Inn / Courtyard by Marriot's Twin 16-story towers located a half block north of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Trinity and San Jacinto, across from Brush Square and the Convention Center. A two-story building is located between the two towers. Lance Armstrong Crosstown Bikeway, a project named for seven-time Tour de France winner and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong, will provide a continuous bike route for over six miles, beginning at Leander Loop at US 183, following 5<sup>th</sup> Street, passing through downtown along 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, and terminating near Deep Eddy pool just west of Mopac. The project will include both a separated, paved bicycle path and bike lanes on city streets. The route is needed to provide non-motorized access to and through downtown, and is geared to bicycles not pedestrians or crowds of joggers.



Designs for Lance Armstrong Bikeway by NextProject

The City's Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) has commissioned an artist team to identify public art graphic way finding opportunities and functional amenities along the Bikeway. Previously, there was no "graphic identity" for the Bikeway, and the art enhancements are considered one means to provide identity with a recognizable look and feel.

*"Capital Metro All Systems Go! Urban Commuter Rail"* is the slogan for the first segment of commuter rail transit in Austin. Capital Metro's 32-mile Downtown / Northwest rail line will run from Leander to the Austin Convention Center and Brush Square. Service will start in 2008. As part of the *All Systems Go* plan, Capital Metro is evaluating future transportation options to connect more of the community to these new services, under a project called the Future Connections Study.

Adjacent to the Four Seasons Hotel at Cesar Chavez and Trinity Streets is planned the Four Seasons Residences. Designed by internationally renowned architect Michael Graves, the project is a mix of 200-240 apartments on the lower floors and 70-80 condos on the upper levels, with some street level retail space. Construction is due to begin the second quarter of 2007.

Stakeholders, led by the Downtown Austin Alliance Parks Committee/Brush Square Subcommittee, are working on the renovation of Brush Square and the Susanna

Dickinson House. Meant to preserve the home and legacy of Alamo survivor, the House celebrates Texas' historical heritage by providing programs and educational resources to visitors to Brush Square.



## *Market / West End / Seaholm Districts*

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the Market/West End/Seaholm Districts are ½ block north of 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Cesar Chavez (Lady Bird Lake) to the south, San Antonio Street/Shoal Creek/Nueces Street to the east and the area west of Lamar/Baylor Street to the west and north to the intersection at Lamar Boulevard and Shoal Creek.

### **Physical Character**

The Market/West End/Seaholm District is characterized by mixed-use establishments including retail, restaurants and urban style living such as lofts, apartments and upscale condominiums providing an overall feeling of hip culture and dense activity. One of the overriding, yet hardly recognizable, physical features of this area, is Shoal Creek. Shoal Creek is one of the two main Downtown creeks together with Waller Creek and, while it is hidden from view by the buildings, it defines the area's terrain. The Creek abruptly drops off south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street towards Lady Bird Lake and the Colorado River where Lamar Street Bridge crosses the river. Cesar Chavez goes under the bridge and can easily flood during heavy rains.

The commercial area of North Lamar Boulevard with its numerous retail stores, restaurants and commercial office space from West 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Streets and the few blocks stretch of West 6<sup>th</sup> Street west of North Lamar Boulevard is the visual defining character of the area. In recent years this has become more emphasized with the new and varied development at, and surrounding, the intersection of West 5<sup>th</sup> and West 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and North Lamar Boulevard centered on Whole Food's flagship store. Along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and east of Lamar there is a developing mixed-use area with a gallery, artist studios and residences featuring ground level retail. Multi-use residential units have been built in the area along West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street east of North Lamar Boulevard.

### **Experience Layers**

Both walking and riding are successful journeys in this district. A hike and bike trail along Shoal Creek adds to both the walking and playing experience. Major gateway streets such as 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, Lamar Boulevard and Cesar Chavez provide for an active auto experience. Waiting is prevalent, but given the environment, there is a lot of visual stimulation to keep frustration levels low. The high density of retail, other mixed-

use establishments, and outdoor activities at Whole Foods makes the district a great place to gather and play. Working and living is also prevalent in this area providing for well-rounded, active and vital experiences that will only grow over time.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

Shoal Creek was the western boundary of the original 1839 Austin plat and before that a major Native American and early settler foot and horse path. Before the building of the dam that created Lady Bird Lake (formerly called Town Lake), one of the early river crossings was at the mouth of Shoal Creek and the Colorado River. In 1981 major flooding greatly impacted the areas surrounding Shoal Creek.

### **Cultural Facilities**

The main focus of this area is the new flagship Whole Foods Market, which holds a myriad of special activities and experiences including outside seating and performance space. Across the street on the southwest corner are a several home furnishing stores, which attract up-scale shoppers. The northwest corner of the intersection is anchored by local favorites such as Waterloo Record Store and Amy’s Ice Cream among others. Book People, the areas most celebrated independent bookstore currently resides in the northeast corner along with the recent additions of REI and Anthropologie. Up the street going north are other people attractions – Whole Earth Provision Company, Eclectic (ethnic craft and furniture store), and the Shoal Creek Saloon, which features outdoors deck seating. Galleries reside in the district along West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The area is rounded out by fitness centers including the WYCA.

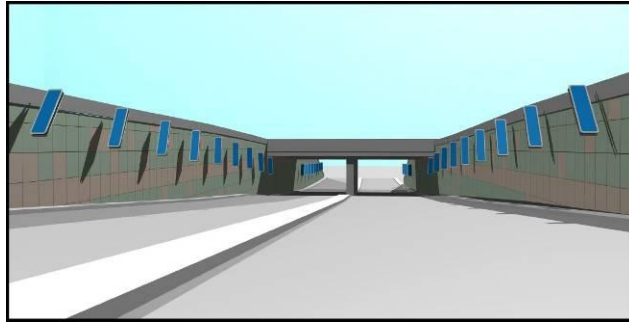
### **Cultural Events**

Whole Foods Market offers a diversity of experiences – buying groceries or wine, outdoor sitting and dining, enjoying a leisurely coffee, listening to music on the upper deck, and ice skating. The developers are branding the area as the Market District. Shoal Creek offers a hike and bike trail which runs all the way to Lady Bird Lake. A BMX Bike course runs just outside the district in Duncan Park on W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, west of North Lamar Boulevard. Every winter GSD&M displays a holiday vignette of oversized cartoon-like animals.



## Public Art

In the Lamar Street Underpass, Carl Trominski's *Moments* consists of reflective signs and blue lights that glow at night by solar power. The



*Moments*, Carl Trominsky



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

Whole Foods facility includes architectural detailing throughout which was created by Austin artisans from the mosaic tile signature chocolate landmark inside by Ali Winningham to the wood and metal tree-like shade structure outside by Chris Levack.

## Emerging Projects

This area is still in the process of developing with much activity happening in the southern section. The block directly north of the Whole Foods block (building where Whole Foods vacated but still housing Book People) also now holds REI, Anthropologie, Teo restaurant and private business offices. A modest 30,000 square foot expansion will occur in 2007. Yet to be developed is the block directly east of Whole Foods current location, also owned by Schlosser Development. It will be a 400,000 square foot mixed-use project, containing office space for Whole Foods, ground floor retail and residential in three buildings.

The area south of W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and east of North Lamar Boulevard will see a major transformation with the building of a residential complex on the Gables' site and the remodeling of Seaholm Power Plant. Gables is redesigning their project of primarily residential, retail and 20,000 square feet of



Seaholm District Master Plan - ROMA Design Group  
Updated by ROMA/TBG/City of Austin

office space. Construction is expected to begin mid-2007. Southwest Strategies is redeveloping the circa 1950 Seaholm Power Plant and adjacent property, into a high quality, mixed-use cultural attraction. As part of the development in this area the Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge Extension Project is now online. The project's goal is to extend the James D. Pfluger Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge to the north connecting Lady Bird Lake to the Lamar Corridor, Downtown and other areas north. At present, there is no convenient crossing of West Cesar Chavez Street and the Union Pacific Railroad between the Bridge and West 5<sup>th</sup> Street. While the at-grade crossing at Sandra Muraida and West Cesar Chavez is a safe crossing, it is not convenient. AIPP will assume 2% of the city's contribution of this project plus a match from the local private developer Gables Apartments for public art. Artists Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt (R & R Studios) from Miami, Florida were selected through a competitive national Call to Artists, and have been commissioned to design a public artwork as part of the Pfluger Bridge Extension / Gables Development project.

In addition, several residential areas and buildings are planned. Located at the western edge of Austin's Central Business District at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and West Avenue, and overlooking Shoal Creek, ZOM Austin's "The Monarch" is one of the city's first AA luxury rental high-rise, at a new center of pedestrian-oriented development in downtown Austin. With views of downtown, Lady Bird Lake and the hills of West Austin, the twenty-four story residential tower will join an already vibrant neighborhood. Completion is expected to be late 2007. Dallas-based Phoenix Property Company is building a 4 to 6-story warehouse-style apartment building at the former site of Goodwill Industries at Third Street and Lamar Boulevard. Construction is expected to start in Spring 2007 on a 36-story condominium tower two blocks south of Whole Foods Market's flagship store. The project, called "Spring," will have several levels of parking above and below ground, plus shops on the ground floor with 20-foot sidewalks shaded by awnings.

Additionally, the City of Austin is beginning a feasibility study on the redevelopment of the Green Water Treatment Plant site. See descriptions under 2nd St / Warehouse District / Emerging Projects.

## *Civic /Uptown Districts*



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

### **Boundaries**

The Civic/Uptown District wraps around the western side of the Capitol Complex and Congress Avenue down to half block past 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The boundaries are Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to the north, half block due south of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, half block west of Congress Avenue to the east, and Nueces Street to the west.

### **Physical Character**

While there are some single-family residences along the upper western edge of this area, it is predominantly commercial. The main north/south arterials are Guadalupe and Lavaca Streets with West 7<sup>th</sup>, West 12<sup>th</sup>, and West 15<sup>th</sup> Streets acting as intersecting corridors. The southern section south of 11<sup>th</sup> Street is part of the downtown commercial district. The University of Texas sits at the northern boundary and a residential community sits at the western boundary. Three distinguishing features of the civic district are the complex of Wooldridge Park, the historical Bremond Block to the south, and the County Court House and jail to the north.

### **Experience Layers**

The Civic area offers better opportunities for walking than the Uptown area because of its presence of destination density and proximity to restaurants and galleries. There is a historic walking tour in the Civic District and Wooldridge Park offers

opportunities for gathering or playing. Two major thoroughfares – Lavaca Street and Guadalupe Street– create rewarding riding experiences. If entering downtown via Guadalupe visual attractions include or will include a church, the County Courthouse and jail, the John Henry Faulk Central Library, Austin History Center, Federal Courthouse, Republic Square, and finally City Hall.

Taking Lavaca out of downtown one passes behind the Texas Governor’s Mansion and near the State Capitol. Older single-family homes west of Guadalupe offer living experiences while the working experience takes over towards Congress Avenue. Playing experiences are available through galleries and arts programming in the Uptown District. Wooldridge Square Park affords limited opportunity for the playing experience.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

Situated in the middle of the Civic District is one of the remaining four original squares, Wooldridge Park. In the middle of the natural bowl-shaped park is a 19<sup>th</sup> century covered wooden bandstand that was recently refurbished. To its south is the first main public library building in Austin, now the current Austin History Center. A number of historic architectural features are in this area including a mural on the outside ceiling of the northern entrance, which was done by a local artisan in the early 1900s. The Austin History Center houses many historical documents and photographs of Austin. To Wooldridge Park’s north are the County Courthouse and jail, and to the south the historic Bremond Block. The Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA) offices inside the historical Bremond Mansion. A fire gutted the Guadalupe Arts Center, where over 50 artists had studios, in 2004.

### **Cultural Facilities**

Cultural facilities in this district include the Austin History Center and John Henry Faulk Central Library. In Uptown there are a group of cultural facilities in close proximity to one another – Women & Their Work, D. Berman Gallery, and The Scottish Rite Theater. Just outside Uptown on MLK is the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and the University of Texas Jack Blanton Art Museum. As mentioned previously, the complex of Wooldridge Park includes the Austin History Center and John Henry Faulk Central Public Library to the south, the TCTA building further south in the historical Bremond Block, and the County Court House and jail to the north.

### **Cultural Events**

Activity in Wooldridge Park includes a giant chessboard on particular Saturdays and occasional events such as music, peace rallies and various celebrations. The restored 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bandstand has been used by Paramount Theater to publicize their Rain Man theater work. It was also the site of Green Art's inaugural project at AMOA's Spring Family Exhibition.

### **Public Art**

A sculpture entitled *Eagle II* by David Deming is located in front of the John Henry Faulk Central Public Library.

### **Emerging Projects**

Just north of Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard (MLK) near the heart of the City is the new state-of-the-art Jack S. Blanton Art Museum on the University of Texas at Austin campus, which opened in April 2006. Composed of two buildings that face one another across a landscaped pedestrian passageway and plaza, the new facility creates an inviting public gathering space and forms a gateway between the historic university campus and the Austin community. The 124,000-square-foot Mari and James A. Michener Gallery houses the museum's collections and exhibitions. The 56,000-square-foot Edgar A. Smith Education, Visitor and Administration Building, opening in 2007/2008, will serve a range of audiences including university students, school children and the public. It will house administrative offices, a 299-seat auditorium, a sixty-seat lecture hall, several classrooms, a cafe and a bookstore.

Also along MLK and Lavaca Street, the UT Executive and Conference Center plans for 70,000 square feet of conference space, 300 hotel rooms, and an underground parking garage. The conference center will have a 250-seat amphitheater, 3 classrooms and 12 other rooms.

Travis County officials are looking to re-validate past master plans and begin the process for finding a site for the courthouse and defining the amount of space needed to carry the county through 2040. County officials are looking at two sites in this district.

La Vista is a new residential mixed-use building being erected on Lavaca at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition to condominiums, the eight-story building will feature a street-level

restaurant and a three-floor Executive Business Center. The Oasis in West Campus is another mixed-use project with 18 residential units, office space and retail space.

## *Northeast / Hospital Districts*



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the Northeast/Hospital District are East 15<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, East 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, ½ block west of Red River and IH-35 to the east and ½ block west of Brazos Street, San Jacinto Boulevard and Trinity Street to the west.

### **Physical Character**

With its close proximity to the Capitol Complex, numerous office buildings and parking lots, the Northeast District is somewhat nondescript. The one original Austin square which no longer exists was located here. The dominant physical feature of the Northeast District is the Federal Complex, which takes up two city blocks between East 8<sup>th</sup> and East 10<sup>th</sup> Streets and San Jacinto and Trinity Streets. The other prominent feature in the area is the tall Omni Hotel, the site of numerous conferences.

The prominent feature in the Hospital District is the great expanse of Brackenridge Hospital on the east side of Red River, and on the west side of Waterloo Park. With Waller Creek running through the park lengthwise north to south, much of the topography is a “V” deepening towards the Creek.

### **Experience Layers**

The Northeast/Hospital District is primarily experienced through automobile. Working experiences occur due to the high concentration of state office buildings. Transit

to and from work via parking garages, offers the majority of walking experiences in the area. The State Capitol building is just west of this area so there are tourists who walk from the Capitol Parking Garage to the State Capitol. Waterloo Park affords opportunities for play and strolling along Waller Creek.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

The one lost square of the four original squares was located in the Northeast District. It is now occupied by the First Baptist Church. While many people have voiced a desire to restore the park to its original state, no one has acted on it. St. Mary’s Cathedral on East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, between San Jacinto and Brazos, which was recently restored, is the Cathedral for the local diocese. In the late 1980s/early 1990s the Creek was used as an unusual site for performance with dancers positioned on boulders in the Creek. St. David’s Episcopal Church, the second oldest building structure downtown, hosts live music performances by local musicians monthly.

### **Cultural Facilities**

Considered “outdoor facilities”, Waterloo Park, Symphony Square and Waller Creek are some of this district’s primary cultural places. The churches in the area are also sites for activities including social gatherings, music performances and arts and crafts happenings. Symphony Square is the headquarters of the Austin Symphony, the city’s oldest performing arts group. Located at Red River and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets, Symphony Square is a complex of four historic limestone buildings and a 350-seat amphitheater. The Symphony Box Office is located in the Jeremiah Hamilton Building of the Symphony Square Complex. It is believed to be one of three remaining triangular buildings in Texas. Other buildings that make up the complex are the Michael Doyle House, a simple stone cottage, Hardeman House, which is home to Serrano’s Café and Cantina, a Tex-Mex food restaurant, and the New Orleans Club Mercantile used by Café Serranos. The recently restored St. Mary’s Cathedral on East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, between San Jacinto and Brazos, holds beautiful examples of local artisan work.

### **Cultural Events**

The events that take place in Waterloo Park, Waller Creek and three churches bring vitality to the area. In the heart of Downtown, this nearly eleven-acre city park is the site for concerts, festivals, and other special events throughout the year such as



Juneteenth celebrations, Blues Festivals, Spamarama, and more. Waller Creek runs through the middle of the park. There are some trails, paved pathways, grassy areas, an outdoor stage, small playground, picnic tables, picnic pavilion, restrooms, and plenty of shady places to sit for reading, listening, thinking or admiring the view. Activities at Symphony Square include outdoor concerts, Children's Day performances each Wednesday morning in June or July, and other miscellaneous performances throughout the year.

### **Public Art**

There are no city-commissioned public artworks within this district.

### **Emerging Projects**

The Waller Creek Flood Diversion Tunnel will begin in Waterloo Park. The proposed 15-22 foot diameter tunnel will allow development of the existing flood plain in the lower Waller Creek area. The City and the County in collaboration with the Downtown Austin Alliance are analyzing construction alternatives. The City has also recently engaged economic development consultants to review the economic projections contained in Brown and Root / Espey Padden's additional studies. The consultants, Kent Dussair, President of CDS Market Research in Houston, and Steve Spillette, of Spillette Consulting, also in Houston, delivered their report to the City in July 2004, and will provide the city with an update to that report. The Waller Creek Flood Diversion crosses the East 6<sup>th</sup> Street District, Red River District and the Northeast/Hospital District.

Also in the Northeast District at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Trinity Streets, plans for 303 Urban Village call for an 8-story building, with four stories of residential above three stories of parking and first floor commercial. Topping the project will be a cafe and rooftop terrace.



## *Rainey Street District*



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the Rainey Street District are Cesar Chavez to the north, Lady Bird Lake to the south, IH-35 to the east and Waller Creek to the west.

### **Physical Character**

The Rainey Street District is currently a residential community of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century small homes with the exception of a couple multi-family residential complexes, a hotel. Milago on Lady Bird Lake is a 240-unit, 13-story condominium building overlooking Lady Bird Lake at the foot of Rainey Street, an area long targeted for revitalization. The units are above a multi-level parking garage, with at least two levels underground. The southwest edge of the district is Lady Bird Lake with the mouth of Waller Creek.

### **Experience Layers**

This area is primarily residential including single-family. Walking is primarily experienced along the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts”**

The Driskill & Rainey Subdivision was platted in 1885. By 1890 there were five houses on Rainey Street; ten more houses were built during the 1890s. The neighborhood was characterized by Victorian-style, wood-frame houses owned by middle-class families. Nine more houses were built on the street from 1900 to 1916; thereafter, the middle-class character of Rainey Street began to change: the years from 1917 to 1934 marked a period of transition from middle-class owner occupants to

working-class owners and renters. The architectural character of the street also began to change after World War I, with the construction of smaller, wood-frame bungalows in the late 1920s, reflecting this shift to working class family occupants. All of the lots on Rainey Street had been built upon by the mid-1930s, and no new construction occurred until the 1970s. The Rainey Street National Register Historic District represents a significant collection of 19th and early 20th century houses, and clearly retains its viability as a historic district with 26 of the 35 principal structures (74%) contributing to its historic character. Eleven properties on Rainey Street, as well as the house at 91 Red River Street may also qualify for city historic landmark designation.

### **Cultural Events**

The Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail runs along the edge of the lake and is tied to East Austin under the IH-35 overpass.

### **Public Art**

Although there is public art along the Hike and Bike Trail, it is outside the study area boundaries.

### **Emerging Projects**

There have been many suggestions and plans (including one from a UT School of Architecture studio class) for how to develop or revitalize the Rainey Street District. The Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) is due to open in June 2007. This 126,000 square-foot facility is to be dedicated to the preservation, creation, presentation and promotion of Mexican-American Cultural Arts and Heritage.



Image of the Mexican American Cultural Center as designed by CasaBella & Del Campo + Maru, Joint Venture

Phase I includes an outdoor plaza and a two-story structure to house offices with classrooms and meeting rooms. A multi-purpose building will be designed and constructed that will seat 300-people for a performance, or 150 for a sit down dinner. Associated surface parking and landscaping will also be part of Phase I. A large 800-seat theater, a small 300-seat theater, an outdoor Plaza, and a two-story education, exhibit, rehearsal and office building with a two-story parking garage is planned for Phase II. With the passage of Proposition 4 of the 2006 Bond election Mexic-Arte will receive a \$1.5 million contribution from the City of Austin to go towards a new Mexic-Arte Art Museum. Additional funds will be raised to build a new larger facility next to the MACC.

High Street Rainey, LP, a subsidiary of Dallas-based Trammell Crow Co., is constructing, “The Shore,” a high-rise tower for condominiums, with other associated improvements. Construction of the project in the Waterfront District, dubbed by Trammell Crow, is at Davis and Red River streets with completion expected in early 2008. The 22-story project will be linked to a planned adjacent Kimpton Hotel, named Hotel Van Zandt, and luxury condominiums by a sixth floor terrace. Construction has begun on the parking garage. Another project is being planned for a site at the corner of Red River and Cesar Chavez Streets directly south from the Convention Center.

Australian developer Constellation Property Group has two skyscrapers planned for the site – a luxury condominium tower and one a hotel. Each tower will be about 30 stories high. The project will also include ground-floor retail and an eight-story office building.

The Waller Creek Flood Diversion Tunnel will open at the mouth of Waller Creek and Lady Bird Lake.



## Gateways



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

### Boundaries

There are nine major streets, or “gateways,” that lead into the Downtown area. Southern entries include South Congress Avenue, South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and South Lamar Boulevard. The main eastern entries are East Cesar Chavez, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The northern entry is Red River, Guadalupe, and Lamar. Western entries include West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Enfield, and West Cesar Chavez.

### Physical Characters of Gateways:

**Southern Gateways** – South Congress Avenue provides the most dramatic entrance into Austin. Following the city’s natural topography, the street leads upward toward the State Capitol Building. Arriving by freeway on IH-35 from the south, a similar sensory experience leads down towards Lady Bird Lake. South 1<sup>st</sup> Street crosses the Colorado River at Lady Bird Lake to a triangle of Live Oak trees and Austin’s City Hall designed by international architect Antoine Predock. South Lamar Boulevard rounds out the major southern entrance into downtown. Secondary streets on the south that feed into these streets are Riverside Drive from the east and Barton Springs from the west. A major exit

from IH-35, Riverside Drive follows the curvature of Lady Bird Lake with glimpses of the water before turning north on South Congress Avenue to cross the river and enter the city. Barton Springs Road travels through Zilker Park, Austin's grand public park, and a string of restaurants just west of Lamar Boulevard.

**Eastern Gateways** – Historically Waller Creek has been Austin's eastern boundary; however IH-35, with its elevated roadway, has become a formidable barrier to overcome in modern times in linking East Austin with Austin's downtown.

**Northern Gateways** – Guadalupe Street, a main gateway from the north into Downtown, travels along the University of Texas' western boundary before crossing Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard and entering into Downtown. North Lamar Boulevard, another major gateway into downtown, follows the curvature of Shoal Creek, historic Austin's western boundary. At MLK, Speedway (on the University campus) turns into Congress Avenue and the north entrance into the State Capitol Complex affording more immediate views of the State Capitol. Congress Avenue and MLK, and Red River and IH-35 while in close proximity offer differing approaches to downtown. From IH-35 the city skyline approaches swiftly while Red River follows the curvature of Waller Creek, travels along St. David's Hospital, Waterloo Park, and Brackenridge Hospital before straightening out at 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Western Gateways** – The paired one-way streets of West 5<sup>th</sup> and West 6<sup>th</sup> bring people back and forth along MOPAC, Austin's western north/south freeway, and the new Market District both defined by the Whole Foods Market and the upscale shopping experience centered along West 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the West 6<sup>th</sup> / North Lamar Boulevard intersection. This shopping experience continues along North Lamar Boulevard for several blocks. Enfield/15<sup>th</sup> Street is another gateway into Downtown affording a dramatic approach with the road curving just before the North Lamar Boulevard overpass and passage through some of Austin's oldest and grandest homes. Cesar Chavez runs the east/west length of Downtown.



### **Experience Layers**

Gateways are primarily experienced through the riding experience, but can be experienced through the walking journey as well. Depending on intimacy of the entry experience and the speed of traffic of given gateways, artworks and activities that enhance the walking experience can occur.

### **Historic Landmarks and “Ghosts**

In 1835, Jacob Harrell and his family set up a camp near the present site of the Congress Avenue Bridge. Other families joined Harrell and named their settlement Waterloo. This camp and settlement is the first documented settlement of the area that would come to be known as Austin. In 1893 the Great Granite Dam on the Colorado River was constructed to stabilize the river and provide hydraulic power to generate electricity. By 1938 the dam had been replaced by seven U.S. government-funded dams. Construction of IH-35 began in 1954 and was completed and dedicated in 1962. Prior to that, the corridor was called East Avenue and was characterized by a beautiful house-lined street with a wide, park-like median.

### **Cultural Facilities**

The southern gateways link people to Zilker Park, Town Lake Park, Palmer Community Events Center, Zach Scott Theater, Austin Lyric Opera, Umlauf Sculpture Garden, a hike and bike trail on the south, and the many eclectic shops and landmark businesses along South Congress Avenue. The Eastern gateways link people to East Austin and many African-American cultural facilities and activities including the Carver Museum and Cultural Center, Pro-Arts Collective, Hispanic cultural facilities, Texas Music Museum, various live music clubs, artists' studios and businesses. The western gateways link people to the shopping along W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The northern gateways link people to the Bob Bullock State History Museum and the University of Texas campus, which includes the new Blanton Art Museum, the Bass Performing Arts Center, and Erwin Center.

### **Cultural Events**

The facilities mentioned above hold cultural activities and events. As previously indicated, the Congress Avenue Bridge has become a nursery for the Mexican Free-tail Bat, and it is the largest urban bat colony in North America. Thousands of tourists come

to Austin to view the bats exiting the bridge at dusk for their evening feeding. Enfield is part of the route for the Capital 10K, a national race that occurs in the spring and draws people from around the country.

## Public Art

As mentioned previously in the Market / West End / Seaholm District section, a major gateway into Downtown, Carl Trominski's *Moments*, is located on the Lamar Railroad Underpass. There is a "gateway" arch on East 11<sup>th</sup> Street a few blocks east of IH-35 created with funds from Capital Metro and the Austin Revitalization Authority.

Other notable public artworks that mark entry to Downtown include *Night Wings*, a bat sculpture donated by the Downtown Austin Alliance. Located in a traffic island at 300 South Congress, the work pays tribute the bat colony that resides under the Congress Avenue Bridge.



*Night Wings*, Dale Whistler

## Emerging Projects

The gateways from the south, Lamar Boulevard, S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Congress Avenue has significant development happening:



Design courtesy of Nelson Partners and TeamHaas Architects

The construction of the Joe R. & Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts is well underway. Transformed from the former Palmer Auditorium, the Long Center will have multi-theaters to provide performance and rehearsal facilities for all of Austin's performing artists. The Center will be the permanent home to Austin Symphony Orchestra, Ballet Austin, and Austin Lyric Opera.

In addition, world-class performance facilities will be available for the full range of Austin's other performing artists and arts organizations. The main 2,400-seat Dell Hall will feature two balconies; the smaller Rollins Studio Theater will be a flexible, forty-three foot by sixty-foot space that will seat up to 240 audience members.

Town Lake Park has completed construction on the second of four phases of the 54-acre urban park, which started in February 2006. Phase II of the park includes redevelopment of the old City Coliseum site. Parking for approximately sixty park visitors is provided just north of the Dougherty Arts Center. There is an observation hill, dense landscape planting, and a lagoon with water collected from the new Palmer Events Center, and restrooms.

As a result of the fall 2006 Bond Election funds are being identified for improvements to the Dougherty Arts Center located at Barton Springs and Dawson Road.

As previously indicated, the Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge is planned for extension. The planning process for this phase of the project began in the spring of 2004. The City's Art in Public Places Program has commissioned an artist team for public art in the park.

Two high-rise buildings are going up near S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Lady Bird Lake: Fairfield Residential LLC, a residential developer based in Grand Prairie, plans to renovate the Hyatt Regency Hotel, adding meeting space, and eventually as many as 500 residential units, shops and restaurants on the site, although it could be 2009 before work might start on such a project. AquaTerra is a nineteen-story building with 163 condominiums, on the south shore of Lady Bird Lake. The site is in the middle of the block that includes the 17-story Hyatt Regency Austin and an office building, which houses the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. The land is now being used for parking.

Two residential complexes are being built along S. Lamar Boulevard, just south of Lady Bird Lake. Dallas-based CLB Partners LLC is building Bridges on the Park, a \$50 million condominium and retail project. The Paggi House Restaurant, housed in a 160-year-old building, will be incorporated into the project. A second phase, with more condos and shops, could begin in several years on land now home to Taco Cabana. Phoenix Property is planning a 5-story, 137-unit apartment project with ground floor retail and restaurants, on the site currently occupied by Binswanger Glass Co. at 300 South Lamar Boulevard.

The gateways on the east from 4<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Streets are also beginning to see some development. The Saltillo District Redevelopment Master Plan will provide the framework for development of approximately 11 acres of Capital Metro property along the E. 4<sup>th</sup> / E. 5<sup>th</sup> Streets corridor extending from IH-35 to Comal St. in East Austin. Capital Metro's 32-mile Downtown / Northwest rail line will run from Leander to the Austin Convention Center in Downtown Austin. Service is scheduled to begin in 2008.

As part of the *All Systems Go!* plan, Capital Metro is evaluating future transportation options to connect more of the community to these new services, under a project called the Future Connections Study.

Two residential projects are on the eastside overlooking IH-35. Houston developer Martin Fein Interests Ltd. has developed Robertson Hill Apartments, a luxury apartment complex on San Marcos Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets. Interurban Development is planning Skyline, an 118-unit upscale condo project on a site located between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets overlooking IH-35. Amenities include a rooftop deck with pool, fire pit and cabana.

On the northern boundary of the Study Area is the University of Texas. Please see the Civic / Uptown District for descriptions of the Jack S. Blanton Museum – the James A. Michener Gallery building (opening in 2006) and the Edgar A. Smith Education, Visitor and Administration Building due to open in 2007/2008 at MLK and Speedway. Just a few blocks west of the Museum on MLK, UT is building the UT Executive and Conference Center.

On the western boundary of the Study Area is the W. Pecan Street neighborhood. Phoenix Property is building a 5-story warehouse-style apartment building at the former site of Goodwill Industries at Third Street and Lamar Boulevard as mentioned in the Market / West End / Seaholm District Emerging Project description.

## VI. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

*The city appears to you as a whole where no desire is lost and of which you are a part...*

Italo Calvino  
*Invisible Cities*

The Austin Framework section sets forth a number of recommendations, each with a rationale and set of implementation strategies. These recommendations identify opportunities for public art as well as strategies for developing the cultural vitality downtown. Throughout the planning process the consultant team conducted research on each of the two programs – Art in Public Places and Civic Arts – to understand their individual charge, and their particular roles and responsibilities. While in practice the two programs are very different, to the public they were seen to have overlapping activities. In order to better describe these programs and more clearly differentiate them one from another, the consultant team is recommending name changes for both. The Art in Public Places (AIPP) program is recommended to be renamed “The Public Art and Design Program” in order to expand the Public thinking and practice to view the program as one which “integrates art into design and planning practices and the urban fabric” rather than the limiting current perception of the program as one which “places art in public places.” Given the AIPP’s recent ordinance change to 2% and its new charge of streetscape projects, the new name suggests something much more befitting of its charge. The Civic Arts Program is recommended to be renamed the “Cultural Vitality Development Program” in order to more closely reflect the current scope of work of the program and its trajectory from the EGRSO activity Austin Sense of Place and Cultural Identity. These objectives can be distilled into one goal – “to nurture, promote, and support Austin’s creative individuals, cultural communities, and civic spaces through programming and projects that contribute to Austin’s identity in the regional, national, and global market place.” The following recommendations will refer to the programs with the revised program name.

### Recommendations / Rationale / Strategies

This section includes recommendations, which are related to the physicality and cultural vitality of Austin – its landscape, built environment and form, and the activities that make Austin an exciting place to be. These recommendations are based on findings from the charrette and planning process. Although the findings from the charrette process were based on ten breakout

sessions that focused on individual defined districts, attendees' visions contained many similarities and crossovers. These visions fell into four main categories, or "systems" of place that help describe the basic features of the city, that identify areas in the city where people spend their time and art will hold meaning or function, and where implementation strategies can be most effective. For details of the charrette process and description of the districts, see *Section IV: Mapping Place*.

Recommendations brought forth in this section will be structured in a manner to reflect findings by systems and subsets. Illustrations and maps accompany systems and recommendations where relevant. Each recommendation is accompanied by a rationale and an implementation strategy. Systems are as follows:

- I. **Natural Environment Systems.** These include parks and open spaces and urban water system and trails.
- II. **Built Environment Systems.** These include civic facilities, strategies for working with private development, buildings and structures, parking lots and garages, and vacant lots and spaces.
- III. **Connectivity Systems.** These include the connections between places, the corridors and streetscapes, and gateways, and transit systems.
- IV. **Cultural Systems.** These include honoring and revealing history, stories of Austin, and individual expressions; providing and supporting spaces for everyday and special events to occur; and growing the artistic and cultural community contributing to the Austin identity.

## **I. Natural Environment Systems**

The Parks and Open Spaces, and the Urban Water System and Trails, is the ground layer for all human-made structures and activities. Austin's downtown follows the natural curvature of the land; the hill where the Capitol Building sits falls gently to Lady Bird Lake and the Colorado River. Even though IH-35 seems more a border on the eastside and Lamar Boulevard feels more like the border on the west side, Waller Creek and Shoal Creek were the first borders of Downtown and still command a presence though at times they seem forgotten. Austinites have a love of their place and a passion for the environment; they remain fiercely protective of these Austin amenities.

The Parks and Open Spaces are often times the most civic spaces Downtown. They are the places that citizens gather to recreate or play, or come together in solidarity. The Urban Water Systems and Trails is the network that holds the natural systems together.

### **A. Parks and Open Spaces**

The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department calls Austin "a City within a Park." In downtown are several parks and other civic spaces that exemplify many of the standard typology of Parks and Open Space – parks and greenbelts, urban oases, grand public places, corporate foyers, and street plazas. Several parks and open spaces accompany the water systems of Austin. These parks and open spaces offer leisure and athletic activities, as well as opportunities for respite and reflection. Three of the four original squares (circa 1839) are still definable as parks – Republic Square, Wooldridge Square, and Brush Square. There are civic places like City Hall Plaza with its Friday noon live music scene or Wooldridge Park with its occasional activity. The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department has city oversight of the parks. Austin Parks Foundation works to program the downtown parks including being the contact to facilitate things with the City. Downtown Austin Alliance has a staff position who acts as staff liaison for downtown park matters.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

## RECOMMENDATION 1

*It is recommended that an Art Park be developed at Town Lake Park and/or Downtown to include both permanent artworks and rotating temporary artworks and exhibits.*

### Rationale

Town Lake Park is considered the heart and soul of open space in Austin. It is the most important public space in Austin. It is also the center of outdoor activity and includes sporting events, cultural events, music and art festivals, boat races, art shows and trade shows. In a recent plan developed by Gail Goldman Associates, it is recommended that Lady Bird Lake (formerly called Town Lake) become a center for temporary public art activities and works. The planning process for the ***Downtown Arts Development Study*** concurs with this recommendation. One of the major themes brought forward by participants throughout the planning process was the need for Austin to engage in temporary public art programming and projects. Temporary programming and projects were viewed as a means to get local artists more involved in the creation of public artworks. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, temporary projects and programming were viewed as a canvas for the creation of more dynamic, innovative and cutting edge works that engage both community and artist in a vibrant and



intellectual dialogue with place; and provide opportunity for Austin’s visual arts community and city to arrive solidly on the national arts map.

### **Strategy**

a. *Art in Public Places work with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to develop exhibition policies for the Great Meadow within the Town Lake Park*

b. *Facilitating a temporary art program takes human resources, time, and funding. The Art in Public Places Program is primarily a percent-for-art program that has limited staff, time, and monetary resources. Yet, the return on investment can be great – heightened awareness of art in the environment, building new audiences, promotion of local artists, providing experiences for new artists, and providing a tourist attraction to out of town visitors. It is recommended that the Cultural Arts Division explore the feasibility and possible partners, such as non-profit and cultural organizations, for an ongoing temporary public art exhibition in Town Lake Park and/or along the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail and creek trails (See Recommendation 7 recommending temporary art along Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail and creek trails).*

c. *Develop a temporary art policy much like the “film friendly” policy facilitated by EGRSO/CAD/Creative Industries where an artist or an organization wanting to create a temporary art project or event can be helped through a process that will address a feasibility analysis, permitting and siting requirements, and installation requirements.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

*It is recommended that, as the Southwest quadrant of Downtown continues to be developed, Republic Square be given special attention to continue to develop it into an active vibrant civic site.*

### **Rationale**

Republic Square is in the center of activity of the high-growth area that is the southwestern corner of downtown. The Federal courthouse will be built on the block directly west of the park; Austin Museum of Art is currently

planned for the south block; the Butler Dance Education Center is being created from an old printing plant nearby; and the Austin Music Hall is being renovated to be more soundproof. Nearby Block 21 will offer a new home for the Austin Children's Museum and Austin City Limits Studios, while numerous residences exist and others are being built. For those things that are already active: the Farmer's Market sets up every Saturday morning, closing off the street directly south of the park; Movies in the Park are sponsored by Austin Parks Foundation, Downtown Austin Alliance, and Time Warner; every spring the Austin Fine Arts Festival occupies a number of streets to the south; and bike and foot races occur nearby; City Hall offers its music, visual arts, and film programs and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Retail District offers a shopping experience. Summer 2006 found a unique event on the Intel building shell – Blue Lapis Light, a site-specific dance company, created to put on performances to sold-out audiences. There has always been a desire to acknowledge the history of the park with its Auction Oaks being the site of the first property sale in order to fund the building of Austin and the Mexican-American community's long-term use of the park before moving to the Eastside. Austin Parks Foundation, in partnership with Downtown Austin Alliance, has been facilitating meetings for The Republic Square Partners Group – a group of stakeholders created to help revitalize the park. With the decision to build the Federal Courthouse in 2004 came new ideas for the most recent iteration of revitalization potential. This is the group that will be a leader in determining how the revitalization will occur. Major Stakeholders will convene to determine goals and design of the park.

### **Strategy**

*Civic Arts should continue to be an active member of the Republic Square Partners Group (Austin Parks Foundation, Downtown Austin Alliance, City of Austin Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, General Services Administration, Ballet Austin, Austin Museum of Art, and others) in order to maximize the potential for cultural activities as funds become available through the park redesign.*

### RECOMMENDATION 3

*It is recommended that the Cultural Arts Division become active in the revitalization of the Brush Square with an eye toward art in order to maximize the potential for cultural activities and public art as funds become available.*

#### **Rationale**

Brush Square is what remains of the original square in the southeastern quadrant of the Downtown. Home to the downtown fire station plus the O. Henry House and the Susanna Dickinson House, it is also directly across from the Austin Convention Center, the Hilton Hotel, and the Marriott Courtyard/Residence Inn. It is the site of the annual O. Henry Pun-Off. There are funds identified on the fall 2006 Bond Election to renovate the Susanna Dickinson House.

#### **Strategy**

*The Cultural Arts Division should be poised to make recommendations on the revitalization of the park including bringing the Art in Public Places staff on board when appropriate.*

### RECOMMENDATION 4

*Wooldridge Park is the third and last square of the original four squares. The Cultural Arts Division shall be watchful of potential revitalization and cultural activity in order to maximize the potential for cultural vitality activity and public art.*

#### **Rationale**

Wooldridge Park is north of the Austin History Center and Main Library and south of the County Courthouse and Jail. Graced with a 19<sup>th</sup> Century outdoor concert gazebo, there is sporadic cultural activity that occurs there.

### **Strategy**

*The Cultural Arts Division should be poised to make recommendations on the revitalization of the park including bringing the Art in Public Places Staff on board when there is opportunity for public art.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

*It is recommended that Partner Stakeholders gather together and create a plan for cultural programming and integrated and discrete works of public art in Waterloo Park.*

### **Rationale**

Already in the park is an existing artwork donation on loan – a recent installation of permanent statues honoring Mexican leaders – and numerous festivals and events occurring. Public Art is viewed as an impetus for development and a tool to mark and identify place in Waterloo Park. As green space improvements occur, the integration of public art and artistic designed landscape would add community investment and beauty to place. Waterloo Park is in disrepair because of overuse. Programming policies that would protect the Park and at the same time create dynamic vitality in the Park will enliven this part of Austin.

### **Strategy**

*Major stakeholders in the area and overseers of the park and City cultural activities – Brackenridge Hospital, the City Parks and Recreation Department, Austin Parks Foundation, Ronald McDonald House, The State, the City Cultural Arts Division of Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, and pertinent City Boards and Commissions – gather together to create the Waterloo Park Master Plan for Public Art and Cultural Vitality. The Waller Creek Tunnel Development will begin here in Waterloo Park and has a potential to enhance the visibility of the inlet.*

## RECOMMENDATION 6

*It is recommended that the Civic Arts work with Downtown Austin Alliance and be watchful of potential cultural activity that can occur in the smaller parks and open space (e.g. outdoor lunch plazas, etc.) in order to maximize the potential for cultural vitality activity and public art.*

### Rationale

There are numerous smaller spaces throughout the Downtown District that have potential for animation during special events. These are corporate foyers and urban oases (lunch plazas or small secluded plazas).

### Strategy

*Civic Arts should be poised to make recommendations on ways to bring cultural vitality to the smaller urban public spaces including bringing the Art in Public Places staff on board when there is opportunity for public art.*

## B. Urban Water System and Trails



*Green Austin Series at Austin City Hall, Jimmy Jalapeeno*

The Urban Water System includes Lady Bird Lake and its 10.1 mile hike and bike trail around the Lake and Waller Creek and Shoal Creek and their trails. Like most cities, Austin's waterways are the life blood of the City. In fact, Barton Springs, the natural-fed springs that helps to create Barton

Springs pool in Zilker Park, is known as “the Soul of the City.” The health of Austin’s water is fiercely protected by environmentalists as is the natural environment of the Lady Bird Lake trail fiercely protected by those citizens that want it to remain natural and free of human accoutrements. Waller Creek and Shoal Creek were the original east and west boundaries of Austin that have numerous stories to tell, from the stories of early days as a significant trail of native Americans and early travelers to the stories of heavy flooding.

Trails are a major pedestrian experience in Austin. Running proudly along parks, such as Town Lake Park, or winding quietly throughout creeks and greenways, Austin’s trails, like its waters, are an essential component of both the city’s geography and lifestyle.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

*It is recommended that Town Lake Park and Austin’s creeks be recognized and highlighted as major and important features of the Austin landscape through the addition of temporary works of art and cultural programming that respect and honor their nature.*

### **Rationale**

Lady Bird Lake and Austin’s creeks are so much a part of Austin’s landscape that they often blend in, become anonymous features of place. Many in Austin want this anonymity to remain. They want their landscape to be untouched and respected for itself, for who it is, rather than commercialized or manicured by man-made forces. Similar to Town Lake Park, the trail that runs through the entire park has also become the center of athletic, sporting, and leisure activity in Austin. Used day and night by Austinites and visitors, the trail is definitely an Austin truth. In keeping with all that is Austin, many have fought suggestions of the trail being paved or legitimized in any way as a “trail.” Rather this trail is viewed as a natural extension of those who use it, who pack the dirt down with their running shoes, bicycle tires and hiking boots, and who enjoy its natural, unfettered

magic. Permanent public art along the trail was viewed as an extension of the trail's natural beauty, along with a way of enhancing the trail user experience through moments of serendipity, surprise and beauty. In addition, it was viewed as a means to tell a story, play a game or to engage in an experience that connects place to place along the trail, or marks time and place for a runner, biker, hiker or other trail user.

Others praise the waters and creeks of Austin and want to see them honored and further defined. They want its sometimes anonymous presence to come to the forefront of place. Temporary and rotating artworks and cultural programming are viewed as a means to ebb and flow like the waters themselves. Each new work will have its peak, while the next meanders its way to place creating a series of works which recognize and respect place, yet provide opportunity for artists and their works to regenerate and feed themselves through the life force provided by the waters.

### **Strategy**

*a. Utilize the implementation strategy under Recommendation 1 as a way to bring temporary art along trails: It is recommended that the Cultural Arts Division explore the feasibility and possible partners, such as non-profit and cultural organizations, for an ongoing temporary public art exhibition in Town Lake Park and along the Town Lake Hike and Bike trail and creek trails. (See Recommendation 1)*

*b. Provide park amenities that will create a more artful place (e.g. memorial benches to create a more "artful" seating area) through private commissions of local artists as donations to the City*

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

*It is recommended that permanent works of public art be added to mark pedestrian entrances along the length of the Waller Creek hike and bike trail to aid with connectivity and tie the entire length of the Creek together.*

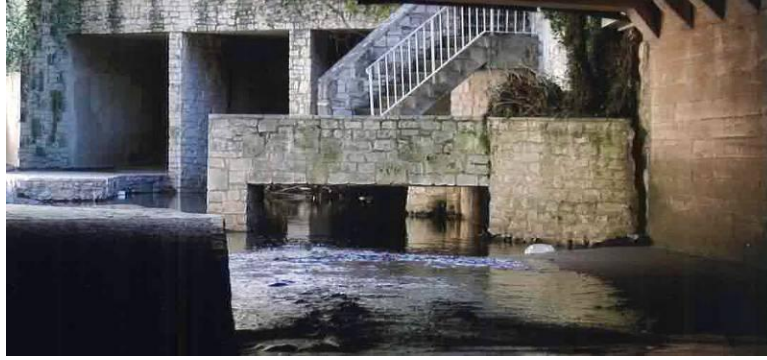


Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

### **Rationale**

Connectivity was a major theme throughout the planning process, and permanent works of public art were viewed as a catalyst for the connection of place and private development. Waller Creek holds a strong historical and geographic place in the minds of Austinites as being, along with Shoal Creek and the Colorado River, one of the original boundaries for Austin city dwellers. The creek runs 6 miles and in the early days embraced by such homeowners as Jesse Driskill, Governor E. J. Davis, sculptress Elizabeth Ney and writer J. Frank Dobie; and powered much of the manufacturing machinery. In 1976, Lady Bird Johnson led an effort to restore the creek to its early reputation as “a beautiful stream of permanent and pure water.” There are several beautiful and restored areas of Waller. In addition, planning process participants felt that of all the creeks, Waller offered tremendous economic potential and that the building of a pedestrian environment similar to the San Antonio River Walk would be a catalyst for private development.

### **Strategy**

*a. When the Waller Creek Tunnel comes on line, use the Art in Public Places percent for art funds to design a “connectivity system” with art to mark the entrances into the Waller Creek Trail; art to celebrate the beginning of the Tunnel and the end of the Tunnel in a significant way; and explore the possibility of telling the story of Waller Creek flooding through art.*



*b. Permanent works of public art including landscape design and discrete features were considered tools to enrich the creek experiences as well as offer storytelling or repetitious elements that aid with the experience of connectivity along the creeks.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

*It is recommended that the Shoal Creek trail be revitalized, and that entrances to the trail be created along Shoal Creek.*

### **Rationale**

Shoal Creek is the largest of the creeks within the city limits, and is considered Waller's "sister" creek. It was originally the western boundary of the city and considered by many to be, along with Waller, the central thread of linear parks through the city. In keeping with the theme of "connection" that continually recurred throughout the planning process, a greenway or trail along Shoal Creek, which included integrated and signature works of public art, was recommended as a way to further enhance pedestrian connectivity throughout Austin. The City of Austin produced the Shoal Creek Greenway Action Plan in 1998.

### **Strategy**

*The City, through its Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office and Cultural Arts Division, shall encourage residential developers and retail developers to enhance the entrances into Waller Creek.*



## **II. Built Environment Systems**

The Built Environment includes Civic Facilities, buildings and structures, parking lots and garages, and vacant lots. These structures are the Austin language of the built environment that provides clues to Austin's character and history to residents and visitors.

While the City of Austin does not currently mandate private developers to include public art or cultural vitality in their projects the Art in Public Places staff is assisting in the selection of artists and the Civic Arts staff assists in nurturing opportunities for dynamic activities. This section includes strategies for public/private partnerships.

### **A. Civic Facilities**

Every City has its collection of cultural facilities that are the cornerstone for cultural activity and for drawing residents downtown and visitors to a city. While the Downtown has such significant facilities as the Paramount Theater, Mexic-Arte, the Jones Center for Contemporary Art, La Pena, the Austin Children's Museum, Women & Their Work, Scottish Rite Theater and others, Austin has ranked low in the past on city report cards for not having large art museums or other significant cultural facilities. This is changing. The new Blanton Art Museum, on the campus of the University of Texas opened its doors in spring 2006 with record-breaking attendance. The Long Performing Arts Center, another important cultural facility and will open its doors in 2008. The Butler Ballet Austin Dance Education Center, created from a former printing facility, will reopen in Spring 2007. The Mexican American Cultural Center is due to open in Spring 2007. And the Austin Museum of Art plans to develop a new museum in a prominent downtown location just south of Republic Square. Additionally, the downtown is also home to various other galleries, theaters and numerous live music venues.



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

## RECOMMENDATION 10

*It is recommended that the City analyze the number, type, variety, location, and condition of cultural facilities available Downtown to determine a necessary course of action to address the health of facilities, to recommend any needed facilities, to understand location clusters for marketing, and to spark dialogue about Austin facilities.*

### Rationale

When listening to the arts community there is ongoing conversation about the lack of certain cultural facilities, e.g. “we don’t have enough theaters with 300-600 seats,” and “the noise ordinance is driving live music venues out of the downtown.” In order for the City to understand what the Downtown has in the way of cultural facilities, what is needed for the arts and cultural organizations and creative industries to not just survive, but thrive, and to provide analysis and additional data to spark conversations about other issues. The *Downtown Arts Development Study* process has created some cultural mapping. More will be facilitated through the Community Cultural Planning process.

## Strategy

*The City shall conduct a database and create cultural maps in order to foster dialogue about Downtown cultural facilities.*

## B. Private Development

Another common theme brought forth during the planning process was the desire for private development to include public art in their efforts either directly or through partnership with Art in Public Places. Although the City of Austin does not mandate that private developers include public art or cultural vitality activities many city public art programs are involved in very successful public/private partnerships. Although there is some commonality in how these cities go about partnering efforts – designated funding, incentives or door knocking – the partnerships have resulted in some of the finest public artworks in those cities.



*Let Every Man Sit Under His Vine, and None Should Make Him Afraid*, Ryah Christensen located at Robertson Hill Apartments

## RECOMMENDATION 11

*It is recommended that art and design be integrated throughout the downtown infrastructure including building and landscape design and that the City encourage private development partnerships to help make this happen.*

## **Rationale**

Artworks add life and beauty throughout the City; mark or create place; add cultural vitality; provide identity to place; recognize place uniqueness, culture or purpose; spur private development; and increase city economic vitality.

Along with the benefits of having many public artworks of the highest quality in the city, there are secondary benefits. The city and private sector form collaborations that provide each with a more positive image of the other, and cause a relationship that furthers the main goals – to build a city that is vibrant and culturally alive, and one which attracts new business and spurs its economic engine. An example of a successful public/private partnership is the partnership with AMLI to commission a public art work as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Great Streets implementation. AMLI has also provided public space for temporary exhibitions, providing one of the most interesting visual arts experiences of 2005 when they opened their raw retail space prior to build-out to a group of University of Texas art students. They later provided space for another group of temporary artists and also for an exhibition put on by one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street retailers.

## **Strategy**

*a. When the City develops a private development Building Density Program or tax incentive program, the Civic Arts and Art in Public Places Program shall advise the City on ideas for including public art and cultural vitality opportunities.*

*b. The Cultural Arts Division shall research private development public art programs and downtown cultural funds in other cities in order to analyze such mechanisms for Austin.*

*c. The Cultural Arts Division should develop slide show presentations on the value of public art and cultural vitality and seek opportunities for presentation to Chambers of Commerce, commercial associations as the Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA), BOMA, neighborhood groups, and others.*

### C. Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures are a mainstay of the built environment. Their presence and architectural design provides clues to Austin through the building materials used and the architectural detailing expressed. The arts and their relationship with the city's architecture can further define a city's language and bring clarity and definition to the urban landscape.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

### RECOMMENDATION 12

*It is recommended that wall treatments such as projections, lighting, digital artwork and murals, either temporary or permanent, be considered for prominent blank walls in downtown.*



Drawing produced by DADS Advisor

## **Rationale**

There are several blank walls throughout the Downtown that could add visual interest if given some visual treatment permanently or as part of special events. Temporary artworks or projections turn an empty and unattractive wall space into an event. Several cities use walls to project movies outdoors and create a movie series event during certain months. Projections are also used to display digital artworks or photographic events. In the 1980s the northwest face of the State building at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Guadalupe was used as a movie screen for viewers in Republic Square. More recently, First Night participants utilized the large wall of the Radisson Hotel at Congress Avenue and Cesar Chavez Street for projections December 2005. Participants in the planning process singled out certain walls for treatment including those at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and San Antonio, the Federal and State buildings, and Cesar Chavez Street and the Plaza Lofts. However, careful thinking should go into the choice of a wall to act as a canvas for temporary artworks such as staging considerations, wall material and size, viewing area and whether the surroundings can offer a potential for gathering and socializing during events.

Artist designed lighting or digital imagery is a way to add beauty, light and sometimes changing and interactive experiences to a building or environment. Such materials as neon, fiber optics, digital and sound imagery, and the buildings and landscapes they occupy, become city landmarks and destinations. Several cities have used lighting and digital artworks as a way to involve citizens in a dialogue with a building either through artworks that personally involve people in making the artworks work, or through artworks that continuously change.

## **Strategy**

*a. The Cultural Arts Division shall inventory blank walls in the downtown area suitable for such treatments, identify interested people in partnering up for the creation of a wall treatment program, and investigate possible funding sources.*

*b. The City shall support and work with those entities desiring to create lighting events on buildings downtown. Private Development incentive*



*package (see recommendation under B. Private Development) and the Cultural Arts Funding Programs are possible funding sources.*

### RECOMMENDATION 13

*It is recommended that art treatments be added as part of fencing surrounding construction sites in order to mitigate the visual eyesore of the construction process.*

#### **Rationale**

The city of Austin is in the middle of a cultural renaissance. Public and private improvement and development efforts have given way to a plethora of construction efforts throughout the city. These areas are often eyesores that can disrupt convenience by causing temporary changes to pedestrian and vehicular transit patterns. Many communities have used the arts, both public art and festivals and events, to help alleviate the inconvenience caused by development efforts and to beautify place during construction. The painting or artistic treatment of construction fencing by local artists or school children provides both with an opportunity for expression and ownership in city development efforts.

#### **Strategy**

*Consider artistic construction fencing to be part of any tax incentive program or building density program that the City of Austin negotiates with private developers (see recommendation under B. Private Development.)*

### RECOMMENDATION 14

*It is recommended that the City, developers, and contractors utilize the resource of Austin architectural artisans and artists for the creation of architectural detailing and functional works.*

### **Rationale**

Such buildings as the Driskill Hotel (circa 1886) with its exterior limestone historical busts and architectural detailing and the Palmer Community Events Center with its limestone sea creatures, and the metal Zilker Garden Gates are all wonderful examples of artisan work, past and present, that reflect Austin character. These architectural marks express the various imagery of Austin and help make the downtown visually rich.

### **Strategy**

*Art in Public Places Program shall investigate a local artisan resource into the existing artists' registry and City's purchasing system as a way to assist developers and architects to better utilize local artists and architectural artisans in the built environment including architectural detailing and free-standing functional street amenities.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 15**

*It is recommended that temporary or permanent artist designed shading devices be added to downtown buildings to guard against the summer heat and sun and encourage more pedestrian activity.*

### **Rationale**

During the planning process, participants noted that it was often difficult to walk downtown because of the heat and lack of shade. The Great Streets Master Plan seeks to develop a more pedestrian friendly and active downtown, which is being accomplished through mixed use development, wider sidewalks, planting strips, trees and public art. However, few of the downtown buildings currently offer physical shade such as awnings. This recommendation involves artists in the creation of creative shade devices which could either be temporary or permanent, and which could become an event that adds shade devices incrementally over a period of time.

## Strategy

*The Cultural Arts Division shall recommend and define public art and cultural vitality parameters as part of the City's future incentive package, and encourage artist/artisan-designed shade structures as an example of such an incentive (See Recommendation 11).*

## D. Parking Lots and Garages

With the age of the automobile came one of the city's most unattractive physical structures – the parking garage. Originally designed to save city ground space and at the same time hold a high number of automobiles, the parking garage was viewed by most cities as a given utilitarian necessity. Little money or thought went into the design of these concrete bread boxes leaving major portions of the city's landscape with huge pauses in an otherwise fulfilling dialogue. With the city's new focus for qualitative rather than quantitative design also comes a new view of the parking lot and garage. Some cities are burying parking, while others are farming them out to park and rides and preaching the necessity to take transit. But the need for places to park in the city, at least in the near future, is not going away.



Parking Garage design by Barnes Gromatsky Kosarek Architects; artwork design by Ann Adams

## RECOMMENDATION 16

*It is recommended that artistically designed landscaping or other artist designed architectural features be integrated into expansive parking lots and garages throughout downtown to increase their attractiveness, orient users and provide a sense of safety.*

## Rationale

Artistically designed or applied artworks can do much to mitigate the appearance of old parking structures, and the inclusion of integrated artworks

in new parking facility designs can do even more. Beautification can be combined with functional needs such as aiding with cognitive recognition of parking floor and space, or working with a metal artist on railing. Opportunities for artworks should be integrated into a unified way-finding system in an otherwise concrete maze, and if the artist is teamed with the architect during design, the artwork can be built right alongside the parking structure keeping costs to a minimum. In addition, artworks can become a part of landscaping, paving, fencing, or streetscape furniture in large parking lots with intention of humanizing these vast spaces and also providing way finding potential.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall encourage public art architectural enhancements for parking garages either through the percent-for-art program or as part of the architectural design of public and private development (See Recommendation 11).*

## **RECOMMENDATION 17**

*It is recommended that permanent and temporary artworks or event programming take place in parking garages throughout downtown to increase their attractiveness, orient users and provide a sense of safety.*

### **Rationale**

Occasionally, parking lots and garages sit empty. During these times, they can become a canvas for temporary and rotating artworks and events. Even when full, temporary works such as sound and lighting, painting and digital imagery can aid with user orientation and way-finding.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall encourage permanent and temporary artworks including event programming for parking garages either through the percent-for-art program or as a partnership with private development (See Recommendation 11).*

## E. Vacant Lots and Spaces

Vacant lots and spaces are rare in most cities. Often, they exist during times of major redevelopment efforts where land is cleared but lays in waiting for its next inhabitant. Traffic triangles and small open spaces where they exist can offer potential for stand-alone or integrated artistic planting schemes or artistic designs for planned signage.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

## RECOMMENDATION 18

*It is recommended that temporary artworks and temporary art programming occur in any open lots, spaces waiting for construction, and vacant retail windows in the downtown landscape.*

### Rationale

A common theme during the planning process was the need for temporary artworks and art programming as a means to enliven the downtown landscape. The incidence and placement of changing and rotating artworks and exhibits was viewed as a means to create a shift in the visual arts scene in Austin. Comparisons were made to the music scene which involves the work of several musicians of varying styles that are ever changing. The visual arts scene in Austin lags behind the music scene, and given funding constraints, temporary artworks is viewed as a way to involve

many artists of varying backgrounds and voices in the creation of artworks in downtown Austin. Among areas suggested for temporary works were the blocks bounded by 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Cesar Chavez, Red River and IH-35.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall work with developers, property owners, and Downtown Austin Alliance to assist in the facilitation of temporary public art and exhibitions. Cultural Arts Division shall explore the use of pre-leased vacant space as part of the incentive package for developers and property owners (See Recommendation 11). The City shall encourage use of pre-construction open lots for arts events in temporary open spaces downtown as part of the contract negotiation phase with private developers or during the permitting phase of a development project.*

### III. Connectivity Systems

The movement of people from place to place is done on foot, by bicycle, by car, and by public transportation. The paths people take using these modes of mobility are the connections between places – the corridors and streetscapes. Gateways mark entrances. Transit systems have their accompanying waiting locations, providing numerous opportunities for public art.

#### A. Streetscapes and Corridors

The Great Streets Master Plan, focusing on creating the best experience for the pedestrian, provides the template for the creation of a network of connecting streets that are comfortable and walkable. Among the recommendations and guidelines are wider sidewalks, trees and planting strips, functional seating and lighting, and public art.

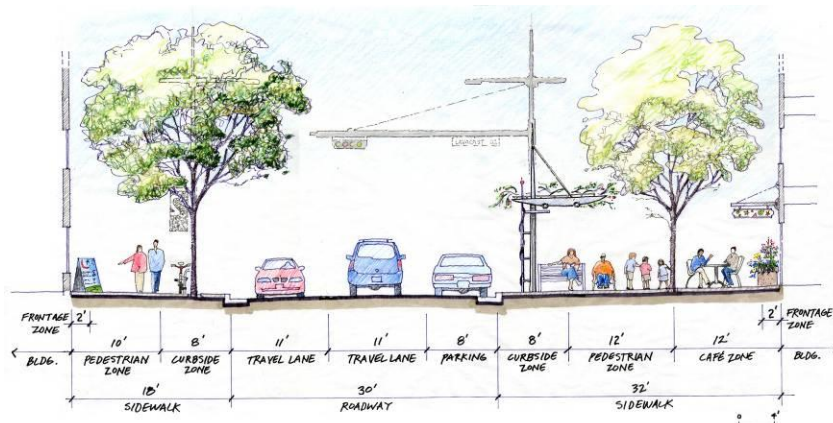


Image for Second Street District Streetscape Improvement Project as designed by Copley Wolff Design Group

#### RECOMMENDATION 19

*It is recommended that artist designed signage, banners, or artworks that act as markers, be integrated into pedestrian corridors to help orient pedestrians and act as navigational landmarks.*



Drawing provided by DADS Advisor

### **Rationale**

In keeping with the themes of connectivity and orientation, planning participants recommended that artists be commissioned to create signage or markers that aid with the pedestrian transit experience and provide clues that help them navigate through downtown. Specific reference was made to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. as a street that was in need of navigational markers. However, the entire downtown streetscape system was considered an opportunity for an artist designed map or other navigational device.

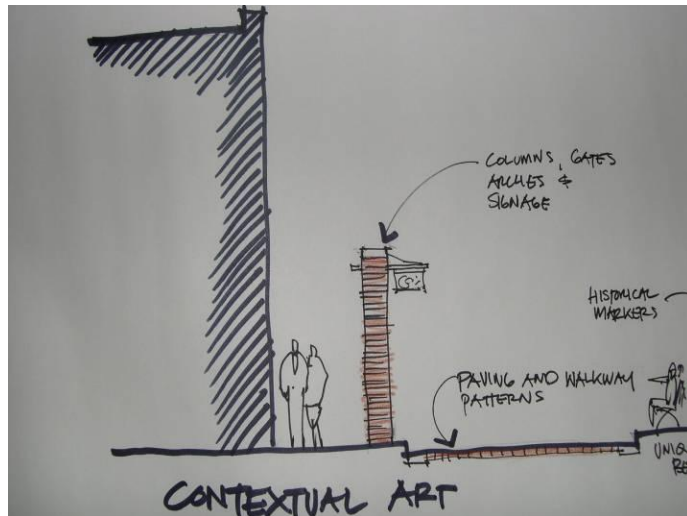
### **Strategy**

*The City shall create a way finding system that includes artists' work in interesting and/or innovative ways.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 20**

*It is recommended that artists or artisans be involved in the integrated design of standard streetscape features along key downtown streets such as light poles, signage or markers, benches, trashcans, newspaper stands, pavers, and other streetscape infrastructure to enhance the pedestrian experience as outlined in the City's Great Streets Program.*





Drawing provided by DADS Advisor

### Rationale

Planning process participants felt that the integration of art into functional elements or the replacement of off-the-shelf functional elements with artist designed functional elements would both enhance the pedestrian experience as outlined in the Great Streets Program and provide opportunities for artists and artworks to enter the urban landscape at minimal cost. In addition, planning participants noted that Art in Public Places should be considered a regular member of downtown planning and design initiatives to ensure artworks were incorporated early and that art become a seamless component of design. Specific areas for art enhancement included the Convention Center to Congress Avenue, north from the Convention Center to 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Cesar Chavez, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Red River, Trinity, Brazos and Lamar. However, it was the sentiment that any streets undergoing Great Streets Improvement efforts include integrated artworks.

### Strategy

*a. In addition to the Art in Public Places 2% for streetscape enhancements the City shall encourage the use of construction dollars to be used for artistic streetscape elements.*

*b. The City shall explore the use of a pre-approved rotating artisan roster for the design and fabrication of streetscape elements (See Recommendation 15).*

## **RECOMMENDATION 21**

*It is recommended that works of art be integrated into crosswalks, streets, and sidewalk paving throughout downtown with the intention of orienting and enhancing both the pedestrian and vehicular street crossing experience.*

### **Rationale**

Artist designed crosswalks and sidewalks have been recognized as an opportunity for public art in other cities and are being used on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. These come in the form of artistic paving or bronze, metal or other material inlays in concrete, and provide an opportunity to further orient pedestrians. The application of the materials could be diverse including story telling, marking place, recording history, or beautifying place. If designed during streetscape improvement efforts, the cost of including artistic enhancements within crosswalks and paving would be minimal. In the charrette, areas specifically mentioned included MLK and Guadalupe, MLK and Lavaca, MLK and Congress Avenue. The Republic Square Task Force identified the desire to have a history walk from Republic Square to Congress Avenue.

### **Strategy**

*Art in Public Places shall work closely with the Great Streets Program implementers to include artists on design teams and to partner with private developers in the strategy of privately funded streetscape improvement projects.*

## RECOMMENDATION 22

*It is recommended that the islands or medians in pedestrian crosswalks be artistically enhanced either through artist designed planting schemes or artworks to improve the downtown pedestrian and vehicular experience.*



Drawing provided by DADS Advisor

### Rationale

Islands and medians were also considered an optimal location for the inclusion of artist designed planting schemes. MLK was specifically mentioned as an area that could benefit from this artistic approach. However, it was also discussed that the planting schemes could tie the entire downtown together through some similarity of planting choice or artistic enhancement yet provide uniqueness to place through the use of differing planting choices or artistic enhancements within the similarity as is happening with the choice of street trees for the Great Streets Master Plan.

### Strategy

*Art in Public Places shall work closely with the Great Streets Program implementers to include artists for street islands or medians.*

## RECOMMENDATION 23

*It is recommended that interactive artworks such as sound works, digital works or other works be placed or integrated into major intersections and bus stops to engage both the pedestrian and vehicular experience.*

### **Rationale**

The use of sound or digital works were considered a means to enliven areas of the urban landscape; offer moments of serendipity, surprise and humor; and engage pedestrians in a dialogue and interaction with place. The use of works that engage pedestrians through sound is becoming a more commonly used art form in the urban landscape. Sidewalks, walkways or streetscape elements that are integrated with motion detectors or pressure devices cause the pedestrians themselves to make the sound happen delighting both adults and children alike. Sounds can also be specific to place offering opportunity for cities to distinguish themselves. Sound works also become both a local and tourist attraction and are one of the most successful types of artworks of the waiting experience layer.

### **Strategy**

*a. Art in Public Places shall consider appropriate City construction percent-for-art projects for sound works and digital works. Art in Public Places shall be available as a resource to Capitol Metro in the development of future light rail stations (See Recommendation 31).*

*b. The City should support and encourage opportunities for technology artists, and visual artists paired with technology artists, to create sound works and digital works.*

## RECOMMENDATION 24

*It is recommended that art be part of any City initiative to extend Red River to the Mexican American Cultural Center, connect Rainey to Sabine, and connect Red River to Holly Street.*

### **Rationale**

As stated earlier, connection was one of the most commonly recurring themes of the planning process. Although not entirely an art recommendation, participants in the planning process often combined their views of city needs with art needs, providing testament to the sophistication of participants and their understanding of the impact art and artists can have on city change.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall consider including public art and cultural activities as part of any streetscape extension project to encourage concepts of connectivity within downtown.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 25**

*It is recommended that the whole downtown length of IH-35 between Downtown and East Austin should be investigated for opportunities to emphasize connections between the two areas. To that end it is recommended that enhancements for the underpass at 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets be implemented, and that the Rainey Street area capture the flavor of East Austin via Holly Street through both temporary and permanent public artworks.*

### **Rationale**

As mentioned earlier, East Austin was considered although not studied during the planning process. East Austin is home to both Latino and African American communities, and, in the last several years, has become a mecca of artist studios and artsy establishments that are real and authentic as opposed to chic or cosmopolitan. East Austin's diversity and natural flavor make it distinct from anywhere else in Austin. On the eastside, 11<sup>th</sup> Street is the gateway to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets Community Redevelopment Project and the Anderson Hill Redevelopment Project. An arched gateway announces entry into the area when traveling east from the downtown. The City of Austin is facilitating the transformation of the IH-35 underpass at 6<sup>th</sup> through

8<sup>th</sup> Streets. Because of the Rainey Street area's proximity to East Austin across Holly Street, charrette participants felt that expanding its flavor into Rainey was a natural. Using temporary and permanent works of public art that can help create place and mark gateways between the Downtown and the East side should echo East Austin's diversity and distinction.

### **Strategy**

*The Cultural Arts Division shall assess the IH-35 underpass projects and recommend next steps.*

### **B. Gateways**

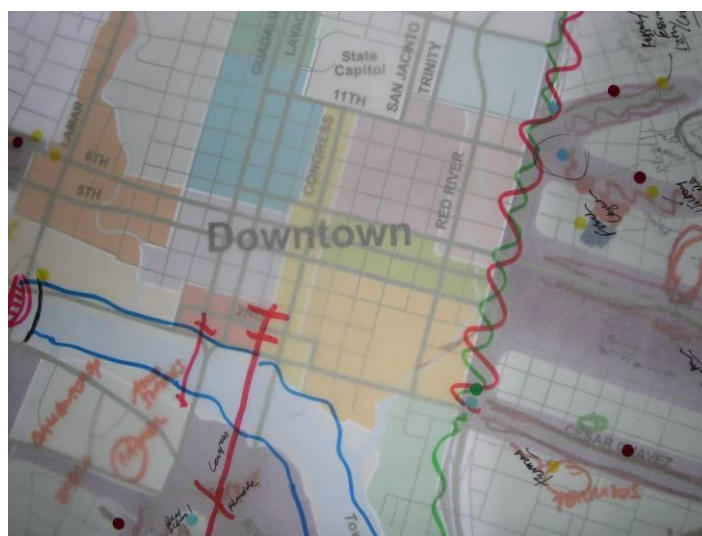
Gateways are the city's opportunity to welcome people, to distinguish it from all other cities, to provide its people with pride, to put itself on the map, and to position itself to be seen by the global world in exactly the way it wants to be seen. *See V: Mapping Place* for descriptions of the gateways.



Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

## RECOMMENDATION 26

*It is recommended that large or grand scale discrete artworks be sited at important gateways to mark entry/exit to downtown. These include: on the south are the bridges into downtown, on the east are the gateways through IH-35, on the west are 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and 12<sup>th</sup> and Enfield/15<sup>th</sup> Streets and on the north is Guadalupe and Congress Avenue/Speedway.*



Drawing provided by DADS Advisor

### Rationale

When you think of Paris, you think of the Eiffel Tower; St. Louis, the Arch; and Grand Rapids, the Calder. All are works of public art. Large and grand scale signature artworks provide cities with instant identity and cognitive memory of place. Because downtown is in the midst of major efforts to increase its image, identity and sense of place, the placement of large or grand scale artworks at key gateways will not only mark place, it will also create a feeling of transition, excitement, and anticipation for the vehicular experience, offering a first chapter for a story to follow.

### **Strategy**

*There is no funding for these gateway projects. The City should prioritize the entrance gateways into the Downtown and as time and funding permit, the City shall encourage the following entities to partner in realizing such signature art works: Downtown Austin Alliance, corporations, and the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association. Submitting a grant to the National Endowment for the Arts is a viable option for this kind of project.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 27**

*It is recommended that artworks that function as streetscape elements, signage, or discrete works be placed at key areas throughout downtown to provide district or neighborhood distinction, define areas, or act as gateways between areas.*

### **Rationale**

Within the entire downtown experience, there are unique experiences and flavors of place. Different district and usage patterns call for different experiences such as arts and entertainment, music, history, mixed-used, and retail. Each of these areas provides a venue for unique signage or signature artworks that define and distinguish the unique social and cultural flavor of the area. In addition, similar to large and grand scale gateways that mark entrance to downtown, these artworks, although smaller in scale, can accomplish the same functional considerations – marking and identifying place and creating a sense of transition between places – which provides both vehicles and pedestrians with a sense of anticipation and a cognitive awareness of where they are.

### **Strategy**

*The City, downtown stakeholders, and history associations and organizations should utilize opportunities through the Great Streets Program to find ways to distinguish different areas in downtown.*



### C. Transit Systems

Art in Transit has become one of the fastest growing and most successful public art initiatives in the country offering opportunity for transit users to enjoy fine works of art, more beautiful and engaging spaces and more people friendly environments. In addition, the inclusion of art is used as a tool to entice people to ride transit, thereby diminishing the presence of the automobile in the downtown environment, and maybe someday even the parking garage.



Photo courtesy of Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority

### RECOMMENDATION 28

*It is recommended that integrated and functional artworks be included at bus and Dillo stops, in or surrounding any new transit stations, the new commuter rail stations, and major Downtown transfer locations.*

#### Rationale

Although this art program is not currently within the purview of Art in Public Places Program, participants didn't distinguish between Art in Public

Places initiatives or other initiatives. In general, all public art being added to the urban landscape is perceived as a Public Art and Design project. Many cities are successfully integrating public art into their bus stops and light rail systems creating spaces that are welcoming, attractive, engaging, and beautiful, and which often become signatures for their city. Participants regarded the inclusion of public art in public transportation initiatives as a high priority.

Republic Square, Brazos and E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street at the State Capitol are all sites for major public transportation transfers Downtown.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall advise and assist Capital Metro to develop policy and process for including art in the Austin transit system.*

#### IV. Cultural Systems

These include honoring and revealing history and stories of Austin, providing and supporting spaces for everyday and special events to occur, and growing the artistic and cultural community contributing to the Austin identity.

Creating a city is an ongoing reiterative process of agreeing, disagreeing, and consensus; building, tearing down, and rebuilding. Each generation layers their sense of what the city should be on top of the one before. One can read some of the physical traces of these changes in the landscape and buildings. Other stories are destroyed when a building is destroyed or when the actions of creating the city cause stories to be forgotten. Yet every place has its “truths” – characteristics and even stories that seem to be constant through its history. These other stories of place – whether they are stories specific to ethnic cultures, music, the landscape and environment, technology, or others – all are rich material for content for public art and cultural vitality.

Downtown Austin is often thought of as the “living room of the City.” It is the place where people come together in community to share the everyday activities and the special events of the City. Without this cultural vitality happening in the places downtown, both buildings and public spaces, there is little reason to come downtown but for work. Austin can provide and support spaces for everyday and special events to occur.

Helping grow Austin’s individual artists, for-profit creative industries and nonprofit arts and culture organizations, and various ethnic cultures, ensures ongoing cultural vitality Downtown and growing opportunities for resident and visitor participation. These contribute to residents’ quality of life and create a distinctive Austin identity with a competitive edge in the regional, national, and international global marketplace.

## A. History, Stories, and Individual Expressions

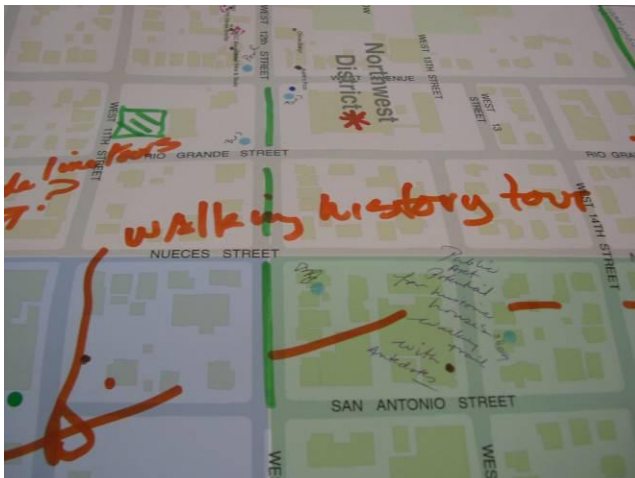


*Rhapsody*, John Yancey commissioned by Austin Revitalization Authority

Every place is layered with stories – history stories, stories of place, and individual expressions. History shapes the essence of place. It lives inside place like memory lives inside people. The recognition of place history is of the same importance as the recognition of individual roots. The notion of place denying that it has history is the same as an individual denying his past. Place stories are those stories that are tied to the landscape and values of the people and contribute to place identity for both residents and outsiders. There is also place for the individual expressions of the artist.

### RECOMMENDATION 29

*It is recommended that an artistically designed heritage and history walk or trail be located in the downtown, which captures the rich history of Austin, invites tourism, and educates the public.*



Drawing provided by DADS Advisor

## **Rationale**

Austin has a rich and flavorful history marked with stories of its founding and development that are larger than life, filled with a poetic sensitivity that captures a love of its land and people, and laden at times with inequalities and injustices. All these traits can still be seen in today's Austin – an unwavering sensitivity and loyalty to its land and natural resources, a larger than life pride in its individualism and entrepreneurial spirit, and a desire to seek ways to rectify and celebrate its differences. Those that regard Austin's history as important do so with passion. The recommendation for a heritage/history walk downtown to celebrate Austin's rich past was another common theme of the planning process right alongside recommendations that Austin look toward its future. While the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau / Heritage Marketing has created a number of walking tour guides for the downtown, people feel these could be expanded to include something on the ground as a path, or something technological like wireless stations that would transmit history to one accessing it, or more diversified brochures that could include histories not shown very much.

## **Strategy**

*It is recommended the Austin history and heritage community made up of the Austin Heritage Society, Austin History Center and the Austin History Association, Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau Heritage Marketing, COA Neighborhood Planning/Historic Preservation, and other entities such as the City, Downtown Austin Alliance, and pertinent others take the lead on stewarding this recommendation for the Downtown. Through a process of cultural assessment, inventorying, benchmarking what other cities have done, researching grant opportunities, identifying creative and innovative ways to reveal history, these stakeholders can come up with a plan for revealing important history in the downtown area. Such a project has potential for receiving funds through the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Texas Humanities Council, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts, and other funding sources.*

## RECOMMENDATION 30

*It is recommended that through the revitalization plans for Republic Square, a significant history component be facilitated.*

### **Rationale**

For a number of years there has been an intention that, through the revitalization of Republic Square, there would be a historical overlay depiction to educate people on Republic Square's important history as both the beginning of Austin (with the sale of lots from under the Auction Oaks) to the rich inhabitation by Austin's Mexican Americans in late 1800s-early 1900s, and other historical events.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall identify a process to enable an historic overlay project to happen as part of the revitalization of Republic Square. Art in Public Places shall consider the historical significance of the park in development of a percent-for-art project.*

## RECOMMENDATION 31

*It is recommended that artwork placed within the Rainey Street District reference the history of the area.*

### **Rationale**

Not particularly an art recommendation, Charrette participants were asked to consider potential themes for districts and areas and it was recommended that the historical significance of the Rainey Street District be recognized through National Historic District designation.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall appropriate eligible public art dollars to artwork that references the history of the area.*

## RECOMMENDATION 32

*It is recommended that the City, through its various programs including Art in Public Places and Civic Arts, make it possible for various stories to be showcased in a variety of ways.*

### **Rationale**

As part of the Great Streets Program/Art in Public Places projects implemented along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street public art works are depicting stories of the rivers at the corners of intersections of the river streets with two major works honoring and telling a story of the Central Texas springs. At City Hall the public art work in the plaza uses a sapling from Treaty Oak. All these emphasize Austinites' value of its waterways, landscape, and environment. The Angelina Eberly sculpture at Congress Ave and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, a donation by Capital Area Statue (CAST) depicts a person and event in Austin's history. The stars in the sidewalk from the Convention Center to East 6<sup>th</sup> Street honor numerous musicians. An artistic bench on the Lady Bird Lake trail at Cesar Chavez and 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge tells the story of a favorite local artist as does the Stevie Ray Vaughn sculpture on Lady Bird Lake trail on the south side of the river tells the story of a favorite local musician. Activities such as the Cinco de Mayo celebrations at City Hall plaza and Wooldridge Park, and Juneteenth parade down Congress Ave celebrate some of our diverse ethnic cultures. All these are about telling the Austin stories. The fine arts exhibitions in the various AMLI buildings in the last two years celebrate the individual story and their quests for self-expression. All of these are stories that come from places, communities, and people in Austin.

### **Strategy**

*a. The Art in Public Places Program shall seek to facilitate projects that reflect a variety of stories of Austin from the individual story to the community story.*

*b. Civic Arts shall seek to support and encourage projects and activities that tell a variety of Austin stories.*

### RECOMMENDATION 33

*It is recommended that history and other stories use a variety of communication methods.*

#### **Rationale**

Bronze figurative sculpture and historical plaques are traditional ways to communicate history. However, there are numerous other ways to tell history or place stories. When the Angelina Eberly sculpture was dedicated in a public ceremony an actress played the part of Angelina Eberly come back from history and addressed the audience while Mayor Will Wynn told a story. Given Austin's creativity and innovation, innovative media and approaches could be created to tell Austin history and place stories. The use of technology or wireless opportunities is an example.

#### **Strategy**

*The City should seek, create opportunities, develop partnerships, and support innovative ways for telling Austin history and place stories through their various projects.*

### **B. Everyday and Special Event Place Systems**

Dynamic scenes, everyday activities and special events at cultural facilities and outdoor performances, festivals, parades, and other events bring cultural vitality to place. Austin's current entertainment and event venues are multiple and diverse, but according to participants in the planning process there is still a need for additional venues of varying scales that reach different audiences and a need to find ways to sustain the current cultural vitality. Outdoor public spaces are key ingredients for supporting the cultural activity that creative economy experts refer to as "street life" that includes both the bustling of people moving from place to place and actual activities that occur on the street and in the outdoor public spaces. (See related recommendations under Natural Environment Systems and Built Environment Systems.)





Photo courtesy of DADS Advisor

#### RECOMMENDATION 34

*It is recommended that the City, and its various partners, shall continue to develop the downtown area as a focal point for the City and Region as a center of cultural vitality and promotion of “Downtown Austin is the community’s living room.”*

##### **Rationale**

During the day or night sidewalk cafes display dynamic activity signaling bustling street life. When one attends a performance in the evening downtown often times dinner and perhaps after-dinner drinks are included. And such dynamic festivals as the Austin Fine Arts Festival or First Night fill the streets with visitors and activity. These are all “scenes” – collections of synergistic businesses that can work together to maximize the experience for the downtown visitor. They make a downtown alive and keep people coming back time and time again. Through the City’s Cultural Assessment and the Community Cultural Planning process these cultural centers are being mapped. Downtown Austin Alliance has created a significant marketing tool with their PBS Downtown program that brands Downtown Austin as a happening place to be.

### **Strategy**

*a. The Civic Arts shall work with Downtown Austin Alliance, arts and culture organizations, and other entertainment offerings such as restaurants and retail to create dynamic “scenes,” to create a downtown brand for the arts, and to market them locally and, with the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau, to market them regionally and nationally.*

*b. The Cultural Arts Division shall research the development of a Downtown Cultural Fund that supports cultural programming and artworks not currently funded through government resources.*

### **RECOMMENDATION 35**

*It is recommended that the City nurture and strengthen those cultural places, institutions, businesses and initiatives with the power to attract people and businesses, define local or regional cultural heritage, draw tourists, and catalyze economic growth.*

### **Rationale**

Those places where people gather and become community are cultural vitality centers. They are the sites that have the power to attract people and businesses, define local or regional cultural heritage, draw tourists, and catalyze economic growth.

### **Strategy**

*a. The City, through its Community Cultural Planning process, shall develop and implement a cultural vitality measurement system to record the ongoing cultural health of the downtown arts, culture, and creative industries community.*

*b. Civic Arts shall be vigilant in keeping watch over existing cultural places and emerging places that can become cultural vitality centers of the future, in order to monitor the health and make recommendations for nurturing, preserving and sustaining the cultural environment downtown.*

## RECOMMENDATION 36

*It is recommended that Republic Square continue to be developed as a place for cultural activity including performance as the park is being revitalized; the Butler Ballet Austin Educational Center becomes active; and Austin Museum of Art opens in order to showcase the cultural richness of Austin.*

### **Rationale**

Elsewhere in the *Downtown Arts Development Study* recommendations were delineated for a Republic Square history depiction and a description of its pivotal positioning in the southwest quadrant of the downtown making it an ideal location for performances that showcase Austin's cultural richness. Ballet Austin recognizes the value of Republic Square's location. Austin Museum of Art is a partner in the Republic Square Partnership Team and will be able to utilize the Park for various activities. The Park's rich history of the Latino community in the late 1800s lends itself to present significant Latino celebrations.

### **Strategy**

*The Civic Arts shall continue to work with the Republic Square Partnership group in the ongoing revitalization of Republic Square, identifying opportunities for cultural expressions, initiatives, projects, and programming. (See Recommendation 2 for other recommendations regarding Republic Square.)*

## RECOMMENDATION 37

*It is recommended that the Rainey Street District become a cultural arts district through the development of arts programming, the attraction of arts facilities, and the development of a density of retail, galleries, restaurants, artist housing, and other arts services.*

### **Rationale**

There has been consideration that the Rainey Street District would become a cultural arts district. Planning participants reinforced this concept and suggested that in addition to an artist live/work space that retail, galleries, cultural facilities and other cultural arts venues be concentrated in Rainey and that it be actively marketed as a cultural district.

### **Strategy**

*The City shall investigate the possibility of Rainey Street becoming a Cultural District, create a report describing its status and recommend a course of action.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 38**

*It is recommended that additional locales downtown be identified for event activities.*

### **Rationale**

Certain places, institutions, and initiatives in a downtown become focal points for activity, have the power to attract people and businesses, define local or regional cultural heritage, draw tourists, and catalyze economic growth.

### **Strategy**

*Civic Arts shall work with Downtown Austin Alliance, artists, arts and culture organizations, and other entertainment offerings such as restaurants and retail, to identify latent centers of cultural vitality to nurture to become dynamic “scenes.”*

## **C. Community Systems**

The community is the people of place. The city’s job is to nurture its people and the people’s job is to nurture its city. The even interchange between both is one of the most essential components of a city that is alive.

Helping grow Austin's individual artists, for-profit creative industries and nonprofit arts and culture organizations, and various ethnic cultures, ensures ongoing cultural vitality Downtown and growing opportunities for resident office worker, and visitor participation. These contribute to residents' quality of life and create a distinctive Austin identity with a competitive edge in the regional, national, and international global marketplace.



Photo courtesy of the City of Austin

## RECOMMENDATION 39

*It is recommended that the City use its various programs and opportunities to grow artist entrepreneurs, for-profit creative industries, nonprofit arts and culture organizations, and ethnic cultural expressions in the Downtown.*

### **Rationale**

During the Artist Round Table and interview process, artists voiced a desire to be more included in the Art in Public Places Program. Public art workshops for local artists can serve two purposes: 1) it can help educate local artists who have not yet, or have very recently, entered into the public art domain; and 2) it can provide artists an opportunity to air any concerns they may have and the Art in Public Places Program the opportunity to

address, and if need be correct incorrect information that led to, their concerns.

Additionally, for a robust culturally vital downtown to occur and be sustained over time the City of Austin must be ever vigilant on the emerging, growing, and ongoing creative industries, nonprofit arts and culture organizations, and ethnic cultural expressions.

### **Strategy**

*a. The Art in Public Places Program shall offer public art workshops to the visual arts community and to the business community.*

*b. Civic Arts shall continue to develop and implement strategies to nurture emerging artists and to advise organizations and businesses on new projects that could find a place in the Downtown.*

## **RECOMMENDATION 40**

*It is recommended that the City identify and implement strategies to strengthen Austin's cultural economic development.*

### **Rationale**

In 2003 City leaders moved the charge of developing Austin arts and culture to Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office. This included the Cultural Funding Programs, Art in Public Places (proposed to be renamed Public Art and Design), commercial music and film, and technology, and Austin Sense of Place (called Civic Arts, proposed to be renamed the Cultural Vitality Development Program). Because the economic development of arts and culture is such a critical piece in Austin's ongoing race to be distinctive in the regional, national, and global marketplace, the Plan authors thought it important to reiterate in the ***Downtown Arts Development Study***. While the whole Cultural Arts Division strives to do their part in developing the arts, it is the primary focus of the Civic Arts and Creative Industries Development to develop the arts, nonprofit and for-profit. Additionally there is work being done in this arena as part of the Community Cultural Planning process.

### **Strategy**

*a. The Cultural Arts Division shall increase awareness and understanding in communities of how culture can be leveraged to cause local and regional business growth.*

*b. The City shall encourage existing partners and grow new partnerships and collaborative relationships to strengthen and leverage Austin's cultural resources.*

*c. The Cultural Arts Division shall implement a cultural vitality measurement system to record the ongoing cultural health of the Downtown, provide research on best practices regarding the cultural sector activity in Austin, and provide research on Austin's market and non-market values.*

### **RECOMMENDATION 41**

*It is recommended that an artist live/work space be developed in Austin to raise the consciousness and awareness of the visual arts and to provide an obvious commitment on the part of decision makers to support visual artists.*

### **Rationale**

Another way suggested to raise the level of awareness of the visual arts was the development of an artist live/work space in Austin. Such a facility was viewed as a commitment on the part of city leadership and decision makers to support the visual arts and artists. The live/work space would double as an open studio exhibit space between certain hours to provide people the opportunity to meet the artists and view them in the midst of creation, much in the same way that people watch musicians perform. The suggested area for the live/work space was the Rainey District.

### **Strategy**

*Through its Community Cultural Planning process the City shall investigate the viability and steps necessary to create an artist live/work space Downtown.*

#### RECOMMENDATION 42

*It is recommended that the downtown aggressively market its cultural and arts facilities and events to strengthen the image of the arts and culture in Austin.*

##### **Rationale**

The visual and cultural arts in Austin are important. The AUSTIN ARTS Book has worked to market the recipients of the City's Cultural Funding Programs' to residents and tourists as well. While there are numerous websites that list the organizations and events, visual arts people, through the Charrette and in other ways, have expressed the desire that there be a Strategy of more aggressive marketing strategies. It was viewed that aggressive marketing would also begin to accomplish the higher charge of the ***Downtown Arts Development Study*** – to use the arts and culture to create a lively and dynamic downtown.

##### **Strategy**

*a. The City shall work with Downtown Stakeholders who are already branding the downtown to ensure the arts, culture and creative industries are emphasized.*

*b. As part of the Civic Arts' ongoing marketing work, the City shall be a partner in the discussion about visual arts marketing.*

*c. The City shall work towards the next edition of the AUSTIN ARTS Book.*





## VII. PLANNING PROCESS

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 David Gerard  
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For a comprehensive overview and status of current development and planning projects in Downtown Austin and for links to some of the City of Austin planning documents listed in this bibliography access: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/default.htm>



## VIII. APPENDIX (CHARRETTE DRAWINGS)

### Congress Avenue District



### East 6<sup>th</sup>/Red River District



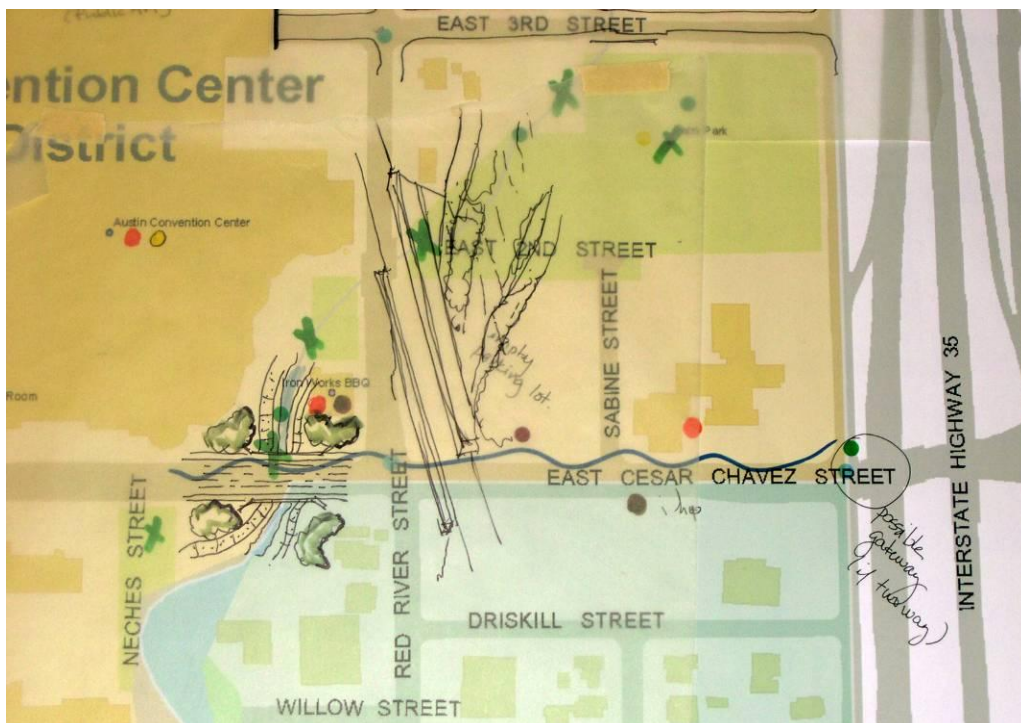
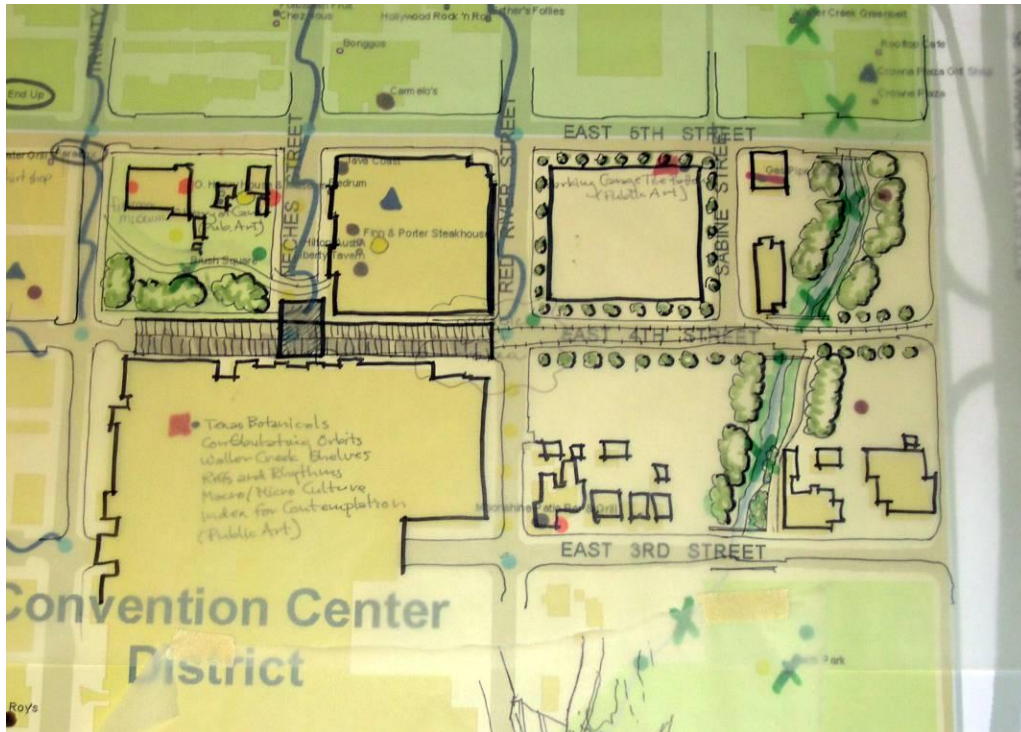


## 2<sup>nd</sup> Street/Warehouse District





## Convention Center District



## Market/West End/Seaholm District





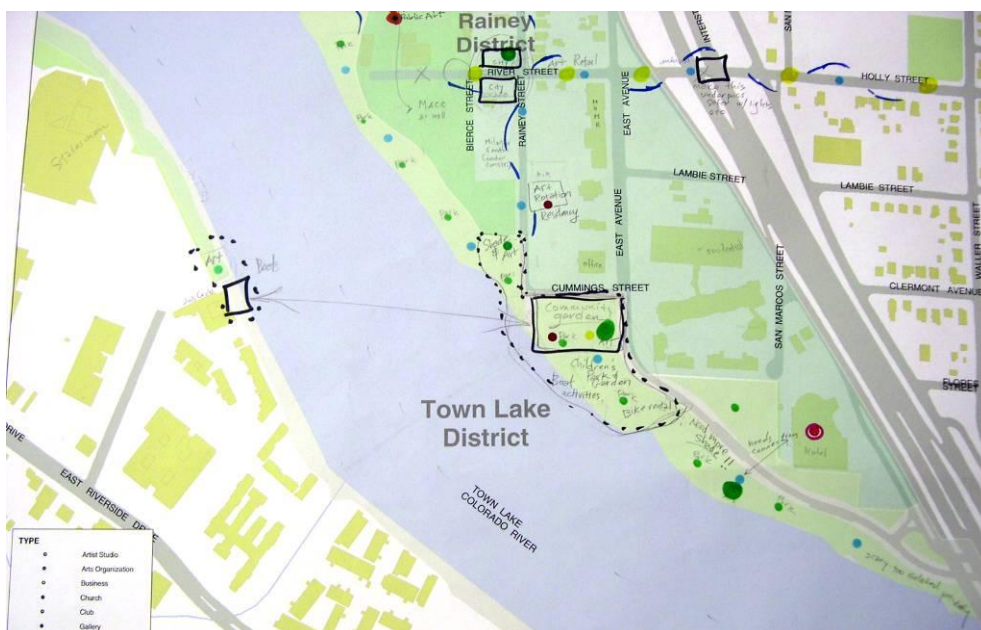
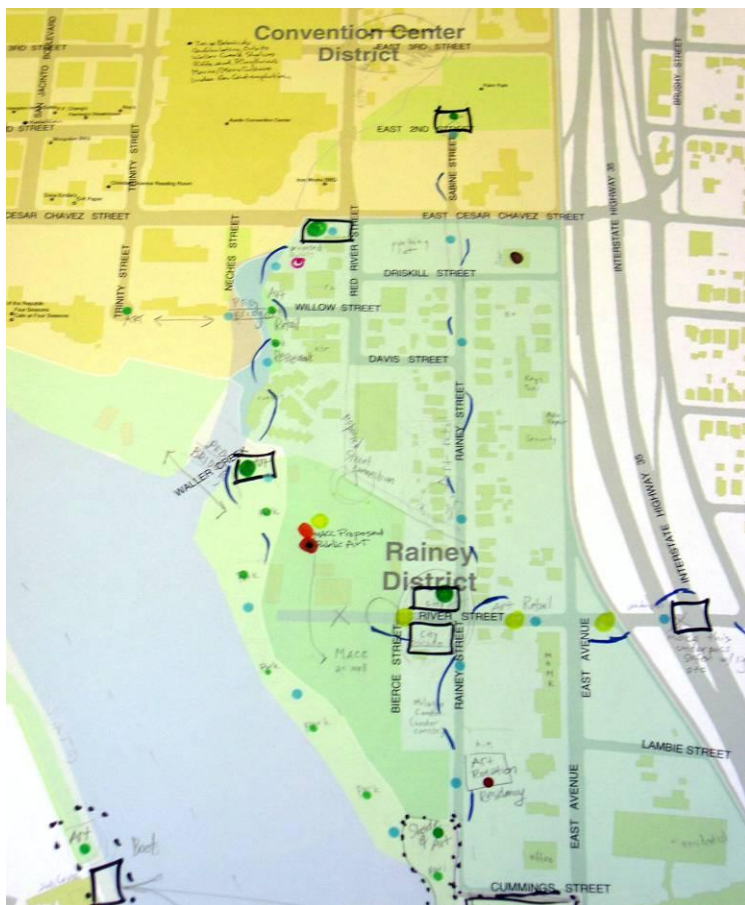


## Northeast/Hospital District

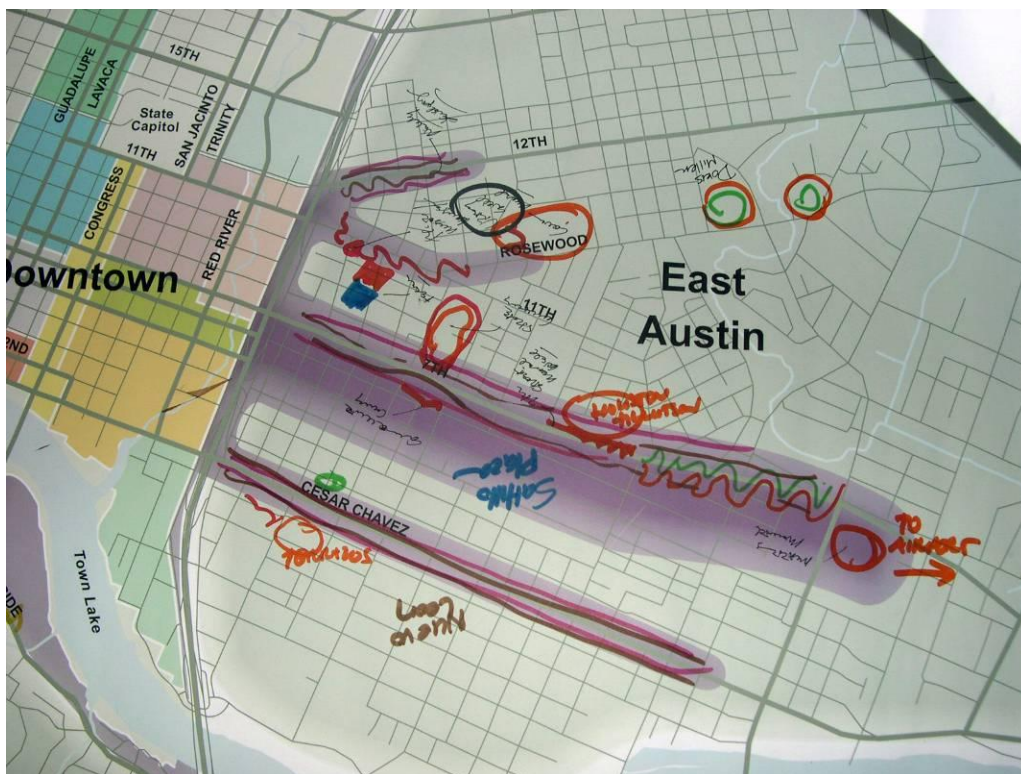




## Rainey Street District

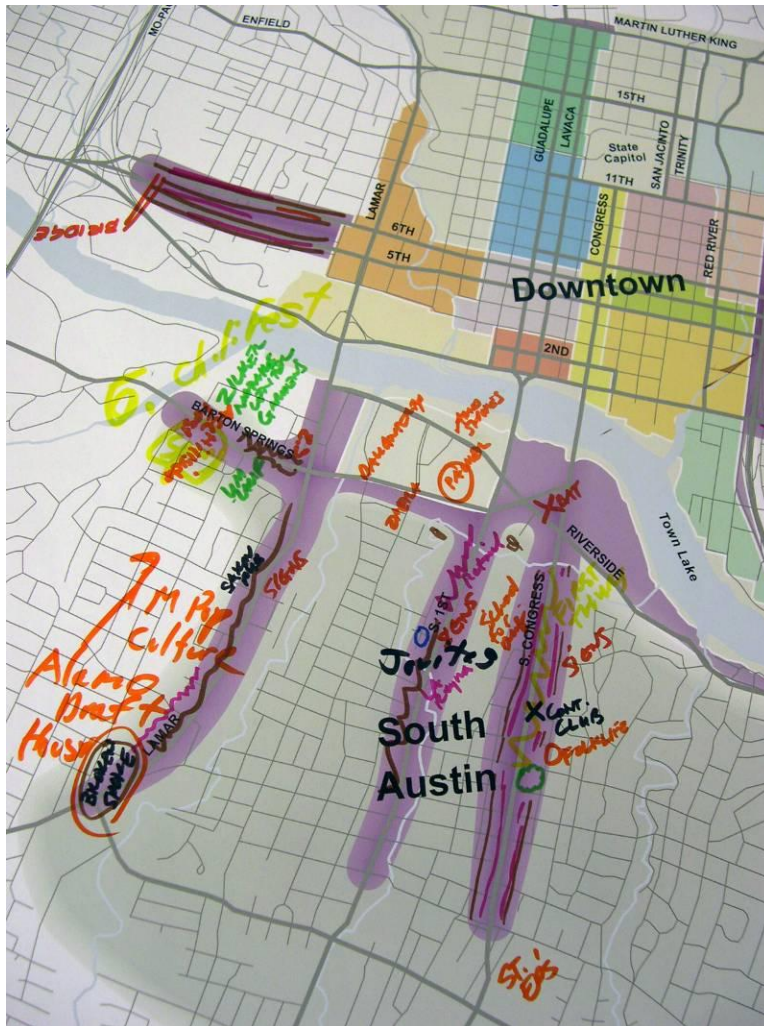


## Gateways





## Gateways (continued)







A heartfelt thanks to all of you who participate  
and made this possible!

