City of Austin
Urban Trails Master Plan

April 2014
Agenda:

• Definition of an Urban Trail
• Urban Trail Master Plan Goals
• Existing Urban Trails
• Public Input
• Design Criteria and Considerations
• Prioritization Matrix
Definition of an Urban Trail

A citywide network of non-motorized, multi-use pathways that are used by bicyclists, walkers and runners for both transportation and recreation purposes.

- Included in 2009 Bicycle Master Plan,
- Follows Imagine Austin,
- Considers definitions used by other communities, and
Urban Trail Goals for Austin

1. Provide **easy access** to urban trails for both transportation and recreation users.

2. **Connect** urban trails to the on-street bicycle network, sidewalk network, transit stops and bike share stations.

3. Ensure **adequate trail width** to accommodate both recreation and transportation uses.

4. Incorporate **trail amenities** and **features** that create unique, whimsical greenways.

5. Provide adequate funding and resources for **maintenance** and **operations**.

6. Ensure that all urban trails are **context-sensitive** and **environmentally sustainable**.
Existing Urban Trails in Austin

- **About 300 miles of trails** of all types.
- **About 60 miles** of existing trails are defined as Urban Trails.

- Boardwalk Trail at Lady Bird Lake – 1 mile
- Country Club Trail – 4 miles
- Johnson Trail – 1 mile
- LAB – 6 miles total (about 2 miles of Urban Trail)
- Shoal Creek Trail – 8 miles
- Southern Walnut Creek Trail – 6 miles
- Northern Walnut Creek – 8 miles
- US 290 Sidepath to Manor – 5 miles
Urban Trails in Austin
Public Input on Urban Trails

• Telephone survey (statistically relevant survey): 603 respondents
• Austin Urban Trail User survey: 189 respondents
• Online survey: 2,392 respondents
• 5 public meetings
  – Questionnaire: 105 respondents
  – Online Open House survey: 66 respondents
Public Input on Urban Trails

41% of Adults
Ride Bikes in Austin

23% of adults ride a bike often

3% ride daily

59%

Over 75% of Kids
Ride Bikes in Austin

25%

75%
Public Input on Urban Trails

54% of people in Austin want to ride more

94% of bike enthusiasts feel comfortable riding on an Urban Trail
50% feel comfortable riding in a traditional striped bike lane
Public Input
Scenario Preferences

A path or trail that is separate from a street

A residential street with low speed traffic AND a wide bicycle lane separated from traffic by a raised curb

A major urban street AND a wide bicycle lane separated from traffic by a raised curb

A residential street with low speed traffic AND bicycle route markings, speed humps and other traffic calming designs.

A neighborhood street with low speed traffic AND a striped bicycle lane.

Very comfortable
Somewhat comfortable
Somewhat uncomfortable
Very uncomfortable
Public Input on Urban Trails

Top 7 barriers preventing people from riding a bike

- Weather is too hot: 75%
- Destinations too far: 52%
- You do not feel safe: 46%
- Bicycle lanes, trails are not connected: 44%
- Lack of shade: 40%
- Bicycle lanes, trails are not available: 40%
- Takes too long: 38%
Public Input on Urban Trails
Most Important Potential Improvements

- Add Lighting
- Separate areas for walkers and bicyclists
- Widen Trail surfaces
- Improve smoothness of trails
- Improve Access
The Austin Urban Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Width</td>
<td>12’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Shoulder</td>
<td>2’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. Vertical Clearance</td>
<td>10’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Cross Slope</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Grade</td>
<td>5% (8.25 % with handrails)</td>
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Southern Walnut Creek Trail
# Dual Track Urban Trail

## Criteria

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Width</strong></td>
<td>8’ for pedestrian side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10’ for bicyclist side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Shoulder</strong></td>
<td>5’ user separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2’ shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vertical Clearance</strong></td>
<td>10’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Cross Slope</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Grade</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
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Urban Trail Design Considerations

• Include **connections** to surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, places of employment, other trails, on-street network, public transit stops, bike share stations.

• Install **lighting** where appropriate to enhance security and nighttime accessibility.

• Design for **environmental preservation:**
  • Preserve trees or vegetation closer to the trail,
  • Incorporate scenic overlooks or pull-offs,
  • Incorporate smaller curve radii to preserve the scenic qualities of the corridor, and
  • Watershed Protection Ordinance supports Urban Trails.
Other Urban Trail Considerations

• Plan for security presence and emergency access
• Location Markers & Wayfinding
  – Orientation, distance, and travel time,
  – Provide safety information, and
  – Educate about trail etiquette.
• Promote and provide incentives for development of Urban Trail segments and connections
• Create a sense of place
  – Engage the community
### Urban Trail Corridors – Prioritization Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Level of Importance (Weighting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Environmental considerations</td>
<td>3x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Citizen support</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Constructability</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Corridor availability</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Connectivity to Active Transportation Network</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Connectivity to transit</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Connectivity to local destinations/neighborhoods</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Scenic qualities</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Area population density</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Helps overcome gap or barrier</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ First in its area of the City</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Uses a point system.
- Criteria are weighted to emphasize importance.
Timeline for Implementation

- April 8 – East ANC and Urban Transportation Commission
- April 14 – Land, Facilities, and Programs Committee (Parks and Recreation Board)
- April 15 – Bicycle Advisory Council
- April 16 – Environmental Board
- April 22 – Parks and Recreation Board
- May 1 – City Council (set public hearing)
- May 13 – Planning Commission
- May 22 – City Council (conduct public hearing)