

**Design Resources for the Waller Creek District**  
**City of Austin**  
**Planning and Development Review**  
21 September 2011

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to provide background information for the Waller Creek Design Competition. A list of additional information and resources is included to facilitate the development of successful design proposals.

**City of Austin and Waller Creek Conservancy Partnership:** In May 2011 the City of Austin and Waller Creek Conservancy entered into a partnership to redevelop and revitalize Waller Creek and the surrounding district. Prior to the initiation of this partnership the City completed a master plan for the area: The Waller Creek District Master Plan. In recognition of the partnership between the City and Conservancy the Austin City Council suspended implementation of the Waller Creek District Master Plan pending the outcome of the Waller Creek Design Competition at which time the master plan will be amended to reflect changes required by the final design. Additional information on the Master Plan is provided below. City staff is available on an as-needed basis if questions arise regarding the Master Plan.

The Waller Creek District Master Plan was shaped through a robust process of community engagement and articulates the community's vision for the redevelopment of the Waller Creek corridor and the Waller Creek District. That vision is anchored by three guiding principles: environmental and open space restoration; creation of linkages – both physical and cultural; and economic redevelopment.

Some of the key elements of the Master Plan include:

- The Vision (as articulated on pages 1 and 2 of the Plan);
- The Guiding Principles (as articulated on page 7 of the Plan); and
- The major recommendations that flow from those Guiding Principles (as articulated on pages 7 through 19 of the Plan);
- The proposed Development Standards articulated on pages 45 through 65.

A link to the Waller Creek District Master Plan is provided in the *Additional Information and Resources* section below.

**Land Ownership:** Though there is a substantial amount of publicly owned land within the District, much of the land is privately owned. The Master Plan recognizes that the vision for Waller Creek and the District will only be realized through the cooperative efforts of both public sector entities and private land-owners and businesses. Accordingly the Master Plan addresses issues such as land use, ownership and easements, and development standards. Additional information regarding available resources on property ownership and easements is available on the ftp site (see *Additional Information and Resources*).

**Physical Survey:** As part of the Waller Creek Master Plan the City prepared a physical survey of Waller Creek from Lady Bird Lake to 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This survey includes location of physical improvements (buildings, walls, fences, etc), topography with spot elevations and 1' contours, and tree locations with species and caliper information. This information is available for download from the ftp site (see *Additional Information and Resources*).

**Waller Creek Tunnel and Associated Projects:** The Waller Creek Tunnel Project will address the problems of flooding and erosion along lower Waller Creek by constructing an underground flood control tunnel. Nearly a mile long and with an average diameter of 24 feet, the tunnel will capture and redirect flood waters south of 12th Street and carry them to an outlet lagoon located on the shores of Lady Bird

Lake. When complete, the tunnel will take nearly 28 acres of downtown land out of the 100-year floodplain and create an environment suitable for redevelopment.

Several major projects associated with the Tunnel are either under construction or have designs that are complete or substantially complete. These include a new Boathouse on Lady Bird Lake near the confluence of Waller Creek and Lady Bird Lake (under construction), the Tunnel Inlet Structure and Lagoon at Waterloo Park (design complete), Waterloo Park Restoration and Improvements (design substantially complete), 8th Street side inlet (design substantially complete), 4th Street side inlet (design substantially complete), and the Tunnel Outlet at Lady Bird Lake (design substantially complete). More detail on the Tunnel and associated projects is provided in *Lower Waller Creek Design Considerations – Watershed Protection Department*.

**Tax Increment Finance District:** The flood control tunnel (the mechanism that enables substantial redevelopment in the Waller Creek District) has been financed through the use of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. Repayment of the bonds that have been and will be issued to fund the tunnel project will come from the increased property tax revenue generated by future redevelopment within the TIF District. Planning and design for the Waller Creek District should contemplate a magnitude and type of redevelopment that will be sufficient to make the TIF District successful. Further information about the TIF financing plan is included in the *Additional Information and Resources* section.

**Historic Resources:** There are a number of Historic Landmarks or potentially significant historic resources within the Waller Creek District. Examples include several bridges over Waller Creek and a number of formerly residential or commercial structures in the area. As part of the Waller Creek Tunnel project a Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey Report was issued. The report addresses historic resources in the areas where the tunnel project disturbs the surface, at the inlet, outlet and side inlets. Links to resources on potential historic resources are provided in the *Additional Information and Resources* section.

**Accessibility Standards and Applicable Codes:** Design documents resulting from this Design Competition should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Texas Accessibility Standards.

Within the City of Austin's jurisdiction the City's Land Development Code (LDC) and Technical Criteria Manuals contain regulations that guide land development. Key issues addressed by the LDC and Criteria Manuals include permitted land uses, site development standards, height and density limits, parking requirements, and Capitol View Corridors. Links to the Land Development Code and Criteria Manuals are provided in the *Additional Information and Resources* section. City staff is available on an as-needed basis to provide guidance regarding these standards.

Design documents for work within the right-of-way ultimately will be subject to review and approval by the Public Works Department and the Austin Transportation Department.

**Great Streets Master Plan:** The goal of the City of Austin's Great Streets Master Plan is to articulate the vision of "streets for people", through the implementation of streetscape standards that pursue a more equitable balance of public space usage between the pedestrian realm and the car.

Since 2003 the implementation of Great Streets has occurred in three principal ways: as a public-private partnership through the Great Streets Development Program (GSDP), through the city's capital improvement program, or by the private sector as a community benefit for increased entitlements.

In 2004 the City Council created the GSDP which allows the city to reimburse private developers or property owners for a portion of the cost of constructing Great Streets streetscape improvements. A link to the Great Streets requirements has been provided in the *Additional Information and Resources* section. City staff is available on an as-needed basis to provide guidance regarding the Great Streets program.

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### **Additional Information and Resources:**

The following Information and Resources are divided into three general categories: High Priority (design teams should review and be familiar with these); Recommended (design teams are recommended to review and be familiar with these); and Supplemental (design teams may wish to consult these for background information).

Upon request the City can provide GIS data and information; as-built drawings from City projects; project management data; prior design and planning projects; and information within the knowledge of City staff.

#### High Priority:

- Waller Creek District Master Plan, 2010 ([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/wcmp\\_home.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/wcmp_home.htm))
- Property Ownership (2007), ([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/parcel\\_ownership.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/parcel_ownership.pdf)) see GIS information for the most current parcel ownership
- Easements (ftp site)
- Physical Survey including, location of physical improvements, trees, and topography. (ftp site)
- Potential Historic Resources (ftp site)
- Waller Creek Tunnel Project (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/>)
- Great Streets Master Plan and Development Standards ([www.ci.austin.tx.us/greatstreets](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/greatstreets))
- Americans with Disabilities Act and the Texas Accessibility Standards
- Austin Land Development Code ([http://www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Texas/austin/title25landdevelopment?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:austin\\_tx\\$anc=](http://www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Texas/austin/title25landdevelopment?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:austin_tx$anc=))
- Austin Criteria Manuals [http://www.amlegal.com/austin\\_techmanuals/](http://www.amlegal.com/austin_techmanuals/)
- Waterfront Overlay Combining District, Austin Land Development Code, Chapter 25-2 (Zoning), Article 3 (Additional Requirements for Certain Districts).
- View Corridors: Sections 25-2-162 and 25-2-642 (and appendix) of the Austin Land Development Capital Code. Also see: "Downtown Development and Capitol View Corridors," Downtown Commission, 2007 ([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/CVC\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/CVC_Report_Final.pdf))
- City of Austin GIS information (available through the City of Austin ftp site).

#### Recommended:

- "A Program of Uses for Waterloo Park, Placemaking in Austin," Final Report, October 25, 2010, Project for Public Spaces.
- Downtown Austin Plan, [www.cityofaustin.org/downtown](http://www.cityofaustin.org/downtown).
- Austin Parks and Recreation Long Range Plan for Land, Facilities and Programs 2011-2016, 2010 (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/longrangeplan.htm>).
- Waller Creek Watershed Erosion Assessment (City of Austin, Watershed Protection Department), 1997 (available for down-load).

- Downtown Austin Retail Market Strategy, 2005  
(<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/default2.htm#retail>)
- Urban Design Guidelines for Austin, January 2009  
([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/urban\\_design\\_guidelines\\_for\\_austin.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/urban_design_guidelines_for_austin.pdf))
- City of Austin Bicycle Plan, 2009 (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/publicworks/bicycle-plan.htm>)
- City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan, 2009 (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/publicworks/pedestrian-plans.htm>)
- Downtown Arts Development Study, 2007  
([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/downtown\\_arts\\_development\\_study\\_final.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/downtown_arts_development_study_final.pdf))
- The Trail Enhancement Plan, 2008  
(<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/downloads/trailenhancementplanweb.pdf>)
- “The Trail at Lady Bird Lake: Vision Plan,” The Trail Foundation, 2008  
([http://www.thetrailfoundation.org/associations/4559/files/TheTrailatLadyBirdLakeVisionPlan\\_sm.pdf](http://www.thetrailfoundation.org/associations/4559/files/TheTrailatLadyBirdLakeVisionPlan_sm.pdf))
- “Imagine Austin,” City of Austin Comprehensive Plan project (<http://www.imagineaustin.net/>)
- City of Austin Grow Green Guide ([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/pg\\_pdfs.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/pg_pdfs.htm))

Supplemental:

- Downtown Parking Study, prepared for the City of Austin by Walker Parking Consultants, February 2009. (available through the City of Austin ftp site)
- Lower Waller Creek Development Plan, 1976  
(<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/lowerwallercreekdevelopmentplan.pdf>)
- Waller Creek Charrette Report, 1998  
([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/waller\\_creek\\_charrette.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/waller_creek_charrette.pdf))
- Waller Creek Greenway Action Plan, November 2000  
([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/wc\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/wc_action_plan.pdf))
- “Austin Creeks” report (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/downloads/austincreeks.pdf>)
- “Waller Creek Terrace” report, 2002  
([http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/wc\\_proposal\\_terrace.pdf](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/wallercreek/downloads/wc_proposal_terrace.pdf))
- R/UDAT Reports, 1991, 1992, 1997, 2000  
(<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/downtown/default2.htm#rudat>)
- Town Lake Corridor Study, 1985  
(<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/townlakecorridorstudybooklet.pdf>)