

Watershed Protection Ordinance:
Briefing to City Council



Purpose

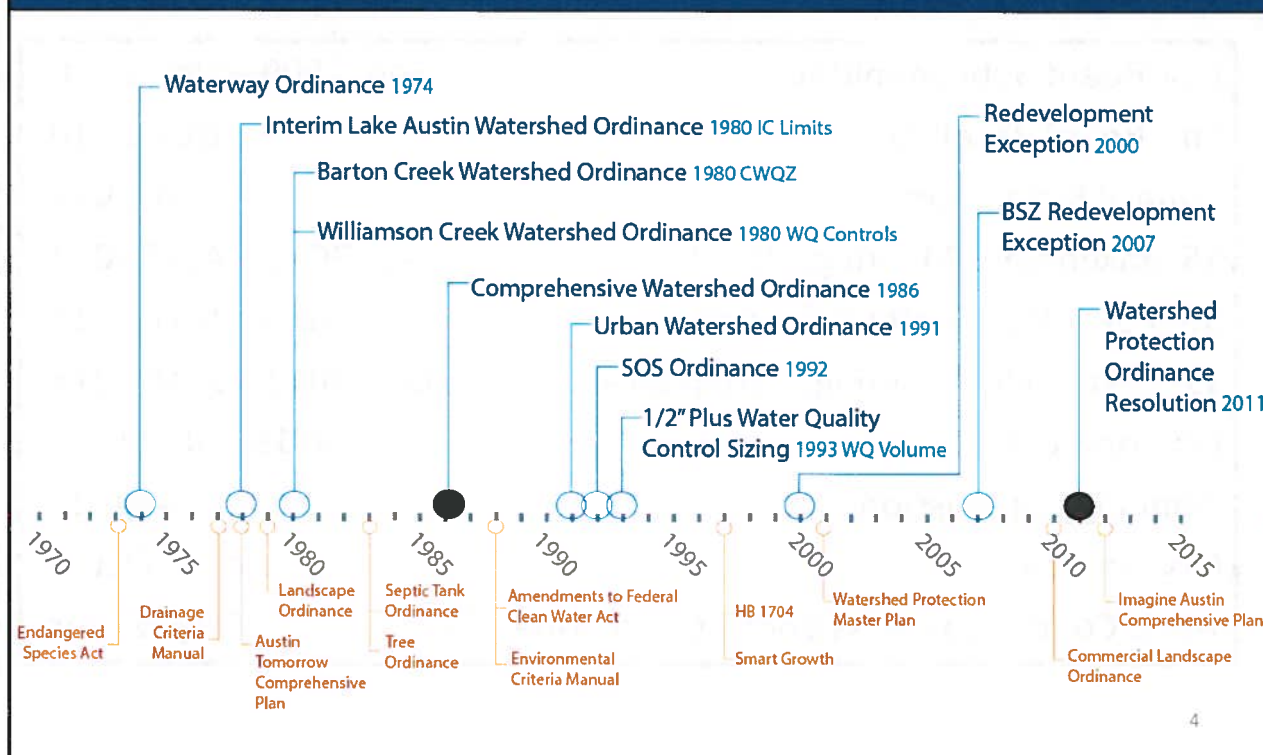
- **Act now in a rapidly growing city → Council Directive**
- **Provide superior protection for creeks & watersheds citywide**
- **Incorporate 30 years of lessons learned**
- **Stop creating problems faster than we can fix them**
- **Design and build a sustainable future: Imagine Austin**
 - Sustainable water resources
 - Green infrastructure
 - Compact development
 - Connectivity

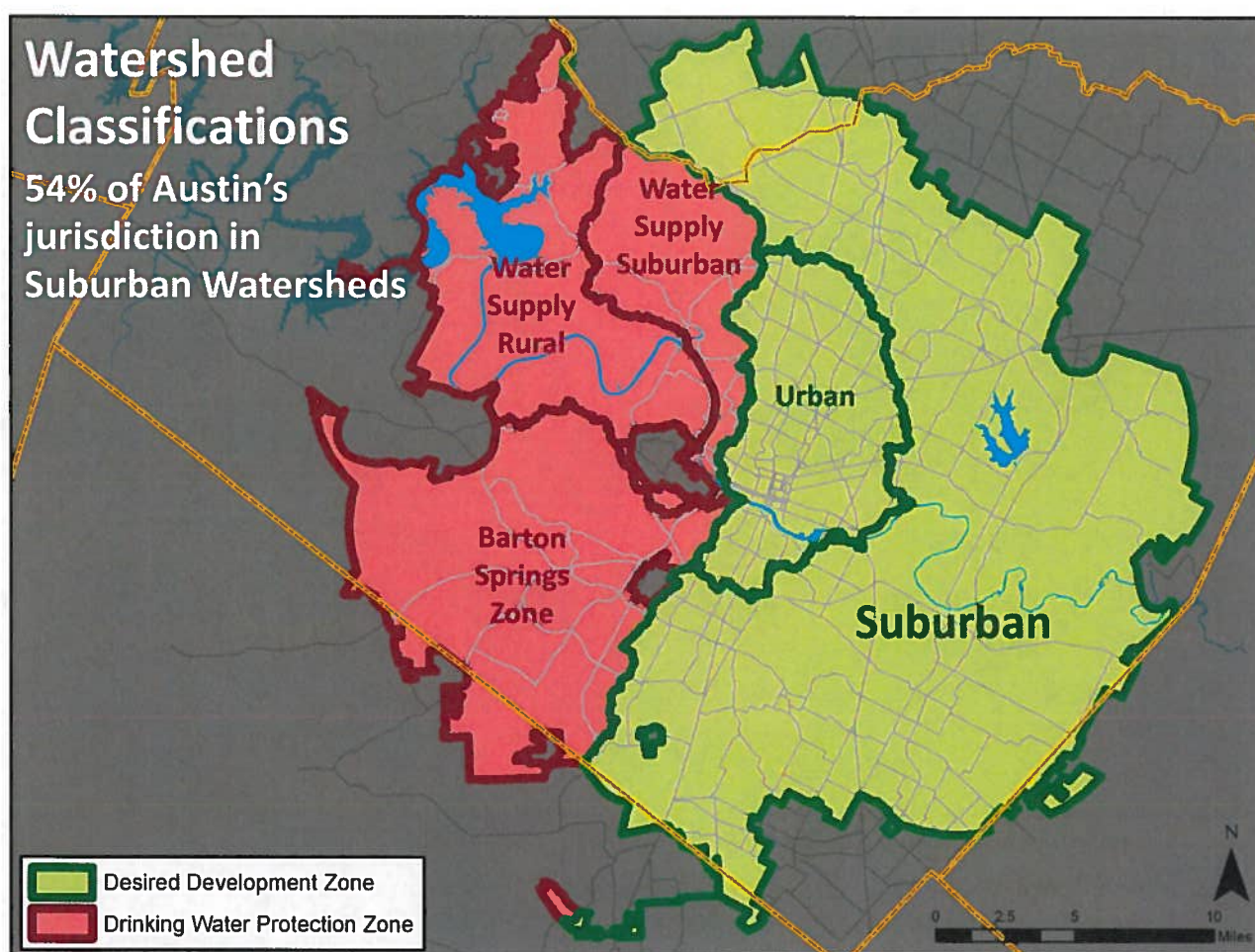
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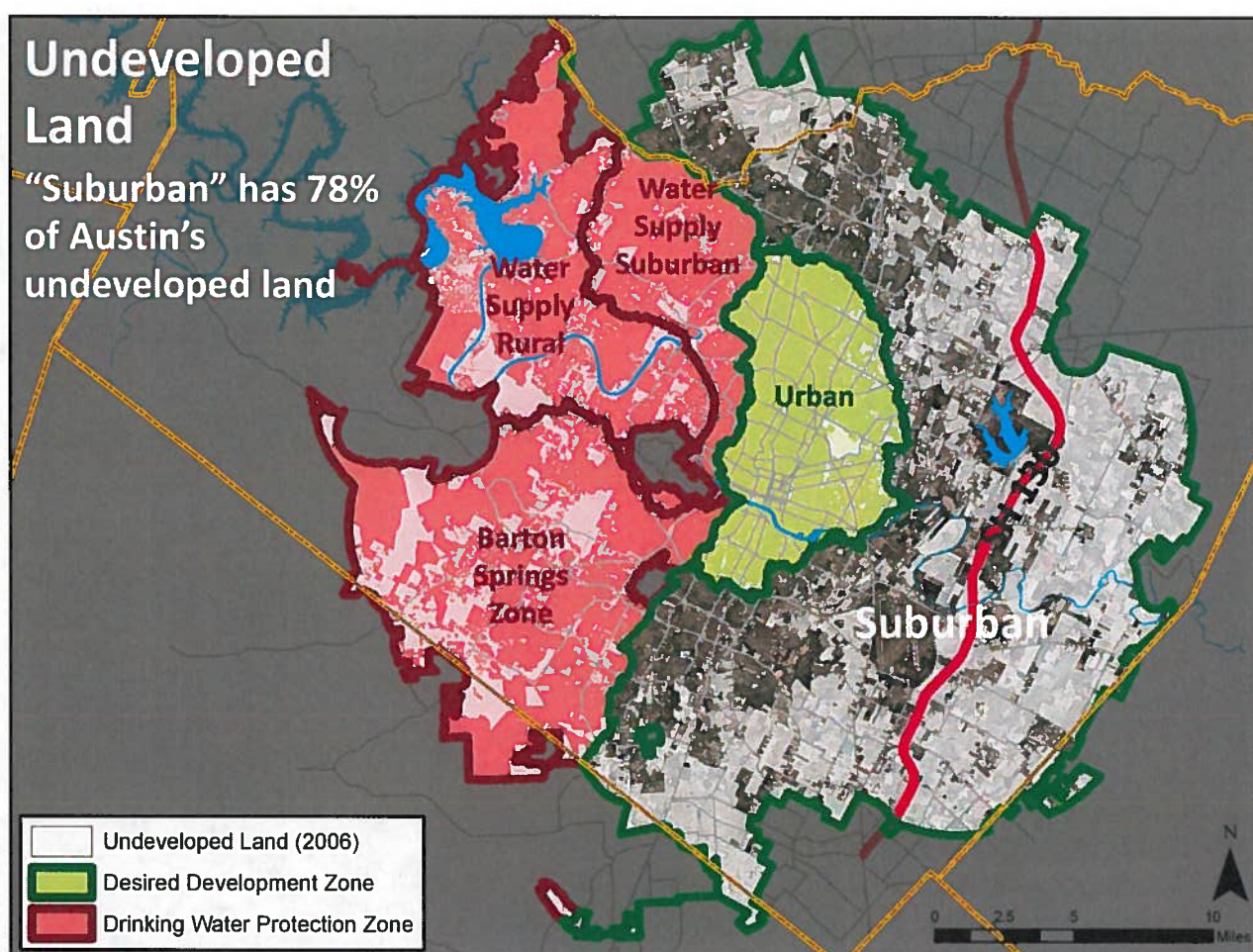
WPO Timeline

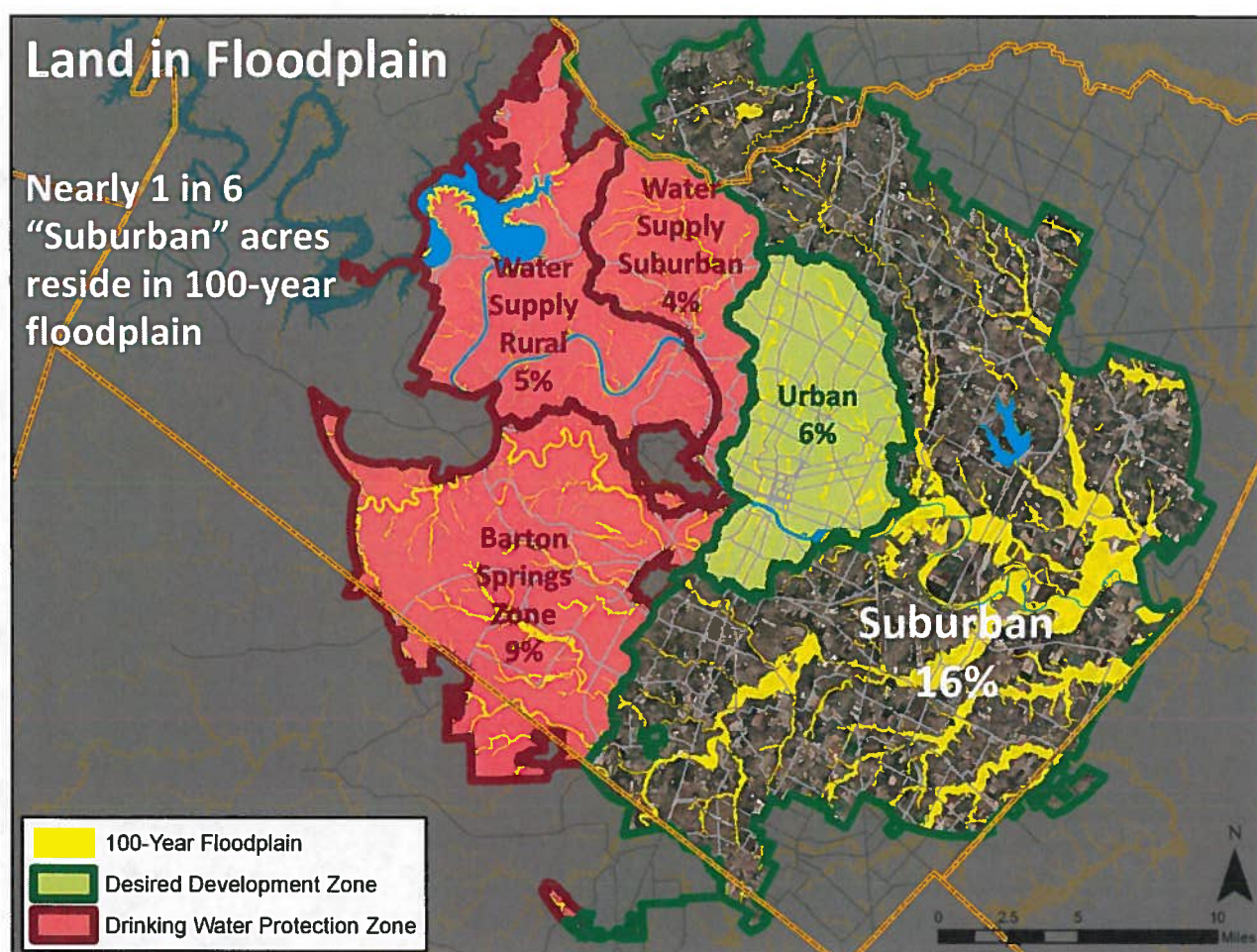
Env. Board Subcommittee	Sep. 2009 – Nov. 2010
Env. Board Resolution	Nov. 2010
Council Resolution	Jan. 2011
15 Stakeholder Meetings: Input	Sep. 2011 – April 2012
Staff develops Draft Ordinance	April – Nov. 2012
11 Stakeholder Meetings: Ordinance	Dec. 2012 – June 2013
Environmental Board	Jun 19; July 11, 17
Planning Commission	Aug. 27
City Council	Oct. 1, Oct. 3
Travis County Commissioner's Court (Title 30)	Fall/Winter

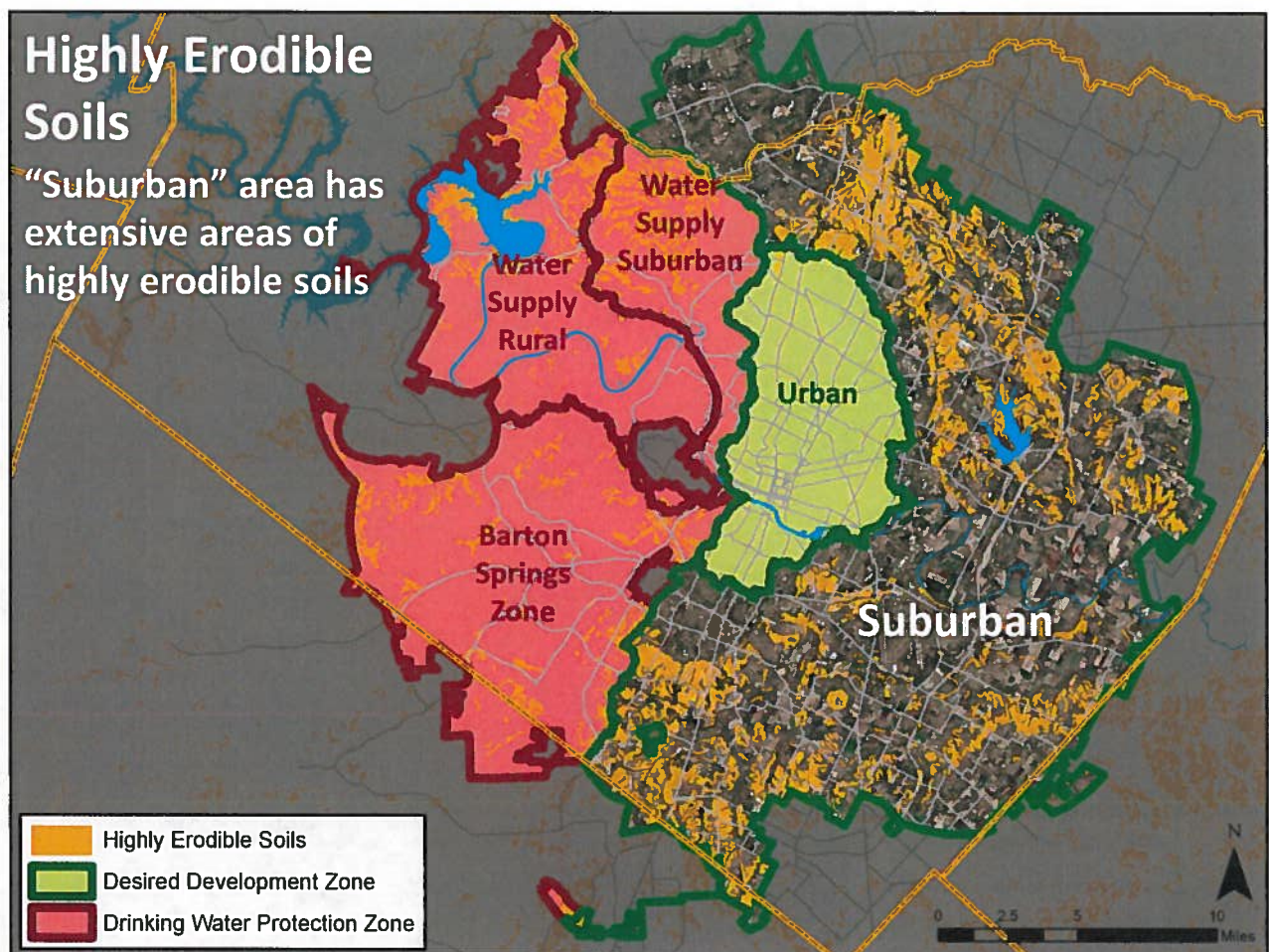
Austin's Watershed Protection History: Landmark Events











Council Resolution

- 1. Creek Protection**
- 2. Floodplain Protection**
- 3. Development Patterns & Greenways**
- 4. Improved Stormwater Controls**
- 5. Mitigation Options**
- 6. Simplify Regulations & Maintain Opportunity**
- 7. Coordinate with Regional Partners**

(Resolution #20110113-038)

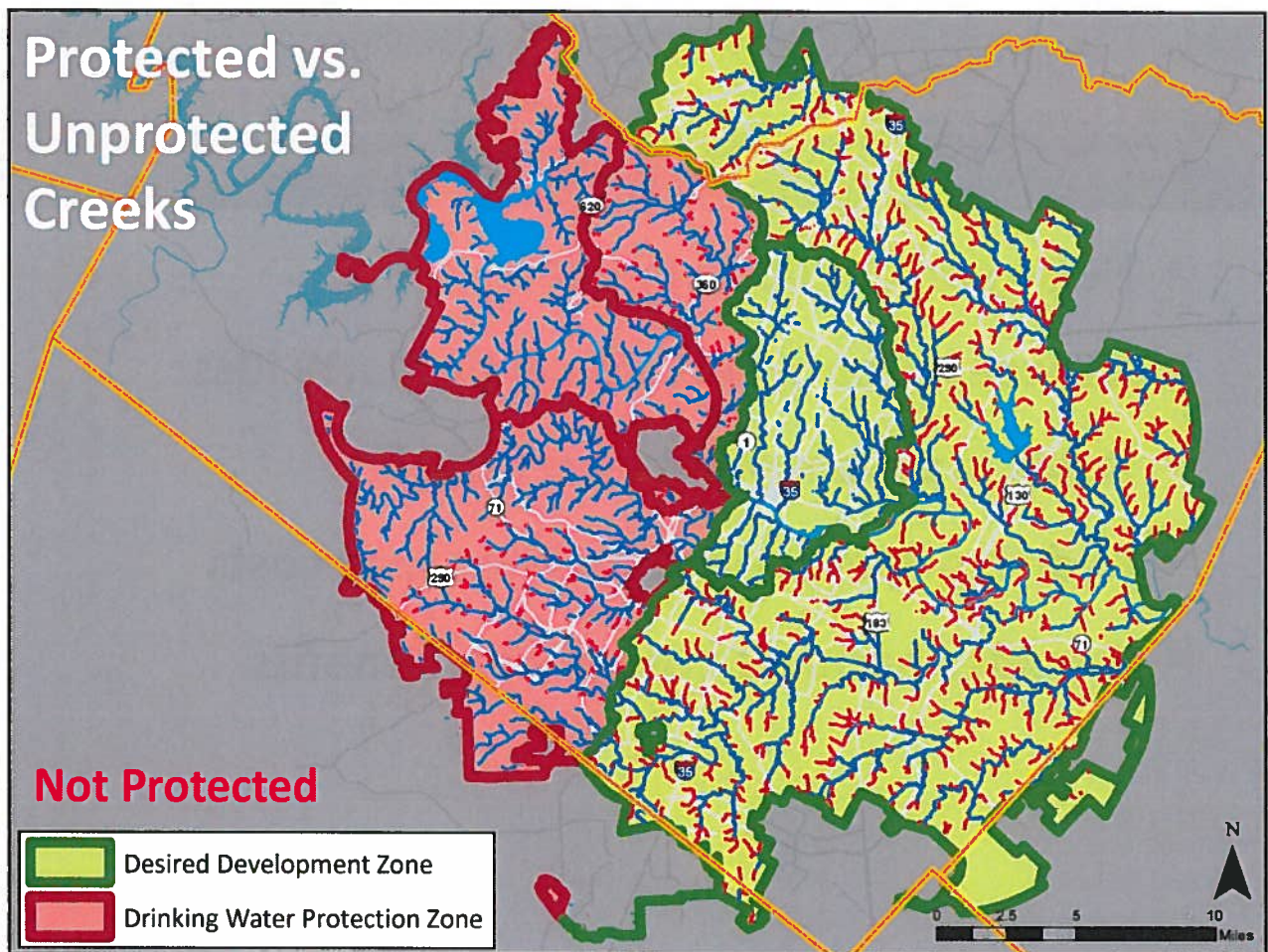
Creek Protection

"Improve stream buffer requirements, including critical headwater areas, to protect water quality and reduce erosion, flooding, and long-range costs for infrastructure maintenance."

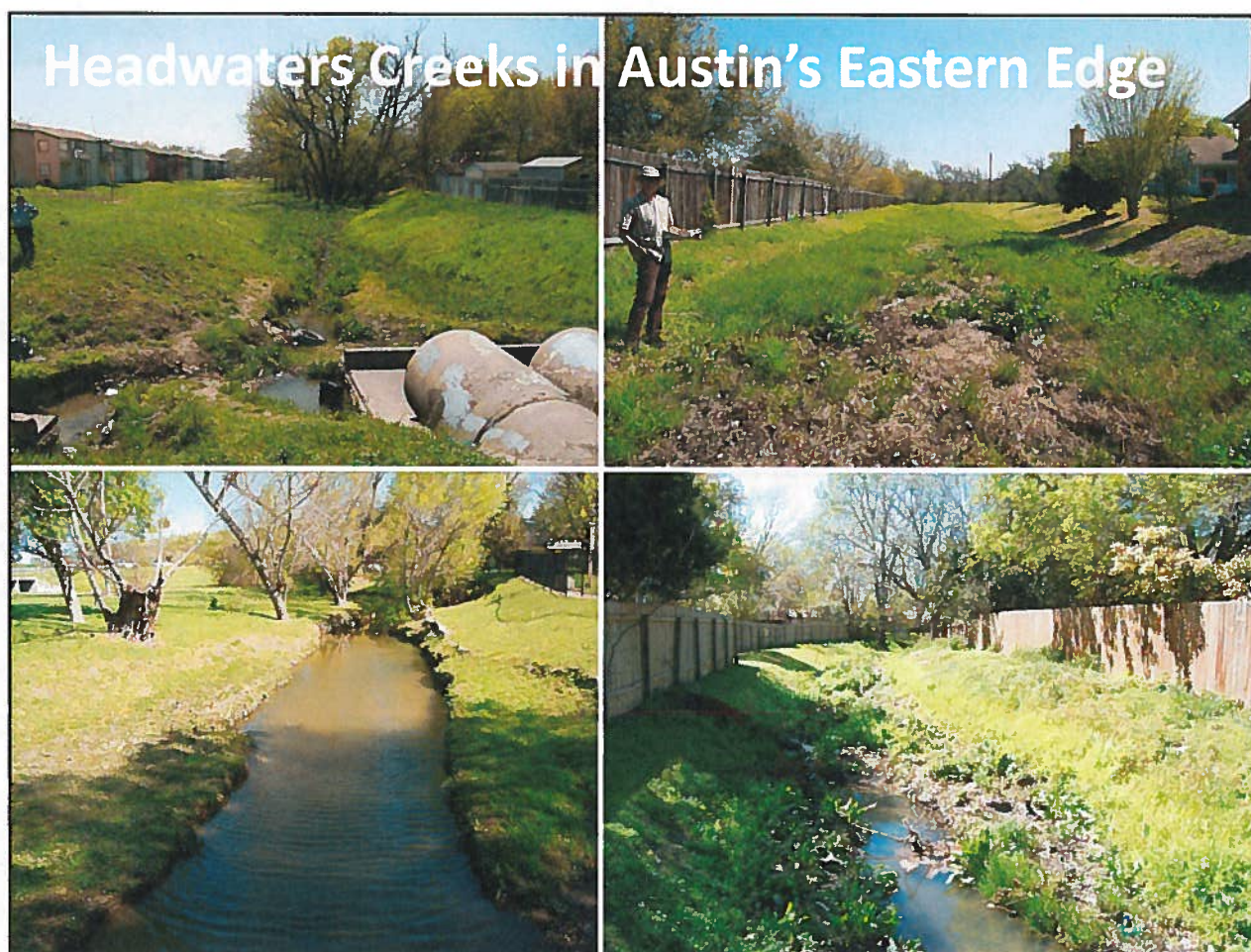


Benefits of Healthy Creek Corridors

- **Helps control flood impacts**
- **Reduces channel erosion & property loss**
- **Helps maintain good water quality**
- **Reduces operation & maintenance costs**
- **Provides multiple community benefits**

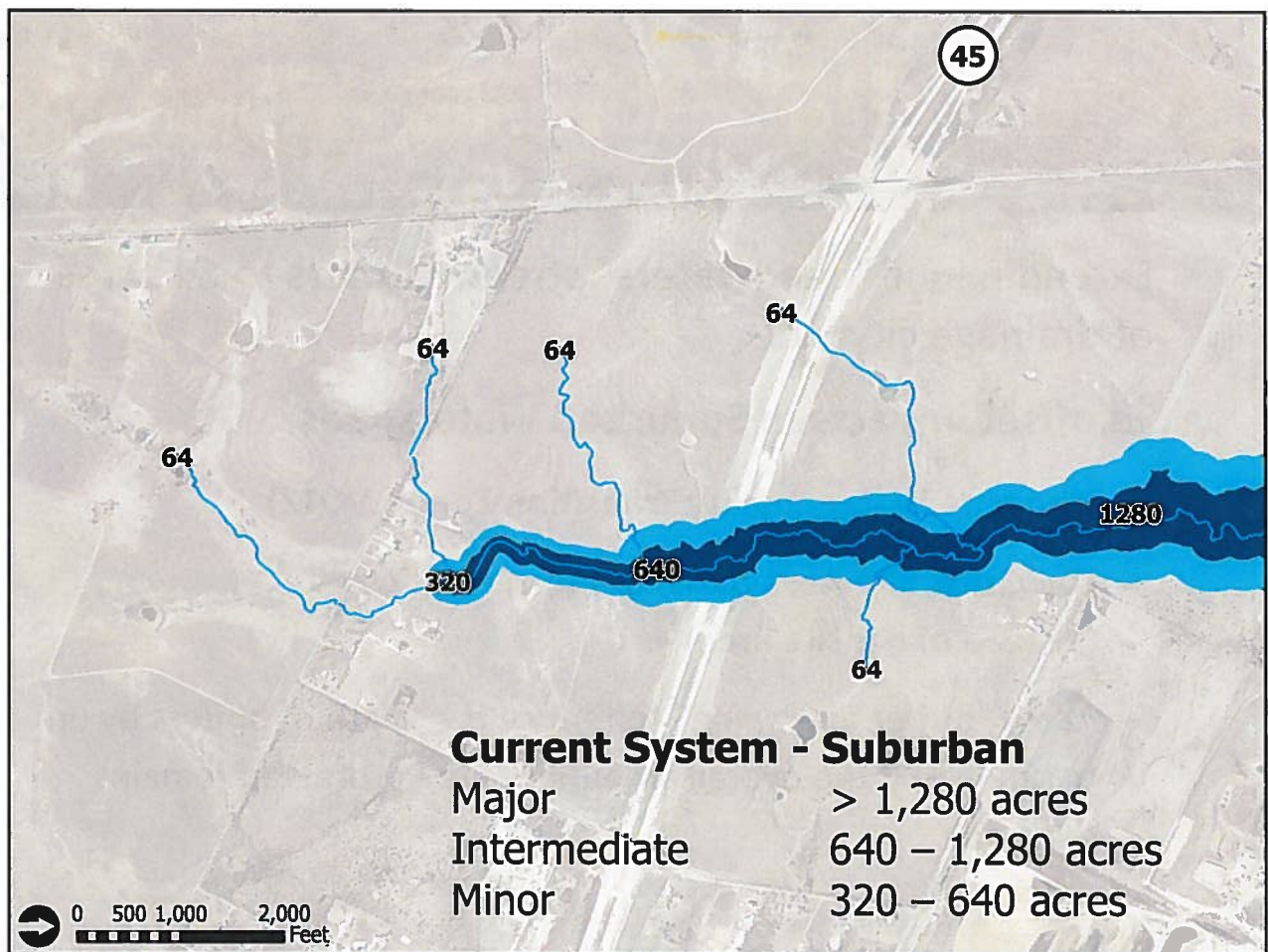


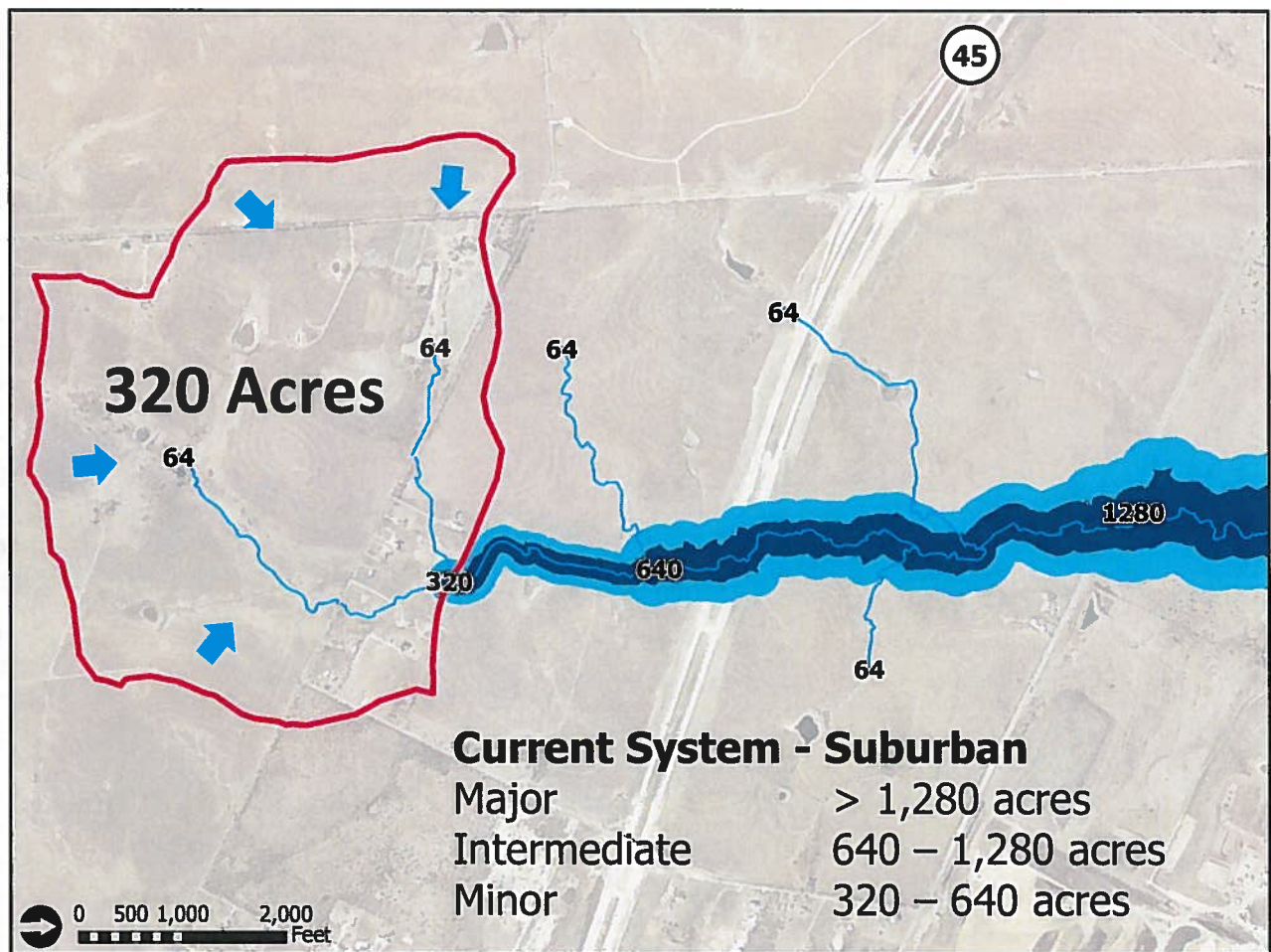


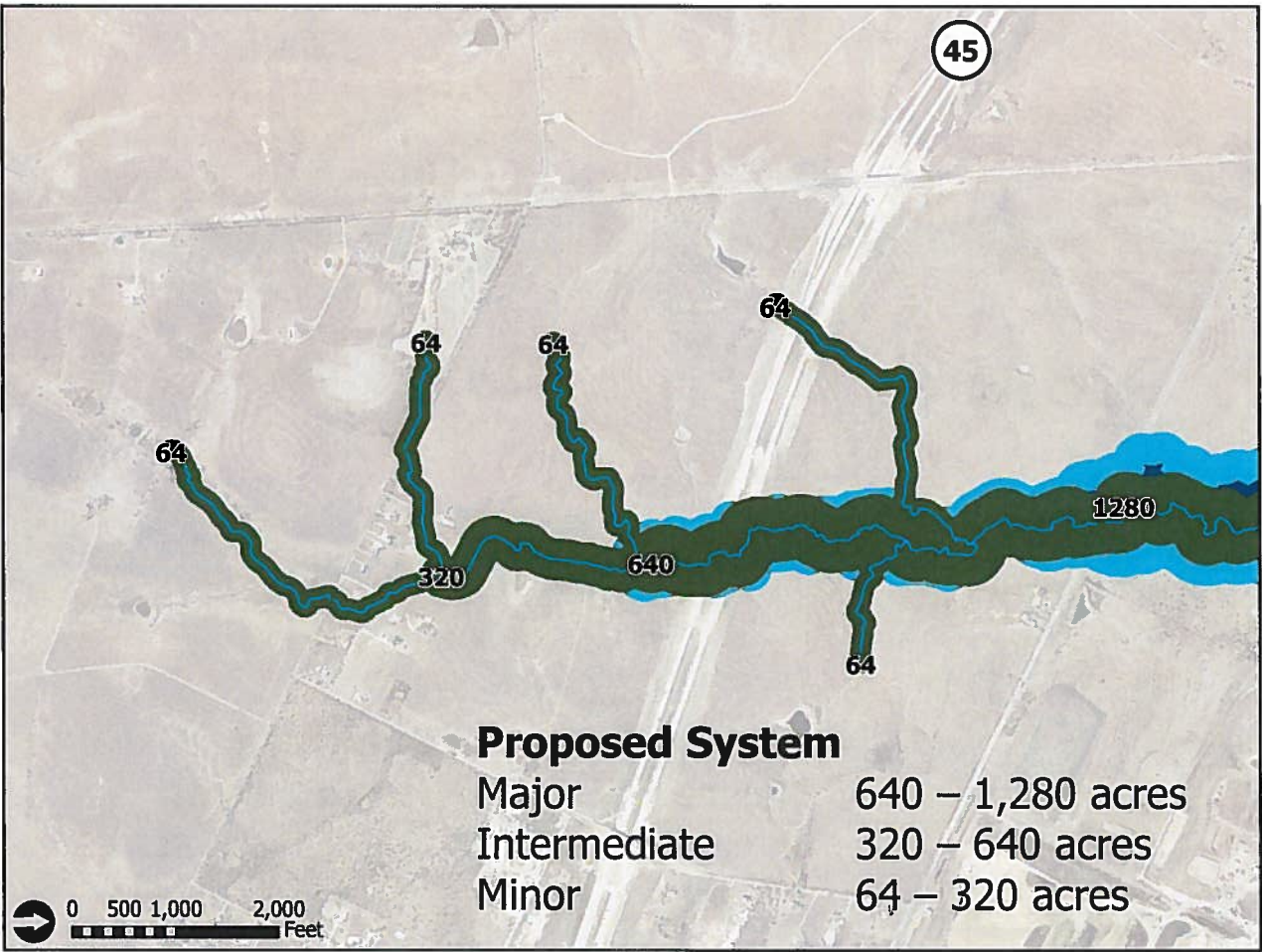


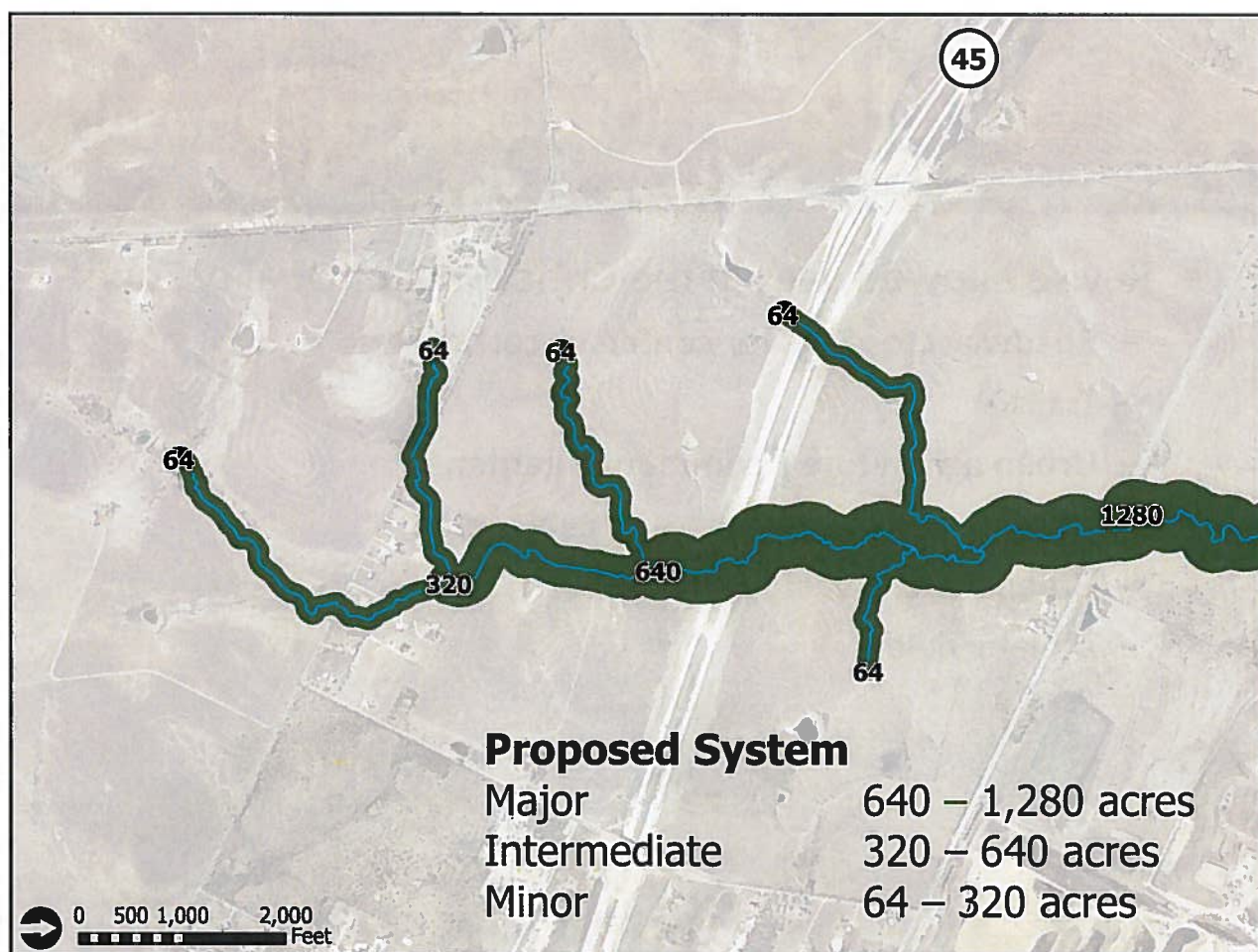
Creek Protection: Ordinance Proposal

- Extend minor **“headwaters” stream buffers** to 64 acres of drainage citywide
- To **offset impacts in Suburban Watersheds**:
 - Eliminate **Water Quality Transition Zone (WQTZ)**
 - Use **Gross Site Area** basis for impervious cover (instead of net site area)
 - Allow **“buffer averaging”** to reduce the width of buffers by up to one-half if the overall amount of area protected remains the same



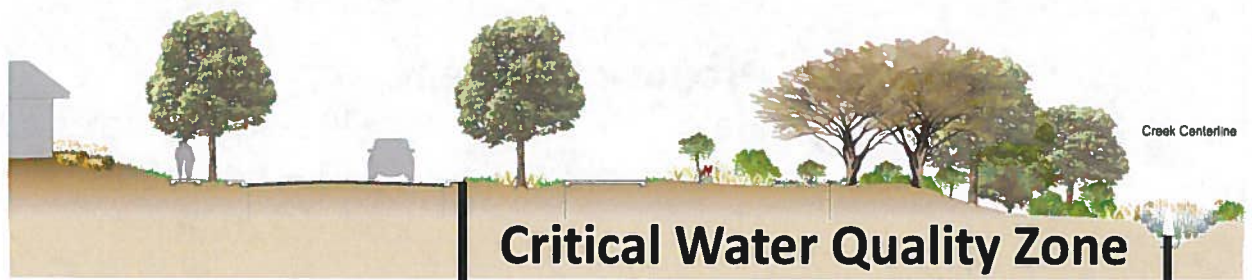






Creek Protection: Ordinance Proposal

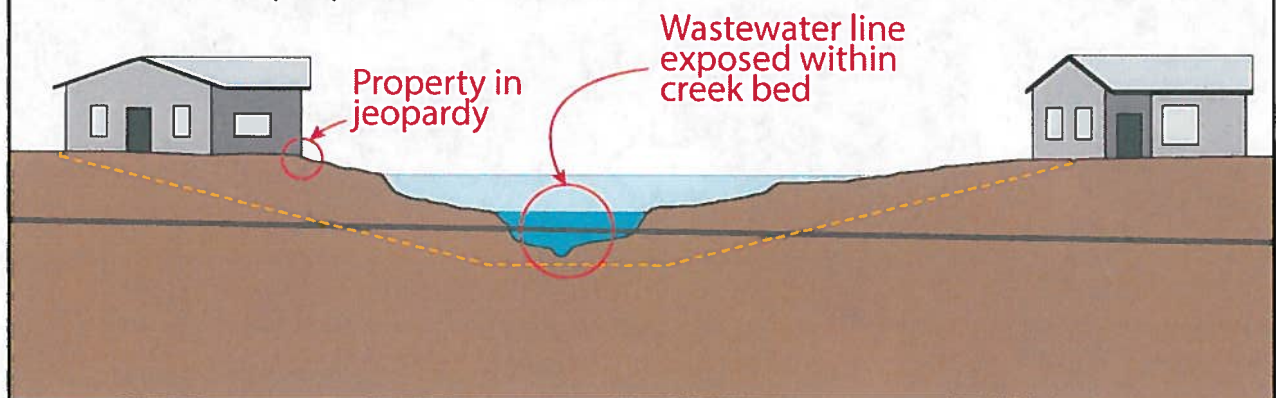
- Revise **allowed uses** in the Critical Water Quality Zone:
 - Roadway crossings for centers & corridors
 - Trails
 - Urban agriculture / community gardens
 - Utility lines (wastewater, gas, cable, etc.)
 - Green water quality controls
 - Athletic fields





Creek Protection: Ordinance Proposal

- Require **Erosion Hazard Zone (EHZ)** protections
 - No improvements (including utility lines) are allowed within the erosion hazard zone unless **protective works** are provided
 - Development must not result in additional erosion impacts to other properties



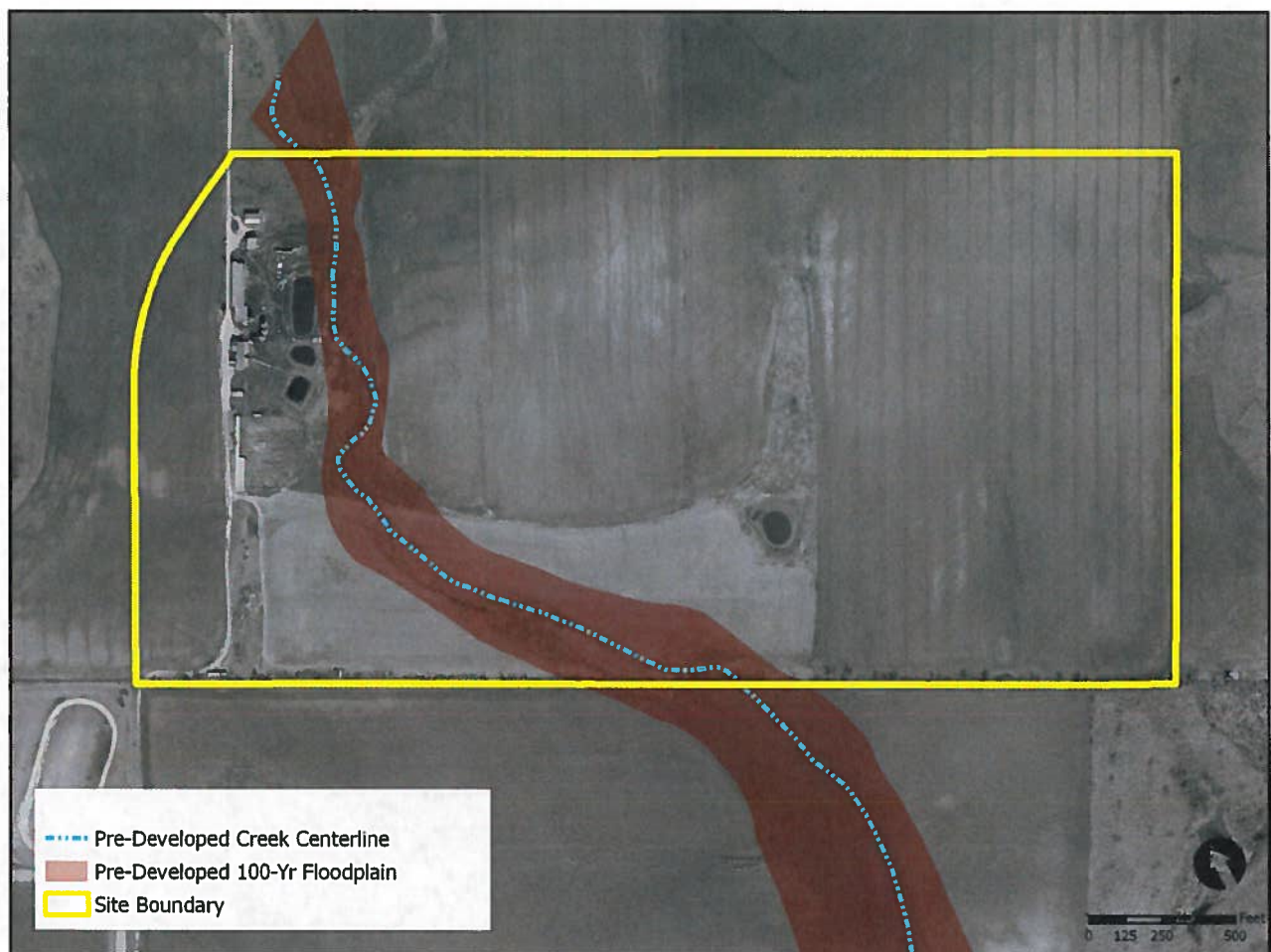
Floodplain Protection

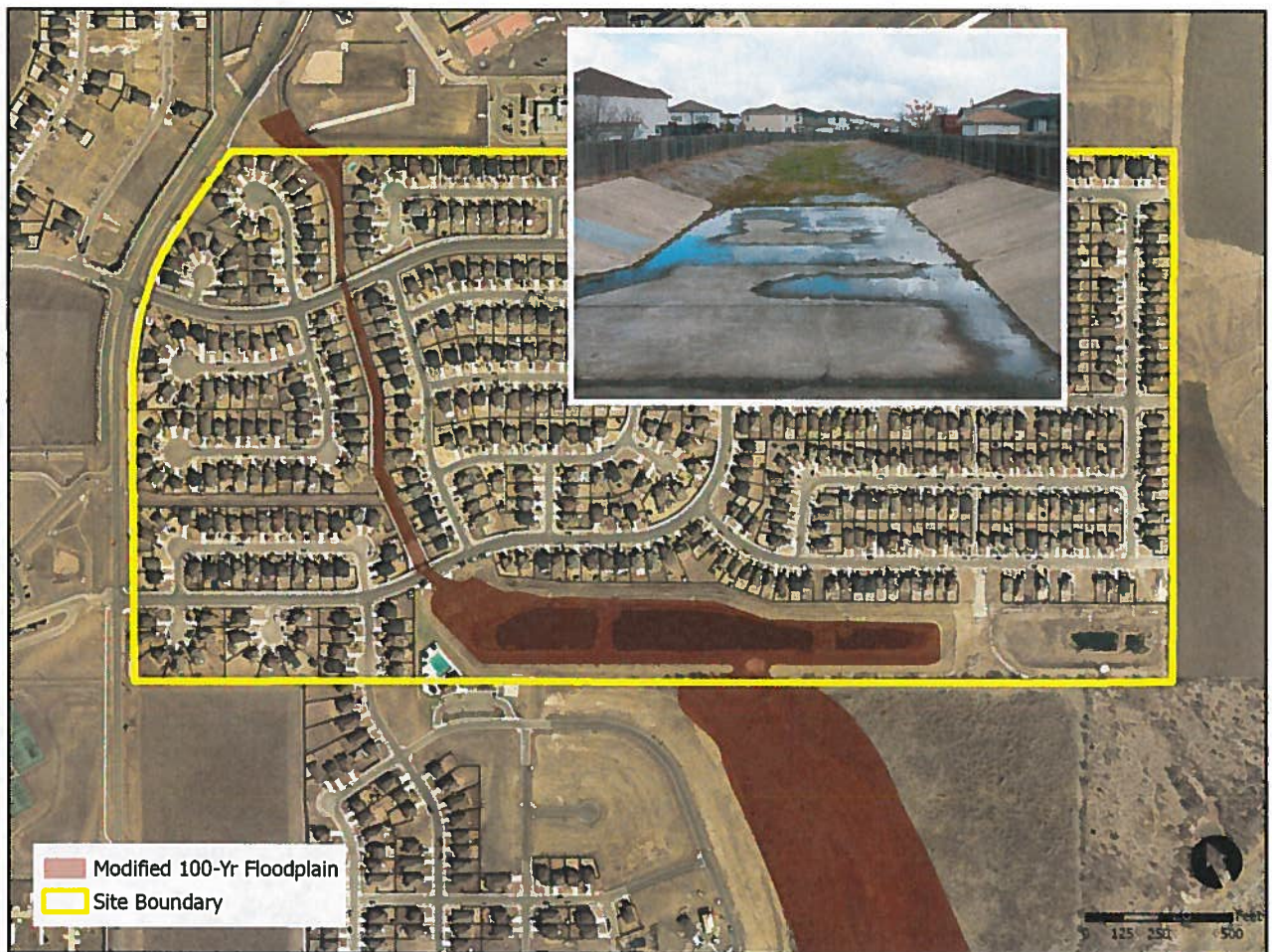
"Promote, encourage and/or require the preservation and restoration of floodplains and stream buffers as well as the beneficial re-purposing of mining quarries."



Floodplain Protection: Ordinance Proposal

- Restrict floodplain modifications
- Functional assessment of floodplain health
- Design for future healthy riparian vegetation
- Require restoration
- Provide off-site mitigation options





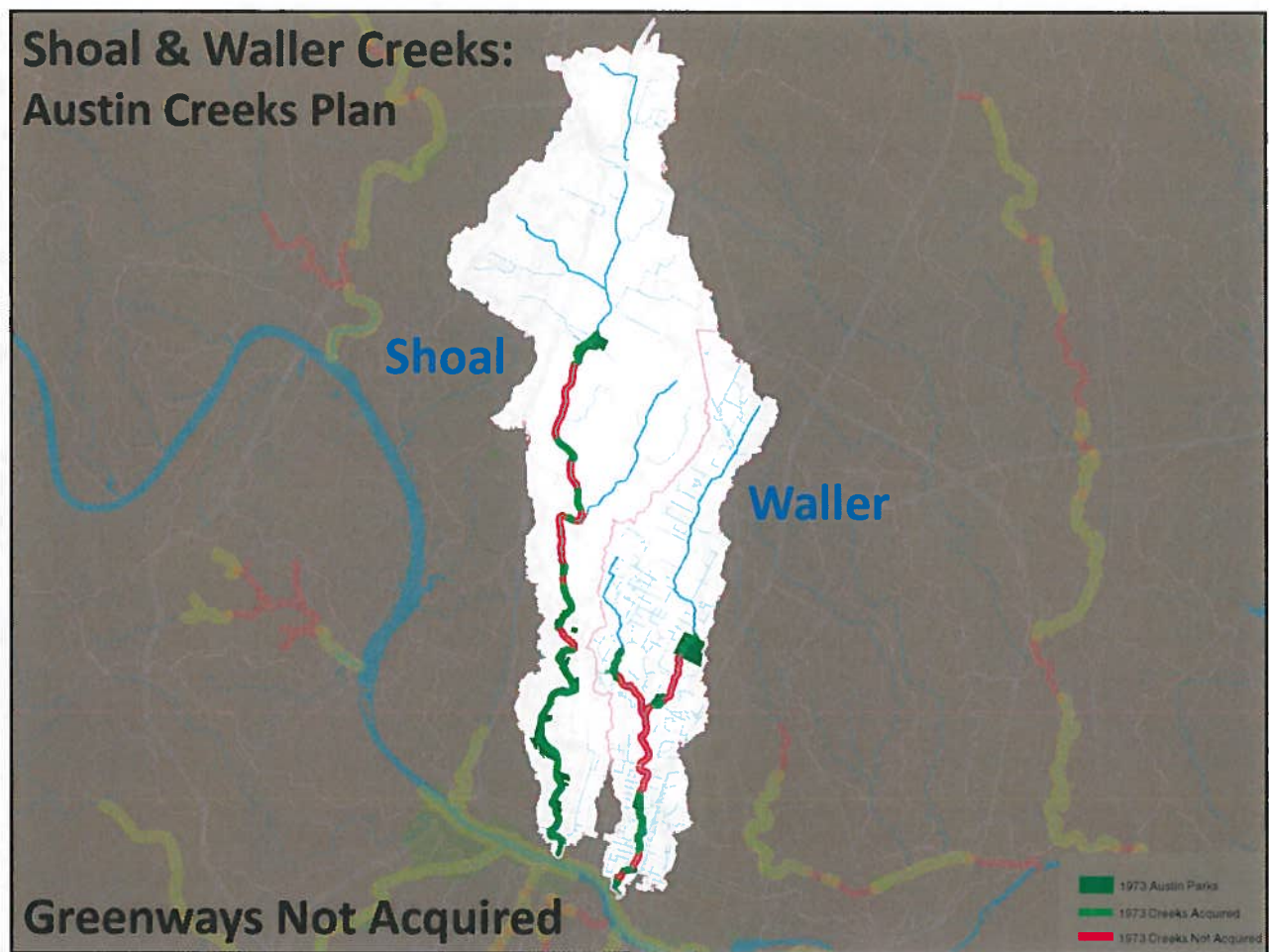
Development Patterns & Greenways

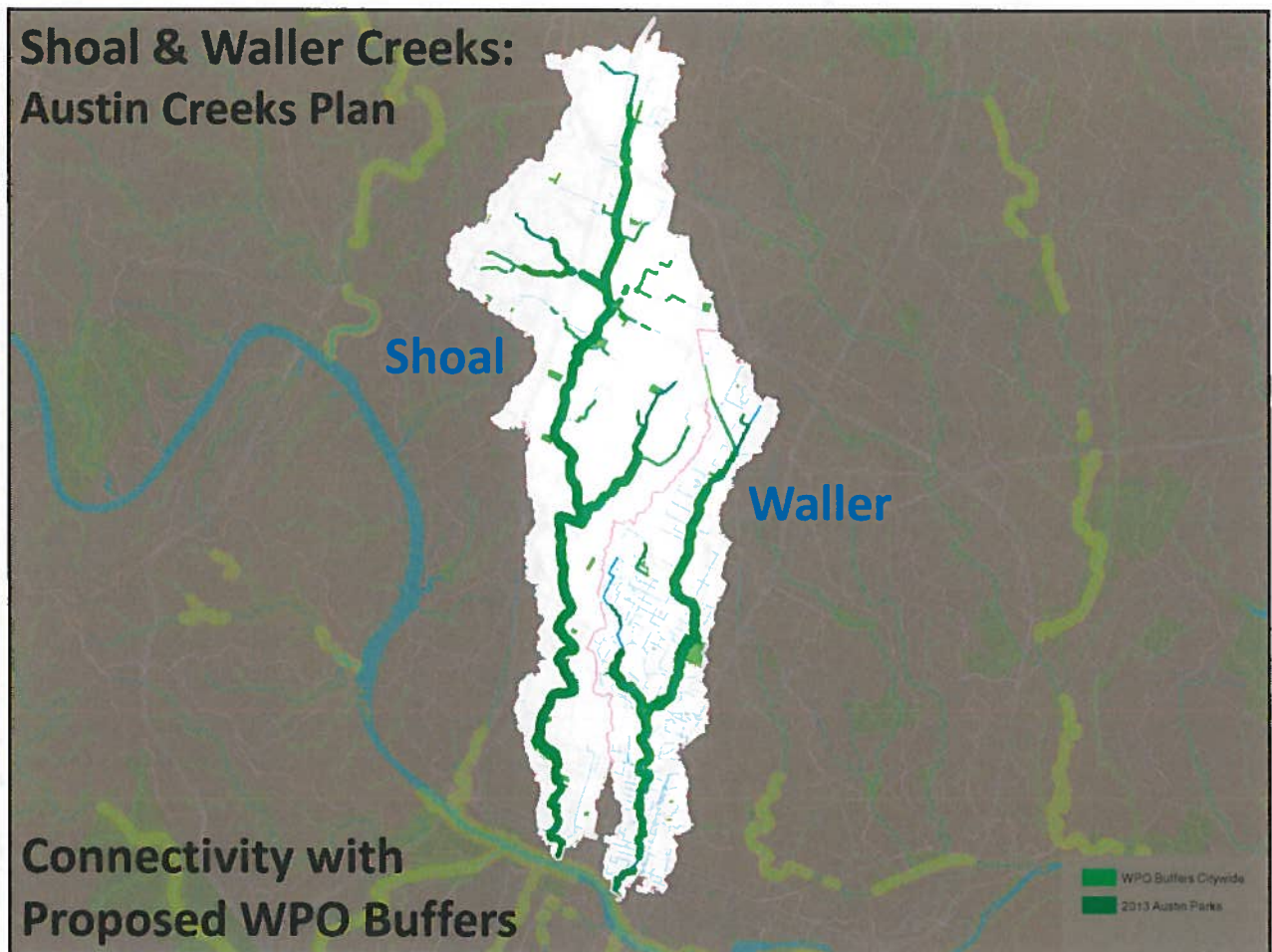
"Explore opportunities to encourage a development pattern that better protects public and private property, preserves floodplains, creeks and open spaces, and provides access and connectivity with greenways and trails."



Development Patterns & Greenways: Ordinance Proposal

- **PUD Tier 2 zoning elements** (10 → 23 options)
- Improve **transfers of development rights** options
- Expand the **Redevelopment Exception**
- Facilitate **small roadway projects** (less than 5,000 square feet)





Improved Stormwater Controls

"Improve permanent stormwater controls to better moderate runoff and help reduce streambank erosion."



Improved Stormwater Controls: Ordinance Proposal

- Adjust threshold for requiring **water quality controls** (5,000 square feet of impervious cover)
- Allow “**stacking**” of water quality and flood controls
- Require **accessibility** for maintenance & inspection
- 3rd party inspection for **subsurface controls**

Mitigation Options

"Explore better ways to regulate the modification of floodplains, including options for off-site mitigation for developments in areas that are planned for higher density developments."



Mitigation Options: Ordinance Proposal

- New **floodplain modification** mitigation options
- New **redevelopment** options in Water Supply watersheds (e.g., Lake Austin, Bull Creek)
- Evaluate options for **centers and corridors** in the Imagine Austin Code revision process

Simplify Regulations

"Simplify development regulations where possible and minimize the impact of any changes on individual and collective abilities to develop land."

Existing: 6 Stream Buffer Systems

ELEMENT	DESIRED DEV'T ZONE		DRINKING WATER PROTECTION ZONE			
	Urban	Suburban	Water Supply Suburban	Water Supply Rural	Barton Springs Zone Barton, Onion et al.	Williamson, Slaughter
Waterway Classification						
Minor	Over 64 ac.	320 - 640 ac.	128 - 320 ac.	64 - 320 ac.	64 - 320 ac.	128 - 320 ac.
Intermediate		640 - 1,280 ac.	320 - 640 ac.	320 - 640 ac.	320 - 640 ac.	320 - 640 ac.
Major		over 1,280 ac.	over 640 ac.	over 640 ac.	over 640 ac.	over 640 ac.
Critical Water Quality Zone						
Minor	50 - 400 ft.	50 - 100 ft.	50 - 100 ft.	50 - 100 ft.	50 - 100 ft.	50 - 100 ft.
Intermediate		100 - 200 ft.	100 - 200 ft.	100 - 200 ft.	100 - 200 ft.	100 - 200 ft.
Major		200 - 400 ft.	200 - 400 ft.	200 - 400 ft.	200 - 400 ft.	200 - 400 ft.
Water Quality Transition Zone						
Minor	None	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.
Intermediate		200 ft.	200 ft.	200 ft.	200 ft.	200 ft.
Major		300 ft.	300 ft.	300 ft.	300 ft.	300 ft.

Simplify Regulations

"Simplify development regulations where possible and minimize the impact of any changes on individual and collective abilities to develop land."

Proposed: 3 Stream Buffer Systems

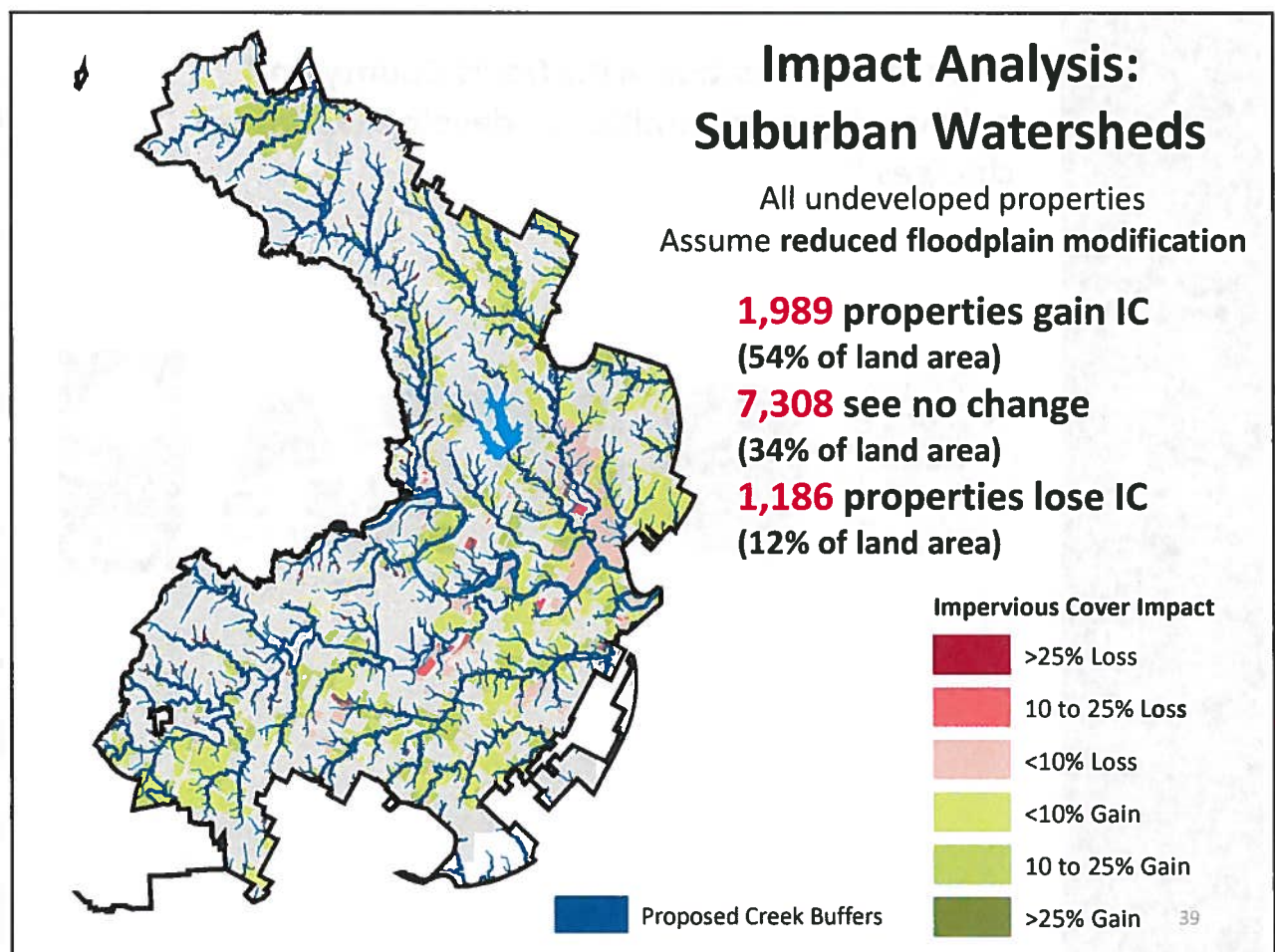
ELEMENT	DESIRED DEV'T ZONE		DRINKING WATER PROTECTION ZONE		
	Urban	Suburban	Water Supply Suburban	Water Supply Rural	Barton Springs Zone
Waterway Classification					
Minor	Over 64 ac.	64 - 320 ac.			
Intermediate		320 - 640 ac.			
Major		over 640 ac.			
Critical Water Quality Zone					
Minor	50 - 400 ft.	100 ft.	50 - 100 ft.		
Intermediate		200 ft.	100 - 200 ft.		
Major		300 ft.	200 - 400 ft.		
Water Quality Transition Zone					
Minor	None	None	100 ft.		
Intermediate			200 ft.		
Major			300 ft.		

Simplify Regulations: Ordinance Proposal

- Provisions were included to **minimize impacts** on the ability to develop, especially in Suburban watersheds
 - Eliminate Water Quality Transition Zone
 - Gross site area
 - Buffer averaging
- Eliminate the **Boundary Street Deduction**
- Numerous **clarifications & corrections** of existing code

Impact Analysis: Suburban Watersheds

- Analysis for undeveloped properties shows:
 - Minor gain (**4-5%**) in average impervious cover
 - Majority of properties (**70%**) are not affected
 - Majority of affected sites are within a range of +/-25 percent for impervious cover impact
 - Site-specific factors will affect each site differently
- Affordability Impact Statement assessment
 - Negative and positive impacts



**Coordinate with
Regional Partners**

"Work in coordination with Travis County and neighboring communities to develop the above changes."



Next Steps & Additional Information

Next: City Council Hearing, October 3, 2013

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www.austintexas.gov/page/watershed-protection-ordinance-0

