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North Shoal Creek neighborhood plan



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North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan Partners

Abbreviation	Full Name
311	Austin 311 Information Service
ACT	Austin Community Trees Program
AE	Austin Energy
AISD	Austin Independent School District
APD	Austin Police Department
APH	Austin Public Health
APL	Austin Public Library
ARR	Austin Resource Recovery
ATC	Austin Tenant Council
ATD	Austin Transportation Department
Cap Metro	Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Code	Austin Code Enforcement Department
CPO	Austin Corridor Program Office
DSD	Austin Development Services Department
EDD	Austin Economic Development Department
KAB	Keep Austin Beautiful
LATM	Austin Transportation Department - Local Area Traffic Management
NHCD	Austin Neighborhood Housing & Community Development Department
NPCT	Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
NPP	Neighborhood Partnering Program
NSCNA	North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association
OoS	Office of Sustainability
PARD	Austin Parks and Recreation Department
PAZ	Austin Planning and Zoning Department
PTA	Pillow Elementary School Parent Teacher Association
PW	Austin Public Works Department
SCC	Shoal Creek Conservancy
SFC	Sustainable Food Center
TreeFolks	TreeFolks
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
Urban Forestry	Austin DSD Urban Forestry Division
WPD	Austin Watershed Protection Department

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Acknowledgements

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Disclaimer

A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries. Maps within this plan are for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. They do not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. The maps have been produced by the Planning and Zoning Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

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Plan Context and Overview

The Context

The North Shoal Creek neighborhood has evolved from the 1960s to today going from quiet suburban fringe to a fully-developed central neighborhood with vibrant commercial corridors. The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan is a multi-stakeholder vision for establishing a more complete community for this portion of north central Austin. This plan balances the need to shape and guide change in a rapidly growing city and the need to identify aspects of the planning area that should be preserved and those that could be enhanced. The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Planning Area (NSCNPA) is part of Austin urban core, bounded by US 183 on the north, MoPac on the west, Burnet Road on the east, and Anderson Lane on the south.

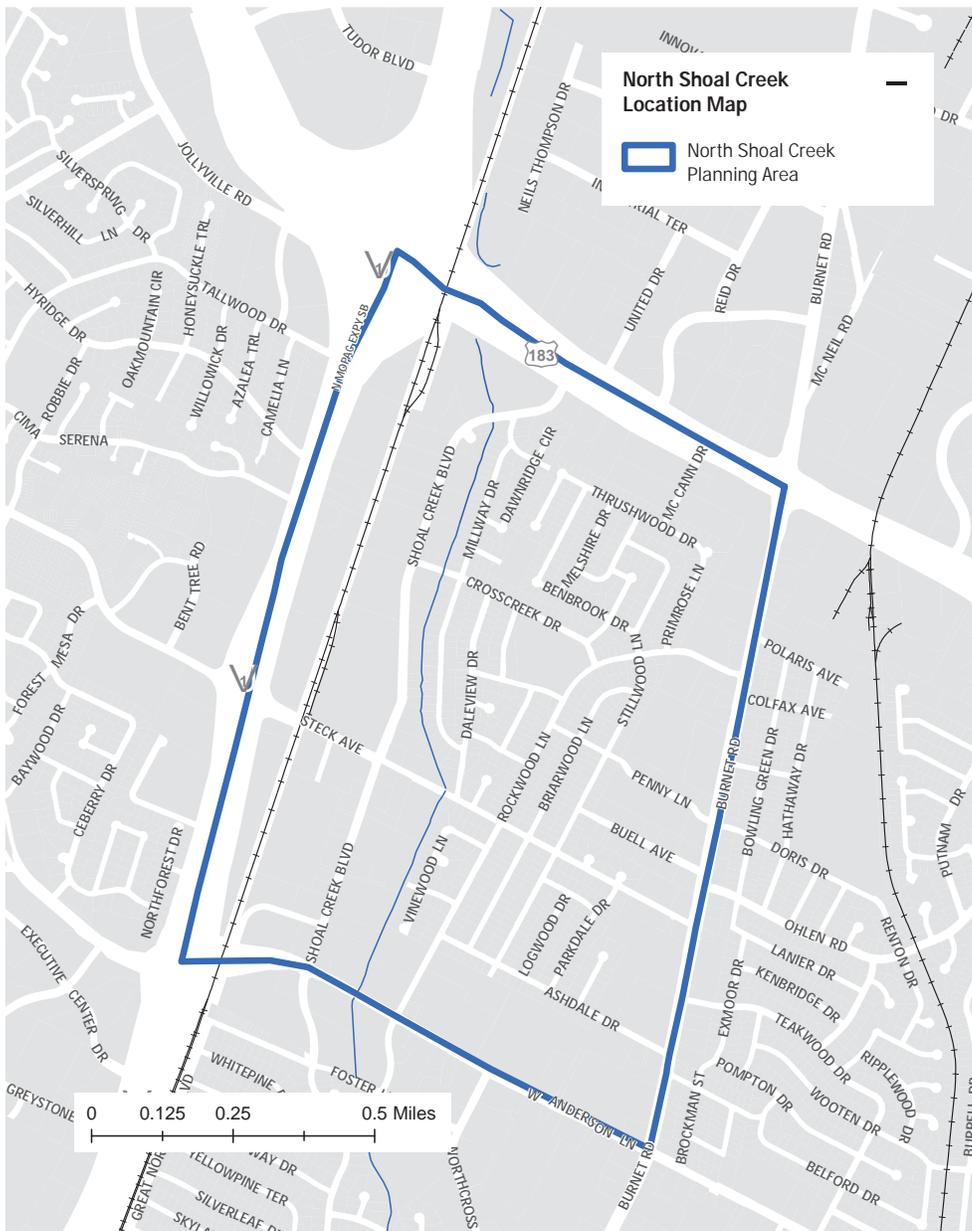


Figure 1 North Shoal Creek

While North Shoal Creek is well on its way to becoming a complete community, the planning area is not immune to outside forces. As Austin continues to grow and change, North Shoal Creek will continue to evolve in terms of affordability, demographic composition and building form -- especially along the major commercial and transit corridors. Shaping eventual change to make it more equitable and ensuring that quality of life is improved is the purpose behind the *Imagine Austin* comprehensive plan and the neighborhood plans.

Learn more about Imagine Austin at
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/imagine-austin>

Imagine Austin calls for the establishment of Complete Communities across the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Complete Communities are places that meet people's needs and desires within a short trip of where they live or work. A community is "complete" when it provides easy access to jobs, shopping, learning, services, green spaces, and other amenities via walking, biking, driving, and transit. To greater and lesser degrees, all communities are complete and what constitutes "completeness" varies from place to place. There are several measures by which a community can be evaluated for its completeness:

- Its walkability
- The availability of green spaces,
- The presence of a variety of housing options for a range of households, ages, and incomes
- The availability of nearby places to shop, dine, recreate, and access services.

Neighborhood Planning in Austin

Neighborhood planning in Austin grew out of community initiatives seeking to guide development and to preserve quality of life and neighborhood character while accommodating change. The 1979 *Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan* recommended that the City "develop and implement specific, detailed plans tailored to the needs of each neighborhood." This and the recommendations from the Citizens' Planning Committee from the mid-1990s lead to the creation of the Neighborhood Planning program by City Council in 1997. Over the next two decades, 30 neighborhood plans were initiated and adopted as amendments to the *Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan* and later, to *Imagine Austin*.

Imagine Austin establishes a policy framework for small area plans (neighborhood, station area, corridor, etc.) to assess a area's "completeness" and develop the vision, goals, policies, and actions needed for a community to become more complete. These plans provide City departments with guidance on community priorities, capital improvement projects, and are reviewed for zoning cases.

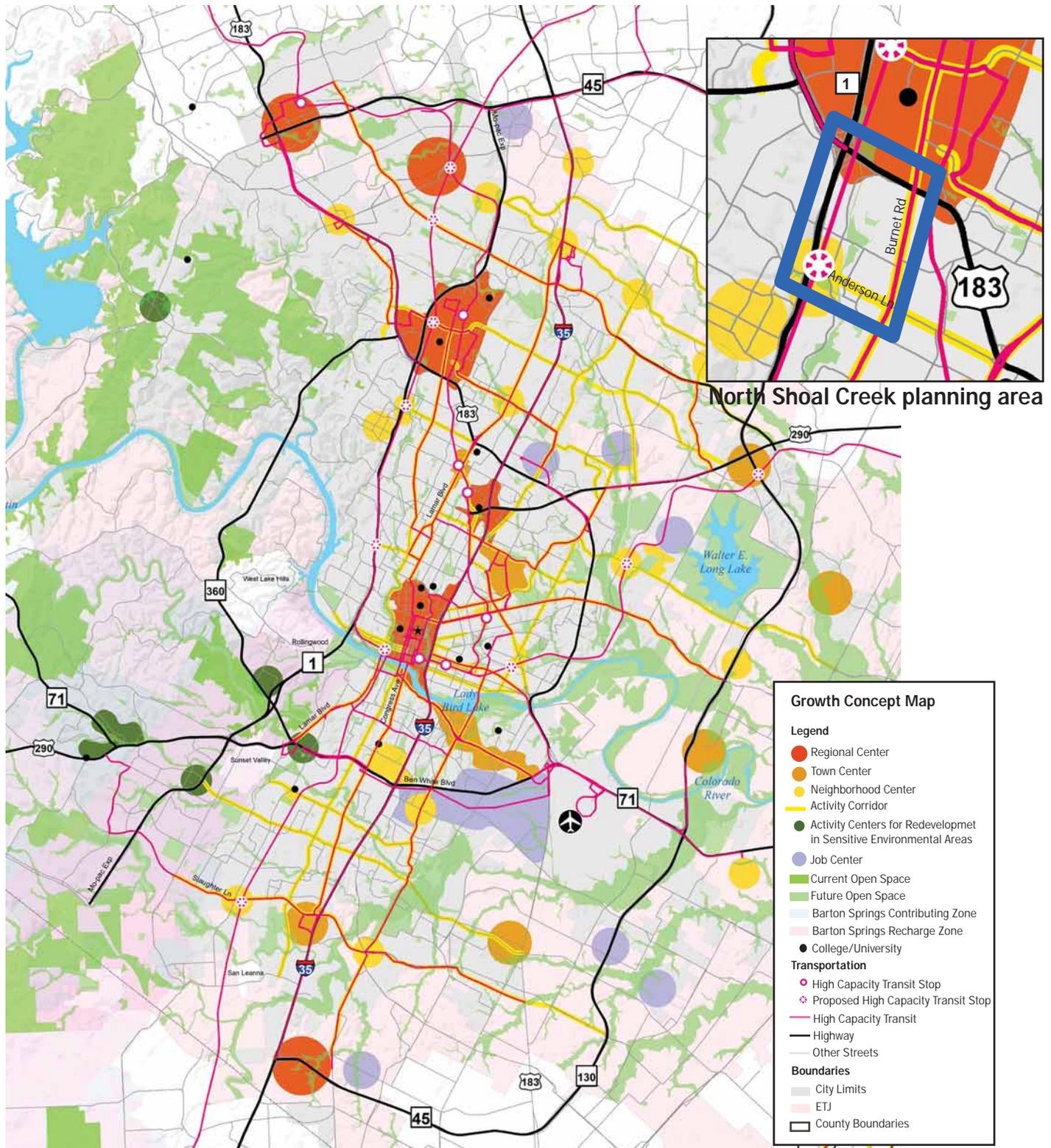


Figure 2 Imagine Austin Growth Concept Map

The Growth Concept Map applies the Imagine Austin vision statement to the city's physical development. Generated through a public scenario-building process, it defines how we plan to accommodate new residents, jobs, mixed use areas, open space, and transportation infrastructure over the next 30 years.

Imagine Austin's "Growth Concept Map"

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan works within the policies and guidelines established by *Imagine Austin* by providing detailed land use, infrastructure, and service recommendations within the neighborhood planning area. The *Imagine Austin* Growth Concept Map (GCM) envisions how the city should grow over the next 30 years. The Growth Concept Map is conceptual and the categories are not parcel-specific, nor do they carry the legal weight of zoning designations or other land use regulations. Using a largely interconnected network of activity corridors, mixed-use centers, and job centers, the Growth Concept Map presents a strategy to accommodate the bulk of future population and job growth in Austin. These corridors and centers are important tools to create more complete communities across the city. The GCM also provides direction as to how development will occur outside of the centers and corridors, it illustrates an expanded open space network, and it provides a framework illustrating how people will move about the city and the region. Within the planning area, the GCM identifies Burnet Road and Anderson Lane as Mixed-Use Activity Corridors.

Figure 3 Subdivision Development



North Shoal Creek Geography, History and Natural Features

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Planning Area is a one square-mile section of North Central Austin bounded by Mopac, US 183, Burnet Road, and Anderson Lane. Located along these roadways there is a mix of commercial uses ranging from retail, restaurants, and entertainment venues to automobile dealerships, storage facilities, and offices. When the subdivisions that would become the planning area's residential interior were being built, they were at the very northern edge of Austin. Like the majority of suburban communities built at the edges of cities, North Shoal Creek has a hard line dividing the commercial uses—and even townhouses and apartments—from the single-family interior. Once past that line there are only houses and occasional duplexes. These structures reflect the ranch house designs of the 1960s and early 1970s. In the late 1990s the North Shoal Creek Estates subdivision—comprised of more contemporary suburban houses—was built on the remaining vacant land. The planning area is now completely built out. Consequently, any new construction will most likely appear in the form of significant residential remodels or tear downs, accessory dwelling units in backyards, or the redevelopment of existing commercial and multi-family sites.

Like most residential areas built during this time, most of the planning area's roadway network does not follow a simple grid and reflects the area's suburban orientation around the car. While areas south of Steck Avenue have a mostly gridded street layout, those to the north have more curved streets with fewer direct connections. This is largely due to the phased construction of the planning area's interior by different developers.



In terms of natural features, the planning area is located about a mile and a half from the headwaters of its namesake, Shoal Creek. The creek enters the planning area through a culvert underneath US 183 and flows along a narrow stream through the western third of the planning area. The planning area is located in a relatively flat area of the city, making it conducive to walking or bicycling given adequate sidewalks, bike routes, and shade trees. It gently slopes to the south from its highest point near US 183 and McCann Drive to its lowest point where Shoal Creek passes under Anderson Lane.

Throughout the planning process, participants emphasized the importance of trees and the shade they provide. The front yard tree canopy in the interior of the neighborhood varies from street to street, but overall it provides a fair amount of shade. While the single-family areas are shaded the commercial areas surrounding them are not. The commercial area's large parking lots are mostly unshaded and retain a significant amount of heat, particularly during summer months. Parking lots and dark roofs, along with heat generated by energy usage, contribute to higher urban temperatures relative to undeveloped areas.

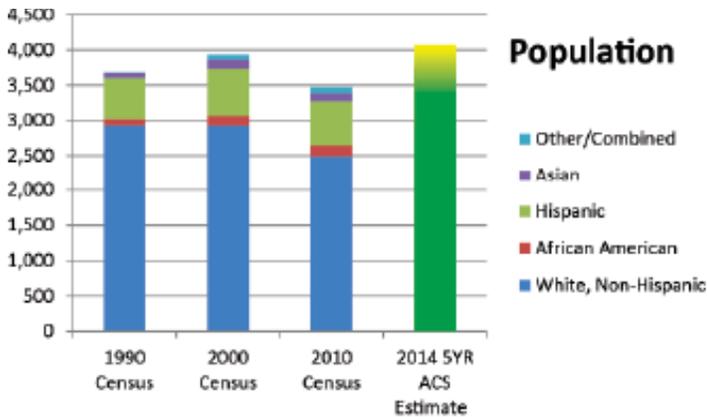




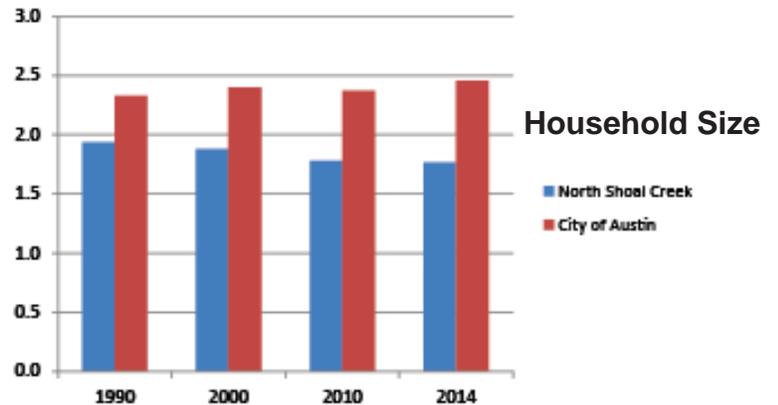
Photo courtesy NSCNA

Demographic Trends

Over the last couple of decades, North Shoal Creek’s population has become more diverse, a little older, and the number of people in each home has decreased. According to 2014 Census estimates, the planning area was home to an estimated 3,761 residents. This is a slight increase from the area’s population in 2010 and about the same as in 2000. The population in North Shoal Creek is growing more diverse. The proportions of people who identify as African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Other/Two or More Races increasing in 2000 and again in 2010. While the area is diversifying, it is less diverse than the City of Austin as a whole.



Graph 1 Area Population

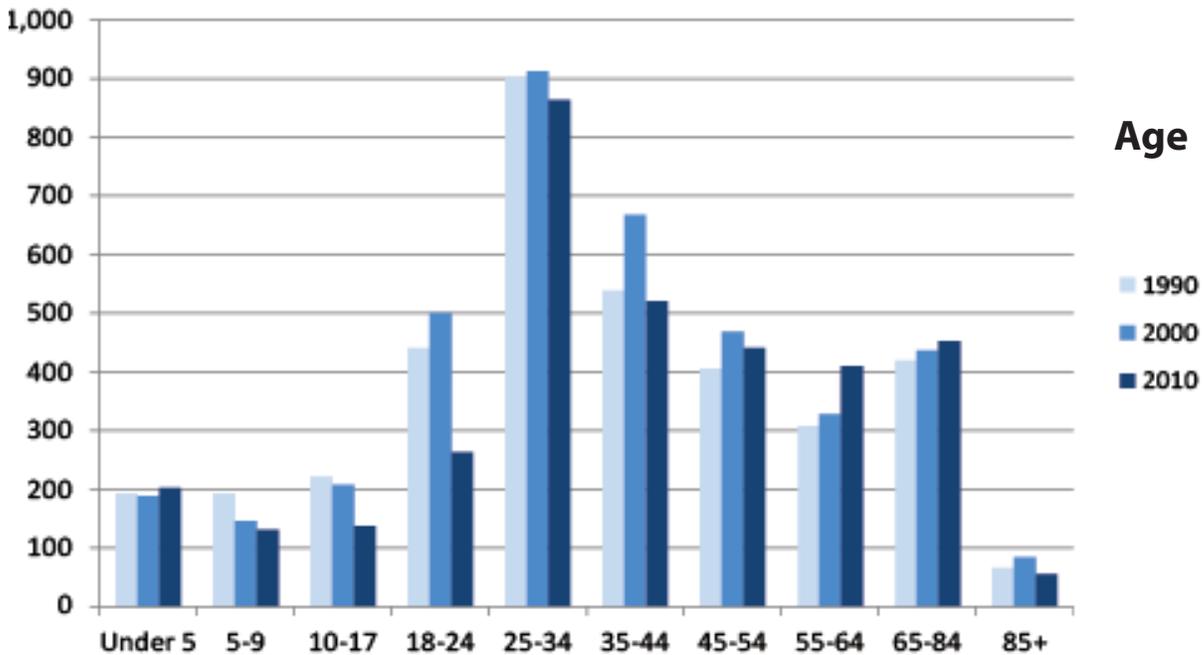


Graph 2 Area Household Size

As shown below, there have been declines over the past couple of decades in children, teens, and college-aged residents residing in the neighborhood, and increases in age groups from 55 to 64 and from 65 to 84 years old. This shift has presented itself in the declining number of residents living in each household, which is contrary to the trend for Austin as a whole. The most likely explanation is that aging residents enjoy living in the neighborhood and don't want to move away (into smaller homes or condominiums) as their children grow up and move out. The booming housing market is exacerbating this trend. Young families that previously could afford a home in the neighborhood are now priced out, and retirees have less incentive to sell, as the values of their homes (and nest eggs) continue to appreciate for the foreseeable future. On the rental side, there are many apartments for singles and couples, but once these families have children and seek more space, they will likely move to the suburban fringe, where larger units or houses are more affordable.



Photo courtesy NSCNA



Graph 3 Area Age Range



The Planning Process

Formulation of the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan involved extensive outreach to residents, property owners, businesses, institutions, and families of students at Pillow Elementary. Initial outreach included an emailed survey to all Austin utility account holders, a meeting with the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Association, and postcards sent to almost 3,000 residents, property owners, and businesses. Following the initial survey, the City held six community workshops at Pillow Elementary School. Each workshop consisted of presentations, group discussions, and group exercises. Presentations, discussions, and exercises focused on topics that included:

- Complete Communities
- Mobility and Land Use Connections
- Food Access
- Community Character, Places & Visions
- Fair Housing
- Community Character Districts
- Watershed Protection
- Plan Implementation, Goals, Policies, and Actions
- Future Land Use Maps
- Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams
- Stakeholder Forum: Ideas and Concerns

In addition to the workshops, there was a Kickoff survey, a Visual Preference survey, outreach meetings for Pillow School families (in English and Spanish), a mid-process survey, and a stakeholder forum focusing on community concerns about the plan and the planning process. Following initial drafting of the main plan building blocks, each section was posted online for community comment. At the end of the process, a final draft was released for stakeholders to comment on, and a final Open House was held presenting the main plan outcomes. A final survey was then distributed to gauge participant satisfaction with the plan and the planning process.

Complete Community Needs and Values

At the start of the planning process, stakeholders were asked what they thought was needed to make their neighborhood feel more complete and what their top priorities were. The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan aims to address these needs and values.

Complete Community Top Needs:

- A sidewalk network that makes it easy to walk to nearby goods and services
- Better overall access to open space and parks
- A network of bicycle lanes and/or trails linking homes to shopping and services, recreation, and transit
- Better access to transit stops
- Redevelopment of aging commercial sites that could provide more local-serving businesses
- Preserving the residential core and allowing more housing options in other areas
- Remodeling of existing commercial buildings to promote more local-serving businesses
- A greater variety of nearby community gathering spaces and recreational centers
- Better access to healthy foods and fresh produce
- A greater variety of nearby entertainment, arts and cultural facilities and amenities

Complete Community Top Values:

- Improving mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists, better access to transit
- Ensuring Pillow elementary students can safely walk and bike to school and back to their home
- Supporting new, small community gathering places such as “pocket” parks and plazas
- Making existing commercial areas more walkable
- Deciding how aging commercial and multi-family sites should be developed
- Improving access to and quality of parks



Plan Organization

The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan is a working document designed to assist stakeholders in improving and/or maintaining the quality of life in their community. The plan is built around five building blocks based on stakeholder input throughout the planning process:

- Housing Opportunity
- Community Character
- Mobility and Connectivity
- Natural Environment
- Quality of Life

The steps needed to address each building block's issues—goals, policies, and actions—were developed through a public planning process consisting of meetings, workshops and surveys as described above. For a more detailed description of workshops and surveys see the Public Input Summary found in the Appendix.



Other than Community Character, each building block has the following three components:

Goals are aspirational and general statements about desired outcomes or end states. A goal requires policies and actions to be realized. Due to their broad nature, goals are difficult to measure.

Policies are more specific and usually address a specific aspect or facet of a goal. Their greater specificity makes them easier to measure; however, they do not include specific actions. Policies will guide decision-making around certain topics.

Actions are specific and are used to track a plan's implementation. Actions have potential partners listed, which are City departments and/or external groups who will be responsible for taking that action.

The Community Character building block is structured differently. It contains Visions for each of the seven sub-areas of the neighborhood. It also contains Policies for those areas, which are meant to help achieve each sub-area's vision.

Goals, policies, and actions are tracked by City staff. The responsible departments consult recommended actions when prioritizing their work plans. The presence of an action in this plan does not guarantee that it will be achieved, but it will ensure the responsible department or decision-making body is aware of the importance of that action for the neighborhood.



Plan Implementation: Neighborhood Plan Contact Team

In the City of Austin, the group of people who are charged with shepherding and implementing their neighborhood plan is called the Neighborhood Plan Contact Team. The NSCNPA Contact Team will be the main group responsible for coordinating with applicable City of Austin departments, neighborhood associations, and other groups to prioritize and implement the plan's recommendations. Contact Teams are required for all neighborhood plans under City of Austin Land Development Code. Each contact team must have representation from a:

- Property owner
- Renter
- Business owner
- Neighborhood organization representative(s) who own or rent property within the planning area.

Contact Teams review and make recommendations for amendments to a neighborhood plan, including any changes to the Future Land Use Map (Character District). Contact Teams are also responsible for advocating for the implementation of all the recommendations contained in a neighborhood plan by working with the City of Austin, community volunteers, and other groups.

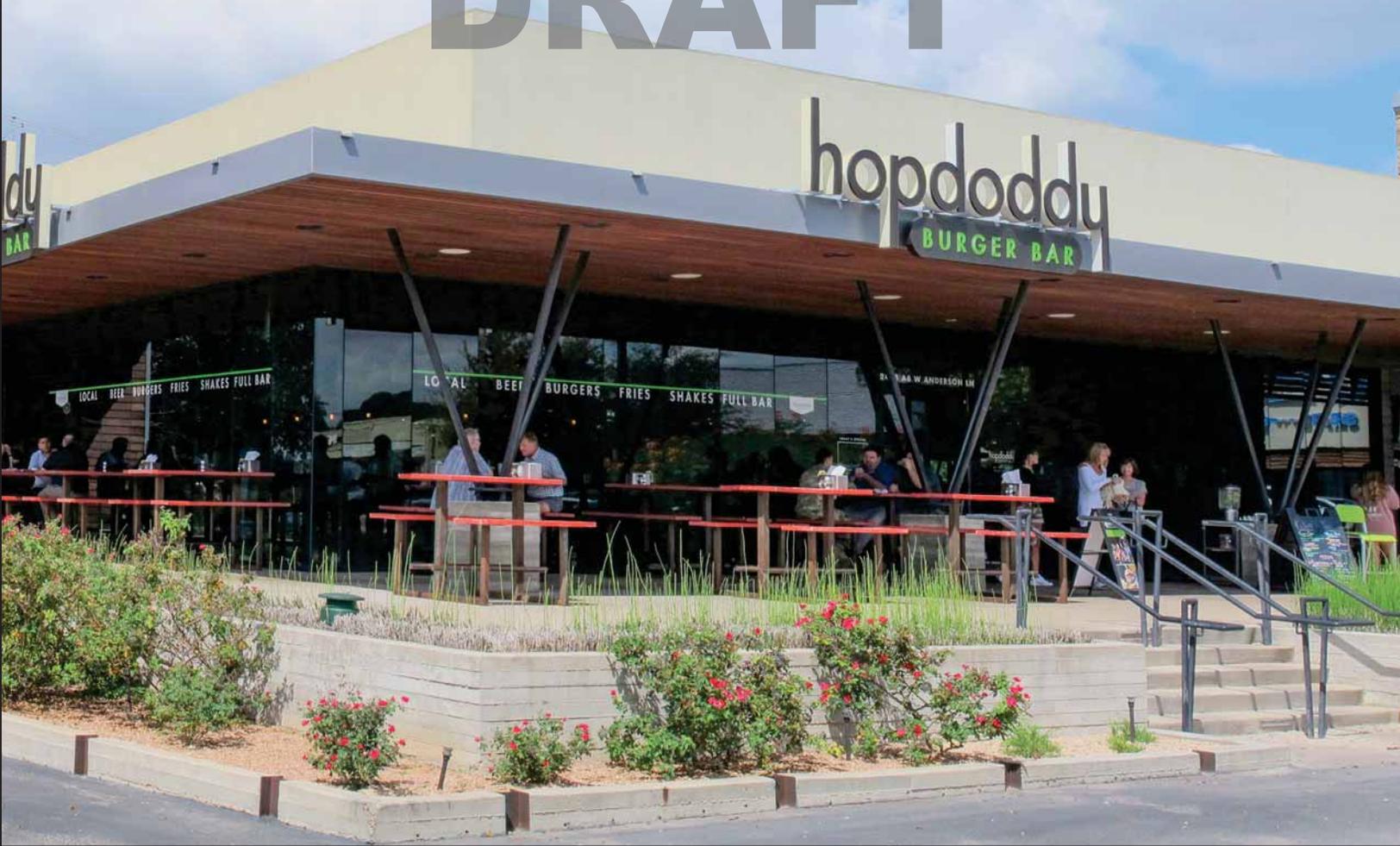
For more information on Neighborhood Plan Contact Teams, please visit: <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/neighborhood-plan-contact-teams>

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Facing Page: A prominent local business that effectively uses outdoor space and large display windows to create a sense of vibrancy along Anderson Lane.

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COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Visions and Places

Future Land Use Map

Character Districts

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HOME GROWN & HANDCRAFTED

CRISPER!

LIVE MUSIC

SOCIAL LOUNGE

LUNCH

Late Night



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VISIONS AND PLACES

A community's character is defined by the different places found within it and how those places look, feel, and function. Is it a quiet place with few people, or is it a vibrant one where people tend to gather? Are the buildings squat or tall? Some of these places are dedicated to commerce, some to industry, and others are the residential areas where most people live. Others are defined by a mix of available goods and services, housing, job opportunities, public spaces, recreation, and entertainment opportunities.

In the same way that cities are collections of places, so are neighborhoods. The North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Planning Area consists of seven "places." Throughout the planning process, participants defined and refined the boundaries of these places. Participants created a vision for how each place should retain its basic character or how it may change over time. In those areas where change is anticipated, this section will inform future land use and zoning decisions. These decisions should be considered in relationship to this section's land use policies, the Future Land Use Map, other relevant plan sections, as well as other applicable City of Austin plans.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY CHARACTER?

Community Character is the image and perception of a community, as defined by its people, history, built environment, and natural features.



NEIGHBORHOOD PLACES

US 183
Frontage Road



Residential Interior



Shoal Creek
Boulevard



Mopac
Frontage Road



Buell Avenue



Burnet Road



Anderson Lane





RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR

VISION: The Residential Interior should remain a quiet residential district. In the future it should retain its residential character as a community of calm, tree-lined streets with sidewalks that safely and comfortably connect residents to their neighbors and nearby goods, services, and recreation.

North Shoal Creek's Residential Interior is calm and peaceful. It is characterized by quiet, tree-lined streets of well-maintained one and two-story, ranch-styled houses and duplexes mostly dating from the 1960s and 1970s. At the heart of the planning area sits Pillow Elementary School and Park. Along the edges are a number of apartment and condominium complexes. Surrounding the Residential Interior are commercial areas providing goods, services, and employment opportunities. In places where other character districts abut single-family properties in the Residential Interior, considerations such as screening, fences, landscaping, and architectural designs should be employed to provide a protective buffer.



The Residential Interior of the planning area is well-established and not likely to substantially change from its current character. In the short-term, the most likely changes will be significant remodels of, and additions to, existing houses. However, as the value of land increases at a much greater rate than that of the structures it contains, there could be an increase in demolitions and rebuilds. The resulting new houses likely may be larger, will likely have more contemporary designs, and will be significantly more expensive than the existing ones—a trend that is already occurring in residential areas adjacent to the planning area.

Existing Conditions



WHAT ARE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)?

ADUs are buildings containing additional dwelling units that are smaller than the primary residential buildings. They can be an apartment located over a garage or parking area or a small, stand-alone house. While some ADUs are two-stories, they should not impinge on the privacy of neighbors. These units are an important tool to promote more affordable housing in the Residential Interior. ADUs are appropriate on lots with easy access to the back yard—either on corner lots or on lots with wide side yards.



Land Use Policies for Residential Interior

RI P1 Retain single-family houses as the most dominant building type.

RI P2 Encourage subordinate, secondary housing units in locations that provide access and respect privacy.

Related Policies

EN P4 Establish a healthy and vibrant tree canopy.

MC P1 Complete the sidewalk network, starting with key connections.

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BURNET ROAD

VISION: As one of Austin’s “Main Streets,” Burnet Road provides people from nearby residential areas, and those living in the Austin region, an assortment of services, retail, and entertainment opportunities in a variety of building sizes. As change occurs along Burnet Road, the character of the roadway will evolve from one favoring people driving their cars to one where pedestrians and bicyclists can shop, dine, and enjoy their time. As the corridor becomes more welcoming to people walking and biking, improved transit service will link the area to Central Austin and destinations to the north.

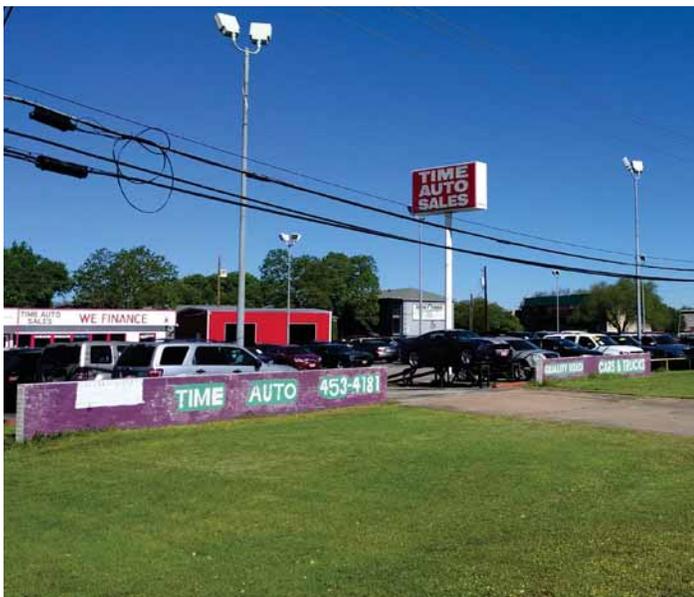
The buildings, parking lots, and wide curb cuts along Burnet Road exemplify the suburban commercial character of the 1970s and 1980s. There are several older shopping centers, numerous stand-alone commercial buildings (i.e. fast food and sit-down restaurants, convenience stores, self-storage facility), as well as several new and used automobile dealerships. These conditions, along with heavy traffic and unshaded narrow sidewalks, contribute to conditions unfavorable for walking and biking.

Austin, particularly its urban core, is experiencing unprecedented change. Presently, the change along Burnet Road is focused south of Anderson Lane; however, redevelopment pressures are beginning to be felt in North Shoal Creek. In fewer than 10 years many of the properties with frontages on Burnet Road may be candidates for redevelopment. As change comes to North Shoal Creek’s segment of Burnet Road it should help achieve the plan’s vision for the roadway



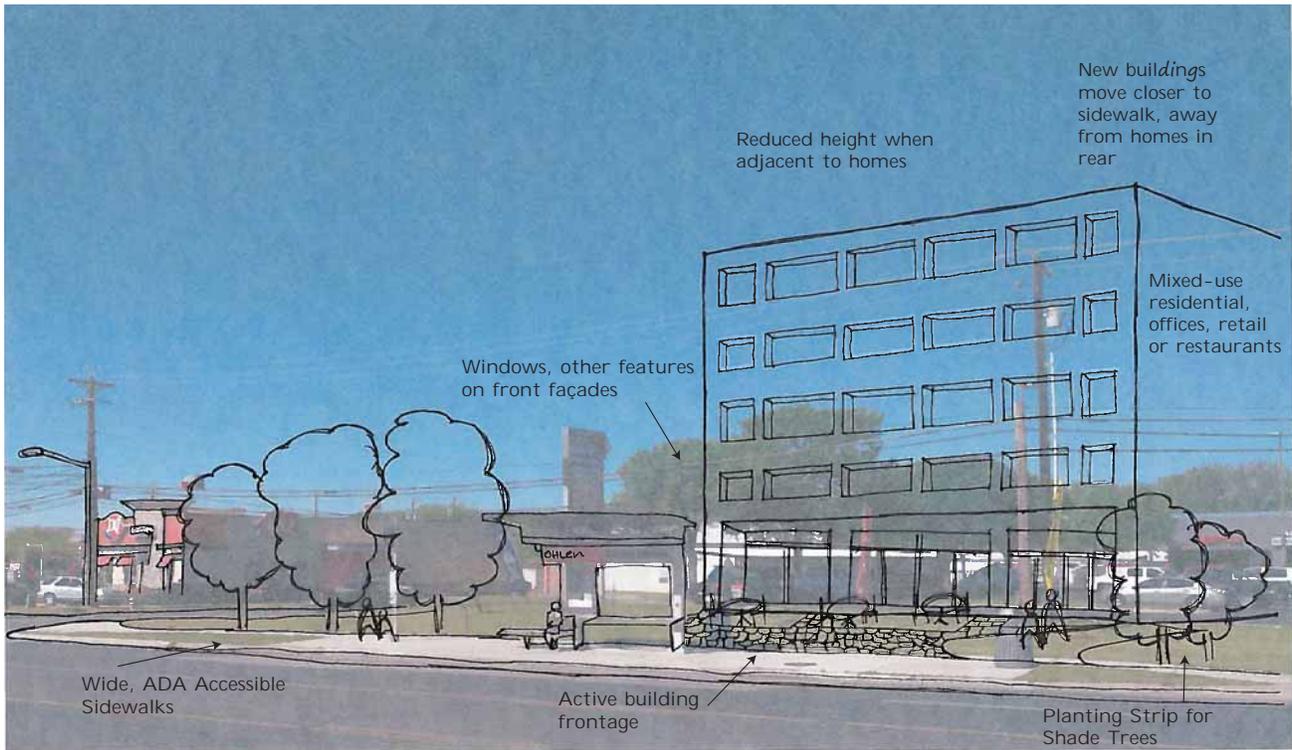
and support other plan elements. New development should be directed toward the commercial corridors to reduce redevelopment pressures in the Residential Interior. Although buildings will be oriented toward the street, there should be a variety of building heights and front setbacks to avoid a repetitive appearance. Multi-bedroom units should be encouraged to accommodate larger household sizes. Developments should contribute to making Burnet Road a better place to walk by providing shade and places where people want to shop, dine, and meet their friends and neighbors. As sites redevelop, the resulting projects should contribute to increased ridership for the MetroRapid service and contribute toward the transit-oriented development principles described on pages 59-68.

Existing Conditions



WHAT ARE PEOPLE-FRIENDLY PLACES?

These types of development are built at human scale and oriented to people rather than to cars.



Enhancing the streetscape by providing wider sidewalks, shade trees, amenities such as outdoor seating and moving buildings closer to the street create a more pleasant and safer walking experience.

Land Use Policies for Burnet Road

BR P1 Foster people-friendly areas along Burnet Road while attracting a wide range of goods and services.

BR P2 If redevelopment occurs, encourage a mix of uses, including multi-family components.

BR P3 Encourage preservation of multi-bedroom apartment units and inclusion in new developments.

BR P4 Encourage sustainable, unique and accessible retail development.

BR P5 Development immediately adjacent to the Residential Interior will be compatible, with enhanced landscape screening and building height step backs.

BR P6 Look for opportunities to increase tree canopy while enhancing sidewalk and green space along Burnet Road.

BR P7 Leverage opportunities to harmonize land uses near high-capacity transit.

Related Policies

MC P8 Make it safer for people to walk around the neighborhood and to nearby commercial areas..

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ANDERSON LANE

VISION: *Anderson Lane is a major arterial, significant for its eclectic mix of goods, services, entertainment, and housing. As the character of Anderson Lane transitions from automobile-dominated to one more supportive of people walking and biking, new buildings will be closer to the street and a lively people-oriented environment will emerge. Where there used to be drainage ditches and narrow sidewalks, coffee shops and human-scaled public spaces will emerge, providing opportunities for social interaction in places along greener and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.*

Although Anderson Lane and Burnet Road are both major commercial roadways, the retail environment along Anderson Lane is much more robust and some shopping centers have had recent, significant improvements. The most striking difference between the two corridors is the number and size of the shopping centers. Along Anderson Lane, between Shoal Creek Boulevard and Burnet Road there is a continuous half mile row of retail establishments.



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Like those along Burnet Road, the shopping centers along Anderson Lane are representative of an automobile-oriented suburban design. Most of the buildings are single-story and are separated from the roadway by large parking lots mostly devoid of sidewalks, trees, or significant landscaping.

Over time, mixed-use activity corridors like Anderson Lane, with their large, deep parcels, will likely be candidates for redevelopment, bringing new retail and housing opportunities. When and if decisions are made to redevelop these commercial sites, they should be replaced by more sustainable and urban development. As they redevelop, large commercial sites should provide internal circulation routes to make it easier to travel through these sites and make future development feel less visually massive.

Existing Conditions



WHAT IS COMPATIBLE?

This means development that has similar massing and uses that do not conflict with adjacent sites. A commercial building next to a house's back yard should

- Be set back from the property line
- Have landscaping, fencing and other buffers
- Should not loom over the adjacent house
- Should not have windows peering into the yard.



Land Use Policies for Anderson Lane

AL P1 Foster people-friendly areas along Anderson Lane while attracting a range of goods and services.

AL P2 Increase the tree canopy while enhancing sidewalks and green spaces along Anderson Lane.

AL P3 Encourage multi-family development as one component of a mixed-use environment.

AL P4 Encourage multi-bedroom apartment units.

AL P5 Encourage sustainable, unique and accessible retail development.

AL P6 Development immediately adjacent to the Residential Interior will be compatible, with enhanced landscape screening and lower building heights.

AL P7 Integrate land uses with the transportation system.

AL P8 Create shaded, well-maintained, and safe paths to walk and bike.

Related Policies

MC P8 Make it safer for people to walk around the neighborhood and to nearby commercial areas.

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BUELL AVENUE

VISION: Buell Avenue is a unique part of the neighborhood that serves as a transition from Burnet Road to the Residential Interior, offering a variety of goods and services. This Special District will incorporate spaces for tradespeople, shop keepers, craftspeople, artists, and residents to interact while enjoying the calm live/work environment.

The current character of Buell Avenue is oriented towards services, storage, and contractor shops. As compared to the retail environments along Burnet Road and Anderson Lane, this mix of commercial services attracts less customer traffic. The commercial sites on Buell Avenue are largely paved over and have very few trees. The buildings in this district are currently utilitarian, with fenced-off parking lots or storage yards.

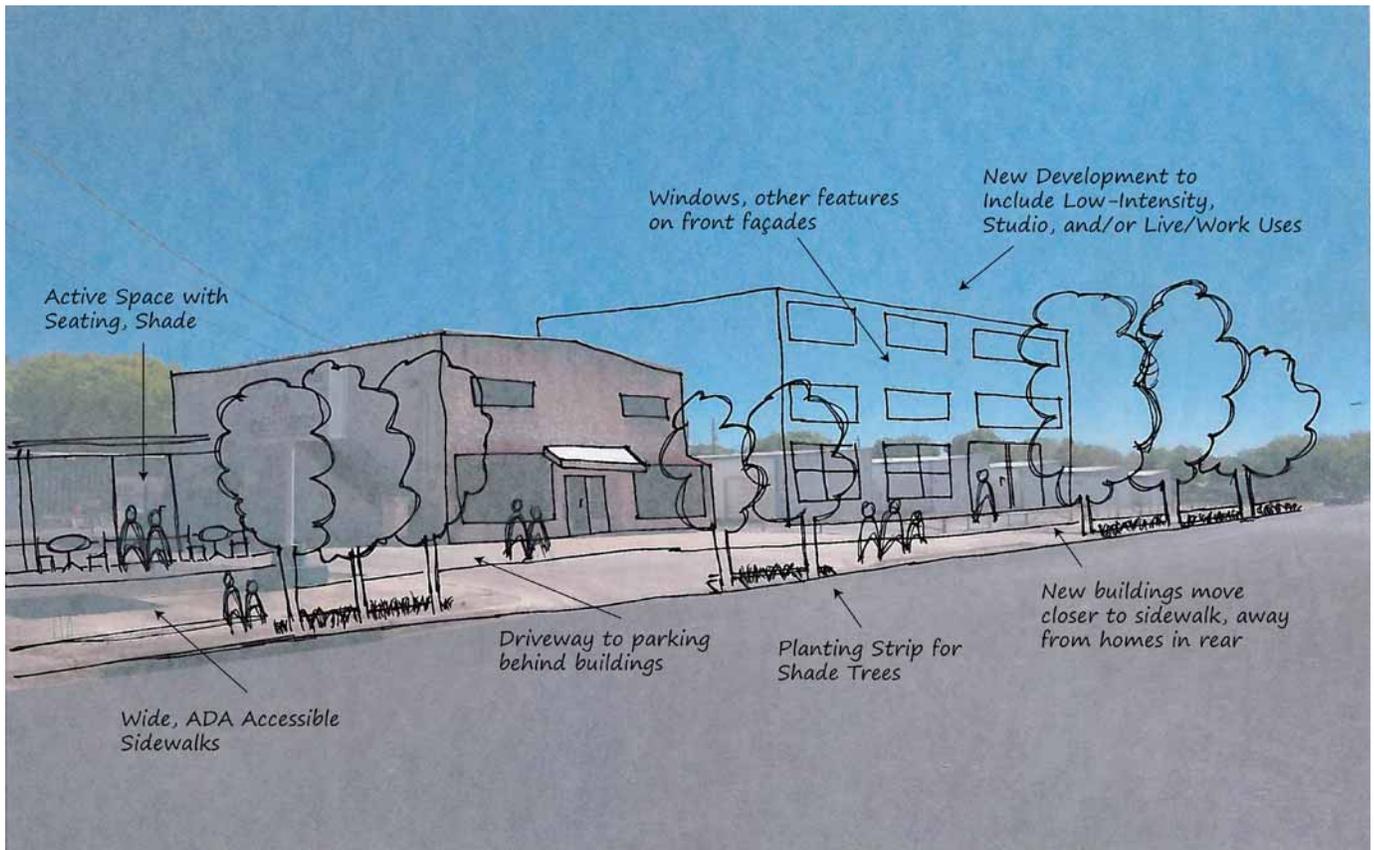


Stakeholders identified Buell Avenue as a place whose built character should change while continuing to provide spaces for existing businesses. Intermixed with the commercial uses will be new residential uses such as live-work spaces, townhouses, small apartment buildings, as well as long-time businesses. There will be more green spaces, and the buildings along Buell Avenue will move close to the street adding shade trees and creating a pleasant place to walk. Where adjacent to single-family homes, new development will have buffering and compatible heights.

Existing Conditions



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Adding wider sidewalks, street trees, outdoor seating, and orienting buildings toward the street creates a pedestrian-friendly place that encourages walking and socializing.

Land Use Policies for Buell Avenue Special District

BA P1 Serve as a transitional place between Burnet Road and the Residential Interior, providing employment, live/work, and residential opportunities.

BA P2 Landscaping and green spaces should be used to soften the character of buildings along Buell Avenue.

BA P3 Development immediately adjacent to the Residential Interior will be compatible, with buffer yards, enhanced landscape screening and lower building heights.



SHOAL CREEK BLVD

VISION: Shoal Creek Boulevard is a tree-lined connection for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists with several distinct places along its path through the planning area. Along its route there is a diverse mix of retail, services, large and small local businesses, as well as a variety of housing.

From north to south, Shoal Creek Boulevard’s diverse mix of uses and buildings creates a more varied character than the other commercial roadways in the planning area. Most of the buildings are one or two-stories, although there are a few taller buildings. The northern third of the roadway is a mixed use/industrial area with a collection of offices, light industrial uses, warehouses, and apartments. With the exception of the First Texas Honda dealership, the middle section (centered around the intersection with Steck Avenue) has smaller-scaled buildings containing retail, services, offices, and apartments. The southern third is more commercially-oriented and has a mix of retail and services and includes Lowe’s Home Improvement store and the 8015 Shoal Creek medical/office/commercial center.



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COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Shoal Creek Boulevard serves as a transition between the planning area's Residential Interior and the taller buildings along the MoPac frontage road. The actual Shoal Creek further serves as a buffer between the single-family homes on its east and the commercial and industrial uses to its west. As properties along Shoal Creek Boulevard redevelop, they should contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The parking lots and driveways lining the street should be replaced by building frontages, public spaces, and broad sidewalks shaded by street trees. Properties adjacent to the railroad tracks are more appropriate for taller buildings and non-residential uses.

Existing Conditions - North



Existing Conditions - Middle



Existing Conditions - South



Land Use Policies for Shoal Creek Boulevard

- SC P1 Maintain the northern portion uses with a balance of one- to three-story offices, apartments, warehouses, and live-work spaces.
- SC P2 Encourage development of a mixed-use district with local-serving shops and services near Steck Ave.
- SC P3 Continue to support more intensive uses near Anderson Lane, such as commercial and services, while providing opportunities to add residential components.

Related Policies & Actions

- MC P2 Improve and promote transit to connect to other areas of Austin.
- MC P8 Make it safer for people to walk around the neighborhood and to nearby commercial areas.
- MC A14 In partnership with the Shoal Creek Conservancy, connect the Shoal Creek Trail through the planning area with enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

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MOPAC FRONTAGE ROAD

VISION: Mopac's frontage road hosts highway-scale office and commercial uses that cater to workers and customers from all across Austin and Central Texas.

The Mopac Frontage Road is separated from the majority of the North Shoal Creek planning area by the Union-Pacific railroad tracks and is difficult to access other than by car. The Mopac Frontage Road, particularly north of Steck Avenue, is characterized by an increasing number of multi-story office buildings. The exception to this is at the northern edge of the frontage road where Mopac meets US 183 and there is a heavier industrial use—Ergon Asphalt and Emulsions, Inc.

As sites along the frontage road redevelop, a mix of four to six-story office building heights would be appropriate. Residential uses are not compatible with the fast-moving highway traffic and loud and frequent railroad traffic.

Land Use Policies for Mopac Frontage Road

MF P1 Encourage a balance of offices and services, discourage residential.

MF P2 Allow building heights of four to six-stories and vehicular-oriented site design.

MF P3 Integrate beautification of landscape areas and plant trees to provide shade along walk and bike paths.

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US 183 FRONTAGE ROAD

VISION: Due to large traffic volumes and noise, the types of businesses along this frontage road will continue to be offices, industry, regional-serving commerce, and other non-residential uses. Development will be oriented toward the frontage road and buildings will scale down toward adjacent houses.

Similar to the MoPac frontage, this part of North Shoal Creek is dominated by an elevated freeway and access road with vehicles traveling at highway speeds. While this provides excellent regional access for offices and businesses, it makes for a poor pedestrian environment and is not appropriate for residences.

Land Use Policies for US 183 Frontage Road

US P1 Development immediately adjacent to the Residential Interior should be compatible, with enhanced landscape screening and lower building heights.

US P2 Maintain a balance of regional-serving commercial uses, and discourage residential uses along the frontage road.

US P3 Encourage private property owners along the frontage road to incorporate native planting to help diffuse traffic noise

US P4 Integrate beautification of landscape areas and plant trees to provide shade along walk and bike paths.

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Character Districts Typical Land Uses and Heights

Residential Core:
Single-family homes and
duplexes up to 2
stories

Neighborhood
Transition:
Mostly apartments, con-
dos and townhomes. up to 3
stories

Neighborhood Node:
Pedestrian-oriented
mixed-use or commer-
cial buildings. up to 3
stories

Mixed-Use
Activity Corridor:
Pedestrian-oriented
mixed-use, residential
or commercial buildings,
with a variety of heights up to 5
stories

Buell Live/Work District:
Commercial Services
and Live/Work units. up to 3
stories

Commerce:
Commercial services,
office, retail. up to 5
stories

Industry: Services and
storage, some offices. up to 3
stories

Open Space & Preserve:
Natural, drainage, and
park spaces. Limit
N/A

Future Land Use Map

Imagine Austin and small area plans (including neighborhood, corridor, center, and station area plans) provide policies for spending, regulations, and land use decisions and zoning changes. These plans work together by providing decision-makers with coordinated but different perspectives. For land use decisions, *Imagine Austin's* "Growth Concept Map" and associated text provides high-level policy direction as to how Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) should become more sustainable. The Growth Concept Map section of *Imagine Austin's* chapter four, "Shaping Austin: Building the Complete Community," identifies and defines centers and corridors where much of our projected future growth—people and jobs—should occur. While the comprehensive plan articulates what the city-wide interest is at a broad scale, small area plans provide a detailed view based on local conditions.

The *North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan's* text, maps, photographs, illustrations, and future land use map (FLUM) provide local and detailed policy direction. The FLUM is a parcel-level land map illustrating how the plan's vision for each place in North Shoal Creek should evolve or be preserved. It is the plan's primary land use decision-making tool and balances the desires and rights of diverse stakeholders while implementing adopted City policies. Although it guides land use decisions, the FLUM is not a zoning map. When used for land use decisions, it should be used in conjunction with other plan elements to guide decisions on proposed zoning and development cases as well as the application of new development regulations.

WHAT IS THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT?

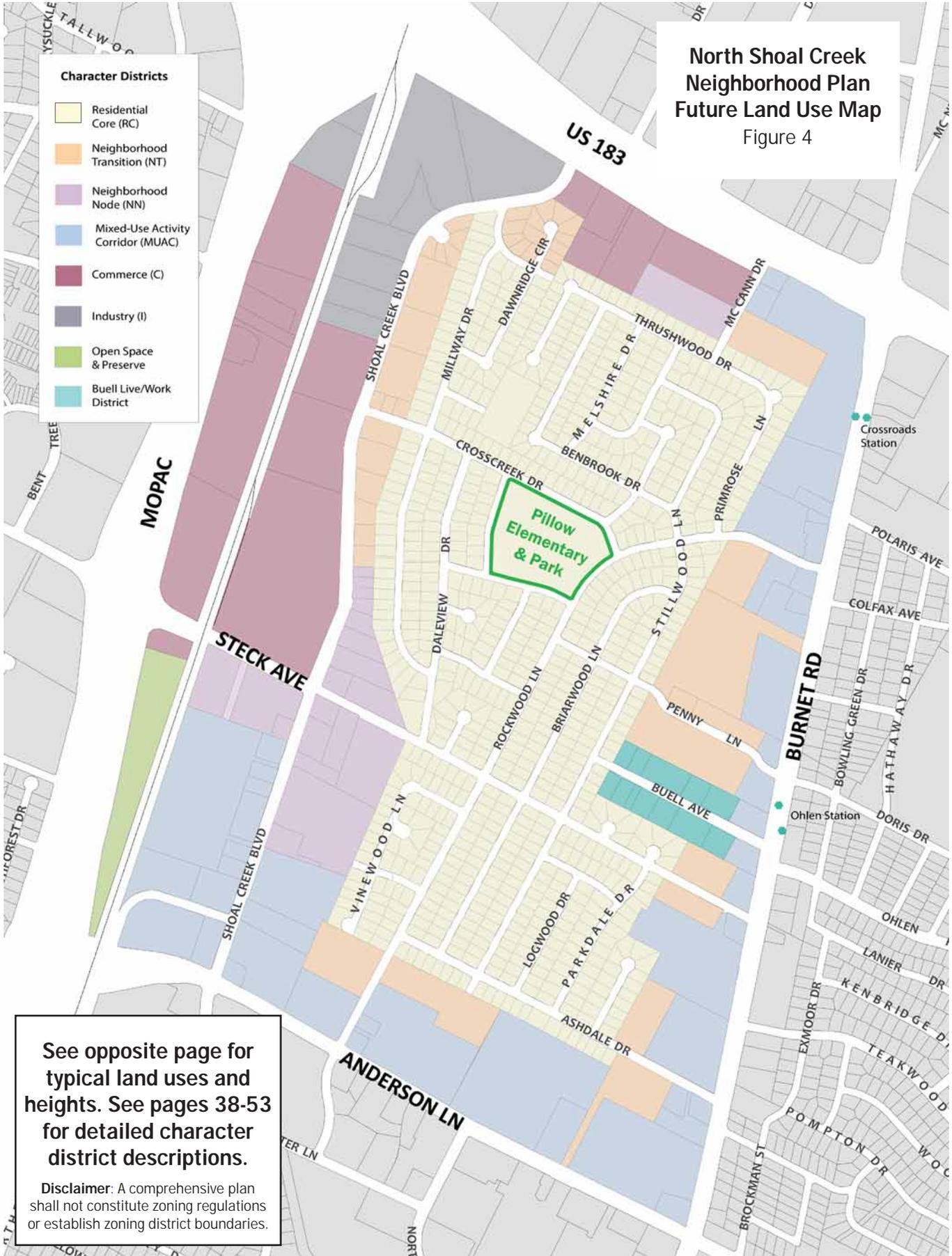
The built environment consists of buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, or anything that is built by humans. It is one of the main determinants of community character (along with land use).



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North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Plan Future Land Use Map

Figure 4



See opposite page for typical land uses and heights. See pages 38-53 for detailed character district descriptions.

Disclaimer: A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

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Character Districts

The Future Land Use Map illustrates what different places in the planning area could be like. The desired future characteristics of these areas are depicted by different colors representing individual “character districts.” They represent a spectrum of land uses, activity intensities, and the types and sizes of buildings you could expect to find in a given district.

Intensity of uses and activities will range from quiet, with occasional visitors—to moderate, with some residents, visitors, customers, and few deliveries—to intense, with many residents, employees, visitors, and more deliveries. Intensity of use also captures the operating characteristics of different residential and commercial uses such as noise, vibrations, traffic, and emissions.

The number, types, and sizes of buildings vary by district. Less intensive districts will have fewer and smaller buildings than more intensive districts. At the lower end of the spectrum, a less intense residential district could have one and two-story houses and duplexes, houses of worship, small parks, and elementary schools. At the upper end, in more intensive commercial and mixed use districts, there could be townhouses, multi-story apartment and mixed use buildings, single-story shopping centers, and stand-alone commercial buildings.

The proposed districts in this plan are intended to preserve and enhance the character of some areas, while providing guidance as to how others might change in the future. The FLUM was developed using a variety of inputs. These include the “Places In the Neighborhood Map,” stakeholder input, existing land uses and zoning, and *Imagine Austin’s* “Growth Concept Map” as guiding principles.

The planning area’s future character as a whole is based upon eight different Character Districts. The first five districts found in the plan allow residential uses, and focus on the types of buildings and their massing. The final three districts are more focused on land uses.

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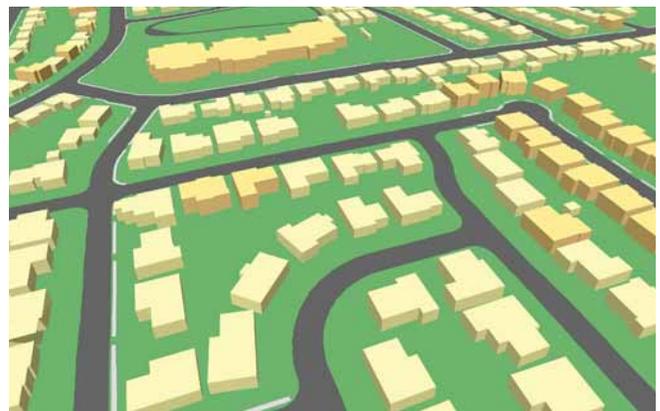
WHAT IS BUILDING MASSING?

Building massing is a relative quality based on the combination of the size, shape, and placement of buildings. A building with blank walls with few details or windows can be perceived as very massive. A building's massing can be changed through architectural details, windows, columns, and different building materials.



WHAT IS A BUILDING MASSING STUDY?

A building massing study, as demonstrated by the illustrations to the left, is an examination of what could be built based on the site's zoning. It uses the zoning setbacks and building heights, but is devoid of significant architectural designs.



CHARACTER AND INTENT

Residential (with dispersed civic and institutional uses)

North Shoal Creeks' Residential Core is a lower density area characterized by detached single-family houses, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units. The intent of the district is to preserve this character.

Neighborhood Examples: Northtowne, North Shoal Creek Estates subdivisions.

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Single-family detached houses, duplexes.

Secondary Uses: Civic and institutional uses, parks, accessory dwelling units.

RESIDENTIAL CORE FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be preserved within or added to the Residential Core:

- One to two story buildings (mostly one-story)
- Mostly detached single-family, some duplexes
- Architectural styles compatible with existing ranch homes
- Placement of windows and balconies that respects the privacy of neighboring residences
- When attached, garages are flush w/front façade
- Front yards w/shade trees
- ADUs where lot configuration allows

Related Policies

See Residential Interior Policies on page 19.

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RESIDENTIAL CORE ILLUSTRATED



(Left), The character of North Shoal Creek's Residential Core is largely defined by 1960s and 1970s ranch-style houses with shade trees and generous front yards; (middle), public uses such as elementary schools, parks, playgrounds, and fire stations and quasi-public institutions such as houses of worship can complement surrounding residential uses; (right), although built in the late 1990s, the houses in the North Shoal Creek Estates subdivision are characterized by more contemporary one and two-story ranch-style houses.



(Left and middle), New construction often reflects the styles and trends of the period in which it is built; however, when existing housing is replaced, the new dwellings should acknowledge the architectural styles and building heights and massing of existing houses and duplexes; (right), accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can provide new housing options without altering the single-family character of the residential core.

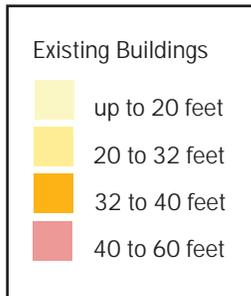
CHARACTER AND INTENT

Mostly residential with some low-intensity offices and retail

This character district serves as a transition between less and more intense areas, such as between single-family and mixed-use or commercial. In the North Shoal Creek Neighborhood Planning Area this district can include a variety of different sized multi-family buildings, duplexes and scattered small-scale offices and small-scale commercial buildings. This district also provides an opportunity for housing types such as townhouses, rowhouses, smaller-scale apartments, and cottage courts.

Neighborhood Examples: Royal Orleans North, Village Christian Apartments, Ashdale Gardens Condos, North Village Branch Austin Public Library, Crossroads Apartments, Arabella Apartment Homes.

Building Massing: A Bird's Eye View



This massing study for the Neighborhood Transition shows that building massing and layout of this district will not change significantly as new buildings are moved closer to the sidewalk and street.

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Townhouses, multi-family apartments or condos, mixed use with limited commercial space.

Secondary Uses: Duplexes, civic and institutional uses, parks, community buildings, community-serving commercial, offices, live-work spaces.

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NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical in the Neighborhood Transition District:

- One to three stories in height
- Building heights should step down to be compatible with adjacent houses
- Placement of windows and balconies that respects the privacy neighboring residences
- Landscaping and architectural designs to buffer adjacent residences
- Commercial uses generally limited to ground floor
- Surface parking lots behind or to side of main building

NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION ILLUSTRATED



(Left), The windows and balconies of new apartment buildings should not infringe on the privacy of adjacent residents. These complexes should be two to three-stories and relate to the street; (middle), limited office and commercial uses (e.g., professional offices, small-scale retail, etc.) should not generate excessive traffic; (right), new and existing smaller-scaled apartments serve as a transition between more intense character districts and the Residential Core.



(Left), Two-story townhouses and rowhouses should be located closer to the street to foster an environment conducive to walking and to improve public safety by promoting “eyes on the street”; (center), adaptive reuse, or using a building for something other than it was originally intended, can extend the life of those structures; (right), civic uses such as libraries, police substations, and schools are appropriate for the Neighborhood Transition.

CHARACTER AND INTENT

Mostly mixed-use or commercial, with some residential sites.

This character district will allow for a mix of residential and commercial development within walking distance of transit. The Neighborhood Node should be located along minor commercial streets and at the intersections of these roadways. In the planning area, this development should focus on neighborhood-scaled mixed-use and commercial buildings (one to four stories) offering goods and services for nearby residents.

Neighborhood Examples: Office/commercial area located at the intersection of Steck Ave with Shoal Creek Blvd

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Neighborhood-serving commercial/retail, restaurants, professional/corporate offices, mixed use buildings.

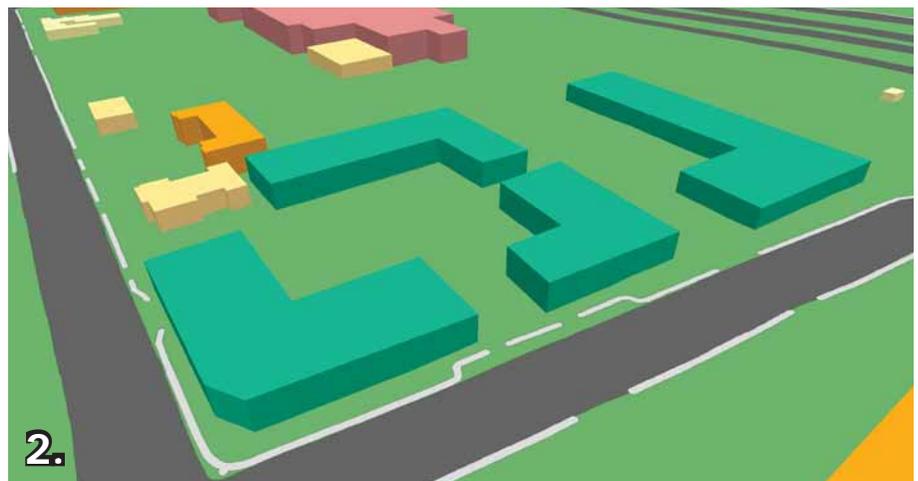
Secondary Uses: Multi-family buildings, civic and institutional uses, parks, community buildings.

Building Massing: A Bird's Eye View

1. This illustration shows the existing massing for the Neighborhood Node.
2. The massing and layout of the Neighborhood Node will shift from encouraging tall buildings surrounded by parking to pedestrian-scale buildings oriented closer to sidewalks with parking behind.



Existing Buildings	
	up to 20 feet
	20 to 32 feet
	32 to 40 feet
	40 to 60 feet
Potential Buildings	
	up to 3 stories



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NEIGHBORHOOD NODE FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical to the Neighborhood Node:

- Buildings located close to the street
- Wider sidewalks, street furniture, and street trees
- Sidewalk cafe seating allowed
- Façades with display windows along sidewalk
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- One to three stories in height
- Building heights should step down to be compatible with adjacent houses
- Placement of windows and balconies that respects the privacy neighboring residences
- Landscaping and architectural designs to buffer adjacent residences
- Mostly mixed-use and commercial, some apartments, rowhouses, or townhouses
- Surface parking on the side of or behind buildings
- Parking structures hidden from street

Related Policies

See Shoal Creek Boulevard Place Policies on page 31.

NEIGHBORHOOD NODE ILLUSTRATED



(Left), Wider and well-lit sidewalks, street trees, street furniture (planters, benches, trash bins, etc.), sidewalk seating, person-scaled signage, large display windows, and buildings closer to the street create an environment that supports walking, strolling, and chance encounters; (middle), parking should either be on-street or to the side or rear of buildings.



(Above), Buildings typically should not exceed three or four stories.

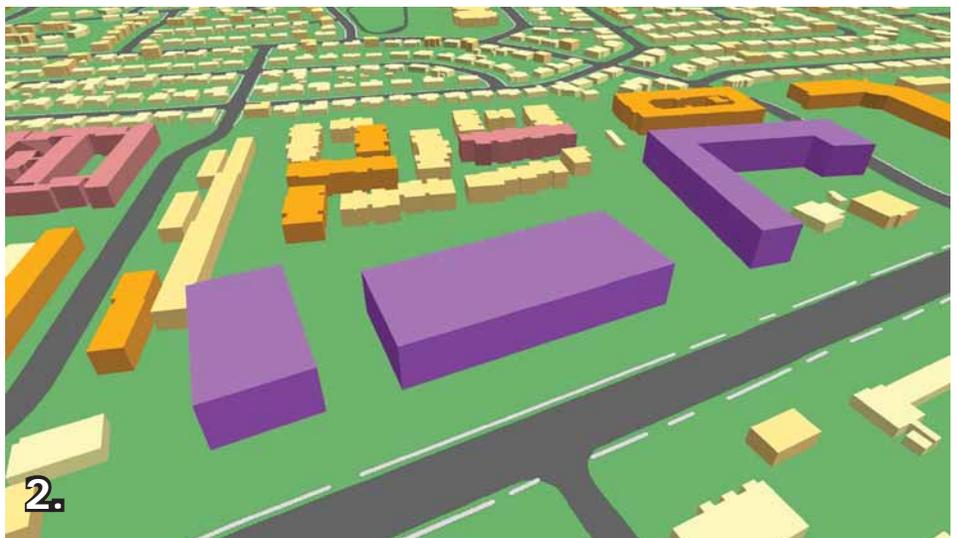
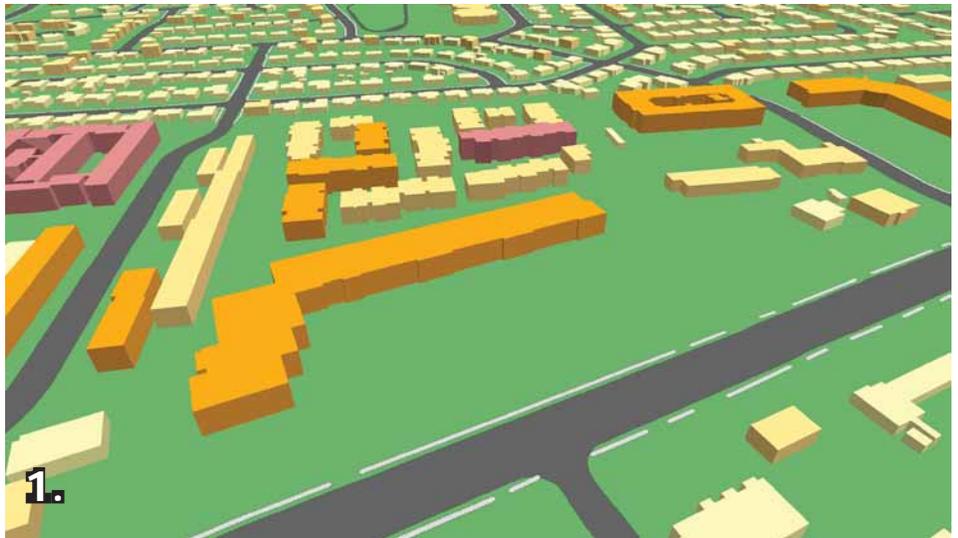
CHARACTER AND INTENT

Mostly mixed-use or commercial, some residential parcels.

This character district is applied along major commercial roadways well-served by transit, designated as Activity Corridors on *Imagine Austin's* "Growth Concept Map," and other roads identified through the planning process. Access to frequent transit makes these corridors good locations for a mix of housing and commercial uses. This district offers residents along the corridor and in nearby neighborhoods convenient access to work, entertainment, shopping, and services. Although they provide access to local residents, these corridors can be destinations for people across Austin and the region. Buildings along these corridors will be taller near major roadways. If adjacent to single-family areas design considerations such as lower heights, architectural designs, and landscaping should be used to ensure compatibility with residential lots.

Building Massing: A Bird's Eye View

1. This illustration shows the typical existing massing for the Mixed-Use Activity Corridor, a large flat big box or strip mall behind a large surface parking lot.
2. The massing and layout of the Mixed-Use Activity Corridor will shift to walkable, urban buildings of varying heights, oriented toward the street and pedestrians, with parking lots or decks behind.



Existing Buildings	
	up to 20 feet
	20 to 32 feet
	32 to 40 feet
	40 to 60 feet
Potential Buildings	
	up to 5 Stories

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Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Mixed-use, commercial, retail, restaurants, transit-oriented development.

Secondary Uses: Multi-family, office, civic and institutional uses, community buildings.

Neighborhood Examples: Burnet Road, Anderson Lane

MIXED USE ACTIVITY CORRIDOR FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical to the Mixed Use Activity Corridor:

- Buildings located close to the street
- Wider sidewalks, street furniture, and street trees
- Sidewalk cafe seating allowed
- Façades with display windows along sidewalk
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Buildings no taller than five stories, and heights should vary from lot to lot
- Development should support increased transit ridership
- Building heights should step down to be compatible with adjacent houses
- Placement of windows and balconies should respect the privacy neighboring of residences
- Landscaping and architectural designs to buffer adjacent residences
- Mostly mixed-use, neighborhood and region-serving commercial, some apartment buildings
- Parking structures hidden from the street or adjacent houses
- Surface parking on the side of or behind buildings
- Limited drive-thru facilities
- Open and green space should be incorporated into developments

Related Policies

See Burnet Road Place Policies on page 22 and Anderson Lane Place Policies on page 25.

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MIXED USE ACTIVITY CORRIDOR ILLUSTRATED



Along Mixed Use Activity Corridors there will be a mix of older and newer development. (Left), unless they are combined with larger tracts of land, smaller commercial sites (e.g., convenience stores, free-standing commercial buildings, restaurants, etc.) are less likely to redevelop than larger commercial ones; (center), shopping centers with significant recent investments and few or no vacancies are not generally short-term candidates for redevelopment. (Right) For those sites not likely to redevelop, creative solutions will be needed to make the sidewalks in front of them more conducive to walking.



Parcel sizes along a Mixed Use Activity Corridor will affect the type of redevelopment that occurs. (Left and middle), redevelopment of larger sites will often produce four to five-story mixed use buildings or multi-story commercial buildings with streetscape improvements to create a more pleasant environment for walking; (right), if redevelopment occurs, the buildings should be moved closer to the street and parking located to the side or rear.



The new buildings along a Mixed Use Activity Corridor should create places where people feel comfortable and want to spend time. (Left), wider, shaded, and well-lit sidewalks are the foundation of a walkable place; (middle), large storefront windows and sidewalk cafes create a pedestrian-friendly retail environment; (right), creating places where it is easy and enjoyable to walk can support better-quality transit service since people do not need a car to access goods and services.

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Open Space & Preserve (OS/P)

CHARACTER AND INTENT

No residences or businesses.

This character district is for larger tracts of undeveloped land. It can apply to publically-owned land and privately-held lands where a conservancy or government owns the development rights.

Structures are mostly used for storage, administration, recreation, or educational purposes. This district excludes smaller, neighborhood parks and open spaces which are often defining attributes of the character district in which they are located.

The water retention ponds along MoPac, under the control of the Watershed Protection Department, are the only areas of Open Space & Preserve in North Shoal Creek.

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Public open space and park sites, creek corridors and natural detention storm water areas.

Secondary Uses: Undeveloped areas; wildlife and native plant habitat, watershed lands; passive, low-impact activities; no land disturbance; and/or trails for non-motorized activities.

Neighborhood Examples – MoPac Storm Water Detention Fields

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ILLUSTRATED



The parks/Open Space character district includes a variety of different types of uses and places: (left), natural or native-planting areas used for stormwater and flood control; (middle), wilderness areas used for preservation and/or recreational purposes; (right), publicly-owned land along creeks and within the 100-year flood plain.

CHARACTER AND INTENT

Balance of commercial services and live-work, some residential uses.

The intensive commercial uses along Buell Avenue is reflective of businesses often found at the periphery of cities and is a reminder that this area was once Austin's northern edge. As market demand changes, Buell Avenue will become a place where a mix of live-work projects, residents, small-scale services, artisanal businesses, offices, and tradespeople coexist. The housing should include a mix of townhouses, rowhouses, and small apartment buildings.

Neighborhood Examples: Buell Ave

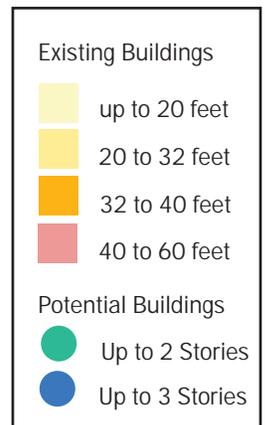
Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Live/work units, artist and craft spaces, professional offices.

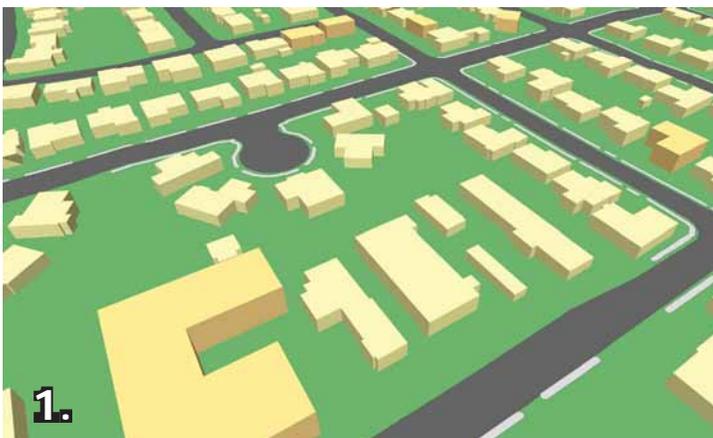
Secondary Uses: Storage spaces, contractor shops, civic and institutional uses, parks, community buildings.

Related Policies

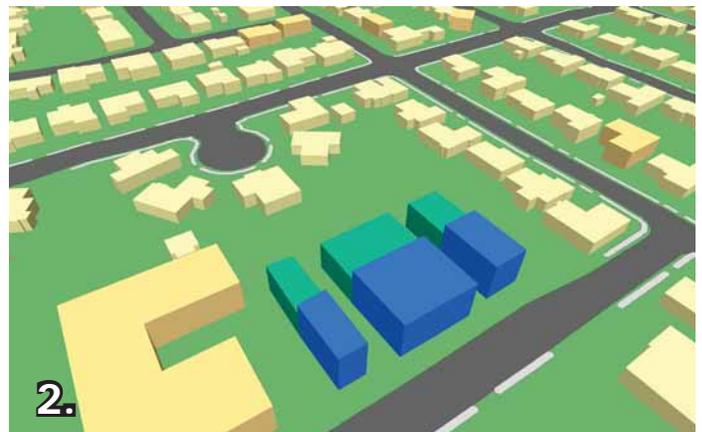
See Buell Avenue Place Policies on Page 28.



Building Massing: A Bird's Eye View



1. This illustration shows the typical existing massing for the Buell Special District.



2. The massing and layout of the Buell Special District will shift to walkable, live-work buildings and creative spaces, oriented toward the street and pedestrians, with parking lots behind and increased setbacks from adjacent residences.

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BUELL LIVE/WORK DISTRICT FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical to the Buell Live/Work District:

- Walkable, urban built form
- Enhanced public realm and/or outdoor seating
- Neighborhood-serving uses, specialty commercial and craftspeople, live-work units
- Building heights of one to three stories
- Heights should step down to be compatible with adjacent residences
- Placement of windows and balconies should respect the privacy of neighboring residences
- Landscaping and fences to buffer adjacent residences
- Parking should be on the side of or behind buildings, but not adjacent to residences

BUELL LIVE/WORK DISTRICT ILLUSTRATED



(Left), the scale and height of new buildings along Buell Avenue should be one to three-stories to transition between the taller buildings along Burnet Road and the single-family houses and duplexes in the Residential Core; (middle), as sites redevelop, they will introduce building elements and sidewalk improvements to make it easier to walk; (right), new development should include amenities to improve the public realm such as seating, street trees, and public space.



(Left), As Buell Avenue changes, the buildings lining the roadway will become a mix of existing structures, (middle) live-work buildings, and (right), small-scale apartments, rowhouses, or townhouses.

CHARACTER AND INTENT

Entirely commercial, no residential uses.

This character district accommodates commercial activities such as retail shopping centers, hotels, car dealerships, multi-story office buildings, entertainment venues, or campuses located mostly along highway frontage roads. Although these sites should allow for internal pedestrian connectivity, their overall design is fashioned to the needs of people arriving by car. Residential uses are inappropriate due to a lack of external connectivity.

Neighborhood Examples: Atrium Office Centre, Chancellor Centre, First Texas Honda, Texas North Nissan

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Office, retail, restaurants, services, car dealerships and multi-tenant commercial.

Secondary Uses: Entertainment, recreation, institutional uses, ponds and storm water facilities.

COMMERCE DISTRICT FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical to the Commerce District:

- Auto-oriented, region-serving commercial with frontage road access
- Building heights up to six stories where not adjacent to Residential Core
- Heights should step down to be compatible with adjacent residences
- Placement of windows should respect the privacy of neighboring residences
- Landscaping and fences to buffer adjacent residences
- Adequate parking, visible from street
- Multi-lane drive-thru facilities

Related Policies

See MoPac Frontage Road Policies on page 32 and US 183 Frontage Road Place Policies on page 33..

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COMMERCE ILLUSTRATED



There are a number of commercial sites and uses that have operational characteristics (e.g., adjacency to freeways or busy railroad tracks, traffic generation, sound and vibrations, truck traffic, etc.) that are not well-suited for or adjacent to residential uses. These sites can include such commercial uses as warehouses, small-scale manufacturing, large automobile dealerships, large corporate campuses, automobile repair, motels, and kennels.



CHARACTER AND INTENT

Entirely industrial/office/services, no residential uses.

The Industry district is found in areas with established light industrial and office uses or in areas where those uses may be appropriate in the future. The district is generally not compatible with, nor should it be located adjacent to residential uses. Residential uses are not allowed in this district due to noise, vibrations, truck traffic, emissions, and storage of hazardous materials. This district is appropriate for individual sites or smaller groupings of industrial uses.

In the planning area, the Industry district is found along Mopac and US 183, with access to highways and rail. It is also on the most northern segment of Shoal Creek Boulevard on the west side of the roadway. It includes light industrial uses, such as manufacturing centers, technology/data centers, and other uses that would typically occupy flex space in commercial buildings.

Neighborhood Examples: Shoal Creek Business Park, Hammill Center

Typical Land Uses

Primary Uses: Light manufacturing centers, distribution and warehousing, technology/data centers, flexible industrial spaces, contractor yards.

Secondary Uses: Commercial, office, civic, and institutional uses; ponds and storm water facilities.

INDUSTRY DISTRICT FEATURES

The following features were identified as characteristics that should be typical to the Industry District:

- Offices, warehouses, industrial parks with truck loading facilities
- Building heights generally one to three stories
- Adequate parking, visible from street
- Storage yards or containers screened from view of street
- Deep front setbacks
- Landscaping along street frontages

Related Policies

See MoPac Frontage Road Policies on page 32 and US 183 Frontage Road Place Policies on page 33.

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INDUSTRY ILLUSTRATED

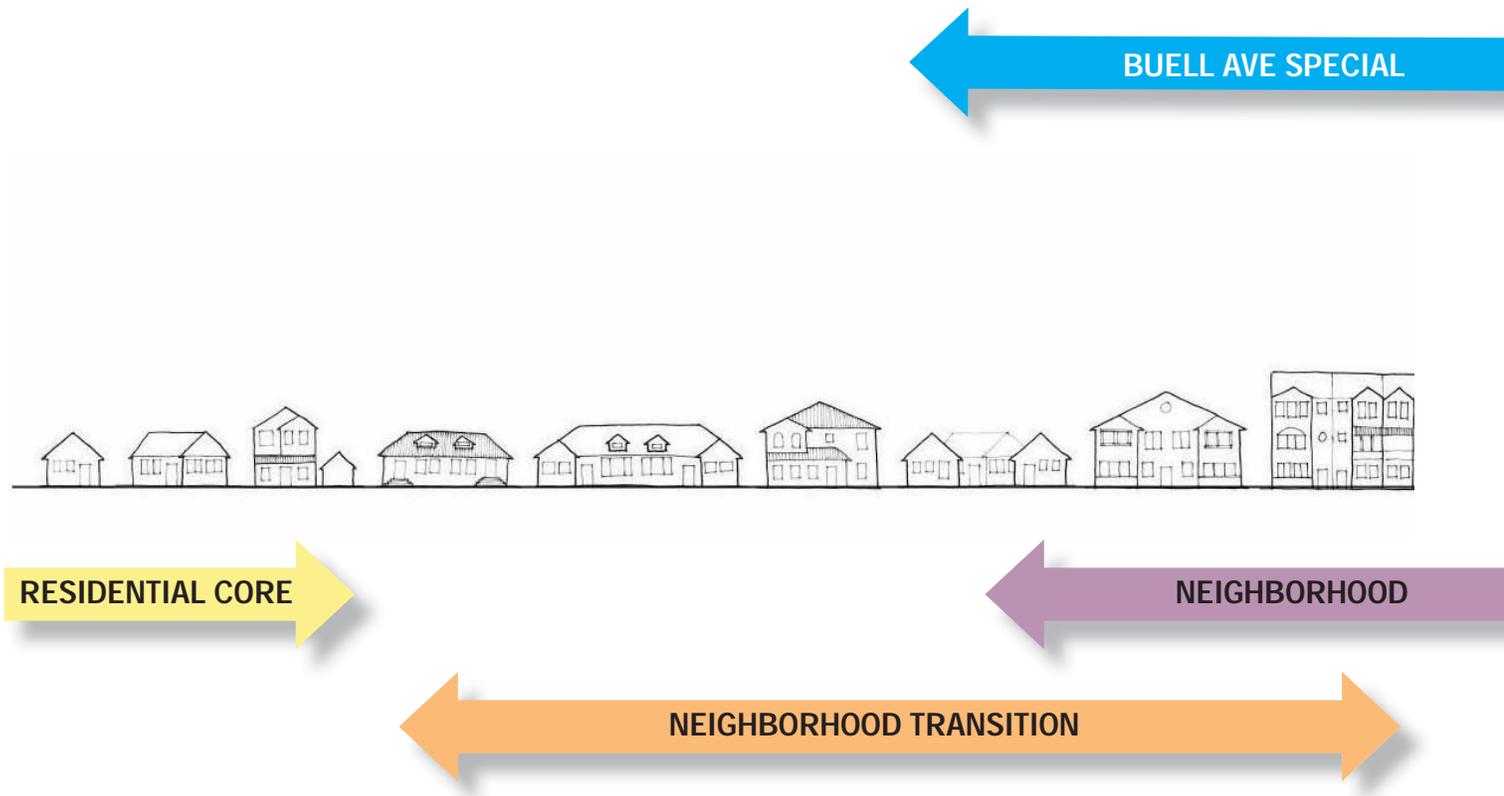


While an essential element of a healthy urban economy, the operating characteristics of industrial uses such as outdoor storage of materials, sound, vibrations, odors, and heavy truck traffic may necessitate additional steps to mitigate. This can be accomplished through screening (plant and non-plant materials), increased setbacks, and locating these uses away from residences.



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SPECTRUM OF BUILDING TYPES



The Spectrum of Building Types illustrates the typical range of size and massing for buildings in North Shoal Creek’s primary character districts and their relationship to other character districts. Character districts without housing uses do not fall within the building type spectrum illustrated above. Those districts focus on how the site is used and the uses operating characteristics.

The Residential Core is comprised primarily of single family stand-alone homes and duplexes with the possibility of accessory dwelling units where appropriate.

The Neighborhood Transition can have a mix of attached rowhouses and different sized apartment complexes, and although some small office and commercial buildings are allowed, it is primarily a residential area.

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DISTRICT



NODE



ACTIVITY CORRIDOR

A Neighborhood Node will have a greater mix of commercial uses and residences and will be a hub of activity found near busier intersections and along some roadway segments.

Activity Corridors serve dual purposes. They are transportation links connecting people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit to citywide opportunities for work, entertainment, goods, and services. They also serve a land use function and will have the greatest concentration of commercial and multi-family uses.

The Buell Special District is particular to North Shoal Creek and the building types that exist there are found primarily in similar heavy commercial/light industrial areas throughout the city. The future of the district should see a change in building type to live/work buildings with residential components mixed with offices, shops, and small maker spaces.

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Creating Transitions Between Lower and More Intense Land Uses

Throughout the planning process, participants stressed the importance of minimizing the effects of taller buildings and higher-intensity uses on adjacent residential areas. Land use planning and development regulations offer approaches to address these concerns.

The plan's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a guide for future zoning and land use decisions. The map reflects stakeholder input, existing land use and zoning, the transportation network, and City of Austin policies. Due to the way the streets in North Shoal Creek were laid out and the way the land was subdivided and historically used there are a few locations on the FLUM where the Residential Core (RC) directly abuts the Mixed-Use Activity Corridors (MUAC). In areas where the two districts are not adjacent to one another, the Neighborhood Transition (NT) and Buell Live-Work Special Districts serve as a buffer/transition area to step down the intensity between the RC and MUAC. The NT district uses less intense land uses such as townhouses, cottage courts, apartments, and some office and retail to buffer the MUAC from the RC. The Buell district envisions shorter buildings and commercial uses that do not generate significant amounts of traffic. The Spectrum of Building Types on pages 54-55 and the descriptions within each character district profile illustrate how these intermediary districts are more compatible with Residential Core than with Mixed Use Activity Corridor.

There are several regulations that govern the transitions between commercial and multi-family uses and duplexes and houses. **Compatibility** standards are regulations that dictate setbacks, building heights, and building stepbacks for upper floors as a means to create transitions between less intense and more intense uses. Another regulation to promote more harmonious transitions between land uses is through **buffers**. These create a physical separation between different uses and might look like a required setback, an unbuildable floodplain along a creek, or a parcel with an intermediate sized development that physically separates a residence from an Activity Corridor scale building. In Austin, development is not allowed within 50 feet of designated creeks or in the 100-year floodplain (see the map to the left).

The Residential Core Buffer Map (right) illustrates where Activity Corridor and Commerce character districts are within 100 feet of single-family and duplex lots. Any development in this area should be designed to limit the project's impact on adjacent single-family homes or encroach upon the privacy of their yards, as spelled out in the Character District descriptions of this plan.



Figure 5

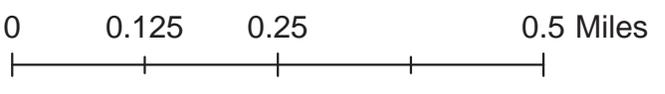
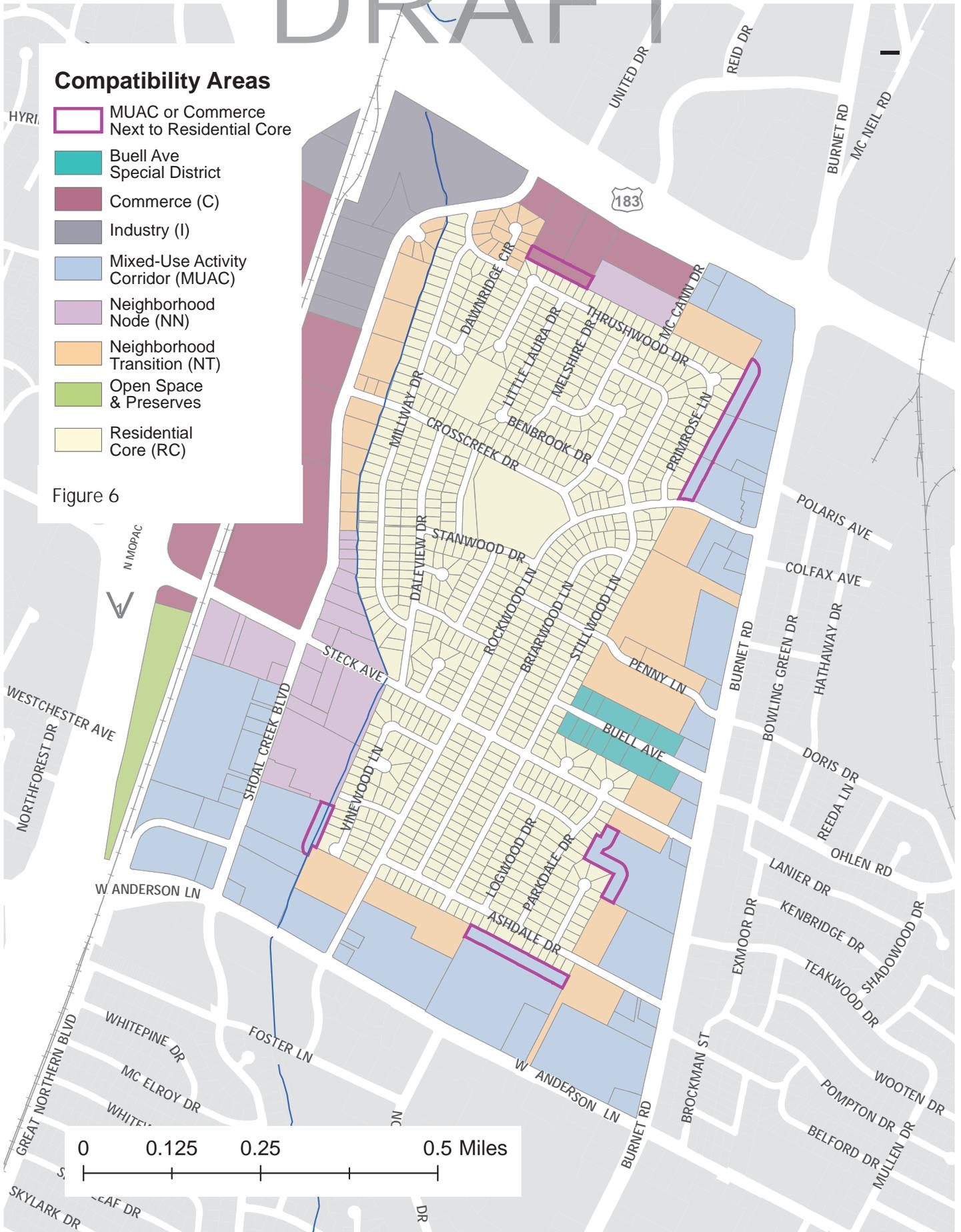
Development-Restricted Open Space Areas

-  Creek Buffers
-  Stormwater Basins

Compatibility Areas

- MUAC or Commerce Next to Residential Core
- Buell Ave Special District
- Commerce (C)
- Industry (I)
- Mixed-Use Activity Corridor (MUAC)
- Neighborhood Node (NN)
- Neighborhood Transition (NT)
- Open Space & Preserves
- Residential Core (RC)

Figure 6



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Linking Transportation and Land Use

Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, is a type of community development mixing retail, services, residential, entertainment, and public uses such as libraries and government offices with convenient transit. Depending on the type of transit (bus, streetcar, light rail, subway, etc.) and the character of the area adjacent to and near the transit stop, the area appropriate for TOD can vary in size and intensity. The goal is to create compact, walkable, mixed use places within convenient walking distance of high-capacity transit stops.

High capacity transit is characterized by carrying more people using larger vehicles and/or more frequent service than standard bus transit. It can be rail (regional, commuter and urban rail) or bus rapid transit.

In the North Shoal Creek Planning Area there are several places along Burnet Road that could support Transit-Oriented Development in the future. This section of the plan will discuss how ready these areas are for TOD according to Capital Metro's TOD Priority Tool. A review of specific characteristics and elements that assist in creating successful TODs is also included in this section.

MetroRapid

The Capital Area Transportation Authority (Cap Metro) initiated two high-frequency bus lines linking North and South Austin through Downtown. The first line, the 801 MetroRapid, began operation in January 2014. Beginning at its northernmost station, Tech Ridge, it links North Lamar Boulevard, the Triangle and nearby State of Texas offices, Guadalupe Street, the University of Texas, Downtown, South Congress Avenue, and South Park Meadows. The second line, the 803 MetroRapid, began service in August 2014. It links the Domain in far north Austin, Burnet Road, the Triangle and nearby State of Texas offices, Guadalupe Street, the University of Texas, Downtown, and South Lamar.

Find MetroRapid info at www.capmetro.org/



DRAFT Transit-Oriented Development

Along the segment of Burnet Road serving as the eastern boundary of the planning area, there are two paired sets of stations for the 803 MetroRapid line: Crossroads and Ohlen Stations. The southbound stations are located in the planning area and the northbound stations are located on the east side of Burnet Road in the Wooten Neighborhood Planning Area. Within the North Shoal Creek Planning Area, Crossroads Station, is located adjacent to the Crossroads Shopping Center and the second area station is located a half mile away between Buell Avenue and Penny Lane.

Although not in the planning area, immediately to the south on Burnet Road is another MetroRapid stop: Northcross Station. (Please note, the Northcross Station is included in this discussion because of its adjacency to the planning area; however, recommendations in this section will only refer to the Crossroads and Ohlen Stations.) The three stations, spaced a little over a mile from one another, create a rich, high-capacity transit environment along this portion of Burnet Road. When considered in combination with the large commercial tracts that are projected to become candidates for redevelopment, this part of Austin could be a ideal location for transit oriented development.

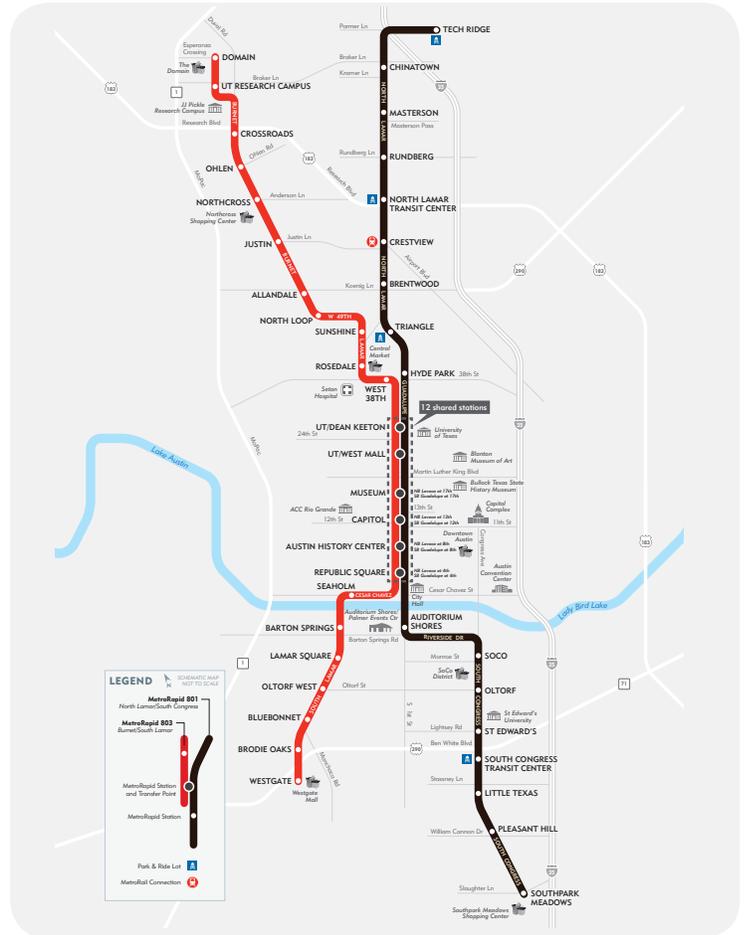


Figure 7 MetroRapid Route Map
Source: CapMetro

Looking at Austin's High-Capacity Transit Stations: Capital Metro's TOD Priority Tool

A 2016 Capital Metro study analyzed the MetroRapid and MetroRail stations resulting in the TOD Priority Tool. This tool assesses each station's potential for transit oriented development. The tool's framework examines each station based on the following three criteria: Place Type, Missing Elements and Needs, and TOD Readiness.

1. Place Type

Based on the surrounding built environment and the characteristics of the area around a station, the tool provides an aspirational goal as to the type of place the TOD could become in the future: Central Core, Regional Hub, TOD Village, Neighborhood TOD, or Special Destination.

2. Missing Elements/Needs

What improvements or changes could be made to facilitate these areas becoming more transit oriented?

3. TOD Readiness

Station areas are measured on a spectrum of TOD-readiness: Long Term, Emerging, Ready, and Arrived.



Find the TOD Priority Tool by visiting www.capmetro.org/tod/



Transit-oriented development should include public spaces and art, pedestrian scaled lighting, comfortable walking paths and amenities such as bicycle parking.

DRAFT Transit-Oriented Development

The Capital Metro TOD Priority Tool identifies all three stations in this plan as “emerging” TODs beginning to demonstrate some TOD characteristics.

The Crossroads and Northcross Stations are classified as TOD Villages. As they develop into fully functioning TODs, it is envisioned that these areas will become mixed-use urban places with more intense activity and development with visible and high-quality transit service. These are regional destinations providing access to entertainment, culture, and commerce, as well as providing local services for the surrounding residential areas.

Among the needs identified for Crossroads and Northcross Stations are: traffic calming, improvements to make it easier and safer to walk and bike to and from the stations, shade trees, and better lighting.

Ohlen Station (between Penny Lane and Buell Avenue) is classified as a Neighborhood TOD. This station type is an urban, mixed use place, similar to, but less intense than a TOD Village. Overall, a TOD Village or Neighborhood TOD is primarily residential, with apartments or mixed use buildings within and nearby the station. The commercial uses should meet the day-to-day needs of people living within the TOD and those of nearby residents.

Among the needs identified for Ohlen Station are: better lighting, improvements to make it easier and safer to walk and bike, shade trees, and a buffer between the sidewalk and Burnet Road.

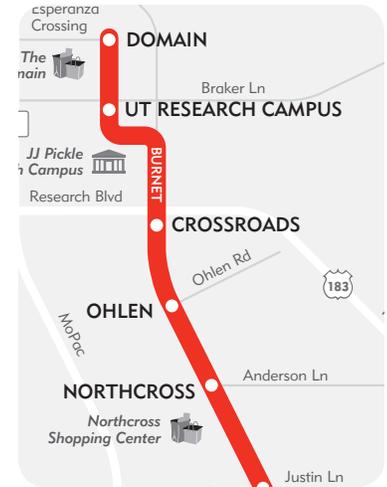


Figure ? MetroRapid Route Map
MetroRapid 801
Source: CapMetro



Narrow sidewalks and uneven bicycle lanes along busy corridors such as Burnet Road create an uncomfortable walking and biking environment. These conditions lead residents to rely on car usage to travel to nearby locations.

DRAFT Transit-Oriented Development

Current Conditions: Land Use

The implementation of the 803 MetroRapid is a significant public transportation investment; however, the land uses and zoning along Burnet Road between US 183 and Anderson Lane do not currently support this investment. The buildings and uses are a reminder of this segment of Burnet Road's suburban origins. As discussed previously, along this segment of Burnet Road there are a number of aging shopping centers, a variety of freestanding commercial buildings, and a self-storage facility.

Crossroads Station



Figure 8

Current Conditions: Zoning

Along most of the major roadways served by the MetroRapid lines, the majority of current zoning allows for the possibility of transit oriented development. For the segment of Burnet Road along the eastern boundary of the planning area, this is not the case. Although the majority of the current zoning (CS -Commercial Services, as of 2017) provides generous development standards; it does not allow for a meaningful amount of residential uses and many of the allowed uses are unsupportive to more robust transit service.

Ohlen Station

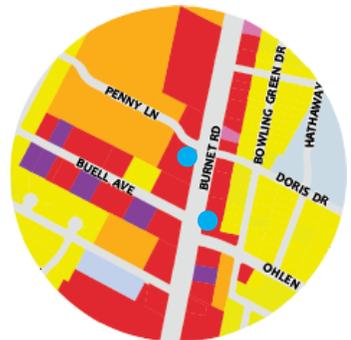


Figure 9

North Shoal Creek Land Use

Single Family	Office
Duplexes	Manufacturing
Three/Fourplex	Warehousing
Apartment/Condo	Landfills
Retirement Housing	Government Services
Commercial	Educational



DRAFT Transit-Oriented Development

The same regulations and market forces that created the automobile-oriented, sprawling development along Burnet Road also created an environment where it is unpleasant to walk or bike. There are sidewalks, but they lack shade and are interrupted by numerous and often wide driveways. There are also few street connections leading into the Residential Core. On the west side of Burnet, between Anderson Lane and US 183 (approximately 1.2 miles) there are five such connections and seven on the east. The lack of connections into residential areas means people must walk or bike further along indirect routes to reach Metro Rapid stations, which in effect disincentivize transit use.



The Future Land Use Map and TOD

Depending on the local conditions, transit oriented development can extend from $\frac{1}{4}$ up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from a station. In the planning area, as illustrated by the adjacent map (Figure 10), the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance (shown in green) from the southbound station extends to the edge of the Residential Core (RC) and the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distance would then extend well into the RC. Since the vision for RC district seeks to preserve its basic character, most of the area considered appropriate for TOD generally falls within the Mixed Use Activity Corridor (MUAC), Buell Live/Work, and Neighborhood Transition (NT) districts. Each of these districts allows for transit-supportive development. The Residential Core falls beyond the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walking distance and allows for a mix of houses, accessory units, and duplexes.

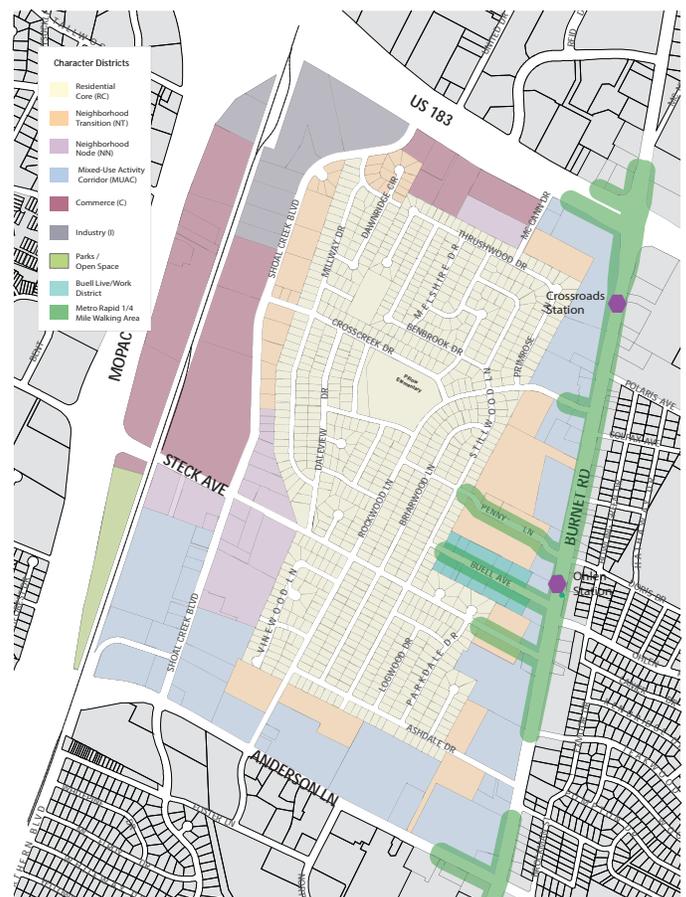


Figure 10 FLUM relation to TOD

Creating a Transit Oriented Place

While high-capacity transit and an increase in urban development are the foundational elements of TOD, there are other important characteristics and elements that contribute to TOD's long-term success.

Shaded, continuous, and right-sized sidewalks

If TOD is to be successful, there must be places where people feel safe and comfortable walking. Central to creating inviting places for people to walk, particularly during the warmest months, are shade trees. As trees mature, they should create a continuous canopy and be placed 20' to 30' feet apart. Sidewalks connect people to the places where they want to be and should have no short gaps, longer missing segments, or broken and uneven pavement. Often sidewalks are too narrow for individuals, couples, people in wheelchairs, and/or people pushing strollers to comfortably pass one another. Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate foot traffic and the planting area for street trees. The tree planting area creates a more welcoming place to walk by establishing a buffer between traffic and people walking. At a minimum, sidewalks within TOD should be 12' to 15' wide.



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Transit-Oriented Development

Pedestrian-scaled lighting — The lighting needs of people walking differ greatly from those driving their cars. To create a comfortable and safe place to walk at night the lighting needs to be closer to the sidewalk (12' to 15' versus 25' or taller for automobile traffic) and spaced closer together. The lighting should also be directed downward to illuminate the sidewalk. If the adjacent roadway is sufficiently narrow, these lights can also illuminate its travel lanes.



Safe Crossings — Besides being shaded from the sun and feeling safe at night, people walking need to feel and be safe when crossing the street. Depending on the street, pedestrian crossings should be no more than 300 feet apart so that a person does not have to walk more than 150 feet to reach a safe crossing. Highly-visible crosswalk markings and changes in paving materials inform motorists that they are approaching a street crossing and need to watch for pedestrians.



Public spaces and public art — In addition to the goods and services available in TOD, public spaces provide another destination that people can reach by foot. Parks, plazas, and playgrounds provide additional opportunities for social interactions or spaces to just enjoy the outdoors. Though not essential to creating a safe area for people to walk or socialize, public art can make a place feel special and memorable. It can create connections with the past, memorialize people and events, and bring a smile to those who experience it.



Building design and orientation — Creating a vibrant and safe place for walking is only part of the solution to creating successful TODs. Another equally important aspect is the design and orientation of buildings. As new development replaces aging suburban buildings, the new structures should orient their front facades and entrances towards the street—this applies to commercial and residential development. An important element in the design of these new buildings is the reduction of “dead spaces.” Such spaces include parking lots, fences, and long, blank walls. Instead, buildings and their uses should foster a pleasant walking experience by providing visually interesting and engaging sights and experiences. This can be done through building details, large windows for retail, outdoor seating, and pedestrian-scaled signage.



Transit Oriented Development and Household Affordability

Focusing employment, residences, and access to goods and services near high-capacity transit stations can lower household transportation costs by reducing the need for a car for many trips. This applies to people living within the TOD and those living in adjacent residential areas. Lower income households, many of which might not have a car, and households who choose to not own a vehicle, could benefit from living and/or working near high-capacity transit and the amenities provided by TOD.

Steps should be taken to preserve existing apartments and other denser housing within a ¼ and ½ mile from high capacity transit stations. Although new housing in TODs tends to be more expensive, regulations and incentives can provide housing opportunities for lower income households.

TOD Policies

TOD P1 The zoning within a quarter mile of MetroRapid stations should promote transit-supportive densities, designs, and mix of land uses.

TOD P2 New development within a quarter mile of MetroRapid stations should orient buildings to the street and create an environment conducive to walking.

TOD P3 New development within a quarter mile of MetroRapid stations should provide a variety of easily accessible public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and plazas to promote social interactions and to invite individuals to enjoy the outdoors.

TOD P4 New development within a quarter mile of MetroRapid stations should provide public art to create a unique sense of place.

TOD P5 Sidewalks within a quarter mile of MetroRapid stations should be wide enough to allow couples, strollers, or people in wheelchairs to comfortably pass one another.

