

...take it outside! The Next Ten Years

Travis County Parks Master Plan

August 9, 2016



Austin, Texas







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Introduction

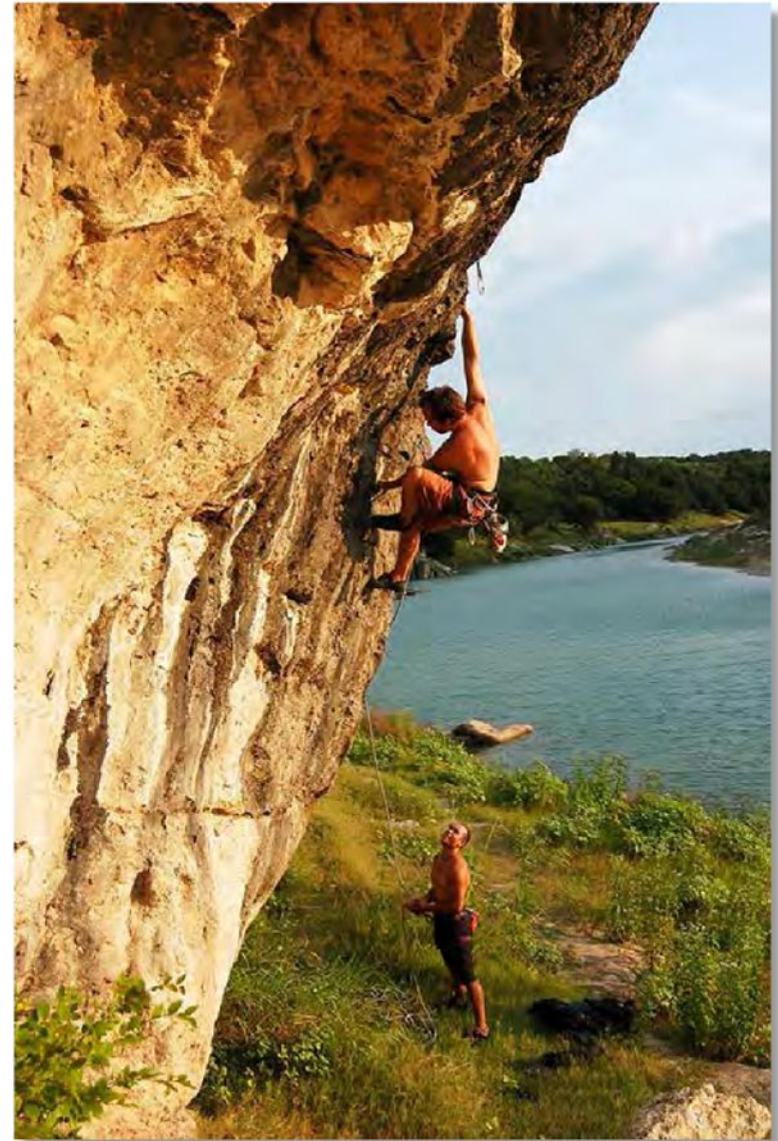
...take it outside!

Getting people outside for their health and wellbeing is the mission of Travis County Parks. It is a mission supported by a park system where people relax, enjoy family and friends, and engage with their community, where people of all ages and abilities challenge themselves and play hard, where the county's natural and cultural resources are protected and its special character preserved for people to enjoy today and in the future.

Travis County Park System

Travis County has invested in parks with the support of county residents because of the many quality of life, economic, and environmental benefits derived from a strong park system. The positive impacts of park use on physical and psychological health have been documented in numerous studies – a walk in the park, for example, can ease “brain fatigue”ⁱ. The positive effect of proximity to natural areas on real estate valuesⁱⁱ and the extent to which Lake Travis contributes to the community's economic strengthⁱⁱⁱ are also well established. And conserving natural areas in parks is an effective strategy for helping minimize stormwater damage, protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat, and preserve landscape character.

Travis County Parks is a 9,666 acre system with 26 parks open to the public. Travis County Parks serves the entire Travis County population but is responsible for building and maintaining parks



Reimers Ranch Park

primarily in unincorporated Travis County (see map 1). Its parks are also heavily used by residents of adjacent Williamson County and Hays County.

The county park system has evolved over the decades, both growing in size and changing in character. It initially consisted of small parks... many of which were lake-front properties deeded to the County as parkland in exchange for the County building a road to the new park and the donor's nearby property. By the 1980s, the County was operating a substantially larger system. It managed seven LCRA properties on Lake Travis and had acquired larger parks of its own including Hamilton Pool and Webberville Park.

The emphasis on providing water-related recreational opportunities, continued through the 1990s. In the latter part of the decade, however, the county started developing metropolitan parks that are primarily facility-based: they have major sports complexes and special use facilities such as skateboard parks and BMX tracks as their main attractions. By locating them near high growth areas – Pflugerville, Manor, and Del Valle – Travis County Parks established a greater presence in eastern Travis County.

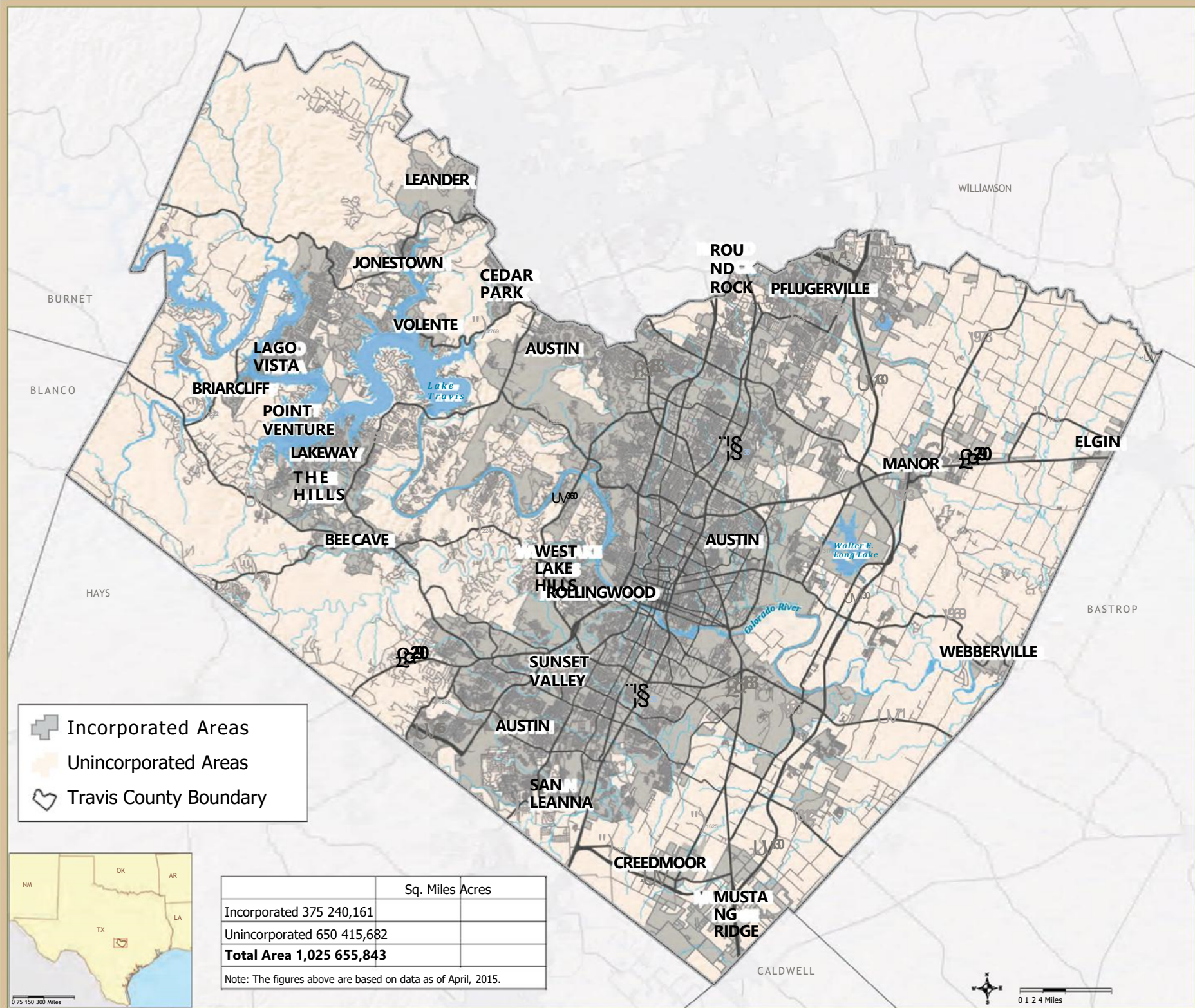
Most recently, Travis County Parks has renewed its focus on natural resource-based recreation. In 2005, with voter-approved bond funds, the county initiated development of river and creek corridors throughout the county, a commitment supported by the successful passage of the 2011 bond program.




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Capital Improvement Planning

Travis County's park master plans establish capital improvement program (CIP) priorities for acquiring parkland and implementing major capital improvements^{iv}. This park Master Plan will build upon past CIP initiatives and continue the tradition over the next ten years of developing a park system that meets the needs of Travis County residents. The status of park bond projects is described in Appendix A.

It is the intent of Travis County Parks to use voter-approved bonds as the primary source of financing to implement this master plan. A first action following adoption of this master plan, therefore, will be detailing and cost estimating the projects prioritized in this master plan in preparation for a future bond referendum.

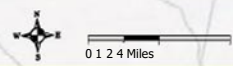


-  Incorporated Areas
-  Unincorporated Areas
-  Travis County Boundary



	Sq. Miles	Acres
Incorporated	375,240	161
Unincorporated	650,415	682
Total Area	1,025,655	843

Note: The figures above are based on data as of April, 2015.



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Community Profile^v

Travis County has a vibrant economy and offers a high quality of life that attracts many people: its population grew by 36% between 2000 and 2014, and is forecasted to grow by another 12% by 2019. It has a majority white population, with a substantial number of residents identifying themselves as being of Hispanic origin (see Table 1). Its population is young, and is forecasted to remain so. Economic indicators point toward positive growth in household income, home values, and per capita income in the near future.

Planning Areas

For the purpose of this plan, the county is divided into four planning areas (see map 2) to reflect the diversity of people and natural conditions in the county. By doing this, park needs and CIP priorities can be addressed in finer detail than if they are examined on a county-wide basis. The north-south divide is the centerline of the lakes and Colorado River. The east-west divide follows the centerline of SHWY Loop 1 from the Williamson County border to SHWY 45, at which point the boundary extends directly to the Hays County line. This alignment is used because it follows the Balcones Fault, a natural divide between eastern and western Travis County. Demographics, forecasted growth patterns, and geographic information for each planning area are provided in the following section.

GIS Data Source

See Appendix B for GIS Data Source information.

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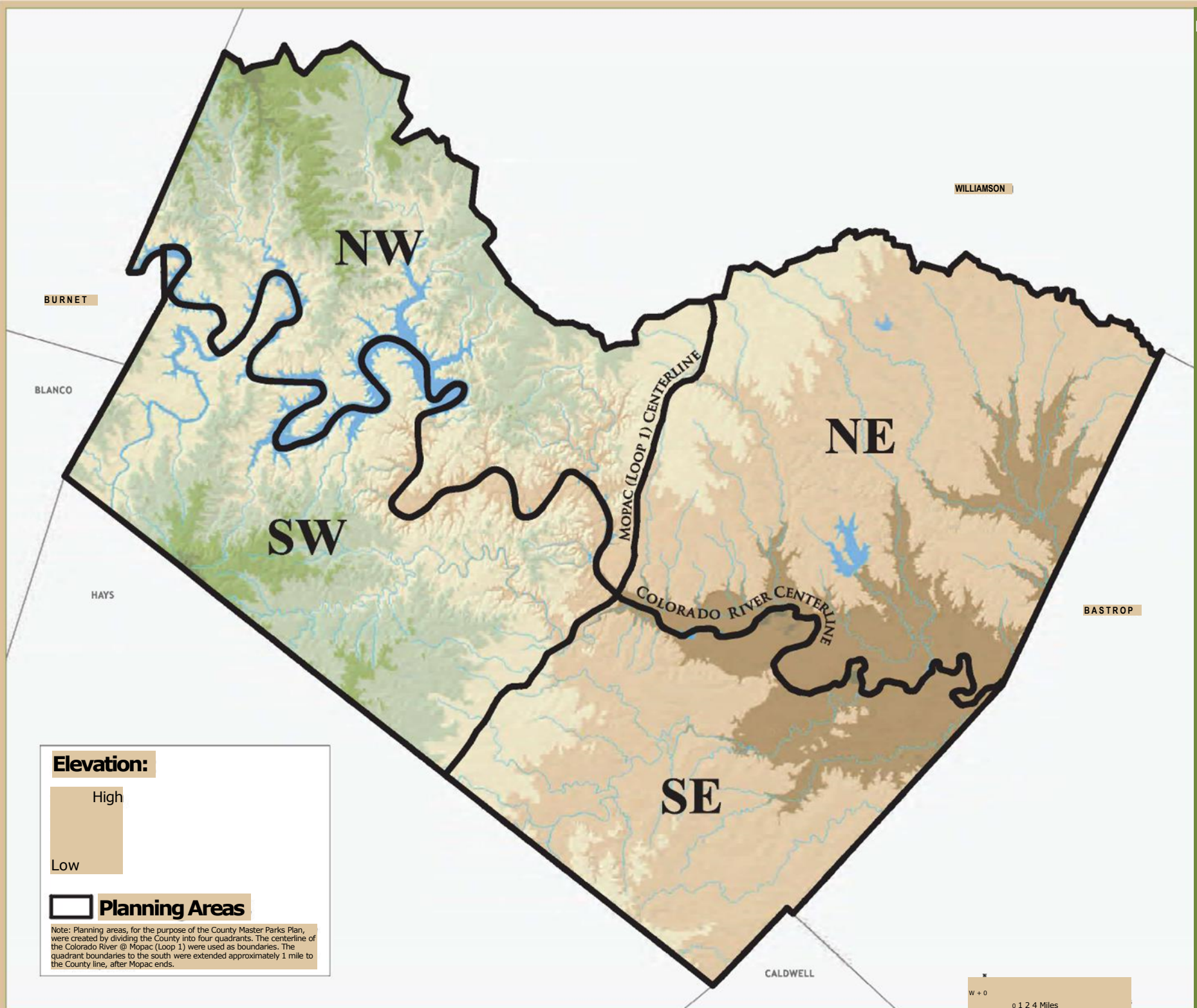
Year	Travis County Population
2000	812,462
2010	1,024,022
2014	1,105,345
2019	1,235,900

2014 Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White Alone	68.5%
Black Alone	8.5%
American Indian Alone	.8%
Asian Alone	6.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	.1%
Some Other Race Alone	12.6%
Two or More Races	3.7%
Hispanic Origin	36.2%

Year	Median Age
2010	32
2014	33
2019	33

Year	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Per Capita Income
2014	\$55,649	\$258,221	\$32,463
2019	\$67,982	\$293,885	\$38,375

Table 1: Travis County Community Profile



Elevation:



Planning Areas

Note: Planning areas, for the purpose of the County Master Parks Plan, were created by dividing the County into four quadrants. The centerline of the Colorado River @ Mopac (Loop 1) were used as boundaries. The quadrant boundaries to the south were extended approximately 1 mile to the County line, after Mopac ends.



Planning Area Profiles



Pedernales River at Reimers Ranch Park



Webberville Park Northeast Metropolitan Park



Northeast Planning Area

Demographics

The Northeast Planning Area is the most populated planning area, and the planning area with the largest minority population. It is where the county's "Black Alone" population is concentrated, and it has a sizeable Hispanic population. The median household income, median home value, and per capita income are significantly lower than those in the western part of the county.

Future Growth

The FM 973 and SH 130 corridor, north of the river, is the unincorporated part of the county where the greatest concentration of growth is forecasted to occur. South of Manor, east of Pflugerville, and west of Elgin are other high growth areas. Although forecasted to be a high growth area overall, a large portion of this planning area is expected to remain lightly developed.

Geography

This part of the county has many creeks that drain to the Colorado River. It has some of the lowest elevations in the county, broad floodplains, and rolling hills. It is an ecologically diverse region: although mostly Texas Blackland Prairie, it also has large expanses of Floodplain and Low Terraces and the only occurrence of Post Oak Savannah in the county.

Year	Population
2000	350,627
2010	442,095
2014	478,575
2019	537,769

2014 Race/Ethnicity	Percent ^{vi}
White Alone	59.6%
Black Alone	14.0%
American Indian Alone	0.9%
Asian Alone	6.7%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	14.9%
Two or More Races	3.8%
Hispanic Origin	39.3%

Year	Median Age
2010	30
2014	30
2019	31

Year	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Per Capita Income
2014	\$46,694	\$207,769	\$24,716
2019	\$55,318	\$243,842	\$28,805

Table 2: Northeast Planning Area Community Profile

Southeast Planning Area

Demographics

The Southeast Planning Area is the second-most populated planning area, and has the highest percentage of its population identifying themselves as being of “Hispanic Origin” or “Some Other Race Alone”. Like the Northeast Planning Area, its median household income, median home value, and per capita income values are significantly lower than those found in western Travis County.

Future Growth

East of SH 130, between SH 71 and FM 812, is the unincorporated part of this planning area where the greatest concentration of growth is forecasted to occur.

Geography

This part of the county has many creeks draining to the river, including Onion Creek, the creek with the largest watershed and the most hazardous flood events in the county. It is ecologically diverse and has elevations ranging from low floodplains, through hillier Texas Blackland Prairies, to the high Edwards Plateau.

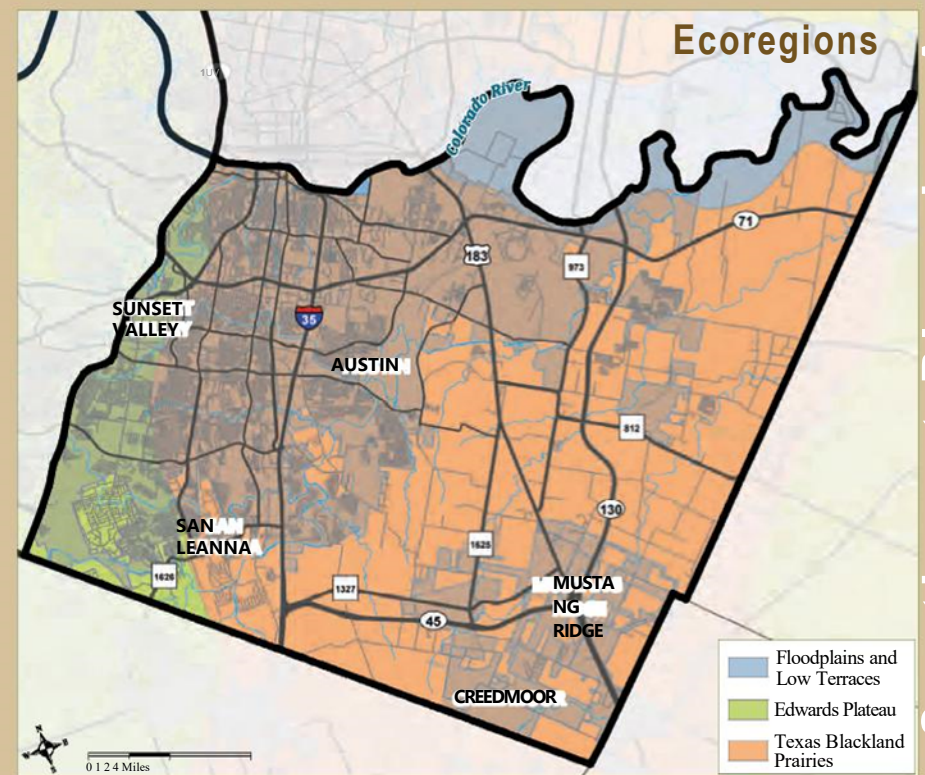
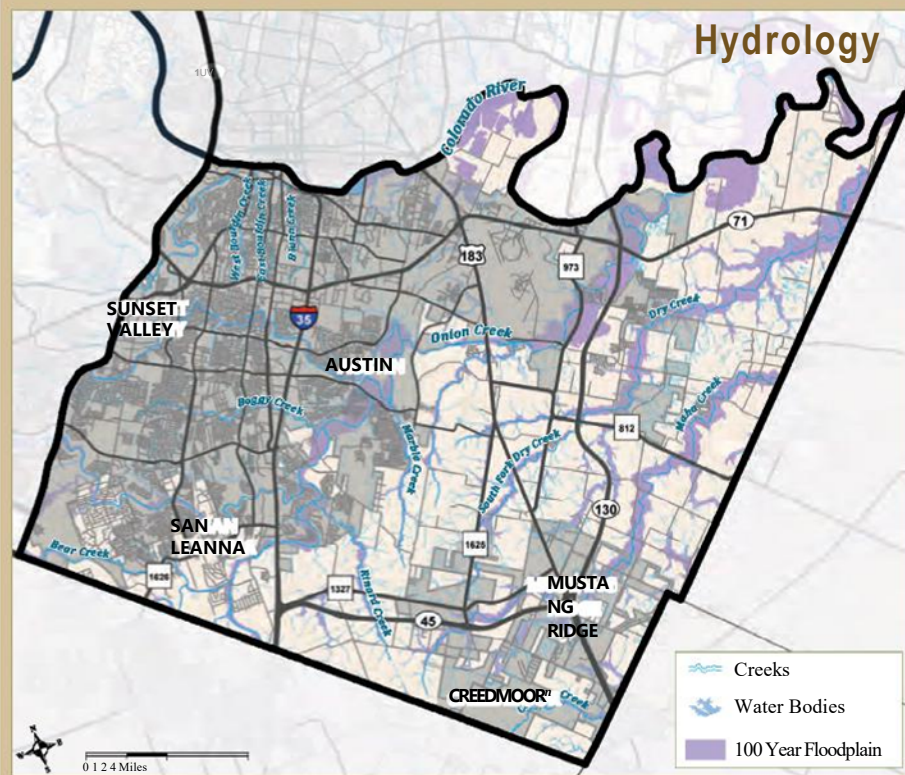
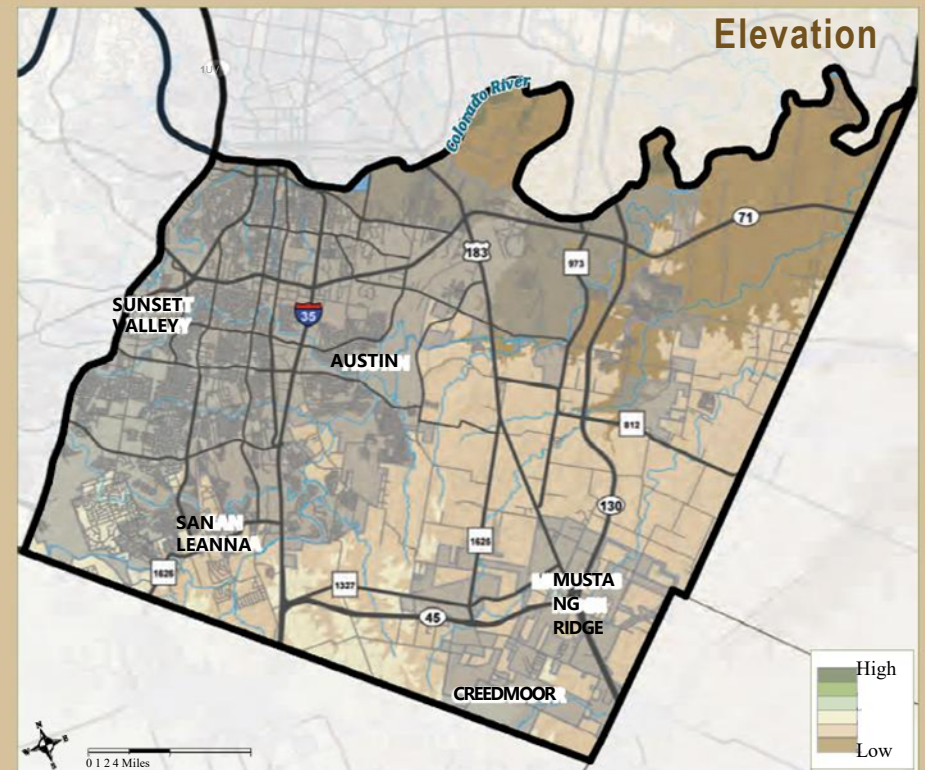
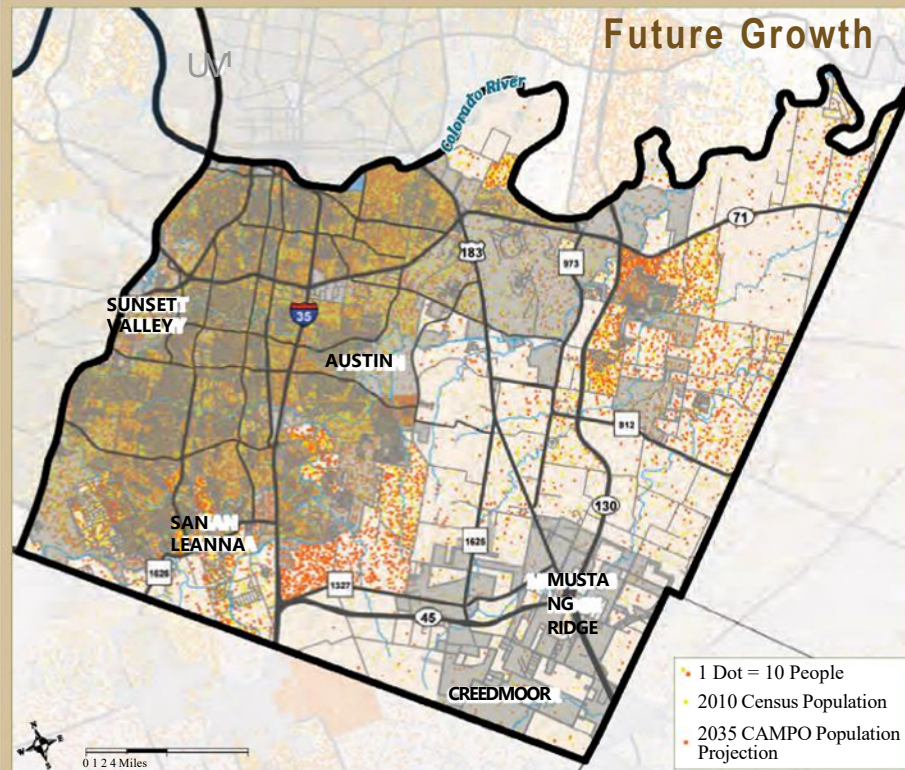
Year	Population
2000	237,722
2010	287,133
2014	310,521
2019	346,949

2014 Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White Alone	66.8%
Black Alone	6.5%
American Indian Alone	1.1%
Asian Alone	2.8%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	18.9%
Two or More Races	3.8%
Hispanic Origin	49.8%

Year	Median Age
2010	30
2014	31
2019	32

Year	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Per Capita Income
2014	\$46,041	\$212,032	\$24,526
2019	\$53,824	\$238,695	\$28,642

Table 3: Southeast Planning Area Community Profile



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Southwest Planning Area

Community Profile

The southwest planning area has the smallest population of all planning areas, the largest percentage of its population identifying as “White Alone”, and the second smallest percentage of its population identifying as being of “Hispanic Origin”. It also has the oldest population, and is the planning area with the highest median household income, median home value, and per capita income in the county.

Future Growth

Most growth is forecasted to occur within the cities of Lakeway, Bee Cave, West Lake, and Austin.

Geographic Characteristics

This planning area includes the regionally significant Lake Travis, the Pedernales River, and many creeks that drain to these two water bodies. It is exclusively Edwards Plateau, and unlike eastern Travis, has narrow floodplains.

Year	Population
2000	93,839
2010	130,812
2014	142,392
2019	160,156

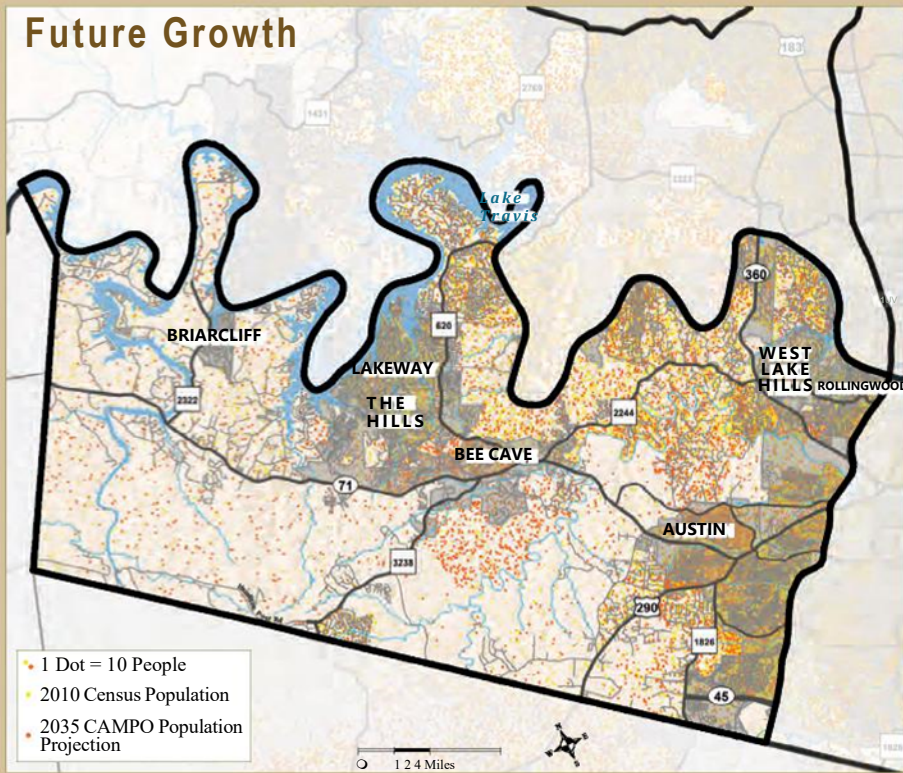
2014 Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White Alone	85.8%
Black Alone	1.3%
American Indian Alone	.4%
Asian Alone	6.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	.1%
Some Other Race Alone	3.3%
Two or More Races	2.5%
Hispanic Origin	13.1%

Year	Median Age
2010	40
2014	41
2019	41

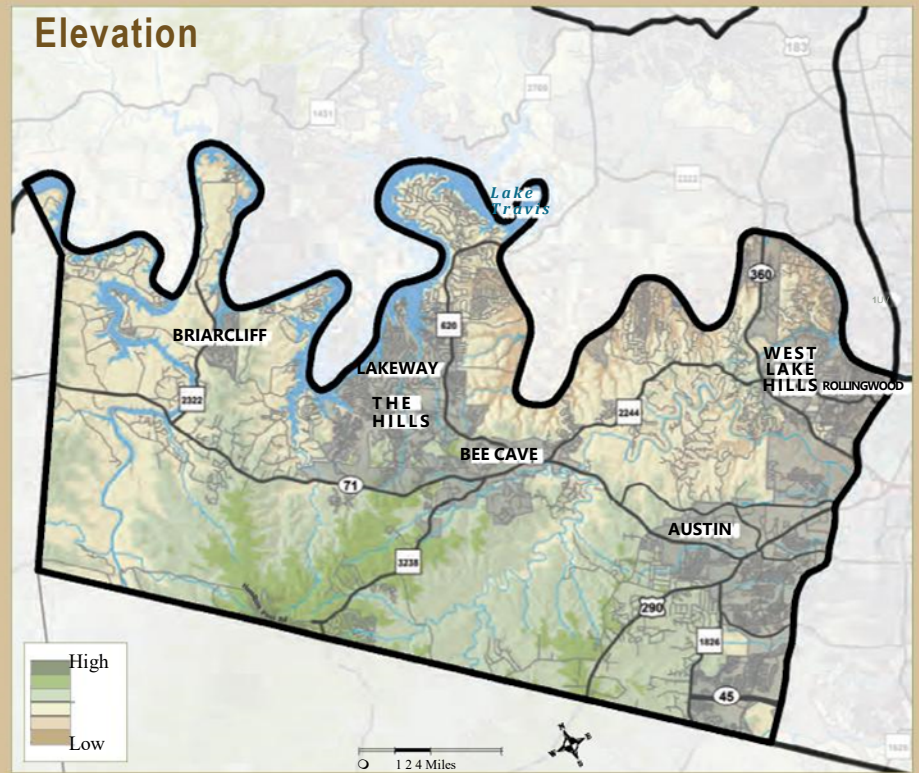
Year	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Per Capita Income
2014	\$108,851	\$414,896	\$54,195
2019	\$129,825	\$477,011	\$65,357

Table 4: Southwest Planning Area Community Profile

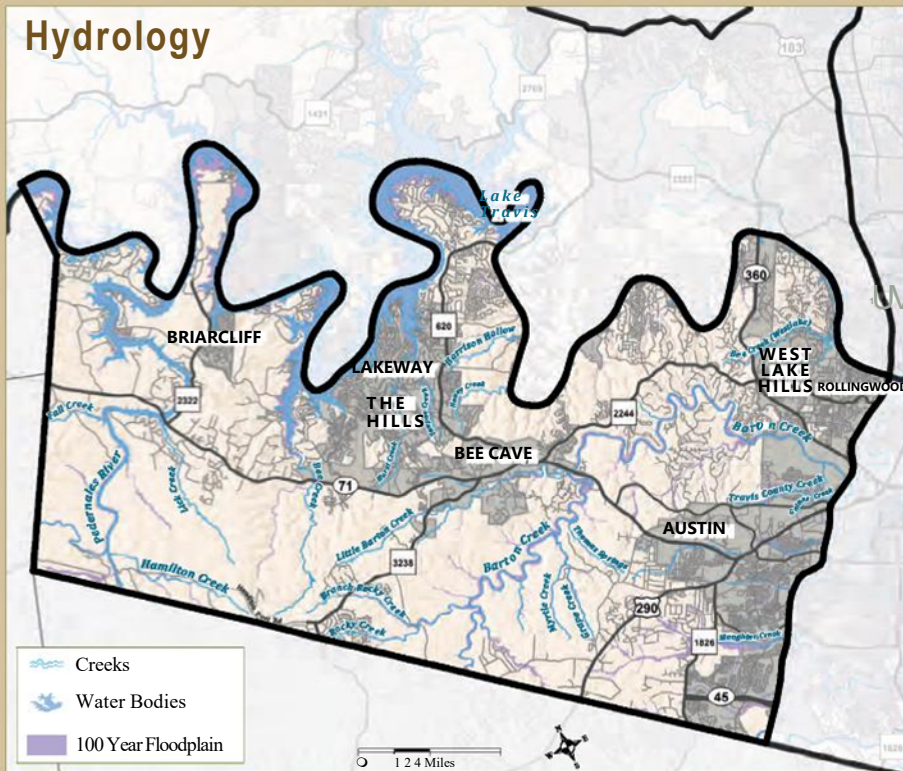
Future Growth



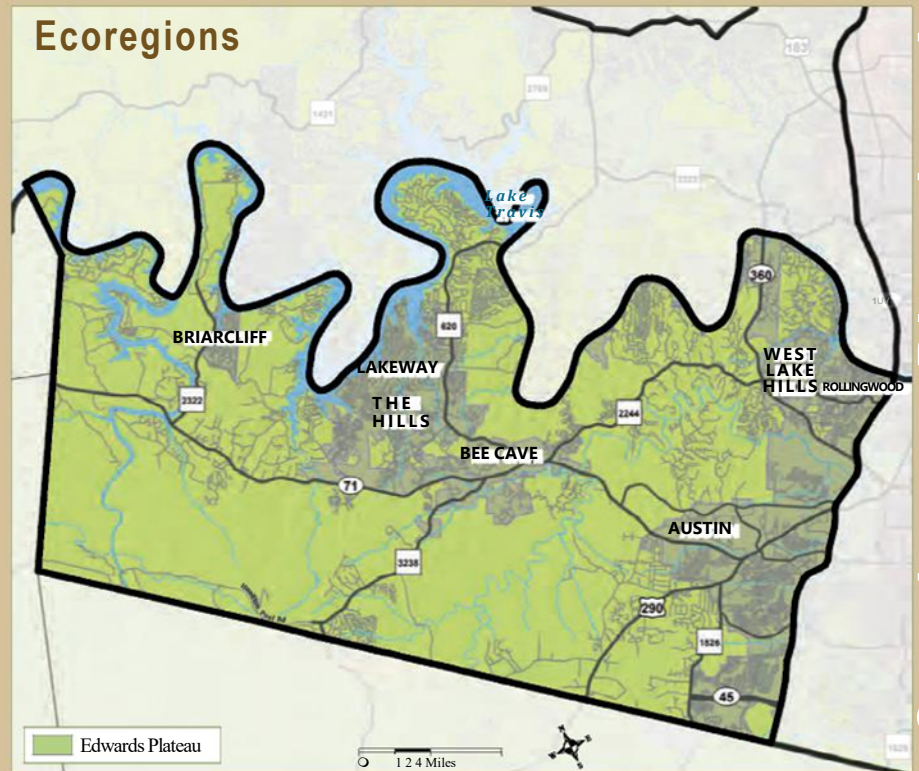
Elevation



Hydrology



Ecoregions



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Northwest Planning Area

Demographics

The Northwest Planning Area has the second smallest population (see Table 5). Like the southwest part of the county, it has a large “White Alone” population, and small minority population. Its population is somewhat older and more prosperous than the county-wide average.

Future Growth

Forecasted growth is concentrated in the municipalities of Austin, Cedar Park, Jonestown, Lago Vista, and Leander.

Geography

The Northwest Planning area is primarily Edwards Plateau. It has two major creeks – Big Sandy Creek and Cypress Creek – draining to Lake Travis and forming major arms of the lake. Like Southwest Travis County, its floodplains are narrower than those found in eastern Travis County.

Year	Population
2000	130,273
2010	163,983
2014	173,857
2019	191,026

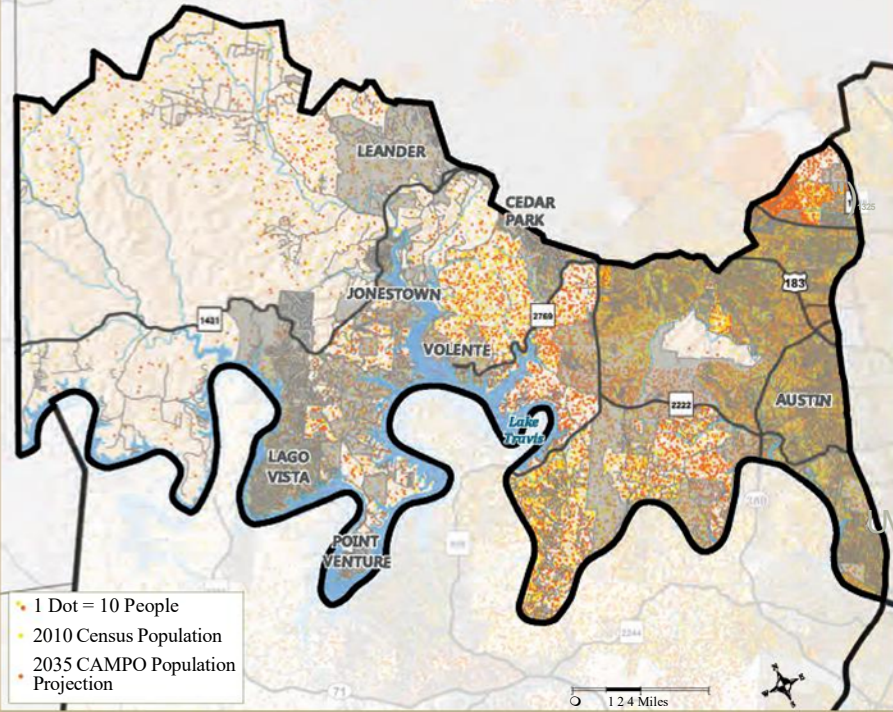
2014 Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White Alone	82.0%
Black Alone	2.4%
American Indian Alone	.4%
Asian Alone	9.7%
Pacific Islander Alone	.0%
Some Other Race Alone	2.5%
Two or More Races	2.9%
Hispanic Origin	11.7%

Year	Median Age
2010	37
2014	38
2019	39

Year	Median Household Income	Median Home Value	Per Capita Income
2014	\$83,108	\$398,647	\$50,163
2019	\$101,725	\$457,134	\$60,374

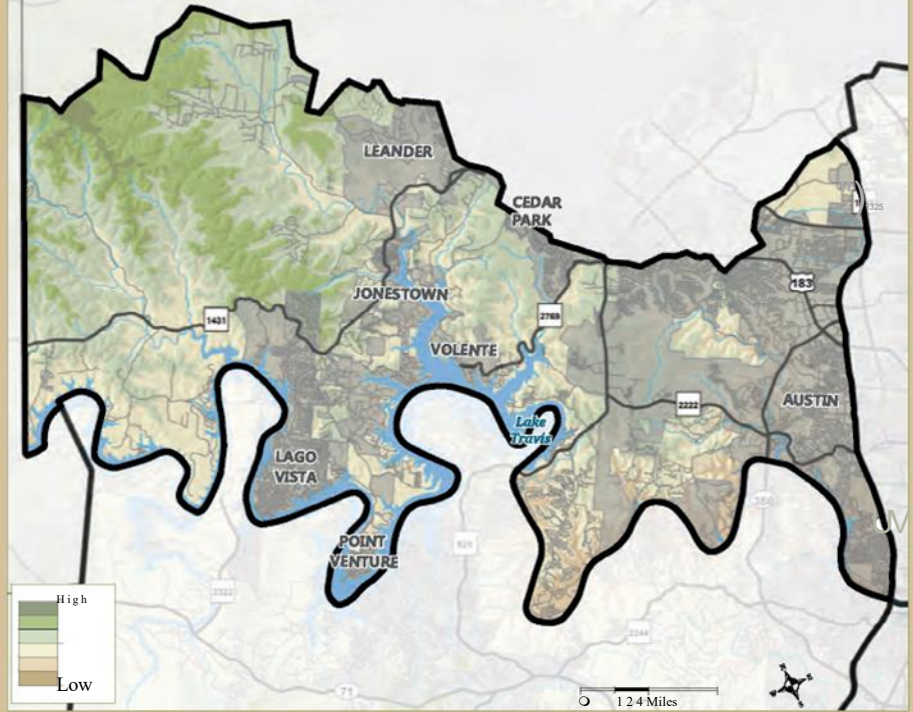
Table 5: Northwest Planning Area Community Profile

Future Growth



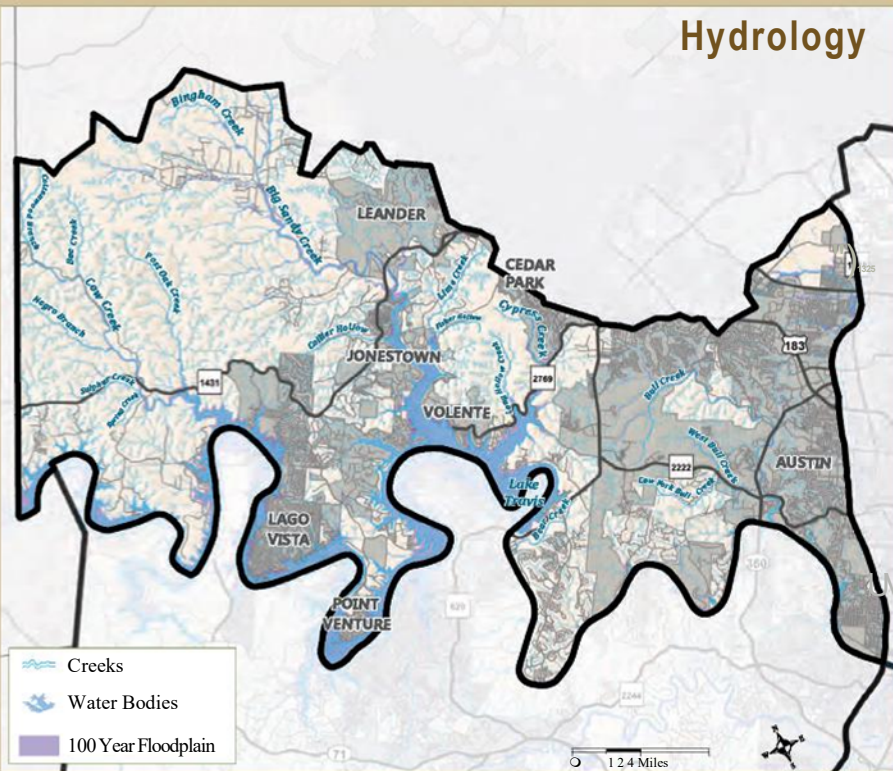
- 1 Dot = 10 People
- 2010 Census Population
- 2035 CAMPO Population Projection

Elevation



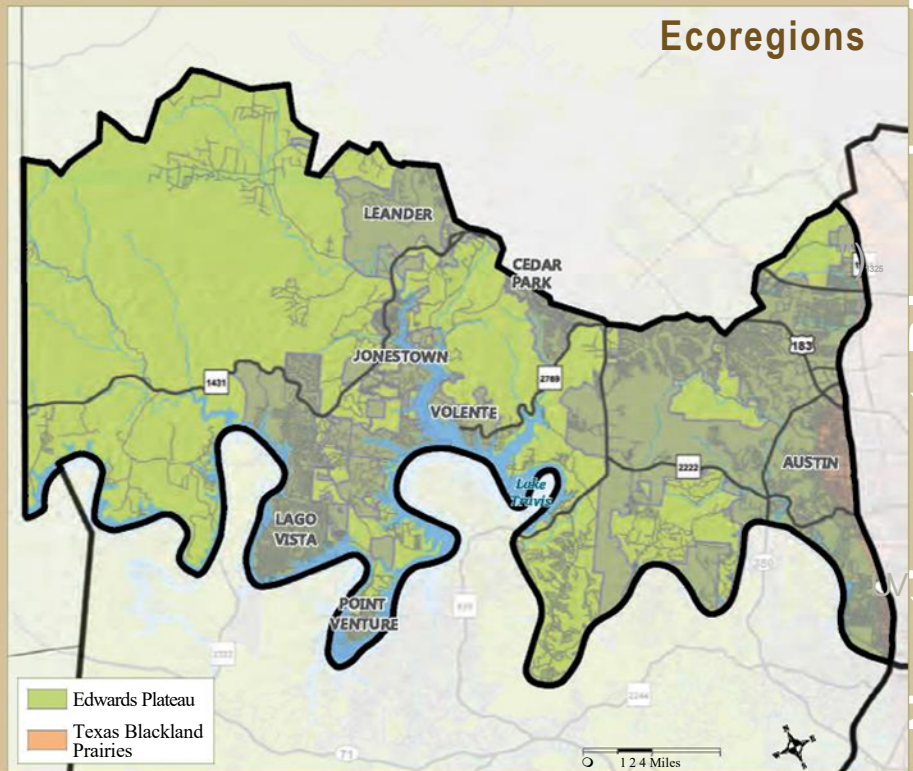
- High
- Low

Hydrology



- Creeks
- Water Bodies
- 100 Year Floodplain

Ecoregions



- Edwards Plateau
- Texas Blackland Prairies

Northwest Planning Area

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Goals, Objectives, and Policies



Colorado River



Environmental Day Camp

Goal A: Support the health and wellbeing of Travis County residents

Objective A.1: Provide diverse recreational opportunities

Policy A.1.1: Provide facilities that are popular with a broad segment of the population

Policy A.1.2: Provide facilities to support specialized recreational activities

Policy A.1.3: Provide facilities for a diverse county population and people of all ages and abilities

Objective A.2: Provide clean, safe, comfortable parks

Policy A.2.1: Maintain clean facilities and grounds

Policy A.2.2: Design, develop, and maintain parks for visitor safety and sense of security

Policy A.2.3: Develop and maintain safe playgrounds

Policy A.2.4: Mitigate hazardous tree conditions in activity areas

Policy A.2.5: Enforce park rules and state laws

Policy A.2.6: Provide emergency response services

Policy A.2.7: Shade playgrounds, picnic areas, trails and other park facilities

Policy A.2.8: Provide restrooms and drinking water in high-use areas

Objective A.3: Provide access to natural areas

Policy A.3.1: Acquire regionally significant resources for nature-based recreation

Policy A.3.2: Acquire and maintain natural areas close to where people live

Objective A.4: Support multi-modal transportation for all ages and abilities

Policies A.4.1: Develop a comprehensive greenway multi-use trail system

Policies A.4.2: Connect multi-use park trails to regional bike and pedestrian systems

Goal B: Protect natural and cultural resources

Objective B.1: Design and maintain environmentally sustainable parks and facilities

Policy B.1.1: Use reclaimed water when feasible

Policy B.1.2: Use best mechanical and cultural turf management practices

Objective B.2: Manage land to achieve greatest ecological value

Policy B.2.1: Use best management practices to maintain or restore native woodlands, prairies, riparian zones, and other ecosystems

Policy B.2.2: Promote and use best management practices to control and prevent spread of invasive species and noxious weeds

Policy B.2.3: Use directional lighting and other techniques to maintain dark skies

Policy B.2.4: Require best management practices on leased agricultural lands

Objective B.3: Balance recreational and ecological needs

Policy B.3.1: Develop and implement site master plans that zone recreational uses and natural areas

Policy B.3.2: Continue "Leave No Trace" partnership

Policy B.3.3: Interpret ecological systems and land management practices to educate park visitors

Objective B.4: Preserve cultural resources

Policy B.4.1: Complete cultural surveys to identify preservation opportunities

Policy B.4.2: Interview longtime landowners and residences to document community and park related history

Policy B.4.3: Interpret historic and cultural resources

Policy B.4.4: Use short to long term leasing of suitable parkland for agricultural use to preserve farming and ranching traditions and rural character

Objective B.5 Preserve ecological diversity

Policy B.5.1: Acquire land in Floodplain and Low Terraces, Post Oak Savanna, Edwards Plateau, and Blackland Prairie ecoregions and maintain ecological functions



Hamilton Pool Preserve

Goal C: Use Travis County resources responsibly

Objective C.1: Use cost effective operation and maintenance practices

Policy C.1.1: Assess impacts of capital improvements on O&M costs
Policy C.1.2: Analyze the impact on County budget of providing new programs and services

Objective C.2: Leverage Travis County resources through partnerships that promote conservation and recreational opportunities

Policy C.2.1: Coordinate conservation of high-priority lands and river and creek corridors with local jurisdictions, agencies, non-profits, and landowners
Policy C.2.2: Leverage capital improvement funds with federal and state grants.
Policy C.2.3: Coordinate planning and programming with other divisions and county departments

Objective C.3: Promote local and regional use of County parks

Policy C.3.1: Develop online, print, and broadcast presence
Policy C.3.2: Implement the "Comprehensive 5-year Communication Plan"

Objective C.4: Minimize natural hazards

Policy C.4.1: Reduce wildfire potentials in parks and preserves through forest management, prescribed fire, site and ecotype-

appropriate fuels management, adjacent land owner outreach promoting FireWise and community Wildfire Protection Plan recommendations and other best management practices.
Policy C.4.2: Mitigate flood damage in parks through appropriate siting of facilities, stream bank stabilization, stormwater mitigation, and flood preparation protocols

Objective C.6: Know public preferences

Policy C.6.1: Engage county residents, stakeholders, and experts in park planning and policy formulation processes
Policy C.6.2: Use statistically valid data when feasible to identify recreational preferences

Objective C.7: Construct parks to the aesthetic and performance standards for which they have been planned, designed, and funded

Policy C.7.1: Maintain appropriate professional and technical staffing and expertise to ensure projects are constructed according to planned, designed, and funded aesthetic and performance standards
Policy C.7.2: Maintain appropriate professional and technical staffing and expertise to ensure timely completion of park projects

Plan Development Process

Plan Preparation

Travis County Parks prepared this master plan. It is the third TPWD-approved plan completed since 1997 under the direction of Charles Bergh, Travis County Parks Director. It is built on previous plans, ongoing communications with park visitors and stakeholders, survey data, input from public meetings, and citizens' communications with members of the Commissioners Court.

Travis County Parks considered information collected through public review of the proposed 2011 Bond program, the Land, Water, and Transportation Plan (LWTP), and this draft master plan. Public input for the 2011 bond program was facilitated by staff working with the Citizen Bond Advisory Committee that was appointed by the Commissioner Court. Concept Development and Planning (CD&P) assisted staff with the LWTP process. Travis County staff facilitated public review of this master plan.

Schedule

- August – September 2014: Initial Public Engagement Process
- January 2015 – January 2016: Plan Preparation
- January 2016 – Commissioners Court Approval to release draft for Public Review
- March 2016 to May 2016 – Public Review of Draft
- May 2016 to July 2016 – Final Revisions
- August 2016 – Commissioners Court Adoption
- Date of future bond election to fund implementation to be determined

Previous Plans

Previous plans completed by both the County and other governmental and non-governmental agencies embody community values that provide context for this master plan.

Figures 1-3 illustrate plans with elements relevant to the Colorado River and creeks in eastern Travis County. They include:

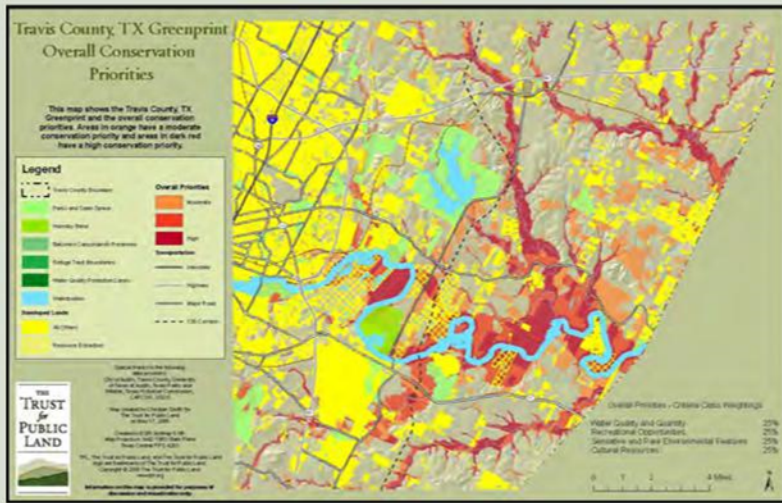
- “The Travis County Greenprint for Growth” completed by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) (October 2006)
- “Discovering the Colorado: A Vision for the Austin-Bastrop River Corridor” completed by the Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership (ABRCP) (December 2006)
- “Imagine Austin” completed by the City of Austin (COA) (June 2012)

Figure 4 illustrates the “Pedernales River Project” that is being facilitated by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to protect the watershed which includes Hamilton Pool Preserve and Reimers Ranch Park. (Ongoing)

Figures 5-8 illustrates previous County plans on which this plan is built. They include:

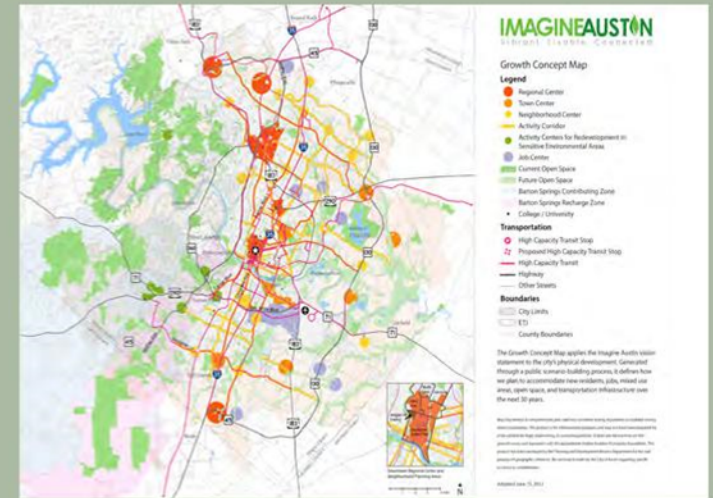
- “Travis County Parks and Natural Area Master Plan” (May 2006)
- “Concept Plan for the Onion Creek Greenway” (March 2010)
- “Colorado River Corridor Plan” (September 2012)
- “Land, Water, and Transportation Plan” (December 2014)

Figure 1: The Travis County Greenprint for Growth



October 2006: The Trust for Public Lands completes the “The Travis County Greenprint for Growth”. Using Geographic Information System modeling, TPL helps communities and local governments systematically identify conservation priorities, which in this plan includes floodplains along the Colorado River and creeks of eastern Travis County.

Figure 3: Imagine Austin



June 2012: City of Austin adopts “Imagine Austin”, identifying the Colorado River and creeks in eastern Travis County as future open space.

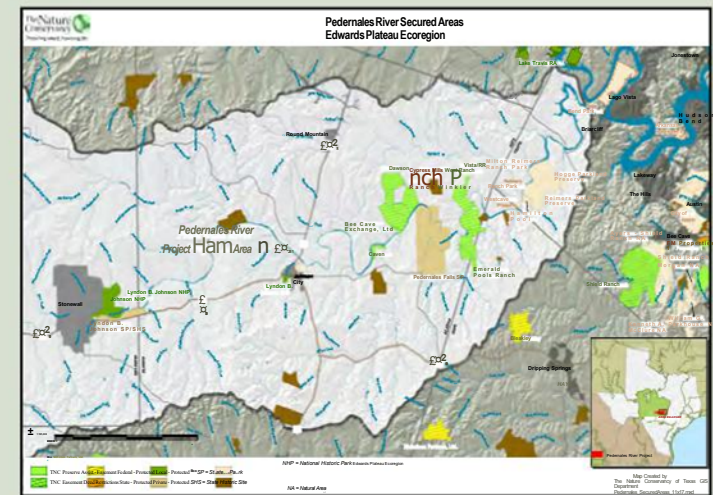
Figure 2: Discovering the Colorado



December 2006: The Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership publishes its vision document, a “...framework for city and regional policy, riparian protection and restoration efforts, public recreational infrastructure investment, educational programs, future development proposals, and an overall tool for the community to promote a sustainable river corridor.”

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Figure 4: Pedernales River Project



Ongoing: The Nature Conservancy works with landowners and governmental and non-governmental agencies to protect the river’s watershed, including land around Hamilton Pool Preserve and Reimers Ranch Park.

2011 Bond Program

Public Input Process

- Citizen Communications: One half hour was dedicated to Citizens Communications at the beginning of each of the 11 CBAC meetings held at the Joe C. Thompson Center.
- Public Meetings: Six (6) public meetings were held throughout the county in June 2011. Public meeting attendance sheets are provided in Appendix C.
- Correspondence: Participants could submit written comments on-line or at meetings.
- Commissioners Court Communications: Citizens could also attend Commissioner Court voting sessions speak directly to members of the Court.

Summary of Public Input

The breakdown of comments received for specific bond projects is provided in Appendix D. Highlights follow.

Acquire parkland for river corridor and greenways

There was strong support for parkland acquisition: acquiring land for the Pedernales River Corridor had the most support of all the projects; and acquiring land for greenways along creeks in eastern Travis County was the second-most popular project.

Develop Onion Creek Greenway

The third-most popular project was developing the Onion Creek Greenway, work that included building recreational facilities, trails, infrastructure and utilities, and restoring bottomland woods.

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Land, Water, and Transportation

Public Input Process

- Public Meetings: Seven (7) public meetings were held throughout Travis County. Public meeting attendance sheets are provided in Appendix E.
- Survey: Participants completed a voluntary on-line survey about land conservation priorities and strategies. Because it was taken voluntarily and not through sample selection process, the data does not statistically represent the county population.
- Public Outreach: Public outreach was made through radio spots, print and digital advertisements, web page postings, and tweets.
- Correspondence: Participants could submit written comments on-line or at meetings.
- Commissioners Court Communications: Citizens could attend Commissioner Court voting sessions and speak directly to members of the Court.

Summary of Public Input

The full survey is provided in Appendix F. Highlights follow.

Conserve land in Travis County

There is strong support for land conservation in the county. Only 17% of the survey respondents think "Travis County cannot afford to conserve land and should use public dollars for other purposes" whereas two-thirds disagree with this statement.

Purchase parkland to conserve land

Although leveraging county dollars for land conservation is supported by the greatest number of respondents (88%), buying parkland also is a popular strategy: approximately three-quarters of the respondents (76%) think that “Travis County should purchase parkland to conserve land.”

Conserve land for public recreation

An overwhelming majority (85%) of the respondents think that it is important to conserve land for public recreational use.

Conserve land to protect natural resources

Respondents enthusiastically support conserving land to “protect water quality and supply”, to protect “natural springs”, to “protect woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and other natural areas” and to “protect wildlife” (93%, 93%, 86%, and 82% respectively).

Connect Parks to Communities

More than three-quarters (79%) of the respondents think that “It is important to have trails, sidewalks, and bike paths which are connected to parks, schools, and businesses near my home.”

Being able to walk and bicycle are important

Almost two-thirds (60%) of the respondents think that “It is important to live in a community where I can walk or bike...” for non-work related travel.

Overview of Responses to Open-ended Questions

- Support for conservation is strong but tempered by the need to invest in transportation infrastructure and affordability considerations.
- Conserving land for water resource protection is a top priority.
- The public needs to be able to use conserved lands, particularly for walking and bicycling. Such trails need to be part of large, integrated trail systems.

Commissioners Court Communications

In addition to communications with the Court during formal comment periods, constituents sometimes make direct requests to their elected representative outside formal processes. One longtime request has been made by residents of Precinct 3 who are asking the County for assistance in the development of sports fields in their community.

Parks Master Plan

Public Input Process

The public input process ran from March 4, 2016 to May 1, 2016. It included the following:

- Public Meetings: Six (6) Public meetings were held in the county: two in western Travis County, three in eastern Travis County, and one in downtown Austin. Sign in sheets and comments are provided in the Public engagement Report.

- Public Outreach: Opportunities to learn about and comment on the draft master plan were advertised in press releases, print and electronic media, and social media.
- Correspondence: Participants could submit written comments on-line or at meetings. All written comments are provided in the Public Engagement report.
- Commissioners Court Communications: Citizens could attend Commissioner Court voting sessions and provide their input directly to the Court.

Summary of Public Input

See the Public Engagement Report for more detailed information.

- The single-most commented upon topic is the need for youth sports fields near the cities of Bee Cave and Lakeway.
- There is strong support for a natural resource-based park system. People supported parkland acquisition priorities and maintaining a system of regional parks and greenways; they want opportunities to mountain bike, rock climb, hike, camp and enjoy the outdoors; and they want parks to be maintained as natural areas
- Many people request expanded opportunities to play disc golf.
- They support proposed park improvements but want development to have a minimal impact on the natural character of county parks.
- An interconnected, regional system is desired.
- Preservation of land for local food production is desired.

Commissioners Court Adoption

The Travis County Commissioners Court adopted **...take it outside! The Next Ten Years** on August 9, 2016.

Park Development Concepts and Standards

Types of Parks

Neighborhood Park

0-5 mile service area
<10 minute drive
<20 acres

Neighborhood Parks are small parks developed primarily for day-use. They are sited within or near a residential area and typically have picnic facilities, playgrounds, small sports fields and courts, low-volume boat ramps, or other facilities for individual or small group use. Travis County Parks does not actively pursue development of neighborhood parks and may transfer ownership of neighborhood parks to willing municipalities or other organizations for continued public use if appropriate. New neighborhood parks are ideally integrated into greenway and river corridor systems as trailheads connected to larger multiuse trail systems.

Community Park

0-25 mile service area
< 30 minute drive
20 - <200 acres

Community Parks are medium sized parks that accommodate both day and overnight use. They are developed for both moderately intense recreational use and conservation of natural areas. They serve multiple residential areas and may have picnic amenities, playgrounds, small sports fields and courts, moderate-volume boat ramps, beaches, or other facilities for mid to large group use. New community parks are ideally integrated into greenway and river corridor systems with trailheads connected to larger multiuse trail systems.

Metropolitan Park

0-100 mile service area
30 minute – 2 hour drive
>200 acres

Metropolitan (Metro) Parks are large parks sited near rapidly growing population centers. They have both capital-intensive recreational facilities and natural areas. They typically have picnic facilities, playgrounds, multiuse trails, sports complexes, and special-use facilities such as a BMX track, swimming pool, or skate park. They are major anchors along greenways and are connected to larger multiuse trail systems. They are primarily day-use parks but overnight use is allowed by permit.

Regional Park

0 - >100 mile service area
2 – 6 hour drive
> 200 acres

Regional Parks are large parks that protect and provide recreational access to significant or unique natural resources including Lake Travis and the Pedernales River. They may have both day-use and overnight facilities to support boating, camping, fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and other nature-based recreational activities. They may also have specialized facilities, such as an observatory, for nature appreciation and environmental education.

Connector Park

0 - >100 mile service area

Connector parks are the lands between named parks along greenways and river corridors. They are used by people throughout the region, typically maintained as natural areas, and have well developed trail systems.

Preserve

0 - >100 mile service area

Preserves are established primarily for conservation of significant or unique natural or cultural resources and may have limited public access.

Acquisition Priorities

This plan includes conservation priorities set in previous Travis County park master plans as well as a new one – Post Oak Savanna – that was set in the County’s recently adopted Land, Water, and Transportation Plan.

- 100-hundred year flood plains and terraces and bluffs
- Pedernales River Corridor
- Post Oak Savanna and bluffs
- Sites with significant natural springs and water features

Preferred Parkland Configuration

As a non-urban, county park system, Travis County Parks has historically had a strong natural resource-based system and provided longtime access to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, the Colorado River, and Hamilton Pool. In keeping with this role, Travis County Parks wants to develop a park system in which parkland is configured to maximize the quality of life, environmental, and economic value of natural resource-based parks.

Regional Parks and Preserves

Regional parks and preserves that are at least 200 acres are preferred over smaller tracts for many reasons:

- Increases nature-based recreational opportunities
- Preserves natural drainage patterns and maximizes groundwater recharge
- Reduces fragmentation of ecosystems and wildlife habitat
- Preserves rural landscapes and vistas
- Consolidates maintenance operations

Greenways and River Corridors

Greenways along creeks and river corridors are preferred because of benefits derived from their linear configuration:

- Accommodates connectivity and integrated trail systems
- Attenuates impact of stormwater on creek and river water quality
- Mitigates impact of flood events
- Protects riparian ecosystems and wildlife habitat
- Provides corridors for wildlife movement
- Preserves rural landscapes and vistas

28 Travis County Parks Master Plan

Strategic Parkland Acquisitions

Strategic parkland acquisitions are often opportunity driven and are made for several reasons:

- Provides access to a scarce resource such as Lake Travis
- Improves boundary configurations of existing parks
- Increases size of existing parks
- Acquisition circumstances are favorable
- Prevents incompatible land uses being developed adjacent to existing park

Types of Facilities

A goal of Travis County Parks is to support the health and wellbeing of Travis County residents. This will be accomplished by providing facilities that support diverse recreational activities, for all ages and abilities, that ensure clean, safe, comfortable recreational experiences, and that facilitate access to nature. All facilities will meet ADA standards unless reasonable accommodations cannot be made. Facility menus are provided below.

Basic Recreational Facilities

The menu of basic recreational facilities has developed in response to demand identified in public meetings, surveys, citizen communications with elected officials and park staff, observation of park use, and knowledge of market trends.

Nature-Based Facilities Play/Athletic/Sports Facilities Trails

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ Boat Ramp | ■ Baseball Field | ■ Crushed Granite Multiuse |
| ■ Campsite (improved) | ■ Basketball Court | ■ Natural Surface Hiking |
| ■ Campsite (unimproved) | ■ Concession Building | ■ Natural Surface Multiuse |
| ■ Fishing Pier | ■ Multiuse Field | ■ Paved Multiuse |
| ■ Picnic Shelter | ■ Playground | |
| ■ Open Water Swim Area | ■ Pool | |
| ■ Interpretive Signage | ■ Soccer Field | |
| | ■ Softball Field | |
| | ■ Splash Pad | |
| | ■ Tennis Court | |
| | ■ Volleyball Court | |

Specialized Recreational Facilities

The menu of specialized recreational facilities has developed – and will continue to develop – through advocacy by special user groups. This typically occurs through the public meeting forum sponsored by the Citizen Bond Advisory Committees (CBACs) who are charged by the Commissioners Court to review staff recommendations and facilitate public input on park bond packages.

Nature-Based Facilities Play/Athletic/Sports Facilities Trails

- Observatory • BMX Track • Natural Surface Multiuse (with equestrians)
- Rock Climbing “Trails” • Cricket Field • Single Track Mountain Bike
- Disc Golf Course
- Skate Park



Observatory at Reimers Ranch Park Skate Board Park at Northeast Metropolitan Park

Park and Facility Inventory

Overview: The Travis County park system has 36 parks and 9,657 acres of parkland (see Table 6). Most of this land is open to the public but a significant amount has been purchased relatively recently and is not. Development of the properties will be determined through site-specific planning. The status of specific park properties is provided in Table 8.

Parkland Status	No. Parks	Acres	% Park System
Open to Public	26	7611	79%
Restricted Access	3	42	<1%
Planned Public Access	5	1,838	19%
Managed by Others	1	163	2%
Closed	1	12	<1%
Total	36	9,666	100%

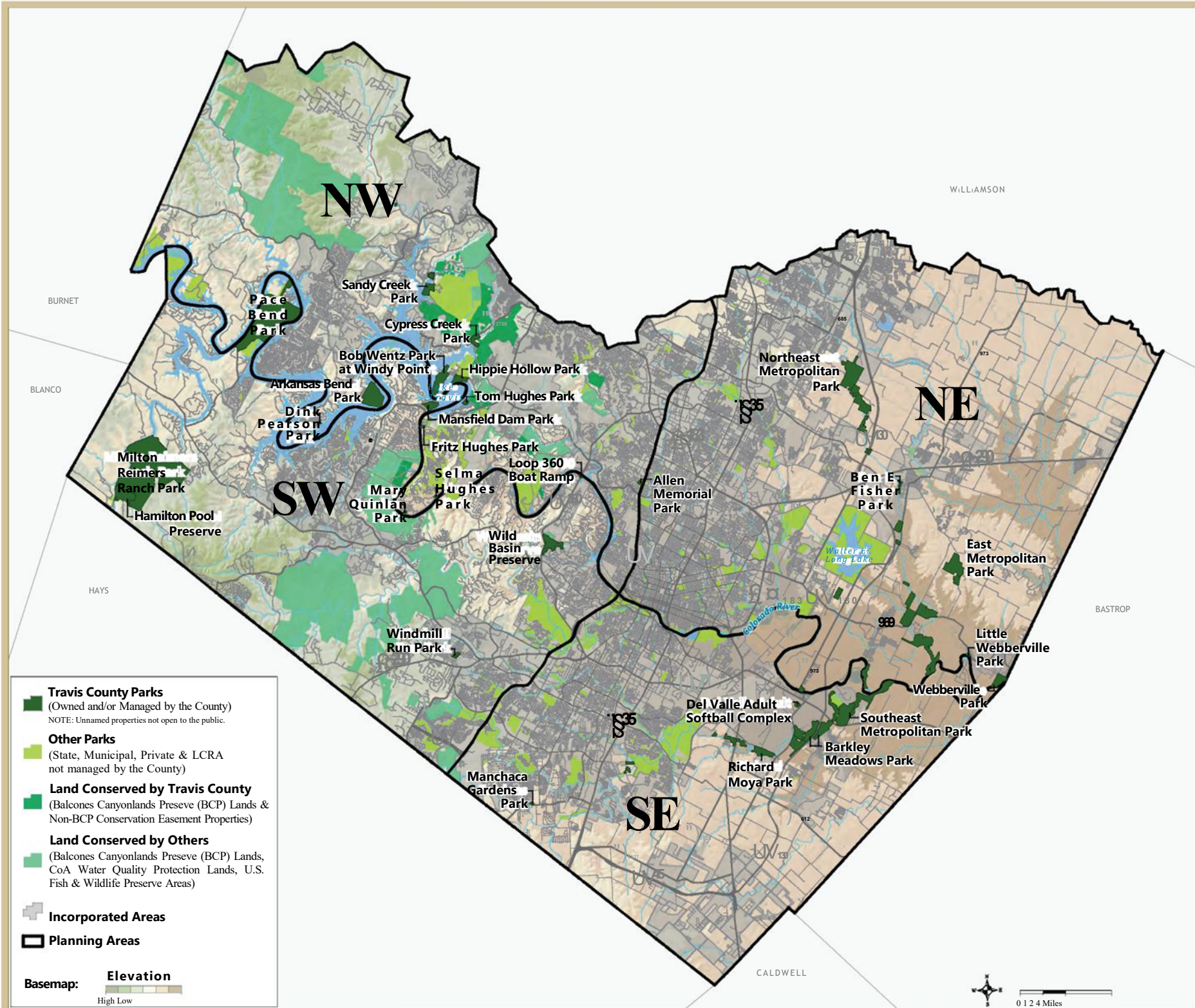
Table 6: Parkland Status

Geographic Distribution: Approximately 80% of the park system consists of regional, connector, and preserve properties with strong nature-based recreational opportunities. The largest portion of this property is regional-type parkland, all of which is found in western Travis County. The other significant portion is connector-type parkland, which forms the backbone of the greenway system and is found exclusively in eastern Travis County.

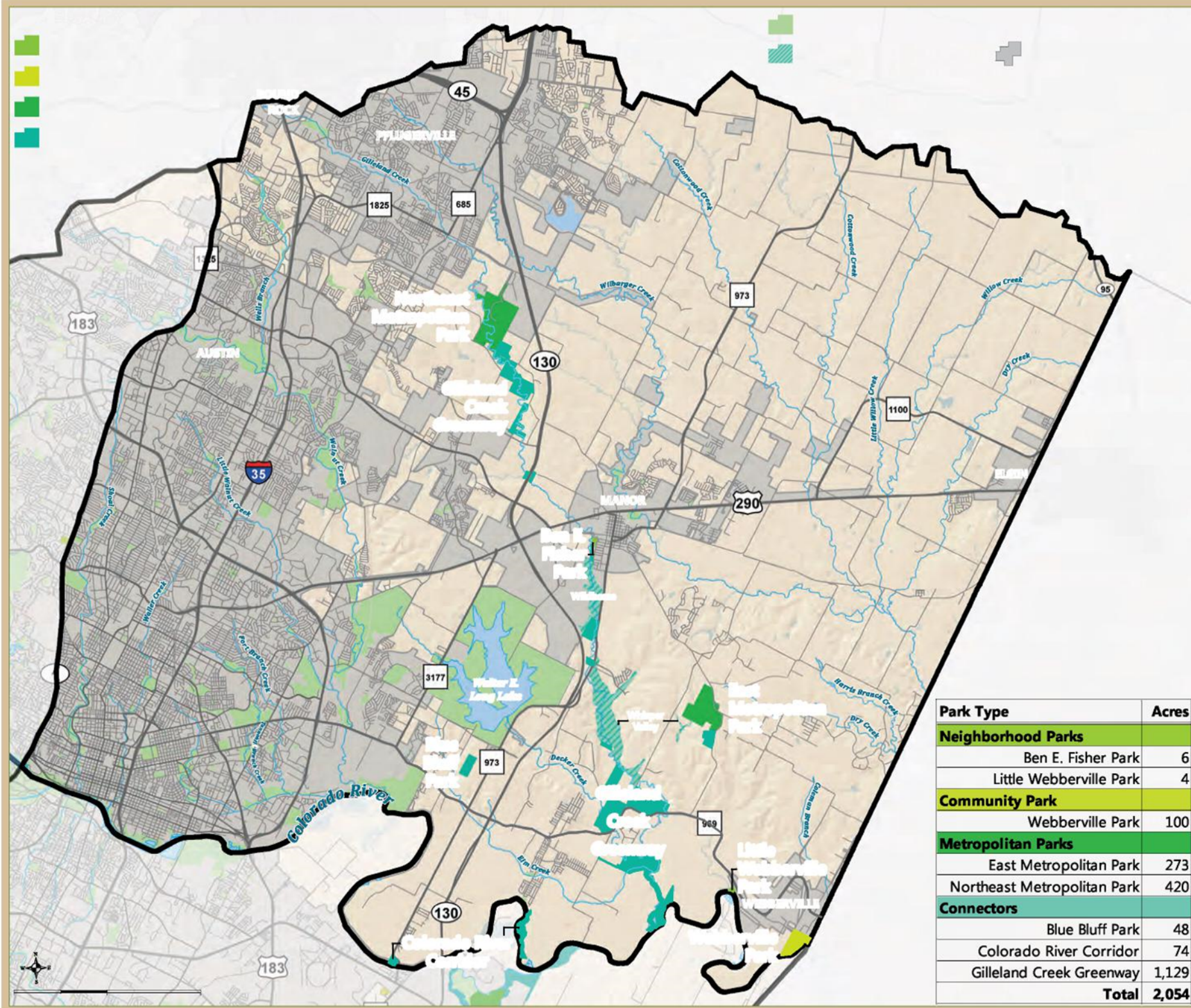
Type of Park	Park System		Northeast Planning Area		Southeast Planning Area		Soutwest Planning Area		Northwest Planning Area	
	Total Acres	Total Percent	Acres	Percent Total Acres	Acres	Percent Total Acres	Acres	Percent Total Acres	Acres	Percent Total Acres
Neighborhood	88	0.9%		10 11%	4	5% 16		18%	67 76%	
Community	734	8%	100	14%	453	62%	3	0%	178	24%
Metropolitan	1,001	10%		693 69%	308	31% 0		0%	0 0%	
Regional	5,686	59%	0	0%	0	0%	4,967	87%	720	13%
Connector	1,763	18%		1,251 71%	512	29% 0		0%	0 0%	
Preserve	394	4%	0	0%	0	0%	394	100%	0	0%
Totals	9,666	100%		2,054 21%	1,277	13% 5,380		56%	965 10%	

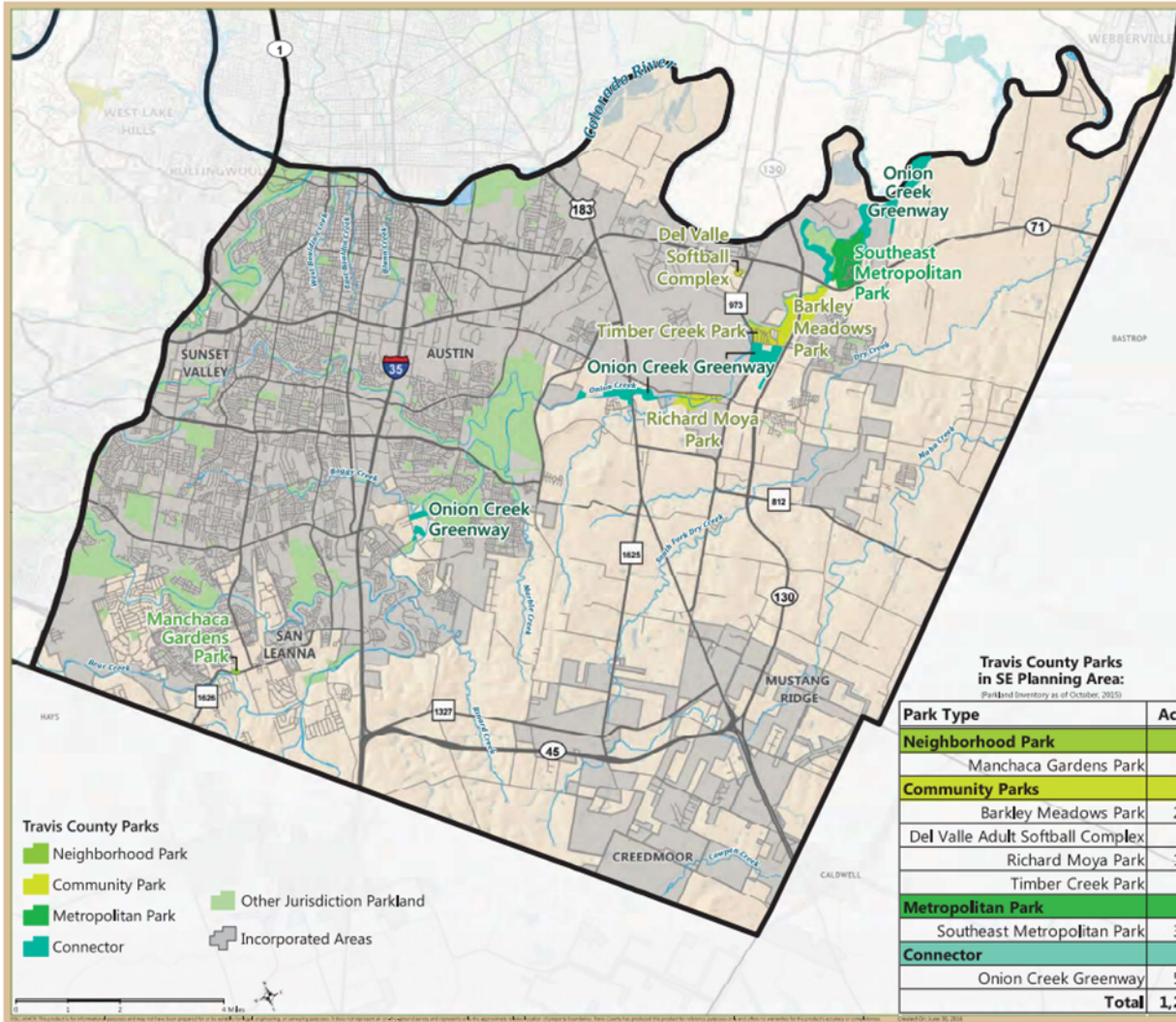
Date Completed: January 26, 2016

Table 7: Type of Parkland



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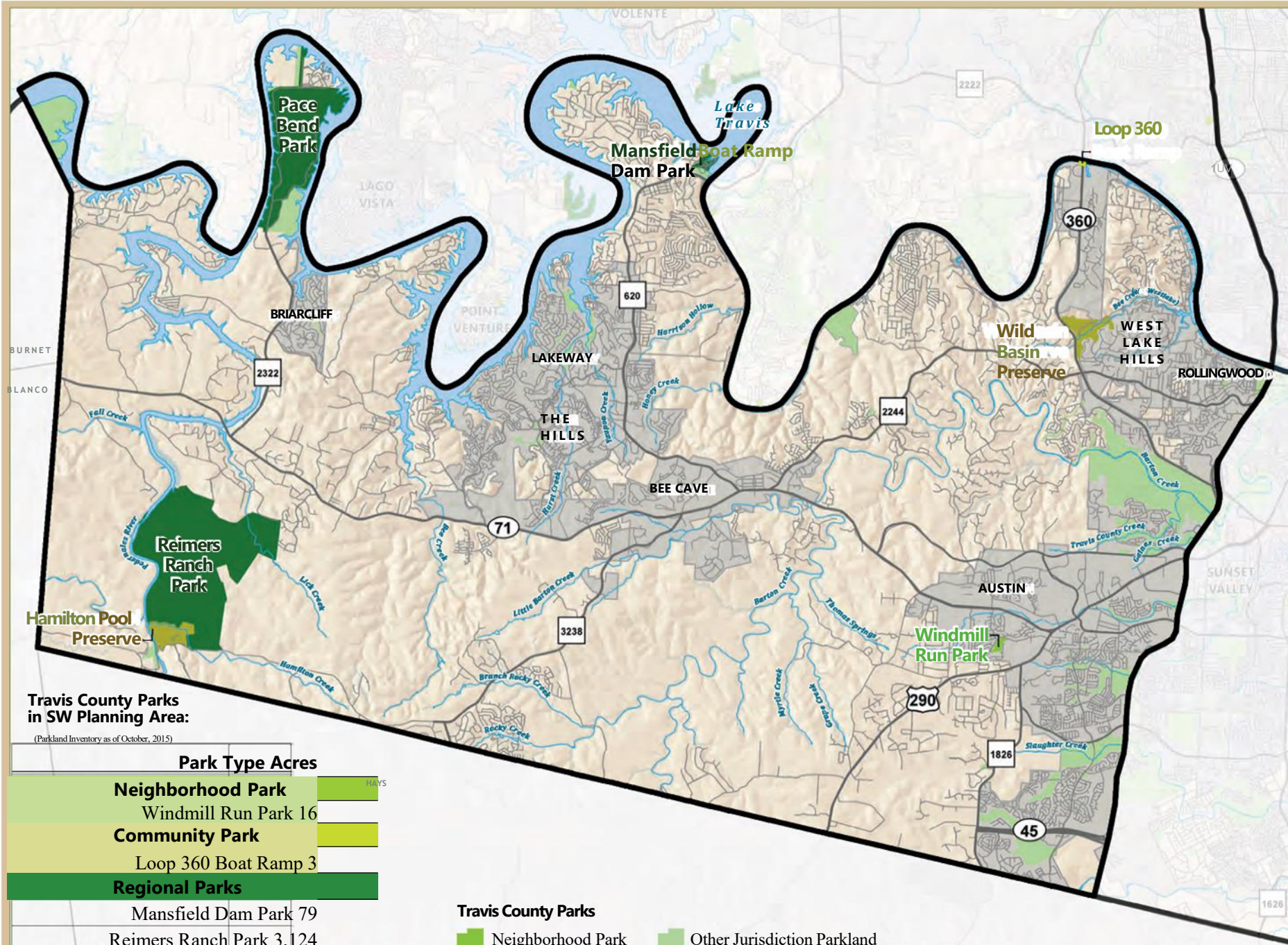




Travis County Parks in SE Planning Area:
Parkland Inventory as of October, 2020

Park Type	Acres
Neighborhood Park	
Manchaca Gardens Park	4
Community Parks	
Barkley Meadows Park	256
Del Valle Adult Softball Complex	12
Richard Moya Park	110
Timber Creek Park	75
Metropolitan Park	
Southeast Metropolitan Park	308
Connector	
Onion Creek Greenway	512
Total	1,277

Southeast Planning Area Parkland Inventory



Travis County Parks in SW Planning Area:
(Parkland Inventory as of October, 2015)

Park Type Acres	
Neighborhood Park	163
Windmill Run Park	16
Community Park	3
Loop 360 Boat Ramp	3
Regional Parks	3,124
Mansfield Dam Park	79
Reimers Ranch Park	3,124
Pace Bend Park	1,764
Preserves	231
Hamilton Pool Preserve	231
Wild Basin Preserve	163
Total	5,380

Travis County Parks

- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Preserve
- Other Jurisdiction Parkland
- Incorporated Areas

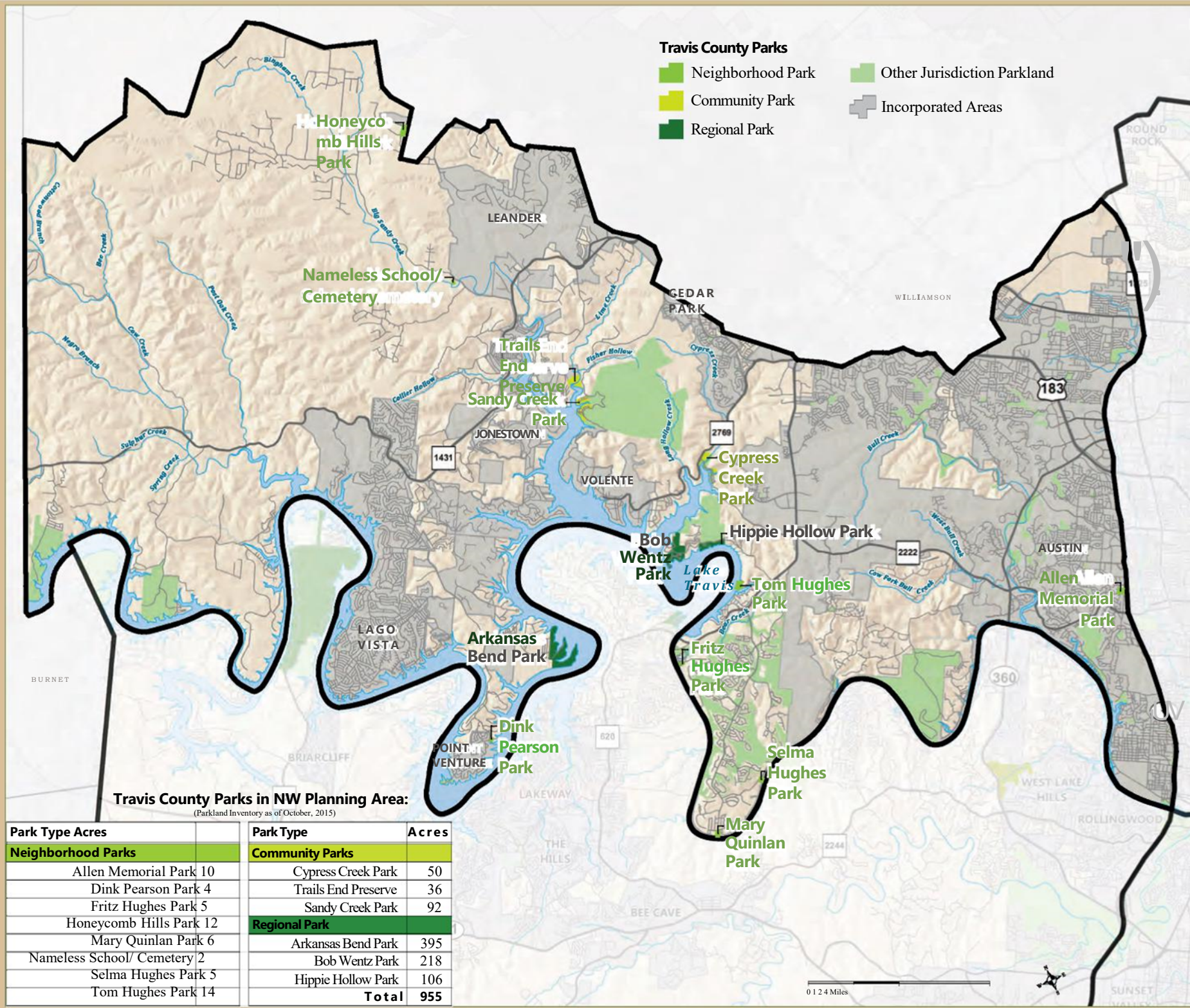
0.124 Miles



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Travis County Parks

- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Other Jurisdiction Parkland
- Incorporated Areas



Travis County Parks in NW Planning Area:
(Parkland Inventory as of October, 2015)

Park Type	Acres	Park Type	Acres
Neighborhood Parks		Community Parks	
Allen Memorial Park	10	Cypress Creek Park	50
Dink Pearson Park	4	Trails End Preserve	36
Fritz Hughes Park	5	Sandy Creek Park	92
Honeycomb Hills Park	12	Regional Park	
Mary Quinlan Park	6	Arkansas Bend Park	395
Nameless School/ Cemetery	2	Bob Wentz Park	218
Selma Hughes Park	5	Hippi Hollow Park	106
Tom Hughes Park	14	Total	955

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Needs and Implementation Priorities

Park and Facility Needs

Park and facility needs are based on the input received from citizens in the public engagement process for the 2011 bond program, Land, Water, and Transportation Plan (LWTP), and this park master plan. Direct communications with elected officials and staffs' observations of park usage are also considered. Specific needs and the related implementation priorities are described in the planning area sections that follow. Note: There may also be needs-related operational efficiencies and service delivery that are not yet identified and included herein.

Implementation Strategies

Travis County Parks uses several strategies to implement capital improvement projects. They include:

- Voter-approved bond funding
- Parkland dedications
- Federal and state grants
- Floodplain buyouts
- Donations

Voter-approved Bond Funding

Voter-approved bonds have been the primary source of funding for capital improvement projects: since 1997, voters have approved four (4) bond referendums, totaling approximately \$192 million, for parkland acquisition and construction of park improvements.

Voter-approved bond funds are intended to be the primary source of funding for implementing this master plan.

Parkland Dedications

Travis County's Chapter 82, Travis County Development Regulations requires dedication of parkland or fee-in-lieu of parkland from developers in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City of Austin and unincorporated areas of Travis County. If in the City of Austin ETJ, parkland dedication goes to the service provider with the park closest to the development. Since this ordinance was adopted in 2003, Travis County has collected approximately \$2.6 million in fees.

Federal and State Grants

Travis County Parks has received approximately \$8 million since 1984 in federal and state grants to improve boating access, to acquire parkland, to build park facilities, and to build trails.

Floodplain Buyouts

Travis County's Floodplain Buyout Program is implemented in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Its purpose is to buy out flood prone residences to mitigate loss of life and property damage. Buyout property is designated as parkland. To date, approximately 370 acres have been added to the County park system through floodplain buyouts.

Donations

Developers sometimes donate more land than the minimum amount required by parkland dedication ordinances. For example, Travis County Parks is currently accepting approximately 800 acres of parkland from developers, which exceeds their minimum requirements.

Northeast Planning Area Needs

Acquisition Priorities

- Floodplain and bluffs along the Colorado River, Gilleland Creek, Wilbarger Creek, and TO BE NAMED Creek
- Post Oak Savanna and bluffs
- Strategic properties

Basic Facility Needs

- Basic facilities and associated infrastructure to support recreational use of greenways and river corridors, including a boat ramp on the Colorado River, picnic shelters and tables, playgrounds, paved multi-use trails, other types of trails as appropriate, and interpretive amenities.

Specialized Recreational Facility Needs

- To be determined through future public engagement processes

Implementation Priorities

1. Complete parkland acquisition for Gilleland Creek Greenway
2. Develop Gilleland Creek trail and other recreational facilities
3. Renovate Ben E. Fisher Park
4. Acquire parkland for Colorado River Corridor
5. Acquire parkland for Wilbarger Creek Greenway
6. Acquire parkland for TO BE NAMED Creek Greenway
7. Acquire Post Oak Savanna and adjacent bluffs
8. Develop boat ramp at FM 973 crossing
9. Acquire strategic parkland (location to be determined)



Skateboarder at Northeast Metro Park

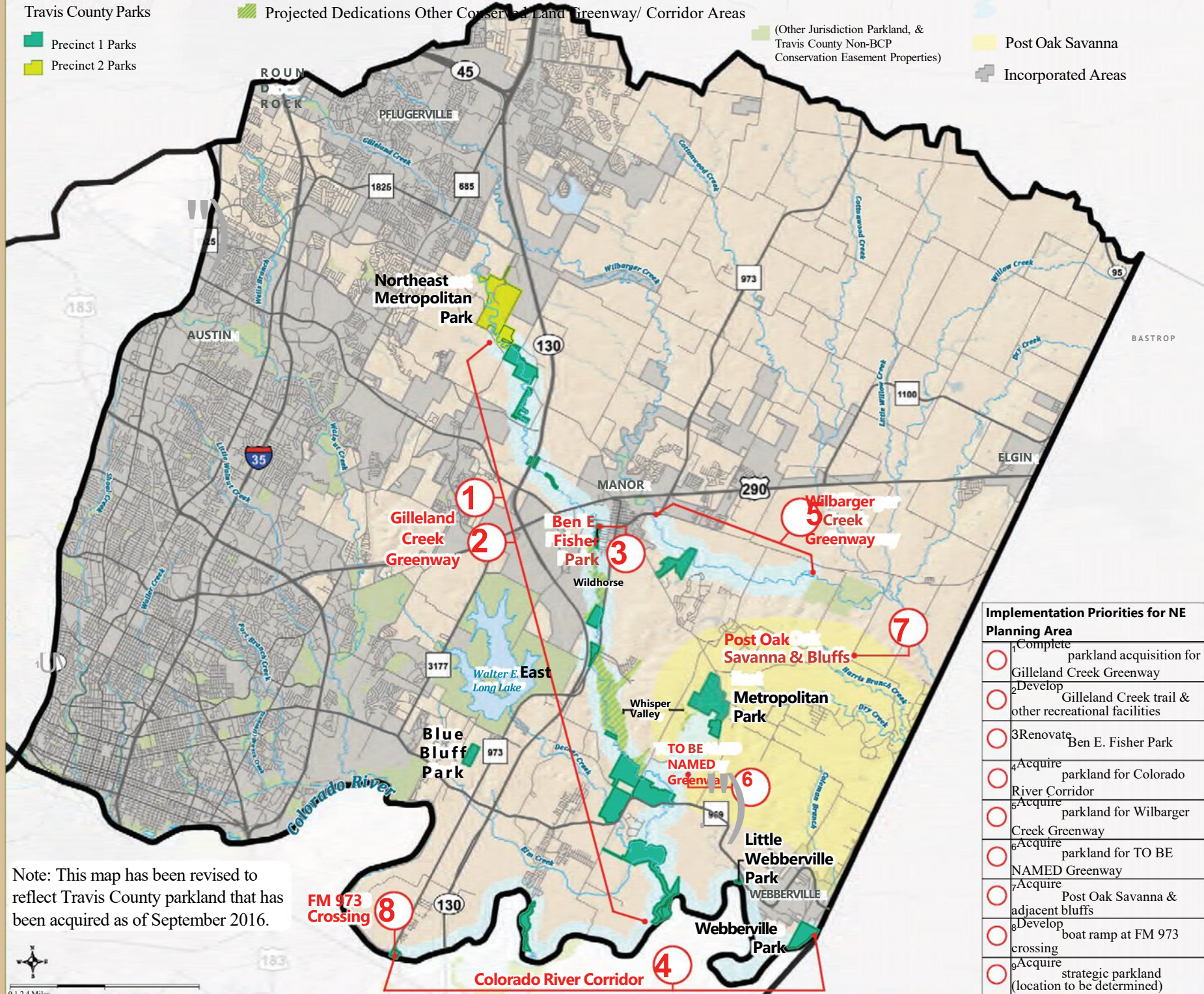
Travis County Parks

- Precinct 1 Parks
- Precinct 2 Parks

Projected Dedications Other Conserved Land Greenway/ Corridor Areas

(Other Jurisdiction Parkland, & Travis County Non-BCP Conservation Easement Properties)

- Post Oak Savanna
- Incorporated Areas



Implementation Priorities for NE Planning Area	
1	Complete parkland acquisition for Gilleland Creek Greenway
2	Develop Gilleland Creek trail & other recreational facilities
3	Renovate Ben E. Fisher Park
4	Acquire parkland for Colorado River Corridor
5	Acquire parkland for Wilbarger Creek Greenway
6	Acquire parkland for TO BE NAMED Greenway
7	Acquire Post Oak Savanna & adjacent bluffs
8	Develop boat ramp at FM 973 crossing
9	Acquire strategic parkland (location to be determined)

Note: This map has been revised to reflect Travis County parkland that has been acquired as of September 2016.



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Southeast Planning Area Needs

Acquisition Priorities

- Floodplain and bluffs along the Colorado River, Onion Creek, and Dry Creek.
- Strategic properties

Basic Facility Needs

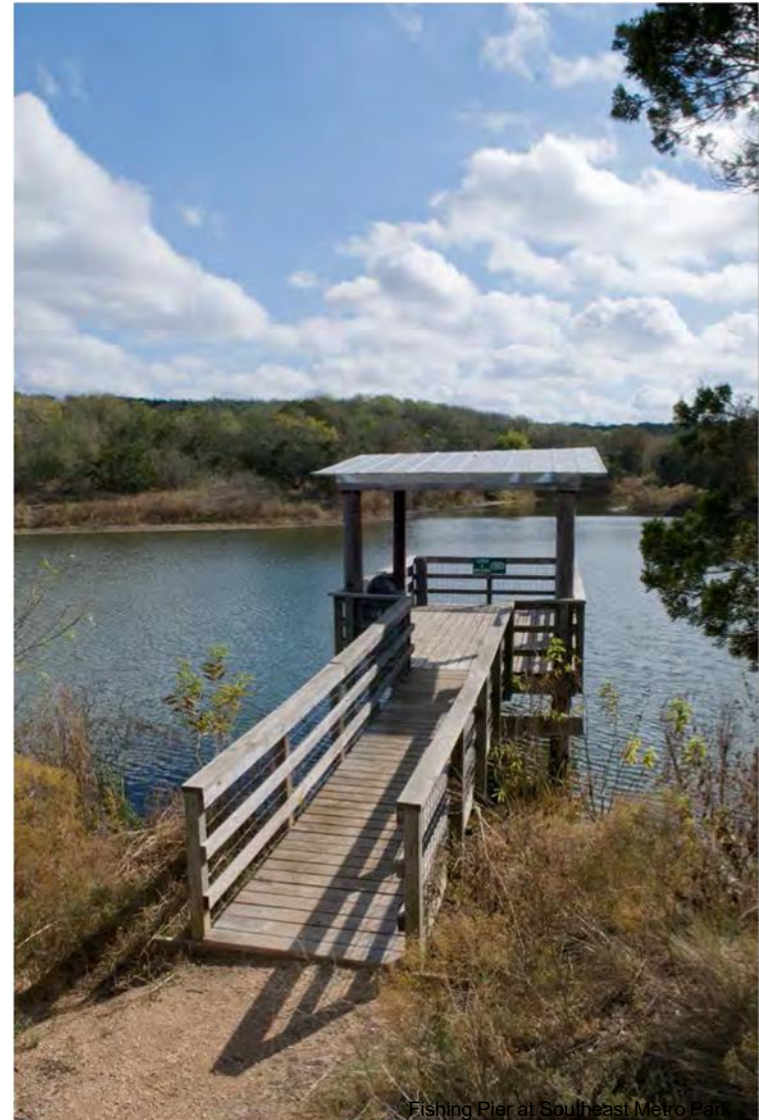
- Basic facilities and infrastructure to support recreational use of greenways and the river corridor, including picnic shelters and tables, playgrounds, paved multi-use trails, other types of trails as appropriate, and interpretive amenities.

Specialized Recreational Facilities Needs

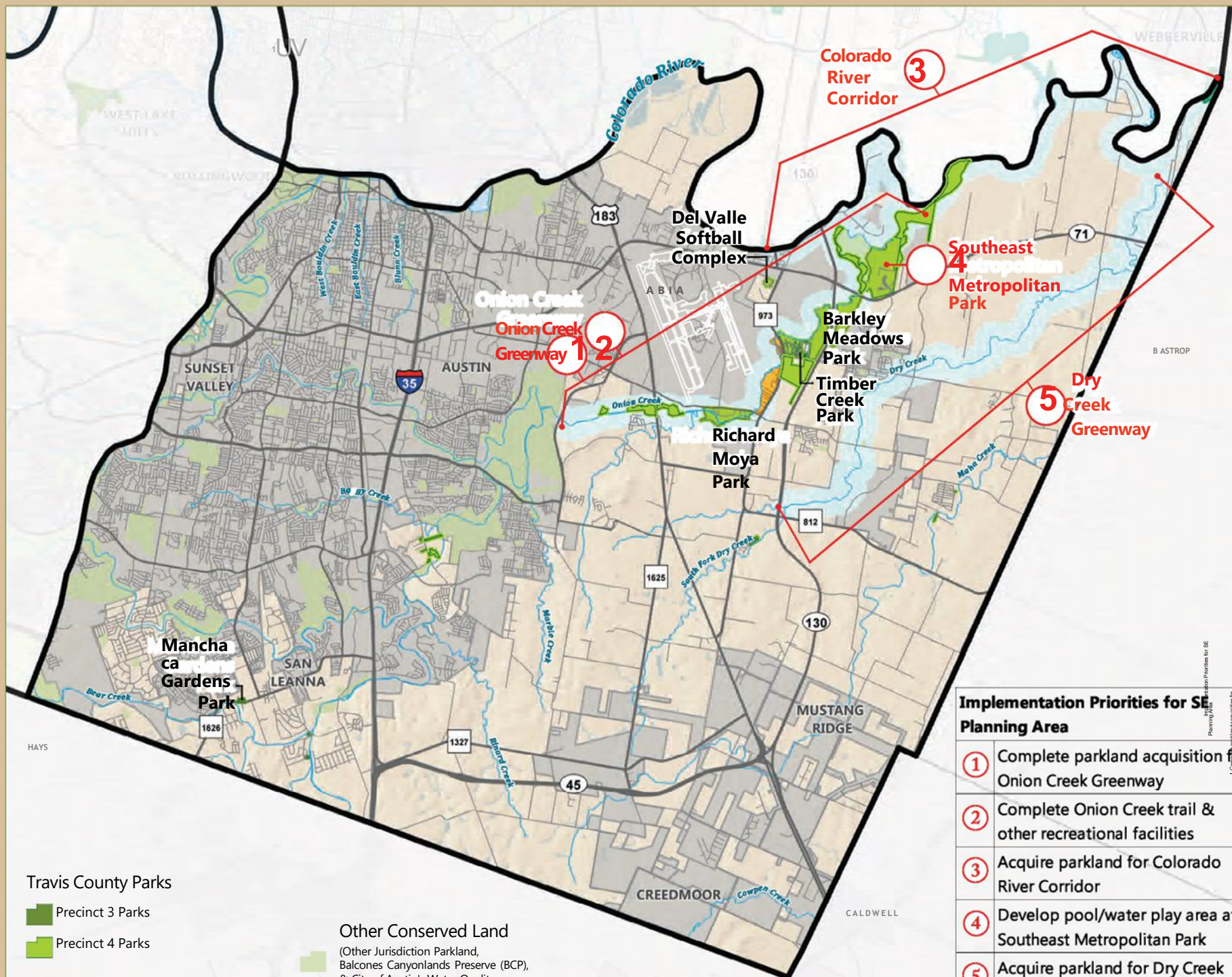
- Pool/water play area at Southeast Metro Park
- To be determined through future public engagement processes

Implementation Priorities

1. Complete parkland acquisition for Onion Creek Greenway
2. Complete Onion Creek trail and other recreational facilities (coordinate with the City of Austin, State of Texas, and Austin-Bergstrom International Airport continuation of trail on their properties)
3. Acquire parkland for Colorado River Corridor
4. Develop pool/water play area at Southeast Metro Park (pool to be managed by other entity such as the YMCA)
5. Acquire parkland for Dry Creek Greenway
6. Acquire strategic parkland



Fishing Pier at Southeast Metro Park



Travis County Parks

- Precinct 3 Parks
- Precinct 4 Parks

Other Conserved Land

(Other Jurisdiction Parkland, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP), & City of Austin's Water Quality Protection Lands)

Greenway/ Corridor Areas

ABIA Portion of Greenway Incorporated Areas

Implementation Priorities for SE Planning Area

- 1 Complete parkland acquisition for Onion Creek Greenway
- 2 Complete Onion Creek trail & other recreational facilities
- 3 Acquire parkland for Colorado River Corridor
- 4 Develop pool/water play area at Southeast Metropolitan Park
- 5 Acquire parkland for Dry Creek Greenway
- 6 Acquire strategic parkland (location to be determined)

0 1 2 4 Miles



Southwest Planning Area Needs

Acquisition Priorities

- Pedernales River Corridor
- Strategic Lake Travis properties

Basic Facility Needs

- Basic facilities and infrastructure to support overnight recreational use of parks. These include but are not limited to primitive to full service campsites, restrooms, picnic facilities, and trails.
- Paved multiuse trails
- Other types of trails as appropriate

Specialized Recreational Facility Needs

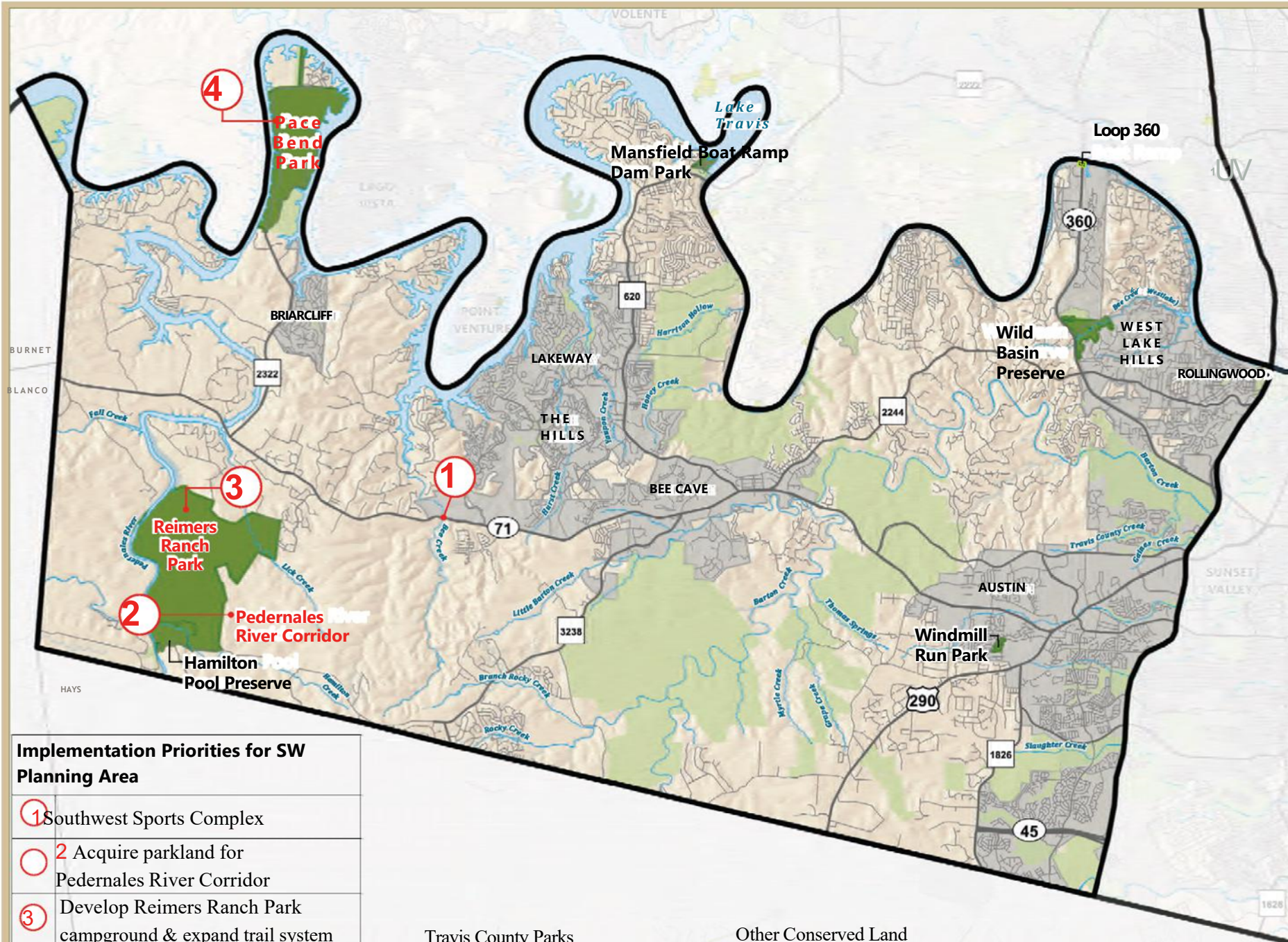
- Overnight facilities at Reimers Ranch Park
- County assistance with development of sports fields
- To be determined through future public engagement processes

Implementation Priorities

1. Develop Youth Sports Complex (contingent upon donation or lease agreement for parkland)
 2. Acquire parkland for the Pedernales River Corridor
 3. Develop Reimers Ranch Park campground and expand trail system
 4. Improve day use areas and develop campgrounds at Pace Bend Park
1. Acquire strategic Lake Travis properties



Reimers Ranch Park



Implementation Priorities for SW Planning Area

- ① Southwest Sports Complex
- 2 Acquire parkland for Pedernales River Corridor
- ③ Develop Reimers Ranch Park campground & expand trail system
- ④ Improve day use area & develop campgrounds at Pace Bend Park
- 5 Acquire strategic Lake Travis properties (location to be determined)

Travis County Parks

- Precinct 2 Parks
- Precinct 3 Parks

Other Conserved Land

(Other Jurisdiction Parkland, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP), & City of Austin's Water Quality Protection Lands)

■ Incorporated Areas

0 | 1 2 4 Miles



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Northwest Planning Area Needs

Acquisition Priorities

- Strategic Lake Travis properties

Basic Facility Needs

- Basic facilities and infrastructure to support recreational day use of Trails End Preserve
- Paved multi-use and other types of trails as appropriate

Specialized Recreational Facility Needs

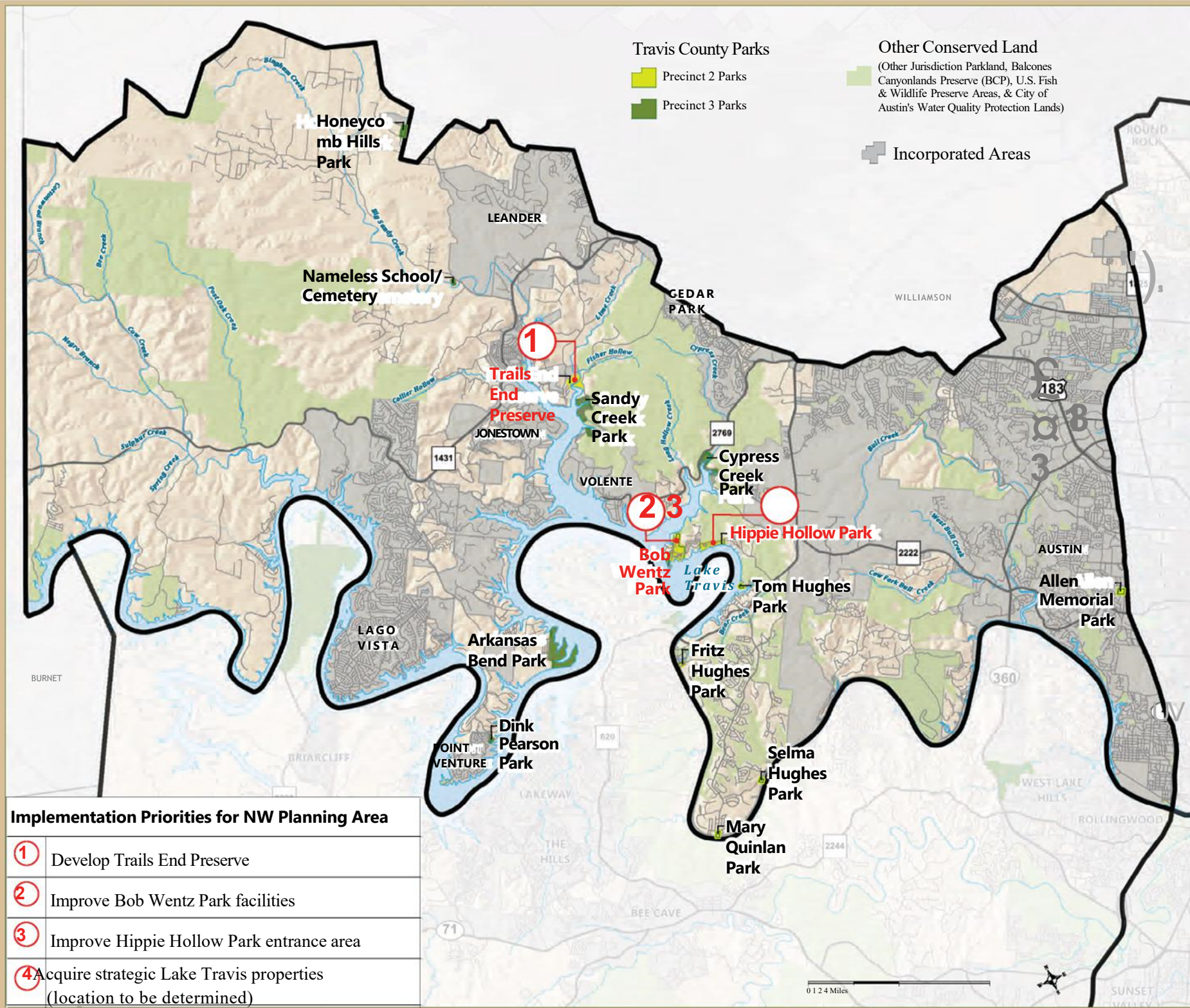
- To be determined through future public engagement processes

Implementation Priorities

1. Develop Trails End Preserve
2. Improve Bob Wentz Park facilities
3. Improve Hippy Hollow Park entrance area
4. Acquire strategic Lake Travis properties



Coreopsis and Prickly Pear at Balcones Canyonland Preserve



Implementation Priorities for NW Planning Area

①	Develop Trails End Preserve
②	Improve Bob Wentz Park facilities
③	Improve Hippy Hollow Park entrance area
④	Acquire strategic Lake Travis properties (location to be determined)

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