

Watershed Protection Ordinance (WPO) Stakeholder Meeting:

Options for Mitigation, Rule Simplification & Flexibility



Meeting Objective

Discuss opportunities to simplify and clarify current watershed regulations and examine potential benefits & challenges.

Meeting Agenda

- **Introductions [5 min.]**
- **Staff Presentation: Options for Simplification, Flexibility, and Mitigation [40 min.]**
 - **Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan context**
- **Small-Group Breakout Sessions [60 min.]**
 - **Potential opportunities & challenges**
- **Full Group Wrap-Up [15 min.]**
 - **Summary of opportunities & challenges**

Complementing the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan

IMAGINEAUSTON
Vibrant. Livable. Connected.

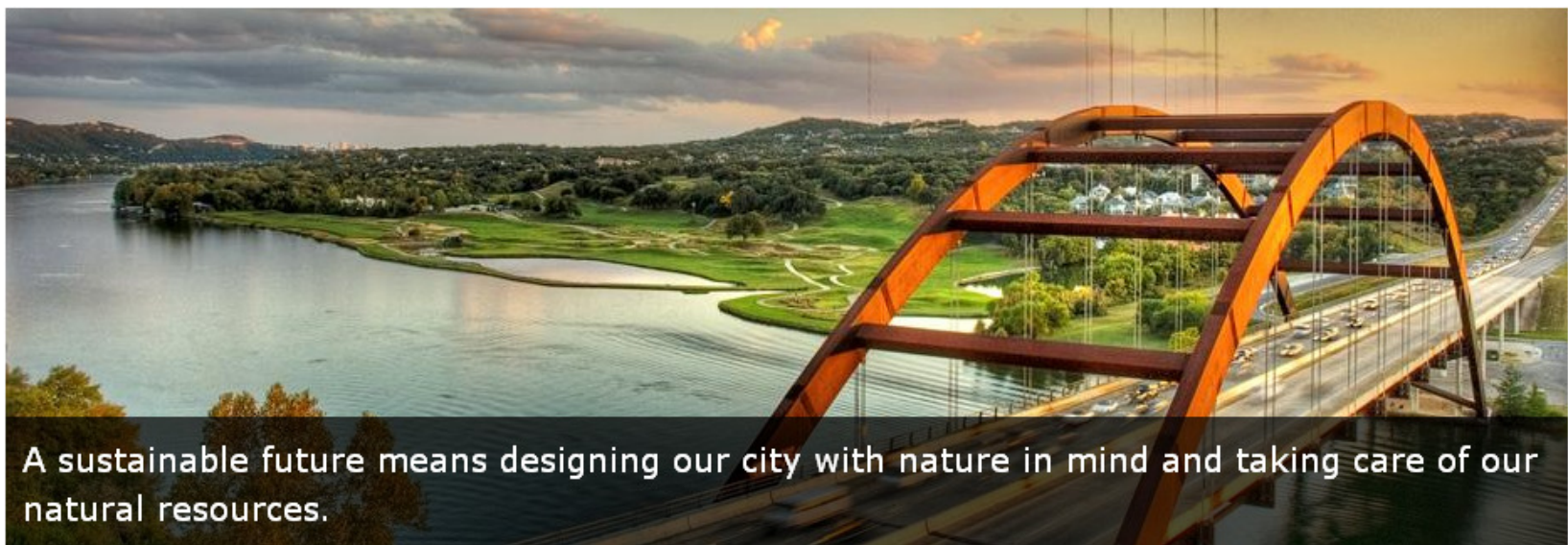
About

Our Plan

News

Get
Involved

Project
History



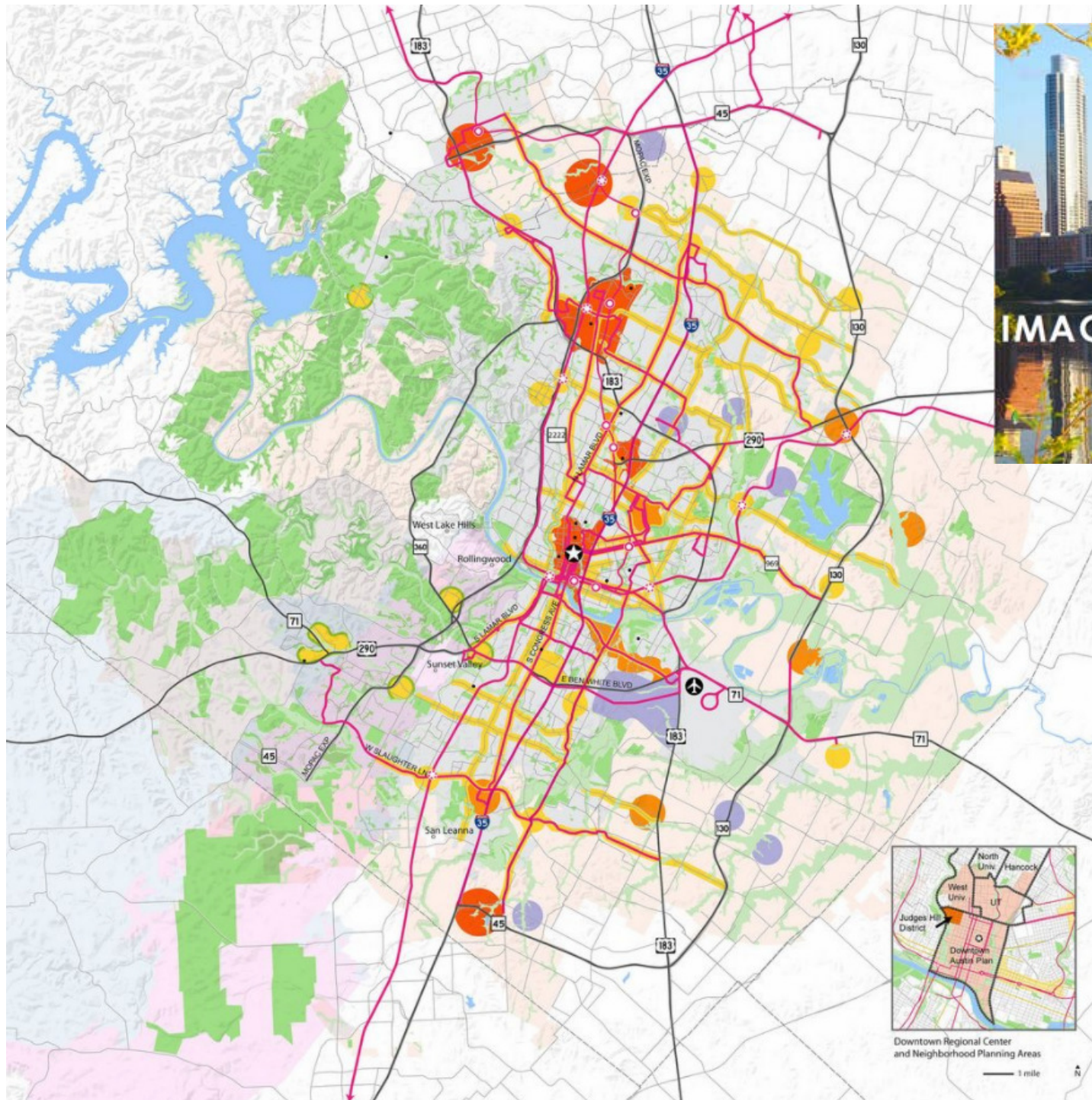
A sustainable future means designing our city with nature in mind and taking care of our natural resources.



Core Principles for Action

- Grow as a compact, connected city
- Integrate nature into the city
- Provide paths to prosperity to all
- Develop as an affordable and healthy community
- Sustainably manage water and other environmental resources
- Think creatively and practice civic creativity

Growth Concept Map



Land Use

- Regional Center
- Town Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Activity Corridor
- Job Center
- Current Open Space
- Future Open Space
- Redevelopment over Edwards Aquifer
- Barton Springs Contributing Zone
- Barton Springs Recharge Zone
- College / University

Transportation

- High Capacity Transit Stop
- Proposed High Capacity Transit Stop
- High Capacity Transit
- Highway
- Other Streets

Boundaries

- City Limits
- ETJ
- County Boundaries

Preferred Growth Scenario: Key Directions

1. Promotes a compact and connected City of Austin
2. Promotes infill and redevelopment as opposed to typical low-density “greenfield” development
3. Focuses new development in mixed-use corridors and centers accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit as well as by car
4. Provides convenient access to jobs and employment centers
5. Protects existing open space & natural resources such as creeks, rivers, lakes, and floodplains
6. Directs development away from the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones

Preferred Growth Scenario: Key Directions

7. Improves air quality & reduces greenhouse gas emissions
8. Expands the transit network
9. Increases transit use
10. Reduces vehicle miles traveled
11. Reduces per capita water consumption
12. Provides parks and open space close to where people live, work, and play

The 8 Priority Programs

1. Invest in a compact and connected Austin
2. Sustainably manage our water resources
3. Continue to grow Austin's economy by investing in our workforce, education systems, and entrepreneurs.
4. Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.
5. Grow and invest in Austin's creative economy
6. Develop and maintain household affordability throughout Austin
7. Create a "Healthy Austin" program
8. Revise Austin's development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city

Balancing Growth with Preservation

CE P1. Permanently preserve areas of the greatest environmental and agricultural value.

CE P2. Conserve Austin's natural resources systems by limiting development in sensitive environmental areas that include the Edwards Aquifer and its contributing and recharge zones and endangered species habitat.

LUT P4. Protect neighborhood character by directing growth to areas of change and ensuring context sensitive infill in such locations as designated redevelopment areas, corridors, and infill sites.

Integration of Urban & Suburban Watershed Requirements

- **Potential to combine Urban and Suburban into one area; or**
- **More closely align the requirements for the two areas**
- **Current major differences include:**
 - **Stream Buffers**
 - **Gross vs. Net Site Area**
 - **Impervious Cover limits**
 - **Fee-in-lieu for water quality**
 - **Cut & Fill requirements**
 - **Steep Slope protection**

Sensitive Area Protections (e.g., Steep Slopes and Cut & Fill)



Sensitive Area Protections (e.g., Steep Slopes and Cut & Fill)

- **Steep Slope protection removed from Urban Watersheds in April 2000**
- **Cut & Fill requirements never included for Urban Watersheds**
- **Cut & Fill limited to 4 feet everywhere else**
 - **Administrative variance up to 8 feet in Suburban Watersheds**
 - **Administrative variance for water quality controls**
 - **Other exceptions for ROW, foundations & utilities**

Fee-in-lieu of Water Quality Controls

- **Currently allowed in Urban Watersheds for:**
 - **Commercial sites of 1 acre or less**
 - **Single-family subdivisions of 2 acres or less**
 - **Development treated by regional facility**
 - **Not allowed adjacent to streams or lake**
- **Could allow in some or all Suburban Watersheds**
 - **Simplify design & review of small, urban infill projects**
 - **Use the funds for worthy watershed projects nearby**
 - **Consistent with small-scaled, green infrastructure philosophy?**

Buffer Incentives or Requirements for Redevelopment Projects



Buffer Incentives or Requirements for Redevelopment Projects



Buffer Incentives or Requirements for Redevelopment Projects

- **Current Redevelopment Exception exempts project from requirements of 25-8 Subchapter A (Water Quality) if:**
 - **Impervious cover is not increased**
 - **Water quality controls are provided for the redevelopment**
 - **Meets additional requirements for neighborhood plan compatibility and vehicle trips**
- **Otherwise compliance with all of 25-8 Subchapter A is triggered (e.g., creek buffers, cut & fill, CEFs, etc.)**
- **Consider allowing additional impervious cover (and/or building height?) under exception (up to zoning or watershed limit) in exchange for backing off creek**

Redevelopment in the Drinking Water Protection Zone

- **Sites within the Drinking Water Protection Zone (other than Barton Springs Zone) may only redevelop 25% of existing impervious cover**
- **Consider extending a version of BSZ Redevelopment Exception to the rest of the Drinking Water Protection Zone**



Mitigation for Movement or Elimination of Headwaters Creeks

- **Mitigation: find ways to compensate on- or off-site for reduced buffer width and/or length**
 - **Extend other buffers beyond (upstream of) 64 acres**
 - **Works in coordination with buffer averaging**
 - **Ensure high quality riparian areas not replaced by less valuable ones**
- **Channel relocation: options for moving channel from existing location**
 - **Not the preferred scenario**
 - **Need new Open Channel Waterway criteria (Drainage Criteria Manual Chapter 6)**

Other Examples of Simplification & Clarification

- **Remove the Boundary Street Deduction for Desired Development Zone**
- **Clarify that public trails do not count as impervious cover**
- **Align porous pavement definition and credits across the Code**
- **Allow water quality controls within the WQTZ to treat development within the WQTZ**
- **Other code clean up/clarifications**

Adoption Schedule

Stakeholder Meetings

Sep 2011 – April 2012

(Meetings approx. every two weeks)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Creek Protection | Sep 9, 23, Oct 7 |
| 2. Floodplain Protection | Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 2 |
| 3. Development Patterns & Greenways | Dec 16, Jan 6, 20 |
| 4. Improved Stormwater Controls | Feb 3, 17, Mar 2 |
| 5. Mitigation, Simplification & Flexibility | Mar 23 |
| 6. Summary of Stakeholder Meeting Progress | Apr 6 |
| 7. Staff develops Draft Ordinance | Apr – Jun |
| 8. Stakeholder Feedback on Draft Ordinance | Jul – Aug |

Boards & Commissions

Sep – Oct 2012

City Council

Nov/Dec 2012

Travis County Commissioner's Court

Winter 2012/13

Contact Information

Matt Hollon

Watershed Protection Department

City of Austin

(512) 974-2212

matt.hollon@austintexas.gov

**[http://www.austintexas.gov/page/
watershed-protection-ordinance-0](http://www.austintexas.gov/page/watershed-protection-ordinance-0)**