

The Project

From its inception, Envision Central Texas has sought to involve the citizens of Central Texas in creating a comprehensive long-term vision for their region. As part of the process, six sites were chosen from around the region where local citizens could



explore how to create and enhance their own neighborhoods and communities and provide valuable input about the values and development preferences of the people who live in the cities and towns that make up Central Texas.

The Process

In April 2003, dozens of citizens came together for a hands-on planning workshop to create a vision for the future of the test site area. The workshop encouraged participants to share their thoughts on issues like transportation, the local economy, land development, and the environment, and to formulate plans for how the community could undertake positive change over the next 20-40 years. Attendees worked in small groups using maps of the



area and built plans using a variety of icons or gamepieces representing different types of development, proposed improvements, new streets and trails, and public amenities such as parks.



The East Austin Rail Corridor/Featherlite test site consists of approximately 70 acres in the east side of the City of Austin, Texas. The site includes established residential areas, existing industrial uses, cleared land which had been used for industry, and

floodplain areas. Several major roads travel through the site, and an existing freight rail line — a possible major transit corridor — traverses the site from north to south.



The visions developed by citizens in the workshop served as the primary input into a final concept plan for the site. This concept plan was presented to the community at a workshop in October 2003.

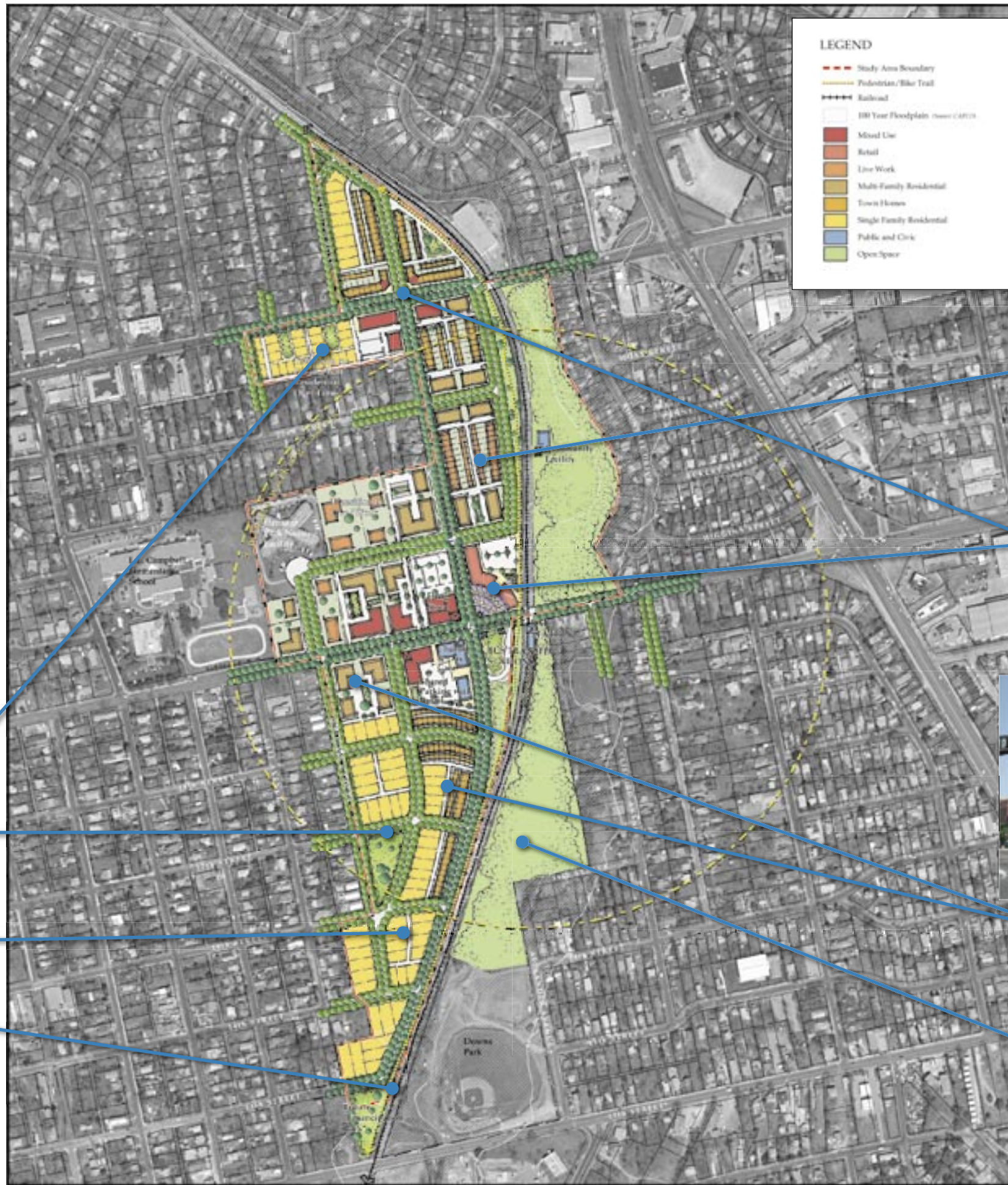


Consolidating the chips placed by stakeholders onto one map enabled the project team to create a concept plan that more closely reflects the residents' priorities.

The Plan

The Concept Plan illustrates a vision for the East Austin Rail Corridor/ Featherlite test site as a neighborhood commercial center connected to the possible transit station, with new retail and civic uses and open space amenities, a mixture of housing types, and an interconnected street network. New residential areas blend with existing neighborhoods, especially where adjacent to existing single family homes. Large former industrial parcels create opportunities for a variety of new housing types, and large open spaces within the floodplain provide recreational areas and stormwater management.

The plan includes an enhanced and extended network of neighborhood-scale streets to allow easy auto and pedestrian access to the civic, recreational and commercial uses, and to the potential transit station. All streets include sidewalks, and buildings line the streets with primary entryways and windows facing the streets to create a safer, more neighborly environment.



New homes are able to face the street when parking is placed in the rear. Porches on the fronts of homes provide extra living space and a semi-private area to relax and enjoy the weather.

Mixed Residential

This area contains a variety of housing types. Located near mixed use areas, the area is primarily residential though some commercial establishments may be allowed if compatible. Proximity to mixed use areas allows residents quick and easy access to commercial and civic services and transportation amenities.

Mixed Use Centers

Development is more intense and diverse in these areas in order to take advantage of central locations and access to transportation facilities, and to create a more walkable and complete district.



Diverse Housing Types

Including single family homes, townhomes, and multifamily homes in the same area gives residents a wide range of options to choose from as their needs change.

Open Space & Floodplain Preservation

Floodplain areas along Boggy Creek are preserved providing publicly accessible open space and reducing flooding problems. This new series of open spaces connects directly to the existing Boggy Creek Greenbelt to the south.



Green Court Housing

This housing type surrounds small private greens with single family homes.

Connectivity & Walkability

A network of streets with sidewalks that link to existing streets creates a variety of routes for cars and pedestrians. Shorter, more direct connections enable residents to walk to shops and services safely.

Residential

These areas are primarily residential and of lower intensity than the mixed use residential areas.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Trail

A trail paralleling the train track allows access to the transit facility and the mixed use centers. The trail also connects to existing trails to the south.

East Austin Rail Corridor/ Featherlite Tract Concept Plan

What's next?

The Test Site process results in a community vision. The plan will serve both as a goal-setting device for local planning efforts and as an example for other cities and towns in the region dealing with similar issues. It does not have the power to regulate development in the test site area. It is up to the community now to decide which elements should be implemented. Citizens and officials may advocate for changes in zoning and building ordinances during the planning process, and support infrastructure improvements which advance the goals of the plan.

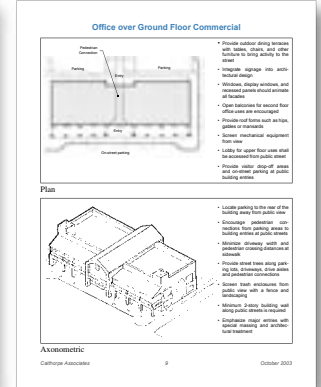
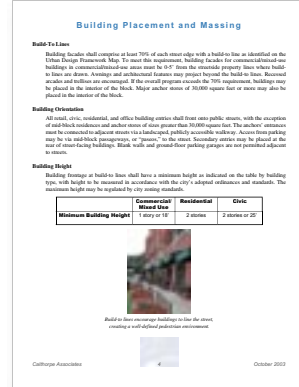


Urban Design Framework Map

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Urban Design Framework Map simplifies the concept plan into areas of generalized land use. In most areas, mixing of uses is

allowed along with the dominant use. The map also shows critical "build-to" lines, where buildings must be built close to the street and at a minimum height that varies by the type of use. Sufficient height is required to ensure that buildings shape an adequate and memorable public realm. These urban design standards specify those features deemed essential to a coherent district or neighborhood, while maintaining flexibility for land owners and developers and supporting design creativity.



Example pages from the proposed urban design guidelines

While these principles have been applied here to only one area, they would also be valuable for Austin's other housing and commercial developments. Connected networks of streets reduce traffic congestion. Placing stores, parks and schools near homes enable some trips to be made by foot and bicycle. Quality sidewalks and well-designed buildings create a better and safer and more pleasant environment for everyone.

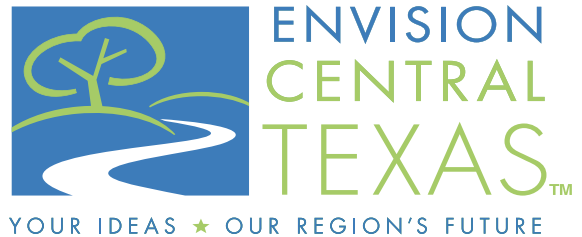
The Envision Central Texas Project

Envision Central Texas is a nonprofit organization formed to assist in the public development and implementation of a regional vision addressing the growth of Central Texas, with an emphasis on land use, transportation and the environment. Envision Central Texas dramatically alters the planning process by inviting the participation of every citizen from Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays,

Travis and Williamson counties. By working with the people of Central Texas to build a consensus, we can preserve and enhance our region's quality of life, natural resources, and economic prosperity. The goal of this process is to develop a preferred growth scenario combining broad public input and advanced analysis techniques to measure the effects of growth alternatives.



A Community Visioning Project of



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