

DRAFT

MARCH 14, 2014

Growth Guidance Plan

LAND, WATER, AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The seal of Travis County, Texas, is a circular emblem. It features a central five-pointed star with a smaller star on its upper point. Below the star is a city skyline. The star is flanked by two olive branches. The entire seal is encircled by the text "COUNTY OF TRAVIS" at the top and "STATE OF TEXAS" at the bottom. The year "1839" is inscribed at the bottom of the inner circle. The seal is rendered in a light gray, semi-transparent style.

Travis County Commissioners Court

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Commissioner Bruce Todd and Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt, Precinct 2

Commissioner Gerald Daugherty and Commissioner Karen Huber, Precinct 3

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A: INTRODUCTION

Travis County Plans for the Future

The population of Travis County is forecasted to grow to approximately 1.5 million people by 2035, and demand for county services will grow accordingly. The *Land, Water, and Transportation Plan (LWTP)* will provide a framework for how the county protects its land and water resources, builds transportation and park systems, and efficiently delivers related services to residents while maintaining a balanced budget. It is a set of long-term goals and policies that the Commissioners Court will use to guide orderly development and the appropriate conservation of land and water resources within the unincorporated areas of Travis County. It will accomplish the following:

- Identify where the county will incent development
- Identify where the county will incent conservation
- Provide guidance to minimize incompatible land uses
- Guide consistent collaboration with other governments and agencies at the regional and local level
- Help coordinate private and public investment

As with all Texas counties, Travis County must accomplish these objectives within the context of the legislative authority granted to counties by the state legislature. While cities need to determine whether a proposed ordinance violates state law, counties need to determine whether a proposed ordinance is allowed by state law. Travis County and other urban counties are seeking additional authority so they can effectively manage growth within their jurisdiction.

Travis County Vision, Guiding Values, and Mission

VISION FOR TRAVIS COUNTY

Travis County's vision for the county is one of an open, diverse community where all people are safe and healthy and can fulfill their hopes and dreams; where people enjoy a good quality of life and natural and cultural resources are protected for us and future generations.

VALUES THAT GUIDE TRAVIS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Taking responsibility and being accountable, fostering public trust, providing good customer service and excellence in performance, practicing sound fiscal policy, respecting and caring for the individual, acting with transparency, honesty and openness, and working in collaboration and cooperation with others.

TRAVIS COUNTY MISSION

Our mission is to preserve health, provide a safety net for the needy, ensure the public safety, facilitate the resolution of disputes, foster an efficient transportation system, promote recreational opportunities, and manage county resources in order to meet the changing needs of the community in an effective manner.

Transportation and Natural Resources Department

Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) is the department completing the *LWTP*. Its mission is to provide citizens living in unincorporated areas of the county with transportation, natural and cultural resource protection, park, and land development services to promote public safety, health, and welfare in compliance with Texas laws and mandates of the Travis County Commissioners Court. TNR is completing the *LWTP* to facilitate more comprehensive decision-making across its different programs and leverage program resources so departmental services are delivered in the most cost-effective way. The specific TNR functions addressed in the *LWTP* are as follows:

- Planning and implementing park, land conservation, drainage, and transportation capital improvement programs
- Managing parks, land conservation, endangered species habitat, water resource protection, and hazard mitigation programs
- Regulating the subdivision of property, construction of streets and drainage in subdivisions, and development in flood plains

Public Engagement

The *LWTP* is built on existing transportation, resource protection, park, hazard mitigation, and land development plans, ordinances, and rules. The public input process for the *LWTP* began, then, with information received from the public when these plans and ordinances were originally developed and adopted. Additional information about public opinions was also obtained from surveys completed by other agencies in recent years (see the *LWTP Background Report*). THE COMPLETE REVIEW PROCESS WILL BE DESCRIBED WHEN COMPLETED.

Planning Horizon and Geographic Study Area

The planning horizon is 25 years and uses the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) population and growth projections for planning purposes. This is aligned with the Travis County Central Campus Master Plan 2010 timeframe as well. The geographic study area is the Extra-Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJs) of the 22 municipalities in Travis County and the unincorporated area outside these limits. It is approximately 419,000 acres, or 654 square miles (see *Map 1*).

Horizon Issues

WILDLAND FIRE MITIGATION

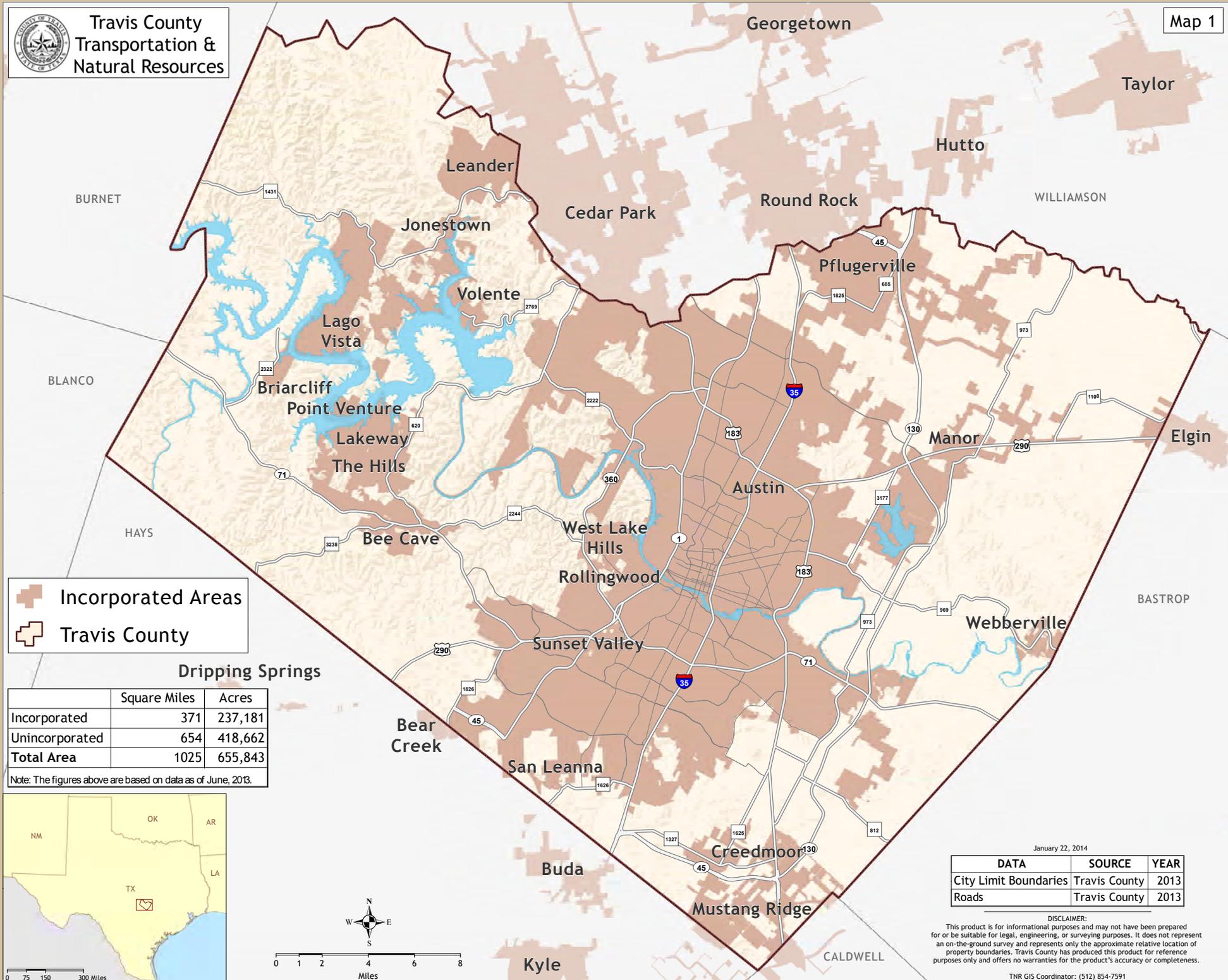
The recent occurrences of severe wildfires in central Texas at the urban interface with undeveloped land has increased public concern about loss of life and property damage from these events. This problem is currently being addressed by the *Joint City-County Wildland Fire Task Force* and *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* template but will need to be addressed in greater detail in the County's *Hazard Mitigation Plan*.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The County has historically opted to leave transit services to other providers including Capital Metro (CMTA) and Capital Area Rural Transportation System [CARTS]. However, it is apparent that the County will be sought as a partner in the development and funding of the system as the region moves forward in its effort to provide for a regional high capacity transit system. For example, in June 2012, the County was approached by Lone Star Rail (Austin-San Antonio passenger rail) to enter into an inter-local agreement with other jurisdictions to develop a tax increment finance zone to help finance the system (County Commissioners directed representatives from Lone Star Rail to return to report on how their discussions with other partners have proceeded).

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The current federal transportation funding system has not been able to keep pace with transportation infrastructure needs especially in rapidly growing areas such as the Central Texas region. Construction costs are rising, federal and state gas taxes remain unchanged, leading to reduced spending power. In the hopes of finding more sustainable revenue sources, Travis County has sought new ways to increase local revenues to help offset property tax based funding, shifting the financing burden of larger, regional, more costly projects from public taxpayers to the users and private development that generate additional traffic.



Incorporated Areas
 Travis County

Dripping Springs

	Square Miles	Acres
Incorporated	371	237,181
Unincorporated	654	418,662
Total Area	1025	655,843

Note: The figures above are based on data as of June, 2013.



January 22, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
City Limit Boundaries	Travis County	2013
Roads	Travis County	2013

DISCLAIMER:
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TNR GIS Coordinator: (512) 854-7591

B: FORECASTED DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Historical and Forecasted Population Growth

TRAVIS COUNTY VS METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA GROWTH

From 1980 to 2010, the population of Travis County grew at an average rate of 3.02% per year, from 419,573 residents in 1980 to 1,024,266 in 2010. In comparison, population of the five counties (Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop and Caldwell) that make-up the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) grew at a combined average rate of 3.65% per year. This trend is expected to continue: in 2010, nearly two-thirds (60%) of the 5-county population resided in Travis County; by 2035, Travis County’s share of the 5-county population is forecasted to decline to approximately one-half (48%) of the total 5-county population (see *Figure 1*). See *Map 2* for projected population within the unincorporated area of the County.

Figure 1: Historical Population and Forecast by County

County	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2025 Forecast	2035 Forecast
Travis	419,573	576,407	812,280	1,024,266	1,318,000	1,555,300
Williamson	76,521	139,551	249,967	422,679	702,700	1,026,500
Hays	40,594	65,614	97,589	157,107	271,600	371,200
Bastrop	24,726	38,263	57,733	74,171	149,200	215,500
Caldwell	23,637	26,392	32,194	38,066	65,300	82,100
5-County Total	585,501	846,227	1,249,763	1,716,289	2,506,800	3,250,600

Source: CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, June 2010.

INCORPORATED VS UNINCORPORATED GROWTH

Between 1980 and 2010, much of the new population in the region located in low density single family housing on the fringe of existing urban areas, and much of it occurred outside municipal boundaries. An additional 100,000 persons are living in unincorporated Travis County (see *Figure 2*) since 2000. The percentage of the total county population living in unincorporated Travis County has increased as well, growing from 9.1% in 2000 to 17.5% in 2010.

Figure 2: Travis County Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Population (2000 and 2010)

Travis County	2000 Census	% of County Total	2010 Census	% of County Total
Incorporated	740,119	90.9%	845,371	82.5%
Unincorporated	72,161	9.1%	178,895	17.5%
Total	812,280		1,024,266	

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census.

Forecasted Distribution of Population

ALLOCATION OF FORECASTED POPULATION

CAMPO Centers Concept- As part of the demographic forecast prepared by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), a Centers Growth Concept scenario was developed to guide where future population would be allocated. The Centers Growth Concept is the implementation of a network of high density mixed use centers oriented around transportation investments included in the CAMPO long range transportation plan. In Travis County, there are currently 18 centers located mainly at the intersections of existing and/or future planned transportation systems which include rail, transit and roadway improvements. Currently, CAMPO staff and local jurisdictional planning staff are working to refine the Center’s map geography in preparation for development of the CAMPO 2040 transportation plan. Refinement to the plan will allow for a better alignment with local land use plans and approved development plans within the region. While current forecast data is representative of Center’s geography in the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, this data will be updated as the region refines that geography (see *Figure 3*).

By implementing the Center’s concept, Travis County expects to direct its transportation investments and other incentives to target new growth and encourage development of a connected regional network of dense, mixed use centers that provide the ability to improve the region’s quality of life. Currently, Webberville is the only center located completely within the unincorporated area of Travis County. Six centers, (Pflugerville, SH 130 and US 290, Manor, Webberville, SH 130 and SH 71, and Mustang Ridge) are located along the SH 130 corridor. Another six centers are located in the I-35 corridor (Ben White, Central Austin, Mueller, Highland Mall, Tech Ridge and I-35 and SH 45 N. The population target ranges for medium centers range from 9,000 – 75,000 persons; the range for small centers is 1,000 – 10,000 persons.

C. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities and challenges arise from the interaction of development with the foundational land and water resources of unincorporated Travis County. Because understanding these relationships provides insight into how the County can best guide growth and conservation in its jurisdiction, analyses were completed to answer the following questions:

- How much land is needed to accommodate development over the next 25 years and is there enough?
- What are the existing and emerging development patterns in unincorporated Travis County?
- What are the county's land and water resources and where are they located?
- Where do development trends and conservation values clash or complement one another?
- What opportunities and challenges can be “exploited” to balance development and conservation needs?

Land Conversion Analysis

The region continues to see high growth rates and long-term forecasts of continued growth in residential housing and employment that will require areas within unincorporated Travis County to be developed. Some areas of the County will develop at faster rates and will be looked at to accommodate the region's new growth. An analysis of how much developable land in the unincorporated area is available is provided below. Population forecasts for the next 25 years and the associated land development requirements to support that growth and current land supply data suggest that the unincorporated area will have more than enough developable land to accommodate expected growth.

Two different Scenarios were examined to see if there were limitations to the amount of developable land required to accommodate growth in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. Scenario 1 examined the developable acreage remaining if all prioritized land identified in the GreenPrint for Growth was preserved. Scenario 2 looked further and examined the amount of developable land remaining if prime farmland was also conserved in addition to the prioritized lands identified in the GreenPrint for Growth. A third Scenario that included water conservation priority lands was not evaluated and will be finalized in the next draft.

Land requirements to support the population increase from 2012 were calculated for a forecasted 2035 population. To determine the amount of land needed, first an analysis of the land requirements to support the existing 2012 population was performed (see *Figure 4*). The analysis uses Travis County Appraisal District (TCAD) data to identify current land use acreage in the unincorporated

areas of the County. From this data, five land use categories (residential, commercial, industrial, civic, and unclassified) were selected that provide a representation of which parcels are considered developed land. For 2012, it is estimated that 104,846 acres are developed within the unincorporated areas. This equates to approximately .59 acres per person. With an additional 111,706 persons forecasted to reside within the unincorporated area and the acreage requirement for that growth at .59 acres per person, an additional 65,468 acres will be required to accommodate this population growth.

Figure 4: Land Requirement to Accommodate Population Growth to 2035

Land Use 2012 (Unincorporated Area)	Unincorporated Acreage 2012	Acreage/ Person 2012	Additional Acreage Required for Pop Increase to 2035	
Residential	73,883	0.41	46,134	
Commercial	16,155	0.09	10,088	
Industrial	478	0.003	298	
Civic	10,196	0.06	6,367	
Unclassified	<u>4,134</u>	<u>0.02</u>	<u>2,581</u>	
Total Developed Area	104,846	0.59	65,468	
2010 Unincorporated Population:				178,895
2035 Forecasted Unincorporated Population:				290,601
Additional Unincorporated Population (2010 – 2035):				111,706

Translating the growth forecasts into demand for land requires assumptions regarding the future density of new developments. Using this type analysis produced a worst case scenario since it would extrapolate a trends based Scenario that is characterized by densities developed from an auto dependent population. It is hoped that the density at which future land is developed will be influenced by policies within this plan which allow more dense development that protects the region’s natural resources.

An analysis of available land for development was completed for the two Scenarios. In Scenario 1, GreenPrint lands that were identified as high priority to be preserved were identified as not to be developed. Within the unincorporated area, 179,840 acres were identified as being developable, meaning land that had no priority for preservation. After removing the amount of acreage required to accommodate new growth, approximately 114,000 acres remain or 64% of the estimated 2012 unincorporated developable (unprioritized) acreage (see *Figure 5*).

Scenario 2 provides a more aggressive preservation scenario that includes the GreenPrint high priority lands as well as the Prime Agriculture lands. Within the unincorporated area, 118,400 acres were identified as being developable. After removing the amount of acreage required to accommodate the new growth, approximately 53,000 acres remain or 45% of the estimated 2012 unincorporated developable (unprioritized) acreage.

Figure 5: Unincorporated Developable Land (Unprioritized) Acreage

	Unincorporated Developable (Unprioritized) Acres 2012	Acreage Required to Accommodate Population Growth to 2035	Unincorporated Developable (Unprioritized) Acreage Remaining 2035	% of Developable (Unprioritized) Acres Remaining after 2035
Scenario 1 - GreenPrint	179,840	65,468	114,372	64%
Scenario 2 – GreenPrint with Prime Agricultural Lands	118,400	65,468	52,932	45%

During the next 25 years, population forecasts and current land supply data suggest that the unincorporated area will have more than enough developable land to accommodate expected growth. It was estimated that new development will require approximately 66,000 acres, which will vary depending on how densely developers build and the implementation of the Centers Growth concept. Developable (unprioritized) land in the unincorporated area totaled between 118,000 to 180,000 acres, depending on the Scenario. The development requirements for the next 25 years result in a surplus of developable land that can adequately accommodate the expected growth to 2035.

Existing and Future Development

Identifying opportunities and constraints in existing and future development will help determine where growth is occurring and is expected to occur in the future. Within Travis County, development identifiers help focus where lands are susceptible to being developed or may become developed within the planning horizon. Development Activity (see *Map 3*) and Activity Centers and Emerging Development (see *Map 4*) comprise the following development identifiers:

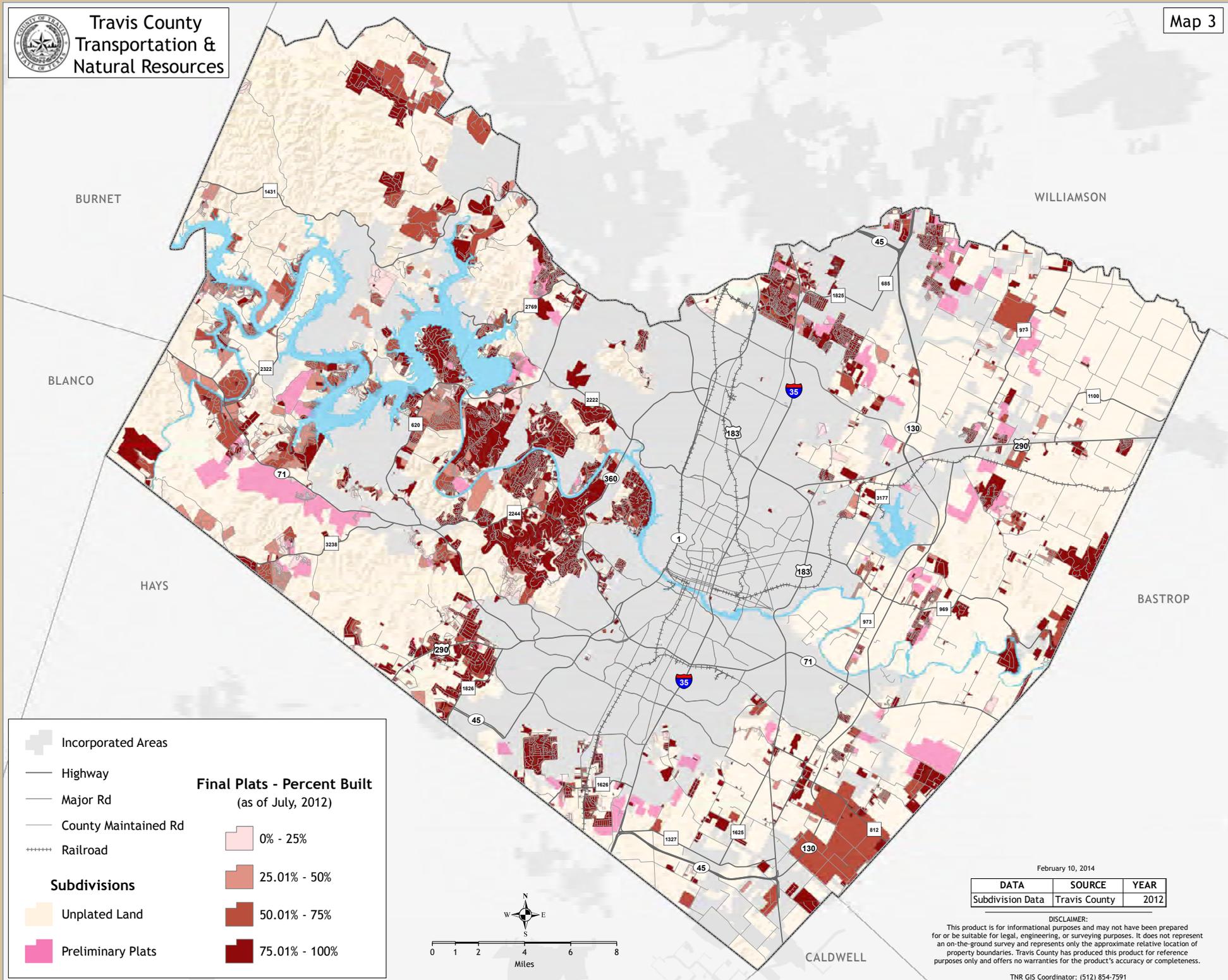
- Final and Preliminary Plat Subdivisions
- Vacant Platted Lot Inventory
- Emerging Projects
- CAMPO Centers
- Growth Along County Boundaries

Final and Preliminary Plat Subdivisions (Map 3): An indicator of where growth will occur is provided through land parcel status in the land development process. Locations of preliminary platted subdivisions, undeveloped platted subdivisions and existing platted subdivisions with vacant lots reveal areas that could more easily receive growth than areas that would need to begin the land development process.

- Directing growth to areas that have existing infrastructure requires less infrastructure investment.
- Northeastern Travis County, much of the preliminary platting is found east of SH 130 abutting the incorporated limits of the City of Pflugerville.
- Southeastern Travis County, large subdivisions that were platted before the 1900's that have large lots that could be re-subdivided.
- Southwestern Travis County, large preliminary plans exist along SH 71 W.
- Western Travis County has more vacant lots in final platted subdivisions than in eastern Travis County. While housing costs may be a large factor in this result, these areas may be more available to new housing starts as the economy rebounds.
- Far Northwestern Travis County shows little subdivision activity. Most activity in the unincorporated area has occurred along FM 1431 in Jonestown.

Emerging Development (Map 4)

Emerging projects reveal the beginnings of plans and agreements between developers and local jurisdictions on proposed developments. These type projects usually are more long term, potentially mixed use and are larger scale than normal single family developments.



BURNET

WILLIAMSON

BLANCO

HAYS

BASTROP

CALDWELL

Incorporated Areas
 Highway
 Major Rd
 County Maintained Rd
 Railroad

Subdivisions

Unplated Land
 Preliminary Plats

Final Plats - Percent Built
(as of July, 2012)

0% - 25%
 25.01% - 50%
 50.01% - 75%
 75.01% - 100%

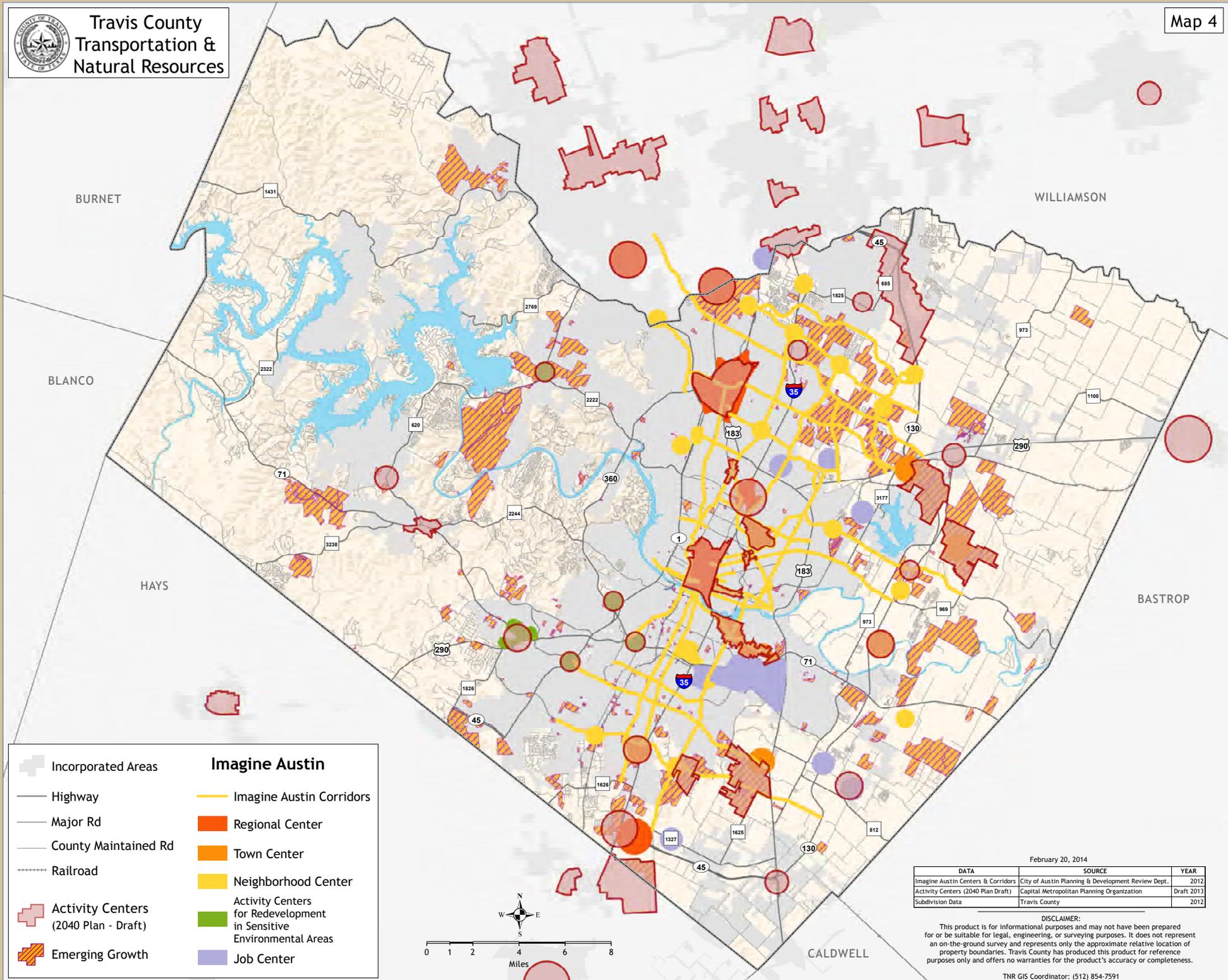


February 10, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Subdivision Data	Travis County	2012

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Imagine Austin

- Incorporated Areas
- Highway
- Major Rd
- County Maintained Rd
- Railroad
- Activity Centers (2040 Plan - Draft)
- Emerging Growth
- Imagine Austin Corridors
- Regional Center
- Town Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Activity Centers for Redevelopment in Sensitive Environmental Areas
- Job Center



February 20, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Imagine Austin Centers & Corridors	City of Austin Planning & Development Review Dept.	2012
Activity Centers (2040 Plan Draft)	Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization	Draft: 2013
Subdivision Data	Travis County	2012

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- Most emerging projects are occurring along the SH 130 corridor and along planned corridors that have proposed public private partnerships.
- Large area of emerging projects identified along SH 130 between US 290 East and FM 969.
- Emerging Projects in southeastern Travis County are adjacent to City of Austin limits except for Southeast Travis County MUDs along Pearce Lane.
- Emerging projects in western Travis County are smaller in size and development intensity.

NORTHEAST QUADRANT

Pflugerville to US 290 E: New growth will be occurring in the City of Pflugerville and its ETJ. This area is expected to see continued growth especially to the east of its incorporated area. Much of this future growth is characterized by single family preliminary plats adjacent to existing residential development in eastern Pflugerville. Current preliminary plats show approximately 3,000 residential units slated for development. Further east, there are large areas of mainly agricultural land that do not show potential for new development to occur and have no emerging projects. These are located mainly northeast of the City of Pflugerville and to some extent east of the SH 130 corridor. South of Pflugerville and west of SH 130, existing large residential developments (Pioneer Crossing and Harris Branch) continue to be developed. Newer residential developments (Cantarra, Entrada and Fossil Creek) have begun and will provide approximately 3,000 residential units at buildout. Just to the east and north of US 290 E, Shadow Glen, a mixed use development will provide another 3,000 units at buildout.

SH 130: Large, mixed use tracts that include single and multi-family residential uses are being planned that access this new transportation corridor that runs mostly in the unincorporated area of the County. South of US 290 East to the Colorado River along the SH 130 corridor is identified as a major future growth area in the next 25 years. The 2,047 acre Whisper Valley PUD is expected to include 4,737 single family homes; 1,451 multi-family units; 231,070 sq. ft. of office space and 429,130 sq.ft. of retail space. Wild Horse PUD, bisected by SH 130 expects to develop over 5,800 residential units and non- residential development that will occupy 6.3 million sq. ft. Additionally, single family residential developments (Eastwood and Wolf Subdivisions) will create just over 3,000 new single family residential units. Another area along Decker Lake Road will see 1,700 single family units and over 1,500 multifamily units developed at the Indian Hills, Lariat B Ranch and Gilbert Lane Subdivisions. In total, approximately 15,200 new single family residential units will be provided in this area.

South of FM 969, the proposed Rio de Vida MUD is shown as a future town center in the City of Austin's comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin. The development currently has no MUD agreement with the City of Austin; however, plans to develop over 8,000 single and multi-family units with commercial and retail uses continue.

SOUTHEAST QUADRANT

Another area of high growth is planned to occur in southeastern Travis County just west of SH 130 along the extensions of Slaughter Lane and William Cannon Drive. Two large mixed-use developments, Goodnight Ranch (Slaughter Lane and Thaxton Road) and Pilot Knob MUD (along future Slaughter Lane and William Cannon Drive west of US 183 S) have just over 19,500 residential units planned.

Additionally, further to the east of SH 130 is the new Formula One (F1) site. While, the project was not included in the current population forecast, the impact on the surrounding area will be dramatic especially in the potential for new job growth. Northeast of the F1 site is another MUD development. Southeast Travis County MUDs propose nearly 4,000 units of single and multifamily residential and additional retail space. Another proposed high growth area lies at the intersection of IH 35 S and SH 45 SE. Sunfield development along the Hays County line is proposing the development of a master planned community of single and multi-family, commercial and light industrial land uses. Also, the City of Austin has identified the area surrounding the intersection as a Regional Center in its Imagine Austin Plan.

A large area of southeast Travis County is shown as final platted and with a majority of those lots developed. However, this was an early plat of large lots. While these lots are shown to be developed, it is possible that new development could occur in this area with the acquisition of lots and a re-subdivision of the properties.

SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

In southwest Travis County, large amounts of land are held as preserve lands and water quality protection lands. These acquisitions have lessened the potential acreage for future development. Areas that are forecasted to see growth in the next 25 years include, the Village of Bee Cave located at RM 620 and SH 71 W along the SH 71 West highway corridor. Just west of Bee Cave, nearly 3,600 residential units are planned at Sweetwater Ranch, Lazy Nine MUD and West Cypress Hills; all take access off of SH 71W. While not a defined center, the City of Lakeway will grow along its southern boundary, west of the new medical center, and along Bee Creek Road. Additionally, at Lake Travis along Bee Creek Road, Vizcaya subdivision is planned for 275 residential lots.

NORTHWEST QUADRANT

A large portion of northwest Travis County is part of the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife refuge. As with southwest Travis County, a large amount of acreage is in preserve and water quality protection lands. Limits to infrastructure and opportunities to develop outside endangered species habitat reduce this quadrant as a high growth area for the future. The cities of Jonestown and Lago Vista show continued growth north of Lake Travis.

CAMPO Centers (Draft 2040) (Map 4)

The CAMPO Center concept is designed to direct future growth to areas with adequate public facilities including new development alternatives and compact mixed use centers that provide alternative transportation modes making it easier to live work and play. By directing the growth trend from traditional subdivision development to a “centers” type concept, more opportunities become available to provide for parkland, greenways, conservation of prime farmland and allow for sustainable water sources. Locations of existing and proposed centers provide opportunities to evaluate connections between centers and needs for supporting infrastructure.

- Many of existing CAMPO Centers have proposed emerging projects.
- Predominant center locations are in the along SH 130 and proposed transportation corridors.
- City of Austin identified neighborhood centers along northern city limits along proposed corridors.
- Opportunities exist to expand and connect centers in the unincorporated area along transportation corridors.
- Western Travis County has limited center development, connectivity will be problematic.

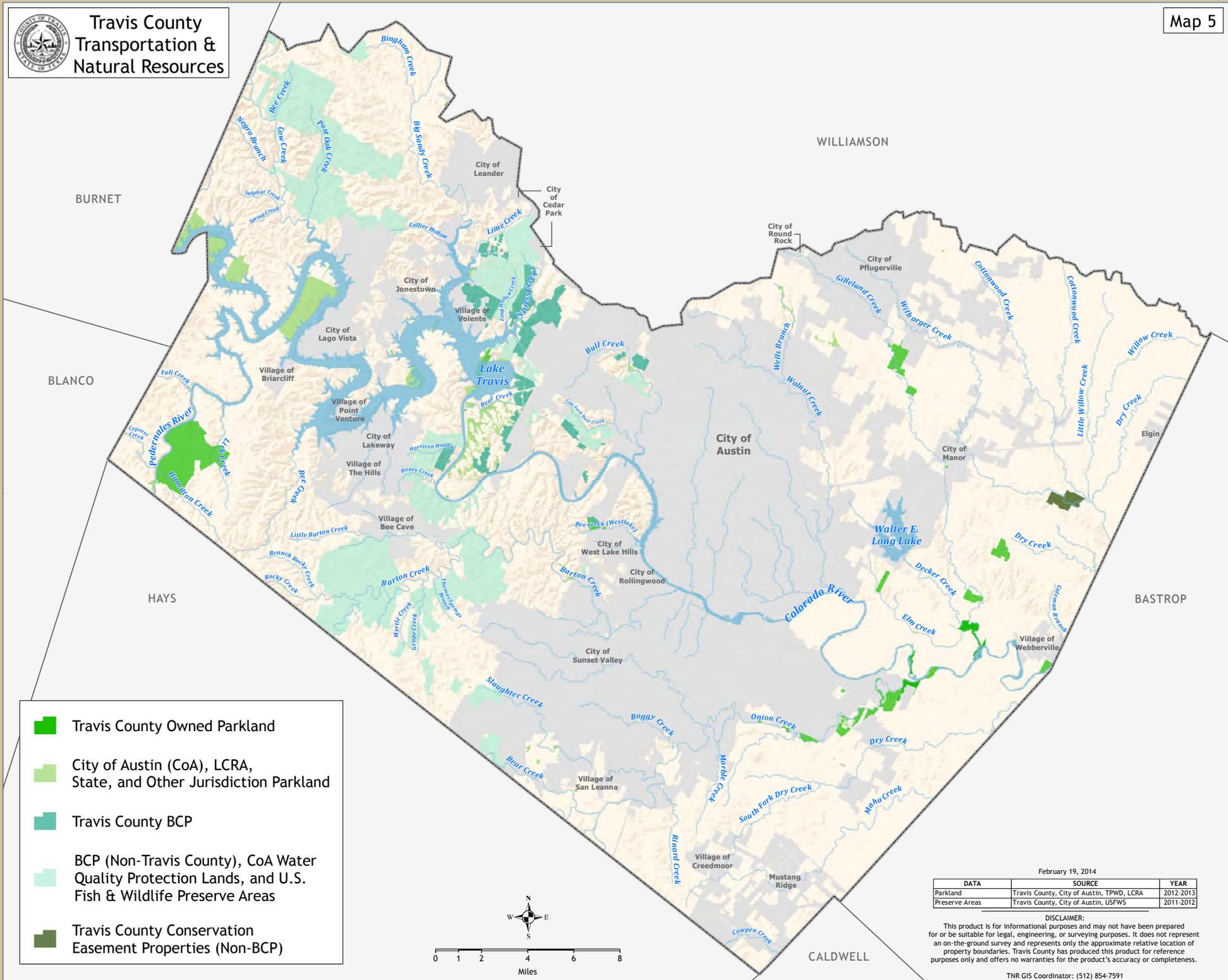
Growth on County Boundaries

Significant growth will also occur just outside the County’s boundary. In northern Travis County, a medium center (Robinson Ranch) is located west of Burnet Road along SH 45 and will include 10,000 new residential units. In southern Travis County, growth will continue in the Buda and Kyle areas and new development is planned along I-35 at Estancia and the old Heap Ranch.

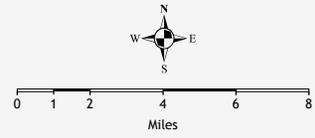
Land Resources

LAND CONSERVED IN UNINCORPORATED TRAVIS COUNTY

Approximately 60,000 acres, or 14% of unincorporated Travis County, has been conserved as parks, preserves, or conservation easements by Travis County, the State of Texas, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and the City of Austin (see *Map 5*). Most of this land has been conserved to protect endangered species habitat and because this type of habitat is found exclusively west of the Balcones Escarpment, more land has been conserved in western Travis County than eastern: approximately one-quarter of western Travis County is conserved while approximately 2% of eastern Travis County is conserved (see *Figure 6*).



- Travis County Owned Parkland
- City of Austin (CoA), LCRA, State, and Other Jurisdiction Parkland
- Travis County BCP
- BCP (Non-Travis County), CoA Water Quality Protection Lands, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Preserve Areas
- Travis County Conservation Easement Properties (Non-BCP)



February 19, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Parkland	Travis County, City of Austin, TPWD, LCRA	2012-2013
Preserve Areas	Travis County, City of Austin, USFWS	2011-2012

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Figure 6: Land Conserved in Unincorporated Travis County

UNINCORPORATED TRAVIS COUNTY		LAND CONSERVED BY TRAVIS COUNTY					LAND CONSERVED BY OTHERS (USFW, State, LCRA, Municipalities)					TOTAL CONSERVED LAND	
Area	Acres	Park Acres	Preserve Acres	CE Acres	Total Acres	Land Area Conserved	Park Acres	Preserve Acres	CE Acres	Total Acres	Land Area Conserved	Acres	Land Area Conserved
NE	122,333	1,607	0	531	2,139	1.7%	132	0	0	132	0.1%	2,271	1.9%
SE	62,970	1,107	0	0	1,107	1.8%	16	0	0	16	0.0%	1,123	1.8%
SW	127,912	3,532	403	0	3,935	3.1%	2,663	18,875	0	21,538	16.8%	25,473	19.9%
NW	105,446	203	5,346	0	5,549	5.3%	3,789	20,430	0	24,219	23.0%	29,767	28.2%
TOTAL	418,662	6,450	5,749	531	12,729	3.0%	6,600	39,305	0	45,905	11.0%	58,635	14.0%

Note 1: "LAND CONSERVED BY TRAVIS COUNTY" includes Travis County-owned land that either a) is in unincorporated Travis County, b) has at least 15% of its area in unincorporated Travis County, or c) is adjacent to county-owned land in unincorporated Travis County.

Note 2: Northeast (NE), southeast (SE), southwest (SW), and northwest (NW) geographic areas are defined east-west by IH 35 and north-south by the centerline of the Colorado River.

Note 3: Balcones Canyonland Preserve or City of Austin water quality protection conservation easements are included in the "Preserve Acres" category. Other types of conservation easements are included in the "CE Acres" category.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S ROLE

The County plays a significant role in conserving land in unincorporated Travis County: it has conserved approximately one-half of all parkland in the area; and contributes to the preserve inventory as a holder of Balcones Canyonland Preserve (BCP) land. More recently, the county has taken on the role – and is the only governmental entity doing so – of executing conservation easements not specifically intended to protect endangered species habitat or water quality (see *Figure 7*).

Figure 7: Travis County’s Role in Conserving Land in Unincorporated Travis County

PROVIDER	PARKS		PRESERVES		CONSERVATION EASEMENTS		TOTAL	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Travis County	6,450	49%	6,600	14%	531	100%	13,581	23%
Other	6,600	51%	39,305	86%	0	0%	45,905	77%
Total	13,050	100%	45,905	100%	531	100%	59,486	100%

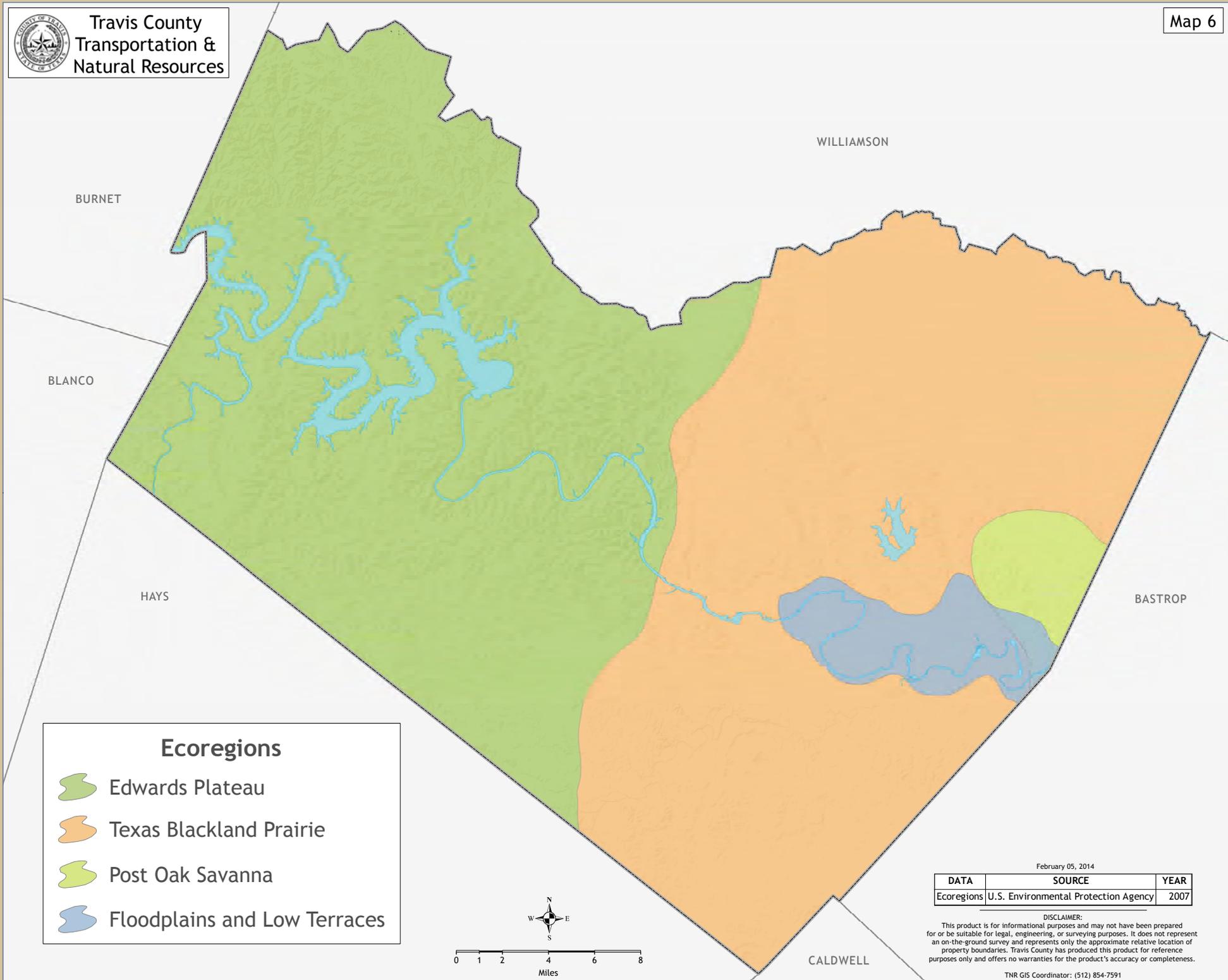
CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Travis County has opportunities to conserve land resources that play vital roles in maintaining critical natural functions and the natural and rural character of the county. It has diverse ecoregions, prime farmland, threatened and endangered species habitat, and floodplains and riparian areas.

ECOREGIONS

An ecoregion is an area of similar ecosystems identified through the analysis of the patterns and composition of biological communities and physical characteristics such as geology, climate, soils, land use, and hydrology. Travis County is an unusual Texas county because it has four ecoregions and rich ecological diversity that is not found in most other Texas counties. The four ecoregions are the Edwards Plateau, Texas Blackland Prairie, East Central Plains (herein referred to as Post Oak Savanna), and Floodplains and Low Terraces (see *Map 6*). Ecoregions, per se, have not been identified for conservation in previous county plans.

Edwards Plateau: The Edwards Plateau ecoregion is found in western Travis County. It is highly dissected by erosion and solution of porous limestone by springs, streams, and rivers both above and below ground. Its limestone geology also supports formation of crevices, cracks, sinkholes, caverns and grottos known as “karst” that provide vulnerable habitats for solitary and colonial bats, unique isolated invertebrates, and colonial birds like swifts and swallows. Karst also provides conduit for surface waters to reach the Edwards and Edwards–Trinity aquifers and for artesian groundwater to surface as springs. This portion of the Plateau in Travis County, i.e., the Balcones Canyonlands, has a higher representation of deciduous woodland than elsewhere on the Plateau, with plateau live oak, escarpment black cherry, Texas mountain-laurel, madrone, and Lacey oak.



Ecoregions

-  Edwards Plateau
-  Texas Blackland Prairie
-  Post Oak Savanna
-  Floodplains and Low Terraces



February 05, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Ecoregions	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	2007

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Mature, large Ashe juniper – known locally as “cedar” – within mixed hardwood woodlands are also found in deep canyons. Some remnants of eastern swamp communities, including bald cypress, American sycamore, and black willow, occur along major stream courses. It is likely that these trees have persisted as relics of moister, cooler climates following the Pleistocene glacial epoch. Elevations in Travis County drop sharply from the top of the Plateau off the eastern edge of the Escarpment to the Blackland Prairies.

Texas Blackland Prairie: The Texas Blackland Prairie ecoregion is found in eastern Travis County. It is underlain by Upper Cretaceous marine chinks, marls, limestones, and shales which give rise to the characteristic black, calcareous, alkaline, heavy clay soils. Early settlers were drawn to this region by these productive soils, gentle topography, and luxuriant native grasslands. Although historically a region of tall-grass prairies, today much of the land is devoted to cropland, non-native pasture, and expanding urban uses. Few remnant native prairie sites remain. Historical vegetation was dominated by little bluestem, big bluestem, yellow Indiangrass, needlegrass, and tall dropseed. Woody vegetation including mesquite, sugar hackberry, cedar elm, Osage orange, and other woody species grow along fence lines and field borders. On steep or sloping terrains not subject to cultivation, it is common to find eastern red cedar, Ashe juniper, Texas persimmon, elbowbush, possumhaw holly, and live oak¹. Stream bottoms may be wooded with bur oak, Shumard oak, elm, ash, eastern cottonwood, and pecan.

Post Oak Savanna: The Post Oak Savanna ecoregion is found in far eastern Travis County, starting a transition zone between the Texas Blackland Prairie and east Texas pine forests, changing in small ways in soils, vegetation, plant communities, fish and wildlife. It is gently rolling to hilly, supporting a mosaic of woodlands mixed with prairie pockets, and cross-cutting streams. The dominant vegetation is an open deciduous forest or woodland of post oak, blackjack oak, and other drought-tolerant southeastern species. The Post Oak Savanna represents the southernmost extension of the transitional oak forests that separate the eastern United States and the Great Plains.

Floodplains and Low Terraces: The Floodplains and Low Terraces ecoregion is found along the Colorado River corridor in eastern Travis County. While there are many finer-scale floodplains (e.g. Onion Creek, Pedernales River) in our county, the Floodplains and Low Terraces is a larger category floodplain following the mainstem Colorado River. This ecoregion maps primarily the recent alluvial deposits and not the older, high terraces. These bottomland forests contain bur oak, Shumard oak, sugar hackberry, elm, ash, eastern cottonwood, and pecan; however, most of these forests have been converted to cropland and pasture.

¹ http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/habitats/cross_timbers/ecoregions/blackland.phtml

PRIME FARMLAND

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines prime farmland as having the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply to produce sustained, high yields of food, forage, and fiber crops if managed according to acceptable farming methods. In Travis County, almost all prime farmland is found in eastern Travis County (Map 6). It is valued for its agricultural productivity and rural character. Its conservation has been previously identified as a priority in Travis County’s Parks Master Plan, Conservation Subdivision Ordinance, and the Colorado River Corridor Plan (CRCP). More recently, Travis County partnered with the USDA to conserve prime farmland through the federal Farms and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP).

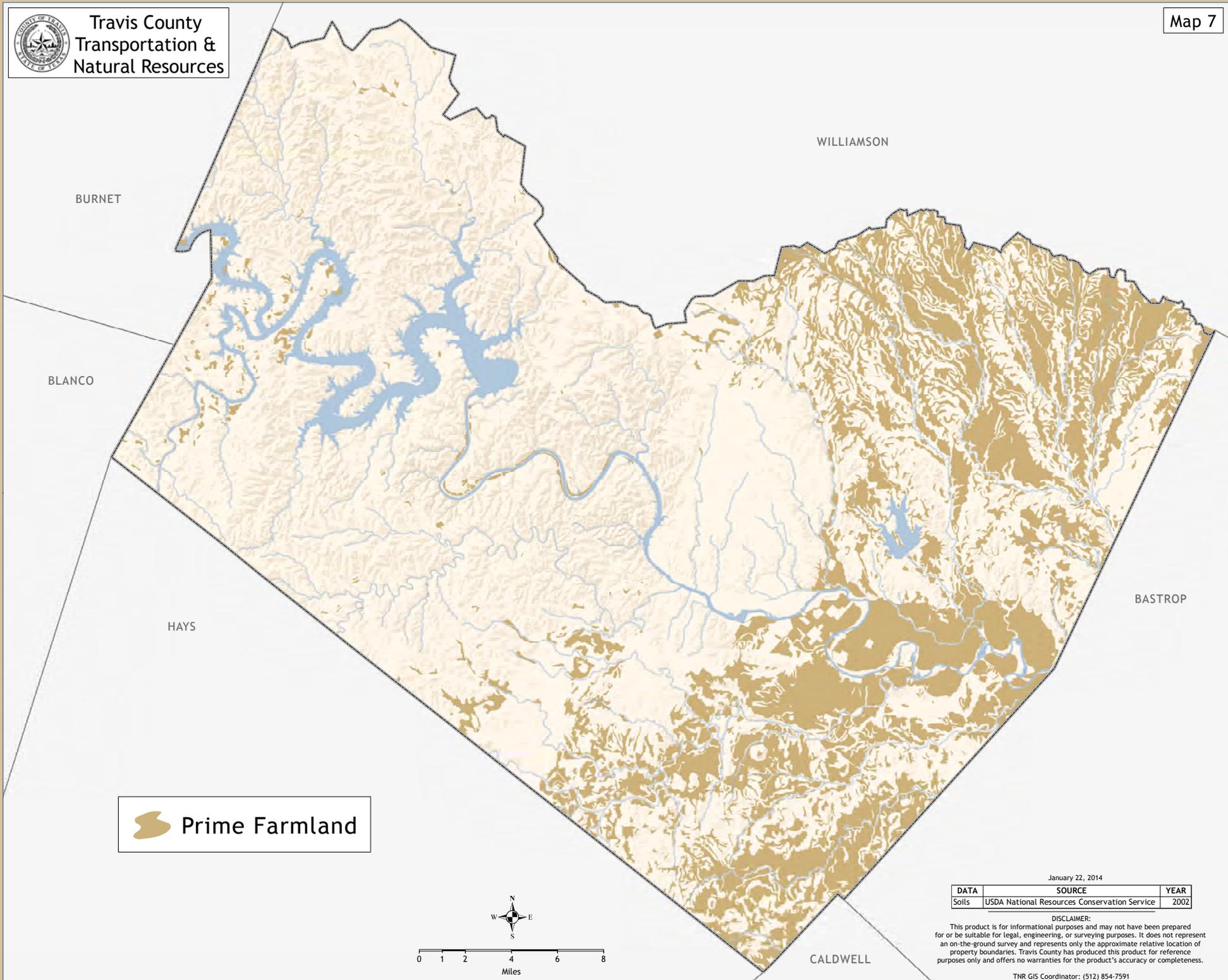
THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITAT

An endangered species is a population of organisms which is at risk of becoming extinct because it is very limited in range, few in numbers, and/or threatened by environmental conditions such as habitat loss, predation, or disease. In Travis County, several bird, aquatic, and cave-dwelling species are federally listed as threatened or endangered (see *Figure 8*). Of these, two endangered song birds and six endangered karst invertebrates are protected under the Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan (BCCP)². Although not protected under the BCCP, several rare salamander species that inhabit Travis County were recently federally listed as threatened or endangered species: the Barton Springs salamander (*Eurycea sosorum*) and Austin Blind salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*) are listed as endangered and the Jollyville Plateau salamander (*Eurycea tonkawae*) is listed as threatened.

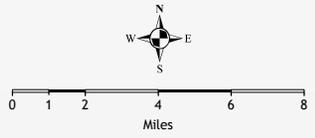
Figure 8: Threatened and Endangered Species in Travis County

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Vireo atricapillus</i>	Black-Capped vireo
<i>Setophaga chrysoparia</i>	Golden-Cheeked warbler
<i>Neoleptoneta myopica</i>	Tooth Cave spider
<i>Texella reddelli</i>	Bee Creek Cave harvestman
<i>Texella reyesi</i>	Bone Cave harvestman
<i>Tartarocreagris texana</i>	Tooth Cave pseudoscorpion
<i>Rhadine persephone</i>	Tooth Cave ground beetle
<i>Texamaurops reddelli</i>	Kretschmarr Cave mold beetle
<i>Eurycea sosorum</i>	Barton Springs salamander
<i>Eurycea waterlooensis</i>	Austin Blind salamander
<i>Eurycea tonkawae</i>	Jollyville Plateau salamander

² In 1996, the USFWS issued a 10 (a) “incidental take” permit to Travis County and the City of Austin authorizing the implementation of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) thereby providing a method for landowners to develop their property by mitigating impact of their land use activities on protected endangered species.



 Prime Farmland



January 22, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Soils	USDA National Resources Conservation Service	2002

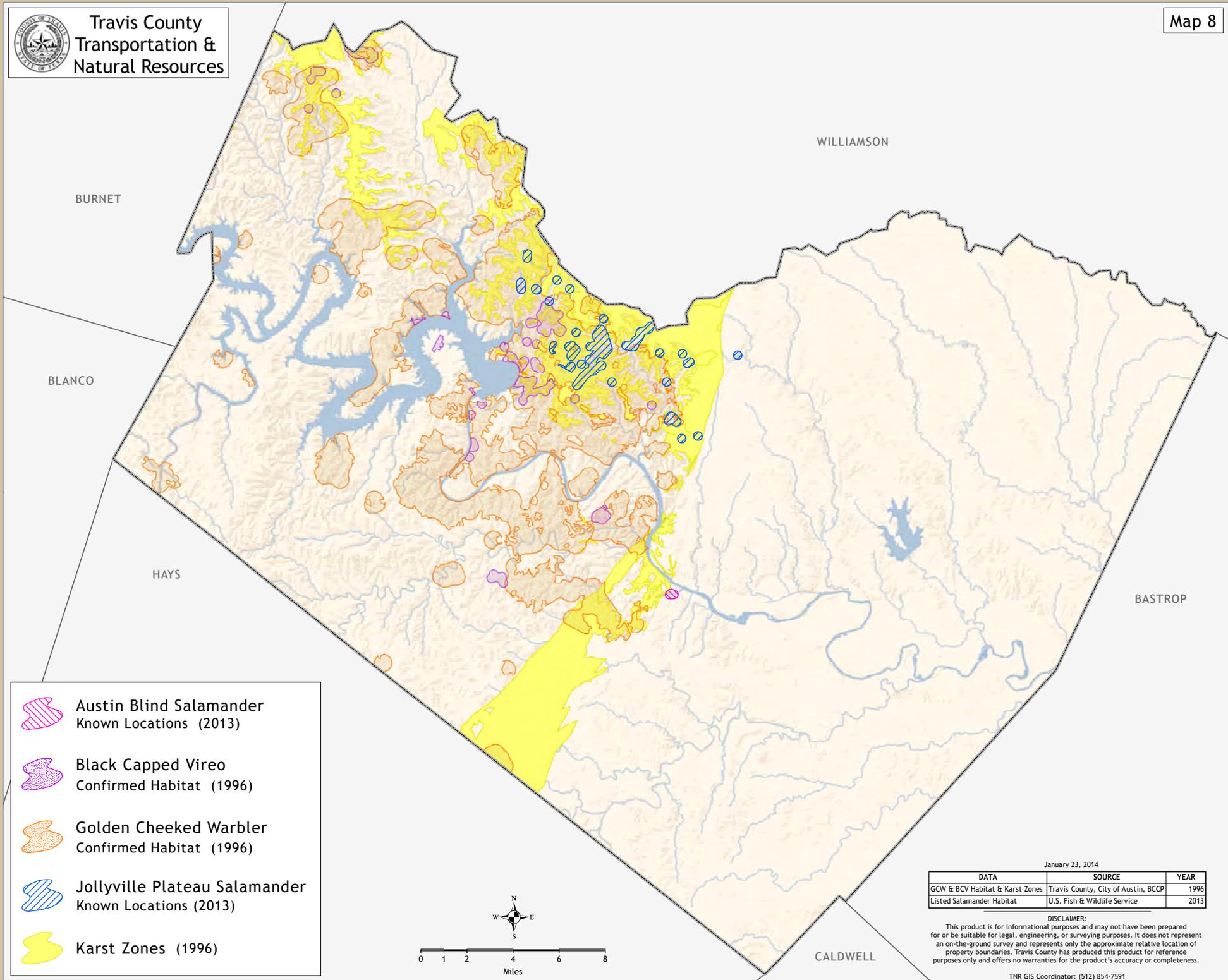
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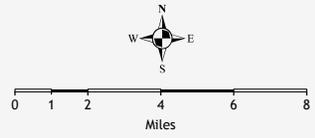
As shown on *Map 8*, known habitat for threatened and endangered species is found in the western half of Travis County. The Barton Springs and Austin Blind salamanders are confined to the outlets at Barton Springs near central Austin; the Jollyville Plateau salamander lives primarily in the springs and streams of northwest Travis County; habitat for cave-dwelling species is found in the areas of outcrop of the Edwards Limestone running north-south through the county and northwest along the Williamson County boundary; and areas where, as of 1996, there have been confirmed sightings of Golden-Cheeked warblers and Black-Capped vireos are concentrated in north-central part of the county but scattered throughout western Travis County. The Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan (BCCP) obligates Travis County to conserve endangered species habitat covered by the plan and protect other non-BCCP protected species as required by the Endangered Species Act passed by Congress in 1973.

FLOODPLAINS AND RIPARIAN AREAS

The largest expanses of floodplain and riparian areas are found in eastern Travis County, along the Colorado River and its tributaries (see *Map 9*). As transitional zones between upland areas and rivers and creeks, these areas play a role in attenuating polluted runoff, maximizing groundwater recharge and storage, and mitigating stormwater damage. In their proper functioning condition, that is, vegetated with bottomland forest, grassland, riparian, and upland species, their natural benefits are most pronounced. In Travis County, these benefits have been compromised through the historic clearing of land for timber and farming, the damming of the Colorado River, and, most recently, land use changes associated with development and aggregate mining of alluvial deposits. Conserving floodplains and riparian areas along the Colorado River and its tributaries are high priorities in the *Parks Master Plan*, and *Colorado River Corridor Plan (CRCP)*.



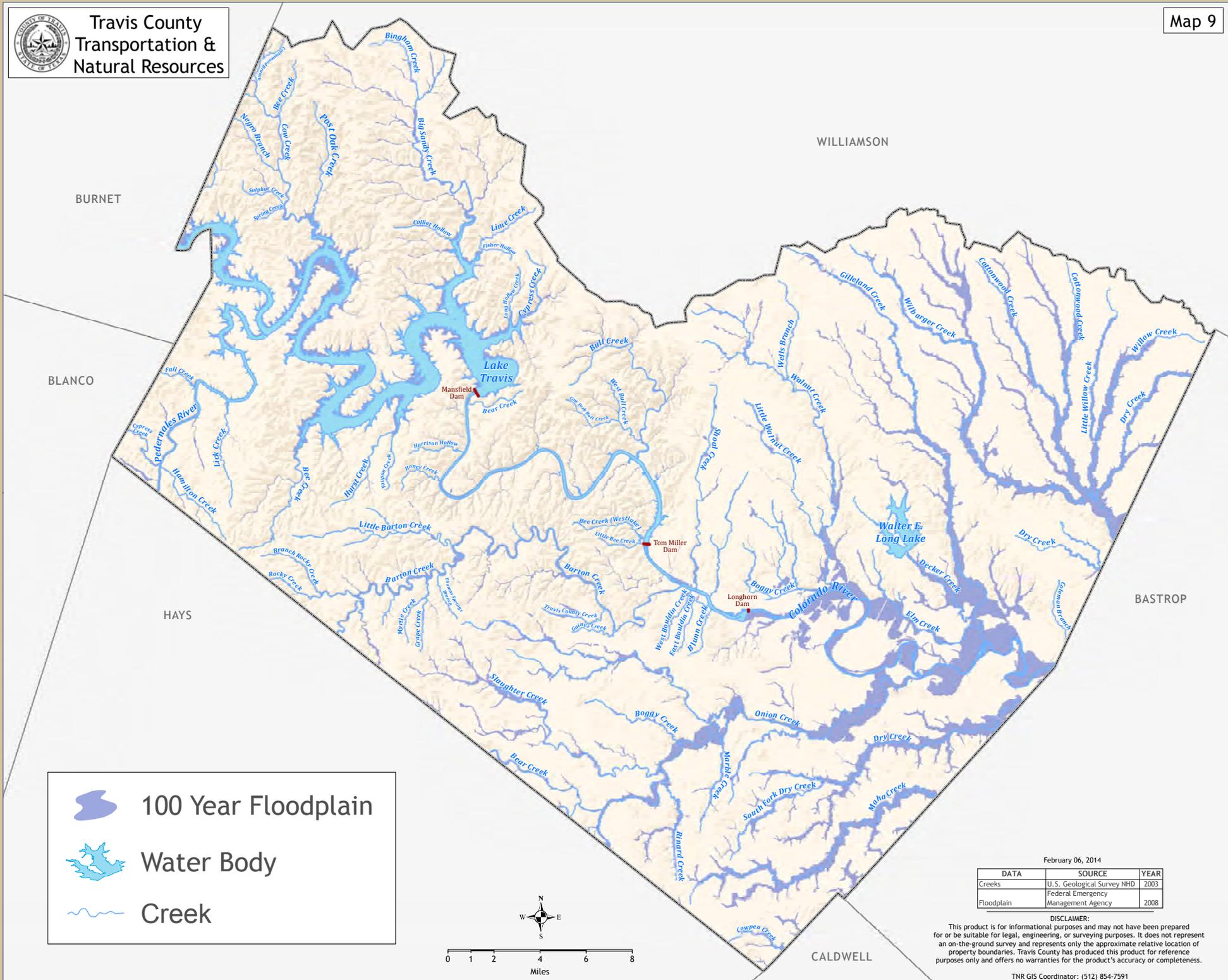
-  Austin Blind Salamander
Known Locations (2013)
-  Black Capped Vireo
Confirmed Habitat (1996)
-  Golden Cheeked Warbler
Confirmed Habitat (1996)
-  Jollyville Plateau Salamander
Known Locations (2013)
-  Karst Zones (1996)



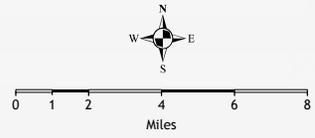
January 23, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
GCW & BCV Habitat & Karst Zones	Travis County, City of Austin, BCCP	1996
Listed Salamander Habitat	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	2013

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-  100 Year Floodplain
-  Water Body
-  Creek



February 06, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Creeks	U.S. Geological Survey NHD	2003
Floodplain	Federal Emergency Management Agency	2008

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Water Resources

Unincorporated Travis County has significant water resources that need to be protected for ecological purposes and domestic, agricultural, recreational, commercial, and industrial uses. Surface water resources include Lake Travis and its tributaries and the Colorado River and its tributaries (see Map 9). Groundwater resources include the Trinity and Edwards outcrop regions in western Travis County and the Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer in eastern Travis County (see Map 10). Springs are also found throughout the county (see Map 11).

LAKE TRAVIS AND TRIBUTARIES

Lake Travis is formed by the impoundment of the Colorado River at Mansfield Dam and is the most significant reservoir on the river because of its tremendous water storage capacity. It is a primary source of fresh water for communities and major industries throughout Travis County and helps drive the area's strong economy and population growth. It also is a major recreational resource that is estimated to generate, when full, approximately \$200 million in revenue for state and local governments. The Pedernales River is the largest tributary to Lake Travis in the county. As of April 2013, in its Current Water Quality Report, the LCRA rated both Lake Travis and the Pedernales River as having "excellent" water. Bee Creek, Cow Creek, Cypress Creek, Hurst Creek, and Sandy Creek are major creek tributaries of the lake.

COLORADO RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

The Colorado River provides water for local residential, agricultural, and commercial uses but it's also a source of water for the City of Pflugerville in the northern part of the county. Major tributaries are Onion Creek, with a watershed of approximately 343 square miles, and Gilleland Creek. The water quality of the Colorado River at Austin was rated "fair" in the LCRA's April 2013 Current Water Quality Report.

EDWARDS OUTCROP

The Edwards Outcrop is an environmentally important recharge zone allowing fresh water to replenish the Edwards Aquifer. Much of it is located within incorporated parts of the county, however, so Travis County has limited responsibility for its protection.

TRINITY OUTCROP

The Trinity Outcrop, west of the Edwards Outcrop, allows fresh water to percolate downward into the Trinity Aquifer that is the main source of well-water for both public and private users in unincorporated western Travis County. Its supply is threatened, however, by increased consumption by a growing population and limited recharge of its supply as multi-year droughts continue. This

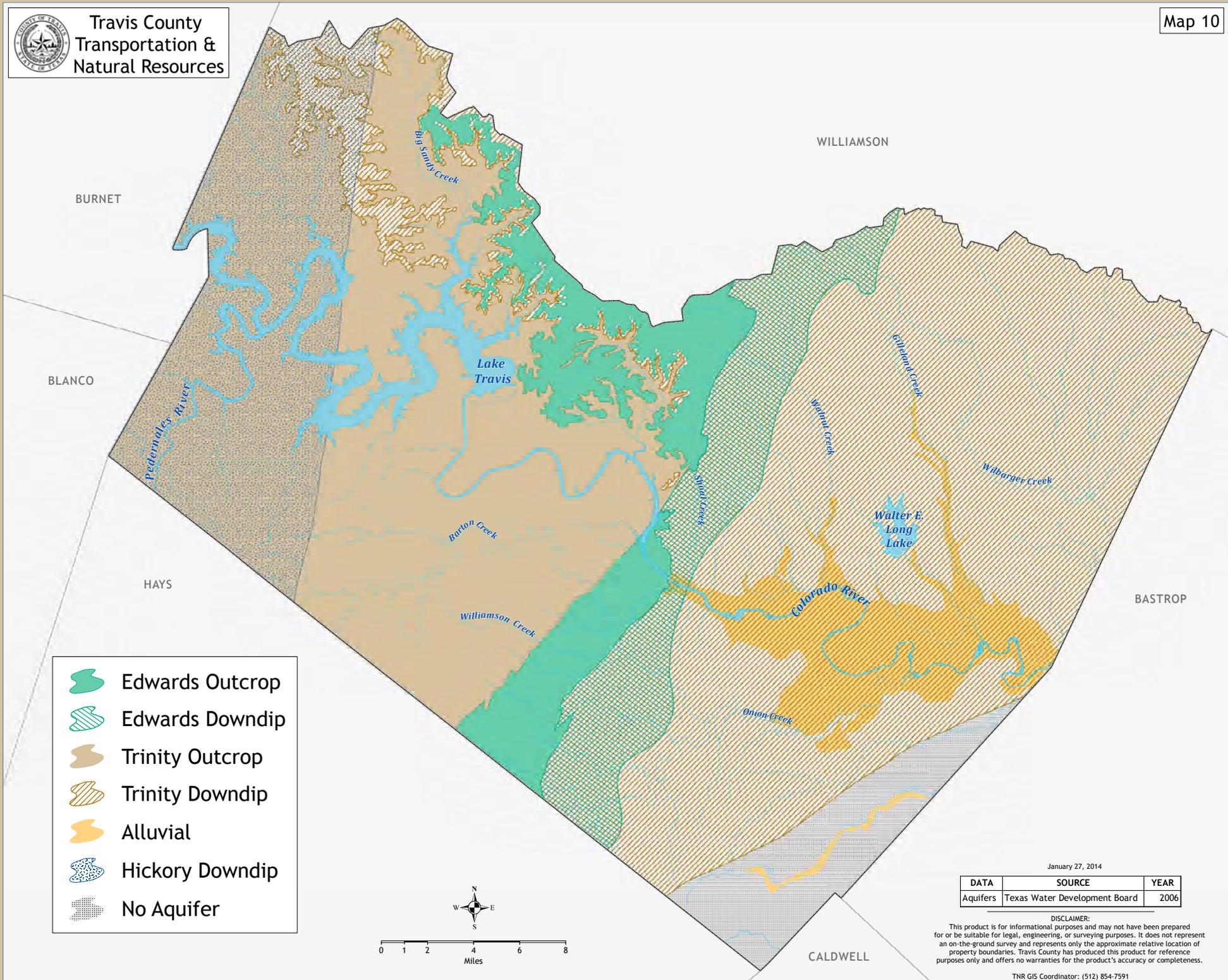
situation was so dire that in October 2010, the Travis County Commissioners Court suspended approval of subdivisions using Trinity Aquifer groundwater and created a stakeholder committee to help develop new subdivision regulations regarding water availability. Subsequently, the Commissioners Court adopted the Water Availability Rule in January 2012 thereby requiring a subdivider of land to demonstrate that a sound and adequate source of water is available commensurate with projected population demand.

COLORADO RIVER ALLUVIAL AQUIFER

The Colorado River Alluvium is the only fresh groundwater supply east of the Edwards artesian zone in eastern Travis County. It is a locally important public and private well-water supply but its small size and limited capacity cannot support growth in that area. The quality of its water is already degraded in some locations due to elevated nitrate levels and is further threatened by polluted runoff from agriculture and aggregate mining operations.

SPRINGS

Springs are locations where groundwater naturally comes to the surface. They are found throughout Travis County. Many are protected as part of the Balcones Canyonland Preserve (BCP) but unprotected areas of concentrated springs are found in the Post Oak Savanna region of eastern Travis County and the Shingle Hills area of Southwest Travis County.



-  Edwards Outcrop
-  Edwards Dwndip
-  Trinity Outcrop
-  Trinity Dwndip
-  Alluvial
-  Hickory Dwndip
-  No Aquifer

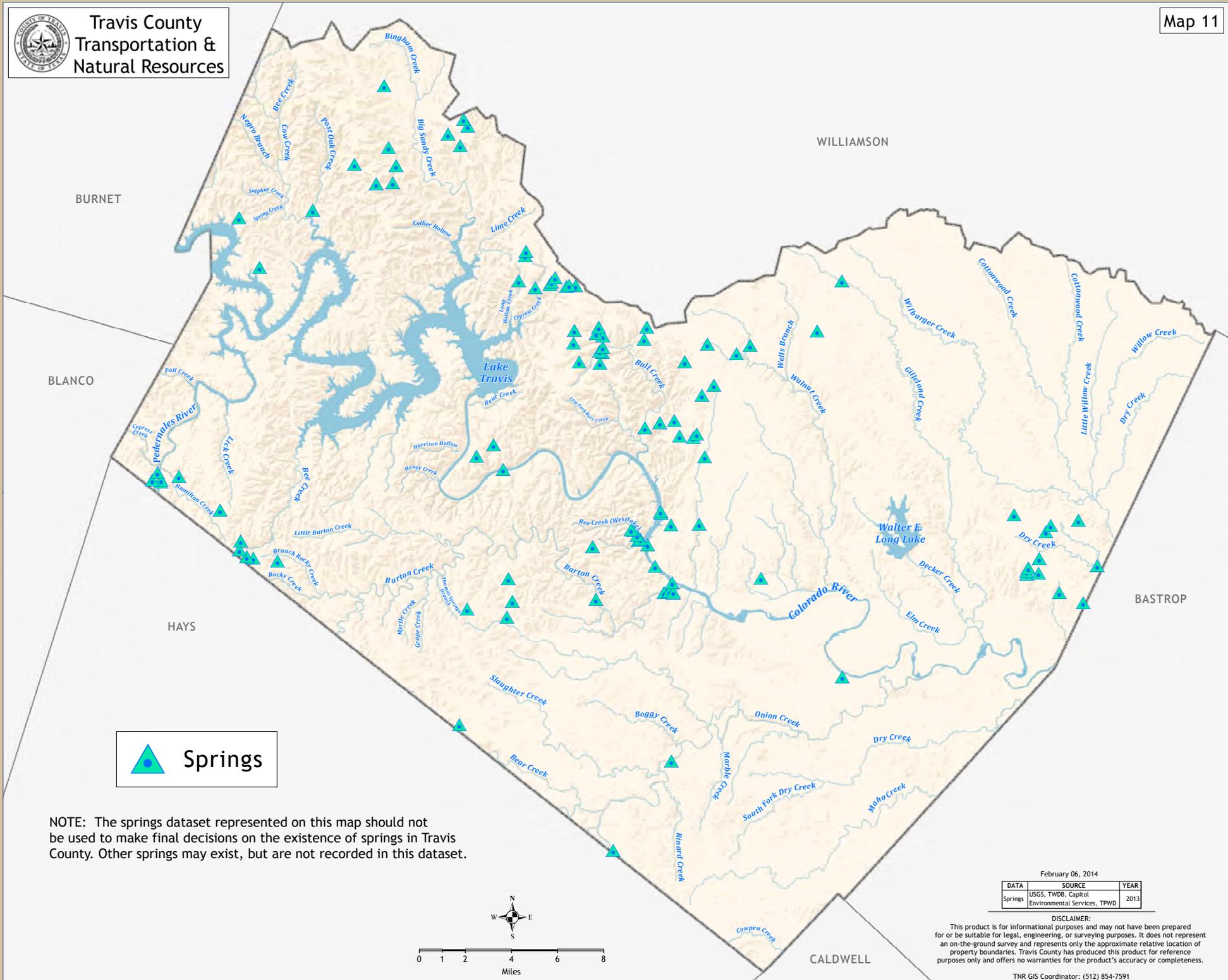


January 27, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Aquifers	Texas Water Development Board	2006

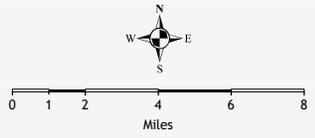
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Springs

NOTE: The springs dataset represented on this map should not be used to make final decisions on the existence of springs in Travis County. Other springs may exist, but are not recorded in this dataset.



DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Springs	USGS, TWDB, Capital Environmental Services, TPWD	2013

February 06, 2014

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Opportunities and Challenges

For LWTP purposes, unincorporated Travis County is divided into areas that have similar development patterns and land and water characteristics and, subsequently, similar opportunities and challenges with respect to how the County guides growth and conserves land. The specific “Opportunities-Challenge Areas” (see *Map 12*) discussed in this section are as follows:

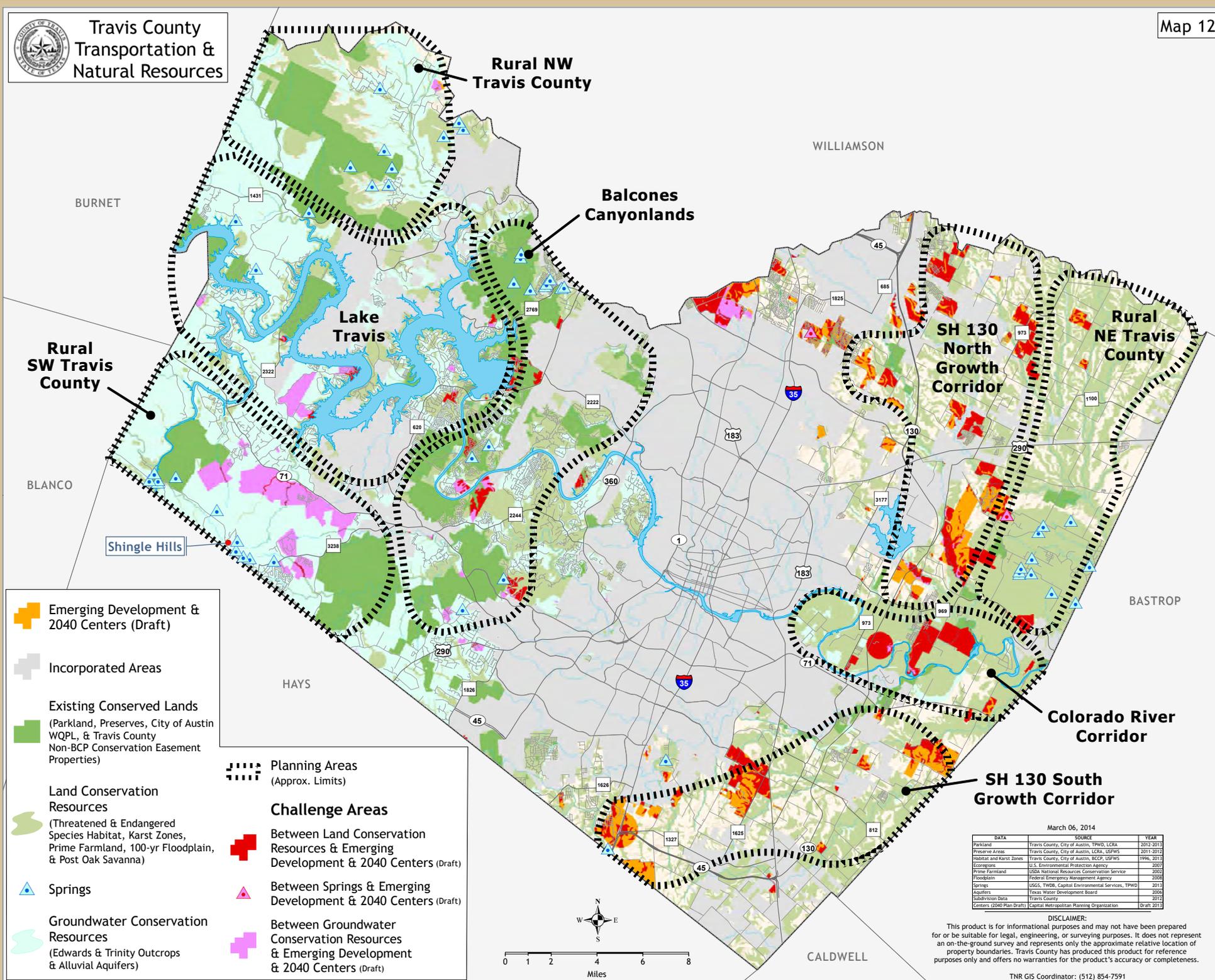
- SH 130 North Growth Corridor
- SH 130 South Growth Corridor
- Rural Northeast Travis County
- Colorado River Corridor
- Rural Southwest Travis County
- Lake Travis
- Rural Northwest Travis County
- Balcones Canyonlands

SH 130 North Growth Corridor (Precinct 1)

The SH 130 North Growth Corridor is a crescent-shaped area that roughly follows the alignment of SH 130 and extends from Williamson County to FM 969. Most of the corridor is located within the municipal and ETJ boundaries of the cities of Austin, Manor, and Pflugerville.

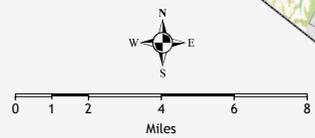
High Growth Area: Construction of SH 130 and SH45 toll roads and the availability of developable land are spurring growth in this area. Numerous single-family and multi-family subdivisions have been developed; and the number of plans for large, mixed-use developments is making this one of the potentially most concentrated area of new growth in unincorporated Travis County. Tremendous growth continues in the region. Forbes magazine estimated Austin’s population growth at 2.5 percent in 2013 making it the highest of all geographic regions in the country. The City of Austin’s demographer estimates that this growth equates to 110 new residents moving into the Austin Metro area each day. The potential location of this new growth is shown through the numerous emerging projects identified along the corridor. These future projects have estimates of nearly 80,000 new residential units along the corridor.

Need Private Sector Investments in Infrastructure: The city of Austin views the corridor as a suitable place for dense, mixed-use development in their Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). However, much of the area requires infrastructure investments to support



- Emerging Development & 2040 Centers (Draft)
- Incorporated Areas
- Existing Conserved Lands (Parkland, Preserves, City of Austin WQPL, & Travis County Non-BCP Conservation Easement Properties)
- Land Conservation Resources (Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat, Karst Zones, Prime Farmland, 100-yr Floodplain, & Post Oak Savanna)
- Springs
- Groundwater Conservation Resources (Edwards & Trinity Outcrops & Alluvial Aquifers)

- Planning Areas (Approx. Limits)
- Challenge Areas**
- Between Land Conservation Resources & Emerging Development & 2040 Centers (Draft)
- Between Springs & Emerging Development & 2040 Centers (Draft)
- Between Groundwater Conservation Resources & Emerging Development & 2040 Centers (Draft)



March 06, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Parkland	Travis County, City of Austin, TPWD, LCRA	2012-2013
Preserve Areas	Travis County, City of Austin, LCRA, USFWS	2011-2012
Habitat and Karst Zones	Travis County, City of Austin, BCCP, USFWS	1996, 2013
Ecoregions	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	2002
Prime Farmland	USDA National Resources Conservation Service	2002
Floodplain	Federal Emergency Management Agency	2006
Springs	USGS, TPWD, Capital Environmental Services, TPWD	2013
Aquifers	Texas Water Development Board	2006
Subdivision Data	Travis County	2012
Centers (2040 Plan Draft)	Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization	Draft 2011

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the intensity of the development proposed. In 2006, the City of Austin completed a study looking at the creation of an infrastructure district to fund needed water transmission lines, major wastewater collection lines, arterial roadway improvements and regional drainage facilities along the corridor. The study, however, found that the costs of the required infrastructure exceeded the district's forecasted revenues, requiring the city to finance the difference. Because the city was unwilling to take on this debt, a district was not established, and large scale infrastructure investments have not been made. While the city was unwilling to assume debt to build the infrastructure required for mixed-use development, improvements are being financed through other means: Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs), Public Improvement Districts (PIDs), and partnerships to an extent not seen elsewhere in unincorporated Travis County.

Current planning continues to point to this area as a “desired” area for growth in that the City of Austin's comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*, promotes a compact and connected city by directing development away from sensitive environmental resources, and protects existing open space and natural resources. Much of the future growth areas found on the City of Austin's Growth Concept Map follow along the SH 130 corridor.

Arterial Roadways Improved: Travis County and City of Austin have been investing in arterial roadway infrastructure to facilitate mobility within the corridor. Improvements are planned or already completed for Pecan Street, Howard Lane, Wells Branch Parkway, Parmer Lane, Braker Lane, and Decker Lake Road to improve connections to SH 130 and movement within the corridor. Additionally, the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) is completing toll improvements to US 290 E from US 183 to the east of Parmer Lane. Once completed, the Manor Expressway will be a 6.2-mile limited-access toll road with three lanes in each direction. The existing US 290 E will be widened and will remain non-tolled. As these new improvements provide for more mobility, it is expected that development will occur along these arterials as other types of infrastructure are provided.

Development Outpaces Prime Farmland Conservation: This is the part of the county where the most development is occurring and where there is a corresponding loss of farmland. There are still opportunities to protect this resource, however, through conservation developments (in accordance with the County's Conservation Subdivision Ordinance) and conservation easements.

Land Conserved through Parkland Acquisition: Of the land conserved in the corridor, most of it is done so through parkland acquisition: the County has purchased approximately 1,000 acres since 1995 for Northeast Metro Park near Pflugerville and the Gilleland Creek Greenway that runs the length of the corridor. Most of the land is obtained through fee simple purchase, but a significant amount is gained through landowner dedications required by the County and City of Austin's parkland dedication

ordinances. In some cases, the dedications exceed the amount required by the ordinance because developers appreciate the marketability of having greenways adjacent to their subdivisions as well as the savings realized from not having to maintain the property or pay taxes on the land.

Creek Corridor Potential: Willbarger Creek is a major creek with corridor potential. It connects cities of Pflugerville and Manor. Like the Gilleland Creek Greenway, it can serve multiple purposes: recreation, wildlife corridor, groundwater recharge, flood mitigation, and water quality mitigation. A Willbarger Creek corridor could be established through parkland acquisition (both fee simple purchase and parkland dedication), conservation subdivisions, conservation easements, or water quality setbacks.

No Significant Groundwater Resources: The corridor lies over the downdip portion of the Edwards Aquifer that is on the poor side of the “bad water line” and contains saline water.

SH 130 South Growth Corridor (Precinct 4)

The SH 130/45SE Southeast Growth Corridor is separated from the northern crescent by the Colorado River Corridor. As with the northern corridor, the Southeast Growth Corridor follows the approximate alignment of SH 130 and includes SH 45 SE. Most of the corridor is located within the municipal and ETJ bounds of the cities of Austin, Mustang Ridge and Creedmoor.

Development is Imminent: The SH 130 South Growth Corridor has less proposed new development than the northern part of the corridor. However, with the Circuit of the Americas track located in this area, and availability of suitable land for development, it is expected that growth will occur at the same levels as seen in the northern part of the corridor. This new development is already being realized through the creation of the 1,600 acre Southeast Travis County MUD planned along Pearce Lane. The municipal utility district will be able to tax residents so that water, sewage, drainage and other infrastructure can be developed. The development will be predominately single family residential. Another sizeable planned development is the Pilot Knob MUD’s located near the intersection of US 183 S and FM 1625. Approximately 14,500 residences and 3.8 million square feet of commercial space is planned to be developed over the next 40 years. Further west, surrounding the intersection of IH 35 S and SH 45 SE are the proposed Sunfield and Estancia developments. These large mixed use developments are proposed to add approximately 20,000 and 8,000 residential units respectively within the corridor.

Arterial Roadways Improved: Since the opening of SH 130, Travis County has invested in roadway infrastructure to make connections to the toll road through improvements to Slaughter Lane, William Cannon Drive and Elroy Road. Improvements have also been made to provide better access to the residents living in the Del Valle and Elroy communities. Court approved funding of a

new road, Maha Loop Road, will provide increased connectivity to SH 71 E and additional access to Del Valle School facilities and the Circuit of the Americas site.

Land Conserved Through Parkland Acquisition: As in the northern part of the corridor, land has been conserved through parkland acquisition: the County has acquired approximately 1,235 acres since 1995 or the Onion Creek Greenway; and, as elsewhere in the county, there are opportunities to protect prime farmland through conservation developments and conservation easements.

No Significant Ground Water Resources: There is a narrow strip of alluvial aquifer along Maha Creek but most of this area lies over the downdip portion of the Edwards Aquifer that is on the poor side of the “bad water line” and contains saline water.

Rural Northeast Travis County (Precinct 1)

Rural Northeast Travis County extends from Williamson County to the Colorado River Corridor, bounded by the SH130 North Growth Corridor to the west and Bastrop County line to the east. A small portion is within the City of Elgin but it is mostly unincorporated land. Much of this area is unincorporated and located outside of any jurisdiction’s ETJ.

Slower Pace of Development: This area has limited utilities and a network of two-lane county roads serving rural areas. As the cities of Elgin, Manor and Pflugerville grow, however, utilities will become more available and development can be expected to expand into the area. This growth, though, is expected to be much slower than that occurring in both the SH 130 corridor to the west.

Diverse Eco-regions to Protect Ahead of Development: Because of relatively low development pressure, there is an opportunity to conserve land ahead of development. This is particularly advantageous because this is an ecologically diverse part of the county: it has two different eco-regions -- Blackland Prairie and Post Oak Savanna -- one of which -- Post Oak Savanna -- is only found in this part of the county.

Land Protected through Conservation Easements and Parkland Acquisitions: To date, approximately 530 acres of prime farmland have been conserved through the County’s conservation easement program that is being implemented in partnership with landowners and the USDA’s Farm and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP). Although this program is available to landowners in other parts of the county, landowners here have acted proactively. They established, for example, the Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance to pursue conservation easement partnerships with the County and USDA. The County is currently negotiating three additional conservation easements on properties in this area.

The County has conserved some land through parkland acquisition: in 2001, it purchased approximately 273 acres for the East Metro Park.

Creek Corridor Potential: As in the SH 130 North Growth Corridor, Wilbarger Creek has corridor potential. It extends from the City of Manor to privately conserved lands further east, and it can be relatively easy to connect it to East Metro Park. Similarly, it can serve multiple purposes and be established through different public and private initiatives.

Numerous Springs: As seen in Map 12, springs are concentrated in the Post Oak Savanna eco-region that are not threatened by development.

COLORADO RIVER CORRIDOR (Precincts 1 and 4)

The Colorado River Corridor, for these planning purposes, extends from the eastern limit of incorporated City of Austin to the Bastrop County line. Its northern and southern boundaries follow the approximate limits of the river's 100-year flood plain. Most of it lies within the ETJs of the cities of Austin and Webberville.

Residents and Mining Interests Clash: Spurred on by the recent permitting of large tracts of land for mining, residents lobbied the county to address their concerns about the impact of mining operations on their quality of life: they expect dust, noise, impairment of water resources, loss of agricultural lands and rural character, and negative impacts on their property values to worsen as mining operations expand. The county's limited authority, however, to enforce land use regulations restricts the type of actions the county can take to protect landowners. In this particular case, the county undertook several actions to mitigate the impacts of incompatible land uses occurring side-by-side: 1) executed the Agreement for the Acquisition of Open Space Parkland in Lieu of Condemnation with TXI, 2) contracted services for monitoring the impact of mining on noise levels and air and water quality, and 3) contracted services to complete the Colorado River Corridor Plan (CRCP), a conceptual plan for the corridor that identifies preferred land use patterns that has growth along the major highways, large tracts of rural land preserved, and clashes of incompatible land uses minimized.

Infrastructure Drives Pace of Development: The extent and pace of residential and mixed-use development in the corridor is dependent in large part on the availability of water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. The proposed development of Rio de Vida, a mining reuse project for mixed use municipal utility district (MUD) that would yield over 8,000 homes and apartments, demonstrates this point. In this case, a MUD was established to finance infrastructure. The City of Austin and district, however,

could not reach an agreement over water and sewer rights so the district was dissolved in 2012. Although this MUD was dissolved, the developer has expressed his desire to develop the area and is exploring other opportunities.

Residents Lobby for Annexation: Residents of Austin Colony are actively seeking opportunities to provide land use protection, infrastructure improvements, and quality of life improvements through annexation by the City of Austin or municipal incorporation of the area.

Congestion a Local Problem: Additional residential development has led to increased congestion and travel times within the corridor. As a response to these conditions, improvements to provide better access to the new middle school were funded in 2011 and a partnership with TXDOT to add capacity to FM 969 from FM 3177 to Austin Colony Blvd was established.

New Bridge to Improve Regional Mobility: Construction of a bridge over the Colorado River connecting Burleson Manor Road to SH 71 E is proposed in the CAMPO 2035 plan. This major transportation improvement will improve connectivity and regional mobility and also stimulate development in areas that are not currently served by a well-developed roadway network.

Prime Farmland Lost to Aggregate Mining: The Colorado River corridor is home to the largest contiguous area of Prime farmland in the county. Aggregate mining, driven by demand for building materials, however, is superseding agricultural use of the land. Although mining is an historic activity, it is now occurring on a larger scale than previously experienced and it is planned to continue over the next few decades.

“Concurrent Reclamation” Softens Impacts of Mining: There are several legacy quarries and mines in the corridor which have matured without human intervention into wildlife habitat with some wetland functions. But without the softening effects of time, traditional drag line operations close with unsightly spoil piles and unnatural land contours that are not suitable for reuse. More recent requirements for closing mines, though, dictate that post-mining landscapes have contours and elevations that approximate pre-mining landscapes. Mines are closed with agreed upon slopes, re-vegetation, and stabilization that make the post-mined land environmentally sustainable and suitable for agricultural, residential, or commercial uses.

Land Conserved Through Parkland Acquisition: As in other parts of the county, land is primarily conserved through parkland acquisition: the County has acquired approximately 320 acres along Gilleland Creek and the Colorado River. At this time, the only farmland being conserved in the corridor is that which is acquired incidentally for the greenways and river corridor (There is, however, landowner interest in protecting their working farms through conservation easements).

River Corridor Potential: In addition to the Gilleland Creek corridor, that crosses the Colorado River floodplain, there is potential to develop a corridor along the Colorado River. Travis County currently has parkland along the river that could be the foundation of a Colorado River corridor.

Alluvial Aquifer Impacted by Development: The Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer is a locally important source of water that could be altered by the removal of alluvial material. The extent and nature of the impact of this activity on the aquifer is not known, but the County is monitoring water quality in the area for the purpose of understanding the potential impacts on the aquifer from mining. The aquifer has met local demand for water historically for agriculture and limited domestic use but its capacity is inadequate to support additional urbanizing trends. As a result, the County has prohibited its use as a water supply for new subdivisions.

Rural Southwest Travis County (Precinct 3)

Rural Southwest Travis County extends from the eastern edges of the cities of Lakeway and Bee Cave west to Blanco County and southwest to Hays County. Its northern boundary is Lake Travis. Much of this area is unincorporated and located outside of any jurisdiction's ETJ.

Growth Hinges on Infrastructure Development: This area is attractive for development because it is the last area in the county that has large, contiguous tracts of undeveloped land and it is served by the SH 71 and Hamilton Pool Road transportation corridors. The degree this area develops, however, hinges on whether transportation improvements are provided and water is available to support growth. Limited water infrastructure has slowed development and road improvements have been controversial: some residents have objected to and delayed improvements to Hamilton Pool Road and the construction of the Reimers-Peacock arterial.

Development Threatens Water Quality: Southwest Travis County has important ground and surface water resources: it lies over the Trinity Aquifer, a locally important source of water, and includes the Pedernales River and other tributaries of Lake Travis – a regionally important source of water. Mitigating the impact of increased impervious cover on both groundwater and surface water quality and facilitating recharge of the aquifer are therefore critical objectives, and time sensitive along SH 71 and Hamilton Pool Road.

Best Construction Practices Needed: When development pressure began in the early-to-mid 2000's, several instance of water pollution of local waters, like Lick Creek and Hamilton Creek and Pool, occurred. Although primary regulatory responsibility fell to the LCRA and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), residents lobbied Travis County to help resolve the problem. The

County did issue violation notices for storm water management failures, but these events prompted the county to strengthen its regulatory powers for protecting water quality. Beginning in 2005, the county adopted more stringent water quality protection rules as part of its development regulations.

Land Protected Through Parkland Acquisition and Water Conservation Easements: Travis County has been conserving land in this part of the county through parkland acquisition. It has assembled more than 3,000 acres on the Pedernales River, adjacent to Hamilton Pool Preserve, since 2001. This is in accordance with the Southwest Travis County Growth Dialogue (SWTCGD) recommendation to conserve approximately 6000 acres in the area (SWTCGD was a forum organized by the LCRA and Travis County to facilitate a discussion about development and conservation issues in their community). The City of Austin has also assembled large tracts of land for water quality protection that are protected through conservation easements.

Creek and River Corridor Potential: Hamilton Creek runs from the county highpoint at Shingle Hill to the Hamilton Pool Preserve, making it a particularly critical water way and strong candidate for corridor development. Hamilton Pool, in fact, was recently contaminated by runoff from a construction site in Hays County, forcing Travis County to take legal action against the developer of the property that generated the pollution for its cleanup. The creek also flows into the Pedernales River, the major tributary of Lake Travis in Travis County along which the County has purchased parkland as the foundation of a corridor system.

Numerous Springs: As seen in Map 12, there many springs in the Shingle Hills area not yet threatened by development.

Lake Travis (Precinct 3)

The Lake Travis area extends east-west from Burnet County to Mansfield Dam and captures the north and south shore of the lake. It includes portions of the cities of Lakeway, Volente, Lago Vista, Jonestown, Point Venture, and Briarcliff, communities that developed around populations attracted to a lake-centered lifestyle.

An Economic Driver: Lake Travis is a natural resource that drives the economy at both the regional and local level. It is a primary source of fresh water for communities and major industries throughout Travis County and helps drive the area's strong economy and population growth. It also is a major recreational resource that is estimated to generate, when full, approximately \$200 million in revenue for state and local governments. That is not the case at this time: due to an ongoing drought, many businesses lake-related activities are closing, on either a temporary or permanent basis. And property values are affected as well: the overall value of waterfront property and real property in the general area of the Highland Lakes typically experiences downward pressure that parallels the decline in water levels and associated economic activities.

Population Concentrated in Incorporated Lake Communities: Much of the population within this area is concentrated in incorporated areas along Lake Travis. The north shore communities of Lago Vista, Jonestown and Volente and south shore communities of Lakeway and Briarcliff have experienced the same rapid growth occurring in the Central Texas region. With an increased aging population and many of these communities supporting retirement developments, population growth is forecasted to continue to impact the quality of life for the citizens within this area.

Unincorporated land in this area has seen less development due to the inability and high cost to provide supportive infrastructure. However, growth continues does continue along the two main corridors that serve this area, RR 620 and FM 1431

Limited Transportation Corridors Cause Congestion: Increased local traffic and increased through traffic using RR 620 are impacting residents living within the area. RR 620 provides local access to south shore communities, but also is the last crossing of the Highland Lakes/Colorado River before US Hwy 281 in Marble Falls. With limited alternatives to relieve this major traffic corridor, congestion continues to increase along RR 620. Currently, no improvements are identified for this section of RR 620 in the CAMPO 2035 Transportation Plan. The Plan does call for a transportation study to be undertaken; however, with these limited options, communities have begun voicing and undertaking plans to address this congestion. The City of Lakeway has taken the lead to look at an “ambitious” transportation plan to increase mobility within the corridor. This plan calls for elevated tollways and crossings of BCP lands that would require “cooperation and compromise” from many of the stakeholders within this area.

Environmental Conditions Limit Mobility Options in RR 620 Corridor: Proposed improvements to transportation are limited due to topography inherent to western Travis County, crossing of the Lake, and surrounding BCP lands. Desires to develop new transportation corridors and/or provide for added capacity not only are impacted by the natural environment, but also public opinions about preserving the “Texas Hill Country environment”, scenic vistas, recreational opportunities and water quality. Rapid growth in the area challenges the balance of protection of critical natural and water resources and providing efficient, safe and reliable transportation.

No Identified CAMPO Activity Centers and Emerging Growth Developments in Unincorporated Area: Changes in land use and development practices has been one solution undertaken by the CAMPO region to reduce congestion. The allowance for dense, mixed use development served by a mix of transportation choices can lead to changes in mobility patterns within the region. However, currently, this type development has not been identified within this area of Travis County. Challenges are seen in whether the development community and the residents in the area will see that this type of development is compatible with values of many

of the residents. The County's conservation development ordinance is another opportunity allowing for changes in how development impacts the area's natural resources.

Large Tracts of Land Conserved by LCRA: The LCRA obtained large tracts of land beyond what they needed to build Lake Travis, and subsequently established 10 new parks on surplus land above lake level (seven of which are managed by Travis County). With ownership of approximately 2,200 acres of the nearly 2,400 acres of parkland on the lake, the LCRA is clearly the most significant conservator of land in this area.

Changing Lake Levels Challenge Recreation Providers: Lake Travis is designed to rise and fall, with extremes that have ranged from its current low – lowest elevation since 1964 – of approximately 628 feet mean sea level (ft msl) to a high of 710 ft msl in 1991. Both conditions create special engineering, construction management challenges and expenses for recreation providers. Facilities have to be designed and built to withstand inundation. Conversely, facilities do not function as intended when lake levels drop dramatically: boat ramps are not useable and amenities, such as restrooms, are too far from park visitors to be useful.

Rural Northwest Travis County (Precinct 3)

Rural Northwest Travis County is bounded on its east side by the cities of Leander, Jonestown, and Lago Vista, the north and west by Williamson and Burnet counties, and south by Lake Travis. Much of this area is unincorporated and located outside of any jurisdiction's ETJ.

Little Imminent Development: There is limited development emerging in this area because there is limited infrastructure in place to support large scale developments. No road improvements are planned within this region.

Land Conserved Through Habitat Protection: The US Fish and Wildlife Refuge is the largest preserves in the county, established to protect threatened and endangered species habitat, and according to plan it will get larger.

Creek Corridor Potential: Both Big Sandy Creek and Cow Creek have corridor potential. As elsewhere in the county, they can serve multiple purposes and be established through a combination of public and private initiatives.

Water Resources Protected Through Habitat Preservation: Although habitat protection is the primary purpose of the US Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the preserve also protects the important Trinity and Edwards outcrops, headwaters of tributaries flowing into Lake Travis and numerous springs.

Balcones Canyonland Area (Precincts 2 and 3)

The Balcones Canyonland area extends from the northern Travis County boundary to approximately the “Y” at Oak Hill. It includes incorporated areas of the cities of Austin, Bee Cave, Lakeway, Oak Hill, Volente, and West Lake.

Development Constrained: This area is distinguished by land use pattern of scattered, densely developed areas adjacent to and within the mosaic of Balcones Canyonland Preserve (BCP). Several factors constrain development of new subdivisions: protected species limited amount of land available for development, and steep, costly-to-develop terrain. However, suitable sites can be planned, permitted and mitigated through several regionally available processes.

BCP Substantially Complete and a Success: The Balcones Canyonland Conservation Plan (BCCP), an Endangered Species Act (ESA) incidental take permit, facilitates continued development in western Travis County by acquiring and managing the Preserve system that offsets impacts from development to certain federally protected species. Land acquisition for the preserve is substantially complete: as of February 2014, the Preserve is comprised of 30,516 acres for the benefit the golden-cheeked warbler (Warbler) and black-capped vireo (Vireo); and 47 of the 62 karst features listed in the BCCP protected. Travis County is currently managing approximately 7600 acres of the BCP. Although the Preserve exceeds the minimum size of the required 30,428, permit holders still need to acquire habitat for the Warbler and Vireo to meet the Preserve design configuration specifications outlined in the Permit.

New Federally Listed Species: In September 2013, two new springs- and groundwater-dependent species which occur in western Travis County were listed under the ESA – Jollyville Plateau Salamander and Austin Blind Salamander. Neither are covered by the BCCP incidental take permit, meaning that landowners’ and developers’ projects which may affect these species will not have the expedited ESA compliance mechanisms to address their mitigation needs. Project sponsors will need to pursue individual incidental take permits with US Fish and Wildlife Service; this is a lengthy process. A regional incidental take permit for Jollyville Plateau Salamander, similar to the BCCP could put protective and permitting measures in place to facilitate development in western Travis County.

Water Resources Protected Through Habitat Preservation: Although habitat protection is the primary purpose of the BCP, the preserve also protects the important Trinity and Edwards outcrops (karst terrain which provides aquifer recharge), headwaters of tributaries flowing into Lake Travis and numerous springs.

D: GROWTH GUIDANCE

Goals and Objectives

Goal A: Improve the Quality of Life of Travis County Residents

Objective A-1: Maintain or improve standard of living including access to clean water and affordable transportation.

Objective A-2: Maintain or improve community safety through hazard mitigation

Objective A-3: Maintain or improve roadway and pedestrian safety Objective A-4: Provide facilities including parks and bike and pedestrian trails to support healthy lifestyles

Goal B: Optimize Benefits of Land and Water Resources

Objective B-1: Protect the rural and natural character of Travis County

Objective B-2: Protect water resources

Objective B-3: Protect outdoor recreational opportunities

Objective B-4: Protect ecosystems and wild life habitat

Objective B-5: Enhance property values

Goal C: Optimize Use of Travis County Resources

Objective C-1: Maximize value of CIP investments

Objective C-2: Distribute Travis County resources effectively

Objective C-3: Minimize loss-of-life and damages to residents and county property

Objective C-4: Improve cost effectiveness of long-term operation and maintenance activities

Objective C-5: Optimize Travis County resources through leveraging

Growth Guidance Principles

Implement “Activity Centers” and “Corridors” Concept³

- reduces infrastructure and maintenance costs
- supports compact and connected growth
- provides walking and bike friendly alternatives
- reduces sprawl
- encourages land use that supports various modes of transit
- encourages efficient use of land and water resources
- improves air quality

Conserve Land along Significant Waterways and Connect to Aggregated Conservation Areas

- protects surface water and springs
- maximizes groundwater recharge
- attenuates polluted runoff
- mitigates storm water damage
- protects ecosystems
- provides wildlife habitat and corridors
- protects agriculturally productive lands
- allows for trail connections between residential, commercial, and other activity centers
- provides nature-based recreational opportunities
- preserves scenic and natural qualities of the rural landscape
- contributes to a quality of life that attracts tax-paying business and residents
- increases property value of residents adjacent to natural areas

³ Activity Centers and Corridors are planned and built mixed-use environments that possess the density and diversity of land use and design attributes that produce lower vehicle-miles traveled and support transit, bicycling, and walking. They are planning districts supported by their jurisdictions and other implementing agencies that provide a framework for regional transportation planning. Source : CAMPO definition created for draft CAMPO 2040 Plan, Dec. 2013

GROWTH GUIDANCE POLICIES

LAND

POLICY L-1: Encourage development that is consistent with the County’s “Activity Centers” and “Corridors” concept and has minimal impact on land and water resources.

POLICY L-2: Develop an interconnected system of parks, preserves, privately conserved properties, and conservation subdivisions that protect high-priority land and water resources and complement “Center” and “Corridor” land use patterns.

POLICY L-3: Prioritize conservation of the following lands:

- Land along the Colorado River and its major tributaries
- Headwaters and perimeters of the Pedernales River and other tributaries to Lake Travis
- Post Oak Savanna in eastern Travis County and Shingle Hills in southwest Travis County where springs are concentrated
- Working farms and ranches, particularly areas of USDA-designated Prime Farmland
- Threatened and endangered species habitat protected by the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan⁴ (BCCP)

POLICY L-4: Support conservation in eastern Travis County that helps balance conservation county-wide and protects land and water resources in advance of development in a high growth area.

POLICY L-5: Develop a park and preserve system that provides opportunities for the public to enjoy nature-based recreation throughout the county.

⁴ **Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan** (“BCCP”)-Travis County and the City of Austin were jointly issued a regional permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that allows incidental “take” of eight locally occurring federally-listed endangered species under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act. “Take” is the removal of occupied endangered species habitat or species displacement due to development of habitat areas. This community-based solution, referred to as the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (“BCCP”), calls for the creation of a preserve system to protect these eight endangered species as well as 27 other species believed to be at risk.

POLICY L-6: Manage the Balcones Canyonland Preserve⁵ (BCP) with best practices to conserve rare, threatened, and endangered species habitats and systems.

POLICY L-7: Use best management practices to maintain or restore native woodlands, prairies, riparian zones and other ecosystems and control invasive species on County-owned land.

POLICY L-8: Regulate development to decrease loss-of-life and property damage from flooding, fire, and other hazards.

POLICY L-9: Reduce wildfire potentials in parks and preserves through forest management, prescribed fire, site and ecotype-appropriate fuels management, adjacent landowner outreach promoting FireWise and Community Wildfire Protection Plan recommendations, and other best management practices.

POLICY L-10: Require best management practices for the construction of streets, structures, and drainage facilities in subdivision developments and transition to sustainable construction and O&M practices.

POLICY L-11: Develop and implement strategies for minimizing light pollution and maintaining dark skies.

POLICY L-12: Support state, county, and local regulation of billboards.

POLICY L-13: Develop and implement design standards for protecting the natural and rural character of county roads.

POLICY L-14: Provide information and resources to private landowners to promote best conservation and management of native ecosystems, especially on sites adjacent to parks and preserves.

⁵ **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve** (“BCP”) To minimize and mitigate the impacts of take, the Permit Holders agreed to: 1) assemble a minimum of 30,428 acres of endangered species habitat in western Travis County known as the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (“BCP”), 2) secure protection for a series of karst (cave) features and rare plants throughout Travis County 3) provide for ongoing maintenance, patrolling, and biological management of the preserved habitat; and 4) conduct biological monitoring and research activities supporting the BCCP permit terms and conditions.

POLICY L-15: Support local government decisions regarding the location of Activity Centers and Corridors.

WATER

POLICY W-1: Encourage and support residents and businesses on best methods to manage water resources including rainwater harvesting and xeriscape practices.

POLICY W-2: Support efforts to reduce reliance upon Lake Travis and groundwater resources including conservation, piping from other sources, and new impoundments.

POLICY W-3: Use water quality protection rules to protect ground and surface water resources throughout our jurisdiction from potential land development impacts.

POLICY W-4: Use regulatory authority to ensure adequate groundwater is available for future subdivision needs and establish a groundwater conservation district in SW Travis County to protect the Trinity Aquifer from further unsustainable withdrawals.

POLICY W-5: Protect Lake Travis water quality in accordance with the Travis County water quality protection standards and by conserving land along tributaries.

POLICY W-6: Protect the Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer.

POLICY W-7: Protect watersheds and headwaters up-gradient of spring sites known to be habitat of the Jollyville Plateau salamanders.

POLICY W-8: Integrate storm water, flood mitigation, and water resource protection planning and programming.

POLICY W-9: Develop and implement protocols for designing, constructing, and maintaining sustainable Rights-of-Way(ROWs).

POLICY W-10: Use sustainable practices to reduce water consumption in County parks.

POLICY W-11: Promote and use best management practices to control invasive aquatic species on County-owned properties.

POLICY W-12: Promote and educate public on invasive species management.

TRANSPORTATION

POLICY T-1: Support development of high density, mixed use activity centers through the use of transportation investments that integrate land use and transportation.

POLICY T-2: Reduce demand on the region’s roadway system by developing a transportation network that provides people with multiple ways to travel.

POLICY T-3: Prioritize transportation options that allow for choice within and connecting Activity Centers.

POLICY T-4: Avoid and minimize impacts of transportation on sensitive natural and cultural resources, especially threatened and endangered species habitat.

POLICY T-5: Provide bike lanes, sidewalks or shared use paths on arterial roads.

POLICY T-6: Connect multi-use trails in County parks to the regional bike and pedestrian system.

POLICY T-7: Formulate policies guiding County’s role in transit.

POLICY T-8: Incorporate regional transit plans in the planning and development of County transportation facilities.

POLICY T-9: Plan for and develop a road network that facilitates emergency access and evacuation.

POLICY T-10: Support efforts to minimize residents' harmful exposure to hazardous materials transported by road, rail or pipeline.

POLICY T-11: Consider the total project context during the design process that balances transportation, land use, economic, social and environmental goals and objectives.

GROWTH GUIDANCE TOOLS

POLICY GGT-1: Use existing regulatory authority to guide development.

POLICY GGT-2: Pursue additional authority to prevent incompatible land use conflicts in unincorporated Travis County.

POLICY GGT-3: Allocate funds for capital improvements supporting "Activity Centers", "Corridors", or conservation of County-prioritized lands.

POLICY GGT-4: Support incentives for capital improvements supporting "Activity Centers", "Corridors", or conservation of County-prioritized lands.

POLICY GGT-5: Protect County-prioritized land and water resources through park and preserve land acquisitions, parkland dedications, conservation easements, floodplain buy-out programs, and the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.

POLICY GGT-6: Coordinate with local jurisdictions, agencies and the private sector to promote connectivity and compatible development of land, water, and transportation systems.

POLICY GGT-7: Prioritize investments in arterials connecting to SH 130.

POLICY GGT-8: Use platting, permitting, other growth information to identify market-driven Activity Center and Corridors.

PLANNING AND POLICY FORMULATION

POLICY PPF-1: Comply with all applicable local, state and federal rules, regulations and permits.

POLICY PPF-2: Engage county residents, stakeholders, and experts in planning and policy formulation processes.

POLICY PPF-3: Use statistically valid data to identify Travis County residents’ opinions and preferences.

POLICY PPF-4: Coordinate departmental planning to optimize use of County resources.

POLICY PPF-5: Ensure that public facilities are planned in advance of public need.

POLICY PPF-6: Complete and regularly update departmental plans and studies to guide development of county-wide bond programs and other capital investment decisions.

POLICY PPF-7: Monitor growth in unincorporated Travis County to identify “horizon issues”.

POLICY PPF-8: Coordinate land use and transportation policies with local jurisdictions, agencies and the private sector.

POLICY PPF-9: Specify procedures for waiving conditions of a plan or policy when environmental, fiscal, or other types of constraints make its implementation unfeasible.

FINANCE

POLICY F-1: Leverage County capital improvement funds with federal and state grants, private sector partnerships, contributions from other jurisdictions and agencies, and user and impact fees (see Appendix A: Funding for Capital Improvements).

POLICY F-2: Assess impacts of capital improvements, program expansions, and federal/state mandates on the O&M costs.

POLICY F-3: Analyze efficiency and cost effectiveness of capital investments and seek innovative ways to reduce costs.

POLICY F-4: Analyze the fiscal impact on County resources of providing new types of services or facilities.

POLICY F-5: Analyze fiscal impact of creating Transportation Reinvestment Zones (TRZs).

Growth Guidance Plan

Introduction

The Growth Guidance Plan is built on LWTP Goals, Objectives, Growth Principles, and Policies and illustrates where the County will encourage development and where it will encourage conservation through its practices and policies. It integrates market trends and community values relative to both preferred development patterns and conservation priorities. Information in the CAMPO Centers and Emerging Development map (Map 13) is the basis of the development component of the Growth Guidance Plan. Information in the Conservation Priorities map (Map 14) is the basis of the conservation component of the growth guidance plan.

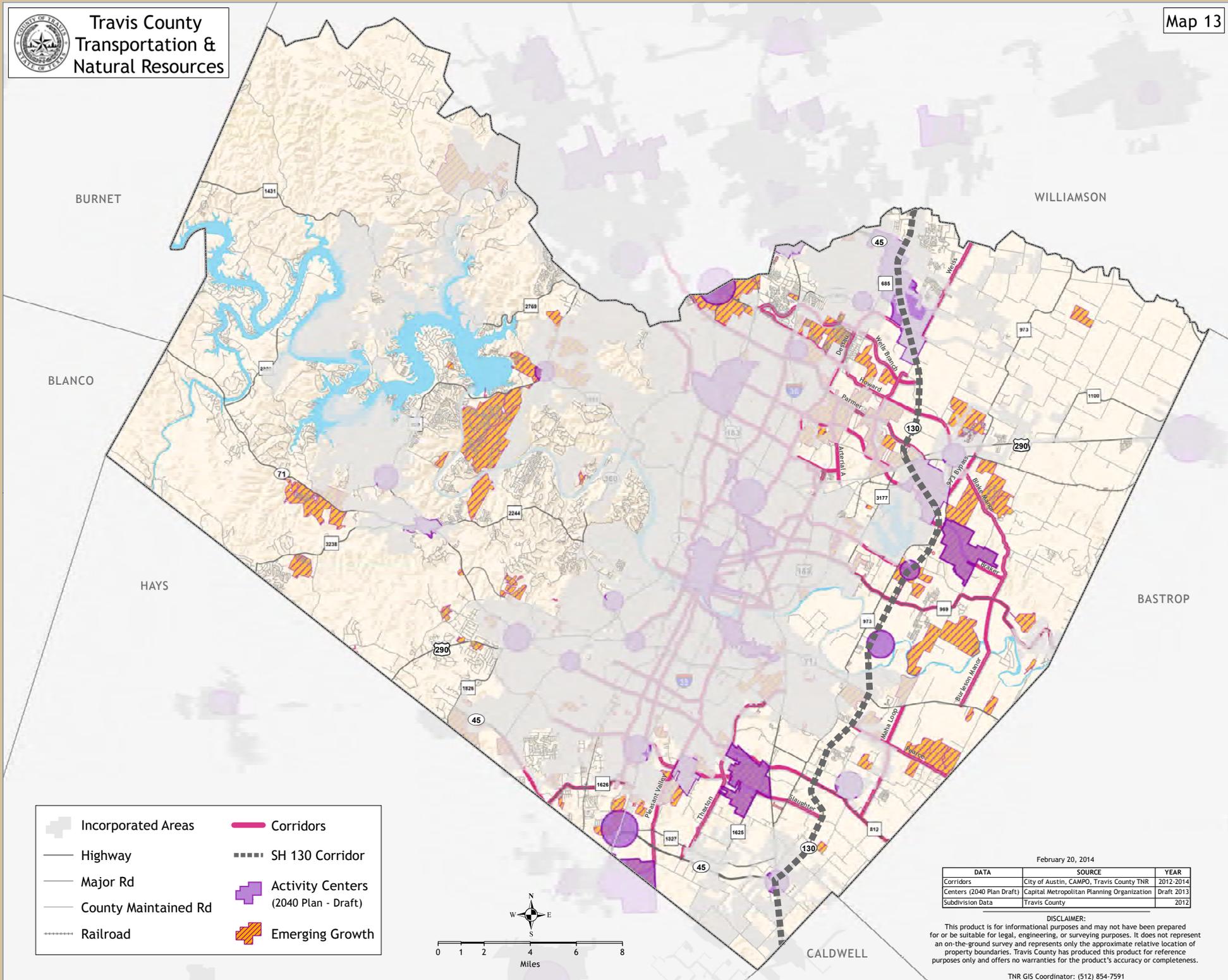
Campo Centers and Emerging Development

The CAMPO Centers and Emerging Development map (see *Map 13*) shows the areas that are expected to develop through identification of emerging projects and locations of proposed Activity Centers.

Emerging Growth: These areas are identified as prominent development locations in the unincorporated area of the County. Many of the locations are occurring along the SH 130 corridor especially north of the Colorado River. While some emerging projects are located south of the Colorado River, those projects have been found closer to incorporated limits of the City of Austin, such as Pilot Knob MUDs and the Goodnight Ranch subdivision. Much of the larger emerging projects are mixed use developments being developed through municipal utility districts (MUD's) or Public Improvement Districts (PID's). The densities of land uses and proximity to multi-modal corridors make the larger projects candidates for center type development.

Activity Centers: By directing future growth into Centers, improvements in the region's traffic congestion hope to be realized. Growth that is supported by adequate public facilities, compact mixed uses, and alternative transportation modes will make it easier for residents to live work and play. By doing so, opportunities become available to provide for parkland, greenways, conservation of prime farmland and allow for sustainable water sources.

- Many of existing CAMPO Centers have proposed emerging projects
- Predominant center locations are proposed along the SH 130 corridor and proposed transportation corridors



	Incorporated Areas		Corridors
	Highway		SH 130 Corridor
	Major Rd		Activity Centers (2040 Plan - Draft)
	County Maintained Rd		Emerging Growth
	Railroad		



February 20, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Corridors	City of Austin, CAMPO, Travis County TNR	2012-2014
Centers (2040 Plan Draft)	Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization	Draft 2013
Subdivision Data	Travis County	2012

DISCLAIMER:
This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries. Travis County has produced this product for reference purposes only and offers no warranties for the product's accuracy or completeness.

TNR GIS Coordinator: (512) 854-7591

- Opportunities allow for expansion and connection of centers in the unincorporated area along transportation corridors
- Western Travis County has limited Center development and few transportation corridors, connectivity is problematic

CONSERVATION PRIORITIES IN UNINCORPORATED TRAVIS COUNTY

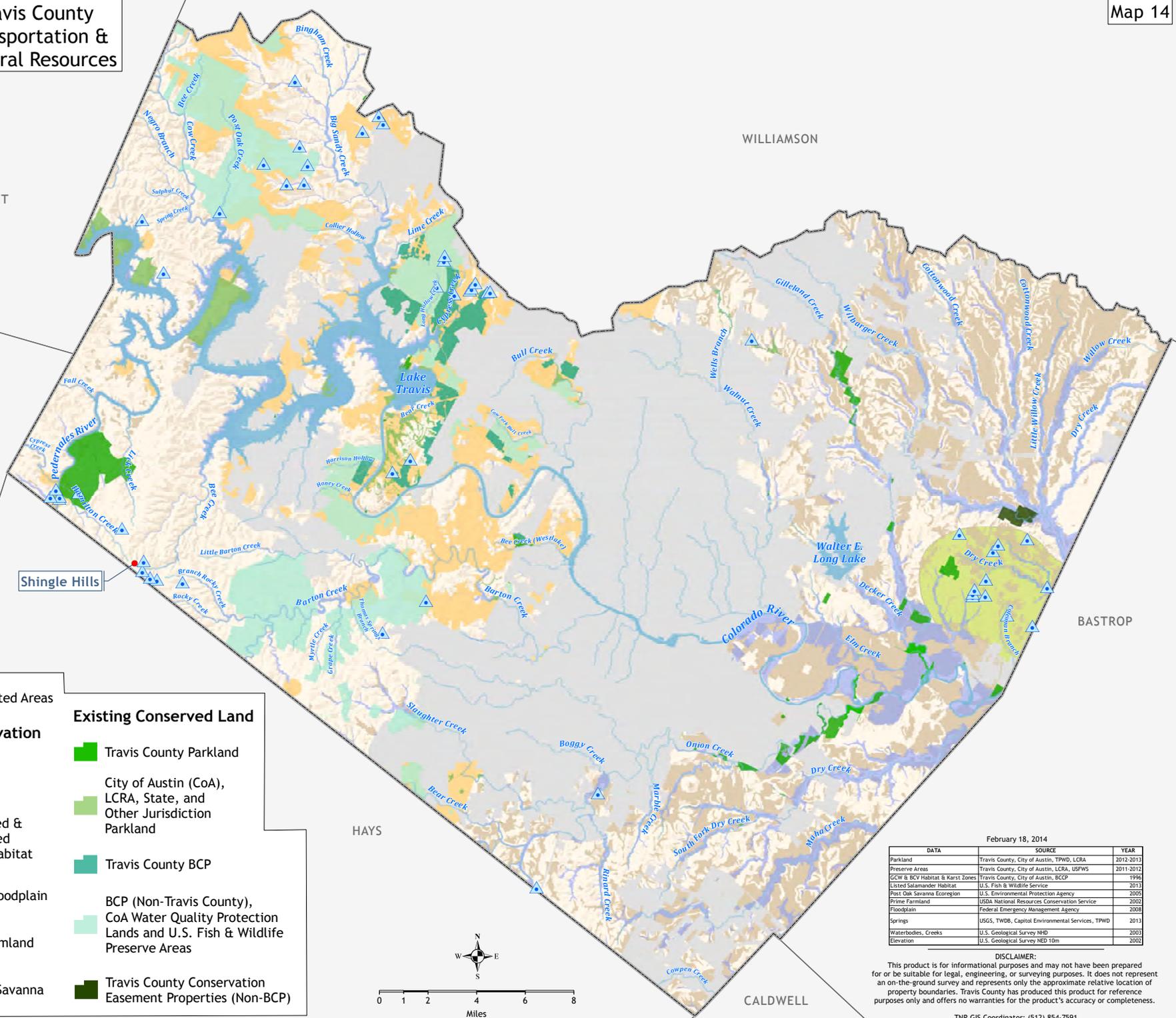
Conservation priorities are the major land and water resources distributed throughout the county that are valued by the community for both their natural functions and qualities that contribute to the sense of Travis County as a special place (See *Map 14*).

Prime Farmland: Conserving prime farmland maintains local agricultural productivity and preserves the rural character of unincorporated Travis County. Almost all prime farmland is located in Eastern Travis County.

Post Oak Savanna: Conserving Post Oak Savanna preserves the natural character and ecological diversity of the county (the three other eco-regions in the county -- Blackland Prairie, Floodplains and Low Terraces, and Edwards Plateau -- are conserved indirectly, i.e., as prime farmland, floodplains, and/or endangered species habitat). The Post Oak Savanna is located in far eastern Travis County.

Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat: Conserving threatened and endangered species habitat protects the biological diversity of the county and satisfies the requirements of the Endangered Species Habitat. Threatened and endangered species habitat is located exclusively in western Travis County.

100-Year Floodplain: Conserving 100-year floodplains protects water resources by improving groundwater recharge and attenuating runoff. It also provides opportunities to preserve or restore natural ecosystems, provide wildlife habitat, develop linear parks for recreational and multi-modal transportation uses, and mitigate storm water damage. Floodplains occur throughout Travis County but represent extensive areas with potential for land conservation in the eastern portion.



Land Conservation Priorities

- Springs
- Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat
- 100- yr Floodplain
- Prime Farmland
- Post Oak Savanna

Existing Conserved Land

- Travis County Parkland
- City of Austin (CoA), LCRA, State, and Other Jurisdiction Parkland
- Travis County BCP
- BCP (Non-Travis County), CoA Water Quality Protection Lands and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Preserve Areas
- Travis County Conservation Easement Properties (Non-BCP)

Incorporated Areas

- Incorporated Areas



February 18, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Parkland	Travis County, City of Austin, TPWD, LCRA	2012-2013
Preserve Areas	Travis County, City of Austin, LCRA, USFWS	2011-2012
GCW & BCW Habitat & Karst Zones	Travis County, City of Austin, BCCP	1996
Listed Salamander Habitat	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	2013
Post Oak Savanna Ecoregion	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	2005
Prime Farmland	USDA National Resources Conservation Service	2002
Floodplain	Federal Emergency Management Agency	2008
Springs	USGS, TWDB, Capitol Environmental Services, TPWD	2013
Waterbodies, Creeks	U.S. Geological Survey NHD	2003
Elevation	U.S. Geological Survey NED 10m	2002

DISCLAIMER:
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TNR GIS Coordinator: (512) 854-7591

Western Travis County Waterways: Protecting the Pedernales River and other Lake Travis tributaries protects the major drinking water supply for Central Texas. Therefore, establishing environmental buffers along these creeks and river is a conservation priority in support of maintaining the outstanding reservoir water quality residents value.

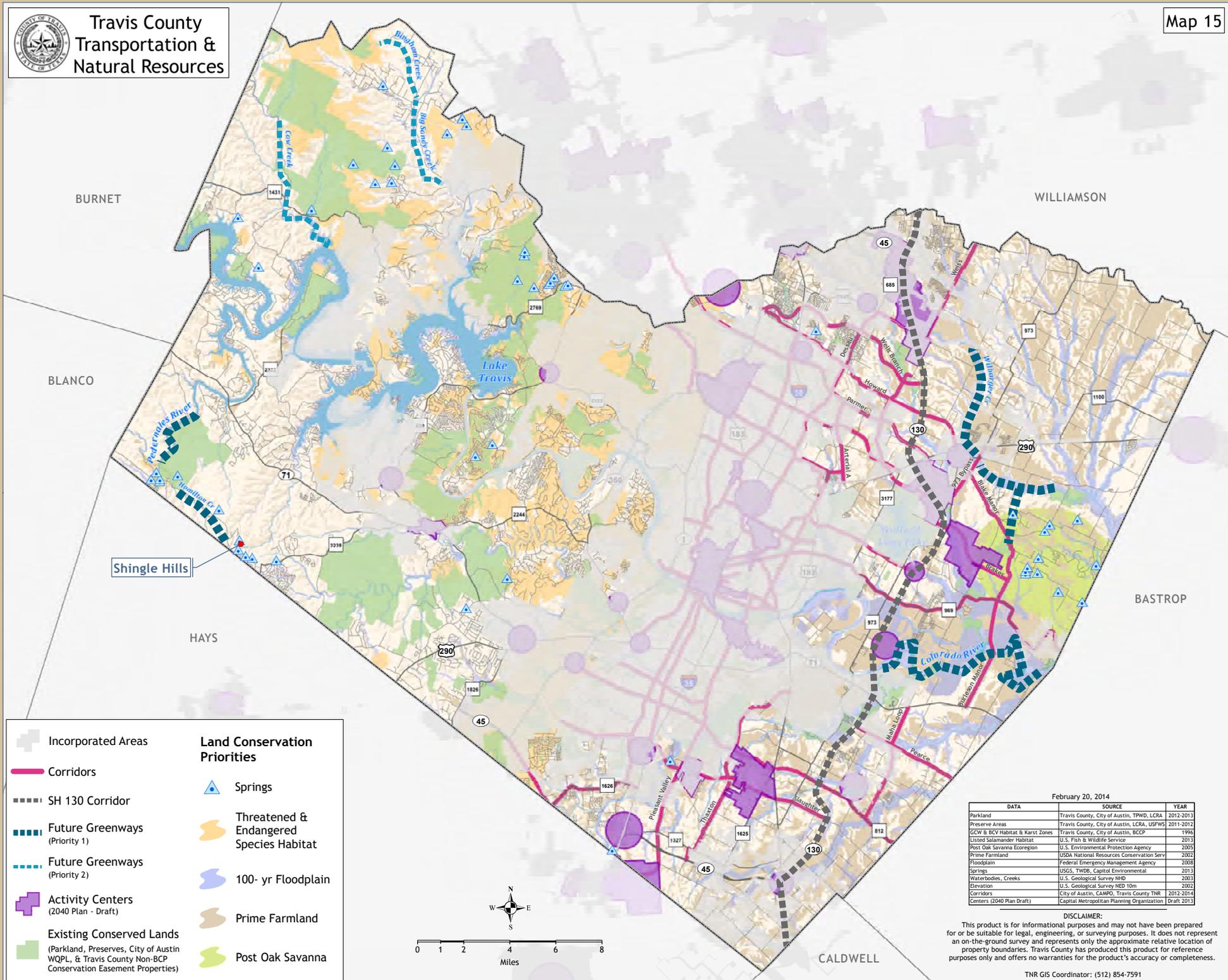
Springs: Conserving springs protects the natural character of the county and preserves habit for animal and plant species that thrive in spring ecosystems. Most known spring locations are in the karst landscape of western Travis County but the Post Oak Savanna has many springs as well.

Aquifers and Outcrops: Aquifers and Outcrops are not identified as a conservation priority per se because they are instead protected indirectly by conserving land resources, i.e., waterways and endangered species habitat in western Travis County and prime farmland and floodplains in eastern Travis County.

GROWTH GUIDANCE PLAN (see *Map15*)

Adjacency to Utilities Driving Location of New Development: Undeveloped land near developed tracts that have adequate infrastructure are identified as “lands most susceptible” to change. Past trends within the region show that this growth was accommodated in low density single family developments along the edges of existing urban areas. These undeveloped tracts along the periphery of the incorporated areas of the County create challenges in the planning for future Activity Centers that allow for conservation of natural resources and provide for future greenways.

SH 130 Growth Corridor: Forecasted growth is occurring along the SH 130 Corridor. Policy direction that allows for new development patterns can provide improvements to congestion and preserve natural resources in western Travis County. By directing new growth along this corridor, the protection of natural resources in eastern Travis County becomes critical to the development of this corridor. These opportunities lie in land areas unconstrained by flood plains, endangered species habitat, water resources, or prime farmland areas.



BURNET

WILLIAMSON

BLANCO

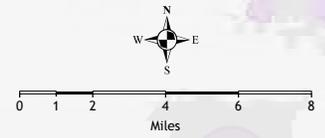
BASTROP

HAYS

CALDWELL

Shingle Hills

	Incorporated Areas	Land Conservation Priorities
	Corridors	
	SH 130 Corridor	
	Future Greenways (Priority 1)	Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat
	Future Greenways (Priority 2)	
	Activity Centers (2040 Plan - Draft)	100- yr Floodplain
	Existing Conserved Lands (Parkland, Preserves, City of Austin WQPL, & Travis County Non-BCP Conservation Easement Properties)	
		Prime Farmland
		Post Oak Savanna



February 20, 2014

DATA	SOURCE	YEAR
Parkland	Travis County, City of Austin, TPWD, LCRA	2012-2013
Preserve Areas	Travis County, City of Austin, LCRA, USFWS	2011-2012
GCW & BCW Habitat & Karst Zones	Travis County, City of Austin, BCCP	1996
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Corridors	City of Austin, CAMPO, Travis County TNR	2012-2014
Centers (2040 Plan Draft)	Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization	Draft 2013

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Support Activity Center and Transportation Corridor Concept: Activity Centers were identified through the CAMPO 2040 long range transportation planning process. They are supported by jurisdictions and other implementing planning agencies through previous comprehensive or development plan approvals. They represent planned mixed-use environments that possess increased densities and diverse land use supported by transportation corridors that provide alternative transportation modes. Ultimately, congestion is reduced through reductions in the number of single occupant vehicle trips within the region and new developments are supported that allow for residents to live, work and play.

Support Opportunities to Leverage Infrastructure Investments in Activity Centers: New trends in development will require the County to leverage infrastructure investment to support Activity Centers. Travis County through the use of Tax Increment Finance Districts, Public Improvement Districts, and other innovative finance mechanisms can support the needed infrastructure and public amenities that will be required to develop these activity centers. Continuance in public-private partnerships and development agreements are leveraging techniques that should be continued to support the Activity Center concept.

Develop Transportation Corridors Connecting to Centers and SH 130: The identification of priority corridors allows for multimodal improvements to support the Activity Center concept. Increased mobility choice can be created through the reconstruction of and development of arterials within and connecting activity centers to be more bus, bicycle, and pedestrian friendly.

Develop Corridors along Rivers and Creeks: Develop corridors along rivers and creeks that connect to residential, commercial, civic, and land conservation nodes and the transportation network and that are comprised of parks, conservation easements on private lands, open space in conservation developments, and water quality protection zones.

Priority 1 Corridors

- Colorado River (FM 973 to Webberville Park)
- Hamilton Creek (Shingle Hills to Hamilton Pool)
- Pedernales River (West Cave Preserve to north boundary of Reimers Ranch Park)
- Wilbarger Creek (City of Pflugerville to Wilbarger Creek conservation land with secondary branch to East Metro Park)

Priority 2 Corridors

- Big Sandy Creek/Bingham Creek (Leander to USFW Wildlife Refuge)
- Cow Creek (Lake Travis to USFW Wildlife Refuge)

Aggregate Priority Land Resources: Aggregate priority land resources to optimize natural benefits and community character.

- Post Oak Savanna
- Prime Farmland
- Shingle Hills
- Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat

E: ACTION PLAN

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

LAND

Parks and Land Conservation Master Plan

Update the Parks Master Plan in accordance with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) master plan guidelines, Conservation Subdivision Ordinance requirements, and Travis County growth guidance planning policies.

Parks and Land Conservation Bond Program

Develop project selection and prioritization criteria consistent with Travis County growth guidance policies and prepare a preliminary list of parks and land conservation projects to be finalized by a citizen bond advisory committee (appointed by Commissioners Court).

Conservation Easement Program Update

Review *Travis County Conservation Easement Program Guidelines* with the Land Conservation Work Group and revise as necessary for consistency with Travis County growth guidance policies.

WATER

Drainage Bond Program

Develop project selection and prioritization criteria consistent with Travis County growth guidance policies and prepare a preliminary list of drainage projects to be finalized by a citizen bond advisory committee (appointed by Commissioners Court).

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Plan

Develop a comprehensive multimodal transportation plan for the unincorporated area of Travis County in accordance with growth guidance planning polices and is coordinated with the development of CAMPO’s regional transportation plan.

Bike/Ped/Trail Plan

Develop a comprehensive plan that integrates pedestrian, bicycle and trail facilities.

High Accident Study

Update study to identify and provide recommendations for improving high accident locations within the unincorporated area of Travis County.

Transportation Bond Program

Develop project selection and prioritization criteria consistent with Travis County growth guidance policies and prepare a preliminary list of transportation projects to be finalized by a citizen bond advisory committee (appointed by Commissioners Court).

Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessment

Participate with stakeholders in an assessment that allows the region to identify and rank transportation system components that are vulnerable to extreme weather events such as flooding, drought, extreme heat events and wildfires.

INTER-RELATED

Natural Disaster Mitigation Plan

Update the plan to identify and prioritize capital improvement projects for mitigating natural disasters.

REGULATION AND PERMITTING

LAND

Conservation Subdivision Ordinance

Review, update, and obtain Court approval of a revised *Conservation Subdivision Ordinance*.

Single Office Agreements

Identify opportunities to establish Inter-local Agreements (ILAs) with willing municipalities to regulate subdivision plats and permits in ETJs and execute where feasible.

Threatened and Endangered Species Monitoring

Monitor listing of new threatened and endangered species and identify impacts of habitat on development.

WATER

Trinity Aquifer Groundwater Conservation District

Establish a stakeholders group and facilitate establishment of a Trinity Aquifer Groundwater Conservation District.

Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer

Assess the impacts of growth on the quality and quantity of the Colorado River Alluvial Aquifer and develop water resource protection rules.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Criteria Manual

Participate with the City of Austin in the updating of transportation guidelines and design criteria for use in the unincorporated area of Travis County.

Roadway Load Limits Regulations

Analyze fiscal impact of requiring overweight vehicle permits for using load limited roads.

INTER-RELATED

Growth Guidance Legislative Issues

Identify growth guidance issues related to land, water, and transportation that require legislative action.

NEW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

LAND

Dark Skies Initiative

Research and report on “dark skies” issues and opportunities, including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of the initiative.

Farmland Preservation Initiative

Research and report on preserving prime farmland issues and opportunities, including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of the initiative.

Scenic Roadways Initiative

Research and report on scenic roadway issues and opportunities, including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of the initiative.

Public Outreach Program: Best Land Conservation Practices

Propose a program for promoting best land conservation practices including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of implementing the program.

Public Outreach Program: FireWise

Propose a program for promoting FireWise practices including an assessment of the public safety, fiscal, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of implementing the program.

WATER

Sustainable Roadside Protocols

Research and report on Sustainable Roadside issues and opportunities, including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of implementing the protocols.

Integrated Stormwater, Floodplain Management, and Water Quality Program

Consider further integration of development reviews related to drainage, stormwater, floodplain, and water quality.

Water Supply Service

Research and report on water supply service issues and opportunities, including an assessment of the fiscal, quality of life, and environmental benefits and disadvantages of implementing the protocols.

INTER-RELATED

Resource Leveraging Program

Research and report on a program for proactively leveraging resources to implement the LWTP, including an assessment of the fiscal benefits and disadvantages of implementing the program.

Public Needs and Preference Studies

Research and evaluate opportunities to partner with local entities for regular, scientific surveys of county residents' needs and preferences.

Prosperous Places Program

Evaluate feasibility of using CAPCOG’s Prosperous Places Program’s advanced strategic planning and community analytics effort for County purposes.

Sustainability Indicators Project

Evaluate feasibility of participating in the Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project analytics program.

Growth Monitoring and Impacts Report

Research and report annually on growth in unincorporated areas of the County and its fiscal and environmental impacts.

APPENDIX A: FUNDING FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS¹

TYPE OF FUNDING	SOURCE OF FUNDING				NOTES
	<i>Travis County</i>	<i>Landowner/ Developer</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Other</i>	
County and City General Funds, General Obligation Bonds, and Certificates of Obligation	X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional revenue sources for financing capital improvements. • Many cities traditionally funds roads only inside city limits.
Participation Agreement	X	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing roads: combine County and City funding with landowner funding (public/private partnership). • Many cities traditionally funds roads only inside city limits.
Public Improvement District (PID) (with bonds or without)		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: Landowners pay assessments. • Has been used by City and landowners: Indian Hills, Whisper Valley, and Estancia. • City funds roads in city limits <u>and ETJ</u>.

¹ Prepared by Tom Nuckols, Travis County Attorney.

Public Improvement District (continued)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PID can either issue bonds <u>or</u> serve as a post-construction lien device to defer payment of landowner’s share until after a developer has bought the land. • Potential for creating a “roadway construction revolving fund” for future roadways. • Can combine with Participation Agreement to create public/private partnership.
Road District Bonds		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: Landowners pay district property tax or assessment. • Successful roads districts include Golden Triangle and Bee Cave-Galleria. • District can fund roads in city limits <u>and ETJ</u>. • Can combine with TIF or TIRZ to create public/private partnership.
Tax Abatement	X		X	X (other taxing entities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxing entities can abate taxes in exchange for private entity building roads (public/private partnership). • Traditional model for economic development. • Taxing entities other than ISDs may participate.

Tax Abatement (continued)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can fund roads in city limits <u>and ETJ</u>. • Diverts tax revenue needed for County services.
City Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Bonds.	X		X	X (other taxing entities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City issues bonds backed by pledge of tax revenue from taxing entities. • Traditional model for economic development. • Other taxing entities may participate. • Can fund roads in city limits <u>and ETJ</u>. • City can commit property <u>and sales tax</u> increment to pay back bonds. • Travis County can commit county property tax increment to pay back bonds. • Diverts tax revenue needed for City/County services.
City or County Transportation Infrastructure Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)	X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City issues bonds backed by pledge of tax revenue from taxing entities. • County can pledge tax revenue, but not issue bonds. • Can fund roads in city limits <u>and ETJ</u>. • Combine with road district: District issues bonds and City and County pledge tax increment to district. • Diverts tax revenue needed for City/County services.

Venue Statute Bonds				X (tourists)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: hotel tax, rent car tax, parking tax, etc. • Limited to certain types of facilities. • Has been used by City of San Antonio, Bexar County, City of Austin, and Harris County. • Can fund roads in city limits <u>and</u> ETJ. • Requires an election.
County Assistance District				X (consumers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: District can impose sales tax for roads and economic development. • Cannot result in sales tax above state maximum of 8.25%. • Requires an election. • Commissioners Court can be governing body of district. • Potential for County to collect sales tax outside city limits?
Existing City Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)				X (tourists)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: City can use HOT to “transport tourists from hotels to tourist attractions.” • Road must be owned and operated by the city <u>or</u> privately-owned, but

					partially financed by the city.
Neighborhood Empowerment Zone			X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows city to abate property taxes and refund sales taxes. Simpler process than traditional tax abatements.
Municipal Management District (with or without bonds).		X		X (consumers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: District can impose sales tax and assessments. TCEQ or Legislature must create. Applies to commercial property only. Board consists of residents or property owners.
Municipal Development District (with or without bonds).				X (consumers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-County revenue source for financing capital improvements: District may impose sales tax. May include city limits <u>and</u> ETJ. City appoints board. Requires an election in the district.
State Infrastructure Bank				X (TxDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TxDOT can loan money for state roads.
380/381 Agreements	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great flexibility. Can be used to combine any of the above tools.

