R/UDAT ★ AUSTIN

IMPLEMENTATION

A Call...

To Action
Report of the R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN Implementation Committee

Submitted to
The Citizens of Austin
May 15, 1992

Sponsored by: Austin Chapter, American Institute of Architects
City of Austin
Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
In 1898 Congress Avenue and Sixth Street, known then as Pecan Street, featured pedestrian traffic and a rail transit system.
At the heart of Austin is open space: a land of wildflowers, waterways and hilltops. One of its most dynamic features is its setting on the banks of the Colorado River at the foot of the Texas Hill Country. From Mirabeau B. Lamar's decision to establish the capital of the Republic on this soil, Austin has struggled to blend its heritage of natural beauty with its vision of urban growth. Current concerns to protect the environment in the midst of urban development parallels the caution city planners expressed three generations ago.

In 1839, Edwin Waller laid out an exemplary plan for Austin, balancing east and west around a central axis connecting the Colorado River to a new state capitol, and flanked by a creek on either side. In 1928, Austin's leaders adopted a progressive city plan, the first since 1839. This plan marked a turning point for urban design and framed the Austin of 1992. The plan recognized the importance of preserving the city's natural beauty and open space. It established a parks and recreation department that guaranteed for future generations the enjoyment of such amenities as Barton Springs and Zilker Park. At the same time, however, the plan racially segregated the city. This decision to separate its people and commerce would strain Austin's social fabric for decades. Today's Austinites must carry forward the environmental vision of yesteryear, but continue to reverse the racial division inherent in the 1928 plan.

Austin is quintessential Texas, a place that offers the best of city and country. Austin is bluebonnets and blues, history and hill country, research and recreation. It is the center of a government that guides a land so diverse it is described as a "whole other country."

Austin is also home to a population of culturally diverse, educated, energetic and creative residents who are proud of their city and who are interested in promoting the success of its economic heart: Downtown. Downtown includes college and university communities, the State Capitol complex, the governmental seat of Travis County, a broad spectrum of commercial enterprises, and integral and adjacent neighborhoods. This population is augmented by the million and a half visitors who travel to the capital city each year. Downtown Austin is the center of government, education, culture and ideas for the Lone Star State. However, Downtown cannot fulfill this role and potential unless careful attention is given to issues that accompany growth and evolution. Responsibility for, and benefits from, its development and social well-being must be shared by everyone.

As a city grows, so do the complexities of sustaining its quality of life. An urban center encompasses architecture and open space, culture and commerce, transportation efficiency and pedestrian accessibility, work and recreation. However, the vitality of urban life centers around people. Crime, pollution, substance abuse and homelessness drain vitality and deplete both human capital and natural resources.

Difficulties also arise from the fragmented structure of Downtown. Effective mass transit and Downtown circulator systems must unite the economic, cultural, residential and governmental centers of the Downtown community. Some neighborhoods are frustrated by a lack of meaningful inclusion in city planning. Insensitivity regarding these issues will further divide the community and reduce its ability to effect positive results.
Austin is a place where people want to live and do business. Keeping it thriving is a matter of addressing a broad spectrum of economic and social issues. The job is too big for government, business, academia or citizens to handle alone. But a joint effort by a representative group can work together to ensure the success of Downtown’s role as the driving force of Austin. Downtown must become everyone’s neighborhood.

In 1989, a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) was invited to Austin to analyze current Downtown conditions and to recommend strategies to usher Austin into the 21st century. That assessment is documented in the report “R/UDAT AUSTIN,” January 21, 1991. The results of further consideration and investigation by the R/UDAT Implementation Committee are documented in this report.

This document provides a proposal for revitalizing Downtown Austin. Recommendations, some calling for specific actions and others encouraging further discussion or investigation, are intended to provide a framework which will coordinate other planned and spontaneous initiatives.

The call to action is being sounded. More than six decades have passed since a comprehensive Downtown proposal was implemented. Now is the time for the Downtown community to unite in commitment to a revitalized Downtown.

**URBAN DESIGN**

Cities should aim to unify function and form. Residents and visitors should feel that Downtown is a spacious, inviting structure, with well-placed corridors and a sensible blueprint. Downtown Austin should be a place to go to, not through. Achieving this goal means using varied methods of transportation, slowing and reducing automobile traffic, and increasing pedestrian activity. The overall goal is to create user-friendly linkages to connect Downtown’s nerve centers. Installing a transportation circulator system (expanded Capital Metro 'Dillo routes and/or trolley) will achieve an efficient network. Efforts should be undertaken to link East Austin with Downtown. The physical and psychological barrier of Interstate 35 must be reduced.

Congress Avenue and East and West Sixth Street are vital components of Austin’s urban design. Congress Avenue is the center of the city’s business community. Sixth Street by day is a collage of specialty shopping opportunities and by night is a panorama of live music, dining and entertainment. Soon, the Convention Center will present another district of commerce and entertainment. The Center is a bold step toward revitalizing Downtown.

Downtown benefits economically and culturally from the presence of the University of Texas and the Capitol complex. However, linkages between these areas are weak or non-existent. Better transportation along Congress Avenue will produce unity among these vital elements. This linear relationship should begin at the river’s edge, flow along Congress Avenue through the Capitol complex, and culminate with a gateway marking the entrance to the University. This upgrade will restore stature to Congress Avenue, the Grand Boulevard of Texas.

A successful Downtown is a 24-hour Downtown; a positive mix of residential and commercial areas is necessary. People must want to live as well as work in Downtown. Every effort therefore should be made to
encourage Downtown residential development. In order to maintain this metropolitan blend, regulations should prevent commercial expansion from encroaching on established neighborhoods.

Downtown Austin is preservation as well as innovation. The City’s Historic Landmark Commission must develop meaningful regulations to ensure preservation of historic buildings that enhance Downtown’s character and boost its tourism. The Capitol building is the crown jewel of Austin’s rich history and work is under way to restore its grandeur. The Capitol restoration is another bold step toward revitalizing Downtown. This blend of past and present gives Austin its rich texture and personality. The city’s heritage must resonate through its urban future.

(see page 13 for detailed recommendations)

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Downtown’s urban setting, contrasted against the backdrop of hills and lakes, gives the city its unique character. Residents and visitors enjoy a large and diverse parks system offering a range of recreational and cultural amenities, from boating and hiking to picnics and concerts on the shores of Town Lake. These open spaces and waterways provide Downtown’s natural borders. This blend of commerce and recreation has long attracted residents and businesses in search of a better quality of life. The economic prosperity of Downtown depends on protecting this balance between mankind and nature.

The natural environment is a fragile system. Therefore, use and enjoyment should be balanced with care and preservation if Austin is to preserve its unique character. Water and air pollution from automobiles, and litter lining the banks of Town Lake are two examples of current environmental degradation. Environmental degradation affects all segments of the population, but Austin has always been environmentally conscious, and its residents are determined to preserve and enhance this ecological bounty. Vigilance on the part of the City, business community and private citizens will ensure this goal is achieved.

Litter threatens the delicate ecological balance.

Paramount to the use and enjoyment of these natural amenities is ease of access. Natural linkages between Town Lake, Waller and Shoal creeks, the Convention Center, and other areas of Downtown are inadequate and should be enhanced and maintained. Town Lake
"Pushcart Charlie" prepares to search for aluminum on East Fourth Street.

deserves special emphasis because of the north shore’s proximity to hotels and the new Convention Center. The south shore, as home to Zilker Park, Barton Springs, the Hillside Theater and Auditorium Shores, is equally vital.

Preservation of our surroundings is crucial. Enhancing the beauty of both shores will add to the desirability of Downtown as a place to visit rather than bypass. The relationship between Downtown and its natural environment should be a relationship of urban form and open space. (see page 17 for detailed recommendations)

COMMUNITY ISSUES

The spirit of Downtown transcends its structures. People, not buildings, are its soul. People are a city’s most precious resource. Every structure built, every park cultivated, every landmark preserved is a reflection of a desire to elevate our quality of life. But in striving to advance, a city sometimes alienates and divides members of its population. While people are a community’s most precious resource, they are
also in danger of becoming its most neglected.

Austin, like most cities, faces the serious problems of homelessness and transience. They are issues that emotionally divide the community. Complicating the situation is the proximity of social service agencies to central Downtown. On one hand, there are those who believe these services should be kept Downtown. On the other, some consider that the presence of these individuals disrupts business and that the agencies assisting them should be located elsewhere.

This is a controversial issue, but all must realize that urban centers are the home of the homeless. Moving facilities that care for them to outlying areas will not alleviate the problem. This issue is, and will remain, a challenge for Downtown. With this understanding, the community can move forward. Public and private support is needed to meet this social challenge. The City must provide a comprehensive mental health, alcohol/drug rehabilitation, and housing center. Developing a policy of compassion for transience, homelessness and substance abuse must be part of Austin’s vision.

Basic community services are an essential ingredient. Downtown must be perceived as safe, clean and active. The safety of residents and patrons is dependent upon increased police protection and continued enforcement of curfew and alcohol consumption ordinances. The new Convention Center requires establishment of a special police district for Downtown. Daily cleaning of alleys and streets remains under the City’s jurisdiction, but property owners and businesses should shoulder more responsibility for Downtown’s condition. Beautification is a marketing tool that should be vigorously encouraged.

(see page 21 for detailed recommendations)

The Ballet Folklorico is one of many cultural arts offerings.
But artistic expression requires a forum for exhibition. A Comprehensive Cultural Arts Facilities Plan will create Downtown arts venues to accommodate Austin artists and art organizations. This vision recognizes the city's diverse cultural composition and its specific needs. This plan will present questions of design, management and funding. Although this task is enormous, nurturing the cultural arts environment will be a catalyst in revitalizing Downtown.

Central to the development of artistic unity is the creation of a Cultural Arts District, accomplished by coordinating the activities of arts organizations, the Parks and Recreation Department, Austin Arts Commission and the City of Austin. These facilities should share in marketing opportunities and be located throughout the Downtown area. The Cultural Arts District will serve artists in the local, regional, national and international markets. Additionally, it will include the existing arts facilities and organizations, as well as future development. The Cultural Arts District will provide and nurture a multicultural environment where everyone can enjoy a variety of events. Furthermore, a district will allow our vibrant arts community to reach its full potential as an important part of Austin's economy. Festivals and special events should be arranged in concert with specific city departments and private organizations. These joint projects between cultural and commercial entities can showcase and promote Austin-based artists and cultural arts organizations, adding a myriad of cultural and economic benefit.

Visitors and residents alike can benefit from the development of the Austin arts scene. Talent, energy and ambition exist within the artistic community, but development of these attributes requires commitment on the part of civic leaders to establish Austin as a first-class cultural arts showcase. (see page 25 for detailed recommendations)

Transportation

Downtown's future success depends on an effective transportation system linking its main components. The main components of Downtown, the University, Capitol complex, central business district, Town Lake and East Austin are disconnected. Consequently, mobility is impaired and the potential for interaction is reduced. The University's students and employees find it difficult to patronize Downtown shops and restaurants. Visitors are bewildered by unclear tourist routes and the lack of accessible transportation. East Austin businesses find it difficult to attract customers because of insufficient access across I-35. The University, central business district and Capitol complex anchor Downtown's economy, but inadequate circulation between them restricts their interaction. Ineffective mass transit inhibits Downtown opportunities.

At the heart of these challenges is the automobile. Without it, access to Downtown's amenities is often impossible. With it, travelling Downtown brings congested traffic and inadequate parking. Auto traffic increases air pollution, depletes energy resources, causes delay and burdens the taxpayer with costs for roadway expansion and improvement.

Improved mobility and reduced traffic congestion hinge upon mass
The adopted system should encourage pedestrian traffic, decrease and slow automobile traffic, stop frequently at popular sites, be affordable and environmentally sensitive. Capital Metro must act to establish a Downtown circulator system. Transit would be augmented with the installation of a light rail system that serves Downtown and outlying Austin communities. A public transit system that links all segments of Downtown can create an integrated environment, providing access to recreation, commerce and culture.

(see page 29 for detailed recommendations)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Downtown must regain its position as the economic hub of the city through the implementation of a progressive economic development plan. Downtown, however, is no longer perceived solely as a center of commerce but must also incorporate culture, entertainment, tourism and residential neighborhoods to maximize its chances for prosperity.

Existing amenities are a key to the future prosperity of Downtown. The Capitol, the University, Convention Center, cultural and entertainment venues and immediate proximity to Town Lake should be marketed as an economic magnet luring businesses to Downtown. These attractions, missing from Austin’s suburbs, provide a unique setting for commerce. Future action should build upon this strong base.

Downtown Austin’s role as a retail center is declining. Few stores remain, and their retail mix is limited. Some retailers only cater to the business community and are open limited hours. A healthy economic picture requires a strong retail base in Downtown, with a rich variety of attractive shops. The East Eleventh Street Business District and the East Twelfth Street Gateway must become a vital business link between East Austin and Downtown.

Small businesses are the backbone of local economies, and Austin must make it attractive for these businesses to locate Downtown. Additional initiatives to increase the number of women and minority-owned businesses are required.

The music and entertainment scene in Downtown is a rich source of revenue. The nearby Convention Center will be a vast economic resource for Austin and will provide new opportunities for attracting visitors and a larger market base. The overall economic impact of the center will be felt throughout the city. Taxi, retail stores, clubs, restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions will all benefit from its presence. Heritage tourism and marketing is another essential tool for developing Downtown and East Austin. Programs should make historic sites more interesting, accessible and attractive. Signage and walking tours should be improved. Continued funding for preservation of historic sites is critical.

Downtowns are also seen as a reflection of a community’s overall quality of life. The qualities of a city’s downtown are often considered by relocating businesses as a factor in deciding to move into an area. Therefore, it is of vital importance that an economic plan for the revitalization and future development of Downtown be implemented.

(see page 33 for detailed recommendations)
...THE ACTION

Austin's caring and energetic residents have created a wealth of projects and ideas for rejuvenating the Downtown area. Rich and diverse ideas are in abundant supply, but there is no unified body to guide their development. The success of Austin's revitalization depends on creating a Downtown Management Organization (DMO) to nurture the vision for a revitalized Downtown and to keep the momentum alive.

DMO

Acting as Austin's Downtown advocate, a DMO is management of Downtown by Downtown. The DMO will: provide leadership and oversee promotional, management and financial concerns; be a unified voice for property owners, local government, tenants and Downtown patrons; represent Downtown at the local, state and federal levels; ensure accountability in planning, funding and implementation of projects and programs; produce additional funding to implement high-priority projects and programs; interact with social, business and adjoining neighborhood organizations; underscore Downtown's role as the seat of government and the economic, cultural and social focus of the city; and consolidate the strengths of Austin's business and civic leaders.

The DMO will be run by its members and guided by a board of directors who have ultimate responsibility for DMO operations. Austin is the only major city in Texas without a Downtown Management Organization. Formation of a DMO will enhance Downtown Austin's image as the regional hub through the encouragement of commercial, retail, residential and entertainment growth.

PID

Funding for the DMO will come from the establishment of a Public Improvement District (PID). A PID is proposed as a means for the Downtown Austin community to provide adequate and equitable funds for supporting and marketing Downtown beyond the level presently provided by the public and private sectors. The PID's funds will be raised through a levy on assessed property values within the PID's boundaries. Once a PID is in place, DMO membership will be automatic for all property owners assessed in the district.

The City Council should approve authorization and formation of a Public Improvement District.

(see page 37 for detailed recommendations)
CONCLUSION

Austin is at a planning crossroads. One path leads to a future Downtown characterized by an eight-to-five existence, an ever-dwindling selection of shops and restaurants, entrenched geographical divisions, a stranglehold of cars, and a sea of blacktop where open space once prevailed. The other path leads to a Downtown with a rich cultural and retail mix, effective mass transit, abundant natural beauty, unified East and West Austin, and adequate services for those in need.

Planning is an ongoing, necessary process, but is pointless if implementation never occurs. The rapidly changing world no longer permits the luxury of continued debate and procrastination. Deciding not to decide is no longer an option. Actions taken today will frame the city for the 21st century and dictate the quality of life for future generations. It is time for Austin to evolve from a city of ideas into a city of action.

This report should be adopted by the City Council as a guide for City departments, boards and commissions, in carrying out their planning and operating functions.
Austin, as depicted in this kaleidoscopic mural, is a wealth of culture, commerce and entertainment.
FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE and potential to be a great, multifaceted city should not be left to chance. Creative and managerial energy must be expended to promote, guide, and nurture development of the vision for Austin. The detailed recommendations contained in this report provide a framework for the development of the vision for Austin in the 21st Century.

The recommendations focus on different aspects of the plan for Austin's enhancement. The components, however, are interrelated and must work in concert with one another to be effective. Each component of the plan is introduced with an icon. This icon is repeated throughout the document, highlighting recommendations in other sections that are related to the main themes.
The following constitute the most important preconditions to the creation of an effective urban design for Downtown Austin.

- The elimination of fast through traffic by the introduction of slower moving two-way traffic;
- The implementation of an effective public transportation policy based upon a downtown trolley system; and
- The implementation of steps to diminish the nature of Interstate 35 as a barrier between east and west Austin.

The central goal of downtown design is to create a downtown which is economically vital, visually attractive, compact and efficient, and functions as a high quality focus for community and regional activity. Attention needs to be focused on specific districts, projects, and urban management to be facilitated by the Downtown Management Organization. Consider the following recommendations:

**PLANNING**

Complete the Comprehensive Plan and Design Guidelines for the entire Downtown, including coordination with the State of Texas and the University of Texas.

**URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Development proposals should be reviewed against not only general performance criteria but urban design guidelines prepared for each downtown overlay district. Excellence of design and preservation of the unique character of Austin should be encouraged.

**CONGRESS AVENUE**

Recognize Congress Avenue as the Grand Boulevard of Texas. Amend zoning regulations to allow design to fit the Downtown vision. Complete the sidewalk upgrade of the 200 block of Congress.

**CONVENTION CENTER**

Complete linkages to the Convention Center, shopping areas, and eating, entertainment, parks and historical areas within the Downtown area, with a strong emphasis on pedestrian movement.

**EAST SIXTH STREET IMPROVEMENTS**

Complete the East Sixth Street improvements to create a pedestrian environment that is comfortable, safe, interesting and visually attractive. Initiate the two-way traffic conversion.
URBAN FORM AND LINKAGES

Provide a meaningful and identifiable system of multimodal linkages throughout the city that are sympathetic to the human and natural environment, strengthen identity and orientation, promote an Austin character and encourage a walking environment.

TRANSPORTATION/PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Develop a Downtown transportation plan that emphasizes Downtown as a destination point rather than a transportation passageway and reduces the intrusion of cars in favor of the creation of a pedestrian environment. Specific R/UDAT recommendations in this regard include preventing the double decking of I-35, and introducing two-way streets throughout Downtown. Any transit plan for Austin must include a system, such as a trolley, specifically designed for the efficient and attractive movement of, and service to, people in their Downtown activities.

DISTRICTS

Promote the revitalization of Downtown by creating special districts which emphasize clustered uses and thematic urban design. Districts may be defined by use, architectural character and age.

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

New development should include an internal system of Downtown open space to help organize the urban form.

REGULATORY

Revise development regulations to allow unique features of traditional Austin architecture prohibited by current regulations. Create regulations which encourage first-floor activity and retail business opportunities. Consider special building code provisions to address historic buildings.

HISTORIC BUILDING PRESERVATION/REUSE

Adopt, with the Historic Landmark Commission, meaningful regulations which contribute to the preservation and reuse of historic buildings to enhance the character of Downtown.

STREETSCAPE

Make streets more pedestrian comfortable through the provision of canopies, awnings, wide sidewalks, trees, street furniture and pocket parks.

LAKEFRONT

The lakefront should be preserved and enhanced as a unique natural feature contrasting with the built environment. It should receive the highest level of maintenance, plantings and pedestrian-way development.

WALLER CREEK

Improvements to Waller Creek should be expedited. Additional improvements to the length of the creek, including access to both banks, should be in conjunction with private development. Design review should be done by the Parks and Recreation Department along with building permit reviews.
SHOAL CREEK

Use small weirs and dams in Shoal Creek along with frequent cleanups, hardening of erosion areas, regrading of banks and lining of channels. Flooding controls, storm water retention and filtration requirements must have special provisions that recognize high-density Downtown development.

RESIDENTIAL

A successful Downtown with 24-hour use must have residential availability. Residential scale and mix of uses must be established by regulation and/or incentives to encourage housing within the area. Establish hard edges and definitive design to protect existing Downtown neighborhoods.

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY

Retrofit existing infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the handicapped. Encourage businesses to consider the needs of the handicapped within their locations.

CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT

The Seaholm Power Plant has been designated for cultural/civic uses when the present use has ceased. Planning for this facility within the framework of an Arts District should be undertaken. Additional land acquisitions should be made now to accommodate parking for the area. Palmer Auditorium should also be part of this long-range arts planning for reuse as a performing arts and music facility for Austin.

MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX

Plans for a Municipal Office Complex and Plaza at the City-owned site at Second and First Streets should be revived and implemented. Additional land should be acquired now to accommodate the needs of this complex.
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Downtown Austin is blessed by its environmental surroundings. Town Lake on the south, Waller Creek on the east and Shoal Creek on the west form a natural frame on three sides of Downtown. This report recommends future Downtown development should build on the significant investment in natural parks and open spaces which Austin has already made. The first priority is to protect the investment by repairing and maintaining existing facilities. The second priority is to improve and enhance existing facilities. Once these priorities have been addressed, new plans and new facilities should be considered.

The overall goal of the natural environment recommendations is to create environmental continuity while maintaining the natural diversity within the Downtown area. In order to achieve this goal, three subsidiary goals have been established.

EXISTING PLANS

The existing recommendations found in the Austin Convention Center District Design Guidelines (1990), Austinplan (1989), the Town Lake Comprehensive Plan (1987), C.I.P. priorities for Town Lake Park by the Waterfront Planning Advisory Board and by the Parks and Recreation Board (1989) and the Lower Waller Creek Development Plan (1976) are generally consistent with R/UDAT recommendations concerning the natural environment and, therefore, should be implemented subject to available funding.

NATURAL LINKAGES

Natural linkages between Town Lake, Waller Creek, Shoal Creek, the Convention Center, the State Capitol and other parts of Downtown Austin should be enhanced and maintained.

COORDINATION

City of Austin departments are encouraged to coordinate design and implementation of proposed projects to maximize efficient use of public resources and to ensure consistency with overall urban design objectives.

Specific short-term recommendations are:

MAINTENANCE

Increase landscaping and maintenance of Town Lake along the urban waterfront including frequent mowing, increased planting and irrigation of flower beds, and litter control and abatement in the park and in the lake. Increase hike and bike trail maintenance and erosion control measures. Clean and maintain Waller Creek from...
MAINTENANCE
(Continued)

Town Lake to Martin Luther King Boulevard. Purchase and provide personnel for a "trash barge" for Town Lake. Increase planting and maintenance of Brush Square. Increase litter control and abatement in and around Shoal Creek.

PARK/TRAIL REPAIRS, IMPROVEMENTS

Implement basic landscape improvements to the Trask House area. Eliminate the City of Austin Street and Bridge Yard and make temporary improvements to the adjacent hike and bike trail. Make repairs to restore the Shoal Creek and Waller Creek trails to create continuous linkages through Downtown.

MAPS AND SIGNAGE

Develop comprehensive tourist maps of the Downtown area that include all parks, creeks, hike and bike trails, recreation/cultural facilities and other major attractions. Encourage use of Town Lake and the existing trail system through improved signage.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Construct a separate bike trail around Town Lake. Create a significant open green space between Bouldin Avenue and Dawson Road from Riverside Drive to Barton Springs Road for cultural and recreational uses.

PROGRAMS

Reinstate the Urban Park Ranger Program to provide visitor information and security along hike and bike trails and in urban parks. Consider funding as part of Youth at Risk Program.

PLANNING

Update the Waller Creek Master Plan and develop plans for improvements to Palm Park and Trask House area, Brush Square, Waterloo Park, Shoal Creek, and the Rainey Street area.

Specific long-term recommendations are:

TOWN LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Continue to implement the Town Lake Comprehensive Plan on a phased basis as funding becomes available.

RUNOFF CONTROL MEASURES

Develop urban runoff control measures, including regional detention and filtration for flood and pollution control and develop plans for addressing chlordane, nitrogen and phosphate contamination in Town Lake.

HIKE AND BIKE TRAIL COMPLETION

Complete the hike and bike trail on the south side of Town Lake between Congress Avenue and IH-35.
PLANNING CONSISTENCY

Review proposed development projects for consistency with the updated Waller Creek Master Plan, Convention Center District Design Guidelines, the Shoal Creek Master Plan, and the Rainey Street area plan.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implement the updated Waller Creek Master Plan and the plans for improvements to Palm Park and the Trask House area, Brush Square, Waterloo Park, Shoal Creek and the Rainey Street area.

FIRST STREET PROMENADE

Develop First Street Promenade along the urban waterfront as proposed in the Town Lake Comprehensive Plan and the Convention Center District Design Guidelines.

LINKAGES

Develop and implement plans for linking Wooldridge Park, Republic Square and Town Lake through a Guadalupe Street Green Finger.

RED RIVER STREET

Improve access to Town Lake and the Rainey Street area park by realigning Red River Street south of First Street and by improving signage.
Homeless/Transient Services

1. Caritas
2. Salvation Army
3. Travis Co. Human Services
4. Austin Resource Center for the Homeless
COMMUNITY ISSUES

The major concern indicated by Downtown property owners and businesses in the public hearings during the R/UDAT visit dealt with the homeless/transient population on the streets. Homelessness/transience is a troubling issue in many cities. Solutions will require the cooperation of both public and private entities. It is obvious that the lack of funding sources in a restricted City budget will necessitate Austin as a whole continuing to stress the need for the services and programs identified by the community and R/UDAT. Also, the Downtown Management Organization should find all of these issues of great importance to the revitalization of Downtown and the success of the Convention Center.

Short-term recommendations are:

RELOCATION OF FOOD KITCHEN

Consolidate services for the homeless in the vicinity of the Salvation Army. Caritas has received financial aid from the City to rent facilities for food distribution and other services and will operate at times the Salvation Army is closed.

DAY LABOR PICK-UP

Create a structured day labor program in conjunction with the Salvation Army. A pilot program was initiated by the City but proved to be unsuccessful. A more positive response is needed from the users of this type of labor and from the workers.

RELOCATION OF HOBO

HOBO was deemed the appropriate administrator for a homeless resource center and received $115,000 from the City to provide shelter and support services. The City has agreed to lease space at 411 West Second Street to HOBO subject to certain protections provided for adjoining properties.

DETOXIFICATION PROGRAM

R/UDAT supports the findings of the Detoxification Task Force. Recommendations are the use of excess capacity in existing treatment facilities at an annual cost of $620,000 for 10-detox and 25-treatment beds. In the longer term, the City should establish a detoxification and treatment facility which would include a booking station, 70-bed detox unit and 50-bed treatment unit. Estimated annual cost of operation of such a facility on a lease basis is $3,303,749.

SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS

Increase police protection and continue enforcement of the curfew and alcohol consumption ordinances. Twelve police officers and a supervisor have been assigned to the East Sixth Street area on Friday and Saturday nights. It is expected that this
SAFETY AND CLEANLINESS
(Continued)

The enactment of the curfew and container ordinances have decreased complaint calls to the police by 25%. An ordinance prohibiting urination/defecation in public places went into effect in 1990. Resources for additional lighting and cleanliness have been installed. Additional sidewalk cleaning and extra security should be considered by a Downtown Management Organization as a possible project.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

The need for day care facilities in or near Downtown is recognized. Some facilities are being provided by organizations such as churches. The State of Texas has recently opened a center for the use of State employees at Fifteenth Street and Lavaca. The University of Texas will provide on-campus facilities for faculty, students and employees. To address the needs of City workers, nonaffiliated employees and other government workers, the Health and Human Services Department is coordinating with Travis County and the Austin Independent School District to explore the feasibility of combining resources. Various sites are under consideration. Private contractors have offered services for child care in hotels accommodating visitors.

Long-term issues are:

CONVENIENCE, SAFETY, CLEANLINESS

Although daily cleaning of alleys and streets is the duty of the City, more responsibility for the appearance of Downtown should be assumed by property owners and businesses. Beautification as a marketing tool should be encouraged.

POLICE DISTRICT

It is suggested that there should be a special police district for the Downtown area. This necessity will increase with the opening of the Convention Center. Special identifying uniforms as an aid to visitors might be considered.

BARRICADES ON EAST SIXTH STREET

After capital improvements are in place on East Sixth Street, the City should consider the use of barricades to control traffic and crowds.
In the shadow of the Capitol, a homeless man warms himself by a fire.
CULTURAL ARTS

The basic focus of these recommendations has as priorities the artists, creators of our cultural expression, the arts organizations that support and expand their activities, the citizens of Austin and the natural beauty of Town Lake and our city.

This subcommittee’s recommendations take into account the diversity of Austin’s cultural composition and its specific needs. We acknowledge the consistent support given to the arts and culture by the citizens of Austin, in part through Austin audiences, businesses, corporations, individuals and the City of Austin Cultural Affairs Division.

CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT

We recommend creation of a Downtown Cultural Arts District, within the spirit of the R/UDAT report and of the preceding statement, to serve the artists and the local, regional, national and international markets.

The Cultural Arts District is envisioned as an open space in harmony with our natural landscape and environment. This cultural magnet with individual venues, facilities and attractions will be located throughout the Downtown area, converging in a Cultural Arts District. It will attract those in the multidisciplinary arts and the general population. It will include existing arts facilities and organizations located in the area as well as future facilities; both will share common marketing and transportation linkages.

The Cultural Arts District will provide and nurture a multicultural environment where the general population can enjoy a variety of cultural events. Furthermore, the Cultural Arts District will allow our vibrant arts community to reach its full potential as an important part of Austin’s economy; a flourishing cultural life will become another major incentive for tourism.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement the Cultural Arts District, attention must be given to the following considerations:

There is great potential in the Downtown area for adaptive use of existing facilities or for the creation of new ones.
Questions of availability for new construction include costs, design, mechanisms for funding, best use of existing buildings, concrete timetables and proposed programming/management could be resolved by the Comprehensive Arts Facilities Plan. The Comprehensive Arts Facilities Plan should include the work in progress of Parks and Recreation Department and the Austin Arts Commission’s Comprehensive Arts Plan (ACAP), without exclusion of other pertinent input, which would form the basis for a Marketing Plan for the Cultural Arts.

Arts facilities planning is an enormous task which, nevertheless, needs to be implemented to protect and further develop the quality of life in Austin. The eventual realization of projects developed in a coordinated, inclusive manner within the framework provided by our statement will yield a world-class Cultural Arts District which can center the dynamics and become an inclusive force in our culturally diverse city.

We recommend the transportation linkage of the quadrants of Town Lake with Congress Avenue, Sixth Street, the Convention Center, the Waller Creek corridor, and the University of Texas.

We recommend improved maintenance of the Bike Trail and of other bike access to facilities on Town Lake, wide outside lanes on streets, and bike corridors for the bicyclists, conserving the environmental characteristics of the area as a priority. In turn, other venues will open and give maximum participation to the community in general.

Concrete initial steps should be taken specifically to solve the great need for space for arts facilities.

We recommend development of a comprehensive architectural design, an engineering and funding plan for the retrofitting of existing structures and construction of new facilities. These plans will incorporate and respect the natural landscape and environment of Town Lake as a priority.

As a long-term recommendation, we propose phased development of cultural facilities, funding options, operations and projects through maximum utilization of public and private resources. Additionally, we propose development of a central cultural facility in the Downtown area to function as an economic-tourist draw, representing Austin’s cultural heritage and varied artistic resources.
In this regard, we propose that reuse of existing city-owned facilities and resources should be considered, whenever possible.

Develop a bond issue, or means of facilitating a bond issue, for renovation/construction of following facilities:

- Palmer Auditorium (adaptive reuse)
- City Coliseum (adaptive reuse)
- Mexican American Cultural Center
- Carver Cultural Arts Center
- Paramount and State theaters*
- Discovery Hall
- Seaholm Power Plant and adjacent land**
- Cultural Arts Facilities Study
- City-owned warehouse space (adaptive reuse)


We strongly recommend structured plans for festivals and special events in coordination with the specific City departments and private organizations. These synergistic projects between cultural and commercial life in Austin will showcase and promote Austin-based artists and cultural arts organizations which serve and represent the four-county surrounding area.

Develop the public, non-profit/for-profit partnerships that will be required, and establish a Director of Cultural Affairs within the Downtown Management Organization (DMO) to oversee the implementation and coordination of these recommendations.
TRANSPORTATION

The vision as seen by R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN is to make Downtown a destination rather than a passageway; to encourage pedestrian and transit linkages within the Central Business District; to provide a circulator system between the University and Congress Avenue, between the Convention Center and East Sixth Street, between Downtown and East Austin across IH-35; and between Downtown and Town Lake and creeks in the area.

Short-term goals are:

EXPAND CAPITAL METRO 'DILLO SERVICE

Currently the 'Dillo operates on two routes which connect the Auditorium Shores area with Downtown, Capitol complex, and the southern area of the University campus. A proposal is now under consideration to add a third 'Dillo route in the summer of 1992 which would connect the Auditorium Shores parking areas with the Convention Center and many of the major Downtown hotels and tourist attractions. This route, if approved, would start operation to coincide with the opening of the Convention Center.

LINKAGES WITH EAST AUSTIN

The Texas Department of Transportation is studying the possibility of replacing some of the existing high embankment that carries the main lanes of IH-35 with bridges or a depressed roadway to reduce the visual barrier between the CBD and the area east of IH-35. It is also considering the possibility of extending Third and Fifth streets across IH-35. This extension would allow all streets from Third to Eighth to connect from the CBD to the areas east of the CBD.

STREET CONVERSIONS

The Transportation Subcommittee did a study of the CBD street systems. The following topics were addressed: traffic safety, pedestrian safety, parking conditions, capacity, signal timing, effects on the environment, transit operation, business and physical modifications, and Historic Steam Train Service. Two-way conversions require significant investment of public or private funds. Further study is required prior to the conversion of all one-way streets to two-way flow.

PARKING

A parking management plan is required to ensure that a comprehensive program is in place to meet the needs of the Convention Center, businesses, commercial establishments, office complexes and other purposes provided by the Central Business District.
PARKING
(Continued)

The plan should integrate Capital Metro's fixed routes and extensions, bus service, Downtown transit shuttle ('Dillo) service, future light rail transit service and off-street parking locations (within the core area as well as peripheral areas).

IH-35 COLLECTOR/DISTRIBUTOR SYSTEM

The Texas Department of Transportation is planning, as part of an IH-35 capacity improvement project, to provide much better access and egress from the CBD by providing a collector/distributor roadway and new ramps to the CBD that should perform better than the present configuration. Ramps that connect directly to City streets are one of the most important features of the design concept. This type of ramp requires a one-way street at its terminus to function properly. Connection to a two-way configuration would reduce capacity to an unacceptable level. The position of the Texas Department of Transportation is that Downtown cannot afford to lose capacity on the CBD streets.

TRINITY STREET SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Provide sidewalk improvements and "Texas Walk of Stars" on Trinity Street from south of First Street to the alley south of East Sixth Street. Improvements on First Street from Trinity to Red River on the south side will include the replacement of sidewalks, installation of trees, irrigation utility adjustments, pedestrian lighting and planting beds. Construction dates are October 1991 to July 1992. The original project included Second Street from Trinity to Brazos and First Street on the north side from Trinity to San Jacinto. An additional $700,000 is required to complete the work originally envisioned.

CONGRESS AVE. IMPROVEMENTS 200 BLOCK

The design phase of this project has begun. Construction will start in January 1993. The Real Estate Division is working with property owners regarding driveway access, easements and vacating right-of-way. Some of the money required is available through bonds.

EAST SIXTH STREET - PHASE I

Construction has begun on the beautification of East Sixth Street. This project includes widening sidewalks at some intersections, resurfacing walks with pavers, improved handicapped accessibility, providing sign standards, removal of trees and landscape furniture, landscaping and other enhancements. The conversion of Sixth Street to two-way traffic is also a part of this project. Construction dates are November 1991-July 1992.

LIGHT RAIL/HISTORIC TROLLEY SERVICE

Capital Metro is currently analyzing the feasibility of an electrically powered light rail transit system in the north central area of the city. Two alternative alignments in the Downtown area are being examined. If deemed feasible, a light rail could be in
operation as early as 1996. Historic trolley service could operate as a Downtown
circulator and provide the linkage of the Downtown/Convention Center to the
Capitol, the University of Texas and to the retail areas east and west of Congress
Avenue.

Long-term goals are:

HISTORIC STEAM TRAIN SERVICE

The Austin Steam Train Association, Capital Metro and the City of Austin are
currently negotiating an operating agreement which would allow the Steam Train
Association to operate an historic steam train service on the old Southern Pacific
Railroad main line.

EAST-WEST DOWNTOWN HIGHWAY

Improved access to and from Downtown is required. A highway across Downtown
connecting IH-35 to Loop 1 is not compatible with the vision of R/UDAT. Modification
to the IH-35 highway ramps will improve the safety and flow on the east.
Traffic flow to and from the west to Downtown is a major problem. Improvements
on West First, West Fifth and West Sixth streets or other west end streets are inco-
nsistent with the existing quality of living and activities. The Third Street Gateway/
Parkway proposal, consisting of space for moving automobiles and transit vehicles,
provides an alternative for accessibility needed for Downtown demands, including the
Convention Center.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The success of the plans recommended by R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN depends on Austin achieving its economic potential as a commercial center. In addition, areas adjacent to Downtown, most notably East Austin, must participate and benefit from Downtown development. The separation of East Austin from Downtown is “visual, psychological, physical and inescapable.” The approach advocated by R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN and this Call To Action is one of inclusiveness, one that recognizes the interdependence between the minority communities of East Austin and Downtown. Downtown’s interest will be served and advanced by investment in development and linkages with East Austin, and East Austin must share in the economic benefits of such development.

Downtown should:

• Offer basic services and traditional amenities but also take advantage of the latest in conveniences and technology;
• Provide a compact, multifaceted mix of business offering a panorama of merchandise and services so diverse that everyone can find something appealing and affordable;
• Provide an economic climate sufficiently rich, open and tolerant so that each person finds employment suited to his or her taste and talent;
• Offer adequate access to education, information and capital so that both economic mobility and stability are encouraged and enhanced;
• Meet the needs of all income levels;
• Reflect all cultural backgrounds;
• Provide economic opportunity to all people regardless of race, sex or ethnic origin; and
• Become rich in its compact complexity, which includes a re-emphasis on traditional, creative and aesthetic values which render the built environment amenable, habitable and enjoyable.

The success of the economic recommendations for R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN is dependent on the creation of the Downtown Management Organization. The strategies for economic development must have a broad perspective and geographic definition beyond that of the Central Business District. This approach will allow the Central Business District to work effectively to establish the linkages with East Austin, the University of Texas, the State and surrounding neighborhoods.

Specific recommendations are:

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION/MARKETING

Economically enhance the Downtown area by increasing shopping and eating destinations for Austin’s citizens and visitors.
BUSINESS REVITALIZATION/MARKETING

(Continued)

Through the auspices of the DMO, sponsor a comprehensive market analysis for Downtown and use its finding to attract new business in and for Downtown.

Focus new retail development projects to central Downtown locations and not to the periphery of Downtown.

GATEWAYS

Revitalize the gateways to Downtown and those areas immediately surrounding Downtown.

THE CITY'S ROLE

Retail revitalization efforts should take place in a public-private partnership. Public participation, at a minimum, involves staff liaison for research on sales and property tax issues. Focus should be directed to research on the tourism pool rebate to the City of Austin from the State of Texas. Additional study is also required into other state efforts to capture tourism dollars and how these efforts can benefit Austin. Authorize incentive and rebate programs to attract and retain businesses in the targeted area.

CITY OF AUSTIN REBATE INCENTIVES

SALES TAX REBATE

Implement a rebate plan based on gross sales for the first 20 entities that locate in or renew leases in the targeted area. The rebate schedule is a sliding scale over five years ranging from 1.0% in the first year, and reducing to 0.2% in the fifth year.

BUILDING PERMIT FEES

Waive or reduce building and permit fees for tenant improvements.

CURRENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Identify current incentive, rebate and abatement programs which could be used for the Downtown retail and business program.

PRIVATE INITIATIVES

Facilitate the lease or purchase of a minimum of 500 net usable square feet by each of 20 street-level retail shops or restaurants.

Ten of the new establishments shall be located in the area bounded by 11th Street, First Street, Colorado Street and Brazos Street.

Five of the establishments shall be enterprises owned by minorities and women.
PRIVATE INITIATIVES
(Continued)

HERITAGE MARKETING

Coordinate the publication of a Business Resources Directory outlining existing resources available to businesses and retail and property owners.

Heritage tourism and marketing is an essential tool for developing Downtown and East Austin. Programs to make the historic sites more interesting, accessible and attractive must be developed.

Develop tourist programs capitalizing on existing historic sites and attractions such as the Capitol and the nine national register districts. Special emphasis should be placed on the areas within easy walking distance of Downtown.

Continue support of the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Historic Landmark Commission in their ongoing efforts of preservation, heritage services and marketing.

Continue to provide funding for preservation and restoration of historic sites and buildings.

Install historic markers on appropriate buildings in Downtown and increase the use of text markers to provide visitors with greater access to interpretive information.

Expand the historic banner program to include Congress and the Bremond block and to create linkage between the Capitol and the Convention Center.

Expand visitor information services through a new visitor center located in Downtown.

Continue to develop and promote various free walking tours for visitors at regularly scheduled times as well as on special requests.

Develop a new historic walking tour for children.

Develop a new historic/anecdotal tour of East Sixth Street which features historical interpretations of buildings as well as stories about the street and its heritage.

Develop a tour of the Sixth Street area west of Congress Avenue.

Work with Capital Metro and Sixth Street businesses to arrange for the use of an open-air tram and create linkages between Downtown and the historic amenities in East Austin.

PRESERVATION

HERITAGE SERVICES
HERITAGE SERVICES
(Continued)

Develop driving tours of historic Hispanic Austin and historic African-American Austin.

Support the initiation by ACVB of a Forum of Heritage related businesses and organizations to organize and coordinate their efforts to the mutual benefit of all of the historic community in Austin. Such a forum could be used to identify marketing opportunities which cross individual property boundaries or public and private sector activities.

Develop a guide to Bed and Breakfast establishments in the inner city.

Long-term recommendations are:

MARKETING

Continue the national marketing program which features historic opportunities in Downtown and in East Austin.

Expand the marketing of the “Walk Of The Town” cassette.

Continue to develop new historic brochures.

LINKAGES WITH EAST AUSTIN

Develop measures and a timetable to ensure minority participation in the local economy.

Begin linking Downtown and East Austin along the East 11th, East Sixth, East Fifth, and East 12th street commercial corridors.

Develop a neighborhood scaled project on East 11th Street and fund it.

Link the development of vacant parcels north and south of East 11th Street and directly east of IH-35 to downtown, primarily via the East 12th Street median and landscaping, to create a significant draw to the East 11th Street area.

It is imperative that the East Austin community participate in the planning of any project and that the development capability be created in East Austin to enable the community to take advantage of linkages.

Consider linking downtown to East Austin under IH-35’s East Fourth Street underpass, using the open space under IH-35.

Support development of the Capital Metro site on East Fourth Street, east of IH-35, that benefits and has the support of the community in East Austin.
The success of R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN as a long-range planning tool is dependent on the creation of a Downtown Management Organization (DMO) to become Downtown Austin's advocate and manager. Goals of R/UDAT ☆ AUSTIN established a need for an organization responsible for leadership, promotional, management and financial concerns of Downtown Austin.

The DMO should be structured to address all aspects of planning for physical improvements, economic growth and social issues affecting Downtown. Specific areas of concern related to the goals and objectives of the plan include:

- Enhanced security and cleanliness for Downtown;
- Retail promotion and marketing;
- Promotion as Austin's urban neighborhood;
- Conventions and tourism;
- Advocacy in political and community forums; and
- Focused efforts to solve human resource issues.

The DMO should respond to the changing economic and social conditions by evaluating the relative importance of its goals and objectives. Secondly, the organization, based on the evaluation, should develop strategies to achieve these goals.

RETAIL PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Retail promotion and marketing should involve the many aspects of bringing attention to retail opportunities Downtown. Implementation of a program of promotions, both joint and individual, can be coordinated through the DMO. The DMO should be responsible for the development and oversight of Downtown management initiatives, such as retail retention and retail recruitment, based on desired mix and location such as concentrating specialty retail tenants unique in the market in the area north and west of the Convention Center. It should develop a year-round marketing program and schedule of promotions.

AUSTIN'S URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

Develop linkages with other area activity centers including the University of Texas, cultural organizations and venues, conventions and sponsors of Downtown festivals. Work with adjoining neighborhoods to ensure planned activities are both inviting to
AUSTIN'S URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

(Continued)

their residents and not detrimental to neighborhood needs.

Provide outreach to neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown and involve them in Downtown economic life. Define and use regulations to ensure an appropriate transition of Downtown land use which protects the neighborhood scale of West and East Austin.

DOWNTOWN ADVOCATE

As the advocate for Downtown interests, the DMO reviews capital, policy and other plans by the City, County and State that affect Downtown. The organization will also be responsible for developing projects consistent with the overall plan. Typical projects include safety and security related items, increased maintenance efforts and physical improvements.

DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

The establishment of the organization will require a variety of funding mechanisms, which may include start-up contributions, a Public Improvement District (PID) and/or a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). The organization will require paid staff and an operating budget. This funding should be from both public and private sectors. The City, County, University of Texas and Capital Metro are being asked to contribute, as are private businesses and land owners.

DMO START-UP CAPITAL

Start-up capital will be required for both administrative and service components of the DMO, estimated at $350,000, coming from a consortium of local financial institutions. The loan would be repaid from PID revenues.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Public Improvement District (PID) has been chosen because it is currently authorized by statute and there is precedent in other Texas cities. The creation of the PID will require approval of at least 51% of the property owners of the proposed district.

The authorized activities of the PID are varied. Those most appropriate for Austin include the authority to:

- Create and fund the DMO, and;
- Contract for district specific services such as increased security, street cleaning, paint and fix-up program, graffiti removal and landscaping improvements.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT

A Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) is not a tax abatement but a redirection of funds from the City's general revenue account to improvements specifically within TIF boundaries. The TIF freezes the tax base at the time of establishment and designates any excess tax increments to a special fund created by City ordinance for a designated period of time.
A Vision for Downtown Austin

Downtown Austin is the heart of a dynamic city that is a unique blend of urban culture, natural beauty and rich historical heritage, offering an unparalleled living and working environment. Inspired by its spectacular setting on the banks of the Colorado River at the foot of the Texas Hill Country, Mirabeau Lamar described Austin as the “City of the Violet Crown.”

Austin is, at once, the Capitol City of the Great State of Texas and the hometown of an industrious, educated, ethnically, and culturally diverse population. Its heart, centered on the State Capitol grounds and the grand civic boulevard, Congress Avenue, is a daily habitat for no less than 20% of its population which includes a progressive work force, a large and energetic community of university students and a visionary business community. When one adds biennial State legislative sessions, the frequent regional, state, and national conferences, tournaments, and meetings held in Austin, as well as visitors to the State Capitol, the population increases dramatically. Downtown Austin is every Texas citizen’s neighborhood.

We envision the Downtown Austin of the future to be an urban tapestry of human experience that includes:

- The beauty of a garden within the work environment;
- Civic buildings surrounding a grand plaza with cascading water;
- Cyclists and hikers on trails along the water’s edge;
- Shoppers in a market rich with cultural diversity;
- Families strolling on a tree-lined esplanade;
- Water taxis and trolleys and shaded walks linking city sites;
- A healing center dealing creatively with urban issues;
- Undisturbed cliffs and woodlands within minutes of Downtown;
- A vital commercial and financial center;
- City gateways enticing visitors to new discoveries;
- Opening night in a theater district;
- Celebratory festivals on Downtown streets;
- Students having lunch in a pocket park with live music playing;
- Families living and working in the Downtown area;
- Entertainment and music spanning the spectrum from gospel to country to rhythm and blues.

A clean, well-lighted Downtown gives evidence of the city’s vigor and commitment. Signs and information placards should be accessible all over the Downtown and its now neglected parts. Buildings should be made brighter, giving an impression of openness and a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Maintenance, security and safety will offer proof that this commitment is long-term and not transitory.

The future vision for Austin and its heart, Downtown, blends the joys of entertainment, restaurants, shops and gardens with business, public offices and housing in an intelligent, sensitive and inspirational way.
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