

**CREATING A GREAT DOWNTOWN
R/UDAT REVIEW**

2000



CREATING A GREAT DOWNTOWN R/UDAT REVIEW 2000



DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE

A Vision and a Voice for Downtown



Austin Chapter of the
American Institute of Architects

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Preface

Three years after the 1997 R/UDAT Revisited conference gave Austin a short list of priority projects, the community reconvened to review Downtown's progress. During the half-day conference, participants from all areas and sectors of Austin gathered to assess the state of Downtown development, in terms of both the achievements and the challenges. In the opening session, leaders of each of the three private sponsoring organizations welcomed the participants and explained why their organizations have a stake in creating a great Downtown. Speaking for the Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, William Massingill reviewed the AIA R/UDAT program. Responding to requests from the Austin community, the AIA assembled a Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team. Austin's R/UDAT 1991 analyzed the problems of Downtown Austin and made recommendations on how to revitalize Downtown. (A R/UDAT team is not compensated for its work and, in addition, agrees to forego any commissions from projects arising as a result of R/UDAT recommendations.) After the 1991 team finished its work, a community group worked for a year to develop an action plan—*A Call to Action*. Although some steps were taken over the next six years, Downtown Austin was still in desperate need of development in 1997, when the team was brought back for R/UDAT Revisited. Since the team felt that the original recommendations were still, for the most part, applicable, they decided to develop a short list of “do-these-first” projects. These projects were reviewed in the R/UDAT Review 2000 conference on December 6, 2000.

The Board Chair of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, Mary Scott Nabers, gave the regional perspective of the business community. The Chamber has been a cosponsor of every step of the R/UDAT process and an active partner in Downtown redevelopment. A vital Downtown is a critical part of the overall economic health of Austin and its overall ability to compete in a global marketplace. Robert Gaston, Chair of the Board of the Downtown Austin Alliance, observed that the Alliance is the direct product of the first R/UDAT and is now a cosponsor of the ongoing R/UDAT Review process. Gaston noted that the 1997 R/UDAT report, *A Call to Finish*, attributed Austin's lack of progress toward the shared vision of a Great Downtown primarily to a lack of leadership. Austin had excellent plans for Downtown but got bogged down in the process of implementation. Gaston introduced Mayor Kirk Watson as a leader in overcoming that impasse. Since 1997, the Mayor and City Council have provided the leadership to get things done. As in the original R/UDAT and R/UDAT Revisited, the City cosponsored R/UDAT Review 2000.

Mayor Watson reviewed each of the five priority projects identified in the 1997 R/UDAT Revisited report and evaluated Austin's progress on each one. Afterwards, in five breakout sessions, community leaders led discussions on achievements and challenges. At lunch, participants listened to two of the original R/UDAT team give their perspective on Downtown Austin. The results of all of these meetings are presented in this report.

Sessions

In some sessions, the discussion of achievements and challenges led to a short list of priority projects, or next steps. In others, the discussion raised important issues, and suggested concerns that need to be addressed. The three community leaders and the R/UDAT Review 2000 steering committee coordinator are listed at the beginning of all the session reports. Although they have all been invited to comment on some or all of this report, none bear responsibility for the final report. It should be noted that the achievements and challenges lists are the result of the group discussion; no attempt has been made to edit or prioritize these lists.



Mayor Kirk Watson—Opening Remarks



First, I wish to thank Chuck Davis and Tom Gougeon for joining us today. It is important to get an outsider's perspective. We often think of ourselves as quite pretty and believe we know it all. And it is nice to have someone tell us that is absolutely true! Really, I am always glad to welcome Chuck and Tom to our City. They were here in

1991 and in 1997 and their work has given us a roadmap to follow, which has proven instrumental in our progress.

I would also like to thank the sponsors: the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, who along with the City are responsible for this event. There is a lot of work that goes into putting this on, and I want to thank everyone involved for the hours put in before and after this conference.

In 1991, the first R/UDAT led to the Community's vision of Downtown. Over the next six years, we took several organizational steps towards that vision, most notably the start of the Downtown Austin Alliance funded by a Public Improvement District. But we were not able to get the momentum we needed to move forward.

In 1997, R/UDAT Revisited identified five priority projects with these characteristics:

- High potential for success.
- Leverage to produce spin-off results.
- Tangible impacts.
- Acceptable public cost.

These five projects were as follows:

- 1) Mixed-use residential development on the City's waterfront site, with civic and public uses including a bona fide City Hall. The site might be expanded to include properties currently owned by the State that are expected to be available in the near future.
- 2) Convention Center expansion supporting tourism and entertainment.
- 3) Transit Links including light rail and Great Streets.
- 4) Waller and Shoal Creek areas should include both residential and public sites. Creek belt projects need to be completed and maintained.
- 5) Performing Arts Complex at the Palmer Auditorium site, with the condition of private sector funding.

That was 1997—all these projects had not even started.

Three years later, MUCH has happened. So much, in fact, that we need to pause and take stock of our achievements, assess the remaining challenges, and remember why we're doing this.

But first, let's look at the progress we have made since R/UDAT's last visit and the challenges they set for us.

1. The City's waterfront site is no longer the most forlorn patch of Downtown. This six block area will include a new City Hall, three CSC buildings with 3500 new Downtown employees, two blocks of residential development, street-level retail, and nearby, the new Austin Museum of Art and an Intel software research facility.

Austin gets an A for creating, in a very short time period, a Downtown Digital District with all the elements of a Great Downtown.

2. The Convention Center expansion is on time, on budget, and hopefully will be joined by the Convention Center Hotel project.

I'd give this one an A. Once we work out all the details with the hotel, I reserve the right to change this to an A+.

3. Transit links—Well, the vote for light rail failed by a narrow margin. Other Downtown transit—Dillos, buses, and vanpools—have been improved. Great Streets has changed from an idea to a funded program; the Great Streets Master Plan currently being developed will guide the implementation phase. The Downtown Access and Mobility Plan is being developed in tandem with the Great Streets plan.

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Well, folks, I think we get an A for effort, but not more than a B-minus for product.

4. We have a Shoal Creek Greenways Master Plan and there are three major residential projects underway along the Creek. Waller Creek now has a Greenways Master Plan, funded by public and private contributions. Unfortunately, we are facing a \$25 million shortfall in the funding necessary for the Waller Creek flood control tunnel. We're working on that. However, there is a tremendous potential jump start to creek improvements pending an agreement with the company that is the next piece in the Downtown Digital District—Vignette.

So this one is still a work in progress.

5. The Long Center for the Performing Arts is a shining example of Austin's potential when we come together as a community. This is the ideal public/private partnership. The City has supplied the property and the community has stepped up and shown its overwhelming and generous support for the performing arts.

Definitely an A+.

Overall, that makes 3 A's, one B-minus, and one incomplete. Not too bad!

And, beyond reviewing the R/UDAT Five, we can look at a Downtown that will more than double its square footage in the next five years.

Does this mean that we're done? That Downtown no longer needs any attention?

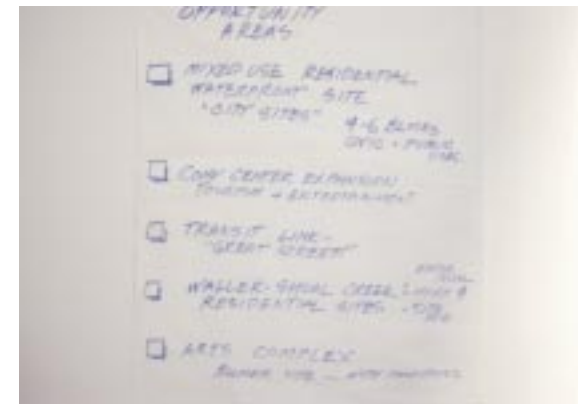
Absolutely not.

In the five sessions this morning, community leaders will review our achievements and, with the help of the community, define the remaining challenges. We all know that there are challenges for

- Downtown Mobility, including Great Streets,
- Downtown Environment, natural, built, and cultural, especially our Greenways,
- Downtown Linkages, in that a healthy Downtown depends on thriving adjacent neighborhoods,
- Downtown Smart Growth, because the only way to protect our quality of life during this time of very rapid growth is to channel the growth to Downtown,
- Downtown Community, i.e., how we deal with those who need our help the most.

I look forward to the results of those sessions.

I'd like to take a moment and remember why we are doing this. Why the community came together in R/UDAT and R/UDAT Revisited. Why the Council and the people of Austin have worked so hard for environmental preservation, incentives for development to locate Downtown, and improved mobility.



Downtown belongs to all of us. It is the economic engine that finances a large part of our quality of life. It is the historic and cultural heart of our City, and indeed, our region. It is the social heart, the place where all of Austin comes together, as did 200,000 of us last New Year's Eve. When other people think of Austin, they think of the State Capitol, the University of Texas, and 6th Street. These are all Downtown.

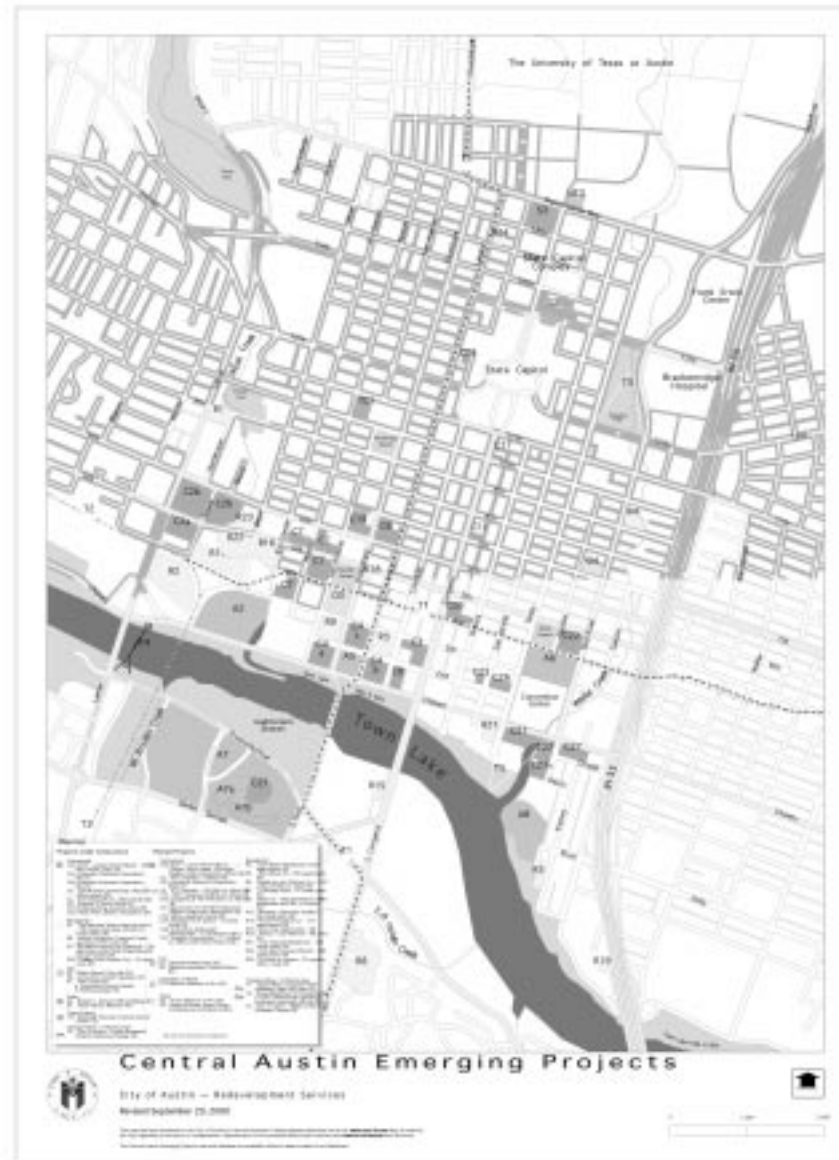
We cannot afford to have less than a Great Downtown. We owe it to our taxpayers, to our children, and frankly, to ourselves as Austinites, to make this a Great Downtown.

And we're not there yet. One swallow doesn't make a summer and not even a dozen projects make a Great Downtown.

The R/UDAT team identified five priority projects for Austin in 1997. These were the DO-IT-NOW projects and not a substitute for all the other recommendations of the previous R/UDAT work. I would encourage you to go back and look at those recommendations.

This is the beginning of the Austin century, if we fulfill our promises.

And with your participation and support, we will.



CREATING A GREAT DOWNTOWN

Overview



Chuck Davis

After the morning meetings, the participants were treated to remarks by two members of the original R/UDAT team, Chuck Davis and Tom Gougeon. Their observations provide the context for the results of all of the sessions. The following is a summary of their remarks, not a transcript.

Downtown Austin is at the beginning of a renaissance. Since the 1997 R/UDAT Revisited, a stunning array of projects have been launched. The Central Austin Emerging Projects map shows 51 separate projects in some stage of planning or construction in the fall of 2000. Downtown is no longer a neglected place needing projects to stimulate development. But it is still a long way from being finished. At this time, there are two urgent needs for Downtown to stay on track.



Tom Gougeon

First, Downtown needs to focus on the overall quality of the pedestrian experience. Both consultants were very clear that the most important priority now is improving the pedestrian environment. All kinds of wonderful projects are in the pipeline, but the fabric weaving those projects into a total experience is lacking. Great Streets has been a program with a few successes; as of now it needs to become the priority program that must succeed.

The street and pedestrian environment matter because many of the benefits of attracting activity and users to Downtown are only fully realized if they become pedestrians. If the new workers, visitors, convention delegates, and residents don't use Downtown on foot, then the potential for increased economic activity is limited. So it is not just a design concern; it is a basic economic concern.

Downtown environments create value because of the density of activity. If the environment tends to inhibit pedestrian activity, then there will be lower traffic, sales, attendance, etc. This translates into less value for land and commercial and residential space than would exist with a better pedestrian environment.

What makes a great street? Many factors come into play, but the essence is that a great street is a place, not a road. People choose to be in the public space because it is attractive rather than because they have no alternative. A great street has shade, people-friendly storefronts, cafes, and a variety of things to see and do. A great street is designed, with materials and objects chosen to support the function of the street.

In Austin, Congress Avenue is very close to being a great street, but most of Downtown has increasingly beautiful buildings in an increasingly unsatisfactory public streetscape.

It is particularly important to understand that retail streets are different than any other type of street. A street intended to support significant retail activity has to have certain characteristics. If it lacks them, it will not work, no matter how much retail space is created. Anyplace that is supposed to be a retail environment (e.g., 2nd Street) needs special attention. It will fail if it is too wide a street with relatively high traffic speeds, has too limited a sidewalk, incorporates the wrong dimensions and scale at the street level, leaves big holes or gaps in the street experience, provides no parking on-street, or has too few amenities.



Second, Downtown traffic and parking must be managed so as not to degrade the pedestrian experience. Downtown streets need to be calmer; the recommendation for two-way streets was made in 1991, again in 1997, and repeated in this conference. Downtown development in the short run may need parking; in the longer run, Downtown growth depends on alternative means of getting employees into and out of Downtown. Although other areas in the region may be able to continue growing without good transit, Downtown cannot. More efficient bus service can postpone the need for light rail, but at some point Downtown growth will require rail transit. And transit will also become the source of long term competitive advantage.

In the long run, when all employment centers in the region have traffic and access problems, public transit can handle 30-40% or more of the work trips to Downtown. The competing suburban sites will never get to double digit ridership levels, which will start to matter to employers as congestion increases. Downtown property owners and employers have a huge stake in the transit issue.

Another transportation project that would have major benefits for Downtown is the reconstruction of IH-35. When TxDOT reconstructs IH-35, the section in Downtown needs to be below-grade. Removing the barrier between Downtown and East Austin and creating

possible development sites in the air rights over the new highway are two positive benefits of lowering the freeway. Austin should join the growing list of cities that have civilized their Downtown freeways by depressing them.

Assuming that the City succeeds in creating Great Streets, there are a few notable projects that Austin needs. These include a new Downtown public library, and a destination museum at the Seaholm power plant site. Austin cannot claim to be a great Downtown without a central library. In other cities these facilities are lively centers of urban activity. Seaholm is the kind of potential site that all cities love to have, although it is always difficult to choose and fund a really wonderful museum.

Downtown Austin has made amazing progress in three short years. Downtown problems have shifted to the transitional problems of success—construction, detours, etc. Some may think too much has been done and that Downtown no longer needs attention. But this is only a great beginning, and not even the end of the beginning.

Three years from now, Austin should have as much news, as many exciting things in progress, and as much reason to hold a R/UDAT Review as it does today.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

Sessions

Downtown Mobility

*Michael Aulick, Butch Babineaux, Gus Garcia
Charlie Betts, coordinator*

Downtown Linkages

*Carol Barrett, Perry Lorenz, Lori Renteria
Thais Austin, coordinator*

Downtown Community

*Fred Butler, Stacey Shorter, Beverly Silas
John Nyfeler, coordinator*

Downtown Environment

*Ben Bentzin, Brigid Shea, Larry Speck
Lucy Buck, coordinator*

Downtown Smart Growth

*Kent Collins, Ross Garber, Austan Librach
Mike Knox, coordinator*

Downtown Mobility

Achievements

- Dillo restructuring
- Airport bus
- Transportation bonds passed in 1998 and 2000

(the following are in progress)

- Lamar Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge (spring 2001)
- Crosstown Bikeway
- Downtown Access and Mobility Plan
- Downtown Parking Study
- Great Streets Master Plan

Challenges

- Implementing plans/Using results of studies
- Building Great Streets
- Transit—bus and rail
- Construction-related congestion
- Infrastructure in the public right-of-way
- Parking
- Traffic
- Western Access
- Lack of bicycle lanes
- Great Streets Master Plan should have come before the Downtown Access and Mobility Plan
- Getting over the one person/one car phenomenon
- No regional vision for mobility/access
- Commuter Rail

Discussion

Downtown in the Region—Transportation Planning

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is the entity charged with long range transportation planning for the Austin metropolitan area. Although there has been a substantial increase in Downtown residents, the sheer size of the employment base means that further development depends on an efficient system of getting people to and from Downtown. Planning that system depends on good forecasts of employment and population. In the most recent round of estimates, CAMPO's forecast for the year 2025 shows a growth of about 13,000 employees from 1997, the base year. But based on development projects in the CBD pipeline it seems that at least that many will be added in the next 5 to 10 years. Revising these estimates is an important step in ensuring that Downtown access needs are included in the planning process.

In the current long-range plan, there are four major projects that will significantly impact Downtown. These are:

- IH-35 HOV lanes and main lanes—construction to start in 2007 or later.
- Loop 1/US 183 HOV lanes—construction to start in 2008 or later.
- SH 130—construction to start by 2002 pending right of way acquisition.
- Light rail between north-central Austin and Downtown—on hold.

Although it is clear to CAMPO that light rail is a critical element in the development of an efficient transportation system, the voting public narrowly defeated the light rail proposition on November 7, 2000. For the region as a whole, and especially for Downtown, light rail's importance as part of Austin's future transportation system needs to be better communicated. Clarifying what light rail would actually mean for the Austin area is a challenge for the community in which CAMPO plays a critical role.

Light rail's initial line was proposed to relieve traffic in the dense corridor between IH-35 and Loop 1. The importance of this corridor is shown by a CAMPO survey in 1997 that found 50% of all commuters in the Austin metropolitan area traveling either on IH-35 or Loop 1 during rush hours. Light rail, as well as HOV lanes, could alleviate the increased congestion generated by further development. The 1997 survey also found that auto drivers were more likely to try passenger rail (75%) than buses (50%) or bicycles (33%), suggesting that light rail could succeed where increased bus service could not.

Light rail is not a panacea; the growth in the Austin metropolitan area means that traffic congestion will increase even if all of the planned projects are built in a timely manner. However, the increase in congestion can be smaller, with appropriate infrastructure improvements, or larger, without those improvements.

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Comprehensive Downtown Parking Study

Wilbur Smith Associates was hired by the City to study parking issues for Downtown, as well as two adjacent commercial areas. In the Spring 2000 inventory, 38,000 total parking spaces were counted in Downtown, excluding the state's 10,000 spaces. The consultants will present a draft to the City Council in February 2001, but the final report will be issued with the Downtown Access and Mobility Plan. Parking needs depend on many factors, including traffic congestion and transit use; final recommendations on Downtown parking need to be coordinated with recommendations on overall mobility.

Downtown Access and Mobility Plan

The DAMP is evaluating intersection traffic operations and examining future traffic improvement needs. In this, the consultants will include all modes of transportation: auto, transit, pedestrian, and bicycles. The study will focus on the impacts of proposed development through 2005 and develop a traffic simulation model (CORSIM) for use in this study and later by City staff. The study area is bound by 15th Street on the north, IH-35 on the east, Barton Springs/Riverside Drive on the south, and Lamar on the west. The study will also consider connections to Loop 1 at Enfield, 5th/6th Streets, and Barton Springs Road. The 17-month project is to be completed in July 2001.

Significant findings to date include:

- The most heavily traveled roadways (over 3000 vehicles per hour during peak periods) are Cesar Chavez, Lamar, Guadalupe/Lavaca Streets, 5th/6th Streets.
- Downtown has over 40 bus routes, including Dillos, using over 200 bus stops. Major transit routes include Congress Avenue, Colorado and Brazos Streets, 5th and 6th Streets, and 11th Street.
- Pedestrian traffic is concentrated along 2nd, 5th, and 6th Streets, near Congress Avenue; there are 300-800 pedestrians per hour during peak car-traffic hours.
- Intersections along Barton Springs have the highest concentration of bicycle activity (45 per hour at Barton Springs/Congress during peak car-traffic hours).
- Peak periods for car traffic are between 7-8:30 AM and 4:45-5:45 PM.
- During these peak times, the average speed for vehicles in Downtown is 12 mph.
- During peak hours, 60% of the intersections operate at poor levels-of-service as defined by traffic engineering standards.
- During peak times, 64 intersection approaches experience queues/back-ups of 15 or more vehicles. (The study includes 200 intersections. If both streets were two-way streets, there would be four intersection approaches for each intersection.)

Over the next five years, at least 30 emerging projects will come online in Downtown. This is projected to mean a total of 40,000 vehicle trips per day entering Downtown during the morning peak hour. This is 24% more than today. Based on testing three alternatives using the COR-SIM model, the consultants will make recommendations for long-term traffic improvements.



Great Streets Master Plan

The goal of the Great Streets Master Plan is to provide more access for the pedestrian through wider sidewalks, two-way streets, clearly identified crosswalks, universal parallel parking, etc. The City Council has mandated its priorities in the following order: pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle. There will be a Great Streets alternative tested by the CORSIM model in the DAMP. The final recommendations of the Great Streets Master Plan and the DAMP will need to be coordinated or mediated through policy decisions by the City Council.

Lessons Learned From the Light Rail Campaign

The narrow defeat of light rail in the November election is a problem for Downtown vitality. What went wrong? Why didn't Austin, with its strong commitment to the environment, endorse the proposed transit system? Several reasons have emerged from post-election analysis. Proponents did not have an effective, clear message; opponents did. The benefits of light rail, such as improved air quality, were not communicated. The message to East Austin was not clear, especially in the area of economic development benefits. South Congress merchants thought rail would have a negative effect on them. A number of voters still mistrust Capital Metro, even though the agency has improved dramatically in the past two years. Because

the federally-mandated process was not complete, the actual routes and stations of the proposed system were not available before the vote. Next time, proponents should emphasize long-term benefits, not only the next 10-20 years. Those who favor light rail should send a clear, concise message to neighborhoods, including the University, the State, and Downtown, as to how the proposed system benefits them.

Parking and Transit

Austin's Comprehensive Downtown Parking Study shows that Downtown Austin has a parking ratio of 1.5 employees per parking space. For comparison, Houston's ratio is 2:1. San Antonio has a low ratio of 1:1, while Toronto manages 5.2:1. The City Council should establish a target parking ratio based on both parking needs of Downtown employees and on the city's ability to sustain the influx of vehicles.

Another parking issue is strictly economic. While parking structures are valued at about \$50/SF, office space can be as high as \$250/SF. If every new office structure builds a half block parking garage, significant tax base is lost for the City. And since Downtown only requires about 20 cents of City of Austin services for every tax dollar it raises, it is clear that the entire City would benefit from maximum use of Downtown land.

Austin has significant room for improvement in using transit. Only 8% of commuting trips are made by transit. In contrast, Portland has a transit capture of work-related trips of 40%. In Texas, Houston captures more than 20%. Increasing this capture rate will alleviate high parking demand, vehicle congestion, and barriers to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Summary

All of Austin's mobility issues have a direct effect on Downtown's continued economic vitality. Downtown cannot continue to grow without making substantial changes to its current levels of parking, transit, and pedestrian-oriented streets. These three issues are inter-related and of vital importance.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

What needs to be done in the next 3 years?

- Encourage commuting by some method other than driving alone, including transit, carpools, vanpools, cycling, etc.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment Downtown.
- Choose transit streets and Great Streets, and link the pedestrian-oriented streets to transit.
- Consider potential sites for a transit center in and adjacent to Downtown.
- Create a parking district to create an income stream and to ease the burden currently being carried by developers.
- Encourage shared parking.



Downtown Environment

Natural	Built	Cultural
Achievements		
Shoal Creek Greenways Master Plan	CSC/City Hall Downtown Digital District	Long Performing Arts Center
Waller Creek Greenways Master Plan	Residential projects—urban lofts, apartments	Austin Museum of Art
Improved trails	CarrAmerica, Intel, other projects	Bob Bullock Texas History Museum
1998 Bond proposition to buy environmentally sensitive land	Convention Center expansion	Mexican American Cultural Center funding
1998 Bond proposition supporting building a flood control tunnel for Waller Creek	Restorations/Renovations- e.g., Driskill and Stephen F. Austin Hotels	George Washington Carver Museum funding
Smart Growth Initiative	Infill projects	Texas Fine Arts Association
Increased attention to Downtown parks	Vignette	Mexic-Arte
Pedestrian/bicycle bridge	More mixed use projects	Austin Lyric Opera
		Blanton Museum
Challenges		
Waller Creek flood control	Great Streets	Downtown home for Ballet Austin
Greenways design standards, landscaping, and maintenance	Seaholm re-use	Parks and other public spaces programming
Rainey Street development	Downtown retail	Public art
Gateways/connections to Downtown	New central library	Further development of Downtown cultural district

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

Discussion:

Natural Environment

Usually when we speak of the natural environment of Downtown, we usually mean the green spaces, including the Waller and Shoal Creek greenways, the parks, and the green pockets. Downtown has no natural areas in the sense that all of Downtown has been shaped by human activities. Even the creek areas reflect the effects of human intervention, especially the effects of developments upstream that have drastically altered the flood patterns of the creeks.

Downtown green spaces are natural in that they contain plants and animals. They provide respites from the hard-scape of the built environment. The two Downtown creeks, currently rather neglected spaces, provide significant potential for greenways. Both Shoal and Waller Creeks now have Greenways Master Plans, providing guidelines for urban development compatible with healthy creeks. The plans also delineate the amenities necessary to create user-friendly spaces. Both creeks now need the investments, both public and private, to implement those plans.

Treasuring Downtown green areas is part of the whole Austin strategy of Smart Growth, in that an important part of enticing development is the level of amenities available, including recreational opportunities. Town Lake is a major Downtown amenity, as well as the center of Austin. Downtown can and should extend the green space of the Town Lake greenbelt into more of Downtown.



Built Environment

In the last three years, an amazing number of changes have happened in the built environment of Downtown. Large institutional buildings, like the Convention Center expansion, are at one end of the scale. Smaller projects are all over Downtown. Indeed, one of the remarkable changes in Downtown in the past three years is the infill movement, as spaces that were unused, or underused, have been transformed into hives of activity.

Another remarkable transformation in Downtown is the rapid change in the residential quality of Downtown. New apartments and new lofts have been occupied as soon as they were finished. Downtown has become a very cool place to live. Unlikely spaces, such as the top of an office building, and Congress Avenue historic storefronts, are being converted to residential use.

Over the next few years, the area around lower Shoal Creek will become a neighborhood, with a variety of housing and retail options available within a few blocks. All of Downtown benefits from the increase in residents, as people who live in an area take ownership of the public areas.

Mixed-use projects are appearing in Downtown. Office buildings now have ground-floor retail spaces oriented to the street. Downtown Design Guidelines adopted by the Council show developers how to create projects that are parts of a Great Downtown. The Great Streets program offers the promise of creating a pedestrian-friendly urban environment. And everyone, however he or she comes to Downtown, is a pedestrian while here.

Besides the new construction, both renovations and restorations are contributing to the Downtown renaissance. Our two historic hotels, the Driskill and the Inter-Continental Stephen F. Austin, have won awards for their loving and accurate restorations. Various post-war office buildings, such as 1011 San Jacinto and the Perry-Brooks, have taken on new life in the New Economy. The Schneider Building will form part of the Downtown Digital District as part of the CSC project.

With all of the good news, there are still some big challenges. The first is to replace the current Downtown Post Office with a facility that works in Downtown. The current facility takes up a whole city block in a car-oriented, pedestrian-hostile manner that violates all principles of good urban design. Downtown needs a Post Office that accommodates people who walk to pick up their mail, who walk to post a package, and who walk to mail letters.

Another major deficiency is the lack of a great central library. The current facility is outdated and inadequate for a city the size of Austin. As we move into the next millennium, Austin needs to build a central library that reflects a sense of place and meets the needs of Austin's citizens.



In order to make the leap between a Downtown with a lot of good buildings and a Great Downtown, Austin needs to fill in the gaps and knit the projects together. The public spaces need to be at least as good as the private buildings. Great Streets should be built to make the area in and around and between the buildings places for people. As Downtown develops distinct districts, most recently the Downtown Digital District, the streetscapes need to support each district's identity.

Downtown parks need to become spaces where people want to be, not just green lawns to observe from passing cars. Currently Downtown's historic parks are rarely used. Brush Square, one of the four original parks in the Waller plan, should be restored. The fire station and parking lot need to be relocated and this park reclaimed.

The built environment of Downtown Austin has changed dramatically and, for the most part, in a positive direction. It's a good beginning towards building a great Downtown.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

Cultural Environment

Archaeologists focus on technology and arts when evaluating a society. High tech employees demand a diverse and culturally active community. In Austin, the arts are a key attraction for Downtown. Civic pride in a community, certainly in Austin, is a reflection of a healthy arts community. Performing and visual arts have seen major changes in the past three years:

- The Texas Fine Arts Association develops contemporary visual arts in Texas, providing services, exhibitions, and exposure to collectors. TFAA opened the Jones Center for Contemporary Art on Congress Avenue in November 1998. Besides administrative space, the Center contains 15,000 SF of exhibit space.
- The Mexic-Arte Museum is dedicated to visual and multi-disciplinary Latino/Mexican art. In an agreement between the museum, the City of Austin, and the Block 42 Partners, the museum's location at 419 Congress Avenue is secure for at least 25 years.
- Three major museums are in various stages of completion. The Bob Bullock State History Museum celebrates Texas history with almost 50,000 SF of exhibit space, as well as an Imax™ theater. It will open in 2001. The Austin Museum of Art has unveiled the Gluckman Mayner design for a 145,000 SF project on a whole city block fronting Republic Square; this museum is expected to open in 2003. The University of Texas is planning a 150,000 SF Blanton Museum of Art to open in 2003.
- The Mexican American Cultural Center has been given six acres on Town Lake to develop a center for the preservation and enrichment of Mexican American cultural arts. The center is projected to open in 2003.
- And the largest, most impressive project of all is the Long Center for the Performing Arts, scheduled to open in summer 2004. The Long Center will be the performance home for Austin's Ballet, Opera, and Symphony groups, as well as being available for use by other performing arts groups. The Austin Lyric Opera Center and music school opened in February 2000 in a location across the street from the Long Center. The Lake/Flato design includes rehearsal facilities, recital hall, class rooms, studios, multimedia lab, and offices.

The explosion in Downtown cultural facilities in the past three years is almost incredible. The remaining challenge is to operate and maintain all of these wonderful new facilities. Austin's cultural environment is healthy; it could get all the way to thriving if it stays on this trajectory.

Summary

Downtown's environment—natural, built, and cultural—is in the midst of transformation. The achievements of the past three years are impressive. The challenges, especially for the Waller and Shoal Creek Greenways, are substantial. Whether Downtown's green spaces achieve the same quality and diversity as its built spaces remains to be seen. In each area, there are significant challenges remaining.

What needs to be done in the next 3 years?

- Create urban greenways for both Shoal Creek and Waller Creek.
- Build Great Streets.
- Decide and start on Seaholm re-use.
- Increase public art and arts programming.
- Restore Brush Square.
- Plan a better Downtown post office.

Downtown Linkages

Achievements

- East Austin Dillo Route
- Austin Steam Train at Plaza Saltillo
- Holiday lights on East 6th to Chicon
- East Cesar Chavez Plan for mixed use
- New street lights on East Cesar Chavez
- Willow/Spence Historic District Study
- Downtown Rangers supported Eastside Rangers Patrol pilot project
- Neighborhood planning/neighborhood plans in adjacent neighborhoods
- Austin Revitalization Authority
- Theodore Hershberg's "The Case for Regionalism"
- Waller Creek stakeholders group
- IH-35 task force
- Parking study task force

Challenges

- Light rail election failure
- Plaza Saltillo not being used for Dillo/Charter buses
- Re-design of IH-35 still just a dream
- Red River becoming a Great Street
- Traffic/pedestrian impact of Downtown projects on adjacent neighborhoods
- Neighborhood preservation, gentrification issues
- Linkages to UT, State Capitol Complex

- Improved Dillo linkages to adjacent neighborhoods
- Greenway Hike and Bike alternative ways to get through town
- Improved pedestrian access to Waller Creek

Discussion

Many of the problems are seen in terms of physical linkages between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. These include streets, transit facilities, greenways, and signage. Increased mobility between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods was seen as equally important with increased communications. Especially with the development of neighborhood plans, Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods need to find ways to communicate informally, as well as interacting through the formal development review process.

The importance of educating major Downtown employers to alternative means of commuting was noted. Leadership from the Austin City Council is also important. The City can lead by example as well as by including commuting strategies in its negotiations, as it did with Vignette. Adjacent neighborhoods benefit from decreased traffic as well as enhanced pedestrian and transit linkages. Participants discussed the issues surrounding East/West mobility and the need to link East Austin with Downtown. One suggestion was to extend the Dillo service further into East Austin. Another was the redevelopment of East 7th Street, which is a major commercial corridor for East

Austin as well as a major link between Downtown and the airport. East 7th could become the preferred route from Austin-Bergstrom, serving as the most important gateway to Austin for those visitors arriving by air.

One of the biggest problems in linking Downtown with East Austin is a lack of relationships. Traditionally, the neighborhoods have not wanted the participation of Downtown groups in their planning processes. Downtown groups have been reluctant to reach out for fear of seeming to be interfering. Participants discussed the need for both formal and informal linkages to create relationships. The City's neighborhood planning process should incorporate venues for communication and cooperation between adjacent neighborhoods, especially between Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods.

What needs to be done in the next 3 years?

- Increase signage to and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Clean up Capital Metro's property at IH-35 & 4th Street.
- Improve bus shelters.
- Increase trash cans.
- Increase Congress Avenue Dillo service during legislative session.
- Develop venues to share neighborhood plans; joint planning between neighborhoods and Downtown is nonexistent.

Downtown Community

Achievements

- Creation of the Downtown Austin Community Court
- Improvements in the Austin Downtown Ranger Program: More personnel, expanded role
- Relocation of the Day Labor site
- New Caritas facility
- Improved lighting on East 6th St./Congress Avenue
- Improvements in basic cleanliness with increased litter removal and continuing graffiti removal
- Increase in police resources for quality-of-life issues, such as drug possession and panhandling

Challenges

- Fragmented services
- Lack of affordable housing
- Plans for new homeless facilities on East 7th Street
- Limited police resources/low police visibility
- Maintaining full staff of Downtown Rangers
- Cleanliness and lighting, on the whole, still have problem areas
- Problematic nighttime establishments

Discussion

Affordable housing is a problem for all of Austin. In Downtown, this problem should be addressed through a public-private partnership for mixed-income housing in

the northeastern Central Business District. An economic development corporation would probably be necessary to achieve the goal of providing some affordable housing in Downtown. Target residents are beginning professionals, food and beverage industry workers, and arts and entertainment industry workers. Opportunities for single-room units should be explored. A purchase of land by the public sector would probably be needed in order to give a developer enough incentives to build a mixed-income project. Otherwise, high land prices would be prohibitive.

The Austin community needs to create a sobriety center. Currently, there is a lack of community support for helping people recover from addictions, especially those of alcohol and drug abuse. Downtown, as the location of most of the existing social service agencies, has a special interest in helping the community find solutions to these problems. In addition, since the problems of substance abuse are frequently coexistent with mental illness, shortfalls in state funding for mental illness need to be addressed, by Austin as well as by other communities in Texas.

The Austin community needs to continue its emphasis on improving the continuum of care for individuals and families in need. Technology improvements should be able to provide better record-keeping and tracking, from detoxification to housing to job placement. An example of the need for better coordination are the ongoing problems of the planned the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless and overnight shelter for single adult males.

While responding to those in the community who need help, Austin, and especially Downtown, needs public order. Enforcement of laws and preservation of an orderly Downtown environment are consistent with providing services for those in need. In many cases, those seeking social services are most vulnerable to the problems caused by a lack of public order. Crime, and the perception of public disorder, are still significant problems, most notably in the southeastern portion of Downtown, where development has lagged behind other areas of the Central Business District.

Downtown Austin, like all downtowns, deals with the community's hardest problems on a daily, face-to-face basis. Although these problems are generated by the whole community, Downtown has a special interest in finding solutions. This can only be done through partnerships, with the support of the whole community.

What needs to be done in the next 3 years?

- Create affordable housing in Downtown, as well as in all other areas of Austin.
- Establish a Sobriety Center. Work to increase state funding for treating mental illness.
- Improve coordination and accountability of social services.
- Resolve problems of the proposed resource center and adult-male shelter.
- Maintain public order through community policing.

Downtown Smart Growth

Achievements

- Smart Growth Incentives
- Downtown Design Guidelines
- City Hall/CSC Downtown Digital District
- Residential projects—Post Properties, Brown Building, Sutton projects
- Uniform Conservation Building Code and other City process reforms
- Neighborhood planning

Challenges

- Expanding Smart Growth program so as to substantially affect the patterns of growth
- Affordable housing
- Development process reform
- Integrating neighborhood plans

Discussion

Downtown and Smart Growth

The Smart Growth program has three tiers of incentives: Zone Specific Incentives, Primary Employers Incentives, and Smart Growth Matrix Incentives. All of these are based on evaluation of potential projects using the Smart Growth matrix. The Smart Growth matrix considers a) contributions to quality of life, b) the relationship of land use to transportation modes, and c) urban design characteristics. The matrix is used as the basis for developing possible financial incentive packages.

Downtown Smart Growth Projects completed or under construction are 300 W. 6th (CarrAmerica), 524 North Lamar, Austin MarketPlace, Post West Avenue, Plaza Lofts and the Nokonah condominiums. Smart Growth Matrix Projects pending are the Convention Center Hotel, Four Seasons Residences, and Vignette.

In the City Hall District are CSC (three office/retail buildings), AMLI (two residential/retail buildings), new City Hall and Public Plaza, Austin Museum of Art, and the 2nd Street retail district. Adjacent to this is the new Intel software research facility.

Downtown Emerging Civic Projects, the public sector component of Smart Growth, include the Long Center for the Performing Arts and Town Lake Park, new City Hall and Plaza, Austin Convention Center expansion, Austin Museum of Art, Mexican American Cultural Center, and Seaholm Power Plant redevelopment. All of these Smart Growth projects will create 1,655 residential units, 1,286,000 SF of commercial space, 800 hotel rooms, and a total of \$413,500,000 in private investment.

Current Downtown City-sponsored design and planning efforts include the Downtown Austin Design Guidelines, the Great Streets Master Plan, the Downtown Access and Mobility Plan, and the Downtown Austin Comprehensive Parking Study. Three years after R/UDAT Revisited, the City's Smart Growth initiative is visible in a wave of Downtown developments.

What does Smart Growth do for the development community?

Developers like rules such as the Smart Growth Matrix. There are enough risks in any development without unknown or unclear, or seemingly unfair government rules. Public participation and process (zoning hearings, etc.) is welcome, given clear rules and consistent policies. A critical mass of residential units must be developed in an urban area; one project won't do. Urban vitality requires a mix of housing with ground-floor retail. Austin should insist on superior urban design and give incentives for doing it right. Building elements such as lamps, sidewalks, etc. are important to the overall effect. Some rules, like the prohibitions of obstructing the Capitol View Corridors, must be absolute. Allowances for mixed use are critical for a 24-hour Downtown. Mixed use is not easy for developers. Preserving historic structures keeps a connection with the past. Allow for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



CREATING A GREAT DOWNTOWN

People should be able to walk to work, in a streetscape that encourages walking with shade, space, and pedestrian friendly storefronts. Residential development is one element of a good Downtown; it needs the supporting elements to really work.

How the New Economy Fits In

New Economy companies need to be fast and are under tremendous financial pressure; speed is of the utmost importance. To be attractive, there has to be a downtown district, not just a few scattered locations. Downtown must be thriving in order to compete. The comparative advantage of Downtown versus the suburbs is what's outside the door. In Downtown, urban vitality creates a stimulating place at all hours. Since building Downtown is more expensive, incentives have to be strong to overcome the difference between urban and suburban locations. In considering incentive packages, there is a major difference between a home-grown headquarters and a branch location of a multinational corporation. Austin should court the home-grown companies.

Downtown's competitive advantage depends on its vitality—it's about people. Human capital is most important for new economy companies, and recruiting is the hardest thing. Employers are competing regionally, and a creative work environment is an incentive to potential employees.

What makes a creative environment?

- People who take ownership—so Downtown needs more residential development as a key component of a “Digital Downtown.”
- Diversity—Non-tech people shouldn't be forced out of Downtown. They are part of the Downtown culture that must be preserved.
- Culture—Creative people are interested in schools, libraries, museums, and music. Downtown needs as many cultural facilities as possible. It's also important to focus on education; many employees have children and will consider the quality of schools.

What needs to be done in the next 3 years?

Learn from the mistakes of Silicon Valley, such as the loss of affordability and traffic congestion. Major issues to focus on are:

- Mobility, traffic and accessibility.
 - Support the Great Streets Program, including funding and inter-agency coordination.
 - Invest in the public infrastructure of Downtown. Remember that we are all the public in “public investment.”
- Livability, including cultural and historic resources, education and libraries.
 - Complete the Waller Creek tunnel.
 - Depress IH-35 and re-establish connections to East Austin.

- Affordability, including affordable housing.
 - Develop funding mechanisms for residential development, land prices, street improvements, etc.
 - Develop a critical mass of retail, with continuity.
 - Include retail that supports residential development.
 - Continue to work on government regulations (e.g. zoning, floor-area ratios, Capitol View Corridors) and processes, which can either encourage or discourage development and affect land prices.
 - Create development incentives for the “dead zone” in the northeast quadrant of Downtown.
- Preserve the culture of Downtown Austin.
 - Define and strengthen the “heartbeat” of Austin? Is it Congress? East 6th Street? The Warehouse District? The 2nd Street Retail district?
 - Work on the relationship between Downtown and near-Downtown areas.
 - Establish and work towards a future vision for Congress Avenue, including the role of retail.
 - Develop a master plan or vision for Downtown.
 - Communicate that clear vision and define the City's role in achieving that vision.

Conclusion

Downtown Austin has made substantial progress since R/UDAT Revisited. Many pieces of the puzzle are still not in place, but enough are there to see what a great Downtown Austin could be. Besides the remaining challenges, there are some new issues, raised by the success of the past three years. Some of these current issues are construction inconvenience, housing affordability, transit capacity, demands for higher standards of architectural quality, concerns about authenticity and diversity, and the search for better retailing and a richer cultural mix. These are signs that Austin is succeeding in creating a Downtown that attracts people once again.

Many cities are wrestling with these same challenges; they tend to be the ones with the most dynamic, most interesting Downtowns. On the whole, these are good problems to have because they are the problems associated with success. They are far preferable to deal with than the problems of decline and failure, which were the problems Austin faced in the original 1991 R/UDAT. Downtown Austin is on the right path; the next three years should continue the progress of the past three years, not the stagnation of the previous decade.

Downtown Austin still has significant unrealized potential. This can be seen by examining maps of the existing, projected, and potential tax base in Downtown. The first map shows the blocks that had a valuation of more than \$20 million in 1997. There are some, but not many. Even so, Downtown's small area comprised 5% of the total assessed value in Austin's tax base.

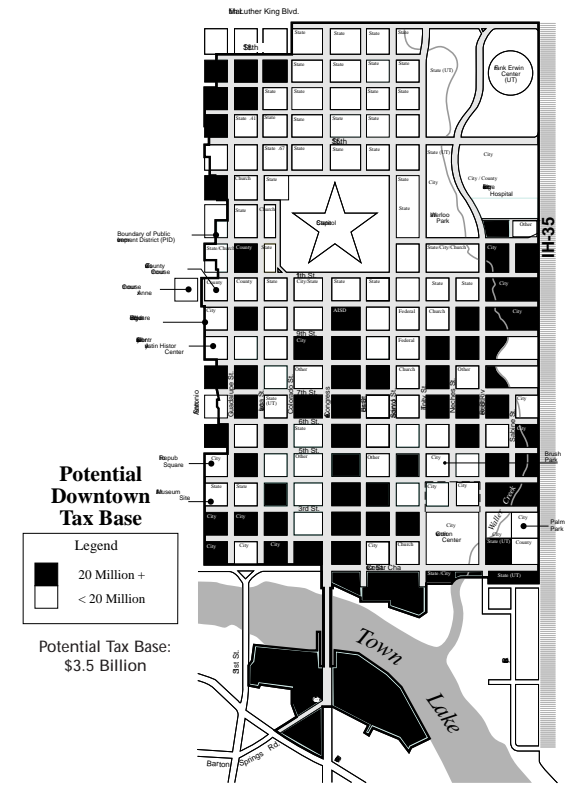
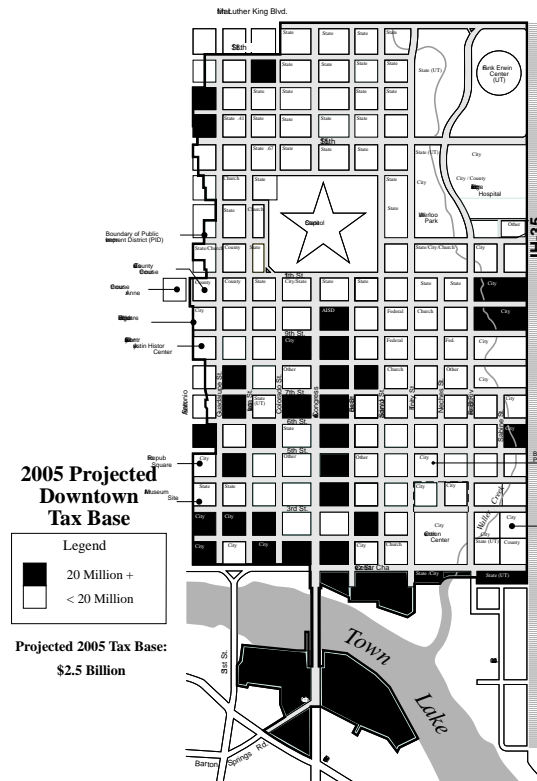
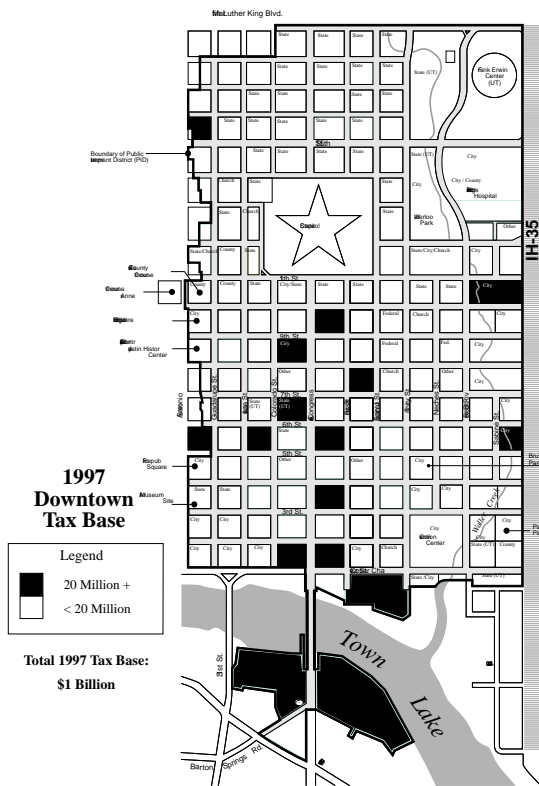
The second map shows the 2005 projections of Downtown after today's emerging projects (see map on next page) are completed. The number of high value blocks has increased substantially, but there are still many blocks below the threshold. Many of these are not available for development, either because they are publicly owned, or owned by a private, nonprofit entity.

Considering only those blocks that are privately owned by other than nonprofit entities, the potential for Downtown—if the low value blocks became high value blocks—is shown on the third map.

Downtown's tax value will increase 154% between 1997 and 2005. It could, if the current community commitment to Downtown development is maintained, achieve (at least) another 42% growth by 2010.

Downtown's value to the community is only partially economic. It is also cultural, historic, and social. For all of these reasons, Downtown's continued development contributes to the quality of life of the Austin metropolitan region. R/UDAT, R/UDAT Revisited, and now R/UDAT Review 2000 reflect the community's concerns for, participation in, and commitment to creating a Great Downtown Austin.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N



The 2005 Projected Value determined by adding estimated values of Emerging Projects (as shown in map on page 8) to current tax base. No allowance for annual valuation increase has been made.

Potential Value determined by substituting 2000's median value of all blocks assessed over \$20 million (\$37,187,500) for current values of underutilized blocks (blocks assessed below \$5 million and NOT predominantly occupied by public or private nonprofit entities).

Biographies

Michael Aulick

Michael Aulick has been the executive director of Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization since 1992. He has 30 years experience in transportation, land use, and environmental planning in New Orleans, San Diego, New York City, and Austin. He received his Masters Degree in Regional Planning from the University of Michigan and his BA in Economics from Rice University.

Butch Babineaux

Principal Transportation Engineer with Wilbur Smith Associates Graduated with B.S. in Civil Engineering from LSU Registered Professional Engineer in states of Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Arkansas Over 15 years experience in comprehensive transportation engineering and planning projects throughout the Southwest Region of the United States. Project Experience includes: Downtown Traffic and Parking Studies, Metropolitan Area Transportation Plans, Highway Feasibility Studies, Traffic Impact Studies, and other transportation related programs for both the public and private sectors. Currently serving as Project Manager for the ongoing Downtown Austin Access and Mobility Study.

Carol D. Barrett

Carol D. Barrett is the Manager of Community Information and Planning for the Planning Environmental and Conservation Services Department of the City of Austin. She received a BA in Political Science from Stetson Univeristy and a master's degree in City Planning from Georgia Institute of Technology. Additionally, she received Continuing Professional Development Certificates from the American Institute of Certified Planners in 1994, 1996, 1997, and 1999.

Ben Bentzin

As a community volunteer, Ben Bentzin serves as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of ARTS Center Stage, a nonprofit organization which will create and manage the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Center for the Performing Arts. In his professional life Ben is a seven-year veteran of Dell Computer Corporation, and is currently Director of Marketing for Dell's Public Online Division. Ben's community service includes the Board of Directors of Ballet Austin, Contributions Committee of the Dell Foundation, Board of Directors of Boys & Girls Clubs of Austin, membership in the Downtown Austin Alliance and Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, Knights of the Symphony, and advisor to the MBA program at St. Edward's University. Ben holds an MBA from The Wharton School of The University of Pennsylvania and a BS in Finance from Arizona State University.

Frederick W. Butler

Fred Butler received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Management from the University of Cincinnati in 1966 and later earned Master's Degrees in Guidance and Counseling (MS) and National Security Affairs/International Relations (MA). Fred culminated a 26 year Air Force career in 1992, retiring in the rank of Full Colonel.

In April 1996, Fred became the first Executive Director for Austin's Community Action Network (CAN). In this role he is responsible for guiding the CAN's 13 partner organizations in community assessment and planning, evaluation, resource development and allocation, communication and policy implementation.

Fred has served as President of the Board of Directors for the Foundation for the Homeless and is a graduate of the 1996-97 class of Leadership Austin and currently serves on the LA Board. He is a 1998 Fellow of the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the University of Texas Law School and a graduate of the Spiritual Direction Internship Program. Fred currently serves as Secretary of the Council for Community Reconciliation, on the Executive Committee for the Austin Regional Sustainability Indicator Project, as a member of the Huston-Tillotson Community Participation Task Force and as a member of the Strategic Planning Staff Group for the Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Greater Austin Quality Council.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

Kent Collins

Kent Collins is senior vice president of development with the western division of Post Properties, Inc. (formerly Columbus Realty Trust), a multi-family real estate investment trust based in Atlanta. He is responsible for the company's development activities in the Houston and Austin areas. Prior to his employment at Post, Kent was project manager of Dallas City Center, a multi-disciplinary downtown revitalization project encompassing 18 blocks of the historic center of downtown Dallas.

Kent holds a Masters degree in Business Administration from the Anderson School at the University of California at Los Angeles, and a Bachelor of Architecture degree from The University of Texas at Austin. Kent is a board member of Preservation Dallas and Austin's West End Alliance. He is a member of the Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Texas Society of Architects, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Chuck Davis

Chuck Davis, FAIA, is currently serving as Senior Design Principal on several of EHDD's most visible and successful projects. Chuck is widely recognized both nationally and internationally as one of the leading designers of aquariums and exhibit facilities.

After serving as Principal in Charge on the original Monterey Bay Aquarium, he has gone on to work on such projects as the Steinhart Aquarium Renovation in San Francisco; the Palm Beach Seaport Aquarium in Florida;

the National Institute for Marine Biology and Aquarium of Taiwan; Tampa Aquarium in Florida; and the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California. He is currently serving as Principal in Charge of the design team for the renovation of the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and the Gulf of Maine Aquarium in Portland, Maine.

Additionally, he has extensive experience in major academic and institutional design including Stanford University's McClatchy Hall and History Corner Renovations; the award-winning Science Library at UC Santa Cruz; the Campus Library of the University of California, San Francisco; and the Main Library Complex Renovation at UC Berkeley.

Ross Garber

Ross Garber, a recovering Internet entrepreneur and self-styled civic entrepreneur, has resided in Austin with his wife and family since 1994. Garber is the co-founder of Vignette Corporation, and served as CEO and then Chairman of the company from its founding in 1995 until summer 1999. Today, he and his wife are active philanthropists in Austin-based projects for education and the arts. Garber, who was named 1999 Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year in the software category, serves the board of directors for Motive Communications, is an advisory board member for Agillion, and is a founding board member of the Austin 360 Summit.

Gus García

Gus García is immediate past mayor pro tem of the City of Austin and a long-time AISD trustee. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and is a certified public accountant.

Tom Gougeon

Tom Gougeon is currently a partner in Continuum Partners LLC, a Colorado-based development company focused on pedestrian-oriented and mixed use projects in the Western United States. Tom previously served as the executive director of the W.M.B. Berger Foundation from 1997-99 and as the CEO of the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation from 1992-96. The Foundation leads the redevelopment program for the Stapleton Airport infill site. From 1983-91, he served as assistant to the Mayor of Denver. He received a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Denver and a master's degree in city and regional planning from Harvard University. He serves as chair of the Nature Conservancy of Colorado, on the Board of Directors of Colorado's Ocean Journey, chair of Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and on the Property Development Committee for the Rocky Mountain Mutual Housing Corporation. He also served for 10 years as a commissioner of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority.

Austan Librach

Austan Librach is the Director of the Planning Environmental and Conservation Services Department for the City of Austin. He has 30 years of experience as the director of the environmental, engineering, and physical planning departments of local government organizations. He received a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt University and a master's degree in Regional Planning from University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, American Public Transit Association, and Congress for the New Urbanism.

Perry Lorenz

Perry Lorenz is a 34 year resident of Austin, Texas and has been actively involved, primarily as a principal, in the purchase, sale, and development and management of downtown Austin real estate since 1977. Mr. Lorenz has formed and serves as managing general partner of numerous partnerships involved in the development and redevelopment of downtown properties with a recent emphasis on inner city residential projects. He is a licensed real estate broker and holds a Bachelor of Arts and MBA degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He currently serves on the City of Austin Design Commission, City of Austin Downtown Commission, UT Austin School of Architecture Foundation Advisory Council, Lower Colorado River Authority's Lake Austin Advisory Panel and West End Austin Alliance.

Lori Renteria

Lori Renteria grew up in a Slovak-American neighborhood on Detroit's eastside. She joined the Army in 1976 and learned how to fix computers. She came to Austin in 1978 and landed a job at IBM fixing machines primarily at the Austin Police Dept and Brackenridge Hospital. She met her husband, Sabino Renteria—a life-long East Austinite and political activist—at IBM.

Lori has been an active volunteer in East Austin's social and political processes for over 20 years. She's raised over 2 1/2 million in grants to implement programs for youth in East Austin including a Camp Fire Club, a gang prevention and teen jobs program, a homeless student support service, and recently retired from AISD as service-learning ambassador at Martin Jr. High School. Lori has spent the last three years working on the Smart Growth Neighborhood Planning process serving as secretary and newsletter editor for the East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Leadership Team.

Brigid Shea

Brigid Shea is president of Brigid Shea & Associates and has worked on environmental and public policy issues for over a dozen years. Shea was elected city-wide to the Austin City Council in 1993 where she championed environmental and quality-of-life initiatives as well as telecommunications, utility and campaign-finance reform. She helped found and direct the Save Our Springs Coalition and served as executive director from 1997-1999. Shea has been recognized with many academic and professional awards, winning a Rockefeller Research Fellowship for Journalists at UNC Chapel Hill as well as a Yale Divinity School Research Fellowship and was named "Communicator of the Year" in 1993 by Austin Women in Communications as well as the Toastmasters. While working as a journalist with the National Public Radio station in Philadelphia, Shea won two national Armstrong Awards for her documentaries.

C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N

Stacey Shorter

Stacey Shorter, Court Administrator for the Downtown Austin Community Court, served as a Project Director during the implementation phase of the Community Court. When the court opened on October 1, 1999, the Austin City Manager appointed Stacey as the Court Administrator. Stacey is responsible for managing the overall operations of the court and serves as staff for the City Council appointed Community Advisory Committee. Prior to working with the Downtown Austin Community Court, Stacey served as Project Administrator for the Superior Court of California where she spearheaded the development of a Domestic Violence Court and Family Reconciliation Court. Stacey has over ten years of experience with project development and court building with an emphasis on restorative justice.

Beverly Silas

Beverly Silas was elected to the Downtown Austin Alliance Board of Trustees in 1998, and currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the Board. Silas, Director of External Affairs for Southwestern Bell, is experienced as a Board member and volunteer in many organizations, which led to a Governor's Award as an Outstanding Texas Volunteer in 1993. Her current and recent activities are as varied as the Capital Area Workforce Development Board, the Texas Special Olympics, Leadership Austin, Downtown Austin Alliance and current National President of The NETWORK, an organization to bring together African-American employees of SBC Communications, Inc. Silas also serves on the Management Advisory Committee at ACC as one of ACC's seven elected trustees.

Lawrence W. Speck

Lawrence Speck was appointed dean of the School of Architecture in 1993. He is a practicing architect with the firm PageSoutherlandPage whose recent projects include the Barbara Jordan Passenger Terminal at the new Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the award-winning Rough Creek Lodge and Conference Center in Glen Rose, Texas, and the Austin Convention Center. Speck has been the recipient of the Blunk Memorial Professorship, an endowment recognizing excellence in undergraduate teaching awarded by the university.

Speck is the author of numerous articles on design theory and history, and the book "Landmarks of Texas Architecture" (University of Texas Press, 1986). Speck has won national, state and local design awards for his work. In addition to his duties as Dean, Speck teaches the entry level lecture course Architecture and Society.

Acknowledgments

Sponsors

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This report is the product of a collaborative effort. Session notes were generated by volunteers and session coordinators. Some community leaders contributed backup materials. Drafts were written by Sam Allison, Lucy Buck, Julie Fitch, Michael Knox, and Rachel Moyle. Community leaders, as well as the two consultants, were asked for review and comment, all of which was gratefully received. Final responsibility for this report rests with the editor.

Editor: Lucy Buck
Design: NgnWorx, Inc.

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C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N



C R E A T I N G A G R E A T D O W N T O W N