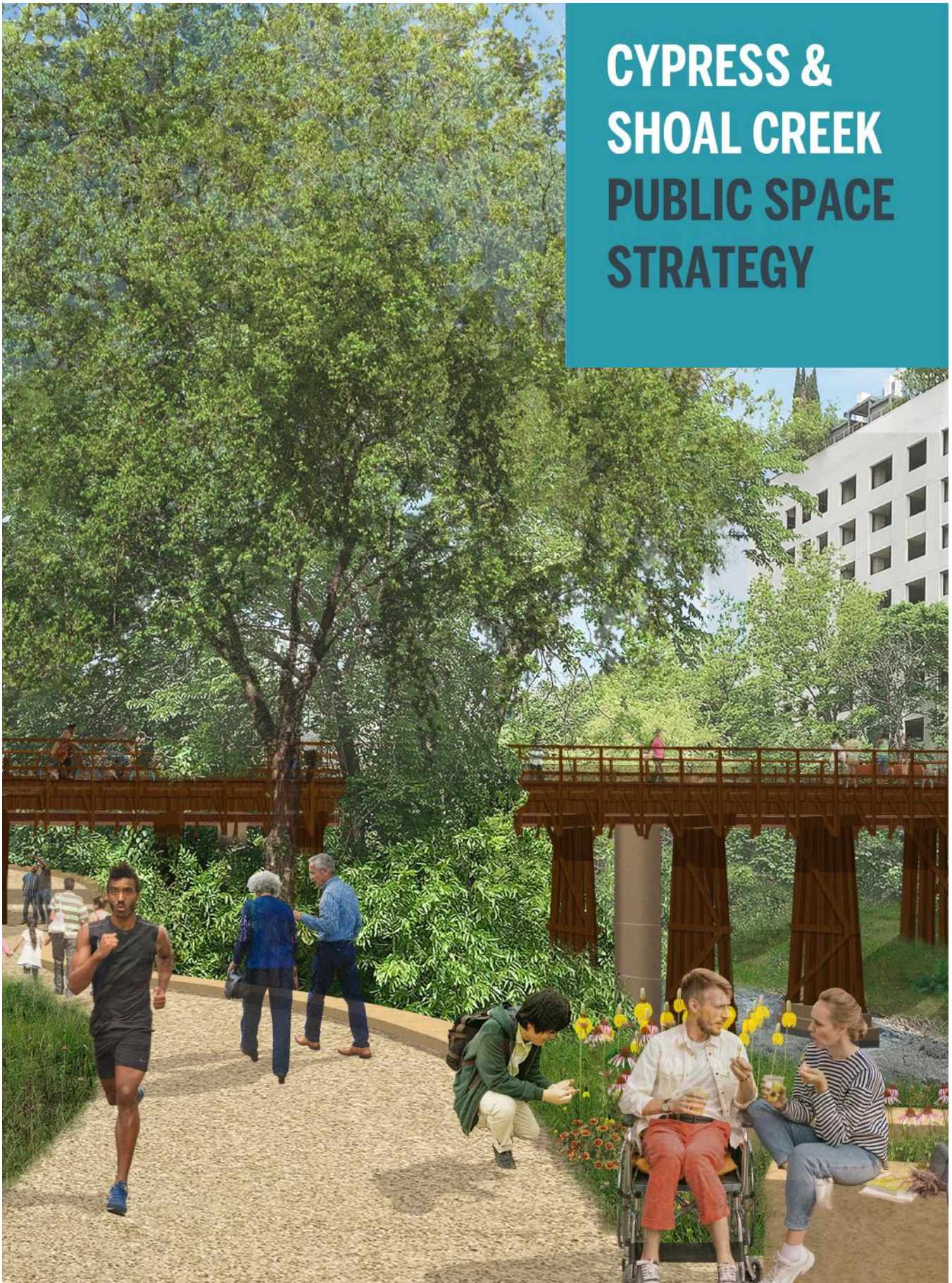


CYPRESS & SHOAL CREEK PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY



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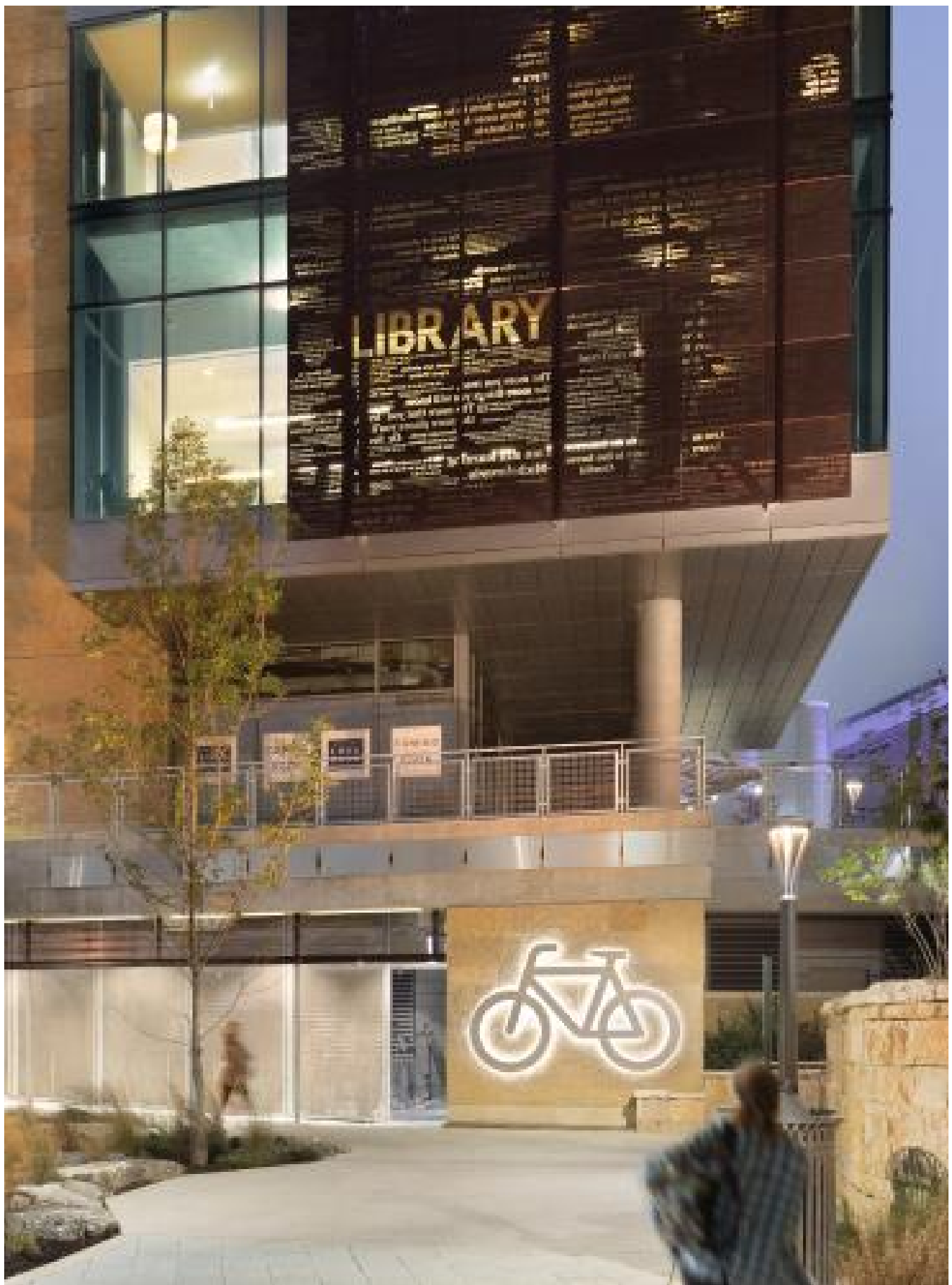
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CYPRESS & SHOAL CREEK

PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

AUGUST 2021





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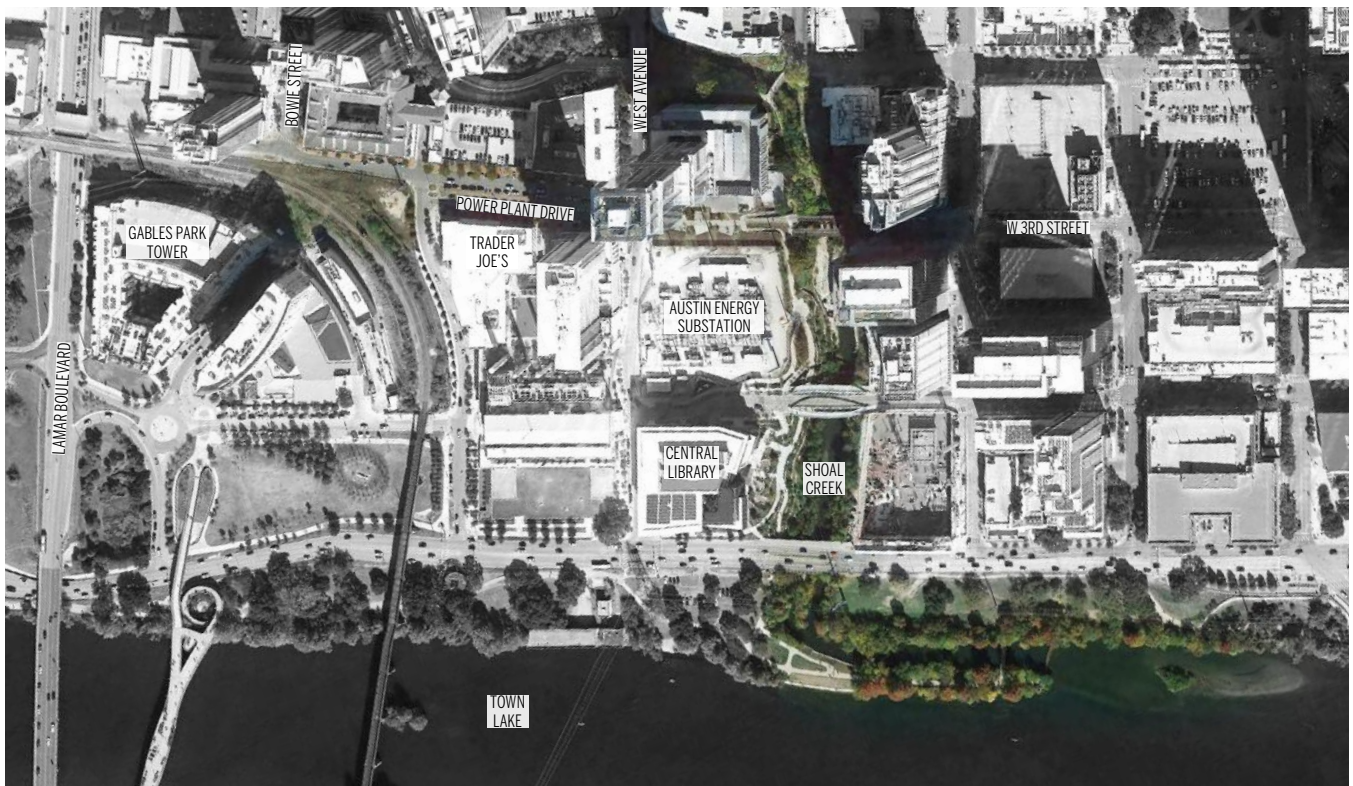
► Through the Cypress & Shoal Public Space Strategy, it is possible to transform forgotten urban pockets into a beautiful, usable, breathable public realm.



IMPORTANCE OF THE AREA

The Cypress & Shoal Creek Public Space Strategy illuminates a vision for improving the area around Third Street and Shoal Creek. The name is inspired by the historic name for Third Street, originally known as “Cypress Street.” This area is a gateway to critical community resources and major public investments such as the Central Library, Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail, and Seaholm Power Plant redevelopment. These centrally-located destinations were envisioned as serving a citywide audience, yet the difficulty of navigating this area prevents that intention from becoming a reality.

This strategy presents a community-guided vision for making this area safer, more accessible, and better connected. In addition to Austin's popular destinations, there is momentum for breathing new life into leftover urban spaces emerged due to fast-paced growth and the building up of the city. It is a priority to carve out recreational open space for people among the bustling streets and soaring towers, and it is of equal importance to restore ecological functions in the midst of so much hardscape.



KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS

CREATION OF A SERIES OF PUBLIC PLAZAS ALONG WEST THIRD STREET FROM NUECES STREET TO WALTER SEAHOLM DRIVE, INCLUDING:

- » Rehabilitation of the nearly century-old railroad trestle bridge as a public park and scenic overlook
- » Expanded and improved public space with a better bike path connection at Margaret Moser Plaza
- » Public plaza and widened path with dedicated bike lanes north of the Austin Energy substation
- » Conversion of Power Plant Drive into a public pedestrian plaza



WAYFINDING & NAVIGATION:

- » Clear signage for Lance Armstrong Bikeway
- » Creation of intuitive trail connections with signage depicting the connections from the Seaholm Waterfront to Republic Square and beyond
- » Increased safety and cleanliness with trail lighting and trash receptacles

TRAIL AND BIKEWAY CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS, INCLUDING:

- » Safer crossings at West Avenue & Power Plant Drive and Walter Seaholm & Power Plant Drive.
- » Construction of a new bike-pedestrian bridge spanning Shoal Creek at Third Street
- » Creation of a new Shoal Creek Trail route passing under the Third Street bike-pedestrian and trestle bridges
- » Creation of a walking and cycling pathway under the active Union Pacific rail line to connect Third Street to the Butler Hike & Bike Trail (known as the Bowie Street Underpass)
- » Separated, dedicated bike lane alongside the public space created by the conversion of Power Plant Drive
- » Widened trail at Rio Grande Street with a boardwalk



ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION:

- » Habitat restoration and stream bank stabilization from the Central Library to West Avenue

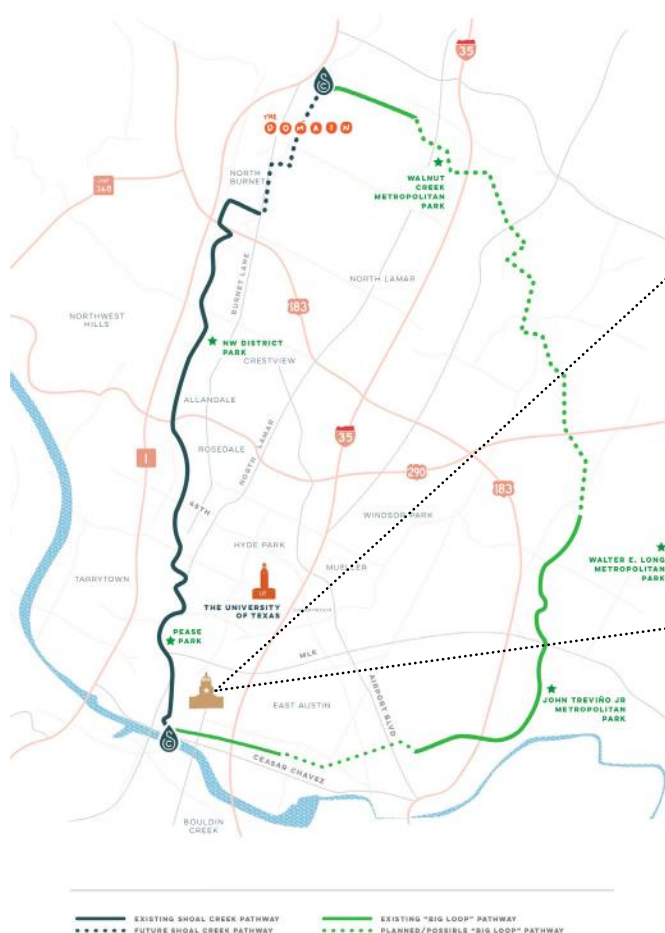
SHOAL CREEK TRAIL PLAN

Created through the facilitation of the Shoal Creek Conservancy and with the active engagement of 100+ community stakeholder groups, the plan calls for a seamless, connected network of hike and bike trails along the 11-mile Shoal Creek corridor, and connections to other urban trails city-wide.

Upon its completion in 2018, the Trail Plan was accepted by the City of Austin Public Works Department as a guiding document for future improvements to the Shoal Creek Trail.

Improvements to the Cypress & Shoal Creek area are on the Trail Plan's list of the top 5 stakeholder-identified priority improvements. These priorities were flagged as the most urgently needed improvements poised to make the biggest impact on safety and accessibility in the area of downtown.

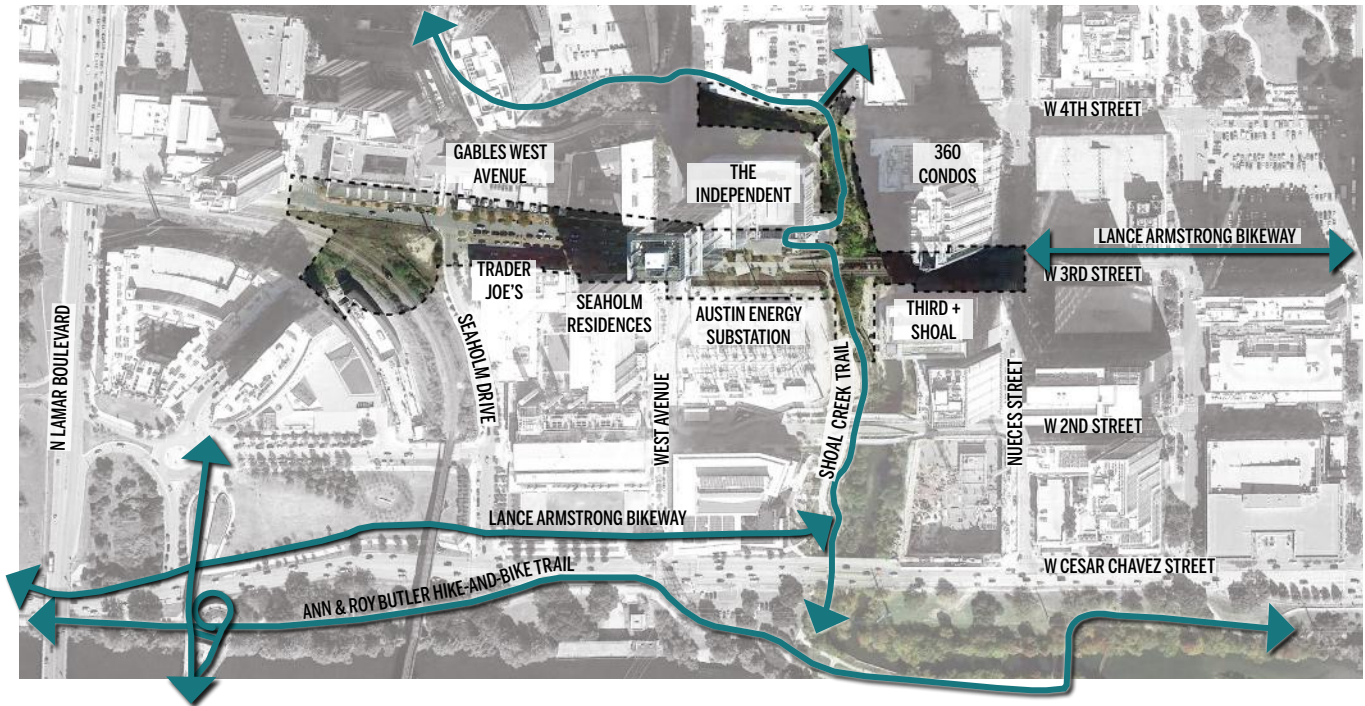
The City of Austin's Urban Trails Plan and Bicycle Plan position the Shoal Creek Trail to become a major segment in a 30-mile "Big Loop" of bikeways traversing the city.



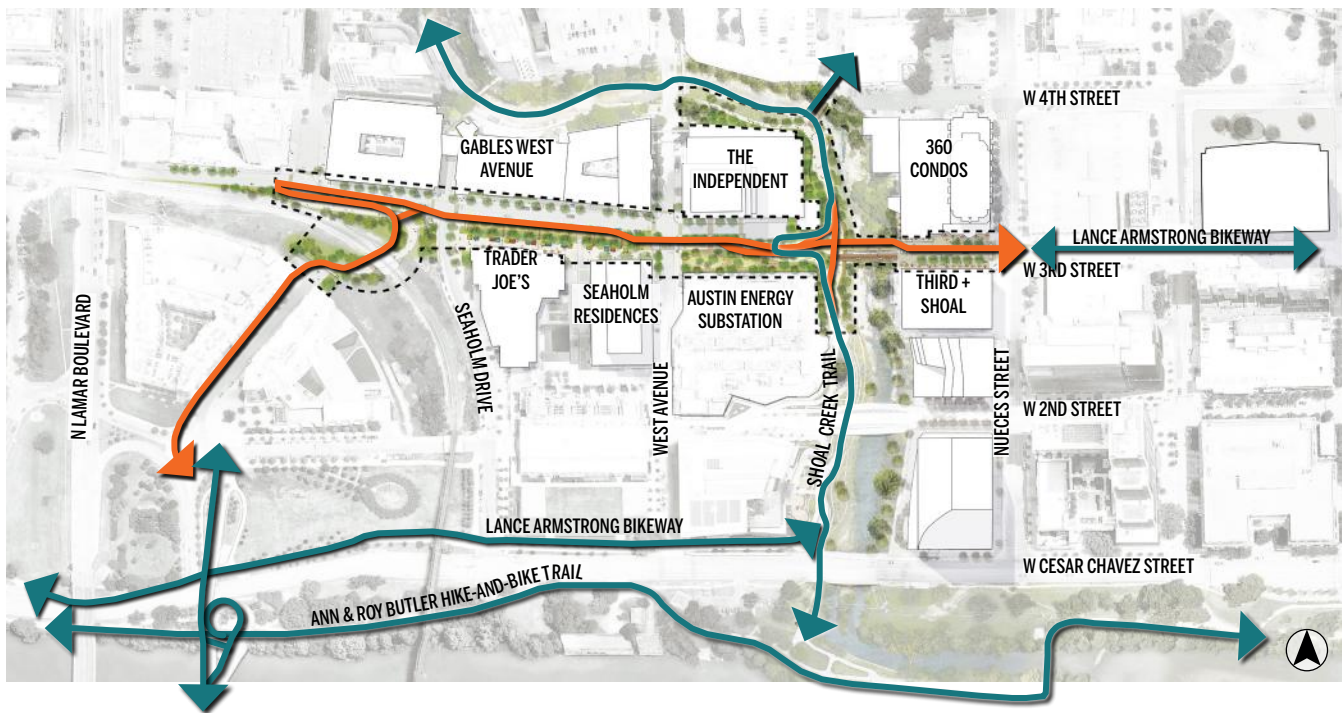
➤ Shoal Creek Trail is also poised to be the western link in the Downtown Urban Greenbelt, a 6.5 mile loop formed by the Shoal Creek Trail, the Capitol Mall, Waterloo Greenway, and the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail.

NEW CROSTOWN PATHWAYS

EXISTING PATHWAYS



PROPOSED PATHWAYS



- Located on the cusp of Shoal Creek's confluence with the Colorado River, the Cypress & Shoal Creek area is home to two major crosstown pathways: Shoal Creek Trail which runs north-south, and the Lance Armstrong Bikeway which runs west-east.

HISTORY OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT

EARLY 2000S

In the early 2000s, the City of Austin invested in the 2nd Street District and Seaholm Development District. These investments spurred the transformation of the Cypress & Shoal Creek area from an industrial center into a dense urban neighborhood, that is home to vibrant destinations that attract people from all over the city.

2000S

Since 2000, these two districts and their adjacent city blocks have together added over 4,000 housing units and 2 million square feet of dining, retail, and office space. This growth includes 16 blocks of current or former city property that have been redeveloped. Redevelopment of the Seaholm District has been driven by City Council's creation of a tax increment financing district (TIF) in 2008.

2008

The Seaholm TIF has facilitated the redevelopment of approximately 9 blocks of City-owned property with the re-purposed Seaholm Power Plant as the district's centerpiece. Tax revenue generated through the TIF district has funded rehabilitation of the Seaholm Power Plant, plaza, and street work.



An award winning new central library opened in 2017 on the site of the south part of the substation between the Seaholm development and Shoal Creek. The building is integrated into the adjacent parkland, which was completely reconstructed as a fitting connection between the building and Shoal Creek.



ENDEAVOR REAL ESTATE GROUP

The City of Austin is one of 10 leading North American cities participating in the launch of a national EcoDistricts pilot program. Austin is initially focusing on the Seaholm Development District.

2010

Since 2010, The City of Austin has been in negotiations with Union Pacific Railroad to secure the easement to construct the Underpass under an active rail line.

Additionally, regulatory conflicts around the area's utility infrastructure presented a barrier to fully realizing the potential of its public spaces.

Austin Water Utility and Austin Energy restrict the development of certain amenities within their right-of-way.

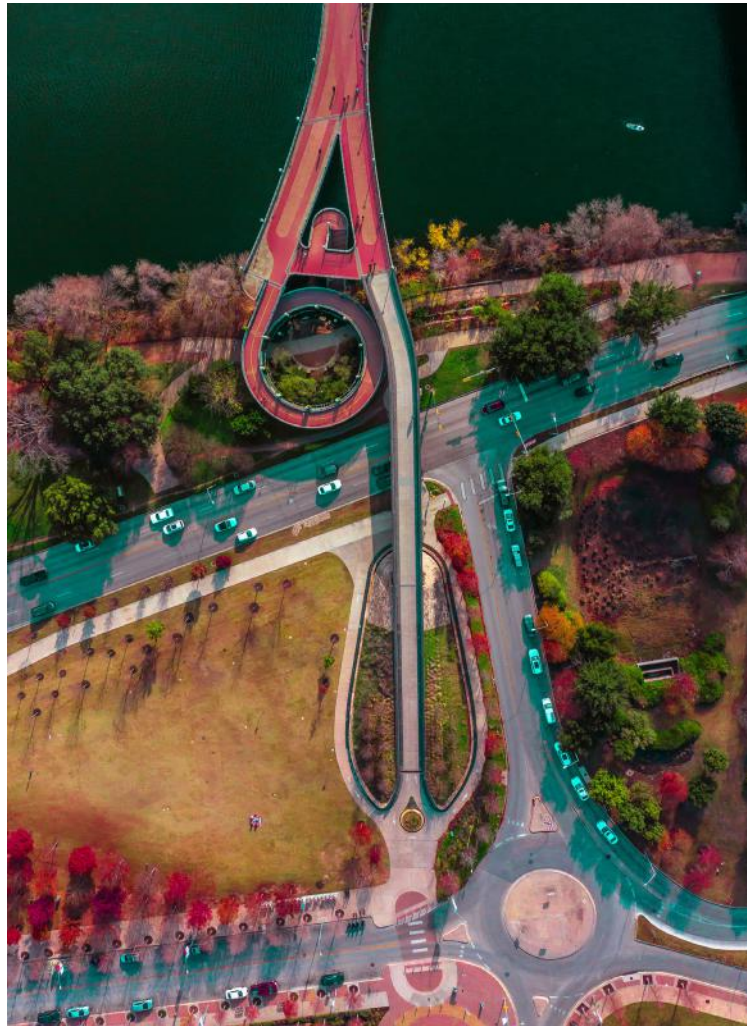
The abundance of utility infrastructure therefore rendered some concepts untenable or made them too complex to negotiate. For example, overhead transmission lines that connect the Austin Energy Substation on West Avenue and run along Third Street to Lamar Boulevard prohibit many pedestrian uses underneath them.

However, in a densely populated urban neighborhood, space is at a premium and every square foot needs to fulfill multiple duties.

2021

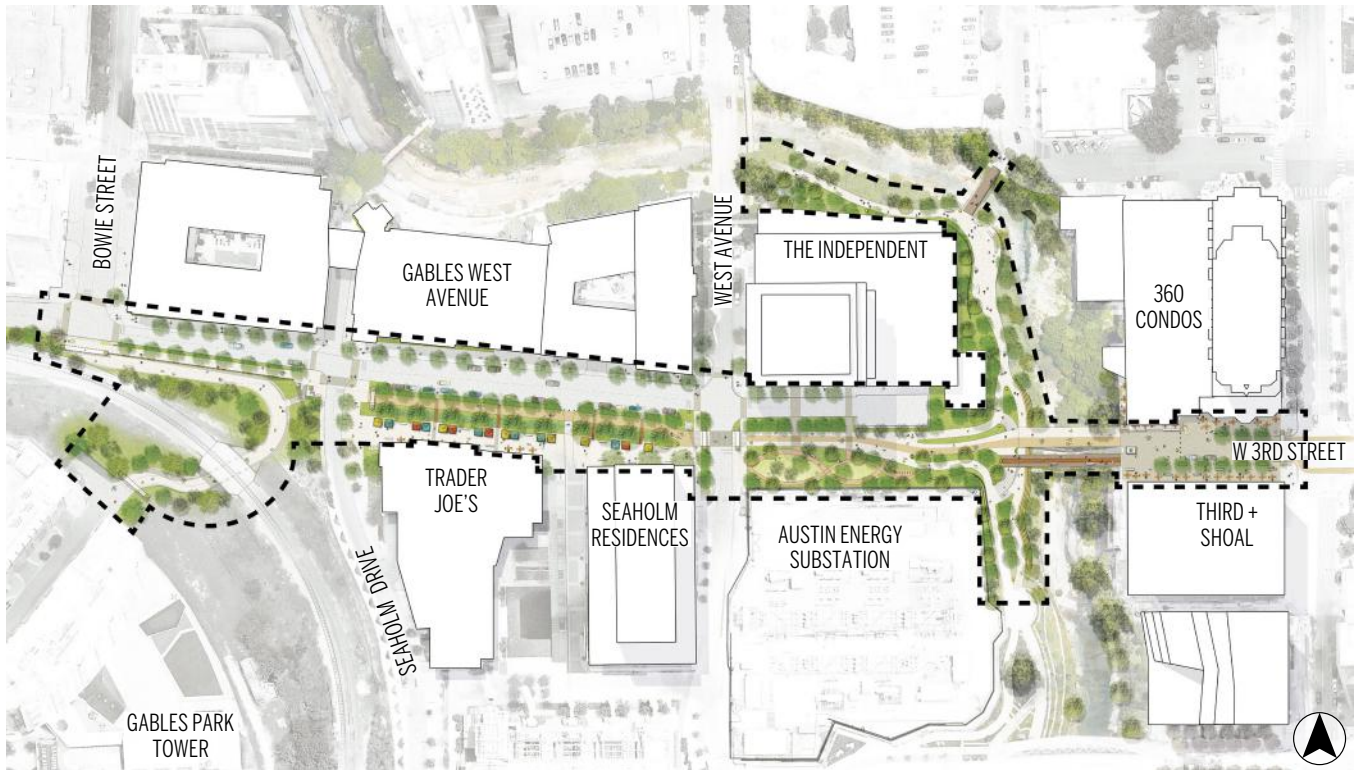
Revisiting and resolving these challenges is a prerequisite to adding many of the features that will make the Cypress & Shoal Creek public realm a safe and inviting place to be. As of 2021, the Seaholm TIF fund remained earmarked with several million dollars for this improvement.

►► **The Bowie Street Underpass, the long-planned bicycle and pedestrian link between the Seaholm Development District and the Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge, remains the major outstanding project in the Seaholm TIF's intended funding scope.**



PROJECT SCOPE

This concept-level vision for the Cypress & Shoal Creek area builds on the public engagement findings established in the Shoal Creek Trail Plan, which reflect a broad desire for improvements to the trail at Third Street and Shoal Creek. In crafting the Public Space Strategy, Ten Eyck Landscape Architects delved into the area's complex public spaces in greater detail, soliciting a more granular level of stakeholder input on existing conditions and proposed improvements.



PROJECT PROCESS



On-the-ground site inventory and analysis



Community and stakeholder input

Two stages of widely promoted online feedback to first gather information about existing conditions and then collect feedback on the draft Public Space Strategy



Technical Advisory Group comprised of representatives from key City of Austin departments

Present the project and its desired outcomes to gauge feasibility and to collect embedded knowledge of the history in this area.



Review of draft Public Space Strategy with area property owners, many of whom are involved in maintaining the public right-of-way

Insight about current day-to-day usage and potential challenges with the proposed concept.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to in-person gatherings just as the community engagement period was set to begin. The project pivoted to an all-virtual engagement strategy through the online platform Social PinPoint, which offers rich interactive tools such as maps with the ability to make geotagged comments. Input opportunities were promoted in local media and through partnerships with multiple City of Austin departments and community organizations.

PUBLIC INPUT ROUND 1

Goals: Gather information about existing conditions. Learn about people’s experiences with the current site; challenges and barriers to visiting and navigating; and positive elements that people enjoy.

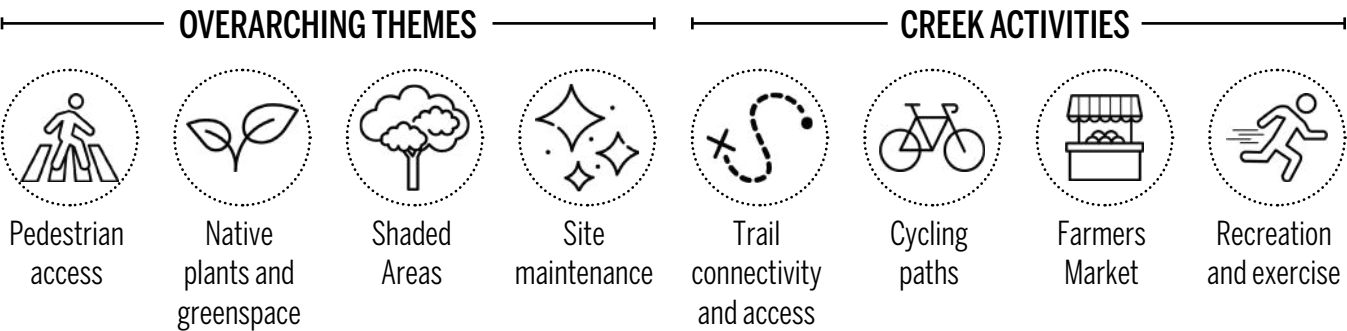
Tools: Stakeholder survey & interactive map

Engagement Period: April 5 - May 10, 2020

Unique Stakeholders: **238**

Map Comments: **97**

Survey Responses: **218**





PUBLIC INPUT ROUND 2

Goal: Gather reactions to draft Public Space Strategy to inform refinements to the design.

Tools: Graphics of proposed changes to each area with open ended survey questions & interactive map with ability to comment and to upvote/downvote comments

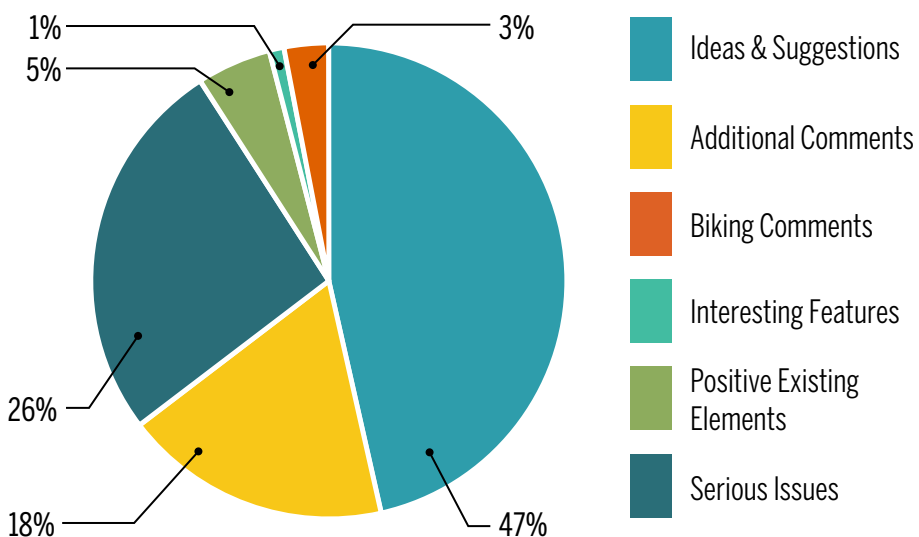
Engagement Period: December 18, 2020 - February 14, 2021

Unique Stakeholders: **254**

Map Comments: **358**

Survey Responses: **69**

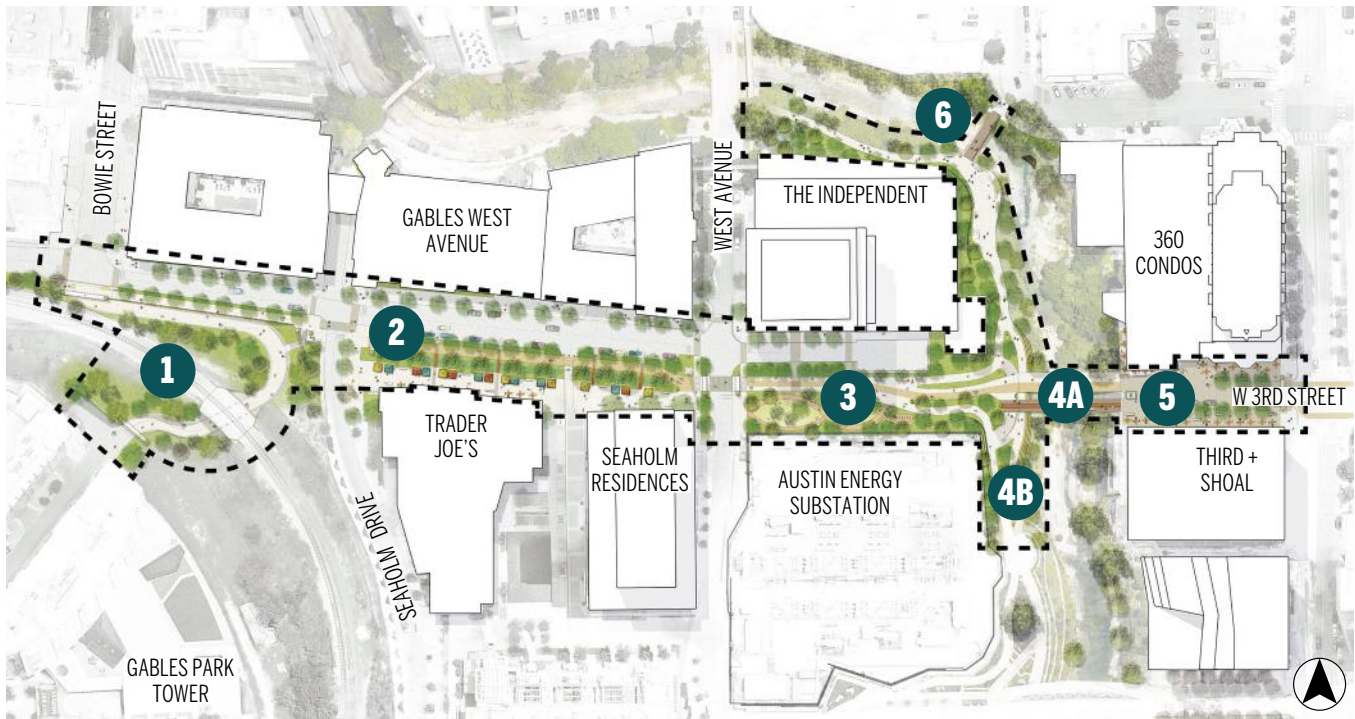
COMMENT CATEGORIES



► “Love the market/ pop up programming area...and more street trees...”

► “Excellent concept - this will be an incredible improvement in this area!”

SIGNATURE SPACE PRIORITIES



WHAT WE HEARD

1

BOWIE STREET UNDERPASS

Prioritize. This is a long-awaited improvement and approved, permitted design.

2

MARKET PLAZA

Prioritize. Re-purpose Power Plant Drive; remove vehicular access and parking; add greenery and bioswales. Improve safety of intersections

3

CONVERGENCE PLAZA

Support for maintaining pedestrian access to bridges via north and south staircases between the bridge & trail (reflected in final design).

4A 4B

THIRD STREET BIKE-PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE & TRESTLE

Support for historic restoration of the trestle bridge at Third Street. Desire for improved, widened bike/pedestrian bridge.

NEW SHOAL CREEK TRAIL CONNECTION AT THIRD STREET

Support for establishing a new trail link under bridges; Shoal Creek Trail Plan's top five priorities identified by stakeholders.

5

MARGARET MOSER PLAZA

Strong desire for explicit signage indicating Lance Armstrong Bikeway route. Strong support for physically separated bike path from pedestrians and cars.

6

SHOAL CREEK TRAIL CONNECTION AT RIO GRANDE

Provide basic amenities for Trail, especially lighting; widen trail.



1 BOWIE STREET UNDERPASS

INITIAL WORK

Build the critical missing link of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Curate public art installations; implement sound attenuation measures

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Shoal Creek Conservancy, City of Austin Transportation Department, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Union Pacific Railroad, Austin Energy, Austin Water Utility

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

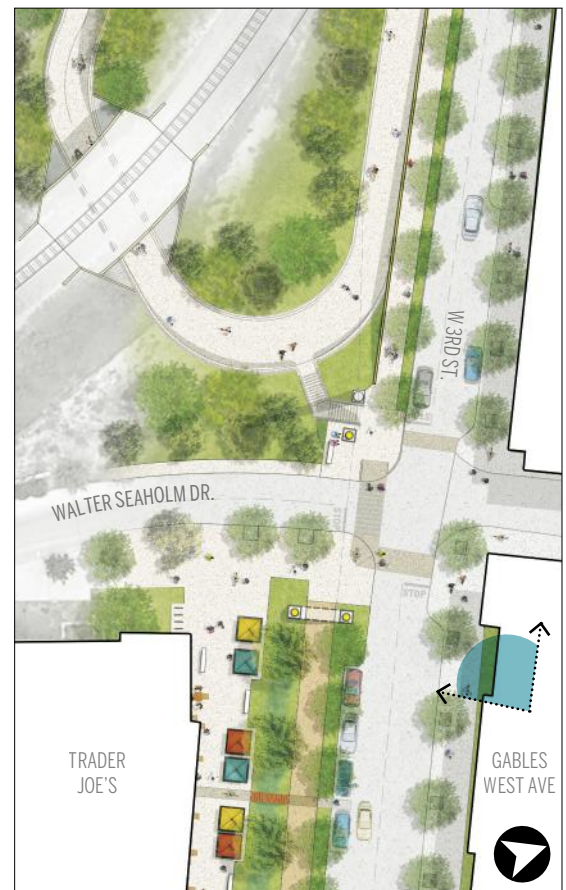
City of Austin Public Works Department, Seaholm TIF, GO Bonds

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020)

\$8.6 M

General Notes:

- Concept designs are for illustrative purposes only.
- Total cost for each area includes cost of construction, plus cost escalation, contingencies and soft costs.





2 MARKET PLAZA

INITIAL WORK

Close Power Plant Drive; initial intersection improvements; designate interim bike route

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Implement green stormwater management; construct pedestrian plaza; construct dedicated/fully separated bike path.

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Shoal Creek Conservancy, City of Austin Transportation Department, Austin Energy, Seaholm District, City of Austin Public Works Department, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Private entities, City of Austin Public Works Department, Seaholm TIF, GO Bonds, Great Streets Development Fund

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020)

\$5.5 M





3 CONVERGENCE PLAZA

INITIAL WORK:

Activate public space

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

This will be a key link/node after the Market Plaza and Third Street bridge work is complete; long-term intersection improvements; plaza work.

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Shoal Creek Conservancy, Austin Energy, Austin Water Utility, Downtown Austin Alliance, Seaholm District, City of Austin Transportation Department, City of Austin Public Works Department

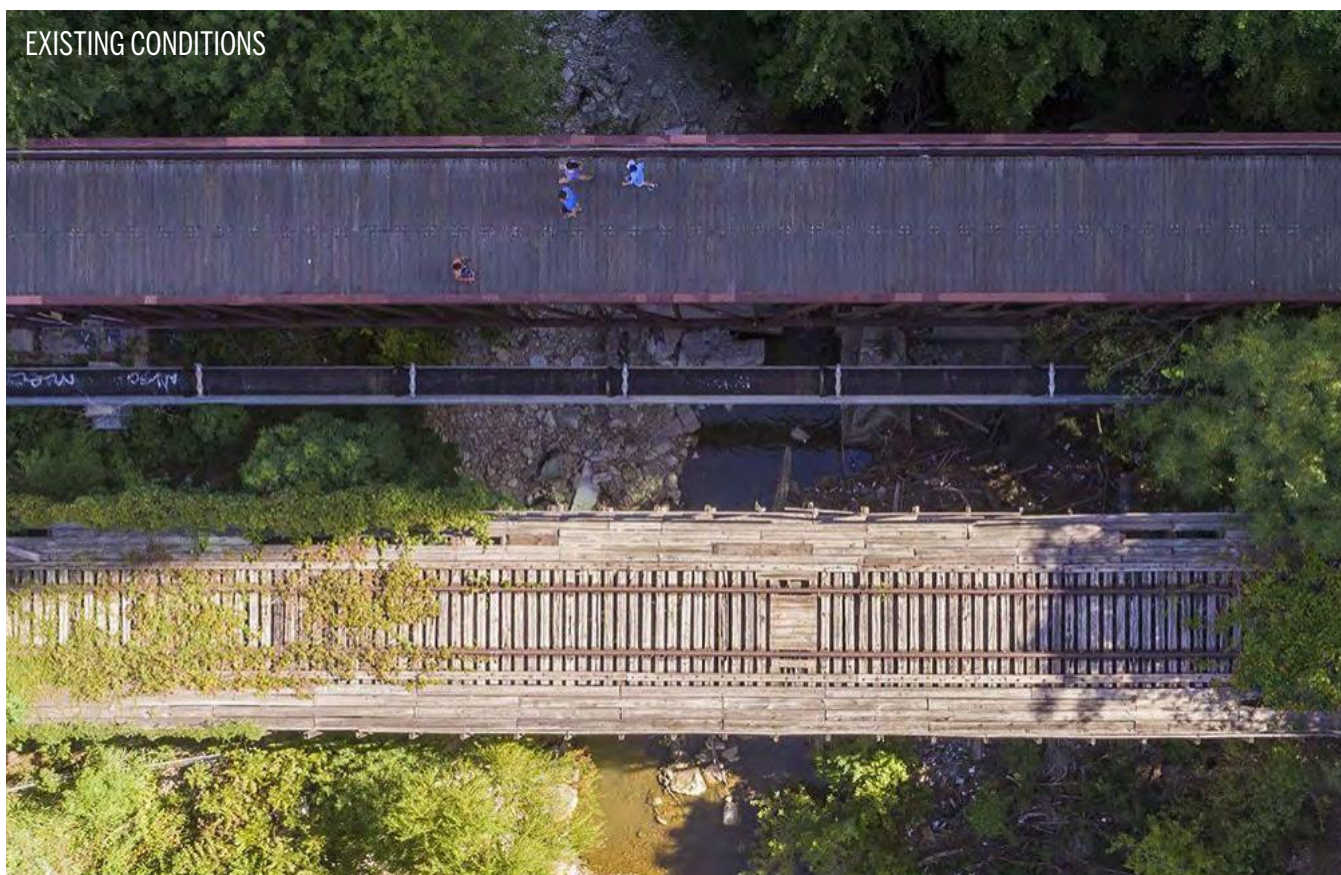
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Private entities, City of Austin Public Works Department, Seaholm TIF, GO Bonds, Great Streets Development Fund

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020*)

\$7.7M





PATRICK WONG - ANTLIER WONG PHOTOGRAPHY

4A THIRD STREET BIKE-PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE & TRESTLE

INITIAL WORK

New bike/pedestrian bridge

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Rehabilitate Third Street trestle bridge and convert to park space

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Shoal Creek Conservancy, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, Austin Water Utility, Downtown Austin Alliance, Bike Austin, historic preservation groups

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Private entities, City of Austin Public Works Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, GO Bonds, Drainage Utility Fund, historic preservation grants

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020*)

\$9.0M





4B NEW SHOAL CREEK TRAIL CONNECTION AT THIRD STREET

INITIAL WORK

Construct new Shoal Creek Trail connection under bridges and two staircases to street-level

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Ongoing streambank restoration

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

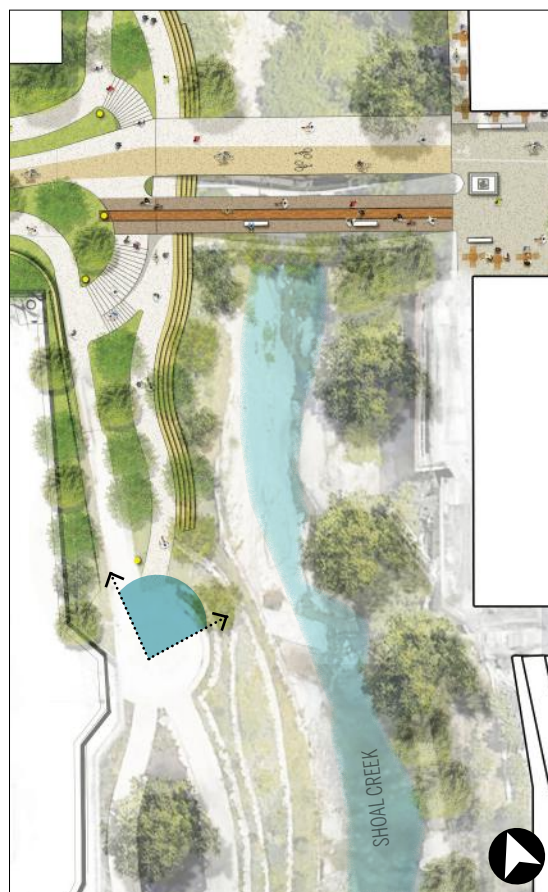
Shoal Creek Conservancy, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, Austin Water Utility, Downtown Austin Alliance, Bike Austin, historic preservation groups

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Private entities, City of Austin Public Works Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, GO Bonds, Drainage Utility Fund, historic preservation grants

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020)

\$3.5M





5 MARGARET MOSER PLAZA

INITIAL WORK:

Reconfigure plaza entrance to discourage cars and welcome bikes/ pedestrians

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Convert Margaret Moser Plaza to woonerf and improve bike/pedestrian connections.

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Conservancy, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, Austin Water Utility, Downtown Austin Alliance, Bike Austin, historic preservation groups

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Private entities, City of Austin Public Works Department, City of Austin Transportation Department, GO Bonds, Drainage Utility Fund, historic preservation grants

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020)

\$4.3M

Note: For visual imagery of woonerf concept, see page 19.





6 SHOAL CREEK TRAIL AT RIO GRANDE

INITIAL WORK

Construct cantilevered boardwalk and widened trail,

LONG-TERM / PROJECT WORK

Streambank restoration at boardwalk site as part of Little Shoal.

KEY PUBLIC & NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Shoal Creek Conservancy, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin Public Works Department

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Drainage Utility Fund, City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, GO bonds, Public Works Department

TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED, 2020)

\$4.4 M



Note: For visual imagery of cantilevered boardwalk concept, see page 19.

VISUAL DICTIONARY OF INSPIRATIONAL PLACES

WOONERF

DEFINITION:

A shared street that prioritizes bike and pedestrian activities while also allowing limited parking and vehicular access at low, safe speeds.

CONCEPT LOCATION:

Margaret Moser Plaza

INSPIRATIONAL PEERS:

The Wharf, Washington, DC; Cady's Alley, Washington, DC; Kensington, London.



IMAGE: THE WHARF, WASHINGTON, DC



IMAGE: MØNSTED KALKGRUBER, DENMARK

CANTILEVERED BOARDWALK

DEFINITION:

Expanded trail pathway that extends over the creek bed, allowing for minimal disruption to the existing the ecological habitat.

CONCEPT LOCATION:

Shoal Creek Trail at Rio Grande

INSPIRATIONAL PEERS:

Hot Springs, Arkansas; Mønsted Kalkgruber, Denmark; McDowell Creek Falls, Oregon.

PROGRAMMING, ACTIVATION, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

TIMING: ONGOING THROUGHOUT ALL PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION

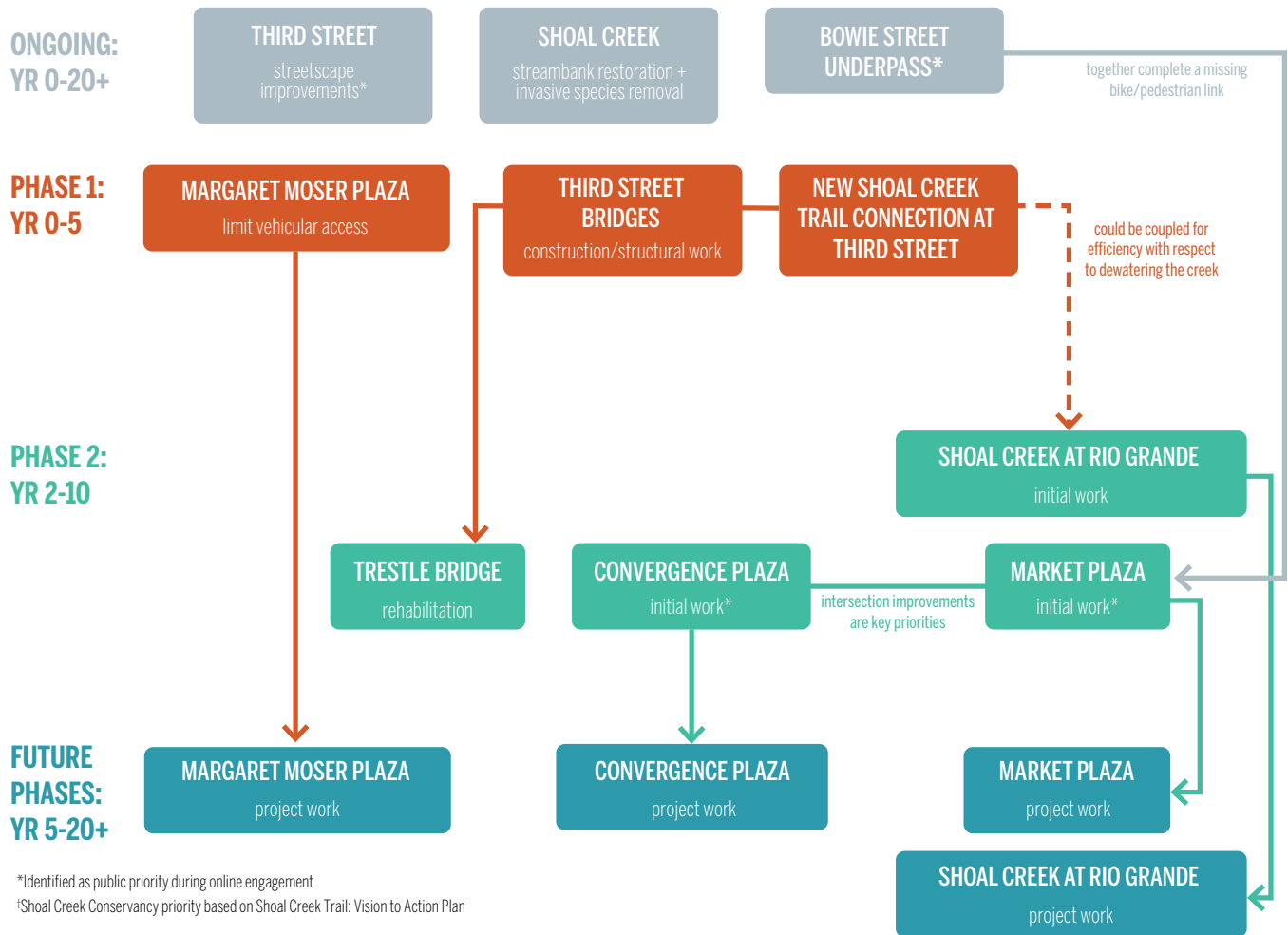
- 1** Build public awareness and champions for the Cypress & Shoal Creek Public Space Strategy vision
- 2** Activate Cypress & Shoal Creek area with programming and art
- 3** Consider creating temporary plazas in cooperation with neighboring businesses to serve as setting for an outdoor event
- 4** Continue communication about planned improvements with community stakeholders
- 5** Place signage to highlight future improvements
- 6** Continue to engage downtown business owners, property owners, HOAs and neighborhood associations
- 7** Continue to engage citywide stakeholders including partner nonprofits & community groups

REGULATORY CHALLENGES

TIMING: THESE KEY ISSUES MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE CONSTRUCTION ON C&S PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS MAY PROCEED.

- 1** Achieve compatibility with adjacent utility right-of-way
 - >> Market Plaza and Convergence Plaza improvements are contingent upon the ability to develop trail amenities within Austin Energy and Austin Water Utility right-of-way; right-of-way dimensions and types of permissible neighboring amenities vary depending on the type of utility infrastructure
 - >> Collaborate with utilities and relevant City departments to achieve a regulatory structure that allows for both safe maintenance of utility infrastructure and high quality public spaces
- 2** Resolve key issues between Union Pacific and the City of Austin
 - >> Secure an Union Pacific easement to enable construction of Bowie Street Underpass
 - >> Acquisition of Third Street Trestle by City of Austin to enable construction of Third Street underpass and Trestle transformation

PHASING STRATEGY



COST ESTIMATE

PROJECT AREA	COST
1) Bowie Street Underpass	\$8.6M
2) Market Plaza	\$5.5M
3) Convergence Plaza	\$7.7M
4A) Third Street Bike-Pedestrian Bridge & Trestle	\$9.0M
4B) New Shoal Creek Trail Connection at Third Street	\$3.5M
5) Margaret Moser Plaza	\$4.3M
6) Shoal Creek Trail at Rio Grande	\$4.4M
TOTAL COST ESTIMATE	\$43.0M

General Notes:

- Total cost for each area includes cost of construction, plus cost escalation, contingencies and soft costs.
- Total cost for each area is the estimated cost, 2020.



FOLLOW PROJECT UPDATES AT [SHOALCREEKCONSERVANCY.ORG](https://shoalcreekconservancy.org)