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THE TRAVIS COUNTY GREENPRINT FOR GROWTH



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GREENPRINT FOR GROWTH

OCTOBER 2005—OCTOBER 2006

Published by
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PROJECT PARTNERS

City of Austin
Travis County
The Trust for Public Land
The University of Texas at Austin–School of Architecture

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Austin Metro Trails and Greenways
Austin Parks Foundation
Austin to Bastrop Colorado River Corridor Council
Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District
Bull Creek Association
Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)
Capital Metro
City of Austin
Creating Common Ground
Envision Central Texas
Hill Country Alliance
Hill Country Conservancy
Lower Colorado River Authority
National Parks Service–Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
Native Prairies Association of Texas
The Nature Conservancy of Texas
People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER)
Real Estate Council of Austin
Save Barton Creek Association
Save our Springs Alliance
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Travis County
The Trust for Public Land
University of Texas at Austin–School of Architecture
&
Several interested individuals and businesses

THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS FOR THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THIS PROJECT:

Advanced Micro Devices
The Westhill Foundation for Nature (Knobloch Family Foundation)
Land/Water/Sky (Mike Luigs)
Travis County

Shield Ayres Foundation
Reese Foundation

Applied Materials, Inc.
GF Family Foundation
Milo Burdette
Bryan Hale

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INTRODUCTION— WHAT IS GREENPRINTING?

“The great success of the Travis County Greenprint project is that it brought citizens, community groups and business leaders together to produce a roadmap to help meet our parks and green space needs. As our community continues to grow, the need to expand and maintain our green infrastructure is enormous. The greenprint provides us with a vision for moving forward and allows us to collaborate to leverage our resources to everyone’s benefit.”

—Mayor Will Wynn
City of Austin



Barton Creek, Austin

Greenprinting is TPL’s application of Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling, which helps local governments and communities make informed decisions about land conservation priorities. The greenprinting model systematically analyzes public goals for parks and open space—including other quality-of-life goals like providing pure drinking water, ample recreation, and well-planned growth. The model identifies currently unprotected areas that offer the highest conservation benefit based on locally identified goals and criteria.

Greenprinting is an easy-to-understand tool for prioritizing land acquisition that objectively considers diverse interests and community values and fosters collaboration among stakeholders. There are four steps to using the model:

1. Data is collected that reflects community goals, then
2. Data is translated into GIS models,
3. Criteria are weighted (valued) according to community goals, and finally
4. Overview maps, parcel priority rankings, and reports are created.

THE TRAVIS COUNTY GREENPRINT

“This report serves as a guide to the open space needs of the Austin/Travis County area in the future. I wish I had had these guidelines sooner but it is never too late to make commitments to building and expanding our parks infrastructure.”

—Margaret Gomez
Travis County Commissioner



Barton Springs Pool, Austin

THE “WHAT”?

In 2002, Envision Central Texas (ECT), a nonprofit organization created to assist in the public development and implementation of a regional vision addressing the growth of Central Texas, started a public input process to identify critical resources in the region. Special focus was given to land use, transportation, and the environment. The goal was to work with the people of Central Texas to build consensus around a vision that would help preserve and enhance the region’s quality of life, natural resources, and economic prosperity. Based on the broad input from the community, in 2004 ECT released a vision statement that includes a focus on more parks, greenways, and protected open space.

Based on this vision, it is the goal of The Trust for Public Land to use its “greenprinting” services to develop the “Travis County Greenprint for Growth”—a road map from the vision (as stated by the community through the efforts of ECT) to the implementation. In this endeavor, TPL is partnering with the University of Texas at Austin, the City of Austin, and Travis County to bring its national expertise in this area to build on the efforts of ECT.

THE “WHY”?

As communities grow, they are finding themselves behind the curve in terms of addressing the growing parks and recreational needs of the population. This is certainly true of Central Texas, particularly Travis County and the City of Austin. Our most cherished recreational areas and parks—for example, Zilker Park and the Town Lake trail—are very heavily used, while additional parks and recreational capacity are not being added at the same rate. Investment in maintenance has not kept pace with the needs and many recreational facilities are in severe disrepair. On another front, state and federal funding for parks and natural area preservation and development is down to negligible levels. It is imperative, therefore, for local governments to focus on providing this infrastructure, which is critical to maintaining and improving the quality of life, and thus a robust economy, for Austin.

THE TRAVIS COUNTY GREENPRINT GOALS

“Greenprinting is proving to be an invaluable tool to advance the goals of Envision Central Texas. It will help elected officials, land conservancies, and private citizens advance the protection and stewardship of the region’s most valuable environmental assets.”

—Frederick Steiner
Dean, School of Architecture,
University of Texas at Austin
Henry M. Rockwell
Chair in Architecture



Blake Gordon

Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Park, Austin

The goal of a comprehensive Travis County Greenprint is to create a unified vision—led by the community with TPL’s facilitation—that identifies the critical parks, recreation, and natural lands protection needs in the county. It is the goal of this effort to assist the City, the County, and the various parks and recreation and natural area conservation organizations to apply the

limited resources available to this common vision. The Travis County Greenprint is aimed at helping the Central Texas community leverage available resources more effectively, resulting in a better parks, recreation, and natural areas system in the region.

METHODOLOGY

“With Greenprinting, the Trust for Public Land has developed a state-of-the-art process for assessing priority lands for conservation. The process combines the latest high tech computer analysis with good old-fashioned town hall type meetings. The result is an accurate picture of our most important lands that the people of the community want to save.”

—Butch Smith, Senior Planner
Austin Parks and
Recreation Department



Barton Creek Wilderness Park, Austin

Eric Swanson

In order to achieve the above defined goals, and to create a “road map” for an effective and sustainable parks and recreation system in the region, the Travis County Greenprint focused on the following specific tasks:

- ❁ Inventory the existing resources—develop a comprehensive GIS database of existing park and open space resources in the Central Texas region.
- ❁ Complete a “level of service” study.
- ❁ Conduct stakeholder input meetings to identify the resource areas in the greatest need and still available for protection.
- ❁ Develop an interactive model that defines and prioritizes the parks and conservation acquisition needs.
- ❁ Present model for review by stakeholders and finalize results.
- ❁ Support the implementation of the land acquisition and capital improvement needs in the region.

THE STAKEHOLDER INPUT PROCESS

The Travis County Greenprint project was facilitated by The Trust for Public Land in partnership with the City of Austin, Travis County, and the University of Texas at Austin’s School of Architecture. This group formed the core project partnership, with extensive and engaged input from a stakeholder group. This stakeholder group included public agencies, conservation organizations, community organizations like the Austin Neighborhood Council, regional planning and transit organizations, representatives from the real estate development community, and the University of Texas, as well as several interested individual participants.

The first two stakeholder/focus group meetings were aimed at identifying a host of conservation criteria. These criteria were then grouped into four “conservation categories.” A technical advisory team (TAT) was formed from the stakeholder group. This TAT included representatives from the City, the County, the Lower



Colorado River, Travis County

Colorado River Authority, the Capital Area Council of Governments, UT-Austin, and The Trust for Public Land. The role of the TAT was to develop the criteria matrix and to assign weights (values) to the individual criteria within each criteria category. The initial set of weighted criteria was then presented to the stakeholders for review and input in the form of the first draft greenprint model.

Additional input was incorporated into the model, and the stakeholders were then asked to weigh the four overall criteria categories. Two additional meetings allowed for further review and refinement of the overall weighting, and the final model was presented to the stakeholders.

The overall data gathering, stakeholder input, model development, and review process occurred over a period of twelve months.

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Travis County Greenprint included the following stakeholders:

- Austin Metro Trails and Greenways
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Austin to Bastrop Colorado River Corridor Council
- Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District
- Bull Creek Association
- Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)
- Capital Metro
- City of Austin
- Creating Common Ground
- Envision Central Texas
- Hill Country Alliance
- Hill Country Conservancy
- Lower Colorado River Authority
- National Parks Service—Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

- Native Prairies Association of Texas
- The Nature Conservancy of Texas
- People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER)
- Real Estate Council of Austin
- Save Barton Creek Association
- Save Our Springs Alliance
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Travis County
- The Trust for Public Land
- University of Texas at Austin—School of Architecture
- and
- Several interested individuals and businesses

TECHNICAL ADVISORY TEAM

The Travis County Greenprint Technical Advisory Team (TAT) provided expertise and guidance in the development of the greenprint model and acted as the main review team through the stakeholder input process. The TAT consisted of the following:

1. Wendy Scaperotta, Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources, providing expertise in parks, natural and cultural resource conservation, GIS mapping and planning.
2. Butch Smith and Randy Scott, City of Austin, providing expertise in parks, water quality, natural resource conservation, GIS mapping and planning.
3. Sean Moran, Capital Area Council of Governments, providing expertise in GIS mapping and regional planning.
4. Barbara Parmenter, University of Texas at Austin—School of Architecture, providing expertise in GIS mapping, and community and regional planning.
5. The Lower Colorado River Authority, providing natural resource conservation and GIS mapping data.

MODEL GOALS AND CRITERIA

“Hill Country Conservancy has been a stakeholder on the Travis County Greenprint project. We feel strongly that the results, which are based on a combination of data, science and good-old-fashioned ‘stick-to-it-iveness’, have created a powerful vision that the community can own—and implement!”

—George Cofer
Executive Director,
Hill Country Conservancy

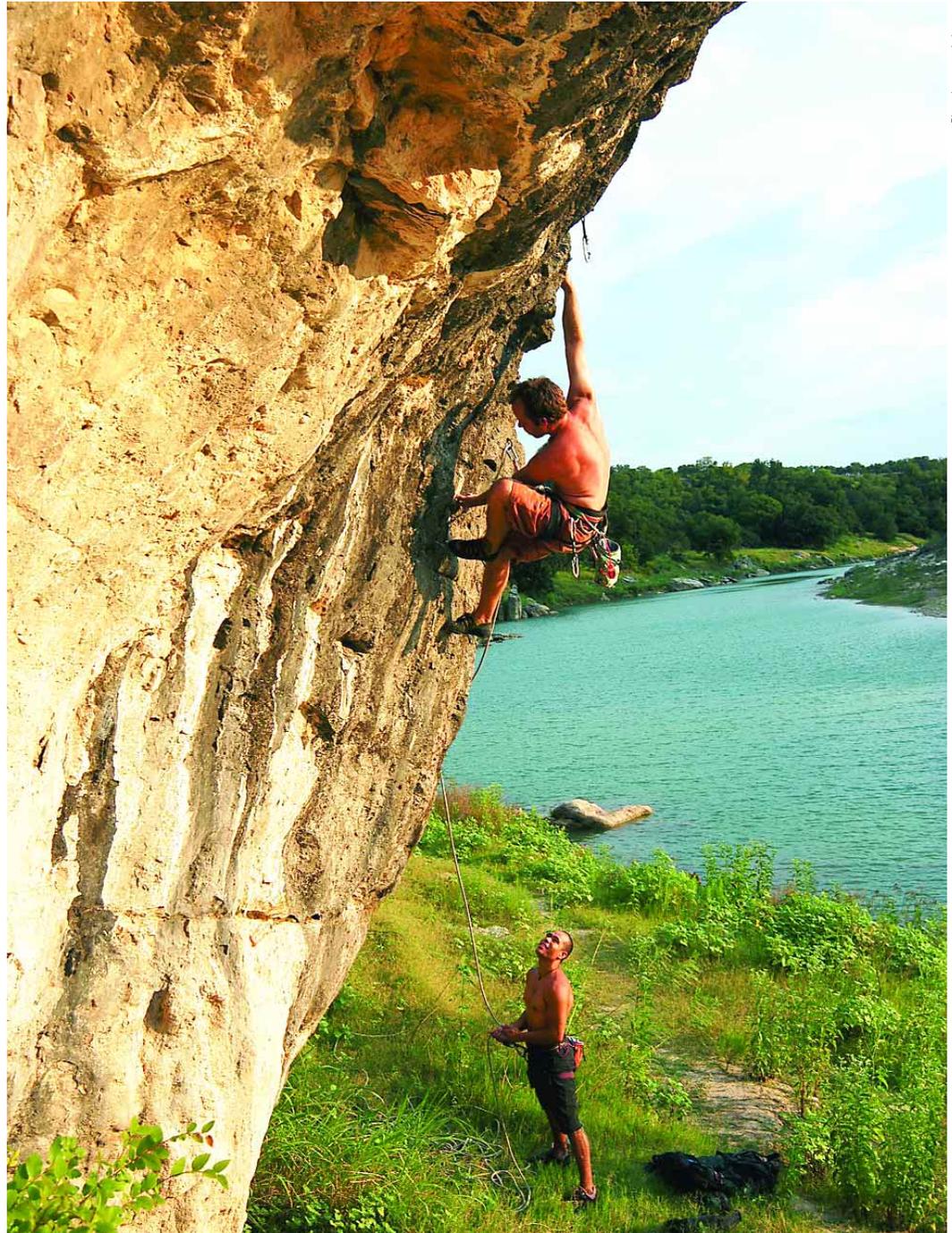


Photo by: merrickales.com

Reimers Ranch Park, Travis County

Table 1 provides a list of the conservation criteria identified through the stakeholder input process, as well as the overall conservation goals that were structured in order to build the

model. The table also details the individual criteria weights (values) that were agreed upon to build the goal composites, as well as the data sources.

TRAVIS COUNTY GREENPRINT MODEL — FINAL MODEL CRITERIA, MAY 12, 2006

Criteria Class	Model Criteria	Class Weight	Criteria Weight	Data	Data Source
WQ: Protect Water Quality/Quantity		25%			
	WQ01: Streams (Riparian Corridors)		10%	TravisCountyHydrologicNetwork.shp	http://nhd.usgs.gov/data.html
	WQ02: Waterbody		10%	hydro_p.shp	COA website
	WQ04: Floodplain		25%	Q3.shp	COA website
	WQ06: Aquifer Down Dip Zone		3%	Edwards_aquifer.shp	COA website
	WQ07: Steep Slopes		5%	slopeint (10 meter DEM)	USDA Geospatial Data Gateway
	WQ09: Native Prairies		3%	prairies.shp	COA Park and Recreation
	WQ10: High Quality Woodlands		5%	floodtree raster; Woodland.shp	Barbara Parmenter University of Texas at Austin; Travis County
	WQ11: Recharge Zones		20%	recharge.shp	COA website
	WQ12: Contributing Areas		9%	ContributingAreas.shp	COA Park and Recreation
	WQ13: Alluvial Soils		10%	alluvial_soils.shp	Soils data from COA Park and Recreation; TPL National queried alluvial soils.
RO: Recreational Opportunities		25%			
	R001: Greenspace		10%	Travis_VLI.shp	CAPCOG
	R002: Water Access		10%	Boat Ramps (and fishing piers), Travis County Parks (Lake and River Parks), Pedernales And Colorado River, Pedernales and Colorado Bridge Crossings	COA website, LCRA, and COA Park and Recreation
	R003: Adjacent to Existing Parks		10%	COA Parks, Travis Parks, State Parks, HOA Parks, MUD Parks, Regional Parks_City Village, COA Trails, and MUD Trails	COA Park and Recreation, CAPCOG
	R004: Community Gardens		5%	Community Gardens	TPL National GIS
	R005: Park Equity		15%	COA Parks, Travis Parks, State Parks, HOA Parks, MUD Parks, Regional Parks_City Village, COA Trails, and MUD Trails	COA website and COA Park and Recreation
	R006: Riparian Corridors		5%	TravisCountyHydrologicNetwork.shp	http://nhd.usgs.gov/data.html
	R007: Wildlife Corridors		5%	Transmission Lines and RiparianCorridorsWithBuffers	USGS_NHD and LCRA
	R008: Trail Connectivity		5%	A combination of data from Landuse2003, NHD stream data, Cenart (roads layer), and trails (MUD, COAand Proposed).	USGS, NHD, COA website, COA Park and Rec.
	R009: Trail Corridors		10%	COA Trails, MUD trails, Proposed Trails	COA Park and Recreation
	R010: Floodplain		25%	Q3.shp	COA website
EF: Protect Sensitive/Rare Environmental Features		25%			
	EF01: High Quality Woodlands		15%	floodtree raster; Woodland.shp	Barbara Parmenter University of Texas at Austin; Travis County
	EF02: Migratory Bird Habitat		10%	Important Bird Areas for Travis County.shp	TPL National GIS
	EF03: Habitat Connectivity		15%	LandUse2003 data, R007 Wildlife Corridors Result, BCP_parcel_tcad; Water Quality Protection lands, and Paved Roads	City of Austin website; LCRA (transmission lines); NHD riparian corridors form R007 result.
	EF04: Geologic Features		10%	Sinkdrainage_ContourDrainage.shp	City of Austin Watershed Protection and Development Review Department.
	EF05: Sensitive Environmental Features		10%	SpringSeepsWaterfalls.shp	USGS NHD data and CAPCOG (BCP_geodatabase)
	EF06: Native Prairies		10%	prairie.shp	COA Park and Recreation
	EF07: Threatened and Endangered Species		20%	ThreatenedAndEndangeredSpeciesOccurrences.shp	Texas Parks and Wildlife
	EF08: Alluvial Soils		10%	alluvial_soils.shp	Soil data from COA Park and Recreation; TPL National queried alluvial soils.
CR: Protect Cultural Resources		25%			
	CR02: Working Lands		20%	Travis_VLI.shp	CAPCOG
	CR03: Viewsheds		20%	overlays.shp (CVC, Scenic Viewshed Roads); Major Rivers; Major Waterbodies	COA website
	CR04: Federal and State Historical Sites		20%	histplc_point.shp; historic_marker.shp	Texas Historical Commission
	CR07: Scenic Corridors		25%	wildflower_roads.shp; overlay.shp; cow creek.shp, 1431.shp; 130 Corridor water crossings	TPL National GIS
	CR08: Adjacent to Conservation Easements		15%	Included in the BCP and Water Quality Lands	COA Park and Rec.

Table 1: Criteria Matrix

GREENPRINT RESULTS

Lynn Hollibec



The following maps present the results of the Travis County Greenprint model. The maps are organized in order to provide the maximum detail and analysis based on the modeling process. On a five-point scale of high to low, the conservation goals identified in the greenprint include high, moderate-high, and moderate priorities.

Map 1: Water Quality and Quantity Composite

Map 2: Recreational Opportunities Composite

Map 3: Rare and Sensitive Environmental Features Composite

Map 4: Cultural Resources Composite

Map 5a: Travis County Greenprint

Map 5b: Travis County Greenprint with existing protected parks, trails, natural areas, habitat and water quality protection lands (local, state, and federal)

Map 6: Travis County Greenprint with existing green space and land use (as of 2003)

The Travis County Greenprint model has been developed using the GIS data sets available during the course of the stakeholder input process. By its nature, the model is dynamic, and may be updated as new data becomes available. In order to maintain the integrity of the process, any update will require that the technical advisory team be consulted and, if necessary, the model criteria be re-weighted.

As investments are made, and community conservation goals identified through the greenprint are met, the stakeholders will have the opportunity to revisit the overall priorities and adjust them to reflect updated needs.

CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED

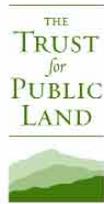
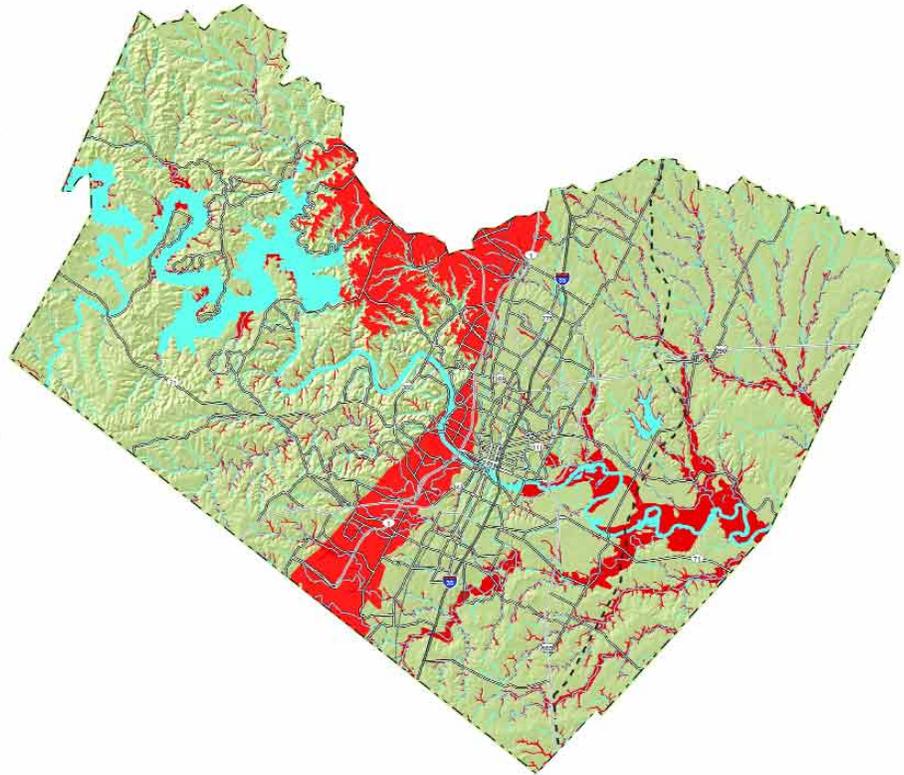
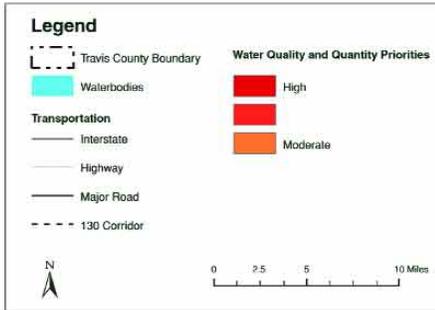
The Travis County Greenprint identifies the following as areas for special focus and future acquisition investments:

- ❖ The Colorado River Corridor east of IH-35 to the county boundary. It is safe to say that further greenprinting efforts along the corridor into Bastrop County will emphasize this priority (see maps 7a & 7b).
- ❖ The central city (neighborhood parks) and the Walnut Creek Watershed. The greenprint supports the City of Austin's vision for additional neighborhood parks in north-central Austin as well as acquisition for the Walnut Creek Greenway (see maps 8a & 8b).
- ❖ Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (see maps 9a & 9b).
- ❖ Southwest Travis County. The greenprint identifies priority acquisitions to augment the City of Austin's ongoing water quality protection efforts (see maps 10a & 10b).
- ❖ The Balcones National Wildlife Refuge (see maps 11a & 11b).

Maps 12a and 12b provide a detailed view of conservation priorities within the Pflugerville City Limits.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the water quality and quantity priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Special Thanks to the following data providers:
City of Austin, Travis County, University of Texas at Austin,
Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Historical Commission,
CAPCOG, USGS

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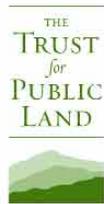
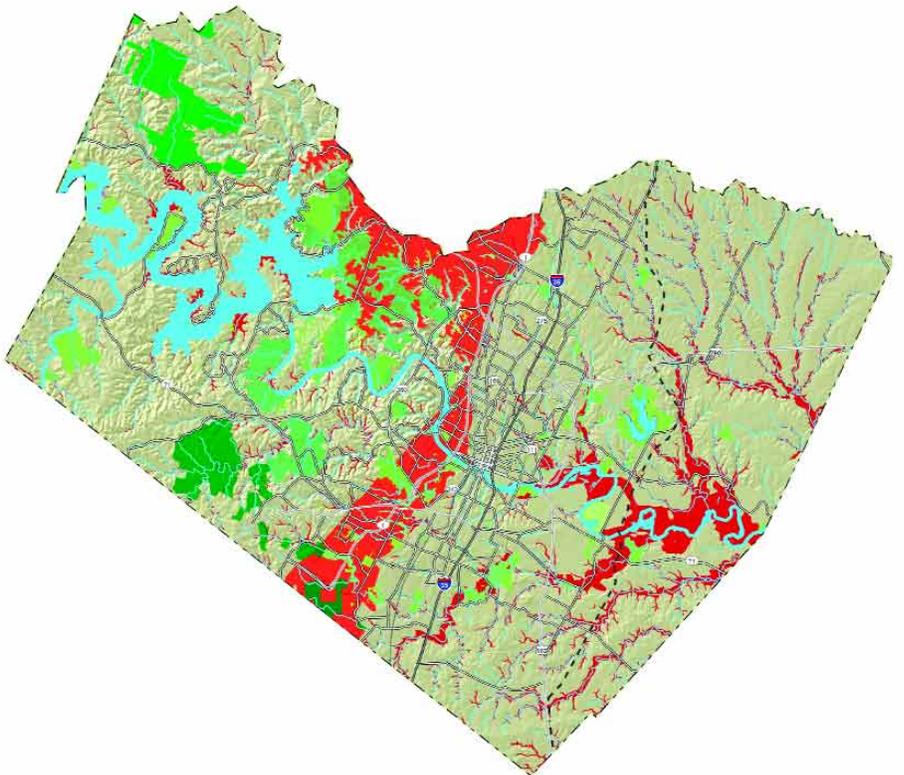
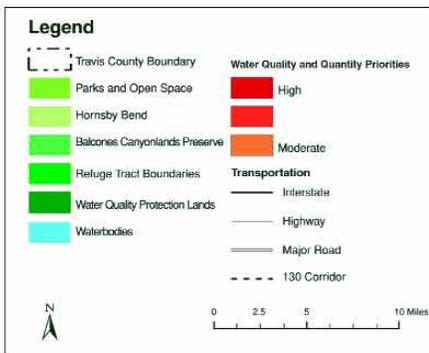
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Map 1a: Water Quality and Quantity Priorities

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY PRIORITIES

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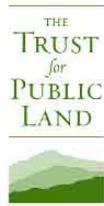
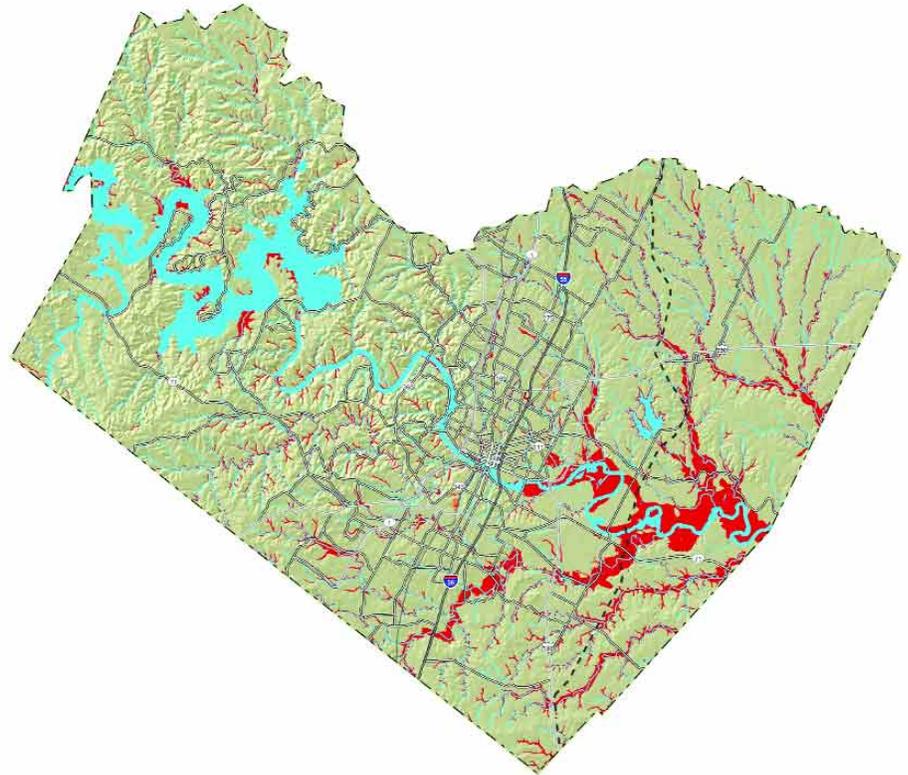
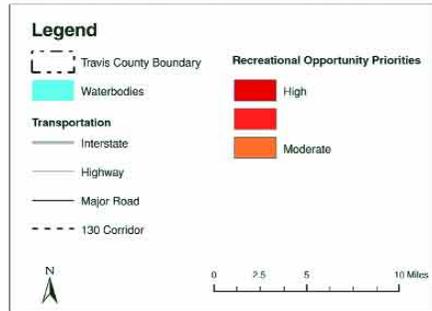
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Map 1b: Water Quality and Quantity Priorities with Protected Land

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the recreational opportunity priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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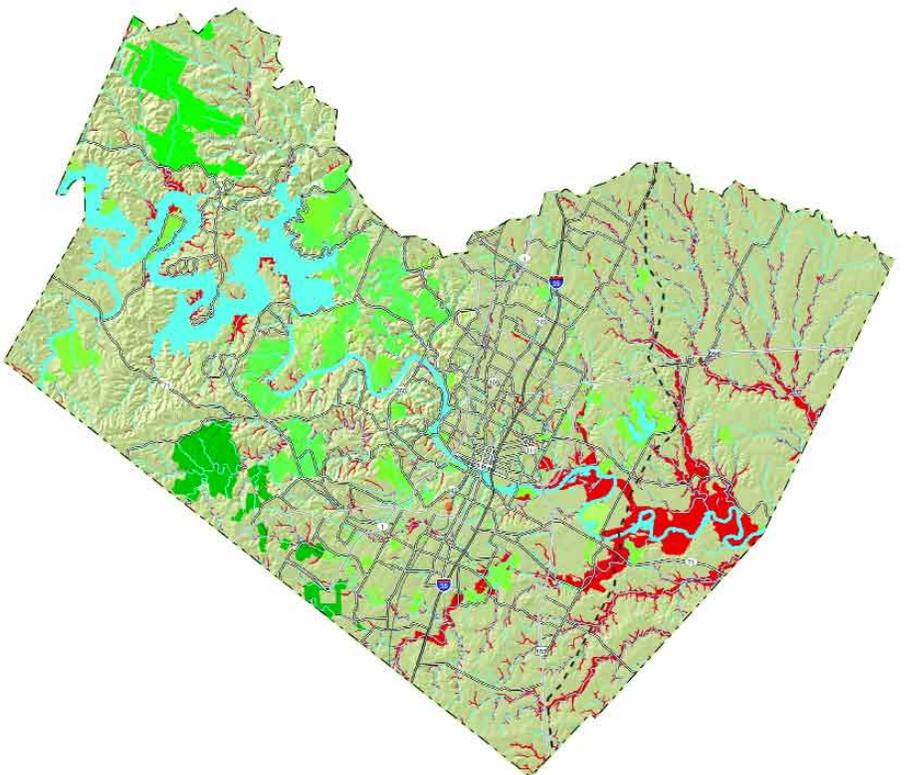
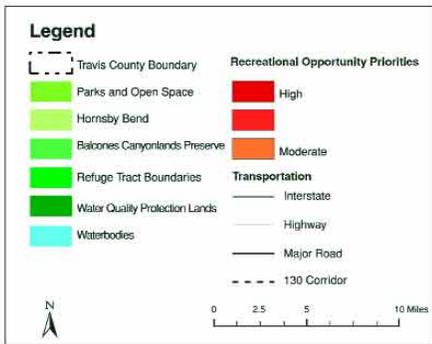
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Map 2a: Recreational Opportunities Priorities

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the recreational opportunity priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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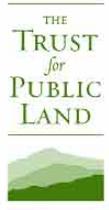
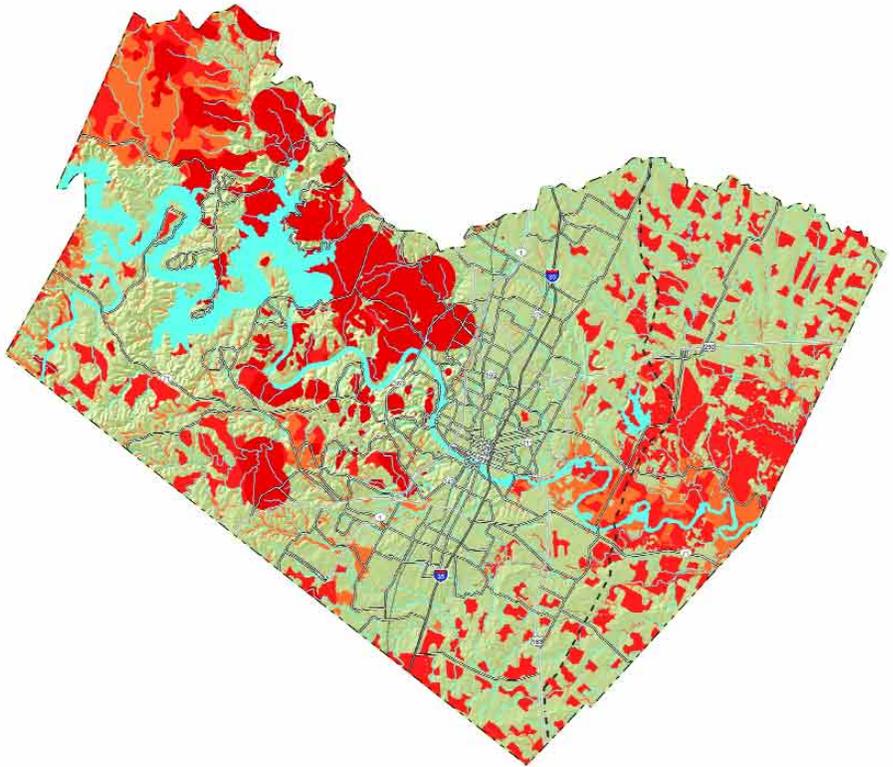
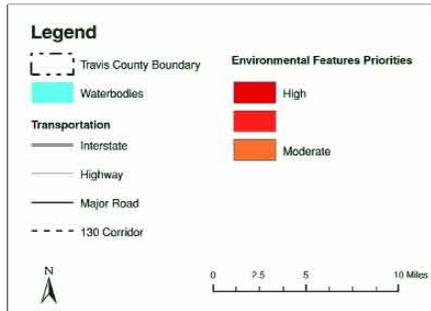
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Map 2b: Recreational Opportunities Priorities with Protected Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT RARE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the rare and sensitive environmental features priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Special Thanks to the following data providers:
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 Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Historical Commission,
 CAPCOG, USGS

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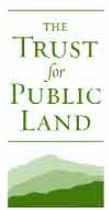
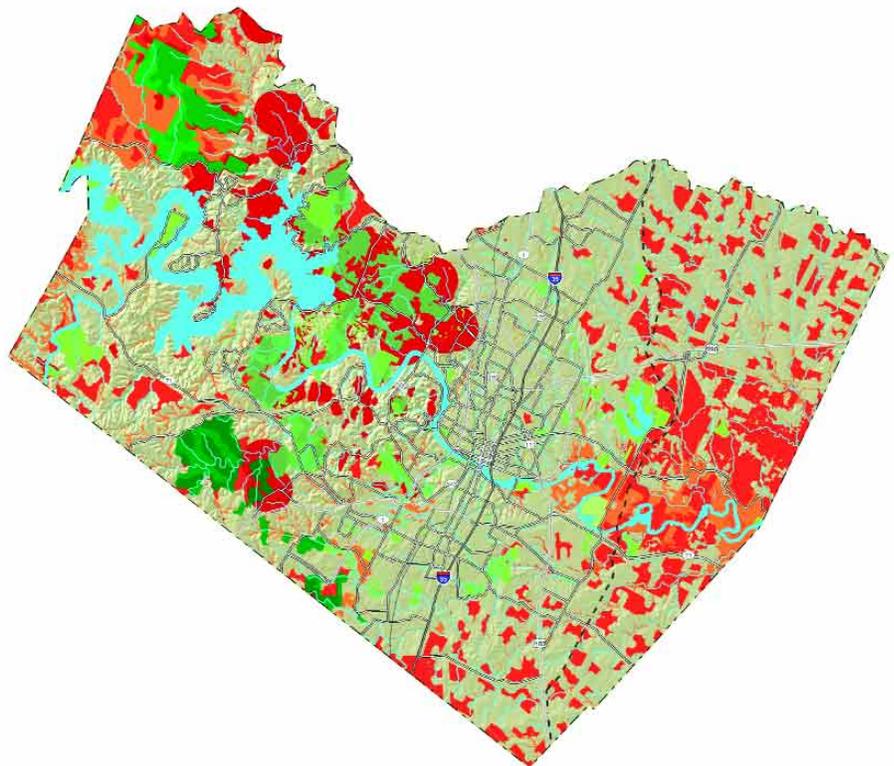
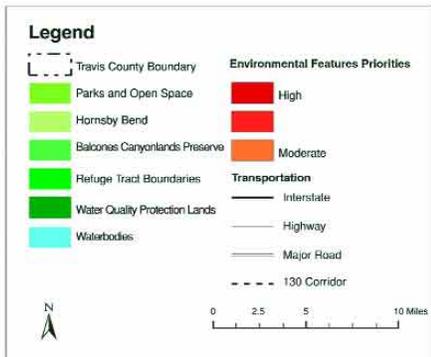
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Map 3a: Rare and Sensitive Environmental Features Priorities

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT RARE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the rare and sensitive environmental features priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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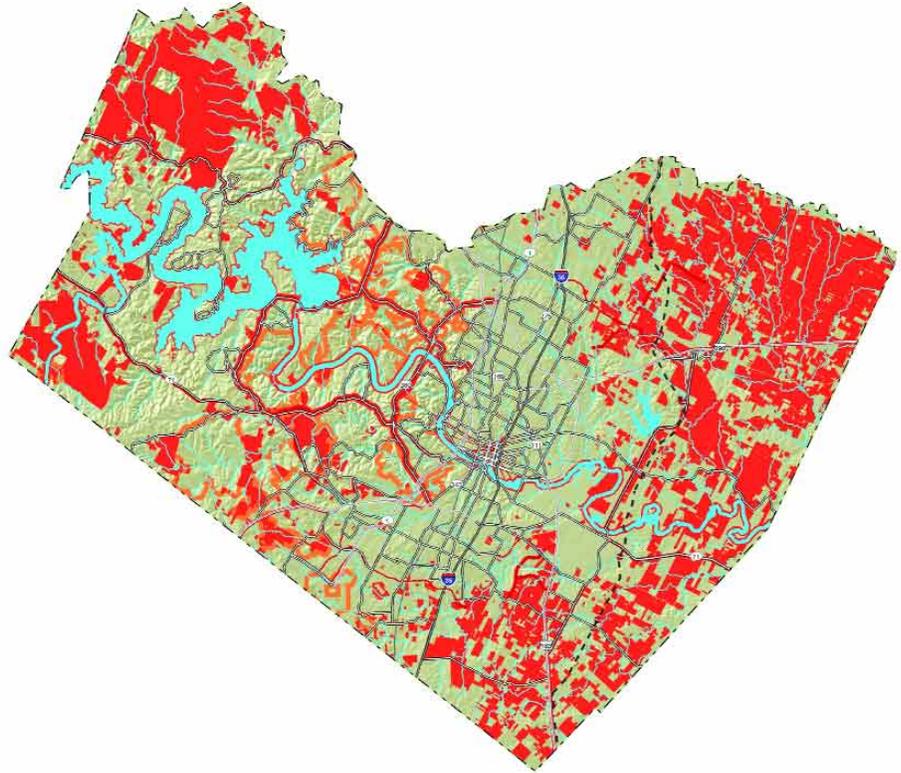
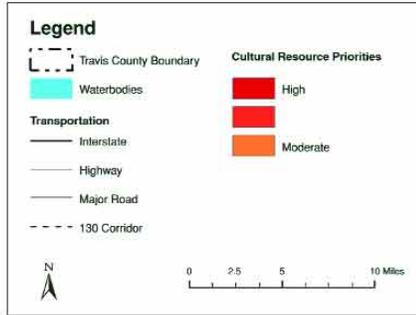
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Map 3b: Rare and Sensitive Environmental Features Priorities with Protected Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT CULTURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the cultural resource priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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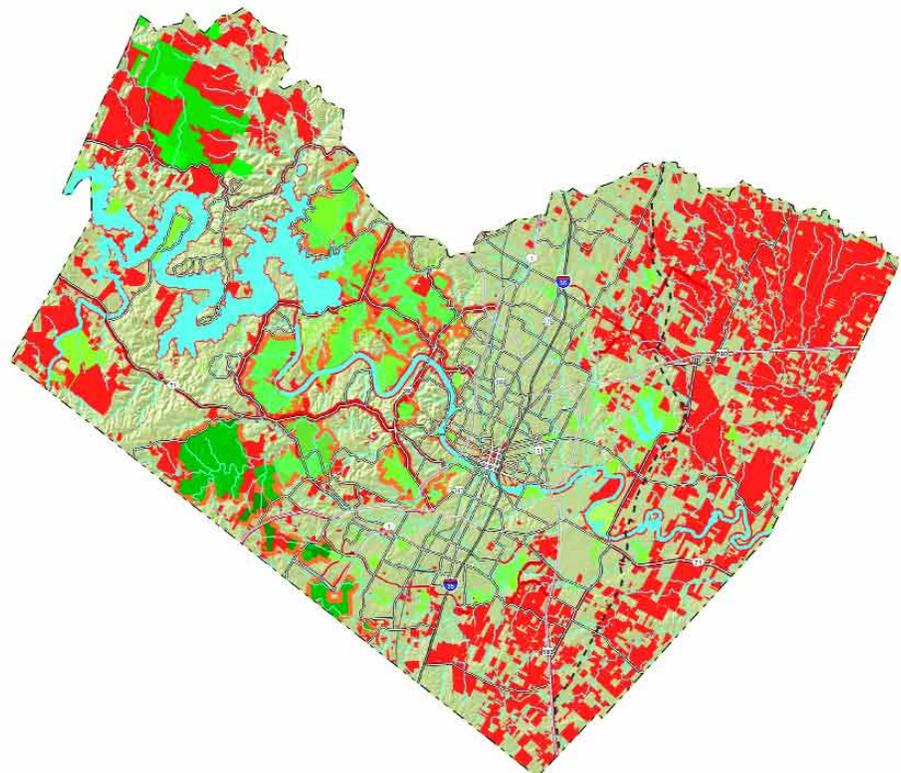
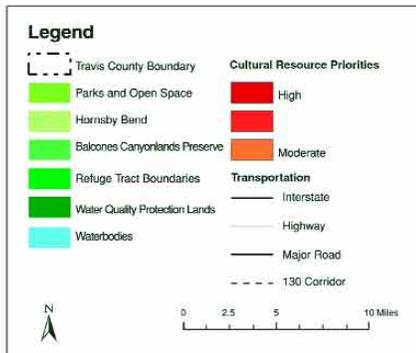
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Map 4a: Cultural Resources Priorities

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT CULTURAL RESOURCE PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the cultural resource priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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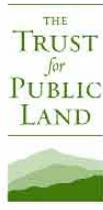
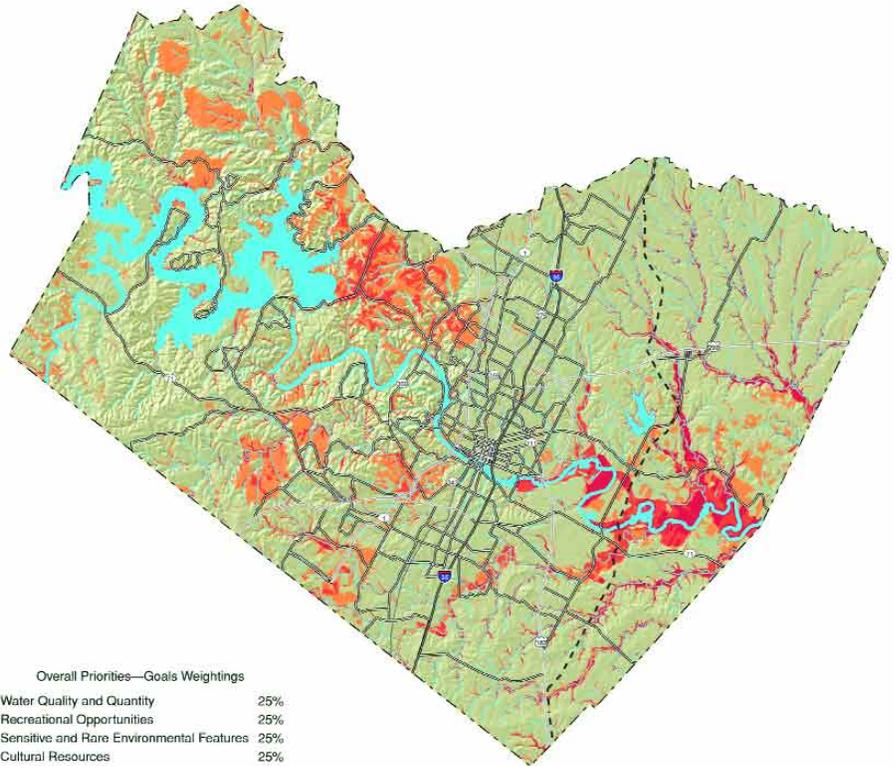
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Map 4b: Cultural Resources Priorities with Protected Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

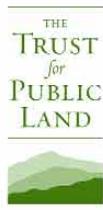
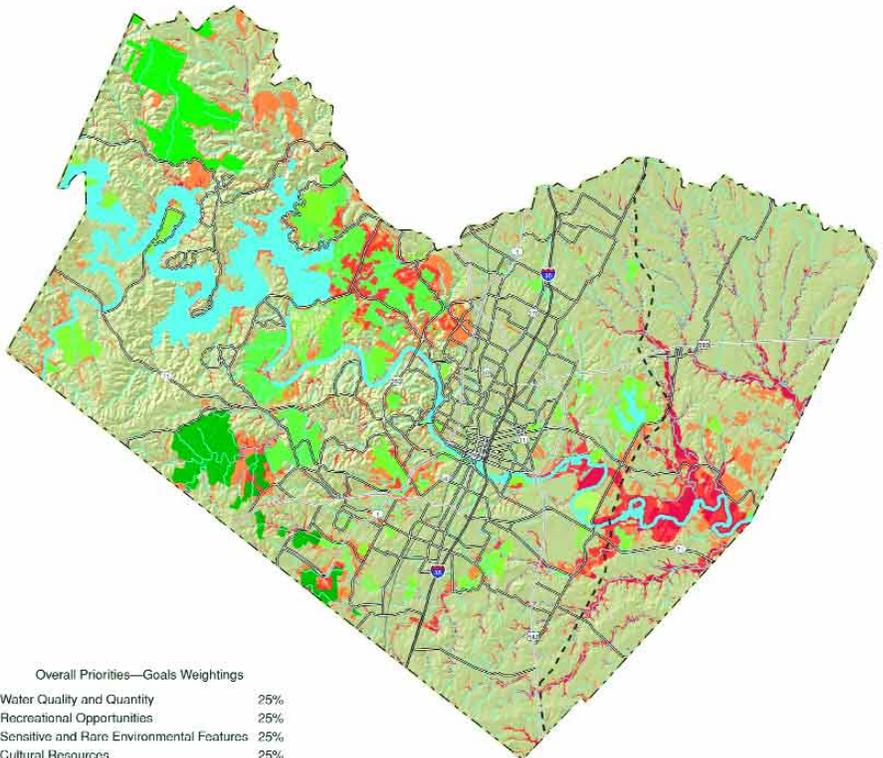
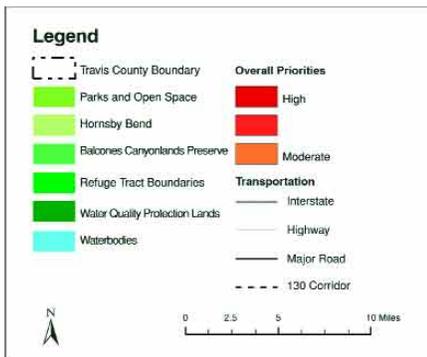
Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

Map 5a: Overall Conservation Priorities

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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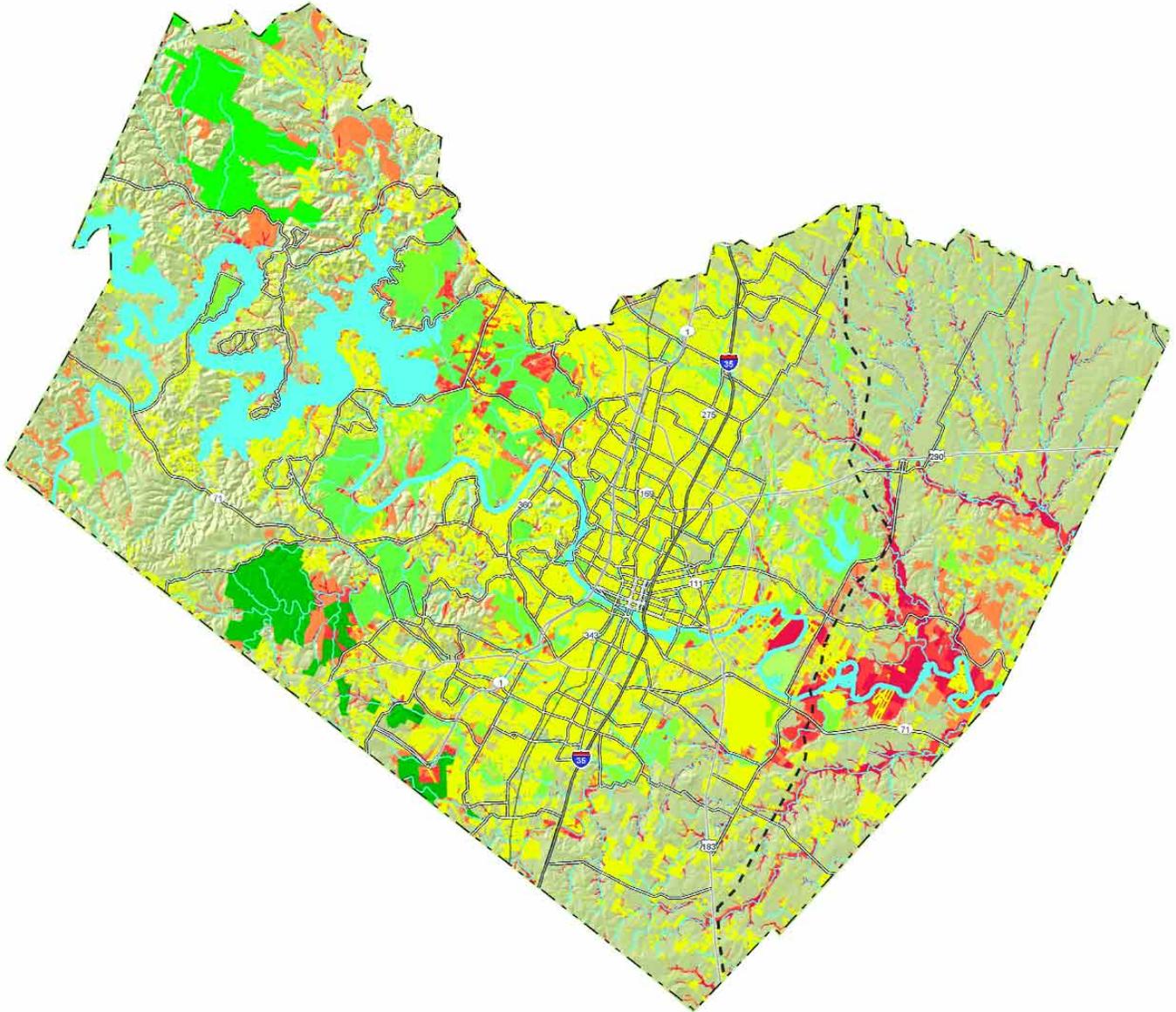
Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

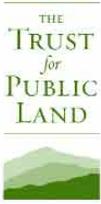
Map 5b: Overall Conservation Priorities with Protected Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES



This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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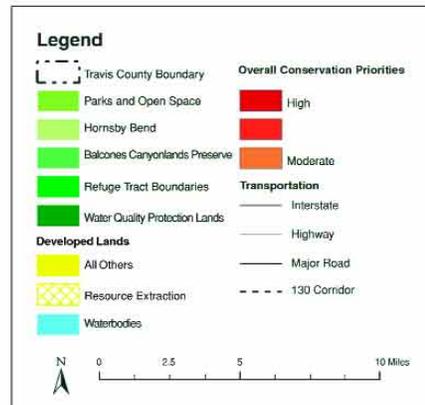
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Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

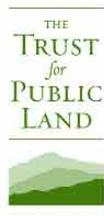
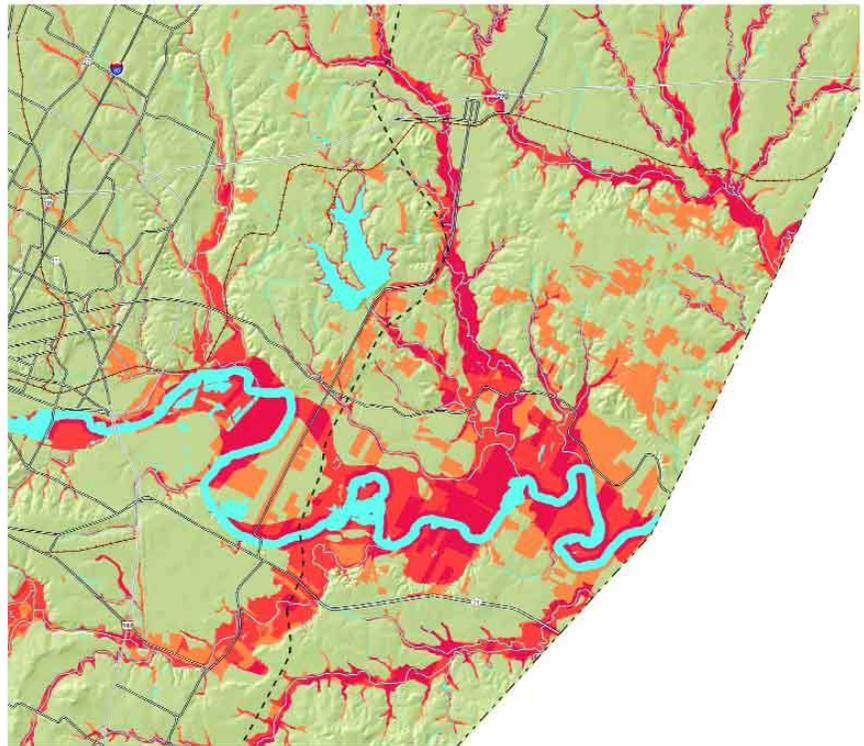
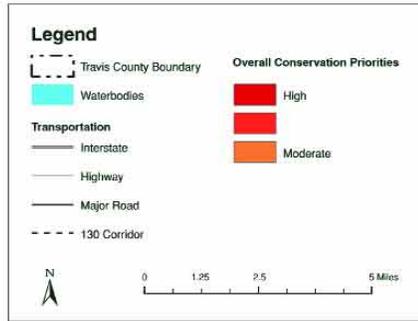
Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%



Map 6: Overall Conservation Priorities with Protected and Developed Land

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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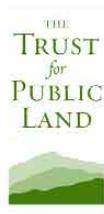
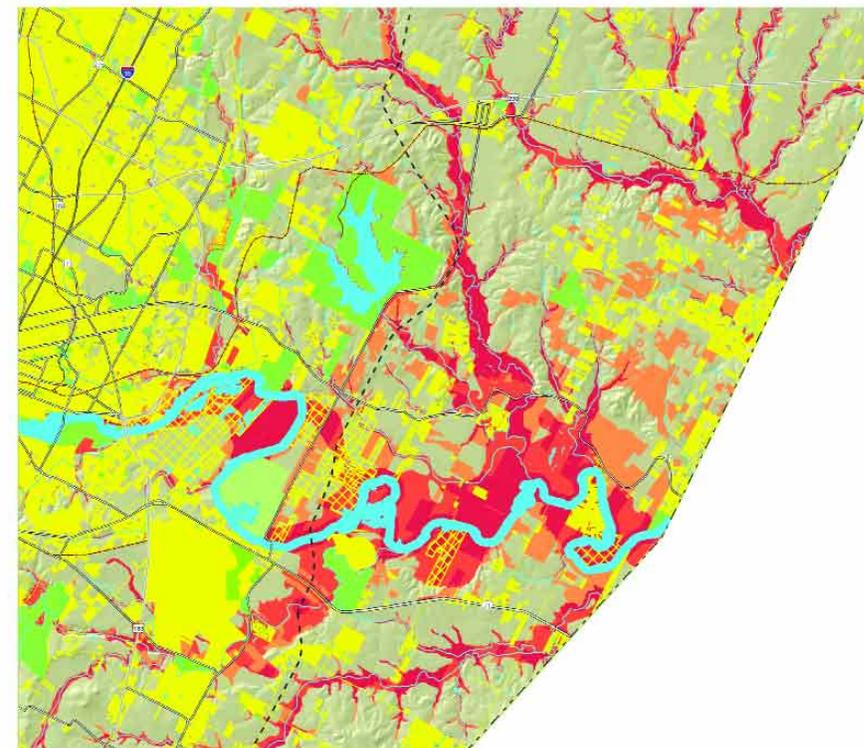
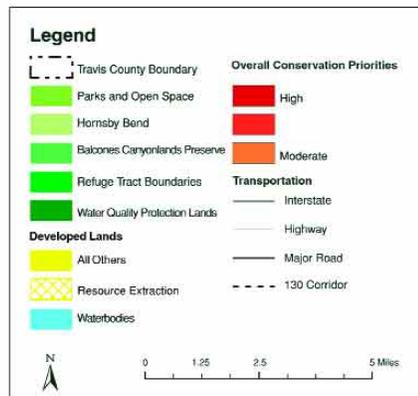
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Map 7a: The Colorado River Corridor East of IH-35

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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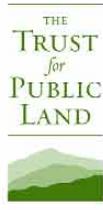
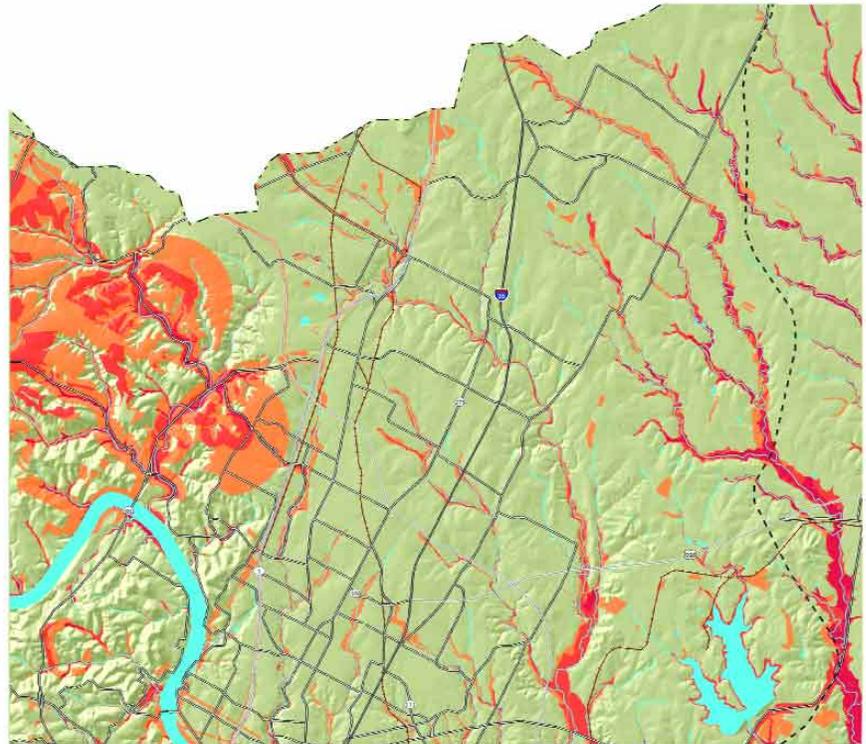
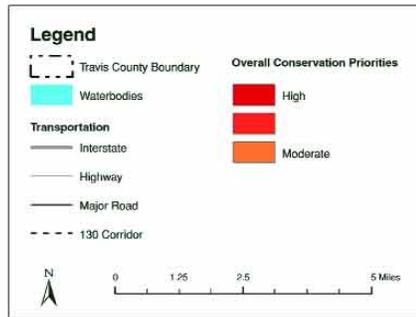
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Map 7b: The Colorado River Corridor East of IH-35 with Protected and Developed Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



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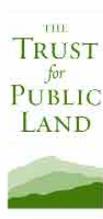
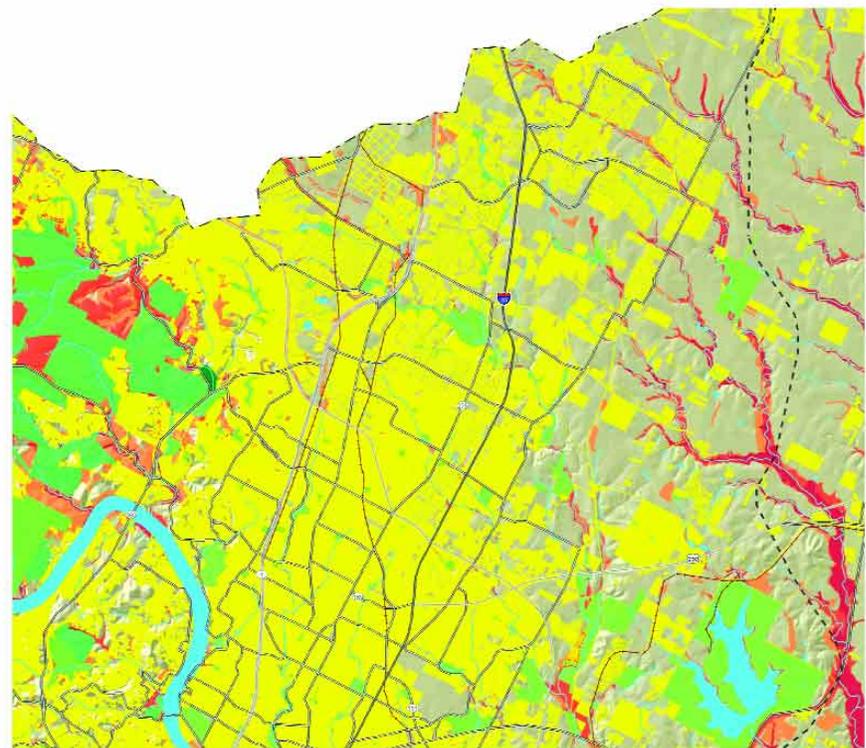
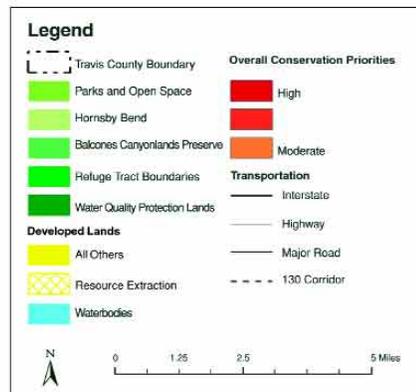
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Map 8a: Central Austin and Walnut Creek Watershed

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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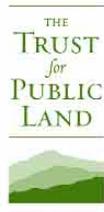
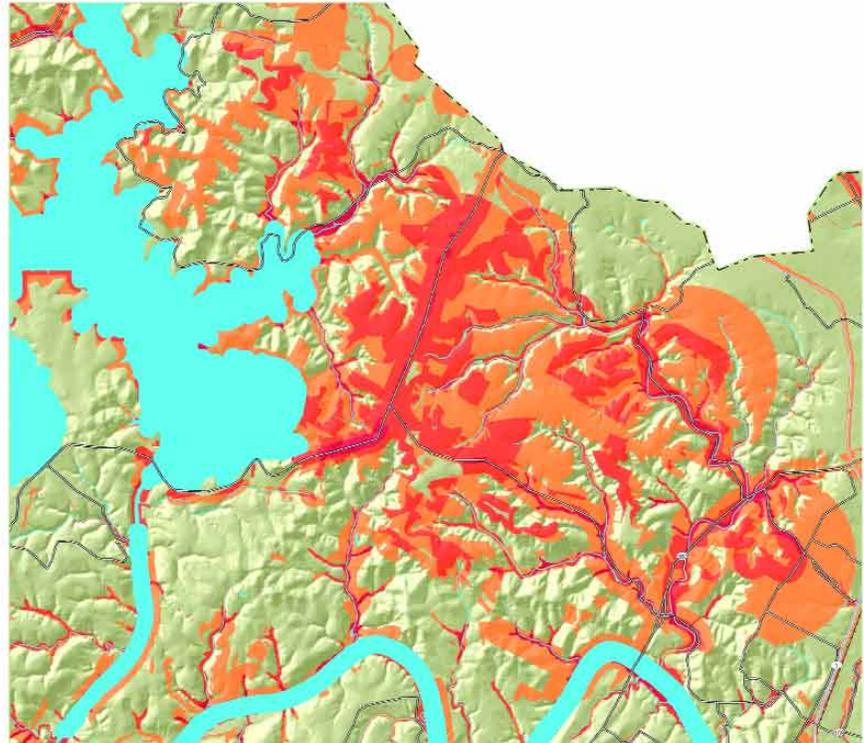
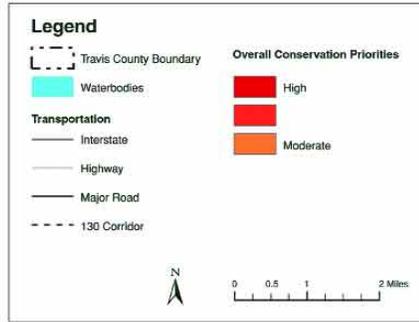
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Map 8b: Central Austin and Walnut Creek Watershed with Protected and Developed Land

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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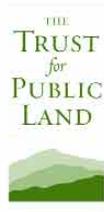
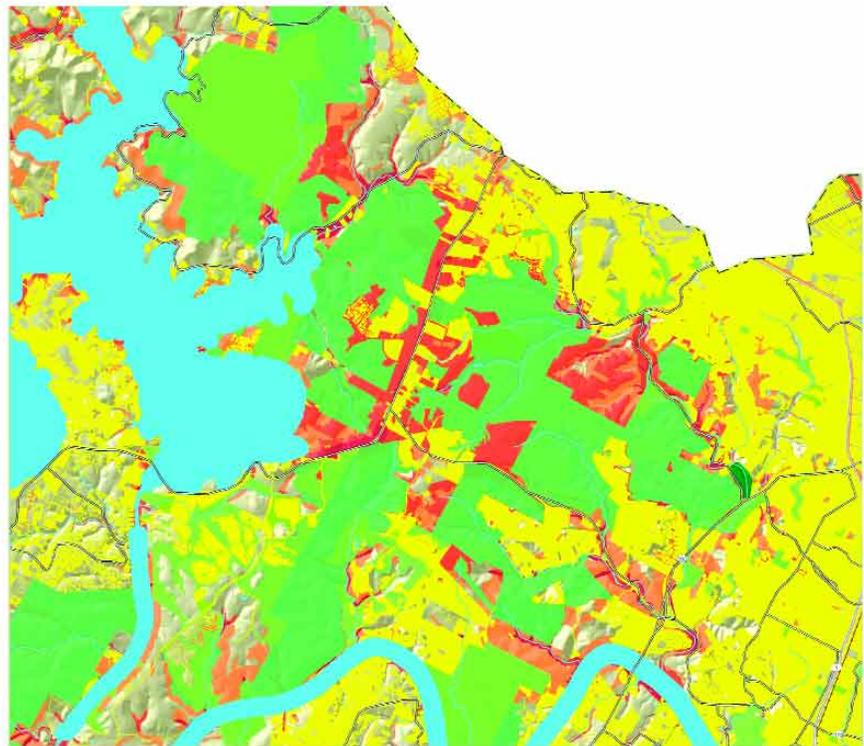
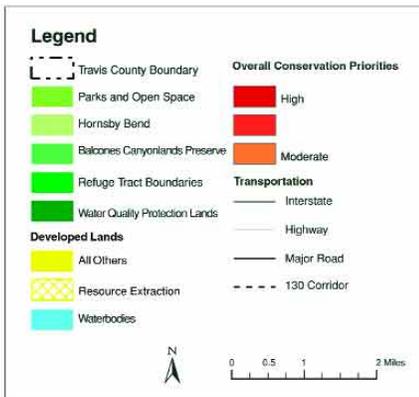
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Map 9a: Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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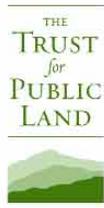
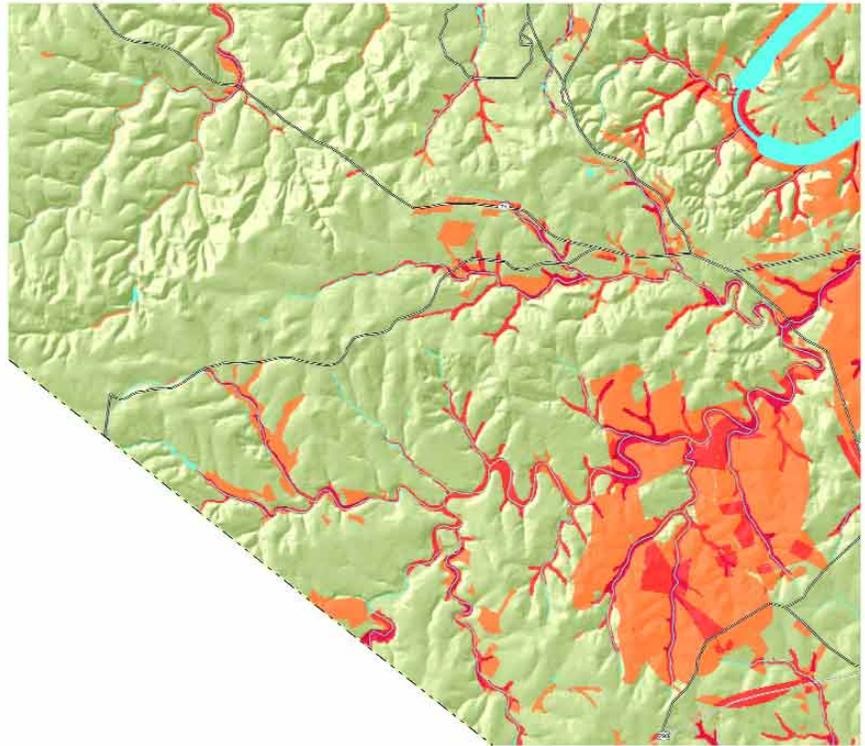
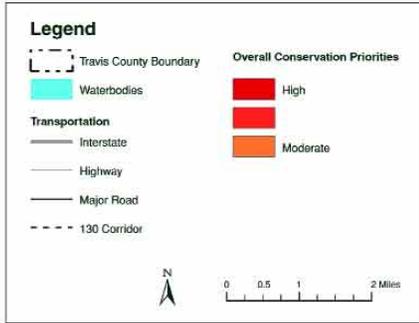
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Map 9b: Balcones Canyonlands Preserve with Protected and Developed Land

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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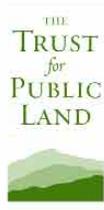
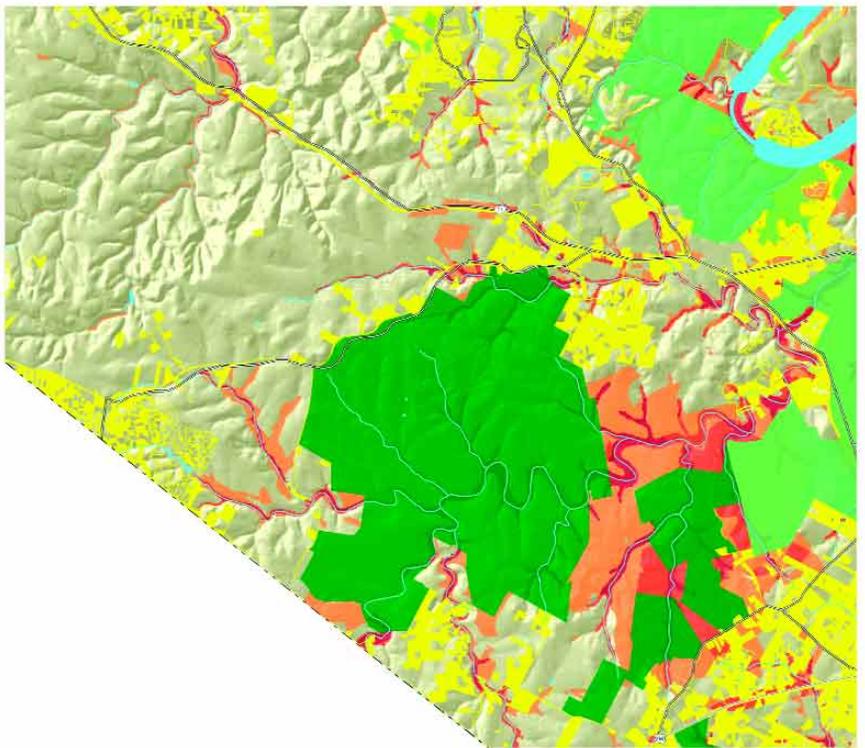
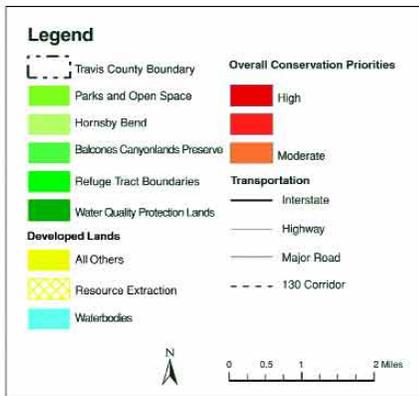
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Map 10a: Southwest Travis County

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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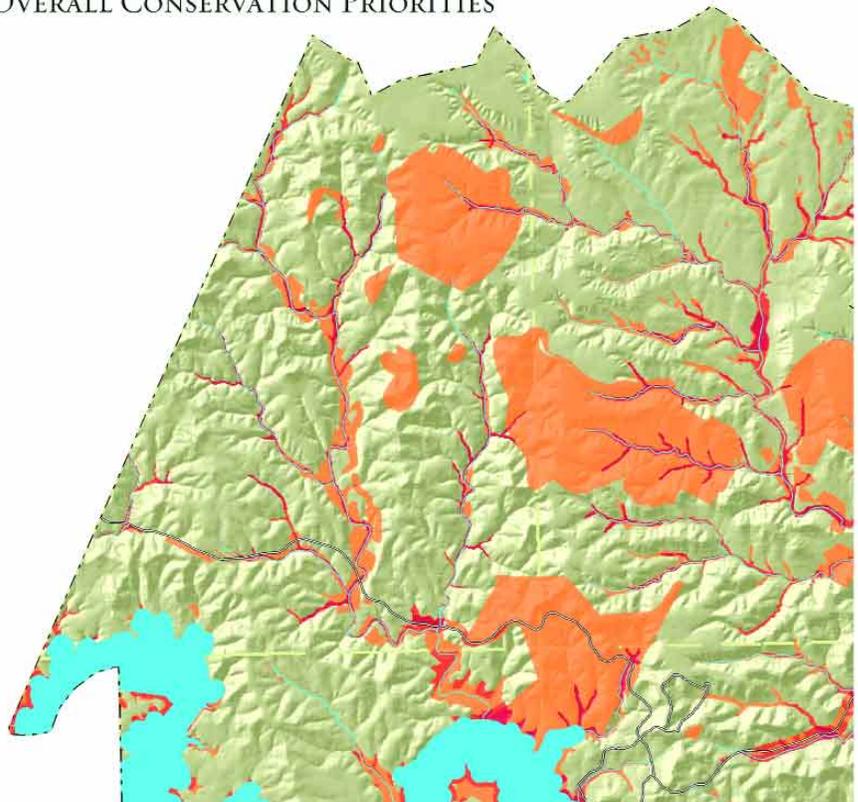
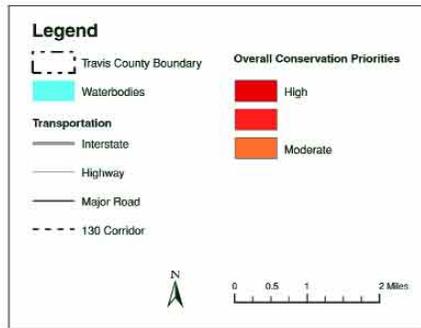
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Map 10b: Southwest Travis County with Protected and Developed Land

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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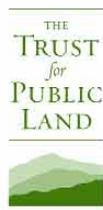
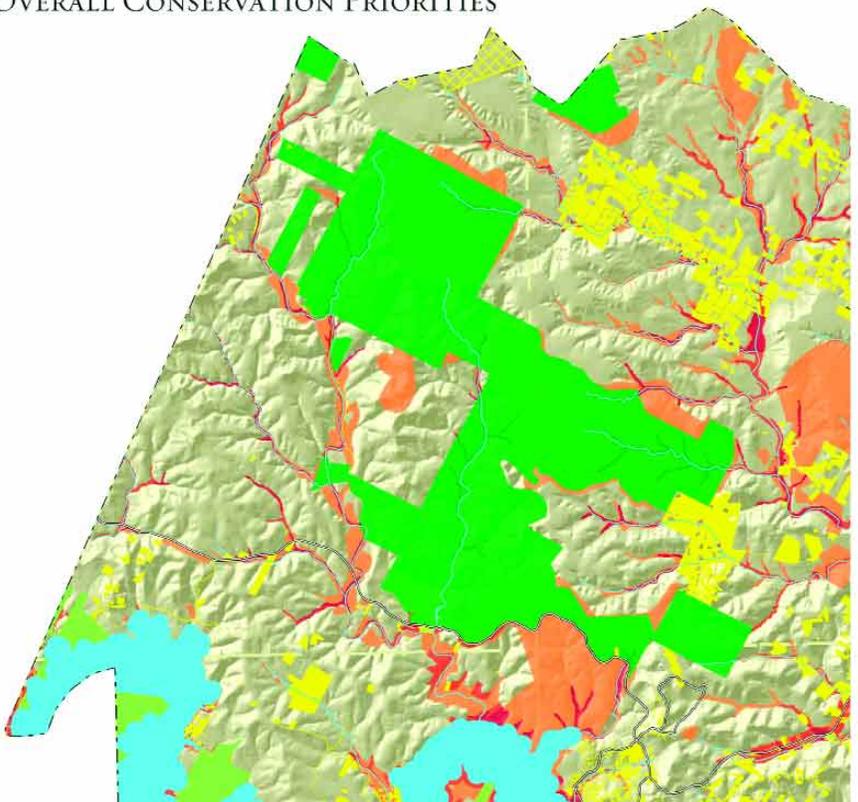
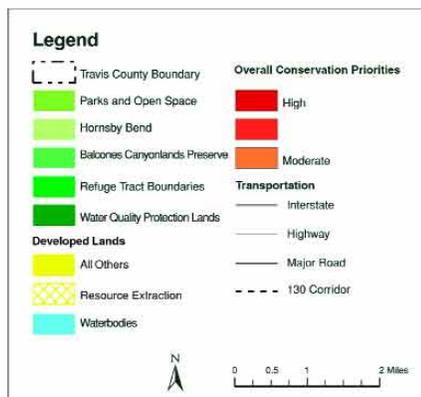
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Map 11a: Balcones National Wildlife Refuge

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TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

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Map 11b: Balcones National Wildlife Refuge with Protected and Developed Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

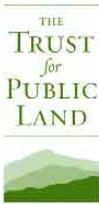
TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES—CITY OF PFLUGERVILLE

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint study overall conservation priorities results. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

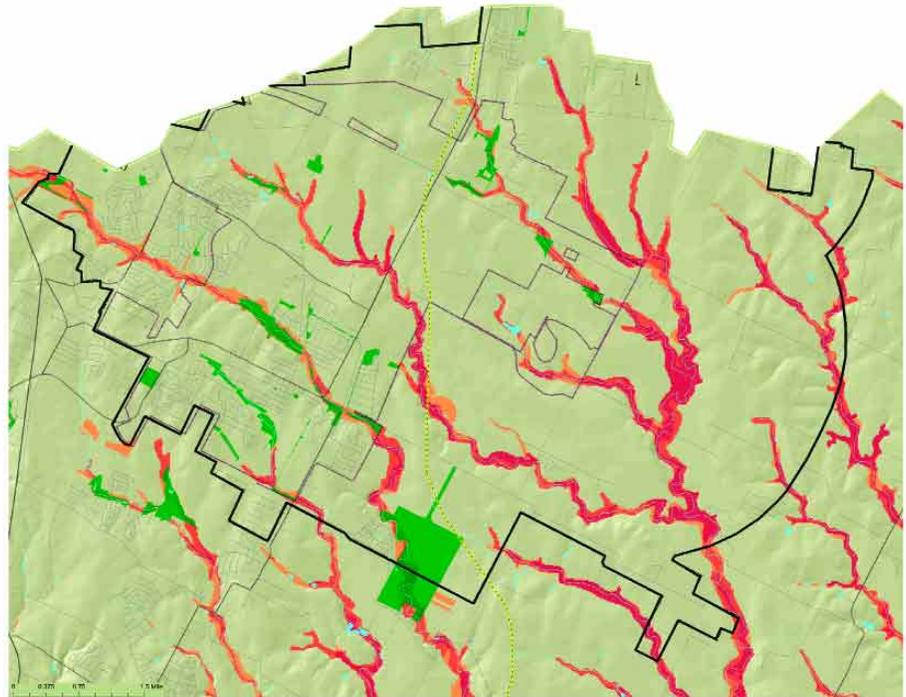


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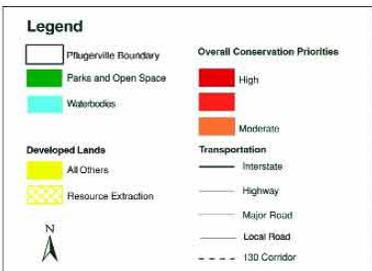


Map 12a: Pflugerville City Limits

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

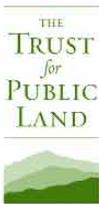
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Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

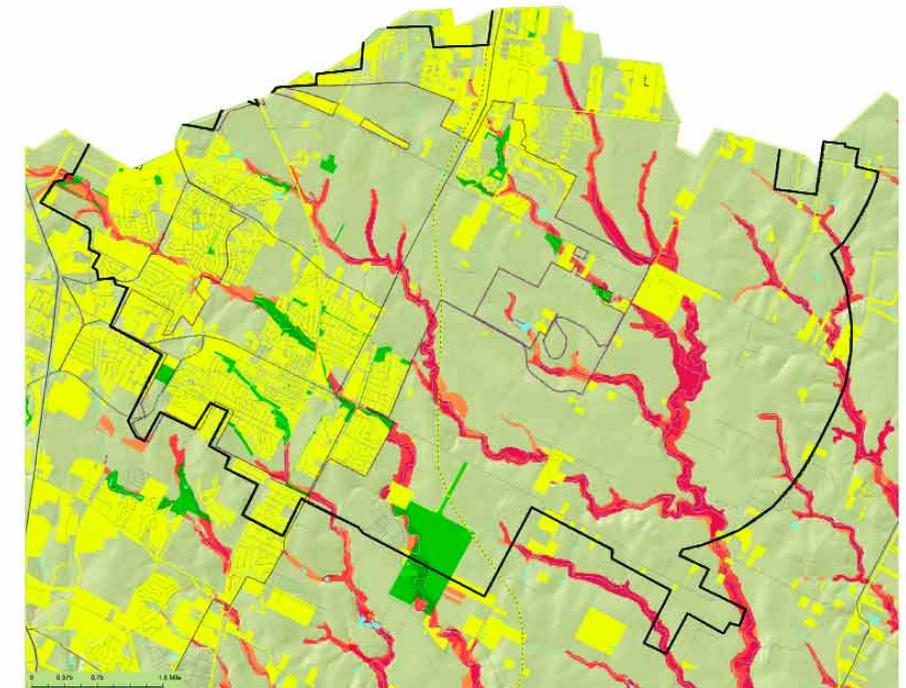


Special Thanks to the following data providers:
City of Austin, Travis County, University of Texas at Austin,
Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Historical Commission,
CAPCOG, USGS

Map created by the Trust for Public Land
on October 5, 2006

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Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane
Texas Central FIPS 4203

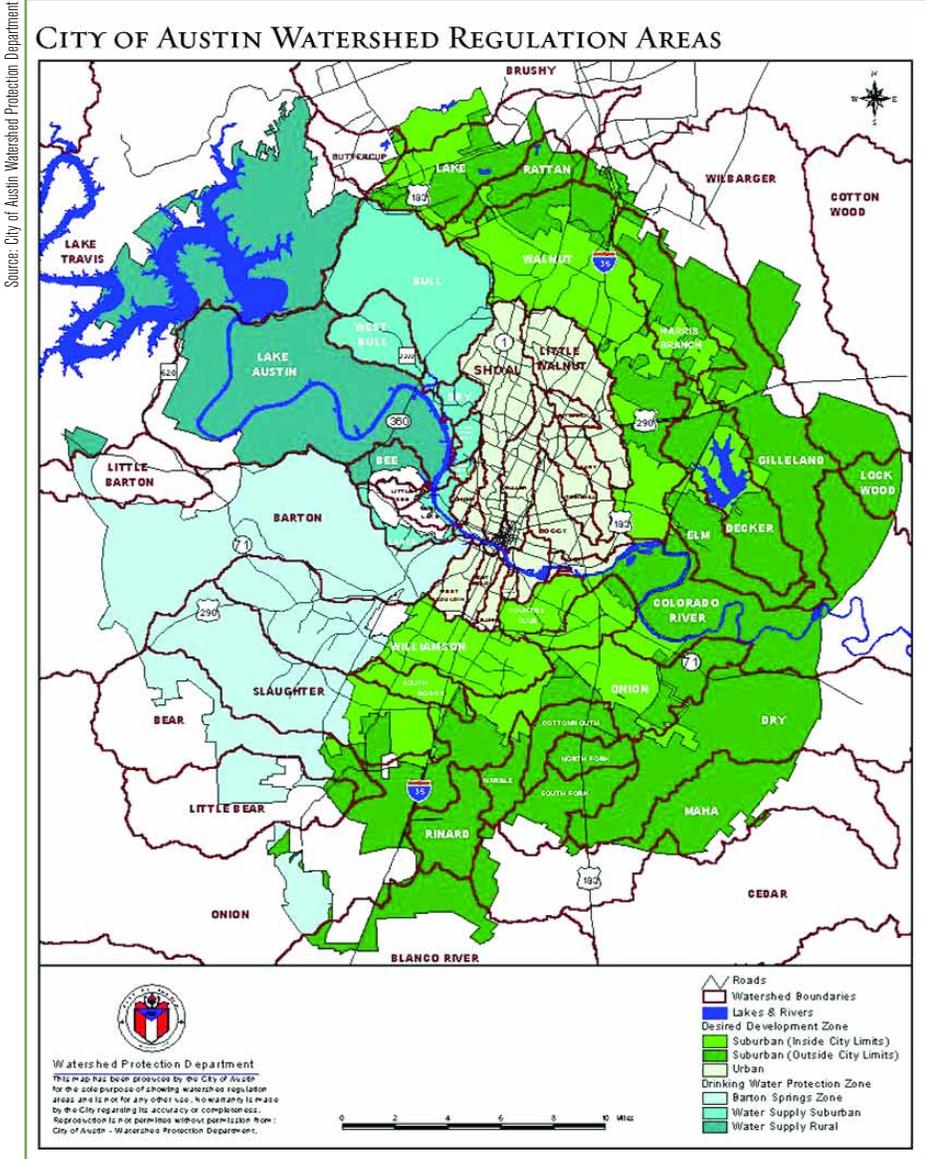
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Map 12b: Pflugerville City Limits with Protected and Developed Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

ADDITIONAL OVERLAYS— THE GREENPRINT IN A CONTEXT



Map 13: City of Austin Watershed Regulation Areas

The Travis County Greenprint identifies land acquisition priorities focused on the four overall conservation categories of water quality and quantity protection, recreational opportunities, rare and sensitive environmental features, and cultural resources. Various jurisdictions within Travis County operate under certain existing regulations or conservation plans that aim to protect and preserve land for specific purposes. Generally these existing regulations or plans provide an additional “filter” to further prioritize the acquisitions. This section aims at identifying these regulations and plans, primarily with the goal of putting the Travis County Greenprint results in the context of ongoing land conservation efforts, as well as challenges to the work of protecting special landscapes in Central Texas.

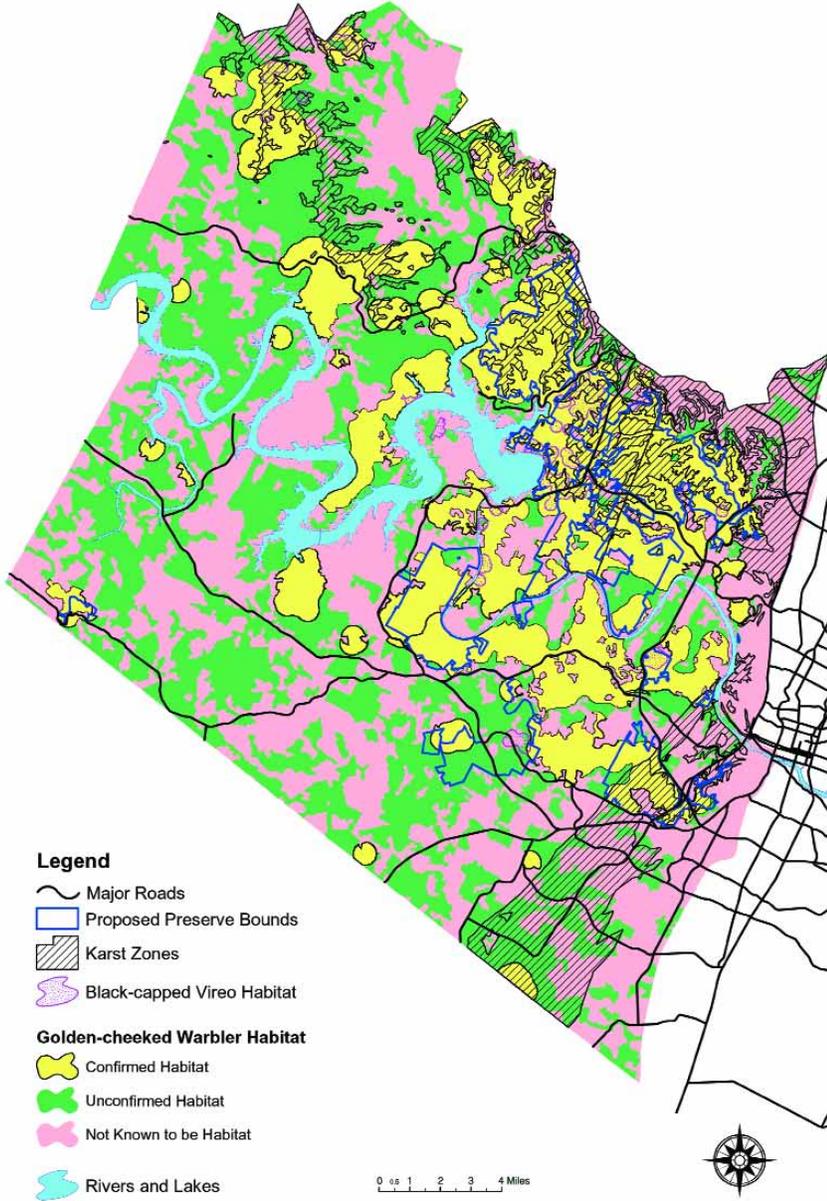
EXISTING WATER QUALITY REGULATIONS

Map 13 provides a comprehensive view of the City of Austin’s watershed regulation areas. City regulations in place that effect land conservation for the purposes of water quality and quantity protection include the Save Our Springs Ordinance and the City Watershed Protection Ordinance.

While these existing ordinances provide a tool for the City to protect critical resource watershed protection lands, there are concerns that some current state regulations reduce the effectiveness of these measures. This further emphasizes land acquisition as the most effective and “in perpetuity” tool for land conservation for water quality and quantity protection.

In Texas cities, developers can request review of their development plans under the regulations in effect when the first application for development is filed for a specific piece of property. Through this process it is possible for development to occur under older regulations, thereby not conforming to the most current water quality regulations and regional planning that cities, counties, and citizens have in place.

BALCONES CANYONLANDS CONSERVATION PLAN Habitat Zones & Proposed Preserve Boundary



Map 14: Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan

Texas local government code allows for the flexibility of landowners and developers to choose the first development application filed for a specific piece of property as the one that locks in the regulations applicable at the time of construction. As a result, in some cases developments are built under decades-old regulations. Even if the property changes ownership, the current state regulations allow new owners to claim development plan review based on regulations in place when the first-ever development plan for the property was filed. In Austin a number of major developments in the sensitive Edwards Aquifer watersheds are “grandfathered” such that the regulations based on current knowledge and science of water resources are rarely followed.

BALCONES CANYONLANDS CONSERVATION PLAN

Source: <http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tmr/bccp/default.asp>

The Balcones Canyonlands area in western Travis County provides habitat for a number of rare and endangered plant and animal species found nowhere else on earth. Above ground are unique woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands. Below ground is a honeycomb network of caves, sinkholes, and springs containing highly specialized animals adapted to these unique environments. Still deeper are a series of aquifers, including the Edwards Aquifer, that is the primary drinking water source for over 1.5 million Central Texas residents.

For centuries, the Texas Hill Country supported a thriving community of wildlife, including species such as the golden-cheeked warbler and the black-capped vireo. Unfortunately, changing patterns of land use and urban expansion fragmented habitats, and populations of these species declined. When scientists and community leaders came together to create a plan that would protect this natural heritage while allowing economic growth and development to continue, the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (or BCCP) was created.

“The Nature Conservancy of Texas was a stakeholder in TPL’s Greenprinting process and I found it to be a very valuable way to sort through priorities of many categories to focus on the lands most in need of conservation or set aside for parks. The Greenprint is a guide and a vision for the community and for the political leaders to turn into action with lasting results. The Nature Conservancy salutes TPL for this important work.”

—Valarie Bristol
Director of External Affairs
The Nature Conservancy of Texas

The BCCP is a 30-year regional permit, issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, (USFWS), that allows for incidental take of habitat lands outside of proposed preserve lands, and provides mitigation for new public schools, roads, and infrastructure projects of the participating agencies (Travis County, the City of Austin, the Lower Colorado River Authority, The Nature Conservancy, Travis Audubon, and other partners). Landowners and developers may elect to participate in the BCCP to mitigate for development of endangered species habitat rather than mitigating directly through the USFWS.

In addition to providing landowners with locally managed solutions to address endangered species concerns, the BCCP called for the creation of a system of habitat preserves known as the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (or BCP). The BCP was created to protect eight federally listed endangered species, including two songbirds and six invertebrates. In addition to protecting these especially vulnerable animals, the preserve protects habitat for other native plants and animals of the Texas Hill Country and contributes to clean air, clean water, and quality of life for all Central Texas residents.

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve is managed under the terms and conditions of a regional permit issued under section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and jointly held by Travis County and the City of Austin. Under the terms and conditions of the regional permit, the managing partners of BCP agreed to:

- ❖ assemble a minimum of 30,428 acres of endangered species habitat in western Travis County for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, and secure protection for a series of karst (cave) features and rare plants throughout Travis County;
- ❖ provide for ongoing maintenance, patrolling, and biological management of the preserved habitat; and
- ❖ conduct biological monitoring and research activities supporting the BCCP permit terms and conditions.

Partners in the BCP that own and manage lands dedicated to the preserve include Travis County, the City of Austin, the Lower Colorado River Authority, The Nature Conservancy of Texas, the Travis Audubon Society, and several private landowners.



Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Travis County

Benjamin Larkin

STATUS OF THE BCCP ACQUISITIONS

Lesley



Golden-cheeked Warbler

As stated earlier, 30,428 acres of suitable endangered species habitat are required to be assembled and managed within twenty years of issuance of the permit. The BCCP managing partners (Travis County, the City of Austin, and the Lower Colorado River Authority), in cooperation with nonprofit conservation organizations Travis Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy of Texas, and private landowners, have, to date, assembled more than 27,000 acres, over 90 percent of the total permit acreage required.

The current and ongoing efforts undertaken by Travis County to continue the BCCP acquisition project are likely to address the conservation priorities identified by the Travis County Greenprint in this area.

Benjamin Larkin



Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Travis County

Geographies of Concern

The Travis County Greenprint identifies priorities based on the stakeholder discussions over the course of five extensive meetings. These discussions resulted in the the list of model criteria described in section V, Model Goals and Criteria. In addition to the priorities that were identified as a result of this process, this greenprint report would like to highlight two specific “geographies of concern” areas that, due to their physical and environmental characteristics, are areas that need focused conservation efforts.

THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Source: The Southwest Travis County Growth Dialog Final Report, May 2006



M. and N. Ebovry

Black-capped Vireo

The Texas Hill Country, with its rolling hills and rugged terrain, its unique wildlife and birds, and expansive views, is a special place. This landscape, as well as the surface water –the Colorado and Pedernales, several creeks, and the Edwards Aquifer running underground–has generated tremendous growth and development, impacting not only the landscape, but also the water quality in the region.

Southwest Travis County is an environmentally diverse and beautiful hill country setting. Glenrose limestone predominately underlies the rolling landscape, which forms naturally benched terrain. Soils in the region are those of the Brackett Association that are characterized as shallow, gravelly, calcareous, loamy soils overlying inter-bedded limestone and marl. These shallow, loose soils over limestone are susceptible to erosion, particularly if they lose vegetative cover.

The area is traversed by a number of clear, ephemeral, and perennial creeks that feed into the Pedernales River or Lake Travis and the Colorado River. These include Barton Creek, Cypress Creek, Fall Creek, Hamilton Creek, Rocky Creek, Bee Creek, Lick Creek, and other unnamed drainages. These creeks are fed, in part, by spring flow that recharges through the porous Hensel Sand and Cow Creek limestone formations. The springs of the study area are a tremendous natural and cultural asset



Benjamin Larkin

Balcones National Wildlife Refuge, Travis County

and are arguably what makes this area unique. The best known include those associated with Westcave Preserve, Hamilton Pool, Levi Rock Shelter, and others along Bee Creek, Rocky Creek, and smaller drainages. In terms of vegetation, common hill country species can be found along with more unique species and communities.

Some open space has been set aside by local government and landowners and includes Westcave Preserve (26 acres), Hamilton Pool Preserve (232 acres), Pace Bend Park (1,100 acres), the Shield Ranch (6,343 acres), and the Little Barton tract (928 acres). These tracts, as well as other appropriately managed areas, provide habitat for unique species such as the golden-cheeked warbler, black-capped vireo, Palamedes swallowtail butterfly, redbay, Texabama croton, and bracted twistflower. All of these species are so unique that they have either federally endangered status or other conservation designations indicative of their rare or endemic status. The area supports healthy populations of more common wildlife species as well, such as white-tailed deer, turkey, feral hogs, and a variety of songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Hill country and western species such as black-tailed rattlesnakes, “mountain boomers” (collared lizards), rock squirrels, ringtail cats, and even mountain lions begin to occur in the study area.

The ranching families of this region have left a wonderful legacy in a beautiful area. Many of these ranches can trace continued ownership and management for a century or more. This occupation, as well as that of American Indians before them, results in historic and prehistoric sites scattered throughout the study area that are worthy of further study and preservation.

The natural beauty of the Central Texas Hill Country has made it very attractive to development, both for residential and commercial uses. Given the unique natural resources—water, habitat, and landscape—this region presents itself as an area of focus for conservation efforts. The Travis County Greenprint identifies watershed protection and habitat lands in western and southwestern Travis County as broad conservation priorities, and it also strongly supports the efforts of organizations like The Nature Conservancy, the Hill Country Conservancy, and the Hill Country Alliance for additional protection of this very special place in Texas.



Jim Olive



Lisa Keesa

Bauerle Ranch, Austin

PRAIRIE LANDS

Lynn Hollibaec



Over seventy-five percent of Texas was once prairie. The hill country was a mosaic of plant communities, with mixed-grass prairie presumed to have been a large component. Our first Texas wealth, cattle and grains, is still based on these degraded habitats. The soils they created now feed the world. The east half of Travis County around Austin, known as the Blackland Prairie, was once part of the southernmost extension of the True or Tallgrass Prairie. This was habitat to the indigenous Comanches and prairie-dependent species such as buffalo, antelope, badgers, prairie wolves, prairie dogs, burrowing owls, and many others.

Today much of this land is part of Austin’s “desired development zone” and has been developed or is right in the path of rapid development. The Travis County Greenprint identifies prairie lands in eastern Travis County that have the potential for providing passive recreational opportunities, while at the same time preserving some of the last remaining tracts of this sensitive and historic landscape.



Eric Swanson

In contrast to the hills and caves of the west, eastern Travis County consists of Blackland Prairie.

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

Compiled by: Peter Harnik and Coleen Gentles, The Trust for Public Land Center for City Parks Excellence

“TPL’s Greenprint for Growth report marks the beginning of a way to assess land conservation priorities in Travis County. For the first time, we have a holistic vision for conservation across all of Travis County, yet one that can be adapted to the priorities of different eco-regions in the county. Moreover, this GIS tool can continue to be improved with new data and, for many years to come, Greenprinting will aid citizens and elected officials make informed decisions about land conservation.”

—Kevin M. Anderson,
Coordinator
Austin Water Utility—Center for
Environmental Research



Kevin Anderson

Colorado River, eastern Travis County

In an effort to ascertain how the city of Austin and Travis County compare to other major cities and counties, The Trust for Public Land investigated Travis County along with four other counties of comparable land area, population, and dominance of one individual city: Duval County, Florida (Jacksonville); Marion County, Indiana (Indianapolis); Multnomah County, Oregon (Portland); and Shelby County, Tennessee (Memphis).

In terms of acreage totals, Travis County falls in the middle of the five counties with 29.0 acres per 1,000 residents, significantly below the average of all five counties (see Table II). Putting this in terms of total parkland as a percent of county land area, Travis County ranks last of the five counties with 4.1 percent of the county land area dedicated as parkland (see Table III).

It is important to recognize that in every county there is a combination of federal, state, county, and city agencies contributing to the acreage totals. Altogether there are seven agencies within Duval County and Marion County, nine agencies within Travis County, and ten agencies within Multnomah County and Shelby County. In three of the counties (Duval, Travis, and Marion), the principal landowner is the major city park agency. A water district in Duval County contributes 5,970 acres to the total acreage for the county. Federal land adds heavily to the acreage

totals, with the National Park Service contributing 8,400 acres in Duval County and the U.S. Forest Service contributing 33,280 acres in Multnomah County. Several state parks also contribute parkland to the counties—one in Multnomah, two in Travis, Shelby, and Marion, and six in Duval.

Putting population into the context of land area, Travis County has the lowest population density of the five counties with 900 residents per square mile in 2005, less than half the density of Marion County with 2,160 residents per square mile (see Table IV).

Despite its current low density, Travis County is projected to grow by 92.4 percent from 1990–2020, two times faster than Duval County (46.5 percent) and almost seven times faster than Marion County (13.4 percent) in the same time period. Travis County is expected to reach over 1.1 million residents in 2020 (see Table V).

Without an aggressive land acquisition plan, Travis County’s rapid growth rate could quickly erode the parkland gains that have been made. Travis County is expected to acquire 3,721 acres by the year 2016, falling in the middle of the five counties. While Travis is expected to gain more parkland than Marion and Shelby Counties, it will be outstripped by Duval and Multnomah Counties (see Table VI).

ACRES OF PARKLAND PER 1,000 RESIDENTS BY COUNTY AND AGENCY

Agency	Population	Acres by Agency	Total County Park Acres	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Duval County, Florida	832,499		97,886	117.7
Jacksonville Parks, Recreation, Entertainment and Conservation Department		75,235		
Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve (NPS)		8,400		
Florida Park Service		8,124		
St. Johns River Water Management District		5,970		
Atlantic Beach Parks and Recreation Department		100		
Jacksonville Beach Recreation and Parks		42		
Neptune Beach Public Works Division		15		
Multnomah County, Oregon	661,902		53,298	80.6
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (USFS)		33,280		
Portland Parks and Recreation Department		10,846		
Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces		7,013		
Gresham Parks & Recreation Division		1,167		
Tryon Creek State Natural Area		675		
Troutdale Parks & Facilities		179		
Fairview Public Works Department		104		
Wood Village Public Works Department		22		
City of Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation		12		
City of Maywood Park		N.A.		
Travis County, Texas	890,128		25,888	29.0
Austin Parks and Recreation		16,835		
Lower Colorado River Authority		5,390		
Travis County Parks		1,872		
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department		962		
Pflugerville Parks and Recreation Department		380		
Lakeway Parks and Recreation Department		214		
Sunset Valley Public Works Department		205		
Lago Vista Property Owners Association		30		
Wells Branch Municipal Utility District		N.A.		
Shelby County, Tennessee	909,035		23,825	26.2
Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park		12,387		
Memphis Division of Park Services		4,852		
Shelby Farms County Park		3,000		
Bartlett Parks and Recreation Department		1,150		
T.O. Fuller State Park		1,100		
Germantown Parks and Recreation Department		700		
Collierville Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts		500		
The Mike Rose Soccer Complex		136		
Shelby County Public Works Department		N.A.		
City of Millington		N.A.		
Marion County, Indiana	855,204		13,228	15.5
Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Dept		10,855		
Fort Harrison State Park		1,700		
Lawrence Parks Department		300		
White River State Park Development Commission		250		
Beech Grove Parks Department and Hornet Park Community Center		91		
Civil Town of Speedway Parks Department		30		
City of Southport, Indiana		2		
Average, All Counties:				53.80
N.A. = Not Available				

Table II: Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents by County and Agency

ACRES OF PARKLAND AS PERCENT OF LAND AREA BY COUNTY AND AGENCY

Agency	Land Area in acres	Acres by Agency	Total County Park Acres	Park Acres as Percent of Land Area
Duval County, Florida	495,360		97,886	19.8%
Jacksonville Parks, Recreation, Entertainment and Conservation Department		75,235		
Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve (NPS)		8,400		
Florida Park Service		8,124		
St. Johns River Water Management District		5,970		
Atlantic Beach Parks and Recreation Department		100		
Jacksonville Beach Recreation and Parks		42		
Neptune Beach Public Works Division		15		
Multnomah County, Oregon	278,400		53,298	19.1%
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (USFS)		33,280		
Portland Parks and Recreation Department		10,846		
Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces		7,013		
Gresham Parks & Recreation Division		1,167		
Tryon Creek State Natural Area		675		
Troutdale Parks & Facilities		179		
Fairview Public Works Department		104		
Wood Village Public Works Department		22		
City of Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation		12		
City of Maywood Park		N.A.		
Marion County, Indiana	253,440		13,228	5.2%
Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Dept		10,855		
Fort Harrison State Park		1,700		
Lawrence Parks Department		300		
White River State Park Development Commission		250		
Beech Grove Parks Department and Hornet Park Community Center		91		
Civil Town of Speedway Parks Department		30		
City of Southport, Indiana		2		
Shelby County, Tennessee	483,200		23,825	4.9%
Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park		12,387		
Memphis Division of Park Services		4,852		
Shelby Farms County Park		3,000		
Bartlett Parks and Recreation Department		1,150		
T.O. Fuller State Park		1,100		
Germantown Parks and Recreation Department		700		
Collierville Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts		500		
The Mike Rose Soccer Complex		136		
Shelby County Public Works Department		N.A.		
City of Millington		N.A.		
Travis County, Texas	632,960		25,888	4.1%
Austin Parks and Recreation		16,835		
Lower Colorado River Authority		5,390		
Travis County Parks		1,872		
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department		962		
Pflugerville Parks and Recreation Department		380		
Lakeway Parks and Recreation Department		214		
Sunset Valley Public Works Department		205		
Lago Vista Property Owners Association		30		
Wells Branch Municipal Utility District		N.A.		
			Average, All Counties:	10.6%
N.A. = Not Available				

Table III: Acres of Parkland as a Percent of Land Area by County and Agency

POPULATION AND POPULATION DENSITY

County	State	Land Area in Acres	Land Area in Square Miles	Population in 2005	Density (population per square mile) in 2005
Marion	Indiana	253,440	396	855,204	2,160
Multnomah	Oregon	278,400	435	661,902	1,522
Shelby	Tennessee	483,200	755	909,035	1,204
Duval	Florida	495,360	774	832,499	1,076
Travis	Texas	632,960	989	890,128	900

Table IV: Population and Population Density

POPULATION GROWTH

County	State	Population in 1990	Projected Population in 2020	Projected Population Growth Rate (1990–2020)
Travis	Texas	576,407	1,108,849	92.4%
Duval	Florida	672,971	986,101	46.5%
Multnomah	Oregon	583,887	716,190	22.7%
Shelby	Tennessee	826,330	1,002,359	21.3%
Marion	Indiana	797,159	904,298	13.4%

Table V: Population Growth

ANTICIPATED ACREAGE ACQUISITION

Agency	Current Park Acreage	Anticipated Park Growth Acreage by 2016
Duval County, Florida		
Jacksonville Parks, Recreation, Entertainment and Conservation Department	75,235	
Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve (NPS)	8,400	6,000
Florida Park Service	8,124	
St. Johns River Water Management District	5,970	
Multnomah County, Oregon		
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (USFS)	33,280	
Portland Parks and Recreation Department	10,846	
Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces	7,013	3,500-4,500
Travis County, Texas		
Austin Parks and Recreation	16,835	3,000 1
Lower Colorado River Authority	5,390	
Travis County Parks	1,872	721
Marion County, Indiana		
Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Dept	10,855	1,500
Shelby County, Tennessee		
Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park	12,387	600-1,500
Memphis Division of Park Services	4,852	N.A.

1 Estimate based on past growth rate.
N.A. = Not Available

Table VI: Anticipated Acreage Acquisition

CONCLUSION

“TPL’s Greenprinting process is a powerful planning tool. I think the way it weds technical GIS capabilities with an inclusive, value driven visioning process makes it an especially meaningful tool for preserving parkland and natural areas in Travis County.”

—Wendy Scaperotta
Senior Park Planner,
Travis County Transportation
and Natural Resources



Colorado River, eastern Travis County

NEEDS QUANTIFIED BY THE TRAVIS COUNTY GREENPRINT

The Travis County Greenprint identifies approximately 22,000 acres of highest to moderate priority lands that need to be protected. These priority lands include areas that provide connectivity between existing City of Austin-owned water quality lands; water quality lands within the Colorado River corridor and along major creeks like Walnut, Gilleland, Wilbarger, and Onion Creeks; land providing recreational access within the Colorado River corridor in the central and north central city; and habitat lands in western Travis County within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and the Balcones National Wildlife Refuge areas.

At current conservative land values, these priority acquisitions translate into over \$500 million in conservation acquisition funds. No public agency within Travis County has the capacity to bring conservation funding at this level to bear to address all the needs. As a result, Travis County communities need to look at unconven-

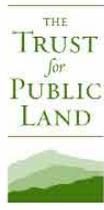
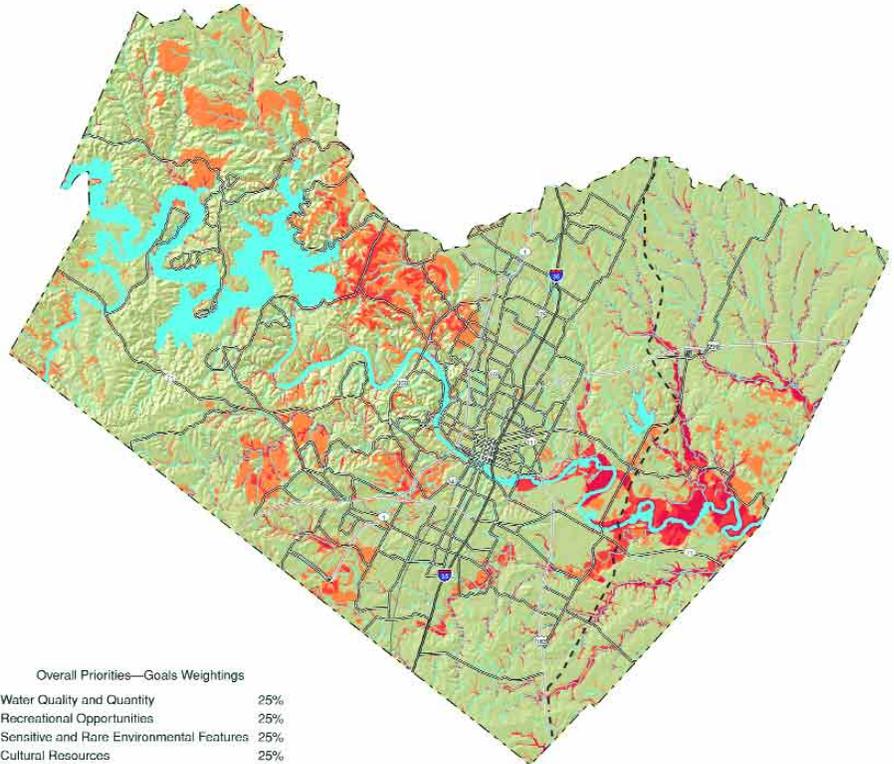
tional funding sources, as well as other conservation tools, to address this growing need. Partnerships between public agencies and private and nonprofit conservation organizations, as well as the business community, are necessary and the only way to ensure that critical resource and parklands within Travis County are protected and provided to Travis County residents. The use of a broader set of conservation tools—conservation easements, landowner stewardship agreements, etc.—will allow for a more sustainable and improved quality of life in this region.

INVESTMENTS MADE IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The following maps provide an overview of parks and open space needs within Travis County, as well as a look at the investments made by the various agencies within the county in addressing these needs. Given the rapid growth in the north and southwest part of the county over the past ten to fifteen years, communities within the county have needed to focus these investments on protecting habitat and water quality lands, while also continuing the acquisition and development of parks, trails, and greenways.

INVESTMENTS IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN TRAVIS COUNTY

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Special Thanks to the following data providers:
City of Austin, Travis County, University of Texas at Austin,
Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Historical Commission,
CAPCOG, USGS

Map created by the Trust for Public Land
on October 4, 2006

Created in ESRI ArcMap 9.1®
Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane
Texas Central FIPS 4203

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Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

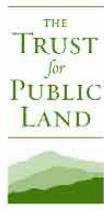
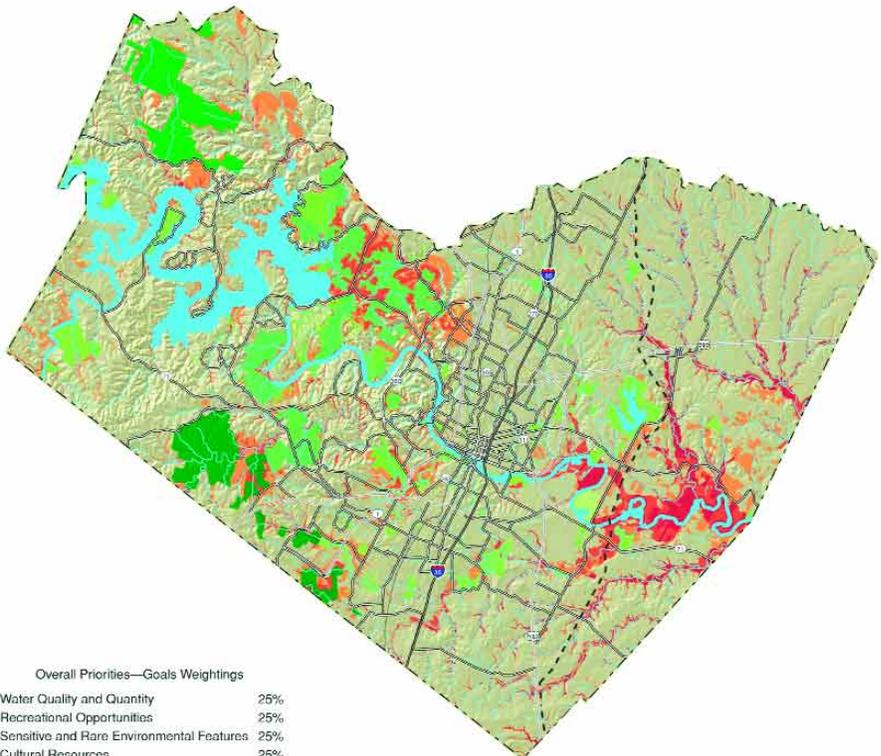
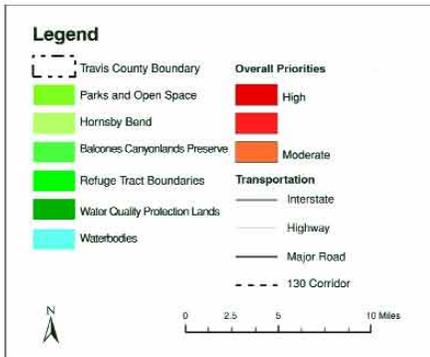
Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

Map 15a: Travis County Greenprint Map

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

INVESTMENTS IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN TRAVIS COUNTY

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Special Thanks to the following data providers:
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Map created by the Trust for Public Land
on October 4, 2006

Created in ESRI ArcMap 9.1®
Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane
Texas Central FIPS 4203

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Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

Map 15b: Investments in Green Infrastructure in Travis County with Protected and Developed Land

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

“The community-driven Greenprinting process in Travis rightly shows the high need for protecting rivers and creeks in Eastern Travis County.”

— Kathryn Nichols
National Park Service
Rivers, Trails & Conservation
Assistance

Map 16 presents the Travis County planning areas as defined in the 2006 Travis County Parks and Natural Areas Masterplan. These planning areas correspond to the four quadrants of the county created by the north-south divide of the Colorado River, and the east-west divide between precincts 2 and 3 in the north, and precincts 3 and 4 in the south.

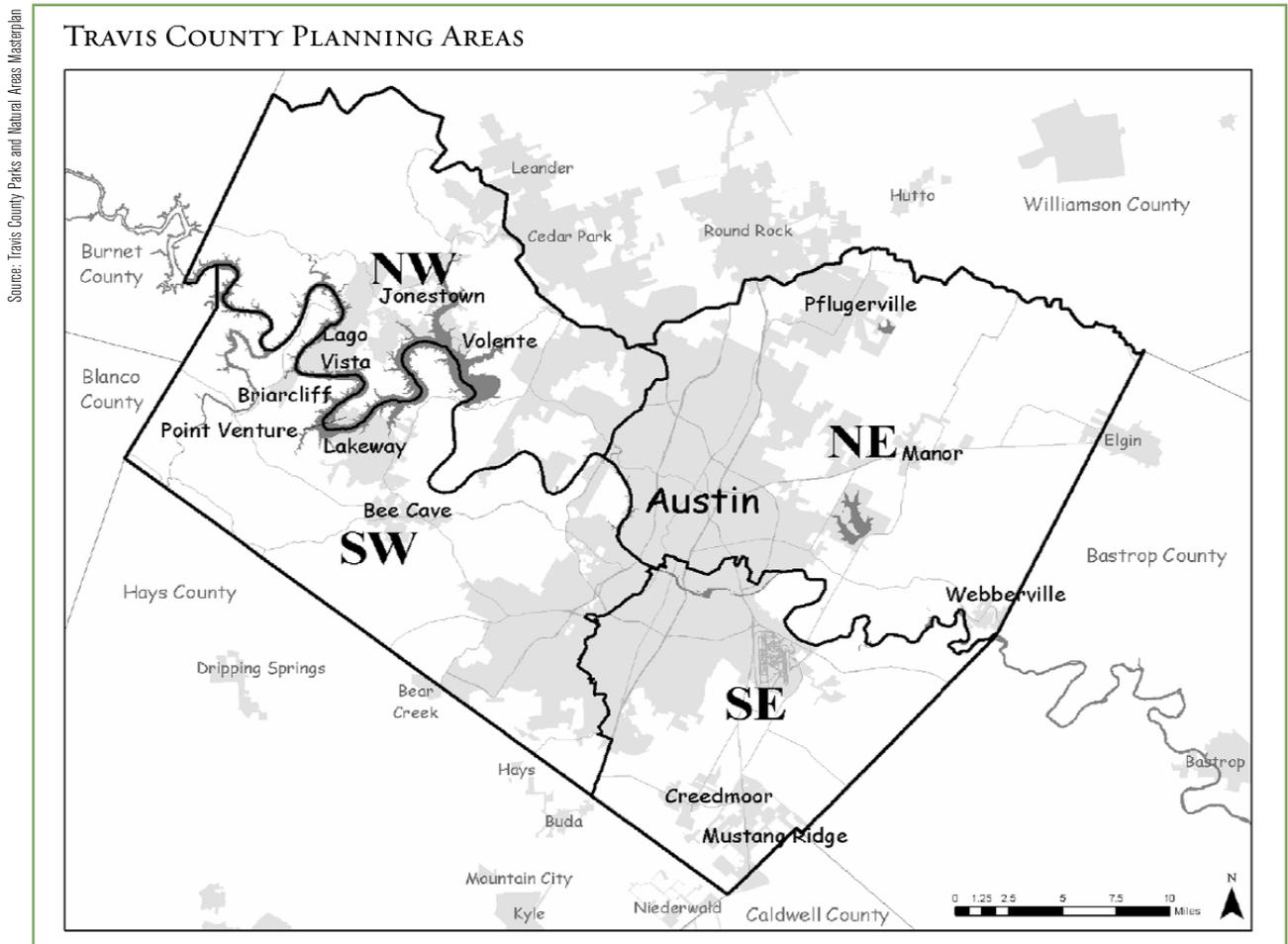
Currently, a total of 81,430 acres of parks, natural areas, and preserve lands have been acquired and protected (see Table VII on page 39). These areas include habitat lands, water quality and quantity protection lands, and parks and natural areas providing public access. Given the need for water quality and habitat land protection, a majority of these acres—over 85 percent have been acquired in the northwest and southwest planning areas of the county, with only a little over 14 percent of the total acreage in the northeast and southeast planning areas.

The land area of the county is almost equally divided between the western and eastern planning areas. However, in comparison, just a little over 26 percent of the population lives in the northwest and southwest planning areas, and almost 74 percent of the population lives in the northeast and southeast plan-

ning areas. As a result, the density distribution within the county is at 426 people per square mile in the two western planning areas and over 1,144 people per square mile in the two eastern planning areas together.

The northeast (NE) planning area is the largest, most populated planning area with the greatest number of residents per square mile—hence the greatest “demand” for park and open space services. A substantial population in the eastern half of Travis County lives in poverty, and the area also has a large young population (over 55 percent) and large minority population (over 60 percent), compared to 13.9 percent and 19.1 percent, respectively, in the western half of Travis County.

A further comparison of the demographic and public land acreage data shows that the eastern planning areas together have an average of 19 acres per 1,000 population of parkland and no water quality or habitat lands preserved, while the western planning areas together have an average of 328 acres per 1,000 population of total parks, preserves, and water quality lands, and an average of 41 acres per 1,000 population of parkland.



Map 16: Travis County Planning Areas

PARKS AND NATURAL AREA ANALYSIS FOR TRAVIS COUNTY

Planning Areas (acres)			Types of Open Space (acres and %age)										
			Travis County Greenspace				Other Providers' Greenspace				Total		
	Total Area	Water Bodies	Land Area	Parks	% Land Area	Natural Areas	% Land Area	Other Parks	% Land Area	Other Natural Areas	% Land Area	Total Green Space	% Land Area
NW	142,080	9,047	133,033	356	0.3%	4,412	3.3%	1,693	1.3%	30,028	22.6%	36,490	27.4%
SW	177,280	7,675	169,605	2,768	1.6%	1,959	1.2%	3,848	2.3%	24,758	14.6%	33,333	19.7%
NE	218,880	2,073	216,807	942	0.4%	0	0.0%	6,169	2.8%	155	0.1%	7,266	3.4%
SE	116,480	786	115,694	481	0.4%	0	0.0%	3,861	3.3%	0	0.0%	4,342	3.8%
Total	654,720	19,581	635,139	4,547	0.7%	6,371	1.1%	15,571	2.4%	54,941	9.3%	81,431	13.5%

Table VII: Parks and Natural Area Analysis for Travis County

Source: Travis County Parks and Natural Areas Masterplan, 2006

TRAVIS COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Planning Area	Sq. Miles	Population	% of Total	Under 18 Years	65 Years and Older	Living in Poverty	Population/sq. Mile
NW	222	57,873	7.1%	15,202	4,497	3.5%	261
SW	277	154,866	19.1%	41,133	10,469	4.3%	559
NE	342	405,518	49.9%	88,896	28,526	13.9%	1,186
SE	182	194,023	23.9%	47,713	11,332	19.1%	1,066
Total	1,023	812,280	100.0%	192,944	54,824	10.2%	794

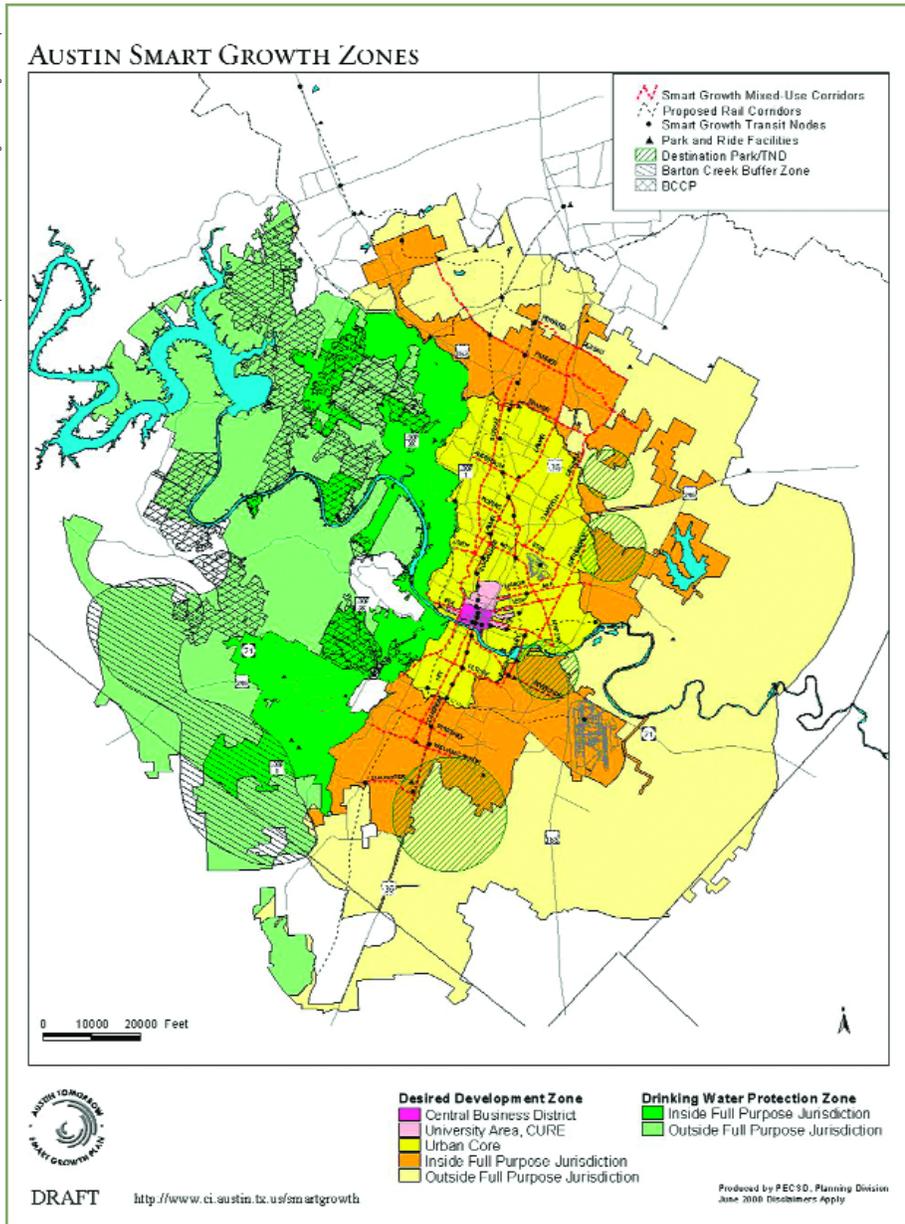
Table VIII: Travis County Demographics

Source: Travis County Parks and Natural Areas Masterplan, 2006

TOTAL ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

Planning Area	Population	All Lands	Park Land
NW	57,873	631	35
SW	154,866	215	43
NE	405,518	18	18
SE	194,023	22	22
Total	812,280	100	25

Table IX: Total Acres per 1,000 Residents



Map 17: City of Austin "Desired Development Zone"

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY—THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS

As stated before, despite its current low density, Travis County is projected to grow by 92.4 percent from 1990-2020. A significant portion of this growth is projected to happen in the city of Austin's "desired development zone (DDZ)," the portion of the city east of loop 1.

A majority of the DDZ also corresponds with the eastern planning areas of the county. The focus of the City of Austin's Smart Growth Initiative is to encourage development and growth in the Desired Development Zone, while discouraging urbanized growth in the environmentally sensitive "Drinking Water Protection Zone." It therefore becomes more critical that, as the DDZ and the eastern part of Travis County develops and grows, the Travis County community as a whole makes focused and significant investments in ensuring that the critical natural resources in the area are protected, and that the growing population has access to the parks and recreational infrastructure it needs for a good quality of life.

The Travis County Greenprint is the first ever community vision for land conservation that focuses on water quality and quantity, recreation opportunities, rare and sensitive environmental resources, and cultural resources at the same time. Given the limited resources available for land conservation and parks, the greenprint provides a community-based vision of how and where investments might be made over the next decade or so, so that lands conserved can provide multiple benefits to the community. The greenprint clearly identifies the need to protect floodplains along the major creeks (Gilliland, Wilbarger, and Onion) and the Colorado River Corridor. It identifies priority prairie lands in eastern Travis County that, if protected, will not only preserve the last remaining prairies in Travis County, but will also provide areas for passive recreation in that part of the county.

APPENDIX

“The Greenprint developed for Travis County will be an important conservation planning tool for this region. Travis County is facing tremendous growth pressure. The Greenprint community process and GIS tools provide a means to focus our efforts on lands that are important for many different community values including water quality protection, public recreation, rare species protection, and local farm and ranch preservation.”

Sherri Kuhl
 Manager, Environmental
 Leadership
 LCRA



Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Travis County

Eric Swanson

One of the highlights of the stakeholder input process was the assigning of final weights to the overall conservation goals. Map A4 represents the final consensus of the stakeholders regarding the overall conservation priorities or goals (water quality & quantity at 25 percent, recreational opportunities at 25 percent, rare and sensitive environmental features at 25 percent, and cultural resources at

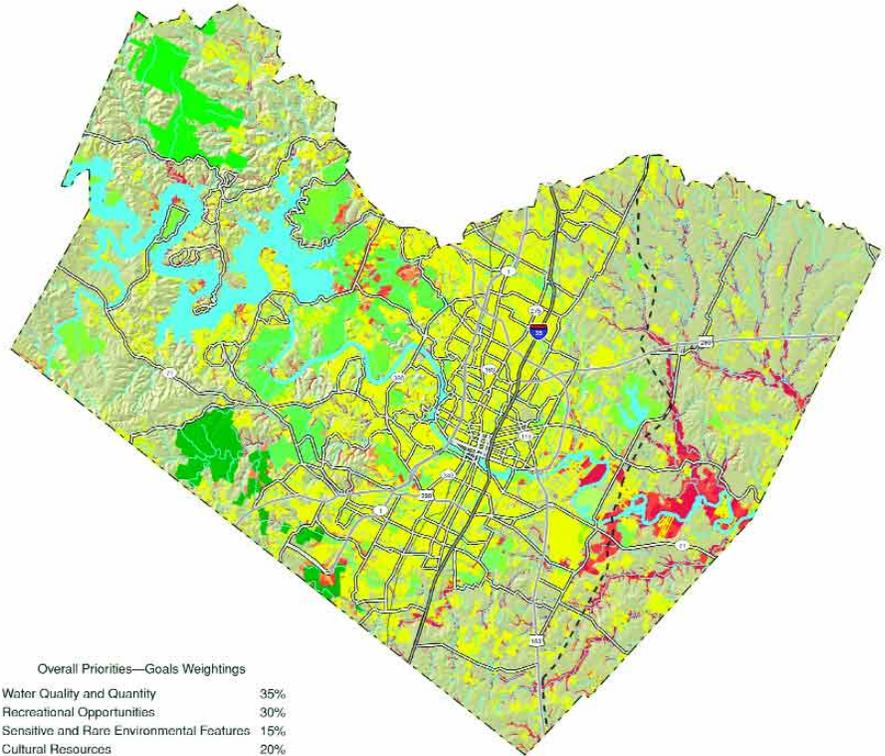
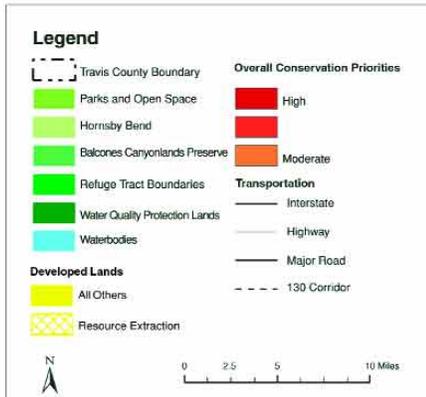
25 percent). Before arriving at the final consensus, the stakeholder group explored various scenarios regarding the overall conservation goals. In these scenarios, the group explored different weights for the conservation goals. The following options were explored and discussed, after which the final scenario was agreed upon. Maps A1–A3 provide the alternative scenarios discussed.

	Scenario 1 (Map A-1)	Scenario 2 (Map A-2)	Scenario 3 (Map A-3)	Final Scenario (Map A-4)
Recreational opportunities protection	35%	35%	40%	25%
Water quality & quantity protection	30%	30%	40%	25%
Rare and Sensitive Environmental Features	15%	20%	10%	25%
Cultural Resources	20%	15%	10%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table X: Overall Conservation Priorities–Optional Scenarios

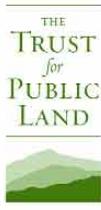
TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

Water Quality and Quantity	35%
Recreational Opportunities	30%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	15%
Cultural Resources	20%



Special Thanks to the following data providers:
City of Austin, Travis County, University of Texas at Austin,
Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Historical Commission,
CAPCOG, USGS

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Map Projection: NAD 1983 State Plane
Texas Central FIPS 4203

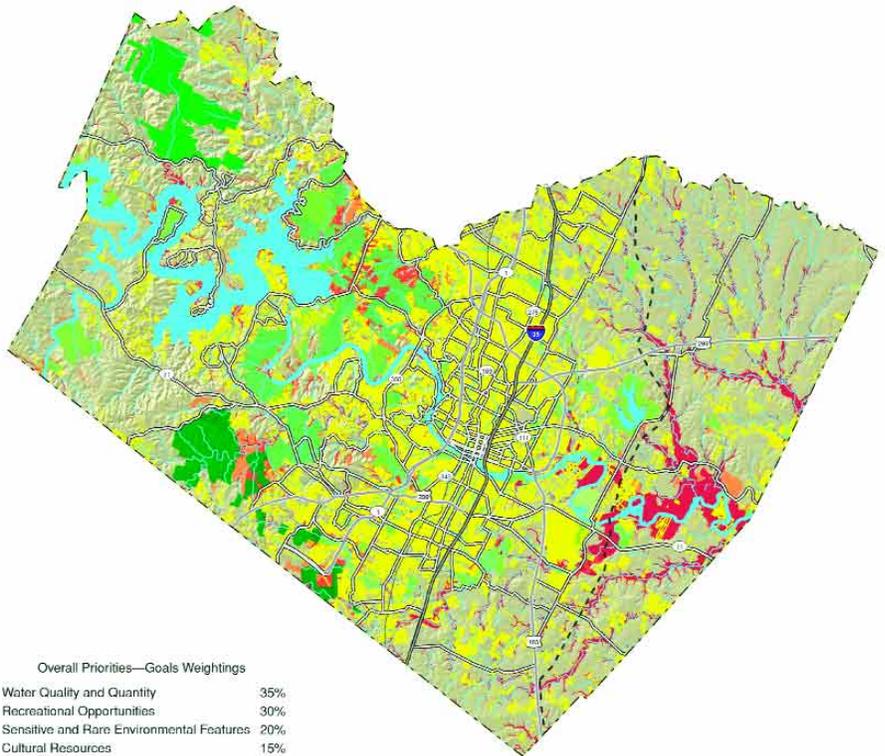
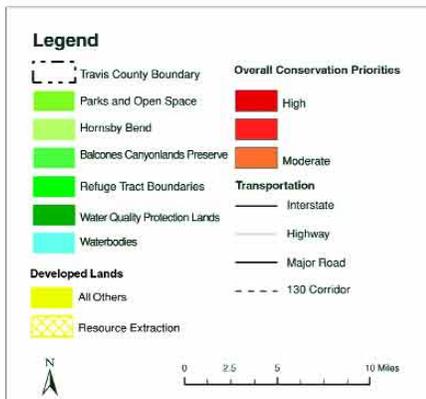
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Map A-1: Overall Conservation Priorities Scenario 1

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

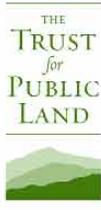
TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

Water Quality and Quantity	35%
Recreational Opportunities	30%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	20%
Cultural Resources	15%



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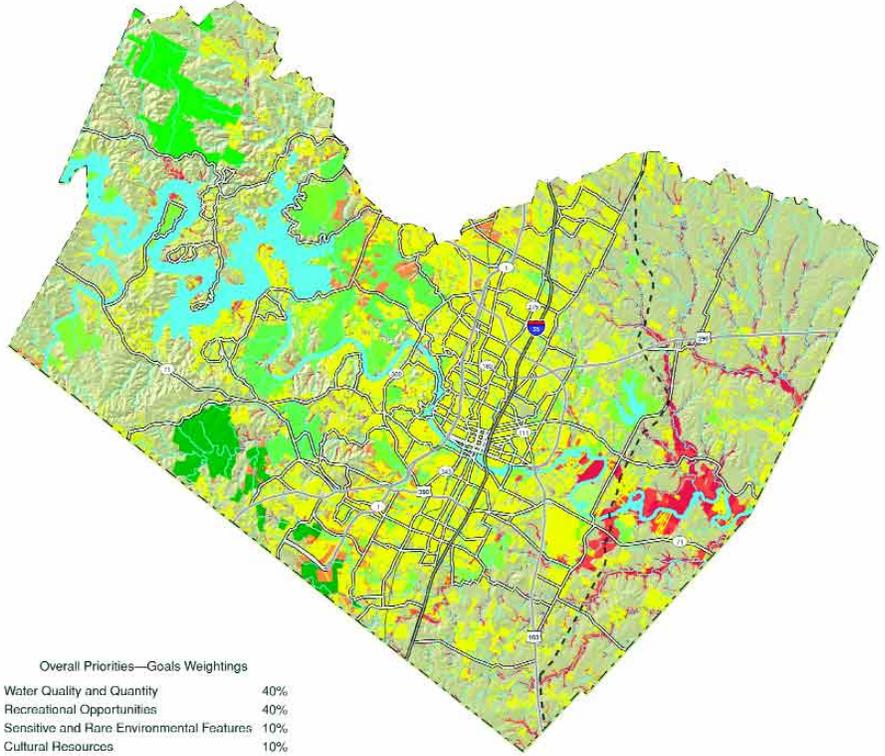
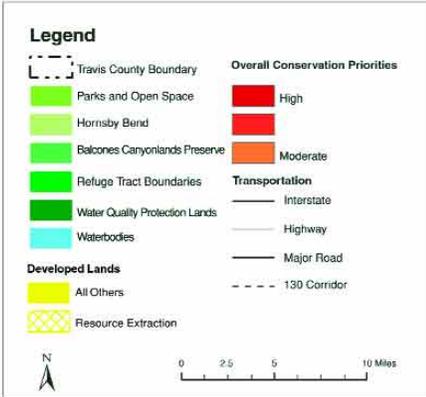
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Map A-2: Overall Conservation Priorities Scenario 2

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

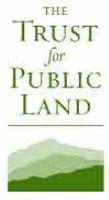
Water Quality and Quantity	40%
Recreational Opportunities	40%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	10%
Cultural Resources	10%

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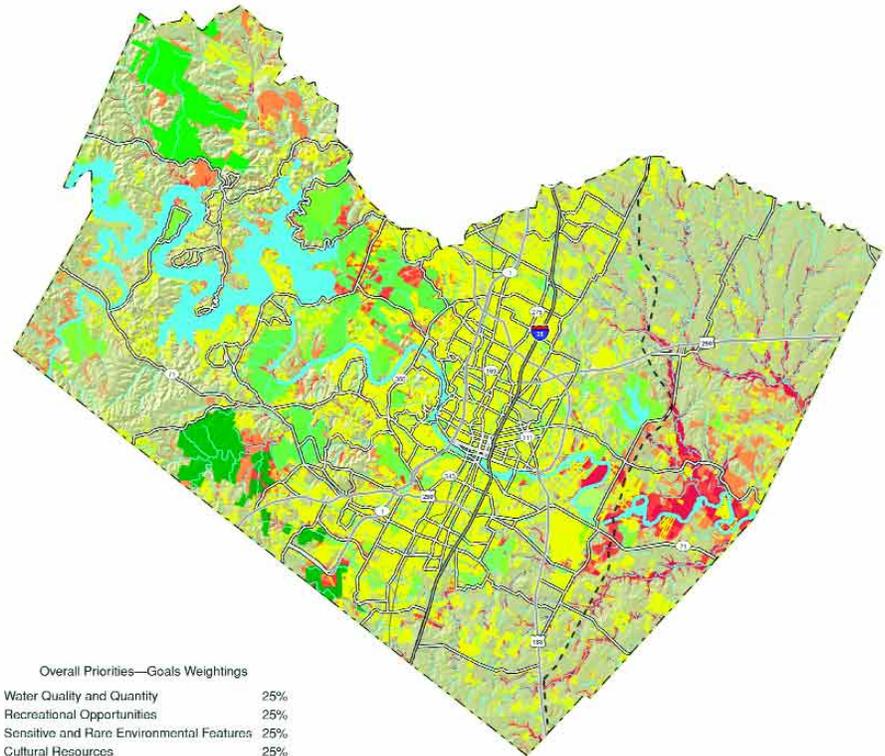
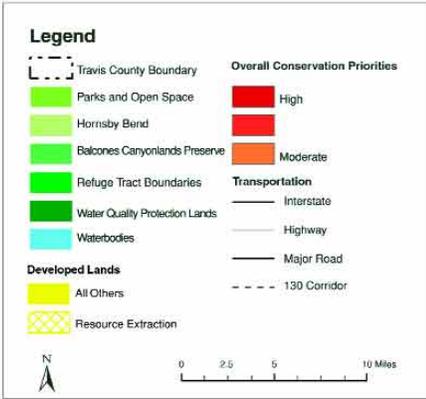


Map A-3: Overall Conservation Priorities Scenario 3

Note: The Travis County Greenprint model was developed using GIS data sets available during the course of the project. The model may be updated as new sets become available.

TRAVIS COUNTY, TX GREENPRINT OVERALL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

This map shows the Travis County, TX Greenprint and the overall conservation priorities. Areas in orange have a moderate conservation priority and areas in dark red have a high conservation priority.



Overall Priorities—Goals Weightings

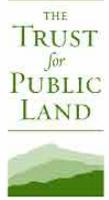
Water Quality and Quantity	25%
Recreational Opportunities	25%
Sensitive and Rare Environmental Features	25%
Cultural Resources	25%

Special Thanks to the following data providers:
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Map A-4: Overall Conservation Priorities Final Scenario

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THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
TEXAS STATE OFFICE
816 CONGRESS AVENUE
SUITE 1550
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