

Cooper, Robertson & Partners *Architecture, Urban Design*

# CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLANS FOR THE BRACKENRIDGE TRACT



## PROJECT REPORT **VOLUME 2**

June 2009



prepared for the  
**BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM**

**CHAPTER VI**

**COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INPUT**



**THE BRACKENRIDGE TRACT CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLANNING TEAM**  
for The University of Texas System Board of Regents  
invites you to participate in considering the future of Brackenridge Tract.

Weeklong Workshop  
November 3-7, 2008

For more information and REGISTRATION, please visit <http://www.utbracktract.com>

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## 6.1. OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Effective public involvement is central to the Brackenridge Tract Conceptual Master Planning Process and Project. The Public Involvement Plan incorporates broad public involvement techniques and innovative programs to identify, reach, and involve members of The University of Texas at Austin community, City of Austin residents, neighborhoods, civic and government leaders, and other interested groups and individuals. The primary objectives of the Public Involvement Plan are to:

- Educate and inform all interested parties about the master planning process, and about directives, policies, and benefits of a Conceptual Master Plans for the Brackenridge Tract;
- Provide advance notice of upcoming events and meetings;
- Demonstrate to all interested and involved citizens that the plans are being developed by a highly qualified and responsive team ; and
- Gain and maintain public understanding and support.

Every effort is made to involve the entire community in public involvement meetings and the planning process, to ensure that all interested groups and individuals have equal and ample opportunities to have their voices heard and their concerns addressed.

## 6.2. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

### 6.2.1. UTA COLLABORATIVE PLANNING EFFORTS

A series of regularly scheduled collaborative planning meetings were conducted with groups representing the Brackenridge Field Laboratory and Graduate Student Housing. In addition, regular meetings with the Faculty Council were held to solicit input about potential uses on the Brackenridge Tract.

### 6.2.2. KEY BRIEFINGS/TARGETED INFORMATION MEETINGS

The consultant team met with a number of interested groups and individuals whose participation is critical to moving forward, and from which valuable planning information has been gathered. Meetings with targeted groups/individuals held include:

- Austin Independent School District Su-

- perintendent
- Austin Community Foundation Vice President and General Counsel
- Austin American-Statesman Editorial Board
- Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Central West Austin Neighborhood Planning Meetings
- City of Austin Mayor, City Council Members, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and various directors of departments
- City of Rollingwood Mayor and City Administrator
- City of Westlake Hills City Administrator and Council Member
- Downtown Austin Alliance Executive Director and board chair
- State, County, and City Elected and Public Officials
- Georgia Lucas Foundation Board of Directors
- Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce President
- Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)

- executive level personnel
- Mathews Elementary School Principal, Parent Teacher Association, and Campus Advisory Committee
- Opportunity Austin Board Chair
- Save Muny Group
- Stratford Place Residents
- State Historical Commission Executive Director
- Travis County Commissioner, Precinct 2
- The University of Texas at Austin President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice Presidents, and other executive level personnel
- The University of Texas at Austin – Faculty Council
- The University of Texas at Austin – College of Natural Sciences Dean and heads of departments
- The University of Texas System Board of Regents, Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and various executive level department directors
- The University of Texas System Brackenridge Tract Task Force
- The University of Texas at Austin Stu-

- dent Body President and Vice President
- Town Lake Trail Foundation Executive Director and executive committee
- West Austin Neighborhood Group
- West Austin Youth Association Board of Directors and Executive Director

### 6.2.3. LEASE HOLDERS

The Cooper, Robertson & Partners, LLP (CRP) team has met with Brackenridge Tract lease holders and visited their facilities on the site. The lease holders were invited to participate in the public meetings and give their input.

### 6.2.4. ELECTED/PUBLIC OFFICIALS OUTREACH

The consultant team has conducted one-on-one briefings with elected and public officials at all levels of government to keep them informed of the project and process, and to gather information.



### 6.3. PUBLIC MEETINGS

In order to involve all interested parties, the CRP team employed a variety of measures to inform and engage the public. These measures have included public meetings, a project website, electronic mailings (e-blasts), online surveys, US mail, comment cards, and via telephone. Finally, public meetings were held at times most convenient to varying schedules; and videos of all meetings have been posted on the project website.

The CRP team has held several public meetings throughout the conceptual master plan process.

#### 6.3.1. LISTENING SESSION

CRP project team held the first public meeting on June 25, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the LCRA Hancock Building, Board Room, 3700 Lake Austin Boulevard. This meeting was announced by distributing door hangers to residences and businesses in the area, along with an invitation to take a brief survey to determine participants' knowledge about the tract. Over 200 citizens attended. CRP began the session with a brief presentation which included a team introduction, overview of the planning process, and the online survey results. A project fact sheet and comment cards were distributed to all attendees. The floor was opened to the public for comments and to share their visions and ideas for the Brackenridge Tract.

The team heard great passion from those who spoke and distilled several core values from their comments which included:

- Preservation of the West Austin neighborhood character
- Addressing existing traffic issues
- Importance of recreational and open space (such as the golf course and West Austin Youth Association)
- Importance of graduate student housing for The University and neighborhood
- Need for the Brackenridge Field Laboratory to fulfill its education mission
- Protection of environmental assets such as heritage trees, Lady Bird Lake, and natural areas
- Desire to create a sustainable plan focusing on clean air and water, and reducing the heat island effect
- Capacity of the social infrastructure (schools) and physical infrastructure (utilities)

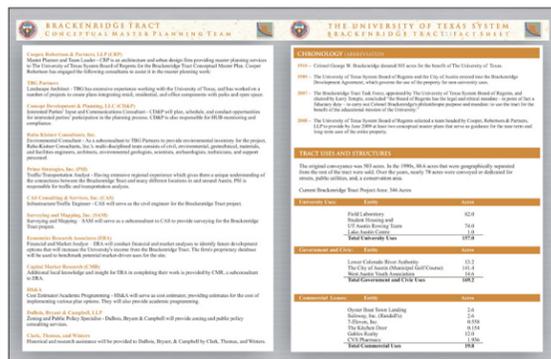
#### 6.3.2. INFORMATIONAL SESSION

The team held an Information Session on August 12, 2008 at the LCRA Hancock Building, Board Room, 3700 Lake Austin Boulevard. Over 180 attendees heard results of a second survey, and viewed preliminary findings of ongoing analyses of the tract from research conducted since May 2008. This meeting was announced by mailing postcards and emailing addresses collected during the Listening Session, via the website, and the City of Austin's database for the Central and West Austin Neighborhood Plan.

The Agenda included:

- Summary of Core Community Values
- Inventory of Existing Conditions
  - Regulatory
  - Traffic
- Site Mapping
- Inventory of Environmental Conditions
- Characteristics of West Austin Neighborhoods

The meeting concluded with a description of the next steps in the planning process, including ongoing public outreach, collaborative planning efforts with U.T. Austin Graduate Housing and the Brackenridge Field Laboratory, creating constraints and issues report, and developing planning principles for the November Weeklong Workshop. Comment cards were again distributed and the public was encouraged to participate in the upcoming meetings and workshops.





The gallery hours were flexible to encourage citizens to visit the studio and provide further input.



Many community members visited the gallery throughout the week where table drawings and analysis diagrams were posted for easy review.



The design team closely studied the work session drawings.



The design team met to synthesize the many ideas heard from the work session attendees.



The design team met with community stakeholders and experts in scheduled technical meetings.

### 6.3.3. WEEKLONG WORKSHOP

Monday, November 3 to Friday, November 7, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., 3700 Lake Austin Boulevard, LCRA Colorado Room (formerly Lakeview Lodge) and Hancock Building Board Room. The weeklong workshop was announced on the website and by mailing postcards to addresses in the area surrounding the Brackenridge Tract and individuals that attended previous workshops. Emails were also sent to all registered to receive project updates. The Weeklong Workshop provided an opportunity for the public to participate in a hands-on visioning of the Brackenridge Tract.

#### 6.3.3.1. Gallery Hours

Throughout the workshop, a viewing gallery was organized in the entrance of the LCRA Colorado Room. Visitors were greeted by a member of the Brackenridge Tract Conceptual Master Planning Team and were invited to view a collection of background information and progress analysis drawings, such as: University housing sites, University property map, outlying area parks, maps of the area over time; designated historical areas, map of neighborhood associations; precedent studies, transit routes, scale

comparisons of similar locations, and others. The Gallery was open at various times throughout the Weeklong Workshop to accommodate varying daily schedules.

#### 6.3.3.2. Internal Meetings

The Conceptual Master Planning Team hosted a series of meetings during the weeklong workshop to gather additional information about the tract.

- **Brackenridge Field Laboratory Collaborative Planning Session**
- **Town Lake Trail Foundation** - A meeting was held to discuss the possibility of extending the trail through the Brackenridge Tract. The executive director shared valuable information on possible routes for the extension, and other necessary planning information.
- **City of Austin** - The City of Austin identified a group of individuals who represented various departments of the City including the City Manager's office, planning and zoning, public works, parks and recreation, Austin Energy, Transportation, and others to serve as a resource for the Brackenridge Tract Conceptual Planning Team, and to answer questions pertinent to the planning effort.
- **West Austin Youth Association (WAYA)**
- **The University of Texas System Planning Group**
- **The Brackenridge Tract Task Force**

#### 6.3.3.3. Studio Space

The CRP team set up a working design studio in the Colorado Room for the designers and planners to use during the weeklong session. This provided all team members a chance to work side by side, on site, to prepare for meetings, review input gathered at meetings and work sessions, visit complex areas of the site, and to also solicit feedback/input of conceptual ideas from each other throughout the week.



The studio space was located in the Colorado Room, offering easy access for the design team to check on the site.



#### 6.3.3.4. Kickoff Presentation

The Weeklong Workshop started with a Kickoff Presentation on November 3, 2008 to over 70 attendees. The presentation summarized new information that had been gathered and reviewed the events of the week.

Topics covered included:

- A discussion of The University of Texas legacy
- A comparison of University-related developments
- Context and compatibility analysis
- Transportation strategies
- Ecological and environmental strategies
- Place making strategies
- Draft Design Principles
- The results of the second survey
- An explanation of the Workshop Planning Session and the different scenarios that would be used
- A question and answer period

#### 6.3.3.5. Work Sessions

Two identical public work sessions were held on Wednesday, November 5, 2008, one at 9:30 a.m. and a second at 6:30 p.m. The morning session had more than 70 attendees and the evening session had over 60 attendees. These sessions engaged participants in the exploration of five development scenarios. The scenarios identified opportunities to both fulfill the Board of Regents' fiduciary duty to carry out Colonel Brackenridge's philanthropic purpose to use the tract for the benefit of the educational mission of The University of Texas at Austin, and to be compatible with the Tract's context. The five different scenarios were:

1. *Everything remains the same*
2. *Everything north of Lake Austin Boulevard remains the same*
3. *Everything south of Lake Austin Boulevard remains the same*
4. *A nine-hole golf course remains on the tract*
5. *Everything goes*

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Participants worked in randomly selected groups to create conceptual plans following the Draft Design Principles. After working in groups for an hour, each table designated a spokesperson to present their big ideas to the entire group. All in attendance were invited to comment of the findings of each table.

#### 6.3.3.6. Closing Presentation

On Friday, November 7, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. the team gave the Closing Presentation to 50 attendees. The presentation included:

- A review of the project schedule;
- An overview of the Brackenridge Tract Task Force Report recommendations;
- A discussion of the Brackenridge Tract and U.T. Austin's legacy;
- Transportation strategies;
- Further discussions on design strategies
- A review of the scenario drawings created at the work sessions;
- Perspective vignettes and diagrams that summarize key themes from the work sessions;
- A review of the design principles as they relate to the different scenarios; and,
- The next steps in the planning process.



Over 70 people attended the Kick-off presentation.



The two work sessions engaged the participants into sharing ideas for the future of Brackenridge Tract.



Paul Milana welcomed the crowd and presented the analysis sketches and diagrams.



Community members worked together.

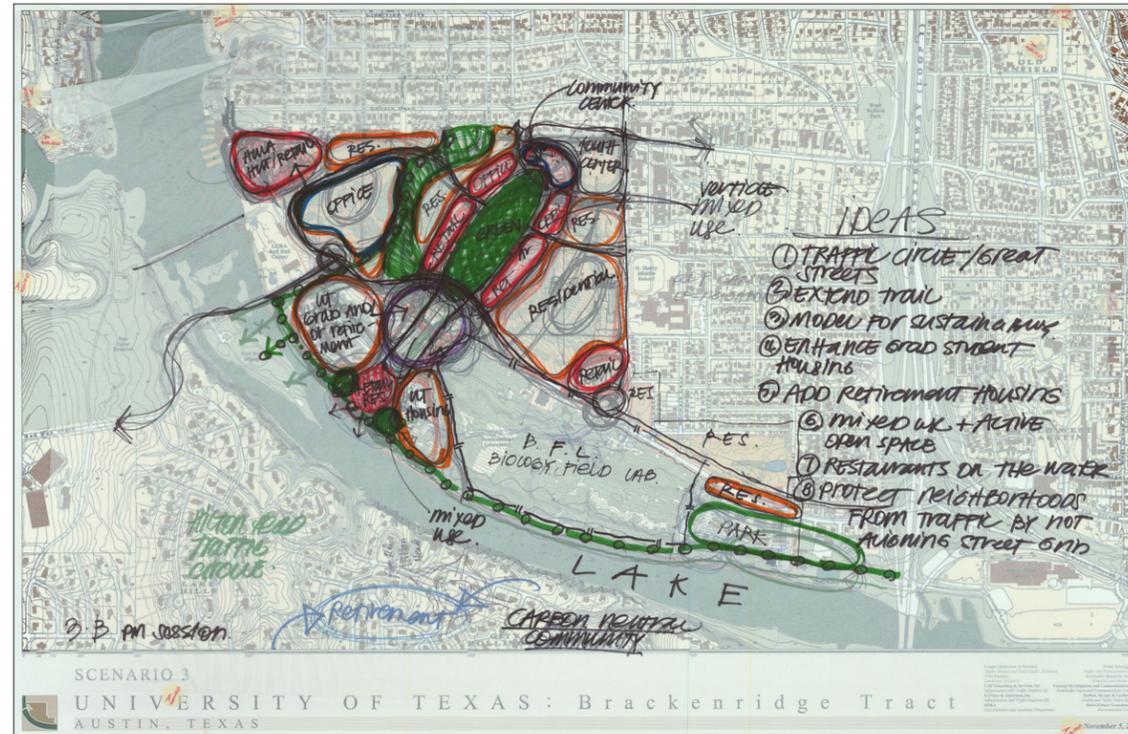
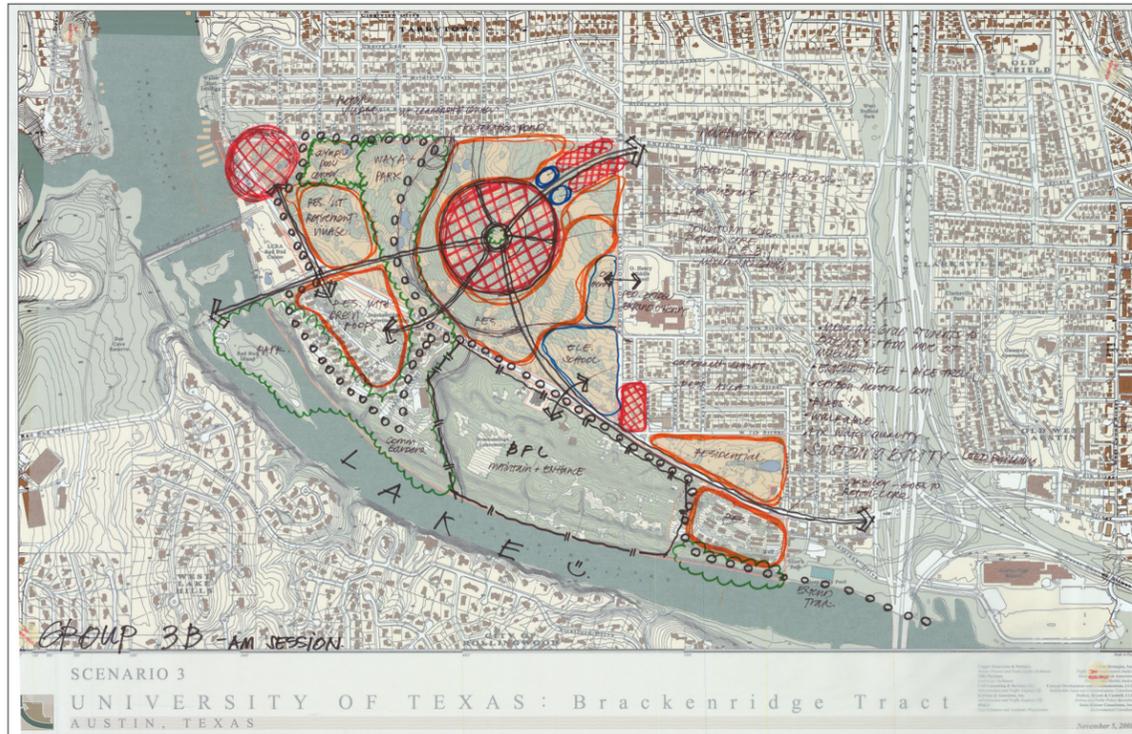


At the end of the session, one representative from each table presented their ideas to the whole assembly.









**Scenario 3 - "Everything south of Lake Austin Boulevard stays."**

- Use of open space as a place making strategy
- Development forms open space and funds open space
- Great Streets Program
- Extension of trail system
- Model for sustainability
- Protect neighborhood with compatible uses and traffic measures

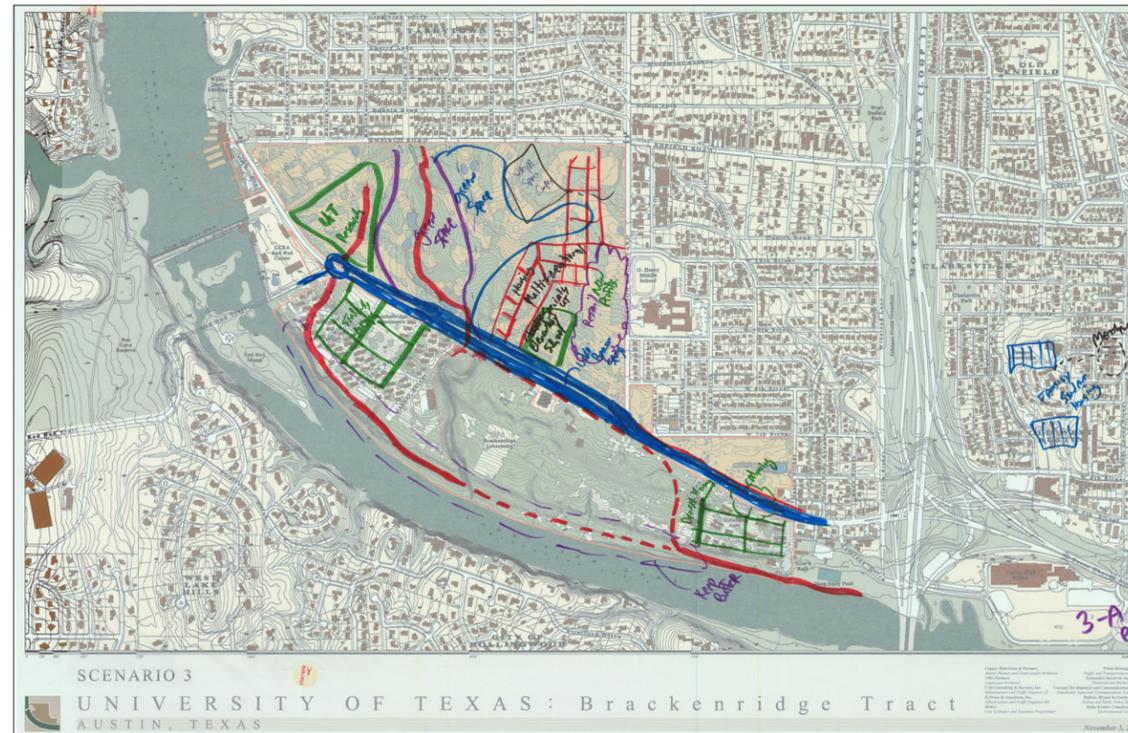
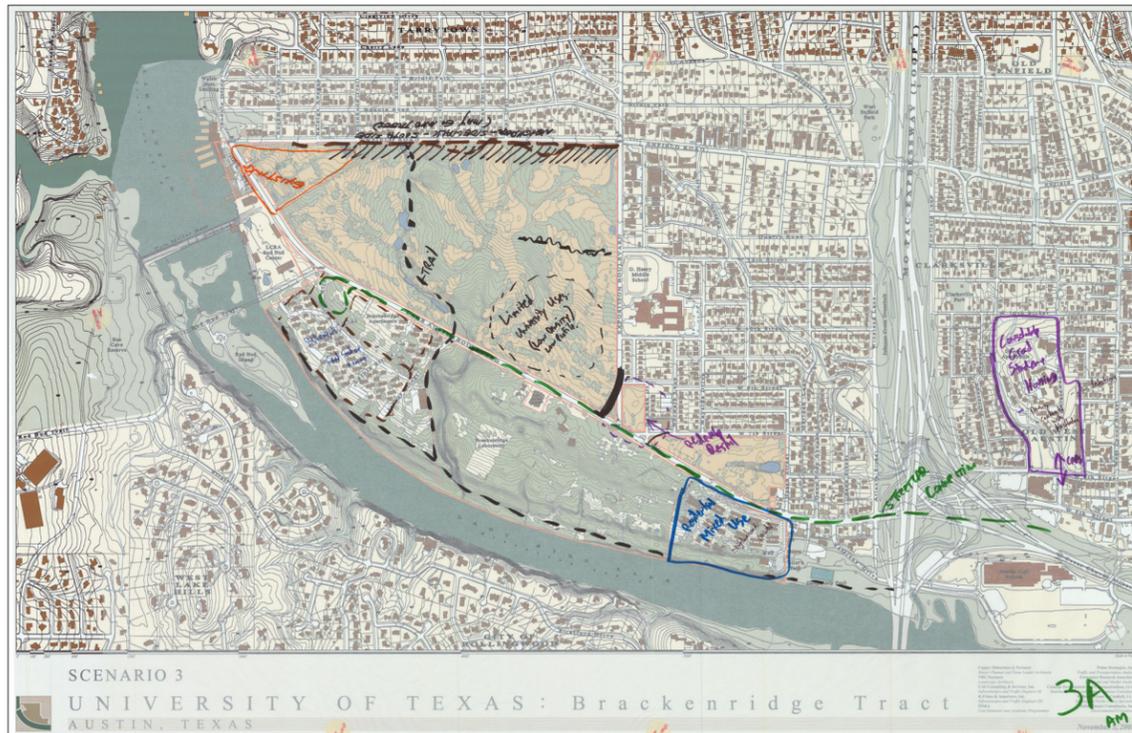


Table drawings produced during the work session

**Scenario 4 - "A nine-hole golf course stays."**

- Tract as Austin's Central Park
- Extend Hike & Bike
- Lake Austin Boulevard as Scenic Drive
- Question: What economic drivers fund these improvements?

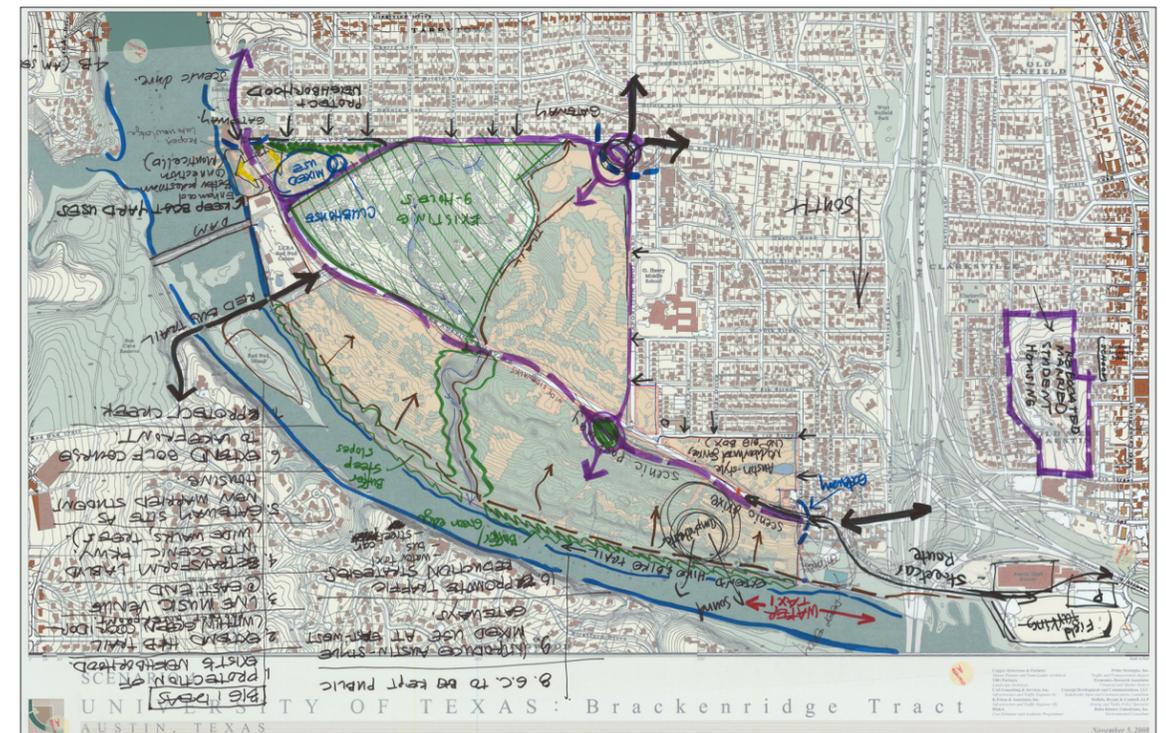
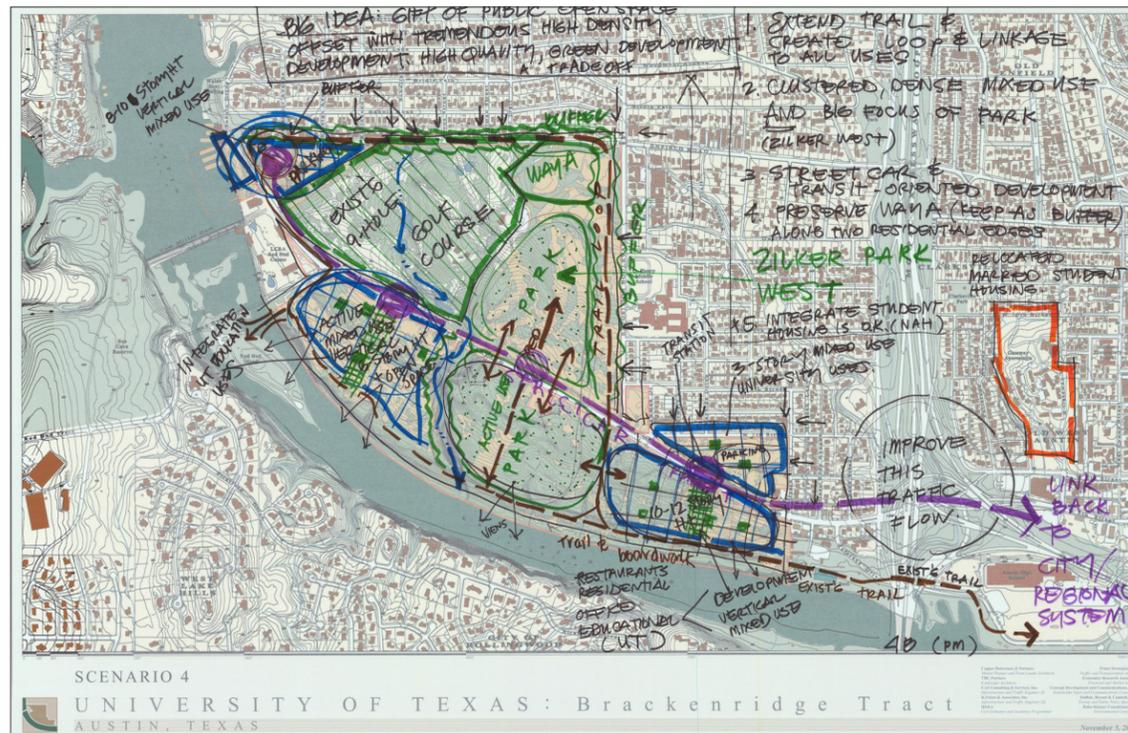
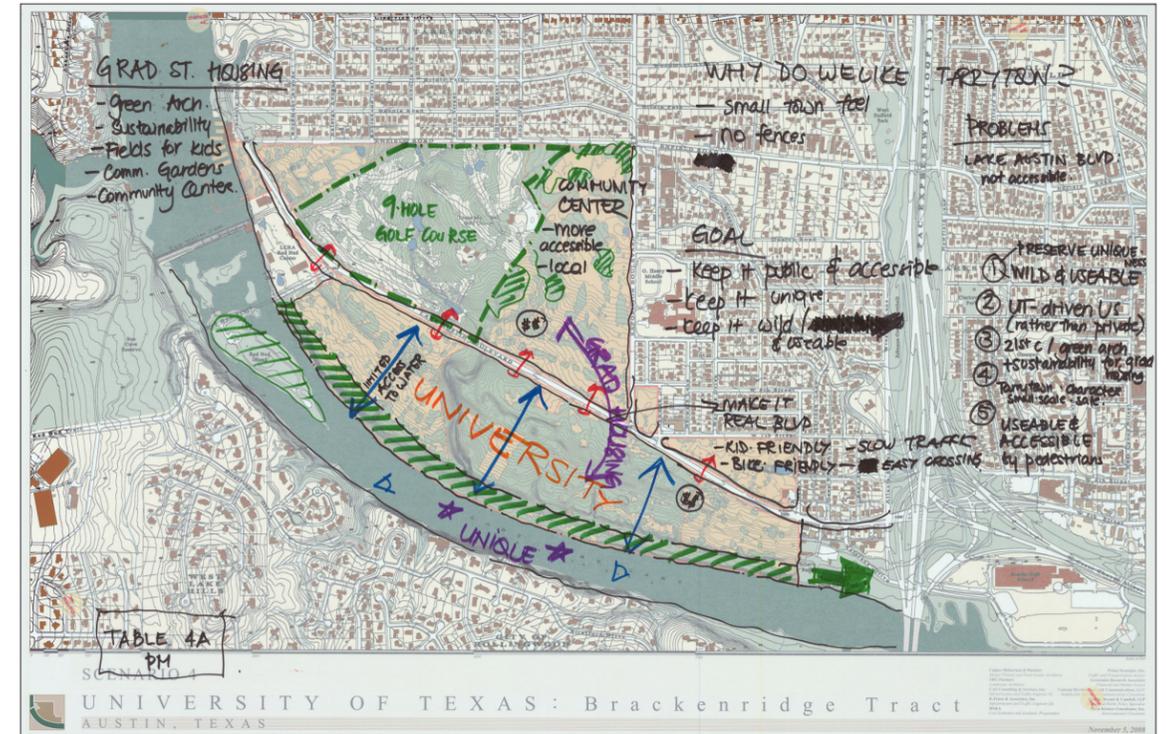
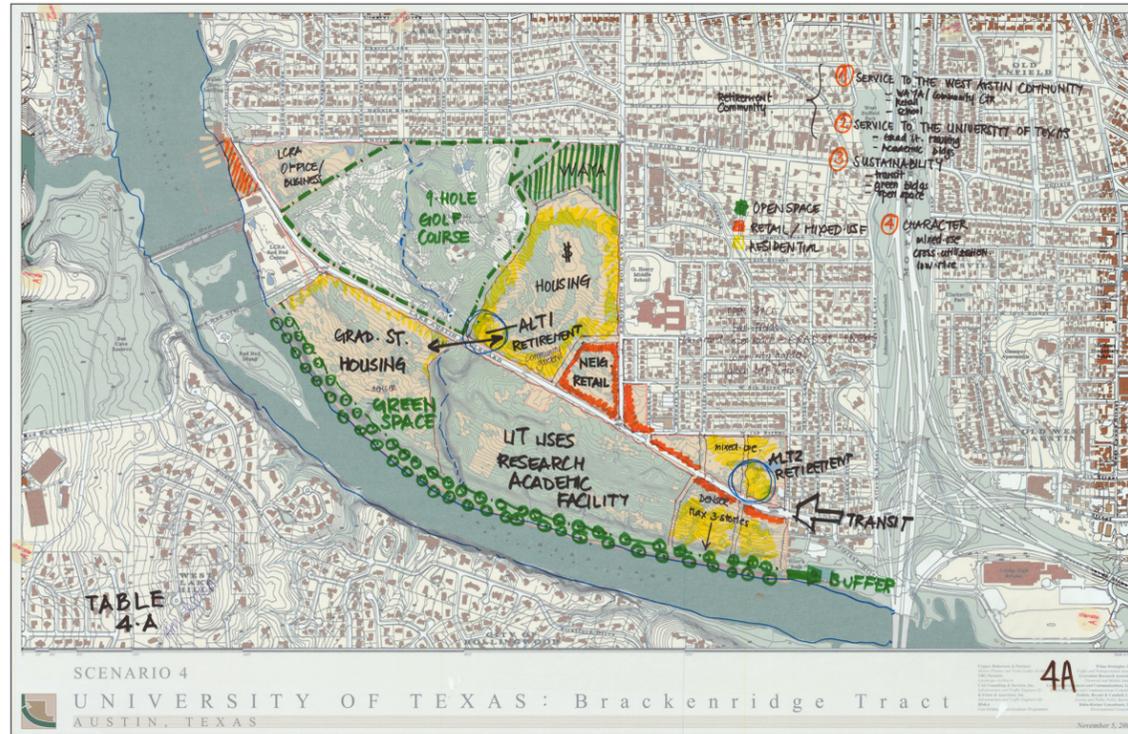
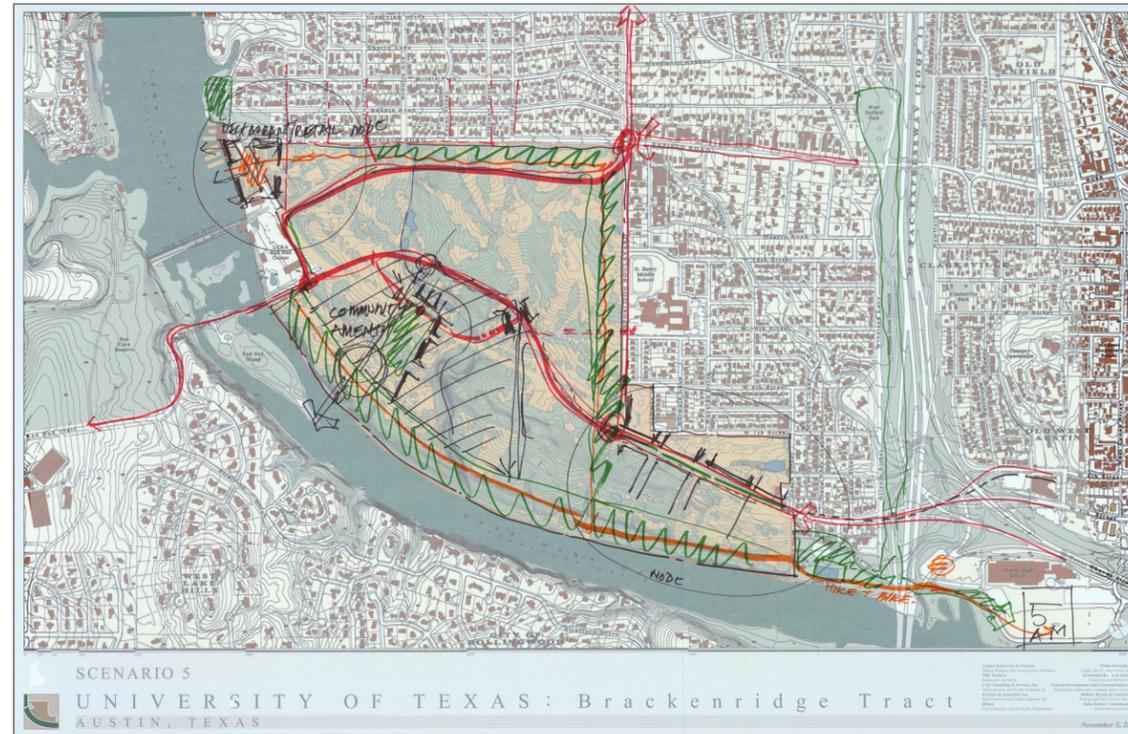
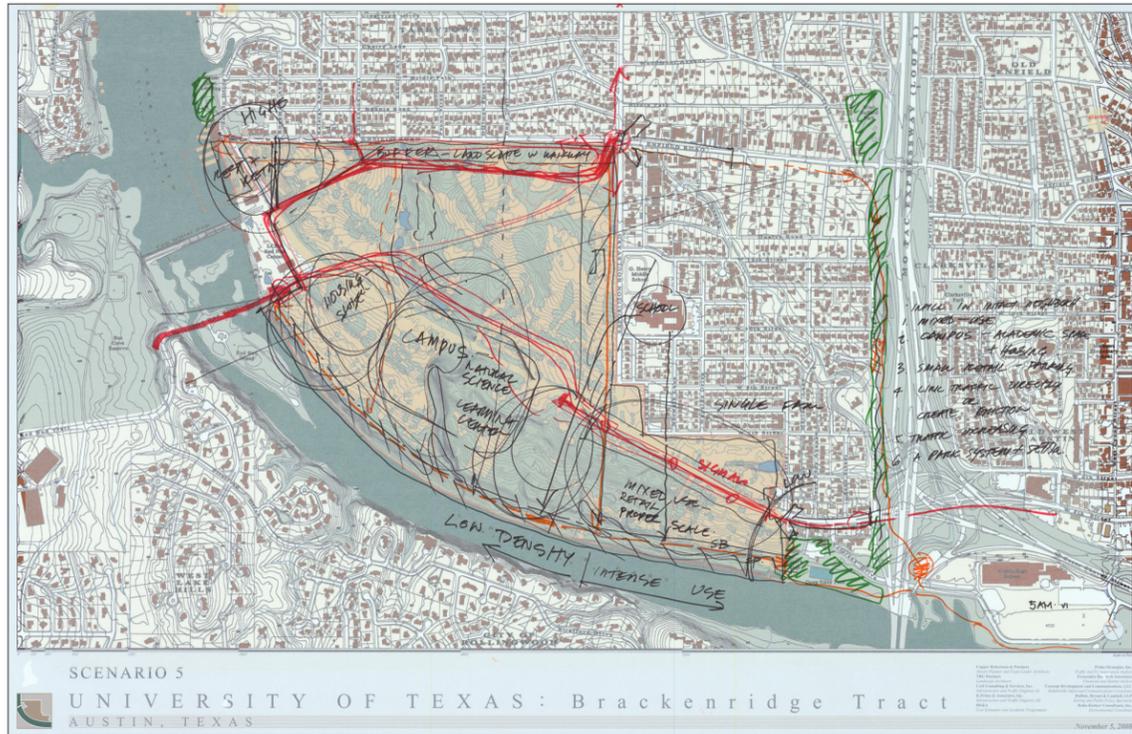


Table drawings produced during the work session

**PUBLIC MEETINGS**



**Scenario 5 - "Everything goes."**

- Collection of walkable neighborhoods
- Freely useable open space
- Range of uses
- Interconnected trail systems
- U.T. Austin uses remain

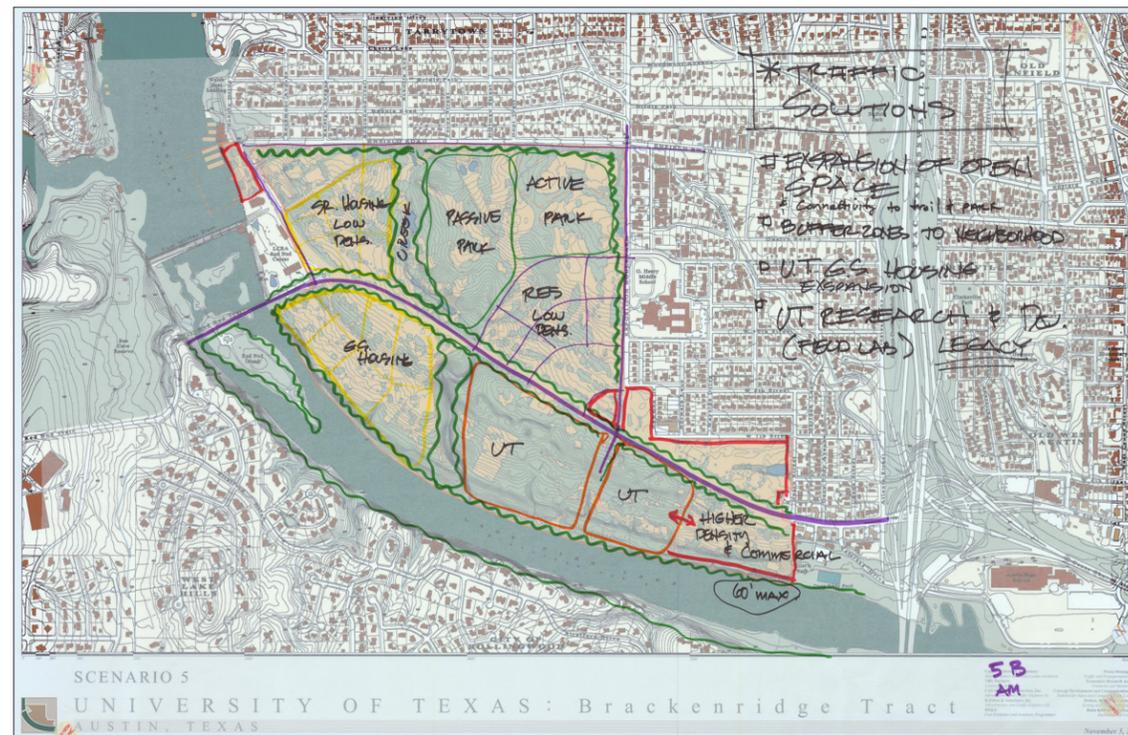
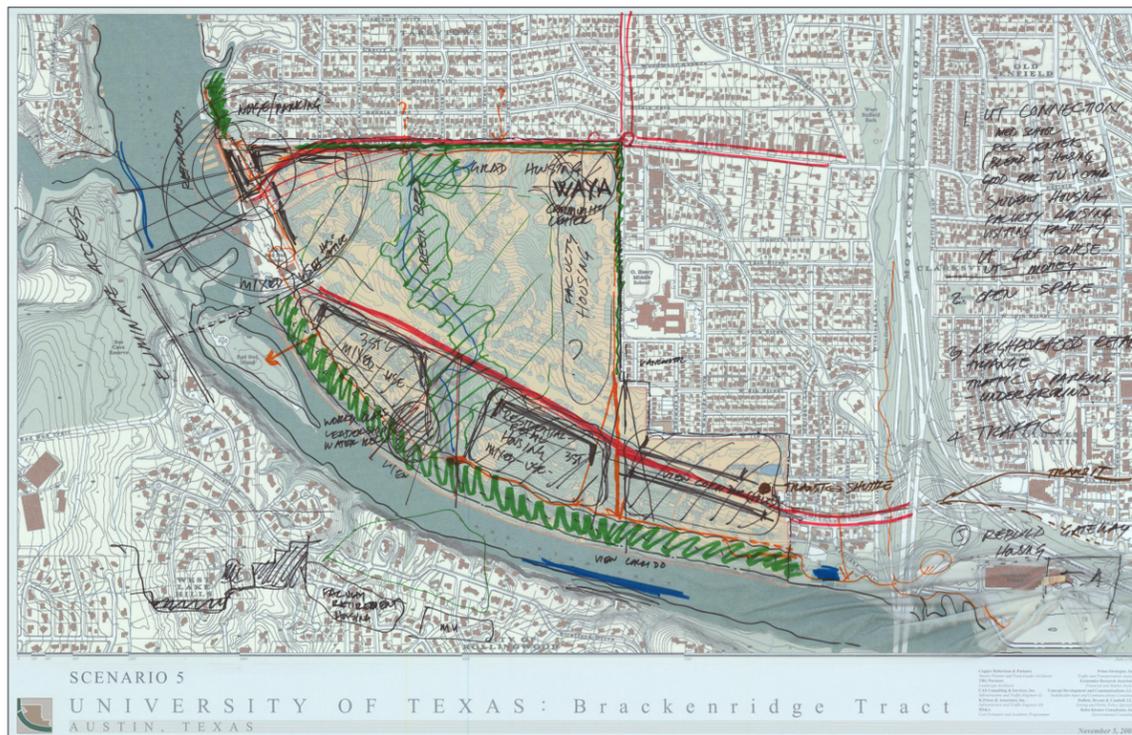


Table drawings produced during the work session

### 6.3.4. UPDATE SESSION

The Cooper, Robertson & Partners project team held two identical update sessions on May 20th, 2009 at the LCRA Redbud Center located at 3601 Lake Austin Boulevard. Over 150 interested citizens attended the update sessions, which provided to inform the public on the progress of the planning for the future of the Brackenridge Tract. The presentation included examples of how the plans being developed address each of the design principles which are guiding the work, how concepts under development scenarios could be experienced through artistic renderings, and recommendations for both graduate student housing and mobility improvements at the MoPac/Lake Austin Boulevard interchange. After the presentation, members of the team were available at stations dedicated to specialized subjects, including Mobility and Connectivity, Parkland and Community Amenities, Land Use and Place Making, and Sustainability and Environment for questions and comments from the public.



Over 150 interested citizens attended the update sessions.



Paul Milana gave an overview of how the plans being developed address each of the design principles.



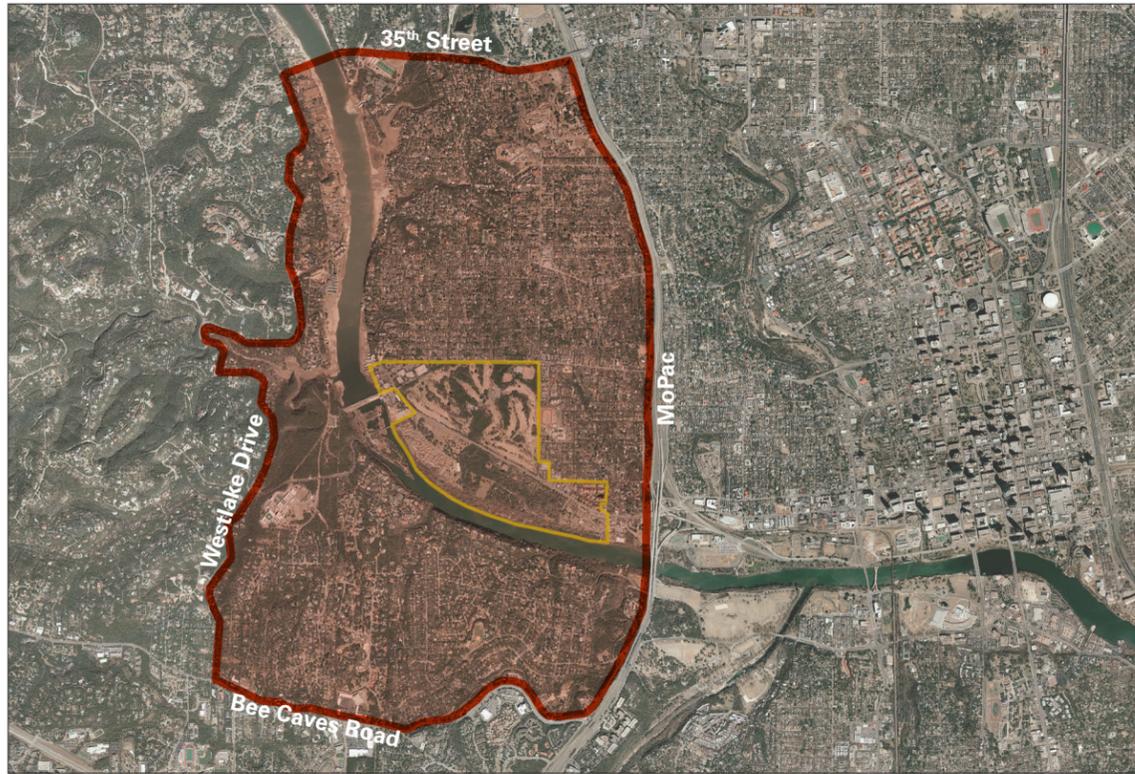
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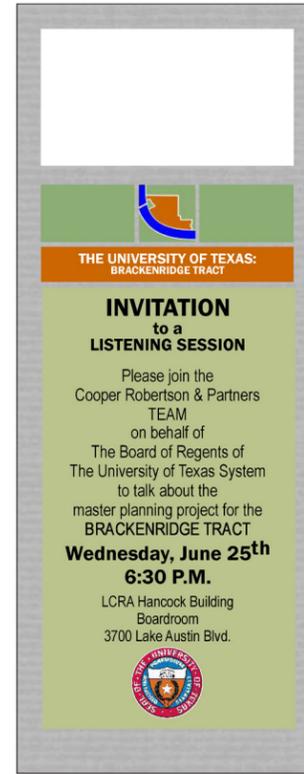
Community members asked questions and offered comments at the end of presentation.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS





Door hangers were distributed to residences and businesses in the area designated to announce the public meetings.



Sample door hanger

## 6.4. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

### 6.4.1. DATABASE

A database has been established and is regularly updated and maintained. The database includes elected and public officials, individuals that have signed in at any of the meetings or workshops, all comments collected from the website, comments and contact information received via comment cards or email, the City of Austin's Central West Austin Neighborhood Planning database, and a purchased mail list of residents in the area immediately surrounding the Brackenridge Tract.

### 6.4.2. FACT SHEET

A fact sheet was developed to provide general project information, a map of the Brackenridge Tract and current users, and CRP team information. The fact sheet was distributed at the Listening Session on June 25, 2008, and is posted on the project website.



A project fact sheet was distributed to the attendees of the Listening Session.



The Brackenridge Tract website was created to inform the public on the events and progress of the team.

### 6.4.3. WEBSITE

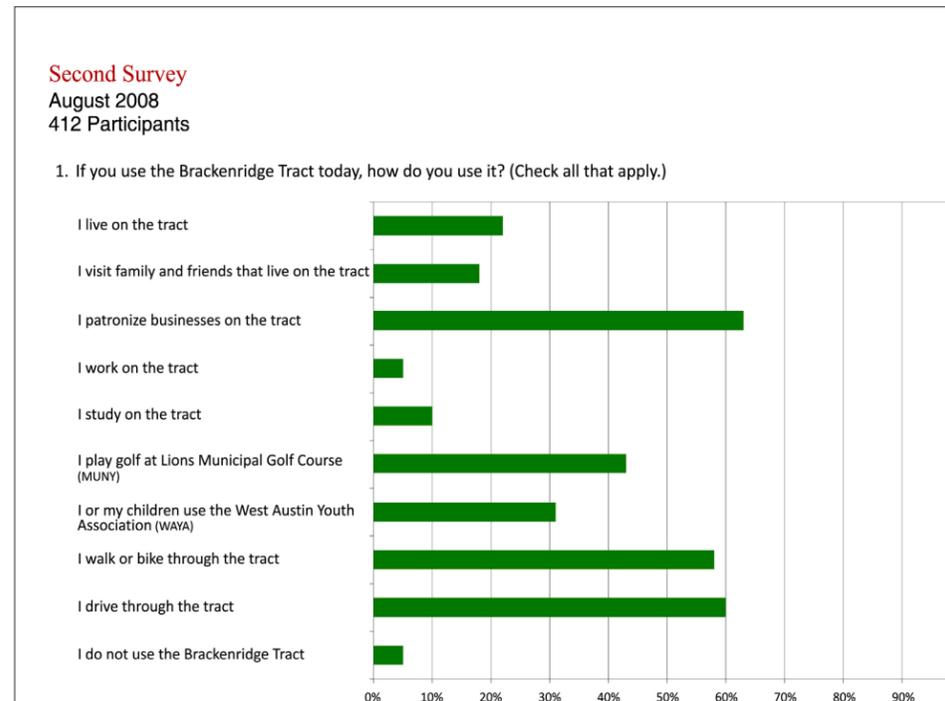
A project website ([www.utbracktract.com](http://www.utbracktract.com)) was created in June 2008. The website contains information on the CRP team, history of the Brackenridge Tract, relevant media stories, contact information, and a project calendar with public meeting information. Also included on the website are videos and presentations from all public meetings. Visitors can register to receive project updates and make comments via the website.

## COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## 6.4.4. SURVEYS

The CRP team has conducted two online surveys via Survey Monkey.

- The focus of the first survey was to gain insight on the public's current knowledge level of the Brackenridge Tract and what aspects of the property are most valued. The survey was publicized on door hangers announcing the Listening Session and on the project website. 900 people participated in the survey and the preliminary results were shared at the Listening Session on June 25, 2008.
- The second survey provided information to the CRP team on how the public currently uses the site and what uses would be desirable in the future. The survey was publicized on the website and on the postcard invitations for the Information Session on August 12, 2008, and received over 400 participants. Please visit the website to view the survey analysis.



Sample survey results

## 6.4.5. ELECTRONIC MAIL BLASTS

Electronic Mail (Email) blasts were used to announce public meetings. The following e-mail blasts have been sent:

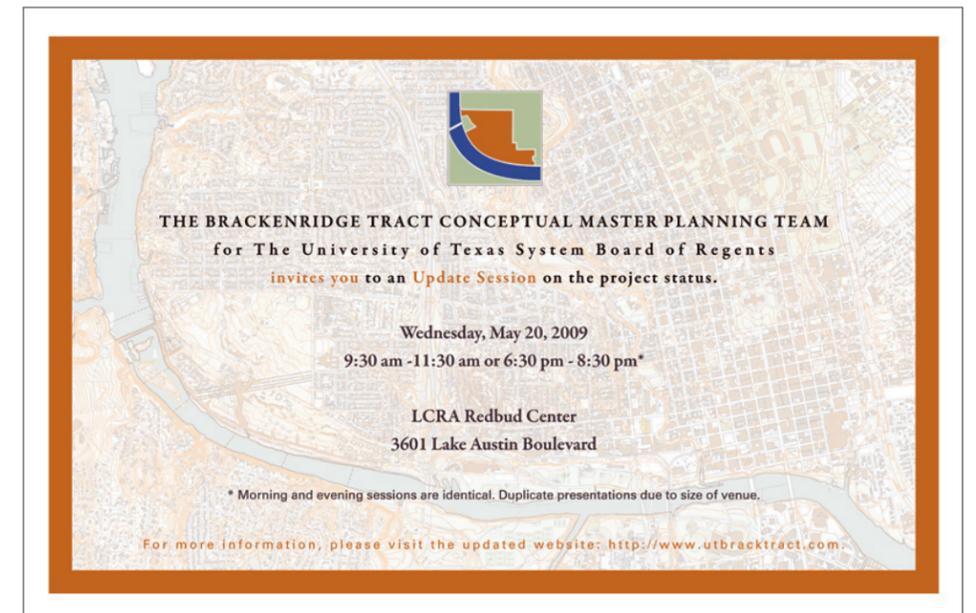
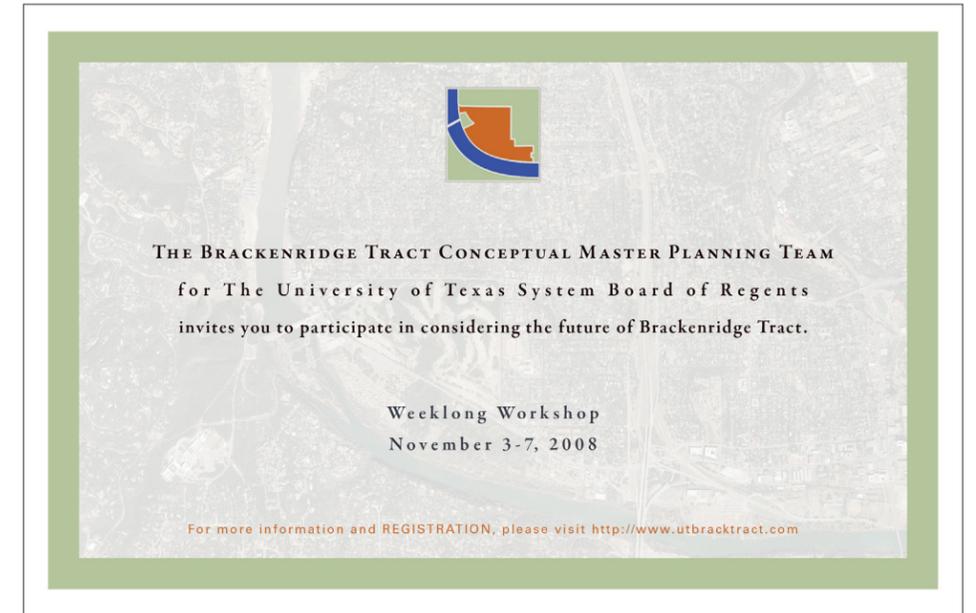
- August 1, 2008 – Announcement for Information Session
- October 17, 2008 - Announcement for November Weeklong Workshop
- October 31, 2008 - Reminder for November Weeklong Workshop

## 6.5. MEDIA

The CRP team worked closely with The University of Texas System's Public Information Office to ensure project information was distributed to all media in a timely manner. Furthermore, the CRP team has monitored and clipped relevant articles in local and statewide publications as well as reviewed noteworthy blogs and other Internet media. Stories relevant to the Brackenridge Tract Conceptual Master Planning Project and process are posted on the project website.



Articles in the local papers increased public awareness.



Postcards and e-mails were used to invite the public to participate in the public meetings and sessions.